

## 4. Radicalism and reform at the ‘Gate of Pandemonium’: the Crown and Anchor tavern in visual culture, 1790–1820

On the morning of 28 February 1820, John Cam Hobhouse sat down to write what he hoped would be his last diary entry from his Newgate prison quarters. Rumour had it, he noted, that his ‘den’ would be ‘adjourned this day’.<sup>1</sup> Later in the afternoon, as Hobhouse enjoyed a stroll on the top of the gaol, he received news from the Governor of his release. Paying the watchman a pound, he descended to his apartments,

sent [his] boy for a horse...put on breeches and boots...packed up letters &c...and at half-past five p.m., after shaking hands with Mr Brown [the Governor] I *repassed the door of Newgate*, got on my horse and trotted away.

Hobhouse, who had been confined in Newgate for his inflammatory comments following Peterloo, immediately retired to the family estate at Whitton, where his attention was devoted to ‘thinking what I should say at the dinner to be given to me tomorrow at the Crown and Anchor on my liberation’.<sup>2</sup>

After only a day’s respite from London, Hobhouse rode back to the metropolis to rendezvous with Sir Francis Burdett, the veteran radical ally, who accompanied his new charge to the Crown and Anchor tavern. After the disappointment of having ‘a dozen or so gentlemen’ reject his request for them to act as stewards for the dinner, Hobhouse was delighted to find many others unconcerned at the prospect of associating with the newly released prisoner. When he arrived at five o’clock on the afternoon of 2 March 1820, about 450 guests had gathered in the tavern for dinner and Hobhouse recorded that he was ‘received in a most affectionate manner’.<sup>3</sup> An observer from *The Times* reported the ‘immense cheering’ on the entry of the reform duo to the Large Dining Room of the tavern. The diners, the correspondent noted acerbically, were ‘superior to those who usually attend dinners of this description’.<sup>4</sup> Following the meal, the formalities began. The first toast of the evening, usually reserved for the health of the sovereign, was defiantly given to ‘[t]he people; the only free source of

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1 For a digitalised version of the Hobhouse diaries, see <<http://www.hobby-o.com/newgate.php>> For a discussion of John Cam Hobhouse, see Robert E. Zegger, *John Cam Hobhouse: A political life, 1819–1852* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1973).

2 *The Times*, 3 March 1820.

3 <<http://www.hobby-o.com/newgate.php>>

4 *The Times*, 3 March 1820. The description of the events that follows is sourced from this report.

legitimate power' and was met with loud and sustained applause, and 'three times three'. Defying the suspension of habeas corpus and the climate in which careless words could lead to immediate imprisonment, subsequent toasts served to remind the King of his duty to the people of England, while others advocated the 'thorough reform of parliament'. Each toast was followed with a bellowing 'three times three' and was interspersed with songs such as *Rule Britannia* and *Kick the Rogues Out*.

With the revelry of the toasts dispensed with, Hobhouse rose to address the crowd amid 'waving handkerchiefs and the loudest cheers'. In a lengthy and defiant address, he admonished those in the government responsible for his imprisonment as 'eavesdroppers, spies, men without character, men who could only command respect by means of corruption'. He invoked the tropes of nationalism and constitutionalism, reminding the assembly that despite conquering the land, not the Romans, the Danes or the Normans could destroy the 'free institutions and the free laws' that belonged to England.<sup>5</sup> Englishmen, he proudly noted, were not destined to 'fall by such hands'—then or now—for even an assembly, met as they were at present, to protest against the acts of tyranny which had been committed, was sufficient to show that the people of England were not thus to be subdued'.

The gendered nature of these public celebrations is apparent when we consider the release of Susannah Wright; when she left prison, she did so quietly and with little ceremony.<sup>6</sup> Suffering from ill health, she later reaffirmed her dedication to the radical cause by supporting those still in prison and by disseminating the radical message through her Nottingham bookshop. Hobhouse, however, was following in the footsteps of other male radical 'martyrs' when his release from imprisonment was celebrated at the venue. Along with Hobhouse (and Burdett himself), many other imprisoned male radicals, including William Cobbett, William Holmes and John Ward, found a different expression of defiance when they testified to their continued commitment in the public arena of the Crown and Anchor tavern.

For Hobhouse, the tavern provided a fitting venue to reaffirm his radical political opinions. What better way to close a period of 'unfreedom' than with a public

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5 The tropes of nationalism and constitutionalism remained contested territory throughout the early nineteenth century. For a discussion of radicals invoking the discourse of natural and historical rights, see the various contributors to James Vernon (ed.), *Re-Reading the Constitution: New narratives in the political history of England's long nineteenth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Penguin, 1968), pp. 84–110; James Epstein, *Radical Expression: Political language, ritual and symbol in England, 1790–1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 3–28; Iain McCalman, 'Popular Constitutionalism and Revolution in England and Ireland', in Isser Woloch (ed.), *Revolution and the Meanings of Freedom in the Nineteenth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), pp. 138–72.

6 My research failed to uncover an instance where an imprisoned female radical enjoyed similar public recognition upon her release.

rebirth at the venue he once described as a 'Temple of Liberty'—a space that Hobhouse believed embodied the very freedoms denied (theoretically at least) by the prison space.<sup>7</sup> In the same year, *The Times* newspaper saw a natural synergy between the prison space and the Crown and Anchor—albeit in less celebrated terms. In 1817, the paper caustically reported on a speech delivered in the tavern by veteran radical Major Cartwright advocating a political reform agenda:

How soothing a doctrine for the many who are now 'fast bound in misery and iron', in those receptacles of guilt, Newgate and Coldbath Fields, and all the other prisons of the kingdom; the tenants of which, if they should come out tomorrow, would, like those gentlemen who met at the Crown and Anchor, be much more inclined to reform the State than to amend their own lives.<sup>8</sup>

The Crown and Anchor had joined Newgate and Coldbath Fields in a triumvirate of radical spaces now clearly mapped on the early nineteenth-century public sphere.

In the long period of popular discontent that stretched from the 1790s through to the mid-nineteenth century, the Crown and Anchor tavern was a seminal site in the campaign for political reform. The historical record is rich in episodes of popular radical involvement with the tavern and countless scholarly works documenting the climate of political discontent of the period feature meetings held in the venue.<sup>9</sup> Yet these works invariably set the Crown and Anchor as merely a backdrop (if they mention it by name at all) to the meetings of the day, rarely exploring the significance of the site and its intimate connections with popular radical culture in these years.

The following two chapters explore the Crown and Anchor tavern itself as a central site of London radicalism, charting how it became a central institution in the public sphere, so ubiquitous that its name became a form of shorthand in the language of politics. Although there are ample text-based references to the Crown and Anchor, this chapter will first focus on the representation of the tavern in the popular political prints of the period, when the Crown and Anchor became part of the caricaturists' palette of symbols with which to communicate,

<sup>7</sup> *The Times*, 10 February 1819.

<sup>8</sup> *The Times*, 24 January 1817.

<sup>9</sup> Some studies of British radicalism mention the venue explicitly, such as J. Ann Hone, *For the Cause of Truth: Radicalism in London 1796–1821* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), *passim*; and Epstein, *Radical Expression*, pp. 107, 219; David Worrall, *Radical Culture: Discourse, resistance and surveillance, 1790–1820* (New York: Harvester, 1992), pp. 25, 144, 161; Iain McCalman, *Radical Underworld: Prophets, revolutionaries and pornographers in London, 1795–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 29. In other studies, the name of the venue is often overlooked in the narrative. Take, for example, John Belchem, *'Orator' Hunt: Henry Hunt and English working-class radicalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

and in so doing embedded the tavern on London's political landscape. The prints also record the changing nature of the tavern's clientele over time and as such provide an important commentary on the development of radicalism.

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The Crown and Anchor tavern was located in London's bustling central business area of the Strand—opposite Christopher Wren's seventeenth-century church of St Clement Danes and only a short distance from London's locus of power in Westminster. The tavern was situated on the Strand estate of the Dukes of Norfolk—the prominent English Catholic dynasty of the Howard family. Title deeds survive for the tavern as far back as 1731 when it existed in a modest form (Figures 4.1 and 4.2).<sup>10</sup> In 1787, then incumbent to the title of the Duke of Norfolk, Charles Howard, extensively renovated the site, rebuilding the venue to formidable proportions. By 1790, the tavern stretched the entire block from Arundel Street to Milford Lane—running parallel with the Strand—though set back behind the houses and shopfronts of the southern side of the bustling London artery (Figure 4.3).



**Figure 4.1 An early street view of the Strand and St Clement Danes Church, 1753. On the right is the original entrance to the building with the Crown and Anchor tavern sign visible.**

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<sup>10</sup> See the title deed, dated 25 March 1731, in the collection of documents concerning the tavern in the estate of the Duke of Norfolk, D7415, Arundel Castle Archives, Arundel. There are earlier reports of an auction in the 'Great Room' at the Crown and Anchor 'near St Clements Dane' in the *Daily Journal*, 6 November 1723.

#### 4. Radicalism and reform at the 'Gate of Pandemonium'



**Figure 4.2** Horwood's map of the Strand showing the Crown and Anchor before the renovation, c. 1799.

Copyright Guildhall Library.



**Figure 4.3** Horwood's map of the Strand showing the extended site of the tavern, 1807.

Copyright Guildhall Library.

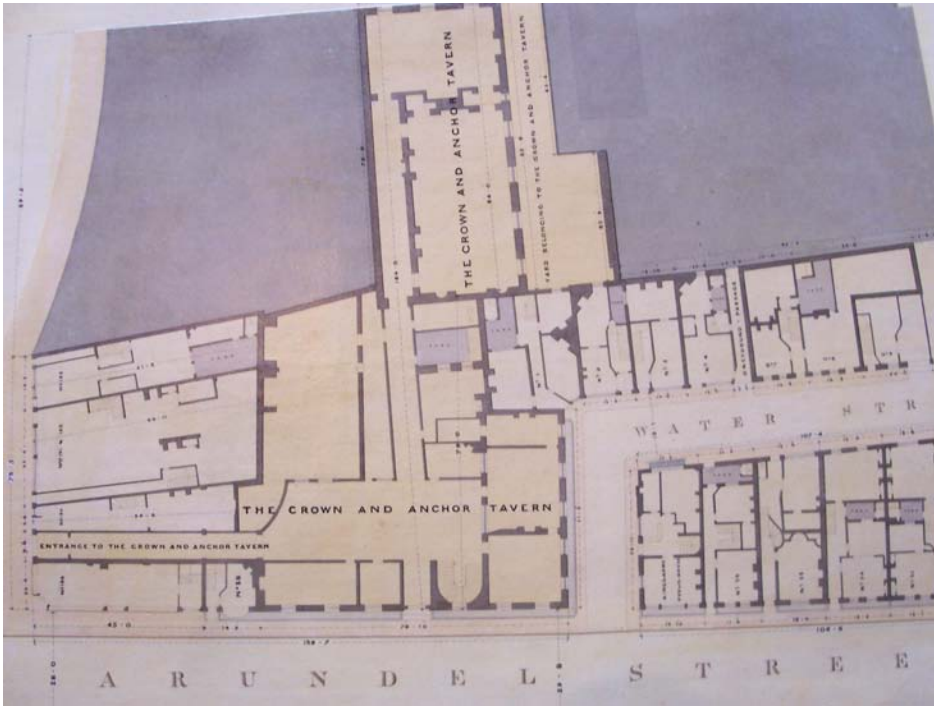


Despite the immense size of the tavern, the front facade, which faced Arundel Street, was modest in appearance with the proportion and balance typified by Georgian architecture (Figure 4.4). Seven windows on each floor of the four-storey building were symmetrically aligned—the ground floor distinguished from the upper floors by arched windows and rusticated stonework. Iron balconies, each with their own iron lamps, dressed the windows of the first floor. Pilasters intersected each of the windows and stretched the height of the building. The whole effect provided an understated face to the streetscape. The tavern's principle entrance faced Arundel Street, and the subtle restraint evident in the facade was reflected by the narrow passageway that dissected two Strand shopfronts, allowing ingress from the major London thoroughfare (Figure 4.5).



**Figure 4.4 Arundel Street entrance of the Crown and Anchor tavern.**

Thomas H. Shepherd, 1852. Copyright Trustees of the British Museum.



**Figure 4.5 Ground-floor plan of the Crown and Anchor tavern, 1836.**

From the Deed of the Arundel Buildings Estate, Middlesex, R. and H. R. Abraham Architects.  
Copyright His Grace the Duke of Norfolk (per the Archivist, Arundel Castle).

