INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL "OTHERS":
FRENCH, FEMALE, AND BLACK BODIES IN BRITISH SATIRICAL PRINTS,
1789-1821

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Art.

Chapel Hill
2013

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ABSTRACT
ALEXANDRA M. WELLINGTON:
Internal and External "Others":
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(Under the direction of Dr. Mary D. Sheriff)

From the onset of the French Revolution to the death of Napoleon I (1789-1821),
Thomas Rowlandson, James Gillray, and George Cruikshank created political prints
satirizing the rapid turn of events in France. Their works, which cast France as Britain's
supreme "Other," were immensely popular and circulated widely in journals and
newspapers in London as well as in the distant regions of the British Empire. In this
thesis, I analyze the ways in which prints satirizing French politics and manners
simultaneously address issues current in Great Britain, especially the increasing political
activity of British women and the threat of slave uprisings in Britain's West Indian
colonies. I argue that the grouping together of Britain's external "Other," France, with
Britain's internal "Others," women and enslaved blacks, complicated satirical imagery
during this period and enhanced the power of political prints by provoking and
contributing to debates on issues abroad and at home. Through my discussion of their
historical context, imagery, and circulation, I reveal that satirical prints were crucial to
the development of Britain's national identity during this formative period.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Mary Sheriff, for her guidance and enthusiasm as I was writing this thesis. I am also deeply indebted to Dr. Lyneise Williams and Dr. Tatiana String for their helpful comments and support. To my friends in the Art History Department, thank you for spending many hours brainstorming ideas with me in thesis seminar, coffee shops, and elsewhere. You have made this journey a true pleasure. Finally, to my mother, Carol, and my sister, Victoria, thank you for being my best friends now and always. Σας αγαπώ!

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Introduction

In 1805, James Gillray published *St. George and the Dragon*, an etching that
depicts George III in military dress and on horseback, raising his sword high in the air
and glaring menacingly down on his unusual foe (Figure 1). Directly beneath the king's
horse is a fantastical monster composed of a scaly body, enormous wings, speckled hind
legs, a long, slithering tail, and, most curiously, the head of Napoleon. Below Napoleon
crouches Britannia, her hair disheveled and her spear and Union Jack shield knocked
away by the threatening creature about to crush her.

By the time *St. George and the Dragon* hit London streets, political debate and
satirical imagery concerning France had been circulating in the British Isles en masse for
sixteen years. The onset of the French Revolution sparked a level of public discourse in
Britain that had not been attained since the Glorious Revolution of 1688, and the vivid
satirical imagery of everyday print culture became an important battlefield for intensified
debate concerning the French cause. Between 1789 and 1821, beginning with the
Storming of the Bastille and ending with the death of Napoleon, a rich and complex
visual vocabulary developed in British satirical art. Such imagery performed a variety of
functions for its British audience, commenting as much on British politics and society as
it did on the violent and rapidly changing events in France.

In *St. George and the Dragon*, Gillray addressed multiple current hot topics by
setting up a series of dichotomies within the work. A close reading of the image

demonstrates the sophistication of British public debate during this moment, highlighting the interrelatedness of many of Britain's passionately contested issues. Just as Napoleon's tail swirls in and out of the horse's hooves, the issues raised in the work interplay with one another and reveal a highly intricate network within which British identity was defined, questioned, and debated in relation to France, Britain's extreme "Other." An analysis of the imagery and implications of *St. George and the Dragon* will make this point clear.

The half-broken crown falling off Napoleon's head symbolizes the weakness and folly of his reign and contrasts with George III's sturdy military hat, made doubly phallic by its tall red and white plume and its close proximity to the King's upright arm and sword. The flames bursting forth from Napoleon's mouth, which take the shape of a snake's tongue, complement the serpent-like tail of the Emperor and align him with other imagery of France during the period. As with allegorical representations of France as Medusa during the French Revolution, Napoleon's monstrous body signifies the national body of France. He is a demon of sorts who stands little chance against the British King.

Yet the depiction of George III is not entirely favorable. Like Napoleon, who is shown with a long, pointed nose and an expressive grimace, the King is a caricature, with almost no chin, an incredibly rosy face, and a portly belly. Despite the fact that he refers to Christian imagery of St. George and the dragon and assumes the dramatic pose and compositional prominence of a history painting protagonist, George III is not the dashing hero one might expect. Furthermore, the nearly crushed Britannia, whom the viewer assumes he will just barely rescue, suggests that the King will squeak by and save Britain from French invasion only in the nick of time.

