

**The Home-Making of the English  
Working Class: Radical Politics and  
Domestic Life in late-Georgian England,  
c.1790-1820.**

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**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements of the Degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy.**

**2016.**

**Statement of originality.**


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- R. Mather, 'These Lancashire women are witches in politics': Female reform societies and radical theatricality in the north-west of England, c.1819-20' in *Manchester Region History Review*, Vol. 23 (2012), pp.49-64.

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## Acknowledgements

The research presented here was funded by a Queen Mary Principal's Studentship from the Centre for Studies of Home, with an additional grant for research expenses awarded by the Economic History Society. Helpful staff at the British Library, the Borthwick Institute for Archives, Burnley Local Studies library, the Geffrye Museum of the Home, Lancashire Record Office, London Metropolitan Archives, Manchester Archives+, Sheffield City Archives, The National Archives, and West Yorkshire Archives Service all assisted me in conducting this research.

I have benefitted from the advice and experience of an excellent supervisory team. Amanda Vickery and Barbara Taylor have shared their extensive expertise, as well as offering many a timely pep-talk and personal kindness. The Centre for Studies of Home, based at Queen Mary and the Geffrye Museum of the Home, has proved an excellent resource, both in terms of academic support and access to a vibrant scholarly community. Particular thanks are due to Alastair Owens for his interest in this project from its inception and for his comments on the final draft. I would also like to thank my examiners, Jane Hamlett and Emma Griffin, who offered a generous critique and suggested useful amendments to the thesis.

Robert Poole is to thank (or to blame!) for my initial interest in the long eighteenth century and for encouraging my ambitions towards graduate study. He and Katrina Navickas have been unstintingly generous in offering access to their source material, as well as in providing me with opportunities to share my own work. Catriona Kennedy helped me to develop my ideas for this project and countless others have provided advice, support and opportunities, shared their own unpublished work and directed me towards invaluable source material. If I was initially concerned that living at a distance from my institutional base would leave me feeling isolated, these fears have been allayed by both the academic support and the friendship I have encountered. To thank everyone who has helped and supported me individually would result in a list longer than the thesis itself, but I would particularly like to thank Mikael Alm, John Barrell, Jenny Basford, Nathan Bent, Antonia Brodie, Tessa Chynoweth, Sophie Coulombeau, Alice Dolan, James Ellison, Alexis Gebbie, Ryan Hanley, Lucy Hodgetts, Sally Holloway, Laura Humphreys, Mia Jackson, Nigel Jeffries, Elin Jones, Sarah Lloyd, Bridget Lockyer, Matthew McCormack, Jessica Moody, Frank O'Gorman, Catherine Oakley, Sara Pennell, Steve Poole, John Styles, Abigail Tazzyman, Annabelle Wilkins, Mark Wilson, and Stephanie Wilson. I am very grateful to everyone who has made me welcome in London and offered me places to stay, and especially to Sam Smith, who has picked up the bill more times than I care to remember.

If, therefore, I present rather a romanticised version of family, home, and community in this thesis, it is because I have been so fortunate in this regard myself. Especial thanks are due to my parents, who have patiently endured my years of studying, offering encouragement, financial and emotional support, and proofreading various versions of my work. I owe a great deal to their belief in the power of education and their commitment to social justice, which has shaped my ability to study as well as the subjects I have chosen to pursue. My partner Thom has lived through this thesis with me from its outset, and done more than his fair share of domestic labour to ensure that I saw it through to completion. I am so grateful for his faith in me, despite my haphazard manner with an en-dash and my idiosyncratic referencing techniques. Thom is also responsible for introducing a cat into our life – the essential ingredient to make any house a home.

## **Abstract**

This thesis explores how 'home', as both an idea and a physical space, operated in the formation and expression of popular political radicalism in late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century England. With a regional focus on London and the South Pennine areas of Lancashire and Yorkshire, the thesis intervenes in a rich historiography of popular radicalism in this period to argue for the importance of everyday practice in bringing together and sustaining a beleaguered movement, especially during periods of repression. In doing so, it offers new perspectives on the importance of the intersections of class and gender within radicalism, and sheds new light on the crucial and underappreciated role of women. Home could offer opportunities for political involvement, but could also restrict the emancipatory possibilities open to women in particular. The thesis unpacks ideas and practices associated with the home, including family relationships, consumer practice, and the use of objects, to expose it as an insecure and unstable site from which to launch a campaign for political legitimacy. Because 'home' was embedded in so many moralistic and political discourses, its deployment could be politically powerful, but could also hinder attempts to thoroughly rethink the social norms which underpinned classed and gendered inequalities. Throughout, however, the thesis stresses the continued unknowability of many aspects of working-class domestic life and the problematic nature of the sources we use to interrogate it, arguing for continued sustained work to unpick the diversity in the nature and meanings of home for working-class people in this period.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction.

[I]n our domestic capacity, with the suckling at the breast, and the stripling at the hand, the air they inhale shall be filled with the principles of reform.<sup>1</sup>

This was the defiant statement of Halifax's female reformers at a meeting on Skircoat Moor, less than two months after the infamous Peterloo massacre, where eighteen people were killed and hundreds more injured as a peaceful reform meeting was dispersed. Their words remind us that political radicalism did not occur only at large, explicitly political meetings like that at which this address was read, but in the everyday interactions of families and communities. This thesis is about these quotidian and often obscure radical practices, and specifically those that took place in the domestic context to which the speaker referred. I argue that attentiveness to the way that the home shaped and was shaped by popular politics enables us to better appreciate the intersections of class and gender within the radical movement, and in particular highlights the underexplored contributions of working-class women in the struggle for political representation in late-Georgian England.

This study asks a number of related questions about the connections between radical politics and domestic life. Why did working-class men, and especially working-class women, draw on domestic imagery when making the case for political inclusion? Why did home have such emotive power? How were the physical spaces of home implicated in networks of power and resistance, and where did family relationships fit with wider relationships with the community and with the state? How can we uncover the political potential of domestic practices, and how did day-to-day routines interact with political activism? Were working-class people able to use the relationships, objects, and practices of home to express their politics, and what did this mean for the articulation of class and gender within a heterogeneous movement? While it can be difficult to access the varied experiences of domestic life as lived by working-class people, this thesis uses a broad range of source material to piece together answers to these questions.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Halifax Public Meeting', *The Times*, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1819. NewsVault, accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

Popular political radicalism emerged out of the upheavals of the late eighteenth century, as industrialisation was reshaping the world of work, the routines of home, and the landscapes in which people made their lives. The American and French revolutions heightened interest in democratic ideals, and near continuous war with France between 1793 and 1815 provoked considerable economic flux as well as raising issues of what constituted active citizenship due to the need for mass mobilisation of military force.<sup>2</sup> It was in this context that the first Corresponding Societies emerged, calling for political reforms including enfranchisement beyond the existing property qualifications. These ‘radical reformers’ hoped that, once able to participate in the political process, they could play some part in shaping the forces that affected their lives. Yet this was also a time of stark political divisions, with radicals facing opposition from those equally committed to preserving social order. Catriona Kennedy has argued that ordinary people felt ‘a vertiginous sense of the past rapidly receding beneath the wheels of history’, heightening the sense of urgency which coloured political activity on both sides during this period.<sup>3</sup>

Though this thesis focuses on resistance and radicalism, it is important to note that not all working-class people were interested in political change. How far either radicalism or conservatism, or indeed political apathy, can be seen to hold sway within the working-class population of late-Georgian Britain remains a matter of debate,<sup>4</sup> and as Katrina Navickas has suggested, the flexibility of either persuasion means that we are better to consider them as ‘stances’ rather than as coherent ideologies.<sup>5</sup> ‘Radical’ identities were defined in terms of and against the existing political situation, but ‘political radicalism’ was far from unified in this period.<sup>6</sup> The term ‘radical’ describes a coalition of groups with the broad aim of

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<sup>2</sup> L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (1992, London: Pimlico edition, 1994), ch.7.

<sup>3</sup> C. Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Military and Civilian Experience in Britain and Ireland* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p.187. Kennedy suggests that diarists writing during the wars against France between 1793 and 1815 were keenly aware that this was a momentous period in history. See also ‘Bayonets Across the Hedges: British Civilian Diaries and the War at Home’ in *War Memories: the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars in modern European culture*, edited by A. Forrest, É. Francois & K. Hagemann (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2012), pp.77-95.

<sup>4</sup> The work of Linda Colley has been particularly influential in asserting that the majority of Britons felt considerable loyalty to the existing regime. See ‘The Apotheosis of George III: Loyalty, Royalty and the British Nation’ in *Past and Present*, Vol.102 (1984), pp.94-129; ‘Whose Nation? Class and National Consciousness in Britain, c.1750-1830’ in *Past and Present*, Vol.113 (1986), pp.97-117; *Britons*.

<sup>5</sup> K. Navickas, *Radicalism and Loyalism in Lancashire, 1798-1815* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.4.

<sup>6</sup> M. Philp, ‘The Fragmented Ideology of Reform’ in *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp.50-77; J. Epstein, *Radical Expression: Political Language, Ritual and Symbol in England, 1790-1850*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp.27-28; L. Edwards, ‘Popular Politics in the North West of England, 1815-21,’ PhD thesis (University

obtaining a reform of the parliamentary system, which was to include the extension of the franchise to provide a secret ballot for all men, more regular elections and more equal constituency representation. This being accomplished, it was hoped that the wider electorate could influence the provision of legislation more favourable to the labouring classes, such as better welfare provision. It was in this focus on universal (adult male) suffrage and welfare reforms, as well as in the practical involvement of working-class people, that radicalism differed from more 'moderate' reform movements. Working-class radicalisms derived from a range of influences and experiences, from the inspirational effects of the French and American revolutions, to the pressures of war and industrialisation, to the investigatory spirit of the Enlightenment and its dissemination through an expanding press.<sup>7</sup> Thus a range of radicalisms emerged offering differing analyses of political problems and their potential solutions. For some, nothing less than a democratic revolution involving the abolition of the monarchy and the redistribution of property would suffice, while others were primarily concerned with defined issues such as trade regulations or religious toleration. For the purposes of this thesis, the broad spectrum of political radicalisms are explored, from the constitutional to the revolutionary. Related issues, such as the demands for the repeal of the Corn Laws, or Luddite protests against industrial change, are also considered where these seem to intersect to a relevant degree with the aims and actions of political radicals as broadly stated. By considering a wide variety of political positions, and drawing on work which emphasises the importance of symbols and rituals to radical culture, we can see more easily the overlaps between politics and everyday life, particularly when considering such an emotionally and symbolically charged environment as the home.<sup>8</sup>

At a time of social, political, and economic flux, we might imagine that 'home' was a stable concept to cling to, but in fact domesticity was itself highly politicised, woven into webs of domination and resistance. 'In England alone, is the term home, with all its domestic comforts and associations, properly understood', wrote the Lancastrian weaver-poet

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of Manchester, 1998), p.224; J. Mee, 'Rough and Respectable Radicalisms' in *History Workshop Journal*, Vol.56 (2003), pp.238-244.

<sup>7</sup> H. T. Dickinson, *British Radicalism and the French Revolution, 1789-1815* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), chapter 1.

<sup>8</sup> For the symbolic and ritual repertoires of popular politics see J. Epstein, *Radical Expression*; R. Poole, 'The March to Peterloo: Politics and Festivity in Late Georgian England' in *Past and Present*, No.192 (2006), p.152; K. Navickas, *Protest and the Politics of Space and Place, 1789-1848* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).

Samuel Bamford in a memoir of his political life in the 1810s.<sup>9</sup> Bamford's claim for the exceptional Englishness of home was a point of distinction, tacitly setting the nation in a superior position on a scale of comparison against other, less domesticated states. Linda Colley has demonstrated that support for the wars against France was bolstered by a strengthening sense of national identity based on just such ideas of British exceptionalism.<sup>10</sup> This was also a period of British imperial expansion, in which such difference – real or imagined – was crucial to the project of colonization, calling upon the supposed superiority of the colonisers for moral justification.<sup>11</sup>

In national politics, home was strongly associated with family relationships, which in eighteenth-century political thought mirrored the state in its idealised form; thus the male head of household enacted on a micro-level the benevolent paternal authority over wife, children, and employees that a monarch was to maintain over his subjects. This was a hierarchy ordained by God, another patriarchal figure presiding over his family on earth. On a more day-to-day, practical level, the home was an economic unit at all levels of society, whether as the centre of employment on a large estate, the operating base for a middle-class professional, as a manufacturing workshop or simply as a household to be managed through the production and consumption of goods. As we will see in the third chapter of this thesis, work and other strategies within a working-class 'economy of makeshifts'<sup>12</sup> had a considerable impact upon the home and the practice of living within and without it. Thus the stability of the home had both imagined and practical significance for the good of the nation. Yet the home was also a contested ideal: while the cosy cottage was perhaps the ultimate national symbol – the private castle in which every Englishman could enjoy his liberties – it was also evoked in narratives of a past golden age, a rural idyll increasingly eroded by enclosure, industrialisation, war, rampant consumerism, and political unrest. The idea of home, then, could be employed in competing discourses to project differing positions on the state of the nation.

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<sup>9</sup> S. Bamford, *Passages in the Life of a Radical and Early Days in Two Volumes*, edited with an introduction by H. Dunckley. Vol.2 (1844; London: T. Fisher Unwin edition, 1905), p.260. Unless otherwise stated, *Passages* hereafter refers to this edition.

<sup>10</sup> Colley, *Britons*.

<sup>11</sup> K. Wilson, 'Introduction: Histories, Empires, Modernities' in *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660-1840*, edited by K. Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.3.

<sup>12</sup> Olwen Hufton's phrase has proved a useful concept for historians analysing 'the patchy, desperate, and sometimes failing strategies of the poor for material survival'. See A. Tompkins & S. King, 'Introduction' in *The Poor in England, 1700-1850: An economy of makeshifts*, edited by S. King & A. Tompkins (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p.1.

This intertwining of the domestic and the political resonates with the way in which historical geographers have defined the home as a 'multi-scalar' space which is 'simultaneously material and imaginative', incorporating ideas and feelings as well as a physical site for dwelling, and thus applicable beyond that physical site into localities, even nations.<sup>13</sup> This thesis applies this understanding of home to an analysis of the ways in which popular radicalism played out in domestic life, predominantly focusing on the household itself but extending into neighbourhoods, communities, and, as we saw above, a sense of national identity. The interconnectedness of domestic and political has not, to date, been sufficiently explored with reference to the popular radicalism of the late-Georgian period. Rather, the existing scholarship has focused on public speeches and actions, taking explosions of activism out of the context of everyday life.<sup>14</sup> Thus even where it has been attentive to the complex meanings of symbolic and ritual cultures,<sup>15</sup> I argue, historical scholarship has failed to provide an account of the ways that political radicalism was *lived* day-to-day, and has hence missed the nuanced ways in which class and gender interacted in the movement.

The public face of radicalism from the 1790s through to 1820 was dominated by men working in small-scale trading or industry, usually based in the home or in small workshops. These were shoemakers, booksellers, tailors and weavers, usually not the poorest amongst the working classes, but always aware that fluctuations in trade might thrust them below the poverty line.<sup>16</sup> All of these employments were precarious in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, subject to the booms and bust of a wartime

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<sup>13</sup> A. Blunt & R. Dowling, *Home* (London: Routledge, 2006), p.22.

<sup>14</sup> The questions driving this thesis were initially provoked by discussions ahead of the 2011 conference 'New Approaches to the History of Popular Protest', which took place at the University of Hertfordshire on 1<sup>st</sup> July that year. Professor Steve Poole suggested that 'Protest History' was itself a problematic concept: 'If we spend too much time looking for 'protesters' and studying their 'protests', are we in danger of limiting our own interest in popular agency and popular culture? I guess really I'm wondering how interested everybody is in what protesters might be doing during those days of the week when they're not preoccupied with something we can identify as protest... Their susceptibility to protest is perhaps simply a clue to a wider politics of democratic perception, for instance... So what do LCS members talk about around the tea table or in the course of a country walk?' See Poole, S. 'Ideas for discussion questions', message 7, 10th June 2010. Online forum post. *Protest History Forum*. Accessed 17th Feb. 2017. <http://protesthistory.proboards.com/post/22/thread>.

<sup>15</sup> For the symbolic and ritual repertoires of popular politics see J. Epstein, *Radical Expression*; R. Poole, 'The March to Peterloo: Politics and Festivity in Late Georgian England' in *Past and Present*, No.192 (2006), p.152; K. Navickas, *Protest and the Politics of Space and Place, 1789-1848* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).

<sup>16</sup> E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963, London: Penguin edition, 1980), p.211-212; D. Bythell, *The Sweated Trades: Outwork in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London: Batsford Academic, 1978), pp.217-221.

economy as well as the threat of mechanisation and the decline in labour regulations in the period, which undermined the wages of skilled workers by allowing unapprenticed labour into the trades.<sup>17</sup> Donald Read has suggested that it was this proximity to potential destitution that characterised the unifying experience of being ‘working class’: ‘It is not perhaps the working conditions per se ... but the never-ending need to ferret out the means to assure their sustenance.’<sup>18</sup> Likewise, Carolyn Steedman, in her work on domestic servants in the period, highlighted a keen awareness of reliance on their social ‘superiors’, so that working-class men and women were always aware that they ‘must labour for their bread, and ... equally, might be denied that bread.’<sup>19</sup> I use the term ‘working class’ here to denote the above occupational groupings alongside unskilled labourers and the very poor. While this large group shared similar economic circumstances, particularly in the experience of precarity, my understanding of class as applied here also draws on the likelihood of similarity in social circles and cultural reference points.<sup>20</sup> I do not, however, wish to suggest that being working class was a fixed position, nor that all of the working class were radicals, or indeed that all radicals were working class. This thesis focuses on working-class radicalism, but recognises that this was one political position among many held within this heterogeneous and loosely-defined socio-economic grouping. Though the domestic lives of the working classes in general are discussed here to provide context, I by no means assume a deterministic relationship between class and political position, and the focus in this thesis is very much on *radicalism* as it was lived by working-class men and women.

Class was not the only or necessarily the most dominant element of a political identity.<sup>21</sup>

While the role of class in the political radicalism of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth

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<sup>17</sup> Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, ch.8 & 9; Bythell, *The Sweated Trades*, p.11.

<sup>18</sup> D. Read, ‘Ranciere and the Worker’ in *Class*, edited by P. Joyce (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p.169.

<sup>19</sup> C. Steedman, *Labours Lost: Domestic Service and the Making of Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.254, p.258.

<sup>20</sup> In doing so, my work draws upon insights derived from recent sociological work which has drawn upon Pierre Bourdieu’s ideas about cultural capital to explore those aspects of class which are not immediately obvious as being economically determined. In their work on 21<sup>st</sup>-century class divisions, Mike Savage and colleagues have argued that cultural distinction has become increasingly important to class differentiation as the gap between those at the top and bottom of the socio-economic scale has widened, leaving a fuzzy and ill-defined middle. This is a version of class which resonates with the blurred boundaries we identified earlier as characterising eighteenth-century socio-economic distinctions. I would also suggest, as Mike Savage does, that the ways in which class is now understood in highly moralised and personalised terms, has much earlier parallels. M. Savage, *Social Class in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (London: Pelican, 2015), pp.90-91, p.335.

<sup>21</sup> J. W. Scott, ‘The Evidence of Experience’, in *Questions of Evidence: Proof, Practice, and Persuasion across the Disciplines*, edited by J. Chandler, A. I. Davidson & H. Harootunian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp.374-375.

centuries has been the subject of extensive and vociferous debate, the ways in which gender shaped the movement has been rather less well explored.<sup>22</sup> Anna Clark's *The Struggle for the Breeches*, published more than two decades ago, remains the most important contribution to scholarship on gender and working-class radicalism in the period. Yet, in spite of Clark's stated aim of moving the discussion of class and politics beyond productive relations, economic factors largely determined the gender relations she described.<sup>23</sup> Clark's artisans are misogynistic because they are frustrated by their declining status and inability to achieve the financial security necessary to assert a more family-orientated masculinity; her textile workers are more co-operative because their work requires the labour of a whole household. Such an approach submerges gender within class, while my own account suggests a rather more dynamic relationship which takes account of other factors shaping identity, such as emotion, religious belief, and available cultural references. Furthermore, Clark's analysis focussed on male actions and rhetoric –which are after all most evident in the sources – and did so to the extent of drowning out discussion of what *women* said and did.<sup>24</sup> The female reform societies which emerged in the 1810s are confined to a few pages of her account, quickly despatched with the conclusion that their quest for respectability lead them too readily to adopt a 'separate spheres' ideology and accept their confinement to domestic roles.<sup>25</sup> Thus her narrative of women excluded from politics neglected the ways in which working-class women could appropriate and subvert separate spheres rhetoric, drawing upon their role in the home to actively participate in radical politics in ways which have been insufficiently explored.<sup>26</sup>

Historians of family life in particular have shown how men and women alike encountered and adapted gendered ideals, and that the home was central to the performance of gender and power. Ingrid Tague, for example, has suggested that fashionable women adopted the tropes of conduct literature, designed to keep wives subordinate to their husbands and

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<sup>22</sup> For example, G. Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History, 1832-1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p.106; P. Joyce, 'Class and the Historians', in *Class*, edited by P. Joyce (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p.128.

<sup>23</sup> A. Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the making of the English working class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp.3-4.

<sup>24</sup> K. Navickas, 'Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches*', *History and Today*, 2015, accessed 28<sup>th</sup> January 2017, <http://historytoday-navickas.blogspot.co.uk/2015/03/anna-clark-struggle-for-breeches.html>.

<sup>25</sup> Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches*, pp.161-164. For an extensive critique of the concept of 'separate spheres' of political and domestic life, see A. Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', in *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (1993), pp.383-414.

<sup>26</sup> See Colley, *Britons*, ch.6 for a discussion of the ways in which women could draw upon the gendered discourses of national identity to carve out political roles.

confined to private life, as a means to publicly assert their own social and political status.<sup>27</sup> Elizabeth Foyster, in her work on women of a similar social status, has argued likewise that, rather than necessarily restricting women's room for manoeuvre, ideals of appropriate conduct could be used as a means to outline what they deemed acceptable within marriage, and to protest abusive or neglectful behaviour.<sup>28</sup> The subversion or appropriation of gender ideals was not confined to either women or to the upper classes. Working on a slightly later period than my own, Megan Doolittle has shown that ideals of masculinity could have a powerful effect on working-class men, who felt a real and intense sense of shame when unable to fulfil the roles of provider and protector.<sup>29</sup> The breadwinner ideal was not fully established in the late-eighteenth century, but the physical burdens of childbearing and childrearing worked alongside gendered expectations to maintain men as the dominant economic partner in a marriage, and the role of husband as provider was furthermore enshrined in the doctrine of *couverture* as the counterpoint to female dependence.<sup>30</sup> Thus Joanne Bailey has demonstrated that even in this earlier period, both men and women deployed gendered tropes relating to roles as providers and nurturers respectively in their attempts to secure relief from parish authorities, demonstrating that the ability to perform such roles could have important material consequences.<sup>31</sup> As we shall see in the first chapter of this thesis, gendered performances likewise underpinned the ways in which radical men and women made public appeals for political reform.

Working-class people came across gendered ideals in a range of forms, from the tract and the sermon to the ballad, and the cheap print, or through the normative power of neighbourhood gossip. As Susan Pedersen has pointed out, however, the producers of such media could not control the reception of their work, or prevent their readers egging on precisely those characters designed as bad examples.<sup>32</sup> A multitude of alternative gender models also existed within popular culture. One need only look at caricatures of working-

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<sup>27</sup> I. H. Tague, 'Love, Honor, and Obedience: Fashionable Women and the Discourse of Marriage in the Early Eighteenth Century,' in *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (2001), pp.76 - 106.

<sup>28</sup> E. Foyster, 'Creating a Veil of Silence? Politeness and Marital Violence in the English Household', in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, Vol. 12 (2002), pp.395 -425.

<sup>29</sup> M. Doolittle, 'Fatherhood and Family Shame: Masculinity, Welfare and the Workhouse in Late Nineteenth Century England' in *The Politics of Domestic Authority in Britain since 1800*, edited by L. Delap, B. Griffin, and A. Wills (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp.84 – 110.

<sup>30</sup> J. Bailey, *Unquiet Lives: Marriage and Marriage Breakdown in England, 1660-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.62-66.

<sup>31</sup> J. Bailey, "'Think Wot a Mother Must Feel': Parenting in English Pauper Letters, c.1760-1834', in *Family and Community History*, Vol.13, No.1 (2010), pp.5-19

<sup>32</sup> S. Pederson, 'Hannah More Meets Simple Simon: Tracts, Chapbooks, and Popular Culture in Late Eighteenth-Century England', in *Journal of British Studies*, Vol.25, No.1 (1986), pp.84-113.



class women to see that it was more than possible to imagine women who were robust, forthright, lusty, even aggressive. Though exaggerated to the point of grotesque, images such as Isaac Cruikshank's *Indecency* (Fig.1) should remind us that some working-class women were uninterested in meek femininity.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, in spite of such crude attempts at humour, there was often an element of admiration in the depictions of the stubborn, no-nonsense fishwife or orange seller. Vic Gattrell, while acknowledging that brutally misogynist satires did exist, found that 'the sexually initiating, predatory, even emasculating woman is common' in Georgian caricature as a figure with the potential to be celebrated as much as feared or despised.<sup>34</sup> Diana Donald has further argued that the figure of the Billingsgate fishwife was akin to that of John Bull, representing the sturdy English character in opposition to the effeminate, fashion-obsessed (Frenchified) fop.<sup>35</sup> Popular ballads likewise offer alternative models of womanhood, and the 'female soldier' continued to offer a thrilling suggestion of the possibilities for women who bypassed the bounds of domesticity into the nineteenth century.<sup>36</sup> Likewise, men continued to have access to models beyond the staid paterfamilias. Anna Clark highlighted the continuation of a rough and ready masculinity centred around the pub rather than the home, while Rictor Norton has demonstrated the presence of a 'molly' subculture in London, which played with gender through rituals such as the use of 'maiden' names.<sup>37</sup> Again, if we look at caricature, John Bull, the figure representing sturdy British manliness, is as often seen gleefully farting in the face of the French army or tucking greedily into patriotic roast beef as he is displaying 'civilised' control of his animal appetites in a domestic setting.<sup>38</sup> Thus rational

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<sup>33</sup> I. Cruikshank, *Indecency*. Coloured engraving, dimensions not given (SW Fores, 1799). Library of Congress, Washington DC, USA.

<sup>34</sup> V. Gattrell, *City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-Century London* (New York: Walker and Company, 2006), p.381.

<sup>35</sup> D. Donald, *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), p.115-118.

<sup>36</sup> D. Dugaw, *Warrior Women and Popular Balladry, 1650-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) suggests that the focus of these ballads shifted towards romantic attachment, rather than individual adventure, towards the end of the eighteenth century. However, the female warrior was still culturally intelligible to a late-eighteenth century audience, and could still be allowed to participate in gender-crossing behaviour. See also R. Mather, "'All the Glories of the Camp": Women, British Nationalism, and the Soldier Hero in Yorkshire and Lancashire, 1793-1815,' MA dissertation (University of York, 2011), p.20-22.

<sup>37</sup> Clark, *Struggle for the Breeches* – see also I. McCalman, *Radical Underworld: Prophets, Revolutionaries, and Pornographers in London, 1795-1840* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998) for more detail on a 'rough' underworld culture, which did not necessarily exclude women; R. Norton, *Mother Clap's Molly House: The Gay Subculture in England, 1700-1830* (London: GMP Publishers Ltd, 1992), p.105.

<sup>38</sup> Eg. J. Gillray, *French Liberty, British Slavery*. Hand-coloured etching, 247mm x 350mm (H Humphrey, 1792). British Museum, London; H. Ward, *John Bull's Explosive Bum (Bomb), or a Ducking*

man and submissive woman were not the only models of gender available to working-class people, and though ideals of respectability could be powerful, they did not necessarily override other social or structural contexts determining behaviour. As Peter Bailey has argued, respectability should be understood as a performed role, and the notion of what was deemed appropriate behaviour was highly context-specific and might vary in different social situations.<sup>39</sup> Understanding classed and gendered identities in this way offers the potential to look beyond the carefully-constructed public face of popular radicalism to the ways in which people might engage on a day-to-day level.

The focus on home in this study shifts the analysis of politics away from public interactions with the state through episodes of protest, and towards interwoven webs of influence, control and resistance, operating at interpersonal, domestic, local, national and international levels. The multilayered understanding of power and the performance of identity employed in this thesis obviously owes a great debt to the work of Michel Foucault, but is also influenced by the perhaps more optimistic approaches of Michel de Certeau and James C Scott, who have explored the possibilities for resistance within hegemonic systems.<sup>40</sup> In *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, Scott emphasised the ways in which subaltern people are able to undermine the dominant powers of elites through private talk in hidden spaces, as well as through quiet glances and gestures which subtly communicate an unwillingness to submit to control, even in shared fantasies of revolt or revenge.<sup>41</sup> Michel de Certeau similarly stressed the way in which dominant discourses can be undermined in the ways they are received, so that consumers of discourses are empowered through their own forms of production. Like Scott, he also explored the agency subaltern people are able to exercise through strategies such as ‘stealing time’ from the employer, forming implicit solidarities with fellow idlers.<sup>42</sup> Jacques Ranciere has also suggested that repetitive, monotonous work

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*for the French Fleet in Basque Roads*. Etching, 346mm x 245 mm (Walker Cornhill, 1809). British Museum, London.

<sup>39</sup> P. Bailey, ‘Will the Real Bill Banks Please Stand Up? Towards a Role Analysis of Mid-Victorian Working-Class Respectability’ in *Journal of Social History*, Vol.12, No.3 (1979), pp.336-353.

<sup>40</sup> Critics of Foucault’s work have argued that his analysis of power offers few avenues for genuine, successful resistance, particularly because of his destabilisation of the positions from which this can be launched. However, as Shane Phelan has argued, this destabilisation allows for the assertion of alternative, more nuanced subject positions, and enables the oppressed to avoid replicating the same strategies of domination employed by the oppressor. See S. Phelan, ‘Foucault and Feminism’ in *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol.34, No.2 (1990), pp.421-440.

<sup>41</sup> J. C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), pp.3-5, pp.7-9.

<sup>42</sup> M. De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, translated by S. F. Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p.18, p.25.

left the worker free to mentally escape and to dream of a different life.<sup>43</sup> Politics are not, in these analyses, evident only in explosions of activism, but operate at different levels simultaneously and sometimes in contradictory ways in the practice of everyday life.

By connecting home and politics, we can better understand the interpersonal relationships and power negotiations which underpinned political activism. Everyday resistance can after all reveal the faultlines in collectives as much as it builds subtle links. The idler at work, for example, is only in sympathy with his or her colleagues until they have to pick up the slack – something we will discuss when exploring the gendered divisions of paid and unpaid work in the home in the third chapter. The home offers a particularly interesting case study for uncovering these conflicts, given the aforementioned tensions between discourse and practice and the fluctuating nature of power and control within domestic relationships. Recent studies of the home have highlighted the use of material culture to mark out spheres of authority, which were subject to temporal shifts as well as those associated with life-stage. Events such as childbirth or ill health, routines such as cooking and cleaning, the passage of time between working day, evening and night – all could cause fluctuations in the power relations of home which were subtly negotiated through the use of particular rooms, or particular objects.<sup>44</sup> This study relates power and authority in the home to political life, looking at how gendered domestic relationships and practices shaped forms of engagement with radical politics for working-class men and women. As Matthew McCormack has pointed out, working-class men emphasised their family responsibilities in making claims for independent manhood, while Karen Harvey has shown how the discourse of œconomy made household management central to the duties of middling and working-class men: ‘men’s right to citizenship was firmly grounded in their own material practices in (not just possession of) a house.’<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> J. Ranciere, *The Nights of Labour: The Workers’ Dream in Nineteenth Century France* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), p.59.

<sup>44</sup> See, for example, A. Flather, *Gender and Space in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007); M. Johnson, *An Archaeology of Capitalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996); S. Pennell, ‘Pots and Pans History: The Material Culture of the Kitchen in Early Modern England’ in *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (1998), pp.201-216; M. Doolittle, ‘Time, Space, and Memories: The Father’s Chair and Grandfather Clocks in Victorian Working-Class Domestic Lives’, in *Home Cultures*, Vol.8, No. 3 (2011), pp.245-264.

<sup>45</sup> M. McCormack, ‘“Married Men and the Fathers of Families”: Fatherhood and Franchise Reform in Britain’ in *Gender and Fatherhood in the Nineteenth Century*, edited by T.L. Broughton & H. Rogers (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp.43-54; K. Harvey, *The Little Republic: Masculinity & Domestic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p.176, p.187. See also M. McCormack, *The Independent Man: Citizenship and Gender Politics in Georgian England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).

Though the performance of a respectable, self-sufficient representation of masculinity has been recognised as crucial to the campaign for working-class political representation, there has been only limited attempts to relate this to both the material and affective environments of home in the context of working-class radicalism. I argue here that home environments were crucial to shaping classed and gendered political identities, and thus were as crucial to the radical movement as were such sites as the pub, the moors, or the chapel.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, in looking more closely at home and politics, the underappreciated role of women in politics becomes much more apparent. The role of middle- and upper-class women in home-based political activity has been the subject of productive exploration, with Elaine Chalus, Sarah Richardson, and Kathryn Gleadle all demonstrating that such women were able to use their accepted domestic roles to participate in political activism through such activities as social entertaining, letter-writing, boycotts, and the display of politically-charged material culture. Family connections could facilitate women's participation in politics, enabling political activity to be framed as feminine care and support for male relations.<sup>47</sup> Though the gendered and contingent nature of these forms of participation has caused Gleadle to define such political women as 'borderline citizens', their surviving letters and diaries reveal that they were able to engage in political activity in meaningful and often effective ways.<sup>48</sup> These studies have all moved discussion beyond ideals of feminine behaviour to explore the ways in which discourse and practice shaped feminine political behaviour, demonstrating the fluidity between the 'private' world of home and the public and political arenas.

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<sup>46</sup> The pub was a classic site for association, and one frequented by women as well as men: see Navickas, *Protest and the Politics of Place and Space*, pp.32-35; T. Hitchcock, 'Book Review: *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* by Anna Clark' in *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, Vol.28, No.1 (1996), p.124. See also C. Steedman, *An Everyday Life of the English Working Class: Work, Self and Sociability in the Early Nineteenth Century* (2013), pp.93-94, pp.111-112 on one working-class man's attitudes to female drinking. The Pennine moors have also been highlighted by Katrina Navickas as an important site for political activism and particularly that which was illegal or on the borders of legality, see K. Navickas, 'Moors, Fields and Popular Protest in South Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1800-1848' in *Northern History*, Vol.46, No.1 (2009), pp.93-111. For the chapel as a meeting space in a slightly later period; see *Protest and the Politics of Place and Space*, pp.190-196. For London's radical spaces, see also C. Parolin, *Radical Spaces: Venues of Popular Politics in London, 1790-c.1845* (Canberra: ANU EPress, 2010), accessed 28<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2016, <http://press.anu.edu.au?p=17011>, chapter 3 (no page numbers given in online edition).

<sup>47</sup> E. Chalus, 'Elite Women, Social Politics, and the Political World of Late-Eighteenth Century England', in *The Historical Journal*, Vol.43, No.3 (2000), pp.669-697; S. Richardson, *The Political Worlds of Women: Gender and Politics in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013); K. Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens: Women, Gender, and Political Culture in Britain, 1815-1867* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>48</sup> Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*, p.2.

Similar studies regarding politics in working-class homes have been limited by the fact that domestic lives of the working classes in the late-Georgian period have remained relatively obscure, in spite of the growing scholarship on the meanings of home. This is in part an issue of source material, something discussed in greater detail below. The autobiographies, diaries, and letters which detailed the intimate lives of the middle classes are far rarer for those lower down the social scale until later in the nineteenth century. Few of the buildings which housed the working classes in this period survive in anything like their original state, and as shall become clear later in this thesis, the material culture which does survive is poorly documented. There has until recently been heavy reliance on the accounts of social observers, usually from outside the communities they wrote about, who frequently presented a picture of such domestic misery that it is difficult to imagine home life was anything other than a trial to be survived. The classic example is Fredrich Engels' description of Manchester's Angel Meadow in the 1840s, which he deemed to be 'Hell upon Earth'.<sup>49</sup> Leaving aside Engels' obvious interest in highlighting the worst incidences of exploitation and poor living conditions among the working classes, Manchester's rapid growth and immigration to the area made the Angel Meadow of 1844 a much more crowded locale than it had been in the late-eighteenth and earlier nineteenth centuries. Recent archaeological investigations in the area have shown that at the start of our period, Angel Meadow featured a combination of reasonably-sized housing designed for merchants, which was only later subdivided and the spaces between filled in with smaller houses intended for the growing factory workforce.<sup>50</sup> A similar pattern emerged in Preston, where purpose-built back-to-backs surrounded the Horrocks brothers' Yard Works and Frenchwood factory from the early 1800s, but were interspersed with larger, more salubrious properties such as those on High Street, which were occupied by handloom weavers during the prosperous years of the 1790s.<sup>51</sup> It was not just in the North-West, with its new factories and domestic textile industries, that the pattern of housebuilding and adaptation was changing in the late Georgian period. The third chapter outlines the impact of economic change on housing conditions in both the Pennine region and the London area, alongside the ways in which other factors, such as the local environment, shaped

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<sup>49</sup> F. Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*, translated by Florence Kelley Wischnewetzky (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1892), Project Gutenberg, transcribed by David Price, accessed 15<sup>th</sup> Jan 2016, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/17306/17306-h/17306-h>, p.54.

<sup>50</sup> Oxford Archaeology North, 'Co-op Headquarters, Miller Street, Manchester: Archaeological Excavation', unpublished report (Lancaster: Oxford Archaeology North, March 2011), pp.14-15.

<sup>51</sup> N. Morgan, *Vanished Dwellings: Early Industrial Housing in a Lancashire Cotton Town, Preston* (Preston: Mullion Books, 1990), p.47, p.61.

decisions about accommodation. In doing so, it builds upon recent, often interdisciplinary, scholarship, which has shown the potential for digging deeper into the meanings of working-class housing in this period of social and economic flux.

Archaeological research, for example, has not just investigated the structure of working-class buildings, but the kind of objects that might be found inside. An excavation of early-Victorian privies in Limehouse, London uncovered evidence of the small pleasures of domestic life: clay pipes, well-used teawares, children's toys, gifts between lovers. They also show a concern for cleanliness, with a number of scrubbing brushes showing signs of considerable use. Taken together, the assemblages from the Limehouse dig challenge assumptions – easily made from the comments of middle-class social commentators, however well-meaning – about dirty slums, drunkenness (teawares far outweighed items associated with alcohol) and the bleakness of domestic life for the Victorian poor.<sup>52</sup> Eighteenth-century shipwrights' cottages at Deptford yielded evidence of the material life of ordinary dockworkers, with the range of pottery wares suggesting some desire to follow fashions in homewares among less affluent Londoners.<sup>53</sup> Even the notorious slums of St Giles retained archaeological evidence of the presence of fashionable Wedgwood pottery.<sup>54</sup> Material deprivation was not always so great as to prevent the expression of aesthetic preferences, a desire for respectability, or the simple pleasures of family life. Such studies have challenged the received wisdom about working-class homes, and demonstrated their potential as sites for making meaning and expressing identities. With this new understanding, we can recognise the importance of interrogating the connections between working-class homes and working-class politics.

Studies of home also enable the analysis of production and consumption together, rather than the prioritising the former in understandings of class and gender. Consumer behaviour amongst the working classes was a subject of public concern in the eighteenth century, as we shall see in the fifth chapter of this thesis. It is only relatively recently, however, that historians have begun to look more closely at the forms and meanings of working-class consumption beyond its function as a cause or effect of the Industrial

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<sup>52</sup> A. Owens, N. Jeffries, K. Wehner, R. Featherby, 'Fragments of the Modern City: Material culture and the rhythms of everyday life in Victorian London' in *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Vol.15, No.2 (2010), pp.212-225.

<sup>53</sup> R. Denson & N. Jeffries, 'A Post-Medieval Shipyard and Shipwrights' Cottages at Deptford: Some Observations on Pottery and Material Culture' in *London Archaeologist*, Vol.10, No.1 (2002), pp.20-27.

<sup>54</sup> S. Anthony, *Medieval settlement to 18<sup>th</sup>-/19<sup>th</sup>- century rookery: Excavations at Central St Giles, London Borough of Camden, 2006-8* (London: Museum of London, 2011), pp.37-8.

Revolution. Though occupants of London, the great trading capital of England, may have had easier access to a wider range of goods than provincial Britons, material improvements were not confined to the capital.<sup>55</sup> This is a conclusion sustained by work on domestic interiors using trial records and inventories. Adrian Green's work on pauper inventories from East Anglia and North-East England has highlighted the surprising range of goods available to the poor in the early eighteenth century, noting in particular the prevalence of tea-making equipment and looking glasses.<sup>56</sup> Green argued that such items offer evidence of the agency of working-class people in making houses homely even when necessitous of relief for their poverty. 'Posterity', he concluded, 'should avoid the condescension of assuming that poverty prohibited people from finding consolation at home.'<sup>57</sup> Though home itself could be a transitory concept,<sup>58</sup> working-class people were able to make home even in temporary accommodation. John Styles, for example, has used Old Bailey records to explore the ways in which London lodgers encountered consumer goods. He found that lodging houses tended to provide some non-necessary or decorative items, such as woodcut prints and (again) looking glasses.<sup>59</sup> Though the occupants of furnished lodging rooms did not choose these objects, it seems that landlords and landladies anticipated that their tenants might appreciate attention to fashion or aesthetics when taking a room.

Styles has shown that this kind of indirect, involuntary consumption was an important part of the consumer experiences of working-class people, especially those who relied upon charity.<sup>60</sup> His nuanced approach to working-class consumer behaviour has provided much-

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<sup>55</sup> Joe Harley has found regional diversity in ownership of goods using pauper inventories from the early eighteenth century, with proximity to London seeming to determine access to novel commodities. 'Material Wealth or Material Poverty? A Regional Study of the Material Lives of the Poor, 1670-1834,' paper presented at the British History in the Long Eighteenth Century Seminar, Institute for Historical Research, London, 26<sup>th</sup> January 2015. By the latter part of the century, improved transport links and the growth of northern centres of production may have reduced this effect.

<sup>56</sup> A. Green, 'Heartless and Unhomely? Dwellings of the Poor in East Anglia and North-East England' in *Accommodating Poverty: The Housing and Living Arrangements of the English Poor, c. 1600-1850* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p.86.

<sup>57</sup> Green, 'Heartless and Unhomely?', p.95.

<sup>58</sup> Alastair Owens and Nigel Jeffries have suggested that frequent moves - albeit within a fairly limited locality - were the norm for working-class households. A. Owens & N. Jeffries, 'People and Things on the Move: Domestic Material Culture, Poverty and Mobility in Victorian London', in *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*. Early online, DOI: 10.1007/s10761-016-0350-9 (2016), pp.13-14.

<sup>59</sup> J. Styles, 'Lodging at the Old Bailey: Lodgings and Their Furnishing in Eighteenth-Century London' in J. Styles & A. Vickery (eds.), *Gender, Taste & Material Culture in Britain & North America 1700-1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), pp.61-80.

<sup>60</sup> J. Styles, 'Lodging at the Old Bailey'; see also *Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), chapters 15-17.

needed balance in an often heated debate on living standards in the industrial revolution. Issues of material improvement in the second half of the eighteenth century have tended to split historians between those ‘optimists’ who see industrialisation as a positive force, and ‘pessimists’ who contend that little improved for working-class people. The latter approach, typified by E.P. Thompson’s gloomy depiction of the working classes as ‘those who the consumer revolution consumed’,<sup>61</sup> was challenged by historians who argued that in fact it was the consumer desires of the working-classes that drove industrialisation.<sup>62</sup> Styles’ account of changing consumption patterns offers a balance between these viewpoints, pointing to the pleasure many working people experienced in buying and using consumer goods, but qualifying the overly optimistic assertions of Neil McKendrick, whose ‘consumer revolution’ was brought about by the emulative behaviour of ‘the mill girl who wanted to dress like a duchess.’<sup>63</sup> McKendrick argued that women were at the forefront of industrial and commercial change, as did Jan de Vries, who argued that the redirection of female labour in particular shifted working-class economies from subsistence to market focused.<sup>64</sup> Again, we can see how exploring domestic life can reveal the ways in which class and gender interacted in changing historical circumstances.

Discussions of production and consumption emphasise distinctions in gender as well as in class, though recent work has challenged the association of women with consumption by stressing men’s acquisitiveness and use of objects to shape their self-presentation.<sup>65</sup>

Meanwhile the position of women in the industrialising labour market has remained controversial.<sup>66</sup> While the optimists have stressed the opportunities for women in factory

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<sup>61</sup> E.P. Thompson, quote on the dustjacket of P. Linebaugh, *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Verso, 1991), quoted in J. Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p.3.

<sup>62</sup> J. de Vries, ‘Between Purchasing Power and the World of Goods: Understanding the Household Economy in Early Modern Europe’ in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, edited by J. Brewer & R. Porter (London: Routledge, 1993), pp.107-119; *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer behaviour and the Household Economy, c.1650 to the present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>63</sup> J. Styles, ‘Chronologies of Consumption in Eighteenth-Century Britain.’ Paper presented at the North American Conference on British Studies, Boston, Mass., 18 November 2006. See also N. McKendrick, ‘Home Demand and Economic Growth: A New View of the Role of Women and Children in the Industrial Revolution’ in *Historical Perspectives: Studies in English Thought and Society in honour of J.H. Plumb*, edited by N. McKendrick (London: Europa, 1974), p.209.

<sup>64</sup> McKendrick, ‘Home Demand and Economic Growth’, p.172, pp.187-188; de Vries, ‘Between Purchasing Power and the World of Goods’, p.113.

<sup>65</sup> Eg. M. Finn, ‘Men’s Things: Masculine Possession in the Consumer Revolution’ in *Social History*, Vol.25, No.2 (2000), pp.133-155.

<sup>66</sup> P. Sharpe, ‘Continuity and Change: Women’s History and Economic History in Britain’ in *Women’s Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914*, edited by P. Sharpe (New York: Arnold, 1998), pp.23-41.



work, pessimists point to continued low wages for women, and the evidence suggests both regional difference and changes in labour force participation across the lifecycle. Emma Griffin, in an account which stressed the benefits of industrial change for men, argued that it had little to offer married women or children.<sup>67</sup> Steven King, meanwhile, has called attention to the place of different strategies of production, consumption, and external support in maintaining a household-based ‘economy of makeshifts.’<sup>68</sup> While it is now clear that working people had access to more and better goods by the mid-eighteenth century than they had previously, the overall effect on their quality of life remains more contentious. In linking consumption to politics, this study offers a new perspective on the meanings of consumer behaviour and its potential (or otherwise) to play a part in working-class strategies of self-improvement.

This thesis therefore builds upon and extends recent work on the meanings of domestic objects, routines, and practices as they related to the performance of class and gender from the early modern to the early Victorian period, bringing these insights to bear on the study of popular radicalism from the 1790s to the 1820s. Existing scholarship has uncovered the use of symbolic and ritual practice within the movement, but has focused almost exclusively on public words and actions and has thus obscured a full understanding of the more day to day operations of class and gender within political activism. This has led to an underestimation of the role of women within radicalism, and in particular their importance in sustaining the movement on a day-to-day basis, especially during times of crisis. This thesis asks what the insights gleaned on gendered power through studies of home can tell us about the practice of radical movements, and how the awareness of political ritual can shed new light on the histories of home.

The limited role assigned to radical women is challenged in this thesis through detailed exploration of the ways in which domestic life enabled and constrained their participation in politics. The next chapter offers a new interpretation of the use of domestic rhetoric in political speeches and writings, arguing that an appeal to homely values could be rather more subversive than previously allowed. The third chapter provides more background on working-class homes more generally, setting them within the context of industrialisation

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<sup>67</sup> E. Griffin, *Liberty's Dawn: A People's History of the Industrial Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), esp. chapters 2-4. See also *Women's Work: The English Experience*, edited by P. Sharpe; Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, pp.103-113;

<sup>68</sup> S. King, ‘Meer Pennies for my Baskitt will be Enough’: Women, Work and Welfare, 1770-1830’, in *Women, Work and Wages in England, 1600-1850*, edited by P. Lane, N. Raven & K. D. M. Snell (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004), pp.119-140.

and its effects on routines of home-making and work, and teasing out the impact of these changes on class and gender. The fourth explores affective relationships in the homes of working-class radicals, highlighting the importance of family life in building and sustaining the movement. The fifth chapter analyses the politics of domestic consumption among the working-classes, and the possibilities and contradictions of utilising consumer power as a radical strategy. The sixth takes an in-depth look at the material culture of the home, and the ways in which personally-crafted and mass-manufactured domestic goods could be used to express political identities, forge connections with communities, and memorialise important or traumatic events.

### **Regional Focus**

The breadth of this study is facilitated by focusing on two regions in particular, though examples from elsewhere are drawn in where appropriate. The south Pennine region, incorporating East Lancashire and West Yorkshire, was dominated by small towns and villages involved in domestic and factory-based textile production, as well as the extractive industries and agriculture. Lancashire became the centre of production for cotton, *the* success story of the 'Industrial Revolution' – one of the limited number of industries that saw significant and rapid growth in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.<sup>69</sup> Yorkshire, meanwhile, saw the steady increase in production of woollen and worsted goods, drawing the industry away from its more dispersed locations in the Midlands and South-West.<sup>70</sup> The geography of the region had much to do with this expansion, since the Pennine hills and valleys facilitated water-powered factory spinning, and the cool, damp climate was ideal for working with textiles. As steam power began to take over, the region also benefitted from supplies of coal. Again, Yorkshire mining grew steadily, but Lancashire's coal production doubled between 1800 and 1815.<sup>71</sup> The metal industries, dominant in the Sheffield region, also benefitted from the availability of coke for smelting, and were the other big success story of industrialisation. The large, well-connected towns in the region, such as Leeds and Manchester, expanded rapidly to meet the demand for workers housing. The south Pennine region therefore has obvious interest for an investigation into working-class life in late-Georgian England as a major centre of industrial change.

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<sup>69</sup> M. Berg, *The Age of Manufactures, 1700-1820: Industry, Innovation and Work in Britain*. Second Edition (London: Routledge, 1994), pp.40-41.

<sup>70</sup> Berg, *The Age of Manufactures*, p.42.

<sup>71</sup> Berg, *The Age of Manufactures*, p.45.

In the London area, meanwhile, a rapidly expanding population meant that there was high demand for land throughout the century. Production in the centre was largely in small-scale or domestic workshops, often highly specialised and concentrated in certain areas of the city. Skilled workers, producing high-quality or bespoke goods, tended to reside in the central districts, while ‘slop’ work and that considered to be unskilled was found further east, and high rents and restrictions on building pushed larger-scale industry to the outskirts.<sup>72</sup> The decision to consider the whole of what we know now as Greater London, crossing the county boundaries then in existence, therefore enables coverage of these areas of more intensive industry, as well as the still semi-rural areas which were only beginning to be incorporated into a suburban sprawl.

Both of these regions can also offer rich source material on working-class life and politics in the late-Georgian period. They were the areas which dominated in EP Thompson’s account of *The Making of the English Working Class* as well as Anna Clark’s *The Struggle for the Breeches*, in part because of the prevalence of these areas in the Home Office papers from the period.<sup>73</sup> London, as the centre of government, was an obvious focus for official attention, but the south Pennines were home to some particularly attentive magistrates, whose frequent correspondence with the capital offers a wealth of (admittedly somewhat biased) information on political activity in the region.<sup>74</sup> These communications reveal that political activists travelled and communicated between London and the South Pennines fairly frequently, as well as within the discrete regions. As Katrina Navickas has shown, the county boundaries crossing the Pennines were highly permeable, and local activists were able to exploit the jurisdictional limits of pursuing magistrates.<sup>75</sup> Within the London region, too, ‘confused and overlapping’ boundaries of authority and labyrinthine networks of courts and alleys enabled fugitives to evade discipline, though as we shall see later in this thesis, neighbourhoods could be close-knit, with limited potential for anonymity.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> M. D. George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century* (Penguin, 1965), p.79; P. Guillery, *The Small House in Eighteenth-Century London: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), pp.8-9; Green, *From Artisans to Paupers*, p.6, pp.156-159.

<sup>73</sup> Clark’s account included Glasgow alongside Lancashire and London.

<sup>74</sup> Navickas, *Radicalism and Loyalty in Lancashire*, p.26.

<sup>75</sup> K. Navickas, ‘Moors, Fields and Popular Protest in South Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1800-1848’ in *Northern History*, Vol.46, No.1 (2009), pp.96-99.

<sup>76</sup> Hitchcock and Shoemaker, *London Lives*, pp.18-19; George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century*, p.91. The Mint offers an excellent example of these confused customary and official boundaries in the early eighteenth century – see N. Stirk, ‘Arresting Ambiguity: The Shifting Geographies of a London Debtors’ Sanctuary in the Eighteenth Century’, in *Social History*, Vol.25, No.3 (2000), pp.316-329.

Both regions are also of interest for exploring issues of identity. As Clark pointed out, gender roles could be affected by the different economies of each region, though care has been taken here not to argue that this necessarily determined relations between men and women. London was, furthermore, a city of immigrants, in which only about a quarter of the inhabitants had been born within the metropolis.<sup>77</sup> Though the Pennine region was less diverse, it was beginning to be shaped in important ways by Irish immigration in particular, which helped to polarise political opinion between the extremes of the ultra-loyalist Orange order and the underground revolutionaries of the United Englishmen.<sup>78</sup> Such cultural factors, alongside politics and religion, shaped familial, local, and national identifications. Examining both London and the South Pennine region enables us to draw out connections and comparisons between regions of different economic, demographic and political composition.

