

Politicizing Caricature/ Caricaturing Politics

Re-interpreting James Gillray's Counter-Revolutionary Prints (1780-1800)

Volume 1 of 2

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Abstract

This thesis intends to address the marginalization of loyalist visual culture by focusing on political prints produced by James Gillray (1757-1815) during the last decades of the eighteenth century (1780-1800). It engages with the cross-linkages between British Loyalism and counter-revolutionary politics by reading political caricatures as historiographical accounts.

Gillray's caricatures are central to understanding the fears that the excesses of the French Revolution generated in the conservative heartland of England. But his prints continue to be read as graphic metaphors for counter-revolutionary protest, and he himself heralded as a Tory hireling or propagandist. In this inter-disciplinary study visual and verbal texts will engage with each other in an attempt to show that a reading of Gillray's visual semiotics through a lens of either/or is reductive because his prints form a complex compendium of Loyalist, Republican, revolutionary and anti-revolutionary historiographies. This thesis scrutinizes his prints to challenge conventional polarities used to describe British politics between 1780 and 1800; Pitt versus Fox, Burke versus Paine, Church versus Dissenters, Jacobin versus anti-Jacobin.

The central argument is articulated by examining the context in which these prints were produced; Gillray is here situated in a wider context by studying historical and literary texts including a series of late eighteenth-century literary pamphlets, religious pamphlets, ballads, broadsheets, historical treatises, 'vulgar' radical texts and polite literature. These are used to highlight the mutual interdependence of the visual and the verbal in the establishment of meaning. The argument is consolidated using theories of inter-textuality developed by Roland

Barthes and post-structuralist theories developed by Mikhail Bakhtin, Michel Foucault, and Hayden White. Each chapter of the thesis tries to broaden the received understanding of conservatism during the period by traversing strict disciplinary boundaries between literature, history, and art.

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Chapter 1

Discourse/ Counter Discourse: Why Gillray?¹

Indeed, if there be such a thing as truth, it must infallibly be struck out by the collision of mind with mind.²

William Godwin's memorable claim in *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* evokes a compelling image of spark and flint to alert his readers to the potentially inflammatory nature of the 'truth'. The author has recourse to a disturbing verb, 'struck out', which hints at dual meanings (defining/deleting). This ambivalence lends an irony to his statement, which ensures that it remains the most fitting tribute to the English literary marketplace at the end of the eighteenth century.

The French Revolution marked a definitive turning point in the political history and social make-up of the western world, and led to widespread political turmoil in Europe. The demographic, economic, and institutional change coupled with the decreasing dependence of authors on aristocratic patrons, the growth of a responsive literate audience, and the increasing multiplicity of centres of power led to the emergence of the modern intellectual as a critical force to be reckoned with.

The historically contingent rise of the intellectual is epitomized by Edmund Burke. His *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), written in response to Richard Price's *Discourse on the Love of Our Country* (1789), has been considered to mark the origin of modern conservative literary thought and political liberal

¹ The title is taken from Richard Terdiman's book on nineteenth-century realism. Richard Terdiman, *Discourse/ Counter Discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth Century France* (London: Cornell University Press, 1985).

² William Godwin, *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, and its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness. By William Godwin. In two volumes, Volume 1* (London: G.G. and J. Robinson, 1793) p. 21.

thought.³ A number of prominent eighteenth-century scholars insist this is because *Reflections* propounds a staunch belief in the 'virtues of tradition, continuity and slow organic growth, which have ever since provided the theoretical mainstay of conservatism'.⁴ In his tract, Burke questions the applicability of new-found French principles to Great Britain and links revolution to 'universal anarchy' and 'national bankruptcy', only to come to the conclusion that the Revolution 'is such a plague, that the precautions of the most severe quarantine ought to be established against it'.⁵ His conscious appropriation of history in support of a particular political order, evident in the titular 'Reflections', is only reinforced by such passages. What seems to drive Burke to construe the legitimating fiction of stability and truth that defines *Reflections* as aristocratic propaganda is his apprehension at the destruction of binaries between public and private, man and woman, patrician and plebeian. This comprises his constant grievance, in the passages most popular with his detractors:

To make everything the reverse of what they have seen is quite as easy as to destroy. No difficulties occur in what has never been tried [...]. At once to preserve and to reform is quite another thing.⁶

Traditionally, critics have used these passages to reiterate Burke's insistence on the preservation of age-old binaries. But Burke's supposed insistence on celebrating the *ancien regime*, and preserving the past, is at odds with the framework of his tract. In

³ Edmund Burke (1729-1797), Irish author, political theorist and philosopher; Richard Price (1723-1791), political pamphleteer, philosopher, and Dissenting preacher. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France, and on the Proceedings in Certain Societies in London Relative to that Event. In a Letter Intended to Have Been Sent to a Gentleman in Paris* (London: J.Dodsley, 1790); Richard Price, *A Discourse on the Love of our Country, Delivered on November 4, 1789, at the Meeting-House in the Old Jewry, to the Society for Commemorating the Revolution in Great Britain. With an Appendix, Containing the Report of the Committee of the Society; an Account of the Population of France; and the Declaration of Rights by the National Assembly of France.* (London: T. Cadell, 1789).

⁴ Eric J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution 1789-1848* (London: New American Library, 1962) p. 240. It is interesting to note that despite being considered the forefather of literary conservatism, Burke has been lauded as the father of modern liberal thought by a number of prominent politicians.

⁵ *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, pp. 80, 132.

⁶ *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, p. 247.

fact, the composition of *Reflections* testifies to the fact that socio-political change had indeed enveloped every aspect of existence, be it public or private.⁷ This is evident in the title itself, which insists that it was penned as ‘a letter intended to have been sent to a gentleman in Paris’. The epistolary framework of *Reflections* aligns it with a series of politically charged pamphlets, which were sold to the public in the guise of letters. Moreover, the highly provocative style of Burke’s polemic underlines the increasingly public dimension of a vociferously private form. Dwelling on the increasing popularity of the open letter in her book *Romantic Correspondence*, Mary Favret links this phenomenon to the fall of the Bastille.⁸ Like the institutions of France, the letter of sentimental fiction also underwent a drastic change at the end of the eighteenth century. As a result, ‘the emblem of isolation and vulnerability found itself in a powerful, public place’.⁹ This phenomenon reiterates the increasing fluidity between the public and private realms. The genre of the letter enabled experience to be translated from the private to the public domain, and back again. The writer and the reader thus become involved in a productive enterprise. This dynamic partly explains why Burke’s politically-charged tract sparked off a huge ideological debate, resulting in a proliferation of warring pamphlets. In his commendable study of the age, Stuart Andrews identifies sixty-five books and pamphlets directly addressed to Burke’s attack of the French Revolution, published in the 1790s in Britain.¹⁰ Burke’s *Reflections* and the

⁷ For a detailed analysis of the breakdown of the public/private divide see John Barrell, *The Spirit of Despotism: Invasions of Privacy in the 1790s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

⁸ Mary A. Favret, *Romantic Correspondence: Women, Politics, and the Fiction of Letters* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

⁹ *Romantic Correspondence*, p. 1.

¹⁰ Stuart Andrews, *The British Periodical Press and The French Revolution 1789-99* (New York: Palgrave, 2000) pp. 217-19.

responses it garnered thus waged an ideological battle primarily in the form of letters sent back and forth between very public individuals.

Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*, published in 1791, is perhaps the most popular response to Burke's *Reflections*.¹¹ By way of critiquing Burke's rhetoric, Paine launches an ideological assault on the Burkean school of thought by resorting to extremely simple sentences to articulate radical political sentiment. He directly addresses the matter at hand: 'I shall, sans ceremony, place another system of principles in opposition to his'.¹² The thrust of his pamphlet is simple, '[A]ll men are born equal, and with equal natural rights'.¹³ Paine's linguistic bent further consolidates his central argument: that politics was a matter for the common people. He is at pains to advocate reason and rationality, as opposed to Burkean imagination. In fact, in *Rights of Man* he repeatedly dismisses Burke's *Reflections* for being 'theatrical':

As to the tragic paintings by which Mr. Burke has outraged his own imagination, and seeks to work upon that of his readers, they are very well calculated for theatrical representation, where facts are manufactured for the sake of show, and accommodated to produce, through the weakness of sympathy, a weeping effect. But Mr. Burke should recollect that he is writing history, and not plays, and that his readers will expect truth, and not the spouting rant of high-toned exclamation.

When we see a man dramatically lamenting in a publication intended to be believed that 'The age of chivalry is gone! That the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever! That The unbought grace of life (if anyone knows what it is), the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise is gone!' and all this because the Quixote age of chivalry nonsense is gone, what opinion can we form of his judgment, or what regard can we pay to his facts? In the rhapsody of his imagination he has discovered a world of wind-mills, and his sorrows are, that there are no Quixots to attack them.¹⁴

¹¹ Thomas Paine (1737-1809), author, pamphleteer, revolutionary. Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man: Being an Answer to Mr. Burke's Attack on the French Revolution*. By Thomas Paine, Secretary for Foreign Affairs to Congress in the American war, and Author of the Work Intituled Common sense (London: J. Johnson, 1791).

¹² *Rights of Man*, p. 8.

¹³ *Rights of Man*, p. 46.

¹⁴ *Rights of Man*, pp. 21-22.

At every step, Paine draws attention to the element of ideological mediation in Burke by highlighting the lack of ‘truth’ and the clever exposition of facts ‘calculated for theatrical representation’. This narrative trope automatically allows Paine to occupy a higher moral standpoint in his tract. What is interesting is that this binary way of reading the Revolution through these two texts has become something of a practice in critical readings of the period.¹⁵ But the distinction between history and drama that forms the basis of Paine’s argument seems redundant in a post-Foucauldian world, where the gap between fact and storytelling has crumbled. In fact, it is the fictional element of *Reflections* that prevents it from being unidirectional. Burke’s constant swaying between anecdotal narration and factual reportage lends the text polyphony, and testifies to the untidiness of history itself.

Ironically Paine draws attention to this multiplicity while denouncing the generic diversity of Burke’s text ‘Mr. Burke’s text is *all* Miscellany’ (italics-author’s own). Mocking the ‘mob of ideas tumbling over and destroying one another’, Paine is dismissive of Burke’s narrative experimentation.¹⁶ As John Whale points out, the messiah of revolutionary sentiment paradoxically ‘advocated a repression of Burke’s revolutionary aesthetics’.¹⁷ Having denounced the emancipatory potential of plurality as a narrative trope, Paine argues for a language that relies on rationality. The vernacular, colloquial idiom of *Rights of Man* could be a result of Paine’s unique subject position in revolutionary America and its more flexible literary and

¹⁵ See Marilyn Butler, *Burke, Paine, Godwin, and the Revolution Controversy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); R.R. Fennessy, *Burke, Paine, and the Rights of Man* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963); Ray Browne, *The Burke-Paine Controversy: Texts and Criticism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963).

¹⁶ *Rights of Man*, p. 117.

¹⁷ John Whale, *Imagination Under Pressure 1789-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) p. 51.

linguistic tradition.¹⁸ But Paine's literary aim of simplicity is grounded in the deistic faith that man must go back to nature for information. Owing to this, he celebrates an ideal time when language, and words, could be used unambiguously. By emphasizing the point of origin, his ostensibly revolutionary text shies away from fully articulating the egalitarian principles it proposes. *Rights of Man* is torn between a 'belief in progress and an adherence to origins'.¹⁹ Ultimately,

the moral imperative which enables a revolutionary new start can never entirely escape its metaphysical origins, and allow a clean break for the new world of free trade and commerce for which Paine has such high hopes.²⁰

There is no doubt that *Rights of Man* is a key step towards fashioning a unique idiom with which to question the establishment and articulate radical political ideas. In addition to deploying simple language, Paine constantly uses the pronoun *we* to build up a sense of intimacy between the writer and the (proposed) plebeian reader whilst foregrounding the intellectual potential of the latter. This could explain why his Republican tract immediately succeeded in capturing popular imagination and became something of a publishing phenomenon.²¹ But Paine's ostensible egalitarianism cannot simply be pitted against Burke's ideas of hereditary succession, or his belief in monarchy. They are complex texts, fraught with similar complexities. For this reason they cannot be pitted against each other or pigeonholed

¹⁸ Paine trained alongside the likes of William Cobbett (1763-1835). Mostly marginalized as a grammarian, Cobbett was instrumental in shaping linguistic trends and stressing literacy at the time. He also went on to publish *A Grammar of the English Language*, an enormously popular text meant to teach labourers how to write. William Cobbett, *A Grammar of the English language, in a Series of Letters. Intended for the Use of Schools and of Young Persons in General; but, More Especially for the Use of Soldiers, Sailors, Apprentices, and Plough-boys* (London: T.Dolby, 1819).

¹⁹ *Imagination Under Pressure*, p. 60.

²⁰ *Imagination Under Pressure*, p. 57.

²¹ Paine's pamphlet sold an estimated 200,000 copies between 1791 and 1793 as opposed to the 30,000 copies of Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Interestingly both pamphlets were priced at three shillings. See E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1963) p.108.

into any one school of thought. Clearly, the pattern that emerges from engaging with the literary interventions of the leading intellectuals of the day is one of ideological hybridity. These texts are deeply rooted in the socio-political and cultural geography of the 1790s, and become sites of ideological contestation. The conversational nature of these pamphlets contributes to the formation of a critical constellation, which has as its co-ordinates disparate personalities and thinking minds such as Priestley, Burke, Paine, and Godwin, who inherit similar intellectual and cultural schemata, but respond to it in very different ways. The ruptured social fabric during this period of transition (inter-regnum) leads to a proliferation of ideological perspectives. This explains why the literature of the time is characterized by an endless series of debates, what Godwin called 'unlimited speculation' between intellectuals such as Burke, Paine, and Godwin.²² The dynamics of consensus and difference co-exist, making the end of the eighteenth century a fertile ideological playground. This explains why the public sphere acquired an added importance in the late eighteenth century. Addressing this, Alex Benichmol claims:

[T]he theoretical model of the public sphere is not simply another value neutral conceptual shell designed to encase a multiplicity of cultural practices, but an important contemporary articulation of a normative cultural space for the critical interrogation of administrative and economic institutions. Read back into the intellectual practices of the Romantic period, the public sphere becomes a crucial mediating 'lifeworld'.²³

The changing nature of the public sphere meant it could accommodate a greater variety of cultural utterances. This explains why these authors do not shy away from referring to, agreeing with, or even refuting each other. Thus, literary productions of the 1790s should be understood as conversational acts produced out of a contentious

²² *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, p. 21.

²³ Alex Benichmol, *Intellectual Politics and Cultural Conflict in the Romantic Period: Scottish Whigs, English Radicals and the Making of the British Public Sphere* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2010) p. 38.

discursive position. It is in this period of acute discursive friction that James Gillray (1757-1815) printed his political and social satires.

Born in Chelsea in 1756, Gillray started his life by learning engraving, and later joined the Royal Academy as a student. During this time he supported himself by engraving prints under pseudonyms. He lived with his primary publisher and print seller, Miss Hannah Humphrey—whose shop was first at 227 Strand, then in New Bond Street, followed by Old Bond Street, and finally St. James's Street. He died on 1 June 1815. Gillray's prolific output comprises hundreds of trenchant political and social satires. His prints are central to understanding the fears that the excesses of the French Revolution generated in the conservative heartland of Britain, most notably its urban core, the city of London. Owing to the occasional receipt of a commission from the Tory Government, Gillray's whole oeuvre is frequently dismissed as that of a Loyalist. But I believe that if his caricatures are situated in the wider cycle of production and consumption that was central to Britain in the late eighteenth century, he can be read as yet another co-ordinate of the politico-literary exchange between stalwarts such as Burke, Paine, and Godwin who defined the literary landscape of the day. Situating Gillray in this literary debate is, I believe, central to interpreting his visual aesthetic. This thesis examines the historically contingent location of Gillray's prints in order to arrive at a notion of intertextuality, which is central to an understanding of the proliferation of public letters and political pamphlets in the ideologically fraught public sphere during the last decade of the eighteenth century. Such an interaction between various discourses, especially visual and verbal ones, can help the reader detect fissures in Gillray's assimilation and concretization of the dominant culture and his reaffirmation of monarchy. For this reason, he provides the lynchpin to understanding the complexity of counter-revolutionary propaganda in late-eighteenth-century England. His prints serve as

graphic metaphors for counter-revolutionary protest, but they can be studied to reveal the complex and fractured nature of political discourse in the period following the French Revolution. Through this thesis, I aim to show that a reading of Gillray's visual semiotics through a lens of either/or is reductive, as it does not fully respond to the complexities of the visual narratives that he provides. Each of Gillray's visual texts can be used to situate him in a wider context by studying relevant historical and literary texts, including a series of late eighteenth-century literary and religious pamphlets, ballads, broadsheets, historical treatises, 'vulgar' radical texts, and polite literature. In order to comprehend the interdependence of the visual and the verbal in the establishment of meaning, it is imperative to move towards an understanding of visual satire as historiography. This idea is a derivative of Hayden White's groundbreaking claim regarding the centrality of narrativity in history writing.

Writing about fictional representations of historical events in *Tropics of Discourse*, White suggests:

What should interest us in the discussion of the 'literature of fact' or, as I have chosen to call it, the fictions of factual representation is the extent to which the discourse of the historian and that of the imaginative writer overlap, resemble, or correspond with each other. [...] [B]oth wish to provide a verbal image of 'reality'.²⁴

He uses this claim to argue for plural accounts of history (historiographies), as opposed to a single authoritative version of history. He goes on to foreground the presence of emplotment, argument, and ideological mediation in the multiple historiographies of an age. Examining history as discourse, White's essay can be used to arrive at the notion of political caricature as historiography.²⁵ His argument

²⁴ Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978) p. 121.

²⁵ I have deliberately chosen to refer to caricatures as 'historiography' and not 'historiophoty', White's term for the transposition of historical narratives in visual discourse. This is because this thesis aims to study historical, literary, and visual narratives by placing them on a similar footing.

can be extended to visual satire. The logical culmination of this analogy is the assumption that caricaturists like Gillray can be seen as historians who use the visual discourse to transpose history onto prints. Using this understanding, this thesis will offer an interpretative framework that highlights the historical significance of Gillray's prints and their complex position in a layered history, which comprises a compendium of Loyalist, Republican, revolutionary and anti-revolutionary historiographies.

In recent years a number of scholars have used a similar approach to the eighteenth century. Surprisingly, however, most critical studies on the period examine the role of British popular culture by studying the historical or literary writing of the time. The period between 1760 and 1820 has long been acknowledged as the golden age of British pictorial satire. But despite the ubiquity of political caricature in Britain during the last decades of the eighteenth century, scholars seem to steer clear of inter-disciplinary studies involving visual satire. It is only recently that late eighteenth-century caricaturists have attracted significant scholarly attention and their works have been studied in their own right as sophisticated and intricate images that yield a history of the age.

This is evident in a spate of revisionist iconographic studies that have been published in the past two decades. Ronald Paulson and Paul Keen were amongst the first scholars to concentrate on the centrality of political prints to the expansionary dynamics of print culture. In *Representations of Revolution* Paulson proposes the notion of reading these satires as visual texts. In *The Crisis of Literature in the 1790s* Keen carries this idea forward by questioning conventional ideas about

literature and introducing the idea of caricatures as literary texts.²⁶ This concept is deployed as an analytical tool in numerous studies of eighteenth-century prints.

Antoine DeBaecque tells the history of the French Revolution through the study of images of the body as they appeared in the popular literature of the time, whilst Dena Goodman and Joan Landes analyze the sexist implications of a number of these images.²⁷ But it does not take long to realise that iconographic analyzes tend to concentrate on visual expressions of radicalism.

This is not to say that Loyalist prints have been doomed to obscurity. In fact, a number of prominent critics, including Raymond Williams and Marilyn Butler, are alert to the contributions of radical, as well as counter-revolutionary, culture. Both *Culture and Society* and *Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries* provide excellent introductions to the importance of conservative culture and are crucial for anyone interested in Loyalist caricatures.²⁸ Unfortunately, their attention to this body of prints has not been borne out in subsequent scholarship. It is only very recently that the cross-linkages between British Loyalism and counter-revolutionary politics, initially sidelined, have attracted interest. This has resulted in an insightful interdisciplinary reading by Kevin Gilmartin.²⁹ As the title of his *Writing against Revolution: Literary Conservatism in Britain 1790-1832* suggests, it focuses on British Loyalism and reactionary politics. Gilmartin consistently draws attention to

²⁶ Ronald Paulson, *Representations of Revolution, 1789-1820* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983); Paul Keen, *The Crisis of Literature in the 1790s: Print Culture and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

²⁷ Antoine De Baecque, *The Body Politic: Corporeal Metaphor in Revolutionary France 1770-1800*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993); Joan. B Landes, *Visualizing the Nation: Gender, Representation, and Revolution in Eighteenth Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003); Dena Goodman, *Marie Antoinette: Writings on the Body of a Queen* (London: Routledge, 2003).

²⁸ Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958); Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries: English Literature and Its Background, 1760-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

²⁹ Kevin Gilmartin, *Writing Against Revolution: Literary Conservatism in Britain, 1790-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

the centrality of visual forms, while stressing the need for more scholars to foster an inter-disciplinary approach. Ironically, his historio-literary perspective constantly privileges printed books and periodicals over prints, the verbal text over the image.

I intend to address this relative marginalization of Loyalist visual culture by focusing on political prints produced by James Gillray during the last decades of the eighteenth century. Recent interest in political satire led to the establishment of a national centre in Britain for the study of cartoons and caricature at the University of Kent in Canterbury.³⁰ Despite this, the only book-length study available on Gillray is outdated and highly inadequate. *Historical and Descriptive Account of the Caricatures of James Gillray* by Thomas Wright and Robert Harding Evans lists all of Gillray's prints chronologically and describes each of them with a clinical objectivity, without situating them in the socio-political context of the age.³¹

But the absence of an interdisciplinary book-length study on Gillray has been addressed by Richard Godfrey's catalogue of the Gillray exhibition held at Tate Britain from 6 June 2011- 2 September 2011.³² *James Gillray: The Art of Caricature* was the first exhibition in over thirty years to focus on the socio-political ethos of the late eighteenth century through a study of Gillray's prints.³³ Supported by *The Economist*, and organized in association with the British Museum, it brought together almost a hundred and fifty major works from public and private collections in Britain and the United States, including a rich selection of prints lent by the Library of Congress, Washington DC. Curated by Richard Godfrey, a leading

³⁰ The British Cartoon Archive is located at the University of Kent's Templeman Library and has a collection of over one hundred and fifty thousand British satires, cartoons, and comic strips.

³¹ Thomas Wright and Robert Harding Evans, *Historical and Descriptive Account of the Caricatures of James Gillray: Comprising A Political and Humorous History of the Latter Part of the Reign of George the Third* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1851).

³² See Richard Godfrey, *James Gillray: The Art of Caricature* (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 2001).

³³ This exhibition followed the one organized by the Arts Council of the UK in 1967.

scholar on Gillray and British printmaking, Mark Hallett, a prominent eighteenth-century scholar at the University of York, and Martin Myrone, the curator at Tate Britain, this exhibition is important for any contemporary study on Gillray because it brings together some of his most celebrated and less popular prints.

Godfrey's introduction and Mark Hallett's essay, 'James Gillray and the Language of Graphic Satire' discuss the growth of a new satiric counter-culture in late-eighteenth-century Britain at length. Hallett draws attention to an important aspect of Gillray's oeuvre - the complex duality of his pictorial satires, and the multiplicity of references based on 'a playful interweaving of historical and contemporary narratives and pictorial and literary materials'.³⁴ He discusses the influence of George Bickham (1684-1758), William Hogarth (1697-1764), and contemporary artists such as Johan Zoffany (1733-1810) on Gillray.³⁵ According to Hallett, it is the complexity of Gillray's prints, alongside their visually spectacular nature, that makes them relevant to the twenty-first-century viewer. Godfrey's catalogue covers Gillray's entire life from his first drawings to the ones he made just before he died. But what makes it interesting is the fact that it is not a mere compilation of prints; instead, it provides the reader with an interpretative framework within which Gillray's life and times can be read. It introduces those political and social intrigues that fashioned his identity as a satirist and engages with key political figures in a way that promotes a nuanced understanding of the age. A commendable introduction to the era, the catalogue is broadly thematic. Prints are grouped into individual sections concentrating on Gillray's early works, his grotesque representations of the French Revolution, his vacillating political

³⁴ *James Gillray, The Art of Caricature*, p. 24.

³⁵ According to Hallett, Gillray's oeuvre establishes him as Hogarth's 'natural successor'. *James Gillray, The Art of Caricature*, p. 29.

affiliations, his acerbic satires of the royal family, and a final section of his sketches once he descended into insanity. The short explanation that accompanies each print clarifies the context in which the print was produced. In fact, Godfrey goes a step further and even includes the collection from which the print has been sourced, and hints at the multiple influences that might be evident in a particular print. In the pages that follow, it becomes clear that Godfrey's primary purpose is the appreciation of caricature as a persuasive visual medium.

At each stage Godfrey uses Gillray's prints to demonstrate the caricaturist's alertness to the political intrigues of the time, and his attention to minutiae. The members of the royal family, and eighteenth-century political stalwarts become an important part of the cumulative narrative that can be constructed from Godfrey's account of Gillray's prints. In the process of unravelling this narrative, Godfrey stresses Gillray's unfavourable, even harsh, depictions of representatives of both the Tory Government and the Whig Opposition. In fact, he acknowledges the latent subversive energy present in some of Gillray's prints:

Seen with the perspective of time [...] Pitt seems as ridiculous as Fox, or as Bonaparte, John Bull and Britannia nearly as foolish as the sans-culottes.³⁶

This ensures that the compilation provides the reader with a succinct introduction to the complex position of political caricature at the end of the eighteenth century.

Godfrey's mode of interpretation works well because it seems to move towards democratizing the arts by including material such as paintings, sculptures, and medals to convey the sense of Gillray's times. *James Gillray: The Art of Caricature* succeeds in throwing light on the importance of visual satire as an entertaining, yet politically provocative form. But the catalogue's take on Gillray remains ambivalent. In his preview to the exhibition Godfrey insists that

³⁶ *James Gillray, The Art of Caricature*, p. 91.

The purpose of the exhibition is not merely to show Gillray's value to the historian, through his famous caricatures of such figures as Pitt, Fox, or Napoleon, nor his frequently hilarious lampoons of the fashions and scandals of the time, but to demonstrate his great gifts as an artist. His muse was comic – nobody could have been further from the council tables of the Royal Academy, an institution where he had studied as an engraver, but which he subjected to some of his most sustained attacks. Yet he was in his way one of the greatest draughtsmen of his day, and a brilliant and highly innovative printmaker.³⁷

Here the satirist is described as an outsider and the qualifying 'yet' serves to reinstate the hierarchy between fine art, promoted by the Royal Academy, and caricature. The latter is still relegated to the sidelines, as Gillray is ultimately heralded as a fine draughtsman, albeit one rejected by the Royal Academy.

Godfrey's catalogue establishes Gillray as a prominent figure in the narrative of eighteenth-century British satire, but in my opinion, his insistence on a chronological rendition of Gillray's output, and his ultimate verdict on Gillray reinstate the hierarchy between an artist and a satirist. The narrative of a career and the hierarchizing of genres immediately deprive Gillray of any potential beyond the immediately visible.

I will seek to address these lacunae by moving away from a conventional recounting of the historical events of the eighteenth century, and concentrating on the thematic over the chronological. The body of works cited above shapes my perspective on the prints in question. Gilmartin's deconstruction of the simplistic definition of Loyalism has heavily influenced me, but I want to extend his line of enquiry to concentrate on the visual realm in order to engage with the numerous ways in which political caricatures function as historiographical accounts. I will engage with the philosophical, cultural, linguistic, and aesthetic matrices by which

³⁷ Richard Godfrey, 'James Gillray at Tate Britain', *History Today* 51: 6 (2001) <<http://www.historytoday.com/richard-godfrey/james-gillray-tate-britain>> [1 June 2010] (para 2 of 2).

historical insight is generated in Gillray's ostensibly Loyalist prints. This does not mean that I will attempt to 'justify' reactionary prints. In fact, I will question that label itself. Whiggish historians are too quick to label Gillray conservative, and feminist historians too quick to dismiss him for being patriarchal. Even a book that aims to nuance the concept of propaganda is quick to dismiss Gillray as the 'most obvious propagandist' of the eighteenth century and trace his ideological leanings to his 'conversion to conservatism as a result of his dismay at the French Revolution'.³⁸ That is why he presents such a challenge. To use Miles Taylor's phrase, my approach 'may bring with it the dangers of an inverted Whiggery' but I strongly believe it has helped place these prints in a proper context.³⁹

1.1 Interrogating Gillray's Satiric 'Conservatism'

The inception of visual lampoons on a mass scale can be traced to the political counter-revolution in Britain from 1792-1832 in which there was an efflorescence of a common consciousness, and a democratization of the printed word and image. The anxiety that events in revolutionary France might provoke a similar disruption of established order in Britain led to a proliferation of propagandist speeches, sermons, pamphlets, tracts, broadsheets, festivals, songs, and caricatures. The circulation of such propaganda is central to the expansionary dynamics of print culture. But pictorial satires had an edge over written material because they appealed to a wide range of people. One of Gillray's later prints, *Very Slippy-Weather* (1808, Figure I.1) depicts such a scene. Miss Humphrey's shop in St. James' Street is in the

³⁸ Garth S. Jowett, Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda & Persuasion, Fifth Edition* (London: Sage Publications, 2011) pp. 77-78.

³⁹ Miles Taylor, 'John Bull and the Iconography of Public Opinion in Britain c. 1712-1929', *Past and Present* 134 (1992) pp. 93-128 (p.128).

background. In the window a number of Gillray's prints are displayed, and the crowd is busy perusing them. Interestingly a coachman, a footman, and an errand boy in ragged clothing can be seen standing alongside an army officer, and a dandy. As this self-reflexive print shows, the caricatural form managed to contribute to the burgeoning democratic consciousness by reaching those corners of existence that no other literary form could. Besides addressing the literate audience, these prints could communicate to the illiterate masses, when the written word could not. By transforming political events and the private lives of the aristocracy into a colourful pantomime that every man in the street could comprehend, they instigated an immediate response. Unlike earlier artists who sold their work solely to patrons, caricaturists were associated with publishers who aimed at reaching the maximum number of customers for maximum profit. But for those members of the public who could not afford the two-shilling price tag of a coloured print, print-sellers created captivating window displays, allowing passers-by to share the joke.

However, while print culture guaranteed freedom, its popularity meant that it also became an important means of arbitrating authority in the revolutionary decades. The historically contingent public sphere provided an ideal space to constitute cultural meanings.⁴⁰ The complex nature of visual productions engendered during a period of acute discursive friction needs to be understood within this context. Gillray was at the peak of his popularity at the end of the eighteenth century. Therefore, it is not surprising that his pictorial libels are deeply rooted in the socio-political geography of the 1780s and 1790s. His acceptance of commissions from the Tory Government and his contribution to Canning's

⁴⁰ For a detailed analysis of the concept of the public sphere see Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger, Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989).

periodicals *Anti-Jacobin* and *The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine* has led to a spate of critical readings that situate him either as a hireling, a commissioned propagandist, or an apologist for the Government. Moreover, the ubiquity of his caricatures has often been understood as a sign of the dominant discourse being bodied forth self-confidently.⁴¹

There is no denying that Gillray's caricatures are central to the stigmatization of the Francophile language of reform. In one of his most complex prints *New Morality; – or – The Promis'd Installment of the High-Priest of the Theophilanthropes, with the Homage of Leviathan and his Suite* (1798, Figure I.2) he paints a damning portrait of the Jacobin faction. This work was included as a pullout in the inaugural issues of the counter-revolutionary monthly *The Anti-Jacobin*. An excerpt of George Ellis and George Canning's poem *New Morality*, which appeared in the last issue of the weekly *Anti-Jacobin Review* in July 1798, forms a part of Gillray's print.⁴² The poem tries to visualise the cruelties meted out by Jacobins, and juxtaposes them against abstract Republican ideas of liberty. It critiques the Romantic poets for propounding radical ideas. In fact, the poem could be seen as a poetic rendering of anti-revolutionary principles, for it ends by exhorting Britain to root out the 'deep infection' by staying true to her traditions.⁴³ It is these nuances of modern political thought, literary thought, and fashion that

⁴¹ A tourist account of the crowds gathered at Mrs. Humphrey's shop at 27 James Street testifies to the popularity of Gillray's caricature: 'The enthusiasm is indescribable when the next drawing appears [...] it is a veritable madness. You have to make your way through the crowd with fists'. Though caricatures by Gillray, Rowlandson, and others were most popular in Britain, where viewers could easily identify and laugh at the subjects, some publishers exported their wares as well. Robert Justin Goldstein, *Censorship of Political Caricature in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1989) p. 10.

⁴² George Canning, John Hookham Frere, George Ellis, William Gifford, 'New Morality', *Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin* (London: W. Bulmer and Co., 1801) pp. 233-56. For more information on counter-revolutionary periodicals of the time see Stuart Andrews, *The British Periodical Press and The French Revolution 1789-99* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).

⁴³ *Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin*, p. 233.

Gillray explores in his visual text. The print is an attack on French Theophilanthropists, whose Enlightenment theories were supposed to have triggered Jacobin 'savagery'. On the left, the titular Leviathan, here represented by the Duke of Bedford, can be seen. Charles James Fox, John Thelwall, and others members of the political Opposition ride the Leviathan waving revolutionary caps at the crowd.⁴⁴ The procession of the Jacobin faction includes monsters, frogs, crocodiles, and snakes, and is led by Joseph Priestley.⁴⁵ At the front of the procession are poets, including Robert Southey and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, both represented with asses' heads, and Charles Lamb, who is depicted as a frog. Erasmus Darwin, Thomas Holcroft, Joseph Priestley, Charlotte Smith, William Godwin, and Mary Wollstonecraft follow them.⁴⁶ Clearly, Gillray imagines the Jacobins to be a lethal conglomerate of Whig politicians, radical publishers, Leftist authors, and religious Dissenters moving towards a French temple of radical thought. The *mis-en-scene* of this print powerfully evokes the fervour of revolutionary festivals that were organized in France following the fall of the Bastille. On the right, a 'cornucopia of ignorance' spews forth pamphlets, radical periodicals, and copies of London's Whig newspapers. The pile of 'ignorance' also includes works by feminist authors of the

⁴⁴ Fifth Duke of Bedford (1765-1802), Whig politician and patron of horse-racing; friend of Charles James Fox and the Prince of Wales. Vic Gatrell traces Gillray's influence back to a letter by Edmund Burke. In his *Letter to a Noble Lord* (1796) Burke referred to Bedford as 'the Leviathan among all the creatures of the Crown. He tumbles about his unwieldy bulk, he plays and frolics on the ocean of the royal beauty'. Isaac Cruikshank refers to this in *The Modern Leviathan* (1796, Figure 1.3). Gillray is clearly influenced by both. Edmund Burke, *A Letter from the Right Honourable Edmund Burke to a Noble Lord, on the Attacks Made Upon Him and his Pension, in the House of Lords, by the Duke of Bedford and the Earl of Lauderdale, Early in the Present Sessions of Parliament* (London: J. Owen, and F. and C. Rivington, 1796) p. 37. For more information on this see Vic Gatrell, *City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-Century London* (London: Walker and Co., 2007) p. 656.

⁴⁵ Charles James Fox (1749-1806), Whig statesman, a staunch opponent of William Pitt and George III who championed the French revolutionary cause; John Thelwall (1764 – 1834) radical British orator, writer, and one of the founders of the London Corresponding Society; Joseph Priestley (1733-1804) English theologian, political theorist, and dissenting clergyman.

⁴⁶ Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), English physician, slave-trade abolitionist, and philosopher; Thomas Holcroft (1745-1809), author sympathetic to the early ideals of the French Revolution; Charlotte Turner Smith (1749-1806), Romantic poet and author; Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), author, and champion of women's rights.

time; Mary Wollstonecraft and Helen Maria Williams are incorporated for having openly championed women's independence, while Mary Robinson seems to be included because of her allegedly intimate relationship with Charles Fox. Representatives of the Radical faction cluster around the 'holy hunchback' La Révellière-Lépeaux. Lépeaux, part of the Executive Directory, which remained in power in France from 2 November 1795- 10 November 1799, was known for his criticism of Christianity and anti-monarchical statements in the Constituent Assembly.⁴⁷ His revulsion at established religion led him to establish the sect of Theophilanthropy, to which Gillray's print refers. David Williams (1738-1816), an English Deist, originally conceived Theophilanthropy in 1766. It failed in Britain, but gained popularity in France. Followers of the creed frequently read works by English Deists, Voltaire, Socrates, and perhaps most importantly, Rousseau. In Gillray's print La Révellière-Lépeaux can be seen reading *Religion De La Nature* inside the temple while the Holy Bible lies discarded on the floor. Jacobins, Whigs, and Radicals pay homage to the creed of Theophilanthropy. The print combines politics, religion, and literature, in order to create a stark binary between 'good' literature, politicians, periodicals, and priests; and Whigs, romantic poets, and Dissenters in the minds of the populace. Embedded into a historical moment of ideological conflict, Gillray's elaborate panoramic print seems to validate the initial English rejection of Theophilanthropy. The murky ramifications of the adoption of a 'New Morality' by the devotees of Jacobinism are reiterated by the portraits of the three reigning deities of the radicals on the far right. Justice is depicted as a hag with Medusa-like hair, sagging breasts, and a dagger in each hand. She wears a belt that

⁴⁷ For more information about the French Director La Révellière-Lépeaux and the creed of Theophilanthropy see Alfred Allinson, *The Days of the Directoire* (New York: John Lane Company, 1910).

reads 'Egalite' but can be seen crushing the scales of justice. Gillray's Philanthropy is an obese woman standing with a globe she's about to devour. In Canning's poem, Philanthropy is introduced in a memorable fashion:

First, Stern Philanthropy:- not she who dries
The orphan's tears, and wipes the widow's eyes;
Not she, who, sainted charity as her guide,
Of British bounty pours the annual tide: -
But *French* Philanthropy; - whose boundless mind
Glows with the general love of all mankind: -
Philanthropy- beneath whose baneful sway
Each patriot passion sinks, and dies away
Taught her in school to imbibe thy mawkish strain,
Condorcet, filtered through the dregs of Paine,
Each pert adept disowns a Briton's part,
And plucks the name of England from his heart (*italics-author's own*).⁴⁸

In keeping with the poetic description, the obesity of Gillray's Philanthropy highlights acquisitiveness instead of a charitable spirit. The presence of the globe hints at a strain of imperialism; she loves 'all mankind', but has forgotten the patriots of her own country. Such a deity, Gillray seems to suggest, is anathema for the British public. The satire continues when he visualises Sensibility just as Canning and Ellis describe her. She is a forlorn looking woman holding a book by Rousseau in one hand and a dead dove in the other. She can be seen crushing the decapitated head of Louis XVI under her feet. Her droopy face with 'a plentiful supply' of tears invokes, and subsequently dismisses, the heightened emotional behaviour often associated with the Age of Sensibility.⁴⁹ Sensibility seems to have an unending supply of tears to mourn the loss of a bird, but is content to be standing on a pedestal amidst the political chaos that is wreaking havoc in the nation for she hears:

[U]nmoved; of Loire's ensanguined flood,
Choked up with slain, of Lyon's drenched in blood

⁴⁸ *Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin*, p. 237.