This blending of conventions from history painting and graphic satire simultaneously brings gravity and humor to the work and complicates the ways in which it can be understood. On a historical level relevant to the depicted characters, the etching references the threat of invasion by Napoleon's troops. On a metaphorical level, the bodies of the two rulers stand in for each nation and speak to the different political values of Britain and France. On an artistic level, and especially in relation to satirical print traditions in Britain, the use of Britannia alongside George III and Napoleon comments on the interrelationship between caricature and allegory. Finally, and on a personal, domestic level, the contrast between an effeminate, disarmed Britannia and a masculine, phallic king calls into question the changing roles of women within and beyond the household.

What this etching represents is a face-off, not only between King George III and Napoleon but also between monarchy and republic, history painting and graphic satire, allegory and caricature, man and woman. On the surface, Gillray's etching seems mainly to address the first duel, that of King and Emperor, which is the most immediately recognizable subject in the work. However, a deeper reading reveals that the image is far more complex than first expected, referring to contemporary discourse within Britain and "taking sides" in the hotly contested debates of this historic moment. Through sophisticated manipulations of the satirical tradition, Gillray and other British print artists raised multiple issues in a single image, effectively transforming discourse on French politics into a dialogue that equally addresses British policies, traditions, and culture. In so doing, satirical art played a central role in questioning and defining what it meant to be British in individual, national, and colonial terms.

My work is in dialogue with Linda Colley's research on the construction of British identity during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In her book *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, Colley analyzes the internal and external factors that helped to define what it meant to be British during this formative period.[1] Internal factors include the multiple ethnicities living within the United Kingdom: the English, the Welsh, the Scottish, and the Irish, as well as the intermarrying and mixing between these groups. Colley also addresses internal divisions regarding religion, namely between Protestant and Catholic Britons, and debates on the role of women within British society. In regards to external factors, Colley argues that British identity was increasingly forged after 1707 "in reaction to an "Other" that was partly real and partly imagined."[2] She designates France as Britain's supreme "Other" and as the nation against which Britain defined itself, yet she also discusses "the presumed otherness of imperial spaces and cultures," the rather stark dichotomy between British Protestantism and Catholicism, and universal womanhood as a perceived threat against British manhood.

One of Colley's central arguments is that "people in the past often consciously or unconsciously dealt in multiple identities," and that British identity experienced a continual process of forging and devolution and of shifting allegiances.[3] However, Colley argues that British identity crystallized between 1707 and 1837 due to the nature of Empire, as all British countries benefited in some way from the alliance between

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[1] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), xiii-xiv. The formal starting point for *Britons* is the Act or Treaty of Union of 1707, which "proclaimed that henceforward England, Wales and Scotland would be 'united into one kingdom by the name of Great Britain.'" Colley ends her book with the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837.

[2] Ibid., xix.

[3] Ibid., xxvii.

England, Wales, and Scotland. Protestantism served as the primary unifying force for these countries, which were threatened by invasion from Catholic France for more than half the time between 1689 and 1815. In other words, "a marked perception of vulnerability and of external threats," caused primarily by the acts of France, gave rise to the concern that Britain was fragmented and needed to pool its powers as a form of protection.[4]

In my thesis, I focus on the issue of British identity formation by analyzing how in satirical prints Thomas Rowlandson, James Gillray, and George Cruikshank depicted Britain's foremost "Other," France. I argue that these images not only shed light on Colley's argument about the forging and contestation of British identity, but also that they were central to everyday life and political discourse. Furthermore, satirical prints made by these artists cast France as the supreme "Other" and as a gateway to enter into discussions of other internal threats, the most prominent being the female body and the black body.

By defining the female body as an internal threat, I do not mean to focus specifically on British women or French women, but rather to point to similarities in the ways that women are depicted in satirical prints more generally and how these depictions relate to the British understanding of universal womanhood. I discuss the ways in which politically active women are shown as deviant and troublesome and how this portrayal is similar to representations of France in British prints. The female body fuses with imagery of Medusa, chaos, demons, animals, and the black body, linking woman to the corpus of figures used by British artists to satirize the French Revolution and its aftermath.

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[4] Ibid., xxiii.

Similarly, my categorization of the black body as an internal threat does not limit my inquiry to one specific ethnic group but rather analyzes the ways in which all black people colonized within the British Empire were grouped together.[5] In British prints satirizing France, the black body often operates as the foundation for the French government or as an extension of the state. Like the female body, the black body is blended with imagery aligned with France and similarly coalesces representations of Medusa, chaos, demons, animals, and women.

