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Henry Hunt's White Hat: the Long Tradition of Mute Sedition

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Henry Hunt (1773-1835), nicknamed 'Orator' Hunt, was the star turn at St Peter's Field on 16 August 1819, being welcomed to the platform with the airs of 'See the Conquering Hero Comes', 'God Save the King' and 'Rule Britannia'. 'God save the King' was played with a particular reference beyond that of loyalty, for Hunt had refused to 'stand and uncover' for the anthem in Manchester's Theatre Royal that January. As in more visible features of the giant meeting that day, the music alluded to the radical purpose of the assembly while lying beyond the reach of prosecution under British treason and sedition legislation, which depended on language, whether printed or spoken. The subject of this essay is the mute – but similarly unprosecutable – sedition of colour in clothing to express radical views, and in one article of clothing in particular: Hunt's white hat.[1]

Henry Hunt, an agitator who was radical candidate for Westminster in 1818, was already notorious for his capacity to draw large crowds to hear him speak. On this occasion, his white hat, for which he was already known, was central to the wide range of symbolic allegiance to the radical cause on show: as James Epstein suggests, 'it would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of the emblems and banners carried into Manchester on 16 August 1819', which included 'numerous caps of liberty on poles ringing the hustings, as if imparting apotropaic protection to the meeting'. In the midst of this tableau, Hunt's removal of his white hat was the signal for his speech to begin. As Samuel Bamford recalls, 'Mr Hunt, stepping towards the front of the stage, took off his white hat, and addressed the people'.[2] Hunt's speech was interrupted by the charge of the yeomanry that precipitated the outrage of Peterloo, and his white hat 'was staved in by a sword and became the symbol of

reform' (although indeed, as we shall see, the colour and the hat were both in use in radical and oppositional contexts before Hunt was born).[3] However, Peterloo undoubtedly helped to make Hunt's choice of headgear notorious: cartoons of Hunt before Peterloo do not show the white hat, even when it is reported by onlookers. Afterwards, matters changed. 'White hats' began to distinguish Hunt's followers, and 'the wearing of white hats to divine services and Sunday schools in Lancashire opened a new theatre of resistance'. Within a few weeks of that fateful day in August 1819 the white hat of liberty was sufficiently widespread in the Manchester area to become the subject of an anxious broadside by Anglican Sunday Schools. By October, Thomas Teulon took it as the title of his periodical, 'THE WHITE HAT, worn by so many steady and dedicated patriots', and thereafter white hats and green ribbons (to which I shall return later) were for some time worn on the anniversary of Peterloo. Within weeks then, not only Peterloo but Hunt's white hat had become notorious: the 'condensed symbolic nomenclature' of Hunt's hat offering a narrow and deep point of reference for the importance of reform and the folly of repression. The hat was a badge of good manners and gentility, a reassurance that the radicalism represented by Hunt resided comfortably within the bounds of civil discourse. Its colour was important to this implicit claim in more ways than one. [4]

On the day of Peterloo itself, both Hunt's white hat and the act of taking it off were significant. The colour white was worn by radical sympathizers on a number of occasions: it symbolized purity of intention as opposed to corruption, much as when ex BBC reporter Martin Bell (b1938) wore a white suit as the victorious independent candidate in Tatton at the General Election of 1997 (and indeed for many years afterwards). Hunt had refined the use of the colour white by attaching it to a single specific object - his hat - which became his badge and brand, and the piece of

materiality by which he was both recognized and remembered. Hunt wore this white top hat, possibly for the first time, speaking at Spa Fields at the monster rally there on 15 November 1816, the first in a series of meetings which – it has been claimed – 'inaugurated the mass platform' into British public life. This may be too strong a claim: the London Corresponding Society meetings at Copenhagen Fields on 26 October and 12 November 1795 were attended by a 'vast crowd'.[5] Whoever is granted priority in their organization, such mass gatherings went on to be a model for Daniel O'Connell's repeal movement, itself developed from O'Connell's engagement in the latter stages of Reform agitation. These gatherings were themselves part of 'the era of large monuments…a "performing century" – and the century of monster meetings, large assemblies, festivals, and street illuminations', the cultural semiotics of public memory. In this sense Hunt's rallies anticipated not only future Reform gatherings but covert Tory attempts to turn rallies to more traditional uses, such as was evident in some of the planning for the Burns Festival in Ayr in 1844. In the first age of mass industrial urbanization early modern outdoor socialization practices continued in the context of the poor availability of artificial light, but they could now be on a new scale, not just by virtue of population concentration but by the means of the velocity of circulation made possible by an expanding media. Both state and revolutionary actors took full advantage, beginning with the *fêtes révolutionnaires.* of the 1790s, out of which the LCS and Hunt's gatherings grew. [6]