⁴⁹ *Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin*, p. 239.

Of crimes that blot the age, the world with shame
Foul crimes, but sicklied over with Freedom's name.
Altars and thrones subverted, social life
Trampled to earth, - the husband from the wife
Parent from child, - with ruthless fury torn, -
Of talents, honour, virtue, wit, forlorn
In friendless exile, - of the wise and good
Staining the daily scaffold with their blood,-
Of savage cruelties, that scare the mind
The rage of madness with hell's lust combined
Of hearts torn reeking from the mangled breast,
They hear- and hope, that ALL IS FOR THE BEST (emphasis-author's
own)⁵⁰

The verse highlights the inappropriateness of the grief brought about by the deaths of lap dogs, doves, and robins in popular sentimental literature at a time of political upheaval. Gillray's print reiterates this visually; all three muses can be seen wearing the *bonnet rouge*, but stand atop pedestals, preoccupied with crushing justice, devouring the world, and mourning a dead bird respectively. They continue to be unfazed by the chaotic political scenario unfolding in front of them. Their ignorance of the socio-political commotion represented in this print is a stark reminder of the perspective of the caricaturist. The print intervenes in the revolutionary debate by visualizing the ideas expressed in Canning's verse. But in doing so, Gillray's visual text highlights the potential of the satirical print as a means of ideological penetration. Defending the novel form, William Godwin insists that it could be used to convey pressing political issues 'to persons, whom books of philosophy and science are never likely to reach'.⁵¹ This holds true for the genre of the political print over and above any other. The poetic rendition of *New Morality* is over twenty pages long, but Gillray's print compresses the multiple arguments expressed in the

⁵⁰ *Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin*, p. 240.

⁵¹ The suppressed Preface to the first edition dated 12 May 1794, first published in the second edition. William Godwin, *Things As They Are; or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams*. By William Godwin. In *Three Volumes, Volume 1. The Second Edition Corrected* (London: G.G. and J. Robinson, 1796) p. vi.

poem in a single image of the foaming tide washing over the cornucopia. The resultant sliminess is reflective of the paranoia of the age.

This overwhelming sense of apprehension expressed by Gillray's *New Morality* is heavily reminiscent of Pope's *Dunciad*. Like Pope, Gillray takes upon himself the task of representing the degradation of literary and social ethics in this print. He too does not have an individual target; rather the print is a comment on the deterioration of society. Gillray's congregation of political and literary dissenters, all clamouring to pay homage to the high priest of Theophilanthropy, evokes the dunce games of *The Dunciad*. In the second part of Pope's Juvenalian satire Dulness vows: 'Who flings most filth, and wide pollutes around/ The stream, be his the Weekly Journals, bound'.⁵²

It is this 'filth' and 'pollution' that Gillray seeks to explore, and consequently debunk, through the visual image of the slithery tide washing over the gathering of literary and political 'dunces' of late-eighteenth-century England. Gillray's print explores the annihilation of sense from England in a manner starkly similar to the fourth part of *The Dunciad*. As Pope's Dulness assumes her throne, Logic and Science are bound, Wit has been exiled from her kingdom, Morality is strangled, and the Muses are enchained and guarded by Flattery and Envy. Gillray's nihilistic tableau combines all these factors in one striking visual image. The influence of Pope's and Canning's literary satires add resonance to Gillray's visual interpretation of the political and literary scenario of the 1790s. As a result, the plate provides the onlooker with a far more disturbing view of the potential collapse of established order in Britain. The tide of Jacobinism, represented quite literally in the

⁵² Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad, in Four Books: Printed According To the Complete Copy Found in the Year 1742. With the Prolegomena of Scriblerus, and Notes Variorum. To Which Are Added, Several Notes Now First Publish'd the Hypercritics of Aristarchus, and His Dissertation on the Hero of the Poem* (London: M. Cooper, 1743), p. 106.

print as a mass of *bonnet rouges*, conflates religious, political, and literary figures into a threatening whole. Despite the exaggerated idiom, there is a very obvious political argument in this print.

Gillray continues to use a similar idiom to visualise his support of the state in a number of political prints. He exploits the element of exaggeration to the fullest in *Doublures* (1798, Figure I.4), an archetypal Hogarthian satire, where he caricatures the Whig Opposition with vitriolic ridicule. The late eighteenth century is characterized by an increased interest in the intricacies of physiognomic perception and *Doublures* explores this. It is heavily conditioned by Lavaterian physiognomy.⁵³ The title of the work is followed by a Lavaterian quote ‘If you would know Men’s Hearts, Look in their Faces’. This is because in this print Gillray shows the ‘true’ physiognomic face of a number of members of the Whig Opposition. It argues that fancy clothing and titles are attempts to disguise traits that are evident to the astute observer. Seven men, including Charles James Fox, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the Duke of Norfolk, George Tierney, Sir Francis Burdett, the Duke of Bedford, and the Earl of Derby, have a dual caption beneath each of their faces.⁵⁴ Gillray insists Fox parades as ‘The Patron of Liberty’, but is ‘The Arch

⁵³ The latter half of the eighteenth century is distinguished by a marked interest in the intricacies of physiognomic perception. A number of treatises including John Clubbe’s *Physiognomy* (1763), Francis Grose’s *Rules for Drawing Caricature*, and Johann Kaspar Lavater’s *Essays on Physiognomy* (1789) influenced Georgian caricaturists including Gillray. John Clubbe, *Physiognomy; Being a Sketch Only of a Larger Work Upon the Same Plan: Wherein the Different Tempers, Passions, and Manners of Men, Will Be Particularly Considered. Hear You! Whose Graver Heads in Equal Scales I Weigh, to See Whose Heaviness Prevails; Attend the Trial I Propose to Make. Dunciad. By the editor of The History and Antiquities of Wheatfield in Suffolk* (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1763); Francis Grose, *Rules for Drawing Caricature, with an Essay on Comic Painting* (London, 1788); Johann Caspar Lavater, *Essays on physiognomy, Designed to Promote the Knowledge and the Love of Mankind. By John Caspar Lavater, Citizen Of Zurich, And Minister Of The Gospel. Illustrated by More Than Eight Hundred Engravings Accurately Copied; And Some Duplicates Added From Originals. Executed by, or Under the Inspection of, Thomas Holloway. Translated from the French by Henry Hunter, D. D. Minister Of The Scots Church, London. Wall. God Created Man After His Own Image* (London: John Murray, H. Hunter and T. Holloway, 1789).

⁵⁴ Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816), Irish playwright, statesman, Whig M.P.; Charles Howard, 11th Duke of Norfolk (1746-1815), collector, active participant in the Whig party; George Tierney (1761-1830), politician, prominent opponent of William Pitt; Sir Francis Burdett (1770-1844),

Fiend'. Fox's Satanic self is reflected in the snake that can be seen around his neck, and the flames behind his head. The other leaders of the Opposition are dismissed as 'A Baboon' or worse still 'The Lowest Spirit of Hell'. Gillray's physiognomic portraiture relies on features already present in the aforementioned people, and uses contouring to foreground the physical manifestations of moral deformity of the leaders of the Opposition for the common observer. In doing so, Gillray's print pays homage to Lavater's theory, which insisted on a direct correlation between the external appearance and the moral degeneracy of the individual.

But this series of double portraiture also evokes the early eighteenth-century belief in the difference between a person's character and their external appearance, the likeness and the skit, best witnessed in Hogarth's *Characters and Caricatures* (1742-43, Figure I.5). The print comprises a series of pre-and-post headshots, which Hogarth drew in order to respond to allegations regarding the exaggerated, caricatural features of his characters. At the bottom of the print, Hogarth illustrates the difference between characterization and caricature by reproducing three character figures from the works of Raphael, and four caricatures: *Due Filosofi* from Annibale Carracci; a head by Pier Leone Ghezzi; and a Leonardo da Vinci grotesque reproduced from the French *Têtes de Caractères*. Hogarth also adds a line drawing in the space above the second illustration to indicate the simplicity with which caricatures can be produced. Above this, the print is filled with hundred profiles of 'characters', intentionally devoid of individual peculiarities.⁵⁵ In *The Analysis of*

aristocrat, independent M.P. who entered Parliament in 1796 and championed free speech, and personal liberty; Edward Smith Stanley, 12th Earl of Derby (1752-1834), Whig politician.

⁵⁵ In *Discourses of Art* (1771) Sir Joshua Reynolds advised budding painters to 'leave out all minute breaks and peculiarities in the face'. Joshua Reynolds, *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Knt. Late President of the Royal Academy: Containing his Discourses, Idlers, A Journey to Flanders and Holland, (now first published,) and his Commentary on Du Fresnoy's Art of painting; Printed From his Revised Copies, (with his last corrections and additions,) in Two Volumes. To Which is Prefixed*

Beauty, Hogarth writes that he was careful to vary the features of these heads at random to prevent any of the portraits being identified as a real individual.⁵⁶ This is done in order to show the likeness of his work with the paintings of Raphael rather than the proponents of the Italian *caricatura*. Having located himself as a descendent of the artistic tradition that originated from Raphael, and distanced himself from the caricaturists of his day, Hogarth added a note under the picture 'For a farther Explanation of the Difference Betwixt Character & Caricature See ye Preface to Jo^h. Andrews'. He refers to Henry Fielding's 1742 work, *Joseph Andrews*, because it is here that the author explains that a character portrait requires attention to detail and a degree of realism, while caricature allows for a great degree of exaggeration. Talking of Italian *caricatura* he says:

Its aim is to exhibit monsters, not men; and all distortions and exaggerations whatever are within its proper province [...]. Now what *Caricatura* is in painting, Burlesque is in writing [...]. He who should call the ingenious Hogarth a Burlesque painter, would, in my opinion, do him very little honour; for sure it is much easier, much less the subject of admiration, to paint a man with a nose, or any other Feature of a preposterous size, or to expose him in some absurd or monstrous Attitude, than to express the affections of men on canvas. It has been thought a vast commendation of a painter, to say his figures seem to breathe; but surely, it is a much greater and nobler applause, that they appear to think.⁵⁷

It is clear to the reader that Hogarth alludes to the passage to demonstrate the foreign nature of caricature and place himself firmly in a tradition that valued verisimilitude. Gillray's *Doublures of Characters* uses exactly the same traditional satiric device as Hogarth's print, but deploys it to commend the caricatural form. Gillray is deeply influenced by Hogarth, but is much more comfortable inserting himself in the mould

An Account of the Life and Writings of the Author, By Edmond Malone, Esq. one of his executors (London: T. Cadell, Jun, and W. Davies, 1792) p.72.

⁵⁶ William Hogarth, 'Of face', *The Analysis of Beauty. Written with a View of Fixing the Fluctuating Ideas of Taste* (London: J. Reeves, 1753) pp. 149-56.

⁵⁷ Henry Fielding, *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews, and of his Friend Mr. Abraham Adams. Written in Imitation of The Manner of Cervantes, Author of Don Quixote. In two volumes* (London: A. Millar, 1742) pp. x-xi.

of the caricaturist. He is aware of the literary and pictorial traditions that he has inherited, but he adds a characteristic Gillray twist to each of them. This includes celebrating the 'preposterous' and 'monstrous' elements shunned by both Hogarth and Fielding. His print revels in exaggerating facial idiosyncrasies of the members of the Opposition.

This plethora of influences at play in his pictorial representation of the members of the Whig party illustrates the presence of a 'schema' at work. In his extremely influential work *Art and Illusion*, E.H. Gombrich engages with the forces that influence an image-maker. According to him the evolution of the artist's language, what he calls the 'schemata', is a sum of the accumulated knowledge that is passed down from one generation to the other. The schemata constitutes a body of work by earlier artists and influences the contemporary artist both consciously and unconsciously. Moreover, it helps him nuance his image. It provides the artist, or print-maker, with a means of interpreting the world and thereby enters into every image conjured by him. Gombrich argues that 'the artist [...] needs vocabulary before he can embark on a 'copy' of reality'.⁵⁸ Keeping this in mind, one can detect the influence of Hogarth's prints, Lavater's tracts, and the Italian *caricatura* on Gillray's pictorial lampoons. But all of these are assimilated by Gillray, and consequently refashioned to fit the changing literary tastes, and political situation of late eighteenth-century Britain.⁵⁹ This explains why, despite it being a Hogarthian print, the influence of the French Revolution can be seen everywhere in Gillray's

⁵⁸ E.H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (London: Phaidon, 1977) p. 75.

⁵⁹ Talking about the Romantic artist, Gombrich says 'He can re-fashion this imagery, adapt it to its task, assimilate it to his needs and change it beyond recognition, but he can no more represent what is in front of his eyes without a pre-existing stock of acquired images than he can paint it without the pre-existing colours which he must have on his palette'. This dynamic is at play in Gillray's prints. E.H. Gombrich, 'Imagery and Art in the Romantic Period', *The Burlington Magazine* 91: 555 (1949) pp. 153-59 (p. 158).

Doublures. The Revolution irrevocably changed the meaning of numerous symbols by endowing them with political connotations. In antiquity, slaves wore the red revolutionary cap, mimicking the Phrygian bonnet, but it became one of the primary symbols of the French Revolution. Frequently sported by revolutionaries, it is often used to symbolise the ideological leanings of a person in the caricature of the time. The Revolution's attempt to represent the unprecedented caused a trans-valuation of visual symbols such as the cap of liberty. For Loyalists, the meaning of the cap of liberty is unmistakable:

[I]t was the symbol of Revolution, the ensign of French anarchy, the sign under which the Jacobins were to orchestrate the terror of 1793-4. It represents, for them, the antithesis of British Constitutional 'liberty' and patriotism. The presence of the cap of liberty betrayed the real intent of plebeian radicals, exposing the constitutional guise of their proceedings as merely cover for seditious organization. In Gillray's ferocious visual attacks on revolutionary France, plebeian radicals, both French and English were stripped of humanity. On their heads they usually wore the *bonnet rouge*.⁶⁰

All these connotations are implicit in Gillray's representation of Lord Derby as a baboon in a *bonnet rouge* in *Doublures*. The red cap is not an innocent prop; instead, it provides an immediately intelligible symbol by which the public could associate him with the Opposition. Caricatures are effective as propaganda only because they draw upon an available body of symbols, and in turn, further condition the cognitive abilities of the masses as 'people of all ranks came in contact with this symbology and understood its basic lexicon as well as its idiosyncrasies of visual organization'.⁶¹ Gillray continues to exploit culturally resonant symbols in *Le Coup De Maitre* (1797, Figure I.6), which demonises Charles Fox as a hairy French revolutionary, aiming his pistol at the British Crown, Lords, and Commons. The

⁶⁰ James Epstein, 'Understanding the Cap of Liberty: Symbolic Practice and Social Conflict in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Past & Present* 122 (1989) pp. 75-118 (p. 102).

⁶¹ Amelia Rauser, 'Death or Liberty: British Political Prints and the Struggle for Symbols in the American Revolution', *Oxford Art Journal* 21: 2 (1998) pp. 153-71 (p. 156).

symbolic *bonnet rouge* reappears and serves to heighten the anarchy suggested by the primary image of Fox wielding the pistol. The presence of recurring signifiers such as the *bonnet rouge* help feed into an understanding of Gillray's pictorial libels as iconographic configurations that are visually coded.

This characteristic becomes clearer in some of his more complex images. One such print *The Zenith of French Glory* (1793, Figure I.7) seems to replicate Burkean Francophobia. It embodies a dystopic vision, equating Liberty with anarchy. A *sans-culotte*, with two daggers dipped in blood sits atop the bodies of a bishop and two monks. The body of a lawyer hangs in the background. At the same time a crowd rejoices the assassination of Louis XVI by the guillotine. Once again, the presence of the red revolutionary cap and the tri-coloured cockade ensures that signification is a result of signifiers formed apriori by certain symbols. The multiple images of destruction tie into one another to underline the French prioritization of violence over law, religion, and aesthetic pursuits. In embodying the dominant discourse and displaying it insistently using immediately intelligible symbols, Gillray attempts to inculcate English ideals within the populace. The print works by engraining a dual image of British stability versus French anarchy in the minds of the onlookers. The legitimating fiction of stability and truth conjured by Gillray for Britain goes hand-in-hand with his insistence on sentimentalizing the French *ancien regime*. This is evident in *The Blood of the Murdered Crying for Vengeance* (1793, Figure I.8), which idealizes Louis XVI, and foregrounds the excesses of the Revolution. Gillray's gory representation is highly reminiscent of Burke's description of the royal family 'swimming in blood' and the regicide as 'unprovoked, unresisted, promiscuous slaughter'.⁶² Decapitation, traditionally

⁶² *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, p. 106.

symbolic of lack of authority, is reconfigured, for in Gillray's print the dead king still speaks, exhorting Englishmen to 'rescue the kingdom of France, from being prey to violence, usurpation and cruelty'. The textual accompaniment reinforces the caricaturist's belief in monarchy, dismissing the fraternal ideal fore-grounded by revolutionaries in France.⁶³ Gillray's understanding of the Revolution in France as a reproachable phenomenon is highlighted most powerfully in caricatures such as *Tom Paine's Nightly Pest* (1792, Figure I.9), which shows Paine beset, by nightmares about his upcoming trial for publishing his seditious tract. Paine sleeps on a straw pillow wrapped in an American flag, inscribed 'Vive L' America'. In his pocket is a copy of 'Common Sense'. An imp drops a French revolutionary song as he flees through a window. Confronting Paine are the spirits of three judges who will try him. They read out the charges against him that include 'Libels/ Scurrilities/ Falsehoods/Perjuries/ Rebellions/ Treasons'. The presiding judge declares that he will die like a dog on the gallows. His guardian angels, Dissenter Joseph Priestley, and Whig leader Charles James Fox can be seen at the headboard. The inclusion of a religious personality, alongside a Whig politician is a familiar trope by now. This ensures collusion of religious, political, and cultural ideas linking them inextricably in the minds of the people. However, an interesting detail, which is often overlooked in descriptions of the print, is that the spirits of all three judges waiting to try Paine are faceless. This seems odd given Gillray's attention to detail in the rest of the print. The lack of individuality accorded to the arbiters of law seems to point to the foregone result of the trial. This little detail highlights the coercion exercised by the representatives of the State; Paine would be prosecuted for penning a seditious

⁶³ Lynn Hunt suggests that revolutionaries in France could be understood as a 'Band of Brothers' because the fraternal ideal replaced the valorization of the monarch as the father figure. Lynn Hunt, 'The Band of Brothers', *The French Revolution: The Essential Readings*, ed. Ronald Schechter (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 2001) pp. 236-62.

pamphlet irrespective of who the judge was. It comes as no surprise that the jury that tried Paine did find him guilty. He moved to France, and then America, to escape prosecution.

Another print that intervenes in the same debate as *Tom Paine's Nightly Pest* is *Smelling Out a Rat or The Atheistical-Revolutionist Disturbed in his Midnight Calculations* (1790, Figure I.10). Here, Edmund Burke is shown spying on Dissenting clergyman Dr. Richard Price who is working on an imaginary piece titled *On the Benefits on Anarchy, Regicide and Atheism* with a picture of Charles I (1600-1649) hanging over his desk. Interestingly, Gillray's corrosive depictions of Priestley, and Fox so far are extended to Burke in this print. He is reduced to a long nose, peering spectacles, and a crucifix. The playful, yet ruthless depiction of Edmund Burke, and the facelessness of the three judges in these two prints bring us to an issue that is at the very core of Gillray's images. Ostensibly, he adheres to Loyalist tenets. Despite this, his prints are invigorated by a transgressive energy that renders them inherently unstable. It is this duality that seems to animate his oeuvre. His satires constitute fields of struggle, which highlight the 'highly complex' internal structures of a hegemonic set of beliefs.⁶⁴ The parody of Price's actual sermon, which provoked Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, coupled with the portrait of Charles I, also betrays royalist anxiety regarding regicide, which in turn underlines the vulnerability of the dominant discourse. The extent of this vulnerability can be understood by examining prints such as *A Connoisseur Examining a Cooper* (1792, Figure I.11) where George III studies Samuel Cooper's portrait of Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658), who signed the death warrant of

⁶⁴ In *Marxism and Literature*, Raymond Williams highlights the unstable nature of hegemony in process 'A lived hegemony is always a process [...]. It is a realized complex of experiences, relationships and activities, with specific and changing pressures and limits'. This could explain why Gillray's lampoons are animated by paradoxes. Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) p. 112.

Charles I. For the eighteenth-century Briton Cromwell's overthrow of monarchy epitomized the spirit of revolt. Gillray's allusion to the English Civil War (1642-1651) is the cause of the King's alarmed expression. The print hints at an analogy between Charles I and George III, thereby underlining the threat to monarchy in revolutionary times. By repeatedly drawing attention to the apprehension felt by the royals, Gillray dents the commonplace image of the self-assured and confident aristocracy. For this reason, his satires defy easy categorization as Loyalist propaganda.

This dynamic is best explicated in *French Democrats Surprising the Royal Runaways* (1791, Figure I.12), which depicts the arrest of Louis XVI and his family at Varenne on 22 June 1791. The print represents a mob of people who have broken into a modest room that houses the royal couple. Gillray resorts to burlesque; exaggerated expressions, and bloated contours are heavily used to depict the situation. The private space of the royals is politicized in a pronounced fashion as a mob, armed with brooms, knives, swords, and bayonets, bursts into the private chambers of the King and the Queen. It is easy to sense an anxiety regarding populist reform in Gillray's print. But in doing so, he succeeds in capturing the moment of rupture between the public and private realms. Dwelling on the shifting notion of privacy in the 1790s John Barrell insists that:

The fence, which had once divided private from public space, had been removed, and space traditionally regarded as private was redefined as public.⁶⁵

The spatial politics of Gillray's print chronicles this definitive shift. This is where visual images have an edge over the literary form. The spontaneity and immediacy of the caricatural form lend the image meanings that are beyond what is immediately

⁶⁵ *The Spirit of Despotism*, p. 8.

visible. As a result, the play of discursive forces makes it tough to decipher authorial intentionality, and this lends instability to Gillray's visual satires. Talking about the complexity of such satiric representations of nationalism, Charles A. Knight suggests

For satire the stereotypes of simple nationalism are a language from which it creates a text; for propaganda that language is itself the text [...]. The anarchic force of satire undercuts the principles that nationalism establishes. Satire is too unstable to be the tool of national ideology, and nations do well (or ill) to use the darker weapons of propaganda. Satire exploits the nation's double image.⁶⁶

The intrinsic hybridity of the satirical form helps situate these prints at the crossroads between public and private, and Radical and Loyal. Gillray exploits the ambivalence of the satirical form. For this reason, his polyphonic prints offer an interpretative framework that exposes the reader to multiple ways of reading the same event. The caricaturist might or might not have intentionally worked these layers of history into the print. But the spatial politics of graphic satire allows a multiplicity of symbols and ideologies to co-exist in one print. This ensures that the signification of such a print is uncontrollable.⁶⁷ In such a scenario, the interpretative onus is on the reader. The consumer deciphers meanings encoded into a visual lampoon by the caricaturist, but is capable of carrying that process to its logical conclusion by trying to gauge incipient counter-discourses that may be present in the same image. In that sense the beholder of graphic satire occupies a very important position. The hermeneutic position of the viewer becomes important precisely because the satirical form allows for a multiplicity of ideas to co-exist in one striking

⁶⁶ Charles A. Knight, 'The Images of Nations in Eighteenth-Century Satire', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 22: 4 (1989) pp. 489-511 (pp. 494-510).

⁶⁷ Gombrich addresses this when he says: '[...]art has to compensate for the loss of time dimension by concentrating all required information into one arrested image'. *Art and Illusion*, p. 292.

image. The interactive process of reading ensures that these prints function as communicative acts produced out of a conflicting discursive position.

This is precisely why pigeonholing Gillray as a Loyalist propagandist seems to be reductive. A close reading of his satires underlines the presence of a multiplicity of ideas and discourses. They need to read as hybrid constructions characterized by a play of multiple, even conflicting, ideologies. Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of dialogism, which he introduces in his 1929 essay 'Problems of Dostoevsky's Art', is a useful tool for understanding the complexity of Gillray's prints. Writing about the existence of multiple discourses within a novel, Bakhtin argues:

This (novelistic) discourse is the expression of a language consciousness that has been profoundly relativized by heteroglossia and polyphony. In the novel, literary language possesses an organ for perceiving the heterodox nature of its own speech [...] languages are dialogically implicated *in* each other and begin to exist *for* each other (similar to exchanges in a dialogue). It is precisely thanks to the novel that languages are able to illuminate each other mutually; literary language becomes a dialogue of languages that both know about and understand each other (italics-author's own).⁶⁸

The architectonics of Gillray's prints ensures such dialogic play. So it is possible to extend Bakhtin's theorization on the novel form to the visual realm, by focusing on the dialogic interaction(s) in Gillray's prints. The layered nature of his prints betrays the co-existence of varied ideological planes and results in such an interaction. The multiple connotations of Gillray's images continue to remain important because the intention of the caricaturist

[R]efracted as it passes through these planes, does not wholly give itself up to any of them. It is as if (he) has no language of his own, but does possess his own style, his own organic and unitary law governing the way [...] his own real semantic and expressive intentions are refracted within them.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist (Texas: University of Texas Press, 1990) p. 400.

⁶⁹ *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 311.

This ensures that the Loyalism expressed in Gillray's prints provides a nuanced testimony to the changing political and social landscape of the 1790s. The spontaneity of the caricatural form helps Gillray fashion a new visual vocabulary from multiple sources and faithfully represent a society in flux. Prints such as *French Democrats Surprising the Royal Runaways* espouse the attributes of counter-revolutionary propaganda, but also testify to the changing social fabric, Governmental oppression, and carry a tacit admission of a society in the making.

The changing nature of the society, and the consequent disturbance of the patrician/plebeian equilibrium is frozen in perpetuity as Gillray caricatures the London Corresponding Society (LCS) meeting regarding two Tory sponsored acts, the Treasonable Practices Act and the Seditious Meeting Act, at Copenhagen House.⁷⁰ The British government introduced the two acts, together known as the 'Gagging Acts', following the stoning of King George III on his way to the Parliament in 1795. The Treasonable Practices Act expanded the definition of high treason to include any conspiracy against the King or the Constitution while the Seditious Meetings Act restricted the size of all public meetings to fifty people. The LCS frequently conducted meetings with a large number of people, and was constantly penalized following the implementation of the two Acts. Gillray's *Copenhagen House* (1795, Figure I.13) highlights the changing fabric of society by drawing attention to such extra-Parliamentary organizing, which was increasingly becoming a visible part of the political landscape of Britain. The presence of women in the crowd is reminiscent of the women's participation in the March to Versailles

⁷⁰ John Thelwall formed the LCS in 1792 to promote reform amongst the masses. Early members included Thomas Hardy, John Horne Tooke, Joseph Gerrald, Olaudah Equiano and Maurice Margaret. E.P. Thompson estimates that the LCS started with twenty-five members in 1792 and could boast of 2000 active members by 1795. It was finally suspended and made illegal in 1799. For more information see E.P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (London: Penguin, 1991).

on 4 October 1789. Gillray freely uses revolutionary colours, blue and red, to clothe the members of the mob. This leaves the onlooker in no doubt about the ideological bent of the meeting. Although his portrait of the mob is deeply rooted in late-eighteenth-century Britain, the influences of Hogarth's representations of the mob and Pope's crowd scenes in *The Dunciad* can also be detected.⁷¹ But once again Gillray transforms his visual and literary schemata by crediting his mob with a political consciousness. The political impetus is evident in his representation of a homogeneous crowd of *sans-culottes* in ragged clothing as opposed to the hierarchized heterogeneity of the channelled crowd in Hogarth's *Masquerades and Operas* (1724, Figure I.14) and the unchannelled mob in his *The South Sea Scheme* (1721, Figure I.15).⁷²

It would be easy to conclude that Gillray discursively constructs the London Corresponding Society as a mob, at a time when the mention of the word brought up images of regicidal hordes of men, prone to violence. But his print does not dismiss the radicals of the LCS. If anything, it lauds extra-Parliamentary organizing by highlighting its peaceful nature. Despite the lack of order, the meeting represented by Gillray is peaceful, and reiterates Thelwall's 'abhorrence for tumult and violence' and his insistence on peaceful demonstration, a far cry from the mob of 'cruel ruffians and assassins', which characterized reactionary propaganda of the day.⁷³

The orderly conduct implies constraint

Such constraint had important symbolic connotations during the 1790s: in tumultuous times, the disciplined and ordered structures of the LCS not only

⁷¹ 'An existing representation will always exert its spell on the artist even as he strives to record the truth'. *Art and Illusion*, p. 72.

⁷² The Burlington group is isolated while the crowd queues to get into the masquerade. The insistence on class hierarchies is unmistakable.

⁷³ *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, p. 105. John Thelwall, 'Speech at the General Meeting of the Friends of Parliamentary Reform, Called by the London Corresponding Society', *The Debate on the French Revolution 1789-1800*, ed. Alfred Cobban (London: Nicholas Kays Ltd., 1950), p. 121.

provided a stabilized and normalized space in the micro-world of the meeting room, but those structures also supported the implication that the Society and its members were not given to transgressive behaviour.⁷⁴

Fifteen thousand people are said to have attended Thelwall's speech at Copenhagen House, and if the rapt expressions of the members of Gillray's crowd are anything to go by, it was instrumental in marking the rise of the common man as a self-conscious, historical agent. In recording this, the print veers towards a Painite depiction as the satirist captures 'the tremendous breaking forth of a whole people in which all degrees, tempers, and characters are confounded'.⁷⁵ His exploration of the regulatory structure of the LCS is, therefore, politically loaded. By adhering to Thomas Erskine's utopian view of a reformatory, but peaceful, gathering of people, the satirist blurs the boundary between the ideologies he seems to be espousing, and rejecting. Staunch Tories such as William Cobbett vociferously denounced the mob as the devil in 'his worst shape'. Such rhetoric relies on construing 'radicalism as a form of deviance', and conferring the LCS with a deviant identity. This process of exclusion was 'an exercise in stigmatization and isolation to depower and denigrate radicals'.⁷⁶ Gillray's print does not rely on creating such a simple dichotomy. The presence of this disruptive sub-stratum ensures that this plate cannot be read unambiguously as a propagandist weapon. Rather, the caricatural image serves as an '*omnium gatherum* of topoi' because it amalgamates miscellaneous materials into

⁷⁴ Michael T. Davis, 'The Mob Club? The London Corresponding Society and the Politics of Civility in the 1790s', *Unrespectable Radicals? Popular Politics in the Age of Reform*, eds. Michael T. Davis, Paul A. Pickering (Burlington: Ashgate, 2008) pp. 21-40 (p. 31).

⁷⁵ Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad, An Heroic Poem. In Three Books* (London: A. Dodd, 1728); *Rights of Man*, p. 32.

⁷⁶ *Unrespectable Radicals*, p. 24.

strikingly ambiguous images and displays ‘an alternative, liberating newness against the absorptive capacity of [...] established discourses’.⁷⁷

This ‘newness’ is consolidated further in Gillray’s derision of the legitimacy of the monarchy as a social, moral, and political system in *A New Way to Pay the National Debt* (1786, Figure I.16). It is the first of numerous prints that satirise the miserliness of King George III and Queen Charlotte, and the extravagance of the Prince of Wales. In this mock-heroic print, Gillray resorts to a setting that evokes Renaissance grandeur, and even visually quotes from Raphael. In the right background, the Prince can be seen in tattered clothes, hinting at the King’s refusal to pay his debts.⁷⁸ He is accepting a note for £200,000 from the Duc d’Orléans.⁷⁹ The King and Queen are coming out of the Treasury, with their clothes bursting at the seams with coins. On the left, a forlorn, crippled sailor seems to be appealing in vain for assistance. This is in stark contrast to the pomp connoted by the band playing for the royal couple. The spatial placement of the members of the band is significant. They surround the King, Queen, and Pitt on three sides, effectively ensconcing them from the Prince, and the soldier, both of whom lie outside the charmed circle.⁸⁰ Gillray’s deployment of this spatial trope only further highlights the self-absorption of the royal couple. The text under the print reads, ‘designed by Heliogabalus’ on the left, and ‘executed by Sejanus’ on the right. Gillray’s choice of pseudonyms is telling; Heliogabalus was the adopted name of a profligate Roman

⁷⁷ Robert Patten, ‘Conventions of Georgian Caricature’, *Art Journal* 43:4 (1983) pp. 331-38 (p. 338); Richard Terdiman, *Discourse/ Counter Discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth Century France* (London: Cornell University Press, 1985) p. 13.

⁷⁸ Here Gillray alludes to the King’s refusal to pay the Prince’s debts in the spring of 1786, which caused a scandal in Britain.

⁷⁹ Louis Philippe Joseph d’Orléans (1747–1793), member of the House of Bourbon, the ruling dynasty of France, active supporter of the French Revolution, frequent visitor to Britain, and a friend of the Prince of Wales.

⁸⁰ William Pitt (1759-1806), British politician who became the youngest Prime Minister in 1783. He is an important character of Gillray’s visual vocabulary.

emperor, while Sejanus was Emperor Tiberius's despotic minister.⁸¹ By dedicating this print to Jacques Necker, Louis XVI's finance minister, Gillray contrasts France's fiscal policies with those of Britain, which was faced with increasing national debt. Despite this William Pitt, the Prime Minister, can be seen offering the King and Queen yet more money, whilst keeping a few coins for himself. The King looks pleased as he extends his arm to accept this money. Gillray's acerbic portraiture of Pitt is carried a step forward in *The Vulture of the Constitution* (1789, Figure I.17). As the title connotes, William Pitt is personified as a vulture, and Gillray accuses him of usurping royal prerogatives. This print came at a time when George III had become temporarily insane (possibly from a rare hereditary metabolic disease, porphyria) and Pitt proposed placing restrictions on the powers of the Prince of Wales. If the King had been found incapable of ruling, the Prince would have been appointed Regent and would have replaced Pitt and the Tory ministry with a Whig administration, led by Charles James Fox. Instead, according to Gillray, Pitt, nourished by Treasury gold, crushes the crown, scepter, and the Magna Carta, while he tears apart the Prince's feathered coronet, an insignia of his royal status. He continues in the same vein in *An Excrescence; – A Fungus; – alias – A Toadstool Upon a Dung-hill* (1791, Figure I.18). Here Gillray transforms the head of William Pitt into a mushroom, whose roots take the shape of the royal crown. Pitt was First Lord of the Treasury and Prime Minister at the age of twenty-four. In this satire, Gillray suggests that the ambitious young Pitt was dependent upon royal favour, while he increasingly arrogated the King's power for himself, particularly during the Regency crisis, when George III was first afflicted with mental illness (November 1788–May 1789). Gillray injects another blow when he equates the

⁸¹ Draper Hill, *The Satirical Etchings of James Gillray* (New York: Dover Publications, 1976).

source of Pitt's power, the King, with a dunghill. Pitt's mercenary motives come under scrutiny again in *Political Ravishment, – or – The Old Lady of Threadneedle-Street in Danger!* (1797, Figure I.19). A satire on the currency crisis and the substitution of paper money for gold, Gillray personifies the Bank of England as the 'Old Lady of Threadneedle-Street'. Pitt makes improper advances to the terrified elderly maiden; his hat partially hides a list of loans, alluding to the Whig accusation that Pitt intended to spend the nation's gold on war. Gillray's witty rendition of Pitt's influence on the Bank of England underlines his antipathy to Pitt. By visualizing Whig allegations against Pitt, Gillray voices the perspective of the Opposition. This continues in *The Dissolution; or – The Alchemist Producing an Aethereal Representation* (1796, Figure I.20). Backed by the power of the Crown (the bellows) and Treasury gold ('Treasury cole'), the alchemist Pitt transforms Parliament into a Government completely subservient to him. The Prime Minister here seems to have acquired the powers of a dictator. Surrounded by the accoutrements of wizardry, he sits on miniature military barracks, a reference to a long-standing prohibition against the building of barracks for fear it would lead to military despotism. With little time for war preparations, Pitt had allowed barrack construction without Parliament's approval or proper Treasury supervision. But one of Gillray's most damning prints of Pitt is titled *Presages of the Millenium; – with – The Destruction of the Faithful, as Revealed to R: Brothers, the Prophet* (1795, Figure I.21). Here he parodies a Benjamin West drawing, *Death on a Pale Horse* (1783, Figure I.22), as he portrays Pitt as Death riding a white Hanoverian horse, wielding famine and destruction.⁸² An imp wearing the feathered coronet of the Prince of Wales kisses Pitt's bony posterior. Pitt's steed tramples Whig politicians,

⁸² Benjamin West (1738-1820), British-American painter, under the patronage of George III.

including Fox, Sheridan, and William Wilberforce, who clutches a document, 'Motion for a Peace'. This alludes to the Opposition's insistence on peace with France during the 1795 session of Parliament. Also crushed underfoot are some pigs. The obvious allusion is to Edmund Burke's comment in *Reflections* that learning was being 'trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude'.⁸³ While Gillray was alarmed by the Whig sympathy for the French cause and distrustful of the radical British societies, the apocalyptic imagery of this print clarifies that he hardly toed the Tory line. The radical plurality of his visual satires ensures that they defy easy classification. By drawing attention to the inadequacies of the royals and those in power, they offer a nuanced reflection of the murky politics and propaganda of the age. In doing so, these satires deconstruct the façade of self-assured representatives of the State. Instead these prints highlight the vulnerability of the hegemonic discourse, and can be used to understand the evolution of reactionary culture as a complex and fiercely contested negotiation between rival political groups and the English citizenry itself.

