

James Gillray@200: Caricaturist without a Conscience?

**The Ashmolean Museum
Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th March 2015**

Abstracts

Of

Papers

James Gillray@200: Caricaturist without a Conscience?

**The Ashmolean Museum
Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th March 2015**

Rachel M. Brownstein
Professor of English, City University of New York
rbrownstein@gc.cuny.edu

James Gillray and Jane Austen: Aesthetic Affinities

Dramatically different in their medium, message, and reputations, James Gillray and Jane Austen—near contemporaries—have significant aesthetic affinities. While their lives, careers, and politics (or lack of them) seem absolutely opposed, the art they made—elegant, satirical—appeals to similar tastes. Gillray was at the height of his cultural influence when Austen began writing, and his spectacular grotesque portraits arguably inspired her to invent those shifts in point of view that turn “real”-seeming human specimens from characters into caricatures, and back again. Both artists were appalled and intrigued by the greed and decadence of Georgian England, and its power structure; both admired Pope and Swift. Both documented the ongoing wars between France and England, men and women, aristocrats and arrivistes, real elegance and vulgarity—and between selfishness and civilization, on all social levels and in both political parties. My paper will draw parallels between the paragon of propriety and the alleged gun for hire, the lady and the crank, both satirists who focused on telling details in the service of a clear moral vision, and sported with allusions to please a coterie their present-day admirers aspire to join.

Biographical Statement:

Research Interests: 18th and 19th century literature, the novel especially; life writing; essays; caricature.

James Gillray@200: Caricaturist without a Conscience?

The Ashmolean Museum
Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th March 2015

Esther Chadwick

PhD Candidate in the History of Art at Yale University
esther.chadwick@yale.edu

Gillray's *Tree of Liberty*: political communication and postal networks in the radical 1790s

The Tree of Liberty, with the Devil Tempting John Bull (May 23, 1798) is one of the first among nearly a hundred prints by Gillray that were folded up, addressed and sent like letters to the editor of *London und Paris* in Weimar. This paper begins with the physical marks of the print's journey through the post in 1798—fragments of a wax seal, a handwritten address, a Foreign Office stamp—and goes on to consider the postal system as a key context for Gillray's work in the French revolutionary decade. Gillray relied upon the post as a means of receiving information to be processed in his prints, as well as using it as a vehicle for his satire. He was acutely aware of the politicization of the letter as a unit of communication in late eighteenth-century Britain, and made postal interception the basis of some of his most brilliant work. *The Tree of Liberty* not only reflects upon the problem of political communication in this period but also offers us a way to think about the place of Gillray himself as an artist of the network.

Biographical Statement:

I am a PhD Candidate in the History of Art at Yale University and currently Paul Mellon Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. My dissertation, "The Radical Print," explores the relationships between printmaking and political radicalism in the Age of Revolutions. My project has also been funded by the Huntington Library, the Lewis Walpole Library and the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art. I recently co-curated the exhibition, *Figures of Empire: Slavery and Portraiture in Eighteenth-Century Atlantic Britain*, at the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven.

James Gillray@200: Caricaturist without a Conscience?

The Ashmolean Museum
Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th March 2015

Ersy Contogouris

Ersy Contogouris, Adjunct Professor, Université du Québec à Montréal
ersy.contogouris@gmail.com

Gillray's Preparatory Drawings

James Gillray's drawings—summary sketches, preparatory drawings to prints, and drawings that were never made into prints—have gone largely unexamined, yet they provide us with significant insight into his oeuvre. A comparison between a highly finished preparatory drawing for *A Cognocenti, Contemplating ye Beauties of ye Antique* and the finished print (1801), for instance, reveals that Gillray had initially intended to represent Emma Hamilton as Medusa but that he chose instead to depict her as the Greek courtesan Lais. With this substitution, Gillray gave Emma back her beauty but apparently stripped her of the power of Medusa. Turning back to the print with this knowledge, we detect lingering signs of Medusa's power in Lais. This talk will examine this and other drawings by Gillray to argue for the importance of studying Gillray's drawings with the same attention as his printed oeuvre and will attempt to understand why these drawings, just like the drawings of all caricaturists, have been largely ignored by art history.