### **Sources and Methodology**

Earlier in this chapter, I touched upon the difficulties of accessing the domestic lives of working-class people given the patchiness of the written record. It is more difficult still to gain specific detail of the lives of working-class radicals, especially those who formed the anonymous mass of the movement rather than its leadership, its biographers, and its archivists. Yet in trying to understand the ways in which politics influenced and was influenced by domestic life, I wanted to uncover some of the textures of everyday life for working-class radicals. I have, therefore, used a patchwork of source material, attempting to cover the gaps that would otherwise have been left. As Tim Hitchcock has elegantly put it, when trying to reconstruct a 'history from below', we come closest to 'truth' by using each source 'to form one lens in an insect-like compound eye'.<sup>79</sup> It is impossible to know for sure how the historical actors discussed here felt, even what they did, but in assembling these fragmentary scraps of evidence, I have attempted to compensate for the drawbacks of each source base when used alone, in order to get closer to the motivations and actions of the subjects of this study.

Autobiographies, an obvious first port of call for accessing the private lives of historical actors, are enjoying something of a renaissance in historical scholarship. The main concern for historians using autobiography is the degree to which they can be said to represent

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<sup>77</sup> George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century*, pp.118-119.

<sup>78</sup> Navickas, *Radicalism and Loyalty in Lancashire*, p.80.

<sup>79</sup> T. Hitchcock, *Down and Out in Eighteenth-Century London* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2004), p.236.

working-class life, given that the overwhelming majority of memoirs were written by men, and usually those who had attained a degree of security by the time they came to write.<sup>80</sup> Recent work by Jane Humphries has drawn on an impressive array of statistical data to argue that her own sample of working-class autobiographies did not over-represent deprivation, but did not account for the relative privilege of those who recalled their childhood following a period of upward social mobility.<sup>81</sup> Nonetheless, as the work of Julie Marie Strange and Megan Doolittle on Victorian working-class autobiography has shown, life narratives do help us to see the ways in which their authors made sense of their own experiences in line with available cultural reference points.<sup>82</sup> Likewise, Emma Griffin has demonstrated the possibilities of mining the accounts of male authors for insights into the hidden lives of women.<sup>83</sup> In this thesis, I draw on a number of autobiographies, largely written by members of the radical movements of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. The majority of authors were members of the London Corresponding Society, though Samuel Bamford's detailed accounts of his political and social life provide a useful northern perspective, as does the only autobiography written by a woman, that of the Sheffield radical Winifred Gales.

Autobiographical accounts are rarely written down without some reference to informing posterity, and the authors were conscious of their roles as historical actors.<sup>84</sup> Winifred Gales wrote an account of the family history for her children, which she urged them *not* to make public. The 'Recollections' were composed in an awareness of her own mortality, through a desire to explain the circumstances of the family's expatriation to America due to the persecution of radicals in the 1790s.<sup>85</sup> Winifred obviously felt it was important to relate these historical events to her children, though she was also aware of the difficulties of

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<sup>80</sup> David Vincent identified 142 genuine working-class autobiographies for the period 1790-1850, of which just 6 were by women, and all of these from the latter part of the period. See *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Working Class Autobiography* (London: Methuen, 1981), p.8. See also J. Host, *Victorian Labour History: Experience, identity and the politics of representation* (London: Routledge, 1998), chapter 2, on the unrepresentative nature of much extant 'working-class life' writing.

<sup>81</sup> J. Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, p.55.

<sup>82</sup> J.M. Strange, 'Fathers at Home: Life Writing and Late-Victorian and Edwardian Plebeian Domestic Masculinities' in *Gender and History*, Vol. 27, No.3 (2015), special issue 'Men at Home', edited by R.Sarti, pp.703-717

<sup>83</sup> Griffin, *Liberty's Dawn*, esp. chapter 4.

<sup>84</sup> C. Kennedy, 'Bayonets across the Hedges', pp.77-95.

<sup>85</sup> Gales Family Papers #2652-z, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Folder 1, pp.2-4. See [http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/g/Gales\\_Family.html](http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/g/Gales_Family.html)

recalling long-past events, and her own unwillingness to relate youthful indiscretions.<sup>86</sup> Those who wrote about their lives were selective about what they revealed, and – unhelpfully for our purposes – working-class men and women in particular seem to have been fearful of boring their readers with the minutiae of daily life.<sup>87</sup> Winifred Gales reassured herself that it would be easier for her children to put down a written account than ‘to escape from a garrulous companion.’<sup>88</sup> Samuel Bamford felt that the publication of *Passages in the Life of a Radical* was ‘an act of duty to his country and himself’ in informing them of his experiences of political persecution, and he felt encouraged to reveal more incidental detail of popular culture in Lancashire in *Early Days* by the positive reception of the former book.<sup>89</sup> The majority of working-class writers were likewise keen to stress their humility. Nonetheless, as noted above, the ways in which authors chose to represent themselves are revealing of class and gender norms, and of the conventions within which they could make sense of their own varied experience. Within this process of narrating their lives, authors allowed some of the less comfortable details of their lives to slip through, and thus we can access some of the ways in which they dealt with uncomfortable or socially difficult emotions such as shame, desire, and grief.<sup>90</sup>

The careful construction of an autobiography has much in common with other textual sources used within this thesis. Because of the tendency to shape life events into a meaningful narrative in autobiography, other sources were consulted to provide a more immediate version of some of the more troubling aspects of domestic life. Applications for poor relief and court records were both used to provide context for this study, though these sources do not relate directly to identifiable political radicals. However, as King and Timmins have suggested, by 1820 around 50% of the population were reliant on poor relief at some point in their life cycle, making poverty a common experience for working-class radicals and non-radicals alike.<sup>91</sup> My reading of requests for relief in archives across the Pennines and in London, as well as petitions to place children in London’s Foundling Hospital, thus offered crucial background detail for this study. Requests for relief provide

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<sup>86</sup> Gales Family Papers, Folder 1, pp.3-4.

<sup>87</sup> Vincent, *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom*, p.4, & ‘Love and Death and the Nineteenth-Century Working Class’ in *Social History*, Vol.5, No.2 (1980), pp.227-229.

<sup>88</sup> Gales Family Papers, Folder 1, p.3.

<sup>89</sup> S. Bamford, *The Autobiography of Samuel Bamford. Volume I: Early Days, Together with an Account of the Arrest &c.* Edited with an introduction by W.C. Chaloner (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1967), p.iii.

<sup>90</sup> Doolittle, ‘Fatherhood and Family Shame’; Griffin, *Liberty’s Dawn*, chapter 6; Strange, ‘Fathers at Home’.

<sup>91</sup> S. King & G. Timmins, *Making Sense of the Industrial Revolution: English economy and society 1700-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p.319.

evidence of another form of self-presentation, designed as they were to demonstrate the applicant's need and their worthiness as a candidate for financial support. Thus applicants stressed their industry and sentimental family ties, and that the circumstances which disrupted their ability to sustain themselves were beyond their control.<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, it is difficult to judge who exactly authored a petition for relief: in some cases, those in need of relief wrote to the overseers with details of their requests, or signed a letter dictated to someone more literate, while in others overseers took down the details of a face-to-face examination, or filled out a printed *pro forma*. Such petitions cannot, therefore, offer the unmediated voice of poor men and women, but rather offer insight into the self-presentation strategies they might adopt in order to secure financial help for themselves and their families, and thus reveal ideals of what constituted a 'deserving' family.

Likewise, court records can reveal more about expectations of domestic life than they do its actualities. In both the criminal and church courts, those cases relating to the home represented a breakdown of its norms, whether through transgression of domestic boundaries or the breakdown of relationships within. Nonetheless, as Amanda Vickery puts it 'social codes are exposed as much in the breach as in the honouring.'<sup>93</sup> In court cases, daily routines or domestic ideals which would usually remain hidden are exposed by witnesses seeking to demonstrate how these routines were interrupted or prove their own blamelessness. Court cases were not, therefore, 'the whole truth and nothing but the truth', no matter what the witness may have sworn to. As Joanne Bailey has pointed out, 'litigation is not a candid window on society and relationships; indeed it has more in common with fun-fair mirrors, reflecting back images distorted by several factors.'<sup>94</sup> While historians are often wary of the fact that the voices in court records are filtered through lawyers, clerks and legal procedure, Bailey showed that the public record can also mask the behind-the-scenes agency of litigants. Court proceedings are stories, rather than facts, and multi-layered, multi-vocal stories at that. Cases involving the breakdown of personal relationships are particularly problematic in this regard, as the privacy surrounding family life could obscure and distort what was happening within the home.<sup>95</sup> Even seemingly objective

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<sup>92</sup> Bailey, "Think Wot a Mother Must Feel", pp.7-8, 13.

<sup>93</sup> A. Vickery, 'An Englishman's Home Is His Castle? Thresholds, Boundaries and Privacies in the Eighteenth-Century London House' in *Past and Present*, Vol.199, No.1 (2008), p.156.

<sup>94</sup> J. Bailey, 'Voices in Court: Lawyers or Litigants?' in *Historical Research*, Vol.74, No.186 (2001), p.406.

<sup>95</sup> See Foyster, 'Creating a Veil of Silence', pp.395-415.

information, such as lists of items stolen from a room, might involve a process of selection which remains hidden from the historian.<sup>96</sup>

The court records used here were drawn from three main sources – the digitised Old Bailey proceedings, the Cause Papers for the Diocese of York, and the series of church court records for London held at London Metropolitan archives. These provided much useful detail of everyday life in London and West Yorkshire in particular, but are used throughout with the recognition that, like autobiographies and requests for relief, that detail is heavily mediated. Taken together, however, these sources articulate some of the many perceptions that working-class people had of what home was or should be, whether through the way they framed their own domestic practice, or through their objections to the breakdown of norms. These sources therefore exist in a relationship with other sources which produced and reproduced discourses about home, and these also circulated in cheap, printed media such as broadside ballads. Due to their supposed function as performance pieces, ballads are often associated with the oral culture of the working-class population, and viewed as expressions of popular culture. In truth both their origins and their readership are difficult to ascertain, as is the reaction that a politically-influenced ballad, for example, might provoke.<sup>97</sup> The historian must be aware of issues such as the costs involved in producing or purchasing different types of ballad sheet, and the function of some of these as collector's items rather than popularly available pieces. Even for cheaper sheets, the act of putting a ballad into print would rob it of the fluidity of the oral form. However, while she has pointed to these difficulties of extracting 'pure' working-class ballads, Katrina Navickas concluded that 'music was a crucial part of both quotidian life and working-class 'extraordinary events'.<sup>98</sup> Samuel Bamford noted the potential of music to draw in a wider audience for political ideas, drawing on his experience of the Methodist church.<sup>99</sup> Thomas Spence also produced political ballads, though his were of a rather less respectable character than Bamford's radical hymns.<sup>100</sup> Elsewhere, we can draw out ideas about gender, work, and community, enriching our understanding of the kind of representations working

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<sup>96</sup> Styles, 'Lodging at the Old Bailey', pp.66-69.

<sup>97</sup> A. McShane, 'Ne Sutor Ultra Crepidam: Political Cobblers and Broadside Ballads in Late Seventeenth-Century England' in *Ballads and Broad-sides in Britain, 1500-1800*, edited by P. Fumerton, A. Guerrini & K. McAbee (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp.208-209.

<sup>98</sup> K. Navickas, 'The Search for "General Ludd": The Mythology of Luddism' in *Social History*, Vol.30, No.3 (2005), p.287.

<sup>99</sup> S. Bamford, *Passages in the Life of a Radical* (1844; Oxford: Oxford University Press paperback, 1984) p.123.

<sup>100</sup> *The Political Works of Thomas Spence*, edited by H.T. Dickinson (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Averro Eighteenth-Century Publications, 1982).



people might be familiar with. Ballads, reproduced in printed form, have been used here as a window into domestic life as well as to explore ways the radical movement was represented outside of the formality of a speech or newspaper report.

Popular print media dealt not only in words about, but also in images of domestic life. Hannah Greig has noted a sudden boom in artistic portrayals of the English home from the 1750s onwards.<sup>101</sup> The late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century cottage scenes by the likes of George Morland and Thomas Gainsborough, depicted a cosy rural simplicity which could reassure those concerned by the politically restive working classes or by accounts of food shortages or rural displacement. David Solkin and John Barrell have stressed the political implications of such images, which allowed for middle- and upper-class viewers to simultaneously distance themselves and to scrutinise the lifestyle of an imagined 'other'.<sup>102</sup> The preoccupation with the domestic interior and its inhabitants was echoed in satirical prints, although in these the conditions of home life could vary according to the message the creator wanted to convey. As Ludmilla Jordanova reminds us, in her impassioned insistence that 'Image Matters', we need to interrogate images just as rigorously as we would textual sources. It is vital that we are aware of the creator of a piece, the way in which it was made and displayed, and the context in which it would be viewed – such detail, she argues, is 'simply the equivalent of an accurate footnote.'<sup>103</sup> Throughout this thesis, the images used are intended to convey – just as autobiographies, court proceedings, or ballads did – the kinds of cultural representations of home that working-class men and women might recognise, internalise, or adapt to their own purposes. Working-class people could access artworks through cheap reproductions or their use in pamphlets or tracts, or even through the printshop windows as depicted in James Gillray's famous *Very Slippery Weather*.<sup>104</sup> As we will see in the sixth chapter, images were also printed onto domestic ceramics, broadening their circulation.

Working-class people therefore had some access to a visual culture that used domestic order to suggest respectability. Rather like the imagined rooms in Kate Retford's work on

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<sup>101</sup> H. Greig, 'Eighteenth Century English Interiors in Image and Text' in *Imagined Interiors: Representing the Domestic Interior since the Renaissance*, edited by J. Aynsley & C. Grant (London: V&A Publications, 2006).

<sup>102</sup> D. H. Solkin, *Painting Out of the Ordinary: Modernity and the Art of Everyday Life in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2008); J. Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

<sup>103</sup> L. Jordanova, 'Image Matters' in *The Historical Journal*, Vol.51, No.3 (2008), p.781.

<sup>104</sup> Donald, *The Age of Caricature*, p.7.

conversation pieces, the homes depicted were ‘intended to be understood as signifiers of abstract virtues, rather than specific lived environments’.<sup>105</sup> Despite the potential for an ideological agenda, images can also enhance our knowledge of the ways in which everyday space might be used. Images *can* ‘render immediate the drier, written description’ of sources such as inventories.<sup>106</sup> As long as we are alert to the motivations involved in the creation of images as we are in texts, we can cautiously use them to draw conclusions about material life as well as cultural norms. Indeed, an unrecognisable image would be unlikely to achieve any kind of political or didactic function as it would seem inapplicable to the viewer. Furthermore, prosaic details such as the placing of particular types of object, such as cooking utensils around the hearth, can escape attempts to create a master narrative in image just as events deemed too ordinary for special attention do in text.

Images thus complement the inventory sample used within this thesis to provide context regarding the physical environments in which working-class people lived. I used probate and pauper inventories to gather quantitative data about the goods present within. These sources are, again, not without their drawbacks. In most areas, probate inventories became less common from the mid-eighteenth century, and were only required where the total value of the property to be listed exceeded five pounds, so they did not tend to represent the poorer sections of the population.<sup>107</sup> However, the Cause Papers database, noted above, facilitates searching of the extant inventories from the Diocese of York, and reveals that a considerable number of working-class inventories survive from the late-Georgian period. These are supplemented by a smaller number of probate inventories from London and Lancashire. The inventories have been identified by the occupation of the deceased, however, which is an unreliable indicator of social class given the potential for variations in wealth and status within occupational groups. An established shoemaker and his apprentice, for example, might both be described as shoemakers. Occupational data is also less useful for identifying working-class women, who tended to be defined instead by marital status. The probate inventories considered here, then, potentially cover a wider sector of the population than that selected for study, resulting in a possible bias towards more prosperous families in the quantitative data.

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<sup>105</sup> K. Retford, ‘From the Interior to Interiority: The Conversation Piece in Georgian England’ in *Journal of Design History*, Vol.20, No.4 (Winter 2007), p.296.

<sup>106</sup> Retford, ‘Interior to Interiority’, p.292.

<sup>107</sup> J. Moore, ‘Probate Inventories: Problems and Prospects’ in *Probate Inventories and the Local Community*, edited by P. Riden (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1985), p.13.

In an attempt to balance this potential bias, the probate inventories are considered alongside inventories of goods distrained in lieu of rent, and inventories taken by parish overseers to assess the property of paupers requiring relief. These inventories both represent difficult economic circumstances and go some way to tempering the tendency towards prosperity in the probate inventories. Significant problems do, however, remain with the use of inventories to provide quantitative information about material environments. Crucially, the forms, wordings and valuations of inventories were not standardised, resulting in vastly differing levels of detail and variation in the values of goods. Many compilers gave the current or resale value of objects rather than their original cost, for example, and the recording of items gives little impression of the ways in which they were acquired or used. Pauper inventories in particular often ignore the financial value of items, because the goods were often only taken by the parish after the death of the claimant.<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, inventories tend only to record moveable property, not the fixtures and fittings of a house, and not all place the goods in defined rooms, so it becomes more difficult to imagine the organisation of objects within domestic space.<sup>109</sup> Where rooms are named, inventories become much more useful in analysing trends in such practices as separating work and home, or placing decorative goods in a room used for socialising. I have also found it productive to explore in detail the descriptions of items, such as the materials from which a table or bed was constructed, thus supplementing the quantitative analysis with qualitative detail. However, there is a danger that the impression we gain of domestic material culture from inventories remains a static one, with the objects frozen in time at the point of being assessed. This obscures flows of goods both within and beyond the household, including important economic practices such as using commodities as stores of credit. As Beverly Lemire has argued, 'Consumption was a multifarious process, rarely the final act in the social and economic retail interplay, a fact that was recognized by contemporaries who bought goods to enjoy, but also to ensure their future.'<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> P. King, 'Pauper Inventories and the Material Lives of the Poor in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries' in *Chronicling Poverty: The Voices and Strategies of the English Poor, 1640-1840*, edited by T. Hitchcock, P. King & P. Sharpe (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), pp.157-159, p.161.

<sup>109</sup> Moore, 'Probate Inventories', pp.12-13.

<sup>110</sup> B. Lemire, *The Business of Everyday Life: Gender, Practice and Social Politics in England, c.1600-1900* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p.86.

For the purposes of this study, I have analysed 57 inventories, itemizing the goods within 59 houses<sup>111</sup>, of which 50 are related to death or probate, and the remainder were produced as part of the poor relief process or in seizing goods in distraint of rent. The inventories are drawn from a number of archives and record offices covering the regional span of the study, and were analysed using a Microsoft Access database. Using this software, I examined the inventories for the presence of some of the key domestic goods highlighted by historians as crucial to the ‘consumer revolution’ of the eighteenth century, including clocks, looking glasses, books, ceramics and items relating to the preparation and consumption of hot drinks. I also looked for work equipment within the home, considering its location where possible. In chapter three, I use this data to discuss the classed and gendered implications of paid and unpaid work within the home, while in the fifth chapter I explore the consumer practices of working-class people. Though the inventories reviewed here do not refer specifically to the homes of working-class radicals, they do give crucial information about the ways in which homes were used by people of similar status in their localities.

Insights into radical activity were gleaned from Home Office and contemporary newspaper reports and pamphlets, as well as from the autobiographies of known radicals. Viewing these sources together is useful as they often presented rather different versions of the same events. The spies who reported on radical meetings, for example, often noted violent and extreme language in radical speeches that was not evident in the more temperate version offered by sympathetic newspapers or pamphlets. The spies, as paid informers for local magistrates attempting to maintain order in their communities, had an obvious interest in exaggerating revolutionary potential. On the other hand, the majority of working-class radicals, as we have already noted, were keen to project their own respectability and thus their fitness for citizenship. It is notable that radical speeches and pamphlets often drew on domestic imagery in the attempt to do so.<sup>112</sup> The digitisation of a large number of newspapers and other print media from the period has assisted in the use of these sources, though the unreliable text-recognition frequently used to digitise them means that some relevant texts are missed when searching online. I have attempted to counter this through more systematic reading of the microfilm copies of the radical weekly

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<sup>111</sup> The inventory of William Walker of Halifax lists his property at two different inns and a farm, bringing the total number of buildings inventoried to 59. See Borthwick Institute for Archives, TEST.CP.1794/9.

<sup>112</sup> For example, the speeches of the Female Reform Societies which emerged in the North West in 1819 tended their poverty in terms of its effect on home and family. See chapter two.

*Manchester Observer*, held at Manchester's Central Library. Cross-referencing with the Home Office papers also poses problems as these are still in the process of cataloguing, making it difficult to access those papers relating to any given place or event. While I have sought to access alternative viewpoints by using different sources of information on radical activity, it has not always been possible to do so.

In part because of the growth of a popular radical movement, but also because of the other social and economic changes taking place at this time, social commentary on the state of the working classes flourished in the late eighteenth century. Unlike autobiography, or reports in the radical press, these observations came from outside the communities they described. Social observers were often inspired by a reforming impulse, perhaps even a degree of sympathy for their impoverished subjects, but the project of gathering and quantifying information about working-class lives was, as Sandra Sherman has observed, a highly political one.<sup>113</sup> The observers' richly detailed studies, constructed through close observation and interviews within communities, can provide important information including detailed budgets for wages, food prices and rents. However, while it is tempting to rely on the seeming accuracy of such accounts, the historian must be aware that even the 'hard' numerical data is filtered through the relationship between community and commentator. Observers were rarely truly objective, and their outsider status could lead a suspicious community to give deliberately vague or misleading information. As Sir Frederick Morton Eden admitted, in the preface to his 1797 investigation into *The State of the Poor*, 'Private opinions, and private passions, will, in spite of us all, too often interfere, and bias and influence the most honest and intelligent minds, in their judgements respecting even matters of fact.'<sup>114</sup> Whatever care Eden took to avoid bias, his characterisation of struggling labourers as 'habitually careless', his detailed budgets, his proposed changes to diet and his conviction that unnecessary amounts were wasted on alcohol smacked of judgemental attitudes towards the poor, and their suspicion of his motives can be seen in their reluctance to furnish him with accurate figures.<sup>115</sup> Less

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<sup>113</sup> S. Sherman, *Imagining Poverty: Quantification and the Decline of Paternalism* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2001).

<sup>114</sup> F. M. Eden, *The State of the Poor: Or, an history of the labouring classes in England from the Conquest to the Present Period*. Vol.1 (London: J. Davis: 1797. Facsimile published London: Frank Cass & Co., 1966), pp.i-ii.

<sup>115</sup> Eden, *The State of the Poor*, p.Xxvi, p.536.

sympathetic observers, such as the magistrate Patrick Colquhoun, portrayed the poor as victims of their own idleness and criminality.<sup>116</sup>

Well-meaning or otherwise, social commentators often had a solution in mind. Advice texts about or for the poor on how best to manage their situation offer another strand of evidence for this study. Didactic literature is used here to suggest dominant ideals of home, but it is worth recalling that its authors were usually from outside the working-class communities they advised and their values may not have been shared by those they sought as an audience. Even where the revered radical leader William Cobbett advised the working-class population on such matters as *Cottage Economy*, he did so from a much more comfortable economic position than that of his target audience. It is hard to determine how far a target audience aspired to the ideals propagated through prescriptive literature, although it is known that pamphlets and tracts such as those of Hannah More were disseminated widely. At least some of the recipients must have ruminated on the contents, though perhaps not in the manner intended by the author.<sup>117</sup> Such texts, therefore, are useful in recreating the different kinds of idealised notions of 'home' which would have been available to a working-class readership. In cases such as those of Cobbett and More the historian is also able to link the ideas of what home should be to a political ideology. Cobbett's emphasis on self-sufficiency, for example, was tied to the radical boycott of excise goods which sought to limit the revenue available to an unreformed government (see chapter five), while More wrote with the vastly different purpose of preserving the established social order. In chapter two, I will explore the ways in which ideals of home in art, literature, and social commentary contributed to a sense of working-class identity and could be deployed in radical political rhetoric.

The textual and visual materials discussed above shaped the ways in which working-class people thought about their own homes and the ways in which their politics related to it. This study is also concerned with objects, and the ways in which these too influenced and were influenced by their users. The use of material culture offers both enormous potential and considerable difficulties for historians of the working classes. On the one hand, material culture can communicate in ways that written texts cannot for those of limited literacy. Henry Glassie argued that a focus on words leads historians to 'omit whole spheres of experience that are clumsily framed in language but gracefully shaped into

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<sup>116</sup> Hitchcock & Shoemaker, *London Lives*, p.401.

<sup>117</sup> S. Pederson, 'Hannah More Meets Simple Simon: Tracts, Chapbooks, and Popular Culture in Late Eighteenth-Century England', in *Journal of British Studies*, Vol.25, No.1 (1986), pp.84-113.

artifacts'.<sup>118</sup> The difficulty is in extracting what, precisely, objects are communicating, and this is much more easily achieved when objects are accompanied by a comprehensive written record which helps us to ascertain provenance, use, and meaning. This written record is often absent for the very reasons that material culture is useful for studying the working classes. The process of analysing material culture is further complicated by the dispersal of the object record. Museum collections are the major repositories for extant objects, but the ways in which they are displayed (if displayed at all, for many of the more common items languish in stores) often distance the objects from the contexts of their use. Surviving material culture is also often geographically removed from the regions in which it was produced or used, so that the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, for example, houses ceramic goods from all over Britain, as well as the wider world. In such circumstances, it is difficult to build a detailed object biography, which might place it in particular spaces or time periods.

This uncertainty surrounding working-class material culture gives the sixth chapter, which concentrates on the political implications of objects, a somewhat speculative character which distinguishes it from the rest of this thesis. In researching this chapter, I examined a number of surviving household ceramics, handling these where possible to get a sense of the quality of materials, whether the item was for use or display, and how roughly handled or frequently used it had been. However, even where physical handling was possible, the very act of concentrating on these objects may have robbed them of some of their subtle power in shaping habits and routines, like tea drinking or cleaning, which may well have been such ordinary activities as to fall below notice. As Daniel Miller has argued, with reference to the appropriation of kitchen spaces in council housing through redecoration, 'we have to regard apparently trivial activities as deriving from profound concerns.'<sup>119</sup> Miller's words act as a statement of intent for this thesis, and in dealing with the object record I have looked for the ways in which objects might embed resistance to power within quotidian life, thus reinforcing working-class agency. This has involved reading the surviving objects alongside textual sources, such as inventories and court records, that suggest patterns of use and meaning.

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<sup>118</sup> H. Glassie, *Material Culture* (Indiana University Press, 1999), p.44, quoted in K. Harvey (ed.), *History and Material Culture: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources* (London: Routledge, 2009), p.3.

<sup>119</sup> D. Miller, 'Appropriating the State on the Council Estate' in *Man*, Vol.23, No.2 (1988), pp.353-372.

Material culture can, of course, not only encompass the objects within the home but the building itself. Scholars in the field of architecture, and vernacular architecture in particular, have recognised the importance of analysing space to gain greater insight into the lives lived within it. Daniel Maudlin, for example, describes vernacular (as opposed to polite) architecture as ‘the architectural language of the people.’<sup>120</sup> But how are we to read this language, and to what extent *can* it be read as speaking for ‘the people’ when many of the living spaces they occupied were provided for them, by employers or charitable organisations? The third chapter deals with some of these issues, considering how economic imperatives and local environments shaped living spaces as much as individual choices. Again, however, survival is a problem when we try to recreate the domestic environment in three dimensions. Those buildings which have stood the test of time have usually undergone dramatic renovation in order to meet modern standards, and are also usually privately owned and inaccessible. Recreations of the original spaces, like the carefully reconstructed almshouses at the Geffrye Museum in east London, give us some idea of space, light and temperature, for example, but it remains difficult to imagine the hustle and bustle of a living space.

Material culture reminds us of the importance of cross-referencing all sources, of exploring their various meanings, the context of their creation and the lifecycle of their use. The use of multiple, overlapping sources here reflects the search for resonance across a broad and varied source base, addressing the inadequacy of any single source base to reflect the textures of everyday life. The thesis draws out the potential of working-class homes as formative and expressive sites within popular radicalism, demonstrating the creative ways in which working people were able to negotiate power within and beyond domestic space. Home resonates across cultural media as a means of making sense of classed and gendered power, and also offered a site for the performance of politicised behaviours. The narrative I offer, however, is neither fully comprehensive nor necessarily generalizable beyond the bounds of the research conducted here. Some working-class groups are not considered in detail - it has not been possible, for example, to fully explore the ways in which domestic servants thought about home, or to look extensively at the experiences of minority groups such as black Britons or those in same-sex relationships.<sup>121</sup> Different methodological

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<sup>120</sup> D. Maudlin, ‘Crossing Boundaries: Revisiting the thresholds of vernacular architecture’, in *Vernacular Architecture*, Vol.41 (2010), p.11.

<sup>121</sup> Carolyn Steedman made the case for including domestic servants among the ‘working classes’ in *Labours Lost*. Forthcoming work by Tessa Chynoweth will examine in detail the complex relationships of servants to domestic spaces which were owned by others. For an exploration of the



approaches, such as microstudies of different parishes, extensive work with a single archive, or even tracing individual families might also draw attention to further complexities that are not revealed here.

The findings of my research are divided into five chapters, followed by an overall conclusion which draws out their shared themes and suggests directions for further research. Taken together, the chapters offer new insight into working-class domestic life and new perspectives on social, economic and political change. The material and imaginative aspects of home are brought together in the practices of building family relationships, buying goods for the home, and using or displaying objects within a household context. Before we can address these themes, the third chapter explores the physical spaces in which working people lived, while the second, to which we now turn, considers the way working-class homes featured in the cultural imagination.

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varied experience of black British men, including participation in the radical movement, see R. Hanley, 'Black writing in Britain, 1770-1830', PhD thesis (University of Hull, 2015). For (male) same-sex relationships among working-class men, see Norton, *Mother Clap's Molly House*.

## Chapter 2

### Imagining Home: Domestic Rhetoric, Gender and Political Radicalisms in England, c.1790-1820.

‘In the composition and government of families the Supreme Creator hath given a clear intimation of his will concerning the rights of the different ranks of men in any nation,’ declared an anonymous Scottish pamphleteer in 1794, writing in the guise of the ghost of the recently-guillotined Jacques-Pierre Brissot. ‘And since every nation has been composed of families, there must be a similarity between families and nations. A family may be composed of a few, or many persons, but whatever the number is, the father, master, or head, is always its governor. A numerous family is a nation in miniature... and affords a demonstration of the absurdity of a perfect equality of all men.’<sup>122</sup> Brissot had apparently felt the need to return from beyond the grave to warn the parliamentary reformers of the Society of the Friends of the People of their folly.<sup>123</sup> According to the pamphlet’s opening lines, the Friends of the People sought to follow the French example of violently suppressing their enemies, but Brissot warned that such actions in France had turned a land of peace and plenty into one of depraved poverty. ‘It is generally allowed,’ the spirit admitted, ‘that we had some reason to complain, but you have not even the *appearance* of a grievance’. He condemned the ‘groundless complaints and unreasonable clamour’ of the societies as ‘disgraceful’.<sup>124</sup>

The tone taken by ‘Brissot’s ghost’ is typical of the somewhat patronising combination of moral and political imperatives handed down by the opponents of British political reform to those they viewed as social inferiors. It combined an attack on democratic principles as necessarily damaging to human relationships and opposed to the natural hierarchy imposed by God with the impressively audacious insistence that the British labouring classes lived in a state of both liberty and plenty. These combined critiques focused attention upon the working-class home. As Sarah Lloyd has demonstrated, the cottage became a key site of debates about poverty from the 1770s onwards, with picturesque fashion, political economy and sensibility all helping to shape an ideal of the perfect domestic environment

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<sup>122</sup> Anon., *Brissot's Ghost! Or, Intelligence from the Other World; Communicated to a Meeting of Those Who Call Themselves Friends of the People* (Edinburgh, 1794). Eighteenth Century Collections Online (Gale), doc. ref. CW107763322, accessed 21<sup>st</sup> July 2013, pp.14-15.

<sup>123</sup> In England, The Society of the Friends of the People was composed of a largely middle-class membership, but in Scotland, where the pamphlet was produced, membership extended further down the social scale.

<sup>124</sup> Anon., *Brissot's Ghost!*, p.6.

which was used to comment on the reasons for poverty and the best possible solutions.<sup>125</sup> These debates shaped gendered narratives designed to invoke the kind of self-sufficient ‘manly vigour’ that would keep a working man and his family off the poor rates and, during wartime, fighting for his country.<sup>126</sup>

The heightened interest in working-class homes in the late-eighteenth century is evident across a number of representational genres. David Solkin has explored in detail the politics of the representation of the working-class ‘everyday’ within the visual arts, arguing that the popularity of largely rural scenes of working-class life towards the end of the century was due to their making ‘familiar’ their unknowable and potentially-threatening working-class subjects.<sup>127</sup> Though he does not argue that the artists or their spectators had a unified political vision, Solkin shows that the artistic depiction of the ‘everyday’ flourished at a time when ‘the combined impact of revolutionary agitation, war and industrial capitalism not only estranged the rich from the great mass of the labouring poor but also brought an end to the ideological consensus that had kept the various components of the propertied minority at peace with one another for a century or more.’<sup>128</sup> It was not only artists and their critics who sought to make sense of this shift. Sandra Sherman has argued that ‘scientific’ studies of poverty constituted a further attempt to make knowable the working-class population, and at the same time reduced them to quantifiable elements of production and consumption, thus denying working-class communities the rounded humanity that might have presented a sympathetic subject to the reader.<sup>129</sup> Tim Hitchcock and Robert Shoemaker stressed that these ‘scientific’ studies of a lumpen, undifferentiated ‘poor’ robbed the working-classes of their key bargaining tool when dealing with overseers or the courts: ‘In the 1790s the power of systematically collected data and statistics was increasingly set against the power of narrative, to the disadvantage of the poor.’<sup>130</sup>

By telling the stories of working-class people, the artists and statisticians denied them the opportunity to assert their own subjectivity. Such investigation implied – if this was not made explicit – a distrust of working-class people and a concern that they might be lying about or exaggerating their poverty in order to get something for nothing. Reflecting that

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<sup>125</sup> S. Lloyd, ‘Cottage Conversations: Poverty and Manly Independence in Eighteenth-Century England’ in *Past and Present*, No.184 (2004), pp.69-108.

<sup>126</sup> Lloyd, ‘Cottage Conversations’, pp.94-96.

<sup>127</sup> Solkin, *Painting Out of the Ordinary*, pp.2-4.

<sup>128</sup> Solkin, *Painting Out of the Ordinary*, p.269.

<sup>129</sup> Sherman, *Imagining Poverty*.

<sup>130</sup> Hitchcock & Shoemaker, *London Lives*, p.407.

the English poor were far better off than the French, Patrick Colquhoun, a London magistrate, wondered ‘where is the country in the world, where every pressure on the poor is so amply relieved by the rich as in England? – Are not their purses opened up in every occasion where *real* distress is to be found?’<sup>131</sup> Frederick Morton Eden, author of an extensive survey of *The State of the Poor* across England, suggested that ‘instances may be found of persons preferring a pension from the parish, and a life of idleness, to hard work and good wages.’ For the worker who genuinely struggled to make ends meet, Eden argued that the problem was down to ‘ignorance, custom or prejudice, he adheres to ancient improvident systems in dress, diet and in other branches of private expenditure.’<sup>132</sup> Such statements deny the working classes of the authority of their own experiences, echoing ‘Brissot’s ghost’ in asserting that they had ‘not even the *appearance* of a grievance’, and even if they did, it was their own bad management, rather than any wider social or economic cause, that was to blame.

If we return to visual arts, we gain a similar impression. Working-class people were depicted as healthy, hearty and cheerfully industrious, whether at their labour or enjoying the rest at the end of a difficult day. As John Barrell has argued, these cosy scenes offered a reassuring image of labouring people happily distanced from the pressing concerns of national interest that troubled the educated elite.<sup>133</sup> George Morland’s paired depictions of *The Comforts of Industry* and *The Miseries of Idleness*, (Fig. 2) painted in the 1780s, made explicit the message that material domestic comforts followed from hard work and good management, and as the 1790s progressed, these virtues were associated ever more with political quietism in representations of the working classes. The impression given by such literature as Hannah More’s *Cheap Repository Tracts* was that any worker with time enough to concern himself with politics was doing far too little work, and her *Shepherd of Salisbury Plain* delighted in the fact that his laborious life left him with limited opportunities for sin, a category within which More would certainly have included political radicalism.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> P. Colquhoun, *Useful suggestions favourable to the comfort of the labouring people, and to decent housekeepers. Explaining how a small income may be made to go far in a family, so as to Occasion a Considerable Saving in the Article of Bread. A Circumstance of Great Importance to be Known at the Present Juncture* (London, 1795). Eighteenth Century Collections Online (Gale). Doc. ref. CW3306547054. Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2016, p.16. My italics.

<sup>132</sup> Eden, *The State of the Poor*, Vol.1, p.94, p.100.

<sup>133</sup> J. Barrell, *The Spirit of Despotism: Invasions of Privacy in the 1790s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp.210-214.

<sup>134</sup> H. More, *Cheap Repository: The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain, In Two Parts*. Part One (London, 1795?). Eighteenth Century Collections Online (Gale). Doc. ref. CB3326383864. Accessed 18<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2014, pp.4-5.

The French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars explicitly politicised the labouring-class home, because in order to drum up the necessary support (financial and physical) for large-scale and long-term combat, the government had to mobilise the lower classes, and to do so it needed to make a distant conflict meaningful to ordinary men who had little to gain. The poorer man was informed of what he had to fight for, and this was the protection of his 'King, Church, babes, and wife.'<sup>135</sup> This sentimental appeal to family values reflected a gendered version of national identity, which developed from the culture of sensibility and Enlightenment ideas about the natural constitutions of men and women. Sensibility was valued on the basis of the authenticity of emotional responses, tempering the previously dominant 'polite' culture, in which restraint was paramount. Men were still, however, expected to exercise rationality in the control of emotional display, while women were felt to be less capable of subordinating the heart to the head. These gendered theories were reinforced by scientific and medical discourses, which argued that women's bodies, and their nerves in particular, were weaker than those of men.<sup>136</sup> We have already noted the enhanced authority of 'scientific' observation with reference to statistics, and similarly, these discourses around sexual difference were granted the status of natural truth. Women thus being 'proven' weaker than men, it behoved the stronger sex to protect them, as well as their children, so that a chivalric masculinity was ascendant in the late-eighteenth century.<sup>137</sup> William Alexander, in his conjectural *History of Women*, asserted that only in the savage state were beings undifferentiated, and elaborated on the appropriate gender relations of a civilised society: 'Women in all ages have set the greatest value on courage and bravery in the men; and men, in all civilized ages and cultures, have placed the chiefest female excellence in beauty, chastity, and a certain nameless softness and delicacy of person and behaviour.' The softness of women, and roughness of men, Alexander argued, naturally tempered and balanced one another.<sup>138</sup> These 'natural' distinctions, evidence of a civilised nation, were reflected not just in gendered, but also in class divides. In Hannah

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<sup>135</sup> H. More, "The Ploughman's Ditty; Being an Answer to that Foolish Question, what have the POOR to lose? A Question frequently asked during the Alarm of Invasion" quoted in M. McCormack, *The Independent Man: Citizenship and Gender Politics in Georgian England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p.146.

<sup>136</sup> L. Jordanova, *Sexual Visions: Images of Gender in Science and Medicine between the Eighteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989), pp.26-27.

<sup>137</sup> M. Cohen, "'Manners Make the Man': Politeness, Chivalry, and the Construction of Masculinity, 1750-1830' in *Journal of British Studies*, Vol.44, No.2 (2005), pp.314-315, 318.

<sup>138</sup> W. Alexander, *The History of Women, from the Earliest Antiquity to the Present Time: Giving an Account of Almost Every Interesting Particular Concerning That Sex, Among All Nations, Ancient and Modern. Vol.1* (Philadelphia: J.H. Dobelbower, 1796). Eighteenth Century Collections Online (Gale). Doc. ref. CB129955791, accessed 12<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2016, pp.272-273, p.323.

More's *Village Politics*, Jack Anvil countered Tom Hod's Paineite ideals by reminding him that men have differing natural abilities and strengths: equality was all very well in theory, Jack pointed out, but 'I'm stronger than thou: and Standish, the exciseman, is a better scholar; so we should not remain equal a minute'.<sup>139</sup>

Hierarchies in both home and state were therefore depicted as natural and, according to the author of *Brisson's Ghost*, God-given. Indeed, in political theory, the 'little commonwealth' of home was the mirror of the state, the authority of the head of household reflecting on a smaller scale that of the king within the country, as we saw in the passage which opened this chapter. Democratic principles therefore had the potential to re-order the domestic, as well as political, lives of British people. This was evident, argued the opponents of reform, in the French experiment with political equality. Conservative pro-war propaganda sought to inspire 'John Bull' with Hogarthian contrasts between the supposedly plentiful living of the loyal Briton and the severe deprivation of the French revolutionary (Fig. 3), implying the potential horrors of a successful French invasion. Accounts of the Revolution made much of the treatment of Marie Antoinette, with even Mary Wollestonecraft deploring the treatment of the French Queen (if only as a woman, rather than as a Queen).<sup>140</sup> The combination of disintegrating family values and living standards among French citizens was depicted in Gillray's typically grotesque *Family of Sans-Culottes Refreshing After the Fatigues of the Day* (Fig.4). In the image, hag-like women are barely distinguishable from the scrawny men, feasting together with their children on decapitated heads and entrails, presumably of unfortunate counter-revolutionaries. By the fire, one woman's unnatural lack of maternal instincts is signalled by her preparing a baby to eat, while one of the men sits upon a slaughtered, naked woman. This image represented the total inversion of the civilised values for which William Alexander had praised the British. Since British radicals were inevitably associated with French Jacobins, they too were the enemies of a cosily idealised British domesticity. Prominent radicals were demonised as wife-beaters or bastard-bearers,<sup>141</sup> while the declared purpose of the Association for Preserving Liberty and

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<sup>139</sup> H. More, *Village Politics: Addressed to all the Mechanics, Journeymen and Day-Labourers in Great Britain. Fifth Edition* (G. Walker, 1793). Google Books. Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> May 2016, <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=hHQ4AAAAMAAJ>, pp.6-7.

<sup>140</sup> S. Kingsley Kent, *Gender and Power in Britain, 1640-1990* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p.130.

<sup>141</sup> C. Wagner, 'Loyalist Propaganda and the Scandalous Life of Tom Paine: "Hypocritical Monster!"' in *British Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies*, Vol.28 (2005), pp.97-115. The 'radical delegate' Mitchell was able to turn this to his advantage, using the hearing of trumped-up bastardy charges against him to make a speech 'of great length, respecting despotism and corruption' and denouncing spies and informers; see 'Police,' in *Morning Chronicle*, 11<sup>th</sup> July 1823. British Library Newspapers, accessed 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2013.

Property Against Republicans and Levellers, famed for its intimidation of suspected radicals, was to:

preserve and transmit to their Children that Constitution and domestic Happiness which they received from their Ancestors; which has always distinguished them above all the Nations of the Earth.<sup>142</sup>

The persistent theme throughout was that a harmonious and comfortable domestic life was the reward for adherence to correct loyalist, patriotic and moral principles; for unquestioningly accepting one's place in society and working hard without complaint for the perceived good of the nation.

Unsurprisingly, working-class radicals resented a discourse which portrayed them as inhuman, unfeeling and self-serving, and which condemned the labouring classes as a whole for either aspiring above or falling below the narrow limits of a dictated ideal of domestic comfort. The third chapter of this thesis explores in more detail the complex placing of working-class homes in networks of social and economic power, and the many challenges faced in creating and maintaining a 'respectable' home. This chapter explores the way that radical speeches and publications attempted a counter attack through their own use of domestic rhetoric. Historians have generally interpreted the allusions of working-class radicals to home and family as part of an attempt to make the movement respectable whilst also appealing to issues which could engage a wider audience than abstract political theorizing.<sup>143</sup> While not denying the importance of respectability and broad appeal, I argue here that their key purpose was to challenge loyalist constructions of patriotism, undermining the claims of conservatives to hold a moral high ground in order to set out an alternative vision for national identity. As Michael Davis has argued, the contest between conservative and radical in this period was often a competition to be identified with shared cultural values, and to identify the opposing group with the negative binaries of their own positive attributes.<sup>144</sup> I demonstrate that domestic ideals were deployed in propaganda

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<sup>142</sup> Resolutions of a meeting of the Association for Preserving Liberty and Property Against Republicans and Levellers, in *The Observer (1791-1900)*, 16<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1792. ProQuest Historical Newspapers, accessed 9<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2013.

<sup>143</sup> See, for example, Clark, *Struggle for the Breeches*, p.157; L. Edwards, 'Popular Politics in the North West of England, 1815-1821,' PhD thesis (Manchester University, 1998), pp.185-186.

<sup>144</sup> M. T. Davies, 'The Mob Club? The London Corresponding Society and the Politics of Civility in the 1790s' in *Unrespectable Radicals? Popular Politics in the Age of Reform*, edited by M. T. Davis & P. A. Pickering (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp.21-40.

produced by both mainstream and underground, ‘unrespectable’ radicalisms, acting both as a serious critique and as a playful inversion of loyalist discourse, and in ways which could prove problematic despite their empowering potential.

How might working-class radicals counter conservative claims that a reform of state hierarchies would necessarily undermine social values held dear by the majority? Without the guarantee of their own property, what safeguards could they offer against the anarchy that might result from a democratic experiment; anarchy which had, according to conservative propaganda, already resulted from such an experiment in France? If the nation was but an expanded version of the home, surely the ability to maintain order in the home demonstrated similar abilities with regard to the state, regardless of the form of tenure under which it was held. Therefore, an ability to provide for, protect and exercise control over oneself and one’s immediate dependents could be evidence of the characteristics necessary for the responsibilities of citizenship. It was these characteristics that Samuel Bamford seems to have been keen to display in his political memoir when dedicating over a page to a description of his cottage in Middleton, Lancashire.<sup>145</sup> Having invited the reader in, he warned that they must go ‘down a step or two – ‘Tis better to keep low in the world than to climb only to fall’, thus offering a reassurance of his contentment with his station in life which was further reinforced by his descriptions of ‘humble’ and ‘old-fashioned’ furniture and a plain stone-flagged floor. Despite the simplicity of the interior, it was clearly comfortable, with a ‘well-stocked shelf of crockery ware’ and some decorative items, so we know that the Bamfords were not careless of their surroundings. Everywhere there was evidence of the family’s industriousness, from the two looms laden with work, to the clean scrubbed floor and furniture and finally in the behaviour of the two Bamford women, who were shown in useful and improving activities, one mending, the other reading.<sup>146</sup> Bamford’s description of his interior could have come straight from a Cheap Repository Tract, had it not been prefaced with the tales of a few weeks as a political fugitive.

Yet, as Anna Clark has pointed out, this version of the ‘little commonwealth’, even while divesting citizenship of the need for a property qualification, was still beyond the reach of

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<sup>145</sup> Charlotte Grant argues that the use of an interior to reflect character or mental state was a common device of the eighteenth-century novel. “‘One’s Self, and One’s House, One’s Furniture’”: From Object to Interior in British Fiction, 1720-1900’ in *Imagined Interiors: Representing the Domestic Interior since the Renaissance*, edited by J. Aynsley & C. Grant (London: V&A Publications, 2006), pp.134-154.

<sup>146</sup> Bamford, *Passages*, p.68-69.



many working-class men.<sup>147</sup> As Francis Place, another radical autobiographer, lamented, ‘the hopes of a man who has no other means than those of his own hands to help himself are but too often illusory’, as ‘even the best and most frugal of workmen’ could experience sudden downturns in fortune which obliterated years of careful saving.<sup>148</sup> The shoemaker Thomas Preston might have undertaken ‘excessive toil and solicitude’ in order to ‘maintain in comfort that *home* which ought to be the pride of every family man and good citizen’, but despite his good intentions, he and his children were left destitute when his wife absconded with her lover, leaving him without her additional income and with his own work hours reduced by the need to provide childcare.<sup>149</sup> Illness or death in a family, or an unexpected drop-off in trade, were circumstances beyond the control of the household which could nonetheless undermine a man’s ability to provide domestic comfort, but did this make him any less worthy a citizen? A well-maintained home, concluded the London Corresponding Society, ‘may be evidence of industry and economy, but it is not a general test of moral rectitude.’<sup>150</sup> The Society, therefore, sought to free the material space of home from its moral associations. While Francis Place emphasised the importance of material goods to the maintenance of a working man’s self-respect,<sup>151</sup> for many labouring-class radicals, the ability to acquire and preserve these material comforts was too unstable a foundation for a political identity. Working-class radicals needed an alternative definition of citizenship in which qualifications were built upon less tangible qualities of humanity rather than on property. For this reason, radical rhetoric emphasised emotional ties, using the family as a means to demonstrate a real, affective connection to the good of the nation.

Contrary to Edmund Burke’s portrayal of a brutish ‘swinish multitude’, radical rhetoric declared that the working classes were eminently capable of refined feelings. As a correspondent to the radical *Black Dwarf* pointed out in 1819, ‘These immoral brutes/ Vie even with princes in parental love/ And conjugal affection.’<sup>152</sup> As well as claiming for

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<sup>147</sup> Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches*, p.145, p.149. Barbara Taylor stresses that women were still more likely to be excluded since ‘even in this democratised version, independence remained a firmly masculine attribute, tied to a male citizen who was seen... as a household head, ruler of his own little kingdom’. See *Mary Wollstonecraft and the Feminist Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.227-8.

<sup>148</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, p.127, p.115.

<sup>149</sup> T. Preston, *The Life and Opinions of Thomas Preston, Patriot and Shoemaker, Containing Much That is Curious, Much That is Useful, More That is True* (London, 1817), pp.16–18.

<sup>150</sup> Meeting of the London Corresponding Society, 17<sup>th</sup> September 1795, in M. Thale, *Selections from the Papers of the London Corresponding Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) quoted in Clark, *Struggle for the Breeches*, p.144.

<sup>151</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, p.117, p.127-128.

<sup>152</sup> *Black Dwarf*, Vol.1 (1819), quoted in Clark, *Struggle for the Breeches*, p.157.

radical men the self-respect and chivalric manliness their opponents sought to deny them, it enabled a neat reversal of conservative propaganda in which it was the radicals who defended British domesticity, not against France, but against their own oppressive government. The ultra-radical bookseller Thomas Spence parodied the patronising attitude towards the labouring classes and drew attention to the source of economic distress in a song published in his journal *Pig's Meat* in 1794:

'Ye Swinish Multitude who prate,  
What know ye 'bout the matter?  
Misterious are the ways of state,  
Of which you should not chatter.  
Our church and state, like man and wife,  
Together kindly cuddle;  
Together share the sweets of life,  
Together feast and fuddle...

Now when we see you mend your lives,  
And live in humble quarters:  
We'll let you kiss in peace your wives,  
Nor tax for new-born daughters.  
Let us at will reap all you've sown,  
John Bull should bear, and never frown,  
Beneath immense taxation.'<sup>153</sup>

Samuel Bamford similarly recognised the 'heart-stirring' appeal of music, having seen its effect at Methodist assemblies, and combined this with both tales of past victories for liberties and a desolate image of the oppressed family. Men could not forgo the rights hard won by their ancestors, his popular *Lancashire Hymn*, insisted, for they had their own families to think of:

Have we not heard the infant's cry,  
And marked the mother's tear?  
That look which told us mournfully

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<sup>153</sup> T. Spence, 'Edmund Burke's Address to the Swinish Multitude' (1794; *Pig's Meat*, ii. 39-41) in *The Political Works of Thomas Spence*, p.124-126.

That woe and want were there?  
And shall they ever weep again,  
And shall their pleadings be in vain?<sup>154</sup>

Radical domestic rhetoric therefore incorporated economic adversity in a sentimental appeal on behalf of the ‘family in distress’, a melodramatic vision of virtuous wives and innocent children whose loving husbands and fathers were daily tortured by their inability to provide necessities no matter how hard they might work.<sup>155</sup> This was not only a familiar trope, but one which could allow for the realities of working-class life, encompassing not only the experience of deprivation but also the collaborative nature of the family economy, so that women as well as male householders could be visible.

Radical men and women alike used images of home and family to highlight the hypocrisy of their opponents on a range of issues. Most radicals opposed the French wars, arguing that the campaigns raised taxation, exacerbated high food prices and caused depressions in trade as well as encouraging the view that democratic principles were Gallic and thus unpatriotic. Thus radical propaganda highlighted the ways in which war, far from preserving a treasured ideal of domesticity, had torn families apart. A London Corresponding Society pamphlet published in 1795 criticised the building of barracks, suggesting the separation of the military from ordinary society made it more difficult for families to find impressed men. It sympathised with the ‘Devoted victim, stolen from the wife of thy bosom, thy fond parent, or thy darling children!’ and assured him that ‘whether thou art languishing in some horrid dungeon, writing under the lath of the military executioner, or expiring in the field of battle, know that thy fellow citizens have marked with their detestation and resentment, the villainous authors of your calamities.’<sup>156</sup> A year earlier, the Society had promoted a petition to the king, ‘entreating that a speedy termination may be put to the present calamitous and ruinous war, by which so many thousands of our Countrymen and their helpless Families, without any possible prospect of future advantage, are reduced to the most deplorable state of want and wretchedness.’<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Bamford, *Passages* (Oxford edition), pp.123-125.

<sup>155</sup> The phrase “family in distress” is borrowed from Joanne Bailey’s discussion of the use of the trope in pauper letters. See Bailey, ‘Think Wot a Mother Must Feel’, p.13-14.

<sup>156</sup> Anon., *Reformers No Rioters: Printed by Order of the London Corresponding Society* (London, 1794). Eighteenth Century Collections Online (Gale), doc. ref. CW105551163, accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2013, p.3.

<sup>157</sup> British Library Manuscripts, Francis Place Collection, Add MS 27814, f.5. Microfilm in the Borthwick Institute for Archives, York.