Gillray explores this interaction in *The Death of the Great Wolf* (1795, Figure I.23), which parodies another Benjamin West work *The Death of General Wolfe* (1770, Figure I.24). In this acerbic lampoon, Gillray borrows his vocabulary from West to comment on the Treasonable Practices Act and the Seditious Meeting Act, a day before they became law. The dying hero General Wolfe has become William Pitt, surrounded by Tory ministers and supporters, including the bespectacled Edmund Burke and Secretary of War Henry Dundas, always wearing

⁸³ *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, p. 117.

Scottish tartan.⁸⁴ Messengers race toward the ‘dying’ Pitt to tell of victory (‘We have overcome all Opposition!’), but in Gillray’s mock-heroic print the victory over the revolutionary *sans-culottes*, in the left background, is a farce. Burke can be seen leaning over Pitt, and from his pocket a paper labelled ‘Reflections upon £3,700’ is visible. This is a reference to the two pensions that he was awarded for his work. Gillray suggests that the Government, with its arsenal of legal weaponry restricting individual liberties, vastly overreacted to the threat posed by the small group of dissenters. The titular ‘wolf’ only reinforces Gillray’s sharp critique of Pitt as a military leader. Clearly each of these prints, which degrade the members of the royal family and the representatives of the Government, are not comprehensible outside the event that lay behind its publication and circulation. They are enmeshed in a thick tangle of particular social, historical, and political conflicts, each of which bestows an additional dimension to the prints in question. Working our way through these prints, layer by layer, highlights the complexity of Gillray’s depiction of the exchange between rival legislative and political groups of Britain in the late eighteenth century.

His nuanced exploration of this relationship continues to challenge the viewer in *The Dog Tax* (1796, Figure I.25), which refers to a case put forward by MP John Dent in April 1796. The case concerned implementing a national tax on dogs to safeguard public health, reduce the expenditure of keeping pets, reforming hunting laws, and perhaps most importantly raising cash for the Government. The case found favour with many MPs but was unpopular with the public, primarily because it would result in the extermination of the dogs that were unpaid for. In

⁸⁴ Henry Dundas (1742-1811), Scottish lawyer and politician, war secretary under Pitt from 1794 to 1801, and the treasurer of the Admiralty between 1782 and 1800.

Gillray's print Whig politicians Charles Fox and Richard Sheridan and Tory politicians William Pitt, and Henry Dundas all take the form of dogs. What is interesting is that this print ostensibly advocates the dog tax, but the forlorn expressions on the faces of Fox and Sheridan, coupled with the smugness on those of Pitt, and his ally Dundas suggest otherwise. Moreover, the Tory dogs support fine collars while the Whigs are tied with chains. In Gillray's typically playful style Fox can be seen urinating on Dundas. The print-maker's inclusion of this little detail seems to reflect an awareness of the exasperation of the public at the introduction of yet another tax. This would mean that they could no longer keep their pets, while their wealthier counterparts could afford to keep theirs. The cheeky poem under the print reiterates this idea:

New Grievances so thickly come
And Taxes fall so hard Sir
Poor Johnny Bull can't pay his Sum
For Dogs that are his Guard Sir!

It is indeed surprising that Gillray was not fined or prosecuted for prints such as *The Dog Tax*, which border on the cruel, and powerfully undercut the representatives of the state. This seems to be because 'visual satirists were protected by the ambivalence inherent in all graphic irony'.⁸⁵ Gillray exploits the potential of the satirical form to the utmost by encoding subversive discourses into his prints.

His form works to his advantage, especially in social prints, because it allows him to expose the personal lives of members of the aristocracy, and even question their morals, albeit facetiously. In *The Morning After Marriage – or – A scene on the Continent* (1788, Figure I.26) he delves into the Prince of Wales's romantic entanglement with a twice-widowed, Roman Catholic commoner, Mrs. Maria Anne Smythe Fitzherbert. In December 1785, the Prince apparently married

⁸⁵ *City of Laughter*, p. 485.

Mrs. Fitzherbert secretly. In his print, Gillray borrows the pose of the bored wife from the second plate of Hogarth's *Marriage à La Mode* titled *Tete-a-tete* (1743-45, Figure I.27), with all its implied associations.⁸⁶ The Prince has left the bed already, and seems exhausted from his marital exertions. This is reinforced by the spent candle and spilt wine. But Mrs. Fitzherbert looks longingly at the unmade bed. This union was, in fact, invalid since the Prince needed and had not obtained, the King's consent. Moreover, marriage to a Catholic would have blocked his succession to the throne. In 1787, he allowed the marriage to be repudiated at the cost of having his huge debts settled by Parliament. Gillray depicts this in *Dido Forsaken* (1787, Figure I.28), a parody of Sir Joshua Reynolds' (1723-1792) epic painting *The Death of Dido* (1781, Figure I.29). The caption verbally elicits Gillray's schemata, Virgil's *Aeneid* and Reynolds' painting, to draw the viewer's attention to the main subject of the graphic hybrid. Mrs. Fitzherbert is represented as Dido, the Queen and founder of Carthage, who was in love with Aeneas and killed herself when he deserted her. Like Dido, Mrs. Fitzherbert too is positioned atop a funeral pyre whilst a small boat ironically titled 'Honour' carries the Prince, and his allies. The Prince can be seen insisting 'I never saw her in my life' as the boat sails away. On Mrs. Fitzherbert's left, the profiles of William Pitt and Henry Dundas try to blow the royal regalia off her head. She is clearly deprived of any standing in the royal family.

The Prince of Wales's affairs and his extravagances continued to provide fodder for Gillray's prints. In return for the settling of his debts, the Prince agreed to marry Caroline of Brunswick in 1795. Although Caroline produced an heir, Princess

⁸⁶ Hogarth's *Marriage à La Mode* (1743-45) comprises six paintings, designed to highlight the repercussions of an ill-advised marriage. In Hogarth's moralistic series the match leads to unhappiness, adultery, sexually-transmitted diseases, and the eventual suicide of the wife. In the second plate, titled *Tete-a-tete*, the husband looks exhausted after a long night, whilst the wife stretches out on a chair. The overturned chair on the left hints at a sexual encounter, which could have been interrupted by the husband's return home. The pose of the wife in the second canvas of the series is similar to Mrs. Fitzherbert's pose in Gillray's print.

Charlotte, in January 1796, the marriage was a disaster, and the Prince's romantic liaisons and extravagant habits continued as before. Gillray explores this in *The Presentation— or — The Wise Men's Offering* (1796, Figure I.30). Here, the drunken Prince extends his hand to baby Charlotte, held by Mother Windsor, a well-known procuress, while the leaders of the Whig Opposition, Charles James Fox and politician and playwright Richard Brinsley Sheridan, kiss the baby's bottom.⁸⁷ The Prince's drunken state, in which he allows members of the Opposition access to his daughter, is under scrutiny here. The birth of a child did not put an end to the debauchery of the Prince of Wales. Gillray alludes to this in *Duke William's Ghost* (1799, Figure I.31). In this parody of Fuseli's painting *The Nightmare* (1781, Figure I.32), Gillray imagines that the ghostly apparition of the Prince's great-uncle, the Duke of Cumberland, has appeared before the Prince of Wales to warn him against debauchery. The overt sexuality of the woman in Fuseli's print is replaced by the clumsiness of the Prince, who lays on the bed in a drunken slumber. On the left side, there are several empty decanters and yet more wine can be seen spilling out of a glass and decanter close to the Prince. The materiality of this print, reinforced by the Duke's naked posterior, is a world away from the supernatural surrealism that defines Fuseli's painting. In fact, Gillray's interpretation of the masterpiece intervenes in, and subsequently comments on, the Prince's nightmarish extravagances. It is interesting to note that this satirical depiction of the Prince comes at a time when Gillray was receiving commission from Pitt's Tory administration.⁸⁸ The satirist's unwillingness to be an apologist for the Government

⁸⁷ This print led to charges of blasphemy against Gillray. Although he was not ultimately prosecuted, the threat reflected efforts by the Proclamation Society, high-ranking clergy, and members of Parliament to suppress 'licentious' publications, as well as to increase Loyalist censorship.

⁸⁸ Gillray is said to have received commission from the Tory Government from November 1797 to early 1801.

is nothing new. His refusal to reiterate Tory dictums can be traced to early prints such as *Election-Troops, Bringing in their Accounts, to the Pay-Table* (1788, Figure I.33). For seven prints supporting Admiral Hood, the Tory candidate in the 1788 election, Gillray was to be recompensed £20. But Gillray does not ventriloquise for the Government; instead, the print reflects his ambivalent attitude toward the Whigs and Tories. Here he exposes the shenanigans encouraged by his Tory employers: newspaper publisher Edward Topham confronts Pitt and wants to be paid for 'Puffs & Squibs and for abusing Opposition,' a ragged newsboy 'For changing Sides,' a cobbler 'For Voting 3 times,' and a sailor 'For kicking up a Riot.' Pitt directs all claimants to Great George Street under the Rose, alluding to George Rose, Secretary of the Treasury. This postscript to the 1788 Westminster election is especially important to Gillray since it is the first political satire he signed with his own name. But given the tenor of this print, it is unlikely he was ever paid.

By now it should be clear that despite its occasional regulatory potential, Gillray's oeuvre cannot be read as an unequivocal endorsement of political allegiance. Hints of oppositionality are woven into the fabric of his counter-revolutionary caricature because the spontaneous form seeks to capture a society in the making. The immediacy and irreducible plurality of the satirical image surpasses sublimated high art and the literary pamphlet. The brevity of the visual form and its deployment of easily recognizable symbols make it convincing and add to its effectiveness as a popular cultural form. Gillray's prints are 'visual evidence of the wave of feeling that made counter-revolution as genuine a popular sentiment in Britain as the Revolution was in France'.⁸⁹ His denigration of Whigs, Dissenters, and libertarians is effective, but his 'heroes' including William Pitt, George III, and

⁸⁹ *Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries*, p. 56.

Edmund Burke too, are subject to similar scrutiny. Gillray's oeuvre seems to testify to the fact that the plebeian/ patrician and Tory/ Whig binarisms could no longer do justice to the multiplicity of ideologies that proliferated in Britain during the revolutionary decade. A commissioned Tory propagandist, he shares his discomfort for the dissemination of Paineite propaganda with the Charles Fox, but his descriptions of the masses frequently echo Paine's *Rights of Man*.⁹⁰ He dismisses Burke as a mercenary in a number of caricatures, but advocates the abolition of slavery in a manner similar to Edmund Burke, Hannah More, and William Wilberforce.⁹¹ *Barbarities in the West Indies* (1791, Figure I.34) pictorially interprets a true incident reported by Sir Philip Francis in the Commons debate of 18 April 1791. Unlike numerous reactionary pamphleteers, Gillray undermines the philanthropic endeavours of slave traders by drawing attention to the excesses of slave trade. The flaying arms and legs of a slave struggling in a vat of boiling sugarcane juice draw attention to the exploitation involved in the trade. The concerns of this print are strikingly similar to Hannah More's poem *Slavery*. Gillray too seems to be asking whether 'Britain, where the soul of freedom reigns/ (will) Forge chains for others she herself disdains', but the condensation of numerous meanings within one single configuration adds to its effectiveness as abolitionist

⁹⁰ Charles Fox advocated universal suffrage but was critical of Paine. Thomas Erskine approved of Paine's *Rights of Man* but was disturbed by a cheap edition, which targeted the masses. These subtle differences in the reformist lobby underline the extent of heterogeneity within revolutionary and counter-revolutionary factions.

⁹¹ Slave trade was first called into question in the Parliament in 1774. In 1783 the Quakers presented a Bill in the House of Commons and the Association for the Abolition of Slave Trade was formed in 1787. However the abolitionist movement gathered momentum in 1796 when Methodists, Quakers and Baptists started campaigning through pamphlets, petitions and public meetings. For more information about slave trade in the eighteenth century see Nandini Bhattacharya, *Slavery, Colonialism, and Connoisseurship: Gender and Eighteenth-Century Literary Transnationalism* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2006); Robert Harms, *The Diligent: A Voyage Through the Worlds Of The Slave Trade* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); Srividhya Swaminathan, *Debating the Slave Trade: Rhetoric of British National Identity, 1759-1815* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2009).

propaganda.⁹² His iconographic hybrids revel in physiognomical abnormalities, but combine witty commentary with an astute pictorial representation of socio-political events. This astuteness is the primary reason behind my early proposition of satire as historiography. In keeping with this, the primary aim of this thesis is to contribute to the field of inter-disciplinary study by granting centrality to the figure of the satirical historiographer and understanding his role in the counter-revolutionary campaign. For this reason, each chapter will try to broaden the received understanding of conservatism during the period by traversing strict disciplinary boundaries between literature, history and art.

In this introductory chapter, I hope to have established an understanding of Gillray's prints as historical registers, rooted in the political and socio-cultural geography of Britain at the end of the eighteenth century. I have attempted to engage with the varied sources of Gillray's visual vocabulary including the use of symbols from folklore, allegory, myth, and high art, the influence of prominent eighteenth-century studies on physiognomy, caricaturists like Hogarth, counter-revolutionary and revolutionary pamphleteers, and Jacobin iconographers. This feeds into my central argument that multiple, even contradictory sources, the incorporation of popular energies, and the lack of causal narratives in Gillray's caricatures account for spontaneous and multivalent images which represent a society in flux. Theories of inter-textuality developed by Roland Barthes and post-structuralist theories developed by Mikhail Bakhtin and Hayden White, have helped me understand and articulate this polyphony by situating Gillray's prints in context. The primary suggestion, to which the title of the chapter refers, is that these caricatures cannot be read unambiguously as polemics, produced to reiterate hegemonic beliefs at an

⁹² Hannah More, *Slavery. A Poem. By Hannah More* (London: T. Cadell, 1788) p. 18.

important historical moment.

Having established the theoretical basis for the analysis of Gillray's prints, my next chapter, "'He Drinks the Knowledge in Greedy Haste': Tasting History through Gillray's Prints', examines the images of eating and drinking and their numerous processes and permutations, including starvation, hunger, indulgence, excretion and cannibalism. This takes its cue from the shortage of food in Britain and France during the revolutionary decade and the increasingly political nature of food-riots in the two countries. I discuss Gillray's prints in tandem with eighteenth-century religious sermons, popular broadsheets, and literary texts to foreground the ways in which he uses the metaphor of food to engage closely with the political events of the day, and distil those events into graphic images animated by multiple ideological forces. The chapter ends by concluding that Gillray's representations are influenced by Loyalist, revolutionary, anti-revolutionary, and Republican historiographical accounts alike. This is why the resultant body politic forged by Gillray - using exaggerated metaphors of food, eating and hunger - provides a basis for understanding the complex political and social condition of Britain between 1780 and 1800, especially the food riots.

The third chapter concentrates on the primary participant of these food riots. "'Which Way Shall I Turn Me, How Shall I Decide?": Gillray's John Bull and the Disposition of National Identity' focuses on the key national icon that often represents the apotheosis of the French Revolution within Gillray's oeuvre: John Bull. I will argue that he uses this iconic figure for multiple, even contradictory purposes in his prints; to discredit the utopian platitudes of the French Revolution, promote Francophobia, perpetuate a critical stance towards those ensconced in power in Britain, and to voice the opinions of the common man. He embodies the ideological conflicts faced by British citizens on a daily basis during the 1780s and

1790s; one that is tempted by the 'nice napple' of the tree of liberty, even though he hesitates to abandon George III.⁹³ Through a variety of texts and images I argue that Gillray's John Bull marks a departure from propagandist depictions of the English citizen. Instead, he intervenes in some of the most complex political debates of the period, which mirror the split subjectivity of English citizens at the time.

Increasing fondness for the John Bull figure led to the dismissal of an earlier national icon, Britannia. The decreasing popularity of a feminine national icon is not entirely surprising. The role of Parisian market-women during the French Revolution offered the quintessential image of the inversion of natural order, and this resulted in a series of conservative reactions against the presence of women in the public sphere. This is what the fourth chapter, 'Body/Bawdy Inscriptions: Gillray's Representations of Women', concentrates on. It examines Gillray's representation of women, especially Queen Charlotte and aristocratic women. Gillray's oeuvre abounds in depictions of politically or intellectually assertive women as sexually degenerate or masculine. His prints seek to sustain the theory of separate spheres and delimit the role of women, in the same vein as the English conduct literature of the period. Ironically, he draws heavily upon a body of French revolutionary caricature, which uses scatological and sexual imagery to foreground the sexual debauchery of aristocrats, especially Marie Antoinette. In this chapter, Gillray's graphic, and occasionally sexually explicit, representation(s) of Queen Charlotte are discussed alongside eighteenth-century conduct books and the venomous, frequently pornographic, prints and pamphlets that were hurled against Marie Antoinette from the 1780s until her death in 1793. This section of my thesis deconstructs the binary between revolutionary and counter-revolutionary graphic

⁹³ See James Gillray, *The Tree of Liberty* (1798).

satire by arguing that maligning feminine sexuality and women's political aspirations became convenient tropes employed by both revolutionary and counter-revolutionary prints to dispel anxieties about the transgression of women into traditionally 'masculine' domains. The last section of this chapter seeks to put Gillray's 'conservatism' in perspective by discussing a few proto-feminist works of the time.

Read together, these chapters move towards an understanding that Gillray's prints cannot be read purely as expressions of the dominant ideology. This is because of the spontaneity of the caricatural form that seeks to capture a society in transition. I believe that it is this very instability of meaning, present in all his prints, that has attracted modern political and anti-establishment caricaturists to look to Gillray as 'the father of the political cartoon'. In the concluding chapter, 'Gillray's Legacy', I use the theoretical concepts propounded by Walter Benjamin in his seminal essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* to understand the allure of Gillray's prints for contemporary viewers and cartoonists.⁹⁴

Ultimately, I hope to be able to foreground an understanding of caricatures as historiographical accounts and highlight the unpredictable ideological consequences of conservatism in print culture by looking at the often-disruptive subtext of 'Loyalist' prints. Such an analytic perspective will allow more effective analysis of the nature of English conservatism during the last decades of the eighteenth century and grant centre-stage to visual forms in the counter-revolutionary campaign. The polyphonic caricatural form and Gillray's allusive ideological affiliations both lend an essential ambivalence to his caricatures, which prevent them from propounding absolute belief in English tradition and stability.

⁹⁴ Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. Hannah Arendt (London: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1968).

The co-existence of multiple versions of history within each print ensures a proliferation of meaning, which seems to be circumscribed only by decisive coordinates such as his English identity and the theory of proper spheres. Despite this overarching conservativeness, incipient possibilities of a disruptive sub-stratum can be fleshed out by a re-examination of his subtle symbolic repertoire.

This ambiguity is an effect of the complex system of connotation, commercial considerations, and fissured ideological affiliations that defined the caricatural form in the last decade of the eighteenth century in Britain.⁹⁵ Gillray's polyphonic caricatures reflect the instability, paranoia of the age, but also begin to accrue a variety of meanings unintended by the author. Even a relatively unambiguous print like the *London Corresponding Society, Alarm'd or Guilty Conscience* (1798, Figure I.35) which reduces English Republicans to grotesque, scarcely human plotters, points to the coercive mechanisms of the State by drawing attention to the list of members arrested by the Government. In a profound sense, then, the signification of these images is uncontrollable and reveals the fragmented nature of the dominant discourse itself. A close reading of the images permit the spectator to alter his/her position in the symbolic order and thereby to escape some of the traps set by the field of vision, including the power of the image to legitimize hierarchies. These prints come to epitomize what E.P. Thompson calls the 'dialectical tug-of-war of ideology', which is only fitting given that they are the expressions of a socially and politically tumultuous age.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Caricaturists aimed at mass-appeal. The criterion of profitability and the constraints of the commercial market complicate any judgment regarding the ideological affiliations of the caricaturist.

⁹⁶ *Customs in Common*, p. 93.

Chapter 2

'He Drinks the Knowledge in Greedy Haste': Tasting History Through Gillray's Prints⁹⁷

They receive him in a half-circle; twelve speakers behind cannons with lighted torches in hand [...] he asks, in temperate but courageous language: What they, by their journey to Versailles, do specially want? The twelve speakers reply, in few words inclusive of much: 'Bread'.⁹⁸

Carlyle's iconic account of the French Revolution foregrounds the centrality of bread in one of the most tumultuous events in European history. It comes as no surprise, then, that the metaphor of food remained imperative in a revolution that started over bread. Whilst England had seen a number of food riots in the eighteenth century, they started to acquire a distinct political dimension only towards the end of the eighteenth century. This was primarily because the dissatisfaction arising from the shortage of food, especially wheat and corn, in England in 1794-95, provided a perfect opportunity for the Jacobin lobby to promote their cause.⁹⁹ The resultant 'disorder' is evident in the ways in which French revolutionary language percolated into the threats of the English plebeian classes. Adrian Randall insists that the 'rhetoric of radicalism was routinely added to threats over food prices' in late

⁹⁷ The phrase comes from Jane Taylor's sentimental celebration of the diffusion of knowledge amongst the lower classes at the tail end of the eighteenth century in England. The metaphor of hunger dominates her portrait of the self-improving underdog:

From needful sleep the precious hour he saves,
To give his thirsty mind the stream it craves:
There, with his slender rush beside him plac'd
He drinks the knowledge in with greedy haste

Jane Taylor, *Essays in Rhyme, on Morals and Manners* (London: Taylor and Hessey, 1816), p. 137.

⁹⁸ Thomas Carlyle, *The French Revolution: A History. In Two Volumes*, Volume 1 (London: Chapman and Hall, 1857) p. 210.

⁹⁹ Disastrous harvests and the war led to food prices soaring in the 1790s. The price of wheat went up from sixty shillings and six pence a quarter in 1794 to ninety-one shillings and eight pence in 1795 and to one hundred and forty two shillings and ten pence in 1800. See Frank McLynn, *Crime and Punishment in Eighteenth-century England* (London: Routledge, 1989) p. 337.

eighteenth-century England.¹⁰⁰ This linking of chronic food shortage to political revolutionary vocabulary can be witnessed in handbills, ballads, notices and political prints. ‘Peace and Large Bread; or a King without a head’ begins one notice put up in Bath. In Banbury, ‘Cheap Bread or No King’ was written on a church door. At Windsor, a notice proclaimed:

Notice is hereby Given to George III and all his Tiranical Crew that Unless we the starving Poor have Bread at 6d Quarter loaf Meat 4d pound and no Taxes He May Expect No less than Be Shot – all Farmers upholders of Corn their Farms Burnt and Take the Hint – So shall it Be – for We Value not our own Lives to rid the Earth of Tirants.¹⁰¹

In 1795, there were a number of reports of men and women near starvation attacking mills and granaries, not to steal food, but to punish the owners. Corn and flour was thrown along the roads and discarded in the rivers, and machines were damaged. In an attempt to stop food riots, anti-Jacobin satires such as Jack Cade’s *The Quartern Loaf for Eight-pence* (1795) tried to prove to the populace that they were mere pawns being exploited by the Opposition lobby: ‘a scarcity here [...] has rendered the present moment the fittest time to push forward our Jacobin plans here, by propagating our levelling principles of reform, in riots’ whilst agronomists like Arthur Young delivered lectures to the poor, insisting that attacking mills would not increase the supply of bread.¹⁰² A plethora of anonymous verses berated the lower classes in engaging ways:

When with your country Friends your hours you pass,
And take, as oft you’re wont, the copious glass,

¹⁰⁰ Adrian Randall, *Riotous Assemblies: Popular Protest in Hanoverian England* (London: Oxford University Press, 2006) p. 226.

¹⁰¹ Home Office Papers 42/50, George to Master of the Rolls, 13 and 16 March 1800; Home Office Papers 42/49, Walford to Morice, 27 April 1800; Home Office Papers 42/55, Notice Undated December 1800, quoted in *Riotous Assemblies*, p. 227.

¹⁰² Jack Cade, *The Quartern Loaf for Eight-pence; or, Cut and Come Again: being Crumbs of Comfort for All True Reformers* (London: B. Crosby, 1795) p. 4; Arthur Young, *The Example of France, a Warning to Britain* (London: W. Richardson, 1793).

When all grow mellow, if perchance you hear
 That 'tis th' Engrossers make the corn so dear;
 They must and will have bread; they've had enough
 Of rice and Soup, and all such squashy stuff:
 They'll help themselves: and strive by might and main
 To be reveng'd on all such rogues in grain:
 John swears he'll fight as long as he has breath,
 'T'were better to be hang'd than starv'd to death:
 He'll burn Squire Hoardum's garner, so he will,
 Tuck up old Filchbag, and pull down his mill'.
 Now when the Prong and Pitchfork they prepare
 And all the elements of rustick war
 [...]
 Tell them what ills unlawful deeds attend,
 Deeds, which in wrath begun, and sorrow end,
 That burning barns, and pulling down a mill,
 Will neither corn produce, nor bellies fill 103

The rhyme draws attention to the miserable conditions of the working classes. It marks a departure from writings that mythologized, and subsequently romanticized, poverty to diffuse resistance. A commendable example of the latter is a sermon by William Paley, which promotes Christian resignation by interpreting hunger as a blessing: 'The rich [...] addict themselves to indulgence lose their relish. Their desires are dead. Their sensibilities are worn and tired'.¹⁰⁴ The verse in question moves away from this representation of frugality as 'a pleasure' to highlight the sheer deprivation of the lower classes. The reference to 'rice and Soup, and all such squashy stuff' immediately brings to mind numerous pamphlets such as *Useful Suggestions Favourable to the Comfort of the Labouring People, and of Decent*

¹⁰³ *Customs in Common*, p. 232. For more contemporary responses to the scarcity of bread, see Author of *An Appeal to the Good Sense of the Higher and Wealthy Orders of the People, Striking Facts Addressed to Those Who Still Disbelieve in a Real Scarcity, and a Solemn Appeal to all who think Otherwise* (London: J. Hatchard, 1800); Anonymous, *Proceedings of the House of Commons, on the Eleventh day of December 1795, Respecting the High Price of Corn* (London: n.p., 1795) and Anonymous, *Facts for the Consideration of the Public at Large on the High Price of Meat, Shewing the Real Cause of the Same* (London: F. and C. Rivington, 1795). In the latter 'the extreme dryness of the last summer - the uncommon floods that succeeded in the autumn - followed by the severest winter in the memory of man' are pinned as the real causes for the scarcity of meat. *Facts for the Consideration of the Public at Large on the High Price of Meat*, p. 3.

¹⁰⁴ William Paley, *Reasons for Contentment; Addressed to the Labouring Part of the Public* (Dublin: J. Milliken, 1793) pp. 11-14.

Housekeepers (1795), which seek to highlight the existence of staple foods other than bread.¹⁰⁵ But the overarching didacticism ‘Tell them what ills unlawful deeds attend’ only feeds into the dominant idea that the poor lack discernment. The verse ultimately dismisses resistance of any kind as ‘unlawful deeds’.

In a similar vein, Hannah More’s cheap repository tract of 1796, *The Riot; Or, Half a Loaf is Better Than No Bread*, counsels the masses to wait ‘patiently for the prices to fall’ and dismisses rioting as an effective measure.¹⁰⁶ The doggerel verse comprises a dialogue between Tom Hod and Jack Anvil; the latter effectively classifies initiative as ‘passion’ and resistance as ‘sin’, which results in capital punishment:

So I’ll e’en wait a little till cheaper the bread,
For a mittimus hangs o’er each Rioter’s head;
And when of the two evils I’m asked which is best,
I’d rather be hungry than hang’d, I protest.

Derry Down

Quoth Tom, thou art right; If I rise I’m a Turk,
So he threw down the pitchfork, and went to his work

Her tract insists on inaction because the Church will ‘bear all wants of the weak’, ‘The Gentlefolk too will afford us supplies’ and ‘the King and the Parliament manage the rest’. More’s insistent use of the collective pronoun ‘us’ is effective; her pamphlet gains credibility by implicating her in the misery faced by the lower classes.

¹⁰⁵ In the late eighteenth century wheat’s association with food value was very strong. David Davies, an eighteenth-century pamphleteer, asserts that ‘wheaten bread’ contains much more nourishment than barley bread and ‘is the only good thing of which they (poor people) can have a sufficiency’. Cookbooks by John Farley and Suzannah Carter offered dozens of recipes for breads, cakes and pastries which could be made only with ‘the finest flour’. Following the shortage of wheat and corn, a number of pamphlets tried to dismantle this perception. In keeping with this, Colquhoun’s pamphlet highlights soup as a great source of nutrition and provides recipes of numerous soups which could be consumed without bread. Patrick Colquhoun, *Useful Suggestions Favourable to the Comfort of the Labouring People, and of Decent Housekeepers* (London: Henry Fry, 1795); David Davies, *Case of Labourers in Husbandry* (Bath: P. Byrne, 1795) p. 13; John Farley, *London Art of Cookery* (London: John Fielding, J. Scatcherd, and J. Whitaker, 1783); Suzannah Carter, *The Frugal Housewife* (London: E. Newbery, 1795) p. 130.

¹⁰⁶ Hannah More, *The Riot; or, Half a Loaf is Better than No Bread. In a Dialogue between Jack Anvil and Tom Hod* (London: J. Marshall, 1796).

Her association of improvement with traditional charity continues in *The Cottage Cook* (1797) where she demonstrates how to reduce the consumption of white bread.¹⁰⁷ The text depicts a widow, Mrs. Jones, instructing a lower-class woman to bake her own loaves of brown bread instead of buying small loaves of white bread from the market. The woman's agreement, like Tom's cheerful acceptance in *The Riot*, seems to validate the argument from below. Mrs. Jones's *faux* maternalism actually provides an alternative based on accommodating the lack of bread, rather than resisting it. The verisimilitude of the pamphlet is dangerous because the domestic veneer is used to depoliticize the scarcity of bread. Mrs. Jones's benign discourse, like Jack's well-meant suggestions in *The Riot*, goes back to a traditional model of paternalistic benevolence that 'typifies right-wing propaganda'.¹⁰⁸

Gillray engages with similar concerns in his print titled *The British Butcher Supplying John Bull with a Substitute for Bread* (1795, Figure II.1), produced in the wake of the riots in June-July 1795, in response to the increasing scarcity of corn and bread in England. Unlike More, who never once mentions escalating prices as the reason for Jack's hunger in *The Riot*, Gillray immediately grounds his print within this particular socio-political crisis by virtue of two notices on the butcher's stall. These compare the rates of provisions against a common man's wages, demonstrating that the rate of meat and bread often surpassed an average journeyman's weekly wage. Billy the Butcher is offering a piece of meat to John

¹⁰⁷ Hannah More, *The Cottage Cook, or, Mrs. Jones's Cheap Dishes; Shewing the Way to do Much Good with Little Money* (London: J. Marshall and R. White, 1797).

¹⁰⁸ Sandra Sherman, *Imagining Poverty: Quantification and the Decline of Paternalism* (Columbia: Ohio State University Press, 2001) p. 67.

Bull, who looks malnourished and starved, which is unusual with him.¹⁰⁹ Here Gillray echoes pamphlets like *An Address to the Plain Sense of the People, on the Present High Price of Bread* which dwell on 'the high price of wheaten bread, the ordinary food of a great part of the people' and insist there was 'never was there a time when the poor man called more loudly for assistance'.¹¹⁰ The lines at the bottom of Gillray's print explicate the butcher's advice to John Bull:

Since Bread is so dear (and you say you must eat)
For to save the expense you must live upon meat;
And as twelvecence the quartern can't pay for bread
Get a crown's worth of meat, - it will serve in its stead

Not only does the butcher sport a *bonnet rouge*, the piece of meat that he is offering to John Bull, the ubiquitous Everyman, also bears an uncanny resemblance to the most popular symbol of the Revolution: the cap of liberty. Following the Revolution, the Phrygian cap or *bonnet rouge* had become the most common symbol of popular radicalism in France. The prominence of the cap of liberty in Gillray's prints immediately politicizes the issue of hunger and links it inextricably to lower-class radicalism. Increasingly, the cap comes to bear an exclusive attachment to Jacobinism, as the symbol of French anarchy endangering the ordered liberty of Britain.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ The figure of John Bull gained prominence in the early eighteenth century through John Arbuthnot's *The History of John Bull* (1712). Tamara L. Hunt argues that the allegorical figure of Britannia was replaced by John Bull as a national symbol during the revolutionary decade. John Bull emerged as the spokesman for the British public and was used widely to depict Loyalist allegories. In Gillray's prints the John Bull figure is mostly rotund, often monstrously fat. Tamara Hunt, *Defining John Bull: Political Caricature and National Identity in Late Georgian England* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003).

¹¹⁰ Anonymous, *An Address to the Plain Sense of the People, on the Present High Price of Bread* (London: S. Gosnell, 1800) p. 14.

¹¹¹ In the century before the French Revolution, the cap of liberty was often used to represent British patriotic sentiment. But during the French Revolution, it frequently accompanied the tri-colour cockade and became part of the uniform for *sans-culottes*. Transformed into the *bonnet rouge*, it became inextricably linked to the cause of the French Revolution in the British imagination. For an extensive discussion see James Epstein, 'Understanding the Cap of Liberty: Symbolic Practice and Social Conflict in Early Nineteenth Century England', *Past & Present*, 122 (1989), pp. 75-118.

Ostensibly, then, this print suggests that the rise in food prices is a direct consequence of French revolutionary principles being promulgated in England. But a clever pun on 'crown' in the Butcher's ultimatum 'A Crown, take it or leave it' drives the viewer to believe that a baffled John Bull needs to accept the *bonnet rouge* to satiate his hunger; the acceptance of Republican principles holds the promise of prosperity. It is this complexity that animates Gillray's graphic satires and differentiates them from the array of other texts that address the lack of food either by censuring increased food prices and straightforwardly demanding reform or by depicting a passive, repentant Everyman figure, dependent on charity for sustenance.

In this way, Gillray's prints can be described as hybrid constructions characterized by a dialogic play of multiple, even conflicting ideologies. The dialogic interaction ensures that these images are layered, and subsequently endowed with multiple connotations. This chapter argues that the 'Loyalism' depicted by Gillray's visual rhetoric provides a marked departure from the expository prose of authors and pamphleteers such as Hannah More, Arthur Young, and William Paley. The layered nature of his prints betrays the co-existence of varied ideological planes, which are important because they result in diffusing the intention of the caricaturist. As a result, the print is characterized by a complex ideological vacillation, which betrays the temperament of the age.

This dynamic is evident in Gillray's print titled *The Tree of Liberty* (1798, Figure II.2) where Charles James Fox is conjured as the biblical serpent trying to tempt John Bull to taste the 'nice napple' of reform. The Tree of Opposition is rooted in 'envy', 'ambition' and 'disappointment' with a *bonnet rouge* adorning its branches, which are inscribed with 'The Rights of Man' and 'profligacy'. The fruits, in Gillray's prints, are labelled 'murder', 'revolution', 'conspiracy', 'democracy',

‘treason’, ‘slavery’, ‘plunder’, and ‘atheism’; a web of references linking Republicanism to a series of evils. The Tree of Justice in the background boasts of roots and branches inscribed with the words ‘king’, ‘lord’, and ‘religion’ and its fruits include ‘happiness’, ‘security’, and ‘freedom’. Prints such as these seek to clarify complex political issues so as to simplify choices and decisions. The satire is effective because it draws upon an available body of symbols. Here Gillray derives his imagery from J.A. Russell’s sermon of 1795, where France is described as ‘a tree whose branches spread far and wide, and appear blooming and flourishing to the eye, but the whole trunk is decayed and rotten, and is fast approaching to its Fall’.¹¹² In addition to religious discourses, Gillray also draws upon popular depictions of the contrast between France and Britain such as the 1793 song *The Contrast. English Liberty, French liberty - Which is Best?*:

True Britons [...] are free,
 And know Liberty’s not to be found on a tree.
Derry down, & c.

[...]
 We know of no Despots, we’ve nothing to fear,
 For this new-fangled nonsense will never do here.
Derry down, & c.

Then stand by the Church, and the King, and the Laws,
 The Old Lion still has his teeth and his claws;
 Let Britain still rule in the midst of her waves,
 And chastise all those foes who dare call her sons slaves.
Derry down, & c.¹¹³

Gillray’s symbolism replicates Russell’s image of an ostensibly healthy tree that is decaying from within. His John Bull figure is fat, ugly and naive, but is also smart enough to resist the rotten fruit hanging from the Tree of Opposition. But, unlike the simple dichotomy created between France and Britain by the song, John Bull’s

¹¹² J.A. Russell, *A Sermon, Preached in the Parish Church of Dronfield, in the County of Derby, on Wednesday February 25th, 1795, being the Day Appointed for a General Fast* (Sheffield: Britannia Press, 1795) p. 11.

¹¹³ *The Antigallican Songster, Number I. The Contrast. English Liberty - French Liberty - Which is Best?* (London: J. Downes, 1793) p. 6.

speech here does not dismiss Republican ideals as ‘new-fangled nonsense’; instead, it testifies to the allure of the views of the Opposition ‘Very nice Napple indeed!- but my pokes are full of Pippins from off t’other Tree: and besides, I hates Medlars, they’r so damn’d rotten they’ll gee me the Guts-ach for all their vine looks!’.

