

'Unite and Be Free': The Historical Archaeology of British
Political Radicalism, 1815-1822.

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July 2020

Abstract

The late 1810s saw waves of political radicalism. Reformers protested and petitioned for voting rights and parliamentary reform, whilst some extremists sought insurrection and revolution. Within mass platform meetings, societies, and movements, material culture and space were important mechanisms in expressing, signalling, and constructing radical identities. This thesis studies these identities through their material and spatial outputs through utilising thematic analysis and exploring several key events: important mass platform meetings, female reform societies, the imprisonments of Henry Hunt and Samuel Bamford, and the Cato Street Conspiracy execution. It argues that radicalism associated itself with open, public, and urban space, however, 1820 saw the contraction of space to the scaffold and prison cell. Material culture was instrumental in making and infusing spaces and landscapes with radicalism through its emblematic and totemic qualities.

As well as examining radicalism, the thesis contributes to archaeology more generally. Its methodological approach promotes the study of events, demonstrating how the archaeological analysis of the short-term is possible and illuminating. Through using thematic analysis, the thesis adopts an interdisciplinary stance, utilising material culture, documents, and visual sources. As a subdiscipline, it is in its early stages yet there is great potential to examine historical movements, events, and moments that can help us understand inequalities and protest in contemporary experiences. This is the driving force of the thesis: to tell radical stories that resonate with today.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

All newspapers were accessed through the John Rylands Library, the British Newspaper Archive, Gale Cengage 19th Century Newspapers, Gale Cengage The Times Digital Archive, Gale Cengage 19th Century Periodicals, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, and ProQuest British Periodicals.

AJ – Aberdeen Journal	EMLR - European Magazine and London Review
BC – Bath Chronicle	FJ – Freeman’s Journal
BWM – Bell’s Weekly Messenger	GH – Glasgow Herald
BWJ – Berrow’s Worcester Journal	GJ - Gloucester Journal
BD – Black Dwarf	HT - Hampshire Telegraph
BMV – Bristol Mercury	HP – Hull Packet
BNP – Bury and Norwich Post	HJ – Hereford Journal
CBC - Cambridge Chronicle	IJ – Ipswich Journal
CMC – Cheltenham Chronicle	JOJ – Jackson’s Oxford Journal
CC – Chester Chronicle	KC – Kentish Chronicle
CPR – Cobbett’s Political Register	LSC – Leicester Chronicle
CM – Caledonian Mercury	LC – London Courier
CJ – Carlisle Journal	LG – Lancaster Gazette
CMC – Cheltenham Chronicle	LI – Leeds Intelligencer
CO - Cheshire Observer	LM – Leeds Mercury
CP – Carlisle Patriot	LT – Leeds Times
DCA - Durham County Advertiser	LVM – Liverpool Mercury
DM – Derby Mercury	LDG – London Gazette
EM – Evening Mail	MA – Morning Advertiser

MG – Manchester Guardian
MM – Manchester Mercury
MO – Manchester Observer
MC – Morning Chronicle
MP – Morning Post
MR – Military Register
NC – Newcastle Courant
NM – Northampton Mercury
NS – Northern Star
NFC – Norfolk Chronicle
NR – National Register
OJ – Oxford Journal
OUCH – Oxford University and City
Herald
PC – Perthshire Courier
PLDA – Public Ledger and Daily
Advertiser
RCG – Royal Cornwall Gazette
SWJ – Salisbury and Winchester
Journal
SNL – Saunders’ News-Letter
SC – Suffolk Chronicle
SHI – Sheffield Independent
SHM – Sheffield Mercury
SM – Stamford Mercury
SPR – Sherwin’s Political Register
TC – Taunton Courier
TEFP – Trewman’s Exeter Flying Post
WEE – Windsor and Eton Express
WACK – Westmorland Advertiser and
Kendal Chronicle
WG – Westmorland Gazette
WJ – Worcester Journal
WA - Wrexham Advertiser
YH – York Herald

ARCHIVE REFERENCES

Broadside Ballads Online at the Bodleian Library - BBO
British Library – BL
British Museum - BM
Harvard Law School Library - HLSL
Home Office – HO
John Johnson Collection at the Bodleian Library – JJC
Newcastle University Library - NUL
Treasury Solicitor’s Papers at the National Archives - TS
The Word on the Street – TWS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to Jon Finch, supervisor of both my MA and PhD, who has provided invaluable insight and critique on the thesis. Your constant support made me feel an appreciated researcher within the department. I am indebted to the very short conversation where you only said, 'Peterloo', at me in winter 2015.

Thanks to Jon Mee and Steve Ashby for their guidance and input on the Thesis Advisory Panel. Both made what could have been onerous meetings into ones of enthusiastic constructive criticism.

To the Working Class Movement Library and its staff, many thanks for being such a welcoming and knowledgeable archive. This thesis is also indebted to digital and online archives. Without these fantastic collections, the research could not have been half as rich.

For the team of readers, El Conroy and Claire Boardman, I am very grateful for your dedication to searching out as many typos, spelling mistakes, format mishaps, and grammatical errors as you could. I am also incredibly grateful for everyone who took the time to hear ideas and analysis from this research presented at conferences. Your enthusiasm for the topic helped forge the thesis into something more than I thought possible.

I was lucky enough to be part of an amazing research community in G65 in beautiful King's Manor. Thanks for being a safe place (or lively pub) to rant, ask silly questions, and learn in. I am not sure how many PhD candidates had a cardboard cut-out of Kit Harrington watch them write their thesis.

I raise a virtual glass to all my friends who endured hearing me discuss radicalism but also toasted and wished me success.

Last but not least, thank you to my Mum, Dad, Corey, and Ozzy. Your love and encouragement were a constant source of support throughout my university education.

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author.
This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other,
University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

1 INTRODUCTION

On the 4th October 1819, up to 40,000 working-class men and women met at Skircoat Moor, an open space on the south-western edge of Halifax to protest for democratic reform and to commemorate the violence exacted at Peterloo two months earlier, where eighteen people died when a similar, peaceful demonstration was attacked by the militia. Some wore white hats with ribbons, whilst others, particularly women, were dressed in mourning attire. The reformers processed across the landscape, their ranks punctuated by banners and flags painted with legends such as, 'Unity and Love', 'England expects every man to do his duty', 'Hunt and Liberty', 'We mourn for our brethren murdered at Manchester', and 'Liberty or Death'. Ordinary people were reclaiming urban spaces and radicalising them through mass meeting events as a performative means of being heard. As such, the meeting in Halifax captures key aspects of the reform movement and radicalism in the late 1810s. Material culture, landscapes, spaces, and gendered performances, were all important features of Regency radicalism.

The post-Napoleonic period was one of lively radical activity in Britain. Radicals across the country, but especially in Lancashire, Yorkshire, and London, were agitating, protesting, and petitioning for reform of a parliamentary system that related to the medieval landscapes of power, rather than the emerging geography of industrialisation and urbanism. The mass platform meeting became a popular method of demanding change through claiming public spaces and physically demonstrating support for the cause. Within what George Rudé (1967) characterised as the political 'crowd', material culture was an important medium for communicating radical ideologies and constructing political identities. Women were involved in public events and crafting liberty caps – the symbol of the French Revolution and an enduring symbol of reform. Female reformers supported the movement and were important actors in the gathering momentum of eighteen-

nineteen. In contrast to the mass platform meeting, violence and insurrection were chosen by a minority as a way of securing revolutionary change, but their efforts ended in trials for high treason and sometimes execution. The years 1815-1822 can be considered ones of animated, energetic, and at times divided radicalism, yet their study remains comparatively neglected.

1.1 AIMS OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This thesis explores British political radicalism between 1815-1822, emphasising the importance of landscape, space, and material culture in constructing radical identities, whilst also recognising the cruciality of materiality and spatiality in performing radicalism. The methodological and theoretical aims presented create a new framework for undertaking historical archaeology. Simultaneously, they cultivate and advance the archaeology of radicalism, an important and original sub-discipline that – due to contemporary political discourse – is much needed.

The thesis has several key aims which deal with methodological and theoretical considerations, as well as how historical archaeology can and should contribute to political history. Methodological aims focus on undertaking archaeological interpretations where material culture does not survive and how historical archaeology can study short-term movements and events. This lacuna in the evidence for events and incidents led to an appreciation of art historical thought and using contemporary visual sources whilst also understanding documentary and visual sources as a form of material culture. These aims are interconnected, with the lack of material culture and studying events driving forward new ways of interacting with sources. Through exploring these aims, it became apparent that the role of the queer self in interpretation needed to be examined, with this acting as a thread throughout the thesis. Collectively, these aims seek to develop the archaeology of radicalism.

Archaeology can seem to miss important stories and key events in history through poor material survival. This thesis crafts a new way of approaching the past through viewing documentary and visual sources as material culture, undertaking an archaeological study with a limited material record, and accessing a series of critical moments in the evolution of political radicalism at the start of the nineteenth century. Historical archaeology has traditionally made a strength of weaving together documentary sources with the archaeological and artefactual record. However, the majority of these studies use text as an aid to the object and as a way of providing context, rather than making the documentary a primary point of critical analysis (see Galloway 2006 for an overview). Thus, the potential of these sources and how they intersect is being overlooked. Visual sources are often included within archaeological studies as a way of illustrating or analysing the landscape or a particular building, but again, they are not frequently utilised as a critical source themselves. Therefore, this thesis is crafting an innovative way of archaeologically delving into the documentary and visual.

Visual sources are integral to this thesis (see chapter three) and harnessed beyond their illustrative purposes to explore how people interpreted, related to, and imagined their society. Exploring how people *saw* their society through depictions of events and individuals is a vital aspect of the thesis and is a major methodological contribution to archaeology. In order to succeed in fulfilling the methodological aims, therefore, the thesis will be underpinned with a theoretical and critical methodological appreciation of art historical thought and interpretation (Crary 1992; Hahn 2001; Heffernan 2006), in order to analyse an array of contemporary cartoons, caricatures, and engravings. Importantly, this is not just about using visual sources as historical evidence, but recognising that ways of seeing have a history themselves (Behr, Osborne, and Wieber 2010). The thesis works within Burke's (2001; 2010) framework of 'eyewitnessing' or 'intertextuality'. Burke argues that the historian can

engage with visual sources by approaching them with the same rigour as a historian would with documents or text. Through utilising this framework, the thesis understands documents and visual sources as the event of the text. This recognises the process of writing, the production of the textual artefact, and its experience of being read. Considering this further, documentary and visual sources can be understood as a 'deposit of activity' (Baxandell 1985, 13). Burke recognises 'ten commandments' or pitfalls that researchers must be aware of in the study of visual sources. The commandments concerning authenticity, cultural context, and attitudes are particularly useful for this thesis. Overall, engaging with the visual and considering art historical epistemology has the bonus of producing an inter- or trans-disciplinary approach.

Studying events and understanding text as a form of material culture are entwined. Approaching material culture as a way of disproving the historical record is misguided. This approach misunderstands documents, the historical record, and historical method. Rather than seeing 'traditional' material culture as something to be 'read' (Hodder 1989), landscapes as 'historical documents' (Barker 1993, 13) or the documentary record as something to be 'excavated' (Penn 1991), this thesis seeks to move beyond seeing material culture as something passive and static, or using excavation metaphors as a way of justifying or securing archaeology's use of text. Moreland (2006, 143) highlights how, within historical archaeology, there is 'still a tendency to see texts as providing evidence about the past rather than having efficacy within it'. Historical archaeology has often justified itself as being a 'voice for the voiceless' (Scott 1994), highlighting how material culture can challenge the historical record (Holly and Cordy 2007), with this reducing the role of the text to being an oppressing cultural force (Moreland 2006). Rather, we must understand how textual culture impacts societies (O'Keefe 2018) instead of only engaging with the 'surface meaning' of words encountered in archives and archaeological sites

(Cipolla 2012). The methodological interest lies in the tension between the archaeological and the historical and recognising the multiplicity of truths rather than attempting to construct a single understanding of an event or process. This thesis incorporates documents from numerous political factions and ideologies appreciating the scalar nature of studying events whilst also appreciating how the events and identities were understood or perceived differently by different people. This builds on a queer understanding of the past and embracing dislocated and multiple truths.

Queer archaeology does not only have to be focused on the history of or identifying LGBTQ+ individuals in the past. Rather, queer archaeology connects a body of theory, the queer self, and an appreciation of multiple perspectives into its interpretations. This thesis will demonstrate the powerful pertinence the queer self has on shaping and moulding interpretations. Queer practice encourages reflection on positionality through making the researcher consider how their values, identity, and views impact or shape the analysis. Rather than box this neatly in the method chapter, these reflections occur at crucial moments, directly tying the researcher and researched together instead of compartmentalising them. Thus, the use of queer theory and its prominence ebbs and flows throughout the thesis, with it being most explicitly used in chapter six. Even when it is not explicitly referred to, queer theory and identity underpins the thesis. First person voice is used delicately and at appropriate moments, allowing the self and research to interact. It enabled an appreciation of different perspectives on the same event or space, allowing the analysis to incorporate numerous experiences. Queer theory validates tensions and intersections between themes (as in chapter four), allowing landscapes, spaces, and radicalisms to interweave, rather than becoming/being treated as monolithic or singular concepts.

This innovative study addresses key areas that archaeology has the potential to examine: the political past, events, and text as material culture. Combining these aims together, the thesis creates and develops an archaeology of radicalism. Through methodological and theoretical aims working in tandem, the archaeology of radicalism will be inherently interdisciplinary in nature and analyse how the past and present collide, interact, and sustain inequalities. Contemporary protest, activism, and politics continue to be shaped by historical resistance, making this research pertinent and necessary to understand the legacies and heritage of radicalism. How we tell stories about past radicalisms moulds understandings of contemporary political narratives. The archaeology of radicalism will be – and must be – relevant.

Building on the aims, the research questions for this thesis seeks to understand the performance and identities of Regency radicalism in Britain. Material culture was fundamental in creating political identities in radicalism. Landscapes and spaces influenced radicalism's efforts to achieve change. The thesis examines how material culture, landscape, and spaces were so important, as well as how they were utilised in radical identity construction and performance in different contexts: the mass platform meeting, female reform societies, imprisonment, and execution. As an imaginative and innovative study, the thesis' development of the archaeology of radicalism establishes the importance of examining political material culture, landscapes, spaces, and events.

1.2 RATIONALE

There are numerous reasons behind historical archaeology engaging with, and studying, political history. The time period was a vibrant and complex political era in which reform movements gathered momentum and the Tory establishment reacted fearfully having seen the impact of revolution in Europe. The frequent use of mass platform meetings as a novel instrument of the disenfranchised during this period provides the opportunity to consider the role of landscape, something that

archaeology has proved itself to be extremely capable of analysing already. There were also fascinating new forms of material culture being crafted, created, and curated by radicals and reformers built on the legacy of the Wilkeite movement, the French Revolution, as well as military and religious processions. Radicalism was performative, and performance was marked with and by material culture. Material culture and space were important elements in radical ritual, identity, and interaction in this period (Epstein 1994; 2003). Political material culture has received some attention from an historical perspective, although this has largely focused on the French Revolution (Fairchilds 2000), perhaps due to its emphasis on transforming the everyday (Auslander 2005). Within the nineteenth century, historians have not been as enthusiastic as those studying the long eighteenth century to include material culture in their work (Nixon, Pentland, and Roberts 2012). Importantly, the same can be argued for visual culture (Thompson 2007), with some nuanced exceptions being Brewer's (1976; 1986) extensive work on pre-1832 Reform Act posters, cartoons, and caricatures, and the French Revolution (Crow 1995; Hunt 1992). Therefore, there are exciting possibilities of exploring radical material culture further and to develop an archaeology of radicalism.

Historical archaeology has yet to fully engage with its political potential. Whilst it is recognised that all archaeology is in some capacity political and situated within political discourse, it is often implicit and not a driving factor of the research. Of course, there have been various attempts at producing archaeologies that make political impacts and these should be rightly applauded. Attempts have been made to create an archaeology that seeks to deconstruct inequalities in the present (Leone 1995; 2010; 2011), create and harness movements (Chidester 2010), or decolonise the past (Smith and Wobst 2005; Sully 2007). As highlighted by Orser (1996), and to a less political extent by Johnson (1996), capitalism is a major study point of the discipline, although this does not automatically translate into an active or explicit

political stance. This thesis aims to pursue the political further and build upon previous work by analysing the political past, but also by considering how archaeology can contribute to contemporary political debates and action. One of the overarching aims of the thesis therefore is to create an explicitly political historical archaeology that seeks to construct meaningful narratives around political radicalism of the Regency period. Using political events and history aids the telling of these stories, engendering a response and forging a direct connection between the past and the present. The point about connecting the past with the present is worth further comment. British society is politically divided and wealth gaps are growing. Narratives and stories about suffrage, trade unionism, co-operative movements, and so forth, have traditionally been pigeon-holed as left-wing history. This thesis recognises how the fight for voting rights is a story for all working/middle classes and should be trans-political.

There is also methodological potential in this thesis. Archaeology has typically engaged with studying long term change or the long durée, and this approach continues to be one of archaeology's defining strengths. However, archaeology needs to also engage with the short term, ranging from year/s to months to hours. Through exploring the mass platform, female reform societies, and executions, this thesis will examine events which only lasted for a number of hours. However, they were also the manifestations of longer-term shifts in society. Rather than build a narrative focused on *why* these events happen, it will analyse *how* they happened through analysis of their materiality, processions, spaces, and bodies. The thesis seeks to answer how an historical archaeology of events can be created and harnessed. Whilst the scope of the thesis focuses on the early nineteenth century, the methods employed here will demonstrate that the archaeology of events has far greater potential.

1.3 STRUCTURE

Chapters two and three work together to situate the study within its historiographical, methodological and theoretical frameworks. Chapter two provides a review of the literature on political radicalism and studies that have incorporated material culture or space. Importantly, this does not aim to be a critical analysis of why radicalism occurred when it did, nor to provide a comprehensive narrative of the reform movement in the post-Napoleonic era. Rather, it explores how material culture and landscape have featured in historical and archaeological work on protest, resistance, and radicalism. Chapter three discusses the methodology used – thematic analysis – as well as providing definitions of key concepts including landscape, space, and gender. Chapter four explores how the thematic analysis was applied, outlining the four major themes and providing a case study for each.

Chapters five, six, seven, and eight, explore various events, individuals, and societies. The method of thematic analysis lends itself to the analysis being structured around important themes. As opposed to having separate analysis and discussion chapters, the two are entwined to produce a more coherent interpretation. Chapter five focuses on the mass platform meeting through its landscape theme, using the Spa Field meetings of 1816, the Blanketeer's March of 1817, and the Smithfield meeting of July 1819 as case studies. Chapter six explores the female reformers and their societies in 1819, with an emphasis on the theme of gender. The Blackburn Female Reform Society receives particular attention due it being the first of its kind. Other notable aspects of the analysis include how women used the liberty cap as their preferred form of material expression and how their gendered identity could be considered as a form of female masculinity. Chapter seven focuses on the theme of identity and space, exploring the prison experiences of two notable Regency radicals, Henry Hunt and Samuel Bamford, following their sentencing at the York trial for parts they played in the Peterloo Massacre. Chapter eight examines the execution of

the Cato Street Conspirators, paying attention to Arthur Thistlewood and William Davidson in particular, and their execution spaces with a particular emphasis on the body and performance. Chapter nine provides the thesis' conclusions.

1.4 CONCLUSION

This thesis will analyse the important, tumultuous, but often neglected, events of Regency radicalism. It follows the development of the movement from mass meetings to conspiracies, trials and executions. By selecting a chronological range of events with very different associated spaces and material culture, the analysis chapters will explore radicalism's relationship with space, place, and landscape. The methodological and theoretical aims combine with the research questions to drive archaeological interpretations that will provide fresh insights on a complex period of political activism. The archaeology of radicalism is highly pertinent to contemporary struggles, protests, and inequalities. It listens to dissenting voices which tell stories that still brim with relevance. This thesis aims to deliver a new area of study to archaeology whilst connecting it to historical investigations of radicalism.

2 REVIEWING RADICALISM, CONTEXTUALISING REVOLUTION, FOREGROUNDING LIBERTY

This chapter will review how radicalism has been approached from three different perspectives: the spatial turn, the material turn, and archaeology's engagement with the thesis study areas, resistance, and politics. After reviewing the different ways that archaeology and history have studied radicalism, it will provide some necessary context regarding the French Revolution's legacy in British political thought and Regency radicalism. The final section considers the central importance of spatiality and materiality in British radicalism but also Loyalism, the 'establishment', and politics generally. It unpicks the idea of Liberty through various contexts, including liberty caps, representations, and election culture.

2.1 THE SPATIAL TURN

One of the important shifts which occurred within literature on radicalism and reform has been the spatial turn. This body of work has been crucial in developing understandings of how radicalism operated, congregated, and protested. The following section will examine some of the different ways space has been considered, such as the diversity in spaces considered, investigations into closed or semi-private spaces, and taskscapes. It will also address some of the issues or areas which require further work, particularly noting the absence of landscape and archaeology in discussions of radical spatiality.

Spatial work has a real diversity in the buildings, locations, and spaces which are studied. Within radical studies, there are two – quite rough – categories: open or public spaces and closed or semi-private spaces. These are non-exacting as there can be overlap but it does catch the feeling of the literature. Navickas (2016) explored public spaces in an early nineteenth century context, with a particularly important part of the argument being that radicals/reformers shared or occupied the same

spaces as the authorities/oppressors, thereby creating contested arenas in urban settings. Furthermore, space is not passive, rather Navickas conceptualises it as active. This analytical shift generates opportunities to examine how space can prevent, mould, or reinforce power and agency. Awcock (2019) focused on open spaces in London, analysing contested debates and usages of Hyde Park. Navickas' argument on the closing down of public spaces c1800-1850 actually connects to Awcock's work on park spaces in that Hyde Park was being regulated as a *space* thus controlling *where* protest was acceptable and limiting places of free speech. What these studies elucidate is space was – and is – not a neutral arbiter. It was contested regarding who could use it and how it could be used, it was fluid in how it changed over time, and was active in shaping and making radicalism.

Moving to the category of closed or semi-private, we can also see that important work has been conducted. Mather (2018) has examined the domestic space or home in Regency radicalism, with this work tying into recent research interests on commemoration and memorialisation. Parolin (2010) has explored how radicals interacted with prisons, theatres, and taverns in the nineteenth century. Regarding the later nineteenth century, Forster (2019) has considered the spatial experiences and impact of refugees of the Paris Commune of 1871 in London. Again, there is variety in what has been examined, demonstrating that the spatial turn can operate on various scales.

Research has advocated for the increased usage of taskscapes within protest history studies (Awcock 2020), an idea originally put forward by Tim Ingold (2000). Navickas (2011) did utilise taskscapes for an examination on Luddism, perhaps because of how it foregrounds human agency within landscape building, therefore placing the emphasis on the protestors. Taskscapes also feature in a study on landscapes during the Later Highland Wars where the concept is used to frame not only how crofters

seized land but how they envisioned its use (Robertson 2016). What is interesting about the adoption of taskscapes within protest history, is that – at least in Ingold’s iteration – taskscapes actually struggle to deal with inequalities. Bender (2001) also critiques how taskscapes fail to fully consider the historical specificity of social relations. The advantage of taskscapes is they encourage thinking about the relationships between materiality and time (Thomas 2017) but, of course, it is not the only way we explore such relationships. Indeed, Ingold (2017) himself has begun to reflect on the idea of taskscapes, instead emphasising the idea of ‘meshworks’. These are two significant criticisms which either need to be included within the use of taskscapes, or perhaps more extremely, taskscapes need not be adopted. At the heart of the issue is that within the 1990s debates on landscape in archaeology, taskscapes were useful in generating discussion and highlighting key points (for example, landscapes are not static) but within contemporary archaeology, what actually is the difference between a landscape and a taskscape? We already have the multi-faceted concept we need to understand the relationship between people, space, and materiality: landscape.

The spatial turn has been exactly that – space orientated. Whilst there has been some acknowledgment of place (see Navickas 2016), public and open spaces (Navickas 2015) and interesting wielding of historical geography (see Roberts 2017 on the geography of Luddite machine breaking), there has been insufficient engagement with the idea of landscape – and perhaps too much on taskscapes! In an examination of South Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire, Navickas (2009b) proposes that rather than the landscape being a backdrop, it was at the foreground. It achieved this status through its symbolism and becoming a place of historical agitation, therefore making place and space important in acting as reminders of the right to meet but in more recent work by Navickas, the idea of landscape seems to be utilised to a lesser extent. Engagement with the idea of landscapes can be seen in

studies of rural or agrarian protests (see Baker 2019 for an example). Carl Griffin (2014) argues that despite significant transformations in rural spaces, the protest landscape remained largely unchanged between 1700-1850 – something worth remarking on as Griffin’s temporal framework crosses the divide between early modern and nineteenth century studies. Enclosure is a prominent feature in studies of rural landscapes of protest (Dyer 2006; McDonagh 2013). Perhaps then this is an issue of an urban/rural divide in scholarship and a consequence of the type of protest conducted in rural spaces – the transformation of rural Britain influenced how protest would manifest. Although it could be argued that this discussion on landscape/space is semantics, landscape is different to space, and it is here that historical archaeology can exercise one of its strengths. This is also one reason why the thesis engages with mass platform meetings over tavern, pubs, and clubs meeting. Through exploring at this wider scale or scope, it is possible to introduce the idea of landscape within urban contexts.

Alongside landscape, there are other key areas in which the spatial turn has yet to explore. These could be split into two separate categories: memory and performance - although it actually is useful to think about the two together. Kelliher (2018, 8) has identified that the role of memory – or ‘usable pasts’ – has not been fully integrated. Perhaps recent work on the Peterloo Massacre demonstrates the value of incorporating memory, commemoration, and usable pasts (see Cozens 2018). Questions on how space and landscape were moved through still need to be explored. Chartism has received attention on its spectacular processions (Nouvian 2019) and the build-up to Peterloo has been considered (Poole 2006). One of the most interesting studies conducted on space and performance, is that of Daniel Arasse (1991) who explores the spectacle of the guillotine during the Reign of Terror, with the analysis layering together actors, agency, space, and material culture. Crucially, theatrics were utilised in order to make the guillotine more entertaining;

its efficiency resulted in a quicker execution compared to hanging, leaving the crowd displeased. Compensation was found in processions, songs, and holding the decapitated head aloft. This is particularly significant regarding this thesis' methodology due to its considered combination of sources and methodologies, whilst also demonstrating the worth of studying radical space and performance. Despite the aforementioned work, there is room for development and exploration. This thesis aims to look at various scales of spaces and landscapes, highlighting the importance of spatial dimensions in radicalism and how these aided radical performance and identity construction.

The major area of criticism – and this should not be read as blame – is the lack of archaeological theory within this work. Why are history and archaeology developing their theories in parallel? Why are the disciplines not communicating? This thesis is not the place to answer such questions regarding why the disciplines are not taking advantage of fruitful conversations, but it can emphasise that utilising a historical archaeology framework is useful due to its inherent interdisciplinarity.

2.2 THE MATERIAL TURN

History has not only turned to space, it has also turned to the material. This can be seen within a diverse number of subjects, although the historiography of radical studies and material culture is perhaps more complicated than other areas. It has to be acknowledged that James Epstein engaged with material culture, especially the liberty cap, in the 1990s. French Revolution studies have also explored the material world and objects of revolution, although perhaps cynically, this shift may have occurred sooner here because of the sheer volume of work on the French Revolution, but also because of the central importance in revolutionary zeal in changing all aspects of life, influencing urban space and architecture (Ferguson 1994; Leith 1991), songs (Rogers 1947; McKinley 2007), and clothing (Fairchild 2000; Harris 1981). There has also perhaps been an imbalance in engagement with

material culture within radical or protest studies. Eighteenth century studies have examined material culture to an extent, then there is a trough in early nineteenth century studies, before the curve begins to rise again, peaking with late nineteenth century studies. This could be due to wider concerns within these periods. For instance, the eighteenth century is connected to the increase in consumption and vapid capitalism, with these shaping studies to explore the commercialisation of politics (see Bermingham and Brewer 1995).

The material turn has encouraged investigation into a variety of material culture, but clothing and dress accessories have been the most explored in radical or political contexts. Morris (2015) has analysed the role of clothing in communicating political messages in late Victorian England. Navickas (2010) highlights the symbolism that political sashes could carry, arguing that clothing and material adornments were prominent features in early nineteenth century radicalism, reform, and politics. These studies arguably could have discussed and recognised the important relationship between materiality and embodiment more. Whilst both studies interconnect clothing into wider social, cultural, and political contexts, they miss the important physical frame of the body and how the properties of the material interact or intersect with the physicality of people. Furthermore, this work is of course important and formative in shaping how scholarship examines material culture, but it has largely been limited to personal possessions, household items, and clothing thereby missing out on other mundane objects (McDonagh 2019). Radical studies thus need to not only consider the body in more depth, they also need to widen their material scope. As highlighted above in how rural protest studies have engaged with the idea of landscape more than urban protest studies, the need to engage with more material culture may again be a challenge for scholars working on urban protests. Discussions on animal maiming (Griffin 2014) and destroying features such as hedges (McDonagh 2013) have been considered in rural settings,

thus showing how material culture is being treated in a broader sense. These absences in urban protest research may also be a divide between early modern researchers and long eighteenth/nineteenth century scholars too. Work on early modern resistance and protest has been more expansive in its scope, laying down the gauntlet for researchers of later periods.

Again, French Revolution studies have arguably led the way with their studies of clothing. Within revolutionary thought, symbolism, signs, and codes were considered powerful mechanisms and tools that would help to create a unified France and convince people of the necessity of independence (Frank 2015). This connects to the need for the Revolution to not just alter the state but the people and the everyday (Hunt 2004a), with these two points for example being linked to ideas of creating a national dress. Ribeiro (1988) and Jones (1994) have argued modern understandings of fashion being the outward symbolic expression and manifestation of an individual's personality emerge from the French Revolution. This links to the consumer revolution of the second half of the eighteenth century and identity politics of the Revolution. One of the interesting facets of this manifestation is explored by Fairchild (2000) who carefully examines the evident contradiction in decreeing a freedom of dress law but following this with regulatory articles, including one which impinged upon personal freedom: that every French citizen must wear upon their person a red, white, and blue cockade. Fairchild argues that 'clothes literally made the man' due to revolutionary notions of goods, in this case clothing, were formative, symbolic, and didactic. Within many of these studies, material culture becomes passive or secondary to human action. It *represents*, *symbolises*, *expresses* radicalism or revolution. This is not necessarily problematic nor inherently wrong – indeed the analysis chapters do understand material culture as capable of being representative, symbolic, or expressive – but these studies do

miss important criteria such as the production of the objects and the material agency embedded within, in this instance, clothing.



Figure 1: Depiction of a sans culottes (Anon 1789). They earned their name from their choice of trousers and were particularly forthright revolutionaries. Note the liberty cap and weaponry which became key symbols of the Revolution due to the Reign of Terror.

By far the most analysed item of radical clothing or material culture is the liberty cap (figure 1). Liberty caps were multi-faceted materiality, existing as both a hat to be worn and a powerful symbol, appearing in prints, texts, paintings, engravings, cartoons, and atop pikes and poles. Therefore, the cap was not limited to a material existence but was prolifically deployed within more traditional historical sources. Although classical in its origins, the liberty cap became firmly wedded with revolution and radicalism, perhaps vying in contest with the guillotine as ‘the most potent symbol of freedom’ (Harris 1981, 283). Within its Roman context, it was a simply made hat given to slaves to materially declare and demonstrate their freedom, although even Romans adopted its symbolic qualities with Brutus utilising it on coinage to signal liberation from a tyrannical ruler: Julius Caesar (Omissi 2016). It transcended borders, becoming firmly rooted as a symbol within British politics. Immediately, it should be noted the liberty cap had not been divorced from British symbolism prior to the French Revolution but rather its meaning was substantially altered and imbued with new vigour. Indeed, the cap was not even a purely radical symbol necessarily, with Britannia (British liberty ideally personified) holding a pole with a cap surmounted on the end from around the mid-eighteenth century onwards (Higham 2001). Furthermore, it was also utilised within the American Revolution, with the combination of cap and pole becoming a revolutionary, republican symbol (Newman 1997), thus entering popular imagination. Despite this, the liberty cap is most firmly connected to the French Revolution, possibly due to the Reign of Terror but also the National Convention decided Liberty holding a pike with a liberty cap topping it was to be the symbol of the New Republic (Benzaken 1998). Notably, the shift away from recycling monarchical imagery began during this stage of the Revolution, with the liberty cap being pushed forward as a particularly suitable symbol for eliminating royalist symbols. However, it is worth noting the liberty cap’s fluidity and multi-vocality; Wrigley (1997) argues it was not understood universally and statically across the Revolution, instead a multitude of interpretations projected

onto a generic idea. This point is confirmed by Epstein (1989), who comments that one of the reasons the military reacted against protestors at Peterloo, Manchester, was due to the hoisting of liberty caps. Furthermore, this insight aptly explains the necessity of reviewing the liberty cap because of its prominence within British radicalism between 1815-1822, a point which emerges especially in chapter six' analysis of female reformers who were the foremost crafters of the caps.



Figure 2: Dancing Carmagnole around Tree of Liberty (Bonnevill 1792-94). This print not only depicts individuals wearing the liberty cap, but also its relationship to ritual, community activities. A group dances around a liberty tree, topped symbolically with a cap and decorated with cockades, most likely to the popular song 'La Carmagnole'.

Liberty caps were involved in revolutionary displays (see figure 2). Harden (1995) examines the relationship between the cap and the liberty tree, noting the important rejection of the usual trajectory of the hat's resurgent popularity after classical times. Rather than the pole or pike, the tree was used in rural areas, owing its usage not to antiquarians, classical texts, or Parisian propaganda, but its links to maypoles and masts which existed alongside trees as symbols of community and solidarity. However, this also extends to the decision to decorate liberty trees with caps, amongst other items including flowers, cockades, and at times farm implements. To frightened aristocratic and upper-class onlookers, the tree was linked to the gibbet (Ozouf 1988), thereby suitably highlighting the need to be aware of the multiple meanings, experiences, and interpretations that both performance and material culture generate and invite.

Material culture has not been absent from historical studies on radicalism. Banners, flags, liberty caps, et cetera, are mentioned, often within descriptions or vignettes. This, therefore, is very much the point: there is a difference between description and analytical incorporation of objects. Important work has been conducted (see Mansfield 2008, Mather 2018, McCalman 1998) but explicit interpretation, incorporation, and integration of material culture is not yet commonplace. Although discussing Victorian imperialism, Rappaport (2008) reflects on an interesting point: material or cultural histories tend to separate the everyday and rare through analytical frameworks, thereby creating a false or ahistorical division. This arguably is the case in radicalism studies too. Certain topics have received more material attention than others. Abolition has generated discussion around the material culture used to support anti-slavery movements (see Guyatt 2000; Katz-Hyman 2011). It may be possible to argue that these studies emerged through the obvious objects utilised within such movements – think about the powerful legacy of the Wedgwood medallion or the iconic liberty cap in the French Revolution. However,

material culture was obvious to late Georgian/Regency radicals, it was utilised in a variety of ways and contexts. Why has there been a silence or consignment of the material as illustrator or descriptor? In a period, rich with text and material culture, it makes archaeological (and historical) sense to pursue and incorporate both. Hodder and Hudson (2003, 13) have suggested that historians are specialised archaeologists in that they focus on one type of material culture in particular – the text. Whilst this can be a useful, even fun, way of conceiving the past and the evidence we have to work with, there are inherent differences between the disciplines and text & materiality. The more intriguing way to frame this argument is instead to deliberate over whether historical archaeology is the way forward.

Though the broader material turn in history has engaged with theory and considered epistemological ramifications and issues regarding material culture, there generally has been an absence of theory in studies of radical material culture. Murray Pittock's (2011) work on Jacobite material culture is especially worth noting due to its theorisation on how to approach the subject. Pittock is not the first to consider Jacobite material culture but other literature, whilst useful in its description, does not enter into analytical procedures (see Seddon 1996 for an example). Through theorising, Pittock shifts Jacobite material culture from being only communicative or part of a strategy to active and providing a space for silent conversations because of the possible treasonous readings attached to Jacobite language. Instead of blanket labelling objects as 'symbolic' et cetera, taking the time to venture into how we theorise complex material culture such as treasonous, seditious, or radical objects is worthwhile.

Surprisingly, there has been an absence of archaeology within these discussions. Nixon, Pentland, and Roberts' (2012) discussion on the material culture of Scottish reform politics is perhaps one of the few – if not only – instances where historians

utilise archaeological theory within a radical/reform context. As considered by Mansfield (2008), cultural history has not sufficiently interacted with material culture and its accompanying methodologies; whether this is because of ignorance, lack of confidence working with materials, or not understanding the methodologies is undecided. However, archaeology has also not fully contributed. Leone (2011) notes that the study of what he calls 'critical historical archaeology' has yet to flourish within nineteenth century studies. Radical studies would benefit from appreciating archaeology's long engagement with materiality. Of course, the charge could equally be levelled at archaeology: where are the archaeologists contributing to our understandings of radicalism? Is this a symptom of historical archaeology being a 'younger' discipline and archaeology's previous disregard of the postmedieval when excavating? If, as I am arguing, historical archaeology can offer much to our interpretations on radicalism, bringing in material culture theory and expertise, historical archaeology's absence of engagement with the radical or protest past does appear stark. However, although no study (other than my own MA dissertation on Peterloo) has been conducted on British radicalism, there are numerous important instances of historical archaeology demonstrating how it can contribute to understanding resistance. What radical studies need is a spatial, landscape, and material inclusive approach.

2.3 DEVELOPING THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF RADICALISM

The archaeology of radicalism is an emerging field seeking to study the radical past. Its definition of radicalism is not limited to this thesis' British context, rather it defines itself through being against authority, thereby allowing for temporal, cultural, and geographical differences. In order to pursue its development, this thesis builds on previous research (Kitchener 2016) extending the period of focus and exploring numerous important events. This section will provide an overview of archaeological assessments on the landscapes the thesis explores and archaeological studies that have previously looked at politics, the political, and/or resistance. The

archaeology of radicalism is most closely related to these areas and they provide both inspiration and direction in developing a new subdiscipline.

2.3.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF STUDY AREAS

Before considering the ways in which archaeology has engaged with political archaeology and the archaeology of resistance, it is worth investigating what archaeological assessments have been made of the study areas. Important landscapes to consider are Cato Street, Grosvenor Square, Spa Fields, Smithfield, Newgate in London, St Peter's Square in Manchester, and Ilchester Gaol in Somerset.

London provides several landscapes to consider (figure 3). It appears there has been no archaeological assessment of the Cato Street stable, despite it still standing. Grosvenor Square is itself a Grade II listed park and garden, although Lord Harrowby's house, where the conspirators were heading to, has been demolished. Spa Fields has been largely unconsidered within its postmedieval setting. Merlin's Cave, an eighteenth-century pub and hustings for the Spa Fields meetings, no longer survives as a building. Smithfield Market has received more attention, although it is worth noting that the current building dates to 1866, therefore archaeological work on the market has centred around the Victorian construction as opposed to the open cattle market of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Newgate Prison was excavated in the early 1900s and there are surviving eighteenth century cells in The Viaduct pub on Newgate street. As Winter (2012) highlights, little else survives of Newgate's physical structures. Furthermore, the archaeological attention has been on the prison itself (especially the medieval prison) rather than the execution landscape around it.



London: Key Locations

Created: 26 March 2021 using ESRI ArcGIS Pro basemap: GB Light Grey and OS Open Map - Local [SHAPE geospatial data], Scale: 1:10000, Tiles: 10, Updated: 8 October 2020, Ordnance Survey (GB), Using: EDINA Digimap Ordnance Survey Service, <https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/>, Downloaded: 2021-03-21 01:35:08.522

Figure 3: Key locations and landscapes in London

Manchester also features within the study areas. The most notable landscape is St Peter's Field, now known as St Peter's Square. Manchester's urban expansion has swallowed up these fields, now being the site of Manchester Central Library and the Midland Hotel. Archaeological work has been conducted at St Peter's Square including excavations of St Peter's Crypt, but again, this work has not been focused on its radical usage. There were relevant excavations conducted nearby. The University of Salford excavated the New Bailey Prison (Reader 2015a), which is where reformers arrested at Peterloo were sent, and they also excavated the Hulme Barracks (Reader 2015b), which is where the 15th King's Hussars – who were involved at Peterloo - were stationed. Whilst interesting excavations, they do not consider St Peter's Fields nor assess radical landscapes. To very much emphasise the challenges of archaeologically assessing these landscapes, it is worth highlighting that there are

only two physical structures which survive from the Peterloo era near St Peter's Fields: a short wall near the Quaker meeting hall and the Sir Ralph Abercomby pub.

The final landscape to consider is Ilchester Gaol. This was where Henry Hunt was imprisoned. It has been largely demolished, with there being some small buildings surviving as cottages. No cell blocks or apartments survive. Archaeological excavation has occurred at the gaol site, with this being particularly useful at understanding the female block and felons' yard (Jones 1991). However, we can see yet again that archaeological assessments via excavation or surveying have struggled to gain access to radical landscapes or material culture. To combat the scant archaeological record, we must pursue other methodologies.

2.3.2 POLITICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

All archaeology is in some capacity political. However, it is necessary to provide a distinguishing factor that recognises some archaeology is explicit in its politics. Political archaeology either deals with the study of the political past (a diverse but small area of enquiry) and/or attempts to be a political force in contemporary or future society. Of course, the two can overlap and be combined, something which this thesis seeks to do. Important themes are: the position of the scholar in relation to politics, how and why the past is constructed, and the production of a reflexive archaeology. These are central to the formulation of the methodology. As noted by Olivier (2013), 'the business of archaeology is the present'. Therefore, it is apparent prior to any deeper review of the literature that archaeology needs to undergo a process of disentanglement and build itself into a political movement.

The archaeological study of the political past has proven itself to be incredibly varied, engaging with a vast array of cultures and societies (LeCount and Yaeger 2010; Ristvet 2014). Particular areas of research have included analysing the relationship between academic and indigenous peoples (McDavid 1997; Phillips and

Allen 2010), the archaeologist's relationship with the past (Horning 2011), examining the relationship between historical processes and present day political and social concerns (Agbe-Davies 2010; Stahlgren 2010), exploring how various classes of peoples interact with museum and heritage spaces (Newman and McLean 2006; Smith 2006), and how the past has left a legacy in helping to uphold and create systems of suppression, dominance, and resistance (Bond and Gilliam 1994; Leone 1986). Much of this research is in relation to slavery, race, relations between indigenous peoples and academia, colonialism, nationalism, and capitalism.

González-Ruibal's (2010) work on the effects of Italian Fascism and colonialism on Western Ethiopia between 1936 and 1941 is a prime example of a study which researches the deeply political but does not seek to decolonise or affect contemporary political discourse. Rather, military sites are studied from a traditional archaeological methodology and through the lens of colonialism and contemporary conflicts. Wood (2014), who studies the democratic implications of archaeology, examines how certain groups within the USA both historically and today have harnessed the power of material culture in attempts to reinforce patriotic and nationalist constructions of US national identity. Whilst this work is undoubtedly valuable, it often does not necessarily combine its contemporary study with research into the past, focusing instead on the discipline of archaeology.

There is a recognition that archaeology needs to be self-aware in its pursuit of the political regardless of the context the research occurs in (Starzmann, Pollock, and Bernbeck 2008). It is crucial to understand the privileged position of the scholar and how archaeologists have an *active* role. Feminist archaeologists have been successful in promoting the incorporation of gender and women as not only valid but important areas for archaeological investigation. As feminism is inherently political, feminist archaeologists have attempted to make differences within archaeology and

academia (Gilchrist 1991; Levine 1991), challenging androcentrism and emphasising how contemporary patriarchy is born from the past. 'The Annapolis School', so called because of Leone's extension work in Annapolis, or 'critical archaeology', has proven influential, becoming 'a well-recognised force within the discipline' (Wilkie and Bartoy 2000, 747). It has been an active type of political archaeology, especially due to its openness of being a political practice (Shanks and Tilley 1987; 1992), with this often being linked to deconstructing ideologies that contribute to inequality within society and archaeology (Leone 1996). It has achieved its greatest impact within analysis and undertaking of community archaeology projects, with the self-reflexive nature of critical archaeology being a vital aspect (see Baker 1997; Derry 1997; Gibb 2000). Activist archaeology makes activism the focus of the archaeology, arguing that rather than only 'pursue the past' archaeology needs to change the present (Stottman 2010, 8). Archaeology should not only concern itself with the present, it should also consider the future, due to how 'social change begins with our own actions and grows from daily life' (Wood 2002, 191). Robert Chidester (2010), in a refreshingly open piece, discusses his work regarding Maryland labour movements and his attempts to help working-class Marylanders gain pride from their industrial heritage. This is under the banner 'movement archaeology', something Chidester reflects on not having necessarily much influence at the moment. Despite these apparent successes (and it should be noted as with all these forms of Political archaeologies to what extent impact actually happens), they have mainly been limited to academic archaeology. Herein lies the need for crossover, but it is essential elements of this work are utilised in attempts to actually make archaeology politically impactful. If we are to engage with politics and inequalities, we must first recognise and acknowledge those within our discipline if we are to construct an inclusive, diverse, and complex past.

2.3.3 *ARCHAEOLOGY OF RESISTANCE*

A closely associated area to consider is the archaeology of resistance; in many ways political activism and radicalism can be seen as resisting authority. Indeed, Frazer (1999a, 8) addresses the political potential of resistance studies through reflecting upon the domination within our own archaeologies and explicitly expanding to a resistance 'which has everything to do with the agency and volition of people in inferior positions of power'. Within this extensive body of work, common themes that have been addressed include slavery (Agorsah 1993; Bush 1996; Garman 1998; Orser and Funari 2001), maroons (Sayers 2014; Weik 1997) and colonialism (Given 2002; González-Ruibal 2014; Griffin 2010; Palmer 2016; Rushohara 2015). With historical archaeology's global reach and interest in the development of capitalism and colonialism, it is perhaps not surprising that the largest engagement with resistance has been within colonial contexts.

Beyond colonialism, Gilly Carr (2010; 2012) has undertaken extensive research regarding the occupation of the Channel Islands during the Second World War, highlighting the crucial role of symbolic and implicit resistance, which utilised items of material culture such as coins and the usage of the V for Victory campaign as a key source of resistance. The Colorado Coalfield War Project has also contributed to the resistance debate (Chicone 2011; Larkin and McGuire 2009; McGuire 2014; McGuire and Reckner 2003). This group of work focuses on a particular historical moment, that of the coal strikes by Colorado coal miners which resulted in the Ludlow Massacre. These studies therefore differ by being centred on explicit resistance through the act of striking, rather than symbolic or implicit resistance found in graffiti, hidden objects, and secret performances. Work has also centred on contemporary or recent protests too, including Occupy Democracy protests (Soar and Tremlett 2017), Greenham Common (Schofield 2009), and Stanton Lees Camp

(Badcock and Johnstone 2009), with these offering some interesting landscape insights.

An important facet of British radicalism surrounds agriculture, industrialisation, and roads. Although not coupled with radicalism, this has been explored archaeologically, particularly regarding enclosure. Delle (1999), Williamson (1999), and Webster (1999) in a special issue of the *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, explore various strands of resistance evident in Britain and Ireland across the early modern period. Frazer (1999a; 1999b) explores this resistance archaeologically across the seventeenth century, noting various methods employed by a class who increasingly felt divorced and ostracised from the processes and control of production. This assault on property links to shifts in understandings regarding privacy and property in the early modern period (Johnson 1996). One of the most visible areas this shift impacted were the Highland Clearances, a complex tapestry of the ideology of improvement, class tensions, and 'agricultural revolution', which resulted in large-scale evictions of tenant farmers across the Scottish Highlands. Symonds (1999) offers an archaeological examination of this in the Outer Hebrides. Linking to the idea of 'everyday resistance' (Scott 1987, 29), Symonds notes several acts of resistance that are not as visible such as retreating to spiritual solace in Christianity and naming places connected to mythology, heritage, and clans (especially in Gaelic). In a return to the topic, Symonds (2011, 117) concludes 'The important point is that although long suffering, these people did not, however, regard themselves as victims. It was others who made them so.' Herein lies a vital point about the importance of recognising agency of peoples regardless of their situation, with this being a recurring theme in both this chapter, the methodology, and subsequent analyses.

Studies of resistance have begun to address what is meant by resistance, helping to develop a more nuanced, critical analysis and application (Van Buren 2013), which crucially is beginning the deconstruction of the colonised/coloniser binary (Liebmann and Murphy 2011). This simplification of various groups of societies (both indigenous and metropolitan) has produced narratives which create a universal or homogenous experience. Whilst recognising diversity of experience adds to the archaeological methodological challenge, it should be a vital incorporation into all areas of studies in archaeology, including that of radicalism. Much of the justification for undertaking this research extends from the 'voice for the voiceless' argument. The important prerequisite for this is that there is a need for the academic to 'give' the voice, rather than pass along or listen to. Although this could be conceived as purely semantic, I believe it contributes to creating social inequalities and power imbalances between researcher and researched, something archaeology should still be aware of despite in most cases not meeting the subject. Of course, insightful work has been generated through this framework and rationale, but as Gasco (2004) has explored within Spanish colonialism, there needs to be re-evaluation. The researcher needs to *recognise* and *listen* rather than *give* or *take*. Issues with language therefore need to be avoided within the emergence of political and radical archaeology. Instead, it emphasises that people in the past left a material (which includes the textual and documentary here) voice therefore the past is no longer passive.

What we can thus see, is that archaeology has been engaging with resistance and protest but not radicalism *per se*. There are important areas in which archaeology has yet to venture, one of which is nineteenth century radicalism and reform movements. With the diverse range of resistance studies encountered, it is not an issue of archaeological appetite which caused this absence of engagement with radicalism. Several reasons can be speculated: lack of communication between archaeology and history (each discipline must share blame!), issues regarding

evidence (at least in this time period, there is a dearth of surviving artefacts, buildings, and sites), the topic being seen as one for historical pervence, and archaeology's slow uptake in postmedieval studies. Rather than dwelling on the 'why nots', we can see that archaeology has produced fascinating and relevant work on resistance in a diverse range of contexts. The promise of an archaeology of radicalism is thereby not only apparent but an exciting opportunity.

2.4 BRITISH RADICALISM AND RESISTANCE (C.1750-1830)

There is a plethora of work on British radicalism and resistance. This following section identifies two key areas which are especially important for this thesis: the reaction and fear of the French Revolution in British society and the role of violence in radicalism. As already highlighted, much of this work has not been archaeological yet still provides relevant contextualisation to the forthcoming analysis chapters. In particular, both areas highlight how vital it is to understand not exactly what happened but rather, what was thought to be happening, how events were being understood, and how radicalism was being represented.

2.4.1 *FRENCH LIBERTY, BRITISH SLAVERY: THE REACTION TO AND FEAR OF REVOLUTION*

A major repercussion of the French Revolution was sustained fear of subsequent insurrections, uprisings, and challenges to authorities (figure 4). Taylor (2014) examines how the Illuminati were seen by a segment of conservative thinkers to be involved in promoting and enabling a global subversion of the establishment. Taylor's argument that fear of conspiracy was involved in conservative or right wing thinking in Britain has previously been widely dismissed (Sack 1993; Doig 2004; Mori 2000; Porter 2000). Whilst difficult to analyse its prevalence, conspiracy and the creation of imagined fears did play a role within British reactions to Revolution. Zamoyski (2014) covers this across Europe, arguing that much of the fear was a phantom terror, with the recurring theme being spies, informers, and government officials, were largely at fault for reporting false news, perhaps making it a

particularly pertinent argument for contemporary society. Importantly, states across Europe were continuing 'police' work methods previous to 1789, using intelligence to repress the populace and curtail civil liberties (Alpaugh 2016; figure 5). However, despite this being a useful insight, there are problems with the argument which emphasises the fear and anxiety of authorities was largely a 'phantom', as this undermines the power and agency of collective radical action which occurred within the period. As Land (2016, 910) notes in a review of Zamoyski's book, there are issues with defining what constitutes a revolution or revolutionary thought with Zamoyski setting 'a forbiddingly high threshold'. However, this caution carries weight beyond historiography, it extends into the period post-Revolution where there was a continuum of feeling on what radicalism and revolution actually were. Whether phantom or not, authorities and the middle and upper classes did have a somewhat sustained fear of revolutionary change and radicalism, with this certainly permeating the years 1815-1822. This fear manifested in clashes between tradition, aristocracy, and empire, against radicalism, democracy, populism, and independence (Hone 1982; Graham 2000), although there are issues with reducing it to binary thinking.

Conservative and Loyalist response, which has previously been erroneously and simplistically reduced to variations on Edmund Burke (Claeys 1989; Dickinson 1989; Gilmartin 2000). Furthermore, alongside the themes of fear and anxiety, it may be possible to note of conservative victory and success. Dickinson (1977; 1989) argues the 1790s radical cause in Britain lost not only because of government legislation and oppression combined with radical ineptness, but because conservative rhetoric, ideology, and philosophy was highly persuasive and ingrained within social structures.

Thus far, the review has largely focused on negative reactions, thereby ignoring positive or enthusiastic engagements. The positivity was by no means sustained over the course of the Revolution, waning especially with the execution of Louis XVI and the Terror. Sir Samuel Romilly (1790, 1) wrote about how the English should be most appreciative as they have long understood the value of liberty and the revolution 'should justly claim the admiration of mankind'. Christian support was also provided to the cause of Revolution. Mark Wilks (1791), a preacher and farmer from Norfolk, declared that Jesus Himself was a revolutionary, partially quoting Isaiah 61:1 (ESV), 'he has sent me...proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound'. Wilks (1791, 7) later proclaimed the 'French Revolution is of God, and no power exists, or can exist, by which it can be overthrown', as the hand of God guides it. Groups of people would gather to celebrate the Revolution. In an account on the celebration of Belfast, the belief that 'THE WORLD SHOULD PAY HOMAGE [capitals original]' manifested as a procession through the city and a chaired meeting with numerous *fou de joies* (Gibson 1792). As mentioned above, much of this enthusiasm dissipated and turned to horror or disappointment due to the violent turn of the Revolution.

A final element to evaluate is that of the satirical print and caricature. Along with other forms of journalism (Grenby 2001), the storming of the Bastille not only signalled a revolution, but an upsurge in political graphic satire, which developed distinctive elements that contributed to its ability to shape, reflect, and express public opinion (Dickinson 1986). Gatrell (2006) argued that despite the increase in satire, the visual was much more successful than the textual (although distinctions between text and visuals are not perhaps useful) due to higher circulation and through being easier to understand. In an interesting exploration of the use of humour in responses to the Revolution, noting that post-1793 it gained 'special status' through being 'deeply horrible and funny at the same time', Lahikainen (2015, 94) believes that there was a normative process of wedding humour with social turmoil, often using death, irony, and horrific themes as a response. Carnal violence is apparent within James Gillray's work, a celebrated caricaturist and nationalist of the period (Porterfield 2017). His work portrayed messages of royalism and counter-revolution, often utilising national symbols (Sack 1993). Through the calculated usage of symbols such as Britannia, John Bull, and revolution as violence, Gillray, amongst other conservative caricaturists such as Isaac Cruikshank and Thomas Rowlandson, helped to make satirical prints reinforce British identity through defending the constitution (Colley 2005; Oberstebrink 2011). Again, themes of fear and anxiety emerge, with these demonstrably being an influence within the upsurge of Loyalist and conservative satire (Loussouran 2015). Obviously, it was not only conservatives which took advantage of the print; Donald (1996) proposes Loyalists would both simultaneously use and attack the reformer's methods, in this instance commissioning prints whilst harassing radical printers. Prints and other visual depictions form part of methodology therefore making it an important requirement to have their context. This brief section highlighted the crucial role symbols and signifiers played in communicating political messages. However, it is widely debated what distribution and consumption level was achieved by graphic

satires, with the question of audience needing to be addressed because of how this affects their impact. Whilst Donald (1996) rightly pointed out that prints were printed onto other items of material culture and Brewer (1986) acknowledges print shop windows would have been an accessible means of popular consumption, Nicholson (1996) believes consumption was not as numerous as usually assumed. Despite issues around determining consumption, Jones (2012) deems the print as the dominant medium within late eighteenth century and Regency media landscapes. Within popular culture, song and music were probably more influential in distributing radical politics (Davis 2005). Therefore, whilst prints are a worthwhile source, issues of audience must be recognised within their analysis.



*Figure 6: Perhaps one of Gillray's (1805) most famous prints, *The Plumb-pudding in Danger*, emphasises both the British and French government's rabid and dogmatic pursuit of gaining larger global influence and territory. Key features are William Pitt's thin frame and Bonaparte's large, crooked nose; both of these were common comical devices within cartoons to signal to the reader who was being satirised.*

Napoleon Bonaparte is an interesting figure regarding his relationship with British Radicalism and Loyalism. Fear is again a feature, especially regarding his military campaigns, although it appears implicitly through satire as opposed to sensationalism (see figure 6). Indeed, Bainbridge (1995, 8) argues that the English were obsessed with Napoleon, viewing him as a historical figure but also an imaginary one. The appeal behind the modern day-Prometheus was his enigmatic character of military hero to dictator to bogeyman to exile. Even historical studies wrestle with his character and actions, Jourdan's (2016) analysis makes this especially clear, noting the tension between the revolution he inherited and how what ultimately became a dictatorship undermined it. He was often idealised, along with Oliver Cromwell in this respect, as being an individual who battled nobly against corrupt regimes and successfully overturned them (Semmel 2004). However, not all radicals felt favourable towards him. William Hone, a bookseller and satirist, defended the French Revolution in 1821, declaring that France 'fell back into slavery' under Bonaparte (McElligott 2011, 244). Furthermore, historians have perhaps erroneously presumed that during the Napoleonic Wars, radicals and loyalists were synced in their opinion, a criticism Harling (1996) put forward. Following this, Semmel (2000; 2004) successfully demonstrates how Napoleon did feature within the radical imagination, especially once he was exiled as he assumed the position of 'counter-monarch', permitting an investigation of the British monarchy and constitution against the imagined Napoleonic France.

Bonaparte was part of what can be called the 'cult of personality'. Napoleon utilised and placed himself in the 'cult of great men', not just within France but across Europe (Zarieczny 2013). This participation within the cult extended throughout Napoleon's life, and despite his numerous detractors of both liberal and conservative ideologies, resulted in him becoming part of legend, being celebrated as the personality which saved France (Hazareesingh 2005). The celebration of

Napoleon by radicals reputedly made William Oliver, the government spy who was involved in encouraging the Pentrich Rising, have a bust of Bonaparte on his mantelpiece to help construct his 'radical' persona (Semmel 2004). Looking at radical contemporaries of Henry Hunt, who himself was an admirer of Napoleon to an extent, it is possible to see how radical and reform politics could be thought of in international or universal terms as well as national ones. *Sherwin's Register* (later called *The Republican* following Peterloo), wrote that Napoleon's name 'will be placed in its proper station in the Temple of France, while theirs will serve as a by-word for infamy for future generations' (Sherwin 10 October 1818, 360). William Godwin (although the letter is written by his alias Verax of Bath) explained that Napoleon's power rested on parliamentary approval and is therefore legitimate and matches the Prince Regent's (Godwin 1815, 3). Perhaps the most well-known radical British supporter is William Hazlitt, an essayist and literary critic, who wrote a biography on Napoleon (Hazlitt 1959 [1828]). These perspectives show how radicalism cannot be understood as a singular entity or as monolithic. Rather there were competing ideas and arguments, even around one man.

Of course, this idea of celebrity or cult of personality extended beyond Bonaparte, being an interesting feature and phenomena, which crosscuts this period. Personalities of philosophers in the French Revolution were important, McNeil (1945) identifies there being a strong cult surrounding Rousseau in particular. This power of the personality is evident within Chartism's reaction with radical tradition and radical heroes, Roberts (2013) traces this creation, noting that the main methods were to write and/or speak a 'people's history' in which history and mythology were entwined and to formulate a canon of radical texts. Roberts highlights that within this, a 'pantheon' of radical heroes was celebrated and commemorated, including individuals such as William Cobbett and Hunt, but also extending to further radical history, with persons like Wat Tyler and Oliver Cromwell.

Alongside, or perhaps within the cult of personality, is the mythical hero. Navickas (2009a) explores this in relation to Ned Ludd, the mythical leader of Luddism, suggesting the popularity of the moniker across Britain is indicative of a populace weary of war who were able to transcend regionality to create a shared identity and response to governmental oppression. Notably, the cult of personality is by no means limited to the radical realm, authorities and Loyalists had their own heroes and celebrated figures. Colley (2005) and Russell (1995) framed Nelson's funeral as being understood in reference to the cult of monarchy, in which the spectacle became a form of state pageant. However, Jenks (2000) offers an alternative, proposing the event was hijacked by numerous competing interpretations and readings through which the event became propaganda, especially in Loyalist and patriotic understandings that the funeral marked some form of consensus. Therefore, the idea of the hero and the cult of personality was well established in various political contexts in the period.

2.4.2 VIOLENCE: RADICAL MEANS FOR RADICAL ENDS?

Although peaceful and legal means were used by many reformers and radicals in the post-Napoleonic period, violent alternatives were sometimes advocated and even attempted. There are several key violent events in the period 1760-1822 to recognise that help situate the Cato Street Conspiracy (chapter eight). It is important to recognise that these events were utilised as propaganda to support the conservative and Loyalist reading of reform whilst also fuelling the fear and anxieties prevalent in the period. However, even if only a minor proportion of radicals advocated for drastic means, or perhaps ideas of violence waxed and waned over the period, violence could be part of a radical ideology and approach to change.

Prior to 1815, there were several attempts at assassination, insurrection, and conspiracy. The Despard Plot in 1802 sought to assassinate George III whilst also capturing important locations in London, including the Tower of London and the

Bank of England. These landmarks feature in other radical or revolutionary plans, such as the Spencean hijacking of the Spa Field Meeting in 1816 where they attempted to storm the Bank of England (see chapter five for further discussion). Despard and Thistlewood of the Cato Street Conspiracy (see chapter eight for further discussion) were linked by government informants and officials. A spy remarked that Thistlewood was 'quite the gentleman... from his past life, his present pursuits, principles, and low connections etc he seems to be a second edition of Colonel Despard (HO 42/136, 8th February 1813). The Irish Rebellion of 1803, led by Robert Emmet, failed to secure Ireland's independence from the United Kingdom. Emmet and his men aimed to seize Dublin Castle and the Pigeon House Fort. Similarly, to Despard's Plot, it was seen as a reckless and poorly thought out plan.

As well as radical violence, whether proposed or undertaken, other protests also included violence. The Gordon Riots, 1780, and the Priestley Riots, 1791, are good examples of violent action in a non-radical framework. A group of 40-60,000, led by the staunchly anti-popery leader of the Protestant Association, Lord George Gordon, aimed to deliver a petition to the House of Commons, demanding the 1778 Catholic Relief Act be repealed. Following the crowd's dispersal and the petition being dismissed by 192 votes to 6, a wave of violence, looting, and targeted destruction happened. Rioters attacked Catholic chapels and properties. Eighteenth century Protestant England saw a connection between Protestantism and liberty, rights, and wealth (Colley 2005, 33) and the repeal of the legislation was seen as threatening to King, Church, and State. As well as Catholic buildings, they targeted the Bank of England and various prisons, including Newgate (figure 7). This suggests anger and discontent felt by rioters was not solely aimed at Catholics (Haywood and Seed 2012). Rabin (2017, 109) places the Gordon Riots into their international as well as national context, arguing the Riots were responding to the identity tensions caused by an unstable expansion of British Empire which conceded to Catholic toleration for

colonial subjects and now British citizens. The Priestley Riots were sparked by a dinner which celebrated the second anniversary of the Bastille's fall at Joseph Priestley's home (figure 8). Again, forces and reasons behind violent expressions of animosity towards Dissenters were tied up with political fear and anxieties, this time with added pressure from the French Revolution. Bygrave (2012) highlighted how Priestley attempted to distinguish and publicly disassociate religious dissent from radical politics or sedition. Whatever the crowd thought of Priestley's arguments, it appears they saw a clear connection. Both Riots are still complicated to unpick today with the crowd's turn to rioting being fuelled by intersecting reasons, emotions, and ideologies. Whatever the reason they commenced, they left a cultural memory and legacy which married crowds and protests to the possibility of violence. Part of the fear surrounding radical mass meetings in the 1810s is thus the potential of the crowd to erupt.



Figure 7: *No Popery or the Newgate Reformer* (Gillray 1780). Gillray suggests that some of the rioters used Protestantism as a veil to rob and loot.



Figure 8: Rioters Burning Dr. Priestley's House at Birmingham, 14 July 1791 (Eckstein 1791)

The last topic to consider is how violence was used against radicalism. Authorities did utilise violence as a way of combatting protest. There are three events to focus on: the Massacre of St George's Field, Massacre of Trenent, and the Peterloo Massacre. The Massacre of St George's Fields, 10th May 1768, occurred as supporters of the radical MP, John Wilkes, protested his imprisonment in the King's Bench Prison for the supposed crime of criticising George III and for the Middlesex election being overturned. The riot act was read but the crowd refused to leave. Soldiers opened fire, killing up to 11 individuals. Cash (2006, 221) outlines how the crowd gathering and interacting with Wilkes was a cause for concern for the government, especially with the shouts not only being 'Wilkes and Liberty' but complaints on the cost of living. An anonymous pamphlet claimed 'how long the horrid Massacre in St.

George's Fields had been planned and determined upon, before it was carried into execution' (Anon 1769, in Cavendish 1841, 107). Wilkes also agreed the massacre was predetermined (*St. James's Chronicle* 10 December 1768). On the 29th August 1797, Scottish protestors gathered to object to the conscription of Scots into the British Militia, with this linking to other protests over the 1797 Militia Act. The protestors were met by soldiers who shot the leader Jackie Crookston, and several others, before the Cinque Port Light Dragoons chased the fleeing protestors and cut them down with their sabres. Estimates of the death toll are put around twelve to twenty women, men, and children. It became known as the Massacre of Tranent. Early reports placed the blame on the protestors:

A great concourse of people assembled; and every attempt was made to pacify them, and warn them of the illegality and danger of their proceeding. But the forbearance of the troops was misconstrued into fear, and the behaviour of the mob became so violent, that the dragoons were at least ordered to charge (*HJ* 6th September 1797).

The final violent event to consider is the Peterloo Massacre. On the 16th August 1819, a peaceful mass platform meeting in Manchester was violently dispersed by the yeomanry, resulting in the deaths of at least 18 people (Bush 2005). The authority's use of violence was deemed legitimate as the onlooking magistrates feared the meeting was becoming riotous – it clearly was not. This angle was spun in the York trial, 1820, which saw five reformers found guilty of unlawful assembly (Dolby 1820; chapter seven). Peterloo became a landmark event in Regency radicalism, inspiring meetings across the country that protested the authorities' use of violence and advocated for reform. Banners, flags, liberty caps, and clothing were important pieces of material culture used in these meetings (Kitchener 2016); female reformers were instrumental in these meetings and crafting material culture (chapter six). What these three violent events highlights is that authorities could pre-plan violence, blame was attached to the crowd rather than authorities, were fearful

of a gathered crowd regarding its *potential* to erupt, and anxiety around radicalism was strong enough to implement violence.

2.5 FOREGROUNDING LIBERTY

An important area to consider is how ideas, material culture, and performative events were not purely within the radical or reform sphere. Rather, ideas such as liberty, material culture such as banners, and performative events such as hustings, existed within other political domains and ideologies. For example, toasting and dining has been explored in relation to radicalism (Epstein 1994) but they also happened for charity dinners (Lloyd 2002) and were important in solidifying Whig identity in the early 1800s (Orme 2014). Therefore, it is necessary to foreground some concepts and material culture before the analysis chapters, in order to suitably highlight the complex, multi-faceted plasticity evident within the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' political spectrums.

Whilst the concept and materiality of Liberty, especially liberty caps, did become entwined – or stained – by the French Revolution, it is important to note that conceptions and understandings of liberty existed beyond and before revolution. This section will demonstrate the complicated entanglements between liberty and political viewpoints, whether radical or not. It utilises a range of material and visual culture to demonstrate this, including medals, coins, pottery, and caricature. What this analysis does highlight is that, despite the Revolution, liberty and its trappings still existed as symbols to be deployed by the State, loyalists, conservatives et cetera, meaning we have to be careful in simply ascribing material culture and symbolism as being radical on the basis of a cap, banner, or motto. The role and influence of classicalism has been downplayed in favour of promoting the revolutionary input on the use of the liberty cap and depictions of liberty/Liberty. We can investigate this through several different perspectives: the liberty cap on non-radical material

culture, liberty drawn or conceived as a building or structure, and Liberty, and the female personification of the concept.

Examining medals and coins of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the use of classical imagery is apparent, including depictions of Fame, Peace, and Victory. Crucially, caps of liberty were also utilised in a range of State contexts on medals, including commemorating deaths (V&A/A.86-1978) and marking important occasions (figure 9). Highlighting how liberty caps were not limited to medals and coins, the painted hall at Greenwich Hospital, London, has a ceiling that depicts William and Mary gifting a liberty cap to Europe (V&A/812-1877). William Pitt the Elder's monument in the London Guildhall has a liberty cap on the medallion, although the original design indicates Pitt was supposed to be holding a pole topped with a cap (BM/1886,0111.35). There are also examples of the liberty cap being used in non-State contexts too. This includes frontispieces to books (BM/1882,0311.4248), trade cards (BM/Heal,103.8), the arms of the Foundling Hospital as designed by William Hogarth (RCT/RCIN 811806), jewellery including a finger ring depicting Brutus (BM/1890,0901.10), and pottery (V&A/414:551-1885), including a teacup and saucer made for Jane Burke, wife of Edmund Burke (BM/1887,0307,VIII.20). The diversity of contexts and materiality of using the liberty cap demonstrates the prominence of the cap as a loyalist or State-sanctioned piece of symbolism pre-Revolution. It also highlights the varying ways that material culture could be combined with imagery, again, emphasising the plasticity of the liberty cap.



Figure 9: 1) Silver medal commemorating the league of amity between Britain and Holland in 1654 (BM/M.7372). Upon the flag poles are non-Phrygian style caps of liberty. 2) Silver medal celebrating William of Orange restoring 'troubled Britain' in 1688 (BM/G3,FD.381). The liberty caps in 1 and 2 are more like liberty hats, they appear to be depicting the style of hat popular in and associated with the Dutch (see also BM/G3,EM.141). 3) Bronze medal, with George II on the obverse, celebrating the peaceful and plentiful state of the kingdom in 1750 (BM/G3,EM.196). 4) Gold medal struck to celebrate the marriage of George III and Queen Charlotte, 1761 (BM/G3,EM.19). 3 and 4 are indicative examples of how Britannia was depicted with liberty caps (see also BM/M.4636).

The liberty cap was also still used post-Revolution, again, in diverse ways and in multiple political contexts (figure 10). Again, the liberty cap features on an array of material culture, including tickets (BM/1983,U.1875), frontispieces (BM/1895,1031.538), medals celebrating the 1832 Reform Act (BM/M.6201), and Wedgwood pottery and medallions (BM/1853,1104.12). Perhaps the wave of post-Napoleonic radicalism, or indeed the association of liberty caps with Napoleon, meant that from cursory examination, there does seem to be a decline of liberty cap usage between 1815-1820 for state events or by authorities. Medals struck to commemorate George III upon his death in 1820 do not include liberty caps (see BM/BNK,EngM.356). Nevertheless, the liberty cap continued to be used by a range of political groups, and could not always be associated with revolution, especially when it was deployed outside of satire or caricature.



Figure 10: 1) Bronze medal showing Britannia holding a spear topped with a liberty cap dating to 1799 (BM/M.6574). 2) Silver coin struck to commemorate the death of Catherine Macaulay in 1790 (BM/M.4979). This clearly references ancient Roman coins struck to celebrate Brutus ending Caesar's tyranny (for an archaeological example see PAS/FAPJW-E8D710). 3) Pewter medal showing Queen Caroline dressed as Liberty, designed by Josiah Wedgwood, in support of the Queen during the Queen Caroline Affair, 1820 (BM/M.5663). 4) Bronze medal showing Britannia seated between Peace and Victory, the cap of liberty is above Britannia's head. The obverse has a bust of the Prince Regent (BM/M.5433).

Before revolution – and certainly before 1815 – radicals were associated with the liberty cap, meaning it is also worth analysing how the liberty cap was used by and associated with radicals pre-1815 too. Utilising classical depictions and allegories can be seen within coins and tokens of John Wilkes (see BM/M.4743;

PHM/NMLH.1995.91.25.2). Thomas Spence's tokens, which utilised a range of imagery and were minted in the 1790s, worked as acts of satire and protest by mimicking the establishment or authority's deployment of allegory and symbolism (figure 11). The Sheffield Constitutional Society, a branch of Major Cartwright's Society for Constitutional Information, also minted some tokens which used liberty caps (BM/SSB,237.76). As well as coins, medals, and tokens, the liberty cap features on other pieces of material culture. Transferware often took advantage of the rich visual culture, transferring famous or recognisable prints and caricatures onto pottery. Hogarth's depiction of the devilish Wilkes was transferred onto a punch bowl (BM/1988,0421.1). Therefore, this utilisation of the liberty cap demonstrates that the tradition of using the liberty cap radically at least extends back to the 1760s.



Figure 11: This Spencean token, dated 1796, shows Britannia in her classic seated pose with British shield facing outwards and holding her spear. Rather than the liberty cap balancing upon the spear, it is shown falling (BM/1870,0507.16167). Other tokens use the image of a pig with a liberty cap (PHM/NMLH.1993.371.16; PHM/NMLH.1993.371.15), which references Spence's publication 'Pig's Meat' and Edmund's Burke description of radicals as the 'Swinish Multitude'.

Whilst radicals used the liberty cap, we can also see how in the loyalist or conservative imagination, the relationship between radicalism and liberty cap was already formed prior to the Revolution. This was exemplified through Charles James Fox, a radical Whig MP who was leader of the opposition in the 1790s. Fox was frequently depicted in satire pre and post 1789, meaning we have the opportunity to analyse the relationship between radicalism and the liberty cap with and without the impact of the French Revolution. Key motifs in satires of Fox were his weight – he was often depicted as being grotesquely fat – and, referencing his surname, drawing him as a fox.¹ Fox was also depicted with ‘gunpowder jowls’ and ill-kept hair, with these becoming the defining features of Fox in caricature.² Materially, caricatures of Fox used popped open or ill-fitted clothing to accentuate the fatness, but they also used liberty caps to highlight Fox’s radical politics. This especially centred around the Westminster Election of 1784, including *Vox Populi, Vox Dei* (Cruikshank 1784) where Fox stands hand on hip and holds a pole topped with a liberty cap, and *The Chairing of Fox* (Wall 1784; figure 12).³ The commonplace way the liberty cap is depicted is on top of a pole, which Fox is often shown holding. Although this cap-on-pole depiction continues post-Revolution, there is an increase in depictions showing Fox wearing a

¹ For fatness, see *War! Glorious War!* (Dent 1793) and for being drawn as a fox, see *Two new sliders for the state magic lantern* (Rowlandson 1783). Fatness and foxiness were combined too, see *The Cole-Heavers* (Gillray 1783).

² This depiction seems to become the established or most common defining features of Fox around 1782-1784, seemingly established around the time of the 1784 Westminster Election and Fox’ relationship with the Duchess of Devonshire (either as chief canvasser or libertine lover). See *Perdito and Perdita- or- the man and woman of the people* (Colley 1782), *Cheek by jowl or the mask* (Hedges 1784), and Rauser (2002).

³ See also *Devonia, the beautiful daughter of love & liberty, inviting the sons of freedom to her standard in Covent Garden* (Caley 1784), *Knave of Hearts* (Anon 1782), *Coalition arms* (Smith 1784), *Satan haranguing his troops after their defeat* (Humphrey 1784), and *The Historical Painter* (Dent 1784), which also associate the liberty cap to Fox and Foxite politics.

liberty cap.⁴ As the liberty cap became more entwined with Jacobinism and sans-culottes, the role of the liberty cap in caricatures changes. Fox's support of the French Revolution enabled the connection and as the liberty cap gained prominence in the revolution and cultural imagination, there was a strengthening of the association between Fox and liberty caps.⁵ Fox was shown in the clothing of a sans-culottes (figure 13), thereby solidifying this connection further. In *Meeting of Unfortunate Citoyens* (Gillray 1798), Fox's ruffled hair sticks out from beneath his liberty cap, combining the older motifs with the new one: Fox wearing or holding the liberty cap. There were also efforts to link Fox to liberty trees too, Gillray utilised this in three famous prints: *Promis'd Horrors of the French Invasion, or Forcible reasons for negotiating a regicide peace* (1796), *The tree of liberty must be planted immediately!* (1797) and *The tree of Liberty,-with, the Devil tempting John Bull* (1798). Combining these together, we can understand that radicalism could be associated with liberty caps prior to the revolution. Through placing a liberty cap on a pole, the pre-revolution prints utilised established depictions of Liberty, transferring the motif from allegory to Fox. Post-revolution, the liberty cap becomes an item of radical and revolutionary clothing, allowing a more intimate portrayal of Fox with the liberty cap. The liberty cap – or revolution and sedition – are no longer at arm's length, instead, they are materialised and embodied aspects of Fox in caricature.

⁴ Examples of the cap-on-pole post-1789 include *The Battle of Whigs, or, The Meal-Tub Plot discovered* (Dent 1791), *The fallen angel!* (Fores 1793), and *The fall of Phaeton- the blow up of the Whig club- or the majesty of the people* (Fores 1798).

⁵ This association can be seen in multiple contexts including caricaturing the opposition in *The raft in danger or the Republican crew disappointed* (Cruikshank 1798), satirising the Whig's support of France in *Jacobine Wigs, or, Good Night to the Party* (Dent 1792), Fox's critique of prosecution against non-existent sedition in *The ex-rector of St Stevens. | and his clerk | in solemn supplication to their deity* (Brown 1794).

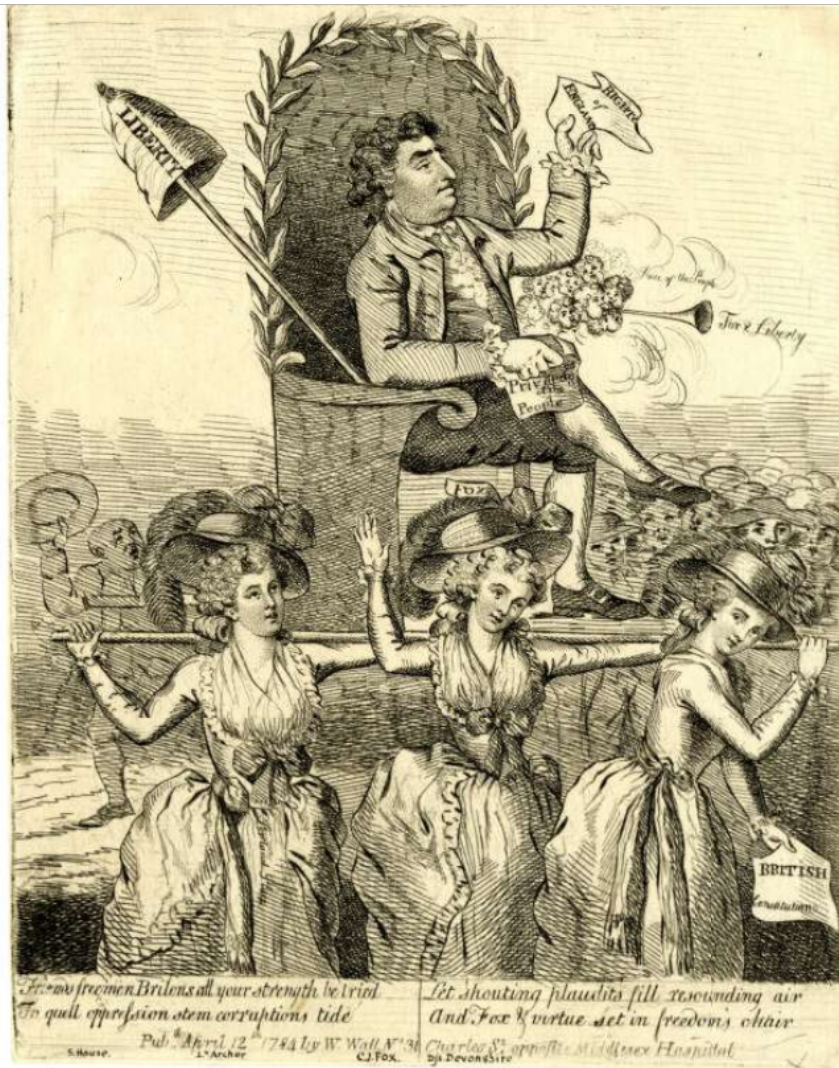


Figure 12: *The Chairing of Fox* (Wall 1784) shows three women, including the Duchess of Devonshire, carrying Fox following his narrow victory in the election. The satire emphasises the efforts of Devonshire and women in canvassing and securing votes for Fox. Depicting the chairing or procession features elsewhere too, see *'The disappointed candidate solus!!'* (Humphrey 1784) and *'The re-electing of Reynard, or Fox the pride of the geese'* (Richardson 1783).



