

**Universidade do Minho**  
Instituto de Letras e Ciências Humanas

Queen Caroline and The Print  
Culture of Regency Radicalism

Maria Georgina Ribeiro Pinto de Abreu

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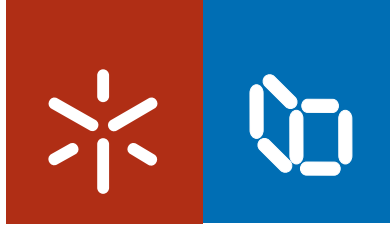
UMinho | 2011

Agosto de 2011

This study was sponsored by Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia through POPH-QREN – typology 4.1 – Formação Avançada, co-funded by Fundo Social Europeu and national funds from Ministério da Ciência, Tecnologia e Ensino Superior

Grant Reference: SFRH / BD / 60247 / 2009





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Tese de Doutoramento  
Ramo de Conhecimento em Ciências da Cultura  
Especialidade de Cultura Inglesa

Trabalho efectuado sob a orientação da  
**Professora Doutora Joanne Madin Vieira Paisana**

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Título da tese: “Queen Caroline and the Print Culture of Regency Radicalism”

Orientadora: Professora Doutora Joanne Madin Vieira Paisana

Ano de conclusão: 2011

Designação do Ramo de Conhecimento do Doutoramento: Cultura Inglesa

DECLARA QUE DE ACORDO COM A LEGISLAÇÃO EM VIGOR, NÃO É PERMITIDA A REPRODUÇÃO DE QUALQUER PARTE DESTA TESE/TRABALHO.

Universidade do Minho, \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

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## Acknowledgements

First and special thanks are due to my Ph. D. supervisor, Doctor Joanne Madin Paisana, whose constant interest provided welcome encouragement in the preparation of this work and whose suggestions, comments, and guidance were crucial in bringing it to fruition. I must also thank Doctor Joanne for her great kindness to me.

I also wish to thank Professor Ana Gabriela Macedo, Director of Centro de Estudos Humanísticos da Universidade do Minho (CEHUM), my host institution, whose support at various moments was stimulating.

The staffs of the following institutions were also very helpful to me: The staff of CEHUM, who have always showed a spirit of understanding collaboration throughout these years; the staff of the Rare Books and Music Room and the staff of the Imaging Service at the British Library, whose supply of material, vital for this research, was prompt and collaborative; Ms Kate Heard, Assistant Curator of the Print Room, Royal Collection, Windsor Castle, for the ready replies to several queries about material in the Print Room concerning the George IV Collection; Ms Allison Derrett, Assistant Registrar at the Royal Archives at Windsor, for the detailed information concerning the Queen Caroline Papers; Mr Paul Johnson, Image Library Manager at the National Archives at Kew, who provided me with data concerning the Will of Queen Caroline.

I am particularly indebted to Ms Sheila O'Connell, Curator of British Prints before 1880 at the Department of Prints and Drawings of the British Museum. Ms O'Connell kindly provided me with a list of prints in the British Museum Collection related to Queen Caroline which are not described by Dorothy George, as well as valuable information about the newest acquisitions by the British Museum of satirical prints concerning Queen Caroline.

I am also grateful to colleagues at Escola Secundária José Régio who have repeatedly manifested interest in the progress of my work. It meant much to me.

Most of all, I wish to thank my family for their lasting support, their goodwill and readiness in providing valuable assistance at various moments, and for their patience listening to my tirades. They must be as pleased as I am to see this work finished.



# **Queen Caroline and The Print Culture of Regency Radicalism**

## **Abstract**

The distinctive feature of the culture of Regency radicalism is what Marcus Wood (1994) calls ‘the delight in unrespectability’. It expressed itself in the mock-satiric style of its print culture, frequently seen as the last expression of a blackguard subculture doomed to extinction by the rise of middle-class values of respectability and progress. This view echoes in the work of a considerable number of authors, often influenced by Jürgen Habermas’s negative assessment of popular radicalism in his work *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Contending with this view, I argue that the mock-satiric tone of the print culture of Regency radicalism is forward-looking and intentionally disruptive.

My conclusion is drawn from the analysis of the periodical radical journalism and the pamphlet satire issued in 1820 in the context of the Queen Caroline affair. The ‘unrespectability’ in which radical writers delighted during the Affair was not the product of a rough culture but the creative response to the cultural marginalisation and the restrictive press legislation against which it was played. Along with these constraints, sprang the courage and the spirit of defiance. Richard Carlile’s bold war of resistance for the right of publication, William Cobbett’s staged political drama, Thomas Wooler’s sophisticated wit, and the ingenious allegorical meaning of William Hone’s satire were as much the result of their intellectual, literary and political skill as of the threat of prosecution that hung over their heads. On the other hand, by encompassing the domestic and moral concerns associated with the Queen’s case in their discourse, Regency radicals went beyond the strict political agenda of parliamentary reform and pointed to a new vision of polity and society.

In periods of crisis, such as the Queen Caroline affair, the aforementioned were formative experiences. They made radical journalism and satire into ‘act’ instead of simply ‘text’, and also into a cultural, even counter-cultural, instrument with great popular appeal. Regency radicalism defined itself during the Queen Caroline affair by

the role it played in the public sphere as intentionally rebellious, forward-looking intervention. The Queen Caroline affair is therefore a good case study of the political, literary, and intellectual elements underlying the print culture of Regency radicalism.



# **A Rainha Carolina e a Cultura Imprensa**

## **do Radicalismo da Regência**

### **RESUMO**

O traço distintivo da cultura do movimento radical do período da Regência consiste no que Marcus Wood (1994) denomina ‘o gozo em ridicularizar o poder’. Esta atitude materializou-se numa produção editorial satírica, frequentemente vista como a última manifestação de uma subcultura grosseira em vias de extinção pela ascensão dos valores de decoro e progresso, associados à classe média. Este ponto de vista reflecte-se na obra de um considerável número de autores, frequentemente influenciados pela apreciação negativa da cultura do radicalismo popular, presente no livro de Jürgen Habermas *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Refutando essa apreciação, alego que o tom satírico subjacente aos textos produzidos por aqueles autores apresenta uma visão política e cultural virada para o futuro e intencionalmente dissonante.

A minha conclusão baseia-se na análise da sátira e do jornalismo periódico radical produzidos em 1820, no contexto do chamado ‘Queen Caroline affair’. Durante esta crise, a troça e mesmo o escárnio dos poderosos não foram o produto de uma cultura grosseira, mas sim a resposta imaginativa à marginalização cultural e à repressão política de que eram alvo os autores e activistas radicais nesse período. É que, a par da marginalização e da repressão, brotaram a coragem e o espírito de desafio. A intrépida guerra de resistência desencadeada por Richard Carlile pelo direito à liberdade editorial, o encenado drama político de William Cobbett, o humor sofisticado de Thomas Wooler, e o inventivo sentido alegórico da sátira de William Hone foram tanto o resultado da sua capacidade intelectual, literária e política, como da ameaça de repressão que pairava sobre as suas cabeças. Por outro lado, ao abrangerem no seu discurso as preocupações de ordem moral e do âmbito da domesticidade, relacionadas com o ‘Queen Caroline affair’, os autores radicais ultrapassaram o âmbito estrito da sua agenda de reforma parlamentar e apontaram para uma visão nova da política e da sociedade.

Em períodos de crise como o ‘Queen Caroline affair’, estas experiências eram formativas. Elas transformaram o jornalismo e a sátira em ‘acto’, em vez de

simplesmente 'texto', e em um instrumento de cultura, e mesmo de contra-cultura, de grande impacto popular. Durante o 'Queen Caroline affair', o movimento radical caracterizou-se pelo papel que desempenhou como intervenção insubmissa, virada para o futuro. O 'Queen Caroline affair' é, pois, um bom exemplo de estudo de caso da interação dos elementos políticos, literários e intelectuais subjacentes à cultura editorial do radicalismo da Regência.

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# Abbreviations and Acronyms

## Institutions

British Library	BL
Royal Archives – Windsor	RA
The Lewis Walpole Library Digital Collection, Yale University	LWDC

## Publications

<i>British Museum Catalogue</i>	<i>BMC</i>
<i>Cobbett's Weekly Political Register</i>	<i>PR</i>
<i>John Bull</i>	<i>JB</i>
<i>Liverpool Mercury</i>	<i>LM</i>
<i>National Union Catalogue</i>	<i>NUC</i>
<i>Notes and Queries</i>	<i>NQ</i>
<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>	<i>OED</i>
<i>The Black Dwarf</i>	<i>BD</i>
<i>The Parliamentary Debates from the Year 1803 to the Present Time</i>	<i>HPD</i>
<i>The Republican</i>	<i>R</i>

## Others

Anonymous	Anon.
Attributed	Attrib.
Bill of Pains and Penalties	Bill
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<sup>1</sup> This phrase designates prints not described in the *BMC*.

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## Textual Note

All quotations retain their original emphasis, italicisation, capitalisation, punctuation and spelling.

Works published anonymously are cited either under the publisher's name followed by (pub.), or under the date of publication when the publisher is unknown.

Pseudonyms are cited within square brackets.

Works published under pseudonym, but whose author is known, are cited under the author's real name.

The date of the first publication of a work is indicated within square brackets, at the end of the reference, when there is a large time gap between both editions.

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# INTRODUCTION

*O PRINTING! How hast thou disturbed the peace!*

William Hone, *The Political Showman – at Home*

This study resulted from interest in the culture of popular radicalism motivated by my work for a master's thesis about the decade of the 1790s and the influence of the French Revolution in England. Subsequent focus on Regency radicalism and William Hone's satire has cemented that interest. The representation of the Queen Caroline affair in the radical press seemed the logical consequence.

The Queen Caroline affair designates the popular movement that agitated England in 1820-1 on behalf of Queen Caroline. Caroline Amelia Elizabeth of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel (1768-1821) was the consort and cousin of George Augustus Frederick (1762-1830), the elder son of George III, who acceded to the throne in January of 1820 as George IV, King of the United Kingdom of Great-Britain and Ireland.

The movement was prompted by the attempt of the new king to strip his wife of her title of Queen Consort through a lawsuit on an accusation of adultery to which Caroline answered by returning to England in the early summer of 1820 after a six-year exile on the Continent to claim her title. The prosecution of a Queen accused of adultery by a notoriously adulterous King, her determination to face the accusation and the doubts as to the constitutionality of the procedure by means of a Bill of Pains and Penalties account for the generalised support of the public and the press, especially of the writers of the London radical press.

The fact that the agitation was 'peaceful and literary' (Lee, 2009: 139) constituted one of the motives of my interest. Another motive lay in the intertwining of the political, the cultural, and the literary in the radical defence of Queen Caroline. Furthermore, the reading of scholarly research which persistently attempted (and eventually succeeded) in

relegating Regency radicalism and its culture to the dustbin of history<sup>1</sup> prompted extra motivation.

This study examines the representation of the Queen Caroline affair<sup>2</sup> by the radical press and, more generally, it enquires into the role played by Regency radical culture in early nineteenth-century English society. Radical culture consisted essentially of two elements: the ‘market for spoken debate’ (Thompson, 1991: 843) and the radical press. Although diverse forms of ‘orality’ played a role in the agitation for Queen Caroline, the main arena of the radicals’ championing of the Queen was the London radical press. The object of this investigation is therefore to enquire into the political and cultural importance of the discourses<sup>3</sup> about the Queen Caroline affair in the London radical press, especially the attitude of mock-satirical unrespectability towards the political establishment that characterised its various forms and genres.

This enquiry is guided by two overarching questions: What does the violation of respectability and its diverse discursive forms and tones (especially the melodramatic and the satiric) reveal about radical culture and the role it played within early nineteenth-century public stage? Did the ‘delight in unrespectability’ (Wood, 1994) of Regency radical journalism and satire carry political and cultural meaning, or was it the last expression of a blackguard subculture doomed to extinction by the rise of middle-class values of ‘respectability’<sup>4</sup> and progress, as Habermas (Burger and Lawrence, 1989) and

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase ‘Regency radicalism’ designates the popular radicalism of the Regency years and the first two years of the reign of George IV. ‘The culture of Regency radicalism’ refers to the common attitudes and ideas, the interpretations and responses of Regency radicals to the tensions and changes of this period, materialized in the political and literary experiences of radical journalists and satirists. A related idea of culture, in Williams’s (1993: 325) sense of ‘a whole way of life’, is discussed in Alves (2000: 11-43); the phrase ‘dustbin of history’ conveys the sense used by Marcus (1995) in the book of the same title about cultural criticism. He argues that history is cheapened and restricted by the refusal of a critical engagement with history, that is, by the refusal to revise our relations with the past.

<sup>2</sup> The term ‘affair’ was first used by G.M. Trevelyan in 1922, in his work *British History in the Nineteenth-Century (1782-1901)*. In the following year, it was used by E. Halévy in *A History of the English People in the Nineteenth-Century – II The Liberal Awakening 1815-1830*. Since then, it has been largely accepted by historians.

<sup>3</sup> The term ‘discourse’ is used in the Foucauldian sense of production of knowledge through language, in complex interplay with ideology and power. ‘Discourse’, namely ‘satirical discourse’ becomes ‘historical event’, rather than just linguistic/logical production of meaning/argument. If not taken to metaphysical extremes, these insights are useful theoretical tools for the discussion of satire as culturally discursive practice. The impact of satire arises out of the interaction between text and context as topically and culturally situated references.

<sup>4</sup> According to the *OED* (Simpson and Weiner, 2010), the first published record of this term dates from 1775.

others advocate<sup>5</sup>? The answers are sought in the examination of the discourses of radical journalism and political satire issued by the London radical press during the Affair.

The Queen Caroline affair was the first nation-wide popular agitation conducted essentially through the press and the print media. This was a novelty, which in itself justifies scholarly attention. The preference for ‘intellectual force’ instead of ‘physical force’ propaganda strategies is suggested by the radicals’ efforts to extend the access to print by the lower-classes since the end of the Wars. The printed word and image were touted as a way to increase political awareness. Hence the value placed on the free circulation and exchange of information and commentary. The way the printed word and image were used by these ‘voices from below’ (Thompson, 1993) is in headlong confrontation with both the aristocratic establishment and the middle-class strategies of change (Abreu, 2010a; 2010b).

Recent studies, for example Parolin’s (2010), contend for a more integrated relationship than the dichotomies bourgeois-plebeian, or mainstream publics-counter publics allow; however, the way the repressive legislation issued from 1794 to 1819 meant to curtail the expansion of the public sphere beyond the margins of the aristocratic elite, as Parolin herself admits, makes a case for the existence of a radical counter public, struggling for a place in the public debate. The Queen Caroline affair would thus seem to constitute a good case study of the intersection of the press, propaganda, gender, class, and politics and ultimately to be a metaphor of political and cultural change demanded from below, as argued in this study.

Although the Affair ended with the death of Queen Caroline in August 1821, the focus is placed on the year 1820, with only sporadic incursions into the year 1821. This decision originates in the fact that the appropriation of the Queen Caroline affair by the radical press virtually ended with the year 1820. On the other hand, considerable analytic space is given to the period 1815-20, due to the importance attached to contextualization.

As a consequence of the aforementioned, two main organising principles – the historical and the generic – direct the argument upon which this study is built. The former works as the background against which the latter – materialized in the examination of radical journalism and satire – is played. These reference criteria are combined with critical comparative analysis of the most relevant research on Regency radicalism and the radical

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<sup>5</sup> Scholarly assessment of the culture of Regency radicalism as backward-looking and inconsequential was greatly influenced by Jürgen Habermas’s view of the formation of the liberal public sphere in his influential 1962 work *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit, Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der Bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, translated into English in 1989, by T. Burger and F. Lawrence (Burger and Lawrence, 1989).

press. The combination of analytic criteria is apparent in the Introduction, where the most influential analyses to date of the Queen Caroline affair are surveyed, from those by Trevelyan and Halévy in the 1920s to the contributions made after the 1980s, a decade that represents a watershed in the scholarly appreciation of early nineteenth-century popular radical culture.

After the Introduction, Chapter One chronicles the Queen Caroline affair and elucidates the significance of its antecedents. Chapter Two interprets the resurgence of popular radicalism after 1815 and the demand for parliamentary reform, concentrating on the economic distress of the lower classes, the public image of the Prince Regent, and the cultural identity of Regency radicalism. Chapters Three and Four constitute the fulcrum of this study. They examine the most widely circulated radical journalism and political satire produced during the Queen Caroline affair in their socio-political context: Chapter Three analyses the rendering of the Queen Caroline affair by the three radical periodicals that resisted the restrictive press legislation passed at the end of 1819, namely *The Republican*, edited by Richard Carlile (1790-1843), *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, edited by William Cobbett (1763-1835), and the *Black Dwarf*, edited by Thomas Jonathan Wooler (1786?-1853). The radical periodical journalism issued during the Queen Caroline affair is an area where scholarly research is noticeably deficient.

Chapter Four discusses the traditions embodied in Regency radical satire<sup>6</sup> and sets it in its broad political, literary and social contexts. It also analyses the rendering of the Queen Caroline affair in satirical prints and pamphlet satire, especially the pamphlet satire produced in 1820 by William Hone (1780-1842) in partnership with George Cruikshank (1792-1878), the leading caricaturist of the day. Finally, Conclusion determines the extent to which early nineteenth-century radical journalism and satire helped redefine cultural and political authority.

Research centring on the part played by the print culture of Regency radicalism in the Queen Caroline affair stems from developments in approaches to the study of popular radicalism influenced by Cultural Studies. Although the influence of this discipline was felt from the 1960s onwards in the academia as a whole, it is only in the 1980s that a new view of Regency radicalism and its culture emerges, especially concerning the role played by the radical press, which had been underestimated or even ignored.

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<sup>6</sup> The phrase 'Regency radical satire' is used in this study to refer to the satire (typically anonymous) issued by the Regency radical press from 1815-22.



Until that time, the main scholarly concern was to enquire into how the agitation on behalf of Queen Caroline had contributed to political change. In face of the failure of the agitation to overthrow the Government, or to impose parliamentary reform, the conclusion was necessarily negative. Trevelyan's 1922 judgement of the Queen Caroline affair was accepted for many years: a political and historical irrelevance with only a cathartic function (Trevelyan, 1962: 195-9).

For Trevelyan, the part played by the radicals – especially the part played by the radical satirists – functioned as the 'low comic relief' that allowed the lower classes to 'laugh and feel avenged' of a Government and a King, both enormously unpopular since the end of the wars, especially after 'Peterloo'. Laughter was therefore cathartic. This catharsis restored the good humour of the nation and allowed the Tories another decade in power, helped by years of better trade, more liberal policies, and Whig hesitation to adopt a popular programme. Trevelyan considers the hypothesis that radical satiric laughter may have created the psychological conditions that prepared the way for political change as purely accidental.

Following on Trevelyan's footsteps, in 1923 Halévy (1949: 80-106) interprets the 'Affair of Queen Caroline' as 'a sordid domestic squabble' (87) and as part of the dispute between Toryism and revolutionary radicalism. As Trevelyan, he stresses the role of party politics and bypasses the social and cultural changes ongoing in early nineteenth-century British society. In spite of the initial hypothesis that the agitation on behalf of the Queen might present 'the appearance of an incipient revolution' (101), Halévy concludes that 'the ferment of 1820 veiled the decline of the Radical movement' and that 'the affair was nothing but a passing wave of popular feeling' (103). In the end, the British gave proof of their devotion to monarchy, even when attacking the King. Social tranquillity returned when trade began to recover in 1821, and England 'recovered its mental balance' (105), averting the danger of revolution.

The most promising aspect of Halévy's analysis is the recognition that the popular agitation for the Queen presented novelty: the Affair 'rekindled popular excitement [...] in an entirely novel way' (84), with William Cobbett writing the Queen's replies to Addresses in July 1820 and the Government not daring to apply the press laws or the Acts against seditious meetings of 1819. Yet, these new elements and others, such as the doubts of the political establishment as to the loyalty of the troops, or the absence of the 'sobering influence upon the lower classes' (102) of nonconformity are summarily dismissed as the consequence of the success of a type of literature by which 'the entire population wallowed

in obscenity' (97). The interpretation of the power of the press to reach (and thus to influence) a wider audience than ever before is absent. The political role played by the Regency radical press is consigned to a very secondary position in the preoccupations of these historians.

Trevelyan and Halévy were followed by decades of relative silence, until the 1960s and the 1970s witnessed a rising interest, even a 'revolution', in the study of popular radicalism. This 'revolution' started with E. P. Thompson's seminal work *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), and continued in the works of Stevenson (1977), Prothero (1979), and others. Of the three, Thompson's was the most influential. Apart from the combination of erudition and literary talent, popular radicalism became a protagonist for the first time in this work, which accounts for its enormous influence over decades. The real issue in *The Making* was the story of popular radicalism, a story where the agitation prompted by the Queen Caroline affair did not seem to fit in. This narrative conditioned Thompson's analysis and he therefore labelled the Affair and the role played by the radicals in it as 'humbug' (778).

The term 'humbug' conveys the historian's uneasiness in face of both the radicals' espousing of a cause that seemed a diversion from radical politics and the populist propaganda openly carried out in its support. This type of propaganda was perceived as incompatible with the 'heroic' conception of radicalism conveyed in *The Making*, which Laqueur (1990: 820) later characterized as 'a generally respected, secular, rationalist, male tradition'. In the absence of an atmosphere of political agitation in the early 1820s, Thompson admitted that the Queen Caroline affair has, at best, placed 'Old Corruption in the most ludicrous and defensive postures' (778).

In this period, the main concern generally lay in explaining the consequences for the radical camp of the resulting popular agitation, not in finding meaning in the agitation itself. Moreover, the populist discourse that characterised the agitation was generally associated with loyalist propaganda strategies – and not with radical methods of rational political discussion. This alleged incompatibility partly explains scholarly reticence to acknowledge the widespread use by radical writers of melodrama and satire as political discourse. Thompson afterwards revised his appreciation of the Affair, but the mark had stayed, and it shaped most of the subsequent research on late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century radicalism until the 1980s and beyond.

In spite of the marginal treatment of the Queen Caroline affair in *The Making*, the discussion of the political and intellectual traditions underlying the artisan culture that

produced the Regency radical press, and that struggled for its freedom, remains an essential contribution. Thompson was one of the first to refer to the delight in baiting authority as the most striking characteristic of the press battles of those years, and to point out how the establishment perceived that enjoyment as a threat to the continuation of the status quo. The delighted exploitation of ridicule was ‘a glorious moment’, especially in the lampoons by William Hone and George Cruikshank and in *Cobbett’s Weekly Political Register*: ‘no British monarch has ever been portrayed in more ridiculous postures nor in more odious terms than George IV during the Queen Caroline agitation’ (778-94). Thompson planted the seeds that began to take root in the 1980s. His analysis of the ‘continuing traditions and the context that has changed’ (27) is critical in providing the basis for the understanding of the Queen Caroline affair within the broader backgrounds – political, social, economic and cultural – against which it developed.

In the second half of the 1970s, Stevenson (1977: 117-48) publishes an essay entitled “The Queen Caroline Affair”, inserted in the work *London in the Age of Reform*. In line with Thompson’s historiography, Stevenson focuses on the contributions of the Affair to the course of popular radicalism, and argues that the Queen Caroline affair offers ‘some fascinating insights into the development of radicalism in general, and of London radicalism in particular’. In that sense, the Queen Caroline affair ‘provided the last occasion upon which the forces of metropolitan radicalism were drawn together under a personality with sufficient appeal to impose some unity upon the various groups’ (144). In Stevenson’s analysis, London radicalism was given cohesion by the Queen Caroline affair, but that cohesion was ephemeral, due to the personal divisions and political heterogeneity within the movement.

The vagueness of the Queen’s cause – that of the ‘injured Queen’ – and the rivalries of the London radicals contributed to the quick disintegration of the movement after the dropping of the Bill of Pains and Penalties. They also exposed the failure of the London radical groups to create permanent ties in the aftermath of the Queen Caroline affair. Consequently, the focus of the radical agitation passed to the provinces, where radical communities were more homogenous and, therefore, more cohesive. In tune with Thompson’s heroic conception of popular radicalism, the Queen Caroline affair was not considered by Stevenson as an event with a weight or meaning of its own, but the swan song of London popular radicalism. When the fire was extinct, there was no spark to light it up again.

At the close of the 1970s, Prothero (1981 [1979]) publishes *Artisans and Politics in Early Nineteenth-Century London: John Gast and His Times*, which contains a chapter (Chapter 7) on the Queen Caroline affair. In this work, the view of the agitation on behalf of Queen Caroline as a diversion of radicalism from reform into the side-issue of the Queen's rights is questioned. This is a significant insight, for it sees the Queen's case as 'crucially important in dissipating the constrictions of the *Six Acts* and re-establishing open political campaigning' (141).

The innovative aspect of the agitation is found in the part played by artisans, organised in their trades societies. The political demonstrations by the trades societies, promoted during the Queen Caroline affair, are considered as a political step forward in relation to petitions, because they laid the foundations of a practice maintained throughout the decade: they 'restored freedom of political agitation and brought trades societies into open political activity', while it also 'shook the prestige of monarchy and government' (142).

The argument that the revitalization of popular radicalism took place largely in the meetings held by trades societies to approve resolutions and addresses and to elect committees to organise their presentation by deputation or procession limits the analysis. The role played by public opinion and by women is largely neglected, whereas the part played by the trades societies seems overrated. It is true that a number of trades societies met to approve and present addresses to the Queen<sup>7</sup>, but the vast majority of addresses did not originate on a trades basis, but on a community basis. It is also significant that there were more than twenty addresses signed only by women.

Even though Prothero suggests that the agitation for Caroline might be more important than 'its ostensible aim' – thereby proposing a broad conception of what may be considered 'political' – he does not carry this idea to the end. The back is turned on the radical press, held responsible for the fact that 'the nation wallowed in obscenity' (140). The main focus is still the nonconformity of the Queenite agitation to the radical aim of parliamentary reform.

Before the 1980s, therefore, the Queen Caroline affair was largely seen as a trivial and inconsequential cause because it did not comply with conventional analytic frameworks. Analyses focussed essentially on the directly class-based and institutional aspects of the agitation, in detriment to the more elusive elements underlying the radical

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<sup>7</sup> According to Cole (2011: 168), nine 'trades and industries' presented addresses to the Queen.

intervention. Consequently, the role played by radical journalism, the value put on the free circulation of information and comment, the empowerment of public opinion, the political use of the vocabularies of melodrama and satire by radical writers, were bypassed.

Those elements – especially radical journalism and the energies unleashed by radical satire and melodrama – came to be viewed by subsequent research not simply as ‘an intermezzo of cathartic laughter’, as Trevelyan argued, but as widespread and in some ways vitally cohesive elements that deserved serious consideration. The change of analytic paradigm was fruitful, as it opened up promising new avenues of research.

The step towards analytic reorientation is largely indebted to the introduction in the 1980s of a whole new set of criteria through which to interpret popular movements such as the Queen Caroline affair: gender, populism, scandal and morality, the public sphere, farce and melodrama. Although the influence of the new discipline of Cultural Studies entails the risk of separating culture from society, by treating it as ‘free-floating’ – a caveat stressed by Calhoun (2005: 3-4) –, different layers of meaning came to light in the new analyses and were explored in new ways. The Affair came into its own right as a key moment in the history of cultural change, and the hypothesis that it might not have been a trivial cause launched promising debate.

Yet, apart from a few exceptions, a pessimistic conclusion prevails: the events of 1820-1 were extraordinary, but largely inconsequential. The negative connotation of the word ‘affair’ emphasises that assessment. Fulcher (1995) is one of the few to question its use and to prefer the word ‘agitations’, arguing that by dwindling its public and political nature the term ‘affair’ undervalues the popular outburst it caused. Although the term ‘affair’ is kept in the present study, the view of the events and their protagonists as inconsequential is rejected<sup>8</sup>.

Laqueur’s (1982) essay “The Queen Caroline Affair: Politics as Art in the Reign of George IV” is clearly part of the new approach. It is also paradigmatic, in the sense that it displays both its almost limitless possibilities and its shortcomings. The attempt to break away from Thompson’s heroic view of radicalism is an innovation. The acknowledgement of the potential of the Affair as a radical cause, especially the discussion of the power of the press and of public opinion ‘against the coterie politics of court and parliament’ (431) signals an important analytic breakthrough. Yet, Laqueur’s main argument that the

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<sup>8</sup> The reasons for maintaining the term ‘affair’ are twofold: firstly, the word ‘affair’ is widely accepted, therefore it is a useful term, and secondly, the word has a broad meaning, which is a quality.

radicals' use of sensationalism and triviality destroyed the political purpose of popular radicalism in the Affair is disappointing.

The promising discussion of 'the function of the trivial', that is, the discussion of how the 'thousand reverberations' and the 'folly and imposture' of a private divorce action became a great radical cause is frustrated by the conclusion that 'that cause was rendered harmless by being transformed into melodrama, farce and romance' (418). Laqueur argues that the radicals' interpretation and purpose in the Caroline agitations (a way of exposing 'Old Corruption' in order to bring about political change) was 'deluged by royalist melodrama and romance' (439).

Even though Laqueur admits that the public defence of Caroline and the celebrations at her acquittal constituted a massive, unprecedented political mobilization against the Government, the unreformed Parliament and the character of the King, he claims that the radical representation of the Affair as melodrama and romance led to its de-politicization. The people's imagination became irresistibly attracted towards the traditions, rituals and ceremony linked to the lives of royalty and, by comparison, the world view presented by the radical strategy appeared empty of meaning.

For Laqueur, the narrative of the radicals on the lawsuit against the Queen 'was overwhelmed by a more compelling, more culturally complex, and politically safe version of the story as domestic melodrama and royalist fantasy' (465). Caroline's cause thus became 'a work of art', disconnected from reality. Consequently, the trial of the Queen was theatre, domestic melodrama and, finally, carnival. This depoliticized the agitations by, for example, turning the Italian witnesses into the villains of the piece in the place of Old Corruption, the King and his Ministers (452-3).

Though Laqueur asserts that he does not mean to say that the politics of 1820 were 'linguistic' (465) in the sense that they were disconnected from the institutional and structural characteristics of English society, by seeing the Queen's case as a 'work of art', as 'text', the radicals' struggle as 'narrative', and politico-cultural change as 'language', he falls into the postmodernist trap of reductionism and abstractionism.

In spite of having left out other major forms of radical representation of the Affair – namely, journalism and satire – Laqueur's essay certainly raises some key issues, such as the discussion of the politico-cultural meaning of the demagogic and even populist elements present in radical propaganda. That was one of the questions discussed by Ian McCalman (1988), Tamara Hunt (2003), and Anne Clark (2004), as will be seen later.

1982 was a fertile year. Anne Hone publishes *For the Cause of Truth. Radicalism in London* and Craig Calhoun issues *The Question of Class Struggle: Social Foundations of Popular Radicalism during the Industrial Revolution*. Both works contain sections on the Queen Caroline affair. Anne Hone draws attention to the role played by ‘feminist feeling’ and organisation in 1819 in the provinces, and in 1820 in London, when mothers and wives rallied in support of the ‘most maligned and oppressed wife of all’ (Hone, 1982: 308). The focus is placed on radical activity and the radical press: ‘this scene of numerous meetings, enormous processions, and the drafting and presentation of addresses signed by thousands was matched by the activity of the press’ (312-3), including the radical press, with its periodicals, popular verse satires by William Hone, William Benbow, John Fairburn and Thomas Dolby. Mathew Wood, William Cobbett, Major Cartwright and John Thelwall are protagonists in the Queen’s cause, and it is therefore “a mistake to dismiss the Affair as merely the final, unfortunate, or amusing outburst of Georgian ‘coarseness’, before the onset of Victorian ‘refinement’” (307).

Despite the relevant questions raised, the final appraisal of the radical part in the Queen Caroline affair reflects the old criteria. Hone concludes that all the radical activity and the enormous popular response led nowhere. The radicals ‘gambled and lost’: despite the ‘period of strongly voiced public opinion and ministerial concessions to parliamentary reformers, the government survived’ (318). Although more analytic space is given to women’s participation and to the radical press, Hone resonates with Stevenson (1977), when she concludes that the Queen’s affair was an interim of unity in the usual divisiveness and dissension of popular radicalism, which returned as the popular response to the Queen’s cause waned.

In *The Question of Class Struggle*, Calhoun (1982) explores a view of popular radicalism as being both reaction and opposition to capitalism and the industrial revolution. It is a direct, though kind, refutation of Thompson’s heroic conception of radicalism in *The Making*. The part dedicated to the analysis of the radical support of Queen Caroline (105-15) confirms that critique. The championing of the Queen is considered proof of ‘the populist, restorationist, and non-class-analytic nature of their radicalism and their rebellion’ (110). For Calhoun, the Queen Caroline affair illustrates the ‘reactionary-radical ambivalence of the English social protest’ (108). Hence, the agitation in the Queen Caroline affair was both reactionary and radical.

The focus on the weight of traditional images of the family and on the power of the symbolism of monarchy lends a clear sociological character to Calhoun’s analysis. The

purpose is to discuss whether the defence of traditional family values, contained in the radical exploitation of the King's 'violation of the norms of good familial conduct' (107), was conservative. Calhoun argues that the defence of traditional family values, implicit in the criticism of the King's debauched life-style and ill-treatment of his wife, may lead to the view of the radicals' support of the Queen as conservative.

To reinforce this hypothesis, Calhoun asserts that the popular agitation was based on the struggle against the social and political changes attendant to the industrial revolution (hence the strength of the agitation in rural areas in the South, in detriment to industrial regions such as Southeast Lancashire). This argument, however, does not seem to sufficiently value the fundamental role played by London radicalism and its radical press, and the support of the Queen in industrial areas, such as Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham and Wakefield, to mention only a few<sup>9</sup>. In face of these facts, even Lord Sidmouth's assertion in a letter of 21 September to the King that in the country and in most manufacturing districts, reports 'are, upon the whole, favourable' (Aspinall, 1938: 368-9) should be addressed with caution.

Despite the controversial character of this view of popular radicalism, the argument that the demand for rights based on community values (such as traditional images of the family) may not be trivial or retrograde contributes to the understanding of the Queen Caroline affair. Calhoun contends that the defence of the Queen was 'an indication of the complexity and diverse rootedness of the community-based movements which preceded those founded on the category of class' (115). Although he decries the class-specific character of the radicals' goals and questions the sincerity of the radicals' defence of the Queen – a mere speculative exercise – he concludes that the events of 1820 were part of the path towards historical progress, due to the new role played by people in forming public opinion: 'the people were seen as a party, more than established parties' (115).

This idea is developed by Calhoun in an essay published the following year, significantly entitled 'The Radicalism of Tradition'. In this essay, Calhoun (1983) argues that 'conservative' pre-existing attachments to tradition and community may be crucial bases for rational participation in the most radical of mobilizations, that is, traditional values provide their radicalism. This view sheds light on the discussion of the alleged ideological ambiguity of early nineteenth-century English radicalism. More specifically, the claim that forms of popular culture may be loaded with political meaning directly

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<sup>9</sup> Addresses coming from industrial areas, such as Sheffield, Nottingham, Bristol, Halifax, besides London and Edinburgh were also signed by thousands of middle and working-class women (Colley, 1992: 265).



questions the supposed marginal and inconsequential character of the radicals' intervention in the Queen Caroline affair. In this sense, it is a significant contribution.

The promising discussion of how certain elements of popular culture may acquire political meaning underlies McCalman's (1988) interpretation of the radicals' strategy in the Queen Caroline affair. *Radical Underworld* is not a work on the Queen Caroline affair, but the first major work in which the ultra-radical press is protagonist. The focus on Spencean ultra-radicalism as the darker side of radicalism is pertinent, especially as it brings to the radical tradition the political and cultural activities of the ultra-radicals which surfaced during the Affair. The claim that 'humour, escapism, sex, profit, conviviality, entertainment and saturnalia should be admitted to the popular radical tradition, along with the sober, strenuous and heroic aspects which are more customarily described' (234) is an important contribution to the discussion of what is 'political'.

This work gains relevance for the understanding of the radical part in the Queen Caroline affair, especially the discussion of the accusations of triviality in the appropriation of the popular agitation for the Queen by radical journalists and satirists. McCalman admits that, at least in the long run, trivial events – among which we may count scandal and its inherently sensationalistic and populist exploitation – may influence cultural and even political attitudes and choices, due to the anti-establishment effects they may gradually embed<sup>10</sup>.

The propagandistic treatment of popular outbursts and scandals, such as the Queen Caroline affair, by the radical press, may have political significance by bringing sections of the population, usually indifferent or hostile to popular radicalism, within its influence. The strength of the loyalist counter-attack may be grounded precisely in the fear of the political consequences of less deferential and less quiescent attitudes towards power. In this sense, *Radical Underworld* is one of the most original interpretations of popular radicalism since Thompson's *The Making*, to which it directly relates.

There is, however, a considerable degree of ambiguity in McCalman's assessment of the radical appropriation of the Queen Caroline affair. On the one hand, there is some agreement with Laqueur in admitting that the populist strategy instigated by the radicals condemned them to 'capitulation and failure' (162). On the other hand, McCalman seems to admit that the political, anti-establishment effects produced by the populist propaganda

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<sup>10</sup> Laqueur's (1990: 821) review of McCalman's work acknowledges this vision of popular radicalism: 'McCalman poses an immensely important question [...]. Sex and scandal simply can no longer be relegated with a self-righteous sniff to the academic waste-basket'.

cannot be ignored or deemed negligible just because the politics of the Queen Caroline affair became entwined with those populist elements of popular romance and fantasy. He argues that Richard Carlile was not necessarily right when he blamed his fellow radical pressmen, in the *Republican*<sup>11</sup> of 29 December 1820, for the trivial forms their propaganda had taken (175).

This hypothesis constitutes McCalman's original contribution to the discussion of the ability of sensationalism and populism to undermine the attitudes of awe and deference which underlie the recognition of power *qua* power. That breach of deference is illustrated by the words of a prostitute to the soldiers at the Crown tavern in 1820: 'If you present arms, you shall not come to bed to me. I am for Caroline. I am a whore and if she has had a whore's stroke is there any reason she is not to be a Queen?' (176). McCalman also explains the extreme sensitivity of George IV to his own satirical depiction as the King's instinctive perception of the rebellious character of the parodic laughter that poured out of pamphlets and satirical prints every day.

Anne Clark's (1990) "Queen Caroline and the Sexual Politics of Popular Culture in London, 1820" reinterprets the controversy over the political meaning of the Affair. Clark argues that farce and melodrama have in reality politicized the Affair, by means of the creation by radical writers and caricaturists of a new popular-political language and, through the large audiences thus reached, of a radical mass movement. The focus on the complex intersections between politics, popular culture, and morality illuminates important aspects of the discussion of the meaning of the Queen Caroline affair.

Radicals exploited scandal because scandals offered the opportunity to expand on the relation of virtue to power in order to expose the politics of class and gender. Clark agrees with Laqueur that the most interesting aspect of the Affair is its representation by the radicals as melodrama and farce, but she disagrees that the use of these genres dragged the Affair down to the level of scandal and turned attention away from real political issues.

For Clark, the Queen Caroline affair was an opportunity for radicals to use the vitality of plebeian popular literature to create an 'overt political language' that made mobilization possible (51). This literature had two main genres: the melodramatic – which emphasised the image of the wronged Queen as an emblem of purity and victimization – and the satiric – which came from a rougher political tradition of republicanism, infidelism and sexual freedom (52). Though divergent but not contradictory tendencies within

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<sup>11</sup> Henceforth referred to as *R*.

plebeian culture, melodrama and satire linked the personal to the political, and both enabled the common people to undermine the moral hegemony of the upper class: ‘after years of the Vice Society, Cheap Repository Tracts and magistrates, the poor turned the tables and became moral arbiters of their betters’ (52). Clark concludes that by defending Caroline, the radicals were admitting that the rights of women and sexual morality were political issues.

These are important contributions although some arguments are weakened by generalisations and misinterpretations. For example, Clark’s assertion that radical satire celebrated the Queen as a lusty, defiant wife on both a personal and a political level, does not correspond to the tone of the bulk of the satirical production issued by the radical press on her behalf. On a personal level, the predominant tone is a mix of victimization and glorification, with only perhaps Richard Carlile justifying Caroline’s sentimental inclinations (never negatively interpreted as ‘lovers’), while simultaneously asserting the belief in her innocence. Most importantly, Caroline was not presented by the radicals as ‘Queen of misrule’ who legitimated the people’s defiance of the established order, or who defied conventional morality (57). She was presented as a strong woman whose courage and determination exposed a system of injustice in opposition to her husband, presented as a despotic, debauched King. Only in this way did the satiric mode, and the radical press as a whole, intensify anti-royal feeling and promote political change.

Fourteen years later, Clark (2004: 177-207) reviewed her interpretation of the Queen Caroline affair, focusing on its implications for the constitution – as seen by Tories, Whigs, and radicals – and on women’s place in society. Clark argues that by exposing a system of corruption and injustice, the Affair asserted the idea that images of royalty now depended on public opinion. The exercise of public opinion in addresses, publications, and meetings was considered by conservative doctrines a constitutional and class usurpation of the predominance of nobility. To meet that danger, conservatives were forced to rework the concepts of patriotism and loyalty, in order to celebrate the crown as the symbol of the throne rather than its occupant. Thus, radical criticism of the monarch may obliquely have strengthened monarchy. Clark believes that in the end the Affair may have affirmed popular royalism. Albeit a mild one, this is a refutation of Laqueur’s view of the Affair as a diversion from radical politics through its trivialisation by melodrama and romance.

In “Morality and Monarchy in the Queen Caroline Affair”, Tamara Hunt (1991) argues that morality, not politics, was the major theme of the Affair: the Queen Caroline affair had no significant political meaning and, in some respects, it was “the first wide-

spread popular expression of the moral standards that have come to be labelled ‘Victorian’” (698). Its relevance, therefore, can only be restricted to the cultural history of England. The popular agitation on behalf of the Queen certainly had ‘important political overtones’ having for a time united the radicals and the Whig opposition in the aftermath of the Peterloo violence and the passage of the *Six Acts*, but it was not essentially political.

Hunt argues that satirical prints and pamphlet satires did not represent the political-radical critique of the established power, but rather the public’s new demands for respectability as a social value. Thus, the focus on the immorality of the King in a large number of pro-Queen satirical prints is explained as a form of charivari – ‘a ceremony of mockery dating from medieval England’ (709) that mixed ideas about politics and morality – to symbolize the enforcement of morality. This argument claims that the satirical focus on the immorality of George IV during the Queen Caroline affair originated in ‘sentiments very far removed from party politics’ (703), that is, morality was disconnected from politics and the driving force of satiric laughter was not the denunciation of political corruption and abuse of power.

Resonating with Clark’s view that the Affair had ultimately intended to reform monarchy, not to overthrow it, and with Laqueur’s (1982) analysis of the conformist role of melodrama and romance, Hunt argues that the Affair was ironically rendered harmless by satiric representation, because the satirical prints that portrayed the witnesses against the Queen as disreputable, government-paid hirelings, signified the demand for the highest respectability from those witnesses. The King’s identification with Majocchi in Hone’s 1820 satire *Non mi Ricordo*, (the King also answers ‘non mi ricordo’ to questions that attack his character), implied that ‘the public took the unprecedented step of demanding the same respectability from the monarch himself’ (707).

Hunt further argues that the satires and satirical prints that denounced the King’s ill treatment of his wife (Hone and Cruikshank’s 1820 satire *The Queen’s Matrimonial Ladder*, for example) appealed greatly to women, who felt that the mistreatment of the Queen by her husband might be applied as a precedent by husbands to relieve themselves of their wives and families. The portrayal of the Queen as innocent, when there was strong indication to the contrary, is only apparently a paradox because it indirectly showed that the King should ‘exercise a different type of power: moral leadership’ (718) and embody the domestic virtues that the growing middle-class valued in a sovereign.

It was not the political institution of monarchy, but the monarch, who was in danger during the Queen’s affair. This idea is reasserted in the subsequent work *Defining John*

*Bull* (Hunt, 2003), where Hunt argues that in spite of the apparent defeat of the King and Government at the trial of the Queen, the King remained on his throne with his ministry intact, and the Whigs remained in opposition for another decade. The decision to drop the Bill of Pains and Penalties is considered a clever move since it ‘gave the public the feeling that it had won’ (286) when in substance nothing had changed. *Defining John Bull* also reinforced the assertion that radical support of the Queen could hardly be turned into a ‘popular political platform’.

This re-examination of the Queen Caroline affair reveals a conception of politics that overlooks the nature and significance of the radicals’ arguments in the crisis. As Fulcher (1995: 486, fn. 22) notes, although Hunt is right in stressing the importance of the moral dimension in the Queen Caroline affair, her view of politics as just party politics led to the misrepresentation of morality – and of politics in a broad sense – as the motor of the popular mobilization in support of the Queen. By not acknowledging the fact that there were no rigid divisions between morality and politics in the radical critique of the political system, Hunt bypasses the true force of the radicals’ arguments, which lay in their ability to denounce corruption ‘in a fertile and flexible way’, thus pointing to reform as the solution.

The first volume of Robert Patten’s bulky work, *George Cruikshank’s Life, Times and Art* briefly focuses on the contribution of George Cruikshank to the Queen Caroline affair (Patten, 1992: 169-85). The conclusion that the Affair left no lasting traces in the development of English politics and society presents no substantial novelty. The texts and satirical prints by Hone and Cruikshank on behalf of the Queen are considered ‘Queenite pasquinades’ (185) of brief popular impact. For Patten, George Cruikshank’s fluctuating political sympathies symbolise the ephemeral character of radical, satiric laughter. The same George Cruikshank, who produced probably the majority of the images on behalf of the Queen, also etched *The Royal Extinguisher, or the King of Brobdingnag & the Lilliputians* (BMC 14145), a satirical print of February 1821, where a flattering image of George IV puts out the light of the Queen and her ‘Jacobin friends’. A few weeks later, Queen Caroline would be forgotten, leaving no lasting traces in the development of English politics and society.

George Cruikshank’s changing political allegiances during the Queen Caroline affair are particularly discussed and assessed. They are seen as either the consequence of a pledge made to the King not to depict him in any immoral situation, or as an indication of a lack of ethical principles. To a certain extent, this discussion is secondary and doomed to

remain largely speculative. George Cruikshank and his brother Robert produced prints for both William Benbow (pro Caroline) and George Humphrey (pro George IV) in the month of June 1820. In that year, George Humphrey also published prints lampooning the King, and at least one verse satire *Horrida Bella, Pains and Penalties versus Truth and Justice* (BMC 13948-72) was printed by Benbow for him. Humphrey only started a campaign in earnest against the Queen from January 1821. Variable political loyalties were relatively common among graphic artists.

In the case of these artists, political ambivalence may be interpreted as the exercise of artistic freedom, as for example when George Cruikshank parodied *The Queen's Matrimonial Ladder* – which he had produced in partnership with William Hone – in the frontispiece of *The Radical Ladder*, the loyalist response. Another loyalist work by George Cruikshank in 1820, the satirical print *Coriolanus Addressing the Plebeians* (Fig. 6: 59) shows the author himself, depicted as one of a disoriented radical crowd. As Wood (1994) notes, the ultimate challenge for the artist was to parody himself and his own parody. Ambiguity might therefore mean that an artist was not a mere anonymous executant, but an author in his own right (Donald, 1996: 42-43). More prosaically, it might also mean that the artist needed to earn a living.

E. A. Smith's (1993) *A Queen on Trial The Affair of Queen Caroline* agrees with Patten (1992) as to the general assessment of the Queen Caroline affair: it was 'one of the best-known and most scandalous chapters in the history of the British throne' (xi) and 'one which might have brought the country to the verge of revolution' (187); its main quality lay in having demonstrated the strength and resilience of the basic fabric of the English society and institutions.

For Smith, the Queen Caroline affair left no lasting traces with respect to the development of popular radicalism. The agitation over the Great Reform Bill, eleven years later, 'brought out some of the same features of popular political activity, without building specifically on the experience of 1820' (187). Even though the popular agitation on the Queen's behalf 'marked the apogee of the success of the early nineteenth-century radical movement' (xi), it became evident that for the radicals, Caroline's value was only symbolic: Caroline was no real political asset for them.

The most remarkable aspect of this case was the opportunity it gave women to identify themselves with a political cause in spite of their inability 'to change the fundamental conditions of English life and society in the early nineteenth century' (187). Smith dedicates an entire chapter to this sudden burst of feminist activity, although he

stresses the temporary nature of the experience, ‘a memory of the past rather than a stimulus for the future’<sup>12</sup> (100).

The structure of Smith’s work is based on accounts of the different phases of the case by its protagonists – the King himself, the Queen and her supporters, Cabinet ministers, members of parliament, journalists, and caricaturists – and by mere observers of English society. These primary sources are both unpublished papers (*Broughton Papers*, *Cobbett Papers*, and *Francis Place Papers*) and printed works, and it constitutes the most original and valuable facet of Smith’s study. The short and useful introductory summaries at the beginning of each chapter are followed by a varied typology of primary source texts – letters, diary pages, official messages, newspaper articles, extracts of trial cross-examinations, etc. in which valuable information is provided about the immediate reactions of the society at large to the events of the case, abundantly poured out on a daily basis in the press.

There are, however, several aspects of the Affair that seem to be either insufficiently explored or even surprisingly absent in Smith’s general appreciation and choice of material. For example, the radicals’ decision to come forward as defenders of the Queen – a member of the hated aristocracy – is not interpreted. On the other hand, the choice of press cuttings hardly contemplates the periodicals of the radical press, arguably the most constant and important arena of radical appropriation of the Caroline affair. The treatment of printed material on the radical side is rather poor, namely the satirical prints and pamphlet satires published from the Queen’s arrival in England to her acquittal – there is no reference to Hone’s satires or to Cruikshank’s satirical prints, not to mention the squibs and the sensationalist posters and popular prints by the ultra-radicals William Benbow, Samuel Waddington, and others.

The work of the following authors on the Queen Caroline affair reflects the revisions in the understanding of Regency radicalism even more clearly than the analyses by Laqueur (1982), Clark (1990), or Hunt (1991). Although Laqueur, Clark, and Hunt go beyond traditional analytic perspectives and tackle those less considered aspects of popular radical culture, such as the exploitation of sensationalistic cases and even scandal in the media, their analyses do not tackle in sufficient depth the role played by the radical press and the new public opinion that expressed itself during the Queen Caroline affair. The

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<sup>12</sup> Smith refers to the radical movements of the mid-seventeenth century when there were Leveller women as well as men and to the demands for equal rights for women, awakened in the 1790s in a few women, such as Mary Wollstonecraft, influenced by the American and French Revolutions.

work of the following authors allows a richer insight into these issues – the role of the propaganda generated in the radical press in the aftermath of the Peterloo crisis and the impact of the passing of the *Six Acts*. The Queen Caroline affair thus appears as a good case study of the intersection of press and propaganda, gender, class, and politics.

The essay by Dror Wahrman (1993), “‘Middle-Class’ Domesticity Goes Public: Gender, Class, and Politics from Queen Caroline to Queen Victoria” is especially relevant in this way. Its main argument contends that the support of Queen Caroline did not originate in any sociologically defined notion of ‘middle-class’, as Davidson and Hall (1987) claim, but in the collective and ‘sound judgement’ of politically informed and intelligent men, that is, in public opinion recognized as the domain of the (male) public sphere that cut across (sociologically defined) class lines.

Wahrman claims that the rhetorical invocation of the term ‘middle-class’ during the Affair was not specific to and distinctive of any particular social class. Support of the Queen was spread widely, ranging from many of the landed classes to radical working classes, ‘and perhaps most important, to artisanal circles’ (402). The participation of the ‘middle class’ in this popular agitation was invoked and asserted as part of a male public opinion, as a political audience and partisan public. This, however, does not exclude the fact that the Affair brought to the political arena ‘issues of domestic life, matrimonial behaviour and sexual mores’ (407), but the notion of ‘middle class’ was only relevant to the ‘composition of public opinion’ and not to the discussion of domestic issues, or as ‘a source for an alternative mode of private/family behaviour’ (408).

The Queen’s cause came to be seen as the cause of the people as a whole, and their judgement was seen as the voice of ‘public opinion’ whose extraordinary and unprecedented power (seen in its invocation by politicians, pamphleteers, periodicals) is considered one of the most striking aspects of the Queen Caroline affair<sup>13</sup>. The criticism of aristocratic mores was not done in the name of a ‘middle class’ sense of ‘domestic happiness and matrimonial bliss’ (presented as a counter model to the dissolute life of the upper classes), but as the collective embodiment of a certain conception of ‘manliness’. This ‘public opinion’ represented ‘public’ (political) ‘intelligence’, ‘virtue’ and ‘integrity’ and was defined through the gendered differentiation of ‘public’ and ‘private’. It was thus

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<sup>13</sup> As Wahrman (1993: 404) notes, the recognition of the unparalleled political relevance of public opinion during the Queen Caroline affair does not deny the long history of the concept, or discuss its origin or genealogy. It rather discusses its uses and the power it displays at specific moments.



constructed as 'altogether male', and it was the main protagonist against aristocratic and ministerial corruption in the Queen Caroline affair.

Wahrman finds only one exception to this thesis, which is the presence of distinct women's voices in the public realm during the Queen Caroline affair. As Laqueur (1982) observes, Caroline became 'a woman's cause' (408). Wahrman, however, argues that while the women addressing the Queen were doing it as 'women *qua* women', they were also aware of the transgressing nature of their intervention, whereby they crossed the boundaries between the domestic and the public. These 'married ladies' did so 'overwhelmingly in their capacity as intelligent and responsible contributors to a male public opinion rather than in some putative capacity as the embodiment of a new moral code of domestic ideology' (409). That is, 'the transgressing married ladies' were still unsure of themselves.

Wahrman's argument that in the early nineteenth century the notion of 'middle class' referred to the values of an enlightened, male public/political opinion, rather than to the ethics of a sociologically determined class (the middle-class), has important consequences. Firstly, unlike Habermas (Burger and Lawrence, 1989), it recognizes the existence of a diverse (socially and politically) public sphere. Secondly, it points to the idea that the political criticism of the Government and of the King, contained in the popular agitation for Caroline, was not determined by the standards of any sociologically determined class, but it cut across class lines to include the radical audience and even women.

Much like Wahrman's, Louise Carter's (2008) essay "British Masculinities and the Queen Caroline Affair" focuses on public opinion as the realm of males in the public sphere. Carter takes the Queen Caroline affair as a case study of the way in which Georgian masculinities were represented in early nineteenth-century British society, and argues that support of the Queen and opposition to the King largely derived from shifting ideas about masculinity. The views of masculinity as selfish, arrogant and disrespectful of women (symbolised by George IV and his ministers) were giving way to ideas of honourable and chivalrous behaviour towards women.

George IV was thus out of tune with the general opinion of his subjects and in breach of Christian doctrine, which entrusted the husband with certain obligations towards his wife in return for her obedience. To love and protect one's wife was a husband's obligation, independent of one's personal inclination. Moreover, to disregard and aggrieve Caroline so publicly was seen to be even worse than private ill treatment.

These 'private' qualities were becoming increasingly pertinent to the evaluation of a man's worth, and even more so in the case of a King, whose ill use of his wife might encourage other men to ill use and abandon theirs, with potentially devastating effects on society. The King's behaviour as a husband was not simply a private matter, but an indication of a lack of adult character and manly responsibility. Worse, it had implications in the public perception of the King's ability to perform the office of king.

Although they are separated in time by more than ten years, Wahrman's and Carter's essays are interrelated, which justifies the infringement of the chronological sequence followed thus far in this survey. They are interrelated not only because of the obvious emphasis both place on the growing social and political weight of public opinion, but essentially through the way they focus on the role of women in the Queen Caroline affair. By pointing out the changes undergone in the perceptions of masculinity in early nineteenth-century British Society, Carter sheds light onto Wahrman's rationale of women's participation in the Affair – as participants in male ideology instead of questioners of it.

As the weaker part in the marriage contract, the best option for women lay in guaranteeing security in marriage and the respect of their husbands, both threatened by the legal initiative of George IV against his wife. Women were thus motivated to see in the Queen's woes a threat to their married condition and to publicly demand the protection of their rights. Yet, even though their demands may be considered conservative, the fact that they occupied the public realm reveals their capacity of independent action. That is why their feelings of insecurity can be said to have planted the seeds of change. These essays complement each other by showing that women's participation in the public sphere during the Caroline affair was forward-looking in spite of the conservative ideology of their discourse<sup>14</sup>.

Perhaps the most markedly textual/literary analysis of the Queen Caroline affair is Marcus Wood's (1994) *Radical Satire and Print Culture 1790-1822*. This work is the first study in which radical satiric print culture is earnestly considered. It discusses the cross fertilization between print and post-Waterloo radical culture in the context of the satiric production of William Hone as a whole, and this discussion represents a turning point in the approach to Regency radicalism. Inserted in Hone's satiric production, the Queen

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<sup>14</sup> Colley (1992: 262-81) had already argued that the spread of the doctrine of separate spheres could in practice defend the position of women. There was a type of 'unwritten contract' affecting all classes of women, through which they accepted a separation of spheres on condition that men maintained and respected them.

Caroline affair is considered, above all, a subject for the popular press, which found in it almost an endless source for satire, parody, and mock everything (advertisements, trials, etc.).

For Wood, the relevant task is the analysis of the way the Queen's case was politicised, and not the question of knowing whether the radicals really believed in the Queen's innocence when they took up her cause. The way Caroline was appropriated by the radical propaganda machine and used as a stick with which to beat the King and his ministers constitutes the relevant analysis. Hone's satires, for example, showed the Regent as a fat, overgrown child guided by his sensual appetites and a Cabinet of corrupt and hypocritical self-seekers (258). On the other hand, by being fused with the idea of the freedom of the press, and marketed as a heroine, the Queen became an emblem of the power of the press. As the Affair developed, the press was presented by the radicals as the only power capable of protecting her from her enemies, thereby tying the Queen firmly to the Reform cause.

Wood sees the trial of the Queen as a climactic moment for radical propaganda. Taking advantage of the government's 'fatal' decision to ground the prosecution on the testimony of Italian witnesses, the radicals explored the 'immense opportunities for trial parody', so easily offered by the government (150). The analysis of Hone's 1820 satire *Non Mi Ricordo* (150-4) reveals Hone's creative imagination (and Wood's interpretative proficiency), by focusing on the meaning conveyed by the ingenious, gradual fusion of the character of Majocchi<sup>15</sup> and the King, which the illustration by George Cruikshank highlights. The interpretation of the meaning of Majocchi's phrase 'non mi ricordo', as representing 'the linguistic anarchy of the lie' (152), stresses its satirical value in the sense that it subverts attempts by the legal discourse to control meaning and to force language to perform according to certain rules. Subversion of meaning becomes a powerful propaganda strategy.

Though focusing on the radical press, Wood also makes some quick incursions into loyalist propaganda in order to point out the obstacle that loyalist propaganda was unable to overcome: the fact that the satirical mode was not an appropriate vehicle for aggrandizement, or for a didactic message of reassurance. Wood argues that the loyalists were generally unable to reach the level of artistic skill and political effectiveness of the Hone-Cruikshank partnership, the exception being the pamphlets and satirical prints

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<sup>15</sup> Theodore Majocchi was the first (and most notorious) witness against the Queen.

illustrated by George Cruikshank for the loyalist camp, including those in which Hone himself is parodied, such as *Coriolanus Addressing the Plebeians*, and *The Radical Ladder*, the loyalist response to *The Queen's Matrimonial Ladder*<sup>16</sup>.

Yet, despite the recognition that in the six years after Waterloo the pamphlets by Hone and Cruikshank 'strengthened and unified the satiric methods of the radical press', Wood does not acknowledge their perennial meaning, and concludes with a pessimistic note:

The savage and violent energies of the gutter press no longer poured into satires attacking the government and monarchy but were absorbed by the expanding horror market which focused on sensational murders and sex crimes. [...] Cruikshank moved, as ever, with the times [...] Hone similarly moved towards the more balmy waters of the Victorian publishing mainstream [...] Hone and Cruikshank lost the essence of their former satiric being – the desire to glory and imaginatively exploit unrespectability (Wood, 1994: 270-1).

The novelty of Jonathan Fulcher's (1995) essay, "The Loyalist Response to the Queen Caroline Agitations<sup>17</sup>" lies in the examination of the Affair from the point of view of the loyalist agitation that erupted in the second phase. The purpose is to understand the successes and failures of the radicals in linking the Queen's case to the cause of reform. For that, Fulcher believes that it is necessary to shift the emphasis placed by previous discussions (Stevenson, 1977; Prothero, 1981; A. Hone, 1982; Laqueur, 1982; Calhoun, 1982; McCalman, 1988) on the effects of the agitation on reform and radical politics, and concentrate on other 'neglected contexts' (482).

This involves the analysis of the effects of the advocacy of the Queen's cause on the language of constitutionalism, and the question of how the Queen's cause lost popularity so quickly after the trial in November. It also involves the explanation of how the Queen's affair succeeded in mobilizing the hitherto unpoliticized groups of respectable yeomanry and country gentry, as well as many women. These are Fulcher's 'neglected contexts'.

Fulcher argues that by advocating the Queen's cause through the language of constitutionalism, that is, by attempting to defend monarchy in the person of the Queen, the radicals appropriated the core loyalist values of the monarchy – the basis of the loyalist countering of insurgent Regency radicalism. This appropriation also changed the course of the reform movement, by giving 'vital constitutional legitimacy' (483, 490) to the radicals'

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<sup>16</sup> Wood (1994: 253-9) analyses this satire in detail.

<sup>17</sup> As aforementioned (9), Fulcher prefers the term 'agitations' to 'affair'.

arguments in favour of reform. As Cobbett pointed out, the Queen's cause 'naturally aligns itself with that of the Radicals. They are *complainants*, and so is the Queen' (483).

This appropriation aroused the strongest reaction in the loyalist camp because it gave the radical arguments a legitimacy that was subversive of the existing political system. To meet these dangers, the loyalists attempted to rework their own concept of patriotism by using several tactics: aggressive assertions of allegiance to the 'status quo' (especially after December in the ultra-loyalist newspaper *John Bull*), which forced radicals to define (and re-define) their patriotism, attacks on the private character of the Queen, attacks on the wives of the aristocracy who visited her, on liberal Whigs, and, most importantly, an attack on what they considered an 'unholy alliance' between Whigs and radicals, arguing for example, that the Whigs who had entered that alliance could lose their estates (490).

Fulcher sees the reworking of the loyalist concept of patriotism as one of the causes of the efficacy of the loyalist response. This reworking accounts for 'perhaps the most significant loyal reaction in terms of the press and organization since the end of the Napoleonic Wars' (483, 490). On the other hand, the Affair involved women in public, political life, which was also subversive of traditional political norms. Loyalists therefore quickly understood that controlling female behaviour was important in winning the argument over the constitution, since the question of female, public-political activity was also a source of continuing discomfort, even for radicals (500). This loyalist reaction which has largely been ignored by historians 'is a major part of the political context' (486).

To the Queen's sudden loss of popularity certainly contributed the skilfulness with which the loyalist camp managed the question of the participation of women in public political activity. For Fulcher, some Loyalist pamphlets, such as John Wilson Croker's *A Letter from the King to his People, The Declaration of the People of England*, and the satire *The Royal House that Jack Built, or 1820* illustrate the connection between the Queen as subject and the Queen as wife, linking the Queen to all women, who must obey their husbands (487-8).

The most significant period of the loyalist response dates from the dropping of the Bill on 10 November 1820. Fulcher thinks that the decision not to proceed further with the Bill was 'a stroke of political genius on the government's part' because it 'took the sting out of radical agitation on her [the Queen's] behalf' (492-3). Though the initial radical reaction was of triumph – the dismissal of the case was hailed as an acquittal – the way in which the loyalist newspaper *John Bull* sought to undermine opposition by using satire and ridicule (the techniques formerly used by the radicals) was very influential. Men like

Weaver, Shackell, and Arrowsmith, cover editors for Theodore Hook, the ‘anonymous’ editor of *John Bull*, formed the nucleus of the new loyalist London publishers – ‘aggressively anti-radical, royalist, and prepared to tread the fine line between satire and slander in the fight against what they claimed to be sedition and blasphemy’.

Fulcher’s analysis sheds new light on the radical intervention in the Queen Caroline affair. By focusing on the loyalist response, what comes to the fore is the threat posed to the loyalist camp by the radicals’ trespassing on their hallowed ground and taking the unprecedented step of linking the cause of reform to the defence of a Queen.

Research on the Queen Caroline affair after the 1980s has dictated new analytic perspectives – the Affair as reflection of changing sexual moralities in Regency England (Hunt, 1991, 2003), the Affair and its implications on the Constitution (Fulcher, 1995, Clark, 2004), the Affair as a class and gender issue (Hone, 1982; Calhoun, 1982; Wahrman, 1993; Carter, 2008), the Affair in print culture, especially satire (Patten 1992; Wood, 1994), or the Affair as melodrama (Laqueur, 1982; McCalman, 1988). Previous approaches had stressed the failure of radicals to use it to revive the reform movement (Trevelyan, 1962 [1922]; Halévy, 1949 [1923]; Thompson; 1991 [1963]; Stevenson, 1977; Prothero, 1981 [1979]).

Although the analyses surveyed tend to deny the lasting influence of the public intervention of Regency radicals during the Queen Caroline affair, some recent research has recognized that the intense campaign led against the King and his Government introduced ‘public opinion’ as a new power in politics. It also constituted an opportunity for the radicals to intervene in the public debates of the day with their specific political language.

In this sense, it is surprising that the place where the new type of political language was most extensively and successfully exercised – the radical periodicals – be almost ignored by scholarly research on the Queen Caroline affair. Yet, the way political, literary and intellectual factors are linked in the radical periodicals offers promising opportunities for enquiry.

To fill that gap is one of the purposes of this study. In the face of the political, social, economic and cultural anxieties with which the beginning of the twenty-first century is confronted, re-visiting a culture that valued the rights – and the responsibilities – of citizenship can be stimulating.

## CHAPTER ONE

### The Queen Caroline Affair



Fig. 1 Anon., Her Most Gracious Majesty Caroline, Queen of England, 1820-1

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*I am what I seem. And I seem what I am.*

The Queen's Answer to the  
Address from the County of Middlesex

George III died on 29 January 1820. The Regent was finally King at the age of fifty-seven, but on the day following his father's death he fell seriously ill. John Croker, Secretary to the Admiralty, linked the illness of the new king to the discomfort at the prospect of his estranged wife becoming Queen. On 5 February, he wrote in his *Diary* that 'the King would be better but that his anxiety about the Queen agitates him terribly' (Jennings, 1885: 157).

It is consensual to admit that the major concern of George IV during his illness was to seek ways to divorce his wife, in order to disqualify her as Queen Consort. As early as 31 January, Princess Lieven, an acute observer of the English political life, perceived the potential for conflict over this issue and remarked in a letter to Metternich that 'the story of the Queen will be an odd one for Queen she is; she will have to be unqueened and only Parliament can do that' (Quennell, 1938: 8). The idea that his exiled wife had become Queen was so unbearable that on 12 February the King ordered Caroline's name to be withdrawn from the Liturgy, the first step towards depriving her of her legal title.

Despite the popular support enjoyed by the Queen during the Affair, the legal measures taken against her ultimately succeeded in preventing her presence at the coronation ceremony. At a more direct political level, they also contributed to quell the call for political change that had strengthened during the legal battle in the House of Lords. This outcome of the Affair seems to confirm Erskine's (2008) argument that the use of law as a political weapon by the King and Government – in this case the use of the legal mechanism of a Bill of Pains and Penalties – proved effective<sup>1</sup>. Although as Hunt (1991: 701) notes, the Government's decision to turn a private affair into a major political issue involved many risks, the fact is that George IV got his way and was crowned alone and an extremely unpopular Government remained in power. Whatever the judgement about her

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<sup>1</sup> Erskine (2008) argues that a similar mechanism was used by the U.S. Congress in 1998 against President Clinton, which resulted in a subsequent massive Republican electoral victory.

actions and character, Caroline was certainly the weaker part in this quarrel ever since she first set foot on English soil.

## From Marriage to Exile

Caroline Amelia Elizabeth of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel was born on 17 May 1768 the daughter of Karl Wilhelm Ferdinand, Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel (1735-1806) and Princess Augusta Frederika of Wales (1737-1813), sister to George III. Sir James Harris, Lord Malmesbury, the Whig politician and diplomat sent by George III in the autumn of 1794 to Brunswick-Wolfenbütte to ask for the hand of Caroline, was impressed by her warm feelings, great good humour, much good nature and personal courage, but he thought that she lacked tact (New, 1961: 79).



Fig. 2 *The First Interview of the Prince and Princess of Wales*<sup>2</sup>  
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<sup>2</sup> Anonymous print published by John Fairburn in 1795.

