

GEORGE & CAROLINE:  
THE GENDERED DISCOURSE OF A ROYAL SCANDAL

by

MARGARET ANNE SWANSON

(Under the Direction of Laura Mason)

ABSTRACT

In 1820, George IV accused his wife, Caroline, of adultery with a lowborn foreigner, instigating a Bill of Pains and Penalties to divorce and degrade her. The proceeding generated intense public debate, mobilizing people along class lines. The middle class defended Caroline while the aristocracy backed George. Both sides used print media to argue for their chosen royal. This study examines pamphlets, caricatures, and newspapers to highlight the gendered discourse prevalent in such media. Kingites and Queenites alike used the scandal to express their views on gender relations. Carolinites used bourgeois gender ideals to defend the Queen while spreading their beliefs nationally. Strikingly, loyalists used the same middle-class language to neutralize Caroline's threat to the political and social orders. Despite trying to defend patriarchy, Kingites ended up advocating bourgeois gender ideas. Ultimately, the gendered debate revealed the changing social context of the period, witnessing the emergence of Victorian ideologies.

INDEX WORDS: George IV, Caroline of Brunswick, Scandal, Monarchy, Adultery, Gender, Nineteenth-Century British Society, Nineteenth-Century Caricatures, Popular Politics

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## Chapter 1

### The Queen Caroline Affair

With George III's death on 29 January 1820, the Prince Regent became George IV and his wife became Queen of England. Although Caroline had lived abroad for over six years, she returned to assume her role as Queen Consort. George opposed the idea, instigating a Bill of Pains and Penalties in Parliament:

A Bill to deprive her Majesty, Caroline Amelia Elizabeth of the title, prerogatives, rights, privileges, and pretensions, of Queen-Consort of this realm, and to dissolve the marriage between his Majesty and the said Queen.

Whereas in the year 1814, her Majesty, Caroline Amelia Elizabeth, then Princess of Wales, and now Queen-Consort of this realm, at that time residing in Milan, took into her service one Bartholomew Bergami, alias Pergami, a foreigner in a low situation . . . and whereas, after the said Bartholomew Bergami . . . had so entered her service, a most improper intercourse took place between them. . . . forgetful of her rank and station, and wholly regardless of her honour and character she conducted herself towards the said Bartholomew Bergami, alias Pergami, with indecent and offensive familiarity and freedom, and carried on with him in a scandalous and adulterous intercourse—by which great scandal and dishonour were brought on her Royal Highness, as well as on the kingdom. And the said scandalous and adulterous conduct towards his Majesty having rendered the said Caroline-Amelia-Elizabeth unworthy of the situation of Queen of this realm.<sup>1</sup>

Using this archaic procedure, Tories sought to distract public attention from the King's notoriously immoral behavior while removing Caroline from the throne. A scandal immediately ensued, engulfing the populace in a heated debate. Men and women defended their chosen royal with divisions following class lines. The bourgeoisie and working class supported Caroline while the aristocracy backed the King. With popular

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<sup>1</sup> T.C. Hansard, ed., *The Parliamentary Debates: The Parliamentary History of England From the Earliest Period to the Year 1803* (London: T .C. Hansard, 1821) Ser. II, Vol. II, 212.

opinion beginning to gain significant power at this time, both groups used newspapers, pamphlets, and caricatures to garner public support.<sup>2</sup>

The Queen Caroline affair occurred at a transitional moment in British history. The emergence of a middle class saw the creation and extension of new attitudes about morality as well as gender. Seeking greater political power, the bourgeoisie began to set itself apart by embracing virtue, piety, and a new style of domesticity. As well, the Regency period witnessed changes to the monarch's role. George III was the last king to wield true political power. On George IV's ascension, no one knew exactly what his role would be. In the midst of these changes, George's attempt to divorce Caroline generated impassioned public debate, providing a unique opportunity to explore changing ideas about politics, class, and gender.

Previous scholarly studies have focused on political and class issues arising from the affair. The more prominent interpretation focuses on the political divisions created when parties aligned with their chosen royal. Caroline's cause attracted Whigs and radicals who longed to gain power. Tories, currently in power, supported the King. These divisions along with the arguments advanced by each side received much scholarly attention.

In his seminal work, *Artisans and Politics in Early Nineteenth-Century London*, I.J. Prothero uses the Caroline affair to illustrate the workings of the radical party in the 1820s. He argues that the divorce scandal proved "an important episode in London working-class politics" because, among other things, it "restored freedom of political

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<sup>2</sup> Anna Clark, *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of the British Constitution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 204, 207; Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850, Revised Edition* (London: Routledge, 2002), 152-154.

agitation.”<sup>3</sup> His text serves as a foundational study of the trial and the political issues that developed as a result. Thomas Laqueur’s article, “The Queen Caroline Affair: Politics as Art in the Reign of George IV,” advances Prothero’s discussion of radical politics by analyzing the aesthetic forms used to represent the affair. In the first section, Laqueur examines the scandal’s effect on the radicals’ attempt to gain power and enact governmental reform. He asserts that radical involvement in the scandal stemmed from the desire to show the corruption and illegitimacy of the political system, which the radicals hoped to accomplish by using Caroline as a symbol of the country’s need for reform. The larger second section addresses Laqueur’s main argument. He claims that the artistic forms of melodrama and farce, or the “theatricalization of politics,” utilized by the radicals, depoliticized the affair, thus undermining the significance of their cause.<sup>4</sup> Laqueur explains that these art forms shifted the debate from the political actions of the royal family to their personal virtues and vices. In the end, politics “assumed the characteristics of the art,” leaving the King and government unscathed and the radical cause lost.<sup>5</sup>

Prothero’s work fails to address sex and gender while Laqueur subordinates the topic to the depoliticization of the radical cause. A brief section of his essay focuses on women’s political involvement in the scandal. He illustrates how their defense of Caroline made the politics of gender an important aspect of the agitations. Laqueur claims that Caroline’s female supporters defended her because they associated her plight with the sexual double standard and the fragility of marriage; therefore, they mobilized to

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<sup>3</sup> I.J. Prothero, *Artisans and Politics in Early Nineteenth-Century London: John Gast and his times* (Folkstone, Eng.: Dawson, 1979), 136, 153-154.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Laqueur, “The Queen Caroline Affair: Politics as Art in the Reign of George IV,” *Journal of Modern History* 54 (1982): 432, 434, 439, 440, 452.

<sup>5</sup> Laqueur, “Queen Caroline Affair,” 448, 457-458, 463.

defend Caroline, making a political argument about gender roles as well. Ultimately, Laqueur argues that the art used to represent the gender politics, much like the general radical politics, depoliticized these women's arguments, undermining their political position.<sup>6</sup>

More recently, Anna Clark's *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of the British Constitution*, examines the relationship between sex scandals and politics. Clark claims that the Caroline scandal had serious implications for the constitution because the King threatened to upset the balance of power by using the government to solve his personal problems. George's decision to pursue a divorce politically mobilized the populace, generating a debate about constitutionality, legality, and justice. Moreover, Clark argues that "all parties used the scandal as an opportunity to express their views on the constitutional place of monarchy," making scandal a political weapon.<sup>7</sup> She concludes that the Caroline affair established the legitimacy of public opinion in the constitution.<sup>8</sup>

In terms of sex and gender, Clark focuses on sexual morality and women's place in public opinion. The radical, sexual, and sustained nature of the affair created an opportunity for both loyalists and Carolinites to use sexual propaganda. Thus, the scandal caused a debate on sexual morality, Clark argues, because it highlighted deep divisions over sexual morality that followed class divisions. Her analysis shows that the Queen lost support because of these divisions, particularly middle-class support, as the trial revealed increasingly prurient sexual evidence against Caroline.<sup>9</sup> Despite these valid assertions, Clark's work neglects a detailed discussion of the gendered images and

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<sup>6</sup> Laqueur, "Queen Caroline Affair," 442, 445, 447.

<sup>7</sup> Clark, *Scandal*, 177, 187-190.

<sup>8</sup> Clark, *Scandal*, 2, 177, 206.

<sup>9</sup> Clark, *Scandal*, 199-203.

rhetoric used in the propaganda, which would strengthen her arguments about sexual morality.

Similarly, her examination of women highlights their political role, downplaying the gendered implications and motivations driving these women. Instead, Clark argues that the affair politically mobilized large numbers of middle- and working-class women, raising questions about women's role in public opinion. She asserts that the affair had mixed results for women's place in politics: middle-class women suffered malicious attacks from conservatives and working-class women gained nothing.<sup>10</sup> Overall, Clark emphasizes politics over sex and gender. Yet, her discussion of sexual morality and women's participation has important implications for a gendered interpretation of the affair.

A second dominant interpretation of the Caroline affair addresses class. The early nineteenth century presents a tangled web of class related issues because of the emergence of a new middle class with principles and ideas distinct from the working class and the upper class. This ideological flux makes interpreting the scandal important because people chose sides along class lines. Anna Clark and Lenore Davidoff and Catherine Hall examine working class and middle class participation in the affair respectively.

Anna Clark explores the scandal's impact on the working class in her article "Queen Caroline and the Sexual Politics of Popular Culture in London, 1820." She argues against Laqueur's interpretation that melodrama and farce depoliticized the affair. Rather, she claims these forms of expression politicized the affair, leading to greater working-class political agitation. Ultimately, this media enabled the creation of a "new

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<sup>10</sup> Clark, *Scandal*, 199, 206-207.

political language that could speak of both royal politics and family crises in the same breath. Instead of trivializing radical politics, the transformation of popular literature into overt political language made the mass mobilization possible.”<sup>11</sup> Clark further argues that the scandal enabled working people to relate to and use Caroline as a symbol of their political and economic oppression, utilizing such a symbol to express their anxiety about political repression and family turmoil. Finally, she highlights the primary importance of the scandal—it enabled the working class to employ a new type of politics separate from the middle class that combined “old plebeian spectacle” with new political organization and representation.<sup>12</sup>

Although Clark subordinates her discussion of sex and gender, she does analyze two stereotypical gendered images that appealed to the working class: the “victimized maiden oppressed by aristocratic masculinity” and the heroic female, defiant of traditional female roles.<sup>13</sup> Clark believes these images hold significance because they conveyed a political rhetoric that facilitated working-class agitation. The first image enabled working-class men to embrace chivalry and portray themselves as defenders of women. This idea of chivalrous manhood, Clark claims, provided a way to calm gender antagonism between working-class men and women. Moreover, these images allowed the working class to undermine George’s masculinity, filling his role as Caroline’s protector.<sup>14</sup>

The image of the heroic female appealed to working-class women because it exceeded stereotypical limitations for women, reversing their relation to the law. The

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<sup>11</sup> Anna Clark, “Queen Caroline and the Sexual Politics of Popular Culture in London, 1820,” *Representations* 31(Summer, 1990): 51.

<sup>12</sup> Clark, “Queen Caroline,” 47-50.

<sup>13</sup> Clark, “Queen Caroline,” 47, 61.

<sup>14</sup> Clark, “Queen Caroline,” 52-54, 57.

images' portrayal of Caroline as rational, educated, adventuresome, and courageous politically mobilized women because it allowed them to believe in a life more extraordinary than work, children, and home. Clark demonstrates that the literature enabled working-class women to participate in politics, bringing their issues to the heart of the political struggle. This political activism separated working-class and middle-class women since working women wanted to undo the double standard inherent in separate spheres. Despite gains in politicizing women's issues, Clark clearly shows how this iconography never upset the balance of sexual difference; more often than not, Clark claims, working-class women associated with Caroline as mothers. Ultimately, Clark analyzes working-class radical political rhetoric with a secondary emphasis upon sex and gender.<sup>15</sup> In addition, her attention to the connection between political rhetoric and gender issues provides an avenue for a more detailed exploration.

As well, Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall examine class in their work *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850*. Davidoff and Hall believe that the primary significance of the affair was the marked shift in public attitudes about private morality, a shift the middle class greatly influenced. The authors argue that Caroline became a symbol of ideal womanhood, expressing a middle-class view of domesticity and marriage. This new view highlighted standards of femininity, masculinity, personal virtue, reason, and honor. They claim that the affair represented one of the first public rejections of one type of marriage and sexuality for another. The bourgeoisie spurned George's world of lax morality, upholding their ideal of a quiet domestic life and more rigorous sexual practice. Ultimately, Davidoff and Hall argue, public opinion decreed that the royal family must be a family. Thus, the affair "marked a

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<sup>15</sup> Clark, "Queen Caroline," 58, 60, 62, 63.

significant moment in terms of public attitudes to marriage and sexuality.”<sup>16</sup> Through the scandal, the middle class imprinted its model of morality and domesticity on the monarchy.<sup>17</sup>

Davidoff and Hall’s analysis illustrates the increasing influence of middle-class ideas. Within this dominant discussion, the authors briefly address middle-class gender beliefs. Davidoff and Hall claim that bourgeois men supported Caroline because she represented a dependent, vulnerable woman. This image made men want to defend her since a husband’s role required that he protect his wife. Middle-class women supported Caroline to protect their position as wives and maintain their domestic model.<sup>18</sup> Davidoff and Hall’s discussion of feminine and masculine ideals and the influence of bourgeois ideas about marriage, domesticity, and sexuality lays the foundation for a detailed analysis of gender roles in the Caroline affair.

I take off from Davidoff and Hall by placing gender at the center of my analysis. Aside from politics and class, gender is another key method with which we can explore the scandal, its impact on society, and the different gendered and sexual ideologies operating at this time. The massive amount of pamphlets, caricatures, and newspapers produced in response to the scandal provides ample sources for a gendered analysis. Publications intentionally used gendered rhetoric and images to mobilize supporters. This discourse allowed men and women of each class to apply their values to the images, conceptualizing the scandal within their gendered framework. As Joan Scott argues, the concepts of ‘man’ and ‘woman’ “are at once empty and overflowing categories. Empty because they have no ultimate, transcendent meaning. Overflowing because even when

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<sup>16</sup> Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 149, 152-154.

<sup>17</sup> Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 149, 152.

<sup>18</sup> Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 151-152.

they appear to be fixed, they still contain within them alternative, denied, or suppressed definitions.”<sup>19</sup> Each group of supporters, then, could interpret the roles of kings and queens, husbands and wives, and men and women according to its own standards. This use of gender on a national scale makes examining the scandal through a gendered lens fundamental to understanding its implications for British society and gender roles in the early-nineteenth century.

Known for its distinctive fashions, entertainments, and architecture, Regency England witnessed pervasive aristocratic excess, played out in expensive and frivolous pursuits such as gambling, racing, and elegant clothing.<sup>20</sup> Practicing patriarchy, aristocrats expected complete submission from wives and children. Inherent within this ideology, the sexual double standard allowed men to have indiscriminate affairs while women suffered condemnation. Yet, although society frowned on women engaging in affairs, few objected as long as a wife produced a legitimate heir and remained discreet, highlighting the elite’s pervasive immorality.<sup>21</sup>

However, on the surface, the nobility expected propriety and decorum. Driven by money and power, elites attempted to share in “Society” life by meeting certain expectations. Advantageous marriages, patronage, and impeccable reputations created the aristocracy’s foundation. By early-nineteenth century, a strict social protocol governed nobles’ actions. Men had freedom while women had to be above the reproach

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<sup>19</sup> Joan Scott, “Gender a Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” in *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 49.

<sup>20</sup> Carolly Erickson, *Our Tempestuous Day: A History of Regency England* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1986), 7-8.

<sup>21</sup> Anna Clark, “Whores and gossips: sexual reputation in London 1770-1825,” in *Current Issues in Women’s History*, eds. Arina Angerman, et. al. (London: Routledge, 1989), 232; Edward Shorter, *Written in the Flesh: A History of Desire* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 27; E.A. Smith, *George IV*, 19; Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage In England, 1500-1800* (New York: Harper, 1979), 330-331; Joan Perkin, *Women and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 1989), 50; Venetia Murray, *An Elegant Madness: High Society in Regency England* (New York: Viking, 1999), 1.

of the *grandes dames* of English society. These formidable women set stringent criteria for a woman's acceptance into fashionable society, focusing on behavior, dress, and respectability. Men rarely had to fulfill such strict requirements. A woman's failure to meet these standards resulted in ostracism, potentially ruining her family's hope of remaining in the inner circle.<sup>22</sup> Ironically, the *grandes dames* who held such high expectations led lives full of scandal, adultery, and intrigues.<sup>23</sup> Thus, the nobility used propriety as a cover for its pleasure-centered lifestyle.

Yet, this lifestyle, particularly gender roles, began to change. Industrialization and changing business practices gave rise to a middle class, a group with money but no titles. Growing out of industrialism and Evangelicalism, this group set themselves apart from the nobility and the working class by redefining ideas about women and the home. The bourgeoisie saw the home as the proper place for piety and morality. And women's simplicity, fragility, and purity suited them to a domestic life, through which they regenerated their husbands' and the nation's morals. Thus, the home became women's new domain. No longer accepted in the public sphere, women focused on motherhood and running the household. Men, however, dominated the public realm. Using virtue and a belief in equality between property-holding men, bourgeois men challenged the aristocracy for political and social power. Unlike noblemen, middle-class husbands returned home to their wives, maintaining a tranquil domestic life, and allowing the restoration of their morals and virtue.<sup>24</sup> This new ideology, separate spheres, gained

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<sup>22</sup> Perkin, *Women and Marriage*, 76-81.

<sup>23</sup> Murray, *Elegant Madness*, 53.

<sup>24</sup> Catherine Hall, *White, Male and Middle-Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), Ch. 3, especially 75-89; Bonnie G. Smith, *Changing Lives: Women in European History Since 1700* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1989), 181-188.

strength during the Regency. And the divorce scandal allowed the bourgeoisie to spread their ideas at the national level, challenging aristocratic gender ideals.

Literature produced in response to the Caroline affair embraced a gendered discourse. Such images and rhetoric emphasized the proper or improper behavior of the King and the Queen. Such sources reveal that both Carolinites and loyalists appropriated middle-class gender ideologies to argue about the royals. Pro-queen propaganda used bourgeois gender ideals to define both men's and women's roles and to challenge the pervasive immorality. More importantly, Queenites used the affair as a means to express their beliefs and impose them on national political values. Strikingly, loyalists used the same middle-class language to neutralize Caroline's threat to the political and social orders, attacking her behavior and highlighting her transgressions. Although pro-king supporters set out to defend patriarchy, they ended up defending bourgeois ideas about domesticity. Chapter 2 explores pro-queen literature while chapter 3 addresses loyalist propaganda.

## II.

To understand why George enacted a Bill of Pains and Penalties against his wife, it is necessary to examine Caroline's conduct before and during her marriage to the Prince of Wales. Born Princess Caroline Amelia Elizabeth of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, the second of six children, she had little hope of an exciting life. Her father, Duke Charles William Ferdinand, chiefly known for his military acumen and ability, treated his children severely. He ignored his daughters and forced military training on his incapable sons. His wife, Princess Augusta, the elder sister of King George III of England, led a quiet and retired life. She avoided her husband's court and generally detested life in

Germany. Their marriage fell apart after Prince Charles took a mistress and the children felt the effects.<sup>25</sup>

This tense and bitter environment shaped Caroline's character. As she came of age, her parents allowed her no freedom. She received little formal education, never learning to write very well. Most of the time, Caroline sewed or knitted. To control her behavior, a governess accompanied Caroline, even into her twenties. As a young girl, she showed the propensity for impulsiveness and rebelliousness. Because of this unruly behavior, her parents rarely allowed her to socialize, attend court, or participate in dances. Furthermore, Caroline lacked any concept of hygiene (even for a time without electricity and running water). She bathed irregularly, often wearing filthy clothes for days. This issue, seemingly trivial, played a role in the Prince of Wales' great distaste for his future wife.<sup>26</sup>

Because of her upbringing and the constant chaperonage, Caroline enjoyed violating convention. Once, upset at her parents for refusing to let her attend a ball, she faked childbirth to break up the party. Having achieved her purpose, she stopped screaming and told her parents never to keep her from a ball again.<sup>27</sup> When allowed to socialize, Caroline appeared lustful and flirtatious with poor conversational skills and shocking language. Supposedly, Caroline received several marriage proposals, all of which mysteriously failed. Prior to her betrothal to George, Queen Charlotte of England expressed her disapproval of Caroline's behavior:

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<sup>25</sup> Biographies of Caroline provide more detailed information than provided here. For further research on Caroline's life refer to the following sources: Flora Fraser, *The Unruly Queen: The Life of Queen Caroline* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), ch. 1; Thea Holme, *Caroline: A Biography of Caroline of Brunswick* (New York: Atheneum, 1980), ch. 1; Alison Plowden, *Caroline and Charlotte: The Regent's Wife and Daughter, 1795-1821* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1989), ch. 1.

<sup>26</sup> Fraser, *Unruly Queen*, ch. 1 & 2 ; Holme, *Caroline*, ch. 2 & 3; Plowden, *Caroline and Charlotte*, ch. 1.

<sup>27</sup> Fraser, *Unruly Queen*, 20.

They say that her passions are so strong that the Duke himself said that she was not to be allowed even to go from one room to another without her governess, and that when she dances, this lady is obliged to follow her for the whole of the dance to prevent her making an exhibition of herself by indecent conversations with men . . . all her amusements have been forbidden her because of her indecent conduct.<sup>28</sup>

Caroline's unseemly behavior made her an unsuitable match for any man, let alone the British heir apparent. She demanded attention, lacked refinement, flirted with men, and shocked polite society.<sup>29</sup> Her upbringing played a major role in undermining her marriage to George, providing a foundation for the scandal that broke upon England with such ferocity in 1820.<sup>30</sup>

Yet, George's rearing also contributed to the downfall of their marriage. Queen Charlotte gave birth to George Augustus Frederick, Prince of Wales and heir to the throne, on 12 August 1762. As one of 15 children, 13 of whom lived to adulthood, George received little attention from his parents. According to his parents' lifestyle, they lived a quiet, retired, and frugal life in a modest establishment near Kew Gardens. His tutors focused more on inculcating morality than imparting true intellectual knowledge, leaving George's education incomplete. Over the years, he pieced together enough knowledge to be considered quite accomplished.<sup>31</sup> However, the stifling atmosphere at home, restrictions on his social life, and a denial of a military role, contributed to George's rebellion and dismissal of the King's and Queen's principles.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> A. Aspinall, ed., *The Correspondence of George, Prince of Wales, 1770-1812* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963) vol. iii, 9 (Hereafter cited as CGPW).

<sup>29</sup> Fraser, *Unruly Queen*, 26-28.

<sup>30</sup> Fraser, *Unruly Queen*, ch. 1 & 2; Holme, *Caroline*, ch. 2 & 3; Plowden, *Caroline and Charlotte*, ch. 1

<sup>31</sup> Steven Parissien, *George IV: The Grand Entertainment* (London: John Murray, 2001), 23-24.

<sup>32</sup> Biographies of George IV provide more detailed information than provided here. For further research on George's life refer to the following sources: Saul David, *Prince of Pleasure: The Prince of Wales and the Making of the Regency* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1998), ch. 1 and ch. 6; Steven Parissien, *George IV: The Grand Entertainment* (London: John Murray, 2001), ch. 2; E.A. Smith, *George IV* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), ch. 1.

As a young man, the Prince of Wales became notorious for his extravagant lifestyle and his licentious behavior. George embraced pleasure, luxury, gambling, drinking, racing, and womanizing, earning him the title “first gentleman of Europe.”<sup>33</sup> He had numerous indiscreet affairs with titled women and commoners.<sup>34</sup> His lifestyle caused his father to offer strict moral lessons, generating familial tension. Moreover, the Prince lacked the ability to control his indulgences. In 1787, Parliament agreed to pay off his debts of £210,000. Less than a decade later, George’s debts accumulated to over £552,000—a sum generated by his love of women, clothes, jewelry, horses, guns, gambling, painting, and remodeling.<sup>35</sup> At this point, the King found a means of ending his son’s dissolute lifestyle, marriage.<sup>36</sup>

As the heir apparent, George, at thirty-two, pushed the age barrier for marriage. Yet, he did not want to marry. The reason for his apathy toward marriage—he already had a wife. In December 1785, George secretly married Maria Fitzherbert in a ceremony the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches validated.<sup>37</sup> The pair kept the marriage a secret and continued to live in separate houses, although they remained near each other. The Royal Marriages Act of 1772, which forbid the marriage of any descendent of George II under the age of twenty-five without parental permission, along with the Act of Settlement of 1801, which forbid marriage to a Catholic, made secrecy necessary for the

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<sup>33</sup> Sharon H. Lauder milk and Teresa L. Hamlin, *The Regency Companion* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1989), 49-50, 67, 97-123.

<sup>34</sup> Parissien, *George IV*, 41.

<sup>35</sup> Parissien, *George IV*, 51-53.

<sup>36</sup> David, *Prince of Pleasure*, ch.6; Parissien, *George IV*, ch. 3 & 7 ; Smith, *George IV*, ch. 2.

<sup>37</sup> Smith, *George IV*, 37-8.

pair.<sup>38</sup> More importantly, this secrecy enabled George to disclaim the marriage and accept his father's proposal to find a suitable bride.<sup>39</sup>

Many theories discuss how Caroline became the chosen bride for the Prince of Wales. One theory suggests that Lady Jersey, George's current mistress, hand picked Caroline for her "indelicate manners, indifferent character, and not very inviting appearance, from the hope that disgust for the wife would secure constancy to the mistress."<sup>40</sup> Another theory suggests that the Prince chose Caroline over several more appealing women because he admired the Duke of Brunswick's "military, political, and private character."<sup>41</sup> Whatever the reason, George's decision to marry Caroline plagued him personally and politically until her death in 1821.

Lord Malmesbury, the royal envoy sent to bring Caroline to England, had great reservations. He described Caroline as flighty, impulsive, and lacking in judgment, governing powers, or tact.<sup>42</sup> On their journey to England, Malmesbury attempted to educate Caroline in her duties as the Prince of Wales's wife. He lectured her on cleanliness and her treatment of George. She should be above "reproaches and sourness . . . [when] any symptoms of a goût in the Prince [appear]," instead, she should favor the Prince with "softness, endearments, and caresses," and "domesticate him—give him a relish for all the private and home virtues; that he would then be happier than ever; that the nation expected this at her hands."<sup>43</sup> Despite his good intentions, Caroline never

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<sup>38</sup> Smith, *George IV*, 18, 34.

<sup>39</sup> David, *Prince of Pleasure*, ch. 3; Parissien, *George IV*, ch. 3; Smith, *George IV*, ch. 4.

<sup>40</sup> As quoted in Parissien, *George IV*, 74.

<sup>41</sup> Aspinall, *CGPW*, vol. iii, 3.

<sup>42</sup> Third Earl of Malmesbury, ed., *Diaries and Correspondence of James Harris, First Early of Malmesbury* (London: R. Bentley, 1844) Vol. iii, 195-197.

<sup>43</sup> Malmesbury, *Diaries*, iii, 193, 203.

embraced her new situation in life as a highly moral English monarch dedicated to her husband.

The Prince of Wales never tried to reform his ways in preparation for his true marriage. As Caroline's lady-in-waiting, he selected Lady Jersey and sent her to greet the Princess, rather than attending himself.<sup>44</sup> At their first meeting, George's behavior sealed the fate of the disastrous union. Lord Malmesbury observed:

[Caroline] very properly, in consequence of my saying to her it was the right mode of proceeding, attempted to kneel to him. He raised her (gracefully enough), and embraced her, said barely one word, turned round, retired to a distant part of the apartment, and calling me to him, said, 'Harris, I am not well; pray get me a glass of brandy' . . . Upon which he, much out of humour, said, with an oath, 'No; I will go directly to the Queen,' and away he went.<sup>45</sup>

The Prince's rebuff undid Malmesbury's rudimentary training of the Princess. In defense, Caroline resumed her manners from Brunswick, compounding George's distaste for his soon-to-be bride.

The couple married on 8 April 1795. George arrived intoxicated and hiccupped through his vows. That evening, Caroline claimed he passed out in the fireplace. But, shortly thereafter, Caroline conceived the only child the two would have, and George's mistreatment started in earnest. Among other things, he showed her rudeness, disdain, and calculated insults, such as taking away her jewelry and giving it to Lady Jersey.<sup>46</sup> Shortly after Princess Charlotte's birth on 7 January 1796, George asked his father to approve a separation. The King refused because a separation would further the public's negative opinion of the Prince. Thus, the battle between the royal couple began, raging until Caroline's death in 1821.

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<sup>44</sup> Parissien, *George IV*, 74-76; Smith, *George IV*, 71-73.

<sup>45</sup> Malmesbury, *Diaries*, iii, 217.

<sup>46</sup> Parissien, *George IV*, 75.

Essentially, the pair did not suit. George hated Caroline, found her lack of hygiene disgusting, and loathed her non-English behavior. Caroline detested George for his infidelity, his cruel treatment, and his tight control over her social life. Shortly after their marriage, newspapers circulated rumors about George's mistreatment of his wife and their possible separation. This witnessed the beginning of popular support for Caroline as a woman of "suffering virtue."<sup>47</sup> After George III denied the request for a formal separation, the couple decided informally to separate. Caroline left London to reside with her own court at Blackheath. She visited Charlotte more than George did and won favorites easily with her affability and friendly manners.<sup>48</sup>

The Princess's lax behavior at Blackheath enabled the Prince to make a more concerted effort to get rid of her. Lord and Lady Douglas, well-known social climbers, claimed Caroline gave birth to an illegitimate son in 1802. King George III had no choice but to examine the allegations, as this child would upset the succession. The "Delicate Investigation," taken up in 1805, consisted of a secret committee that investigated the claims. Finding that William Austin, the child in question, was given to Caroline by a laboring woman, the committee dismissed all charges. George's hope for a divorce died. Instead, he watched Caroline gain more public support while losing credibility because he did not protect his wife. An anonymous letter chastised George:

A husband is the most natural protector of his wife, he is bound by those laws you are hereafter to administer, to support and to answer for her: if the situation of a wife did, under any circumstances, more imperiously call upon a husband for protection, than that of Her Royal Highness does upon you, I mistake: and by whatever unhappy differences you have been separated, I do assert, that in regard to your own honour as a husband, you should have personally, openly, and assiduously inquired into the nature of

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<sup>47</sup> *The Times*, 24 May 1796.