War had not only separated families, it had impoverished them. The high taxes imposed to fund the campaigns continued into peacetime, so that, as a petitioner against the Corn Laws complained to the Prince Regent:

your poor Subjects and Families that as so Gallantly fought for  
your Fathers Family all this War... come home to there [sic] native  
country and be starved to Death with their Families for want of  
bread.<sup>158</sup>

Such appeals to the Crown, in which the economic and political were often intertwined, might be phrased as requests made of a paternal figure. Samuel Drummond, one of the organisers of the attempted Blanketeers March in 1817, addressed the assembled marchers, telling them ‘We will let them see it is not riot and disturbance we want, it is bread we want and we will apply to our noble Prince as a child would to its father for bread.’<sup>159</sup> Yet four years after the end of the war, the effects of increased taxation and of the Corn Laws were still being felt, and rhetoric had incorporated anti-war sentiment into a wider critique of an exploitative economic system. The Female Reformers of Manchester, for example, noted that the ‘unjust, unnecessary, and destructive war, against the liberties of France ... has tended to raise landed property threefold above its value’.<sup>160</sup> This also enabled a counter-attack against criticisms of the labouring classes for the ways they chose to dispose of their income, should these fail to fit within prescribed economies compiled by outsiders, like those suggested by Colquhoun and Eden, who had little knowledge of how their family economies worked in practice. Working-class radicals declared the rich, rather than dispossessed paupers, to be the feckless parasites, as it was they who lived in idle luxury by exploiting the labour of the ‘industrious classes’.<sup>161</sup> Thus in 1818, in the wake of the spinners’ strike in Manchester, Elizabeth Salt published a scathing attack on the rich, citing the Corn Laws and Combination Acts as the means by which a ‘formidable *combination*’ of employers, landowners and legislators were preventing the labouring classes from obtaining

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<sup>158</sup> The National Archives (TNA), HO42/143 f.45-46. Anonymous letter to the Prince Regent dated 9<sup>th</sup> Mar. 1815.

<sup>159</sup> R. Poole, ‘French Revolution or Peasant’s Revolt? Petitioners and Rebels in England from the Blanketeers to the Chartists’ in *Labour History Review*, Vol.74, No.1 (2009), p.15.

<sup>160</sup> The Manchester Female Reformers’ Address to the Wives, Mothers, Sisters and Daughters of the Higher and Middling Classes of Society, *Manchester Observer*, July 31<sup>st</sup> 1819, reproduced in R. Frow & E. Frow (eds.), *Political Women, 1800-1850* (London: Pluto Press, 1989), p.25.

<sup>161</sup> The Manchester Female Reformers warned middle-class women that ‘the lazy Boroughmongering Eagles of destruction’ would turn on them next, ‘till at length, the middle and useful class of society is swept, by their relentless hands, from the face of the creation.’ *Manchester Observer*, July 31<sup>st</sup> 1819 in *Political Women*, p.24-25.

the means of subsistence. She sneered at hypocritical moralists who insisted on keeping wages low ‘least [sic] you should expend it in ale-houses’, when in reality after a fourteen hour day ‘we have *repeatedly* retired ourselves... and generally put our poor children supperless to bed’, despite having asked for ‘nothing further than a comfortable livelihood for ... hard labour’.<sup>162</sup> Concern for the defenceless child was both a badge of virtue and an indication of the inhumanity of the opponent. Salt’s critique was not purely economic, she also damned the Regent’s failure as paternal head of state, declaring that a working man was ‘not yet *monarch* enough to *receive* and *enjoy* the cries of his famishing children, or the tears of his grief-worn wife’.<sup>163</sup> If the nation mirrored the family on a larger scale, the Prince Regent was deemed to be an unnatural husband and father, neglecting his responsibilities in pursuit of his own pleasures, and showing little care for his struggling subjects.

The dysfunctional nature of the national ‘family’, radicals argued, prevented the normal functioning of their own family groups. Elizabeth Salt, who viewed Malthusianism as yet another device of the rich, complained that ‘the only happiness we have, in prospect for our youths (that of joining them in marriage with those they love) is to be prevented, in all cases where they cannot show ... that they *are* able to maintain themselves and a family of children, without being troublesome to the rich.’<sup>164</sup> Others likewise complained of the economic impossibility of marrying and starting a family, positing political reform as a necessary corrective for the unnatural disruptions to normal family life. The precise forms this reform should take and the benefits it would bring varied. For some, it was a reduction of taxes that was necessary in order that ‘Parents will no longer consider the increase [*sic*] of a family as a burden but as a blessing,’<sup>165</sup> while others believed that it was only under a reformed system of land ownership that labouring-class families ‘would not then have the gloomy prospect of bringing up their children to be thieves and prostitutes.’<sup>166</sup>

Oppression was reflected not just in the condition of the family but also in the state of the home itself, a supposed refuge from the cares of the world. Thus the Female Reformers of Blackburn lamented that:

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<sup>162</sup>TNA, HO33/2/17 f.64-68. E. Salt, *To all persons desirous of, and friendly to, establishing an union on legal principles, for the purpose of supporting the innocent mothers, wives & children, of such persons as are, or may hereafter be suffering, under want of a just remuneration for their Labours* (Manchester, 1818), p.2. p.6, p.8.

<sup>163</sup> Salt, *To all persons desirous of, and friendly to, establishing an union on legal principles*, p.6.

<sup>164</sup> Salt, *To all persons desirous of, and friendly to, establishing an union on legal principles*, p.4.

<sup>165</sup> Clark, *Struggle for the Breeches*, p.149.

<sup>166</sup> Allen Davenport, quoted in McCalman, *Radical Underworld*, p.49.

our houses which once bore ample testimony of our industry and cleanliness, and were fit for the reception of a prince are now alas! robbed of all their ornaments, and our beds, that once afforded us cleanliness, health and sweet repose, are now torn from us by the relentless hand of the unfeeling tax gatherer.<sup>167</sup>

The bed was not just a place of rest after the day's labour, or of rejuvenation for the next. It was the central to family life, the place where marriages were cemented, children conceived and born, where family members recovered from sickness or died. Its loss struck at the heart of emotional ties between individual, family, and place.<sup>168</sup> As suggested above, the material state of the home symbolised a national, as well as a familial, identity – in the introduction we noted Bamford's assertion that only the English truly understood the comfort of home. Yet domestic felicity was increasingly hard to maintain, as the radical women of Bolton-le-Moors informed William Cobbett:

we would once have welcomed you by spreading before you a board of English hospitality, furnished by our industry. Once, we could have greeted you with the roseate countenances of English females. Once, we could have delighted you, with the appearance of our decent, and well-educated offspring; whilst we could have presented to your view, our Cottages, vying for cleanliness and arrangement with the Palace of the King.<sup>169</sup>

The words of these radical women invoke their care for cleanliness and health, reminding the reader of religious ideas of purity as well as of the medical texts of the time which were increasingly concerned with the impact of the environment on the health of children in particular.<sup>170</sup> Intimate emotional relationships within the family, expressed through the

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<sup>167</sup> *Black Dwarf*, July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1819, in *Political Women*, p.23.

<sup>168</sup> Unpublished research by Joanne Begiato and Angela McShane on the meanings of the early modern bed is available online, see: J. Begiato, 'Beds: The Beating Heart of the Household.'

*Joanne Begiato Muses on History*, 2013, accessed 10<sup>th</sup> Aug.

2013, <https://jbailey2013.wordpress.com/2013/08/10/beds-the-beating-heart-of-the-household/>.

<sup>169</sup> Letter 'From the Female Reformers of Bolton-le-Moors,' in *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, 29 December, 1819, Nineteenth Century British Library Newspapers, accessed 30<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2011.

<sup>170</sup> A correspondent to *The Cottagers' Monthly Visitor*, styling herself 'Martha Homely' declared that 'In my opinion, cleanliness is one of the virtues, and comes next to honesty and sobriety and often greatly recommends even Religion itself,' April 1821, see British Library Tracts, 1803-1820, p.175. As Mary Douglas has pointed out, in Western societies, 'sacred things and places are to be protected from defilement. Holiness and impurity are at opposite poles', with dirt associated with disorder. See *Purity and Danger, With a New Preface by the Author* (London: Routledge, 2002), p.2, p.9.

women's care of the physical and spiritual wellbeing of their children, were disrupted by material deprivation, which, they asserted, arose 'entirely from the misrule of a profligate system of government.'<sup>171</sup>

Domestic rhetoric was therefore highly adaptable, forming a coherent thread which could tie together economic, emotional and political grievances. It also allowed ordinary men and women to dramatise aspects of everyday life, speaking with an authority which could, they claimed, be backed up with empirical evidence.<sup>172</sup> A focus on issues of home and family was important in enabling working-class women in particular to speak in public and with authority about political grievances. However, because women spoke out primarily in terms of traditionally feminine domestic concerns, their words have tended to be viewed by historians as a kind of barrier against criticism, and their participation is rarely adequately explained. Anna Clark, for example, suggested that that 'Women had to use modest language because they faced vitriolic attacks for their activities',<sup>173</sup> but this does little to tell us why they braved such attacks in the first place, or why they continued to use 'modest language' even when it had clearly failed to ward off criticism. The backlash against the emergence of female reform societies in 1819 played upon a number of stereotypes of working-class women, from troublesome battleaxe to drunken nymphomaniac to furious virago (Figs 5-7). Working-class women were not, in popular perception, confined to simply-defined domestic roles. As discussed in the first chapter, women's economically productive labour was often crucial to family economies, and this was especially true in the textile towns where female reform societies first emerged. Northern women were also involved in popular politics before women-only societies publicly appeared, particularly where politics intersected with everyday issues. They were prominent in food riots and complicit in Luddism,<sup>174</sup> and as we shall see in later chapters, they also played important practical roles behind the scenes. Thus the decision to highlight their femininity through women-only societies, and to justify these societies in terms of their domestic, familial roles, requires some explanation beyond an attempt to appear respectable. Viewing the

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<sup>171</sup> *Black Dwarf*, July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1819, in *Political Women*, pp.22-23.

<sup>172</sup> H. Rogers, *Women and the People: Authority, Authorship and the Radical Tradition in Nineteenth-Century England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp.20-21.

<sup>173</sup> Clark, *Struggle for the Breeches*, p.161.

<sup>174</sup> N. Rogers, *Crowds, Culture and Politics in Georgian Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), pp.229-233; P. Custer, 'Refiguring Jemima', pp.127-158. See also Bamford's account of two "young amazons" involved in the attack on Burton's mill in *Passages in the Life of a Radical and Early Days*, edited with an introduction by H. Dunckley, Vol.1 (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1905), p.248. Hereafter, *Early Days* refers to this edition, unless otherwise stated.

speeches of female radicals within the wider context of radical use of domestic rhetoric and alongside their actions suggests that it was part of an attempt to counter conservative propaganda and posit male radicals as the chivalric defenders of both family and nation. If political honour was measured in such terms, 'the signature of a female would', in the words of the Manchester radical Ethelinda Wilson, 'stamp the eloquence of a Burke with insignificance.'<sup>175</sup> Thus the performance of apparently traditional gender roles could take on a more subversive edge.

The opponents of the Female Reform Societies, however, did not accept their self-positioning as concerned wives and mothers acting in support of male relatives. A number of stories emerged of much more violent tendencies among women in the North West in particular. In July 1819, the same month as the women made their first speeches, an anonymous spy reported from Middleton that:

the Women are going about from House to House begging for Money ... to Make Caps of Liberty ... they say in public they will begin with the Branches and cut them all down till they come to the Ball, the Meaning of that is that they will murder all their Neighbours that are against their Purpose.<sup>176</sup>

Such tales were likely exaggerated if not wholly fabricated. Home Office informers were known for their tendency to spice up reports in the hope of sweetening their pay packets. Nonetheless, it is clear that domestic rhetoric was insufficient to convince conservative observers of the respectability of the women's actions. The *New Times* compared the Blackburn female reformers to the 'Poissards of Paris, those furies in the shape of women'<sup>177</sup> and in George Cruikshank's *Belle Alliance* (Fig. 7) the female reformers resembled the similarly caricatured French market women, and are depicted declaring that 'If they won't grant us Liberties why d—me we'll take 'em.' The women themselves were not averse to implying their potential for militancy, with some speeches referring to precedents for female activism,<sup>178</sup> while the Manchester Female Reform Society declared that they were

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<sup>175</sup> E. Wilson, 'To Mr. Carlile', *The Republican* (London), Vol.2, 21<sup>st</sup> January 1820, p.71. ProQuest British Periodicals Collection 2, accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2013.

<sup>176</sup> TNA, HO42/190 f.205-6. Anonymous report from Middleton to Sidmouth, 26 July, 1819.

<sup>177</sup> C. Parolin, *Radical Spaces: Venues of Popular Politics in London, 1790–c.1845* (Canberra: ANU EPress, 2010), accessed 28<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2016, <http://press.anu.edu.au/?p=17011>, chapter 3 (no page numbers given in online edition).

<sup>178</sup> *Black Dwarf*, 14 July 1819, in Frow & Frow, *Political Women*, p.25.



resolved to 'bear the ponderous weight of our chains any longer, but to ... tear them asunder, and dash them in the face of our remorseless oppressors.'<sup>179</sup>

Where more militant language was used by women, it was justified, rather than neutralised, by an appeal to the ties of motherhood. Thomas Spence offered examples from nature of the power of mothers who felt their offspring were endangered, positing women as the defenders of the rights of infants as well as those of themselves and their husbands.<sup>180</sup> He promoted his land reform project in a pamphlet in which a female protagonist engaged in furious debate with an aristocratic opponent, warning that

whereas we have found our husbands, to their indelible shame, woefully negligent and deficient about their own rights, as well as those of their wives and infants, we women, mean to take up the business ourselves, and let us see if any of our husbands dare hinder us. Wherefore, you will find the business much more seriously and effectually managed in our hands than ever it has been yet.<sup>181</sup>

Likewise, female action could be justified as wifely obedience. Jane Carlile was praised in these terms for continuing to run her husband's radical bookshop after his arrest,<sup>182</sup> while the wives of two London Corresponding Society members, Janet Evans and Elizabeth Bone, initiated a riot at Coldbath Fields Prison during the incarceration of their husbands in 1798.<sup>183</sup> Emotional familial ties hardened the resolve of women, rather than softening their actions. Contemporary observers on both sides were convinced of the superior resolve of women as compared to men. A correspondent to the *Literary Chronicle* admitted that 'I tremble when I think of men with starving families urged on by the double impulse of hunger and a mistaken sense of duty ... I consider the involvement of women to be the

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<sup>179</sup> *Manchester Observer*, 31 July, 1819, in Frow & Frow, *Political Women*, p.26.

<sup>180</sup> T. Spence, *The Rights of Infants; or, the Imprescriptable Right of Mothers to Such a Share of the Elements as is Sufficient to Enable them to Suckle and Bring up Their Young in a Dialogue Between the Aristocracy and a Mother of Children* (London, 1797). Eighteenth Century Collections Online (Gale). Doc. ref. CW3308386019, accessed 25<sup>th</sup> Aug. 2014, p.5.

<sup>181</sup> Spence, *The Rights of Infants*, p.8.

<sup>182</sup> M. Bush, 'Richard Carlile and the Female Reformers of Manchester: A Study of Gender in the 1820s Viewed Through the Radical Filter of Republicanism, Freethought and a Philosophy of Sexual Satisfaction' in *Manchester Region History Review*, Vol.16 (2000), p.9.

<sup>183</sup> McCalman, *Radical Underworld*, p.16.

most dangerous feature'.<sup>184</sup> Meanwhile, Charlotte Johnston wrote to her husband, the Manchester radical John Johnston, gleefully informing him that 'the women have taken it [radical politics] in hand, and you will see that they will do something, for one woman will do more than five men.'<sup>185</sup>

This is not to say that the women using militant language intended violent action, or that we should give credence to the alarmist reports of spies. The radical rhetoric of both men and women in this period could offer a means of testing out political ideas and identities, as Mark Philp has shown.<sup>186</sup> It was also influenced by melodramatic conventions which portrayed actors in black and white terms as either heroic or evil, and the radical fight as one for 'death or liberty.'<sup>187</sup> There is still debate over the extent of an insurrectionary underground, but for the most part historians feel that physical force was the resort of extreme circumstances, and that a majority of radicals would have been aware of the slender chances of its success.<sup>188</sup> Nonetheless, it should be clear that the use of domestic rhetoric was not solely an attempt to appeal to middle-class values of respectability, perhaps especially when it was women who used such language to justify their political actions.

We should also beware of concluding that the use of gendered domestic rhetoric meant that radicals necessarily envisioned a limited role for women in practice. As we have seen, and will see in later chapters, radical women were engaged in politics, and not in a merely ornamental capacity. While only a minority of radicals of either sex explicitly sought a truly universal suffrage, ideas about the extent of female involvement in politics were a matter of debate. Arianne Chernock has persuasively argued for a more positive assessment of male demands for female equality in this period, which she believes set an important precedent for the more widespread campaigns for female suffrage in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>189</sup> Radical claims for political enfranchisement tended to be narrated in terms of natural rights or a conjectural history of liberties held under the 'ancient constitution'.

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<sup>184</sup> 'An Old Spartan,' in *The Literary Chronicle* (28<sup>th</sup> Aug. 1819), p.234. ProQuest British Periodicals Collection. Collection, accessed 30<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2011.

<sup>185</sup> HO42/190, Letter from Charlotte Johnston to John Johnston, 19<sup>th</sup> July 1819 quoted in Epstein, *Radical Expression*, p.89.

<sup>186</sup> M. Philp, 'The Fragmented Ideology of Reform', pp.71-72, p.76.

<sup>187</sup> E. Royle, *Revolutionary Britannia? Reflections on the threat of Revolution in Britain, 1789-1848* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p.8.

<sup>188</sup> Royle, *Revolutionary Britannia?*, pp.5-6, p.10.

<sup>189</sup> A. Chernock, *Men and the Making of Modern British Feminism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), p.127.

Historians have tended to assume that the latter in particular excluded women,<sup>190</sup> but as Chernock has demonstrated, it was possible to use either or both narratives to claim citizenship for women, while women's supposedly greater sensibility could also be used as justification.<sup>191</sup> There is certainly evidence of the negotiation of an appropriate political role for women in contemporary documents. John Gale Jones, on his tour of Kent in 1796, passed an enjoyable evening with a friend and his new wife, with the latter not only signalling her agreement with Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, but going further in arguing that women should be able to act as political representatives. The young 'disciple of equality' blamed men for depriving women of opportunities to demonstrate their competencies, and argued that a female Parliament would never have passed the recent Convention Bills restricting the right to assemble. Her guest assented, having earlier expressed little concern or surprise at women's interest in politics.<sup>192</sup> In the post-war movement, Samuel Bamford proudly recounted how he had, at a radical meeting:

insisted on the right, and the propriety also, of females who were present at such assemblages, voting by show of hand, for, or against, the resolutions. This was a new idea; and the women, who attended numerously on that bleak ridge, were mightily pleased with it, – and the men being nothing dissentient – when the resolution was put, the women held up their hands, amid much laughter; and ever from that time, females voted with the men at radical meetings.<sup>193</sup>

The procedural practices of radical organisations could be used to signal the way in which affairs of the state might be conducted should they be successful,<sup>194</sup> although in this case Bamford's reliance on the militia rolls as an electoral register suggests otherwise.<sup>195</sup> Nonetheless, to grant women the right to an opinion independent of that of their husband or father was an important point in a society where it was taken for granted that a man should represent his dependents.

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<sup>190</sup> Epstein, *Radical Expression*, p.23.

<sup>191</sup> Chernock, *Men and the Making of Modern Feminism*, pp.115-118.

<sup>192</sup> J. Gale Jones, *A Political Tour through Rochester, Chatham, Maidstone, Gravesend &c* (1796), with an introduction by Philip MacDougall (Rochester: Baggins Book Bazaar, 1997), p.36, pp.40-41.

<sup>193</sup> Bamford, *Passages*, p.141.

<sup>194</sup> Davis, 'The Mob Club?', p.30.

<sup>195</sup> Bamford, *Passages*, p.21.

To question the patriarchal rights of husbands and fathers in matters of state could also be to challenge the subordinate status of women within the home. Wollstonecraft herself had wrestled with the conflict between justifying female claims for citizenship in terms of motherhood, while also resenting the way in which the traditional family could restrict opportunities for intellectual, and therefore rational political, engagement.<sup>196</sup> Thomas Spence argued that women, and indeed children, should have the right to an equal share in both the profits of the land and therefore, through their contribution to the revenue, in the election of officials in his utopian Spensonia.<sup>197</sup> Spence, however, stopped short of allowing women to fulfil ‘public roles’, seeing them as constitutionally unfit. Richard Carlile, on the other hand, tapped into a strain of Enlightenment thought in which the perfect state organisation could only be founded in true equality in both government and home.<sup>198</sup> Just as his ideal government was based on rational consent, so he felt that love – ‘one of the chief sources of human happiness’ – should also be practiced in a more reasoned and egalitarian manner.<sup>199</sup> He and other radicals including the more respectable Francis Place advocated contraception as a means of alleviating the hardship of working-class families for whom children could become a burden. Carlile’s contraception manual used language similar to that of more standard appeals on behalf of the ‘family in distress’, speaking of the ‘evil’ that ‘arises ... even where the parents are most industrious and most virtuous, from a half-starved, naked, and badly housed family, from families crowded into one room, for whose health a house and garden is essential.’<sup>200</sup> Imposing limitations on family size would also have done much to reduce the burden of domestic work for women, the nature and impact of which is discussed in more detail in the next chapter, leaving them freer to take part in political activity.

However, the radical reorganisation of the ‘nation in miniature’ could be fraught with difficulty. As both Anna Clark and Barbara Taylor have discussed in detail, a rethinking of family structure and practice was difficult to accept for a number of reasons. On a practical level, economic instability made working-class women in particular wary of non-regulated unions such as those proposed by Carlile and, later, by Robert Owen, in which a ‘marriage’ lasted only as long as its members desired it be so. Conservative propaganda played on the (very reasonable) fears of women that in such a situation they would quite literally be left

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<sup>196</sup> Taylor, *Mary Wollstonecraft and the Feminist Imagination*, pp.221-222, pp.224-225.

<sup>197</sup> Spence, *The Rights of Infants*, p.11, p.13.

<sup>198</sup> See Chernock, *Men and the Making of Modern British Feminism*, chapters 3-4.

<sup>199</sup> R. Carlile, *Every Woman's book; or What is Love?* Fourth Edition. (London: R. Carlile, 1826), p.v.

<sup>200</sup> Carlile, *Everywoman's Book*, p.22.

holding (and economically supporting) the baby while their erstwhile companion transferred his affections with impunity.<sup>201</sup> Diverting from the dominant discourse risked playing into the hands of these conservative opponents and thus undermining the subversive appeal of appropriating domesticity as a badge of patriotism. Furthermore, the hegemony of established ideas of morality could be difficult to challenge, even for radical men and women who might embrace political and religious dissent, the latter often being an important factor in the formation of the former. Religion and radicalism could each be important building blocks of both individual and familial identities, and Carlile's deism and later atheism made acceptance of his version of morality difficult for more godly radicals. A more traditional domestic rhetoric could offer safer, more unifying ground, incorporating every day experience rather than proposing new forms that experience could take.

The kind of domestic rhetoric employed by radicals could restrict questioning of traditional ways of organising power within the home, but much of its appeal probably came from its potential to dramatise common experiences. Of course, not all working-class families lived in standard family forms and their experiences of home varied widely. But for many, as we shall see in later chapters, the domestic environment nurtured and enabled the transmission of radical ideals and was thus an important part of political identities.<sup>202</sup> As has already been cautioned, we should not therefore see a focus on home and family as entirely pragmatic, although it was attractive in its potential to bolster masculine self-image, empower women to speak publicly, and playfully invert conservative propaganda. Domestic rhetoric enabled working-class men and women to voice genuine grievances about disruption to their home lives and to envision a more hopeful future when radical reform might remove both political and economic obstacles to stability. Its adaptability combined with this appeal to everyday experience made domestic rhetoric a continuous theme of the propaganda of radical societies from their inception in the 1790s. Yet the imagery of distressed families oppressed by the state rang ever more true as those involved in radical activity experienced exacerbations of economic hardship and even physical harm to families.

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<sup>201</sup> B. Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem* (London: Virago Press, 1983), chapter 6; Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches*, chapter 10.

<sup>202</sup> D. Thompson, *Outsiders: Class, Gender and Nation* (London: Verso, 1993), pp.83-86; D. Worrall, 'Kinship, Generation and Community: The Transmission of Political Ideology in Radical Plebeian Print Culture' in *Studies in Romanticism*, Vol.43, No.2 (2004), pp.283-295.

Committed working-class politicians were required to spend a considerable amount of time away from home, attending meetings, disseminating information, or as fugitives from persecution. Both men and women suffered imprisonment for their participation, and this could have devastating emotional and economic effects on the family. Judges had no compunction in imprisoning women who were pregnant or caring for young children, portraying them as traitors to a system designed to protect them.<sup>203</sup> Susannah Wright, a female radical and free-thinker who spectacularly conducted her own defence in her blasphemy trial, had to fight for the provision of a bed for herself and her baby while they were residents of a filthy and crowded cell in Newgate prison.<sup>204</sup> Elizabeth Gaunt, on the other hand, was so fragile after months in solitary confinement that she could barely stand or speak at the trial of Peterloo prisoners.<sup>205</sup> Such harsh punishments were detailed as further examples of government hypocrisy. The *Cap of Liberty*, describing the treatment of Ann Scott, who was also imprisoned on the evening of the Peterloo massacre, remarked that

The partizans [*sic*] of the Government are ever holding up to public view the horrors of the French Revolution, and cautioning the People of England to beware such sanguinary scenes, yet while with one hand they are penning these precepts of prudence and morality, with the other they are acting over again the Robespierrean part of universal massacre.<sup>206</sup>

While imprisoned radical women emphasised their own bodily sufferings and the risks to their children, men tended only to highlight concerns for dependents. Thomas Preston found that, during his imprisonment, his daughters were ‘driven about from place to place, few persons offering them an asylum’, his home already having been plundered of ‘every useful article of furniture, even my children’s last bed.’<sup>207</sup> He insisted, however, that on his own account he felt ‘perfectly serene’ during his imprisonment.<sup>208</sup> Francis Ward, a Nottingham lace-maker, wrote anxious letters to Lord Sidmouth regarding financial

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<sup>203</sup> In the sentence handed down to Jane Carlile, the judge expressed his astonishment “at seeing a woman stand forward as the opponent of that system from which everything valuable to woman was derived”. *The Times*, October 24<sup>th</sup>, 1821, quoted in Parolin, *Radical Spaces*, chapter 3.

<sup>204</sup> Parolin, *Radical Spaces*, chapter 3.

<sup>205</sup> Bamford, *Passages* (Oxford edition), p.181, p.191. Oddly, mention of Elizabeth Gaunt is omitted from the account of the trial in the Dunckley edition.

<sup>206</sup> *Cap of Liberty*, October 20<sup>th</sup>, 1819, quoted in Frow & Frow, *Political Women*, p.27.

<sup>207</sup> Preston, *Life and Opinions*, p.31.

<sup>208</sup> Preston, *Life and Opinions*, p.33.

support for his ‘distressed and helpless’ family, since business had slowed since his imprisonment, prior to which he had had little chance to prepare for this change in circumstances.<sup>209</sup> In his memoir, Samuel Bamford described several emotional partings from his wife and child, related to his political career, and admitted to ‘apprehensions lest they might be distressed’ in financial terms.<sup>210</sup> It is likely that Jemima Bamford, like Francis Ward’s wife, would indeed have found herself under considerable economic pressure, supporting herself and a child on only one wage and the charitable assistance of fellow reformers. Francis Place, whose daughter had died of smallpox during a period of extreme poverty caused by his being blacklisted for organising a strike, recognised only too well the ‘propriety and necessity of raising money by contributions for the support of the families of the persons who were imprisoned’ after the seizure of members of the London Corresponding Society in 1798. However, he also noted the difficulties attending his attempt to do so:

such was the terror the proceedings and disposition of the Government produced and of the habeas corpus act being again suspended that no one would either act as secretary or consent to have his name and address taken down. I was therefore compelled to act as secretary ... Thomas Hardy on my application consented to act as Treasurer.<sup>211</sup>

The generosity of donations ensured that the women were, in this case, adequately provided for. As we shall see in the fourth chapter, radicalism could provide a network of assistance to supplement that provided by kin and community, but it seems likely that even pooled resources would be stretched during government crackdowns. Framing protests at persecution in terms of concern for dependents allowed radical men to maintain a heroic front, but the suffering of both the imprisoned and their families was all too real.

As radical rhetoric appropriated domesticity it obtained the moral high ground partly because the savagery of the authorities increased, simultaneously vindicating and challenging the image of the working-class radical man as defender of home and family.

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<sup>209</sup> K. Navickas, “‘A Reformer’s Wife ought to be a Heroine’”: Gender, Family, and English Radicals Imprisoned under the Suspension of Habeas Corpus Act of 1817’ in *History*, Vol.101, No.345 (2016), p.256; TNA, HO42/169, ff.332-333 Letter from Francis Ward to Lord Sidmouth, August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1817.

<sup>210</sup> Bamford, *Passages*, p.192.

<sup>211</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, pp.181-182.

Radicals had criticised the French wars for separating and impoverishing families, but participation in politics could mean their own families were torn apart, their possessions confiscated, and all family members subject to written, verbal and physical abuse. As we will see in the next chapter, the boundaries of home were easily breached, and while private lives could be publicised for political gain, their politicisation could make them vulnerable to attack.<sup>212</sup> We have noted the fragility and negotiated nature of privacy in working-class homes, but any attempt at constructing a private space was shattered by the invasions of home conducted in an attempt to repress popular radicalism. In 1794, Thomas Hardy, the secretary of the London Corresponding Society, was awoken in the early hours of morning by a group of men with a warrant for his arrest on charges of treason. They then proceeded to unceremoniously ransack the house with little regard for the family's privacy:

Lazun [later a King's Messenger] was very active in rummaging all the drawers, even those containing Mrs Hardy's clothes. He demanded the key of a bureau, which happened to be locked, and when he found he could not obtain it, he threatened to break it, and proceeded to put his threat into execution by trying to force it open with the poker. Mrs. Hardy entreated him to desist, and Mr. King called in a smith... He picked the lock of the bureau, and those of some trunks, and the party soon had four large silk handkerchiefs filled with letters and other papers; among which were many of Hardy's private letters from friends in America, and at home ... The feelings of poor Mrs. Hardy, on that occasion, may be easier imagined than described. In an advanced state of pregnancy, sitting in bed all the time, and unable to dress before so many unwelcome visitors, whom she could hardly consider in a better light than that of robbers.<sup>213</sup>

Likewise, little thought was given to the delicacies of Samuel and Jemima Bamford during his night-time arrest in 1819. The pair had barely time to dress before the deputy constable and his assistants 'commenced searching the place, for arms ...The drawers were

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<sup>212</sup> Attacks on the home were experienced on both sides of the political divide, as Louise Edwards has noted. 'Popular Politics in the North West of England', p.140.

<sup>213</sup> T. Hardy, *Memoir of Thomas Hardy: Founder of and Secretary to the London Corresponding Society* (London: James Ridgeway, 1832). Internet Archive/Open Library. Accessed 12<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2015, <http://archive.org/details/memoirofthomasha00hard>, p.32.



rummaged; my oaken box was explored; a shawl was spread on the floor, and all my books and papers were bundled into it.<sup>214</sup> Jemima Bamford was then faced with the threat that the soldiers would ‘blow her brains out’ for shouting ‘Hunt and liberty!’ as they forcibly removed her husband, although they backed down in the face of her audacious refusal. From early in 1820, one of the provisions of the notorious Six Acts allowed for still more arbitrary incursions into domestic space by facilitating searches on homes without even the formality of a warrant.

These unannounced and indelicate invasions of privacy were unpleasant enough, but even more sinister and disruptive than official arrests were the actions of grass-roots loyalist organisations concerned with eradicating radical activity from their neighbourhoods. In 1794, while Thomas Hardy and John Thelwall were imprisoned and awaiting trial for treason, their homes were attacked by mobs attempting to enforce an illumination for a British naval victory. Magistrates failed to intervene as ‘the delicate sensibility of the female character was wantonly sported with’ while ‘their husbands were not present to defend them against premeditated insult.’<sup>215</sup> Thomas Hardy was for the rest of his life to blame the terror of this event for his wife’s death after giving birth to a stillborn child.<sup>216</sup> Mrs Hardy was, the London Corresponding Society claimed, so weakened by anxiety for her unjustly imprisoned husband that she was no longer emotionally or physically strong enough for the struggles of the lone wife. In her dying speech, she was reported to have declared herself ‘a martyr to my husband’s sufferings.’<sup>217</sup> A Corresponding Society pamphlet raged that:

the enemies to the liberties of man may dare to defend such conduct on the principle, that wives should suffer for the political sins of their husbands. Of such philosophy! and of such religion! we will not speak, but content ourselves with saying – we cannot admire the manliness of the sentiment, and adding with Mr. Burke, “The age of Chivalry is gone!”<sup>218</sup>

While the London Corresponding Society was able to gain considerable sympathetic mileage from Mrs Hardy’s tragic story,<sup>219</sup> it was little consolation for Thomas, who largely

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<sup>214</sup> Bamford, *Passages*, p.172.

<sup>215</sup> Anon., *Reformers No Rioters*, p.4.

<sup>216</sup> Hardy, *Memoir*, pp.36-40, p.73.

<sup>217</sup> Anon., *Reformers No Rioters*, p.8.

<sup>218</sup> Anon., *Reformers No Rioters*, p.4.

<sup>219</sup> John Gale Jones recalled that: ‘When I came to the account of Mrs. Hardy’s death, and related the circumstances attending her funeral, the effect it had on my auditory was visible. The landlady,

retired from politics after his release.<sup>220</sup> In these circumstances, the radical working-classes were unable to call upon outside assistance to restore order; indeed they complained that in fact magistrates and constables were complicit in mob attacks on their homes, turning a blind eye since this coincided with their own political preferences.<sup>221</sup>

Nowhere, however, is the violence of anti-radicalism more evident than in the propaganda produced in the wake of Peterloo. Both images and texts concentrated on female or infant victims, with William Hone's depiction in *The Political House that Jack Built* (Fig. 8) as a case in point. In the background, the Manchester Yeomanry can be seen, sabres drawn, trampling a young woman holding a baby. To the front of the image are five more detailed figures. One man strikes a thoughtful attitude, while another raises his eyes to heaven, his hands joined as if in prayer. A small child clutches the leg of the first, gazing upward imploringly. Beside the latter slumps a thin woman holding a child, her head in her hands, utterly desolate. These, Hone tells us, are 'THE PEOPLE', the victims of government oppression: a dishevelled family, utterly impoverished by high taxes, and brutally attacked when trying to redress their grievances through legal means. He quotes Cowper's anti-slavery poem *The Task*: 'What man seeing this, and having human feelings, does not blush?'<sup>222</sup> Yet inhuman as the Yeomanry's actions might have been, there was little the men in the image could do to prevent them. In such cases, men could not act as chivalric defenders of domesticity, but could merely protest at their weakness in the face of superior force. The trampled woman was to become the iconic image of Peterloo, represented in art, literature, even on material goods, while the feminine martyr, as a symbol of the violation of natural human sympathy, remained a potent symbol through the Chartist years and especially during the campaigns for women's suffrage.<sup>223</sup>

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who chanced to be in the room, wept aloud, and the whole assembly sat mute and motionless with pity and surprize.' *A Political Tour*, p.13.

<sup>220</sup> J. Binns, *Recollections of the life of John Binns, written by himself, with anecdotes, political, historical, and miscellaneous* (Philadelphia, 1842). Internet Archive/Open Library. Accessed 8<sup>th</sup> July 2013, <http://archive.org/details/recollectionsof00binn>, p.42.

<sup>221</sup> Anon., *Reformers No Rioters*, p.4; T. Walker, *A Review of Some of the Political Events which have Occurred in Manchester in the Last Five Years* (London, 1794). Internet Archive/Open Library. Accessed 12<sup>th</sup> Aug. 2013, <https://archive.org/details/reviewofsomeofpo00walkuoft>, pp.55-56.

<sup>222</sup> W. Hone, *The Political House that Jack Built* (London, 1819). Internet Archive/Open Library. Accessed 13<sup>th</sup> Aug. 2013, <http://archive.org/details/politicalhouseth1819hone>, p.12.

<sup>223</sup> A. Morgan, 'Starving Mothers and Murdered Children in Cultural Representations of Peterloo' in *Manchester Region History Review*, Vol.23 (2012), special issue 'Return to Peterloo' edited by R. Poole, pp.65-78. For a discussion of violence (both by and against women) as a tactic in the Edwardian campaign for women's suffrage, see J. Lawrence, 'Contesting the Male Polity: The Suffragettes and

I have argued that home and family were a common theme of radical rhetoric from at least the 1790s, though the intensity of this focus increased in the 1810s. It was perhaps at a height between 1819 and 1820, as the emergence of female reform societies, the Peterloo massacre and the Queen Caroline affair pushed women and domestic concerns to the forefront of the political agenda, although the latter focused more on the Queen as wife and mother than on the problems of the working-class family. Yet while Peterloo in particular increased middle-class sympathy for the radical cause, and popular opinion caused the government to drop charges against Caroline, there was little immediate benefit in terms of the extension of the franchise. Thus, even as celebrations were ongoing for Caroline's acquittal, John Roper reminded a meeting of Bolton radicals that while a moral victory had been won, there was still much more to be accomplished:

Let me see a Standing Army abolished. A National Debt paid and swept off. Let me see an unrestricted and unlimited Commerce. Let me see all useless sinecures and Pensions struck off. Let me see this Nation freely represented. Let me see it governed by wise disinterested Rulers, then I will shake hands with the Ruling Powers then will I rejoice Heartily then will I give up Radicalism. But till all this is accomplished, I will persevere in the Good old Faith of Jacobinism. Let me see all our incarcerated Friends liberated by such Powers and then Roper will be a Loyal Man. But till then – no never.<sup>224</sup>

Bamford, in his memoir, seems ultimately to have regretted the toll taken on domestic life by his political career, and cautioned those who took up the mantle:

the industrious and poor man, best serves his country by doing his duty to his family at home. – That he best amends his country by giving it good children; and if he have not any, by setting a good example himself. – That he best governs by obeying the laws; and by ruling in love and mercy his own little kingdom at home. – That his best reform is that which corrects the irregularities of his own hearth. – That his best meetings, are those with his own family, by

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the Politics of Disruption in Edwardian Britain' in *Women, Privilege, and Power: British Politics, 1750 to the Present*, edited by A. Vickery (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp.202-226.

<sup>224</sup>TNA, HO40/15 f.142. Spy's report of a meeting at Bolton, enclosed in a letter from Colonel Fletcher to Lord Sidmouth, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 1820.

his own fireside. – That his best resolutions, are those which he carries into effect for his own amendment, and that of his household....That his best riches is contentment. – That his best love is that which comforts his family.<sup>225</sup>

Reform for Bamford must begin with the ‘nation in miniature’. The state could not be improved without moral rigour and careful management of the home, but at the same time it was the difficulties in executing this management that many radicals complained of; difficulties exacerbated by the persecution of activists. The power of domestic discourse was symbolic, rather than practical, and must be examined alongside the realities of working-class homes and their more active use in radical culture.

This chapter has argued that, in highlighting the plight of ‘helpless families’, radical men and women adopted traditionally gendered roles within a narrative of frustrated domesticity in order to expose the inconsistencies and hypocrisies of conservative propaganda. This redeployment of imagery previously used against the labouring classes in general and radicals in particular could be adapted to critique the government’s stance on a range of issues. Nonetheless, in practical terms it could be hard for radical men to sustain the heroic role imagined in this discourse in the face of their inability to protect families against the violence of the government’s response, especially in 1819. Furthermore, because this strategy was based on redeploying a dominant discourse of what domesticity should be, it was limited in the scope of what it could demand. Portraying men as chivalric heroes and women in the supporting, damsel-in-distress role could close off public discussion of alternative ways of living which potentially offered greater equality, as well as practical benefits. Yet discourse did not necessarily reflect practice, and the following chapters will demonstrate some of the more practical ways in which the home could nurture and sustain political radicalisms in a variety of forms.

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<sup>225</sup> Bamford, *Passages*, pp.100-101.

## Chapter 3

### The Politics of Making Home

‘Building, or what may more properly be termed the tumbling up of tumble-down houses, to the north of London, is so rapidly increasing, that in a year or two there will scarcely be a green spot for the resort of the inhabitants. Against covering of private ground in this way, there is no resistance’.

So William Hone, writing in 1825, rehearsed a now familiar tale of industrial development in late-Georgian Britain.<sup>226</sup> He evoked multiple facets of this development as they were experienced by many of the working classes: the loss of customary rights to land, the loss of leisure, and above all the rush to capitalise on an expanding urban population through speculative building which paid more attention to quantity than to quality. It was in the midst of this rapid change, and especially in reaction to the stripping away of customary entitlements, and the associated reduction in status, that E.P. Thompson identified the origins of working-class politics.<sup>227</sup> Home, ideologically constructed as the embodiment of security and comfort, a space for the enactment of the most intimate relationships, would seem to provide a retreat from disorientating changes in the wider world. As we saw in the previous chapter, however, this construction of home was not only highly politicised, but also threatened by the reactions of the authorities to radical activism itself. Nonetheless, the idea of home had considerable normative power – it was something against which working-class people knew their own homes were judged as respectable or otherwise because these judgements were made evident in written texts and images. It was for this reason, as we saw in the previous chapter, that the London Corresponding Society challenged the slippage between the material and the moral in understandings of home as the basis for citizenship. This chapter sets the idealised version of home within the context of the physical spaces in which working-class men and women lived, discussing how the ability to make home was affected by the advance of industrial capitalism in our study regions in the 1790s and early-nineteenth century. Home was not just a metaphor for

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<sup>226</sup> W. Hone, ‘Cottage Formerly in Hagbush Lane’ in *The Every-Day Book*, 1825-6. BioText: A Biography, Bibliography, and Etext Archive. Accessed 1<sup>st</sup> Feb. 2016, <http://honearchive.org/etexts/edb/day-pages/177-june26.html#img06hagbushcottage>. I am grateful to Lucy Hodgetts for alerting me to this source.

<sup>227</sup> Thompson, *Making*, esp. chapter 12.

nation, or a space solely for family life, but a site of production and consumption, embedded into local communities and landscapes. As such, homes were central to the conflicts between customary practice and the free market which Thompson saw as crucial to the development of politicised working-class identities. Yet they were also spaces in which smaller-scale power negotiations took place within the family itself. I argue that the home was a site of struggle not just rhetorically but in practice, and that ways of making home were enacted within gendered and classed power structures as well as relationships with wider political and economic contexts. The everyday practices of home influenced the ways in which working-class men and women were differentially inclined and able to participate in radical politics.

Late-Georgian and Victorian domesticity is frequently associated with the ascent of the middle classes, who idealised domestic space as a private refuge for the family, separate from the immoral world of work and politics, thus asserting their moral superiority over the dissolute aristocracy even as they participated enthusiastically in an exploitative capitalist economy.<sup>228</sup> Recent historiography has exposed the cracks in the domestic ideal, exploring the fluid boundaries of 'private' and 'public' worlds, but the idea that the home was, in Nancy Armstrong's words, the 'model and source of middle-class power' remains, either implicitly or explicitly, in many histories of home.<sup>229</sup> Though I agree with Armstrong that the idea of 'home' requires attention as a disciplinary technology, her argument is centred around the novel, thus bypassing scholarly discussions of the role of home as an actual space and as a set of practices, as well as its representation in different cultural forms such as ballads and caricature. As we saw in the second chapter, ideals of home were communicated to and by the working classes as well as those higher up the social scale – home was a theme common in image and song, in religious texts, and in political speeches. Furthermore, as we also saw in the previous chapter, these ideals were frequently deployed as a means of de-legitimising the political demands of the working classes, whose economic circumstances problematized their achievement, yet could be deployed to challenge as well as to reinforce classed and gendered norms.

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<sup>228</sup> Eg. Davidoff & C. Hall, *Family Fortunes*, pp.18-28; N. Armstrong, 'Some Call it Fiction: On the Politics of Domesticity' in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, edited by J. Rivkin and M. Ryan (Second ed., Malden: Blackwell, 2004), pp.567-583; J. Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p.6.

<sup>229</sup> Eg. Posonby, *Stories from Home; Domestic Space: Reading the Nineteenth-Century Interior*, edited by I. Bryden & J. Floyd (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999). Quote taken from Armstrong, 'Some Call It Fiction', p.572.

A small number of recent studies have begun to assess the social and political implications of the homes of the poor in terms of agency and resistance, but as yet there has been no attempt to connect the experience of home spaces with the growth of political radicalism amongst the working classes as defined here.<sup>230</sup> The neglect of working-class homes as sites rich in social and political meaning is perhaps in part due to the popular image of housing in the period of industrialisation, still haunted by the spectre of the degraded Dickensian slum.<sup>231</sup> As we saw in the previous chapter, however, the increasing ‘outsider’ surveillance of working-class homes which produced this image was in itself political, serving to emphasise the distinctions between the working classes and their observers. Even where observers were sympathetic, seeking to draw attention to poor conditions in order to improve them, depicting only the negative aspects of working-class life served to dehumanise and distance working people. While not denying that unpleasant, uncomfortable, even dangerous housing did exist, this chapter draws upon historical and archaeological research alongside my own inventory data sample in order to demonstrate the efforts of working-class people in making homes from varied domestic spaces in a time of rapid and unpredictable social change. I demonstrate that home was a space in which working-class people invested emotionally and financially, but one in which status differences between classes and genders were materialised in and shaped everyday practice. By better understanding the placing of working-class domestic spaces within micro-level networks of power, we can gain greater insight into the development of politicised identities and more obvious forms of political practice. Though it is not possible, given the source material currently available, to discuss radical homes specifically in this chapter, the context it seeks to provide emphasises the potential for fluidity between the domestic and political and thus the practical possibilities of the home as a radical site.

In London and the Pennine regions, the second half of the eighteenth century saw considerable expansion of the population and consequently of the number of workers to be housed. London spread outwards with the growth of manufacturing areas beyond the city, with development in Southwark and Lambeth to the south of the Thames and towards

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<sup>230</sup> Eg. J. McEwan & P. Sharpe (eds.), *Accommodating Poverty*.

<sup>231</sup> See, for example, the BBC’s forthcoming *The Slum* (due to air 2016) in which contestants will live in a subdivided Victorian house and battle to avoid the ‘dosshouse’ while attempting to ‘eke out a living through traditional trades like tailoring, candle-making and wood-turning’ and selling food and flowers in the streets, ‘BBC Two Announces Ambitious New Living History Series – The Slum (w/t).’ BBC, 2016, accessed 17<sup>th</sup> July 2016, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2016/bbc-two-the-slum>.

Mile End in the east.<sup>232</sup> Manchester and Leeds rapidly infilled remaining space in the centres, then spread outwards as they developed new areas of working-class housing to accommodate a growing workforce for the new factories, distinct from the more integrated areas of housing built previously.<sup>233</sup> Even in the smaller outlying Pennine towns, such as Bamford's Middleton, economic change marked the landscapes in which working people made home. All of the major canal routes through the Pennines had been cut by 1816, and investors rapidly caught on to the possibilities of mechanised production and built their mills along these waterways and in the river valleys.<sup>234</sup> Katrina Navickas has argued that these privately-owned built structures, along with the enclosure of the commons and the grandiose civic buildings emerging in the newly prosperous northern towns, constituted a privatisation of public space unprecedented in the northern towns, and one which was often vigorously resisted.<sup>235</sup> These changes to the built environment reflected a growing distance between the middle and working classes, also evident in changes to working practice. Samuel Bamford, for example, lamented that employers were becoming too proud to join their workers for refreshment following the ritual 'bearing home' to Manchester of finished work produced in the surrounding villages.<sup>236</sup> 'Bearing home' remained a festive occasion, an opportunity for sociability among fellow (male) workers, even as the landscapes through which the weavers brought their work changed. Across the Pennines, the relatively egalitarian relationship between employers and employed in the West Riding textile was also shifting. Adrian Randall has noted that the new and increasing presence of factories in these landscapes was also perceived as ominous by workers in the West Riding, since even the smaller mills built in this period suggested the change in working practices to come.<sup>237</sup>

In London too, the environment in which working people made their homes was altered by patterns of investment and development. William Hart noted rising rents as housing near

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<sup>232</sup> Guillery, *The Small House in Eighteenth Century London*, pp.21-24.

<sup>233</sup> M.W. Beresford, 'The Back-To-Back House in Leeds, 1787-1937' in *The History of Working-Class Housing: A Symposium*, edited by S.D. Chapman (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1971), pp.99-105; Oxford Archaeology North, 'Co-op Headquarters, Miller Street, Manchester', p.15. Beresford notes that development in Leeds was concentrated to the north, south, and east, with the west 'desperately reserved for better quality building', p.104.

<sup>234</sup> The dates of completion were as follows: Rochdale Canal, 1804; Huddersfield Canal, 1811; Leeds-Liverpool Canal 1816: see B. Trinder, *The Making of the Industrial Landscape* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1982), p.116.

<sup>235</sup> Navickas, *Protest and the Politics of Space and Place*, p.xi, p.3, p.6.

<sup>236</sup> Bamford, *Early Days*, pp.107-113.

<sup>237</sup> A. Randall, *Before the Luddites: Custom, Community and Machinery in the English Woollen Industry, 1776-1809* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.45.



the Thames was cleared to make way for the expansion of the docks.<sup>238</sup> Towards the centre of the capital, Lynn MacKay noted the use of ‘improvement’ of the built environment, the clearing away of ‘eyesores’ and ‘slums’, as a means to shape respectable behaviour, all the while pushing working-class people into ever more overcrowded and distinct areas of the city, into the haphazard array of backstreets and courts that continued to lurk behind the elegant Georgian main streets.<sup>239</sup> This process was made possible by the nature of landholding within the metropolis, where wealthy aristocratic landlords, for whom affordable housing was hardly a priority, controlled vast swathes of the city and used the built environment as a means to display their power.<sup>240</sup> Within his account of the development of north London, William Hone recalled a mud cottage erected in Hag-bush lane, on the outskirts of London, in the 1810s, ‘partly on the disused road, and partly on the waste of the manor’ by a family of rough sleepers. The land was situated between that of ‘two rich men’ who deemed this family’s hut ‘by no means a respectable neighbour for their cattle’. Refusing to leave the land, the family found their cottage destroyed by the rich men’s labourers, but the workhouse refused to accept them, insisting that the landowners had no right to remove the makeshift cottage. The labourer having rebuilt his home, ‘wealth again made war on poverty, and while away from his wife and child, his scarcely half-raised hut was pulled down during a heavy rain, and his wife and child left in the lane shelterless’. Hone noted the sad irony that, having built a third time, the family made a living selling small beer to the builders whose work was rapidly connecting the lane to the metropolis and would thus eventually encroach upon the public land on which the cottage stood.<sup>241</sup> The tale reveals Hone’s political sympathies, and thus perhaps his telling is not entirely reliable, but nonetheless suggests the ways in which working-class people might have encountered the privatisation of land through enclosure, ‘improvement’ and the constant demand for profitable building space. Lucy Caffyn found that squatters’ cottages frequently appeared upon common land in the early eighteenth century, especially in mining areas, but the enclosure of the commons reduced the possibilities for such building,

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<sup>238</sup> ‘The Autobiography of William Hart, Cooper, 1776-1857: A Respectable Artisan in the Industrial Revolution’, edited by P. Hudson and L. Hunter, in *London Journal*, Vol.7, No.1 (1981), p.155.

<sup>239</sup> L. MacKay, *Respectability and the London Poor, 1780-1870* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013), p.13. The intentions of ‘improvers’ could, however, be frustrated by the continued customary use of space by the working-classes – see E. Griffin, ‘The “Urban Renaissance” and the Mob: Rethinking Civic Improvement Over the Long Eighteenth Century’ in *Structures and Transformations in Modern British History*, edited by D. Feldman & J. Lawrence (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp.54-73.

<sup>240</sup> Green, *From Artisans to Paupers*, p.142.

<sup>241</sup> Hone, ‘Cottage Formerly in Hag-bush Lane’ in *The Every-Day Book*.

thus encouraging a reliance on the commercial housing market just as the loss of rights to glean or graze cattle on such land pushed families into a reliance on waged labour.<sup>242</sup> The shaping of the landscape, then, physically reflected the growing power of the capitalist middle classes, and the devaluing of customary spatial practices in favour of potential profit. Working-class people therefore found their everyday environments significantly altered by wider changes over which they had very limited control.

Of course, some of the investment in both London and the north was directed towards the provision of housing specifically intended for the working classes. Stanley Chapman has discussed how the early factory colonies, such as Cromford Mills in Derbyshire, just south of our study area, built new housing as the enterprise developed in order to attract an increasing workforce, having initially used existing housing or adapted other buildings. The new purpose-built workers' housing followed similar patterns to that already existing in the area, but the extensive survival at Cromford and in other factory colonies in the region suggests a reasonable standard of building quality. Some of these houses included domestic weaving workshops, while others consisted of just two rooms on a one-up-one-down pattern, but many had gardens attached and were rather less cramped than the courts of Leeds, Manchester and around London, where houses were constructed in a more haphazard fashion on whatever land was available.<sup>243</sup> Lucy Caffyn, for example, has discussed the improvements made to estate housing at Harewood in Leeds, where stone and thatch 'hovels' were replaced in the 1790s by two-storey stone cottages designed by John Carr, with a school and a ribbon factory, as well as land for grazing animals, provided at the same time. Though the sturdiness and roominess of these cottages may well have enhanced the comfort of Edwin Lascelles' workers, he was perhaps as much concerned with enhancing his own status and the value of Harewood. In this ambition, a survey of the estate carried out in 1796 declared his success: 'These Comfortable Habitations reflect great Honour and Praise on their Noble Owner ... The Example is highly meritorious and consonant to the Grandeur of the Place it adjoins'.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> L. Caffyn, *Workers' Housing in West Yorkshire, 1750-1920* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1986), p.6; J. Humphries, 'Enclosures, Common Rights, and Women: The Proletarianization of Families in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries', in *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol.50, No.1 (1990), pp.17-42. As Humphries noted, this loss of common rights impacted especially on women and children.