Entering the building from Arundel Street, visitors were greeted by an elegant foyer, paved with stone and dominated by four large Doric columns, which supported a gallery above. The entry was light and spacious, effected by a large lantern that hung overhead.<sup>11</sup> The tavern's considerable kitchen facilities were located on the ground floor, providing convenient access to the aptly named Large Dining Room, which, as evidenced by the Hobhouse liberation dinner, could seat upwards of 500 guests. The room was simply but elegantly appointed. Enriched carved cornices circled the ceiling, which featured two large moulded centrepieces of carved flowers supporting the room's chandeliers. Two substantial fireplaces framed with marble and wood dressings provided winter warmth. Festoons (carved chains of flowers, leaves or ribbons hung in curves) cascaded from the walls of an arched recess at the western end of the room, with the walls adorned with a frieze of eight panels.

<sup>11</sup> This description of the interior of the Crown and Anchor has been taken from the title deeds to the tavern held at the Arundel Castle Archives. I owe a great debt to the staff of the Arundel Castle Archive who retrieved these records, some of which were uncatalogued at the time of my visit. Since that time, an illustrated catalogue of the collection has become available. See Heather Warne (ed.), *The Duke of Norfolk's Deeds Vol II—Properties in London and Middlesex* (London: Phillimore, 2010). Sources from Arundel Castle Archives are reproduced by kind permission of His Grace the Duke of Norfolk.

A prodigious staircase constructed of stone, framed by continuous ornamental iron rails and topped with mahogany handrails, led to the upper floors. Ascending the staircase to the second floor, visitors to the tavern could momentarily catch their breath in the small second-floor lobby—described as a ‘large well hole’, lit both by natural light drawn into the space by two conical skylights and, in the evenings, by a huge lantern raised six feet, six inches (1.98 m) high. The lobby provided an area for guests to assemble before making their entrance into the Crown and Anchor’s premium asset: the ‘Great Assembly Room’. The room was one of the largest available in the metropolis, measuring an immense 2969 sq ft (276 sq m) and was reportedly capable of hosting concerts, balls and banquets for at least 2000 people.<sup>12</sup> The room was elegantly appointed with chandeliers, marble fireplaces and intricately carved architraves and cornices, and the centre of the immense ceiling was garnished with an ornate domical centrepiece of formidable proportions from which grasped an enormous chandelier. Like the Large Dining Room, here an enriched moulded frieze and cornice encircled the entire room with ‘ornamental panels, medallions and festoons’ featured on four walls. These were further detailed with Doric pilasters mirroring the facade of the building. A raised music gallery for orchestras was situated at the western end of the room, surrounded by iron railings and supported by three fluted Doric columns. Three substantial arched windows at the eastern end of the room allowed for illumination by daylight.

In its extended configuration, the venue provided an immediate outlet for the flourishing social and cultural energies of the city.<sup>13</sup> The building was both expansive and immensely versatile as its many meeting rooms were capable of accommodating diverse gatherings of varying sizes at the one time. Apart from rooms for staff and for the major dining operations of the tavern, the architectural plans and title deeds for the tavern detail a large drawing room, a smoking room, a news room, a library, a reading room, several ‘class’ rooms and a ladies room. The building had developed strong cultural associations during its long eighteenth-century history and, by the turn of the century, it had emerged as one of the cultural icons of the city. It was the eighteenth-century birthplace of the Academy of Ancient Music and the Academy of Musicians, of

12 *Epicure’s Almanack* (London, 1815), p. 115. This source also records that two other rooms in the tavern measure 1200 sq ft (111 sq m) and 1500 sq ft (139 sq m), along with ‘numerous elegant rooms’. See also E. B. Chancellor, *The Annals of the Strand: Topographical and historical* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1912), pp. 333–6.

13 There are many works that discuss the nature of urban sociability in this period. See, for example, Gillian Russell and Clara Tuite, ‘Introducing Romantic Sociability’, in Gillian Russell and Clara Tuite (eds), *Romantic Sociability: Social networks and literary culture in Britain, 1770–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 1–24; Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Associations 1580–1800: The origins of an associational world* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English culture in the eighteenth century* (London: Harper Collins, 1997); Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society 1780–1950* (1953; reprinted, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983); Iain McCalman (ed.), *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British culture 1776–1832* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).



which Handel was a founding member, as well as the Society of Musicians.<sup>14</sup> The Great Assembly Room's orchestra gallery continued to accommodate promenade concerts by the Philharmonic Orchestra and other musical groups throughout the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup>

The tavern also had strong affiliations with London's medical and scientific establishments throughout the decades that straddled the turn of the eighteenth century.<sup>16</sup> It was the customary dining venue for fellows of the Royal Society, who would retire to the tavern's dining room following their meetings.<sup>17</sup> It was the birthplace of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, and meetings of the foundation organisations, which would later combine as the British Medical Association, were also held in its rooms. The tavern also developed an association with the diffusion of knowledge, hosting both scientific and literary lectures throughout the late eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century. It was a key metropolitan establishment for London's literary elite as a venue for sociability and conviviality, and for the lectures by such literary greats as Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Hazlitt.<sup>18</sup>

Observers of London later in the nineteenth century remembered the tavern as 'one of the most famous houses in London' during the earlier part of the century, and much of this reputation was owed to the venue's political affiliations.<sup>19</sup> Its status as a cultural centre was surpassed only by its renown as a thriving venue for political debate, discussion and dissent. As both J. Ann Hone's study of London

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14 Peter Clark notes that the academy attracted '[l]ords, gentry, clergy and artists like William Hogarth'. Clark, *British Clubs and Associations 1580–1800*, p. 79. For an overview of the musical associations of the Crown and Anchor, see Robert Elkin, *The Old Concert Rooms of London* (London: Arnold, 1955), pp. 50–7. For an account of the formation of the Society of Musicians, see also Pippa Drummond, 'The Royal Society of Musicians in the Eighteenth Century', *Music & Letters*, vol. 59, no. 3 (1978), pp. 268–89.

15 Elkin, *The Old Concert Rooms of London*, p. 56.

16 For a discussion of these connections, see T. D. Whittet, 'The Crown and Anchor and the Arts and Sciences, Part 1', *Pharmaceutical Historian*, vol. 13, no. 3 (1983), pp. 2–6, and 'Part 2', *Pharmaceutical Historian*, vol. 13, no. 4 (1983), pp. 5–8; Alec Lawrence Macfie, *The Crown and Anchor Tavern: The birthplace of Birkbeck College* (London: Birkbeck College, 1973). See also the many histories of the area that detail the early use of the tavern. For example, Walter Thornbury, 'The Strand (Southern Tributaries)', *Old and New London*, vol. 3 (1878), pp. 63–84; Peter Cunningham, *Hand-Book of London* (London, 1850), p. 480; Henry C. Shelley, *Inns and Taverns of Old London* (Boston, 1909), ch. 4.

17 See *London Chronicle*, 28 November 1789. The Royal Society continued to hold their dinners at the tavern until 1848. See, for example, *The Times*, 1 December 1831; *Morning Chronicle*, 10 December 1832. For a discussion of the dinners of the Royal Society, see H. G. Lyons, 'The Anniversary Dinner', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1938), pp. 96–103.

18 On Coleridge's Crown and Anchor lectures, see Kathleen H. Coburn, 'S. T. Coleridge's Philosophical Lectures of 1818–19', *The Review of English Studies*, vol. 10, no. 40 (1934), pp. 428–37. See also Peter J. Manning, 'Manufacturing the Romantic Image: Hazlitt and Coleridge lecturing', in James Chandler and Kevin Gilmartin (eds), *Romantic Metropolis: The urban scene of British culture, 1780–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 227–45.

19 See, for example, the clipping headed 'Some Account of the Parish of St Clement Danes' (n.d.) and other early references to the tavern compiled by D. Foster in the 82-volume 'scrapbook': D. Foster, *Inns, Tavern, Alehouses, Coffee Houses etc, In and Around London*, vol. 20, c. 1900, City of Westminster Archives, pp. 230–301. The compilation is a remarkable resource for the history of London meeting places.

radicalism and Marc Baer's more recent study of Westminster political dinners reveal, the Crown and Anchor had a long association as the headquarters and the favoured dining establishment of the reform-minded or radical Westminster politicians and electors.<sup>20</sup> During the 1790s, the figure of Charles James Fox was synonymous with Crown and Anchor politics.<sup>21</sup> Apart from countless meetings and appearances at the tavern, supporters of the indomitable Whig grandee gathered on 10 October each year to celebrate his 1780 election victory, and on 13 January for festivities to mark his birthday. Such high-profile events helped propel both the tavern and its clientele into the broader public sphere. By the turn of the century, Fox's failing health saw him retreat from public life and the Crown and Anchor baton passed to Sir Francis Burdett. As we saw in an earlier chapter, the tavern became the headquarters for Burdett and his supporters, and celebrations of his electoral victories occurred annually in May throughout the early decades of the nineteenth century.

Though newspapers in this period are strewn with accounts of political meetings and events at the Crown and Anchor (as we shall see in the next chapter), visual culture also has much to offer as evidence of the venue's importance on the political landscape. Vic Gatrell maintains that 'just as a cluster of texts is read', so too prints, whose themes tend to 'cluster chronologically', can provide a 'clue to the preoccupations of a moment'.<sup>22</sup> Prints of this period offer particularly rich rewards for those investigating cultural communication through visual form, as artists brought their satirical skills to an increasingly politically aware public, providing sharp political commentary in amusing and often ribald fashion.<sup>23</sup> H. T. Dickinson observes that in the late eighteenth century, printmaking became professionalised, with artists who 'read newspapers and periodicals, listened to parliamentary debates and sought out political gossip in order to find topics

20 The Whig Club met at the tavern as early as 1786. See *Morning Herald*, 6 February 1786; *General Evening Post*, 30 March 1790; *Morning Chronicle*, 11 January 1790, 8 December 1790. A meeting in November 1795 was reported as one of the largest assemblies ever held, with more than 50 lords and members of the House of Commons in attendance. See E. W. Brayley, *Beauties of England and Wales, London and Middlesex* (London, 1810), vol. 1, p. 567.

21 On Charles James Fox, see Leslie G. Mitchell, *Charles James Fox* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); John Dinwiddy, *Radicalism and Reform in Britain 1780–1850* (London: Hambleton Press, 1992), pp. 1–18.

22 V. A. C. Gatrell, *City of Laughter: Sex and satire in eighteenth-century London* (New York: Walker & Co., 2007), p. 14.

23 There are now many scholarly works that have utilised this rich resource to illuminate aspects of British culture throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. See, for example, Gatrell, *City of Laughter*; Tamara Hunt, *Defining John Bull: Caricature, politics and national identity in late Georgian England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003); Diana Donald, *The Age of Caricature: Satirical prints in the reign of George III* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996); Marcus Wood, *Radical Satire and Print Culture, 1790–1822* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994). See also the seven-volume Chadwyck-Healy series, *The English Satirical Print 1600–1832* (Cambridge: Chadwyck Healy, 1986), including contributions by John Brewer, *The Common People and Politics, 1750–1790s*; H. T. Dickinson, *Caricatures and the Constitution 1760–1832*; Michael Duffy, *The Englishman and the Foreigner*; John Miller, *Religion in the Popular Prints, 1600–1832*; J. A. Sharpe, *Crime and the Law in English Satirical Prints*.

which they could make relevant and interesting to a large body of opinion'.<sup>24</sup> Caricatures, or graphic satires, provide an insight into the social and political climate of the period. Moreover, they remind us that the language of the public sphere also involved visual forms.<sup>25</sup>

The use of caricature to investigate the political temper of the day, however, is not without peril. As John Brewer notes, 'the assumption that political prints provide an unrefracted image of political life produces its own distortions'.<sup>26</sup> To approach visual culture as 'visual realism' is, for Brewer, an ahistorical assumption; we cannot grasp the meaning and significance of visual culture for a historical audience, he contends, without understanding the 'visual and perceptual conventions' employed by artists and graphic satirists of the day.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, both Roy Porter and Vic Gatrell remind us that visual culture is no 'less value laden than verbal' material.<sup>28</sup> The caution with which the modern scholar approaches visual records owes much to the humanist training to tread carefully with every source—image, text or oral—and recognise each as a social construct. It also owes much to the field of semiotics, which, at its crudest definition, involves the study of 'signs'.

The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure first posited the idea of studying the role of signs as part of social life—not only the visual, but also words, sounds and even body language.<sup>29</sup> Saussure's thesis sparked myriad responses from philosophers and theoreticians, most notably Charles Peirce and Roland Barthes, and semiotics has become a dense and rigorously debated area of study.<sup>30</sup> Though the scope of this chapter precludes chronicling the points and counterpoints of this increasingly vast field, semiotics' most basic premises remain fruitful

24 Dickinson, *Caricatures and the Constitution 1760–1832*, p. 19.

25 An immeasurable debt is owed to the seminal work of F. G. Stephens and M. D. George in describing, documenting and cataloguing the immense holdings of popular prints (more than 17 000) in the British Museum. Their groundbreaking work has allowed subsequent scholars much scope in utilising this once-neglected print medium. My own debt to their detailed cataloguing and description of prints associated with the Crown and Anchor tavern is apparent in this chapter. The prints identified here by the prefix 'BM' refer to the entries in their catalogue. See F. G. Stephens, *Catalogue of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum. Division 1: Political and personal satires*, 4 vols (1870–83); M. D. George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires Preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum* (1935–54); all 11 vols reprinted (London: The Trustees of the British Museum, 1978).