It is consensual that marriage presented itself to the Prince of Wales primarily as the solution to his pressing financial problems. That was the condition established by Parliament to pay off his debts and increase his income. The Prince of Wales was notorious for a life-style that had got him into financial problems since his father had provided him with an independent settlement at Carlton House on Pall Mall in 1783<sup>3</sup>. In 1795 these debts, some of which were gambling debts (Baker, 2005: 20), amounted to more than £600,000. However, between 1794 and 1795 the apparently easy solution of marriage became fraught with complications. On the one hand, Pitt's promised increase of £40,000 in the Prince's income on his marriage had met with unexpected difficulties getting through Parliament. On the other hand, the Prince was disappointed because his father had denied him the military rank of major-general to which he aspired.

Besides, the Prince might already have been a married man, as there were rumours that in 1785 he had, secretly and illegally, married Maria Fitzherbert (1756-1837), a Catholic widow. Six years older and twice widowed at twenty-eight, Maria Fitzherbert is described as a beautiful Catholic, stalked by the Prince despite her refusal to become his mistress<sup>4</sup>. When he threatened to commit suicide in 1785 unless he could marry her, he eventually succeeded in convincing her to marry him.

The alleged marriage ceremony took place on 15 December 1785 in Carlton House. Maria's uncle, Henry Errington, and her brother, John Smyte were the witnesses (Baker, 2005: 84-5). Being illegal, Fox denied the marriage in the House of Commons on 30 April 1787, and the Prince admitted it to no one – 'that absurd story of my supposed marriage', he said much later (Jennings, 1885: 93) – but they lived near to each other, as Mrs. Fitzherbert bought a house in St. James's Square, close to Carlton House<sup>5</sup>.

The realization of the marriage remained a matter of controversy for a long time. However, the publication in 1905 of a book by William Henry Wilkins, entitled *Mrs. Fitzherbert and George IV* (Wilkins, 1905) did much to settle the case, by presenting

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<sup>3</sup> Carlton House had been a royal residence in the middle of the eighteenth-century, when it was occupied by George III's widowed mother, the Princess Dowager of Wales. According to Smith (1999: 25), it needed restoration in 1783, but the Prince had grandiose ideas of making it a new Versailles.

<sup>4</sup> Papers referring to Mrs. Fitzherbert are held at the RA and RL at Windsor.

<sup>5</sup> According to Gatrell (2006: 56), Mrs. Fitzherbert lived at 105, Pall Mall. The Prince of Wales is reported to have said these words to Mrs. Fitzherbert, the morning after Fox had denied their marriage in the Commons: 'Only conceive, Maria, what Fox did yesterday. He went down to the House and denied that you and I were man and wife! Did you ever hear such a thing?' (Langdale, 1856: 30).

evidence which made the actual realization of the marriage ceremony very plausible<sup>6</sup>. It should be noted that Maria Fitzherbert never made use of the documents she possessed concerning their union, which might have greatly damaged the Prince, especially when he interrupted their relationship for the first time in 1794 to marry Caroline of Brunswick, later when he became Regent in 1812, and also in 1820 when Caroline was prosecuted for adultery.

The report of a dinner conversation with Lady Bury and Lady Oxford in 1810 shows that Caroline had long been aware of the circumstances that surrounded her marriage. In her usual bad English, she said: 'I,—you know, was the victim of a mammon; the Prince of Wales's debts must be paid, and poor little I's person was the pretence', and confessed: 'to tell you God's truth, [a favourite expression,] I always hated it'. On the same occasion, she alluded to the Prince's mistress Lady Jersey in these terms: 'the first moment I saw my *futur* [sic] and Lady J[erse]Y together, I knew how it all was', and added: 'I could be the slave of a man I love; but one I love not, and who did not love me – impossible' (Stewart, 1908: 14).

Caroline never voiced antagonism against Mrs. Fitzherbert. Lady Bury wrote in her diary for 1811 that 'The Princess of Wales speaks highly of Mrs. Fitzherbert. She always says, 'that is the Prince's true wife; she is an excellent woman; it is a great pity for him that he ever broke vid [sic] her'. (Stewart, 1908: 17). The reverse also seems to be true. Williamson (2002: 331) sees Mrs. Fitzherbert as a friend of Caroline's, although the justification is ambiguous<sup>7</sup>.

These circumstances were exploited in print. A work entitled *The Secret History of the Court of England from the Accession of George III to the Death of George IV* (Hamilton, 1832) contains a series of letters allegedly written in 1794 by the Prince of

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<sup>6</sup> The process went through vicissitudes. As Prime Minister and one of the executors of the will of George IV, the Duke of Wellington ordered the destruction of the Fitzherbert letters in 1833 (Aspinall, 1938: lvii) and repeatedly denied access to documents Mrs. Fitzherbert had placed in a safe at Coutts's Bank in 1833 that could prove the realization of the marriage (Wilkins, 1905: 67-73). The requests of access were made first by Lord Stourton, Mrs. Fitzherbert's cousin and trustee, who was to write her biography and afterwards by Charles Langdale, his brother. Even without documentary proof, Langdale (1856) published *Memoirs of Mrs. Fitzherbert; With an Account of her Marriage to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, Afterwards King George the Fourth* to 'prove' that the marriage had actually taken place and that Mrs. Fitzherbert was convinced of both its validity as a contract and as a sacrament. Finally, urged by relatives of Mrs. Fitzherbert, William Henry Wilkins managed to get the King's permission to inspect the Coutts's papers in 1905. He afterwards published *Mrs. Fitzherbert and George IV* to assert the fact of the marriage although the cutting of the names of the testimonies by Mrs. Fitzherbert weakens the evidence (Wilkins, 1905: 67-73). Besides the fact of the marriage, David (1998: 75-6) refers to written evidence suggesting that the Prince and Mrs. Fitzherbert had 'at least one child, and possibly two'. About George IV's children, see also Smith (1999: 289-92).

<sup>7</sup> Allegedly, Mrs. Fitzherbert went to Paris at the time of the trial of the Queen so as not to be called as a witness because she was incapable of perjury.

Wales, by George III, and by Caroline. In one of these letters, the Prince asks Caroline to refuse him. He states that he cannot love her because he is already married. In another letter, George III asks Caroline not to attend to the Prince's request, and in a third letter Caroline decides to marry the Prince in spite of this humiliation. Although these letters are certainly apocryphal<sup>8</sup>, the fact of their publication shows that the marriage of Caroline to the Prince of Wales was doomed even before it actually took place. James Gillray's vision of marriage bliss in *The Lover's Dream* (BMC 8610; BM-ID 1868,0808.6404), had already turned into a nightmare when the Prince of Wales married his first cousin from Germany on 8 April 1795<sup>9</sup>.

Unlike the contented atmosphere fictionalized in Figs. 2 and 3, both the first meeting and the marriage ceremony were disastrous and set the tone of their future relationship<sup>10</sup>. The adverse disposition of the Prince towards his bride persisted after marriage, and accusations of neglect were voiced publicly in conversation and in the press. Caroline began to receive tokens of public sympathy in articles in *The Times* and the *True Briton*, usually a pro-government paper (Smith, 1999: 75-7). Neglect of his wife became one of the main themes of the Caroline affair in 1820.

Mutual animosity was not mitigated by the birth of a daughter, Princess Charlotte, in January 1796<sup>11</sup>. In a letter of April of the same year, the Prince rejected the possibility of a life together, but at the same time admitted peaceful coexistence: 'our inclinations are not in our power, nor should either of us be held answerable to the other, because nature has not made us suitable to each other. Tranquil and comfortable society is, however, in our

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<sup>8</sup> When the book was published in 1832, authorship was attributed to Lady Anne Hamilton, one of the Princess's ladies-in-waiting until 1813, but she repudiated vehemently. An article in the *New York Times* of 7 May 1910, published in the 'Queries and Answers' section of the newspaper, clearly states that Hamilton is not the author of the book and asserts her indignation when it came out in 1832. See <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archivefree/pdf?res=F7071FFC3E5417738DDDAE0894DD405B808DF1D3> (accessed 12/04/2011). These letters (Hamilton, 1832: 107-8, 109, and 114-15) are reproduced in Appendix One. Lady Hamilton was a loyal friend of the Queen. When the Queen returned to England, she took up residence with her in Portman Street, Portman Square, London, and she accompanied the Queen's body to Brunswick for burial after her death in 1821.

<sup>9</sup> Gillray's print dates from 24 January 1795. It is thus prior to the arrival of Caroline in England. For a brief account of the marriage ceremony and the 'honeymoon' at Windsor and Kempshott, see Smith (1999:72-3).

<sup>10</sup> When the Prince was introduced to his future wife he is reported to have said these words to Lord Malmesbury, 'Harris, I am not well; pray get me a glass of brandy' and to have left the room (David, 1998: 2). As he walked up the aisle on the day of his marriage, Lord Melbourne wrote that 'the Prince was like a man doing a thing in desperation' and that 'he was quite drunk' (Fraser, 1996: 60).

<sup>11</sup> Two days after the birth of his daughter, the Prince of Wales wrote a long testament leaving all his personal property to his 'beloved & adored Maria Fitzherbert', while to Caroline, 'her who is call'd the Princess of Wales I leave one shilling' (Smith, 1993: 8). Fraser (1996: 76) notes that in spite of his professed devotion, the Prince left no personal property in that testament to his daughter.

power' (Aspinall, 1965: 169). In 1798, they separated unofficially and the Princess was allowed to take a house outside London, near Blackheath.

This tacit understanding worked for a time, but in the winter of 1805-06 Caroline was investigated for adultery, an action believed to have been promoted by her husband. Much has been speculated about the reasons of this change of disposition on the part of the Prince, but the fact is that the King approved a secret investigation into the allegations made by Sir John and Lady Douglas (formers friends of the Princess at Blackheath) that the Princess had given birth to a boy in 1803. A Committee of Cabinet ministers (Lords Erskine, Spencer, Grenville, and Ellenborough) of the 1806 Whig Government was appointed, who concluded that the allegations were false, though they added that the Princess's conduct in general 'must [...] give occasion to very unfavourable interpretations' (Smith, 1993: 8).



Fig. 3 *The Marriage Ceremony of the Prince and Princess of Wales*<sup>12</sup>  
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Perceval and Eldon, in the opposition, defended the Princess by writing a letter of protest showing the irregularities of the Whig commissioners and arguing that their

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<sup>12</sup> Anonymous print published by John Fairbairn in 1795.

conclusions were unjust<sup>13</sup>. Yet, when the Tories returned to power in 1807 Eldon, as Lord Chancellor, forbade the publication of the letter of defence of Caroline and the report exonerating her, while leaks of parts of the investigation were not so diligently prevented from circulating (Clark, 2004: 181). This episode became known as the ‘Delicate Investigation’, and it marked the beginning of a process that ended with the self-imposed exile of the Princess in 1814.

Several factors converged in the Princess’s decision to leave the country. Written testimonies suggest that Caroline was unhappy, lonely and demoralized. On 10 December 1810, she wrote a letter to Lady Charlotte Bury, her lady-in-waiting, in which she complained of her retired life: ‘there is nothing new here under the sun, since you left the metropolis and I lead literally the life of a recluse, for still public amusements are prohibited for the present’ (Stewart, 1908: 11). On another occasion, Lady Bury interpreted the communicative mood of the Princess as a sign of her loneliness: ‘Today the princess was in one of her most communicative humours. Poor thing! She was always looking about for someone to pour out her heart to and never found one’ (Stewart, 1908: 15).

In 1812-3, the Regent carried out a series of hostile actions, meant to counteract Caroline’s popularity. David (1998: 341-2) briefly describes them, and their failure: the Regent further restricted Charlotte’s visits to her mother (from once a week to once a fortnight), leaked the depositions of the Douglasses during the ‘Delicate Investigation’ of 1807 to the *Morning Herald* and the *Morning Post*, in the hope that public opinion would view Caroline as a debauched woman and an unfit mother<sup>14</sup>, and finally tried to change the opinion of some pro-Caroline newspapers, such as *The Star*, whose owner was offered £300 a year to turn against her, but which he refused. Brougham responded by publishing *The Book*<sup>15</sup>, and Caroline also published a letter to defend her reputation and to express concerns about Charlotte’s education as a future ruler.

Even so, she was demoralized. In a letter to Samuel Whitbread, a Whig MP, which Lady Charlotte Bury reported in her diary, it becomes clear how much Caroline was

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<sup>13</sup> Caroline alleged that the Commission was not a properly constituted legal body but an *ad hoc* arrangement. She argued that witnesses were not sworn, and therefore could not be charged with perjury, and that she could not defend herself against the insinuation of ‘levity’, or sue for defamation as could common London women (Clark, 2004: 180).

<sup>14</sup> In 1820, Caroline stated in a letter to the King that these limitations on the company of her daughter had contributed to the decision of leaving the country: ‘Bereft of the society of my child, or reduced to the necessity of embittering her life by struggles to preserve that society, I resolved on a temporary absence, in the hope that time might restore me to her in happier days’ (*R*, vol. iii: 618).

<sup>15</sup> It contained the material that Perceval, as the Princess’s lawyer, had collected and printed in 1806 to exonerate the Princess publicly (Williams, 1813). Cobbett (1821: 18) claimed that he, and not the Whigs, had been responsible for the publication of *The Book* in 1813. See Chapter Three (121).

affected by her husband's hostility: 'persecuted as she is, life is a burden to her; [she wrote] that her stay in this country does no person any good, and that it is worse than death to herself [...] and ends by declaring her unalterable resolution to quit the country' (Stewart, 1908: 220). She also felt that she was voted to official ostracism<sup>16</sup> and that the sick King was unable to protect her.

All these events triggered attention from the public, the popular press and the radicals. Poems, ballads, and satirical prints were issued that favoured Caroline and mocked the Regent. Cobbett supported Caroline in his *Political Register*<sup>17</sup> and the City of London presented her with an Address (Clark, 2004: 182). The Princess had always enjoyed popular favour (Fraser, 1996: 87) and now she was more popular than ever, in striking contrast to her husband. Creevey, no longer an admirer of the Regent, wrote in a letter of 14 June 1814 to Mrs. Creevey: 'If he is caught alone, nothing can equal the execrations of the people who recognize him. She, the Princess, on the contrary, carries everything before her' (Maxwell, 1904: 196-7).

The popular support did not deter Caroline from leaving the country. Henry Brougham<sup>18</sup>, who had entered the Princess's circle at Blackheath in 1809, disapproved, but she was determined. As the events of 1820 would confirm, the decision to leave England was fraught with dangers. With extraordinary precision, Lady Bury anticipated dire consequences:

And then the Princess will go abroad, run into all sorts of foolish scrapes, and be forgotten at best – worse will it be for her if things are there proved, which may be brought to this country, and her whole money, hopes, and happiness, taken from her for ever. I tremble for her, poor woman, but see no daylight (Stewart, 1908: 205).

She also doubted the real benefits of popular favour:

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<sup>16</sup> When the overthrow of Napoleon was celebrated with the visit of the allied Princes to England in June 1814, the Regent issued orders barring his wife from all social functions associated with the visit. This treatment 'plunged the Princess of Wales into a fit of melancholy in which for once her spirit was broken' (New, 1961: 103). In a letter dated 10 April 1814 to Thomas Sheridan, Samuel Whitbread, MP, exclaims: 'If the Regent had but one true friend to tell him that he has only two things to do at home to complete the Happiness and Splendor of this Epoch!' (Maxwell, 1904: 191). One of them was the rehabilitation of the Princess of Wales.

<sup>17</sup> Henceforth cited as *PR*.

<sup>18</sup> Henry Peter Brougham (1778-1868), later Baron Brougham and Vaux, was a lawyer and Whig Member of Parliament. A man of varied interests, he was Parliamentary reformer, slave abolitioner, educationalist (founder of the London University College, where his Papers are held), and man of letters. Together with other lawyers and members of the Edinburgh University he founded the *Edinburgh Review*, which in Trevelyan's words (1962: 186) 'played an indispensable part in preparing the mind of the coming age'. Samuel Bamford's account of the first time he saw Brougham (delivering a speech in the House of Commons) stresses the controversial character of Brougham's career as a politician (Dunckley, 1905: 29).



I hear that all ranks, except merely those who bask in the sunshine of the Regent's favour, have expressed themselves warmly for the Princess; and that the Prince cannot move out without hisses and groans. [...] But what good will it do her? None, I fear (Stewart, 1908: 205).

Lady Bury also thought that the Princess of Wales was not acting wisely towards her daughter. Princess Charlotte is generally depicted as an independent, high-spirited girl. She is reported to have said, referring to her parents: 'my mother was wicked, but she would not have turned so wicked had not my father been much more wicked still' (Stewart, 1908: xii). Lady Bury thought that Charlotte was her only hope of future comfort or support, though Caroline had reason to doubt the sincerity of her daughter's feelings towards her:

I conclude Princess Charlotte is desperately angry. She has often behaved ill to her mother, it is true; and the latter is too quick-sighted not to be perfectly aware that she does not care three straws for her: but still, at present, the young Princess is following a good policy, the elder as bad a one (Stewart, 1908: 226-7).

Caroline decided to accept the Government's offer of £35,000 a year and left England on 8 August 1814<sup>19</sup>. The Queen Caroline affair in 1820 partly revived the 'Delicate Investigation' and the events that led to the exile of the Princess. Radical publications that had been issued between 1811 and 1814 were republished in 1820 and incorporated in the mass of publishing that analysed and discussed, but also romanticised<sup>20</sup>, the plight of Queen Caroline. Cobbett wrote several articles in the *PR* in 1820 analysing the process of the 'Delicate Investigation' and linking it directly to the Queen Caroline affair<sup>21</sup>. The untitled print by Richard Austin (*BMC* 14021) about the Princess's departure, issued in 1820, is another illustration of the link between the events of 1806-14 and the Affair of 1820.

However, no matter the affinities between the two events, the events of 1820 revealed an even more vulnerable Caroline, who was now left alone in the world after the deaths of her father in 1806, his brother Frederick William in 1815, her daughter in 1817, and George III in 1820. The 'Address of the Female Inhabitants of Nottingham' summed up her vulnerability:

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<sup>19</sup> In 'An Answer to the Speech of the Attorney-General against Her Majesty the Queen' (*PR*, vol. xxxvii: 386-424) William Cobbett gives a detailed list of the places, cities, and countries that Caroline visited until August 1817 (386-8). Caroline's own narrative of her travels is in the 'Queen Caroline Papers' at the Royal Archives at Windsor (RA 13/7), and also in Fraser (1996: 263-87).

<sup>20</sup> See Chapter Three (90) for a few examples of these republications in 1820.

<sup>21</sup> The article 'To the Clergy of the Church of England' (*PR*, vol. xxxvii: 353-84), published on 26 August 1820 during the enquiry in the House of Lords, is one example. Cobbett played a major role as a supporter of the Queen during the Affair together with his daughter, Anne Cobbett.

Your father is no more – your brother fell in battle – the chief solace of your cares, your amiable daughter, was soon, too soon snatched away! – and your great protector, our late venerable monarch, soon followed her (*PR*, vol. xxxvii: 189).

## From the ‘Milan Commission’ to the Return of the Queen

Caroline’s departure was good news for the Regent. Especially after Charlotte’s death in 1817, of which she was not officially informed, (neither of her marriage in 1816), the Regent was encouraged to take positive action, since there was no risk of his daughter’s opposition to divorce<sup>22</sup>. Thus, in 1818, the Regent renewed his pressure on the Government to proceed against the Princess. He was particularly encouraged by reports from diplomats in Hanover,<sup>23</sup> and by his advisors Sir William Knighton, Sir Benjamin Bloomfield, Mr. Frederick Watson, and Sir John Leach, Vice- Chancellor.

Though continuing to be reluctant to proceedings of any nature against the Princess of Wales, the Government agreed to the scheme proposed by Leach<sup>24</sup> of forming a commission to be sent to Milan to gather testimony on the Princess of Wales’s conduct, namely on the alleged intimate relations with a former Italian servant, Bartholomew Bergami. The Government also agreed to pay the respective costs on condition that ‘whatever might be the nature of the evidence obtained, however decisive as to criminality, the question of the expediency of any proceedings must always be considered as an open question’ (Aspinall, 1938: 252, fn. 1).

Three men were appointed: William Cooke, of Lincoln’s Inn, Major Thomas Henry Browne, an Italian-speaking officer, and John Allan Powell, a solicitor, also of Lincoln’s Inn (Aspinall, 1938: 252). Milan, the Italian city where they were sent in the summer of

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<sup>22</sup> Referring to his daughter’s death, the Regent wrote to Eldon in January 1818 that ‘much difficulty [to proceed against Caroline] in point of delicacy had been set aside’ (Smith, 1999: 176). In his memoirs, Brougham also considered the death of Princess Charlotte the main reason for the appointment the Milan Commission: ‘When she no longer remained to take her mother’s part, the Commission was sent to Milan’ (Smith, 1993: 12).

<sup>23</sup> Under instructions from the Regent, who in 1815 had ‘moved definitely toward a divorce’ (New, 1961: 117), the Hanoverian Minister, Count Münster sent Baron Friedrich Ompteda, the Prince’s Hanoverian envoy to the Vatican, to Italy to report about the conduct of the Princess of Wales ‘with the greatest prudence and discretion’. Initially he stated that the Princess’s conduct was ‘exempt from any reproach, if remarkable for extravagance’, but in 1815 during her stay in Naples, he reported: ‘she is the talk of the Court and town [...] her unguarded conduct, especially towards men, exposes her to scandalous suspicions [...] in a town where chastity has never had much of a ministry’ (Fraser, 1996: 262, 268).

<sup>24</sup> It was Leach, the Vice-Chancellor of England and Chancellor of the Duchy of Cornwall, who initially proposed to send a commission to Milan (Aspinall, 1938: 252, fn 1). Also according to Halévy (1949: 88), Leach, together with Knighton, the King’s doctor, advised the King not to accept any compromise. Leach was, therefore, greatly satirized during the Affair. In *The Political Showman – at Home!*, of April 1821 (Hone, 1971: 269-97), considered by Rickword (1971: 317) ‘the most philosophic of Hone’s pieces’, Sir John Leach is *A Crocodile*: ‘he sometimes utters a piteous whine of distress – almost human; he sheds tears, and, attracting the unwary, suddenly darts upon a man and gorges him with all he has’ (Hone, 1971: 277).

1818, lent its name to this commission. The Milan Commission started taking down the testimony of numerous servants (in menial positions), sailors, innkeepers, gamekeepers, fishermen, postilions and gardeners, who seemed to agree as to the Princess's improper conduct. Most authors concur that the work of the Milan Commission lacked rigour and accuracy, as the Italian witnesses were not sworn in before testifying, their testimony was given at Browne's lodgings in Milan, and it was paid for (Smith, 1999: 177). Hibbert (1976: 534), however, believes that the accusations of 'wholesale bribery' directed against the Milan Commission were unjustified.

In November 1818, the Milan Commission believed that there was 'no doubt of everything being completely proved'. On 13 July 1819, William Cooke presented the conclusions and asserted that after hearing a total of eighty-five persons 'we should give credit to the truth of what they have said', and concluded: 'We are under the necessity, therefore, of humbly stating that in our opinion this great body of evidence established the fact of a continued adulterous intercourse' (Hibbert, 1976: 534).

The conclusions of the Milan Commission together with the trip of James Brougham to Italy in the spring of 1819 initiated a process that only ended with the return of the Queen to England in June of the following year. During that period, complex negotiations took place involving Henry Brougham on the side of the Princess, Lord Hutchinson, the Prime Minister's representative and personal friend of the Regent<sup>25</sup>, and Lord Liverpool himself.

The process was started by a letter from James Brougham to his brother Henry, the Princess's advisor. James had been sent to Italy by his brother to make an evaluation of the Princess's financial situation and to report on the state of her domestic arrangements and intentions for the future (David, 1998: 385), but in his last letter (dated 'after 11 March 1819') he referred to the relationship between the Princess and Bergami as 'most irregular': 'In fact, they are to all appearances man and wife never was anything so obvious' (Aspinall, 1938: 281).

This fact led him to propose a separation<sup>26</sup> involving some kind of settlement that would avoid a public enquiry into her conduct. He thought an agreement would be the best

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<sup>25</sup> Croker describes a favourable portrait of Lord Hutchinson in his *Diary*, only regretting the Whig sympathies: 'The king could not have an honest or more judicious friend. It is a pity that he is so deeply committed with the Whigs, for he is in truth a very moderate man in politics, and a very good kind of man in every other respect' (Jennings, 1885: 173).

<sup>26</sup> When James Brougham refers to a 'separation', he means Parliamentary separation or divorce: 'I should propose that she write a letter to the Prince stating her reasons for wishing a divorce or Parliamentary separation' (Aspinall, 1938: 283).

option for her, and should be done the sooner the better ‘before she loses more character, or in fact before England knows more of ye matter’ (Aspinall, 1938: 283). He was convinced that the Princess would agree to a divorce on terms. She had told him that she had no intention of returning to England or any ambition to be Queen ‘and never had’ (Aspinall, 1938: 280).

This is in agreement with previous statements by the Princess. In 1810, Lady Bury wrote in her journal that at a dinner conversation the Princess denied any desire to be Queen: ‘I never wish to be Queen; [...] ‘the Queen’s mother is enough for me.’ (Stewart, 1908: 15). After her daughter’s death in 1817, Caroline reaffirmed her determination not to return to England ‘under any consideration’ (Fraser, 1996: 299).

Consequently, in a letter dated 14 June 1819, Henry Brougham presented a formal proposal to Lord Hutchinson on behalf of the Princess (but without her knowledge). He suggested that the Princess would accept a separation ratified by an Act of Parliament, in which she would receive her present annuity for life on condition that she would reside permanently abroad and never assume the title of Queen of England, taking some other title approved by the Regent after his coronation, such as Duchess of Cornwall (Smith, 1993: 13). Brougham’s omission of this information to the Princess has been the object of much unfavourable speculation<sup>27</sup>.

Fearing popular reaction in those turbulent times, the Government was anxious to avoid direct procedures against the Princess of Wales and therefore agreed to the settlement proposed by Brougham, if coming from the Princess’s initiative. The Regent, however, confident in the conclusions of the Milan Commission, wanted a divorce or, at least, a divorce ‘by arrangement’. The Government disagreed, and in a Cabinet minute of 17 June 1819 stated that a divorce could never be obtained by arrangement but only ‘upon proof of adultery [...] substantiated by evidence before some tribunal in this country’ which, however, in those troubled times, the Government considered ‘a serious hazard to the interests and peace of the kingdom’ (David, 1998: 387).

A few days later, on 24 July, in another Cabinet Minute the Government questioned the credibility of the testimony of the witnesses appointed by the Milan Commission. Lord

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<sup>27</sup> Brougham’s behaviour is generally viewed as the result of an ambitious and unprincipled character. Fraser (1996: 323-6) sees him as ‘a man of no fixed principles’ who began by defending the Princess’s interests but who, due to his aspirations to the office of Lord Chancellor and even Prime Minister played a double game after 1819, in which the defence of Caroline’s interests was merely an instrument to foster his own. The radical periodicals used very strong language to describe his conduct in this phase and even during the Affair. Carlile wrote in the *R*: ‘Mr Brougham is a man of unbounded talent, we wish we could add the word *honesty* to it’ (vol. iv: 223).

Liverpool questioned the way in which ‘this testimony has unavoidably been obtained’, therefore advising the Regent not to ‘institute any legal proceeding upon such evidence’ (Fraser, 1996: 324). Even though the wish of the King to prosecute his wife collided with the reticence of the Government, the latter ultimately consented to take all the steps that led to the events of the summer of 1820.

The first step was the decision to omit Caroline’s name from the prayer for the King and the Royal Family, made on 12 February 1820, a fortnight after the death of George III. It constituted the first, and perhaps the decisive, factor in changing her former disposition not to return to England. No precedent could be found to support the decision, and the Archbishop of Canterbury opposed it, as well as some members of the Cabinet (Reeve, 1899: 25-6), but the King was very sanguine about it. As Croker observed, he was aware of the symbolic meaning of the act: ‘If she is to be prayed for, it will be, in fact, a final settlement of all questions in her favour [...] and if we are to pray for her in Church we may surely bow to her at Court’ (Jennings, 1885: 159).

The Queen’s exasperation echoed in the press, including the provincial press. In the *Liverpool Mercury*<sup>28</sup> of 23 June, the omission of Caroline’s name in the liturgy was ‘the first and most alarming wrong her Majesty suffered of late years’. The Queen was also greatly displeased at the way diplomats of foreign courts treated her<sup>29</sup>. In a letter to Lord Liverpool from Rome, dated 16 March 1820, published in the *LM* of 7 July 1820, she indirectly communicated the change of plans:

The Queen wishes to be informed through the medium of Lord Liverpool, first Minister to the King, for what reason or motive the Queen’s name is left out of the General Prayers in England, with a view to prevent all her subjects from paying her such respect as it is due to her. [...] The Queen trusts, before she arrives in England, these matters will be corrected [...] (*LM*, vol. x).

The Queen’s threat to return to England panicked Government and Parliament. The Government in particular was aware of the potential for social unrest posed by the eventual

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<sup>28</sup> Hereafter cited as (*LM*). The Affair was also followed and commented on by the provincial press, hence the occasional incursions into some of its organs, namely the *LM*. The *LM* started in 1811 as a weekly newspaper, but in 1858 became a daily newspaper. It cost 7 pence, and was guided by reformist and liberal principles. Its editor, John Smith, was one of the reporters present and imprisoned at Manchester on 16 August 1819 (‘Peterloo’). In 1904, the *LM* merged with *The Liverpool Daily Post*, which dictated its end. <http://newspapers.bl.uk/blcs/LiverpoolMercury.htm> (accessed 16/04/2011).

<sup>29</sup> Caroline was infuriated when Cardinal Consalvi did not recognize her right to the title of Queen during her visit to Rome in February because he had not been officially informed (Fraser, 1996: 344).

return of the Queen. Lord Liverpool called Brougham, the Queen's lawyer<sup>30</sup>, to tell him that the Government had decided not to proceed against Caroline unless she returned to England, and to reassure that the provisions of July 1819 were still valid. The Government drafted a *Memorandum*, dated 15 April 1820, similar to the 1819 proposal but with a higher financial offer of £50,000 a year, published in the *LM* of 23 June 1820:

The King is willing to recommend to Parliament to enable his Majesty to settle an annuity of £50,000 upon the Queen, to be enjoyed by her during her natural life [...] provided she will engage not to come into any part of the British dominions, and provided she engages to take some other name or title than that of Queen; and not to exercise any of the rights or privileges of Queen (*LM*, vol. ix).

The displeasure of the King at the Government's attempt at compromise was interpreted by Croker in these terms: 'the Cabinet offer all but a divorce; the King will have a divorce or nothing' (Jennings, 1885: 160). Besides the King's antagonism, the Government, met yet with another obstacle – Brougham's actions. Brougham hesitated and assumed attitudes which generally point to unreliable or, at least, inconsistent behaviour (Fraser, 1996: 352-3; Hibbert, 1976: 548; New, 1961: 235). He never informed the Queen of the arrangements of 15 April proposed by the Government. She never saw the *Memorandum* until she arrived in London (*LM*, vol. ix, 23 June 1820).

At the end of May, the Cabinet was still confident in Brougham's ability to stop Caroline from returning to England<sup>31</sup>, although there was already general excitement at the prospect of the Queen's arrival. By this time, Caroline relied mainly on Alderman Matthew Wood, MP for the City of London and one of its radical leaders<sup>32</sup>. Wood had campaigned on Caroline's behalf in 1813 and was about to become one of her strongest supporters in the upcoming struggle. He had left for the Continent in May, and accompanied the Queen on her journey back to England.

Notwithstanding the doubts as to Caroline's private conduct during her stay on the Continent, her decision to return to England, against the advice of her legal counsel and knowing the odds involved in a decision that she could have comfortably avoided making,

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<sup>30</sup> In a letter to his step-daughter, Miss Ord, dated 30 January 1820, Creevey wrote: 'I did not tell you the other day, he [Brougham] has now in his possession the proper instrument signed by herself, appointing him her Attorney General' (Maxwell, 1904: 296-7).

<sup>31</sup> What followed can only be described as confusing, with Brougham and Lord Hutchinson arriving at St. Omer on 3 June, but being unable to deter the Queen from returning to England. Brougham's double role as the Queen's advisor and the Government's representative may explain Caroline's refusal of the Government's offer. For details, see Smith (1993: 20-1), Hibbert (1976: 550-1), and Fraser (1996: 358).

<sup>32</sup> Matthew Wood (1768-1843) was Alderman in 1809, Sheriff of London and Middlesex in 1810, Lord Mayor 1815-16 and 1816-17, and Whig MP for the City of London from 1812 to his death.

was courageous. Even Lord Eldon acknowledged her courage: ‘Our Queen threatens approach to England. But if she can venture, she is the most courageous lady I ever heard of. The mischief, if she does come, will be infinite’ (Fraser, 1996: 351).

The Queen arrived with Wood at Dover on June 5 on the ordinary ship, since her demand to Lord Liverpool of a royal yacht to take her across the Channel had been ignored<sup>33</sup>. All the way to London the Queen was saluted by loud and continued cheering. When she arrived in London on the following day, the enthusiasm of the crowd was great. Reports by prominent people (Charles Greville, Thomas Grenville, Lady Jerningham, Lord Grey) concurred that the Queen was enthusiastically greeted and that passers-by shouted ‘Long Live the Queen!’ Greville wrote in his *Memoirs*:

The Queen arrived in London yesterday at seven o'clock. I rode as far as Greenwich to meet her. The road was thronged with an immense multitude the whole way from Westminster Bridge to Greenwich. Carriages, carts, and horsemen followed, preceded, and surrounded her coach the whole way. She was everywhere received with the greatest enthusiasm. Women waved pocket handkerchiefs, and men shouted wherever she passed. She travelled in an open landau, Alderman Wood sitting by her side and Lady Ann Hamilton and another woman opposite. [...] The Queen looked exactly as she did before she left England, and seemed neither dispirited nor dismayed (Reeve, 1899: 28-9).

In front of Alderman Wood’s house in South Audley Street, Mayfair, where the Queen was to stay, the mob gathered demanding illuminations in her honour. Lord Sidmouth was unable to enter his house on 6 June on going home from the Cabinet, and the mob broke the windows of the Duke of Wellington’s carriage, Croker reported (Jennings, 1885: 174). Lady Hertford’s house was assaulted and her windows broken<sup>34</sup>. Even the otherwise circumspect *The Times* vehemently supported the Queen.

### **The ‘Secret Committee’ and the ‘Bill of Pains and Penalties’**

Now that the Queen had returned, steps were immediately taken to prosecute her. On 6 June, the day after the Queen’s arrival, the King sent the following message to the House

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<sup>33</sup> Sir Robert Wilson, MP, stated in the House of Commons that the Queen had been forced ‘to sail in a common passage boat’ and that, once in London, she had had to take shelter in the house of an honest citizen (Fraser, 1996: 370).

<sup>34</sup> Carlile repudiated the breaking of windows in default of illumination (*R*, vol. iii: 260).

of Lords, which was read by Lord Liverpool (*HPD*, vol. 1: 870)<sup>35</sup>. It was published in many newspapers, including some of the provincial press such as the *LM* of 9 June 1820:

The King thinks it necessary, in consequence of the arrival of the Queen, to communicate to the House of Lords certain papers respecting the conduct of her Majesty, since her departure from this country, which he recommends to the particular and earnest attention of the House. The King felt an anxious desire to prevent all disclosures and discussions which must necessarily prove painful to his feelings, but the step adopted by the Queen leaves him no alternative. The King has the fullest confidence that the House of Lords will adopt that course of proceeding which becomes the justice of the case, and is due to the honour and dignity of the crown (*LM*, vol. ix.).

It was accompanied by a sealed bag (the notorious ‘Green Bag’<sup>36</sup>) containing the papers referred to in the King’s message. Lord Liverpool declared that on the following day he would move for the approval by the House of Lords to the appointment of a *Secret Committee* to examine the papers in the bag (which contained the ‘evidence’ gathered by the Milan Commission) and to ‘suggest the mode which might be proper to pursue’ (*LM*, vol. ix, 9 June). A similar message was delivered in the House of Commons.

The Queen reacted, sending a message to the House of Commons in which she expressed surprise at the creation of a secret committee to examine documents. She demanded an open investigation and protested against the formation of a secret tribunal (*R*, vol. iii: 258). In his *Journal* entry of 23 June, Lord Greville referred to the confusion established in both houses of Parliament, with the House of Commons showing ‘repugnance to enter such an investigation’ and the House of Lords cutting a ridiculous figure for having gone into the *Committee* (Reeve, 1899: 32).

In effect, there was some ground for ridicule. *The Committee of Secrecy of the House of Lords* was appointed on 7 June (*HPD*, vol. 1: 886-902), but it began examining the papers in the ‘Green Bag’ only on 27 June. This delay was much derided in the radical press and used as an opportunity for the expression of adverse opinion, even in loyalist circles. Croker thought ‘the ministers wrong, that is, injudicious in proposing a Secret Committee’ (Jennings, 1885: 174).

Outside Parliament, several voices expressed apprehension for the consequences of the proceedings against the Queen. In a letter of June to Miss Berry, Lady Charlotte

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<sup>35</sup> *The Parliamentary Debates from the Year 1803 to the Present Time*, commonly known as *Hansard’s Parliamentary Debates* (*HPD*). It follows up Cobbett’s *Parliamentary History of England*.

<sup>36</sup> The ‘Green Bag’ was actually two green barristers’ brief bags, one for the House of Lords and the other for the House of Commons (Baker, 2005: 160).



Lindsay, daughter of Lord North, the Prime Minister, and one of the Princess of Wales's Ladies of the Bedchamber until 1817, hoped for a stop of the measures against the Queen for fear 'that the further they go, the deeper they will sink in the mire', (Smith, 1993: 44-8). The press as a whole (radical, provincial, and national) published the documents relating to the Affair, and it was becoming clear that the majority of the press was siding with the Queen against the King and his ministers.

Unable to try Bergami for high treason, since he was not a British subject, and anxious about the political consequences of proceeding against the Queen, the House of Commons used the period of indecision in the Lords to make two final attempts to obtain a settlement, instead of a parliamentary enquiry. They were both rejected by the Queen, the second one in these terms:

[...] As a subject of the state, I shall bow with deference, and, if possible, without a murmur, to every act of the Sovereign authority. But, as an ACCUSED AND INJURED QUEEN, I owe it to the KING, to myself, and to all my fellow-subjects, not to consent to the sacrifice of any essential privilege, or withdraw any appeal to those principles of public justice, which are alike the safeguard of the highest and the humblest individual (*LM*, vol. ix, 30 June 1820).

However, after making the decision of examining the papers in the 'Green Bag' on 27 June, the Secret Committee, which included the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chancellor, fifteen peers and several members of the Cabinet, speedily concluded in a report of 4 July that the allegations of 'the most licentious conduct' of the Queen were serious enough to require 'a solemn enquiry' (*HPD*, vol. 2: 167).

This conclusion was reported to Parliament on the following day, 5 July, and no matter how Parliament and Cabinet were aware of the difficult situation they were faced with, they also knew that the King's pressure left them no alternative. Thus, a Bill of Pains and Penalties<sup>37</sup> was introduced in the House of Lords on that same day, containing a divorce clause (*HPD*, vol. 2: 212-4). Technically anonymous, but that everyone knew was coming from the King, the Bill accused the Queen of 'indecent and offensive familiarity and freedom' and of having had 'a licentious, disgraceful, and adulterous intercourse' with Bartholomeo Bergami, or Pergami (*HPD*, vol. 2: 213). It contained an Act to 'deprive her Majesty Caroline Amelia Elizabeth, of the title, prerogatives, rights, privileges, and

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<sup>37</sup> A Bill of Pains and Penalties is an act attaining a person without a judicial trial. This procedure was preferred to an action in an ecclesiastical court, or an ordinary divorce proceeding, because here the case would be subject to the 'right of recrimination' that is, Caroline might counter-charge her husband by pleading, with damaging results, ill-treatment or negligence, her husband's own adultery, and even his illegal marriage to Maria Fitzherbert.

exemptions of Queen Consort of this realm; and to dissolve the marriage between his Majesty and the said Caroline Amelia Elizabeth' (*HPD*, vol. 2: 212). If the Queen was found guilty of adulterous intercourse, she would be stripped of her titles and sent into exile.

The mode of prosecution of the Queen by the introduction of a Bill of Pains and Penalties was strongly contested<sup>38</sup>. The *LM* of 11 August reproduced the full text of a long *Petition to the King* in which the petitioners question the justice of laws such as the Bill of Pains and Penalties. The King's alleged deployment of the power of state to solve his private issues is considered illegitimate and of dubious constitutionality, and the Government is accused of having lost credibility by indulging in the King's wishes. Moreover, given the King's own private conduct, the procedure is considered unjust (Fulford, 1968: 41). As Hunt (1991: 701) notes, by deciding to take a legislative measure, the Government turned a private affair into a major political issue in which the character of the King was much more discussed than the alleged adultery of the Queen – exactly the thing that the Government wanted to prevent.

On the same day, 5 July, the Queen presented a petition to the House of Lords, demanding to be heard by her counsel. She alleged the need to defend herself from the charges in the report of the Secret Committee and to state 'various weighty matters upon their lordships' necessary to be urged 'at the present stage of these proceedings' (*HPD*, vol. 2: 195). The petition was rejected despite the voices that rose in the House defending its acceptance. The 'various weighty matters' alluded to by the Queen were interpreted by Lord Dacre, who presented the petition, as the Queen's preference for a judicial to a legislative proceeding<sup>39</sup>.

On 7 August, the Queen herself wrote a long and emotional letter to the King<sup>40</sup>, in which she stated her wrongs and declared her intention to resist:

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<sup>38</sup> In 1821, W. Hone published and possibly authored a long letter to George IV, entitled *To the King. From the Author of 'The King's Treatment of the Queen'*, in which he argued that Bills of 'Pains and Penalties' were *ex post facto laws* and as such, threats to the liberties of the people and seeds of despotism. He advised George IV to dismiss his ministers and hear the people who demand political change (Hone, 1821d: 14, 28).

<sup>39</sup> After the introduction of the Bill of Pains and Penalties, the Queen presented another petition to the House of Lords in which she protested 'in the most solemn manner against the whole of the proceeding' and demanded her counsel to be admitted 'to state any claims at the bar of the House of Lords' (*R*, vol. iii: 400). The Queen's Counsel was admitted, but it produced no practical effect.

<sup>40</sup> The letter, published by W. Hone and probably written by Cobbett, was returned unopened by Bloomfield. It was afterwards published in the *Times* (George, 1952: 90-1). The letter also appeared as a verse satire, entitled *The Queen of Trumps; or, the Cabinet in a Consternation: A Heroic Poem Founded on the Queen's Celebrated Letter* (Marks, 1820). The frontispiece had a plate in by Lewis Marks, showing the King in a rage at receiving the letter.

You have cast upon me every slur to which the female character is liable. Instead of loving, honouring, and cherishing me, agreeably to your solemn vow, you have pursued me with hatred and scorn, and with all the means of destruction. You wrested from me my child, and with her my only comfort and consolation. You sent me sorrowing through the world, and even in my sorrows pursued me with unrelenting persecution. Having left me nothing but my innocence, you would now, by a mockery of justice, deprive me even of the reputation of possessing that. The poisoned bowl and the poniard are means more manly than perjured witnesses and partial tribunals; and they are less cruel, inasmuch as life is less valuable than honour. If my life would have satisfied your Majesty, you should have had it on the sole condition of giving me a place in the same tomb with my child: but, since you would send me dishonoured to the grave, I will resist the attempt with all the means that it shall please God to give me (Hone, 1820b: 16).

Popular support was constant and enthusiastic during the six weeks interim before the beginning of the public enquiry in the House of Lords. The production of broadsides containing songs was such as to make them a barometer of the public interest and general support of the Queen throughout the process<sup>41</sup>. Yet, interest and support did not come only from the common people but also from the middle-classes and even members of the aristocracy. At the beginning of August, Lord Lyttelton stated that ‘not only the mob, but people of all ranks, and the middle classes almost to a man, and I believe the troops too, side with the Queen’ (Farrer, 1917: 116). Even those who were convinced of her guilt agreed that the King had unpardonably mistreated her when she first came to England. On 27 July, Princess Lieven wrote to Metternich saying that the troops were disaffected and were being paid by the Queen’s partisans. She was so frightened that she declared: ‘If anything happens, I shall run away’ (Smith, 1993: 58). On August 10, Robert Peel wrote to Croker:

I do think the Queen’s affair formidable [...]. They applied a blow-pipe, however, when they omitted the Queen’s name in the Liturgy: when they established a precedent of dethronement for imputed personal misconduct (Jennings, 1885: 176-7).

For the lower classes, the Queen’s plight symbolised their own sufferings at the hands of what they perceived as a tyrannical and corrupt political and economic system represented by the King, the Government, and the House of Lords.

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<sup>41</sup> Bennett (1980-1: 76) finds only 15 songs supporting the King and Government out of more than one hundred presently known that were in favour of the Queen. He believes that many more existed that favoured the Queen.

## The ‘Trial’ of the Queen

The enquiry began in the House of Lords on 17 August. Besides Henry Brougham and Thomas Denman, the Queen’s lawyers were John Williams, Stephen Lushington, Sir Nicholas Tindal, and Thomas Wilde. On the Crown’s side, counsel was led by the Attorney-General Sir Robert Gifford, with Sir John Singleton Copley as Solicitor-General (New, 1961: 248). Large numbers of regiments, drafted from the provinces, added to the neighbouring barracks, transforming the approach to Westminster Hall into a ‘trenched camp’ (Halévy, 1949: 95).

Crowds gathered in St. James’s Square to cheer the Queen, ‘a short, plump woman of fifty-two, swathed in black gauze and lace, and wearing an unusually tall hat adorned with outsized ostrich feathers’ (Robins, 2007:1), a description of the Queen that bears some resemblance to the portrait in Fig. 1 (p. 27). When she left the residence of Lady Francis<sup>42</sup> for the House of Lords, she was again cheered by the crowd with shouts of ‘God bless you!’ and with ‘protestations of loyalty to death’ (Hibbert, 1976: 559). When the Queen went past Carlton House and the Admiralty, or when she arrived at the House, the sentinels and the military presented arms, to the delight of the crowd. The cheering of the Queen was repeated on each day of the ‘trial’ – as most people referred to the proceedings – by the crowds gathered on her way to Parliament, as illustrated by Fig. 4.



Fig. 4 M. Dubourg, *The Queen Returning from the House of Lords*<sup>43</sup>  
© Trustees of the British Museum

<sup>42</sup> Caroline had moved to Brandenburg House, in Hammersmith on 3 August (Halévy (1949: 95). In the early hours of 17 August she went from there to the residence of Lady Francis in St. James Square and afterwards to the House of Lords.

<sup>43</sup> Print made by Mathew Dubourg and published in London by Robert Bowyer in 1821.

The Duke of Leinster opened the proceedings, moving that the second reading of the Bill should be rescinded, that is, that the 'Bill' should be thrown out without debate. Only 41 out of 247 Peers present agreed. Afterwards, a majority of leading Whig Peers, including Erskine, Grey, and Fitzwilliam raised the legal question of whether the Queen could be held guilty of high treason, to which the judges answered that there was no statute law or law of the country touching the Queen's case.

During the following two days, the Queen listened to the speeches of her counsel, Brougham and Denman. It was consensual that Brougham performed the task of defending his client brilliantly. Even if the speeches by the Attorney-General, Sir Robert Gifford and by the Solicitor-General, Sir John Copley were considered sound and partly effective, in Thomas Creevey's opinion, Brougham's and Denman's were better: 'Nothing can be more triumphant for the Queen than this day altogether' [...] the truth is that the law officers of the Crown are damnably overweighted by Brougham and Denman (Maxwell, 1904: 311).

Brougham's oratorical triumph largely resulted from centring his speech upon the discussion of the real nature and purpose of the proceedings against the Queen. He argued that it was not the concern about the morals of the country that motivated the proceedings against the Queen, as stated in the Preamble of the Bill, but the gratification of the private desire of the King. As the King did not put forward any complaint (this was no private bill), his character was at stake, as well as that of the ministers, presented as weak for having thus yielded to the monarch's wishes. Brougham claimed that the House was called upon to dissolve the marriage without the request of either of the parties interested, which turned the whole process 'unprecedented, illegal, in opposition to all analogy, and in the teeth of the most sacred part of civil and ecclesiastical justice' (Kelly, 1821: 20).

Besides, the Government was also accused of ill-faith and hypocrisy, for closing the eyes to the Queen's conduct on condition that she remained abroad: 'to the last moment she was warned not to come back: she was to be pensioned, largely pensioned, for not coming home; and she was to enjoy the rank she had degraded, and the privileges she had forfeited' (Kelly, 1821: 22). To great effect, he pointed out that 'the ship of war, which was refused to bring her back, had been readily granted to take her away' (Kelly, 1821: 21).

Brougham also raised the damning question of recrimination. Although he stated that he would dismiss recrimination for the present, he threatened to use it later because 'an advocate is bound to do his duty' towards his client, no matter the consequences 'to any other persons, powers, principalities, dominions, or nations' (Kelly, 1821: 16). Recrimination was naturally related to the denunciation of double-standards, and he asked

‘whether adultery is to be considered only a crime in woman’ (Kelly, 1821: 18). All these arguments were repeated in the radical periodicals during the Caroline affair and readily taken up by public opinion.

On 19 August, the Attorney-General opened the case for the prosecution, concluding accusation on 21 August. Then the Queen made her entrance, thus avoiding the humiliation of listening to it in person. The debates in the House of Lords were publicly commented on by the press, generally very unfavourable to the prosecution. Tickets of admission had been passed, which enabled the members of the press who possessed them to have direct access to the debates. Besides, the debates were published in the *Journals of the House of Lords*, the daily record for the House of Lords<sup>44</sup>.

The Queen was more popular than ever. From the month of July, Addresses were pouring in from all over the country<sup>45</sup>. The Queen answered them all under the guidance of Wood, Cobbett, and others. During the enquiry, many people came to the streets to watch her pass by to the House of Lords. In a letter of 19 August to Prince Metternich, Princess Lieven estimated that on 17 August twenty to thirty thousand radicals filled the streets and insulted ministers who also passed by (Quennell, 1938: 62). Support of the Queen, however, continued to cut across class lines. Personalities, such as Sir Robert Wilson, Whig MP for Southwark, Coleridge, Byron and many others were in favour of the Queen, as well as members of the middle-classes. On 27 August, Princess Lieven wrote again to Prince Metternich:

[...] she is greeted with respect and enthusiasm, not by the mob – make no mistake about that – but by the solid middle classes who have owned England her reputation for virtue and morality. You see the real mob, too [...] but they are certainly not in majority. All this shows only too clearly how unpopular the king is and what people think of his behaviour (Quennell, 1938: 66).

On 21 August, the first witness, Teodoro Majocchi, was called and the Queen was so disturbed when she saw him on the stand that she left the room. Many interpretations have been given of her indistinct exclamation on seeing him: a bad conscience? Just surprise? Majocchi had served the Queen for almost three years at Naples, Como, Rome, on the voyage to Jerusalem and many other places (Carlsruhe, Nuremberg, Vienna, Trieste, etc.),

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<sup>44</sup> The members of the Press who had tickets from the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod were admitted to the House of Lords. They were allowed to occupy a small space near the Queen’s legal advisers (*Courier*, 17 August: 4); the *Journals of the House of Lords* are one of the most ancient records of parliamentary proceedings in existence. They cover the period from 1509-present.

<sup>45</sup> Very much like the texts of songs published in broadsides, addresses are also good barometers of the interest of the public.

and his testimony would be damning if it stood. He told the Solicitor-General John Singleton Copley how Bergami had been raised from courier to equerry, and to chamberlain<sup>46</sup>, how Bergami had waited at the Queen's table with him and then had dined with her, and that the Queen had bought Bergami a barony and an estate to go with the title. Details about the Queen's sleeping and bathing arrangements were given, especially on the Polacca and on the journey to Jerusalem. Finally, he said that he had left the service of the Princess because she was surrounded by bad people (Adolphus, 1820: 23-36).

However, at Brougham's hands in the cross-examination the following day, Majocchi completely collapsed. He was nervous, muddled, unconvincing and incapable of giving any other answer than 'non mi ricordo'. In the printed record, this answer appears eighty-seven times (Smith, 1993: 85). There was repeated laughter in the room (Adolphus, 1820: 37-8; 45). Even the interpreter, Marchese Nicolas Spinetto, called the witness 'a fanfaron' (another laugh). "Everyone is using the catchword 'Non mi ricordo'", Princess Lieven wrote in a letter to Prince Metternich (Quennell, 1938: 66).

At the end of the cross examination, the evidence had been completely pulverized and Majocchi discredited as a witness. For this victory, Brougham was dubbed, 'the King of Parliament' by Princess Lieven on 6 September (Quennell, 1938: 72), and for months afterwards this phrase was as popular with satirists, such as William Hone, as the Green Bag was with caricaturists. It quickly became a catch phrase for perjury, being glossed in different satirical forms, from mock-trials such as Hone's satire *Non Mi Ricordo* to songs as *The Non Mi Ricordo Song Book* (Wood, 1994: 151). When the chamber maid Louise Demont was cross-examined, her evasive 'je ne me rapelle pas' proved almost the equivalent to Majocchi's 'non mi ricordo'. The last witness, Giuseppe Sacchi, the equerry dismissed from the Queen's service with Demont, might have given more damaging evidence if Brougham had not exposed a lie (Fraser, 1996: 427).

The examination of witnesses from various nationalities<sup>47</sup> of generally mean occupations revealed that the prosecution was not managing to present conclusive evidence. Despite the damaging testimony of some witnesses, such as Captains Briggs and Pechell and the cellar maid Barbara Kness, and the efforts of the loyalist press, especially the *Courier*, to counter the success of the defence counsel, it was becoming increasingly visible that the evidence promised by the Attorney-General in his opening speech was not

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<sup>46</sup> A courier was a person hired to take care of hotel accommodation and the luggage. Occasionally, he could also be a guide for a traveller. An equerry was an officer in charge of the horses in a royal or noble household, and a chamberlain, a high official in certain royal or noble households.

<sup>47</sup> See Adolphus (1820: 22-166) for the testimony of the twenty-five witnesses against the Queen.

being produced. It was also apparent that there was a difference between the unsworn depositions taken by the Milan Commission and the evidence given on oath in the House of Lords, and cross-examined by the Queen's lawyers.

Nevertheless, when the Solicitor-General Copley summed up the charges on 9 September, he declared that the accusations had been proved by the testimony of the witnesses (Kelly, 1821: 639-57). This declaration was followed by Brougham's request of an adjournment to allow the defence to conclude the collection of evidence, which after some objection was granted until 3 October. During this interim, on 13 September 5,000 sailors walked in procession to pay their respects to the Queen. On 30 September, twenty Italian witnesses that Brougham had brought from Italy (allegedly by bribing them) to discredit the most damaging prosecution witnesses were received with public honours at Dover and London (Halévy, 1949: 98).

An unprecedented number of satirical prints and pamphlets, addresses to the Queen<sup>48</sup>, demonstrations, newspaper articles, and songs was issued during the three-week recess. The people did not care 'a straw' about the question of her guilt or innocence, as Croker observed in a letter to Peel dated 1 September: 'As to the Queen's affair, I can only tell you that all the disgusting details proved against her seem to make no change in the minds or numbers of her partisans' (Jennings, 1885: 177). Cobbett remarked that this happened because 'they compared what they had *heard* of the wife with what they had *seen* of the husband' (Cobbett, 1830: par 425).

In effect, the testimonies against the Queen did not seem to have produced visible change in the disposition of the people. On 21 September, Sidmouth wrote to the King saying that though London is 'perfectly quiet', he cannot state to his Majesty that 'any considerable change for the better has taken place in the sentiments and language of the lower classes of the people' and that 'the utmost diligence is used by the police in bringing to justice the protagonists of sedition'; in the country and in most manufacturing districts, the accounts 'are, upon the whole, favourable' (Aspinall, 1938: 368-9).

On 3 October the proceedings were resumed. Brougham repeatedly undermined all the assertions of the Attorney-General, detailing the contradictions and omissions of the prosecution and the inconsistencies of the witnesses. He also read a letter that the Prince of Wales had written to his wife in April 1796, proposing that their intercourse should be

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<sup>48</sup> According to Lee (2009: 107), hundreds of addresses were presented to the Queen during 1820. Rogers (1998: 250) calculates that twenty-seven were female addresses with over seventy thousand signatures. Fulford (1968: 44) lists the cities that have sent women's addresses to the Queen: Bath, Bristol, Exeter, Halifax, Leeds, Nottingham, Sheffield, and Marylebone.



restricted to ‘tranquil and comfortable society’, which Brougham interpreted not only as the expression of the Prince’s wish for a separation, but also as containing no indication that the Princess’s conduct ‘should be made a subject of observation’, or her privacy ‘interrupted by the rigour of a scrutinizing agency’ (Adolphus, 1820: 220). Brougham’s speech was considered a masterpiece of oratory. Creevey wrote:

I never heard anything like the perfection he has displayed in all ways, [in his criticisms upon evidence, his prodigious talents, his overpowering eloquence]. In short, if he can prove what he has stated in his speech, I for one believe she is innocent, and the whole case a conspiracy. He concluded with a most magnificent address to the Lords – an exhortation to them to save themselves – the Church – the Crown – the Country, by their decision in favour of the Queen (Maxwell, 1904: 321).

The effect of Brougham’s speech was so strong that it was believed that the defence would not need to produce evidence. In fact, the Italian witnesses (Marianne Brun, the sister of Louise Demont, and Countess Oldi, Bergami’s sister) were considered unreliable and therefore excluded. But the defence had English witnesses, which the prosecution had not, and wanted to capitalize on this advantage. Two of them, however, the Lieutenants Flinn and Hownam proved bad choices. Flinn broke down during cross-examination by Copley, and Hownam, cross-examined by Gifford, supplied damning evidence against the Queen. Only Lady Charlotte Lindsay, the Queen’s lady-in-waiting until 1817, testified satisfactorily, declaring that she had never observed any improprieties and referring to ‘unpleasant and degrading’ reports as rumours (Adolphus, 1820: 247). On 5 October, Creevey wrote that Lady Charlotte’s testimony ‘closed her examination in chief [...]. He had never heard ‘such testimony as hers in favour of the Queen – the talent, the perspicuity, the honesty of it’ (Maxwell, 1904: 322).

Meanwhile, expressions of popular support for the Queen continued, with large processions of forty or fifty thousand men marching along Picadilly in military formation, headed by a band and displaying banners<sup>49</sup>. Lord Greville wrote in his *Journal* entry for October 8 that ‘the town is still in uproar about the trial, and nobody has any doubt that it will finish by the Bill being thrown out and the Ministers turned out’ (Reeve, 1899: 35). Creevey wrote on October 9 in the same key: ‘The town is literally drunk with joy at this unparalleled triumph of the Queen’ (Maxwell, 1904: 323).

However, when Denman summed up for the defence on 24 and 25 October, two incidents happened. The first, when Denman excessively compared George IV to Nero;

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<sup>49</sup> Creevey to Miss Ord, October 24, 26, 30 (Maxwell, 1904: 332, 334); *PR*, November 11, 1820 (vol. xxxvii: 1135).

then, trying to produce an emotionally favourable effect, he ended his speech with the words of Christ to the adulterous woman: ‘Neither will I condemn thee. Go and sin no more’ (Adolphus, 1820: 395). These were unfortunate words because instead of reinforcing the Queen’s innocence, they involuntarily pointed to her guilt. They were soon parodied in lines such as these: ‘Gracious Queen we thee implore, / Go away and sin no more. / But if that effort be too great, / Go away at any rate’ (New, 1961: 258). The loyalist print *Steward’s Court, or the Manor of Torre Devon* (BMC 14013), probably by Theodore Lane, published by George Humphrey in December 1820, satirises Denman’s words.

Before the Bill was taken to the second reading, the Peers were invited to express their opinion individually. Apart from the members of the Opposition, who unsurprisingly expressed either their belief in the innocence of the Queen, or their conviction that guilt had not been sufficiently proved, independent Peers such as Lord Clifford declared his intention to vote against the second reading because he could not forget that her probable ‘immodest conduct might possibly have been different if the King had treated her differently’ (Halévy, 1949: 99). On the second reading, on 6 November, the Bill passed with a narrow majority of twenty-eight votes (Adolphus, 1820: 440). The Queen, who on 25 October had informed that she would not receive any more addresses, caused a protest to be read in the House in which she asserted her entire innocence (Adolphus, 1820: 441).

By that time it had become quite clear that with so small a majority, whatever the truth about the Queen’s conduct, the chances that the Bill would pass the House of Commons were slight. The Government contemplated this possibility with great apprehension. Moreover, the Crown lawyers knew that the defence intended to exercise the direct recrimination against the King which Brougham had threatened to do in the opening speech. This could greatly affect the King’s position, as it circulated that Brougham possessed proof of the King’s marriage to Mrs. Fitzherbert<sup>50</sup>. In these circumstances, the Peers were not simply giving a verdict of guilty or not guilty, but were voting on ‘many complicated considerations of guilt, of general policy, and of particular considerations’, such as: should proceedings have been taken, did the King deserve a divorce, was the Milan Commission constitutional, would the country be in danger ... (Aspinall, 1947: 37).

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<sup>50</sup> Brougham wrote an article in *The Edinburgh Review* of April 1838 in which he confirmed this threat (George, 1952: xxvi). The Brougham Papers, held at University College, London, contain printed material (one box), including Bills and minutes of evidence, relating to Queen Caroline’s ‘trial’ in 1820 (AIM25: permanent web-accessible database: [http://www.aim25.ac.uk/cgi-bin/vcdf/detail?coll\\_id=3346&inst\\_id=13](http://www.aim25.ac.uk/cgi-bin/vcdf/detail?coll_id=3346&inst_id=13); (accessed 22/07/2009). This material was largely used by New (1961).

Under the pressure of the bishops, the Government proposed to remove the divorce clause, but the motion was defeated by a substantial majority (67), thus remaining in the Bill (Adolphus, 1820: 444: 51). When the Bill was put to the third reading on 10 November, the majority was reduced to nine votes (108 yeas to 99 nays).

Lord Liverpool immediately moved that further consideration of the Bill be adjourned for six months, that is, the Bill was not to be sent 'to the other branch of the legislature' (Adolphus, 1820: 458). This resolution corresponded to the dropping of the Bill. It was immediately interpreted as the acquittal of the Queen and enthusiastically celebrated with illuminations in London and all the major cities for five nights. The King spoke to his brother, the Duke of York, of resigning and of retiring to Hanover. The radicals rejoiced, and Tories such as Croker became apprehensive about the future of the British parliamentary constitution.

## **Finale**

The adjournment of Parliament till 23 January saved the Government from the difficult position in which it had been placed, given the doubts raised about the constitutionality of the Milan Commission, the legality of the whole procedure, and even the justice of the King's demand for a divorce. Therefore, the outcome of the enquiry could only partially be considered a victory for the Queen. In part, it also served the Government's ends. The Queen's demands of a royal palace, made in the heat of the dropping of the Bill, were easily denied. The Queen herself was disappointed. She became convinced that her cause had been used by the Whigs to suit their own purposes.

The void originated by the adjournment of Parliament opened the way to the loyalist reaction. The first indications of counter-loyalist propaganda appeared in October (George, 1952: xxv) and the tide gradually turned to the royal camp in the early months of 1821. In December, the loyalist newspaper *John Bull* wrote that 23 loyal Addresses were presented to the King (No. 2: 11). At the beginning of January, Lord Sidmouth, the Home Secretary, could finally sense a change in the public sentiments: 'it is evident that the confidence in the Loyal is increasing and that of the disaffected diminishing', he wrote to Lascelles (Fulcher, 1995: 496).

Sidmouth's judgement was probably right. Although support for Caroline remained strong in London, some authors detect a swing in the mood of the people from the time of the speech of the King at the opening of Parliament in late January to his coronation in July

(Stevenson, 1977: 134). The report of the police officers, informing that the King's birthday celebrations displayed 'great loyalty' from the 'populace' (Fulcher, 1995: 499) seems to point in that direction. Or it might be that it was not a matter of increasing hostility towards Caroline, but that the interest of the people in the Affair had lapsed after the end of the trial, as Bennett (1980-1: 76) admits.

Whatever the cause, the loyalist reaction strengthened in satirical prints and pamphlets against the Queen. Despite strong demonstrations of support during the thanksgiving ceremony at St Paul's on 29 November 1820 for the acquittal of the Queen, there was a scent of defeat in the air which announced the end of the Queen Caroline affair. On 7 February 1821, Lord Greville wrote in his *Memoirs* that the King 'was received with immense acclamations, the whole pit standing up, hurraing, and waving their hats' (Reeve, 1899: 44) when he went to the theatre at Drury Lane the previous night. On 11 February, the Commons rejected by a majority of 120 votes an Opposition motion to restore Caroline's name to the Liturgy, which would have meant recognition of her as Queen.

The dynamics of defeat continued and became irreversible in March 1821 when the Queen accepted the annual pension of £50,000 that a few months earlier she had refused. This acceptance of a pension made it difficult to sustain the agitation and it inevitably eschewed the radicals. The loyalist press immediately capitalized on it, and the Queen was denigrated as 'Mrs. Muggins' (Smith, 1999: 182). By July, the coronation month, the Queen Caroline affair had virtually ended.

Meanwhile, the King had taken steps to avoid trouble during the coronation. He had assured himself that the Queen could not legally impose her presence, and consequently instructed Lord Liverpool on 21 April 1821 that she:

Should never be suffered by the King, under any circumstances, to appear at the most solemn ceremony, the law having placed the entire control upon that head in the hands and at the pleasure of the king (Smith, 1999: 188).

The Queen counter-demanded that she be crowned a week after the King, but the demand was rejected by the Privy Council, despite threats of riots by Mathew Wood. Although some people, and the King himself, feared that the anger of the mob might disturb the splendour of the ceremony in which the King had put all his heart, there was really no cause for apprehension<sup>51</sup>. In spite of some ridiculous details and some improper

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<sup>51</sup> See 'Sir Walter Scott's Letter on the Coronation' (Croly, 1831: 308-17).

attitudes by the King during the ceremony<sup>52</sup>, at the end the crowd cheered George IV with shouts of ‘God Bless the King’.



Fig. 5 *The Spirit of the Queen Conveyed to the Realm of Eternal Glory!!!*<sup>53</sup>  
© Trustees of the British Museum

For the Queen, tragedy precipitated. After the public humiliation of having been denied admission at Westminster Hall on coronation day<sup>54</sup>, she fell seriously ill and died on 7 August. The popular demonstration through the streets of London during her funeral procession on 14 August – in which Sir George Nayler, Clarenceux King of Arms, carried

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<sup>52</sup> Reports state that the seriousness and length of the ceremony (almost five hours) did not inhibit George IV from oggling Lady Conyngham with significant and even indecent looks (Smith, 1999: 186; Hibbert, 1976: 601).

<sup>53</sup> This is the anonymous illustration to a broadside on the death of Queen Caroline. It shows the Queen being led to Heaven by an angel and crowned by another. The broadside, published by John Fairburn in 1821, is entitled *Fairburn's Authentic Account of the Last Moments and Death of Queen Caroline*.

<sup>54</sup> The *Courier* reports an alleged conversation between Lord Hood, who escorted the Queen together with Lady Hood and Lady Anne Hamilton, and the door-keeper at Westminster Hall on coronation day, when the Queen was denied entrance: ‘the orders are to admit no person without a peer’s ticket. [...] we only act in conformity with our orders’. Sir Robert Inglis had been warned by the Home Secretary of the Queen’s attempt to enter and informed her of the impossibility. The Queen replied, ‘I am sorry for it’. After a few words, she said: ‘How can I get in my carriage?’ (Hibbert, 1976: 613-4).

her queenly crown<sup>55</sup> (Fraser, 1996: 463) – was the last great radical demonstration for almost a decade<sup>56</sup>.

In spite of the orders to avoid letting the funeral procession through the City on its way to Harwich, where the coffin would be embarked to Brunswick, the people forced the cortege to follow to Temple Bar, across Ludgate Hill and down towards Essex road to Chelmsford. In her will<sup>57</sup>, Caroline had expressed the wish to be buried in Brunswick and her tomb to bear only the inscription ‘Caroline of Brunswick, the injured Queen of England’. That inscription was engraved on her coffin, although Davidoff and Hall (2002: 154) state that it was removed during the night, after the crowd had left the parish church of St. Martins, Colchester, where the corpse had been deposited on the way to Harwich.

Queen Caroline is buried in St. Blasii Cathedral (Dom St. Blasius), in Brunswick (Braunschweig), Lower Saxony. George IV is buried in St. George’s Chapel, Windsor Castle.