Biographical Statement:

Ersy Contogouris is adjunct professor in art history at the Université du Québec à Montréal and a visiting scholar at the Université de Montréal. She recently defended her dissertation entitled "Emma Hamilton, a Model of Agency in Late Eighteenth-Century Europe," which includes a chapter on Gillray's caricatures of Hamilton. She is the assistant editor of *The Efflorescence of Caricature, 1759-1838* (ed. Todd Porterfield, Ashgate, 2011). Since 2012, she is the managing editor of *RACAR (Revue d'art canadienne / Canadian Art Review)*.

James Gillray@200: Caricaturist without a Conscience?

The Ashmolean Museum
Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th March 2015

Douglas Fordham

Associate Professor of Art History at the University of Virginia
df2p@virginia.edu

A Media Critic for the Intaglio Age

The question of James Gillray's conscience, or lack thereof, is typically framed around notions of political consistency. Politically contradictory prints are explained through economic self-interest, shifting political circumstance, or sheer cynicism. But what if Gillray's conscience was more attuned to the media and its manipulation than its constantly shifting message? This essay argues that Gillray was one of the first great media critics of the modern age. Gillray lampooned a burgeoning knowledge industry on the cusp of dramatic changes, and he questioned just how ready John Bull was to enter the information age. This paper considers Gillray's deployment of single-sheet intaglio printing at a transformative moment in English print culture. Gillray's satirical approach to imperial news, in particular, skewers the highly mediated nature of intaglio prints and the untrustworthy nature of populist imperialism.

Biographical Statement:

Douglas Fordham is an Associate Professor of Art History at the University of Virginia where he teaches and advises students on British art, the visual culture of empire, and eighteenth-century European topics. He is the author of *British Art and the Seven Years' War: Allegiance and Autonomy* (2010), the co-editor of *Art and the British empire* (2007) and he is currently writing a book on intaglio prints and the British empire.

James Gillray@200: Caricaturist without a Conscience?

The Ashmolean Museum
Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th March 2015

Professor Vic Gatrell

Fellow of Caius College, University of Cambridge
vag1000@cam.ac.uk

Gillray reconsidered: 'the voice and heart of the people'?

At this stage, I can't sensibly elaborate on this proposal without knowing how long papers are meant to be and what other papers will be on offer. At present, I offer less of a research paper than a broad-brush reprise that will take its cue from the conference organisers' statement. Against what threatens to become the fashionable grain, it will defend the substance of Gillray's 'conscience'.

Gillray despised radicals and the French, but he hardly ever took the side of the great, even as he accepted their patronage. Despite or thanks to his misanthropy and cynicism, his satire opposed cant, mocked the powerful, and rooted itself in what Hazlitt called 'the commonsense of mankind', the basis of effective ridicule. Far from lacking a 'clear moral compass', his apparent political inconsistencies sprung from this root. Moreover, it was in these terms that his work was intelligible to his audiences.

Biographical Statement:

I am a Fellow of Caius College, Cambridge. My *The Hanging Tree: Execution and the English People 1780-1868* (1994) won the Royal Historical Society's Whitfield Prize; my *City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-Century London* (2006) won the Wolfson Prize for History and the Hessel-Tiltmann Prize, and was listed for the Johnson Prize. It contains a chapter on Gillray. My *The First Bohemians* (2013) surveys the eighteenth-century London art world; it was listed for the Hessel-Tiltmann Prize. I am currently working on British artists, c.1815-30.

James Gillray@200: Caricaturist without a Conscience?