26 Brewer, *The Common People and Politics*, p. 16.

27 Ibid.

28 Roy Porter, 'Seeing the Past', Review article, *Past and Present*, vol. 118, no. 1 (1988), p. 200; see also Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, p. 14, who maintains that the reading of such prints depends on the 'historian's insight and intuition, and will never be comprehensive'.

29 On Saussure, see Roy Harris, *Saussure and His Interpreters* (New York: New York University Press, 2001). On semiotics and the arts, see Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (eds), *Visual Culture: The reader* (London: Sage Publications, 1999).

30 On Peirce, see James Hoopes (ed.), *Peirce on Signs: Writings on semiotics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991). See also the many debates regarding Peirce in the journal dedicated to his work, *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*. On Roland Barthes, see Annette Lavers, *Roland Barthes, Structuralism and After* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982). For an overview of the debates, see Harris, *Saussure and His Interpreters*.

for the analysis of the visual; it alerts us to the constructed meanings inherent in visual imagery, to the ability of different signs within an image to interact and produce layers of meaning, and to the polysemic nature of many prints—their ability to embody multiple meanings.<sup>31</sup> This is particularly relevant to the diverse range of images, symbolism and meaning embodied in caricatures of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>32</sup>

Three of the earliest prints to feature the Crown and Anchor evolved out of one seminal event held at the tavern in 1791: a celebration to mark the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille.<sup>33</sup> British reformers initially welcomed the Revolution with much enthusiasm and news that they were publicly celebrating the tumultuous events across the Channel caused a shudder amongst conservative London and prompted a flurry of public commentary, including contributions from graphic satirists.<sup>34</sup> The publicity surrounding the impending event was sufficient to induce William Dent's graphic response, *Revolution Anniversary or Patriotic Incantations* (Figure 4.6).<sup>35</sup> The print is set inside an amorphous space, though it is given a spatial grounding by the addition of an invitation titled 'Crown and Anchor', which sits curled at the bottom left corner of the print. The walls are dominated by four posters that link the organisers of the 1791 meeting with historic English rebels: 'WAT TYLER' depicts the famous English leader of the Peasants' Revolt in 1381 and 'JACK CADE', the leader of the Kentish rebellion against Henry VI in 1450, appears alongside present-day reformer and Dissenting minister Dr Joseph Towers, shown attacking the crown and the sceptre with an axe in the poster titled 'REPUBLICISM'. The historical allusion is unambiguous: the caricaturist saw Tyler, Cade and Towers as part of an unbroken tradition of rebellion in the British past.

The fourth wall poster, titled 'FANATICISM', depicts a winged and cloven-footed devil setting fire to a church, while in the foreground prominent Whig

31 For a discussion of the 'indeterminate meanings associated with signs' in respect to radical politics, and specifically the cap of liberty, see Epstein, *Radical Expression*, pp. 70–99.

32 As Epstein argues, 'Struggles to enforce or destabilise such meanings often define the contested terrain of politics.' Epstein, *Radical Expression*, p. 71.

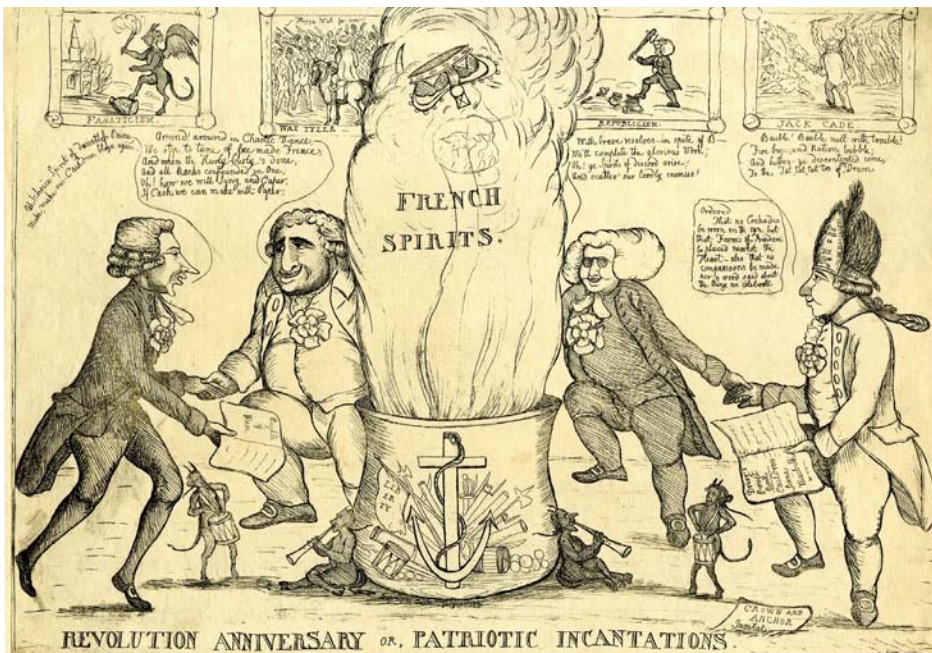
33 For reports of the meeting, see *Evening Mail*, 1 July 1791, 12 July 1791; *London Chronicle*, 12 July 1791.

34 For a discussion of British responses to the French Revolution in print culture, see David Bindman, *The Shadow of the Guillotine: Britain and the French Revolution* (London: British Museum Publications, 1989); Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, pp. 87–90, 97–110. For responses more generally, see the entries in Mark Philp (ed.), *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); H. T. Dickinson (ed.), *Britain and the French Revolution 1789–1815* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989); Clive Emsley, 'The Impact of the French Revolution on British Politics and Society', in Ceri Crossley and Ian Small (eds), *The French Revolution and British Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 31–62; Michael T. Davis, 'Le radicalisme Anglaise et la Revolution Française', *Annals Historiques de la Revolution Française*, vol. 342 (2005), pp. 73–99.

35 BM 7890. For M. D. George's description of the print, see George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires*, 1791, vol. 6, pp. 808–9. William Dent, a self-taught artist, produced hundreds of political caricatures in the period. See David Bindman, 'Prints', in Iain McCalman (ed.), *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 210.



reformers Joseph Priestley, Charles James Fox and Richard Brinsley Sheridan join Towers in a pagan-like dance around a cauldron as they summon both 'French Spirits' and that of radical ideologue Thomas Paine: 'Oh! choice Spirit of dauntless Paine/Make, make our Cauldron blaze again.' Imps play music around the base of the steaming boiler and in the top left a demon sets fire to a church as it treads upon a bishop's mitre. The conflation of radicalism with devilry makes Dent's print one of the early examples of the satirical convention identified by Brewer—the 'satanic radical'<sup>36</sup>—in which caricaturists attempted to demonise and blacken the individuals espousing reform. The print offers a visual instance of what Norbert Elias so eloquently refers to as the 'threshold of repugnance' by which radicals were measured.<sup>37</sup>



**Figure 4.6** *Revolution Anniversary or Patriotic Incantations.*

William Dent, 1791. Copyright Trustees of the British Museum.

The satanic connotations of the Crown and Anchor milieu are evident again in James Gillray's mordant response to news of the July celebrations.<sup>38</sup> Arguably the leading caricaturist of the period, Gillray's *Alecto and her train, at the*

<sup>36</sup> Brewer, *The Common People and Politics*, pp. 39–40.

<sup>37</sup> Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenic and psychogenetic investigations* (1965; revised edn, Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), quoted in Michael T. Davis, 'The Mob Club? The London Corresponding Society and the politics of civility in the 1790s', in Michael T. Davis and Paul A. Pickering (eds), *Unrespectable Radicals? Popular politics in the age of reform* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 21–40.

<sup>38</sup> On James Gillray, see Draper Hill, *Mr Gillray, The Caricaturist: A biography* (London: Phaidon Press, 1965); George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires*, vols 5–8; Christiane Banerji and Diana Donald, *Gillray Observed: The earliest account of his caricatures in 'London und paris'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).





James Gillray, 1793. Copyright Trustees of the British Museum.

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The symbolism employed by caricaturists, observes Paul Pickering, was an effective 'form of social or cultural shorthand: a public mode of communication'.<sup>40</sup> Symbols were an essential tool of the graphic satirist for communicating a message in a succinct and immediate fashion. They also allowed the caricaturist to play with meaning in their prints and, by combining different symbolic elements, the artist could also alter meanings. For instance, seminal events across the Channel were connected with those occurring at the Crown and Anchor by visually endowing the tavern clientele with the key symbols of the Revolution—primarily the 'bonnet rouge' (or red cap of liberty) and the tricolour cockade. A combination of the symbols of the French Revolution and the convention of the satanic radical saw the Crown and Anchor portrayed as a venue seething with danger and revolutionary possibility.

This is particularly evident in the Crown and Anchor prints with inclusion of symbols firmly associated with the French Revolution. Though Dent's print makes fleeting reference to the threat of revolution by depicting the reformers wearing the French Grenadiers' cap and summoning 'French spirits' from the cauldron, Gillray endows Alecto as the embodiment of revolutionary France. Wearing a French cocked hat with a tricolour cockade, she holds a long pike topped with a bonnet rouge. British caricaturists seized on the symbols of the French Revolution to indict the activities of local reformers, many of whom (as the July 1791 meeting itself suggests) were fervent supporters of the Revolution and were easily targeted as revolutionaries-in-waiting. The hapless Whigs were conflated with bloodthirsty French Republicans with a few careful strokes of Gillray's pen.

Despite these connotations, neither print deterred the organisers or supporters from proceeding with the celebrations. More than 1500 'gentlemen' are said to have gathered to dine on such typical Crown and Anchor fare as stewed pigeons, roasted beef and venison and gooseberry tart.<sup>41</sup> As generous quantities of wine were imbibed, their reforming spirits were stirred as the provocative ode celebrating the fall of the Bastille by eminent Della Cruscan poet Robert

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40 Paul A. Pickering, 'Class Without Words: Symbolic communication in the Chartist movement', *Past & Present*, no. 112 (1986), p. 155. On symbolic practices as an integral part of political language, see also Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), chs 1–3; Epstein, *Radical Expression*, pp. 70–99; John Brewer, *Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 163–201; idem, 'Theatre and Counter-Theatre in Georgian Politics: The mock elections at Garrat', *Radical History Review*, no. 22 (1979–80), pp. 7–40.

41 The description is taken from the sample menu for July from the tavern published in a commercial cookbook prepared by the 'Principal Cooks at the Crown and Anchor'. Francis Collingwood and John Woollams, *Universal Cook, and City and Country Housekeeper* (London, 1792). It is unclear whether the 'Bill of fare for July' was from 1791 or 1792. For a report of the meeting, see *Morning Herald*, 15 July 1791; *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, 15 July 1791; *Star*, 15 July 1791.

Merry was read to the assembly.<sup>42</sup> The meeting itself presented Gillray with an opportunity too good to ignore, and in the days following he sketched a second print, *The Hopes of the Party* (Figure 4.8).<sup>43</sup>



**Figure 4.8** *'The Hopes of the Party, prior to July 14th... "From such wicked Crown and Anchor Dreams, good Lord deliver us."*

James Gillray, 1791. Copyright Trustees of the British Museum.

Although the print depicts less satanic associations, it firmly conflates the Crown and Anchor with treachery and revolution, and seals the notion of the tavern as the headquarters for a British rebellion. In a setting reminiscent of the execution prints outside Newgate prison, Gillray sets the scene around a platform erected outside the tavern's Strand entrance, with a mob cheering and waving their hats in anticipation of the beheading of King George III by Charles James Fox. Radical veteran John Horne Tooke<sup>44</sup>—in a pose suggestive of sodomy—grasps

42 The reading of the poem became part of the publicity for the event. See *Whitehall Evening Post*, 12 July 1791. On Robert Merry and Della Cruscan poets, see Jon Mee, "'Reciprocal Expressions of Kindness': Robert Merry, Della Cruscanism and the limits of sociability", in Russell and Tuite, *Romantic Sociability*, pp. 104–22; William Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *The English Della Cruscan and Their Time, 1783–1828* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1967); John Strachan, 'Gifford and The Della Cruscan', in John Strachan (ed.), *British Satire 1785–1840* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2003), vol. 4, p. 384.

43 BM 7892. For M. D. George's description of the print, see George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires*, vol. 6, pp. 810–11.