<sup>48</sup> Fraser, *Unruly Queen*, 79-91; Holme, *Caroline*, ch. 6; Parissien, *George IV*, 77-82; Plowden, *Caroline and Charlotte*, ch. 2; Smith, *George IV*, 74-79.

the accusation against your wife, the cause of it, the truth, probability, or falsehood of it; upon all these points I submit, you ought to have satisfied your own mind first, then have taken your measures as guilt, or malice, or innocence appeared.<sup>49</sup>

Although George lost this battle, Caroline's character suffered as well. Most people chose to see her as victorious, but the hint of her potential adultery haunted Caroline for the rest of her life.<sup>50</sup>

Furthermore, the Delicate Investigation convinced George to restrict Caroline's access to their daughter. Charlotte became a weapon of war between them.<sup>51</sup> Their bitterness soon infected the young Princess. While George controlled Charlotte, he alienated her by denying her any social activities, slighting her in front of the family, and ignoring her. Conversely, Caroline tried to keep Charlotte's affection by aiding her plans to defy George. Caroline also used her daughter as a tool to regain public sympathy. The Delicate Investigation, in conjunction with Caroline's continued erratic behavior, eroded the Princess's social prestige, which she hoped to salvage by playing the grieving mother deprived of her maternal rights.<sup>52</sup> Despite Caroline's obvious use of her, Charlotte remained attached to her mother, though not as closely as the press portrayed. George's renewal of the Delicate Investigation in 1814 forced Caroline to make a tough decision; she opted to leave Britain and persecution. Mother and daughter unknowingly parted for the last time in 1814.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Anonymous, *A Plain Letter to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, Upon his Plain Duties to Himself, His Wife, His Child, and to the Nation, as Such Duties Arise out of the Late Investigation of the Conduct of the Princess of Wales* (London: H. Blanford, 1806), 28-9.

<sup>50</sup> For more detailed information on the Delicate Investigation, refer to these sources: Fraser, *Unruly Queen*, ch. 6-8; Holme, *Caroline*, ch. 8-10; Parissien, *George IV*, ch. 10; Plowden, *Caroline and Charlotte*, ch. 3; Smith, *George IV*, 113-116.

<sup>51</sup> Plowden, 77.

<sup>52</sup> Plowden, *Caroline and Charlotte*, 105.

<sup>53</sup> Fraser, *Unruly Queen*, 250.

### III.

Caroline's return to claim her crown triggered massive production of print media. This analysis of the Caroline affair examines three types of sources: satirical pamphlets, caricatures, and newspapers. Loyalists and Carolinites used such documents as a vehicle for debate. It is through this literature that a discussion of middle-class values and gender expectations arose. The content within the media drives the arguments for chapters 2 and 3, therefore, it is important to determine readership and censorship policies for each type of document.

Both pamphlets and newspapers fell under the *Blasphemous and Seditious Libels Act* or *Criminal Libel Act*, a part of the government's repressive *Six Acts*, following the Peterloo Massacre. The act strengthened existing laws regarding libel, providing harsher sentences for authors of seditious or libelous writings.<sup>54</sup> Even with this act, the government struggled to stem the flow of anti-king literature. According to Anna Clark, the affair "stimulated an expansion of the press and completely swamped the government's efforts at censorship and control."<sup>55</sup> John Stevenson argues that the government could not prosecute authors of pamphlets and newspapers "for fear that they might only inflame and publicize the Queen's cause."<sup>56</sup> Although the proliferation of writings made the act difficult to enforce, it did curtail the use of outright obscenity.

A second law from the *Six Acts*, the *Newspaper and Stamp Duties Act*, controlled readership of such material by increasing taxes on printed material. With this legislation, the government insured that the middle class and aristocracy became the prime audience

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<sup>54</sup> Tamara L. Hunt, *Defining John Bull: Political Caricature and National Identity in Late Georgian England* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 222-225.

<sup>55</sup> Clark, *Scandal*, 189.

<sup>56</sup> John Stevenson, "The Queen Caroline Affair," in *London in the Age of Reform*, ed. John Stevenson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1977), 129.

for such works, effectively minimizing working-class radical agitation. Yet, it was the bourgeoisie who used newspapers to mobilize the population. The overwhelming involvement of the middle class in the Caroline affair made newspapers a valuable medium. In this respect, the stamp act failed to prevent agitation against the government.

Neither the *Six Acts* nor any other legislation governed caricatures, allowing artists the freedom to use images that writers would never dare to use.<sup>57</sup> The golden age of graphic satire lasted from 1770 until 1830, peaking with the Caroline affair in 1820.<sup>58</sup> In particular, the 1780s to the 1820s witnessed a flourishing market for caricatures that exhibited far less inhibition than previous eras. Moreover, publishers produced prints for profit.<sup>59</sup> Thus, engravers employed images that would sell, and sex sells.

As a good consumed by the bourgeoisie and elites, caricatures often focused on politics, scandal, gossip, and sexual relations.<sup>60</sup> The Queen Caroline affair generated approximately 440 prints that highlighted social and political issues involved with the trial.<sup>61</sup> These illustrations reflected popular opinion, communicating complicated messages through simple images.<sup>62</sup> In order for the public to understand a caricature's message, artists needed to use familiar symbols. Tamara L. Hunt argues that the use of older imagery showed that "traditional forms of popular entertainment and public symbolism were adopted into late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century caricature," thus making satirical prints versatile.<sup>63</sup> For instance, the horns of a cuckold—a symbol of charivari, or public shaming—represented a man whose wife had committed adultery.

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<sup>57</sup> Vic Gatrell, *City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-Century London* (New York: Walker & Company, 2007), 9-11; Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 222-225.

<sup>58</sup> Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, 9; Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 294.

<sup>59</sup> Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 2.

<sup>60</sup> Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, 10.

<sup>61</sup> Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, 517.

<sup>62</sup> Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 292, 294.

<sup>63</sup> Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 4.

This image held resonance for generations, and maintained the same idea throughout the Caroline affair.<sup>64</sup> Ultimately, loyalists and Carolinites used caricatures as a weapon. Obscene and lurid prints of the King and Queen helped or hindered their case, while appealing to the public as a visual commentary of the affair.

Throughout the scandal, print and caricature complemented one another. With the exception of the scurrilous *John Bull*, newspapers remained moderate. Whether Queenite or loyalist, these papers avoided outright defamation or obscenity. Pro-queen papers, in particular, steered clear of openly degrading the King. The *Six Acts* made most editors cautious when talking about George. Pamphlet writers exercised less caution. Building upon existing themes in the newspapers, authors used satire to write more explicitly about the royals. These pamphlets openly addressed issues such as adultery, neglect, improper behavior, and injustice. Many pro-king pamphlets explicitly named Caroline as the subject of the work. Conversely, pro-queen publications, especially the more outspoken pamphlets, used veiled references when referring to George. The reason for this difference is simple: George controlled the government, thus, Caroline had no means of recourse, while he used the law to punish his detractors.

Although pamphlets criticized the royals more explicitly than newspapers, they still lacked outright smuttiness. In general, publications briefly commented upon the seedier aspects of the scandal, quickly moving to their arguments. Caricatures, however, dwelled on the obscene, exploiting ideas only hinted at in print. Queenite pictures juxtaposed images of Caroline as innocent and neglected with caricatures that illustrated George's debauchery. With caricatures, the Queen's supporters attacked the character of

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<sup>64</sup> Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 4; Tamara L. Hunt, "Morality and Monarchy in the Queen Caroline Affair," *Albion* 23 (1991): 699.

the King, a tactic that print could not use. Conversely, pro-king images highlighted Caroline's overwhelming sexuality by portraying her nudity, emphasizing her female anatomy—breasts, nipples, butt—, and using sexual symbolism, such as pears and goats. These pictures crudely characterized her affair with a lowborn Italian servant, undermining pro-queen imagery.

As a media source, caricatures had another quality that print sources lacked. The *Six Acts* virtually excluded working-class people from purchasing newspapers and pamphlets (although evidence does suggest that many working-class people did have access to some printed works). And caricatures were published with an eye towards profit, targeting the bourgeoisie and aristocracy. Yet, Tamara L. Hunt convincingly argues that working people had easy access to prints. Most print shops displayed their caricatures in the shop windows as advertisement. As well, publicans often purchased prints to decorate their pubs.<sup>65</sup> Thus, caricatures crossed class lines in a way that print did not.

Chapter 2 addresses pro-queen literature. Both the King and the Queen received attention in Queenite propaganda. Embracing a comparative approach, pro-queen supporters juxtaposed George's behavior with Caroline's actions. Publications highlighted the King's immorality, infidelity, and bad character while they upheld an image of the Queen as pure, virtuous, and innocent. Within these characterizations, an expression of middle-class ideologies emerged, emphasizing proper gender roles. Thus, Carolinites intentionally used the scandal to debate and spread bourgeois ideas.

Chapter 3 covers the pro-king side of the debate. Largely a reaction to Queenite press, the loyalist campaign attacked positive representations of Caroline. Loyalists

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<sup>65</sup> Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 8-13.

employed the same language and ideas as the Carolinites, essentially advocating bourgeois ideals, to destroy the powerful image of Caroline as a virtuous woman mistreated by a cruel husband. Kingite sources avoided addressing George because of his abysmal character. As one of the most unpopular sovereigns, generating a positive representation of him proved impossible, thus necessitating an attack on the Queen. In the end, loyalists used rhetoric that affirmed bourgeois ideals, reinforcing the system against which they were struggling.

## Chapter Two:

### Queenite Arguments

**“Her Rights---her Innocence to guard,  
See CAROLINE our QUEEN,  
By personal dangers undebarr’d,  
Advances all serene.”<sup>1</sup>**

With George IV’s assumption of the throne, talk of the Queen’s impending arrival stirred as early as February, gaining strength in April. The removal of Caroline’s name from the Liturgy and the unwillingness of foreign courts to recognize her new title prodded her to return and reclaim her rightful position. Several months later, she arrived at St. Omer’s where she met her Attorney-General, Henry Brougham, and Lord Hutchinson, the King’s representative. Both Brougham and Hutchinson hoped to persuade Caroline to accept an increase in her annuity, and remain abroad. However, the haphazard manner of the negotiations, the insults she received from foreign courts, the removal of her name from the Liturgy, and the requirement that she use any title but Queen made Caroline’s decision easy—she left posthaste for the shores of Dover.<sup>2</sup>

News of the Queen’s imminent arrival and details of the “bribe” she was offered at St. Omer’s gave rise to massive displays of public support. Sympathetic newspapers printed these proceedings, generating support for the Queen. Her landing on the shores of Dover, according to the *Times*, rivaled those of William the Conqueror and William III in the sheer amount of popular sensation. Allying itself with the Queen, the newspaper

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<sup>1</sup> Lewis Marks, *The Queen of Trumps; or, The Cabinet in a Consternation: An Heroic Poem, Founded on the Queen’s Celebrated Letter* (London: J.L. Marks, 1820), 6.

<sup>2</sup> Fraser, *Unruly Queen*, Ch. 15, especially pages 357-374.

favorably described Caroline: “But this woman comes arrayed only in native courage, and (may we not add?) conscious innocence; and presents her bosom, aye, offers her neck, to those who threatened to sever her head from it, if ever she dared to come within their reach.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, an image an innocent Caroline immediately became entrenched in pro-queen propaganda, a plan initiated by her advisors and readily executed by bourgeois men and women.

At this time, the bourgeoisie emerged as a strong force in political and social realms. In its attempt to make a place for itself, the middle class established ideologies and practices that distinguished it from both the upper and lower orders. Bourgeois men and women embraced Evangelical beliefs in morality, virtue, piety, and a new style of gender relations, separate spheres. Within this idealized system, men participated in the public world of business and politics, and women inhabited the private, domestic sphere.<sup>4</sup>

A combination of forces, such as changes in production, new ideas about manners, morals, and family life, and a redefinition of gender roles, forced women into the domestic sphere, stripping them of most of their influence. Yet, women held some authority within the home. Middle-class women controlled the day-to-day running of the household and the servants. They often became the chief purchasers of goods, therefore handling much of the family income. Other new ideas strengthened women’s position within the family. Evangelicals believed that women could help the battle against sin because they possessed better qualities such as simplicity, purity, piety, and virtue. With these characteristics, women could create a safe “haven” from the outside world, providing security for their children and a place for their husband to regenerate.

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<sup>3</sup> *Times*, 7 June 1820.

<sup>4</sup> Hall, *White, Male and Middle-Class*, 75-77, 83-85.

Moreover, women's stronger sense of morality meant they could maintain their husband's morals, which would then shine forth in the public sphere, leading to moral regeneration at a national level.<sup>5</sup>

Changing views about children also influenced women's role within the family. People no longer believed children were "little adults." Rather, children needed a good home and a proper education and upbringing to make them good citizens later in life. Middle-class women focused on the special role they held as mothers. Their domestic role and feminine virtues made them the perfect choice for nurturer and educator. Eschewing wet-nursing and governesses, bourgeois women reared and taught their own children.<sup>6</sup> These new beliefs and practices gained strength during the Regency period, influencing the debate over George IV's attempt to divorce Caroline.

Men's roles focused on involvement in independent politics and the business market. With increased wealth from industrialization, bourgeois men sought an escape from the aristocracy's patronage. Through the belief of equality between property-owning men and the practice of virtue, middle-class men aimed to rise above the nobility and exercise true political power. Moreover, the growing participation of bourgeois men in the public sphere played a vital role in establishing a social and political identity. Finally, as the family's "breadwinner," middle-class men provided the ideal domestic world for his dependent wife and children—a world where he retired at the end of the day to bask in domestic bliss.<sup>7</sup>

To establish itself politically and socially, the middle class needed to express its beliefs to a wider audience. Because of the bourgeoisie's growing emphasis on morality

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<sup>5</sup> Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class*, 75-90, 110-112.

<sup>6</sup> Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class*, 89-80; Smith, *Changing Lives*, 181-192.

<sup>7</sup> Hall, *White, Male and Middle-Class*, 112, 156-158.

and domesticity, the Caroline affair provided the perfect occasion for the middle class to express and affirm its values on a national scale. In general, middle class individuals favored the Queen because they strongly disliked the King. His licentious, luxurious, and immoral behavior went against their beliefs in morality and virtue. Middle-class men saw the Queen as the ultimate symbol of dependent womanhood in need of their protection, which George IV failed to provide. Middle-class women rallied to Caroline's side, too. They supported the Queen because they believed that their position as wives would become more precarious if the divorce succeeded.<sup>8</sup> Ultimately, bourgeois beliefs shaped pro-queen arguments into a widespread expression of middle-class ideologies.

Unlike pro-king propaganda, which attacked Caroline's behavior while remaining silent about George's actions, pro-queen rhetoric juxtaposed the King's deeds against those of the Queen's, insuring Caroline's supremacy. From past expressions of encouragement, Carolinites knew that popular support lay with the Queen and could be used to her advantage. Most newspapers, satires, and caricatures depicted Caroline favorably. In large part, the language and images employed by the publishers focused on the expected gender roles of the King and Queen, highlighting George's transgressions. Propaganda used middle-class gender ideas to define both men's and women's roles, using the royal couple as the most important example. By applying middle-class principles to this debate, the largely bourgeois body of supporters challenged the pervasive immorality and sexual double standard of the aristocracy. Thus, Caroline's defenders spread their own values about gender roles in the debate over the Queen's behavior.

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<sup>8</sup> Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 151, 152.

**“How joy’d she in coming—  
 how smiling the bower;  
 How sparkling their nuptials—  
 how welcome her dower.  
 Ah! short were her pleasures—full soon came her  
 cares—  
 Her husbandless bride-bed was wash’d with her  
 tears.”<sup>9</sup>**

With pro-queen literature, the bourgeoisie attacked the King, defended the Queen, and created a platform for the expression of their beliefs about marriage, domesticity, and gender roles. With the middle-class emphasis on married life, the failed marriage between George and Caroline provided an opportunity for Queenites to debate their beliefs while actively supporting Caroline. Carolinite propaganda highlighted George’s bad character, his adultery, and his neglect and mistreatment of his wife to illustrate his failure as a husband and man. Moreover, pro-queen supporters created an image of the Queen as innocent and pure, garnering sympathy for a wronged woman. Held up to such a powerful image, the middle class found George wanting. Finally, Queenites compared George and his father to reveal George IV’s unfitness as a monarch. Overall, bourgeois gender ideals drove Queenites to attack George’s behavior as a husband.

Britons rarely supported George. His wild days as the Prince of Wales included drinking, womanizing, and gambling in a period where the general populace struggled to survive. Many held out hope that his marriage would settle him.<sup>10</sup> But George disappointed those hopes. Forced into marriage with an unsuitable woman to pay off his debts, the Prince of Wales did not alter his lifestyle or uphold his marriage vows. Rather,

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<sup>9</sup> William Hone and George Cruikshank, *The Queen’s Matrimonial Ladder, A National Toy, with Fourteen Step Scenes; and Illustrations in Verse, with Eighteen Other Cuts* (London: University of London, Goldsmiths’-Kress Library, 1820), 4.

<sup>10</sup> Anonymous, *The R---l FOWLS; or The Old Black Cock’s Attempt to Crow Over His Illustrious Mate, a Poem* (London: University of London, Goldsmiths’-Kress Library, 1820), 7.

he kept his mistresses and neglected his wife, expecting her to act with propriety, thus embodying the sexual double standard. In 1820, a foundation for bourgeois defense of the Queen already existed because of previous popular support of the Princess along with rampant anti-George literature.<sup>11</sup> George's hypocrisy in pursuing a divorce because of adultery enraged the middle class. Building upon existing hostility, the bourgeoisie overlooked Caroline's transgressions and further vilified the King "because they couldn't stomach the idea that George was the injured party."<sup>12</sup>

Regency England witnessed a shift in expectations of the monarch. John Bull's *Ode to George the Fourth and Caroline his wife* summarized the new King's duties:

A *Father* to the *nation* prove,  
A *Husband* to thy *Queen*,  
And safely in thy people's Love,  
Reign tranquil and serene.<sup>13</sup>

As Davidoff and Hall argue, "the domestic had been imprinted on the monarchical" and now, "public opinion had decreed that the royal family must indeed be a family; kings and queens must be fathers and mothers in their own home if they were to be fathers and mothers to the people."<sup>14</sup> George's separation from Caroline, his abandonment of Charlotte, and his continued profligacy made him the bourgeoisie's enemy. By upholding Caroline as a role model for ideal womanhood, the middle class bolstered its own ideas while rejecting the lifestyle of the aristocracy and the King.<sup>15</sup>

The Queen's cause became a platform for the expression of bourgeois beliefs.

William Hone's *The Political Showman at Home* called the King the "most stupid" man

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<sup>11</sup> Fraser, *Unruly Queen*, 42-44, 65-116, 119; Holme, *Caroline*, ch. 2-4; Parissien, *George IV*, 74, 75-80, 88, 216, 219-224; Smith, *George IV*, 73-78, 173, 180.

<sup>12</sup> Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 271.

<sup>13</sup> John Bull, *An Ode to George the Fourth and Caroline his wife* in Davidoff and Hall's *Family Fortunes: Revised Edition* (London: Routledge, 2002), 152.

<sup>14</sup> Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 152, 155.

<sup>15</sup> Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 152.

with a “voracious appetite” who “feigns the appearance of being upright.”<sup>16</sup> *A Groan from the Throne* presented George as a drunken, malicious, and wicked tyrant intent on ruining Caroline’s happiness.<sup>17</sup> The anonymous author of *The R---l FOWLS* called him proud and extravagant, claiming “his vanity was fed/In every thing he did and said;/He was the life and soul of whim,/And other Cocks were fools to him.”<sup>18</sup>

Above all, George lacked virtue:

Your promises, pledges, every thing,  
Have melted into air;  
Who scans the Cabinet of the K—g,  
Has reason to despair.  
Your Court has now become a scene,  
Where Bacchanalians roar,  
But modesty bids me drop the screen,  
Which Virtue can’t explore.  
Sobriety, Honour, Merit, Truth,  
Are driven far away;  
Deprav’d old age leads vicious youth  
Through life’s licentious day.<sup>19</sup>

Without virtue, the King’s licentiousness would destroy public morals. Thus, George’s shortcomings enabled Queenites to discredit his authority and his claims against Caroline. Moreover, commentary on his failings as a man called attention to his failings as a husband, intimately intertwining the two roles.

In contrast, characterizations of Caroline portrayed a proper woman and dutiful wife. *The Queen of Trumps* depicted the Princess as honorable and honest while Sir Francis Burdett called her a woman of grace and “an example and ornament of the social

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<sup>16</sup> William Hone, *The Political Showman at Home! Exhibiting His Cabinet of Curiosities and Creatures—All Alive!* (London: University of London, Goldsmiths’-Kress Library, 1821), 20-21.

<sup>17</sup> George Cruikshank, *A Groan from the Throne* (London: University of London, Goldsmiths’-Kress Library, 1820), 14.

<sup>18</sup> Anonymous, *R---l FOWLS*, 5-6, 10.

<sup>19</sup> Marks, *Queen of Trumps*, 12.

virtues.”<sup>20</sup> Other pro-queen pamphlets called attention to her virtuous, chaste, and pure character.<sup>21</sup> *A Groan from the Throne* claimed that Caroline’s graces outshone those of Queen Charlotte and her daughters, all known for their decorum.<sup>22</sup> As well, Caroline remained virtuous in the face of her husband’s neglect and infidelity.<sup>23</sup> Although she wanted to maintain her marriage, she accepted the separation from George because her duty as wife required that she obey her husband.<sup>24</sup> By highlighting George’s unmanly character and the Queen’s embodiment of womanliness, Carolinites used middle-class ideals of womanhood to encourage bourgeois support.

As their strongest argument for his unfitness as a husband, Queenite literature focused on the King’s continued adultery. George’s very public affairs provided pro-queen publishers with a vast supply of evidence to show he treated his wife unfairly.<sup>25</sup> *A Groan from the Throne* argued that “a solitary month had scarcely fled” when George left Caroline’s bed “for meretricious dames, with wanton charms,/He left his wife—to revel in their arms.”<sup>26</sup> The author of the *R---l FOWLS* equated his group of mistresses with a “seraglio,” drawing upon popular ideas that equated the harem with sexual

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<sup>20</sup> Marks, *The Queen of Trumps*, 5; Thomas Dolby, *The Green Bag!: Sir Francis Burdett’s Celebrated Green Bag Speech, Delivered in the House of Commons, on Thursday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1820, in the Debate on the Charges Against, and Treatment of, Her Majesty Queen Caroline* (London: University of London, Goldsmiths’-Kress Library, 1820), 745.

<sup>21</sup> William Hone, *The Queen that Jack Found, with Thirteen Cuts* (London: University of London, Goldsmiths’-Kress Library, 1820), 1, 17; Anonymous, *Letter from the Queen to the King* (London: University of London, Goldsmiths’-Kress Library, 1820), 1; Cruikshank, *Groan*, 12.

<sup>22</sup> Cruikshank, *Groan*, 9.

<sup>23</sup> William Benbow, *Fair Play, or, Who are the Adulterers, Slanderers and Demoralizers?: Being an Answer to the Editor of “The News,” on His Enquiry, “How many of the Queen’s Judges have been convicted of Adultery?”: With Curious Additions, and an Address to the Female Inhabitants of such Parishes, and Friends of those Public Bodies, who have not yet Addressed Her Majesty the Queen* (London: University of London, Goldsmiths’-Kress Library, 1820), iv.

<sup>24</sup> Anonymous, *Letter from the Queen to the King*, 2.

<sup>25</sup> Parissien, *George IV*, 38, 57-63, 70-72, 80-83, 85-93.

<sup>26</sup> Cruikshank, *Groan*, 10.

abandonment.<sup>27</sup> This connection showed the Prince's uncontrollable sexuality, claiming he needed multiple women to sate his needs. Moreover, these characterizations highlighted his failure to uphold his marriage vows, thus showing him incapable of virtue.<sup>28</sup> Finally, John Macrainbow's *A Volley at the Peers* asserted that adulterers "are ever the *worst* and most rigid husbands and severely strict fathers."<sup>29</sup> George's adultery exemplified his inability to be an honorable and virtuous husband. Latching onto his public affairs, Queenites argued that his lack of husbandly virtue caused a faithful and innocent wife to suffer unjustly.

While the mention of George's adultery garnered sympathy for a wronged wife, it, more importantly, showed that George had no legal standing on which to accuse Caroline. This aspect of the debate particularly drew the bourgeoisie's ire. The King's hypocrisy, more than the Queen's character, generated such a steadfast defense. In *Dropt Clauses out of the Bill, against the Queen*, Hone facetiously commented upon George's supposed virtue:

AND WHEREAS your Majesty . . . from the time of your Majesty's said royal marriage and separation, until the present time, *hath not commenced or carried on any unbecoming or degrading intimacy with any married or unmarried female or females*, or any other female or females of any rank or description, or in any situation in life whatsoever.<sup>30</sup>

In this work, Hone argued that the King had no right to attempt to divorce Caroline based on adultery. In fact, George's well-known infidelity led his ministers to choose a Bill of

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<sup>27</sup> Anonymous, *R--l FOWLS*, 5; Lisa Z. Sigel, *Governing Pleasures: Pornography and Social Change in England, 1815-1914* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 42.

<sup>28</sup> Cruikshank, *Groan*, 25.

<sup>29</sup> John Macrainbow, *A Volley at the Peers, Both Spiritual and Temporal, or a Veto Upon the Votes of Some of Them: Facts Respecting Baron Bergami: With Anecdotes of a Sicilian Count Not One Hundred Miles from Hanover Square: A Hit at The Red House, (Not the Eel-Pie House) But A Shop in Pall Mall, where Cabinet Work was done, and Jobs Executed at the Shortest Notice, For Ready Money Only* (London: University of London, Goldsmiths'-Kress Library, 1820), 7.

<sup>30</sup> William Hone, "Dropt Clauses out of the Bill, against the Queen," in William Hone's *Facetiae and Miscellanies* (London: University of London, Goldsmiths'-Kress Library, 1827), 3-5.

Pains and Penalties because his case would never stand up in an ecclesiastical court.<sup>31</sup>

George's adultery, then, held political as well as social connotations. The Queen's defenders used the dual meaning to damage the King's position as a political figure—the Bill is unfair and unjust in light of his own transgressions—and to highlight his failings as a husband—he had no honor because he repeatedly broke his marriage vows. In this regard, Caroline's behavior was moot. The bourgeoisie's distaste for George drove their arguments, supporting their defense of the Queen.

The Queen's supporters saw the King's adultery as an easy target for social and political arguments. More vividly than pamphlets, caricatures used George's promiscuity to illustrate his failings as a husband and ruler. Prints emphasized his indiscretions by inappropriately situating the King with his paramours. *Sultan Sham and His Seven Wives* (Figure 2.1) encapsulated George's affairs in one print. Wearing the clothes of a sultan, a reference to the East known for its harems, George strolls past his harem of women with his sword—positioned between his legs—and his limp hat serving as phallic symbols. George's servant, wearing cuckold's horns, remains behind the King to carry his robe. The servant, recognized as Lord ----, is the husband of one of the women. All seven women wear Eastern clothing with their breasts exposed. The King says, "Variety is charming. Constance is not for me, so Ladies pray take warning."<sup>32</sup> The artist's argument supported Queenite claims: George lacked husbandly virtue and control over his sexuality.

In *Sultan Sham*, the artist focused on the King's rampant infidelity and uncontrollable sexuality. Other prints, however, incorporated George's adultery with

<sup>31</sup> Fraser, *Unruly Queen*, 399-400; Smith, *George IV*, 175-178.

<sup>32</sup> Lewis Marks, *Sultan Sham and His Seven Wives* as reproduced in Kenneth Baker's *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 52-53.

commentary on his failure to rule with authority. William Benbow's *A Leap Year Drawing Room, or, the Pleasures of Petticoat Government?* (Figure 2.2) made a social and political argument. In the print, George sits on the throne in a woman's dress, gloves, wig, and slippers. Women paying their respects to the new King surround him. Lady Hertford kisses his hand and Lady Conyngham holds a bag entitled "The Receiver General," waiting to receive the money given to a royal favorite. The presence of George's mistresses and the other women illustrated the King's insatiable sexual appetite. More importantly, the presence of the women indicated the special influence that they held over him as his lovers. George IV ruled not as his own master but as a man controlled by women.<sup>33</sup>

A second print, *K—G Cupid in the Corner – Playing Bopeep* (Figure 2.3), supported the claims made by Benbow's caricature. In this representation, George hides under the skirts of Lady Conyngham, his current mistress. She sits in a chair, breasts and nipples exposed, with her legs spread. A picture in the background shows the King and some men, all wearing cuckold's horns. George exclaims that he has hidden himself from the "Queenites" in the "paradise" of Lady Conyngham's skirts. Often referred to as Vice-Queen or Mrs. Queen because of her power over George, Lady Conyngham says "Heigh Ho for petticoat government."<sup>34</sup> The implication conveyed in both of these prints carried a serious stigma for the new King. A petticoat government meant that George lacked the necessary masculinity to rule. Essentially the caricatures emasculated him, proclaiming him an unfit ruler and man.

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<sup>33</sup> William Benbow, *A Leap Year Drawing Room, or, The Pleasures of Petticoat Government?* in Kenneth Baker's *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 185.

<sup>34</sup> William Elmes, *K—G Cupid in the Corner – Playing Bopeep* in Kenneth Baker's *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 51.

Figure 2.1 Lewis Marks, *Sultan Sham and His Seven Wives* (1820).