The Ashmolean Museum
Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th March 2015

Kate Grandjouan

Visiting Associate Professor at the Department of Art History at the University of
Belgrade

kategrandjouan@gmail.com

Gillray's French jokes: the 'sick-list' casualties of the 1790s

For artists like James Gillray, churning out satirical images of the French in the 1790s was a necessary duty, and even more so for someone who, from 1798, was a salaried illustrator for the *Anti-Jacobite Review*. According to scholars, these were the years of some resolute 'inventions', notably of the 'sans-culotte' (Jouve, 1978; Bindman, 1989; Godfrey, 2001) but also, and more generally of 'the main categories of satiric imagery dealing with the Revolution' (Donald, 1996). This clean-cut interpretation fails to recognise the in-jokes and the complexities, as well as the failures, i.e. those non-communicating and abandoned images. Furthermore, if we look beyond the pressing commercial servitudes, there were aesthetic ones too. The artist was moving tactically back and forth across a well-defined territory of satiric print culture, and one that was possessed by strong, iterative functions. Eighteenth-century national satire operated through stable, textual forms for they needed to remain recognizable if they were to enforce the association of certain visual traits with national types. Yet the events of the French Revolution, and the perceived character traits of the new revolutionaries, required that the modality of inscription change, and that the fixed forms of identity now be inserted into an alternative network of effects. Drawing on these ideas and some of the prints that were published in the 1790s, my paper will explore James Gillray's French satires as trap, game and joke. The images will be shown to derive from well-established but nationally specific symbolic repertoires. The analysis will use textual theories evolved in relation to print culture to highlight this creative interplay between recognition and transformation.

Biographical Statement:

I am a Visiting Lecturer to the Department of Art History at the University of Belgrade in Serbia. I have a PhD in eighteenth-century British art from the Courtauld (2010), where I taught until 2013. I am writing a book on national satire in the eighteenth century, provisionally entitled *Networked Identities: Anglo-French Satires 1680s-1790s*. For more information see kgrandjouan.wordpress.com.

James Gillray@200: Caricaturist without a Conscience?

The Ashmolean Museum
Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th March 2015

Katherine Hart

Senior Curator of Collections & the Barbara C. and Harvey P. Hood 1918 Curator of Academic Programming, Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College

Katherine.W.Hart@dartmouth.edu

James Gillray, Charles James Fox, and the Abolition of the Slave Trade: Caricature and Displacement in the Debate over Reform

This paper focuses on a single print by Gillray that satirizes the prominent Whig orator and statesman Charles James Fox in a phantasmagoric scene that parodies the nightmare visions of Henri Fuseli and Benjamin West. Published in 1791, this caricature—which is titled in typical Gillray fashion—*Alecto and her Train at the Gate of Pandaemonium: ;__or__ The Recruiting Sargeant enlisting JOHN BULL, into the Revolution Service*—associates Fox and his cronies with the ideals of the two-year-old French revolution and its denunciation of monarchy. Fox is the main target here—he is seen as aiding the enemy's cause by inviting the French radicals into England to upend the prevailing social and political order. It is but one of many satirical images—many undoubtedly paid for by the Tory government—that imagines him in this treasonous role. This essay's main thesis posits that the Alecto, the central figure of the print, stands for race and its relation to slavery within the context of a tumultuous and chaotic moment in English, continental, and colonial politics. Her association with the reform-minded Fox, who was a strong advocate for the abolition of the slave trade, further underscores a strong subtext to the print, which on the surface refers only to the English politician's sympathy for republican ideals. To understand the relationship of this work to the subject of race and slavery, the talk first examines the image of the black in eighteenth-century visual satire and the racial stereotypes that underlie the visual and textual narrative of this political caricature. In addition a brief survey of the visual tropes surrounding images of slavery itself—as seen within satirical prints during the period of debate and later enactment of abolition of the slave trade—aids the subsequent discussion of the print's potential meanings. The last part of the talk will consider Gillray's position with regard to the slave trade.

Biographical Statement:

Katherine Hart is the Senior Curator of Collections and the Barbara C. and Harvey P. Hood 1918 Curator of Academic Programming at the Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, and works primarily in the areas of the English art after 1700 and contemporary art. She curated an exhibition *James Gillray: Prints by the Eighteenth-Century Master of Caricature* in 1995 and has a continuing interest in the field of social satire and caricature. She has curated or coordinated exhibitions on such subjects as contemporary photography, ancient Greek childhood, William Hogarth, Romare Bearden, visual culture of medicine, and Inuit art and culture.