44 On Tooke, a veteran of the radical movement of the late eighteenth century, see Christina Bewley and David Bewley, *Gentleman Radical: A life of John Horne Tooke, 1763–1812* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1998); John Barrell, *Imagining the King's Death: Figurative treason, fantasies of regicide, 1793–1796* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 285–7, 366–98, 403–5.

by the legs King George, whose head rests on a block. Sheridan grips the King's ears in preparation for Fox to take an axe to the Monarch's head. Queen Charlotte and the Prime Minister, Pitt, have been summarily dispensed with as they hang limply from the Crown and Anchor's lampposts. In the background, heads appear on spikes atop a burning Temple Bar as the winged figure of Liberty watches from above. Gillray's caustic commentary on the revolutionary intent of the reforming Whigs also mocks the King, who appears confused by the whole situation: 'What! What! What!—what's the matter now.'<sup>45</sup> Despite the undoubtedly scandalous suggestion of beheading the King, the print might have had less ominous undertones for eighteenth-century audiences. They were to wait another two years before the guillotining of Louis XVI—arguably the most famous beheading of the period. The conflation of the Crown and Anchor with both devilry and revolutionary possibility gave credence to the prospect of a British rebellion; a home-grown revolution had been given a spatial context.

Though the three 1791 prints associated the Crown and Anchor with a threat to the political order, the meaning of the Crown and Anchor as a symbol in popular prints was not fixed throughout the decade. This was largely a result of a loyalist campaign to appropriate the tavern in the early 1790s in response to the threat of London's flourishing radical groups and associations who increasingly found a home at the venue. Only five years before his intervention in Colonel Despard's plight in Coldbath Fields prison, then London barrister John Reeves took a decidedly unfavourable view of the tavern's growing radical association when he formed his own loyalist counter-society.<sup>46</sup> In a masterly coup, he appropriated not only the Crown and Anchor site for his meetings but also its name for his association. Originating under the cumbersome title the 'Association for Preserving Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers', it soon became known in the public sphere as the 'Crown and Anchor Society'.<sup>47</sup> Reeves' usurpation of the Crown and Anchor site and nomenclature can be seen as an attempt to sanitise the space that had bred the 'nefarious designs...[of] the wicked and senseless Reformers of the present time'.<sup>48</sup> Its mandate to 'discourage and suppress Seditious Publications' predated that of the Vice Society, which, as we saw in an earlier chapter, was to lead the prosecutions

45 George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires*, vol. 6, pp. 810–11.

46 On Reeves and the Crown and Anchor Association, see Kevin Gilmartin, 'In the Theater of Counterrevolution: Loyalist association and conservative opinion in the 1790s', *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 41 (2002), pp. 291–328; Michael Duffy, 'William Pitt and the Origins of the Loyalist Association Movement of 1792', *Historical Journal*, vol. 39, no. 4 (1996), pp. 943–62; Mark Philp, 'Vulgar Conservatism, 1792–3', *English Historical Review*, vol. 110, no. 435 (1995), pp. 42–69; Worrall, *Radical Culture*, pp. 9–17.

47 *Association for Preserving Liberty and Property Against Republicans and Levellers: Association papers* (London, 1793), part 1. Almost 30 years later, Sir Francis Burdett alluded to Reeves' society in one of his anniversary of election dinners at the tavern: 'it was...strange to see how times had altered. If there should now be a Crown and Anchor Association, it would be not to put down the liberty of the press, but to support that, and to preserve whatever of public liberty still remained to the people.' *The Times*, 24 May 1821.

48 *Association for Preserving Liberty and Property Against Republicans and Levellers*.



of radicals in the early decades of the nineteenth century. The Society spawned several allied provincial societies and generated a mass of correspondence to its headquarters at the Crown and Anchor.<sup>49</sup>

Reeves' relationship with the Crown and Anchor itself, however, was short-lived; the tavern's radical brethren did not acquiesce so easily.<sup>50</sup> In May 1792, leading reform activist John Horne Tooke revived Major Cartwright's 'Society for Constitutional Information' to agitate for parliamentary reform and they actively promoted and published cheap editions of Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* from their headquarters at the Crown and Anchor.<sup>51</sup> Another radical counter-society was launched at the tavern in the month following Reeves' first meeting. The 'Friends to the Liberty of the Press', led by prominent barrister Thomas Erskine, also established the venue as their base.<sup>52</sup> At times, the rival groups even met on the same day, though on different floors of the tavern.<sup>53</sup> Although Reeves' society considered they had successfully prevented England from being engulfed by revolution as early as 1793, the 'perverted and evil men' that the Crown and Anchor Society were formed to resist successfully reappropriated the tavern as a site to further their reform agenda. Reeves' failure to expunge the tavern's radical affiliations was to lead to an enduring legacy of radical and political reform at the venue.

Despite the brevity of Reeves' intervention at the Crown and Anchor, the loyalist champion was also captured in the print culture of the period—due largely to a close, though often fractious, relationship between Reeves and Gillray.<sup>54</sup> Reeves commissioned the master caricaturist to produce several anti-radical prints early in the decade, such as *The Blessings of Peace, The Curses of War* (1795). Only two years earlier, Gillray had been more contemptuous of the association, producing in 1793 the uncommissioned print *The Chancellor of the Inquisition*

49 Philp, 'Vulgar Conservatism', p. 58.

50 The formation and conduct of the association prompted several hostile text-based responses from the radical community. See, for example, the anonymously printed pamphlet *Truth and Reason Against Place and Pension; Being a candid examination of the pretensions and assertions of the society held at the Crown and Anchor, and of similar associations in various parts of the metropolis. Addressed to John Reeves, Esq, and his Associates* (London, 1793); Joseph Towers, *Remarks on the Conduct, Principles, and Publications, of the Association at the Crown and Anchor, in the Strand, for preserving liberty and property against republicans and levellers* (London, 1793).

51 For more on Major Cartwright, see Chapter 5 of this study.

52 Thomas Erskine, *Declaration of the Friends of the Liberty of the Press; Assembled at the Crown and Anchor tavern* (London, 1793). Erskine became one of the key figures in radical culture of the 1790s for his prominent, and often highly successful, defence of radicals prosecuted in this period, including Lord George Gordon in 1780 and Thomas Paine (*in absentia*) in 1792, as well as his remarkable defence of radicals during the treason trials of 1794, where he secured 'not guilty' verdicts for all those he represented. See Gillian Russell, 'The Theatre of Crim. Con.: Thomas Erskine, adultery and radical politics in the 1790s', in Davis and Pickering, *Unrespectable Radicals*, pp. 57–70; David Lemmings, *Professors of the Law: Barristers and English legal culture in the eighteenth century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

53 See True Briton, 28 July 1794.

54 Donald, *The Age of Caricature*, p. 147; Hill, *Mr Gillray*, p. 54.



*Marking the Incurables* (Figure 4.9).<sup>55</sup> The print depicts Edmund Burke (the fierce opponent of the French Revolution responsible for the 'swinish multitude' epithet) walking in legal robes to the door of the Crown and Anchor, over which a sign reads 'British Inquisition' in reference to the activities of Reeves' society.<sup>56</sup> According to Dorothy George, the bag hanging from Burke's waist resembles the chief seal of the Crown, used to show the Monarch's approval of important state documents, and is employed by Gillray to indicate that the work of the Society came with the government's imprimatur.<sup>57</sup> Gillray replaces the royal arms of the Great Seal with a crown and an anchor, and features a skull at each corner. The 'anonymous letter box' at the door of the tavern refers to the correspondence the Society attracted, and also its call for information about the activities of reformers from spies and informers. In a brilliant sleight of hand to indicate the change in ideological complexion of the venue, Gillray has placed royal crowns on top of its lamps.<sup>58</sup>

Just as the change in occupation of the venue could be signified by the use of the crown in this way, the tavern emblem itself could also be manipulated by caricaturists to communicate meaning. The binary of the Crown and Anchor, in both nomenclature and emblem, was a coup for caricaturists. In Dent's *Revolution Anniversary*, the anchor from the tavern's emblem is magnified and assumes centre stage. Long regarded as the symbol for 'hope', the anchor assumed an altogether different meaning when placed in the context of the tavern and amongst the tangible weapons of rebellion—the cannons, swords, axes and the flag of liberty. The symbol of the anchor was now imbued with threat and danger.

The tavern's radical clientele also embraced the possibilities presented by the binary symbols of crown and anchor in the venue's emblem. The reported plan by organisers of the 1791 anniversary celebrations to ceremoniously remove the crown from the emblem (thereby disassociating any connection with monarchical rule), allowing only the anchor to remain, attracted much public attention.<sup>59</sup> In Dent's print, amid the steam rising from the cauldron, he depicts a crown being propelled from the cauldron—a clever visual metaphor for the intentions of the evening, and for radical plans for society at large.

55 BM 8316. For George's description of the print, see George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires*, vol. 7, pp. 20–1.

56 Ibid. See also Nicholas Robinson, *Edmund Burke: A life in caricature* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 167–9. Robinson notes that Burke's association with the Crown and Anchor is also evident in another print by William Dent, *An Alarming Anniversary!!!*. Burke is depicted as Don Quixote (and Pitt as Sancho) 'mounting a dead-of-night reconnaissance' of the tavern (p. 169).

57 George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires*, vol. 7, pp. 20–1.

58 Gillray employs the device again in his 1795 print, *Crown and Anchor Libel, Burnt by the Public Hangman* (BM 8699). Gillray produced the print after a dispute with Reeves involving payment for an earlier commissioned print. See George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires*, vol. 7, p. 207.

59 See the reports of the events in *Evening Mail*, 11 July 1791.



**Figure 4.9** *The Chancellor of the Inquisition marking the Incurrigibles.*

James Gillray, 1793. Copyright Trustees of the British Museum.

The binary elements of the tavern emblem also allowed caricaturists more sympathetic to the radical cause to manipulate meaning in their images with the simple stroke of a pen. Richard Newton's 1798 satirical print *Sola 'Virtus Invicta'* (the motto of the Duke of Norfolk) was a response to the highly publicised 1798 birthday celebrations for Charles James Fox, and the prominent, and soon infamous, role of the Duke of Norfolk in the events.<sup>60</sup> The festivities were an annual event, and 1798 saw one of the largest assemblies ever held at the tavern. The Duke's penchant for drinking and revelry was renowned in London society, as were his liberal political views, despite his close friendship with the Prince Regent.<sup>61</sup> At the request of the chair of the occasion, the Duke of Bedford, the Duke of Norfolk proposed a string of toasts to the 2000-strong audience.<sup>62</sup> Though convention stipulated the first toast at such a public occasion be offered as a salutation to the Monarch, the Duke raised his glass and gave instead to 'the rights of the people'.<sup>63</sup> The flagrant disregard of custom and etiquette met a mix of cheers and murmured disgruntlement. When the room quieted, the Duke continued with an altogether scandalous line-up of toasts bordering on the treasonous: 'to constitutional redress for the wrongs of the people'; to 'a speedy and effectual reform in the representation of the people in parliament'; to 'the genuine principles of the British Constitution'; and to 'the people of Ireland—may they be speedily restored to blessings of law and liberty'. When he finally offered a toast to the King, it contained a thinly disguised rebuke reminding the Monarch of his duty—to 'Our Sovereign's health—the majesty of the people'.

In his print *Sola 'Virtus Invicta'*, Newton shows a tumultuous scene outside the Crown and Anchor with the foreground dominated by the image of the Duke of Norfolk arriving in spectacular and triumphant fashion driving a horse chariot, crowned with the cap of liberty (Figure 4.10).<sup>64</sup> The front wheel of the chariot crushes the neck of Prime Minister Pitt and the King, whose bald head (lower left) has been de-crowned, as the bishops and clergy wait with fearful anticipation of a similar fate. The tavern emblem can be seen in the upper left, though Newton has inverted its symbolic elements; the crown is turned on its head while the anchor stands erect. It is unclear whether Newton's use of phallic

60 Richard Newton's artistic talents were evident from an early age when at fourteen he was employed by radical print publisher William Holland. It was during Holland's imprisonment in Newgate that Newton sketched the *Soulagement* print noted in Chapter 1. For a discussion of Newton's works, see David Alexander, *Richard Newton and English Caricature in the 1790s* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

61 The architectural enhancements of the Arundel estate during the eleventh Duke's tenure illustrate the connection between liberal politics and entertainment for the nobleman. He oversaw the construction of an elegant dining room at the Howard family castle in Arundel, which he named the 'Barons Hall'—in honour of the Barons of Runnymede—a contentious title during such anxious times for Britain's monarchy. See John Martin Robinson, *The Dukes of Norfolk*, revised edn (Chichester: Phillimore & Co, 1995), pp. 174–5.

62 John Russell, Sixth Duke of Bedford. For an account of the meeting, see Thomas Wright, *Caricature History of the Georges* (London: John Camden Hotten, 1868), pp. 514–15.

63 *Ibid.*, p. 514.

64 BM 9177. For George's description of the print, see George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires*, vol. 7, pp. 424–5.



symbolism was a purely satirical tool or indicative of some deeper commentary on the vitality and fertility of radicalism and reform at the Crown and Anchor. Either way, it serves as an apt visual metaphor for the starkly gendered nature of Crown and Anchor politics, which will be discussed further in the following chapter.