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<sup>55</sup> At the time of her death, her official title was Her Majesty Caroline, Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen of Hanover, Duchess of Brunswick and Luneburg.

<sup>56</sup> There are about one hundred folios in the *Home Office Records of The National Archives*, reporting disturbances during the Queen’s funeral procession, where two men were killed, Richard Honey and George Francis:[<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/catalogue/searchresults.asp?fldResultMarker=1&fldSearchNumber=193521&SearchInit=1.>] (accessed 06/10/10). For accounts of the events surrounding the funeral of the Queen, see *Annual Register for the Year 1821* (1822: 126-8) and Aspinall (1938, vol.2: 455-64).

<sup>57</sup> The Will of Queen Caroline is held at the National Archives at Kew, Richmond. Catalogue reference: PROB1/98. The description of the Will on the Catalogue can be viewed at the following web address: <http://readerinternal.tna.local/catalogue/displaycataloguedetails.asp?CATLN=6&CATID=96120&SearchInit=4&SearchType=6&CATREF=PROB1%2F98>. The Queen Caroline Papers are held at the Royal Archives and Royal Library at Windsor, having moved from the Public Record Office (Home Office) (Williamson, 2002: 329). According to the Assistant Registrar of the RA (emails of 25 March, 26 April, and 9 May 2011) there is no index for the so-called Queen Caroline Papers, but there are a few letters written by her (principally as Princess of Wales), including to individuals such as King George III, the Earl of Liverpool, Lord Eldon and Miss Ann Hayman, amongst others, in the Georgian Index, a list for the Georgian period. Some of this material, if not all, was used by Flora Fraser in her book *The Unruly Queen*. In conclusion, although there is material about the trial in the Queen Caroline Papers, there appears to be no material of a personal kind written by Queen Caroline in 1820 which would be of interest to this study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Regency Radicalism



Fig. 6 G. Cruikshank, *Coriolanus Addressing the Plebeians* (Detail), 1820  
© Trustees of the British Museum

This satirical print by George Cruikshank offers a self-mocking depiction of the most outstanding Regency radicals mentioned in the following chapters. From the left to the right, they are<sup>1</sup>: **Preston**, with a hammer in his belt, leaning his folded arms on a staff. Next to him is **Watson**, a pestle in one hand, clyster-pipe in the other. **Thistlewood**, with a knife in his belt, is designated by a staff terminating in a thistle. Next, **Carlile** turns as if to run away; under his feet are a paper, 'Deist', and a book, 'Age of Reason'. Next to him, and, unlike his companions, sturdy and defiant, though alarmed, is **Cobbett**, a large bone in each hand. **Hunt**, leaning on a (reversed) pike and timorously clutching Cobbett's shoulder, has a limp purse inscribed 'One Penny' hanging from his belt. In front of him stands a tiny 'Black Dwarf' with **Wooler's** features. **Major Cartwright**, an aged man with flexed knees, supported on a stick, holds up a sword inscribed 'Universal Suffrage'. Two men hold a large club between them; one, **Hobhouse**, very short, puts his foot on a paper inscribed 'Trifling Mistake'; his tall companion is **Burdett**. The two at the right end of the line are **Alderman Waithman**, linen-draper and M.P., clutching a paper inscribed 'Hell wide Measures', and **Hone**, who is stout, muscular, and (unlike the others) determined. He holds two heavy clubs, one inscribed 'Parody', the other 'Man in the Moon' and 'House that Jack Built'. In the second row and on the extreme right, behind Hone, is **George Cruikshank**, in profile, holding a portfolio inscribed 'Caricature'.

<sup>1</sup> The description is based on Dorothy George's own description in the *BMC* (13677).





## The Upsurge of Regency Radicalism

The years that followed the end of the Napoleonic Wars were marked by deep economic crisis. Trade dropped, hundreds of firms went bankrupt and tens of thousands of workers lost their jobs all over the country. Industries like iron and shipbuilding, which had expanded during wartime, now contracted. In Shropshire, 7,000 ironworkers were thrown out of work (Wright, 1988: 65). The reduction in the numbers of the army and navy added to distress. In the navy, numbers reduced from 100,000 in 1815, to 35,000 in 1816 (Woodward, 1992: 63). In agriculture, farmers were going bankrupt as the price of corn fell and a vast proportion of the rural labourers affected by a wholesale enclosure process<sup>1</sup> became paupers, particularly in the South.

The disruption of traditional modes of work and living caused by industrial change added to the economic crisis and activated class conflict, especially in London and the new industrial districts, from Carlisle to Colchester, and from Newcastle to Bristol. Most weavers, stockingers and cotton-spinners of the domestic industries were becoming wage-earning outworkers with more or less precarious employment. Taken as a whole, extensive enclosure, precarious outwork employment and other forms of productive and social relationships in agriculture and in industry were ‘novelties’ of dramatic human consequence, which Thompson (1991: 207-32) qualified as catastrophic.

Although some MPs and the Regent himself occasionally manifested sympathy for the suffering of the people<sup>2</sup>, positive measures by the Government and Parliament to relieve distress were not taken. The list of parliamentary debates for 1817 (one of the most critical years) in *HPD* mentions only a few occasions on which the economic situation was discussed, and even then without pointing to any palpable measures: on March 13, Henry Brougham presented a long motion on ‘the state of trade and manufactures in the country’, where he pointed out that ‘the period of the session is well high [...] and yet nothing has been done to bring the subject before us’ (*HPD*, xxxv: 1004-44). On March 25, a petition was presented from ‘the freeholders and others of the county of Cardigan’ on agricultural

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<sup>1</sup> The table of the number of enclosure bills passed by Parliament between 1760 and 1832 shows that the years 1810 to 1819 saw the highest concentration of bills passed (Aspinall and Smith, 2001: 468).

<sup>2</sup> See the Regent’s speech from the throne on January 28, 1817 and subsequent commentaries by MPs in *HPD* (vol. xxxv: 1-32).

distress (*HPD*, xxxv: 1270-2). In spite of the acknowledged ‘very temperate and respectful terms in which this petition is couched, [which] does infinite credit to the good sense, judgement, and taste of these suffering petitioners’, after the reading ‘the petition was ordered to lie on the table’, the usual procedure.

Instead, parliamentary action contributed to heighten conflict by passing laws that generated great popular discontent. The Corn Laws, passed in 1815<sup>3</sup> amongst violent protest, were the most controversial, but the less discussed abolition of the Property Tax<sup>4</sup> also contributed to popular discontent, as it alleviated the propertied classes and placed a heavier burden on the lower classes. This exhibition of upper-class power extended to the oppositional Whigs, especially on the Corn Law issue, as their leaders were nearly all of the landed class.

In this atmosphere loaded by unemployment, high prices, low wages and industrial change, Tory indifference – betrayed by the following words by Lord Valletort in 1817 in Parliament – brought many workers under the banner of Regency radicalism:

While he [the Regent] felt assured that every possible reduction would be made in the public burthens, the people would, he trusted, be sensible, that the dignity, the power, and the character of our government must be duly maintained (*HPD*, vol. xxxv: 7).

On the other hand, the state of disorientation that permeated the Whig opposition prevented it from taking advantage of the unpopularity of the Government. This lack of confidence and leadership was admitted by Whig MPs such as H. G. Bennet, who observed in a letter to Creevey in 1816: ‘we must allow that, tho’ the Government are hated, we are not loved ... [...] Who is to lead us now?’ God knows!’ (Maxwell, 1904: 257).

The Whigs were criticised at either end of the political spectrum. The loyalist satire *The Real or Constitutional House that Jack Built* (Asperne and Sams, 1819) expresses the Tory judgement: they are ‘The Hypocrites, shaven and shorn / The broad-bottom’d Whigs, now all forlorn / [...] Who rail’d against Placemen, till they were in Place, / Then sneer’d at their Monarch – nay, laugh’d in his face’ (67-8). At the other end, Thomas Wooler, the

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<sup>3</sup> By prohibiting imports of foreign wheat until the domestic price reached eighty shillings a quarter, the Corn Laws caused an artificial price rise, especially between 1816 and 1819 (Wright, 1988: 65).

<sup>4</sup> *The Death of the Property Tax*, etched by George Cruikshank in 1816 (*BMC* 12752), is one of the prints on this issue. Virtually all the main political events mentioned or discussed in this chapter are commented on in satirical prints or other forms of the contemporary popular print culture.

editor of the radical periodical *The Black Dwarf*<sup>5</sup> hoisted the banner of parliamentary reform against the Whigs in November 1819:

The Whigs are infinitely more helpless than the reformers. [...] They [the reformers] are feared already, as well as hated, by the Tory faction. But the Whigs are not formidable enough [...] to throw off the masquerade of party, and appear in the ranks of the people. This their pride prevents. They cannot condescend to mix with the countless multitudes of the reformers! Their respectability would suffer by the association. [...] The Whigs cannot degrade themselves by mixing with the vulgar herd! (*BD*, vol. iii: 709-10).

Outside Parliament, the political initiative of the new middle-classes, who were prospering with the industrial revolution, was frozen by a dilemma, similar to the Whig one: on the one hand, they felt that siding with the radicals on the issue of parliamentary reform could be beneficial as a means of empowerment; on the other hand, they shared with the aristocracy the fear that parliamentary reform might endanger the security of private property.

Encouraged by an unpopular government and a disoriented Whig opposition, Regency radicalism translated the distress of the labouring classes into a vigorous, even revolutionary (Leader and Haywood, 2005: 2) presence on the public stage. In Thompson's (1991: 660) oft discussed phrase, it was 'the heroic age of popular radicalism' – a mix of political demands, economic upheaval and cultural assertion. The words said by John Thomas Brunt, one of the Cato Street conspirators, before sentence was passed upon him sum up the state of mind that sparked Regency radicalism:

He had, by his industry, been able to earn about £3 or £4 a-week, and while this was the case, he never meddled with politics; but when he found his income reduced to 10s. a-week, he began to look around him, and to ask what that could be owing? And what did he find? Why, men in power, who met to deliberate how they might starve and plunder the country (*PR*, vol. xxxvi: 569-70).

Parliamentary reform was the banner of Regency radicalism and the radical press its agent. The satirical print below (Fig. 7) contrasts Old London Bridge with its 'narrow and decayed Borough Arches' with a new bridge of three arches inscribed, respectively, King, Commons (the largest) and Lords. It symbolises political progress through Parliamentary reform represented by the metaphor of the new bridge *versus* the old, decaying bridge. The demand for parliamentary reform by Regency radicalism signified the kiss of death to the

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<sup>5</sup> Henceforth cited as *BD*.

consensus<sup>6</sup> built around the understanding of the British constitution as the almost perfect balance between the power of the state and the liberty of the people.

This consensus had already been questioned in the 1760s with the Wilkes agitation, and more openly in the 1790s, but now the demand for parliamentary reform was more extensive and bolder than ever before. Authors such as Smith (1999: 168) date political agitation from 1812 due to the way Whig disappointment with the Regent reinforced lower class resentment at the social and economic evils of the wartime. However, with the end of the Wars lower class resentment exacerbated. The social inequality intensified by the high levels of taxation and the huge national debt of the post-war economic crisis caused demands for political change to become much more extended and vigorous<sup>7</sup>.

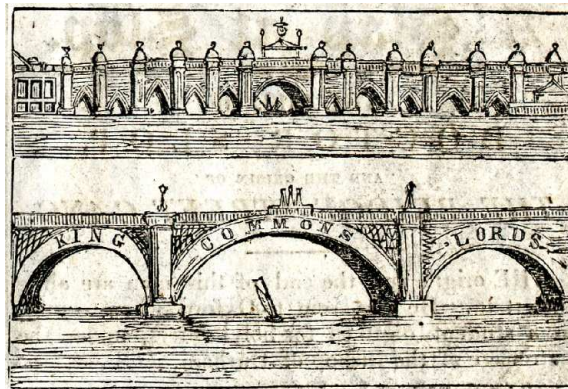


Fig. 7 G. Cruikshank, *Reform*<sup>8</sup>  
© Trustees of the British Museum

By sweeping away the buying and selling of office, parliamentary reform came to symbolise the cure of these moral and economic ills of society. However, the ideological influence of the French Revolution on the one hand, and the defensive reaction of the establishment at the ‘Jacobin threat’ on the other, explain why this constitutional demand entailed now an element of conflict hitherto unknown in British society.

The list of protest actions is long and impressive. Some of it – food riots and corn-law riots in London and the provinces – may not have been politically motivated, but the Luddite machine breaking that erupted in West Yorkshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire (Wright, 1988: 65) and the Spa Fields meetings of 1816-17 clearly bear

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<sup>6</sup> This consensus was celebrated by Sir William Blackstone (1765-9) in his *Commentaries on the Laws of England*.

<sup>7</sup> Although the demand for universal suffrage did not include female suffrage, it represented a decisive step in the direction of the assertion of the rights of citizenship.

<sup>8</sup> This satirical print by George Cruikshank is one of the illustrations of the satirical publication *A Slap at Slop and The Bridge Street Gang* (Hone, 1822), a burlesque newspaper parodying the *New Times* edited by John Stoddart. It is dated 2 August 1821.

the mark of Regency radicalism and their banner. In the Spa Fields meetings, Regency radicals began to raise issues on their own initiative, engaging in conscious confrontation with the political authorities and alienating themselves from the traditional, moderate Westminster and City reformers (Prothero, 1981: 73-4).

1817 was one of the most agitated years, as *The Report of the Secret Committee of the House of Commons*, presented on 19 February 1817 (Aspinall and Smith, 2001: 325-9) confirms. In January, the Convention of *Hampden Clubs* organised the presentation to Parliament of petitions for universal suffrage and the ballot signed by half a million people. Also in January, the Regent's carriage was pelted when he was returning from the opening of Parliament<sup>9</sup>. The Pentridge Rising and subsequent trial and execution of the Nottingham Luddite Jeremiah Brandreth were followed by the Blanketeers march from Manchester, which resulted in the imprisonment of well-known activists of Lancashire.

The repressive measures adopted by the Government in 1817 to quell social protest were largely prompted by the alleged 'assassination attempt' of the Regent. As a consequence, he was associated in the public mind with the introduction of the legislation that was to crackdown the spreading of Regency radicalism: *The Habeas Corpus Suspension Act*<sup>10</sup>, which William Cobbett regarded as the 'establishment of a permanent military despotism' (*PR*, vol. xxxii: 56), *The Seditious Meetings Act* (Aspinall and Smith, 2001: 330-3), Sidmouth's *Circular Letter*<sup>11</sup> which, together with the spy-system<sup>12</sup>, aimed at curbing liberty of expression. That association affected the already damaged public perception of the Regent.

Some authors (Stevenson, 1977: 117-44; Epstein, 1989: 75-118) claim that after 1815 the focus of protest began to shift away from London to the provinces, with provincial cities beginning to play a far more effective role. In effect, the event that

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<sup>9</sup> The report of *HPD* for 28 January 1817 states that 'several daring outrages offered to the person of his royal highness the Prince Regent this day, in his passage from the parliament' (*HPD*, vol. xxxv: 23). However, Smith (1999: 171), states that it happened when the Regent was on his way to the opening of Parliament.

<sup>10</sup> Aspinall and Smith (2001: 329). Now that England was no longer at war with France (as at previous suspension in 1793 and 1798), the 1817 *Suspension Act* was passed to stifle protest. It removed civil rights by virtue of its power to imprison without trial.

<sup>11</sup> The famous *Circular Letter* of 27 March 1817 gave magistrates extraordinary powers relative to the circulation of seditious pamphlets (Aspinall, 1949: 49).

<sup>12</sup> Letters from Home Office spies reported mostly on the activities of radicals and radical societies. Favourite targets were the Spencean Society and the circulation of William Hone's liturgical parodies. Letters in the Home Office Papers (<http://honearchive.org/bibliographical/archives/pro.html>; accessed 12/04/2011) also give evidence of the alarm of loyalists, clergymen, and local magistrates. This information is gathered in the Public Record Office Archives, especially the Home Office Papers (HO 42/158; HO 42/162-232) and the Privy Council Register, 1817 (PRO PC 2/199).

culminated the post-war agitation took place in Manchester with ‘Peterloo’<sup>13</sup>, not in London.

‘Peterloo’ occupies a special place in the history of post-Waterloo agitation as the climax in the use of state violence against unarmed people. It raised a wave of protest all over the country, and the political atmosphere became volatile. Reports in the press expressed widespread anger at the refusal of the Government to enquire into the events and at the increase of expenditure with the Army while taxes were raised, aggravating industry (Maccoby, 2002: 362). The popular agitation that erupted the following year on behalf of Queen Caroline can be understood as still part of the national outcry at the events of Manchester. The popular radical press was especially vociferous. The *Democratic Recorder and Reformers’ Guide* went to the point of threatening with revolution on 2 October 1819: ‘If ever it was the duty of Britons to resort to the use of arms to recover their freedom and hurl vengeance upon the heads of their tyrants it is now’ (Keen, 2003, vol.6: 243).

The Government was alarmed. Lord Eldon believed that there was ‘scarcely a village in the kingdom that had not its little shop in which nothing was sold but blasphemy and sedition’ (Donald, 1996: 188). Lord Sidmouth, the Home Secretary, was also alarmed. Robert Ward, novelist and MP, reported in his diary entry for 27 October 1819 that Sidmouth considered the situation ‘frightful’ (Phipps, 1850: 16-7). As a consequence, the Government passed the *Six Acts*<sup>14</sup>, which were especially aimed at stifling the voice of radical activists, writers and journalists<sup>15</sup>.

Some voices rose to warn against the counter-productive effects. During the discussion in Parliament of one of the Six Bills, the *Seditious Meetings and Assemblies Bill*, at the end of November 1819, Tierney, the leader of the Whigs in the House of Commons, accused the Government, in the presence of Lord Castlereagh, of resorting to

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<sup>13</sup> James Wroe is believed to be the first to have reported the events of 16 August 1819 in the *Manchester Observer* as a massacre. He was imprisoned for these reports. ‘Orator’ Hunt was arrested and remained in prison until March 1820, awaiting trial. The word ‘Peterloo’ is a good example of popular sarcastic nicknaming and inventiveness through the negative association of the events of Manchester to the British victory at Waterloo. See Fraser (1996: 334-5) and Maccoby (2002: 353-61).

<sup>14</sup> See Aspinall and Smith (2001: 335-41) for the text of the Acts. Two of the famous *Six Acts* were directly aimed at restricting the liberty of the press – *The Blasphemous and Seditious Libels Act* and *The Publications Act*. The former gave the authorities discretionary power over those accused of libel; the latter subjected certain publications to the duties upon newspapers, namely to the stamp tax. Lord Ellenborough stated in the House of Lords that the law was directed at the ‘pauper press’, not at the ‘respectable press’ (Cranfield, 1978: 107; Maccoby, 2002: 353-70).

<sup>15</sup> See Maccoby (2002: 353-70) for a view of the radical reaction and the loyalist counter reaction at the events at Manchester, as well as the measures taken by the Government to curb popular agitation, namely the introduction of the *Six Acts* to Parliament.

nothing but force: ‘they think of nothing else [...]; they make no attempt to pacify and reconcile: ‘force – force – force, and nothing but force!’ which he believed converted the discontented into ‘real conspirators in dark corners’. Moreover, the increase of 10,000 men in the army was seen as proof that the new laws were ‘more likely to exasperate than to reconcile’ (*Examiner*, 1819: 776)<sup>16</sup>. In effect, instead of quelling protest, post-war repression launched Regency radicalism and its most distinct agent, the Regency radical press. ‘Peterloo’ thus became more than the ‘moral victory’ ascribed to radicalism by Haywood (2005: 10).

Although some authors question the continuity of popular radicalism during the Wars, it is difficult to explain the extended political agitation after 1815 without reference to a wartime radical activity. This activity was built on the experience of the political, cultural, and industrial organizations of the 1790s<sup>17</sup>, on the struggles for the freedom of the press such as the trial *in absentia* of Thomas Paine in 1792, and kept alive during the Wars in electoral campaigns and in new arenas of political intervention such as the Mary-Anne scandal of 1809<sup>18</sup>. In an essay about London radicalism between 1796 and 1802, Anne Hone (1977: 79-101) argues that the accounts of Francis Place and Thomas Hardy on the one hand, and the ideological desertions of such men as Robert Southey, William Godwin, Dr. Parr, and Coleridge on the other, are overvalued whereas the efforts of John Horne Tooke, Sir Francis Burdett, John Gale Jones and others in continuing to promote the cause of radicalism during the Wars are underestimated.

The enforcement of *The Treasonable and Seditious Practices Act* and *The Seditious Meetings Act* (Aspinall and Smith, 2001: 319-22) in the winter of 1795-6, and the banning of all national political organisations in 1799 have certainly dictated the beginning of the end of the ‘revolutionary’ decade. Popular radicalism suffered retreats and defeats with the Wars, but the experience of the 1790s had provided the organisational, and principally the

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<sup>16</sup> *The Examiner* (1808 to 1822) was a weekly paper edited by Leigh Hunt. Devotedly reformist, it championed Queen Caroline in 1820. Hunt compared the gathering of evidence against the Queen by means of a secret commission to the use of spies by the Government in the Cato Street conspiracy. For a general appreciation of the political and cultural role of the *Examiner*, see Mahoney (2002).

<sup>17</sup> These organisations range from the old reform societies as the Society for Constitutional Information (SCI) to the new popular radical ones, as the London Corresponding Society (LCS), the illegal tavern-debating clubs of the war, and the trade union movement. About the LCS, see Wright (1988: 38) and Thompson (1991: Chapter 1).

<sup>18</sup> In January 1809, one of the Regent’s brothers, the Duke of York, commander-in-chief of the army, was accused by the MP Colonel Wardle of having bestowed military promotions through his mistress Mrs. Clarke, who had received payments for these promotions. The Duke was acquitted of corruption but had to resign his command. The combination of sex in high places, corruption and the press reveals the growing interconnections between the private and public spheres that climaxed in 1820 during the Queen Caroline affair.

intellectual basis, for the contentious occupation of the public space by Regency radicalism. The seeds of political defiance symbolised by Paine's *Rights of Man* had been driven underground but they had not perished. LCS members believed they would grow:

They have lopped the tree of liberty to a stump, but have not killed it. The juices have concentrated in the root, and are preparing to shoot forth with tenfold vigour, luxuriance and verdure (*Moral and Political Magazine*, 1796)<sup>19</sup>.

They grew in the post-Napoleonic era, and Regency radicals were the heirs. This inheritance enabled them to carry the flag of opposition further, when post-war depression and industrial upheaval swept the country. The industrial revolution also favoured the popular radical agenda. If only by concentrating workers in great urban centres and workplaces a new awareness was emerging. In *The Rights of Nature* (Thelwall, 1796), there is clear perception of the role played by industrial change in boosting political awareness:

Man is, by his very nature, social and communicative – proud to display the little knowledge he possesses, and eager as opportunity presents, to increase its store. Whatever presses men together [...] though it may generate some vices, is favourable to the diffusion of knowledge, and ultimately promotive of human liberty. Hence every large workshop or manufactory is a sort of political society, which no act of parliament can silence, and no magistrate disperse. [...] A sort of Socratic spirit will necessarily grow up, wherever large bodies of men assemble (Thelwall, 1796: 21, 24).

The understanding that the actions and attitudes of Regency radicals were also influenced by the new economic and social conditions created by the industrial revolution explains why London, the large industrial metropolis, became the centre of Regency radicalism and its radical press.

Who are the people and the public<sup>20</sup> of Regency radicalism? Thomas Wooler stated in 1818, in the *BD*: 'When we speak of the *public*, we must of course be understood to exclude those who hold places under the host of corruption and those who are waiting to fill them' (vol. ii: 179). Richard Carlile wrote in 1825, in the *R*: 'When I say *people*, I mean they who are employed in useful labour. All beyond these form the scum and disease of human society and have no just claim to count as part of the people' (vol.xii: 255). For Cobbett, the word *people* included 'the whole of the efficient part of the community' (*PR*, vol. xxxvii: 443-4).

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Anne Hone (1977: 82-3).

<sup>20</sup> The term 'public' began to appear in the seventeenth-century, and became common in the eighteenth-century to refer to a private audience unrelated to the exercise of state authority (Melton, 2001: 1).



This is an 'open' conception of the radical public that includes the 'lower orders' but that is not confined to them. The *people* are the 'industrious classes', the 'working people', from whom the consistent impulse for parliamentary reform came after 1815. They were the stockingers, hand-loom weavers, cotton-spinners, artisans and, in association with these, small tradesmen and shopkeepers, publicans, booksellers, and professional men (Thompson, 1991: 211, 668).

The 'scum and disease of human society' are those who 'hold places under the host of corruption and those who are 'waiting to fill them'. They are Cobbett's 'Old Corruption', the 'boroughmongers', the 'borough faction', maintained by the taxes of the people, but who escaped from their control. They are the 'corrupt oligarchy' that decided the majority of the membership of the House of Commons, formed governments and tied MPs to them through service posts and pensions (Prothero, 1981: 78).

Notwithstanding this agreement as to a broad analysis of the political structure and the nature of power, Regency radicalism was a decentralised movement. Despite the existence of strong radical districts in London<sup>21</sup>, it lacked a centralised organisation and leadership. This political weakness may explain the reticence of authors such as Harbermas (Burger and Lawrence, 1989: xviii), Hunt (2003: 232-40) and Clark (2004: 113-25) to recognize the voice of Regency radicalism as an alternative to the middle-class critique of the old authority. Ironically, however, it may have been the absence of the control inherent to a central organisation that accounts for the intellectual freedom underlying the eloquent discursive presence of Regency radicalism on the public stage, its specific idiom and strategy.

In ideological terms, Regency radicalism was also a heterogeneous movement. Paine's rationalist argumentative basis coexisted with the rights and traditions of popular constitutionalism which dated back to the seventeenth-century. The tradition of popular constitutionalism is visible in the political weight given to symbolic ritual and to notions of historical precedent. William Cobbett and Richard Carlile symbolise these two different tendencies<sup>22</sup>. Cobbett represents the demand for a new political structure based in tradition, its values and social relations. He wrote in his well-known 'Letter to the Journeymen and Labourers of England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, on the Cause of their Present Miseries', issued in the first number of the cheapened form of the *PR*, on 2 November

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<sup>21</sup> Bethnal Green, Lambeth, Southwark, Finsbury, and Islington were strong radical districts.

<sup>22</sup> For a discussion of the tensions between the 'rationalist fountain of natural-rights theory', the appeal to the popular constitutionalism of Major Cartwright and the use of symbols (such as the cap of liberty) to reinforce and even subvert meanings, see Epstein (1989; 1990).

1816: ‘We have great constitutional laws and principles to which we are immovably attached. We want great alteration, but we want nothing new’ (*PR*, vol. xxxi: 568). An ardent Painite and free-thought republican, Carlile would certainly disagree with Cobbett’s constitutionalism.

Freed from the constraint of wartime, Regency radicalism began to voice the discontent of the labouring classes and to translate it into political demands on the public stage. The privileged instrument was the popular press in all its various genres. The rise to sixty percent of lower class literacy in the early nineteenth-century (Smith, 1984: 161) and technological advances in print production, which allowed for the boom of cheaper publishing, explain the sense of might and freedom that pervades the intellectual presence of Regency radicalism on the public stage. The strongest and most effective style now was not Malthus’s or Burke’s; it was Cobbett’s, Wooler’s, Carlile’s, and Hone’s. It was radical.

The self-assured boldness of the radical discourse was especially directed at the criticism of the established authority, including the heir to the throne. He was the privileged target of criticism. The economic crisis had exposed the contrast between the Regent’s expensively extravagant tastes paid for with public money and the sufferings of the great majority of people. In those times, personalised criticism bore a clear popular radical subtext, and this was new. In public meetings, tavern debating-clubs and especially in the radical press, the Prince was depicted as an irresponsible heir, unaware of national duress and unsympathetic to the needs of his subjects in a way that had never happened before.

Post-Waterloo distress was certainly not caused by the waste and extravagance of the Regent but there was a growing perception that his life-style was immoral and shocking, and that it contributed to aggravating popular discontent. When the Regent rebuilt the Brighton Pavilion as orientalist extravaganza in 1815<sup>23</sup>, he was often depicted in satirical prints as an oriental despot unable to control his appetites and thus unreliable as a constitutional ruler.

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<sup>23</sup> One of the most amusing descriptions of the exterior of the Brighton Pavilion is found in Cobbett’s *Rural Rides* (Cole, 1930: 68). For an interpretation of the satirists’ perception as corruption of the growing drive towards ‘getting and spending’ in this period (with George IV as the major symbol of this corruption), see Fulford (2003: 11-29, especially p. 22).

## The Public Image of the Elder Son of George III

Criticism of the conduct and extravagance of the elder son of George III was not new. It became noted in pamphlets and letters from the 1780s onwards. The following text by Hampden<sup>24</sup> is illustrative:

Whilst we are trembling on the verge of a national bankruptcy, whilst we are deluged with taxes, little short of total confiscation; whilst the hard-earned wages of the poor and industrious peasantry are barely sufficient to supply the common necessities of life, there should live a man who throws the munificent bounty of the nation into the vortex of folly and dissipation, is a reflection that calls a tear from the eye of Humanity and bids the cheek of Justice kindle with resentment (Lister, 1797: 44).

George III himself reproached his son for the 'love of dissipation', in a long letter written on his eighteenth birthday in 1780 (David, 1998: 23). The absence of habits of sobriety, which was to become the target of crude criticism in satirical prints and pamphlet satires, became notorious in the 1800s. Thomas Creevey, who in 1805 was still a feverous admirer of the Prince, recalled the excessive drinking: 'he used to drink a great quantity of wine at dinner [...] and at last some remarkably strong old brandy which he called *Diabolino*' (Maxwell, 1904: 50). Yet, if compared with the postwar time, this type of censure was essentially benevolent, and the fact that it circulated only among the closed social circles of nobility made it politically safe. It might be personally hurtful but it did not threaten the fabric of society. Even William Cobbett conceded that in those days the Prince was 'by no means unpopular' (Cobbett, 1830: 40).

After the Prince of Wales became Regent in 1812, this type of harmless admonition was increasingly replaced by a manifestly political judgement of his life-style and character. From this period onwards, the Regent became a target for satire and, coincidentally, some of the best depictions date from this period. The portrayal of the Regent in several satirical prints, from *The Prince of Whales or The Fisherman at Anchor*,

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<sup>24</sup> Hampden is the pseudonym of Thomas Lister, who wrote *A Mirror for Princes, in a Letter to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales*. Although some favourable pamphlets were published, such as *A Candid Enquiry into the Case of the Prince of Wales; Shewing that a very Considerable Sum is due to his Royal Highness, more than the Amount of his Debts* (Ridgway, 1787), more were published that exposed the Prince's excessive spending, for example *A Letter to the Prince of Wales, on a Second Application to Parliament, to Discharge Debts Wantonly Contracted since May* (Miles, 1795), *John Bull Starving to Pay the Debts of the Royal Prodigal [the Prince of Wales]* *A Letter to the House of Peers* (Hanoverian, 1795), or *God Save the Prince To the Tune of 'God Save the King'* (1797), a satirical song.

to *The Dandy of Sixty*, both by George Cruikshank<sup>25</sup>, was so convincing that the allegory became reality – his fat body, the many discarded mistresses, the variable political loyalties, and the revengeful husband glued to his person. During the Queen Caroline affair these themes were largely reintroduced, notably in satirical prints and pamphlet satires, revealing the persistence of the public judgement.

Cruikshank's print *The Prince of Whales or The Fisherman at Anchor* was incited by Charles Lamb's squib *The Triumph of the Whale*, published in the *Examiner* (a Sunday paper edited by Leigh Hunt) of 15 March 1812. The fact of this publication was relevant, as it launched a controversy in the press with a sequence of loyalist and Whig responses. One such response appeared three days later, in the Tory newspaper *Morning Post*, and it contained the following eulogy of the Regent, indignantly reproduced in the *Examiner* of 22 March:

[...] You are the Glory of the People, you are the Protector of the Arts, you are the Maecenas of the Age. Wherever you appear, you conquer all hearts, wipe away tears, excite desire and love, and win beauty towards you. You breathe eloquence. You inspire the Graces, you are an Adonis of loveliness (*Examiner*, no. 221: 179).

After the quotation, Leigh Hunt attacked the Regent on such violent terms that he and his brother John were condemned in court<sup>26</sup>. The passage, however, became a classic:

[...] What person unacquainted with the true state of the case, would imagine, in reading these astounding eulogies, that the Glory of the People was the subject of millions of shrugs and reproaches! [...] In short, that this delightful, blissful, wise, pleasurable, honourable, virtuous, true, and immortal Prince, was a violator of his word, a libertine over head and ears in debt and disgrace, a despiser of domestic ties, the companion of gamblers and demi-reps, a man who has just closed half a century without one single claim of the gratitude of this country or the respect of posterity (*Examiner*, no. 221: 179).

The outburst of criticism led by journalists, poets, intellectuals, and satirists had, in effect, become political. One of the causes lay in the public perception of the way the Prince treated his wife, especially on ascending to Regent<sup>27</sup>. The perception of the disrespect, even persecution, of his wife had become a subject of public censure and it

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<sup>25</sup>The former appeared in *The Scourge* of 1 May 1812 (Baker, 2005: 83). It was inspired in Gillray's 1798 satirical print *New Morality*, published in the *Anti-Jacobin Review & Magazine* (Gatrell, 2006: 465-6). A detailed interpretation is done by Patten (1992: 103). The latter is an illustration to Hone's 1819 satire *The Political House that Jack Built* (Hone, 1971: 35-58).

<sup>26</sup> They were unsuccessfully defended by Brougham and condemned to two years' imprisonment. The heavy sentences explain why from then on textual criticism of the Regent became almost totally anonymous.

<sup>27</sup> See Chapter One (35).

certainly played a part in the public judgement of the Regent's character and sense of responsibility, not only as a ruler but also as a husband and a man. The *Letter to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent*, an anonymous letter published in the *Independent Whig*<sup>28</sup> on 26 July 1812, summed up the perception of the Regent's private and public conduct by a growing section of the public:

Is it honour which prompts you to quit the arms of a wife for the endearments of a wanton; or with unblushing effrontery to introduce that wanton before the chaste eyes of your royal mother? Is it a proof of princely honour to toy away the night in debauchery, the day in lascivious enjoyment, and bid the business of the world stand still? While your country groans in distress, and your People are sinking under their privations, is it a sense of princely honour which bids you revel in profusion, and mock their sorrows with your ostentatious prodigality? (Junius, 1812: 16).

These attacks are often explained by Whig resentment in consequence of the Regent's decision to retain the Tory Government<sup>29</sup>. However, the negative public image of the Prince was not contextual; it eroded inexorably after 1812<sup>30</sup>. The popular agitation for political change through parliamentary reform on the one hand and social, economic and intellectual changes on the other, were placing the focus on such qualities as personal responsibility, effort, and accountability in the performance of public office, including the office of king.

These were the traits of a man's character increasingly valued by society. Even today's more benevolent views of the Prince's personality found in Hibbert (1976), Smith (1999), and Baker (2005) – which stress his sensitive, generous, good-hearted nature<sup>31</sup> and the knowledgeable patronage of the arts<sup>32</sup> (music, literature, architecture) – do not refute the accusations of extravagant and dissipated life-style and ill-treatment of his wife which, in the scales of time, were increasingly censured. In a certain sense, the Regent was the victim of cultural change. His vices – gambling, drinking, womanising, and propensity to using indecorous language – might be common to all classes, including the ruling elite, but

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<sup>28</sup> A number of names, from Sir Philip Francis (1740-1818), politician and pamphleteer, to Edmund Burke have been advanced as the real authors of Junius's letters.

<sup>29</sup> For a view of the controversy over the motives behind the Regent's choice of the Tories, see New (1961: 84), Smith (1999:168-9), Baker (2005: 10-2), and Gatrell (2006: 501).

<sup>30</sup> Twenty years after his death, in the 1850s, the writer William Makepeace Thackeray still drew a very critical portrait of George IV in *The Four Georges* (Saintsbury, 2009: 891-924).

<sup>31</sup> See *Statement by George IV* (Jennings, 1885: 310-2), when the King refers to how he helped Sheridan when the latter was destitute and sick.

<sup>32</sup> David (1998: 15) traces the Prince's lifelong love of the arts. In 1824, George IV carried out an extensive programme of repair and refurbishment at Windsor Castle under the supervision of the architect Sir Jerry Wyattville. He also employed John Nash to rebuild Buckingham House, turning it into today's Buckingham Palace.

new values were making their way. In this environment, the recognized intellectual capacity, the refined tastes and personal sophistication were losing relevance as requirements to assess a man's character.

As king, George IV revealed the same resistance to understand his times and his country. Official documents, such as a *Memorandum* of 18 April 1820 respecting the Imperial Crown to be used at the coronation, and Eldon's comment on the King's demands for money, illustrate his unawareness of the spirit of the times. The *Memorandum* states that the King had approved the drawing of 'a rich brill[ant] Crown', for whose 'necessary splendour a less sum than £100,000 would not be sufficient' (Aspinall, 1938: 323).

A week later, George IV wrote to Lord Liverpool saying that 'public economy is important [...] unless it shall be found to be inconsistent with the dignity and splendour of the Crown, which the king considers to be inseparable from the public interest' (Aspinall, 1938: 326). On the following day, Lord Eldon admitted that the King 'has been pretty well disposed to part with us all, because we could not make additions to his revenue. This we thought conscientiously we could not do in the present state of the country'. He further stated that the King was spending vast sums on the Pavilion, for which, 'he will be much puzzled to pay out of his present income' (Aspinall, 1938: 326, fn. 3).

The motion respecting the *Civil List and The Droits of the Crown*, presented on 5 May 1820 by Henry Brougham, and published in the *LM*, reflects the same spirit:

It is expedient that the House should take into consideration the Crown revenues not under the control of Parliament, and make such provision touching the same as should be consistent with the dignity of the Crown and the interests of the subject. [The honourable member sat down amidst the cheers of the House.] (*LM*, 12 May 1820).

Radical writers and satirists echoed these ideas in numerous textual forms and genres. The satirical print *His Most Gracious Majesty Hum IVth & His Ministers Going to Play the Devil with the Satirists*<sup>33</sup>, attributed to George Cruikshank, and published by Thomas Dolby in 1820 is significant in this way. Wellington and other ministers are shown dragging the 'Regent's bomb' to shoot down the satirists. Like gnats, the satirists circle in the air, wave printing presses or dance around them in mockery. The king shouts: "Zound and fury down with them! Here! Sid, you old tottering h-mb-g. Desire the bishops to come along with the tinder-box and matches! Don't you see! They are ridiculing my very bomb (pronounced "bum" at the time). I tell you again, I am k-g, and be d-d to you all, and will

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<sup>33</sup> A copy is held by the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California.

do just as I please!!!” On the lower left-hand corner, the ghost of George III advises: “O my dear son! If you prosecute them you will make their fortunes – but if you will only conduct yourself like a man and a gentleman you will destroy their profession”. Satirical attack was often an instrument with which to criticise the old order, symbolised by George IV.

The pamphlet entitled *To the King, From the Author of The King’s Treatment of the Queen*, published in 1821 by W. Hone and possibly written by him, alleged that the ‘state of disgust and inflammation’ of the people could not be ascribed to the ‘licentiousness of the Press’, as the supporters of George IV argued, but to the new demands of ever larger sections of the population regarding new standards of private and public conduct: ‘I can assure your Majesty that the Press does not, nay dare not always publish what is uttered unreservedly respecting your ministers, and yourself’ (Hone, 1821d: 4). The new demands concerning private and public conduct rejected double-standards of morality and sexuality:

The ministers said, we must un-queen your wife, because she is immoral. Now, if they had succeeded in that attempt, what would prevent a wicked faction the next year, or sooner, from saying, we will dethrone George the Fourth, because he is immoral (Hone, 1821d: 9).

These demands were increasingly reverberated by a vocal radical press that used a satirical tone to undermine authority. George IV was the favourite target of this new print culture. No other royal personage was so lampooned. Woodward (1992: 23) believes that ‘the English monarchy could hardly have survived a successor of his kind’.

## **The Radical Press: the Battlefield of Regency Radicalism**

The place *par excellence* of Regency radicalism as intentionally disruptive discourse is the radical press, whose culture is characterised by a mock-satiric style. This mock-satirical atmosphere – the delight in irony, satire and parody – had been a defining feature of radical culture since the 1790s. The mock-satiric tone of parts of *Rights of Man* – the inaugural text of radical journalistic language – accounted for much of its success among the working people:

The more aristocracy appeared, the more it was despised [...]. It lost ground more from contempt than hatred, and was rather jeered at as an ass, than dreaded as a lion. This is the general character of aristocracy, or what are called nobles or nobility, or rather nobility, in all countries (Kuklick, 1989: 111).

Gilmartin (1996: 20-30) rightly sees the radical press as an ‘alternative structure of politics [...] stubbornly active and physical, never confined to the printed page’ in opposition to the middle-class sense of retreat to the ‘virtual space of print’ symbolised by the gentleman reading the paper while sipping his morning coffee – the press as separate from its social dimension. The Regency radical press, on the contrary, derived much of its energy from the oral contact with its audience in taverns, public houses, and assemblies, where the periodicals were read aloud, commented upon and used as sources of debate.

Public meetings, taverns<sup>34</sup>, and public houses were important arenas, where a bold confrontational discourse – often satirical – was exercised with unprecedented popular impact. Taverns and public houses were the pivot of the working and social life for many of London’s working-classes. They went there to release tensions through traditional recreational customs and rites, but those places were also vehicles for protest and the expression of anti-establishment feelings. The atmosphere created worked to eliminate social deference, the basis of Regency radicalism. It characterized what Belchem (1996: 40) designated ‘a burlesque counter-theatre which mocked and demystified the establishment and its public ceremonial’.

The intercommunication between pressmen and the public was complemented and reinforced by the old tradition of the tavern-debating club<sup>35</sup>, whose informality and conviviality proved an imaginative way of circumventing the problems posed by the anti-radical legislation of 1817 and 1819 (McCalman, 1988: 113-4). This active relationship was also incremented by the habit of publishers and printers of posting their satirical prints on the shop windows of their print shops. Sometimes large crowds gathered to enjoy the *gratis* exhibition of the newest satirical prints, and to hear those literate speak them out for the benefit and gratification of the audience. This was the case, for example, with the crowds that gathered around William Hone’s shop in January 1819 to view George Cruikshank’s *Bank Restriction Note* (Hunt, 2003:12-3). The exhibition of satirical prints in the London print shop windows was not only a free entertainment but also a characteristic of the city remarked on by foreign visitors (Godfrey, 1984: 33).

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<sup>34</sup> The ‘Crown and Anchor’ tavern was one of the great London cultural and radical political centres from the 1790s (Parolin, 2010: 14).

<sup>35</sup> By the end of 1816, details gathered by the Home Office (often employing spies) revealed the existence of seven London sections of political gatherings (of around 120 people each) on the model of the free-and-easy debating club, covering the whole week with political meetings. Some groups were Spencean, others gathered to hear William Cobbett’s *PR* or Thomas Wooler’s *BD* read. The atmosphere of the tavern debating clubs mingled relaxed, blasphemous enjoyment, satirical toasts, patriotic songs and didactic debate, escapism and political protest (Worrall, 1992: 95-101).



Hence, the Regency radical press was not simply a platform for print oratory. It created communal identity and cohesion and it became a vital channel of communication and mobilisation, especially through its journalism. Radical journalism was crucial in building up this ‘oppositional infrastructure’ (Haywood, 2005: 5). The ephemeral periodical *The White Hat*<sup>36</sup> clearly stated this mission on 16 October 1819:

The voice of the country, as that of one man, should cry aloud for RADICAL REFORM. To promote that cry is the object of the present publication. It is added to the many already in circulation, with the hope of aiding in the same good cause; and to discharge the sacred duty of contributing something [...] towards the salvation of this country. (Keen, 2003, vol. 6: 253).

Although few workers could afford to buy a newspaper and many could not read, public houses and even barbers’ shops took in newspapers which could be read aloud to the illiterate. Radical periodicals were also read at Reformers’ meetings. James Watson reports how in 1818, while passing along Briggate, he:

Saw at the corner of Union Court a bill, which stated that the radical reformers held their meetings in a room in that court. Curiosity prompted me to go and hear what was going on. I found them reading Wooler’s *Black Dwarf*, Carlile’s *Republican*, and Cobbett’s *Register* (Harrison, 2007: 96).

Thus, the heart of the Regency radical press was the radical periodical, a weekly paper of political comment. Released from the constraints of wartime, the Regency radical periodical employed a bolder language than its predecessors of the 1790s; it was more ‘incessantly aggressive and wilfully, hilariously rude’ (Smith, 1984: 155). Cobbett’s *Political Register* (1816-35), Wooler’s *Black Dwarf* (1817-24), Carlile’s *Republican* (1819-26), *Sherwin’s Political Register* (1818-19), John Wade’s *Gorgon* (1818-19), Thomas Davidson’s *Medusa* (1819), the ultra-radical *Cap of Liberty* (1819) amongst others, became the main battlefield of Regency radicalism.

The new periodical aimed at commenting on events rather than reporting them. It placed the emphasis on the editorial essay, and was usually the work of a single individual. In order to shape events effectively, it should create its own identity. The merit of William Cobbett lies precisely in having found that particular identity mark, which he quite immodestly claimed, for example, in the *PR* of 11 January 1817 (vol. xxxii: 45). Firstly, he made one of the most significant innovations of this period<sup>37</sup>: he found a loophole in the

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<sup>36</sup> Printed and published between 16 October 1819 and 11 December 1819 by C. Teulon.

<sup>37</sup> More accurately, the innovation was suggested to Cobbett by Lord Cochrane (Alves, 2002: 113-6).

wording of the Stamp Act which provided his *PR* with a much wider circulation and audience<sup>38</sup>. Published as a four column wide pamphlet containing just opinion and no news, the *PR* avoided the four penny stamp duty (Wright, 1988: 65) and cost only two pence. It thus opened the press to a lower class readership. Cobbett announced this innovation in the *PR* of 26 October 1816:

[...] I propose to address, in my next *Register*, a *Letter to the Labourers and Journeymen of this Kingdom*, calculated to lay before them a perfect knowledge of the real causes of their sufferings [...]. That this letter may have as wide a circulation as possible, it is my intention to cause it to be published on a single open sheet of paper, and to cause it to be sold at a very low price<sup>39</sup>.

When, on the following issue, 2 November 1816, he wrote ‘As to the cause of our present miseries, it is the enormous amount of the taxes, which the government compels us to pay for the support of its army, its placemen, its pensioners’, he was innovating in more than one way. On the one hand, he was presenting political corruption as the motto of Regency radicalism, and on the other he was changing political discourse turning it into the voice of the common man becoming public for the first time (Wahrman, 1993: 404). Cobbett used a new style in his *PR* that ‘translated’ domestic politics into a kind of language that the working-man could understand and with which he could identify<sup>40</sup>. The catchword ‘Old Corruption’, a symbol of the corruption of the state made up of ministers, boroughmongers, pensioners, clergy, squires, farmers, manufacturers is a good example of this kind of down-to-earth, ‘unphilosophic’ approach.

In spite of his many contradictions and shortcomings<sup>41</sup>, Cobbett was the most influential voice of the post-war years among the workers in the manufacturing districts, as the writings of contemporaries like Samuel Bamford<sup>42</sup> attest. He strengthened the political

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<sup>38</sup> The original price of the *Political Register* was 1s ½d (12 ½d), which put it far beyond the reach of its intended public. According to Thompson (1991: 789), at its climax between October 1816 and February 1817 Cobbett’s *2d. Political Register* was running at something between 40,000 and 60,000 copies each week, a figure that left any competitor out of sight. The circulation of the leading daily, *The Times*, was 5,730, and the *Observer* (weekly), 6,860 copies. Wright (1988: 66) suggests that its circulation could have been even higher.

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in Cranfield (1978: 92).

<sup>40</sup> See Thompson’s inspired interpretation of Cobbett’s rhetorical strategies in one of his later articles (Thompson, 1991: 824-6).

<sup>41</sup> In a ‘Letter to the Editor’ of *The Yellow Dwarf* of 9 May 1818, a reader draws a merciless portrait of Cobbett’s personal and political character (Keen, 2003, vol.2: 366-7).

<sup>42</sup> Bamford, *Passages* (Dunckley, 1905: 12). Thompson (1991: 698) considers Bamford ‘the greatest chronicler of early nineteenth-century radicalism’. Cobbett’s popularity among the working people turned him into a favourite target of loyalist propaganda. In *The Real or Constitutional House That Jack Built*, Cobbett is vilified as ‘the changeling, / the worthless and base / Just arriv’d from New York, with / his impudent face’ (Asperne and Sams, 1819).

and cultural bonds amongst the working people and reached a wider audience than any other political writer had done since Paine's *Rights of Man*. In all that he was a pioneer.

Regency radical culture was an 'oppositional network' (Gilmartin, 1996: 4) that wove together the writings of the radical press and the concrete political action of debating clubs, assemblies, public meetings and petitions. Since the Wilkes affair, this network had developed new forms of political activity in relation to traditional institutional ones, and nurtured a growing sense of communal identity and political autonomy, which for Melton (2001: 33-4) largely explain the increased radical capacity to make their specific demands on the public stage.

The use of a satirical discourse as political language was the identity mark of the radical press. The publication of several articles entitled 'A Peep at the Peers' in the radical periodical the *BD*, containing a list of the names of the peers together with the amount of public money they received<sup>43</sup>, exemplifies how a satirical tone is efficiently used to criticise and undermine oligarchic power. In one of these articles, issued during the Queen Caroline affair, the 'Black Dwarf' in London addresses the 'Yellow Bonze' at Japan:

Somebody, my friend, has been peeping at the peers of this celebrated kingdom. [...] The peers are now the judges of the Queen, and the King is prosecutor. This peep at the peers is intended to show how very *impartial* they must be in their decision. Though this is *only a peep*, it has a little disconcerted their Lordships. Lord Eldon, good soul, declares he never read so *much falsehood* in his life! What lucky fellow, for a lawyer and a Lord Chancellor! (vol. v: 313).

At the end, the 'Black Dwarf' says: 'This is as much as thou wilt be able to digest at once, unless thou hast a better stomach than my friend John Bull, who is rather sick of it. He signs, 'Thy friend, The Black Dwarf' (vol. v: 318). The intellectual and literary sophistication of this text speaks in favour of the forward-looking intention of violation of respectability and against the idea that radical writers were rough activists. Even radicals connected with the ultra-radical milieu – George Cannon, William Benbow, and William Dugdale – had considerable learning and respectable family background (McCalman, 1984: 89-94). Some prided themselves in being refined philosophers and men of letters.

Consequently, rhetorical violation of respectability coexisted with the praise of the traditional artisan virtues of independence and respectability in this 'vigorous and bawdy

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<sup>43</sup> In the way of James Wade's *Black Book: Corruption Unmasked* (Wade, 1820) and William Hone's *The Political 'A, Apple-Pie'* (Hone, 1971: 135-66). Wade stopped publishing the radical periodical *The Gorgon* to dedicate himself to the investigation of the revenues of the aristocracy, clergy, the expenditure of the Civil List and many others, as detailed in the long title of this book.

plebeian culture'. 'Artisan respectability' is patent in many radical texts. At the time of 'Peterloo', prints such as *A Representation of the Manchester Reform Meeting Dispersed by the Civil and Military Power Augt 16<sup>th</sup> 1819* (BMC, 13262) depicted the crowd at St. Peter's fields as decent, well-dressed and good-mannered labourers. Excerpts of Samuel Bamford's *Passages in the Life of a Radical* stress the efforts made by the organisers of the Manchester meeting at St Peter's Fields in 1819 to convey an atmosphere of the decent, orderly and peaceful disposition of the people:

I may say with truth that we presented a most respectable assemblage of labouring men; all were decently, though humbly attired; and I noticed not even one who did not exhibit a white Sunday's shirt, a neck-cloth, and other apparel in the same clean, though homely condition (Dunckley, 1905: 151).

The language and imagery of Regency radical discourse have to do with political assertion, not with the questioning of the social attitudes praised by Francis Place in his *Autobiography* (Thale, 1972). The distinction between rough social manners (which in effect tended to be considered deviant) and the unruly vocabulary of many Regency texts, especially satirical texts, draws attention to the 'complex relationships between ideology and graphic representation', as Donald (1996: 184) notes, and to the power of language to undermine the ideological and symbolic basis of the established authority.

The rhetorical confrontation enclosed in this idea of politics implies a notion of language as cultural and of its role as political. It means that understanding of the world and of one's position in it depends on seeing language as an instrument of thinking and communication, but also as a struggle over meanings and control over words. This politico-cultural character of language<sup>44</sup> is a focal point of William Cobbett's politics<sup>45</sup>:

Now is the time for you to become grammarians. In your place, I should reason thus: 'How shall I be able most effectually to annoy the tyrants? By my pen, combined with my other means. How shall I qualify myself to use my pen with effect? By knowing how to write correctly. How shall I get that knowledge? By learning grammar. Therefore I will learn grammar. [...] Without literary talent you will be able to do little (PR, vol. xxxv: 10).

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<sup>44</sup> For Bakhtin, language is 'the heart of any culture' (Clark and Holquist, 1984: 291).

<sup>45</sup> For a discussion of the relationships between education and radicalism, see Alves (1985; 1995).

The idea of culture as an essentially political act is most clearly revealed by the importance attached to the diffusion of literacy among the labouring classes<sup>46</sup>. The conviction that the diffusion of literacy was instrumental to political awareness was one of the cements that linked Regency radicalism to the popular radicalism of the 1790s and 1800s. For Thomas Spence, intellectual improvement was critical to political self-determination:

My father used to make my Brothers and me read the Bible to him while working at his Business and at the End of every Chapter encouraged us to give our opinions on what we had just read. By these Means I acquired an early habit of reflecting on every Occurrence which past before me as well as on what I read<sup>47</sup>.

It may appear strange that Spence published the first edition of the report of his 1801 trial<sup>48</sup> (Spence, 1803) in phonetic script with a table of the Spencean alphabet, but the relevant aspect is the emphasis placed on intellectual improvement. This intellectual attitude accounts for one of the originalities of Regency radicalism: the majority of its leaders intertwined political activism and authorship. Moderate reformers such as William Cobbett, William Hone and Thomas Wooler, ultra-radicals such as the Evanses, Thomas Preston, 'Dr.' Watson, James Watson (one of the main orators at the Spa Fields rising), Samuel Waddington, Robert Charles Fair (shoemaker poet), George Cannon (pressman), William Benbow (bookseller and publisher), Thomas Davidson (editor and pamphleteer), were authors<sup>49</sup>. Thompson (1991: 814) sees in *Life and Struggles of William Lovett, in His Pursuit of Bread, Knowledge and Freedom* by the self-educated artisan and Chartist leader William Lovett (1967), a symbol of that intellectual culture.

The value attached to intellectual improvement as instruction is often touted as signalling the presence of a middle-class element within popular radicalism (McCalman, 1988: 153; Harrison, 2007: 38-89). It is doubtful, however, whether this middle-class element played a relevant political role. The distress and the repression of the post-war

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<sup>46</sup> Thompson (1991: 783-90) considers that something like two out of every three working men were able to read after some fashion in the early part of the century, though rather fewer could write. Although some authors question the extent of the diffusion of literacy (Harrison, 2007), the abundance of educational institutions for working people suggests that this effort should not be understated. Harrison (2007: 39) approaches the need for the literacy of the working people as one of the functions of the new industrial society: 'to break down the old and spread the new' society. However, this aim was largely exceeded.

<sup>47</sup> Quoted in Worrall (1992: 77).

<sup>48</sup> Thomas Spence (1750-1814) was tried for sedition and abuse of the liberty of the press and sentenced to a year's imprisonment for publishing *The Restorer of Society to Its Natural State* (Spence, 1801). The principles of property and agricultural reform were a crucial issue in radical politics (Parssinen (1973).

<sup>49</sup> See McCalman (1988: 152-62) and Worrall (1997) for a brief discussion of the intellectual, authorial and publishing activities of some of the above mentioned Regency radicals.

time led Regency radicals to a political praxis and goals that were not decisively influenced by middle-class ideology. Some sections of the labouring classes – artisans, outworkers, factory hands – were clearly the material losers of industrial change, and the radical intelligentsia viewed those changes also as an opportunity for political assertion.

The idea of politics as rhetorical confrontation was forged by the self-confident awareness of an identity of interests against those of the ruling elite – the ‘people’ *versus* ‘Old Corruption’ – but it also resulted from the struggles against the cultural and legal frontiers that excluded Regency radicals from political debate. Through taxes, trials for sedition and blasphemy, or seizure of property, post-war repression aimed directly at stifling radical voices. Thus, the struggle for the liberty of the press became a key issue whose cultural richness and long term consequences made it the crown of the culture of Regency radicalism.

The struggle for the liberty of the press in the early nineteenth-century represents another legacy of the 1790s. The arguments used by Regency radicals were not substantially different from those used by Thomas Erskine in his defence of Thomas Paine in 1792 (Keane, 1991: 2-5). There were differences but these had to do with the fact that, in their irreverence, radical writers were not isolated from the ‘people’ now; they were backed by a larger and more self-confident audience. That was the cement that would unite ‘us’ against ‘them’, and enable the transformation of the political and cultural paradigm that rejected radical writers (Epstein, 1989; Calhoun and MacQuarrie, 2004).

Thus, from 1817 to 1823 direct political intervention through the popular press was treated with severity by the authorities. In 1817, William Hone was tried for the publication of three two-penny pamphlets parodying the Catechism, the Litany, and the Creed of the Church of England<sup>50</sup>. Thomas Wooler was also tried in 1817 for having published two articles in the third and tenth numbers of the *BD*<sup>51</sup>. Repression was especially severe in 1819. Many reformers<sup>52</sup> were convicted in the sequence of ‘Peterloo’ and the *Six Acts*. Some were journalists, as Thomas Wooler (*Black Dwarf*), James Wroe

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<sup>50</sup> Hone had in fact published four pamphlets in January and February 1817, in the interim between the Spa Fields meetings and the suspension of Habeas Corpus: *The Late John Wilkes’s Catechism of a Ministerial Member* (Hone, 1817a), *The Political Litany* (Hone, 1817b), *The Sinecurist’s Creed, or Belief* (1817c), and *The Bullet Te Deum, or the Canticle of the Stone* (1817d). Only the first three were brought to trial.

<sup>51</sup> These articles were ‘The Right of Petition’ and ‘The Past – The Present – and the Future’. Wooler was arrested in early May 1817 and charged with seditious libel. He was brought to trial on 5 June at King’s Bench, before Justice Charles Abbott (Epstein, 1994: 39-40). For an account and discussion of the importance of Wooler’s trial as assertion of Regency radical culture, see Epstein (1994: 29-69).

<sup>52</sup> Activists of the reform movement who were not journalists or writers, such as Joseph Johnson, John Knight, and Joseph Healey were also sentenced after Peterloo (Epstein, 1994: 66).

(*Manchester Observer*), George Edmonds (*Edmonds's Weekly Register*, Birmingham), Lewis (*Recorder*, Coventry); others were apprentices, employees, or newsvendors, not to mention Sir Francis Burdett, Henry Hunt and Charles Wolseley (Maccoby, 2002: 361). Richard Carlile was tried in 1819<sup>53</sup> for republishing Paine's *Age of Reason* and Palmer's *Principles of Nature* (Maccoby, 2002: 360).

The trials of William Hone and Thomas Wooler symbolize both the attempt by the establishment to silence radical voices, and the performed cultural and political challenge by a culture. They were two of the sixteen people tried by ex-officio informations in 1817 (Smith, 1984: 164). They proved their rhetorical capacity to face the power of the state and win (Epstein, 1994: 29-69; Hone, 1818). They used their trials as stages for political and cultural assertion. Hone's trial, especially, became famous, and it occupies a special place in the struggle for the freedom of the press. Physically debilitated, he spoke for about seven hours on three consecutive days in December 1817 without legal counselling and was acquitted. He combined bold rhetorical opposition with the distinctive mark of radical discourse – the 'art of irony and satire' (Hamburger, 1985: 738). His trial illustrates the exercise of satiric language to challenge state authority.

There is some irony in the three acquittals of a bankrupt, ill and small time author and publisher. His trials epitomize the confrontational attitude, the resilience and the intellectual capacity of radical authors and publishers towards the entire judicial establishment. Although after his acquittals Hone did not publish satires for a year, when he resumed publishing in 1819 his satiric output acquired special vigour and, in partnership with George Cruikshank, he became the leading satirist of the period.

These were formative experiences. The victories over the power of state reinforced their self-confidence and sharpened their discourse. Even when the state managed to carry most of the 115 prosecutions and 45 'ex-officio informations' tried in the aftermath of 'Peterloo', reports of the trials circulated widely containing the very passages for which the defendants were sentenced. The impact of Hone's trials shows how laughter generated by ridicule and mockery erased hierarchical distinctions and produced a potentially seditious attitude towards established authority. That was what made Hone dangerous in the eyes of the Government (Kent and Ewen, 2002: 10-1). As a consequence, the establishment often chose not to prosecute satires to avoid the publicity they inevitably raised.

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<sup>53</sup> An account of the trial of Richard Carlile can be found in *The Cap of Liberty* of 13 October 1819, in an article entitled "Christian Persecution N° I" (Keen, 2003: vol.4: 97-9).

The most popular forms of the Regency radical press – pamphlets, satirical prints, periodicals – contributed to what today might be called the democratization of society. The focus on information about parliamentary acts and debates, arrests and libel trials (especially in Wooler's *Black Dwarf*), petitions and public meetings grew out of the conviction that information was education and that both were fundamental instruments of intellectual improvement and a condition of political knowledge. As usual, Cobbett was one of the best to translate the sense of marginalisation of radical discourse, but also the certainty of their 'eloquence' and 'knowledge':

It was perceived that the spirit of reading was abroad. It was perceived that the people *would* read. [...] You called them *rabble*, and their speeches and resolutions you called *trash*; but you had sense enough to see that this *trash* was such as you were unable to come up to. You saw that political knowledge of the highest sort was possessed in abundance by those whom your insolent pride had placed in the 'lower orders'; that the leaders in the cause of Reform had eloquence as well as knowledge at command; and that it was impossible any longer to keep the people in the dark (*Political Pamphlet*, 6 September 1817, vol. xxxii: 718-9).

It is true that the vocabularies through which the delight in unrespectability of Regency journalism and satire was expressed incremented communicative efficiency. Yet, there was more at stake. There was a cultural challenge under way. The political struggle for parliamentary reform was fought side by side with a cultural struggle that challenged accepted notions of 'high' and 'low' culture. William Cobbett's *Political Register*, Thomas Wooler's *Black Dwarf*, Richard Carlile's *Republican*, William Hone's satires, and a plethora of satirical prints turned the political opposition to the King, Castlereagh the Foreign Affairs Secretary, Sidmouth the Home Office Secretary, Eldon the Lord Chancellor, the Milan Commission, and the Italian witnesses into a literary/artistic struggle. That is why the struggle for the freedom of the press was so central to Regency radicalism.

That was the rationale that built the radical intervention in the public dialogue. This understanding is stressed by revisions of Habermas's 1962 text in the work of Lottes (1979) and Eley (1992). They claim that the radical rhetoric and action of opposition and confrontation show that the 'transformation' of the 'public sphere' was not exclusive to the middle-class. Eley (1992: 305-6) notes that the public sphere was always constituted in conflict, with competing publics at every stage, and not as the spontaneous and class specific achievement of the bourgeoisie.



This intertwining of politics and culture was the fertile ground that provided Regency radicalism with its force and imagination and that enabled the outburst of the radical print culture during the Queen Caroline affair. Regency radicalism translated adverse economic, political, and social conditions into cultural energy and privileged a struggle whose main weapons were words and images – a cultural struggle.

Regency radicalism ended with the trial and execution of Arthur Thistlewood and other conspirators of the Cato Street conspiracy, the West Riding risings (Belchem, 1996: 49) and the Queen Caroline affair of 1820-1<sup>54</sup>.

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<sup>54</sup> 1819 is the year generally proposed to signal the end of the period of post-war agitation. However, considering that the Queen Caroline affair of 1820-1 constituted a period of intensive social upheaval, 1821 is defended in this study as the end year of this period.



# CHAPTER THREE

## The Radical Periodicals



Fig. 8 R. Cruikshank, *Public Opinion*, 1820

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## Print Culture and Public Opinion

Although the *Six Acts* closed the legal loophole ‘discovered’ by Cobbett in 1816 and made radical periodicals more expensive (they cost 6 pence), three survived and were given extra visibility by the Affair: Carlile’s *Republican* (1819-26), Wooler’s *Black Dwarf* (1817-24), and *Cobbett’s Weekly Political Register* (1802-35). These periodicals continued to pursue the aim defined by Cobbett in 1816: to enlighten and to educate but also to mobilise. Yet, mobilisation acquired a novel meaning during this crisis. It meant essentially to empower public opinion and to place print culture at the vanguard of political struggle and weakening ‘physical force’ radical strategies (Worrall, 1998: 170). The Queen Caroline affair became an opportunity for what William Blake called ‘mental fight’<sup>1</sup>, as opposed to ‘physical fight’.

The title of the print by Robert Cruikshank, *Public Opinion* (Fig. 8), highlights the strategic shift<sup>2</sup>. Likewise, Cobbett’s vehement denial that the reading of his *PR* or of any other radical writing might have influenced the Cato Street conspiracy (*PR*, vol. xxxvi: 587-8) indicates the radical preference for a different type of political action. These two examples suggest that a common political vision underlies the two most influential forms of the radical press: satire and the periodical press. It was the coming of age of a culture backed by a trusted audience<sup>3</sup>.

The fact that the agitation was markedly literary imposes the analysis of its literary/discursive dimension. Three main discursive strategies dominate the version of the Affair in the radical periodicals – the didactic, the satiric, and the melodramatic – and they were the means by which radical journalists and writers used the printed word and image to undercut political and cultural authority. There was clearly an ongoing contest, not only about political, but also about cultural authority, which Mee (2000) already pinpoints in the

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<sup>1</sup> This expression is taken from *Jerusalem*, a small poem in the preface to *Milton a Poem*, written and illustrated between 1804 and 1810.

<sup>2</sup> In her correspondence, Lady Lyttelton, lady-in-waiting to Queen Victoria from 1838, refers to this print as one of the ‘good caricatures about the business’ (Wyndham, 1912: 224-5).

<sup>3</sup> The word ‘audience’ is used instead of the word ‘readers’ to highlight the importance of orality, typical of radical culture.

1790s, but which acquired decisive impetus in the post-war period, leading to a climax during the Queen Caroline affair.

The didactic mode materialized essentially in the discussion of the legal issues related to the prosecution of the Queen through a Bill of Pains and Penalties. That discussion was viewed as an opportunity for intellectual improvement, a permanent radical concern. The satiric mode is the critical mode *par excellence*. Although satire pervades the treatment of the Queen Caroline affair in radical periodicals, it materialized essentially in the satirical prints and pamphlet satires issued during the Affair. The satiric mode reintroduced the themes of the licentiousness, squandering and self-interestedness of George IV and his ministers, which since the beginning of the Regency had become true metaphors of political corruption in satirical prints and pamphlet satires, in letters and newspaper articles.

The rhetoric of melodrama presented Queen Caroline as a wronged wife, an injured Queen, and a radical heroine. The treatment of these themes partly revived the period between 1806 ('Delicate Investigation') and 1814 (exile), when publications derived from pirated or fictional versions of *The Book* established the framework for the melodramatic representation of Queen Caroline's marital woes in 1820<sup>4</sup>. This type of sentimental literature published between 1811 and 1814 was republished in 1820 by radical publishers such as John Fairburn (who republished his edition of *The Book*), Effingham Wilson (who republished his earlier pro-Caroline and anti-Regent tracts), William Mason (who republished Thomas Ashe's *Algernon and Caroline, or the Spirit of the Spirit*), and by the Grub Street publishers of ballads and song sheets James Catnach and John Pitts (McCalman, 1988: 164-5). The radical periodicals that survived the restrictive press legislation of 1819 explored the dynamics of popular support of the Queen, revitalized by these publications, reaching wider audiences in 1820.

The sheer number of adverse political publications issued everyday by the print shops favoured this dynamics, and the result was that the Government became, at least partly, powerless to enforce the *Six Acts* that it had passed the year before<sup>5</sup>. As Cobbett retrospectively noted, the Queen Caroline affair 'let loose for a time every tongue and

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<sup>4</sup> An example is the anonymous three-volume work published in 1811 *The Spirit of the Book; or, Memoirs of Caroline, Princess of Habsburgh* (McCalman, 1988: 163). This romantic, melodramatic rendering was not produced exclusively in the form of the popular romance. These themes were also introduced in satirical prints in 1812 (George, 1949: xxviii). The theme of the wronged wife figured in a print of 1812 by Williams, *A Midsummer Nights Dream* (BMC 11893).