Thus the female body and the black body are irretrievably interwoven with France in British satirical prints via a shared visual vocabulary. The result is an expansion of Britain's supreme "Other," France, into a multifaceted "Other" that threatens 1) national security in the form of French invasion and indoctrination, 2) patriarchal society via increased women's rights and political activities, and 3) imperial hegemony due to support for abolishing slavery. To demonstrate how this web-like expansion occurred, I analyze the ways in which France, the female body, and the black body were grouped together and collapsed in key works by Rowlandson, Gillray, and Cruikshank. Through a discussion of the prints' historical context, imagery, and circulation, I reveal that British prints were absolutely crucial to the ways in which Britons forged an umbrella identity that simultaneously strengthened British unity and intensified the perceived threat of an overarching, elusive, and conglomerate "Other."

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[5] However, satirical prints that depict Native Americans, Indians, and people of other non-white ethnicities often treat their bodies in a similar manner, darkening their skin so as to suggest a black body. See, for example, the Native American in Gillray's *John Bull Triumphant*, 1980.

Chapter One
***The Contrast*: Britain versus France**

During the period between the beginning of the French Revolution and the end of

Napoleon's rule, British artists produced thousands of satirical prints illustrating and

commenting on the turbulent turn of events in France. By this time, political prints were

quite popular and circulated widely in journals and newspapers. During the late

eighteenth century especially, the newspaper acquired significant status within British

society as a basic yet elevated demonstration of citizens' rights. An anonymous letter,

published in a London newspaper on January 21, 1780, stated that "the freedom of the

press is the palladium of English liberty; it is the prop and foundation of it; and when that

is, by open violence or treacherous undermining, destroyed, it will most assuredly

involve in its ruin the general liberty of the subject."[6] Thus it was the duty of the

newspaper to "protect" liberty by proclaiming public opinion and disseminating political

views among the people. This same argument can be extended to political prints, as

images often reinforced the position of accompanying articles and even, in some

instances, were presented on their own as autonomous editorials.

Cropping up in news publications, shop windows, coffee houses, and elsewhere,

prints became a familiar aspect of visual culture as well as an enjoyable conduit for the

transmission of political commentary. In Britain, French politics were most often

illustrated as dangerous and ridiculous undertakings, aligned with representations of

chaos, hell, and complete despair. However, some artists, such as James Gillray, poked

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[6] Hannah Barker, *Newspapers, Politics, and Public Opinion in Late Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1.

fun at Britain just as much as they did at France. In fact, negative depictions of Britain

flourished in British print culture, made possible by the freedom of the press and the

centrality of public opinion in making or breaking politicians' careers.[7] As a result, the

definition and formulation of British identity during this period proved an incredibly

complex endeavor, especially when one considers that both favorable and mocking

representations of Britain were floating around the public arena, uncensored and in the

spotlight of passionate political discourse.

Thomas Rowlandson's print titled *The Contrast* is the earliest example of a

widely disseminated and popular image that comments on the bloody events taking place

across the Channel (Figure 2). First published in December of 1792, the hand-colored

etching juxtaposes Britain and France as two opposing allegories of liberty. Each

allegory is depicted in a circular composition, framed in gold in the traditional manner of

English emblems.[8] Below each image is a line of text that furthers the theme of contrast

by literally spelling out the just qualities of Britain and the depraved nature of France.

Britannia assumes the form of *La Liberté*, the symbol also claimed by French

revolutionaries as representative of their efforts for reform.[9] Previously, during the

American Revolution and in its wake, British artists depicted the female allegory of

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[7] Public opinion factors prominently in British politicians' careers to this day. Prime Ministers
are expected to resign from office if they are unpopular and especially if they receive a "vote of
no confidence," which demonstrates lack of support from the legislature. See Emily Robinson,
*History, Heritage and Tradition in Contemporary British Politics: Past Politics and Present
Histories* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, c2012).

[8] For a discussion of the history and traditional use of emblems in England, see Peter Daly, Leslie
T. Duer, and Anthony Rappa, eds., *The English Emblem Tradition* (Toronto and Buffalo:
University of Toronto Press, 1988).

[9] For a discussion of the symbolic representation of the French nation, see Maurice Agulhon,
Marianne into Battle: Repubican Imagery and Symbolism in France, 1789-1880 (Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 1981).