The first appearance of the white hat may have been deliberately linked to the Cap of Liberty banner displayed at Spa Fields, where Hunt had made what seems to have been his first appearance in the hat in front of a Cap of Liberty banner and tricolour (a red (England), white (Scotland) and green (Ireland) British flag rather than the French version) in November 1816. The 'British' tricolor was commissioned

by Arthur Thistlewood (1774-1820), later executed for his part in the Cato Street Conspiracy, and made by his wife, Susan. Its British as opposed to French colouring was meant to symbolize native rather than imported radicalism, but radical meetings used political symbols from both traditions in a manner which government found discomfiting. Although Hunt emphasized the roots of the Cap of Liberty in Roman manumission, pointing out its 'representation..on the front of the town hall at York', the 'red cap' that preceded him to the earlier 4 January 1819 meeting at St Peter's Field was a *bonnet rouge* version of the Phrygian cap clearly referencing the French Revolution. The display of the Cap of Liberty, not only here, but at Rochdale, Blackburn and Leigh, London and Huddersfield in the weeks leading up to Peterloo 'was clearly a calculated gesture, making claims on the control of public space'. The Cap was an overt challenge to the magistracy when it was exhibited, being seen as 'that bloody ensign of *French Rebellion* !' Hunt, who had used it at the Bristol by-election of 1812, was very aware of what it meant, and when the 'red cap of liberty' appeared at the Spa Fields meeting on 15 November 1816, his white hat complemented it and both amplified and confused its message, as well as identifying Hunt with a native tradition of liberty personified in himself.[7]

In the developing organization of the monster rally at St Peter's Field in August, Hunt's efforts to avoid 'any breach of the public peace' have been viewed by his biographer as 'truly remarkable and extremely successful'. This determined avoidance of breaching the peace had earlier been evident in the Blanketeers' march of spring 1817, when 'the Manchester radicals decided to petition in groups of twenty, in strict conformity with Stuart legislation against tumultuous petitioning' (see below). Rather interestingly for the argument that follows, the Blanketeers also 'chose to follow Charles Edward's route through Leek and Ashbourne to Derby, rather than

the easier route through Staffordshire' on their way to London, echoing mutely – and beyond the reach of prosecution – an earlier challenge to the Hanoverian state. [8]

The House of Commons' Secret Committee's distaste and suspicion concerning the 'symbols of the French Revolution' was in part because of the manner in which they lay beyond the reach of prosecution, even though – as George Canning protested – 'banners, ribbons, and other such devices, might be as clear an indicator of purpose as words'. In the Jacobite era, tartan had irritated the authorities just as much because of its semantics of opposition. Tartan cloth signified – in both Scots and English garb – support for the Stuart dynasty and opposition to the Hanoverian British state, and indeed a distinctively Jacobite tartan sett seems to have been produced in Edinburgh from 1713. In the 1760s, tartan – seen as the badge of Stuart absolutism – was associated with support for Bute against Wilkes and opposition to reform. The cloth's prohibition and then reintroduction under the limited terms of British military identity, sentimental ethnicity and vaudeville have only in recent years been challenged, while Jacobite flags were ritually burnt. Likewise at Peterloo, the cavalry cried 'Have at their flags' (such as one bearing the legend 'LIBERTAS' on a cap of crimson velvet with laurel, symbolizing the victory of radicalism) precisely because such symbols provoked while being difficult to reduce to the language and intention of sedition. The crowd for their part struggled forcefully for their symbols just as a regiment might over its colours, for 'the mounted caps marked some of the few points where unarmed working people offered resistance' on 16 August. Hunt's hat was also a target.[9]