<sup>5</sup> Yet, there were a number of political trials in 1820. Thomas Wooler, Major Cartwright, and others were tried and found guilty of conspiracy (Borrow, 1825: 368), and Robert Wedderburn was also tried and found guilty of blasphemy (Scrivener, 1999).

every pen in England. There was no law of libel for nearly a year; men talked in public and in print as if they were sitting by their fire-side' (Cobbett, 1830: 564). Radical journalists took advantage of the temporary freedom of the press to publicise their demands in the midst of a wider audience and, consequently, public opinion was strengthened.

The growing influence of public opinion mirrored the call for new attitudes towards monarchy and the government which materialized in demands for more transparency and for the need of political leaders to live up to certain standards, not only of public but also of private behaviour (Wahrman, 1993; Schweizer, 2006). These new expectations fostered the scrutiny in the press of the private conduct of those in power, which may have contributed to the outbreak of royal scandal (Kass, 2007: 4). Seen in this light, the Queen Caroline affair has encouraged arguments in favour of the freedom of expression and the democratisation of society.

The expansion of print and the massive popular response it elicited had yet another consequence: it changed the face of popular radicalism itself, by making it more 'popular', even populist. The populist dimension of the radical discourse was most prominent in the production of ephemeral print forms such as ballads, songs, advertisements, pamphlet satires and satirical prints, but it was also present in the less ephemeral rendering of the Affair in the radical periodicals. Making use of the press to discuss matters of general interest, and directing it at the interests (literary, cultural, political) of a lower-class audience constituted a forward-looking element of the radical participation in the Queen Caroline affair.

Every stage of the Affair was closely followed in the press. The most widely read newspapers of the day supported the Queen, notably the *Pilot*, the *Evening Star*, the *Morning Chronicle* (1769-1862), and *The Times* (1785-). There certainly had been protest and agitation conducted through the press in the past<sup>6</sup>, but the crucial difference lies in the fact that the dimension of the movement on behalf of Queen Caroline in all print media was unprecedented. Notwithstanding the vices and abuses for which the editors of these periodicals may be blamed, their commitment to a view of print culture as the privileged instrument of political contention represents a daring contribution to the democratisation of society.

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<sup>6</sup> The propaganda campaign led by John Wilkes in the *North Briton* in the 1760s and 1770s had some affinities with the Caroline affair. The main difference lies in the extension of the mobilisation of public opinion which in Wilkes's case was circumscribed to London and the Middlesex area.

## The Loyalist Newspapers

The whole radical print media, together with the national and local press, were so effective in summoning and mobilising public opinion in defence of Queen Caroline that the Government and their supporters had to answer popular agitation with their own counter-propaganda. In effect, the attacks on the Queen in the loyalist press, particularly in the *Morning Herald* (1780-1869), the *Courier* (1792-1842), the *Morning Post* (1772-1937), and after December 1820 the *John Bull* (1820-1892), reflect the intensity of the popular support of the Queen in society and the press as a whole.

*John Bull*, whose motto was 'For God, The King, and the People', began publication at the end of 1820. It was published by R. T. Weaver and supposedly edited by Theodore Hook<sup>7</sup>. In discussing the reception of *John Bull* in loyalist circles, Bahram (1849: 203) states in his biography of Hook that the design was received 'with tacit approbation, if not with assurances of active support' [by certain influential members of the Tory party and probably by royalty, too]. Bahram further speculated about the editing process he imagined had taken place in the evening of 16 December, the eve of the first day of publication:

Post hour drawing on – Hook himself fretting, fuming [...] pasting the *disjecta membra*, the corrected 'proofs' upon a blank sheet, endeavouring to frame a sort of Frankenstein similitude of the coming stranger – all eagerness, anxiety, apprehension – when lo! just in time to save the night's mail, the reeking devilet enters, bending beneath the first impression! (Bahram, 1849: 204).

This Frankenstein of Sunday journalism set out with daring to the task of attacking the Queen and her supporters, dubbed the Brandenburgh House party. Its mission was to quell the popular movement on behalf of the Queen and to provide 'an antidote' to 'the shameful licentiousness of a prostituted press' and 'the infamous tendency of the caricatures which issue from every sink of vice and infamy in and near the metropolis' (No. 1: 4).

The *John Bull* claimed great success as early as the second issue (24 December). In its distinctive language, it declared: 'we have launched our bark, and the tide of public favour is with us, decidedly with us' (No. 2: 12). 'Professedly and avowedly loyalists and royalists', it targeted enemies in the vocabulary of hunting: 'the leaders, the plotters, the hidden directors of this despoiling warfare are our game: – we will put them up; aye, and please God! Knock them over afterwards' (No. 2: 12). In the edition of the Christmas Eve

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<sup>7</sup> Hook's connection with the *John Bull* was kept a 'secret', although it was a secret shared by many people.



1820, it published an account of an alleged 'Highland Address to the Queen' and procession in a tone of irony full of sexual innuendo (No. 2: 15).

The Queen was constantly attacked and defamed. She was 'a sickening woman', 'a hypocrite' (No. 1: 4), a mother, who 'had a party to dinner the day succeeding, and that on which she heard of the Princess Charlotte's death, and each following day' (No. 1: 5). She was 'as much the leader of the radicals as Hunt was before her', she was the 'veritable Mother Red-Cap of the faction', together with 'that smirking blockhead Wood' (No. 2: 12).

The paper did not confine itself to the defamation of the Queen. It sought to intimidate her supporters, especially women. It published each week a list of 'The Queen's Female Visitors', copied from the *Courier*, where women who visited the Queen were defamed: only a few of 'looser morals, or with personal interests, are found to visit her' (No. 1: 6). One of the defamed ladies was Countess Jersey, who entered a law-suit against the newspaper in 1821 (McCord, 2002).

The Whig opposition was not spared. Lord Grey, the leader of the Whigs, was derided in a letter by a reader identified as Fitz Harding. Earl Grey was accused of having

Advocated the cause of adultery and moral turpitude; he has done all this, and more, to shew his implacable hatred to the throne and to its ministers [...] but he cannot, he will not, submit Lady Grey or his daughters to the degradation of even leaving their names at the door of an INNOCENT QUEEN!! (No. 3: 22).

In an attempt to undervalue the visit of the Queen's son-in-law, Prince Leopold, in October, the paper stated that the Prince wrote a letter 'it is said, to one of the Royal Family' to say that he had paid the visit 'as a dry matter of duty to his late wife's mother, and not as any proof of his belief in the Queen's innocence' (No. 3: 23).

Propagation of rumours, for example through the use of the impersonal passive voice, was one of the methods employed in the constant denigration of the Queen and her supporters: 'Pergami is said by the *British Monitor* to be at Brandenburg House – his whiskers have been shaved ...' (No. 2: 11). Another method included the copying from other papers, namely the *Courier*: 'we copy from the *Courier* a list of the Queen's female visitors, with some prefatory remarks made by the Editor of that Paper' (No. 1: 6). The newspaper also resorted to the use of anonymous letters to the editor, such as those signed by 'Detector', 'Probe', 'an inhabitant of Whitehaven' (No. 3: 22), where the character of the Queen and her supporters was violently attacked.

The invective and abuse thrown upon the Queen and her supporters succeeded in the object of smothering the popular agitation. Within six weeks of publication, *John Bull* reached the circulation of 10,000 copies (Brake and Demoor, 2009: 321). As John Lockhart later recognized in the *Quarterly Review*<sup>8</sup>:

It is impossible to deny that “Bull” frightened the Whig aristocracy from countenancing the Court of Brandenburg House. [...] The national movement was arrested – and George IV had mainly “John Bull” to thank for the result (Lockhart, 1852: 45).

The methods of the popular press – satire, parody, children’s rhymes, rude humour and personal attacks on the powerful – are sometimes equalled to the methods employed by *John Bull* in the loyalist battle against radicalism, especially the personalization of attacks. There are, however, differences. Firstly, *John Bull* hid editorial responsibility behind presumed proprietors and printers, which prevented the paper from being sentenced, as happened in the above-mentioned libel suit ‘Jersey *versus* John Bull’, despite the agreement of both the juries and the judge that the paper was libellous. The anonymous editor was not even included in the indictment (McCord, 2002: 45). This posture was in the antipodes of the editorial responsibility and even personal courage displayed by radical editors and publishers such as Carlile, Wooler, or Hone. In the case of radical journalists, it was much more their ideas that roused hostility than the form of their expression.

Secondly, humour in the Regency radical press owed its success primarily to imaginative wit and refined irony, satirical devices unknown to *John Bull*. The satiric vein of radical writers might be offensive to the powerful but it was thought provoking and intellectually progressive. *John Bull*, on the contrary, did not discuss political ideas, and humour did not aim to imaginatively delight in unrespectability, only to defame and offend.

A different strategy from that of *John Bull* was employed by the *Courier*, an evening paper edited by William Mudford (Koss, 1990: 44). On August 24, the newspaper declared the intention to ‘abstain from all remark, unless the pernicious falsehoods, the impudent impostures of her advocates compel us to depart from that principle’ (August 24: 3). It claimed to avoid direct attack of the Queen, but the strategy put into action was devised to inflict serious injury on the Queen’s image.

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<sup>8</sup> The *Quarterly Review* (1809-1967) was founded by John Murray as a rival to the Whig *Edinburgh Review*. The above quotation was taken from a reprint of the article by John Gibson Lockhart ‘Theodore Hook: A Sketch’, which had appeared in issue 77 of the *Quarterly Review*.

The *Courier* chose a third party to perform the task of defaming and attacking the Queen. During the proceedings in the House of Lords, the newspaper reproduced in detail the speeches of the Attorney-General and of the Crown lawyers, as well as the depositions of the Italian witnesses. The *Courier* filled its pages with the complete descriptions of the sleeping arrangements of the Queen and Bergami during the different travels of the Queen, contained in the introductory speech of the Attorney-General, in which these sleeping arrangements were described in great detail and presented as proofs of adultery, with frequent reference to ‘sufficient proof’ and ‘plain’, ‘sufficient’ facts (22 August: 1).

The *Courier* also published the alleged words of the Attorney-General that ‘during Carnival the most disgusting scenes took place at her Majesty’s house, scenes which deserved to be classed with those exhibited in a common brothel’ (22 August: 1). Majocchi’s testimony during the examination by the Solicitor-General was also reproduced in detail, whereas the cross-examination by Brougham was given very little space. Majocchi’s repetition of the phrase ‘no mi ricordo’ during cross-examination was justified as ‘an honest desire in the witness to confine himself to the truth’ (31 August: 2), and the low condition of the witnesses was defended on the grounds that in this case ‘it was very frequently quite impossible and impracticable to have any other evidence but that of servants’ (22 August: 2). This oblique denigration of the Queen led Wooler to refer to the *Courier* and the *Morning Post* as the ‘croaking frogs’ ready ‘to extol the filth in which they have been accustomed to wallow’ (*BD*, vol. v: 354).

The apparently objective editorial policy did not prevent the *Courier* from citing the proverb that ‘where there is much smoke there must be some fire’, to refer to the accusations of immorality pending upon the Queen, and from prescribing the adequate procedure: ‘till she wipes off the entire blot – we say fearlessly – she is not an object of public esteem’ (24 August: 3). In the same issue, the *Courier* referred to the demonstrations of popular support on the Queen’s arrival as ‘fulsome fabrications’ of ‘a certain part of the press’, as respectable society kept aloof from the Queen and her supporters were only the noisy and turbulent mob.

Likewise, for the *Courier* the addresses to the Queen were signed only by the very lowest and most disreputable part of the population, and they did not therefore reflect the feelings of the respectable part of the people. In an ‘Extract from a Private Letter’, published in the issue of 17 August, the ‘Address of the Inhabitants of the city of Lichfield’ should be better styled as the ‘Address of Mr. Tag, Mr. Rag, and Mr. Bobtail, of Lichfield,

*gentlemen even, if they choose*' (17 August: 2). In the usual manner, these views were presented indirectly, as anonymous readers' letters to the editor.

The *Morning Post* and the *Morning Herald* had already showed their bias against Queen Caroline when they published in 1813 the depositions of the Douglasses during the 'Delicate Investigation' of 1806, in the hope that public opinion would see Caroline as a debauched woman and an unfit mother. The loyalist press was frequently attacked in radical periodicals and in pamphlet satires. The satire *A Frown From The Crown, Or The Hydra Destroyed* (BMC 14007), illustrated by George Cruikshank and published by John Fairburn, represented the loyalist press as a toad (*New Times*) and a rat (*Courier* and *Morning Post*).

## **The Radical Periodicals**

In their rendering of the Queen Caroline affair, radical journalists went beyond their advocacy of political change in *strictu senso* and encompassed the social and economic problems faced by the working people, including women. Women had already been involved in protest activities during the post-war recession, in reform societies. Now the theme of the 'wronged woman' and 'insulted queen' tied the reform of the political system to those economic and social issues which were less directly 'political', but that mobilised women because they stressed male marital responsibility. The Queen Caroline affair linked the abstract constitutional concerns of popular radicalism with the immediately personal and moral concerns of the people in their everyday lives (Kent, 1999: 160).

The order in which the radical periodicals are examined below does not follow their founding dates, but the date of their first article about the Queen Caroline affair.

### ***The Republican*, edited by Richard Carlile**

*I will pursue my object until prosecution  
for matter of opinion be dropt  
The Republican, 27 October 1820*

Carlile was the first radical journalist to set the tone of the defence of the Queen in the issue of 25 February 1820 of the *R*, when he reintroduced the theme of the wronged wife and of the unscrupulous and dissolute husband:

[...] we feel it an imperative duty to support this injured woman – this victim, first to unbridled lust, and now to despotism. [...] this innocent, injured, and unfortunate Princess, had her future happiness sacrificed at the altar of profligacy [...] Her

husband has decoyed her into marriage to answer his own private views, without the slightest affection towards her, he just condescends to consummate the marriage, and then drives her from his house, studies to insult her, by every means that can be devised, and utterly forsakes her by a public avowal that he will never meet her in public. What tie can a woman feel towards such a husband as this? (vol. ii: 189, 190, 192).

Richard Carlile, the son of a shoemaker, was born at Ashburton, in Devonshire, on 8 December 1790, and died in London in 1843. Soon after his marriage in 1813, he moved to London, where he took up work as a tinsmith. Like many other workmen, in the winter of 1816-17 he saw his hours reduced. He began attending political meetings, where he heard speakers such as Henry Hunt denounce the injustice of a representational system that excluded ninety-seven out of every hundred men.

In 1817, Carlile gave up the tin plate work and dedicated himself full time to radical politics. He wrote his first essays and sold radical pamphlets (among which were parodies by William Hone) and periodicals (*Cobbett's Register* and Wooler's *Black Dwarf*) in the streets of London. He then entered a business partnership with William Sherwin, whereby he would be the nominal publisher of *Sherwin's Weekly Political Register* and run the various legal risks involved in editing and publishing radical texts. In return, he would be able to use Sherwin's premises in Fleet Street and have his publications financed.

Greatly influenced by the political thinking of Thomas Paine, in 1818 Carlile published Paine's *Essay on the Origins of Free Masonry* and in December *The Age of Reason*. In 1819, he moved to new premises in 55 Fleet Street, christened 'The Temple of Reason'. He was already a well-known London publisher when he was invited to join Henry Hunt on the platform of the meeting of 16 August at St. Peter's Fields, Manchester. Having managed to escape arrest by the Yeomanry, he gave an account of 'Peterloo' in *Sherwin's Weekly Political Register* of 21 August, in a letter addressed to Lord Sidmouth (vol. v: 238-45). The Government responded by closing up his shop and confiscating the stock of newspapers and pamphlets. Carlile changed the name to *The Republican* in the issue of 27 August 1819.

In October 1819, he was sentenced to three years imprisonment in Dorchester Gaol and to a fine of £1,500 on charges of blasphemy and seditious libel<sup>9</sup> for having published Paine's *Age of Reason* and Palmer's *Principles of Nature* (Maccoby, 2002: 360). But the *R* did not stop publication, it being edited by his wife, Jane Carlile, a remarkable woman. It

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<sup>9</sup> Carlile took a step forward in defiance in May 1820, by declaring in the *R* that he should have been prosecuted after Peterloo because he had been there, side by side with Hunt and Johnson.

was the beginning of a war of resistance against ‘gagging laws’ and for the right of publication.

In December 1820, Carlile explained that editing the *R* had been motivated by the events of 16 August at Manchester, especially by the Regent’s thanking the Magistrates and Yeomanry of Manchester ‘for their murders’ (vol. iv: 616). The motto of the periodical, ‘I am no orator, as Brutus is / to stir men’s blood; I only speak right on, / I tell you that which you yourselves do know’, taken from Marc Anthony’s speech in Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* (III, 2), is as ironic as Marc Anthony’s own speech.

In effect, ‘to stir men’s blood’ constituted the distinctive mark of the *R* during Carlile’s imprisonment years, especially in the crisis years of 1819-20. After his condemnation, when he found out that some of his jurors had read Paine’s *Age of Reason*, he replied: ‘A prosecution becomes the grand impetus for reading a particular book; and, in the language of Paine, I say again – May Every Good Book Be Prosecuted’ (vol. iii: 117). In May 1820, he declared that he would only accept being released from prison to ‘publish publicly Paine’s *Age of Reason* and Palmer’s *Principles of Nature*’ (vol. iii: 79), and reasserted the purpose to keep publishing with the help of the whole family if necessary. In view of the renewed attempts by the ‘Vice Society’ to close his shop by indicting his wife, he wrote:

I take this opportunity of repeating my thanks to the Vice Society, for the extensive circulation they are again giving my publications. I hear from London that the prosecution of Mrs. Carlile produces just the same effect as my prosecution did – it quadruples the sale of all her publications (vol. iii: 116).

When his wife was effectively condemned for selling Sherwin’s *Life of Thomas Paine* and No. 9, volume I, of the *Republican*, and his shop in Fleet Street was under threat of being closed up again, Carlile stated in the edition of 27 October 1820: ‘the thieves have the power to shut up 55 [the shop number in Fleet Street], but they cannot prevent the opening of 56, so let them go on. Their prosecutions are my joy and comfort, whilst I can see one of my family opposed to them’ (vol. iv: 293\*)<sup>10</sup>. This attitude of defiance was the undertaking of a prison protest of almost ten years that has been compared to Mandela’s own use of imprisonment to bring about the end of apartheid in South Africa (Prescott, 2002).

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<sup>10</sup> Paging of this volume of the *R* is erratic, which makes it difficult to spot references to quotations. To minimize the difficulty, an asterisk (\*) after a page number indicates that it is the second of a duplicated number. The difficulty originates in the fact that at page 390 paging begins again at 290 and repeats the numbers in between.

In Carlile's version, the struggle for the freedom of the press was essentially the struggle for the freedom of publication. In an article about the trial of his wife, Carlile turned the tables on the accusers: 'well, well, Mr. Gurney [the barrister], you shall have a cheaper edition of the Memoirs of Paine within a month: one would have thought the price of 7s. 6d. would have satisfied you. I will try what a shilling edition will do to please or perplex you, for I am quite indifferent which takes place' (vol. iv: 296).

Considering that there was some degree of boasting, as became clear at the end of the year<sup>11</sup>, the above quotations illustrate much more than just rhetorical defiance. They attest to the readiness of adding the praxis of resistance to the rhetoric of defiance. This was Carlile's distinctive contribution to the expansion of the public sphere.

The press was crucially a political weapon, instrumental in publicising radical ideals: 'the progress, persecution, and perseverance, of those who have been called the Radical Reformers of Great Britain, have, by means of our press, been known throughout the Continent, and has kept alive an ardour in the general cause of emancipation and representative systems of government' (vol. iv: 147). In the 'Letter to the King', published on 24 November, the press was a powerful, 'scrutinizing tribunal' (vol. iv: 440), and in spite of the *Six Acts*, the 'circulation of political pamphlets have [sic] been more extensive in the present year than they were in the last'. Those Acts had been 'in a manner, dead born; they effected nothing' (vol. iv: 417).

This assertion was not realistic, as at least two of the *Six Acts* had a direct impact on the radical press: *The Publications Act* had subjected all periodicals to the stamp duty, and *The Blasphemous and Seditious Libels Act* had given authorities extraordinary powers over those accused of libel. This legislative combination dictated the end of the majority of the weekly periodicals that had been edited in the post-war period. Nevertheless, the year 1820 remained somehow an interim of freedom of the press, explained by the extraordinary vigour of popular participation during the Queen Caroline affair, as mentioned above.

The counterpart to Carlile's undeniable personal courage and determination was an exacerbated individualism: 'I feel this satisfaction, that I have flattered no man, or no party; neither have I troubled myself about obtaining the approbation of any individual, or any party' (vol. iv: xii). The inflexible individualism, which resonates in Carlile's

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<sup>11</sup> Carlile admitted in November that his imprisonment was weighing on the management of the *R*. He was facing financial difficulties due to the closing up of the shop in Fleet Street and the prosecution of the vendors (vol. iv: 417). At the end of 1820, Carlile communicated to his audience the necessity to discontinue the publication of this periodical, although he restated his disposition to 'fight the common enemy by means of the Printing Press' (vol. iv: 615). Closure of the *R* was in effect temporary. It resumed publication in 1821.

discourse and in the political praxis of Regency radicals in general, is analysed by Thompson (1991: 688; 836-43), amongst others. Yet, it may have been the intellectual precondition for the independent occupation of the public sphere by Regency radicals.

It was thus from Dorchester Gaol that Carlile weighed up the political atmosphere at the beginning of a new reign:

The present is one of the most gloomy [sic] moments this country ever beheld. A new reign has commenced, but by no means auspicious. There is evidently a hostile feeling between the people and the government. The former are oppressed, and the latter the oppressors (vol. iii: 9).

At the beginning of 1820 public attention was centred on the trial of the Cato Street conspirators and, like other radicals, Carlile commented on the event. He was convinced that political and cultural change did not depend on bloodshed<sup>12</sup>, but on the power of public opinion to influence political decisions. He thought highly of the dignity with which Thistlewood faced the sentence and death, but regretted his disregard for the use of more intellectual confrontation methods: 'I admire the conduct of his on receiving sentence of death and on the scaffold' [...] 'but still he had never performed an action that could elevate his mind and make it happy in its last moments' (vol. iii: 75). Carlile's refusal in principle of the use of violence to obtain the reform of the representational system is directly linked to the value and the power he attached to the printed word:

Well might the Printing-Press be called the artillery of Reason! This is a warfare worthy of mankind! It expands the mind but sheds no blood. [...] Knowledge is power, the sentiment of Lord Bacon, begins now to be echoed from one extremity of the Island to the other (vol. iv: 511).

The deep rooted conviction in the power of the printed word to promote the intellectual development of the people, through which the aristocratic status quo could be challenged, formed the fulcrum of Carlile's politics and it also underlay the treatment of the Queen Caroline affair in the *R*. The didactic intention and the passionate enthusiasm for a cause, expressed in the texts he wrote in support of the Queen, are perhaps even more marked than in the texts by Cobbett or Wooler.

As aforementioned, Carlile understood the importance of the Queen's affair earlier than any other journalist<sup>13</sup>. He saw the advantages for the radical camp of taking up the cause of the Queen, and in the *R* of 16 June he reasserted his earlier commitment to defend

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<sup>12</sup> That did not prevent him, however, from writing some incendiary texts about tyrannicide.

<sup>13</sup> In a letter addressed to the King, published in the edition of 24 November, Carlile referred with unfeigned pride to the fact that this article had been the first published on the affair of the Queen (vol. iv: 435).



a 'much injured and grossly insulted woman' (vol. iii: 253). At this early stage, the reasons for defending the Queen were her personal qualities as a feeling and generous woman towards all that surround her, 'the open and determined manner' of her arrival in England, particularly her refusal of Lord Hutchinson's (Lord Liverpool's emissary to St. Omer) conditions, and her reliance on Alderman Wood, instead of on Brougham (vol. iv: 1-2).

Although Carlile's arguments largely coincide with those of Cobbett and Wooler, some aspects of his defence of the Queen stand out for being clearly ahead of his time. For example, he lamented that 'a mutual separation is not legal, as it would often supersede the painful necessity of discussing family affairs' (vol. ii: 192). Divorce by mutual consent was a bold idea at a time when divorce could only result from the initiative of the husband, based on an accusation of adultery. Carlile was ahead of his time also in the way he faced the sensitive issue of the Queen's private conduct during her stay on the Continent.

He openly admitted that the Queen 'would be strictly justifiable' in having had an intimate relationship. If her husband had 'bestowed his affections on other women', and 'if the Queen had actually bestowed her affections on any other man she would have been not a jot less virtuous than any married or single woman in the country' (vol. iii: 526). On the other hand, Bergami was pictured as an honest, dedicated man: 'it has been shewn that he was a man [...] esteemed by all who had previously known him [...], that in his capacity of courier, of equerry, or of chamberlain, he at all times conducted himself with equal propriety and a becoming demeanour' (vol. iv: 365\*).

In Carlile's version, even the most consensual radical arguments in support of the Queen – the praise of her personal qualities and character – stressed not the victim, but the capacity to withstand adversity. Caroline might be an 'injured woman', but she was essentially a 'noble spirited and injured woman' for withstanding her husband's intentions and for demanding a public investigation although 'she knows what the contents of this Green Bag are' (vol. iii: 259). It was this courage, no matter the abyssal difference of the power commanded by both parts, that Carlile admired and led his audience to admire.

Courage, sense of justice, and moral duty were values dear to Carlile. When Caroline was represented as 'an unprotected female, exposed to the persecution of a gang of villains' (vol. iii: 254), a victim of corruption and oppression, what Carlile stressed was the contrast between the villainy of the prosecutors and the sense of justice and moral duty of the people. Consequently, the people's enthusiastic reception upon the Queen's arrival in England and their attachment to her did not 'arise from any love or adherence to the pageantry of monarchy', the admiration for the splendour of aristocracy, but from the

people's sense of moral duty – the duty of denouncing injustice independently of rank or status. It was the 'moral chivalry of this Island' replacing 'the brutal chivalry of old' (vol. iv: 504). Carlile believed in the capacity of traditional values, such as 'chivalry', to be renewed and reshaped through rational political thought.

No matter how much Carlile's avowed rationalist inclinations would have preferred this reinterpretation to be carried out solely through the medium of reason, the result was mixed. The sense of moral duty and appeal to justice also echoed through the hearts and feelings of the people, that is, they were represented as melodrama. The stirring of feelings of pity, anger, indignation and sympathy, characteristic of the rhetoric of melodrama, leads to the identification with the victim and this identification may become a mobilising force. In this case, melodrama helped rouse general indignation at what was perceived as the injustice of the lawsuit against the Queen. Carlile thus reconciled melodrama with radical politics.

The publication of addresses to the Queen in the *R* reveals the same political purpose. In some of them, it becomes clear that people see the Queen's woes as a reflection of their own deprivations and sufferings at the hands of a system considered to be oppressive. Even though the love for the 'pageantry of monarchy' may have played a part in the hearty welcome of the Queen, Carlile looked for the explanation of the sustained popular support for her in the combination of the defence of the 'injured Queen' with the critique of a Government, which was accused of adopting a dubious and perhaps illegal course to deprive the Queen of England of her title. The *R* played an important role in the double rendering of the Affair as melodramatic stirring and political content.

Carlile's avowed republican beliefs may clarify why the rhetoric of melodrama became a weapon against the King. Unlike Wooler and Cobbett, who generally spared the King from direct attack and preferred to focus on the depiction of a 'wronged woman' and 'injured Queen' at the hands of a corrupt political system, Carlile shifted the strategy and aimed essentially at the examination and denunciation of the conduct of George IV in the double capacity of husband and King. He decided 'to take a peep on the other side' (vol. iii: 255) in order to stir feelings of anger against the King and of empathy towards the Queen.

The King was thus made a target of attack. The Prince's youth, his 'vices and follies', the cohabitation with Mrs. Fitzherbert, the mistresses, the debts, among which was 'a heavy one at the house of an old bawd in one of the streets leading to Piccadilly' (vol.

iii: 526)<sup>14</sup> were constantly under fire. The question of double standards of morality and sexuality accounted for most of the popular feeling on behalf of the Queen, therefore Carlile made some fierce incursions into the subject:

What a pretty Green Bag would the conduct of the King make if the true particulars of his life were filled with it! Humanity and virtue would shrink aghast at it! Let us hope he will have his turn, and be taught the consequence of being done by the same manner as he would do unto others (vol. iii: 365).

Indignation against the King was not essentially motivated by marital infidelity, but by the abandonment, the disrespect, and the persecution of his wife: ‘we should not think him a jot worse as a King or a man for it [infidelity], was it not for the malignant, treacherous and abominable conduct towards a woman, whom he has drawn within the bonds of matrimony, to whom he has religiously sworn affection and protection’ (vol. iii: 526). Though duly pointed out, the greatest flaw of George IV was not his womanising, but the abandonment and persecution of his wife. In accord with his liberal view regarding Caroline’s personal conduct, Carlile condemns, not the husband’s infidelity, but the breach of the duty to respect and protect his wife. This whitewashing of marital infidelity may be considered conservative, but the stress placed on the responsibility of a husband towards his wife, rather than on his unfaithfulness, must have resonated loudly in the hearts and feelings of married women who, in the absence of feminine self-determination, depended totally on their husbands. Additionally, Carlile explored the fact that in this case the husband had kingly power.

The failure of George IV to perform his sworn duties as a husband, together with the use of his position as King to dishonour and degrade his wife, was what made ‘the whole business a sinister and under-handed proceeding’: The Queen, ‘who has not a relative left to open his mouth for her [...] is exposed to the malice of a husband, with kingly authority, who has the disposition, if not the power, of an Oriental Sultan, who has a ministry rife in wickedness and corruption, and a venal parliament in their control’ (vol. iii: 255). The theme of the Oriental despot invaded satirical prints, and the fact that the Queen had no relative<sup>15</sup> to comfort her increased animosity towards a husband, viewed as cruel and

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<sup>14</sup> This page number comes after page 255. This sudden jump in page numbering is an error in volume iii of the *R*.

<sup>15</sup> In effect, the Queen was completely alone. Her son-in-law, Prince Leopold, visited her only after the closing of the defence in October (vol. iv: 342\*).

corrupt. The loneliness of the Queen, sitting in the House of Lords during the enquiry, is manifest in the well-known painting by Sir George Hayter<sup>16</sup>.

This type of double criticism of the conduct of George IV, as a man and as a King, reached a peak during the enquiry, when Carlile's language became inflamed: 'they [Parliament] are determined to support and pander the will of him, whence all their imagined honours flow. [...] And whether he be a prude or a profligate, a lawful magistrate or an imbecile despot, it matters nothing to them' (vol. iii: 613). As to the King, he was 'a brutal and worthless husband' that took a wife 'merely to get his debts paid that he might be enabled to commence a fresh carousal of profligacy and dissoluteness' (vol. iii: 614).

The emphasis placed on the intertwining of the private and public spheres in Carlile's battle for Queen Caroline focused on the demand for both private and political accountability. The conduct of the King as husband, who abandoned his wife and then wanted to divorce her, and the conduct of the King as ruler, who did not hesitate in deploying the power of state (executive, legislative, and judicial) to meet his private ends, becomes part and parcel of public, political judgement. More important still, the intertwining of the private and public spheres presented itself as a distinctive factor in relation to middle-class ideology. Whereas middle-class ideology insisted upon the separation of spheres between the private domain of family life and the public domain of political discussion, Regency radicals insisted now upon the inseparability of the private and public spheres. This broader conception of polity signals change at both levels: at the private level it reveals changing perceptions about gender relations, and at the public level it reveals new demands for political accountability.

The Queen Caroline affair thus became an instrument for the open discussion of the private and the public vices of the ruling elite and, most significantly, for the refusal of the social opacity and impunity on which the aristocratic system of dominance was grounded. As other radical writers, Carlile was struggling to bring both, opacity and impunity, to an end. A free press and a powerful public opinion were the weapons:

Creevey has said, that THE KING IS AN ADULTERER, and should not have brought the charge of adultery against his wife, unless his own hands had been clean. [...] And such is the profligacy of the present government, that all it can do is, to cry hush! Don't speak so loud and so plain, or the people will hear it [...] (vol. iii: 408).

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<sup>16</sup> National Portrait Gallery Image (NPG 999): <http://www.npgprints.com/zoom.php?height=428&image=16038&noZoom> (accessed 05/10/2010).

Whereas the aristocratic establishment preferred to keep things secret, Carlile and many other radical journalists were taking care that the people would hear. He was convinced that only the power of public opinion could check the power of state: 'Nothing will satisfy the King but the ultimate degradation and ruin of the Queen. We sincerely hope that the latter will withstand all the efforts of her enemies and throw herself upon the generosity and protection of the English nation' (vol. iii: 260).

The mobilisation of public opinion on behalf of the Queen in the *R* was based on the exploitation of the dichotomy of courage *versus* cowardice, and virtue *versus* vice and evil: 'every virtuous man and woman in the country must despise him for this Green Bag adventure [...] the whole business has sunk deep into the hearts and minds of the people of this country [...] thanks to the intrepid spirit of the Queen that has baffled this wicked and monstrous measure' (vol. iii: 326).

This polarity was applied to the political-judicial process so as to take on a political meaning. The report of the 'Committee of Secrecy', finding grounds for an enquiry in the House of Lords (vol. iii: 362, 363), was part of the whole vicious process: it was 'one of the blackest reports that the human mind can conceive', politically condemned as the output of corrupted institutions – monarchy and parliament. Therefore, even admitting that a portion of it were true, the public, Carlile warned, 'should not allow any thing that comes from her husband, through so polluted a channel as the English parliament of the present day, to make the least impression on our minds' (vol. iii: 363).

The call for the support of public opinion was renewed at every new stage of the affair. The favourable response of the public was evident when the Bill of Pains and Penalties was introduced by Lord Liverpool on 5 July: 'the moment is all important, every party feeling, and private interest or injury, seems to be hushed' (vol. iii: 402). Carlile understood that public opinion was beginning to find its place as a political partner and as a legitimate part of the constitution. The public support of the Queen reached a peak when the enquiry was about to begin:

The annals of history can display nothing like the present feeling, and such is its effect, that it penetrates the walls of a prison, and almost makes the prisoner forget where he is. Public feeling is now in full blaze, which the craft, wickedness, and subtlety of Castreagh will not be able to extinguish (vol. iii: 546-7).

The vocal presence of public opinion was shaking the foundations of the institutions of the state: the King had withdrawn from London, and the vulnerability of Parliament was patent, even before the defeat of the Bill:

Every member in it, is now put to the test – every man in it, that does not open his mouth on the present occasion, will be stamped a villain; and he who does speak on the occasion, will have every word – every letter, weighed in the public scale (vol. iii: 402).

The nature of the proceedings against the Queen, together with the circumstances and personages involved were considered full proof of the vices of monarchy. They consequently offered ammunition in favour of the cause of republicanism: ‘the vices of monarchy are beginning to display themselves in the most striking colours, never was circumstance so important to the cause of republicanism as the present attempt to crush an injured Queen’ (vol. iii: 614).

In Carlele’s political theory, monarchy was incompatible with universal male suffrage and therefore only republicanism would respect the representative system of government. In the mock-satiric dedication to Sir Robert Gifford, His Majesty’s Attorney-General<sup>17</sup> of the fourth volume of the *R*, Carlele stated: ‘it is seen that nothing but the representative system of government can confer a dignity on a civilized society, and support the progress of its moral virtue’ (vol. iv: xi). He then continued to explain what he meant by ‘anti-monarchical or republican’ principles:

By the term anti-monarchical or republican, I mean where the sovereignty of a nation is vested in the people instead of an individual [...] for it cannot be called civilization or a social state, when an individual makes ten, twelve, or twenty millions of people bend to his will, inclination, and caprice, whatever may be his vices, and from which they can find no relief but in his death (vol. iv: xi).

In reality, the priority for Carlele was not the abolition of monarchy, but parliamentary reform: ‘as to the abolition of monarchy, I do not wish to say a word about it. When I see a reformed Parliament, [...] I would respect all the laws enacted by such a Parliament’ (vol. iv: 616). Influenced by the admiration of the character of the Queen, who alone defied the combined forces of the power of state, he stated: ‘even among those who hate, and would willingly destroy the whole system of government, she will find a sympathetic feeling’ (vol. iii: 260). In December, he even seemed to condescend to the existence of the royal institution. In ‘A Letter to the Queen’, he wrote: ‘I am certain that

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<sup>17</sup> In this long ‘Dedication’ to Sir Robert Gifford, the Attorney-General is sarcastically considered ‘a secret admirer of Republican and Deistical principles’. Carlele thanks him for having increased the sales of the periodical, more than the ‘Vice Society’, with the attention paid to it in spite of ‘the tremendous affair you had in hand, in conjunction with Majocchi, Sacchi, Cuchi, Rastelli, De Mont, Liverpool, Eldon, Lauderdale, and George the Fourth’ (vol. iv: ix-x).

the sense of the nation, if fairly expressed by its representatives, would desire nothing better than to have you at its head' (vol. iv: 506).

Democratic representation became synonymous with republicanism, and both directly related to freedom of speech. The press was regarded as a fortress against oppression and a tool of freedom. Addresses and the respective replies by the Queen were extensively published in the *R* as part of the personal crusade fought by Carlile in the name of the right of publication. The result was that information and comment flowed openly. This favoured an atmosphere of exchange of opinion that emphasised the social character of the radical press. The radical press expanded, and its role as the 'meeting place' of a multiplicity of voices was stressed. The publication of addresses added diversity and a feeling of 'communality' to the message of radical periodicals.

'Addresses pour in from all quarters, in such multitudes, as to preclude our copying them; and all we can now do, is to make a general mention of them' (vol. iii: 519), Carlile informed on 4 August, less than a fortnight before the beginning of the enquiry in the House of Lords. No matter how careful one must be in interpreting their probative meaning, they were the direct voice of the people expressing their feelings, and sometimes uttering their political grievances. They were a barometer of the interest of the public.

Addresses provide first-hand insight into the active role played by public opinion during the Caroline affair. They portray public opinion taking initiative, not just consuming the propaganda that was poured out daily by the press. The publication of addresses, therefore, provides information about the response of communities and of social and professional groups to the events of the Caroline affair, which must be taken into consideration (Lee, 2009).

In a number of ways, addresses are effectively important documents. Many were the result of a process which began with the call for meetings (in a church, town hall, etc.) and ended with ceremonious delivery by demonstration or deputation. Some addresses are fine examples of typographic art, such as 'The Address of Congratulation from the Letter-Press Printers of London' (BM-ID 1868,0808.13717). At least one address is a mock-address: 'A Cunning Address' (BM-ID 1983,0119.297). All these aspects – and others – account for the historical interest of the Addresses to the Queen.

The addresses reproduced in the *R* vary as to details, but some aspects are common: they express sympathy and grief for the Queen's plight, indignation at the proposals made previous to her arrival, admiration for her courage to meet accusers and to demand an open and constitutional investigation, as well as hope for the establishment of the rights as

Queen Consort. The 'Address from the Inhabitants of Southwark' stated that the interests of the Queen and of the people were identical: 'We would, on no account offend, by intruding unnecessarily into the personal concerns of your Majesty. Your Majesty's interests, however, have become the interests of the public' (vol. iii: 367). These addressers claimed such feelings to be common to the great bulk of 'His Majesty's subjects [...] with some few unimportant exceptions' (vol. iii: 368). They were also opportunities for the publicity of grievances, as the 'Address from the Inhabitants of Nottingham':

Cloudy, obscure and portentous as these our times appear, we regard your return to the shores of Albion as the omen of a brighter day, when your benevolent hand may be stretched forth to succour and to aid a drooping, insulted, and injured people. [...]The nation mourns, not only on account of your persecutions, but the manifold grievances under which it labours from a cruel misrule (vol. iii: 369).

In this address, the complaints are directed at the Government, not the monarch. The latter is viewed as a victim of the Government, together with the people: 'we shall never bend the knee to an oppressive administration, who have deceived both the King and the people, and deluged this our happy land in misery and woe; whose deeds every honest man boasting the name of Briton, has reason to deplore' (vol. iii: 369). It becomes clear that people frequently saw in the Queen's woes a reflection of their own deprivations and sufferings. Although Carlile would certainly disagree with the view of the monarch as a victim of the Government, or as exempt from political responsibility, he nevertheless published the address, which attests to the role of the radical periodicals as forums for the open and free discussion of political issues. Women and reformers were urged to present addresses to the Queen: 'to us it appears incumbent that the females should associate and address the Queen' (vol. iii: 435); reformers should 'come up to London with addresses to the Queen' (vol. iii: 522) on the 16 August, as a way to observe the anniversary of 'Peterloo'. However, the Affair touched a nerve among those women who feared desertion or ill-treatment by their husbands, and it also signalled the acceptance by male radicals such as Carlile of the participation of women in the public sphere.

The publication of addresses also represented an opportunity for Carlile to give vent to his anti-clericalism. The support of the Church for the King was mocked and compared to the addresses presented by the people. He imagined the Queen telling her husband: 'you are welcome, George, to the prayers of the priests, as long as I can enjoy the affectionate addresses of the people' (vol. iii: 519). A few days before the beginning of the enquiry, popular support of the Queen was so widespread that the clergy were again scorned:



‘addresses are pouring in from all quarters, both from males and females; and even priests are beginning to take the alarm and to pray for her Majesty’ (vol. iii: 546). This was the typical mock-satiric discourse of Regency radicalism.

The Addresses to the Queen were commented upon in the loyalist press, often violently. In the *John Bull*, they were attacked as ‘absurd’ and ‘unmeaning’, and the replies by the Queen as ‘libellous’ and ‘treasonable’ (*JB*, No. 1: 4). Addresses to the Queen that poured out in large numbers until December were discredited as proceeding only from ‘petty shopkeepers, insolvents, lodgers, and rabble’, in opposition to loyal addresses which were praised for being signed by those who represent ‘the wealth, the respectability and the character a place, where we are to look for them’ (*JB*, No. 3: 19).

Although the defence of the Queen occupied significantly less space in the *R* than in the other two periodicals examined in this study, it is in this periodical that the direct voice of the Queen gains more proximity to the audience. The reason is that, of the three, the *R* published most replies to addresses by the Queen. On the Queen’s part, the publication of replies may have sprung from a sincere desire to express gratitude for the demonstrations of loyalty, affection and support in a difficult hour, but they can also be understood as effective publicity campaigns to influence decisions on her behalf.

If understood in this way, the Queen’s replies to addresses constituted a novelty in the use of the press, and the Queen was aware of that: ‘I have been accused of appealing to popular clamour – but I appeal to nothing but to the good sense and good feeling – to the reason – the morality, and the patriotism of the most enlightened and most respectable portion of the community’ (vol. iii: 525). Their language was often incendiary, as the answer to the ‘Address from the Inhabitants of the Town of Wakefield and its Vicinity’: ‘though I am attacked by that malice which hesitates at no falsehood, and by an assumption of power which seems to spurn all limitation, I feel a cheering confidence of present support, and of eventual triumph in the affections of the people’ (vol. iii: 525).

Besides denouncing the falsehood of the accusations and their illegality, many replies also associated the breach of the legal rights of the Queen, as a private individual, to the larger issue of the guarantee of the constitutional rights and liberties of the people. In the same Wakefield Address, the Queen declared: ‘If I am condemned without justice, and dethroned against the law, the liberties of every individual will receive a fatal stab’ (vol. iii: 524-5). In the reply to the address from the inhabitants of the Borough of Berwick-upon-Tweed, the language could hardly be more inflammatory: ‘what individual is there who could expect an impartial trial where his adversary could influence the majority of his

judges, either by the fear of loss, or the hope of gain: either by good in possession, or in expectancy?' (vol. iii: 526). These replies could hardly have been authored by the Queen, not only for its contents, but also for the fact that her mastery of English was rather deficient.

Actual authorship of the considerable amount of texts published under the Queen's name constitutes one of the issues raised by her increasing public involvement as the events unfolded. As expected, this question was especially taken up by the loyalist press. In order to denigrate her as a rebel, radical writers such as William Cobbett were denounced in the *Courier* and the *Morning Post* as authors of the texts signed by the Queen. Radical writers, however, did not usually complain about the publicity. While venting that the important thing was not authorship but the fact that the Queen approved the texts (vol. iv: 374\*), Carlile did not resist noting that 'they display an ability that has never entered a British cabinet' (vol. iii: 615).

They were, in effect, skilfully written texts, carefully designed to engage a specific audience. This was a feat, given the immense quantity of addresses presented to the Queen. The press, especially the radical press, played an important role in the process. The *R* published the 'Answers of the Queen to Various Addresses' in early September, which ran for ten whole pages (vol. iv: 8-17). In the answer to an address from 'The Industrious Classes', the Queen sympathised with the sufferings of the people:

Who does not see that it is not owing to the wisdom of the Deity, but to the hard-heartedness of the oppressor, when the sweat of the brow during the day is followed by the tear of affliction at its close, when the labour of the hand only adds to the aching of the heart, and what ought to be a source of joy is an aggravation of calamity? (vol. iv: 10)

This answer was also designed to convey a reassuring message of confidence in the future:

But if these things have been, I may perhaps be permitted to hope [...] that happier times are approaching, when commerce will crowd our rivers, trade be busy in our streets, and industry smiling in our fields (vol. iv: 10)

The reply to 'The Address of Congratulation from the 'Letter-Press Printers of London' clearly shows the attention paid by the Queen to the press, and her acknowledgement of its decisive importance for the advancement of her cause. Public opinion was the force of 'enlightened minds', and even though a part of the press was

employed against her, the Queen viewed the press as ‘the only strong hold that liberty has left’ and ‘the only rampart against an implacable foe’ (vol. iv: 368).

As mentioned above, the *R* played an important role in publicising the double rendering of the Affair as melodramatic appeal and political purpose. The publication of emotional replies of the Queen to Addresses contributed to stressing that role. In the answer to the ‘Address from the Hammermen Society at Dalkeith’, the voice of the Queen becomes almost philosophical: ‘to be conscious that we are living for the good of others, that our single existence puts in motion a wide circle of sympathies, and diffuses happiness over the whole surface, is that which renders life a real blessing’ (vol. iv: 13). The answers frequently offered persuasive reasoning, as the answer to the ‘Address from the Inhabitants of Bethnal-Green’:

Though the primary object of the Bill of Pains and Penalties is to divorce me from his Majesty, yet it is hyperbolically pretended that his Majesty is not a party in the case [...] and the State is substituted for his Majesty; but the State, if it means anything, must mean the people, collectively considered. But they, instead of desiring a dissolution of my marriage, have expressed the most indubitable desire that that marriage may not be annulled, but that I may remain Queen Consort of these realms, and be invested with all the rights, privileges, and immunities which the law has appropriated to that Royal dignity (vol. iv: 17).

Carlile was aware of the beneficial political effect for the radical camp of the answers of the Queen to addresses: ‘they are adapted to the real state of the country, and must warm the heart of the advocates of reform, and add thousands, perhaps millions, to their number’ (vol. iii: 615). In the same vein, Carlile referred to the letter addressed by the Queen to the King at the beginning of August: ‘The Queen is an avowed Reformer; she has told the King plainly, that both Houses of Parliament are corrupt, and that she will not respect their decisions if they are made against her’, and added that ‘the female reformers in your neighbourhood may now pride themselves with so distinguished a head’ (vol. iii: 623). The politicisation of the Queen’s case becomes evident.

As suggested above, the *R* was not totally absorbed by the Caroline affair. It maintained regular commentary on other domestic issues, as well as on foreign affairs, namely on events in Spain, Naples, South America, and Portugal. Besides, the Queen Caroline affair was frequently used as a background for the discussion of other political issues, sometimes in a satirical vein. That was the case of *A New Litany or General Supplication* (vol. iii: 327-31), a parody of the *Litany* that combines the defence of the Queen with the condemnation of the main personages of the English political universe

through their association to Satan. The ministers, the king, the clergy, the nobility, the Manchester magistrates, George Canning, Wilberforce, and the aristocratic system of dominance as a whole, are depicted as members of a satanic cult, in a satanic court, praying against the people, the reformers, the Queen, and her friends:

That it may please thee to keep and strengthen in the worshipping of thee, in hollowness of life, thy servant George, our most gracious King and Governor;

*We beseech thee to hear us, good Satan*

Queen Caroline and her supporters have no place in this court:

That it may please thee to exclude from thy court and service, our sovereign's wife, Queen Caroline, and all those who heap upon us infamy and disgrace;

*We beseech thee to hear us, good Satan*

She has the force to defeat the devil's schemes:

Oh, that it had pleased thee to have destroyed our Queen Caroline when she travelled by both land and water, and to have prevented her presence amongst us, by which we have fallen into irreparable disgrace;

*We beseech thee to hear us, good Satan*

The final supplication:

Minister: Oh Satan, let thy mercy be shewed upon us;

Answer: as we do put our trust in thee.

The grace of our Sovereign lord George the Fourth, and the love of Satan, and the fellowship of Belzebub, be with us all evermore. Amen.

Carlile disclaimed the intention of bringing the *Book of Common Prayer* into contempt, since he had no belief in the existence 'of any such gentlemen as Satan or Belzebub'. However, the substitution of God by Satan, as the object of prayer, and the absence of the people as supplicants may have withdrawn centrality from the political message and drawn attention to the religious issue. By representing the political establishment as dark forces of evil commanded by Satan and Beelzebub, Carlile's satire

lost political bite, if compared to Hone's 1817 more gripping and engaging parody of the *Litany*<sup>18</sup>.

This parody inserts itself in the religious controversy which ran in almost every edition of the *R*, – a crusade against ‘the common fraud of religion’<sup>19</sup>. The Queen's case offered ammunition readily used, for example, against Wilberforce: ‘what can be the extent of Mr. Wilderforce's [sic] religious mind, when he calls upon the Queen to dispense with the prayers of the people?’ (vol. iii: 332). This denunciation of the cynical use of religion by the powerful echoed in the public opinion much more deeply than Carlile's more frequent ‘doctrinaire’ tendency to let the religious polemics disperse in abstractions.

After the hearing of the first seven witnesses against the Queen, Carlile's oppositional discourse became more vehement. The language resonated with Burke's ‘swinish multitude’ in reverse: ‘the house maids at Carlton House had never to clean a filthier mess after a royal drunken bout, than the Queen's accusers have now to wallow in’ (vol. iv: 5). In the edition of 8 September, the Queen was certain to triumph: ‘the Queen must triumph, and her triumph must be the disgrace of her husband’, and he added: ‘if ever a woman is set upon the English throne, we could wish it to be Queen Caroline, and that she may be the last’ (vol. iv: 49).

The exercise of oppositional discourse became especially noticeable in the vituperative attacks on the King, but also on the ministers, some of the Peers, the Attorney-General, the Solicitor-General, and the Italian witnesses. On the closing of the case for the King by the Attorney-General, Carlile wrote: ‘all the swearing against the Queen, even if it were true, amounts to nothing; and the majority of “noble lords” seem to have an innate dread of the Queen's defence’ (vol. iv: 81). Even admitting that the Bill would pass in the Lords, Carlile was sure that ‘to attempt to degrade such a woman by a statute will be laughed at’ (vol. iv: 85). In mid-September, he stated that ‘the matter has now approached a crisis, the Queen is become the centre of affection in the country, the King the centre of the disaffection’ (vol. iv: 82-3).

The Italian witnesses were especially targeted as base and perjured people, whose perjury contaminated the King, as they were kept ‘under the especial protection, patronage,

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<sup>18</sup> Hone represented the people as supplicant sufferers praying to God, and he used sarcasm to denounce oppression and tyranny. When he was tried for the publication of this parody, he stated in court that he did not intend to mock religion and that his purpose was solely political. In Carlile's litany, on the contrary, there is open anti-religious intention.

<sup>19</sup> Despite the frequent use of strong language, it must be said that the polemics over religion maintained by Carlile with different personalities in almost every issue of the *R* was conducted with elevation, which once more attests to the role of radical periodicals as forums for the free discussion of issues of general interest.

and favour of the King of England, in the palace of Cotton Garden' (vol. iv: 354\*). One of them, Rastelli was reported to have been 'so well fed and pampered' that 'the mere journey to Milan, and the change of climate, had occasioned a fermentation from his late gormandizing, and he has a violent fever, and has been obliged to lose a great deal of blood' (vol. iv: 354\*). Of Louise Demont was said that 'since she has been in London she has walked the streets for hire' (vol. iv: 368\*).

Carlile wrote a long mock-dedication of volume four of the *R* to Sir Robert Gifford, the Attorney-General. Sir Robert Gifford embodied the malignity of the prosecutors of the Queen, and he therefore became the target of renewed verbal violence in November: 'what you have so well earned must not be denied to you – a halter, Gifford! a halter! Say your prayers and get ready to grace the scaffold' (vol. iv: 326\*).

Those were violent texts, only paralleled by the attacks on the King in November and December. The King, 'a titled thing' (vol. iv: 406) was depicted in the most fierce terms as a monarch, a husband, a father, and a man. George IV was a sanguinary despot, only comparable to Nero: 'I verily believe that if the head of Caroline could be sent to the modern Nero he would receive the present with as much joy as the Nero of old received the head of Octavia (vol. iv: 370\*). The other branches of power, the executive and the legislative, were as corrupt as the King:

But what do we see passing now? A King, vicious beyond parallel, calls upon the other branches of the legislature to assist him in destroying his wife; and those branches, and although they comprise some hundreds, near a thousand, persons, have a bribed majority sufficient to acquiesce, and they do acquiesce, in the will and pleasure of the King, just as if it was a request of the most ordinary kind (vol. iv: 377\*).

Indignation and vituperation were weapons used for the purpose of creating a favourable atmosphere for the ultimate radical goal of political change. However, not all of it was imaginative and justifiable; some included crude defamation. In these cases, it did not reveal Carlile at his best. The best of Carlile and Regency radicalism is to be found elsewhere – in the didactic intent, in the satiric vein of political criticism, in the defence of a woman, lonely and prosecuted, in the use of the Queen's affair to strengthen the public sphere to reach a broader audience and to bring about political change even if this purpose was defeated.

The radicals saw the opportunity for political change and fought for it. Carlile believed that the reformers would be able to capitalize on the Queen's affair: 'every thing

bids fair to crown the long indulged hopes of the reformers and all bids fair to effect those desires without bloodshed or violence of any kind' (vol. iv: 356). The results of the second reading of the Bill further encouraged hopes of political change – the necessary consequence of the expected defeat of the prosecutors of the Queen.

When the Bill was finally dropped on 10 November, Carlile reported the rejoicing, which 'exceeds that of any former occasion', all over the country, with the people:

Exhibiting Green Bags, effigies of false witnesses, and everything which can be considered applicable to the triumph of the Queen. Bells are ringing, bonfires making, squibs and crackers flying, and houses illuminated throughout the west of England (vol. iv: 401).

In the middle of popular rejoicing, Carlile feared that the political capital amassed for the radical cause during the Affair would be lost if the Queen reconciled with the establishment. The Queen had become the symbol of the marginalized condition of the disenfranchised and 'a compensation for the fools, the madmen, the hypocrites, and the swindlers of her House' (vol. iv: 406). The interests of the Queen were definitely associated with those of the people: 'nothing short of a full representation of the people can secure the Queen from further persecution and insult' (vol. iv: 471).

Yet, this last effort at popular mobilisation was ineffective, for neither the Queen nor the radicals could maintain a cause that had been emptied by the dropping of the Bill of Pains and Penalties. Thus, the end of the year 1820 brought with it the end of the radical campaign on behalf of Queen Caroline. Carlile continued to be a prisoner in Dorchester Gaol, 'an excellent place for reflection' (vol. iv: 616), and from there he wrote the last article of that year 1820. He regarded the Queen's affair as 'the triumph of the moral power of virtue over the hideous and long-discovered principles of vice' (vol. iv: 618).

For Carlile, the defence of the Queen against a persecuting husband symbolised the claim to the moral virtue of the people as opposed to aristocratic vice, but the symbol entailed more than the manly chivalric defence of an injured woman. The 'moral chivalry' (vol. iv: 504) that had battled for 'an injured woman, an injured wife, an injured mother, as well as an injured Queen' was overwhelmed by the growing admiration for the courage of a woman standing alone before the entire political establishment.

The rhetoric remained melodramatic, but the 'moral chivalry' had become political in intent: 'when she identified herself with the cause of the people, with the cause of reform, with the cause of universal freedom, then I could have clad myself in armour, and have sacrificed my life in her defence' (vol. iv: 617). The intertwining of moral principle

and the radical political agenda – virtue and political freedom through parliamentary reform – was the focal point of the treatment of the Queen’s affair in the *R*.

Ironically, it was an imprisoned Carlile that battled for the freedom of the press and parliamentary reform throughout the Queen Caroline affair. In that battle he used the printed word with more passion and fortitude than any other radical. Despite the controversial melange of ideas that formed his politics and the melodramatic facet of his personality – Thompson (1991: 843) dubbed him ‘the showman of free thought’ – the years that he spent in prison attest to his determination: ‘I will pursue my object until prosecution for matter of opinion be dropt’ (vol. iv: 297\*). In the final ‘Letter to the Queen’, Carlile made the most emblematic eulogy of the press as a vehicle of intellectual development. In the affair of the Queen, the triumph of the press had been the triumph of justice, the best of triumphs:

In endeavouring to be useful, I have done my best. I saw that the corruptions and delusions of the day required to be attacked with something stronger than squib or pasquinade, which, however it might annoy the subject of attack, or amuse the reader, must be confessed to be but ill adapted to convey principles to the mind (vol. iv: 615).

Carlile’s war of resistance for the right of publication was his distinctive contribution to the expansion of the public sphere, a contribution that must be acknowledged. It was Carlile at his best.

### ***Cobbett’s Weekly Political Register***

*I have never written for temporary purposes*

*PR*, 23 December 1820

W. Cobbett remains the most studied and controversial figure of Regency radicalism. Much of the controversy has been fed by the discussion of his forsaking of Toryism and by his conceptualization of radicalism itself. Dyck (1989: 57) argues that what led Cobbett to distance himself from Toryism<sup>20</sup> was his interpretation of the decline of the farm labourer into poverty during the Wars. In Cobbett’s political imagination, the farm labourer from where he sprung was the symbol of the enduring values of independence and patriotism.

When Cobbett understood that the causes of that degradation were to be found in the corrupted politics of government and not in the war (farmers were getting richer whereas

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<sup>20</sup> Cobbett had viewed the Tory Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger as “a saviour of society” (Spater, 1982: 137).



farm labourers were becoming paupers), he took the decisive step and embraced radical politics against the political establishment. It was the beginning of his war against ‘Old Corruption’ and of the view of politics as drama – the ‘us’ against ‘them’, which defined most of Cobbett’s journalistic style. The claim by Haywood (2005: 6) that Regency radicals were moved by a ‘sense of mission’, originated in the belief that they were ‘part of a historic and sublime confrontation between progress and reaction, good and evil, light and darkness’ finds in Cobbett perhaps its most perfect incarnation.

The frequent criticism that Cobbett failed to conceptualize radicalism beyond the nostalgic idealization of an agrarian past of plenty for the farm labourer has played a relevant part in the ongoing Cobbett controversy, as Wiener’s (1974) review of the polemics since the Victorian times fully shows. It is, however, important to understand that Cobbett’s radicalism was eminently ‘cultural’ in the sense that it entailed a message based on the self-confident awareness of belonging to a community of values and identities in conflict with the political status quo. Cobbett’s radicalism cannot be separated from the ‘cultural citizenship’ that Manning (2009: 108) argued was embodied in the organization of the ‘Chopstick Festival’, staged by Cobbett in July 1832 to commemorate the passage of the First Reform Bill. The criticism of Cobbett’s radicalism also fails to explain the enduring influence over the whole working classes (a term attributed to Cobbett), exercised for decades through his writings, particularly through the *PR*. He was acknowledged by prominent contemporaneous figures as an outstanding leader of Regency radicalism and the most powerful political writer of his time.

Cobbett was a prolific writer, but his political influence was felt essentially through the periodical he edited for more than three decades<sup>21</sup>. The *PR* was founded in 1802, sponsored by Cobbett’s patron, William Windham (Manning, 2009: 110), ‘a Whig more Tory than the Tories’ (Chesterton, 1925: 20). Until 1804, he was a Tory journalist, but thereafter he wrote in the radical interest. The *PR* was not his first editorial venture. During his first stay in America he edited the daily newspaper *Porcupine’s Gazette* (1797-99), which attained the largest circulation of any contemporary American newspaper (Manning, 2009: 99). In 1819<sup>22</sup>, shortly after Peterloo, Cobbett returned from his second stay in America and his *PR*, which had continued publication during his absence owing to the help

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<sup>21</sup> The *Political Register* was published with only minor interruptions from 1802 to Cobbett’s death in 1835.

<sup>22</sup> William Cobbett had been in France and the USA between 1792 and 1800. In the USA he wrote pro-British pamphlets under the pseudonym of Peter Porcupine from 1793. Between 1810 and 1812 Cobbett was in prison, which may explain why he fled to the USA when he again felt the threat of prison in 1817. He remained there until 1819.

of William Benbow and William Jackson<sup>23</sup>, became one of the leading organs in the agitation on behalf of the Queen in the radical press.

However, his championing the cause of Queen Caroline was not a linear process. As he acknowledged in 1813, he had believed the Princess to be guilty of the charges of the ‘Delicate Investigation’: ‘For my part, I confess, that [...] I, for a long while, for several years, thought the Princess guilty to some considerable extent’ (vol. xxiii: 433). In effect, in 1806 he had voiced doubts in the *PR* about the innocence of the then Princess of Wales, and had even condemned the ‘public prejudice being imbibed against the persons [the Douglasses], who were said to have given evidence in the case’ (vol. x: 262).

Cobbett then proceeds to explain that the change of opinion came when he learned ‘about eighteen months ago’<sup>24</sup> that the Regent had tried to suppress the existing copies of *The Book*, through ‘a certain Noble Earl, well known to be much attached to the Prince’ (vol. xxiii: 434). Cobbett interpreted this as an indication of the innocence of the Princess, and pledged the *PR* to make it public: ‘from that hour, as the pages of my Register will show, I did all in my little power to inculcate the same opinion on my readers’ (vol. xxiii: 434). Cobbett’s support became resolute and in 1820 it turned into a radical cause.

In his defence of the Queen, Cobbett remained faithful to the political discourse that had made him famous in 1816, when he initiated the golden age of the radical press<sup>25</sup>. In Cobbett’s political drama, the Queen became a heroine and a symbol of hope for reform through the force of her character: ‘in her Majesty, the Queen, the oppressed part of the people would find a friend, a prop, a support, a foundation of hope of better days’, (vol. xxxvii: 503). As all heroines, the Queen had fierce enemies. These were the villains in Cobbett’s drama. They were the ‘arrogant and greedy junto’ who ‘clearly foresaw that in all these [the Queen’s qualities] we should find the constant temptation to make comparisons that would place their arrogance, their ignorance, their greediness, and their brutal hardness of heart, in a light ten thousand times more odious than that in which they before appeared to our view’. Hence ‘all the efforts to degrade her Majesty, to keep her from the country, and, when arrived in it, to drive her from it (vol. xxxvii: 500).

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<sup>23</sup> William Jackson published volume xxxii, relative to the year 1817, and William Benbow published the subsequent numbers. No biographical data were found for William Jackson. William Benbow, originally a Manchester shoemaker, was involved with ultra-radicalism since 1817 and was imprisoned under the Suspension of Habeas Corpus (1817-18). In 1820, he championed Queen Caroline. In 1821 he was again imprisoned (George, 1952: 153). The *Francis Place Collection* at the British Library contains many examples of Benbow’s publishing activity from this period.

<sup>24</sup> It must have been towards the last quarter of 1811.

<sup>25</sup> A brief examination of Cobbett’s political discourse is outlined in Chapter Two.

Rhetorical violence went to the point of name calling. They were ‘the filthy knaves’, ‘the slippery sycophants’, ‘the cunning and precious knaves’, ‘the crawling courtiers’, ‘your base enemies’. The accusations against the Queen were ‘the foul charges hatched by your enemies’, ‘the monstrous falsehoods’, ‘the vile accusations’ and ‘base calumny’. These expressions are found in the same article. This rhetorical violence against the enemies, allied to the constant presence of the author in the first person, and the occasional insertion of small stories from his personal experience or everyday life<sup>26</sup>, formed the communicative strategies that helped create direct bonds with the audience, often signalled by the use of the personal pronoun in the second person. Despite rhetorical violence, the language is undeniably political.

In effect, this type of dramatisation became a mobilising force. The prosecutors of the Queen were made into symbols of the corruption and injustice of the political system and the Affair into an opportunity for the definition of an identity of interests formed against those of the ruling classes. The Government and the beneficiaries of the representational system were the ‘boroughmongers’, a ‘voracious canker-worm [...] ever gnawing, and never satisfied’, a ‘tormenting, persecuting, villainous worm that is eating out the heart of the nation’ (vol. xxxvii: 160). The following passage illustrates Cobbett’s skill in the use of inventive imagery to convey a mobilising message:

A very profound observer has said that ‘climbing and crawling are performed in the same attitude’. [...] Your Majesty has had a great deal of experience amongst courtiers, you have seen them climb and seen them crawl. They generally begin by crawling, as earwigs and caterpillars first crawl along the ground before they begin to ascend the plant in order to nest themselves in amongst the leaves and devour the fruit. But courtiers, like caterpillars, if shaken down, will crawl again; and it is in this way that they will now endeavour to approach your Majesty (vol. xxxvii: 235-36).

This type of definition of interests prepared the ground for the presentation of the people as the true friends of the Queen, and the political establishment as her enemies: ‘if her Majesty had attached herself to the Place-hunting faction, she would have been banded about to serve the purpose of that faction; and then when, at last, she had served all their purposes, her honour would have been again sacrificed at the shrine of their selfishness’ (vol. xxxvii: 165).

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<sup>26</sup> The episode of the ‘Tunbridge-ware’ – the little cups and saucers, the pretty little tea pots he saw in his childhood sold by gypsies – is used to enliven his denunciation of Whig corruption in the person of Sir John Russell, the Tunbridge youth, and heir of the ‘Noble House of Russell’ (vol. xxxvii: 514-6).

The detainers of power were not the only targets of Cobbett's confrontational rhetoric. The oppositional Whigs, the middle-classes, and the clergy were also seen as enemies of both the Queen and the people. The Whigs were accused of having been silent after 'Peterloo' and now of being equally silent with respect to the cause of the Queen: 'What care they for their noble-hearted Queen? What interest have they in the pure administration of justice?' Above anything else, 'the Whigs are not real reformers; and hence their unmixed hatred is directed against the radicals, because they are sincere' (vol. xxxvii: 184, 188). Cobbett insisted that 'the Whigs are now acting towards the Queen, precisely the part which they have all along acted towards the reformers'. They 'carp, they rail, they even revile' those in power, but they make common cause with the Government in relation to the reformers. In the case of the Queen, 'both factions want her out of the country. They dispute only about the means' (vol. xxxvii: 517).

In a long article published at the beginning of the enquiry in the House of Lords, entitled 'To the Middle Class of People', with the subtitle 'Who are enemies of Reform', the middle-classes are equally accused of having contributed to the persecution of the Queen through their apathy and class prejudice. For Cobbett, the root of the present abuse of the Queen lies in an unreformed House of Commons, for which the middle-classes are greatly responsible: 'that the system has been upheld has been owing to the apathy of the middle classes. [...] If the odious sight [of the Queen going to trial] is now exhibited to the world, it is the work of those whom you have actively supported and encouraged' (vol. xxxvii: 296). The middle-classes are moved by class prejudice: 'had you acted your part well, we should long ago have had a reform of the House of Commons [...]. But you could not endure the thought of suffering the labourer and artisan [...] to participate with you in the enjoyment of political rights' (vol. xxxvii: 302).

Resonating with the Painite/Carlile disdain for the Church and religion, Cobbett's confrontational discourse also extended to the clergy. In an article entitled 'To the Clergy of the Church of England' (vol. xxxvii: 353-84), which is the reply to a pamphlet written in August by a Lancashire priest, Cobbett interprets the motives of the silence of the church in the case of Queen Caroline: the clergy lead most comfortable livings. They do little, but they enjoy the good things of life. They therefore dislike anything that might threaten their privileges. They are not concerned about morals, but about the effects of the Queen's popularity after her return:

You know that she would be popular [...]. Being popular, she would be, of course, a rallying point. [...] Her sin, and her only sin, then, is her being here. This is evident from the endeavours made use of to get rid of her. If she would have gone away [...] she might have lived with all the imputed crimes on her head [...]. No fear on the score of morals was apprehended in this case. The whole of the Queen's sin, therefore, clearly is her being in the country (vol. xxxvii: 383-4).