Liberty as a symbol that frequently crossed national boundaries. As Amelia Rauser demonstrates in her research on British print culture of the 1770s, American revolutionaries increasingly appropriated Liberty as their representative symbol.[10] A percentage of the British population supported the transposition of the allegory from Britain to America and viewed this instance of revolution as a legitimate process and a necessary historical moment. This is because some Britons viewed the American cause as a valiant effort not only to obtain commercial freedom but also to condemn tyrannical rule from afar.[11]

In contrast, the French Revolution enjoyed decent British support only at its inception and even then quite briefly. Once news of the carnage in Paris reached London and disseminated across the British Isles, the British people by and large condemned the violent approach of the French and withdrew their premature nod of approval. Unlike the Revolution in the American colonies, the French Revolution lacked legitimacy due to its perceived aggression and shocked the world by its ruthless and seemingly endless bloodshed. Even so, the French Revolution served as the perfect opportunity for some artists, and especially for Rowlandson, to display the virtue of the British Empire in all its carefully crafted glory. This is especially the case for *The Contrast*.

In the work, British Liberty is shown with various accoutrements, which include a protective lion, a measuring scale of justice, the *Magna Carta*, a shield decorated with an early version of the Union Jack, a Roman helmet, a pole of liberty with a Phrygian cap, and a ship that refers to Britain's naval power and colonies. France, on the other hand,

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[10] Amelia Rauser, "Death or Liberty: British Political Prints and the Struggle for Symbols in the American Revolution" (*Oxford Art Journal* 21, No. 2, 1998).

[11] Ibid; 167.

takes the form of Medusa, holding a sword and a trident topped with a decapitated head. She actively stomps upon the body of her headless victim in a pose of malicious victory, and the dead body hanging from a light post in the background reinforces the reality of the death she brings to the French people. Medusa's masculine body and the phallic snake worn as a belt on her waist enhance the threatening and malevolent spirit of French Liberty. Menacing wisps of steam radiate from her breasts and shoulders, suggestive of her hot temperament and fiery gaze. Later versions of *The Contrast* take this idea of a smoldering Medusa one step further and depict flames blazing from her upper body, transforming her into none other than a fury from hell (Figure 3). By 1793, Rowlandson's image had become so popular that it even decorated glazed earthenware mugs, which circulated extensively within the British Empire for a number of years (Figure 4).

Why did Rowlandson choose to satirize France in this manner? What purpose could a literal and figurative antithesis serve for its British audience? As demonstrated by Colley, the accentuated contrast between Britain and France was central to the formation of a British national identity.[12] As a heterogeneous Empire, Britain needed a rallying point under which its various cultural and social groups could unite. The French Medusa, or the characterization of France as the inferior "Other," served exactly this purpose. By clearly defining the French people as deviants without morality and sound judgment, the British constructed an identity for themselves that was precisely the opposite.

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[12] Linda Colley, *Britons,* 1-9.

The precedent for *The Contrast* was the oft-depicted struggle between the British lion and the Gallic cock, seen for example in the anonymous print *The Gallic Cock and English Lyon* of 1739, Philippe de Louthebourg's sketch *The British Lion and the French Cock* of c.1797, and copper halfpennies produced in 1795 (Figures 5-7). In these depictions, the lion's superiority is implied by its powerful body and ferocious nature and is enhanced by the less threatening, much smaller rooster. This is not to say that the Gallic cock poses no threat to the British lion, as it is sometimes shown pecking at its adversary's eye (Figure 5). Like Medusa, the bird attacks the organ of sight. Both allegorical forms were ideal for artists who wished to portray British fear of a French threat. As an ensanguined nation suffering violent revolution, France had the potential to ingrain vicious ideas of uprising on British soil. This seed of rebellion is planted through sight, by witnessing French revolutionaries in action. The Gallic cock attacks in a similar manner by preying upon the eye of the lion, the gaze of Britannia herself. To effectively demonstrate the potential danger that the French Revolution posed to British onlookers, Rowlandson juxtaposed the supreme allegory of Liberty with the chaotic Medusa of France.