Clearly, Gillray’s caricatural form allows for a multiplicity of ideas to co-exist within one striking image.¹¹⁴ The incipient counter-discourses ensure that Gillray’s caricatures foreground the cultural attributes of counter-revolutionary propaganda, but they also testify to the changing social fabric, governmental oppression, and carry a tacit admission that a society is in the making. These prints come to epitomise the interaction between a number of ideologies and multiple schools of thought. This does not mean that Gillray’s depictions of political events are neutral. They are always entangled in an intricate web of tensions and need to be understood in the context of their publication and circulation. Each image is embedded in a particular political, social and historical context, which must be unpacked in order to render it comprehensible. They exist in a dialogue with both revolutionary and counter-revolutionary prose of the period. For most critics they achieve cognitive authority because of their capability to refer to a certain political or social event, but I intend to offer an interpretative framework, which highlights the polyphonic narrativity of his prints.¹¹⁵ This chapter will adopt an interdisciplinary perspective to explore the myriad ways in which the metaphor of food is deployed by Gillray to examine the complex nature of counter-revolutionary graphic

¹¹⁴ This reading pertains to Gillray’s deployment of the caricatural form and cannot be broadened to include the genre of Loyalist graphic satire in its entirety. For an unequivocal denunciation of Republican ideals, see Rowlandson’s print *The Contrast* (1792).

¹¹⁵ This theoretical idea has its basis in Fredric Jameson’s assertion that the literary text comprises of ‘three concentric frameworks’ which function as ‘distinct semantic horizons’ and his belief in the narrativity of the historical process itself. This is closely related to the central premise of my thesis; studying the caricaturist as a historian who uses the visual discourse to transpose history onto prints. Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Routledge, 2002) pp. 60-61.

satire by looking closely at the images of eating and drinking and their numerous permutations and combinations, including starvation, hunger, indulgence, fasting, excretion, and cannibalism, in order to investigate the ways in which Gillray's plates engage closely with political events of the day and distil those events into ostensibly accessible graphic images.

It is important to note that the inclusion of food in Gillray's oeuvre is not restricted to the depiction of riots. In a number of his prints he deploys the metaphor of hunger to articulate political concerns; politics and the imagery of food intersect to produce his wittiest and most complex prints. In his *Sans-Culottes, Feeding Europe with the Bread of Liberty* (1793, Figure II.3), Gillray responds, in an ostensibly Loyalist fashion, to the French revolutionary regime's publicly stated intention of inciting revolution throughout Europe. Grotesque and ragged *sans-culottes* are shown dethroning the Pope in Italy, driving citizens out of their country in Germany and Prussia, and forcing bread, representative of liberty, on people in Holland and Savoy while they rob their victims at the same time. But the central space of the plate is reserved for England, for it is Britain's plight that concerns Gillray the most. In this central scene, Fox and Sheridan imitate their French compatriots, using bayonets to force John Bull to eat bread while picking his pockets. Their transformation into *sans-culottes* is near perfect except for a small detail, one which is often overlooked in popular readings of this print; whilst the other *sans-culottes* are thin, even emaciated, Charles Fox, the English *sans-culotte*, is still plump. Is the reader to believe that Gillray is hinting at an incipient hierarchy within the *sans-culottes* and pointing to the fact that even English radicals, who usually occupy the lowest rung(s) in Gillray's iconography, are better off than French *sans-culottes*?

Even as one speculates about the possibility of Fox's health being a covert marker of English superiority despite the fact that he has joined the ranks of the bestial French, Gillray ironises this very corpulence in his famous print titled *French Liberty, British Slavery* (1792, Figure II.4). In this print, Gillray, like his contemporaries, seems to rely on a simple juxtaposition of a Frenchman and an Englishman. He points out the frenzied madness of French revolutionaries as compared with the prosperity of John Bull, who at the time of the Revolution represented the characteristics of the ordinary British citizen. On the left, a ragged, emaciated *sans-culotte* eats his dinner of green onions, to be followed by snails, exclaiming, 'O Sacre Dieu!- vat sing be de Liberte vive le Assemble Nationale!- no more Tax! No more Slavery!- all Free Citizen! Ha hah! By Gar how ve live!- ve Svim in de Milk & Honey!'. In contrast, a grossly fat Englishman sits carving his roast beef, with a tankard of ale on the table. However, he claims, 'Ah! This cursed Ministry! They'll ruin us with their damn'd Taxes! Why, Zounds!- they're making Slaves of us all, and Starving us to Death!'

Gillray's juxtaposition of the scrawny, disgusting Frenchman and the well-fed Englishman relies on a British myth reproduced by prints such as Hogarth's *O The Roast Beef of Old England* (1748, Figure II.5). Whilst Gillray inherits the dualist paradigm from earlier caricaturists like Hogarth, the iconography is reconfigured in the face of the French Revolution and Republican threats to the status quo. He introduces symbols such as the bright cockade on the Frenchman's hat, which identify the starving figure as a proponent of the Revolution. The print also underlines the event's linguistic significance by pointing to the semantic changes in political terms such as 'liberty', 'slavery' and 'freedom'.

Another change is visible in the Englishman's room, which includes a statue of Britannia, who has a sack of money instead of a shield. The rest of the furnishings

in the room are in striking contrast to the bare walls, floor, and broken windows of the Frenchman's room. A sword lies atop a violin, suggesting Liberty's abnegation of aesthetic skills for militaristic pursuits. The royal blue of the Briton's clothes seems to symbolise masculinity which can be contrasted with the pink of the Frenchman's attire: the effeminate pink articulates anxieties of the seductive allure of French models of masculinity including the fop and the libertine, both reviled in the literature of the time. Gillray's unmistakable xenophobia is comparable to the lurid Loyalist propaganda produced by contemporaries like Cruikshank.¹¹⁶ But unlike the proliferating Loyalist depictions, Gillray's satire does not stop at the Frenchman. He goes on to ironise British identity by depicting the repulsive corpulence of the meat-eating Englishman who is blotched with drink. The plump John Bull figure has often been seen as a representative of English prosperity, but Gillray's Englishman is obese. His greed is evident in the way he has tucked the tablecloth as a napkin and pulled what seems to be the armchair towards the table. Interestingly, his eyes belie this gluttonous instinct. His gaze seems satiated for he is looking not at the table but at something beyond the space in which he is situated. So is the Frenchman. Despite the apparent line that separates the prints, the fact that both the Englishman and the Frenchman are looking into smoke, seems to coalesce the two sides of the print and unifies what appears to be a diptych. This introduces a disruptive sub-stratum to this propagandist print. It seems to suggest that there are more similarities than dissimilarities between avowedly 'anarchic' Frenchmen and 'orderly' Englishmen.

¹¹⁶ See *French Happiness, English Misery* (1793, Figure II.6). Cruikshank's *French Happiness, English Misery* contrasts four prosperous and content Englishmen with a group of emaciated Frenchmen fighting over a single frog. Francophobia was bound to be an increasingly potent factor in eighteenth century Britain for 'there is no more effective way of bonding together the disparate sections of restless peoples than to unite them against outsiders'. E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) p. 91.

This multivalence continues in *John Bull Taking a Luncheon; - or - British Cooks, Cramming Old Grumble Gizzard, with Bonne-Cherie* (1798, Figure II.7). The print celebrates several British naval victories, the most famous being Nelson's defeat of the French navy at Aboukir Bay at the mouth of the Nile on 1 August 1798. Here a plump John Bull gorges on French warships, served up to him by Nelson on the right. Other naval heroes include Lord Howe (to Nelson's right) and Admiral Duncan (on the far right), who defeated a Franco-Dutch expedition to Ireland. But in Gillray's characteristic style this celebration of British victories is not unambiguous; as the title informs the reader, John Bull, the 'Old Grumble Gizzard' actually complains gracelessly as he is force-fed on numerous naval victories: 'What! more Frigasees? Why you sons o'bitches, you, where do 'ye think I shall find room to stow all you bring in?'. The overflowing pot of British stout kept on the floor reiterates the idea of excess. Outside the window, Fox and Sheridan retreat hastily, hinting at John Bull's insatiable greed: 'O Curse his Guts, he'll take a chop at Us, next'. His protruding belly in these two prints emphasises that the Englishman's condition was immeasurably better than the Frenchman's, and yet this very prosperity is reconfigured as monstrous obesity by Gillray and eventually comes to bear the brunt of his satire. John Bull's corporeality is used to depict, and subsequently ironise, Britain's political status. The polyphonic caricatural form and Gillray's allusive ideological affiliations both lend an ambivalence to his prints which prevent them from propounding absolute belief in 'the virtues of tradition and continuity' and a love for the English constitution.¹¹⁷ The proliferation of meaning in his caricatures seems to be circumscribed only by decisive coordinates such as his Francophobia.

¹¹⁷ *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 292.

This ambiguity gives rise to complex prints like *Pigs Meat; - Or - the Swine Flogged Out of the Farm Yard* (1798, Figure II.8), which depicts Pitt and Dundas driving the Opposition Pigs, representatives of the 'swinish multitude', out of John Bull's farmyard. The text under the image provides a moral lesson on the ramifications of greed. Gillray's depiction of the pigs is based on Burke's famous description of the lower classes as a 'swinish multitude' in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*:

Nothing is more certain, than that our manners, our civilization, and all the good things which are connected with manners and with civilization, have, in this European world of ours, depended for ages upon two principles; and were indeed the result of both combined; I mean the spirit of a gentleman, and the spirit of religion. The nobility and the clergy, the one by profession, the other by patronage, kept learning in existence, even in the midst of arms and confusions, and whilst governments were rather in their causes than formed. Learning paid back what it received to nobility and to priesthood, and paid it with usury, by enlarging their ideas, and by furnishing their minds. Happy if they had all continued to know their indissoluble union, and their proper place! Happy if learning, not debauched by ambition, had been satisfied to continue the instructor, and not aspired to be the master! Along with its natural protectors and guardians, learning will be cast into the mire, and trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude.¹¹⁸

Burke's rhetorical delineation is based on a series of prior references to swine. They are used to represent ingratitude as early as the Bible: 'Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you' (Matthew 7:6). Later literary works endow the word with additional connotations of over-indulgence. Milton's *Comus* (1634), a

¹¹⁸ *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, p. 117.

masque written in honour of chastity, uses the word 'swinish' to suggest Comus' sexual pleasure and intemperance:

for swinish gluttony
Ne'er looks to heav'n amidst his gorgeous feast,
But with besotted base ingratitude
Crams, and blasphemes his feeder¹¹⁹

The word continued to have negative connotations well into the eighteenth century.

'Swinish' is defined as 'slovenly, boorish in manner' by Nathan Bailey's *Universal Etymological English Dictionary* and 'gluttonous, greedy, selfish' by Thomas

Dyche's *A New General English Dictionary*.¹²⁰ But it is a 1789 tract, *Glimpses of the Dark Ages*, published in London by the Religious Tract society, which first uses the term 'swinish multitude'.¹²¹ In this tract the phrase evokes the hordes of pigs infesting Parisian streets. Burke's picture of a 'debauched' mob, determined to trample 'natural' hierarchies borrows heavily from such material. But he markedly politicizes his representation. He uses the term as a basis for creating a continuum on the one hand between the aristocracy, religion and order; and on the other, democracy, atheism and anarchy. This is done with a specific hegemonic purpose of defending the hierarchies propagated by the Establishment.

The radical democratization of the Public Sphere in the revolutionary decade ensured that Burke's response was immediately denounced by a number of pamphlets and tracts that were circulated in response to his politically pointed categorization of the populace as 'swinish'. A number of them like the anonymously

¹¹⁹ John Milton, *Comus: A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634* (London: Humphrey Robinson, 1637), p. 27.

¹²⁰ Nathan Bailey, *The New Universal English Dictionary - To which is added, a Dictionary of Cant Words* (London: James Rivington and James Fletcher, 1759); Thomas Dyche, *A New General English Dictionary; Peculiarly Calculated for the Use and Improvement of Such as are Unacquainted with the Learned Languages. Originally Begun by the late Reverend Mr. Thomas Dyche, and Finished by the late William Pardon, gent* (London: C. Bathurst, J. Rivington and Sons, 1777).

¹²¹ Anonymous, *Glimpses of the Dark Ages; or, Sketches of the Social Condition of Europe, from the Fifth to the Twelfth Century* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1789).

printed *Rights of Swine. An Address to the Poor* drew attention to the misery of the lower classes: 'Thousands of honest and industrious people in Great Britain, are literally starving for want of Bread'.¹²² Others, like ballad writer R. Thompson's *To the Public, Alias the 'Swinish Multitude'*, adopted an caustic tone to mock what they saw as Burke's disregard of the needs of the masses:

[W]ill you never believe you are happy [...]. Can you not believe that your hunger, and thrift, are gratified, unless you eat and drink? [...] O! What political unbelief is this? [...] What! will you not believe the King himself, and all the royal family?¹²³

Thompson's mock-horror turns each one of Burke's assumptions on its head. This attack is amplified by two of the most important responses to Burke's *Reflections*: Thomas Spence's *Pig's Meat* and Daniel Isaac Eaton's *Politics for the People: or, a Salmagundy for Swine*.¹²⁴ A verse on the title page of the second volume of Eaton's pamphlet uses the mock-epic style to great effect:

The praise of him, who talk'd so big
For training up one learned Pig,
Is far below, friend Daniel, thine!
The Feast of Words, which you supply
To your illuminating Stye,
Makes herds of literary Swine

This short verse, recited by a 'spare rib', mocks the widespread Loyalist dissatisfaction at the unprecedented circulation at this period of cheap printed material, which led to an unparalleled social penetration and diffusion of knowledge.¹²⁵ The Attorney General Archibald Macdonald's response, recorded by

¹²² Friend to the Poor, *Rights of Swine. An Address to the Poor* (London: Citizen Lee, 1794) p. 1.

¹²³ R. Thompson, *To the Public, alias the 'Swinish Multitude'* (London: Daniel Isaac Eaton, 1794) p. 1.

¹²⁴ Thomas Spence, *One Pennyworth of Pig's Meat; or, Lessons for the Swinish Multitude. Collected by the Poor Man's Advocate, in the Course of his Reading for more than Twenty Years. Volume 1* (London: Thomas Spence, 1793); Daniel Isaac Eaton, *Politics for the people: or, a Salmagundy for Swine. Volume 2* (London: Daniel Isaac Eaton, 1794-95).

¹²⁵ E.P. Thompson estimates that 200,000 cheap six penny editions of Paine's *Right of Man* were in circulation within a few months. The phenomenon was by no means limited to radical texts. Hannah

numerous pamphlets documenting the trial of Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*, typifies the conservative backlash against this phenomenon:

But when I found that another publication was ushered into the world, that in all shapes was, with an industry inconceivable, circulated, either personally or locally, and was thrust into the hands of parties of all descriptions, that even children's sweetmeats were wrapped with portions of it, and all the industry, such as I described, to obtrude and force it on that part of the public who cannot correct as they go along; I thought it behoved me, on the earliest occasion, to put a charge on record against the author of that book.

The accusation that 'even children's sweetmeats' were being wrapped in the pages of Paine's book underlines the extent of his anxiety. This explains his use of the word 'thrust', which is deployed to suggest the forced indoctrination of the 'ignorant' and 'credulous' lower classes.¹²⁶

His disapproval is in direct contrast with Eaton's and Spence's endorsement of such dissemination of knowledge. This is evident in their professed motive of making 'herds of literary swine' by providing the masses with a 'feast of words'. Spence's *Pig's Meat* is an anthology that combines biblical passages, radical tracts demanding the freedom of the press, *The Analytical's* review of *Rights of Man*, satirical songs written to the patriotic tunes of *Hearts of Oak*, *Rule Britannia*, and *God Save the King*, a collection of passages from the chapbook tradition and excerpts of works by authors such as Shakespeare, Goldsmith, Barlow, Cromwell, Harrington, Milton, Hume, Locke, Berkeley, Swift, Tacitus, D'Alembert, Paine, Richard Price, Priestley, Johnson's *Dictionary* and segments of the new French Constitution. All of this has been collected, the magazine announces, 'by Poor

More's Loyalist *Cheap Repository Tracts* are estimated to have sold more than double the number of copies of Paine's book. E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage, 1963) p. 621.

¹²⁶Thomas Browne, 'Opening Speech of Archibald Macdonald', *The British Cicero; or, a Selection of the Most Admired Speeches in the English Language. Volume 3* (Philadelphia: Birch and Small, 1810) pp. 298-315 (pp. 299, 301).

Man's Advocate, in the course of reading for more than twenty years'. It is intended 'to promote among the Labouring Part of Mankind Ideas of their Station, of their Importance, and of their Rights', and to convince them 'that their forlorn condition has not been entirely overlooked and forgotten, nor their just Cause unpleaded, neither by their Maker nor by the most enlightened of Men in all Ages'.¹²⁷ It also includes a question-and-answer version of the *Rights of Man* and a serialized account of Erskine's defence speech in the trial of the book, all substantiating what Spence pins down as the central point of the defence:

Every man, not intending to mislead and to confound, but seeking to enlighten others with what his own reason and conscience, however erroneously, dictate to him as truth, may address himself to the universal reason of a whole nation either upon the subject of governments in general, or upon that of his own particular country.¹²⁸

Spence's *Pigs Meat* questions the exclusionary logic of the public sphere and dismisses Loyalist dissatisfaction at the growing plebeian counter-culture. Instead it stresses the need to educate the lower classes. Nothing is exempt from Spence's satirical eye. He exposes the greed and hypocrisy involved in ostensibly sacred customs, and dismantles political and social hierarchies through *carnavalesque* literary strategies. By offering a polyphonic product, Spence succeeds in adding a political dimension to the subversive undertones of chapbook literature, which tended to remain sceptical about religion and social order without politicizing this anarchic spirit. This plurality of voices which foregrounds a more inclusive social vision gains importance when compared to the conservative undertones of a number of anti-Loyalist accounts of the period. John Gale Jones's *Address to the Nation* at the London Corresponding Society meeting on 29 June 1795 epitomises the radical

¹²⁷ *Pig's Meat*, p. 1.

¹²⁸ *Pig's Meat*, p. 168.

reluctance to embrace plebeians. Jones advocates peaceful action and condemns violent resistance of any kind:

Are we BRITONS, and is not LIBERTY our BIRTH-RIGHT!
There is no Power on Earth (that) shall silence the Voice of an
Injured Nation, or prevent the Progress of Free Enquiry! - Bring
forth your Whips and Racks, ye Ministers of Vengeance! -
Produce your Scaffolds and your Executioners! - Erect Barracks
in every Street, and Bastilles in every Corner! - Persecute and
punish every innocent Individual! - but you will not succeed! [...]
The Holy Blood of Patriotism, streaming from the fevering Axe,
shall carry with it infant seeds of Liberty, and Men may perish! -
but Truth shall be eternal [...] famine stalks the streets, and
haggard Wretchedness assails you in every shape; mark, Citizens,
the shameful negligence and unfeeling conduct of those who hold
that power which ought to be intrusted to none but your *real*
Representatives (emphasis and italics- author's own).¹²⁹

Jones is dismissive of the government and his speech stresses on the need for 'real' representatives, but his demonization of the enlightened multitude mirrors Loyalist propaganda of the time. The influence of popular counter-revolutionary propaganda on a 'radical' luminary like Jones goes a long way in suggesting that 'Jacobin', 'anti-Jacobin', 'Loyalist', 'radical' and 'reactionary' ceased to be water-tight categories during these politically tumultuous decades.

Unease with the concept of a plebeian public sphere can frequently be detected in the speeches and writings of luminaries who were in favour of reform. A young Coleridge echoes this in his description of the English crowd:

Sufficiently possessed of natural Sense to despise the Priest, and
of natural Feeling to hate the Oppressor, they listen only to the
inflammatory harangues of some mad headed Enthusiast, and
imbibe from them poison, not food; rage, not liberty.
Unillumined by philosophy and stimulated to a lust of revenge by
aggravated wrongs, they would make the altar of freedom stream
with blood, while the grass grew in the desolated halls of

¹²⁹ Anonymous, *London Corresponding Society. Account of the Proceedings at a General Meeting of the London Corresponding Society, Convened by Public Advertisement, and held in an inclosed field, behind the long room, Borough Road, St. George's Fields, on Monday, the Twenty-ninth of June, 1795. Citizen John Gale Jones in the Chair* (London: n.p., 1795) p. 6.

justice.¹³⁰

Coleridge's professedly anti-Burkean agenda is undercut by his detrimental characterization of the lower classes as irrational creatures wholly governed by their senses. He might not validate the aristocracy or clergy as custodians of the populace, but he echoes the conservative lobby in his stark dismissal of radical nationalism. Ultimately, his pleading for the masses, and not to them, disenfranchises the lower classes and veers dangerously close to More's model of paternalistic benevolence.

Eaton's *Politics for the People* offers a strong criticism of this tendency. The author adopts a satirical voice with the same radical effect as *Pig's Meat* in the pamphlet *The Pernicious Effects of the Art of Printing Upon Society Exposed* (1793). In an entertaining passage, Eaton expresses mock horror at the impossibility of governing with unquestioned authority following the overwhelming expansion of print culture:

The lower orders begin to have ideas of rights, as men—to think that one man is as good as another—that society at present is founded upon false principles [...] the scum of the earth, the swinish multitude, talking of their rights! And insolently claiming, nay almost demanding, that political liberty shall be the same to all [...] what audacity.¹³¹

Eaton's compilation of 'high' and 'low' literary sources mock-ventriloquises in order to parody and ridicule establishment cant. This intention can be traced even within the titular 'Salmagundi for Swine', a witty riposte to Burke 'swinish multitude'.¹³²

¹³⁰ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *A Moral and Political Lecture, Delivered at Bristol* (Bristol: George Routh, 1795) p. 9.

¹³¹ *Politics for the People*, p. 9.

¹³² Salmagundi is a salad dish, which originated in early seventeenth-century England. It consists of cooked meats, seafood, vegetables, fruit, leaves, nuts and flowers, oil, vinegar and spices. These disparate ingredients can be mixed together, arranged in layers or geometrical designs on a plate. The lack of a definite recipe allows the cook to experiment. The titular 'Salmagundi for Swine' uses the metaphor of food for the assortment of literary tracts by authors such as Bolingbroke, Swift and radicals like Godwin and Thelwall which are included in the collection.

Spence's and Eaton's influence is evident in Gillray's choice of a title for the print under consideration. The print seems Loyalist in intent. But the dismay on the faces of the 'pigs', coupled with the whips in the hands of the ministers, underlines the coercion exercised by the representatives of the state in a bid to check a burgeoning plebeian counter-culture. It would not be an overestimation to propose Gillray's print as a visual accompaniment to Spence's and Eaton's literary works.¹³³ The presence of this contentious sub-stratum ensures that this caricature cannot be read unambiguously as a potent polemical weapon, produced to reiterate hegemonic beliefs at a key historical moment. Rather, the image amalgamates multifarious materials into striking images and the resultant ideological hybridity challenges established hegemonic discourses.¹³⁴

This newness is illustrated in Gillray's derision of the gentry in *Substitutes for Bread* (1795, Figure II.9), which alludes to the debate regarding the Corn Laws. Disastrous harvests forced the government to urge the populace to eat things other than bread. Here the heads of state substitute bread with fish, wine, champagne, venison and roast beef amongst other delicacies.¹³⁵ Everyone at the table is busy

¹³³ Even within a broader context, Gillray's profession itself reiterates this idea. Loyalist propaganda maligned cheap texts primarily for dismantling the idea of a traditional, exclusive public sphere. But unlike earlier artists who sold their work to patrons, caricaturists were associated with publishers who aimed at reaching the maximum number of customers for maximum profit. For those who could not afford the two-shilling price tag on a coloured print, print-sellers created colourful window displays, allowing passers-by to share the joke free of cost. Thus these visual images, irrespective of their ideological intent, epitomise the growth of a vast, all-inclusive public sphere. For a lengthy engagement with the growth of the Public Sphere see *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*.

¹³⁴ It is interesting to note that Gillray uses revolutionary colours (red and blue) to dress the statesmen in this print. This highlights the way in which the visual vocabulary of the Revolution percolates in Loyalist caricature and ends up lending additional meanings, perhaps unintended by the caricaturist, to a print. In any case, Gillray's choice of a covert representation seems to be a conscious survival strategy; Spence was charged with treason and imprisoned in Newgate without trial from 17 May 1794 to 22 December 1794 but Gillray continued to draw throughout his life.

¹³⁵ Gillray uses the caricatural form but his representation is rooted in fact. Sandra Sherman points out that in popular cookery manuals such as R. House's *Family Cookery, Combining Elegance and Economy* (1800) bread is peripheral to the upscale diets they describe, used only as a side dish with duck, beef, lamb, venison etc. *Sandra Sherman, Imagining Poverty: Quantification and the Decline*

gorging on gold guineas whilst the mob milling outside is dressed in tatters. On the right, William Pitt sits atop a locked chest labelled 'treasury' and in the foreground a huge sack, which claims to be the 'Product of New Taxes upon John Bull's property', is displayed with a small basket full of potato bread, to be given away in charity.¹³⁶ A notice stating: 'Proclamation of a General Fast to avert the impending Famine' is the final nail in the proverbial coffin; the *mis-en-scene* visualises the stark disparity between the promises made by the leaders of the state and their actions. Gillray uses the metaphor of gluttony cleverly to suggest the immense, insatiable greed of the politicians. Gillray's representation here echoes Paine's *Rights of Man*, for both construe the populace as 'a vast mass of mankind [...] degradedly thrown into the background of the human picture, to bring forward, with greater glare, the puppet-show of the state and aristocracy'.¹³⁷ In fact, the immediacy of Gillray's image, the brevity of the caricatural form, and its deployment of easily recognizable symbols make it more convincing than Paine's literary pamphlet.

The effectiveness of graphic satire as a popular cultural form is further demonstrated by witty prints such as *John Bull and His Dog Faithful* (1796, Figure II.10) where Gillray exposes the predatory nature of the ministers. Here John Bull has lost a hand and a leg and is weighed down by a huge bag of debts into which William Pitt has led him. The size of John Bull's bag is suggestive of the

of Paternalism (Columbia: Ohio State University Press, 2001) p. 48.

¹³⁶ William Pitt, a favourite of George III ever since his appointment as the youngest Prime Minister at the age of twenty-four. This led to his influential position, which Gillray depicts in the print. But Pitt's government borrowed more than £156 million in loans between 1793 and 1796 to fund the war with France, which destroyed his earlier public popularity. When going to open parliament in October 1795, George III was greeted with cries of 'Bread', 'Peace' and 'no Pitt'. On 27 April 1797, Pitt submitted a record budget of £42 million, attributing over three-quarters of it to the war effort. Following this he increased taxes, which led to a public backlash. For a detailed study of Pitt's political life, see William Hague, *William Pitt the Younger* (London: HarperPerennial, 2005).

¹³⁷ *Rights of Man*, p. 35.

monumental national debt England was under at the end of the eighteenth century. Pitt is chewing on a bone even as he leads John Bull into further debt. But Gillray does not stop at satirizing Pitt's greed. Fox, on John Bull's right, is seen barking at Pitt whilst Sheridan, to his left, bites the wrong leg. Charles Grey, the greyhound, is eyeing his clothes.¹³⁸ John Bull himself is wearing ragged clothes, is limp and blind, very close to a ditch.¹³⁹

Such complaints proliferated in the wake of the growing scarcity of food in England. But a number of statesmen continued to gloss over the acute shortage of food. In his *Thoughts and Details on Scarcity, Originally Presented to the Right Hon. William Pitt* (1795), Burke argues that starvation is God's will and nothing, be it charity from the upper classes or governmental regulations, can alleviate it completely. By exempting the rich and the government, Burke obliges nobody to provide food to the lower classes. In fact, he markedly omits the acknowledged scarcity when he insists that the poor are happy because they have better food, which is proven from 'the known difficulty of contenting them with anything but bread made of the finest flour, and meat of the first quality'.¹⁴⁰ In this print Gillray rejects these claims completely in his depiction of a malnourished John Bull and a canine William Pitt. Instead, he echoes the opinions expressed by populist pamphlets such as Alexander Dalrymple's *The Poor Man's Friend* (1795), which

¹³⁸ Charles Grey (1764-1845), MP for Northumberland, Fox's follower and Pitt's critic. In 1792, Grey joined a group of pro-reform Whigs.

¹³⁹ Gillray's emphasis on dogs as the animal of choice could be influenced by the government's imposition of a controversial tax on dogs in 1796. The supporters of the bill insisted that dogs could be considered at par with other taxable luxuries whilst the opponents of the tax protested against this objectification and focussed on the mutual affection that brings humans and animals together. The print-maker could be hinting at the fact that the government was leaving no stoned unturned to glean money from the masses. For detailed information on the contemporary reactions to the tax see Lynn Festa, 'Person, Animal, Thing: The 1796 Dog Tax and the Right to Superfluous Things', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 33 (2009) pp. 1-44.

¹⁴⁰ Edmund Burke, *Thoughts and Details on Scarcity, Originally Presented to the Right Hon. William Pitt, in the Month of November, 1795* (London: F. and C. Rivington and J. Hatchard, 1800) p. 5.

berates William Pitt's strategy of mixing maize and barley with wheat to reduce costs, and insists that the poorest of Englishmen have a 'right to eat good wheaten bread'.¹⁴¹ Moreover, Gillray's deployment of the comic form allows him to go a step further by depicting the ministers of state and the leaders of the Opposition as animals, not even human anymore. The range of techniques available to the caricaturist allows for witty exaggeration and a degree of impudence absent from the literary pamphlet.

In print after print, Gillray resorts to the metaphor of food to suggest the greed of the heads of state. In an early print *Monstrous Craws, at a New Coalition Feast* (1787, Figure II.11), he refers to the partial reconciliation between the royal couple and the Prince of Wales following the suspension of his massive debts by William Pitt. Queen Charlotte (1744-1818) is depicted as an ugly hag and King George III (1738-1820) is dressed like a woman.¹⁴² All three have craws resembling giant breasts attached to their necks. They can be seen devouring a huge pot full of gold coins, which is inscribed with the words 'John Bull's blood'. Despite their acquisitiveness, the Prince of Wales' goitre is remarkably empty, underscoring his boundless appetite.

The Prince of Wales continues to be satirized for his dissipation in *A Voluptuary Under the Horrors of Digestion* (1792, Figure II.12). Here, a satiated Prince picks at his teeth with a fork. His protruding belly and undone waistcoat foreground his over-indulgence. A number of signifiers encoded in the print suggest his gluttony and debauchery; his trousers (three of the five buttons have come

¹⁴¹ Alexander Dalrymple, *The Poor Man's Friend* (London: P. Elmsly, 1795) p. 4.

¹⁴² The Queen's representation is particularly cruel as she ravenously stuffing her mouth with gold using two ladles and thrusting her body forward in sexual abandon. For a detailed discussion of Gillray's representations of Queen Charlotte, see Chapter 3 of this thesis – 'Body/Bawdy Inscriptions: Gillray's Representations of Women'.

undone), gnawed bones, empty bottles of wine, the tanker of port on the table, pills for venereal disease behind him, and the crossed fork and knife in the background which parody his Coat of Arms. Unpaid bills under a pot and more unpaid bills in the foreground provide proof of mounting debts whilst the presence of the dice confirms his gambling habits.

On the other end of the spectrum is its complementary print, *Temperance Enjoying a Frugal Meal* (1792, Figure II.13), which, like a number of Gillray's plates, highlights the miserliness of the royal family. Here the king is eating a semi-boiled egg while the Queen crams salad into her mouth. They are drinking plain water, the king's trousers are patched, the fireplace is empty, and so is the frame in the background. Ironically, the border of the frame reads: 'The Triumph of Benevolence'.

This depiction of the frugality of the royal family is similar in intent to *Anti-Saccharites, - or - John Bull and His Family Leaving Off the Use of Sugar* (1792, Figure II.14). In this telling visual, the King and Queen boycott sugar from the West Indies in a bid to oppose slavery and the Queen tries to convince their daughters of the same. Ostensibly, both these prints seem to replicate a Paleyesque understanding of hunger as a blessing and frugality as 'a pleasure'.¹⁴³ This mythologizing of hunger in order to diffuse threats of the impending famine is repeated in a series of religious sermons preached on the days of national fasts in England between 1793 and 1795. These fasts were promoted by the King as a way to cleanse the body, but this period of ritualistic abstinence essentially served to propagate reactionary dictums. For instance, Ebenzer Verax, in his sermon delivered on the day of the nationwide general fast on 25 February 1795, requests the populace to:

¹⁴³ *Reasons for Contentment*, p. 11.

[K]eep your bodies unpolluted with food this day; humble yourselves before the King, and pray as he has commanded you [...]. Pray for the utter destruction, extirpation, and damnation, of that impious, and sacrilegious nation, who have shed royal blood. That their children may be delivered upto famine, and their blood be poured out by force of the sword. Let their wives be bereaved of their children, and be widows; and their men be put to death.¹⁴⁴

These sermons need to be read as key moments of national expression because they endow the idea of starvation with patriotic overtones. Ritual starvation is not only recommended, it is necessary to foreground the solidarity of English citizens and overcome Britain's problems. Essentially, the religious rhetoric of these sermons helps to dilute resistance in a fashion similar to Loyalist pamphlets of the period. This is evident in Noah Hill's characterization of ministers as 'sent of God, faithful to their trust, whom nothing can withdraw from their allegiance to the son of God' in his sermon on the day of the general fast. He goes on to express his disgust at the Opposition:

What an idle, senseless boat is *Love of Country*, and *attachment to the British Constitution*, in those who are devoted to pleasure, or live in a state of open, or secret rebellion against the great Lord of Heaven and Earth! *They* are the enemies from whom Britain has most to fear. Their sins are pregnant with every national evil. They distract our Councils [...] cut short the staff of bread, undermine the Constitution, shake the pillars of the state and put everything to dreadful hazard [...] Amen (italics-author's own).¹⁴⁵

Sermon after sermon relies on creating a simplistic dichotomy between the Establishment and the Opposition in order to instill 'patriotism' in the minds of the ordinary British citizen. John Aikin's *Discourse Intended for the Approaching Fast*

¹⁴⁴ Ebenezer Verax, *A Wonderful Sermon; or, Truth Undisguised. Intended to be Preached on the Fast-day, on Wednesday, the Twenty-Fifth of February, 1795. Together with an Hymn, and a Proclamation* (London: Daniel Isaac Eaton, 1795) p. 8.

¹⁴⁵ Noah Hill, *The Watchman's Report and Advice. A Sermon Preached February 25, 1795. The Day Appointed for a General Fast, in Old Gravel Lane, St George in the East* (London: Johnson, Conder, Knott, and Cleugh, 1795) pp. 27, 51, 52.

Day (1793) exalts the government so much that it becomes synonymous with Britain itself. He summons the people 'on this day for the express purpose of humbling ourselves before the Maker for the sins of the nation'.¹⁴⁶ Clearly, the focus is not on individual, but national faults. All these discourse endow the ordinary citizen with agency; he too can play a part in transforming England back into a prosperous and bountiful country again. Ironically, this agency manifests itself in the form of conscious abstinence.

Even when the sermons are not suggesting starvation or promoting hunger, they emphasise the importance of being niggardly. Anna Barbauld's admonitory *Civic Sermons* are addressed only to 'you who have a love of order [...] who, are accustomed to say to yourselves, I will not buy strong drink today, because my children will have no bread tomorrow'.¹⁴⁷

Gillray almost replicates Barbauld's disciplinary discourse, but his ostensibly Loyalist celebration of stinginess is undercut by the fact that he chooses not to highlight the altruism of the royal couple. Instead, he pokes fun at their greed; the Queen's primary reason for boycotting sugar is to add money to their personal coffers:

O my dear Creatures, do but Taste it: you can't think how nice it is without Sugar :- and then consider how much work you'll save the Poor Blackeemoors? by leaving off the use of it! - and above all remember how much expence it will save your Poor Papa!- O it's a charming, cooling Drink.

The corpulence of the King further highlights his avaricious nature and provides a basis for gauging the intent of the print-maker. A far cry from mainstream religious sermons, Gillray comes close to depicting what William Richards articulates in a

¹⁴⁶ John Aikin, *Food for National Penitence; or, A Discourse Intended for the Approaching Fast Day* (London: J. Johnson, 1793) p. 4.

¹⁴⁷ Anna Letitia Barbauld, *Civic Sermons to the People. Number 1* (Dundee: Edward Leslie, 1792) p. 8.

radical pamphlet of 1795 intended to question the very premise of a general fast.

Dismissing the royal proclamation of the fast as 'blowing a trumpet to call the witness and admire how very pious and devout' one is, Richards insists:

Religion has been too often sadly degraded, and rendered subservient to the unworthiest and vilest of purposes [...] it is seldom anything else but a piece of political machinery to promote their own perverse and crooked designs.¹⁴⁸

Gillray's brazen critique of the royal family reverberates with this understanding of self-interest being the motivating factor behind royal family's penny-pinching habits.

These conflicting 'heteroglot waves from all sides' underline the fact that there is no single overarching ideological conception in Gillray's Loyalist prints.¹⁴⁹ This play of ideologies ensures a layered and complex depiction of the nature of popular sentiment in Britain during the 1790s, very different from the monolithic politics of traditional historiographies. 'There is a lot going on here that the conventional histories of those years seldom accommodate'.¹⁵⁰ The power of Gillray's iconography to undermine the legitimacy of the monarchy as a social, moral, and political system is proven when he extends the metaphor of eating to its utmost and uses scatological imagery as an artistic trope. *The French Invasion; - or - John Bull, Bombarding the Bum Boats* (1793, Figure II.15) provides a scatological embodiment of nationalism with George III shitting a number of tiny gunboats on France. The King here embodies John Bull, so the image is ultimately patriotic, but

¹⁴⁸ William Richards, *Food for a Fast-Day: or, a Few Seasonable Hints for the Use of Those Good People who Believe in the Propriety and Efficacy of Public Fasts, and Who Intend to Observe the Twenty-Fifth of February 1795, Being the Day Appointed by Royal Proclamation, for a General Fast* (Lynn: W. Turner, 1795) pp. 4,16.

¹⁴⁹ *Dialogic Imagination*, p. 307.

¹⁵⁰ *City of Laughter*, p. 14.

the patriotism is reduced to a capacity for directing excrement at the enemies. The British Declaration, which is part of the matter that the king excretes, refers to the port of Toulon then occupied by the British, which would be given back to France on the restitution of its monarchy.

This is especially interesting because a strikingly anti-British image in Jacques Louis David's oeuvre, *British Le Gouvernement Anglais Sous La Forme D'une Figure Horrible Et Chimérique* (The English Government in the Form of a Wild and Horrible Figure, 1794, Figure II.16), borrows heavily from Gillray's representation of George III.¹⁵¹ The king forms the anus of David's titular 'horrible figure' shitting, quite literally, from his mouth.