A post Peterloo broadside, *The White Hat*, glorified Hunt's symbolic garb in terms redolent of earlier political struggles. Hunt was compared to Cromwell, but that was not all, as the broadside threatened to 'lay the Throne and the Altar flat,/With a

whisk of Harry the Ninth's White Hat !'.[10] 'Harry the Ninth' had been a nickname for Henry Dundas (1742-1811), a representative of old corruption and the reputed Scottish taste for absolutism, close associate of Pitt and Secretary for War from 1794-1801, impeached for misappropriation of public funds and acquitted in 1805. It was also the title of 'King' Henry IX, the Stuart heir and brother of Charles Edward Stuart, who 'reigned' from 1788 to 1807. Hunt was the ironic antithesis of the representatives of absolutism; he was also, as we shall see, the heir of their era. Just as 'old Jacks' was a term used for Jacobins, it had been a term used for Jacobites: and the symbolism and public presentation of these two kinds of oppositional politics was markedly similar in ways which are not yet fully appreciated.[11]

Hunt's white hat was a moniker for the orator, who would be barely visible from the back of huge crowds, such as the 10,000 – 153,000 variously estimated at St Peter's Field; later Daniel O'Connell's far more complex floats and pageants would serve the same purpose, framing a single speaker and his significance to monster meetings which could not hear his words. The inaudibility of star speakers was a major problem: 'at the prodigious meeting on Peep Green in May 1839…the *Northern Star* admitted that perhaps not even 10 per cent of the vast crowd were able to hear'. When Hunt took off his hat to address the crowd at Peterloo, they were aware that he was now beginning to speak, even though they could not necessarily hear him. Then, as now, hat etiquette for gentlemen demanded that the hat be kept on outdoors (except when temporarily removed as a gesture of respect) but removed indoors. Thus Hunt's action was both symbolic of his respect for the popular cause of reform and the thousands that had gathered to hear him speak in its support, and it was a gesture signifying entering private space, of conversation *sub rosa*, a symbolic claim to be offering intimate and confidential discourse, which most of the crowd

could not hear, but which was symbolized by the hat. When on, it was a silently respectful affirmation of the principles voiced explicitly when it was off. But of course, Hunt spoke in public: the removal of the hat was thus also a challenge, a making of the private public, the hidden open, and the conspiratorial, political. And yet it was also – given the wide recognition of what constituted appropriate hat wearing and doffing – an act of gentlemanly intimacy extended to a mass audience, a signal of a speech especially for them, even though its message was intended to be broadcast far and wide. The people gathered at St Peter's Field might not be able to hear the speech, but the hat and Hunt's gestures with it reassured them both that it was for them and the nature-if not the detail-of its contents. Hunt's white hat was thus a quintessentially 'treacherous object': a sign of political challenge arising from an everyday item and utilizing its semantic position in society. Removing it was a sign of the onset of the prosecutable language of sedition in what the authorities were to term a seditious assembly. Indeed, Hunt was initially pursued for treason.[12]

John Barrell's *Imagining the King's Death* (2000) was the first major study to outline the continuing importance of the treason legislation of 25 Edward III with its stress on 'compasser ou ymaginer' (to compass or imagine [the King's Death]) in the radical era. As I argued in *Material Culture and Sedition* (2013),[13] the moves made against the dissemination of radical opinion in the 1790s were themselves in close alignment with those made against the Jacobites in a previous era, and in both cases writing and speech were the key signifiers of what might constitute treasonable activity. In addition, mediaeval English legislation on '*scandalum magnatum'* (speaking ill of the great) mutated in the environment of the Reformation and the religious wars of the seventeenth century into an extension of treason law into 'seditious words and rumours' as provided for explicitly in 1 and 2 Philip and Mary c.

3 (1554-55) and implicitly present in extensions of 25 Edward III to include reflection on the monarch's religious beliefs (as in 26 Henry VIII c.13 and 13 Elizabeth c.1). Seditious language began to morph into being regarded as potentially treasonous in the seventeenth century. In 1606, legislation regarding seditious libel was introduced, while the 1661 Sedition Act (13 Car 2 st1 c1) included 'tumultuous petitioning' among a list of new seditious categories which could be in effect treasonable. By 1681, Chief Justice Francis Pemberton noted that what was simply 'uttered and spoken' was increasingly regarded as treasonous, and indeed 'the conjoining of "seditious libel" and "treasonable words" charges in the context of the Rye House Plot of 1683-4 showed how porous these categories were becoming'. While the prosecution of seditious words and the penalties attending conviction waned in the eighteenth century as the state began to feel itself more secure, language was always a flashpoint for prosecution at times of crisis, and just as the concept of an attack on the Crown had been extended into religion so it mutated into more general forms of ideology. Supporters of King James and later radicals both responded to this in the same way: by the use of material culture, gestures and codes to exhibit political sympathies beyond the reach of action under the terms of 'compasser ou ymaginer' in all their forms.[14]