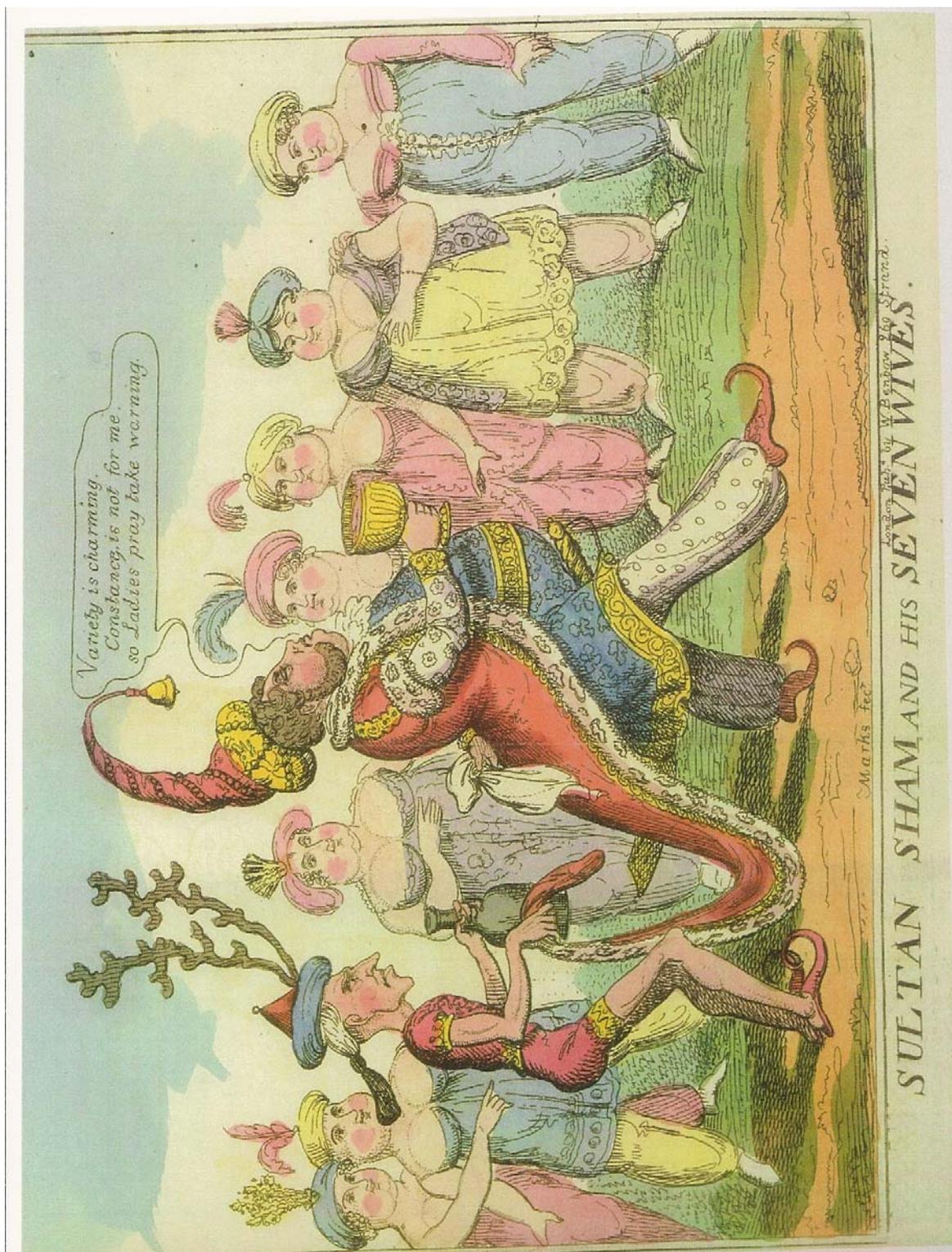
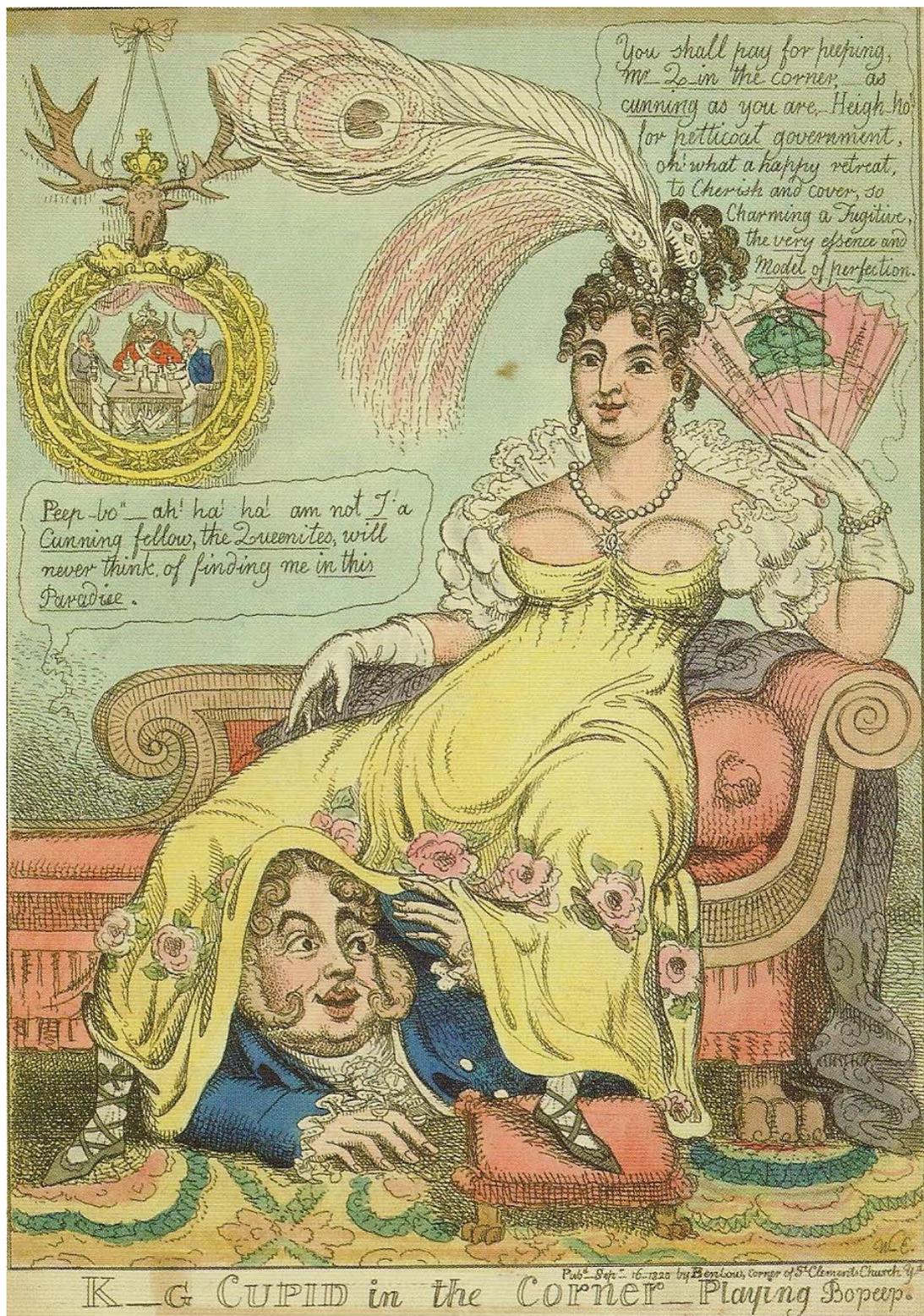


Figure 2.2 William Benbow, *A Leap Year Drawing Room, or, the Pleasures of Petticoat Government?* (June 1820).



Figure 2.3 William Elmes, *K—G Cupid in the Corner – Playing Bopeep* (1820).



The allegation that George allowed women to rule him strengthened the Carolinite position. In highlighting George's failure as a man and a husband, they called upon deeply held beliefs about proper gender hierarchy. While the aristocracy favored patriarchy and the middle-class believed in separate spheres, the general principle that men ruled over subordinate women held true despite class differences.<sup>35</sup> By highlighting the reversal of this hierarchy, the Queen's defenders seriously undercut the King's authority. Benbow's print, which depicted George dressed as a woman, showed that the King was not even a true man. Instead, he was a woman ruled by other women. As a monarch, this reversal questioned his right to rule a nation; as a husband, it questioned his ability to rule his wife.

Conversely, images of Caroline highlighted her innocence, purity, and virtue. The *Delicate Investigation* of 1806 inspired many prints that caricatured the Prince's poor treatment of his wife. The print *State Mysteries, a Vision of Pall Mall* (Figure 2.4) commented upon the *Investigation*. In the caricature, Caroline wears white—the color for purity—and is led by Truth, who shines a mirror in George's face. George sits, legs spread, with Lady Hertford's head in his groin, alluding to his desire for fellatio.<sup>36</sup> While this image circulated seven years prior to the scandal, its contents illustrated existing hostility towards George that pro-queen publishers exploited in 1820.

A drawing by George Cruikshank in Hone's *Matrimonial Ladder* under the heading **Exculpation** (Figure 2.5) similarly highlighted the Princess's innocence. The picture shows Caroline walking arm in arm with George III while Lord and Lady

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<sup>35</sup> Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 2.

<sup>36</sup> William, *State Mysteries, a Vision of Pall Mall* in Kenneth Baker's *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 48-49.

Douglas, her accusers in the Delicate Investigation, flee towards “The Prince’s Court” in a panic. Hone’s verses solidified Caroline’s purity: “She proved to his father,/his son had ill used her:--/Her conduct examin’d, and sifted, shone bright.”<sup>37</sup> Even under attack, the Princess’s virtue remained true.

To counter charges that the Queen committed adultery, images of Caroline during the Parliamentary trial focused on her innocence and purity. These prints showed her unblemished character in light of George’s philandering. Lewis Marks’s *How to get un-married – ay, there’s the rub!* (Figure 2.6) depicted Caroline and George bound by the marriage bond, represented as a sheet titled “Matrimonial Knot.” On Caroline’s side, Brougham and Justice support her resistance to George and his allies, attempting to break the marriage. Justice says to the Queen:

Your exemplary conduct is worthy imitation, as during your husband’s ill treatment every effort you exerted to reclaim him, which failing, the world must approve your seeking refuge in the wholesome and protecting laws of your country—I will be your guide.<sup>38</sup>

According to this print, George would not succeed because Caroline had Justice and her good behavior to recommend her to the people.

All three of these prints stressed Caroline’s innocence and proper behavior. To gain and maintain support for Caroline, pro-queen propaganda emphasized the Queen’s virtue in contrast to the King’s licentious ways. Bourgeois men and women needed someone worthy of defense, thus the importance placed on the Queen’s propriety. As well, Carolinite media sought to spread middle-class ideals of domesticity and gender relations. Attacks against George’s un-bourgeois actions—his bad character and

<sup>37</sup> Hone and Cruikshank, *Queen’s Matrimonial Ladder*, 6.

<sup>38</sup> Lewis Marks, *How to get un-married – ay, there’s the rub!* in E. A. Smith’s *A Queen on Trial: The Affair of Queen Caroline* (Dover, NH: Alan Sutton Publishing Limited, 1993), 26.



Figure 2.5 George Cruikshank, *Exculpation* (1820).

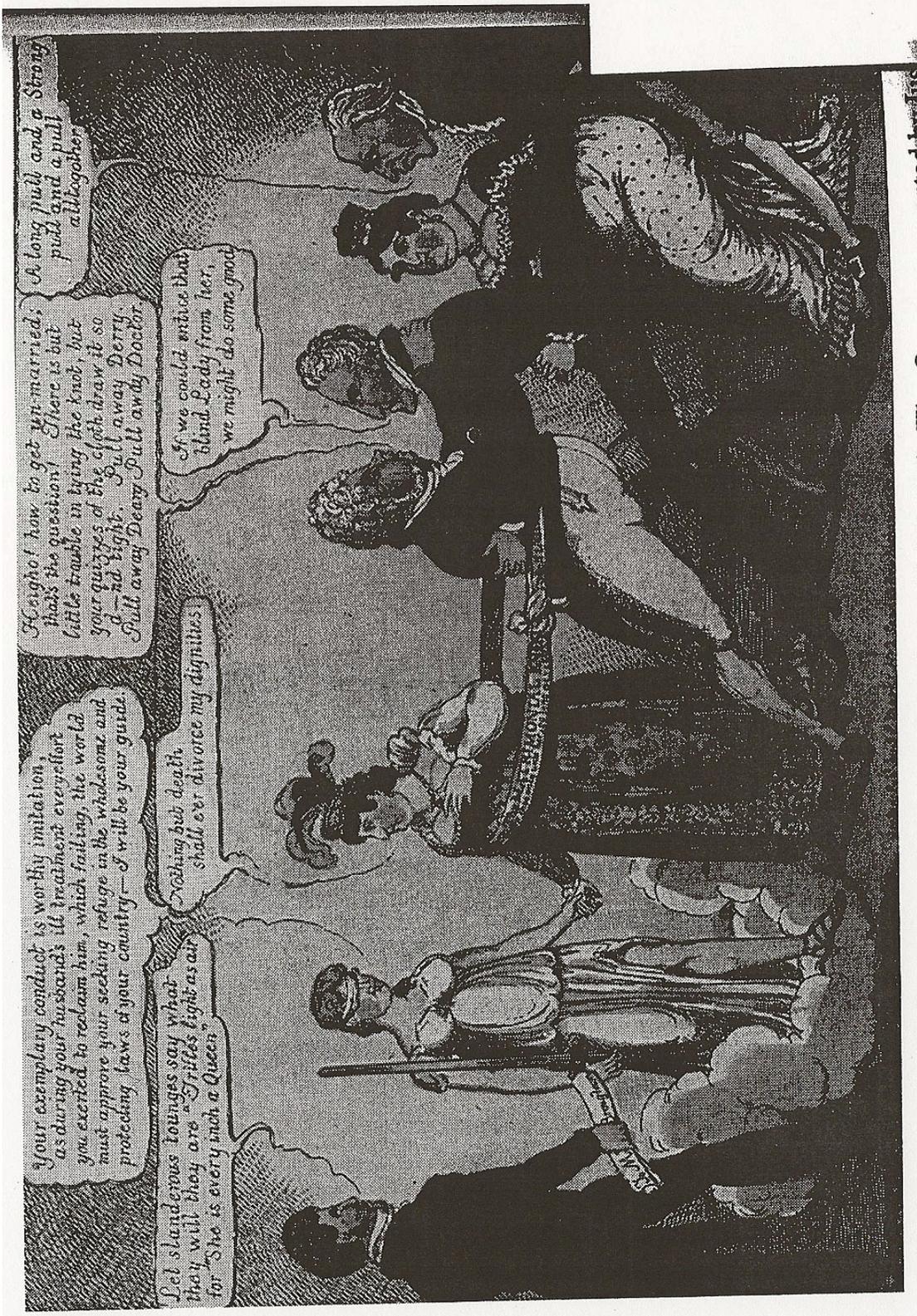


God, and your Majesty, protect mine innocence!

*King Henry VIII.*

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Figure 2.6 Lewis Marks, *How to get un-married – ay, there's the rub!* (July 1820).



adultery—juxtaposed with Caroline’s embodiment of middle-class womanhood—her innocence and virtue—created a simple method for defining bourgeois ideologies within the context of the Caroline debate.

Pro-queen literature also addressed Caroline’s neglect and mistreatment by her husband. In the realm of separate spheres, men and women worked together to create a domestic life. Men protected dependent women and children while women created an escape from the public world. Although patriarchy expressed ideas about women’s dependency as well, separate spheres provided some power to women, which patriarchy did not. Carolinites used the image of the unprotected woman because it provided them with a valid reason to defend a neglected woman driven from her rightful place—the home.

Satirists used the widespread knowledge of the royal couple’s early separation to lay the foundation for George’s other malicious actions. An immensely popular work by William Hone, *The Queen’s Matrimonial Ladder*, illustrated a poignant image of the abandoned and neglected woman in the section entitled **Alteration** (Figure 2.7).

Cruikshank’s drawing shows Caroline in one room lovingly nursing their daughter while George, in the other room, turns his back on the two, embracing a woman in each arm.<sup>39</sup> The concept could not be clearer: George turned his back on his husbandly duties, neglecting his wife and daughter. In *The R---l FOWLS*, the author argued the same point: “Shew’d not even cold respect,/But added insult to neglect;/Kept other Hens before her face,/And left her slighted roosting place.”<sup>40</sup> The King did not treat his wife as he should have. Instead, he deserted her for other women. Moreover, the separation, which

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<sup>39</sup> Hone and Cruikshank, *Matrimonial Ladder*, 4.

<sup>40</sup> Anonymous, *R---l FOWLS*, 13.

Caroline claimed George forced upon her, left her vulnerable and bereft of any happiness.<sup>41</sup> William Hone eloquently described how the separation influenced the Princess's life:

Long before she became a mother she found herself a widowed wife—she was obliged to occupy apartments distinct from those of his Royal Highness at Carlton House. Here, in a state of neglect and sorrow, she remained for some months the victim of broken hopes and blighted affection.<sup>42</sup>

Hone used imagery to induce sympathy for an abandoned woman, the most powerful image espoused by the Queen's proponents.

Caroline's gender established her as naturally weaker, therefore in need of male protection. Most pamphlets addressed the Queen's fragility to generate resentment at the position in which George purposefully placed her—a position without security. Representations of Caroline included a "timid female," "an innocent sheep," a "distressed woman," and a "naked and defenceless innocent."<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, writers accused George for the lack of protection in her life. The *Letter from the Queen to the King* called the King's actions against Caroline "unprovoked persecution," showing how he pursued his wife rather than acting as her "natural as well as legal guardian and protector."<sup>44</sup> And because he failed to meet his husbandly duties, Caroline suffered abuse and accusations that damaged her character and honor, accusations George

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<sup>41</sup> Cruikshank, *Groan*, 10-11; Benbow, *Letter from the Queen to the King*, 2.

<sup>42</sup> William Hone, *The King's Treatment of the Queen Shortly Stated to the People of England* (London: William Hone, 1820), 6.

<sup>43</sup> Macrainbow, *Volley at the Peers*, 15; William Hone, *The Form of Prayer, with Thanksgiving to Almighty God, To be used daily by all devout People throughout the Realm, for the Happy Deliverance of Her Majesty Queen Caroline From the late most Traitorous Conspiracy* (London: University of London: Goldsmith's-Kress Library, 1820), 5; Hone, *Matrimonial Ladder*, 13; Hone, *Queen that Jack Found*, 16; Hone, *King's Treatment of the Queen*, 29.

<sup>44</sup> Anonymous, *Letter from the Queen to the King*, 1, 3.

supported.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Benbow, *Fair Play*, iii; Anonymous, *Real Fowls*, 13.

Figure 2.7 George Cruikshank, *Alteration* (1820).



The most desolate woman in the world!

Thy daughter, *then*, could hear thee weep ;  
But now she sleeps the dreamless sleep.

*Phillips's Lament.*

*An Address to Britons* summarized Caroline's life after abandonment: once "undeservedly banished from her husband's arms," the Princess had to navigate in a foreign land full of vice "without the sympathising consolation of a husband to solace her wretchedness, and to soothe her sorrows, and without that natural protector's friendly arm to shield her from the brutal attacks of an execrable herd of grinning harlots."<sup>46</sup>

According to these publications, George failed in his duties to his wife: he forced an unwanted separation on her, kicked her out of the house, and left her without male protection.

Such treatment angered middle-class men and women because it violated bourgeois domestic ideals. According to Queenites, Caroline wanted nothing more than to be a good wife and mother.<sup>47</sup> The King purposely removed Caroline from her proper role and attacked her character repeatedly. Because he failed to fulfill his husbandly role as protector, his behavior demanded middle-class action. Furthermore, his mistreatment and neglect of Caroline led the Queenites to compare George IV with their role model, George III.

Pro-queen propagandists continued their assault on the new King by comparing him to his father. Embracing honesty, piety, dignity, and a love of a "proper domestic life," George III and Queen Charlotte became role models for the middle class.<sup>48</sup> In contrast, George IV personified everything that the serious bourgeoisie despised. His

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<sup>46</sup> J. Turner, *An Address to Britons, Upon the Triumph of the Queen's Innocence* (London: J. Turner, 1820), 13.

<sup>47</sup> Anonymous, *Letter from Queen to King*, 2, 4-5; Cruikshank, *Groan*, 11; Lewis Marks, *Sultan Sham and His Seven Wives: An Historical, Romantic, Heroic Poem, in Three Cantos* (Davis, CA: University of California, Shields Library, Kohler Collection Preservation Project, 1820), 17; Hone, *Matrimonial Ladder*, 7; Hone, *King's Treatment of the Queen*, 10; Turner, *An Address to Britons*, 16; Anonymous, *---l Fowls*, 13; Anonymous, *The Q-----'s Last Letter to the K---, Written a few Days before Her M-----'s Death* (London: University of London, Goldsmiths'-Kress Library, 1821), 45.

<sup>48</sup> Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 152.

affairs, his drinking, his gambling, and most importantly, his abhorrence for domestic ties made the King an instant enemy to the middle-class way of life. But the Queenite comparison moved beyond imagery that portrayed George IV as a bad man and husband. Pro-queen propaganda highlighted George's failings as a monarch. For the bourgeoisie who viewed George III and Queen Charlotte as the epitome of proper monarchs, George IV represented a drastic departure.

Linda Colley's works on the British nation show how George III gained popularity as an honest, uncomplicated, and genial farmer in the 1780s, after his illness limited his political activity. In contrast to his son, George III's reign represented a life of monarchical splendor combined with domestic responsibility.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, the old King exhibited morality in a corrupt and immoral world. These reasons generated significant middle-class enthusiasm and support for George III and his "unfashionable attributes." Colley convincingly argues, "By praising the King, a stolid bourgeois could affirm his own values and challenge those of society's elite."<sup>50</sup> George III provided a model on which the middle orders based their principles and then applied them to the monarchy and the populace. Thus, images and descriptions of George IV as an adulterer and neglecter of his familial duties supported bourgeois arguments that he lacked the necessary qualities to rule.

In pro-queen propaganda, George IV never lived up to the image of his father. George III loved his wife, lived domestically and frugally, adored his children, and led a religious life. Conversely, George IV hated his wife, ignored his only daughter, and had

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<sup>49</sup> Parissien, *George IV*, 303-315; Smith, *George IV*, 183-191.

<sup>50</sup> Linda Colley, "The Apotheosis of George III: Loyalty, Royalty and the British Nation, 1760-1820" *Past and Present* No. 102 (1984): 102, 104, 106, 108, 111, 121, 124-125; Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), Ch. 5 especially 207-210, 233.

numerous public affairs with married women. Carolinites drew upon these obvious differences to strengthen their argument that the current King lacked the necessary character to accuse his wife of adultery, let alone to sit on the throne. *The R---l FOWLS* believed that “had the Cock possess’d a part/Of what adorn’d his father’s heart;/Been half as constant to his mate, —/The trial that distracts the state” would never have taken place.<sup>51</sup> For this author, George’s lack of masculinity led to the current public scandal and disgrace of the throne, not Caroline’s supposed indiscretions.

*The Queen of Trumps* drew attention to the people’s love for their recently departed sovereign. Author Lewis Marks made an explicit comparison between the two rulers. In reference to George III, Marks wrote, “Your Father, in whose upright mind/Injustice knew no place;/Ah! had he liv’d—so good—so kind,/I’d never known disgrace.”<sup>52</sup> Marks described George IV as untrustworthy, characterized his court as immoral, and claimed that the King’s licentious ways corrupted honor and virtue.<sup>53</sup> William Hone eloquently summarized the differences: “Tho’ pleas’d to know he [George III] lives beyond the skies,/Well may we mourn when such a monarch dies!/Scarcely on earth so good a king now lives.”<sup>54</sup> In essence, George IV’s actions destroyed the positive and respected legacy of his father’s reign, in particular, the domestic nature that the bourgeoisie advocated.

Carolinite newspapers also focused upon George IV’s failings in light of George III’s domestic character. Newspapers referred to George III as “the virtuous King of England,” Caroline’s protector, “our late much-beloved and . . . most gracious

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<sup>51</sup> Anonymous, *R---l FOWLS*, 7.

<sup>52</sup> Marks, *Queen of Trumps*, 11.

<sup>53</sup> Marks, *Queen of Trumps*, 12.

<sup>54</sup> William Hone, *The Loyal Man in the Moon: With Thirteen Cuts* (London: University of London Goldsmith’s-Kress Library, 1820), 27.

Sovereign,” and “a virtuous Monarch so loved.”<sup>55</sup> One article applauded George III’s roles as husband and father: “our pious, venerable, and justly beloved Monarch, the faithful guardian of our civil and religious liberties, to whom the oppressed never appealed in vain, and whose brilliant example as a husband and a father can never be forgotten.”<sup>56</sup> Through such positive images of George III, the pro-queen group upheld a standard of behavior that made George IV look bad in every respect.

Thus, Queenite media compared the two sovereigns to emphasize George’s failings as a man, monarch, and husband. Next to descriptions of George III, characterizations of George IV revealed his shortcomings in stark detail. Although many papers avoided outright defamations, most publications made clear inferences to George’s notorious behavior. Caroline’s expulsion from his home garnered much commentary. The *Times* claimed that this drastic action stemmed from his Majesty’s uncontrollable inclinations, and that Caroline “had merely the misfortune not to please her husband.”<sup>57</sup> William Cobbett’s *Weekly Political Register* ranted against George for his “unmanly” behavior when he thrust Caroline from her home and her child.<sup>58</sup> And the *Black Dwarf* asked why the King “was not bound by all laws . . . to shelter and protect” Caroline?<sup>59</sup> These statements reflected the middle-class idea that men ought to take more interest in domestic affairs, revealing George IV’s failure of his manly duties.

In particular, articles called attention to the King’s unclean hands, highlighting the double standard of morality for men and women. While Caroline faced a trial set on

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<sup>55</sup> *Times*, 7 June 1820, 27 July 1820, 21 September 1820, 7 November 1820; *The Observer*, 6 August 1820; *Morning Chronicle*, 7 June 1820; *Weekly Political Register*, 8 July 1820.

<sup>56</sup> *Times*, 13 October 1820.

<sup>57</sup> *Times*, 15 August 1820.

<sup>58</sup> *Weekly Political Register*, 19 August 1820.

<sup>59</sup> *Black Dwarf*, 19 August 1820.

degrading her position and destroying her marriage because of supposed adultery, George, a renowned adulterer, remained free to continue his dalliances and maintain his throne. This idea deeply offended the bourgeoisie's beliefs about the morality and virtue of men and women. The *Weekly Political Register* emphasized the injustice of the Bill in light of George's adultery. This proceeding denied the Queen "the possibility of the sort of defence, to which she would be entitled in the courts of justice," namely producing evidence that showed "that the husband was the *first breaker of the marriage vow*."<sup>60</sup> The *Times* believed that "If the King is to be allowed the benefit of moral considerations against the Queen; so, beyond all question, ought the Queen to be allowed them, when placed by the King's own will and pleasure in the light of a defendant towards her husband."<sup>61</sup> In light of his myriad transgressions, George's attempt to ruin his wife by means of an unjust proceeding generated considerable uproar from the people. These examples highlighted the growing distaste of the sexual double standard. Carolinites wanted the Queen to have the same opportunities to defend herself against her husband, refusing to let George get away with persecuting Caroline for a crime he committed repeatedly.

George's hypocrisy in pursuing a divorce for adultery embodied the double standard that the Queen's supporters abhorred. Furthermore, it crystallized the King's image as a bad man, husband, and monarch. Using bourgeois ideals to build upon popular ideas of George's poor behavior, pro-queen literature upheld an ideal vision of marriage and gender roles. Through George's adultery and mistreatment of Caroline, he failed to fulfill his duties as husband. Alternately, Caroline's innocence and purity in the

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<sup>60</sup> *Weekly Political Register*, 19 August 1820.

<sup>61</sup> *Times*, 17 August 1820.

face of such oppression fulfilled her womanly role. By creating and disseminating such images, the middle class used the debate to express its ideas on marriage and domesticity. George failed where Caroline excelled.

**“The people of England, naturally interested on behalf of the injured and oppressed, shewed the utmost sympathy for the sufferings of the Queen; not because she was a Queen, but because she was a woman.”<sup>62</sup>**

The King’s inability to fulfill his husbandly role meant Caroline needed someone to stand in his place. Several pamphlets alluded to George III’s role as the Princess’s protector, but his lapse into permanent insanity in 1811 deprived her of her only ally in the royal family.<sup>63</sup> With the introduction of the Bill of Pains and Penalties in 1820, Caroline desperately needed supporters to combat the power of the government. Moreover, as an abandoned woman, Caroline needed a protector. Queenites rallied to her side, proclaiming that the people would fill the void left by George’s neglect. In particular, publications argued that the bourgeoisie provided the security the Queen rightfully deserved and required. Indeed, pro-queen literature intentionally used middle-class language and ideas to mobilize bourgeois men and women. Drawing upon ideas such as masculine chivalry and motherhood, Queenites targeted a middle-class audience to garner support for Caroline.

Sir Francis Burdett declared that the people “offered her their protection, as it was due to her sex and misfortunes.”<sup>64</sup> Hone called upon God to protect Caroline from her base accusers.<sup>65</sup> And Cruikshank’s *Groan From the Throne* described the “unnumber’d

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<sup>62</sup> *St. James’s Chronicle*, 19 October 1820.

<sup>63</sup> Perkin, *Women and Marriage*, 36; Marks, *Sultan Sham*, 18; Hone, *Matrimonial Ladder*, 7.

<sup>64</sup> Dolby, *Green Bag*, 744.

<sup>65</sup> Hone, *Form of Prayer*, 10.

*millions*” who blessed and defended the “long insulted” Caroline.<sup>66</sup> Caricatures strengthened the argument that the people, including soldiers, supported the Queen. Images such as *Boadicea, Queen of Britain, Overthrowing her Enemies* (Figure 2.8) and *Justice Miraculously Delivered from the Voracious Jaws of her Crying Enemy* (Figure 2.9) depict a triumphant Caroline surrounded by supporters. *Boadicea* shows an indistinguishable number of middle- and lower-class men and soldiers while *Justice* portrays her supporters with the figure of John Bull—a symbol for all average British men.<sup>67</sup> The Queen had support, and Carolinite propaganda garnered more defenders on her behalf.

In particular, *The Queen that Jack Found* (Figure 2.10) portrayed the populace as supportive. Because her husband and the government abused and oppressed her, men and women defended the Queen. Beneath an image of respectable men, women, and soldiers cheering the Queen, Hone wrote:

These are HER SUBJECTS, who have one and all,  
 Resolv'd with their Mistress to stand or to fall;  
 Whose LOYALTY, COURAGE, and SPIRIT are known,  
 Averse to *all Tyrants*, true friends to *the Throne*;  
 Whose generous spirit, (tho' taxes oppress,)  
 Revolts at the thought of a female's distress.<sup>68</sup>

The fact that the people rallied to Caroline's side because of her position as a *female* in “distress” exploited middle-class gender ideals. Hone further employed gendered discourse by highlighting the noble and honorable actions of the people who supported

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<sup>66</sup> Cruikshank, *Groan*, 20.

<sup>67</sup> Anonymous, *Boadicea, Queen of Britain, Overthrowing her Enemies* and Lewis Marks, *Justice Miraculously Delivered from the Voracious Jaws of her Crying Enemy* in Kenneth Baker's *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 176, 177.

<sup>68</sup> Hone, *Queen that Jack Found*, 6, 26, 29-30.

Caroline, helping virtue overcome vice.<sup>69</sup> By utilizing key words such as virtue and vice, Hone drew upon characteristics that the bourgeoisie held as standard for men and women.