James Gillray@200: Caricaturist without a Conscience?

The Ashmolean Museum
Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th March 2015

Ian Haywood

Professor of English

Co-Director, Centre for Research in Romanticism University of Roehampton, London

I.Haywood@roehampton.ac.uk

'Gillray's valediction: *The Life of William Cobbett*'

On 29 September 1809 Gillray published his last original caricature, a remarkable 8-plate series entitled *The Life of William Cobbett*. Though these images are often reproduced in biographies of Cobbett, they have never been comprehensively studied. In this talk I will argue that the series distils Gillray's vexed relationship with revolutionary Jacobinism: ostensibly aimed at discrediting Cobbett's rising radical profile, the images respond to both 'loyal' and 'disloyal' readings. In particular, I will focus on two themes: radical textuality and revenance. In attempting to use the visual grotesque to crush radical discourse, Gillray actually gives powerful, emblematic form to radical print culture. Moreover, his portrayal of a monstrous, spectral Cobbett revives rather than exorcises the memory of the 'revolution debate' of the 1790s, the period of Gillray's greatest cultural power. Cobbett was accused by his political enemies of concocting a phoney court-martial of his commanding officers in early 1792, and I will argue that Gillray was drawn to the controversy by the imaginative pull of this regression to a foundational historical moment, the period which instigated the counter-revolutionary cultural war against popular radicalism. Hence the series represents the 'return of the repressed' for Cobbett, Gillray and the period more generally.

Biographical Statement:

The main focus of my research is on the literature, radical politics and visual culture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In 2011-12 I received a Leverhulme Fellowship to support my latest book *Romanticism and Caricature* (2013), and I am now planning to extend this work into a study of political caricature in the 1830s and 1840s, the era of Chartism and *Punch*. Recent essays and papers include 'Illuminating propaganda: radical medievalism and utopia in the Chartist era' and 'The Life of William Cobbett: caricature, hauntology and the impossibility of radical life writing in the Romantic period'.

James Gillray@200: Caricaturist without a Conscience?

**The Ashmolean Museum
Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th March 2015**

Amanda Lahikainen
Assistant Professor of Art History, Aquinas College
amanda_lahikainen@alumni.brown.edu

James Gillray and Representations of Napoleon's Egyptian Campaign: Islam as Republican Sacrilege

"The Turkish Territories begin to be infected with the revolutionary contagion of the French Republic," claimed *The Times* in 1797. Once Napoleon's Egyptian campaign threatened British trade with India, Gillray represented just such a frightening scene of revolutionary contagion in his satire *Destruction of the French Colossus* (1798). The etching depicts the monstrous and proselytizing French Republic with one foot crushing the Bible and a cross, and the other atop the Egyptian pyramids, indicating that the body of the French Revolution might also be represented by Napoleon. Analyzing satires such as this, this paper suggests productive ways to understand early satires on Napoleon before Gillray's invention of "Little Boney" in 1803, including Gillray's Egyptian Expedition satires of 1799. In these works the idea of sacrilege, namely Napoleon's "conversion" to Islam, is a point of attack and condition of possibility for his representation in British satire. Frequent depiction of the crescent moon in British satire between 1798 and 1800, which was foremost a religious and political symbol of the Muslim Ottoman Turks, indicates the strong connections between Empire building, the Revolution, and French experimentation with religion. Napoleon's openness to Islam became yet another errant example of sacrilege and the French failure to legitimize a new religion.

Biographical Statement:

Amanda Lahikainen is assistant professor of art history at Aquinas College, Michigan. She received her PhD from Brown University in the History of Art and Architecture and her BA in philosophy from Wellesley College. She recently completed a Kluge Postdoctoral Fellowship at the U.S. Library of Congress, and has recently had her research on British graphic satire published in *Print Quarterly*, and accepted for publication in the journals *Studies in Romanticism* and *HUMOR: The International Journal of Humor Studies*.