This was one of the most effective arguments in the literary crusade on behalf of Queen Caroline. In the same article, other arguments flowed out of Cobbett's pen, mindful of his old controversy with 'Parson' Malthus. The clergy as a whole are accused of hypocrisy and of being always on the side of the stronger party. Using the Mary-Anne Clarke scandal as an argument, he states that, at the time, the Church was not alarmed about the injury to morals:

Though the public were nauseated with the proofs; upon that occasion the parsons were all indulgence. We were then told, that we had no right to pry into such matters; that we ought to draw a veil over foibles and frailties of the kind; that we were Jacobins and Rebels; that we, through the sides of the Duke of York, attacked the House of Brunswick! Alas! How changed the tone now! (vol. xxxvii: 370-1).

The above instances of dramatisation and personalisation of political discourse reveal a facet of Regency radicalism which 'contaminated' the radical press: the independence of spirit amply displayed by radical writers had its negative counterpart in an exacerbated individualism. Together with Richard Carlile, Cobbett embodied this type of radical leader and journalist, whose independence of mind was only equalled by his vanity.

There are many examples of Cobbett's vanity and even bad taste in the *PR*. 'The Queen's Answer to the Letter from the King to his People'<sup>27</sup> (Cobbett, 1821), published in the *PR* at the beginning of 1821, shows the individualistic vein that pervades the radical political intervention during the Affair at work. In that text, Cobbett states with great vehemence that he, William Cobbett, and not the Whigs, had been responsible for the publication of *The Book* in 1813, a revelation that he considered a 'piece of news to the king, the queen, the ministry, the Whigs, the people' (Cobbett, 1821: 18). As Thompson (1991: 687) notes, 'Cobbett's favourite subject was William Cobbett of Botley'. Cobbett was immodestly convinced that a large part of the credit for the popularity of the Queen's cause was owed to him.

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<sup>27</sup> The version of Cobbett's pamphlet referred to was published in 1821, in Philadelphia, USA. It was the answer to another pamphlet, claiming to be by the King, but which was most probably apocryphal, entitled 'A Letter from the King to his People' (Sams, 1821) dated from Carlton House, 1 December 1820.

This and other instances of Cobbett's personal vanity make it is easy to condemn the politics of Regency radicalism and the demagogic face of much of its radical press – which the *PR* as a whole illustrates – but it is misleading to overlook its considerable virtues. These were the promotion of an attitude of political awareness and of self-assertion rather than fear for a political system perceived as unjust and corrupt. On the other hand, the intellectual and communicative freedom of radical writers was the source of political genius – which the *PR* as a whole also illustrates. In the specific case of the version of the Caroline affair in the *PR*, and in radical periodicals as a whole, the type of representation it translated may sometimes be distasteful to the modern reader, but unlike Laqueur's (1982: 452-53) argument, it did not depoliticize the Affair or convey backward-looking ideas, on the contrary, it politicized it.

It becomes clear from the beginning that Cobbett deployed his whole discursive war machine for a purpose – to tie the defence of the Queen firmly to the cause of Reform. The first article in the *PR* about the Queen's affair was significantly addressed to the Reformers. It was published on 10 June, a few days after the Queen's arrival in England and was entitled "To the Reformers. A Defence of the Queen against the Defence made by her 'Constitutional Defender'" (vol. xxxvi: 889-938). There, Cobbett introduces the people, and specifically the radical reformers, as the true friends of the Queen and discredits Brougham's defence strategy, uncovering the Whigs as false friends of Reform.

Cobbett argued that Brougham was harming, instead of defending, the Queen. In Cobbett's view, Brougham's threat to present recriminatory matter as a means to avoid the trial (reference to a 'green bag' concerning the King) weakened the Queen's position rather than favoured it. An absence of trial could only be admitted if the Queen 'be put in full and entire possession of all and every one of her rights as Queen of this country' for the sake of justice, for her own sake and 'for the honour of the women in this kingdom' and not otherwise, as it would be interpreted as a confession of guilt. The reparation of the accusations could only be made in two ways: either by 'an open and fair investigation or by placing the Queen in the enjoyment of all her rights as Queen of England' (vol. xxxvi: 926-7).

By discrediting Brougham's defence strategy, Cobbett could bring the radicals and reformers to the fore as the true friends of the Queen, and as the true protagonists of the Affair: 'it is among the Reformers, and amongst them alone, that she has found disinterested friends, and warm and efficient support' (vol. xxxvi: 936). Both were suffering at the hands of a tyrannical Government and a corrupt representational system.

The radicals were ‘the calumniated, the persecuted, the oppressed, the cruelly suffering advocates for a Reform in the House of Commons; [...] these martyrs in the cause of truth, justice and freedom have been wicked, seditious, blasphemous agitators’ (vol. xxxvii: 293, 309-10). In Cobbett’s view of politics as dramatic struggle and of his audience as a rhetorical community, ‘martyrology’ was as important to motivate his audience as ‘demonology’ (Binfield, 1997: 157-69). In September, Cobbett returned to this idea and developed it. He compared the prosecution of the Queen to the persecution of the radical reformers, as both the Queen and the radicals were the victims of the same arbitrary power.

The arbitrary power that passed the Gagging Bills in 1817 set the precedent that allowed the passing of the present Bill of Pains and Penalties to ‘dispose of the Queen without any ceremony’, without a trial. The same had happened to many radical reformers in 1817, who were imprisoned ‘for nearly a year’ and released without trial or knowledge of the accuser, or the offence<sup>28</sup>. The spies who denounced the reformers were also compared to the accusers of the Queen in 1806: ‘the deeds of Edwards, [illegible name], Adams, Dwyer, Oliver, Castles and Vaughan and associates were all fresh in our minds. The perjuries of 1806, against the Queen, were all brought back to our recollection’ (vol. xxxvii: 510). In the radical rhetoric, the ‘Delicate Investigation’ was frequently compared to the current proceedings against the Queen.

The comparisons between the Queen’s and the reformers’ plight created empathy, identification, and helped generate a public atmosphere propitious to the fostering of the radical political agenda. As in 1813, Cobbett recognized in 1820 the potential of the Queen’s affair to agitate public opinion to publicise the cause of radical reform. He perceived from the beginning that the Affair was a ‘new and great event’ with an enormous potential to bring about change. It becomes clear that the radicals were not the ‘disinterested friends’ that Cobbett claimed:

It is next to impossible to suppose any change that would do us any harm, while it is always *possible* that a change may do us good, be the change what it may, and come how it may, and when it may (vol. xxxvi: 889).

In December, Cobbett became adamant about the change he wanted to achieve – parliamentary reform – through the triumph of the Queen, and nothing less than that. The Government had not been able to pass the Bill of Pains and Penalties and there was hope that the Ministry would fall. In the atmosphere of governmental defeat, Cobbett appealed

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<sup>28</sup> Cobbett might be also thinking about his own imprisonment for two years in Newgate Prison in 1810, on a charge of seditious libel for criticising flogging in the army.

to the reformers to only accept a change of Ministry that would include a compromise towards parliamentary reform. He feared that the dropping of the Bill of Pains and Penalties might be appropriated by the Whigs, namely Brougham, to achieve a change of Ministry without parliamentary reform.

Cobbett was even ready to drop the cause of the Queen if it were disconnected from the political purpose of contributing to parliamentary reform. He thus openly advised the reformers to oppose petitioning to the House of Commons for the restoration of the legal rights of the Queen, including the restoration of her name to the Liturgy, if the petition did not include the demand for parliamentary reform: ‘nobody can more sincerely wish to see these things accomplished than I do; but I am for no petition to the House of Commons, to the Lords, or to the King, even upon this subject, unless the petition include a prayer for a Reform of Parliament’ (vol. xxxvii: 1686).

This position was coherent with Cobbett’s discourse throughout the Affair. The focus had been placed on the promotion of the cause of parliamentary reform and the Queen’s case had been to a great extent subsidiary to that goal. It is often claimed that the Queen has made use of the radicals to foster her aims, but the reverse is perhaps more true. In December, it had become clear that Cobbett’s intervention in the Queen Caroline affair had been, from the beginning, political: ‘I have never written for temporary purposes’, he declared (vol. xxxvii: 1562), and added with unfeigned arrogance, but also with acute political perception:

While I know, with as much certainty as I know that this is Tuesday, that the wisdom of my principles and proposed measures, of fourteen years age, must be acknowledged, and that in *acts of Parliament too*, or, that this country must take its chance on the boisterous sea of revolution (vol. xxxvii: 1563).

Cobbett’s conception of political struggle as drama, and his view of the Affair as a metaphor of political change, had one of its best examples in the representation of the Queen as a victim of both a revengeful husband and a corrupt political system. The dramatic representation was responsible for most of the popular support of the Queen, and Cobbett therefore appealed to the sentiments of the people in defence of a lonely and persecuted woman, who was Queen of England, accused and friendless, in an emphatic way: ‘a woman whom we have been praying (by name) to God, every Sunday, during the last twenty-five years [...] we see her an accused person, and, apparently, with scarcely any friends’ (vol. xxxvi: 891).



Cobbett repeated the appeal to popular identification with a persecuted woman when he discussed the charges presented by the Attorney-General: 'it has always been a distinguishing characteristic of the people of this country, to sympathise with the oppressed and to lend assistance to the weak in their struggles with the strong' (vol. xxxvii: 422). Wooler made the same point in the *BD* of 14 June, when the 'Black Dwarf' commented on the enthusiastic popular reception of the Queen, by asking: 'is it not better to applaud a defenceless woman than to persecute her?' (vol. iv: 800). Cobbett was especially determined in denouncing the perversion of justice and its unconstitutional use by the King and his Government, and to articulate it with the mobilisation of the people for political change. This was political matter, and the rhetoric of melodrama was the vehicle for its diffusion.

Even though radical journalists discussed issues related to the private sphere of domesticity, they linked that discussion to the purpose of publicising the radical political agenda among the wider audience thus created. That aspect is particularly noticeable in Cobbett. It can be argued that the Queen's affair was appropriated essentially to that purpose. The qualities of the Queen are emphasised so that her courage and determination are presented as sterling political virtues. Her resolve to return to England, the refusal of an increased income for remaining on the Continent, and the demand for an open and fair trial, aimed to agitate the waters and encourage the people to be bold.

Through her courage and determination, the Queen was setting an example that should be followed. She was the inspirational heroine for the cause of parliamentary reform: she 'will have opened the eyes of hundreds of thousands who were blind before her arrival, and, therefore, all the oppressed part of the nation ought to feel great gratitude towards her' (vol. xxxvi: 902-3). As discussed above, the use of melodrama to disseminate a political message was also marked in the *R*, though Carlile placed the stress more on the critique of the King as husband and ruler, which Cobbett avoided, and on the power of the press.

In periods of crisis such as the Caroline affair, the function of the radical periodicals as instruments of both the political enlightenment and the intellectual improvement of the working people remained a key concern. In this vein, the issue of 16 December of the *PR* published the advertisement of the fourth edition of *Cobbett's Grammar*<sup>29</sup>, 'carefully corrected'. The *Grammar* was dedicated to 'Her Majesty the Queen', and was intended for

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<sup>29</sup> The first edition of the *Grammar* dates from 1818. It was published in New York (Nickerson and Osborne, 1983). By 1834, it had sold about one hundred thousand copies (Manning, 2009: 100).

the use 'of schools, and of young persons in general and more especially for the use of *Soldiers, Sailors, Apprentices and Plough-Boys*' (vol. xxxvii: 1560). The correlation between didactic intention and a class-based political discourse is clearly assumed in this advertisement.

Cobbett's *Grammar* was intentionally political and radical: 'grammar, perfectly understood, enables us, not only to express our meaning fully and clearly, but so to express it as to enable us to defy the ingenuity of man to give to our words any other meaning than that which we ourselves intend them to express' (Nickerson, 1983: 34). He insisted that the resistance to the dominant ideology involved the ability to defy the appropriation of meaning by the political enemies, that is, it involved the ability to fight meaning with counter-meaning. In Cobbett's analysis, political and economic oppression also entailed mystification of meaning. Thus, control over words was a crucial weapon for the demystification of the language of oppression.

Cobbett's rendering of the Queen Caroline affair in the *PR* as a whole reveals this double function: to expose the intentionality of the discourse of the Government and to develop a discourse of counter-intentionality. The article 'An Answer to the Speech of the Attorney-General Against her Majesty the Queen' (vol. xxxvii: 385-424) specifically illustrates this discursive strategy. Cobbett analyses the charges against the Queen presented by the Attorney-General and refutes his arguments as part of the structure of corruption. In the end, he concludes that 'the Queen is innocent and her accusers the basest of calumniators' (vol. xxxvii: 422).

Cobbett sees language as a category through which the world is organized politically. It is surprising to find Cobbett's view of verbal discourse in agreement, at least partly, with Bakhtin's conception of style as a struggle, a politics, a means for adjusting and registering relations between speaker or writer, their subject and their audience (Clark and Holquist, 1984: 210). This is how Cobbett created discourse, in dramaturgical interaction that aimed to demystify the language of the political authority. For Cobbett, this type of demystification was an essential part of the radical discourse of opposition.

This discourse of counter-intentionality assumed diverse forms. It was not always violently confrontational as in the above example. It could be unmistakably informative. In the article published on 2 September, entitled 'Brougham's Arguments [...] and the Reply to the Attorney and Solicitor General' (vol. xxxvii: 457-83), the audience was informed about Brougham's argumentation and reply in the House of Lords in favour of the re-cross-examination of the witnesses against the Queen. Brougham protested about the adverse

conditions under which the defence performed their task, such as the absence of any previous knowledge of the details of the accusation (unlike the practice in the lower courts) and the impossibility of questioning the witnesses except through the judges.

Brougham's demand was not accepted and the report was published without comments from Cobbett. These appeared in the following issue, in an article addressed to 'The Solicitor-General', in which Cobbett asserted his conviction that the denial of Brougham's request would not harm the Queen because for 'the public, the whole nation, the whole world' the Queen was innocent, and the charges against her had originated in 'a long-premeditated and slowly-matured conspiracy' (vol. xxxvii: 553).

This formative / informative function was often underlined by a mock satiric tone. In the aforementioned article 'To the Middle Class of People', Cobbett informed his audience about the concept of *ex-post-facto law* by resorting to the distinctive language that was largely his own creation. The result was simple, original, and instinctively mocking:

For instance, I laugh upon seeing Castlereagh in a fright. This is no crime at the time when I laugh; but an act may be passed to-morrow making it a crime in me to have so laughed to-day, and punish me for such laughing. This would be an ex-post-facto law; and the laws of England say, that no such law shall be passed (vol. xxxvii: 286).

This was Cobbett at his best. He knew that the success of the defence of the Queen was greatly dependent on the success obtained by exposing her enemies before a trusted audience. He always wrote having in mind the people as public, for the existence of a public was a crucial element of popular mobilisation. He thus aimed to create, not readers, but an audience. An active audience with whom Cobbett created a direct relationship was the main target of his personalised and dramatised rhetoric, the 'us against them'.

When Cobbett addressed the reformers again in September, he pointed out that 'the arrogant and greedy junto' hated the Queen 'because she was so well deserving of public love and confidence' (vol. xxxvii: 498). The audience was always present, almost physically – the direct speech was the preferred mode of communication, even when there was a specific addressee, be it Lord Liverpool, the King, the Queen, the Whigs, the clergy, or the middle-classes. Apart from supplying the target for political attack, the addressees offered themselves as a pretext, even as figures of speech, for the exposition of ideas and commentary of events, always with the purpose in mind of creating, instructing, and mobilising an audience.

When on 5 August, a little before the commencement of the enquiry in the House of Lords, Cobbett wrote a letter 'To Lord Liverpool', he was actually addressing his

audience: 'I beg the public to bear in mind that every one of us is liable to the same mode of proceeding, which is now adopted against her Majesty. Her cause is, therefore, our cause as far, at least, as relates to this mode of proceeding' (vol. xxxvii: 143). Wooler made the same point in the *BD*, although Wooler's political discourse was more 'literary', less 'oral' (fewer rhetorical questions or exclamatory phrases) and more diversified, through the creation of fictional characters.

There are many instances of the use of addressees as instruments of political assertion and as vehicles for a direct relationship with the audience. In the article 'To the Queen', in the *PR* of 12 August, Cobbett speaks mostly to his audience, by presenting the reformers' struggle for parliamentary reform as a political necessity and a quest for justice and by comparing the method of prosecution of the Queen to the handling of the reformers (radicals) by the Government. In their lack of humanity, the enemies of the Queen were the same as the enemies of reform (vol. xxxvii: 209-39).

When it became clear that the Bill of Pains and Penalties would not pass, Cobbett referred his audience back to the June article and claimed a strategic victory:

I addressed you when the Queen first arrived. I then told you that this affair would, before it was over, do more in exposing the real character and views of our wicked adversaries, than ever had yet been done (vol. xxxvii: 497).

The editors of radical periodicals, and Cobbett in particular, had the merit of having found the key to opening up the public sphere to a lower-class audience. Public opinion, symbolised by the people, all the people, discussing matters of public interest openly and fairly, was set in contrast to the system of secrecy and spies that prosecuted the Queen. When the Queen demanded an open and fair trial and that her accusers be named, Cobbett was quick in interpreting the appeal to the judgement of public opinion as morally superior to the 'secret committee' appointed by the prosecution to examine the evidence: 'The Queen sends her message, and demands *publicity*. She demands that her accusers be named [...]. And what, then, when it was proposed by the Ministers to refer evidence to a *secret* committee?' (vol. xxxvi: 903).

Giving names to political enemies was a strategy initiated by Cobbett and readily followed by Wooler and other radicals<sup>30</sup>. Naming was publicity and a powerful mobilising force. When it was opposed to secrecy and spies, associated to political repression, it was

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<sup>30</sup> Benbow's *Peep at the Peers* (Benbow, 1820), Wade's *Black Book: Corruption Unmasked!* (Wade, 1820), or Hone's *The Political 'A, Apple-Pie'* (Hone, 1971) are examples of a strategy that has followers today, especially in the publication of the names of the beneficiaries of multiple pensions and salaries in public service.

democratic publicity. The Queen herself understood the beneficial effects of this type of publicity by denouncing the method of prosecution in the public sphere. In the 'Letter from the Queen to the King', possibly written by Cobbett and published at the beginning of the enquiry, the Queen protested against 'this species of trial' and demanded 'a trial in a Court where the jurors are taken impartially from amongst the people and where the proceedings are open and fair' (vol. xxxvii: 324).

The Queen was clearly submitting her case to the judgement of public opinion. The Caroline affair can be considered a case study of the clash between two conceptions of political representation: those who believed that Parliament was the 'sovereign power' and the only voice of the people (Blackstone, 1765-9; Keane, 1991: 4), and those who considered that public opinion was the voice of the people as much as Parliament. The constant appeals to public opinion, which characterised the appropriation of the Queen Caroline affair by the radical press, contributed to giving visibility to the latter, especially because Parliament was seen by large sections of the population as a corrupt body that did not fulfil its representational goal.

As in the *BD* or the *R*, the mobilisation of public opinion in the *PR* also included the publication of texts signed by the Queen which publicized her woes and demands. The 'Letter from the Queen to the King' was published in all radical periodicals and also in the *PR* of 19 August (vol. xxxvii: 313: 25). There, Queen sought to influence public opinion on her behalf through melodramatic victimisation:

To see my daughter; to fold her in my arms; to mingle my tears with hers; to receive her cheering caresses, and to hear from her lips assurances of never-ceasing love; thus to be comforted, consoled, upheld, and blessed, was too much to be allowed me. Even on the slave mart the cries of 'Oh! my mother, my mother! Oh! my child, my child!' have prevented a separation of the victims of avarice. But your advisers, more inhuman than the slave-dealer, remorselessly tore the mother from the child (vol. xxxvii: 319).

However, melodramatic victimisation of the Queen never lost sight of the broader political framework of reference. Melodrama could rouse public opinion, but only politics could sustain it, Cobbett argued. He asserted that melodrama could account for the initial popular support of the Queen, but it would not last long unless it were tied to the general discontent caused by the distress of more than twenty years, and 'a conflict with public opinion' that is responsible for a political division, 'enough to terrify rulers of the stoutest nerves' (vol. xxxvii: 1602).

The only permanent remedy will be parliamentary reform, ‘without which Reform I, for perhaps, the hundredth time, give it as my decided opinion, that England never can again enjoy one day of tranquillity’ (vol. xxxvii: 1603-4). Instead of leading to a diversion from radical politics, the use of melodrama strengthened the cause of reform through the popular support of the Queen, thus testifying to the ability of radicals to foster their cause ‘in a fertile and flexible way’ (Fulcher, 1995: 486). The public space was re-appropriated to express the reformers’ views and grievances through the mobilisation of public opinion.

As happened with the other radical periodicals, addresses to the Queen were massively published in the *PR*, a relevance that reinforces the idea of their value as mirrors of public opinion. The extensive account (almost forty pages) of the ‘Middlesex Meeting’ of 12 August (vol. xxxvii: 241- 80), informing the audience about a meeting called for to decide upon its realization, is proof thereof. Cobbett also advised addressers about how to overcome the new legal obstacles to drawing up addresses (vol. xxxvii: 170). Some answers of the Queen to Addresses raise few doubts as to their authorship by Cobbett (vol. xxxvii: 200)<sup>31</sup>.

All addresses expressed popular indignation for the ill-treatment of the Queen by her husband and the injustice of the proceedings against her, as well as admiration for the energy of her character and the high-minded resistance to the attacks of her enemies. The sheer amount of addresses enabled Cobbett to conclude at the beginning of September: ‘thus in England, the Government is trying a Queen, and the people are addressing her [...]. These are strange things to behold!’ (vol. xxxvii: 524). Addresses were translated into opportunities for political confrontation: they were ‘not things cooked up by the lick-spittles of Boroughmongers; by the wretched people who live by public extortion; but they come spontaneously from the people, and in almost every case in opposition to the creatures of her enemies’ (vol. xxxvii: 158). Sincerity, disinterestedness, and spontaneity were political virtues that the people possessed in contrast to the ‘boroughmongers’, who were the Queen’s enemies.

Especially significant are the addresses signed by middle and working-class women published in the *PR*. Many women were eager to use the *Affair* as an opportunity to air their domestic woes in public and to assert equal marital responsibility. According to Rogers (1998: 250), ‘twenty-seven female addresses were presented to Caroline’

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<sup>31</sup> In the Queen’s ‘Answer to the Address from Lewes’, published in the *PR* of 5 August, the image that her enemies were supported by a ‘faction that has long operated like a canker-worm’, is the same as that used by Cobbett in the article entitled ‘To the Earl of Liverpool’, also published in 5 August (vol. xxxvii: 160).

containing over seventy thousand signatures. They were regularly published in the radical periodicals, together with the replies by the Queen.

Addresses such as the 'Address from the Female Inhabitants of Nottingham', signed by 7,800 women (vol. xxxvii: 188: 90), or the address 'Of the Married Ladies' (vol. xxxvii: 333-4) reflected popular female mobilisation. The former suggests participation by working-class women, whereas the latter points to the participation of middle-class women. This fact shows how the Queen Caroline affair cut across class lines. Both addresses expressed fidelity, admiration, and hope that the Queen would defeat her enemies. They are interesting in the sense that while presenting themselves as wives and mothers and asserting their traditional roles, these women did not abstain from appearing in the public sphere of political intervention, usually occupied by men. These acts suggest that for these women, issues of domestic life should be addressed as political issues, as Kent (1999: 158-62) has showed.

The publication of addresses fostered the mobilisation of public opinion on behalf of the Queen and their publication certainly stimulated the drafting of more. The last number of 1820 of the *PR* contained the advertisement for the publication of a complete collection of all the addresses presented to the Queen, many of them never printed, with the corresponding answers by the Queen. The addresses and answers were considered 'one of the memorable features in that memorable year', and they would be of interest to the contemporary reader, and to 'the future Historian they will form a valuable document' (vol. xxxvii: 1701). Addresses to the Queen are rich documents from a variety of analytic perspectives certainly deserving further scholarly attention.

As the Queen Caroline affair was directly related to the familial sphere and to private behaviour, morality was a major issue in the press in general. This issue was taken up by Cobbett and discussed at different moments of the Affair. One such moment happened in the edition of 26 August. It was motivated by a pamphlet, mentioned earlier, written by a Lancashire priest. The priest had argued that the Queen had not been acquitted in 1806 of the charge of 'levity of conduct' and proposed that she ought to be 'set aside for the sake of the morals of the country'.

The interest of the text lies in the fact that Cobbett (like Carlile) saw morality *per se* as belonging solely to the private sphere. He stated that no one, not even a King, should be taken away upon charges of immorality: 'I say, let a king be in morals, what he may; [...] devil as he might be, still I say, that to propose to set him aside for the sake of the morals of the nation would be high treason' (vol. xxxvii: 377-8). He therefore asserted that 'no

Radical has ever broached a doctrine like this; it is the invention of 'the pretended loyal men'. Cobbett's morality was conservative in relation to rising ideas about male private conduct, which increasingly gauged the character of a man and his public image by his private conduct.

Yet, when the discussion of morality involved political consequences, Cobbett's ideas became less conservative: 'If it be necessary to unqueen a Queen for the preservation of morals, why not unking a king with the same object in view?' (vol. xxxvii: 376-7). The reference to the morals of a king in the current context would immediately be understood as referring to George IV's reputation for libertinism. Dethroning kings for their morals would weaken monarchy, but it would be contrary to reason to apply the principle only when a King is at stake:

Slender indeed is the right to reign, if it depend on such a doctrine [...] unless we were to adopt the maxim of this profligate parson, that, in the husband, that is to be overlooked, which is to be deemed criminal in the wife; a maxim in the teeth of reason, in the teeth of justice, in the teeth of law, in the teeth of the scriptures, and in the teeth of the very prayer book, which this parson does read, or ought to read, every Sunday in the church (vol. xxxvii: 375).

Cobbett explored this type of political discourse and argued that the enemies of the Queen were also enemies of the King because they must have known that by accusing the Queen of immoral conduct 'the husband's conduct would not pass without strict enquiry' and that if the Queen was found guilty, the 'feelings' of the King 'would undergo punishment such as human feelings have seldom been known to experience' (vol. xxxvii: 503). Cobbett would be right, were it not for the fact that the King was in reality the main instigator of the proceedings against his wife. Yet in Cobbett's constitutionalism, George IV was no part of his contentious discourse.

The King was in effect the only possessor of power exempted from open criticism in the *PR*. Unlike the treatment of the Affair in satirical prints, where the King was no less a target of mockery than the Government, there is hardly a direct word against George IV in the *PR*. Cobbett even claimed for the radicals the defence of the throne: in spite of having had 'no hand in the affair', they have lived 'to see the day, when it is we who have to stand forward to protect the throne against their machinations' (vol. xxxvii: 519). This kind of trespassing of loyalist hallowed ground naturally prompted violent loyalist reaction, especially in the *Courier* and the *Morning Post* (Fulcher, 1995).



The discourse of opposition and confrontation led radical periodicals frequently to comment on articles published in the loyalist press. Yet, there were some surprising exceptions. When the Queen's 'Letter to the King' was published on 7 August, the *New Times* considered it a 'most detestable letter', and argued that it was in reality addressed not to the King, but to the London mob; the *Courier* derided Caroline as a mother and wife: 'the cant of maternal feelings' does not correspond to reality, 'the tears it talks about were never shed', and 'the tender feelings of the female heart which it describes are the florid inventions of a big-wigged rhetorician'. The letter was 'an impudent fabrication and a fraud'. Cobbett reproduced these attacks on the Queen without commentary (vol. xxxvii: 330). His vanity may have been flattered by the reference to his name as the probable author of the letter. The *New Times* wrote: 'the composition betrays all the malignity of that writer', although 'a more classical pen may have here and there polished off the vulgarity of the author of the *Twopenny Register*' (vol. xxxvii: 327).

Another aspect of Cobbett's defence of the Queen which neither Carlile nor Wooler exploited concerns what he calls Caroline's 'pursuit after knowledge'. Cobbett interprets Caroline's travels as the pursuit of self-improvement and as evidence of the goodness of her character:

By your Majesty's persecutions we have been made acquainted with your real character. Before this time, we regarded you as persecuted, as unjustly treated, as cruelly hunted down. But, until now, we did not know that we had the honour to have for our Queen, a woman who had spent her money and her time in a pursuit after knowledge (vol. xxxvii: 437-8).

Caroline's travels in Europe, part of Asia and Africa, her visits to 'renowned and famous places of antiquity, including Jerusalem and the tomb of Christ are deemed opportunities for humanitarian work. When Caroline was in the 'Barbary States', she employed money 'to obtain the liberty of numerous Christian slaves, and to send them home to their native country' (vol. xxxvii: 439). This argument aimed to bring the Queen to the popular camp:

We take for ourselves some degree of merit for having earned that money by the sweat of our brow, which enabled your Majesty to acquire so large a stock of knowledge; to do good to so many human beings. [...] Your Majesty thus becomes closely identified with ourselves (vol. xxxvii: 440-1).

As the expenditure of public money was one of Cobbett's main political concerns, the question of the public money spent by the Queen in her travels was tackled. He

considered that public money was put to good use, and he compared the ‘smallness of the sum’ that the Queen has spent to perform ‘these great things’, with ‘the largeness of those sums, which others spend in luxury, frivolity, and in all sorts of debasing amusements and pursuits’ (vol. xxxvii: 441), which the audience immediately associated to the King’s spending on the Brighton Pavilion<sup>32</sup>. Cobbett also mentions the public spending by the Government on ‘secret services’ and sinecures.

Taking the purpose of defending the Queen evidently too far, Cobbett aimed to press the idea that, unlike the examples of the King and the Government, the Queen’s travels were not an opportunity for frivolous amusement or irresponsible expenditure of public money, but that they had a serious purpose. Moreover, he believed that the pursuit of knowledge on the part of the Queen was indicative of her innocence, as only innocence is compatible ‘with a great mind’ (vol. xxxvii: 442). The equation knowledge/virtue resonates with Godwin’s belief in the interconnection between intellectual capacity, justice, and virtue (Godwin, 1993). Cobbett thus pledges complete support by the working people: ‘nothing will shake your Majesty in the love and admiration of the people, including in the word people, the whole of the efficient part of the community’ (vol. xxxvii: 443-4).

From the beginning, Cobbett has credited the success of the Queen’s cause to her reliance on the people and in early September, he advises her to pursue that path:

Your Majesty has gained your power over public opinion by your firmness and resolution; by the loftiness of your character and your language. These have given a tone to the minds of the people, who feel as you feel; [...] to preserve that tone, your Majesty must act as you have acted (vol. xxxvii: 445).

On that condition, the enemies of the Queen ‘must be defeated, do what else they will’ (vol. xxxvii: 511-2), and the question is only about the political consequences. Cobbett openly states in December that it is ‘impossible to believe that the present state of things can last long’. He clearly believes in the possibility of a change of Ministry and proposes the realization of a dinner in London before New Year’s Day (vol. xxxvii: 1556) for the purpose of discussing the propriety of sending forth a declaration of their ‘views and wishes with regard to Reform’ (vol. xxxvii: 1612), but in the last edition of the year, 30 December, the dinner is postponed to 17 January 1821 (vol. xxxvii: 1704).

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<sup>32</sup> The Brighton Pavilion became a source of contemporary commentary, mainly negative, by journalists, members of the aristocracy, MPs, authors, and satirists such as William Hone (Donnachie and Lavin, 2003: 364-8).

Cobbett may be accused of having manipulated the Affair in order to publicise the radical political programme of parliamentary reform, but it must be said in his defence that he had no hidden agenda. He was genuinely and openly committed to the cause he defended. In the end, that ostensible aim was not achieved, but in the process the *PR* made a substantial contribution to the victory of public opinion. Public opinion has won a legitimate place in the constitution (Wahrman, 1993: 432; Schweizer, 2006: 33-48) and Cobbett must fittingly be credited with a share in the achievement.

### ***The Black Dwarf*, edited by Thomas Jonathan Wooler**

*In dirtier rags and tatters were the rest,  
And at the head of this unseemly tribe  
Came one whom they denominated scribe  
A vile BLACK DWARF*

*The Loyal Man in the Moon*, 1820

Thomas Jonathan Wooler (1786?-1853) began editing, printing, and publishing the radical periodical *The Black Dwarf* in 1817 (1817-1824). The title of the periodical may have been taken from Walter Scott's novel *The Black Dwarf*, published in Edinburgh at the end of 1816.

During Cobbett's absence in America, the *BD* became the leading radical weekly with a national circulation of over 12,000 at its height (Haywood, 2005: 10). From 1817 to 1820, it contained eight pages in quarto demy format and was published weekly at the price of two pence each number. From 1820 onwards, until 1824 it assumed a new shape, being published in demy octavo form and costing six pence each weekly edition (*NQ*, 1865: 358). The reference to the *BD* in the above quotation, taken from the pamphlet satire *The Loyal Man in the Moon*<sup>33</sup>, underlines the attention it deserved in the loyalist propaganda.

Wooler was a Yorkshire-born printer, who like William Hone, William Cobbett, Richard Carlile and others moved to London as a young man to make a living as a book seller and publisher. In London, he associated with radical circles and quickly distinguished himself in debating clubs, some of his own creation, such as the *Socratic Union*, founded in 1808, and the *British Forum*. In 1813, he edited and published *The*

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<sup>33</sup> *The Loyal Man in the Moon* (Chapple and Johnston, 1820), an illustrated pamphlet satire, was one of the loyal responses to the highly successful satire attributed to William Hone *The Man in the Moon* (Hone, 1971: 83-104).

*Republican: A Weekly Historical Magazine* (McCalman, 1988: 300). In 1814, he may also have edited and published *The Reasoner*, a literary magazine (Epstein, 1994: 36) and in 1814-16, he edited the *Stage*, a theatrical journal. The *Stage* was Wooler's first important weekly. Hendrix (1976: 110) considers it 'a superior journal of dramatic criticism'. For Calhoun and McQuarrie (2004: 3), Wooler was one of the most important radical intellectuals of the early nineteenth-century.

The liberal use of Shakespearean quotations and the rather theatrical mark he imprinted on the periodical reflects his training as a drama critic. That mark of erudition underscores Wooler's talent, mainly when it is combined with a farcical vision of political debate. The unlikely result is a type of popular political discourse with an often undervalued literary quality<sup>34</sup>. The tone of sophisticated wit that defines the style of the *BD* is unmistakably present in the motto of the periodical – 'Satire's my weapon'. In the campaign on behalf of Queen Caroline, the Government, the representatives of State law, the King and the Italian witnesses are continued targets of Wooler's derision. The *BD* is a blend of serious political journalism and satire with a strong popular appeal.

The most original feature of Wooler's periodical – and one which inspired recent followers<sup>35</sup> – is his creation of the character that gives the name to the periodical. The 'Black Dwarf' is Wooler's literary *persona*. This is no Romantic, lonely figure, isolated from the world around him, like Scott's counterpart, but a gregarious entity that writes letters – to the 'Yellow Bonze' in Japan, the 'Green Goblin' in Ireland, the 'Blue Devil' at St. James, and 'Zekiel Strawyard', a country voice commenting on city corruption.

The 'Letters of the Black Dwarf to the Yellow Bonze at Japan' are Wooler's most original creation. These letters, which take most of the space in the periodical, use the literary convention of the pseudo-Oriental correspondent to inform the home correspondent about controversial issues of the day in a supposedly detached way. The vocabulary of 'Oriental despotism' is used as oblique criticism of the political establishment, especially the Government. The character himself and the style of these letters are a striking combination of 'high' and 'low', of the satiric and the melodramatic – sophisticated wit

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<sup>34</sup> However, as Jones (2003: 1-3) points out, recent criticism has often cast a 'satiric eye' over the period and thus challenged conventions about early nineteenth-century literature that overlooked the radical production.

<sup>35</sup> *The Black Dwarf* was also the name of a political and cultural newspaper of the *New Left* published between 1968 and 1972, in the context of the social agitation of the year 1968. It borrowed its name from Wooler's periodical and, to assert the continuity, numbered the first issue 'Vol. 13 n° 1'. In 2008, John Hoyland, one of the members of the board of the *Black Dwarf* in 1968, wrote in the *Guardian* of 15 March 2008 an article about this editorial experience: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2008/mar/15/popandrock.pressandpublishing?INTCMP=SRCH> (accessed 25/03/2010).

and bombastic language, voiced by a 'dangerously low' (Worrall, 1997) black dwarf from Japan. This mixture locates the roots of Wooler's style in both elite and popular culture, as Epstein (1994) has shown, while it also emphasises the instability of canonical categorization.

The 'Black Dwarf' is not the only character created by Wooler. Other more ephemeral voices occasionally appear as readers' letters to the editor. During the Queen Caroline affair, these invented readers usually convey parodic commentary on the proceedings against the Queen, on the King and the Government. They are 'Peter Dolike', 'Mrs Caroline Willhaveit', 'George Shallnothaveit', 'The Brown Ape', 'W. Goodman', amongst others. The dialogising counter-movement (Grimes, 2003: 181) between the original and the parodied emerges as a means by which authority is seized and levelled.

The variety of usually naïve viewpoints through which ironic political comment on recent events is conveyed by these characters grants a sharp edge to the satiric discourse of the *BD*. It is the art of baiting authority through the critical method of parodic laughter. The mock-satiric, ironic mode – materialized in the satiric/farcical attack on the King and Government – clearly dominates the discursive strategy at work in the *BD*.

The themes that dominate the polemics led by Wooler in the *BD* during the Affair – the themes of the private sphere of familial behaviour, the legal issues concerning the method of prosecution of the Queen, the identification of the cause of the Queen and her oppression with the sufferings of the radicals and of the people in general, the publication of addresses presented to the Queen, and the answers to attacks on the Queen in the loyalist press – do not greatly differ from those treated in the *R* or the *PR*. The main differences lie in the comparative more weight given to the discussion of the legal issues of the case and the literary quality of some of Wooler's prose.

Although satire is the cement that links and unifies the themes of the polemics, these are in reality engaged in complex discursive interaction. They are examined in a variety of discursive modes (from melodrama to rational discussion) and played against the political establishment with public opinion as protagonist: 'The Queen is here: and what is much worse, the people seem very glad that she is come' (vol. iv: 800). This combination lends a specific dialogical, multi-voiced mark to the treatment of the Queen Caroline affair in the *BD*.

The Queen Caroline affair was not an obvious radical cause, and at the end of June the *BD* was still scoffing at the royal quarrel and considering it 'a trifling matter': 'all national interest in public business is suspended because a man and his wife cannot agree'

(vol. iv: 895). Although the Caroline ‘mythology’ was already set for use by the time she arrived in England, as McCalman (1988: 163) rightly claims, the initial reticence to take up the Queen’s cause, on the part of radicals such as Wooler, cannot be ignored. This reticence may explain the reason why the tone and the language used in the letter of 14 June by the ‘Black Dwarf’ to the ‘Yellow Bonze at Japan’ is almost conciliatory. The title itself, ‘A Queen to be Disposed of – a Wife to be Given Away’, betrays an attitude of playful irony:

Oh, my yellow friend! We are in a most pitiful plight. We are sadly in want of a little *Eastern law*, concerning the *disposal* of wives! How does thy royal master contrive to keep quietness among so many; when *one* here, is not only sufficient to disturb the royal harem, but to employ the statesmen and lawyers of the country into the bargain? [...] A plague upon these women! They plague men beyond endurance. Here is a woman, who was thought to have been decently and quietly got rid of; – and lo! Here she is again, to disturb a nation, and frighten her husband out of his well-merited repose! (vol. iv: 797).

On closer inspection, however, a less consensual message stirs the textual peace. The suggestion is made that some women are self-determining, potentially independent individuals. Certain women are endowed with a capacity to shake ‘things as they are’ (a favourite *BD* expression), and strong-minded women such as the Queen ‘plague men beyond endurance’. The most intriguing aspect of the view of the Queen as a woman who is willing to stand up to defend ‘the office, and character, and honour, and dignity, and reputation of a Queen’ (vol. iv: 799) – that is, as someone capable of independent political action– is the implied generalisation.

Despite the typical satiric distancing, the above quotation suggests that the Queen Caroline affair may constitute an important moment for women’s independent participation in the public sphere as essential partners in the struggle for a more transparent and moral polity. Wooler might be thinking of the case of Mary Ann Tocker, a woman who pleaded her own cause and was acquitted in 1818 of an indictment for libel by a judge she had accused of corruption (Tocker, 1818). Tocker’s trial became almost as famous as Hone’s, which explains why Wooler, Carlile and Cobbett did not let this case pass unnoticed<sup>36</sup>. Based on this case, Fulcher (1994: 58) postulates the possibility that many women may, like her, have become involved in radical politics in an independent way.

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<sup>36</sup> Carlile published in 1818 one of the editions of Tocker’s trial, *The Trial of Mary Ann Tocker* (Tocker, 1818), Cobbett, still in America, wrote about her in the *PR* (vol. xxxiv, 2 Jan. 1819), and Wooler wrote several articles in the *BD* (vol. ii, October and November 1818).

Tocker's case (and possibly others) may have influenced the attitudes on the part of Regency radicals towards the capacity of women to participate autonomously in the public sphere. Regency radicals, including the editors of radical periodicals, traditionally viewed women mainly as subordinate auxiliaries in an essentially male struggle, but during the Caroline affair they systematically supported women's involvement<sup>37</sup>.

Loyalist attacks on the involvement of women in the Queen Caroline affair show that loyalists were aware of the subversive nature of women's participation in the political life of the country. Wooler interpreted the return of the Queen and her defiance of male authority as subversive female political intervention: 'it was rebellion against the lord of the creation Man! for a woman to be thus borne in triumph past the threshold to which she had sworn obedience' (vol. iv: 801). As the threshold was the King's, the message is inescapably political: Caroline was both a woman rebelling against her husband, and a Queen rebelling against her King. The condition of Caroline as Queen conferred political dimension to her defiance of authority through which both facets of the Queen's case, the public and the private, are interwoven. As Carter (2008: 249) argues, for the radicals gender and politics were not separate and divisible entities and both have shaped the opposition to the 'trial' of the Queen and to George IV and his Government.

The discussion of morality and gender relations constitutes a forward-looking aspect of the treatment of the Queen's case in the *BD*. Wooler refuses the theory of the separation of spheres, and combines the elements of the private sphere of familial behaviour with the public sphere of government and justice. Therefore, the moral conduct of the King, some members of the aristocracy, and the political establishment as a whole are discussed as part of the strategy of defence of the Queen. The offer of a settlement of £50,000 a year for the renunciation of her legal rights as Queen consort is considered proof of the hypocrisy of the accusation and, by implication, of the low moral standards of the aristocratic elite: 'guilty, it is avowed in our moral legislature, she might have been, not only with *impunity*, but with a *splendid reward* [...]. 'She might have built palaces for licentiousness abroad, and paid her paramours with money wrung from the hard toils, and severe distress of the people' (vol. v: 75).

These words are charged with the oppositional cement that would unite the people against the mentors of the political establishment. Exposing the profligacy of

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<sup>37</sup> The change of attitudes is especially noted in the comparison between the way these radical journalists interpreted the significance of women's involvement in radical politics before and after Tocker's case. Since then, and notably during the Caroline affair, they repeatedly appealed to women's public participation.

licentiousness and its being paid with the money obtained by the hard work of the people built the type of oppositional rhetoric with which the working people could identify in those times of economic hardship. The combination of rational discussion with a melodramatic tone allowed Wooler to place aristocratic vice in opposition to plebeian virtue to undermine the political dominance of the aristocracy.

Domesticity and male marital responsibility are discussed in their moral and social dimensions. An anonymous writer (possibly Hone) argued that a husband that neglects and abandons his wife, because he does not like her, and that publicly disregards and aggrieves her is considered in breach of his marriage vows and his behaviour is seen as unmanly, undignified and even as a prelude to the collapse of all morality (Hone, 1820e: 32). Echoing these views, the *BD* denies such a husband the right to accuse his wife, even if she errs: 'Is the man who blighted the first year of her married expectations with such neglect and persecution, entitled to reproach her with a fault?' [...] 'Could such a husband have entered into a court of law demanding compensation for a treasure which he had thrown away! Or vengeance for an error which he had occasioned!' (vol. v: 73-4). The *BD* places the moral and social duty of male protection and respect of the wife above considerations of personal like or dislike. Although it can be argued that in this case dislike was mutual, since 1806 the *onus* of hostile initiatives against his wife fell on the husband, and that turned him into the villain of the piece in the eyes of people across the social spectrum.

The *BD* echoes these perceptions on the morality and social impact of gender relations and, like Carlile, combines them with notions of political accountability. When the 'dislike of her husband' (vol. iv: 841), rather than the character or conduct of the Queen, is considered the real cause of the charges of adultery, it is not only the conduct of a private husband that is at stake but also the capacity of a King to rule. Besides reflecting poorly on the King's private character, the failure to honour his marriage also reflects negatively on the public perception of his ability to discharge his duties as monarch. The correlation established between character and political capacity (even legitimacy) for the exercise of public office constitutes a forward-looking aspect of the intervention of the *BD* and the R in the public realm during the Queen Caroline affair. For good and for evil, twenty-first century election campaigns in the democracies of Europe and in the USA seem to confirm that association.

The relationship between private conduct and public accountability constitutes an example of how a theme can be treated in diverse discursive forms. In this case, the theme is also fictionalized as fantastic dream. In a long letter from the 'Black Dwarf' to the



‘Yellow Bonze at Japan’, entitled ‘Trial of a King, in the Similitude of a Dream’ (vol. v: 285-300), the ‘Black Dwarf’ tells a dream he had of the trial of a king for immoral conduct. The mix of comic and grotesque elements exposes the ‘risible incongruity’ (Donald, 1996: 29) between the voiced principle of public/royal responsibility and actual reality. This is the duality through which authority is undermined:

It [the trial of the Queen] must impress thee with a very high opinion of the purity of the English court. [...] From the arguments of the Crown Lawyers I was glad to perceive that royalty itself ought to be subjected to a strict account; and that it was a just ground for the deposition of royalty, if any moral guilt could be substantiated against the wearer of a crown. The case of the Queen, I was well aware, was no proof of the doctrines; for I saw her when accused by her enemies [...] deprived of her rights [...]. But the idea pleased me. There was something so grand in the idea of Justice calling royalty to account that I dwelt involuntarily upon the theme, and I trembled for every crowned head in Christendom, if they should be subjected to the operation of the principle (vol. v: 288).

The ironic tone soon gives way to fantastic, grotesque imagery as in a flash-forward the scene is suddenly placed in 1868, the third year of the imaginary reign of Edward VII:

The spectre of the late Lord Chief Justice passed once or twice before my eyes, and methought the unsubstantial vision grinned horribly a ghastly smile [...]. Then came Sir Vicary Gibb, who appeared delighted beyond measure as he read the speech of the worthy successor, Sir Robert Gifford, against her Majesty. [...] on a sudden, the scene changed. I was still, however, in a court of law [...]. But it was no longer a Queen that was upon trial, it was a King! (vol. v: 290).

What follows is the bizarre description of the absurd characters and of the trial of the dissolute Edward VII – an allegory to comment upon the trial of the Queen and to offer a cathartic compensation for the oppression and corruption of the proceedings. In the dream, justice seems to be honestly served, as ‘the king himself is also a subject of the law, which it is his business to see duly administered to all, not even excepting himself’ (vol. v: 294).

However, this text is an example of how criticism can be couched in ironic praise and rhetorical indirectness. In effect, Edward VII is brought to trial because he ‘had incurred the indignation of his subjects for various acts of licentiousness which the purity and refinement of the age could no longer tolerate’<sup>38</sup> (vol. v: 290), but the reader gradually learns that what is described is not justice being served, but a world turned upside down. The complex interplay between different levels of meaning transforms the desired

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<sup>38</sup> In the following year, William Hone would write a letter ‘To the King’ (Hone, 1821d: 9) containing a similar idea – if a Queen may be displaced for immoral conduct Parliament may also depose a king for injurious example to public morals.

expiation of the King's immoral conduct into a weird mockery of justice: the judgement of Edward VII is conducted by 'the good and virtuous ministers of the pious George the Fourth, whom it had pleased providence to spare for the regeneration of the state' (vol. v: 290). Thus, on the right hand of the present 'most gracious Lord Chancellor' sat:

An infirm likeness of Lord Liverpool, with a few grey hairs thinly scattered upon his aged head. He seemed to my mind as a willow, almost broken with bending to so many storms. Several other countenances were familiar to my recollection, when I looked earnestly at their care and age-worn faces. At the bar stood a decrepit copy of the present fiery Attorney-General. All the keenness of his eye had vanished. [...] the loads of books under which he bent seemed to delight him no longer; the woolsack, in which his eyes now turn with delighted anticipation, seemed no longer to attract his attention. The lovely carbuncles upon his countenance had vanished; and his voice, turning again to childish treble, piped and whistled in his stand. [...] the scene was awful! (vol. v: 290-1).

The trial of Edward VII thus begins with this irreconcilable contradiction: at the trial of Edward VII, the presumed champions of justice are the former accusers of the Queen, who follow the precedent established by the prosecution in 1820. In that impossible, unreal world, George IV is a model king, ruling over public officers who act upon the strictest moral principles:

His most gracious majesty was a pattern of every virtue – chaste, sober, temperate, frugal, and more attentive to what his people could spare, than what his wants might require, he diffused universal happiness and content around him. No titled wittals, no splendid prostitutes, no noble knaves were seen at his court; but religion walked hand in hand with the moral virtues around his palace. Virtue was promoted and vice abashed. Ah, my lords! These indeed were happy times, when we were all in office and did – just what we ought! [...] On the trial of the Queen [...] a list of witnesses was refused her – she was proceeded against not by any known law, but by a Bill of Pains and Penalties framed expressly for the occasion. This then is the precedent I shall venture to follow (vol. v: 293-4).

The most condemned acts and the vices of the real George IV are transferred to the imagined Edward VII: the illegal marriage to Mrs. F., the many mistresses whose near relations were received into the King's service and granted marks of favour and distinction, the royal marriage and the 'scandalous, disgraceful, and vicious' conduct after marriage. Edward VII will therefore be deprived of the title of 'King-consort' [sic] (vol. v: 296) and his marriage 'dissolved, annulled and made void', exactly in the same terms of the Bill against Caroline.

The trial of Edward VII is completely juxtaposed to that of Queen Caroline. All the arguments and proceedings against the Queen are now advanced against the King, especially the Bill of Pains and Penalties – ‘the readiest mode of doing our own business’, as ‘a criminal proceeding by means of the ordinary courts [...] would not answer the end of public justice’ (vol. v: 298). Justice remains corrupted:

Will your lordships suffer the throne to be polluted because we have no special laws to reach the polluters? Certainly not. It is your business to supply all deficiencies. You are above the law, for the precise purpose of making laws to reach every one. [The worthy Attorney-General here stopped [...] his voice, so that I did not catch precisely his last words, but they sounded to me *except yourselves*. But I might be deceived] (vol. v: 299).

As the trial of Edward VII is a mockery of justice, in the end tension is not released and there is no catharsis. Satire played its part as an instrument of the critique of aristocratic and ministerial corruption. Wooler perceived that satire could contribute to the expansion and politicisation of the public sphere and that public opinion, fused with the freedom of the press, could be made into a protagonist during the Queen Caroline affair.

Rhetorical diversity also means plain rational discussion, carried out essentially through the lengthy examination of the legal issues concerning the method of prosecution of the Queen. As in the other radical periodicals, the aim is to inform and to foster political awareness. Part of this discussion involves the reproduction of official documents respecting the proceedings in the House of Lords, with the aim of offering the public the means to form ‘a correct judgement upon this dispute’ (vol. iv: 834). The edition of 21 June publishes Lord Liverpool’s proposal of 15 April (vol. iv: 834-5) and the five protocols of the Conferences held by the parties to negotiate an agreement that would avoid a public enquiry (Protocols of 15 June, 16 June, 17 June, 18 June, and 19 June, vol. iv: 836-46).

Although the interspersed comments (on the refusal to restore the Queen’s name to the liturgy and the recognition of the Queen’s rights abroad) contain the usual incendiary rhetoric of opposition, the official documents are published *verbatim* and without omissions. These texts symbolise the fusion of different discursive modes in the *BD*. Informative texts might be fused with ‘the violent, performed sincerity of melodrama’ (Jones, 2000: 109), and the latter might fuse itself with satire.

Wooler had a lengthy story of personal conflict with the judicial system. Therefore, it is not surprising that the discussion of the legal issues underlying the method of

prosecution of the Queen achieves prominence in the *BD*. It was the touchstone of Wooler's rendering of the Affair. In a long article entitled 'Sacrifice and Divorce of the Queen' (vol. v: 65-70), the Bill of Pains and Penalties is rejected as 'one of the most contemptible indictments in the world' (vol. v: 66), one no court of law would accept. The *BD* was very sanguine about this method of prosecution: 'It is execrated as an accusation – it would be detested as a law' (vol. v: 77).

The Bill represented the taking of 'undue power' on the part of the legislators for the sake of revenge, which justified that the Queen denounce the kind of justice 'which her enemies dignify by that epithet', and in demanding 'real, substantial justice'<sup>39</sup>. The stress is placed on the oppressive, despotic nature of the prosecution by a parliamentary Bill of Pains and Penalties, whose very title evokes scary feelings. This discussion also had the merit of asserting Wooler's intellectual capacity as a radical leader and of stressing the role of radical periodicals as forums of political discussion.

In order to emphasise the illegality of the method of prosecution of the Queen, the *BD* also published articles by other authors debating this issue. That was the case of the long letter 'To the Queen' (vol. v: 341-51), published at the beginning of September by Major Cartwright. Major Cartwright reinforces the idea that 'Bills of Pains and Penalties' are unconstitutional methods of prosecution and 'flagrant violations of the Constitution, [...] errors or corruptions that no state necessity can justify' (vol. v: 341) and a measure that Parliament had not the authority to enact. The old Major adds that 'if, notwithstanding, it [Parliament] shall pass the same, it will not be a statute, but a corruption, of no force or validity' (vol. v: 344). The 'unexampled wrong, and insufferable indignity' offered to the Queen originate in the 'corruption of the House of Commons and the shocking degree in which a large proportion of the Lords are therein implicated' (vol. v: 347). Cartwright's letter is in line with the radical purpose of tying the cause of the Queen to the oppression of the people by a corrupt parliament. Addressing the Queen directly, he writes:

Your case and theirs is one. Your enemies and theirs are the same. The modes whereby those enemies have aimed destruction at both are identically the same; namely, by violating the constitution and perverting the law: all the means and instruments in both cases likewise the very same; namely, Houses of ----- under unconstitutional influence (vol. v: 347).

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<sup>39</sup> These words echo Wooler's own struggle with justice. Wooler was brought to trial and found guilty together with Major Cartwright, George Edmonds, William Greathead Lewis and Charles Maddocks at Warwick Assizes on 3 August 1820, for having 'combined and conspired' on 12 July 1819 to elect a person to be representative of the inhabitants of Birmingham (Borrow, 1825: 368).

The same political activism imbibes the confrontational tone in the ‘Letter from the ‘Black Dwarf’ to ‘The Reverend J. W. Cunningham’, published on the front page of the edition of 20 September, to explain the relationship between the defence of the legal rights of the Queen and the defence of public liberty:

It follows that the state is worst governed where an injury done to the greatest is not considered as an injury at all to the community. [...] It is their [of the people of England] duty as individuals to protect the known laws of the land, and insist upon their observance; or the departure from them to the prejudice of one individual to day, may furnish a precedent for a second, third, and fourth, until the general bond be entirely broken, and no individual be safe. It is equally beneficial to the state that the public should prevent bad ministers, and capricious monarchs, from destroying the equitable administration of justice, while legitimate freedom depends upon the unalterable basis, and impartial administration of equal laws (vol. v: 397).

The association of the Queen’s plight to the oppression of the people was not the preserve of radical writers. It frequently emerges in addresses to the Queen by artisan societies and other organised groups of working people and even by women. One of these addresses, the ‘Address of the Artisans, Mechanics, and Labouring Classes of the Town of Manchester’, carried unanimously, was published in the issue of 6 September. Although the *BD* does not mention it, according to the *R* (vol. iv: 197), this address was presented to the Queen by Major Cartwright, Alderman Wood, John Cam Hobhouse, and Wooler himself, and was signed by 33,000 people. The Address began by congratulating the Queen on her ‘return amongst us, in contempt and defiance of the artifices and threats of your enemies’, and links the Queen’s plight to the cause of justice and freedom:

Your Majesty cannot be unacquainted with the severe privations and deep sufferings of this immense population; and doubtless your Majesty’s benevolent heart has been wrung at the dreadful events of the fatal Sixteenth of August. The same power which scourged us is now oppressing you: it is not less our interest than our duty, therefore, to stand up against your Majesty’s enemies, who are also the enemies of the rights and liberties of the whole People. [...] we declare that we would rather die than live under such a state of things, as that our enemies are preparing for us. This is our solemn and serious resolution. As far as our power can extend, we will prevent your Majesty from being unjustly and unlawfully sacrificed. We have no fortunes to offer, but we hold our lives valueless when justice and liberty are in danger (vol. v: 378-9).

With the introduction of the Bill of Pains and Penalties in the House of Lords the ‘trial’ of the Queen became a certainty. The confrontational tone of the political discourse escalated in the radical periodicals, including the *BD*, where texts that dramatise the personal safety of the Queen were published. On 5 July, the day of the introduction of the

Bill in the House of Lords, an article entitled ‘Spirited Placard’ is published with the copy of a broadside<sup>40</sup> entitled *Proposal to Murder the Queen!* printed by William Benbow<sup>41</sup>. The handbill was triggered by a paragraph in the *Morning Post* of 26 June, where the Queen is urged to ‘yield to the universal good [...] whether as a martyr or a criminal’. This was interpreted as implying the murder of the Queen:

Englishmen look at this daring proposal, to make your Queen a Martyr! [...] This wretch, in the face of the English nation, proposes to make the Queen a martyr! He cares not, you see, whether her Majesty be innocent or not! He recommends putting her out of the way, whether Innocent or Guilty! What is this but a direct instigation to Murder the Queen? (vol. v: 27).

Highly inflamed rhetorical questions follow, which attest Benbow’s skill as a propagandist. People are urged to ‘guess who the Employers [of the author of the article] are’, and to know ‘what ought to befall those Detestable Employers’. It ends with exhortation to action: ‘will you stand by, while such monsters dip their hands in the blood of a Woman: an Innocent Woman; an Innocent and Injured Queen!’

The article of the *Morning Post* had already been commented upon in the *BD* on 28 June, in two letters from the ‘Black Dwarf, one to the ‘Yellow Bonze’ at Japan, and the other to Major Cartwright. The former, entitled ‘The New Gold Stick, Old Bags, Derry-Down Triangle, Harlequin and the Doctor, Beaten by a Woman!!!’ (vol. iv: 869-82), considers the article of the *Morning Post* ‘a plain proposition to sacrifice the Queen of England’ (vol. iv: 880). In the *BD*, however, the interpretation of the ‘sacrifice’ of the Queen is more subtle: ‘if a Queen standing in the way may be removed by any means, it will form a dangerous example of the mode of disposing with royalty, which may not stop with the removal of a Queen’ (vol. iv: 880), implying that the King could follow suit. Benbow’s extreme populist propaganda does not seem to wholly correspond to Wooler’s convictions, as he stated on 12 July: ‘we cannot think that they [the borough-mongers] will hesitate to sacrifice the honour, though the manners of the age will not allow of the sacrifice of the life of the Queen’ (vol. v: 68).

The sophisticated discourse used by the ‘Black Dwarf’ in the above mentioned letter to Major Cartwright, entitled ‘Commencement of a Radical Reform in High Life’ (vol. iv: 893-5), is much more true to the spirit of the *BD*. With the usual detached tone of irony,

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<sup>40</sup> Broadside is a single sheet of paper, printed on one side only (Bennett, 1980: 1).

<sup>41</sup> British Museum Database Collection (BM-ID 1868,0808.13714; accessed 18/09/10) and *BD* (vol. v: 27). William Benbow also published the print by J.L. Marks, *Sultan Sham and His Seven Wives* (BMC 14029), the frontispiece to the satire of the same title (Hudibras, the Younger, 1820).

the 'Black Dwarf' comments on the recommendation of the 'sacrifice of the Queen for the public good' in the *Morning Post*. The 'little black acquaintance' (vol. iv: 893) anticipates the Major's joy in verifying the adoption by the *Morning Post* of the principle that 'public good is paramount to every other consideration' (vol. iv: 893). Stating that he does not admire the sacrifice of someone prior to finding out their guilt, the 'Black Dwarf' nevertheless expects the precedent to be fully carried, so that 'all shall be sacrificed which is inimical to the public good'. Thus, 'the borough-mongers must offer up their boroughs, the ministers their places, [...] grand pensioners [...] must carry their full bags back again to the treasury!' (vol iv: 894).

The 'Dwarf' goes on to enumerate all the changes that would occur if public good prevailed: 'if it should be demanded of Bishops to be charitable, of Judges to be impartial, of Juries to be honest, of all men to be just', and concludes: 'I think I hear the Attorney and Solicitors General exclaim, 'There would be no bearing this! The very bonds of society would be torn asunder if such doctrines are to prevail' (vol. iv: 895). Sarcasm and irony are used as a polemical mode. This type of ironic-jocose reply is more in tune with Wooler's sophisticated mockery than the extreme populist discourse of ultra-radical propaganda.

In the edition of 12 July, Wooler publishes three advertisements which illustrate the combination of the language of melodrama with satire to denounce the method of prosecution of the Queen as a type of mock-justice. The advertisements are 'Glorious Deeds of Women', 'Bill of Pains and Penalties against the Queen!' and 'Arrival of the Wretches', the latter by Benbow. The first glorifies the actions of famous women in ancient Rome, France, and now England with the struggle of the Queen in favour of the 'Peace, Honour, and Life of the Innocent'. The second is an emotional appeal to the 'love of fair-play and open trial' of Englishmen, and an exposure of the methods of prosecution against the Queen by means of 'Green Bags', 'a Secret Committee', a 'Bill of Pains and Penalties', all having been done 'without giving the Queen any knowledge of the evidence; without letting her Majesty be confronted with any witnesses; without letting her know who the witnesses are; and even without letting her have a statement of the charges against her' (vol. v: 63-4).

The third advertisement, 'Arrival of the Wretches', takes the title of a satirical print published on 12 July by Jane Carlile (*BMC* 13758). It announces the arrival at Dover on 7 July of six Italian witnesses ('*Italian Allies*') against the Queen. The title prepares the reader for the violent language employed: 'such Wretches as go about with dancing dogs and monkeys, white mice, tame snakes, and land-turtles', and to the reaction of the people

who went to see them: 'The magistrates got a guard of constables to protect them, for fear the people should fling them into the sea' (vol. v: 64). The aim is to target the Italian witnesses as objects of general despise and ignominy.

In the crusade against the foundations of the lawsuit against the Queen, Wooler did not neglect the numerous satiric opportunities offered by the Government's decision to ground the prosecution in the testimony of Italian witnesses. Satire is the discursive medium. In an article about the depositions of these witnesses, entitled 'Conspiracy against the Queen' (vol. v: 305-10), Wooler returns to his best style. He jubilantly exploits words and phrases such as 'smoothly', 'decent', 'credible', 'excellent memory', and 'favourite' to mock Majocchi's testimony conducted by the prosecution:

Matters went on smoothly for the prosecution the first day and the law officers of the crown seemed quite delighted with the decent credible deportment, and excellent memory of their favourite Majocchi (vol. v: 305).

The exploitation of ridicule climaxes in the account of the behaviour of the witness, at Brougham's hands – a process of destruction of accepted meaning. During a cross-examination that became famous, Majocchi's former 'decency', 'credibility' and 'excellent memory' are totally undermined:

He was like a parrot, who could only repeat his lesson. He could not be made to understand the meaning of the questions put by Mr. Brougham, though he comprehended those put by the Solicitor General well enough. The interpreter complained he was quite stupid (vol. v: 305).

The depositions of the witnesses for the prosecution and the Government, who relied on them to prove the charges against the Queen, are further exploited in a letter of 6 September by the 'Black Dwarf' to the 'Yellow Bonze' at Japan, entitled 'Defeat of the Queen's Enemies by Themselves'. Here, the ministers and the witnesses are the two sides of the same coin of corruption: 'the ministers have kindly damned their own plot: they have produced witnesses who have as kindly proved themselves knaves and liars. [...] Who but such ministers would have done so much for an opponent?' (vol. v: 326-7). The 'Black Dwarf' mocks 'Signor Non mi Ricordo' and the other witnesses:

The first witness, Signor Non mi Ricordo unsaid in half an hour what it had taken him two days to say before. Who, but Majocchi, could thus have rendered the production of Majocchi a mere farce? Who, but the mate, Paturzo, could have so satisfactorily proved himself a fat, well-paid rogue, who was willing to earn his wages? Who, but the gallant captain, could have proved so well that an increase of pay deserved an increase of labour? Who, but discharged servants, and hired mercenaries, and



purchased liars, could have been brought forward with such certainty of contradicting themselves? (vol. v: 326-7).

The utmost delight was to state that ministers themselves 'began to perceive that their Green Bag was become as ridiculous as 'Old Bags' himself' (vol. iv: 872). Satiric laughter linked the defence of the legal rights of the Queen to the safeguard of individual liberties, to the criticism of the Government, the 'Secret Committee' and the 'Green Bag', the Italian witnesses and the King.

Criticism of the King's conduct was essentially parodic. The representation of the King as a willing cuckold was a favourite theme in pamphlet satire and in satirical prints. In 'A Queer Story' (vol. v: 454-5), published at the end of September, Lincoln, an imaginary reader, writes to the 'Black Dwarf' telling the strange story of a man who had married a wife to pay his debts. After abandoning her and sending her into a foreign country:

A fanciful thought came into his head that he should like to make the world believe that he was a cuckold. [...] The story first made the people laugh; then they said he was mad, and ought to be taken care of. However, nothing could remove his determination. He was bent on being a cuckold (vol. v: 455).

In the same text, the witnesses are also parodied. They are grotesque characters in an atmosphere of carnivalistic fantasy, 'Lilliputians' put into a bag (Green Bag) but who, after being there for so long, were smothered to death and:

Their lifeless bodies made the bag so horribly foul, that nothing but Doctors, and such like men could go near it; [the others were] so much enfeebled by the nausea of their confinement, that when they were brought out into the great hall, to repeat their tales publicly, their breath became so offensive to all around that it was expected a great mortality would prevail, as every one, except a doctor or two, and their mates, became violently sick, and were not likely to recover (vol. v: 455).

Wooler's mission of exposing the threat to the fundamental rights of any single individual, posed by the legal suit against the Queen, finds in the call for popular mobilisation its corollary. When the Queen refuses the financial settlement twice offered and asserts her determination to face the charges in the House of Lords, the *BD* renews the call for the mobilisation of popular support: 'She demands her accusers in the front of the battle, that she may know whom to accuse in her turn; and the public seem prepared to support her in her demand, to its fullest extent' (vol. v: 77).

The appeal to public opinion reflects the perceived atmosphere of hostility towards the Government, every day 'more hated, despised and ridiculed', and the swelling

popularity of the Queen: ‘in the front of the people [...] the Queen becomes every day more interesting and more formidable’ (vol. v: 135). The Queen, however, also has a role to play in the public sphere. The Bill of Pains and Penalties will remain ‘a dead letter in effect’, on condition that the Queen trusts the support of the people, who are ‘the origin of all power’, and who have the same interest as the Queen in the impartial administration of justice:

She does right to appeal to as ‘an innocent, insulted, and persecuted Queen’ to the ‘potent agency of public opinion! This says the *Courier* is an appeal to the populace ‘against the King and Parliament, and the Law! This, the minion knows is false. If the King be her accuser, she has a right to appeal to Parliament, against his accusation. If the Parliament refuse her the protection of the law, she has a right to appeal to the people who have the same interest in the observance and protection of the laws to preserve, inviolate, their common property.[...] It is her right, her duty, to appeal to the origin of all power – to interfere in her behalf (vol. v: 135).

Part of the effort to mobilise public opinion in the defence of constitutional individual liberties is carried out in confrontation with the loyalist press. Perhaps more persistently than with Cobbett and Carlile, the loyalist press becomes the target of Wooler’s vitriolic criticism, especially during the enquiry in the House of Lords. The loyalist press is accused for eking out the despicable evidence elicited from the witnesses of the prosecution:

We can only imagine that failure of Italian knaves to establish a case is to be completed by English scoundrels, hired to propagate the slanders which their Italian friends have invented. We must set down the *Courier* as the Sancho Panza of Majocchi – the *Post* as the Squire of Count Milani, alias Sacchi, alias Sacchini, alias the Devil knows what – and the *Guardian*, as the father confessor of that amiable lying chambermaid, Madam De Mont, alias the Countess Columbiere! And the whole as tutored, equipped, mounted, armed, and paid, by our virtuous ministers, to set out in search of adventures in the land of credulity (vol. v: 381).