**Figure 4.10** *Sola 'Virtus Invicta'... 'Vitue [sic] Alone is Invincible.'*

Richard Newton, 1798. Copyright Trustees of the British Museum.

Neither the government nor George III could allow Norfolk's public display of disloyalty and perfidy to go unnoticed. The Duke was dismissed from all his official positions, including his position on the Privy Council and the Lord Lieutenancy of the West Riding.<sup>65</sup> Signalling that the Duke's powerful friendships would not protect him, the notification of dismissal was sent during a dinner with the Prince Regent. Despite eventually satisfying the King with proclamations of loyalty, he was not reinstated to his official post until 1807.<sup>66</sup> The publicity aroused by the meeting helped cement the image of the Crown and Anchor as an oppositional political space; and despite the penalties imposed on the Duke, it set a precedent for the toasting conventions of the venue, as evidenced by Hobhouse's own toasts following his prison release more than 20 years later.

65 See *Whitehall Evening Post*, 1 February 1798; *The Times*, 2 February 1798.

66 Robinson, *The Dukes of Norfolk*, p. 176. Details of the dismissal are held in the Arundel Castle manuscripts, AC MSS, Howard Letters and Papers, 1636–1822, II.

Although historian Lawrence H. Streicher considers that caricature 'presupposes the existence of relatively fixed iconographic types in art',<sup>67</sup> Newton's graphic interpretation of the events serves again to remind us that the meaning of the symbols employed by the caricaturist were not fixed during this period. For example, as James Epstein suggests, the cap of liberty did not always signal revolutionary intent; indeed, in the century before the French Revolution there was 'no iconographic incompatibility between the cap of liberty and patriotic sentiment'.<sup>68</sup> Following 1792, however, when Louis XVI was 'symbolically decrowned and forced to don the emblem of the revolution' the meaning of the cap altered dramatically. For loyalists and conservatives in Britain, the cap of liberty, particularly when coloured red, soon came to represent the 'antithesis of British constitutional "liberty" and patriotism'.<sup>69</sup> Just as the claims to liberty, to the Constitution and to Britishness were contested, so too were their symbolic representation.<sup>70</sup> Newton's radical sympathies are evident in *Sola 'Virtus Invicta'* by the positive use of the symbols traditionally employed against radicals, with Liberty (in angelic female form) floating above the Duke, preparing to crown him with a wreath of laurel.<sup>71</sup> Her staff bears an illuminated cap of liberty and reveals a tricolour cockade. Fox and the Duke of Bedford stand at the door of the tavern cheering on the Duke of Norfolk, and behind them the tavern crowd wildly wave their hats.

Newton's resolution to recast the meaning of symbols such as the cap of liberty in a positive light coincided with a discernable move in conservative caricature away from the 'satanic radical' conventions and the symbolism invoking revolutionary France. Though the familiar tropes of Jacobin treachery and the symbols of the French Revolution continued to play a part in some prints—as Charles William's 1803 print, *The Crown and Anchor Desperdado or the Cracked member Belonging to the Bedlam Rangers* (Figure 4.11)—reveals, the threat of radicalism is now firmly directed at the individual reformers themselves, indicting their 'levelling' intentions and defiance of the social order.<sup>72</sup> In the print, Burdett leans from a ground-floor window of the tavern, addressing a crowd of soldiers and onlookers. He calls to them:

67 Lawrence H. Streicher, 'On a Theory of Political Caricature', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 9, no. 4 (1967), p. 437.

68 Epstein, *Radical Expression*, p. 78. See also James Vernon, *Politics and the People: A study in English political culture c.1815–1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 113–16. For a discussion of the liberty cap pre-nineteenth century, see J. David Harden, 'Liberty Caps and Liberty Trees', *Past & Present*, no. 146 (1995), pp. 66–102.

69 Epstein, *Radical Expression*, p. 72.

70 For an excellent account of the contested nature of claims to the Constitution in this period, see Barrell, *Imagining the King's Death*.

71 Similarly, the notions of 'Justice' and 'Britannia' are also gendered, the former given female form carrying her sword and scales while the latter proudly bares a shield and spear. Dickinson, *Caricatures and the Constitution 1760–1832*, pp. 20–1.

72 BM 10054. For George's description of the print, see George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires*, vol. 8, pp. 173–4.



I say don't Arm—don't enter into the Volunteer Corps, don't support the Minister, don't oppose the French—but you sailors all demand to be Captains, You soldiers to be Colonels, you people to be Baronets in short now is your time to insist upon everything your hearts can wish, and then—.

The crowd, however, is contemptuous: 'why then the Rascally French will be here, and we shall have nothing left to ask for.' The print is a satire on Burdett's speech at his election celebrations at the tavern on his return for Middlesex, during which he suggested that the government ministers did not warrant 'an honest man to come forward in their defence, or to be justified in lending an assisting arm in defence of their country'.<sup>73</sup> The title of the print—a play on Burdett's support of Colonel Despard—and the image itself reveal that the new generation of reformers who emerged in the early decades of the nineteenth century meant a new cast of characters for satirists and caricaturists. With Fox's death in 1806, and his retirement from public life in the years preceding it, the name of Sir Francis Burdett came to be synonymous with Crown and Anchor radicalism—an association that was duly reflected in the print culture of the period.



**Figure 4.11** *The Crown and Anchor Despardado or The Cracked Member belonging to the Bedlam Rangers.*

Charles Williams, 1803. Copyright Trustees of the British Museum.

<sup>73</sup> M. W. Patterson, *Sir Francis Burdett and His Times* (London, 1931), quoted in George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires*, vol. 8, pp. 173–4.

A key feature of the prints examined thus far is the prominence of the elite gentlemen radicals such as Fox and Burdett who occupied leading roles in events held in the tavern. Any plebeian figures featured in the prints assemble outside the venue's walls. The Crown and Anchor, at least in the caricatures, is a venue of the bourgeois public sphere, populated—as Habermas would suggest—by the British bourgeoisie. In Gillray's 1791 *Alecto* print, the character of John Bull—the archetypal or representative figure of the English common man—is first introduced to the milieu of the tavern, although he is placed at a distance from its front door.<sup>74</sup> Alecto attempts to entice him with a pile of Assignats, the paper currency of the revolutionary government, placing John Bull in a quandary: 'and yet I is half in love with the sound of your drum; & wishes to leave off Ploughing & dunging, & wear one of your vine cockades, & be a French Gentlemen.' Alecto reassures him:

[N]ay, man, never talk about your old Master the Farmer, I'll find you Hundreds of Masters as good as he; Zounds I'll make you one of the Masters of England yourself...the glorious 14th of July is approaching, when Monarchs are to be crush'd like maggots, & brave men like yourself are to be put in their places.

Alecto and her British political allies are connected spatially with the tavern by locating them directly outside the venue; John Bull is recruited as a passer-by, rather than a participant in the Crown and Anchor affairs.

The character of John Bull was another satirical convention employed by caricaturists in the period, though during the 1790s he was increasingly represented as contemptible and ludicrous by artists such as Gillray. As Brewer notes, prior to this, the image of the 'patriotic pleb' involved a far more 'indomitable and stout-hearted Briton'.<sup>75</sup> By the 1790s, John Bull came to be represented as a 'broad grimacing baboon, a dim witted, grossly overweight glutton, or the child-like simpleton—a gross caricature of the rustic fool' and became a stock character in British print for many years to come.<sup>76</sup> As Tamara Hunt argues, the use of the image of John Bull changed again over time, whereby the figure increasingly replaced the image of Britannia as the national symbol.<sup>77</sup>

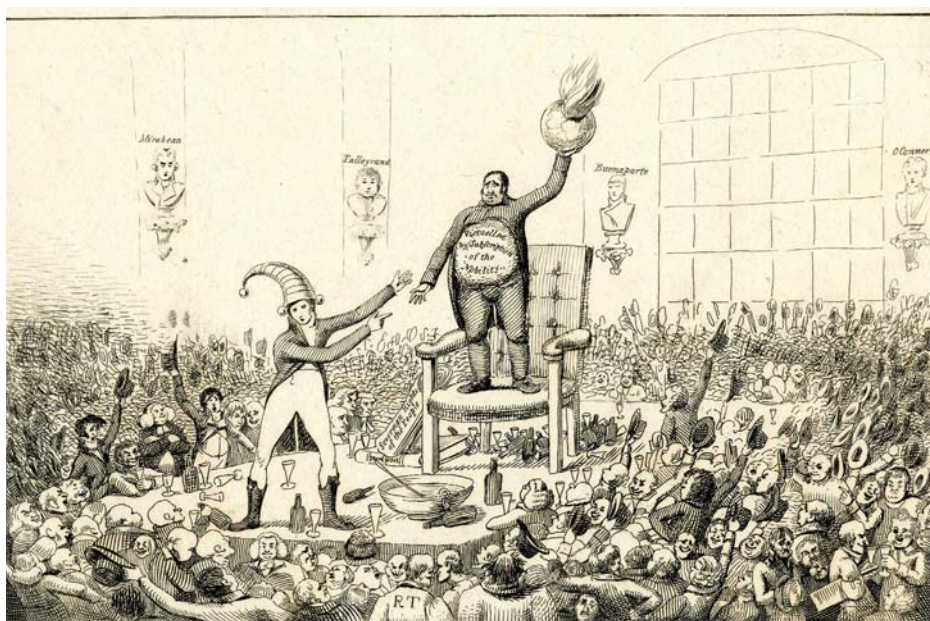
By examining the Crown and Anchor prints over time, it is possible not only to survey the changing representation of characters of different social rank, but to trace discernible changes in their spatial placement within the prints.

74 On the character of John Bull, see Brewer, *The Common People and Politics*, pp. 40–3; Miles Taylor, 'John Bull and Iconography of Public Opinion in England c.1712–1929', *Past & Present*, no. 134 (1992), pp. 93–128; Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, passim; Donald, *The Age of Caricature*, ch. 5.

75 Brewer, *The Common People and Politics*, p. 40.

76 Ibid., p. 43.

77 Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, pp. 121–69. Hunt argues that the figure of Britannia lost public favour due to the close association forged by the Foxites between the Duchess of Devonshire and the Britannia icon.



**Figure 4.12** *Scene in the Crown and Anchor.*

J. T. Smith, 1802. Copyright Trustees of the British Museum.

Newton's 1798 print is one of the first to depict a broader, albeit faceless, crowd assembled at the Crown and Anchor. Similarly, J. T. Smith's *Scene in the Crown and Anchor Tavern* (Figure 4.12), produced as an engraving to accompany verses by satirical poet George Huddesford, *Scum Uppermost*, in 1802, is among the first to venture inside the tavern.<sup>78</sup> The print provides one of the few graphic images of the interior of the venue in the public record in this early period. Although we must be wary of interpreting the print as a realistic depiction of the actual venue, some of the features accord with those described in other public records—namely, the large arched window at the end of the room and the sense of the venue's capacity for assembling large crowds in the 'Great Assembly Room'. The four busts that adorn the walls—reform icons Mirabeau, Talleyrand, Bonaparte and O'Connor—are fictitious additions to the interior; they nevertheless provide an immediate key to the ideological mood of the venue.<sup>79</sup> Fox holds centre place, standing on an oversized chair in the centre of the immense table, while Burdett is depicted as a small figure standing by the left-hand corner of the table. Fox holds aloft a flaming globe, the sign of a 'World's End' tavern. Apart from the title of the print, there are no identifying symbols or signs to mark the space. Yet the size of the assembly, the prominence

<sup>78</sup> BM 9885. For George's description of the print, see George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires*, 1791, vol. 8, pp. 91–2.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

of the key characters and the fictitious busts combine to identify the venue, suggesting a more intimate knowledge of its space in the wider public sphere. It also provides a sense of wider participation at the venue, beyond the key gentlemen figures of Fox, Burdett and the Duke of Norfolk.

It is not until Samuel de Wilde's satire of the 1809 Grand Reform Dinner, however, that we begin to see the Crown and Anchor brethren diversify in terms of social standing (Figure 4.13). De Wilde seized on the reports of debauchery and drunkenness at the dinner. Speakers were reportedly howled down by intoxicated members of the audience and the meeting is said to have illustrated the growing gulf between the Burdett reformers and the Whigs.<sup>80</sup> The meeting was reportedly attended by men of 'some consideration', including Matthew Wood, who was made one of the two Sheriffs of London and Middlesex in 1809, Robert Waithman, political reformer and later Lord Mayor of London, and members of the parliamentary reformers' movement including Lord Cochrane, George Byng and William Smith, Member for Norwich, alongside 1200 other 'friends of liberty'.<sup>81</sup> Significantly, among the gallery is Francis Place, a ubiquitous figure in the machinery of radical London.<sup>82</sup> What makes Place stand apart among this crowd is the fact that he was an artisan—a tailor—of humble birth; he was born in a debtors' prison.