Figure 13: All four of these details utilise liberty caps alongside sans-culotte clothing. 1 and 2 also use the dagger, a common motif in satire for Jacobinism. 1) Detail from *Sans-culottes, feeding Europe with the bread of liberty* (Gillray 1793). 2) *Dumourier dining in state at St James's, on the 15th of May, 1793* (Gillray 1793). 3) Detail from *John Bull humbugg'd alias both-ear'd* (Cruikshank 1794). 4) Detail from *Petition mongers in full cry to St Stephens!! Beware of wolves in sheeps cloathing* (Cruikshank 1795). See also *A democrat,-or- reason & philosophy* (Gillray 1793) and *The Republican attack* (Gillray 1795) for Fox as a sans-culotte whilst wearing a liberty cap and *A right.honourable alias a sans culotte* (Cruikshank 1792) without a liberty cap.

Classical architecture had an undoubtable influence on eighteenth century society. This can be seen through a plethora of buildings, monuments, and the Grand Tour. Importantly, this appreciation of classical architecture enveloped ideas of liberty and how this concept or right could be depicted. The gardens at the country House of Stowe contained a Temple of Liberty whilst visiting cards can depict classical architecture including temples (BM/ C,1.4098-4119). A common motif within cartoons, caricatures, and prints, is the temple of Liberty, often drawn as a rotunda. The rotunda can represent the British constitution with a pillar to represent the King, Lords, and Commons as seen in *A Picture of Great Britain in the Year 1793* (Anon 1794) or as the architectural expression of stability and order.⁶ This could of course be satirised too: Burdett was attacked in *The Pride of Britain* (Williams 1810) by standing 'nobly' atop a rotunda following his efforts to demonstrate that British liberty extends back to the Anglo Saxons. Importantly, the destruction of or ruined temples/rotundas/pillars were also used. Both *Samson Pulling Down the Pillars* (Anon 1767) and *The Political Sampson* (Williams 1810) use the biblical story as a way of highlighting how a political individual was harming the constitution and liberty through their actions.⁷ Destruction was not only levied against radicals or radical MPs, William Pitt was attacked in *The state of the nation* (Anon 1784), with his actions causing Britannia to topple from the pillars of the constitution. Perhaps the most well-known example of using a rotunda would be from William Hone's satirical pamphlet illustrated by George Cruikshank, *The Political House Jack Built*,

⁶ See also *The War of Posts* (Colley 1782) for the constitution as a rotunda and *The Contrast – or things as they were* (Gillray 1796) for three pillars representing monarchy, House of Lords, and House of Commons.

⁷ See also *Ayez pitié de nous!!* (Anon 1797) for pillars being pulled down. This print also utilises the idea of each pillar representing an ideal or institution – in this instance the constitution, commons, and Lords.

which inspired a wave of Loyalist pamphlets (figure 14)⁸. Hone attacked the government and authorities for their actions at Peterloo whilst arguing for the need for reform. Throughout all these visual depictions, the classical architecture of the temple or rotunda was used to capture ideas on liberty or the constitution. As with the liberty cap, the rotunda was used in and by multiple contexts, highlighting the complex multivocality surrounding liberty.

⁸ *The True Political House that Jack Built: Being "A Parody on The Political House that Jack Built"* appears to be the exception to using a rotunda, it instead uses a castle but there are three towers to represent, King, Lords, and Commons (BM/1865,1111.827-839).

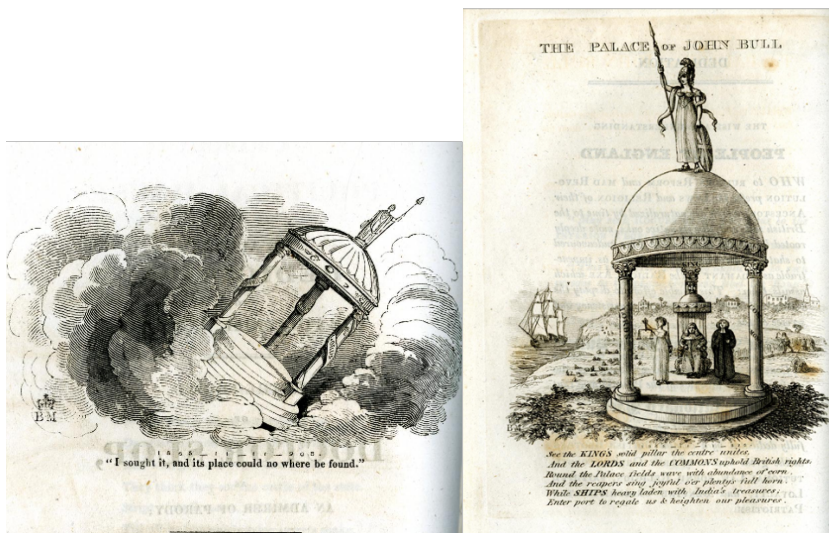
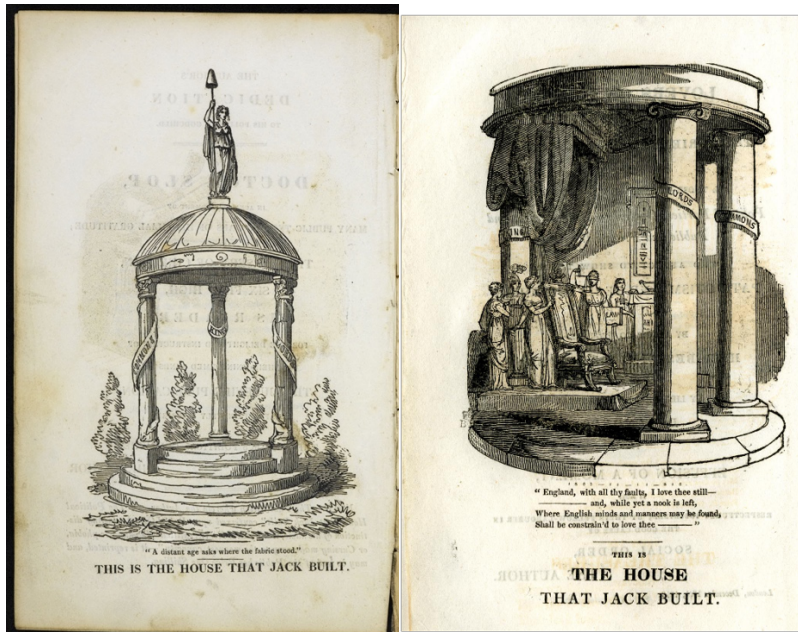


Figure 14: 1) The rotunda, again representing King, Lords, and Commons, topped with Liberty holding a liberty cap (Hone 1819; BL/1570/5312). 2) Hone's well-selling pamphlet produced responses, including 'The Real or Constitutional House that Jack Built' (Asperne 1819; BM/1865,1111.815-826). 3) In the anti-radical pamphlet, 'A Parody on the Political House that Jack Built or the real house that Jack built', the rotunda is toppled by the dangers of radicalism, including attacks on Hunt and Cobbett (Johnson 1820; BM/1865,1111.907-920). 4) Loyalist pamphlets used the same imagery as Hone to argue their perspective, with Britain being represented as a rotunda topped with Britannia as Liberty and a King seated beside Justice and a parson in 'The Palace of John Bull Contrasted with the Poor House that Jack Built.' (Greenland 1820; BM/1865,1111.875-882).

There are also examples where liberty – or the illusion of – is expressed through height, whether through stacking material culture, pillars, gibbets, or poles. *A view of the grand triumphal pillar* (Cruikshank 1815; figure 15) mocks Napoleon's return from Elba after his exile, combining a skeleton holding a liberty cap and the allegorical France is flogged by Napoleon on a gibbet. The gibbet features as a way of demonstrating that liberty has been achieved. This can be satirically, highlighting how the opposite has actually occurred and emphasising that freedom is not anarchy, as seen in *The age of reason or the world turned topsyturvy exemplified in Tom Paines works!!* (Cruikshank 1819a). The idea of a 'false liberty' can also be seen in *The Radical Ladder* and *The Funeral Pile* (Cruikshank 1820a). This pair of prints shows Queen Caroline and radicals climbing a ladder to reach the top of the pillar/constitution but the plan ultimately fails, with the ladder and pillar collapsing with the radicals landing in a heap. Poles could be used to signify the competition behind elections, as seen in *Election-Candidates; -or- The Republican-Goose at the Top of the Polae* (Gillray 1807) and *The head of the poll, or the Wimbledon shewman & his puppet* (Williams 1807), which both satirise Francis Burdett being 'top of the poll' at the Westminster Election. Analysing visual culture has demonstrated how concepts – such as liberty – could be understood and conceived of in material and spatial terms.



Figure 15: A view of the grand triumphal pillar (Cruikshank 1815)

It would be interesting to analyse to what extent Bonaparte and the Napoleonic Wars were instrumental in radicalising or embedding the liberty cap as a symbol of tumult in the conservative imagination. Whilst the Revolution contributed, liberty caps do feature within prints of Napoleon, meaning this is an area ripe for investigation. There also appears to be a connection between using Britannia and liberty caps within non-radical material culture, with Britannia perhaps acting as a legitimising symbol that can counter revolutionary associations of the cap. Does having an obviously 'loyalist' or 'patriotic' symbol dissolve the 'radicalness' of the liberty cap within post-Revolution contexts? Is there a drop in the number of

depictions of Britannia with liberty caps following the Revolution or have we presumed this?

As well as ideas of liberty and the liberty cap, it is also necessary to examine how banners, flags, and mottos were used politically pre-1815 and in non-political contexts. Banners and flags were also contested objects, coming under scrutiny from authorities and conservatives, as they could be tied to sedition. One reformer noted that if reformers were 'prohibited from bearing flags' they should instead carry a bible (*MO* 25th December 1819). Magistrates in Leicester argued that if banners and flags were used at a planned meeting for reform post-Peterloo, the objects would 'give it the character of an illegal meeting' (*MO* 13 November 1819). It is always worth remembering that those imprisoned for Peterloo were found guilty of assembling with unlawful banners (*MO* 1st April 1820), showing the profound impact banners were thought to have. Banners and flags were also seized and destroyed, with this action emphasising the materiality's political potency and the power of these objects as emblems. The contested meanings around material culture could then become physical contests, such as when a liberty cap and banner were attempted to be seized at a meeting in Stockport (*SPR* 7th August 1819, 212). Although some banners and flags were seized, there is also evidence for curation and reusing these objects (see *MO* 6th November 1819 and *MO* 20th November 1819). Curating these radical artefacts shows that their power could be stored and then later returned to in future meetings but also that these objects could be imbued with a cultural or social memory, connecting meetings to previous events. The complexity of material culture and performative events can be seen within William Pitt the Younger's celebration of being granted the freedom of the City of London. In *Master Billy's procession to Grocers Hall* (Rowlandson 1784a), a burlesque depiction of Pitt being drawn in a chariot and a multitude of banners and flags, captures the liveliness of the event, some of its materiality, and the joviality of the

crowd. However, the print does not depict Pitt's coach being attacked by a group of Whigs on the return journey from the Grocers' Hall. Again, the complexity and plasticity of this material culture is apparent. The use of material culture will be further explored by looking at seventeenth and early eighteenth examples, elections and hustings, and State events.



Figure 16: The Solemn Mock Procession of the Pope, Cardinalls, Jesuits, Fryers, Nuns exactly taken as they march through the City of London November the 17th, 1680 (College 1680). A similar scene can be seen in Barlow's (1679) depiction of the Pope burning in 1679.

Banners and flags were used within seventeenth and early eighteenth-century contexts and events. In the late 1670s, there were fears that a Popish Plot might be afoot to instate Catholicism back, these anxieties and belief in the conspiracy resulted in several processions and pope burning events in London, with a range of

material culture featuring (figure 16). Mock processions feature elsewhere too, including the Scald Miserable procession, 1742, which mocked the annual Freemason procession. *The Free-Masons Downfall; or, The Restoration of the Scald-Miserables* (Bickham 1742) shows a range of banners and flags being used, many incorporating freemasonry symbolism.⁹ Other processions were less theatrical. *The loyalty and glory of the city of Bath* (Anon 1689) shows citizens of Bath processing to celebrate the arrival of William of Orange, with some holding flags deeming “This is a Joyful day”. Early eighteenth century depictions of Skimmingtons – a mock parade designed to ridicule unfaithful husbands or nagging wives - include participants using material culture as banners or flags, with the most well-known depiction being Hogarth’s (1726) *Hudibras encounters the Skimmington*.¹⁰ Skimmingtons also happened in the 1600s, so it is likely similar materiality was occurring then too. These examples demonstrate that, just as liberty caps do, banners and flags have a deep temporality.

Elections generated a wealth of material culture, including banners and flags. These were deployed by candidates representing every political persuasion, highlighting how these objects could exist beyond radicalism. O’Gorman (1992, 94) has highlighted how participants “had access to an entire world of symbolism”, arguing elections were a mixture of ‘official’ ceremonial culture with folk or local traditions. Examples of banners and flags within visual culture on elections include *The virtuous and inspir’d state of Whigism in Bristol 1781* (Anon 1781), which although is a satirical take on an election, utilises the prominence of banners and flags as a

⁹ Another view of this event can be seen in *A Geometrical View of the Grand Procession of the Scald Miserable Masons* (Benoist 1742).

¹⁰ See also *Skimmington-Triumph, Or the Humours of Horn Fair* (Anon c.1720) and *The Hierarcichal Skimington: Or a Representation of the Ambitious and Arbitrary Views of a Party* (Dickinson 1735).

caricatural device. Certain elections generated more response than others. For example, Charles James Fox in the 1784 Westminster Election produced an array of visual culture, including *Procession to the Hustings after a Successful Canvass, No: 14* (Rowlandson 1784b). Francis Burdett's 1804 Middlesex Election and 1807 Westminster Election also generated a large response, covering processions, triumphal cars, and hustings.¹¹ Whilst these prints provide insight into how material culture was used, it also highlights how visual culture centred around important, notable, and/or controversial people and places. Many of these prints also chose not to depict the hustings but the procession/posting to the hustings and the celebratory procession following the election too, revealing that banners, flags, ribbons, clothing, and more, were not limited to the canvassing or voting, but election culture as a whole was materially engaged.

Hogarth had been able to capture the essence of the corruption of the eighteenth-century hustings with his depictions of elections but the fascination with the hustings continued into the later part of the century and into the nineteenth. Visual culture – as long as we address elements which may be exaggerated or imaginary for the purposes of satire – can provide insight into the culture and behaviour around the hustings. The success of the satire and caricature rested on utilising recognisable material culture and behaviour. For example, *Election Compromise or a Cornish Hug in Westminster* (Dent 1790) has a series of banners, including one showing Fox hugging his former enemy Samuel Hood, with the commentary on the politics utilising established material culture for scathing satire. Mottos were also important.

¹¹ For processions, see *Middlesex Election 1804* (Gillray 1804) and *The Plate of the Procession & Chiring of Francis Burdett* (Anon 1807), for the triumphal car, see *An Exact Representation of the Principal Banners and Triumphal Car* (Anon 1807), and for the hustings, see *Election - candidates; - or - the republican-goose at the top of the pole* (Gillray 1807).

Newry Election (O'Callaghan 1802) shows the importance of mottos, inscribed on small flags or pendants are the words "Needham for Ever" whilst medals and tokens show the prominence of similar and other mottos, including 'Friend of the People' (see BM/ MG.1483). 'Wilkes and Liberty' was often used as a motto of support for John Wilkes being shouted at election events, it was even printed onto pottery, including a punch bowl (V&A/C.20-1951). The hustings were the stage and physical spot of the election, often becoming the arena for drama, making it an enduring material and spatial image within visual culture and political imagination. Notably, hustings – or a stage – were also used within reform and radical meetings as the place where speakers and committees would gather and orate from. Further research needs to be undertaken to explore to what extent election hustings shaped radical ones.

As well as elections, State events were also highly ritualised performances which incorporated processional elements and material culture. State processions, which claim not only the landscape but also the temporal day through their length, have occurred for centuries, exhibiting power, status, and ceremony. Using processions allows for more of the populace to engage with the event whilst simultaneously claiming more of the space, particularly urban landscapes. Processions were highly elaborate affairs which utilised a plethora of material culture and symbolism. *The View of the Charity-Children in the Strand, upon the VII of July, MDCCXIII* (Vertue 1715) shows an enormous procession which depicts Queen Anne's major event celebrating peace and the Treaty of Utrecht. It culminated at St Paul's Cathedral, which had long been important in thanksgiving ceremonies including in Elizabeth I's reign for the victory against the Spanish Armada, and was one of many royally controlled celebration and worship events (Ferguson 2015). Coronations, weddings, funerals, and more, all involved choreographed processions which understood how

material culture could elevate the symbolism, grandiosity, and spectacle.¹² Recurring events, such as the Lord Mayor's procession, were also elaborate events with a material lexicon.¹³ It is debatable to what extent radical traditions emerged from State or Church events, particularly through subverting or appropriating the culture for radicalising purposes. Regardless of this, both existed together, again demonstrating that radicalism was not in a vacuum nor was its material culture.

These sections have addressed the complexity behind material culture and ideas or concepts such as Liberty within the political world of the period. Liberty was a shared concept which was also contested, existing within Loyalist, patriotic, conservative spheres whilst simultaneously being drawn upon by radicals and reformers.

Although banners, flags, and liberty caps were often used by radicals and closely associated with their politics, these pieces of material culture were made and used elsewhere too. Their use in other contexts emphasises their importance as mediums of transmitting ideas, symbolism, and unity. The power of text and mottos is also evident, demonstrating the fundamental relationship between materiality and textuality, with the material medium elevating and proclaiming text in ways otherwise not possible.

2.6 CONCLUSIONS

Materiality and spatiality were important facets in radicalism. Both were able to offer different ways of constructing identities and performing radicalism.

¹² For examples, see *The triumphal entertainment of ye King and Queenes Maties* (Stoop 1662), *The Ceremony of the Marriage of Princess Royal with the Prince of Orange* (Dickinson 1734), *Lord Nelson's funeral procession by water* (Clark 1806). Of course, this could include satirical depictions too, see *City Horsemanship or Procession to St Paul's* (Dent 1789).

¹³ For example, see *The Lord Mayor's State Carriage* (West 1812) and for satire, see *The Industrious 'Prentice Lord-Mayor of London* (Hogarth 1747).

Furthermore, both were intrinsic in shaping how radicalism was perceived, understood, and represented – a central aspect in the following analysis chapters. However, we must remember that ideas of liberty, using material culture, and performing in spaces was not unique to radicals. Rather, radicalism existed alongside or within a cornucopia of political perspectives which all understood the power of objects and landscapes. We are therefore entering and exploring a complicated, entangled political world, one which was multi-vocal, contradictory, and contested.

The review of literature also further rationalises the methodology and scope of the thesis. Open, urban, and public spaces are being chosen over the role of taverns, theatres, club rooms, and the home because of the need to investigate landscape and to acknowledge that material studies have focused more on personal items than public ones – although the two can overlap. Selecting open spaces too also facilitates engagement with the idea of landscape. Since the thesis also aims to develop archaeological engagement and methodologies regarding physical and digital archives, studying events, and utilising textual and visual sources where little material culture survives, the theoretical and methodological approach chose not to adopt a GIS based approach. Whilst this would bring landscape to the fore, it would at the same distance us further again from the material culture.

Through explicitly exploring the landscapes, spaces, and material culture of radicalism and focusing on how radicals performed and constructed their identities, this thesis contributes to underdeveloped study areas in both radical/protest history and archaeology. These areas are: utilising the concept of landscape within radical urban environments, the role of performance within radical landscapes, studying non-domestic material culture made by or about radicals, actively examining radical material culture rather than using it as a descriptive aid, and advocating for an archaeology of radicalism.

3 METHOD

This chapter will outline the methodologies undertaken as well as the theoretical groundings. Landscape, space, crowds, and gender will be defined as these are important concepts throughout the thesis. The next section deals with how archaeology can analyse moments and events rather than just long-term change and processes. In order to investigate events and experiences and to compensate for an extremely incomplete archaeological record, new methodologies need to be developed. Thematic analysis, of both documentary and visual sources, will be discussed in detail, and the range of sources analysed will be explained.

3.1 DEFINITIONS

It is necessary to be transparent regarding landscape and space within the context of this research, due to their multifaceted understandings and theoretical diversity surrounding and situating them. Crowds and gender also feature prominently in the analysis, meaning it is worth defining these too. To continue the interdisciplinary nature of the thesis, the theoretical positions are drawn from a number of perspectives rather than relying solely upon archaeological thought. There is perhaps a problem of assumed knowledge regarding these terms within archaeological publications which can result in issues regarding clarity of understanding and interpretation.

3.1.1 *LANDSCAPE*

Landscape is 'multi-faceted, at once an object, an idea, a representation and an experience' (Knudsen et al 2013, 287). It cannot purely be thought of in relation to the visual, but needs to incorporate and recognise the role of all senses (Zube 1970, 82). There has been a bias towards the rural landscape (Lilley and Dean 2015), with urban landscape being a relatively recent term, and studying the economical (Smith 2014), with the shift to analysing ideology, meaning, and symbolism again being a recent development.

Landscape is not reliant purely on the physical, but can relate to spectacle, events, experiences, and performance, therefore including people and materials. As argued by Olwig (1996, 645), 'It is not enough to study landscape as scenic text'. In order to understand landscape, it is essential to also understand actions. Landscape contains not just land nor is it only composed of space, it also holds place 'that makes it perceivable as a land or country with its own particular qualities' (Olwig 2008, 163). This means landscape, place, and space are not passive backdrops or stages but can – to varying extents – determine or influence actions, as well as provide significance and meaning to action. These ideas go against perceptions that landscape archaeology is the study of material remains in the present, as proposed by Johnson (2010, 516), as this ignores imagined or intangible landscapes, reducing landscape to being a natural, tangible reality. The definition of landscape therefore has to be balanced between essentialist notions evident within traditional landscape interpretation and recognising participation, engagement, and embodiment in and part of landscapes.

This thesis will utilise a definition of landscape which appreciates the tension between its physical existence of being constructed with materials and people whilst also recognising that landscapes are ideological, philosophical, aesthetic, cultural, and social, with the interplay between these tensions ultimately resulting in what is perceived to be 'landscape'. Furthermore, borrowing from the sociological idea of 'insiders' and 'outsiders' (Merriam and Tisdell 2015), the tension between physicality and intangibility is extended. Individuals or groups are able to exist physically within a landscape but also intangibly, whether through memory, culture, or imagination. However, the intangible landscape differs dependent on experiences, meaning a person can operate both inside and outside landscapes. Whilst traditionally these have been considered binary oppositions and placed upon a spectrum, it does not

necessarily permit access into the nuances of experience. This extends to Olwig's (2008) recognition scholars have consistently, despite knowing better, discussed landscape in the singular as opposed to plural.

3.1.2 *SPACE*

Space has been briefly mentioned above with the idea of social relations being intrinsic to its construction. Crang and Thrift (2000) highlight that despite differences in understanding space, it does not get defined frequently enough by scholars, therefore diluting the concept. Furthermore, abstract models of space have undergone sustained criticism, especially as they often result in replicating questionable or problematic aspects of Enlightenment thought (Sibley 1998), with the claim of the author being beyond, outside, or disconnected from theory no longer substantiated (Curry 1996). Dikeç (2005, 186) emphasises how crucial space, politics, and the political are to one another, arguing 'politics... are inherently spatial for they are... concerned with distributions – of activities, authorities, functions, names, individuals or groups, and places'. It is important to note space should not just be considered in absolute dimensional ways, rather it is constructed out of social relations. Therefore, space is not merely an arena for social phenomena and crucially recognises the multiplicity of space/s (Massey 1994).

Returning to space, this thesis engages with the idea of space as setting, meaning that social relations, interactions, events, and experiences have a spatial element/dimension. Crucially though, space is active, as opposed to a passive backdrop, meaning it is involved, whether explicitly or implicitly, in moulding identities and influencing events, making it 'the medium through which society... can be created and reproduced' (Graves 1989, 297). For example, displays of civic power and authority are evident within public buildings and their locations (Tittler 1991), an obvious instance of the ability of history and archaeology to establish spatial identities in numerous ways: style, function, position, and the conception, creation,

and understanding of space in the period of study. As argued by Navickas (2016) in her analysis of the role of space in political protest in the long eighteenth century, space (as well as place) is of fundamental importance in both the study of popular protest and its strategies. Place 'is a space which has a distinct character' (Norberg-Schulz 1980, 5), with the distinction between space and place being summarised by Yi-Fu Tuan (2014, 6) 'space as that which allows movement' and 'place' as 'pause'. The role of space was recognised by authorities as being a vital aspect of radical culture and community to sever, with the various incarnations of *Seditious Meetings Act* helping to emphasise this (Parolin 2010). E. P. Thompson (1968) highlighted that radicals had two 'public markets': the written word and the spoken word. This idea can be carried forward into the analysis as it permits the study of both imaginary and written spaces and landscapes as well as building on numerous explorations of radical meeting places and gendered spaces (Clark 1995; Epstein 2003; Navickas 2009b; McCalman 1988).

3.1.3 CROWDS

Archaeology has largely focused on the individual and when more than one person is considered, it is usually in relation to group identity as opposed to crowds. The role and perception of the crowd as a social entity was a vital part of the history, legacy, and development of radicalism, with the reaction of authorities and conservatives being crucial in the conception and depiction of crowds. Rudé (2005) importantly drew attention to the complexities of understanding the crowd, with his pioneering social history emphasising a 'bottom up' approach, viewing the crowd as composed of living people or 'flesh' as opposed to abstractions, thereby populating the crowd with people rather than *the* people. As noted by Randall (2009, 421), Rudé was interested in and developing an understanding of the crowd that was 'not merely [as] agency but as an aggregation of individuals', in which individual actors were sought to be comprehended as well as the ensemble. This idea is fundamental to the thesis. Throughout the chapters, individuals and their roles and motives will feature.

Critiques of Rudé highlight the simplifying of crowd behaviour resulting in aspects such as rituals and ceremony being overlooked or not pursued enough (Brewer 1976). To combat this shortcoming, inspiration is taken from Arasse's (1991) examinations of French Revolution executions. Within this analysis, ideas of spectacle and theatre are brought to the fore, emphasising the possibilities of accessing and capturing experiences of entertainment. Peaceful crowds were viewed as having the capacity or potential for violence and this fear of the 'what-could-happen' manifested in the idea or experience of 'sympathy'. Fairclough (2013) has made a compelling case for the role of sympathy ('an index of both emotional and social feeling' p.3) as being viewed as contagion, disruptive, and extending beyond the individual to the collective in the Romantic period by conservatives and authorities, acting as a partial explanation behind the often seemingly instinctive behaviour of crowds. Sympathy was linked to physiological communication, especially to the nervous system, meaning that commentators and observers would view the crowd as a bodily experience and body-led.

3.1.4 GENDER

Gender archaeology often relies upon essentialist understandings, especially through the sexing of skeletal remains in which 'male' or 'female' is taken to mean man/woman, effectively acting as an extension of the 'medical invention of sex' (Karkazis 2008) and continuing morphological discourse from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Colebrook 2004; Hird 2004, 35; Laqueur 1992). Such thinking will be avoided to the utmost in the thesis. Gender is performative and a process of becoming (Butler 2004) and is not universal, but situated within cultural variation and historical processes (Walby 2004). It is a social construct rather than a biological reality (Rahman and Jackson 2010). Thus, there is a distinction between sex and gender, with this being dubbed the sex/gender binary (Richardson and Robinson 2015, 5). Although, it is worth briefly noting that whilst sex is usually viewed as

biological determined and essential whereas gender is a social construct and culturally variable, the presumed essentialism of sex is undermined when biology and the body are also themselves constructs (Delphy 1984). It is worth emphasising here that the understanding of gender presented have been heavily influenced by postmodern and feminist thinking, meaning that a modern or contemporary understanding is being used to analyse the past. It begins with the position that historical and cultural variations exist, meaning that any notion of attempting to locate biological or essential continuities between the past and present are eliminated.

3.2 MOMENT IN TIME

Archaeology deals with the long-term processes and change, usually choosing to focus on centuries or millennia but can also deal with moments, especially in relation to deposition, with battlefield archaeology being an example. Whilst archaeology is able to access a moment, such as burial, archaeological discourse typically priorities how the ritual or culture developed over time. History and sociology have been much more fruitful in their analysis of the moment including carnivals (Haywood 2002; Humphrey 2001; Olsaretti 2007), festivals (Germani 2006; Junyk 2008; Poole 2006; Doderer-Winkler 2013), theatre (Beacham 1991; Navickas 2016; Melvin 2009; Schuyler 2011), and executions (Friedland 2012; Gatrell 1994). Nevertheless, even some of these studies are particularly interested in tracking change across time and are not always endeavouring to analyse, imagine, or conceive the experience and moment-nature. It is somewhat disheartening that archaeology has had limited attempts to access moments and events in great detail for it is apparent that the material and archaeological record can lend themselves to this. An obvious example that demonstrates the value of studying a moment is Pompeii, with this ranging from studying drain pipes and sewer systems (Trusler and Hobson 2017) to establishing its final days before the eruption (Etienne 1992) to investigating life in a Roman town (Beard 2008). Obviously, Pompeii provides a wealth of archaeological evidence, but

the value of analysing the moment can be seen on much smaller scales too. Deposition, especially in relation to ritual, religion, and death, is probably the most common way archaeology has accessed the moment over wider issues. Bog bodies have received much attention with literature debating the possibility of sacrifice, deviancy, and criminality as well as establishing aspects such as the last meal (see Joy 2009 for a study focused on Lindow Man that follows these tropes). Indeed, the emphasis on focusing on deposition resulted in Chapman (2015) calling for the landscape archaeology of bog bodies. However, these examples have been framed around surviving material records, whereas as already mentioned, this thesis is attempting to conduct an archaeology without an extant archaeological record. Of course, there is some surviving archaeology, including several buildings, artefacts, and streets, but the majority of sources are documentary. Therefore, it is crucial to explore how archaeology can work with limited artefacts and within the documentary record, whilst studying moments and events.

Whilst historical archaeology has dealt with documentary sources and creates a written record through excavation and surveying, it has yet to fully appreciate what visual sources can offer. Of course, visual sources such as paintings and maps have not been excluded from use, various studies of landscape parks (Williamson 2013) and urban areas (Fitts 2001) demonstrate this. Visual sources can be 'representations' or imaginings of a moment themselves, therefore are able to help frame materiality and space within a shorter time frame, whilst a critical eye has to be utilised to evaluate accuracy and 'truth'. They contain representations of place/space and material culture, importantly depicting them in use, in a context, and can be linked to an individual or group, with Wintle (2002, 430) calling images 'invaluable' in this respect. Since visual sources are representations, or sometimes a recreation, they permit a degree of insight into the process of imagining a space and landscape. Depending on the type of source, this is able to affect understanding of

an event or landscape. As well as placing material culture into a wider context, visual sources place primary emphasis on how it was used in a moment or event. Of course, a critical lens must be used when analysing a visual source (Waddy 2003). Where possible, multiple sources and source types will be used in creating an archaeology of a moment. Visual sources, rather than acting as a bolster or supplement to this, shall be considered particularly valuable in accessing and recreating the landscapes of political radicalism and are discussed further below.

3.2.1 MATERIAL CULTURE AND MATERIALITY

This thesis argues that rather than material culture being read as text, text *is* material culture. Furthermore, the materiality is brought to the fore, and with it an understanding of the subjectivity and multivocality inherent in material culture and its interpretation. There have previously been tensions due to the supposed clash between archaeological and documentary record leading to historical archaeology undergoing a period of justification (Gosden 1994; Johnson 2012, 270) but these have eased, especially due to historical archaeology's ability to utilise 'thing and word', as well as the 'material turn' in social history (Bennett and Joyce 2010). Historical archaeology has often justified itself through the problematic idea of 'giving a voice to the voiceless' (see Restall 1997; Schroeder 1997; Scott 1994). This argument is based on the belief that archaeology is required to read passive artefacts. However, these justifications are somewhat flawed because they fail to recognise that the material or archaeological record is a voice itself, with this being partially discussed by Wolf (2010) and Little (1992) who argue that since not everyone is represented in the documentary record, archaeology or material culture studies are able to tell the story of marginalised, oppressed, or illiterate peoples. Importantly, the documentary record is still able to contribute in this respect. Despite it usually being indirect evidence about or on the working class or oppressed groups, documents are still able to contribute, as revealed by the wealth of Marxist and feminist historical studies (see Crawford 2004; McIvor 2001; Purvis 1989).

Rather than play text and thing against one another, this thesis seeks to explore a topic that has been dominated by history with an archaeological agenda.

Materiality is also necessary to define. Woodward (2016, 359), notes 'The material properties of things are central to understanding the sensual, tactile, material and embodied ways in which social lives are lived and experienced'. Materiality cannot be divorced from its relationships and entanglements with space, society, and culture, with it being necessary to study not only the object, but what is around and beyond it (Meskell 2004). This is particularly relevant in relation to the methodology being developed for this thesis as little material culture survives. Therefore, documentary sources are relied upon and descriptions that include material properties such as colour, decoration, and fabric, being especially valuable because it permits a partial recreation or insight into missing artefacts. A particularly useful way of uncovering this is through the use of visual culture, including caricatures, cartoons, and paintings. Peter Burke (2001; 2010, 437), has been influential in promoting interdisciplinary work between historians and art historians, emphasising, 'images may tell historians something when texts are silent', whilst also developing 'ten commandments' to ensure thorough and critical analysis of the image. As noted by Horsley (2009), Burke readily dismisses a feminist methodology (notably he discusses this in the singular thereby grouping together a diverse and sometimes divided philosophy), whilst perhaps not fully appreciating what a gendered analysis can achieve. Vic Gatrell (2006) has successfully demonstrated the potential of visual sources in accessing eighteenth and nineteenth century culture, humour, and London, through studying 20,000 satirical prints. As intangible aspects of the past such as politeness and humour have been convincingly studied with the aid of visual sources, this thesis seeks to develop the interdisciplinary potential of the image. The extension of this strand of thought which emphasises that 'studies of materiality cannot simply focus upon the characteristics of objects but must engage in the

dialectic of people and things' (Meskell 2005, 4), is to look to Bruno Latour (2000; 2011). Latour seeks to deconstruct or at least blur categories and their distinctions, for example, instead of following Enlightenment thinking which aims to classify, there should instead be an exploration of the convergence that exists between, within, and through objects, societies, sociologies, and cosmologies. The interesting aspect of this study is not materiality *per se*, but the interplay and relations it has in co-producing society (see Latour 1993). Furthermore, materiality is also about capturing or making the immaterial become material, with this having been widely studied in relation to deities and cosmologies (Miller 2005), but in this thesis, there are immaterial ideas of Liberty, Justice, and Reform which undergo materialisation, offering a non-religious aspect of reification as a process. Overall, it is useful to view and contemplate materiality as being a set of cultural relationships, thus enabling the incorporation of numerous interplaying strands. Within the thesis, materiality is especially important to help bring out the lost artefacts from the documentary and visual record through thematic analysis, which is described below.

3.3 THEORY AND METHODS

The thesis utilises a wide range of documentary and visual sources, as well as artefacts where possible. Thematic analysis is the core process of interpreting the data to all source types, including visual sources. There will then be an overview of the source material and an explanation of how documentary and visual sources will be used.

3.3.1 THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Within the analysis, a range of theories influenced the interpretations and discussions. These are at times made explicit in the thesis: historical archaeology is a recurrent theme, queer and feminist theories in chapter six, and wound culture in chapter eight. Elsewhere, theory has inspired, and is somewhat implicit in the analysis. Nevertheless, concepts by New Materialists and eyewitnessing feature, aiding and shaping the approach to Regency Radicalism.

Archaeological theory has contributed to how objects are understood. In particular, work within the New Materialism school of thought has proven to be an important shaper in how our focus on objects needs to recognise the materials involved in its creation (Ingold 2007). Whilst this thesis is by no means a New Materialist research piece, it does acknowledge material agency. Humans may create objects or texts “but [we] also might be at their mercy” (Brummans 2007, 724). Within a radical sense, this can be understood regarding how radicals created banners, flags, and liberty caps, yet these objects lived beyond radicalism, becoming contested materiality through how they permitted multiple readings. New Materialism reminds us of the importance of an object’s properties – what it is made of and how it acts – and this was an instructive nudge towards my own understanding of radical material culture. Although difficult to access, having this reminder helps us to explore the production of radical material culture. For example, when analysing how female reformers made liberty caps, the fabric became an important aspect of this discussion.

Eyewitnessing has been a useful framework to adopt when approaching and dissecting visual culture and sources. Peter Burke (2010) addresses ten important areas in which the researcher must be aware of when consulting and analysing visual sources. Having this guide enabled the thematic analysis of visual sources to avoid analytical pitfalls and problematical interpretations. These include being aware of whether or not the image was produced from someone who witnessed the event or not, understanding the genre or tradition a piece of work belongs to, and understanding the context/s the image existed within. As Rose (2016, 21) outlines, visual sources need to be recognised as socially embedded. This can include how images have their own form of materiality, therefore they can ‘work in conjunction with other kinds of representation’. Therefore context, or embedment, is a key

methodological concern regarding visual sources. Within the approach, this can especially be seen within the Cato Street execution depictions. Each print was tailored to a different audience but also worked with newspaper reports on the execution, with print and text both illuminating certain details.

3.3.2 *THEMATIC ANALYSIS*

Thematic analysis is used within various disciplines but prominently the social and health sciences. The method involves thorough reading and rereading of the data from which the recurring themes or motifs are highlighted or coded, with repetition being an important criterion in identifying what patterns can be deemed a theme (Bryman 2012, 579-581). On its most basic level, it is a method which aids the organisation and detailed description of the data, however, it often becomes more complex resulting in it being a form of interpretation (Boyatzis 1998). When attempting to locate themes, Ryan and Bernard (2003) provide a useful list: linguistic connectors, metaphors and analogies, repetitions, missing data, indigenous typologies or categories, transitions, and similarities and differences. Of course, it is necessary to define what a theme actually is in order to create one. Braun and Clarke (2006, 82) state, 'A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set'. Furthermore, establishing the importance of a theme is down to the researcher's judgment as opposed to how often it is repeated; repetition may constitute a theme, but higher repetition does not equate to higher value. It is important to emphasise that although a series of research questions have been developed and a theoretical standpoint underpins the analysis, it is not possible to fully predict nor presume what every theme will be before undertaking any analysis (Dey 1993, 97-98). Linking to previous discussions on the positionality of the researcher regarding 'giving a voice' to people, the same thinking is applied to thematic analysis. Some researchers have discussed themes as being 'discovered', 'found', or 'emerged' (Rubin and Rubin 2011; Singer and Hunter 1999), therefore

implying the researcher is passive whilst downplaying the active role in selecting what themes to present to the reader (Taylor and Ussher 2001) and how researchers are involved in the creation of themes, meaning that data 'resides' in heads (Ely 1997, 205-6). Rather, the coherence is the responsibility and act of the researcher and/or analyst 'who has rigorously studied how different ideas or components fit together in a meaningful way when linked together' (Leininger, 1985, 60).

Through understanding theme construction as being driven by the researcher, we can appreciate the role of theory within the analysis. The interdisciplinary nature of the thesis, its combination of a range of source types, and the influence of theories, all impact the analysis. Figure 17 demonstrates this, recognising the encompassing ability of theories around the method and sources but it also highlights how certain theories have been more useful or influential depending on the source type.

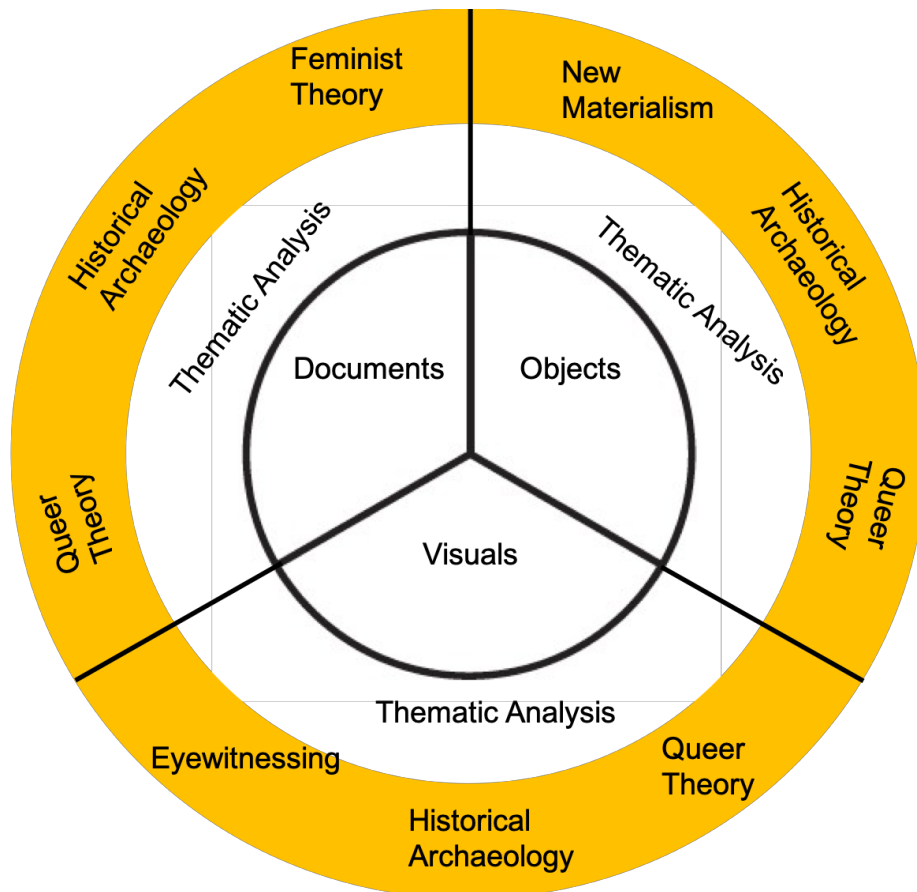


Figure 17: Diagram showing the integration of theory with method. The sources are central to the study, with all having thematic analysis applied to them. Each source type has different theoretical models, with these varying between explicit demonstration and underpinning ideas and analysis.

This highly flexible method was chosen due to its ability to help identify recurring themes within data whilst also producing a rich detailed account of each source. Through being a method, which encourages organisation, it therefore makes it an excellent way of managing the large quantity of data involved in the thesis. By recognising patterns and connecting these into themes, it makes the task of linking together sources more manageable. Below, figures 18 and 19 provide examples of how thematic analysis was applied and managed within the thesis' data corpus. Despite the availability of computer software being available which is able to code

sources, manual coding (the researcher manually codes through designating the themes themselves) has been chosen instead. Although Basit (2003, 152) advocates the usage of computer software, their definition of coding can be used as a justification for the manual approach, ‘What coding does, above all, is to allow the researcher to communicate and connect with the data to facilitate the comprehension of the emerging phenomena and to generate theory grounded in the data’. Through being intimately involved in each stage, manual coding permits a closer relationship with the sources.

1	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
2	Newspaper	Date	Content	Key words	Notes					
3	The Morning Chronicle	1st July 1819	Small paragraph noting the formation of the Blackburn Female Reform society	Blackburn female reform						
4	The Morning Post	1st July 1819	Small paragraph noting the formation of the Blackburn Female Reform society and condemning it	Blackburn female reform	Attacks the society					
5	The Morning Post	1st July 1819	Blackburn female reform rules	Blackburn female reform, libel.	Attacks the society					
6	Northampton Mercury	3rd July 1819	Small paragraph noting the formation of the Blackburn Female Reform society	Blackburn female reform						
7	Leeds Intelligencer	5th July 1819	Small paragraph noting the formation of the Blackburn Female Reform society	Blackburn female reform, Charles Wolsley, Free-thinking Christians	Same as the Chronicle's overview 1st July but has news about meetings in Stockport					
8	Trevelman's Exeter Flyer	8th July 1819	Small paragraph noting the formation of the Blackburn Female Reform society	Blackburn female reform, poem	Poem on reform					
9	Lancaster Gazette	10th July 1819	Overview of Blackburn reform meeting where female reformers were present	Blackburn female reform, Charles Wolsley	Wolsley notes his career as a reformer begun at the Basille					
10	Leeds Intelligencer	12th July 1819	Overview of Blackburn reform meeting where female reformers were present	Blackburn female reform, union clubs, bludgeons.	Page also has notes and overviews of other meetings, including an advert for the Smithfield meeting					
11	The Morning Chronicle	13th July 1819	Overview of Blackburn reform meeting where female reformers were present	Blackburn female reform, Charles Wolsley, Birmingham meeting, banners	Pudsey meeting covered, Birmingham meeting noted					
12	The Morning Post	13th July 1819	Overview of Blackburn reform meeting where female reformers were present	Blackburn female reform, banners.	Other meetings around the country noted					
13	The Morning Post	13th July 1819	Overview of Blackburn reform meeting where female reformers were present	Blackburn female reform, silence, speech, liberty cap						
14	The Morning Post	16th July 1819	The friendly female society in contrast to that of balcburn	female reform, women.	Anti female reform					
15	York Herald	17th July 1819	Overview of Blackburn reform meeting where female reformers were present	Blackburn female reform, liberty cap	Overview of Barnsley reform meeting too					
16	The Morning Post	13th July 1819	Attack on the seditious meeting of the Blackburn female reformers	Blackburn female reform, seditlon						
17	Trevelman's Exeter Flyer	15th July 1819	Attack on the seditious meeting of the Blackburn female reformers	Blackburn female reform	Women who have abandoned their sex					
18	Northampton Mercury	17th July 1819	Overview of Blackburn reform meeting where female reformers were present	Blackburn female reform, liberty cap	Overview of Pudsey meeting					
19	Jackson's Oxford Jour	17th July 1819	Overview of Blackburn reform meeting where female reformers were present	Blackburn Female reform, libary cap	CContains notes written by their oracle					
20	York Herald	17th July 1819	Overview of Blackburn reform meeting where female reformers were present	Blackburn female reform, liberty cap						
21	Royal Cornwall Gazette	17th July 1819	Overview of Blackburn reform meeting where female reformers were present	Blackburn female reform, liberty cap						
22	The Morning Post	19th July 1819	Letter on the subject of Blackburn female reformers	Blackburn female reform						
23	Salisbury and Wincnes	19th July 1819	Female reform societies established in Blackburn, Manchester, and Stockport	Female reform						
24	The Morning Post	20th July 1819	Attack on Blackburn and Manchester female reformers meeting	Female reform, clothing.	Might these women not be better employed?					
25	Royal Cornwall Gazette	24th July 1819	Stockport Female reformers statement	Stockport female reform, Blackburn female reform	Children mentioned					
26	Norfolk Chronicle	24th July 1819	Female reformers!	Female reform						
27	The Examiner	25th July 1819	Recommendation of adoption of female societies	Blackburn female reform						
28	The Morning Post	26th July 1819	Extracts from Stockport and female union of the west	Female reform						
29	Salisbury and Wincnes	26th July 1819	Blackburn reformers visit Manchester	Female reform, pikes, weapons, drilling	Also notes that people are making pikes and practicing drilling					
30	Lancaster Gazette	31st July 1819	Declaration of rules of Stockport female reform	Stockport female reform, children						
31	The Christian Observer	August 1819	Satirical letter from a female radical reformer	Female reform						
32	The Morning Chronicle	3rd August 1819	Stockport reform meeting and Rochdale reform meeting	Female reform, performance, children, husbands	Good example of mockery					
33	The Morning Post	4th August 1819	Notes on the meeting of the Stockport female reformers	Stockport Female Reform						
34	Hereford Journal	4th August 1819	Notes on the meeting of the Stockport female reformers	Stockport Female Reform, performance, theatre, medal	Notes on meeting in Blackburn with a soldier who holds up his Waterloo medal and asks for forgiveness					
35	Royal Cornwall Gazette	7th August 1819	Full report on Stockport meeting	Stockport Female reform, speech,	Speech notes God					
36	Northampton Mercury	7th August 1819	Attack on Stockport female reformers	Stockport female reform						
37	The Observer	8th August 1819	Notes on the meeting at Maccasfield that wishes to form a female society	Female reform						

Figure 18: This is a table which demonstrates the basic level of thematic analysis. It contains newspaper sources relating to female reform which were found through the 19th Century Newspaper Archive provided by Gale/Cengage Learning.

The presentation of the Cap of Liberty was accompanied with the following short emphatic speech, delivered by Mrs. Alice Kitchen, whose maiden name was Mitchell:

“ Will you, Sir, accept this token of our respect to those brave men who are nobly struggling for liberty and life; by placing it at the head of your banner, you will confer a lasting obligation on the Female Reformers of Blackburn. We shall esteem it as an additional favor, if the address which I deliver into your hands be read to the Meeting; it embraces a faint description of our woes, and may apologize for our interference in the politics of our country” --- (very great applause.)

The banner was then lowered, crowned by the Cap of Liberty, and re-hoisted amidst the continued shouts and huzzas of the Meeting.

Silence being again restored, the Chairman observed, that he held in his hand the address of the Female Reformers, which, with their permission, he was desired to read --- (read, read! read! the women for ever!)

Figure 19: An example of coding of a newspaper source relating to female reform (MO 10th July 1819). Red is material culture, green is gender, purple is legitimacy, pink is poverty, dark blue is crowd, light blue is body, and orange is space or place.



Figure 20: Thematic analysis on *The Belle Alliance* (Cruikshank 1819b). Red is material culture, green is gender, peach is sexuality, and pink is poverty.

Coding was also applied to visual sources. *The Belle Alliance* (figure 20) is a key visual source in chapter six. It depicts female reformers at their first public meeting in Blackburn. Through applying thematic analysis to the image, the codes are able to draw attention to several different areas including how the print is spatially divided. There is a vertical split between the two sides, with one side representing women and the other side men. The horizontal split uses the hustings, which is where the majority of the children and tattered clothing is. Coding also permits the visualisation of where themes interact or intersect. For example, material culture and sexuality overlap where the liberty cap is placed on top of the banner. In this way, coding acts as a way of creating Venn diagrams directly on top of the source. Importantly, not everything has been coded. For instance, with material culture, many more red codes could have been applied. However, the theme is interested in radical uses or applications. Therefore, liberty caps, Jacobin daggers, and banners need to be coded but so do everyday hats being raised in radical gestures.

3.3.3 DIGITAL ARCHIVES AND SOURCES

As highlighted frequently already, many of the sources fall within the documentary record due to the low survival rate of 'traditional' material culture. The sources accessed for the thesis are: newspapers, journals, periodicals, pamphlets, cartoons, caricatures, paintings, diaries, letters, government legislation and acts, and magazines, as well as several banners, flags, and weapons. These are found within multiple repositories, museums, and archives within the United Kingdom. Important locations are the Working Class Movement Library, the National Archives, the British Library, and the British Museum. Digital archives utilised include the British Newspaper Archive, British Gale Cengage Newspaper Archive, British Museum, National Archives, People's History Museum, Royal Collections Trust, and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The thesis adopted a mixture of visiting archives and utilising digital repositories and collections. Whilst more of the data was collected from digital collections, the methodology recognises the value of visiting archives and interacting with physical sources, as outlined by Steedman (2005). However, due to the focus of the thesis in exploring public or media responses to radical events and how radical identities were constructed within the public sphere, digital archives were very useful, offering a bountiful resource, especially for newspapers. There perhaps has been an under-theorisation of the utilisation of digital archives by historians - with this being problematic as technologies are never neutral (Huistra and Mellink 2016). This section will outline how the thesis engaged with digital archives and how some challenges were mediated.

The digital and physical archive experiences do differ and deeming one superior to another is probably not the best way of approaching repositories. Rather, we need to be mindful of the strengths and limitations of each archive. Mussell (2016, 17) reminds us of this, "Digital resources are effective because of the ways that the digital medium differs from print". Indeed, both Nicholson (2013, 64) and Mussell (2016, 28) have critically argued that to conceive of the digital as a surrogate to the physical archive is to misunderstand the digital archive's potential, especially regarding new ways of reading, organising, and analysing sources. Therefore, whilst there is value in physical archives and handling sources in person, this thesis also champions the digital archive and the strengths it can offer to historical archaeology.

Digitising sources can have a resonant impact on contemporary society. Bolick (2006) has emphasised the power of the digital archive as it democratises historical sources, enabling a wider audience to engage with documentation. Thomas (1999) highlights how digital archives have been able to widen the type of histories discussed too, meaning that digital archives have a power to not only increase access

to sources but also the ability to tell stories of more people. Whilst debating the extent to which digital archives potential in democratising the past has been achieved, Eichhorn (2014, 228) indicates how during their dissertation defence, they were critiqued for not seeing the records in person but only on microfilm, “what I failed to complete was not the research for my dissertation but rather the *ritual* of research I was expected to enact”. The decision to utilise digital archives could cause criticism from some and there may be an expectation that physical archives should have been used more, with this connecting to Eichhorn’s experience. The questions and areas this research seeks to address are concerned with public and media conceptions of radical identity and events, therefore the digital collections of newspapers, pamphlets, and periodicals are very suitable. Digital archives also produce an image in which thematic analysis can be applied to. Coding involves the action of adding to a source. Downloading an image which can be highlighted is useful. When visiting physical archives, photographs were taken of sources to enable thematic analysis, meaning in some ways the digital was *more* effective for the thesis methodology.

Newspapers have been particularly well digitised and this thesis draws upon two online newspaper archives in particular, with these being supplemented by newspapers from physical collections and smaller digital archives. Nineteenth century online newspaper archives are considered to be archived to a higher quality than other centuries, as missing issues are not such a problem and improved topography (the system for using key word searches) is more accurate (Nicholson 2013). For example, a comparison between word accuracy for two different online archives demonstrated the British Library collection at 78% and the eighteenth-century Burney Collection at 65% (Tanner et al 2009). Free text searching is always possible with digital collections and this offers broader ways of collecting data (Leary 2005). Digital archives are also able to combine disparate datasets, with this

providing ‘a richer account of the period’ (Mussell 2016, 26). These are all considerable strengths to be integrated into the method and data collection.

Visual sources were also engaged with via digital archives. Research on digitalisation has predominantly focused on documentary sources, especially newspapers, but there are overlaps between the two. We again have to be aware of how archives are created and the scale of collections. The British Museum Collection is an astounding online database of 4.9million objects, with 1.9 million having photographs. Whilst quantity does not necessarily equal quality, the digitalisation is to a high standard. One issue which has received attention is how to cite visual sources as unlike written sources, standard style guides are still not prevalent and the process of digitising visual sources can introduce new archival labels or not have any at all, resulting at times in superficial referencing (Layton-Jones 2009). Art history has differentiated between *digitised* art history and *digital* art history (Rodriguez-Oretga 2019), with the first being engagement with digital collections and the second applying computational methodologies to art. Drucker (2013) emphasises that we can understand the digitalisation as being another step in the object or image’s process of interpretation, in much the same way that conservation decisions are too. This art historical perspective aligns with understandings that digitising documents is not about creating a surrogate. Furthermore, this methodology utilises digital collections for gathering sources but approaches them with analogue methods. Bishop (2018) considers digital art history as simplifying or tidying interpretations whilst analogue methods can account for and deliver the ambiguous or dysfunctional. The thesis aligns itself with this understanding, especially as it permits multi-vocality.

Of course, there are limitations or challenges that researchers need to be aware of when utilising digital archives. Optical Character Recognition (OCR), the system used to identify letters and words in digitised text, can be understood as “strange

backwards ekphrasis” as text becomes image which then itself becomes text (Cecire 2011). Variables such as the paper bending and quality of the original letterpress impact the standard of OCR. Whilst free text searching is useful, search terms do have to be created and the correct/historic language has to be used to locate the articles. We have to be aware of ‘keyword blinkers’ (Bingham 2010) which can limit our attention to successful OCR searches. Concerns may also surround the ‘completeness’ of digital archives compared to physical ones. Physical archives of course offer tactile interaction with sources, where archives become a place in which historians can ‘touch the past’ with this producing the response that the past is still beyond reach and this tension is the driving force for history (Robinson 2010, 517). Some historians argue that touch can facilitate deeper understanding or produce more intimate knowledge (Sentilles 2005; Symonds 1999). Arguably, it is actually digitalisation which has reminded historians of the materiality of the archive (Plunkett 2008). Furthermore, historians – unless discussing methodologies or theories - often do not incorporate these tactile or even phenomenological experiences into their published works. Microfilms had a large impact on the process of historical research, Tyrrell (2005, 38) highlights how microfilms also had a democratising effect but also placed a premium on original sources. It is important to embrace the democratising impacts of new technologies and avoid creating a discipline that becomes exclusive. In agreement with Solberg (2012, 72), “I see the collaboration of scholars and technologists as a reminder that the project of history is about building and creating as well as excavating—about looking forward as well as back.”

These challenges were offset in a variety of ways. As opposed to purely relying on free text searching or OCR, newspapers were read in chronological order and individual copies as if they were an eBook – starting from page one and reading to the end. This mimicked the reading experience of being in an archive and also helped

to catch articles which would have been missed if only key search terms had been used. Digitalisation processes have to be selective in their nature (Hughes 2004, 32). Users have to be aware of this selective process and understand processes behind digitalisation, including funding and reasons why sources have been digitised (Hauswedell et al 2020). It is estimated that at the start of the 1800s, there were 200 newspaper titles (Law 2016). The British Newspaper Archive has 100 newspapers across 1810-1819, offering 59, 714 pages to read. British Gale Cengage Newspaper Archive, 1815-1822, has 34 newspapers. Whilst the coverage is not uniform nor utterly comprehensive (but arguably, what archive is, as Yale (2015, 332) states, “No archive is innocent”), this thesis was able to search and engage with 50% of the newspapers in circulation from two digital archives. This was supplemented with physical archives to engage with titles such as *The Manchester Observer*, thus ensuring the radical press was included. Visiting physical archives enabled that tactile interaction too. Importantly, the type and combination of archives should be influenced by the research questions and desired outcomes of the project. This thesis aims to explore how radicals constructed events, radical and conservative responses to events and how this shaped or impacted radicalism’s identity. The emphasis is on the public nature of the events rather than private discourse or government perspectives, meaning the archive engagement needed to focus more on newspapers and published works.

3.3.4 UTILISING VISUAL AND DOCUMENTARY SOURCES

In order to circumvent low material culture survival, the reliance is instead upon visual and documentary sources which represent people, places and material culture. Historical archaeology has a long engagement with utilising both text and artefacts including documentary archaeology (Wilkie 2006), with Mytum (2010, 240) recognising how the discipline is beginning to excel in combining the ‘rich complexity of primary sources’. This interaction also includes narrative writing and naming individuals and specific historical events (Beaudry 1998; Finch 2008; Yamin 2002).

Therefore, the thesis is placed within and hopes to contribute to a discipline that is developing novel ways of constructing past narratives. One of the important contributions is using visual sources, including prints, paintings, and maps. Whilst archaeology has used visual sources in numerous ways, periods, and contexts, it has yet to utilise the visual source as a medium of accessing lost material culture, a way of analysing space and landscape in which no physical remains are present, and as an artefact in their own accord. Previously, written sources such as diaries have been used to situate both individuals and artefacts (Waterson et al 2013) but have not necessarily gone to the extent of using the text to access lost material culture or investigate imagined or imaginary spaces and landscapes. Using these sources also permits access to individuals and individuality, something that can prove problematic especially in relation to urban deposits (White 2009).

It is of course vital to approach the sources critically, including an idea called 'intervisuality' or 'intertextuality' that seeks to ascertain whether an image or text was produced from direct observation or imagination (Hahn 2001). Cross referencing (Burke 2010) and recognising the context of the document or image and its tradition (Crary 1992) is also important. It is naive to view images as being 'snapshots' of the past. Retford (2010) explores this in relation to conversation pieces of the eighteenth century, emphasising how the paintings are not a direct render or revelation of a historical reality. To use images as simply illustrative is highly problematic (Retford 2007). There is also value in not merely understanding images as sources that point to a larger social history or as arrows pointing outwards to something greater, instead, the image (or the text) can be a world or reality unto itself and its complex social and cultural structures worthy of studying (Clark 1982). The style and tradition therefore become interesting areas to investigate and remind the researcher to question the reasoning behind how an image is framed, what is included and excluded, and how style and representation can affect interpretation.

Overall, the absence of a traditional archaeological record should not be viewed negatively, instead, it provides the opportunity to develop new methodologies and conceptions within archaeology. Through approaching visual and documentary sources from a different perspective, archaeological insights into landscape, space, identity, and individuality become possible.

3.4.4 PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SOURCES

The thesis utilises a mixture of public and private sources. By private sources, I mean Home Office records and private letters. The distinction between public and private is whether the source was published or not. This combination of public/private permits insights into a range of perspectives, including how radicalism aimed to portray itself, how the 'establishment' press characterised and critiqued radicals, and how informers gathered information on radical activities. It is important to note that the thesis is not necessarily aiming to create accurate reconstructions of events. Rather, the interest is in how people understood, represented, or interacted with radical spaces, landscapes, and events.

Utilising private sources is important as they can contain information which is not otherwise published. This includes tantalising insights into how material culture was being produced by radicals. Newspapers and prints capture the consumption of radical material culture whilst private sources can deliver some of the production of radical objects and artefacts. Incorporating a range of sources outside of newspapers can help combat one of the issues of utilising digitised newspaper archives. Bingham (2010) has highlighted the danger of honing in on certain publications as they are more available or easier to access, creating an almost distorted 'press opinion'. Through engaging with private sources and a broad range of 'establishment' and radical newspapers, as well as prints and material culture, the methodology combats this possible pitfall.

The Home Office records have been the main private – or Official – sources that have been analysed. These records contain the reports of informers, local magistrates' concerns and information, and the replies from the Government. Within these letters and documents, there are also examples of radical works, such as handbills and petitions. Therefore, the Home Office records provide valuable insights into how radicalism was monitored and characterised by authorities. As already mentioned, this can include information that was not otherwise published or perhaps would not have survived if an informer or magistrate did not decide to write a letter. Of course, these records still have to be read critically. There is still an agenda within these reports – quite often suppressing radicalism. On the other hand, whilst this can be challenging, the records also offer an opportunity to explore developments of ideas and ideologies (Dobson 2009). If we understand the public sources as being 'limited' as they contain what a radical figure, journalist or editor thought would sell, sate the audience, and what information they had managed to uncover, private sources help us go behind 'the published word' as the public and private sources can tell different stories (Tosh 2015, 80).

3.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined the theoretical underpinnings and methodological approach in the thesis, providing the basis for the next chapter on the themes and the analysis chapters. It has dissected important concepts and themes in landscape, space, crowds, and gender. These can be tracked throughout the analysis chapters and how they intersect and interact form nuanced aspects of the conclusions. Studying intersections is possible through using thematic analysis, a dynamic approach which can be applied to documents and visual sources. This chapter has also justified its combination of physical and digital archives, demonstrating the potential digital repositories and collections contain.

4 THEMES

Throughout the analysis, there are four important themes: landscapes, spaces, and material culture; religion and legitimacy; gender (particularly in relation to domesticity and masculinity); and bodies and clothing. The themes have not been reduced into singular words in order to highlight the important relationships apparent between them. Furthermore, it is worth being aware that the themes oscillate in prominence and relevancy during different parts of the analysis. This chapter will outline how each theme was reached and why they are illuminating in the forthcoming analysis chapters.

Also, within this section is an overview of the study of gender in the early nineteenth-century, touching upon recent trends in social and cultural history alongside feminist revisions. It acts as an important setting and contextualising for chapter six which discusses female reform societies. As evident within many areas of history, the woman has previously been overlooked until feminist histories began to be produced. Therefore, this section is an opportunity to analyse what can be considered a successful relationship between politics and the past. It bases its definition of successful feminist historians from Spencer-Wood (2011, 112), who explored the usefulness of feminist methodologies and archaeologies, concluding that it, 'provides insights about gender ideologies, relationships, and differences between women's and men's experiences that cannot be gained from ungendered historical context that generalizes men's experiences and ideologies as universal.'

4.1 LANDSCAPES, SPACES, AND MATERIAL CULTURE

As already touched upon within chapter two, it is worth further emphasising the importance and power of landscapes, spaces, and material culture in Regency radicalism. This thesis focuses on open spaces – public squares and fields – rather than closed spaces – taverns, theatres, club rooms – on purpose. Whilst important

decisions, discussions and discourse occurred in closed locations, it was mass platform meetings that relied upon transforming urban, or quasi-urban, spaces into radical landscapes. They utilised quotidian spaces on the edge of expanding cities, such as Spa Fields in London and St Peter's Fields in Manchester, which, due to their parameters provided a location in which radicalism could pursue its goals. Female reformers also understood the need of not just meeting in a space but transmuting the everyday industrial and urban space into a radical landscape. What chapter five's mass meetings and chapter six's female reformers have in common was a shared philosophy in the power of combining landscapes, space, and material culture. They recognised the active power of materiality and spatiality; harnessing these would enable the creation of more impressive, memorable, and community-building events.

Authorities also understood the potential that is inherent or essential in materials, space, and landscape. Their understanding of how material and spatial agency combine with human agency resulted in authorities heavily policing mass meetings but also regulating executions of radicals. With the Cato Street conspiracy, authorities created a highly controlled execution landscape through distancing the crowd from the scaffold and having extra special constables. As we will see, the need to tame or wield the power of these spaces and events resulted in how the conspirators' bodies were treated post-death: they were buried in unmarked graves with quicklime.

Henry Hunt offers a different way of considering open spaces and landscapes through his imprisonment at Ilchester Gaol. Through undergoing confinement, open landscapes become important. Hunt turns to exploring the cultural and political landscapes he has lived through and experienced as a way of coping with the restrictions of prison. It also allows his own story to be told in a grander narrative.

Material culture also features in Hunt's prison experiences through his business venture, breakfast powder. What is particularly noteworthy about breakfast powder is how the debates centred around the actual *properties* of the foodstuff, as in, what it was made from. Therefore, breakfast powder reminds us that the essential properties or attributes of materials are intrinsic in helping us to understand them.

4.1.1 CASE STUDY: CATO STREET EXECUTION IN PRINT

The Cato Street Conspiracy received a great deal of attention through visual culture. These offer an insight into how the conspiracy was imagined, constructed, and represented by the press. Figure 21 is one such depiction of the execution. Through utilising the thematic analysis, it became possible to understand how space and material culture were interacting to create this framed view of the execution landscape. The centre of the image is dominated by material culture and bodies. Newgate Prison looms in the background, with the characteristic Debtor's Door peeking through the material culture of the gallows and the bodies of the conspirators. Through dissecting the image this way, it becomes apparent that the representation of the execution is actually passive. The space and material culture of the scaffold, Newgate, and ground are relatively under-detailed, almost filling the void around the scaffold. Crucially, even the execution and decapitation are also passive. The angle provided into the scene distances us from the action, the scaffold has been roped off thereby closing down the space, and the bodies are neatly lined up, being distinguished from the officials through their hoods and ropes. Although the officials and executioners are bodies, they are not prominent figures in this scene. They are generic characters who are made separate from the conspirators through their weapons. There is no crowd either, meaning that rather than being part of the gathered hubbub, we have become removed voyeurs, peering into one reconstruction of an execution landscape.

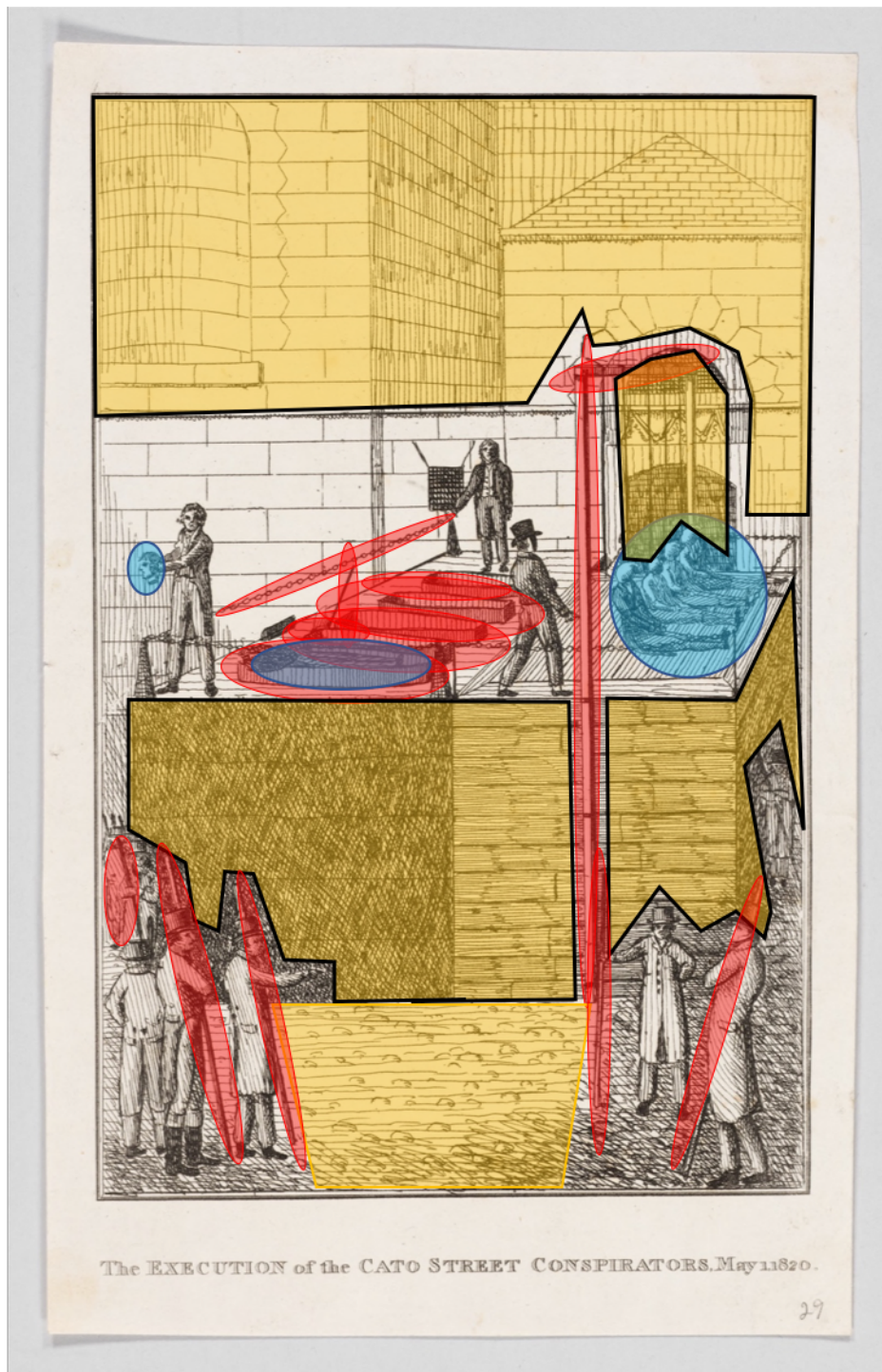


Figure 21: Thematic Analysis on *The Execution of the Cato Street Conspirators* (Wilkinson 1820). Red is material culture, orange is space, orange with black outline is for space and material culture, and blue is bodies.

4.2 RELIGION AND LEGITIMACY

Religion and radicalism are arguably closely linked. Of course, it is worth emphasising 'religion' is a difficult word to define during this period, due to its multiplicities of meaning, experience, and interpretation relating to Anglican and dissenting denominations (Bradley 1990). Furthermore, limiting religious and spiritual understandings to Christianity is not possible. For example, whilst the French Revolution was linked to atheism, especially because of the physical and ideological attacks through an intense period of dechristianisation (Andress 2004), it did attempt to produce a new belief system called the 'Cult of Reason', which involved converting churches into Temples of Reason (Arasse 1991). Loyalists often utilised atheism as an attack upon radical individuals, especially Thomas Paine (figure 22). Deism was another radical belief. It is usually perceived as being intimately related to Enlightenment thought through being characterised as a rejection of the theology and control of Christianity, although to what extent this is a historiographical illusion is debatable (Grasso 2008). Therefore, religion is being utilised as a catch all phrase to highlight the use of Christianity and Deism in Regency radicalism.



Figure 22: *Wha Wants Me* (Cruikshank 1792). Despite being a deist, Thomas Paine was repeatedly charged with the ‘offence’ of atheism due to his zealous criticism of Christianity and institutional religion. Atheism is linked to other destabilising forces including ingratitude idleness, equality madness, and anarchy, which were considered threats to British societal ideals which Paine tramples upon.

The links between religion and radicalism across the period 1750-1822 have been well examined. Various scholars have proposed the argument that religion, mainly Christianity in either its heterodox or dissenting form, was a principle cause in the pursuit of political reform (Pocock 1999; Waterman 1996). Furthering this relationship between religion and radicalism, studies by O’Gorman (1989) and Phillips (1982) suggest that socioeconomic factors are not as influential as religious belief in relation to voting patterns and behaviour. Despite this scholarship which emphasises religion as the primary factor, it is worth cautioning that class and economic differences and disaffection were involved. Various analyses of voting behaviour in the second half of the eighteenth century suggest that property ownership was involved in political belief (Rudé 1962) and class affected whether an individual voted for the government or opposition candidate (Bradley 1987). Vitally, the studies which confirmed religion as the primary factor neglected socioeconomic and other cultural reasons whilst those which promote class ignored religion. Thus, neither side particularly offers a counter, but are to a certain degree advancing interpretations which should be entwined in consideration. The value of this is apparent in one particular study. In an analysis of English radicalism in Bristol during the 1770s and 1780s, Baigent and Bradley (2009) paint a complex picture of the reasons behind the emergence of radical thought and behaviour and are unable to confidently establish the connection between wealth, religion, and radicalism. However, in order to properly comprehend both political action and ideology, it is an utmost requirement to enquire about ‘the entirety of people’s experience — religious, material and indeed political’ (1106). Therefore, it is vital to be mindful of the complexities behind the performance and manifestation of radicalism and whilst religion is an important factor, it cannot be presumed to be the foremost.

A recurring theme with British radicalism of this period is the idea of historical legitimacy. One facet of this is the idea of unbroken liberty, harking back to Anglo

Saxon times, an idea peddled by conservative and radical alike due to their belief in textual authority (Crick 2004), with Holt (1985) even suggesting that the reworking of Anglo-Saxon laws into a 'British' constitution and tradition began in the twelfth century. This idea of the 'Norman Yoke' proved popular, but highlighted tension in the radical movement between invoking this legendary past and crafting a perfect future. Magna Carta featured frequently. John Johnston, a leader in the Blanket March, argued at a meeting in Middleton, 1818:

“Just have the Spirit of our Forefathers & pull altogether as they did in the year 1213[5] at runummede [Runnymede], do as they did take your Petition in one hand & a sword drawn in the other & demand ye compel them to give up those rights & libertys that belongs to English men (HO/42/178, fols 314-19)

Whilst a strong example of referring to Magna Carta, it proved an enduring symbol, also being referenced in many prints and caricatures. Individuals from the 1600s, especially the Civil War, would be referred to. For example, *The Statesman* (14th August 1820) declared it stood for the same cause as John Hampden and Algernon Sydney. It could even be used to legitimise violence. The Home Office received a threat from an anonymous impassioned writer which promised that many radicals were willing to become 'Feltons' (HO/49/199, fol.291), i.e., willing to follow John Felton who assassinated George Villiers, an adviser of Charles I. Another important event which was frequently referred to by radicals and reformers, as well as Whigs, is the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the English Constitutional Settlement of 1689, which became known as the Bill of Rights (figure 23). Understandings, interpretations, and the utilisation of this date fluctuates across the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Wilson (1989) has demonstrated that one such interpretation linked 1688 to current political struggles and calls for reform through arguing that the revolution cemented certain rights and English liberties. By 1788, the Glorious Revolution had taken on 'mythic' qualities and became understood as a

popular event and movement. Indeed, the use of historical legitimacy as a way of building or validating an argument occurred in the preceding events to 1688. As outlined by Zook (2002, 216), 'ancient constitutionalism was a particularly English story... it was supposedly based on age old traditions allowing Whig constitutionalists to represent themselves as restorers rather than innovators.' This type of language can be seen in petitions of the time. For example, a petition from London argued that "They [the petitioners] duly valued and appreciated the constitution of this country, not the impaired constitution as it now existed, but that constitution which our ancestors obtained and transmitted to us" (HC/Deb 07 February 1817/vol 35.cc245-52). It is worth remembering not all radicals subscribed to using historical legitimacy or ancient constitutionalism. William Sherwin and Richard Carlile advanced an argument that it was necessary to break with the past as would contributors in their newspaper *Sherwin's Political Register*. As with Napoleon, the issue of using historical legitimacy does highlight tensions and disagreements within Regency radicalism and emphasises that we cannot discuss a cohesive 'Radicalism' for this period.



Figure 23: Many other prints in the discussion use historical legitimacy as motifs or symbols but *Ourang Outang: Candidate for Westminster* (Anon 1818) contrasts illegitimacy with legitimacy. The ape (representing Murray Maxwell who ran to be Westminster MP) squashes the Bill of Rights and the Magna Carta through accepting false evidence from the infamous spies Oliver and Castles. The green bag features in other prints too as a symbol of corruption (see chapter five on the Smithfield meeting).

This creation of a narrative wherein previous 'British' societies and peoples had liberties which were under threat or had since been lost, also extended to women. Gleadle (2002, 156) notes this, stating that 'many polemicists were arguing that a revolutionary insight... be merely extended.' S. Ferrand Waddington, in the radical journal *The Republican* (1819, 45), offers his argument for vindication, expressing, 'Our British establishment presents a strange inconsistency in allowing women to wield the sceptre, without being entitled to hold any subordinate situation', whilst

crucially linking this to powerful acts by female monarchs and Anglo-Saxon women's rights. Therefore, it may be possible that a form of continuity was occurring within gendered constructions of radicalism, with some of the more 'progressive' men recognising the rights of women. However, the idea of widespread continuity in relation to this idea must be cautioned against due to it not being the general consensus and the lack of a trans-historical tradition within radicalism (McElligott 2011).

Religion and historical legitimacy run across the analysis. These are paired together because of how religion and a belief in historical precedents both contributed to radicalism in similar ways. They provided a solid foundation to build the argument for radicalism from and they could be utilised as a form of justification of way reform was not only needed but substantiated. During mass meetings, speeches were made which connected their protest to historical events or cornerstones of liberty. Female reformers legitimised their presences and involvement in reform through Christian belief, emphasising the understanding that Christ was the greatest reformer. Their legitimacy was also attacked as conservatives and 'establishment' presses would draw upon historical examples in an attempt to dismantle women's engagement with radicalism. Hunt emphasises the centrality of Christianity to his identity through his memoirs. The Cato Street conspirators differed in their religious beliefs, however, when faced with the gallows, their religion came to the fore.

4.2.1 CASE STUDY: MASS MEETING BANNERS

One of the important aspects of thematic analysis is it allows connections to be made across different sources and datasets but also how themes overlap or connect. Looking at the banners at the Smithfield meeting, we can notice how important material culture was in the mass meetings and how banners acted as a source of legitimation. Legitimacy drew upon several radical wells but I think we can also understand material culture as being a vital signifier and carrier of legitimacy.

The banners utilised common phrases or mottos prevalent within radicalism (figures 24 and 25), such as 'Universal Suffrage'. Through adopting this recognisable lexicon, the reformers were legitimising their own arguments by drawing upon radical tradition and familiarity. Crucially, how banners legitimise radicalism is not limited to their inscriptions, but also through how they were being utilised. Banners were not just a decorative element surrounding the waggon/hustings, they were charged objects which spread the message of radicalism, and legitimised the space of meeting. We have seen how important banners were in election culture and in relation to the hustings. This combination of the material and spatial was powerful, note how not all the banners were unfurled to begin with. Materiality and spatiality thus combine with temporality and theatricality to construct the radical event and landscape. Banners were not static either, they were portable, meaning they could easily be incorporated into processions. Therefore, having a banner – or flag – was a recognisable material medium which can turn a large group of moving people into an organised event. At least in the radical perspective, banners, flags, and placards were important not only in identity and event building, they also provided material differentiation between a meeting and a riot. The *Caledonian Mercury* actually legitimises the large gathering by arguing that most present were there out of curiosity rather than passion – quite a common utterance in newspapers in the period. However, where we can see this idea of differing between a meeting and riot even clearer is in the 'Order' placard; it was not just about regulating crowd behaviour, it was there as a distinct piece of evidence. The placard may only have 'Order' written on it but the hidden meaning was the meeting is legal and legitimate.

have taken place in the country.—So early as nine o'clock this morning some had taken their stations in Smithfield, and by eleven o'clock the assemblage was pretty numerous in the open space, as well as in all the avenues leading to the market.

The central point of attraction was the Greyhound Inn, on the west side of Smithfield, in consequence of a rumour generally circulated in the course of the morning that Mr Hunt and his friends were to make their appearance from the balcony of this inn. Nearly the larger proportion of the people, however, seemed to keep aloof from the expected scene of action, and appeared looking on more from motives of curiosity than from any sentiment of participation in the proceedings about to commence.

At twelve o'clock precisely, about thirty men, with white wands and four flags, and a placard, on which was inscribed "Order! order!" proceeded from Smithfield bars to the entrance of Cloth Fair, on the east side of the market. A waggon was here in waiting, on which a part of them mounted, among whom we recognized Preston as most prominent. Fourteen men, with white wands, and two flags, now proceeded down Giltspur Street, as a deputation to wait on Mr Hunt, and attend him to the meeting. The deputation was remarkable for any thing but the respectability of its appearance. None of the flags were at this time unfurled. The numbers assembled appeared to be about ten thousand.

Caledonian Mercury (21st July 1819)

When the Resolution for communicating with the Roman Catholics of Ireland was read, the two flags before furled were opened. The first was a tri-coloured flag, inscribed "England, Scotland, Ireland;" the second displayed the words "Liberty or Death."