<sup>243</sup> S.D. Chapman, "'Workers' Housing in the Cotton Factory Colonies, 1770-1850' in *Textile History*, Vol.7 (1976), pp.119-124.

<sup>244</sup> Caffyn, *Workers Housing in West Yorkshire*, pp.24-26.

The higher quality housing provided by Richard Arkwright and Edwin Lascelles may well also have been designed to attract a respectable workforce, careful of appearances and quietly domestic. Certainly, the provision of housing enabled the employer to keep a better watch over his workers' leisure time: later philanthropists were to ensure their workforce did not have access to a pub, as at Saltaire near Bradford.<sup>245</sup> Like the model villages of the nineteenth century, these employer-provided residences involved a compromise on behalf of the worker: a trade-in of freedom for material security. Living conditions may have been rather more salubrious than elsewhere, but workers in employer-provided housing must have been aware that any dispute could mean the loss of their home as well as their job, providing them with a strong disincentive to make trouble. Given the reluctance of working-class people to submit to domestic surveillance and control in charitable institutions such as the workhouse, however, it may have been preferable to live in poorer quality housing free from such impositions.

Unsurprisingly, alternatives to employer-provided housing varied in quality. In London, at least beyond the central parishes, speculative building was haphazard and piecemeal, largely funded by individuals and small groups, who often did the building themselves.<sup>246</sup> Peter Guillery has attributed the survival of the city's vernacular tradition to the working-class origins of those successful artisans and labourers who were able to invest in building, though their limited capital meant that such development was usually small-scale, high-density, and/or poor quality in order to extract maximum profit from minimum outlay.<sup>247</sup> Likewise, housing provision in the industrialising north was frequently undertaken in this period by the working-classes themselves. Building clubs capitalised on periods of prosperity to pool finances and invest in building for themselves or to rent out. Again, patterns of building reflected local knowledge and tradition, and could be constrained by the need to balance quality against knowledge of their peers' limited resources for rent.<sup>248</sup> Samuel Bamford's depiction of Middleton's idyllic 'club houses', with their 'numerous trim

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<sup>245</sup> John Styles has pointed to the noticeable absence of industrial action at Saltaire – perhaps evidence that it either produced, or more likely attracted, a quiescent workforce willing to enter into a relationship of obligation in return for material security. See *Titus Salt and Saltaire: Industry and Virtue* (Shipley: Salts Estates Ltd, 1990), pp.28-30.

<sup>246</sup> Building regulations covered only those parishes included in the weekly bills of mortality, see C. Knowles & P. H. Pitt, *The History of Building Regulations in London, 1189-1972* (London: Architectural Press, 1972), p.49. A map of the areas included in the bills of mortality in 1831 is available at *Histpop: Online Historical Population Reports*, accessed 15<sup>th</sup> July 2016, [http://www.histpop.org/resources/pngs/0011/00150/00001\\_24bit\\_50.png](http://www.histpop.org/resources/pngs/0011/00150/00001_24bit_50.png).

<sup>247</sup> Guillery, *The Small House in Eighteenth-Century London*, pp.91-2, p.150, p.181.

<sup>248</sup> Caffyn, *Workers' Housing in West Yorkshire*, p.41, p.43.

gardens' and dramatic views of unspoilt landscape, represented a high standard of accommodation, but this was far from universal in building society development.<sup>249</sup> In Leeds, for instance, club builders were amongst those who constructed the notorious 'back-to-backs', synonymous with poor quality and overcrowding.<sup>250</sup> Furthermore, tensions arose within building clubs when members felt inequitably treated: the occupants of the first houses built by Longridge's building society complained that alterations to improve subsequent building created a 'difference and inequality' amongst members which ran contrary to the 'true principle & spirit as well as the words of Rule 9 of the club'.<sup>251</sup> Building clubs therefore offer problematic evidence of working-class community solidarity: while they promoted collective endeavour, the ultimate outcome was individual gain rather than a larger project of improving living conditions. Guillery's nostalgic regret for the decline of 'an improvisational artisan approach to housebuilding that was neither emulative nor exploitative' perhaps underplays the profit motivations of those building for their fellow workers.<sup>252</sup> The motives of working-class building investors were not necessarily any more egalitarian than those of their employers. The pattern of industrial boom and bust in our period enabled some working-class speculators to invest, but always with the knowledge that their tenants might experience less security, and the need to balance against future downturns in their own finances.

Exploring the provision of housing suggests some of the tensions and compromises that existed between desires for economic security and for freedom, and between individual versus collective means of improving living standards. Working-class homes, as we saw in the previous chapter, also had a complicated relationship with respectability. Respectability and domesticity were intertwined – the home was a site in which the respectable values of independence, self-sufficiency, and self-control could be materialised, and which symbolised a moral sanctuary separate from the corrupting influences of the outside world.<sup>253</sup> As we noted, the performance of these values was crucial to the campaign for working-class political enfranchisement, demonstrating moral fitness for citizenship. Yet control over home spaces proved elusive. As middle-class homes began to compartmentalise their various functions, the borders and functions of working-class

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<sup>249</sup> S. Bamford, *The Autobiography of Samuel Bamford*, Vol.1 (Frank Cass & Co Ltd. edition), p.98. (The account of the Club Houses is not included in the Dunckley edition.)

<sup>250</sup> Beresford, 'The Back-To-Back House in Leeds', p.102.

<sup>251</sup> LRO, DDH 999, Letter from John Cross, Preston, to the Building Society, Longridge, 28<sup>th</sup> March 1795.

<sup>252</sup> Guillery, *The Small House*, p.156.

<sup>253</sup> See above, p.74.

households remained decidedly blurred, with fluidity between home and neighbourhood, family and community, living and working. The attempt to maintain the home as a site of masculine control, which in the campaign for manhood suffrage represented the ability to exercise political responsibilities, was subject to economic and community pressures, as well as to the effects of political repression. Crucially, as discussed in more detail below, it also relied on the unpaid and often undervalued labour of women.

First, however, it is worth noting that working-class people *were* concerned about the appearance of their homes, and with its security and comfort, so that domesticity cannot be simply dismissed as a middle-class preoccupation. Samuel Bamford, as mentioned above, also described the club houses in Middleton, which, alongside the survival of some (albeit modernised) worker's housing from the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries remind us that not all building was of poor quality. For example, W.J. Smith has described the 'Neo-grecian' architectural pretensions of weavers' housing built at Rochdale and Bury in the early nineteenth century, with their well-proportioned sash windows offering evidence of a period of prosperity.<sup>254</sup> Moving to the domestic interior, my inventory sample reveals indications of the pride taken by both men and women in making home a comfortable and attractive space. The consumer behaviour of working-class people is discussed in greater detail in the fifth chapter of this thesis, but it is worth drawing attention to some of the goods found within working-class homes here if we are to establish them as spaces resonant of more than poverty, alienation and misery.

The inventories show that, by the end of the eighteenth century, cheaper production and transport had brought a range of consumer goods for the household within the reach of working-class men and women. Though the sample is small and not representative, especially with regard to gender, it does include both pauper and probate inventories, thus balancing the over-representation of wealthier individuals that arises from the use of probate alone. Furthermore, its findings are corroborated by other inventory studies, as well as by archaeological evidence.<sup>255</sup> Time and again we find decorative items and small comforts within the homes of even the poorest individuals in the sample. Sarah Hargreaves of Westgate Hill in West Yorkshire died a pauper in 1821, but the overseers of the poor found she had possessed at least some decent bedding – a feather bed and pillow, 'good'

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<sup>254</sup> W. J. Smith, 'The Architecture of the Domestic System in South-East Lancashire and the Adjoining Pennines', in *The History of Working-Class Housing: A Symposium*, edited by S.D. Chapman (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1971), pp.257-258.

<sup>255</sup> See Introduction, p.27.

blankets and coverlet – as well as a tea kettle, mahogany tea board, and looking glass.<sup>256</sup> John Holmes of Addingham, West Yorkshire, also reliant on poor relief, displayed pictures and pottery items in his house, as well as enlivening it with pet birds.<sup>257</sup> In Teddington, near London, the overseers assessed the property of William Mills, a labourer who had deserted his wife, so that following her death their children were in the care of the parish. The house in which the recently deceased Mrs Mills had lived was surprisingly well furnished for a home occupied by the wife of an absent labourer and her two very young children. As well as a number of prints and looking glasses, calico curtains and mahogany furnishing, Mrs Mills had left a good supply of china and linen, as well as a well-stocked shop with brand new bow windows.<sup>258</sup> It is likely that she was able to afford such items by letting rooms, something discussed further below, and by furnishing her house well she would attract a better class of client.

In general, the London inventories suggest a more materially-rich domestic environment than those in the Pennines, presumably because fancier goods were more readily available in the capital than the provinces, or perhaps because the visibility of the aristocracy heightened awareness of newer fashions. Overall, however, the inventories demonstrate that the majority of individuals in the sample had access to tea- and coffee-making equipment and at least one clock and looking-glass; more than half could display ceramics on a dresser or shelf, slept on a comfortable feather bed, and drew the curtains at night; and a significant minority owned books and prints or pictures (see Table 1). These were all items newly available to working-class people in the eighteenth century, and it is worthy of note that by our period they seem to have been embraced by relatively prosperous workers and the very poor alike. More prosaically, 68% of the documents included equipment associated with house cleaning or laundry, such as brushes or clothes airers, demonstrating the importance of domestic practices of cleanliness to self-respect and self-presentation. The desire to improve the physical environment of home also reflects an emotional attachment to the site, which is also very evident in political rhetoric from the same period, as we saw in the previous chapter.

Later chapters discuss in more detail the political implications of this access to more and better household goods, but here it is worth noting that the creation of a comfortable

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<sup>256</sup> WYAS Bradford, TONG/129/92 Inventory of goods belonging to Sarah Hargreaves, 1821.

<sup>257</sup> WYAS Bradford, 49/D90/6/G/13 Inventory of goods belonging to John Holmes, 1818.

<sup>258</sup> LMA, MJ/SP/1799/APR/049/1-3 Petition by the parish of Teddington to sell the goods and chattels of William Mills, labourer, 1799.

interior, with the potential to express something of oneself, perhaps heightened concerns about the security of the domestic boundary. Whatever else they might represent ideologically or emotionally, household goods were stores of capital which could be exchanged to provide financial liquidity, and thus crucial to the precarious economies of working-class people.<sup>259</sup> As such, however, they might equally prove a temptation to thieves, as evidenced by the huge number of cases recorded in the records of the Old Bailey in which stolen goods were pawned or sold on. The borders around home space, however, were not only important in terms of property and jurisprudence, but spoke to deep and powerful emotions. The idea that ‘an Englishman’s home was his castle’ was reiterated right down the social scale, a symbol of the equality under the law which was crucial to constructions of the ‘Freeborn Englishman’ – a concept which itself underpinned working-class politics, both radical and conservative.<sup>260</sup> This is a theme reiterated in the popular resistance to the assessment of the hearth tax in the late-seventeenth century, which resulted in its much-celebrated repeal by William III.<sup>261</sup> Amanda Vickery has also shown the importance of extensive daily rituals which ordinary people in eighteenth-century London used to protect their spaces, drawing upon an analogy between house and body to explore the domestic boundary as a place of vulnerability to malevolent invasion. Unauthorised access threatened not just property but the construction of home as a place of security, a site of comfort and nourishment.<sup>262</sup> The ability to regulate access to intimate space also spoke to the role of bodily continence in the performance of respectability, and the crucial role of protection and discipline upon which masculine citizenship was contingent, as discussed in the previous chapter.

Control of the domestic boundary was no mean feat, however, especially for poorer households in densely populated areas. Vickery acknowledged that the importance of ritual protection of the threshold was perhaps heightened by the haphazard and frequently close-

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<sup>259</sup> Lemire, *The Business of Everyday Life*, p.104.

<sup>260</sup> Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p.85, p.89. Thompson has also discussed the importance of the perception that English people of all classes were equal under law in *Whigs and Hunters* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), pp.262-264. See also Hay. ‘Property, Authority and the Law’.

<sup>261</sup> S. Pennell, ‘Refused Entry: Responses to Tax Collecting in Early Modern England,’ paper presented at ‘Visiting Rites, 1600-1800’, University of Northampton, Northampton. Sept. 2009. My thanks to Sara for making this unpublished work available to me.

<sup>262</sup> Vickery, ‘An Englishman’s Home Is His Castle?’, esp. pp.153-161.

packed living arrangements of London's working classes.<sup>263</sup> Francis Place described the overcrowded area of central London in which he lived early on in his marriage:

In a few years from this time it will scarcely be believed that an immense number of houses were built in narrow courts, and close lanes, each house being at least three stories and many of them four stories above the ground floor. That in these courts and lanes the dirt and filth used to accumulate in heaps but was seldom removed. That many of these tall houses had two three and sometimes four rooms on a floor and that from the Garretts to the cellars a family lived or starved in each room. Circulation of air was out of the question...<sup>264</sup>

Conditions in the London and the larger northern towns, where back-to-backs and subdivided housing were common, were not conducive to the privacy of individuals or families. In the centre of London, from the City to Chelsea in the west and St Pancras in the north, regulations created in the aftermath of the Great Fire set a minimum width for party walls, as well as restricting the use of timber, but the legislation controlling separate dwellings increased the reliance on provision of accommodation within subdivided buildings of the kind described by Place.<sup>265</sup> In some parts of Manchester, party walls in the upper storey of houses were designed to be removed in some buildings to create a shared workspace above separate living accommodation.<sup>266</sup> Even where houses did not interconnect, the narrowness of the streets and the shared water and privy facilities meant that life was to some extent conducted under the gaze of one's neighbours.<sup>267</sup> The complex layout of interconnecting alleys and courts, easily navigated by those familiar with the landscape, the areas of housing built into the gardens of earlier properties and the subdivided buildings in growing cities could all seem chaotic and threateningly opaque to outside observers, particularly those who wished to improve appearances and apply rational

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<sup>263</sup> Vickery, 'An Englishman's Home Is His Castle?', esp. pp.158-160.

<sup>264</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, p.108.

<sup>265</sup> Knowles & Pitt, *The History of Building Regulation in London*, p.53; George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century*, p.86.

<sup>266</sup> M. Nevell, 'Living in the Industrial City: Housing Quality, Land Ownership and the Archaeological Evidence from Industrial Manchester, 1740 -1850' in *International Journal for Historical Archaeology*, Vol.15, No.4 (2011), pp.598; Caffyn, *Workers' Housing in West Yorkshire*, pp.14-15, p.19, pp.21-22.

<sup>267</sup> MacKay, *Respectability and the London Poor*, p.20.



principles to the development of urban space.<sup>268</sup> City life, then, was not conducive to the kind of individualised family lives celebrated in middle-class domesticity, where the family was distinct from the community.

The porousness of boundaries in individual dwellings, conjoined houses, and narrow streets, and their potentially disruptive social consequences, are evident in a defamation case brought to London's Consistory Court by Mary Ann Barke against her neighbour James Cook Bealby in 1791.<sup>269</sup> The first witness, Jane Peck, lived in an outbuilding of Bealby's house and was required to use a passage through that house to reach the street. It was as she was doing so that she heard Bealby call Barke a bunter and a whore, but she was certain that her friend Jane Jones, minding the baby in the Pecks' house, would also have overheard. Rebecca Hayhurst, a former occupant of both Bealby's house and the Pecks' out-house, also heard the quarrel while standing at the top of the stairs. The case offers some insight into the often cramped and makeshift conditions encountered in London's overpopulated centre, in which proximity could breed contempt and tensions erupt with sufficient force to require recourse to the church courts. Even in less crowded areas, community frustrations required resolution. In Manchester, the residents of Back Turner Street jointly petitioned the magistrate in 1794, calling on him to stop the proliferation of brothels in the area and the nuisance caused by the presence of these 'Bad Girls' and the shady characters they attracted.<sup>270</sup> In the silk-weaving village of Middleton where Samuel Bamford grew up, the first of May, or 'Mischief Night' offered the opportunity for a cathartic exercise in community relations: 'any one having a grudge against a neighbour was at liberty to indulge it, provided he kept his own counsel'. Behavioural expectations were reiterated in symbolic form. Mops were left on doorsteps to signify slatternly domestic habits, while gorse bushes and salt could indicate sexual immodesty, though Bamford suggested that the (usually female) victims of these symbolic slights were more than capable of retaliation.<sup>271</sup> These examples suggest not only the irritations that arose from a too-close knowledge with one's neighbour's habits, but also channels of resolution and

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<sup>268</sup> J. Marriot, 'The Spatiality of the Poor in Eighteenth-Century London' in *The Streets of London: From the Great Fire to the Great Stink*, edited by T. Hitchcock & H. Shore (London: Rivers Oram Press, 2003), pp.121, 123, 130.

<sup>269</sup> For the purposes of this study, I read a number of deposition records from the period 1789-1806. These are held at London Metropolitan Archives under the reference numbers DL/C/284 and DL/C/288.

<sup>270</sup> Manchester Archives+, GB127.BR FF 942.72 S176, Letter within 'Volume of Broad sides on thefts, murder, burglary, robbery and elections 1792-1859'.

<sup>271</sup> Bamford, *Early Days*, p.128.

restoration of order to a community. Though in some of these cases, outside authority in the form of the courts or the magistrate was resorted to, the action was initiated within the community itself. As Lynn MacKay noted, there was a ritual element to many of these neighbourhood disputes, ensuring that they were conducted in such a way that both sides could reach resolution without losing face – something which was crucial to the continued functioning of mutuality within neighbourhoods.<sup>272</sup>

These disputes and their resolutions are therefore important because they suggest a desire within working-class communities to maintain order through generally accepted standards of behaviour, whether in relationships within or beyond the home, morality, or even cleanliness. In other words, they represent shared aspirations for the respectability of an area, defined and policed from within – a politics of everyday life. The power differential between working-class households and employers, charitable providers, overseers of the poor and local law enforcement was considerably greater, thus negating attempts to retain dignity in resolving disputes. We will see in a later chapter, for example, that some poor law authorities visited recipients of relief in their homes, judging their living conditions in order to determine their entitlement. The experience of direct surveillance from such sources would thus be qualitatively different from that conducted by one's peers, hence the reluctance of some working-class people to provide evidence for social observers or for poor relief purposes.<sup>273</sup> It is also important to recognise that, though lack of privacy within working-class communities could prove frustrating, the flexibility of domestic boundaries did have some advantages. Close-knit living could reinforce social relationships and provide the trust and openness necessary to sustain community-based formal and informal credit arrangements, something discussed in greater detail in the fourth chapter of this study.<sup>274</sup> Similarly, reputation and personal connections were helpful in obtaining work or attracting customers, so that working-class families were reluctant to move far from neighbourhoods where they were known. In their study of the movement of people and goods in nineteenth-century Limehouse, Alastair Owens and Nigel Jeffries have suggested that the practical and emotional ties of a community resulted in high mobility, but within a

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<sup>272</sup> MacKay's *Respectability and the London Poor*, pp.31-33.

<sup>273</sup> M. Hewitt, 'District Visiting and the Constitution of Domestic Space in the Mid-Nineteenth Century', in *Domestic Space: Reading the Nineteenth-Century Interior*, edited by Inga Bryden & Janet Floyd (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp.121-141; MacKay, *Respectability and the London Poor*, p.110; King, 'Meer pennies for my baskitt will be enough', p.137.

<sup>274</sup> MacKay, *Respectability and the London Poor*, p.20; Lemire, *The Business of Everyday Life*, chapter 2.

relatively limited locale.<sup>275</sup> Travelling was also tiresome, as the cooper William Hart found when he moved three miles from his workplace to avoid the attentions of press gangs, and his home was less welcoming when he felt isolated from social connections.<sup>276</sup> Lynn MacKay has demonstrated that these factors generated an attachment to place, so that smaller communities, sometimes consisting of a single street, developed within London, and the anonymity of the capital cannot be taken for granted despite its vast population.<sup>277</sup> This is a pattern reflected in the organisation of the London Corresponding Society, whose famously unlimited membership was divided into multiple, locally-based 'cells'. Radical organisation built upon existing community relationships, forming geographically-located societies operating within a larger constellation of communicating groups. This community basis is perhaps most evident in accounts of the march to Peterloo, in which the radical societies of the various towns around Manchester marched in distinct groups, and with distinct banners, to St Peter's Field.<sup>278</sup> We can see, then, that the fluidity between family and community, crossing domestic boundaries, had very real social and economic benefits for working-class people and assisted in political organisation. This should also remind us that home was a multi-scalar concept, mapped out through practices which emphasised belonging.

As we consider the struggles to materialise respectability in working-class homes, it is worth noting here that those who were involved in radical politics tended to be concentrated in trades located either in the home itself or in small workshops close to the place of residence. The fact of work itself reinforced the porousness of domestic boundaries, complicating any understanding of the house as a private refuge. Of course, many middle-class professional men lived in or close to their place of work, but this was a qualitatively different experience from that of the manual worker, for whom work was often noisy, dirty and smelly; an environmental presence that could not easily be enclosed within an office.<sup>279</sup> Intensified demand in the late-eighteenth century meant that heavy industries such as brickmaking and tanning concentrated around the outskirts of towns and cities, so that

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<sup>275</sup> Owens and Jeffries, 'People and Things on the Move', pp.13-14. My own research using the consistory court records held in the London Metropolitan Archives offers further evidence of frequent short-distance moves in early nineteenth-century London in the testimony relating to the case of *Ellis vs Ellis*, November 1806. Maria Ellis and her co-habitee Frederick Shelley appear at multiple addresses in this testimony, but all of these were in either Great Peter Street or Perkins Rents in the parish of Westminster. See LMA, DL/C/288, f.67-84.

<sup>276</sup> 'The Autobiography of William Hart', pp.144-160.

<sup>277</sup> MacKay, *Respectability and the London Poor*, pp.19-20.

<sup>278</sup> Navickas, *Protest and the Politics of Space and Place*, p.58, p.82.

<sup>279</sup> Davidoff & Hall, *Family Fortunes*, pp.364-367.

places such as Southwark became associated with the noxious smells they produced, and the fractures within the working classes between different trade groups were reiterated in the layout of the city.<sup>280</sup> It was not possible, however, for working-class people to entirely separate themselves from the sensory effects of common occupations. The dyeing and printing of cloth often took place within the centre of towns and cities, adding to the pollution of areas which already suffered from their high-density population, and any trade associated with animals was of course accompanied by noise and smells. Francis Place vividly described the ‘putrid effluvia’ that reeked in the close, dark streets close by the ‘butchers shops and killing places’ in the parish of St. Clement Danes.<sup>281</sup> The medic T.A. Murray, investigating the spread of domestic diseases, found that in many London houses:

The state of the windows requires to be particularly noticed ... Many of these cannot be opened without admitting air apparently more noxious, certainly not less offensive, than that in the room.<sup>282</sup>

The middle classes moved away from these areas; working-class people, as discussed above, had strong social and economic motives to remain. Furthermore, in the early industrial period – and in London throughout the nineteenth century – the home was itself an important site of economically-productive labour. Those who traded out of their home welcomed strangers within out of necessity, as well as inviting the gaze of passers-by on the street through the large windows through which their wares were displayed. In a print showing the interior of a *Cobler’s Hall* (Fig. 9) for example, it seems that the cobbler is working within his own room and trading through the open window. The house appears to be on a one-up, one-down pattern, with the staircase against the chimney breast, and the wife cooking downstairs, so that the customer would be able to view a great deal of the cobbler’s domestic, as well as working, life. Though grander establishments than this might be able sacrifice the front room entirely to the storage and display of goods, the shop window remained a vulnerable entry point to the home, and the goods displayed represented a temptation to those who were hard-up. The criminal case against one Joseph Page, tried for burglary in January 1790, turned on whether or not he had attempted to steal from the window display of a cutlers shop. The charge of burglary, often carrying a

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<sup>280</sup> Guillery, *The Small House in Eighteenth-Century London*, p.118. See also Green, *From Artisans to Paupers*, p.6 on the occupational fractures between skilled and bespoke trades to the west of London, and the unskilled, ‘slop’ trades in the east.

<sup>281</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, p.107-8.

<sup>282</sup> T. A. Murray, *Remarks on the Situation of the Poor in the Metropolis, as Contributing to the Progress of Contagious Diseases* (London, 1801), British Library Tracts 1786 -1816 Shelfmark 8286.a.1, p.4.

heavier penalty than other forms of theft, was pressed because the cutlers shop was attached to a dwelling house.<sup>283</sup>

Publicans likewise often lived in their place of work, and Francis Place noted the impact of living in his father's pub on their family practices.

when he [Simon Place] kept a public house the time of dining was limited to ten minutes, the hour of dining a quarter past one, this time was selected as most convenient on account of a number of working men who dined at twelve o'clock and remained till one... There were three large tables in the taproom with high partitions between them so as to make each of them to some extent private ... though my father chose to dine in the tap-room, nothing was so offensive to him as any one looking at him or at the table, and when any one did so he would shew his resentment by a burst of passion vented in sufficiently offensive language.<sup>284</sup>

Letting out rooms – either in a formal context as an inn- or lodging-house keeper, or more informally – was another common economic strategy for working-class people, especially those in the London and the larger Pennine towns, which attracted high numbers of migrants looking for work. Both men and women were involved in the operation of lodging houses, but John Styles' examination of Old Bailey trial records suggested that it tended to be women – either on their own account as widows, or as wives or daughters of a male householder – who were responsible for the daily upkeep, something which clearly added to their already extensive domestic duties, discussed further below.<sup>285</sup> Catherine and James Field of Westminster, witnesses in a church court case involving a former tenant, testified that they let 'the greatest part' of their house in Jermyn Street as lodgings. Catherine told the court that it was her that cleaned the house and made the beds of their tenants, as she had no servant to assist her.<sup>286</sup> Providing lodging was not a strategy for easy

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<sup>283</sup> Old Bailey Proceedings Online. Trial of Joseph Page, 13<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1790. *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, version 7.0. Ref no. t17900113-40, accessed 5<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2014, <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org>; Vickery, 'An Englishman's Home is his Castle?', p.156, fn.18.

<sup>284</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, pp.39-40.

<sup>285</sup> Styles, 'Lodging at the Old Bailey', p.70; J. McEwan, 'The Lodging Exchange: Space, Authority and Knowledge in Eighteenth-Century London' in *Accommodating Poverty: The Housing and Living Arrangements of the English Poor c.1600-1850*, edited by J. McEwan & P. Sharpe (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p.56.

<sup>286</sup> LMA DL/C/288 Consistory Court Deposition Books, Fozard vs Fozard, November 1796, f.159-160.

money, but good tenants could provide a steady stream of income. It seems likely that a Mrs Mills of Teddington, whose surprisingly well-furnished home we saw earlier, supplemented her income from the shop by letting rooms. The house had seven beds, more than double what would be needed for Mrs Mills and her two young children, and the prevalence of decorative items might indicate an attempt to attract a better-than-average class of tenant.<sup>287</sup> This would be an important consideration for a lone woman: lodging relationships were liable to misconstruction which could be damaging to the reputation of both parties. William Hart, a London-based cooper, let a room for a time to a Mrs Gates, whose husband was away at sea, leading to scurrilous speculation about the nature of their relationship. Further problems arose when Mr Gates returned and made Hart uncomfortable with his drunken behaviour. However, these trials did not deter Hart from letting his rooms – at the end of his tenancy, he renewed the lease and took in two further families at a slightly enhanced rate. Thus Hart was able to attain householder status at a cost not much greater than that he would have expended on renting a room, and to supplement his income by recouping that expenditure from others.<sup>288</sup> Nonetheless, the lodging relationship necessarily involved some loss of privacy on both sides, as is evident from Catherine Field's account of examining her lodger's bed for evidence of sexual activity following a complaint from another resident.<sup>289</sup> Again, providing lodgings was a compromise, providing material benefits at the cost of some loss of privacy or control over space.

Unsurprisingly, given the West Yorkshire bias of the inventory sample, textiles are the most visible domestic manufacture in the documents. Of the 25 inventories listing manufacturing equipment, six contained one or more looms, and of these households five also had equipment for spinning or bobbin winding. A further three inventories listed other textile production equipment: wool combs, a wool wheel, and another spinning wheel. All but one of these households was based in West Yorkshire, the other in Bethnal Green, the heart of London's silk industry. Since the weaving of various textiles was crucial to the economies of the Pennine region and of parts of East London, its effects on domestic space receive particular attention here. The environmental impact of weaving differed according to the material in question. In Preston, houses were adapted to the need for

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<sup>287</sup> LMA, MJ/SP/1799/APR/049/1-3 Petition by the parish of Teddington to sell the goods and chattels of William Mills, labourer, 1799.

<sup>288</sup> Hart, 'Autobiography of William Hart', pp.156-157.

<sup>289</sup> LMA DL/C/288 Consistory Court Deposition Books, Fozard vs. Fozard, November 1796, f.160-161.

humid conditions for cotton weaving, so that large windows might be found lighting the cellar, beneath a raised front door accessed by steps from the street, though these damp, cool conditions cannot have made for a pleasant working environment.<sup>290</sup> Delicate silk work and finer cottons, meanwhile, needed considerable protection from the elements, so that in silk-weaving areas such as Middleton in Lancashire or the East End of London, great care was required to prevent environmental damage to the materials. This resulted in weaving rooms with windows that could not be opened even in the summer heat, and ‘the ordinary weaver had to work all through the winter without a fire’.<sup>291</sup> That hand-loom weaving was noisy work is evident from the archaeological remains of noise insulation in the form of walnut shells or waste silk stuffed in the gaps between floorboard joists, or sand layered between floorboards and flags.<sup>292</sup> The topographer James Peller Malcolm, writing of Bethnal Green in 1803, commented that ‘the eternal hum of their looms conveys a confusing effect to the passenger, by no means pleasant.’<sup>293</sup>

Observers did not record the grease and smell of wool, and Dr Ferriar, examining housing conditions in Manchester, discounted the more dangerous problem of cotton dust, which has since been found to contribute to respiratory diseases as well as spreading fever.<sup>294</sup> Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the increasing cost of land and materials encouraged the building of terraces, back-to-backs, or the peculiar back-to-earth cottages built into hillsides.<sup>295</sup> This could reduce ventilation, further increasing the effects of air pollution, and the work equipment physically dominated smaller rooms. Guillery’s work on Bethnal Green suggests that for East London’s silk workers, rents were simply too high to allow for separate living and working spaces, and so the loom would physically dominate the single room in which a weaver and his family lived, with more weavers in the rooms

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<sup>290</sup> Morgan, *Vanished Dwellings*, p.46.

<sup>291</sup> Smith, ‘The Architecture of the Domestic System in South-East Lancashire and the Adjoining Pennines’, p.262-264; Frances Holliss has commented on the glare and heat of workrooms with large windows, which must have been stifling on occasion: F. Holliss, *From Longhouse to Live/Work Unit: Parallel Histories and Absent Narratives*, in *Built from Below: British Architecture and the Vernacular*, edited by P. Guillery (Routledge, 2011), p.202.

<sup>292</sup> Holliss, *From Longhouse to Live/Work Unit*, p.202; M. Johnson, *English Houses 1300-1800: Vernacular Architecture and Social Life* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2010), p.146; Smith, ‘The Architecture of the Domestic System’, p.258-9.

<sup>293</sup> J.P. Malcolm, *Londinium Redivivum: Or, An ancient history and modern description of London*, Vol.1 (London, 1803), p.5, quoted in Guillery, *The Small House*, p.97.

<sup>294</sup> Ferriar opined that the chief cause of fever spreading in Manchester was the ‘incautious intercourse of the Poor with each other in places infected.’ Manchester Archives+, Manchester Boards of Health MSS 1796-1804, p.19, p.25; P. Kirby, *Child Workers and Industrial Health in Britain, 1780-1850* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), pp.80-88.

<sup>295</sup> Caffyn, *Workers’ Housing in West Yorkshire*, p.15.

above and below.<sup>296</sup> A concerned observer in London reported on ‘the cumbrous furniture, or utensils of trade, with which the apartments are clogged’, leaving little space for other domestic activities.<sup>297</sup> Such cramped working conditions could prove dangerous: Peter Kirby, for example, relates a particularly grisly report of a child caught up in and killed by machinery as he played nearby.<sup>298</sup> Less dramatically, the presence of whole families in cramped conditions surely also increased the risk of costly damage to machinery and to work in progress. On a day-to-day basis, the fact of one’s labour was an inescapable sensory presence within these working homes, a reminder of its centrality to family survival, perhaps contributing to the sense of claustrophobia which Francis Place claimed was experienced by all working men in the course of their labours.<sup>299</sup> It is in this context that it makes sense to speak of a working-class identity in this period, even if this was not something yet vocalised in any coherent manner or reflected in a unified class politics.

As a sales space or as a workshop, the home was also necessarily open to non-family members to some degree, in ways which left the occupants vulnerable. Joseph Spencer, who was accused of stealing goods from the rooms above a public house operated by Elizabeth Pally in 1793, was a regular customer. He was therefore left unwatched while she went to the cellar to attend to her business, during which time he apparently made his way upstairs and stole several items from her daughter’s room.<sup>300</sup> Workers coming to and from a business could also make a house more easily accessible to burglars, and employees had ample opportunity to scope out possibilities for theft. In 1790, Ann Jackson was tried for stealing from the home of her employer, Mr Cockerill, a chair maker, and Mrs Cockerill expressed her sense of vulnerability at the breach of trust: ‘I do not wish to see the woman hanged, and yet I am in danger’.<sup>301</sup> The presence of work materials in the home could also make the house a more tempting prospect for thieves. In the north of England, thefts of cloth in various stages of production from the producer’s property seem to have been common, with goods stolen directly from the loom or tenter on occasion.<sup>302</sup> The theft of silk from a loom in Jane Tourell’s Bethnal Green house was thought to have been

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<sup>296</sup> Guillery, *The Small House*, p.95-97.

<sup>297</sup> R. Willan, *Reports on the Diseases in London* (1801), p.256, quoted in George, *London Life*, p.95.

<sup>298</sup> Kirby, *Child Workers and Industrial Health*, p.91.

<sup>299</sup> F. Place, *Improvement of the Working People* (1834), pp.14-15, quoted in *Autobiography*, p.123, fn.1.

<sup>300</sup> Trial of Joseph Spencer and Joseph Douglas, 9<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1793. *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, version 7.2. Ref. no. t17930109-45, accessed 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2016, <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org>.

<sup>301</sup> Trial of Ann Harney and Ann Jackson, 13<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1790. *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, version 7.0. Ref. no. t17900113-2, accessed 5<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2014, <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org>.

<sup>302</sup> See the advertisements in Manchester Archives+, GB127.BR FF 942.72 S176, ‘Volume of Broad-sides on thefts, murder, burglary, robbery and elections 1792-1859’.



conducted 'by a person acquainted with the trade', though little was revealed at trial about the man who had pawned (and thus presumably stolen) it.<sup>303</sup> Work tools were also a target. In 1792, for example, William Griffith was indicted for stealing an anvil from his place of work, at the home of a fellow smith, Richard Barker.<sup>304</sup> Trade disputes could also threaten domestic security: striking workers saw houses of blacklegs as legitimate targets, destroying the equipment of those who threatened to undercut them.<sup>305</sup> While it is important to remember that this is evidence of the breakdown of social norms, through crime and violence, we can see that economic circumstance and the close-knit conditions in which working people lived could negatively impact upon the ability to control access to the home by undesirable elements, thus undermining the power of the householder over the space.

Where the nature of one's business necessitated that customers had physical or even visual access to the home, working-class people had to exercise care over the way the space appeared to these outsiders. As we saw above, for example, Mrs Mills of Teddington would have sought to make her home appear aesthetically pleasing, well decorated and cared for, in order to create a space which suggested to potential lodgers that a certain standard of behaviour and respect would be expected. Likewise, the attention paid by employers to their workers' housing could be used to remind the residents of their obligations to a patriarchal figure who provided both wages and residence. As we shall see in the sixth chapter of this study, the potential for surveillance in many working-class homes had implications for political expression. As we saw in the previous chapter, the home was vulnerable to politicised attack from within the working classes as well as from the authorities of state. Even where the tensions between loyalist and radical working-class factions did not erupt into physical violence, the lack of effective privacy within neighbourhoods could heighten the experience of intimidation. Strong political views would become well-known amongst neighbours, with the consequent threat of animosity and persecution. Michael Phillips has suggested that William Blake was deterred from publishing politically-charged works in 1792-3 through fear of repercussions from within the community. Blake's Lambeth was also home to a committed loyalist association, which went door to door in the area to demand signatures for their declaration to the King. One

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<sup>303</sup> Trial of Mary Lyons, 21<sup>st</sup> May 1817. *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, version 6.0. Ref. no. t18170521-70, accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2012, <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org>.

<sup>304</sup> Trial of William Griffith, 15<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1792. *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, version 7.0. Ref. no. t17921215-14, accessed 5<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2014, <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org>.

<sup>305</sup> For example, see Guillery, *The Small House*, pp.87-88.

of the most active members of this association, David Evans, lived very close to Blake's home and would have regularly passed by it, on which route he would also have been able to view the activity in the printing room through the ground floor window.<sup>306</sup> The degree of publicity associated with home's function as a place of work could thus complicate its use as a space for political expression.

We can therefore get some sense of how working-class domestic life was affected by the realities of the occupants' labour, how home spaces might thus be imprinted with reminders of one's working-class status, and how control over access was made difficult by the locating of work in the home. Nonetheless, working in or near the home could be of both material and symbolic importance. As E.P. Thompson famously argued, domestic manufactures allowed for a level of control over one's own time that was unavailable to those whose labour took place on an employer's premises, and increasingly so as formerly domestic manufacturers moved towards large-scale factory production.<sup>307</sup> The worker at home was independent and able to take personal pride in the skill of his or her work, unlike the anonymous factory workers reduced to their value as 'hands'.<sup>308</sup> We have already noted how the process of 'bearing home' work could forge wider community relationships, connecting workers who might otherwise have been isolated in individual home-workshops in smaller villages. If work at home complicated the boundaries between work and leisure time, this could be beneficial for the collective relationships between fellow working people which underpinned the development of popular radicalism, as we will see in the next chapter.

Aside from these less tangible pleasures of the domestic system, control over one's own time could be of material benefit. Many home-based workers maintained other economically-productive pursuits alongside manufacturing. Over half (30) of the household inventories within my sample recorded some kind of agricultural equipment among the possessions, though 'farmer' or 'yeoman' was given as the occupation in only 14 (around a quarter) of cases (Table 2).<sup>309</sup> The extent of agricultural production among these individuals

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<sup>306</sup> M. Phillips, 'Blake and the Terror, 1792-3' in *The Library*, Sixth Series, Vol.16, No.4 (1994), pp.274-278.

<sup>307</sup> E. P. Thompson, 'Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism', in *Customs in Common* (London: Penguin, 1993), pp.370-382.

<sup>308</sup> Navickas, *Protest and the Politics of Space and Place*, p.xiii.

<sup>309</sup> The Oxford English Dictionary gives three definitions for 'yeoman', all current in this period. Lorna Weatherill also notes the difficulty in classifying this group, noting that the circumstances of

might, of course, have been limited to the keeping of a single cow or pig, but nonetheless it is important to note the persistence even in industrialising areas of small-scale farming as part of an economy of makeshifts. There was a long tradition of such dual occupation in the Pennines, but this was a strategy less popular in the London region, presumably due to the constraints of space. Only one of the London inventories indicated any agricultural production: John Harris of Whitechapel kept chickens in his yard in addition to other manufacturing work, probably as a glazier.<sup>310</sup> The silk weavers of the East End, however, were famous for their gardening, whether this was the production of edibles or bright flowers to display at home or to sell, and the independence to tend their plants was much lamented as conditions within their trade declined.<sup>311</sup> Small plants could also be grown in the well-lit loomshops at the top of these weavers' houses, and tended during working hours. It is worth noting also, however, that even in the more rural Pennine regions, enclosure was limiting the spaces available for small-scale agriculture of this type, while declining conditions for many artisans and small-scale manufacturers were curtailing the freedoms previously available. It is necessary, therefore, to balance any improvements to the home environment associated with the move from home to factory work against the emotional and material benefits of work within the home.

Though observers of working-class homes advised that separation of home and work activities was important, it is difficult to assess how far the working classes themselves viewed the ability to allocate separate spaces for economic and domestic functions as a priority.<sup>312</sup> Hannah Barker and Jane Hamlett used inventories relating to Manchester home-based businesses to show that most individuals sought some separation between work and home spaces, but the extent to which they did so varied according to individual preference and circumstances.<sup>313</sup> Within my own inventory sample, work equipment could be found

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yeoman could range from those on a par with husbandmen to others aspiring to gentlemanly status: *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760*. (London: Routledge, 1996), p.171.

<sup>310</sup> TNA, PROB31/915/80 John Harris, Whitechapel, 1800. The inventory lists glass and window sashes in Harris's loft, suggesting his trade.

<sup>311</sup> R. Veder, 'Flowers in the Slums: Weavers' Floristry in the Age of Spitalfields' Decline' in *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Vol.14, No.2 (2009), pp.261-281.

<sup>312</sup> The architect John Wood advised that, at the very least, all living spaces should have 'a porch, or shed, to skreen the labourer's tools', see J. Wood, *A Series of Plans, for Cottages or Habitations of the Labourer, Either in Husbandry, or the Mechanic Arts, Adapted as well to Towns, as to the Country. Engraved on Thirty Plates. To which is added, an Introduction, Containing Many Useful Observations on this Class of Building; Tending to the Comfort of the Poor and Advantage of the Builder: with Calculations of Expences. By the late Mr. J. Wood, of Bath, Architect* (London, 1792). Eighteenth Century Collections Online (Gale). Doc. ref. CW3306857347, accessed 1<sup>st</sup> Mar. 2013, p.4.

<sup>313</sup> Barker & Hamlett, 'Living above the shop', pp.315-317.

in living spaces from both ends of the wealth spectrum and from both study regions. Mr Goddier, of Bethnal Green, kept weaving equipment in both his garret and ‘one pair of stairs room’. The latter was also evidently a room for non-work activity, containing a bed, a walnut dressing table, two bird cages, a reading table and a cabinet.<sup>314</sup> Mr Goddier’s house contained four rooms in total, and he appears to have been relatively wealthy, so the decision to blur domestic and work functions may not have been inevitable. James Copley, of Thunderbridge, near Wakefield in West Yorkshire, was at the other end of the scale. He was in prison at the time an inventory of his goods was taken by the overseers of the poor, who were assessing the level of relief due to his family. No room names are listed in the inventory of Copley’s goods, and the list of items is short, but contains bulky items such as a bedstead, a table and six chairs as well as looms (plural, but the number not given).<sup>315</sup> This would suggest that the Copleys lived and worked in one or two rooms, and they were clearly not a well-to-do family. In this case, domestic space was probably cramped by necessity, rather than design. Nonetheless, two men in rather different economic circumstances found themselves performing domestic and work functions in the same room, though presumably according to different sets of priorities which remain inaccessible to the historian.

The static nature of an inventory provides little insight into the movement through these rooms, but can hint at the cues used to indicate use at a given time. Hannah Barker and Jane Hamlett, for example, suggested that the screens listed in their sample could offer limited privacy within a shared room, while Lesley Hoskins has shown that temporal as well as spatial indicators, such as moving a bed during the daytime then back at night, could suggest the appropriate use of a space.<sup>316</sup> Other sources offer greater detail of the organisation of space. The Old Bailey trial proceedings, for example, offer incidental detail of the routines which defined domestic space. Edward Timms’ trial for the theft of goods from the house of John Lorien of Bethnal Green, for example, reveals that he was able to steal goods from the kitchen as the family were ‘up stairs in general’, working at their looms. John Lorien lived with his sister and brother-in-law, and appears to have slept in the kitchen, perhaps indicating that work took place upstairs and rest downstairs, although it is

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<sup>314</sup> TNA, J90/434 Supreme Court of Judicature, Godier vs. Godier, 1793.

<sup>315</sup> WYAS Kirklees, KC271.22, Inventory of Goods belonging to James Copley of Thunderbridge, 1821.

<sup>316</sup> Barker & Hamlett, ‘Living Above the Shop’, pp.314-315; L. Hoskins, ‘Reading the Inventory: Household Goods, Domestic Cultures and Difference in England and Wales, 1841-81,’ PhD thesis (Queen Mary University of London, 2011), p.219.

also unclear where the other couple slept.<sup>317</sup> Samuel Bamford, meanwhile, noted that the first items visible on entering his Middleton cottage were ‘two looms with silken work of green and gold’, and described the room (apparently the only room in the house) as a ‘weaving room’ before discussing its more domestic attributes. However, the bed within Bamford’s cottage was screened by a ‘dark old fashioned curtain’, suggesting that the Bamfords found it desirable to separate this intimate space from the rest of the activities that went on in the room.<sup>318</sup> Francis Place, likewise, used a pair of curtains to separate the greater part of his room in a newly-built house from the stairway.<sup>319</sup> Autobiographies, of course, represent a carefully constructed version of the author, and Bamford and Place may have wanted to stress their own notions of respectable domestic organisation. However, other evidence supports the idea that curtains were an important means of regulating the uses of space. Curtains were listed in just over half (32) of the households in my inventory sample, suggesting that cheap textiles offered a convenient means by which working-class households could designate the purposes of domestic spaces in different contexts, or indeed display their aesthetic preferences to those who passed a curtained window. Of the 27 households without curtains, 11 were employed in agriculture, as farmers or yeoman, a further four were either explicitly listed as paupers or assessments were made for poor relief purposes, and three were clothiers (see Table 3). This suggests that the majority of households without curtains were rural, distanced from busy thoroughfares and other houses, and without regular customers within the house. They were, therefore, for the most part, in less need of screening, or their inhabitants were among the poorest in the sample and may therefore have pawned or sold some of their belongings prior to the inventory being taken.<sup>320</sup> Again, our ability to understand working-class domestic space is limited by the difficulties of tracking the movement of goods and people within the home without the detailed accounts, letters and diaries that can be used more readily alongside inventories from higher up the social scale.

The organisation of domestic space reveals not just the tension between domestic and economic functions, but also the disparity of esteem awarded to paid and unpaid work within the household. The maintenance of home which was (and to some extent still is)

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<sup>317</sup> Trial of Edward Timms, 27<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1790. *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, version 6.0. Ref. no. t17901027-57, accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2012, <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org>.

<sup>318</sup> Bamford, *Passages*, p.68.

<sup>319</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, p.124.

<sup>320</sup> The houses of clothiers were frequently attached to tentergrounds, hence the suggestion that they too may have been distanced from the street. Randall, *Before the Luddites*, p.19.

considered to be a woman's duty was not valued in the same way as remunerative labour, though of course many working-class women performed both.<sup>321</sup> In the Pennine region, women frequently worked in the textile industries both in factories and at home, with recognised roles in spinning and weaving, but in London much women's work was more dispersed and frequently hidden. Aside from the few female trades, such as millinery and dressmaking, women's work was predominantly subsumed within the home and family, whether in domestic service, in business with a husband, or patching together a living through letting out rooms, taking in laundry, or going out to char.<sup>322</sup> These occupations blurred into the maintenance of home and the gendered power relations that defined home-making as less important than other forms of work. Witness Francis Place's account of the allocation of domestic space to the respective tasks of himself and his wife. It was important to Place to have a separate room in which to work, which:

enabled my wife to keep the room in better order ... Attendance on the child was not as it had been always, in my presence. I was shut out from seeing the fire lighted the room washed and cleaned, and the cloaths washed and ironed, as well as the cooking. We frequently went to bed as we had but too often been accustomed to do with a wet or damp floor, and with the wet cloaths hanging up in the room, still a great deal of the annoyance, and too close an interference with each other in many disagreeable particulars which having but one room made inevitable were removed, happily removed forever.<sup>323</sup>

He urged fellow workers to 'make almost any sacrifice to keep possession of two rooms ... and to put the bed in the room in which as much as possible of the domestic work is done.'<sup>324</sup> Implicit in this advice are assumptions about the status of different types of work, and thus of those who performed different tasks. Elizabeth Place was to have little choice about sleeping in the room in which she worked – while her husband could shut out the

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<sup>321</sup> For an interesting recent insight into the domestic division of labour, see recent stats from BBC Radio Four's Women's Hour 'Women's Hour Chore Wars – The Stats.' BBC, 2014, accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> Aug. 2015.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/1Rrncf8h5N4TTJMmGlpYSBW/womans-hour-chore-wars-the-stats>.

<sup>322</sup> S. Alexander, *Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London: A Study of the Years 1820-50* (London: Journeyman Press, 1983), pp.20-21, p.49.

<sup>323</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, p.138.

<sup>324</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, p.138.

tools of his trade, she was to rest in the same room where the mopped floor and drying laundry provided evidence of her own allotted tasks. Her husband, on the other hand, was relieved of his discomfort in witnessing the monotony of domestic labour. Only when Francis Place was particularly busy was Elizabeth called on to work alongside him, both screened (again using a curtain) from the household work delegated to a maid in order to maximise productivity, highlighting again the greater status of economically productive work.<sup>325</sup> This arrangement nuances the idea that housework was pushed ‘backstage’.<sup>326</sup> Where space was at a premium, as in the Place’s London house, this was simply not possible. In the inventory sample, many of the cooking and cleaning materials listed can be found – where room names are given – in a ‘Kitchen’ or ‘Scullery’, but are as often in the multi-purpose ‘House’. Furthermore, cleaning materials in particular were moveable objects, and would be used by women in all rooms of the house, so that all domestic space was imbued with her labour.

The frustration that women could experience at the inequity of esteem granted to necessary but unpaid work seeps out of contemporary sources. Even in his essay on domestic freedom from work discipline, E.P. Thompson referred to two literary accounts which qualified his argument along gendered lines.<sup>327</sup> One of these, the ballad of the Jovial Cutlers suggests that the status of men’s work afforded them greater flexibility in time use, even when, in the case of the cutlers, they were on work premises and (mis)using work time. The proximity of the cutler’s wife to the workspace enabled her to hear the men indulging in drinking and to voice her resentment, which is heightened by her own struggle to maintain domestic respectability in the home/workspace.<sup>328</sup> Reading one of Hannah More’s *Cheap Repository Tracts*, it is difficult not to feel some sympathy (perhaps contrary to the author’s intentions) with the frustrations of the mason’s wife, Sarah, who complains of her husband:

when people have families, you know, they cannot expect things to always be in pri[me?]: where one has only two rooms and a little shed, and washing, and cooking, and mending and all to do, one must sometimes be in a little disorder; but Richard has no thought

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<sup>325</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, p.123.

<sup>326</sup> As Matthew Johnson, for example, has argued. See M. Johnson, *An Archaeology of Capitalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp.176-177.

<sup>327</sup> Thompson, ‘Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism’, p.374, p.381.

<sup>328</sup> Anon., ‘The Jovial Cutlers.’ ballad c.1780-1790, in *Poverty Knock: A Picture of Industrial Life in the Nineteenth Century Through Songs, Ballads and Contemporary Accounts*, edited by R. Palmer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p.7.

of that, if everything is not just in its place ... the house is too hot to hold him.<sup>329</sup>

Sarah's complaint was of the double-standard which allowed her husband to escape to the alehouse if the house was not in perfect condition, while she was criticised for wishing to spend time with a friend. Like Francis Place, she felt the need to escape the suffocating demands of her home/workplace, but unlike him she was judged negatively by the community for acting on this impulse. Sarah's work was not valued *as* work, but considered as a feminine duty which she had no right to evade. The domestic was thus shaped by patriarchal power, so that gendered hierarchies were materialised in the home as much as working-class status.

This is not, however, to suggest that women were wholly alienated from their domestic tasks. The archaeologist Matthew Johnson, for example, describes how women in the north of England cleaned their stone-flagged floors using sand, which was spread out in elaborate patterns which would then be left undisturbed until they were swept away at the day's end.<sup>330</sup> This careful regime implies a sense of pride taken in work done well, and indeed it would be unsurprising if women felt an emotional connection to work which after all contributed to the wellbeing of their families and the maintenance of their homes. As ever in domestic relationships, the operation of power might be softened by emotional rewards. The disparity in status between paid and unpaid work does however demonstrate a power differential, embedded in home space, which has long hindered women's full participation in working-class politics. As both Barbara Taylor and Anna Clark have shown, men were often ambivalent about if not openly hostile to female participation in remunerative labour, fearing that they might undercut wages.<sup>331</sup> The respectable, well-kept home, especially as it was filled by more goods requiring care and attention, might therefore be understood as a means of deflecting women from economic and political power, embedding their lesser status within the movement.

Working-class radical societies were – formally at least – male dominated, in part because of their early focus on education and sharing of political ideas. Working-class women, with their double burden of paid and unpaid labour, had less leisure time than men for such

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<sup>329</sup> Anon. *Cheap Repository: The Wife Reformed* (London, c.1795-1798). Eighteenth Century Collections Online. (Gale), doc. ref. CB3326782596, accessed 1<sup>st</sup> Dec. 2014, p.8.

<sup>330</sup> M. Johnson, *English Houses*, p.154.