Pro- queen propaganda targeted both men and women as potential defenders of the Queen. Arguments particularly geared toward mobilizing men focused on the broader aspect of Caroline's need for protection. The image of a neglected, abused, and abandoned woman engendered feelings of chivalry towards the Queen.<sup>70</sup> Because the King failed to safeguard his wife, the "manly and generous people" of the nation had to stand in his place.<sup>71</sup> Several writers argued that only immoral and unmanly men, like the ministers and the King, would persecute a woman of quality.<sup>72</sup> But men with honor and dignity, bourgeois men, secured the safety of a woman in need, thereby affirming their masculinity and fulfilling their role as men.

Scholars such as Davidoff and Hall, Thomas Laqueur, and Tamara L. Hunt have argued that the image of Caroline as a mistreated and abandoned woman demanded that men rescue her from an undeserved fate.<sup>73</sup> Indeed, pro-queen propaganda emphasized the Queen's need of popular support in the face of the King's neglect. Middle-class men ought to protect Caroline because it was a man's duty. In particular, these men protected the Queen because she symbolized the middle-class ideal of a dependent woman. In order to assert their manhood and protect "domestic virtue," middle-class men had to defend Caroline.<sup>74</sup> Yet, the literature not only called for mobilization to aid the Queen,

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<sup>69</sup> Hone, *Queen that Jack Found*, 1, 22.

<sup>70</sup> Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 151; Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 245, 276-277; Laqueur, "Queen Caroline Affair," 463-464.

<sup>71</sup> Hone, *King's Treatment of the Queen*, 30.

<sup>72</sup> Hone, *Political Showman*, 2; Benbow, *Fair Play*, 5, 10, 12, 20; Hone, *Form of Prayer*, 8; Macrainbow, *Volley at the Peers*, 13.

<sup>73</sup> Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 151; Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 245, 276-277; Laqueur, "Queen Caroline Affair," 463-464.

<sup>74</sup> Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 151.

Figure 2.8 Anonymous, *Boadicea, Queen of Britain, Overthrowing Her Enemies* (November 1820).

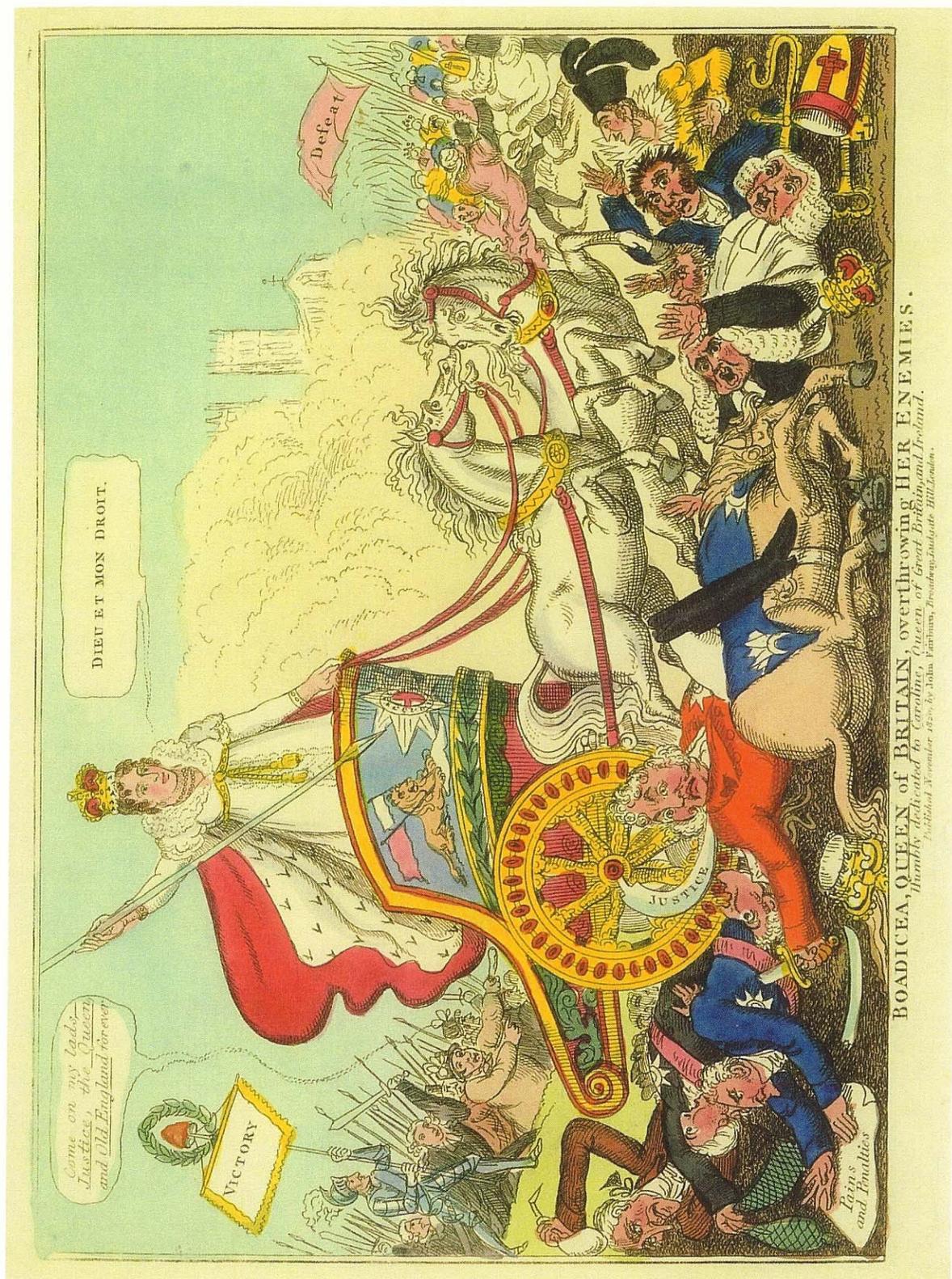


Figure 2.9 Lewis Marks, *Justice Miraculously Delivered from the Voracious Jaws of Her Crying Enemy* (November 1820).



Figure 2.10 George Cruikshank in William Hone's *The Queen that Jack Found* (1820).



“ Wherefore write you not  
What monster's her accuser ! ”

“ Fear it not, Sir : I would I were so sure  
To win the King, as I am bold, her honour  
Will remain hers . ”

*Shakspeare .*

but also became a key to understanding the developing ideals middle-class men embraced.

Importantly, the dominant gendered discourse presented arguments about gender roles and expectations. In their struggle to set themselves apart, the middle class embraced new ideas about male and female behavior. Along with separate spheres, there came certain ideas about the characteristics that middle-class men should adopt. With its background in Evangelical religion, middle-class ideology focused on inculcating a sense of virtue, morality, dignity, and piety.<sup>75</sup> And with the definition of women as naturally weaker and distinct, they “merited masculine protection” on account of their sex.<sup>76</sup> The Queen Caroline affair highlighted how middle-class men should behave, specifically calling on their support because the King failed as a man:

The beauty – the goodness – the very helplessness of the sex are so many claims on our support, are so many sacred calls on the assistance of every manly and courageous arm . . . whilst an example is held up to every ruffian in the land to abuse and insult his wife, that he promised to cherish and protect, is it unreasonable to apprehend the degeneracy and decay of our national morals?<sup>77</sup>

The duty of a middle-class man demanded that he take action. Not only did a woman need assistance, but the morals of the nation also seemed at risk. Arguments such as this spoke directly to a middle-class audience, playing upon and further defining its beliefs and practices.

Moreover, pro-queen propaganda drew distinctions between acceptable and unacceptable behavior for men. The majority of caricatures addressed George’s shortcomings. Most images portrayed his licentious affairs, making the connection that

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<sup>75</sup> Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class*, Ch.3, especially 76-86.

<sup>76</sup> Colley, *Britons*, 266.

<sup>77</sup> Hone, *King’s Treatment of the Queen*, 4, 32.

he abandoned his home life for lascivious reasons.<sup>78</sup> Highly important to middle-class ideology, morality and respectability were hallmarks, distinguishing the group from the aristocracy and lower orders.<sup>79</sup> In regards to the emphasis on morality, George's behavior represented the antithesis of the true middle-class man. The King's inability to control his desire, his failure to fulfill his domestic duties, and his mistreatment of his wife—a woman to be protected above all else—undermined his masculinity and highlighted his lack of morals, honor, and dignity. Thus, pro-queen publications allowed bourgeois men to see their beliefs played out at the national and monarchical level. And the publications enabled these same men to better understand their roles as men and husbands, using the King's abysmal example to show them how not to behave.

Finally, the image of the defenseless woman in need of a man's protection enabled the middle class to impose its beliefs upon the monarchy. As mentioned earlier, Davidoff and Hall argued that the bourgeoisie expected the royal family to function as a true family, with an emphasis on domestic virtue.<sup>80</sup> Numerous pamphlets and caricatures depicted George and Caroline as anything but a family by middle-class standards. Yet, the prevalence of the argument, that the King abandoned his duties as a husband and father, suggests that bourgeois men and women truly expected the King and Queen to adhere to middle-class practices. Unlike pro-king propaganda, which only castigated the Queen for her unwomanly behavior, Carolinite publications expressed the middle-class's

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<sup>78</sup> For a few examples of these kinds of images, refer to: John Marshall's *Our Fat Friend Going to Roost* in Kenneth Baker's *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 30; Lewis Marks's *He Stoops to Conquer, or, Royal George Sunk!* in Kenneth Baker's *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 50; George Cruikshank's *Royal Hobby's, or, The Hertfordshire Cockhorse* in Kenneth Baker's *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 50; Lewis Marks's *An Excursion to Brighton* in Kenneth Baker's *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 52; William Elmes's *The Blanket Hornpipe* in Kenneth Baker's *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 54.

<sup>79</sup> Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class*, 75-77.

<sup>80</sup> Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 155.

desire for George to act as a true husband and father. Shaping the debate surrounding the Queen's trial, bourgeois domestic ideology allowed middle-class men and women to advertise their newly emerging ideas at a national level.

More specifically, Carolinite literature used gendered images and arguments targeted at women. The trial spread the emerging bourgeoisie's beliefs about morality and virtue, which were linked closely with women. With a higher capacity for morality and piety, women served as moral regenerators of the family and, ultimately, the nation. The moral implications of the scandal, especially the double standard, mobilized bourgeois support. And, women's unique role as moral guardians guaranteed female interest. Furthermore, Thomas Laqueur argues that Caroline became a woman's cause because she represented the "virtues of home, hearth, and fidelity." Thus, women agitated on her behalf in an attack on sexual inequality and the double standard.<sup>81</sup> In particular, thousands of women mobilized to support the Queen because her defeat would destabilize every wife's position.<sup>82</sup> Pro-queen publications targeted women to prevent the moral contagion the middle class linked to the scandal.

*The King's Treatment of the Queen* used middle-class language to show the consequences of degrading Caroline:

The cause of her Majesty is the cause of every woman in England. Upon this alarming occasion does it belong, to exert all their influence—the influence of beauty and virtue. The manners, the very virtue of a people, are founded upon general and acknowledged principles of education, and should it become the fashion amongst us to degrade the female sex—to trample on those softer and finer affections, which are the springs of social love, and the bonds of social society—if this shall happen, what will become of women?—they will become the neglected outcasts of our homes . . . Deprived of all their honours, and of all their influence—the tenderness and respect that are now felt for them, will be felt no more . . .

<sup>81</sup> Laqueur, "Queen Caroline Affair," 442, 445.

<sup>82</sup> Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 151-152.

Their very charms—their very virtues, will only excite unmeaning jealousy, and unmanly persecution.<sup>83</sup>

As the moral regenerators of the nation, women would lose their exalted position if an adulterer succeeded in divorce. The author of *Fair Play* encouraged women to mobilize on the Queen's behalf because the trial affected their rights, too. Furthermore, the publication called for these women to encourage Englishmen to support the Queen alongside their wives, sisters, and daughters. Since the fate of all women coincided with the Queen's, these men defended Caroline to fulfill their husbandly duties.<sup>84</sup> So, women acted outside the domestic sphere on behalf of a wife, insuring that their own positions would not suffer. More importantly, middle-class women asked male relatives to save the Queen for them.

Yet, pro-queen propaganda did more than mobilize women; it highlighted gender roles and expectations for middle-class women. A prominent theme throughout the publications, Caroline's virtue and behavior expressed middle-class beliefs about women's proper place. Separate spheres called upon women to remain in the domestic sphere. Images of the newly married Princess showed her desire to stay at home and be a mother and wife. Lewis Marks's satirical poem, *Sultam Sham and His Seven Wives*, alluded to Caroline's wish to make a happy home. But George, instead, "made a cruel separation,/And sacrific'd her hopes in life,/His unsuspecting virtuous wife."<sup>85</sup> Women of the bourgeoisie also needed to possess virtue, morals, and dignity. Authors highlighted her virtue, innocence, purity, and honesty—characteristics she maintained

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<sup>83</sup> Hone, *King's Treatment of the Queen*, 31-32.

<sup>84</sup> Benbow, *Fair Play*, iii-iv.

<sup>85</sup> Marks, *Sham*, 16.

even in the face of George's persecution.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, women's roles now focused more attention on rearing and educating children. Queenite propaganda emphasized Caroline's devotion to her daughter and her despair as a young mother unable to fulfill her duties.<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, the blatant use of middle-class language and themes mobilized bourgeois women's support because it allowed them to understand and work within their own conceptions of gender roles at the same time that the literature emphasized proper middle-class behavior.

In particular, Queenite publications targeted Caroline's motherly role to garner bourgeois women's support. George's removal of Charlotte from the care of her mother, who he eventually forbade to see Charlotte at all, offered an opportunity to capitalize on Caroline's behalf. Carolinites used powerful imagery—a woman torn from her “natural” duties as mother—to inspire greater sympathy for the Queen. The anonymous *Letter from the Queen to the King* depicted a woman unwillingly forced out of her home and away from her child at the hands of a cruel husband.<sup>88</sup> Both *An Address to Britons* and *A Groan from the Throne* noted Caroline's despair at losing her right to “mother” her child; a right revoked by her tyrannical and remorseless husband.<sup>89</sup> In *The R---l FOWLS*, the author argued that George intentionally abused Caroline by taking Charlotte away: “Those, which she valued most, and wore/Nearest her breast, he rudely tore.”<sup>90</sup> Even at

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<sup>86</sup> The following are examples of texts that use these terms to characterize Caroline. The list is not comprehensive but a generous sample. Dolby, 745; Hone, *Matrimonial Ladder*, 14; Hone, *Queen that Jack Found*, 1; Benbow, *Fair Play*, iv; Anonymous, *Letter from Queen to King*, 1; Cruikshank, *Groan*, 10, 12, 27; Marks, *Queen of Trumps*, 5.

<sup>87</sup> Benbow, *Letter from Queen to King*, 2, 4-5; Cruikshank, *Groan*, 11; Marks, *Sultan Sham*, 17; Hone, *Matrimonial Ladder*, 7; Hone, *King's Treatment of the Queen*, 10; Turner, *An Address to Britons*, 16; Anonymous, *R---l Fowls*, 13; Anonymous, *The Q---'s Last Letter to the K---*, 45.

<sup>88</sup> Anonymous, *Letter from the Queen to the King*, 2-3.

<sup>89</sup> Turner, *An Address to Britons*, 16-17; Cruikshank, *Groan*, 14.

<sup>90</sup> Anonymous, *The R---l Fowls*, 13.

their parting, Hone described Caroline's distress at leaving her beloved Charlotte behind.<sup>91</sup>

By emphasizing Caroline's motherly nature and her despair at losing that role, pro-queen publishers appealed to a particular audience, middle-class women. Enlightenment works in conjunction with industrialization and separate spheres gave rise to a new conception of women's role as mothers. Increasingly, women's function became that of nurturers and educators of their children.<sup>92</sup> Turner's *Address to Britons* channeled bourgeois rhetoric in his description of motherhood; "the very name of mother is . . . the praise of heaven—and the applause of earth—the star-bespotted arch of the celestial canopy embraces the maternal office with the divine encompassment of the sacred blessing of Creation's infinite author."<sup>93</sup> With this reverential definition of motherhood as a guide, Carolinite literature highlighted the Queen's desire to fulfill her motherly duties.

*A Groan from the Throne* expressed both Caroline's happiness at the birth of her daughter and the new mother's desire to care for Charlotte.<sup>94</sup> The author of *The Queen's Last Letter to the King* presented an emotional picture of a mother forlorn at the demise of her child. This excerpt expressed Caroline's feelings at the loss of Charlotte's company and her premature death:

. . . when my mind reverts to that distressing moment, when the dear child of my bosom was unfeelingly torn from a mother's arms . . . when the last hope of a disconsolate mother was bereft me, and I bowed to the dispensations of

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<sup>91</sup> Hone, *Matrimonial Ladder*, 7.

<sup>92</sup> Lynn Abrams, *The Making of Modern Woman: Europe, 1789-1917*, The Longman History of European Women (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2002), 17-23, 69; Lawrence Stone, *Broken Lives: Separation and Divorce in England, 1660-1857* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 15; Rachel G. Fuchs and Victoria E. Thompson, *Women in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 12; Hall, *White, Male and Middle-Class*, 83-90, 95, 141-143.

<sup>93</sup> Turner, *Address to Britons*, 18.

<sup>94</sup> Cruikshank, *Groan*, 11.

Providence in the loss of HER, whose life and happiness was far dearer to me than my own. . .<sup>95</sup>

Because of their emphasis on women's unique role as mothers, the image of a woman desolated over the loss of her child resonated with the bourgeoisie. Caroline's emotional reactions toward Charlotte embodied the new domestic ideal the middle class sought. George's interference denied Caroline her rightful role as mother and educator, providing the bourgeoisie with an opportunity to defend the Queen while spreading its ideals. Thus, George's unjust restriction of Caroline's access to their daughter played well among the majority of Queenites.

Furthermore, Caroline's defenders used this argument to solidify women's support. Although experiences of motherhood differed across the class spectrum, Caroline's supporters believed any mother could relate to the Princess's situation. Thus, the *Letter from the Queen to the King* could claim,

To mothers—and those mothers who have been suddenly bereft of the best and most affectionate and only daughters—it belongs to estimate my sufferings and my wrongs. Such mothers will judge of my affliction upon hearing of the death of my child, and upon my calling to recollection the last look, the last words, and all the affecting circumstances of our separation. Such mothers will see the depths of my sorrows.<sup>96</sup>

Propagandists clearly believed that popular support for the Queen should include women. Using Caroline's motherhood as a tool, Carolinites capitalized upon bourgeois beliefs about women's special role as mothers, furthering the case against George.

Conversely, George showed no interest in fulfilling his fatherly responsibilities. Once out of her toddler years, the Prince had little to do with Charlotte. A tempestuous child, Charlotte bucked at the rigid control her father exercised over her, forbidding any

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<sup>95</sup> Anonymous, *Q-----'s Last Letter to the K---*, 46.

<sup>96</sup> Anonymous, *Letter from the Queen to the King*, 4-5.

socialization and locking her away in the country. His mistreatment of Caroline, his mistresses, and his expensive social life did not offer Charlotte a model to follow in preparation for her ascension to the throne.<sup>97</sup> Rather, his failure as a husband reflected on his incapacity as a father, he fell short of bourgeois expectations. Cruikshank's *A Groan from the Throne* commented upon George's poor behavior toward his daughter. At her birth, Charlotte received "no father's rapturous kisses," or a role model because her father "once so good, [became] so soon deprav'd."<sup>98</sup> *An Address to Britons* argued that Caroline's removal from Charlotte resulted in a parentless life for the young Princess.<sup>99</sup> Evidently, George had no desire to be a father. Rather, he kept Charlotte away from Caroline because of his hatred for his wife. Such neglect and mistreatment of Charlotte strengthened the Queenite image of Caroline as a steadfast and dedicated mother and George as a cruel husband and father.

Carolinite literature targeted the bourgeoisie for two reasons. First, the pro-queen faction needed to gain support for Caroline. Because of her early popularity and existing hostility to George, the middle class championed Caroline. And, to successfully combat Parliament and the aristocracy, the Queen needed a large body of defenders. Second, the debate over the scandal presented the bourgeoisie with an opportunity to express and disseminate its beliefs, particularly about gender roles. Using images such as an abandoned and unprotected woman, pro-queen literature appealed to middle-class men and their sense of masculinity and chivalry. And emphasizing Caroline's role as mother

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<sup>97</sup> Fraser, *Unruly Queen*, 237-238; Parissien, *George IV*, 211, 227-228, 230, 233-234; Plowden, *Caroline and Charlotte*, 85-88, 97-98, 115-116; Smith, *George IV*, 155-157.

<sup>98</sup> Cruikshank, *Groan*, 11.

<sup>99</sup> Turner, *An Address to Britons*, 18.

resonated with bourgeois women. Pro-queen literature's use of such imagery succeeded in mobilizing supporters and conveying middle-class ideologies at a national level.

**“A Queen’s man ‘thought the Queen a whore—but he would be damned if any woman should be ill used, whore or no whore.’”<sup>100</sup>**

Despite positive Queenite imagery, some of Caroline's actions violated bourgeois beliefs. In particular, the Queen's unconventional behavior, her love of the theatrical, and her uncommon familiarity with men, raised doubts about her innocence. Many pamphlets defended an unquestionable innocence, claiming that the trial stemmed from the King's persecution of Caroline.<sup>101</sup> But other publications make a different argument—an argument that upholds the Queen, not because of her unblemished character, but because she suffered at the hands of a lascivious tyrant. To maintain the high ground and avoid damaging their own reputations, Queenites shrewdly addressed the ambiguity surrounding Caroline. A pre-emptive strike, this part of Carolinite literature blamed the King for the Queen's unorthodox behavior. His failure to defend his wife, indeed, his active persecution of Caroline received middle-class censure; George's treatment of the Queen caused her curious behavior. Finally, even in its attempt to rationalize Caroline's unusual actions, Queenite propaganda supported and expanded bourgeois beliefs.

Although pro-queen publications shaped an image of an innocent woman, Caroline's unconventional antics generated reason to doubt her innocence. Queenite

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<sup>100</sup> Stevenson, “Queen Caroline Affair” 128.

<sup>101</sup> Macrainbow, *Volley at the Peers*; Benbow, *A Peep at the Peers*; Anonymous, *A Peep at the Origin of some of the King's Pretended Friends, and the Queen's Real Enemies: With Occasional Political and Biographical Observations* (London: University of London, Goldsmiths'-Kress Library, 1820); Anonymous, *Letter from the Queen to the King*; Hone, *Political Showman at Home*; Marks, *Queen of Trumps*; Hone, *King's Treatment of the Queen*; Hone, *Dropt Clauses*; Dolby, *Green Bag Speech*; Benbow, *Fair Play*; Anonymous, *The Q---'s Last Letter to the K---*; Hone, *The Form of Prayer for the Queen*; Hone, *Queen's Matrimonial Ladder*; Cruikshank, *Groan*; Tuner, *An Address to Britons*; Hone, *Queen that Jack Found*.

literature addressed her very public persona, first. The Queen's unending public appearances challenged the idea of women as maintainers of the home, only venturing out for church or philanthropic activities.<sup>102</sup> Second, Carolinite propaganda suggested she might have been guilty. Shaping Caroline into a role model for middle-class women required propagandists to make her less threatening to bourgeois ideals. Thus, George became the cause of Caroline's indiscretions.

Neutralizing the Queen's unorthodox behavior required her defenders to strike a delicate balance. To maintain Caroline's image as a proper woman, pro-queen literature needed to solidify her image as a dependent, vulnerable woman without degrading her public presence. Authors and caricaturists accomplished this goal by affirming the Queen's position as "a poor forlorn woman" and establishing George as the villain.<sup>103</sup> In the pamphlet *The King's Treatment of the Queen*, the author argued that George's failure necessitated people's support for the Queen, and that her appearances in public developed because the King drove her from her home, the sphere she wanted to inhabit.<sup>104</sup>

Lewis Marks wrote that "all the generous and manly feelings of the nation" have rallied to a single woman buried under a heap of "accumulated wrongs," harshness, and oppression.<sup>105</sup> If George had acted as a husband should, argued Lord John Russell, then Caroline would not have violated convention. His public letter to Mr. Wilberforce

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<sup>102</sup> Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class*, 168.

<sup>103</sup> Benbow, *Fair Play*, iii; Hone, *King's Treatment of the Queen*, 3-6, 29-30; Dolby, *Green Bag Speech*, 741-742, 745; Marks, *Queen of Trumps*, cover page, 4-7, 10, 12; Anonymous, *R---l Fowls*, 3-10, 12-14; Anonymous, *Letter from the Queen*, 1-7; Hone, *Political Showman at Home*, 2, 20-21; William Hone, *The Queen's Death* (London: University of London, Goldsmiths'-Kress Library, 1820), 39; Hone, *Dropt Clauses*, 3-5; Anonymous, *Queen's Last Letter*, 45-48; Macrainbow, *Volley at the Peers*, 5, 10; Marks, *Sultan Sham*, 8, 16, 30, 33, 45, 47; Anonymous, *An Address to Britons*, 9, 13, 16-18, 24; Cruikshank, *Groan*, 10-12, 14, 17-18; Hone, *Queen's Matrimonial Ladder*, 1, 4-5, 7, 11; Hone, *Form of Prayer for the Queen*, 5; Hone, *Queen that Jack Found*, 2, 11, 16-17; As quoted in Roger Fulford, *Trial of Queen Caroline* (New York: Stein and Day, 1968), 243.

<sup>104</sup> Hone, *King's Treatment of the Queen*, 29-31.

<sup>105</sup> Marks, *Queen of Trumps*, 30-31.

asserted that two things kept a woman in check: first, the “circle of domestic duties and domestic affections, which alone are of power to keep a wife holy and safe from evil,” and second, “the control of public opinion—the best remaining check this world can afford upon female behaviour.”<sup>106</sup> The separation George forced upon Caroline and her eventual exile proved detrimental because it removed those safeguards. *The Q---’s Last Letter to the K---* supported Russell’s position. The author maintained that had Caroline received lessons in etiquette and protocol, she would not have been prosecuted for a crime she did not commit.<sup>107</sup> And the author of *The R---l FOWLS* argued that George deserved blame because he did not provide an example for Caroline to follow. Rather, he behaved basely and neglected his wife.<sup>108</sup> Thus, any improper behavior on Caroline’s side stemmed from the King’s mistreatment because *he* placed her in a situation detrimental to personal morality.

As well, Caroline’s departure from England in 1814 presented problems for bourgeois supporters because it looked like an abandonment of her womanly duties, especially in light of her acceptance of an increased stipend. To portray the Queen positively, publications argued that her departure was the only option left to a woman deprived of a home, the protection of her husband, and the company of her child.<sup>109</sup> *The Q---’s last Letter to the K---* (1821) exclaimed:

Mercilessly I have been persecuted . . . when I look back at the many foul attempts which were made to rob me of my honour and stab my peace of mind, till, dreading a foe in every countenance, I fled the country where I

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<sup>106</sup> Lord John Russell, *A Letter from Lord J. Russell to Mr. Wilberforce on the Proceedings against the Queen, with the Petition to His Majesty, Assigning Powerful Reasons for Suspending all those Proceedings* (London: University of London, Goldsmiths’-Kress Library, 1820), 5.

<sup>107</sup> Anonymous, *The Q---’s Last Letter to the K---*, 45.

<sup>108</sup> Anonymous, *The R---l FOWLS*, 16.

<sup>109</sup> Anonymous, *The R---l FOWLS*, 17; Anonymous, *The Q---’s Last Letter to the K---*, 46; Hone, *King’s Treatment of the Queen*, 12-13; Marks, *Sultan Sham*, 37-38; Turner, *An Address to Britons*, 22-24; Cruikshank, *Groan*, 18-19; Hone, *Queen’s Matrimonial Ladder*, 7.

ought to have found friends and protectors, [and] sought an asylum among strangers.<sup>110</sup>

Because her husband and his minions pursued her unceasingly, Caroline chose to flee the country. George's persecution necessitated and excused Caroline's abandonment of her womanly obligations. For the Queen's supporters, Caroline wanted to be a wife and mother, a role George prevented her from fulfilling. Thus, bourgeois men and women defended such a woman because her cruel husband forced her into exile, thereby removing her sense of security, destroying her hopes of a quiet domestic life, and undermining her role as a nurturing mother.

More importantly, Carolinites attributed the Queen's questionable fidelity to the King. *The R---l FOWLS* exclaimed:

She had no Parent near at hand,  
A stranger, in a foreign land;  
And if, unhappily betray'd,  
Her steps from virtue's path have stray'd,  
E'ev if that brightest gem is gone,  
That Hens of modesty adorn,  
Although I cannot sanction guilt,  
The Pullet's blood shall not be spilt.<sup>111</sup>

This author did not believe that Caroline had acted with complete innocence. Yet, the pamphlet urged support for the Queen because of George's mistreatment. Lewis Marks's *Sultan Sham* echoed the sentiment with these lines: "That very few deserv'd a throne:/That if Carletta was the worst,/And was of Eve's descendants curst,/She'd match the Sultan to a hair,/For bad and worse he'd stile the pair."<sup>112</sup> Neither pamphlet condemned Caroline. Rather, the publications focused upon George's failures as a husband, claiming they caused Caroline's indiscretions.

<sup>110</sup> Anonymous, *The Q---'s last Letter to the K---*, 45-46.

<sup>111</sup> Anonymous, *The R---l FOWLS*, 16-17.

<sup>112</sup> Marks, *Sultan Sham*, 56.

Two popular caricatures captured the idea of Caroline's questionable innocence. The first image used the infamous green bags to illustrate the Queen's behavior relative to the King's. Green bags served as the common way to carry government documents. They developed a notorious image during the affair because the day Caroline returned to England, George sent green bags to both Houses of Parliament. Queenites latched onto green bags as a symbol of Caroline's persecution.<sup>113</sup> George Cruikshank's *'Ah! Sure Such a Pair was Never Seen so Justly Form'd to Meet by Nature'* (Figure 2.11) presents the King and Queen with green bags for bodies. George's green bag is much larger than Caroline's and the belt around his waist tails off like a limp penis. Caroline's face remains calm and serene while George looks disgruntled.<sup>114</sup> Both the title and the image presented the belief that while George bore the greater guilt, Caroline was not completely innocent. But the caricature generated support for the Queen regardless of the implied guilt because the people sympathized with her plight. Ultimately, the King's hypocrisy resulted in popular support for a woman with questionable innocence.<sup>115</sup>

A second print similarly emphasized Caroline's culpability. In *Which is the Dirtiest – So Foul the Stains Will Be Indelible* (Figure 2.12), William Heath depicts George and Caroline throwing filth at each other. The King draws his ammunition from a bucket labeled "Italian Filth," some of which sticks to the Queen implying guilt. However, Caroline has an overflowing supply of filth to throw at her husband. The muck the Queen throws easily sticks to George while the majority of what he throws at

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<sup>113</sup> Fraser, *Unruly Queen*, ch. 13; Baker, *George IV*, 166; Parissien, *George IV*, 218-220; Plowden, *Caroline and Charlotte*, 211, 213; Smith, *George IV*, 177-178.