Morning Post (21st July 1819)

number. At about one, Mr. Hunt, on horseback, attended by 30 members of the committee with white wands, and preceded by a scarlet flag inscribed "Universal Suffrage," and a red flag inscribed "Peace and good will," entered Smithfield Market-place, and proceeded to a waggon which was situated on the eastern side. Mr. Hunt ascended it, accompanied by Dr. Watson, Mr. Preston, Mr. Thistlewood, and the Rev. Joseph Harrison, the latter of whom, being introduced by Mr. Hunt, was received with loud cheers. Two boards were then displayed with the words "order, order," upon them, to which the committee frequently pointed whenever any disturbance took place among the crowd, Mr. Hunt took the chair, on the call of Mr. Gass, amid the loudest acclamations. He addressed the meeting from the front of the Waggon. He said he had never

Liverpool Mercury (23rd July 1819)

Figure 24: Three different newspaper extracts on the Smithfield meeting. All demonstrate discussions of material culture and/or space but also allow insight into legitimacy. Red is material culture, orange is space, blue is bodies, dark blue is crowds/groups, and purple is legitimacy.

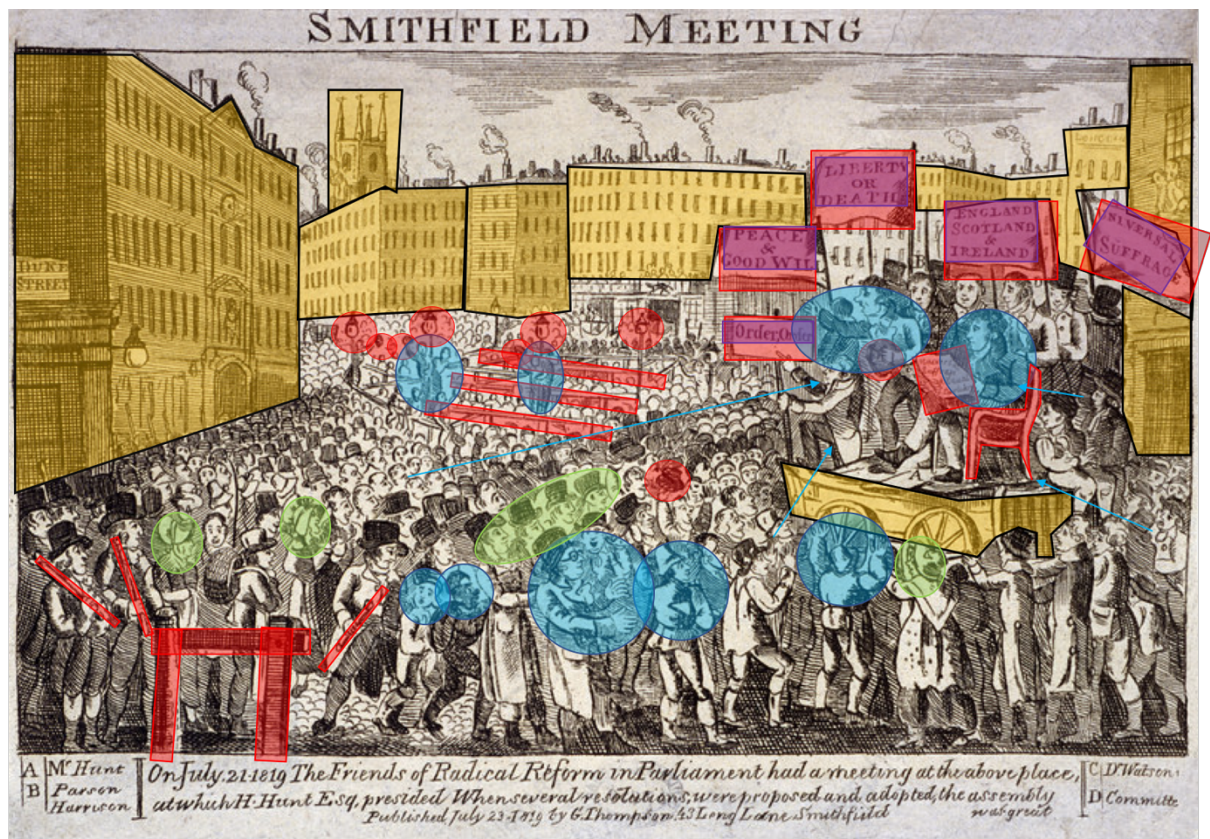


Figure 25: Smithfield Meeting. This print also provides insights into how the reformers and radicals used material culture and space to legitimise their meeting.

4.3 GENDER: DOMESTICITY, EDUCATION AND HOME IN THE URBAN WORLD

Female reformers were passionate about the home and family, declaring that one of their fundamental contributions to radicalism was instructing their children to follow it. Stephens (1987) has evaluated working class education in both eighteenth and early nineteenth century contexts, importantly emphasising that a uniformed national experience did not exist, instead, there were regional variations. Despite this warning, Gomersall (1997, 45) does characterise the experience of learning as a child through 'education, work, family and community life [being] normally synonymous'. Lancashire, a hotbed for radicalism during the Regency, had a tradition of teaching children how to read and write, alongside basic arithmetic sometimes, within the family unit (Sanderson 1968). As numerous feminist historians

(Tilly and Scott 1978; Roberts 1988) have made clear, the spheres of work, family, and home, were by no means distinct entities, rather duty to the family lay in both work and home. Purvis (1989, 25) dubbed this the 'double shift of work and home', in an attempt to encapsulate the experience of single as well as married women.

As noted by Jordan (1989), across Britain and various industrial occupations, women were unequally distributed, with this being linked to employers rejecting women, especially in iron and mining industries. Lancashire and other parts of the northwest of England were heavily involved in radicalism. They were also transformed through industrialisation which occurred over three centuries (Nevell 2003), with men, women, and children being employed within the cotton industry. Radicalism, protest, and industry had a long entanglement. In 1779, a group of men and women decided to maraud around Lancashire destroying workshops and machinery of the latest equipment, due to the threat of women earning less because of improved technology, making this a defence of the skilled woman worker and family economy (Custer 2007). This was one of numerous acts which foreshadowed Luddism. In this relationship between gender and industry, Anna Clark (1995) has posited that through patriarchal understandings of the man assuming dominance over the family through skilled labour, radicalism of the early nineteenth century fundamentally suffered because of its misogyny. This idea of lack of fulfilment through abiding with patriarchy will be returned to in chapter six and will, to a certain extent, be disagreed with. Instead, the analysis demonstrates women positioned themselves as successful within their gender roles and did not believe themselves to be limited by misogyny, which is perhaps an uncomfortable conclusion for contemporary feminists.

Demonstrating the overlap between the themes, religion was entwined with domesticity. Within the nineteenth century, some women, whether religious or

agnostic, utilised religion as a means of legitimising or substantiating social claims, thereby taking advantage of church traditions and the bible which usually subordinated them (Vicinus 2002). Alternative spiritualities and denominations were populated by women, including the Quakers, Theosophy, and Christian Science. Unitarian women across the nineteenth century were involved in numerous social and reform movements, with this view stemming from their general belief it is possible for society to undergo constant self-improvement and humanity is perfectible (Watts 1998, 111). Obviously, the union of political and religious ideologies encouraged participation in political radicalism and reform was not limited to Unitarians, making it very much a Dissenting multi-denominational effort (Lyon 1999; Hole 1989). Of course, conservative onlookers were not always kind about women involved in political reform. Mather (2014) examines female reform clubs across the north of England in 1819, providing evidence from newspaper accounts that judged the women to have rejected morality and Christianity. It is necessary for the historian, or archaeologist, to not limit studies which highlight the limitations of women in politics in the period prior to 1860 but rather to emphasise the opportunities, resistance, and active pursuit of political engagement (Richardson 2000).

Gender features prominently in the discussion of female reform societies. Female reformers considered domesticity, the home, and family as central tenets in their radicalism. This emerged through their language choices in speeches and published written communication. Through the thematic analysis, it became apparent that how the female reformers represented and constructed their own identities clashed with established expectations of womanhood and femininity. This collision resulted in female reformers being both feminine and masculine, or as chapter six names it, female masculinity. The thematic analysis also resulted in gender and masculinity becoming important themes regarding Henry Hunt. Through being not-working class

(see chapter seven for a discussion on Hunt's class identity), Hunt's masculinity was different to the working-class reformers he encountered, perhaps especially those in the industrial north. Hunt makes a hero out of and through his masculinity. He also saw in Napoleon a masculine ideal, perhaps even idol. Aside from Hunt, Napoleon is actually the person of central importance in the memoirs, with Hunt making his story of imprisonment run parallel to the rise and exile of Bonaparte.

4.3.1 CASE STUDY: HUNT'S MASCULINITY

About twelve o'clock an open barouche was drawn up to the door of Smedley Cottage, to convey to the meeting myself and those who were assembled at Mr. Johnson's. It was settled that I should take the chair, that Johnson should move the Resolutions and the Remonstrance, and that John Knight should second them. It was not anticipated that any other person would address the Meeting. We entered the barouche soon after twelve o'clock on the morning of the 16th of August 1819, and proceeded immediately towards St. Peter's Plain, on which spot the Meeting was to be held. We were attended by an immense multitude, preceded by a band of music, and we very soon met the Manchester Committee of Female Reformers, headed by Mrs. Fildes, who bore in her hand a small white silk flag. These females were all handsomely dressed in white, and they proposed to lead the procession to the field, walking two and two, but as, in consequence of the crowd, this was found to be impossible, they fell into the rear of the barouche, which position they maintained, with some difficulty, during the whole way till we arrived at the Hustings. Mrs. Fildes, who carried the flag, was taken up at my suggestion, and rode by the side of the coachman, bearing her colours in a most gallant style. As, though rather small, she was a remarkably good figure, and well dressed, it was very justly considered that she added much to the beauty of the scene; and, as she was a married woman of good character, her appearance in such a situation by no means diminished the respectability of the procession, the whole of which was conducted with the greatest regularity and good order.

When I entered the field or plain, where the people were assembled, I saw such a sight as I had never before beheld. A space containing, as I am informed, nearly five acres of ground, was literally covered with people, a great portion of whom were crammed together as thick as they could stand. Great bodies of people had assembled and marched to the spot in regular order, each striving with the other which should contribute most to the respectability of the meeting by peaceable conduct; every one appeared to be animated with the greatest enthusiasm and devotion to the cause for which they had come together; that cause being solely either to petition, to address, or to remonstrate with, the throne, for a redress of insupportable grievances. Every one appeared to me to be actuated by a similar feeling to that by which I felt that I was prompted in attending the meeting — namely, the performance of an important, a sacred, and a solemn duty to ourselves and our country. Let the reader who was not present picture to his imagination an assemblage of from 180 to 200 thousand English men and women, congregated together to exercise the great constitutional right of laying their complaints and grievances before the throne, and when he has done this, he may form an idea of the scene which met my view.

The moment that I entered the field, ten or twelve bands struck up the same tune, "See the conquering hero comes;" eighteen or twenty flags, most of them surmounted by a Cap of Liberty, were unfurled, and from the multitude burst forth such a shout of welcome as never before hailed the ears of an individual, possessed of no other power, no other influence over the minds of the people, except that which he had gained by an honest, straight-forward discharge of public duty. With some difficulty, and by slow degrees, the carriage was drawn up within a few yards of the Hustings, where the crowd was so dense as to forbid the approach of the carriage any nearer. We alighted, and, an avenue being made for us, we ascended the Hustings. The ladies composing the Committee of Female Reformers had followed close to the carriage up to this point, and therefore it was absolutely necessary to dispose of them in some place of safety, to prevent their being trampled under foot. Some part of them were placed in the carriage, which we had left, and the remainder were assisted upon the Hustings.

Figure 26: Extract from Henry Hunt's memoirs which describes Peterloo. Red is material culture, orange is space, orange with black is space and material culture, blue is bodies, dark blue is crowds/groups, and purple is legitimacy.

Hunt's memoirs offer a fascinating insight into how Hunt constructed his own masculinity and identity. The extract (figure 26) contains a description of the procession to Peterloo and the involvement of the Manchester Female Reform Society. This interplay between Hunt and female reformers brings his masculinity into relief. Hunt considers how the women could not lead the procession due to the density and pressure of the crowd meaning he, as a gentleman, invited Mary Fildes into his carriage. Again, at the hustings, accommodations were made for the women because of Hunt's masculinity and conceptualisation of femininity. How Hunt discusses Fildes is also illuminating; it is her body, her character, and her material

culture which are being remarked upon. We can see various themes converging in the same extract. The presence of women, and how much they dominate this account, perhaps was being emphasised in a post-trial account to highlight that the meeting was peaceful. How Hunt understood and performed gender resulted in how the Peterloo procession was shaped.

4.4 BODIES AND CLOTHING

Radical bodies were important in numerous ways during the late 1810s. Bodies were instrumental in occupying space, providing the physical numbers that demonstrated support for the cause. They were intimately tied to material culture and movement too through clothing, marching, and processing. However, radical bodies were also attacked through text, criticism, and execution. Therefore, this is a critical theme across the analysis. Bodies were ‘contested sites’ and ‘repositories of social and cultural expectations’ (McClive 2009, 45). The body is – and was – pluralistic, being ‘at once the most solid, the most elusive, illusory, concrete, metaphorical, ever present and ever distant thing’ (Turner 2012, 43). This feeling of being in-and-out of touch with the body feeds into the queer understandings this thesis explores.

The body has become an important area of historical study, especially in discussions on gender, fashion, and medicine. Many analyses highlight how the body cannot be understood as a ‘universal entity’ rather it needs to be comprehended as ‘inseparable from the cultural context in which it is born, grows, decays, and dies’ (Pilloud and Louis-Courvoisier 2003, 451). Within the later eighteenth century, Laqueur (1992) argued there was a fundamental shift in understanding bodies from a one-sex/vertical model to a two-sex/horizontal model. Changing Enlightened scientific thought reacted against the political discourse that advanced natural rights. Shifting from seeing male/female bodies as variants on a type of body, scientific ontologising began to argue that male/female bodies are distinct, with

women's bodies sufficiently different to sustain the patriarchy and prevent women's involvement in politics.

Clothing was not only an important way of signalling gender and sexual roles, it was intimately linked to the body. Dressing the body is 'fundamental to microsocial order' therefore if a body is not clothed appropriately or does not conform, it becomes a disruptive or jarring force (Entwistle 2000). Wearing suitable clothing was about dressing for a situation and fitting in (Klepp and Rystt 2017). It was utilised frequently by reformers, especially women, as a crucial material and bodily component of public performances. As seen within the early modern – and extended into nineteenth century understandings – 'the wrong clothes perverted that [bodily] performance and ushered in the effeminate man and the manly woman' (Vincent 2013, 172). Clothing could hide the 'truth' of the body making it materially powerful and possibly deceptive. Ignoring the materiality of the body and gender is to undertake incomplete analyses. Deslandes (2013, 180) emphasises this point by asserting the importance of the relationship between 'bodily presentation and adornment of the body as essential performative gestures in the articulation of modern gender and sexual subjectivities'. Rather than separate clothing and the body, the interplay and enmeshment between these needs to be recognised.

Bodies and clothing are therefore a highly significant theme. The importance of the radical body, how it was dressed, and how it performed features throughout the analysis. In mass platform meetings, bodies combined with material culture to create radical landscapes and to imbue space with radicalism. Female reformers understood the power of materiality and their bodies, utilising dress as a way of performing a feminine radicalism. However, female reformers were also critiqued *because of* their bodies and clothing, creating an unintended gendered reading of female masculinity. Henry Hunt, in his prison cell, utilised the space of the memoir to

consider his life and reform efforts. In doing so, whether intended or not, Hunt discusses how his body performs and interacts with the world. At the Cato Street Conspiracy execution, the conspirators' bodies become a site of contention – are they radical, criminal, or both? The conspirators also utilise the scaffold stage to perform some last acts of radicalism through their bodies and clothing, or in the case of Davidson, to meditate on what happens post-death.

4.4.1 CASE STUDY: FEMALE REFORMER BODIES

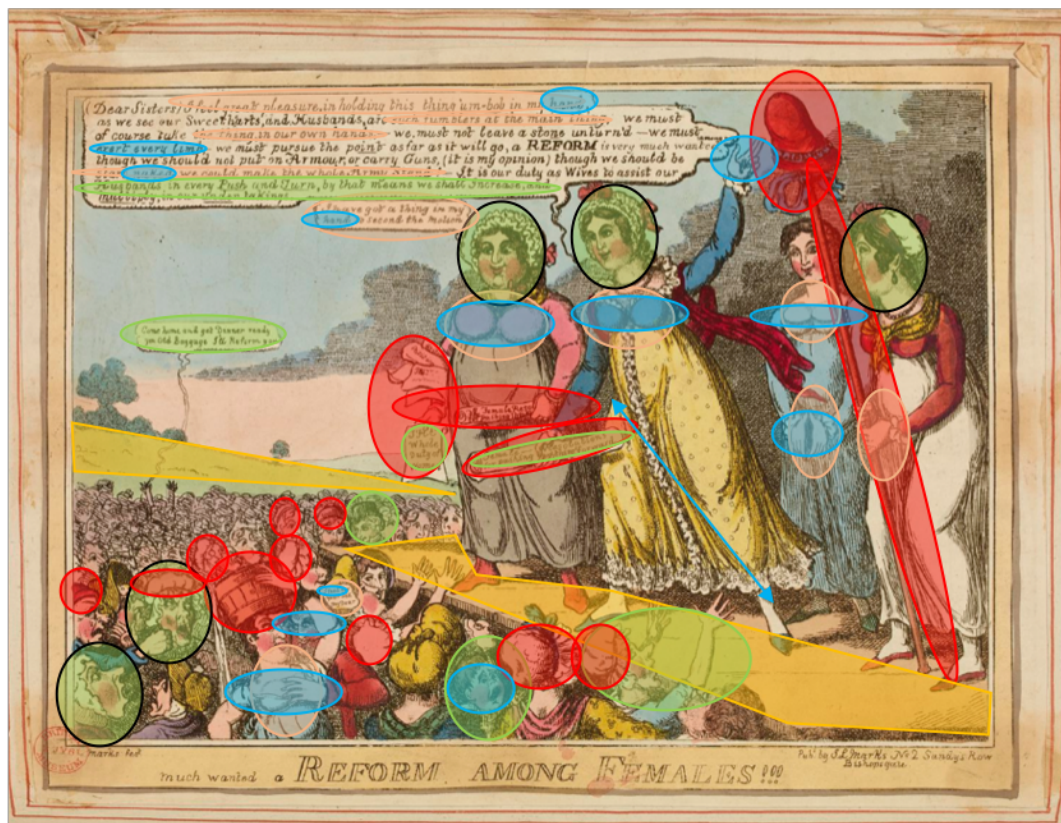


Figure 27: *Much wanted a Reform Among Females!!!* Red is material culture, orange is space and landscape, green is gender, green with black is gender and bodies, peach is sexuality, and blue is bodies.

Female reformers came under attack and criticism with their bodies carrying some of the brunt. Visual culture utilised bodies as a way of facilitating insults, undermining how female reformers embodied radicalism through demeaning their actual physical and sexual bodies. *Much Wanted a Reform Among Females!!!* (figure 27) combines a

mixture of explicit and implicit mockery of bodies. The most prominent body features on the women are their breasts, emphasised by size and shape, and their faces, characterised by blushing. Hands are another important feature, being used in both the text bubbles and through gestures. The crowd does not escape the criticism either. A milkmaid is characterised through the bucket on her head but also the man groping her breasts. There is also a man by the far end of the stage who seems much more interested in the woman's body next to him than the meeting. Women are also seen shouting in the crowd, whether in support or repulsion is hard to estimate. One individual in the sea of the crowd shouts that the women need to return home and "I'll reform you". All of these combine together to sexualise female reformers. The body becomes a medium in which their involvement in reform can be disregarded or diminished through crude jokes and crass caricatures. Their bodies are performing in a space not considered for them, through stepping beyond the domestic boundary, the women are satirised as loose and immoral.

4.5 CONCLUSIONS

The major themes of the analysis have been outlined. These themes somewhat correspond with literature through drawing on numerous avenues of inquiry but they also align themselves and are constructed from the primary evidence. Therefore, the themes are dual-driven by literature and analysis. The themes frame the following analysis, with certain ones becoming more important at different stages of the thesis. Importantly, all the themes do feature in each chapter. Correspondingly, this indicates that to certain events, individuals, and societies, these themes were crucial in their understanding of radicalism. The following analysis is presented in chronological order, beginning with mass platform events in 1816, to the emergence of female reform societies, to Hunt's imprisonment, and finally to the Cato Street Conspiracy.

Alongside outlining the themes, explicit examples of how thematic analysis has contributed to each chapter have been provided and how the themes were constructed from the sources. This is useful for two purposes: it allows the process of research to become more transparent and it emphasises the usefulness of thematic analysis again. It is also worth emphasising that whilst these themes have been pulled apart, the case studies rightly demonstrate that the themes are entangled, related, and interact with each other. Arguably, it is these convergences which are the most illuminating.

5 THE MASS PLATFORM AND RADICAL LANDSCAPES

The mass platform was recognised by numerous radicals as an important way of harnessing support and creating momentum within the reform movement. Claiming landscapes and spaces, the mass platform acted as a physical demonstration of radicalism whilst permitting the radicalisation of public spaces. Although they only lasted for a few hours, certain meetings were successful in living beyond their temporality. This chapter will focus on a selection of meetings in the post-Napoleonic period: Spa Fields, Blanket March, and the Smithfield meeting. A brief context on the reasons behind radical agitation and the emergence of the mass platform will be provided. However, the chapter is more interested in exploring the creation of radical landscapes and events as opposed to producing a narrative or reasons behind mass meetings.

5.1 ANTI-CORN LAWS: POST-WATERLOO POLITICAL RADICALISM

Post-Napoleonic radicalism needs to be understood in its social, economic, and cultural context. The war with France had repercussions in Regency Britain, with some historians making a connection between the economic hardships and the increase in demands for political reform (Taylor 1988). The introduction of the Corn Laws, a move to protect British agriculture, was deeply resented by the industrial and labouring classes. The 1815 Corn Laws introduced a new clause that signalled it as a break from previous 'bread taxes' as it included an import prohibition which meant that 'ports were "closed" 1815-November 1816, November 1817-February 1818' (Williamson 1990, 125). Regardless of the impact of the Corn Laws on the economy and grain prices, they were perceived to be damaging, disadvantaging and of sectional interest (Wordie 2000). Reform and parliamentary representation were viewed as the solution to poverty and grievances resulting in a wave of activity. Within London ultra-radical politics, there was a persistence in the belief of violence

or insurrection as the means to secure change (Worrall 1998). These factors combined together to produce events such as the Spa Fields meetings/riots.

Radical pamphlets, prints, and press were selling exceptionally well. Generally, the press was becoming more influential in stimulating radicalism or support of reform (Schweizer 2006). Readership was also enhanced by communal reading and sharing copies (Semmel 2000). The power of the weekly newspaper not only as a source of news but as an 'essential means of organisation, communication and agitation' was especially realised in this period (Gilmartin 1995, 93). The press was arguably polarised with the radical and reform press pushing for representation whilst loyalist periodicals insisted collective political action was always illegitimate, although there were differences in 'conceptions of the validity of collective political agitation' from people who had 'broadly similar political agenda[s]' in the reform press (Fairclough 2013, 138). The radical press, journals, periodicals, pamphlets, and clubs, debates, and societies were creating a 'counter-public sphere' in the early nineteenth century (Eagleton 1996, 36). Press reports and coverage offered the opportunity for people to imagine what events looked and sounded like whilst also permitting transmissions of political agenda. This was part of an interpenetration between print culture and public assembly in which debates could circulate through text but be read in gatherings which then fed back into print and so forth (Gilmartin 1996, 4). How the press reported mass meetings impacted their perception in the public and cultural imagination whilst shaping understandings of radical landscapes and spaces.

The 1810s saw the adoption of the mass platform meeting as a way of protesting for change and demonstrating support for reform. Whilst direct action forms of protest such as machine breaking and food riots still continued to be utilised, peaceful protest through pickets, gatherings, and marches were becoming more commonplace and overtaking direct action (Rudé 1973, 7). The mass platform

offered new opportunities for utilising material culture including political clothing. It was also a more accessible form of protest through the lack of admission or subscription charges, absence of asceticism, and populist language (Belchem 1988, 256). Groups hoped that 'claiming the meaning of a place could lead them to claim ownership of that space' (Navickas 2009b, 98). Henry Hunt was an important figure in helping the mass platform and public oratory in large open spaces become a popular mechanism. These efforts began in Bristol but were accelerated by his involvement in Spa Fields (Large 1981).

Petitions were a key mechanism used by radicals in this period to the extent that Robert Poole (2019, 553) argues petitions were more important than strikes or riots in protesting for change. The late eighteenth/early nineteenth centuries were fundamental in transforming how petitioning was practiced, especially regarding ideas of popular sovereignty (Miller 2019, 411). The Home Office records indicate that petitions were important across the 1810s, with a small sample including 1813(HO/42/199 fol.171), 1815 (HO/42/143 fols 45-6), and 1816 (see HO/40/3/5 fol. 944; HO/42/150 fols 260-74) showing their prevalence. It was often viewed that petitions would be the first step or basis for reform before more assertive or drastic measures be adopted. William Fitton, a reformer from Royton, spoke at a meeting in Bolton, 4th September 1816, where "Speaking of the mode by Petition he strongly recommended that as the most prudent first Step", although the watching informer feared the next step may be insurrection (HO/42/153 fol. 371). The radical MP, Francis Burdett, often brought forward petitions in the Houses of Commons, including one sitting where he presented around 600 at once (HC/Deb 03 March 1817/vol 35cc859-63). Alongside the sheer number of petitions submitted, they could also reach a high number of signatures. Lord Cochrane presented a petition signed by 30,050 people from Manchester (HC/Deb 06 February 1817/vol 35cc234-8). As well as being used for the cause of reform, petitions were used against

radicalism and reform, often framing it as sedition (see HC/Deb/03 March 1817/vol 35cc837-41837 for an example from magistrates, clergy, and gentry of Blackburn petitioning against seditious meetings in the area) and petitions were used to campaign for other reforms, including alleviating agricultural distress (see HC/Deb 25 March 1817/vol 35cc1270-2). Radicals did debate the impact and influence of petitions. William Cobbett believed that '*Petition* is the channel for your sentiments' (CPR 2nd November 1816) whereas the *Black Dwarf* (12th February 1817) called for more assertive action, arguing that when James II abdicated or William III accepted the Bill of Rights, it occurred through enforcing rights rather than submitting them¹⁴. This belief in petitioning endured across the 1810s and reformers continued to use it. The *Manchester Observer* (14th August 1819) claimed that even 'the poorest, meanest, the most criminal individual in the country, has a right to petition the throne: and no minister... has a right... to intercept any petition', demonstrating perhaps that the events of Spa Fields and the Blanket March may have strengthened the resolve of reformers with petitioners rather than dissuaded them. Although the case studies of Spa Fields and the Blanketeers focus on the meeting, procession, and construction of radical landscapes, these meetings were convened because of petitions. The petition was a piece of material culture and the volume of signatures relied upon materiality.

Placards were also an important combination of text and material within reform culture and mass platform meetings. Highly ephemeral, placards largely survive

¹⁴ The full quote is very forceful, "Was John petitioned to sign Magna Charta: — Was Charles petitioned to lay down his head upon the block: — was James petitioned to abdicate his throne? Or was William petitioned to accept the Bill of Rights? No! no! the right of petitioning with your ancestors meant the right of laying their grievances before the highest authority, and demanding, or ENFORCING an attention to their wrongs".

through newspaper reports or informers who copied the text to highlight any possible seditious or illegal aspects of a meeting. Placards are consistently used across the period. For example, a placard signed by 2,000 householders was displayed in Manchester, October 1816 (HO 42/154 fol. 501.) and John Hockley was caught carrying a placard outside the Crown and Anchor pub, advertising a meeting which would discuss Peterloo (TNA, TS 25/2035, f. 174). Richard Carlile commented on Hockley's arrest, noting that "it has been invariably the practice, when any meeting of importance has been holden that... a man has been employed to stand... with a placard announcing the intention of such a meeting", indicating he thought it shameful that Hockley was targeted (*The Republican* 3rd September 1819, 24). It was not the only instance that placards led to arrest or prosecution. Thomas Farrell, a bill sticker, was arrested in August 1819 for "fixing up a placard of a political nature" (*The Gentleman's Magazine* 1819, 175) and Mr. O'Brien was on trial for sedition because of his possible involvement in printing placards, although Cobbett viewed it as a government conspiracy (*CPR* 3rd March 1821). The Spa Fields meetings used a range of placards. Cobbett highlights the great efforts that reformers went to in advertising the meeting through circulating placards and handbills (*Cobbett's Political Register* 8th March 1817, 314), with some being pasted-on pasteboards and some being carried by men paid to walk slowly around parts of London, stopping to let people read, and giving bills out (Howell 1824, 245). This effort at transforming the urban space through placards – and handbills – really does reveal how landscapes were in flux between the everyday and being radicalised:

They were to be distributed; the placards to be stuck up, and the handbills to be distributed among the lower order of people, the soldiers, and the mechanics, and others out of employment about Petty-France and the Borough, and all London... amongst all the factories... and up at Paddington and Spital-fields. (Howell 1824, 239-240).

This shows deliberate targeting of people and places; the Spa Fields Spenceans were choosing areas they thought would be conducive. The notable Spa Fields placard was one which started with the phrase “England Expects Every Man to do his Duty” (Howell 1824, 86), thus consciously using Nelson’s phrase from the Battle of Trafalgar, therefore playing with Loyalist sentiments. The Smithfield meeting, discussed below, was advertised with a range of placards (HO/42/190). It is also worth noting that placards were not always only text and could be elaborate in design. James Wroe, editor of the *Manchester Observer*, distributed a placard called *The British Constitution 1819* around Manchester in February that year (figure 28). As with other types of radical material culture, placards were subject to being destroyed. What is interesting about placards is their temporal nature. Placed on walls, windows, or fixtures, or carried by reformers, placards by their very purpose are transient, existing for a short period of time with the limited purpose of advertising an event or showcasing an ideology. Prior to the meeting, they radicalise a part of the neighbourhood or landscape, building anticipation for the event. However, as with petitions, placards were not a purely radical piece of material culture. There are examples of the authorities using placards to advise against attending meetings or holding them (see HO/42/192/305 and HO/42/200/1 for examples). Loyalists would also use placards. Perhaps one of the most well-known examples would be the placard that circulated in Manchester prior to Peterloo which highlighted Hunt’s Genuine Beer had been seized and condemned (MS/1197/33). Another placard shared the resolutions from a meeting at Waren-Bulkeley Arms Inn, Stockport, chaired by Captain Salusbury Pryce Humphreys, held only two days after Peterloo (HO/42/192/282). Placards can therefore be understood as part of the tension surrounding the radicalisation of landscapes. Again, we cannot presume material culture to only be radical, rather it must be manipulated or shaped into its radicalism.

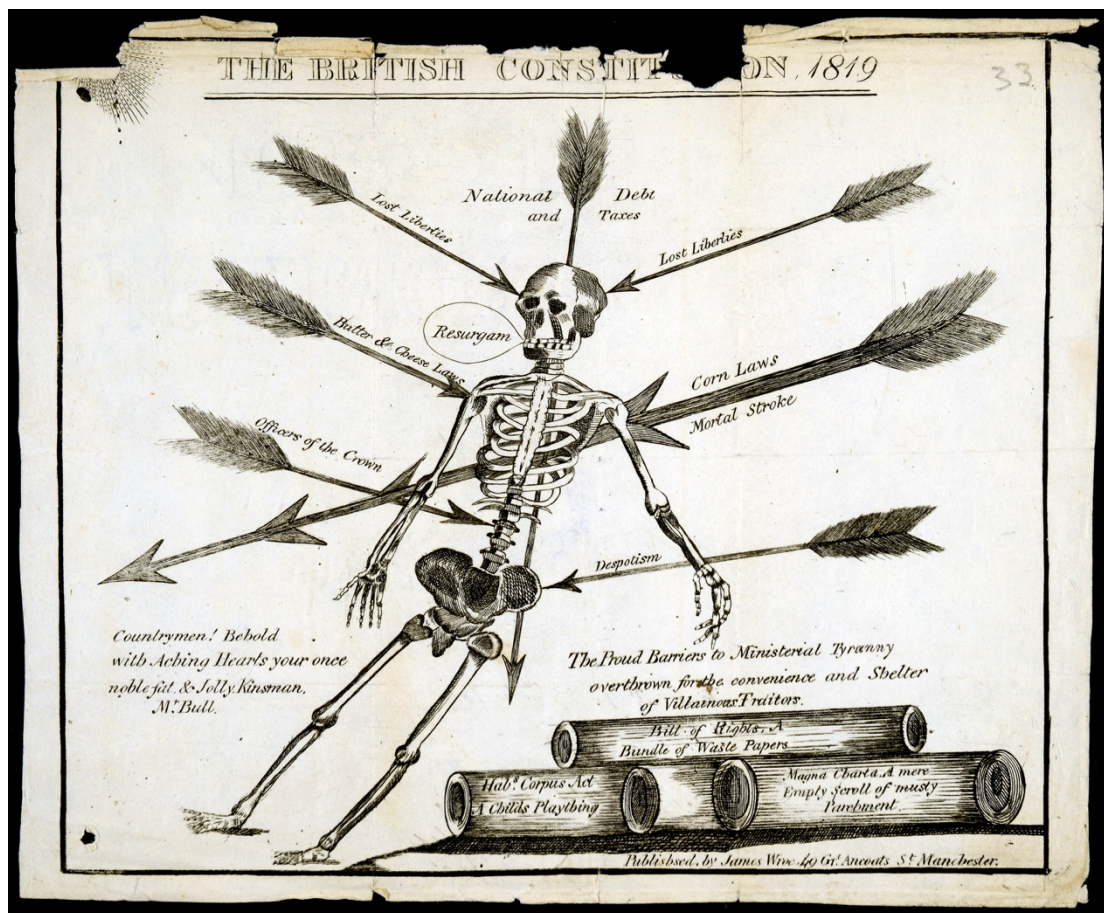


Figure 28: *The British Constitution, 1819* (Wroe 1819; HO 42/184 fol.32). This print/placard was sent to Sidmouth by Colonel Fletcher, who was reporting on the state of radicalism in the area.

5.2 SPA FIELDS 'RIOTS'

Towards the end of eighteenth sixteen, radicals and reformers were agitating for change and gathering support for suffrage and parliamentary reform. The idea of large-scale public meetings was growing in popularity and a group called the Society of Spencean Philanthropists decided to utilise it as the basis for securing revolutionary change. The Spenceans organised what became known as the Spa Fields riots, a series of meetings held in Clerkenwell, London, that had violent – or the possibility of – offshoots. They aimed to inspire a nationwide uprising and seize important buildings such as the Bank of England. Whilst the Spenceans were trying to become revolutionary leaders, Henry Hunt was the main speaker at the mass

platform meetings. Hunt was not involved in any proposed violence but likely knew that some form of insurrection was being plotted. This section will explore the Spa Fields meetings and consider how a radical, or foiled revolutionary landscape, was being constructed. The role of material culture will be addressed, particularly regarding the use of flags, and the lack of legacy at Spa Fields through the radical space being disrupted through urbanisation.

5.2.1 THE SPENCEANS: LEADERS OF INSURRECTION

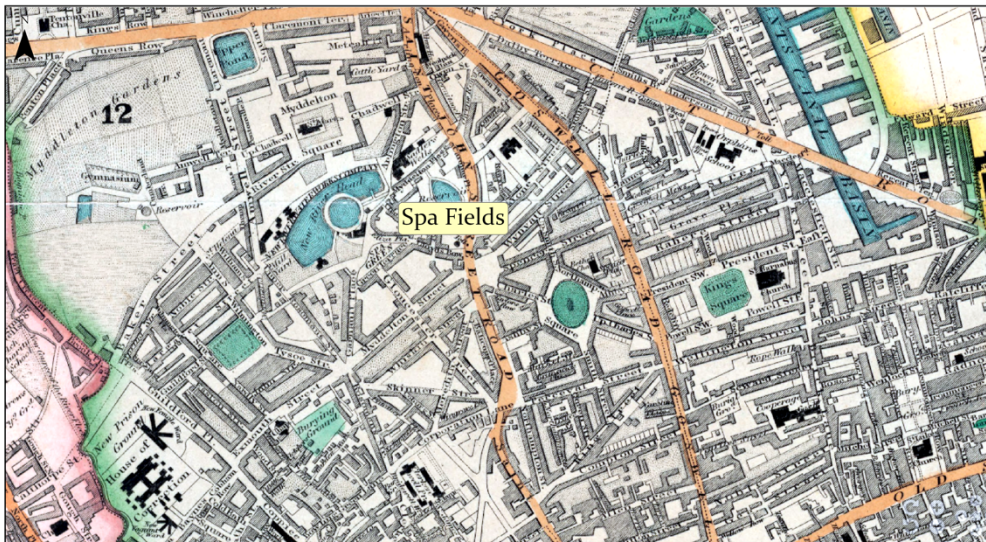
The key group behind making the Spa Field meetings become known as riots were a group of Spenceans. There were several leading figures involved who were particularly important in organising and catalysing the 'riots': James Watson the Elder, who was known as Dr Watson, although he may have been a chemist or apothecary rather than a surgeon, his son, also called James Watson (who will be referred to as Young Watson), Arthur Thistlewood (who was later involved in the Cato Street Conspiracy, see chapter eight), John Hooper, and Thomas Preston. The group wanted to achieve the abolition of aristocracy and clergy, land nationalisation, and for every citizen to receive a plot of land (Prothero 1979, 89). Many radicals would usually deny any charge of 'Levellism' and instead claim to only want to achieve constitutional equality; Spence and his followers were open in their desires for wealth and property equality (Donnelly 1988).

Prior to Spa Fields, the Spenceans had hopes for a French invasion but these were dashed in 1815. Attentions shifted to utilising insurrection as the means to overthrow the current social order. Consistently in the late 1810s, the Spenceans believed revolution would be borne from agitation through mass meetings (Prothero 1974). This belief is understandable as Spence wanted to completely alter society and thought this could not be achieved through reforming society's current structures. It is important to note the Spenceans were not a unified group regarding insurrection or revolution nor even the Spa Fields meeting. Thomas Evans, a leading

Spencean, disagreed with the change in tactic from tavern meetings to the mass platform, especially as the Spa Fields meeting dropped the resolutions regarding land reform on Hunt's request (McCalman 1988, 107). The Spa-Fields-Spenceans were a small group which succeeded in having a major impact on post-Napoleonic radicalism.

5.2.2 SPA FIELDS MEETINGS AND CONTEXT

In 1816 and 1817, a series of popular protests were called in Spa Fields, London (figure 29). Cannon and Crowcroft (2015) consider these meetings to be ones of many of 1816 to have been instigated through revolutionary feeling and widespread hunger that followed the Napoleonic Wars. This situation turned the 'nation into a powder keg' that authorities were concerned could be ignited by radicals and revolutionary activity (Hernon 2006, 14). Spa Fields demonstrated that 'large numbers of working-class people would be willing to come together in a demand for political representation' (Gardner 2011, 220); the meetings/riots made a nationwide impact on contemporary politics (Chun Min 2014). The Spa Fields meetings permit insight into how radicals approached the construction of the mass platform.



Spa Field (1830)

Map of London : made from an actual survey in the years 1824, 1825, 1826, by C. & J. Greenwood, extended and comprising the various improvements to 1830; engraved by Josiah Neele. Scale [ca. 1: 63,360].

Map Provided by Harvard University
Harvard University, Harvard Map Collection, G5754.L7.1830_G7_Shtched
Located at: <https://mf.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/ids/3982548>
Reproduced under: <https://www.harvard.edu/terms-3-2014-weatherford-copyright>

Figure 29: Location of Spa Field. Note already in the fifteen years after the event how much urbanisation has swallowed up the fields.

The Spa Fields Riots have been contentious in the historiography of Regency radicalism. These meetings were important in shifting from moderate reform (petition and debate) to radical reform ('constitutional protest' through the mass platform) (Belchem 1981, 5). They became 'a watershed in the evolution of popular political strategy' (McCalman 1987, 319). Engagement with the mass platform was connected to a growing faith in the power of 'collective presentation of grievances' and how petitioning had been failing as a tactic (Poole 2000, 150). Belchem (1985) suggests Hunt was the crucial individual in accelerating the mass platform's growth. Hunt's efforts therefore transcended the Spencean splinter groups attempts at insurrection. However, there was a divisive element caused too. Scrivener (2014) highlighted how the choice between moderate and radical caused divisions or alienation. Although the public consciousness of reform was enhanced and

momentum gained through Spa Fields, the meetings deepened rifts in reform leadership and increased the distance between different factions (Thompson 1968). Cartwright and Burdett advanced moderate reform that was limited to direct-taxation household suffrage whereas the Spa Fields meetings, through both the Spenceans and Hunt's ideologies, promoted universal male suffrage and acted as a serious challenge to the Hampden Club movement (Belchem 1996).

Hunt's presence has been considered somewhat incidental as the Spenceans were aiming to use the meeting as a springboard for chaos and violence which would be the signal for a nationwide uprising (Chase 1988). Other leading radicals were invited including Cobbett, Cartwright, and Burdett, but only Hunt accepted. Hunt was warned of possible dangerous activity by Cobbett and amended the resolutions of the first meeting in order to tone them down. The relationship between the Spenceans and Hunt can be viewed as one of 'mutual exploitation' as mass platform meetings provided Hunt the opportunity to enhance his reputation as an orator whilst providing a big draw for the Spenceans (Parssinen 1972, 277). Furthermore, the connections between 'gentlemen radicals' and the mass platform were being formed, with individuals like Hunt acting as a way of legitimising the method as a form of protest. McCormack (2019, 82) argues 'their gentility licensed activities like the mass platform that might otherwise have seemed threatening'. Whilst this assertion is questionable due to the consistent constable and military presence at meetings, Spa Fields – with the aid of Hunt – was nevertheless important in promoting the mass platform. Spa Fields failed to achieve an uprising but it was successful in promoting the power of the mass platform.



Figure 30: Map of Clerkenwell (Tyrer 1805). Spa Fields was the area in the centre and demonstrates what a large, open landscape it was and its suitability for mass meetings. Merlin's Place is roughly in the centre of the map, just to the immediate west of the semi-circular feature.

Spa Fields occupied present day Wilmington Square, Clerkenwell, which was constructed in 1818 (Wheatley and Cunningham 2011, 290). There were three meetings held in Spa Fields (figure 30): 15 November 1816, 2 December 1816, and 10 February 1817. This large open space had not been used for radical meetings before but had a long history of organised fights (*LI* 2nd May 1786; *JOJ* 14th August 1802; *MP* 21st June 1810). Merlin's Cave (figure 31), a tavern, was used as the hustings. Spa Fields ceased to be used as a space for meetings meaning it had a short-lived but long-lasting contribution to mass platform protest in post-1815 radicalism.



Figure 31: Recreation of the Spa Fields area during the 1790s (Matthew 1857). In the bottom left corner is the Spa Fields Cake shop. The painting is looking east towards Merlin's Cave.

The first meeting attracted a sizeable crowd of 5,000 to 20,000. It aimed to produce a petition that would be handed to the Prince Regent rather than parliament, which was currently in recess. The Spenceans wanted to march to Carlton House with the petition whilst Hunt wanted to present the petition via the Regent's ministers and hold meetings nationwide on the same day and time as Parliament opened. Hunt's idea was circumvented by the Spenceans who successfully carried an amendment for a second meeting to reconvene on the 2nd December, with this being too soon for national co-ordinated meetings.

The second meeting split into a mass platform event controlled by Hunt and an insurrectionary charge led by the Spenceans. Prior to Hunt's arrival, the Spenceans entered on a waggon and gave a rousing speech which encouraged some of the

crowd, roughly 200-500 people, to follow them into London to seize important locations such as the Tower of London. They robbed gunsmiths on the way and headed to the Tower but any expected support from the guards did not occur. The insurrection stalled and the armed crowd retreated. The spy, John Castle, attempted to entrap Hunt on his way to the meeting. He insisted that the taking of the Tower had been successful and that Watson needed further help. Hunt saw through the ruse and continued to the meeting. The news that the insurrection had failed was apparently disappointing to segments of Lancashire and Manchester reformers. According to one informer, numerous groups – including one of 300 people – descended on Manchester to learn from the mail delivery whether the insurrection had succeeded, and were ultimately disappointed by the news (HO/40/3 fol. 719).

The insurrection the Spenceans wanted to achieve at Spa Fields failed. Dr Watson was arrested on the 2nd December as he, his son, and Thistlewood attempted to leave London (Knap and Baldwin 1828, 202). The other leading radicals Hooper and Preston were also arrested. All five were charged with high treason. The trial and involvement of the spy, Castle, received great media attention (figure 32). Watson was successful in undermining and questioning the evidence presented by Castle resulting in the acquittal of all four men. Castle was proven to have a criminal record therefore enabling them to deem his testimony as unreliable and demonstrate he acted as an *agent provocateur* (Burwick 2019, 377). Although authorities had been disturbed by the Spa Fields meetings, there was a shift from viewing London as the centre of radicalism to the more organised Lancashire and Yorkshire (Navickas 2019).



Figure 32: More Plots!!! More Plots!!! (Fores 1817). The print mocks the involvement of the spies. In the top right quarter, Castle as a wolf says of the lambs, 'Those bloodthirsty Wretches mean to destroy Man, Woman, & Child, I know to a certainty; for they carry sedition, Privy Conspiracy & Rebellion in their looks'.

The third meeting did not have a Spencean presence. Despite this, authorities and the magistrates gathered in No. 9, next door to Merlin's Cave, to watch over proceedings and military officers in plain clothes were placed throughout the crowd (MP 11th February 1817). The meeting operated without discussion of insurrection. There was a focus on the petition to Parliament and the Prince Regent, as well as some comments on the inconspicuous Francis Burdett (HJ 12th February 1817). It covered the resolutions from the preceding meeting noting many had been resolved. It was hoped the peaceable nature of the crowd and meeting may have been able to 'disarm the fears of the Government, and render the necessity of restrictive laws less obvious' (MC 12th February 1817).

5.3 SPA FIELDS ANALYSIS

The following section explores the three Spa Fields meetings and attempt at insurrection. Key themes are the use of material culture and how it was understood by outsiders to radicalism and the reform movement, the description and perception of the crowds, and the use of Merlin's Cave as the stage or hustings. These combine together to examine how the radical landscape was being constructed.

5.3.1 MEETING ONE

Where oration happened became an important issue for the Spa Fields meeting. Apparently, some of the crowd left as no hustings had been set up (*MP* 16th November 1816) as perhaps 'a new hoax had been played off upon them' (*Sun* 16th November 1816). This indicates the importance of having a physical stage in the landscape over occupying a building. Rev. Mr Parkes arrived first in a hackney coach and delivered his speech from atop it (*TEFP* 21st November 1816). When Hunt began speaking, he did so on the coach but relocated to the window at Merlin's Cave with this action causing conflicting reports. One idea for changing was for reasons of oratory, Hunt 'begged them to draw up under the wall of Merlin's Cave public house' so he could better address them (*LVM* 22nd November 1816). Other reports suggest the organising committee wanted Hunt to relocate to Merlin's Cave as a messenger arrived to 'inform him that he had mounted the wrong tribune' (*SC* 23rd November 1816) or a combination of appeasing the committee and speaking from a more advantageous position (*BWM* 17th November 1816). Some newspapers took the opportunity to include a comment on Hunt utilising the public house space to avail himself of some brandy (*Sun* 18th November 1816) where 'large liberations had already been offered on the altar of patriotism' (*LC* 16th November 1816). Most reports argue it was for practicalities and/or the committee and the audience were accepting of this relocation. The *Star* (15th November 1816) breaks this pattern by stating Hunt found the day cold and the crowd were displeased as the top of the coach was better for speaking than the window. Issues of where to speak

demonstrate how the mass platform landscape was not always highly organised but perhaps also how highly visible sightlines were desired over the best auidial experience. Whilst the window offered an elevated position over the crowd, the coach allowed a more intimate location to speak from. The lack of a recognised hustings in the landscape shows that the location of where to speak may not have been properly considered by the organising committee or that their plans for Merlin's Cave were not properly understood by the crowd. Having a material marker, signpost, or statement in the landscape was a crucial part of constructing the radical space of a mass platform meeting. This public house and its first-floor window became important features in the following two meetings too producing a form of spatial continuity once the crowd understood its role. Collective memory permitted Merlin's Cave to serve as the hustings, despite the continued absence of a stage.

Hunt began his oration on top of his coach leading to him being dubbed a 'Hackney Orator' (*Sun* 15th November 1816). This moment was captured in *The Spa Fields Hunt-er* (figure 33). According to Dickinson (1986, 232), this was one of a small number of caricatures that was not overtly demeaning or hostile towards Hunt. Haywood (2013, 153) argues the lips and facial expression can be viewed as bordering on grotesque but concedes this assessment may be unfair as it is difficult to present a shouting person flatteringly. Compared to many other depictions of meetings, this print directly forces attention onto Hunt and includes the viewer of the print as part of his audience. The viewer makes eye contact with Hunt and a sense of intimacy is generated as we become the front row of the Spa Fields audience. It directly references the 'Red Book' which contained accusations of government sinecures (*SM* 22nd November 1816). Merlin's Cave is shown as the backdrop rather than the stage and the crowd have been largely cropped out. The visible crowd has been depicted as respectable and attentive. The tri-coloured flag,

discussed below, was not included in the print, despite It being attached to the coach meaning the emphasis of the print was Hunt, the red book, and his speech bubble.

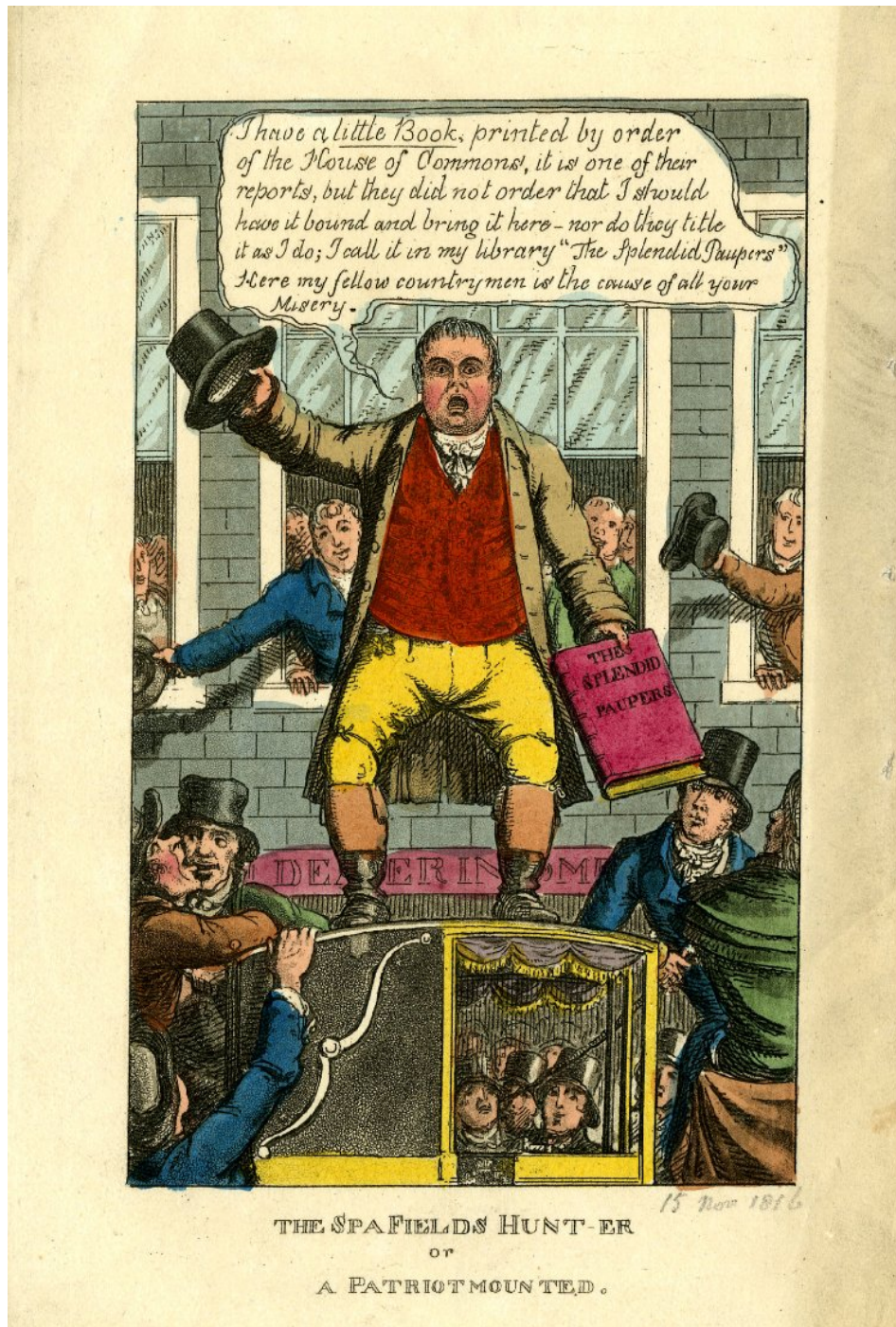


Figure 33: The Spa Fields Hunt-er or a patriot mounted (Williams 1816).

Hunt understood how material culture, as well as space, could be used to make a performance. How he had decided to dress was remarked upon:

His head was powdered, and he wore a new blue coat, which gave him an air of distinction among the mass of poorly clad artisans (SC 23rd November 1816).

Contrary to the earnest exhortations of his compatriots, he *dressed* himself for the Meeting, and betrayed himself in his whole deportment an aristocratic foppery, which very considerably tended to weaken the regards of his staunchest adherents. (*Sun* 18th November 1816)

In order to stand out in the radical space, Hunt dressed as the gentleman and in such a manner he could be distinguished amongst the crowd, showcasing the importance of the body and clothing theme. However, Hunt did not limit his usage of material culture to his person or what he wanted to embody; he recognised how announcing his presence in the landscape was important in enhancing his identity as an orator and leading reform figure whilst also understanding movement through space could be eye-catching. There was a cap on a pole in his arrival procession (*SM* 22nd November 1816) but another piece of material culture was noted as being more dramatic, thus more important. His arrival diverted attention from Reverend Parkes second 'harangue' of the day as his hackney chariot complete with standard ensured 'all eyes were directed' towards him where the flag was unfurled (*LI* 18th November 1816). This standard or flag was provocative to the press due to its colours and text: a tri-coloured flag (green, white, and red) was displayed which bore these inscriptions: "Bread to feed the Hunger" – "Truth to crush the Oppressors" – "Justice to punish crimes." This flag Mr. HUNT frequently waved from the window of the public house from which he spoke. (*MC* 16th November 1816). It was believed the colours of the flag corresponded to the text inscribed with green relating to nature, white to truth, and red to justice (*MP* 16th November 1816). The flag featured in the meeting elsewhere too. The speech was delivered 'under the

shade of a tri-coloured banner' (PC 21st November 1816) and at the end of the meeting was carried before Hunt's hackney coach (Star 15th November 1816). The Hackney coach in combination with the flag signified to the crowd the arrival of the main speaker in a way that successfully grabbed attention. The flag was considered meaningful throughout proceedings through relocating to the Merlin's Cave window following the change in stage and leading the exit procession.

The tri-coloured design of the flag evoked revolutionary connotations to the extent fellow radical Cobbett suggested, in opposition to many establishment newspaper reports, that Hunt was not knowledgeable of it:

It has been asserted that he went to the Meeting with a Tri-coloured Flag. This is also false, he never having known of the existence of any flag until his arrival on the spot; and, was he to go away merely because some whimsical persons *had hoisted a flag and a cap of liberty?* Besides, are there not flags enough at contested elections? Do not freemasons and others parade about with flags? (CPR 23rd November 1816).

Cobbett wanted to distance Hunt from such a flag because of the French Revolution connotations it provoked, despite the flag not being red, white, and blue. These concerns were not unwarranted:

And he came in processions and in triumph, What procession and what triumph? This Friend of Liberty was preceded by
The Three coloured Flag and the Cap on a Pole.

Tolerably significant symbols these! Well – Mr Hunt gets up and has the effrontery to tell them that “the war had had for its object of destruction of the liberties of all countries”. So it had – but on which side? On the side of BUONAPARTE and his Three-coloured Flag, now exhibited to the insulted eyes of a British assembly. (LC 16th November 1816).

The *London Courier* were very deliberate about not mentioning the colour of the flag, therefore allowing the explicit connection between Bonaparte and Hunt. The connection between France and the flag was made elsewhere too. The *Public Ledger* (16th November 1816) suggested the silk flag took 'after the manner of Buonaparte's', conceding the changes of colour. Material culture became a contested site of interpretation, imagination, and identity, with this being played out between the radical and establishment press. This is a recurring theme as materiality became proof of intention and the intimate relationship between material/sedition was being formed.

The closing of the meeting was centred around Hunt and involved a 'spontaneous' procession. Before setting off:

A pole, about 15 feet in length, which had been provided for the convenience of the coach top orators to hold by, was hoisted on the roof of Merlin's Cave with a greasy woollen nightcap at the top; much laughter was excited by this exhibition, and it was whispered that it was intended as a burlesque on the Cap of Liberty. (*Star* 16th November 1816)

It was then carried in front of Hunt's coach alongside the flag (*Star* 15th November 1816). The majority of the meeting was focused on Hunt, he was the 'most prominent character' (*GJ* 18th November 1816), as the main orator and crowd adoration was channelled towards him in particular:

In short, it was almost a mono-drama in which Mr Hunt was the sole speaker...he at last talked down the sun... the rump of them put their idol in a hackney coach and dragged him to his inn, to the great annoyance and injury of the poor coachman, who made a claim of 5*l.* for damage done to the vehicle (*SM* 22nd November 1816).

Reports suggest that around 3,000 individuals were involved in this procession to Fleet Street (*SC* 23rd November 1816). The coach was scratched and Hunt agreed to

pay two pounds compensation after ‘the dragging-honours this second Anacharsis Cloots received’ (*NR* 18th November 1816). The hoisting of the ‘liberty cap’ demonstrates how the everyday could be transformed to become radical. This spontaneous action, despite not being choreographed like Hunt’s entrance, was able to become remarkable. The radical tradition of liberty caps, combined with the pole, inspired this brief moment: an everyday hat became a radical artefact.

5.3.2 MEETING TWO

A coal waggon appeared at around noon and was filled with ‘meanly clothed people’ (*MP* 3rd December 1816). Some reports suggested around twenty individuals, who appeared to be sailors because of their dress, were armed with bludgeons and pockets of stones (*DM* 5th December 1816). Other reports suggest there were two separate coaches: one hackney coach with ‘four persons of respectability’ and another cart that came from Finsbury Square packed full of men and multiple flags (Hone 1816; *BL/G*.18983.(8.)). The number of flags present varies in reports. One or two flags were on the hackney coach; one tri-coloured and the other inscribed:

Nature To feed the hungry

Truth To protect the oppressed

Justice To Punish Crimes

On the reverse, there was the inscription, ‘The brave soldiers are our brothers, treat them kindly’ (*MC* 3rd December 1816). Some witnesses suggested this inscription actually belonged to a banner, ‘It was on a frame, a large frame of deal board, on a pole, with a piece of calico, I think, on the centre of it’ (Gurney 1817, 200, 225, 240). The individual was soon identified as Young Watson. He was ‘genteelly dressed, with tri-coloured cockade in his hat’ (*MC* 3rd December 1816). Dr Watson and another individual, possibly Mr Hooper, leapt onto the waggon both with tri-coloured cockades in their hats to loud cheers. To silence the crowd, Dr Watson used his hat to signal order before delivering a speech (*Examiner* 8th December 1816). This carefully choreographed and designed display attracted attention. Within moments

of entering the field and becoming stationary, 'not less than four or five thousand persons were congregated within thirty yards' (*LC* 4th December 1816). After a stirring speech, Young Watson had a call and response with the crowd:

"fellow citizens, ye want food, ye want employment; do ye want a leader," and waved his flag; where the mob cheered him exclaiming, "We want a leader, and we will have you". (*PDLA* 3rd December 1816).

Young Watson leapt from the waggon. Whilst 'embracing two flags', he led a wave into the city (*CC* 6th December 1816). McCalman (1988, 109) briefly mentions how the flags were viewed as 'revolutionary talismans'. Crafting the flags, cockades, and banner preoccupied time and money for the Spenceans, but they undertook this effort as radical material culture could stimulate the crowd and help the meeting transform into insurrection. This understanding was prevalent in newspapers who focused their reports on speeches made on the waggon and the insurrectionary charge. The Spenceans captured the attention of the Spa Field crowd by radically decorating the waggon. The emblems were powerful enough to draw some away with them and provide a moment that elicited a strong response from the press.

Material culture was key in expressing identity and drawing attention. Through the inherent properties of silk and wooden pole, radical messages could be elevated in ways that an orator's voice may struggle to reach. The Spenceans attracted attention through utilising transport thus suggesting to the crowd that important individuals were arriving. They understood how materiality can transmit messages. The tri-colour was deliberately provocative, linking to the French Revolution in style and its colour choices to the nations of Britain or symbolic representations of ideals. The description of the colours suggests the flag was green, white, and red (Gurney 1817, 197) and does not mention blue. During the trial, a witness, Mr Dowling, was cross-examined by Mr Wetherell who explicitly asked:

Q. You know the value of *a* or *the* as well as I do, was it a French tri-coloured flag or not?

A. I do not think it was.

Q. Have you a doubt that it was not?

A. I do not think it was.

Q. Do you know it was not?

A. I know it was not.

Q That it was not the French tri-coloured flag?

A. It was not.

Q. You called it *the* tri-coloured flag.

A. I did not, I called it *a* tri-coloured flag. (Gurney 1817, 167).

This exchange highlights the importance of colour choice and whether the symbolism could have incorporated revolutionary meanings, therefore enhancing the seditious or treasonous nature of the flag. The defence understood the importance of distancing the flag from the French Revolution. Reports were often unclear about the colours too, usually only mentioning it was 'tri-coloured'. An early *Star* (2nd December 1816) report even labelled it as being a three striped flag coloured blue, red, and white. Perhaps this ambiguity was purposeful and left to insinuate French connections even though, in terms of colour, it was not. The *London Courier* (3rd December 1816) were repeat offenders at this, making explicit connections between the Spa Fields flags and the French Revolution, even calling any liberty cap present *bonnet rouge*. The prosecution attempted to press the witnesses to state the colours (Gurney 1817, 248) as they understood how the materiality and symbolism of the flag could emanate into the landscape and help construct a radical space. Richard Carlile recognised how the flag was being manipulated:

Are the Government-men afraid of a flag, or an handkerchief? Does a tri-coloured piece of cloth, or silk, fixed at the end of a pole, and held up in the

air, fill them with terror? Or is it the *name* of *tri-color* that makes them tremble? (*SPR* 5th April 1817, 4)

Carlile's deft radical insight highlights the very tension between the actual material properties of the objects and what the flag *could* represent. Altogether, the flag was intended to represent the colours of England, Scotland, and Ireland but the establishment's press ambivalence permitted another reading. Waqif (2020, 111) highlighted how Spenceans in the second meeting used the mass platform to connect English and Irish people through a 'community of grievance' (figure 34). At the later Smithfield meeting in 1819 (see section 5.5), Hunt proclaimed at the unfurling of a tri-coloured flag that the colours corresponded to the nations (*Examiner* 25th July 1819). Therefore, the interpretation of the tricolour property of the flag shaped how the radical landscape was perceived, moulded, or understood.

England
 Expects every Man to do his Duty

The Meeting in Spa Fields
 takes place at 12 o' Clock
 on Monday December 2^d 1816

To receive the answer of the Prince Regent to the
 Petition determined upon at the last Meeting held at the
 same place and for other important Considerations

The present state of Great Britain
 Four Millions in Distress!!!
 Four Millions Embarrassed!!!
 One Million and Half fear distress!!!
 Half a Million live in splendid luxury!!!

Our Brothers in Ireland are in a worse state
 The famine of Misery is complete - it can go no farther
 Death would now be a relief to Millions - Avarice
 Folly and Crimes have brought affairs to this dread
 crisis -

Firmness and Integrity can only save the Country!!!

After the last Meeting some disorderly people were guilty of
 attacking the Property of - Individuals, they were ill
 informed of the object of the Meeting, it was not to -
 slander persons suffering in these calamitous times in common
 with others the day will soon arrive when the distressed
 will be relieved.

The Nations wrongs must be redressed

John Dyale Chairman
 James Preston Secretary

Leeds & Bates printing, Alkborough Court Road.

Figure 34: This handwritten bill by James Watson alludes to the sufferings of the Irish whilst also utilising the famous Trafalgar phrase 'England Expects' (TS 11/201/870/533). The bill was turned into placards to inform the public of the December Spa Fields meeting.

Whatever its symbolism, the tricolour was reportedly the same flag from the first Spa Fields meeting showing curators had happened (Gurney 1817, 171). The flags became a site of tension as constables attempted to seize them (DM 5th December 1816). The constables were successful in acquiring one of the tri-coloured flags. Part

of the flag was torn in the struggle and the frame broken (Lewis 1817, 110). It was produced in court during the trial of Dr Watson as evidence (Gurney 1817, 199). The importance of ascertaining the inscription and colours shows the prosecution saw the materiality of the flags as being threatening and able to be transmitters of seditious or treasonous intent. The constables desire to seize the flags and be aggressive in breaking the pole or frame shows how, even in the meeting space, there was understanding of the importance of materiality in constructing radical landscapes and identities and how they can act as material rallying or focal point.

Flags became equated to colours because of how they were being used. Within the landscape, the flag became a point of reference and intimately tied to radicalism. For example, it signalled to one attendee the way to Spa Fields as they did not know the route (Lewis 1817, 107). Following Watson's call to arms, he leapt off the cart 'and a great number of people rush[ed] to the standards' (*JOJ* 7th December 1816). The flags were removed from the waggon and incorporated in the surge towards Coppice Row and then the Tower (Lewis 1817, 110). The power of flags was recognised, 'The tri-coloured flags were the rallying points, and after them many pursued their mad career' (*NM* 7th December 1816). Later in the riot, 'Considerable alarm has been excited by a crowd coming down Cheapside, with colours flying, and several arms with guns and other means of offence' (*DM* 5th December 1816). The performance of violence, combined with the decoration, helped to transform the objects from not only being radical to also being treasonous. The flag also acted as material evidence of an individual being involved in radicalism. James Carter, a sailor in attendance at the meeting, admitted during a private examination with the Lord Mayor to carrying the tri-coloured flag from Spa Fields but denied any knowledge of a preconcerted plan (*CM* 7th December 1816). The flags became the material embodiment of the fears and anxieties of authorities and the propertied classes that revolution was afoot in Britain. Perhaps due to how the flags were being used by groups moving

rapidly through spaces, the authorities could create a clear link between a military charge or a revolutionary stampede.

The riot hit certain spaces in London, including gunsmiths, Snow Hill, the Minories, and the Royal Exchange. Moving in large groups and utilising violent material culture, the rioters transformed everyday streets into places of radical upheaval. Part of the riotous crowd began following an execution in the Old Bailey (*PDLA* 3rd December 1816) turning state-sanctioned violence into radical action. London was impacted by the material actions of the rioters. It was noted their 'track was soon discernible by fragments of lamps and windows' (*CC* 6th December 1816). Many shops decided to close, including those on Newgate Street and in Cheapside (*OUCH* 7th December 1816), and streets were occupied by the 'idle and the curious' (*IJ* 7th December 1816). Upon looting gunsmiths in the Minories, the rioters 'paraded the streets with them, discharging the muskets and pistols generally in the air but occasionally at the houses' (*KC* 3rd December 1816). Firing guns allowed the claiming of the aural landscape, signalling the presence of the 'mob'. The totemic or emblematic power of the flag as a standard extended into the riot. Leaving the field, the first breakaway crowd was preceded by a flag as they headed down Newgate Street towards Holborn (*MP* 3rd December 1816). The charge into the Royal Exchange was led by an individual carrying a flag. It was seized and rioters were arrested (*CC* 6th December 1816). Aside from the violence, the rioters looted shops, including bacon from one (*Star* 3rd December 1816). Despite the emphasis on seizing arms and attempting to storm various important buildings, the most powerful material culture remained the flag. Acting as a standard, rallying point, and visible marker in the landscape, it proclaimed the cause of insurrection for the radical and conservative alike.

There was a focus on emphasising how the 'mob' contained many sailors. Numerous reports contain the assertion that those on the waggon were 'chiefly in the dress of

sailors' (*CP* 7th December 1816) or 'dressed like sailors' (*LSC* 7th December 1816). This uncertainty of whether they were sailors was in other reports too. If the rioters were not sailors but merely in their clothing, this is evidence of individuals disguising or anonymising their identity, utilising distinguishable attire of a certain class. As well as anonymity, sailors' dress would have meant rioters were materially performing who they were presumed to be: lower class vagrants or distressed individuals out of employment. If this was not the case and they were actually sailors, their participation would make sense due to mass unemployment of seamen following the end of the war. The frequency of commenting on the number of sailors occurred because it was considered remarkable. For example, the rioter who was the first to attempt to loot Mr Beckwith's gunsmiths on Skinner Street was described as being 'in the dress of a sailor' (*OUCH* 7th December 1816). The 'mob' was described and demeaned:

It may now be satisfactory to give a description of the rioters as they appeared in their march up the Minories. For the most part they consisted of sailors. Some black, some tawney, some English, some foreign – some boys, some men. One fellow with a wooden leg seemed as active as the rest. (*LCEG* 4th December 1816).

The multitude was 'selections from every class of society, artificers, merchants, sailors' (*JOJ* 7th December 1816). The descriptions purposefully malign the nature and class of the crowd whilst also suggesting the infection of radicalism could affect people of different backgrounds through depicting a 'motley crew' of rioters. Sailors were singled out, especially as they moved in groups. Due to their involvement in the Napoleonic war, moving to radicalism after upholding loyalist and patriotic ideals would have been shocking.

Radical artefacts such as liberty caps, ribbons, and co-ordinated outfits, were relatively absent. Cockades were present and, in the riot, weapons were stolen and

used. As seen above, this led to a focus on attempting to prove the flags and banners were treasonous objects. The first count against Dr Watson included:

the said traitors... together with a great multitude of false traitors unknown... armed and arrayed in a warlike manner...with flags, banners, ensigns, swords, pistols, clubs, bludgeons, and other weapons, maliciously and traitorously did ordain, prepare, levy, and make public war against our said king... to the evil example of all others (Fairburn 1817, 35-36).

Again, there is an understanding that flags and banners connect to the military through the rioters acting in a 'warlike manner'. The emphasis on proving treason materially relied more on explicitly violent material culture but also making radical flags and banners become violent or militaristic objects. In plans to replace banknotes, the Spenceans 'were to coin money with impression of a cap of liberty' (Fairburn 1817, 194). This symbol of revolution and freedom allowed the French connection. Banknotes would have transformed from being symbols of a Regency, Tory State into a Republic, demonstrating how to radicals, material culture held an inherent possibility of being transformed or subverted into a radical object. To authorities and the prosecution, it was another piece of evidence of the dangers of the reform movement.

Whilst Young Watson led the insurrectionary charge, the Spa Fields meeting occurred. Before Watson and Hunt arrived, 'The fields... had the appearance of a fair, covered with people, and stalls for the sale of fruit, gingerbread, &c.' (Hone 1816, BL/G.18983.(8.)). Hunt arrived in his own coach pulled by his own horses, likely due to the expenses Hunt paid for the damage to the coach at the previous meeting. He wore a watchman's great coat that he decided to dramatically fling off as he entered the field (*Star* 2nd December 1816). Enjoying great applause, Hunt's on-time entry again attracted attention due to how he could demonstrate 'he was both a man of substance and skilful jockery' (*Sun* 3rd December 1816). Upon alighting, the pressure

from the crowd was so great Hunt struggled to reach the door of Merlins's Cave (*MP* 3rd December 1816). Following lengthy speeches, news of the outcome of the petition, and resolutions, the meeting dispersed quietly with no sign of riot, and Hunt left to loud applause (*PLDA* 3rd December 1816). Many reports focused on the waggon and riot compared to Hunt's arrival and subsequent meeting. The landscape of terror produced by the riot was much more pressing, fear-inducing, and corresponded to anxieties prevalent in conservative understandings at the time. The riot materially confirmed these fears whilst the actual Spa Fields meeting was able to demonstrate, again, that radicalism could perform peacefully. Some reports understood this by separating the two events whereas others saw a symbiotic relationship.

The reform sympathetic *Morning Chronicle* (3rd December 1816) eagerly insisted those involved in the riotous activities were of different character to the majority of the crowd and 'We were very sorry to see in some... very unbecoming pains taken to misrepresent the proceedings in Spa-fields'. Likewise, the pro-reform *Leeds Mercury* (7th December 1816) separated the meeting and riot, 'the odium arising from the conduct of a few designing or deluded individuals may not fall upon a number of persons who were assembled at the time'. Writing several months afterwards, Carlile (*SPR* 10th May 1817, 83) commented on 'a few foolish men being led away by the insane doctrines of SPENCE', thus creating distance between reasoned reform and Spencean radicalism. Therefore, sympathetic or pro-reform newspapers recognised the need to characterise the crowd as being peaceful or misled but also to protect the mass meeting from being equated to or deemed the basis for violence or insurrection. This separation of events, or distancing of Hunt from the riot, was noted by some:

We have witnessed with equal surprise and indignation an attempt to disconnect the two crowds drawn to Spa Fields... What! Did not the waggon

come with the same symbols, the same tri-coloured flag that had been carried before Mr Hunt in the former meeting? (LC 3rd December 1816)

The power and presence of material culture was demonstrated through the memory it left and how it permitted events to be tied together. In the conservative imagination and press, Spa Fields meeting and Spa Fields riot were not different events, rather they were the two sides of the same radical coin.

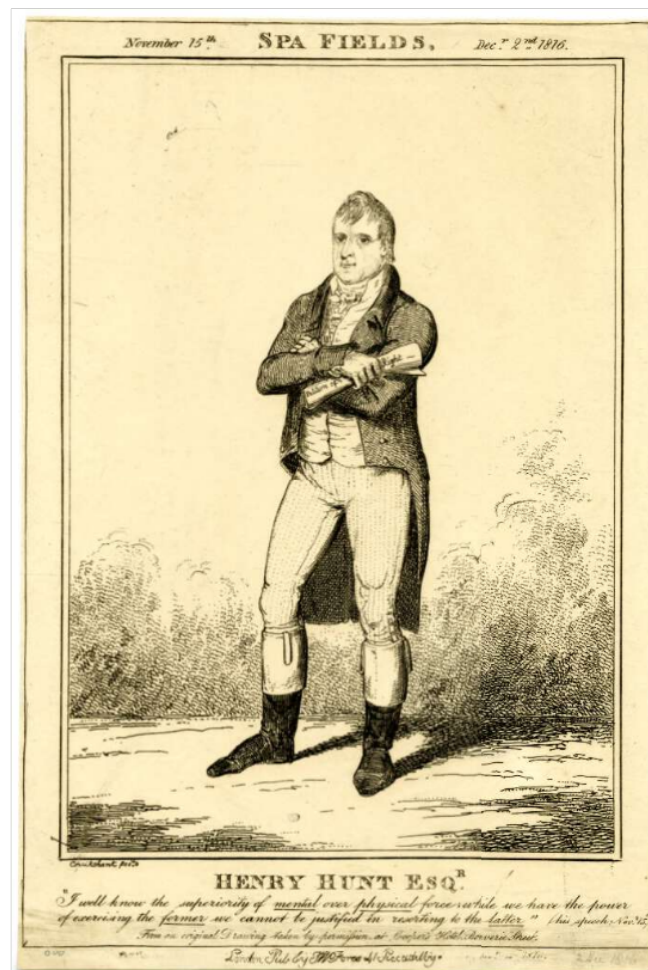


Figure 35: Spa Fields (Cruikshank 1816; BM/1868,0808.8355). This is a favourable depiction of Hunt, issued very shortly after the meeting (4th December)

Hunt did not escape accusations of being connected to the riotous proceedings. Even before they reported on the meeting, the *Evening Mail* (2nd December 1816) were

confident 'Hunt's vanity and wickedness will prompt him to excite a riot if he can'. Reports from the day of the meeting were sent to the papers prior to the end of the event meaning the *Sun* (2nd December 1816) proclaimed Hunt was still 'bellowing forth everything that can inflame their passions to madness and massacre'. The main way connections occurred between the two groups was the flag Hunt's coach had displayed at the first meeting. Having this material evidence allowed reports to confirm their suspicions of Hunt being involved in sedition, or worse, treason. The triumphant parade of the banner in the first meeting (LC 4th December 1816) embroiled Hunt in the 'Treason stalking forth in open day' (LG 14th December 1816). The first meeting was 'itself the first act of a revolutionary drama – and there for the first time, we had the signs and symbols of revolution paraded about' (LC 3rd December 1816). Flags and banners were transformed into 'the standard of insurrection' which had been designed by Hunt and his followers (EM 4th December 1816). Hunt himself had some awareness of the dangers of being associated with violence or lively support. Following the last meeting in which a coach was damaged, Hunt arrived in his own and insisted the crowd did not process out with him 'as knew the consequences of them following' (MC 3rd December 1816). Cobbett complained after the first meeting that even if Hunt 'had drunk off a glass of human blood', he would not have been treated worse by the press (*Cobbett's Political Register* 23rd November 1816), highlighting Hunt would likely be aware of the risks of demonization. Hunt even counterattacked the conservative press, issuing a respectable print of himself (figure 35). Through removing the landscape, crowd, and material culture, the print emphasises the respectability of Hunt through his clothing and pose. Despite knowing the risks of being entwined with violence, Hunt decided claiming the radical space of Spa Fields was worth any reputational risk and controlling the landscape of the mass platform was worth pursuing, to the extent he held the third Spa Fields meeting.

5.3.3 MEETING THREE

Again, the third meeting assembled outside of Merlin's Cave. From 9am, the crowd began to arrive. Reports suggest a large attendance that went into the thousands (MP 11th February 1817). According to some reports, a dissenting preacher sermonised on the need for good conduct whilst emphasising the importance of radical reform (LM 15th February 1817). At one o'clock, 'universal shouts announced the arrival of some popular character in the field' who turned out to be Hunt arriving in a tandem (MC 11th February 1817). Hunt ascended to the first-floor window and, following the chairman's short address, delivered a speech and resolutions. In the avenues leading up Spa Fields, it was reported that placards were posted. Allegedly, the placards called for the 'most atrocious recommendation to commit outrage' (MC 11th February 1817), with these suggesting some radicals still agitated for violence. However, this mass platform meeting lacked many of the features seen in others: no Spenceans, no banners or flags, and no cockades. Hunt must have recognised the need to avoid utilising any material culture which could insinuate violence. Hunt also mentioned in his speech that:

A story had been trumped up of the Regent's having been shot at; but he was sorry to find the multitude had thrown stones at the Regent – (*Laughter*) – because all violence would do harm to their cause. (*Examiner* 16th February 1817)

Here, Hunt is distancing his cause from violence through his oratory. The mass platform, under Hunt's control, continued to be peaceful. The emphasis, by both the radicals and by the press, was not on material culture or processions. Meeting in the same place and utilising the same building to talk from allowed a spatial continuity. The landscape was radicalised through the delivery of speeches, resolutions, and shouts, and radically occupied by the multitude. Materiality did not feature as a mechanism to express identity or claim a space. The lack of the tri-coloured flag

could be because of reformers' anxieties on not wanting to be conflated with revolution or insurrection following the outcome of the riot.

The nature of the crowd became a focal point in how this meeting was reported. This fascination with who and how many attended showed how important engagement and the physical occupation of space was to those outside of reform. Tying the meetings together, it was suggested the crowd 'was chiefly composed of the working classes of the community, whose impoverished appearance... generally denoted the absence of employments' (*MC* 11th February 1817). Behaviour was described; the crowd was noted as acting with 'decorum' (*KC* 11th February 1817). Arguing against continued engagement:

The mob was much less numerous than upon either of the former occasions, not exceeding 10,000, though Mr Hunt from some peculiarity in his visual organs, discerned above 100,000. Mr Hunt modestly disclaimed all knowledge of Greek and Algebra, but we presume he has profoundly studied the science of optics (*MC* 11th February 1817).

There were suggestions the crowd was much more interested in a nearby boxing match that happened during the meeting (*PLDA* 11th February 1817), after the crowd reportedly began to thin on the assumption the meeting was a hoax, 'those who remained seemed more anxious for sportive frolics than serious deliberation' (*Sun* 11th February 1817). These type of comments by the establishment press were quite commonplace regarding mass platform meetings. The crowd was reduced to being curious or inattentive, therefore attacking the speaking ability of the orators.

Perhaps the nature of the previous crowd, or how it had been perceived, influenced how the crowd gathered for the third meeting:

On the hill behind Bagnigge Wells upwards of 500 persons were collected, who, apprehending personal danger from a commixture with the more active

part of assembly, deemed it prudent to content themselves with a distant view of the proceedings. Similar crowds, actuated by similar feelings, were collected in almost all the other elevated spots commanding a view of the Merlin's Cave (LM 15th February 1817).

As noted previously, Merlin's Cave's windows offered a much more visible speaker, with some of the crowd deeming a good vantage point enough rather than being close enough to listen. The crowd was deemed as being extremely important in the making of a reform meeting and in estimating how radical an event might be. The physical gathering of people was viewed throughout these three meetings as being intrinsic to evaluating the danger of radicalism. The crowd could act as a barometer of engagement with reform, revolution, or simple curiosity.