In an equally gross print titled *Midas, Transmuting All to Gold/ Paper* (1797, Figure II.17) Gillray portrays Pitt as Midas, straddling the Bank of England, shitting and spewing forth paper money, thereby transforming the gold coins stuffed in his huge belly. The allusion is to Pitt's mercenary motives behind the substitution of gold with paper money in the face of a shortage of bullion in the Bank of England, owing to the French invasion of Ireland and mounting war costs. Pitt's stature, compared to the relatively miniscule figures of the Opposition on the left, underlines his increasingly influential position in England.

Gillray's imagery here is starkly reminiscent of pamphlets being written by members of the radical lobby, especially Thomas Beddoes, who, in his tract, titled *A Letter to the Right Hon. William Pitt: on the Means of Relieving the Present Scarcity, and Preventing the Diseases that Arise from Meagre Food*, criticises Pitt for lacking foresight:

Did it never, Sir, occur to you, that unproductive years were to be guarded against? [...] The French, with ready money chinking in

¹⁵¹ *British Le Gouvernement Anglais Sous La Forme D'une Figure Horrible Et Chimérique* (1794).

their purses, bought up American crops as they were growing, in the winter of 1794 and 1795 [...]. What did you do? - Nothing that is apparent, certainly nothing that was effectual.¹⁵²

Jacobin newspapers also leapt to the occasion and maligned Pitt. *The Morning Post* of December 29, 1797 claims that 'for a person to fill Mr. Pitt's station, it is necessary to be qualified to defraud the Nation'.¹⁵³ Gillray sticks to a similarly accusatory tone in his print, but his scatological rendition of Pitt's greed furthers the critique; it is savage and betrays blatant disrespect of an influential minister.

The focus on what Bakhtin calls the 'lower bodily functions' in *The French Invasion and Midas, Transmuting All to Gold/ Paper* violates bourgeois norms of bodily shame, degrades the aristocracy, and opens the aristocratic body to *carnavalesque* humour.¹⁵⁴ In doing so, his prints border on being malicious, sardonic, and indecorous. They undermine the exaltation for the members of the royal family, and representatives of the Government, promoted by a number of Loyalist pamphlets. Each one of Gillray's dirty jokes, scatological puns, and explicit jibes at the overindulgence or frugality of the royal family can be considered as historical micro-subjects, conditioned by political events and literary writing of the period. The resultant strain of parody and non-conformism helps Gillray encode resistance within his prints.

¹⁵² Thomas Beddoes, *A Letter to the Right Hon. William Pitt: On the Means of Relieving the Present Scarcity, and Preventing the Diseases that Arise from Meagre Food* (London: J. Johnson, 1796) pp. 5-7.

¹⁵³ William Gifford, *The Anti-Jacobin, or, Weekly Examiner in Two Volumes*, Volume 1 (London: J. Hatchard, 1803) p. 322.

¹⁵⁴ In *Rabelais and His World*, Bakhtin asserts that the official feast is defined by stability and existing religious, political, and moral hierarchies. It is monolithically serious and the element of laughter is alien to it. On the other hand, the carnival temporarily marks 'the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions'. *Carnavalesque humour* is blasphemous and is tantamount to 'the profanation of everything sacred'. Gillray's scatological prints, I believe, foreground a *carnavalesque* conception of the world by focussing on the 'lower bodily stratum' which could not express itself in official cult and ideology. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984) pp. 10, 28, 192.

His prints are influenced by anti-Loyalist tracts and, in turn, influenced revolutionary images. This triadic dialogue that exists between pro-revolutionary texts and images and a 'conservative' caricaturist like Gillray alerts readers to the number of meanings that inhere in each of his images. His prints exist at the cross-roads between Loyalist historiographies, Republican historiographies, revolutionary and anti-revolutionary historiographies. This continuing dialogue between varied historiographies manifests itself in Gillray's anti-revolutionary caricatures in recurrent images of the decapitated head of the King. The macabre tableaux depicted in his prints featuring cannibalism echo the most grotesque permutation of eating, drinking and feasting possible. It is only fitting that a dinner party, a concept revolving around the communal consumption of food, is the chosen location for the earliest of these prints.

In *A Birmingham Toast, as Given on the Fourteenth, by The --- Revolution Society* (1791, Figure II.18), Gillray visualises the 14 July 1791 meeting of the Birmingham Constitutional Society as a gross parody of the Last Supper. The meeting welcomed 'any friend of freedom' to join in its dinner celebrating the second anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, but the event is said to have instigated riots in Birmingham, including an attack on Joseph Priestley's house. In his anti-Jacobin portrayal of popular Whigs and radicals, Priestley (in a visual pun on his name) can be seen holding the Eucharistic chalice and calling for the King's head upon a tray. In the centre, Opposition leader Charles James Fox proclaims 'My Soul & my Body both upon the Toast', and on his left another prominent member of the Opposition Horne Tooke lends his support to 'so glorious a toast'.¹⁵⁵ On the right, members of the society implore God to 'preserve us from Kings & Whores of

¹⁵⁵ John Horne Tooke (1736-1812), radical English politician and agitator for parliamentary reform.

Babylon!', and to 'Put enmity between us & the ungodly and bring down the heads of all tyrants & usurpers'. On the far left Sheridan, surrounded by empty bottles of sherry and broken glasses, says: 'Damn my eyes! But I'll pledge you that toast the Hell gapes for me'. None of the Whigs in Gillray's representation - playwright and politician Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Charles James Fox or Horne Tooke - attended the dinner, but Gillray's configuration visualises the anxieties of the conservative faction in England during the 1790s. Not only is a toast raised to the future beheading of the King, the religious vocabulary deployed here 'Amen! Amen!' seems to consecrate that beheading as a glorious ritual, according it a sacrificial significance.

A later print is a perfect corollary to Gillray's rendition of Priestley's intentions in *A Birmingham Toast*. In *The Blood of the Murdered Crying for Vengeance* (1793, Figure II.19) he deploys the decapitated head of Louis XVI in order to underscore the gruesome excesses of the Revolution. Decapitation, traditionally symbolic of the lack of authority, is reconfigured, because in the textual accompaniment of the print the dead king still speaks:

[M]y Throne is seized on by my murderers; my Brothers are driven into exile; my unhappy Wife and innocent infants are shut up in the horrors of a Dungeon; while Robbers and Assassins are sheathing their Daggers in the bowels of my Country [...] O! Britons vice-gerents of eternal justice, arbiters of the world [...] revenge the blood of a Monarchy most undeservedly butchered, and rescue the Kingdom of France, from being the prey of Violence, Usurpation and Cruelty.

Ventriloquizing for the king, the satirist glorifies Britain as the stronghold of rationality in this print. This speech single-handedly reinforces his belief in monarchy and dismisses the fraternal ideal propounded by the revolutionaries in France by representing French citizens as 'Robbers and Assassins' interested in unleashing anarchy in the whole country.

Interestingly, Gillray's anti-revolutionary print is heavily influenced by a popular revolutionary print by Villeneuve entitled *Matière à Réflexion Pour Les Jongleurs Couronnées* (Matter for Thought for Crowned Twisters, 1793, Figure II.20).¹⁵⁶ But Villeneuve's 1793 engraving highlights the 'impurity' of the King's blood. The severed head of the king is followed by these words from the Marseillaise: 'Let impure blood water our furrows'. The text, an excerpt from the third letter of Maximilien Robespierre to his constituents, reads:

Monday 21 January 1793 at 10.15 a.m. on the place *de la* Revolution formerly called place Louis XVI. The tyrant fell beneath the sword of the laws. This great act of justice appalled the aristocracy, destroyed the superstition of royalty, and created the Republic. It stamps a great character on the National Convention and renders it worthy of the confidence of the French [...]. In vain did an audacious faction and some insidious orators exhaust all the resources of calumny, charlatanism and chicanery; the courage of the Republicans triumphed: the majority of the Convention remained unshakeable in its principles, and the genius of intrigue yielded to the genius of Liberty and the ascendancy of virtue.

As in Gillray's 1791 print (*A Birmingham Toast, as Given on the Fourteenth, by The --- Revolution Society*), the slaughtering of the King takes on the air of a sacrifice that has a rationale behind it. The understanding promoted here is that the blood that is shed, especially the blood of a monarch, is sacred and serves a healing function; it is meant to restore order to a disorderly world. This conception is reiterated by revolutionary propaganda repeatedly: 'The blood of Louis Capet, shed by the blade on 21 January 1793, cleanses us of a stigma of 1300 years' proclaims a radical newspaper of the time.¹⁵⁷ Another dated 22 January, presents an eye-witness account: 'A number of people hurried to get hold of his hair, others drenched the

¹⁵⁶ *Matière à Réflexion Pour Les Jongleurs Couronnées* (1793).

¹⁵⁷ Eli Sagan, *Citizens and Cannibals: The French Revolution, The Struggle for Modernity, and the Origins of Ideological Terror* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2007) p. 346.

paper and even their handkerchiefs in his blood'.¹⁵⁸ This imagery is replicated by overtly anti-revolutionary accounts as well. A pamphlet titled *A Review of the Proceedings at Paris during the Last Summer* describes the horror of such a spectacle:

Two female furies, quarelling for a handkerchief that had been dipped in the blood of a wife, and neither of them getting the advantage the other, each put an end in her mouth, and sucked the blood, contending who should have the greater share.¹⁵⁹

These savage images of the common man craving the blood of the monarch, almost as if it were sacramental blood, go to the very core of the visual and verbal imagery surrounding the Revolution. Louis XVI could be seen as the inviolable embodiment of an older ideological system, and his regicide, coupled with the ultimate violation of his body, heralds a symbolic new world order. This acceleration of violence and the celebration of the *buveur de sang* (drinker of blood) is starkly reminiscent of primordial cannibalism.

Cannibalism figures as an important trope in the political writing of the period. In his *First Letter on a Regicide Peace* of 1796, Burke defined the French mob as cannibal:

By cannibalism, I mean their devouring, as a nutriment of their ferocity, some part of the bodies of those they have murdered; their drinking the blood of their victims, and forcing the victims themselves to drink the blood of their kindred slaughtered before their faces.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Antoine De Baecque, *Glory and Terror: Seven Deaths Under the French Revolution*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (New York: Routledge, 2001) p. 106.

¹⁵⁹ James Fennell, *A Review of the Proceedings at Paris During the Last Summer. Including an Exact and Particular Account of the Memorable Events, on the Twentieth of June, and the Second of September: With Observations on the Characters of the Most Conspicuous Persons Concerned in Promoting the Suspension and Dethronement of Louis the Sixteenth* (London: E. and T. Williams, 1792) p. 390.

¹⁶⁰ Edmund Burke, *Thoughts on the Prospect of a Regicide Peace, in a Series of Letters* (London: J. Owen, 1796) p. 44.

The French government is thus represented as a cannibal Republic. Thomas Paine too deploys this hyperbolic language of bestiality. In *The Rights of Man*, he describes primogeniture as a system of cannibalism by constraint: ‘Aristocracy has never but *one* child. The rest are begotten to be devoured. They are thrown to the cannibal for prey, and the natural parent prepares the unnatural repast’ (italics-author’s own).¹⁶¹ Given these overlaps between revolutionary and counter-revolutionary accounts, it is not surprising that Gillray goes back to Villeneuve’s iconic image for one of his most grotesque representations of cannibalism: *Un Petit Souper à La Parisienne* (1792, Figure II.21). A caricatural rendition of Villeneuve’s *Matter for Thought* in the background testifies to Gillray’s familiarity with revolutionary art. The sketch adorns the walls of the room represented in this print alongside an ironic representation of French Liberty with a *sans-culotte*, complete with a cockade on his head, holding an axe in one hand and a decapitated head in another. Underneath the slogans *Vive la Liberté* and *Vive la Egalité* are clearly visible. These sketches set the tone of the macabre print. In the foreground a group feasts on various body parts of dismembered individuals: one gnaws on an arm, the other enjoys a heart whilst a third spoons an eye from a dismembered head into his mouth, and the fourth uses a fork to devour testicles. His Frenchmen can be seen carrying crude weapons of murder including bloodied daggers and an axe, and the text below highlights their cannibalistic tendency:

Here as you see, and ’tis known
 Frenchmen mere Cannibals are grown
 On Maigre Days each had his Dish
 Of Soup, or Sallad, Eggs or Fish
 But now ’tis human flesh they gnaw
 And everyday is Mardi Gras

¹⁶¹ *Rights of Man*, p. 69.

Gillray is clearly drawing upon some of the proliferating eyewitness accounts of the anarchy unleashed in France during the September Massacres in his representation of Frenchmen as cannibals who relish human flesh. Fennel's exaggerated eyewitness account titled is markedly similar to Gillray's graphic rendition:

Many of the bodies were cut limb from limb, and flesh from bone; and, according to the different inclinations of the murderers each took a hand, a heart, a head, or a piece of flesh [...]. Some of the females went so far, as to cut off pieces of flesh, chew them, and suck the blood, praising its delicious taste [...]. The floors were covered with mangled bodies, most of them naked. ¹⁶²

In Fennel's account the nudity of the corpses seems to heighten the sense of morbidity. In Gillray's print too, the *sans-culotte* on the left is sitting atop a sack containing treasures and gold, including the Pope's crown, without his trousers, a visual rendition of his metaphorical identity.¹⁶³ The buttocks of the man on the right squash the breasts of a dead and bloodied woman. Suggestions of necrophilia are evident in the way a leg of the table pushes into the groin of the dead man whose foot has been cut off and head is under the dress of the woman in yellow. These semi-nude, dismembered bodies, in addition to the dead bodies stashed overhead, seem to betray the print maker's discomfort with the materiality of the human body. The distaste with which Gillray represents these bodies is very similar to Gulliver's descriptions of the irrational and carnal Yahoos in Swift's *Gullivers Travels*. Gillray

¹⁶² *A Review of the Proceedings at Paris During the Last Summer*, pp. 388-90. Donald Greer gives a figure of 35,000- 40,000 actually executed. Of these only 16,394 were pronounced guilty. This helps one understand the extent of the violence and barbarity unleashed in France during the Terror. Donald Greer, *The Incidence of Terror during the French Revolution: A Statistical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935) pp. 135-44.

¹⁶³ The consistent use of the colour yellow and motifs such as the sack of treasures and a bag to collect money are used by Gillray to highlight the greed of the *sans-culottes*. He is reiterating the insinuations of conservatives like Mauric Morgann. In *Considerations on the Present Internal and External Condition of France*, Morgann takes recourse to the metaphor of food to argue that:

The *sans-culotte* of today, enriched with the spoils of the tumult, becomes the Aristocrat of tomorrow [...] Revolution grows out of Revolution, and the fire-eyed monster of Anarchy [...] makes the delicious food it so voraciously feeds on.

Mauric Morgann, *Considerations on the Present Internal and External Condition of France* (London: J. Debrett, 1794) p. 27.

struggles with the corporeality of the human body and manifests a Swiftian revulsion in his representation of French cannibals relishing their victims.

Interestingly Swift also used the metaphor of cannibalism in his Juvenalian satirical essay *A Modest Proposal* where the proposer advocates cannibalism as a way of easing the economic troubles of impoverished Irishmen.¹⁶⁴ But Gillray visualizes Swift's mock-ironic pamphlet as a 'real' event. In Gillray's vision, the room represented in the print is a microcosm of the city of Paris itself, where:

The mangled bodies of others are piled against the houses in the streets; and in the quarters of Paris near to which the prisons are, the carcasses lie scattered in hundreds, diffusing pestilence all around. The streets of Paris, strewn with the carcasses of the mangled victims, are become so familiar to the sight, that they are passed by and trod on without any particular notice.¹⁶⁵

The degeneration of Republicanism is further highlighted by a number of heads and a pair of legs that are visible outside the door of the room. These multiple images of dismemberment are reminiscent of Burke's unsavoury, albeit imaginary, description of the murder of the King's bodyguards in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*:

[T]wo gentleman [...] were cruelly and publicly dragged to the block, and beheaded in the great court of the palace. Their heads were stuck upon spears, and led the procession; whilst the royal captives who followed in the train were slowly moved along, amidst the horrid yells, and shrilling screams, and frantic dances, and infamous contumelies, and all the unutterable abominations of the furies of hell, in the abused shape of the vilest of women.¹⁶⁶

Burke resorts to hyperbole to attack a political regime, which is vociferous in its anti-clericalism and its denunciation of tradition. Unsurprisingly he classifies cannibalism as an archetypal French tendency:

¹⁶⁴ Jonathan Swift, *A Modest Proposal* (Dublin: S. Harding, 1729) and *Gulliver's Travels*, ed. Paul Turner (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

¹⁶⁵ This is an excerpt from the description of the city by *The Times* of Monday, 10 September 1792. Sylvanus Urban, *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, Volume 72 (London: John Nichols, 1792) p. 855.

¹⁶⁶ *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, p.106.

In England we have not yet been completely embowelled of our natural entrails [...]. We have real hearts of flesh and blood beating in our bosoms. We fear God; we look up with awe to kings; with affection to parliaments; with duty to magistrates; with reverence to priests; and with respect to nobility.¹⁶⁷

Burke's delineation of national character relies on a simple dichotomy. England is conjured as a cohesive society and France as one that is dismembered by the forces of revolutionary nationalism. This expression of organicism evokes nostalgia for the English state even as the author casts levellers as usurpers and validates prescriptive restraints on the masses. Burke's early account anticipates a number of eyewitness accounts of the murders of the royal family's select coterie during the September Massacres in 1792.

The phantasmagoric murder of Princess Lamballe, the Queen's lady-in-waiting is recounted by a municipal officer in a similar fashion. The description of her mutilated body, carried in a joyous procession to the Toulouse's house, the Parisian residence of the Lamballes and then the Tower of the Temple, where the royal family was imprisoned, is worth quoting in its entirety:

Two individuals dragged a naked body by its legs, headless, its back on the ground and its abdomen laid open upto the chest [...]. On a shaky platform, the corpse is ceremoniously spread out, and the limbs arranged with a kind of art [...]. To my left, another one (bearer), more horrible, held in one hand the intestines of the victim against his chest, and in the other a large knife.¹⁶⁸

The element of exaggeration involved in these ostensibly objective accounts ensures that Gillray's graphic satires can be treated on par with these versions of history.

The element of ideological mediation is imperative in each of these examples.

Gillray's layered caricatures can thus be treated as historiographical accounts, which secrete the history of an age. Their narratives, once unravelled, carry them beyond

¹⁶⁷ *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, p. 128.

¹⁶⁸ *Glory and Terror*, p. 62.

the exaggeration central to caricature, into a realm of historical validity. As Antoine DeBaecque aptly claims, 'The execution and then, above all, the mutilation, dismembering, tearing apart, and exhibition of the body are like a projection onto the screen of history of a collective mentality that animated the different protagonists of the Revolution'.¹⁶⁹ The scattered corpses, which are at the very centre of Gillray's representation, become symbolic of the increasing savagery in France and betray the print-maker's immense anxiety about British stability. Multiple depictions of dismemberment, severed hands, torn tongues and mutilated organs, ensure that the corpses become 'the measure of everything, to the point of obsession, to the point of madness of a universe wholly ruled by the [...] the visions, the thoughts to which it (the corpse) gives birth'.¹⁷⁰

Gillray's all-encompassing vision spares no one - man, woman, or child. In the left corner of the print, a group of three children are feasting on the entrails of dead aristocrats. The girl on the left is wearing blue, and carrying a bag, perhaps to stash the loot away and the child on the right is wearing red, with the tricolour cockade visible on his head. He also has a dagger tucked into his belt, suggesting the ludicrous extent of violence unleashed by the September Massacres. This visual image of disembowelment, in addition to the multiple images of killing and annihilation, shows how 'in the regimes of ideological terror [...] terror becomes an end in itself. It cannot control its cannibal appetite'.¹⁷¹

Newspaper reports about mobs roasting men, women and children alive are mirrored in Gillray's depiction of an old crone roasting a child over a fire in the

¹⁶⁹ *Glory and Terror*, p. 64.

¹⁷⁰ *Glory and Terror*, p. 9. For a detailed response to the deployment of disembowelment as a literary trope during the French Revolution, see David Punter, 'Parts of Body/Parts of Speech: Some instances of Dismemberment and Healing', *Reflections of Revolution: Images of Romanticism*, eds. Alison Yarrington and Kevin Everest (London: Routledge, 1993) pp. 10-25.

¹⁷¹ *Citizens and Cannibals*, p. 15.

background. According to *The Evening Mail* such cannibalistic imagery continued well after the September massacres:

Several pastry cooks, particularly one by the *Palais Royal*, have *Pies de la viande des Suisses - des Emigrants - des Pêtres* - made of the Flesh of the Swiss- the Emigrants and the Priests. I was present when four *Marseillous* at the *Restaurateur Bouivilliers*, in the *Palais Royal* sent for two of these pies and ate them, crying out – *Vive la Nation*.¹⁷²

Clearly, by September 1792 the Revolution had deteriorated to a chaotic bloodbath. Gillray's anarchic representation highlights the presence of cannibalism as a real threat in the vein of a number of anti-revolutionary dailies of the time. The 10 September 1792 edition of *The Times* questions its readers:

Are these 'the Rights of Man'? Is this the LIBERTY of Human Nature? The most savage four footed tyrants that range the unexplored deserts of Africa, in point of tenderness, rise superior to these two legged Parisian animals - Common Brutes do not prey upon each other.¹⁷³

Gillray is responding to similar stimuli. However, despite the ostensible immediacy and spur-of-the-moment feel of *Un Petit Souper à La Parisienne*, his depiction is a pre-meditated one. Gillray's inspiration comes from an early Flemish engraving by Peter Brueghel's entitled *The Poor Kitchen* (1563, Figure II.22).¹⁷⁴ This print and its companion, *The Rich Kitchen* (1563, Figure II.23), were engraved after designs by Peter Brueghel the Elder. Everyone is skinny in the poor kitchen. At the round table five men can be seen trying to eat oysters and mussels from a single bowl. An emaciated dog below them licks the empty shells. At the lower centre of the print, one can see a woman feeding her baby from a horn. On the left, a man attempts to

¹⁷² William J. Pressly, *The French Revolution as Blasphemy* (London: University of California Press, 1999) p. 151.

¹⁷³ Anonymous, 'France', *London Times*, 10 September 1792 <<http://www.english.ucsb.edu/faculty/ayliu/research/around-1800/FR/times-9-10-1792.html>> [18 August 2011] (para 10 of 20).

¹⁷⁴ James Gillray: *The Art of Caricature*, p. 95.

soften a piece of bread by pounding it. At the door, near the top right corner of the print, a well-fed man is invited in but he seems to have rejected the invitation. The inscription at the bottom translates: 'Where thinman's cook there's meager fare and lots of diet trouble. Rich kitchen is the place for me, I'm going there on the double'.

This setting is almost replicated by Gillray in the way he represents his skinny *sans-culottes* huddled around the table, the fireplace in the background and the lone woman with a baby. These parallels testify to Gillray's familiarity with high art and add another sub-text to this rich print. Hungry people on the look out for food characterize Brueghel's engraving. In the wake of the scarcity of bread, which instigated the Revolution, the lower classes continued to starve in France. This was common knowledge in Britain; J. A. Russell, in his 1795 sermon, asserts that 'Thousands are probably at this moment dying of hunger' in France.¹⁷⁵ The sheer greed reflected in the eyes of Gillray's *sans-culottes*, coupled with the relish with which they can be seen devouring their 'food' hints at the presence of another sub-text - non-ritualistic, sustenance cannibalism, a gross but inevitable repercussion of scarcity.

Hunger was such a powerful, even dominant sentiment in revolutionary France that countless pamphlets, tracts and reports had recourse to the metaphor of food to articulate the political climate of France. Thomas Carlyle, in the first volume of his iconic *French Revolution*, introduces the French Revolution as a devouring force, characterized by literal hunger. A 1792 newspaper report insists on instances of actual cannibalism: 'It is a certain, though disgusting truth that they absolutely chewed the flesh of the mangled victims and that it was a common practice to dip

¹⁷⁵ J. A. Russell, *Sermon, Preached in the Parish Church of Dronfield, in the County of Derby, on Wednesday February Twenty-fifth, 1795, being the Day Appointed for a General Fast* (Sheffield: Britannia Press, 1795) p. 11.

pieces of bread in human blood and eat them with a ravenous delight'.¹⁷⁶ Yet another justifies the multiple killings during the September massacres by means of the metaphor of hunger 'The guillotine is hungry, its ages since she had something to eat'.¹⁷⁷ Such hunger was at the core of a cannibalism that arose out of necessity. Unlike the ritual variety, survival cannibalism has no explanation other than of necessity, an idea corroborated by numerous philosophers. During the Enlightenment, Voltaire and Diderot argued that social cannibalism resulted from food shortage, especially protein deficiency. In his *Essay on the Principle of Population*, Thomas Malthus identifies cannibalism as one of the necessary checks on population expansion, similar in function to war and dearth. Malthus insists that cannibalism 'undoubtedly prevailed in many parts of the new world' and originated in 'extreme want'.¹⁷⁸ Gillray's print heightens this sense of extreme hunger and draws attention to the looming threats of famine, which continued to haunt England and France alike. Clearly, the impetus behind Gillray's horrific representation of cannibalism is not mere Francophobia. Cannibalism was threatening to become a literal reality in England following the shortage of staple grains like wheat and corn, and Gillray's gory representation is a result of an amplification of the same anxiety that led him to conjure a skinny John Bull in the first place. The representation is used:

[T]o shore up a white Christian subjectivity against the anxieties that haunted the Romantic self, during a period when extreme hunger and starvation made the prospect of white cannibalism a very real possibility or, at least, a very palpable fear.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ *The French Revolution as Blasphemy*, p.189.

¹⁷⁷ Albert Soboul, *The Sans-culottes*, trans. Rémy Inglis Hall (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980) p. 160.

¹⁷⁸ Thomas Robert Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population; or, A View of its Past and Present Effects on Human Happiness; with an Inquiry into our Prospects Respecting the Future Removal or Mitigation of the Evils which it Occasions* (London: J. Johnson, 1803) p. 35.

¹⁷⁹ Peter J. Kitson, "'The Eucharist of Hell"; or, Eating People is Right: Romantic Representations

Within Gillray's vision, the eating of human flesh is all the more loathsome because of the very real possibility that one might, in certain conditions, face extreme hunger.

But this does not detract from the fact that Gillray, like Burke, classifies cannibalism as an exclusively French malaise and uses it as a trope of othering. Gillray condones this bloodbath, yet his prints revel in anarchic images. This serves the same purpose as the pretence of verisimilitude adopted by anti-revolutionary newspapers, which 'dress up a reality' so as to render it 'natural', and thereby cast the French as diabolical creatures naturally inclined towards cannibalism.¹⁸⁰ Jan Nederveen Pieterse aptly distinguishes cannibalism as an 'allegory which establishes a centre and a periphery within a moral geography'.¹⁸¹ This allegorical cultural construction creates an image that easily lends itself to the idea of the Other and can be circulated easily.

Gillray's image, then, is based on the amalgamation of two discourses: that of survival cannibalism and mainstream political Loyalism. In embodying the dominant discourse and displaying it insistently by means of immediately intelligible symbols, Gillray attempts to inculcate patriotic ideals within the populace. But his ostensibly Loyalist caricatures actually offer the twenty-first century reader/viewer a complex picture of the socio-political intrigues that England witnessed in the years following 1789. Gillray gleans his symbolic repertoire from widely different, even rival schools of historiography. These multiple histories interact in a way that endows each of his images with significance beyond what is

of Cannibalism', *Romanticism on the Net*, 17 (2000) <<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~scat0385/17/cannibalism.html>> [02 April 2009] pp.1-19 (p. 3).

¹⁸⁰ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972) p. 11.

¹⁸¹ Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *White on Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture* (London: Yale University Press, 1992) p. 116.

immediately visible. This accounts for multi-layered visual images, which deploy the metaphor of eating and drinking at each level. The omnipresence of 'food' and the multiplicity of its registers suggest it was indeed an imperative word in late eighteenth-century England. Gillray uses it to deal with the political, social and cultural organization of England in the 1790s. It is used to suggest prosperity, excess, indulgence, disease, degeneracy and total collapse. In fact, the body politic forged by Gillray's use of exaggerated metaphors of food, eating and hunger, paradoxically provides a lynchpin for understanding both socio-political events and the psychology of the common man in a remarkably nuanced fashion.

Chapter 3

‘Which Way Shall I Turn Me, How Shall I Decide?’: Gillray’s John Bull and the Vocabulary of Patriotism¹⁸²

To you, then, my good friend, Mr. Bull, I address myself; you, who may be said to be the component parts of that glorious constitution, which gives you the liberty, at times, so loudly to roar. If I were disposed anatomically to dissect you, what should I call your horns? The law. Your head is the church (and a fine fat beef’s cheek it is), a British sailor is your surloin, your rump is a royalist, your tail is the opposition, not because it serves to beat the flies that bite and sting your body, but, like the opposition it is *lean and thin* (italics-author’s own).¹⁸³

John Bull, the British everyman figure is ubiquitous in the prints of the late eighteenth century. John Arbuthnot first introduced him in his 1712 *History of John Bull*, published in five parts.¹⁸⁴ His avowedly Tory account of England’s involvement in the War of the Spanish Succession uses the character of John Bull to criticise Whig financiers, who, according to him, were reaping profits from the war. The allegory continued to be used as a critique of political power in the early eighteenth century, but it was only towards the end of the century that the John Bull figure gained popularity as a representative of the British public.

The figure has been the topic of numerous studies in recent years. Prominent historians like Roy Porter insist that John Bull signifies ‘a positive and critical articulation of the political voice of the middle classes’, thereby subsuming patriotism under the broader head of class-consciousness. Others like Hugh Cunningham try to chart a chronological sequence describing the growth of John Bull as a representative of English patriotism. These approaches to the study of

¹⁸² James Gillray, *John Bull, in a Quandary* (1788).

¹⁸³ Anonymous, *The Blessings of Billy’s Budget, the Heaven-born Tinker: a Sermonical Address to the Right Hon. John Bull. By a Loyal Layman* (Chester: Unknown, 1795) p. 13.

¹⁸⁴ John Arbuthnot, *History of John Bull* (London: D. Midwinter and A. Tonson, 1712).

patriotism are too neat. Such sequential renderings exclude ostensibly reactionary representations of patriotism, including Gillray's.¹⁸⁵ It is these gaps within the vocabulary of patriotism, often overlooked in studies of John Bull, which this chapter will concentrate on.

Despite the popularity of John Bull, Tamara L. Hunt's book *Defining John Bull: Political Caricature and National Identity in Late Georgian England* is the only full-length study that engages with the eighteenth-century notion of John Bull.¹⁸⁶ But even a cursory survey of the book draws attention to the fact that the title is a misrepresentation of the study. Only three of the chapters deal with John Bull. All other chapters concentrate on politics and caricature in Georgian England. Hunt provides an introduction to the production and circulation of prints, and political developments of the late eighteenth century in two of the chapters. She devotes a whole chapter to the exploits of King George III and the Prince of Wales but fails to highlight the connection between royal escapades, and the changing image of John Bull. In the chapters on Britannia, John Bull, and the emergence of national identity, Hunt fleetingly talks about the symbolic nature of Britannia as opposed to John Bull as the human representative of the British public. This is of great interest to me. But most of the illustrations Hunt uses to corroborate her argument are frustratingly unattributed. She chooses not to distinguish between caricaturists, thereby running the risk of homogenizing subtle differences between print-makers. In this chapter, I will try to address this issue by focusing on Gillray's prints of John Bull, and examining his role in this shift. Furthermore I will suggest

¹⁸⁵ Roy Porter, 'Review Article: Seeing the Past', *Past and Present*, 118 (1988) pp. 186-205 (p. 198); Hugh Cunningham, 'The Language of Patriotism, 1750-1914', *History Workshop Journal*, 12 (1981) pp. 8-33.

¹⁸⁶ Tamara L. Hunt, *Defining John Bull: Political Caricature and National Identity in Late Georgian England* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003).

that Gillray played an instrumental role in concretizing the notion of the John Bull figure as a personification of Britain.

Hunt's attention to detail has proven to be a rich source of information for me, but I would like to further the debate about John Bull that her book initiates. I will move away from her chronological, and largely descriptive method to concentrate on broader thematic issues as a basis for a discussion of Gillray's ideological perspective.¹⁸⁷

During the French Revolution Gillray's prints frequently deployed the John Bull figure to denigrate France, especially the *sans-culottes*, usurping the prerogative of the crown in France. In practice, this has translated into a widespread belief that these prints are 'reactionary'. I will contest this labelling and suggest that Gillray's John Bull actually marks a departure from more straight-laced propagandist depictions of the English citizen. Using a compendium of late eighteenth-century tracts, I will argue that Gillray's John Bull is an idea (as opposed to a fleshed out individual) that the print-maker uses to dwell on a continuum of themes from the reactionary through to the radical.

Gillray's artistic hybrids use Arbuthnot's Tory John Bull as the basis for a new iconography, which is used to caricature both the revolutionaries in France and the Dissenters in England. Produced in quick response to the changing political situations, his prints betray an acute sensitivity to the subtleties of public opinion. Gillray, I will argue, uses the John Bull figure for multiple, even contradictory,

¹⁸⁷ This is a grouse expressed by numerous reviewers of Hunt's work. David Johnson thinks that in Hunt's work:

[T]he caricatures are treated mainly at face value; the illustration captions are usually descriptive, and often repeated in the text [...]. In the final analysis, despite a wealth of verbal and pictorial illustration, this volume does not advance the debate a great deal.

I have attempted to address this by consciously choosing to discuss Gillray's prints thematically rather than chronologically. David Johnson, 'Review of *Defining John Bull: Political Caricature and National Identity in Late Georgian England*', *Reviews in History*, November 2003 <<http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/360>> [20 January 2011] (para 16,17 of 17).

purposes in his prints: to discredit the utopian platitudes of the French Revolution; promote Francophobia; perpetuate a critical stance towards those ensconced in power in England; to flesh out the rise of national consciousness; express public disgust at the oppressive taxation policies of successive governments; and, more generally, mirror the split English mindset at the time of the French Revolution. His prints featuring John Bull can thus provide us with the material with which to achieve a more nuanced overview of the changing nature of patriotism in England during the last decades of the eighteenth century.

These tumultuous decades, dominated by the French Revolution, led to a widespread anxiety regarding a similar outburst of sentiment in England. This resulted in a proliferation of treatises, tracts, and prints demonizing English Dissenters and French revolutionaries alike. Pamphlet after pamphlet pleaded with the populace not to let ‘jacobinal jaws [...] assail the portals of your loyal, sense-catching ears, with such ungracious sounds!’¹⁸⁸ These warnings successfully amplified the threat of Jacobinism by constructing what can be called a mythology of corporeality. A far cry from the allegorical representations of the nation, the body of the English citizen occupies centre-stage here. It is the corporeality, lent to the figure by a near obsessive attention to ‘jaws’ and ‘ears’, that distinguishes John Bull from other, more symbolic, representations of England. In a period of social and political instability, the materiality of the John Bull figure promotes his identification with the populace.

Gillray extends this materiality to its utmost in a print I discussed briefly in the second chapter. *The French Invasion; - or - John Bull, Bombarding the Bum Boats* (1793, Figure III.1), a comic print, seeks to provide ‘A new map of England

¹⁸⁸ *The Blessings of Billy's Budget*, p. 6.

and France' including England and Wales; the South West corner of Scotland; the north of France, including Paris; and parts of the Belgian coast. John Bull can be seen wearing a fool's cap, representing Northumberland. Norfolk forms his knee, the mouth of the River Thames his ankle, and Kent his foot. In the print John Bull can be seen 'bombarding' excrement at his enemies. The British Declaration, which is part of the matter that the king excretes, refers to the port of Toulon, then occupied by the British, which would be given back to France on the restitution of its monarchy.

This amusing image is similar to an earlier rendition of the map of England featuring Britannia. Gillray's *Britannia* (1791, Figure III.2) depicts England as an old woman seated on the back of a dolphin, against the background of the sea. There is a dove, symbolic of peace, on her right hand. The image is meant to be patriotic, but the tired posture of the woman drains the print of all energy.

In stark contrast is the playful energy of the first image. Here the King embodies John Bull, but this ultimately patriotic image is reduced to a capacity for directing excrement at the enemies. The focus on what Bakhtin calls the 'lower bodily functions' in *The French Invasion* playfully desacramentalizes the aristocracy and opens the body's confines in a way that bears traces of *carnavalesque* humour. Satire, by virtue of being a parodic form, is expected to be transgressive and cheerily offensive. But Gillray's print of John Bull borders on being indecorous. The explicit scatological visual destroys the binaries between high and low, sacred and profane, and question societal taboos; most importantly, the overt admission of John Bull's materiality undercuts the pious reverence for the monarch and respect for the Prime Minister which an overwhelming number of counter-revolutionary sermons and Loyalist pamphlets expected to instil in the minds of the populace. His corporeality helps to manoeuvre the prints towards an articulation of what Vic

Gatrell terms the 'plebeian *carnavalesque*'.¹⁸⁹ The juxtaposition of these two prints, both depicting the map of England, hints at a two-pronged change: the increasing redundancy of symbolic icons such as Britannia and the allure of more corporeal symbols of patriotism. This shift is instrumental because it allows pamphleteers to flesh out a character who could speak for the British public in ways that the earlier icon, Britannia, could not.¹⁹⁰

The materialist basis of the increasingly popular John Bull figure fits well in Gillray's universe. It does not come as any surprise then, that his prints concretise the shift from allegorical to human icons of nationalism. In *The Tree of Liberty* (1798, Figure III.3), a print discussed at length in the second chapter, Gillray's John Bull is tempted by the 'nice napple' of the Tree of Liberty, even though he hesitates to abandon George III. The Christian, even Miltonic, aspect of this print is undeniable; Gillray humanises the allegorical spirit of patriotism, to construe John Bull as a bulwark against French ideas. He is tempted to eat the apple of Liberty, but does not give in to the temptation. Significantly Gillray's print does not resort to simple didacticism. Instead, the print presents a dilemma for his protagonist; and this is something that increased its popularity. A clever shift in iconography ensures that the print dismisses the utopian platitudes of the French Revolution and stresses on their futility in the English context even as it underlines the (*faux*) autonomy of the political subject.