<sup>114</sup> George Cruikshank, *'Ah! Sure Such a Pair was Never Seen so Justly Form'd to Meet by Nature'* in Kenneth Baker's *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 166.

<sup>115</sup> Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 271.

Caroline falls harmlessly at her feet.<sup>116</sup> Heath's caricature accepted that the Queen was probably guilty of some of the charges. Again, in comparison to the King's affairs and actions, Caroline had some virtue, thus requiring people's defense.

Queenites used George's treatment of Caroline to gloss over contradictions in her behavior. Her public persona and questionable innocence presented problems the middle-class needed to overcome to maintain their image of Caroline as a woman worthy of bourgeois support. The King's total lack of morals in conjunction with his active persecution of the Queen enabled Carolinites to blame him for Caroline's unconventional and potentially guilty activities. Moreover, these publications highlighted his failings as a husband, a man, and a monarch. And, because Queenites used middle-class tropes to attack the King and defend the Queen, their literature disseminated bourgeois beliefs at the same time it debated the trial.

**“The Queen’s persecutors have more disgraced themselves by their dastardly conduct towards her, and have committed greater outrages upon public morals . . . than her Majesty would have done had she been guilty of those gross indecencies which are imputed to her by his Majesty’s ministers.”<sup>117</sup>**

Carolinites' main concern was to rally support for the Queen by portraying her as a wronged, innocent, and virtuous woman. Yet, the affair generated larger moral and political issues. For Queenites, Caroline's situation held national implications about morality and the monarchy. Carolinite literature argued against the contamination of public morals arising from the trial. Continuing their support of the Queen, Carolinites blamed George and his ministers for damaging national morals and prestige.

Additionally, the affair shaped national politics. Using the scandal to their own

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<sup>116</sup> William Heath, *Which is the Dirtiest – So Foul the Stains Will Be Indelible* in Kenneth Baker's *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 212.

<sup>117</sup> *Times*, 2 October 1820.

Figure 2.11 George Cruikshank, 'Ah! Sure Such a Pair was Never Seen so Justly Form'd to Meet by Nature (June 1820).

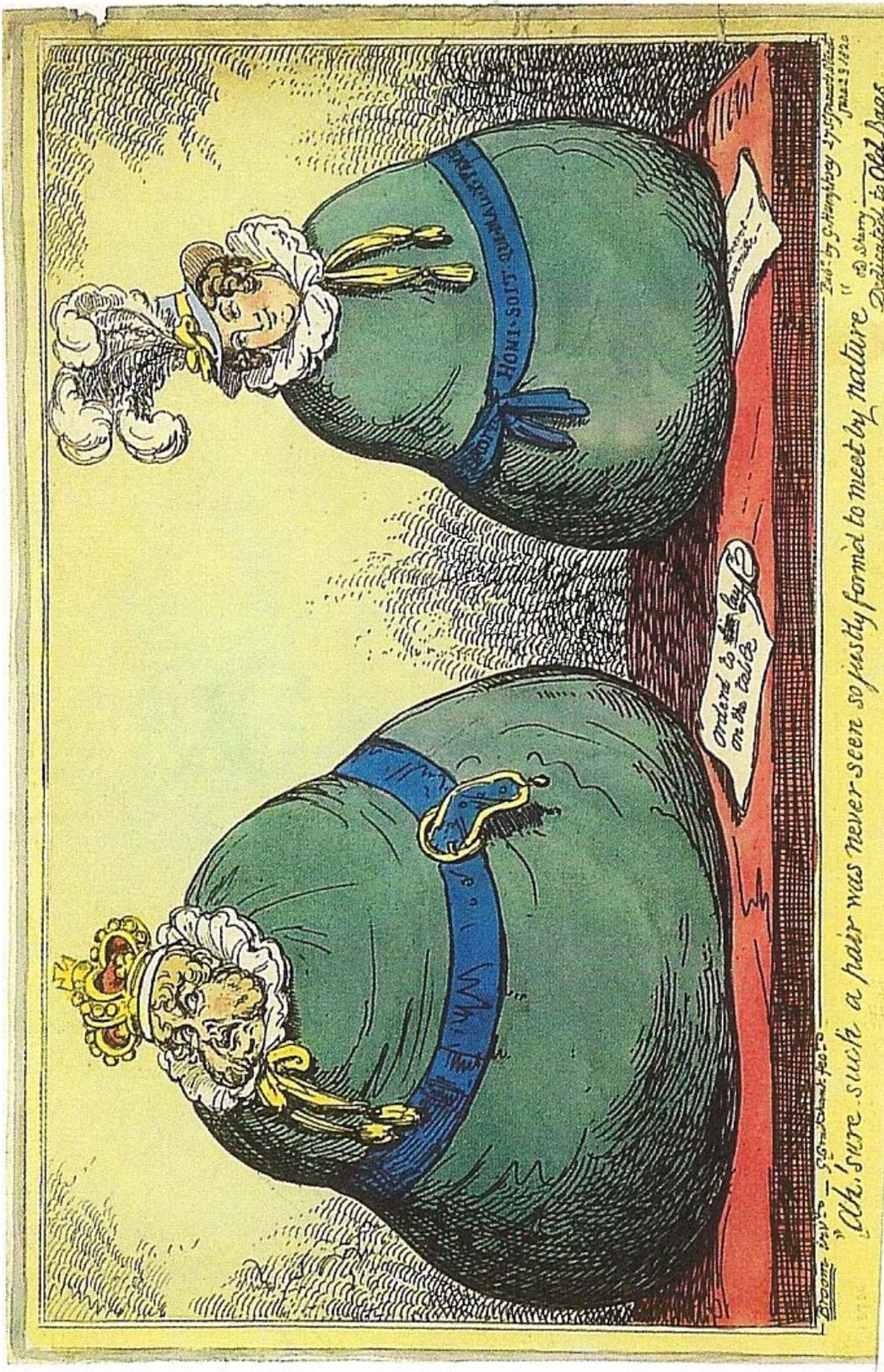


Figure 2.12 William Heath, *Which is the Dirtiest – So Foul the Stains Will Be Indelible* (September 1820).



advantage, different political groups vied for increased power, attempting to change the British political landscape.

The question of national morality arose out of fear that the trial's details would contaminate Britons and so destroy England's reputation as a morally superior country. Queenites believed that the proceeding against Caroline unnecessarily dredged up issues of sexual behavior better left in the private sphere. Tamara L. Hunt argues that "morality was a major theme throughout the [Caroline] affair" and that it held "profound cultural significance and was in some respects the first wide-spread popular expression of the moral standards that have come to be labelled 'Victorian.'" <sup>118</sup> Davidoff and Hall assert that the divorce scandal demonstrated a shift in "public attitudes to private morality," with Caroline "representing the rejection of aristocratic moral standards and the defence of a more rigorous sexual practice." <sup>119</sup> Using middle-class ideas on morality, Queenite literature debated the national implications of having an immoral monarch.

Pro-queen propaganda blamed George and his ministers for the avoidable destruction of national morals. Sir Francis Burdett claimed that an open investigation into the contents of the green bag would "let loose such a mass of filth . . . upon the public as would stagnate the fountain of the public morals of the land." <sup>120</sup> Lord John Russell blamed George for tainting public morals with his pursuit of the trial. Russell wrote "the scenes of immorality which are alleged to have happened, are now, for the first time, to be revealed by the inquiry your Majesty has been advised to set on foot;" George's interference affected public morals, not Caroline's supposed indiscretions. <sup>121</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Hunt, "Morality and Monarchy," 698, 709.

<sup>119</sup> Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 149, 153.

<sup>120</sup> Dolby, *Green Bag Speech*, 742.

<sup>121</sup> Russell, *A Letter from Lord J. Russell*, 2, 4.

William Hone believed that the trial set an example for every man in the nation to “abuse and insult the wife, that he promised to cherish and protect,” thus resulting in “the degeneracy and decay of our [England’s] national morals.”<sup>122</sup> Perhaps the most telling source, William Benbow’s *Fair Play* highlighted the hypocrisy of the charges. While the Queen went on trial for moral issues, adulterous men judged her. Benbow argued that the actions of the King, the Peers, and the ministers “demoralized the rising generation . . . by their example” through introducing “immorality and adultery among the higher classes, or the public at large.”<sup>123</sup> Thus, for the Queen’s defenders, issues of morality arose not from Caroline’s behavior but from the pursuit of a trial tainted by immorality.

Newspapers wrote more specifically about the moral issues arising from the case. With a vast middle-class readership, newspapers purposely addressed ideas embraced by middle-class men and women. The bourgeoisie, with the example of George III and Queen Charlotte before them, began to expect morality from their monarch.<sup>124</sup> The Queen Caroline affair enabled the middle class to express its beliefs about morality at the highest level, that of the monarch. *St. James’s Chronicle* believed the “present mode of proceeding against the Queen” presented a danger to public morals, not Caroline’s behavior.<sup>125</sup> The *Observer* believed that the divorce clause caused all the problems because it enforced the morality of the wife while leaving the husband untouched.<sup>126</sup> Cobbett’s *Weekly Political Register* asserted that the ministers chose a Bill of Pains and

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<sup>122</sup> Hone, *King’s Treatment of the Queen*, 32.

<sup>123</sup> Benbow, *Fair Play*, 9.

<sup>124</sup> Colley, “Apotheosis,” 121, 124-125; Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 151-152; Hunt, “Morality and Monarchy,” 717.

<sup>125</sup> *St. James’s Chronicle*, 22 August 1820.

<sup>126</sup> *Observer*, 11 September 1820.

Penalties “to protect their *morals*” over those of Britons and the virtuous woman on trial.<sup>127</sup>

Writers of the heavily pro-queen paper the *Morning Chronicle* kept a running commentary on the moral problems generated by the trial. One letter to the editor believed the community needed to be saved from the “evils which must ensue from the publication of the contents of the ominous Green Bag.”<sup>128</sup> Another article addressed the contamination that families would suffer from an open trial; “every husband, every father of a family throughout the country, trembles at the very idea of the details of filth and pollution with which they have been threatened.”<sup>129</sup> The trial represented a “foul stain upon the character and morals of the country,” a stain that would infect the whole country.<sup>130</sup>

Continuously reporting on the state of public morals, the *Times* wrote that the continuance of the trial portended genuine national danger. While the paper vindicated the Queen, it also reported on the King’s degradation in the people’s eyes. His immoral actions contributed to the decay in national morals and prestige.<sup>131</sup> Another article argued that the Attorney General’s instigation of the Bill committed a greater “outrage upon public morals” than the “gross indecencies” falsely imputed against Caroline.<sup>132</sup> Finally, the divorce scandal caused “infinite injury to the morals of the country,” spread a “moral pestilence” across the nation, and “disgraced and polluted” England.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> *Weekly Political Register*, 18 November 1820.

<sup>128</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 7 August 1820.

<sup>129</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 8 August 1820.

<sup>130</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 28 September 1820, 2 October 1820.

<sup>131</sup> *Times*, 21 September 1820.

<sup>132</sup> *Times*, 2 October 1820.

<sup>133</sup> *Times*, 2 November 1820, 16 November 1820.

Throughout this literature, Caroline's defenders proclaimed her innocent of all charges and the destruction and contamination of national morals. Rather, Queenites blamed the King for the current state of moral laxity. Caricatures, in particular, made a case on Caroline's behalf through depictions of the King's immoral and damaging actions. Symbols, such as cuckold's horns, displayed George's myriad affairs to reestablish morality in the monarchy.<sup>134</sup> For instance, *The Royal Foraging Cap or New Windsor Uniform* (Figure 2.13) depicted Lord Conyngham proudly wearing a cap with cuckold's horns that George presented to him.<sup>135</sup> The print implied that Lord Conyngham liked his wife's position as George's mistress, and that under his rule men gladly accepted cuckolding. Similarly, Lewis Marks portrayed George fighting John Bull over a pair of cuckold's horns in his print *A Struggle for the Horns!* (Figure 2.14). The King wanted the horns to show the nation that Caroline had committed adultery, necessitating the Bill of Pains and Penalties. Remarkably, John Bull accepted the guilt of the Queen but refused the position of cuckold to the King because of his immoral behavior and mistreatment of Caroline.<sup>136</sup> Both of these caricatures presented the King's adultery as reprehensible, particularly given the hypocrisy apparent in the charges against Caroline.

In *Royal Gambols, or, The Old Oak in Danger* (Figure 2.15), Lewis Marks argued that George's adulterous behavior threatened the throne as well as the nation. The print depicts George swinging on the "Old Oak" of England with his mistresses Lady Conyngham and Lady Hertford on either side of him. Devils attack the base of the oak,

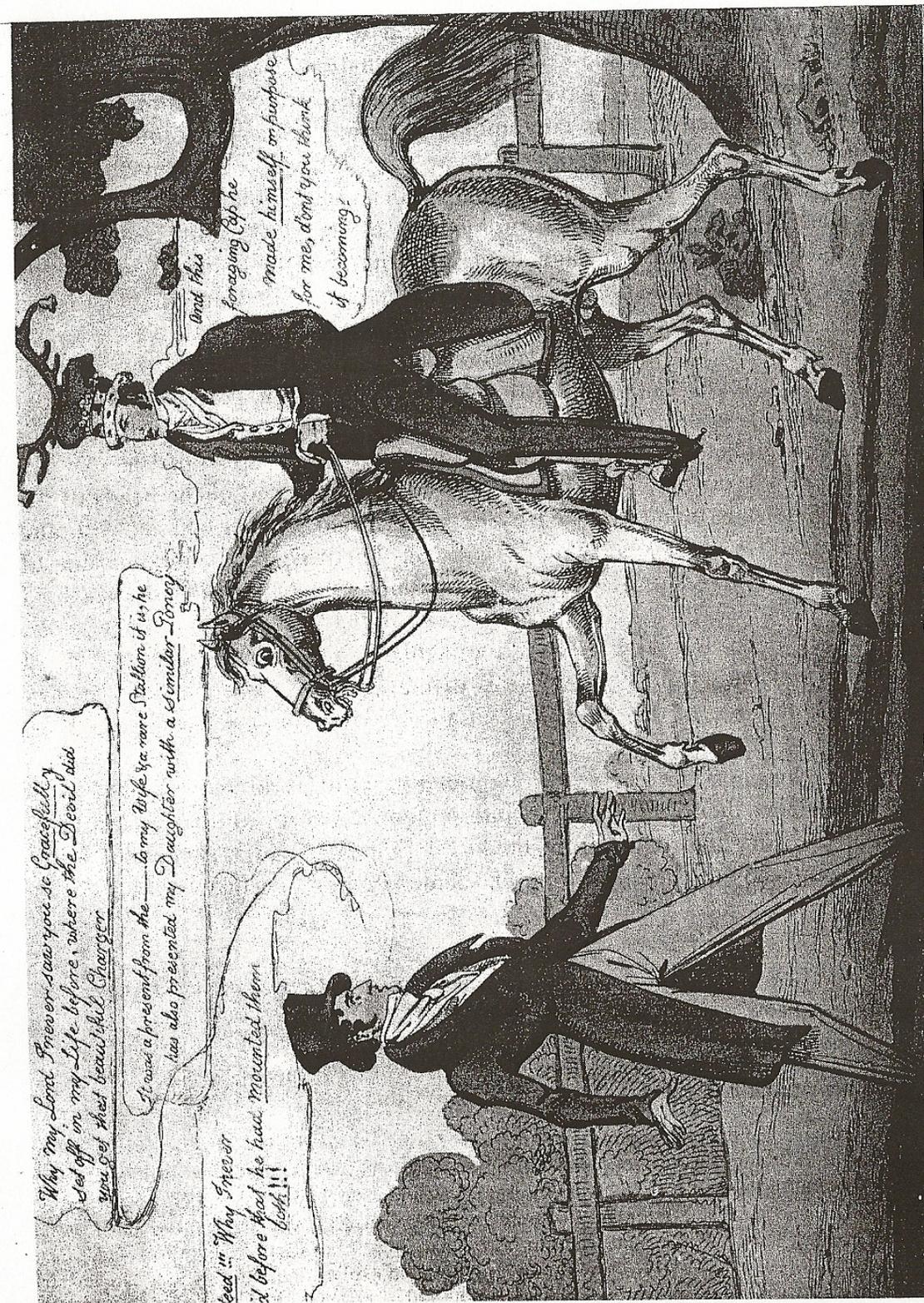
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<sup>134</sup> Hunt, "Morality and Monarchy," 713.

<sup>135</sup> S.W. Fores, *The Royal Foraging Cap or New Windsor Uniform* in Tamara L. Hunt's "Morality and Monarchy in the Queen Caroline Affair," *Albion* 23 (1991): 710-713.

<sup>136</sup> Lewis Marks, *A Struggle for the Horns!*, in Kenneth Baker's *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson 2005), 173.

Figure 2.13 S.W. Fores, *The Royal Foraging Cap or New Windsor Uniform* (1820).





made up of the heads of George's ministers, while John Bull and a soldier look on with concern.<sup>137</sup> Marks's work encapsulated bourgeois expectations of morality and the proper roles for men. George's flagrant affairs threatened the throne because his behavior lacked the necessary virtue for rational thought and rule. The caricature also showed that a man's adultery, specifically a king's adultery, had disastrous consequences. Marks's argument challenged the double standard by claiming that the King's activities, not just the Queen's, affected both national morals and national strength.

Frequently, print media blamed the ministers, rather than George, for the unjust Bill. These publications probably chose to do so out of self-preservation, the wrath of the King could be severe. And, many authors and publishers remained loyal to the monarchy, if not to George IV, and attacking him directly placed a stigma upon the throne.<sup>138</sup> Therefore, the ministers and Peers became easy targets for the Queen's defenders.

In particular, pamphlets attacked these men for two reasons. First, the ministers and Peers had no right to judge Caroline because they were biased; the King held the power of patronage over them. If they failed to do George's bidding, he could revoke their positions, power, and money. William Benbow's *A Peep at the Peers* argued this explicitly. The pamphlet described the titles, positions, livings, sinecures, and pensions of the Peers and Bishops. Benbow highlighted every Peers's dependence on the King's magnanimity.<sup>139</sup> How could a trial against the Queen be fair with all the men in the jury linked tightly to George?

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<sup>137</sup> Lewis Marks, *Royal Gambols, or, The Old Oak in Danger* in Kenneth Baker's *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 157.

<sup>138</sup> Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 245-246, 266-268, 272, 274-275.

<sup>139</sup> Benbow, *Fair Play*, entire.

Figure 2.15 Lewis Marks, *Royal Gambols, or, the Old Oak in Danger* (September 1820).



As well, Macrainbow's *Volley at the Peers* suggested that the Peers and ministers would not judge fairly. The author called these men "placemen" who "forfeited *independence* . . . to become the slave of party . . . and the servile creature of his employers."<sup>140</sup> Bound by patronage and dependent on the King's favor, these men had no choice but to vote as George desired. Queenites argued that these men condemned an innocent woman to retain their power and prestige.

More importantly, the ministers and Peers lacked the morality necessary to judge a woman accused of adultery. In general, descriptions of these men highlighted their unsavory characters, calling them base, unmanly, vain, weak, useless, wicked, and deceitful.<sup>141</sup> *The Political Showman at Home* described them as vermin who attacked a woman of quality.<sup>142</sup> But Carolinite's focused the brunt of their argument on the Peers' and ministers' rampant adultery. Macrainbow's *A Volley at the Peers* listed the known affairs of each Peer and their family members. By highlighting the degeneracy and profligacy of aristocrats, Macrainbow argued that the Peers should not be allowed to judge the Queen. He asked "can it be expected that such men will form a correct judgment upon the conduct of others, who have proved themselves incapable of directing their own?"<sup>143</sup> Benbow's pamphlet *Fair Play* similarly illustrated the incongruity of known adulterers trying an accused adulterer. His list of the Peers incorporated their infidelities as well as their titles. Benbow's examination of the unchecked adultery among the aristocrats highlighted their lack of the necessary morals to judge Caroline

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<sup>140</sup> Macrainbow, *Volley at the Peers*, 4.

<sup>141</sup> Benbow, *Fair Play*, 5; Marks, *Queen of Trumps*, 6; Macrainbow, *Volley at the Peers*, 21; Hone, *Form of Prayer*, 8; Marks, *Sultan Sham*, 33.

<sup>142</sup> Hone, *Political Showman*, 2.

<sup>143</sup> Macrainbow, *Volley at the Peers*, 11-13.

based on a charge of immorality.<sup>144</sup> Significantly, this argument never assumed the Queen's guilt or her innocence; it merely questioned the fairness and justice of an immoral jury.

In its examination of the national implications of the trial, Queenite literature expressed a bourgeois view of morality. The nation suffered from George's immoral conduct because it damaged the virtue and authority that the throne represented. And, his pursuit of the Bill disseminated filth to the public. Through the media, details of Caroline's supposed misconduct invaded public and private spheres. This contamination necessarily spoiled the virtue and innocence of individual families, thus staining the character of the nation as a whole. As well, Queenite literature brought to light the hypocritical and unjust conduct of the ministers and Peers. Their lack of morals and ties to the King worked against middle-class beliefs about political and moral virtue. Ultimately, the bourgeoisie imprinted its ideas about proper gender norms on the scandal, thus acknowledging and rejecting the morality and gender relations of the monarch and the nobility. In the end, George, the ministers, and the Peers lost to public opinion because they failed to live up to middle-class standards.

The immediate importance of the Caroline affair moved away from morals and centered on political maneuvering. Caroline's determination to return to England and claim her crown sparked a massive movement in her defense. Primarily, the scandal became a battleground between the Tories who held power and the disparate groups who wanted power. The moral debate came second to political interests. Of these groups, Whigs and radicals became the Queen's most prominent advocates. Radicals sought to revive parliamentary reform while the Whigs wanted to topple the conservative Tories

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<sup>144</sup> Benbow, *Fair Play*, 10.

and return to power.<sup>145</sup> Although public opinion opposed the ministers and, therefore, the government, very little political change occurred.

Yet, scholars argue that the radicals and the Whigs made gains despite failing to overthrow the current regime. For the radicals, the affair created a cohesiveness never before experienced. John Stevenson claims the Whigs strengthened their alliance with the people through the affair.<sup>146</sup> And, according to Anna Clark, the Whigs successfully used Caroline to address larger issues, such as the constitution and class, while portraying themselves as the movement's leaders, a move designed to make them look like champions of the oppressed.<sup>147</sup> Importantly, through their support of the Queen, Whigs embraced bourgeois ideology. In a period where the Tories and Whigs had few demographic differences, the middle class struggled to make a place for itself in political spheres. But, the Caroline affair witnessed the expression of bourgeois ideology that the Whigs created and supported. In fact, the debate caused Tories to argue that the Whigs "had usurped the predominance of the nobility" by allowing middle-class men to participate in the political sphere.<sup>148</sup>

Ultimately, the Queen Caroline affair failed to produce drastic changes in the political scene. The Tories remained in control of the government until the 1830s and the radicals divided once again.<sup>149</sup> But, the affair highlighted the growing power and importance of public opinion. Although the radicals and Whigs did not gain power, they managed to defeat the government by embracing bourgeois beliefs to defend Caroline.

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<sup>145</sup> Stevenson, "Queen Caroline Affair," 120, 127, 140, 144; Smith, *George IV*, 179-180; Clark, *Scandal*, 206.

<sup>146</sup> Stevenson, "Queen Caroline Affair," 141.

<sup>147</sup> Clark, *Scandal*, 206-207.

<sup>148</sup> Clark, *Scandal*, 196.

<sup>149</sup> Stevenson, "Queen Caroline Affair," 133.

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Queen Caroline's middle-class supporters utilized the press to defend her from the King and his minions. But Queenite assertions did more than support a wronged woman. Using gendered language and images, the group of bourgeois defenders made an argument that employed its gender beliefs and practices, thus applying middle-class values and expectations to the royal couple. The debate over the divorce trial enabled bourgeois men and women to spread their principles and practices throughout the nation.

Carolinites defended the Queen with powerful images that expressed middle-class beliefs about gender roles. One portrayal focused on the King's unmanly behavior. Authors and artists attacked his character in various ways, but the attention given to his public adultery far outweighed his other faults. Another picture highlighted Caroline's purity, virtue, and innocence. This argument concentrated heavily on George's many character defects and juxtaposed them with images of Caroline's propriety. The most important image, however, showed Caroline as a wronged woman, mistreated by a cruel husband. Publications described her as a woman who only desired to be a good wife and mother, roles George denied her. This idea held particular resonance with the bourgeoisie since the immoral King intentionally prevented his wife from fulfilling her womanly duties.

The overwhelming amount of pro-queen literature not only aided in the Queen's acquittal, but also supplied the middle class with an opportunity to express its ideologies at the national level. Despite the fact that the majority of prints and publications supported the Queen, George did have evidence against his wife. Aristocrats and other Kingites mounted a counter-propaganda campaign, attempting to thwart the virtuous

image the Queen's supporters presented. Chapter 3 addresses the loyalist effort to undercut the Queen's popularity using the same gendered images and language as the Queenites.

### Chapter Three:

#### Loyalist Attacks

**“Well gentlemen, since you will have it so, God Save the Queen – and may all your wives be like her.”<sup>1</sup>**

The debate over the Bill of Pains and Penalties mobilized a large portion of the populace as different factions of the public supported one royal over the other. Middle-class men and women waged a fierce campaign on the Queen’s behalf. With newspapers, pamphlets, and engravings, Carolinites defended her innocence and decried her unjust treatment by George and his ministers. The key image Caroline’s advocates promoted was that of a virtuous woman wronged by an adulterous husband. Using middle-class gender ideals, the pro-queen faction led a widespread and successful press campaign to save Caroline and vilify George. Kingites retaliated with literature that discredited the Queen.

Although the majority of the population sided with the Queen, the King received significant support from the aristocracy. Self-interest was a key incentive here, since George controlled the aristocracy’s access to patronage. Indeed, Caroline’s aristocratic supporters quickly fell out of favor.<sup>2</sup> As well, the nobility simply disliked the Queen. They abhorred her familiarity with servants, her lack of etiquette and protocol, and her flighty desire for the theatrical, as when she traveled on the continent in a phaeton shaped like a seashell.<sup>3</sup> Aristocratic women disdained her gaudy dress and makeup, her

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<sup>1</sup> As quoted in Smith, *Queen on Trial*, 29.

<sup>2</sup> Clark, *Scandal*, 202; Perkin, *Women and Marriage*, 36.

<sup>3</sup> Clark, “Queen Caroline,” 51.

disruption of George's domestic peace, and the discontent she stirred among commoners.<sup>4</sup> Finally, George's ministers supported him. With the realistic threat of losing their cabinet positions, they pursued the Bill until popular support for the Queen threatened to bring rising social tensions to a boiling point.<sup>5</sup>

Given the success of Queenite propaganda, the King's supporters knew any defense they mounted must attack Caroline's behavior. Appearing since his majority, caricatures and satires about the Prince continued unabated throughout his reign.<sup>6</sup> By highlighting George's flagrantly immoral behavior, these images expressed public displeasure with it. His unpopularity coupled with Caroline's widespread support before and after her departure forced loyalists to acknowledge that presenting George in a positive way would never work. Instead, pro-king publications sought to destroy Caroline's support by highlighting her indiscretions and unwomanly conduct. Fearing Caroline and her supporters would upset the established political and social order, loyalists tried to maintain the status quo by neutralizing the threat the Queen posed with a counter-propaganda campaign. They exploited the middle-class gender ideologies used to defend Caroline, turning them against her. Where Carolinites portrayed her as the embodiment of virtue and innocence, George's followers described her as immoral and indecent. Finally, unlike Caroline's supporters, loyalists avoided addressing the King's behavior. Such avoidance allowed George's faction to maintain their beliefs about gender hierarchy and the double standard while holding Caroline to the highest standards of morality.

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<sup>4</sup> Emma Sophia, Countess Brownlow, *The Eve of Victorianism: Reminiscences of the Years 1802 to 1834* (London: John Murray, 1940), 125.

<sup>5</sup> Clark, *Scandal*, 186, 204; Smith, *George IV*, 176.

<sup>6</sup> Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, ch. 6, especially 242-291.

**“The mob-led Queen with bold pretence,  
Boasts that she’s “*clothed with innocence.*”  
Of any clothes I’m glad;  
But, may I hint without offence,  
She’s rather lightly clad.”<sup>7</sup>**

As a future queen, Caroline was held to a higher standard than other elite women. George’s supporters used her inability to conform to royal standards to damage her character. Focusing on the Queen’s inappropriate behavior and associations, loyalists discredited the Carolinite image of a proper woman, defended by respectable men and women. With this argument, aristocrats attacked the bourgeoisie, trying to scare them away and discrediting their support. Using images anathema to middle-class ideology, such as the Queen’s relationship with the mob and her political intrusiveness, loyalist propaganda made Caroline appear as a woman unworthy of support.

A principal loyalist argument was that Caroline acted beneath her station. Above all, loyalists charged Caroline with slumming. Not only did she dine with people of low birth, but she also elevated a commoner and slept with him. Her improper familiarity disgusted the nobility and the royal family.<sup>8</sup> In *An Address to the Peers of England*, the author admonished Caroline for acting beneath her dignity and disgracing the national manners of England:

Gracious Heaven! the woman who is to be the first female in England, bathed in the presence of her courier—slept for weeks together by his side—eats out of the same plate, and drinks out of the same bottle with him—joins in the gambols of the kitchen, and regardless of her years as of her rank, exhibits a caricature of a Columbine for the amusement of an Italian mob.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *John Bull*, 24 December 1820.

<sup>8</sup> Brownlow, *Eve of Victorianism*, 111-113, 116, 125; Parissien, *George IV*, 209-210, 230; Olwen Hedley, *Queen Charlotte* (London: John Murray, 1975), 189-194, 218.

<sup>9</sup> J.A. Sargant, *An Address to the Peers of England by an Englishwoman* (London: W. Wright, 1820), 6-8.

According to this author, Caroline did not exhibit the propriety and formality necessary in royal women.