Figure 36: Spa Fields orator Hunt-ing for popularity to Do-good!! (Cruikshank 1817). This satire mocked the third Spa Fields meeting where Hunt laid blame at Burdett who had ignored the request of presenting the petition.

This meeting became more focused on speeches than actions or material culture. Hunt's speech was caricatured (figure 36). Haywood (2017) has dissected this caricature regarding its relation to sound, suggesting Hunt is nearly falling out of the window because of the large speech bubble which acts as a banner looming over the audience. *Sporting Extraordinary; Or, the Spa-Fields Hunt of Monday Last* was written about his speech, emphasising how Hunt utilised his speaking time to critique Burdett:

The fox is 169eynard169'd, the field in array,
And all are prepar'd for the sports the day;
When they find that old r169eynard defeats their *best ends*,
And that orator HUNT makes *game* of his friends. (MP 12th February 1817)

This poem is also quite typical in playing with Hunt's last name through utilising hunting language. Elsewhere, *Elegy Written in Spa-Fields*, mocks those in attendance:

The Parish chimes announce the hour of one;
The workmen bear no more of toil the brunt;
The sober home to get their dinners run,
And leave the rest to Treason to HUNT. (MP 13th February 1817, stanza one).

The crowd is being characterised as lazy labourers whilst Hunt has not escaped the legacy of the second Spa Fields meeting. *Elegy* also notes that the some were 'Full many a glass of DEADY's gin so bright' and that they were 'A shirtless rabble from their homes to call'. Alcohol was a material differentiator between the reformer and the Loyalist in this poem. Caricaturing the crowd as being a 'rabble', common, or uncouth can be seen in the *Spa Fields Orator* too. The crowd were depicted in scruffy clothing and look distressed or forlorn, in comparison to Hunt who wears a smart coat. The poems and caricature assess the Spa Field meetings as failures and attempt to construct a radical space of desperation.

Hunt spoke at all three meetings from a first-floor window in Merlin's Cave. The area was literally fields and understood to have been 'perfectly qualified for the reception of assemblages amounting to many thousand persons' and Merlin's Cave offered an elevated position whilst commanding 'a very pleasing prospect' (Cromwell 1828, 316). Any planned subsequent meetings at Spa Fields were curtailed by the implementation of the 1817 Habeas Corpus Act. This acted as a legal stopgap to physically occupying spaces but other reasons prevented Spa Fields and Merlin's Cave from becoming sites of radical tradition. Forming a hustings tradition based on Merlin's Cave was halted by the ever-expanding city. Buildings were constructed opposite the tavern shortly after the third meeting (Curl 2010, 76). The urbanisation of the area was recognised as a factor that would block the site being a long-term arena of protest or political gatherings:

Spa-fields will soon lose all its notoriety in state affairs. A row of houses is already built before the sign of Merlin's Cave; and the tribune window, so recently attractive to the populace, is now completely enveloped. Ground has been purchased for the immediate erection of 400 houses. (Taylor 1817, 501-2).

The Morning Post (5th April 1817) were gleeful in how Spa Fields was being transformed:

On the spot where the heroic Young Watson distinguished himself as the head... of the Rabble Waggon Train, a new house has already been erected; and if HUNT... when he next appears at the window of the Loyal Volunteer [Merlin's Cave], he will find himself confined in a narrow street...

This process of urbanisation radically altered the area in ten years (figure 37). As well as the pressures of urbanisation claiming open spaces in London, Mr Wilson, the proprietor of Merlin's Cave refused access to the tavern. Placards for a meeting on the 4th May 1818 advertised Spa Fields as the location but Wilson insisted the assembly leave otherwise they would be prosecuted for trespassing (MC 5th May

1818). Future meetings turned to other open spaces in London. Most prominent was Smithfield which held large mass platform meetings in 1819. Spa Fields was prevented from becoming a radical landscape that could be returned to over subsequent years as Copenhagen Fields and St Peter's Fields were able to. Despite the Spa Fields meetings not succeeding in their petitions or insurrection and the urbanisation of the area, they became culturally memorable events that created a powerful moment of Young Watson charging, importantly with the contested tri-coloured flag.

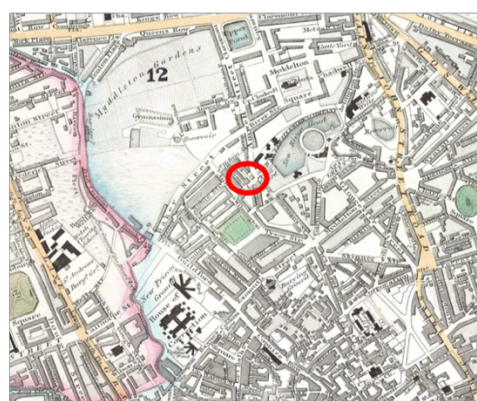


Figure 37: Annotated maps showing the approximate location of Merlin's Cave. TL: The Parish of Clerkenwell by Richard Blome (1720). TR: Trade Card of Clerkenwell (Anon ND). Presumed to be post-1794 because Cold Bath Prison is on the map. CL: Detail from London in Miniature by Edward Mogg (1814). CR: Detail from Christopher and John Greenwood (1826). BL: Detail from The Post Office Map of London by James Wyld (1843). BR: Detail from Bacon's Map of London (1866).

5.4 BLANKETEERS MARCH

Habeas corpus had been suspended. The mass platform method had been curtailed by oppressive government action. Around 20-25,000 people gathered in St Peter's Fields, Manchester on the 11th March 1817 to deliver a petition to the Prince Regent to fight for constitutional reform (figures 38 and 39). The marchers', known as the Blanketeers, profession was largely or entirely weavers (Munger 1974, 19), with this dominance of manufacturing and artisanal occupations also being reflected in the reformers who were imprisoned in 1817 (HO/42/158/11). The entire petition never did make it to London: the meeting was broken up by dragoons and those who made it outside Manchester were stopped at various northern industrial towns including Macclesfield, Leek, and Ashbourne. However, one individual did succeed in fulfilling the march: Abel Couldwell from Staybridge (HO 42/163). The leaders of the march were arrested and taken to the New Bailey in Manchester including Samuel Drummond and John Bagguley, the main two orators (*The Times* 13th March 1817). Bagguley's arrest happened during his speech at the Blanket March:

He was... in the act of crying out, "Behold the constables assembled to awe us, but they dare not touch us, our cause is good, we are invulnerable," when at that instant a party of soldiers received orders to march to the platform from which he was speaking (*The Times* 12th April 1817).

The owner of the cart, Mr Higginbotham, was also arrested (*DCA* 15th March 1817). More Blanketeers made London via the New Bailey than the march (*Star* 15th March 1817). Various troops were successful in preventing the march and movement of radicals across the landscape on a national scale.



Figure 38: Detail from Thompson (1794). The green annotation is an approximate area of St Peter's Fields prior to large scale industrialisation. Located just to the east, is St Peter's Church and located to the west is Deansgate.



Figure 39: Details from Johnson (1819). It shows the location of St Peter's Fields whilst also highlighting how the expanding and industrialising Manchester had already begun to impact the open space. The expansion did, however, centralise the fields, perhaps making them a more useful open, urban space.

It appears likely that there was a London influence on the march. Samuel Bamford (1967, 29-30) suggested drinking sessions in the Cock Inn, London, inspired northern delegates at the Hampden Club convention to consider other options and take the idea back north. Perhaps William Cobbett was also influential. In his *Address to Journeymen and Labourers*, Cobbett stated:

Any man can draw up a petition, and any man can carry it up to London, with instructions to deliver it into trusty hands, to be presented whenever the House shall meet (*Cobbett's Political Register* 3rd November 1816)

As seen in section 5.1, petitions were viewed as a valid and highly suitable way of agitating for change so it may not be possible to directly attribute the inspiration to one source but rather a general belief in the power of the petition combined with some finer details learned in London. The Blanketeers were influenced and tracked by government spies. It is difficult to ascertain how much the spies instigated the march (Poole 2019). The influence of spies is apparent in the aftermath of the meeting in St Peter's Field. Bamford and other radicals were approached by an individual claiming they should 'make a Moscow out of Manchester' through storming the prison and seizing arms (Thompson 1968, 714). The provoker was likely a spy.

The young Bagguley, who was eighteen when he spoke to the Blanketeers, was quickly amassing a reputation for oratory in Manchester. Bagguley labelled himself 'a Reformer and a Republican and a Leveller' (HO/42/164/132-42). He spoke across Lancashire and these meetings were regularly attracting crowds of two thousand people (Hernon 2006, 15). The march flirted with illegality from its conception. White (1957) highlighted how the idea was clever through being technically legal whilst also leaving the grey space for it to develop into something more. The basis of the Blanketeers March was a belief that the suspension of Habeas Corpus could be avoided through using an archaic law that would permit ten people to deliver a

petition to the monarch, or in this case the Prince Regent. This idea escalated upwards through delivering a petition in the thousands but technically the multitude marching to London would be made up of hundreds of ten-person groups. The scheme was discussed in numerous locations, including Stockport (HO/42/159 fol.52). William Benbow, a non-conformist preacher involved in Hampden Clubs, argued that the protestors 'must be firm and unanimous and petition them again & again until the nation is all in one mind' (HO/42/159 fol.28). Bagguley outlined how the petitions would be carried in practice:

After it is signed you must wrap it up in a piece of brown paper and tie it round your right arm with a bow of white tape and come with your things on your back with your 10th man being the chosen man with the petition on his right arm (HO/40/5/4a fol.1387).

The belief in the petition was evident across the Blanketeers but the process of carrying the petition through tying it to the body, shows the importance of embodiment and materiality. It appears that instructions were carried out too, a surviving copy limits the number of names on the petition (HO/42/162 fols 390-3) and the petitions addressed the Prince Regent rather than parliament (figure 40). Authorities likely understood the political potential of the petitions too. The aforementioned copy – as well as others (see HO/42/162 fol.359) – were confiscated and not delivered. In its first ever issue, the *Manchester Observer* (3rd January 1818) mused on the idea that using the 1661 Act Against Tumultuous Petitioning – the same act the Blanketeers had used to justify their petitions was now being used by the Government to threaten people collecting petitions with over 20 signatures – could be used to create an avalanche of petitioners. If only 20 people could sign, how would the House of Commons cope when 50,000 petitions arrived?

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To His Royal Highness George Prince of Wales, and Regent
of the united Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

The Petition of the undersigned, being Inhabitants of Manchester in the
County of Lancaster.

Humbly Sheweth,

That your Petitioners before the last War, neither felt nor feared either difficulty or privation; but during its
continuance, have frequently experienced both, and have repeatedly applied to your Royal Father, your Royal Majesty
and the House of Commons for redress, which applications, we are sorry to say, have in our humble, but from being
not revised that attention, which their importance merited, so that now, when the waste of war is over, our sufferings
are become both more general and deeper than ever.

This state of things, we your Petitioners, attribute to the rapid increase of Taxation, which has been quadrupled,
together with the increase of tithes, which has probably been doubled during the War, which, together, annually absorb
the whole produce of the kingdom, so to leave a quantity very far short of being sufficient to keep your Petitioners
in existence, and therefore, their lives are now become a burden, and a plague to them; your distressed Petitioners
are further convinced, that if the House of Commons had really emanated from, and been wholly and annually appointed
by the People at large, this War, and the Taxation resulting therefrom, would long ago, have revised a sufficient check,
even admitting the nation to have sanctioned its commensurate. That the Laws to regulate the importations of
Corn, calculated to advance its price, would never have been suffered to pass. That the Law of Libel, which subjected
the publication of Truth itself, in some instances, to great pains and penalties, thereby preventing the publication
of the most important Truths, could never have revised the sanction of the friends of Truth, and of mankind. That
a Bill to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act, a Bill empowering Ministers to imprison, without proof of guilt, whenever
they please and for an unknown length of time, could never have passed.

Your Petitioners, therefore humbly but fervently pray, that your Royal Highness will instantly demand
from your Councils, all those Ministers who have advised, or devised such cruel, such unjust measures, and
call to your Councils, men who are the declared and the avowed friends to consultatory measures to better
Reform, and a general and very considerable retrenchment in every department of national expenditure.

Our lives are in your hands — our happiness in a great measure depends on you if you propose the
adoption of measures calculated to relieve us, you may then safely rely upon our support and gratitude —
without this, we can neither support you nor ourselves, your gracious attention to our prayers will gain you the
eternal return and gratitude of your Petitioners, who with ever pray.

Figure 40: Example of a surviving Blanketeer's petition (HO 42/162). It discusses distresses caused by taxation, libel laws, and the Corn Laws. Note how it is addressed to His Royal Highness George Prince of Wales.

Referencing the Peasant's Revolt of 1381 and the Glorious Revolution of 1688, the Blanketeers believed they had precedents for their actions (Poole 2006, 264).

Holding a large-scale meeting followed by a long-distance march was seen as the correct form of action due to the 'gathering momentum of early 1817' and was intended to be a 'coup de grace for old corruption' (Custer 2007, 146). Therefore, the Blanket March was combining two of the main methods of agitation in Regency radicalism: the mass platform and the petition. It also utilised placards to bring the march and meeting to people's attention (figure 41). However, it emphasises an

understanding of how moving through the landscape could be utilised as a way of radicalising space as well.

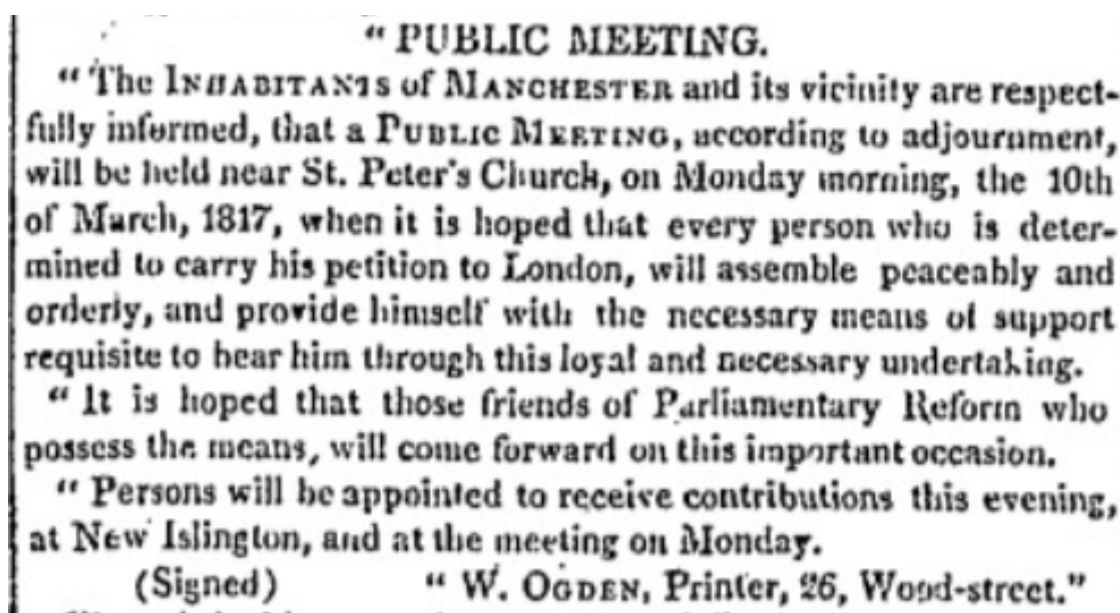


Figure 41: The placard that allegedly was distributed around Manchester prior to the march (*The Times* 13th March 1817).

It was not the first time that moving through the landscape was used as protest.

Bagguley himself in a speech highlighted a historical example:

In the reign of Richard II about 40,000 men went to London to demand their rights of the King; & he granted them their rights & they went home again.

But they only came a little way from London, they did not go from Manchester. (HO/40/5).

The Magna Carta was referenced in a committee meeting, March 1817, "He [Bradbury] then adverted to King John being compelled to sign Magna Charta on one knee and that it only required unity and courage in the people to accomplish as great objects now as were done in those days" (HO/42/164, fol 256). This drawing upon medieval history shows how important historical legitimacy could be in advancing reform rhetoric. In recent memory of the Blanket March was the Bilston colliers. The

colliers yoked themselves to waggons full of coal and petitions to march from Staffordshire to London, gifting the waggons to the Prince Regent in July 1816 (Lapp 1999, 52). This connection was noted by some press reports (*BWM* 16th March 1817). Both the Blanketeers and colliers were ultimately focused on the petition as being the way of achieving parliamentary reform, but they understood how performance, space, and movement could help enhance the material and textual culture of petitions. Through connecting to Magna Carta, the Blanketeers were not only historically legitimising their march, they were also emphasising the importance of the written word in achieving rights.

5.4.1 BLANKETS, ROUTES, AND PLOTS

The march met in St Peter's Field, Manchester, before its intended commencement. This large open space offered a practical location for crowds that went into the thousands. It was usefully positioned by being in the centre of Manchester whilst offering an easy route towards Stockport. In a motion for an inquiry into the conduct of spies and informers, MP George Phillips asked an important question:

An attempt had been made to ridicule the expedition of the blanketeers' but what must have been the consequence of their continuing their route?

Where were they to find sustenance by the way? (Hansard 1818, 848)

Phillips highlights the practical realities of undertaking the march. The Blanket March relied upon moving through the landscape, but this required routes and provisions. Whilst we cannot know for certain where the Blanketeers would have headed on their way to London, it is worth exploring as the radical potential of the march was in how it could have created a radical snowball from north to south.

It appears the Blanketeers went out of Manchester via Piccadilly (*CM* 15th March 1817) and headed on the London road towards Stockport (*DM* 13th March 1817). The aim was to meet more Blanketeers in Stockport, swelling the march in size and support (*NM* 15th March 1817). Stockport witnessed commotion as the bridge was

blocked by yeomanry and some marchers attempted to avoid the troops by throwing themselves into the river and crossing where fordable (*MC* 13th March 1817). In Bagguley's speech to the crowd a week prior to the march, he queried those who would march, "I say will you turn back when you go to Stockport or when you come to face those high and cold Hills in Derbyshire?" (HO 40/5/4a f.1336), indicating a route was in mind. There is some evidence that the route for the first part of the journey was the same one the Jacobites followed into Derby (Lincoln 2007, 29). Where the march might have headed after Derby is conjecture. Approaching it from a Loyalist perspective, the *Leeds Intelligencer* (17th March 1817) suggested:

On that very day, an immense assemblage of persons... commenced their march, in military order, with captains of tens and fifties, for London, in imitation of the march by the Marsellois to Paris, in the commencement of the French Revolution!.

There can be little doubt, that this rising at Manchester had been concerted between the Leaders of Revolution there, and in London. – *Birmingham* was in the line of their march.

Although not saturated by fears of revolution, other reports noted that 'they would be joined in different towns through which they passed' (*LVM* 21st March 1817). Despite failing, it was understood how the 'expedition' could have 'overawe[d] the Government' (*HP* 8th April 1817). It appears that the marching Blanketeers were not met by many – if any – fellow reformers along the way (HO/42/162/350). Even at Macclesfield, where reformers had been preparing to join, no reformers did meet the 400 marchers who had made it to their town (HO/42/161 fol. 17), although Jonathan Hulton, a Blanketeer, in a letter written to his parents informs them he slept in 'very good lodgings' in Macclesfield (HO/40/5/2 f.1304), with this implying there was some support still. This could be because of the effort authorities

undertook to prevent the advancement of the march. At Macclesfield, special constables were on duty alongside the yeomanry (HO/42/161 fol. 274). In Nottingham, cavalry was deployed to meet the expected marchers (HO/42/162 fols 144-45) and at Ashbourne, yeomanry turned many marchers round, encouraging them to head home (HO/40/5/2 fols 1304-9). The authorities obviously took the march seriously and wanted to contain it, being very successful in preventing the march from achieving its potential.

Royle (2000, 47) suggests the Blanketeers were aiming to demonstrate mass support for reform rather than attempt to build a revolutionary army. The plan for how they were moving across the landscape supports this position. Judging by the early known stages of the route (Stockport, Leek, Ashbourne, Derby), the march would have ventured to radical hotspots. This could have included Birmingham and Nottingham due to their connections to a plot that was uncovered after the march (figure 42; see below for further details). It is likely that the march would have followed the London road, with this allowing the march to hit key industrial towns and cities.

Reports on the speeches of Bagguley and Drummond indicate that Nottingham was considered to be a meeting spot, probably to swell the numbers and to re-group all the original marchers (HO/40/5/2 f.1307). A committee meeting indicates Birmingham would have been included on the route and that passing through towns would enable the number of the march to swell (HO/40/5, Part 4a, fols 1338-45). According to 'secret researches', it was uncovered that there were '25,000 *stand of arms* at Birmingham' (NM 15th March 1817). These apparent concerns produced enough evidence to arrest certain (unnamed) individuals for high treason (BNP 19th March 1817), although the high treason charge was not pursued. There were further suggestions the march might have swollen again with 40,000 reinforcements from Lancashire and 10,000 from Glasgow, all marching with blankets (MP 19th March

1817). These fears were evidenced in how the authorities ensured that civil and military arrangements were made in Manchester and Stockport (*LG* 15th March 1817). Whilst meetings were able to cause concern and anxieties, produce accusations of sedition, and provide 'evidence' for insurrection, the Blanket March appeared to trigger deeper fears. Much of the newspaper reporting regarding weapons and treason proved to be unfounded. This was connected to the idea of movement. Provincial radicalism was not being contained to Manchester rather it was going to, in an organised fashion, march to London.



Figure 42: Projected Route of the Blanket Route. It is unclear whether the Nottingham reformers would have headed to Derby or if the Lancashire reformers would have diverted to Nottingham.

Although virtually every initial report on the Blanketeers noted their carrying of blankets, hence the moniker, the reports were more interested in discussing the march and how it was halted, emphasising the petition aimed to ‘undeceive’ the Prince Regent. The material culture mentioned in various reports included bivouacs for camping (*CM* 15th March 1817), knapsacks containing provisions (*LG* 15th March 1817), and blankets (*NM* 15th March 1817). Provisions, or lack of, over the course of the journey would apparently have led to plunder, especially by the time the Blanketeers had reached the Birmingham to London route (*The Times* 13th March 1817). The *Macclesfield Courier* (10th March 1817) claimed those who managed to reach their town had no ‘baggage or any apparent resource, with which to proceed 20 miles further towards London’. It is likely that rather than being ill prepared, the Blanketeers had lost their knapsacks in Stockport following the fray or were being made to appear incompetent. The latter was probably the case as the *Northampton Mercury* (15th March 1817) belittled the march by stating that the amount of provisions and blankets demonstrated how far ‘their folly conceded’. Accusations of incompetence and resorting to plunder were unfair. In order to secure a large crowd, many placards and handbills were distributed as well as ‘emissaries’ visiting establishments to encourage attendance and financial support (*LC* 12th March 1817). Prior to the orators arriving in St Peter’s Field, a cart with a table atop it was prepared to register the names of the marchers and to collect donations (*CM* 15th March 1817). Each Blanketeer was to be given two guineas (*MP* 19th March 1817) and there was an expectation of ‘liberal donations’ arriving once the leaders had caught up with the departed group (*Star* 12th March 1817). There was an absence of radical material culture such as liberty caps, banners, and flags. The Blanketeers had decided to only bring what was necessary for a march. This was reflected in the language choice of the reports which used words such as ‘prepared’ (*MC* 13th March 1817), ‘provided’ (*MP* 13th March 1817), and ‘furnished’ (*LI* 17th March 1817). Despite taking the essentials, the absence of utilising radical material culture to

make a statement in the landscape suggests the Blanketeers were relying on mass movement of people and embodiment of reform. For radical and conservative alike, it was this embodiment and movement of radicalism as opposed to its material output, expression, or encapsulation that was considered more important.

There were interesting word choices used to describe the march. The pro-reform *Leeds Mercury* (15th March 1817) deemed it a 'political pilgrimage' conducted by 'poor distressed petitioners', therefore not agreeing with the method but understanding how it had gained traction. Meanwhile, the establishment press utilised a plethora of pithy political remarks to demean the march. In a future report, the *Star* (13th March 1817) mockingly called those marching '*Delegates*' and 'wanderers', with the latter implying there was no direction to the march, and argued that 'the first night's bivouac' would have 'terminated the pilgrimage'. The use of material culture made 'the mob' have a 'very lubricious appearance; many of them having their bed blankets thrown over their shoulders, and fastened in front over the breast with a skewer (CC 14th March 1817). The *Morning Post* (13th March 1817) considered it a 'mad journey' and used pilgrims as a derogatory slight. The *Caledonian Mercury* (15th March 1817) viewed it a 'mad scheme' and 'expedition' as well as calling those who donated 'silly people'. The idea of madness or scheme features elsewhere too, 'This wild and extravagant scheme, in itself a lamentable proof of the dreadful misery existing among the working classes in this neighbourhood' (LVM 21st March 1817). The marchers were called 'deluded wretches' (LC 12th March 1817) and 'poor deluded people' (NM 15th March 1817). The *Star* (12th March 1817) declared:

In a future age it will not be believed that in the 19th century, people at large and out of Bedlam, could for a moment have conceived so mad a project. It has never been equalled in modern times, but by cases of superstitious

phrenzy – by Buchanites, Brotherites, Southcottians... Lock them up in Mad-houses and you will render a real service to the community.

In a scathing report when the arrested Blanketeers were acquitted, *The Black Dwarf* (10th September 1817, 520) actually reverses the accusations of madness:

It is impossible to avoid ridiculing the result of ministerial fears, and the madness with which they have furnished weapons for their own exposure... The ministers dared to accuse them of *treason* and *riot* when the agents of those ministers *made all the riot* that existed: - and the treason was committed *against* and *not by these blanket men*.

The radicalisation of space was not being contained to a single area, rather the march would have connected different landscapes together and created a form of radical pilgrimage, which triggered anxieties. On the other hand, there was gleeful mockery of the march. These two positions were not opposites and could exist in conjunction as mockery became a way of performing relief and disguising any anxieties.

Estimated size of the crowd varied wildly. The crowd gathered outside of the Quaker's Meeting House with reports suggesting anywhere between 10-30,000 people gathered with the possibility of it swelling to 60,000 (*MM* 11th March 1817; *CC* 14th March 1817). There was an insistence that many in attendance either did not actively engage or participate, for instance, the number of those who huzzahed or waved their hats at the orators arriving was disproportionately small compared to the number in attendance (*CM* 15th March 1817). Some reports emphasised the presence of two knives in Blanketeer's knapsacks. The *Morning Chronicle* (13th March 1817) mocked these reports, 'certainly smells strongly of a plot; two knives... two unusually large knives discovered among... 30,000 people...a most formidable appearance!'. The number actually marching appears to have been a fraction of the crowd but was still a significant amount. Roughly 'about a thousand men...had

withdrawn a short time before Piccadilly, from whence they set out soon after... to London' (*LM* 15th March 1817) or it was as low as 500 (*Star* 13th March 1817). The Blanketeers expected this number to grow on the route down to London. The reported variance in attendance and participation highlight different ways of understanding the radical space. This was a theme that extended beyond the march, with conceptions of size and participation also impacting how Spa Field and Smithfield were discussed, disseminated, and dissected. Expectations of growth indicate how the Blanketeers expected their movement to generate momentum and draw attention to the reform cause. They envisaged the march snowballing into a physical demonstration of support for their petition.

The idea of a large crowd assembling was cause for concern but the additional layer of moving through the landscape beyond the boundaries of St Peter's Field furthered these anxieties:

We are all bustle and confusion in town to day... This morning an immense assemblage took place nearby at St Peter's Church, (report says upwards of 50,000; part of which were prepared with knapsacks, in marching order) (Extract of letter in the *CM* 15th March 1817).

Crowds of people flocked into town from all directions, as early as eight o'clock, and at about nine, the instigators appeared on their temporary stage in a cart, and continued to harangue the multitude till their vast increasing numbers suggested the expediency of putting into practice the well-formed arrangements of the civil and military powers (*MP* 13th March 1817).

Part of this fear connected to how the march permitted different radical areas to become physically and personally connected beyond the circulation of the radical press and correspondence. As well as having preparatory meetings in places such as Middleton and Oldham, discussions focused on 'their junction with their brother

reformers in Spa-Fields' (*CP* 15th March 1817). There was also to be a junction with Stockport reformers on Lancashire Hill (*NM* 15th March 1817). The Blanket March was a considerable act of co-ordination and demonstrates the extent of the radical network. These junctions add further weight to the idea that the march was expected to gain more support as it moved south.

There were concerns the Blanket March could have been connected to the Spenceans. The *Manchester Gazette* (15th March 1817) insisted 'this district is perfectly free from Spencean Societies and Spencean principles'. Speculation of intended violence was aggravated by finding 'two unusually large knives' in some Blanketeers' knapsacks (*Times* 13th March 1817). However, these fears were unfounded. Bagguley was a keen critic of Spa Fields, emphasising how their actions were detrimental to amassing support for radicalism (Belchem 1985, 74). The passing of the Seditious Assemblies Act on the 31st March 1817, which restricted meeting sizes to 50 persons, offered another opportunity for these events to be connected. The '*Blanket Beaux*' were going to 'have given the fraternal embrace to their fellow dupes in Spa-fields' by choosing physical force over petitions (*MP* 25th March 1817). However, this shows how imagination could connect different events together, therefore transcending temporal or physical boundaries, showing how radical performances or actions became ingrained in the conservative psyche or cultural landscape.

Following the Blanket March, a conspiracy was uncovered that aimed to provoke an uprising in Manchester. Reports connected the march to the plot directly, 'The horrible plot was known immediately after the frustration of the Petitioner's Journey to London, or more familiarly speaking, the Blanket Expedition' (*MP* 3rd April 1817). The insurrectionists were going to utilise St Peter's as the base for destruction (*MP* 3rd April 1817). In dramatic style, the insurrection would begin with 'a rocket, which

was to ascend from St Peter's church. The factories in the outskirts were to have been destroyed, by means of rockets (*NM* 5th April 1817). The overarching aim of this signal was:

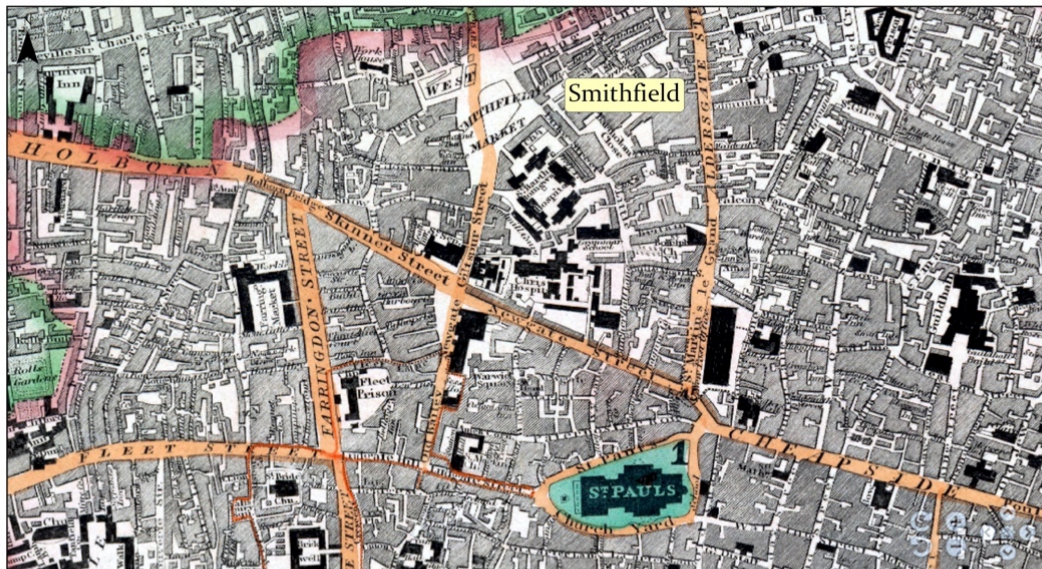
to destroy the town, and to murder those in authority, draw the attention of the military from the more important buildings of the barracks, banks, and the police-office, on each of which they meditated an attack. Their next intention was to murder the magistrates, and release all the prisoners in the New Bailey (*HP* 8th April 1817).

According to Nadin, the Deputy Constable of Manchester – later involved in arresting the speakers at Peterloo – whilst in Middleton, he noticed 'active and clever' signals were being made from hill to hill (*MC* 1st April 1817). As with the march itself, this insurrection had connections with Nottingham, Birmingham, and Derby (*BNP* 2nd April 1817). Eleven 'deputies' were arrested in relation to the plot and these were from 'all parts of the country' (*CM* 3rd April 1817). Whether there was truth in this account or not, it is possible to see how anxieties were centred on the power of places in the local landscape. Buildings of institutional power would be captured therefore subverting the social structure of the city. The emphasis switched from text or inflammatory language to focusing on action and places. Underlying fears in earlier reports on the Blanket March come into sharper relief as moving through the landscape for petitioning to moving through the landscape for insurrection was, at least in the conservative imagination, a fine line. Despite arrests and accusations of high treason, the Blanketeers were acquitted in September 1817, although Carlile adroitly noted the connection between the Blanket March and the alleged plot:

It is clear, [...] that they had two inducements to punish those Petitioners as far as they were able, the first arising from revenge, and the latter from a wish to justify their own proceedings. (*SPR* 1817, 344).

5.5 SMITHFIELD MEETING

Smithfield became an important site of radical meetings. This section will largely focus on one meeting in particular: 21st July 1819. Led by Hunt, this meeting drew the attention of the press and commentators, producing several visual and poetic responses. Smithfield was, and continues to be, a large meat market. Prior to the construction of the contemporary marketplace in the 1860s, Smithfield was an open market offering a public space that could be utilised for other purposes on non-market days (figures 43 and 44). For radicals and reformers, it became a venue for mass platform meetings in central London.



Smithfield (1830)

Map of London : made from an actual survey in the years 1824, 1825, 1826, by C. & J. Greenwood, extended and comprising the various improvements to 1830; engraved by Josiah Neele. Scale [ca. 1: 63,360].

Map Provided by Harvard University
Harvard University, Harvard Map Collection, G5754.L7.1830.G7.Stitched
Located at: <https://mf.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/ids:0992:540>
Reproduced under: https://iris.harvard.edu/urn:3:1614_eother:isocopyright

Figure 43: Map showing location of Smithfield.



Figure 44: *Smithfield Market (Bluck 1811) on market day. Unlike the caricatures of the meeting below, it allows the size and scale to be appreciated.*

The Smithfield meeting was largely driven by organisational efforts of the Spenceans. London radicals, including Watson and Thistlewood, had formed the 'Committee of Two Hundred', which had the support of radical outlets including *The Medusa*, *Cap of Liberty*, and the *Republican* (Stevenson 2020, 43). This committee, chaired by the Spencean, hairdresser, and poet E.J. Blandford, organised the Smithfield meeting (Haywood and Leader 1998, 220). The committee was active across 1819; they also organised the celebratory reception for Hunt following his release from Lancaster Gaol after the Peterloo massacre. One reason why the committee formed was because of difficulties organising large-scale mass platform meetings in London (Belchem 1978, 756). Views on the nature of the committee varied:

Generally speaking the committee was formed of the very dregs of a sottish, filthy, debased, suburban populace... From this anomalous assemblage of

half-crazy fanatics and frothy idiots, emanated the celebrated Smithfield meeting (Brown 1823, 517).

According to the committee, they were 'formed out of the great body of the NON-REPRESENTED PEOPLE of the British Metropolis' (*MP* 7th July 1819). To advertise the meeting, a placard was distributed by the 'mischievous in the Metropolis':

We, the undersigned, being the Committee of Management appointed by the Committee of Two Hundred, to conduct the proceedings preparatory to the Public Meeting to be held in Smithfield, on Wednesday, the 21st instant, at twelve o'clock... (*MP* 15th July 1819)

Blandford was reprimanded for his involvement in distributing placards and commissioning them (*MP* 23rd August 1819). 500 copies of the placard were printed (*NM* 28th August 1819). Committed to large-scale advertisement, a sizeable crowd was generated and attracted the attention of the newspapers. The use of handbills permits insight into how a space could become charged with anticipation of a meeting prior to its occurrence.

The crowd began to grow from as early as 8am and members of the committee escorted Hunt into Smithfield at around 12:45pm (*MC* 22nd July 1819). Hunt was motioned to be chair, delivered a speech, and provided the resolutions. Joseph Harrison, a radical dissenting preacher from Stockport, delivered a speech but was arrested on the hustings. This moment could have been explosive and turned the crowd riotous but Hunt was able to control the situation and Harrison was arrested without incident (Reid 2017, 171). The Smithfield meeting passed peacefully, demonstrating successfully yet again how radicals were able to meet without violence nor having intent for insurrection. Despite this, authorities still attempted to utilise Smithfield as evidence for the illegality of Peterloo (Dolby 1820).

Authorities looked for a reason to arrest Hunt and the Smithfield resolutions skirted dangerously close to providing the evidence they sought (Lobban 1990, 336).

Smithfield was important as the climax of the alliance between the Spenceans and Hunt, with the orator managing to please the more radical attendees, the moderates, and the Manchester reformers through his oratory and crowd control.

5.5.1 MATERIAL CULTURE AND CROWDS

Prior to the meeting, the Lord Mayor proposed that Smithfield be banned as he considered it illegal, although Sidmouth disagreed (Lobban 1990, 336). The Lord Mayor was paranoid about plotting (figure 45) to the extent he swore in court 'he had received *upon oath* an account of a... project planned... nothing less than of *setting fire to the whole city of London, and murdering its inhabitants!*' (*Times* 24th July 1819). This council meeting connected Spa Fields and Smithfield. Mr Alderman Wood recollected that during his own mayoralty a bill was posted on the 2nd December 1816 to inspire people to violence but suggested, despite the Lord Mayor's evidence, Smithfield could not have been the source because whatever the author intended from his arson and murder bill, the Smithfield crowd had not contemplated violence (*MP* 24th July 1819). Wood may have been correct in his assessment; according to *The Leeds Intelligencer* (26th July 1819) a placard without any printer's name was posted in Smithfield but was torn from the walls due to its message. Placards and conspiracies such as these gave support for the authorities' understanding of radical spaces being something to fear and control. However, they also legitimised the presence of officers, constables, and soldiers at meetings and events, meaning radical landscapes began to include a military presence as part of their makeup.



Figure 45: *The Rehearsal (in the green yard) of a new farce, called fire and murder!!* (Lewis Marks 1819). This print represents the moment that a group of radicals decided to challenge the Lord Mayor over some provocative bills which had been posted. The radicals opposed suggestions they had posted the bills, instead claiming that spies and agent provocateurs such as Oliver and Castle had spread them. The Mayor is depicted as Walworth, the Mayor who killed Wat Tyler.

Before Hunt's arrival, a waggon was stationed in the north side of Smithfield to act as the hustings. Various notable figures including Dr Watson, Thistlewood, and Reverend Harrison were already present. At around 11:15am, a deputation was sent to conduct Hunt to the field. They carried 'small flags, which were furled, and covered with oil-skin – the others carried osier wands¹⁵' (JOJ 24th July 1819). Hunt arrived to great cheers and acclamations. He entered at one o'clock and passed through the crowd on horseback with no obstruction; the applause increased in

¹⁵ Archaic spelling of 'osier', a lithe willow branch often used in making baskets or furniture

volume as Hunt got closer to the waggon until it was 'most impressive' (*MO* 31st July 1819). The waggon was packed with reformers and decorated with flags and boards. The members of the committee held their staves of office (*The Times* 22nd July 1819). There were several flags present including one inscribed 'Universal Suffrage' and another 'Peace and good will' (*Examiner* 25th July 1819). To encourage the crowd to be peaceable and listen to the speakers, there were two boards that had 'Order, order' painted on them. Material culture was being used to help announce the arrival of the main speaker. It decorated the radical space and acted as a backdrop to proceedings. Through being held, they acted as an extension of the embodiment of radicalism. However, it was not merely passive nor should only be considered in this regard. Rather, flags need to be understood as an important mechanism for communicating radicalism. They were considered interesting enough to be recorded and reported, seen as evidence for radicalism or possible revolution over just reform, and even as seditious objects. Through being material, hoisted or held above, and positioned in visible places, the flags transcended audio issues, be succinct unlike the oratory, and become totemic or emblematic through using common mottos, processions, and colour. Whether their assessments on crowd size were correct or not, the point that not many would have been able to hear the speeches was correct (*DM* 29th July 1819). Material culture included individuals more than the orators in this regard, although the idea that attending the meeting purely to hear the speakers may be challenged. At Smithfield, the deliberate choice of waiting to unfurl the flags once Hunt had arrived at the field connected them to an individual and elevated the text through being associated with radical celebrity.

After the resolutions, material culture was used to dramatic effect. Two flags were purposefully not unfurled earlier on. Hunt was about to read a lengthy resolution but was prevented with shouts of 'Don't read it; print it' and therefore moved straight to the unfurling (*MO* 31st July 1819). A flag inscribed England, Scotland, Ireland with

gold letters was unfurled to cheers. Hunt described it as the union flag, although 'their enemies would that it was the bloody tri-coloured flag of the French revolution; it was no such thing, nor was it intended to convey any such meaning' (*The Times* 22nd July 1819). The second flag was 'blood' red and inscribed 'Liberty or Death'. Again, Hunt spoke about the flag, arguing it was necessary to explain the symbols as 'the contemptible reptile who would not subscribe to that sentiment, ought to live a slave, and die unlamented' (*The Times* 22nd July 1819). This outline was needed after issues with the tri-coloured flag at Spa Fields. Reformers were being reflexive over symbolism and material connotations, although these issues of communication still continued, including the notorious black flag at Peterloo. The flags helped the performance of radicalism become more dramatic whilst reaching further across the crowd. The flags became a focal point, an emblem on which the large crowd could communicate through.

Fears over crowd composition and intent are clearly evidenced in how authorities managed the Smithfield events. Authorities beat the crowd to assembling. From as early as 8am, City Officers and firemen began to take their positions (*Examiner* 25th July 1819). Many shops were closed (*MC* 22nd July 1819). Across the city of London, 'No fewer than 6000 Special Constables were sworn in the several wards' (*NFC* 24th July 1819). The Officers of the Artillery Company were ordered to be ready and the guards at the Tower of London, the Bank of England, and other public offices were doubled (*HT* 26th July 1819). The Horse and Foot guards, regular troops, and the City Police were also present or on alert (*LI* 26th July 1819). It appeared control extended beyond even the authorities, 'heads of families had strictly forbidden their servants and dependents from resorting to the place appointed' (*Statesman* 21st July 1819). Concerns were over how crowd behaviour and the meeting's purpose directly connected to the second Spa Fields meeting. If reports were accurate in their assessment of the number of officers and constables stationed, the response or

anticipation of violence, rioting, or insurrection must have been genuine and considerable. The number present at the meeting itself also shows how radical spaces were ones of tension between authorities and radicalism due to what the crowd and officers embodied. Having officers and constables stationed, whether at the meeting, on its fringes, or at assumed locations of attack, demonstrates how radical space was understood as one that could transition from order to riot or as contained riot waiting to be set off. Material culture could be viewed as seditious or inflammatory, and be the call to arms. Radicalism was feared as something uncontrollable to a single public space. It might spill out of the meeting boundaries, infect the surrounding landscape, or destroy spaces of authority.

The crowd make-up was frequently noted. It was stated, as if almost obvious, 'the assemblage consisted for the most part of the lowest class of society' (*JOJ* 24th July 1819). In order to combat fears the crowd was largely there for the cause of reform, some newspapers would attempt to establish otherwise. As well as there being successful pickpockets, the majority allegedly were:

Those who came merely from curiosity, and we think they formed the majority of the crowd, were engaged in looking out for situations where they might have that feeling gratified at the least personal inconvenience. Some of them sauntered up and down, watching for the approach of the waggon, in order to be within hearing; others placed themselves on the sheep-pens, the lamp-posts, and other eminences, where, if they could not hear, they might at least be gratified by seeing, what passed (*The Times* 22nd July 1819).

The crowd composition of the second Spa Fields meeting was also undermined; it was suggested the majority present had wandered to the fields following an execution of four criminals at the Old Bailey (*EMLR* 1816, 548). The reporting parallels between Spa Fields and Smithfield demonstrate how Hunt had not escaped the legacy of the Spenceans' actions.

Estimations of crowd size also reveal how differently the crowd was perceived, therefore impacting how it could be imagined. Some newspapers suggested that Smithfield could hold 80,000 and was likely at near capacity (*NFC* 24th July 1819; *Examiner* 25th July 1819). Unsurprisingly, the radical *Manchester Observer* (31st July 1819) argued for this, suggesting the figure of 70,000. The reform-sympathetic *Liverpool Mercury* (23rd July 1819) insisted 70,000 was a gross exaggeration with the number not exceeding more than half of this. Hunt proclaimed to the crowd that he had 50,000 witnesses present (*JOJ* 24th July 1819) and some reports agreed, arguing at the moment of dispersal there was that number present (*HT* 26th July 1819). Visual depictions show a crowd that goes into the thousands and insinuate a packed, cramped space. Not all reports gave such grandiose figures. *The Times* (22nd July 1819) estimated 10,000. The *Royal Cornwall Gazette* (31st July 1819) belittle previous estimations further stating 'The number of persons assembled on the occasion was in the first reports much exaggerated: it is now admitted that not more than 10,000 were present'. The *Globe* (21st July 1819) did not provide an exact figure but thought it was not as large as expected. It is worth considering how estimations impacted how the Smithfield radical space was imagined. Tory or anti-reform newspapers tended to limit the number present and even then, they argued the majority were present out of curiosity, and viewed crowd size estimates as exaggerated. Limiting the crowd size may have textually controlled the crowd, letting anti-reform individuals imagine support for reform was low and radical spaces were not so physically or bodily robust after all. Pro-reform or sympathetic newspapers would increase the number, possibly quite wildly, to demonstrate the number of people who support reform. The crowd size became an opportunity to demonstrate how many made the effort to attend and construct radical spaces. This cultural or media landscape of radicalism was an important filter in how the mass platform was imagined.

Building on newspaper reports, the satirical *The Contented Spital-Fields Weaver Jeremiah Nott, His Address Respecting the Smithfield Meeting* (Gilbert 1819, 3) comments:

the newspapers will tell you the next morning what the meeting consisted of... the well-paid orators, the well-fed committee men, a few hundreds of the rankest of the Radicals, all the thieves, all the beggars, all the street-walkers, and as many unthinking boys, as Radicals, thieves, beggars, and bad women, can bring in their train. Besides what will *you get* by going to the meeting, you will stand in the mud and spoil your shoes, perhaps have your pockets picked and get a bad cold, and you will lose the time in which you might earn a shilling.

This satirical take on Smithfield, and the mass platform generally, acknowledges physical realities of attending. Sensory elements such as cold, tiredness, and dirt were often not acknowledged. However, boredom is one of the emotions and sensory experiences we can access. At Smithfield, the reports suggest the crowd began to assemble at around 10am with Hunt arriving at 1pm. As seen at Spa Fields, there were long waiting times with the crowd not always knowing whether the meeting was going ahead. The gap between the crowd forming and the main portion of the meeting occurring could suggest several emotional responses: anticipation, excitement, curiosity, boredom. The long gap indicates the purpose of attending a meeting may not have been purely to hear the speakers. For those arriving early or attempting to guess the location of the hustings, the spoken element was clearly important. However, it was also about claiming space and radicalisation: it might have been about gathering with fellow radicals to converse or discuss matters with friends, momentum building as the crowd began to swell and physical space began to shrink, or about watching entertainment.

This discussion on the Smithfield crowd can be understood further if we frame it as a form of 'serendipity'. Inspired by brief comments by Richardson (1975), serendipity can help understanding on why it was difficult for authorities or commentators to find the sedition or treason they suspected. Whilst serendipity did not protect radical meetings from being mocked, satirised, or criticised, it did sometimes allow the mass platform to operate without interference or state violence. Although searching for treason, radical meetings became sites of unexpected discovery: that radicalism could be peaceful. Perhaps this was another reason why some newspapers tried to explain away the numbers attending or argue that the crowd was there out of curiosity – of course, a radical meeting would be peaceful and orderly if it was mainly made up of patriots and loyalists! The concept of serendipity may not be useful across multiple meetings but examining meetings case-by-case it highlights how the performance of radicalism and how radicals built their landscapes could create the unexpected. This is not to say that authorities were not disturbed or troubled by these events, as pointed out by Navickas (2019, 3), Smithfield was a meeting that concerned local authorities and connected to Spa Fields. Rather, the serendipity of Smithfield was located in a large gathering of people not leading to violence despite the 'inflammatory' language and resolutions.

5.5.2 VISUAL AND POETIC CULTURE



Figure 46: *Smithfield Meeting* (Anon 1819) shows how the market features in the meeting space through offering an area for seating. The men on the wagon have been labelled as Hunt, Harrison, Watson, and the committee.

The Smithfield meeting generated an array of visual culture that depicted the events. Two versions, although very similar in composition, offer a 'realistic' visualisation, providing a feeling of crowd size and how the hustings were decorated. The crowd beyond the front lines becomes anonymous, making a backdrop to the proceedings, therefore pacifying the crowd as it forbids them an overtly active role in radicalising the landscape beyond presence. This depiction had implications for how the meeting was imagined and considered. It could legitimise understandings of the crowd as being a de-individualised mass. However, there are subtle differences between the two prints on how they have characterised the crowd. *Smithfield Meeting* (figure 46) limited the variety of characters, choosing to mainly depict men in top hats.

Although the crowd is looking towards the hustings, many were not portrayed as animated or attentive. Rather, this was restricted to a small group around the hustings. *Smithfield Meeting London* (figure 47) provides a wider range of individuals in its front row and engagement extends beyond the hustings vicinity. This is partially achieved through slightly elevating the print's viewer perspective. People can be seen climbing buildings, watching from windows, and sat on the marketplace barriers. These subtleties offered different ways of conceiving the Smithfield crowd. Both prints include the viewer as part of the audience as the hustings has been turned to us, rather than the mass meeting crowd.



Figure 47: *Smithfield Meeting London* (Anon 1819; copyright Alamy). This slightly different print emphasises the scale of the crowd. It shows Hunt standing holding his white top hat whilst giving his speech.

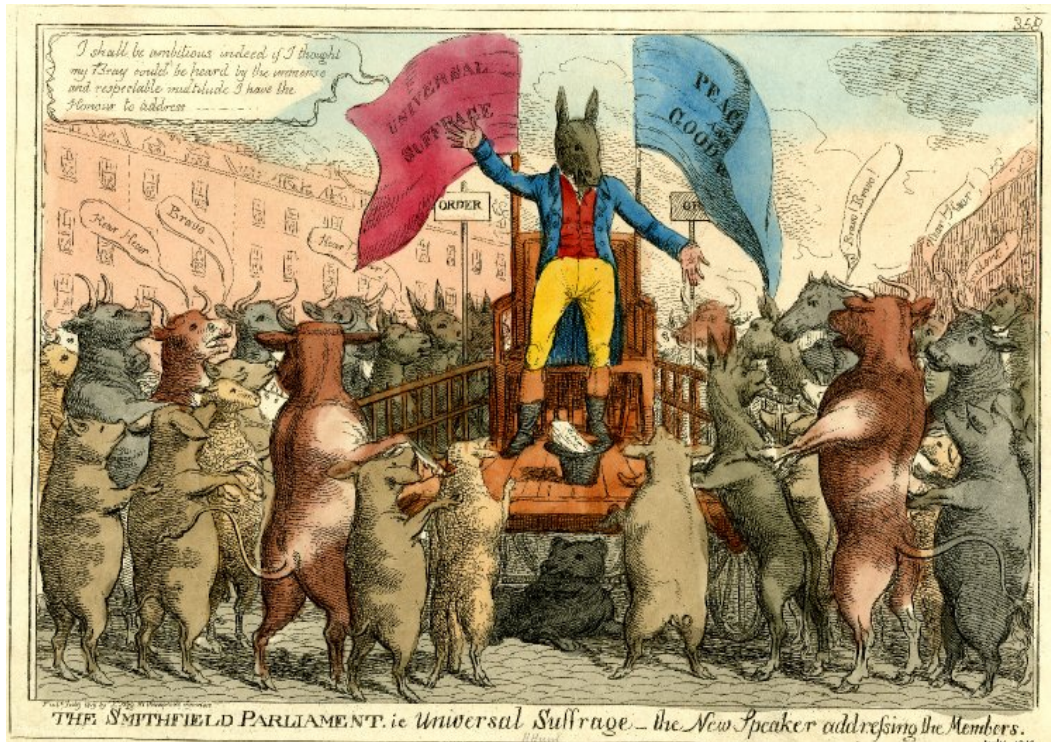


Figure 48: *The Smithfield Parliament. i.e. universal suffrage – the new speaker addressing the members (Williams 1819).* The satire still includes accurate details, including two banners.

One consistent way the Smithfield meetings were undermined was through depicting the event as a gathering of animals, thus tying the physical space and function of Smithfield to radicals and their ideas. Hunt was leading the masses to slaughter, a caricature that had a layer of tragic irony added to it a month later at Peterloo. Through illustrating the crowd as asses, pigs, sheep, and cows, a two-way assessment was being made: the crowd were a herd or a 'swinish multitude' and only an ass would preach to animals (figure 48). In *Fanatical Reformists* (figure 49), the crowd has also been depicted as cattle and pigs who all tilt their heads upwards to earnestly listen. However, it leaves Hunt as the only human present, although he does straddle an anthropomorphised donkey, with this combining perhaps to allude to *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*, only on a much less heroic level. Anthropomorphising animals or creatures by adding human heads was an established visual trope. The ass has the head of Cobbett and five other reformers. One possibility for the five

reformers is they were meant to depict the Spenceans Thistlewood, Preston, and Watson, Reverend Joseph Harrison, and Charles Wolseley (who was meant to be in attendance). Connecting an individual to a donkey can be seen in *The Tables Are Turned* (Cruikshank 1809), *To the Rt. Worshipful John Smoak* (Cruikshank 1819c), and *More than Expected or too many for Boney!* (Holland 1803). With all of these, as well as *Fanatical Reformists*, there are individuals riding the human-faced donkey, meaning the satirical implication is that the rider is making an ass of that person. *Fanatical Reformists* was therefore ridiculing the relationship between Hunt and fellow reformers through the function of Smithfield market, connecting the physical space and the imagined landscape.



Figure 49: Fanatical Reformists. Or the Smithfield Assembly of New Legislators. (Williams 1819).

The meeting generated several poetic responses. These include very quick responses that must be based on early reports:

Farewell *Twenty-One*, it shall ne'er be forgot,
Till each frantic spouter for ever is still,
That you saw to Smithfield *Hunt's Cattle* all trot,
And that you were the day of O'DONNELLY's *mill*. (MP 23rd July 1819)

HUNT saw, joy sparkling in his eyes,
The long-expected morn arise
When it was destined that his name
Should *grace* once more the lists of *Fame*.
To Smithfield straight he bent his way,
Regardless what the world might say;
At least those few, with better *feelings*,
With whom our Hero had *no dealings*. (MP 23rd July 1819).

Deciding to write a poem about radical events shows the newspaper coverage was producing a cultural and imagined landscape of radicalism. The first poem plays with the idea of Smithfield being a market, calling the crowd 'cattle' whilst the second poem identifies Hunt's ego and desire for glory (see chapter seven). Poems became the site of a counter-protest in which Loyalists, Tories, or conservatives rebuke, belittle, or undermine radicals. Rather than taking to the streets themselves, they take to the media and produce textual events or spaces. Conservatives were constructing their narrative outside of physicality, instead 'loyalising' the cultural and media landscapes. These poems cannot be dismissed as purely an individual perspective on the meetings as they were published and received a wide dissemination. Combined with visual satire, conservatives and loyalists were able to propagate their understandings, even if it only largely reinforced perspectives.

5.5.3 LEGACIES AND FUTURES

The Smithfield meeting occurred at the same site as the Peasant's Revolt of 1381.

This was not lost on those attending. Hunt declared in the opening speech:

You are... on the scene of Wat Tyler's action, and I beg of you to believe me when I say, that if I should ever be my lot to receive the same provocation, I shall be ready to put myself, as Wat Tyler did, at the head of the people.

(TEFP 29th July 1819)

This legacy of the Peasant's Revolt was also extended into print culture through poems which were derogatory towards the meeting and Hunt. A poem that attacked Hunt's involvement in reform, included the lines:

Scum of the earth, all scorn beneath,
Modern *Wat Tyler* and *Jack Cade*;
Thou art too low for Satire's Breath,
Or even *the pillory* to degrade. (MP 12th August 1819)

This poem utilised large periods of time or historical narrative that undermined Hunt and the reform cause through insinuating that they cannot reach the heights of the Magna Carta or were part of a story of repeated failure. Despite mockery, the connection between Smithfield and Tyler continued to be strong throughout the nineteenth century; Chartist branches were named after Tyler, an alternative tourist trail of radical London included Smithfield, and the motif of Tyler killing the poll-tax collector became popular on banners (Taylor 2005, 87). Connections to other meetings were also made. Hunt's procession into Smithfield was very similar to his entry at Spa Fields (*Sun* 21st July 1819). Therefore, meetings were connected to historical legacies, but also cultural memories of mass platform were emerging in which Regency radicalism had constructed and the press helped to maintain.

After Peterloo, another meeting was held in Smithfield on the 25th August, although it was meant to be at Kennington Common (*CM* 26th August 1819). Authorities were

concerned, opting to heavily police the event with 150 police, 500 East India Company guard, and 500 special constables (*Examiner* 29th August 1819). The gathering crowd was unsure whether the meeting was going ahead nor where the hustings were but were alerted to its commencement through ‘a grand procession of flags’ (*MP* 26th August 1819). A large waggon was used, which was decorated with an assortment of flags and board. Inscriptions on the flags included, ‘Universal Suffrage’, ‘Liberty or Death’, and the tri-coloured flag, ‘England, Ireland, and Scotland’ (Bloomer 1819), with there being a suggestion these were the same flags witnessed at the previous Smithfield meeting. This seems to be confirmed by other reports who noted that ‘liberty and Death’ was on a red flag (*MC* 26th August 1819), therefore matching the one Hunt unfurled. Utilising the same pieces of material culture reveals the hidden process of curation. It is uncertain where the flags were kept but there were efforts to retain and curate at least two flags. This allowed there to be spatial and material continuity. The meeting’s identity was enhanced by becoming part of a series of events rather than a standalone. Materiality permitted the weaving of a narrative and the flags became imbued with radical identity. Likewise, flags were instrumental in transforming Smithfield from marketplace to meeting, permeating those present with the declaration of radicalism, therefore contributing to identity construction. This can almost be viewed as a symbiotic relationship in which it is difficult to pull apart the meeting and material culture. Indeed, this might not even be the way to view or analyse the mass platform. Rather, the material culture has become so embedded in meeting-making and radical landscapes, it is not possible to understand them separately.

These ideas can be seen in future meetings as Smithfield continued to be utilised as a radical site. A meeting to discuss the tragedy of Peterloo was called for the 25th August 1819 and was advertised with placards which referenced ‘England Expects Every Man to do His Duty (HO/42/192/316) – whether it was to reference Nelson,

Spa Fields, or both, is up to interpretation¹⁶. Another meeting was held in December. A new flag adorned the hustings waggon:

It was a red flag, the device three hands linked with the following inscription

Cripplegate Union

This Union shall live when tyrants are dead;

This Union, so firm, fills them with dread;

This Union's so friendly it joins hand and heart,

No dungeons nor axes this Union shall part. (*MP* 9th December 1819)

Smithfield continued to be a site of reform activity across the nineteenth century (for examples see (*CO* 27th November 1858; *WA* 19th May 1877). Therefore, Smithfield became much more permanent in its radicalism compared to Spa Fields. Its longevity, reuse, and continuity allowed it to become a radical site rather than only a radical space. By this, I argue many radical meetings happened over a long enough period of time that the space and landscape transcended temporal limitations and boundaries to become a site: a place to visit, to return, to connect with. Through returning to Smithfield, generations of radicals were instrumental in making Smithfield not only a market but a radical site.

5.6 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter explored the landscapes, spaces, and material culture of three major events in radicalism. It captured how radicals and reformers constructed their meetings through space, place, and materiality, whilst also understanding how this connected to their own radical identities. No claims have been made to ascertain exactly what happened at these meetings nor determine the exact accuracy of the

¹⁶ A tri-coloured flag was present at a Newcastle reform meeting following Peterloo which also included the 'England expects' phrase on it (*MO* 23 October 1819). This could also be an allusion to Spa Fields but may also indicate how reformers could use patriotic or loyalist language and events.

reports. Rather, the chapter focused on the intersections between what was reported, what was depicted, and what was imagined. It is this tension between text, materiality, and conception that produced the radical landscape, arguably for radicals and loyalists alike. Through looking at multiple perspectives on the same event, it has been possible to build a multi-layered, nuanced analysis that accounts for how different identities impact perception.

Whilst events can be temporarily bound through only happening for a few hours, this chapter highlighted how the event can transcend and continue to exist through being imagined and remembered. One way is through the meeting – or riot – being associated or attached to a radical individual. Spa Fields and Spenceans became entwined. Bagguley's Blanketeers threatened not only the Manchester landscape but the national, therefore offering a temporal disturbance through not containing the protest to a single day. The Lord Mayor was haunted by Smithfield. Visual culture allowed the event to escape its temporal boundaries but also its physical and spatial ones. It created a separate landscape – the imagined radical space – permitting people to attend the event, imagine what they wanted to perceive radicalism as, and build their own political identities.

Whilst this chapter has not attempted to produce a narrative of how the mass platform evolved, there are some cursory conclusions that can be drawn. Alongside confirming the established argument that the mass platform gained prominence and importance as a method of agitation, it appears radicals were learning how to perform and construct radical landscapes and spaces with this developing into more sophisticated performances and processions over the years. The primary evidence for this is the increased usage of material culture, especially banners and flags. Watson charging the crowd away from Spa Fields understood the symbolic or totemic power of the flag, the Blanketeers recognised the power of the petition, and

Smithfield showed how prominent flags had become in performing radicalism and building radical spaces. Future research should focus on conducting a detailed survey and analysis of these years and explore how our understandings of the adoption of the mass platform can be further enhanced by incorporating an archaeological approach that understands the power of radical materiality.

Although future research would need to be conducted to support this conclusion, flags and banners were largely being used for their textual transmission as opposed to the importance being on the materiality themselves. Of course, there are numerous examples of reformers defending their flag or banner and radicals were undoubtedly attached to these objects. However, in the context of a meeting and how they were used, the emphasis was more on the motto and the text. Flags and banners were able to textually transmit a distilled message with these words radiating into the space to help make it radical. Reports often focused on the text rather than the colour and decoration. Flags, in this time period at least, appear more often to contain only text over text and imagery and only having imagery. They utilised common and recognisable phrases that were part of a radical lexicon and tradition. Furthermore, it is arguably words that completed the radicalisation of these objects. The silk, satin, and cambric used to create banners, flags, and liberty caps always held the potential to become a political emblem but when a radical stitched radical words, human and material agency potently combined. Churches, militaries, Loyalists, and more, all used flags and banners, processing with them, using them as backdrops, and curating them. The difference between establishment material culture and radical material culture was and is the text inscribed upon the fabric. The material culture of flags and banners often gained or were imbued with their radicalism through the process of stitching or painting text on them. This was a moment of transformation for the cloth, silk, or cambric, allowing it to become the materiality that would radiate radicalism into public spaces and project the message

of reform. Banners, flags, and liberty caps were material agents in constructing radical landscapes. Even though we can only imagine it, the charge of Young Watson carrying a flag is still highly evocative.

6 'THE MANIA OF AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION': FEMALE REFORMERS AND CRAFTING LIBERTY

One important development in 1819 was the emergence of female reform societies. These collectives of women formed groups to discuss radical politics and contribute to the reform movement. The first formed in Blackburn in June 1819 by a group of women chaired by Alice Kitchen, paving the way for numerous others, particularly in the north of England, with there being clear links to industrialisation. Women participated in creating a vibrant radical culture through marching and processing at mass platform meetings and crafting material culture, particularly liberty caps. This chapter explores these societies and the lived experiences of female reformers through analysing their meetings, performances, and material culture.

All four of the thesis' major themes are apparent in this chapter, especially gender, bodies, and clothing. Important subthemes within this chapter include the tension between society's gender norms and being a female reformer, the use of liberty caps and performance, and the domestication of language. The chapter operates within a feminist framework, recognising patriarchal forces worked against female reformers from both loyalists and fellow radicals. Interesting observations are also possible regarding regulations of behaviour from disapproving women, particularly related to processing, but also through the media response which created the printed event. In order to situate the analysis in this patriarchal context, section 6.1 provides an overview of various societies and religious groups and the role of women within these. Section 6.2 addresses how feminist thought in contemporary research has navigated the complicated intricacies of female reformers' identities whilst also advocating for a methodology that recognises the positionality of the researcher. The Blackburn Female Reform Society warrants its own case study in section 6.3 through being the first female reform society to speak at a public meeting.

Throughout the following analysis, the body features through studying prints and documentary sources, demonstrating the potential of the multi-source approach. How the body is depicted, the role of clothing and liberty caps, and the idea of the collective body all feature through investigating numerous mass platform meetings and prints. Several important themes are discussed in section 6.3. The analysis utilises the framework of female masculinity to understand the tension and conflict between how female reformers and the press understood their gender, domesticity, and morality. Another important theme, particularly examined in section 6.4, is the domestic. This is in relation to language, identity, and space. Women were involved in the crafting and creative processes of radical material culture and were the primary makers of liberty caps. Section 6.5 recognises this crucial role as a form of craftivism, exploring how and who was making radical material culture. Scales of both sources and analysis is a key part of this chapter. As is outlined below, this approach is adopted due to its ability to provide a rounded view that contextualises without entering the remit of generalisations.

Part of the analysis examines how female reformers were 'othering' themselves through not performing to expected standards of femininity and womanhood, meaning an 'other' femininity emerged. This links to deviance, which has often been associated with sexuality more than gender (see Rocke 1996 and Peakman 2009). However, the framework of deviancy, in that an individual or collective deviate from the accepted norm, is useful in relation to female reformers. Whilst this thesis has no evidence or readings of transgenderism, third genders, or queer persons, it does attempt to shift away from simplistic positions regarding men and women, by not reducing them to being monolithic, universal, and stable (Beasley 2008). Rather, it is important to think pluralistically, to recognise the multiplicity of experience. Furthermore, section 6.2 recognises and explores the role of the researcher in performing analysis. As a queer person, this research fits into wider debates in queer

history surrounding the shift from 'effective history' (were there queer people in the past?) to 'affective history' (what is our relationship as researcher with figures in the past?) (Freccero 2005). Through this queerness, how the archaeology is constructed is affected, producing an analysis more interested in fluidity and variation in gendered experiences. Parts of the analysis will focus on group gender, both experienced and perceived, in order to add another scale to the individual.

It is also worth considering how queerness can be used in relation to analysing events. The study of events should not be limited only to the time in which it took place. Rather, it is important to consider how people responded to and imagined events. Events are not singular experiences but link to other activities and experiences, enabling an investigation into local landscapes and networks of communication. Crucially, and especially in relation to imagined events, there is the event of print or media. Therefore, this chapter deals with several scales of analysis, shifting in-between these layers in an attempt to explore events from different perspectives. Queer theory advocates for a fluid understanding of power in which it is expressed and lived as social categories through exchanges between agents, situational, and performed, with this happening under a dominant individual/group/structure (Carr, Hagai, and Zurbriggen 2017). This can be transferred if 'power' is replaced with events because it recognises agency of individuals, the fragmentary nature of lived experiences, and acknowledges the role of wider social structures and categories whilst not having to necessarily focus on them. The thematic approach applies to various types of documentary and visual sources, allowing the interweaving of source types and interdisciplinary thought. The scalar approach permits a focus on the events themselves rather than commenting on social structures at large.

6.1 CONTEXT

Female reform societies were part of a lively working-class culture. In order to situate the following analysis, it is worth providing the context in which female reform societies were formed. The following section provides an overview of ideas on why societies formed and considers the influence of friendly societies, trade unionism, the role of dissenting religions, the impact of industrialisation, and domesticity and gendered spaces. These demonstrate how women in the early nineteenth century were involved with various organisations and public performances, displays, and occasions. It highlights female agency and the connection between domestic and political identities during this period.

Crucially, I do not aim to provide definitive reasons why societies emerged when they did nor attempts to construct an overarching narrative of female involvement in radical movements. Various reasons have been postulated already, Mather (2014) suggests the societies permitted opportunities for women to discuss feminine reasons for reform and feminine experiences of industry and poverty. Poole (2019, 237) connects the emergence of the societies to a growing sense of political confidence and consciousness in women, noting in 1818 that women had begun voting informally at meetings. Many of the counties, especially Lancashire, where female reform societies formed were contentious places politically due to their strong Loyalist traditions and histories (O’Gorman 2014; Navickas 2009a; 2014), meaning their existence may have proved to be problematic locally, regionally, and nationally.

Across northern England, there were many male and female friendly societies. It is difficult to ascertain the number of societies and members due to the disparate nature of the records and how national society records survived better than regional and local society accounts (Jones 1984, 325). Furthermore, friendly societies

demonstrated variety in their structure and scale as well as whether they were affiliated to a trade or religious institution (Weinbren 2006a, 320), with this contributing further to difficulties of estimation. However, the societies were particularly strong in industrial areas (Cordery 2003, 16), with places of heavy manufacturing and mining industry, such as Lancashire and Cornwall, having concentrated membership (Gorsky 1998). Prom (2000, 21) estimated between 8-9% of the total English and Welsh population were members of a friendly society in 1815. Local conditions could be influential; the radicalism and industrialisation of Stockport meant it had an above average membership of 11-16% of its population (Glen 1984, 109). Membership was predominantly men, but there is evidence for female friendly societies. Industrial areas and places with higher female employment, especially northern textile towns, had a higher proportion of women members (Gorsky 1998, 497). Estimates on 1803 indicate around 5% of the membership were women, with this number declining to less than 1% in 1872 (Clark 1995, 35). Although difficult to detangle, it appears industrialisation combined with domestic economies allowed female friendly societies to flourish in Lancashire in the early nineteenth century (Lord 1997). There likely was a connection between economic independence and participating in radicalism.

The decline in female friendly societies might be explained by the concurrent trade union movement. Chase (2000) has postulated that female friendly societies became branches of the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union. In the context of the nineteenth century, Cordery (2003, 44) claimed, 'The salient feature of friendly societies... is their virtual indistinguishability from trade unions', although it is worth remembering there were distinctions and friendly societies as well as trade unionism cannot be considered purely as 'new and particular organisations' (Weinbren and James 2005, 88). The idea of female friendly societies being more politically active is also a possibility. Bohstedt (1988, 98-9) suggests in a survey of 1803 data, two thirds

of the 9,000 female friendly society members lived in towns which had riots, with the female societies possibly acting as a place of 'cohesion'. Elsewhere, there is evidence that friendly societies acted as a way for radicals to learn organisational methods and how to structure their own societies and how friendly societies could conceal political agitation (Thompson 1968, 182). Glen (1984) emphasises that despite the lack of radical views regarding politics in friendly societies, there already existed the practice of organising meetings. Within northern textile industries, where women were more valued in the labour force and radicalism was constructed around community and neighbourhood rather than the workshop or pub seen in London, the reform movement incorporated women much earlier than elsewhere (Clark 1995), although there is the caveat that these ideals and understandings were not uniformly dispersed (Navickas 2016). Rusnock and Dietz (2012) studied female friendly societies and their rules between 1780-1830, highlighting how domestic duties of women were factored into rules regarding how and when benefits would be received by a member. The rules considered childbirth and how marital status could influence money given out. This consideration of the domestic has clear parallels with female reformers who discussed the household, family, and domesticity in speeches and published addresses. Female friendly societies, therefore, help demonstrate how women in the early nineteenth century were aware of how political, domestic, and economic spheres interacted.

Regardless of how distinguishable friendly societies and early trade unions were, both organisations utilised ritual and material culture. Ritual was an important facet, engendering collective identities. Compared to female reform societies, secrecy played a larger role but there are still connections between material culture and performance. Feast days were the main way the societies would make their performances public. The Ashford Female Friendly Society wore blue sashes and paraded around the village with regalia and a band alongside the male society

before feasting (Lord 1997, 110). Banners were an important material expression for friendly societies and trade unions. Weinbren (2006b) argues friendly society banners reminded people of military banners whilst fostering a sense of fraternal order. The material culture of friendly societies, trade unions, and female reform societies therefore overlap in some aspects. Reformers, whether male or female, were participating in wider material culture that recognised the importance of highly visible materiality in banners, flags, and clothing and how these could be used in public performance.

The tradition of dissenting religions in the northwest may have been involved, especially as women were permitted to preach in some Methodist churches (Mather 2014). South Lancashire was a strong area for Methodism due to 'Anglican parochial weakness' (Hempton 1984, 15). Although possible to overstate the influence of Methodism and its connections to radicalism, it can be suggested that, 'Methodism advanced when Radicalism advanced and not when it grew weaker' (Hobsbawm 2010 [1965], 32) and Methodist chapel communities influenced the structure of Hampden Clubs (White 1957, 33-34). Countering this, Methodism was not monolithic. Wesleyan Methodism was much more conservative whilst being typically opposed to radicalism to the extent Halévy (1961) argued Wesleyans prevented revolution in England. Stigant (1971) explored the developing tension and ideological conflict between Wesleyan Methodism and radicalism, with it becoming most fraught in the 1815-1821 period. Despite this clash, other denominations and groups of Methodists were pro-reform and proponents of radicalism, with there being an evident connection between the thriving and active radicalism of Lancashire and Methodism.

Links between Dissent and Radicalism were ingrained in the conservative and public imagination, with female preachers being deemed disorderly and threatening (Lloyd

2009). Arguably, ‘as bearers of cultural values and transmitters of class attitudes, women constituted a formidable force capable of massive reformist efforts’ (Valenze 1985, 9), making women at pulpits a disrupting force. Dissenting religions, including Unitarianism, were often involved in radicalism. The established or Loyalist standpoint emphasised the unstable and threatening politics attached to Dissenters (Andrews 2003). In combination with the French Revolution, the growth of dissent and non-conformism made some concerned that irreligion and atheism were increasing (Field 2012, 716) and charges of infidelity were made against radicals (figure 50). Loyalists viewed their theological standpoints as built on scripture whereas, in the Loyalist perspective, Christian radicals derived their viewpoints from opinion (Denney 2012, 55).



Figure 50: *Death or Liberty! or Britannia and the Virtues of the Constitution in danger..!* (Cruikshank 1819d). Lyon’s (1999, 52) discussion of this print highlights how the imps of ‘immorality’ and ‘blasphemy’ are charging towards Britannia who is defending herself against the rock of religion.

Christian radicalism was apparent across Britain but it reached its heaviest concentrations in the industrial and economically distressed regions of Lancashire and Yorkshire (Lyon 1999, 4). Joseph Harrison, a leading Lancashire reformist and preacher, was influential in the Stockport area. Harrison's Christian faith and radicalism combined becoming a strong influence on the Stockport Union and its Sunday School where they advanced the idea, 'Let all Sunday school supporters, and teachers be determined Reformers' (HO/42/181 fol. 191). Stockport was an important town for the development of female reform societies and there were close ties between Harrison and female reformers. Utilising religious language was another way Christianity was involved in radicalism. Female reformers operated in a complex religious landscape and were influenced by dissenting Christianity, especially Methodism.

Domesticity and the home featured in speeches, but it is important to recognise the industrial and urban nature that both underpins and constructs radicalism in this period. By 1808 in Lancashire, it is estimated that women and children made up at least half of the weaving workforce, with the Napoleonic Wars cementing this (Benenson 1993), although there may have been more children than women (Morgan 1992). Although not possible to ascertain many of the female reformers' occupations, they operated within a highly industrialised and urbanised space and their husbands could well have been factory or mill workers.

6.2 CHALLENGING CONTEMPORARY FEMINISM

One interesting aspect of female reformers is how contemporary feminists have grappled with their gendered performances and their relationship to male reformers. Anna Clark (1995) suggested that through adherence to patriarchal structures, radicalism failed. This section seeks to challenge such opinions that perhaps struggle with the female reformer's decision to create themselves as

mother, wife, and daughter. Ruth Mather (2014, 64) has already started this dialogue, suggesting 'We too should recognise the importance of the shape-shifting women of Lancashire in the public performances of radicalism during these crucial years', although it is necessary to extend this into Yorkshire and Glasgow. Katrina Navickas (2016) noted modern historians have struggled to understand the language and performances of female reformers due to its link to the domestic. In a narrower critique, Paul Custer (2007) challenges Clark's and Epstein's ideas that women had to shape their political speeches and ideals to suit the distinction between the public and private/the political and the domestic due to the audience being comprised of men and women with political understanding and astuteness. However, these approaches have not gone far enough in recognising the researcher in the construction of gendered histories and how contemporary feminism can hinder itself as well as being a powerful, political tool. Of course, feminist history is by no means universal in its meaning nor only deals with gender (McGrath 2014) but feminist influence is implicit in the aforementioned studies. Reflexivity and positionality are vital considerations in relation to gender studies due to the feeling of intimacy and familiarity which is often combined with the political position of feminism/s. This can involve casting oneself into a position of self-reflexivity rather than taking it for granted (Styhre and Tienari 2013) and being aware of the process of meaning making through research (Kulkarni 2017). A lot of literature on being self-reflexive presumes that there is someone being interviewed or surveyed (Stapele 2014). Of course, historical archaeology does not have that opportunity, except in relation to indigenous communities with oral history traditions. History and archaeology have explored reflexivity to a certain extent in relation to decolonisation (Thapar 2005), with some consideration of the challenges of studying a 'familiar' past (Tarlow and West 1999), although not truly grappling with positionality. Combining these factors together, the need for transparency in studying gendered (and political) historical archaeology becomes apparent. Crucially, the process of reflection becomes an

event in of itself, contributing to the thesis' wider efforts. Feminist history – and archaeology – should be performative in nature and practice (Canning 2001). In the reality of research, it is not an overtly continuous process, rather it is a series of events.

The current state of approaches to female reformers has been outlined, and the importance of being reflexive has been demonstrated. Therefore, this next section explores my own position in relation to studying a gendered and political past. Reflexive processes should not be confined to one area but should permeate throughout. Perhaps my attraction to studying female reformers emerges from my own gender. As a masculine woman, who can be othered in contemporary society, there is a feeling of connection, whether illusory or not, between researcher and researched. Whilst some proponents of historical and archaeological study would argue that it is necessary to sever this link as much as possible to produce a critical distance (Bevir 1999; Boldt 2014), doing so would cut the important connection created through research. It also links to older feminist history that would actively declare why the history was being done in relation to the researcher's interests and emotions (Kelly 1984; Lerner 1979). Although this section is not autoethnography, it could perhaps come under the same criticism of being self-indulgent or even narcissistic (see Stahlke Wall 2016), centring research on the researcher rather than the researched. However, this would be a mistaken charge since research is driven by self-interest even when cloaked in 'objectivity'. Instead, this chapter contributes to the vital and powerful construction of 'other' pasts, and through this the researcher is involved in queer discourse. Importantly, involving the queer self does not have to only be related to the study of sex and sexuality or 'the origins of homosexuality' (Blackmore 2011) nor does it have to be at odds with feminism due to its anti-essentialism (Perry and Joyce 2001). As explored by Love (2009), queer history/archaeology can be, indeed should be about navigating the 'dark side' of the

past, recognising the power of loss, grief, and wounds. This emphasis on feeling connection with the past as loss and attempting to study social, cultural, or emotional upheaval, resonates greatly. The very experience or performances of queerness requires the process of looking into the self, with this also acknowledging 'a preference for being 'othered'' (Mankes 2005, 194). As explored by Dowson (2000), there can be pressure on LGBTQ academics to be 'hidden' and to separate sexuality from archaeology. This recognition, in relation to myself where academic and personal lives are not constituted as being distinct spheres and how queerness necessitates inwardness, permits the questioning of how the analysis is shaped. Simply put, does the analysis conceive of female reformers as deviant, othered, or masculine because of my own experiences? And then, does this matter?

Within all of this research, my identity is closely interwoven to the extent that it affects interpretation and presentation. Since this section criticises the use of feminism, it is important to be transparent in my own work. This is by no means to state that feminism has no place in historiography as my own feminism (combined with gender and sexuality) drives an interest in gendered experience of radicalism and landscape. As outlined by Damousi (2014,190), 'feminist history at its best has not remained a passive or static body of knowledge, but continues to be reformulated and reconceptualised'. Whilst feminist histories and archaeologies have undoubtedly produced valuable insights (Snook 2011; Gilchrist 1999; Nelson 2007; Spencer-Wood 2011), it can be utilised without an awareness of the self and how the search for agency-filled women could be deemed a self-fulfilling prophecy. Of course, this is not to say that feminist historians and archaeologists have not engaged with this (see Anderson 2000; Curthoys 1988) or female agency in the past (Broude and Garrard 2005; Malhotra 2013; Thomas 2016) but in relation to the study of gender in political movements of the late eighteenth century, it has been absent. Furthermore, it is problematic to discuss the idea of feminist history as this implicitly

suggests a discipline or approach that is monolithic in meaning and ontology. There needs to be a consideration of feminisms. As Haralovich and Rabinovicz (1999, 1) state, 'Feminism has never been unified'. The issue in analysing literature that focused on female reformers and its feminisms is the lack of transparent positionality or the author did not think it valuable to include an account of their own feminism.