James Gillray@200: Caricaturist without a Conscience?

The Ashmolean Museum
Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th March 2015

Julie Mellby

Graphic Arts Curator within Rare Books and Special Collections at Firestone Library,
Princeton University
jmellby@princeton.edu

The Sale and Resale of English Beauties in the East Indies

On May 16, 1786, William Holland published James Gillray's caricature *A Sale of English Beauties in the East Indies*. This rare and complex etching, enhanced with aquatint and completed with additional hand coloring, makes a wickedly satirical comment on marriageable women in the British East Indies. The bawdy scene was widely marketed by Holland for several years, turned into a popular burletta, and then revived over 20 years later by none other than Thomas Rowlandson.

While a number of Gillray's plates were finished by George Cruikshank or re-imagined by his many young disciples, I believe that Rowlandson stepped in at this instance to make sure this particularly clever print would be remembered in an equally beautiful and substantially unchanged print. I propose a close reading of one of Gillray's rare masterworks in comparison to Rowlandson's smaller, more digestible re-creation designed to assure the continued success of Gillray's satirical message.

Biographical Statement:

Julie Mellby is the Graphic Arts Curator within Rare Books and Special Collections at Firestone Library, Princeton University. This collection includes approximately 400 bound and unbound prints by James Gillray along with significant collections of Thomas Rowlandson, George Cruikshank, and William Heath. The author of several exhibition catalogues including *The Author's Portrait* and *Splendid Pages: The Molly and Walter Bareiss Collection of Modern Illustrated Books*, her most recent publication is "The True and Honest Story of Lew Ney, Greenwich Village Printer," for the *Princeton University Library Chronicle*.

James Gillray@200: Caricaturist without a Conscience?

The Ashmolean Museum
Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th March 2015

Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius

Associate Lecturer, Department of History of Art, Birkbeck College,
University of London
k.murawska-muthesius@bbk.ac.uk

Caricature's unconscious: James Gillray and the Academy

Semantically, the terms 'conscience' (the awareness of right and wrong) and 'the unconscious' (the pool of desires that lie outside of awareness) are as far away from each other as 'canonical' and 'anticanonical', as super-ego and id, or, as masterpiece and caricature. Pushing this logic further, the lack of conscience could indeed be associated with the unruliness of caricature. Drawing from the writings by Freud and by Gillray scholars, this paper will look at 'Two Pairs of Portraits' (1798), which presents an artist sitting in front of an easel in an interior resembling a gallery or an art academy, accompanied by a sketch book, paintings and busts. It will argue that this print could be read not only as Gillray's reflection on the inherent lack of conscience shared by politicians and caricaturists, but also as a kind of Freudian slip, an inadvertent manifestation of caricature's 'unconscious', of its repressed academic aspirations and its insurgent relationship to high art. This reading is framed by the historical complementarity between caricature and the academic training, which reaches back to the *ritratti carrichi* practised at the Carracci Academy in Bologna, Pier Luigi Ghezzi's careers of the caricaturist and the Academic, or even to Reynolds's youthful caricature of Raphael's *School of Athens*.

Biographical Statement:

Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius is Sessional Lecturer in History of Art in the Department of History of Art and Screen Media. Before her arrival in the UK in 1993, she had been Curator of Italian Paintings (1981-90), then Chief Curator of The National Museum in Warsaw (1992-93). Between 2009-11, she was called back to this Museum to work as its Deputy Director.

In 2009 she was Guest-Professor at the Institut für Kunst- und Bildgeschichte, at the Humboldt Universität Berlin. During her stay in the UK, she was recipient of the Henry Moore Institute Research Fellowship, and the Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship.

Katarzyna joined Birkbeck in 2000, teaching Certificate courses on approaches to the discipline (Foundation in History of Art), as well as a range of other courses, Study Days and Study Trips. Between 2003 and 2009 she was holding post of Academic Advisor in History of Art (2003-2009). With Leslie Topp and Charlotte Ashby, she devised the Graduate Certificate course in History of Art and Architecture.