As an appropriate metaphor for the guillotine, Medusa embodies the terror of the French Revolution and gives physical expression to the fears enumerated in Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, published in 1790. In the popular text, Burke predicts the failure of the French Revolution based upon its unstable foundation on the abstract notion of "natural" rights. Assuming Thomas Hobbes' theory of the social contract between man and government, Burke emphasizes the need for certain rights to be sacrificed in the name of organized, civil society. He also provides a specific

definition of liberty that reflects the perceptions of a majority of the British nobility in

regards to the French Revolution. In *Reflections*, Burke states:

> If you are desirous of knowing the great spirit of our constitution, and the policy which
> predominated in that great period which has secured it to this hour, pray look for both in
> our histories, in our records, in our acts of parliament, and journals of parliament, and not
> in the sermons of the Old Jewry, and the after-dinner toasts of the Revolution society. In
> the former you will find other ideas and another language. Such a claim is as ill-suited to
> our temper and wishes as it is unsupported by any appearance of authority. The very idea
> of the fabrication of a new government, is enough to fill us with disgust and horror. We
> wished at the period of the (Glorious) Revolution, and do now wish, to derive all we
> possess as an inheritance from our forefathers. Upon that body and stock of inheritance
> we have taken care not to inoculate any cyon alien to the nature of the original plant. All
> the reformations we have hitherto made, have proceeded upon the principle of reference
> to antiquity; and I hope, nay I am persuaded, that all those which possibly may be made
> hereafter, will be carefully formed upon analogical precedent, authority, and example.[13]

According to this perspective, liberty is an inheritable product passed on to

subsequent generations within an age-old framework of government. Burke viewed any

alterations to this "ancient" model as deviations from the natural order, as the

"Medusafication" of Britannia's imperial law. Not all British politicians agreed with

Burke's argument, which essentially strove to maintain the British political system as it

was, but the eventual realization of Burke's prediction regarding the French Revolution

did much to reinforce his contribution to the theoretical literature of the period. His

writings, like the political prints produced in great quantity by British artists in the late

eighteenth century, effectively pitted France's revolutionary trauma against the solidity

and legitimacy of the British state.

Yet not all political writers and print artists agreed with the faultless depictions of

Britain championed by Burke and Rowlandson. On the other end of the spectrum,

Thomas Paine and James Gillray challenged and complicated traditional notions of

British identity and the role of government. In March of 1791, Paine released the first

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[13] Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. J. C. D. Clark (Stanford: Stanford
University Press, 2001), 180.

section of his *Rights of Man*, which immediately caused a sensation as the most widely read reply to Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. In the pamphlet, Paine defines his famous "perfect" and "imperfect" rights of man, gives an account of the events in France, and challenges a number of issues raised in Burke's *Reflections*, such as the right of inheritance. The most fundamental difference between Burke's and Paine's texts is their definition of liberty and the "natural order of things," which is made especially clear in the following selection from Paine's *Rights of Man*:

> What were formerly called Revolutions, were little more than a change of persons, or an alteration of local circumstances. They rose and fell… But what we now see in the world, from the Revolutions of America and France, are a renovation of the natural order of things, a system of principles as universal as truth and the existence of man, and combining moral with political happiness and national prosperity.[14]

Thus, Paine "sided with" the French and, in so doing, stood against his English brethren. His writings constituted something far worse than political dissent in the eyes of his countrymen, and he was found guilty of seditious libel and excommunicated from Britain. This reaction against Paine demonstrates that his viewpoint was considered un-British and so incompatible with contemporary government that it posed a serious threat to Britain's national identity. However, British print artists who time and again satirized British politics, society, and nationhood often acquired fame as champions of public opinion and defenders of Britain's freedom of speech. One such artist is James Gillray, who in fact worked for King George III and the British government.[15] His depictions of

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[14] Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man: Being an Answer to Mr. Burke's Attack on the French Revolution* (London: C. A. Watts & Co., 1949), 158.

[15] In 1793, George III commissioned Philippe-Jacques de Loutherbourg to travel with him and document his victorious battle against the French in Valenciennes. Gillray accompanied De Loutherbourg to make figure and costume studies. Upon their return to England, George III summoned the artists to show him their drawings, but the King was less than impressed with Gillray's artistic style, which did not offer exact likenesses of his subjects. From about 1795 onward, Gillray was officially employed by the British government and received an annual

his native country and Britons are often less than favorable, yet the artist succeeded in

establishing a successful career as a print artist because of two methodological strategies.

First, Gillray's prints often satirize Britain alongside another country, usually France.

Second, while he *does* poke fun at Britain, his prints do not offer a radical alternative to

the status quo as, for example, in Paine's pamphlets. This is not the goal of satire.

Rather, Gillray draws attention to aspects of British politics that he finds to be alarming

or distasteful and leaves it up to the viewers, including the politicians, to discuss, debate,

and pursue alternative actions.