Such activities could hardly be grouped under the fashionable rubric of the public sphere, as the 'differentiation of civil society from the state' which they manifested was not an alternative political sphere, but an oppositional one: in echoes of both the Restoration and Jacobite eras, the Seditious Meetings Prevention Act of 1817 not only 'restricted the right to hold mass public meetings and censored the radical press', but also gave 'magistrates…powers to monitor all lecture rooms, coffee houses and inns' for seditious material.[15] Thus rather than utilizing the infrastructure

of newspapers and coffee houses, oppositional groups manifested the unity of their subcultures in 'a material form', expressing through the inexpressive the moral force they believed their case to possess, beyond the reach of the monopoly of physical force in the hands of the state.[16] Thus the trial of Henry Sacheverell (1674-1724) in 1710 was accompanied by the production of pictures of him for dining rooms and door signage and his profile in letter seals, tobacco stoppers and coat buttons: an 'urban icon…within a culture of political celebrity that could redefine the most quotidian practices and performances…unbuttoning a coat, smoking a pipe or having a drink'.[17] In the years that followed, even 'printsellers who published gallows portraits' of those convicted of Jacobitism were prosecuted. It was this era, with its strong distribution networks of everything from medals (7000 in one 1699 smuggling run to Kent alone) to pincushions sold 'through provincial merchants, markets, fairs and pedlars', which defined the possible uses of oppositional materiality for generations to come. So strongly entrenched was Jacobite material culture as a political statement that the government propaganda against it had stressed the 'superior relationship to reality' enjoyed by the Whig administration compared to the 'symbolic practices' of the Jacobites that were in their turn to shape the definition of the materiality of sedition in the Radical era, where coat buttons and blue ribbons both were used to denote loyalty to the Crown, just as white was used by the Radicals.[18]

Party colours gained a major popular presence for perhaps the first time in the conflicts of the Stuart and Jacobite eras, and they persisted in public political demonstrations. They had first appeared extensively in the Exclusion Crisis, with green ribbons signifying support for Exclusion, red for the Crown and blue for supporters of Monmouth. After William of Orange came to the throne, orange replaced green as the colour of the Whigs (although green as a radical colour was to

reappear), while white and yellow (sun and sunflowers for legitimacy and renewal) for the Stuart Crown were used, black for Hanover. White was the Bourbon colour, and the white rose was certainly associated with the Stuarts from the attempt to exclude the Duke of York from the succession at the beginning of the 1680s (the White Rose of course had been the badge of the House of York in the Wars of the Roses). White was also associated with the origins of the Stuart dynasty, as Scotland was 'Alba', the white land 'by virtue of a Latin pun which appeared in Caroline masques'. King James 'VIII''s badge later bore the legend 'Alba maxima'; likewise, James Duke of York was Duke of Albany in Scotland. White was found as a Stuart colour in England as late as Bath in 1749, and was adopted-probably in this sense-by the first major Irish agricultural protest movement, the Whiteboys/*Buachaillí Báin* in the 1760s. One of James's codenames was the 'Little white-headed cow'. 'True Blue' Tories on the other hand were initially Protestant Jacobites, and later the colour was used by Lord George Gordon's supporters in the anti-Catholic riots of 1780. The colour characterizes the Conservative and Unionist Party to this day. In 1776, blue cockades and blue ribbons were worn in the Ballymena election, and Orange cockades appeared among loyalists in 1789, while the United Irishmen adopted green. Green became Ireland's colour in British radical display also, and at the same time made its return as a more general radical colour, though often one tinged with reference to Ireland: when James Fleming opened the welcoming speeches in Paisley to celebrate Hunt's release from prison in 1822, for example, Ireland was his primary subject amid concern that 'Scotland might soon be in a similar situation'. The nature and colour of dress and accessories thus both had a long history of association with political expression.[19]