<sup>331</sup> B. Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem: Socialism and Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Virago, 1983), ch.4.; Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches*,



activities.<sup>332</sup> Women's work in London, at least in the 'unskilled' trades, was frequently solitary and home-based, isolating them from the 'sense of artisanal independence, mutuality, homosociality and the integration of political conversation in quotidian working practices' that could be fostered within small workshops, within or beyond the home.<sup>333</sup> However, Anna Clark's assertion that London's economy fostered a journeyman-based, misogynistic radicalism requires some nuance. In some trades, women and men did work side-by-side, notably in textiles as well as printing and bookselling, in which we find some of the more vocal female radicals of the 1790s. The wife of the Spencean Thomas Evans – a member of the ultra-radical underworld criticised by Clark – is a case in point. According to Iain MacCalman:

Janet's degree of political involvement was exceptional. Whilst Evans was in prison, she helped organise a mob-riot outside Coldbath Fields prison. She smuggled information in and out of the cells. She wrote tough, articulate letters to government officials demanding support for herself and the baby, as well as a fair trial and better conditions for her husband. She probably sowed the seeds of [Francis] Place's hostility by criticising the way he and his wife were distributing subscription relief funds to prisoners' families. And the relationship between Janet and her husband seems to have been the opposite of the casual, promiscuous liaison which Place claimed was typical of "old blackguard" tradesmen families. They worked together in the print colouring business and in underground politics.<sup>334</sup>

Similar co-operation in both work and politics is evident in the relationship of John and Winifred Gales, printers of the *Sheffield Register*, and both involved in the Sheffield Society for Constitutional Information. Katrina Navickas has argued that the nature of their home/business enabled Winifred to oversee the publication of the *Register* in her husband's absence, since 'the Gales' printing shop combined a space for domestic activities with a semi-public rendezvous.'<sup>335</sup> Though Clark emphasised the family economy in textiles as

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<sup>332</sup> K. J. Mays, K. J. 'Domestic Spaces, Readerly Acts: Reading(,) Gender, and Class in Working-Class Autobiography' in *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, Vol.30, No.4 (2008), esp. pp.348-9, 351-353.

<sup>333</sup> Navickas, *Protest and the Politics of Space and Place*, pp.30-31.

<sup>334</sup> MacCalman, *Radical Underworld*, p32.

<sup>335</sup> Navickas, *Protest and the Politics of Space and Place*, p.48.

productive of more co-operative relations in northern radicalism, we should recognise that family and domestically-based economies were limited to neither textiles nor the north. Even in shoe-making, a trade associated in popular imagination with unsettled marital relations, women were often active in detailed finishing work.<sup>336</sup> As Taylor reminds us, it was through limiting home-based work that London trade societies sought to control entry in to the trade and thus preserve both status and wages for men alone, but sheer practicality led many families to share a workload in domestic workshops.<sup>337</sup> The realities of domestic labour, like other expectations about feminine conduct, could act as a practical constraint on women's political activism, but the permeable boundaries of home-work spaces could also facilitate their participation.

We can see, then, that the home was a complicated site for the making of classed and gendered political identities. On the one hand, as we saw in the first chapter, we cannot simply dismiss home as a counter-revolutionary ideology or space, in which working-class people traded politics for respectable domesticity. As we shall see when we come to discuss consumer behaviour, the ability to enhance the physical state of the home could encourage the expectation of choice and control in other areas of life, rather than a passive retreat into domestic space. Furthermore, the homes of the working classes in both London and the Pennines were not easily separated from their surrounding communities, with families relying upon one another for economic support and sociability. In this sense, working-class people worked collectively to bolster themselves against the uncertainties of life, something which could prepare the ground for a political movement. On the other hand, financial insecurity *could* promote a more inward-looking desire for individual security at the expense of collective gains, with some workers understandably preferring quietude and comfort to the risks of political struggle seen in this and the previous chapter. While everyday co-operation could create the conditions for political action, the home could also represent inequalities and fractures within the working classes, particularly with regard to the secondary positioning of women in public expressions of radical activity. Above all, we have seen the fluidity between public and private in working-class homes, which was considerably more pronounced than that in the homes of the middling sort because of the

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<sup>336</sup> Alexander, *Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London*, p.40. The shoemaker or cobbler as a symbol of unsettled marital relationships is evident in various caricatures – examples in the British Museum's collection include T. Rowlandson, *The Cobbler's Cure for a Scolding Wife* (Tegg, 1813) BM Satires 12148; Anon. *The Enraged Cuckold* (Carington Bowles, c.1766–1784), BM Satires undescribed; Anon, *The Cobbler Alarmed or his Wife Closing with a new Customer!* (Sidebotham, 1802-1810), BM Satires 11692.

<sup>337</sup> Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem*, pp.90-92, 101-102.

nature of close-knit living and manual work in domestic workshops. In the next three chapters, we will consider in more detail how that fluidity worked in practice, detailing the political implications of family life, consumer behaviour, and household goods amongst working-class radicals. In doing so, we will see that women were active behind the scenes, and that though often marginalised in public expressions of radicalism, they were crucial to sustaining it on a day-to-day level.

## Chapter 4

### Power Relations: Family and Community in Popular Radicalism.

‘The rebel blood, it would seem ... was the more impulsive; it got the ascendancy – and I was born a Radical.’<sup>338</sup>

Samuel Bamford thus characterised his own politics as a kind of radical inheritance from his maternal grandfather. The tale of his canny Jacobite grandfather, who used his wits to escape a traitor’s death, was no doubt a comfort to Bamford in his own periods of persecution. This link with the past placed Samuel’s own political experiences within a broader historical narrative, imbued them with the legitimacy of longstanding tradition, and helped him to make sense of the situation in which he found himself. This chapter explores the forging of collective, family- and community-based political identities, and the ways in which radicalism was practised through these domestic relationships. As in the previous chapters, I argue that a focus on public action and prominent (male) radicals underplays the potential for women’s involvement, and additionally demonstrate the capacity for children to exercise political agency. The potential inclusivity of family-based radical identities, however, was constrained by structural factors as well as by gender norms which inhibited the ability of women and children to participate on an equal basis.

The suggestion that family relationships could facilitate political participation for female and for younger family members is not new. Elaine Chalus has demonstrated that women in aristocratic families played important networking and canvassing roles in the interest of male politicians, while Kathryn Gleadle and Sarah Richardson noted the importance of exposure to political ideals within the home, alongside the opportunities to assist male relatives in political work such as letter-writing, canvassing, and research, in developing women’s political subjectivities.<sup>339</sup> Gleadle defined her middle-class female subjects as ‘borderline citizens’, able to participate in political activity, but always at the margins and secondary to men.<sup>340</sup> Nonetheless, such work has contributed to a body of feminist historical scholarship that has nuanced the model of strict patriarchal authority within the

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<sup>338</sup> Bamford, *Early Days*, p.40.

<sup>339</sup> E. Chalus, ‘Elite Women, Social Politics, and the Political World of Late-Eighteenth Century England’, in *The Historical Journal*, Vol.43, No.3 (2000), pp.669-697; Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*, pp.98-101, pp.109-114; Richardson, *The Political Worlds of Women*, pp.21-38.

<sup>340</sup> Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*, pp.2-3.

(middle- and upper-class) home.<sup>341</sup> In working-class families, male dominance was further complicated by the need for children and women to participate in household economies, as well as by the role of local communities in regulating neighbourhood relationships.<sup>342</sup> Anna Clark argued that the family economies of the Pennine region, built around the domestic textile industries and their recognised roles for women, thus facilitated a more community-based (if still male-led) model of radical politics than that in London, where the male-bonding which came with apprenticeship into trade was carried forward in associational practice.<sup>343</sup> This chapter both builds on and challenges Clark's thesis, arguing that while economic factors did influence the forms of political activism possible for working-class families, emotional and social connections in both regions were also crucial to building, enacting, and sustaining political identities.

It is worth noting at an early stage that the available evidence regarding the political family lives of the working classes in this period offers a partial picture. The richest sources of information about working-class radical life are autobiographical, and the detailed accounts of Francis Place and Samuel Bamford are used extensively here. Winifred Gale's memoirs offer an exception to the overwhelmingly male perspective of radical autobiographies, but all autobiographical material potentially reinforces normative ideals of family practice through a reluctance to share the less savoury details of family life. Recent work to catalogue the Home Office Disturbances Papers has made available further documentary evidence on radical family lives, which, since not intended at the time of production for public consumption, is less carefully constructed to reflect such ideals. However, as cataloguing work is still ongoing, there remains potential to draw further insights from this source in future. The radical press and Francis Place's manuscript papers relating to the London Corresponding Society have also been used alongside these sources, though again, this material has been read in the light of the potential for mediation and subjective retelling of events. It is therefore important to recognise that the focus of this chapter does not allow for adequate discussion of the range of sexual and family practices of the working classes, which would require a thesis of their own.<sup>344</sup>

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<sup>341</sup> Eg. A. Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of Women's History', in *The Historical Journal*, Vol.36, No.2 (1993), pp.383-414; J. Bailey, *Unquiet Lives: Marriage and Marriage Breakdown in England 1660-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Flather, *Gender and Space in Early Modern England*.

<sup>342</sup> See Chapter 1.

<sup>343</sup> Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches*.

<sup>344</sup> For example, studies have explored unmarried motherhood, cohabitation, and same-sex relationships among the working classes, though London has tended to dominate this scholarship.

The decision to use predominantly qualitative source material stems from a desire to uncover the emotional elements of political participation alongside the structural possibilities and constraints in which working-class people acted. As Jane Humphries has argued in her own study of working-class autobiographies, an over-reliance on quantitative demographic data has led historians of the working-class family to make unfounded assumptions about the emotional states of the historical actors involved.<sup>345</sup> Like Humphries, I wish to avoid emphasis on economic instrumentalism in depicting family relationships, and to firmly dispel the idea that economic stress was necessarily destructive to familial affections.<sup>346</sup> Though poor law records, testimony from the church and criminal courts, and indeed autobiographies reveal that experiences of working-class family life could include deprivation, abandonment, and abuse, the nature of the sources I have chosen to use mean that a more positive version of family life is foregrounded here, though one which retained injustices and imbalances of power.

In this chapter, I repeatedly compare political activism to religious practice, suggesting that committed participants in both shaped their everyday lives in accordance with their moral values. The crossover is no coincidence, since many political radicals were influenced by religion, and particularly by religious dissent.<sup>347</sup> As we discussed in the second chapter, ideas about the family were also firmly entwined with moral discourse. Since both religion and politics shaped personal world views and ideas about morality in particular, it seems likely that both would influence the choice of a romantic partner among their adherents.<sup>348</sup>

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See, for example, Norton, *Mother Clap's Molly House*; T. Hitchcock, "'Unlawfully Begotten on her Body': Illegitimacy and the Parish Poor in St Luke's Chelsea' in *Chronicling Poverty: The Voices and Strategies of the English Poor, 1640-1840*, edited by T. Hitchcock, P. King & P. Sharpe (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), pp.70-86; T. Evans, "'Unfortunate Objects" London's Unmarried Mothers in the Eighteenth Century', *Gender & History*, Vol.17, No.1. (2005), pp.127-153; G. Frost, *Living in Sin: Cohabiting as Husband and Wife in Nineteenth-Century England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008); P. Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children in England, 1580-1800*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>345</sup> Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution*, p.50.

<sup>346</sup> See also Vincent, 'Love and death and the nineteenth-century working class', pp.223-247.

<sup>347</sup> Mee, 'Rough and Respectable Radicalisms', pp.241-244; MacCalman, *Radical Underworld*, chapter 3.

<sup>348</sup> Emma Griffin has argued that industrialisation was associated with a weakening of parental and community control over courtship and marriage, resulting in a greater degree of choice for young working-class men and women – see *Liberty's Dawn*, chapter 5. In areas with opportunities for female employment, such as the Pennines, women also had less of an economic imperative to marry than in London, where jobs for women were more frequently unskilled, casual, and poorly paid. For women's earnings in the textile trades, see J. Aiken, *A Description of the County from Thirty to Forty Miles round Manchester*, 1795; Anon., *Thoughts on the Use of Machines in the Cotton Manufacture*, 1780 and F.M. Eden, *The State of the Poor*, 1797, all cited in B. Hill, *Eighteenth-Century Women: An Anthology* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1984) pp.205-207. John Gillis has argued that the Pennine economy also

In a case study of early-nineteenth century courtship in Lancashire, Steve King has drawn upon the correspondence of David Whitehead and his intended wife, Betty Wood, to argue that religion played a key role in determining the pace and ultimate success of the courtship. Their correspondence relating to their potential marriage was framed in terms of a spiritual, as much as romantic, union.<sup>349</sup> It is more difficult to demonstrate that radical politics formed the basis for marriages. Political involvement, as we have seen, was highly contested for working-class men, let alone for women, and thus not one that male radicals tended to stress in accounts of their wives. Nonetheless, Samuel Bamford's account suggests women actively joined in meetings in the Pennine region, and also attended military-style 'drillings' on the moors, at which there seems to have been something of a festive atmosphere:

Maidens would sometimes come with their milk-cans from the farms of Hoolswood or Gerrard-hey, or the fold near us; and we would sit and take delicious draughts, new from the churn, for which we paid the girls in money, whilst a favoured youth or so might be permitted to add something more – a tender word or a salute – when, blushing and laughing, away would the nymphs run for a fresh supply to carry home.<sup>350</sup>

The women attending these drillings were thus depicted in a traditional female role, providing nourishment to the men at their labours. Nonetheless, whether through the romance of danger, mere curiosity, or through their own interest in the cause, they were drawn to the radical activity on the moors, and if the Home Office's correspondents were correct, played a more active role than Bamford's rustic scene suggests.<sup>351</sup> Radical activities, then, offered opportunities for meeting a partner within a network of likeminded individuals. In Jemima Bamford's account of Peterloo, she noted that '[John] Fallows was cut in the head, and Ann Heywood on the arm; they were afterwards married', suggesting

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made it possible for women who became pregnant outside of marriage to survive economically, see J. Gillis, 'Peasant, Plebeian, and Proletarian Marriage in Britain, 1600- 1900' in *Proletarianization and Family History*, edited by D. Levine (Orlando: Academic Press, 1984) p.142. We should however be aware that the textile economy fluctuated considerably during our period and thus did not necessarily provide a secure living for single women.

<sup>349</sup> S. King, 'Love, Religion, and Power in the Making of Marriages in Early Nineteenth-Century Rural Industrial Lancashire' in *Rural History*, Vol.21 (2010), pp.1-26.

<sup>350</sup> Bamford, *Passages*, pp.141-143.

<sup>351</sup> One spy reported seeing 'about sixty Gorles and Women' leaving a radical meeting at Besses o' th' Barn, near Manchester, in April 1818, see TNA, HO42/176 f.399 Account of meeting at Besses o' th' Barn, 20 April, 1819.

that for these two individuals at least, activism and adversity contributed to the formation of a romantic bond – a happier outcome of that day than many others experienced.<sup>352</sup>

If we have only anecdotal evidence that radical gatherings, in the Pennines at least, facilitated romantic attachments between like-minded individuals, the sources are clearer in demonstrating that family networks were crucial to the development of radicalism in both of our study regions. People were drawn into radicalism by family members, workmates, and friends. In the early days of the London Corresponding Society, its founder Thomas Hardy wrote to both an uncle, John Walker, and a cousin, Thomas Newell, to inform them about the society, discuss politics, and suggest that they take action also, putting into practice the Society's aim of acting as the central root from which local branches could extend.<sup>353</sup> The survival of these letters, part of an archive compiled by Francis Place, is testament to their perceived importance in the history of the London Corresponding Society. John Binns, meanwhile, 'became at an early age a lover of republican principles' under the influence of his Irish patriot grandfather, before moving to London with his brother and becoming involved with the London Corresponding Society in 1794.<sup>354</sup> Radicals themselves, therefore, identified family as a key influence when narrating their own political lives.

Further organic growth within radical societies was sustained by local connections, based on everyday sociability and neighbourly assistance of the kind discussed in the third chapter. Francis Place was introduced to the Society by his then landlord, an Irish cabinet-maker with whom he had struck up a friendship after taking refuge in a downstairs room while Elizabeth Place gave birth in their own. In these unusual circumstances, Place perused his landlord's library, containing all the works of Thomas Paine, and noted that 'the quantity and kind of books I found in his room made me desirous of his acquaintance.'<sup>355</sup> In Middleton, in the Pennines, Samuel Bamford's father and uncle were part of a small group of 'Jacobins' in the 1790s, along with three brothers of the Johnson family and one Samuel Ogden.<sup>356</sup> This small group met among themselves, but also communicated with other radicals in the wider locality, forging a sense of collective identity in spite of the opprobrium of their neighbours. As we saw at the opening of this chapter,

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<sup>352</sup> Jemima's account is shortened in Henry Dunckley's edition of *Passages*, but a more extensive version can be found in the more recent Oxford University Press edition, p.164.

<sup>353</sup> British Library, Add. MS 27814, Francis Place manuscript papers, f. 172, f.178.

<sup>354</sup> Binns, *Recollections*, p.25, pp.40–41.

<sup>355</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, p.129, p.127.

<sup>356</sup> Bamford, *Early Days*, pp.52-53.



Bamford conceptualised his politics in terms of a tradition of family rebellion, transferred across generations, and presumably learned at such household meetings.

Family and community bonds were strengthened by the practice of mutual aid. As discussed in the previous chapter, working-class communities frequently relied upon informal economic support, and radicalism in both London and the Pennines built upon these practices, encouraging the sharing of material and emotional resources. John Binns, working as an assistant plumber with his brother, would visit and read to Francis Place at the end of his own working day, enabling both men to learn at once while Place continued his work.<sup>357</sup> More material help for Place came from another radical, John Ashley, who let a room to the Place family and fed the children when they struggled with money.<sup>358</sup> The Society also continued to support Thomas Hardy long after his retirement from active participation, raising subscriptions to support him and his sister, who lived with him as housekeeper, into the 1820s.<sup>359</sup> As we shall see in the next chapter, favourable trading with fellow radicals was another means by which bonds within the political community were strengthened and sustained.

Radical meetings within the home also encouraged reciprocal hospitality. Bamford recalled that ‘my wife and myself, considered all persons as friends, who came to our house as reformers’, and praised his wife’s skills as a hostess, claiming that Jemima ‘never deemed any trouble too great, if bestowed for “the cause”’. He went on to recount a later incident, when Jemima was herself in need of emotional support after Samuel’s arrest, and found a warm welcome at the home of the Drummonds, whose own son had also been arrested:

not one of which family had ever seen her before... She no sooner mentioned my name...than they took her into a room where there was a good fire; -took off her wet shawl and outer garments, and gave her dry hose and shoes, -and set before her refreshments, and pressed her to partake of them with that real good feeling which always produces such good manners.<sup>360</sup>

It was these experiences of being part of a radical community that seem to have resonated for Bamford and indeed for Francis Place, though both were later to disapprove of many

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<sup>357</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, pp.143-144.

<sup>358</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, p.157.

<sup>359</sup> BL, Add. MS 27814, Francis Place manuscript papers, f.9-10.

<sup>360</sup> Again, this section of the memoir is not included in the Dunkley edition, but can be found in the 1984 OUP version of *Passages*, pp.121-122.

of their former radical comrades. Nonetheless, it is important that we recognise the power of emotional ties alongside practical networks in sustaining a political movement through times of adversity. While material assistance was at times critical for survival, perhaps more important was a sense of being part of something bigger, a collective endeavour greater than the sum of its parts. As John Barrell has argued, radicalism ‘did not offer only jam tomorrow; a large part of its appeal was that it offered a sense of immediate, present participation, to whoever would join it and engage in its activities and debates’.<sup>361</sup>

It was in times of difficulty that the most intimate relationships became of crucial importance. Bamford wrote of how his memories of home – ‘a dove nest in reserve’ – sustained him through his imprisonment in 1817, and later, in Lincoln prison after Peterloo, he penned a poem to his wife, attributing his resilience to their love:

Oh! they may bind, but cannot break  
This heart so fondly full of thee;  
That liveth only for thy sake,  
And the high cause of libertie.<sup>362</sup>

Again, Bamford allocated the passive role of muse to his wife, but we should not underestimate the importance of Jemima’s support at a time when her husband’s relationships with his radical comrades were becoming increasingly strained, and his health too was failing. Her stays with him in Lincoln gaol were ‘a great solacement’, she was able to help him find hope in the situation, and in her absence he neglected to take care of himself.<sup>363</sup> We should remember also that radical wives like Jemima were forced, as we saw in the second chapter, to draw on their own resources to patch together a living while their husbands were absent or imprisoned, something which was frequently glossed over in the autobiographical accounts of radical men. Recently rediscovered letters in the Home Office’s archives offer insight into the lives of the wives of those radical men who were imprisoned during the suspension of Habeus Corpus in 1817, allowing us to consider their experiences outlined in their own words.<sup>364</sup> For example, we can sense the anguish of Elizabeth Mitchell, who worried that she ‘had not any work worth mentioning now what

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<sup>361</sup> Barrell, *The Spirit of Despotism*, p.57.

<sup>362</sup> Bamford, *Passages*, pp.303-304.

<sup>363</sup> Bamford, *Passages* (Oxford Edition), pp.337-338; p.341.

<sup>364</sup> Navickas, “‘A Reformer’s wife ought to be a heroine’”, pp.246-263.

must be my lot in winter'.<sup>365</sup> With young children to care for, women struggled to find sufficient work to support their families, and with a number of families to support, the resources of the radical community as a whole were strained.<sup>366</sup>

We should not assume, however, that the women were helpless victims of their husband's political commitment. The letters reveal that these women were actively engaged with political issues and could use their correspondence as a means to challenge the political establishment. Elizabeth Knight and her husband John had long experience of dealing with the prison system, John having been incarcerated a number of times for radical involvement since his first arrest in 1794. Aware that their correspondence would be intercepted, Elizabeth performed humility while littering her letters to her husband with sarcastic digs at the government, tartly observing that 'the delivery of letters is very irregular but as this negligence only concerns me of the swinish multitude it is mere folly to complain'.<sup>367</sup> Even while struggling to survive financially, Elizabeth Mitchell penned petitions to the government calling for the release of her husband and declaring his innocence.<sup>368</sup> These were not docile women, passively supporting their husbands, but capable of articulating their own political positions. In the previous chapter we met Winifred Gale and Janet Evans, two more women who steadfastly supported their radical husbands to the extent that we cannot doubt their personal commitment. Gale refused to reveal the whereabouts of her husband and Henry Redhead Yorke in the face of intimidation from loyalist mobs and the local magistrates, when a less dedicated woman might have caved in for an easy life.<sup>369</sup> Janet likewise risked her own security in her involvement in radicalism, and was imprisoned in 1798 despite being pregnant with twins, stillborn shortly after her release.<sup>370</sup> Even Jemima Bamford, portrayed as meek and obedient in her husband's memoir, refused to be quiet when ordered by the soldiers

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<sup>365</sup> TNA, HO42/168 f.176, Mitchell to Mitchell, July 1817 quoted in Navickas, 'A Reformer's wife ought to be a heroine', p.259.

<sup>366</sup> TNA, HO42/168 f.296, Mitchell to Sidmouth, 11<sup>th</sup> July 1817, quoted in Navickas, 'A Reformer's wife ought to be a heroine', p.257.

<sup>367</sup> TNA, HO42/168 f.41, Knight to Knight, 9<sup>th</sup> July 1817, quoted in Navickas, 'A Reformer's wife ought to be a heroine', pp.251-252.

<sup>368</sup> TNA, HO42/170/43, Mitchell to Sidmouth, 28 Oct. 1817, quoted in Navickas, 'A Reformer's wife ought to be a heroine', pp.261-262.

<sup>369</sup> Gale Family Papers, p.10; see also K. Navickas, *Protest and the Politics of Space and Place, 1789-1848* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), p.48.

<sup>370</sup> MacCalman, *Radical Underworld*, pp.32-33.

arresting Samuel after Peterloo, defiantly continuing to proclaim 'Hunt and Liberty' even when threatened at gunpoint.<sup>371</sup>

It may be that Janet Evans is an exception amongst the radical wives of London, who appear less frequently in our sources than those in the Pennine region, though of course factors inhibiting their appearance in the written record, such as literacy levels, or the decisions taken by the Home Office regarding what to record and retain, must be taken into account. As Anna Clark pointed out, the economic, social, and cultural contexts of the different regions played a part in the extent to which women had a recognised role in radical movements, but so too did the individual circumstances of the women involved.<sup>372</sup> Access to political information and opportunities for expression were crucial, and these factors also played a part in how far women were able to act independently of male relatives. Though the majority of women who appear in our sources *were* related to radical men, episodes of defiance can be found. Winifred Gale's education came from her loyalist father, to whom she frequently read from political pamphlets 'on the right (the Ministerial) side of the question'. She was thus well-equipped for a role in political publishing, though her involvement in the *Sheffield Register* – a newspaper on rather the other 'side of the question' – was described by one local gentleman as 'political heresy'.<sup>373</sup> Just as Winifred Gale rejected her father's position, some women were willing to defy their husbands – as was Margaret Clarke, a rather more obscure character, who wrote to Richard Carlile's wife Jane declaring herself to be 'a real Deist, but hath the misfortune to be the wife of a Christian.'<sup>374</sup> Women were capable of expressing controversial political opinions, and did not always require the support of a husband or father to do so. Though such instances are rare, they offer an insight into the ways in which political commitment, backed up by education, could encourage women to defy patriarchal control within the family. Furthermore, the emphasis on co-operation and mutual support discussed above, extending within and beyond the household, further destabilises any understanding of linear domestic hierarchies. Looking more closely at the role of the family within popular

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<sup>371</sup> Bamford, *Passages*, p.172.

<sup>372</sup> Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches*. Clark's focus is on the family economy of the Pennine districts as compared to the artisanal system of London, but she does also raise the importance of radical religion, and particularly of female ministry within Methodism, in equipping women with the skills for public oratory.

<sup>373</sup> Gale Family Papers, p.10.

<sup>374</sup> *Republican*, Vol.5, p.590 quoted in Bush, 'Richard Carlile and the Female Reformers of Manchester', p.6.

radicalism thus enhances the history of family as well as enriching our understanding of political activism.

To understand more fully the importance of family in popular radicalism, we must also look beyond adult relationships and to those between parents and their children.

Childhood was recognised as an important period for moral development, and it was also a time when individuals became aware of their place in classed and gendered hierarchies.

This was in part due to the economic instability of working-class households, as well as the role of mothers as primary caregivers, which frequently conspired to force children into productive labour, disrupting opportunities for education or childhood leisure.<sup>375</sup> We have already noted the gendered dimension to the balance between work and education, with girls expected to do more household chores which interfered with ambitions towards learning.<sup>376</sup> Unlike paid work, housework did not bring the pleasure associated with ‘tipping up’ wages, or the increase in status and consequently in share of household resources that came with paid working.<sup>377</sup> Girls thus grew up with an awareness that they occupied a lesser position in household – and, by extension, societal – hierarchies. Even amongst working-class boys, such education as was formally received could reinforce social positioning. John Binns, for example, spoke of the shame of being named as one of the schoolboys for whom fees had not been fully paid.<sup>378</sup> Samuel Bamford’s father told him that learning Latin would be a waste of time, since he was unlikely to become a doctor, lawyer, or clergyman, and thus Samuel experienced the ‘sore humiliation’ of remaining ‘in a situation inferior to those whom I had been in the habit of leading’ in educational terms.<sup>379</sup> At a young age, then, it became necessary for working-class children to become reconciled to limited educational horizons.

Apprenticeship was another life stage during which young people frequently felt differentiations in status. Learning a trade usually involved residence in the home of the employer, with the expectation that this situation would mirror the reciprocal relationship of authority and obedience expected of fathers and sons. The Manchester surgeon, Mr Hallett, advertised for an apprentice in July 1820, promising that such ‘respectable Youth’

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<sup>375</sup> Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, pp.117-118.

<sup>376</sup> Mays, ‘Domestic Spaces, Readerly Acts’, pp.343-368. See also Chapter 1, pp.14-15.

<sup>377</sup> Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, p.147. Selina Todd has drawn on oral testimonies and social surveys of young people in early twentieth-century Britain to show that access to leisure was contingent upon this practice of contributing to the household economy, see ‘Young Women, Work, and Leisure in Interwar England’ in *The Historical Journal*, Vol.48, No.3 (2005), pp.789-809.

<sup>378</sup> Binns, *Recollections*, p.16, pp.18-22, pp.22-23.

<sup>379</sup> Bamford, *Early Days*, p.88.

as was successful ‘will be treated as one of the family.’<sup>380</sup> In practice, submitting to the patriarchal authority of an extended ‘household’ family as an apprentice, journeyman or servant did not guarantee familial protection or care, but could instead entail reinforcement of one’s lower status.<sup>381</sup> The grocer George Heywood – also living in Manchester – resented the spatial distinctions in power exercised through his restricted access to some parts of his master’s house during his time as a journeyman living with the Hyde family, for example.<sup>382</sup> In other cases, the exercise of power was more extreme. Behind closed doors, vulnerable young people could be subjected to mistreatment. Samuel Bamford’s friend and fellow radical Dr Healey was brutally treated by his master, and his consequent declaration that his apprenticeship ‘instilled in him a thorough abhorrence of tyranny’ is evidence of how the power dynamics of family life could influence later political leanings.<sup>383</sup> Of course, access to an apprenticeship was itself dependent on economic circumstances. Many parents saved hard to scrape together the premium necessary to give their children a start in a good trade, so that children felt obligated to remain with undesirable masters. William Hart, for example, did not enjoy his hard-won apprenticeship in Luton, with a master he considered to be ‘an awful profane licentious character’ who often paid him short to fund his own ‘drunkenness and lewdness’.<sup>384</sup>

Though potentially a time of hard work and exploitation, apprenticeship might also be a period of unprecedented freedom, and a time in which bonds with fellow workers might be consolidated. Francis Place described how his years as an apprentice and young journeyman were spent in lively sociability with both men and women of similar status in and around Fleet Street, indulging in drinking, dancing, and sexual relationships. Place was conscious that his parents might disapprove of this conduct, but the master with whom he lived was unconcerned.<sup>385</sup> For both Francis Place in London and Samuel Bamford in Manchester, a period of experimentation with a more libertine lifestyle during the early stages of their career was brought to an end by the decision to marry, and thus to start their

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<sup>380</sup> TNA, HO/44/31 Copy of *Manchester Observer*, July 8, 1820.

<sup>381</sup> Naomi Tadmor has shown that the term ‘family’ tended to refer to a whole household, including servants and apprentices alongside blood relations, in the eighteenth century. See N. Tadmor, ‘The Concept of the Household Family in the Eighteenth Century’ in *Past and Present*, Vol.151 (1996), pp.111-140.

<sup>382</sup> Barker & Hamlett, ‘Living Above the Shop’, p.319.

<sup>383</sup> Bamford, *Passages*, p.47. Intriguingly, Bamford’s words here echo those of the Blackburn Female Reformers’ intention of ‘instilling into the minds of their offspring a deep rooted abhorrence of tyranny’, see *Black Dwarf*, 14<sup>th</sup> July, 1819, quoted in Frow & Frow, *Political Women*, p.22 and below.

<sup>384</sup> Hart, ‘The Autobiography of William Hart’, p.151.

<sup>385</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, pp.75-76, p.78.

own, more stable, family unit.<sup>386</sup> Again, geographical factors were influential, and in smaller towns such behaviour would be discovered by close family and/or parish authorities. Bamford was able to ignore his father's advice in Manchester, but in Middleton his affair with the 'Yorkshire lass' with whom he fathered a child was discovered, to the dismay of his aunt and uncle.<sup>387</sup> Furthermore, in the Pennine domestic-based textile industries, apprenticeship was of less importance for social mobility than it was in London, where, despite the erosion of trade regulations, the seven years of formal training were still required to secure entry into a 'respectable' trade. Anna Clark has argued that a youthful, libertine lifestyle continued longer in London, where journeymen were unable to afford to marry, and suggests that this contributed to a misogynistic culture among such young men. She contrasts this picture with a more inclusive attitude in Lancashire, where the family economy meant that marriage made economic sense.<sup>388</sup> This does not hold true in all cases – much depended on the individual circumstances and attitudes of the working men in question. Francis Place, for example, would certainly have bristled at accusations of misogyny, regarding himself as he did as an enlightened rationalist. So too, from a different perspective, would William Hart, whose religion deterred him from socialising with his fellow coopers, 'because I was different to them and moral in my conduct and would not follow their awful courses.'<sup>389</sup> It is crucial that we do look beyond economic factors determining social behaviours to avoid the assumption that poverty was necessarily accompanied by brutality.

It is also perhaps worth noting that youthful indiscretion might be emphasised in such accounts as those produced by Francis Place and Samuel Bamford to narrate their transition to respectability more effectively. For both, marriage was viewed as a turning point, at which they took up adult responsibilities in spite of unstable economic positions, suggesting that perhaps the shift in behaviour was more to do with cultural ideals of protective masculinity (as seen in the second chapter) than with their working practices. That the sexual freedom of youth might be more to do with lifestyle than economics is borne out by Place's assertion that young women likewise engaged in drinking and pre-

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<sup>386</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, p.96; Bamford, *Early Days*, p.237.

<sup>387</sup> Bamford, *Early Days*, p.182, p.192.

<sup>388</sup> Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches*, p.5.

<sup>389</sup> Hart, *Autobiography*, p.154.

marital sex alongside male apprentices, and that this was not necessarily a bar to eventual marriage.<sup>390</sup>

The domestic weaving industry in the Pennines and the textile areas of East London enabled parents to exercise closer scrutiny over their children than if they had been apprenticed, since weaving could be learned at home. Parents working at home could also supervise younger children, and some took the opportunity to read with or otherwise instruct their children while they worked. For example, his father taught the young Samuel Bamford the alphabet while at his loom, before Samuel was old enough to go to school.<sup>391</sup> Bamford claimed to have also developed a strong sense of injustice at this young age, largely due to the experience of deprivation during a downturn of the weaving trade following the French Revolution:

Many of the earliest of my impressions were calculated to make me feel, and think, and reflect ... The notice I took of my mother's anguish and her tears ... was the means of calling into action two of the strongest and most durable impulses of my heart – justice and mercy.<sup>392</sup>

He noted that the impulses inspired an early sympathy for Tom Paine, on witnessing a local effigy burning.<sup>393</sup> Bamford's moral education was influenced by his parents' Methodist leadings, while Francis Place learned at school to separate morality from religion, but both men emerged from their childhood with a similar common-sense moral outlook which informed their radical politics.<sup>394</sup>

Politically-active parents might consciously attempt to encourage their children to share their beliefs as part of a broader attempt to transmit 'family values' across the generations. Leora Auslander, discussing the cultural frameworks in which the English, American and French Revolutions took place, has argued that radical political change could only be enacted through a thoroughgoing transformation of everyday life. In quotidian practices, revolutionaries 'melded repertoires they inherited from the world they were trying to leave

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<sup>390</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, pp.81-82.

<sup>391</sup> Bamford, *Early Days*, p.60.

<sup>392</sup> Bamford, *Early Days*, pp.29-31, p.50.

<sup>393</sup> Bamford, *Early Days*, p.53.

<sup>394</sup> Bamford, *Early Days*, p.27. Bamford attributed his early moral inclinations to 'the sort of daily, fireside education which my parents bestowed on their children. I mention it to their honour, and not from a wish to claim any precocity of intellect', p.52; Place, *Autobiography*, pp.44-45.



with their new visions of that which they hoped to create'.<sup>395</sup> This desire to thoroughly embed political ideals within day-to-day routines is evident in the ways that committed radicals sought to raise their children. What Malcolm Chase has recently argued for the Chartist period holds true for earlier decades of radicalism, 'Child-rearing ... was not just a biological or personal and emotional process, it was a political act.'<sup>396</sup> As we saw at the opening of this thesis, women in particular drew on their maternal roles to emphasise their importance in the political socialisation of children. Likewise, the Female Reformers of Blackburn declared their intention of 'instilling into the minds of their offspring a deep rooted abhorrence of tyranny' – in other words, explicitly planning to educate their children as radicals.<sup>397</sup> As Joanne Bailey has shown, parenting was entwined with the expression of both individual and a collective, family identity, so that a decision to raise children in what was perceived to be a radical manner was a means of demonstrating one's own commitment to the cause as well as disseminating its ideals.<sup>398</sup> In a number of ways, radical parents attempted to express and perpetuate their politics through their children.

The incorporation of children into a radical family identity could begin almost immediately after their birth. Paul Pickering has examined 'Chartist naming', arguing that historians must take seriously the naming of babies for Feargus O'Connor, Bronterre O'Brien, and so on, because in choosing these names, parents manifested their desire for continuity in political principles in the next generation.<sup>399</sup> The naming practices of an earlier radical generation have been less well explored, despite similar patterns of parents naming their children for their radical heroes. Mary Fildes, who stood on the hustings at Peterloo along with Henry Hunt, named three of her five children after prominent radicals: respectively, Thomas Paine, Henry Hunt, and John Cartwright. It is difficult to assess just how widespread such radical naming was. The brief analysis I offer here is based on a database search of birth, marriage, and death records using a commercial website intended for family

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<sup>395</sup> L. Auslander, *Cultural Revolutions: The Politics of Everyday Life in Britain, North America, and France* (Oxford: Berg, 2009), pp.7-8.

<sup>396</sup> M. Chase, *The Chartists: Perspectives and Legacies* (London: Merlin, 2015), p.185.

<sup>397</sup> *Black Dwarf*, 14<sup>th</sup> July, 1819, quoted in Frow & Frow, *Political Women*, p.22

<sup>398</sup> J. Bailey, *Parenting in England, 1760-1830: Emotion, Identity, and Generation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p.97, p.100.

<sup>399</sup> P. Pickering, *Chartism and the Chartists in Manchester and Salford* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), p.41.

history research. Though there are problems in obtaining accurate numerical data using this method, some initial suggestions about radical naming can be made.<sup>400</sup>

For the obvious reason that radical leadership was male dominated, more boys than girls were given names that can be easily recognised as being inspired by the politics of their parents. ‘Mary Wollstonecraft’ as a first name returns only six records, one of which of course relates to Mary Wollstonecraft’s own daughter with William Godwin. The other records seem likely to refer to just two individuals – Mary Wollstonecraft Jones, who died in Manchester in 1846, and Mary Wollstonecraft Smith, baptised in Westminster in 1807, married to Thomas Denman (though not the abolitionist Lord Chief Justice!) in the same place in 1840, and dying just four years later in Steyning, Sussex. Alternative spellings of ‘Wollstonecraft’ found just four more individuals – Mary Woolstonecraft Adams, born 1842; Mary Woolstonecraft Domnum, born 1807, died 1860; Mary Wolstonecraft Galloway, born 1802, died 1892; Mary Wolstonecraft Thomas, born 1842; and Mary Ann Wolstonecraft Rae, born 1844. Interestingly, those children named for the author of ‘Vindication of the Rights of Women’ seem to have been concentrated in the London area and in the Pennines, or at least to have been in these areas at the time they were baptised, married or buried.<sup>401</sup> By contrast “Henry Hunt” as a first name returns 136 results, and “Thomas Paine” 50, though these results may too include some duplication.<sup>402</sup> Of the children named for Hunt, 28 were in Lancashire, with Ashton-under-Lyne, Bury, and Manchester all featuring particularly prominently. Another eight Henry Hunts were recorded in the Sheffield and Doncaster areas, and a further record from Chesterfield bring the total number for the Pennine region to 37: almost a third of the 129 records where a location is given. The London region dominates still more, with over half (67) of the

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<sup>400</sup> I searched these records using the databases of Findmypast.com. Accurate recording of the numbers of children with these names is difficult due to the potential for duplication, as different types of record are not linked, so it is difficult to tell whether a death record relates to one of the baptisms. This is aside from the more obvious problem of the absence of individuals who were not formally baptised or married for whatever reason, as well as the uncertainty over whether a given name might reflect other traditions (eg. A family name) rather than the radical one. It is also difficult to ascertain the social class of those so named – occupations are not always given, and detailed work on individual records would be required to trace life trajectories in greater detail.

<sup>401</sup> The exceptions were Adams (Cheltenham) and Domnum (Stockton-on-Tees).

<sup>402</sup> To limit this effect, the name “Henry Hunt” was searched within a single dataset (‘England Births and Baptisms, 1538-1975’). This search returned 809,966 records, but filtering out of those simply named “Henry” and any alternatives (eg. “Harry Hunt”) reduces the number further still to 136. “Thomas Paine” was searched in the same way, so the relatively small number of records returned may reflect the exclusion of “Tom Paine”, “Thos. Paine”, “Thomas Pain” etc. The apparent preference for naming for Hunt may also reflect the religious differences between the two radical heroes – if Paine’s followers adopted his deist principles, they may well have been less likely to have their children officially baptised and thus recorded in parish documents.

baptism records originating in what is now Greater London. Likewise, of the 68 records of children baptised ‘Thomas Paine’, 17 were from the Pennines, and 20 from the London area. The majority of children named for Henry Hunt and Thomas Paine, therefore, like the Mary Wollstonecrafts, could be found in our study regions.

Interestingly, the majority of children named for Hunt were baptised in the 1840s, after the death of the radical hero.<sup>403</sup> This may be due to the reinvigoration of suffrage campaigning with Chartism, but could also reflect the fact those who had grown up in the post-war years and through Hunt’s period as a reformist MP were now raising their own families. That ‘Henry Hunt’ continued to be chosen as first name for children in Lancashire for a long time after Peterloo, right through until the late nineteenth century, highlights the potential of radical naming as a mark of continuity and resilience in the face of repression. Malcolm Chase (again discussing the Chartist era) has rightly argued that the numbers of children so named are insignificant in relation to the numbers within the political movements they represented, and this seems to be even more clearly the case for our earlier period.<sup>404</sup> Nonetheless, radical naming remains interesting in that it demonstrates an attempt by parents to thoroughly embed politics into their children’s individual, and the family’s collective identities. It could also act as a form of protest. Even more defiantly than most radical parents, William Fitton, of Royton, near Oldham, baptised his son Napoleon in 1819. The child was five years old at the time, and was therefore born before the end of the wars against his namesake, making his moniker a controversial choice.<sup>405</sup> That the baptism occurred just over a month after Peterloo perhaps reflects the frustration radicals experienced in finding other outlets to express their anger at the massacre and the consequent collaboration of the established church and the state in seeking to exonerate the Manchester magistrates.

Radical naming practices were, therefore, a form of parental self-expression; a declaration of real emotional commitment to the cause. Radical naming of children can be seen alongside other naming practices, such as the appellation of Citizen, common in the 1790s as a means of expressing a connection to a common radical identity.<sup>406</sup> It might also be

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<sup>403</sup> 58 records for 1840-1849, compared to just 30 in the whole period 1815- 1839.

<sup>404</sup> Chase, *The Chartists*, p.181.

<sup>405</sup> Napoleon Fitton Chadwick, the son of William Fitton and Hannah Chadwick, was baptised on 26<sup>th</sup> September 1819 and died the following year at the age of 5 – see baptism and burial records on findmypast.com. His death was announced in the *Manchester Observer*, 29<sup>th</sup> January, 1820.

<sup>406</sup> See S. Coulombeau, “‘The Knot that ties them fast together’: Personal proper name change and identity formation in English literature, 1779-1800,” PhD thesis (University of York, 2014), pp.238-245. My thanks to Sophie Coulombeau for making this unpublished material available to me.

viewed alongside baptism itself as a means of bringing children into a wider moral community through the inevitable association of their names with the radical movement. The radical Reverend James Scholefield baptised both Henrietta Hunt Carlile Wheeler and James Cartwright Fildes at a Peterloo anniversary event in 1821, together with eight other children all named for Henry Hunt.<sup>407</sup> The decision to baptise these children at a politically-charged event is further evidence of the attempt to politicise family ritual and embed children within the movement from an early age. These political practices mirrored those of religious groups – especially radical religious traditions – in which children were frequently named for biblical figures or for virtues, and indeed the incorporation of such ritual perhaps further reflects the crossovers between strong religious and political attachments.<sup>408</sup> As well as telling us something about parental identity, they also suggest the values radical parents wished to transmit to their children – those embodied by the role models for whom they were named.

Radical parents also instructed their children in a tradition of political struggle, including key events of the recent past. For example, the *Manchester Observer* recommended a map of St Peter's Field as:

an excellent lesson for children. Let their parents instruct them in this important Political Catechism – “Here (No.1) stood the intrepid Champion of his country's liberties; “ and “Here (No.3) were placed a cordon of bludgeon'd myrmidons, who were there for the purpose of prevent the people's escape from the sabres of the dastardly Yeomanry Cavalry.” “Here, (No.4) were assembled in a secret divan, the hellish confederacy who were to order the commencement of the horr[ible] massacre;” and “Here, (No.5) were mustered the armed associates by which that massacre was to be accomplished;” &c. &c. By this method, the minds of our rising

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<sup>407</sup> Pickering, *Chartism and the Chartists*, p.41; J. T. Saxton, ‘Address to Henry Hunt Esq. from the Radical Reformers, Male and Female, of Manchester, August 16<sup>th</sup> 1821’, extract from the *New Manchester Observer*, included within H. Hunt, *To The Radical Reformers, Male and Female, of England, Ireland, and Scotland* (London, 1820). Google Books, accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> Aug. 2015, <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=QooBAAAAQAAJ&dq>, p.318.

<sup>408</sup> Coulombeau, “The Knot that ties them fast together”, pp.74-75; Mee, ‘Rough and Respectable Radicalisms’, pp.241-244.

generation might be fully impressed with the awful importance of making a stand for their political privileges.<sup>409</sup>

Such lessons complemented less formal means of learning about politics, which ranged from the more general moral education discussed above, to the inclusion of children within political meetings.<sup>410</sup> Political meetings were often held in the homes of members, particularly at times of intense persecution such as the 1790s and after Peterloo.<sup>411</sup> Children in these households would thus come into contact with radical ideas in this informal environment, were they not already attending radical meetings in a more formal capacity.<sup>412</sup> Witnesses described bringing their children to the meeting at St Peter's Fields as evidence of the radicals' peaceful intentions, but they had obviously felt that there was a benefit in bringing such youngsters to the event.<sup>413</sup> If the numbers present at mass-platform radical meetings were a demonstration of physical, embodied power, the inclusion of children within these numbers suggested the potential for its longevity.

Another means by which children could be brought within the radical community was by encouraging them to adopt radical symbols such as the white hat which denoted a supporter of Henry Hunt. This was a practice which caused huge controversy in the aftermath of Peterloo, particularly in relation to children attending school in the hats. The Committee of the Sunday Schools in Manchester and Salford associated with the Church of England issued the following circular:

‘It having been stated by many members now present, that, in several Schools, some of the children have appeared in *white* or *drab* hats, and *other badges or appendages* now used by persons whose

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<sup>409</sup> *Manchester Observer*, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1819.

<sup>410</sup> Pickering, *Chartism and the Chartists*, pp.43-44.

<sup>411</sup> See, for example, Place, *Autobiography*, p.131; Pickering, *Chartism and the Chartists*, pp.44-46. The houses in which meetings were held did not need to be large or grand – for example, meetings were held in a garret in New Islington, Manchester in 1816 prior to the Blanketeers' March. See TNA, HO42/172/60.

<sup>412</sup> Pickering, *Chartism and the Chartists*

<sup>413</sup> At the trial of Peterloo protestors in York, the defence counsel of James Moorhouse declared, ‘he was a married man with eleven children, and his wife then with child; was it probable, under such circumstances, that any man in his senses would go, with his family, to a meeting calculated, as was said, to inspire terror, and to be attended with riot and disorder?’. William Ellson also took his two sons and a daughter, as did Lucy Morville. See Anon., *The Trial of Mr. Hunt [and Others] ... for an Alleged Conspiracy to Alter the Law by Force and Threats; And for Convening and Attending an Illegal, Riotous and Tumultuous Meeting at Manchester on Monday the 16<sup>th</sup> of August, 1819* (Manchester: T. J Evans, 1820) p.152, pp.83-84.

political conduct and opinions are subversive of the Religion, and hostile to the Constitution and Government of the country; - and it having been further stated, that if such children are allowed to attend the Schools in such apparel, the cause of the society might suffer in public estimation: --- This Meeting, being desirous of testifying their decided disapprobation of the principles which now so generally accompany these outward appearances, and being also anxious that the support hitherto afforded to the Schools should not decline from any want of prudent precaution on their part, have come to the determination of recommending a general adherence to the following *regulation*: ---

“That if any children attend the Schools hereafter, dressed as above described, the Visitors or Master are requested to send them home, and not to admit them again, except they appear in such dress as they have been accustomed to wear heretofore.”<sup>414</sup>

This caused outrage among Manchester radicals, with one correspondent to the *Manchester Observer* describing the circular as a ‘cowardly attack upon the rising spirit of the rising generation’, adding that ‘We are not sure that the cause of religion would suffer, were the whole of the Sunday Schools of the Establishment closed for ever.’<sup>415</sup> Another correspondent noted acerbically, ‘How their consciences must accuse them, when such a simple thing as a white hat can put them in remembrance of their foul and unnatural proceedings on the 16<sup>th</sup>.’<sup>416</sup> Some parents chose to send their children to more sympathetic establishments. The Union School Room, in the heart of working-class Ancoats, was both Sunday School and meeting place. The day school taught young people, while public lectures at evenings and weekends could be used to raise subscriptions for political prisoners as well.<sup>417</sup> Opponents accused the school of teaching sedition and deism,<sup>418</sup> but a supporter advocated the Union School as an alternative to the Sunday Schools, which were ‘visiting the sins (as you call them) of the fathers upon the children, with a vengeance’,

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<sup>414</sup> As quoted in *Manchester Observer*, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1819.

<sup>415</sup> *Manchester Observer*, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1819.

<sup>416</sup> *Manchester Observer*, October 9<sup>th</sup> 1819.

<sup>417</sup> See advertisements in *Manchester Observer*, November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1819 and January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1820.

<sup>418</sup> *Manchester Observer*, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1820.

arguing that the children involved had little choice but to be obedient and accept their parents' choice of attire.<sup>419</sup>

The white hat controversy was centred on Manchester, in the particularly heated context of the months following Peterloo, when the established church was already unpopular due to the role of the clerical magistrates in ordering the massacre. The perpetuation of radicalism through the family was not, however, limited to the Pennine region, as we have seen in the development of the London Corresponding Society above. In direct contrast to Anna Clark's depiction of London ultra-radicalism as driven by misogynistic bachelor culture, Iain McCalman has pointed to the importance of family in enabling the Spencean Thomas Evans to sustain not just his own radicalism, but also that of the Spenceans more widely after the death of their eponymous leader. He notes the web of connections established largely through the efforts of Thomas's wife Janet, including not just fellow radicals but also their children – a network sustained by the kind of reciprocal assistance offered within kinship and close-knit community groups.<sup>420</sup> This ultra-radical group also firmly believed in the importance of educating young people to share their political principles, with Evans and Arthur Thistlewood attempting in 1814 to gain election to the committee in charge of the curriculum for West London's Lancastrian schools for the nonconformist poor.<sup>421</sup> Evans' and Thistlewood's own children travelled with them to France to distribute propaganda materials, having learned French in preparation.<sup>422</sup> Even Francis Place, who did not share the Spencean's more extreme version of radicalism, was keen to teach his children French, learning himself for the purpose.<sup>423</sup> It must have proved a useful skill for those persecuted radicals who found it necessary to exile themselves to the continent to escape the force of the English law, as many did in the 1790s in particular.

It is within the context of families embedding their children within the radical movement that we should view Samuel Bamford's comments about his grandfather, which opened this chapter, or John Binns' attribution of his 'republican principles' to his own grandparent. Radical family-based education seems, in many cases, to have been successful. Thomas Evans Junior, active even in his youth, moved north to become editor of the *Manchester Observer* in 1820, taking over from James Wroe when the latter was imprisoned

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<sup>419</sup> *Manchester Observer*, October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1819.

<sup>420</sup> McCalman, *Radical Underworld*, pp.105-106.

<sup>421</sup> McCalman, *Radical Underworld*, pp.22-23.

<sup>422</sup> McCalman, *Radical Underworld*, p.23, p.33.

<sup>423</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, pp.174-176.

on charges of sedition.<sup>424</sup> Wroe's own family were all heavily involved in radicalism – not only were his wife and brothers imprisoned shortly after himself, but even his ten-year-old son David was charged in 1820 for selling a seditious libel.<sup>425</sup> Thomas Paine Carlile, son of Richard, and John Cartwright Fildes, one of the five children of Peterloo protester Mary Fildes, both went on to become active in the Chartist movement, as did James Cooper, who was among those expelled from Sunday school for wearing a white hat.<sup>426</sup> The family, then, was an effective means for the transmission of radical values to the next generation, with children continuing their parents' activism long after the need for filial obedience declined.

The intergenerational continuity of radical principles should not be seen merely as a success of parental influence. As Chase has noted, a concentration on radical naming practices has lead historians to ignore the ways in which children could choose to be involved with politics.<sup>427</sup> Kathryn Gleadle has studied children's play during the Napoleonic Wars, and determined that it both responded to and participated in broader social processes. As young boys mimicked soldiers, and young girls the ladies who offered them tokens of support, they heightened the visibility of the military, acting as a reminder of the forces sustaining the status quo.<sup>428</sup> Samuel Bamford recalled his own fear of a French invasion, learned from 'childish playmates' convinced that "The war" would come to Middleton, and kill all the fathers, and mothers, and children that it could find'.<sup>429</sup> Such rumours were unlikely to encourage solidarity with French revolutionary principles. The political education of children was recognised not only by radicals but also by loyalists, who expressed considerable concern lest children be indoctrinated by radical literature. Matthew Grenby has argued that, although writers of children's literature avoided explicit political content, themes such as industriousness and social mobility carried a more subtle message about the possibilities for political change.<sup>430</sup> The reluctance amongst even highly-politicised authors to discuss current events within children's literature, even in the context of the 1790s war of ideas, was understood by Grenby to result from a desire to preserve

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<sup>424</sup> S. C. Behrendt, *Romanticism, Radicalism, and the Press* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997), p.142.

<sup>425</sup> Pickering, *Chartism and the Chartists*, p.40; *Manchester Observer*, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1820.

<sup>426</sup> Pickering, *Chartism and the Chartists*, pp.42-44.

<sup>427</sup> Chase, *The Chartists*, p.181.

<sup>428</sup> K. Gleadle, 'Playing at Soldiers: British Loyalism and Juvenile Identities during the Napoleonic Wars', in *Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies*, Vol.38, No.3 (2015), pp.335-348.

<sup>429</sup> Bamford, *Early Days*, p.51.