Her book, edited with Natalia Zarzecka, which examines the reception of the artist and performer Tadeusz Kantor in the UK, has been just published by Black Dog.

James Gillray@200: Caricaturist without a Conscience?

The Ashmolean Museum
Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th March 2015

Cynthia Roman

Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Paintings, The Lewis Walpole Library,
Yale University
cynthia.roman@yale.edu

James Gillray and the Satiric Alternative to Painting History

The heyday of graphic political satire by professional printmakers in late eighteenth-century Britain coincided with the increasing realities and recognition of the many obstacles and failures of a national school of academic history painting. This paper will suggest a formative connection between these developments, most notably realized in the hands of the consummately-skilled and brilliant James Gillray, whose satiric art in many ways challenged and supplanted aspects of the public role of narrative history painting. Gillray's early training at the Royal Academy, his deep familiarity with the canon of old master painting, his forays as a reproductive printmaker, and his rupture with the Academy, ideally positioned him to transform the idiom of political caricature and satire previously dominated by amateurs into a more highly ambitious professional project that engaged, as has been established by others, in open and often confrontational dialogue with the Academy, its language, its traditions and its members. More significantly, however, Gillray's satire began quite successfully to perform the task of visualizing historical narratives in competition with more traditional pictorial narratives of history and captivated the shared attention of many among the privileged audiences for academic painting and reproductive historical prints.

Biographical Statement:

Cynthia Roman is the Curator of Prints, Drawings and Paintings at the Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University. The Library holds one of the most important collections of British graphic satire outside of the UK including strong holdings of Gillray prints. For several years she has been co-teaching with visiting faculty a number of master classes and workshops for graduate students and scholars on topics such as graphic satire, comic images, and history painting. She has published essays on topics ranging from Horace Walpole and female genius, Horace Walpole's satire collection and British history painting in the eighteenth century.

James Gillray@200: Caricaturist without a Conscience?

The Ashmolean Museum
Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th March 2015

David Taylor

Assistant Professor, Dept. of English and Comparative Literary Studies
University of Warwick
d.f.taylor@warwick.ac.uk

Gillray, Milton, and the “Caricatura Sublime”

This paper will explore Gillray’s parodies of *Paradise Lost*. While other caricaturists of the period frequently quote and invoke Milton’s epic, Gillray’s prints are unique in their conscious and ironic negotiation of Milton’s status as the poet of the sublime. In works such as *Sin, Death and the Devil* (1792), *The Nuptial-Bower* (1797), and *End of the Irish Farce* (1805) Gillray shows us that, as one nineteenth-century put it, “the ludicrous is not divided by a step from the sublime, but blended with it and twined round it.” Moreover, in positing his Miltonic prints as a form of “caricatura sublime” – a phrase he coined in his Fuseli-travesty, *The Wierd-Sisters* (1791) – Gillray also alludes to and critically engages Enlightenment aesthetics. Where the standard history of Milton’s reception in the eighteenth century tells a story the use of the aesthetic as a means of sequestering the disconcertingly radical, Gillray’s parodies of *Paradise Lost* not only draw upon the poem as an unavoidably political text but also expose the ideological armature of the sublime as theorized by the likes of Joseph Addison and Edmund Burke.

Biographical Statement:

I’m assistant professor of eighteenth-century literature at the University of Warwick, and the author of *Theatres of Opposition: Empire, Revolution, and Richard Brinsley Sheridan* (OUP 2012) and co-editor of *The Oxford Handbook of the Georgian Theatre, 1737-1832* (2014). At present I’m completing a book – provisionally entitled “The Political Uses of Literature: History, Parody, and the Satirical Print, 1750-1830” – that considers political caricature’s appropriation of texts such as *Gulliver’s Travels*, *Paradise Lost*, and Shakespeare’s plays. My article on graphic satirical parodies of *The Tempest* was published in late 2012 in *Shakespeare Quarterly*.