It was thus no surprise that colours were and are evident in unprosecutable displays of political radicalism and disaffection. In the Jacobite period, 'white gloves, signifying innocence, were prominent' in public gatherings. The same use of the colour was made by the White Rose anti-Nazis in Hitler's Germany and by the anti-Bolshevik forces in 1918-20. White ribbons are still used in a more contemporary frame to express opposition in today's Russia.[20] In the immediate aftermath of the French Revolution, white was used by the French Royalists as a sign of loyalty to the Bourbons, before being adopted in England as a sign of purity, just as the Stuart oak was often used as the basis for the Tree of Liberty. In the Rockite disturbances in Ireland, a scarlet band worn round the neck was a sign of 'such as were deputed officers and serjeants under Captain Rock'.[21]

As Nicholas Roe has observed and has already been evident in Hunt's use of the tricolour, the radical era used a good deal of the panoply and symbolism of the revolutionary *fetes*. On Hunt's march into London on 13 September 1819, white wands were carried with red cockades and laurel leaves; a green Liberty banner was carried by six Irishmen, and a white flag announced in its black border and inscription, respectful mourning for those who had died at Peterloo, together with a red flag inscribed 'Universal Suffrage' and the red, white and green tricolour for England, Scotland and Ireland: the embedded reference to Scotland as the 'White Land' is worth noting. Hunt supplemented his usual white hat with white trousers on this occasion. The inscriptions on the banners articulated more direct political discourse than usually found in treacherous objects. As Roe points out:

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Most striking, perhaps, is the frequency with which the colour white

appears in flags, on the wands, in Henry Hunt's dress: as in revolutionary France, white was an expression of the reformers' untainted ideals and motives which (like the laurel) invoked the precedent of the classical world.
Roe does, however, also refer in a footnote to the Jacobite use of such symbols. Laurel symbolized future triumph, and had been used to signify this by supporters of the Stuarts.[22]

Both the nature of materiality and its colour had specific contextual uses. Ribbons were used at elections as both relatively cheap and 'instantly recognizable to the illiterate or to mass crowds'. Green ribbons symbolized radicalism and later Irish or Irish tinged radicalism: more broadly still, it became associated with general political dissent. The wearing of white hats with green ribbons on the anniversary of Peterloo may have referenced not only Hunt, but also the support for annual Parliaments (and hence elections) which was central to the views of many Radicals. Blue 'sashes and cockades' had reappeared to 'demonstrate…loyalism at the burning of effigies of Paine' in 1792-93, while orange-never entirely out of fashion-made a major reappearance as a statement of Protestant identity with the development of the Orange Order in Ireland from 1795 onwards. By the 1820s, yellow had begun to used by liberal reformers, and was later adopted by the Liberal Party. Black denoted collectivity in identity and purpose as well as sobriety of manners. [23]

There was also the register of dress by which the 'body politic' distinguished itself. 'Sunday best' clothing was often worn by Radicals to dissociate their reformist aims from the 'covert and seditious world of underground clubs and mob violence', which the political cartoon – whether or not realistically – associated with scruffiness of person and attire. At the opposite end of the spectrum was the use of disguise to mask illegal activities aimed at the damage of people or property. Cross dressing was

a favoured disguise: in the Rebecca Riots of 1839 and again in 1842-43, men appeared in women's clothes with blackened faces, echoing the 'wearing of women's dress' with 'blackening of the face' used by the Rockites in Ireland. Another Irish radical agricultural group, the Strawboys, used yellow paint or head coverings of straw to disguise themselves.[24]

Henry Hunt was a gentleman – his *Memoirs* suggest an ancestry going back to an officer of William the Conqueror's – and his white hat as a hat signified gentlemanly intent and status. It was also carelessly visible, and was associated in one dimension of its colour with feminine purity, such as the white ribbons worn by ladies to greet George III in 1789 or the plain muslin gowns-often white-which became fashionable from the turn of the nineteenth century. In Hunt's hands symbol became so widely known that it was hooted at by crowds as a sign that the wearer's politics had been identified and were disapproved of; Francis Burdett is depicted carrying it on his lap in *The Real or Constitutional House that Jack Built* (1819).[25] Subsequently it became associated with the Chartist movement: James Taylor, a Methodist Unitarian manufacturer in Rochdale, 'as a special line, made white hats for Chartists'. Taylor stood in the first Reform election of 1832. Two other Methodist Unitarians stood locally in that year in Todmorden and Bury: the latter, Edmund Grundy (1781-1857), had gone bail for Hunt when he had been arrested. In August 1840, 'on his liberation from Chester Castle, Peter McDouall was presented with a '"splendid white beaver hat" by the men of Andershaw'.[26]