In order to counter these issues, it is important to provide an overview of my feminism. Whilst there have been tensions between second wave feminism and queer theory, I feel able to reconcile the two in a similar way to Marinucci (2010) through recognising overlaps and uniting their aims. This is possible through rejecting essentialist understandings of gender and sexuality, with my understandings being staunchly in the social constructionist camp. Furthermore, I reject concepts of post-feminism, which suggests society is in the position to achieve equality between genders already and since there is freedom of choice (especially consumer choice), we are able to choose our way to equality (as opposed to this being capitalist driven quasi-feminism). I seek to perform and experience a queer feminism that focuses on political power rather than purchasing power as evidenced in popular and post-feminism (Martin 2016). Despite better visibility and representation in museums, heritage, and academic study, these efforts can consign struggle and the fight to the past, resulting in understandings of history and archaeology that are post-feminist and post-queer, as seen in other media (McNicholas and Tyler 2017). Rather, by developing and living a queer feminism, I utilise criticality and harness the political potential and performance of being queer. Through undertaking this research, my queer feminism aims to recognise how contemporary struggles can find resonance and solace in past fights. Whether this is a direct continuation or not is unimportant, what is crucial is producing an

archaeology that is relevant and hopefully in some capacity able to make a political contribution to contemporary society.

Another issue is the struggle to accept or be comfortable with how female reformers were performing. This is particularly pertinent to the analysis of language and speeches, but is apparent in the absence of understanding material culture as being more than a prop. The exception is Mather (2018) who explored the boycotting of various taxed goods and the domestic space. Whilst my feminism and queerness have produced an interest in researching female reformers, it does not mean they have to be held to contemporary standards or expectations. Crucially, despite the early nineteenth century being patriarchal, it is a mistake to view it as static or having direct continuity with present day patriarchy. Therefore, the researcher is central to driving the study and whilst it can be difficult, or impossible, to separate the contemporary self from the past, efforts can be made to not construct female reformers as early feminists.

6.3 'READ! READ! READ! THE WOMEN FOR-EVER!': THE FOUNDING OF THE BLACKBURN FEMALE REFORM SOCIETY

The first platform meeting of female reformers happened in Blackburn at a general meeting in the pursuit of reform on the 5th July 1819. It was chaired by John Knight (*LG*, 10th July 1819), a prominent radical from Manchester who was present and arrested at Peterloo. The women 'appeared at the entrance of the ground and were desirous of approaching the hustings' (*YH*, 17th July 1819). The chairman asked the crowd to part and the female reformers entered to rapturous applause. Crucially, the women sought to gift a piece of material culture:

The Ladies then stepping forward towards the Chairman, one of them, with becoming diffidence and respect, presented him with a most beautiful Cap of

Liberty, made of scarlet silk or satin, lined with green, with a serpentine gold lace, terminating with a rich gold tassel. (*MC*, 13th July 1819).

The gift was accepted upon Alice Kitchen's, the Chairwoman of the female reformers, short speech:

Will you, kind Sir, accept this token of our respect to those brave men who are nobly struggling for liberty and life? By placing it on the head of your banner, you will confer a lasting obligation on the Female Reformers of Blackburn.

It was promptly hoisted onto the banner pole amidst great applause. The chairman held the female reformer's address and the crowd encouraged him to read it by shouting, 'Read, read, read, - the Women for ever!' (*JOJ*, 17th July 1819). Part of the address was:

In presenting this Cap of Liberty, which we trust no ruffian bandetti will be allowed to wrest from your hands... We, the female reformers of Blackburn, therefore earnestly entreat you and every man in England, in the most solemn manner, to come forward and join the great union (*BD*, 14th July 1819).

At the end of meeting resolutions, a vote of thanks was unanimously passed in favour of the female reformers (*NM*, 17th July 1819). The meeting was the first indication that female reformers were utilising established radical behaviour and material culture. Through adopting the emblematic symbol of the liberty cap as the gift, female reformers were publicly announcing themselves with a bold statement.

The issue of who was first to be founded needs addressing. Women had been involved in reform prior to the founding of societies, including being present at a meeting in Saddleworth in 1818. A pamphlet written by Elizabeth Salt, as well as four

other women¹⁷, circulated in Manchester. The pamphlet advocated for the founding of a union designed to help support women and children who were affected by male relatives who were imprisoned for reform (HO/42/181/13-17). Poole (2019, 238) highlights a toast given to the 'brave female reformers of Stockport' at a dinner at Sandy Brow on the 15th February 1819. Women had been active in the Stockport Union through participating in the Union Sunday School, a society founded by the dissenting radical Reverend Harrison. However, being toasted and having a distinct society are two distinct entities. Bagguley wrote to the Stockport female reformers from Chester prison encouraging them to participate in the reform movement (HO 42/188) but the letter was not addressed to a society. *The Times* (26th July 1819) suggested 'the hopeful example of Blackburn could not possibly be lost upon Stockport; so a Female Club has been formed there also'. Blackburn women, and presumably reform supporting women elsewhere, also had prior to the formation of the societies, Blackburn female reformers had 'already come forward with the avowed determination of instilling into our offspring a deep-rooted abhorrence of tyranny' (MO 10th July 1819) prior to their first public meeting. The Stockport Female Society officially formed on the 1st July 1819. It is unknown what exact date the Blackburn society formed, although their attendance, alongside the performance and gift of material culture at a public meeting on the 5th July, suggests it could be before Stockport. Furthermore, there are reports on the Blackburn society which predate their public meeting (PLDA 1st July 1819) and circulations of their society rules (*Sun* 30th June 1819). The press seemed to think Blackburn was first resulting in this society being the most attacked and demonised. Perhaps the most revealing evidence is a letter from Mary Hallam, secretary of the Female Union Society of Stockport, to the *Manchester Observer* (17th July 1819), in which Hallam states:

¹⁷ The other women were Elizabeth Powell, Elizabeth Kennedy, Elizabeth Walker and Mary Holden.

It is a very rare thing now a days for Stockport to be second in any thing that relates to Reform, but we here must acknowledge that Blackburn has in this instance taken lead of us, and we must beat in second. At our first meeting on Thursday the 1st instant, at eight o'clock in the evening, 36 females entered the lists, and were formed into classes pursuant to the rules of the male Union.

Whether Blackburn or Stockport was the first society formed, the more important aspect is this shows evidence of communication and network across Lancashire. It also shows women were building momentum over 1819 that resulted in the formation of the societies. The temporal closeness in the formation dates indicates that Lancashire women were mobilising at the same time and had decided societies were the best way of contributing to radicalism.



Figure 51: *The Belle Alliance, or the Female Reformers of Blackburn!!!* (Cruikshank 1819b). George Cruikshank's depiction of the female reformers is highly derogatory. Despite his reformist politics, Cruikshank observed the gendered norms of early nineteenth century British society and produced this hyper-grotesque print.

The Blackburn female reformers produced national controversy with their formation provoking a media and visual response. Cruikshank's print (figure 51) deserves discussion. The women were depicted in grotesque fashion, viewed as overstepping their gendered positions, 'the presentation of the liberty cap was accompanied by a short emphatic speech delivered by Mrs. Kitchen!!! [emphasis original]'. By being involved in oratory and rhetoric, female reformers were transgressing traditional male boundaries of performance. Sexual deviancy was suggested through placing the liberty cap upon the pole between a male reformer's legs, whilst the leader of the women states, 'will you accept this token of our love and by placing it on your ~~pole~~ Banner [deletion original]'. The use of the word 'pole', plus the positioning of both banner and male reformer, have phallic connotations. In the bottom left corner of the print, the figures link to the female reformers' rhetoric of teaching children to support reform and the importance of women in achieving this. The children are depicted as disfigured Jacobins, with some even proudly producing daggers. Liberty, in a less than flattering form, wears yellow, brandishing fire and a dagger on the middle left of the cartoon; she is directly linked to the violent undertones of her phrase 'Liberty or Death'. Daggers are clearly violent pieces of material culture that link to revolutionary aims, with similar use of daggers being found in prints including *The Radical's Arms* (Cruikshank 1819e) and *A Democrat – or – Reason & Philosophy* (Gillray 1793). Cruikshank's print highlights several key themes and issues surrounding female reformers, including disgust or horror at women transgressing gender boundaries, questioning of their moral character, and questioning the relationship between woman reformer, family, and offspring. Importantly, it demonstrates class tensions and fear of working-classes performing violent revolution. The crude depiction of working-class reform movements attempts to undermine through mockery, but anxieties surrounding the possibilities of class turmoil is all too evident.



Figure 52: The Prince of Whales or the Fisherman at Anchor (Cruikshank 1812). The Prince Regent was often caricatured as portly or fat, with these depictions emphasising his indulgent, greedy nature.

Cruikshank's print permits access to the body. The female body is depicted grotesquely, particularly through fatness. In a wider cultural setting, the late eighteenth/early nineteenth-centuries were crucial in 'the acceleration of the anti-fat sentiment' (Forth 2012, 217). Arguably, the stereotyping or disgust behind fat is particularly modern as is the idea that outwards or bodily appearance, especially fatness, can provide social cues about character and personhood (Stearns 1997). This print is an example of what Taylor (2017) highlights as caricature that serves political conservatism (or perhaps established norms in this case) rather than resistance or radicalism, because of its attempts to degrade women through the body. Using fat bodies to satirise can capture various derogatory aspects. The women's bodies become excessive, demonstrate the inability to control oneself, being sexually immoral or loose, and being impolite. Perhaps the utilisation of fat as the main form of mockery links to fears of women taking up too much space in political arenas and overstepping their gender boundaries. Fatness linked to excess in other cartoons of the period, especially in relation to the Prince Regent and Queen Caroline (figure 52), therefore utilising a recognisable trope. Whilst male bodies were also shown as grotesque, it is in a lighter way, their bodies being more comparable to normative

ones. This absence of fat occurs in two ways: normative bodies or emaciated/deathly bodies. Despite being reviled individuals in the conservative press, John Thelwall, John Wilkes, Tom Paine, and Hunt were not fattened in their depictions or satire. For example, a recurring theme within prints depicting the French Revolution or Napoleon, was the unhealthy thinness of the radicals. Thomas Rowlandson's *Reform Advised, Reform Begun, Reform Complete* (figure 53) contrasts the plump British with the skeletal French. Of course, there were examples where male reformers were depicted as fat, but this is usually in a crowd setting and is less about commenting on individuals or a society and more about producing a crowd scene. Therefore, female reformers were disparaged through fatness as a specific slur against their gender performance, excessive involvement in politics, and presumed sexual immorality.

Cruikshank deploys fatness elsewhere as a way of suggesting that women were sexually depraved. In *The New Union Club, Being a Representation of what took place at a celebrated Dinner (1819f), given by a celebrated – society*, a black woman is sat on an abolitionist's lap. Her race and fatness combine to emphasise the racist trope that black women were promiscuous. In other prints, where fatness is deployed to emphasise promiscuity or looseness, the women have large breasts which are almost popping out of the dress. Depicting the female reformers as fat satirically demonstrated how they were taking up too much space in the political sphere, had grown excessive in their pursuit for reform, and were unfeminine. Caricaturing fat as a feminine characteristic and women performing masculine roles combine to produce a female masculinity.



Figure 53: Reform Advised, Reform Begun, Reform Compleat (Rowlandson 1793). Fatness and thinness were utilised as a way of showing how values and ideologies could be embodied.

Space and hierarchy linked to bodies and gender as well. Women occupy the hustings whilst men watch on, subverting usual practice. The grotesqueness of the women is, therefore, not only evident through their bodies, but in their spatial occupation, with this being particularly highlighted by a woman pushed onto the stage from behind. Crucially, there are some men on the stage, performing the roles of chairman and committee. Their bodies are largely normative, but their faces are depraved. The balance between women on one side and men on the other was broken through material culture. The banner pole and liberty cap create a phallic symbol linked to sexual deviancy. Overall, the depiction of women as fat worked as an explicit trope that emphasised excess and unwarranted domination of space.

Perhaps one reason why such a reaction occurred was the fact that Blackburn female reformers were performing the first meeting of its type, which provided a template for the behaviour of other female reformers. One aim of the society was to encourage other societies to be formed (*Examiner* 4th July 1819). It was recommended in a Nottingham meeting that 'female societies be adopted on the plan of the Blackburn Female Reform Society' (*Examiner* 25th July 1819). A society was formed in the West of England, citing that the 'flame of liberty from the North has reached the West' (*MO* 17th July 1819). At the meeting when Stockport Female Reform Society was founded, Miss Whalley addressed the group requesting 'I could wish us to have a cap of liberty, and present it at the next public meeting, as our sisters at Blackburn did at theirs' (*Observer* 8th August 1819). Thus, the plan, performance, and material culture of the Blackburn society were adopted.

Liberty caps became an important feature. At a meeting of the Rochdale Society of Female Reformers, they presented a liberty cap to the chairman, and at the end of the meeting it was processed from the meeting to music (unfortunately, no note was made of the music nor where the cap headed) (*MO*, 31st July 1819). Following in the

same vein as Blackburn, the Galston female reformers placed a 'splendid' liberty cap upon the head of the chairman, donated a flag inscribed 'Annual Parliaments, Universal Suffrage, Election by Ballot' and on its reverse, 'Rise, Britons, and assert your rights', and delivered a speech (*RCG* 6th November 1819). A meeting in Paisley had five liberty caps gifted to five speakers by the female reformers of Paisley, Johnston, Millerston, Bilbarchan, and Eldersli (*SNL* 9th November 1819). Gifted liberty caps featured in Glasgow (*LSC* 13th November 1819), Huddersfield (*MO* 20th November 1819), Hull (*MA* 25th October 1819), Knaresborough (*MM* 21st December 1819), Leigh (*Globe* 25th November 1819), and Wigan (*Globe* 12th November 1819). The Leigh female reformers seemed particularly enthusiastic about using liberty caps, gifting one for their inaugural meeting and members on the hustings each took it in turns to wear it (*HO/42/191/41*). Whether there were extras or not, they followed the same format as Blackburn's first meeting as well as established radical nomenclature. It is evident throughout most female reformer meetings, especially the first at Blackburn, the importance of gifting material culture. This was usually a specially made liberty cap given to the chairperson (although usually a chairman, women were the chairs of single-gender meetings and sometimes mixed gender meetings).

It is interesting to speculate as to why liberty caps were the most frequently chosen gifts. Symbolically, the liberty cap connected to the feminine personification of Liberty. Practically, liberty caps did not require as much material as banners or flags. Liberty caps were a gift size suitable to be gifted to an individual too, whilst a banner or flag would have been suitable for a larger group. However, there is some evidence to suggest liberty caps were recognised as being associated with, or connected to, female reformers. As shall be argued, this is likely due to the links between female reformers and the female personification of Liberty, although of course liberty caps were not exclusive to women with a popular inscription being 'Hunt and Liberty'

(Dolby 1820, 209). Cobbett (*CPR* 23rd October 1819), in a defence of the liberty cap being used as a gift, draws upon the example of how it featured on the half penny on the tip of Britannia's spear, highlighting how pre-1793 conceptions connected the liberty cap to women. The Blackburn reformers were able to begin a connection between liberty caps and female reform. The feminine nature of the cap of liberty – and the success of the symbolism – was apparent through how other reformers would communicate messages about women on them through embroidery. For example, at Peterloo, a cap was witnessed with the inscription 'to the success of the female reformers' made by reformers from Stockport (Barr 1820, 37). Through choosing a symbol associated with allegorical female figures, the female reformers harnessed a potent emblem that materially radicalised spaces and performed feminine radicalism.

The Blackburn female reformers visited other nearby towns to spread the message. On the 17th July 1819, they went to Ancoats, Manchester. They visited the Manchester Female Reformers at the Union Rooms, George-Leigh-Street (*CC* 23rd July 1819). Importantly, other female reform societies also encouraged societies to be formed. The Stockport Female Reformers sent a delegate to a reform meeting in Macclesfield 'to impress upon you the necessity of forming a similar union in this town' (*Observer*, 8th August 1819). The rapid formation of societies following the establishment of one in Blackburn (Manchester, Stockport, and Oldham all followed within a month), not only indicates how these landscapes and events were connected but highlights the enthusiasm of women in reform. There was a similar wave following Peterloo with societies established in Galston, Glasgow, Leeds, Huddersfield, Nottingham, and Northampton in August and September 1819. These movements, travelling, and waves of founding societies suggest a supportive network between female societies, and likely male reform societies, in which the effort to appear in person was valued. Furthermore, female societies were

corresponding with each other, to other reformers, and to non-radicals through print. This suggests passion behind the politics, with the effort and money of travel being deemed important and valuable. As well as this, it fits into wider radical efforts of travel in which male radicals would visit neighbouring towns and cities, with more well-known or leading radicals travelling nationally. The Blackburn female reformers constructed a network of women through established radical means of meetings, societies, material culture, and media.

Female reformers claimed or appropriated spaces for the purposes of parliamentary reform, however, network building also utilised print culture and documents, therefore occupying the public space of the published text. Numerous addresses from several different female reform societies appear in *Cobbett's Political Register*, and the societies often wrote to Henry Hunt, especially when he was in prison. One particular address, *Dear Sisters of the Earth*, written by Susanna Saxton, secretary of the Manchester female reformers, was originally published in the *Manchester Observer* (31st July 1819) but due to its topic on encouraging middle and upper-class women to join, ended up being nationally distributed. It was published in at least 8 newspapers including papers in London (*Sun* 4th August 1819) and Dublin (*DWR* 14th August 1819). As well as these communications with prominent male radicals and newspapers, female reformers evidently distributed circulars and other ephemeral forms of text. It was highlighted that 'a circular has been distributed to other districts' (*LI* 5th July 1819) with the purpose to invite 'wives and daughters of the workmen of different branches of manufacture to form themselves into similar association' (*BNP* 7th July 1819). Through distributing a call for further societies to be formed, the Blackburn female reformers influenced and operated within a network communication.

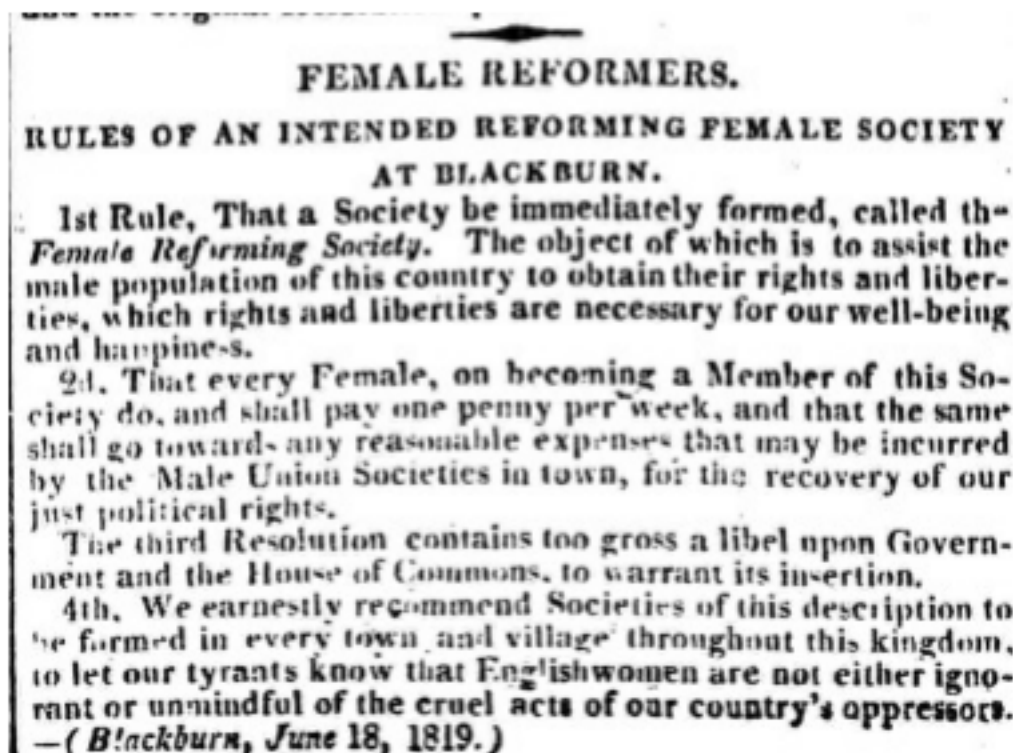


Figure 54: The rules for the Blackburn Female Reform Society (MP 1st July 1819). The third resolution presumably was about 'instilling' into their children the need for reform and 'hatred of tyrants' (CJ 3rd July 1819).

The meeting was a template that could be performed again and again by political women. Blackburn provided a blueprint through utilising established rituals and crafting recognisable material culture from the radical and political lexicon. This meeting was replicated across the north of England by women seeking to create a radical network. The Blackburn female reformers continued using this template too, gifting a liberty cap to a chairman at their second meeting (YH 17th July 1819). As highlighted above, this ritual followed established rituals and nomenclature within radicalism. However, the female reformers' public performances and societies placed a feminine twist on materiality. Female reformers closely associated themselves with the household and domesticity, especially motherhood, and connected themselves to their ideal of family. This was particularly apparent within the rules and aims of the societies (figures 54 and 55). Both Blackburn and Stockport

sought to ‘instil into the minds of their children an unalterable hostility to the borough mongering faction, but also to stimulate their husbands and sons to the same determination’ (*Observer* 8th August 1819). Blackburn female reformers, through being the first to take the public stage, received an onslaught of criticism. Despite this, their first public meeting became instrumental in how female reformers nationwide performed, engaged with, and crafted radicalism. Whilst conservatives saw the female reformers as failing in their femininity, fellow radical women saw inspiration in how they could perform their womanhood in the public arena.

FEMALE REFORMERS.

Female Union Society, established at Stockport.—Declaration and Rules of the Female Union Society of Stockport, from which we extract the following Resolutions, viz.:—

1. That the members shall be classed, with twelve members in each class, who shall select a leader or collector from amongst themselves every fourteen weeks; also, to her collector *one penny*, for the purpose of assisting our male friends in obtaining their object.

2. That a committee of twelve be appointed, one out of each section of the general Union, to manage the affairs of the society, six to go out of office every six weeks.

3. We collectively and individually pledge ourselves to instil into the minds of our children a thorough knowledge of their natural and inalienable rights, whereby they shall be able to form just and correct notions of those legalised banditti of plunderers, who rob their parents of more than half a produce of their labour; we also pledge ourselves to stimulate our husbands, and sons, to imitate the ancient Romans in their courage, who fought to a man in defence of their liberty, and our daughters and female friends to imitate the Spanish woman, who, when their husbands, sons, and other kindred, had gone out to fight in defence of their freedom, would rather have heard of the death of any of them, than their deserting the standard of liberty, and who rather rejoiced if any of their kindred fell bravely defending the bulwarks of their freedom.

4. We solicit communication with every institution of the kind in Great Britain, as it is by a general correspondence that a national union of sentiment can be formed.

5th and last. All communications to be addressed to Mrs. J. Hallam, Union Rooms, Union-place, Stockport.

We have already stated that a similar society was a few weeks ago established at Blackburn.

Figure 55: The rules of Stockport Female Reform Society (LG 31st July 1819). The language is similar to speeches made by the Blackburn Female Reformers, for example, ‘instil into the minds of our children’, perhaps suggesting that these words resonated with the Stockport women.



Figure 56: Location of female reform societies mentioned in the chapter. There is a clear clustering of societies in the north, especially in industrialised areas.

Female reform societies concentrated in the north of England and the Glasgow region (figure 56). The south of England – even London – was quiet regarding the emergence of societies and the unorganised participation of women. This silence was even remarked upon in the House of Commons (*LI* 6th December 1819). The strength of female reform societies in Lancashire was evident in their response to the release of Hunt and the Peterloo prisoners in late August 1819. Released from Lancaster Gaol, Hunt paraded through the county over two days. The Blackburn female reformers gifted their liberty cap which was present at Peterloo (*Peterloo Massacre* 1819, 73). Women and children lined the road between Blackburn and Bolton cheering Hunt along (*MC* 11th September 1819). The Bolton female reformers asked to handpull Hunt’s coach, who refused at first but then relented (*MC* 2nd September 1819). Female and male reformers shared the handpulling for the last 12 miles to Manchester (*CM* 4th September 1819). Hunt also received a triumphant street procession and dinner at the *Crown and Anchor* for his arrival in London on 13th September. Organised by the Spenceans including Dr Watson and Thistlewood, it boldly claimed the London landscape through music, dress, and banners but it was overtly masculine (figure 57). There was one coach of women – the report does not call them reformers or radicals – (*Globe* 14th September 1819) and ‘Ladies’ were seen to be waving from windows (*MP* 14th September 1819) but again, the report does not directly associate them with reform. This event did involve women, but was one of the few to do so nor to the extent of Lancashire’s celebratory efforts. Compared to Lancashire, the prominence of women radicals was muted in public meetings and processions. This difference in approach to celebration between Lancashire and London emphasises how female reform was attached to a regional identity. The rapid urbanisation, the importance of industrialisation, the landscapes of Lancashire, and the very spirit of the female reformers were all factors in this stark divide between the active north and Scotland with the silent south.

Horsemen.
Footmen, bearing a bundle of sticks, the emblem of Unity.
Horsemen.
Six Irish Footmen, bearing a Green Flag, with the inscription, "Universal, Civil, and Religious Liberty."
Horsemen.
Footmen, bearing a Flag of Mourning—Inscription, "To the immortal Memory of the Reformers * * * at Manchester."
Horsemen.
Footmen bearing a Flag—Inscription, "The Palladium of Liberty—Freedom of the Press."
Carriages for Gentlemen connected with the Press.
Horsemen.
Footmen, bearing a Red Flag—Inscription, "Universal Suffrage."
A Landau, containing Mr. HUNT, preceded by a Flag, with this inscription, "The heroic Champion of Liberty," and surrounded by six Horsemen, and Members of the Committee.
Carriages and Footmen.
A Landau, with Watson, Thistlewood, and Preston, and their Friends.
Flag—"Trial by Jury."
Horsemen and Footmen.
Flag—"Liberty or Death."
Carriages, Horsemen, and Footmen.
Flag—"England, Scotland, and Ireland."
Closed by Horsemen, Carriages, and Footmen.

Figure 57: List of the order of the procession for Hunt's entry into London (MA 14th September 1819).

6.4 'SENTIMENTS SUBVERSIVE OF ALL ORDER AND GOOD': FE/MALE REFORMERS

Thus far, this chapter has focused on gender and performance of radicalism by female reformers, especially in Blackburn. To better understand the gendered experience of female reformers, the analysis utilises the framework of female masculinity. This permits the study of both femininity and masculinity but crucially, where they intersect. Within eighteenth century studies, masculinity has been largely understudied, resulting in a gender history skewed towards femininity (French and Rothery 2012). Crucially, these viewpoints, despite contributing valuable scholarship, reduce masculinity/men/maleness to being ahistorical, static, or even

genderless. Although there have been explorations into masculine bodies that cover a diverse range of topics, usually in relation to the body as representation, they have resulted in a disconnection between representation, embodiment, and experience (Begiato 2016). It is important to utilise the idea of 'embodiment' because although gender is performative, it is also a lived experience (Harvey 2015). As outlined by McCormack (2016, 101), 'Histories of embodiment promise to re-ground the history of masculinity in the material, the physical, and the personal'. Importantly, masculinity is not just linked to men/males, rather there must be a consideration of 'female masculinity' and an understanding of how masculinity can be performed and embodied by women. The concept of female masculinity is useful. Female reformers were viewed as transgressing their gender and sex. In a similar way, 'butch' lesbians are often accused of 'trying to be like men' (Nguyen 2008), highlighting continued contemporary difficulties with blurred gender boundaries. Thus far in archaeology, the idea of female masculinity has been largely unconsidered and where possibilities of such a gender identity being in the archaeological record, it is usually interpreted as transgenderism (see Weismantel 2013).

From the outset, it must be recognised female masculinity should not be placed on a spectrum which opposes it with female femininity nor reduced to the female performance of male masculinity (Halberstam 1998). Masculinity is not only located, performed, or sited within the male body, whether biological or constructed (Noble 2004). Additionally, nonconformity signals either a rejection or challenge not only to established gender structures and hierarchies but to the rules, regulations, and expectations that uphold these (Martin 2003). Furthermore, it is an interpretation intimately related to the researcher, with perhaps either the interpretation or insight being constructed from the self. It is therefore a methodological endeavour as the debate about separating the researcher from researched is not always considered or as apparent in archaeology due to time depth. It is also worth noting that compared

to sociological and anthropological work on female masculinity, it is not possible in this analysis to consider 'labels', 'types', or 'subject positions', especially as this interpretation is not generated from the self-identification of female reformers. Utilising this construct of female masculinity, it may be possible to move away from depicting women as being two dimensional. Within literature of the period, women were often depicted in a way that flattened their character through repetition (Wells 2017), and a similar phenomenon can seep into archaeological studies of group identity and gender where depth and fullness are not articulated or inaccessible.

In the late eighteenth century to Regency period, fears and anxieties emerged in response to the possibilities of revolution of the state and to revolution of the self. The body is an important physical element in female reformer's performance; therefore, it is necessary to highlight how the body in this period could be a contested site. In relation to these changes, Wilson (2012) suggests medical discourse in the early 1800s put an end to sensibility as a virtue, instead becoming the 'nervous body'. This change in pathological understanding contributed to ideas that women were equated with the domestic (Showalter 1987). Attempts were made at distinguishing the sexes further to react against the feminine involvement in the public sphere (Colley 2005). Importantly, it was not limited to women in reform or radical circles, it included women's involvement in Loyalist or Patriotic events and spectacles. For example, Admiral Nelson was a particularly celebrated individual, with women buying sentimentalised consumer goods and souvenirs depicting him, and extravagant outpourings of grief following his death at Trafalgar (Williams 2005). Earlier in this chapter, the coverage and commentary on female reformers bodies was evaluated. Post-Napoleonic Wars, the idealised masculine body transitioned between eighteenth century poise and grace to muscular, rugged, and solid (Begiato 2016), meaning that by extension, the male political body also needed to fulfil these

criteria. Overall, society had complex understandings of the gendered body, with both the standard for the ideal femininity and masculinity changing.

Intimately bound with femininity and conceptions of womanhood was domesticity. This domestic ideology was not adopted by the working-classes until the 1840s as economic precarity prevented men from being sole earners (Clark 1995). This has been typically characterised as the separate spheres model, the most famous proponents being Davidoff and Hall (2002). They argue that gender and gendered roles are intrinsic to middle class identity. Whilst not static, and at times contradictory, the middle class understanding of gender over time become more and more entwined with domesticity. These spheres of public, private, and domestic were not contained or stable. Rather, they were subject to change, manipulation, and abuse. The spheres existed both as structures of society and ideologies to be peddled. Gleadle (2009) suggested women's engagement with politics was consistently deemed problematic, meaning we need to understand that nineteenth century public life was narrow minded in scope and admittance. Multiple publics existed, and distinctions between men and women – as well as the defining traits of the sexes – were untidy and tangled (Davidoff 1995). Ideologies and morality were bound up into the conceptions and idealisations of the domestic. Domesticity and respectability were entwined especially in the home which could symbolise a moral sanctuary (Mather 2018, 76). With the home as bastion, being seen to abandon it was viewed as threatening and failing in femininity.

Whether we agree with the separate sphere model or not, as perhaps it was only the projection of an idealised ideology as opposed to social reality (Vickery 1993), the important part is female reformers were held to this ideal. The interplay and collision between the female reformers and newspapers below reveals this tension between working and middle classes. Newspaper arguments were based on the

ideal and held female reformers to a standard purposefully raised too high for women to reach. The attacks – detailed below – on female reformers ‘cleaned up’ the untidiness of society’s gendered structures, creating an ideal which was used as the springboard to begin a smear campaign against female reformers.

6.4.1 *‘SINCE OUR DEBBY HAS TURNED SPEECHMAKER, THE CHILDREN ARE ALL IN RAGS’:
PERFORMANCE AND THE DOMESTICATED RADICALISED*

Domesticity and family were important concerns not only of the female reformers but of the onlooking press. The home, motherhood, and morality of female reformers was judged, dissected, and ridiculed by newspapers who were alarmed and disgusted by women engaging in politics. This section explores how female reformers conceived of themselves, how they viewed the intersection of their domestic and political identities, and the ways they expressed this identity. It examines the commentary and criticism of those outside radicalism through analysing newspaper reports. Located between the insider (female reformer) and outsider (newspaper) conceptions is a new identity: female masculinity. As female reformers forged new ways of expressing their femininity, the newspapers saw them as failing in womanhood and entering spaces meant for the masculine. Combining in uncomfortable, disjointed, and fraught ways, this understanding emerges from queering female reformers, demonstrating how multiple identities existed at once.

Female reformers’ choice of language has been the subject of both historical and contemporary debate. Much of it fits the radical rhetoric style of the time but relates to the domestic, family sphere. Clark (1995) and Custer (2007) consider this a mechanism to reduce or avoid criticism, calling it unoriginal and modest, arguing through this choice, observers would be neutralised, and female reformers would remain secondary to their male counterparts. This idea has numerous flaws. Crucially, it undermines female reformers by attempting to excuse their language choice, and even more pivotally, was a ploy which undoubtedly failed as criticism

and attack went unchecked. Even if it were the initial idea, its continued use would suppose an ineptness or lack of awareness on the part of the female reformers. Expanded to the choice of liberty caps, which attracted sustained criticism, the argument weakens further again. Within contemporary feminist and historical analyses, there is uneasiness on the female reformer's use of domestic language and framing themselves within gendered understandings, rather than feminist challengers to gendered norms. Therefore, this analysis rebukes the aforementioned, instead attaching itself onto the work of Mather (2014) whose intricate study highlights how these societies provided means of distributing feminine reasons for reform and political concerns. Rather than viewing the discussion of the domestic as something to be excused, it should be recognised as the active choice of female agents. The use of the domestic was key to the female reformer. Female reformers did not disconnect domesticity and radicalism. Inherently entwined, they were important cornerstones of feminine identity for female reformers.

Female reformers shaped their public addresses and language around the home and domesticity. In a letter celebrating the founding of the Blackburn society, a female reformer from Ashton, states, "And why should not we, (if nature formed us for helpmates), follow up to nature's plan, and exert the talents we possess in aiding the men in their laudable endeavours for redress of the grievances of which we complain?' (*MO* 17th July 1819). The Female Reformers of Wolverhampton stated that 'we... toil from sun-rise to sun-set... in order to procure a trifle towards the support... of our dear children' (*MO* 20th November 1819). As well as language, we can see this within the performative elements of meetings and protests. At a meeting in Ruglin, just outside of Glasgow, women carried their teapots, snuff boxes, and whiskey measures to the bridge. Upon the shout of 'FIRE, the women threw all of these objects into the river to support the boycotting of taxable goods Hunt and

other reformers argued for post-Peterloo (*MO* 30 October 1819). With public press and meetings, domesticity was not only a core part of the female reformer, it was also a fundamental aspect to the feminine aspect of female masculinity.

Religious references were used alongside the language of domesticity, utilising scripture, and a Christian identity. In an open letter, The Manchester Female Reformers stated Jesus Christ 'was the greatest reformer of them all' (*MO* 31st July 1819). This idea of Christ the reformer was not without parallel. In a Barnsley meeting, 12th July 1819, Mr Brayshaw of the Freethinking Christians proclaimed, 'Jesus, the founder of our system, was one of the greatest reformers that ever appeared on earth!' (*TEFP* 22nd July 1819). The Peterloo Medal, a cast bronze medal that depicts the yeomanry trampling and maiming reformers, has Psalm 37:14, 'The wicked draw the sword and bend the bow to bring down the poor and needy, to slay those whose ways are upright', inscribed upon its reverse (BM/M.5625). Through suggesting this bold theological position, female reformers were part of a wider dissenting and radical tradition that associated Christianity with reform. Reverend Harrison, a dissenting minister from Stockport, spoke at the Blackburn meeting (*Examiner* 19th July 1819). Another example comes from James Smethhurst, a Methodist preacher, who spoke at the Leigh hustings alongside female reformers (*MP* 14th August 1819). This religious expression was different in its methods to Evangelicalism which also pursued reform. Evangelicalism typically limited reform to the self/individual, prison, and abolition. It was far removed from the established church's interpretations of the bible. Combining these, female reformers threatened established Anglicanism and made the church concerned that reform would diminish their dominion. Whilst reformers advanced arguments for reform through religious language, conservative opponents would not make specific theological arguments, but condemn in general terms through invoking Christian principles.

Female reformers understood and projected themselves using history, myth, and ideals. The Stockport society rules stated they would 'stimulate' male relatives to imitate Romans whilst women would be encouraged to imitate Spartan women (*WEE* 18th July 1819), preferring to hear of their husbands and sons dying rather than 'deserting the *standard of liberty*' (*Manchester Observer* 17th July 1819). Male radicals also utilised this language. In a meeting in at Leigh, 11th August 1819, the chairman praised the female reformers as they emulated "the sublime example of the ladies of Greece and Rome" (*Manchester Chronicle* 14th August 1819). A poem in praise of female reformers calls them 'pastora':

Thy image, dear *Pastora*, fires my soul;
O, where's the witching spell thou beauteous dame!
That dost my senses drown, my heart control,
And yields me victim of a *latent flame*?

Thou preaches sacred freedom, but thine eyes
Make slaves where'er are shed their vivid rays;
For heav'n born liberty aloud she cries,
Yet locks in chains, all those who on her gaze.

J. Ogden, Oldham, 7th August 1820 (*MO* 12th August 1820)

Pastora dubs the female reformer a shepherdess. This same meaning can be seen in other pastoral poems of the period, including *The Arcadian Lovers* by Reverend Richard Hole (*Blackwood's Magazine* 1819, 531). The poem contrasts the liberty the shepherdess fights for with how she enslaves those who look upon her. Beauty, therefore the body, becomes the defining feature of female reformers, distracting male reformers from the cause. Whilst this poem was written in support and published in a radical newspaper, sexist tensions underpin the verse. Conservatives

paint the female reformers as failing in their femininity; Ogden writes them as succeeding in it too well.

Within the reform movement, there were an array of responses on female reformers or women being involved in reform, with these showing that male reformers could contribute to either sustaining or challenging the patriarchy too. There was support for women's involvement in reform, the *Black Dwarf* encouraged women to pursue independence to the extent of promoting female suffrage (9th September 1818) and was vocal in its response to the Blackburn female reform first meeting, praising the women's "very *manly* language" (14th July 1819), with this combination of male and female characteristics producing effective oratory. The *Manchester Observer* were consistent supporters of female reformers, in one edition it listed many rights women do have which were being infringed (*MO* 27th November 1819). At a meeting in Finsbury, London, Dr Watson used the address of the Blackburn female reformers as a way of arguing that there was never an improper time to claim rights (*MA* 2nd November 1819). John Knight, the chairman of the first meeting the Blackburn female reformers, addressed the inhabitants of Wigan, emphasising that Wigan needed to finally participate in reform as in other parts of Lancashire, female reform societies had been founded (*SPR* 7th August 1819, 214). In press and in public meetings, male reformers were supporting female reform societies. Through this support, the political sphere was not being conceived of as only being masculine, therefore adding extra weight to the feminine half of female masculinity.

Leading radicals also demonstrated support. William Cobbett referred to female reformers as 'my admired Countrywomen', noting that they 'needed no defender' despite how female reformers have been 'represented as masculine termagants' (*CPR* 29th December 1819). Cobbett's discussion highlights how reformers were very aware of how female reformers were being characterised, especially in relation to

gender. In a plan discussing the promotion of sobriety and frugality, Cobbett addresses women reformers, highlighting that 'your [the wives] power over the men is far greater than their power over you' and how women need to set the example in spending, eating, and drinking habits (*CPR* 22nd January 1820). At dinners held to celebrate Cobbett's return from America, a toast in Liverpool was made to 'the heroines of our age and country' (*MO* 4th December 1819) and in London a toast was made to 'The myriads of Female Reformers in the United Kingdom' and was drunk three times (*MO* 11th December 1819), showing that those around Cobbett also supported female reformers.

Samuel Bamford supported women's involvement. For example:

I went to one house & the W of the house said 'thou shall sane no more pappers' to her husband... For I really think if the Woman would advocate the cause it would prosper, for when there is a piticoat government they have great influence & can bias there husband almost to anything. Therefore I beg when there is a vote put as a question in future that women will put up there hands... (*HO/42/177 fol.320*).

Poole (2019, 160) suggests, based on the above account of a speech by Bamford, that the reformer thought 'women could be a domestic drag on male reformers'. This characterisation is unfair; Bamford appears disappointed that the woman rejected the petition and he understands the political power of women (if they can prevent petitions being signed, imagine what can happen if women directed political attention to having them signed). This attitude can be seen elsewhere too. Upon being held at Coldbath Fields Prison in April 1817, Bamford wrote a personal letter to his wife, Jemima, encouraging her to remember 'a Reformers Wife ought to be a heroine' and to stay steadfast (*HO/42/163/365*). Bamford again called for the involvement of women in voting at future meetings (see *HO/42/178 fol.320*). Bamford, therefore, demonstrates that this support was not limited to expressions

of support in the press or at mass meetings. Male reformers also communicated support through smaller indoor meetings and personal correspondence.

John Bagguley, who was a leading figure in the Blanket March, also discussed women's involvement in politics. Bagguley's attitude shows the complexity of assessing male reformers' perspectives on women's contributions to reform, showing tension between traditionalist or domestic understandings and more radical ones. Both Poole (2019, 160) and Custer (2007, 148) have highlighted how Bagguley asked the Blanketeers whether they were able to 'leave your wives and families under all the circumstances' in order to claim their rights (HO/42/164/138), with Custer arguing that Bagguley posited women as a bar to the process of reform and Poole suggesting it was there as a warning. Whilst these readings are possible, I would argue Bagguley uses women, family, and home, as well as the current poverty they were experiencing, as a rhetorical device of riling up the crowd and highlighting the sacrifices they would have to make. Bagguley notes there will be "difficulties", including the weather, and prior to his asking whether potential marchers could leave their families, he gets the crowd to hold their heads high. Therefore, Bagguley is not viewing women as a bar to reform – he sees them as a reason to fight for it – and whilst it could be read as a warning to be ready, it is framed as a sacrifice. In a later letter, Bagguley addresses the Stockport female reformers during his imprisonment at Chester Castle, stating that their role needed to be 'rational companions to their husbands' and educating the children. Navickas (2016, 264) argues this shows a traditionalist attitude, highlighting that Bagguley was unmarried and had not received bolder responses that married radicals had, like Bamford and Knight, from radical-minded wives. However, in this same letter, a point Navickas does not include, Bagguley also writes, 'let us see female Newtons, and female Locks, and female Hampdens' (HO 42/188/138), with this thinking showing Bagguley's desire for women's involvement in reform but also their power in

education. Bagguley was not relegating women to domestic duties and education, he viewed their contributions – and I think we can read intelligence – as being valuable.

Alongside looking at radical figureheads or reform leaders, support for female reform can be found in less well-known male reformers. At a meeting in Barnsley, a cap of liberty was presented by female reformers and at the conclusion of their address – read by the chairman Mr Mason – a vote of thanks was passed, with Mason noting “that since the females joined their ranks, he had not the least doubt but they would at last reap the fruits of their labour” (*MO* 20th November 1819). Proposed resolutions at a meeting in Nottingham included expressing pleasure in Blackburn female reformers joining the cause and hopes for a similar society in Nottingham (*SPR* 24th July 1819, 182). Therefore, as women entered the mass platform meeting, the established rituals of a vote of thanks and resolutions were utilised to welcome female reformers. Overall, how male reformers understood and supported female reformers is varied, showing how radicalism was not united in this period. However, it appears that the majority of male reformers welcome women being involved in pursuing reform. Domesticity, education, and the home featured in their support, whilst there was also a recognition of the historical examples of women procuring change. To many male reformers then, female reformers were performing an important and legitimate feminine role through engaging with radicalism.

Female reformers faced challenges regarding their active participation in politics, provoking attempts at regulating their behaviour to societal norms. Direct attempts to prevent female reformers from participating were made through interacting in person. Interestingly, this could include other women who reportedly viewed female reformer’s processing with disgust (*L1* 1819). At Peterloo, whilst Oldham female reformers processed, non-reformer women shouted, ‘Go home to your families and

leave matters like these to your husbands' (*RCG* 28th August 1819), demonstrating internalised misogyny. There were various levels of regulation in operation, which likely influenced the performance and creation of feminine radical spaces. National attacks occur through publications, with this wide scale distribution enforcing gendered understandings onto the radical women. Print culture supported patriarchal standards; their mass readership contributed to continued oppression and regulation of women. For example, women present at Peterloo were victim-blamed for attending (*RCG* 11th September 1819), with Bush (2005, 2) noting, 'female reformers had to be taught that, if they behaved like men, they would be treated as such'. Effectively, female reformers were deemed to be acting unnaturally regarding their gender and position, meaning their morality or sanity was questionable. A brief article explored historical incidents where women previously 'interfered', arguing it displayed 'little confidence in the wisdom or courage of the male population' (*HP* 1819). Historical precedent became a weapon on why excluding women from political spaces was necessary. There was a complex relationship between female reformers entering and performing in public and physical spaces and landscapes of radicalism and print culture, the media, and conservative ideals of domesticity and femininity. Print culture created media landscapes and permitted its readership to imagine the events of female reform. Conservative coverage of female reform was always from outside. Not once did it understand the women's purpose or philosophy. Nor did it comprehend their femininity, holding the women to a different standard to the one female reformers created for themselves. These examples demonstrate how events are scalar, with female reformers transcending the initial Lancashire landscapes into the imagined and critical national print. These attacks on women were noted by male reformers. Attacks on the Blackburn female reformers were considered 'degrading epithets', especially cast by the 'turncoat old wizard': the editor of the *Manchester Chronicle* (*MO* 17th July 1819). William Fitton, who was chairman at the Rochdale meeting on

the 26th July 1819, wrote to the *Manchester Observer* (7th August 1819) to complain about the *London Courier's* report which contained falsehoods about the number of women present. There were key themes the conservative press focused on to malign and demonise female reformers: morality, the body, gender, motherhood, domesticity, liberty caps, and clothing. In contemporary understandings, the collective efforts of the media can be framed as a smear campaign.



Figure 58: *Much wanted a Reform amongst females!!!* (Lewis Marks 1819).

Sexuality and the body combine elsewhere too, including another satirical take on the Blackburn Female Reform Society, *Much wanted a Reform amongst females!!!* (figure 58). Phallic imagery features with the woman on the far right holding a liberty pole between her legs, whilst the woman next to her uses her hands to create vulvate symbolism. In the crowd, a young man gropes a milkmaid's breast saying, 'I

feel for your Sex my Dear', with this double entendre displaying concern for the state of women's political oratory but also for the milkmaid's sexuality. The chairwoman, who is giving the address, was mocked through sexual humour and ineptness, 'I feel great pleasure, in holding this thing 'um bob in my hand'. Again, visual culture utilises radical material culture and spaces as a way of adding easily readable satirical elements. It fits into a general response of disgust that saw women as sexually volatile and threatening through inhabiting spaces and landscapes not deemed feminine.

Returning to ideas of the body, newspapers, journals, and pamphlets did not highlight the physical body of a woman, rather the collective body. A common term used for female reformers was 'Amazons' or 'Amazonian'. The Amazonian held particular connotations due to a shift in how womanhood and femininity were understood in the late eighteenth century. Amazons went from heroic or courageous to transgressive, threatening, and lacking traditional femininity, and it stopped being used as a positive label for important British women such as Elizabeth I (Hicks 2005). Remember that the ideal masculine body in this period shifted from graceful to muscular and rugged, meaning that the physically powerful body of an Amazon could no longer be acceptable femininity as it infringed upon idealised masculinity. When the Blackburn society visited the 'Stockport heroines', they were collectively dubbed 'a band of these Amazons' (*OUCH* 7th August 1819). Mary Waterworth, Stockport female reformer, was called a 'profligate Amazon' for her role in sitting on the box of a barouche carrying her society's banner at Peterloo (*MC* 19th August 1819). This frequent referral to women as Amazons was noted by reformers. In the York Peterloo trial, a witness, John Smith, thought the 'women did not merit the term of "profligate Amazons"' (Dolby 1820, 196). Interestingly, Hunt challenged the reporter who called Waterworth an Amazon in the trial. He defended his word choice as 'her appearance and place... justified the observation. I never saw a Lady

present colours at the head of a regiment' (MC 20th March 1820). The performance undertaken by radicals at Peterloo of marching in time and rank, as well as using banners and wreaths, resulted in Waterworth's body becoming a site of tension between her gender and fear of violence. A mocking poem (figure 59) also explores the idea of female reformer as Amazon, but also references hermaphroditism:

But *she*, the Amazon of strife and *storm*,
Of mind *hermaphrodite* in Woman's form,

The poem emphasises a division between the mind as masculine and body as female, showing how female reformers were confusing – or queering – the political sphere. Combined, these references emphasise how removed female reformers were from their gender and how they occupied space, ideas, and events presumed to be exclusively for men. The dual nature of woman/warrior and sexual duality of male/female neatly captures the feeling towards female reformers and their performances. Featured within these uses is fear and anxiety of radical violence, aggression, and uprising. Ultimately, the very act of a female reformer being present in a public space was radical. The presence, performance, and presents of the female reformers disrupted the idealised conception of how the public space should operate. The language of 'Amazons' highlighted the women's dangerous and transgressive gender whilst insinuating female reformers were acting in more masculine than feminine ways. Both Amazonian and hermaphrodite language created this liminal gender of female masculinity.

On the FEMALE REFORMISTS.

In these reforming, innovating days,
Woman the part of *State Reformist* plays!
Not the chaste Fair of angel form and mind,
Bestow'd of Heaven to *grace* and *bless* mankind;
But *she*, the Amazon of *strife* and *storm*,
Of mind *hermaphrodite* in Woman's form,
Who would our rights politic, civil scan,
And while she aids, usurps the "Rights of Man!"
For State Reform, with mobs would *rare* and *roam*,
Nor heed Reform, or *Rights of Man—at home!*
Behold yon Moon, with philosophic eye,
That sheds soft lustre o'er the evening sky;
Should *she* to other spheres eccentric run,
And quit the attraction of the central sun,
Darkness and wreck must blot her silvery light,
And sink her orb in void's chaotic night!
Thus Woman, fram'd by Heaven's unerring plan,
Derives support, and *law*, and bliss, from Man;
Thus, as revolving life's domestic course,
Reflects her *light* from *Man—the solar source!*
But when erratic from her orbit's bound,
She tracks the *meteor Freedom's* lawless round;
From *duty's, virtue's, order's* path would stray,
And strive with lordly Man for sov'reign sway;
Then lovely Woman *falls*—her rule is o'er—
To shine and charm—to rise and reign—*no more!*
August, 1819. BUNGAISIENSIS.

Figure 59: *On the Female Reformers* (NFC 21st August 1819).

The press undertook sustained efforts to run a smear campaign. Labelled as 'furies' (PLDA 31st July 1819), dubbed 'Spartan' (IC 5th August 1819), deemed related to the 'despot' Semiramis, Boudicca, and the Swiss women who fought in the French Revolution (CJ 17th July 1819), and certified as 'Viragoes' (PLDA 14th July 1819), female reformers were attacked with a barrage of mockery, critique, and sexism. Viragoes is especially interesting as it was utilised in a similar way as 'Amazon' through demonising women for acting aggressively or performing masculinity. Connections to the French Revolution were commonplace. They were dubbed as

being akin to the 'poissardes' (CC 16th July 1819), 'The poissardes of Paris, those furies in the shape of women' (WJ 22nd July 1819), 'we find English women... rivalling in effrontery the infamous Poissards of Paris' (SHM 24th July 1819), and were likened to 'revolutionary mobs' during Charles I's reign and the French Revolution (CMC 4th November 1819). Through the Blackburn and Stockport societies being 'daring imitators of the Female Clubs of France', their speeches were claimed to be 'almost literal transcripts' of the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women (WEE 25th July 1819). Women attending meetings was 'a practice unheard of till the French Revolution, when they were poured in from the markets and the brothels' (HP 7th December 1819). The Stockport society were labelled as 'female rebels' (Sun 20th July 1819), with this description encapsulating the feeling towards political radicalism and how women were performing their gender. The temporal depth provided by the female reformer's own language through referencing Greek and Roman culture was satirised:

Societies of *Female Orators* are indisputably of ancient origin, as those who have been present at the *clatter of tongues*, at the meetings of the *Lady Reformers*, are convinced that some such clubs must have been mixed among the workman at the *Tower of Babel*. (MA 5th August 1819)

On the flipside to utilising history and myth to attack female reformers, it could also be used to defend or support their involvement. Drawing on Tacitus, Anglo Saxons, and Queen Boadicea, a letter writer to *The Republican* (10th September 1819, 44-46) provides examples of female political power. Collectively, these attacks, insults, and snide remarks combine to emphasise how the female reformer's gender was assaulted from numerous angles. Culture, history, and revolution were utilised to caricature the women into a concept or image which could be readily demeaned. Each of these insults were connected. Whether drawn from myth, the Bible, or France, they all feature women who defied – or in the conservative imagination, failed – at society's demands for femininity.

The other way newspapers used language to demean female reformers was through branding them immoral mothers. These attacks purposefully flipped female reformer's speeches and conceptions of themselves as teachers of the family and domestically radical. According to the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* (17th July 1819), the women would be 'few and the most depraved of their sex' and it was a 'horror to reflect that the female character in a single instance be rendered seditious and disgusting'. Radicalism was viewed as supplanting family and domesticity. Not only had 'they have abandoned their proper domestic cares' (*Star* 17th July 1819), their aim of instructing their families in reform was considered 'wicked and vicious' (*WEE* 27th June 1819). Through inculcating their children with sedition, blasphemy, immorality, the *Morning Post* (4th September 1819) hyperbolically found no parallel 'in the annals of wickedness'. Rather than be 'odious and disgusting', women should attend the 'domestic concerns of their families' and instil virtues not reform (*PDLA* 13th July 1819). Participating in radicalism misplaced domestic energy:

the cause of Anarchy was warmly advocated by tongues which had been better employed in Domestic Reform, if they possess half the influence over their husbands and their children, which they profess to have in directing a nation. (*TC* 29th July 1819)

Misbehaving boys in Stockport were led astray through 'their *tender* mothers' who were 'drabs for teaching sedition' (*Sun* 11th August 1819). Alternative toasts were suggested for the rights of women, 'Innocence, Modesty, and Prudent' and female reformers should remember Henry VIII's proclamation, 'women should not meet together to babble and talk' (*Star* 14th August 1819). Through entering the political arena, female reformers were cast as abandoning the domestic space. Conservative depictions utilised binaries to emphasise the failure in familial care. Positing immorality against the proper course for women to follow allowed gender transgressions to be magnified. Again, we can see how the establishment press highlights how female reformers are failing in femininity and participating in

masculinity, creating a threatening and destabilising hybrid gender of female masculinity.

Abandoning domestic duties was not purely blamed on women. Male reformers were seen as leading female counterparts astray. Using language that almost makes the female reformers witches, the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* (10th July 1819) argued, 'our anarchists have begun to summon woman from her domestic duties, and to enlist her powerful influence in their unhallowed cause'. Male reformers were 'wicked' through how they 'mislead the women' in order 'to prey upon their credulity' (*Sun* 20th July 1819). Elsewhere, it was suggested 'we find that they contrived to institute even a Society of *Female Reformers* at Blackburn' (*MP* 1st July 1819), with this implying the society was a male idea. A handbill that circulated around Manchester argued that male reformers would lead women astray (figure 60). If it was not men who caused women to turn to reform, it was madness. The 'extravagant insanity' of reform was caused the Blackburn society (*WJ* 8th July 1819). The Stockport women were 'deluded' (*Sun* 20th July 1819). Female reformers were found to have 'given themselves up to the mania of amending the constitution' (*Star* 17th July 1819). These reasons were loaded with sexist assumptions that women could not fight for reform without being influenced by men or controlled by madness. The moral and domestic attacks on female reformers created a distinct category of woman separate from the ideal, whilst providing the reason women engaged with reform. Led astray, deluded, or immoral, female reformers were the deviant other, performing outside of acceptable femininity, therefore creating a new gendered experience.

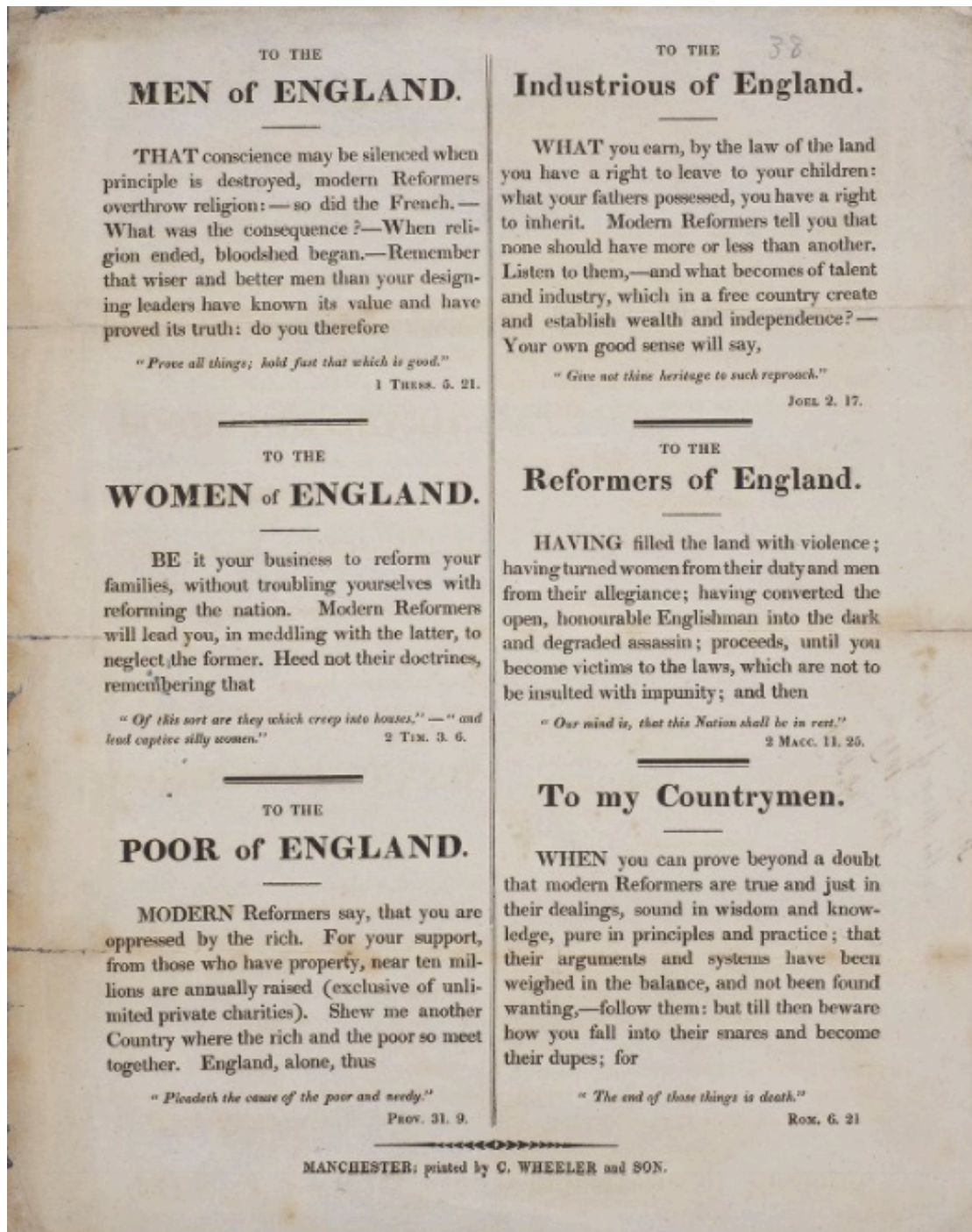


Figure 60: This handbill was distributed around Manchester on behalf of Magistrate Hay, who was present at Peterloo. It connects scripture to the arguments of why being loyal to the nation does not include reform (MS/1197/38).

As well as direct attacks on gender, domesticity and morality, and performance of radicalism, there were attempts at undermining their speeches and how the societies were being run. These attacks utilise stereotypes of women being too talkative and emphasise how poorly run the clubs were since women had no place running them in the first place. Attempts at oratory were called 'vulgar' and the claiming of the title 'chairwoman' deemed 'strange and very uncouth... [an] ill adapt[ion] to such monstrous anomalies' (NM 7th August 1819). Many of these insults were directed towards the Stockport meeting on the 19th July which was widely circulated through a report cribbed from the *Manchester Observer*:

the *Ladies* have been properly reported, as we doubt not, then we may boldly affirm, what we have always suspected, that Major Cartwright himself is not better than an old woman for really the *Ladies* of the Stockport Reform Club, talk just as he does. (MP 4th August 1819).

The Club of Female Reformers at Stockport, among other regulations, have resolved, that not more than *twelves Ladies shall speak at the same time*. It is apprehended, if this severe restriction on the tongue is not taken off, that it will occasion a *revolution* in the club. (NR 8th August 1819)

Building on the momentum of demeaning the Stockport women, the *Morning Advertiser* (6th August 1819) took full satirical advantage of a forthcoming interlude at the Haymarket Theatre, *Ladies at Home! Or Gentleman we can do without you*, noting, 'from its title at least, to be popular with the *Female Radical Reformers* who wish to give the public a Constitution, without *male* assistance or interference'. The Stockport meeting, through its widely circulated report, became the second-most attacked event to the first Blackburn public meeting. Publishing the speeches offered opportunities for the press to further dissect female reformers to the extent that some newspapers added a short paragraph prior to the cribbed report suggesting it was perfect satire produced by radicalism itself (CP 14th August 1819), a burlesque

(*Sun* 4th August 1819), or even a hoax (*MA* 4th August 1819). The tipping point for critique appears to be women entering public spaces or landscapes for political purposes.

Another mechanism for undermining female reformers was divorcing them from the ideal of *the* English woman. Kathleen Wilson (2007) studied ideas surrounding bodies and female masculinity in the French and Napoleonic Wars. Her work indicates gender and national identity were linked, with masculine women being deemed threats to the nation. These anxieties around the woman as politically potent and volatile were replicated in the response to the female reformer. English women were acting French (*Sun* 27th July 1819) and were forsaking 'the modesty of the English female character' (*WEE* 1st August 1819). Lord Castlereagh, whilst discussing a bill in the House of Commons, emphasised that only the most abandoned women were involved in the French Revolution and 'the innate delicacy... modest feelings of English women' would prevent them from imitating such an example (*LI* 6th December 1819). The depths of the Blackburn depravity were evident at these societies as they were the 'first time in England...*females* organised into teachers of insurrection' (*WEE* 25th July 1819). It was unthinkable that 'English women [would] come forward in the cause of treason and sedition' (*LI* 30th August 1819). A letter-writer to the *PLDA* (22nd November 1819) stated that female reformers needed to 'forsake their evil ways... [in order to] render yourselves worthy of the name of British women'. These nationalist takes amplify supposed faults of the women, scaling the immorality from local to national, therefore making their behaviour not just threatening to the household but society, insinuating radicalism cannot equate to Englishness.

ADDRESS
Of the Female Reform Society,
On presenting a Cap of Liberty to the Blackburn Meeting.

O! bear this *Red Cap* to the Secret Committee,
And tell them to prize what the Furies bestow :
'Tis a hell-woven charm against duty and pity,
A blood-spotted signal of ruin and woe.

Say, when they see this new meteor prevailing,
The Crown and the Altar in dust must lie ;
Jests must be mingled with horror and wailing,
And rapine be wedded to blasphemy.

Tell them, that, though we are wives and mothers,
We long for the hour when the rivers shall flow
With streams from the veins of our fathers and brothers,
And our children's blood on the axe shall glow.

Figure 61: Poem on the presentation of a Cap of Liberty by the Blackburn Reformers (WJ 5th August 1819)

Choosing to gift and carry liberty caps in processions was certainly contentious. Female reformers must have understood the potency of this symbol not just in radical spaces and landscapes but in the conservative imagination. It was an emblem clearly associated with recollections of 1793 (CC 16th July 1819). Gifting a liberty cap conjured 'the romantic enthusiasm of the commencement of the French Revolution' (MR 21st July 1819) and it was viewed as the 'appropriate ensign' (Sun 27th July 1819). The Blackburn Female Reformers' decision to choose the liberty cap contributed to it becoming the 'standard of universal suffrage' following on from Spa Field and 'the blood-thirsty Jacobins' (WJ 22nd July 1819). A poem from August 1819 (figure 61) demonstrates the ideals and violence that conservatives bound up in the liberty cap: bloody, blasphemy, terror. Radical pamphlet, *The Black Dwarf* (24th February 1819), tells a satirical quip on how at a Stockport meeting, 'one stout fellow, who reminded us of Sir John Falstaff, address the Chairman in these words:

“I-I-I de-de-demand th-th-that *cup* cap of li-li-li-liberty – in th-th-the name of the ki-king!!!’. Whilst caricaturing a portly loyalist, or John Bull, this account does highlight the importance of seizing liberty caps from radicals. Furthermore, following Peterloo, liberty caps were still utilised by female reformers despite these being an attacked object and a piece of material culture utilised by authorities to deem Peterloo illegal (Kitchener 2016). The response to the liberty cap was vehement and viewed as proof of revolutionary intent. Of course, liberty caps existed within other contexts outside revolution, but to the onlooking establishment press, the link they decided to make was between female reformers and revolutionary women. Liberty caps were provocative. This nature was another reason why this emblem was chosen above others. The liberty cap allowed female reformers to make a bold material statement in the landscape and seize media coverage. It was read with concern and fear by conservatives but was also understood as the material outputs of immorality, abandonment of domesticity, and failed femininity. Given that women were acting as political agents and transgressing gender boundaries, it was not surprising to the conservative press they had crafted a symbol of revolution.

P O E T R Y.

ON THE NOVEL CIRCUMSTANCE OF FEMALES
TURNING REFORMERS.

Hang down your black noddles, Hunt, Cartwright and Co.
Or rather rejoice that they're not *hauging up*,
A pleasanter set of Reformers I trow,
To the Temple of Freedom is now hanging up.

Hunt got on his nag, and he rode to the cart,
There chatter'd and grinn'd like a Mountebank's monkey,
The Female Reformer more proper and smart,
Shall dash through the crowd on her frisky tail'd Donkey.

With her Donkey indeed Hunt and Co. may contend,
So like that sage beast both in brains and in braying,
But when those fair speakers the cart shall ascend,
Adieu Master Hunt to your share of huzzaing.

A rostrum propriety's self could not chuse,
More fit for the stuff which from thence is imparted,
For they who their betters most foully abuse.
Do justly deserve like a Bawd, to be carted.

We now can believe (what was held as a fiction
By those who thought modesty woman's true boast),
The story related in classical diction,
Of termagant Amazons ruling the roast;

Disdaining submission to him declared Lord,
By heav'nly appointment, of worldly creation,
Those sturdy viragos are first on record,
As radical framers of stale reformation.

Hunt and Co. if you please, with your wives share the
breeches,
The husband may thrive when the wiser wife rules,
But shun competition in popular speeches,
Or instead of damned knaves, you will pass for damned
fools. H.

Figure 62: *On the Novel Circumstances of Females Turning Reformers* by Anon (Sun 21st August 1819). This poem utilises several different attacks: Amazons, viragos, and breeches as well as connecting female reformers to nags and donkeys.

Another way female reformers were attacked was through two different items of clothing: petticoats and breeches. Whilst not a take on what female reformers were actually wearing, clothing was used as a mechanism to suggest how women were transgressing their gender and characterising their politics. Petticoat became a replacement word for female. Blackburn women were cast as 'Petticoat-Reformers' (*PDLA* 4th July 1819; *Star* 28th August 1819) and were aiming 'to establish a *petticoat Government!*' (*MA* 17th August 1819). They were 'petticoat demireps' (*HJ* 11th August 1819), with this implying that they were women who were likely to be lifting their skirts. 'Petticoat state-menders' (*CP* 14th August 1819) plays with language to imply that the only thing female reformers can mend were garments. The female reformers would 'struggle hard to *wear the breeches*' (*MA* 21st July 1819) and would have been better occupied mending their husband's (*Star* 17th July 1819). Breeches were connected to ideas on the proper way to run marriages too. One poem (figure 62) mockingly states, 'Hunt and Co. if you please, with your wife share the breeches' but this would lead to them passing for 'damned fools'. These were even combined together, '*The Petticoat Reformers* in the country begin to alarm their husbands, who have already discovered that the Ladies are making rapid strides to *wear the breeches*' (*PLDA* 24th July 1819). Clothing became a medium in which female reformers could be dressed up in to emphasise they were wearing the wrong gender. Female reformers understood the importance of dress and how it could help to create a spectacle. The press recognised this too. Associating women with the wrong trousers ridiculed their radicalism, demonstrating how conservatives conceptualised dress as an important moniker of domesticity.

This smear campaign was at its most vicious in July and August 1819 and born out of sexism. However, this can be unpicked further. Women were understood as having potent and powerful political potential. The examples of previous political women demonstrated to conservatives how disruptive and destructive this agency was and –

most worryingly – could be. The French Revolution was fanned by women as their part was ‘the most desperate and decisive’ and fearfully, ‘from the number of female reformers in England, it only requires a colouring of fanaticism to blow the sparks into a deadly and consuming flame’ (*Globe* 12th November 1819). The *Leeds Intelligencer* (30th August 1819) reported with concern a female reform society had been founded in Leeds. In their opinion:

We conceive these societies (with the exception of the seditious publications) more dangerous than any other step which has yet been taken to the cause of rebellion... The influence of females in every rank of life is great; and though that influence diminishes as they step out of their proper sphere of action, it is still certain, that every mother of a family who joins the ranks of female reformers will do incalculable mischief to society; and at the expense, too, of that exalted character which English women have hitherto maintained...

Women transgressed spatial boundaries and made their physical bodies disruptive. Female reformers were entering and participating in landscapes and performances considered masculine by political authorities. During the late eighteenth century, there was anxiety about the collapse between the distinction of public/private spheres (Benedict 2002), with these fears feeding into print response. The event of the print clearly highlights the importance of gendered performance in public spaces and speaking. Historians debate to what extent the separate spheres model holds up to scrutiny (Steinbach 2012) but in these reports, whether for the sake of attack or the ideology of the newspaper, the female reformers were viewed as leaving their rightful sphere and trespassing in another. This movement between the domestic and the politic meant women had forsaken their sex and gender, demolishing the barrier between the home and reform (which was a false construction by the press), and creating an immoral version of femininity which, when performed, threatened the stability of the home. When multiplied to many women, this threatened the

fabric of society. Beneath the cheap shots, critique, and moralising, was anxiety that the reform cause would gain further momentum with the aid of women. The sustained campaign was not only about demonising women, it purposefully wanted to prevent women from engaging with reform politics as it understood their radical potential.

As well as sexism and concerns over the diminishment of the idealised view of domesticity, class featured in the critiques. Radical women occupied a dual position of attracting ridicule and attack whilst simultaneously being a disruptive force which resulted in fear and anxiety. The emergence of female reform societies was both a 'nonsense' and a cause of 'disorder of the nerves' (*MP* 26th July 1819). A radical meeting in Rochdale, 2nd August 1819, demonstrates how working-class women were seen as overstepping their position:

expressing themselves in a manner that showed how utterly regardless they had become of female propriety... [compared to] those [windows]... graced by females of respectability; insults of the grossest were offered to the latter by those of their own sex who were in the mob (*HJ* 4th August 1819).

The class and dignity of the conservative women observing is emphasised whilst the active reformist women, 'whose appearance is said to have indicated extreme poverty', are depicted as uncouth, unladylike, and driven to depravity because of their poverty.

The fear of female reform was linked to physical meeting and having a space composed of political minded and forthright women. This can be likened to Mary Douglas's (2002) idea of 'matter out of place', in which dirt (whether symbolic, physical, or social) is considered against social norms and understandings. Female reformers – as the matter – were out of their *domestic* place. At their first meeting, the Blackburn female reformers took up physical space usually reserved for men:

With repugnance we mention, that one novel, and most disgusting scene took place: - a deputation from the Blackburn female reform society mounted the stage... These women then mixed with the orators, and remained on the hustings during the rest of the day (*LI* 12th July 1819)

Despite most reports efforts to demonise female reformers as an anonymous collective or body, individuals were singled out where possible. This was 'matter out of place' in action as the individual stood out and could become a focal point for channelled attacks. At a reform meeting in Leigh, Manchester, police arrested Thomas Clure who was present on the hustings and the chairman left the proceedings. To counter the disorder caused, a female reformer stepped in as chair, much to the letter writer's outrage (*MC* 14th August 1819). The same letter writer also discussed, Mary Bradshaw, who was present at the pinnacle moment of hoisting the liberty cap. It revealed she had a supposed alias (Moll Nush) and was accused of felony in Chorley, therefore undermining her character through links to secrecy and criminality. Her gender and class were mocked as she was one of the '*ladies*' [emphasis original] (*MP* 14th August 1819), turning radical language into a sneer. This letter and report critique the meetings themselves through attacking individual characters. In another report on Leigh, Bradshaw was deemed 'an active and distinguished member of the Blackburn reform meeting', therefore ascribing collective guilt through association with the individual (*HJ* 18th August 1819). However, there were occasions when the collective was turned into a larger body again. Summarising radicalism of 1819, the emergence of female reform societies was noted as 'a hideous feature' and again, likened to the French Revolution where 'women were lost to shame' (*LI* 22nd May 1820). Female reformers were associated with fears of continental radicalism and revolution, shifting the scale of disgust, anxiety, and shock to international levels. Within these sources, radicalism was discussed as monolithic and a unified whole, as opposed to being considered regional and multifaceted. Ultimately, criticisms, attacks, and fears on and over

female reformers were complicatedly entwined. The multifaceted nature of sexism, classism, conservatism, and elitism produced complex intersections. Although at times one facet was more apparent than another, it was this combination of insults, sneers, and moralising that amounted to sustained demonization of female reformers. These criticisms on failing femininity, the attacks on women entering masculine spheres, combined together, producing a reading of female reformers as performing a female masculinity.

6.4.2 MATERIAL GIRLS

Importantly, this emphasis on the body was not just bound up in language, it included materiality. Clothing was crucial in performing radicalism for female reformers. At the first Blackburn meeting, the women were 'very neatly dressed for the occasion' (*NM* 17th July 1819) and 'each wore a green favour in her bonnet or cap' (*MP* 13th July 1819). This power of clothing was quickly recognised by the Blackburn reformers. They donned the same outfit at a meeting in Manchester a fortnight later (*MP* 20th July 1819). At Peterloo, women made efforts to present well, with witnesses recognising this (Barr 1820, 75). John Tyas, *The Times* reporter, noted:

There were a great number of women and children. Many of them marched in ranks like the men. I saw two female parties in particular, who came at the head of the divisions. They appeared to be dressed in their best clothes on the occasion (Dolby 1820, 206).

Another witness, John Brattargh, made a similar observation, 'the women were tidily dressed; apparently in their holiday clothes' (Dolby 1820, 212). Wearing best clothing has been observed by various scholars of political radicalism (Epstein 1994; Navickas 2010; Poole 2019) but more analysis needs to be conducted in exploring why and how it connected to other meetings of female reformers. One possible suggestion – and often the explanation by aforementioned studies – for the wearing

their best dress links to the reasoning behind learning to march in time and to be orderly. Examples of self-regulation were found at Peterloo through Bamford's placing laurel wreaths onto individuals leading different sections (Pratt 1820, 11) and the use of signs stating 'Order' (Peterloo Massacre 1819), whilst at various other meetings and events, including Hunt's triumphal entry into London following his bail, the crowd would self-regulate through shouts of 'Order' (BD 15th September 1819). There were concerns they would appear to be unrespectable or labelled drunkards if organisation failed (White 1957, 190). However, clothing went beyond concerns of order and respectability. Processing in best clothing was not only for those watching, it was part of the spectacle building by the reformers. The material culture of radicalism, including clothing, was for those involved in practicing radicalism and constructing a sense of group identity.



Figure 63: *Liberty a la Francoise!* (Holland 1803). Liberty is in the centre both in white and with the liberty cap, emphasising that this symbolism is not exclusive to radicalism.

The power of dress was utilised through women marching in all white contingents. This appears to be purposeful and explicit symbolism, with possible links to the French Revolution during which women often wore white or personifying Liberty or Justice. The latter is probably more likely. Classical precedents were a popular tool used by various political groups with clear allegorical meaning utilised in print and building culture (figures 63 and 64). As noted by Hunt during the York Peterloo trial, the York Assize Court has a liberty cap decoration on the front elevation to which Hunt adeptly points out, 'Why then should that which was approved by all in York be esteemed a crime in Lancashire?' (Dolby 1820, 174). Indeed, a special constable who was called as a witness at the trial also noted:

I saw no caps of liberty among the people, but I have seen the stone cap at the top of this castle; a stone cap is not a cap of liberty, it is only the figure of one. (Dolby 1820, 57).

This quote highlights how authorities felt material culture had to be categorised as either legitimate or revolutionary. The newspapers also approached radical materiality in this way; if revolution could be connected to the object then it became a dangerous, seditious, and volatile piece of material culture. The quote provides insight into contemporary understandings of the liberty cap with the humour behind this remark being the tension between the liberty cap carved on a government building and the prosecution's argument liberty caps were emblems of revolution. Although in the context of attempting to prosecute Peterloo defendants, Mr Scarlett remarks since the French Revolution, '[the liberty cap] had been converted into an emblem of disaffection. It was no longer the cap of liberty; it had degenerated into a badge of licentiousness' (Dolby 1820, 288), therefore placing the liberty cap into a European context. Furthermore, it demonstrates how symbolism and codes are dependent upon their political context, whilst emphasising that these symbols were contested and contained multiple meanings, especially when linked to physical and material expressions.



Figure 64: This depiction of the festival of reason in Notre Dame (converted into a Temple of Reason during the French Revolution), highlights many women wearing similar outfits which were white (Fabre d'Eglantine 1789-94). Importantly, Liberty is also present, sat in a classical pose complete with pole and cap of liberty. There is striking resemblance to depictions of Britannia.

Other female reform societies made sure to utilise clothing as a mechanism too, especially through mourning attire post-Peterloo. Three female reformers stood on the hustings for the Halifax reform meeting. Miss Flodder received particular attention:

A very handsome girl, was dressed in a white moslem gown, flounced with a double row of black crape; she wore a green spencer, a net cap, with three drab coloured feathers and a black bow; partly over her cap she wore a black crape veil; she had on a black necklace, a black brooch in her bosom, black ear-rings and black gloves (TEFP 14th October 1819).

The Halifax meeting, Monday 4th October, responded to Peterloo. Through choosing choreographed accessories, Miss Flodder presented herself as a mourner. This trend

of using funereal imagery is apparent in reform meetings elsewhere. The repetition of black on the individual in this instance is linked to the wider meeting. The march was silent except for the band which played the 'dead march' repeatedly. An aura of solemnity was generated through muffling the drum, modifying banners and hats to have black crape, and the quietness of the processors. Miss Flodder, through clothing, became a notable contributor to the meeting, although one of up to 50,000. Her body and gender performed the role of solemn mourner. Although not covered in such detail, other female reformers also undertook the role of mourner. At a meeting in Carlisle, October 1819, a group of female reformers dressed in mourning attire (*Statesman* 16th October 1819). Whilst the idea of Blackburn female reformers laying out trends is evident, the example of mourners demonstrates how reformers borrowed, appropriated, and utilised well-known symbolism and ritual, to remember and presence the dead. The performance and clothing of the female reformers was hyper-feminine through their strict adherence to expected behaviour and materiality of mourning of the period.

The power of both women and clothing was recognised by conservative onlookers resulting in efforts to undermine female reformers for their dress and outfits. For example, in reference to the founding of a society in Stockport and the Blackburn reformers attending, female reformers 'paraded Manchester a few days ago, in order to kindle a petticoat fire at the latter place' (*HJ* 4th August 1819). The accusation, obviously not literal but rather insinuating they were causing a stir, of burning a feminine item of clothing suggests the women were not conforming to expected gendered roles and were attempting to be masculine. Some reports would emphasise that female – and male – reformers were shabbily dressed because of their destitution. However, the choice of clothing by female reformers was difficult to attack. It was not revealing or improper therefore could not be connected to the sexually immoral yarn newspapers were spinning. One female reformer was noted

as 'very smart-looking' at a meeting in Clay Knowes, Glasgow, (*MA* 6th November 1819) and the entire Glasgow contingent of female reformers were 'well-dressed' (*SWJ* 8th November 1819). Female reformers were noted to be 'neatly' dressed (*SM* 16th July 1819; *WG* 16th October 1819), and 'respectably dressed' (*Scotsman* 16th October 1819). Sometimes only a description of the outfits was given without any form of remark, positive or negative (*RCG* 21st August 1819). Whilst not often high praise, the reports conceded the clothing could not be insulted. The clothing that was attacked was conceptual and not the material. We could understand clothing as being a defence mechanism or barrier against criticism. Whilst it did end up materially operating in this capacity, this was a secondary reason or consequence female reformers' decision making. Rather than being a shield against loyalism or conservatism, it was first and foremost the material expression of radicalism. The female reformers' understanding of how radicalism should be performed in public landscapes and spaces, especially events, was built around material culture. Gifts and clothing combined in the feminine expression of support for reform and radicalism.