¹⁸⁹ *City of Laughter*, p. 200.

¹⁹⁰ In an early Gillray print *Britannia's Assassination* (1782) the Rockingham Whigs force their way into power and decapitate Britannia. Britannia has lost her shield, but continues to stand in her traditional pose. This decapitation is representative of a broader shift towards more human representations of concept of nationhood. Interestingly, Charles James Fox is represented as a fox in this print. But in the next two years, Gillray would start depicting him as a plump, hairy man; one who would feature prominently in Gillray's oeuvre. This is precisely the shift that defines and shapes Gillray's John Bull.

In *Reform Advised. Reform Begun. Reform Compleat* (1793, Figure III.4), commissioned by Sir John Dalrymple, Gillray plays on the idea of John Bull as the symbolic Englishman. This print predicts his future, were he to be taken in by French claims. In the first plate, a stout John Bull can be seen feasting on beef, ale, and pudding. He realizes this is because of a 'good Constitution', but his French guests try to persuade him that adopting their dictums will make him happier. In the second plate, he has lost weight, as well as a leg. He is miserable, and has only frogs to eat. The French continue to insist his condition would improve if he followed their reforms. In the last plate, he can be seen being trampled underfoot by Frenchmen and Republicans, who insist he should be grateful to them. This print, like numerous pamphlets of the time, is meant to serve as a warning to Englishmen. A popular reactionary handbill, provocatively titled *France Run Mad* (1795), verbalizes this threat:

John Bull is desired to beware of her as she has bit several of his Countrymen, and is just now in a violent delirium - she talks about *conquering* him to make him *free* [...] poor creature, she is very bad indeed! But it is hoped, that by *copious bleeding*, she will be brought to her senses (italics- author's own).¹⁹¹

The delirium suggested by the titular *France Run Mad* is reinforced by the actual text of the pamphlet. According to the author, the increasing popularity of French revolutionary principles could at best be described as a contagious disease, which would lead to a decimation of anything that is positive. The image of bleeding, meant to invoke widespread violence in France, only carries the imagery of disease a step further. The author seems to expect bloodshed to rectify the disease of Liberty in the same way as leeches sucking on human blood cure diseases.

Gillray seems to adhere to, and extend, this apocalyptic vision to include

¹⁹¹ Anonymous, *France Run Mad* (London: Unknown, 1795), p. 1.

John Bull's family in a print he made later that year. *John Bull's Progress* (1793, Figure III.5), divided into four plates, is used to narrativise the hardships imposed by war. The first plate, titled 'John Bull Happy', depicts a scene of domestic bliss where John is in deep slumber, his wife is spinning yarn, and his children are playing. The washerwoman at the door, the glow of the fire from the fireplace, and the sleeping pets all add to the picture of domestic bliss. In the second plate, 'John Bull going to the wars', he can be seen leaving for the campaign, whilst his family grieves at his departure. This plate is interesting because Gillray plays with shadows and colour to convey the idea of a representative Englishman. The armed protagonist can be seen marching away in the foreground; in the background, numerous other countrymen prepare themselves for the impending war. The third plate, 'John Bull's Property in Danger', signals bankruptcy as his family pawns its possessions. In the last plate, ironically titled 'John Bull's Glorious Return', a haggard figure returns home. He has lost a lot of weight and a leg and his family members have also been reduced to shadows of their former selves. Their impoverished, almost skeletal, forms convey grotesqueness. Their poverty is evident from the tattered curtains that adorn the windows and the fact that they have been reduced to eating onions. Huddled in a corner to keep warm, their expressions betray a fear of the once beloved patriarch of the family. This print is a clarion-call to Englishmen to shake off their lethargy and actively oppose the dissemination of revolutionary principles in England.

Such imagery is a recurring ploy in the period. A popular song, *John Bull Roused from his Lethargy*, reiterates Gillray's understanding of this figure:

As John Bull lay asleep on a Hogshead of Beer,
 A rascally Rabble, led on by Monsieur,
 Laid a plot to surprise him, and as it is said,
 To drink up his Liquor, and cut off his Head.
 Derry down, & c.

Said Tom Paine to this Rabble, what Business has John
To that Cask of October he's snoring upon?
Vat John Business? Him Business, echoed Monsieur-
You and I, Monsieur Paine equal Right to de Beer
Derry down, & c.

Notres Jacobine Gentleman too is ver plain-
Equal Right to John's Bullocks, John's Mutton, and Grain;
John's October fans Doute for me verily tink-
Good Liquor may tempt e'en Dissenters to drink
Derry down, & c.

You a right? Cried a tar, who stepped in unobserved –
You a right Ragamuffins, you ought to be starved-
What drink up his Stingo, and quarter his Sheep-
Steal his Cattle and Grain, while the Fellow's asleep?
Derry down, & c.

Split my Timbers, I'll rouse him – then gave him a Shake,
John sprung on his Legs, and was quickly awake;
Grasped his good oaken Cudgell, prepared for the War
Kicked Tom Paine, banged Monsieur, and rewarded the Tar.
Derry down, & c.

Then come on, all my brave British Lads,
Let us cheerfully drink the old Toast of our Dads;
Who with three jovial Cheers often made their Room rings,
With 'Long life to our Church, Constitution, and King.'
Derry down, & c.¹⁹²

Popular propaganda, whilst simplistic, betrayed a deep knowledge about the principles of the Opposition. At the very beginning, this poem conjures an image of a lackadaisical John Bull figure. The binary between him and the 'rascally rabble' is laid out clearly for all to see. He is characterized by a passivity that is in complete opposition to the frantic activity of the mob who plan to 'drink up his liquor', and 'cut off his head'. In the poem, it is Thomas Paine who provides the rationale for such violence. He can be seen speaking eloquently about equality, and indoctrinating the masses about the rights of the people. He insists that the mob has

¹⁹² Anonymous, *John Bull Roused From His Lethargy. A New Song* (London: C.L. Hannell, 1795) p. 1.

a right over John Bull's property, his livestock, and food supply. Interestingly John Bull continues to snore through all of this. However the timely intervention of another Englishman makes sure that their plans do not come to fruition. Instead, the introduction of this character provides an opportunity for the explication of an alternative ideology. Since the very beginning, the poet's repeated use of the word 'rabble' to denote mobs of people, swayed by Painite dictums, draws attention to the poet's perspective. But it is the third and fourth stanzas that paint an explicitly unflattering picture of the Painite mob as secretive ('laid a plot'), and cowardly ('while the Fellow's asleep') thieves who ought to be punished. Once John Bull has been woken up, he immediately takes things in his own hands. The fifth stanza effectively establishes his prowess and good judgment; he instinctively distinguishes his friends from his foes, and takes appropriate action against the latter. It is easy to see how the poem starts by acknowledging the reasons for political and social unrest in the country but subsumes this discourse with another, more traditional one, that commemorates an average citizen's faith in the lack of change. The celebratory tone of the final stanza is important, for it seals the faith of the common man in the institutions of the state, namely the Church, the King, and the constitution. The overtly propagandist piece paints the picture of an honest, but sleepy John Bull who is finally roused from his lethargy by the rhetoric of patriotism. Like Gillray's John Bull, it is the threat of English Jacobins and French revolutionaries that awakens him into wanting to protect his constitution, the King, and his nation. But the playful tone of this song is a far cry from the gruesome vision conjured by Gillray in print after print.

In *Consequences of a Successful French Invasion* (1798, Figure III.6), he is at pains to convey the catastrophic repercussions adopting French democratic principles would have on Englishmen. The third plate of the series depicts John

Bull, his wife, a curate, two seamen, and other English citizens in torn clothing being forced to hoe a field of garlic by a Frenchman. The print-maker fully fleshes out the theme of forced subordination in *The Promis'd Horrors of the French Invasion – Or Forcible Reasons for Negotiating a Regicide Peace* (1796, Figure III.7). As the subtitle suggests, the plate equates peace negotiated with the French to submission, to be followed by violent invasion. The scene is at the site of the royal residence, St. James' Palace, in London. A French army marches through the city, bearing various dismembered bodies, including that of Lord Grenville on the right, and flags supporting a republic. On the left, French soldiers clear out White's Club and begin hurling aristocrats from the balcony. They have also thrown out playing cards and part of a gambling table. Meanwhile, on the balcony of the Whiggish Brooks's club, British radicals, including an Anglican minister and some dissenters, burn the Magna Carta, introduce new laws, and guillotine a variety of figures of authority, including a judge, indicated by his white, flowing wig.¹⁹³ A note beneath a plate of heads reads: 'Killed off for the Public Good'. On the ground floor, a man walks in the main entrance bearing a sack on his head ('Remnants of the Treasury') and carrying another under his arm ('Requisitions from the Bank of England'). In the right foreground, a bundle including the Bill of Rights, various statutes, and several acts of Parliament carries a tag: 'Waste Paper'. In the centre of the composition, William Pitt, the Prime Minister, is tied to a liberty pole while Charles Fox scourges him. In the background, a church is on fire. The print visualises widespread paranoia regarding a political upheaval in England. The apocalyptic

¹⁹³ Gentleman's clubs gradually replaced coffee-houses in popularity during the late eighteenth century. They were centres of political discussions and debates. As Gillray's print suggests White's, established in 1693, was one of the first gentleman's clubs. It was pro-government, and highly aristocratic in flavour. From 1783, it was considered to be the unofficial head-quarters of the Tory party. Brook's was founded in 1764 as a meeting place for Whigs. For more information see Anthony Lejeune, *The Gentlemen's Clubs of London* (Macdonald and Jane's: London, 1979); Robert J. Allen, *Clubs of Augustan London* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933).

spatial narrative envisaged by Gillray relies on a binarism that denigrates France by highlighting the nexus between anarchy, atheism, and French revolutionary principles. His imaginary projection betrays a disturbing Francophobia.

But this revulsion is indicative of a chronic xenophobia that can be traced to Gillray's earlier work. As early as 1779, he was making prints that sought to underline the sheer incongruity between France and England. In *Politeness* (1779, Figure III.8), a scowling John Bull and a French marquis can be seen exchanging abusive remarks. A stout John Bull, a beer in hand, angrily says 'Damn you!' to a skinny Frenchman with a wooden leg. The latter is sniffing tobacco, as he tells John Bull 'Vous etes une bette!' (you are a brute). From the rump of beef behind John Bull to his dog, everything on the left side of the print conveys health. The presence of the listless mongrel, and the frogs hanging from the hook on the right side convey starvation. Gillray is drawing upon old English stereotypes of the Frenchman; emaciation had long been associated in the English mind with the French as a symbol of their poverty.¹⁹⁴

In the wake of the Revolution, Gillray begins to endow this intrinsic difference with political connotations. In *French Tailor Fitting John Bull with a Jean de Bry* (1799, Figure III.9), Gillray alludes to Paine's trade as a maker of corsets by equipping the revolutionary with scissors. Thomas Paine, portrayed as a French tailor, can be seen persuading John Bull about the comfort of *Jean de Bry*, a staple of French fashion; 'A-ha! There, my friend, I fit you to the life!- there is liberty!- no tight aristocratical sleeve to keep from you do vat you like'. But he is disgusted and dismisses the tailor's claims 'Liberty! [...] why zound I can't move my Arms at all! [...] oh! Damn your French Alamodes, they give a man the same

¹⁹⁴ For a detailed engagement with the deployment of nationalism as a strategy to rouse patriotism see *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*.

Liberty as if he was in the Stocks! Give me my Old coat again, say I, if it is a little out at the elbows.' Paine is clearly unsuccessful at persuading John Bull who refuses to be swayed by French fashion. By incorporating little details such as the measuring-tape made of a tri-colour cockade and the dreaded *bonnet rouge* on Paine's head, Gillray leaves the viewer in no doubt that French principles were constrictive, and did not fit the English context. Moreover Paine's measuring tape is unable to measure the gigantic royal crown. Gillray uses this little detail to amplify the discrepancy between French and English principles, and firmly establish the inadequacy of the former.

The covert xenophobic undertones of the aforementioned prints are in line with propagandist tracts, which sought to demonise the French and subsequently justify British intervention

Can there be any faith in frog-eaters? Fellows who fill their animal frames with the extremities of four-legged families, filthy tenants of the marshes, and steal a hopeful conventional assembly of croakers out of a ditch, for a dinner? Are these fellows fit, I say, to form a constitution for themselves, independently of beef-eating Britons?¹⁹⁵

This tract relies on a derogation of the principles of the French Revolution, and questions the efficacy of the revised constitution. Disturbingly this political difference spills over into a variety of other avenues. It draws upon a long tradition of English and French rivalry in prints and caricatures, but goes a step further by conjuring the French as brutish 'four legged' creatures, incapable of making sensible political decisions.¹⁹⁶ The scrawniness of the French is cited as the reason for their

¹⁹⁵ *The Blessings of Billy's Budget*, p. 18.

¹⁹⁶ Refer to chapter two, "He Drinks the Knowledge in Greedy Haste"- Tasting History Through Gillray's Prints', for a detailed discussion. Traditional British iconography repeatedly conjured the French as scrawny men who ate frogs, and juxtaposed them against beef-eating Englishmen. This myth is reproduced by prints such as Hogarth's *O The Roast Beef of Old England*. Late eighteenth-

political incapacity. In keeping with this, the health of Englishmen is accepted as an indicator of their political supremacy.

Interestingly the basis of this British superiority, asserted in tract after tract, was not the representative Englishman's capacity for heroism, his military prowess, or even his astute political sense. Instead it could be narrowed down to the intrinsic good judgment of the average British citizen. This fact is expounded in excruciating detail through the dominant image of John Bull as a well meaning, but gullible Englishman by numerous tracts, addressed to the people of England:

By my foul, John, I've studied your nature a while,
And I think, when they say so, they don't miss a mile:
The world's wide, to be sure; but, as *intellects* go,
You're as *clumsy and bothered a beast* as I know (italics- author's own).¹⁹⁷

This is interesting indeed because John Bull cannot be distinguished as a military, or political, hero figure. In fact the poet is at pains to highlight his ordinariness; he is not the most intelligent or sophisticated person. Ironically it is this unremarkable standard-ness of the John Bull figure that makes him an effective patriotic symbol.

The dominant perception of the English masses construed them as 'honest, but a rude unlettered people' with 'dull intellects [...] base and ignorant'.¹⁹⁸ John Bull is one such person; dull, even ignorant, but well meaning, and most importantly stubbornly human. His intrinsic humanity seems to endear him to the masses in a way that symbolic representations of Englishness such as Britannia could not. It is John Bull's mundanity and his lack of revolutionary enthusiasm, coupled with his

century pamphleteers inherit this dualist paradigm but reinterpret the iconography in the face of political developments such as the French Revolution.

¹⁹⁷ Anonymous, *A New Song, written by Captain Morris. Addressed to John Bull and his Numerous Family* (London: Unknown, 1794) p. 1.

¹⁹⁸ Anonymous, *John Bull Starving to Pay Debts of the Royal Prodigal. A Letter to the House of Peers. By a Hanoverian* (London: R. Lee, 1795) pp. 10-13.

instinctive good judgment that made him gain popularity as the 'true' representative of the English masses.

Thus, one can trace the roots of John Bull's popularity to his ordinariness. In other circumstances this characteristic could have hindered the popularity of a potential national icon. On the contrary, late eighteenth-century political and social disturbances provided a perfect breeding ground for the growth of such an icon.

This is because the bulk of the nation, i.e. the masses, were an increasing presence in eighteenth-century politics. Mobs of people had an increasingly important part to play in English polity: the Sacheverell riots of 1710, the Church and King riots of 1714-15, the Excise Bill in 1733, the Porteus and Irish disturbances of the later thirties, the Jew Bill of 1753, the Spitalfields and Wilkite Riots of the 1760s, the Gordon Riots of 1780, periodic election disturbances, and innumerable minor tumult over wages in England are all testimony to the civil disorder that resulted from masses of English people.¹⁹⁹ England managed to avoid excessive violence but each of these disturbances were

a useful reminder to the parliamentary classes that there was another political world outside Westminster and St. James's, and that there were limits to the abuses that this outside world would tolerate.²⁰⁰

But it took the crucial role of the crowd in the French Revolution for literary pamphleteers and caricaturists to acknowledge the sheer potential of hordes of people taking to the streets.²⁰¹ Their reactions varied widely: while a few of them adopted a commemorative tone to celebrate the phenomenon, the majority

¹⁹⁹ For a detailed account of political disturbances in the eighteenth century see Ian Gilmour, *Riot, Risings, and Revolution: Governance and Violence in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Pimlico, 1993).

²⁰⁰ *Riot, Risings, and Revolution*, p. 341.

²⁰¹ Some accounts on the period use the word 'mob' to signify a collection of people engaged in violence, and distinguish it from a 'crowd' which is used to define a gathering of people engaged in a laudable pursuits. However I have consciously used the words 'crowd' and 'mob' interchangeably.

highlighted its riotous tendencies and sought to warn the English masses against violence.²⁰² In each case, the descriptions of masses of people are coloured by the biases of authors, satirists and historians.

Most prominent amongst these is Edmund Burke's description of the mob. He considers the revolutionary crowd both undesirable and destructive; the mob that invades the *chateau* of Versailles in October 1789 is described as a 'band of cruel ruffians and assassins, reeking with [...] blood.'²⁰³ On the other hand, revolutionary historians like Michelet extol the revolutionary mob as an important element in the evolution of France.²⁰⁴ In spite of obvious ideological differences between these schools of historiography, each talks of the mob as a singular entity. George Rude was the first historian to draw attention to the way in which the crowd continued to be homogenized in the late eighteenth century. In his book *The Crowd in the French Revolution* Rude insists that the mob was represented as a

[D]isembodied abstraction and the personification of good or evil, according to the particular fancy or prejudice of the writer. Though differing profoundly in their attitude to the revolutionary tradition and in their hostility or reverence for leaders or victims of the great Revolution, they have all been inclined to view these events and participants 'from above' [...] the revolutionary crowd, whose voice was seldom reflected in the speeches of politicians or the writings of the pamphleteers and journalists, tended to be

²⁰² Historians like Robert B. Shoemaker describe the eighteenth century as the 'century of the mob' but the mob is constantly depicted in the historio-literary writings of the period using impersonal epithets: the 'inferior sort', the 'insolent rabble', the 'dregs of the people', the 'brutal, lower populace'. Even a cursory survey shows that pamphlets and graphic satires of the period were unable to comprehend the mob as a subject. It is used primarily for two purposes - to represent public opinion in support for a cause and caricature prominent individuals and politicians. *The London Merchants Triumphant*, shows tradesmen and others celebrating the withdrawal of Sir Robert Walpole's unpopular Excise Bill of 1733, by burning his effigy in a bonfire at the Royal Exchange. *The Scotch Yoke or English Resentment* deploys the mob to satirise Ministers such as Lord Bute. The print depicts Bute atop a pile of burning faggots, abused by a mob with comments such as 'See his arse there! See his arse'. In each case, the mob is Tory in nature. The dominance of the Tory complexion of the mob diminished during the last decades of the eighteenth century, but even towards its end most contemporaneous representations continue to homogenise it. Robert B. Shoemaker, *The London Mob: Violence and Disorder in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007) p.111.

²⁰³ *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, p. 105.

²⁰⁴ See Jules Michelet, *Historical View of the French Revolution: From its Earliest Indications to the Flight of the King in 1791*, trans. B.L.C. Cocks (London: H.G. Bohn, 1860).

lost sight of as a thing of flesh and blood and to assume whatever complexion accorded with the interests, opinions or ideals of the revolutionary leaders, their critics or adherents.²⁰⁵

Whilst this is true of the majority of literature produced at the time, Gillray's prints seem to mark a departure from the aforementioned descriptions. Not only does he distinguish between the members of the mob, he also uses the mob to explore the increasingly unstable relationship between paternal authority and the crowd.

In the years following the French Revolution, Jacobinism became a frequent pre-occupation of letters and handbills. The increasing undercurrent of political motivation led to widespread anxiety within the anti-Jacobin gentry. These anxieties are evident in Gillray's savage caricatures of Jacobinism, which depict the French as subhuman fiends. Interestingly this spills over into his treatment of English lower-class radicalism. In prints such as *The Promis'd Horrors of the French Invasion*, he gives the French men strikingly simian features. *The National Assembly Petrified - The National Assembly Revivified* (1791, Figure III.10) furthers this; in the first print, the members of the National Assembly are alarmed at Louis XVI's escape; and in the second, they can be seen celebrating his capture. Unsurprisingly, Gillray portrays the members of the National Assembly as lower-class men, including a cook sporting the *bonnet rouge*, a hairdresser, a tailor, and a post-boy. They can all be seen carrying tools that symbolise their occupation, and their unkempt appearance underlines their humble professions. By depicting the members of the National Assembly as working class people, Gillray likens them to Paine and plebeian English Dissenters. But Gillray's conservative leanings in these prints should not blind the reader to the fact that he does provide the reader with hints,

²⁰⁵ George Rude, *The Crowd in the French Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959) pp. 4-5.

which distinguish the members of the group based on their professions. This contributes to the demystification of the hazy, impressionable view of the mob. He goes on to provide the reader with definitive descriptions of people who comprised both French and English crowds.

The untrammelled energy of the mob is a dominant presence in *London Corresponding Society, Alarm'd or Guilty Conscience* (1798, Figure III.11). Here Gillray carries over his caricatures of the French Jacobins to London's lower classes. The print is inspired by the arrest of certain Irish members of the society in February 1798 and shows a group of men huddled plotting in a cellar. All are low life characters: a butcher, baker, pickpocket, a Dissenter, and others. All are in simple dress, but once again they bear some emblems of their trades. The man on the right has a comb in his hair and a pair of scissors lying on his hat; he is a barber. The man to the left has a butcher's steel hanging from his pants. The society's membership appears in the book resting on the chair to the right. It includes names like 'Forging Sam', 'Barber Joe', 'Dick Butcher', 'Filching Ned', 'Dissenting Nick', and 'Sheepshead Will'. Two posters appear on the wall on the background. The one on the right is entitled 'Tom Payne'. A number of figures have distinctively bestial faces, which evoke Gillray's representation of French revolutionaries. By using similar tropes to depict French revolutionaries and English dissenters Gillray effectively 'jacobinises' the members of the radical Corresponding Society. This is used to imply their involvement in the rioting and popular disturbances of the late eighteenth century.

So far we have seen that Gillray deploys physiognomical tropes to amass French revolutionaries and English dissenters under one head. He includes the Whigs in this group by highlighting their seditious inclination in *Patriotic Regeneration viz Parliament Reformed* (1795, Figure III.12). In this print, he

projects what a reformed House of Commons would look like. It shows Whig leaders in the ragged attire of 'the inferior sort' trying the former prime minister, William Pitt, at the bar of the House, while the new Members of Parliament, portrayed as a Jacobin mob of *sansculottes*, look on. A fat butcher and a chimney sweep can be recognised among those on the benches. The lowly origins of people who supported the Opposition are evident from the crowd that includes artisans and butchers.

Clearly Gillray's body of prints uses a wide range of tropes to hint at the similarity between Dissenters, Whigs, and Jacobins. Physiognomic similarities notwithstanding, he endows both groups with one distinct characteristic; their mob-like identity. This is exemplified in *The Republican Attack* (1795, Figure III.13), which represents the riot that attended George III's opening of Parliament. A number of prominent Whigs including Fox, Sheridan, and Lansdowne can be seen in tattered jackets, breeches, and *bonnet rouges*; they are part of a mob, which assaults the king's coach as a bread riot takes place in the background. The dominant presence of the cap of liberty on plebeian radicals underlines the similarities between French revolutionaries and English Dissenters within Gillray's oeuvre, and adds to his vociferous denunciation of revolutionary tendencies. Quite interestingly, the royal carriage, driven by Pitt, tramples over Britannia. This little detail underlines the increasing redundancy of Britannia as a national icon. Instead, the print's depiction of the riotous mob ('down with George', 'No King') testifies to the increasingly significant role of the common man in English politics. In acknowledging the common man as a political agent, Gillray surprisingly veers towards the Painite agenda. But, he does not, at any point, celebrate the power of the masses unambiguously. His engagement on this issue continues to remain fraught, to say the least.

In fact his portraiture of English mobs mirrors the anxiety voiced by numerous eighteenth-century pamphlets, that ‘the mass of mankind are neither prudent nor cautious’.²⁰⁶ He highlights this gullibility of the mob in *Copenhagen House* (1795, Figure III.14). As I mentioned in the first chapter, this print draws attention to extra-Parliamentary political organizing by the London Corresponding Society. But a prominently placed roulette wheel inscribed ‘Equality and no sedition Bill’ and a barrel of ‘Real Democratic Gin’ seems to suggest it is the gaming and alcohol that lures people to such meetings.

Gillray seems to be at pains to drive home that fact that mobs of well-meaning Englishmen could be easily duped by the seductive rhetoric of the Opposition. It is here that the fictional figure of John Bull comes to the rescue. He is delineated as an empathetic, yet sensible presence. In that sense the John Bull figure is a result of Gillray’s nuanced negotiations with collectivist consciousness in graphic satire. The print-maker’s positioning of John Bull is similar to the widely circulated *Letter from John Bull to his Countrymen*, dated December 6, 1792, which foregrounds John Bull as ‘your true and honest adviser, and real friend and brother’.²⁰⁷ The use of the first person here is noteworthy. By addressing the citizens of England directly, the tract initiates a process of direct interaction, which is invaluable in garnering the trust of the populace.

It is precisely this dynamic that explains the success of Gillray’s *The Tree of Liberty* (1798, Figure III.15). The print’s popularity can be explained by the fact that it does not overtly denounce the Whigs. Instead, it showcases the allure of the Opposition: ‘Very nice Napple indeed! - but my pokes are full of Pippins from off t’other Tree: and besides, I hates Medlars, they’r so damn’d rotten they’ll gee me the

²⁰⁶ *John Bull Starving to Pay Debts of the Royal Prodigal*, p.4.

²⁰⁷ Anonymous, *A Letter from John Bull to his Countrymen* (London: Unknown, 1793) p. 12.

Guts-ach for all their vine looks!'. In highlighting the seductive nature of the doctrines of democracy, and underlining the confusion faced by John Bull, Gillray makes a persuasive case for John Bull's split mindset at a politically turbulent time. His prints articulate the paradoxical position of the average man comprising the urban mob at the end of the eighteenth century; acknowledged as a political agent yet constantly dismissed as ignorant, constrained by bad harvests, and the lack of food. Gillray's John Bull then is not a spokesperson for, but a representative of the British public. Therefore it does not come as any surprise that Gillray frequently uses his John Bull figure to debate the dilemmas facing the British populace.

This is evident in an early print, *John Bull, in a Quandary* (1788, Figure III.16), where he depicts a stocky figure standing between two Members of Parliament running in a Westminster by-election. On the right hand side is Hood, whose naval success is represented by the prizes he has captured. French sailors and their ships can be seen in the background. Townshend, on the left, is holding ribbons attached to three simpering ladies on their knees, to show his success with women. He tramples a *bonnet rouge* under his feet. John Bull's positioning right in the middle of the print seems to testify to his lack of inclination towards either Member of Parliament. The inscription, which reads: 'Which way shall I turn me? How will I decide?' reiterates the confused expression on his face.

This statement is reflective of the spatial dynamics of this print such. John Bull is literally situated in a liminal space, between the two Members of Parliament. In that sense, this print is a pictorial rendition of a Bourdieuesque field of power, a social arena that allows for multiple agents to interact on a variety of levels including classes, ideological leanings, and political philosophies.²⁰⁸ As a social

²⁰⁸ See Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice

agent, John Bull is positioned in a way that allows him to interact with multiple ideologies, thereby allowing him freedom of choice. The visual nature of Gillray's print allows for opposing discourses to co-exist within one striking image; and this enables him to represent John Bull's dilemma in an effective way. Neither of the Members bears any merit, so it is a classic case of choosing between the devil and the deep sea. Multivalence is threaded into the very texture of this print, and is used by Gillray to demonstrate the challenges faced by the English populace.

A similar, albeit ideologically stronger, spatial narrative is at play in *Bank-Notes, - Paper-Money, - French-Alarmists, - O The Devil, The Devil! - Ah! Poor John Bull!!!* (1797, Figure III.17). This print dwells on the issue of paper money: William Pitt can be seen persuading John Bull to accept it while the Whigs, represented by Fox and Sheridan, do their best to dissuade him. The introduction of paper money was Pitt's response to the threat from revolutionary France. As Matthew Rowlinson points out:

[N]ationalist sentiment [...] typically mobilized around currency in the form of credit money rather than that of legal tender.²⁰⁹

The existence of this link between patriotism and money was witnessed in Britain in February 1797. The gold reserves of the Bank of England diminished due to the loans it made to the Government to pay for the war against France. It could no longer guarantee the convertibility of its notes. The Bank met with Prime Minister Pitt and he intervened, prohibiting it from making any more payments in gold. All

(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984). Instead of analyzing societies in terms of classes, Bourdieu uses the concept of *field*: a social arena in which people maneuver and struggle in pursuit of desirable resources. A field is constituted by the relational differences in position of social agents, and the boundaries of a field are demarcated by where its effects end. Different fields can be either autonomous or interrelated and are organized both vertically and horizontally. This means that fields are not strictly analogous to classes, and are often autonomous, independent spaces of social play. The field of power is peculiar in that it exists 'horizontally' through all of the fields.

²⁰⁹ Matthew Rowlinson, *Real Money and Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 50.

financial institutions of Britain followed suit and there were meetings all over Britain, where hordes of people resolved to accept bank notes for any payment due to them. This resolution was interpreted as a display of patriotism; 'the use of banknotes was everywhere represented as testing generalized British loyalty'.²¹⁰

The class basis of this campaign must be kept in mind because it comprised of people who had invested in various forms of paper. It did nothing for the masses that bought and sold goods, and earned wages in coins. The majority of people, accustomed to trading in coins, had to be persuaded to accept paper money. William Forbes testifies to this in his *Memoirs of a Banking House*:

Our counting-house, and indeed the offices of all the banks, were instantly crowded to the door with people clamorously demanding payment in gold of their interest-receipts, and vociferating for silver in change of our circulating paper. It was in vain that we urged the order of Council — which, however, applied merely to the Bank of England — and the general resolution adopted by all other banks in Edinburgh. They were deaf to every argument, and although no symptom, nor indeed threatening of violence appeared, their noise, and the bustle they made, was intolerable.²¹¹

Gillray shows this class basis of the campaign to support paper circulation in his print. On one side, Fox, sporting a hat with a tri-coloured cockade, exclaims, 'Don't take his d—d paper, John! Insist upon having gold to make your peace with the French when they come'. On the other side, Sheridan, in *bonnet rouge* cries out, 'Don't take his notes! Nobody takes notes now. They'll not even take mine!' . But the rustic John expresses his confidence in Pitt and answers, 'I wool take it! a may as well let my Measter Billy hold the gold to keep away the Frenchmen as save it to gee to you when ye come o'er wi' your domned invasion'. Clearly *Bank-Notes, - Paper-Money* tries to make a virtue of the patience of Englishmen, and advocates the moderation of the state.

²¹⁰ *Real Money and Romanticism*, p.51.

²¹¹ William Forbes, *Memoirs of a Banking House* (London: William and Robert Chambers, 1860) p. 83.

It is important to note that even in this situation, despite his occasional mooring about the choices he has been presented with, Gillray's John Bull never once displays a transgressive energy. His consistent lack of volatility ensures that he never crosses the range of 'acceptable' behaviour. The spatial narrative of the print which positions John Bull between William Pitt and Richard Sheridan seems to foster ideological mobility, but it is subtly strengthening the dominant ideology. In that sense, it is his stubborn inertia that is the most important propagandist tool used by the caricaturist.

But Gillray's John Bull does not always bow down to the representatives of the state. In fact, it is the exploitation of the populace that seems to be Gillray's foremost concern in a number of prints. In *John Bull Ground Down* (1795, Figure III.18), Prime Minister William Pitt grinds John Bull into coins, which are then collected by the Prince of Wales to pay his moneylenders, and mistresses. The image suggests that the economic hardships of the English citizens were exacerbated by the Prince's mounting debts. The immediate occasion for this print is the settlement of the Prince's revenue on his marriage with Caroline of Brunswick. The covetous expressions on the faces of all the scramblers, including ministerial pensioners Burke, Dundas, and Loughborough, implicate them in the exploitation of the citizenry. Pitt remorselessly grinds John Bull whilst crying 'God save great George our King'. The Monarch, represented by a crown throwing its rays on the scene, validates and encourages his actions 'Grind away! Grind away! Grind away. Billy! Never mind his bawling! Grind away'. A terrified John Bull accuses them of Murder, but the King dismisses his claim: 'What! What! What! Murder hay? Why, you poor Stupe, is it not for the good of your Country? Hay? Hay?'.

Gillray's visual rendition of the common man's grievances continues in *Blindmans Buff—or—Too Many for John Bull* (1795, Figure III.19). The print calls

into question English loans to the Emperor of Austria in May and June of 1795.

William Pitt can be seen ordering everybody to assault and rob a blindfolded John Bull. He is kicked by a ragged sans-culotte, a pipe-smoking Dutchman, pick-pocketed by the Emperor, and the Prussian who already has his bag of cash. John Bull's blindfold highlights the helplessness of the ordinary English citizen; the caricaturist uses his figure to suggest the degeneracy of the representatives of the state at a time of scarcity.

John Bull Baited by the Dogs of Excise (1790, Figure III.20) similarly satirises efforts by William Pitt, George Rose, and a few members of Parliament to impose new Excise duties on tobacco. The additional tax burden on British citizens is implied by the image of a bull, muzzled and blindfolded, with legs chained to a stump, being harassed by dogs, depicted with heads of Members of Parliament. Among the Members depicted are: William Wyndam Grenville, Henry Dundas, Charles Lennox Richmond, Charles Jenkinson, Richard Pepper Arden, Sir Charles Pratt Camden, and possibly Francis Osborne Carmarthen. William Pitt holds a chain with a tag that says 'New Excise fetters for John Bull' while instructing the Members of Parliament to get John Bull. Gillray also hints at the fragile relationship shared by Pitt and Edward Thurlow by depicting him as a dog, which registers his opposition to the tax by urinating on tobacco leaves.

It does not come as any surprise that the door of the Excise Office resembles a prison. The coercion conveyed by the prison door goes a long way in highlighting widespread public dissatisfaction regarding Excise duties on tobacco.²¹²In another

²¹² Proof of public dissatisfaction can be found in the records of English debating societies: On April 15, 1790 the society at Coachmakers Hall debated the merits of Pitt's judgment:

Has Mr. Pitt by introducing the Tobacco Act, and extending the Excise Laws, adopted Measures destructive of the Interests of Great Britain, and subversive of the inestimable Blessings of Liberty? The Publick are respectfully informed that in compliance with the Solicitations of many respectable Electors, this very popular Institution will, for the

interesting twist, a red rose has replaced the face of the man, who can be seen painting the entrance. This literal rendition of George Rose's last name is an effective trope that serves to underline his crucial role in the imposition of excise duties.²¹³ It is worth questioning Gillray's motive here; is he drawing an analogy between early modern political intrigues and the feudal War of the Roses?²¹⁴ If it is so, then Gillray uses the imagery of the rose to hint at the brewing civil disorder between the Whigs and Tories due to the Excise duties, and internal tensions within the Tory faction between Thurlow and Pitt. His depiction of Georgian politics seems to mirror the series of wars between the two rival branches of the House of Plantagenet between 1455 and 1485. This print is clearly attentive to the nuances of political power play in Georgian England and deploys John Bull as a medium to convey the exact nature of the chicanery in question. Due to the complex mechanics of identification and absorption that can be located in the act of reading such a print, it is indeed possible for the twenty-first-century reader to glean a historiography of the tumultuous years in question from this print.

In *Opening of the Budget, or John Bull Giving His Breeches to Save His Bacon* (1796, Figure III.21), Gillray continues to use John Bull to undermine the heavy taxes that crippled the British populace. The print is based on the heavy taxation of the year 1796, and the demand for voluntary contributions, which were forced from John Bull by the continued alarm of a French invasion. Dundas,

remainder of the Season, be dedicated to the Discussion of a Series of important political Subjects, including a free investigation both of the public Conduct of the Minister and on the Opposition, in order that at the ensuing General Election the People may be the better able to know to whom they ought to give their Suffrages. It was determined almost unanimously that Mr. Pitt, by introducing the Tobacco Act, and extending the Excise Laws, had adopted measures destructive of the interests of Great Britain.

See Donna T. Andrew, 'London Debates: 1790', *London debating societies 1776-1799* (London: London Record Society, 1994), pp. 273-98 (p. 282).

²¹³ See George Rose, *A Brief Examination into the Increase of the Revenue, Commerce, and Manufactures, of Great Britain, from 1792 to 1799* (London: J. Wright, 1799).

²¹⁴ A series of Civil Wars, known as the Wars of the Roses, where the white rose stands for the House of York and red rose for the House of Lancaster.

Grenville, and Burke, are busy helping themselves, while Fox, excluded from his share, is calling for the assistance of his friends, the *sans-culottes* of France, who were supposed to be preparing their invasion at Brest. John Bull can be seen giving his money and his clothes away. Fox can be seen telling John Bull that Pitt and his colleagues are 'aristocratic plunderers', but he encourages the French to hurry to England before John Bull becomes bankrupt. This has led to dominant interpretations of this print as 'reactionary'. It has been argued that the print-maker wants to highlight Fox's treason, in order to legitimise the unpopular taxes, which were levied by Pitt's government. Paulson has even argued that Fox is the only 'object of the artist's indignation' in the print. But there is a far more intricate power play at work.²¹⁵

The print is dismissive of treasonous Whigs, but it is equally dismissive of the Prime Minister. He is standing with a bag inscribed with 'Requisition Budget' and can be seen trying to scare John Bull about future tribulations into extracting as much money from him as possible. He is counselling John Bull to surrender the last of his possessions: 'More Money, John! - more Money! To defend you from the Bloody, the Cannibal French – they're a coming! - why they'll Strip you to the very Skin - more Money John! - They're a coming- they're a coming'. The reiteration seems to build a false sense of urgency that leads an alarmed John Bull into throwing his money and his breeches into the bag; 'a coming?- are they- nay then, take all I've got, at once, Master Billy!- for its much better for I to give you all I have in the World to save my Bacon, - than to stay and be Strip'd stark naked by Charley & the plundering French Invasioners as you say'.