The white hat, though, had a longer history of public display, which took two main forms, one general and one specific. The Cap of Liberty, although by origin Roman, had arguably been seen as a 'Dutch symbol', symbolizing the struggle to free the Netherlands from the 'absolutist' monarchy of Catholic Spain: as such, it entered

English political discourse after the Revolution of 1688. It was a patriotic symbol, with overtones of support for the Protestant succession: it could not easily become white until the close of the Jacobite era, for white was a core Jacobite colour, as is discussed further below. John Wilkes (1726-97) appears to have been initially identified with the 'red Phrygian cap' of Liberty in the 1760s, but soon his depiction changed. William Hogarth's famous 1763 caricature of Wilkes with the cap of liberty on a pole (BMC 4050) appears to show the cap as white, as indeed it more clearly is in the pro-Wilkes print of 1768, *The many Headed Monster of Sumatra* (BMC 4231): this is interesting, as 'the red cap of liberty' was to be its definitive colour in the French Revolutionary era.[27] A white liberty cap on a pole can also be seen in prints such as *Association, or Public Virtue* (BMC 5638), *Your Petitioner Sheweth* (BMC 5665) and *The R-y-l Hunt or the Petitioners Answer'd* (BMC 5675), all from 1780, while in 1793, Thomas Rowlandson's *The Contrast* depicts a white Cap of Liberty on the end of Britannia's trident. Hunt's white hat was thus a visible expression of a definitive political commitment which could trace its symbolism back beyond the French Revolution's red caps to the radical Whigs of the 1760s and the Revolution of 1688. But it appears not only to have been related to radical symbolism divided from it by time and/or space, but to have deliberately reiterated one particular aspect of that symbolism: the hat, because of its association with the Cap of Liberty.[28]

But the white hat had a still earlier and equally pertinent presence in symbolic politics. When James, Duke of York, returned to London from Edinburgh at the close of the Exclusion Crisis in 1682, his 'triumph was celebrated…by the performance of Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserv'd* at the Duke of York's playhouse in Dorset Garden', where Antonio, the villain in chief, is a thinly disguised version of the Earl of Shaftesbury and Pierre-though he too is politically compromised-is seen as the

vehicle for an attack on Whig values. Subsequently, *Venice Preserv'd* became both a popular and a Jacobite play, being performed 89 times in London between 1729 and 1745 alone. Otway's commentary on the politics of the Exclusion crisis was accompanied by a 'curious stage tradition'. Both John Mills and James Quin, 'who had the role of Pierre at Drury Lane from 1707 until 1748' consistently 'wore a white hat when performing the part', identified by Aline Mackenzie as a sign of support-on the head of the conspiratorial Pierre-for the Stuart dynasty. White was the Stuart colour and the colour of James as Duke of York and Albany. The white hat thus had almost half a century of public tradition at one of London's major theatres as a sign of public display of conspiratorial and anti-Hanoverian sympathies long before Hunt was born. Drury Lane was also the only theatre operational in London during the Stuart Restoration. [29]

Productions of *Venice Preserv'd* continued at Drury Lane until at least the 1780s, and it was at Drury Lane that James Hadfield attempted to assassinate George III on 15 May 1800 while the national anthem was being played before the staging of a Cibber play. *Venice Preserv'd* had nearly caused a riot when it was staged following a previous assassination attempt on the king, and when it was produced again in 1802, Pierre's part was censored. The play continued to be politically referenced: John Wilkes Booth (whose favourite roles included Brutus and Wallace) said in 1865 on hearing of the surrender of Robert E. Lee that 'he was done with the stage, and the only play he wanted to present now was *Venice Preserved*', an indication that he was now determined to assassinate rather than (as he had previously planned) kidnap Lincoln. The associations of Pierre's white hat could thus suggest a much more radically violent attack on corrupt government than that symbolized by the white Cap of Liberty. [30]