Where once John Bull stood bemused and detached from the space of the tavern, in De Wilde's print, a butcher joins in the revelries with the aristocratic reformers. The figure of the butcher, Brewer notes, was a familiar one in the caricature of the eighteenth century, and stood alongside that of the sailor as the archetypal figure of the 'liberty-loving Englishman' before the adoption of the character of John Bull.<sup>83</sup> In the print, not only is the butcher placed amongst the reformers, De Wilde also gives him a voice. He is depicted making a speech and holding a pamphlet, 'The Wae Ow too Riform the Parl[iament]', while a grinning chimney sweep 'decked out in the cocked hat and gold paper epaulets of May-day' points to Gwyllym Lloyd Wardle's *Plan for a New Government*.<sup>84</sup>

80 Not all newspapers reported the meeting in this way. *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 6 May 1809, provided a detailed report of the meeting, which excluded any mention of reports of drunkenness or riotous behaviour.

81 Michael Roberts, *The Whig Party* (London: Macmillan, 1939), pp. 246–7.

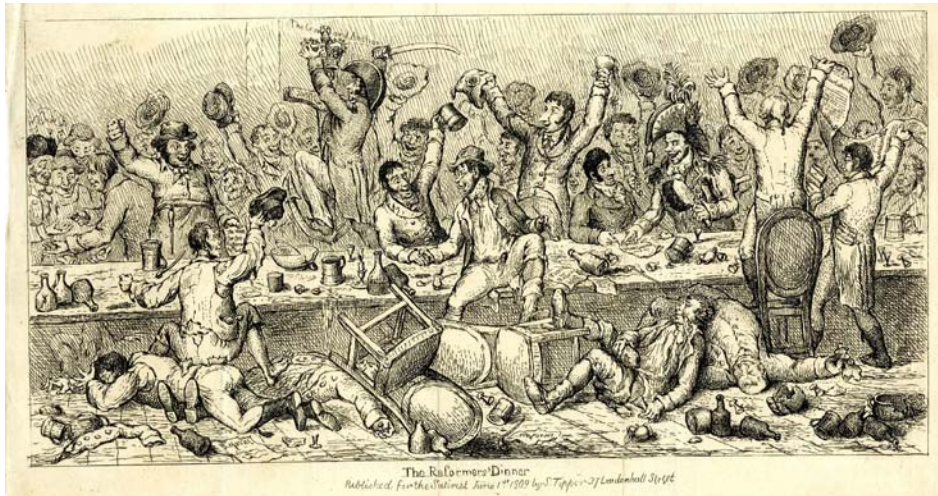
82 On Francis Place, see Dudley Miles, *Francis Place 1771–1854: The life of a remarkable radical* (Brighton: Harvester, 1988). For more on Place, see Chapter 5 of this study.

83 Brewer, *The Common People and Politics*, pp. 41–2. The butcher—seemingly an incongruous choice as the representative figure of the English common man—Brewer reminds us, linked 'national identity to culinary and dietary habits', for the butcher 'presided over the preparation and sale of that most distinctive of English dishes, the roast beef of England'.

84 Wardle, a parliamentary backbencher, caused a public scandal when he exposed corruption involving the Duke of York in the awarding of army contracts. His further exposé of the Duke's mistress, Mary Anne Clarke, eventually led to the resignation of the Duke as commander-in-chief. See Philip Harling, 'The Duke of York Affair (1809) and the Complexities of War-Time Patriotism', *Historical Journal*, vol. 39, no. 4 (1996), pp. 963–84; Peter Spence, *The Birth of Romantic Radicalism: War, popular politics and English radical reformism, 1800–1815* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996), ch. 6.



De Wilde's print demonstrates that some of the familiar symbols of the previous century remained embedded in popular political prints of the early decades of the nineteenth century, as he depicts Burdett raising a glass in one hand and a bonnet rouge with tricolour cockade in the other. The binary of the tavern's emblem is again put to good use: Lord Cochrane is the figure mounting the oversized tavern emblem to slash at the crown with his sabre.<sup>85</sup>



**Figure 4.13** *The Grand Reform Dinner.*

Samuel De Wilde, 1809. Copyright Trustees of the British Museum.

I am mindful again here of Brewer's warning about 'visual realism'. As he notes, during the 1790s, there was a tendency to remove plebeians from scenes where we should 'expect their presence' so that many of the crowds depicted in early political cartoons consist 'almost entirely of gentlemen'.<sup>86</sup> It is possible that De Wilde's use of the butcher and chimney sweep is the inverse of this phenomenon, and is merely intended as a metaphor for the levelling dangers inherent in the intentions of the Crown and Anchor reformers, rather than actual evidence of working-class participation in its events. Place's presence, however, suggests otherwise. He provides context for the generic figures, which suggests that the shift of placement of plebeian figures from outside to inside was recognition by the caricaturists of the day that the tavern's more plebeian identities were legitimate participants in the public sphere. Although the aristocratic reformers so intimately connected with the tavern still dominate the prints after the turn of the century there is an increasing association of the Crown and Anchor as the headquarters of a burgeoning, newly politicised and unruly rabble. With both De Wilde's and Smith's prints among the first to depict the interior of

<sup>85</sup> George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires*, 1791, vol. 8, pp. 91–2.

<sup>86</sup> Brewer, *The Common People and Politics*, p. 18.



the building, it appears that by the early nineteenth century, the doors of the tavern, if only metaphorically, have opened to accommodate the expanding political nation.

\* \* \*

The use of print culture to explore the cultural understanding of the Crown and Anchor tavern inevitably raises a question about the consumption of such prints and the extent to which they were circulated in London at the turn of the nineteenth century. Produced as works of art, they were intended for commercial gain and for sale to private buyers. Did this then mean they were accessible only to a political elite who could afford to purchase the prints, or did the caricaturists' sphere of influence extend beyond a bourgeois public? What role did the phenomena of the caricature shop—such as that of Mrs Humphrey's, which displayed and sold Gillray's works—play in extending the reach of the caricaturist beyond a paying clientele?

The question of the circulation of the prints is a vexed issue among scholars of print culture in this period.<sup>87</sup> H. T. Dickinson questions the veracity of claims of mass audiences, arguing that it is 'impossible' to be certain of the press runs of any of the prints.<sup>88</sup> Though he allows that some prints were displayed in publishers' shop windows, Dickinson argues that only about 10 such shops existed, and they were limited to metropolitan viewers so that most political prints found an audience in the politically aware inhabitants of London and Westminster.<sup>89</sup> He concedes that there are examples where prints gained wider circulation than that suggested purely by print run alone. When the middle classes feared revolution, for example, Dickinson maintains, they 'pasted political prints on the walls of taverns, shops, and workshops in an effort to influence the lower orders'.<sup>90</sup> Roy Porter and Diana Donald are less cautious in their assessments; Donald considers that the dissemination of caricatures was far wider, socially and geographically, than previous scholars (such as Dickinson) 'have thought likely'.<sup>91</sup>

87 Many scholars have written about the market for and the consumption of political prints. In addition to those already noted, see Vincent Caretta, *The Snarling Muse: Verbal and visual satire from Pope to Churchill* (Philadelphia, 1983), pp. 243, 255. For an overview of the debate, see Eirwen E. C. Nicholson, 'Consumers and Spectators: The public of the political print in eighteenth-century England', *History*, vol. 81, no. 261 (1996), pp. 5–21; and Porter, 'Seeing the Past'.

88 Dickinson, *Caricatures and the Constitution 1760–1832*, p. 17. Nicholson also remains sceptical of the reach of the caricaturist, arguing that 'the evidence presently available' does not support the status it has been accorded by historians—'that of a "mass" and potentially demotic medium'. Nicholson, 'Consumers and Spectators', p. 21.

89 Dickinson, *Caricatures and the Constitution 1760–1832*, p. 15.

90 Ibid.

91 Donald, *The Age of Caricature*, p. 184. Porter, 'Seeing the Past', p. 200. Tamara Hunt also argues against Dickinson's position. See Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, pp. 7–10.

Clearly, however, conjecture over circulation should not preclude the importance of the prints for illuminating the past. Crucially, as Vic Gatrell reminds us, 'textual evidence presents the same difficulties'.<sup>92</sup> 'In any case', he continues, 'the historian of mentalities is concerned with what was thinkable and doable in the past, regardless of the assumed numbers of people involved, or its assumed normative standing'. Given the uncertainty over circulation numbers, it is perhaps more prudent to focus on the availability of the prints in the public arena. The display of the prints in the caricature shops such as that operated by Hannah Humphrey meant that many prints were exposed to the public gaze.<sup>93</sup> Visitors to London, such as Johann Christian Hüttner, noted the extreme popularity of the 'caricature shops'.<sup>94</sup> He observed they were 'always besieged by the public' with the exception of 'Mrs Humphrey's shop, where Gillray's works are sold'. Here he found the audience were people of 'high rank, good taste and intelligence'.<sup>95</sup> In 1791, *The Times* lamented the public display of the prints as a public menace:

[T]he scandalous caricatures in many of the print shops of this metropolis, hung out to debauch the minds of an unwary youth, and libel the most exalted characters. They attract so many passengers that it is difficult to pass the streets without being obliged to go on the carriageway to avoid pickpockets, who generally plant themselves in the way to practice their callings.<sup>96</sup>

Reeves' loyalist members of the short-lived Crown and Anchor Society certainly recognised the power of prints to rouse popular discontent. One correspondent to the Society considered that '[s]uch prints make stronger Impressions in the minds of Comon [sic] people than many times reading accounts of the subject'.<sup>97</sup> The appeal of the popular print to the illiterate public accounts for much of the moral panic over their content. Although political discontent framed as published text proliferated in this period in the form of books, pamphlets and newspapers, there was a certain safety in that these forms of cultural communication presupposed a literate (and largely bourgeois) audience.<sup>98</sup> Their perceived ability to influence the unpredictable, unstable and poorly educated

92 Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, p. 14.

93 Cindy McCreery, 'Satiric Images of Fox, Pitt and George III: The East India Bill crisis of 1783–84', *Word and Image* (1993), p. 164.

94 Johann Christian Hüttner, *London und Paris*, 1798, quoted at <<http://www.npg.org.uk/live/arccari5.asp>>

95 Ibid.

96 *The Times*, 22 December 1791.

97 Quoted in Donald, *The Age of Caricature*, p. 142.

98 As Ian Haywood notes, the attitude also prevailed amongst gentleman radicals such as William Godwin. See Ian Haywood, *The Revolution in Popular Literature: Print, politics and the people, 1790–1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 41–2. See also Brewer, *Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III*, pp. 140–2; Donald, *The Age of Caricature*, pp. 142–6.

'mob' was seen as more limited than publicly displayed graphic satire.<sup>99</sup> Even where the prints of the 1790s involved text as complex verses or explanatory notes, the symbolism and imagery utilised in popular prints meant members of the illiterate, or less politically aware, public could still appreciate their message.<sup>100</sup> Regardless of the impasse about the consumption of prints, as a cultural communicator, the caricaturist clearly did not rely solely on the skills of a literate audience.

Moreover, when the Crown and Anchor prints are viewed over time, the sharp reduction in the use of text over a relatively short time frame is evident. This appears paradoxical, for it occurs precisely at the time when literacy levels are on the rise.<sup>101</sup> There is little doubt that over time the caricaturist honed his skills to communicate more effectively and succinctly in purely visual form and therefore relied less heavily on the use of text. The reduction in the use of text also suggests that the collective understanding of the identities, images and symbolism featured in the prints was maturing. The caricaturist relied on an audience who instantly recognised and understood the meaning attached to the multitude of symbols that was so vital a part of the caricaturist's work. The reduction in the use of text, paradoxically perhaps, was reflective of the political sophistication of the audience—a populace well versed in the political iconography of the day.

Perhaps the clearest evidence of the broadening reach of the caricaturist lies in the increasing appropriation of the medium by radicals themselves. Prior to the 1790s, most caricatures and graphic satires were critical of government personalities and political events. The French Revolution, however, turned the caricaturists' lenses firmly on those who sought to change the British political and social system. Although Newton's *Sola 'Virtus Invicta'* is one of the few prints exhibiting any radical sympathies referred to in this chapter, there were many other prints in the period that were scathing in their criticism of those in power.<sup>102</sup> The iconic print by George Cruikshank of the shackled and impoverished 'Freeborn Englishman', gagged with a padlock through his lips, was inspired by a 1795 print, *A Lock'd Jaw for John Bull*, which shows Pitt padlocking John Bull's lips with the reassurance that he would soon become

99 Donald, *The Age of Caricature*, p. 147; Dickinson, *Caricatures and the Constitution 1760–1832*, p. 11.

100 Dickinson, *Caricatures and the Constitution 1760–1832*, p. 20.

101 See Haywood, *The Revolution in Popular Literature*, chs 1 and 2; Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader: A social history of the mass reading public 1800–1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), ch. 2; David Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture: England 1750–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

102 For a discussion of the use of caricature and visual culture by the radicals in this period, see Wood, *Radical Satire and Print Culture*, ch. 2; Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, ch. 16; Alexander, *Richard Newton and English Caricature in the 1790s*.