<sup>430</sup> M. Grenby, 'Politicizing the Nursery: British Children's Literature and the French Revolution' in *The Lion and The Unicorn*, Vol.27, No.1 (2003), pp.1-26.



the innocence of childhood. The sentimentalisation of childhood in the last decades of the eighteenth century, however, suggested an avenue for amending the behaviour of affectionate parents. Educational practice could also act in reverse, with children encouraged to act as conduits to alter the political persuasions of their parents by playing on their emotional attachment, rather in the same way that children today are taught to encourage their parents in such behaviours as recycling or non-smoking. Prizes given to children at Sunday School, for example, often bore religious or otherwise moralistic messages, with the intention that these be shown to parents and perhaps displayed within the home, as well as encouraging the recipient to take early responsibility for their own activity.<sup>431</sup> Children were therefore understood to have a degree of political agency in their own right, and thus their incorporation into political activism through the family should not be viewed as a one-way process.

In this chapter I have demonstrated that, though women and children were not afforded the same recognition as adult male radicals, they were crucial to building a collective identity which linked family and community, and provided the emotional support and motivation necessary to carry the radical movement through difficult periods. Though this of course remains a secondary role, it was one which destabilised a top-down hierarchy which placed men in absolute authority over the family. Without women and children, the radical movement would likely have crumbled, rather than evolving as it did into Chartism, especially as relationships between male protagonists such as Hunt and Bamford, Place and Evans broke down amidst bruised egos and perceived personal slights. Furthermore, radical participation, even in the background, may well have given women and children the confidence to demand a more prominent public position. Katrina Navickas, for example, has argued that the experiences of 1817 may well have been important for the development of the female reform societies in 1819, as women who were forced into prominence when their husbands were imprisoned declined to sink into the background once the crisis had passed.<sup>432</sup> In the next chapter, I consider in more detail the role of practical, household action in consolidating individual and collective radical identities, while in the final chapter I explore the expression of these identities through objects. Taking into account these

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<sup>431</sup> V.A. Crewe & D.M. Hadley, “‘Uncle Tom Was There, in Crockery’: Material Culture and a Victorian Working-Class Childhood’ in *Childhood in the Past*, Vol.6, No.2 (2003), pp.89-108, esp. p.95. See also N. Riley, *Gifts for Good Children: The History of Children’s China, 1790-1890* (Ilminster: Richard Dennis, 1991): a plate catalogued in this work includes the lines ‘When we devote our youth to God/ ‘Tis pleasing in his eyes./ A flower offered when in the bud / is no vain sacrifice’, pp.228-229.

<sup>432</sup> Navickas, ‘A Reformer’s wife ought to be a heroine’, pp.263-264.

practical and material elements of working-class domestic life further emphasises the importance of the household in political radicalism, and the ways in which everyday participation in politicised activity sustained the movement through periods of severe repression.

## Chapter 5

### Spending Power: Radicalism and Household Consumption

The industrial revolution and accompanying demographic revolution were the background to the greatest transformation in history, in revolutionising “needs” and in destroying the authority of customary expectations.

So wrote E.P. Thompson in the introduction to *Customs in Common*, which pitted the legitimising force of precedent (real or imagined) within ‘plebeian’ culture against the bulldozing force of the market and its investors. This process, he argued, has continued to the present day in the demand for ever-increasing economic growth to facilitate a rising living standard understood as the ability to consume more (supposedly better) commodities. Yet even while decrying the relentless expansion of the category of ‘necessary’ goods, he warned that so doing could itself be an apologist’s argument for the forces that keep the poor in poverty so as to better exploit them.<sup>433</sup> Indeed, recent historical scholarship seems to have favoured a more positive view of commercialising society, contending that the industrial revolution and the connected expansion of the world of goods brought about real and tangible improvements in health and wellbeing as well as material prosperity for the working classes. Furthermore, Emma Griffin has recently argued, this improvement came alongside increased political awareness and participation. She contends that rather than producing apathetic submission to the market, the material gains of workers in industrialising Britain were ‘enough to drag wage-earners out of the servile submission that poverty had forced on them since time immemorial.’<sup>434</sup>

The relationship between consumerism, exploitation and resistance in the industrial revolution is the subject of continued scholarly interest and lively debate, as an ever-expanding body of scholarship continues to refresh our perspectives on how far and to what end working-class men and women participated in a ‘consumer revolution’ in the eighteenth century.<sup>435</sup> We now know that by the 1790s, the opening decade of the period in

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<sup>433</sup> Thompson, *Customs in Common*, p.14.

<sup>434</sup> Griffin, *Liberty’s Dawn*, p.247.

<sup>435</sup> Some of this debate has been summarised by John Styles, who has pointed to multiple ways in which working people accessed and interacted with goods by way of nuancing both ‘optimistic’ and ‘pessimistic’ portrayals of the industrial and consumer ‘revolutions’; see *The Dress of the People*, pp.3-8.

question here, most households had access to new and different goods than those they might have possessed at the beginning of the century. But did the market necessarily impose its own priorities over customary expectations, or were working-class people more active in adapting consumer behaviour to meet their own imperatives? In this chapter, I argue that working-class people had, by our period, largely come to expect access to certain non-essential goods, incorporating these into domestic routines, but that working-class consumption remained contentious among commentators across the socio-economic spectrum. Attempts to regulate working-class consumer behaviour were linked to a conservative desire to encourage individualistic self-help and suppress calls for more thoroughgoing economic reform, but could also be adapted as part of active radical citizenship amongst the working-classes themselves.

The classic account of the triumph of commodity over domestic custom is William Cobbett's lamentation in 1825's *Rural Rides* of the replacement of 'plain manners and plentiful living', materialised in good old English oak, with new mahogany and fine glass, and fancy manners to match.<sup>436</sup> The targets of this criticism are farmers, whose tastes Cobbett claimed deprived poorer tenants of the bed and board to which they had once been entitled, but, by 1825, many working people had themselves acquired mahogany, glass, dinner sets and the other accoutrements on which Cobbett blamed their immiseration. Existing historical scholarship on eighteenth-century consumption demonstrates an expansion in the volume and diversity of goods available in England from the end of the seventeenth century onwards. These studies are largely reliant upon probate inventories, and therefore tend not to represent the poorest sections of the population, though this has been to some degree rectified by further work using pauper inventories as well as by archaeological evidence.<sup>437</sup> The results of these studies are supported by my own

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<sup>436</sup> W. Cobbett, *Rural Rides*, Vol.1 (1830), edited with an introduction by Asa Briggs (London: Dent, 1912), pp.265-268.

<sup>437</sup> Examples of probate inventory-based studies include C. Shamma, 'The Domestic Environment in Early Modern England and America', in *Journal of Social History*, Vol.14, No.1 (1980), pp.17-18; Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain*; M. Overton, *et. al.*, *Production and Consumption in English Households, 1600-1750* (London: Routledge 2004). These studies focus on the 'middling sort' – Weatherill's sample, for example, includes only a tiny percentage of 'labouring class' inventories. Pauper inventory studies include King, 'Pauper inventories and the Material Lives of the Poor in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries'; Harley, 'Material wealth or material poverty?' and forthcoming thesis, 'Material Lives of the English Poor: a regional perspective, c.1670-1834', University of Leicester. These pauper inventory studies aim to uncover the lives of the *poor*, rather than the 'working class' more generally, though as King's work demonstrated, the inventory could be taken in anticipation of the need for relief and thus capture the material environment prior to the severest depredations of poverty (pp.170-172). This reminds us again of the precarity stressed in my own definition of what it meant to be 'working class' – individuals

analysis of a small sample of 59 pauper *and* probate inventories from London and the Pennine region, which suggest that by the late-Georgian period, working-class people furnished their homes in a range of materials, including mahogany alongside deal and oak. As we saw in the third chapter, even inventories taken for poor relief purposes included goods made from imported woods, clocks, looking glasses, feather beds and decorative ceramics. The goods of Mrs Mills of Teddington included a mahogany night stool, as well as chests of drawers and basin stands of the same material, plus extensive lists of china, stone ware and linen.<sup>438</sup> The rather sparser inventory of Sarah Hargreaves, a pauper of Westgate Hill near Bradford, included a mahogany tea board as well as a looking glass, ‘good’ blankets, and feather bedding.<sup>439</sup> The inventory sample demonstrates that it was not unusual for working-class people, including those reliant on relief, to own a range of decorative objects including clocks, mirrors and prints (see Table 1). Some 61% (36) of the inventories I studied listed a dresser, delph case, or some other form of shelving for the display of ornamental items, suggesting a sense of pride in exhibiting such items. Even considering the potential for under-representation of such smaller, moveable goods in inventories, 72% (42) of the inventories consulted had equipment or furnishings for the specific purpose of preparing or serving hot drinks. These items, including tea tables and silver goods alongside more basic coffee pots and kettles, suggest the adoption of rituals around the preparation, serving and consumption of hot drinks at home. The picture of domestic life which emerges from these documents was, if somewhat sparser than today’s interiors, not without basic comforts.

Though living standards – insofar as they can be measured by material wealth – seem to have stagnated somewhat by the end of the eighteenth century, decades of progression had accustomed even the poorer members of society to some degree of consumer choice.<sup>440</sup> Despite this, historians have tended to focus upon the ways in which working people accessed basic foodstuffs, especially bread, but also the agricultural products traditionally

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might experience a relatively rich material environment prior to a life event or downturn in trade which could render maintenance of domestic comforts unsustainable. My own study, in using both pauper and probate inventories, therefore aims to capture a broader range of material experiences that working-class people might have access to at home, but as pauper inventories are, as King noted, rather more difficult to locate than probate inventories, probate inventories dominate the sample and thus it is potentially skewed towards more wealthy working-class households. However, archaeological evidence also supports the conclusion that working-class people had access to decorative goods: see introduction, p.12.

<sup>438</sup> LMA, MJ/SP/1799/APR/049/1-3 Petition by the parish of Teddington to sell the goods and chattels of William Mills, labourer, 1799.

<sup>439</sup> WYAS Bradford, TONG/129/92 Inventory of goods belonging to Sarah Hargreaves, 1821.

<sup>440</sup> Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p.5.

farmed on the commons or offered as part of the remuneration of rural labourers. The high prices or enclosures which restricted access to these products understandably resulted in noisy protest, such as the much-studied food riot, and the long campaign against the Corn Laws, because these were items understood as necessities. While recognising the powerful symbolic resonances of bread and of common land, this study focuses instead on working-class attitudes towards items which were not required for survival, but to which I argue working people had become accustomed during the eighteenth century, to the point that they were so integrated into domestic routines that their absence would be keenly felt. Indeed, these 'luxuries' might themselves have come to be numbered amongst the 'customary expectations' of working-class people. Such items – hot drinks, alcohol, tobacco, and decorative goods – did not invite protest in the same way as access to basics, as they were much harder to present as necessities. Nonetheless, they were symbolically, and indeed practically, important to working people and thus became one of the battle grounds in which ideas of power and status were the real issues at stake.

The desirable extent and direction of working-class spending had throughout the eighteenth century been the subject of heated national debate.<sup>441</sup> Such tensions were to be expected in a period of rapid change in consumer expectations, but the 1790s brought new concerns about appropriate working-class consumption as war brought straitened economic circumstances at the same time as anxieties were heightened about the spread of democratic ideals in the wake of the French Revolution.<sup>442</sup> In this chapter, working-class domestic consumption and the debates which surrounded it are related to the growing political consciousness expressed in the activities of working people's associations for parliamentary reform from the 1790s onwards. By exploring consumer, as well as productive, relations in the early industrial revolution, the contradictory effects of the rise of the free market on working people's lives are more fully revealed.

In a classic Marxist model, consumer desire is understood as a conservative force, reconciling citizens to market forces by manipulating their desires, but this is a

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<sup>441</sup> For debates about working-class consumption of 'luxuries' in the eighteenth-century see J. White, 'Luxury and Labour: Ideas of Labouring-Class Consumption in Eighteenth-Century England' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Warwick, 2001) and 'The Laboring-Class Domestic Sphere in British Social Thought' in *Gender, Taste & Material Culture in Britain & North America 1700-1830*, edited by J. Styles & A. Vickery (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), pp.247-263.

<sup>442</sup> Barrell, *The Spirit of Despotism*, p.220.

conceptualisation which has been challenged by historians and social theorists alike.<sup>443</sup> Michel de Certeau, for example, argued that consumption itself is a form of production, with consumers adapting commodities in ways which can disrupt or complicate ‘panoptic’ power structures.<sup>444</sup> That this may not be a modern phenomenon is suggested by Timothy Hall Breen’s work on consumer behaviour and the American Revolution. Breen suggested that the ‘production of meanings’ involved in consumption was ‘highly charged with political implications ... For almost everyone the meanings of things raised perplexing questions about gender and equality.’ He viewed consumption as an empowering act, in which men and women might exercise a degree of choice which they would come to expect in other areas of life, including politics.<sup>445</sup> Influenced by these theories, I suggest in this chapter that the debate over working-class consumption in late-Georgian England was a power struggle deeply enmeshed with classed and gendered identities. What and how one chose to consume was, as suggested by Cobbett’s laments about the decline of ‘plain manners’, a crucial means of understanding and expressing a sense of oneself in relation to others. However, the ‘choice’ of what to consume was itself constrained by economic resources and cultural expectations, especially for the financially precarious. The ways in which consumer behaviour interacted with other aspects of self-conception and self-presentation, at a time of radical change in household production and consumption, therefore complicates any simple understanding of consumer choice as politically empowering.

As we have seen in the second chapter of this thesis, conservative imaginings of working-class homes tended to emphasise a kind of rustic sufficiency, conveying the message that working people should be satisfied with what they had, rather than envying the material possessions of their betters. This was made explicit in some literature, which drew on biblical imagery to argue that the poor were in fact better off than the wealthy, as they faced fewer impediments to heaven. The prominent and politically conservative evangelical Reverend Thomas Biddulph, in a sermon offering *Seasonable Hints to the Poor*, argued that ‘Poverty and sickness, which deprive us of the enjoyment of worldly treasures, contribute through grace to render Christ more precious.’ He warned the poor that by coveting even

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<sup>443</sup> E. Asquer, ‘Domesticity and Beyond: Gender, Family and Consumption in Modern Europe’ in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, edited by F. Trentmann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p.569.

<sup>444</sup> de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*.

<sup>445</sup> T. H. Breen, ‘The Meanings of Things: Interpreting the Consumer Economy in the Eighteenth Century’, in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, edited by J. Brewer and R. Porter (London: Routledge, 1993), pp.249-260.

the most insignificant of items, they risked setting up idols in opposition to God.<sup>446</sup> Furthermore, Biddulph explicitly linked covetousness with political radicalism, exhorting his readers to eschew the ‘fashionable’ practice of ‘*speaking evil of dignities*’ encouraged by the ‘*lawless multitude*’. Instead his audience should remember God’s command to ‘*honour the King*’, and study their bibles instead of the newspapers.<sup>447</sup> That the powers of the established church contributed to this discourse suggests an attempt to render morally legitimate the shift in emphasis that placed the onus on the poor to help themselves, rather than to expect assistance from the godly rich.

Of course, ideas about appropriate consumption had long been inflected by religion as well as by politics. What was important was that the dominant message from the established church from 1790s was explicitly classed, aimed at justifying the financial insecurities experienced by working-class people without interrogating where the responsibility for their difficulties lay. It was an attitude lampooned by Isaac Cruikshank in his print *A General Fast in Consequence of the War!!*, in which a fat clergyman feasting with two fashionable ladies is contrasted with a thin, ragged Spitalfields weaving family (Fig.10). Aware that working-class people might recognise this injustice, especially in the hard wartime years, conservative evangelicals like Biddulph and his fellow Bristolian Hannah More deliberately conflated the desire for political reform with consumer desires, so that the latter could be depicted as greed – a ‘politics of envy’ rather than a call for social justice. More’s Cheap Repository Tracts repeatedly stressed individual solutions: concentrating on personal, moral reform to improve one’s situation through industry and frugality. In *The Lancashire Collier Girl*, for example, the hard and dangerous work of the entire family – including young children – is celebrated as an alternative to reliance on the parish, while in *Village Politics*, her hero Jack Anvil scoffs at Tom Hod’s Paineite politics, diminishing them to a desire for cheaper goods:

Tom: I don't see why we are to work like slaves, while others roll about in their coaches, feed on the fat of the land, and do nothing.

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<sup>446</sup> T. Biddulph, *Seasonable Hints to the Poor on the Duties of Frugality, Piety, and Loyalty. Being the Substance of a Sermon Delivered in the Parish Church of St Maryport, Bristol, to Two Benefit Societies on Whit-Monday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1797* (Bristol: W. Pine & Son, 1797). Eighteenth Century Collections Online (Gale), doc. ref. CW120415340, accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> Apr. 2014, p.12, p.4. Biddulph also reminded his readers of the biblical assertion that ‘*it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God*’, p.17. For more on Biddulph, see G. Carter, ‘Biddulph, Thomas Tregenna (1763–1838)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>447</sup> Biddulph, *Seasonable Hints to the Poor*, p.15.



Jack: My little maid brought home a storybook from the Charity-School t'other day in which was a bit of a fable about the Belly and the Limbs. The hands said, I won't work any longer to feed this lazy belly, who sits in state like a lord, and does nothing. Said the feet, I won't walk and tire myself to carry him about; let him shift for himself; so said all the members; just as your levellers and republicans do now. And what was the consequence? Why the belly was pinched to be sure; but the hands and the feet, and the rest of the members suffered so much for want of their old nourishment, that they fell sick, pined away, and would have died, if they had not come to their senses just in time to save their lives, as I hope all you will do.

Tom: But the times—but the taxes, Jack.

Jack: Things are dear, to be sure: but riot and murder is not the way to make them cheap ... I dare say, if the honest gentleman is not disturbed by you levellers, things will mend every day. But bear one thing in mind: the more we riot, the more we shall have to pay.<sup>448</sup>

More's solution was always to keep quiet, work harder and have faith in God and the government. In a further dialogue between Anvil and Hod, in *The Riot; or Half a Loaf is better than no Bread*, Hod is dissuaded from starting a bread riot by his friend's wisdom:

'tho' poor I can work, my brave boy, with the best,

Let the King and the Parliament manage the rest'.<sup>449</sup>

Others argued that if the poor were really suffering, they should not choose to spend their limited resources of time and money on subscriptions to radical clubs.<sup>450</sup> Both working-

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<sup>448</sup> More, *Village Politics*, pp.7-8.

<sup>449</sup> More, *The Riot; or Half a Loaf is better than no Bread*.

<sup>450</sup> For example, TNA, HO42/189 f.5. Handbill entitled 'To the Women of England', which told readers that their penny subscriptions took food from their family's mouths. Radical women in particular were criticised for paying attention to politics rather than feeding and clothing their children.

class spending and working-class politics were, to these commentators, matters too important to be left to the working-classes themselves.

Underpinning all of this concern with working-class consumption was the conviction that rate-payers had the right to monitor and direct the spending of all who might potentially fall within the remit of parish relief. This was a conviction made explicit by Sheffield's Committee for the Relief of the Poor, which in 1795 issued subscribers of a guinea or more with a list of addresses of the recipients of relief. Subscribers were asked to visit a small number of the houses and record on the form provided the number of inhabitants 'which they think should be relieved, or none.' The circular proposed that the financial future of a whole family could be decided by a few moments scrutiny and the check of a box, performed by a stranger granted authority through their own financial security. The mental and physical distance between those who subscribed to and those relieved by the Committee was acknowledged in their circular, which explained that 'the greater Number of Paupers live in the Park, the Crofts, or other Places remote from the Residence of most of the Subscribers', but suggested that visiting a small number of houses even at a distance was not too great a demand to ensure that relief was administered 'in a Manner which Experience has proved to be the least liable to imposition'.<sup>451</sup> Thus any privacy afforded to the poor by the economic segregation of the town was eroded by the Committee's determination to monitor the recipients of relief. In 1808, Sheffield's overseers can again be seen to have attempted to extend their scrutiny of local paupers, this time publishing a list of the casual and regular recipients of relief along with their addresses, and, in the case of the regular paupers, the amount of money they received. Again, this was with the explicit intention of monitoring recipients, in order to 'detect impositions', a task this time turned over to the public at large, rather than just subscribers.<sup>452</sup> Sheffield was not alone in publishing these lists: a number of London parishes also 'outsourced' surveillance of paupers to the community in order to be better informed of anybody who might be 'improperly receiving Relief'.<sup>453</sup>

Furthermore, once identified as being worthy of support, poor families found their spending choices restricted by the method of dispersing relief. In the Sheffield example,

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<sup>451</sup> Sheffield City Archives, JC1605: Resolution regarding personal visits to poor people's homes, 1795.

<sup>452</sup> Sheffield City Archives, JC1507: *A List of the Casual and Regular Out-Paupers of Sheffield ... Taken Sept. 30, 1808.*

<sup>453</sup> London Metropolitan Archives, P71/TMS/588-590: Lists of the Poor.

this was fulfilled by providing families with tickets to be lodged with bakers or supplier of meal, in order that the family could receive an allotted quantity of food; a utilitarian system which removed the possibility of a varied diet, of spontaneous purchases, of provision of hospitality to visitors – in other words, it reduced the power of relieved families to decide how best to direct their household resources.<sup>454</sup> Along with such techniques as the badging of paupers, such forms of ‘involuntary consumption’, with choices made by officials rather than within a family, were a means of marking those receiving relief as ‘other’. However, unlike the involuntary consumption of clothing amongst the parish poor, which John Styles has suggested could be used to mark belonging and entitlement to support even if the clothing was of unfashionable and of low quality, the provision of foodstuffs in this manner seems to offer few avenues for such reinterpretation. While in matters of clothing, the parish authorities had to ensure their paupers were outwardly decent – if nothing else so that they might have some hope of obtaining and retaining employment – it was more difficult for poor law recipients to argue that certain foodstuffs were necessary to maintain a social position, even if that might be the case.<sup>455</sup> Rather than marking out belonging, restricted provision of foodstuffs marked difference and dependence, and deprived poor families of their ability to participate in community sociability based in shared hospitality and mutual support.

The limitation of choice in the provision of food and clothing to poor law claimants was part of a much wider move – among social commentators as well as poor law unions – towards the monitoring and control of working-class spending, especially, but not exclusively, where the individuals or families involved received poor relief. Sandra Sherman has argued that the proliferation of ‘scientific’ information about the working-classes in the 1790s marked a dramatic shift in values towards the espousal of a free market, releasing the upper-classes from their customary obligation to support the poor.<sup>456</sup> She suggests that suspicion of mass consumerism was not just about an anticipated drain on the poor laws, but also due to the central role of consumer behaviour to bourgeois identity. Accepting that working people had needs and desires beyond the basic necessities of life meant confronting the fact that they too were individual human beings rather than the insensible, amorphous mass – ‘the swinish multitude’.<sup>457</sup> This, Sherman argues, was the purpose of

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<sup>454</sup> Sheffield City Archives, JC1605: Resolution regarding personal visits to poor people’s homes, 1795.

<sup>455</sup> Styles, *The Dress of the People*, pp.271-275.

<sup>456</sup> Sherman, *Imagining Poverty*, pp.4-5.

<sup>457</sup> Sherman, *Imagining Poverty*, p.16.

literature claiming to offer scientific insight into working-class people's needs and desires, enumerating their spending until they were reduced to a series of statistics. Despite the claims of such literature to objectivity, Sherman asserts that it contributed to a de-individuation of working people which made it easier to ignore their claims to the traditional obligations of the local gentry.<sup>458</sup> Thus we return to Thompson's account of the widening cultural gap between rich and poor, and the shedding of customary ties of paternalism and deference in the name of economic efficiency. But rather than these values simply being disposed of, Jonathon White's work suggests that they were being replaced by new, commercially-orientated social relations, in which 'paternalism' meant accepting the working classes as consumers, whilst 'deference' was to be shown through the limited exercise of the powers of consumption.<sup>459</sup> As we saw in the second chapter, there was a delicate balance between demonstrating good management and care for the domestic environment, and appearing to spend excessively in the pursuit of luxuries above one's station.

In such a context, can we understand the continued refusal of working-class men and women to adhere to the imagined budgets proposed by social commentators as a form of rebellion, a stubborn prioritisation of their customary expectations against the relentless tide of rationalisation? Whether as a conscious protest or not, Beverley Lemire has shown that the household economies practised by working people often resisted the disciplining force of quantification. Pawnshops, informal credit networks, and the use of goods as a form of 'alternative currency' all persisted as part of a working-class 'pattern of consumerism [which] was antithetical to a middle class which sought to create a permanent material world in their homes and in their dress, saving and spending in more structured, monetized forms outside the purview of street sellers.'<sup>460</sup> As we have seen in previous chapters, working-class households were strongly community-orientated, and tasks and resources were shared of necessity. In these circumstances, seemingly irrational economic practices, such as offering hospitality to a neighbour when on a limited income, were crucial social glue to sustain bonds facilitating mutual aid. Furthermore, as Lemire argues, these kinds of customary economic practice were gendered, with women key to such informal economies, and becoming less involved as saving, accounting and spending were

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<sup>458</sup> Sherman, *Imagining Poverty*, pp.9-11, p.28.

<sup>459</sup> White, 'Luxury and Labour', p.331.

<sup>460</sup> Lemire, *The Business of Everyday Life*, p.104.

brought within the purview of quantification.<sup>461</sup> Women have also long been associated with consumption, often in negative terms which emphasised their irrationality, as displayed in a susceptibility to useless and frivolous luxury goods, though scholarship has demonstrated the need for caution in accepting the often satirical depictions of female shoppers. Amanda Vickery, for example, argued that, at least in more prosperous households, it was often men who were responsible for the purchase of more expensive, novel, or decorative domestic goods.<sup>462</sup> Karen Harvey also pointed out the important role of men in managing household economies on a more routine basis,<sup>463</sup> while among the working-classes, John Bohstedt has warned against the assumption that women, especially those employed in economically productive labour, were always the shoppers for their families.<sup>464</sup> So was the exercise of spending power able to benefit women?

Despite Bohstedt's assertion, working-class autobiography and didactic literature aimed at working people do suggest that working-class women *were* strongly associated with shopping for the home and family. The London-based tailor Francis Place described his wife as 'clever at purchasing', a skill which enabled her to help in his business as well as caring for their large family at minimum cost.<sup>465</sup> In the Preston factory districts, on the other hand, Benjamin Shaw, regretted that his wife Betty had not had a mother to model such careful management, and thus was careless with money and ran up debts, despite what her husband perceived as a strange lack of interest in items such as clothes and furniture.<sup>466</sup> Shaw clearly felt that consumption of household essentials was a female concern, and household budgeting was a skill transmitted from mother to daughter. This assumption was also held by Esther Hewlett, whose domestic advice manual recommended that, when choosing the location of a cottage, newly-wed men should consider the distance to work and their wives the distance to the shops or market,<sup>467</sup> while The Society for Bettering the

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<sup>461</sup> Lemire, *The Business of Everyday Life*, p.46, p.93, pp.202-204.

<sup>462</sup> Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p.126

<sup>463</sup> K. Harvey, 'Men Making Home: Masculinity and Domesticity in Eighteenth-Century Britain', in *Gender and History*, Vol.21, No.3 (2009), p.528

<sup>464</sup> J. Bohstedt, 'Gender, Household and Community Politics: Women in English Riots, 1790-1810', in *Past and Present*, Vol.120, No.1 (1988), p.47. Bohstedt's warning is based on his finding that food rioters tended to gather for the purpose, rather than spontaneously erupting into disorder in the market place, thus we cannot assume that the prominence of women in food riots was simply due to their presence at the market.

<sup>465</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, p.227.

<sup>466</sup> B. Shaw, *The Family Records of Benjamin Shaw Mechanic of Dent, Dolphinholme and Preston, 1772-1841*, edited by A.G. Crosby (Manchester: The Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1991), pp.76-77.

<sup>467</sup> E. Hewlett, *Cottage Comforts, with Hints for Promoting Them, Gleaned from Experience: Enlivened with Authentic Anecdotes* (London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1825), p.24.

Condition and Improving the Comforts of the Poor would have warned Benjamin Shaw that to ‘choose a wife, who has not, by attention and economy on her part, proved herself fit to manage a family, is *extremely imprudent and improvident*.<sup>468</sup> Of course, the writings of the autobiographers might reflect their awareness of such cultural expectations, but nonetheless these sources suggest that, at least in theory if not in practice, working-class women did take a large part in organising household consumption.

What did this mean for the role of women within the family and the wider community? Certainly, the informal economies discussed by Lemire provided women involved with considerable power over their neighbour’s economic circumstances.<sup>469</sup> The social networks which sustained local systems of credit and access to information were likely strengthened by attendance at community hubs, such as local shops or markets. Women shopping for the mundane necessities for maintaining the household would meet neighbours, share news, and thus solidify social bonds. This may, to some extent, have mitigated against the frequent female exclusion from the masculine association of the workshop, mentioned in chapter three.<sup>470</sup> Breen has pointed to other pleasures of going out to shop, rather than spending hours on the ‘tedious... production of “homespun” goods’ so prized by critical observers, and has therefore suggested that ‘The acquisition of goods by women in this economy was an assertive act, a declaration of agency’.<sup>471</sup> Consumption decisions could perhaps in similar ways enable defiance against attempts to control working-class spending, a hidden transcript of resistance against impositions ‘from above’.<sup>472</sup>

However, there is little evidence that such resistance was consciously political, and nor did it challenge the larger structures which operated to embed inequalities.<sup>473</sup> While a new awareness of themselves as consumers could contribute to the radicalism of the working-classes, it was just as likely to sustain a conservative desire to protect what one had through limiting change. The very title of the working-class loyalist Association for the Protection of Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers was a statement of the desire to guard one’s personal goods. Conservative propaganda depicting British plenty, usually opposed to French misery, connected with strong impulses to maintain the comforts one

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<sup>468</sup> Anon., *Information for Cottagers, Collected from the Reports of the Society for Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor. And Published by Order of the Society*. (London, 1800).

<sup>469</sup> Lemire, *The Business of Everyday Life*, p.46.

<sup>470</sup> See above, p.100.

<sup>471</sup> Breen, ‘The meanings of things’, p257.

<sup>472</sup> See Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, p.4 for the concept of the ‘hidden transcript’ in unequal power relations.

<sup>473</sup> Asquer, ‘Domesticity and Beyond’, p.580.

possessed, and a fear that radical political change might threaten the security of what little property working-class people owned. Furthermore, hidden resistance is, by its nature, unable to generate alternative discourses, such as those which might establish customary rights to the comforts enjoyed by working-class people. Instead, responses to attempts to control working-class consumerism focused on bread, replicating the depiction of working people as machines requiring only food and fuel.<sup>474</sup> Items such as tea and white bread were no longer ‘luxuries’, but everyday items, and no matter how much the imagined budgets of observers sought to present cheaper alternatives, it was difficult to divest consumers of goods which had become embedded in their daily routines. Historians have pointed to the use of sweetened tea for warmth and energy following the decline of agricultural employment and the increasing reliance on the market for sustenance, which resulted in less access to nutritious foods. In this context, tea and sugar cannot be understood as ‘luxuries’, rather they addressed a lack of the ‘necessaries’ required to sustain life.<sup>475</sup> In a similar vein, Samuel Bamford spoke of the women and old men who might share out a pinch of snuff or tobacco while waiting to collect milk at the dairy, ‘just to keep the wind off’.<sup>476</sup> Thus small pleasures could distract from the monotony or discomfort experienced in working-class life, and could facilitate sociability. Provision of hospitality, as we have already noted, was important in sustaining community bonds. Samuel Bamford remarked unfavourably on the unwelcoming atmosphere offered to working-class radical delegates at the home of Sir Francis Burdett, suggesting that Burdett exhibited a penny-pinching attitude incompatible with his status:

I could not help my thoughts from reverting to the simple and homely welcome we received at lord Cochrane’s, and contrasting it with the kind of dreary stateliness of this great mansion and its rich owner ... scarcely a servant appeared; and nothing in the shape of refreshment was seen.<sup>477</sup>

On the other hand, we saw in the previous chapter that the poor Drummond family showed great kindness to Bamford’s wife, Jemima, which Samuel took as evidence of their respect. Bamford’s concerns were not simply the product of his upbringing in the tight-knit

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<sup>474</sup> Sherman, *Imagining Poverty*, p.82, 85.

<sup>475</sup> C. Sussman, *Consuming Anxieties: Consuming Protest, Gender, and British Slavery, 1713-1833* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), p.31.

<sup>476</sup> Bamford, *Early Days*, p.97.

<sup>477</sup> Bamford, *Passages*, p.24.

community of Middleton, and examples of similar attitudes towards appropriate provision of hospitality can be found in the metropolis. Francis Place and his lodger, Richard Wild, fell out over the latter's failure to pay for food that his brother ate on a visit to the house. The episode shows how the provision of hospitality was tightly bound with values of fairness and a sense of obligation. While Place rationalised his request for repayment with reference to Wild's wages and lack of family to support, Wild was highly offended. The friendship could only be restored and the pair's business plans established with carefully laid out plans for shared household, as well as business, expenses.<sup>478</sup>

Attitudes to hospitality offer some insight into wider perceptions of how working people thought about the social impact of their behaviour as consumers. Once more, we can see how everyday domestic practice was firmly intertwined with ideas about morality and social justice. It was not only conservatives who sought to determine the appropriate boundaries for working-class consumption. The self-fashioning of working-class radicals often involved a rejection of corrupting luxuries as part of the assertion of moral independence, and unwillingness to compromise beliefs for material gain. Samuel Bamford, who we saw detailing the simple comforts of his cottage in the second chapter, and extolling hospitality here, also recalled his suspicion of fellow radicals who were released from prison rather better off than previously. Writing of a young man named James Leach, Bamford found that:

Instead of the simple-minded and soft-hearted lad I had left at Coldbath-fields, I now found a person smartly attired, and with some cash in his pockets. I perceived also, that he affected superiority ... He has maintained *his* distance and *his* superiority ever since, and he is welcome to both, and his riches to boot.<sup>479</sup>

For his own part, Bamford insisted that he could not be tempted by 'baubles', telling his readers that '*I would not change my iron bed,/ For all the downy couches, spread/ Around corruption's throne.*'<sup>480</sup> Throughout Bamford's memoirs, he reinforced the moral superiority of the same kind of simplicity advocated by conservative tracts. Though cleanliness, neatness, and the provision of hospitality were key to Bamford's ideals of respectability, he was scathing about 'showy' consumer goods, such as goldfish 'which, by human pride....are doomed to

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<sup>478</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, pp.188-191.

<sup>479</sup> Bamford, *Passages*, pp.138-139.

<sup>480</sup> Bamford, *Passages* (Oxford edition), p.178. For Bamford's disdain of baubles, invoking the figure of Oliver Cromwell, see *Passages* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1905), p.28.



paddle around glass vials, through thick and sickening water, as an ornament to parlour windows; or for the amusement of the lady and her visitors'.<sup>481</sup> The goldfish seem to have symbolised for Bamford the enslaving power of these 'artificial' wants. Fellow autobiographer Francis Place was likewise suspicious of profligate spending, though his care over his own outward appearance caused negative comment from his neighbours, who accused him of acting above his station.<sup>482</sup> He was also keen to avoid being given money for fear of his independence being compromised or seeming to be so.<sup>483</sup> Nonetheless, he accepted that tradespeople were always reliant on the goodwill of their customers and thus was willing to suppress principle in favour of profit, decorating 'shewy' shopfronts and submitting to the demeaning manners of wealthy customers, though he privately regarded their pretensions to 'taste' to be synonymous with 'folly and caprice'.<sup>484</sup> Place was able to maintain the 'psychological space' which permitted him to understand himself as independent<sup>485</sup> through hidden rebellions which demonstrated his contempt for his 'frivolous' customers, such as pretending to alter garments to meet their exacting requirements while in fact making no changes at all.<sup>486</sup> Thus Place maintained a moral distance even as he facilitated 'luxurious' consumption, insisting upon his determination to 'get money, and yet avoid entertaining a mercenary money getting spirit'.<sup>487</sup>

In both Bamford's and Place's accounts, we can see the tension between acquisitiveness and a desire for moral purity through self-denial, similar to that revealed in Matthew Kadane's detailed exploration of the inner life of the Leeds-based clothier Joseph Ryder.<sup>488</sup> Ryder's diary expressed constant anxiety about whether his success in business reflected God's approval, or condemned him as vain and self-indulgent. Though neither Bamford nor Place was as religiously inclined as the Puritan Ryder, both understood 'unnecessary' spending as detrimental to moral (in this case political) purity, encouraging an avaricious nature and a vulnerability to be swayed from principles. On the other hand, a certain degree of material comfort was necessary to retain the respectability that was highly valued by both men. Of course, the ways in which Bamford and Place represented themselves was

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<sup>481</sup> Bamford, *Passages*, p.178.

<sup>482</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, p.106.

<sup>483</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, pp.187-188.

<sup>484</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, p.216.

<sup>485</sup> See R. Malcolmson, *Life and Labour in England, 1700-1780* (Hutchinson, 1981), pp.133-134 for independence as 'a certain social and psychological space of one's own'.

<sup>486</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, p.217.

<sup>487</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, p.217.

<sup>488</sup> M. Kadane, *The Watchful Clothier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

designed to suggest to the reader their independence, rationality, and stoic masculinity. In doing so, they seem to have presented working-class consumption in similar ways to the conservative pamphlets and sermons discussed earlier. Nonetheless, both men rebuked outsiders who sought to deprive poorer people of their comforts. Bamford defended working people from such attacks, arguing that

the main body of them, struggling as they do, daily and hourly, with want on one hand and the allurements to vice on the other, still lean, nay, hold strongly, by “virtue’s side,” and cast from them temptations of which those who judge them severely know nothing.<sup>489</sup>

Place, on the other hand, argued that improved material circumstances were reflected in the better manners of the working classes:

The progress made in refinement of manners and morals seems to have gone on simultaneously with the improvements in Arts Manufactures and Commerce... Some say we have refined away all our simplicity and have become artificial, hypocritical, and upon the whole worse than we were half a century ago. This is a common belief, but it is a false one, we are a much better people now than we were then.<sup>490</sup>

The writings of Bamford and Place show that they and others within their social circles recognised that there might be ‘appropriate’ patterns of consumer behaviour for people of their class. These patterns were established through social activities such as visiting, or refusing to do so, and through gossip, like that about Place and his wife, who were accused by neighbours of dressing in a manner that exceeded their status.<sup>491</sup> The accounts above suggest that what was resented by working-class people was the attempts to police their spending from outside, without understanding of the norms, expectations and practices of the community.

Working-class radicals were nonetheless able to use their consumption habits in practical ways to build a collective identity, through such activities as supporting tradespeople of a

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<sup>489</sup> Bamford, *Early Days*, p.97.

<sup>490</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, p.82.

<sup>491</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, p.106.

similar political persuasion. For example, Place suggests that men within the London Corresponding Society brought their custom to fellow members, though he claims not to have taken advantage of his radical connections personally.<sup>492</sup> The practical application of political to consumer habits emerges in more complexity through an exploration of the under-studied boycott of excisable goods practised by radicals from late 1819. Many of the contradictions and complications that emerge from analysing the power relations involved in working-class consumer behaviour are well illustrated by this campaign, instigated in the *Manchester Observer* in 1819. Struggling for a viable course of action in the wake of the violence that met the St Peter's Field meeting on August 16<sup>th</sup>, a correspondent called upon fellow readers to embrace

modes of resistance which an army, however immense, cannot render ineffectual ... the resistance of peace: *-an abstinence from those articles, your consumption of which, though they are not necessaries, furnishes your oppressors with a revenue that is their security, and the means they employ to oppress you.*

Spirits, beer, tea, coffee, tobacco, snuff: these are articles immensely taxed ... if you will relinquish the use of their taxed luxuries (and all the articles I argued against are luxuries,) you will soon behold the blessed effects of your virtue, in the distress, and absolute ruin, of your oppressors.<sup>493</sup>

The campaign built upon a tradition of successful consumer protest in Britain, which in living memory of many participants had been used to great effect in abolitionist circles in Britain, as well as in the American Revolution, and which in turn may have sown the seeds of the later Temperance movement.<sup>494</sup> The idea was keenly taken up by the paper's readership, and the following few weeks' editions contained lists of those eagerly pledging their support for and participation in the campaign.<sup>495</sup>

Others added to the list of goods to be avoided, proposing that:

Every family ascertain the daily consumption of SALT, and resolve to use only one half – avoid as much as possible all occasions

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<sup>492</sup> Place, *Autobiography*, p.142. Members of the Society also loaned each other money, see p.174.

<sup>493</sup> *Manchester Observer*, August 28<sup>th</sup>, 1819.

<sup>494</sup> Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p.814.

<sup>495</sup> *Manchester Observer*, September 4<sup>th</sup>, 1819, September 18<sup>th</sup>, 1819.

requiring STAMPS – Wear *white* or *dyed* clothes instead of *Prints* –  
burn *oil* instead of *Candles* --- wear *shoes* and gaiters instead of *Boots*  
--- wear *cotton* or *worsted gloves* --- have *painted* walls instead of  
*Papered* --- avoid keeping dogs --- using gigs --- requiring game  
licences --- and whatsoever increases the means of paying  
sinecurists, placemen and pensioners.<sup>496</sup>

The above list serves to highlight the extent to which working-class men and women were able to exercise choice in household consumption by the early-nineteenth century. Indeed, though the key point of the campaign was to decrease the revenue available to a government oppressing its people, its proponents pointed to additional benefits to health and finances from choosing to abstain from ‘luxury’ goods. Yet in laying emphasis on the ‘unnecessary’ nature of the articles involved, boycott campaigners echoed the stern admonitions we earlier saw emanating from those seeking to control working-class spending. This was an irony noted by Thomas Wooler, whose *Black Dwarf* reprinted a lengthy extract from Sir John Sinclair’s *Code of Health and Longevity*, in which the author complained that ‘the money ... squandered upon tea, would purchase a sufficiency of wholesome and substantial food ... [for the poor] it is worthless and improper’, under the title ‘Sir John Sinclair, A Radical’.<sup>497</sup> Presumably, Wooler and his readers were aware that Sir John’s attitudes towards the working classes were anything but sympathetic, his *Statistical Account of Scotland* having concluded that working people ‘embarrassed in their circumstances, owe their poverty either to their own, or their wife’s bad conduct’.<sup>498</sup> To admit that comforts such as tea and coffee were luxuries was to deny that their use had become customary to the point where many would understand them as necessities.

Therefore, though the correspondent to the *Manchester Observer* had claimed that the items he listed were unnecessary and even harmful, the embeddedness in working-class culture of tea and coffee in particular were evidenced by the promotion of numerous alternative products. The radical orator Henry Hunt was quick to capitalise on the boycott, offering his supporters an alternative in the form of his Breakfast Powders made from roasted corn, while William Cobbett went on to publish guidelines for home production of beer and alternatives to tea, and correspondents flooded newspapers with their own replacement

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<sup>496</sup> *Manchester Observer*, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1819.

<sup>497</sup> *The Black Dwarf*, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 1820.

<sup>498</sup> Quoted in Sherman, *Imagining Poverty*, p.102.

recipes.<sup>499</sup> Again, the *Black Dwarf* recognised the irony of the rush to find home-grown alternatives for ‘idle and adulterated *luxuries*, as we have been taught to *call* them.’<sup>500</sup>

Perhaps Hunt, in creating a commercial product, rather than advocating home production or foraging in hedges, was more alert to the resources of time and space required for such an exercise – resources in scarce supply for workers in the industrialising regions targeted by the campaign. Strategies such as the cottage-based subsistence production advocated by Cobbett simply did not fit with the realities of an urban environment and changing time-allocation patterns,<sup>501</sup> even if the men and women (on whom the greater burden would doubtless fall) desired the additional workload.

The numerical strength of the campaign is difficult to judge, as is the extent to which individuals took their abstinence. Though many radicals pledged to take part, it is impossible to ascertain how many did so in practice. There were certainly those who continued to indulge a preference for proscribed goods. The account book of William Varley, a weaver with radical sympathies from Higham near Burnley, provides evidence of his household’s continued consumption of tea, coffee and sugar through late 1819, 1820 and 1821, though he appears to have brewed his own beer on occasion.<sup>502</sup> His diary makes no mention of the campaign, so whether he was unaware of it, or just opting not to be involved, is impossible to know.<sup>503</sup> The *Manchester Observer*, while preaching abstinence, continued to print advertisements for taxable goods, with the London Tea Company competing for space with large-print reminders of the boycott.<sup>504</sup> Even prominent radicals might have limits to their commitment. John Saxton, for example, was the agent for Hunt’s Breakfast Powder in the north-west, but even in the Orator’s presence

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<sup>499</sup> K. Gilmartin, *Print Politics: The Press and Radical Opposition in Early Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.108.

<sup>500</sup> Quoted in Gilmartin, *Print Politics*, p.108.

<sup>501</sup> See J. de Vries, ‘Between purchasing power and the world of goods’, pp.85-132, for the reallocation of household resources from home-based subsistence to the market as a means of maximising economic productivity. Within the inventory sample, just under half (29) of the documents listed brewing equipment, only two of which referred to properties located in the London region. A further ten referred to households in larger towns within South and West Yorkshire, with four in Halifax, three in Wakefield, two in Sheffield and one in Dewsbury. The remainder were in smaller towns and villages.

<sup>502</sup> Burnley Local Studies Library, Accounts of William Varley, Oct 1819-1822. Varley purchased a pot brewing stand in December 1819, and purchased malt and hops twice in August 1820 and again in October that year. My thanks to Nathan Bent for alerting me to William Varley’s diary and accounts.

<sup>503</sup> Burnley Local Studies Library, William Varley’s Memorandum Book, 1820-1821, transcribed by Linda Croft.

<sup>504</sup> *Manchester Observer*, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1819.

candidly declared that he would not attempt to carry into effect Mr Hunt's rule of temperance. He would attend a meeting at any time, he said; or make a speech, or move, or second a resolution for parliamentary reform; but a resolution for a personal reform in the matter of a little cordial, he neither could nor would entertain.<sup>505</sup>

Saxton's declaration was met with amusement among his companions, and indeed Bamford's account suggest that the majority only abstained on this occasion out of respect for Hunt's presence. As in both friendly society organisation and the Victorian temperance movement, traditional modes of working-class sociability, especially those involving alcohol, clashed with a desire for respectability, and there was considerable suspicion of the imposition of middle-class values.<sup>506</sup> Furthermore, the temperance-related literature of the Chartist movement suggests an unwillingness to buy into rhetoric which portrayed social problems as the result of drink, preferring to emphasise instead that poverty and alienation caused the drinking.<sup>507</sup> Though the early nineteenth-century radical boycott campaign envisioned a collective effort, its proponents echoed the individualistic self-help rhetoric of thrift and industry as the solution to the economic problems of the working-class.

Nevertheless, some campaigners went further than refusing to buy proscribed goods, and urged that the boycott should be extended to hostile tradespeople, as well as employers:

the *total disuse* of all the heavy exiseable [sic] articles; such as tea, sugar, tobacco, snuff, &c. and in order that you may enlist into your ranks individuals in the middle walks of life, let that man be considered a traitor to the cause of Reform, who expends a penny with one who is either directly opposed to reform, or who pretends to be neuter to your sufferings; and as soon as trade will justify the measure, let every individual be scouted from your society, and branded with the name of Traitor to his Country, who takes a reed (we are more particularly addressing the Weavers)

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<sup>505</sup> Bamford, *Passages*, p.182.

<sup>506</sup> E. Lord, 'The Friendly Society Movement and the Respectability of the Rural Working Class' in *Rural History*, Vol.8 (1997), pp.165-172.

<sup>507</sup> R. Breton, 'Diverting the Drunkard's Path: Chartist Temperance Narratives' in *Victorian Literature and Culture*, Vol.41 (2013), pp.139-152.

from a Manufacturer, who did not *actively*, both by his name and his money, support your just claims.<sup>508</sup>

As the writer acknowledges, economic circumstances prevented many people from withholding their labour. Withdrawing custom would also be difficult in smaller towns and villages where the choice of suppliers was limited.<sup>509</sup> However, there is evidence of the impact a boycott could have in the testimony of James Murray, a confectioner in Manchester. Murray, having been apprehended at a radical meeting prior to Peterloo, was accused of spying and beaten by some of the radicals, and in turn had claimed that he would be ‘pleased to go home in a boat over the blood of Reformers’.<sup>510</sup> Unfortunately for Murray, his trade was well known – he was not only taunted as ‘Gingerbread Murray’ and ‘White Moss Humbug’, but found his trade so diminished that he was required to reduce his workmens’ hours from six days to two.<sup>511</sup> However, there is little evidence of the impact of the wider boycott campaign.

It is also hard to determine how far gender played a part in the campaign. All of those who signed the pledges in the *Manchester Observer* were men, but the management of day-to-day domestic provisioning was, as we discussed earlier, a task traditionally associated with women. Did men make the decision to boycott, and impose this on the rest of their household, or were women responsible for the practical implementation of consumer protest? John Bohstedt, in the context of a different kind of consumer protest, has challenged the notion that women were necessarily more involved than men in food riots. Rather, these were mixed-gender, community-based events and usually carefully orchestrated rather than ‘spontaneous explosions’ erupting in the midst of day-to-day market activity.<sup>512</sup> The boycott, however, was a form of protest which needed to be more fully integrated into everyday routines, and so required the support of whoever was most often responsible for shopping for the home, and, as we saw above, the expectation was that women would perform this task even if this was not always the case in practice. Thus Kathryn Gleadle has pointed to the important role women played in sustaining politicised

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<sup>508</sup> *Manchester Observer*, August 28<sup>th</sup>, 1819.

<sup>509</sup> Bythell, *The Sweated Trades*, p.39.

<sup>510</sup> *The Trial of Henry Hunt*, p.162.

<sup>511</sup> *Trial of Henry Hunt*, p.39; Anon., *In the King’s Bench, Between Thomas Redford, Plaintiff, and Hugh Hornby Birley, Alexander Oliver, Richard Withington, and Edward Meagher, Defendants, for an Assault on the 16<sup>th</sup> August ... Report of the Proceedings ... Taken from the Short-Hand Notes of Mr. Farquarson* (Manchester: C. Wheeler & Son, undated [1822]), p.308.

<sup>512</sup> Bohstedt, ‘Gender, Household and Community Politics’, p.97.

consumer practices such as vegetarianism and homeopathy as well as boycotting and favourable trading.<sup>513</sup> Women had also been particularly prominent in the abolitionist boycotts of the late eighteenth century.<sup>514</sup> Furthermore, alongside their behind-the-scenes, routine activity in the boycott campaign, women were occasionally publicly visible, attending meetings with resolutions in support, and sharing alternative products to replace taxed goods.<sup>515</sup> A caricature of the Manchester Female Reform Society, published in the *Manchester Comet*, mocked the women by depicting them eagerly consuming liquor and tobacco, while boxes of Hunt's Breakfast Powder remain stacked, untouched, in a corner (Fig. 6). The depiction of female reformers as drunken, lascivious or grotesque was a common theme in anti-reform satire, and the image's use of alcohol and pipes seems to be a deliberate attempt by the satirist to mark them as masculine as a means of undermining the moral power of their femininity, as well as that of the boycott itself. In doing so, the satirist aimed to de-legitimise female involvement in political activity, demonstrating that the boycott campaign had the power to destabilise gendered, as well as class-based, expectations of behaviour.

At any rate, enthusiasm for the campaign was slow to evaporate, and the campaign was able to expand beyond its Manchester base. At a radical meeting in Huddersfield,

the Chairman ... concluded by enforcing his former exhortations against the use of taxed articles: he himself, by such an abstinence, saved 6s a week in his family, and found himself much better in health. He recommended a substitute for tea, and the use of toast and water instead of fermented liquors<sup>516</sup>

while at a dinner in London celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the acquittals of Thomas Hardy, John Horne Tooke, and John Thelwall, 'a considerable quantity of Radical Beverage was drunk' in the making of toasts.<sup>517</sup> Bonds of solidarity were also formed with Irish nationalists, who had themselves pledged to abstain from exciseable goods. A letter to the *Manchester Observer*, signed by 'An Irishman', expressed a shared sense of 'slavery and

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<sup>513</sup> K. Gleadle, "'The Age of Physiological Reformers': Rethinking Gender and Domesticity in the Age of Reform' in A. Burns & J. Innes, *Rethinking the Age of Reform: Britain 1780-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.200-219.

<sup>514</sup> C. Midgley, 'Slave Sugar Boycotts, Female Activism and the Domestic Base of British Anti-Slavery Culture' in *Slavery and Abolition*, Vol.17, No. 3 (Frank Cass, 1996), pp.137-162.

<sup>515</sup> *Manchester Observer*, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1819, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 1819; Gilmartin, *Print Politics*, p.108.

<sup>516</sup> *Manchester Observer*, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 1819.

<sup>517</sup> *Manchester Observer*, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 1819.



oppression', along with a respect for a British radical heritage. 'Such names as *Algernon Sidney, Harrington, Hampden, and Milton*, are dear to our hearts', the writer professed, before advocating for the efficacy of 'a virtuous abstinence from such destructive, and pernicious articles as spirits, porter, tea, tobacco &c.' to bring an end to the 'Protestant Babylon' which was the source of oppression.<sup>518</sup> Working-class radicals from England and Ireland alike could take pleasure in becoming 'seditiously sober', inverting negative stereotypes of working-class drunkenness while both saving money and damaging the government's revenue.<sup>519</sup>

Perhaps the most positive result of the boycott campaign was this solidarity, forged by practical participation towards a shared purpose. Though we have noted the limitations of access to alternative products, in theory, anyone could take part, and feel they were taking an active part in forwarding the cause of political reform. It was a family-based campaign which emphasised the moral superiority and restraint of the reformers, who formed a stark contrast with the opulent lifestyles of government ministers. It was a much needed expression of community in the aftermath of violence and intimidation, one which asserted peaceful aims and inclusivity, and which could connect radical activists in disparate locations in collective action. Nonetheless, it prioritised the activity of men, who dominated the published material on the campaign, and though women likely did much of the crucial work to sustain the boycott this was rarely celebrated publicly. Thus the radical boycott bolstered masculine claims to rationality and independence while underplaying female labour in maintaining the boycott on a day-to-day basis. Crucially, the boycott also sought to limit working-class access to many of the same items targeted by critical social commentators, and risked buying into a discourse which denied the importance of 'non-essential' items for sustaining *life*, rather than mere existence. As such, it highlights the complexity of power relations based around the desire and ability to access an expanding range of consumer goods.