The singsong rhythm of Pitt's dialogue is almost hypnotic in its monotony.

²¹⁵ *Representations of Revolution*, p. 185.

There seems to be a covert recognition of the fact that anti-Jacobin stereotypes, were, in part, a fabrication of ministers like Pitt. Gillray seems to be suggesting that the propagation of such stereotypes was aimed at extracting money from the populace. His print also highlights the falsity of Pitt's paranoid claims; the money that is collected is not used against French invaders. Instead, state pensioners including Burke, Portland, and Dundas can be seen devouring John Bull's treasure from the sack. They can be seen repeating Pitt's dialogue 'Ay. They're a coming' 'Yes yes they're a coming' 'Ay!Ay! they're a coming! They're a coming'.

This theme continues in *Begging no Robbery i.e. Voluntary Contribution or John Bull Escaping a Forced Loan* (1796, Figure III.22). Pitt and his allies stop John Bull to ask for contributions; 'Good Sir, for Charity's sake, have Pity upon, a poor ruined Man;- drop if you please, a few bits of Money into the Hat, & you shall be rewarded hereafter'. Little details add to the sense of deprivation of the populace; John Bull rides on a mare coming from 'Constitution Hill', but heading towards 'Slavery Slough by Beggary Corner'. Moreover, the fact that Pitt, Grenville, Dundas, and Burke are grouped together as an army hints at the coercion exercised by the State to garner money from citizens. In fact, in doing so, Gillray is echoing the sentiments of radical pamphleteers of the time. The vociferous denunciation of Pitt in these prints bears a striking resemblance to the postscript of a tract called *Precious Morsels*:

O! Billy is a wanton wag,
The blightest lad that ever I saw
And has so well the gift of gab,
He makes John his purse-strings draw.

He can armies raise and navies,
He can venture on a war,
Of men and money make new levies
His like is neither near nor far.

For Catskins when he went to fight,

Of insults offered, loud did bawl,
And honest John, who thought him right,
At last agreed to pay for all.

But Billy then was in a passion,
Swore he'd give John, Nootka Sound,
Yet by this fam'd negotiation,
John got ne'er an inch of ground.

[...]

And now he's gone to war with France,
Where men and money John must send,
And surely's running such a dance
That God knows when his wars may end.

From East to West, from South to North,
Over Europe all the sword he'll draw,
And not content he'll still hold forth,
And quarrel with America.²¹⁶

Precious Morsels, which claims to describe the 'features of sundry great personages' depicts William Pitt as an extravagant politician, blessed with the 'gift of the gab'. There seems to be a suggestion that his persuasive powers ensnare John Bull into submission. John Bull gives in to his demand for higher taxes, but does not benefit in any way whatsoever. The poem succinctly describes the wars waged by Pitt and the unpopular taxes levied by his ministry. The portrait that can be gleaned from this short poem is of a conniving politician who does not live up to his promises. The irreverent choice of address ('Billy') in itself seems to undermine the importance of the Prime Minister. The primary grievance is the 'men and money' English citizens must provide to satisfy the whims of politicians. This echoes Gillray's humanization of the John Bull figure to critique Pitt's taxation policies, and their excessive burden on the ordinary citizens. He does not stifle public criticism of the Government. In

²¹⁶ Anonymous, 'Walmer Castle', *Precious Morsels*. I. *Features of Sundry Great Personages; viz. His Majesty, George the Third; the Late Earl of Bute, and Present Lord Hawkesbury; King Midas Marched from Home; the Bamboozled Mynheers, His Serene Highness, John Bull, Paymaster General; &c. &c.* II. *A tit-bit for Billy Pitt, &c. &c.* III. *America Fast A-sleep.* IV. *The Wonders of the Hatred of Liberty; A Raree-Show* (London: Unknown, 1795), pp. 24-25.

fact, he even goes so far as to express hope in the native wisdom of the Englishman.

His belief in John Bull's astuteness is evident in *John Bull Bother'd; – or – The Geese Alarming the Capitol* (1792, Figure III.23). Here he imagines the conversation between a perplexed John Bull and a terrified William Pitt, who has mistaken a flight of geese for 'Ten Thousand *sans culottes* [...] Five Hundred Disputing-Clubs with bloody Mouths; & Twenty Thousand Bill-stickers with *Ca Ira* pasted on the front of their Red-Caps!'.²¹⁷ Gillray uses the print to visualise the Tory government's paranoia at the threat of Jacobin activity and unrest in Britain. Pitt warns John Bull, 'they're Rising & coming upon us from all parts' and is scared 'they'll murder us'. He proves to be surprisingly astute and refutes Pitt's alarmed speculations: 'I'll be shot, if I can see anything myself, but a few geese gabbling together - but Lord help my silly head, how should such a Clod-pole as I be able to see anything Right?' 'Where's the use of Firing now- what can us two do against all them Hundreds of Thousands of Millions of Monsters?- Lord Master, had not we better try if they won't shake hands with us, and be Friends?'. Gillray's scepticism about the government's fear-mongering tactics is furthered in his representation of John Bull. His hat sports conflicting tickets: '*Vive la Liberté*' and 'God Save the King'; he carries the Loyalist essay *Pennyworth of Truth* and Paine's radical *Rights of Man* in each of his pockets. This detail provides a strikingly accurate representation of the average English citizen being bombarded with propaganda by the Tories, Whigs, Dissenters, and Republicans. This makes it easy to comprehend the split subjectivity of Englishmen at a politically tumultuous time.

Gillray's prints chronicle the historical intrigues of the last decade of the eighteenth century and offer nuanced, albeit ideologically questionable, portrayals of

²¹⁷ *Ca Ira*, loosely translated as 'We're off and away', popular revolutionary street song.

paranoid Tories and treasonous Whigs. Moreover he goes beyond the binarisms of state and the Opposition to provide a more complex picture of the splitting Opposition; Whigs, Dissenters, Catholics, and mobs. Each of the prints discussed in this chapter is constituted by numerous discourses and permeated with narratives of varying capacities. Irrespective of the side he is on, Gillray does not shy away from fully representing both points of view. The presence of these multiple interpretative scenarios in each of these prints render their existence as political propaganda suspect.

The satires are undoubtedly potent cultural forms, but what distinguishes the body of prints discussed in this chapter is Gillray's fashioning of an identifiable John Bull figure. Unmistakably Hobbesian, it is a far cry from the earlier symbolic national icon Britannia.²¹⁸ The caricaturist deploys him to reflect the political and social unrest of the times. Ultimately, Gillray's John Bull is as denunciatory of Pittite taxation as he is of Foxite treason. The print-maker uses him to satirise royal immorality and aristocratic degeneracy, voice the opinions of the common man, and embody the ideological conflicts faced by English citizens on a daily basis in England during the 1780s and 1790s. Gillray's plural appropriations of the John Bull figure mark a departure from propagandist depictions of the English citizen. His John Bull figure intervenes in the most complex political disputes of the period and one can even go so far as to say that he embodies some of the crucial debates raging in England at the time of the French Revolution.

The increasing popularity of John Bull is a testimony to the rising belief in the political convictions of the ordinary citizens and their role in polity.

²¹⁸ Gillray's figure is Hobbesian in the way it links the human body to the English country; his John Bull could well be one of the people who comprise the torso and arms of the giant crowned figure in Abraham Bosse's title page of *Leviathan*. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan, or, The Matter, Forme, & Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill* (1651) (New York: Viking Press, 1982).

Progressively, John Bull replaced Britannia as a national icon. This shift is significant because it goes to prove that in the wake of the French Revolution:

A victimized Britannia was not appropriate to represent the nation under all circumstances, especially during a desperate military contest. Moreover, since assertiveness or aggression was then considered to be inappropriate for a feminine figure- and ladies were not supposed to intervene in politics- she could not be shown on the offensive against her enemies without appearing to be like the French Liberty or English female Politicians.²¹⁹

The role of Parisian market-women during the French Revolution offered the quintessential image of the total inversion of natural order.²²⁰ It is not surprising then, that the one national icon, representative of the late eighteenth century, is a man.

²¹⁹ *Defining John Bull*, p. 143.

²²⁰ For women's role in the French Revolution, see Darline Gay Levy, Harriet Branson Applewhite and Mary Durham Johnson (eds.), *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795* (Illinois: Illini Books Ltd., 1980); Dorinda Outram 'Women and the Discourse of the French Revolution', *The Social History of Language*, eds. Peter Burke and Roy Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) pp. 120-36.

Chapter 4

Body/ Bawdy Inscriptions: Gillray's Representations of Women

[A] Queen is but a woman; a woman is but an animal; and an animal not of the highest order.²²¹

Gillray's oeuvre is saturated with social and political satires depicting aristocratic women. One of his most famous prints, *Fashionable Contrasts - or The Duchess' Little Shoe Yielding to the Magnitude of the Duke's Foot* (1792, Figure IV.1) attempts to visualize the marital discord between the son of George III, Frederick, Duke of York and Albany (1763-1827) and Frederica Charlotte Ulrica (1767-1820). In Gillray's characteristic manner the Duke's huge feet are in stark contrast to the unusually dainty feet of the Duchess, covered by delicate, jewel-encrusted slippers. Her feet are separated by the Duke's feet, which face the bed. Gillray's choice of a copulatory position highlights the physical inequality of the couple and hints at violation instead of consent. The suggestive image satirizes reports that maligned the Prussian Princess for her lack of beauty, and counter-reports that sought to flatter the royal family by praising the delicacy of the Princess's foot and her choice of footwear. Ridiculing both sides of the coin might seem like a typical Gillray trait but, in this chapter, I will argue that such prints are an aberration insofar as Gillray's depiction of aristocratic women is concerned.

So far, I have sought to show that the power of Gillray's prints lies in their lack of ideological fixity and the ambiguity of their tone. But in this chapter I will engage with his depictions of aristocratic women to show that the ambivalence, that is a characteristic of Gillray's prints, disappears to reveal an ostensible ideological

²²¹ *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, p. 114.

inflexibility in his biting satires of women such as Queen Charlotte, the Duchess of Devonshire, the Countess of Strathmore, and Lady Worsley. Gillray's satirical prints of women will be read alongside prominent feminist works of the age in order to engage with debates regarding attitudes towards women in late eighteenth-century England. Ultimately, this chapter suggests that his representations of the bodies of aristocratic women can be used to analyse the complex ways in which female sexuality gets tied up with political fervour during the last decades of the eighteenth century.²²²

This dynamic comes into play in Gillray's vicious transformation of the allegorical figure of Liberty to a monstrous hag, marching to the beat of Sheridan's pipe and Fox's drum in *Alecto and her Train at the Gate of Pandemonium: - or- the Recruiting Sergeant enlisting John Bull, into the Revolution Service* (1791, Figure IV.2). The titular 'Gate of Pandemonium' refers to the Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand, a meeting-place for the Revolution Society. By situating the print at a politically significant space, the satirist immediately endows it with meanings beyond the ones that are immediately visible.²²³ The sinister flames that envelop the entrance of the tavern further the Miltonian reference, and firmly establish the tavern as a sinister space. The image itself depicts the honest John Bull, trying to

²²² The chapter aims to highlight the constrained position of women in positions of power. Writing in March 1719, Elizabeth Charlotte insists that 'being a Queen is not the happiest condition in the world. I wouldn't have wanted to be one for anything. You suffer the worst restrictions, you have no power whatsoever'. Not all the women under consideration in this chapter were feminist campaigners. In fact, most of them do not lend themselves easily to a feminist reading. But the body of politico-erotic prints and pamphlets which focus on them reveal and play upon the contradictions of their social position, gender roles, and place within the family and state in a fashion that allows for a nuanced analysis of the gendered nature of the last decades of the eighteenth century. Charlotte-Elizabeth D'Orléans, *Dite Lettres De La Princesse Palatine (1672- 1722)* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1985) p. 382.

²²³ For a detailed discussion about The Crown and Anchor tavern as a symbol of radical political culture in late-eighteenth-century England see Christina Parolin, 'Radicalism and Reform at the "Gate of Pandemonium": The Crown and Anchor Tavern in Visual Culture 1790-1820', *Radical Spaces: Venues of Popular Politics in London: 1790-1845* (Canberra: The Australian National University Press, 2010) pp. 105-46.

resist French Republicans and English Whigs, but it is Alecto, the Greek Goddess of famine, who occupies the position of prominence. Here she represents the false promises made by French revolutionaries in the name of liberty. This is especially important because the allegorical figure of Liberty had replaced the Monarch as the representative of the French Republic in the years following the French Revolution. Gillray's monstrous personification of Liberty exists in a dialogue with the celebratory feminine images of Liberty that were proliferating in France at the time. He dresses his Liberty in tattered clothes, which reveal her dark skin and sagging breasts, with a tri-colour cockade adorning her head. In keeping with Greek mythology, his demonic hag has snakes for hair. She can be seen trying to bribe John Bull with money and seduce him with visions of freedom.²²⁴ In doing so, this print establishes a continuum between sexual abandon, political radicalism, and frenzied unreason. By linking Republican women with French Jacobins and barbarians, Gillray's vision of debased female agency collates political conservatism and misogyny.

Gillray was drawing these prints in a marketplace that was characterized by unprecedented change. Crumbling boundaries between the traditionally masculine public sphere and the feminine private sphere, political and economic turbulence, and the expansion of print culture colluded in the emergence of the modern intellectual as a critical force in the late eighteenth century. Large-scale political and social commotion allowed the intellectual an ambiguous social position and the freedom to experiment with various forms of oppositionality and multiple ideologies. This, I have shown, is evident in the literature of the period, which is

²²⁴ Gillray's perversion of the Liberty figure went on to become the shorthand for demonizing feminine agency. This print influenced Isaac Cruikshank's *A Republican Belle-A Picture of Paris for 1794* (1794, Figure IV.3), which visualises a Republican woman with a tiara made of daggers, guillotine earrings, razor sharp teeth and an apron patterned with skulls.

characterized by an exchange of ideas, between the likes of Burke, Paine, and Godwin. Dwelling on the historically contingent nature of this dynamic, historians such as Isaac Kramnick have noted that the multiplicity of conflicting ideologies in the second half of the eighteenth century require more than the dichotomy of plebeian and patrician.²²⁵ Crisis precipitates discursive change. This leads to a co-existence of consensus and difference and dialogism creeps in precisely because it is a period of acute discursive friction. This unsettling mix of ideologies is rampant in the literary and visual products of the age and needs to be kept in mind when examining Gillray's prints, which seem to concretize the theory of separate spheres in an ostensibly misogynist fashion. As Katharine Kittredge points out in her evocative anthology *Lewd and Notorious: Female Transgression in the Eighteenth Century*

Eighteenth-century visual and written sources contain myriad images of the suffering and ridicule that await women who break the rules: the whining spinsters, the evil murderess, the decaying prostitute. As feminists, our natural response to these images may be revulsion – surely, we cannot be expected to claim these pathetic objects as foremothers. Too frequently, we identify such portraits as evidence of misogyny and move along in search of more positive images ... we must not continue to avert our eyes.²²⁶

Kittredge's insightful observation provides a valid reason to suspend our judgement regarding the ideological nature of Gillray's prints. Their complexity is compounded when one realises that even the most celebrated feminist treatises of the period betray anxieties similar to those manifested in Gillray's prints.

This explains why the latent intricacy of Gillray's *Alecto and her Train at the Gate of Pandemonium* can be better understood by reading it alongside

²²⁵ Isaac Kramnick, 'Religion and Radicalism: English Political Theory in the Age of Revolution', *Political Theory*, 5: 4 (1977) pp. 505-34.

²²⁶ Katharine Kittredge Ed., *Lewd and Notorious: Female Transgression in the Eighteenth Century* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003) p. 1.

Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*, a conscious political reaction to Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.²²⁷ Wollstonecraft opposes Burke's view of the French Revolution as a direct threat to English political and social stability. She insists he is a beneficiary of the constitution, which works through bribery, corruption, and patronage.²²⁸ She goes on to refer to Burke's reputation for unbridled passion and uses his aesthetics, enunciated in his early treatise on the sublime and the beautiful, against him. In *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* Burke had characterized the sublime as masculine and the beautiful as feminine. Judgment, he says, is masculine and wit feminine. Wollstonecraft claims that the latter dominates in *Reflections* and this makes it a feminine text: '[Y]ou foster every emotion till the fumes, mounting to your brain, dispel the sober suggestion of reason'.²²⁹

Turning Burke's own argument on its head, she uses it to point to his vitiated mind and sensibility. The conversational tone of her text is important because it allows Wollstonecraft to initiate a dialogue with Burke.

I beseech you to ask your own heart, when you call yourself a friend of liberty, whether it would not be more consistent to style yourself the champion of property, the adorer of the golden image which power has set up?— And, when you are examining your heart, if it would not be too much like mathematical drudgery, to which a fine imagination very reluctantly stoops, enquire further, how it is consistent with the vulgar notions of honesty, and the foundation of morality— truth; for a man to boast of his own virtue and independence, when he cannot forget that he is at the moment enjoying the wages of falsehood; and that, in a sulking, unmanly way, he has secured himself a pension of fifteen hundred pounds per annum.²³⁰

²²⁷ Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men, in a Letter to the Right Honourable Edmund Burke; Occasioned by his Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London: J. Johnson, 1790).

²²⁸ This claim is rooted in fact. 'Over half of all the men who sat in the House of Commons between 1734 and 1832 had had a close relative before them. In 1790 the proportion actually increased'. *Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries*, p. 12.

²²⁹ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (London: R. and J. Dosley, 1757); *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*, p. 6.

²³⁰ *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*, pp. 19-20.

Having dismissed Burke's political philosophy she insists that rights depend on reason, not history. She draws on the language of natural rights but chooses a discourse that highlights female subjugation at each stage. Even Republican ideologues had not yet included women as political agents and thought of political rights as a strictly male prerogative. *Vindication of the Rights of Men* extends the program based on universal male suffrage to women. The statement and reply structure of the treatise is important because it allows Wollstonecraft to enter into a conversation with her literary adversaries, Rousseau and Burke. She is no longer the bystander she makes herself out to be in the prefatory Advertisement. As Patricia Yaeger argues, this:

[M]ulti-voicedness is emancipatory because writing here acquires a power lacking in speech; the power to cite someone else's words at length in order to interrupt the citation and change its intent, to subvert past silences and refashion the terms of a repressive discourse.²³¹

The vacillating narrative of the text helps Wollstonecraft insert herself in a long tradition of predominantly masculine discourse and subvert it from within. She sets an antecedent for a variety of dissenting voices by feminists writing for, and as, the Other. Wollstonecraft's use of the form of the public letter lends her treatise an essentially dialogic framework. In this case, the genre of the public letter functions as a medium to interpret and articulate women's identities and differences.

Wollstonecraft uses it to intervene in contemporary debates and offer incisive social criticisms. Burke's political program is the ostensible focus of her work but her critique is steeped in her gender and class position and linked to the socio-economic inequalities of the day. She emphasizes the importance of public education for

²³¹ Patricia Yaeger, *Honey-Mad Women: Emancipatory Strategies in Women's Writing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

women and nurturing the female faculty for reason. In doing so, she succeeds in politicizing the central institutions of society, class and family, via her examination of the gendered horizon of expectations. *Vindication of the Rights of Men* politicizes the private realm and advocates a radical reorganization of society as a pre-requisite for women's emancipation by proposing that the private and public spheres are mutually influential. Wollstonecraft attempts to delineate and disengage herself from the masculine definitions of women. For this reason, she was maligned by a number of literary and political commentators. She is the primary target of Polwhele's tirade against literary women, provocatively titled *Unsex'd Females*:

And, Death! restore thy 'long, unbroken sleep'.
 See Wollstonecraft, whom no decorum checks,
 Arise, the intrepid champion of her sex;
 O'er humbled man assert the sovereign claim,
 And slight the timid blush of virgin fame,
 'Go, go (she cries) ye tribes of melting maids,
 'Go, screen your softness in sequester'd shades;
 'With plaintive whispers woo the unconscious grove,
 'And feebly perish, as depis'd ye love.
 'What tho' the fine Romances of Rousseau
 'Bid the flame flutter, and the bosom glow;
 'Tho' the rapt Bard, your empire fond to own,
 'Fall prostrate and adore your living throne,
 'The living throne his hands presum'd to rear,
 'Its seat a simper, and its base a tear;
 'Soon shall the sex disdain the illusive sway,
 'And wield the sceptre in your blaze of day;
 'Ere long, each little artifice discard,
 'No more by weakness winning fond regard;
 'Nor eyes, that sparkle from their blushes, roll,
 'Nor catch the languors of the sick'ning soul,
 'Nor the quick flutter, nor the coy reserve,
 'But nobly boast the firm gymnastic nerve²³²

For Polwhele, Wollstonecraft's ideological inclinations tarnish her as a woman. He reads her non-conformity and her interest in women's rights as a marker of her supposed licentiousness. A lack of 'coy reserve' and non-subscription to received

232 *The Unsex'd Females*, pp. 16-18.

attitudes about women make her unwomanly, or ‘unsex’d’. Ironically, Polwhele’s attack ‘slight the timid blush of virgin fame’, ‘artifice discard’, ‘no more [...] weakness’ is also a concise summation of Wollstonecraft’s agenda in *Vindication of the Rights of Men*. Highlighting these dialogic strains in an apparently straightforward invective, Susan Wolfson insists, ‘a strange counter-effect of this scandal-sheet is its inadvertent vindication of Wollstonecraft’.²³³ Therefore it does not come as any surprise that Polwhele’s derisive label for Wollstonecraft, ‘the intrepid champion of her sex’, has been used by a number of critics to position her as a literary foremother of feminist thought. Mary Poovey is one of the many critics who laud her for occupying this position of prominence:

More surely than any of her female contemporaries, Wollstonecraft took the first step towards liberating herself from the crippling structures of female propriety.²³⁴

Unfortunately, the covert dialogism of Polwhele’s poem stops at denouncing Wollstonecraft’s literary output. The footnotes to his poem contain an acerbic denunciation of Wollstonecraft. He constantly corroborates his central proposition with personal details from Godwin’s *Memoirs*.²³⁵ This is reiterated later in the poem, when he moves away from attacking her authorial subjectivity and dwells on the relationship between Wollstonecraft and Imlay:

Bath’d in new bliss, the Fair-one greets the bower,
And ravishes a flame from every flower;
Low at her feet inhales the master’s sighs,
And darts voluptuous from her eyes.
Yet, while each heart-pulse, in the Paphian grove,
Beats quick to IMLAY and licentious love,
A sudden gloom the gathering tempest spreads;

²³³ Susan J. Wolfson, *Romantic Interactions: Social Being and the Turns of Literary Action* (Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 2010) p. 98.

²³⁴ Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, and Jane Austen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985) p. 48.

²³⁵ William Godwin, *Memoirs of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (London: J. Johnson, 1798).

The floral arch-work withers o'er their heads;
Whirlwinds the paramours asunder tear;
And wisdom falls, the victim of despair.²³⁶

Polwhele's choice of language 'ravishes a flame', 'darts voluptuous', 'licentious love' leaves no doubt in the reader's mind regarding the poet's intent. The uneasy collusion of public and private lays the charges of promiscuity, and disorderly sexuality at Wollstonecraft's door. This is a charge reiterated by anti-Jacobin T.J. Mathias, to whom Polwhele dedicates his poem. Describing Wollstonecraft in *The Shade of Alexander Pope* he says:

Fierce passion's slave, she veer'd with every gust
Love, Rights, and Wrongs, Philosophy, and Lust²³⁷

In her work, Wollstonecraft tries to steer clear of the dominant discursive image of the subservient woman. For this reason both Mathias and Polwhele see 'lust' as being intrinsic to the kind of author she was.

This is especially ironic because Wollstonecraft's ideal woman is completely exempt from sexuality. She argues that women, like men, must develop intellectually but envisages them in chaste, companionate, and egalitarian marriages. Unlike Rousseau's Sophy, Wollstonecraft's ideal woman is not a sexual creature. In her later *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Wollstonecraft categorically insists 'To render the human body and mind more perfect, chastity must more universally prevail'.²³⁸ The insistence on chastity could be the reason behind the popularity of her works amongst women. It could explain why her views on education were adopted by a number of women who advocated women's equality including

²³⁶ *The Unsex'd Females*, pp. 34-35.

²³⁷ Thomas James Mathias, *The Shade of Alexander Pope on the Banks of the Thames. A Satirical Poem. With Notes. Occasioned Chiefly, but Not Wholly, by the Residence of Henry Grattan, Ex-Representative in Parliament For the City of Dublin, at Twickenham, in November, 1798. By the Author of The Pursuits of Literature* (Dublin: J. Milliken, 1799) pp. 47-48.

²³⁸ Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects* (London: J. Johnson, 1792) p. vii.

Catherine Macaulay and Mary Hays, but were also celebrated by authors such as Maria Edgeworth, and Hannah More who were not championing women's independence.

Both *Vindications* constantly associate sensual femininity with 'weakness, childishness, deceitfulness, cunning, superficiality, servility, coquetry, sentimentality, ignorance, slavish conformity (and) fickle passion'.²³⁹ The feminine self is portrayed almost as a malaise:

[Women's] senses are inflamed, and their understandings neglected, consequently they become the prey of their senses, delicately termed sensibility, and are blown about by every momentary gust of feeling. Civilized women are, therefore, so weakened by false refinement [...]. Ever restless and anxious, their over exercised sensibility not only renders them uncomfortable themselves but troublesome, to use a soft phrase, to others. All their thoughts turn on things calculated to excite emotion; and feeling when they should reason, their conduct is unstable, and their opinions are wavering [...]. By fits and starts they are warm in many pursuits; yet this warmth, never concentrated into perseverance, soon exhausts itself [...]. Miserable, indeed, must be that being whose cultivation of mind has only tended to inflame its passions.²⁴⁰

Wollstonecraft's radical evaluation of the social construction of gender here is constrained by her belittling of the feminine principle. She articulates radical sentiment, but does not seem to have the vocabulary to do so. 'The lack of adequate terminology available for her to praise women' forces her to resort to 'masculinist language'.²⁴¹ Despite being extremely alert to the discursive construction of women and open to the economic independence of women, she eventually naturalizes the family structure by arguing for the education of women so as to make them better mothers and wives. In doing so, Wollstonecraft falls hostage to the very categories she tries to escape.

²³⁹ Susan Gubar, 'Feminist Misogyny: Mary Wollstonecraft and the Paradox of "It takes one to Know One"', *Feminist Studies*, 20: 3 (1994) pp. 452-73 (p. 456).

²⁴⁰ *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, pp. 129-30.

²⁴¹ Iain McCalman, *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture, 1776-1832* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) p. 45.

The ideological heterogeneity of both *Vindications* shows how even an organic intellectual like Wollstonecraft is constrained by the very stereotypes she seeks to question. Wollstonecraft tackles the problematics of patriarchy and aristocracy but falls into replication, even recuperation of those categories. Her authorial persona is might be far from Gillray's monstrous personification of Liberty but her allegedly egalitarian social vision is so heavily influenced by Burke that she, like Gillray, does not question the hierarchizing of the feminine principle as weak; instead, she advocates nurturing the masculine faculty of reason in women. She disconcertingly derogates the feminine throughout *Vindication of the Rights of Men*: Her insistence on espousing 'manly plainness' and 'a manly spirit of independence' ensures that she becomes representative of what Elaine Showalter categorises as 'feminine'.²⁴² Her position of difference is woven into dominant ways of seeing and believing even as tries to question and move beyond hegemonic social mores.²⁴³

In her expression of a professional self, Wollstonecraft constructs herself in the masculine image of an intellectual. She represents herself as the true English patriot juxtaposed against Burke, the ostensible Francophile 'the champion of property, the adorer of the golden image which power has set up'.²⁴⁴ In order to transcend the limitations imposed on her sex she aspires to be a man. In order to achieve this, she constantly underplays her passionate side in the two

²⁴² *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*, pp. 84, 28.

²⁴³ In *Toward a Feminist Poetics* Elaine Showalter argues that women's literature can be divided into three phases; the Feminine phase (1840–1880) where women tried to equal the achievements of men, the Feminist phase (1880–1920) which witnessed women's writing protesting against male standards, and the Female phase (1920–) characterized by journeys of self-discovery, and the assertion of an autonomous identity for women. Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

²⁴⁴ *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*, p. 20.

Vindications.²⁴⁵ The notion of performativity is thus, intrinsic, even to the ostensibly revelatory treatise. Despite their self-revelatory nature, the pamphlets involve a high degree of self-consciousness and Wollstonecraft's construction of her own identity, to be consumed by the reading public, is telling. It is this rhetoric of self-presentation via which she places herself against the landed gentry as a woman of the intellect. Ironically she takes recourse to a masculine posture to do that.

Wollstonecraft's derogation of the feminine principle and romanticization of chastity is surprisingly reminiscent of the way in which female sexual behaviour forms the basis of Gillray's defamatory images of aristocratic women. A perfect example of this is Gillray's Miltonic caricature *Sin, Death, and Devil* (1792, Figure IV.4), which serves as a graphic and sexually explicit attack on the Queen Charlotte. The Queen was advised to take an active interest in matters of the state following the King's mental illness in 1788. She worked closely with William Pitt to monitor the vagaries of the political situation in England. Due to this, it was frequently suggested that she was instrumental in Pitt's choice of peace in 1790, and war in 1793.²⁴⁶ Their relationship provides the basis for Gillray's satire. It portrays the struggle between Prime Minister William Pitt and Lord Chancellor Edward Thurlow as a contest between Death and Satan. The influence of Hogarth's *Satan, Sin, and Death* (1735-40, Figure IV.5) is evident in Gillray's characterization of the gaunt Pitt as death, winged Thurlow as Satan, and Queen Charlotte as the sorceress. Hogarth's unfinished oil sketch illustrates a passage from Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Satan can be seen trying to cross over from hell to the newly created earth. On the

²⁴⁵ A popular biographical anecdote revolves around Wollstonecraft begging her lover Fuseli's wife to admit her into the family. This incident is not mentioned in any of her autobiographical and epistolary writings.

²⁴⁶ See Anna Clark, *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of the British Constitution* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004) pp. 114-18.

right, Death bars Satan's way at the gates of Hell. In the middle, Satan's daughter, Sin, represented as a naked woman by Hogarth, informs her father of their incestuous offspring Death. Hogarth's Sin mediates between her father and her son, both of whom, it is suggested, are her lovers.²⁴⁷ This subtext of adulterous love continues in Gillray's print as Queen Charlotte intervenes to solve a dispute between two of her alleged suitors. By invoking earlier literary and satirical masters, Gillray seems to be urging his readers to detect powerful emblematic tropes in his print. But he does not stop at the level of metaphor; instead he endows the allegorical conflict with specific political connotations.

The composition of his lurid print and the positioning of the two combatants with the Queen in the middle automatically hint at her influence in matters of the state. In fact, she can be seen wearing a key with the words 'the instrument of all our woe' on it. The presence of the key establishes her control over the gates of Hell. Her snaky skin and her Medusa-like hair, incredibly reminiscent Gillray's Alecto, evoke all the associated connections with monstrosity while her sagging breasts and the suggestive placement of her right hand on Pitt's genitals underline her sexual degeneracy. When read together, all these markers seem to suggest that it is Queen Charlotte who had the potential to become the real 'instrument' of the nation's 'woe' by asserting her illicit influence on Pitt. Gillray's representation of the Queen is, quite paradoxically, influenced by a body of French revolutionary caricature which used scatological and sexual imagery in order to foreground the sexual debauchery of aristocrats, especially Marie Antoinette. Gillray uses signs from revolutionary prints proliferating in France and adapts them for his 'Loyalist' caricature. By doing this, Gillray's prints, which demonise and occasionally

²⁴⁷ For a detailed discussion of the print see Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth's Harlot: Sacred Parody in Enlightenment England* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2003) pp. 227-35.

bestialise the Queen's body, succeed in creating a myth, divorced from real referents, which revolves around the figure of the aristocratic woman, in this case, Queen Charlotte. The Queen's body becomes a site of contestation onto which crucial political and cultural debates are mapped; it primarily functions as a series of signs, fabricated for representation and offered to the imagination of the viewer.

Gillray's socio-political satires continue to exploit this complex system of signs and symbols to refer to the Queen's supposed sexual degradation and undermine her political aspirations. His anxiety about her rising political aspirations is evident in *Weird Sisters; Ministers of Darkness; Minions of the Moon* (1791, Figure IV.6). The print reactivates the image of Fuseli's painting titled *The Weird Sisters* (1783, Figure IV.7) by embedding it in a political context. The 'witches' are Henry Dundas, Secretary of State for Home Affairs; William Pitt, Prime Minister; and Edward Thurlow, Lord Chancellor. This caricature was printed during The Regency Crisis and provides a paradigm for reading the political situation in its characterization of Queen Charlotte as Lady Macbeth.²⁴⁸ Gillray uses the dull side of the moon to hint at the King's passive nature whilst the colour and the positioning of the half-moon highlight the Queen's political aspirations. The emasculating effect this has on the State is evident in the text below the image 'They should be women! – and yet their beards forbid us to interpret, - that they are so'. Gillray's print clearly links the responsibilities bestowed on the Queen during the Regency Crisis to enfeebled masculinity. The print suggests that women's participation in politics

²⁴⁸ The Regency Bill of January 1789, intended to deprive the Prince of Wales of power, stated that the royal household was at the Queen's disposal and bestowed the Queen the charge of the King's person.

leads to a crisis in traditional masculinity. This assumption is a key aspect of anti-female caricature, and Gillray seems to wholeheartedly adhere to that dictum.²⁴⁹

His suggestive characterization of the Queen as Lady Macbeth, a cold-blooded *politique* who has emasculated the King, suggests that death is the inevitable consequence of political ambition and lust for power. He visualizes this suggestion in *The Hopes of the Party Prior to July Fourteenth* (1791, Figure IV.8). In this populated print, Gillray draws attention to the alleged sexual misconduct of the Queen in the midst of satirizing Republican sympathizers, and prominent Whigs. While Tooke, Fox, and Sheridan try to slaughter the King, the dead bodies of Queen Charlotte and William Pitt flutter in sexual abandon in the background. Their bodies hang by lanterns in the street, but in Gillray's characteristic bawdy style their genitalia rub against each other. His inclusion of the Queen in this print, and the subsequent assassination of her character by insinuating the deeply sexual nature of her relationship with Pitt are telling. These prints show that maligning feminine sexuality seems to be a convenient trope employed by both revolutionary French caricature and counter-revolutionary English caricature to dispel anxieties vis-à-vis the transgression of women into politics.

The omnipresence of the apprehension regarding the presence of women in politics can be traced to the fact that the eighteenth century saw a significant rise in aristocratic women using their influence to venture into politics.²⁵⁰ Ingrid Tague argues that this influence:

²⁴⁹ See Richard Polwhele, *The Unsex'd Females; A Poem, Addressed to the Author of The Pursuits of Literature. By the Rev. Richard Polewhele. To Which is Added, a Sketch of the Private and Public Character of P. Pindar* (New York: William Cobbett, 1800).

²⁵⁰ For insightful studies of the increasing presence of women in eighteenth-century politics see Katherine Gleadle, Sarah Richardson, eds., *Women in British politics, 1760-1860: The Power of the Petticoat* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000) and Ingrid H. Tague, *Women of Quality: Accepting and Contesting Ideals of Femininity In England, 1690-1760* (Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2002) pp. 194-216.

[W]as seen and accepted as public power. There was no need, when women used their influence to win jobs or political support, to pretend that this was mere sociability or to disguise it through male intervention or feminine disavowal. Influence provided the primary legitimate and accepted means for women of quality to participate in public affairs, and it reflected the most significant way in which status could overcome gender barriers. Women were able to exercise this power during the early modern period because political and social authority among the elite was still largely based on personal relationships between individuals. But although influence was *personal*, it was not *private* (italics- author's own).²⁵¹

The increasing participation of women in politics, especially election campaigns, generated a lot of interest from satirists. Georgiana, the (in)famous Duchess of Devonshire (1757-1806), is in many ways representative of women's involvement in the electoral process. She attracted a lot of attention whilst campaigning for Whig politicians, especially Charles James Fox.²⁵² Gillray explores the 1784 Westminster elections in the print titled *The Devonshire, or Most Approved Method of Securing Votes* (1784, Figure IV.9). This election stands out because it saw the participation of a number of female campaigners and the outcome made it seem that women could make an impact in politics. The 1783 election of Pitt as Prime Minister resulted in the Whigs trying to gain dominance over Tory MPs. Charles James Fox decided to do this by running for a seat in Westminster, a large, and therefore coveted borough. There were only two seats and three candidates: Charles Fox, Lord Hood, and Sir Cecil Wray. The Duchess of Devonshire actively participated in canvassing for Fox. This led to widespread speculation in newspaper reports and eyewitness accounts about her handing out medals to those who professed their support to Fox and her

²⁵¹ *Women of Quality*, p. 197.

²⁵² In *Women, Privilege and Power*, Amanda Vickery insists that women's participation in the political sphere is often under-represented. I will argue that women's participation is not under-represented but mis-represented. Amanda Vickery, *Women, Privilege and Power: British Politics from 1750 to the Present* (California: Stanford University Press, 2001).

door-to-door canvassing in middle and working-class areas. It was even suggested that she would socialise and drink with the lower classes whilst campaigning.²⁵³

It is precisely these 'methods' of securing votes that Gillray questions. His print gives credence to a popular story that she had exchanged a kiss with a butcher for a vote for Fox. By representing this rumour in print, Gillray visualises women's participation in the elections, something missing from most accounts of the period. But his Pittite attack on the Duchess undermines women's political engagement and seems to suggest that women have no place in politics. *The History of the Westminster Election of 1784* insists that 'beautiful ladies' helped candidates in 'seducing the electors'.²⁵⁴ Gillray confirms this in his suggestive depiction of the fashionable plumes in the Duchess's hair and her body, arched forward suggestively towards the butcher. By castigating her interaction with the lower classes, the caricaturist succeeds in negating the complexity of women's participation in politics at a turbulent historical moment. The explicitly sexual aspect of Gillray's defamation campaign demonstrates how ineluctably the woman's body is invested in the political domain. His portrayal of the Duchess of Devonshire seems to combine misogyny and political disgust. Her status as *femme publique* seems to justify the penetration of her body by agents of the state and self-proclaimed guardians of traditional morality. In keeping with this, Gillray's print articulates the current

²⁵³ For a commendable account of her involvement in the 1784 Westminster Election see Amanda Foreman, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire* (London: Harper Collins, 1998) and Amanda Foreman, 'A Politician's Politician: Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire and the Whig Party', *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations, and Responsibilities*, ed. Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1997).