The newspapers that support the King and the Government against the Queen, namely the *Courier*, the *Morning Post*, the *Western Luminary*, and the *Guardian* but ultimately ‘every ministerial journal in the metropolis’, are accused of ‘daily publishing the grossest and most unfounded assumptions of her Majesty’s guilt, and recommending its consequences’ (vol. v: 380). They are dubbed ‘the ministerial prints’, ‘ministerial reptiles’, the ‘sycophantic press’, ‘English scoundrels’ privileged ‘to publish the basest calumnies and to exhaust the vocabulary of slander against her Majesty’. This is incendiary, populist language, but in fact the majority of the loyalist press used the same language to refer to the Queen. As Fulcher (1995: 481-502) has shown, the loyalist press strategically focused

on smearing the Queen's reputation rather than on attempting to defend the King's conduct.

When the *Courier* condemned the Queen's reply to an address from the borough of Newbury as 'an appeal to the populace against the King, the Parliament, and the Law' (vol. v: 135) and considered it a radical appeal, the *BD* responded in the edition of 26 July in an article entitled, 'The Queen Denounced as a Radical!!!' (vol. v: 133-5). The *BD* reproduced some paragraphs of the Queen's reply to argue that if the Queen's language is 'radical language', it is also more – 'it is the language of honesty and truth' (vol. v: 134).

This was the clue to reintroduce the idea that the popular support of the Queen is associated with the safeguard of everyone's liberties: 'the Tyranny which destroys her today, makes every man's liberty less secure tomorrow' (vol. v: 134). The attack upon the rights of an individual is considered an attack upon the security of everyone's rights: 'the Sympathies of the People and the Potent Agency of Public Opinion form the best safeguard against the aggressions of Tyranny and the Enormities of Injustice!' (vol. v: 134). Therefore, to support the Queen is not an act of sedition, as the *Courier* argues, but a necessary exercise of citizenship by those who:

Wish to live under the dominion of law, and not under the sanction of privilege [...] to show the minions of the system we value the laws, as highly as they do their places; and are as steadfastly determined not to part with them, without every honourable effort in their defence (vol. v: 78).

The same arguments are used in the 'Letter from the 'Black Dwarf' to 'The Reverend J. W. Cunningham'. This text resorts to a tone of irony to exploit the clash between the supposed qualities inherent to the title of 'Reverend' and his 'unchristian' attacks on the Queen: 'Though I know not in *what* your *reverence* consists, as I find no reverence for truth, for justice, for Christianity, or the common feelings of humanity in behalf of a persecuted woman, I must still call you *reverend*, for fashion's sake' (vol. v: 393). In a marked confrontational tone, the main radical arguments for supporting the Queen are summed up:

A priest, indignant that a woman should receive the protection due to her sex, that a mother deprived most singularly and unexpectedly of her only child, should receive the sympathy of mothers, that a wife, ill used and discarded by her husband, should receive the condolence of wives [...] that a Queen should receive the assurances of the loyalty of a people, who believe her guiltless and whom the laws have not pronounced guilty (vol. v: 395).

Satirical exploitation of unrespectability frequently assumes a point of view whose apparent naivety and ‘lowness’ in reality hides the nucleus of Wooler’s literary talent. This is the case with the letter to the editor, entitled ‘Justice! Mon! Justice!’, which exposes the King’s conduct towards his wife as a bad public example. This mock-satiric letter is written by the imaginary reader ‘Peter Dolike’ and published in the edition of 5 July. The discrepancy between the bad English, the low social condition of the author and the sophistication of the original parodied enhances the comic effect. Comic effect further derives from the toppling of right and wrong and from the claim for a kind of mock-justice:

Why, would ye think it, sur? Here be I in the House of Correction, and all for what? Because I don’t like my wife, and am determined not to live wi her any longer. [...] I only married her at first to get my debts paid, and so I owed her nought o’ that score. [...] I bethought myself that I might get her out of the parish [...]. So I got one of the beadles to say I’d give half-a-crown a week extra, if she’d go; and she went for a piece; but just as I had got myself comfortable wi another woman like [...] than back she comes, and wants to be my wife. So I calls her all the bad names I could think of, and turns her out of doors, as I hear other fashionable folks do, by the advice of ministers. But our minister be such a queer chap, that instead of taking my part, he has taken hers, and has got me put into gaol, only for just serving my wife as other folks serve theirs! I am no great scholar, but I’ve been at Sunday school, and I know *precedent’s* good law, and that I ought to be liberated, and my wife put in my place. As you live in town, will ye be kind enough to ask Lord Eldon about it for me: and get me a bill of divorce seat down as speedily as possible, that I may be my own man again, like other great folks (vol. v: 31).

Although satire is conveyed essentially as imaginary letters to the editor, or letters from the ‘Black Dwarf’ to the ‘Yellow Bonze’, other forms, such as mock-advertisements are used. These may resort to the frequent satirical device of trial as theatre, to represent the enquiry against the Queen in the House of Lords. One of these mock-advertisements was published on 23 August. It advertises a ‘new-grand-historical-serio-comical farcical-spectacle’, to take place at ‘Theatre Royal, New Palace Yard, entitled ‘The Queen of Hearts, *versus* The King and his Knaves, or the Trappers Trapped’ (vol. v: 269-71).

The satirical effect originates in the double *entendre* that pervades the whole piece, from the title to the dramatis personae and the scenery. The list of dramatis personae is extensive and suggestive: ‘The Knave of Clubs’ is the ‘D-ke of W—n’; Picklock and Strap (German Knaves) are Baron Ompt-a and Baron Red-n; Precedent and Circular (Green-Bag makers) are Lord L—p—l and Lord S—d—h; Old Bags, or law-twister, is the L—d C—

n—r; Derry-Down cold blood, a vampire, is L—d C—r—h.<sup>42</sup> The judge is ‘vox populi’; Law is Christianity; and the Executioner is John Bull.

The scenery is ‘new’, and was ‘got up at a great expense, to give due effect to the performance’: ‘The House of Lords by daylight, with the New throne in the back ground, and carefully covered up till wanted’ – an allusion to the postponed coronation; ‘The Coronation Kitchen [...] changes to a New Steam Kitchen, heated by Italian steam’ is probably an allusion to ‘Cotton House’, the former town-house of Sir Robert Cotton (d. 1631), near the west end of Westminster Hall, where the Italian witnesses were lodged (Cunningham, 1850: 141-2); ‘a distant view of St. Omers’; ‘Grand Procession of the Queen of Hearts to New Palace Yard’; ‘Interior of the House of Lords – entrance of the Queen and general alarm’; the ‘Cottage near Windsor park, and Lady C. on the lap of Heliogabalus<sup>43</sup>, who is doing nothing’ alludes to the much derided withdrawal of the King to Windsor during the trial of the Queen, allegedly in the company of Lady Conyngham; the procession of the ‘Unclean Beasts’ (the witnesses for the prosecution) into the ‘Hospital of Incurables’<sup>44</sup>. Especially ironic is the last note:

A new farce, called Degradation [exile of the Queen] is in rehearsal, and will be produced as soon as the characters are determined. The petite-piece, in one act, called the Coronation, is yet unavoidably postponed, for want of the proper character. The serious comedy of ‘Reform’ is rejected, on the same account, but the farce of ‘The Devil to Pay’, may yet be performed this season.

During the trial interim from 9 September to 3 October it had become increasingly clear that the prosecution would not win the case against the Queen. This was the moment the Queenites had longed for. Numerous satirical prints and pamphlets, songs, addresses and newspaper articles poured from the print shops. On 27 September, the *BD* publishes an article, whose title ‘The Case against the Enemies of Her Majesty the Queen Clearly Stated. With an Exposure of the Swearings of Their Witnesses; and a Demand for their Responsibility’ (vol. v: 449-52) signals the turn over, by clearly transforming the case against the Queen into a case against the Government. The accusers became the accused:

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<sup>42</sup> Key to the list of dramatis personae: Duke of Wellington, Baron Ompteda and Baron Reding (Hanover ministers at Rome), Lord Liverpool, Lord Sidmouth, the Lord Chancellor, and Lord Castlereagh.

<sup>43</sup> It is an allusion to the King. Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antonius (218-222 AD) was also known as Elagabalus or Heliogabalus, the Syro- Roman sun God. He had a reputation for eccentricity, lust and cruelty. See Dio (1969: 411).

<sup>44</sup> This epithet is remindful of Hone’s ‘House of Incurables’ in *The Queen’s Matrimonial Ladder* (Hone, 1971: 167-85). In another text, the House of Lords is called ‘a national puppet-show [...] where I have been informed Old Bags sometimes assumes the character of clown (vol. iv: 877).

Was it this? Was it this then, this boasting, and this pretending of some 20 or 30 Italians, Swiss, and Germans, mean in circumstances and vagrant in character? Was any thing which these wretched creatures threatened to say, a cause for Alarm!! to men calling themselves English Statesmen? Men whose public acts commit the character, and the dignity of England? Shame! Shame! What England! The once great England! Reduced to this condition? (vol. v: 450)

The prospect of the defeat of the Bill of Pains and Penalties motivated contradictory reactions in the *BD*. On the one hand, Wooler felt encouraged to take a further step and demand the prosecutors of the Queen be held accountable, in tune with the other radical journalists: ‘shall we not call for the Responsibility of the accusers to the laws of their country, for the insulting injuries they have committed against their country through the person of the Queen?’ (vol. v: 452). On the other hand, Wooler was more aware than Carlile or Cobbett that popular indignation was ephemeral, and that the demand for governmental accountability was unrealistic. The possible failure of the prosecution to condemn the Queen would not automatically bring about the establishment of her rights. At a moment of general celebration, Wooler saw beyond the limits of propaganda and asked the relevant questions:

They know the public spirit is broken – that the bull may bellow – but that his horns are in no condition to toss. Impeachment they deride. [...] what then have they to fear, even in the failure of the atrocious conspiracy against the Queen? Nay, in the proof of her innocence, how is she to be established in her rights? How is she to be restored to the enjoyment of her rank and dignity? This is a matter for grave and serious consideration; as raising important difficulties, which the removal of an administration would not overcome (vol. v: 356).

Even a change of ministry would not result in any progress. Only ‘a change of measures, resulting from a change of system’ (parliamentary reform) could bring about political progress. Wooler was aware that the dropping of the divorce clause in the Bill of Pains and Penalties was a triumph of the Queen’s defence, but not necessarily a triumph of the Queen, let alone of the people. He believed it could even be a ‘trick’ of the ministers ‘for escaping the consequences of their misdeeds and continuing in office without an impeachment’.

In effect, there seemed to be the purpose of carrying the Bill into effect by admitting the adultery proved while refusing the divorce. Wooler felt the taste of a pyrrhic victory. The tone of irony sounded like defeat:

A bill of degradation, without the divorce, would rob the Queen of her political rights and rank in society, and thus gratify the notorious personal dislike of her husband, by

banishing her from every circle where it could be possible for her to abash him with the indignant glances of her piercing eye. [...] The case for the King has been made out, and a *most miserable case* it is! His Majesty himself must be heartily ashamed of the materials with which it has been attempted to holster up the supposed wounds of his *bleeding honour* (vol. v: 383).

Wooler sensed the inevitability of political defeat, but he continued to publish satirical pieces in the *BD*. In the edition of 8 November, ‘Ambulator’ voices another mock account of the royal marriage and of the proceedings against the Queen. This new character writes a note to the editor of the *BD*, from ‘Cross and Crown Court, Blackfriars’ (loyalist connotation), asking him to publish a ‘Letter’ (vol. v: 678-80) he found ‘at the bottom of Fleet Street’ and which he enclosed. The letter was addressed to ‘Mrs. Caroline Willhaveit from ‘George Shallnothaveit’, complaining about his marital misfortunes and offering to relieve Mrs. W.’s own ‘wants and wishes’.

The names of the characters and the situations depicted parody the royal marriage and the King’s mistresses: George S. tells Mrs. W., an apothecary’s wife, about ‘the sufferings which followed my marriage with Miss Brunswick!’ until he got Mr. Canting, the jobler (an allusion to George Canning), to persuade her to remove to a distant country. Referring to the members of the Milan Commission, and possibly also to Lord Hutchinson (Lord Liverpool’s emissary to St. Omers), George S. hopes to get the much desired divorce:

In short, by the activity of a few real friends, Mr. Humtidy (you remember, Mr. H. the picklock manufacturer?) Mrs. Leech, Mr. Foul, and Mrs. Scullion, the Cook, matters are now so admirably arranged, that we shall get her brought in ‘guilty of returning to town’ – for the silly woman is actually come back – and this verdict both Dr. Slop and the bishop tell me will carry a divorce, a consummation devoutly to be wished. Then, my darling Mrs. W. should your brute of a bedfellow retire one of these days in charge of the undertaker, parson and sexton, there may be some hopes of my calling you by the name of wife, and of proving to you the fidelity with which I keep my every now. Let me have one line from your sweet fingers, till opportunity allows me to have more from your sweet lips. Adieu! My dearest Mrs W.

From your adorer  
George Shallnothaveit

At the second reading on 6 November, the Bill passed with a small majority that was further reduced at the third reading on 10 November. In face of the results, Lord Liverpool moved that ‘the further consideration of the Bill be adjourned for six months’, which was interpreted as an acquittal of the Queen and celebrated with illuminations in London and all the major cities for five nights.

The moment also corresponded to the height of the invocation of public opinion as a weapon against oppression. In the *R* of 17 November, Carlile was vehement in attesting to the decisive role played by public opinion in the Queen's case: 'the ruling gang have long triumphed over the people [...] and the Queen of England would have fallen a sacrifice to their machinations, had not the people unanimously vindicated her cause' (*R*, vol. iv: 406).

However, the adjournment of further considerations for six months and of Parliament until January emptied the popular agitation of its motive and favoured counter-attack by the loyalist press. The edition of the *BD* of 13 December reflected the new situation, when loyal addresses began to find their way into the press. The irony and mockery thrown upon the writers of loyal addresses in the letter 'To the Wise Men of Gotham, Resident in the Ward of Cheap, in the City of London' (vol. v: 835-6), by 'The Brown Ape to Thomas Helps, and his Associates',<sup>45</sup> are strong, but they are no longer the instruments of joyful attack. They are the devices of resistance.

The 'Brown Ape' from Borneo writes to Thomas Helps to express the congratulations of the apes of Borneo at the English apes, for their authorship of loyal addresses. The English apes are 'lineal descendents of a colony of enterprising apes from Borneo' who embarked for Europe 'in the company of some rats from Java, some centuries ago' (vol. v: 835). The English apes now live among the 'Bulls' – a 'discontented race' who do not appreciate the comfort, morality, benevolence, safety, just laws and the mild and paternal government that they have. The English apes are thus not part of the English people. To the apes of Borneo 'all this is so very clear, and satisfactory, and so much like our own way that:

When it was read in our assembly, every ape leaped from his seat, and emptying his mouth of the nuts collected in the morning's march, burst out into an exclamation of 'Aye! This will do! Europe will soon be as civilized as Borneo, and apes shall rule the world.' (vol. v: 835-6).

During the Queen Caroline affair, Wooler fully justified the pertinence of 'satire's my weapon' as the motto of the *BD*. He showed that satire could unite people in asserting their claims and expanding the public sphere, either as a weapon of positive assertion or of disillusioned resistance. Every satirical text in the *BD* was an exercise in intellectual liberty, and the fact that this exercise was moved by the plight of a Queen (and a woman) constitutes a contribution to a new view of society and polity.

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<sup>45</sup> According to folklore, Gotham (pronounced 'goathem') is a village inhabited by fools. This letter is reproduced in full in Appendix Three.



Wooler's political discourse was deliberately and strategically satiric, even when diverse discursive modes were fused within satire, namely melodrama. Satire enabled political enemies to be singled out and targeted with great clarity and precision, especially as the process of creation of his comic-grotesque allegories originated in the apparently naïve viewpoint of a social and literary outcast, even a pariah – Wooler's symbolic persona, the 'Black Dwarf'.

Wooler was a prominent and influential figure in the milieu of early nineteenth-century satire. However, he created a literary persona whose discourse symbolises all that is marginal, 'low', and unstable. Perhaps he wanted to fictionalize the instability of accepted notions of literature and prove that instability may rhyme with perpetuity.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### Satire as Political Weapon



Fig. 9 C. Williams, *A View of the R-g-t's Bomb*, 1816

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## ‘Satire’s My Weapon’

‘Satire’s my weapon’, the first line of the motto of the *The Black Dwarf* is a quotation from *Imitations of Horace, The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace, Imitated*<sup>1</sup>, by Alexander Pope (1733). It illustrates a feature of the print culture of Regency radicalism that has been increasingly stressed by recent studies – the infiltration of canonical literature in its writings, in general, and in political satire, in particular. The incursion of radical journalists and satirists into ‘high’ literature reveals more than their erudition. It reveals a view of literature as common, classless heritage, and not as the preserve of the elite and part of its ideological apparatus. The satirical work of William Hone illustrates this infiltration and, simultaneously, the attempt at overcoming the boundaries of ‘high’ and ‘low’.

This type of ‘intertextuality’<sup>2</sup> challenged cemented notions of literature and culture. In literary/artistic terms, it meant questioning the notions of ‘high’ and ‘low’ art forms that have integrated European cultural traditions since Aristotle’s theorization of literature in *Poetics* (Butcher, 1961). In classical theory, this distinction has to do with issues of form, subject, and point of view. In *Poetics*, tragedy and the epic are high art forms while comedy and parody are low art forms. The power of tragedy and the epic lay in their ability to depict men as they ideally ought to be and thus to evoke the beautiful and the universal.

These characteristics of high art stood in blatant contrast to comedy and parody. In parts II and V of *Poetics*, Aristotle defined comedy, and specifically parody<sup>3</sup>, as the imitation of men such as to make them worse than they are in real life, not as regards to vice but as regards to the ludicrous, which is a subdivision of the ugly. Aristotle thus makes a crucial point: the distinction between high and low art is essentially linked to the intention of the writer to ridicule his subject rather than the choice of subject.

This identification of comedy with the ridiculous and the ridiculous with the ugly had consequences concerning the status of the author in Aristotle’s theory: the graver spirits

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<sup>1</sup> The whole motto: ‘Satire’s my weapon, but I’m too discreet / To run a muck, and tilt at all I meet; / I only wear it in a land of Hectors, / Thieves, Supercargoes, Sharpers, and Directors’ (Pope, 1733: 11).

<sup>2</sup> The term was created by Julia Kristeva in 1969 to refer to the understanding of a text as a tissue of references and quotations from other texts and therefore as an intervention in a cultural system (Graham, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Aristotle refers to Hegemon, the Thasian, as the inventor of parodies.

sang hymns to the gods and the praises of famous men. The more trivial sort imitated the actions of meaner persons, at first composing satires (Aristotle, *Poetics*: Part IV). Hence, subject matters are correlated with the character of the poet himself: the ‘serious’ author would represent noble actions and noble personages, the malicious and vulgar satirist would represent the actions of the ignoble. Motivation also condemned the satirical author: he was seen as a mere opportunist, seeking quick profit instead of contemplating the prospect of immortality.

The notion of ‘low’ art, and by implication of the ‘low’ author, was created. Last but not least, the satirist was condemned aesthetically. The attention paid to crude detail and the flouting of rank and hierarchy caused by the lack of empathy of the satiric author with his characters, were viewed as a lack of erudition and as the author’s incapacity to rise above his subject matters. The type of ‘risible incongruity’ (Donald, 1996: 29), which is peculiar to satire, represents the overturn of the reaction traditionally elicited by the tragic or the epic modes, where the public smile with those who smile and weep with those who weep. This creates an inversion of aesthetic and moral codes by which the satirist is condemned to the condition of literary and social outcast. The satirist is thus triply flawed: in his character, motivation, and lack of erudition.

This classical philosophy of art stood unchallenged throughout the eighteenth-century. It was largely diffused in the pages of *The Spectator*<sup>4</sup> of the 1710s and articulated by authors such as the Earl of Shaftesbury<sup>5</sup>. The notion of satire as a ‘low’ art form in opposition to ‘high’ art forms is clearly suggested in the text below by Pope (1733: 19). Libels and satires are ‘lawless things’, marginalised texts, whereas ‘grave epistles’ are venerated works of art. In spite of the pervading tone of irony, the text suggests that the distinction is not merely one of form or content (‘grave epistles’), but essentially one of judgement as to the anticipated readership (‘as a King might read, a Bishop write’ / such as Sir Robert would approve). ‘Grave epistles’ are directed at an upper-class, educated public, whereas the satiric laughter elicited by Hone’s text is libellous, because its inherent unrespectability is subversive, at least potentially. The critical-ironic tone of the verses by Pope does not taint its literary status because they are directed at an educated reading

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<sup>4</sup> *The Spectator* was a daily journal briefly published in London (1711-2) by Richard Steele and Joseph Addison, addressed to the new middle-classes. In the issue of 12 March 1711 (No. 10), Addison stated that he wanted to ‘enliven morality with wit and to temper wit with morality’; in other words, he wanted to instruct and to amuse.

<sup>5</sup> In ‘Soliloquy: or, Advice to an Author’ (Ayles, 1999: 337-8).

public; they are considered 'high' art, whereas the text by William Hone represents 'lawless satire':

P. *Libels and Satires!* lawless things indeed!  
But grave *Epistles*, bringing vice to light,  
Such as a King might read, a Bishop write,  
Such as Sir Robert would approve —  
F. Indeed?  
The Case is alter'd — you may then proceed;  
In such a cause the Plaintiff will be hiss'd,  
My Lords the Judges laugh,  
and you're dismiss'd.

Alexander Pope  
*The First Satire of the Second Book of  
Horace, Imitated*

**Cross-Examination Resumed:**

Why did you marry?  
*To pay my debts.*  
Then why did you part?  
*Because my debts were paid.*  
I ask you again the cause of your separation.  
*She left me.*  
On what account?  
*I did not like her and I told her I'd have nothing to do  
with her anymore.*  
If your marriage oath has not bound you, can you  
expect people to believe you if ever you should  
take a solemn public oath?  
*More yes than no.*  
How many wives does *your* church allow you?  
*Non mi ricordo.*  
How many have you had since you separated from  
your own?  
*Non mi ricordo.*

William Hone  
*Non Mi Ricordo*, 1820

Hone's satire was not written by a bishop, and it certainly did not intend to make the King laugh; it was sold cheaply, it was directed at a popular audience, and it mocked the king. It was considered 'lawless' and 'low' by the politico-cultural establishment. Much of the Regency radical intervention in the public sphere must be understood as the attempt at overcoming the age-old boundaries between 'high' and 'low' art. This challenge was part of their politico-cultural transgression. Radical journalists and satirists linked politics and culture, treating cultural manifestations as political acts and vice-versa.

The 'low' status of satire was especially applied to graphic satire<sup>6</sup>, although this type of satire could also find its place in the mainstream philosophy of art – it was a successful upper-class amusement, especially social satire and caricature. The heyday of social satire was around 1770 to 1832. The engravers Mathew and Mary Darly published the much admired social satires by William Henry Bunbury and the 'postures' of Robert Dighton. The London publishers Samuel Fores, Rudolph Ackermann and Thomas Tegg would issue catalogues and folios of satirical prints that were sold or lent to the moneyed classes as fashionable entertainment for a special evening (Godfrey 1984: 15; Donald, 1996: 4-5).

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<sup>6</sup> Until the introduction of caricature in the 1750s, the term 'satire' designated both graphic/visual and textual satire. They were regularly published in periodicals and broadsides and not separately as began to happen after the 1770s.

Caricatures were first developed as ‘portrait caricatures’, a fashionable art among the aristocracy. The Bolognese painters and engravers Annibale Carracci (1560-1609) and Agostino Carracci (1557-1602) are credited as the inventors of caricature<sup>7</sup> at the end of the sixteenth century. For Annibale, the caricaturist’s task was ‘to grasp the perfect deformity and thus reveal the very essence of personality’ (Baker, 1996: 10), and he claimed the status of work of art for ‘a good caricature’<sup>8</sup>. Nevertheless, the classical ideal of beauty and of universality as requirements of ‘high’ art forms stood unchallenged.

In 1712, *The Spectator* (no. 537, 5 Nov. 1712) defined them as ‘those burlesque pictures, which the Italians call caricatures, where the art consists in preserving, amidst distorted proportions and aggravated features, some distinguishing likeness of the person’. Caricature was adopted by English satirists in the 1730s and 1740s. Arthur Pond (1701-1758) is considered the first artist to introduce personal caricatures to the English public through his engravings of caricatures by Carracci, Guercino, Mola and Ghezzi, amongst others, published between 1736 and 1742 (Godfrey, 1984: 31; Donald, 1996: 14).

The association of ‘low’ art to graphic satire was applied with special intensity after the invention of caricature. Graphic satire could only be brought to a position of relative social and cultural prominence if it limited itself to a well-behaved critique of society, and if it were directed at an educated audience. That was the case with social satire. William Hogarth (1697-1764), ‘the father of graphic social satire in England’ (George, 1987: 21) is a good example of how a polite and moralizing critique of society (Young, 1938: 26; George, 1987: 13) could bring the satiric mode to a position of social and cultural tolerance, even prominence (George, 1987; Donald, 1996). Hogarth’s use of a naturalistic ‘idiom’ – opposed to the allegoric language of earlier graphic satires – contributed to making his prints tolerated and even acclaimed by ‘polite culture’<sup>9</sup>. The fact that Hogarth preferred the word ‘print’ rather than ‘caricature’<sup>10</sup>, to refer to his engravings tells a lot about the status of graphic satire.

Engravers were not allowed full membership in the Royal Academy. Even within the ranks of print makers there was a hierarchy, with reproductive engravers at the top, followed by those who engraved mezzotints after portraits, with caricaturists on the bottom

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<sup>7</sup> The word ‘caricature’ appears in English in 1710, used by the Duchess of Marlborough (Godfrey, 1984: 13).

<sup>8</sup> Annibale claimed that ‘a good caricature, like every work of art, is more true to life than reality itself’ (Godfrey, 1984: 11).

<sup>9</sup> The print *John Wilkes Esq.* (BMC: 4050), dated from 1763, is a good example of Hogarth’s use of a naturalistic pictorial language for satirical purpose.

<sup>10</sup> *Characters and Caricaturas* is the oft quoted example of Hogarth’s disregard for caricature as an art form (Godfrey, 1984: 43).



rung. James Gillray (1756-1815) attempted to elevate himself above the rank of caricaturist, by trying for a brief period (1783-1786) to make a career as portrait painter and reproductive engraver, but the fruitless efforts forced him back to satirical prints. Polite culture continued to debase graphic satire, even when the satirist avoided a spirit of aggressive mockery<sup>11</sup>. Not even artistic excellence would rescue the satirist/caricaturist from opprobrium if he overstepped the boundaries of social or political decorum.

That was clearly the case with Gillray. The critical attitude of most of his caricatures dictated more than anything else the reluctance of contemporaries to refer to him as a 'genius'. Only the German newspaper *London und Paris*<sup>12</sup>, issued in Weimar in 1798, seemed to have no doubts in acknowledging Gillray's genius during his lifetime. Even the posthumous recognition by such commentators as James Peller Malcolm (Malcolm, 1813), Thomas McLean (McLean, 1830), or William Hazlitt (Hazlitt, 1830) of the unrivalled artistic quality of his parodic burlesque kept the same reticence. The exuberance of Gillray's satire, its graphic vocabulary full of parody and burlesque and its insistence on physical ugliness and 'vulgarity' placed it in the antipodes of the urbane play of wit characteristic of Hogarthian satire, and that had its price.

Gillray's artistic fate makes the Regency radical attempt at breaking the compartmentalized early nineteenth-century cultural environment all the more striking. The questioning of hitherto established notions of literature, art and culture (implied in the intertwining of 'high' and 'low' culture in popular radical satire) anticipated much of what came to be understood as modernity and even post-modernity. The inclusion of *The Political House that Jack Built*, of 1819<sup>13</sup>, the most widely circulated of Hone's satires, in Jerome McGann's *The New Oxford Book of Romantic Period Verse* (McGann, 1993) is a sign of the acknowledgement of satire as a literary genre. It finally occupies its rightful place in the history of literature.

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<sup>11</sup> Even when satirists produced works dealing with canonical literary, or historical and religious subjects they were the target of elitist criticism. Sir Joshua Reynolds considered that Hogarth 'very imprudently, or rather presumptuously attempted the great historical style, which his previous habits had by no means prepared him' (Hallett: 2006: 198).

<sup>12</sup> Banerji and Donald (1999: 5) have no doubt in considering the contemporaneous commentaries of Gillray's prints in *London und Paris* 'a prime historical source which has no English counterpart'.

<sup>13</sup> Hone's pamphlet satire *The Political House that Jack Built* (Hone, 1971: 35-58) was inspired by the 'Peterloo' events. It sold over 100,000 copies soon after publication (Bowden, 1975: 243-4, 287).

## The Tradition of Royal Satire

Being concerned with power, Regency radical satire is intrinsically political. In this sense, it is linked to the tradition of royal satire, which began with the Restoration<sup>14</sup> in the seventeenth-century (Godfrey, 1984: 11). Before that, the rule and power of kings was so absolute that it was unlawful to dispute, much less to mock. Kings ruled by divine right, which meant that attack was virtually sacrilegious.

The conception of kingship as unlimited, sacred rule was definitely shaken by the events of the Glorious Revolution in 1688-9. Underlying those events was the constitutional theory, later codified by William Blackstone (1723-1780), jurist, professor and MP, that monarchy ‘though a wise institution [was] clearly a human institution [and] the right inherent [to the king] no natural, but a positive right’ (Blackstone, 1765-9: 202). The conditions of the accession to the English throne of the House of Hanover in 1714 and their exercise of power accentuated the diminution of the status of the king, implicit in the Glorious revolution. Carretta (2007) argues that the perception of the Hanoverian King George I (1660-1727) as a foreigner undermined his right to rule. He also argues that the king’s direct involvement in government, particularly of George II (1683-1760), implied that the king no longer enjoyed the statute of ‘absolute perfection’ (Carretta, 2007: 38-40).

This last point, especially, was crucial in leading to the gradual questioning of the theory that the king ‘could do no wrong’, that is, that the king exerted power but did not bear responsibility for government. The second part of *Bob’s The Whole*, a blasphemous 1740 parody of the Athanasian Creed – a certain inspiration for William Hone’s parody *The Sinecurist’s Creed* of 1817 – illustrates the rising perception of the king as a partner in the political game:

And the political faith is this; that we serve and obey one monarch in a triple Conjunction. NEITHER confounding the Conjunction tripartite; nor dividing the Persons in Triplicity. For there is one Body of the Monarch, another of the prime minister, and another of the Countess of Yarmouth<sup>15</sup>. [...] SUCH as the Monarch is, such is the minister, and such is the Countess [...] THE Monarch corrupted, the

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<sup>14</sup> One of the earliest examples of regal satire is the 1665 satire *Second Advice to a Painter*, attributed to Andrew Marvell (1621-1678) by Roger L’Estrange (1616-1704), Licensor and Surveyor for the Press under Charles II (Dunan-Page and Lynch, 2008). This satire reflects disappointment at the incapacity of Charles II to rule: ‘What boots it that thy light does gild our days / And we lie basking in thy milder rays / While swarms of insects, from thy warmth begun, / Our land devour and intercept our sun?’ They are humorless and usually unsigned. Baker (1996: 9), however, dates the first prints that dared to question authority and the crown earlier, in the 1640s, during the struggles between Charles I and Parliament.

<sup>15</sup> The Countess of Yarmouth was the mistress of George II.

minister corrupted, and the Countess corrupted. AND yet they are not only Three corrupted; But one Body corporate corrupted. (*BMC* 2464; BM-ID 1868,0808.3664).

Dorothy George (1959: 89) describes the satires that went along with the political crisis of 1741-2<sup>16</sup> as ‘one of the peaks of English pictorial polemics’. The number of prints in the British Museum is about 58. The questioning of the principle that the king ‘could do no wrong’ constituted the first step towards the desacralization of monarchy, on which satire was based. A number of satires on George II illustrate this development: the king being misled by his ministers and the king as a fool, particularly in his body *natural*.



Fig. 10 Anon., *Idol-Worship or the Way to Preferment*, 1740  
© The Trustees of the British Museum

In this decade, satires are still emblematic and full of complicated verbal inscriptions, only understood by a small, sophisticated audience. Figures usually look austere but, surprisingly, imagery can be gross and even scatological, as in the anonymous print *Idol-*

<sup>16</sup> *The Champion, or Evening Advertiser* (No. 2), of 1740, is a profuse satire in which George II is accused of helping Robert Walpole corrupt British politics (*BMC* 2453). Another of the many satires in the *BMC* (vol. iii) depicting George II as involved in party strife is the anonymous satirical print *The Conduct of the Two B--rs* (*BMC* 3069), of 1749, whose accompanying lines illustrate the message of governmental and regal corruption: ‘O England how revolving is thy state! [...] to be thus betray’d /by those, whose Duty ‘tis to serve and aid!’. George II, represented by the white horse of Hanover, is drinking the blood of a dismembered and disembowelled England.

*Worship or the Way to Preferment* (Fig. 10), issued in 1740, a satire on state corruption in the figure of Robert Walpole, the First Minister of George II.

Though at the beginning of his reign in 1760 George III (1760-1820) was received with great expectations<sup>17</sup>, by the end of the first decade he began to be depicted as a fool, manipulated by his Scottish First Minister, Bute, and his own mother<sup>18</sup>, very much in the same way his grandfather had been portrayed in relation to Robert Walpole. Carretta (2007: 10) argues that it was during the reign of George III that the development of modern regal satire accelerated due to the perception of the increasing regal involvement in party strife, combined with the recognition that monarchy was a human, not divine, creation. George III still generally benefited from the premise that the king 'can do no wrong', as acknowledged by Junius<sup>19</sup> in his 'Letter to the Printer' of the *Public Advertiser*, 19 December 1769 (Junius, 1818: 175), but the growing perception of George III's active role in politics explains why in the 1770s several satires depicted him as a knave<sup>20</sup> rather than a fool (Carretta, 2007: 96, 129).

These attacks on the king's body *politic* in the 1770s culminated in the American Declaration of Independence in 1776, and the consequences were manifold. On the one hand, they opened the way to the 'desacralisation' of monarchy by Thomas Paine (who had played a major role in the American war of independence) in his *Rights of Man* (1791-92). The popular impact of *Rights of Man* owed much to the idea that having become a tyrant (like his ministers) and not simply a fool, the king had betrayed his role as guardian and father-figure to the nation. After having associated kingly rule to governmental co-responsibility, Thomas Paine could set forth attacking the king's two bodies, particularly the king's royal body, denying him any political, moral, or even natural legitimacy<sup>21</sup>. Ultimately, the theory of regal co-responsibility for the state of the nation was

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<sup>17</sup> In 1761, Hogarth expresses those hopeful expectations by depicting George III in his design *Frontispiece to the Artists Catalogue* (BMC 3808; BM-ID Cc,1.164) as a fountain that shall sustain the arts.

<sup>18</sup> An anonymous engraving of 1769 *You Have Got Him Ma'am, in the Right Kew* (BMC 4245), alluding to the proximity of the residence of the Princess of Wales with that of Lord Bute at Kew, is one of many satirizing George III for subservience to his mother and his minister. It shows George's mother leading the king, blindfolded, by the nose through Kew Gardens, while Bute hides his influence behind a tree.

<sup>19</sup> 'Junius' contributed a series of political letters to the London political newspaper *Public Advertiser* between 21 January 1769 to 21 January 1772 and the *London Evening Post*, one of the most important newspapers of the eighteenth-century (Clarke, 2004: 90).

<sup>20</sup> *Nero Fiddling, Rome Burning, Pompaja & Agrippina Smiling*, an engraving of 1770 (BMC 4381), illustrates this shift. Nero (George III) is playing the fiddle as Rome burns. He has his foot on two books, 'Laws of Humanity' and 'Laws of Discretion'. He says: 'What a charming blaze! This shall make them know I am their Master'. Pompaja (Queen Charlotte) and Agrippina (the Princess of Wales) watch. The latter says: 'My Son you have done well, they are all Rebels; but you should have got their Money from them first'.

<sup>21</sup> Paine wrote in 'Common Sense' (1776): 'One of the strongest *natural* proofs of the folly of hereditary right in kings, is, that nature disapproves it, otherwise she should not so frequently turn it into ridicule by giving mankind an *ass for a lion*.' (Kuklick, 1989: 11-2).

accompanied by the concomitant unpopularity of the king, and that assumption paved the way to the violation of ‘respectability’ inherent to popular radical satire. This new view of the monarch, both as an active player in politics and a fool, is well documented in the Regency period. The way George IV imposed a parliamentary enquiry against his wife on a reluctant Cabinet bears proof thereof, and for that he was pilloried in the press. The fact that George IV survived to the nadir of monarchical appreciation suggests that the tendency towards the desacralization of monarchy coexisted with the resilience of the office itself<sup>22</sup>.

Mock-satirical violation of ‘respectability’ implied the existence of a settled parliamentary system with an Opposition strengthened by a burgeoning periodical press, newspapers and popular, cheap publications, as well as the absence of pre-publication censorship (Donald, 1996: 1). These conditions existed in British politics and society during the Regency and the reign of George IV. Behind George IV’s unpopularity was a wealthy middle-class, more numerous and influential in England than elsewhere in Europe (George, 1987: 14) and the army of all those that had been displaced, or deprived of their crafts, but were intellectually and politically ‘educated’ by the industrial revolution in progress, as well as a committed popular press.

This was a virtuous circle of economic and cultural effects. The extension of political participation and debate fostered the expansion of the reading public – and vice-versa. In economic terms, the British print trade and industry witnessed a remarkable growth in this period, with the press reaching wider markets among the middle and the lower classes, which meant that new social forces were emerging with new values, new attitudes, and a new world vision.

### **Political Satirical Prints: From Townshend to George Cruikshank**

Apart from a few very successful pamphlet satires, satirical prints<sup>23</sup> were the most popular satirical form in the Regency period. Regency satirical prints represented the third generation of a type of satire – caricatures, or caricature prints – which emerged in the second half of the eighteenth-century, as seen above. In spite of the Italian origin of

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<sup>22</sup> The resilience of the institution of monarchy in contemporary Europe may be positively related to its loss of political power. Cannadine (1986: 102) relates the increase of the popular attraction for the magic of monarchy in the present time to the loss of effective political power by the king, arguing that a king who is beyond political strife becomes more ‘popular’.

<sup>23</sup> The term ‘satirical print’ is used in this study in preference to ‘caricature’ as it conveys a broader meaning and has the advantage of emphasising the intention of the author. Additionally, prints could be satirical without necessarily implying distortion of features.

caricatures, Donald (1996: 11-12) argues their British counterparts have deeper domestic roots than has been acknowledged. The familiarity of the British with the comic likeness of such fashionable traditions as puppetry and improvised mimicry – the puppet theatres in eighteenth-century London and even in country alehouses – prepared the way for English satirical prints. It was a type of characterization of social types that could be easily assimilated by a fashionable but highly conventional, upper middle-class and aristocratic audience<sup>24</sup>.

George Townshend (1724-1807), Marquis in 1787, is credited with the first English political satirical prints. He was the first amateur to combine the newer personal caricature and the older tradition of seventeenth-century emblematic visual satire. He thus turned the private amusement of personal caricature into a venomous propagandistic activity. Horace Walpole<sup>25</sup> noted that Townshend began ‘to adorn the shutters, walls, and napkins of every tavern in Pall Mall with caricatures of the Duke of Cumberland and of Sir George Lyttelton (Duke of Newcastle) and Mr. Fox’ (Godfrey, 1984: 14). In 1756, he introduced the new format: small etchings printed as cards with the intention of creating immediate impact, in which he seems to have succeeded, from the analysis of contemporary records. *The Recruiting Serjeant or Britannia’s Happy Prospect* (Fig. 11), is considered his most famous print.

In the 1770s and 1780s, the general preference was still for social humour in the vein of Hogarth’s engravings. Townshend’s political prints were clearly an exception at least until the 1790s, when they stepped to the fore due to the extraordinary technical and artistic skills of Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827) and especially of James Gillray. Gillray possessed a more complex, and therefore richer, world vision than Rowlandson’s, hence the frequent comparison with William Blake. Both are considered the highest representatives of a ‘gilded’ age of satirical prints that stretched from the 1770s to the early 1820s.

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<sup>24</sup> Donald (1996: 11) refers to *Lecture on Heads* by George Alexander Stevens, first staged in 1764 and still popular in 1780, as a proof of the connections between satirical prints and the very funny impersonation of *bad* qualities by caricatured ‘heads’ of a range of well-known types. This tradition was still alive in 1820. *A Political Lecture on Heads. By the Black Dwarf*, by Thomas Wooler (Wooler, 1820), with at least four editions, published by Johnston, and *A Political Lecture on Tails, Dedicated to the Great Head*, a satire upon George IV, possibly by Hone (Hone, 1820f) and illustrated by G. Cruikshank (BMC 13935), figure amongst others.

<sup>25</sup> Horace Walpole (1717-1797) was the son of Sir Robert Walpole, the First Minister of George II.



Fig. 11 G. Townshend, *The Recruiting Serjeant or Britannia's Happy Prospect*, 1757

The Lewis Walpole Library (LWDC)<sup>26</sup>

By the second half of the 1790s, the term ‘caricature’ had lost its original precise meaning of personal depiction to signify ‘any sort of satirical, humorous or grotesque representation’ (Hill, 1965: 1). Typically, conflict was epitomized and complex situations were simplified. The satirical message was achieved through the use of various devices, which included distortions of scale to express criticism, or tags and puns to label the objects of satire (Patten, 1992: 63-4). With Gillray, these distinctive features evolved in the interplay between continuity and innovation.

Gillray’s cross-fertilization of the traditions of history painting, fashionable portraiture and emblematic satire on the one hand, with the new art of Townshend’s political caricature on the other, raised the new genre to unknown heights of artistic skill and political insight. In the polarized atmosphere of the 1790s, Gillray made all the key political figures of the day – the royal family, members of the aristocracy – targets of his parody, fantasy and burlesque, lampooning what he perceived as corruption, injustice, or abuse of power. For his mastery in defining instantly recognizable types and individuals (John Bull, George III, Queen Charlotte, and mainly the Prince of Wales<sup>27</sup>), Hill (1965: 156) and Godfrey (1984: 18) claim for Gillray the title of the first modern cartoonist.

<sup>26</sup> *The Lewis Walpole Library Digital Collection*, call number 757.4.0.1.1, Yale University.

<sup>27</sup> An example of this kind of recognition (though rather grotesque) is the 1787 print by James Gillray, *Monstrous Crows, at a New Coalition Feast*, held at New York Public Library, Horace Walpole Collection (Godfrey, 1984: 81).

Yet, their audience was limited. It was confined to a small market of middle and upper-class buyers, including royalty<sup>28</sup> (George, 1987: 14). Until the 1810s, the circulation of satirical prints mirrored the typical social stratification of eighteenth-century London. This is the reason why many print shops were located in the West End of London: they followed their customers. Mary and Mathew Darly and William Humphrey had their shops in the Strand, Hannah Humphrey at 27 St. James's Street, Samuel Fores set up his business in 50 Picadilly Street, Thomas Tegg at 111 Cheapside, William Holland first in Drury lane and then in 50 Oxford Street, to mention only a few (Patten, 1992: 75-7; Donald, 1996: 3-4; Gatrell, 2006: 243). The elevated social origin did not confine itself to the audience; it extended to the authors of graphic satires, from the first amateurs, such as Townshend, to the renowned caricaturists of the end of the eighteenth century.

Upper-class exclusivity was reinforced by the high cost of print production. Satirical prints were etched or engraved on copper and pressed on handmade paper, coloured by hand, and afterwards reproduced<sup>29</sup>. The cost of prints was therefore high. Gatrell (2006: 245) compares the price of a large print (it could cost 5 s. in the 1770s) with the price of a piece of clothing, e.g. an everyday coat (5 s.), or of a woman's gown (7 s.) to show how prints were expensively sold. Depending on the elite for a living, satirical engravers and publishers did not dare overtly challenge privilege or question the established order. When they mocked the Prince of Wales for his extravagance, wastefulness, debauchery and political liaisons, mockery stayed within a closed upper-class circle, out of popular reach. Satire was therefore generally identified with the interests of the political and social elite.

Technological innovations that lowered the price and accelerated the pace of print production fostered the emergence of cheap publications and created the appropriate background for the outburst of satiric laughter in 1820. These technological innovations consisted essentially of the introduction of wood engraving, a technique developed by Thomas Bewick (1753-1828), and of rapid mechanical improvements in printing presses. Unlike copper-plate engravings, engraving on wood allowed the drawing of highly detailed images and the production of thousands of copies on conventional printing presses.

These developments contributed to extending the print trade to a middling and plebeian market. The Mary-Anne Clarke scandal in 1809 marked the moment when the identification of satire in general (satirical prints and pamphlet satire) with the politico-

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<sup>28</sup> The Prince of Wales maintained standing orders for prints at several shops, having bought 121 prints from Hannah Humphrey in 1806-07 (Patten, 1992: 75).

<sup>29</sup> Etching is a printing method in which the lines are bitten by acid into a metal plate.



social status quo began to decline. This event dominated public attention. The number of satirical prints catalogued in the British Museum reveals the interest aroused by the affair: 121 satirical prints, 56 being by Thomas Rowlandson for the publisher Thomas Tegg. They were ‘cheerfully bawdy’ (Gatrell, 2006: 498), such as *The Bishop and his Clarke*, by Rowlandson, where the Duke (Bishop of Osnabrück) in bed lovingly tells his mistress: ‘ask any thing in reason and you shall have it my dearest, dearest, dearest love’, to which she answers by reminding him of the list of promotions she had pinned at the head of the bed.

The popularity of the Clarke scandal contributed to the revitalization of London radicalism during wartime and it had a direct impact on the production of social satire and political propaganda (Wood, 1994: 4). Following the pioneering strategy of Thomas Tegg<sup>30</sup>, who in 1806 began to sell cheap books and prints, more radical or radically inclined book sellers trailed the same path in the 1810s. The following list of the ‘low’ print shops and publishers is indebted to Gatrell (2006: 501-8).

John Fairburn was the first to pursue the path opened by Tegg, and established shops in Blackfriars and Ludgate Hill in 1811. He was followed by John Johnston, who in 1811 also opened his ‘cheap caricature warehouse’ at 101 Cheapside. Still in 1811, M. Jones of Newgate Street began publishing the satirical journal *The Scourge; or Monthly Expositor of Imposture and Folly* (a liberal riposte to the conservative *Satirist*). In 1817, Thomas Dolby sold Cobbett’s *PR* and published twenty-eight catalogued satires against the King between 1820 and 1822. J. Sidebotham, publisher and printer, had a shop in Newgate Street, the Strand, and Bond Street, and produced seventy-five titles between 1815 and 1820, mostly by Robert and George Cruikshank. From 1817, John Lewis Marks, an engraver and pioneer of lithography, who had begun his career working for Tegg in 1814, published his work from several addresses in Bishopsgate, Soho, Covent Garden and Picadilly. In 1820, John Marshall issued half a dozen devastating prints against the King at his shop in Little St Martin Lane, and William Benbow produced twenty-three titles in 1820-25 from his shops at the Strand, High Holborn and Castle Street.

For a decade, these print and book sellers turned satire against the powerful instead of being their instrument, as hitherto. From 1812 onwards, book sellers and print sellers

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<sup>30</sup> Thomas Tegg was the first to meet the demand for cheap reprints of satirical prints. He pirated Gillray, Rowlandson, and others in reduced copies. However, Rowlandson and Woodward also produced designs for him, although not so carefully executed as they did for Ackermann (Donald, 1996: 4-5).

found in the Regent – that ‘sick epicure’<sup>31</sup> – a valuable target. The radicalization of the visual language against the Regent was unprecedented, with hardly a favourable print. After the Queen Caroline affair, George IV remained unpopular<sup>32</sup>.

Between 1778 and 1797, there are 294 catalogued prints on the Prince, but in the eight years from January 1812 to December 1819, there are 230 prints, one-seventh of all catalogued prints (Gatrell, 2006: 508, 511). Many (94) are by George Cruikshank because his widow preserved them and donated them to the British Museum. Whether or not odium of the Regent had been part of the Whig vendetta, as D. George (1949: xxii) believes, it soon overflowed Whig politics and created an unprecedented, destabilizing situation.

The satiric representation of the Regent shows that what had largely been a genre whose criticism the elite could assimilate had now become a vehicle for political attack on the mighty. The corpus of satirical prints and other popular satirical publications that exposed the vices of the Prince of Wales did not circulate within the reliable upper-class sphere, safe from the merciless people, but in its middle. The satirical author ceased to be a kind of licensed jester, and satirical prints and pamphlet satires were no longer confined to a ‘respectable’ elite market.

## Regency Satire

The pioneering work of Marcus Wood (1994), followed by Gary Dyer (1997), and more recently by Kent and Ewen (2002), and Steven Jones (2000; 2003) have shown that satiric writing was much more central to the literature and culture of the Romantic period than deemed by traditional literary criticism. Although some of these works do not focus on the sub-literary and non-literary satiric writing of radicals such as William Hone and Thomas Wooler, they nevertheless contribute to a reappraisal of satire as a language shared by the literary and the popular, or as ‘a popular semiotic discourse potentially available to poets as well as printmakers, and to diverse audiences at the time’ (Jones, 2003: 2).

These authors and others, such as Gatrell (2006), and Carretta (2007) have illuminated the continuities and the interrelationships (but also the tensions) that cut across different types of satiric writing, literary and non-literary. These are brought to light by the

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<sup>31</sup> Dorothy George (1949: xxii; xx) quotes from Anacreon Moore’s 1816 poem ‘Lines on the Death of Sh-r-d-n’. Moore was considered by the very loyal *Morning Herald* of 7 February 1814 one of the ‘dark trio juncta’ who conspired against the Regent, the others being Byron and Sam Rogers.

<sup>32</sup> Baker (2005: 19, 216) records only two non-critical prints in 1829, the year before George IV’s death: *The Slap Up Swell Wot Drives When Hever He Likes* (April, 1829), by William Heath, and *Vox Populi* (November, 1829), by Robert Seymour (1800-1836).

fact that some literary radical satires were published by the 'low' print shops<sup>33</sup> and circulated in pamphlets and other texts of the Regency radical press, which contributed to making them accessible to a lower and lower-middle class audience, as McCalman (1988: 122) has shown. It is therefore important to recognize the intertwining of 'high' and 'low' within satire as a genre and, more specifically, within the satiric tradition that is present in the work of the journalists, satirists, and publishers of the Regency radical press. Furthermore, bipolar divisions between elite and popular, polite and vulgar tend to disregard the degree of cultural exchange among different social groupings (McCalman, 1999: 216) and thus to simplify complex interconnections.

However, cultural plurality and literary dialogue cannot overlook the fact that the 'genetic code' of Regency radical satire is not essentially literary. It is to be found in the free, ambivalent and unrestricted laughter, full of blasphemy and profanation of everything sacred, present in traditional rural pastimes and festivities. Bakhtin's theorization of 'the life of the carnival square', with its temporary suspension of hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions (Clark and Holquist, 1984) remains useful in accounting for the extra-literary sources of Regency satire. The laughter that connected people in rural festivities through inversion and parody was often satirical – it stressed anti-authoritarianism and sharpened social awareness by ridiculing authorities, for example, in the mock mayor ceremony (Hendrix, 1976: 119).

This rural culture survived in the fairs and carnivals of the new industrial towns, and though these traditions were not in themselves political, they appealed to an attitude of criticism of authority and violation of 'respectability' that underlay the political attitude of Regency radical satire. In London, Saint Bartholomew's Fair was one of the most famous festivities of this kind. It was held until 1855 at Smithfield, near Newgate, and it was described in 1826 as a 'saturnalia of nondescript noise and nonconformity'. The Lord Mayor became 'the lord of misrule and the patron of pickpockets' on the opening day (Gatrell, 2006: 200). The permission given in the past to Tyburn felons to make last dying speeches remained in the popular imagination as plebeian occupation of the public space and sometimes as inversion of the rule of law. The memory of this practice may also have contributed to the opening up of a popular, confrontational public space in early nineteenth-century British society (Roberts, 2004).

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<sup>33</sup> Shelley's *Oedipus Tyrannus, or, Swellfoot the Tyrant: A Tragedy in Two Acts*, a satire on George IV during the Queen Caroline affair, was published in 1820 by J. Johnston, a well-known radical publisher whose public was the London crowd of the low print shops and publishers.

The transgressive practices of fairs, festivals, holidays, elections and charivari were merged with the custom of anti-authoritarian joking of broadsides, chap-books, prints and almanacs and with forms of popular-literary culture, such as parody, popular romance, farce, pamphleteering, and satirical prints. ‘Orality’ constituted, however, the stronghold of the popular satirical tradition. In the Regency years, popular satiric language was characteristic of the spoken word of public meetings, taverns, and of the theatre – a major popular institution in and outside London. Theatre performances were often disorderly, with clashes in the audience over on-stage events, and it often included farce, a satiric genre (Thompson, 1991: 735-36). Sedition and blasphemy trials were also sites of assertion of the power of the spoken word.

‘Satire was in the air’<sup>34</sup> and it was the ‘natural’ mode of expression of Regency radicalism. The following excerpt of Bamford’s *Passages in the Life of a Radical* illustrates that oral genetic origin:

About this time I was formally introduced to Mr. Cobbett, by Benbow. [...] A number of other delegates were present, but I thought Cobbett gave the preference above all, to our friend Fitton of Royton; whose sarcastic vein had particularly pleased him. Fitton had, in a speech at a public meeting, designated a certain class in Manchester, ‘The Pigtail Gentry;’ a ludicrous idea certainly, and one which made Cobbett laugh till his sides shook. No man could enjoy a bit of sarcasm better than he (Dunckley, 1905: 23).

Rooting satire predominantly in popular oral traditions contributed to the popular appeal and strength of the satirical production between 1815 and 1822. Popular radical satire took diverse literary, artistic and publication forms: satirical prints and pamphlet satires were published with great popular success in the periodicals of the radical press, in posters<sup>35</sup>, advertisements, the traditional ballad broadside, song-sheets, woodcuts for cheap books, jest books and tracts, in toys and even on cloth, porcelain, fans pipes and walking sticks. Among the most successful satiric forms circulated during the Queen Caroline affair – pamphlet satires, satirical prints, broadsides, advertisements and songs<sup>36</sup> – two will have will be examined in this chapter: satirical prints and pamphlet satires.

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<sup>34</sup> W. Bagehot, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 1862, quoted in George (1987: 13).

<sup>35</sup> Sometimes several publishing forms were combined in one, as in the poster advertisement for issue n° 7 of the radical periodical the *Black Dwarf*, which displayed an innovative response to the suspension of *Habeas Corpus* in 1817 (<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/takingliberties>; accessed 22/02/2010).

<sup>36</sup> Bennett (1980-1) comments on the production of songs during the Queen Caroline affair, which he divides into five main phases, and relates it to the broadside tradition. The publication of the two main collections of broadside songs about the Affair, held by the British Library and the Cambridge University Library, would seem of historical and cultural relevance.

Concerning its method, Regency satire was essentially parodic – in the sense of *representation* rather than *mimesis*, because it created a relationship of tension between the original and the parodied. The result of this tension was that, instead of being a secondary, imitative text<sup>37</sup>, parody established a relationship of identification with the original, that is, parody became the background text. For Grimes (2003: 180), this constitutes the ultimate subversion, but the efficiency of popular radical satire as subversive text lies in its lasting significance, even its universality. George Cruikshank's comic-grotesque dramatizations of the body, taste and manners of the Regent in satirical prints and pamphlet satires were extremely competent in commenting on his political, financial, and sexual behaviour during this period but, at the same time, they retain much of the original strength. They remain meaningful today.

Regency parody is an elusive and elastic genre (Knight, 1992: 22). It includes literary genres and works, their style or structure, but it is not confined to them. Any act, artistic or non-artistic, verbal or non-verbal, to which some kind of symbolic significance was attached, could be an object of parody. A catchword/phrase could become parodic representation with enormous propaganda power. The catchword 'Peterloo', for example, illustrates this type of imaginative association of the events of St. Peter's Fields in Manchester to the much prided victory at Waterloo to great effect.

Edmund Burke's phrase 'swinish multitude' had been a popular target of parody since the 1790s in countless rhetorical situations, even in names of periodicals<sup>38</sup>. The following excerpt of a letter by a Lancashire cotton weaver, probably an alias of Thomas Wooler, published in the radical periodical *BD* of 21 January 1818, parodies Burke's 'swinish multitude':

I have been informed that a son of corruption has said that Lancashire men are an ignorant swinish multitude. Are we ignorant because we have given our votes to such men as Canning and Cawthorn? Or because we have sold our bodies for *old rags*, to be shot like birds in all parts of the world?<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Satire as imitation of a text was produced by authors of different ideological areas and even by politically neutral authors. *Rejected Addresses, or the New Theatrum Poetarum* (Horatio and James Smith, 1812), is an example of this type of uncritical parody.

<sup>38</sup> The title of Daniel Isaac Eaton's periodical (1793-5) *Politics for the People: or, a Salmagundy for Swine*, and of Thomas Spence's *Pig's Meat; or Lessons for the Swinish Multitude* (1793-6) illustrate such sarcastic dubbing.

<sup>39</sup> Hendrix (1976: 113).

Other popular satiric methods included the nursery rhyme method of repetition and progress, the parodic representation of church liturgy and trial ceremony, all explored by William Hone.

Symbolism was an element of satiric dramatization, particularly in satirical prints. Britannia symbolised national interests or the country's well-being, horns indicated cuckolds, and Sidmouth, the Home Secretary, was almost always represented with his clyster-pipe. John Bull became one of the most frequently employed symbols during the Regency. Often represented as a bull or other animal, it symbolised the typical Englishman<sup>40</sup>. Shortly before the Wars, John Bull was portrayed as being hardy and forbearing, sometimes literally pushed to extremes of resilience, as in the print published by Samuel Fores in 1796, *Johnny in a Flattening Mill* (BM-ID 1868,0808.6538).

After the Wars, the representation of John Bull underwent a gradual change. In *The Blessings of Peace or, the Curse of the Corn Bill* (BMC 12503), designed by George Cruikshank in 1815, he is a still prosperous-looking countryman, outraged by the Corn Bill and determined to emigrate with his wife and family. Later, pushed to extremes by taxation and starvation, he could assume aggressive postures. In *Royal Hobby's* (BMC 13215), of 1819, John Bull stands outside a miserable hut, with his wife and children, and scolds the Duke of York: '£10,000 a year for a son to do his duty to his father!!!!!! Whilst my children are starving!!' In 1820, Dorothy George catalogues only two prints where John Bull is depicted as an animal (a bull and a dog) and 35 where he is depicted as a man (BMC: 792).

Name calling, nicknaming and other elements of exaggeration intensified the popular appeal of satire. Examples are Cobbett's 'pig-tail gentry', 'the borough mongers', 'the thing', or the Prince of Wales's nicknames 'Prinny', 'the first gentleman of Europe', 'the Prince of Pleasure'. Double meanings and puns were also favourite sources of satiric laughter. The satirical print by Charles Williams *A View of the R—G – T's Bomb* (Fig. 9: 159), 'commemorating' the offer of a big cannon by Ferdinand of Spain to the Regent, is an example. In William Hone's *Non Mi Ricordo* (Hone, 1971: 193-205), and *The Queen's Matrimonial Ladder* (Hone, 1971-167-85), the comic effect is largely subsidiary to the use throughout of puns, double meanings and nicknaming. The continual reshaping and

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<sup>40</sup> It was introduced by John Arbuthnot in his 1712 satire *Law is a Bottomless Pit; or, the History of John Bull* (Hunt, 2003: 144). Arbuthnot described his character as 'an honest plain-dealing Fellow, Choleric, Bold, and of a very unconstant Temper' (Patten, 1992: 73).

reinterpretation of these traditions, and the element of consensus and universality (Calhoun, 1983: 895-6) thus achieved, also account for the force of Regency satire.

In 1819, with the outcry of indignation raised by ‘Peterloo’, the satiric attacks reached a peak and prepared the way for the climatic events of the following year. The presence of editors, publishers, proprietors, and journalists at the Manchester meeting (Richard Carlile of the *Republican*, Edward Baines of the *Leeds Mercury*, James Wroe and Saxon of the *Manchester Observer*, John Smith of the *Liverpool Mercury*, and John Tyas of *The Times*) spread the indignation all over the country.

Although it is usually admitted that reports of ‘Peterloo’ in cheap periodicals and pamphlets exceeded in volume and importance the images of Peterloo, prints were issued in Manchester and London and sold all over the country. One of the prints, *Massacre at Peterloo! Or a Specimen of English Liberty* (BMC 13260), published by J. L. Marks shows the notorious deputy constable of Manchester, Nadin, who arrested Henry Hunt, saying: ‘What a glorious day, this is our Waterloo’. However, not all satirical prints were favourable to the radicals. George Cruikshank etched *The Radical’s Arms* (BMC 13275), published in November, where the radicals are shown as grotesque figures rejoicing over destruction and violence, symbolized by a bonfire, a guillotine, the gallows and two bloody axes.

The passage of the *Six Acts* echoed in images and text. George Cruikshank etched two prints satirizing this repressive legislation. One of them, *A Free Born Englishman! The Admiration of the World!!! And the Envy of Surrounding Nations!!!!*, of December 1819 (BMC 13287; BM-ID 1868,0808.12910), shows a poor John Bull ragged and starved by taxes, shackled and silenced by gagging laws and with his feet on the fallen down symbols of individual liberties.

The other satirical print attacking the *Six Acts*, *Poor Bull & his Burden—or the Political Murraion-!!* (Fig. 12) was also issued in December 1819. It shows a (John) Bull bleeding, gagged and brought down on the ground by the weight of a pyramid made of eight ministers and tax collectors, seven soldiers, six courtiers, five placemen, five clerics and three bishops, and topped by a crown (Patten, 1992: 156). Wellington is on the side dressed as an executioner, ready to kill the gagged bull that supports the whole establishment. Political criticism lies in the provocative question: ‘What will become of these Vermin, if the Bull should rise?’ Here John Bull is still a ‘bearer of burdens’, but the question is inflammatory.



Fig. 12 G. Cruikshank, *Poor Bull & his Burden -or the Political Murraion-!!* 1819  
 © The Trustees of the British Museum

State prosecution of satirical prints and pamphlet satires was the initial response of the establishment to their enormous success. However, the prosecution of satires had difficulty standing, as prosecuted authors could read out their satires in court, or describe the indicted print, as Hone's acquittal sufficiently revealed. Additionally, satirists often capitalized on their victories by publishing reports of their trials<sup>41</sup>. Hone and Wooler used trials as a means of publicity.

The radical publisher John Fairburn celebrated Hone's acquittal and his juries with a verse broadsheet *The Three Honest Juries: A Parody on 'The Roast Beef of Old England'* surmounted by a medallion showing a laughing face labelled: *Laugh like me !!! Oh! the Big Wigs of Old England! Laugh at the English Big Wigs* (BMC 12900). Other political

<sup>41</sup> Wooler published in 1817 *A Verbatim Report of the Two Trials of T. J. W., Editor of the Black Dwarf, for Alleged Libels ... Taken in Short Hand by an Eminent Writer, and Revised by T. J. W., and An Appeal to the Citizens of London against the Alleged Lawful Mode of Packing Special Juries*. Hone published *The Three Trials of William Hone*, apart from satires in partnership with George Cruikshank.



trials took place in 1817 – the trials of James Watson sr., Thomas Preston, and Arthur Thistlewood, charged in sequence of the Spa Fields rising and also acquitted – but they did not acquire the notoriety of Hone’s trials.

If literary ‘radical satire’<sup>42</sup> is ‘utterance’, rather than ‘simply text’, and ‘act’ rather than ‘thing’ (Dyer, 1997: 9), Regency radical satire is even more so. It created a new form of the genre. It was not the descendent of a conservative eighteenth-century satire written to preserve a classical model, but crucially a form that defined itself essentially by the role it played in the public sphere as ‘material and intentionally disruptive intervention’ (Grimes, 2003: 174). It circulated freely, it was virtually authorless, and it signalled the birth of a new public opinion which pointed forward towards a modern world where authority is always provisional (Grimes, 2000: 154).

Several interconnected factors – the extension of lower-class readership, technological improvements in print production, the demand for more transparency in political life, the atmosphere of conflict against which it flourished, and, paradoxically, the fear of prosecution – nurtured Regency radical satire and made it into a cutting political weapon and a counter-cultural instrument with great popular appeal.

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<sup>42</sup> Dyer (1997) coined the phrase ‘radical satire’ to refer to a class of literary satire of the Romantic period. *The Fudge Family in Paris*, by Thomas Moore, *The Mohawks*, by Sir Charles and Lady Morgan, *Ultra-Crepidarius*, by Leigh Hunt, *Peter Bell, the Third*, by Shelley, and *The Vision of Judgment*, by Byron, are discussed as representative of this literary satire. It uses the heroic couplet, whereas ‘popular radical satire’ uses stanzaic forms. Furthermore, the anticipated audiences, price, and sources are also distinct.

## The Queen Caroline Affair and Satirical Prints

Public feeling in behalf of the Queen is daily and hourly strengthened, whilst her oppressor daily loses ground. Caricatures in ridicule of the King are now exposed to sale, that were never paralleled before (*R*, vol. iii: 433).

Unlike the benevolent and sometimes nonsensical type of humour that came afterwards, disengaged from a direct relationship with public figures and public affairs<sup>43</sup>, Regency radical satire made truth claims in relation to the objects of laughter, and humour was personal and irreverent. During the Queen Caroline affair, it translated into the depiction of the representatives of the political, legal, and religious power – and of their symbols – in undignified, ridiculous postures. The above quotation signals the satiric laughter that lampooned George IV in satirical prints, pamphlet satires, advertisements, and broadsides<sup>44</sup> in 1820.

The playfulness implicit within parodic representation made the political anger against the King, his ministry, the Milan Commission, the ‘Green Bag’, and the witnesses for the prosecution more sophisticated, but not less pointed. The argument was often couched in ironic praise and rhetorical indirectness (sometimes to impede prosecution) but the message was never ambiguous. Parodying authority was not docile voyeurism; it approached power obliquely (but closer than it would prefer), defying the barriers of class and social position.

Loyalist prints and pamphlet satires were also published, especially from the last quarter of 1820, but their motivation and character differed greatly from that of Regency radical satire. On the one hand, the loyalist production was essentially reactive, originated by the need to counteract the strength of the satirical attacks in the popular radical press as a whole. The loyalist newspaper *John Bull* was very clear about that purpose. In the edition of 17 December 1820 it claimed for itself the task of administering a ‘salutary medicine’ to the ‘shameful licentiousness of a prostituted press, the infamous tendency of the caricatures which issue from every sink of vice and infamy in and near the metropolis’ (No. 1: 4). On the other hand, loyalist attacks on the person of the Queen generally implied the encomium of the status quo, which hardly suited the satirical mode.

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<sup>43</sup> *The March of Intellect, A Comic Poem* (Moncrieff, 1830) is an example of this type of humour found in *Punch*, as well as in Lewis Carroll (pseudonym of Charles L. Dodgson, 1832-1898), and Edward Lear (1812-1888). George Cruikshank’s 1828 print *The Age of Intellect* (‘Scraps and Sketches’) is another instance.

<sup>44</sup> Broadsides expressed the more sentimental and melodramatic elements of the Queen Caroline affair in the numerous ballad and song texts sold by the printers and ballad sellers of St. Giles and Seven Dials, James Catnach and John Pitts, amongst others. Appendix Two contains a list of song texts found in a scrapbook at the British Library (1820) and in Bennett (1980-1).

Hence, to say that Regency radical satire exploited unrespectability in an imaginative way is hardly sufficient. It is necessary to enquire into how the attitude of unrespectability was translated into images and words, and to gauge the way radical satirists and caricaturists disrupted and reworked the many consecrating symbols of power, including the linguistic, and created their own (Sen, 2009: 159). The type of discursive disruption and reworking that would take place draws the line between forward-looking political criticism and personal defamation.

The task thus remains to determine whether and how the main themes treated by the radical satirists were metaphors of the political and the moral legitimacy of state authority. It is necessary to enquire whether those themes – the withdrawal of George IV to Windsor, his womanising, the postponed coronation, the use of the office of King to introduce a private bill to Parliament, the subservience of ministers and the corruption of justice – share in the open, democratic endeavour and forward-looking vision of print culture and society that characterised the public intervention exercised through the periodicals of the radical press. The necessarily very incomplete overview of the satiric production issued during the Queen Caroline affair presented below will nevertheless hopefully suffice to convey the interpretation of events by the satirists of the period, and thus to tell a story different from the one told by the political establishment<sup>45</sup>.