To conclude, then, we can see that working-class attitudes towards and uses of consumer power were too complex to be explained either by attachment to custom or as a sweetener for the bitter pill of capitalism. Working people participated, often eagerly, in commodity consumption, and used goods to define themselves, in ways to be discussed more fully in the next chapter. Yet despite the power of goods, agency could also be expressed through

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<sup>518</sup> *Manchester Observer*, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1819.

<sup>519</sup> *Manchester Observer*, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 1819.

their rejection. A Spartan lifestyle could be consciously performed as a means of expressing moral rigour and independence, while abstinence from certain goods could be a practical means of protest, an alternative to the riot as a means of demanding that the free market was tempered by the protection of decent standards of living. However, in maintaining a discourse that divided 'luxurious' commodities from necessities, working-class radicals struggled to express the validity of a desire for more than the basic stuff of survival. If goods could be used to define the self, it is no surprise that the practices of consuming them was fraught with tensions, and the tenacity of debates around working-class interactions with goods is testament to their power, something discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

## Chapter 6

### Radical Subjects, Radical Objects? Domestic material culture and working-class radicalism.

We have so far seen that the home was an important site of emotional attachment to politics, in which everyday routines and personal relationships were moulded in line with radical ideals. In the previous chapter, I argued that the practice of working-class consumer behaviour was fraught with political tension, resulting in an ambivalent relationship between consumerism and popular radicalism. Here, however, I wish to explore in more depth the objects which were purchased, made, used, and/or displayed in working-class homes, and the ways in which these facilitated the formation and expression of personal and political identities, connecting individuals and families with the radical community. I argue that objects were given meaning by the context of their creation, acquisition, or use, so that by being attentive to the material culture of working-class homes, we can further probe the emotional elements of class and gender politics, and the potential of the home to foster and express those elements. However, I do not argue, as Murray Pittock does, that the objects within working-class homes could be explicitly 'treacherous' because of their hidden nature.<sup>520</sup> As we have seen, privacy was by no means guaranteed within the home, especially for working-class men and women involved in political radicalism, and so the radical objects of political dissent in this context require alternative analysis.

Despite the attention to eighteenth-century consumerism, and although the historical study of material culture is a rapidly expanding field, the objects which structured and reflected working-class life in this period have received relatively little attention.<sup>521</sup> This is largely due to problems of survival and documentation, which occur at multiple points in the object lifecycle. In terms of the initial presence of an object in a working-class household, we have seen that rooms could be multi-purpose and crowded, hot, dusty and busy; these are not conditions conducive to the survival of delicate ceramic goods or paper materials such as prints. This study has a particular interest in pottery items which, as Sara Pennell reminds

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<sup>520</sup> M. Pittock, 'Treacherous Objects: Towards a Theory of Jacobite Material Culture' in *Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies*, Vol.34, No.1 (2011), p.52.

<sup>521</sup> Notable exceptions include Styles, *The Dress of the People* and B. Millmore, 'Love Tokens: Engraved Coins, Emotions and the Poor, 1700-1856,' PhD thesis (University of Brighton, 2015). Smaller scale published studies include Katrina Navickas' article on political dress, "'That Sash will Hang You': Political Clothing and Adornment in England, 1780-1840' in *Journal of British Studies*, Vol.49, No.3 (2010), pp.540-565 and Jennine Hurl-Eamon's work on working-class love tokens, 'Love Tokens: Objects as Memory for Working-class Women in Early Modern England' in *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol.6 (2011), pp.181-186.

us, tend to be represented in museum and private collections by whole, unbroken items rather than shards or incomplete pieces, and therefore might not represent those that were used most often or that were less durable.<sup>522</sup> Archaeologists do, of course, study these fragments, but they are less readily available for display or handling. This problem of survival is compounded by the fact that working-class people were less likely than those higher up the social scale to keep detailed financial accounts or to record their motivations for purchase or use of domestic objects in diaries and correspondence.<sup>523</sup> Unlike the objects used in public radical protest, domestic objects belonging to working-class people were also less recorded in other written sources, such as newspaper reports. We therefore encounter difficulties in attempts to ‘read the absent object’ by cross-referencing multiple sources, especially because, as we have seen, much of the textual and visual material representing working-class homes was ideologically motivated and produced outside the communities depicted.<sup>524</sup>

Where working-class domestic objects *are* documented, their presence tends to represent unusual circumstances in which the meaning of goods is heightened. The interiors of working-class homes and their associated objects can appear in inventories (the problems of which we have already noted), court cases, and through the disruptions caused by disasters like flood or fire.<sup>525</sup> In such circumstances, attention is drawn to everyday items through events which do not typify everyday life, and where the potential for loss heightens the meaning of objects. However, Daniel Miller has suggested that the most influential objects are often those we do *not* notice; we are so accustomed to their presence that we do

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<sup>522</sup> S. Pennell, “‘For a Crack or Flaw Despis’d’: Thinking about Ceramic Durability and the “Everyday” in Late Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth-Century England’ in *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings*, edited by T. Hamling & C. Richardson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p.30.

<sup>523</sup> This is perhaps again a problem of survival, or of a feeling that domestic life was not worth recording, rather than lack of literacy – Susan Whyman, for example, has used case studies of non-elite men and women who were able to record aspects of their lives in writing to argue that ‘a culture of letters that embraced lower- and middling-sort writers had developed in England by 1800’; see *The Pen and the People: English Letter Writers, 1600-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.17. Carolyn Steedman’s account of the Nottinghamshire framework knitter similarly provides an insight into the ways in which working-class people used writing – in this case providing rich insights into everyday life as well as detailed financial accounting; see *An Everyday Life of the English Working Class*. William Varley also kept both a diary and an account book, which are available for consultation at Burnley Local Studies Library.

<sup>524</sup> G. Adamson, ‘The Case of the Missing Footstool: Reading the Absent Object’ in *History and Material Culture: A Student’s Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, edited by K. Harvey (London: Routledge, 2009), pp.192-207.

<sup>525</sup> For fire claims, see Styles, *The Dress of the People*, p.31.

not question the way in which they structure our feelings or behaviour.<sup>526</sup> In this case, the most important items might be those which remained undocumented.

In addition to questions of documentation and preservation within working-class homes, we must consider the policies of collection, preservation and display which mediate our access to working-class domestic objects in their 'afterlife'. For the purposes of this study, I have accessed surviving objects in the collections of a range of museums with very different aims in the ways they acquire and present material culture. The Victoria and Albert Museum in London, for example, was founded on the principle that making accessible the best and most beautiful examples of British and international design would act as inspiration to the visiting public, and this focus has resulted in a museum which highlights high-end objects designed by prominent figures and intended for the richer classes of society.<sup>527</sup> Cheap, mass-produced ceramics of the type discussed here are secreted in crowded cabinets on the museum's top floor, grouped in terms of production technique or date rather than aesthetic themes. In contrast, museums which stress the social and political history of local populations, such as the People's History Museum in Manchester, Touchstones in Rochdale, and the Museum of London, are more likely to display similar items within an assemblage of objects related to similar social movements or events – for example, the Henry Hunt jugs discussed later in this chapter form part of the Peterloo display in the People's History Museum. These decisions regarding preservation and display cloud our understanding of which objects are representative of the everyday lives of ordinary people, but this difficulty is to some extent ameliorated by the growing trend of museums presenting their collections on searchable, online databases, which enable the researcher to form their own object groupings according to search priorities. Of course curatorial decisions regarding the cataloguing of objects may still impact upon the results of a search, and the quality of catalogue resources can depend heavily on the museum's budget and staffing. In addition, digital imaging, however high quality, rarely reveals the tactile qualities of objects which can be assessed through handling, and the objects presented are divorced from their context. Archaeological studies, on the other hand, which are highly attentive to objects in context, still suffer from a lack of written documentation which would assist with interpretation. These seemingly prosaic considerations, taken together with the above-mentioned lesser survival of documented

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<sup>526</sup> D. Miller, *Stuff* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), p.50.

<sup>527</sup> See 'A Brief History of the Museum.' Victoria and Albert Museum, 2016, accessed 1<sup>st</sup> Aug. 2016, <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/a/a-brief-history-of-the-museum/>.

working-class household objects, have made access to representative samples of such objects more difficult than is the case for higher-status material culture.

In an attempt to identify and theorise ‘radical’ household objects, this chapter focuses on two kinds of material object: goods which were home-made or improvised from materials available to their maker, and those which were mass-produced and purchased on the consumer market. In the case of the latter, I have chosen to focus especially on decorated ceramics, which I have accessed in physical form in museum collections in London and Manchester, as well as through online and printed catalogues. Though the regional focus of this study is upon London and the Pennine regions, the objects discussed here appear to have had a nationwide distribution. Transfer-printed or underglaze-painted ceramics were produced cheaply and in large quantities in Liverpool, Yorkshire, Sunderland, Newcastle, Scotland and Devonshire as well as in the Staffordshire centre of pottery production, before transportation and sale in major towns across the nation.<sup>528</sup> Ceramic goods were amongst the items hawked by street vendors, like the young woman depicted in Paul Sandby’s 1760 *Cries of London* series, who offers ‘All Sorts of Earthen ware. Plates three ha’pence a piece. Wash hands Basons ten pence a piece. A white Stone Mug or a Tea pot’ (Fig.11). The second-hand trade – especially in easily moveable goods like textiles and crockery – was key to the domestic economies of working-class people, while those less concerned with legality might, as Sarah Richards reminded us, obtain items through theft or the black market.<sup>529</sup> There was a multiplicity of ways in which various different users might obtain a single ceramic object at different times in its life-cycle, something which can pose difficulties for the establishment of an ‘object biography’ tracing the item through time. Furthermore, many of the objects discussed here do not bear a maker’s mark, which makes determining their origins or assessing their lifetime trajectories still more difficult. Therefore, the focus here is on potential meanings of the items, rather than their production or the point of purchase. In the case of self-made or adapted items, on the other hand, the point of production seems to have been crucial, with the labour in making acting as an expression of feeling, as is discussed further below. This chapter opens with a discussion of the broad emotional implications of material goods for working-class people,

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<sup>528</sup> J. Lewis & G. Lewis, *Pratt Ware: English and Scottish Relief Decorated and Underglaze Coloured Earthenware, 1780-1840* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors’ Club, 1984), p.22. London’s ceramic production centred around the porcelain wares produced at Bow and Chelsea.

<sup>529</sup> Lemire, *The Business of Everyday Life*, p.82; S. Richards, *Eighteenth-Century Ceramics: Products for a Civilised Society* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp.73-75.

providing context before moving to detail more specifically radical items and their potential meanings.

In spite of the methodological difficulties discussed above, the limited survival of written sources detailing working-class domestic experience makes non-written evidence all the more intriguing. Leora Auslander's call-to-arms for the use of material culture insisted that 'Each form of human expression has its unique attributes and capacities; limiting our evidentiary base to one of them—the linguistic—renders us unable to grasp important dimensions of human experience, and our explanations of major historical problems are thereby impoverished.'<sup>530</sup> As David Vincent has pointed out, some of the most complex yet crucial emotional experiences – such as love and grief – are the hardest to verbalise, and this is still more true where access to models for such communication (eg. novels) is most restricted.<sup>531</sup> Material objects were therefore crucial to the expression of such emotional experiences. Samuel Bamford, for example, found his burgeoning romantic feelings to be 'a sentiment too delicate for oral expression', so that emotion was shared instead through bodily expression – meaningful looks and blushes – and through objects.<sup>532</sup> Bamford and his future wife Jemima exchanged elaborate hand-made Valentines, with the work involved in the creation of these tokens a symbol of the extent of a romantic attachment which remained unspoken.<sup>533</sup> Such objects did not just communicate the unsayable, but played an important role in power negotiation during courtship. This was a period in which both men and women sought to establish their expectations for their lives together. Sally Holloway has demonstrated the gendered ways in which goods were used in this process: by men to highlight their ability to provide for their future wife's wellbeing, while women's gifts drew attention to their domestic abilities.<sup>534</sup> As relationships progressed, love tokens could also be used to announce a courtship, thus transporting them from the private world of emotion to a public world in which they could have legal resonance as symbolic evidence of a romantic contract in breach of promise cases.<sup>535</sup> We can also see, therefore, how gifts, especially those exchanged within families – between couples, or given by parents to their children – could solidify a sense of obligation. Bridget Millmore's work on 'love' tokens, which explored the emotional resonances of altered coinage as evidence of 'attachment' in

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<sup>530</sup> L. Auslander, 'Beyond Words' in *The American Historical Review*, Vol.110, No.4 (2005), pp.1015.

<sup>531</sup> D. Vincent, 'Love and Death and the Nineteenth Century Working Class', p.227.

<sup>532</sup> Bamford, *Early Days*, p.149, p.155.

<sup>533</sup> Bamford, *Early Days*, pp.149-151, pp.154-5.

<sup>534</sup> S. Holloway, 'Romantic Love in Words and Objects During Courtship and Adultery c.1730-1830,' PhD thesis (Royal Holloway University of London, 2013), p.69.

<sup>535</sup> Holloway, 'Romantic Love in Words and Objects', pp.33-34.

different contexts, pointed to the repeated emphasis on remembrance in the use of phrases such as 'keep me in your mind'.<sup>536</sup> She argued that the tokens interwove economic and affective themes in powerful ways, bolstering the shared identities of those involved in the making, giving and receiving of these engraved coins: 'The language conveyed in words and images is one of belonging to a family, belonging to a household, and belonging to a trade'.<sup>537</sup> These objects acted as a physical connection between giver and receiver, materialising the reciprocal relationship between the two and acting as a reminder of obligations while the parties were physically separate.

Material objects were concerned not just with personal family relationships, but with much wider social issues. For example, Catherine Belsey has explored the use of religious imagery on objects relating to a new marriage, suggesting that couples were to remain aware of their spiritual obligations during this important transitional period.<sup>538</sup> Such objects encouraged the newly-created families to weave religious practice into the very fabric of their lives. Angela McShane has found a similar use of royalist imagery in courtship gifts in post-Restoration England, in which 'Loyal objects ... domesticated the monarchy, bringing them within the purview of family relations and exposing them to the same mutual imperatives of Christian Humanist love'.<sup>539</sup> Tara Hamling also recognised the interweaving of religious, moral and familial themes on early modern domestic objects, but she, however, finds a tension in these objects between whether higher priority should be granted to God or to family. Furthermore, while religious imagery on everyday objects could, in post-Reformation England, avoid charges of idolatry due to the quotidian nature of these goods, this in itself suggests a decline in the status of the image through its placement on something ordinary.<sup>540</sup>

These tensions seem less evident with images of the royal family, who under George III had begun to present themselves *as* a family, emphasising their connections to their subjects rather than their elevation above and beyond them. Symbolism encompassing both the relationship to the loved one and the relationship to the monarch or nation combined in one object was still a subtle theme. Many late Georgian ceramics depicting

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<sup>536</sup> Millmore, 'Love Tokens', pp.262-263.

<sup>537</sup> Millmore, 'Love Tokens', p.263.

<sup>538</sup> Discussed in Hamling, T. 'Reconciling Image and Object: Religious Imagery in Protestant Interior Decoration' in *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings*, edited by T. Hamling & C. Richardson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp.323-324.

<sup>539</sup> A. McShane, 'Subjects and Objects: Material Expressions of Love and Loyalty in Seventeenth-Century England' in *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol.48, No.4 (2008), p.885.

<sup>540</sup> Hamling, 'Reconciling Image and Object', p.327, pp.332-334.



romantic images also featured the feathers of the Prince of Wales, later George IV, in a more muted reference to the parallel between family and state.<sup>541</sup> Another popular genre of ceramic goods featured sailors parting from or returning to their sweethearts, echoing in their humble way the elaborate Ramage and Fergusson chimney pieces described by Stana Nenadic, in which a woman awaiting her seafaring lover can be seen as a stand-in for Britannia watching over the British navy.<sup>542</sup> These items encompassed women within a vision of patriotic nationhood, albeit in a somewhat passive role. Alasdair Brooks has argued further that everyday images of tranquil rural life on decorated ceramics contributed to a narrative of national, united British identity, though it is also possible that such images could be read alternatively as a depiction of a past golden age, especially in the context of war and industrialisation.<sup>543</sup> For any given object, multiple readings are possible.

Recent studies by Katrina Navickas and Matthew McCormack have explored the related worlds of loyalist and military material culture,<sup>544</sup> but studies of radical objects from this period have tended to focus upon the paraphernalia of public protest: banners, caps of liberty, and clothing.<sup>545</sup> John Brewer has explored commercial goods connected with the huge popularity of John Wilkes in the 1760s, but these were used in the context of an associational sphere consisting largely of propertied men, and based upon business networking and club membership.<sup>546</sup> Murray Pittock's analysis of Jacobite material culture

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<sup>541</sup> See, for example, the 'Love and Live Happay' teapot, c.1805, pictured in J. & G. Lewis, *Pratt Ware*, p.227.

<sup>542</sup> S. Nenadic, 'Romanticism and the Urge to Consume in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century' in *Consumers and Luxury: Consumer Culture in Europe, 1650-1850*, edited by M. Berg & H. Clifford (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp.217-218. For examples of the sailor's parting/return genre, see Lewis & Lewis, *Pratt Ware*, pp.18-19.

<sup>543</sup> A. Brooks, 'Building Jerusalem: Transfer-Printed Finewares and the Creation of British Identity' in *The Familiar Past: Archaeologies of Later Historical Britain*, edited by S. Tarlow & S. West (London: Routledge, 1999), pp.51-66. For alternative readings of rural imagery, see above, pp.46-47, and Barrell, *The Spirit of Despotism*, pp.210-214.

<sup>544</sup> K. Navickas, 'The Spirit of Loyalty: Material Culture, Space, and the Construction of an English Loyalist Memory, 1790-1840' in *Loyalism and the Formation of the British World*, edited by A. Blackstock & F. O'Gorman (Rochester: Boydell Press, 2014), pp.43-60; M. McCormack, 'The Material Life of the Militia Man,' paper presented at the British History in the Long Eighteenth Century Seminar, Institute of Historical Research, London, 27<sup>th</sup> June 2012, podcast available at <http://www.history.ac.uk/podcasts/british-history-long-18th-century/material-life-militia-man>, accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> Mar. 2013.

<sup>545</sup> For example, N. Mansfield, 'The Contribution of the National Banner Survey to Debates on Nineteenth-Century Popular Politics' in *Visual Resources*, Vol.24, No.2 (2008), pp.133-143; Epstein, *Radical Expression*; Navickas, 'That sash will hang you'; R. Poole, 'The March to Peterloo'; J. Barrell, 'Radicalism, Visual Culture, and Spectacle in the 1790s' in *Romanticism on the Net*, No.46 (2007), Accessed 31<sup>st</sup> Oct., 2011, <http://www.erudit.org/revue/ron/2007/v/n46/016131ar.html>.

<sup>546</sup> J. Brewer, 'Commercialization and Politics' in *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialisation of Eighteenth-century England*, edited by N. McKendrick, J. Brewer & J.H. Plumb (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), pp.197-264.

is similarly concerned primarily with objects associated with elite men and women.<sup>547</sup> There has been less attention to the way in which the proliferation of household goods in the eighteenth century related to the formation and expression of political identities by ordinary men and women, yet as we saw in the previous chapter, consumer identities could be highly political. This chapter therefore suggests some domestic items with potential connections to political radicalism and asks what it meant to make and use them, especially in the context of working-class homes in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.

Not all political items were purchased, nor did their creation need to be complicated or time-intensive, but instead could use existing materials, as did the engraved coins studied by Bridget Millmore. For example, during his tour of Kent in 1796, the London Corresponding Society member John Gale Jones noted that he had seen two mantelpieces carved with political messages. The first was in the parlour of the man with whom he was lodging in Chatham, who proclaimed himself, albeit somewhat timidly, as a radical. The room was 'well-furnished with political prints' (of which more later), with the mantelpiece at the centre inscribed with the words *'National debt 75l. a minute, sleeping or waking.'*<sup>548</sup> The national debt, and the taxation necessary to service it, was a key grievance among radicals. The location of the words on the mantelpiece, at the very heart of the room,<sup>549</sup> seem to suggest the importance of this issue to the carver, who we assume to be the owner of the house. Although he was able to afford prints, he supplemented this with a hand-written message, emphasising his own personal views rather than relying on those transmitted in images by others.

The other mantelpiece discussed by John Gale Jones was located within the parlour of the Bull Inn in Rochester. The inn represents the extreme example of the publicity of the working home. To be successful in business, it needed to be continually accessed by outsiders, but simultaneously it was the living space for the landlord or landlady and their

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<sup>547</sup> Pittock's 'Treacherous Objects' suggests that use of these items could avoid prosecution for sedition because it 'could pose as the blameless everyday exchange of the educated and genteel', p.48.

<sup>548</sup> Gale Jones, *A Political Tour through Rochester, Chatham, Maidstone, Gravesent &c*, p.8.

<sup>549</sup> For the longstanding analogy between home and body, with the hearth as the heart of the home, see R.B. St George, *Conversing by Signs: Poetics of Implication in Colonial New England Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), pp.129 -141.; For an interesting insight into the continued importance of the mantelpiece as a site of self-fashioning, see J. Stone, 'Mantelpieces Via Today Programme – Radio 4.' Storify, 2012. Accessed 18<sup>th</sup> July 2012. <https://storify.com/jemstone/mantelpieces-via-today-programme-bbc-radio-4>.

family. A correspondent to the *Manchester Observer* described the tension between public and private space in the inn or pub in 1819:

An Englishman's house is said to be a castle, into which the king himself "dares not enter;" the publican's is an exception; the domiciliary visits of *thieftakers*, and other low *police retainers*, are not strange to him ... it is a grievance to the honest and respectable man.<sup>550</sup>

This perhaps explains the ambiguity of the carved message in the Bull Inn, again situated on the parlour mantelpiece. The initial message seems to have read 'Britons, strike home, and save your liberties and your country' and was signed 'An enemy to all tyrants', but beneath it another hand had written 'An enemy to all scoundrels'. John Gale Jones was unsure whether this second writer agreed with the first, since he considered the word 'scoundrel' to be synonymous with 'tyrant'.<sup>551</sup> Whoever wrote the second message perhaps counted on this ambiguity, which would certainly have been useful to the innkeepers if their own political sympathies came under scrutiny. As discussed in previous chapters, working-class homes were rarely completely private. With space at a premium, the houses of working people were required to prioritise commercial access over any delicacy the inhabitants might feel about their privacy. Therefore, we cannot assume that late-Georgian working-class men and women could secrete objects expressing explicit political dissent within the more intimate spaces of their home, unlike the elite Jacobites studied by Murray Pittock.<sup>552</sup>

Pittock's article on the material culture of Jacobitism stressed the importance of non-linguistic or extra-linguistic communication in the context of severe repression. He argued that objects participated in coded proclamations of allegiance – for example, a toast to 'The King' was transformed by physically making the toast over water, a reference to the exiled Stuarts. Many Jacobite objects had meaning only to those in the know, and more explicit objects were revealed only in a private context, in which category Pittock included the home. However, those items I have identified as potentially radical do not easily fit this framework. Radical items often openly proclaimed allegiance, something which was

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<sup>550</sup> Letter from 'Misomotes', *Manchester Observer*, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1818.

<sup>551</sup> Jones, *A Political Tour*, p.3.

<sup>552</sup> Pittock, 'Traacherous Objects', p.52.

possible because the context of late-Georgian radicalism differed significantly from that of Jacobitism. In both periods, open political dissent had potentially serious consequences – Pittock outlined both the severity of the laws against treason and sedition and the potential to extend their interpretation to encompass a multitude of activities, and pointed to the continued use of these laws in the political repression of the 1790s.<sup>553</sup> Indeed, both 1795 and 1820 saw laws against treason and sedition strengthened and extended, in the infamous ‘Two Acts’ and ‘Six Acts’ respectively. The radicalism of this later period, however, was based in an assertion of the rights of the disenfranchised to speak out. To be effective, it needed to be open.

In the late Georgian period, radicals did not attempt to mask their political commitment; rather, they could use material culture to make a strong political statement. Following the Peterloo massacre in 1819, Nancy Clayton of Ashton near Manchester transformed the petticoat she had worn on the day into a black flag bearing the words ‘Murder on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August 1819, at Peterloo’. This was displayed in her window each year on the anniversary of the massacre, when the Claytons held a dinner to remember their fallen comrades. The flag was not simply an adaptation of a material available to Nancy, but because of its physical connection to the meeting at St Peter’s field it seems to take on the status of a relic, symbolising those who were not as lucky as Nancy in emerging unscathed that day. Banners and flags had been specifically targeted in the violence at Peterloo, and the display of a confiscated banner provoked a riot later the same evening,<sup>554</sup> so the creation of a new banner was a provocative act. As James Epstein points out, black flags were not only used in mourning, but by pirates declaring their defiance of law and government.<sup>555</sup>

Banners were a relatively new addition to the repertoire of protest in 1819, part of a growing radical willingness to engage with visual culture in the period after the close of the Napoleonic Wars.<sup>556</sup> We tend to know relatively little about their production, but it seems likely that they were hand-made by those sympathetic to the cause, perhaps communally, and thus seem to represent the bonds of comradeship as much as the opinions of those

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<sup>553</sup> Pittock, ‘Traacherous Objects’, pp.41-43.

<sup>554</sup> M. Bush, ‘The Women at Peterloo: The Impact of Female Reform on the Manchester Meeting of 16 August 1819’ in *History*, Vol.89, No.294 (2004), p.222

<sup>555</sup> Epstein, *Radical Expression*, p.164.

<sup>556</sup> M. Roberts, ‘Radical Banners from Peterloo to Chartism’ in *Manchester Region History Review*, Vol.23 (2012), special issue ‘Return to Peterloo’ edited by R. Poole, pp.95-96.

who carried them.<sup>557</sup> The community could also work to ensure they were hidden and preserved, as was the case with the banner carried to St Peter's Field by Middleton radicals, smuggled away in a young woman's petticoats and secreted in a chest by Jemima Bamford.<sup>558</sup> The symbolic power of Nancy's flag was such that it was still contested in 1839, confiscated by a group of constables and dragoons despite the efforts of the community to save it.<sup>559</sup> This episode contradicts Murray Pittock's argument, in relation to Jacobite objects, that the feminine gendering of the domestic sphere protected the owners of these objects from prosecution, because women were largely immune to prosecution.<sup>560</sup> This suggestion does not hold true in the case of working-class women, as we have already seen. Previous chapters have revealed frequent intrusions into working-class homes, and even the presence of women in a vulnerable state of undress did not deter constables eager to earn favour by securing a radical 'traitor'. Nor did femininity protect working-class women against prosecution, rough treatment, economic struggles and even physical attack. The objects in working-class homes were no more free from prosecution than if they had been on public display.

Much of the *point* of radical objects was in their ability to defiantly proclaim a political identity in the face of a denial of the rights of the working classes to possess such a thing. The London shoemaker Thomas Preston was certainly keen to identify his home, which was also his place of work, with his political opinions. He thus commissioned a sign, which he then 'with all due formality, nailed to the wall on the outside of my house.' The sign confused many of the apparently numerous interested observers, portraying a man with a noose around his neck and the words '*A warning to the Oppressor, and a lesson to the Oppressed ... The King and Constitution Pure, - Burdett the Pilot!*' Their confusion apparently amused Preston, especially when it was expressed by the local magistrates, who 'seemed very desirous to have the key, the better to decypher the subject'.<sup>561</sup> Preston's sympathy with the radical Sir Francis Burdett, then imprisoned, and his repeated explanation that the sign should act '*to deter men from acting wrongfully*', enables us to consider his commissioned sign as

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<sup>557</sup> Robert Harrop of Lees described how plain white bleached cambric was ordered to make a banner for what became Peterloo, and then 'a number of persons engaged to put on certain devices and inscriptions ... The fringe was supplied by the women.' Quoted in R. Poole, 'The Middleton Peterloo Banner' in *Manchester Region History Review*, Vol.23 (2012), special issue 'Return to Peterloo' edited by R. Poole, pp.169-170.

<sup>558</sup> R. Poole, 'The Middleton Peterloo Banner', p.162.

<sup>559</sup> Epstein, *Radical Expression*, pp.163-4.

<sup>560</sup> Pittock, 'Traacherous Objects', p.52.

<sup>561</sup> T. Preston, *The Life and Opinions of Thomas Preston*, pp.18-19.

a call for violent redress, yet one which was cleverly complicated so as to make a denial possible should a confrontation with the authorities occur. Preston did not explain his motives in having the sign produced, but, he did so at a time when his ‘poor little family... was frequently pinched with hunger and cold’ suggesting either a deep desire to express his political beliefs in material culture, or perhaps even a calculated attempt to draw customers – especially those who shared his sympathies – with his unusual shop sign.

Other commissioned radical objects were less curious, designed as mementos for particular individuals. These, like the parting gifts of lovers or parents, served as reminders of comrades made absent through imprisonment, exile, or death. For example, the likeness of John Binns was taken by a radical bookseller in Ireland just prior to his trial for sedition in 1797, and a number of copies taken from the engraving of this portrait.<sup>562</sup> Similarly, a supposedly sympathetic sculptor (though actually the spy, George Edwards) was commissioned by Thomas Evans to produce a memorial bust of the recently deceased Thomas Spence for Spence’s former ultra-radical followers.<sup>563</sup>

Part of the symbolic power of these hand-made or commissioned objects was their physical association with the person who brought them into being, but it was also possible to attain mass-produced items with political meanings and messages. Various contemporary images depict the display of prints on the walls of humble houses, something we have already mentioned in the context of John Gale Jones’ Chatham host. In this parlour, John Gale Jones recognised and was able to name at least two of the prints, demonstrating that these were well-known caricatures, at least to the interested metropolitan observer. Yet even where imprints of caricatures were beyond the reach of a householder, they could display other ephemera into which an audience – be it themselves, other family members, or a guest – could read meaning. Cheap ballad sheets, playbills, and chapbooks were readily available in most towns, hawked about like the pottery goods discussed above, and we can see them plastered to the walls of houses in paintings such as Thomas Heaphy’s *The Family Doctress* (1809) as well as caricatures such as *John Bull in his Glory*, which was discussed in the second chapter (Fig.3).<sup>564</sup>

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<sup>562</sup> Binns, *Recollections of the Life of John Binns*, p.72.

<sup>563</sup> McCalman, *Radical Underworld*, p.99.

<sup>564</sup> T. Heaphy, *The Family Doctress*. Watercolour, 48.3 x 62.2cm (1809) reproduced in D. Solkin, *Painting Out of the Ordinary: Modernity and the Art of Everyday Life in Early Nineteenth-Century London* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), p.63.

Historians of the upper classes in Georgian society have pointed to the way in which a sense of one's social standing could be enhanced by the recognition of classical or literary motifs in the interiors of grand houses.<sup>565</sup> This sense of recognition, an ability to decode a painting or sculpture, was one of the pleasures of viewing such artworks. Working-class men and women may not have been able to afford exquisite portraits or sculptures, but they *could* share in the satisfaction of understanding the references in a ballad sheet or a cheap illustration. What they chose to display on their walls could be a means of signifying their knowledge of current or historical events, religious or literary references, to others. For example, in a print dating from 1800, the eponymous *Cobler's Hall* is shown as both home and work space, its walls richly covered in paper ephemera which would be seen not just by the occupants but by the customers of the cobbler hard at work in the foreground of the image (Fig. 9). One of these prints depicts the Duke of Cumberland on his horse, a reminder of the Jacobite rebellion of 1745 and a hint that the cobbler or his wife was aware of and interested in the history of this event. John Brewer noted that Cumberland was depicted on even more consumer goods than the immensely popular John Wilkes, and the suppression of the Jacobites at Culloden was celebrated annually – acting as a reminder to any who might subsequently seek to launch a similar campaign against the Hanoverian crown.<sup>566</sup> It is therefore unlikely that a Jacobite sympathiser or indeed others with rebellious tendencies would display this print, unless it was in a manner by which it could be subverted – perhaps in the privy, or beside other items which might alter its reading.<sup>567</sup> Perhaps, then, the Duke signified the couple's proud English identity, support for war against the country's perceived enemies, or possibly just celebrated a romantic, heroic version of battle.

We have already seen how the material culture of working-class homes was depicted in prints and literature to present negative images of popular radicalism. In the satirical *A Gentleman of Moderate Income Making Himself Decent to Dine Out* (1796), an image of Tom Paine adorns the bare walls of a grubby garret – in this case, the image mocked people of 'modest means' with the temerity to concern themselves with political matters, rather than their

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<sup>565</sup> For example, J. Barrell, *The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place, 1730-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), pp.5-6; P. Ayres, *Classical Culture and the Idea of Rome in Eighteenth Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), esp. pp.75-83.

<sup>566</sup> Brewer, 'Commercialization and Politics', p.250.

<sup>567</sup> See, for example, Martyn J. Powell on political images in chamberpots in *The Politics of Consumption in Eighteenth-Century Ireland* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp.187-191.

own material self-improvement.<sup>568</sup> Yet material culture, including but not limited to print, could be used to proudly proclaim a political identity. When, in 1820, a butcher's shop was raided in a search for seditious literature, two copies of the *Manchester Observer* were confiscated. The butcher was offered the loyalist *Courier* in return, but steadfastly refused, claiming its proximity might poison his meat.<sup>569</sup> This humorous anecdote demonstrates the unwillingness of radical sympathisers to be associated, through the physical presence of the newspaper, with attitudes and ideas they found distasteful. Images and objects were another means of communication, and thus had a part to play in the contest of conservative and radical ideas in political culture.

In addition to prints or ballad sheets pasted on walls, working-class people displayed ceramics in their homes, on shelving, racks, dressers, or over the fireplace. We can see the neatly-displayed crockery on the mantelpiece and a shelf above the range in *Cobler's Hall*, while in *The Enraged Cuckold* (Fig. 12), the perilously slanted crockery shelf is symptomatic of more serious domestic disorder. Household ceramics are among those categories of goods considered to be drivers of the eighteenth-century consumer boom, with innovations in production bringing aesthetically-pleasing pottery items within the reach of the working-class population.<sup>570</sup> The inventory sample confirms their presence within working-class homes, with 54% of inventories listing ceramic items, and even more (61%) included one or more display cases or dressers (see Table 1 and Table 4).<sup>571</sup> Cheap ceramics could be used for eating and drinking, but were also a simple way to brighten up a room through the display of colourful or interesting items – indeed, where I have accessed transfer-printed ceramics in person, they seem to have been used rarely or not at all for food or drink.

All of the London households in the sample contained some ceramics, perhaps suggesting their readier accessibility in the capital. The majority of the Yorkshire Pennine households

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<sup>568</sup> D. Bindman, *The Shadow of the Guillotine: Britain and the French Revolution* (London: British Museum Publications, 1989), pp.113.

<sup>569</sup> *Manchester Observer*, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1820.

<sup>570</sup> N. McKendrick, 'Josiah Wedgwood and the Commercialization of the Potteries', in *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialisation of Eighteenth-century England*, edited by N. McKendrick, J. Brewer & J.H. Plumb (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), pp.100-101.

<sup>571</sup> These figures are likely, if anything, to underestimate ceramics ownership and display, since small, moveable and easily resaleable goods were frequently removed before inventories were taken and secreted, sold or pawned. This perhaps explains why only two of the inventories including ceramics were taken in circumstances of current or potential financial hardship – for the maintenance of abandoned children, and for failure to pay rent. Similarly, fixtures such as shelving and mantelpieces were rarely recorded in inventories, so might well be underestimated here.



with recorded ceramics were also in the larger towns, and thus perhaps were in reach of a wider range of consumer goods than in the smaller hamlets. The owners of the ceramic goods were, furthermore, predominantly artisans or small-scale tradespeople – blacksmiths, clothiers, inn and shopkeepers – so it is of course possible that the poorest in society did not benefit from the reduction in the cost of ceramic goods. It is perhaps more likely, however, that poorer households divested themselves of such items when they found themselves in need. The presence of decorative goods in poor areas of London has been confirmed in the archaeological record, and in St Giles in the 1790s, one could find hawkers of such items as ‘pictures of wax-work Paris plaister’ which cost as little as 6d a pair.<sup>572</sup> The inventories have little to say regarding the patterns or prints present on the ceramic goods present in these homes, though court records suggest that patterning was one means by which victims of theft identified their property.<sup>573</sup> Decorated ceramics were more expensive than undecorated items of a similar quality, but the advent of transfer-printing as an alternative to hand-painting considerably reduced the cost of adding decoration, and brought such goods within reach of the better-off amongst the working classes.<sup>574</sup> Thus transfer-printed household ceramics were another means by which ordinary people were able to access print culture in both textual and graphic forms.

The prints on pottery followed similar themes to those covered by wider print culture, and in some cases reproduced images and text printed elsewhere. They portrayed everything from romantic and familial relationships, to celebrities, famous events and industrial wonders. Trades were also often illustrated, reflecting the pride in occupational identities which was also evident in civic ritual.<sup>575</sup> Although we might tend to associate material culture depicting trade with a predominantly male associational culture, some of the items question the gendering of both trade identities and the spaces of association. The pub tends to be associated with male conviviality, but women were also featured on a jug and mug dedicated to the Farmer’s Arms, which show robust women with the tools of their

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<sup>572</sup> Trial of Elizabeth Carr, 13<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1790. *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, version 7.0. Ref. no. t17900113-14, accessed 5<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2014, <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org>. For the archaeological record, see above, p.27.

<sup>573</sup> Trial of John Goodhall, 14<sup>th</sup> July 1813. *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, version 7.2. Ref. no. t18130714-8, accessed 15<sup>th</sup> Aug. 2016, <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org>. Elizabeth Goodman, whose goods were stolen from her lodgings at the house of John Day, a shoemaker, identified her (by then broken) crockery among the recovered items: ‘This is my lid, and these pieces of the tea-pot are the same pattern.’

<sup>574</sup> Brooks, ‘Building Jerusalem’, p.54; Richards, *Eighteenth-Century Ceramics*, pp.54-55.

<sup>575</sup> See, for example, the account of a wool-combers’ procession quoted in Thompson, *Customs in Common*, pp.60-61.

trade, identifying them as partners in labour (Fig. 13). Both items show signs of considerable use, probably within the pub identified. The reverse to the jug also features an assertive woman, as will be discussed below. The mug, somewhat damaged, features a poem celebrating the independence of the farmer able to eat and wear the produce of his own labour. While emphasising the honour of the worker, the poem does not question the right of those ‘Who Roll in Splendor and State’ to do so, but other trade mugs did make their politics explicit. A Weavers’ Arms mug, dated to c.1816, a period of post-war depression, bears above the insignia of the trade a legend which reads ‘May the Lost Rights of Briton Soon be Restored’.<sup>576</sup> More opaque in meaning is an earthenware jug in the collections of the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge printed on one side with a steam engine and the words ‘Success to the Steam Engine, erected March 1st 1792’. Under the spout is a badge reading ‘King and Constitution.’ Yet the other side of the jug complicates a reading of this object as straightforwardly equating political loyalty and industry. It bears a print showing fustian dressers at work and the inscription ‘Success to the Fustian Dressers. This is a truth you can’t deny/Our Work is hot and very dry’. Katrina Navickas has suggested that the item may be satirical, connected with arson attacks on factories using steam power through the reference to the hot, dry working conditions.<sup>577</sup> If so, the threat was sufficiently veiled for producers, purchasers and users to avoid prosecution. Presumably, as with other forms of graphic satire, it was difficult to prosecute printed ceramics without a detailed unpicking of their meanings within an open court, in which the prosecutors might risk further embarrassment.<sup>578</sup>

Transfer-printed pottery items with more explicitly political themes were common, with items decorated with members of the royal family and military and naval heroes especially surviving in large numbers. Even more ambiguous figures were represented, for example in a small figurine of Napoleon unearthed in the excavation of a former labourers’ cottage on the site of Sydenham Brewery (Fig. 14). Despite the fears of a Napoleonic invasion in Britain, there was a degree of admiration at his military prowess even amongst some loyalists. Radicals also had mixed and fluid views about Napoleon – especially following the restoration in of the Bourbons in France, when Napoleon became a symbol of the defeated

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<sup>576</sup> J. & G. Lewis, *Pratt Ware*, p.135.

<sup>577</sup> Personal communications with Katrina Navickas on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2012. My thanks to Katrina for alerting me to this item and her interpretation of it.

<sup>578</sup> Donald, *The Age of Caricature*, p.15.

Republic.<sup>579</sup> Radical heroes and events were also commemorated, although surviving objects with these subjects appear to be less common than those featuring monarchs, soldiers, and sailors. The most commemorated radical heroes seem to have been Francis Burdett and Henry Hunt, with the Peterloo massacre far and away the most commemorated radical event in this period. This was perhaps because of the utility of cheap commemorative goods in raising money to help support those who were wounded at St Peter's Fields, along with their families, the relatives of those who had been killed, and those who were imprisoned in the aftermath.<sup>580</sup> If we accept John Barrell's assertion that the 1790s radicalism produced little visual propaganda due to a desire to maintain respectability, rather than entering the bawdy world of graphic satire,<sup>581</sup> then we can see Peterloo as an opportunity to capitalise instead on the kind of tragic melodrama often found in ballad literature. The image which resonated on most Peterloo commemoratives, of a woman trampled by an attacking yeoman soldier, was a simple means of conveying the inhumanity of the event within a single image in which the peaceful nature of the meeting and the transgression of codes of honour by the yeomanry were encapsulated.

Peterloo domestic commemoratives ranged from elaborate, lustre-decorated creamware items to a simple plaque currently preserved in the British Museum. The small size and smudged transfer of this item suggested it would be among the cheaper goods available. Nonetheless, the hole bored to hang the object identifies it as a display object (Fig. 15). Indeed, it seems likely from their current physical condition that most surviving crockery commemoratives were also display objects, which were perhaps used only occasionally with honoured guests, or at anniversary or fundraising meetings. Perhaps, like Jacobite objects, they were associated with particular toasts or rituals.<sup>582</sup> Certainly by the 1830s, a range of symbolic political objects were highly visible during a radical dinner at the home of John and Nancy Clayton.<sup>583</sup> Like Jacobite objects, radical items used in toasting rituals practised a

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<sup>579</sup> See S. Semmel, *Napoleon and the British* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), chapter 6; T. Prince, 'Napoleon Bonaparte and British Radicalism, 1802-21,' MA thesis (University of York, 2012).

<sup>580</sup> It has been suggested that the large numbers of surviving silk handkerchiefs featuring John Slack's image of the massacre were sold to raise money in this way. See C. Burgess, 'The Objects of Peterloo' in *Manchester Region History Review*, Vol.23 (2012), special issue 'Return to Peterloo' edited by R. Poole, p.156. Malcolm Chase also finds intriguing evidence to suggest that these handkerchiefs were also used as a portable propaganda tool to stir up Irish dissent, although it unlikely that larger and less durable items like ceramics were used in this way. See *1820: Disorder and Stability in the United Kingdom*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), p.54.

<sup>581</sup> Barrell, 'Radicalism, Visual Culture, and Spectacle in the 1790s', para.30.

<sup>582</sup> Pittock, 'Traucherous Objects', p.48.

<sup>583</sup> Epstein, *Radical Expression*, p.147.

kind of alternate reality, defined by Pittock as a ‘counter-public sphere’, which mirrored official rituals such as the civic dinners used by local elites to display their power.<sup>584</sup> As Epstein puts it, ‘Ritual performance allows people to enact – to define by means of social drama – certain roles and meanings’.<sup>585</sup> The objects could act as props in these performances, structuring behaviours such as toasting or even acting as a reminder to avoid consumption of excised goods, as discussed in the previous chapter. Use of the object might in this context signal to others that this, rather than tastes or finances, was the reason for such an avoidance. Perhaps more importantly, the use of an object differentiated by its depiction of a radical hero, or symbolically decorated, might dictate the actions expected of its user. Just as the ‘Sunday Best’ clothing worn on the march to Peterloo acted to indicate the self-restraint and self-respect of the marchers, so ceramic objects might suggest a certain standard of decorum expected at a celebratory or commemorative event.<sup>586</sup> Objects were thus another means by which radicals could perform their capability for co-ordinated, disciplined action, constituting an alternative to the existing body politic.

Unlike Jacobite objects, or the fustian dressers jug, these items again seem to openly proclaim their allegiance. The form of mass-platform radicalism practiced by supporters of Hunt and Burdett drew its power from the open show of supporting numbers, and in this it differed from both past and contemporary forms of illicit dissent. Though more cautious in times of severe repression, such as the 1790s and in early 1820, concealment of radical beliefs ran counter the democratic impulses of the movement. Republican or violent incarnations of popular radicalism were unlikely to be openly and sympathetically portrayed on mass-produced goods, in the way that the less extreme, constitutional versions could be. Despite the public outrage following Peterloo, only one commemorative item endorsing a violent response has been preserved. This jug, held at Rochdale’s Touchstones Centre, is printed on one side with the standard image of the yeomanry charging helpless people with the word ‘Murder’, beneath which the inscription reads ‘The scripture crys out life for life and God ordain’d it so. We’ll not forget to repay the debt incurred at PETERLOO.’ (Fig. 16) Unlike the other commemorative items, which suggest a more passive response, this jug explicitly dictates the action expected of committed radicals. However, as suggested above radical memorial rituals, in which all of these items could play a part, were always an act of protest, however hidden, and an active, participatory reinforcement of political

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<sup>584</sup> Pittock, ‘Traacherous Objects’, p.45.

<sup>585</sup> Epstein, *Radical Expression*, p.149.

<sup>586</sup> Bamford, *Passages*, pp.150-151.

beliefs and identities. Ritual practices were the sustenance of radical endeavour, and material goods facilitated and framed these practices.

Nevertheless, radical objects were not just collected by sympathisers. One of the magistrates who orchestrated the massacre also collected a wide range of objects associated with Peterloo, suggesting that for John Crossley, the relics were of antiquarian interest, marking an extraordinary event and/ or celebrating the suppression of the protest.<sup>587</sup> John Barrell has also drawn attention to the potential for collecting crazes to skew our estimation of the sympathy for radical causes expressed in material culture. He argues that the radical tokens produced by Thomas Spence in the 1790s were often purchased by aristocratic enthusiasts and then stored privately, rather than circulating as a form of popular propaganda.<sup>588</sup> It is possible that mass-produced prints and ceramics were a conversation piece rather than a heartfelt political statement; a means by which men and women of all political persuasions could demonstrate a knowledge of current events and mark these, just as births were marked on the tokens mentioned above.

It is also worth noting that not all such goods were made, commissioned, or purchased by the household which ended up with them. Crewe and Hadley have explored how the Methodist and temperance images or messages on ceramics given to children on the Sheffield Manor estate in the nineteenth century often conflicted with the realities of the ideals and expectations of the families of those children.<sup>589</sup> John Styles alerts us to the extent to which the consumption patterns of working-class people were involuntary, with items imposed upon them through charity, gifts and prizes, as well as being handed down through families.<sup>590</sup> Commemorative objects were given out at elections or popular festivities, such as George IV's coronation, during which the authorities were keen to impose a celebratory narrative against the threat of disorder from those parties who wished to demonstrate their distaste for the unpopular king. These objects were not only distanced from the recipient as the product of another's labour, but also as that of another's choice.

We can speculate on what it might have meant to produce ceramic goods on a large scale. Brighton and Hove Museums' collections include an earthenware beaker bearing the legend 'No Handycraft can with/ Our art compare/ For Pots are made of/ What we Potters are.'

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<sup>587</sup> T. Wyke, 'Remembering the Peterloo Massacre' in *Manchester Region History Review*, Vol.23 (2012), special issue 'Return to Peterloo' edited by R. Poole, pp.112-113.

<sup>588</sup> Barrell, 'Radicalism, Visual Culture, and Spectacle in the 1790s', paras.16-18.

<sup>589</sup> Crewe & Hadley, "'Uncle Tom was There, in Crockery'" pp.89-108.

<sup>590</sup> Styles, *The Dress of the People*, pp.247-301.

(Fig. 17) Despite the temptation to take this as evidence of potters using labour as an expressive force – to imagine radical potters carefully crafting ceramics as a means of protest – few ceramic items were produced by a single worker.<sup>591</sup> The mass-produced nature of these items suggests they were more likely introduced in the hope of capitalising on public interest in current affairs and famous people. This suggestion is supported by the survival of two jugs in the collections of the People’s History Museum, which are inscribed in honour of Henry Hunt but feature an image of the American naval hero Commodore Bainbridge, suggesting the hurried nature of their production to meet demand raised by Hunt’s popularity (Fig. 18). John and Jennifer May suggest that the Bainbridge transfer was carelessly reused because the original products featuring Bainbridge were intended for the export market, so the substitution would not be recognised in Britain,<sup>592</sup> but this seems unlikely. Even if buyers interested in politics were not already familiar with images of Hunt (or Bainbridge), they might question the naval imagery in the transfer. It seems more likely that, as Chris Burgess suggests, existing transfers were reused in order to speed up the production process in order to meet a sudden spike in demand after Peterloo,<sup>593</sup> or perhaps to save money on a speculative production.

It is not clear whether it mattered to purchasers that the man pictured was not Henry Hunt. Perhaps it was more important to sympathisers that the image symbolised their hero, or equated him with naval feats of glory in defence of freedom. After all, naval forces were, unlike a standing army, associated with the preservation of English liberty, and naval heroes were a popular subject for commemorative commodities. The use of radical heroes on commemorative items can in this light be seen as part of a contest for definitions of patriotism, an assertion that those fighting for liberty were as important as those protecting the nation from external threat.<sup>594</sup> As such, it can be counted as part of the radical appropriation of practices associated with militarised romantic nationalism in a similar way to the presentations made to leaders by the female reform societies.<sup>595</sup> On the other hand, it could be that the survival of two of these misprints was simply due to their collectability. Just as Thomas Spence’s endless combination of token prints frustrated those seeking to

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<sup>591</sup> Richards, *Eighteenth-century ceramics*, p.50.

<sup>592</sup> J. May & J. May, *Commemorative Pottery* (London: Heinemann, 1972), p.136.

<sup>593</sup> Burgess, ‘The Objects of Peterloo’, p.155.

<sup>594</sup> See Nenadic, ‘Romanticism and the urge to consume’, p.217 for a discussion of the connections between romanticism, nationalism, and material culture, including the celebration of popular reform leaders.

<sup>595</sup> See Mather, ““These Lancashire women are witches in politics””, pp.54-55.

complete their collections, perhaps a misprint on a commemorative ceramic jug made it more unusual and thus all the more desirable.<sup>596</sup>

Some ceramics which did not commemorate particular events or people can still be seen as suggestive of attitudes to power. For example, one of the Farmers Arms mugs mentioned above is printed on the reverse with an illustrated poem entitled 'The Tythe Pig' (Fig. 19). The poem tells the story of a usually amiable parson, who became rather less pleasant when the time came to collect tythes from his parishioners. The greedy vicar is, however, thwarted by a farmer's wife, who insists that if he intends to take a tenth of all their goods, he must also take her tenth child:

The Priest look'd gruff, the Wife looked big,  
L---ds, Sir quoth she, no Child, no Pig.

The humour in the poem is all about the triumph of the weak over the strong: of a woman over a man, as well as of the humble farming family over the grasping parson, representative of the whole established church. It is not clear whether the implication is that the clergyman is the child's father – certainly there were enough examples in popular culture of predatory parsons for the audience to understand the print in such a way, although the image of a dog, usually included in the print, suggests fidelity. Either way, the poem seems to have been popular, appearing on ceramic items in collections across England, and its tale was well enough known that ceramic figures without the accompanying verse were also produced.<sup>597</sup> Of course these were humorous items, not necessarily intended to be taken as a serious criticism of the church, but they further reinforced the critiques of corruption in the church from dissenting radicals in particular. Their grievances were heightened in the aftermath of the Peterloo massacre, when the gift of the prosperous living of Rochdale to the clerical magistrate William Hay intensified suspicions that religious leaders traded ministerial allegiance for monetary gain. As one poetic correspondent to the *Manchester Observer* put it:

*Says H\*\*\* to Hay*  
*Come tell me, pray*  
*The sure way to promotion?*

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<sup>596</sup> Barrell, 'Radicalism, Visual Culture, and Spectacle in the 1790s', paras. 15-16.

<sup>597</sup> Lucinda Strickland's portrayal of working-class Christmas celebrations, *Christmas in a Cottage* (London: T.Becket, 1790), includes a rendition of 'the song of the *Parson and Pig*', p.14.

*It can't be piety,  
 Nor meekness, nor sobriety,  
 According to my notion."*  
*Quoth H\*\* to H\*\*\*,  
 You're mighty dull,  
 Not yet to know the way,  
 Devotion is the thing I'll prove,  
 I don't mean to the Lord above,  
 But to Lord Castlereagh.<sup>598</sup>*

The 'tythe pig' ceramics, then, represented the more jocular side of serious anti-clericalism. They confirmed the hypocrisy of the clergy, who were all too keen to advise obedience to authority and patience in suffering, but themselves were quick to complain if their weekly allowance was not promptly paid.<sup>599</sup> That it was a woman depicted making that challenge reflects the accepted role of women as moral guardians: the wife is shown as matronly and respectable, rather than as the bolshy fishwife stereotype associated with assertive working-class women. We have already noted that motherhood was used by working-class radicals to legitimate their political actions. The fact that the farmer's wife was not caricatured allows the viewer's sympathies to rest unambiguously with the farming family, rather than with the parson. The objects therefore formed part of a discourse in which a challenge to clerical authority was sanctioned, even celebrated.<sup>600</sup>

Another intriguing print featured the iron bridge across the Tyne at Sunderland, completed in 1792. It was not unusual to celebrate industrial innovations – we have already seen a depiction of the steam engine, for example – but two ceramic items with this print (a plaque and a mug) have found their way into the People's History Museum due to their

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<sup>598</sup> *Manchester Observer*, 5<sup>th</sup> February 1820.