‘used to it’.<sup>103</sup> Nevertheless, it was the anti-radical prints from artists such as Gillray that arguably dominated the satirical world of the late eighteenth century.<sup>104</sup>

That domination, however, was shattered with the entry of radical publisher William Hone onto the satirical landscape in the second decade of the nineteenth century.<sup>105</sup> Hone’s work saw a resurgence of radical print propaganda and led to a pamphlet war with loyalist commentators. Amidst the stoush, we again find the Crown and Anchor has a central place in visual representations of the political landscape. Hone’s brilliant political satire had a hiatus of almost two years following his three (unsuccessful) prosecutions under the suspension of habeas corpus in 1817 for earlier publishing work.<sup>106</sup> If Hone was buoyed by his defeat of the authorities, the Peterloo massacre would cement his dedication to the radical cause and reinvigorate his satirical juices. The events of 1819 inspired a remarkable period of satire as Hone produced a series of political parodies he devised while reading nursery rhymes to his children.

Engaging the sharp talents of a new caricaturist, George Cruikshank, to illustrate the pamphlet, the *Political House that Jack Built* saw an evolution of the medium of satire by combining simple rhythmic verse with accompanying images.<sup>107</sup> The collaboration produced one of the most successful satirical works seen in England—from either side of the political divide. It was first published in December 1819 and, by March the following year, it was in its fifty-second edition, with a deluxe colour edition also on sale. The shilling pamphlet tapped into a popular market and is reported to have sold 100 000 copies.<sup>108</sup>

Although Hone’s pamphlet itself does not feature the Crown and Anchor, a brief outline of the *Political House* parody is necessary if we are to appreciate the context of the prints in which the tavern featured in this period. The introductory image of the *Political House* represents the Constitution—or the ‘House’ of the parable’s title (Figure 4.14). Cruikshank utilises the traditional graphic representation of the Constitution as a temple supported by three

103 See Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, pp. 489–90; Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, p. 224.

104 Brewer rightly notes that the ‘genteel’ provenance of the print collection of the British Museum might not present the ‘complete picture of radical engraving’. Brewer, *The Common People and Politics*, p. 45.

105 On William Hone, see Kyle Grimes, ‘Spreading the Radical Word: The circulation of William Hone’s 1817 liturgical parodies’, in Michael T. Davis (ed.), *Radicalism and Revolution in Britain, 1775–1848* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), pp. 143–56; Wood, *Radical Satire and Print Culture*, pp. 96–154; Edgell Rickword, *Radical Squibs and Loyal Ripostes: Satirical pamphlets of the Regency period, 1819–1821* (London: Redwood Press, 1971), pp. 1–23.

106 See Philip Harling, ‘The Law of Libel and the Limits of Repression, 1790–1832’, *Historical Journal*, vol. 44, no. 1 (2001), p. 128n.

107 George Cruikshank was the son of prominent eighteenth-century caricaturist Isaac Cruikshank. For a discussion of George Cruikshank, see Robert L. Patten, *George Cruikshank’s Life, Times and Art*, 2 vols (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992); John Buchanan-Brown, *The Book Illustrations of George Cruikshank* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1980).

108 Rickword, *Radical Squibs and Loyal Ripostes*, pp. 23–4.



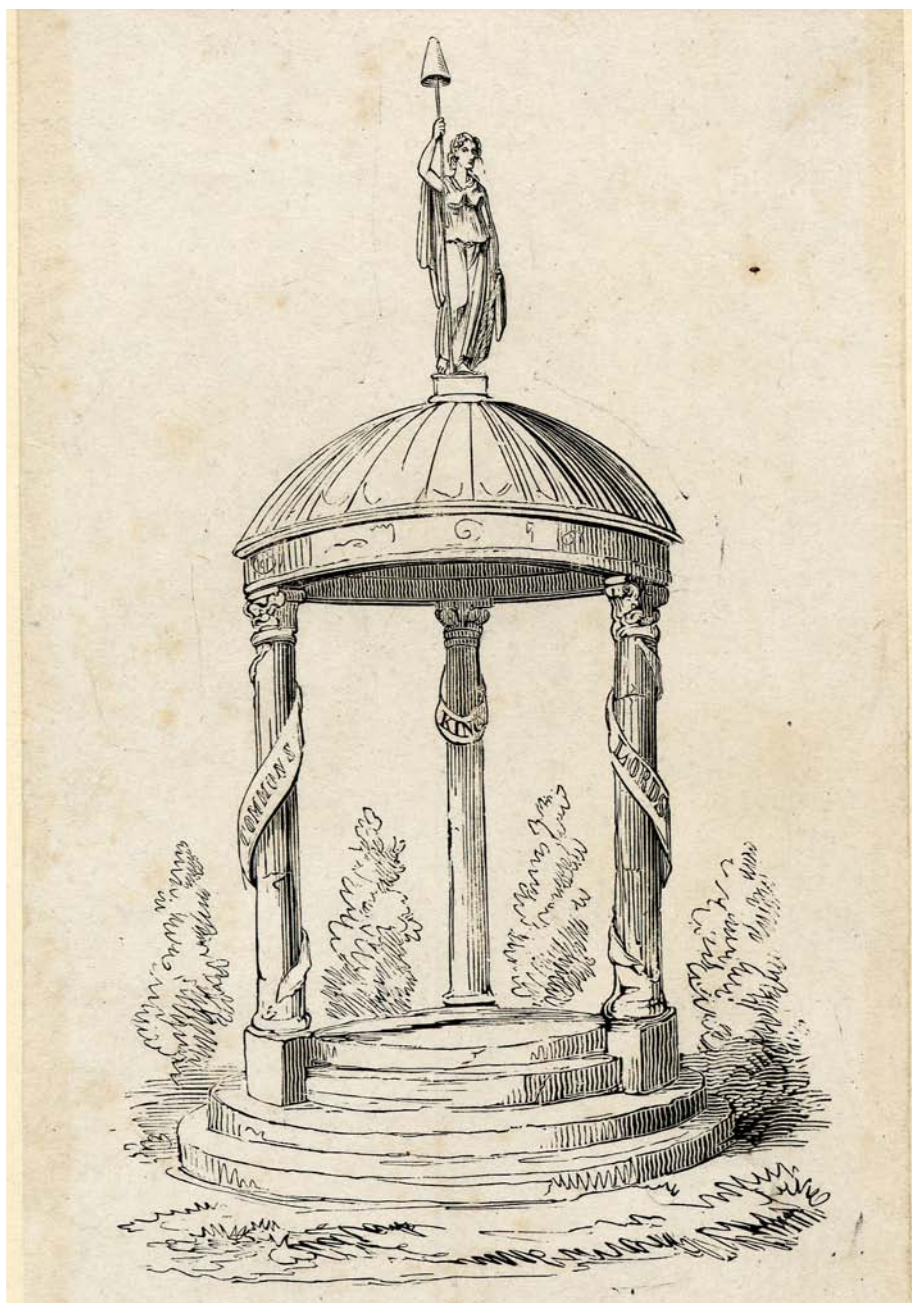
columns, titled Commons, King and Lords. Liberty (again, in Romanesque female form) crowns the temple. The 'Wealth' of the nation is symbolised by a treasure chest, which holds scrolls symbolising 'Habeas Corpus', 'Bill of Rights' and 'Magna Carta'—a holy trinity of radical claims to Britishness.<sup>109</sup> Both verse and text censure the British elite, or the 'Vermin' who 'Plundered the Wealth/That lay in the House/That Jack built'. The 'People', all 'tatter'd and torn', are represented as ragged and starving as they are slaughtered by the yeomanry at Peterloo. Just as the radicals who questioned which political side had the truer vision for Britain from their prison cells, Hone's pamphlet called for the restitution of the ancient rights of the freeborn Britain, which had been 'plundered' by the 'vermin' in political power. *The Political House that Jack Built* provided the most powerful answer to the fear-driven, 'Jacobin treachery' message of the conservative prints in circulation in the previous decades by inverting the threat to the British nation. The danger lay not with the reformers and radicals who assembled at the Crown and Anchor, but with the British government itself.

The immense success of Hone's *Political House* parody pamphlet enraged conservative Britain and provoked a volley of loyalist ripostes. These works generally imitated both the style and the imagery of Hone's original; in *The Real or Constitutional House that Jack Built*, the Constitution is again represented as a temple, with three pillars of Monarch, Lords and Commons, although in this print the figure of 'Liberty' is replaced by 'Justice', also in female form, carrying in one hand the scales of justice and in the other a book symbolising 'LAW' (Figure 4.15).<sup>110</sup> The riposte focuses on William Pitt as the leader—or 'the PILOT'—who has prevented the 'plundering' of the treasures of the 'HOUSE that Jack Built'. Lords Wellington, Nelson, Burke and Castlereagh are denoted as the 'PATRIOTS', and their portraits hang on an English oak surrounded by laurel leaves—again indicating the contested nature of political iconography in the period.<sup>111</sup> The absence of the figure of Liberty in the riposte, however, suggests that by 1819 radicals had successfully appropriated that icon as their own.

109 See Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p. 805. As I argued in Chapter 2 of this study, although Linda Colley's account of the forging of a British identity argues that Britishness was an expression of difference from an alien 'other'—from France, from Catholicism and later from races encountered in the Empire—she does concede that internal schisms had a role to play in the formation of a national identity. See Linda Colley, *Britons Forging the Nation 1701–1837* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 342.

110 *The Real or Constitutional House that Jack Built* (London, 1819), reproduced in Rickword, *Radical Squibs and Loyal Ripostes*, pp. 59–82.

111 As Marcus Wood notes, loyalist publishers who imitated Hone's style had the difficult task of presenting the Regent and the cabinet as 'astute and benevolent leaders'. Wood, *Radical Satire and Print Culture*, p. 259.



**Figure 4.14 'This is the House that Jack Built', *The Political House that Jack Built*.**

William Hone and George Cruikshank, London, 1819. Copyright Trustees of the British Museum.

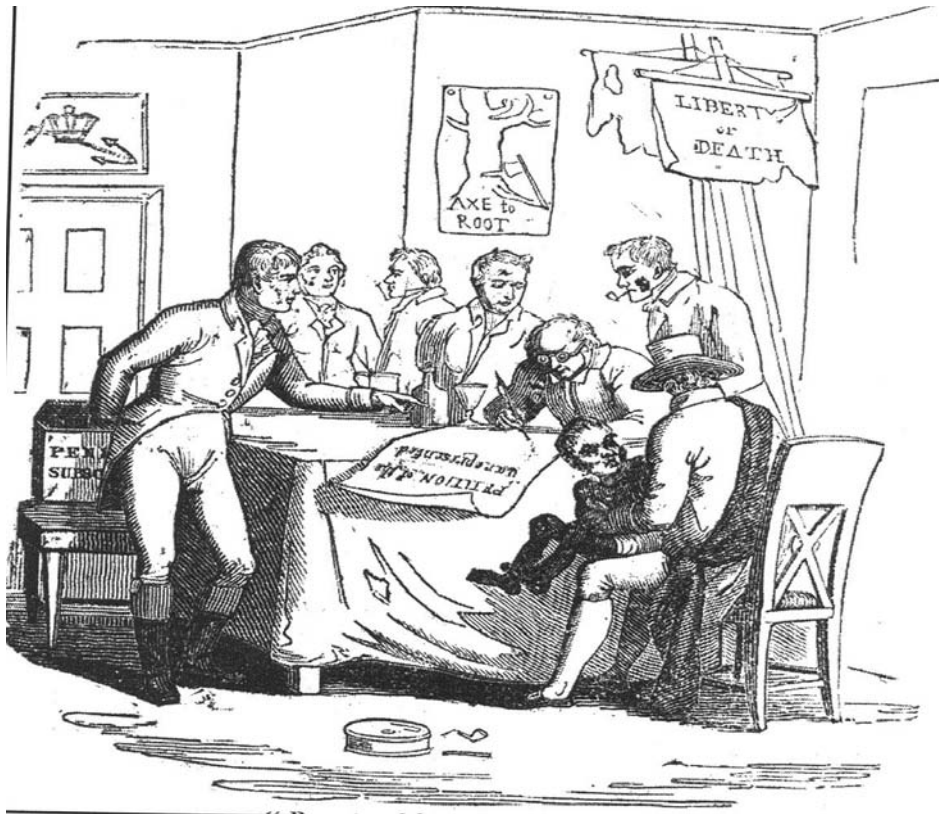


Figure 4.15 'This is the House that Jack Built', *The Real or Constitutional House that Jack Built*.

London, 1819. Copyright Trustees of the British Museum.