Female reformers used the power of the body too. In Stockport's first female reform meeting, the chairwoman Mrs Hallworth exclaimed she would 'dedicate to liberty her heart, her *body*, yea, her very life' (*MP* 4th August 1819, emphasis original). At a large public meeting in Carlisle, female reformers gave an address which included numerous references to the idea of bondage, being 'tied up', slavery, and hearts bleeding (*MC* 15th October 1819). The Manchester female reformers wrote an address to 'the Wives, Mothers, Sisters, and Daughters of the higher and middling Classes of Society' in which reference to the naked body (alluding to material poverty and vulnerability) is made:

The Sabbath, which is set apart by the all wise Creator for a day of rest, we are compelled to employ in repairing the tattered garments, to cover the nakedness of our forlorn and destitute families (*MO* 31st July 1819).

Nakedness here could refer to feelings of shame, living in poverty, and being exposed to unjust elements. The need to repair clothing linked to the need to be presentable and to be able to have pride in oneself. Similarly, Mrs Blackburne, President of the Leeds Female Reformers, utilised the language of destitution in relation to the family and the body but instead used food rather than clothing:

But here the heart begins to bleed. Those of you who have never felt the agonising words inflicted by the piercing cries of your tender infants for bread when you have none to give them... Are we and our children, then, to be starved out of existence? (*Observer*, 27th September 1819).

Whilst emotive, the word choice intimately linked oppression with the physical self and body. Using such language, female reformers situated their experiences in domestic space, the family unit, and physicality, therefore grounding emotions and political ideology into real, lived experiences.

The language adopted by female reformers, which focused on the distresses they experienced from poverty, can also be seen in other radical outputs from the period. A petition from Middleton, December 1816, highlighted how it was “People of this part of the Country, to SUBSIST on their present means, even with the support of the SOUP KETTLE” (HO/42/157, fol. 182). Samuel Drummond, on the hustings before the Blanketeers marched, stated, “it is bread we want and we will apply to our noble Prince as a child would to its Father for bread” (HO/40/5/no.11). Food, or the lack of it, then were themes utilised elsewhere too, showing the connection between suffrage and poverty within radicalism of this period.

Women in radical politics utilised bodies and materials to perform radicalism in various spaces and landscapes. The scalar nature of events was particularly apparent through the event itself, the imagining of it, and local events combining to create landscapes. There was a strong theme of sexuality and sexual immorality in response to female reformers, viewing them as stepping beyond domestic boundaries to become threatening, violent Amazonians. Opposing these attempts at slighting character, female reformers used domestic language and understandings to demonstrate their support of reform and share everyday lived experiences, bringing themselves and their suffering into their politics. Clothing was an important type of material culture utilised by women, both through the creation of radical items such as liberty caps and through using everyday items and readily available belongings like best dress. This section highlights plurality of experience and demonstrates the possibility of accessing individual and group identities. It also emphasises how the conflict or tension between how female reformers presented themselves clashed with how they were received, understood, or discussed. This created an unstable or queer gender of female masculinity, as female reformers performed inside radical landscapes and outside where society expected them to be.

6.5 MAKERS OF LIBERTY

Female reformers contributed to creating radical material culture. One common way was through making liberty caps. There are numerous recorded instances of female reform societies deciding to craft a special liberty cap to present at meetings. Whilst it can be difficult to access the process of making radical material culture, it is possible to glean some insight. An important feature appeared to be quality, with this also indicating expense. Crafting was a form of activism and links with contemporary movements. This section investigates particular items, including banners. These can be deemed mini object biographies, although it is difficult to track what eventually happened to them. Historical archaeology has had some

success with this methodology (Cessford 2014; Gray 2010) but usually relies on the artefact surviving – a privilege not extended to much radical material culture.

In reports on radical meetings, the quality of liberty caps was often remarked upon. Accounts often remark positively upon the material, for instance, words such as ‘splendid’ were used (*RPG* 6th November 1819). The liberty cap is not a simple object within the female reformer narrative; it is the material representation of the values the women embodied. As an overtly political craft, it was a medium through which women could express their desire for liberty and contribute materially to meetings. Liberty caps, imbued with female agency, should therefore not be overlooked or omitted from radical narratives or heritage. At the first Blackburn meeting, Alice Kitchen presented the cap with an address, ‘it [the liberty cap] embraces a faint description of our woes and may apologize for our interference in the politics of our country’ (*MC* 13th July 1819). Similar apologies are seen in other speeches, including at Stockport, with these anxieties or attempts at humility being satirised in print culture and newspaper accounts. Perhaps then the need to craft stemmed from an awareness of how women were interacting with politics in ways considered unseemly. The opportunity to hand something physical over rather than just words was a declaration, making the verbal contribution into something tangible, providing material proof of genuine intention. These caps were an important part of meetings through providing material mediums into which female reformers could channel their radicalism and participate in radical ritual. Through crafting, community, and performance, liberty was being made materially and spatially.

Craft was activism. In recent years, there has been a resurgence in craft activities, with the coining of the word ‘craftivism’ (Corbett and Housley 2011), with this shift back to crafts such as knitting occurring alongside the exposure of global sweatshop

practices (Bratich and Brush 2011, 235). Stitch 'n' Bitch, a movement wherein typically young women gather in spaces such as cafes to craft and chat, demonstrates an interesting reclamation of time through reconfiguring capitalist pressures and forces, whilst also offering new connections within a dislocated information society (Minahan and Cox 2007). The reason these contemporary movements are mentioned is to draw possible parallels between craft movements of today and the reform movement. Mitchell (1996) highlighted in a study on nineteenth century needlework that feminist history has characterised sewing as a burden or drudgery. The female reformers were harnessing the everyday to create the radical. Utilising domestic skills, the ordinary task of stitching became radicalised. The creation of liberty caps becomes craftivism through a reclamation of previous cottage industrial practices, imbued with personal and group identities, and distinct from emerging industrialism.

The problem with attempting to understand crafting processes is accounts provide details on inscriptions and colour, but often do not explain how or who made it. Liberty caps were likely predominantly made by female reformers in the late 1810s. An informer reported that at the upcoming Peterloo meeting, it was expected that female reformers would be “furnishing a cap of liberty” (Internal State, no. 21, 10th August 1819). Male reformers of Huddersfield were noted to, ‘by the kindness of their female friends, have procured a quantity of Caps of Liberty’ (MA 11th November 1819). In a report on an upcoming meeting in Leigh, it was reported female reformers would be ‘furnishing a cap of liberty’ (*Globe* 25th November 1819). The dominance of liberty caps as gifts strongly indicates women being the main crafters of the caps. Beyond liberty caps, we can surmise the clothing worn at meetings and processions was a mixture of bought and made. There is some evidence of female reformers making banners and flags. At the first Leigh meeting where female reformers were present, an informer remarked:

what was more novel, these women planted a standard with an inscription, "No Corn Laws, Annual Parliaments, and Universal Suffrage;" as well as another standard, surmounted with the cap of liberty on the platform. Both the flag, and the cap were presents from the Ladies' Union!! (Internal State, No. 22, 11th August 1819).

The Leigh female reformers engaged with gift giving, both a banner and liberty cap were used as presents at a later meeting too (*WACK* 4th December 1819). At Peterloo, the Oldham Female Reform Society was described as creating the 'most elegant' banner (*The Gentleman's Magazine* 1819, 172). In one corner, Justice held scales and a sword and in another corner the eye of Providence. On its reverse, two hands clasped, both wearing shirt ruffles, with an inscription underneath, 'Oldham Union'. Royston female reformers also made flags. They had two red flags, one inscribed 'Let us [women] die like men, and not be sold like slaves' and the other 'Annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage'. At a Newcastle reform meeting following Peterloo, a flag which depicted Justice holding scales was carried. Inscribed on it was 'Presented by the Female Reformers of Winlaton' (*MO* 23 October 1819). Mrs Catteril, of the Carlisle female reformers, presented a flag to the chairman inscribed 'Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed' and a figure of Britannia in mourning (*MO* 13 November 1819). These rich details generate an idea of what these banners would have looked like, but it is not explored, at least in the surviving documents, how and who was responsible for its creation. It may be inferred it was female reformers, and it may have been a democratic effort by the group. In a witness statement at the York trial, Robert Harrop described how the Saddleworth and Lees banner was made collectively as each person chose a different phrase and the women later added a fringe (Barr 1820, 84). This suggests a group decision process even if only one or two people did the crafting. Liberty caps, banners, and flags were likely made at home or in the workplace. The skillsets of the northern reformers would have transferred to this radical material culture.

There is some evidence on how money for the purchase of materials was generated. Again, this highlights the group nature of radical material culture. An anonymous informer noted that women in Middleton were going from house to house for the purposes of raising funds for a liberty cap (HO/42/190 fol.205). This perhaps extends from the tradition of petitioning. Reformers when collecting signatures would go door-to-door to encourage people to sign (see HO/40/3/1 fol.728; HO/42/177 fol.543). However, it may also have been the accepted practice. When collecting for a banner or colours, a Failsworth reformer passed around a hat for donations (Internal State, no. 24, 5th August 1819). What all these examples have in common was the collective expense behind making radical material culture. This implies that radical objects were specially made and often made with a good standard of fabric, elevating them above everyday items in this sense. These examples also highlight the group identity within the objects: from their moment of conception, to production, to utilisation, they were for a group of people.

Outside of liberty caps, other gifts were used, and there are some hints in how these were produced. The Manchester Female Reformers gifted Cobbett a silver writing stand and pen which they meant to present to him upon his return from America (*CPR* 18th December 1819). It is possible the silver for such gifts came from medals. Reformers with Waterloo medals reportedly donated them to Manchester female reformers 'in aid of their funds for the promotion of Radical Reform' (*CJ* 31st July 1819). These medals would have been smelted and could have been sold but it appears they might have been repurposed. The Coventry female reformers gifted Cobbett a writing desk as a New Year's Gift following the failed election campaign to instate Cobbett as MP (*CPR* 6th January 1821). Cobbett also remarks that criticism directed towards female reformers for gifting banners makes no sense when supposed 'gentle.. dames' are able to present military banners and swords:

What! Have not you as much right to present flags as the wives and daughters of Lords Lieutenant? The banners that you have present are those of civil life: those which they present, are banners of war and bloodshed... And yet those who present these banners and swords are to be regarded as accomplished and gentle ladies; while you are to be spoken of as bloodthirsty and blackguard hags! Never did it occur to those gentle and accomplished dames to present a man with a writing stand and pen... they deal in warlike banners and in swords: you, in emblems of the social compact and in implements which convey ideas from mind to mind. (*CPR* 29 December 1819).

The Leeds Female Reform society created a gold medal and chain in anticipation of Hunt's acquittal at the York trials following Peterloo (*RCG* 15th April 1820). It was to be presented in Leeds, presumably as part of a large-scale procession. There was a liberty cap in the centre with the legend 'Hunt triumphant, a friend to the liberty of the subject' surrounding it (*BD* 19th April 1820; figure 65). Although not presented at the assumed time, the medal was given to Hunt some point between April 1820 and November 1822 as Hunt wore the medal when he was released from Ilchester Gaol (*Observer* 3rd November 1822). This appears to be an interesting example of commissioning radical material culture. It uses established language and classical imagery of the liberty cap and wreath. Both Cobbett and Hunt's gifts were made of precious metals indicating material choices were important. Gifts were created with an individual in mind, but female reformers understood how their identity was imbued into them. Whether commissioned, made by a radical craftsperson, or made from Waterloo medals, the gifts demonstrate the thought behind each present and indicate collective funding.



Figure 65: description of gold medal that was going to be presented by the Leeds female reformers to Henry Hunt after the trial (BD 19th April 1820).

This section explored the processes of crafting radical material culture made or commissioned by women. Accessing this is problematic and involves conjecture. However, it is apparent women were crafting pieces of radical material culture and the language inscribed upon them used familiar phrases. Following this logic, it is probable that, as with their meetings, the crafting processes were similar to those of their male counterparts (although this is equally as difficult to locate evidence on). At times, men and women were involved in crafting the same object too as seen in the Saddleworth and Lees banner, blurring notions of a distinct radical material culture. Crafting was possibly outsourced, as perhaps seen in the medal example, although it is difficult to ascertain the production origins of such items (and whether it can be considered outsourcing if the craftsperson was themselves a reformer). Whatever the methods in acquisition, female reformers were carefully constructing radical material culture which was central to radical ritual and display. Physical presence was not considered to be enough, materiality had to feature.

6.6 CONCLUSIONS

Whilst female reformers have received attention in numerous histories of political radicalism, there has been a tension in the literature between reconciling contemporary feminism with their domestic language, and despite the apparent gendered nature of reform, masculinity and femininity have largely gone unstudied. Previous studies have somewhat patronised female reformers and struggled to balance what the female reformers represented and what we would want them to be. Female reformers were important agents in crafting radical material culture and forged their own branch of radicalism. They understood radical lexicons, traditions, and materiality, and harnessed these for their ideology that they believed was worth protesting for. It is possible to analyse the performance and lived experiences of gender by female reformers, resulting in interpretations that highlight the multiplicity of experience of radicals in terms of material culture, space, and performance.

Feminine identity was at the forefront of the female reformers' performance. They did not seek to divorce gender and domesticity from radicalism and reform. Instead, they utilised their position as women to further reform through language, material culture, and involvement in radical displays and processions. Rather than breaking the mould of radical nomenclature, they performed it within feminine understandings and experiences. This included crafting liberty caps, the central piece of material culture to female reformers, as well as using domestic items such as clothing to construct radical landscapes and spaces. Importantly, group identity is evident materially. The crafting of liberty caps was probably a collective activity, but the liberty caps in and of themselves were representative of the female reform society. During the ritual element of gifting the cap, it was symbolic of their identities as radicals and a materialisation of their pledge to the cause. Furthermore, liberty caps operated in an interesting space in the wider reform movement

generally through association with revolution and male radicals, but then often being utilised to depict the women Liberty, Justice, and Britannia. Female reformers were therefore creating an identity that was both feminine and masculine at the same time.

Their involvement provoked responses and attempts at regulations. The print and media landscape largely aimed to debase their character, often relying upon sexual connotations and suggestions of immorality. Sexism and classism feature in these attacks. Anxiety and fear over an empowered working and underclass in which women were using their agency would have been alarming, especially when framed in the radical and revolutionary history and climate of the time. Whilst Regency political radicalism cannot be untangled from revolution, it is important to recognise that fear and anxieties should not be reduced to this factor alone. The tactic of mass platform meetings was unsettling through claiming space and the feminine presence proved to destabilise it further through subverting gendered expectations. Industrial landscapes were creating an active arena in which economic, social, and urban issues were amalgamating to generate action and protest in radicals and anxiety and repression from outsiders. Interesting shifts and tensions in what it meant to be an individual as well as concerns surrounding femininity and masculinity are also prevalent, with these societal structures and ideologies being undermined by the female reformers' performance.

This is an interesting context in which to situate the analysis of female reformers. Within the shifting concepts of idealised masculinity, female reformers were not just overstepping the mark spatially but also through their bodies. Whilst individual women are sometimes described (usually through holding a position of power such as chairwoman or through beauty), it was usually in the collective form. The combination of multiple women engaging in political pursuits created a body politic.

By operating within spaces presumed to be reserved for men and by constructing their own spaces, female reformers performed their version of female masculinity, providing a challenge to contemporaries and present-day scholars. The women's character was usually degraded or attacked through suggestions on sexual impropriety and immoral behaviour. These accusations and slandering can be directly attached to anxieties over women encroaching into 'masculine' spaces. Therefore, the transgression is spatial and gendered, creating female masculinities and queering radical landscapes.

7 POST-PETERLOO: PRISON, PUNISHMENT, POSTERITY

The post-Peterloo experience for radicals was one of lively activity: mass platform meetings were held nationwide, radical publications were producing volumes of insights and critiques, and the reform cause had gained momentum. This was curtailed by the Six Acts in 1819 but also through a year of punishment and imprisonment in 1820. Two leading radicals, Henry Hunt, and Samuel Bamford, were found guilty for their involvement at Peterloo and were sentenced to prison (Ilchester and Lincoln respectively). This chapter explores these experiences through imagined landscapes and materiality.

7.1 PRISON EXPERIENCES

Prisons offer an interesting space in which to conduct analysis in. Through being confined and insular, they provide limited spatial engagement with the world. Importantly, the documentary record (although graffiti can also produce similar insights) permits the study and creates a record of the imagined space and landscape beyond the confinement. Utilising written sources in this respect allows archaeology to engage with the otherwise unattainable experiences.

This section focuses on two individuals found guilty at the Peterloo trials: Henry Hunt and Samuel Bamford. The trial took place at the Lent assizes, 1820, at the York Assize Court. Hunt requested the trial be moved from Lancashire in the hopes of securing a fairer trial (Poole 2006). The trial was a monotonous affair – even the prosecutor labelled it ‘tedious’ (Barr 1820, 103) – with many witness accounts which often overlapped or repeated. Nevertheless, it drew great crowds and people travelled from around the country to witness it (Pratt 1820, 5). Alongside Hunt and Bamford, Joseph Johnson, John Knight, and Joseph Healey were found guilty of seditious intent, a lesser charge than the original charge of sedition and accusations of high treason upon their initial arrest at Peterloo. Johnson, Knight, and Healey feature in

the analysis below, but the emphasis is on Hunt and Bamford. These two individuals offer the opportunity to explore radical experiences of incarceration, how the prison cell linked to external spaces, and examine the role of memory and commemoration.

7.2 BREAKFAST POWDER AND PEEPING INTO PRISON: THE BASTILLE EXPLOITS OF HENRY HUNT

During his two-year imprisonment in Ilchester Gaol (figure 66), Hunt (figure 67) wrote copious correspondence and busied himself producing publications. Alongside these efforts, he attempted to produce and promote a new business venture: breakfast powder. Hunt is a difficult individual with which to grapple due to his multi-layered and at times contradictory identity. Hunt presents the welcome challenge of someone who emphasises the existence of personalities, insider/outsider status, and carefully managed his public persona. This section explores the methodological and theoretical difficulties and issues in analysing the multi-faceted identities of an individual whilst trying to tie it back to material culture. It does this through analysing his relationship and identity with female reformers, the breakfast powder venture, and his attempts at prison reform, using his published correspondence to reformers which he released in a monthly volume as well as various other sources.



Figure 66: The Northwest view of Ilchester Gaol (Hunt 1820; NUL/942.073 HUN). Taken from Hunt's memoirs, this engraving highlights various parts of the gaol, including where Hunt resides.



Figure 67: Henry Hunt (Wiche 1822). Painted whilst in prison, Hunt holds a copy of a report on Ilchester Gaol and an excise for roasted corn (breakfast powder) is on the writing desk.

McCalman (1999) captured Hunt's essence, 'With his burly frame, stentorian voice, rakish reputation, theatrical flamboyance, and blunt farmer's idiom, Hunt managed to project the image of a John Bull-like radical patriot whose white top hat remained a radical icon long after his own eclipse'. He was a gentleman farmer and first found national renown through his involvement in Spa Fields (Cannon 2009). In later life, Hunt became member of parliament for Preston (Wright 2006). Alongside William Cobbett, Hunt was arguably the most well-known and influential radical of the post-Napoleonic period (Tilly 2015). This continued after Hunt's death into the Chartist period where calls were quickly made for a monument to be erected in his honour (Poole 2018, 201).

Historians have not always been kind to Hunt. Zamoyski (2014, 143) described him as 'vain, self-serving and arrogant'. Indeed, Bamford (1967, 349) reflected on the end of his relationship with Hunt, 'as I no longer suited his purpose, he had done with me, and I gained the loss of his friendship'. Tempering this slightly, Roberts (2013, 30) has highlighted how many of the radical figures or heroes celebrated by the Chartists were 'outspoken, cantankerous, arrogant, freethinking, and independent' to varying degrees, making Hunt in this respect part of a group who struggled to manage their egos. As an avid writer of correspondence and pamphlets, as well as his memoirs, Hunt left a rich documentary record that provides an insight into his life lived through material and spatial experiences. Hunt wrote his memoirs whilst in prison – contained in a restricted space relying on imaginary landscapes in order to communicate and recollect. Despite Hunt arguably being especially egoistical during his imprisonment, Belchem (1985, 133) argues the prison writings are some of the most crucial Hunt wrote and there is a need to explore the texts beyond the obvious arrogance. Whilst he most likely had some form of reference through newspapers, pamphlets, and journals, the role of memory is very apparent in his writing.

For example, one way in which memory features is in accounts of early life. Arguably, one of the important aims of Hunt's memoirs was using his childhood and adolescence as a way of building himself as a trustworthy and honest individual. He utilises his relationship with his parents in tying his identity to respectable people. When discussing his mother, Hunt emphasises her piety, how she would quote 'amiable Christian precept[s]' (Hunt 1820a 51), 'devoted a very great portion of her time to relieving the wants of those who [...] stood in need of assistance' (Hunt 1820a, 50), and 'that if there ever were a human being who acted up to the spirit and letter of Christianity, both in profession and practice, I believe my excellent departed mother to have been that mortal' (Hunt 1820a, 52). Hunt ascribes gendered understandings to his parents with each forging different parts of him:

While my mother was instilling into my mind, and teaching me to practice, the mild and lowly principles of Christianity, my father never failed to hold up for my admiration and example, the exploits of the noble, generous, brave, and renowned heroes of antiquity (Hunt 1820a, 54).

His father was there to mould him into a proud countryman, noting how this love of his country was 'instil[led] into my breast' (Hunt 1820a, 55), but Hunt's father also wanted him to be honest and reliable. One day, instead of visiting his grandfather, the young Hunt decided to play with his friends, a week later when his deception was uncovered, Hunt was 'nearly half kill[ed] for his infamous behaviour' by being flogged by his father. Upon reflection, Hunt decides:

It made the most lasting impression upon my mind, and stamped my determination, at all hazards to speak the truth in future... I have always found that as honesty is the best policy, so is truth in the end always sure to prevail. Although I know I am sent here for speaking boldly and publicly the *truth* (Hunt 1820a, 45).

This process of using the politeness and sensibilities of his parents to emphasise how he became a good man was a way of legitimising his current circumstances of

imprisonment. Various themes extend from this idea of Hunt using the memoirs as a means of constructing himself into a respectable individual who is also a man of the people. Themes of heroism, honesty and trust, and being part of something bigger or a metanarrative are discussed.

7.2.1 HUNT, HEROISM, AND HOME

Building on chapter six, it is possible to examine gender and domesticity further through Hunt's recollections of home. Pinpointing Hunt's masculinity and class is difficult but necessary in order to contribute to scholarly debates on 'gentleman radicals'. Prominent themes in this section are the spatial experiences of the prison cell, constructing a middle-class identity, and remembering Peterloo. Hunt's memoirs characterised femininity as passive and masculinity as active.

Before analysing the prison cell and Hunt's imagined or recollected landscapes, it is worth exploring how he conceived of space beyond the cell, as well as how he constructed his class identity. This will be framed within a discussion on the complications of studying gentry/middle class identities. Space features frequently within Hunt's memoirs. Important settings and places became mediums in which Hunt constructed his identity. The memoir text becomes a space. In his marital home, Widdington Farm near Salisbury Plain, there were rules for proper behaviour, especially towards women:

No language or conversation was ever permitted in my board, to which the most chaste female ear might not listen without a blush... no man was ever permitted to enter my door a second time who once dared utter an indelicate double entendre in the presence of a female; even if that female were only a servant (Hunt 1820a, 325).

Through having such rules, whether adhered to or not, Hunt perhaps portrayed himself as a gentleman as argued by Belchem and Epstein (1997) who categorise Hunt as the gentlemanly radical, although Belchem (1985) previously argued for a

'gentleman farmer' perspective. Thompson (1963, 622-3) also classified Hunt as a gentleman. Cobbett understood Hunt's connection with the countryside, noting Hunt's love of 'country life' (*Cobbett's Political Register* 14th December 1816). A correspondent wrote to the *Manchester Observer* (6th February 1819), stating that Hunt reminded them of an 'independent country gentleman'. Whilst Hunt was not working or labouring class and was in many ways a gentleman, scholarship has started to place too much emphasis on Hunt's gentleman characteristics and does not consider his farming identity, therefore dropping the 'country' aspect. The gentry occupied a complex place in English social hierarchy with their identity being contradictory as it was both simple and opaque (Mingay 1976). Social structure and hierarchy in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were stratified and composed of intricate subdivisions. Barrell (1983, 2) summarises the 'social pyramid', 'There is not one line but many, drawn by those in every station immediately above or below the position that they feel themselves to occupy'. Finch (2019) highlighted the difficulty in quantifying the number and income of the gentry across the modern period, but emphasises how it can be a useful way of understanding landholding patterns. Following this example, Hunt would be placed in what FML Thompson (1963) called the 'squirearchy' (owned 1,000-2,999 acres) as he owned roughly 1,000 acres. Hunt's father was successful in farming, as indeed was Hunt, they were able to rent various farms that took the total to around 3,000 acres which included the rents of tenants (Hunt 1822, 176). The mixture of owning and renting may take Hunt's land over the boundary into the 'greater gentry' category (3,000-9,999 acres) but gentry identity rests on land ownership, something Hunt was not able to increase.

Alongside placing Hunt into the squire category of society, he also fits into 'the Farming Interest', a concept outlined by Barrell (1972, 67). This group were usually owners or renters of smaller estates, agriculture experimenters, literate and learned, and reformist in their politics, and many were members of agricultural societies

(something Hunt was proud of). Hunt's parents wished him to go to Oxford to study and his mother especially wanted him to become a clergyman, but he refused as he wanted to be a farmer (Hunt 1820a, 99-104) making farming and county life an essential part of his identity. Importantly, Hunt (1820a, 107) advocated 'that it is absolutely necessary for a man to be a philosopher, before he can become a good farmer', with this further advancing the argument that Hunt fits into the Farming Interest. He discusses his farming ability with pride, 'I was labouring incessantly in my vocation, as a farmer, and I was now become a complete master of every branch of the profession, there being no part of it that I had not performed with my own hands'. As well as placing much of his identity in farming, Hunt was also a keen improver. He experimented at Widdington Farm in 1801 by successfully growing oat crops on very poor land. His last experience as a full-time farmer was at Cold Henly, where he attempted to follow Tull's Husbandry after encouragement from Cobbett and wasted a great amount of money through drilling to try and produce a better or larger corn crop (Hunt 1822, 151-52). Hunt (1822, 177) explained 'I was induced to expend a large sum of money in improving the farm, from the promises of the cunning, artful, and deceitful old-clergyman' he leased it from. Importantly, it was Hunt's growing political identity and activism which caused him to cease being a full-time farmer. Following his imprisonment, Hunt never returned to full-time farming as he needed to recoup money and improve his finances. Perhaps Hunt's political career overshadowed his farming vocation and country identity. Reform and radicalism are often associated with urban or industrial areas but this brief assessment of Hunt's identity shows how rural or farming individuals were part of post-Napoleonic reform.

Scholarly study of the gentry has typically focused on landed estates and issues of inheritance over other aspects including family relationships and dynamics (French and Rothery 2012) and gender generally, with the exception being Vickery's (2006)

study of women's experiences. If we accept that Hunt is in the squire strata of society, then even less work has been conducted on understanding their gender. There are difficulties in analysing squire/gentry masculinities. Typically, squire/gentry masculinities have been pigeon holed into 'trickle-down' aristocratic identity and considered in opposition to the 'bourgeois' or emergent/ascendant middle class (see Tosh 2002). However, if we accept the squire/gentry are middle-class, what does Hunt incorporate from other forms of the middle-class? This question arguably arises from the division in scholarship between historians of the long eighteenth century and the nineteenth century who approach class differently (August 2011). Furthermore, studying Hunt's social standing is a process of untangling as he lived in the transition period of the aforementioned scholarship. Based on the linguistic turn, using autobiographical texts allows class to be understood in relation to language. Gray (1986, 365) emphasises 'we need to see language as actively constitutive of social identities and based on political mobilisation'. A defining characteristic of the middle-classes of the nineteenth century was reform in numerous ways but importantly these were often 'bound up in moulding the urban working classes' (Goodlad 2001, 591): to what extent are Hunt's reforming principles bound up in this principle and advocacy?

One of the challenges of studying autobiographical text is grappling with how individuals wish to be seen or read; this links to people having identities/multiple selves rather than a singular self (Mead 1934; Stryker and Burke 2000). Autobiographical text records how an individual progresses or exists within the social world, permitting the analysis of human agency, whilst importantly helping the researcher resist the urge to generalise and classify to the expense of individuality and social dynamics (Evans 2013). Subsequently, the analysis is not interested in ascertaining whether events actually happened, but how including them impacts the self-construction of identity. This pays homage to discourse analysis which

understands language as active not neutral which produces a 'communicative event' (van Dijk 2001) and text produces a way of understanding the world both by author/producer and reader/consumer (Griffin 2013). Hunt's memoir constructed an understanding of the world (and himself) for himself whilst also producing an understanding for myself, the consumer. Hunt, the insider, is constructing himself in one respect and presumably for a particular purpose whilst I, the researching outsider, would recognise Hunt as being middle-class and bourgeois. Therefore, what is Hunt producing through his numerous attempts at distancing himself from the middle-class with this being apparent throughout the memoirs (see Hunt 1823, 40-41, 206) as well as explicit exclusion from the gentry (see Hunt 1821[2003], 15-16)?

It is worth considering temporality in his constructed identity. The memoirs cover his life before his political venture, but by being written in prison, serve a particular purpose of presenting himself as a respectable citizen of society who has been wrongly imprisoned. During his accounts of his married life, Hunt presents himself as the archetypal gentleman. The emphasis on running a proper and polite household, as well as being 'a dashing figure' who was involved in hunting, riding, receiving guests, and the country social circle (Hunt 1820a, 304-5; Hunt 1822, 42-3), links to values that were championed and performed by the middle-class in this period. Hunting was seen as an activity that embodied the virtues of the Enlightenment (Finch 2004) and partaking in sport was a way of reforming a man into a moral and fit middle-class version of masculinity (Moore 2013). In his characteristic arrogant style, Hunt (1820a, 180, 223-225; Hunt 1823, 42-3) emphasised how well run his farm was, and linked his arguments to the ideology of improvement prevalent in agriculture (see Tarlow 2007). These highlight how Hunt performed his gentrified identity and attempts at being part of polite society pre-politics. Hunt discusses improvement:

I have before mentioned that I was a member of... the Bath and West of England Agricultural Society; and, as a farmer, possessing, perhaps, the very best and largest stock of Southdown sheep, having my extensive farms cultivated under my own eye in such a manner, as to be more like a garden than like a large arable farm, that farm, of course, producing its produce in the market at all times of a superior quality; I had been often asked, why I did not exhibit some of my stock, and claim some of the numerous prizes for good husbandry, which were annually given by the society? My answer was this, "I pay my guinea a year, that I may have an opportunity to watch the motions of those gentry who have the management of the *concern*, and to see how the *pegs and wires* work" (Hunt 1821[2003], 198-99).

In amongst the bragging, Hunt highlights his desire to keep up to date with agricultural innovation and discourse. Again, we can see the importance of farming within Hunt's identity. In this instance, being a member of a club, conversing in gentry circles, and farming prowess allowed Hunt to flex his ideal identity.

Accusations of indecency and immorality were frequent against individuals involved in reform meaning Hunt made efforts to construct himself as a sensible socialite. Hunt separated from his wife, and received frequent criticisms from the loyalist press for his sexual habits for openly cohabiting with Catharine Vince (Belchem and Epstein 1997, 180). Cobbett and Hunt would sometimes have heated arguments and falling outs, Cobbett denounced Hunt stating, 'Beware of him! He rides about the country with a whore, the wife of another man, having deserted his own' (Melville 1913, 13; figure 68). Mrs Cobbett, wife of Cobbett, felt uncomfortable with Hunt being in her house due to his 'immoral connexion' and her hatred of infidelity (Huish 1835, 430-1). During his imprisonment, Hunt was treated differently than fellow political prisoners because of his romantic relationship with Vince who was not permitted to visit him in his private room. This was a point of contention to him as

Johnson and Bamford were afforded this in Lincoln with their wives (Hunt 1820b). Belchem (1985, 135) argues the absence of Vince during his imprisonment was part of the reason why Hunt behaved the way he did: paranoid, inflated sense of self-importance, and argumentative. The prolonged experience of solitary confinement likely did impact Hunt's mental health and he was cut off from radical and familial relationships due to being isolated in Ilchester away from the north and London. The social conservatism of the time, and indeed some reformers, meant Hunt's campaign to have Vince visit and stay was not roundly supported. Perhaps Belchem is too lenient with Hunt in emphasising that the prison stay was the cause of the ego inflation: Hunt was undoubtedly egoistical and concerned with this public image prior to prison. However, this separation from Vince, as well as being severed from the face-to-face conversation with other reformers, would have impacted Hunt, as did the physical and spatial restrictions of prison.

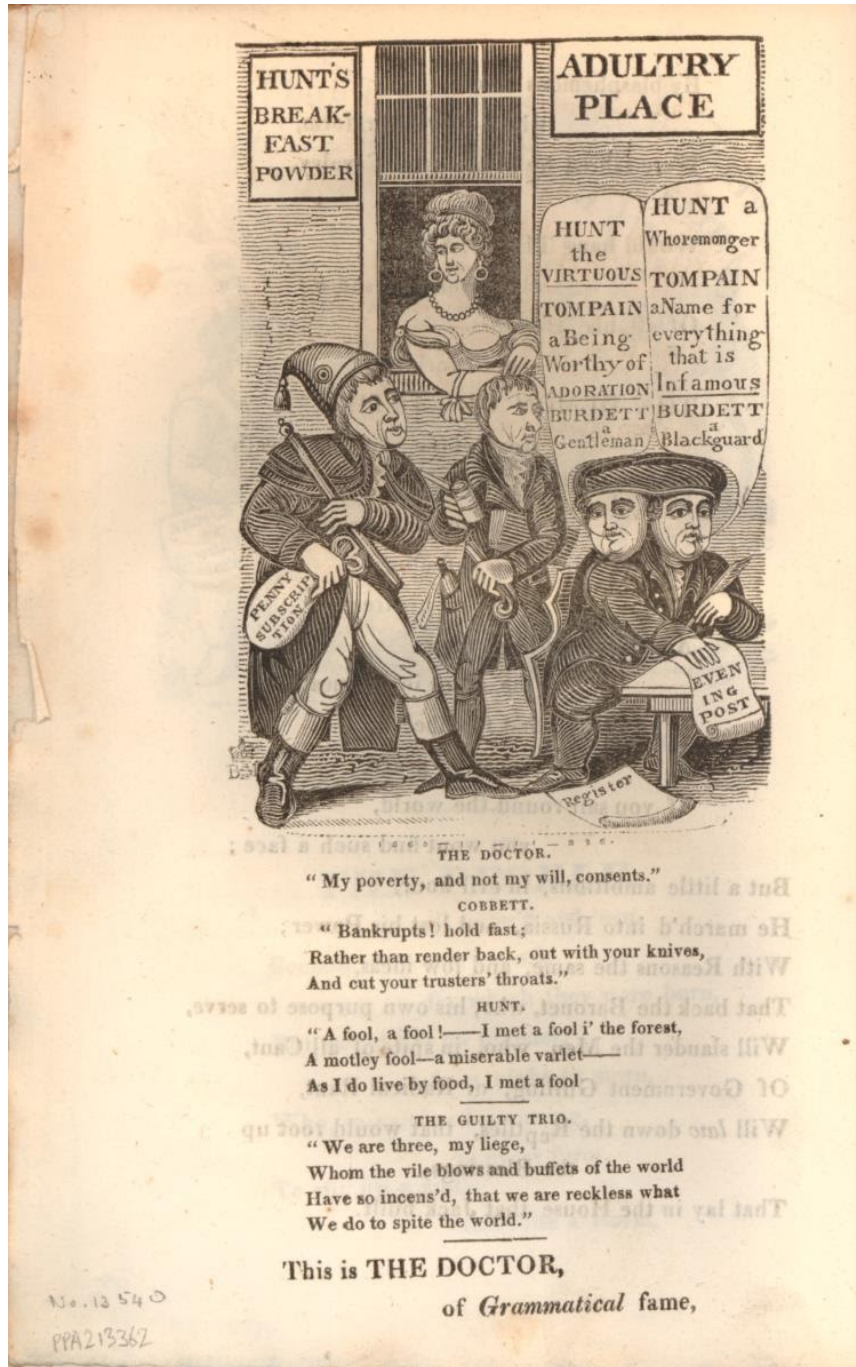


Figure 68: This is the doctor of grammatical fame (Anon 1820). The conservative and loyalist press leaped upon the apparent two-facedness of Cobbett who flit between praising his fellow reformers to denouncing them. Here the artist references Cobbett calling Hunt a 'whore' in 1813.

Through reflecting on his life, Hunt used memories that helped him build a narrative in which he was destined to be the hero of political reform, whilst also giving purpose to his incarceration. The idea of heroism is a common trope throughout the memoirs. Hunt slips in an account of when he heroically saved a man from drowning and that he had previously saved a suicidal woman (Hunt 1821[2003], 82-3). During his childhood, he learned to appreciate classical heroes from his father. One day as a boy, he was reading aloud to himself Hector's speech to Andromache, but was interrupted by his father. Rather than stop, Hunt was encouraged to continue which drove his father into a rapturous and joyful frenzy, leading to him apparently proclaim:

The name of HUNT will again be recorded in the page of history, and I feel that you, my dear boy, are destined to restore the fame of our family; and I hope to live to see you prove yourself worthy of your ancestors (Hunt 1820a, 55).

His ancestors were considered heroic through their actions in the English Civil War, with his great-grandfather being imprisoned for his royalist support following the establishment of Cromwell's government. Whilst Hunt does not consider his ancestors' attempts at restoring Charles II lawful, and deems Charles I's execution the moment where a 'tyrant was ultimately brought to justice' (Hunt 1820a, 21), he enjoys telling the adventurous escape of Colonel Hunt, his grandfather. Colonel Hunt escaped imprisonment as his sister Margery dressed him in women's clothes and slept in his cell the night before his execution. After staying the night in a collier's cottage, he made his way to France to meet Charles II. Importantly, there is a sense of place and belonging involved in this account that ties Hunt's imprisonment to his ancestors. Hunt marvels at the idea that:

Colonel Hunt was sent back after trial to be executed at this very jail, and possibly might have been confined, if not in the same room, upon the very same spot wherein his descendant is now writing the account of the

transaction, which has been descended by tradition and written documents to him as the heir of the family (Hunt 1820a, 27).

Therefore, Hunt effectively turned the prison space into place by associating memory and personally connecting to his surroundings. It also produces a narrative of purpose, explaining Hunt's imprisonment. Hunt presents as a Christian and uses Christian language. For example, he utilises a common reform phrase that Christ was 'the greatest reformer of them all' (Hunt 1821[2003], 28). Occasionally, Hunt hinted God has ensured an occurrence ('I know my own business, and now I have, thank God, got it once into my own hands' (Hunt 1822b, 15) and Divine intervention/will (Hunt 1823, 199, 202-03). This is not to suggest a belief in a Protestant predestination, instead, it suggests Hunt aligned himself as being part of something greater or God's plan. Richard Carlile perceived Hunt's Christian identity as a front:

We never heard a word about your religion until you got to Ilchester Gaol... you made a sad mistake in representing your solitary confinement to be like the solitary confinement of Jonah in the whale's belly... Several little things connected with your religion in the course of publishing your memoirs would have been worth noting down for reference (*The Republican* 12th April 1822).

This exception to Hunt's Christianity by Carlile extends from a public spat between the two men but it highlights how careful Hunt was in constructing his image in the memoirs. Through recounting these family memories linked to the prison, Hunt found comfort in there being purpose behind his imprisonment.

Throughout the memoirs, contemporary events and individuals are mentioned, as Hunt weaves his own life story into a wider narrative. For example, he described the Battle of Trafalgar and mourned the loss of Nelson (Hunt 1821[2003], 74-75) and studied famous historical figures once he began to find an interest in politics (Hunt 1821[2003], 77). Heroism extends to other reformers, including Sir Charles Wolseley and John Knight, but within the narrative, Hunt presents himself at the forefront. In

an account of when Hunt ran for election in Bath, he emphasises the support he gathered in person and at various meetings. However, on the day of the election, he stood at the hustings waiting for his supporters, but people who had pledged to support him were nowhere to be seen or would not be seen to speak with him (Hunt 1821[2003], 193). The masculinity is implicit throughout this, performed through class activities, domesticity and embodiment. Fixating on heroism and being part of something larger than the individual demonstrates a desire to be gallant, active, and a guardian, whether in domestic space to women or in a reform meeting to the working-classes. Although I have been unable to attach certain pieces of fiction to Hunt's memoirs, it is possible Hunt relied on common tropes within Regency popular and gothic literature. In the late eighteenth/early nineteenth-centuries, central characters were often marked by being genteel and possessing sensibility (Kelly 1985). Of course, the memoirs are not gothic through the lack of the supernatural and other markers of the genre, instead, the focus is on the male protagonist. The narrative is centred around a male and masculinity, especially a narrative that 'concentrates on the life and progress of a male protagonist' (Tiranasawasdi 2010, 108). However, Ellis' (1989) understanding emphasises how the main male protagonist often experiences exile or social exclusion from private, domestic, and public spaces, with this reading of Hunt placing his own story, masculinity, and exclusion through imprisonment as running parallel to popular fiction of the time.

It is interesting to wonder how such a dynamic occurred outside the domestic space and in the radical, especially as Hunt states, 'I have always been one of those mortals who think that women were formed to participate in all our rational pleasures and amusement' (Hunt 1820, 324). Hunt's interaction with various groups of female reformers provides a crucial material element to explore. At Peterloo, the female reformers aimed to give Hunt a new banner they had made and deliver an address (figure 69). Manchester Female Reformers featured in other ways too:

We very soon met the Manchester Committee of Female Reformers, headed by Mrs. Fildes, who bore in her hand a small white silk flag. These females were all handsomely dressed in white... Mrs. Fildes... was taken up at my suggestion, and rode by the side of the coachman, bearing her colours in a most gallant stile. As, though rather small, she was a remarkably good figure, and well dressed, it was very justly considered that she added much to the beauty of the scene; and, as she was a married woman of good character, her appearance in such a situation by no means diminished the respectability of the procession [...] (Hunt 1822, 612).

The interplay between male and female reformers provides a moment to consider. Hunt emphasises Mrs Fildes' body through physical features and material additions. There was an implicit binary in considering the beauty of the body alongside character, with the two creating the whole. Importantly, Mrs Fildes, although being discussed on an individual level, was seen as part of something larger. The body features elsewhere too. Upon Hunt's release from the 'Lancaster Bastille' along with other radicals, there was a large procession through Lancashire. This stopped overnight in Bolton where the Bolton Female Reformers addressed Hunt and were so incessant in their demand, Hunt relented to their wish of hand drawing his carriage out of town (*MC* 2nd September 1819). Handpulling was a highly performative and symbolic gesture. It was usually the preserve of males making this a noteworthy spectacle. Female reformers felt the need to suitably honour their radical hero.

FEMALE REFORMERS.

The following is a copy of an Address, which it was the intention of the Female Reformers of Manchester to have presented to Mr. HUNT, along with a new banner, on Monday last :—

TO HENRY HUNT, ESQ.

CHAIRMAN OF THE REFORM MEETING IN MANCHESTER.

“ SIR—Permit the Female Reformers of Manchester, in presenting you with this flag, to state, that they are actuated by no motives of petty vanity. As wives, mothers, daughters, in their social, domestic, moral capacities, they come forward in support of the sacred cause of liberty—a cause in which their husbands, their fathers, and their sons, have embarked the last hope of suffering humanity. Neither ashamed nor afraid of thus aiding you in the glorious struggle for recovering your lost privileges—privileges upon which so much of their own happiness depends—they trust that this tribute to freedom will animate you to a steady perseverance in obtaining the object of our common solicitude—a Radical Reform in the Commons House of Parliament. In discharging what they felt to be an imperative duty, they hope that they have not ‘overstepped the modesty of nature,’ and they shall now retire to the bosoms of their families with the cheering and consolatory reflection, that your efforts are on the eve of being crowned with complete success.

“ May our flag never be unfurled but in the cause of peace and reform, and then may a female’s curse pursue the coward who deserts the standard.”—August 16, 1819.

Figure 69: A copy of the address and presentation that the Manchester female reformers intended to deliver at the Manchester meeting to Mr. Hunt (MP 23rd August 1819).

Female reformers and Hunt corresponded with open letters written whilst Hunt was imprisoned. The Manchester Female Reformers wrote:

Our Tyrants have immured you in a dungeon and we have enshrined you in our hearts. [Italics original]. Never Sir, shall we cease to pray for your happiness and welfare (Hunt 1820, 13).

They also acknowledge support for Queen Caroline:

We are but Women, it is true, but if our unnatural enemies appear to despise us on that account – we have only the instance the case of our brave and matchless Queen (Hunt 1822b, 6).

The female reformers must have empathised and felt some form of connection with Queen Caroline due to attacks on her sexuality and accusations of adultery. For

Hunt, whether as a quirk of the writing style or because the letter did actually help, he responds:

Such an unequivocal proof of the zealous support and attachment of the brave and enlightened females of Manchester has indeed illuminated my dungeon and chased away the pestilential vapours of the petty tyrants' malice (Hunt 1820b).

This was connected to Hunt's idea of femininity being about alleviation and light. When discussing his prison cell, Hunt contrasts the darkness, absence of air and sunlight, and the severe confinement with how 'the admission of the female branches of my family' softens this experience (Hunt 1820, 472). Both the physical and material presence of women, and femininity, impacted upon Hunt's perception of the space. Of course, this could be about presenting a genteel identity as much as actual experience, with this being another example where it is difficult to unpack Hunt the published identity and his private thoughts.

7.2.2 'ONCE MORE I BREATHE THE FRESH AIR': HUNT'S PRISON CELL

The analysis has focused thus far on how Hunt constructed his identity temporally through his pre-political life and in relation to female reformers. However, it is also worth further exploring his lived experience of imprisonment and the process of remembering and writing. The prison cell occurs within the memoirs as both a real and imagined space, as lived and written, with this complex relationship providing a point of an analysis. As will be highlighted, Hunt placed his prison cell into imagined and notable landscapes, making the space transcend its confines.

Hunt linked the confined space of the prison cell and its limited experiences to notable individuals and distant landscapes, constructing the cell as a form of oppressive persecution rather than deserved punishment. Woven throughout the memoirs were references to contemporary events and Bonaparte. These admonish or criticise contemporary rulers (or 'tyrants') and demonstrate how reform was

necessary. The chance of peace was lost when Britain warred with Napoleon, and it will only occur once reform is achieved (Hunt 1823, 83). When discussing Napoleon's marriage and divorce to Josephine, 'Napoleon boldly avowed his love for Josephine, and acquitted her of all suspicion of blame; instead of becoming the dastardly assassin of her character... he continued to cherish... protect her to the last' (Hunt 1821[2003], 176). Hunt connected his own experience to Napoleon's to legitimise his separation from his wife. This appreciation of Napoleon's character is because of Hunt's own perceived failings and how he still felt the need to defend his actions (Hunt 1821[2003], 26-28). Hunt saw idealised masculinity in Napoleon: he is the most referenced individual in Hunt's memoirs, with over 160 mentions across three volumes. Hunt drew parallels with Napoleon through composing memoirs during incarceration, although he also found parallels with Sir Walter Raleigh 'and many other patriotic and eminent men who have gone before me' (Hunt 1820, xvii), embedding himself into an imprisonment tradition. In a rambling section defending his admiration for Napoleon, Hunt argues it is not because 'he was a friend of freedom' but it was because of him being a 'brave and noble-minded man':

If I am asked whether I should like to live under such a tyrant and such a tyranny as existed in France... I answer NO. But if I *must* submit to a tyrant, let it be to one that I can look up to, and whose superior qualities I can admire, rather than to a despicable wretch, who has not one noble quality, but, on the contrary, is deserving of contempt (Hunt 1823, 186-195).

These compliments and efforts at drawing parallels occur despite acknowledging and rejecting Bonaparte's tyranny. Through comparisons and weaving Napoleon's battles and other events through his own personal narrative, Hunt linked himself to Napoleon as both were wrongly admonished. It contrasted to his views on George IV and the Hanoverians, 'George the Third was the only King I ever saw, and I never wish to see another King' (Hunt 1823, 201). However, Hunt's statement that he does

not 'eulogise' or praise Napoleon is questionable. At the Smithfield meeting, resolution 14 stated:

That this meeting unequivocally disclaims any share or participation in the disgraceful and cowardly act of the Boroughmongers in placing the brave Napoleon a prisoner to perish on a desert island (*Examiner* 25th July 1819).

This support can be traced to Hunt's parliamentary campaign of 1812 where he argued for ending warring with France, suggesting Britain was fighting Liberty not for it (Belchem 1985, 42). The most explicit evidence for Hunt's admiration, and perhaps desire to receive similar acclamation, can be read in the letter Hunt published upon learning of Bonaparte's death:

True history will faithfully record his deeds, his valour, his unrivalled genius, his magnificence, his justice, impartiality, wonderful capacity in the field and cabinet, his gratitude, his honour, his universal knowledge and skill in the arts and sciences, the first of all men, the most wonderful man to ever existed!
(Hunt 1822b[1821], 29).

Ultimately, Hunt was trying to construct a public character for himself that emulated the positive traits of Napoleon. In Bonaparte, Hunt located an individual who underwent imprisonment and received attacks through the press, whilst of course making an extraordinary impact on the political and cultural landscape of Europe. Within Napoleon's narrative, Hunt found masculinity he deemed worth being associated with and thought it legitimised his own prison experiences, placing himself into a narrative of national significance.

A strange part of Hunt's imprisonment occurred when Saxton visited. Hunt became the first knight of the Order of Saint Henry of Ilchester after being dubbed with a poker by Saxton, who became the second knight. An unnamed Taunton friend of Hunt suggested the idea (Hunt 1822b, 15-16). The plan was to escalate this order nationwide: radical visitors to Ilchester would be knighted but Hunt advised that

large towns have two knights and small towns one to help protect reform against spies and ensure the wellbeing of reformers. Belchem (1985, 146) highlighted how these fit into wider efforts of creating a Great Northern Union, an idea that gained some traction in the 1820s with Charles Wolseley as the treasurer. Support for the Union was found across the north, including York whose reformers sent a £5 donation (*MO* 20th July 1822). This support was definitely not universal. Bamford (1984[1844], 346) commented Saxton thought it was a jest but Hunt took the order and knighting seriously, 'I... escaped the poker being in prison, but we were to have it when we came out'. In an argument between Johnson and Hunt following the publication of Hunt's memoirs, Johnson responded in an open letter 'To Saint Henry of Ilchester' with the conservative press lapping up what happens 'when knaves quarrel, what instructive anecdotes they tell of each other' (*LI* 2nd September 1822).¹⁸ Richard Carlile slammed Hunt¹⁹, arguing his religion was unspoken prior to Ilchester, 'Your Knights of the Order of St Henry of Ilchester, and the pious pilgrimages to the imprisoned saint, must not be forgotten!' (*The Republican* 12th April 1822, 460). Around the time of the knighting, Cobbett and Hunt had another argument.

¹⁸ The quarrel between Johnson and Hunt was over money. Hunt argued he paid for every expense in his time at Smedley Cottage, August 1819, whilst Johnson countered saying he was still owed money (*MP* 23rd August 1822).

¹⁹ The basis of the argument between Carlile and Hunt was the Great Northern Union. Carlile thought it went against Paineite principles and was not based on republicanism. He considered it another Hunt parade of egotism and empty words. Hunt still had enthusiasm and energy for mass mobilisation and pursuing reform through agitation whereas Carlile had grown increasingly in favour of a more intellectual radicalism.

The Examiner (8 September 1822) noted ‘the difference between Messrs. Cobbett and Hunt has it seems, terminated in open hostility’. Cobbett similarly insulted Hunt with a poem titled *To Saint Henry of Ilchester* with each verse picking out a sin or hypocrisy:

MUNCHAUSEN long has borne the prize
From all the *Quacking ‘Squires;*
But, what are all his heaps of lies
To thine, thou prince of liars!

[...]

This is the root of “Union’s tree”
(Thou louder swear’st and louder);
“All to *Reform* must *traitors* be
“That will not buy *my powder.*” (*The Times* 4th September 1822)

The poem also references breakfast powder, with Cobbett insinuating that Hunt was using reform as a vehicle for financial gain. Another reformer expanded on Cobbett’s poem with a ballad:

“Saint Henry,” indeed! Why, then old “tricky blade,”
‘Tis enough to make Englishmen blush,
To find thee sarcastic, a trickster by trade,
And a bolter, by – “buying a brush”. (*Examiner* 22 September 1822)

The tune was set to the duet *Maid in the Mill* from the comic opera *Rosina* (BBO/2806 c.17(257); V31598). The male singing part insinuates that they have not only enjoyed many maids but their infatuation is short-lived. This ballad implicitly mocked Hunt’s relationship with Vince. Unsurprisingly, this episode in radical fallouts was enjoyed by conservatives. The moniker of ‘Saint Henry’ was an easy form of mockery. In recounting the celebratory procession in Preston for Hunt’s release from

prison, *The Westmorland Gazette* (16 November 1822) noted by the time the procession arrived at the bonfire, ‘some unlucky boys and girls were amusing themselves with *punching* the embers out, so that scarcely a spark of the bonfire remained for the poor starved worshippers of *Saint Henry* to warm themselves by’. An anonymous placard on female reformers was discussed in *The Manchester Observer* (31 August 1822). It stated sarcastically that ‘in the absence of the town crier, some person... will stand opposite... to shout out “There goes an Admirer of the protector, Saint Henry”’. Hunt’s attempt to construct a heroic/quasi-religious identity was divisive but was borne out of the feeling of entrapment caused by imprisonment. Although Hunt was confined to a confined space, he still caused ripples in the national radical landscape.

7.2.3 BREAKFAST POWDER

One unusual activity Hunt undertook whilst in gaol were his attempts to continue selling ‘Breakfast Powder’. The venture was successful, despite the initial seizures of grain and manufacturing equipment, but provides an exciting opportunity to explore the interplay between radical consumption, identity, and material culture. It appears Hunt’s Breakfast Powder was first available to buy in January 1820, meaning it began prior to Hunt’s imprisonment. However, the association of breakfast powder and radicalism pre-dated and existed alongside Hunt’s efforts too (figure 70). Thomas Worth, an agent for the radical journal the *Black Dwarf*, had his ‘Radical Breakfast Powder’ (made of red wheat and scotch barley) seized in December 1819 (*NFC* 24th December 1819). Mr Dynes sold his version of the powder in the Ipswich area, frequently advertising it as preferable to coffee (*JJ* 25th January 1823). Debates in Parliament on breakfast powder in 1822 discussed it in terms of ‘persons who sold’ the powder and moved away from directing the conversation purely on Hunt’s efforts (*MC* 27th March 1822). These discussions were finally resolved by enacting a new Excise Act which allowed ‘the manufacture and sale of scorched or roasted corn, pease, or beans, by *persons not being dealers* in coffee, cocoa, tea, tobacco, or

snuff' (RCG 15th June 1822). Once sanctioned, Hunt's Breakfast Powder was sold nationwide, including by Mr Henry Dunsford in Cornwall (RCG 20th September 1823), and breakfast powder appeared to come into general use with the rye going up in price (JOJ 20th December 1823). Hunt's Breakfast Powder was still being sold by at least in 1834 as the Leeds Temperance Society recommended it as a substitute for coffee (LT 10th May 1834) and breakfast powder generally having a connection with radical politics (NS 24th September 1842).

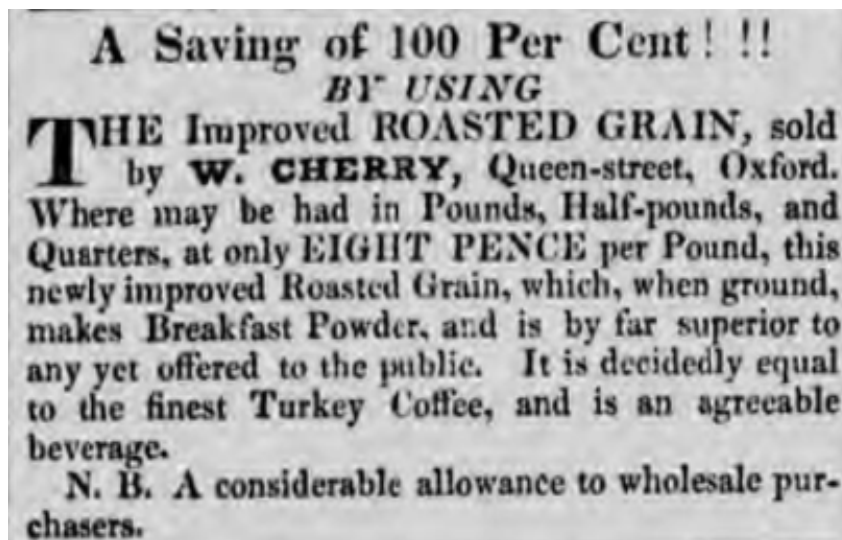


Figure 70: Mr Cherry's breakfast powder (JOJ 8th November 1823)

The conservative press mocked Breakfast Powder. Hunt's other venture of 'blacking polish' was also satirised, with the polish becoming a trope in caricatures and cartoons of Hunt in the late 1820s and 1830s (figure 71). When Thistlewood of the Cato Street Conspiracy (see chapter eight) was arrested, reports included the detail that upon the premises being searched, some Breakfast Powder was found (MP 1st March 1820). In a summary of what radicals were currently pursuing in 1823, Mr Preston was noted as 'tippling Mr Hunt's breakfast decoction' (WG 4th October 1823). Hunt's ability to produce foodstuff was summarised in a letter against him running for M.P., 'Mister Hunt, late adulterating brewer... inventor of the infamous burnt-rye

Breakfaster Powder!' (*MP* 14th March 1820). There were also critiques, especially regarding its 'low price of one shilling to the pound' [emphasis original] and

This breakfast powder consists chiefly of roasted wheat ground, but the nutritious horse bean, and other cheap materials, are called in to complete the preparation and disguise the composition, that the purchasers may not take to making it for themselves... by mixing less expensive materials with it, after the manner of the "Breakfast Powder" manufacturers, the poor may supply themselves for about fourpence a pound with that for which their friends charge a shilling! (*MC* 27th January 1820).

This critique of the price compared to the materials was jumped on by Tory commentators but also rebuked by some radicals. Whilst his published addresses to radical reformers during his imprisonment emphasised how he developed breakfast powder as a nutritious option for those in poverty, this did not convince everyone. Breakfast powder was designed to be a 'salubrious beverage' at 'two thirds less price than any other warm meal they could procure' (Hunt 1821[1822b], 17). Cobbett and Hunt had differing opinions on how best to help the 'suffering' Irish. Hunt sent half a ton of Breakfast Powder:

To the suffering Irish, as a humble subscription from the Captive of Ilchester, has stuck in the gullet of a certain person, who have properly christened himself, "I MYSELF I", alias William Cobbett (Hunt 1821[1822b], 20).

The debate between the two leading radicals has interesting parallels with modern debate on charity work and agency. *The Morning Post* (26th January 1820) accused Hunt of self-promotion in a sarcastic take:

The friends of the people, the advocates of their rights and liberties, are giving a notable instance of their disinterestedness, to the wretched Radicals whose distress they pretend to commiserates... [Breakfast Powder is] prepared, of course, not for the benefit of the vendors, but wholly and solely for the relief of the people.

Even in a trial (discussed further below) for the charge of producing an imitation of coffee, the Solicitor-General noted, despite claims Hunt endured hardship through not being able to continue manufacture, Hunt did make a profit:

Although the Defendant had professed to set up his manufactory on motives of patriotism and benevolence, and for the good of the poor, that he actually took the moderate profit of 300l. per cent. as the reward of his virtues (*MP* 17th February 1821).

It is worth noting breakfast powder did have some support. The radical MP, Sir Robert Wilson, asked in the House of Commons why the prosecution had taken place, as 'he thought, that in these times, such things as these ought not to be taken from the nation' (*MP* 22nd February 1821). The Marquis of Lansdowne also wanted to ensure that if breakfast powder proved wholesome, then Parliament should not be seeking to ban it (*MP* 9th March 1822). Reformers at a dinner to celebrate 'the Triumph of Westminster and Purity of Election' thought it an injustice Hunt had been penalised for producing food which benefitted the public (*MC* 24th May 1822). As with Saint Henry and his knights, breakfast powder became a talking point. With the reform movement beginning to fray in 1820, breakfast powder was a dividing wedge between the leading reformers. The establishment press leaped on another opportunity to demean radicalism and add another quip or political punch to their arsenal.

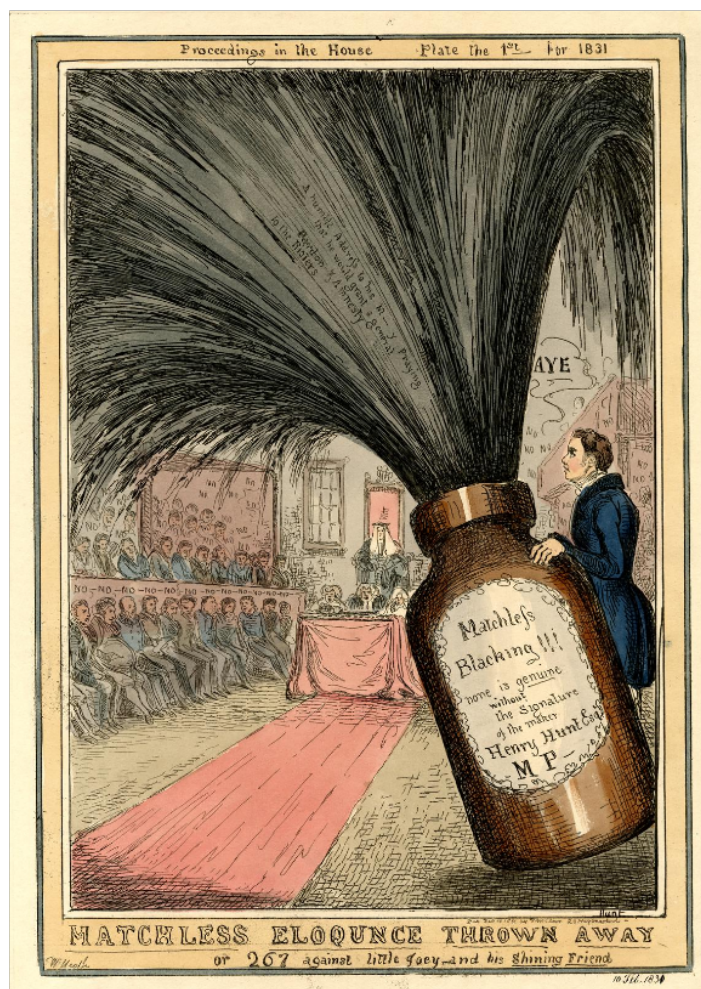


Figure 71: *Matchless Eloquence Thrown Away* (Heath 1831). The shoe polish exploding represents Hunt's oratory.

Over the course of its production, breakfast powder and the manufacturing equipment were seized several times. The first happened shortly after the powder went on sale in February 1820 with Officers of the Excise seizing the apparatus for its production (MC 26th February 1820). Two charges alleged Hunt had produced imitation coffee for the purpose of selling it and for actually selling it. Although *The Examiner* (27th February 1820) generally supported Hunt, there was some humour in the remark, 'We are really surprised at this audacious and malicious attempt to pervert a matter so clear. Whoever mistook this powder for an "imitation" of

coffee?'. Hunt was fined £200 on both counts, with Mr Hill's (representing Hunt) argument that breakfast powder 'never pretended or supposed to be anything else' failing to convince (*FJ* 21st February 1821). These fines were later remitted by the Exchequer through the efforts of Robert Wilson (*BMV* 12th May 1821), but then, despite the Chancellor of the Exchequer saying the fine would not be levied, the Sheriff of Somerset had a writ to pay the fine through selling Hunt's property (*BWJ* 17th January 1822). It appears that the fine may have been carried out to a certain extent as reformers at the Westminster Reform Dinner hoped Hunt would be reimbursed for the penalties (*MC* 24th May 1822). Breakfast powder became a point of 'persecution', with Hunt believing the government were wilfully preventing its manufacture:

Every impediment has been thrown in the way to prevent the manufactory and sale of the roasted grain for making my Breakfast Powder, by the gemmen²⁰ of the Excise Office (Hunt 1821[1822b], 15).

The Roasted Grain Act became a sore point for Hunt. He denied charges made against him that the powder contained other grain or foodstuff than the rye advertised, and denounced the seizure of the manufactured powder and various equipment needed for the process (Hunt 1821[1822b], 18). Later, once the manufacture of breakfast powder was secured by an Act of Parliament, Hunt combatted libel against his rye-based powder which insinuated it was poisonous, winning £200 in damages. Hunt presented a celebratory pound of roasted corn to Mr Scarlett, who represented the defendants and was also the prosecutor in the Peterloo trial (*MP* 18th December 1824). Breakfast powder occupied Hunt during

²⁰ Gemmen is an eye dialect spelling of 'gentleman' (where nonstandard spelling is used to write a word how it is said regionally or dialectally).

prison but also adds further weight to his farmer identity being important to him throughout his political career. Hunt viewed the fines as an attack on himself and reform, with this demonstrating how bound up business, farming, politics, and ego were in Hunt's identity. With breakfast powder, we can see how connected and integrated different spaces were in radicalism. Whilst somewhat isolated in Ilchester, Hunt was still able to be a prominent figure in the national radical and press landscapes.

7.2.4 PRISON REFORM



Figure 72: *A Peep into Ilchester Bastile*, from Hunt's pamphlet *Peep into Prison* (1821b; BL/6057.ee.15.(1.)). It emphasised the poor conditions endured by prisoners, utilising depictions of torture. The jailor is shown holding a whip, stressing the violent use and abuse of power

During his incarceration, Hunt (1821b) campaigned for prison reform through a pamphlet entitled *A Peep into Prison; or, the Inside of Ilchester Bastile* (figure 72). This fits into wider prison and punishment reform movements that gathered pace in the early-nineteenth century (Herrup 2004). It could be linked to reforms occurring in other institutions such as asylums (Fennelly 2014). Dissenting religions also feature in reform movements, with individuals such as John Howard being prominent in their attempts to secure necessary changes through government acts (Chapman 2013), as well as reform movements and efforts for asylums (Porter 2004). Margot Finn's (2007) analysis of Hunt's prison experience as a gentleman

radical emphasises how it fits into radical attempts in this period to construct a narrative from the medieval onwards, especially noting the consistent disapproval of debtors' laws by reformers. Therefore, Hunt's prison reform efforts were not an isolated instance, rather, they fit into a national story.

Other political reformers had also been involved in denouncing prison conditions and seeking change. Sir Francis Burdett (1799, 10-11), in a speech to the House of Commons, emphasised the cruel treatment of prisoners in Cold Bath Fields Prison, noting cells were 'fitter for beasts than men' and the jailor abused his position for gain, 'they receive from his hands... blows, and death by torture'. Calling a prison 'Bastille' was frequently deployed, with this language being adopted by both reformers and non-reformers in describing incarceration. For example, Burdett's 1799 election campaign featured 'Burdett and No Bastille' as the prominent slogan (Sherwood, Neely, and Jones 1802) and James Gillray (figure 73) echoed this language in his satirical take on the Middlesex election. Another MP, Colonel George Williams of Liverpool, also objected to political prisoners' treatment. Williams would visit Nathan Broadhurst (who later founded the Political Union of the Working Classes (Hilton 2008)), smuggling in radical newspapers as a form of resistance. The role of emotion and sympathy were commonplace throughout reform attempts, with efforts to empathise with the poor (McGowen 1987). Overall, it is apparent that Hunt's efforts for prison reform feature within a wider context, and that connections between parliamentary and prison reform existed.

Within historical studies, narratives and interpretations produced on reformers and prison reform have often regarded attempts at reform as about controlling prisoners or creating 'docile bodies' (Foucault 1977), although it is worth remembering that those who received the help of reformers may not have viewed it this way, instead finding parallels between Christian ideals and humanitarian kindness with

neighbourliness and kinship (Rogers 2014). This tension between historical studies highlighting connections between paternalism, class, control, power, and the actual lived experiences of prisoners is something I constantly evaluated throughout this analysis. Whilst this brief context of prison reform highlights various factors about why prison reform was advocated for and who was involved, Hardman (2013) makes a compelling argument for 'molehill' studies of prisons rather than relying only on big names or larger narratives or structures. The 'molehill' approach utilises individual sites and locality over the general or national scale. The following case study of Hunt's call for reforms fits into this individualised historical approach.

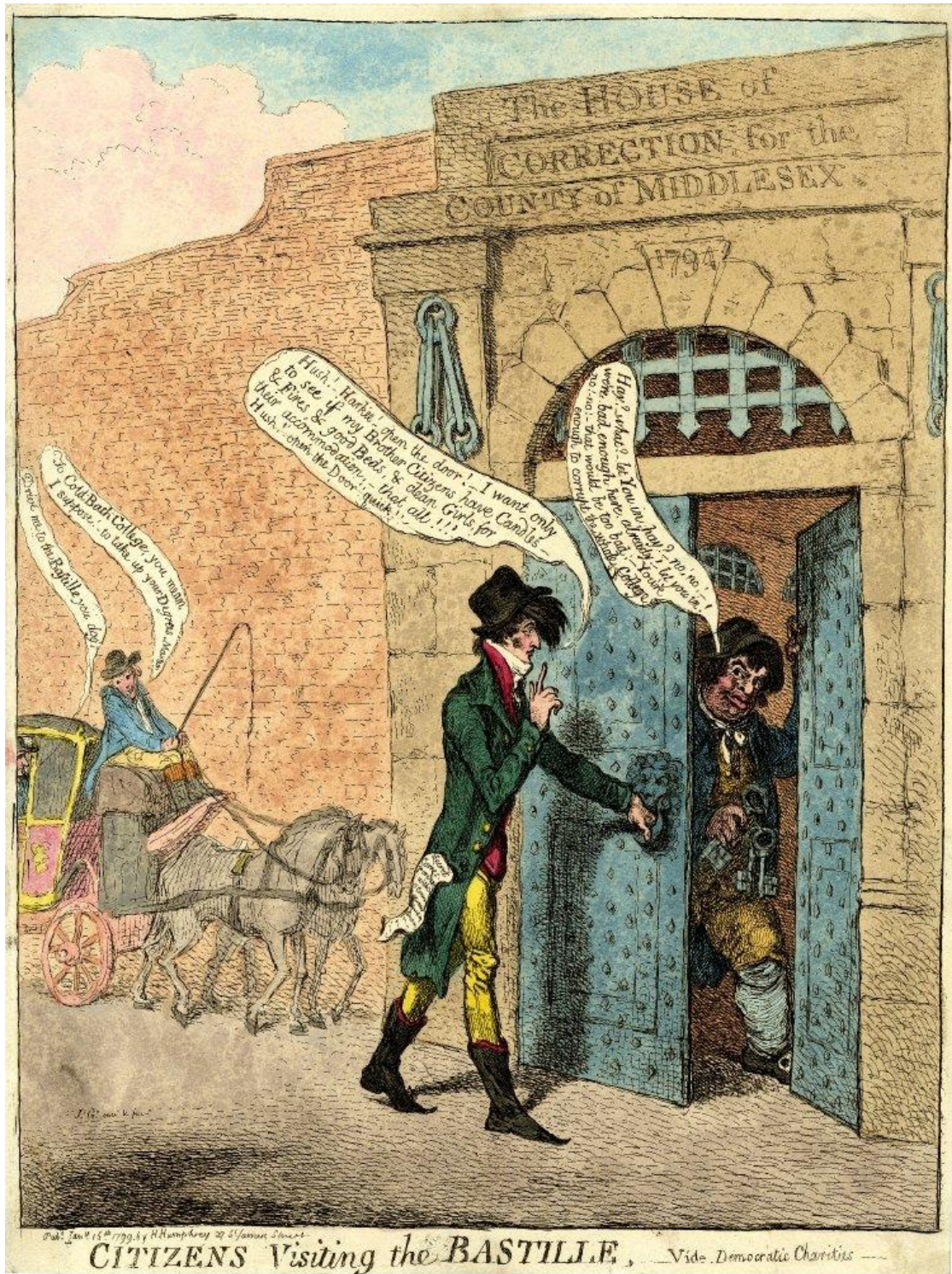


Figure 73: Francis Burdett visits the radicals held at the Cold Bath prison (Gillray 1799).

Ilchester Gaol went through three major phases, with each prison being located in a different part of the town. The first two phases were medieval, a small building near the contemporary High Street constructed in 1166 and, between 1322 and 1429, a larger stone structure was built on the west side of the bridge, with its primary purpose being to hold prisoners who awaited trial. The seventeenth century prison was erected on the north bank of the river Ivel in Northover and underwent various phases of construction. These include an additional 26 cells with staples and rings to chain prisoners in 1789, a wash house and bakery in 1810, and by 1821, the courtyards were subdivided and a factory erected by the female prison. Much of this expansion and modification occurred under the governor William Bridle's instruction, with his efforts focusing on producing opportunities for work for the prisoners by making space for cloth manufacturing and tailoring. The cells were described in some detail in James Neild's survey of English prisons:

Each story containing five cells, 9 feet by 6, and 8 feet 6 inches high, fitted with perforated iron bedsteads, and straw, changed either monthly or oftener, as needful; a blanket, and a coverlet, or rug. Each cell has a double door; the outer iron-gated, the inner of wood... The cells have each a semicircular window, half glazed, half open, with sloping boards, and have a view into the Keeper's garden (Neild 1812, 288).

The prison closed in 1843 and was purchased by the Tuson family who turned the site into gardens. Little remains of the prison, the only buildings to not be demolished were the wash house and the laundry room.

Ilchester gaol had a reputation for being poorly maintained. According to evidence published during Hunt's stay, 4058 (71.4%) of the 5678 prisoners incarcerated between 1811 and 1821 required medical assistance and had been placed onto the sick list (*LVM* 2nd November 1821). The site of the gaol was a major influence on the health of the prisoners. Chosen in the seventeenth century, the spot by the river was

prone to flooding and lack of major repairs or improvements across the eighteenth century also contributed to poor standards of health (*Victoria County History* 1974). However, John Howard, the famous prison reformer, did not remark much on the state of Ilchester upon visiting in 1774. The main comment Howard made was the gaoler had 'very improperly taken' the male prisoners' day room (Taylor 1836, 67). Nor did Neild (1812, 289-90), who stated 'the sewers are judiciously placed, and not offensive' and 'Six only have died during the last seven years', although he emphasised prisoners were subjected 'to many and great inconveniences' through isolation from friends and family, and lack of manufacturing opportunities produced a 'distressed situation'. However, by 1821, the prison was in dire need of repairs. James Hillier, another prisoner, also petitioned the House of Commons for an inquiry to be made into the conditions, citing its location, contaminated water supply, and accusations the gaoler's house was one of debauchery (*HC, 11 April 1821*). During the state inquiry into Governor Bridle's (figure 74) actions, Hillier revealed the brutality of the punishments enforced and the common reality of overly tight cuffs under cross-examination by Hunt (Hunt 1821c, 28). Overall, conditions at Ilchester were poor and in need of improvement, meaning criticisms from the conservative press towards Hunt's efforts can be countered and the harsh reality of the gaol can be considered within the spatial analysis.



W. Bridle Gaoler of Ilchester.

Figure 74: Illustration of William Bridle, Governor of Ilchester Prison, in the transcript of the trial and other documents by Hunt (1821c). Note the deliberate use of gallows, chains, and noose to emphasise cruelty.

Hunt's efforts did not go unnoticed, prompting a media and government response. The Radical and pro-reform press supported the pamphlet's message, Cobbett (*CPR* 9th March 1822) remarked after reading it, 'if any man can read [...], that petition, without feeling his *blood boil*, that man is a tyrant and a base and cowardly villain!'. Even the pamphlet *John Bull* (4th March 1822) supported the cause, despite being friends with Bridle and believing some allegations to be false, although they did use

the opportunity to make a case against Hunt and radicals arguing that the radicals only became interested in helping Hunt once 'a leader likely to be far more popular' had died in Queen Caroline. Beyond the press, it was debated in the House of Commons, with the motion of publishing the evidence taken to the Commissioners of the Inquiry at Ilchester being passed (*MA* 2nd March 1822). The accusations made it to trial. Unfortunately for 'the great green-eyed radical Hunt', the trial resulted in 'mortification' and 'produced a visible alteration in his person' as all charges were deemed unsubstantiated (*MP* 5th July 1821). However, not long after, the gaoler Bridle lost his job (*LM* 4th August 1821) and Ilchester was advertising for a new gaoler, surgeon, and parson (*MC* 3rd October 1821). The dismissal of Bridle suggests conditions at Ilchester were poor and attempts were made to correct issues, including sewage contaminating water supply.

Hunt's complaints focus on the quality of architecture and its spatial layout, considering it to be 'a rude violation of the science of architecture' (1821b, 3). The multi-phase nature of buildings from different periods produced a prison which did not operate efficiently (1821b, 3). One area of concern to Hunt was gendered access, with him expressing fears about segregation and public viewing of prisoners. In order to reach the laundry where they worked, female prisoners had to use the same passage as the males, with this being in view of visitors, therefore (in Hunt's opinion) exposing them to unwarranted masculinity. Issues with segregation even seeped into the prison chapel:

When men who have been prevented intercourse with women for two or three years, and women who have been prevented intercourse with men for two or three years, meet once a week *on the Sabbath in church*, and only be separated by a lattice work partition, it is not to be wondered if indecencies occurred. (Hunt 1821, 5)

Running throughout these observations are concerns for the moral wellbeing of prisoners and the need for each sex to adhere to gendered roles. Hunt emphasised the need for the proper place for marital sex:

The wives of the debtors are permitted to go into the general ward and general sitting room to visit their husbands, but in opposition to the laws of God and nature are not permitted to retire with them in private. This most abominable and obnoxious restriction on an unfortunate and oftentimes an honest debtor, had led to the most revolting scenes (Hunt 1821, 7).

Here, sex, gender, space and decency are entwined. Arguments put forward by Hunt feed into wider reform efforts too, where segregation was enforced in order to encourage inward reflection through penitence (Wilson 2014). Furthermore, the push for gender segregation was gathering pace in the late eighteenth century, being advanced by eighteenth century prison reformers John Howard and George Onesiphorus Paul, and this belief was cemented in law shortly after Hunt's incarceration through the 1823 Gaol Act (Brodie, Croom, and O'Davies 2002). Therefore, Hunt's call for reform was not radical, since it adhered to complaints seen within other prison reformer's rhetoric from the previous fifty years. The above suggestions fit into the 'evangelical' school of prison reform that sought to make prisons moral institutions and advanced gender segregation, partially for sexual purity. Hunt was a Christian and these themes emerge in his writings. If Hunt could believe that it was the Lord's will for him to be imprisoned, it is not a stretch to see him apply the same Providence to other prisoners.

However, despite the religious implications of gender and sexual reform, it is not that straightforward. Sex is important to Hunt. Bamford (1844[1984], 347) argued the only reason why Hunt wanted to help Bamford's wife Jemima cohabit with him during his incarceration was 'he could exhibit it as a precedent for a like indulgence to the lady he co-habited with'. Elsewhere, Belchem and Epstein (1997), as well as

Finn (2007), explored sexual behaviour of political leaders, with there being an evident contrast between the sexual openness of Hunt and Feargus O'Connor with later figures such as William Gladstone, who hid his fascination with sex workers and pornography. The idea of a sexual radicalism is found implicitly throughout radical writing of the early to mid-nineteenth century. Clark (1995) suggests this tendency towards a public sexuality may have been unappealing to the wider working-class. We have already seen how Hunt's separation from his wife was regularly used against him. This desire for sex from Hunt, and only becoming interested in prison reform through experiencing imprisonment himself, strongly suggests Hunt's pursuit of reform may have largely been motivated out of self-interest. This need to make everything about himself was not lost on commentators of the time. In November 1820, a fire occurred at Ilchester Gaol and *The Times* (20th November 1821) remarked upon Hunt's open letter which discussed why a bell the magistrates had ordered to be placed outside his cell had 'mysteriously' almost been removed the day prior to the fire:

Hunt, with his usual conceit imagines that nothing can happen without a special reference to him: if he had been alive at the time of the fire of London, he would have sworn that its only object was to burn him out.

Prison reform, therefore, is another area in which the complexities of Hunt's character and identity are evident. The tension between the desire for cohabitation, arrogance and ego, and the prison environment and conditions produced a drive for prison reform. These elements were inherently entangled and it is difficult to locate the main factor. However, this is not necessarily important to achieve. Rather, Hunt's prison reform efforts emphasise his identities of public reformer and private gentleman as well as the intersection between these competing performances.

The material culture of the prison and its space were of course instrumental aspects of Hunt's prison experience. However, it is worth summarising how these shaped his

experience and his conceptions of the outside world. The poor conditions in the prison certainly pushed Hunt to demand an inquiry into Ilchester and to turn his hand to prison reform. The small cells with their basic furnishing produced the intended effect of confinement and isolation. On Hunt, this arguably influenced or encouraged the process of remembering and writing his memoirs with his memories acting as a medium to imagine landscapes and life beyond the cell walls. It also facilitated letter writing, making the cell a focal point in the radical network. Therefore, the cell space was transcended into various landscapes through engaging with reading, writing, and remembering. Being part of a writing network allowed Hunt to continue his *Breakfast Powder*. The venture and prison reform, highlights tension between his class, ego, and the want to help others. Overall, in order to combat the spatial restrictions and harsh material culture, Hunt utilised the materiality of writing. Hunt's experience was arguably more shaped by the spatial restrictions of the cell and prison and its conditions but the material culture of letters, pamphlets, addresses, and books were his main source of support, ensuring he was still part of the radical network and connected to the outside.