In fact, many pro-king pamphlets insinuated that the Princess fled to the continent to escape the higher moral expectations in England.<sup>10</sup> These writers believed Caroline's familiarity with servants and her uninhibited nature made her an undesirable royal. Further degrading the British monarchy, Caroline allowed her behavior to become more outrageous in an environment of lax morals.<sup>11</sup> Because she did not act with the dignity expected of royal women, Kingites censured the Princess's peculiar behavior, viewing her escape as a way to practice her immorality without fear of repercussion. Rather than exhibiting a sense of decorum while abroad, Caroline drank beer, caroused in public, ate lower-class food, witnessed indecent dances, and appeared in public unclean, indelicate, and slatternly.<sup>12</sup> Loyalists played upon Caroline's familiarity with commoners and her questionable activities to illustrate her lack of morals and dignity, which rendered her unfit to be a Queen of England. Attacking her character damaged the idealized image Carolinites had created.

George Cruikshank captured the Princess's unbecoming behavior in his print *A Royal Visit to a Foreign Capital, or, The Ambassador Not at Home...!* (Figure 3.1). This caricature shows Caroline in her carriage with William Austin, her adopted son, the Countess Oldi, Bergami's sister, and Bergami, who sits by the Princess. Caroline is wearing a turban and a low-cut gown that reveals her ample bosom. Bergami wears an

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<sup>10</sup> Anonymous, *A Letter to the Queen by a Widowed Wife* (London: University of London Goldsmiths'-Kress Library, 1821), 62; Anonymous, *The New Pilgrim's Progress; or, A Journey to Jerusalem* as reproduced in Edgell Rickword's *Radical Squibs and Loyal Ripostes* (London: Redwood Press, 1971), 240; Sargant, *Address*, 6-8; Anonymous, *The Radical Harmonist, or, A Collection of Songs and Toasts Given at the Late Crown and Anchor Dinner* (London: W. Wright, 1820), 8, 14.

<sup>11</sup> Anonymous, *Letter to the Queen*, 62.

<sup>12</sup> Sargant, *Address*, 14-16.

elaborate outfit with a phallus shaped hat. The Queen's servants look distinctly foreign, with dark skin and outlandish attire. Upon the party's arrival in Vienna, they are informed that Francis I, the Austrian Emperor, is not at home.<sup>13</sup>

Cruikshank's print deftly portrayed Caroline's farcical and whimsical actions. She failed to act with the dignity expected of the Prince Regent's wife. Her clothes revealed too much skin. Her companions lacked pedigree and refinement. And, loyalists argued, she traveled openly with a low-born Italian lover. Indeed, Francis I's refusal to receive the Queen derived from her actions abroad. Although more lax on the continent, Caroline's actions disgusted even foreign rulers, cheapening the British monarchy abroad. Kingites capitalized on these bizarre activities, showing that Caroline lacked the ability to behave in a manner that dignified her husband and the nation.

Like pamphlets and caricatures, newspapers highlighted the Queen's association with people beneath her station and her own low behavior. Every facet of her behavior and every person or group she associated with came under intense scrutiny in the loyalist press. Most depictions of Caroline's followers characterized them as a "vile rabble" or a "riotous mob," despite the fact that most of Caroline's support came from the bourgeoisie. The *Courier* claimed she flew "for protection and acquittal to—the rabble," underestimating "the moral and intellectual habits of Englishmen" by assuming any honorable man might support her.<sup>14</sup> A well-known royalist paper, the *Morning Post*, called Caroline's proponents "coarse and vulgar men . . . a mob . . . [and] the terror of the respectable classes."<sup>15</sup>

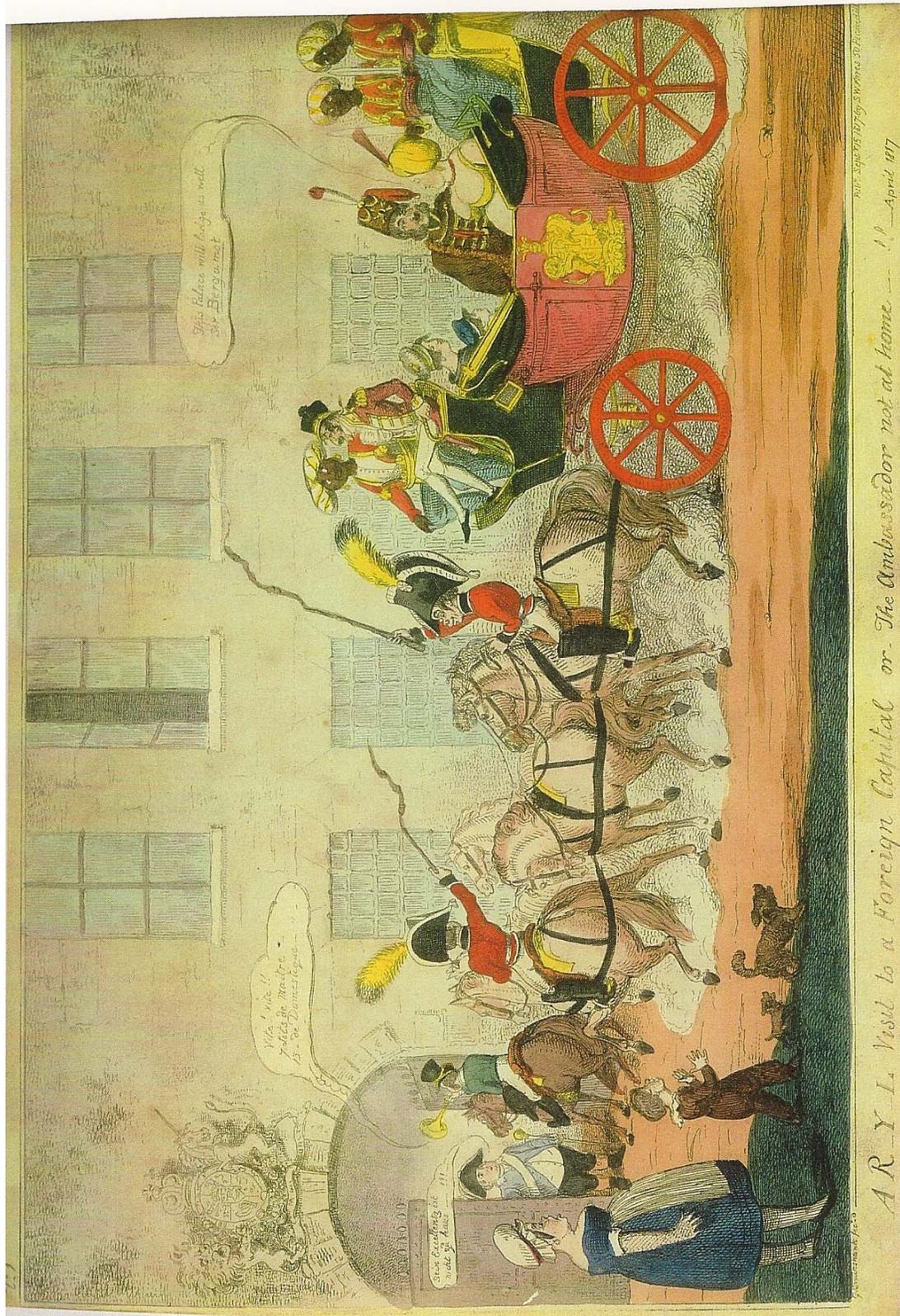
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<sup>13</sup> George Cruikshank, *A R-Y-L Visit to a Foreign Capital, or, The Ambassador Not at Home...!* in Kenneth Baker's *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 118.

<sup>14</sup> *Courier*, 14 August 1820.

<sup>15</sup> *Morning Post*, 7 June 1820.

Figure 3.1 George Cruikshank, *A R-Y-L Visit to a Foreign Capital, or, The Ambassador Not at Home* (September 1817).



This characterization expressed a tension between aristocrats and the middle orders. On the one hand, loyalists hoped to weaken the Queen's support by disgusting middle-class defenders. On the other hand, the aristocracy despised the pretensions of the bourgeoisie, including them in depictions of Carolinites as filth. But, the thrust of the argument remained that Caroline associated with people beneath her station.

Moreover, women who aligned themselves with the Queen "distinguished themselves by a marked and indelicate manner from all other women in England."<sup>16</sup> Only "low and vulgar" women, feigning respectability in borrowed clothes, presented addresses to Caroline.<sup>17</sup> According to loyalists, the Queen's open and friendly association with low men and women damaged her image. No true woman openly embraced the company of the lower orders, much less a Queen who claimed moral uprightness. Thus, by highlighting the kind of company the Queen kept, pro-king newspapers hoped to undermine her position by establishing Caroline as a woman unable to act as a proper woman.

Because the loyalist press wanted to weaken the Queen's cause, newspapers commented on the character of Caroline's associates and called attention to behavior unbecoming a Queen. Both the *Morning Post* and the *Courier* chastised Caroline for her shameless public appearances. A Queen, particularly one on trial for adulterous relations, should not be making a spectacle of herself in public.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, she should discontinue her association with "all persons having the least pretensions to respectability" and, furthermore, should "place herself in a state of retirement, and even

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<sup>16</sup> *John Bull*, 17 December 1820.

<sup>17</sup> *Morning Post*, 29 July 1820.

<sup>18</sup> *Morning Post*, 1 July 1820.

of seclusion” rather than inciting the rabble.<sup>19</sup> The *Morning Post* wanted her held to account “for degrading, disgusting parades of her Royal Person, in such company, at such times, and at such places, as would render despicable the wife of any reputable commoner in the land.”<sup>20</sup> The *Courier* accused Caroline of breaking the tradition that gave only honorable and worthy men and women access to royalty.<sup>21</sup> One letter to the editor of the *Morning Post* offered scathing commentary on Caroline’s lack of propriety:

Instead of retiring from the gaze of public admiration, and supporting the dignity and propriety of the high character with which she has been invested by a marriage . . . what has she done? She has thrown herself into the hands of the most despicable rabble; she has, thereby, identified herself with a mob, and has spared no pains to inflame their diabolical passions; she has debased, vilified, calumniated, and libelled the character of the King. . . . *Is this the demeanor of a virtuous woman and a chaste wife? Or, is it the conduct of even a decent female* [my emphasis]?<sup>22</sup>

Her low connections and continued presence in public did not constitute the accepted behavior of a queen. Rather, the loyalist press showed that Caroline could not act properly in the simplest regard, making her adultery more plausible and her aura of innocence less likely.

Furthermore, Caroline flouted gender expectations by engaging in factious politics. Upon her return from abroad, the Queen found ready support from radicals and Whigs, hoping to use Caroline for their own purposes.<sup>23</sup> Loyalists leapt upon the Queen’s political associations to show how far beyond her position she acted; a woman had no place in politics, especially politics that went against her husband, the King. Both *The Radical Ladder* and *A Letter to the Queen by a Widowed Woman* asserted that

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<sup>19</sup> *Courier*, 13 July 1820, 21 August 1820; *Morning Post* 28 August 1820.

<sup>20</sup> *Morning Post*, 12 August 1820.

<sup>21</sup> *Courier*, 18 September 1820.

<sup>22</sup> *Morning Post*, 17 August 1820.

<sup>23</sup> Fraser, *Unruly Queen*, 366, 388; Holme, *Caroline*, 192-193; Parissien, *George IV*, 216, 219-224; Smith, *George IV*, 173, 180; Perkin, *Women and Marriage*, 36.

factions used Caroline for their own purposes while *The Radical Harmonist*, *The Declaration of the People of England to the King*, and *A Letter from the King to His People* claimed that Caroline readily embraced and aided the political groups.<sup>24</sup> In particular, *A Letter from the King* argued that Caroline, with the opposition's assistance, turned a private, domestic affair into a political battle, seeking to undermine the King's authority.<sup>25</sup>

In the only pamphlet written by a woman, *An Address to the Peers of England*, author J.A. Sargant illustrated how Caroline's involvement with radicals blunted the people's morals. The radicals' malignant nature influenced the good working people of England to support a guilty woman, thus ruining the nation's strong principles.<sup>26</sup> Whatever the perceived consequence, Kingites showed that Caroline's political participation caused trouble because, as a woman, she had no authority or foundation for her actions. Moreover, her active participation in the political sphere violated aristocratic and middle-class beliefs about women's roles. Loyalists used the political uproar over the trial and Caroline's active public role to highlight the social and political damage that would inevitably follow. For the King and his ministers, Caroline threatened to undo both the gender hierarchy maintained by the elite and the political order controlled by the Tories. The active involvement of a majority of the population worried the pro-king faction, making it imperative to destroy the Queen's support.

Loyalists strengthened their claim against the Queen with unfavorable characterizations of her political followers. In general, pamphlets and caricatures

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<sup>24</sup> Anonymous, *Radical Ladder*, 214-215; Anonymous, *A Letter to the Queen*, 62-64; Anonymous, *The Radical Harmonist*, 2-5, 9; Anonymous, *The Declaration of the People of England to the King* (London: J. Hatchard & Son, 1821), 14; Anonymous, *A Letter from the King*, 27, 33.

<sup>25</sup> Anonymous, *A Letter from the King*, 27, 33.

<sup>26</sup> Sargant, *Address*, 16-17.

represented Caroline's political supporters as uneducated, disloyal subjects from the unrespectable lower class. Alderman Mathew Wood, one of the Queen's foremost advocates, was called a fool and encumbrance. Furthermore, the Alderman, "black and rotten at the core," led other men who had rotted on the inside.<sup>27</sup> Such men wanted to trample the British throne, using any means necessary, including the Queen. The author of *The Radical Ladder* spoke plainly; the radicals wanted "the King to unmake!"<sup>28</sup> Caroline's willing relationship with such vile men destabilized her claim to innocence, virtue, and purity. Loyalists wondered: how could a virtuous woman associate with disloyal and degenerate men?

Frequently, these groups received the title of "mob" to establish their illegitimacy and threatening nature.<sup>29</sup> Theodore Lane's *Grand Entrance to Bamboozl'em* (Figure 3.2) embodied loyalist characterizations of the Queen and her followers. The print depicts Caroline's arrival in London. Her garters are undone, her dress is décolleté, and she wears a liberty cap while Alderman Wood wears a jester's clothes. Both the Queen and Wood ride asses on their way to meet the radicals, including prominent party leaders Henry Hunt and Francis Burdett. The crowd personifies the uneducated mob. Aside from a few well-dressed men, the group consists of drunkards, revolutionaries, and those without money, respectability, or morals. The banners held by the crowd read, "Revolution," "Radical Reform," "Anarchy," "Disaffection," "Riot," "Immorality," and

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<sup>27</sup> Anonymous, *The Radical Harmonist*, 2-6.

<sup>28</sup> Anonymous, *The Radical Ladder*, 224.

<sup>29</sup> Anonymous, *The Radical Ladder*, 222; *Morning Post*, 1 July 1820, 27 July 1820, 10 August 1820, 12 August 1820, 27 September 1820, 30 November 1820; *Courier*, 11 August 1820, 13 August 1820, 30 October 1820, 9 November 1820, 14 November 1820; *John Bull*, 24 December 1820, 7 January 1821, 14 January 1821, 28 January 1821, 4 February 1821.

“Indecency.”<sup>30</sup> Caroline’s acceptance of this rough group’s support demonstrated her support of revolution and anarchy. Kingites positioned the Queen so that support of her cause was extremely unattractive and almost criminal. Moreover, her appearance in this print strengthened the pro-king argument that Caroline acted unwomanly; she not only dressed like a harlot, but she also stirred thoughts of rebellion.

A second caricature highlighted Caroline’s connection with the dregs of the political world, similarly linking her with revolution. *The Radical Ladder* (Figure 3.3) by George Cruikshank, typically a caricaturist in favor of the Queen, parodies William Hone’s immensely successful *The Matrimonial Ladder*. In *The Radical Ladder*, Caroline climbs a ladder with rungs named after famous incidences: Spa Fields Riot, Smithfield, Hunt’s Procession, Peterloo, and Cato Street. These steps lead to Queen’s Arrival, Radical Addresses, and, finally, Mob Government. Behind her, Jacobins shelter under her long cloak, supporting her, as she reaches out to topple the pillar of “King, Lords, and Commons.” With this print, loyalists suggested that revolutionary forces used the Queen to try to destroy the government.<sup>31</sup> Although radicals and Whigs used Caroline’s cause to gain power, Kingite emphasis on her revolutionary influence generated fear that a woman might overturn the constitution and monarchy. Playing on fears of gender and political upheaval, loyalists made people wary of supporting the Queen.

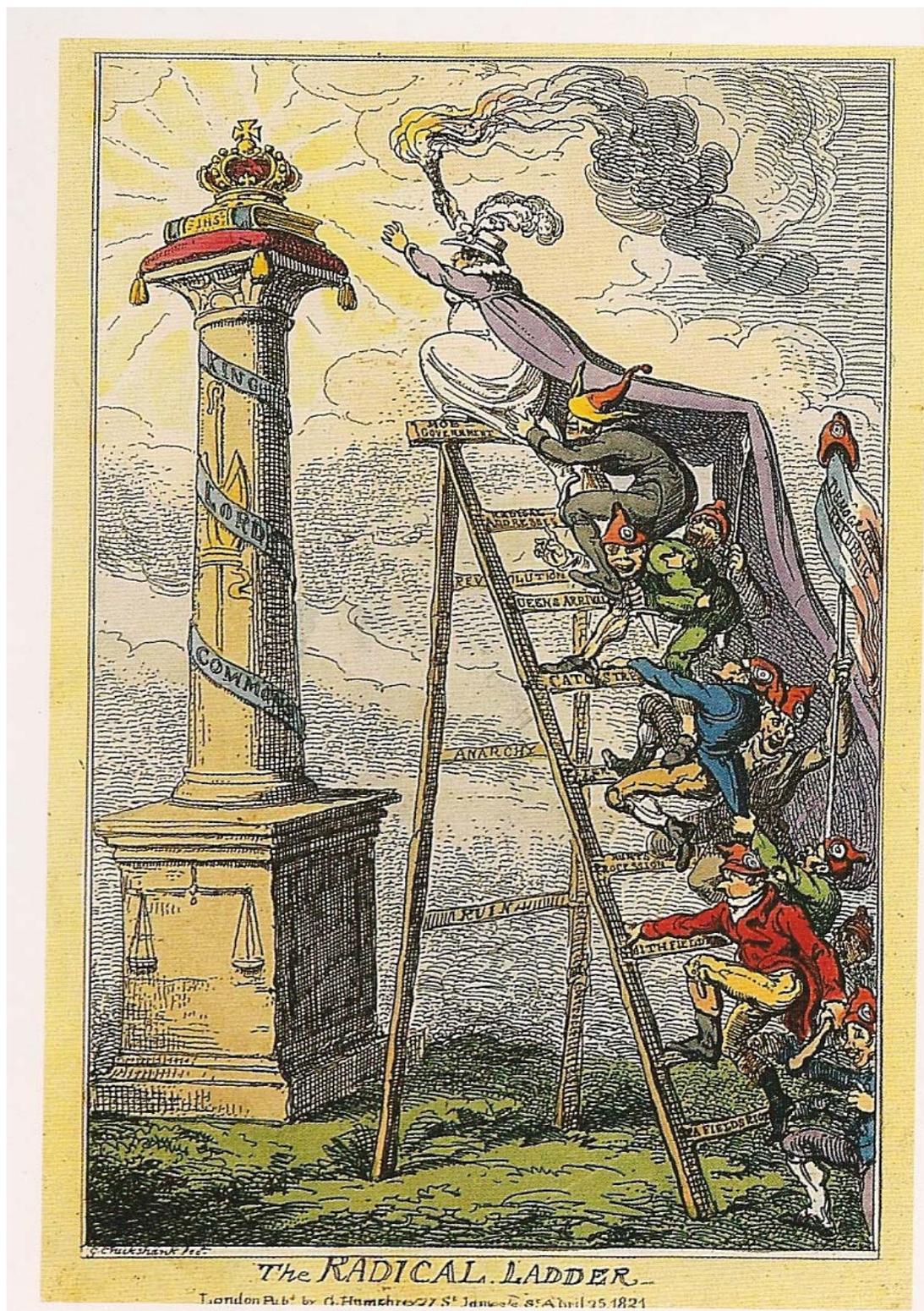
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<sup>30</sup> Theodore Lane, *Grand Entrance to Bamboozl’em* in Kenneth Baker’s *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 164-165.

<sup>31</sup> George Cruikshank, *The Radical Ladder* in Kenneth Baker’s *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 174.



Figure 3.3 George Cruikshank, *The Radical Ladder* (October 1820).



Newspapers similarly focused on Caroline's dangerous political activity and her association with vile men. In the *Courier*, the editor accused the Queen of generating discontent among the rabble of society and empowering "peticoat Radicals."<sup>32</sup> Caroline's ability to turn gender relations upside down, enabling women to influence men, touched upon deeply held beliefs about hierarchy. To neutralize her influence, loyalists highlighted how the Queen's disturbance of established hierarchies led to possibilities of political, social, and gendered upheavals. The *Morning Post* carried more openly hostile characterizations of Caroline and her political allies. The Whigs lacked honor and consistency, practiced subterfuge rather than honesty, and neglected true justice in the case of the Queen.<sup>33</sup> But the *Morning Post* saved its most scathing commentary for Caroline:

This woman, so disgraced by her own acts, so unalterably degraded in every honest heart; this woman who has defied and insulted her King, and who has fanned the flame of faction and sedition, by the abuse (in her addresses) of all the institutions of our country . . . the vilest and most abandoned woman is the idol of the day—virtue is insulted.<sup>34</sup>

Caroline failed to obey her husband, her first duty as a woman, and intentionally incited political action against the King. These activities damaged the image of an injured and defenseless wife used by the Queen's defenders. Taken together, newspapers, pamphlets, and caricatures used Caroline's foray into the political sphere to prove that she did not behave properly. In particular, the potentially revolutionary consequences of her behavior, which the King's defenders highlighted, showed how a woman's interference in politics was detrimental to the nation. According to loyalists, the Queen cared more for herself than for the safety and stability of the country. Again, Caroline's

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<sup>32</sup> *Courier*, 27 July 1820.

<sup>33</sup> *Morning Post*, 29 September 1820, 13 November 1820.

<sup>34</sup> *Morning Post*, 16 November 1820.

transgressions of gender roles were the central argument utilized to lessen her threat to the government, illustrating that she did not deserve approbation.

To discredit her bourgeois supporters, loyalists called attention to Caroline's inappropriate behavior and associations. Her low-class actions should disgust any middle-class man or woman who practiced clean living and moral uprightness. And her relationships with the mob and political rebels placed the Queen firmly outside the acceptable environment for middle-class women. Pro-king supporters used such class invective to alienate her defenders. What true bourgeois man or woman would support such a woman? In an attempt to discredit and discourage the middle class's defense of Caroline, Kingites argued that only unrespectable men and women supported the Queen.

**“Though you were a Princess, you were yet a woman born to submit and obey.”<sup>35</sup>**

A second idea that Kingites used to denigrate Caroline focused on her roles as a wife and mother. Loyalists attacked the Carolinite image of a good wife and mother denied those roles by a cruel husband. Publications highlighted Caroline's less than submissive attitude toward George and her lack of interest in her daughter. The representation of a disinterested wife and mother resonated with middle-class women because of the shifting focus of women's roles towards that of a loving and nurturing mother. In their attempt to undermine Queenite propaganda, Kingites used bourgeois ideals to sway middle-class support.

*The Radical Ladder* described the Queen jeering and attacking her husband rather than obeying him.<sup>36</sup> The anonymous *Letter to the Queen, by a Widowed Wife*

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<sup>35</sup> Anonymous, *A Letter to the Queen*, 59.

<sup>36</sup> Anonymous, *The Radical Ladder: or, Hone's Political Ladder and his Non Mi Ricordo Explained and Applied, the Designs of the Radicals Developed, and Their Plans Traced, a Satirical Poem, with Copious Notes* as reproduced in Edgell Rickword's *Radical Squibs and Loyal Ripostes: Satirical Pamphlets of the*

admonished Caroline for turning her back on her marriage. Assuming the voice of a neglected and abandoned woman, the author chastised Caroline's adultery, claiming that marriage vows remained steadfast even after separation:

But never once in that time have I felt I was released from the vows which my lips had reluctantly pronounced, that because I had no home under my husband's roof I was at liberty to act as I pleased under my own; and that though the privilege and almost the honours of a wife were denied me, I had not the character of one to support, nor for one moment fancied under any temptation that the dereliction of another from the path of honour could plead an excuse for my own. . . .the question. . . would not be whether he were guilty, but whether I was pure.<sup>37</sup>

The author believed the Queen an adulteress, hence the worst possible wife. For this author, George's infidelity did not matter, illustrating the double standard advocated by elite society. Eschewing emerging middle-class beliefs in gendered spheres, nobles continued to uphold patriarchy, a system that lent itself to a pervasive sexual double standard. Adulterous women suffered severe consequences while unfaithful men caroused with impunity. Thus, Caroline in no way deserved to reign as Queen Consort since she could not even remain faithful.

Additionally, the author argued that a wife had certain duties to uphold: Caroline failed at these duties, refusing to make her marriage successful.<sup>38</sup> The Princess did not put George first nor did she submit and obey, causing her trouble because she denied her role as a wife. The author told Caroline:

Had you loved—you would have conciliated the affection of your Royal Husband; had you honoured him—you would have been more circumspect in your conduct, and consulted his dignity, if you were indifferent to your own; had you obeyed him—you would not have set

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*Regency Period, 1819-1821, Illustrated by George Cruikshank and Others* (Trowbridge, UK: Redwood Press, 1971), 217.

<sup>37</sup> Anonymous, *Letter to the Queen*, 57-58.

<sup>38</sup> Anonymous, *Letter to the Queen*, 59.

both him and his Government at defiance, and given his people so fearful an example of rebellion.<sup>39</sup>

Plainly, Caroline failed in all her wifely duties. She did not love, honor, or obey, nor did she remain faithful. Because she acted unfaithfully and disobediently, the Queen did not merit men's support. Her behavior substantiated George's treatment and removed her need of men's chivalric protection. Similarly, women need not support Caroline because she neither fulfilled her wifely duties nor acted with propriety, so was undeserving. Such arguments used Caroline's transgression of gender roles to bolster Kingite support and to destroy Carolinites, who defended her based on a bourgeois view of proper womanhood. With the growing middle-class belief in women's special role, Caroline's actions, as described by the loyalists, undercut the steadfast support of the middle orders.

Significantly, *A Letter from the King to His People* went beyond attacking Caroline and defended George. Its attempt to undermine the idealized vision of Caroline incorporated a positive portrayal of the King. This pamphlet is one of the few sources that addressed George's behavior in any significant detail. Generally, loyalist propaganda focused on Caroline because the King's unpopularity made any positive depiction of him unbelievable. Yet, this work, which ran through at least twelve editions, adopted the King's voice to defend George's pursuit of the Bill. The author believed George was the injured party. Claiming that Caroline committed the first wrong, George explained how he acted as a dutiful husband:

As a husband I enabled my wife to maintain the dignity of her rank and station as Princess of Wales; I visited her separation with no pecuniary privations, but on the contrary, paid for her debts . . . . I never on any

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<sup>39</sup> Anonymous, *Letter to the Queen*, 64-5.

previous occasion threw the slightest obstacle in the way of her Royal Highness's comfort, tranquility, and domestic arrangement.<sup>40</sup>

According to the letter, Caroline repaid his benevolence by acting without discretion or dignity, ultimately disgracing the throne with adultery.<sup>41</sup> Yet, even after her failure as a wife, the magnanimous George would allow Caroline to have the throne if English women could accept her as their role model.<sup>42</sup> By the end, George argued that Caroline's inability to be a proper wife or to fulfill his minor request, that she present herself with "unquestionable and unequivocal propriety of conduct," made the Queen unworthy of attachment and a stain upon the throne.<sup>43</sup> Thus, because Caroline could not behave as a proper woman, she did not deserve the crown.

This thought would have resonated with the middle class because of its fundamental belief in morality, piety, and virtue, particularly in regards to women. A *Letter from the King to His People* positioned George so that he became the victim of a wayward wife's unwomanly actions. Moreover, the author claimed that Caroline's behavior threatened the upright character of the people, the nation, and the throne, while George wanted to prevent such damage by acting against his adulterous wife. This interpretation of the Queen's behavior challenged the Carolinite image of a wronged and neglected woman.

In regards to Caroline's motherly actions, the pamphlets provide less direct insight. A solitary pamphlet, *A Letter from the King to His People*, addressed the issue openly, claiming that George restricted Caroline's access to their daughter for educational

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<sup>40</sup> Anonymous, *A Letter from the King to His People* (London: University of London, Goldsmiths'-Kress Library, 1820), 5, 18-19.

<sup>41</sup> Anonymous, *Letter from the King*, 8-9, 11.

<sup>42</sup> Anonymous, *Letter from the King*, 25.

<sup>43</sup> Anonymous, *Letter from the King*, 35, 43-44.

reasons only.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, the Delicate Investigation's ruling that Caroline acted without modesty and respectability solidified the Prince's desire to separate the pair. A woman unable to behave with decorum should not have authority over the British heir apparent. Because Caroline could not manage her own life, it followed that her presence would not be beneficial to Charlotte. A bad wife did not make a good mother.

While few of the pro-king pamphlets outright address Caroline as a mother, they all comment on her unwomanly behavior. In a period where the roles of wife and mother defined womanhood, particularly within middle-class ideology, women's ability as wives directly reflected on their capabilities as mothers. Loyalists implicitly argued that Caroline's failure as a wife, the highest achievement for women, meant she could never be a good mother. Pro-king literature contested Queenite images that portrayed Caroline as a dutiful wife and mother. Numerous caricatures of the Princess during her time abroad depict her total enjoyment of it, particularly her time with Bergami. Not one of these prints shows Caroline pining for her daughter's company or even mourning Charlotte's death in 1817. Instead, the pictures portrayed an immodest, immoral, hedonist intent on satisfying herself.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, loyalist characterization of the Queen as a self-centered adulteress who failed to be a wife and mother cast doubt on her relationship with Charlotte. The King's supporters did not need direct commentary on

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<sup>44</sup> Anonymous, *Letter from the King*, 19.

<sup>45</sup> This list of caricatures is only a sample of pro-king images attacking Caroline for her overwhelming sexuality. George Cruikshank, *A R-Y-L Visit to a Foreign Capital, or, The Ambassador Not at Home...!* in Kenneth Baker's *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 118; Selim, *The Genius of History, or, Dressing for a Masked Ball at Naples*, in Kenneth Baker's *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 119; Theodore Lane, *Installation of a Knight Companion of the Bath*, Kenneth Baker's *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 120; Anonymous, *Bergami Pears, or, Choice Fruit*, Kenneth Baker's *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 122; Theodore Lane, *The Como-cal Hobby*, Kenneth Baker's *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 123.