Concerning the production of satirical prints<sup>46</sup>, the years 1820 and 1821 were record years. According to Volume X of the *BMC* (covering the years 1820-7), 729 political prints were published in 1820-1: 565 prints in 1820, and 164 prints in 1821 in comparison to the remaining six years, when only 292 political prints were issued (*BMC*, xx, xxvi). However, the satirical production was more numerous. The British Museum collection of prints related to the Queen Caroline affair is far from complete<sup>47</sup> despite the Museum's continued acquisition in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. More recently, in 2007 and 2010, a number of prints joined the Collection. In 2007, an anonymous, untitled print (BM-ID 2007,7087.38) showing three women, one possibly being Caroline of Brunswick, was acquired. In 2010,

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<sup>45</sup> Speaking in the context of contemporaneous African culture, Chimamanda Adichie, a Nigerian woman-writer, delivered a talk in the US in 2009 in which she drew attention to the risk of the prevalence of a 'single story' within society, and defended the co-existence of alternative stories. She argued that stories matter, and that 'when we reject the single story, when we realise there's never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise': [http://blog.ted.com/2009/10/the\\_danger\\_of\\_a.php](http://blog.ted.com/2009/10/the_danger_of_a.php) (accessed 16/06/2010).

<sup>46</sup> Henceforth, the phrase 'satirical print' also designates the illustrations of broadsides.

<sup>47</sup> A number of items from George IV's print collection, whose provenance is often difficult to trace, remain in the *Print Room* at Windsor Castle, but most of the royal collection of satirical prints, designated as *George IV Collection* was acquired in 1920-21 by the Library of Congress, Washington. Despite the lack of a published catalogue, microfilms of about 8,000 of those prints (of a total of 9,900) are available in the British Museum. For a general view of the location of collections of British satirical prints, see Turner (2004).

the British Museum acquired the satirical print by George Cruikshank *Nobody Going to be Punished! Nobody Going to be Hung!!! !!!* (Fig. 36: 213), published by John Fairburn in September 1821.

The General Election, which took place between 6 March and 14 April 1820, and the Cato Street conspiracy inspired a series of satirical prints<sup>48</sup>, but when the Queen returned to England in early June, the Affair swept aside all other topics and between July and October numerous satirical prints, almost all supporting the Queen, illustrate every stage. All the leading caricaturists and publishers of the day produced satirical prints during the Affair. Even when the authors and publishers are not always identifiable as radical, their inclusion in the radical press is justified by the predominantly libertarian or reformist character of their message. The message is considered more relevant than the political affiliation of the author or publisher.

The Cruikshank brothers, Robert and George, Charles Williams, Lewis Marks (also a publisher), William Heath (known as 'Paul Pry'), John Marshall were the main authors of satirical prints, whereas the radical publishers William Benbow, Thomas Dolby, John Johnston, and John Fairburn were the main publishers, together with Samuel Fores and the more loyalist-inclined George Humphrey. George Humphrey carried a systematic campaign against the Queen only from January 1821; before that, he interspersed the publication of prints against the Queen with others against the King, an example being *Ah! Sure such a Pair was never seen so justly Form'd to meet by Nature* (Fig. 16) and, notably, the verse satire printed by Benbow *Horrida Bella, Pains and Penalties versus Truth and Justice* (BMC 13948-72).

The first references to the Affair, both in a radical periodical and a satirical print occur in the same month – February 1820. The print entitled *Reflection. To Be or Not To Be??* (Fig. 13), by Robert Cruikshank, is considered the first satirical print of the reign of George IV. The visual appeal of this print lies not only in the representation of the new King, fat and short, trying on the royal crown in front of the mirror, but essentially in his alarm at the view of Caroline crowned, symbolised by the reflected image of the Queen. The bottle and glass of wine on the table add a satirical allusion to his drinking vice. The famous first lines of Hamlet's 'Soliloquy' are used to anticipate the perceived anxiety of the King in face of Caroline's return, one of the leitmotifs in the satirical representation of power during the Affair.

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<sup>48</sup> *The Cato Street Conspirators* (BMC 13707), a satirical print by George Cruikshank, published by G. Humphrey on 9 March 1820, is an example, but others are listed in the BMC on this subject.

This was the first of a number of satirical prints which resorted to Shakespeare's plays to ridicule George IV during the Caroline affair. Although quotations from Shakespeare's plays were popular among virtually all classes of people, the fact that they were used as sources of satiric laughter attests to the grounding of popular radical satire in the intertwining of 'high' and 'low' culture and also to its essentially parodic character.

This satirical print constitutes, to a certain extent, an exception. In fact, from February to July 1820 – months of uncertainty as to the unravelling of the case – satirical prints ridiculed both sides of the royal quarrel and not only the King, as happened after that month. Two prints, *La Gloire des Honnetes Gens!!* (Fig. 14) and *How Beautiful is Virtue!!!* (Fig.15), illustrate that balance.



Fig 13 R. Cruikshank, *Reflection. To Be or Not To Be??*, 1820  
© Trustees of the British Museum

*La Gloire des Honnetes Gens!!* was etched by George Cruikshank and published by George Humphrey on 15 June. It consists of four designs on one plate, each with a different title (*Modesty!*, *Dignity!*, *Chastity!*, *National Love!*) which clearly contradict the images. Caroline is depicted in indecent clothes and attitudes, wearing excessively décolleté dresses and sitting close to Bergami. The designs allude to different occasions

when the Princess was with Bergami during her stay in Italy (Genoa and Naples) and on board the frigate *Clorinda*<sup>49</sup>.

*How Beautiful is Virtue!!!*, its counterpart, was published by Lewis Marks in June. It shows scenes of debauchery of George as Regent and King with different women, but it adds political comment on the plate 'National Love'. This design critiques the fact that in the aftermath of 'Peterloo', the Regent received a group of Manchester Yeomanry, whose killing of unarmed people is symbolised by blood stained swords. Criticism of the clergy is present in the figure of a priest holding an open Bible, but also a scourge and chains. The sub-title 'Impartial justice ever in our view' 'Fair to the public' conveys concise, ironic comment.

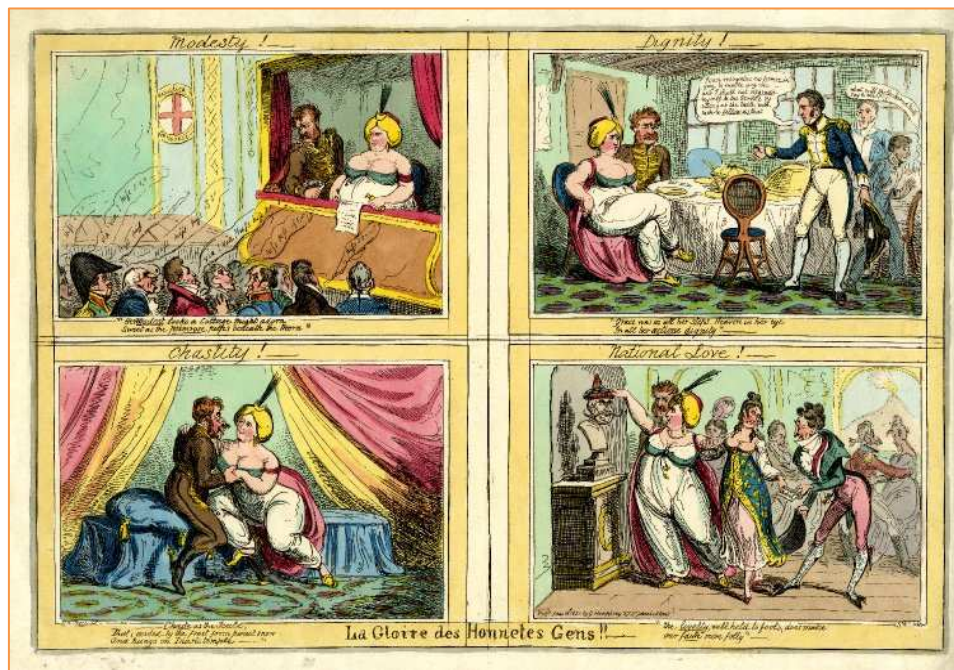


Fig. 14 G. Cruikshank, *La Gloire des Honnetes Gens!!*, 1820  
© Trustees of the British Museum

The same structure and the same titles are used on both plates and, taken together, they illustrate the relative balance between anti- and pro-Queenite prints at the beginning of the Affair. It is difficult to know which of the two prints came out first, as the latter only indicates the month as date of publication.

<sup>49</sup> The scene seems to anticipate the testimony of Captain Pechell during the proceedings in the House of Lords. He stated that he had refused to sit at the same dinner table with Bergami in 1816 on board the *Clorinda*, a refusal not accepted by the Princess (Kelly, 1821: 334-37).



Fig. 15 L. Marks (pub.), *How Beautiful is Virtue!!!*, 1820  
© Trustees of the British Museum

Until July, the critical stance towards the Queen is apparent. In the print by George Cruikshank “Ah! Sure such a Pair Was Never Seen so Justly Form’d to Meet by Nature” – *Old Sherry*<sup>50</sup> (Fig. 16) published by George Humphrey on 23 June, criticism is conveyed by the metaphor of the ‘Green Bag’. Although the King’s bag is much bigger, which may be interpreted as containing more damaging evidence against him, both, King and Queen, are viewed negatively.

In this print, the ‘Green Bag’ is not yet the notorious symbol of the corrupted justice served at the Queen’s trial, which appeared in subsequent prints. Here, the existence of ‘Green Bags’ seems to symbolise the immoral conduct on both sides. The representation of two green bags also suggests that the Queen might gather evidence against the King, as Brougham threatened in Parliament on 7 June and Cobbett in the *PR* (xxxvi: 912). Although this print aligns itself in the critical stance towards the Queen, it is less biased than *La Gloire des Honnetes Gens!!*

<sup>50</sup> The title of this print is a song from *The Duenna*, an opera by Richard Sheridan (1751-1816). This song had been used in two prints by George Cruikshank, one of 1815 entitled *The Pig Faced Lady of Manchester Square The Spanish Mule of Madrid* (BMC 12508), and the other of 1818 whose title is the song itself, *Sure Such a Pair were Never Seen So Justly Form’d to Meet by Nature!!!* (BMC 13131).



Fig.16 G. Cruikshank, “Ah! Sure such a Pair was Never seen so Justly Form’d to Meet by Nature” – Old Sherry, 1820  
© Trustees of the British Museum

The return of the Queen to England in June marked the beginning of a shift in the satirical representation of the royal squabble, with popular support moving onto the Queen’s side. The Queen is represented as a persecuted woman and a symbol of courage and determination, in contrast with the depiction of the King as pusillanimous and hypocritical, and the government as corrupt and subservient.

The print by Charles Williams *Dover Cliff or the Bomb Removed* (Fig. 17), published c. June, is a mockery of the royal institution and of power in general. The King is ridiculed physically (his fat body) and in his fright at the imminent arrival of the Queen. The design shows the Regent’s bomb<sup>51</sup> on the edge of a cliff pointing to the sea, while a ship is approaching. In alarm, George IV inspects the sea through a spyglass and tells the Doctor [Sidmouth] and Derry [Castlereagh]: ‘Here she comes by God! ram away Doctor if one Bolus won’t do put in three ; D ... me wee’l give her a dose! Hand me the match Derry, she will be within reach of my Bomb the next tack’.

<sup>51</sup> As aforementioned, the ‘bomb’/‘bum’ pun had been the subject of ludicrous mockery since 1816.



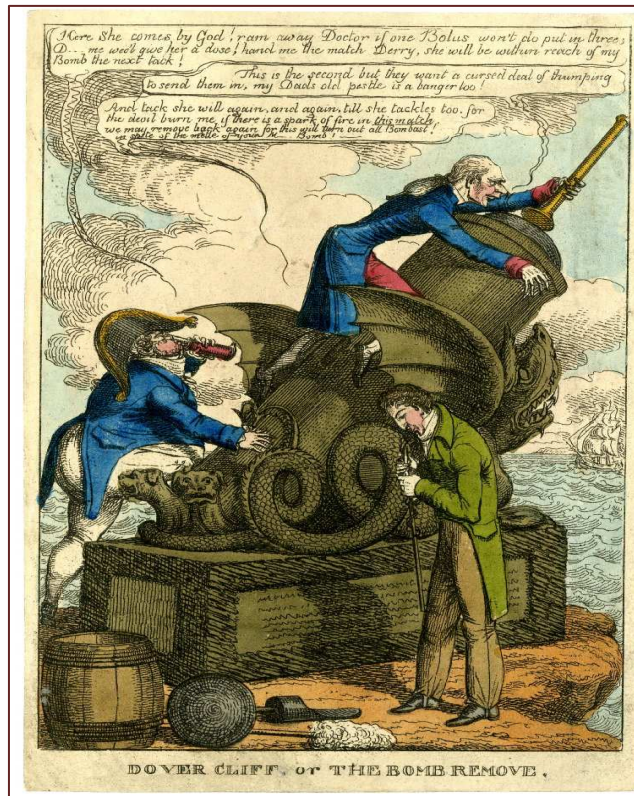


Fig. 17 C. Williams, *Dover Cliff or the Bomb Removed*, 1820  
 © Trustees of the British Museum

Showing George IV frightened at the arrival of a lonely and helpless woman conveys a message of desacralisation of power. However, the King's determination to defy danger in this print makes the demystification of authority seem rather benevolent in comparison to *A Scene of the new Farce of the Lady and the Devil* (Fig. 18), a print also published in June<sup>52</sup>, in which the King is retreating in panic.

In this print, the King's exclamation '*The Devil*', the Archbishop's words '*The Lord have mercy on our vicked [sic] souls*', and Castlereagh, startled, spilling the inkpot, convey the comic embarrassment and confusion produced by the news. The spelling of the word 'wicked' may be a typo but it could also intend to draw attention to the German origin of the dynasty of Hanover. The heavily caricatured ministers and King, with huge heads on tiny bodies, contributes to the desired comic effect. Political criticism lies mainly in the words of the Archbishop.

<sup>52</sup> The National Archives Collection holds the English original, published by W. Benbow. See <http://www.flickr.com/photos/nationalarchives/3311206029/> (accessed 22/01/2011). The BM image reproduced below is probably a pirated copy, published by William McCleary, an Irish publisher.



Fig. 18 W. McCleary (pub.), *A Scene of the new Farce of the Lady and the Devil*  
 © Trustees of the British Museum

In the first phase of the Affair, the representation of the King, anxious at the imminent arrival of Caroline to England, was not totally unfounded. On 27 May George IV wrote to Sir William Knighton, his physician and Keeper of the Privy Purse: 'I must implore you, my dear friend, if you have any regard for me to call upon me as soon as possible after your return to London tomorrow morning. [...] My mind is in a state not to be described...' (Aspinall, 1938: 336).

*Coronation Arrngements [sic] Awkwardly Interrupted [sic], or Injured Innocence Demanding her Rights* (Fig. 19), published on 1 June by John Fairburn, emphasises how the elements of the private and the public spheres are intertwined in the graphic representation of the Queen Caroline affair. In this print, Caroline appears before George IV and the Cabinet to demand her rights, disturbing the plans of the King for his coronation. A cat passing under the King's chair, and calmly leaving the cabinet room, adds a note of commonness and nonsense to the whole scene and demystifies its institutional seriousness.



Fig. 19 J. Fairburn (pub.), *Coronation Arrangements Awkwardly Interrupted, or Injured Innocence Demanding her Rights*, 1820  
 © Trustees of the British Museum

The satirical representation of the Affair soon acquired a marked political character, with the Queen's return being fictionalized as an event that could change the status quo. In *Caroline's Wood-en Broom to Sweep the Filthy Committee Room* (Fig. 20), published by John Fairburn a month later, in July 1820, Caroline is not only praised for returning to England to face her enemies, she is also viewed as a symbol of change. The Queen and the broom symbolise both the need for sweeping up the Government, and the power of courage and honesty to frighten corruption. The ministry are denounced as illegitimate political and moral leaders. Lord Liverpool frightened, hiding beneath the table, personifies the weaknesses and moral failings of the status quo and, by negative association, stresses the qualities of courage and righteousness that characterise the Queen and, by implication, the reformed political power.

The view of Caroline as a heroine, both in the personal and in the political sense, strengthened after the Government's decision to prosecute her. That decision was unpopular and, when the proceedings became a reality at the beginning of July, public opinion swung decidedly onto the Queen's side. Laughing at the King, the Government, and the institutions of state became the main instrument of political propaganda.



Fig. 20 J. Fairburn (pub.), *Caroline's Wood-en Broom to sweep the Filthy Committee Room*, 1820  
© Trustees of the British Museum

In some satires, however, humour is almost absent. Direct political criticism, often dramatised rather than satirised, becomes the key element. The print *Figures in a Fog* (Fig. 21), published by Thomas Dolby, uses the cause of the Queen to criticise/dramatise political corruption, one of the main themes of Regency radicalism. The Queen's accusers are pictured in dark colours (symbolising corruption) fleeing, terrorised by the power of the Queen, who appears irradiated, shedding light like a sun. This print exemplifies the combination of two apparently opposite discourses: the discourse of satire as criticism, and the discourse of melodrama as identification, used to dramatised the contrast between courage and accountability *versus* secrecy, conspiracy and corruption. As in the discourse of Carlile, Cobbett, and Wooler, in satirical prints the Queen became a symbol of courage and determination and the defence of her cause a metaphor of political and cultural change.

The enormous quantity of prints produced in 1820 resulted in the necessity of finding new ways of exploring various satirical devices, for example, the metaphor of darkness to symbolise vice and evil, and of light to symbolise justice and freedom. Symbols were efficient satirical devices. Their meaning was shared by the audience as a whole and their

visual nature made satirical commentary immediately understood by the illiterate. In the verse satire *The Total Eclipse: A Grand Politico-Astronomical Phenomenon, Which Occurred in the Year 1820* (BMC 13976-84), illustrated by Robert Cruikshank, and published by Dolby in November, the field of astronomy is used to make a political comment. The title page shows the King's head as the sun, but his face is obscured by a black disk inscribed *Vice*, implying that censure falls on the person of the King, and not on the institution of monarchy. The clouds, the shadows, and the dark colours expose the King's vices, symbolised by bottles and a corkscrew, his irresponsibility (fool's cap) and the despotism of his ministers (shackles, axes, cannon and cannon-ball), who obscure him. George IV is often depicted wearing a fool's cap as a symbol of his irresponsible conduct as a monarch. The end of the eclipse brings Caroline crowned, standing on clouds and holding a paper 'Justice for the Oppressed and Freedom for Millions!' She fiercely points down to sea waves, in which the frightened head of the King and the ministers drown.

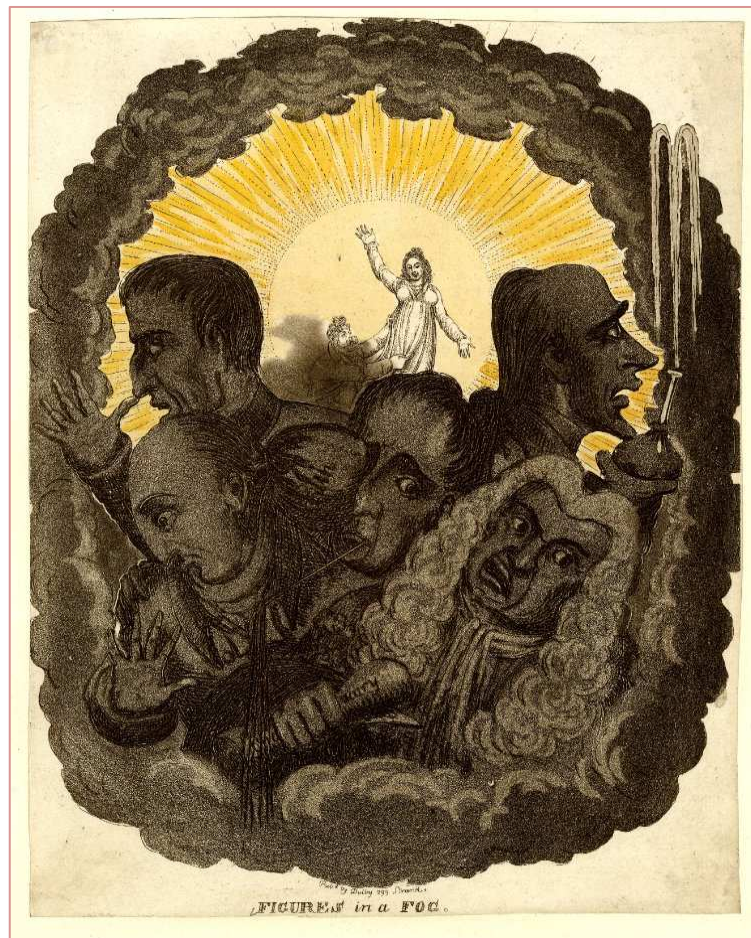


Fig. 21 T. Dolby (pub.), *Figures in a Fog*, 1820  
© Trustees of the British Museum

Satirists sharpened their vocabularies in a variety of rhetorical and pictorial vocabularies against a King and Government, accused of sponsoring a process that was viewed both as a conspiracy against the rightful Queen of England and a threat to individual liberties. The verse satire *A New favourite Royal Alphabet for the 17<sup>th</sup> of August, Dedicated to the Peers of Great Britain, Consisting of Various Characters, By Peter Pangloss, LL. D and A.S.S.*, for example, follows the alphabetical order to parody those linked to the process against the Queen, including the King. The letter *C* is directed at Cook, William Cooke, one of the members of the Milan Commission:

*C* was a Cook, who to make a dirty pie, / From Italy fetch'd all the filth he could *spy*; /  
The stomachs of Commoners being unable / To swallow such stuff, 't was put on a  
Lord's table [...]. *Z* [George IV] was a Zero, who found a good wife, or / He ne'er had  
been any thing more than a cipher [...] / To comfort th' oppressed is the part of a hero;  
/ To court the oppressor discovers the Zero (31).

It was published by Thomas Dolby, and it bore the following 'Dedication by Peter Pangloss to the Peers of Great Britain', full of irony and puns enveloped in an allegory of trial proceedings based on the language of print:

I hope none among you will look upon it as a Capital crime to stir up the *republic of letters* in opposition to the arbitrary measures about to be adopted through the medium of a wise and *learned* aristocracy. And, as my Lord Holland has recommended you to take advantage of the interval of repose from your parliamentary duties, *to brush up your Italian*, I trust the study of this Primer may prove not altogether useless to such of your lordships as are unacquainted with the *Italic character*, or have not carefully examined those which are not in fashion at Court in the present day.

Comparison and contrast are the satirical devices used in *Royal Congratulations* (Fig. 22), published by Thomas Dolby in October to highlight the unpopularity of the King. This print is divided into two scenes, one showing the Queen receiving addresses of loyalty and support, and the other showing the King, totally apart from his people, sailing with Lady Conyngham and receiving a document entitled 'Hum', which is handed to him by a grave-digger.

The hostile message of many satires towards the institutions of the state may have dictated the publication of a few anti-Queenite prints during the proceedings in the House of Lords. *A Royal Salute* (Fig. 23), by William Heath, published on 28 August, is one of the few prints critical of the Queen published in August. It shows a fat, ugly Queen in adulterous embrace with Bergami.



Fig. 22 T. Dolby (pub.), *Royal Congratulations*, 1820  
 © Trustees of the British Museum

The prolonged retreat of the King at Windsor during the best part of 1820, especially during the lawsuit in the House of Lords, was copiously mocked in satirical prints, illustrated verse satires, and radical periodicals throughout the Affair. In October, Carline mixed perplexity with irony in the *R*: 'it is strange that we hear nothing of the King [...]; not a word has been said about him up to the 9<sup>th</sup> inst. there is no mention even where he is residing' (vol. iv: 225).



Fig. 23 W. Heath, *A Royal Salute*, 1820  
 © Trustees of the British Museum

The print *St. Stephen's Bell-Man* (Fig. 24), possibly by William Heath, published on 25 August by Samuel Fores, explores this theme, by ridiculing the King's absence from London as 'disappearance'. It shows Castlereagh as a street bell-man shouting a 'wanted' advertisement of an old deer, in a clear metaphor of the King: '*Stolen or Strayed, Lost or Miss led*' (possible allusion to his mistress Lady Conyngham), '*a fine Old Buck of the Hanoverian Breed [...] most graceful in his action, full about the Neck & Chops, his Rump erect [...] is extremely fond of his Antlers or Horns. [...] So that he may be restored to the Herd a Crown will be the Reward!!*' Above, at a window, the Queen plays with the double-meaning of 'half a crown': '*Aye Master Bell Man if you can but restore him it will be worth Half a Crown<sup>53</sup> to me*'. The superior vantage traditionally adopted by the satirist is here embodied in the figure of the Queen.

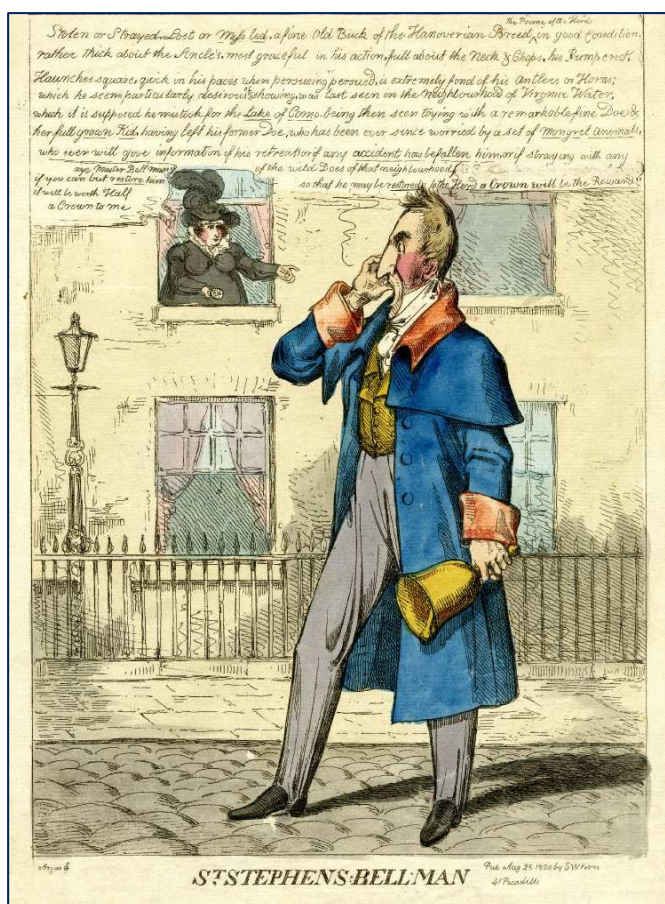


Fig. 24, S. Fores (pub.), *St. Stephen's Bell-Man*, 1820  
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<sup>53</sup> Half a crown was the Queen's emblem and a popular political pun with many applications (George, 1952: 87).



The King's absence was also laughed at in inflamed placards and handbills advertising pamphlet satires and satirical prints. One such mock-advertisement, 'Strayed and Missing', one of William Hone's *Advertisements Extraordinary* (Hone, 1971: 206-7), insists on the interpretation of the King's absence as undignified, pusillanimous conduct.

The representation of George IV as an oriental despot immersed in oriental luxury, surrendered to sensual pleasures and disinterested in the affairs of state became recurrent in satirical prints and pamphlet satires. Its force lay in the way private vices were enveloped in public political meaning through allegorical representation. By associating George IV to Nero, the King's extravagance and immoral conduct not only deprived him of the moral authority to prosecute his wife, but they allowed for the public political accusation that he used Parliament and the institutions of state to serve his private ends. He thus acted as a tyrant and not as a constitutional ruler.

Allegorical representation fostered a type of argumentative leap forward that made satire a powerful propaganda medium. The deviation from British polity and morality is further condemned in *Nero Fiddl'd when Rome was Burning* (BMC 13893)<sup>54</sup>, by William Heath, published by Samuel Fores. The King is playing cello, incited by Lady Conyngham: 'Play Here we Go Up Up Up', while John Bull shouts: 'Rome's on fire, Haste Haste Help Help, the People's roused, Perjurers [sic] allowed Conspirators are suffered to Escape, the Directors are impeached—& the World's in arms'. A placard (a written record of his vices, for shame, and for reckoning) shows the expenses of the King: his luxuries, the commented debauchery at the Cottage, and the costly presents to the Conynghams. Its materiality is a powerful tool of criticism.

Other satires on the King's philandering are less politically charged. Their main intention is to expose the double standards of sexuality and morality in a relaxed, entertaining tone. One of the most amusing prints on this behalf is *K--g Cupid in the Corner – Playing Bopeep* (Fig. 25), published by William Elms. It parodies the 'protection' given by Lady Conyngham's skirts during the 'trial' of the Queen. Lady Conyngham appears in many prints during the Affair. In *George's Delight, Or More Cunning than Cautious* (BMC 14018), by William Heath, published in December by S. Hough, the same light, good-humoured criticism is presented. Lady Conyngham says, while kissing the King: 'Georgy loves good Ale and Wine / And Georgy loves good Brandy / And Georgy loves his C—n—g—m / As sweet as sugar Candy!'

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<sup>54</sup> An engraving of 1770, *Nero Fiddling, Rome Burning, Pompaja & Agrippina Smiling* (BMC 4381) also satirized the King's father, George III (See p. 168, fn. 20).



Fig. 25 W. Elms (pub.), *K-g Cupid in the Corner – Playing Bopeep*, 1820  
Trinity's Access to Research Archive

The life-style of George IV as debauched and irresponsible is also represented in verse satires. *The R—l Great Baby among the Roses* (BMC 13867) is a coloured engraving and frontispiece to the verse satire *A Peep into the Cottage at Windsor; or, Love among the Roses*, by Roger Hunter, published by Benbow in September. It shows George IV half naked, reclining on a bed of roses, attended by three ladies, one of whom is his new mistress Mrs. Q. The relations between the King and Mrs. Q. (the wife of Colonel George Quentin, of the Tenth Hussars) were the subject of another, very scurrilous satire, *The Lost Mutton Found!! Or, The R---l Fly-by Night; A Poem; Being a Despatch Extraordinary From W---r Castle*, published by J. Fairburn:

Mrs. Q. like a goddess, sits down to the harp [...]  
She the forte piano, and he the short flute!  
But the old Mutton's flute being shockingly small,  
And very much worn, didn't join in at all (14, 16).

In the verse satire *The Queen that Jack Found* (BMC 13742), illustrated by George Cruikshank except on the title-page woodcut (George, 1952: 59), George IV is 'the figure that wears a C—' / [...] Who honour and virtue / Has trampled down, / By discarding the

Queen / That Jack found'. It was printed and published by John Fairburn in July. The idea that the conduct of George IV as a husband and as a man contaminated his office as King was recurrent in the different genres of the radical press – from the periodicals to satirical prints, broadsides, and verse satires.

The absence of George Canning during the proceedings in the House of Lords was also the object of satirical comment. *A Cunning Address* [the 'u' struck through, with 'a' above it], (Fig. 26) published by Samuel Fores, is a broadside with a satire of Canning bowing in front of the Queen. It comments on the departure of Canning abroad to avoid taking a stance. The pun 'Canning'/'cunning' suggests social censure and reflects the demand for new standards of political behaviour.



Fig. 26 S. Fores (pub.), *A Cunning Address*, 1820  
© Trustees of the British Museum

Satirists knew that their work reached a wider audience than ever before. It was the triumph of laughter. The fact that the King resorted to suppression, that is, to buying up the plate and copyright from the print seller, in an attempt to curb the output of unfavourable

prints<sup>55</sup>, proved the impact of the satirical production that daily poured out from the print shops. The King bought up plates from caricaturists such as George Cruikshank and Lewis Marks, and from publishers such as William Benbow, but that strategy did not produce immediate results, as they often received the money and continued publishing satirical prints of the King.

While in radical periodicals George IV was much spared, in satirical prints, broadsides and verse satires the King and his ministers Liverpool, Eldon, Sidmouth, Castlereagh, and Wellington (who had entered the Cabinet in 1818 as Master of the Ordnance) were constantly lampooned. Satiric laughter shared with the more sentimental and melodramatic versions of the Affair in ballads and songs the realm of public opinion as popular-political audience. These elements of popular literature, art, and culture<sup>56</sup> are often fused with the appropriation of erudite sources.

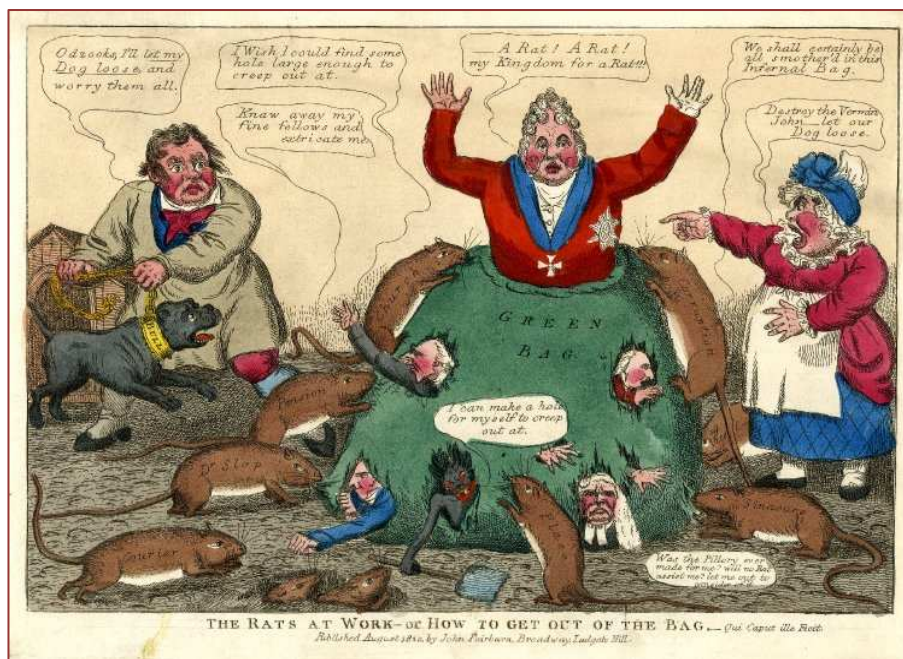


Fig. 27 J. Fairburn (pub.), *The Rats at Work – Or How to Get Out of the Bag – Qui Caput ille Fecit*, 1820  
© Trustees of the British Museum

<sup>55</sup> George IV spent more than £2,000 trying to suppress unfavourable prints during the Queen Caroline affair (Godfrey, 1984: 20). Receipts of bills in the RA, Windsor Castle, indicate that payments were made (Registrar of the RA, Round Tower). Attempts at suppression of unpleasant prints were not new. Hill (1965: 119-123) notes that in 1804 the Prince of Wales bought a print by Gillray, *L'Assemblée Nationale or-Grand Co-operative Meeting at St. Anne's Hill*, for a large sum of money to remove it from public view. It may have been the first of many prints bought up by the Prince and King during his life. George IV was also a collector of prints. Information about this activity can be found in *Princes as Patrons* (Evans, 1998).

<sup>56</sup> Based on Ledger's (2004: 588-9) interpretation, the epithet 'popular culture' refers to the customs and traditions of the early nineteenth-century political entity of the 'people', as defined in Chapter Two (68-9).

This cross-fertilization can be found in parodies of Shakespeare's plays such as *How to Get Un-Married,—Ay, There's the Rub!*, (BMC 13770; NPG<sup>57</sup>), a parody of *Hamlet*, and in *The Rats at Work – Or How to Get Out of the Bag – Qui Caput ille Fecit*, a parody of *Richard III*, both published by John Fairburn. In *The Rats at Work* (Fig. 27), published in August, George IV is in a green bag, holding up his arms, exclaiming 'A Rat! A Rat! My Kingdom for a Rat!!!' Castlereagh, Sidmouth, Liverpool, and Eldon are also in the bag screaming for the help of rats. Each rat has an inscription: *Church and Corruption; Pension, Place, Sinacure* [sic] and *Dr. Slop, the Courier, and Vice C—* [Vice-Chancellor Leach, the instigator of the Milan Commission].

If Skakespeare's quotation provides the rhetorical framework, symbolism charges this print politically. Rats, the 'vermin' that corrupt the state and its organs, and John Bull's angry bulldog, anxious to get at the rats in the bag, bear strong political meaning. John Bull says: 'Odzooks, I'll let my Dog loose and worry them all'. Mrs Bull shouts: 'Destroy the Vermin John – let our Dog loose'. It is a message for the need of political change. The notorious 'Green Bag' is now a clear symbol of political corruption, featured in numerous satirical prints.

In *The Caldron Or Shakespeare Travestie* (Fig. 28), also published by John Fairburn in August, the composition of the image suggests that the 'trial' of the Queen is an infernal conspiracy. The characters are hellish witches and devils. One of the devils, dark, eyeless, and winged throws the contents of an 'infernal Green Bag' into a big cauldron in flames, named 'Cast—gh & Co. The three witches are Liverpool, Sidmouth and Castlereagh, who also contribute to the infernal cauldron and chant witches' curses. George IV is Macbeth, but unlike Shakespeare's character, he does not defy fate, he is frightened by it: 'Tell me ye d—n'd infernal Hags of Night, shall Fr-k reign?'

This question comments on the alleged fear of the King of losing the lawsuit against the Queen, thereby allowing succession to pass on to his brother Frederick, the Duke of York<sup>58</sup>. A small, grotesque, blue devil avoids a direct answer, by saying: 'All hail Macbeth! Thou'rt now the cause of Laughter'. These words have the effect of breaking the atmosphere of tragedy created by the graphic representation, thus giving way to satiric

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<sup>57</sup> Image: National Portrait Gallery D1386:

<http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portraitLarge/mw35517/How-to-get-Un-married---Ay-theres-the-Rub?search=sp&sText=How+to+Get+UnMarried%2C%E2%80%94Ay%2C+There%E2%80%99s+the+Rub%21&firstRun=true&rNo=0> (accessed 19/04/10).

<sup>58</sup> However, as the Duke of York died before George IV, in 1827, the succession passed on to William IV, the third son of George III.

laughter. They suggest that George IV does not possess the tragic greatness of Macbeth. He is a ridiculous figure to be laughed at. He is Shakespeare travestie.

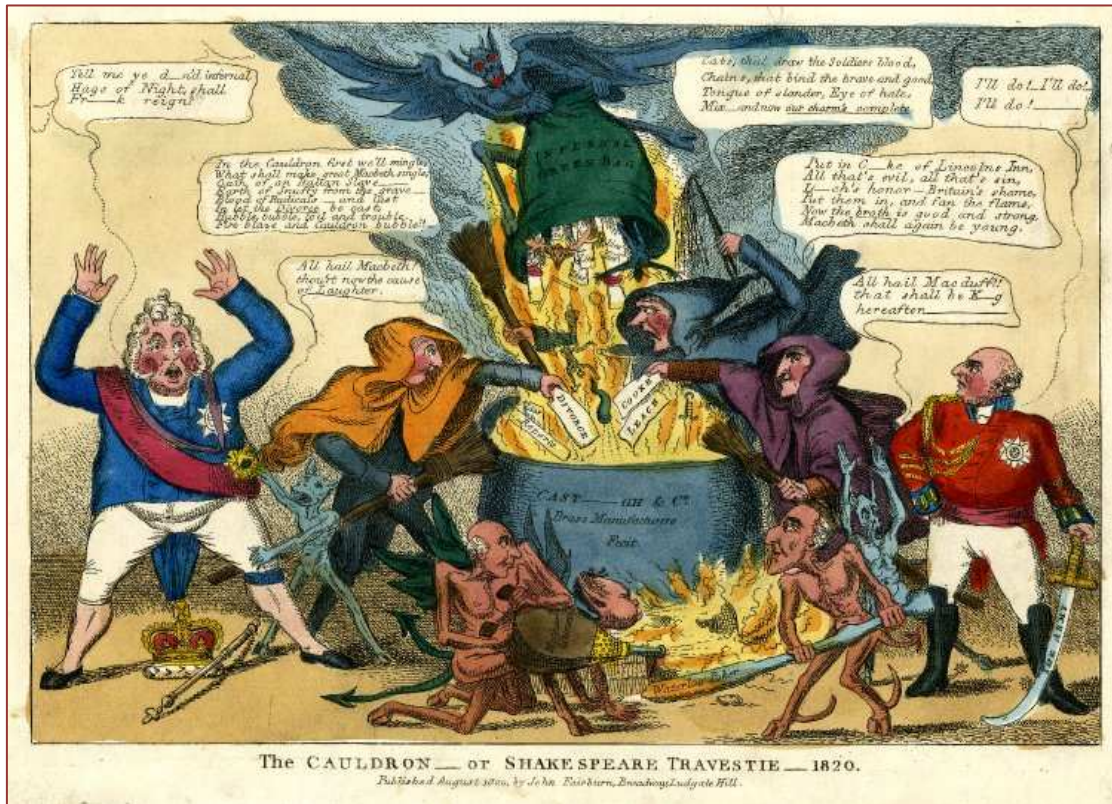


Fig. 28 J. Fairburn (pub.), *The Caldroun Or Shakespeare Travestie*, 1820  
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In *A Scene from Don Giovanni* (Fig. 29), published on 23 July by H. Fores, Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni* provides the framework of reference for satirical mockery. The main satirical effect originates in the comparison of George IV, fat, ridiculously dressed and caught unawares by his wife, to the debauched Don Giovanni of Mozart's opera. Classical works may be reinterpreted by satire and appropriated as common, classless heritage.

Satirical prints thus combine 'high' and 'low' art forms for parody and ironic comment on political enemies. However, the roots of satirical laughter lie in the elements of popular culture. One of them is the depiction of rulers as infants, a device that became popular in 1820, especially in broadsides<sup>59</sup>. This device conveys a type of down-to-earth,

<sup>59</sup> Two broadsides were published by James Catnach, *The Royal Cot, Or The Great Babe Taken Ill* and *A Nurse wanted for the Great Babe* (George, 1952: 68). The print *The R—l Great Baby among the Roses* (BMC 13867), which can be considered a sequel, is the frontispiece of a verse satire, *Peep into the Cottage at Windsor A; or, Love among the Roses, A Poem...* by Roger Hunter, published in September by W. Benbow, as aforementioned (198). However, the first satire to show the Regent as an infant dates from 1812; it is Cruikshank's *The Political Medley or Things as they were in June 1812* (George (1949: xxviii), where the Prince is led by Lady Hertford in political manoeuvring.

‘unphilosophic’ message that is at the heart of Regency radical satire. Additionally, the satiric device of reduction has the obvious political benefit of turning the political enemy into a ‘lilliputian midget’ (Wood, 1994: 225). The depiction of George IV as a ‘Great Babe’ debased the King, both as an individual and a monarch.



Fig. 29 S. Fores, *A Scene from Don Giovanni*, 1820  
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This device is explored in *The Cradle Hymn* (Fig. 30), the heading of a broadside etched by Robert Cruikshank, possibly published by C. E. Pritchard in July. George IV is an infant, sleeping in a cradle. The actions carried out around the figure of the King lead to its desacralisation. Here, laughing at the King was built around the representation of ugliness and even of scatological details: Castlereagh is by the fire drying a cloth, possibly a nappy, and Canning takes away a smelly chamber pot. The infant is tended by an old woman, possibly Sidmouth, and two young women. In the broadside that accompanies the print, Sidmouth rocks the cradle and sings a lullaby – a mockery of the Affair.

It begins ‘*Hush! GREAT BABE! Lie still and slumber / Troops of Lancers guard thy bed*’. The last two stanzas link the King’s character to his politics:

Hold the Press in close submission  
Keep the Radicals in awe;  
Call Reform the worst Sedition,  
Yet, observe the FORMS of Law!

Thus you'll pass your time securely,  
And your baubles all retain;  
I shall aspirate demurely  
*Heavens! What a GLORIOUS Reign!*

The popularity of the theme reached radical periodicals. Carlile referred to this print in the *R*, commenting on the negative developments for the Government of the lawsuit against the Queen: ‘they have parodied the cradle hymn in different ways for the amusement of the royal infant and even a fine dressed doll ceases to allay its tears, and fears, and vexations’. Next, Carlile derided the Government: ‘such is the state of the English government: never was it so disgraced before, with a mixture of despotism, dotage, infancy, imbecility, and childish petulance’ (vol. iv: 5). Carlile’s commentary draws attention to the echo of many satirical prints in the more directly political radical press. They were also part of the radical counter-discourse.



Fig. 30 R. Cruikshank, *The Cradle Hymn*, 1820  
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Animalisation was another element of popular culture present in satirical prints during the Affair. It was one of the most insulting devices. George IV is a great dirty boar lying on straw on the frontispiece of a lithographed broadside *A Touch of the Sublime!!! Or The Pell Mell Boar, and the Powers of Brandy!* (BMC 13868), by S. Vowles, published at the end of September by J. Griffin. Castlereagh empties a bottle of brandy into an overflowing crease and Sidmouth squirts the animal with his clyster-pipe. Castlereagh says: ‘Friend Sid – the Augean Stables were nothing to clense, compared to this Styee!!!’ Sidmouth: ‘Aye, my worthy Fellow Servant, you will find the Styee, your Masterpiece! And



*with all my care, I can't make this Beast appear decent, he is so covered with filth!!'* Filth was a metaphor for corruption, whose ultimate victims were the people: 'One Mister Bull / Pays dear for Brandy-Swill!' The most damning consequence of this type of satirical attack lies in the 'synecdoche effect' through which monarchy is inescapably impugned by the ridicule placed on the monarch.

During the enquiry in the House of Lords, satirical mockery focused on the Government ministers. One of the sharpest arguments against them consisted of the accusation of incitement to perjury. The decision of the prosecution to base their case on the testimony of Italian witnesses supplied satirists with an embarrassment of riches. On the one hand, the Italian witnesses proved incapable of providing credible evidence, which was endlessly ridiculed; on the other hand, satirists did not miss the opportunity to present the Government, and the King himself, as suspects of having instigated them to commit perjury. In *The 'Green Bag' Hobby to Frighten the Innocent, Or My Jockey the Order of the Day!!!* (BMC 13985), published by Langham at the end of the enquiry in November, King and ministers are represented as the symbols of an established, corrupted authority which breaks the law, instead of guaranteeing its rule. George IV is riding a velocipede whose seat has the shape of a 'Green Bag'; he asks Majocchi, whose head is comically coming out of the bag: 'Do you know all you have to swear?' Majocchi answers: 'Non mi Ricordo', the famous catch-phrase. Behind is Sidmouth with his clyster pipe. He says: 'We shall loose the Trial because these Italian Devils cannot recollect one day what they are told to swear the other'. Castlereagh says: 'I wish they would take me instead I think I could manage it'.

The prospect of the defeat of the prosecution inspired further depictions of King and ministers in panic fearful, not of the Queen, but of the people. In the print *The Brightest Star in the State ... Or...A Peep out of a Royal Window*, published by Benbow, the assumption that the highest positions of state are occupied by the best and the bravest is undermined by the depiction of the established authority in cowardly postures. George IV is at Carlton House with his ministers. Eldon asks: 'Cast—rag (a sneering pun), what's that noise about Q—n for Ever Tower Guns Firing. Thank G—d I'm here. For it's a knell that would summon us to H—ll'. Castlereagh, on the left, says: 'Hang the people, what a riot they make. Thank God I'm safe at home, they surely won't dare drag me out of C—n H—e'. Liverpool, on the right: 'Devil take the Bill, they want to make me pay it at Sight on Tower Hill but I should have run my head against a block for they would have axe'd me

about it which I shouldn't like'<sup>60</sup>. Prints like this one bore a clear radical subtext because they aimed at influencing the common people.

The ultimate satirical defiance offered by the failure of the prosecution to prove the allegations of adultery consisted of ridiculing ministers for their alleged incompetence. In *A Bottle of Smoak or A Song of Sixpence* (BMC 13849), designed and published by John Marshall, the failed plans of the ministers are symbolised by a large bottle inscribed *lies* and *non mi ricordo*, out of which rise clouds of smoke: 'Before the bag was open'd the Ministers 'gan to sing / Oh! Here we have a dainty dish to set before the King. / But when the bag was open'd the Lords began to stare, / To see their precious evidence all vanish into air'.



Fig. 31 J. Fairburn (pub.), *Boadicea, Queen of Britain, Overthrowing her Enemies, Humbly Dedicated to Caroline Queen of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1820  
© Trustees of the British Museum

The above lines allude to a pamphlet satire attributed to William Hone, *The Green Bag: A Dainty Dish to Set Before a King; A Ballad of the Nineteenth-Century*, by the

<sup>60</sup> According to Thomas (1969: ix), Benbow was prosecuted for libel in 1821 by the Constitutional Association for this print, but the case was eventually dropped.

Author of *The Political A, Apple Pie*, which presents the lawsuit against the Queen as a conspiracy by the ministers against both the Queen and the King, and not as originated in the King's desire to eschew his wife. They echo the constitutional theory that 'the king can do no wrong', which sometimes appeared in a few pamphlet satires, and more generally in radical periodicals. Richard Carlile was an exception among radical journalists, as he repeatedly wrote in the *R* that the theory that a King can do no wrong made no more sense. In the 'Letter to the Queen', published on 1 December, he called it a 'ridiculous maxim' (vol. iv: 505).

However, in satirical prints and verse satires the representation of George IV as an active player in the prosecution against the Queen is clearly the rule. In *Boadicea, Queen of Britain* (Fig. 31), the Queen, crowned, rides a chariot of white horses (symbol of the Hanoverian dynasty) over her accusers, including the King whose crown lies on the ground. The scene is a battlefield and the people, marching behind the Queen, hoist a banner, inscribed 'Victory', topped with the cap of liberty, whereas her enemies' banner is inscribed 'Defeat'. The Queen symbolises 'Justice'. The graphic representation associates Caroline to the legendary image of the Celtic Queen Boadicea, or Boudica, who, riding high in her chariot, fought bravely against the Romans in A.D. 61. This print relates the political demands of the radicals to the powerful image of two women.

In the broadside *The Broken Crown, Or, The Disasters of a Green Bag Chief!!!* (BMC 14006), etched by Robert Cruikshank and published in November/December, the metaphor of the broken crown conveys the idea that monarchy/monarch need reformation. The King and his ministers, worried, are trying to mend a broken crown. Sidmouth holding his usual clyster-pipe, says: '*There seems to have been a flaw in it for some years it only required a slight tap to do all the mischief*', implying that the decadence of the monarch/monarchy are older than the present crisis. George IV, weeping, tells Eldon: '*Cant Sid my Tool and L—r—pool, Some how contrive to mend it*'. Eldon: '*Dash my Wig if I know what to do! my head's in Chancery*'. Papers lying near Sidmouth's chair establish the link between the much-needed change and the radical agenda: *A Blister for the Radicals if they Kick up a Row; A Gagging Bandage, with a pot of Poison for the Q*, together with the words *Filth* and *Dirt*. The following words by John Bull, who is seated on a bale inscribed *Knowledge is Power*, show that the radicals used the Queen Caroline affair to publicise their claim for parliamentary reform:

I think the following prescription would be the best Cement, a handful of reformation; a large portion of the abolition of Sinicures [sic], a ladle full of the reduction of Taxes, with a plentiful solution of the Oil of Just Claims, and attention to the wants of an industrious part of the Community, would more safely ensure a permanent union with the separate pieces than all the cement or steel lozengers [sic] in the world.

Another broadside, *A Loyal Glee, As Sung By Messrs. S—d—th, L—rp—l And C—tl—gh* (BMC 14019), published in December, bears an equally radical message. The title page engraving is by Robert Cruikshank. Three ministers, Liverpool, Sidmouth and Castlereagh sing outside Carlton House. Liverpool and Sidmouth (with his symbolic clyster-pipe) have gouty legs. The King and Lady Conyngham watch from a window. She says: ‘*Y’our M—y how well they Chord, it is like one Person*’. John Bull changes the meaning of the word ‘chord’: ‘*They may Chord to please his M— y but dang me If I don’t wish the Three was in One Cord*’. It comments on the delivery of a loyal address to the King by the Lord Mayor with six Aldermen on 8 December.

This loyal address was the response to another address to the King presented by the Corporation of the City of London on the previous day deploring the ‘mockery of justice’ in the lawsuit against the Queen. It was accompanied by a petition demanding the removal of the ministry (George, 1952: 148). This possibility was contemplated by the King himself at this time (Aspinall, 1938: 387-93). This type of action/reaction attests to the vitality and simultaneously to the literary character of the agitation.

As the second reading of the Bill on 6 November gave a majority of just 28 votes to the prosecution, satirical attacks on the King and Government increased their intentional symbolic meaning as discursive assault. Alarm sounded when the Queen began to appear in satirical prints, illustrated broadsides, and addresses sitting on the throne and, most importantly, associated to political change. In the anonymous print published by John Fairburn *The R—l Hen and the Dunghill Cock*, the Queen appears on the throne, crowned by ‘*Manus populi*’<sup>61</sup>. There was apprehension in loyalist circles about the future of the monarchy.

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<sup>61</sup> Hunt (2003: 283, fn. 164).



Fig. 32 J. Fairburn (pub.), *Richard Coeur de Diable!!*, 1820  
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The King himself feared for the future of his reign. On 10 November he told Sidmouth that ‘he had serious thoughts of retiring to Hanover and leaving this Kingdom to the Duke of York’ (Aspinall, 1947: 40). In effect, the dropping of the Bill of Pains and Penalties was associated in satirical prints and radical periodicals to the downfall of the King himself, viewed as the punishment for his unmanly conduct towards his wife and Queen of England.

Dream visions were often a form of allegoric representation of punishment and of its cathartic function. These satirical devices were used in textual satire, as seen above in ‘Trial of a King, in the Similitude of a Dream’ (141-3), and more frequently still in graphic satire. In the anonymous print *Richard Coeur de Diable!!* (Fig. 32) published in October by J. Fairburn, George IV starts awake with a vision of his parents reprimanding him, while his fall is being plotted by his ministers. the King’s words ‘By holy Paul—shadows to night have struck more terror to the soul of Richard, than can the substance of ten thousand foes, arm’d all in proof and led by Caroline!!!’ suggest that he fears the ghost of his parents even more than his wife.

The censure of the King’s character is signalled in the title, by opposing the great individual courage, which both fact and legend concede to King Richard I, dubbed *Coeur*

*de Lion* (the Lion-Hearted), to the weakness of George IV, a king fearful of ghosts, and in danger of being betrayed by his own ministers.



Fig. 33 W. Benbow (pub.), *The Degraded Honoured & the Honoured Degraded – or the Black Dogs under G-v-t well Dressed and turned out*, c. 1820  
© Trustees of the British Museum

The ghost of George III, haunting his son and expressing judgement on his moral and political failings, appears in several prints in 1820. Another example is the print *His Most Gracious Majesty Hum IVth & His Ministers Going to Play the Devil with the Satirists*, briefly described in Chapter Two (74-5).

The downfall of King and Government is crudely represented in *The Degraded Honoured & the Honoured Degraded – or the Black Dogs under G-v-t well Dressed and Turned out* (Fig. 33), published by William Benbow. In this print, John Bull whips a pack of black dogs with the heads of the king and the ministers, who are paying their homage to the Queen, depicted on the throne and wearing the crown<sup>62</sup>. On a parallel, surrealistic dimension, two devils fly over the scene, one of them possibly mounted by the king and a mistress, the other by a skeleton holding a rope with a hanged bishop. On the right, ‘Green Bags’ hang from a nail on the wall.

<sup>62</sup> There is some similarity of graphic vocabularies between this one and the print *The Recruiting Serjeant or Britannia’s Happy Prospect* (Fig. 11: 171), by George Townshend, which highlights the continuity of satirical traditions.

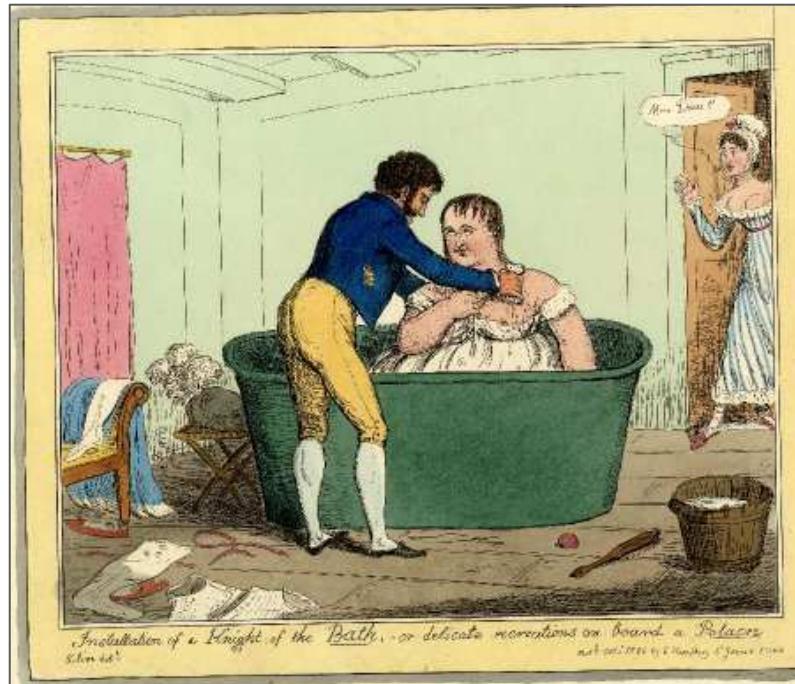


Fig. 34 G. Humphrey (pub.), *Installation of a Knight of the Bath, or Delicate Recreations on Board a Polacre*, 1820  
© Trustees of the British Museum

By linking hopes of political change to the Queen's case, the dropping of the Bill in reality took the sting out of the agitation on her behalf, instead of favouring it. Caroline also sensed defeat. In November, she complained that 'no one, in fact, care [sic] for me, and this business has been more cared for as a political affair, dan [sic] as de [sic] cause of a poor forlorn woman' (Jennings, 1885: 180).

This was the opportunity that the loyalists longed for to respond to the popular movement on behalf of the Queen. In October and November, George Cruikshank etches three plates 'Printed at the Expense of the Loyal Association' for the *Loyalist's Magazine*<sup>63</sup>, in which the Queen is viewed as the leader of the radicals. In October, George Humphrey publishes the print *Installation of a Knight of the Bath, or Delicate Recreations on Board a Polacre* (Fig. 34), showing a scene of intimacy between the Queen and Bergami.

Loyalist counter-propaganda combines the rousing of fears at the alleged alliance between the Queen and the radicals with attacks on the private character of the Queen. The Queen's depravity is the theme of a considerable number of satirical prints by Theodore

<sup>63</sup> Original title: *The Loyalist and Anti-Radical*. They were *The Radical Ladder* (BMC 13895), *The Funeral Pile* (BMC 13902), and *The Mother Red Cap Public House, in Opposition to the King's Head* (BMC 13975). The 'Mother Red Cap' was a well-known tavern in Tottenham Court Road (George, 1952: 130).

Lane, published by Humphrey at the end of 1820 and throughout the year 1821, even after her death.

However, not all loyalist prints denigrate Caroline. Some try to rouse compassion for the suffering of the King, and indignation at the rejoicing of the Queen. This melodramatic vocabulary is highlighted in the twin prints *Moments of Pain* (BMC 13988) and *Moments of Pleasure* (BMC 13989), possibly by Theodore Lane, for George Humphrey. An ill and melancholic King, whose pulse is being felt by a worried doctor, Sidmouth, is in striking contrast to a satisfied Queen seated on a sofa receiving many addresses of popular rejoice at the dropping of the Bill.

Theodore Hook's Sunday paper *John Bull* is often held responsible for having turned the tide onto the side of the King with its scandalous prose and also with its squibs. From January to August 1821, Theodore Lane designed prints for Humphrey in which the Queen continued to be defamed. After the Queen's death on August 7, Humphrey displayed forty-two anti-Queenite prints on his shop-window, which marked the end of his campaign (George, 1952: xxviii).



Fig. 35 W. Benbow (pub.), *The Stool of Repentance; The Scorn of the World*, 1821  
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On 22 January 1821, sixty-five addresses to the Queen are still presented, and attacks on the King in the press continue, but the popular agitation in favour of Caroline had ended. *The Stool of Repentance; The Scorn of the World* (Fig. 35), published on 10 January 1821 by Benbow, reflects the pessimistic feeling. This print is a mockery of the Affair by the four Continents of the world. Britannia is humiliated and the King, his Government, and the Queen are to blame for the torrent of corruption polluting Westminster, the centre of political power.

*Horrida Bella, Pains and Penalties versus Truth and Justice* (BMC 13948-72), a verse satire printed by Benbow and published by George Humphrey in November, narrates the Queen's Affair following the letters of the alphabet. In the BMC description, Dorothy George observes that this is an exceptionally well informed satire. The Government is depicted as subservient to the King and not the reverse, as often erroneously happens, and the part played by Lord Stewart (half brother of Lord Castlereagh), as Ambassador in Vienna, in collecting evidence against the Queen is also mentioned under letter *E*, for 'Embassy'.



Fig. 36 G. Cruikshank, *Nobody Going to be Punished! Nobody Going to Be Hung!!! !!!*, 1821  
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The reference to the printing press under the letter *P* (13963) is especially significant, as the liberty of the press was a constant theme of the Affair in radical periodicals and pamphlet satires: '*P*, for the Press that exposes the view / which tyrants in despite of reason

pursue'. A placard reads: *'the Liberty of the Press is like the air we breath, if we have it not, we die'*. This satire is one of a number of satires which, from this month, present a summing up of the Affair, which suggests the feeling that it was drawing towards the end.

The last satirical print known to date about the Affair, *Nobody Going to be Punished! Noboby Going to Be Hung!!! !!!* (Fig. 36), is enigmatic. It was designed by George Cruikshank and published by John Fairburn in September 1821, the month that followed the death of the Queen. It is a satire on the verdicts on the deaths of two men at the funeral procession of the Queen<sup>64</sup>.

Two lifeguards, represented as 'Nobody'<sup>65</sup>, stand on the foreground and one man, hanged and looking like a lifeguard, is seen in the background. In the foreground, one 'Nobody' with his back turned to the viewer is in the pillory, the other beneath a gallows. The latter has a noose around his neck and his hands are tied. He appears to shrug his shoulders, as he speaks the words of the title. These may mean either that a 'Nobody' (the traditional scapegoat for any misdeed) is going to be punished, or that no one is going to be punished. In either case, the message is pessimistic. As there was no punishment for a crime, justice was not served. The idea that this conclusion may be applied to the Affair as a whole is what makes the message of this print enigmatic.

## **Pamphlet Satire – William Hone**

*Arise, O Satire! – tune thy useful song,  
Silence grows criminal, when crimes grow strong;  
Of meaner vice, and villains, sing no more,  
But Monsters crown'd, and Crime enrobed with Power!  
The Right Divine of Kings to Govern Wrong  
William Hone, 1821.*

Pamphlet satire was a well-liked sub-literary genre during the Queen Caroline affair. Some textual satires rivalled satirical prints in the popular esteem. According to J. R.

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<sup>64</sup> The coroner's inquest on the deaths of the two men resulted in verdicts of manslaughter and wilful murder, against an unknown Guardsman, which meant that crimes were committed but no one was found guilty of them.

<sup>65</sup> This print was acquired by the BM in 2010, as mentioned earlier in this chapter. Two other prints on this subject, also published by Fairburn in September 1821, already figured in the *BMC*. They are *The Horse-Councillor—Obtaining a Verdict! Or, Killing No Murder!!* (*BMC* 14249) by G. Cruikshank, and *The Man-Slaughter-Men! Or a Horse Laugh at the Law of the Land* (*BMC* 14250), possibly also by G. Cruikshank. The logical sequence in the treatment of the subject points to the above illustration being the last published. According to George (*BMC*, vol. ix: 487), this representation of 'Nobody' dates at least from 1600. See descriptions of prints depicting 'Nobody' in the *BMC* (nos. 12438-51, vol. ix: 486-8).

Jackson's incomplete list *Annals of English Verse, 1770-1835* (Dyer, 1997: 12), over 60 volumes of satirical verse were published in 1820, against a total of 201 volumes of poetry. The average cheaper price of pamphlet satires in relation to satirical prints<sup>66</sup> and their relatively quick production lent themselves to prompt and popular political comment.

William Hone (1780-1842) was an autodidact parodist, publisher, bookseller, antiquarian, and journalist who in collaboration with George Cruikshank (1792-1878) authored some of the most widely circulated and influential satires printed between 1815 and 1822. Most satires were anonymous or written under pseudonym<sup>67</sup> and this was also true of Hone's satires. Even those whose authorship he acknowledged in *Facetiae and Miscellanies*<sup>68</sup> (Hone, 1827) – a collection of his acknowledged satires – were not signed by him.

Hone was a prolific writer. Anne Bowden suggests in her doctoral thesis (Bowden, 1975) that he may have written, edited/or published about 228 titles, nearly ninety per cent of which in the period 1815-21<sup>69</sup>. Until Rickword (1971), Bowden (1975), Smith (1984), Wood (1994), Grimes (1997; 1998<sup>70</sup>; 2000; 2003; 2007), Marsh (1998), amongst others, rescued him from oblivion, Hone was a marginalized figure of early nineteenth-century English culture.

The Hone-Cruikshank partnership was consistent and productive. Both shared rejection of the policies of Government, namely the attacks upon the liberties of the people and the restrictions on the freedom of expression imposed by the gagging laws of 1819. This common ground, which Patten (1992: 151) partly attributes to Hone's political influence, was combined with a keen sense of what would catch the interest of the public. The Hone-Cruikshank partnership took part in the apogee of satire which invaded the English public sphere during the Queen Caroline affair.

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<sup>66</sup> Most pamphlet satires cost one shilling, whereas the price of prints varied, according to size, colouring, or detail. Plain prints usually cost one shilling, but coloured ones cost two shillings (Baker, 2005: 18).

<sup>67</sup> For a brief discussion of anonymity in this period, see Alves (1995), 'Anonymity and Political Intervention: William Godwin as an Anonymous Author'.

<sup>68</sup> 'I am not ashamed of my offspring, and am responsible for what the poor things do, and it is not pleasant to hear their parentage ascribed to others; therefore, I collect them together, in my paternal character' (Hone, 1827: vii).

<sup>69</sup> Grimes (2007) considers Hone 'perhaps the best-selling writer in England during the post-Peterloo and Queen Caroline affair periods'. For Epstein (1994: 35), Hone was 'the greatest radical satirist of the Regency era'. Hone's materials (correspondence, drafts of parodies, and other texts) are held by several libraries and archives in the UK and the USA, but the largest collection is housed in the British Library (the 'Hone Papers' and 'Additional Manuscripts').

<sup>70</sup> The William Hone Bio Text (Grimes, 1998) is a thoroughly researched web-site containing part of Hone's biography, a fully annotated bibliography and e-text archive.

Despite Hone's initial reluctance to join the Queenites – his imprisonment and trials in 1817 had left indelible financial and psychological marks – the Hone-Cruikshank partnership made some of the most significant contributions to the print production of that year. However, it did not survive it. For Hone, it was his last overt and serious political commitment. For Cruikshank, it marked a shift in his career; henceforth, he would dedicate himself predominantly to the more profitable business of book illustration.

With the pen and the press, Hone's was a creative response to the Affair. Although he also wrote and published non-satirical texts supporting the Queen<sup>71</sup>, by far his most relevant contribution was satirical. As a satirist, Hone used the 'delight in unrespectability' (Wood, 1994) of satiric laughter as a counter-discourse of resistance to the power of state summoned against the Queen. The attitudes of contempt rather than fear, of anti-authoritarianism rather than deference towards the established authority, characteristic of satiric discourse, were often intertwined with the theme of the power of the press, a most cherished theme by Hone, as by radicals in general.

Hone's satire combined tradition with innovation. The popular-literary traditions of eighteenth-century almanacs, press advertisements, children's books, chapbooks, nursery rhymes, showman's notices, and playbills furnished the structural and symbolic frames of reference needed to make the satires easily understood by a popular audience. Being eminently parodic, the long-standing traditions of liturgical and trial parody, the official language and ceremony of the church and the court provided Hone's satire with rhetorical and symbolic tools. With those tools, he successfully undermined the state authority in particular, and the aristocratic culture in general, enshrined in that very language and ceremony. Hone's parodic satire included literary models (Defoe, Marvell, Cowper, Sterne, or Pope) but it was not confined to them.

Hone combined these heterogeneous sources of satiric discourse in new ways. Trial parody, freak-show parody, or nursery-rhyme parody were often combined with advertisements in an imaginative and fertile exploitation of the resources of print culture. The advertisement *Sale Extraordinary* is an example among many. His most famous parody, *The Political House That Jack Built* (Hone, 1971: 35-58) is advertised there as "Freehold Public Houses, divided into lots for the convenience of purchasers [...]"