7.3 'IN THE NAME OF GOD WHO MADE US, LET US PERISH, OR BE FREE!': BAMFORD'S BASTILLE BALLAD

Born in Middleton, sometime in the late eighteenth century, Samuel Bamford (figure 75) was an important member of the post-Napoleonic reform movement. Weaver by trade, he received a grammar school education through his father's position as master of the Manchester poorhouse (Hewitt and Poole 2000, x). His wife, Jemima, was an important individual throughout Bamford's life. They married in 1812 after Jemima fell pregnant and she was a loyal supporter of the reform cause (Bamford 2014, 132). Bamford wrote on a variety of topics, especially poetry (Bamford 1819; 1834; 1864), but also autobiographies (Bamford 1984[1844]; 1849), on walking (1844) and Lancashire customs (1850). He was a passionate walker and proud of Lancashire dialect, with his poetry reflecting both these themes. Importantly,

Bamford was at Peterloo and is the only known poet to have witnessed the events and subsequently composed verse about it. Bamford denied having written on Peterloo, despite writing numerous poems that were published in a variety of radical newspapers (Gardner 2007). Some poems were an explicit call to violence:

TOUCH him, aye! touch him, if you dare;
Pluck from his head one single hair –
Ye sneaking, coward crew:
Touch him – and blasted be the hand
That graspeth not a vengeful brand,
To rid our long oppressed land
Of reptiles such as you. (*Touch him!*, Bamford 1864 [1820])

Hilton (1984) interprets Bamford's denial of having written poetry on Peterloo as linked to his later autobiographical work being carefully constructed to distance himself from his radical militant past. Bamford was aware of the writing he had produced but he attempted to reshape his public identity, especially in response to Chartism. Furthermore, his *Passages in the Life of a Radical*, whilst earning him the title of 'the greatest chronicler of nineteenth century radicalism' (Thompson 1968, 637), were seized upon by the middle-classes in response to Chartism as a propaganda tool (Hewitt 1991). Bamford arguably wrote *Passages* partly as a piece of anti-Chartist work, especially as he felt Chartists did not educate themselves about the past nor recognise the previous efforts of reformers (Hewitt and Poole 2000). These are important caveats to consider within the following analysis of Bamford. He produced an array of literature across the nineteenth century meaning an understanding of memory, self-reflection, and presentation of the self all need to be accounted for – just as Hunt's output requires critical review. Bamford was arrested in April 1817 on charges of treason and sedition, with reports labelling him as a 'Reform Delegate' (an individual who represented an area or society at a meeting) in the midst of a revolutionary environment that sought to commit

violence against property and persons in Manchester, (including Mr Joseph Nadin who was the chief constable at Peterloo and who arrested Hunt on the hustings (LG 5th April 1817). He was imprisoned and wrote about his experiences in *An Account of the Arrest of Samuel Bamford*. The prison space was not a new one to Bamford when he reached Lincoln in 1820.



Figure 75: Photograph of Samuel Bamford, c. 1872. (GB127.m72234).

Bamford's recollections of his post-Peterloo prison experience were constructed long after the event, sketched out in his autobiography *Passages* some 22 years later. Although put together as a collection of events and experiences, it is written in a dramatic and colourful style, which blends together the historical, autobiographical, and sensational. Bamford's prison experiences offer a challenge of critically analysing sources and then weaving them together due to the varying temporality of sources available and how memory impacted on his recounted experiences. As highlighted by Gleadle (2004, 496), 'Bamford's diary provides for a more textured account of the complex interplay between gendered preoccupations, radical programmes, and reforming culture'. Gleadle challenges previous interpretations by Hall (1992) that Bamford conformed to purely traditional and masculinist roles in his marriage to Jemima, instead suggesting that everyday experiences are more nuanced than the 'separate spheres' model by providing examples of when Bamford took the domestic role, cared for her during illness, and helped to preserve the domestic networks through letter writing. Whilst written with a certain audience in mind, *Passages* does not have its integrity undermined, rather it means approaching the source in a different manner and reading it with constant awareness of the temporality. Furthermore, there needs to be recognition of how, through *Passages*, Bamford was writing a space into which he could write a new or ideal identity. This can be combined with close reading of the poetry he wrote whilst incarcerated, adding an interesting multi-source element.

Before exploring Bamford's experiences, it is worth providing some context on the prisons in which he was held for a period of twelve months in 1820-1821. King's Bench Prison was a place of brief incarceration where Bamford met Wolseley, who was sentenced to confinement for eighteenth months in Abingdon for his speaking role at the Stockport reform meeting of July 1819 (*MP* 16th May 1820) as their sentencing happened on the same day at the King's Bench (*TEFP* 18th May 1820).

Bamford (1984, 313-14) provides an interesting description in which the spatiality of the prison becomes linked to class and social structures:

It seemed to be an epitome of the great world we had left, only there were not any spinning or weaving going here... but all the degrees of luxury and want...: all the extremes and contrarities of our English condition might here be observed.

King's Bench was a profit-making prison and a microcosm of London society. After his brief stay, Bamford was relocated to Lincoln Castle Prison with Johnson and Healey. It was built within the walls of the medieval castle in 1787. Bamford, along with Johnson and Healey, were not kept in separate cells but instead were in an 'apartment' in the debtors' area of the gaol, providing more freedom than other prisoners.

Prison identity was closely linked to Bamford's reform experience as it was a relatively frequent occurrence in his life, 'He has been confined in a great number of English prisons, for the cause of reform than any other Englishman living' (Thompson 1841, 283). Therefore, Bamford's politics resulted in him forsaking his love of open spaces. The English landscape, especially the countryside, were important themes in Bamford's writing. The confinement of prison and exercise yard with the expansive countryside and long walks Bamford undertook following his release from prison demonstrate a fundamental tension. Higgins (2014, 65) highlights tension in Bamford's *Passages* between liberty to roam and the fear and suspicion of travelling, the 'idyllic countryside as a repository of Englishness, but also... wandering through the English countryside as perilous and constrained'. Bamford explores this tension in his later works, retrospectively to his 1810s experiences.

As already noted, Bamford's identity was connected to the love of the countryside and his poetry also explores this theme. Bamford's poetry often works within a

scalar approach, going from the small flower, to a particular landscape, to a natural event such as a season as in *To a Snowdrop*, Bamford (1864) joyfully welcomes the flower's appearance in the countryside. It is clear within his poetry that he is attached to the landscape around Manchester. In *A View from Tandle Hill and Hymn to Spring* (Bamford 1843), this appreciation and love of nature is apparent:

And, lo! what a world is before me spread,
From the fringed dell to the mountain head!
From the spangled turf, whereon I stand,
To the bend of heaven and the verge of land!
Like an ocean cradle deep it lies;
To the right, to the left, dark hills arise,
And Blackstone-Edge, in his sunless pride,
Doth York from Lancaster divide;
Whilst, on to the south if away we bear,
Oh! what shall bar our progress there?
Nought, save the blending of earth and sky,
Dim, and afar as eternity! (A View from the Tandle Hills, Stanza 3)

By dusky woodland side,
 Silent thou rovest;
Where lonely rindles glide,
 Unheard thou movest;
Wide-strewing buds and flowers,
By fields, and dells, and bowers,
'Mid winds and sunny showers,
 Bounteous thou provest. (Hymn to Spring, Stanza 3; Bamford 1843)

Although not written whilst in prison, *Tandle Hills* is an optimistic poem that Bamford can see the hope and promise of reform over the horizon. Radicals would often meet upon Tandle Hill (near Oldham) making this a personal place:

When dusk came... we jumped from our looms and rushed to the sweet cool air of the fields... or the green lane sides... in the grey of a fine Sunday morn, we would saunter through the mists, fragrant with the night odour of flowers and new hay, and, ascending Tandle Hill, salute the broad sun, as he climbed from behind the high moors of Saddleworth. (Bamford 1982, 132).

Bamford's identity is connected to the outdoors and to nature meaning the confinement of a prison cell must have been a stark experience.

On the way to Lincoln prison, Bamford travelled in a four-horse stage coach and he found moving across the landscape at pace enjoyable:

To my great satisfaction, dashing along a broad highway, past meadows, corn-fields, and trees in all the verdure of spring. (Bamford 1984, 316)

The beauty of the outside world is contrasted with the coach conductors, who Bamford labels as having never seen 'two worse-looking fellows' and 'I never, before or since, set my heart so against two strangers' (Bamford 1984, 316-7). Bamford requested that he, Johnson, and Healey be allowed to freshen up and not wear their clasps. He explains that he normally did not care for appearance but he understood the importance of first impressions in a prison (Bamford 1984, 318). Perhaps the impact of the thought of a year's imprisonment was entering Bamford's mind already where he could savour the last look at the changing landscapes, but was preparing his identity for an apartment. Bamford's love of the outdoors features in his prison recollections. He notes how he would join in games of football (Bamford 1984, 334) and recounted a story of the governor's peacock and chick watching an ever-swooping bird of prey getting closer (Bamford 1984, 331). The desire to be part of life beyond the prison wall's led to Bamford appreciating the bells of Lincoln

Cathedral, the 'sweetest toned bells I have ever heard' (Bamford 1984, 322). There are frequent references to walking, lounging, or napping in the yard, suggesting whenever possible Bamford would choose the outside, even if it was a confined space. Compared to other prisons, Lincoln's yard (for the debtors and political prisoners at least) had greenery, and an area of cultivation by some of the felons (Bamford 1984, 321). Love of Lancashire is also apparent as Bamford wore his clogs all winter. Indeed, the clogs were so notable in the prison that upon leaving, Bamford gifted them to the turnkey 'Old Daddy' as there was a tradition to give him a present. The turnkey had begged for them and apparently added them to his collection of curiosities and skulls of executed prisoners (Bamford 1984, 353). Despite being confined, Bamford held onto parts of his identity, performing them as much and often as he could. Bamford countered the confined prison living spaces through hyper-performing parts of his identity with material culture, such as being a clog wearing Lancashire weaver.

Upon arriving at Lincoln, the Bamford, Healey, and Johnson were greeted by John Merryweather, the governor of the prison. They were led to their apartment which had a day room and bedroom that were 'remarkably clean, airy, and agreeable' (Bamford 1984, 319). On the first day after breakfast, they were visited by magistrates and clergymen who asked whether the accommodation was satisfactory: 'we assured them we were perfectly so, and quite grateful for their attention to our comfort' (Bamford 1984, 319) and the prisoners agreed to a set of injunctions, including not circulating publications and discussing political topics. The limited restraints resulted in the three men feeling 'still more pleased than before' (Bamford 1984, 320). This feeling would not last the duration of the imprisonment; Healey accused Bamford of not disclosing all of the money they received for their joint account which 'rendered me during the remainder of my imprisonment, a stranger to the society of my two fellow prisoners' (Bamford 1984, 326).

Bamford's relationships in prison were thereafter directed away from Healey and Johnson to fellow prisoners. Close confinement and extended time spent together was fracturing the relationship they had built rambling and through reform events. Bamford summarised this as 'to ensure the company daily of one we cannot thoroughly esteem, is rather too much for human patience' (Bamford 1984, 332). In Middleton, a rumour circulated that Bamford was actually a government spy and had sold the Peterloo banner to the police for £12 (Bamford 1984, 334). Around this time too Hunt and Cobbett had fallen out again. The falsehood was disproved but it does show how the reform movement was splintering. Of course, Bamford continued to be part of a radical network, receiving a relief fund from friends in Middleton, correspondence and newspapers from Sir Charles Wolseley, and support from Major Cartwright. However, the prison experience and the intensity of close relationships it produced appears to have affected Bamford. Perhaps his sixth time in prison for offences related to his politics was the term which influenced him into being less active in the reform movement.

There is one important relationship which warrants particular attention: Jemima's stay in Lincoln. Prior to this, Jemima and Samuel had a loving relationship. The journey from Manchester to York for the trial, Bamford was joined by his wife and child to Rochdale, he attempted to be cheerful but was reduced to feeling 'darkness' when seeing his wife overcome with emotion and his daughter not understand what was happening (Bamford 1984, 238). The fear of being apart from Jemima is evident in a poem for penned his wife whilst in prison following his sentence at the York trial:

I never will forget thee, love!
When summer sheds her golden ray;
And thou shall be my comforter
Amid the winter's cheerless day!

Oh! they may bind but cannot break,
This heart, so full of thine and thee;
Which liveth only for YOUR sake,
And the high cause of LIBERTY! (Bamford 1864 (written in 1820))

Upon hearing of Samuel's ill health, Jemima endeavoured to visit and a separate apartment was arranged for them. In a strange event, Johnson met Jemima at the gates and rather than take her to see Bamford, he instead took her to his apartment to have coffee with his wife. Jemima was perturbed and left to visit Samuel. Their 'meeting was both mournful and tender' as Jemima cried at the sight of Bamford's health (Bamford 1984, 336). Bamford considered that upon her arrival he 'had one true friend to converse with' (337). She was the 'one most fitted to administer to my wounded mind' (1984, 338). This connection with Jemima and his open declaration of love and affection towards her show the centrality of her, family, and home to his identity. Importantly, Samuel and Jemima decided to walk from Lincoln to Middleton following his release (Bamford 1984, 353-360). They admired the Roman arch in Lincoln, passed the gibbet of Tom Otter, ferried over the Trent, and climbed the height of Hattersage-Grange and looked at Mam Tor. Here Bamford declared he was part of the 'swinish multitude' Edmund Burke discussed as he could poetically see the wind. The book's accounts of Bamford's radical life finish with Jemima and Samuel entering Middleton and embracing their daughter before lighting a hearth at home. The importance of family, landscape, and walking to Bamford's identity and sense of place/belonging, were considered the perfect end to his time in radicalism.

7.4 CONCLUSION

Confinement contributed to the fracturing of the reform cause. Following the waves of radical activity and agitation of the post-Napoleonic years, the State were successful in containing calls for reform. The open, public landscapes of the mass meeting and processions were forcibly shrunk to the size of a prison cell. This change

in the scale of spaces where leading radicals were operating from not only impacted the wider reform movement, it helped to shape and mould Hunt's and Bamford's identities. Hunt's ego became larger and harder to control as the space he had to live in became smaller; the prison space, confinement, and distance from the urban centres of radicalism affected Hunt's conception of his place and position in the reform movement. Breakfast powder and attempts at prison reform were ways of being occupied, engaging with the wider world, and provided reasons to leave the prison. Bamford's prison experiences jaded his radical outlook and should be considered a major contributing factor in his withdrawal from active radicalism. The pressure of prison, his illness, distance from Jemima, and being prevented from enjoying the countryside combined to dismantle his passion for the cause.

Through exploring memoirs, this chapter has been able to examine the imagined landscapes and memories of Hunt and Bamford. Both utilised their experiences as a way of constructing a new identity. Hunt wanted to appear as a martyr – despite not dying for the cause – through emphasising his suffering. He connected his punishment to his family's and likened himself to the exile of Napoleon. Hunt cast himself as the tragic hero whose noble fight results in personal hardship. Although Hunt's egotism was apparent prior to prison, imprisonment made him look inward and he reduced the reform movement to himself (or as its leading light). Breakfast powder and prison reform occupied him, allowing him to further present himself as a champion of change. Bamford's memoirs were written over twenty years later. His 1817 pamphlet on prison reads very differently to *Passages*. Retrospection, contemplation, and temporal distance allowed Bamford to be deliberate in what he included and what he chose to ignore. Whilst there was selective remembrance and the purposeful construction of a less militant version of himself, what Bamford included were important moments and experiences of radicalism. His intangible

landscapes were memories but they highlight the energy, trauma, and competing egos of Regency radicalism.

8 PUNISHMENT: THE CATO STREET CONSPIRACY AND EXECUTION

The Six Acts of December 1819 curtailed the vibrant and lively mass platform meetings. This legislation made it difficult for radicals and reformers to publicly gather through limiting meetings to fifty people. As well as this, the acts focused on putting the radical press in a stranglehold, making it more expensive to publish by subjecting it to stamp duty (Haywood 2004, 99-100). Peterloo still angered reformers and their attempts at procuring justice had thus far come to naught. The violence of Peterloo and subsequent suppression of radical public activity inspired a small section of radicals to pursue physical force to inspire revolution. The Cato Street Conspiracy occurred in 1820, signalling an end to the post-Napoleonic wave of English radicalism (Thompson 1968). The Conspiracy aimed to assassinate the cabinet. It failed, resulting in five radicals being executed for high treason. The conspiracy has featured in narratives of radical history and movements but the conspirators have been discussed as radicals or revolutionaries rather than criminals. This analysis will recognise that criminality was woven into the narratives of their execution and the condemned bodies were simultaneously radical and criminal.

This section focuses on the spaces of the Cato Street Conspiracy. Of the five men executed, it will pay particular attention to Arthur Thistlewood, the main leader of Cato Street, and William Davidson, a Jamaican born radical. The analysis examines the conspirators' religious beliefs and the criminal body. The conspirators were involved in or proposed violence, meaning their sedition had become treason: they were important actors in a transient, now intangible space and landscape of execution. Archaeologists have attempted to analyse executions previously within various time periods (Buckberry and Hadley 2007; Murphy 2008; Tucker 2015), but this has usually been through studying human remains and does not often consider

the idea of the execution as spectacle (Reynolds 2009; Van der Saden 2013). However, this overlooks the important consideration of how executions were highly ritualised and performative events and, in the early-modern period at least, were considered to be places of education, reform, and entertainment. The role of the body, both alive and dead, was central to the event so needs to be considered carefully too. It is worth exploring what happens when the criminal body was killed publicly. Although these spaces had radicals present, the space needs to be assessed according to what extent we can understand execution landscapes as being a loyalist or conservative space.

This section builds on two excellent analyses of 'landscapes of terror'. Daniel Arasse (1991) deftly explores how the guillotine became prominent in the French Revolution and its associated spectacle (or lack of) developed into ritual. This analysis highlights how short time period analyses are a useful way of grappling with complex spaces and performances. Marcus Rediker's (2007) influential study investigates the execution of and by pirates, highlighting how important space and landscape are in considering these spectacles. It captures the drama and theatre of these charged spaces through various case studies, whilst emphasising tensions that either bubbled beneath the surface or emerged in acts of defiance. In both pieces, the importance rests on how multiple strands are combined in order to access these intangible spaces and to recognise the social, cultural, and ideological rituals that underpin them. Rather than shy away from producing analyses that are multi-layered for generalisation, they attempt to include the nuances, complexities, and contradictions. As outlined in chapter six, my position as a queer person and theorist creates desire to interact with and embrace that which does not fit together and to emphasise its tensions. I hope this chapter emphasises the role of space, landscape, spectacle, and also memory in producing the state sanctioned death of a 'criminal'.

8.1 EXECUTIONS IN THE LONG EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY

In order to better understand the Cato Street execution, it is worth providing a brief overview of execution practices and high treason executions in the eighteenth/nineteenth-centuries. The so-called Bloody Code made over two hundred crimes punishable by death. Executions were part of the social fabric of Britain in the long eighteenth century (Thompson 1975, 270). Increasing the number of capital crimes, despite the declining number of executions, was a purposeful move by ruling classes to control the population and secure deference (Hay 1975). Executions were deemed necessary to suppress crime, especially against property, with the gallows the preferred deterrent (Cooper 1974). In London, executions were commonplace, allowing the public to engage with the spectacle of the law enacting justice. On average, twenty people a year were hanged in London and Middlesex by the end of the eighteenth century (McLynn 2013, 258). Gatrell (1994, 7-8) estimates about 7,000 people were executed in England and Wales between 1770 and 1830, with England averaging 67 a year. Crowds attending executions were typically localised and London frequently had crowds that numbered the thousands (Devereaux 2013, 78). Reading about executions was popular throughout the 1700 and 1800s, but newspapers became more important in disseminating execution news from c.1760 onwards and became popular media in consuming crime compared to last dying speeches, the Ordinary's Account, and confessions (McKenzie 2005).

The crowd present at executions often constituted a rich social tapestry, 'the execution [in London] presented a formative cultural space where curious neighbours could meet and socially engage with one another' (White 2008, 150). Authorities were concerned about the behaviour of the crowd. This concern resulted in abolishing processual elements of execution in London in 1783. The scaffold was relocated from Tyburn to Newgate due to critiques of carnivalesque crowds and

disorder (Linebaugh 1975). Newgate's execution site was located at Debtor's Door in a busy thoroughfare, therefore stopping traffic for state violence. In 1807, an execution at Newgate went tragically wrong as the large crowd rushed forward as the platform dropped: 30 people were crushed or trampled to death. Harris (2003) considers this event critical in thinking towards policing and responding to mass crowds. Public assemblies or gatherings were already viewed by authorities as a source of disruption to order in which revolutionary or radical activity could occur (Palmer 1988). Wilf (1993, 53) suggests the end of processing pre-execution reflected changing understandings from 'bombarding the sense to one that sought to influence the imagination'. Removing the procession created a 'more imposing ritual', through attempting to secure the crowd's focus on the primary reason for public execution – deterrent for crime – whilst removable gallows outside Debtor's Door allowed the shock factor to be reinstated (Devereaux 2009, 158). Concerns for the crowd, intent, and behaviour can be seen at the Cato Street execution with the large constable presence due to anxieties the crowd might be supportive of the conspirators.

There are several executions for high treason that need to be discussed. Following the Jacobite executions in the 1740s, treason executions were not commonplace. François Henri de la Motte and David Tyrie were executed for spying for the French in 1781 and 1782 respectively. Both had their hearts removed as part of the punishment process. Tyrie's heart was shown to the multitude before being thrown into a fire (*NFC* 31st August 1782). Apparently, the crowd at Tyrie's execution sought to grab parts of his quartered and emasculated body, 'the populace had the liberty of cutting and hacking any part they thought proper, such as fingers, toes, and ribs' (*HJ* 29th August 1782). Tyrie and de la Motte's executions were the last in England to include quartering. Although several high-profile high treason trials happened in the 1790s, English radicals were largely able to avoid punishment. The nineteenth-

century saw several important treason trials which resulted in executions. Seven men were sentenced to death for their involvement in the Despard Plot (see section 2.2.3). They were hanged until dead, their heads removed by surgical knife and saw, and the heads were displayed to the crowd (*MP* 22nd February 1803). Robert Emmet, an Irish radical, was executed on the 20th September 1803 (figure 76). Jeremiah Brandreth, the leader of the Pentrich Rising (a failed uprising that believed French military support had landed in England), was executed and decapitated with an axe (*MP* 8th November 1817). Prior to the execution, the Pentrich condemned were ceremonially drawn around the prison yard on a horse-drawn hurdle (*LI* 10th November 1817). In 1820, the Cato Street conspiracy executions was the last in England which involved decapitation, with the last in the UK being three leaders of the Radical War in Scotland, 1820.



Figure 76: Execution of Robert Emmet in Thomas Street (Byrne 1877). Emmet's Irish nationalism and republicanism made him an enduring figure and produced a legacy that other early nineteenth century treason executions did not produce.

8.2 THE CATO STREET CONSPIRACY AND CAPTURE

Plans began to formulate in November 1819. Mass meetings were still occurring but attendance was wavering with fears Peterloo could happen again. Extreme radicals contemplated other methods more and more (McElligott and Conboy 2020, 7). After debates between striking quickly at one or two individuals or waiting to attack numerous targets at once, the debate was won out by Thistlewood who argued for patience, and the conspiracy began to gain momentum (HO/42/199). Whilst gathering weapons including 6lb of gunpowder and 20 pike blades (figure 77), the conspirators made a hitlist of government figures, with Sidmouth and Castlereagh topping it. The weapons were not only for assassinating but would act as the basis to begin a city-wide insurrection. A stable with a hayloft on Cato Street, Marylebone, was going to be the base to attack from.

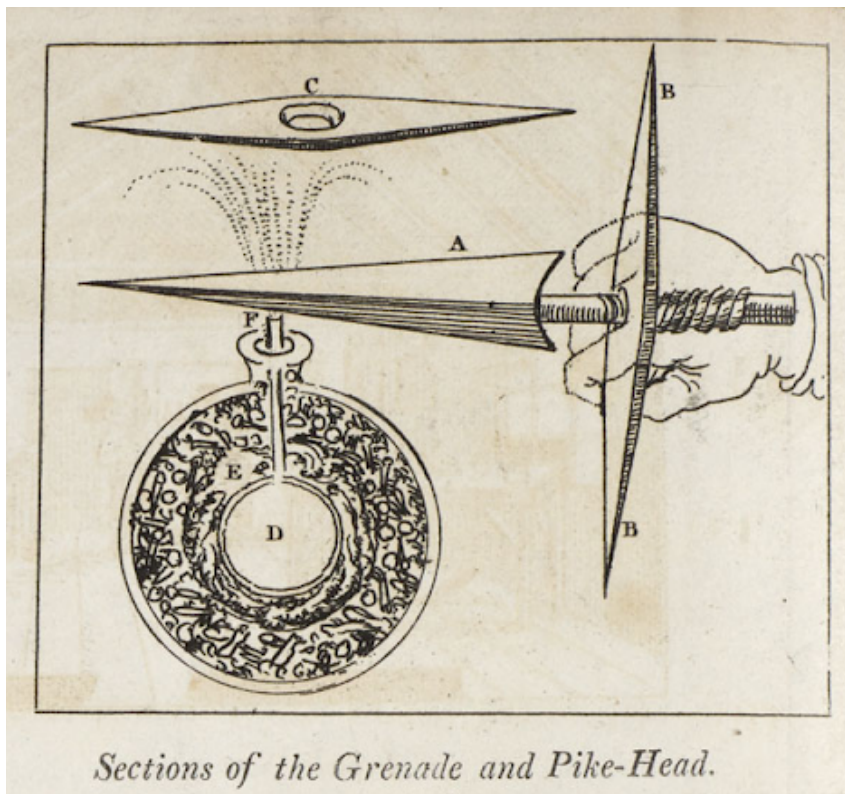


Figure 77: Illustration showing the sections of a grenade and pike-head in a book providing the narrative of the conspiracy. (Anon 1820; BL/RB.8.a.6).



Cato Street (1830)

Map of London : made from an actual survey in the years 1824, 1825, 1826, by C. & J. Greenwood, extended and comprising the various improvements to 1830; engraved by Josiah Neele. Scale [ca. 1: 63,360].

Map Provided by Harvard University
Harvard University, Harvard Map Collection, G5754.L7.1830.G7_Shtched
Located at: <https://mf.ils.harvard.edu/ia/ia6/ia6002548>
Reproduced under: <https://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUJ:earthid:copyright>

Figure 78: Map of Cato Street and Grosvenor Square. Note that this map calls Cato Street 'Horace Street' instead. It changed its name because of the infamy of the conspiracy.

The conspirators decided to utilise a similar strategy of the Despard Plot of 1802 by assassinating important individuals and then inspiring an uprising (Wright 1988, 73). They aimed to assassinate the Cabinet of the Tory government whilst they dined at Lord Harrowby's house in Grosvenor Square on the 23rd February 1820 (figure 78). The assassination would lead to them establishing a Committee of Public Safety in the same vein as the French Revolution. They intended to decapitate the ministers and parade their heads on pikes in a violent parody of treason symbolism (McElligott and Conboy 2020, 1). This attempt ultimately failed as the information they had received and been encouraged to act upon came from a government spy or *agent provocateur*: George Edwards. Davidson went to find out more details about the cabinet dinner and Harrowby's servant informed Davidson his master was not at

home. Despite this information, Thistlewood decided the plan should still go ahead. On the 23rd February, the supposed day of the dinner, the Cato Street stable was stormed by officers of the Bow Street Runners. They entered into the hayloft after being delayed by Davidson, meaning the conspirators were able to hastily prepare for the constables. In the ensuing chaos, Thistlewood stabbed Richard Smithers (figure 79), an officer, with a rapier. According to one account, Smithers died a theatrical death, 'Poor Smithers fell into the arms of his brother-officer, Ellis, exclaiming – "Oh, God! I am --" and in the next instant was a corpse' (Wilkinson 1820[1836], 10). Thistlewood managed to escape the premises with several other conspirators and calls for their apprehension were published in newspapers on behalf of Lord Sidmouth (*LDG* 24th February 1820). The rest of the conspirators surrendered peacefully and Thistlewood was arrested the next day.



Figure 79: *The Cato Street Conspirators* (Cruikshank 1820b). This etching depicts the moment where Thistlewood kills a police officer with his rapier. It also highlights how some conspirators surrendered peacefully whilst others were aggressive until arrest.

All eighteen conspirators were arrested. They were put on trial at the Sessions House, Old Bailey, between 17th April to 28th April. Initially, the sentence was to be hung, drawn, and quartered, but this was commuted to hanging and beheading for Thistlewood, Davidson, James Ings, Richard Tidd, and John Brunt, and commuted to transportation for life for John Harrison, Charles Cooper, James Wilson, John Strange, and Richard Bradburn (Hannon 2020). Eight conspirators were not sentenced. Some gave witness testimony in the trials of other conspirators as a means of having charges dropped. There was some debate at the time whether the government, through the spy Edward's actions, created an opportunity for purposeful entrapment of the conspirators as a mechanism to justify the Six Acts and to smear the reform cause (Aylmer 1820, 27). Matthew Wood, a Whig MP and former Lord Mayor of London, argued these points in the House of Commons (Hansard 1820, 58). Zamoyski (2014, 234-5) suggests it became a 'highly convenient' moment as it successfully ended criticisms for the government's response to Peterloo whilst simultaneously enabling the justification that the country was threatened by revolution. Gardner (2012, 30) goes further again, stating the conspirators were the 'victims of a government-fomented plot'. This implies the conspiracy may not have occurred without Edwards as an influencer. Edwards was definitely influential in spreading the idea the cabinet were dining at Harrowby's home on the 23rd February and as two conspirators (Robert Adams and John Harrison) turned the king's evidence, Edwards was no longer needed at the trial (Chase 2004), effectively sealing the fate of the others. As well as witness statements, important material evidence was utilised such as pikes and grenades as well as a recipe for fire bombs (HO/44/4/20). Regardless of whether Edwards was involved or not, the conspirators were looking for a way to radically begin a revolution. In their trial, both Thistlewood and Ings connected their actions to Peterloo. Thistlewood stated that he wanted to 'avenge the death of those unhappy people' and deemed the actions of the yeomanry to have been high treason

(*Examiner* 30th April 1820). Arguably, with or without Edwards, Thistlewood and co would have trodden down the path to radical violence.

Historians have not been kind towards the conspiracy. Compared to the Despard Plot and Spa Fields, E. P. Thompson (1968, 702) deemed it, 'rasher, more violent, more pathetic'. Archer (2000, 66) labelled it 'another pathetic attempt at agitating the people to revolution'. It has also been commonplace to dismiss the conspiracy as being propagated by fantasists despite genuine government concerns of violence and the serious intent of the conspirators (McElligott and Conboy 2020, 7). The analysis hopes to contribute to recent revisionist works that understand the conspiracy as an important part of post-Napoleonic radicalism. This will be approached through examining the spaces of the conspiracy: the stable – the site of plotting and capture – and the execution.

8.3 RADICAL EXTREMISM: CATO STREET CONSPIRACY AND RADICAL VIOLENCE

Eighteen-twenty was an interesting and complex time for radicalism and reform. For radical extremists, the circumstances of 1819, the end of the Regency and beginning of George IV's reign, and the continued failures and oppression of the Tory administration meant the time was right for action. Gardner (2011) argues the post-Peterloo atmosphere generated belief the violent actions of a few would be successful. John Gale Jones, a radical orator active in the 1790s-1810s and member of the London Corresponding Society, recollected that Peterloo was a turning point in his radical ideology, 'I was one of those who made up their mind that all further praying and petitioning ought to be at an end, that the *time for Reform was past and the hour of Revolution come*.²¹ The conspiracy can be understood as a part of a

²¹ (Royle 2000, 53)

wider extremist movement to utilise violence as the means of achieving change. Huddersfield weavers gathered on the moors on the 31st March with the plan to seize weapons from soldiers, but other groups from Yorkshire and Lancashire failed to assemble so the uprising was abandoned (*MP* 5th April 1820). One radical was apprehended by authorities for accepting a parcel of weapons (*LI* 3rd April 1820). Posters and placards were displayed in Glasgow, instructing workers ‘to desist from working till the Revolution was complete’ (*HO* 33/2/33 f155). Another attempt was made by around 500 men outside Barnsley on the 12th April. Again, further contingents did not arrive and the group retreated upon the arrival of yeomanry, with some being apprehended and expressing ‘disappointment’ at the poor turn out (*MC* 17th April 1820). Reportedly, a flag was found abandoned on the moor inscribed, ‘He that smiteth a man so that he die shall surely be put to death’²² as well as pikes and guns (*LI* 17th April 1820). This spate of radical activity that tried to occupy physical space to inspire insurrection shows that whilst a minority, radicalism had embraced the idea of violence again. Indeed, Richard Carlile commented that the 1790s were not the age of revolution, ‘the present moment better deserves that epithet’ (*The Republican* 15 September 1820, 79).

²² This is a scriptural reference to Exodus 21:12.

8.4 ARTHUR THISTLEWOOD



Figure 80: Portrait of Arthur Thistlewood (Scharf 1817). The portrait was undertaken following Thistlewood's arrest at Spa Fields.

Arthur Thistlewood (figure 80), the leader of the conspiracy, had previously attempted revolution (see chapter five). These repeated attempts led him to being characterised:

if ever there a man whose character... stood proof...of the dark and dreadful passions which agitate a reprobate mind – *Thistlewood was that man*. As the *Radical Orator*, as the *Rebellious Rioter*, as the *Traitorous Conspirator*, as the

Political Assassin, as the remorseless Murderer... [Emphasis original]. (NFC 20th May 1820).

Violence and Thistlewood were firmly entwined in political commentaries. One informer commented that Thistlewood appeared 'to be a second edition of Colonel Despard' (HO/42/136). According to one trial transcript from the conspiracy, 'A political mania had long characterised his career' (Kelleher 1820, 4). This violent narrative was exacerbated further by Thistlewood being the murderer of the constable Smithers and for being the leader. Cruikshank (figure 81) placed Thistlewood amongst the more militant radicals, emphasising their violent ideologies.



Figure 81: Thistlewood was depicted in 'Coriolanus Addressing the Plebeians' (detail from Cruikshank 1820c) by holding a staff with a thistle on top and having a knife in his belt, located just to the right of a flag inscribed 'Blood and Plunder'. The important element is he is located closer to the more extreme radicals (the dishevelled individuals in the middle) but also those he went on trial with in 1817, Watson and Preston, with Watson holding a pestle and clyster pipe and Preston leaning on his staff, hammer tucked in his belt.

Thistlewood was active in radicalism, especially violent agitation, throughout the late 1810s. In eighteen-seventeen, Thistlewood and Dr Watson were arrested and charged with high treason (chapter five). The wit, intelligence, and arguments of Watson during his defence resulted in an embarrassing acquittal for the prosecution, whilst Thistlewood was acquitted later after the crown's chief witness was revealed as fraudulent. The close shave with high treason did not prevent Thistlewood from continuing to pursue a coup as the way of producing radical change, although Watson shifted away from this towards open constitutionalism, hence his lack of involvement in the Cato Street conspiracy. In September 1817, Thistlewood plotted with a group of radicals to use the St Bartholomew's Fair as cover for storming the Bank of England, but swift official actions prevented the attempt (Smith 1953). Thistlewood experienced a quieter year in eighteen-eighteen as he was imprisoned in Horsham Gaol for threatening to breach the peace after he challenged Lord Sidmouth to a duel over failure to return confiscated property (*MP* 11th February 1818). After Peterloo, the need for action stirred within Thistlewood again. As the reform movement started to splinter over which direction to take, Thistlewood began to formulate the Cato Street Conspiracy (Stevenson 2020). It appears many leading reformers such as Hunt, Hone, Cobbett, and Wooler may have been aware a plot was being hatched and developed as Thistlewood expressed disappointment at how numerous reformers did not donate to their cause (McElligott 2020, 53-54). By the Cato Street conspiracy, leading Spenceans – Dr Watson and Robert Wedderburn – were imprisoned. Leadership transferred to 'the notoriously belligerent and impulsive' Thistlewood (Scrivener 2001, 197) and his ideals were paramount in the failed plot.

8.5 WILLIAM DAVIDSON

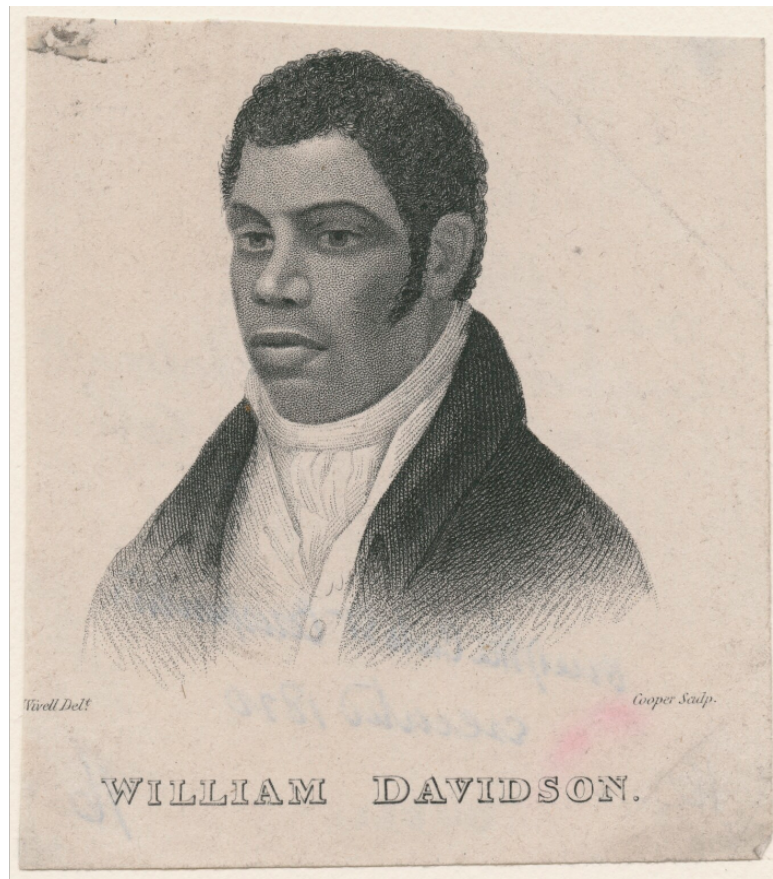


Figure 82: Portrait of William Davidson taken after his arrest for his involvement in the conspiracy (Kelly 1820).

The Cato Street conspiracy has been pushed to the periphery of the narrative of the reform movement resulting in the story, eloquence, and experiences of black radical William Davidson (figure 82) being ignored or excluded. Goodrich (2019) has noted conceptions of English radicalism have often been too focused on English people at the expense of international and Atlantic radicals such as Henry Redhead Yorke and Robert Wedderburn. Yorke was a black gentleman radical (before his shift to loyalism) from Barbuda who developed his radical ideology in France during the revolution and was tried for seditious conspiracy in 1795. Wedderburn was a Jamaican lower-class individual who entered the radical scene in the late 1790s, soon becoming involved with Spence and publishing his first essay *The Truth Self-*

Supported in 1802. Wedderburn also saw the value in using violence – or at least violent rhetoric - to achieve radical change, for example, in a meeting debating whether a slave could justly kill their master (with those attending favouring yes), he argued that Britons needed to rise up, ‘there would be slaughter in England for their liberty’ and upon the vote being cast in favour, he quipped, ‘well gentleman I can now write home and tell the Slaves to murder their Masters as soon as they please’ (HO/42/195). The following analysis of the Cato Street conspiracy aims to help contribute to this body of work and explore Davidson’s experience of execution. Davidson’s role in the conspiracy was to raise money, purchase weapons, and to guard various homemade weapons in the Cato hayloft. For example, Davidson was able to defraud the Mendicity Society for 30 shillings by asking for money to redeem pawned tools but instead purchased a blunderbuss (HO 44/4/100).

Davidson was born in Jamaica in 1781. His mother was a slave and allegedly his father the Attorney General of Jamaica. At the age of fourteen, Davidson moved to Scotland to study law but instead became involved in radical politics, had a stint as a sailor, and then became a cabinet maker. His education and skilled profession made him the most ‘formally educated... [and] the highest status’ of the conspirators (Talbot 2016, 43). He was involved in radical reading groups, such as the Marylebone Union Reading Society, although was sometimes too impoverished to afford the subscriptions (TS/11/205) and in societies such as the London Corresponding Society. Ramdin (1987) argues Davidson likely became involved with Spencean groups and ideologies due to their ultra-radical ideas and because the group was largely composed of ‘working class people’. Davidson appears to have loved singing or connected with radical music and ballads. At his birthday party in May 1819, neighbours complained of seditious ballads being loudly sung (HO/44/5/105, fols 494-5) and upon his arrest, he bellowed *Scots Wha Hae Wi*

Wallace Bled, the Robert Burns' ballad (HO/44/4 fols 72-3), thus connecting himself to his Scottish ancestry.

Davidson was involved in mass public meetings, possibly escalating his involvements in public and private meetings since Peterloo (TS 11/198). Although noted in later reports, Davidson was considered a principal speaker at the Finsbury Square meeting, 1st November, 1819 (MO 4th March 1820), with the meeting being advertised by Thistlewood (BL/8135.e.2(29?)), meaning it is likely part of the Spencean agenda. Davidson emphasised the right of Englishmen to be armed (not to be the aggressors but to be protect themselves). The crowd apparently did not appreciate this argument, even with other speakers aiding Davidson, paying him 'irksome attention' (MA 2nd November 1819), but it is difficult to unpick whether this was the paper or crowd showing contempt to Davidson based on race. Davidson appears to have been blocked from speaking at least once. In a meeting at Smithfield, December 1819, Davidson was racially cast as 'a dirty fellow' seen climbing the hustings carrying a letter from Watson. The '*letter-carrier*' was not permitted to read the letter whilst a flag 'with Death's head and cross bones waved over his head, accompanied by the most horrid grins and gesticulations of its supporter' (MP 9th December 1819). The flag, which was also inscribed, 'let us die like men and not be sold like slaves', was then taken to the meeting in Westminster on the same day and received a similar reception (MC 9th December 1819). The spy, Edwards, testified it was Davidson at Smithfield who was protecting the black banner (HO/44/5/56). Davidson was attempting to bring his and Watson's Spenceans politics into the mass platform but was rebuffed. The reaction of the crowd and the coverage of the press demonstrated racially charged responses too. Whilst Davidson was aiming to speak words by another, his ability at oration would suggest he would have added his own input. Slavery had long been a motif and lexicon used by radicals in the eighteenth/nineteenth-centuries (Wheeler 2013). However, Davidson's usage

of the flag adds another personal layer on top of the figurative language, especially as Davidson grew up in colonial Jamaica, although he was not a slave himself. The flag could have become an anti-slavery artefact as well as a radical one.

Hanley (2020, 94) emphasised how Davidson's blackness was 'intimately entwined with acute poverty' as he experienced financial hardship and discrimination because of his race. These experiences in Britain and his upbringing shaped his anger against slavery and slave owning British elites and were instrumental in producing his insurrectionary politics. When he was arrested at Cato Street, Davidson sang *Scots Wha Hae*, with Innes (2002) suggesting he identified more with his Scottish ancestry. However, Davidson's race was an important part of his identity and involvement in radical culture. Gilroy (1993) connected Davidson to Wedderburn who was also a Methodist. Both men were sailors, their mothers were slaves, and moved in the same radical circles in London. Religious convictions can be seen in a sample of handwriting taken before the executions by John Adolphus, member of the defence counsel, who sent copies of the handwriting of all the conspirators to Lord Liverpool. Davidson wrote three bible verses (Proverbs 18:13, Exodus 23:9, Deuteronomy 24:17):

He that answereth a matter before he heareth it it is a folly a shame upon him.

Thou shalt not oppress a stranger in a strange land

Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of a stranger (BL/MS/38284f.216)

Gatrell (1994, 311) calls it 'copy-book aphorisms' but misses the point of the verses Davidson wrote. All three connect to the trial and demonstrate Davidson felt unjustly treated. The Exodus and Deuteronomy verses indicate Davidson may have been reflecting on his race and how it could have impacted the trial. It suggests that in his final moments, Davidson felt like an outsider and rather than being a black British radical, he considered himself a black *foreigner* radical.

Davidson was often referred to as 'Black' Davidson or as the 'person/man of colour'. This includes Home Office spy reports and correspondence (TS/11/205, no. 876/38; TS/11/205, no. 876/46a). James Ellis, the leader of the officers who stormed Cato Street, refers to Davidson as 'the man of colour' in a testimony (HO 44/4/115), therefore using his race as an identifiable feature, enabling Ellis to connect Davidson's race to actions and add weight to his account. At a meeting in London, *The Morning Post* (2nd November 1819) characterised his address as 'the "arming" phrenzy of the Mulatto'. Reports of the conspiracy referred to Davidson as the 'man of colour' whilst also emphasising his role in guarding the hayloft and his armed response to the constables (MC 26th February 1820). Importantly, being characterised by race or receiving racist judgement was not limited to the press or authorities. In an assessment of Davidson shortly after the conspirators' arrests, Richard Carlile (*Republican* 3rd March 1820, 212-223) wrote about how he received a letter – although Carlile burned this letter – from Davidson about a plot to release the imprisoned Carlile from gaol. Carlile also discussed three times he encountered Davidson, remarking "It struck me as singular, that a man of his colour and complexion, should be an active member of such a Committee". In one of these encounters, Carlile met both Davidson and Edwards, viewing Davidson with suspicion and being untroubled by Edwards (the actual spy). As with other radical events, such as the Spa Field meetings (Castle) and the Pentrich Rebellion (Oliver), Carlile believes Cato Street to have a government informer: William Davidson. Carlile (*Republican* 5th May 1820, 44-45) actually felt the need to write a public letter of apology to Mrs Davidson, apologising for thinking Davidson the spy over Edwards. It seems that Carlile's prejudice led him to slander Davidson.

Throughout his life, Davidson encountered racism and this concerned him during his trial. During a speech, Davidson stated, 'My colour may be against me, but I have as good and as fair a heart as if I were a white' (Wilkinson 1820, 322). Davidson's

defence expected racism to feature in the prosecution's case and witness statements, therefore they emphasised his education and artisan identity (Livesay 2018). Racist tropes continued post-execution too. There is plenty of evidence Davidson was a family man who cared for his six children, but biographies slandered him by suggesting that 'although married, he paid his addresses to them [women] wherever he could get the least foothold' and perhaps even had three wives (Kelleher 1820, 12). The analysis will consider how race and racial tropes featured in the execution space and reports.

8.6 THE STABLE AND THE EXECUTION: SPACES OF THE CATO STREET CONSPIRACY

Whatever the reason behind the conspiracy, it produced a spectacular execution landscape and space. Vic Gatrell (1994) dissects published texts and prints that followed the event in terms of language and the audience for the publication by considering them polite (distancing themselves from the violence and perhaps producing sympathy) or vulgar (explicit depiction of violence and cruder in style). 'Polite' pamphlets, aimed at middle/upper classes, suggest the conspirators were 'monstrous others... outside the reach of sympathy of civilised understanding', with this attitude capturing the tension between ideas of sympathy and cruel punishments being backwards or barbaric (Gatrell 1994, 299-305). Vulgar prints and pamphlets for popular consumption transmitted the violence and horror of the execution. Whilst some of the following material was aimed at lower classes, it is worth remembering the overlap between different print genres in this period. Broadsides and pamphlets often lifted text from newspapers (Crone 2016a). However, the spaces of the plot, including the stable where the conspirators were arrested, have largely gone unstudied. The stable can be understood as a crime scene, a place of curiosity and fascination, and the site of foiled revolution. Understanding the stable as a crime scene is not without contemporary cause. The power of the crime scene continued to be utilised in the eighteenth century as a site

of execution (Poole 2015). Whilst the stable was not the place of execution for the conspirators, it proved to be alluring to the crime tourists who visited in late February 1820.

8.6.1 THE STABLE

The Cato Street stable (figure 83) was hired due to its location near Lord Harrowby's house, the supposed place where the Cabinet were to dine on the 23rd February. The conspirator, John Harrison, rented the stable from John Firth, a cow-keeper and owner of the premises, who claimed to not know what true purpose it was rented for (*MC* 28th February 1820). It was described by Mr Bolland, the junior counsel for the Crown, as being well-suited for its purpose, with it being an 'obscure street' (Wilkinson 1820, 127). Furthermore, through having a hayloft only accessible through a ladder (*PLDA* 25th February 1820), the conspirators controlled the flow of people into the space where discussions and planning occurred. The neighbourhood was for lower-class individuals and the stable was 'very dilapidated' (*MP* 25th February 1820). The rooms were largely empty and described as being generally in a poor state of repair:

The lower part of it... is a coach-house, and... a cow-house, strewed over with bricks and rubbish; and in one corner of this stable is a ladder, which stands quite aslant... Over the stable is a loft, in a ruinous state, which has a large box in it, and part of a broken form; - contiguous to which are two small rooms, also empty. The whole appearing truly desolate and wretched. (*Star* 25th February 1820)

The residents of Cato Street were unaware of what the stable was being used for (*MC* 25th February 1820), although the hanging of sacks in the windows to obscure the view raised some concern (*Globe* 25th February 1820).



Front View of the Stable in Cato Street

Figure 83: Front view of the stable in Cato Street (Aylmer 1820). This view places the stable into its landscape, demonstrating its ordinariness.

The stable was not the only building in which the conspirators utilised but it became the focal point and most important place connected to the conspiracy, despite it having being involved for the shortest amount of time. The conspiring had been happening in Brunt's house but this was some distance from Harrowby's in Grosvenor Square (Wilkinson 1820, 123). Brunt's lodgings at Fox-Court, Gray's-inn-Lane (*Sun* 25th February 1820) and Tidd's house ('a small and miserable dwelling situated in the Hole-in-the-Wall passage, leading from Baldwin's-gardens to Torrington-street' (*PLDA* 26th February 1820)) were used to store weapons and ammunition (*NC* 29th April 1820), although the stable also had some weapons, including pistols and pike heads (*HO/44/4* fols 94-95). It is possible that the small yard behind Davidson's house was used as a place for weapons training (*HO/44/5/14*

fols 38-9). Alongside using domestic spaces, the conspirators met in numerous pubs, including the Black Dog in Gray's Inn Lane and the Rose in Wild Street (HO/42/199, fols 561-3). It appears that the area around Gray's Inn Lane was important, as the conspirators also regularly met at the White Hart tavern in December 1819 (HO/42/199, fol.559; HO/42/199, fols 573-5). As Cato Street was the place where the conspirators were to launch their attack and were captured, it was elevated above other places involved. In a similar way to how the cellar in the Gunpowder Plot where Fawkes was arrested became the enduring place in cultural memory, the stable captured the public's imagination.



Figure 84: Front View of the Stable in Cato Street where the Conspirators met (Hassell 1820). This is the same view as figure 83, highlighting how the press utilised or copied the same images to meet public demand.

The case produced great public interest, with the fascination leading to the production of plans and views of the stable and Cato Street (figure 84). This interest in the space was apparent when crowds were reported gathering around the stable and even Harriet Arbuthnot, wife of a Tory MP, visited the hayloft (Bamford 1950, 7). Many people of 'every rank in life, hastened towards Cato-street to take a view of the place where this horrid crime had been committed... resolutely determined on exploring this meeting-house of the Radicals' (*Statesman* 25th February 1820). The number of people visiting likely went into the hundreds so they could 'visit the place where the unfortunate object of this investigation fell by the assassin's object' (*Globe* 26th February 1820). The 1751 Murder Act refers to murder as 'the horrid crime' meaning that reports were lifting legal language. These accounts were a form of dark tourism, revealing fascination not purely directed at the capture of the radicals but also the murder of Smithers. Access to the stable space was not limited to the site itself. Newspaper reports also described the hayloft and its surroundings (*Observer* 27th February 1820). The visual culture produced around the conspiracy permits an analysis of how the stable space was understood and how the narrative of the capture of the conspirators was told. Compared to 1819 prints of mass platform meetings, including Peterloo, which focused on open and public spaces, the prints of Cato Street instead focused on a cramped private space. The stable was a lower-class space, associated with grooms, it had been transformed into a crime scene that warranted depiction from every angle. The shift in the depiction of radical spaces in visual culture runs parallel to how radicalism and the reform movement had withdrawn from occupying open spaces.



Figure 85: Depictions of the stable, the moment Smithers was killed, and Thistlewood's escape (*The Observer* 12th March 1820; BL/NTAB 2021/28). These prints show moments of action but are still labelled, therefore offering detailed depictions.

The stable space connects to what Seltzer categorises as 'wound culture'. Seltzer (1998) suggests that contemporary society has developed a culture in which violence, gore, and death via crime has become a source of fascination or theatre. Interest in crime has led to public intrusion into scenes of violence with this fascination or glamorising of crime dismantling boundaries between public/private experiences of the crime. Violence has become 'addictive' through the development of wounded or executed bodies becoming part of public spectacle. Depicting the crime scene, as well as the execution space in this instance, permitted the early nineteenth century viewer to create, in the words of Foltyn (2008, 155) 'corpse facts and fictions to revive, re-imagine, and "play" with the dead'. Wound culture can be connected to understanding consumption of crime as experiencing the sublime. Huey (2011, 382) argues the sublime permits the consumption of 'violent crime imagery in mediated forms... to experience safely, and ultimately transcend, those elements of human experience which rightly incite fear, horror, and dread. It is a form of "riskless risk"'. Both Kant (2005 [1790]) and Burke (1990 [1787]) understand the sublime as the output of our imaginations and as located within the mind. Kant (2005 [1790], 74) especially understands the sublime in relation to objects and how they can 'raise the energies of the soul'. Wound culture and the sublime can be seen to manifest within the materials produced surrounding crimes and executions. Visual depictions of the stable, both internal and external views, allowed the public to engage with a dramatic moment of violence, the place where death was planned, and to experience the space as sublime through the materiality of print.

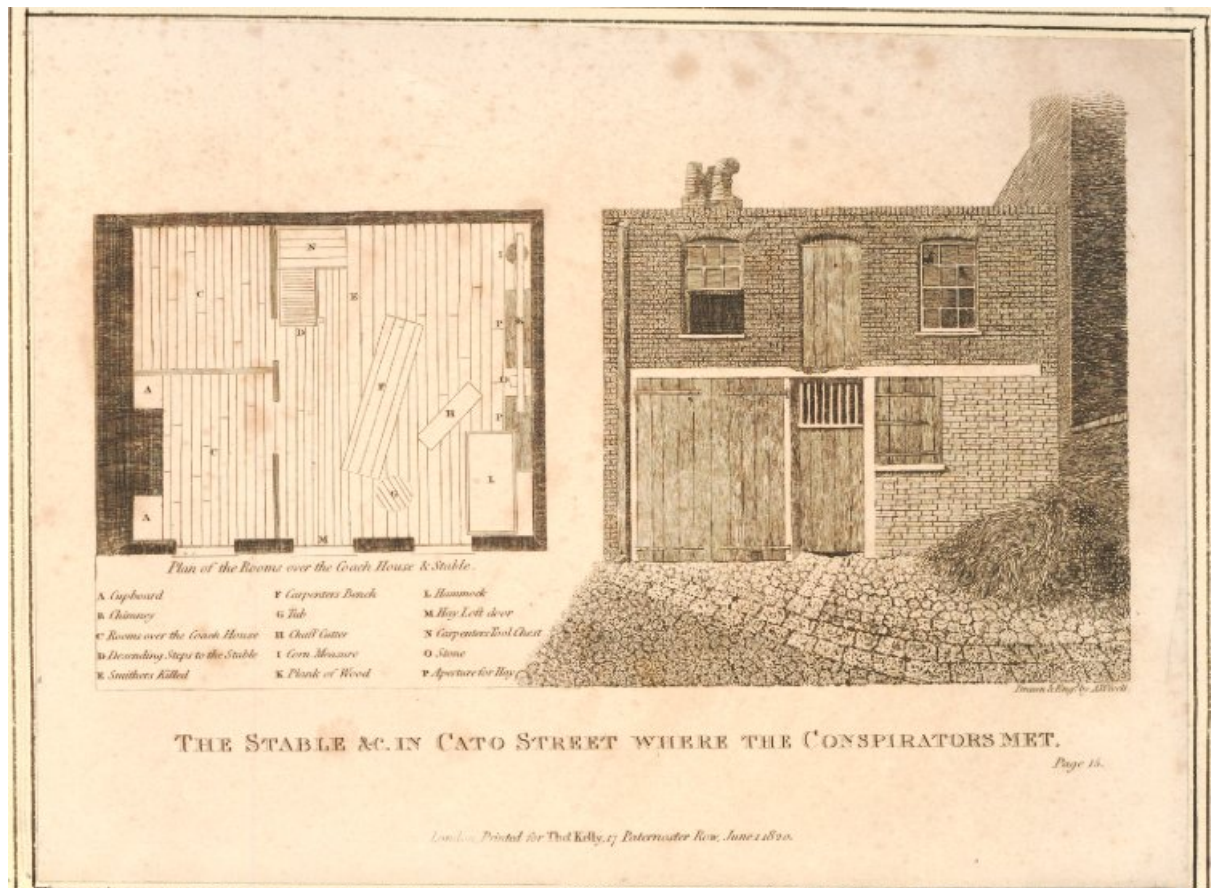


Figure 86: *The Stable &c in Cato Street where the Conspirators met (Wivell 1820). A labelled plan is provided alongside an elevation that highlights how ordinary the stable was.*

The number and detail of the prints was unusual (figures 85 and 86). Combined with newspaper reports, they indicate heightened fascination with the conspiracy. Newspapers were important transmitters in crime and execution reporting. Snell (2007, 15) argued newspapers became the most important medium of ‘disseminating narratives of deviance’, although Sharpe (2012) does caution this somewhat, highlighting that sensationalism was the key factor for including crime and punishment news. Despite the prevalence and popularity of criminal biographies in the eighteenth century (Rawlings 2005), the level of detail, especially regarding the prints, was unusual. They can be understood as part of a wider interest in crime reports, trial transcripts, and crime fiction (see Marsh and Melville 2019, 7). For

example, in 1790, London newspapers on average dedicated around 15% of their pages to crime or justice news (King 2007). Unusual or serious crimes, or murder, forgery, and treason committed by women or people of colour, attracted particular interest in the press (King 2009) and it was this factor of being unusual which helped generate such a wealth of visual culture for the conspiracy. Crime reporting needs to be viewed as a creative and manufactured process in which interpretation, editorialising, and assessing what is of interest needs to be remembered (Jewkes 2015). Newspapers provided the most widely read accounts of crime generally whilst handbills, one-page ballads, and cartoons provided information for the poorer market (King 2007, 74), meaning these prints were operating at the propertied market. Across the eighteenth/early nineteenth-centuries, the main audience for pamphlets, books, biographies, and trial proceedings were the upper-middling classes (Ward 2014, 19). Detailed reports on crimes, trials, and executions were becoming more commonplace by the early nineteenth century, although the 1820s seem to be the decade where newspaper reports on crime were becoming much more frequent and detailed (Dyndor 2008), meaning the Cato Street conspiracy was an early moment in this acceleration of coverage. The following prints were largely published in books and pamphlets, although *The Observer* (figure 85) also printed several views. Including portraits of the accused or condemned was commonplace in trial literature, but the incorporation of place was not. There was a fascination with place regarding the conspiracy. In a similar way to how radicals made objects such as clothing transition from the everyday to radical, the same had happened to the stable through the print culture surrounding it. The emphasis on dissecting the stable through labelling, providing different perspectives, and generally an absence of people in the prints reveals that the curiosity was not focused purely on the conspirators but also on the place of conspiracy.

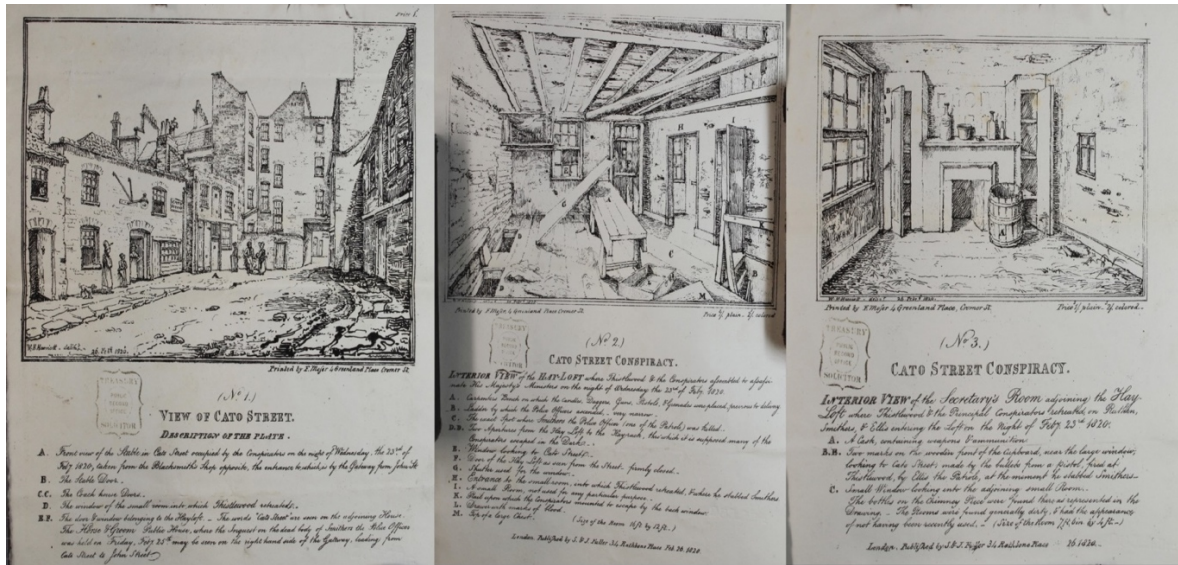


Figure 87: Three plates showing the view of Cato Street, the hayloft, and the room where Thistlewood retreated to (Fuller 1820; TS 11/202). These views were meticulously labelled, providing extra detail.

This fascination with place (figure 87) appears to be quite remarkable in crime reporting in the late eighteenth/early nineteenth-centuries. Certain crimes or criminals received great attention. For example, Jack Sheppard's escapes from Newgate and James MacLaine's, a highwayman, robbery of Lord Eglinton. One exception, although it did not produce the same number of prints, were prints focused on the murder of Issac Blight by Richard Patch (figure 88). The print placed the house into its landscape and through a dotted line, marks out how Patch moved through Blight's House. It is important to state the form of the Cato Street conspiracy stable prints were not unique. For example, *A Perspective View of the temporary Gallows in the Old Bailey* (Anon 1794) labels the various parts and features of the scaffold without anyone in the print. What ties all of these crimes together were how they were considered remarkable, notable, or unusual. The novelty of the crime or the persona of the criminal elevated and charged the spaces associated with them. For the stable, the novelty lay in an ordinary, lower-class space becoming the place of a plot. It is possible to view this fascination as part of a curiosity or drive to understand the intimacies of a crime and the prints can be

framed as efforts to present a crime scene. The labelling of objects and features, the general absence of people, and presenting a 'detached' perspective, demonstrates an emphasis on the place, space, and materiality of the conspiracy.

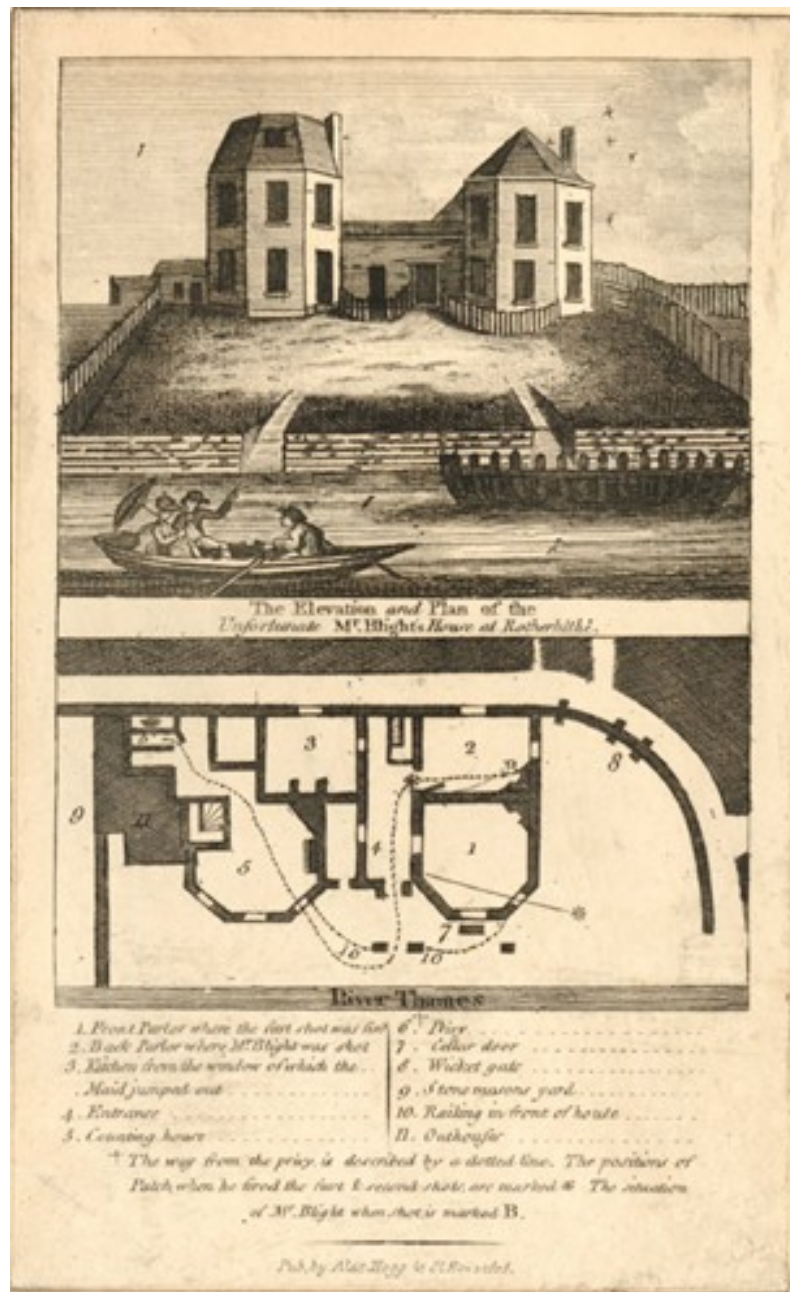


Figure 88: The Elevation and Plan of the Unfortunate Mr Blight's House at Rotherhithe (Hogg 1806). The print shows the elevation of the house as well as a labelled plan showing the route the murderer took through the house.

The need to visually depict the internal space of the stable, especially the hayloft, showed fascination with the crime scene and site of capture. This can be understood in terms of, and linked to, celebrity. It is important to remember that celebrity was not only for the 'good', skilled, or talented, infamy was intimately tied to celebrity. Nor did celebrity have to be long-lasting or sustained. By the time of the conspiracy, the 'commercialised fame market' that the press had created was firmly in place (Cowan 2016). Returning to Seltzer (1998), criminal acts in themselves were able to create celebrity and serial or extreme violence was an important factor. Although discussing the criminal corpse, Penfold-Mounce (2010, 254) argues that consuming the criminal corpse through media was able to create or sustain its celebrity. Expanding on this, the production of visual culture depicting the stable created a place of criminal celebrity, a window to peak into where the reader can safely view, imagine, and consume treason. We can understand the Cato Street stable as a central aspect of early nineteenth century wound culture: a site of criminality, a place making celebrity, or a crime scene.

The production of the visual culture, as well as transcripts of the trials, show that there was an appetite for consuming information on the Cato Street conspiracy, as well as some of the 'celebrity' of the crime. The conspiracy offered the opportunity for both pre- and post-mortem fame to build around the conspirators. Having prints of the crime scene to dissect allowed the night of the 23rd February and the conspiracy to have depth, whilst also allowing insight into the months of plotting the conspirators had undertaken. Through illustrating the site of the conspiracy, the shocking chronology of the crime was exposed. The prints helped to remind readers that the conspirators frequented here to meet secretly, seditiously converse, and plot. The 'ordinariness' of the space was accentuated by the prints whilst simultaneously attaching infamy or celebrity to the conspirators. Exterior depictions illustrate a standard stable that was inconspicuous. The prints therefore contributed

to fears and anxieties of revolution as they revealed the mundanity of radical spaces, whilst also emphasising the despicable nature of the crime. The seemingly quotidian stable space was actually a radicalised base for assassination. Visual culture permitted readers to have a point of reference to imagine the space from, to visit the crime scene, and to understand the insidious place of conspiracy. Purchasing and reading about the conspiracy contributed to the notoriety of the conspirators. It was the conflict between the quotidian nature of the stable and the horror of the plotted treason that combined to produce the celebrity and intrigue around the conspirators.

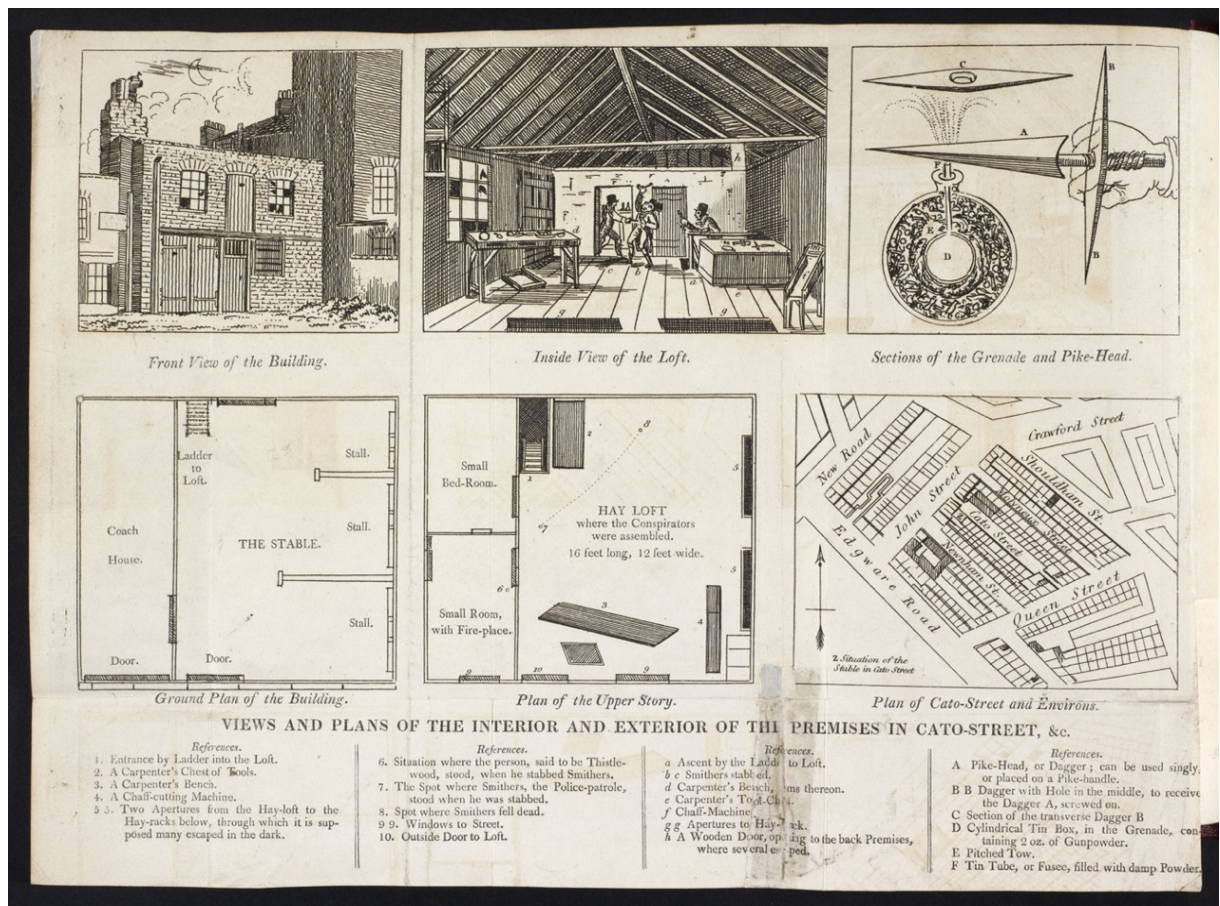


Figure 89: Series of prints showing various scenes and places associated with the Cato Street Conspiracy (Fairburn 1820).

Many of the prints do not include people, instead focusing on the space and furniture (figures 84, 86, 87, 92, and 93). Where people were depicted, it was predominantly the scene of capture freeze-framed as the moment Thistlewood killed Smithers. *The Cato Street Conspirators* by George Cruikshank (1820b; figure 79) provided the most crowded scene. It centred on Thistlewood and Smithers, who were depicted in lighter tones compared to darker shadows on the edge of the print. The *Inside View of Loft* (figure 89) depicted a sparse scene with only three figures. This illustration sets up the stable as a theatrical backdrop. Wilkinson's depiction (figure 94) also utilises a theatrical framing, limiting the number of people present, centring attention on Smithers, whilst making room to highlight weapons on the tables. The second scene that received some attention was the escape of some of the conspirators (figures 85 and 95). This was another moment of drama and demonstrates how being attached to the stable was the same as being attached to the crime. In *View of the Building in Cato Street* (figure 91), the people outside are not conspirators, rather they are every-day citizens unsuspecting of what the stable was used for. *Front view of the stable in Cato Street* (figure 83), *The Observer's* (figure 85), and King and Wyld's (figure 91) exterior views suggest people who have visited the site post-capture and are shown pointing at the building. *Arthur Thistlewood* (figure 90) was the only instance of depicting Thistlewood in the act of violence without the surroundings of the killing. It also runs counter to the usual courtroom portraits for criminals. Despite this exception, the other instances of people being included support the idea that aside from the killing of Smithers, the fascination was on the place and how it was involved in the making of the conspiracy. Divorcing people from the place adds weight to the understanding that the stable was viewed as a scene for crime, but also that the place can reveal information about the character of the conspirators and insights into how the conspiracy was formed. Removing people elevates the stable into an important space that was able to shape criminality and become a place imbued with celebrity.



Figure 90: Thistlewood shown in an aggressive stance, holding his rapier and pistol (Bailey 1820).

In summary, ideas on wound culture can be transferred to the early nineteenth century, regarding the hayloft and the killing of Smithers. Souvenirs from executions of the criminal corpse were not uncommon and crime tourism was growing (Penfold-Mounce 2010). Publishing and distributing the space of the crime, including prints depicting the death of Smithers, fed into a desire to be intimate or to own part of

the crime or criminal. It allowed what Lyotard (1988, 169) has termed the 'pleasure of pain'. Widely circulated printed and visual culture created a form of souvenir whilst also permitting an individual to become a tourist and 'visit' the crime scene. Within several of the prints, there was deliberate emphasis on labelling sections of the hayloft, allowing the reader to understand the significance of the material culture in the room. The prints were presented as being accurate and factually correct, adding a layer of authenticity to the tourist experience. Through having a depiction of the crime scene, the reader's mind was able to not only visit but recreate the arrest of the conspirators and death of Smithers. The Cato Street Conspiracy was able to become sublime through its spatial depictions. Indeed, perhaps this fascination continues into the modern day, as the stable has become virtual reality through The West End Job project. ²³

²³ <https://www.catostreetconspiracy.org.uk/the-plot/cato-street-vr>



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(No. 2.)

CATO STREET CONSPIRACY.

INTERIOR VIEW of the HAY-LOFT where Thistlewood & the Conspirators assembled to assassinate His Majesty's Ministers on the night of Wednesday the 23rd of Feb. 1820.

- A. Carpenters Bench on which the Candles, Diggers, Guns, Pistols, & Grenades were placed, previous to delivery.
- B. Ladder by which the Police Officers ascended, - very narrow -
- C. The exact Spot where Smothers the Police Officer (one of the Patrole) was killed.
- D. D. Two Apertures from the Hay Loft to the Hay-rack, thro' which it is supposed many of the Conspirators escaped in the Dark.
- E. Window looking to Cato Street.
- F. Door of the Hay Loft as seen from the Street - firmly closed.
- G. Shutter used for the window.
- H. Entrance to the small room, into which Thistlewood retreated, & where he stabbed Smothers.
- I. A small Room, not used for any particular purpose.
- K. Nail upon which the Conspirators mounted to escape by the back window.
- L. Drawer with marks of blood.
- M. Top of a large Chest.

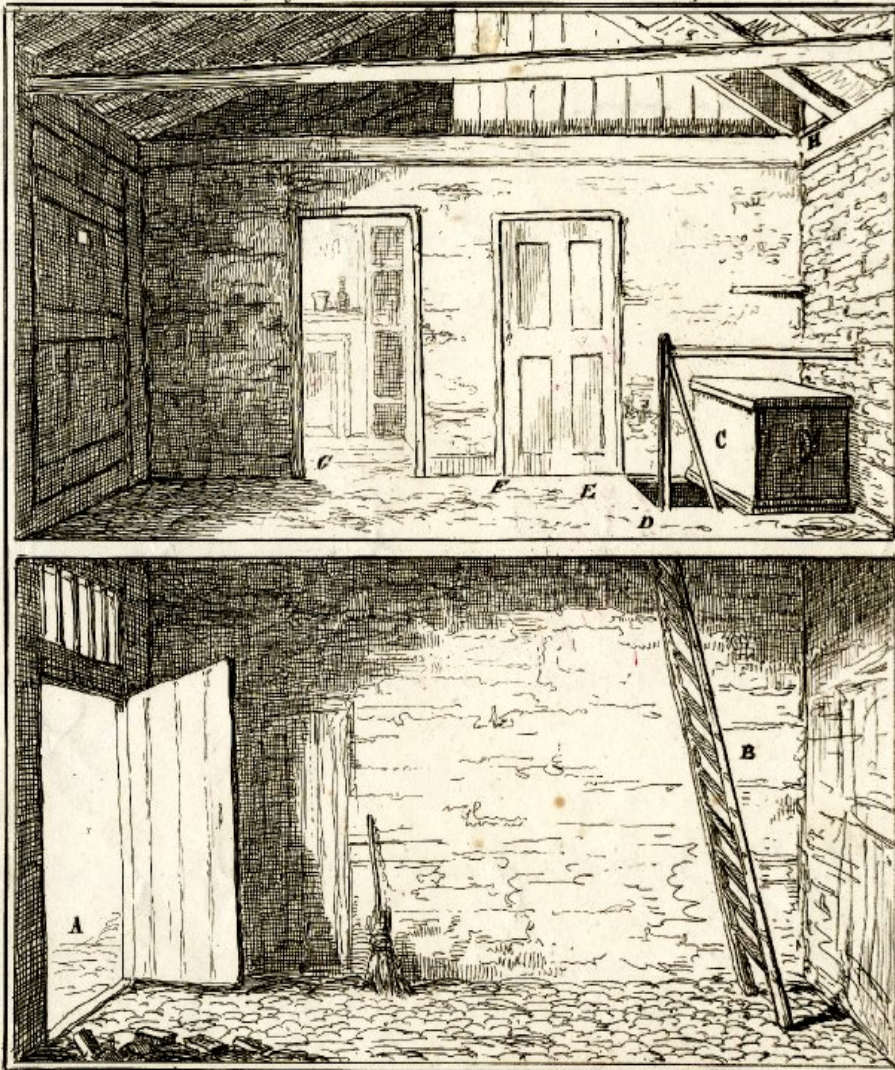
(Size of the Room 16 ft. by 12 ft.)

London. Published by S. & J. Fuller 34, Rathbone Place Feb. 26. 1820.

1820.

Figure 92: Plate 2 for Cato Street Conspiracy Series (Fuller 1820). This print provides meticulous labels of interesting but simultaneously mundane features.

Interior View of Hayloft &c in Cato Str^t., occupied by the Conspirators



- A. Entrance from Cato Str^t - B. Step ladder leading to loft, the entrance to which was nearly covered
 by a Carpenters Chest (C). D the spot where Ruthven stood, who entered first, E. Glas, second, F. Smithers, third,
 who upon Ruthvens saying, "seize their arms" rushed forward & received the sword on his right breast, which
 penetrated to his head - besides this mortal wound, a bullet was lodged in the back part of his shoulder & a desperate
 wound under the right elbow - rec^d probably in attempting to wad off the blow, his face was also much bruised.
 G. Inner room & place from whence Thistleswood made his deadly lunge - H. loft window from which many of
 the conspirators escaped.

Figure 93: Interior view of Hayloft &c in Cato Strt., occupied by the conspirators (Cruikshank 1820d).