<sup>599</sup> This criticism could be applied to religious leaders of all denominations. An open letter to Methodist leaders criticised their attitude towards radical reformers, as well as their demanding money from the poor while their own wives and daughters swanned about in silk. *Manchester Observer*, 1<sup>st</sup> January 1820.

<sup>600</sup> A similar piece in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London shows a parson attacked by a sow while amused male and female labourers look on. The print on this piece was copied from a 1784 caricature. See 'Tythe in Kind, or The Sow's Revenge' earthenware mug (c.1785). Accessed 23 June 2016, via <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O149392/tythe-in-kind-or-the-quart-mug-unknown/>. The 'Vicar and Moses' series of Staffordshire figures, based on Hogarth's *Sleeping Congregation* also poked fun at the clergy – see M. Schkolne, 'Vicar and Moses.' Staffordshire Figures 1780-1840, 2010. Accessed 23 June 2016. <http://www.mystaffordshirefigures.com/blog/vicar-and-moses>.



assumed status as radical objects. The reasons for their being understood as such are obscure. The bridge was funded by the Tory MP Robert Burdon, but its design is credited to Thomas Paine, based on the iron bridge in Philadelphia.<sup>601</sup> On the reverse of the mug is a poem, *The Sailor's Tear*, which evokes the parting scenes discussed previously, depicting the sailor as a man of feeling, tearful at his absence from his wife and child – again, this juxtaposition is ambiguous, and can be read as either celebrating the chivalrous sailor hero or criticising the way in which war tore families apart. Unfortunately, it has not yet been possible to locate any documentation relating to the creation of these commemoratives, and therefore we are left to wonder whether they were associated with Paine by their initial owners, or if this meaning was imposed later. The image appears on ceramics in collections across the country, which seems to suggest that although they were probably made in Sunderland, their sale or distribution (perhaps by Burdon around election time) was not confined to the region, though this geographical distribution could also be the result of later movement or collection patterns. Ultimately, as with so many everyday working-class objects, we can only speculate as to whether the cast iron bridge signalled veiled radical commitment to Paineite ideas, support for a Tory MP, or simply an interest in engineering and technological development. This example reminds us that objects could have multiple, sometimes contradictory meanings, depending upon who was reading them.

In speculating about what these mass-produced consumer goods might have meant for a political identity, we must ask whether the means of their production mattered. If we return to the Valentines created by Samuel and Jemima Bamford, we can see that it is the input of their labour that animated the object with emotional significance. This suggests that the hand-making of goods was a means of creating a connection between object and owner, and, as with romantic objects, the input of labour could signify depth of feeling in the making of political objects. This can also be seen in the choice of a sculptor thought to be sympathetic to the subject for the bust of Spence. The sculptor was to act as a physical proxy for the emotional labour of its commissioner. The significance of Nancy Clayton's flag was not just in its inscription or the symbolism of its colour, but in the fact that the object had been physically present at a turning point in radical history. It was that petticoat, rather than any other material, that Nancy adapted as a rallying point for future ritual

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<sup>601</sup> See T. Paine, *The Political Writings of Thomas Paine: Secretary to the Committee of Foreign Affairs in the American Revolution, to which is Prefixed an Account of the Author's Life* (1824). Internet Archive/Open Library. Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> May 2016, <https://archive.org/details/politicalwriting01painrich>, pp.420-421.

remembrance. So few radical relics from Peterloo survived that the rarity of Nancy's flag must have made it even more precious. But the printed ceramics discussed here were, for the most part, produced in bulk and presumably sold through the usual distribution networks, thus forming part of an impersonal, industrial process. As Brewer has shown, there was a network of political and economic interest at play in the creation of politically-themed ceramics, which acted as a marketing tool for politician and producer alike.<sup>602</sup> Given the suspicion of self-aggrandizement, especially that achieved through consumption, which we saw in the previous chapter, we must wonder if such a thoroughly self-interested relationship in any way diminished the meaningfulness of political ceramics even for the most ardent radical purchaser.

The case has also been stated here for viewing commemorative ceramics as collectors' items, in which we can perhaps see the taming of the threat of radicalism. Stena Nenadic suggested that the domestication of Romanticism worked in this way, to divest the movement of its more dangerous aspects – 'nihilistic tendencies, brooding introspection, emotional excess' – while embracing those which could be easily accommodated in middle-class culture. She cited Walter Scott's tremendously popular *Waverley*, in which the initially impetuous and emotional hero is tamed by marriage and domesticity, as the ultimate example of this trend, but it could also be recognised in, for example, the commodification of military themes, which, as I have argued elsewhere, enabled support for war while distancing the viewer from violence and brutality.<sup>603</sup> We have seen in the case of mass-produced ceramics that more threatening versions of radicalism tended not to be featured, while celebration of heroes in the tradition of popular nationalism was a frequent theme. Yet despite this caution against assuming too great a role for ceramics in displaying a political identity, we must not discount them as altogether meaningless in this role. For those who did subscribe to the views encapsulated in the objects, their use, whether ceremonial or everyday, could reinforce beliefs and inform practice. Furthermore, items with a more guarded message or those which used humour could encourage a user to reflect on their meaning through the subtlety with which it was transmitted. While we must beware of reading too much into mass-produced goods, we must also avoid being fooled by what Miller calls the 'humility of things'.<sup>604</sup> These were still items which were relatively

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<sup>602</sup> Brewer, 'Commercialization and Politics', pp.239-241, pp.252-253.

<sup>603</sup> Nenadic, 'Romanticism and the urge to consume', pp.218-220; Mather, "All the glories of the camp", pp.16-21.

<sup>604</sup> Miller, *Stuff*, p.50.

new additions to working-class homes, and certainly those which were purchased were done so with intent, as a deliberate choice of that object rather than any of the many other, perhaps cheaper, options available. Furthermore, household ceramics, whether or not they represented a political figure or event, did have political connotations in that their display – whether on a shelf or in use – demonstrated the owner or user’s personal aesthetic decisions, their power to represent themselves through the goods they accrued. This can be seen as a statement of identity pitched against the attempts of others to set the boundaries of what a working-class home was and could be.

When interpreting the political connotations of working-class household objects, we must consider not only the object itself but the context in which it was produced, obtained and used. Without the specific documentation linking each object to its context, the meanings can only be deduced through an assessment of what connected information exists.

Ultimately, the story of these objects has to be an act of our imagination, albeit one rooted in the evidence available. Yet perhaps it is the act of imagination that is important.<sup>605</sup> If we return to Thomas Preston’s sign, we can see that for him, the important part of the sign’s creation was his imaginative work in designing it, rather than the labour that went into its physical production. Likewise, the different interpretations of mass-produced goods can be seen as a result of different imaginative understandings of their meaning, rather than material differences in their making and display. Though of course the physical properties of the object were important in its use – Was it aesthetically pleasing? Did the jug pour well? Was it heavy, light, rough, smooth? –the meaning could incorporate these properties within the mental process which imbued the object with significance. The mind projected itself onto objects, within the constraints of matter.

This chapter concludes, therefore, that even identical objects could mean different things in different circumstances. If we look at this in the context, discussed in earlier chapters, of a movement experimenting with different positions and rituals to find its own political language, this is hardly surprising. Objects were an extra-lingual means of expressing these different positions, of playing with ideas about the radical movement’s aims and means of achieving those aims. For a movement in which access to written language varied, ritual use

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<sup>605</sup> See C. Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987) and Nenadic, ‘Romanticism and the urge to consume’, p.208 for imagination as the driver of consumer behaviour in the late eighteenth century. Lewis Hyde’s survey of folk tales and anthropological works also suggests the importance of imaginative work in the exchange of goods, for example in the stories connected to the otherwise apparently mundane objects in the Kula ring. *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property* (London: Vintage Books, 1979), pp.12-13.

of objects was another means by which working-class men and women could communicate, raise discussion, and negotiate power relationships. As with the Jacobite objects discussed by Murray Pittock, the meanings of some of these objects can be opaque to the modern observer, perhaps because they were intended to be so to avoid prosecution for treason or sedition. The majority of items discussed here, however, openly portrayed a radical message or depicted a radical hero. These goods were not explicit because they were safely located in a private sphere of home – as we have seen, working-class homes were rarely sufficiently private for this to be an effective strategy of hidden resistance. Rather, radical objects formed part of the performance of respectability, reinforcing the assertion that working-class men and women were legitimate political actors. Radical household goods thus suggest another strand of everyday domestic practice in which the home was a space for imagining an alternative political reality through the performance of that alternative.

## Chapter 7

### Conclusions

This thesis set out to discover how 'home', defined as an idea, a physical space, and its associated practices, was employed in working-class political radicalism in two English regions during the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. It sought to address an absence in the scholarship on political radicalism in this period by considering how radicals 'lived by' and 'lived with'<sup>606</sup> their politics on a day-to-day basis, rather than focusing solely on recognisable moments of 'public' action. Drawing on my previous work on gender and popular politics, I recognised an emphasis on the idea of home in political discourse which I felt bore further interrogation with regard to its classed and gendered implications for the radical movement. My work on female reformers in the North-West had led me to question the existing scholarship on domestic political rhetoric, which I felt was too easily dismissed as appealing to 'middle-class values'.<sup>607</sup> In the research presented here, I therefore sought to dig deeper into the meanings of home for working-class people and the ways in which home was used in practice as well as in rhetoric. I argued that domesticity was not confined to the middle classes, but rather that working-class people likewise envisioned the home as a site of intimate attachment and as a space in which their own identities were formed and expressed. Working-class radicals used the home to materialise and perform not only their individual respectability, but also the legitimacy of their politics.

This study has employed a wide range of sources to understand how home was imagined as a model for nation, as an intimate site for family relationships, and as an actual space in which people worked and consumed as well as performing more 'private' domestic functions. I focused on two case-study regions – London and the south Pennines – as these were areas for which the source material was particularly rich. An inventory sample, images, and surviving objects were used to get a sense of the material culture of working-class housing, and these sources were interpreted alongside autobiographies, newspaper

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<sup>606</sup> John Gillis's work on the history of the family makes the useful distinction between idealised, imaginary families, 'families we live by', which represent the ways we think of and present ourselves, and the 'families we live with' – the messy realities which, past and present, have complicated the picture. It is a distinction which can also speak to the differences in the ways in which politics were articulated and the complicated, complex lived realities in which individuals might attempt to put them into practice. See J. Gillis, *A World of Their Own Making: A History of Myth and Ritual in Family Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p.7.

<sup>607</sup> Mather, 'These Lancashire women are witches in politics', pp.49-50.

reports, and the Home Office papers in order to uncover the meanings of these spaces and objects for the political lives of working-class people. The use of this patchwork of sources mitigated some of the methodological issues associated with reliance on a single source base, and enabled me to address the resonances of home across cultural forms.

My previous work on female reform societies explored the gendered meanings of home in political rhetoric, and has been extended here to account for the importance of home for men as well as women, in recognition of scholarship demonstrating how home was used in constructions of masculinity in this period.<sup>608</sup> Home was crucial in political rhetoric as a site around which multiple culturally relevant discourses converged, symbolising such values as sensibility, industry and self-sufficiency. Adult men were expected to provide for and protect their wives and children, and it was this responsibility that male radicals drew on as evidence of their political capabilities. Women also drew upon their domestic experiences, asserting their own right to speak on political issues, though they rarely called for the vote on their own account. Rather, their narrative of frustrated domesticity countered other politicised imaginings of working-class homes, challenging the cold enumerations of the statisticians as well as the depictions of radicals as either careless of domestic decencies or greedily dissatisfied with their existing comfort and plenty. Home was so powerful because it was potentially a universal ideal, appealing to men and women in both of the study regions and across the social spectrum. The idea of home provoked deep emotional attachments, and as such it was highly contested across the political spectrum with both conservatives and radicals claiming to be the defenders of domesticity. However, while the ideal of home allowed radicals to redeploy criticisms against them, this required their attempting to appropriate the same terms as their opponents, thus limiting the extent to which the status quo could be challenged.

Having established the importance of home in political discourse, I have sought to examine the physical spaces in which working-class people made home. I argue that our understanding of what home could mean for working-class people is obscured by our reliance on the evidence of social observers, who were not usually resident in the communities they portrayed. Home was an important but in some ways ambivalent space for working-class people. Working-class homes contained items which suggested a desire for comfort and to display aesthetic preferences. The inventory sample demonstrated the

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<sup>608</sup> Eg. Harvey, *The Little Republic*; Tosh, *A Man's Place*; McCormack, 'Married Men and the Fathers of Families'.

presence of such goods as mirrors, ceramics, and equipment to make and serve hot drinks even in homes reliant on poor relief. Items associated with work were also prominent within the home. Working at home had potential emotional and material benefits for working-class people, as did the close-knit nature of working-class living in the growing towns and cities of London and the Pennines. However, the conditions of work could be unpleasant and indeed dangerous, while domestic boundaries, especially in crowded towns, could be fluid and easily breached, leaving working-class people subject to outside surveillance or even the hostile invasions by political opponents that we saw in the first chapter. In this sense, working-class homes differed from those of the middle classes, which were increasingly segregated and specialised, and where the effects of work could be contained within particular areas. In growing industrialising towns and cities, working-class people faced significant challenges in maintaining the ideal 'respectable' home.

Gendered expectations again affected the ways home worked in practice. Working-class women, who may have had some help from children or a servant, but were likely to do the bulk of unpaid housework themselves, found they often faced a time-consuming and physically demanding double burden of paid and unpaid labour. This was to have a very real effect upon women's participation in politics, restricting their access to the leisure time enjoyed by men and opening them up to further judgements regarding the material state of the home, with the implication that women involved in politics neglected their domestic duties. Despite these practical constraints on women's participation in politics, this study also found ways in which both women and children could be involved in sustaining radicalism through difficult times. Through the family, working-class radicals could both sustain and display their political identities in everyday practice. Radicalism was incorporated into the moral education for which families were held responsible, and the evidence suggests that this practice had some success in generating continuity within the radical movement, its predecessors and its successors. This study has thus demonstrated that an understanding of working-class politics through time requires this analysis of how movements operated on a day-to-day level, as well as in explosions of public protest.

Women were also crucial to consumer-based activism such as the radical boycott of taxable goods. Working-class spending was closely policed in ways which caused much resentment, but was also restricted by working-class radicals themselves during boycott activity. Again, the attempt to conform to respectable standards could also impede a thorough interrogation of these standards, so that the radical boycott risked appearing to capitulate to

the imposed categories of luxury and necessity and the denial of the former to working-class people. Nonetheless, the boycott offered a practical means of embodied participation which had the potential to unite the radical community in shared action. Likewise, the objects which were bought or created by working-class people could be used in the performance of an alternative political culture. Like refraining from certain kinds of goods, symbolic objects proclaimed the self-respect of working-class radicals and thus their political legitimacy. I therefore suggest that, rather than being covert objects within an oppositional political culture, these objects for the most part proudly declared their allegiance. There are many difficulties with interpreting the object record of working-class homes, due to fragmentary survival and limited documentation, and mass-produced objects for a commercial market are particularly complex to 'read', given that the same item could be used in different ways by different people. Nonetheless, I would argue that the use and display of radical political objects within the home could be a means of demonstrating emotional attachment to the cause. Furthermore, those objects which were created by hand or specially commissioned by working-class radicals had particular resonance as items personally chosen and imbued with physical and imaginative labour, demonstrating the pride taken by the creator in their political identity.

The findings of this study intervene in a number of historical debates. They speak to the history of popular radicalism in England by introducing the issue of quotidian practice and the importance of rehearsing a radical self in everyday life, rather than solely at identifiably 'radical' events. In this, political radicalism mirrored radical Protestantism, which stressed the need to apply one's values in everyday life.<sup>609</sup> The final three chapters in particular suggest parallels between political and religious modes of practice, reminding us of the importance of religion in underpinning ideas about domesticity as well as its contribution to radical politics in this period, thus supporting scholarship which has challenged the narrative of the eighteenth century as a period of secularisation.<sup>610</sup> Working-class radicals adapted religious ideas and practices to incorporate radicalism into daily life, creating a distinct politicised culture. Leora Auslander, in her study of three political revolutions, has argued that that 'transforming the heart as well as the mind, the home as well as the legislature, were as necessary to the difficult task of turning monarchists into republicans

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<sup>609</sup> Auslander, *Cultural Revolutions*, pp.54-55.

<sup>610</sup> For a useful discussion of the complexities of separating the religious and the secular, in light of the continued, often internalised, influence of religion on everyday life, see J. Seed, "Secular" and "Religious: Historical Perspectives", in *Social History*, Vol.39, No.1 (2014), pp.3-13.



and subjects into citizens, as was creating new systems of governance and taxation'.<sup>611</sup>

British radicals, unlike French and American revolutionaries, did not successfully effect the changes they wished to see in the period in question here, but within the domestic practices of radicals detailed in this study we can get some sense of the ways in which they sought to embody their politics and enact them at micro-level.

Historians have recognised for some time the importance of symbolic means of communication in radical protest, but this study has identified the home as another site in which radical men and women were able to use material items as well as embodied practices to assert the legitimacy of their political participation. My work therefore also contributes to recent scholarship on the spaces of radical politics, adding the home to those more obviously 'public' arenas (the pub, the moors, even the prison) in which political association took place.<sup>612</sup> These findings, as suggested above, allow us to view more positively the possibilities for female participation in radical politics, while recognising that certain expectations around women's domestic duties could limit the extent to which they were able to capitalise on and gain recognition for this participation. Previously, women's role in the movement has relied on discussions of their attendance at radical events, or their recorded speeches or letters to the press. This study has built upon recent work using the Home Office Disturbance Papers and gone further in revealing just how crucial the family basis of popular radicalism was in sustaining the movement through its most difficult moments.<sup>613</sup> Without the emotional and financial support of women, their participation in the education of children, or their commitment to actions such as boycotts, not to mention the work they did in maintaining the physical home environment, working-class radical men would have found it much more difficult to maintain their own more prominent political activism. The involvement of children alongside their parents further emphasises the family as a means of support for activists and as a guarantee of its continuation. These findings suggest the potential for longer-term studies of popular radicalism in order to further elaborate on the intergenerational reach of political activism. Furthermore, they reiterate the importance of intangible attachments – like that to place, or tradition – within popular politics, supporting John Barrell's assertion that much of the pull of radicalism was in the promise of 'jam today'. Radicalism may have been slow to deliver on universal

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<sup>611</sup> Auslander, *Cultural Revolutions*, p.8.

<sup>612</sup> Navickas, *Protest and the Politics of Space and Place*; Parolin, *Radical Spaces*.

<sup>613</sup> Navickas, "A Reformer's Wife ought to be a Heroine".

suffrage, but the men and women involved felt the immediate benefits of belonging to a community and of being part of the action.<sup>614</sup>

My findings suggest that this earlier period was a key moment for forging the domesticity usually more associated with the Victorian era. It thus complements scholarship by Amanda Vickery and Margaret Posenby, who have previously explored the complex meanings of home in the Georgian period, though with reference to a different socio-economic group.<sup>615</sup> I argue strongly against understanding the home as a middle-class site, or domestic values as necessarily bourgeois or reactionary. This study has deliberately taken a broad approach, exploring multiple elements of home and connecting them to wider social contexts. In doing so, it has asserted that home was not a utilitarian space but one which represented complex negotiations of power and status, and one to which working-class people often had deep emotional attachments. It has drawn on and contributed to a growing body of scholarship which seeks to undermine stereotypes of working-class homes and research more fully their diversity and nuanced meanings.<sup>616</sup> My research also suggests some of the ways in which small-scale, quotidian actions contributed to more obvious forms of political activism, though we must beware of assuming that the working-class home and the actions within were private or hidden. As noted above, the actions radicals performed within their homes were less a form of 'hidden resistance' against a hegemonic power, and more an overt means of challenging that power, though at times this was only accomplished by participating in the same discourses.

This study also touched upon the much-discussed issue of material living standards during the early 'Industrial Revolution', though I argue that quantification is inadequate for understanding the multiple attachments between people and things, and have looked instead at the wider meanings of spaces and objects. My work also, therefore, contributes to another growing body of scholarship concerned with the consumer behaviour and

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<sup>614</sup> Barrell, *The Spirit of Despotism*, p.57.

<sup>615</sup> Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*; Posenby, *Stories from Home*.

<sup>616</sup> See C. Steedman, *Dust* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), chapter 6 for an account of a historian's struggle against reading working-class homes in terms of stereotypical assumptions. James Symonds has also warned against exaggerating material progress in the attempt to challenge the image of the degraded slum; see 'The Poverty Trap: or, Why Poverty is Not About the Individual' in *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, Vol.15, No.4 (2011), pp.563-571. For nuanced accounts of the power relations involved in the homes of the poor in our period, see *Accommodating Poverty*, edited by J. McEwan & P. Sharpe. For a later period, see O. Betts, 'Working-class homes in three Urban Communities, 1870-1914', PhD thesis (University of York, 2013).

material culture of the working classes. The eighteenth century has long been recognised as a period in which there was an expansion of the types and quantities of material goods available to ordinary people: this study has unpicked some of the meanings of this expanded consumer potential, particularly with regard to household goods. While politicisation is usually related to productive relations, or to material deprivation, this thesis calls for a more holistic approach to exploring the networks of (productive, consumer, and affective) relationships which contribute to an individual's sense of their political self. As it has shown throughout, these relationships could have complex and contradictory effects on political ideas and practice – on who could understand themselves as sharing 'an identity of interests' with others. Political radicals were largely drawn from the skilled and semi-skilled trades, such as weaving, shoemaking, and tailoring, and thus were not usually amongst the poorest of their class. Nonetheless, deregulation and mechanisation, as well as the economic fluctuations caused by the war, threatened their status as well as their financial security. It was from this precarious position that working-class radicals fought for representation, but it was a battle often fought on emotional terms relating to the threats to their everyday, domestic experiences.

I have used the language of 'class' throughout this study, though I acknowledge that it is imperfect. Nonetheless, I hope that this study has shown how the process of 'classing' did occur in working-class homes of this period. The context of rapid social and economic change, including rising expenditure on poor relief, war, and growing political awareness amongst the working classes exposed the working-class home to increased outside surveillance. Working-class people recognised the ways in which they were judged, stigmatised, and othered, depicted as an unruly 'swinish multitude' by those higher up the social scale. This comes across in Elizabeth Salt's angry words about the struggle to survive on wages kept low to prevent their being spent at the alehouse, as well as in Thomas Spence's more humorous observation that working-class people would not be left in peace without 'mending their lives' and living in 'humble quarters'. It is evident in Samuel Bamford's attempt to depict a living space which evidenced his industry and stewardship while remaining appropriate to his station. The awareness of such differentiation is also evident in our discussion of gender, in the frustrated words of women in response to the inequitable distribution of unpaid housework, for example. The home was thus a site in which one became socialised into one's social position, where distinctions were made material in everyday relationships and practices. Perhaps because classed and gendered difference were so readily encountered in the home, it was also an important site for

resistance. Through home, working-class men and women asserted their right to be involved in politics, speaking on a public platform about domestic issues, and participating in practical activism such as boycotting goods or creating ritual objects. In doing so, they pushed back against the ways in which they were negatively characterised by others.

Home's power is, to some extent, rooted in its perceived timelessness, but this thesis has attempted to demonstrate how the ways it is deployed are rooted in particular historical moments – in this case, ideas about home were forged in the context of industrialisation and war, the spread of democratic ideas, and an Enlightenment emphasis on scientific rationality. Investigating more closely the use of home in both earlier and later periods can alert us to the ways in which the cultural context in which it is situated shifts, and the social and political implications of continuity and change in everyday life. This study necessarily takes a broad approach, using multiple local archive collections and studying various aspects of home life, in order to assert the importance of home as a whole to political identities and action. Because of its broad remit, the study was geographically limited, for the most part, to two study regions (London and the south Pennines). I recognise, however, that these regions had a particular experience of industrialisation as well as their own political cultures, which suggests that my findings cannot necessarily be generalised to other areas. The role of home in rural politics would be a particularly interesting subject for further study, given the different nature and pace of change in agricultural communities compared even to those in the smaller industrialising villages of the Pennines. Given the position of home in English national identity, as vocalised by Samuel Bamford in the introduction, the issues raised in this study also bear further investigation in the Welsh, Scottish, and Irish contexts, while useful comparisons could also be drawn further afield – with France or America, for example.

Yet as well as broadening out the terms of this research, narrowing down the focus could also add further nuance to some of its arguments. For example, microstudies of radical involvement in particular locales, such as Katrina Navickas exploration of the Ancoats area of Manchester, could provide additional detail of the family and community relationships which built and sustained radicalism.<sup>617</sup> There is also potential for useful collaborations with family historians, who may be able to elaborate upon the bare details available in parish records tracking families through time. While working on this thesis, I was contacted by

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<sup>617</sup> Navickas, *Protest and the Politics of Space and Place*, pp.106-117.

two individuals who had seen my work on the Peterloo Massacre and who wanted to share stories about the event which had been passed down by members of their families. One of these correspondents told me of his great-aunt's recollections of weapons buried in the back yard after the Massacre, and her fear even in old age that bringing them to public knowledge risked reprisals from the authorities.<sup>618</sup> Within such memories, of course, there is the potential for stories to be reshaped or altered by the distance from the events, but the ways in which memories of protest are themselves shaped and incorporated into familial identities are in themselves part of the story that this thesis tells. Furthermore, they allow us to access some of those stories which are not documented in the archives, and to uncover, as this thesis has sought to do, some of the lesser-known stories of activism.

The sources used here also have a great deal of potential for further exploration, which was not possible within the scope of this study. The National Archives has an extensive collection of probate records that have not been used in detail here because they lack clear occupational data, thus making it difficult to assess the class of the deceased according to the criteria used here. The inventory sample used here could be usefully extended by detailed reading of these records, which do occasionally offer clues about the deceased – as did that of John Harris, who was assumed in this study to be a glazier due to the equipment and stock listed within the inventory of his household. There is also potential for extending the use of pauper inventories within the sample, as these are often uncatalogued and require extensive sifting through the archives of individual parishes. Recent work by Joseph Harley has uncovered a number of these inventories, but more work is needed to locate surviving documents which offer insight into the living spaces of the poorest citizens.<sup>619</sup> Expanding the inventory sample to include more documents, as well as potentially widening the regional focus, would enable a better understanding of the variety of home types and domestic goods that shaped the lives of working-class men and women. The recent work to catalogue the Home Office Disturbance Papers also offers exciting potential to uncover more insights from the confiscated correspondences of radicals, further developing our understanding of how family relationships underpinned the day-to-day practice of radicalism as well as sustaining it through the most difficult of periods.

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<sup>618</sup> My thanks to Professor Derek Roebuck for sharing his Aunt Sarah's story with me, and for allowing me to include it here.

<sup>619</sup> Harley, 'Material Lives of the English Poor'.

All historical writing is influenced by the context in which it is written. Though the research for this thesis was concerned with the period from 1790 to 1820, its findings invite comparison with the use of home in contemporary politics. Recent Conservative-led governments have discussed financial policy with reference to household budgeting, referring to reductions in public spending as ‘simple conservative principles of good housekeeping’.<sup>620</sup> It is the everyday, common-sense nature of this rhetoric which makes it so persuasive. Its accessibility and inclusivity (“we’re all in this together”) undercuts more abstract economic reasoning. Furthermore, the commitment to frugality is paired with a heightened surveillance of and negative judgement upon those who rely on state support. There has been a boom in so-called ‘poverty porn’ – television programmes which detail the daily lives of participants in receipt of social security, usually emphasising large families, consumer habits, and criminal behaviours. Such programmes, just like the social observers’ reports of the late-Georgian period, distance the observer from the participants, and thus defuse potential public criticism of the removal of those benefits.<sup>621</sup> Both right and left draw on the rhetoric of ‘hardworking families’, thus solidifying the division of those in poverty into industrious and feckless, deserving and undeserving. This thesis acts as a reminder that moral judgements about the lives of working-class men and women have long been used to delegitimise their claims upon the state, and that we should be attentive to the political work of supposedly ‘objective’ portrayals.

The use of home is not just classed, or gendered, but also applies to ‘race’ politics. While home can represent belonging, hospitality, and mutuality, it can also enforce exclusion. Keith Snell, for example, has pointed to the negative corollary of belonging in the form of a ‘culture of local xenophobia’, in which outsiders were viewed as threatening to members of a parish. He argued that this culture inhibited the development of a broader class consciousness.<sup>622</sup> Protecting the boundaries of the parish, or of the nation, can seem the obvious extension of attempts to regulate those of the home. The idealisation of home in

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<sup>620</sup> Speech delivered by then party leader David Cameron to supporters in Birmingham; see ‘David Cameron: Living Within Our Means.’ *Conservative Home*, 2016, accessed 1<sup>st</sup> Sept. 2016, [conservativehome.blogs.com/torydiary/files/living\\_within\\_our\\_means.pdf](http://conservativehome.blogs.com/torydiary/files/living_within_our_means.pdf).

<sup>621</sup> A. Billen, ‘Nothing to do but Breed and Feed? The Rise of Poverty Porn: Reality TV Turns its Lenses on the Poor; From Honey Boo Boo to Skint, We’re Suddenly Hooked on Watching the Poor’, in *The Times*, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013; R. de Vries, ‘Benefit Claimants are Now Seen as Other, Not Fully Human’ in *The Guardian* (London), 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2013; L. McKenzie, ‘Poor Women have Never Had “Privacy”. So why should those who Bank Offshore?’ in *The Guardian*, 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2016.

<sup>622</sup> K.D.M. Snell, *Parish and Belonging: Community, Identity and Welfare in England and Wales, 1700 – 1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), chapter 2.

the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century occurred in the context of an attempt to solidify boundaries: against a French invasion, against the demands of democracy, and to consolidate a British state which was still in its infancy and throughout this period attempting to control its Irish neighbour, resulting in the Act of Union in 1801. The expansion of British colonial ambition in this period also involved the elevation of domesticity as a particularly British trait as part of an assertion of civilisation and the ‘othering’ of those who were colonised. This interweaving of nation and home remains dangerously relevant in the emotional attachment which individuals feel to a bounded state and the fear and suspicion of those ‘others’ who might penetrate those boundaries.<sup>623</sup> The home/ nation is viewed through the lens of an imagined golden age, unchanged prior to the incursions of large numbers of immigrants, who are now perceived to threaten the purity of the national culture. This ahistorical understanding of the home and nation, and the gendered implications of ‘threatened purity’, require robust challenge from historians. By highlighting the messiness of past domesticity, we can challenge the idea of a golden age and imagine a more positive, welcoming future, in which the boundaries of home/nation can be perceived as fluid without that representing a challenge.

Indeed, exploring contemporary parallels for the politicisation of the late-Georgian working-class home also reminds us of the potential to appropriate, subvert and resist politicised discourses around the home. Though home-based radical practice has altered with the technological changes of our own era, we can still find examples of the use of home space to demand change. Women in particular remain active in politics based in domestic action – perhaps most strikingly in the recent occupations of buildings to assert a right to affordable housing.<sup>624</sup> These actions challenge the classed and gendered marginalisation of poorer citizens, arguing that the rising cost of housing and lack of social provision in London in particular amounts to ‘social cleansing’. This term in itself evokes the ways in which working-class people are associated with dirt and impurity, hinting again at the powerful sense of exclusion which social change can impose upon those with limited economic resources. Yet the embedding of political activism within daily life can be a

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<sup>623</sup> S. Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), pp.1-3, chapter 2.

<sup>624</sup> For example, see actions by Focus E15 at ‘About us,’ Focus E15, 2016, accessed 1<sup>st</sup> Sept. 2016, <http://focuse15.org/about/>, and Sisters Uncut. ‘Summer of Action: South East London Sisters Uncut Occupation on Rye Lane, Peckham.’ Sisters Uncut, 2016, accessed 1<sup>st</sup> Sept. 2016, <http://www.sistersuncut.org/2016/06/29/summer-of-action-south-east-london-sisters-uncut-occupation-on-rye-lane-peckham/>.

means of refusing this exclusion, of practicing one's citizenship on a quotidian basis, as well as potentially proving more accessible than other forms of protest such as public demonstrations. The use of home in political discourse and action continues to have a powerful effect, making abstract ideas into the intimate and relatable stuff of everyday life.



## Appendix 1

### Inventories Included in the Sample

#### Borthwick Institute for Archives, York

TEST.CP.1790/1 Inventory of goods belonging to Mary Popplewell, widow, of Batley, 1791.

TEST.CP.1792/1 Inventory of goods belonging to Robert Haig, yeoman, of Sandal Magna, 1792.

TEST.CP.1793/12 Inventory of goods belonging to Johnathon Wooler, worsted manufacturer, of Bradford, 1793.

TEST.CP.1793/13 Inventory of goods belonging to John Young, yeoman, of Ripon, 1793.

TEST.CP.1794/2 Inventory of goods belonging to George Broadbent, joiner, of Huddersfield, 1794.

TEST.CP.1794/5 Inventory of goods belonging to George Hasleham, leadminer, of Grassington, 1794.

TEST.CP.1794/9 Inventory of goods belonging to William Walker, innkeeper, of Halifax, 1794.

TEST.CP.1794/7 Inventory of goods belonging to John Hudson, farmer, of Church Garforth, 1795.

TEST.CP.1794/8 Inventory of goods belonging to Martha Riley, widow, of Halifax, 1795.

TEST.CP.1800/3 Inventory of goods belonging to Richard Sainter, farmer, of Birkin, 1800.

TEST.CP.1800/4 Inventory of goods belonging to Thomas King, of Batley, 1800.

TEST.CP.1801/2 Inventory of goods belonging to John Senior, clothier, of Dewsbury, 1801.

TEST.CP.1801/3 Inventory of goods belonging to Richard Bickerdike, farmer, of Spofforth, 1801.

TEST.CP.1801/4 Inventory of goods belonging to Joseph Townend, clothier, of Hey in Meltham, 1801.

TEST.CP.1801/5 Inventory of goods belonging to John Hill, farmer, of Sheffield, 1801.

TEST.CP.1801/6 Inventory of goods belonging to George Lee, farmer, of Tankersley, 1801.

TEST.CP.1801/7 Inventory of goods belonging to Joseph Nicholas, farmer, of Guiseley, 1801.

TEST.CP.1804/1 Inventory of goods belonging to William Pawlet, surgeon, of Pontefract, 1804.

TEST.CP.1808/2 Inventory of goods belonging to Joseph Ramsden, clothier, of Almondbury, 1808.

TEST.CP.1809/11 Inventory of goods belonging to Francis Loftus, farmer, of Badsworth, 1809.

TEST.CP.1809/3 Inventory of goods belonging to William Horn, stuff weaver, of Wakefield, 1809.

TEST.CP.1809/6 Inventory of goods belonging to Richard Parkin, farmer, of Darfield, 1809.

TEST.CP.1810/3 Inventory of goods belonging to William Russell, butcher, of Birkin, 1810.

TEST.CP.1810/8 Inventory of goods belonging to John Clayton, innkeeper, of Thornton, 1810.

TEST.CP.1807/2 Inventory of goods belonging to Matthew Hutchinson, maltster, of Pontefract, 1811.

TEST.CP.1812/4 Inventory of goods belonging to Elizabeth Hardcastle, widow, of Wakefield, 1812.

TEST.CP.1812/5 Inventory of goods belonging to William Kay, currier, of Sheffield, 1812.

TEST.CP.1813/1 Inventory of goods belonging to Jonathon Speight, innkeeper, of West Ardsley, 1813.

TEST.CP.1813/10 Inventory of goods belonging to David Leonard, bacon factor, of Spofforth, 1813.

TEST.CP.1814/1 Inventory of goods belonging to William Green, cloth miller, of Calverley, 1814.

TEST.CP.1814/2 Inventory of goods belonging to William Sadler, cooper, of Wakefield, 1814.

TEST.CP.1814/8 Inventory of goods belonging to Evan Home, farmer, of Halifax, 1814.

TEST.CP.1815/1 Inventory of goods belonging to Giles Elliot, ironmonger, of Doncaster, 1815.

TEST.CP. 1815/3 Inventory of goods belonging to William Gaunt, farmer, of Farnley, 1815.

TEST.CP.1816/2 Inventory of goods belonging to William Wilkes, farmer and lime burner, of Brotherton, 1816.

TEST.CP.1817/4 Inventory of goods belonging to William Ellis, innkeeper, of Wakefield, 1817.

TEST.CP.1818/15 Inventory of goods belonging to Leonard Cottam, shopkeeper, of Doncaster, 1818.

TEST.CP.1819/1 Inventory of goods belonging to John Senior, manufacturer, of Halifax, 1819.

TEST.CP.1820/1 Inventory of goods belonging to Jonas Field, shopkeeper, of Halifax, 1820.

#### Lancashire Record Office

UCDL.9.7 Inventory of goods belonging to Thomas Webster, of Clayton-le-Moors, 1814.

#### London Metropolitan Archives

MJ/SP/1799/APR/049/1-3 Petition by the parish of Teddington to sell the goods and chattels of William Mills, labourer, 1799.

ACC/0763/037 Inventory of household furniture etc. belonging to George Turpin [of Shoreditch], 1808.\*

P71/TMS/586 Notice of distraint with a schedule of goods (Mr James, 13 St. Thomas Tenements [Southwark]), 1819.

#### The National Archives, Kew

C108/285 Printed sale catalogue of goods belonging to Mr Webb, 1792.\*

J90/434 Supreme Court of Judicature, Godier V Godier, 1793.\*

PROB31/915/52 Inventory of goods belonging to William Cowden, bricklayer, of Hackney, 1796.\*

PROB31/915/62 Inventory of goods belonging to James Blatch, linen draper, of Fleet Street, 1796.\*

PROB31/915/80 Inventory of goods belonging to John Harris of Whitechapel, 1800.\*

PROB31/921/639 Inventory of goods belonging to John Sears of Southwark, 1800.\*

PROB31/921/736 Inventory of goods belonging to Nicholas Browning, baker, of St Giles, Cripplegate, 1800. \*

#### West Yorkshire Archives Service (WYAS)

WYAS Bradford, 14D95/5/13 Inventory of goods belonging to Michael Smith, yeoman, of Cragside, 1792.

WYAS Bradford, DB39/c37/12 Inventory of goods belonging to Sarah Holmes of Bolton, 1793.

WYAS Bradford, DB3/C32/4 Inventory of goods belonging to Joseph Waddington, cordwainer, of Cullingworth, 1804.

WYAS Bradford, 49d90/6/G/13 Inventory of goods belonging to John Holmes of Addingham, 1818.

WYAS Bradford, TONG/129/92 Inventory of goods belonging to Sarah Hargreaves, pauper, of Westgate Hill, 1821.

WYAS Kirklees, KC21/19 Inventory of goods belonging to Widow Copley of Thurstonland, 1810.

WYAS Kirklees, KC271.22, Inventory of Goods belonging to James Copley of Thunderbridge, 1821.

\* The data for these inventories was taken from the copies compiled and transcribed by Jane Hamlett, Laurie Lindey and Zoe Hudson, held at the Geffrye Museum of the Home, London.

## Appendix 2

### Tables and Figures

**Table 1: Number of inventories listing consumer goods.**

| Item                       | No. of inventories | % inventories |
|----------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Clock(s)                   | 46                 | 78%           |
| Print(s)                   | 25                 | 42%           |
| Book(s)                    | 21                 | 36%           |
| Looking glass(es)          | 42                 | 71%           |
| Ceramics                   | 32                 | 54%           |
| Display unit (eg. Dresser) | 36                 | 61%           |
| Feather bed(s)             | 30                 | 51%           |
| Curtains                   | 32                 | 54%           |

**Table 2: Inventories listing Agricultural Equipment**

| Name                 | Location         | Occupational Status      |
|----------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Martha Riley         | Halifax          | Widow                    |
| John Hudson          | Church Garforth  | Farmer                   |
| William Walker       | Halifax          | Innkeeper (3 properties) |
| Thomas King          | Batley           | Not given (Collier)      |
| John Clayton         | Thornton         | Innkeeper                |
| Michael Smith        | Cragside         | Yeoman                   |
| Joseph Waddington    | Cullingworth     | Cordwainer               |
| John Harris          | Whitechapel      | Not given (Glazier)      |
| Mary Popplewell      | Batley           | Widow                    |
| Robert Haig          | Sandal Magna     | Yeoman                   |
| Jonathon Wooler      | Bradford         | Worsted manufacturer     |
| John Young           | Ripon            | Yeoman                   |
| Richard Sainter      | Birkin           | Farmer                   |
| Richard Bicker       | Spofforth        | Farmer                   |
| Joseph Townend       | Hey in Meltham   | Clothier                 |
| George Lee           | Tankersley       | Farmer                   |
| Joseph Nicholas      | Guiseley         | Farmer                   |
| William Pawlet       | Pontefract       | Surgeon                  |
| Matthew Hutchinson   | Pontefract       | Maltster                 |
| Francis Loftus       | Badsworth        | Farmer                   |
| Richard Parkin       | Darfield         | Farmer                   |
| William Horn         | Wakefield        | Stuff weaver             |
| William Russell      | Birkin           | Butcher                  |
| Elizabeth Hardcastle | Wakefield        | Widow                    |
| William Wilkes       | Brotherton       | Farmer / lime burner     |
| Evan Home            | Halifax          | Farmer                   |
| Jonathon Speight     | West Ardsley     | Innkeeper                |
| Thomas Webster       | Clayton-le-Moors | Not given                |

**Table 3: Inventories without curtains, by occupation**

|                                                 |    |
|-------------------------------------------------|----|
| Agriculture (Farmer, Yeoman)                    | 11 |
| Trades (Shopkeeper, Glazier, Maltster, Butcher) | 4  |
| Manufacturing (Weaver, Clothier)                | 5  |
| Hospitality (Innkeeper)                         | 1  |
| Pauper                                          | 5  |
| Other (Widow)                                   | 1  |

**Table 4. Inventories listing ceramic goods.**

| Name of householder  | Occupation              | Place of residence         | Type of inventory |
|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| William Walker       | Innkeeper               | Halifax *                  | Probate           |
| Thomas King          | Not given (Collier)     | Batley                     | Probate           |
| Giles Elliot         | Ironmonger              | Doncaster                  | Probate           |
| William Gaunt        | Farmer                  | Farnley                    | Probate           |
| Leonard Cottam       | Shopkeeper              | Doncaster                  | Probate           |
| Mr James             | Not given               | London (Southwark)         | Distrain for rent |
| William Mills        | Labourer                | Teddington                 | Poor law          |
| Joseph Waddington    | Cordwainer              | Cullingworth               | Probate           |
| Mr Webb              | Jeweller                | London (Great Portland St) | Sale of goods     |
| Mr Goddier           | Weaver                  | London (Bethnal Green)     | Probate           |
| James Blatch         | Linen draper            | London (Fleet St)          | Probate           |
| John Sears           | Not given (Blacksmith?) | London (Southwark)         | Probate           |
| John Harris          | Not given (Glazier?)    | London (Whitechapel)       | Probate           |
| Nicholas Brow        | Baker                   | London (St Giles)          | Probate           |
| William Cowden       | Bricklayer              | London (Hackney)           | Probate           |
| George Turpin        | Not given               | London (Shoreditch)        | Probate           |
| Robert Haig          | Yeoman                  | Sandal Magna               | Probate           |
| John Young           | Yeoman                  | Ripon                      | Probate           |
| George Broadbent     | Joiner                  | Huddersfield               | Probate           |
| Joseph Townend       | Clothier                | Hey in Meltham             | Probate           |
| John Hill            | Farmer                  | Sheffield                  | Probate           |
| Joseph Nicholas      | Farmer                  | Guisseley                  | Probate           |
| William Pawlet       | Surgeon                 | Pontefract                 | Probate           |
| Matthew Hutchinson   | Maltster                | Pontefract                 | Probate           |
| Francis Loftus       | Farmer                  | Badsworth                  | Probate           |
| William Kay          | Currier                 | Sheffield                  | Probate           |
| Elizabeth Hardcastle | Not given (widow)       | Wakefield                  | Probate           |
| John Senior          | Manufacturer            | Halifax                    | Probate           |
| William Ellis        | Inkeeper                | Wakefield                  | Probate           |
| William Wilkes       | Farmer / lime burner    | Brotherton                 | Probate           |
| Evan Home            | Farmer                  | Halifax                    | Probate           |
| David Leonard        | Bacon Factor            | Spofforth                  | Probate           |

\* Of the three inventories of goods belonging to William Walker, in his three different properties, the Angel Inn was the only inventory to include ceramics. The other two inns – the White Lion and the High Sunderland – did include dressers/ Delph racks, so it is possible that ceramics had already been removed when the inventories for these other inns were taken.

Fig. 1. I. Cruikshank, *Indecency* (SW Fores, 1799). Coloured etching. Library of Congress.



Fig. 2. G. Morland, *The Comforts of Industry* and *The Miseries of Idleness* (1780s). Oil on canvas. National Gallery of Scotland.



Fig. 3. T. Ovenden, *John Bull in His Glory* (image courtesy of Professor John Barrell) and *Citizen Coupe Tête in his Misery* (J. Downs, 1793). Hand coloured etching. British Museum Satires 8293.

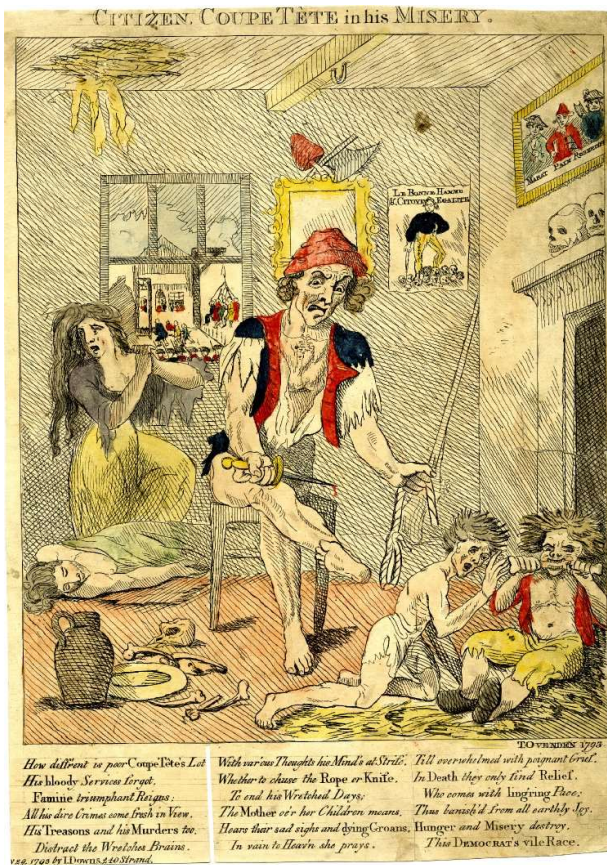




Fig.4. J. Gillray, *Petit souper, a la Parisienne; - or - a family of sans-culotts refreshing after the fatigues of the day* (Hannah Humphrey, 1792). Hand-coloured etching, British Museum Satires 8122.



Fig.5. J. Lewis Marks, *Much Wanted A Reform among Females!* (Place of publication unknown, c. August 1819). Hand coloured etching. British Museum Satires No. 13264.



Fig.6. 'A report of a meeting of female radical reformers, at the Union Rooms', *Manchester Comet*, September, 1822. Chetham's Library.



Fig. 7. G. Cruikshank, *The Belle Alliance, Or the Female Reformers of Blackburn* (G. Humphrey: London, August 12 1819). Hand coloured etching. British Museum Satires No. 13257.



Fig. 8. George Cruikshank's illustration of 'The People' in W. Hone, *The Political House that Jack Built* (London, 1819), p.13.

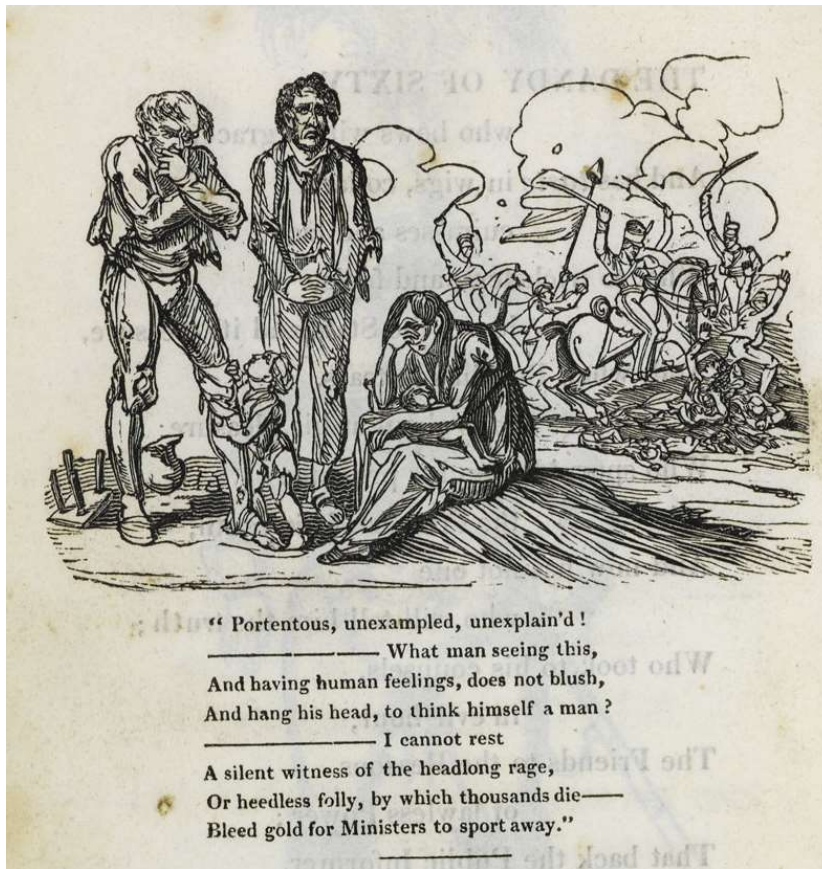


Fig.9. Anon, *Cobler's Hall*. (Bowles & Carver, 1800) Etching. British Museum.



Fig. 10. I. Cruikshank, *A General Fast in Consequence of the War!!* (SW Fores, 1794). Etching, 249 x 353mm. British Museum Satires 8428.



Fig.11. P. Sandby, *Cries of London: View of Two Earthenware Sellers*. Etching, 24cms. (Francois Vivarez, 1760). Guildhall Library, London.



Fig. 12. Anon, *The Enraged Cuckold*. Mezzotint, 254 x 355mm. Printed by Carrington Bowles, London, 1784. (British Museum, London).



Fig.13. Details of 'Farmer's Arms' jug and mug, no dates (People's History Museum, Manchester).





Fig. 14. Napoleon figurine found at an eighteenth-century labourer's cottage at the Sydenham Brewery site, Museum of London Archaeology. See P.R. Mullins & N. Jeffries, 'The Banality of Gilding: Innocuous Materiality and Transatlantic Consumption in the Gilded Age' in *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, Vol. 16, Issue 4 (2012), pp.745-760.



Fig. 15. Peterloo plaque, c.1819 (British Museum, London).



Fig. 16. Peterloo jug, c.1819 (Touchstones, Rochdale).

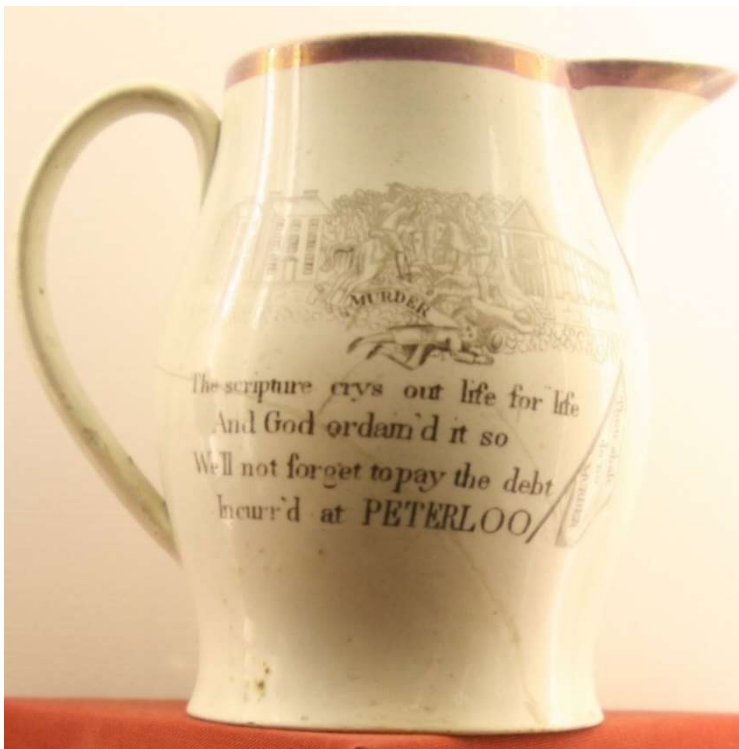


Fig. 17. 'Trade and commerce' beaker, c.1810 (Brighton and Hove Museums)



Fig. 18. Jug printed with Commodore Bainbridge in place of Henry Hunt, c.1819 (above, People's History Museum, Manchester) and jug printed with Henry Hunt himself, c.1820 (below, Bonhams – see <http://www.bonhams.com/auctions/13634/lot/352/>).







**Fig. 19. Detail of 'Tythe Pig' jug, no date (People's History Museum, Manchester).**  
 The poem reads: 'In Country Village lives a Vicar, Fond –as all are- of Tythes and Liquor;/  
 To Mirth his Ears are seldom Shut, /He'll Crack a Joke, and laugh at Smut; / But when his  
 Tythes he gathers in, /True Parson then – no Coin, no Grin. /On Fish, on Flesh, on Bird,  
 on Beast, /Alike lays hold the Churlish Priest./Hob's Wife and Son – as Gossips tell /  
 Both at a time in Pieces fell; /The Parson comes, the Pig he claims /And the good Wife  
 with Taunts inflames, /But she quite Arch bow'd low and smil'd, /Kept back the Pig and  
 held the Child: /The Priest look'd gruff, the Wife looked big, /L---ds, Sir quoth she, no  
 Child, no Pig.



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