Caroline's relationship with Charlotte to make their point understood: Caroline was a bad wife and, thereby, a bad mother.

Yet, the relationship between Caroline and Charlotte received outspoken attention in newspapers. In response to *The Queen's Letter to the King*, an early Queenite publication, the *Courier* reviewed the portion of the letter that described the Queen as a good wife and loving mother:

The cant of *maternal feelings* with which it is filled are the cool suggestions of a *hired penman*. The *tears* it talks of were never shed, but in the libeller's ink. The *tender feelings* of the *female heart* which it describes, are the florid inventions of a big-wigged rhetorician.<sup>46</sup>

The author of this article refused to believe Caroline capable of writing about maternal and tender feelings, instead attributing the letter to a hired pen. By disparaging her image as a loving mother, loyalists wanted to cast doubt on the Queen's ability to possess any womanly qualities.

*John Bull*, a newspaper created in the wake of the Queen's acquittal, solely committed itself to defending George by attacking Caroline. Caroline's devotion to her daughter occasioned severe criticism from the paper. In reference to Charlotte's death, the paper commented:

Now not to speak of the parade of grief for the loss of a daughter, for whom she cared so little, that, in her own private circle, she did not afford *one day of mourning*. The heartless allusion to an event which no mother of real sensibility could make to fifty strange men (half-naked or not), stamps the sort of feeling which attaches itself to the memory of her child. The Queen's Maternal woe is a part of her *stock in trade*, and when she is dressing to receive the scum of the metropolis, on Saint Monday, she puts it on as regularly and mechanically as she does the stain on her eye-brows, or the paint on her cheeks.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> *Courier*, 15 August 1820.

<sup>47</sup> *John Bull*, 24 December 1820.

In essence, loyalists claimed that the Queenite image of Caroline as an injured wife and mother was false because she only cared for herself. In depicting her thus, loyalists hoped to damage the idea of Caroline as a distressed mother because that particular image resonated with the middle class.

With the new emphasis on motherhood and the sense of solidarity motherhood engendered between women regardless of class, George's supporters faced a daunting task. Characterizing the Queen as a bad wife and mother went to the heart of bourgeois standards of womanhood. Damaging this representation of Caroline could have weakened the Queen's supporters and their press campaign. Caroline did not deserve support from the middling orders because she did not embrace the ideals of separate spheres: she dishonored her husband and the throne, she ignored a daughter she claimed to love, and she gallivanted across the continent in an inappropriate fashion surrounded by unsavory characters. Clearly, loyalists argued, this woman lacked the attributes necessary for respect.

**“They have laboured, it is true, to gloss over this flagrant breach of female modesty, by pretending that he slept by her for her protection!”<sup>48</sup>**

A third loyalist argument portrayed Caroline as a woman overwhelmed by her sexuality. Society expected fidelity from women, particularly from the woman providing the heir apparent.<sup>49</sup> Caroline's questionable relationship with Bergami and her immodest behavior provided evidence the King's supporters could exploit. To destroy Queenite arguments for her purity, loyalist propaganda highlighted the Princess's voracious sexual nature. The image of a Queen without virtue struck at the heart of bourgeois ideology—

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<sup>48</sup> William Turner, *An Address to the Queen's Friends* (London: William Turner, 1820), 4.

<sup>49</sup> Jonathan Fulcher, “The Loyalist Response to the Queen Caroline Agitations,” *Journal of British Studies* 34 (1995), 488-490.

without virtue, Caroline was not worth defending. Aristocrats used Caroline's overly familiar behavior to crush middle-class support.

In *An Address to the Queen's Friends*, William Turner scoffed at the Queenite argument that Bergami slept in her ship tent for her protection. Instead, Turner insinuated that Bergami occupied the tent for Caroline's pleasure, and that her desire for him dictated where he slept in each residence.<sup>50</sup> The *Courier* seconded this argument, "We must suppose, therefore, that Bergami made a voluntary offer of his services, and that her Majesty's "Brunswick heart," though insensible to fear, was not quite impenetrable to all other emotions."<sup>51</sup> *The Radical Harmonist* made it clear that Caroline's passions drove her to adultery:

Roar on, my boys, and make a noise  
For one who pays so well.  
She may take anew to one of you,  
Her tastes, you know, she cannot bridle;  
Any one may be the man,  
And become fat, rich, and idle.<sup>52</sup>

As the verse indicated, the Princess let her sexuality overwhelm her with Bergami. Even worse, it suggested that she could not control her passions, resulting in other lovers. Prostitutes and women of low-birth, not the Queen of England, acted this way. Loyalists promoted the image of an oversexed woman because it violated aristocratic and bourgeois beliefs about the ideal woman's submissiveness and chastity, thus, delegitimizing the Queen's cause. A queen who failed to remain faithful and pursued affairs threatened to damage more than her marriage. Caroline's outrageous exploits stirred social disorder. Loyalists needed to remove the threat she posed to the "natural"

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<sup>50</sup> Turner, *Address to the Queen's Friends*, 4.

<sup>51</sup> *Courier*, 13 October 1820.

<sup>52</sup> Anonymous, *Radical Harmonist*, 15.

gender order. Highlighting the Queen's supposed affair with a low-born foreigner sought to ruin her credibility as a woman worthy of support.

One pamphlet in particular, *The New Pilgrim's Progress*, blatantly illustrated Caroline's overwhelming sexuality. Under **HIRING**, the Princess chose Bergami for his physical attributes rather than merit. Her final comment to her new servant, "You shall ride and drive ME too," left little to the imagination; Caroline hired Bergami for her sexual pleasure.<sup>53</sup> The next section, entitled **RIDING POST**, further illustrated the Princess's sexual desire. She tells Bergami to drive them home faster, "For I am faint and fev'rish too/ . . . For I must e'en get out to you,/ Or you get in to me."<sup>54</sup> Caroline's feverishness derived from her desire to sleep with Bergami. Once she succeeded, Bergami's status rose.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, her open love for the "*Tu-lips* of Bergami" caused her English attendants to doubt her, forcing them to leave Caroline to save their reputations.<sup>56</sup> The departure of her English attendants witnessed the loss of the last remaining check on the Princess's behavior. Bergami soon earned a position riding in the coach with Caroline, a situation she took advantage of by learning "*All* the proportions of the lacquey." He made her "Happy all day long to see him,/ And to feel him all the night." So happy, in fact, that she "Deigns to be his bottle-holder!"<sup>57</sup> The conclusion depicted the Queen and Bergami in several indecent situations. The author's main argument highlighted Caroline's inability to control her sexuality: she hired Bergami based on physical attributes and advanced him as they became intimately involved.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Anonymous, *The New Pilgrim's Progress*, 243.

<sup>54</sup> Anonymous, *The New Pilgrim's Progress*, 244-245.

<sup>55</sup> Anonymous, *The New Pilgrim's Progress*, 245.

<sup>56</sup> Anonymous, *The New Pilgrim's Progress*, 246-247.

<sup>57</sup> Anonymous, *The New Pilgrim's Progress*, 248-249.

<sup>58</sup> Anonymous, *The New Pilgrim's Progress*, 256, 266.

Because she could not control her sexuality, Caroline became a tainted woman. Pamphlets argued that no man and, especially, no woman could associate with the Queen without damaging his or her character. *The Radical Ladder* illustrated the damage caused by associating with the Queen; “Who confess’d that reports were so shocking and sad,/ That to stay with the Queen she opin’d was too bad,/ Lest her character *pure* should incur a deep *stain*,/ Which she long might be toiling to wash out again.”<sup>59</sup> Another pamphlet, *The Radical Harmonist*, explained that respectable men and women knew Caroline’s society to be damaging and, therefore, avoided her company.<sup>60</sup> This argument targeted middle-class women to dissuade them from supporting Caroline. A woman’s most valuable possession, her honor, would never recover once she associated with an adulteress. This Kingite argument hoped to frighten a large part of Caroline’s supporters away, avoiding further challenges to the gender hierarchy.

More specifically, the Princess’s conduct negatively influenced women’s behavior. Caroline not only broke her marriage vows but she also stepped beyond accepted roles for women by fulfilling her desires and exerting control over her own life. *The Radical Harmonist* claimed that the men who supported the Queen did so at their wives’ behest. According to the author, the men attending a dinner to support Caroline hailed from “Petticoat Lane,” claiming that these men allowed their wives to rule them. The *Courier* supported this claim within its pages, stating, “the husbands are to wait at the table, and obey their wives.”<sup>61</sup> Thus, Kingites practiced normal and accepted gender roles while the Queen’s defenders embraced “a world turned upside down.”<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Anonymous, *Radical Ladder*, 231.

<sup>60</sup> Anonymous, *Radical Harmonist*, 14.

<sup>61</sup> *Courier*, 12 August 1820.

<sup>62</sup> Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 4, 274-275.

Similarly, *An Address to the Peers of England* addressed the negative affect that Caroline's actions had on the normal state of gender relations. The author admonished the Peers for not convicting the Queen, claiming that her acquittal would enable wives and daughters to act likewise.<sup>63</sup> An article in the *Morning Post*, feared for the moral impact that the acquittal would have on British women. Instead of honoring a nation, Caroline's adultery lowered the esteem felt for all women in England.<sup>64</sup> Because the House of Lords failed to convict Caroline, women throughout the nation would view her behavior as acceptable, thus destabilizing the norms that regulated relations between men and women. Loyalists latched onto Caroline's gender transgressions to undermine the Carolinite position and maintain control over women.

The idea that the King of England had an errant and unfaithful wife threatened the gender order; if the most powerful man in the land could not control his wife, what must that mean for the rest of the nation? For the loyalists, it was of paramount importance to show that the Bill of Pains and Penalties sought to punish a guilty woman—a disturber of the peace. Focusing on her overpowering sexuality and the gender reversals among those who supported her, Kingites hoped to frighten Caroline's defenders into upholding the social status quo. But, this argument silently criticized the King, too. Loyalists advocated patriarchy over separate spheres but failed actively to defend George's lifestyle. Despite the implicit criticism of George, the Queen's flagrant immodesty remained the thrust of the aristocratic argument about proper behavior.

Caricatures strengthened the argument for Caroline's overwhelming sexuality. While crude images typically appealed to the lower orders, caricatures had long been a

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<sup>63</sup> Sargant, *Address*, 5-6.

<sup>64</sup> *Morning Post*, 10 November 1820, 1 December 1820.

good purchased by and developed for the aristocracy.<sup>65</sup> Loyalist pictures explicitly illustrated the Queen's improper sexual behavior. *The Genius of History, or, Dressing for a Masked Ball at Naples* (Figure 3.4) addressed testimony that Caroline wore a costume that exposed her arms and breasts in public.<sup>66</sup> In the print, the Princess looks in the mirror while fixing her hair, Bergami at her side. Her sheer dress exposes her breasts, including her nipples, and her plump behind. Bergami's eyes focus on Caroline's bare bosom as he holds her wrap and a bottle of perfume named "essence of bergamy."<sup>67</sup> The image shows that the Princess acted with blatant indiscretion, allowing her sexuality to dictate her actions. A woman of her age and rank should never be alone with a man, much less invite a man to attend to her toilette.

A second caricature left little to the viewer's imagination. Artists' utilization of symbolism often attracted more attention to the prints that employed popular or easily deciphered symbols, such as a goat or pears.<sup>68</sup> *The Como-cal Hobby* (Figure 3.5) depicts the Princess as a goat—the symbol of sensuality—being ridden by Bergami who flourishes a whip. In the background, another couple imitates Bergami and the Princess, the man riding on the woman's back. This image presented two main arguments: first, Caroline indulged her sexuality with Bergami, and second, the Princess allowed a reversal of gender relations in her household.<sup>69</sup> *Bergami Pears, or, Choice Fruit* (Figure 3.6) alludes to her adultery and insatiable nature. The Princess sits in a chair, fully clothed, and holds a scroll titled "Defense." Two pears, a symbol for male genitalia,

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<sup>65</sup> Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 2-8.

<sup>66</sup> Selim, *The Genius of History, or, Dressing for a Masked Ball at Naples* in Kenneth Baker's *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 119.

<sup>67</sup> Baker, *George IV*, 119.

<sup>68</sup> Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 2-4.

<sup>69</sup> Theodore Lane, *The Como-cal Hobby* in Kenneth Baker's *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 123.

Figure 3.4 Selim, *The Genius of History, or, Dressing for a Masked Ball at Naples* (October 1820).

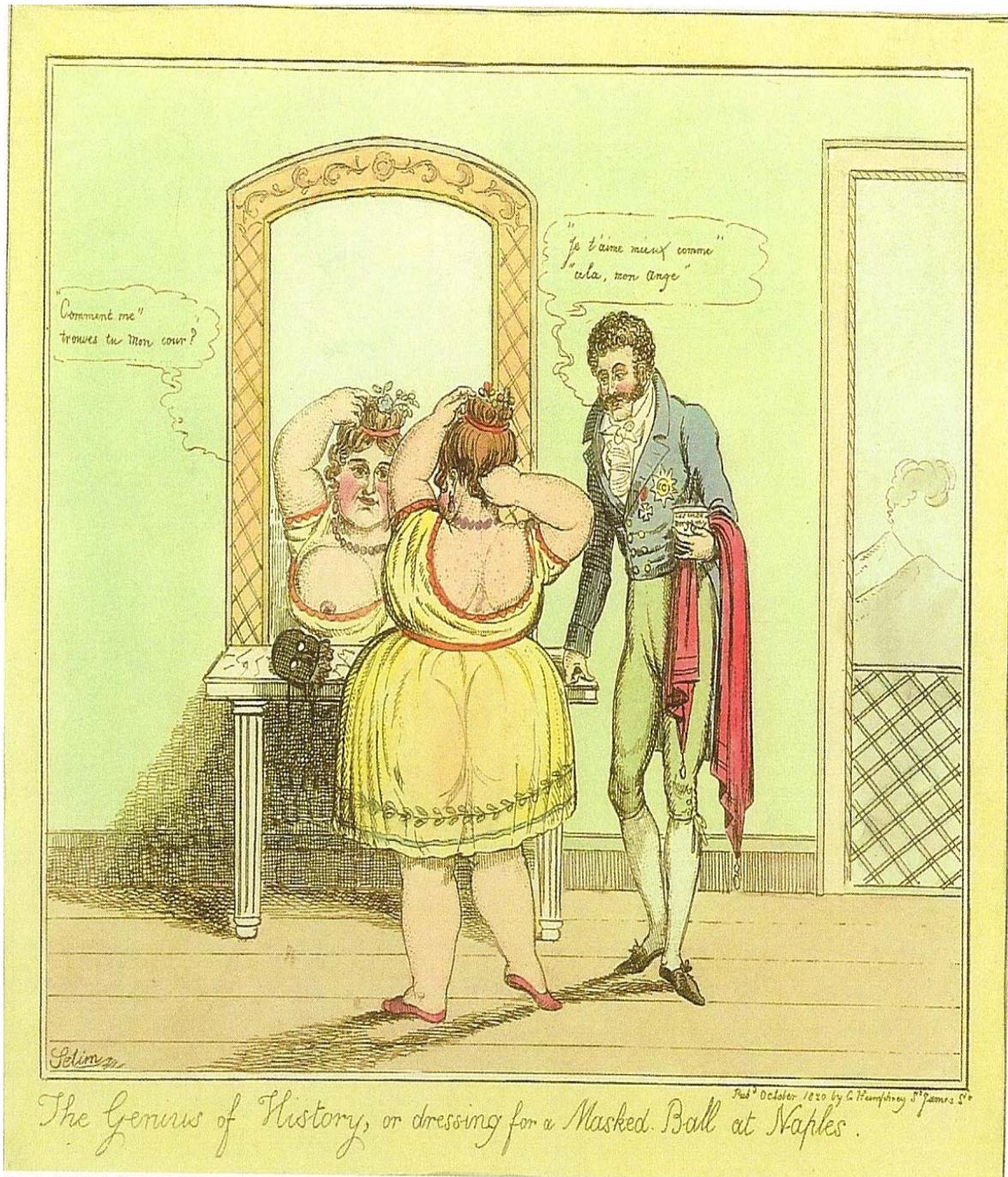


Figure 3.5 Theodore Lane, *The Como-cal Hobby* (April 1821).



Figure 3.6 Anonymous, *Bergami Pears, or, Choice Fruit* (October 1820).



dangle from the end of the scroll. Caroline says, “I do love these pears! but I hate Windsor pears,” proclaiming her sexual relationship with Bergami and disparaging her husband. Furthermore, pears cover the table while the Princess holds a half-eaten pear not far from her mouth, indicating fellatio. Taken with her position in the chair, legs spread indecorously wide, the artist argues that Caroline embraced her sexuality outside her marriage bed.<sup>70</sup> Loyalists used such prints to simplify written arguments. Here, the Queen’s overt sexuality took center stage. Her indecent dress and sexually suggestive actions proclaimed Caroline as the lowest sort of women, a prostitute. These caricatures transmitted a simple message: Caroline did not deserve the honor and respect due to a Queen because she did not behave as a proper woman.

This argument in particular damaged Caroline’s foundation of support. By appealing to middle-class notions of propriety, loyalists drove home the point that Caroline’s behavior was unacceptable. With images of a sexually voracious Queen, aristocrats wanted to remove any possibility of bourgeois support. How could moral, chaste, and virtuous men and women defend a Queen who reveled in her sexuality, committing adultery without reservation?

**Here lives Q---- C-----, who MOBS adore,  
And would their IDOL make for evermore!  
Had she, from youth, been moral, chaste, and wise,  
No shouts from thousands had assail’d the skies!  
Nor, with disgust, had blushing VIRTUE seen  
A brazen, factious, and licentious -----!<sup>71</sup>**

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<sup>70</sup> Anonymous, *Bergami Pears, or, Choice Fruit* in Kenneth Baker’s *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 122.

<sup>71</sup> *Morning Post*, 23 September 1820.

All of these loyalist critiques were linked by a single over-arching theme: Caroline's actions made her an unsuitable Queen of England. Caroline behaved inappropriately, cultivated unacceptable associations, failed to fulfill her roles as a wife and mother, and let her sexuality overwhelm her, all of which the King's defenders used to show that she should not reign as Queen. Furthermore, the debate over the trial forced a reexamination of expectations for royals. A comparison between Queen Charlotte and Queen Caroline highlighted the many ways in which Caroline failed as a role model for British women. Loyalists argued that her want of propriety caused national moral decay, while Queen Charlotte's morality set a fine example for women to follow. Finally, George's role received indirect criticism from aristocrats who sought new standards for the King of England.

Publications questioned Caroline's worthiness to represent all British women. J.A. Sargant called Caroline "the first female of England" and William Turner asked whether she deserved "to preside at the head of the female society of this country?"<sup>72</sup> The *Morning Post* believed danger would come from allowing a guilty and un-degraded Queen to remain at the head of female society.<sup>73</sup> *John Bull* summed up the situation simply:

The great—the real question is this, and this alone—is the Queen fit to remain at the head of the female society of England? is she fit to wear the unsullied diadem, to enjoy the homage of public respect, and to share in the devotion of our public prayers? in short, is she guilty or is she not?—is she the most injured, or the most profligate of women?—if injured, redress the injustice, and place her on the Throne by the side of her Husband and Sovereign—if profligate, be just to that Husband and Sovereign, and preserve his Person and his Throne from such contamination.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Sargant, *Address*, 1-3; Turner, *An Address to the Queen's Friends*, 7.

<sup>73</sup> *Morning Post*, 10 November 1820.

<sup>74</sup> *John Bull*, 14 January 1821.

Staunchly pro-king, this newspaper believed the latter to be true and that the throne needed to be free of Caroline's pollution. To solidify their argument about the expected morality of a Queen, loyalists used the image of Caroline as a moral contagion. Moreover, Caroline's sex determined what norms people expected her to follow and the King's supporters utilized bourgeois gender ideals in their attempt to undermine the Queen's support.

By comparing Caroline and Queen Charlotte, Kingites showed that Caroline lacked the necessary qualities to reign as queen. Caroline always fell short in comparison to Charlotte, who set the standard of expectations for future Queen Consorts. In a description of the duties of a Queen Consort, the *Morning Post* claimed:

The nation has not only a strict right, but an unquestionable interest, and an indispensable duty, to require . . . an unstained character . . . in its Sovereign Lady, the chief favourite of the country, the model of female manners, and the source from which either decorum, delicacy, and morals—or coarse licentiousness, equivocal purity, and dangerous relaxation, must derive.<sup>75</sup>

In a later article the *Post* continued, “The situation of a Queen of England was a responsible situation; she was a great functionary of the State . . . she was expected and *ought* to be a model and example to female conduct. All that the country required of her was that her conduct should be correct and pure.”<sup>76</sup>

*A Letter from the King to His People* similarly expressed the greater standards expected of a queen. In particular, the author argued that Caroline's position “demanded a greater degree of discretion” and required that she maintain a “dignified and elegant association.”<sup>77</sup> As her past behavior demonstrated, Caroline's upbringing did not

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<sup>75</sup> *Morning Post*, 1 July 1820.

<sup>76</sup> *Morning Post*, 9 November 1820.

<sup>77</sup> Anonymous, *A Letter from the King*, 8-9.

prepare her to reign in superficially moral England. Her overt familiarity, slovenly dress, and lack of decorum severely handicapped her chance at meeting the high demands of a Queen Consort. Added to this burden, the lack of assistance by anyone in her circle of acquaintances guaranteed that she would never attain the lofty expectations of her future station.<sup>78</sup> Loyalists used her unfortunate upbringing and undignified activities to illustrate the severe and unacceptable differences between Caroline and her predecessor.

Queen Charlotte personified the bourgeois ideals of a moral, virtuous, and dutiful wife and mother, becoming a model that loyalists used to damage Queenite arguments about Caroline's suitability. Pro-king publications highlighted the exemplary behavior of Charlotte and the questionable morality of Caroline. The *Morning Post* reflected on Queen Charlotte's exceptional behavior:

That great Queen and illustrious woman, who was, for more than half a century, the brightest ornament of the Court of Britain, as she was its most effectual safe-guard . . . Who can calculate the benefits of her pure example, of her unstained reputation, of the determined stand which she made against vice, however high in birth, and exalted in rank? The Court over which she presided was the most correct in Christendom.<sup>79</sup>

In contrast, Caroline's disturbance of the royal household, her questionable fidelity at Blackheath, and accusations of her adultery with a foreigner fell short of Queen Charlotte's example. The *Courier* spoke highly of Queen Charlotte, "Her [Caroline's] good and virtuous predecessor, the pious, the chaste, the exemplary Queen CHARLOTTE, lived and reigned among us above half a century, without reproach," while Caroline stained the morals of the nation.<sup>80</sup> Such comparisons highlighted Caroline's failure to meet bourgeois expectations as described by Kingites.

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<sup>78</sup> Perkin, *Women and Marriage*, 36; Fraser, *Unruly Queen*, ch. 1.

<sup>79</sup> *Morning Post*, 1 December 1820.

<sup>80</sup> *Courier*, 11 November 1820.

Interestingly, most of the elite found the court of George III and his wife dull, avoiding it at all costs. Aristocrats abhorred the domestic and moral nature of the royal couple.<sup>81</sup> But, for the purpose of undermining the new Queen's supporters, loyalist publishers drew on the increasingly influential bourgeoisie's gender beliefs. Queen Charlotte exemplified the womanly attributes advocated by the middle class, attributes that Caroline failed to possess. This comparison struck at the heart of pro-queen arguments because of middle-class support for George III's and Charlotte's moral and domestic lifestyle. Kingites used the comparison between Charlotte and Caroline to highlight the stark differences between the two women, undercutting the power of Carolinite arguments that the new Queen was a true woman.

Most importantly, Caroline's behavior negatively influenced the nation as a whole. As the head of all women in the country, the Queen's example held significant weight from the highest to the lowest women. But more than that, Caroline's actions reflected upon the reputation of England itself. Her lack of queenly attributes and the charges against her, according to the loyalists, undermined popular morals and Britain's standing in world affairs. Before the official trial commenced, speeches in Parliament addressed the moral issues raised by the case. One member from the Opposition exclaimed:

For God's sake—for the sake of the country . . . for the sake of the wives and daughters of all who loved decency, morality . . . he called upon the House . . . to ascertain if it were yet possible to escape from this threatened calamity. If the means of avoiding it were yet afforded, he put it to honourable members, as they valued everything that was dear to them—as they valued the character of England as a nation—whether they would not hesitate before they opened a subject disgusting in itself, and most destructive in its consequences.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 152-153; Parissien, *George IV*, 21-22; Smith, *George IV*, 2-4.

<sup>82</sup> Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, Ser. II, Vol. I, 941-942.

The fear of potential moral consequences arising from the pursuit of a divorce prompted many men in Parliament to speak out against the action. An open trial would make Caroline's actions a part of the public record, leading toward moral contamination. Even without solid proof of her adultery, Caroline's unusual antics made her seem, to aristocratic eyes, unsuitable as a figure for emulation.

Pamphlets and newspapers likewise proclaimed the doom of English morality. *An Address to the Peers of England* argued that the Queen's acquittal destroyed the "moral interests of the country" by placing an adulteress on the throne, "a person who is an unfit associate for a virtuous woman even of the lowest class."<sup>83</sup> The *Courier* proclaimed an adulteress worse than an adulterer because women cannot control their excesses like men, which, in Caroline's case, led to moral contamination.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, the paper labeled Caroline's actions a "monstrous evil" that undermined the "safety of the State, [and] the morals of the country."<sup>85</sup> The *Morning Post* described the Queen's behavior as a "female pollution" of the throne and the nation.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, her actions brought about a moral taint on the nation, disgracing the national character.<sup>87</sup> Finally, the *Post* declared that "through the profligacy and artifices of a woman," England has become "the laughing-stock of Europe," bringing "virtuous Britain" under intense scrutiny.<sup>88</sup> Such Kingite arguments illustrated the damage that Caroline's action, the actions of a woman, inflicted upon the country. Her behavior, not George's, deserved punishment because of the severe consequences linked with a woman stepping beyond her proscribed role.

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<sup>83</sup> Sargant, *Address*, ii, 2-3.

<sup>84</sup> *Courier*, 10 November 1820.

<sup>85</sup> *Courier*, 9 June 1820.

<sup>86</sup> *Morning Post*, 10 November 1820.

<sup>87</sup> *Morning Post*, 20 June 1820, 21 August 1820.

<sup>88</sup> *Morning Post*, 23 November 1820.

So, how did the loyalists prove that Caroline was unfit to remain the Queen Consort? When viewed against the domestic, virtuous, and moral behavior of Queen Charlotte, Caroline never stood a chance at retaining her image as innocent and pure. Each argument loyalists advanced consciously employed a gendered discourse to degrade and denigrate Caroline and her threat to the political and social order. Through representations in pamphlets, caricatures, and newspapers, loyalists appropriated middle-class language and ideas about gender roles to show how Caroline fell short as a *woman*. While the nobility never truly embraced middle-class ideologies about separate spheres and moral living, the loyalists used such ideas because they cut to the heart of Carolinite arguments. Pro-king literature sought to undercut pro-queen propaganda, which juxtaposed a virtuous and innocent Caroline against a tyrannical and cruel George; therefore, the loyalists used similar language and ideas, making Caroline the transgressor and George the victim.

Yet, George rarely appeared directly in Kingite discourse. A large part of pro-queen literature relied on attacking his character while upholding the Queen's position. Conversely, pro-king publications shied away from addressing George. This absence from the propaganda reflected the King's notorious reputation and the sexual double standard. References to George remained vague yet positive. For example, of the eight pamphlets under analysis, only two commented upon the King openly; the others focused on destroying Caroline's reputation. Sargent's *Address to the Peers of England* referred to the King's attributes in a footnote calling him "the most accomplished Prince in Europe . . . so highly gifted, so *conspicuous*, even *amongst sovereigns*, for the elegance of his manners and the variety of his acquirements—unequalled in dignified politeness,

as in amiable and gracious condescension.”<sup>89</sup> In the same note, Sargant listed the “grossness and indelicacy” of the Queen and her actions.<sup>90</sup> Yet, no mention of George’s long list of mistresses appeared, nor did any mention of his excessive debts, his drinking, or his political policies.

*A Letter from the King to His People* adopted the voice of the King, allowing loyalists to tell George’s side of the story. Each grievance he held against the Queen appeared with a detailed explanation. In regards to his own behavior, the King offered weak excuses for becoming “thoughtlessly extravagant” in his expenditures.<sup>91</sup> Yet, the document failed to mention the King’s notorious affairs with married women, whose husbands and families gained lucrative positions as a result. Rather, the pamphlet documented George’s attempts to be a dutiful and caring husband to a wayward wife. The Prince provided Caroline with money and homes, he allowed her to maintain her rank, all he asked for in return, that she act in a manner appropriate for the wife of the Prince of Wales.<sup>92</sup> This pamphlet, especially, portrayed the double standard on a national scale.

Despite these two pamphlets, loyalists remained silent about George’s behavior. Changing expectations of the monarch and fluctuating ideologies about gender roles influenced the pro-king position. Because Kingites used middle-class beliefs to debate the scandal, they trapped themselves, making commentary on George’s behavior impossible. Their argument that Caroline was unworthy to be the Queen because of her adultery would have backfired had they applied the same argument to the King’s actions.

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<sup>89</sup> Sargant, *Address*, 15.

<sup>90</sup> Sargant, *Address*, 14.

<sup>91</sup> Anonymous, *A Letter From the King*, 4.

<sup>92</sup> Anonymous, *A Letter from the King*, 11, 15, 18.

Yet, George was a vastly unpopular ruler and many aristocrats remained loyal for personal reasons rather than true allegiance. The loyalist silence surrounding the King's behavior indicated an unspoken criticism of him as much as the attacks on Caroline denigrated her. The pro-king faction did not defend George.

Although loyalists remained mute about the King's sexual liaisons, their expressions of the Queen's supposed misdeeds and the lack of acknowledgment of the King's immorality looked like tacit acceptance of the double standard. According to pro-king literature, Caroline could not sit on "the Chaste Throne of Great Britain" because she engaged in an affair with a lowborn foreigner.<sup>93</sup> Her conduct brought shame down on the crown, the throne, and the nation. No woman believed to be unfaithful could sit on the throne with impunity.<sup>94</sup> Society held higher expectations for women, especially royal women, and any hint of improper conduct stained a woman's reputation. Although the House of Lords acquitted the Queen, loyalists believed the accusations tarnished her character irrevocably.