²⁵⁴ J. Hartley, *History of the Westminster election, Containing Every Material Occurrence, from its Commencement [sic] on the First of April, to the Final Close of the Poll, on the Seventeenth of May. To Which is Prefixed A Summary Account of the Proceedings of the Late Parliament, So Far as They Appear Connected with the East India Business, and the Dismission of the Portland Administration, with Other Select and Interesting Occurrences at the Westminster Meetings, Previous to its Dissolution on the Twenty-Fifth Day of March, 1784* (London: J. Debrett, 1784) p. 225.

political situation using the body of the woman as a site, destined to exhibit a variety of political signs.

But in creating the anti-ideal and reviling 'public' women, Gillray undeniably brings the issue of public womanhood in the foreground. This is because his seemingly prescriptive sentiment is at odds with the uncontrollable nature of his genre. In her seminal 1975 essay 'Women on Top', Natalie Zemon Davis insists that even negative images of disorderly women could function subversively. Davis rights asserts that 'the image of the disorderly woman' is 'a multivalent image that could operate, first to widen behavioural options for women within and even outside of marriage, and, second, to sanction riot and political disobedience'.²⁵⁵ This is why, to the twenty-first century scholar, Gillray's permeable prints are a rich source for understanding the nuances of the way women looked at themselves in the eighteenth century and the perception of gender in the eighteenth century.

This hypothesis is supplemented by the fact that this complex relationship between 'public' women and agency continues to be a presence in the feminist writing of the period, even when the sexual self of the woman, which Wollstonecraft continually dismisses, is the primary focus of the work. This is true of Mary Hays' *The Memoirs of Emma Courtney* (1796), considered to be a pioneering feminist work of the late eighteenth-century.²⁵⁶ *The Memoirs* traces the growth of a woman's sexual and intellectual self. The confessional autobiographical mode uses the first person, emotive, highly individualized voice and is reminiscent of Rousseau's writing. However Hays deploys the epistolary form to subvert dominant ideologies and grapple with issues such as marriage, women's sexuality, education,

²⁵⁵ Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Women on Top', *Early Modern Europe- Issues and Interpretations*, eds. James B. Collins, Karen L. Taylor (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006) pp. 398-411, p. 401.

²⁵⁶ Mary Hays, *Memoirs of Emma Courtney. In Two Volumes* (London: G.G. and J. Robinson, 1796).

and the economic and emotional predicament of single women untrained for a profession: '*Dependence* I repeated to myself and felt my heart die within me' (italics- author's own).²⁵⁷ Hays' disruptive text uses the tropes of the sentimental narrative to vindicate passion and construes the very act of writing as pleasurable and therapeutic 'To write had always afforded a temporary relief to my spirits.'²⁵⁸ She writes in order to break away from her passive self to being an active and sexual agent. The autobiographical sub-text ensures a conflation of the fictional and the real, the public and the private. The triad of feminine sexuality, desire, and the act of writing is central to the *Memoirs* 'I am neither a philosopher nor a heroine-but a woman to whom education has given a sexual character' (italics- author's own).²⁵⁹ Hays' fictional narrative becomes representative of what Tilottama Rajan calls 'autonarration'.²⁶⁰ She negotiates with the matrix between life, fiction and ideology and traces the birth of a new, independent self for women.

At the same time however, the sentimental tone of the *Memoirs* runs the risk of essentializing the masculine from the feminine even more sharply 'I found a sweet relief from my sorrows in these tender maternal cares'.²⁶¹ The moralistic tone of the Preface adds to the ambiguity.²⁶² The ultimate irony however, is the fact that Emma Courtney takes recourse to letters and 'writes her love because she

²⁵⁷ *Memoirs*, Volume 1, p. 54. Hays espouses a stringent critique of the institution of marriage in her *Letters and Essays, Moral and Miscellaneous* 'Young women without fortunes, if they do not chance to marry[...] have scarce any other resources than in servitude or prostitution'. Mary Hays, *Letters and Essays, Moral, and Miscellaneous* (London: T. Knott, 1793) p. 84.

²⁵⁸ *Memoirs*, Volume 2, p. 73.

²⁵⁹ *Memorirs*, Volume 2, p. 53.

²⁶⁰ Rajan defines autonarration as the self-conscious location of ideology within a fiction rewriting of personal experience. See Tilottama Rajan, 'Autonarration and Genotext in Mary Hays' *Memoirs of Emma Courtney*', *Romanticism, History, and the Possibilities of Genre: Re-forming Literature 1789-1837*, ed. Tilottama Rajan, Julia M Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 213-39.

²⁶¹ *Memoirs*, Volume 2, p. 188.

²⁶² In the *Preface* Emma Courtney seems to accept the dominant devaluation of passion and represents her memoirs as a warning against error.

cannot act it, and that both her love and her ideas are confined within the space of representation'.²⁶³ The transgressive act of writing the 'self' is finally indicative of her powerlessness.

The text can be said to exist in a dialogue with a series of Gillray's prints that respond to this issue of agency accorded to women. The first of these is a brutal print, *The Lubber's Hole; - alias - The Crack'd Jordan* (1791, Figure IV.10), a comment on the affair between the Duke of Clarence (George III's son) and Dorothea Jordan. The print depicts the Duke of Clarence's mistress and the mother of ten of his children as a pot with a huge crack. Dorothea Bland, who went by the name Mrs. Jordan, was famous for cross-dressing and acting at the Drury Lane Theatre. Gillray's representation of her as a chamber pot on legs reiterates popular ideas about female performers being 'vulgar' and 'loose' women. She is, quite literally, reduced to a sex object, as the Duke can be seen entering the pot via the huge crack symbolic of her genitalia.

Gillray goes back to their relationship in *La Promenade En Famille* (1797, Figure IV.11) cheekily subtitled 'A sketch from life'. The print represents the Duke of Clarence pulling his three children in a cart while Dorothea Jordan rehearses lines for a play. The implication is obvious. Her conduct is shocking not just as a royal mistress, but also as a woman. The influence of Hogarth's Evening print, from his *Four Times of the Day* (1736, Figure IV.12) series, is evident in the composition of the print. The couple attempts to escape from the city to Sadlers Wells. The entrance to Sadler Wells Theatre is visible on the left towards which the husband can be seen carrying the daughter. The strategic placement of the cow's horns behind the husband's head foregrounds the idea of him as a cuckold. In the original painting the

²⁶³ *Romanticism, History, and the Possibilities of Genre*, p. 231.

man's hands are stained blue to reveal he is a dyer by trade. His wife's face is coloured red in order to imply the lack of innocence. This power play is underlined by the replication of this idea in the background where the couple's children are fighting over some gingerbread. The cane between the little boy's legs functions as an overt phallic symbol but it seems to be an ironic reminder of his lack of authority. He continues to cry while the girl bosses over him.

The imagery in Gillray's print is derivative of both Hogarthian and medieval notions of cuckoldry, but once again the satirist endows his schemata with contemporaneous connotations. In his print Dorothea's masculine style riding breeches betray a fundamental anxiety about women 'masquerading' as men, peculiar to eighteenth-century England. Terry Castle insists that such cross-dressing has a utopian potential because it helps to destabilize the binary between masculine and feminine realms.²⁶⁴ For this very reason, women in masculine guise seem to represent the most threatening of female behaviour for Gillray. They transgress the rules of heterosexual society, thereby upsetting the 'natural' order of things. His print repeatedly hints at the paramount danger associated with acting and cross-dressing, that of subverting the status quo. These prints then seem to be regulatory gestures aimed at containing the transgression of women like Emma Courtney. Ironically, as Mary Hays' novel demonstrates, even her sexually aware protagonist ultimately lacks agency, and is not capable of transgressing patriarchy. This brings us to the conundrum that is at the centre of the debate regarding women's rights in the late-eighteenth century - while the engraver overtly derides women in public spaces and is dismissive of their sexuality and cross-dressing, women's writing

²⁶⁴ Terry Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnavalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction* (California: Stanford University Press, 1986).

continues to question this characterization but reiterates the former's claims by celebrating pre-ordained roles of women as wives and mothers.

Ironically, Gillray chooses to lament the sexuality of women by depicting women's bodies as thoroughly saturated with sexuality. In a riveting voyeuristic print, *A Peep into Lady W!!!!y's Seraglio* (1782, Figure IV.13), the satirist represents Lady Worsley's numerous lovers taking turns at copulating with her. Dorothy Seymour married Sir Richard Worsley in 1775 and is said to have taken twenty-seven lovers.²⁶⁵ This image seeks to disclose an aristocratic lady's intimate moments by a set of very precise referents. Gendered norms and sexual fantasy combine to conjure a disturbing vision, which represents the violation of the very last taboo: the private life of the aristocratic women is peeled bare by image. The sexuality displayed by Lady Worsley here is outside the reproductive matrix that valorises conception; the print revels in, but ultimately castigates, this repudiation of procreative sexual activity.

Gillray's interpretation of a staircase of lovers waiting to pleasure Lady Worsley in her chamber bears a striking resemblance to the scene described by numerous political pornographic pamphlets in revolutionary France. The pamphlet *The Austrian Woman on the Rampage* which shows Marie Antoinette being taken by the Comte d'Artois, the king's brother, on the very back of Louis the XVI, as he sleeps, describes the sexual act in a similar fashion:

On a human monarch's back
I see the Mother of Vice
Plunged in fearful pleasures twice
A whorish Queen, a princely hack

²⁶⁵ For extensive information about sexual scandals involving Lady Worsley see Hallie Rubenhold, *Lady Worsley's Whim: An Eighteenth-Century Tale of Sex, Scandal, and Divorce* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2008).

A lout of a Prince and a prostitute Queen.²⁶⁶

Similarly, in *The Royal Bordello* the Queen asks the Baron, Cardinal, Bishop, and Marquis to take turns to infuse 'your procreative broth in my pot'.²⁶⁷ The underlying assumption in these pamphlets is that power becomes arbitrary and abusive when it is mixed with sexual passion in a woman's body.

These examples make it evident that Gillray resorts to the trope perfected by revolutionary print-makers who sought to highlight the sexual degeneration of Marie Antoinette in revolutionary France, to question the morals of aristocratic women in England. The aristocratic woman's body constructed by the ubiquitous panoptic gaze of these print-makers provides a ground for the play of culturally contested meanings. Lady Worsley, the woman, is fabricated as the site of debates surrounding public womanhood.

Gillray's reactions against public womanhood, in favour of conjugal and maternal roles for women, are strengthened in a series of prints where he focusses on the lack of maternal instincts in aristocratic women. The theme of maternal negligence is nowhere more evident than in the print titled *The Fashionable Mamma, or the Convenience of Modern Dress* (1796, Figure IV.14) where he pokes fun at an aristocratic mother. The lady's preoccupation with fashion is evident in the way she sports huge ostrich plumes in her hair. Large headgear, first made popular by Marie Antoinette during the 1770s, was very popular in England at the end of the eighteenth century. In Gillray's print fashion and frivolity seem to exist in a continuum. Not only can his Mamma boast of ostentatious headgear, she can be seen

²⁶⁶ Chantal Thomas, *The Wicked Queen: The Origins of the Myth of Marie-Antoinette*, trans. Julie Rose (New York: Zone Books, 1999) p. 215.

²⁶⁷ *The Wicked Queen*, p. 220.

sporting her gloves and evening accessories whilst a carriage waits for her outside. Ironically her attire consists of a maternal chemise, slit at the breast.

Traditionally, English women's bodies had been 'padded, corsetted, bodiced and concealed in broad petticoated or hooped dresses'.²⁶⁸ But these trends changed over the last decade of the eighteenth century and the years between 1793 and 1800 led to an increase in the popularity of flimsier dresses and petticoats. It is in this context that the Fashionable Mamma's clothes need to be read. Gillray continues to poke fun at dresses that expose a woman's body in a number of other prints. In his print *Ladies Dress, As It Soon Will Be* (1796, Figure IV.15) he engages with a lady wearing a dress which bares her breast and exposes her thigh while in *Operatical Reform; - or - La Dance A L' eveque* (1798, Figure IV.16) the famous opera dancer Rose Didelot and two girls appear in flimsy petticoats and bodices, and transparent dresses. A laughing satyr and a horrified Venus surround them and the text below the print reads:

'Tis hard for such new fangled orthodox rules,
That our opera-troop should be blam'd,
Since, like our first parents, they only, poor fools
Danc'd naked, and were not asham'd

In all these prints, which dwell on fashion of the 1790s, one can detect a marked lack of insistence on corsets, underwear, even sleeves. This attention to the 'natural' form of a woman is deeply conditioned by Rousseau's celebration of the mother's body, especially the ritual of breast-feeding, in *Emile*.²⁶⁹

Gillray's response to this shift is very obvious in *The Fashionable Mamma*. The chemise, slit at the breast, might be the mother's attire for the evening but the look of indifference on her face is in stark contrast to the indulgent look on the

²⁶⁸ *City of Laughter*, p. 364.

²⁶⁹ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile; Ou, De L'éducation. Volume I* (Paris: à Francfort, 1762).

maid's face. The fact that the maid has to hold the child to the mother's breast visualizes the dark underside of Rousseau's model of natural motherhood for Gillray's viewers.²⁷⁰ The indecency of the maternal chemise, which leaves the breasts of the lady exposed for Gillray's viewers, provides another comment about the nature of the lady. The framed picture, with its insistence on maternal love, heightens the criticism implicit in the print and gives away the ideological affiliation of the caricaturist. For Gillray, the Fashionable Mamma seems to be the generic aristocratic mother, and he uses her to undercut the maternal instinct of aristocratic women.

Gillray continues in the same vein in his Lady Termagant prints. In this series, Gillray chooses to focus on a woman who was in the limelight because of a broken marriage - Mary, Countess of Strathmore. Mary Eleanor Bowes (1749-1800) married the Earl of Strathmore in 1767 and had a tarnished reputation following a number of public affairs. She married Andrew Robinson Stoney Bowes in 1777 and suffered a long history of domestic violence at Bowes' hands. Following this, a number of caricatures revolving around his maltreatment of the Countess were printed. But Gillray chooses to focus on Countess Strathmore as a woman who lacks maternal instincts. He highlights her harshness with her own stepson in the first portraiture of the series.

Lady Termagant Flaybum Going to Give her Step Son a Taste of Her Desert after Dinner, A Scene Performed Every Day near Grosvenor Square, to the Annoyance of the Neighbourhood (1786, Figure IV.17) depicts the Countess sitting in an indecorous fashion with her legs crossed and a breast exposed. What is

²⁷⁰ In *Emile*, Rousseau insists on breast-feeding, as opposed to using wet-nurses, as a marker of natural motherhood. Gillray seems to turn this philosophical concept on its head as he depicts a wide-eyed greedy infant. The implication is obvious; the tainted mother seems to have passed on her corrupt traits to her child.

interesting is the sexual overtone of this print; the maidservant is busy unbuttoning the boy's breeches. It proposes that the Countess used her stepson for sexual gratification.²⁷¹ Furthermore, her exposed breast seems to suggest that she is still breast-feeding the young boy. The simultaneous infantilization and flagellation betrays a perverse sexuality, which disturbingly conflates the maternal and the erotic. Vic Gatrell suggests that Bowes, the Countess' second husband, might have commissioned these prints. But Gillray's compliance, and his obviously exaggerated depiction of the Countess, betrays his ostensibly gendered perspective.

His repudiation of the Countess is taken further in the second print of the series titled *The Injured Countess ..[es]s* (1786, Figure IV.18) which visualises rumours about Lady Strathmore's dislike of her children and her love for cats. The Countess suckles two cats at her breasts while her son cries in the background: 'I wish I was a cat, my mama would love me then'. The print is littered with details that suggest Gillray is visualizing Bowes' perspective. Behind the table a suggestive picture of Messalina hints at the Countess's transgressions. On the left, her rumoured lover, Captain Farrer of the East India Company, can be seen examining the Bowes estate. Lady Morgan, who helped the Countess escape from Bowes, is portrayed as a grotesque witch-like figure with a tapering waist.

Gillray depicts Lady Morgan in the same fashion in his next print titled *The Miser's Feast* (1786, Figure IV.19). In fact, he goes a step further and depicts Mrs. Morgan as the personification of famine. She is bare-breasted and her waist has almost vanished. In this bleak print, the figure of death on the right has an arrow in

²⁷¹ In her book *Lascivious Bodies*, Julie Peakman argues that the eighteenth century led to a re-categorization of sex. New fears regarding masturbation and homosexuality were rampant but numerous other forms of sexual activity including group sex, strangulation, and flagellation were becoming accepted practice. London had numerous flagellation parlours and Theresa Berkeley; one of London's famous prostitutes even produced the 1793 edition of an anonymous work from 1777, *The Exhibition of Female Flagellants*. Julie Peakman, *Lascivious Bodies: A Sexual History of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Atlantic Books, 2004).

one hand and a plate with a bone in the other. There is another person sitting on the table in tattered clothes. A blocked window, locked cupboards, and bags of money reiterate the title of the print. The text reads: 'What else can follow, but destructive fate, / When Famine holds the cup, and Death the plate?'. The Countess can be seen by the door but has not yet entered the room. Everything in the print highlights the bleakness of the future for the Countess, should she desert Bowes. The Countess, Gillray's grotesque print seems to suggest, is on the brink of disaster.

Bowes continued to maltreat the Countess and was imprisoned for over twenty-two years.²⁷² But Gillray continues to put the onus of their dysfunctional marriage on the Countess. His unremitting satire of the Countess continues till the last print of the series titled *Andrew Robinson Bowes Esqr. as He Appeared in the Court of Kings Bench . . . to Answer the Articles Exhibited Against Him, by his Wife, the Countess of Strathmore* (1786, Figure IV.20). Here Gillray depicts the Countess and Mrs. Morgan among the spectators. The Countess did not attend the trial, but in Gillray's version she is not only present, but she is also bare-breasted. The inclusion of this one seemingly trivial detail sexualises and demonises the aristocratic mother simultaneously.

By now it should come as no surprise that Gillray's veneration of motherhood, and contempt at the lack of maternal instinct in aristocratic women finds an ally in Wollstonecraft's deference of motherhood in *Maria or The Wrongs of Woman* (1798). *Maria* espouses a syntactic and thematic revolt against oppressive

²⁷² For an autobiographical account see Mary Eleanor Bowes, *Confessions of the Countess of Strathmore, Written by Herself. Carefully Copied from the Original, Lodged in Doctor's Commons*. (London: W. Locke, 1793). For an introduction to domestic violence in the eighteenth century and a detailed deliberation on the turbulent second marriage of the Countess see Wendy Moore, *Wedlock: The True Story of the Disastrous Marriage and Remarkable Divorce of Mary Eleanor Bowes, Countess of Strathmore* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2009).

patriarchal structures and a claustrophobic capitalist system.²⁷³ Part memoir, part sociological text, part political tract, Maria seeks to negotiate with the triadic complex between life, art and ideology. The novel questions the sexual, economic and legal basis of patriarchy 'I had been caught in a trap and caged for life' and uses a mosaic of images to suggest that the French Revolution did not bring any reprieve for women across classes.²⁷⁴ Wollstonecraft anticipates Walter Scott's *Bride of Lammermoor* (1819) and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) by drawing attention to the linkages between women, marriage, property and hysteria by focussing on Maria, who is deprived of her wealth and imprisoned in a madhouse.²⁷⁵

The patriarch, George Venables, is responsible for both Maria's literal and mental confinement. The panoptic nature of patriarchy, revealed in Maria's literal confinement to the prison-house, anticipates the Foucauldian matrix between power, discipline, madness, and the prison house. Wollstonecraft, like Foucault, seems to be suggesting that the state tries to fit in all impulses under one homogenous umbrella. Any deviation, the self-expression on a woman's part in this case, is treated as an aberration, tantamount to 'madness'.

The disruptive content of *Maria* is compounded by the incoherence of form. The frequent ellipses, dashes, incomplete sentences, the proposed multiple endings and the final fragmented ending of the novel helps Wollstonecraft articulate what Julia Kristeva calls 'unsatisfied, repressed, new, eccentric, incomprehensible'

²⁷³ Mary Wollstonecraft, 'Maria', *Posthumous Works of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman. In Four Volumes* (London: J. Johnson, 1798).

²⁷⁴ *Posthumous Works*, Volume 2, p. 6.

²⁷⁵ Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, ed. Michael Mason (London: Penguin, 1996); Sir Walter Scott, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, ed. Fiona Roberston (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

elements that disturb the patriarchal status quo.²⁷⁶ The form of the text, emblematic of *écriture féminine*, thus becomes its most important characteristic. The challenging format of the novel allows Wollstonecraft to represent women's experience in a radical fashion.²⁷⁷

This is reinforced by the fact that she accords her protagonist agency to verbalise women's experience, and speak out against patriarchal authority. But her heroine is punished for her disdain of patriarchy by having her child snatched away from her. This leaves Maria hearing her 'half speaking half cooing', and feeling 'the little twinkling fingers on her burning bosom – a bosom bursting with the nutriment for which this cherished child might now be pining in vain'.²⁷⁸ Once again Wollstonecraft's exposure of the tyranny of wifery is closely followed by a valorisation of 'the unutterable pleasure of being a mother'.²⁷⁹ Her celebration of motherhood is rooted in women's experience, but is reminiscent of the assumptions of moralistic conduct books. Ironically it is this very maternal instinct that causes her to speak out against the prevalent discourse in the first place; the novel is addressed to her daughter, whose presence is responsible for Maria's articulation of an alternative discourse. Once again, the reader can sense Wollstonecraft vacillating between questioning and replicating of the patriarchal ethic in *Maria*; the author seems to be trapped within the entrapping ideologies she seeks to escape.

Both Wollstonecraft and Hays, often celebrated as literary foremothers, seem to be caught in a double bind. They seek to fashion an identity for themselves and offer a new perspective on debates regarding women, but cannot escape the

²⁷⁶ Julia Kristeva, *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986) p. 156. Wollstonecraft is said to have devised seven alternate endings for *Maria*.

²⁷⁷ Hélène Cixous, 'The Laugh of the Medusa', *New French Feminisms*, ed. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (New York: Schocken, 1981) pp. 245-64.

²⁷⁸ *Posthumous Works*, p. 3.

²⁷⁹ *Posthumous Works*, pp. 31-33.

influence of their literary forefathers. The overarching presence of devotional literature, conduct books, Dissenters' sermons, Enlightenment treatises, Augustan satires, and philosophical tracts in the literary and visual texts of the period leads authors such as Wollstonecraft and Hays to fabricate a uniquely complicated position vis-à-vis the insubordination of the bourgeois feminist project during the French Revolution. This explains why Wollstonecraft's egalitarian social vision and liberalism, and Mary Hays' subversive contemplations regarding feminine sexuality cannot be celebrated uncritically. Hays goes a step further by differentiating her sexual self from Wollstonecraftian 'manly' rationality, but she too, critiques sentimental literary formulae only to reify them.

We have seen that Gillray's representations of women seem to lack the plurality, which defines the majority of his prints. But I hope to have shown that even the most radical texts of the period, which seek to dwell on the intricacies of women's involvement in social and political life of eighteenth-century England, are entangled in a similar skein of tension. Ideology, poetics, politics, and identity come together to lend a variegated texture to each of these literary and visual texts. This is the reason for the categorical lack of a conclusive authorial stance in each case. But this is not a shortcoming in any way; rather it is an indicator of the author's engagement with the nuances of socio-political and cultural geography of the 1790s. The radical reorganization of the public sphere increasingly led to the breakdown of the traditional dichotomies between public and private spaces, patrician and plebeian. Both the ostensibly feminist and conservative texts of the period are caught in these raging debates. This is why eighteenth-century feminist literary texts and Gillray's 'conservative' prints of aristocratic women are fraught with similar ambiguities. This is what brings Wollstonecraft's pro-revolutionary polemic, Polwhele's vituperative anti-woman satire, and Gillray's riveting prints of

aristocratic women together. The lewd woman anti-type is prevalent in Gillray's images, but eventually Hays, Wollstonecraft, and Gillray seem to be driving towards a common point - heteronormative patriarchal society works relentlessly to divide women as 'good' and 'bad', but as a compendium of images discussed in this chapter - Gillray's Duchess of Devonshire and Queen Charlotte, Wollstonecraft's Maria, Hays' Emma Courtney - shows, the two categories are frighteningly similar, overlapping, and diffused.

Gillray is constantly attracted to women who are in the public eye, strategically positioned on the cusp between the public and the private. The aristocratic woman's body, obsessively sexualized or demonized, becomes a site of contempt, occasioned by the destruction of the patriarchal norms, and intensified by the intrusion of women into the public sphere. But his images of these women are emblematic of this broader problem of the relations between women and the public sphere in the eighteenth century. In this chapter, I have shown how his prints frequently suggest that in eschewing domesticity, and veering towards the public sphere, women become 'lewd'. But his admonitory intention is at odds with the subversive nature of his genre. His images might, at first, seem dismissive, but in keeping with the polyvalent nature of his caricature they garner visibility to the 'public' woman and introduce the concept of 'public womanhood' into the domain of discussion. His texts are permeable, and their permeability makes them incendiary. To quote Kittredge - 'it is precisely by becoming "notorious" that a singly "lewd" woman (real or constructed) has a profound effect on the society that reviles her'.²⁸⁰ Thus, Gillray's anti-ideal, despite its discursive power, does not operate in monolithic fashion but can be maneuvered to contribute to a rich cultural

²⁸⁰ *Lewd and Notorious*, p. 2.

dialogue about the nature of women's participation in the public sphere in the late eighteenth century. The latent dialogism of the prints, coupled with the ambiguities of women's writing in the late-eighteenth century, contributes to the formation of a critical constellation that has as its co-ordinates disparate personalities and thinking minds such as Priestley, Burke, Paine, Wollstonecraft, Godwin, and Gillray. Far from being reductive, these ambiguities are the *deux-ex-machina* of this critical constellation for they ensure an after-life of the period's critical ideas.

Chapter 5 Conclusion: Gillray's Legacy

We have seen how Gillray's prints succeed in chronicling the ruptured social fabric of England during a period of transition. Their stature as 'low art' allows them to engage closely with the complex nexus between the emergent bourgeois public sphere and the political realm. It is their unique fusion of visual enjoyment and political intervention that makes them attractive to an increasingly literate public in the late eighteenth century. Their omnipresence – his prints were displayed in shop-windows and people's houses alike – actively contributed to their popularity. To use Walter Benjamin's terminology, Gillray partook in 'mechanical reproduction' by virtue of being a print maker. As a result, his prints powerfully attest to the decay of 'aura'. For this reason, Benjamin's theoretical formulations are useful in analyzing the allure of Gillray's prints.

In 'The Work of Art In The Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (1936), Benjamin discusses a shift in perception in the face of the advent of film and photography in the twentieth century:

[T]hat which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art. This is a symptomatic process whose significance points beyond the realm of art. One might generalize by saying: the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence. And in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it reactivates the object reproduced.

Further dwelling on the difference between art and film he writes:

But the instant the criterion of authenticity ceases to be applicable to artistic production, the total function of art is reversed. Instead of being based on ritual, it begins to be based on another practice – politics [...] Magician and surgeon compare to painter and cameraman. The painter maintains in his work a natural distance from reality, the cameraman penetrates deeply into its web. There is a tremendous difference between the pictures they obtain.

That of the painter is a total one, that of the cameraman consists of multiple fragments which are assembled under a new law. Thus, for contemporary man the representation of reality by the film is incomparably more significant than that of the painter.²⁸¹

By deliberating over the analogy between Benjamin's theorizing on film and Gillray's eighteenth-century satires, one can deduce that it is the caricaturist's preoccupation with politics, and the multiplicity of his perspectives that lend a unique edge to the prints in question and make them such strong tools of political commentary.²⁸² In a manner similar to Benjamin's reading of film, Gillray's prints also dismantle the sacrosanct, and revel in 'multiple fragments which are assembled under a new law'. The resultant polyphony, as I have shown, is central to Gillray's oeuvre.

Another factor that contributes to the dissipation of 'aura' is their frequently salacious nature. As we have seen, his satires revel in bodily functions including vomiting, urinating, farting, spitting, defecating, and fornicating. Occupying a lower rung on the hierarchy of genres allows him to deploy bawdy and scatological motifs and critique existing social and political mores unabashedly using parody and analogy. This paved the way for the simultaneous contemplation of his prints by large numbers of members of the public.

But it needs to be questioned whether this move away from the 'domain of tradition' provides an apt summation of Gillray's achievements as a satirist. On closer examination, one can see that this turn from the 'aura' of traditional art is only the tip of the iceberg, merely indicative of the immense potential of his satire. What makes Gillray's art exceptional is that fact that although it dismantles 'aura', it does

²⁸¹ *Illuminations*, pp. 221, 234.

²⁸² This is one of the numerous examples of this analogy present in the essay. A close reading of the *The Work of Art In The Age of Mechanical Reproduction* testifies to the striking similarities between Benjamin's understanding of the medium of film and my understanding of visual satire in the late eighteenth century in this thesis.

not dwindle the subject to the level of the commonplace. It moves away from the sacramental element of traditional art, only to create alternative iconic configurations. It is this unique, almost oxymoronic quality, that is responsible for their popularity. A good example of this dynamic is the literally titled *An Excrescence; A Fungus; alias A Toadstool Upon A Dunghill* (1791, Figure V.1). This print relies on physiognomic metamorphosis to comment on William Pitt's growing influence in England. Talking about the difference between portrait caricature and Gillray's satiric caricatural portraits of politicians, Ronald Paulson insists that in the case of the latter 'an elaboration of context becomes necessary. Unlike portrait caricature then, with its generally static figures and barely defined locale, satiric caricature typically presents a dramatic situation'.²⁸³ In keeping with this, Gillray's print is deeply rooted in the age. Pitt signifies the parasite that feeds on the Crown, but the titular 'Dung-Hill', i.e. the Crown, is representative of the rot that provides sustenance to parasitical fungi. The lack of realism, and resultant element of comic exaggeration in such configurations, makes the wielders of power seem less intimidating, thereby dispersing the ambience of veneration that traditionally surrounded them. But this does not stop Gillray from embedding these members of royalty, and representatives of the state, at the very centre of his alternative satirical historiography.

Gillray's *The Giant Factotum Amusing Himself* (1797, Figure V.2) provides definitive visual evidence of this.²⁸⁴ The print depicts Parliamentary struggle in England. The 'giant factotum' in question is William Pitt. Sitting atop the Speaker's

²⁸³ Ronald Paulson, 'Pictorial Satire: From Emblem to Expression', *A Companion To Satire*, ed. Robert Quintero (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2007) pp. 293-324, p. 313.

²⁸⁴ A giant reproduction of this print occupied centre-stage in the 'Politics' room at a recent exhibition, *Rude Britannia: British Comic Art*, held at the Tate Britain from 9 June to 5 September 2010. The room in question was curated by the *Sunday Times* regular Gerald Scarfe. This testifies to the fact that it is Gillray's iconic compositions of eighteenth-century politicians and members of the aristocracy that continue to interest practitioners of caricature in recent times.

chair in the House of Commons, towering high above the galleries, he is turned into a 'surreal Gulliver amongst pygmies'.²⁸⁵ The faces of the members of the Opposition and his supporters are reduced to mere specks. His left foot is crushing Fox, Sheridan, Erskine, and other members of the Opposition, while Canning kisses his right foot, supported by Wilberforce and Dundas, worshipped by other ministerial supporters and members of the Treasury. He is playing the children's game of cup and ball, but the ball in question is the globe. Gillray's suggestive placement of the globe suggests the extent of Pitt's influence at home and abroad. In his left hand is a document entitled 'resources for supporting war'. His right pocket contains documents regarding large numbers of seamen, regulars, and volunteers. But his left pocket is bursting at its seams with gold coins. The title satirically alludes to his multifarious responsibilities as the English Prime Minister including maintaining peace at home and continuing war abroad while increasing his influence, and amassing wealth for himself. In keeping with this, his posture, with his back fully stretched out, betrays arrogance.

The print was published at a time when Britain was fighting an expensive war against France the cost of which eventually led to a change in Pitt's taxation policy. Despite increasing national debt and the prospect of the introduction of new taxes, his popularity remained intact.²⁸⁶ Gillray's print destabilizes his reputation by questioning his tactics. Once again, the satirist seems to be ventriloquizing for the British populace by suggesting that Pitt's dominance over Parliament was a result of coercion. But *Giant Factotum* highlights public grievance against the minister by

²⁸⁵ Vic Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, p. 280.

²⁸⁶ This changed towards the end of year when Fox made a powerful speech on December 14, 1797 opposing the onslaught of taxes. For a history of the imposition of taxes in England see Edwin Robert Anderson Seligman, *The Income Tax: A Study of the History, Theory, and Practice of Income Taxation at Home and Abroad* (New Jersey: The Lawbook Exchange Ltd., 2004) pp. 57-77 and Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class: The Political Representation of Class in Britain, c. 1780-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

resorting to the artistic trope of perspective. It betrays a nuanced understanding of the political intrigues of the day and it could be argued that the print verbalizes the complaints of the common man. But that does not stop the satirist from allotting a position of prominence to the representative of state.

In both cases, Pitt is reduced to being a 'fungus' and a 'factotum', but he is still at the very centre of Gillray's satirical historiography of late Georgian England. Drawing on Ernst Gombrich's essay by the same name, Ronald Paulson insists that the 'emblem' is a cartoonist's armoury, and this is nowhere truer than in Gillray's case.²⁸⁷ If the dissipation of 'aura' is indicative of the immense potential of his art, then his iconic (re)configurations represent the realization of that potential. His icons help him condense political intrigues, social binaries, and power plays into one powerful emblematic image. The strategic use of perspective lends a distinctive iconic aspect to his prints and helps develop visual satire into an alternative form of historiography.

Upon deliberation, one can see that this historiography – comprising his prints on food, John Bull, and aristocratic women – is fraught with complexities, and is deeply polyphonic in nature. The variety of visual narratives it provides betrays a nuanced understanding of the last two decades of the eighteenth century. The viewer of Gillray's satires encounters information about countless social and political changes within his oeuvre. But in each case in Gillray's satirical macrocosm, it is the iconic images of John Bull – as the innocent English citizen who cannot choose between French revolutionaries and the representatives of State, Charles James Fox – as a hairy revolutionary, Pitt – as a skeletal wielder of arbitrary power, and the Prince of Wales – as a symbol of debauchery that remain with the viewer. Testifying

²⁸⁷ E. H. Gombrich, 'The Cartoonist's Armoury', *Meditations on a Hobby Horse and Other Essays on the Theory of Art* (London: Phaidon, 1963), pp. 127-42; *A Companion To Satire*, p. 293.

to this, *The Guardian's* Steve Bell insists that rather than the portraiture of George III, Charles James Fox, or William Pitt, it is Gillray's vivid caricatures of them we remember - 'He made them dance to his tune'.²⁸⁸

His mass-produced plates stand in stark contrast to the high art of the day. By effectively dismantling the halo around the aristocracy and the representatives of the state, and opening them to irreverence and ridicule, Gillray's prints instill doubt, and promote debate and discussion, both of which are necessary for any democratic society. In spite of their vibrant nature, the canon has relegated Gillray's oeuvre to the backwaters of literary and visual productions of the age. A history of exclusion has resulted in a limited understanding of Gillray as a satirist, and of eighteenth-century visual satire as an evocative tool for understanding the age. Despite the omniscient strain of political and social commentary, his prints continued to be suppressed in later centuries. This could explain why, in spite of recent revisionist work, Gillray continues to be seen as an apologist for the Government. I believe this is primarily due to the absence of a sustained critical study of his oeuvre, and I hope to have addressed this critical imbalance by focussing on the richness of Gillray's output. The selection of prints in this thesis showcases the plurality inherent in his work.²⁸⁹ His satires are ideologically hybrid and need to be appreciated as such. An acknowledgement of this hybridity complicates received ideas about what constitutes propaganda and can help us take the work on eighteenth-century satire in a new direction.

Gillray's ideological leanings remain indecipherable in a considerable number of his prints. But they are the richer for it. Each print is situated in a specific

²⁸⁸ Steve Bell, 'Interview', *University of York*, 12 May 2011 <<http://www.york.ac.uk/news-and-events/features/steve-bell-interview/>> [10 June 2011] (para 16 of 20).

²⁸⁹ Gillray continued to satirise politicians and in the early nineteenth century. Napoleon was one of his primary targets. These prints, however, are outside the purview of this thesis.

political and literary context. The verbal accompaniments, speech bubbles, and captions work with the graphic image to make the print what it is. This dialogue between the political, the literary, and the visual in each plate makes it aesthetically complex. To the twenty-first-century post-Foucauldian scholar, they 'tell' the history of an age of political and social upheaval. Gillray's late-eighteenth-century prints chronicle the nuances of changing attitudes towards literacy, gender, politics, and family. Their spontaneity offers a glimpse of the alleys of history that are often bypassed by traditional historical and literary accounts of the time. In doing so, they bear testimony to the fact that reading historical and literary texts are not the only rewarding ways of interpreting the age.

The twenty-first century has seen a resurgence of Gillray's brand of satire with cartoonists like Steve Bell, Dave Brown, and Martin Rowson. Cartoonists have graduated from displaying their wares in shop windows to creating their own websites, but their aim – to make their art readily available to the largest number of people possible – remains the same. Gillray's successors continue to draw inspiration from the political conspiracies, persistent inequality, Parliamentary feuds, and social controversies, and persist in expressing their hostility towards the Establishment. They rely on politicians to provide constant ammunition for pungent commentary. They are inventive, and effective social commentators, who have the unique ability to grapple with multiple aspects of a debate within one satirical plate. Gillray's legacy is a body of cartoons that continue to be visually appealing, but never ideologically predictable.

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