Though the Whigs are mentioned in the riposte, they are dismissed as 'HYPOCRITES', and the 'RADICALS' are the focus of censure and scorn. The detail of the illustrated 'radical' scene and accompanying verse is worth pausing over (Figure 4.16). The page depicts a scene of eight men meeting in a small room. Gathered around a table, on which is placed a large sheet titled 'Petition of the Unrepresented', are all the leading radicals of the period. Veteran radical leader Major Cartwright signs his name to the petition while Richard Carlile, his hair drawn cleverly into devilish horns, looks over his shoulder. T. J. Wooler is represented symbolically by the title of his journal the *Black Dwarf* and sits on the lap of Sir Francis Burdett, represented in his electoral sash but who appears to be bearing the new radical symbol of the early nineteenth-century radicalism: Henry Hunt's white hat.<sup>112</sup>



**Figure 4.16 'These are the Radicals—Friends of Reform', *The Real or Constitutional House that Jack Built*.**

London, 1819. Copyright Trustees of the British Museum.

<sup>112</sup> On the adoption of Hunt's white hat as a plebeian radical symbol, see Epstein, *Radical Expression*, pp. 94–5, 115, 199n.



Further symbols are scattered throughout the scene. On the wall behind the assembly hangs a picture of an axe being held to the base of an English oak.<sup>113</sup> A procession banner, 'Liberty or Death' (an image that emerged following its prominence at Peterloo), lies slumped against the wall. Joining the symbolic incarnations of radicalism (from the conservative perspective) is the crude, yet immediately identifiable, tavern sign of the Crown and Anchor placed above the doorway. Where once artists used text and graphics to locate their tavern scene, now the tavern emblem alone suffices. That a new generation of graphic satirists could represent the Crown and Anchor in symbolic form alone speaks volumes of the cultural understanding of the venue on the political landscape, and the enduring associations of the tavern and radical politics first formulated a generation earlier. Like the bonnet rouge and tricolour cockade, the tavern had assumed its own political identity; it had become a symbol in its own right.

The Crown and Anchor featured again in the loyalist responses to Hone's sequel to the *Political House* pamphlet, *The Man in the Moon*.<sup>114</sup> Prompted by both the inflammatory speech of the Regent at the opening of Parliament in November 1819 and the new legislative powers of the Six Acts, Hone and Cruikshank's second collaboration was published in January 1820. By March, the parody—which took the form of a dream narrative—was in its twenty-sixth edition. The poem is set in a parallel society on the Moon, 'Lunataria', and is a parody of the Regent's speech. Hone indicts the existing political and social system, the increases in taxation of the poor and the alliance between the military, the church, Parliament and the monarchy. It is interspersed with Cruikshank's illustrations, all pointedly irreverent, such as the opening image depicting the Regent facing a lunar parliament (Figure 4.17). The members are faceless and, with the royal star replacing both their heads and genitalia, they are depicted as pawns of the monarchy. In imagery consistent with the radical representations of the yeomanry at Peterloo, the Regent is charged with complicity as he triumphantly holds a sabre aloft. Outside parliament, however, a storm is brewing. The printing press shines from the sun above and the cap of liberty with a comet tail of 'reform' is about to descend on the Regent's head.

Loyalist ripostes soon followed Hone's publication, and the Crown and Anchor again featured in their counter to Hone's shrewd and pointed censure of the political system. Although the format of the *The Loyal Man in the Moon* again imitated Hone's original, the content, notes Edgell Rickword, was focused more closely on the upcoming Westminster election.<sup>115</sup> There is a clear return to the familiar tropes of the 1790s in *The Loyal Man in the Moon*, as the figure of the

113 On the oak as a symbol of liberty, see Harden, 'Liberty Caps and Liberty Trees', pp. 66–102.

114 *The Man in the Moon* (London, 1820), reproduced in Rickword, *Radical Squibs and Loyal Ripostes*, pp. 83–106.

115 Rickword, *Radical Squibs and Loyal Ripostes*, p. 314.

Regent is replaced with that of Burdett, wearing a cap of liberty with a tricolour cockade and bearing another symbol of the French Revolution—a dagger—in one hand and a ‘Liberty or Death’ banner in the other (Figure 4.18). In the loyalist incarnation, a radical parliament is pictured as faceless and is symbolised by daggers and bonnet rouge. A dove, stabbed by a dagger, descends with a trailing comet tail of ‘Peace’. The devil, who sits atop the printing press, evokes the tropes of the ‘satanic radical’ from the 1790s, though it could also be an allusion to the freethinking tenets of prolific radical publisher Richard Carlile.<sup>116</sup>



**Figure 4.17** *The Man in the Moon.*

William Hone and George Cruikshank, 1820. Copyright Trustees of the British Museum.

<sup>116</sup> The date of the print coincided with Carlile’s high-profile trial and imprisonment.

THE  
**LOYAL**  
**MAN IN THE MOON.**  
WITH THIRTEEN CUTS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF  
THE CONSTITUTIONAL HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT.



LONDON:  
PRINTED FOR C. CHAPPLE, 66, PAUL MALL,  
Bookseller to His Majesty, and His Royal Highness the Duke of York,  
AND J. JOHNSTON, CHEAPSIDE.

1820.

Figure 4.18 *The Loyal Man in the Moon.*

Anonymous, 1820. Copyright Trustees of the British Museum.



The loyalist dreamer narrating the riposte fondly reminisces about ‘Moonarian Law’ of which ‘true Lunarians had no cause to grieve/The want of good and wholesome regulations/Such as are found in all enlightened nations’. The dreamer’s contentment is shattered, however, when he finds ‘the great extent of vice!’—that ‘Radicals were in the moon’.

For very shortly after my arrival,  
There happen’d in the Moon a great revival  
Of what they call the spirit of reform;  
In other words, a signal for a storm...

The dreamer quickly discovers that ‘exploits of this community’ have a spatial element:

Accordingly, these Moonites, full of rancour,  
Met in a house, just like the  
CROWN AND ANCHOR;

The page is illustrated with the scene of a small tavern room (Figure 4.19). Burdett is atop the table addressing a motley bunch of reformers with tankards in hand. The imagery is reminiscent of the prints that first featured the expanding political nation with the unruly rabble of men endowed with ape-like or grotesque features—a familiar trope of artists of the 1790s who employed the technique of distorting or exaggerating the character and appearance of public figures for further satirical edge.<sup>117</sup>

Despite the reactionary intent of such ripostes, Donald is perhaps too quick to dismiss them as ‘feeble’.<sup>118</sup> While they do appear to be ‘lacking in penetrative power’, as Rickword suggests of *The Loyal Man in the Moon*,<sup>119</sup> their value to the social historian lies in the sense of the political climate they also provide and of the multiple voices that could be heard in the public sphere. Juxtaposed against the originality and sophistication exemplified by Hone’s work, they undoubtedly appear ‘feeble’ to the modern eye. They also, however, hold valuable insights into how imagery can be manipulated to produce meaning and alter identity. Take as an example the different representations of the space of the Crown and Anchor over time. Both loyalist responses depict the tavern meetings as the shadowy and intimate underground reminiscent of De Wilde’s 1809 print, rather than the commanding tavern space that housed Fox in J. T. Smith’s *Scene in the Crown and Anchor Tavern*. In the latter print, despite the association with political opposition, the space commands a sense of legitimacy. In the loyalist

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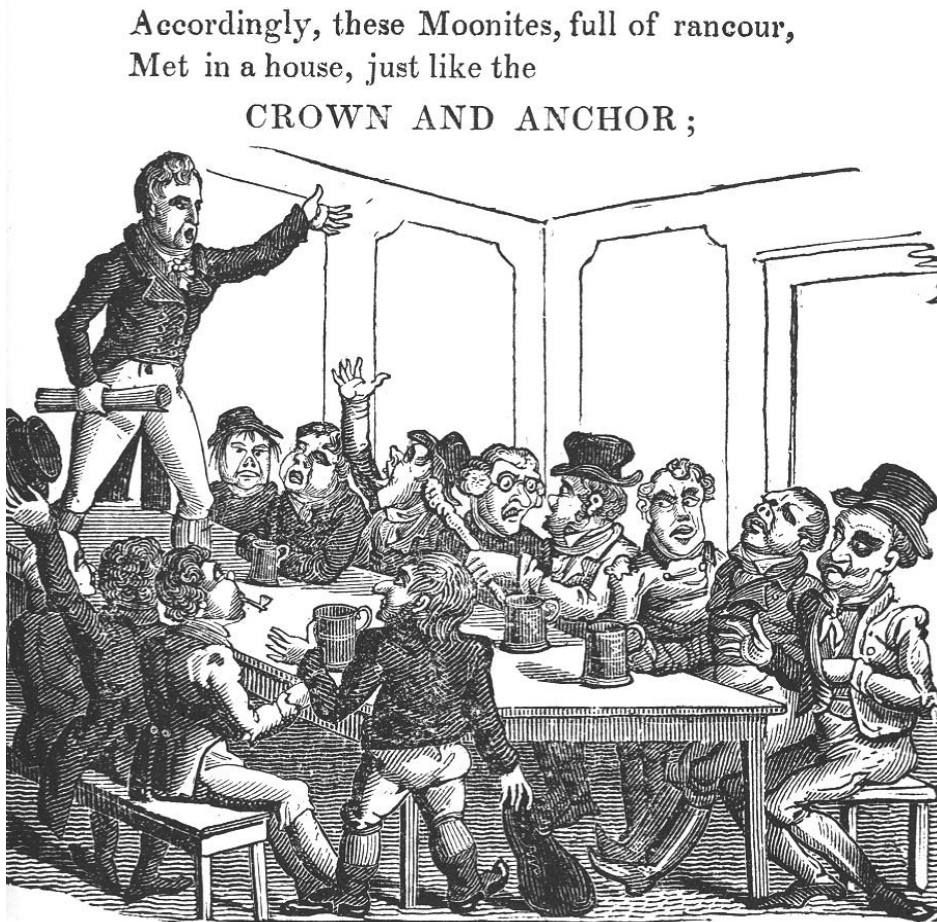
117 Dickinson, *Caricatures and the Constitution 1760–1832*, p. 20.

118 Donald, *The Age of Caricature*, p. 198.

119 Rickword, *Radical Squibs and Loyal Ripostes*, p. 312.



ripostes, however, the depiction of a small and seedy space implies secrecy and sedition, and reinforces an image of radicalism operating on the margins of the public sphere.



**Figure 4.19 'Crown and Anchor', *The Loyal Man in the Moon*.**

Anon., 1820. Copyright Trustees of the British Museum

Hone's works produced such viperous responses from loyalists because of the danger inherent in their political sophistication. As Donald notes, while Hone and Cruikshank drew on the work of eighteenth-century caricaturists, Hone 'had a new and dangerous objective of indicting a political system, not simply its office holders'.<sup>120</sup> Hone's pamphlet changed the way satire worked. Cruikshank's illustrations were no longer the comical features of the 1790s Gillray mould.

120 Donald, *The Age of Caricature*, p. 198.

The ironic and often ambiguous form of the eighteenth-century print with its 'polysemic imagery', as Donald argues, 'could not serve the purposes of those bent on the conversion of public opinion to the cause of political and social reform'.<sup>121</sup> Radicals not only appropriated the form, they refashioned it for their own purposes, leaving the conservative responses seemingly locked in the past by revisiting the old tropes first formulated by their eighteenth-century forebears. The success of Hone's work also spoke to the growing politicisation of the plebeian classes; William M. Thackeray later recalled the 'grinning mechanics' who gathered at Hone's own shop window and who read the satires to the assembled crowd.<sup>122</sup> Samuel Bamford also recollected the delight with which a group of soldiers read Hone's work: 'they burst into fits of laughter.'<sup>123</sup>

Both Thackeray's and Bamford's observations confirm that the work of the graphic satirist was often consumed collectively. We cannot imagine that the throngs who assembled outside the shop windows in the 1790s did so in reverential or reflective silence. That people from all ranks related to and enjoyed the caricaturists' work suggests a broad cultural understanding of the symbols and imagery at the heart of graphic satire. It is clear from this survey of prints that over time, the Crown and Anchor became part of the caricaturists' palette of symbolic and political shorthand devices, which artists drew upon for the communication of their ideas. Set amongst the other (often also contested) symbols of Britishness and those of the French Revolution, the venue came to be associated with devilry, subterfuge and sedition. Beyond this, in print, it performed a function analogous to the building itself: it provided a framework, a location, a venue. The action took place at the Crown and Anchor, whether in flesh and blood, bricks and mortar or pen and ink.

Despite attempts to marginalise its radical inhabitants, the recurrence of the venue in prints of the period, as well as its early liberal Whig traditions, allowed it a prominent and legitimate place on the national political landscape. By tracing the representation of the tavern in visual culture throughout this period, it is evident that the venue was not simply an innocuous landscape backdrop to create a spatial context for prints. The venue transcended its function as a tavern; it assumed a political identity in its own right.

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121 Ibid., p. 185.

122 William M. Thackeray, 'An Essay on the Genius of George Cruikshank', *Westminster Review*, vol. 34 (1840), pp. 6–7, quoted in Donald, *The Age of Caricature*, p. 198.

123 Samuel Bamford, *Passages in the Life of a Radical* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 24.