Conversely, men acted as they pleased and rarely received condemnation, much less harsh punishment. The double standard allowed men, simply because they were born men, to get away with behavior deemed immoral and reprehensible in women. But, loyalists did not necessarily uphold the King's adultery. Rather, his affairs remained untouched for two reasons. First, loyalists would have undermined their arguments against the Queen, necessitating a different approach. Their publications would have drawn unwanted attention to the guilty King had George's supporters applied the same

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<sup>93</sup> *Morning Post*, 10 August 1820.

<sup>94</sup> Anonymous, *Radical Ladder*, 218; Anonymous, *New Pilgrim's Progress*, 266; Anonymous, *Radical Harmonist*, 8, 14; Sargant, *Address*, 6-8; Anonymous, *Letter to the Queen*, 56-57; Anonymous, *Letter from the King*, 43-44; Anonymous, *Declaration of the People*, 14-15; Turner, *Address*, 4, 6-7, 12.

middle-class expectations to him. Moreover, loyalist response to Carolinite propaganda witnessed some success because it exploited the same language that pro-queen publications used. Highlighting the King's inability to meet middle-class expectations for men would have destroyed loyalist support. Second, George held the power of success and ruin over the nobility. Challenging the King's actions would have spelled financial, political, and social doom. For loyalists, the debate over the trial remained a dispute about Caroline's actions. Without direct discussion of George's activities, pro-king supporters implicitly advocated a sexual double standard.

Finally, the divorce scandal enabled a discussion and reconfiguration of the monarch's role. George's position as monarch underwent changes, gaining strength from the gendered issues apparent in the divorce trial. With his bouts of illness and the humiliation and instability associated with the American and French revolutions, George III lost his ability to be politically intrusive. To stabilize the country, he became a figurehead that stood for monarchical splendor and domestic simplicity. According to Linda Colley, George III's shift from a political monarch to a domestic king held significant implications for future monarchs. The emergence of the King's new role as a virtuous father and husband coincided with the strengthening of the middle class, who praised the domestic nature of the King.<sup>95</sup> With George III's example to build upon, the bourgeoisie affirmed his values and applied them to the nation at large, establishing private virtue as a necessary trait of future leaders.<sup>96</sup> Tamara L. Hunt illustrates the changes in caricatures' representations of George III. After the 1780s, images of the King began to show him as a "symbolic head of state" rather than a political actor,

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<sup>95</sup> Colley, "Apotheosis," 106, 109, 111, 125.

<sup>96</sup> Hunt, "Morality and Monarchy," 718.

suggesting that the public cared less about the King's political prowess than his personal virtue.<sup>97</sup> Thus, the Queen Caroline affair delved into the domestic expectations for kings and queens of England.

George IV was the first king to wield no political power. So, what purpose did he serve? Davidoff and Hall contend that the trial against Caroline caused the middle class to expect a proper domestic life from the royal family.<sup>98</sup> Loyalists encouraged that expectation by applying middle-class tropes to their debate. Tamara L. Hunt argues that the publications generated during the controversy in 1820 reflected the growing emphasis the public placed on private morality, especially from the sovereign.<sup>99</sup> And Linda Colley suggests that George III's popularity as a monarch increased because he adopted domestic and moral habits while George IV continued to sink into unpopularity because of his open enjoyment of sex and other vices.<sup>100</sup> Loyalists' failure to defend the King's dissolute habits supports Colley's argument, even the aristocracy could not stand up for his licentious lifestyle. The focus on morality and domesticity, which went against the practices of the nobility as well as George, addressed not only the private virtues of a monarch but also proper gender roles. Ultimately, the widespread discussion of gender systems bled over onto the debate about the King's new role.

Davidoff and Hall, Colley, and Hunt all recognize that the monarch's role as the head of the nation underwent significant change in this period. The Caroline affair was critical in establishing this new role. Through the press, people debated expectations for monarchs as husbands and wives, and men and women. The gendered language and

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<sup>97</sup> Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 230, 234.

<sup>98</sup> Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 152.

<sup>99</sup> Hunt, "Morality and Monarchy," 717-718.

<sup>100</sup> Colley, "Apotheosis," 104.

images used to debate Caroline's and George's behavior highlighted the centrality of issues like proper gender relations, domesticity, and morality. Both pro-queen and pro-king literature adopted bourgeois ideas to address the actions and characters of Caroline and George. A distinct idea of society's expectations for the King emerged from this debate. Clearly, the lack of positive portrayals of George indicated a *popular* feeling of dislike. Taken with the loyalists' unspoken criticism of the King's behavior, George IV represented what Britons did not want from their ruler.

Ultimately, both Carolinites and loyalists expressed society's demand for something more from George. His lack of a political presence demanded that George IV fulfill a different role for the nation. Colley argues that the nation wanted a figurehead to represent the nation proudly. And in many ways, George provided monarchical splendor.<sup>101</sup> But what else did people want from their ruler? The disdain that both pro-queen and pro-king factions expressed in regards to George's behavior reflected that his current actions did not meet their expectations. The bourgeois gendered images and language used by both groups in the debate over the Caroline affair indicated a desire from both the middle class and the aristocracy for a monarch who embraced a domestic and virtuous life. They wanted another George III and Queen Charlotte with their emphasis on domesticity, religion, and virtue. This debate gave credence to the strength of bourgeois values and their spread throughout society. Redefining the King's role within a middle-class belief system fixed the cultural shift from patriarchy to separate spheres and laid the foundation for the Victorian era—a period where the royal family embraced domesticity, virtue, and piety, eschewing the profligacy of George IV.

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<sup>101</sup> Colley, "Apotheosis," 99, 102, 104, 106, 108, 125-126.

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During the Queen Caroline divorce scandal, loyal aristocratic men and women engaged in a propaganda battle to combat the derogatory attacks made against George and his ministers. Loyalists attempted to counter negative images of the King by undermining the Queen's support. To undercut Caroline's widespread popularity, loyalists challenged the predominant image of a pure, virtuous, and wronged woman. Aristocrats wanted to ruin her reputation because Caroline posed a major problem for George's backers—she threatened the social and political orders. Her "cause" triggered political upheaval in a period where social tension required little provocation to boil over. In such an atmosphere, the nobility viewed the Queen as a genuine danger to the established order. More important to this study, the Queen's personal behavior, and the bourgeoisie's interpretation of her actions, contested the accepted gender norms of the aristocracy as well as the sexual double standard. Loyalists wanted to preserve the gender hierarchy rather than accept the middle-class ideology of separate spheres, which required morality and fidelity from both sexes. The bourgeois language used by Caroline's supporters in conjunction with her popularity required a response from George's proponents.

For loyalists to sway public opinion away from the Queen, they needed to destroy her upright image. Using the same middle-class gender ideologies Carolinites' employed, aristocrats attempted to discredit Caroline. Loyalists tried to neutralize the threat she posed to politics and society by creating an image of a bad woman, wife, and mother—a woman completely unsuitable and unworthy to be Queen. Publications

claimed that she acted beneath her station, associated with unsavory people, failed to be a submissive and obedient wife, neglected a daughter she did not love, and engaged in adultery. Each of these arguments could have condemned the Queen by themselves, but taken as a whole, Caroline's character did not stand a chance.

Such arguments highlighted the tension evident in the loyalist position. Caught in a transitional moment between the established system of patriarchy and the burgeoning idea of separate spheres, the Caroline affair enabled a widespread discussion of appropriate gender relations. While trying to maintain their ideas about gender roles, aristocrats used bourgeois values to define the appropriate gender relationship for the King and Queen. Reinforcing the system they struggled against, the loyalist side of the debate affirmed middle-class ideals, thus backing aristocrats into a confirmation of separate spheres over patriarchy. Moreover, loyalists' implicit criticism of the King's antics suggested that aristocrats disliked his lifestyle even though George represented the antithesis of bourgeois values. Thus, the aristocracy's struggle to maintain their own values became muddied by their obvious disapproval of George and their use of middle-class ideology to attack the Queen.

In the end, Parliament acquitted the Queen and great celebrations occurred throughout the nation. Although Caroline won the day, her character suffered irreparable damage while George began to gain popularity. Shortly after the end of the trial, public opinion began to turn against the Queen when she accepted a raise in her income.<sup>102</sup> Loyalists failed to achieve a complete degradation of Caroline and a dispersal of her followers. And the scandal found aristocrats supporting bourgeois values in a situation

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<sup>102</sup> Fraser, *Unruly Queen*, 449-454; Holme, *Caroline*, 217-220; Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 287-289; Hunt, "Morality and Monarchy," 719-722; Plowden, *Caroline and Charlotte*, 213-215.

where the elite wanted to uphold their established way of life. Despite the tension caused by aristocratic support of middle-class practices, loyalists achieved their ultimate goal—averting a major political and social upheaval.

## CHAPTER 4

### Conclusion

**“Most Gracious Queen, we thee implore  
To go away and sin no more;  
But, if that effort be too great,  
To go away, at any rate.”<sup>1</sup>**

Queen Caroline’s “acquittal” on 10 November 1820 witnessed the final stages of the scandal. Rather than risk a hostile public reaction, Lord Castlereagh dropped the Bill after the House of Lords reached a majority of only nine votes. Caroline and her supporters won the day. Celebrations erupted nationally with illuminations occurring for five days.<sup>2</sup> The *Times* called them “a splendid and universal celebration” of “victory over . . . domestic tyranny and flagitious persecution.”<sup>3</sup> To commemorate her victory, Caroline planned a thanksgiving ceremony at St. Paul’s Cathedral.

The service at St. Paul’s was the last expression of unity and support in the Queen’s name. Politically, Caroline was no longer useful. Her acquittal failed to place Whigs and radicals in power. And without Caroline’s cause holding them together, the parties ended their alliance, despite their common goal of parliamentary reform. Moreover, the Queen never embraced the political aspirations of her supporters. Heedless of Whig and radical aims and support, Caroline selfishly secured her future.

As the trial revealed increasingly prurient sexual evidence, Caroline’s middle-class supporters grew more concerned with her behavior. Testimony from former

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<sup>1</sup> As quoted in E.A. Smith’s, *George IV*, 183.

<sup>2</sup> Clark, *Scandal*, 204; Fraser, *Unruly Queen*, 444-446.

<sup>3</sup> *Times*, 11 November 1820.

servants exposed Caroline's intimacy with Bergami, including their sleeping arrangements, his presence in her bathing chamber, and their overly familiar interactions. The most damaging testimony came from Captain Gargiulo. He testified that on board his *polacca* Bergami and Caroline slept and bathed together, not bothering to hide their physical intimacy.<sup>4</sup> Such testimony confirmed Caroline's infidelity, but the populace refused to see her punished while George remained untouched. During the trial, the bourgeoisie overlooked this evidence in light of the King's immoral behavior. But, the Queen's acquittal in November removed the threat to her position as wife, causing many bourgeois supporters to defect. As well, an increase in anti-queen literature dissuaded further middle-class support. Finally, because the bourgeoisie morally castigated George, their moral standards required that they also criticize Caroline.<sup>5</sup> Given the evidence and her unwomanly behavior, the middle-class could no longer uphold her as an injured and abandoned woman.

Caroline's acceptance of an increased annuity killed her cause. Upon her return in June 1820, the Queen took a stand against accepting "bribe" money (an increase in her annuity to remain abroad) unless George restored her name to the Liturgy. Throughout the trial, Caroline adamantly refused any money. But early in 1821 she accepted the £15,000 increase without successfully restoring her name to the Prayer Book. This act destroyed the faith of her remaining defenders, tarnishing her reputation. At the same time, George's popularity began to rise.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Fraser, *Unruly Queen*, Ch. 17, especially 424-428.

<sup>5</sup> Clark, *Scandal*, 203-205; Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 287-288; Hunt, "Morality and Monarchy," 719; Smith, *George IV*, 182.

<sup>6</sup> Fraser, *Unruly Queen*, 452-453; Clark, *Scandal*, 204-206.

Throughout the ordeal, the King secluded himself, avoiding the displays of popular displeasure aimed at him. He publicly reemerged after the acquittal, earning his subjects' grudging support. The number of spontaneous addresses he received increased along with open public approbation. His accession day witnessed "God Save the King" sung "with rapture and waving of hats" while calls for "God Save the Queen" met with hisses. At the opera, George received a standing ovation and a man who asked "Where's your wife Georgy?" was sat upon immediately.<sup>7</sup> Finally, the elaborate preparations for George's coronation appealed to the populace. His return to the public eye, his air of formality and regality, and his extravagant coronation reestablished the preeminence of the monarchy, giving Britons a renewed sense of pride after the scandals of the Regency.<sup>8</sup>

On 19 July 1821, George IV was crowned in the most expensive coronation in British history. The ceremony, which Sir Walter Scott described as "splendour . . . never paralleled in Europe," used spectacle and pageantry to inspire loyalty and excitement. The King became the focus of the public's attention. Yet, Caroline remained on the periphery of these events. Despite George's refusals, the Queen attempted to attend the coronation. Her few aristocratic friends accompanied her, witnessing her denied entry. After trying all the doors, Caroline left in defeat, followed by hisses and hoots. Deserted for the excitement of the coronation, the Queen's final attempt to claim her rightful position failed. Sir Walter Scott described the state of Caroline's cause, it was "a fire of

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<sup>7</sup> Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 288-289; Smith, *George IV*, 182-183.

<sup>8</sup> Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 290-291.

straw which has now burnt to the very embers, and those who try to blow it into light again, will only blacken their hands and noses.”<sup>9</sup>

Upon returning from the coronation, Caroline became severely ill with digestive troubles. She made a final public appearance on 30 July before dying of a bowel obstruction on 7 August 1821. The Queen’s funeral procession drew one last show of support. To deter protests, the government routed the procession away from Queenite areas, such as the City of London. But Carolinites, mainly working-class agitators, had a different idea. They forced the procession through the city, resulting in riots and manslaughter. The departure of Caroline’s remains to Brunswick for burial ended the affair. The inscription on the Queen’s coffin expressed her feelings succinctly; “Here lies Caroline of Brunswick, the injured Queen of England.”<sup>10</sup>

George ruled for another nine years. Following Caroline’s death, he toured his kingdom, inspiring displays of support in Ireland and Scotland. He never remarried, instead remaining with his mistress Lady Conyngham. Although the issue of Catholic emancipation caused him political strife, the King retained his Tory government. He spent his last two years in virtual seclusion at Windsor, dying of arteriosclerosis on 26 June 1830.<sup>11</sup> The Duke of Wellington called George “the worst man he ever fell in with his whole life, the most selfish, the most false, the most ill-natured, entirely without one redeeming quality.”<sup>12</sup> The *Times* wrote,

There never was an individual less regretted by his fellow-creatures than this deceased king. What eye has wept for him? What heart has heaved one sob of unmercenary sorrow? . . . If he ever had a friend – a devoted

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<sup>9</sup> As quoted in Fraser, *Unruly Queen*, 457.

<sup>10</sup> Fraser, *Unruly Queen*, 456-466.

<sup>11</sup> David, *Prince of Pleasure*, 421-423; Smith, *George IV*, 191-204.

<sup>12</sup> As quoted in Christopher Hibbert, *George IV: Regent and King, 1811-1830* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 310.

friend in any rank of life – we protest that the name of him or her never reached us.”<sup>13</sup>

Although he regained popularity at his coronation, he died as one of the most despised monarchs in British history.

## II.

The Queen Caroline affair raised important questions about politics, class, and gender. Previous studies have highlighted politics and class while subordinating issues of sex and gender. Yet, fluctuating ideologies, such as patriarchy versus separate spheres, contributed to the broader scope of the debate. In fact, sources such as newspapers, satirical pamphlets, and caricatures reveal significant ideas about contemporary gender ideals. Taking off from previous scholarly work, I discovered that both Queenites and loyalists appropriated middle-class gender ideologies to argue about the royals.

Carolinites juxtaposed images of Caroline as pure, innocent, and abandoned with representations of George as immoral and cruel. Using middle-class standards for proper gender behavior, pro-queen literature defined men’s and women’s roles while also challenging immorality and the sexual double standard. Thus, the scandal enabled the bourgeoisie to spread their values about gender roles at a national level. Loyalist propaganda countered the Queen’s virtuous image by using the same middle-class gender rhetoric to attack her. Aristocrats wanted to neutralize the threat that she posed to the political and social order. While defending patriarchy, loyalists actually advocated bourgeois ideals, which generated tension between their goal, neutralizing Caroline, and their methods, using middle-class discourse.

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<sup>13</sup> *Times*, 15 July 1830.

Queenites succeeded because they sustained a consistent argument: Caroline, an innocent and abandoned woman, suffered at the hands of a cruel, immoral husband. The bourgeoisie used images and rhetoric that people could believe. George's public affairs, hedonistic lifestyle, and mistreatment of Caroline provided an easy defense because her actions always looked better in comparison. Moreover, Carolinites publicly adhered to the moral code they celebrated when defending the Queen. The middle class believed its values should apply to the royal family. With the example of George III and Charlotte before them, the bourgeoisie proclaimed higher expectations for monarchs. Using the affair to spread their beliefs, Queenites castigated George for failing to meet their standards and for attacking a woman embracing such values.

Audience played an important role in the affair as well. Queenite literature targeted the middle class. Using the affair as a platform, the bourgeoisie spread and defined their ideas, hoping to create class-consciousness. Appealing to ideas about morality, virtue, and fidelity, Carolinites built a strong foundation of support. The powerful imagery the bourgeoisie used resonated with a group determined to establish their moral superiority. And Queenite literature succeeded because it remained consistent with the practices of the middle class.

Even in the face of the Queen's misdeeds, the bourgeoisie upheld their moral code. Rather than ignore Caroline's unorthodox actions, Queenites addressed them outright. Her public persona, familiarity with men, and lax behavior violated middle-class gender roles. But, instead of covering it up, the bourgeoisie acknowledged her inconsistencies, blaming George and his ministers. Queenites claimed that the King's unfitness as a man and husband caused Caroline's unwomanly actions. Had George been

an upright man, she would not have acted in an unbecoming manner. Carolinites faulted the ministers for creating the sordid mess by bringing private, family issues before the public and courts. Thus, the King and his ministers were responsible for the Queen's bizarre behavior, absolving her of any wrongdoing. Ultimately, Queenites' reputations along with their admission of Caroline's deficiencies stymied loyalist attacks, bolstering the middle-class position.

As well, pro-queen supporters held George and his ministers responsible for the decay in national morals. Rather than believe that Caroline's actions polluted public morality, Queenites argued that the King and his ministers caused the dissemination of such filth by pursuing the Bill. Their persecution of an innocent, vulnerable woman made a private affair public, tainting public virtue. Such actions revealed the dishonest and unmanly characters of George and his ministers while Queenite literature continued to uphold the Queen as virtuous. Given the immoral backgrounds of Caroline's persecutors, pro-queen supporters found it easier to believe in Caroline as a victim, as opposed to George. But Queenite fear of national moral decay also reflects a desire not only for a moral monarch, but also for a moral society. The bourgeoisie no longer accepted George's or society's licentiousness.

Finally, the bourgeois ability to place blame on George during the scandal further explains why Caroline fell out of favor so quickly after the trial. The Queen's acquittal removed any roadblock to the fulfillment of her womanly roles. Although no longer under attack from George and his ministers, Caroline continued to behave badly. Thus, for the middle class it was no longer possible to blame her actions on anyone else. And without a way to justify her improper activities, the middle-class could not use her any

more. Caroline's on-going bad behavior violated bourgeois ideals, making it necessary for the bourgeoisie to abandon her cause. Therefore, the Queen was no longer a useful tool for the spread of middle-class values, making a continued association with her a liability for the bourgeoisie.

### III.

The loyalist effort to defeat Queenite arguments failed. Kingites could not win because of the blatant hypocrisy of their position and because they shared particular gender expectations with the Queenites. Aristocrats condemned Caroline because she failed to meet bourgeois standards. They attacked her character, purity, and honesty, arguing that she was unworthy to be Queen. Yet, Kingites ignored George's problematic behavior. His unabashed adultery and abandonment of his wife received no censure from loyalists, who examined Caroline's every action and found her wanting. The bourgeoisie renounced the double standard, instead expecting virtue and fidelity from *both* men and women. By refusing to hold George to the same expectations that they required of the Queen, Kingites undermined their own arguments.

Such hypocrisy revealed tensions in loyalist arguments. Audience reflects one conflict apparent in Kingite discourse. Pro-king supporters appealed to the middle class to take George's side at the same time snubbing them as a grubby mob. Aristocrats disliked the bourgeoisie because of their growing power. Yet, loyalists recognized the significant role the bourgeoisie played in the Caroline affair. Hoping to persuade the middle class to abandon the Queen, Kingites attacked her behavior with bourgeois rhetoric. The nobility's appeal highlighted Caroline's un-bourgeois behavior, illustrating why the middle class should not support her. Kingites knew that the majority of support

lay with the Queen so they sought to undermine pro-queen arguments by removing her staunchest advocates, the middle class.

When loyalists failed to win the bourgeoisie over with their own principles, they attacked middle-class credibility. Characterizing middle-class men and women as a “mob” or “vile rabble” violated bourgeois ideals. Such descriptions destroyed bourgeois respectability and distinctiveness, essentially putting them on the same level as the working class. This argument reflected the loyalists’ desire to damage the Queenite position. The middle class posed a real threat to the established order, which the nobility feared. But the Kingites’ dual response, a combination of appeal and attack, reflected the tension in their beliefs. They sought to maintain the status quo at the same time that they validated bourgeois ideals.

Another conflict highlighted in Kingite arguments reflected how loyalists used middle-class morality to attack Caroline but remained silent about George’s reprobate behavior. By holding the Queen to bourgeois standards, pro-king supporters aimed to undermine Queenite arguments for Caroline’s innocence and virtue. Yet, Kingites’ appropriation of middle-class values proved problematic. If they expected Caroline to adhere to bourgeois ideals, indeed, castigating her for failing, then George deserved the same degradation. Two reasons prevented loyalists from applying bourgeois morality to the King’s behavior. First, George controlled every aristocrat’s fate—titles, wealth, pensions. In supporting the King, loyalists had to work within certain parameters, condemning George’s behavior was unacceptable. Second, the King behaved much worse than Caroline. If Kingites applied the same values to George’s actions, even loyalists would concede that George mistreated and unfairly persecuted Caroline. But

aristocrats remained silent even when they had the opportunity to uphold George as an example of a patriarch. This silence indicates loyalist unease with George's lifestyle. Perhaps aristocrats wanted to maintain the established order, but their failure to defend the King suggests an implicit affirmation that even George needed to meet certain moral expectations.

Pro-king literature reflects a final tension between aristocrats' abstract celebration of George III's and Queen Charlotte's virtue and their real conviction that such virtue was a bore, to be avoided at all costs. The nobility scoffed at the domestic and pious life of George III and Queen Charlotte. Unlike previous monarchs, George III's court became a domestic setting for the royal family as opposed "to the highly ritualized courts of continental Europe."<sup>14</sup> Queen Charlotte and her husband saw court visits as an opportunity to spread their moral and religious views, protecting their family from the immorality of elite society. This domestic and moral nature discouraged aristocrats from attending unless it was required. Instead, they socialized at fashionable salons in London, embracing affairs, gambling, drinking, and general excess. Thus, George and Charlotte's court became and remained a domestic haven, which drove a bored, young Prince into a licentious world.<sup>15</sup> Yet, during the affair, loyalists advocated the royal couple's virtue. In particular, Charlotte's purity, piety, and domesticity exemplified expectations for a Queen's behavior. By comparing Charlotte and Caroline, Kingites condemned her for failing to act like Charlotte, attacking Caroline for her inability to conform to middle-class standards.

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<sup>14</sup> Smith, *George IV*, 2.

<sup>15</sup> Smith, *George IV*, 2-4.

Although loyalists' comparison reflected an affirmation of bourgeois beliefs, their intentional absence from court, usually a preserve of the nobility, suggests that aristocrats did not want to be governed by such beliefs. Charlotte's virtuous nature bored elite society. Aristocrats sought pleasure and excitement in a period where it could be found readily. The bourgeoisie's affirmation of George III's and Charlotte's domestic and moral nature provided Kingites with an opportunity to undermine Queenite support. Arguing for Charlotte's virtue, loyalists used her to sway Caroline's middle-class supporters to the King's side. Yet, by using such arguments, aristocrats recognized and attributed importance to bourgeois values. Taken with the Kingites' implicit criticism of George, this tension reflects the impact of fluctuating gender ideologies. Even pleasure-driven aristocrats acknowledged that the monarch needed virtue.

Indeed, this appeal to middle-class ideals probably failed because it must have appeared plainly instrumental to their bourgeois public. Why would hedonistic aristocrats advocate George III's and Charlotte's lifestyle when they clearly detested it? Queenites did not fall for this argument because it was an obvious ploy to damage Caroline's defense. So why use such a tactic? Both the King's unpopularity and the massive support for the Queen proved difficult to overcome. Kingites needed to use any weapon they could to ruin Caroline's image, even if it meant supporting beliefs they did not practice. Yet, loyalists did not need to compare Caroline and Charlotte to prove Caroline behaved unwomanly. Upholding George III's and Charlotte's actions while remaining silent about George's reprobate behavior affirmed bourgeois values over aristocratic beliefs.

All three of these tensions reflect the influence of middle-class values in this period. The Caroline affair enabled a growing middle class to develop class-consciousness while also spreading its beliefs at the national level. Using the widespread nature of the scandal and various forms of print media, the bourgeoisie advocated their ideas as an ideal to be embraced by all, including the royals. Queenite publications spread middle-class values throughout the nation, dominating the discussion of the scandal. Unable to keep up with the sheer volume of pro-queen propaganda, loyalists had no hope of defeating Caroline's supporters. Moreover, the prevalence of bourgeois rhetoric in Kingite publications further established middle-class values as ideal. Thus, the loyalist agenda—a defense of patriarchy—was swept away by popular opinion and the nobility's own leanings toward bourgeois beliefs.

#### IV.

Finally, Kingites failed because they unsuccessfully attempted to appropriate middle-class morality and because they shared with the middle classes certain ideas about men and women's roles and capacities. Thus, the scandal shows how ideas about men and women set particular limits on the ongoing debate. Both aristocrats and the bourgeoisie believed that women were weak and subordinate to men. These beliefs benefited Queenites because they could acknowledge Caroline's failings, as a woman, and then blame them on the man who should have protected her. After her acquittal, these expectations worked against her because she failed to assume her proper role. Queenites could no longer blame George or the ministers for Caroline's behavior. This suggests that expectations for women worked for and against the Queen. Such standards

generated massive support for a wronged woman but turned quickly against her when there was no threat to her position.

Kingites struggled because gender expectations for men afforded no room for manipulation. Loyalists could not blame anyone for the King's behavior. Moreover, there was no way for Kingites to make his actions right had they acknowledged them. As the head of his household and the nation, George's reputation would have been destroyed had aristocrats tried to argue that he behaved badly because of Caroline. Such arguments would have emasculated him, declaring him unfit to rule. Thus, gender expectations limited the arguments available to Kingites, forcing them to attack Caroline.

Ultimately, the scandal reveals changes in gender, class, and moral expectations. At its foundation, the Caroline affair was political. But the prevalence of gender in the debate reflects important social connotations. Joan Scott argues, "we must constantly ask not only what is at stake in proclamations or debates that invoke gender to explain or justify their positions but also how implicit understandings of gender are being invoked and reinscribed."<sup>16</sup> Queenites and Kingites, alike, appropriated middle-class gender ideals to argue for their chosen royal. By invoking gender, both sides enabled men and women, of any class, to apply their own gendered values to the affair. Moreover, the deliberate use of bourgeois ideals revealed changes in class. Loyalists recognized the growing power of the middle class, appropriating its ideals in an attempt to sway the bourgeoisie to the King's side. As well, loyalists' affirmation of middle-class moral expectations reflected both the growing significance of the middle class as a group and the appeal of its ideals. Both Queenites and Kingites desired morality and virtue in the

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<sup>16</sup> Scott, "Gender a Useful Category of Historical Analysis," 49-50.

monarch. Finally, at the same time that each group used gender to support its side, gender shaped and was shaped by the debate.

## V.

The Queen Caroline affair influenced more than class and politics. The outcome of the trial, while important, does not reflect the significance of the event. The scandal witnessed the expansion of middle-class beliefs, giving rise to Victorian notions of gender, morality, and domesticity. George's desire for a divorce and Caroline's unorthodox behavior provided the opportunity to debate changing expectations for men and women, husbands and wives, and monarchs. Queenite literature illustrated the importance of virtue by highlighting the negative affects of George's adultery. Loyalist publications also upheld ideals of virtue and morality, attacking Caroline's inappropriate behavior as damaging to the nation. Thus, both Carolinite and Kingite literature affirmed and spread shifting ideals about gender, a symptom of the changing context of the period.

My examination of the gendered images and rhetoric used to debate the Caroline affair has exposed other avenues of exploration. One area that needs further development is the relationship between the working class and the middle class. Anna Clark's work, "Queen Caroline and the Sexual Politics of Popular Culture in London, 1820," addresses working-class agitation on Caroline's behalf. She argues that the affair enabled the working class to practice a type of politics all its own, without the influence of the middle class.<sup>17</sup> But her study does not include an analysis of the relationship between the working class and middle class. Did they coordinate their efforts on the Queen's behalf? How much access did working people have to the propaganda generated by the scandal? Did the working class accept the gendered arguments in Queenite literature? A study of

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<sup>17</sup> Clark, "Queen Caroline," 47-50.

this nature might reveal valuable information about why the government acceded to public opinion. It might also show how effective Queenite propaganda was in spreading bourgeois beliefs to the lower orders.

Interestingly, the Parliamentary debates reveal another avenue for study. The debates in the House of Lords preceding the introduction of the Bill of Pains and Penalties echoed the same rhetoric used in the media. Sympathetic members of Parliament championed Caroline as a wronged, defenseless, an innocent woman. They declared her need for protection from persecution. Conversely, Kingites argued that Caroline's behavior made her unworthy to be the head of English females. Her conduct stained the throne and tainted morals.<sup>18</sup> The fact that the same language was used in Parliament and in the public suggests that this event had important political implications as well. Given this evidence, a further study into the Parliamentary actions of the proceeding would greatly strengthen an examination of the Caroline affair.

In the end, the scandal offered a unique opportunity to examine social and political changes in early-nineteenth century England. George's unpopularity and Caroline's bizarre behavior became a rallying point for dissatisfaction with the government and, interestingly, gender relations. Such an event, seemingly absurd, answers many questions about changing gender roles and fluctuating ideologies about morality, domesticity, and marriage.

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<sup>18</sup> Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, Ser. II, Vol. I, 872, 896-897, 940, 941-942, 949-950, 962, 976, 1292, 1295, 1333, 1373.

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