In more recent times, 'White hats' have become a slang description for the good guys in Westerns following the use of white hats to identify the heroes in the black and white era, and today the term is used of computer hackers who test rather than compromise the security of the systems they hack as well as a certain subgroup of American college student who is morally conservative, dresses up unnecessarily and maintains contact with home and high school friends. Most of the varied uses of the term 'White Hat' involve ascriptions of virtue, integrity or moral conservatism in various contexts, and take us back all the way to both Hunt and Pierre. Hunt's White Hat is thus not only an accidental detail of the carnage at Peterloo, but a denominator of the deep meaning of materiality and culture in political protest, one often powerfully and specifically referenced, while resting beyond the reach of prosecution-if not, as on that fateful 16th of August, assault.

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[1] James A. Epstein, *Radical Expression: Political Language, Ritual, and Symbol in England, 1790-1850* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 82; see Murray Pittock, *Material Culture and Sedition, 1688-1760: Treacherous Objects, Secret Places* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2013), for a full discussion of the semantics of the expression of treason and sedition beyond language.

[2] Epstein, p. 82; Samuel Bamford, *Passages in the Life of a Radical*, Preface by T.M. Hilton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984 [1841]), p. 151.

[3]https://www.britannica.com/biography/Henry-Hunt (last accessed 31 January 2017).

[4] See for example BMC 12819 which does not show it at the November 1816 Spa Fields meeting; *At a Special Meeting of Members of the Committee of the Sunday Schools in Manchester and Salford Belonging to the Established Church*, 24 September 1819; Paul A. Pickering, 'Class Without Words: Symbolic Communication in the Chartist Movement', *Past and Present* 112 (1986), pp. 144-62 (155); Epstein, pp. 94-95.

[5] John Belchem, *'Orator' Hunt: Henry Hunt and English Working-Class Radicalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), pp. 58-59, 64; H.T. Dickinson, *Caricatures and the Constitution* (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1986), pp. 166-67.

[6] Joep Leerssen and Ann Rigney, 'Introduction', in Leerssen and Rigney (eds), *Commemorating Writers in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Nation Building and Centenary Fever* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2014), pp. 1-23 (6); Murray Pittock and Christopher Whatley, 'Poems and Festivals, Art and Artefact and the Commemoration of Robert Burns, c1844-c1896', *Scottish Historical Review* 93:1 (2014), pp. 56-79.

[7] Epstein, pp. 72-74, 77, 80-81.

[8] Belchem, *'Orator' Hunt*, pp. 74, 81, 91, 106; Paul Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People, 1688-1788* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993 [1989]), 341; *Memoirs of Henry Hunt Esquire*, 3 vols (London: Dolby 1820).

[9] Katrina Navickas, '"That sash will hang you": Political Clothing and Adornment in England, 1780-1840', *Journal of British* Studies 49:3 (2010), pp. 540-65 (552); Murray Pittock, 'Plaiding the Invention of Scotland', in Ian Brown (ed.), *From Tartan to Tartanry: Scottish Culture, History and Myth* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 32-47; see Dickinson, pp. 47, 99 for the association of tartan with Bute; Epstein, pp. 81, 82, 85.

[10] http://chethamslibrary.blogspot.co.uk/2012/09/putting-on-my-white-hat.html 21 September 2012 reproduced this broadside.

[11] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, revised ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968 [1963]), p. 544.

[12] See Murray Pittock, 'Treacherous Objects: towards a theory of Jacobite Material Culture', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 34:1 (2011), pp. 39-63; Pickering, p. 153.

[13] John Barrell, *Imagining the King's Death: Figurative Treason, Fantasies of Regicide, 1793-96* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Pittock, *Material Culture and Sedition*.

[14] David Cressy, *Dangerous Talk* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 29, 40, 42, 49, 57, 63, 208, 235; Pittock, *Material Culture and Sedition*, pp. 6-7.

[15] Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, tr. Thomas Buger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: Polity, 1992 [1962]); Penny Young, *Two Cocks on the Dunghill: William Cobbett and Henry Hunt: their friendships, feuds and fights* (South Lopham: Twopenny Press, 2010 [2009]), p. 123.

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