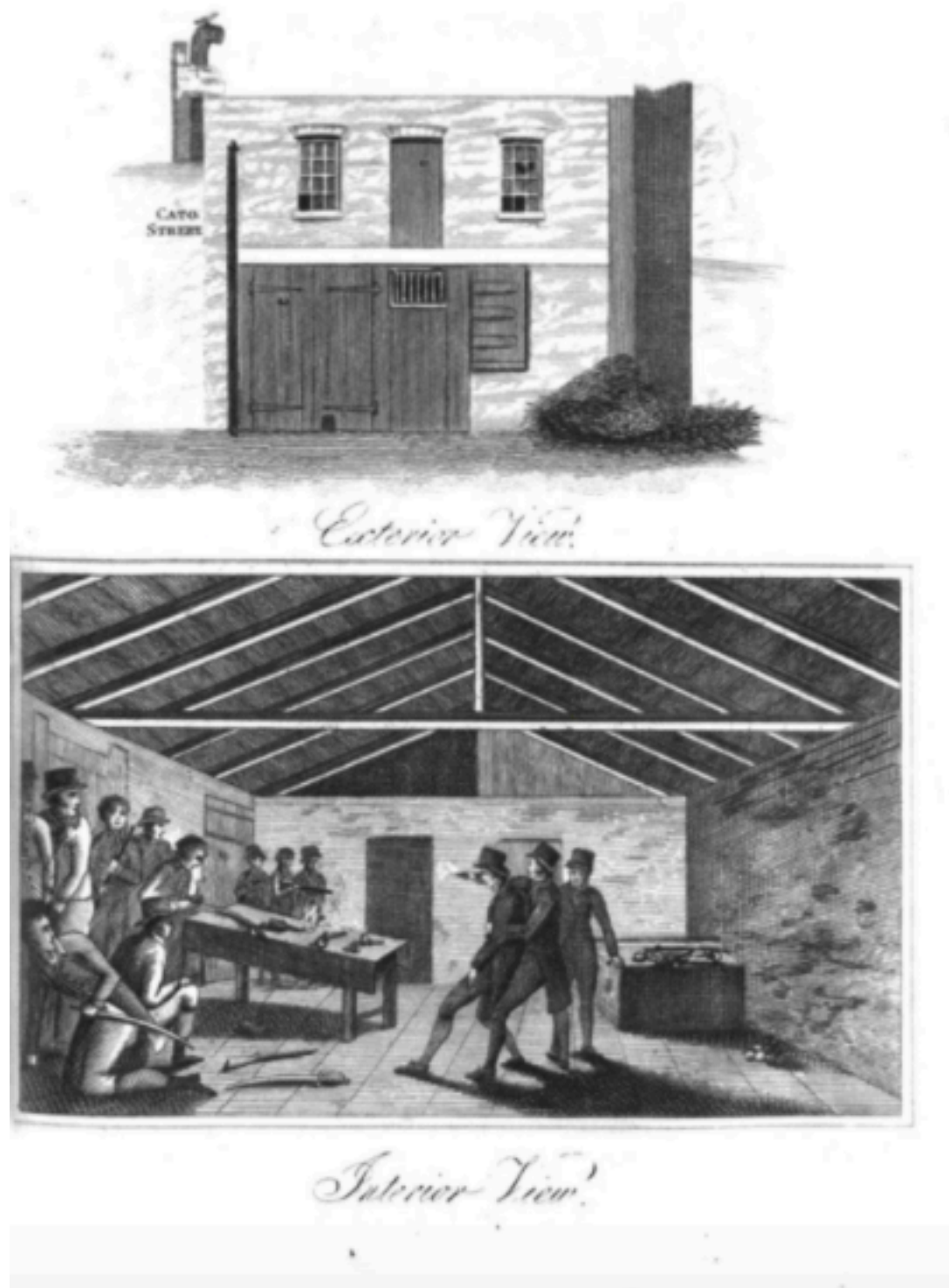


Figure 94: View of the exterior and interior of the stable (Wilkinson 1820, 300-301). This view was published in a lengthy account of the conspiracy and trial which included biographies of the conspirators.

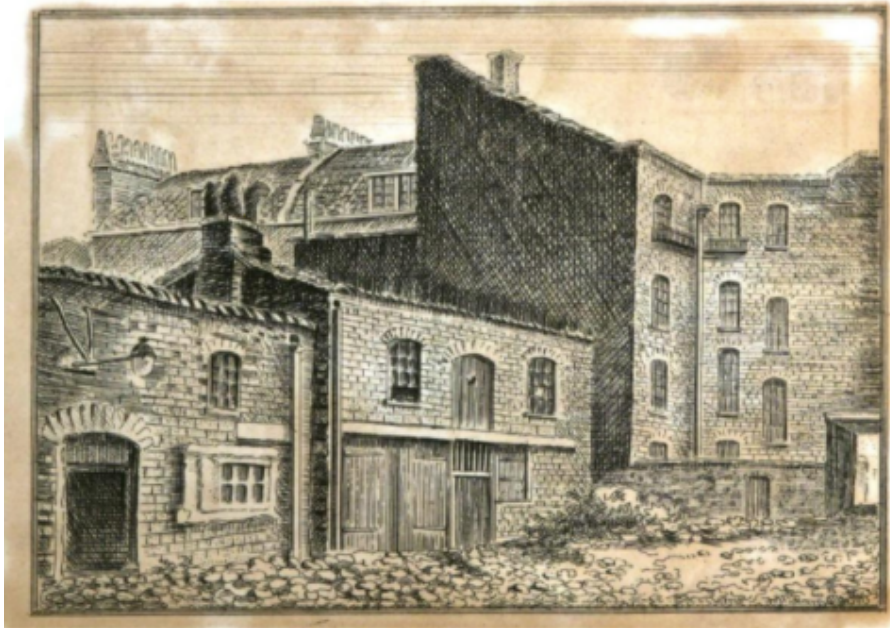


Figure 95: Two exterior views of the stable (Sherwood, Neely and Jones 1820). The first shows the front whilst the second shows the back during the fleeing of the conspirators. This edition was published very shortly after the trial and advertised itself in the Manchester Observer (29th April 1820).

8.7 THE MAYDAY DANCE: THE CONSPIRATORS' EXECUTION

What is particularly interesting about the conspirators' executions is the modification of a very old form of execution: hanged, drawn, and quartered. Originally, the execution was to include the quartering of the executed bodies too. However, this was prevented as 'His Majesty having been graciously pleased by warrant' remitted this aspect of the punishment (Gurney 1820, 656). The Treason Act 1814 ensured the condemned was dead before beheading, although beheading had nearly been removed entirely by the efforts of the legal reformer Samuel Romilly until it was considered that the punishment for high treason needed to be worse than that for murder. Unlike the condemned of the Pentrich Rising in 1817, the conspirators did not face the 'drawing' aspect of the punishment. The Pentrich condemned were symbolically carted around the execution space three times to represent being drawn by the horse (*YH* 15th November 1817). The Cato Street execution, and Pentrich, was within a contained space that regulated movement and limited the spectacle to a static focal point. As already seen, the role of the body and how it performs is a crucial part of the radical and reformer identity – thus the bodies and corpses of the conspirators will be explored.

8.7.1 DETAILS OF THE EXECUTION

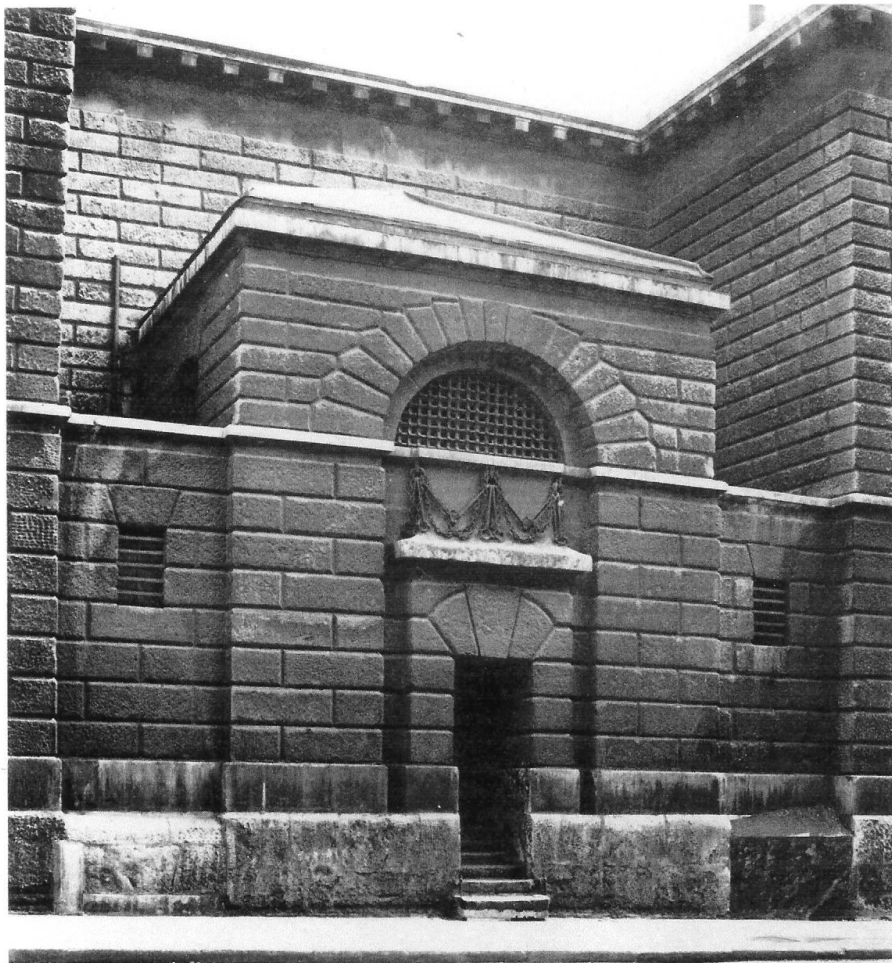


Figure 96: The Debtor's Door at Newgate (Batsford 1950, 45).

The execution occurred at Newgate Prison on the 1st May 1820. Newgate became an important 'theatre where the social dramas that beset England could be played out' (Wilson 2014, 26). It was a gruesome spectacle which attracted a large crowd, some accounts stated that from as early as 5am, the crowds began to fill the streets and windows of neighbouring buildings (*LI* 8th May 1820). The scaffold was located outside of Debtor's Door (figure 96), allowing easy exit from the prison to the execution site. Following a complete rebuild in 1777, and then its reconstruction

following a fire in 1782, the prison was new and a statement of state power, making it a highly suitable backdrop to executions. Inspired by Classicalism, the Debtor's Door uses the principles of discipline and control in this architectural style without decorative features such as foliage (Unwin 2000, 93). Instead, there were chains to emphasise the purpose of the building. Its scale and use of large blocks of stone helped to make the door look small, oppressive, and confining. The scaffold and gallows had been specially modified for the mode of execution. This included an extra pole to ensure the coffins could be publicly viewed and that the severing of the heads could be watched (figure 97). The executioner and assistants were first to arrive, carrying poorly made elm coffins displayed on the 'part of the stage next Giltspur Street' and were shortly followed by a block of wood placed at the head of the first coffin (*MC* 2nd May 1820). With the State stage set, including its impressive backdrop, the execution could begin.



The EXECUTION of the CATO STREET CONSPIRATORS, May 1820.

29

Figure 97: *The Execution of the Cato Street Conspirators* (Wilkinson 1820). This engraving demonstrates how the multiple gallows operated with coffins lined-up ready for the condemned. The executioner holds Thistlewood's decapitated head to the public. Permission from Harvard Library.

At 7:45am, the condemned Thistlewood made his appearance on the scaffold. He carried an orange and appeared calm (some reports suggest that all the condemned were given an orange, with Ings choosing to eat his on the gallows (*YH* 6th May 1820)). As the executioner placed the cap over his head, he requested his eyes were not covered, with one newspaper suggesting he was looking for someone in the crowd (*LI* 8th May 1820). Rev. Cotton, the ordinary at Newgate, attempted to speak to him but Thistlewood shook his head respectfully. Tidd arrived second, giving three cheers to the crowd who responded, before nodding to someone in a window and becoming calm. Ings came third, choosing bravado, he gave three cheers (again returned) and quipped, 'Oh, give me death or liberty!'. Tidd was noted to have 'surveyed the MASKED Executioner, the halter, the knife, the coffins and the block, with a steady eye' (*CPR* 6th May 1820). Davidson was next, he appeared to be in prayer as he mounted the scaffold, bowed to the crowd, and was joined by the Rev. Cotton. The final conspirator to arrive was Brunt, who ran up the stairs and appeared to be the most outwardly affected. However, upon seeing the deployed soldiers there to keep order, Brunt shouted, 'What, soldiers! What do they do here? I see nothing but a military government will do for this country, unless there are a good many as we are'. No response is recorded to Brunt's political outburst. Shortly before the execution, Ings joked, 'Come, old man, finish us tidy!'. Following this, the caps were pulled down, the men placed upon the trap doors, and the sentence was read. Half an hour after the drop, the bodies were cut down, and a masked man began the process of beheading with Thistlewood. The assistant was possibly a medical student or surgeon but another suggestion (which notably emerged much later than the execution) was he was a resurrection man, who upon being asked to decapitate the heads responded, 'Oh, yes; that he could do it very well, as he was in the habit of cutting off heads for the purpose of obtaining teeth' (*MC* 28th September 1820). Upon severing the head, one of the assistants raised up Thistlewood's head (figure 98), proclaiming 'This is the head of Arthur Thistlewood, a

traitor', with this being repeated for the other four men. According to the *Leeds Intelligencer* (8th May 1820):

The Exhibition produced on the spectators, a thrilling sensation; and the hissings and hootings of a part of the mob, were vehement.

This reaction was largely the crowd partaking in the pantomime theatrics of executions, jeering and booing the villains, but some of this response would have been caused by the shock or repulsion of witnessing a decapitated head. During the process of beheading, the masked man's knife was turned, requiring the aid of two more people to sever Thistlewood's head. Once the bodies were laid down, complete with the heads, the execution was over. It took one hour and eight minutes (Wilkinson 1820, 387).

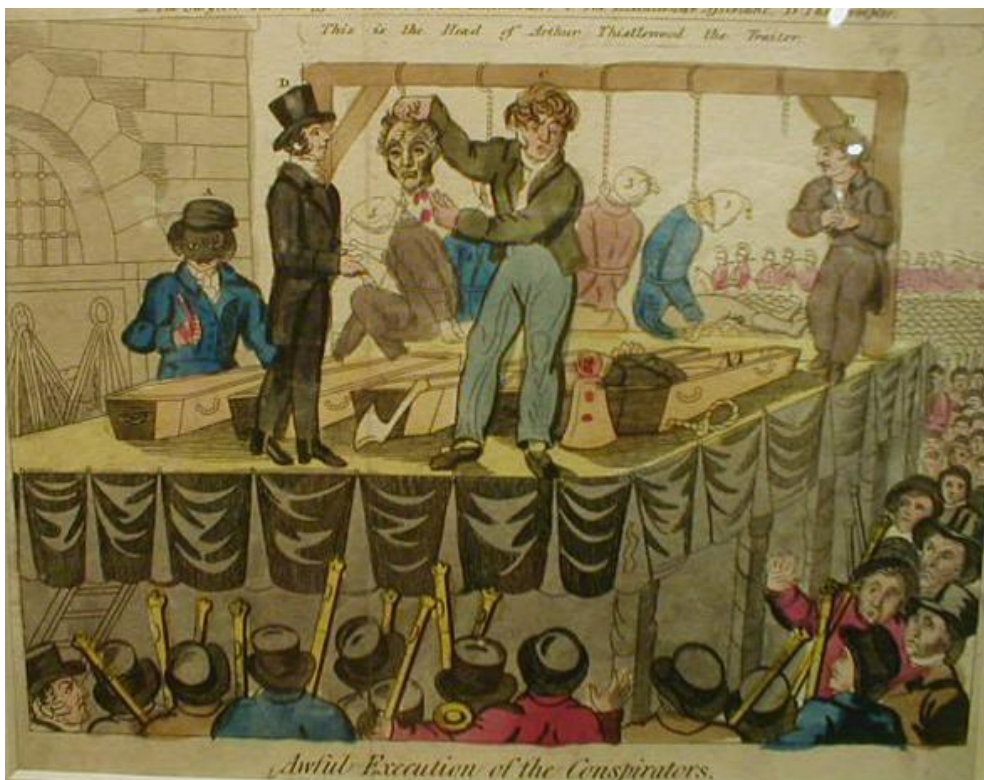


Figure 98: Awful Execution of the Conspirators (Anon 1820). This depiction shows the presentation of Thistlewood's head, the masked executioner in the background holding a bloody knife, and the other four conspirators still hanging. The crowd is shown being much closer to the action than they would have been. Constables with their tipstaves (the yellow sticks) are shown at the front of the crowd and watch attentively.

8.7.2 PERFORMING EXECUTION

The Cato Street conspiracy execution offered a space for state performance, but also how the conspirators could control themselves in their last moments. This section will focus on the performance of the executioners and the executed. Material culture and space were both important in enabling these performances and transforming the Debtor's door into a landscape of justice, orchestrated death, or spectacle. The scaffold, chopping blocks, knives, and coffins were vital objects in this space whilst clothing from the executioners and executed added to the ritual and drama.

The scaffold was the spectacle's stage and it needed to be properly dressed. On the Sunday evening before the execution, a large number of spectators were reported to watch the enlarging of the scaffold for the purposes of this execution (*BMV* 8th May 1820). The presence of the scaffold was not in itself deemed enough. It required extra symbolism to be utilised as it 'was lined with black cloth and on one part immediately behind the drop' (*NC* 6th May 1820). However, practicalities were also considered, with these revealing the mechanics behind state violence. Sawdust was spread on the scaffold where the decapitations were to be performed (*LVM* 5th May 1820). At around 7:45am on the day of the execution, the coffins were laid out:

bringing forth five coffins one after the other, which were laid in a line... They were very rough in their manufacture and appeared to be made of elm.

These were accompanied by a block of wood, which was placed at the head of the first coffin (*MC* 2nd May 1820).

The execution was signalled via the presence of material culture and materiality helped to construct the space outside of Newgate into one of spectacle and anticipation. A combination of practicality and ritual was apparent through utilising the impressive façade of the Debtor's Door and black cloth, whilst recognising that this execution was extraordinary through enlarging the scaffold. The cheapness of



Figure 99: The execution of Thistlewood, Ings, Brunt, Davidson, and Tidd (Thompson 1820; JJC/20090626). This print utilises a different perspective than the other three, showing the thoroughfare and how busy the crowd scene was. Despite the crowd being too close to the scaffold, the windows and roofs of surrounding houses, the church, and Newgate are packed with spectators.

the coffins was another way of controlling the conspirators' bodies pre and post-death. They would have witnessed where their bodies were going to be placed and understood the authorities did not view that their burials needed respectable coffins. The coffins restricted what the crowd could see too. In a practical fashion, they concealed the bodies neatly and permitted the removal of the decapitated corpses without extra attention. Controlling the bodies post-death and limiting the power of the criminal corpse can be linked to an anthropological concept, 'matter out of place' (Douglas 2002), in which substances, fluids, and objects have a designated space and become pollutants, dirty, or pure. Through restricting the view

of the bodies, and therefore their blood post-decapitation, the pollutant of the criminal corpse was being managed and the risks of the purity of their cause making the bodies become martyrs was mitigated.

The attention of the prints (figures 97, 98, 99, and 100) was the scaffold, becoming the space warranting the viewer's attention. Newgate has been presented as a backdrop to the events, acting as scenery in which the stage and performance occur before. The focus was achieved through choosing a deliberate part of the execution: all four depict the exhibition of Thistlewood's head as the moment to capture as the climatic part of the spectacle. They avoid depicting direct violence through not showing the moment of decapitation nor the bodies whilst they were in the process of dying through being hanged. Wilkinson's prints produced physical distance, and therefore limited intimate details, from Thistlewood's exhibition by making the viewer look up towards the scaffold. It is not possible to see the features of Thistlewood, rather it is known who it is because he was the first to be decapitated and four bodies still hang. The anonymous print changes this perspective and foregrounds Thistlewood's head being held aloft. His expression can be discerned, blood drips, and his bloody neck can also be seen in the coffin. The violence is explicit. Thompson's print details the violence again. Thistlewood's head is held aloft but it is Ings who is being decapitated, with some blood surrounding the block. In the coffin, the viewer can even spy Thistlewood's headless body. Even the hanging bodies have been depicted differently. Wilkinson's prints depict them as being ordered, perhaps even positioned, following their death in a neat row with the criminal corpse behaving itself. These prints were accurate in showing how the executioner moved the bodies post-hanging into a sitting position facing Ludgate Hill (*Sun* 2nd May 1820). The anonymous print does not shy away from the reality of death and instead chooses to present the moment before the rearranging, deciding that this representation was more important than accuracy. The bodies are

disordered, twisted, and sat like ragdolls. Thompson's print again captures the disorder of death but chooses to depict the assistant executioners cutting down Davidson. Both the anonymous and Thompson prints also give the viewer a closer view of the decapitator. The anonymous print shows the decapitator in a mask with his chin visible. In Thompson's, the decapitator has almost been racialised. It does not look like he is wearing a mask or crape rather he has been shaded to look black. This decision might have been to add to the 'savagery' of the scene. Wilkinson and Kelly do have executioners and the assistants on the scaffold but it is not possible to ascertain who is who. It appears the decapitator has been removed from the scene entirely, creating another polite distance from the violence.

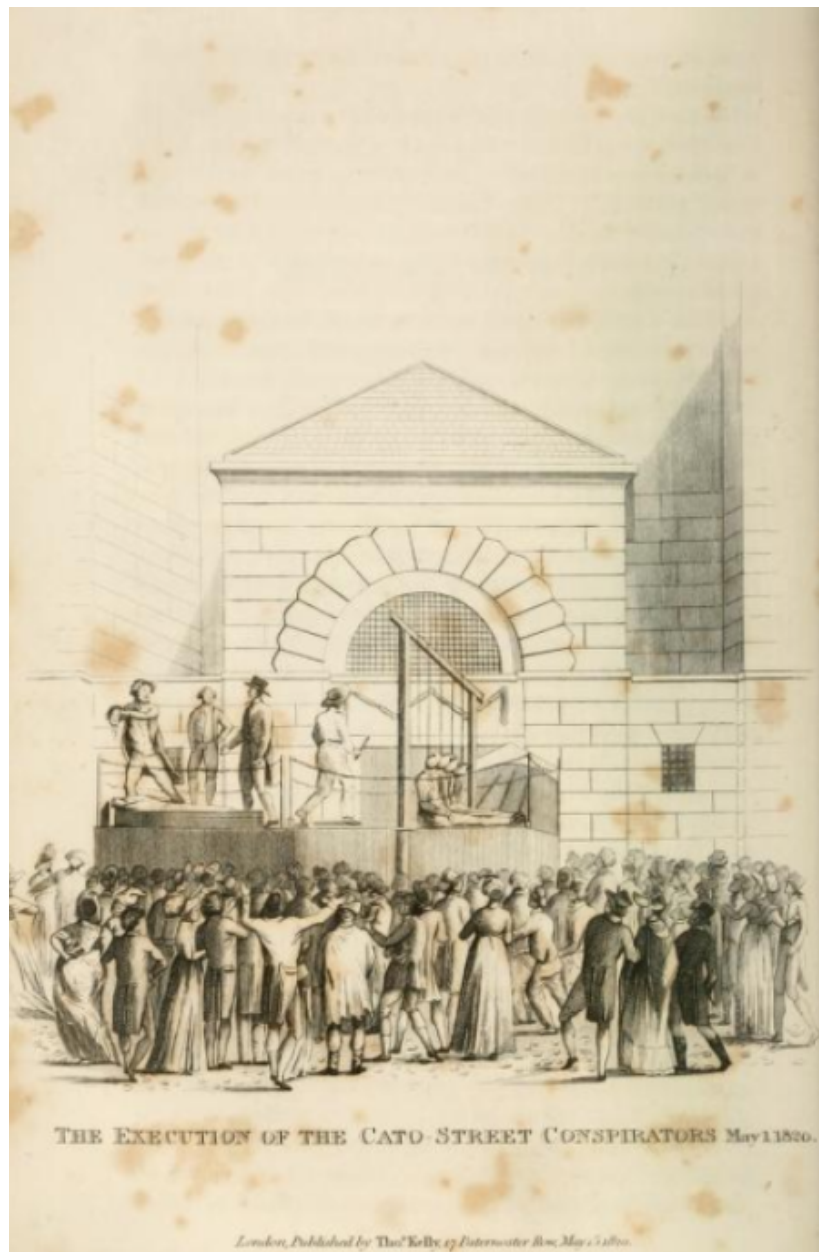


Figure 100: *The Execution of the Cato Street Conspirators* (Wilkinson 1836[1820]).

These differences in capturing the experience and space of the execution was likely connected to different audiences. Protecting and distancing the viewer from violence means Wilkinson's publications aimed for a middle/upper-class audience. Style and genre also evidence this. Wilkinson's was more expensive: the execution scene was a copper plate in a half-leather edition of *The Newgate Calendar Improved*

(figure 100). The anonymous print was cruder in artistic style but does dissect the scene by labelling each person. It was the fold-out woodcut from a pamphlet aimed at the popular market. Although the assertion the woodcut was for the popular market, it cannot be limited to this group. Chassaigne (1999) demonstrated across the nineteenth century that audiences for cheaply mass distributed crime pamphlets and broadsides were not purely the lower/working classes. Thompson's print also labelled and dissected the scene. Its cruder style again suggests popular market. In many ways, it is the print that makes the viewer feel closest to the action and allows the reader to consume the violence. Despite these differences in style, form, and audience, all chose the same moment to depict, with Thompson's print including additional details. The Cato Street execution was therefore constructed in various ways but the performance of Thistlewood's decapitation caught the imagination. The one exception to the above is an execution broadside, *The Last Dying Speeches of Arthur Thistlewood...*, which utilises a stock woodcut of Newgate (figure 101). In this instance, the broadside was likely made prior to the execution and sold onsite, meaning the maker decided to utilise existing imagery as the text was more important. Accuracy was not crucial as the title is erroneous because no quartering occurred. Rather than attempting to portray or capture the event accurately, it was to be a cheap souvenir a spectator could use to remember the event.

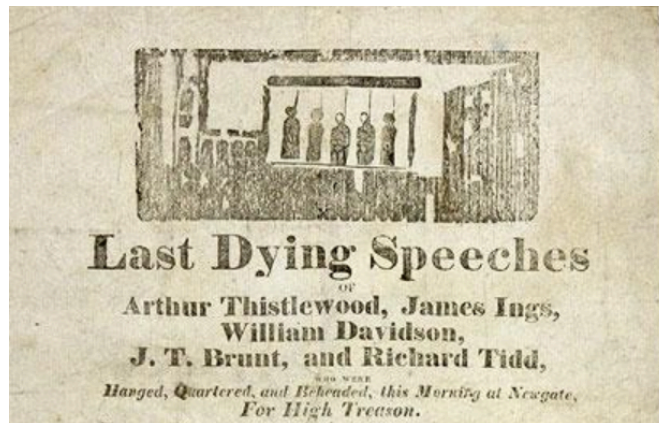
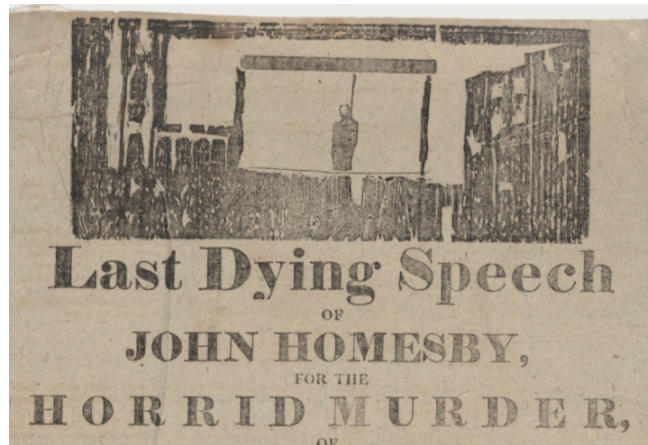


Figure 101: Three execution broadsides (HLSL/990022193130203941; Anon 1820; HLSL/990081133860203941). The Homesby broadside dates from 1819, the Cato Street broadside from May 1820, and the Godwin broadside from December 1820. All three have the same stock woodcut for the Newgate execution scene and scaffold.

The executed influenced the execution space through how they performed in their last moments as well as through materiality. Their clothing was roughly treated in order for the decapitation to occur. Numerous reports note how the coats and waistcoats had to be 'forced down' to properly expose the neck (*TEFP* 4th May 1820). Beyond how clothing impacted the process of execution, the conspirators decided to dress in particular outfits:

Thistlewood was dressed in a black coat and waistcoat, blue pantaloons, and list shoes. Tidd came next: he wore a blue coat, a striped waistcoat, breeches, and boots with the tops cut from them. Ing's had on a butcher's jacket and cap, with trousers. Davidson was dressed in a blue coat, coloured waistcoat, breeches, and high gaiters. Brunt wore a cap, a coloured coat and trousers (*LVM* 5th May 1820).

Ings and his butcher's jacket drew the most attention in reports (*AJ* 10th May 1820). It was a 'rough pepper-and-salt-coloured worsted jacket and a dirty cap' (*BMY* 8th May 1820). Allegedly Ings shouted 'Jack Ketch should have no coat of his' after he remembered to ask for some clothes he left behind to be given to his wife and he wore different attire to his trial (*LVM* 5th May 1820). The decision to wear his profession's attire contrasted with his fellow conspirators. In a limited capacity, it allowed Ings to project his identity into the execution space and through his loud performance on the scaffold, it became part of the bravado that Ings deemed necessary to perform a 'good death'. His material and vocal choices were a deliberate ploy by Ings in trying to shape how his death was perceived. Ings was not performing as a butcher, rather the clothes helped to symbolise he was an everyday citizen who worked in a skilled profession. The condition of the clothes emphasised his financial and class position in society. Wearing butchers' attire to an execution in which Ings was to be 'butchered' added a layer of irony. These arguably combined to materially signal to the crowd and audience who read the reports that Ings was not only a conspirator, he was an ordinary man.

All five men had to wear a hood during the execution, removing some of their agency. Thistlewood, Tidd, and Ings requested the hood not be pulled over their eyes until it was completely necessary. Davidson held a handkerchief, requesting it was tied round his eyes when the hood was placed on him. The hood of course worked two ways: the conspirators could not see as they died, but the crowd could not watch their faces either. Usually in executions, the hood would have concealed the 'physiognomical contortions' hanging produced (Devereaux 2009, 157) but the hoods were removed in the process of decapitation. Through revealing the head, despite covering it in the process of dying, there was an opportunity to assess the conspirators' and to interact visually with the complete criminal corpse. This is another reason why the reports fixated on the head post-death (see 'The Radical Body/Corpse'). The hood materially controlled what the crowd could see during the execution but the spectacle of the event overtook concerns of witnessing the post-death face. The state decided exhibiting the un-hooded head was a necessary part of the spectacle, trumping the concealment, but nevertheless controlling the viewpoints of the execution.

The executioner was anonymised through wearing 'a black mask, which extended to his mouth, over which a coloured handkerchief was tied, and his hat was slouched down so as to conceal part of the mask, attired in a blue jacket and trousers' (*EM* 3rd May 1820). The *Star* (1st May 1820) stated the outfit reminded them of 'that character in pantomime from *Harlequinn*', with this likely referring to the wearing of the mask. Other reports suggest it was 'a shabby black coat' (*BMY* 8th May 1820). The *Caledonian Mercury* (4th May 1820) suggested the 'person who was so obnoxious²⁴ was dressed like a seaman', likely the rough attire was to disguise a

²⁴ Archaic spelling of obnoxiousness meaning exposed or subject to rather than pretentious or rude.

medical professor (*JOJ* 6th May 1820). Disguise features in other reports too (*CBC* and *GH* 5th May 1820) meaning the skill broke the illusion of it being an 'ordinary' executioner. The conspirators' executioner embodied and performed the stock role, utilising a recognisable uniform and only his skill and tools providing clues of his profession outside of the scaffold.



Figure 102: The axe created for the Cato Street Conspiracy execution (British Library 2020).

An axe was created for the purpose of decapitating the conspirators (figure 102). However, it was not used. Instead, the decapitations were undertaken with a knife. Reports disagree on the size of the knife but it appears to have been for surgery or amputations. The choice to commission an axe and then not use it is interesting, especially as some reports noted the axe was present on the scaffold (*LVM* 5th May 1820). Other reports noted Thistlewood's decapitation damaged the knife, 'In performing his dreadful duty, the edge of the first knife was turned by the vertebrae of Thistlewood, and two others became necessary to enable him to finish his heart-appalling task' (*TEFP* 4th May 1820). There was a strong insinuation that the executioner in charge of decapitation was a medical practitioner meaning they might

have overruled the choice of an axe in preference for an instrument they were more confident with. The materiality of the decapitation became imbued with the identity of the executioner and impacted the time it took as well as the spectacle.

The change from an axe to a knife had repercussions for the performance and spectacle of the execution. It was not the only instance where a knife was used to decapitate over an axe or sword. At the Despard Plot execution on the 21st February 1803, the insurrectionists were beheaded using a knife, with reports linking the executioner to St Thomas' Hospital (*MP* 22nd February 1803). Performing the decapitations with an axe would have required a different stance and would have altered the ritual ceremony, breaking a long tradition of using an axe to behead traitors as seen in the English Civil War and early modern period (Klemp 2010; 2011). Recent high treason executions including Brandreth at the Pentrich execution (*MP* 10th November 1817), used an axe, meaning the Cato Street conspiracy executioner made a deliberate choice. As well as being connected to the profession of medicine, this could have extended into the ideas on dignity and a 'humane' execution. Spierenburg (1984) argued in the late eighteenth century, sanguinary public punishments were becoming less popular and there was growing aversion to cruelty in punishment. The knife may represent this larger historical change in process. The process of hanging had become more humane at Newgate as 'the drop' was introduced as a way to make the death of the criminal shorter (Hunt 2004b, 45). The executioner was noted to be working with 'anatomical adroitness' (*Globe* 1st May 1820). Although the beheading still occurred, it is worth remembering that the conspirators were the last people in England to be decapitated.²⁵ The mixed

²⁵ The Radical War insurrectionists Andrew Hardie, John Baird, and James Wilson were executed later in 1820 for high treason and are officially the last people to be beheaded in the United Kingdom. They were beheaded with an axe.

approach to beheading seen in high treason executions in the early nineteenth century shows a conflict in how to approach the act of decapitation and what different pieces of material culture represent. The surgical knife was meant to remove a layer of the ritual barbarity, adding a layer of dignity, distancing the state from medieval or early modern associations. The knife failed to achieve this, at times botching the process, especially for Thistlewood. Using a knife did not prevent the crowd reacting with groans or shrieks (*KC* 2nd May 1820) nor did it make decapitation avoid criticism, 'The same disgusting and abominable piece of wanton and absurd barbarity was then performed [again]' (*Scotsman* 6th May 1820). Wilf (1989, 510) suggested repulsion towards dissection was largely visceral rather than ideological, the disdain towards it was due to the power of the images that 'sharpened knives and lacerated flesh' could produce. Decapitation is not far removed from dissection; witnessing the execution of the conspirators was akin to watching a body being dissected, especially as someone believed to be the medical profession wielded a knife to achieve it.

8.7.3 *THE CATO CONSPIRACY CROWD*

There were concerns about possible trouble or agitation. These concerns were managed by the demarcation of space; Thomas Bridges, the Mayor of London, highlighted even if the conspirators attempted speeches, 'the distance from the place of Execution would have prevented any bad effects' (*HO* 44/6/135). The magistrates prepared for trouble by having large banners to unfurl that stated 'The Riot Act has been read – disperse immediately' upon reading the Riot Act (*Christian Watchman* 1820). These preparations were because the magistrates understood the sonic power of the crowd and the memory of how those at Peterloo could not hear the Riot Act loomed large. Various guards and troops were deployed to observe the crowd and ensure a peaceable meeting (*MP* 2nd May 1820). The whole area was controlled with fences and posts too. Each avenue that approached Newgate was secured by erecting wooden rails (*MP* 2nd May 1820). Aurally, materially, and

physically, the execution space was being controlled. This expectation of trouble reveals how a space of authority could be subverted into a radical one. Whilst there was no physical or violent trouble, the executioner who removed the heads did face vicious comments and decapitations provoked a strong vocal response from the crowd (*GH* 5th May 1820). Ultimately, there were no issues regarding crowd control as the audience dispersed peacefully (*CM* 4th May 1820). The only reported incident was not from misbehaviour or aggression, rather a symptom of so many people wanting to watch proceedings. The railings nearby at St. Sepulchre's Church fell due to the number of people who climbed them to attain a better vantage point (*JOJ* 6th May 1820). This lack of agitation or aggression may suggest a crowd largely unsympathetic to the radical cause, although equally it could imply reformers present decided the best course of action would be to stay quiet. The radicalism was contained to the scaffold and conspirators. Although discussing Tudor public executions, Sharpe (1990, 32) makes the interesting point that in a time when authorities did not want large crowds gathering, they did encourage attendance to public executions. The same fear of the crowd was prevalent in 1820, and the Six Acts had recently been passed. The state was willing to chance agitation at the execution as ceremonial and public performance of execution outweighed any concerns of a troublesome or radically charged crowd.

It is difficult to assess the sympathies of the crowd. Their reactions match usual pantomime and theatrics of executions. Some must have attended for the excitement, spectacle, and thrill of a public execution. Upon decapitating Thistlewood,

Hundreds from the tops of neighbouring houses groaned, and set up a shout. Some crowed, "Murder the villain!". Such is the force of habit, that the crowd were more excited at the mutilation of the dead, than at the destruction of the living (*Star* 1st May 1820).

People were paying decent money to secure a seat, 'A guinea was given without hesitation for any place from which a near view of the scaffold could be had' (*Globe* 1st May 1820), meaning that there was a 'polite' audience as part of the crowd. However, there must have been an element of support in the crowd. Thistlewood received a few cries of 'God bless you Thistlewood' (*NM* 6th May 1820). Prior to the hood being pulled over Thistlewood's head, he looked around the crowd for someone he recognised but likely could not locate them due to the distance between scaffold and crowd (*LVM* 5th May 1820). Upon reaching the top of the scaffold, Tidd scanned the crowd and 'familiarily nodded to someone whom he recognised' (*GH* 5th May 1820). As Tidd's body was cut down from the scaffold, some were heard to cry, 'Bring out Edwards' (*MC* 2nd May 1820), referring to the *agent provocateur*. Ings attempted to generate some crowd interaction:

The moment he had taken his station, he moved his head to and fro, and cried "huzza!" three times. He then commenced singing, "O give me death or liberty!" Here there was a partial cheering from the top of the Old Bailey (*NC* 6th May 1820).

According to Bamford (1893, 300), Healey and Johnson paid a decent sum of money to hire a window opposite the scaffold, but Bamford chose not to attend as he could not stomach watching such a scene. To a certain extent, the authorities' concern of trouble was not without basis. There were reformers and radicals in the crowd and the vocality of the crowd at charged moments such as the decapitation suggest that the execution space could have been transformed from state sanctioned spectacle to a radical disruption.

8.7.4 THE RADICAL BODY/CORPSE

One important element in this form of punishment was the role of the radical body. 'The historicised body', the idea the body has a history not limited or contained to ahistorical or biological narratives (Cooter 2010), has yet to be fully explored in historical studies on executions, with 'corporeal features' such as flesh and blood

often appearing in the accounts or descriptions provided but not themselves analysed (Hurren 2016). This case study aims to contribute to work that combats the 'biologisation of the humanities' (Duden 2005, 247), a trend visible in archaeology as well as history. Much of this work focuses on embodiment, understanding the body was experienced historically specifically (Harvey 2019) but there also needs to be research on how the body was perceived. Execution spaces provide visually violent and graphic ways of being presented with the mortality and death of the body. The Cato Street execution provides an extra element too as the beheadings created a moment in which the onlooker could see the internal body.

A lot of literature on the criminal corpse focuses on its involvement in creating the 'criminal celebrity' and how selective remembrance can focus on charisma and attractive characteristics (Denham 2016). Posthumous myths, emergence of a folklore, or hero status (see Seal 2009) did not become attached to Cato Street, although individuals like Emmet and the Radical War have heroic myths and narratives constructed around them. Despite how the Cato Street stable became a place of celebrity making, the conspirators did not achieve this elevation and their corpses were selectively forgotten. Instead, the execution was successful in not only killing the conspirators but also their 'fifteen minutes of fame'. Questions therefore surround whether their bodies were viewed more as radical than criminal. Did their act of treason mean their bodies and corpses were considered differently than if other crimes had been committed?

Newspaper reports fixated on the head post-death. This was due to understanding the death penalty as being an operation, 'The criminal was seen as the diseased part of the body politic and execution was the necessary removal of that diseased part to ensure the continued good health of society' (Taylor 1998, 126). Radicals were often depicted as being skeletons or underweight, therefore the link between the

philosophy being one of disease and death was already prevalent in nineteenth century understanding. There were several ways the head was described, perceived, and understood by and through execution reports: as an object, as a way of understanding the character of an individual, and decapitation as a ritual moment for sound to occur in the spectacle of execution. These help to illuminate how the spectacle and space interacted.

Objectifying the head and the body post-death featured within several accounts of the execution. Thistlewood's head, once removed from the body, could be considered a 'ghastly object' (*MC* 2nd May 1820). Brunt's head became the 'trunkless ball'. The maltreatment of the deceased's body was not remarked upon as being unfortunate or disrespectful, but was instead described in graphic detail and objectified. If it was not the head being commented upon, the body could also be objectified. The executioner 'severed the head from the trunk' (*CM* 4th May 1820). These language choices could be a way of dealing with the violence of decapitation through dehumanising the bodies. Using objectifying language helped to create a distance between reader and violence.

There were understandings the face post-death could reveal something about the character of the deceased. This was a belief that persisted through the eighteenth/early-nineteenth centuries (Tarlow and Lowman 2018) but was especially potent in the 1800s. Death masks have a long history and were connected to criminals as a way of safely meeting one, especially murderers (Quigley 2005) and were popular in the nineteenth century to help investigate phrenology and criminality (Wilkins 1990). Phrenology was a science growing in popularity and advanced a model that claimed to understand where criminality came from (Rafter 2005). The reports and accounts of the execution operated within lay phrenology, participating in an established belief system that connected the external body to the

internal mind. Similarly, reports and accounts of their arrest and trial would comment on their appearance, with one commentator suggesting 'they were for the most part men of short stature, mean exterior and unmarked physiognomy' (Wilkinson 1820[1836], 14). Thistlewood was noted to have had his eyes shut but be otherwise unchanging. Tidd was perhaps disconcerting for the conservative onlooker:

We were peculiarly struck while contemplating this horrid part of the ceremony, so far as related to Tidd. The features were not in the last degree distorted, but... shewed the same complacency as when the drop fell, - a strong proof of the firmness of feeling which he possessed (*MC* 8th May 1820).

Brunt's head showed pain he suffered before death as his dark hair contrasted with 'the purple hue produced by the agonies of death'. Davidson's head was viewed to be unchanging, 'His face remained in death exactly what it had been while he lived; the mouth was a little open, but no expression of agony or change of colour could be remarked... No drops had fallen from the other heads, but from this a few fell' (*MC* 2nd May 1820). No blood fell from the other heads but from Davidson's 'it fell profusely' (*LVM* 5th May 1820). This account of Davidson's experience attempted to align the execution, death, and his Methodism/Christianity together. The body acted as physical proof for salvation. As the only head to shed blood upon being exhibited – even if not the reality – the connection between Christ redeeming Davidson was symbolically displayed in comparison to the deists.

The spectacle of the execution was constructed through the interplay between crowd, space, and state sanctioned violence. Intersections between these three aspects were particularly apparent when sound and crowd responses are considered. Two ways sound became important and was reported upon was the moment of decapitation and when the decapitated heads were presented to the

crowd, with the ritualistic declaration from the executioner's assistant, 'This is the head of [name] – a traitor!'. Seeing the knife be applied to Thistlewood's throat, the crowd 'raised a shout, in which exclamations of horror and reproach were mingled' (*MC* 2nd May 1820). This 'tumult' briefly impacted the executioner, but largely the reaction of the crowd did not interrupt their role (*MO* 6th May 1820):

The operator was loudly hissed and groaned at by the mob, and some atrocious expressions were applied to him. The universal groans, accompanied by some female shrieks, when he first commenced upon Thistlewood, had an awful effect. (*GH* 5th May 1820).

As well as the act of decapitation, the exhibition of the head to the crowd also provoked a vocal response of hisses and hootings (*TC* 3rd May 1820). Davidson's exhibition also elicited hisses and groans (*Times* 2nd May 1820) and for the other three conspirators too (*BC* 4th May 1820). The masked man dropped Brunt's head, the last to be exhibited, to 'howlings and groans from the spectators' (*TEFP* 4th May 1820). Dropping the head during the ceremonial declaration disrupted the ritualistic performance and spectacle, permitting one last burst of sound from the crowd. The execution space could oscillate in terms of who was in control of it. The moment of decapitation became a moment of tension as it appeared the crowd could have surged becoming the dominant actor and the authorities may have worried the spectacle acting as a provocation rather than demonstration of punishment. Penfold-Mounce (2010, 262) suggests in the 1800s, '[t]he criminal corpse is not consumed in the physical cannibalistic sense but rather socially consumed through tourist-like techniques'. Historians typically viewed the execution crowd and space as being a 'theatre of punishment' rather than a mob scene (McKenzie 2003, 168) but here was a moment where theatrics could have become tumultuous. This surge was not purely attached to sympathetic or reform attendees nor was it purely a performance of the pantomime vocality of execution crowds. The decapitation

affected the crowd emotionally and they channelled this reaction, revulsion, or aversion through sound.

Many accounts of the execution claimed a lack of blood or did not include blood in their reports. This could have been because the bodies were kept sitting up in the coffin following the decapitation (*MP* 2nd May 1820). *The Times* (2nd May 1820) discussed blood in more detail but noted 'From the manner in which the last part of the execution was performed very little blood was seen on the scaffold'. This want to avoid the display or description of blood is interesting in itself, showing a desire to obscure bodily fluids from public view or exposure. Viewing blood in executions, as well as other forms of entertainment, was part of the spectacle (Crone 2016b), meaning deliberate attempts to limit blood ran counter to popular conceptions of what executions should contain. As with the coffins, blood needed to be contained and not become 'matter out of place'. If the blood of the conspirators left the body too soon and entered the execution space, the blood of radicalism would have spilled directly into an authoritative space resulting in contamination. The minimisation of blood until the head was set into the coffin contains this matter, designating its new place as one of death.

Following the placement of the corpses in their coffins, the bodies were buried in Newgate and the coffins filled with lime. Discovering this, the wives of the deceased were 'overcome by their feelings' (*JOJ* 6th May 1820). A petition from the wives of all five of the deceased to have 'the mutilated remains of their deceased husbands, in order that they may be consigned to their silent graves' (HO/44/6/271) was denied, with Thistlewood's wife, Susan Wilkinson, later sending an individual petition too. The response to her efforts, 'that Thistlewood was buried' (*MP* 3rd May 1820) and 'the body belongs to the King' (*YH* 6th May 1820) were powerful declarations from the State that the conspirators' bodies had been severed from society. Brunt's last

words, 'he would make a present of his body to King George the Fourth' (*JOJ* 6th May 1820) recognised his body would transfer from being his to the King's. These accounts highlight how the bodies no longer belonged to the individuals or their families. The process of execution had begun State sanctioned deradicalisation. Perhaps the State's actions contributed to Susan's and Mary Brunt's (wife of John Brunt) efforts to bring forward a Bill of Indictment against George Edwards, the *agent provocateur* (HO/44/6/243). One petition requested the bodies be returned to the families and then exhibited to raise relief funds was denied (*JOJ* 6th May 1820). Crowds continued to be interested in attending the dissections and displays of executed bodies throughout the 1810s and 1820s (King 2017, 152). The prevention of exhibiting probably extended from concerns it would allow the conspirators' corpses to become focal points of radicalism, possible martyrdom, and perhaps not the bodies of moral instruction they should have been following their decapitation.

The decision to quickly remove the bodies from public display and accelerate the decomposition demonstrates a fear that the conspirators' bodies could remain powerful post-death. According to some reports, the coffins were filled with lime, screwed shut, lined up, covered with earth, and then covered with paving stones in Newgate (*CM* 6th May 1820), meaning that the usual practice of no grave marker and restricting access to the grave through confining it in a prison was followed. *The Times* (3rd May 1820) explicitly states quick lime was used. Displaying the criminal corpse, whether in a gibbet or at the anatomy table, had a long history (Tarlow and Dyndor 2015) but also in ephemera such as execution broadsides and transcripts (Bates 2020). In England, the display of spiked heads ended c.1781, although continued in Ireland until 1798 (Gatrell 1994, 317), meaning that burial or dissection were the likely options for the treasonous corpse. Wound culture permitted the violence of the execution, the public spectacle and ritual of the execution space, and the dissemination and consumption of newspapers, broadsides, and pamphlets to

the extent the ritual of presenting the heads was undertaken and eagerly consumed. However, it prevented the conspirators' corpses from impacting the landscape or spaces of London through being displayed. The bodies and criminal corpses were contained to the limited time frame of the execution and then in cultural and media imagination.

Interestingly, the Cato Street bodies appear to have been treated differently to other 'treasonous' corpses. The bodies of the seven men involved in the Despard Plot were sent to their families for internment (*MC* 22nd February 1803). Likewise, Emmet's body could have been claimed by his family. They chose not to as many were under arrest so his remains were sent to Newgate. Brandreth and the Pentrich bodies were buried in St Werburgh's church-yard in Derby (*MP* 8th November 1817). Hardie and Baird of the Radical War had their bodies interred in Stirling High Church churchyard (*CM* 16th September 1820). Murderers would have been covered under the 1751 Murder Act which sentenced the criminal corpse to be dissected or gibbeted, adding further weight to the argument the conspirators' bodies were purposefully buried this way. Does this suggest that the conspirator's corpses produced more anxieties in the authorities or did the post-Peterloo climate contribute? It indicates fear that the spectacle and ritual of execution regarding the conspirators was not enough in this case: further disintegration needed to occur. Containing the bodies within the boundaries of Newgate controlled access to their graves and spatially segregated the conspirators from society. Their criminal corpses were considered dangerous and potentially still a conduit for radicalism. The authorities' actions show tension between their fear of the body and the potential power of the criminal corpse.

The question surrounding whether the bodies were viewed by the authorities and Government as more radical than criminal still remains. Verdery (1999, 28) explained the 'dead body is meaningful not in itself but through culturally established relations

to death and through the way a specific dead person's importance is construed'. Of course, the conspirators had been sentenced to death for the crime of high treason so it is possible to analyse their bodies as criminal corpses. However, the anxieties over crowd control and the treatment of the bodies suggests fears that their bodies could continue to be a source of radicalism or inspiration. If radical righteousness could be retained post-decapitation, as some reports concluded, the corpse could remain imbued with radicalism *and* treason. The conspirators' corpses therefore operated on several levels, demonstrating how bodies could be imbued with multiple identities. Arguably, the primary layer was how they were understood as radical or radicalised, something which needed to be physically eliminated. The secondary layer was their treason and how this created the criminal corpse. Treason permitted the spectacle of decapitation and the State's violence of severing the body and mind. These layers interact, intersect, and overlap, and it can be difficult (or perhaps not even necessary) to dismantle the enmeshment between radicalism, treason, and execution.



Figure 103: Jeremiah Brandreth (Neele 1817). His face is shown at peace and shading is used to represent blood.

Unlike other executions from the period, the majority of the Cato Street Conspiracy's visual culture did not focus on the criminal body as its topic. As noted above, the fascination was more directed towards the stable and place of criminality. Of course, the execution prints show the decapitation of Thistlewood but other types of prints that depicted the criminal corpse were not made (or no longer exist). For example, Jeremiah Brandreth's decapitated head received the same treatment that heads did in French Revolution prints (figure 103). Although the above prints do include the presentation of the head — choosing to portray the pinnacle of the spectacle — they are relatively distant and do not attempt to capture the character of the deceased. Some criminals had their bodies displayed post-execution. The prints *Ignominious exposure of the Body of that inhuman Murderer, John Williams...* (Anon 1811) and *John Williams Sketch'd From the Corpse* (Picarello 1812) both depict the exhibition of John Williams laid on a death cart following his suicide before trial. Perhaps this

display was caused because of Williams' suicide which removed the possibility of an execution. This option was removed by the swift burial of the conspirators but nobody decided to imagine the scene nor provide a sketch of the bodies in the coffins whilst on the scaffold. Figure 104 was an exception, showing a celebratory scene where Tories dance around a liberty tree topped with the conspirators' heads. The apparent disinterest in visually depicting the conspirators' corpses and heads close up or as the main topic of the print, but willingness to describe their deaths and how their faces had changed post-death, suggests it was not from lack of public appetite for such details.



Figure 104: A May Day Garland for 1820 (Fores 1820). This print depicts leading public figures dancing around a maypole topped with the conspirators' heads. Sidmouth is in green and Castlereagh in the blue. Between them is a man in a black mask, similar to the style of the Harlequin, who holds a bloody knife in their mouth. Dorothy George (1952) argues this could be one of the conspirators who turned King's evidence but I argue this is the executioner who decapitated the conspirators. The fiddler is the spy, Edwards, who plays the tune the Tory cabinet dances to. The print references the date of their execution and subverts the idea of the liberty tree. H.T. Dickinson (1986) suggests the print demonstrates some sympathy towards the conspirators and disdain for the tactics used to capture them.

8.7.5 DAVIDSON'S CHRISTIANITY AND BODY

Throughout the execution, references to God and Christianity were made. Four of the five conspirators were deists, with this interplay between deism and theism being noted in reports. The weekend before the execution, whilst the conspirators were held in Newgate, the usual procedure of a visiting chaplain occurred, putting emphasis on the spiritual body. Reverend Cotton, the Anglican ordinary of Newgate, went to talk to the conspirators on the Sunday evening to help them bring their minds to prayer and repentance (*Sun* 2nd May 1820). The others respected Cotton's motive but affirmed their Deist beliefs (*LM* 6th May 1820). Only Davidson appeared to listen with any desire for Christian recourse and requested a Wesleyan minister to attend if possible. Although this request was denied, Davidson did pray with Cotton 'in the most fervent manner' (*LI* 8th May 1820). Davidson even prayed whilst the executioner pulled the cap over his eyes, pressing Cotton's hand strongly whilst this occurred (*CM* 4th May 1820). According to one report's 'remarkable fact', Ings was seen to join Davidson in prayer 'just as the fatal signal was about to be given' (*NC* 6th May 1820). Out of the five men, Davidson performed the role of the penitent although he did not deliver a speech, a common feature delivered by repentant people prior to execution. Davidson performed an internalised version of Christianity rather than evangelical, likely choosing to turn the execution space into a reflexive one.

The reports attempted to provide a 'redemption narrative' for Davidson and in distinction to the deists. Redemption narratives are often deployed in fiction as a way of redeeming a character from an act, deed, or thought, with it often occurring in the final section of the media. Davidson's redemption was triggered by being sentenced and entering the prison space. He was able to atone and perform Christianity in the execution space. Descriptions of his performance and body show some respect for his engagement with Reverend Cotton, especially as the other four

men consistently refused religious intervention. In comparison to the others, Davidson's behaviour 'presented a gratifying contrast to that of his companions. His deportment was mild, yet firm, and he prayed with great fervency' (*JOJ* 6th May 1820). His 'conduct was most decorous, and he was most evidently making the best use of his time to make his peace with God' (*NM* 6th May 1820). Importantly, the narrative was not explicitly written in terms of a 'sinner becoming a saint' nor did the visual culture make an explicit connection between suffering and salvation, as commonly seen throughout the Christian art tradition (Carrabine 2011). The narrative was delivered much more subtly. This was because of a combination of Davidson's race and Methodism but also the lack of a last dying speech, an important ingredient in achieving a 'good death' on the scaffold. Through praying and engaging with Cotton, Davidson demonstrated the absolute judgment of God in which salvation was passed on him, due to a belief that 'salvation or damnation could be demonstrated both by gallows speeches and performances' (McKenzie 2006, 134). It is also worth highlighting that the redemption of Davidson's body was prevented by the State. The 'mark of infamy', a term to describe the State's post-humous punishment, (Tomasini 2017, 67) remained on Davidson's corpse and in this instance, retributive justice continued into the burial.

An interesting divide between Davidson and the deists was vocality. Davidson only spoke quietly to the Reverend whereas the deists exclaimed both their spiritual and radical beliefs, performing this identity until the end. For example, whilst apparently sucking his orange, Ings 'screamed in a discordant voice, "Oh, give me death or liberty!" Brunt rejoined, "Aye, to be sure. It is better to die free, than live like slaves!"' (*LVM* 5th May 1820)²⁶. Thistlewood, despite the crowd's anticipation of

²⁶ Other reports suggest that Ings sung the line and do not include Brunt's addition to the line.

speeches, said, 'I have but a few moments left to live, and I hope you will tell all, that I die a sincere friend to liberty' (YH 6th May 1820). Overall, the charged space of Newgate's scaffold resulted in the enhancement of certain aspects of the conspirators' identities, with all choosing to emphasise their spiritual beliefs and some continuing to be emblazoned in their radical ones. Alongside the performance of the body, the voice was utilised as a way of resisting the authorities' control of the execution space and their bodies, attempting to introduce discord into the regulated. The deist conspirators Ings and Brunt projected bravado into the public domain and print. Davidson rejected a last hurrah at performing radicalism, instead choosing to spend his last moments in prayer.

During accounts of the execution, Davidson's race was rarely mentioned in stark contrast to reports on his involvement and capture in the conspiracy. For example, in an account that provided more information on the conspirators, *The Observer* (27th February 1820) stated, 'William Davidson, the man of colour, was the best-looking man amongst them'. There are a handful of execution reports which do note his race. *Jackson's Oxford Journal* (6th May 1820) highlight Davidson as 'the man of colour' and the *Leeds Mercury* (6th May 1820; notably in the biographies after the execution rather than in the report) call him 'the Mulatto'. Descriptions of Davidson focus on how he prayed and performed the penitent criminal in his last moments. In fact, Davidson's race was more apparent in accounts of the trial than the execution. Davidson was tried alongside Tidd and they were distinguished through race, 'Richard Tidd and William Davidson (the man of colour) were then put to the Bar' (LG 6th May 1820). In a synopsis of May 1820's events, *The Lady's Monthly Museum* noted 'Davidson, the man of colour' (1st June 1820). The prevalence of racism towards black radicals elsewhere makes the lack of references to race notable. Biographies on Davidson post-execution were especially racist, utilising tropes such as addiction to gambling and uncontrollable lust (Kelleher 1820; Wilkinson 1820).

The lack of racism or noting of Davidson's race did not occur in the execution space or reports as his performance and embodiment of Christianity and penitence superseded it, especially as the white conspirators did not participate in repentance. The depictions of the execution focused on the moment of decapitation with four bodies hanging in the background. Presumably, the prints depicted Thistlewood's decapitation due to his leading role in the conspiracy. This does have the effect of visually anonymising the bodies and removes Davidson's race. The press, for a single event and plenty of column inches, decided to drop explicit racism or racial epithets. Davidson's race was not as threatening as his radicalism that was being punished.

8.8 CONCLUSION

For a conspiracy that echoed the grand-scale violence of the Gunpowder Plot, Cato Street has been largely forgotten, and the bodies along with the execution have not been actively remembered. The conspirators did not achieve hero status nor did the reform or radical movement particularly construct myths or martyrdom around them. This was in part because the majority of the reform movement were against violent means. By extension, the conspirators had not been successful in performing charisma in their lifetime, a quality highlighted by numerous celebrity theorists as an important prerequisite to gaining a large following, whether it was because of fame or infamy (Weber 1968; Rojek 2001). The conspiracy cannot be easily associated with nationalism. Emmet can be tied to Irish republicanism and the Radical War can be connected to Scottish national identity. Perhaps the aim of eliminating the cabinet over targeting the military, as well as the small numbers rather than groups into the hundreds, also contributed. Whatever the reason why the bodies have been forgotten or excluded from the narrative of radical politics and heritage, the conspirators' bodies became criminal corpses, with their radical potential dismantled by the State. The wound culture centred around the place of conspiracy, with the stable capturing the fascination of the public and press.

The execution space was predominantly one of authority and belonged to the conservative supporters. Whilst alive, the conspirators performed their radical identities and generally pushed back against the idea of Christian salvation. In the process of dying, the space was de-radicalised, shifting instead to a sombre and reflexive landscape without any trouble from the watching crowd. The bodies too, once dead, were stripped of agency and familial ties, becoming property of the state and an object of horror. The landscape for this execution was generally still, with limited noise from the crowd, except in call and response cheers and general hootings, hissings, and groans upon the execution of the condemned and limited movement with the absence of the prisoners being drawn, the crowd assembled early, and the execution space was cramped. Instead, the landscape focused on the performance of the conspirators and executioners, as well as the role of the bodies in how they lived just prior to death, how they died, and what their faces and heads had become. Therefore, the execution of the Cato Street Conspirators was one in which the radical body was de-radicalised, the space that could have fluctuated between radicals and State remained calm, and the watching public were horrified by the decapitation but supportive of the punishment. The execution space was controlled by the authorities and state-sanctioned violence provided a ritual spectacle that defeated not only an attempt at insurrection but any possible power the conspirators' criminal corpses might have wielded. The execution wound culture focused on the decapitated bodies, through this being the moment which provoked crowd noise, the climax of the State ritual, and the focal point in prints depicting the execution. The State were victorious against the radical violence of 1820, decapitating the monster that had haunted them throughout the 1810s.

9 CONCLUSIONS

Regency radicalism was a vibrant, energetic, and momentous wave of activism. Radicals and reformers pursued and protested for change through seizing spaces and landscapes whilst proclaiming their cause with banners, flags, clothing, and liberty caps. At times, leading figures argued and radicalism was not united in what changes it wanted to cause, but radical events understood the power of the material and spatial, capturing the imagination of the working-class radical and aghast conservative alike. Concentrated in Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Glasgow, male and female reformers radicalised their landscapes, embodied their political beliefs, and materially declared their allegiance to reform. Whilst this wave of agitation, petitioning, and protest failed to achieve parliamentary reform and suffrage, it still resonates with contemporary experiences. The stories of post-Napoleonic radicalism are worth telling and listening to. They remind us that the struggle for change has a deep history; it is a heritage we must remember.

Material culture, space, and landscape were important parts of radical and reform performance, the construction of identities, and were used as ways of expressing and disseminating beliefs, ideologies, and messages. Targeting events highlighted how materiality and space were repeatedly used as strategies for disseminating ideas and building community across post-Napoleonic radicalism, meaning that the material and spatial dimensions of reform and radicalism need to be considered just as important as its print culture. Combining these together, the thesis has contributed to archaeology through developing a way for archaeology to study events and understand social movements, concepts, and experiences where material culture has not survived in any quantity. Its interpretations are also pertinent and relevant for political and social history through its exploration of important radical events from fresh perspectives, emphasising the spatial, material, and embodiment of radicalism. Approaching the mass platform meeting, female reformers, prison

experiences, and execution through historical archaeology has enabled new insights into Regency radicalism.

9.1 ARCHAEOLOGY OF EVENTS

What became apparent through researching radical events was how interconnected the aims of exploring areas with low material culture survival and appreciating visual sources were to understanding events. Originally, these aims were considered as separate strands but thematic analysis demonstrated their inseparability. The lack of surviving material culture encouraged novel ways of utilising documentary and visual evidence. Visual sources were able to provide insight into what material culture might have been present but importantly, they highlight how the radical event was imagined and conceived. When studying events, we are not examining a singular experience. Analysis therefore needs to attempt to incorporate competing and different perspectives. Feeding into this, the thesis has not aimed to produce a narrative of radicalism. Instead, it has explored moments, experiences, and events to gain insight into material culture, space, and landscape featured in radical identity building. Through looking at where events, identities, material culture, bodies, spaces and/or landscapes, and radicalism intersected, the thesis has appreciated how multi-faceted, connected, contradictory, and entangled the reform movement was.

The methodology has proven fundamental to ensuring that accessing events archaeologically is possible. Using thematic analysis has produced interpretations that enabled the researcher to highlight the significance of material culture and space that would otherwise be obscured by text. There has been a purposeful avoidance of comparing the method to excavation or using the metaphor 'excavating the record', as has happened elsewhere within historical archaeology, as it is important to recognise how the process of analysing and interpreting text is in itself archaeological in nature without being linked to the archetype. Historical

archaeology has to better incorporate text and visual sources into its methodologies, theories, and approaches, in order to reach its full potential.

The material culture discussed and interpreted survives in small quantities, forcing a reliance on the documentary and visual record. However, this thesis recognises how documents, prints, and engravings are themselves forms of material culture and should be considered as cultural and archaeological artefacts. Documents offer the 'event of the text': the moment of writing, the experience of reading, and the incident of imagination. Appreciating this cultural, social, and immaterial landscape and space has provided insights into how radicalism and reformers were perceived, understood, and judged by the conservative psyche. The archaeology of events cannot only examine those performing or facilitating the event, it has to investigate how the event was observed, criticised, and perceived too. Through analysing how outsiders viewed radical spaces and events, the thesis has produced nuanced insights. The wealth of text written on reform demonstrates how conservatives and loyalists alike constantly returned to the same topics of mass meetings and radical material culture in order to reinforce their belief in the dangers of radicalism, whether they be revolutionary, treasonous, or the 'Amazon' woman.

9.2 QUEERLY DOES IT

Whilst undertaking the research, I began to consider the position of researcher and their relationship with the research. It became especially apparent when collecting data that it was important to evaluate my positionality and attempt to understand how my identity intersects with the themes, sources, and interpretations. As with the ability of archaeology to study events, thematic analysis lends itself to this introspection as the themes are explicitly constructed by the researcher, therefore, making it both necessary out of academic rigour and considerations on how narratives of the past are constructed, to understand where researcher and research collide or interact.

Although not on queer historical people or LGBTQ history, this thesis stakes the claim of being queer archaeology through the researcher's identity. It is important that queer archaeology is not limited to only telling stories or attempting to access LGBTQ historical identities as alongside creating a history of the marginalised, it creates a marginalised history. LGBTQ archaeologists are in a position to utilise the discomfoting nature of queer theory and their identities to contribute disruptive, exciting, and challenging archaeologies. Through attempting to shift away from the heteronormative lens, this thesis used various frameworks and ideas that may not otherwise have been utilised. Chapter six is a prime example of this as the idea of viewing female reformers as having a female masculinity extends from my own experiences as a masculine queer woman. The thesis' focus on unpicking identity also stems from queer theory. With my own identity, I have had to navigate and explore, recognising its multi-faceted nature. Through my own experiences of being perceived differently than how I consider myself because of my body and gender, led me to appreciate that the bodies and genders of reformers may have undergone something similar. The Cato Street execution became a point of interest to me because of my own interests in contemporary crime. My own consumption of crime documentaries made me reflect on how an 1820 audience would have consumed Cato Street. Despite post-processualism being the dominant theoretical paradigm, soft positivism still exists as an epistemology within archaeology and would admonish emphasising the connection between researcher and research rather than create false distance. My thesis pushes for the acceptance of the personal being explicitly discussed in archaeological research. Not being open or severing an important part of myself would have impacted the interpretations. Denying who I am in order to be a 'better' researcher would have negatively impacted the research and conclusions.

9.3 MATERIAL CULTURE

Divided by chronology, the analysis chapters explored landscapes and spaces, gender and material culture, and bodies and punishment. Although separated into case studies on mass meetings, societies, prisons, and execution, there are clear overlaps and connections between the case studies. The importance of material culture needs to be recognised and emphasised. Liberty caps, banners, and flags were emblems which had a powerful control and influence over the loyalist understanding of radicalism. As well as signifying group identity, these objects were vital in the display of radicalism. In order for the mass meeting to become a mass spectacle, material culture was needed to embellish the radicals and elevate the performance. Our appreciation of the power of materiality needs to encompass *all* mass meetings and gatherings of the period. Radicals understood materiality was not only about ‘putting on a show’, it was a medium through which their politics, fellowship, and shared identity could be channelled and would help define the open and urban spaces radicalism occupied. Male and female reformers appreciated this, creating a radical lexicon and material tradition together. We can clearly see how the themes of material culture, landscape, and space fuse together and cannot be unpicked. Radical meetings and societies relied upon the material to radicalise spaces and landscapes but also to bolster, enhance, and construct their radical identities.

Material culture was pivotal in creating political identities of radicalism and reform. The analysis demonstrates how it was used as a powerful emblem of radical ideology through its totemic qualities in the mass platform. Materiality could not only capture or distil radicalism in ways spoken words and text could not always manage, it could communicate ideology and provide a medium for identity building through connecting individuals at mass platform meetings and building regional and national networks. This is especially true of liberty caps that became entwined with female reformers and the Spenceans’ use of cockades. However, there are more examples

of when text and materiality combined. It is crucial to understand that the role of material culture in constructing identities was enhanced, accentuated, and aided by phrases and mottos. Likewise, material culture gave these phrases a tactile and totemic medium to be displayed and emblazoned upon. Many flags and banners present at meetings were inscribed with text. The material culture enabled the projection of radical ideology through being the emblematic medium of radical language. It is not worth trying to distinguish whether text or material was more important. Rather, there needs to be an appreciation of how enmeshed the two were and how they worked in a symbiotic relationship. This entanglement contributed to constructing radical identities allowing radicals and reformers to claim public spaces, declare their beliefs, and inspire onlookers.

9.4 REFORM LANDSCAPES: MEETINGS, PRISONS, EXECUTIONS

The main components of constructing radical landscapes were speakers and crowds, material culture such as banners and flags, public spaces in urban centres, performance and processing through urban landscapes. Combining together, all these factors interacted to create radical events. These events claimed public and outdoor spaces, radicalising them, not only for the few hours they were held but also through creating a shared cultural memory. The meetings and events at Spa Fields, the Blanket March, and Smithfield all lasted beyond their temporal boundaries. The radical landscapes constructed at these major events lived on through the press, prints, toasts, speeches, and material culture that radicals – and conservatives – made.

Space and landscape were important components in Regency radicalism. The four years after Waterloo (1815-1819) were characterised by meetings, gatherings, and societies. Whilst meetings happened in reform union rooms and pubs, radicalism publicly declared its presence through the mass platform meeting. By 1820, however, the radical space had begun to contract. It shrunk to the confinement of

prison or flipped into authority-controlled executions. Regency radicalism, as advanced by Hunt and his followers, understood radicalism in terms of its public, physical, presence. Crowds and embodying radicalism in urban spaces were vital methods in pursuing and advocating reform for the disenfranchised. Even as the leaders were punished, contracting those spaces, being public in those spaces was still vital. Hunt attempted to shift his mass platform meetings into a mass readership of addresses and memoirs. Therefore, we must recognise how being public, having a voice, whether through meeting or publishing, was considered crucial in constructing a radical movement.

Material culture was pivotal in constructing radical events. Through banners, flags, cockades, liberty caps, and clothing, materiality was returned to again and again as a way of enhancing the meeting space. It was combined with performance and processions. Handpulling coaches, leading insurrectionary charges whilst holding a banner, a knapsack carrying a petition, all of these demonstrate the potency of the radical, material, and spatial combining together. These formats were replicated and performed across the country, uniting separate and disparate meetings through the use of the same methods and the reappearance of recognisable pieces of material culture. Radicals built a radical lexicon and tradition by constructing radical landscapes. This period of radicalism is arguably crucial in cementing the importance of the mass platform, material culture (especially banners, flags, and liberty caps), and claiming public spaces: they were not only the ways of constructing radical landscapes, but of performing radicalism and protest themselves.

We can understand the changing scale of spaces from large and open to small and confined as the shifting fortunes of radicalism. With hope, momentum and energy, large open and urban landscapes were claimed; with oppression, fear and disillusion, previously occupied spaces become void of regular protest. Although radicals were

sent to prison, transported, and executed across the late 1810s, eighteen-twenty was a powerful end point to English radicalism. The burial of the conspirators in lime-filled coffins not only destroyed their bodies, it signalled the end of this tremendous period of radical activity. Punishment, through prison and execution, was clinically deployed by the government and razed radical landscapes.

In contrast, the Cato Street execution was missing too many components to be part of the radical tradition. The hayloft provided a conspiratorial, cramped, and dilapidated space that became a place of fascination and understood as a crime scene. Through being a contained and defined space, it could be dissected and compartmentalised by the media therefore allowing the eager public to consume details and insights on a radical space. As the site of a conspiracy, the fears and anxieties of conservatives were proven true, it just occurred in a much smaller space than anticipated. With material culture stripped away in execution landscapes, the opportunities for radicalising the space was stunted. Newgate was packed with a crowd and the streets prevented processions. The execution space permitted the beheading of the revolutionary hydra the government had feared would continue to regrow its heads. The execution, at least in the short term, triumphed over the tragedy that authorities had caused at Peterloo. Coupled with the Six Acts, the execution-controlled radicalism, dampening its zeal and activity. The State performed violence dramatically in a space it designed, wresting control of public spaces that had been the domain of radicalism. Although the execution can be seen as an endpoint of English radicalism, it has to be remembered that not all radical activity stopped nor did the State's actions eliminate the social memory of radical events and spaces. However, the Cato Street conspirators were largely forgotten meaning that radicals and reformers were deliberate in what events made their tradition or narrative. The conspirators' execution highlights that the presence of radicals does not automatically equate to a radical landscape. Context and purpose

of an event were, of course, vital in radicalising spaces and landscapes. However, we can also note the importance of material culture again. Executions were displays of state power and its apparatus acted as a blunt performative statement of radicalism being slain. The crowd could have tipped the balance. Even though the conspirators would have been executed, the crowd's performance could have radicalised the space through utilising the pantomime and theatrics of executions.

9.5 FEMALE REFORMERS

Female reformers understood the potency of material culture. They utilised objects as a key way of expressing and participating in radicalism. There were two main methods utilised: gifting and processing. The most important gift was the liberty cap. Its frequency and geographical distribution highlight how the cap united female reformers across Britain. Connecting to the feminine figures of Liberty and Britannia, as well as being a recognisable and highly symbolic radical artefact, the liberty caps were imbued with the identities of female reformers. As gifts, they allowed the group/society's identity to be contained within materiality. Liberty caps were a fitting and suitable expression of feminine radicalism. Processing was also an important method. Marching in contingents, moving through landscapes, and performing in choreographed outfits, female reformers contributed to the radical claiming of public spaces. They were instrumental in radicalising landscapes in the late 1810s and provided a crucial gendered aspect to how radical spaces were being constructed. As seen above, the research question has ultimately created a false division between the material and spatial. We cannot understand gifting, processing, and the meeting space as separate entities. The female reformers understood how these interacted. Materiality and spatiality's interplay were used together in order to create the methods female reformers utilised to advance the radical cause.

Female reformers used established radical methods, materiality, and claiming of space. Their symbols were part of a radical lexicon and they operated within a

recognised radical tradition. They chose gifting as it permitted women a space in which they could enter and interact in proceedings. Processing was a highly visible way that female reformers could demonstrate to onlookers that women supported reform. Through participating in reform meetings, female reformers were taking advantage of their public nature. They knew that their presence would cause controversy but it would also attract attention and newspaper coverage. On one hand, female reformers used these methods to support and demonstrate their radicalism. On the other, these methods were deliberately provocative, and helped to circulate the reform cause through attracting criticism.

Gendered performances and language were crucial components to radicalism. The female reformers' gender was analysed with the aid of female masculinity, balancing their understandings of radicalism with outside critiques and attacks. Female reformers were not the proto-feminists some may wish them to be. Rather, they teach us to remember the multiplicity of ideologies in past radicalisms, the role of class in Regency radicalism, and they need to be part of Britain's radical heritage. Reflecting on our positionality can help us better understand historical movements and people as it allows us to understand where the tensions or connections between ourselves and the past are. Researching female reformers shaped the rest of the analysis through challenging me to consider how I shape, interact with, or reject the past. Further work needs to explore their gender through analysing their interactions with male reformers. Radicalism's understanding of gender also needs investigation in more depth. How did domesticity, the home, and family feature in leading radicals' words and at speeches in meetings? As well as this, where did industry, female employment, and urbanisation feature in female reformers' radicalism?

9.6 FUTURE AREAS OF STUDY

The legacy of Peterloo over the past two hundred years has already been studied to some extent. This major political injustice has been commemorated by various

peoples and places and through different ideologies, means, and ways. There is a clear opportunity to explore this narrative from the first anniversary commemoration in 1820 to its two hundredth anniversary. Questions could focus on how the role and use of material culture has changed over this period, how have contemporary politics impacted, shaped, or influenced commemoration, and how has place and space featured in remembering Peterloo? As well as events which were commemorated or are more well known, research needs to explore the memory of events such as the Pentrich Rising, Cato Street Conspiracy, and the Radical War. What made some events commemorated or adapted into a radical narrative? Why were some events and individuals forgotten?

Conceptions of reform and execution crowds would also be worth exploring. Those watching plays understood that they participated in the action; they did not view theatre as engaging with culture nor watch in silence, they were 'more mindful of being part of the theatrical experience' and actors, as well as the crowd, 'claimed the stage rather than the page as the place where drama was interpreted' (Brewer 1997, 351 & 338). This has implications for understanding radical and execution crowds. Did the vocality of the crowd occur because of how the theatre audience behaved? How were the hootings and hissings towards authorities, criminals, and executioners meant to be interpreted? There is a barrier between us and those attending meetings executions through which we currently cannot grasp the complete meaning of the sounds; we do not fully understand the rituals, performances, and spontaneity of the radical and execution crowd. Newspaper reports contain assessments of the crowd and why they attended, the answer to understanding the soundscape of events may lie in comprehending how reporters were making their assessment of who the crowd was composed of.

Beyond the Regency period, historical archaeology needs to explore other political movements and events. In a British context, the Levellers, 1790s radicalism, and Chartism all need attention. Due to the international nature of historical archaeology, there are many other movements, revolutions, and injustices that warrant study. The obvious places to turn to are the French, Russian, and American Revolutions. The political movements cannot be limited to only radical ones. Although this thesis argues for the creation of the archaeology of radicalism, it recognises there needs to be further study on loyalism, patriotism, and conservatism. Again, this needs to be international in scope and not limited by Britain's borders. However, due to the nature of this thesis, I feel best qualified to pinpoint examples within the long eighteenth century in Britain. The intermediate study would be to explore Loyalism's reaction to radicalism. Why burn Tom Paine's effigy publicly? Claiming the streets and taking over the urban landscape was utilised by the State too. How did royal processions and elections claim space? How important was material culture in this?

Banners and flags were not limited to radicalism. Rather, they were used by the military, the church, friendly societies, and more, meaning that we cannot define these objects as being inherently radical. What connections can be made between radical banners/flags with non-radical ones? Did they develop from the same tradition? How were they being used? Was text or imagery the main marker of difference? What similarities in language were there in inscriptions? In a similar way to the linguistic turn in tracking a word over time and in the spirit of an object biography, *types* of object need to be tracked and their *context* needs to be recorded. We cannot just accept the presence of the banner, flag, and liberty cap at radical events. They were purposefully chosen and understood as essential. The objects' relationship with other political, social, and cultural processions, ceremonies, and rituals needs to be better comprehended.

9.7 ARCHAEOLOGY OF RADICALISM: A MANIFESTO

The archaeology of radicalism needs to study other political movements, moments, and experiences. It is important future work does not abandon the short-term and the event. Choosing events has been demonstrated to be a valid and robust way of studying radicalism's material culture and landscapes. However, these approaches will need to be stitched together too. What stories can we tell about how radicals made, crafted, and curated material culture? This does not have to be limited to telling narratives of emerging traditions or typologies – although this most certainly needs to be done - rather, we can explore seemingly disparate events and political moments and make a narrative out of struggle. Stories on political radicalism have power. At times unwieldy, others dangerous, but most of all, a beacon of hope. We have to be alert to how archaeological and historical narratives can be reduced into political rhetoric and propaganda, how the storyteller can snip and cut what does not fit. It is important to realise that this last assertion is a charge against left wing archaeologists and historians. What have we edited out of the political past? Where have we chosen to streamline? What have we decided to forget?

An archaeology of radicalism needs to have a radical heart. I am not the first archaeologist to call for an archaeology that is politically minded, motivated, and manoeuvred. This thesis was driven by queer theory and is a political statement in itself. My queer identity is firmly embedded within these words, interpretations, and conclusions. Divorcing this part of myself would be impossible and trying to would have been soul-crushing. I add my voice to the historians and archaeologists who say 'No' to false objectivity and to having to hide in the academic closet. LGBTQ+ voices are able to tell different stories and ask new questions. The openness certainly creates vulnerability and, unfortunately, could leave a queer researcher exposed to vitriol. The archaeology of radicalism must become instrumental in building spaces where the personal/private diatribe is collapsed.

Whilst composing this research, I have been in multiple conversations, involved in conference sessions, and a witness to Twitter drama. What connects these is a passion for fighting for change and a desire to forge a new archaeology. My PhD saw three UCU strikes. Being on the picket line and involved in Teach Outs, I know that there is a radical seed being nurtured in archaeology waiting to grow and blossom. The archaeology of radicalism may be about the study of radicalism in the past but it cannot limit itself in only looking back. Telling the stories of female reformers, reading the poetry of Bamford, and making our own banners and flags, we could be reminded that our fight is part of something larger – their fight. Yes, change is not swift, combatting entrenched structures is tiring, and it can all feel pointless. Failure is part of protest. Belief in inevitable social progress has been shown to be naïve and untenable. But what we can do is be radical. The archaeology of radicalism needs to be twinned with radical archaeology.

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Figure 82: Kelly, T (1820) *William Davidson*. [print]. London: National Portrait Gallery.

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conspirators, taken during their trials, by permission, and other engravings. London: T. Kelly.

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Figure 98: Anon (1820) *Awful Execution of the Conspirators.* [watercolour]. Cambridge: Cambridge University Library.

Figure 99: Thompson, G (1820) *The execution of Thistlewood, Ings, Brunt, Davidson, and Tidd for high treason in forming of a plot to assassinate his Majesty's ministers whilst at a Cabinet dinner they where [sic] on Monday May 1 1820 in front of Newgate and after hanging half an hour they where [sic] cut down and their heads sever'd from their bodies and held up and proclaimed the head of a traitor.* [print]. London: Thompson.

Figure 100: Wilkinson, GT (1836[1820]) *The Newgate calendar improved; being interesting memoirs of notorious characters who have been convicted of offences against the laws of England, during the seventeenth century; and continued to the present time, chronologically arranged*. London: T Kelly.

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