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<sup>71</sup> Hone wrote *The Form of Prayer* (Hone, 1820a), and *The King's Treatment of the Queen, Shortly Stated to the People of England* (Hone, 1820e). Although the former parodies the practice of issuing 'a form of prayer' to celebrate a major event in the monarchy, the tone is not satirical; in the same year, he published the *Queen's Letter to the King* (Hone, 1820b); in 1821, Hone wrote two further pamphlets – *To the King, from the Author of The King's Treatment of the Queen* (Hone, 1821d), and *An Accurate Report of the Trial of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Caroline* (Hone, 1821b).

comprising a Capital well accustomed bustling free Public House, most desirably situated [...] called by the Name of the ‘House that Jack Built’” (Hone, 1971: 105). The audience would immediately understand the double meanings. Another advertisement mentioned the ‘Imperial Palaverment’, with its ‘House of Tops’ and ‘House of Bottoms’ (Hone, 1822: 56). The thorough account of the sources of Hone’s satire in Wood’s 1994 *Radical Satire and Print Culture* also draws attention to the influence of the propaganda of the Wilkes affair and the late eighteenth-century Westminster elections, as well as of the trials of Thomas Spence (1794, 1801) and Daniel I. Eaton (1812).

In the introduction to *Facetiae and Miscellanies* (Hone, 1827), Hone indirectly referred to the twofold sources of his satires – the popular and the erudite: ‘they savour somewhat, perhaps, of the ancient spirit of my country and of converse with books rather than men’. His long-standing interest in the literature of parody is also suggested: ‘the reading I am familiar with may be inferred from *The Political Showman*’, which he confessed cost him ‘more labour and was less popular than my other pieces’ (Hone, 1827: vii-viii).

Hence, Hone’s lifelong passion for books enabled him to resort to erudite sources for the texts of some satires. That was the case with *The Right Divine of Kings to Govern Wrong* (Hone, 1821a), which is an adaptation of Defoe’s *De Jure Divino*, and whose title was taken from Pope’s mock-poem *Dunciad*.<sup>72</sup> The same erudite sources are found in the satires *The Political Showman – at Home! Exhibiting his Cabinet of Curiosities and Creatures – All Alive!*<sup>73</sup> (Hone, 1971: 269-97) and *A Slap at Slop and the Bridge Street Gang* (Hone, 1822), the latter clearly influenced by Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy* in the use of nicknaming and cursing.

From the point of view of early nineteenth-century print culture, Hone’s satires represented a breakthrough. In *Aspersions Answered* (1824: 49), Hone claimed that his ‘little pieces’ had created ‘a new era in the history of publication’ by creating a pattern – engraving on wood instead of copperplate (Wardroper, 1997: 7) and type on a single page – which enabled the production of cheap illustrated texts. Hone adapted the combination of text with image on a single page, introduced between 1807 and 1809 by John Harris in the

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<sup>72</sup> ‘May you, may Cam [the river that flows through Cambridge], and Isis [name of the Thames as it flows through Oxford] preach it long! The RIGHT DIVINE of Kings to govern wrong’.

<sup>73</sup> George-Louis Leclerc’s (Comte de Buffon) *Histoire Naturelle de l’Homme*, and Oliver Goldsmith’s 1774 *History of the Earth and Animated Nature* were the textual sources of this satire (Wood, 1994: 182).

production of children's books<sup>74</sup>, to his satirical pamphlets and created the pattern for cheap literature (Wood, 1994: 222-4). He adopted this innovation in the 1819 satire *The Political House that Jack Built* with great success, and used it again in 1820 in two equally successful pamphlet satires *The Queen's Matrimonial Ladder, A National Toy* (Hone, 1971:167-85) and in *Non Mi Ricordo!* (Hone, 1971: 193-205) both composed during the Queen Caroline affair in partnership with George Cruikshank<sup>75</sup>.

*The Queen's Matrimonial Ladder, A National Toy* combines satire and melodrama in an allegory of the royal marriage. The satiric depiction of the King in some of the best designs by George Cruikshank is accompanied by the melodramatic account of the sufferings of the Queen at the hands of a cruel husband. The theme of the wronged wife reached one of its most successful versions in this text, this being the most popular satirical pamphlet printed after *The Political House*. It was published in early August 1820 and ran to forty-four editions in the four months after its publication, having also come out in two French editions (Wood, 1994: 172).

Like most pamphlet satires from *The Political House* onwards, *The Queen's Matrimonial Ladder* inspired numerous loyalist imitations (Wood, 1994: 172; Bowden, 1975, 320-2)<sup>76</sup>. In Hone's own account, the source of *The Queen's Matrimonial Ladder* is to be found in the field of children's play<sup>77</sup>:

I wandered off towards Pentonville, and stopped and looked absently into the window of a little fancy shop – there was a toy, 'The Matrimonial Ladder'. I saw at once what I could do with that, and went home and wrote 'The Queen's Matrimonial Ladder' (Rolleston, 1853: 41-2).

In this satire, Hone's discursive attack contains no novelty. His arguments are even disappointing if compared to the rhetorical inventiveness of his liturgical parodies. This relative orthodoxy is compensated by structural originality. The narrative framework of naïve play and children's toys imaginatively conveys the gradual construction of

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<sup>74</sup> Ruwe (2003) contributed a chapter to Steven Jones's *The Satiric Eye*, which accounts for the innovative production of children's books by Harris and links their satiric energy to political parodies.

<sup>75</sup> The importance of Hone's innovation was recognized. The *Examiner* of 24 December 1820 wrote: 'To Mr. Hone is England indebted for originating this important branch of publication' (Hackwood, 1912: 219).

<sup>76</sup> *The Radical Ladder* (Wright, 1820) was one of them. It was published in October 1820 and printed for the 'Loyal Association' to *The Loyalist and Anti-Radical Magazine*. It is a longer text (24 pages, whereas Hone's satire has 18), and it has only one illustration on the frontispiece, by George Cruikshank, in which the Queen, followed by the radicals, is at the top of the ladder setting fire to the crown, the head of the whole political system. George Cruikshank's varied political allegiances are the object of some scholarly discussion, as briefly noted in the Introduction.

<sup>77</sup> The metaphor of the 'ladder' had already been used by G. Cruikshank in an advertisement, *Fortune's Ladder*, based on children's ladder toys, produced for Bish (a lottery contractor), long before his collaboration with Hone. Wood (1994: 174) finds it strange that Hone did not mention Cruikshank's contribution to the satire.

allegorical meaning, while it also proves an ingenious basis to undermine the seriousness and self-importance of power and of kingship in particular. The title word 'ladder' is an efficient metaphor of the Queen's matrimonial woes since her arrival in England in 1795, and each 'step' of the ladder (section or 'scene' of the parody) is the account of her ill-treatment by the King.

Formally, each section has a half-page illustration by George Cruikshank, with the title word ending in the suffix '-ation' and the text working as a caption. In the first scene, 'Qualification', the portrayal of the King as a decadent, debauched Prince repeats the usual criticism, but the lack of novelty is balanced by the ingenuity of George Cruikshank's design, one of the best depictions of the King, clearly developed out of Gillray's 1792, *A Voluptuary under the Horrors of Digestion*. The caption completes the scene:

In love, and in drink, and o'ertopped by debt  
With women, with wine, and with duns on the fret. (169)

The Queen is an expected melodramatic heroine: 'all youthful and gay / From the hearth of her fathers, he lured her away' and 'Her husbandless bride-bed was wash'd with her tears'. She is also described as a courageous woman, who 'steers her own course, comes indignantly over / And the shouts of the nation salute her at Dover!' (171, 176).

The scene 'Accusation' is a mockery of the trial of the Queen, with Parliament dubbed as the 'House of Incurables'. The King is 'fat, fifty-eight, and frisk, still a beau [...] / Led by a passion, prurient, blind, and batter'd, / lame, bloated, pointless, fameless, age'd and shatter'd / creeping, like Guy Fawkes, to blow up his wife' (181). The line, 'I shall get rid of her, and I'll then get another!' (179) reflects the opinion that George IV was a capricious, deceitful husband, moved by selfish motivation and not by moral principles. George IV, 'like an old Charley', stands at the door holding the *Report of a Bad House*, 'a burning shame', an allusion to the report of 4 July of the Secret Committee that advised the realization of 'a solemn enquiry' (*HPD*, vol 2: 167) against the Queen.

There are two victorious entities in this satire, the Queen and the press, and a loser, the King. The Queen is about to set the *Report* on fire, thus winning over the King, portrayed as a ridiculous *Guy Fawkes*, led by an equally ridiculous, lame *Cupid*. He is set in contrast to the power of the press, 'our moral sun' (180), significantly placed above him. Cruikshank's design for the concluding section, 'Degradation', shows a disgraced George IV 'exposed [...] for all men to see' and turned into a victim of 'the laughter of triumph, the jeers of the world' (185).

The punishment of the King, exile (the sentence determined for Caroline in the Bill of Pains and Penalties), is seen as the result of the vigilance of the press. That is why the press is depicted inside an eye, the eye of God, who sees everything. It sees the corruption of state, symbolised by Leach, Vice-Chancellor and member of the Milan Commission: it ‘sees the rat Leech turn towards Milan’s walls, [...] / sees Him, for who they work the treacherous task, / With face, scarce half conceal’d, behind their mask’ (181). The eye as symbol of the power of truth and justice against corruption also featured in satirical prints, such as *Queen Caroline. Britain’s best hope!! England’s Sheet-Anchor* (Fig 37) published on 19 October 1820 by John Fairburn.



Fig. 37 J. Fairburn (pub.), *Queen Caroline. Britain’s Best hope!! England’s Sheet-Anchor*, 1820  
© Trustees of the British Museum

This image of the printing press inside an eye is directly linked to the eighteenth-century satires developed out of the Gunpowder plot, and seventeenth-century emblem



books<sup>78</sup>. The vigilance of the free press (the radical press) protects the Queen and the people – both placed on an equal footing – punishing fools and villains:

Scorn'd, exiled, baffled, goaded in distress,  
She owes her safety to a fearless Press:  
With all the freedom that it makes its own,  
It guards, alike, the people and their throne;  
While fools with darkling eye-balls shun its gaze,  
And soaring villains scorch beneath its blaze. (181)

The celebration of the printing press as a counter-power played a central role in Hone's participation in the Queen Caroline affair and, in general, it permeated and linked all the satiric pamphlets produced by William Hone. In satires illustrated by George Cruikshank, such as *The Political Showman – at Home! Exhibiting his Cabinet of Curiosities and Creatures – All Alive!* (Hone, 1971: 269-97) and the newspaper parody *A Slap at Slop and the Bridge-Street Gang* (Hone, 1822) the press is a protagonist. The seven-headed monster on the frontispiece of *The Political Showman* represents the Holy Alliance (union of the Pope, Austria, Prussia, and Russia), and is clearly inspired by freak-show advertising and by propaganda relating to elections<sup>79</sup>.

In contrast to the monster, the *Showman* is a humanised press, exhibiting the Government as 'the most wonderful of all wonderful Living Animals' of the 'strangest and most wonderful artificial Cabinet in Europe [...] very crazy, but very curious' (272). The originality of this satire lies in the humanised representation of the press, in contrast with that of politicians as 'curiosities' and aberrations. Hone denounced the corruption of state and simultaneously affirmed the power of the press in defeating the Government ('they mind nobody but me!') during the Queen Caroline affair of the previous year:

Please to walk in, Ladies and gentlemen – it's very worth *seeing!* [...] Take care!  
Don't go within their reach – they mind nobody but *me!* A short time ago they got loose, and, with some other *vermin* that came from their *holes and corners*, desperately attacked a **Lady of Quality**; but, as luck would have it, *I*, and my '*four and twenty men*', happened to come in at the very moment; – we *pull'd* away, and prevented 'em from doing a *serious mischief* (Hone, 1971: 272).

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<sup>78</sup> Cruikshank's design alludes directly to the print *The Double Deliverance 1588-1605*, of 1621 by the Ipswich preacher Samuel Ward, published in Amsterdam in 1621. It is a good example of the very elaborate and humourless style of satires in this period. It bears several inscriptions in Latin, one of them being 'Video Rideo', translated into English and German, preceded by an eye.

<sup>79</sup> Hone had a vast collection of election propaganda. He certainly knew compilations such as *The Wit of the Day, or The Humours of Westminster* (1784), an anonymous collection of advertisements, hand-bills, squibs, songs, ballads, etc. written and circulated during the 1784 Westminster campaign.

Before the descriptions and illustrations of the ‘Animals’, a ‘Show-Cloth’ – a transparency (*BMC* 14150) – painted by George Cruikshank showed a printing-press, *Liberty*, and a bust-portrait of the Queen framed in laurel. It was exhibited by Hone during the illuminations that took place from 11 to 15 November 1820, in ‘celebration of the Victory obtained by The Press for the Liberties of the People, which had been assailed in the Person of the Queen’ (Hone, 1971: 273) and again on 29 November, when the Queen went to St. Paul’s (George, 1952: 207).

As in *The Queen’s Matrimonial Ladder*, the press is represented inside an eye. Double meanings signal the political message:

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you a *good day*. *Keep* to THE RIGHT. Walk *steadily* FORWARD. The *animals* may make an uproar, but don’t be alarmed; I’ll see to safe OUT. Remember they are *under my control*, and cannot take a step beyond the reach of MY EYE (Hone, 1971: 294).

When Hone pointed out in this satire that ‘Knowledge is Power’ he was meaning it literally. The press was a means of empowerment for the journalists and satirists of the radical press because it was through the printing press that access to public discourse was granted to those who had been hitherto denied a place in that discourse (Jones, 2003: 182).

Bearing in mind that the press was a focal point of radical interest, both in periodicals and satires, it is not surprising that *The Printers’ Address to the Queen, And Her Majesty’s Tribute to the Press, In Answer* (*BMC* 13963) was printed by John Johnson, for Hone<sup>80</sup>. With 1,345 signatures, it was presented on 11 October by a deputation of 138 Compositors and Pressmen. The front page (*BMC* 13947) is a ‘Specimen of the Typographic Art’. The Address (*BMC* 13963) ends:

Should the page of History record the present era as one in which overwhelming Power combined with Senatorial Venality to crush an unprotected Female, we trust it will also preserve the qualifying remembrance, that the base Conspiracy was defeated by the irresistible force of Public Opinion, directed and displayed through the powerful medium of a Free, Uncorrupted, and Incorruptible British Press.

Below, a careful wood engraving (21x31 in.) of the Stanhope Press was inset, with twelve lines of verse beginning: ‘From Thee, O Press! What blessings flow!’ The Stanhope press featured in several satires by Hone. One of the most powerful depictions is the illustration by George Cruikshank on the frontispiece to *A Political Christmas Carol*, published in 1820 (Hone, 1971: 99-102): the press, irradiated, throws back the frightened

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<sup>80</sup>‘Just Published by William Hone’ is an appealing advertisement of this address to the Queen (BM-ID 1868,0808.13715).

Attorney-General Gifford and the Solicitor-General Copley despite the reassurance of Lord Liverpool: ‘Let nothing you affright; / Go draw your quills, and draw *five Bills*, / put out yon blaze of light’.

*A Slap at Slop and the Bridge-Street Gang* (Hone, 1822) is the last and lengthiest (56 pages) of the Hone-Cruikshank satires, and it also deals with the relations between Regency radicalism and the press. The first edition dates from 1821. It is a burlesque parody of *The New Times*, dubbed *Slop Pail* and of its editor, John Stoddart<sup>81</sup>, nicknamed ‘Dr. Slop’, after the choleric physician in Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*. It is advertised as ‘ROYAL RED HOT SLOP, seven-pence per pail; spooned out every morning at six o’clock, at 153, Fleet-street. SCAVENGERS, SWEEPS, AND OTHERS, EMPLOYED IN DIRTY WORK, gratefully partake of this BREAKFAST BEVERAGE’ (20). It is a violent attack on extreme loyalist press and the ‘Constitutional Association’, inscribed in the tradition of the parodic newspaper<sup>82</sup>.

After Queen Caroline’s death, it was reissued carrying an extra woodcut at the head of the first column with a text beginning ‘Her Majesty died by the dagger of Persecution’ (38)<sup>83</sup>. This text, framed in black as a sign of mourning, expressed revolt at the intention of the loyalists to prevent demonstrations of popular feeling after the Queen’s death: ‘they have hoisted the black flag of unrelenting and deadly hate against her as long as she lived – they have exterminated her, and they hang out a white one, crying Peace! Peace ! Where there is no Peace! (40).

The value put on the social and political role of the press constitutes a forward-looking aspect of Hone’s political and editorial intervention. This emphasis was crucial in establishing the Regency radical press as an independent voice in early nineteenth-century England. Hone is an example of how the popularity of satire could contribute to the establishment of a freer press and become a tool for the publicity of a more equitable parliamentary representation.

It is commonly said that, as a businessman, Hone had no talent. In effect, he was constantly menaced by bankruptcy, and he died poor. However, he showed great

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<sup>81</sup> John Stoddart had become an object of Hone’s derision since 1815 in *Buonaparte-phobia, or Cursing made Easy to the Meanest Capacity: A Dialogue between the Editor of ‘The Times’, Doctor Slop, My Uncle Toby, & My Father* (Hone, 1815). The title also reveals the influence of Lawrence Sterne. According to Grimes (1998c), Hone reprinted this pamphlet in 1820 (*Buonapartephobia. The Origin of Dr. Slop’s Name*) probably because Stoddart had recently formed a conservative propaganda organization called the ‘Constitutional Association’.

<sup>82</sup> In 1819, three parodic newspapers were published: *The New Daily Advertiser*, *The Quizzical Gazette Extraordinary*, and *The Rump Chronicle* (Wood, 1994: 202).

<sup>83</sup> Besides Hone’s, other elegies were published in broadside form such as *An Attempt to exhibit the Leading Events of the Queen’s Life in Cuts and Verse*, published in December 1821 by Catnach (BMC, 14255).

imagination in devising what today would be called a marketing strategy. Apart from the systematic use of advertising, Hone resorted to other marketing forms. One of them was the offer of a ‘toy’ together with the purchase of *The Queen’s Matrimonial Ladder* with no additional cost, as 1s. was the standard price of all Hone’s satires. The ‘toy’ represented the royal relationship and the fall of George IV. Each step was named after the ‘scenes’ /sections in the pamphlet satire and accounted for the mistreatment of the Princess and later Queen by her husband. In the final step, ‘degradation’, the King wears a fool’s cap (as in satirical prints and broadsides) and bows in front of Britannia, who is seated beside her angry lion, holding a birch rod and facing him. George IV is the villain of the piece and the Queen is a neglected, abandoned and defamed wife.

The satires *The Political Showman* and *Non Mi Ricordo!* were also associated with advertising. Hone published *Advertisements Extraordinary* (Hone, 1971: 206-7) – a number of mock advertisements in handbill format sold together with *Non Mi Ricordo*. They parodied all the protagonists at the Queen’s trial: the King (‘Strayed and Missing’), the Government (‘The Old Hakney, Liverpool’; ‘To Manglers – Just Leaving his Place’), and the Italian witnesses (‘To Laundresses, Wants a Place’). Mock advertisements were published in varied formats, from handbills to pamphlets and even newspapers. On the page opposite to the beginning of *Non Mi Ricordo!*, Hone advertised *The Queen’s Matrimonial Ladder*, and a ‘Lost Memory’:

LOST, at the Court martial, Signor MY JOCKEY’S MEMORY, together with his Government Victualling Bill; both a little damaged, and of no use but to the owner. Whoever will bring them to the Publisher, in time to be restored to the Signor’s disconsolate Mother, Mrs. Leech, shall be rewarded with a “Non mi ricordo!” (Hone, 1971: 194).

Hone’s mastery of the satiric potential of parody is displayed in *Non Mi Ricordo*, a satire that explored the popular tradition of trial parody<sup>84</sup>. Hone had already made use of trial parody in August 1817, in the interim between his release from prison and his trials in December 1817, with the satire on Lord Castlereagh *Another Ministerial Defeat! The Trial of the Dog for Biting the Noble Lord* (Hone, 1817e). In this satire, Lord Castlereagh’s dog, appropriately nicknamed ‘Honesty’, is tried for having bitten his lordship. Animal trials

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<sup>84</sup> Wood (1994: 145: fn. 74) lists a considerable number of trial parodies that figured in Hone’s sale catalogue, which attests to his familiarity with this tradition. However, other authors, namely Thomas Wooler, also produced trial parodies of this type in 1820, such as *Trial Extraordinary – Mr Canning Versus the Radical Reformers* (BD, vol. v: 537-40) and *The State Trials Contrasted with the Manchester no Trials* (BD, vol. vi: 541-56).

were very popular forms of trial parody in the early nineteenth-century, but it is also tempting to see Hone's persistent interest as a form of catharsis of his own traumatic trial experience of 1817.

*Non Mi Ricordo!* was published in September 1820 during the lawsuit against the Queen and went through at least thirty-one editions in 1820. Kent and Ewen (2002: 22) claim that the idea for *Non Mi Ricordo* came from conversations between Hone and Cruikshank, and probably Hazlitt, at the Southampton Coffee House in Chancery Lane. The title and end pages are illustrated by George Cruikshank. The title page shows the King, standing at the bar, answering 'Non mi ricordo' to the question 'Who are you?' In the end page, the King, sitting on a gridiron and chained by the ankles, is being grilled by two demon satyrs. Alluding to the voluminous body of the King, the caption reads 'The Fat is in the Fire!'

*Non Mi Ricordo* has probably inspired *Half-A-Crown Lost! Examination Extraordinaire of the Vice R-Y of B—d—y Boro! Alias The Handsome Gentleman. By John Bull* (Prichart, 1820). It is a satire printed and published by C. E. Pritchard in October/November (*BMC* 13939-42), with a woodcut by Robert Cruikshank on the title page. It also depicts the King on trial. George IV is cross-examined by John Bull, who asks: 'Who are you?' He answers: 'The Vice Roy of Brandy Boro!'

In Hone's *Non Mi Ricordo*, George IV is ridiculed in an imaginary cross-examination at the Queen's trial. Hone exploits the fictional confrontation between the original (the Italian witness for the prosecution, Theodore Majocchi), and the parodied (George IV), in a discursive 'decomposition' (Marsh, 1998: 38) that gradually fuses Majocchi and the King. George IV is interrogated about his immoral and debauched life and, like Majocchi, he misunderstands questions, which is the opportunity for ludicrous punning:

How much money has been expended on you since you were born?  
Non mi ricordo.  
What have you done for it in return?  
More less than more. (197)

After that [after you left your wife] what did you do?  
Oh, I rambled about.  
Where did you go? –  
To Jersey and elsewhere [...]  
How many other places did you go to?  
Non mi ricordo.

Is the Marquis of C. a married man?<sup>85</sup> (198)

Are you a sober man?

More no than yes.

How many bottles a day do you drink?

Non mi ricordo. [...]

Can you produce a certificate of good character from those who *know* you?

Yes, from the minister.

Pho! Pho! Don't trifle; can you from any *respectable* person?

Non mi ricordo. (203-4)

Hone exposes the vices of George IV (referred to as 'The Witness', and once as 'Mr. Mereamusement') in a language that even the barely literate could understand. Satiric laughter originated in the demystification of the rituals of legal retribution, through the parodying of the objections by the Solicitor-General, the rulings of the Lord Chancellor, the interpositions of some Peers and of the Interpreter. This semantic disorder of the court and legal processes is largely effected through double meanings, naming and nick-naming.

This satire is riddled with nicknames to debase the officers of the Law and their discourse ('The Turnstile General', 'The Lord Precedent Furthermore', 'Lord Muddlepool'), as well as with double meanings, intended at parodying trial proceedings and argumentation (the words 'bind', 'binding', and 'Cabinet maker', used at the beginning of the cross examination). The intimidating seriousness of court ceremony and language are thus undermined by the satiric laughter elicited by these stylistic devices. The effect is heightened by the perception that this was a trial that the King and ministry themselves had instigated, that is, satiric laughter incarnated the power of delivering deserved punishment. The fictional representation of the foibles of authority and of their ceremonial can therefore be interpreted in a broad sense as a kind of revenge.

Naming was a favourite and 'quite serious' (Hendrix, 1976: 116) radical practice that worked as a catalyst for political propaganda. It was used in the pamphlet satire *The Political 'A, Apple-Pie'* (Hone, 1971: 135-66), illustrated by George Cruikshank and usually attributed to Hone<sup>86</sup>. *The Political 'A, Apple-Pie'* is the satiric version of James Wade's *Black Book: Corruption Unmasked* (Wade, 1820), the difference being the evident delight in singling out and exposing political enemies in Hone's satire. Through irony and symbolic meaning, baiting authority becomes art:

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<sup>85</sup> Jersey and C. [Conyngham] are the names of two mistresses of the Prince of Wales/Regent/King.

<sup>86</sup> The fact that it was sold by Johnston raises some doubts as to the authorship by Hone, as he had stated, albeit indirectly, that he would not allow his writings to be sold by anyone but himself, due to the numberless imitations of the *Political House* (Hone, 1971: 105). Additionally, it does not appear in *Facetiae and Miscellanies* (Hone, 1827).

The Bishops, God bless them, and bless their wigs!  
They bit at this pie, like many fat pigs;  
Though the bites that they made they were none of them small,  
Great Barrington's greatly exceeded them all.  
The Bathursts they bit a piece large as one's fist;  
Brougham, Bennett, and Burdett, bit at it, but miss'd. (138)

The Princess of Wales also figured in the list: 'that unfortunate exile, the Princess of Wales / The subject and victim of all sorts of tales, / Some true and some false, whate'er be her wish, / Enjoys no small share of this excellent dish' (165). Other radical publishers, such as William Benbow also contributed to naming as denunciation. Benbow published *Fair Play, or Who are the Adulterers, Slanderers and Demoralizers?*, a satire on the Italian witnesses, written under the pseudonym Shandy Sinecure esq. FRS, which also contained detailed listings of the beneficiaries of state money. This openly political purpose proves that satire and melodrama could be instrumental to the politicization of the Caroline affair. As McCalman (1988: 176) notes, the characteristic Manichean moral structure of melodrama – and also of satire – was well adapted to conveying deep anti-establishment feelings.

Due to the characteristic anonymity of satire, other satires published during the Queen Caroline affair are sometimes attributed to Hone. That is the case of *The Green Bag: A Dainty Dish to Set Before a King; A Ballad of the Nineteenth-Century*' (Hone, 1820d), illustrated by George Cruikshank. The frontispiece states that it is *By the Author of 'The Political A, Apple Pie'* and that it was published by J. Robins in July 1820. The fact that it was not published by Hone raises further doubts about his authorship.

The predominant tone of this pamphlet is melodramatic. The Queen is depicted as a heroine, who returned to England to face the governmental conspiracy set against her, and whose courage terrifies her enemies: 'But, oh! what consternation seiz'd / Her enemies all round, / When first they heard that she had set / Her foot on English ground!' (15). The Queen sits in a chair in royal robes, crowned and wearing a sceptre, in anticipation of her victory. The plate bears the inscription 'God bless the Queen – the Fittest Dish To set before a King!' (15).

Unlike most satires by Hone, this satire/ballad is an illustration of the theory that the king can do no wrong. The King is not presented as a satirical object, but as misguided by the ministers: 'for they had so misguided him / And led him so astray / That though his heart was very good / His head was the wrong way' (22). He is only mildly criticised for his futility: 'the K—g was in his cabinet / there counting out his money / or calling some

sweet lady fair / his *jewel* and his *honey*' (4). The idea of kingly political irresponsibility remained a legal precept.

Thus, the satiric attack falls on the 'Green Bag', 'a bag full of lies' (3), the Milan Commissioners, the Italian witnesses, 'prepared for any dirty job, / and for all sorts of vice' (8), Wilberforce, who 'could not bring / her Majesty to taste the dish / they set before the King' (19). Differently from this pamphlet, *In Parliament Dropt Clauses out of the Bill, Against the Queen* (Hone, 1820c) matches the charges against Caroline with equally damning charges against George IV. Likewise, *The Right Divine of Kings To Govern Wrong!* (Hone, 1821a) considered the doctrine that the King can do no wrong as 'the very soul of despotism'.

Another illustrated verse satire, *The Royal Letter-Bag* (Hone, 1820g), sold by Thomas Dolby in October/November 1820, renders satirical comment on George IV and the trial of the Queen. In *Notes and Queries* (Series 6, vol. 12: 272) this satire is attributed to William Hone, but it does not appear in Hone's *Facetiæ and Miscellanies*. It is divided into twelve 'Epistles', and it has three woodcuts (BMC 13943-13945): the title page woodcut, shows a courier galloping from Windsor, preceded by four rats and urged by the devil; the second, *Royal Milling* (BMC 13944), shows the King being knocked down by his brother, the Duke of York, and losing the crown. The Duke of York allegedly protested at the King's intention to divorce his wife (George, 1952: 122); the third, *A Pair of Respectable Witnesses* (BMC 13945) is a very grotesque print. It shows the 'Green Bag' having the face features of George IV, from where appear two rough witnesses, two serpents, a monstrous leech, and the words *bribery, lies, filth, obscenity, non mi ricordo* and *je ne me rapelle pas*. Seated around the bag are Sidmouth, Eldon, Castlereagh, and, according to D. George (1952: 122), possibly Wilberforce. In *Epistle One*, George IV is lampooned for being a self-contented cuckold:

Start not at horns, as if in shame,  
All ye who are cornuted,  
For hear how loudly I proclaim  
That mine are deeply rooted.

The question of double-standards of morality and sexuality, more systematically dealt with in the radical periodicals, is tackled with wit in *Epistle Nine*:

Adultery, wh—dom, in a K—g  
Are nought – a mere fleabite,  
But in a QUEEN, another thing,  
They are d—n quite.



Hone's satires, especially the seminal *The Political House*, inspired many imitations during the Queen Caroline affair. *The Political Queen that Jack Loves* (BMC 13662) is a verse satire on behalf of the Queen, published in February 1820 by Roach. One of the designs shows a flag inscribed *Reform*, topped by a cap of liberty. This detail has led George (1952: xxi) to argue that in February the radicals had already identified the Queen's cause with theirs.

*The Political House* also inspired some loyalist imitations, such as *The Royal House that Jack Built, or 1820* (BMC 13810-23), one of the very few anti-Queenite satires published in August. It was printed by and for W. Wright. The 'house that Jack built' is Windsor Castle, where the King lives (flatteringly depicted). It describes the main charges against the Queen, especially her relationship with Bergami. The Queen is described as a threat to the King. *The Palace of John Bull, Contrasted with the Poor House that Jack Built* (Bull, 1820), is also a loyalist satire. The true palace of John Bull is placed in contrast to 'the squalid wretchedness, the conspicuous miseries of the *Poor House* that the revolutionary Jack would build us' (3).

*The Queen and Magna Charta; Or, the Thing that Jack Signed, Dedicated to the Ladies of Great Britain*, published by Dolby in October, is the frontispiece illustration of a satire (BMC 13871-83) imitating Hone's *The Political House*. In the frontispiece (BMC 13871), Britannia seats beside her lion wearing a cap of liberty, and holding a placard inscribed *To assert the Rights of Man*, and above a sword, *To avenge the wrongs of woman*. She is illuminated by rays from an eye in the clouds.

*The Old Black Cock and his Dunghill Advisers in Jeopardy, or, The Palace that Jack Built* (Wilson, 1820; BMC 13905-16) is an illustrated verse satire on George IV and his advisors published in October. The illustrations are initialled in pen as being by 'G Ck' (George Cruikshank) and 'I R Ck' (Isaac Robert Cruikshank). It is sometimes attributed to William Hone, according to the NUC<sup>87</sup> of Pre-1956 Imprints, (vol. 478:75). The title page (BMC 13905) shows George IV as a cock. John Bull grasps the leg of the cock and bends towards it with a knife. Behind him is a burlesque view of the Pavilion. It begins: 'This is the Palace that Jack built', and continues:

This is the corn,  
That lay in the Palace that Jack built [...]

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<sup>87</sup> NUC stands for 'National Union Catalogue', a cooperative cataloguing programme operated by the Library of Congress and other American and Canadian libraries. The NUC of Pre-1956 Imprints is still an important tool, as about 27% of the books listed there were not listed in the World Catalogue of 2005. Catalogue of the National Library of Ireland <http://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000088230/Details> (accessed 11/10/2010).

This is the cock well known to fame  
A dunghill at heart, tho' supposed to be game;  
Who lost to feeling, and dead to fame,  
Dishonoured his father and disgrac'd his name (5) [...]

This is the hen, from Germany brought,  
Allow'd to be one of the best of her sort,  
That left her friends, and became the sport  
Of the cruel and base of a profligate court;  
That wedded the cock, well known to fame  
A dunghill at heart... (7-8) [...]

This is Dame Bull, a sensitive wife,  
Who ne'er intermeddled with quarrels or strife,  
But who scorn'd to behold an innocent Bird  
*Defass'd, and disgrac'd, and degrad'd unheard,* (14) [...]

This is John Bull all tatter'd and torn,  
His money and most of his liberty gone,  
Who rose with the lark and went late to his bed.  
To provide his half-famishing children with bread. (15)

The structure clearly imitates the *Political House*. The last page, *Justice Triumphant* (BMC 13916) shows a lamp post from where cocks with human heads hang by the neck. These are Sidmouth, Liverpool, Castlereagh, and Eldon, on the left side. On the right are four witnesses, two of them being Majocchi and Demont. The unsophisticated narrative structure and the violent language and imagery lead to a doubt as to Hone's authorship of this satire.

However, the question of whether Hone authored this, and other, satires mentioned in this chapter is relatively unimportant. What matters is the legacy, and in this respect the least one can say is that Hone's mark is imprinted in all of them – the satirical hauteur employed against the political authority embodied in the King, the Government, the representational and the legal systems, and the conviction in the power of the press as a force against the corruption of state.

Most importantly, Hone merged 'high' and 'low' culture and politics and thereby transcended their established boundaries. In that pursuit, he violated 'the scope of knowledge proper for a man of my condition', as he acknowledged in the preface to *Ancient Mysteries Described* (Hone, 1823: i-ii). This bold use of culture accounts for much of the current interest and even fascination for his work. Like Cobbett, Wooler, and Carlile, he was an autodidact who knew that culture could be an instrument of individual and collective emancipation.

During his trials, Hone contended with the judges that his liturgical parodies were considered blasphemous because they had not been issued by the ‘respectable press’, but had been made accessible to a wider audience than the elite. His offense had been to have ‘transgressed the boundary between the elite and the common’ (Grimes, 1997: 196). In 1821, he kept the same spirit of defiance. *The Right Divine of Kings to Govern Wrong* was advertised together with *The Spirit of Despotism, Dedicated to Lord Castlereagh* (Hone, 1821c) in the *Catalogue of William Hone’s Publications* published in 1821 (Rickword, 1971: 298-300). There, he stated with irony that this ‘rare and extraordinary book’ was ‘so effectually suppressed that there are only two copies of it besides my own in existence’ and added: ‘*I have reprinted it verbatim* from my own Copy; and, (although containing as much in quantity as a volume of Gibbon’s History of Rome,) it is sold for *Eighteen-pence*’ [Hone’s italics] (Rickword, 1971: 298).

Despite this defiant attitude, Hone remained aware of the risks involved in the publication of satires. In *The Right Divine of Kings to Govern Wrong*, he warned: ‘Satire reflect with care, due caution give /Some [tyrants] are dead, beware of those that live. / If thou too near the present age begin / Truth will be crime, and courage will be sin’ (Hone, 1821a: 16). Hone never fully recovered from the physical and psychological strain of his 1817 trials, and returning to satire after almost two years’ interval may have represented a type of catharsis from that traumatic experience. He defied his fear of prosecution as much as he defied his political enemies.

That bold mock-satirical attitude, combined with serious political commitment, links Hone with the journalists of the radical press discussed in Chapter Three, the more so as Hone has edited in 1817 the short-lived radical periodical *Hone’s Reformists’ Register and Weekly Commentary* (1 February 1817 to 25 October 1817). Regency radicals were a community in the political and cultural, as well as in the rhetorical sense of the word. From Hone’s satires springs the same confrontational discourse and the same personal commitment found in Carlile, Wooler, and Cobbett. As much as radical journalism, Hone’s writings and publications marked early nineteenth-century print culture, not only during the Queen Caroline affair, but also during the whole Regency period, as E. P. Thompson, earlier than anybody else, recognized in *The Making* (1991: 661).

Hone deliberately trespassed into forbidden territory and used language and culture as classless heritage. It was probably the recognition of Hone’s intrinsic transgressiveness that led George Cruikshank to depict him as the only Regency radical in an attitude of

boldness in his print *Coriolanus Addressing the Plebeians* (Fig. 6: 59). In trying to account for the success of Hone's satires, Hackwood (1912: 230) encapsulated that fascination:

Hone lit these squibs and flung them among the mob; and the people, even those who disagreed with them, bought them, read them, laughed, and said, 'D— the fellow!' and waited for the next.

## CONCLUSION

This study has discussed how certain forms of popular culture, art and literature were appropriated by Regency radical authors during the Queen Caroline affair to acquire politico-cultural meaning. It has showed that the radical appropriation of the Affair was not a diversion from radical politics trivialised by melodrama, as Laqueur (1982) argued, or by satire as Patten (1992) claimed, but the use of melodrama and satire as instruments of political and cultural assertion. These modes of popular literature and art, in fact, unleashed cultural energies and enabled radical writers to create a political language that mobilised sections of the population hitherto aloof and even hostile to radical politics. In a similar vein, popular culture was loaded with political meaning, and this has not to do with the alleged ideological ambiguity of popular radicalism, but with the reinterpretation of what is political (Calhoun, 1983). McCalman (1988) has also claimed that popular culture may be a strong vehicle for the promotion of anti-establishment feelings.

The association of melodrama to loyalist propaganda methods, namely to methods which aimed at the ideological support of the status quo, may account for its dismissal as acceptable radical political discourse (Laqueur, 1982). As to satire, some authors briefly discussed by Jones (1996) consider that the conception of parody as criticism (Hutcheon, 2000) is problematic, on the grounds that if parody is criticism then it performs only 'the crudest of critical functions, the judgemental' (Jones, 1996: 61). The absence of sophisticated critical functions implied in the condemnatory purpose of the satirical discourse exchange would make parody a fundamentally conservative tool. However, that may not always be the case. When satire relies upon linguistic and graphic creativity, it can also perform an intellectual-political function. This research showed that during the Queen Caroline affair satire as well as melodrama have performed this function and conveyed innovative and progressive political meaning.

Looking closely at radical journalism and satire during this crisis, the portrayal of the Queen Caroline affair comes to light as imaginative political intervention in the public sphere. The language of melodrama used in defence of the Queen was adapted to the discussion of concrete political issues, such as the employment of Parliament by the King to fulfil his private ends, the method of prosecution, and the association of the rights of the Queen to those of the people – her lost rights became the people's lost rights. The Queen was therefore portrayed as a woman whose attitude of defiance of the powers summoned

against her personified the very political, moral and ethical virtues that would bring about change in society and polity.

Marked as a radical heroine and an emblem of the freedom of the press, the Queen became a symbol of change. In the process, the radical discourse went beyond the limits of a private divorce scandal and became not only political intervention but also innovative political intervention. That is what makes the discussion surrounding the character and vices of the Queen as an individual largely irrelevant. What matters is the way the Queen as *persona* was represented. In that task, radical journalists defied old conceptions of leadership and of what was considered political and extended and reinterpreted the radical political agenda of parliamentary reform and freedom of the press. Politics was the motor of the popular mobilisation, as Fulcher (1995) argues, but these boundaries were transcended by its being translated into cultural act.

Hence, the discussion of themes relating to the private sphere of behaviour and morality became intertwined with, and in large measure gave way to, the discussion of the larger issues of political accountability and political change. The treatment of themes such as the double standards of morality and sexuality, the ‘wronged woman’ and ‘insulted Queen’ at the hands of a revengeful husband, prompted the criticism of the existing political leadership and the demand of their removal through parliamentary reform. This broad understanding of what is political links the moral and domestic dimension of the Queen Caroline affair to the radical political agenda.

Carlile, Cobbett, Wooler, and Hone showed that the vocabularies of melodrama and satire could transform a private affair into politico-cultural discourse. In this task, they stressed the role of public opinion as political audience, and contributed to enlarging its scope to include an increasingly literate and politically aware plebeian public. Typical cases in point are, for example, the attention paid to the development of the people’s reading and writing skills in the *PR*, the discussion of the legal issues underlying the method of prosecution of the Queen, carried out at great length in the *BD*, and the sustained religious polemics and struggle for the right of publication in the *R*. These were manifestations of the view of politics as cultural act.

Carlile, Cobbett, Wooler, and Hone questioned the politics of the establishment in distinct ways, but their writing had joined in the same objective. Carlile stressed the role of the freedom of the press and the right of publication as a tool of political empowerment. Cobbett created a style that succeeded in developing, amongst its audience, a sense of belonging to a community with specific interests that demanded to be heard. The

distinctive mark of the *BD* was the mock-satirical discourse that defined its literary persona, the 'Black Dwarf', and a whole gallery of lesser satirical characters. More markedly than his fellow pressmen, Wooler's writing symbolises the merging of politics and culture that characterised the intervention of other radicals, such as William Hone. Wooler's satirical characters, Hone's satires, and ultimately the whole radical intervention on behalf of the Queen in the radical press, show that the Queen Caroline affair was an opportunity capable of translation into political and literary-cultural terms.

If the Queen as *persona* symbolises the qualities of a new political order, the way George IV was depicted in satirical prints and pamphlet satires – a man guided by sensual appetites, who behaved like an Oriental despot rather than a constitutional ruler – personifies the vices of the old, corrupt, aristocratic order. As a whole, the life-style of the King, including the treatment of his wife, became political and cultural. The Government was represented as a corrupt body and the House of Lords as a clique of hypocritical self-seekers, because they did not hesitate to prosecute the rightful Queen of England to keep the royal favour. The character flaws of king, ministers and members of Parliament, especially those of the House of Lords, became synonymous with political corruption. This pattern of political criticism – the correlation between character, private vice and corruption in high places – has essentially to do with the claim that the personal may be political. It was this broad understanding of the political that enabled melodrama and satire to be well-suited to the rhetoric of oppositional Regency radicalism.

The loyalist camp discerned the threat to the established authority, and therefore its response aimed precisely at separating the private from the public. The systematic defamation of the Queen and her supporters, especially women, by the loyalist press was a crucial element of a strategy that sought essentially to relegate the Queen Caroline affair to the private sphere. As loyalists well knew, a great part of their victory depended on the success in controlling the women who participated in it. The loyalist attempt was partly successful, and the political change to which the radicals aspired was not attained. As a result, the radical intervention was considered ephemeral and inconsequential.

The negative assessment of the part played by the radicals in the Queen Caroline affair has marked scholarly discussion, especially the oft established correlation between radical politics and the writings of the radical press. Even though the radical satire issued during the Queen Caroline affair has recently recovered some of the marginalisation to which it had been voted, the historical role played by the Regency radical press remains largely relegated to the 'dustbin of history'. This pompous sniff is not new. In the 1920s,

Trevelyan and Halévy had already set the judgement that echoed in many subsequent authors: the Affair was a historical irrelevance, a scandalous wave of low comic relief. In the 1990s, a host of authors still waved the same banner: for Patten (1992), the satiric laughter that erupted during the Affair was as ephemeral as Hone's satires and Cruikshank's prints, considered 'Queenite pasquinades' (185). When Clark (1990) admits that satire and melodrama might have conveyed political meaning, it is essentially to highlight the celebration of immorality and defiance of the established order, allegedly carried out in satire, and not its role as critique of the vices and corruption of the rulers. Even Wood (1994), whose study of the satirical work of William Hone remains indispensable reading, does not escape a similar conclusion: the influence of the confrontational style of radical satirists and the radical press was ephemeral.

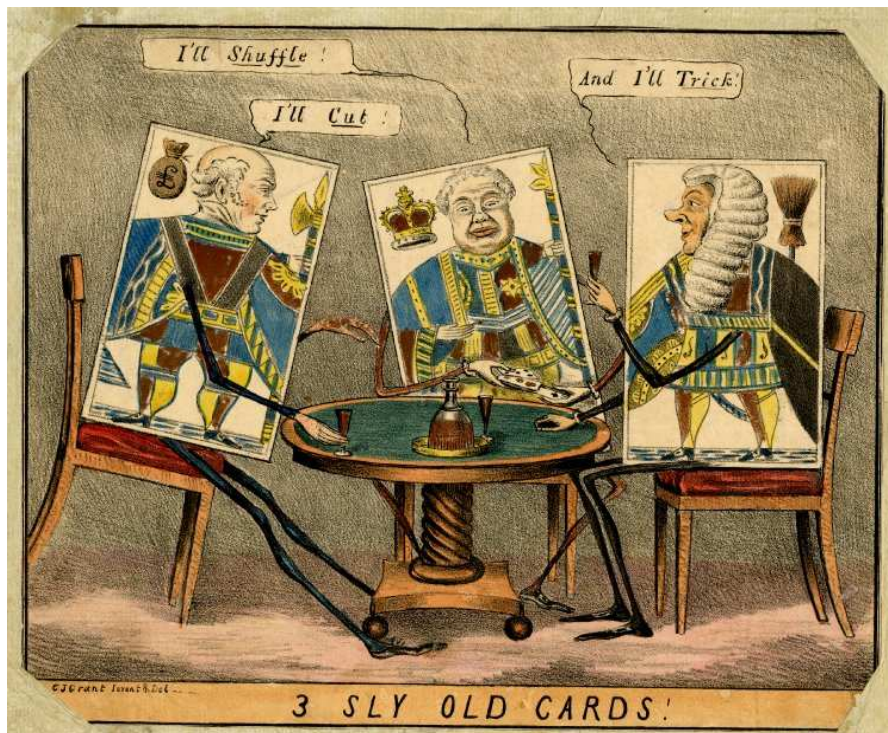


Fig. 38 C.J. Grant, 3 Sly Old Cards, 1830-35  
© Trustees of the British Museum

However, a closer look reveals a different picture. What was ephemeral was not the belligerent attitude that defined the spirit of Regency radicalism, but the format for satirical prints – the single sheet print. The sample of the satirical work of Charles James Grant<sup>1</sup> showed in the cartoon *3 Sly Old Cards* (Fig. 38) questions the death sentence placed on the

<sup>1</sup> Until recently, Grant was an important but overlooked caricaturist, active between the 1830s and the 1850s. About Grant's activity, see Pound (1998), a catalogue published jointly with the exhibition held at the University College, in London, in 1998.



satirical spirit of Regency radicalism. In the 131 numbers of his 'Political Drama' (issued weekly between 1833 and 1835-6 and costing a penny), Grant used the old style to address the political and social themes which constituted the battlefield of the radicals: corruption, injustice, and lack of freedom.

The same personalisation of discourse and confrontational attitude is displayed in this print: three 'Court Cards', with long thin arms and legs, represent the King, Lord Grey and Brougham. In the middle, William IV shuffles a pack of cards, saying 'I Shuffle'. On the left and right are Lord Grey, with a predatory hand extended, saying 'I'll Cut!' and Brougham in his Chancellor's wig, saying, 'And I'll Trick'. Their respective suits are indicated by a crown, a money-bag inscribed '£', and a broom.

The continuity of the radical satirical tradition is underscored by the comparison of two woodcuts: *The Poor Laws in Bradford*, by Grant, published in 1837 in *Cleave's Gazette of Variety*, and *Steel Lozenges*, by G. Cruikshank, an illustration to the pamphlet satire of 1820 *The Man in the Moon*, both reproduced by Sally Ledger (2004: 582-3; 2007: 80-1). The graphic language is melodramatically hostile in both illustrations. The violent imagery used by Cruikshank – soldiers pushing their bayonets down the throats of unarmed men and women – is literally applied by Grant in this print to expose the violence of the new Poor Laws.

Ledger finds the same continuity in the work of Charles Dickens. She argues that Dicken's work is rooted in the popular radical tradition – a debt that Marsh (1998) had already pinpointed – and traces the influence of Regency radicals on his work, from Hone to Cobbett. Following the same line of thought, Brian Maidment (2010) draws attention to Grant's images in the 1830s and 1840s as counterbalance to the conventional tastes and interests associated with the emergence of some middlebrow mass circulation periodicals. The spirit of opposition remained intact.

However, for Gatrell (2006), Patten (1992), Wood (1994), Donald (1996) and others it was the old spirit that had suddenly died. They dictate the sudden end of radical satire, and link it to the triumph of a middle-class sense of 'respectability', seen as reaction and substitute of the 'old' radical spirit of 'unrespectability'. For Gatrell, 'respectability' was a distinctive mark sought by the artisans and the new middle classes that had climbed the social ladder. The pursuit of virtue would be the moral and cultural distinction between the rough habits of the lower classes *vis a vis* aristocratic culture.

Gatrell is right when he sees 'respectability' as the sum total of such values as honesty, thrift, discipline, prudence, modesty, and personal worth, but it may be inaccurate

to argue that respectability is incompatible with attitudes of open defiance of authority. The key point for Gatrell is that:

Whatever form it took, respectability went ill with unseemly, mocking or bawdy satire. In the long term, a popular and confrontational satire, hatched from below and directed at the powerful, shared the fate of all satire in cultures that were discovering the rewards of good manners and the purchasing power to express them. In and after the 1820s, the vast promise of a radical satire that was held out during the regency years was quenched in the autodidact's po-faced aspiration (Gatrell, 2006: 580).

Regency radicals disagreed. Richard Carlile suggested in a 'Letter to the King' published in the *R* during the Affair that if standards of respectability were compared between the 'industrious classes' and the established authority, the result would not be favourable to the latter: 'whilst you have been daily clamorous [sic] about the danger and fear of anarchy among the industrious classes, you have practically exhibited the folly and danger of anarchy in a monarch and his aristocracy' (vol. iv: 441). William Hone strikes the same key in *Non Mi Ricordo*. For the cross-examiner of the King, 'respectability' means 'good character', which is a demand to be made especially to the established authority, symbolised by George IV: 'Can you produce a certificate of good character from those who *know* you? / Yes, from the minister. / Pho! Pho! Don't trifle; can you from any *respectable* person? / Non mi ricordo'. (Hone, 1971: 203-4).

The 'unrespectability' of Regency satire was unmistakably political. In his 1817 trial, Wooler justified his satiric writing saying that 'nothing but the boldest language' could serve his political purpose (Jones, 2000: 109). Radical writers meant to undermine authority through intellectual means rather than through physical force strategies. This was a shift of far-reaching importance. The confrontational and even bawdy style of the radical print culture constituted a consciously assumed politico-cultural attitude. Even the boldest satire was intrinsically didactic in intent. The acerbic criticism of the vices and corruption of the rulers and the delineation of character it offered was imbued with a sense of the urgency of moral and political principles that often confers on them a universal meaning. The spirit of aggressive mockery of many radical writings coexisted and was often intertwined with a clear didactic intention that was intimately linked to the pursuit of knowledge and self-improvement.

The focus placed on the argument that the 1820s and 1830s were decades of self-improvement for the lower-classes often overlooks two facts. Firstly, the pursuit for knowledge and self-improvement did not begin in the 1820s; it can be traced from at least

the decade of the 1790s, the decade of the radical awakening. Secondly, some educational and educative centres of the 1820s and 1830s functioned simultaneously as political sections. Many artisan and lower middle-class radicals looked at educational institutions in a 'spirit of militant independence' (McCalman, 1988: 181-203). Hence, the urge towards self-advancement is positively linked to the radical critique of the establishment rather than negatively.

This urge may explain how and why the Regency radical press took the written word to levels of civic and political intervention unimaginable in our present time and, against the constrictions of repressive legislation, produced a cultural revolution for thousands of people of the lower classes (Alves, 2002: 8-9). The calling of attention to the recovery of active citizenship enshrined in these lessons from the past is the heritage of the Regency radical press. That was the mark imprinted by the radicals on the Queen Caroline affair. The discursive practice of radical writers, satirists and journalists during the Queen Caroline affair echoes Cobbett's assertion: 'I have never written for temporary purposes' (vol. xxxvii: 1562-3).

Regency radicals wanted immediate political change. Despite the strong cultural ties with tradition – political, cultural, and literary – theirs was a culture of breach, not of continuity. They wanted to break with the past in many aspects, and in this sense they were looking forward, not backward. They may have been uncomfortably in advance of their time, but they were not rude or ignorant. They used humour as an instrument of change because that is 'only in the company of humour that fully human and enduring social change can ever take place' (McCalman, 2000: 224).

Seen in this light, the categories through which post-1980 historiography has analysed the Affair, namely gender, patriotism, populism, respectability, the public sphere constitute useful analysis but they were not the protagonists of the radical version of the Affair. The protagonists were timeless: they were corruption, injustice, lack of freedom and the public as the motors of change – hence the attention paid by Carlile, Cobbett, Wooler, and Hone to public opinion.

No matter their usefulness, by looking at partial elements, the new approaches tend, in general, to narrow, instead of widen, interpretative horizons. They fail to offer a broad reading of events, and only a broad reading guarantees understanding. This type of interpretative limitation may explain, for example, Hunt's (1991) argument that Regency satire did not represent the political radical critique of the established order, but the public's demands for respectability as a social value. Hence, what is distinctive and useful

about post-1980 analyses of the Queen Caroline affair depends on the recognition of the pioneering spirit of historians such as E. P. Thompson and A. Briggs, that is, of the recognition that ‘modern historians have been sitting on a giant’s shoulder’ (McWilliam, 1998: 14). The pioneering spirit of these historians lay in their persistent efforts to understand Regency radicalism as a totality of meaning and to interpret its message as a whole, even when their conclusions now seem limited.

If that line is pursued, the Queen Caroline affair appears as a key moment in the history of cultural change. It is a metaphor of the struggle for new, forward-looking values such as the role of public opinion and the participation of women in a male public sphere. The popular radical discourse that reached a climax with the Queen Caroline affair was a battlefield against ‘things as they are’ – the political and the cultural. The link established between domestic and moral concerns, and the demand for parliamentary reform and political accountability proposed a new view of society in which culture was political and politics was a cultural act. The weapons were the printed word in all its forms and genres – rational-critical, melodramatic, and satiric – and a class-based counter-discourse.

The oft used argument that the new science of political economy and the rise of trade unionism were replacing politics as working-class ideology and making post-war radical intervention obsolete would not have convinced Regency radical writers. They knew well that politics is about the distribution of power and that if politics is ignored any challenge to the status quo is doomed to failure by the detainers of political power (Hollis, 1973: xxii).

Regency radicals made an important contribution to the building of a more democratic society based on the rule of law and on individual liberties *vis-a-vis* privilege. Their emblem was parliamentary reform, and their agents were the struggle for the freedom of the press and the belief in public opinion as a force against arbitrary power – a political struggle with deep cultural undertones.

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## **APPENDICES**





## **APPENDIX ONE**



The following letters are included in *The Secret History of the Court of England*, a book published in 1832, whose authorship was attributed to Lady Anne Hamilton (1832), lady-in-waiting to Caroline, as Princess of Wales, and afterwards as Queen. Lady Hamilton vehemently denied authorship of the book:

*Copy of a letter written to the Princess Caroline of Brunswick, by George Prince of Wales.*

“MADAM,

“ 1794.

“The king my father, whom I highly respect and esteem, has just announced to me that your hand is destined for me. I am obliged, by the imperious force of circumstances to own, that this intelligence has thrown me into despair, and my candour does not allow me to conceal my sentiments from you. I hope that when you are acquainted with them, you will aid me in breaking the ties which would unite us only to render us unhappy; and which will be in your power to oppose, since *I* am unable to do so. You, Madam, are adored by your parents; I am aware that they have allowed you the liberty of refusing all the princes who have been proposed to you in marriage; refuse *me* also, I conjure you in the name of pity, to which I know you are no stranger. You do not *know* me, Madam; you therefore can have no cause to lament my loss. Learn, then, the *secret* and *unhappy* situation of the prince whom they wish you to espouse. I cannot love you; I cannot make you happy; my heart has long ceased to be free. She who possesses it is the only woman to whom I could unite myself agreeably to my inclinations. *You* would find in me a husband who places all his affections upon another. If this *secret*, which I name to you in *confidence*, does not cause you to reject me; if ambition, or any other motive of which I am ignorant, cause you to condescend to the arrangements of my family, learn that, as soon as you shall have given an heir to the *throne*, *I will abandon you*, never to meet you more in public. I will then attach myself to that lady whom I love, and whom I will not leave. Such is, Madam, my last and irrevocable resolution; if you are the victim of it, you will be a *willing victim*, and you cannot accuse me of having deceived you.

“I am, Madam,

“With great truth,

“Yours sincerely,

“GEORGE P.”

(Hamilton, 1832: 107-8)

*Copy of a letter written to Caroline, Princess of Brunswick, from her uncle, George the Third.*

“My dearest Niece Caroline,

“ 1794.

“It has afforded me very much pleasure to hear, by the means of my son Frederick of York, that you merit my very best regard. I have no doubt you have frequently heard of my very great and affectionate regard for your dear mother, my sister; and I assure you I love her daughter for her sake. I am well persuaded that my dear niece will not refuse the pressing request of myself and her mother with respect to an alliance with my son George, Prince of Wales, which I earnestly desire may be arranged to take place as speedily as possible. I promise, most solemnly promise, that I will be your friend and father upon every occasion, and I entreat you to comply with this ardent desire of my heart, that my agitated mind may once more be composed.

“I have explained to my sister the probable difficulties which my son George may mention; but they must not have any weight in your mind and conclusions. I beg you not to refuse this pressing petition of your most

“Sincere and affectionate

“Uncle,

“GEORGE R.”

“P. S. Do not delay a reply an hour longer than can be avoided.”

*“To Caroline, Princess of Brunswick”*

*&c. &c. &c.*

(Hamilton, 1832: 109)

*Copy of a Letter to the Duchess of Brunswick, from her Brother, George the Third.*

“MY DEAR SISTER,

“I have endeavoured to exite [sic] and promote in the mind of my son George a desire to espouse my dear niece Caroline. *This*, I am aware, he will only consent to as a prudent step, by which his debts may be paid. I will trust to your influence with Caroline that she may not be offended with any thing he pleases to say. He may please to plead that he is already married!—and I fear he will resort to any measures rather than an honorable marriage. But as, in my former letters, I have explained my wishes upon this subject, I therefore need not now repeat them. Tell my dear niece she must never expect to find a mother or friend in the queen; but *I will be her friend to my latest breath*. Give me your support, my sister, and prevail upon my niece Caroline at all hazards.

“Your’s affectionately,

“GEORGE R.”

(Hamilton, 1832: 110)

*Copy of the reply to George, Prince of Wales, from Caroline, Princess of Brunswick.*

“MY LORD AND COUSIN,

“I cannot express to your royal highness the feelings of surprise which your letter has afforded me, neither can I rely *entirely* upon what it contains; because the accompanying letter of the good king, your father, is so very opposite to its meaning. I thought that the ties of relationship which exist between us would have obliged your royal highness to treat with delicacy and honor the princess whom your king destines for you. For my own part, my lord, I know my duty, and I have not the power or the wish to break the laws which are wished to be imposed upon me. I, therefore, have decided upon obeying the wishes of those who have the right to dispose of my person. I submit, at the same time, to the consequences with which your highness threatens me. But, if you could read *that heart* to which you impart such anguish, you would perhaps have feelings of remorse from this barbarous treatment, in which your royal highness appears to boast. I am now resolved to await from *time* and our *union* the just regard I will endeavour to merit; and I trust that your regret for what you have written will, in some measure, avenge the wrong you have so wantonly committed. Believe me, my lord, that I shall not cease to offer my prayers for the happiness of your royal highness; *mine* will be perfect if I can contribute to yours.

“I am, for life, your most devoted Cousin,

“CAROLINE AMELIA OF BRUNSWICK.”

(Hamilton, 1832: 114-5)

## **APPENDIX TWO**





## Songs, Posters and Miscellaneous

Together with the Addresses presented to the Queen, the lyrics of songs and ballads were important barometers of the interest raised by the Affair among varied sectors of the population. The lyrics of songs were usually printed as broadsides primarily for street sale, although they could also be sold by the printers themselves, or by shopkeepers associated with them, as shown by Bennett (1980-1) and Maccoby (2002). The typical broadside in this period contained the lyrics of one, two or three songs, and the usual price was half-penny or one penny, correspondingly. This, together with the fact that there was no music on the sheets, points to a predominantly working-class audience.

The main publishers of broadsides were James Catnach and John Pitts of Seven Dials, Batchelar of Long Alley, Moorfields, and Evans of Long Lane, Smithfields (Bennett, 1980-1: 74) although a number of others, such as John Fairburn, Thomas Dolby, and Richard Carlile, not usually associated with this type of publishing, were also active. The broadside production by these radical publishers – albeit reduced – shows that even this type of literature could be put to the service of anti-establishment agitation.

The very nature of these publications, commonly referred to as ‘ephemera’, makes it difficult to know how many broadsides were produced during the Queen Caroline affair. Bennett (1980-1: 74) calculates that the two most important collections of broadsides about the Affair – the British Library Collection and the Madden Collection at Cambridge University Library – contain a total number of about 110 ballads. Typically, the authors of this type of sentimental literary production are unknown, or not named. There are exceptions, however, as with the ballad ‘God Save the Queen – A New Song’, whose author is Samuel Bamford.

Only two sets of songs supporting the King and the Government, published by William Wright of Fleet Street, are reported by Bennett (1980-1: 76). They are the *Radical Harmonist*, dating from the time of the trial, and *The New Christmas Budget*, dating from late December 1820. They were sold at one shilling each, which suggests that they were not directed at a working-class reading public.

The origin of the majority of the tunes that accompanied the lyrics is traditional, including Scottish and Irish tunes as for example, ‘Erin Go Bragh’ (both Scottish and Irish), which accompanies the lyrics for ‘Queen of the Isles’. ‘Britons Claim her as your

Queen!!' was sung to the tune of 'Scotts, wha' ha' wi' Wallace Bled', which is a traditional Scottish tune. Maccoby (2002: 371, fn. 3) lists the following broadside songs:

- 'The Britons' Hymn'
- 'O Britons, Remember your Queen's Happy Days'
- 'My Husband'
- 'Queen Caroline and the British Trio'
- 'Four New Songs on the Bursting of Green Bags!!!'
- 'Caroline Triumphant' (*BMC* 14047; BM-ID 1993,1212.38), printed by J. Pitts, a broadside celebrating Caroline as Queen with nine wood engravings and four song-texts: 'The Poor Royal Stranger'; 'British Seamen's Address to the Queen (adapted from 'Hearts of Oak'); 'Britons Claim her as Your Queen', and 'The Wandering Boy'.
- 'The Appeal of Innocence', 'The Queen of the Isles', and 'God save the Queen'.

Sometimes the lyrics of songs were collected as cuttings in the manner of the traditional scrapbook, together with other material, such as posters and advertisements. The following titles and lyrics are collected in a large scrapbook at the British Library, entitled *Satirical Songs and Miscellaneous Papers, Connected with the Trial of Queen Caroline* (1820). Their interest lies in offering a view of the type of sentimental literature as a whole connected with the Queen Caroline affair which includes song-texts, posters and advertisements:

- 'The Rose of Albion' (tune of 'Rose Bud in Summer'), printed and fold by J. Pitts:

Blow softly ye breezes and waft  
O'er the proud billows the bark  
which contains our lov'd Caroline dear,  
Ye angels of peace, Oh! watch over her pillow  
And ever defend her when danger is near [...]

- 'Caroline's Return', to the tune of 'He was fam'd for Deeds of Arms'

- ‘Britons Claim her as your Queen!! to the tune of ‘Scotts, wha’ ha’ wi’ Wallace Bled’, printed by J. Fairburn.

- ‘Long Live Queen Caroline’, printed by J. Pitts

- ‘Sweet Caroline, Me Store’, printed by J. Pitts

- ‘Queen of the Isles’, to the tune of ‘Erin Go Bragh’, printed by J. Pitts:

O Haste, Caroline,  
Haste, o’er the wide water [...]

- ‘The Poor Royal Stranger without any Home’, printed by J. Catnach

- ‘God Save the Queen – A New Song’, published by T. Dolby:

God save Queen Caroline  
Long live brave Caroline  
God save our Queen  
Virtue and truth combin’d  
Reign in her noble mind  
Her fame no spot shall find!  
God save our Queen [...]

- ‘The British Seamen and their Beloved Queen’, printed by J. Catnach, and sung to the tune of ‘Heart of Oak’

The Italian witnesses were favourite targets of ridicule and execration in broadside songs, or as posters and advertisements, also found in the same scrapbook. Some examples:

- ‘The Green Bag’ (tune of ‘The Knight Errant’), printed by J. Pitts:

When the Queen was abroad  
Far removed from our eyes [...]

- ‘My Jockey & Co’s. Bag of Lies!!’ is an advertisement and a ‘new song’. It was printed by J. Fairburn, and sung to the tune of ‘The Yorkshire Gala’, probably a traditional tune (Bennett, 1980-1: 84):

Now selling off, enclos’d in Bags of Green  
The stock of lies made up against our Queen  
Without reserve – imported from abroad O.  
That favourite species call’d non mi Ricordo

This BL scrapbook also contains some texts of addresses presented to the Queen:

- ‘Address of the Female Inhabitants of Nottingham, with her Majesty’s Answer’, as it appeared in the *Traveller Newspaper* of 26 July 1820. An excerpt:

Your father is no more – your brother fell in battle – the chief solace of your cares, your amiable daughter was soon, too soon, snatched away – and your great protector, our late venerable monarch, soon followed her.

- ‘To the Queen’s Most Excellent Majesty, the Dutiful Tender of the Loyalty, Homage, and Respect of the under-signed, the Married Females Resident in the Parish of St. Mary-le-Bone’.
- Excerpt of the text printed on the poster ‘On the Return of Queen Caroline to England’, published by J. Fairburn:

Britons! Your Queen returns to England’s shore,  
To face the malice of her foes once more;  
She comes, array’d in innocence, to prove  
She’s still deserving of her People’s love [...]  
Much injur’d Princess! [...]

## **APPENDIX THREE**



**TO THE WISE MEN OF GOTHAM, RESIDENT IN THE WARD OF  
CHEAP, IN THE CITY OF LONDON**

**The brown Ape to Thomas Helps, and his associates—greeting!**

Whereas it hath been represented to your illustrious brethren, the apes of Borneo, that certain *well-disposed* persons, who are now busy in framing *loyal* addresses, are lineal descendants of a colony of enterprising apes, from Borneo, who allured by the celebrity of ‘the monkey who had seen the world’, embarked for Europe, in company with some rats from Java, some centuries ago:—and whereas, your hairy brethren feel honoured by the celebrity you have acquired for the race:—I am requested to convey to you their sincere congratulations, upon your recent discovery; which the Gods of the monkey species must have doubtless inspired, for the benefit of the Bulls among whom ye have condescended to take up your abode. We have heard that the Bulls are a discontented race;—that they were glorious and did not know it; prosperous, and yet could not believe it:—comfortable, without perceiving their comforts;—moral, without morality;—benevolent, without benevolence;—property safe, though continually pillaged by robbers;—freedom, both civil and religious, safely locked up in cells, for the enjoyment of the people, without their appreciating the blessing; just laws, which are ungratefully called unjust;—impartially administered, by men known to be most partial; and a *mild and paternal* government, which thanked one portion of its subjects for the destruction of the other!!!!!!

All this is so very clear, and satisfactory, and so much like *our way*, that when it was read in our assembly, every ape leaped from his seat, and emptying his mouth from the nuts collected in the morning’s march, burst into an exclamation of—“Aye! this will do! Europe will soon be as civilized as Borneo; and apes shall rule the world.” And the whole assembly sang in full chorus, the national air of “The monkey who had seen the world!” Anxious, for the honour of our species, we have drawn up for your assistance the mathematical demonstration of the positions you have laid down, lest your haste should betray you into some inaccuracies which might set the bulls roaring at your mistakes; for that race of animals is yet in a very rude and uncultivated state; in proof of which, several bulls have here lately set up a laugh so loud, and coarse, at our Great apes, that it might

have been taken for a horse laugh! We should like to know whether they are more civil in Europe.

Pray has the difference of climate made any particular alteration in your appearance? Do you run still on all fours? We have heard here of some sacrilegious attempts to *set you upright*, and to *make men of you*? We hope, however, that you will adhere to the faith of your forefathers, and *crawl* as long as you can. It is beyond measure the *safest plan*; an ape upon his four legs may fall over, but can hardly be said to fall down. But we think we perceive, in your words, the full proof of your original nature; and we feel confident that you will never look, or be, more like men, than you are, or your hairy brethren. You have been, we hear, very successful in collecting nuts, chestnuts, and other winter hordes. Are you still covered with hair? We have heard with astonishment that you have put tails behind your heads, instead of wearing them, as is usual among apes, where they are worn by any of our fraternity. But we have no doubt you have good reason for your deviation. It has probably helped you in your *collections*; and for this every thing is allowable. The blessings of your fraternity attend you:—and may chestnuts never fail you in the winter. Be assured of our prayers, and our high consideration.

THE BROWN APE

(*The Black Dwarf*, vol. v: 835-6)