An especially successful example of Gillray's satirical imagery is *The Plum-*

pudding in Danger; -or- State Epicures taking un Petit Souper, published in 1805 (Figure

8). The hand-colored etching, often designated as "the most famous political caricature

of all time," shows William Pitt the Younger and Napoleon helping themselves to

servings of a steaming globe in the form of a plum pudding.[16] On the left, Pitt leans

forward and carves a section of the Atlantic Ocean with a three-pronged, trident-like fork

and a carving knife, obtaining the West Indies in the process. Napoleon, in contrast,

wields a two-pronged fork and his sword to slice away Europe while leaving Sweden and

Russia intact. In this way, Gillray identifies Pitt and Britain as masters of the sea, while

Napoleon and his armies are cast as conquerors of European soil. Thus, the bodies of the

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pension of £200. During this moment in Gillray's career, caricatures of the King and Queen
diminish and "a torrent of vitriolic prints assail the Whigs, who are represented as bloody-handed
traitors in league with the French, dressed as sans-culottes, red bonneted, scampering behind the
arch-fiend Charles James Fox as he strives and schemes to bring down Britannia and reduce the
nation to a vassal state of France." Richard Godfrey, *James Gillray: The Art of Caricature*
(London: Tate Gallery Publishing), 16, 19.

[16] Ibid., 128.

Prime Minister and the Emperor stand in for the nations they respectively represent while also asserting each country as a power player and a master of foreign lands.

What is markedly different between Rowlandson's *The Contrast* and Gillray's *The Plum-pudding* is the artists' depictions not only of each "side" but also France and Britain's proximity to or distance from one another. Rowlandson treats Britain and France as independent nations, each contained within their emblematic frames. Furthermore, a quick glance is more than enough time for one to discern that Britain is painted as the righteous victor while France assumes the role of a bloodthirsty Medusa. This is the case neither in *The Plum-pudding* nor in Gillray's work more generally. Rather, Gillray almost always "evens the playing field" and situates Britain and France, Pitt and Napoleon, and King and Emperor within a shared pictorial space that simultaneously draws parallels and disparities between the two. In other words, to Gillray, Britain is just as deserving of satirical commentary as France.

Gillray's most frequent method for satirizing the two countries is to reveal their negative qualities through the mask of caricature.[17] Caricatural satire makes use of exaggerated physiognomic features, such as enlarged, pointed noses or impossibly rosy cheeks, to suggest flaws in character.[18] The power of caricature originates from its seemingly honest depiction of the subject, which is ironically exaggerated and deformed

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[17] Amelia Rauser, *Caricature Unmasked: Irony, Authenticity, and Individualism in Eighteenth-Century English Prints* (Cranbury: Associated University Press, 2008).

[18] Many eighteenth-century artists learned how to master these types of depictions by using Mary Darly's how-to manual for drawing caricatures. See Mary Darly, *A Book on Caricaturas: on 59 copper-plates, with ye principles of designing in that droll & pleasing manner, with sundry ancient & modern examples & several well known caricaturas* (Cornhill: Printed for R. Wilkinson, 176-?).

to communicate said truth.[19] This believability endows the image with a sort of legitimacy as it seems to expose deficiencies inherent in the subject. To put it more plainly, the shell of the person reveals the personality within. Gillray's mastery of caricature enhanced the power of his commentary, which could easily pack a punch and effectively vilify his subjects of discourse.

In *The Plum-pudding*, Pitt and Napoleon are treated equally as caricatures and as subjects to be mocked. Pitt's skeletal frame and Napoleon's small stature contrast with their insatiable appetites, made clear by the enormous chunks that each leader carves away from the steaming plum pudding. Napoleon, with flushed cheeks and an enlarged nose, eyes his portion greedily and opens his mouth in expectation of his first bite. Pitt, shown with a rather long pony tail, rosy cheeks, and a weak chin, glares over the plum pudding and keeps a watchful eye on Napoleon to make sure his opponent does not carve away too much of their shared dish. In the image, there is a blending of the individual, pictured as a combination of lifelike representation and exaggerated physiognomy, with the nation, connoted by the inclusion of the globe, which establishes a connection between the bodies of the leaders and the global powers they represent. In hieratic terms, Pitt occupies more space than Napoleon, as he is the taller figure and sits on a larger chair. His plate is also bigger than Napoleon's, and he carves away a much heftier slice of the plum pudding. Thus, even though Gillray satirizes both subjects in the print, he clearly situates Pitt as the one with the "upper hand." The same is true for Gillray's *St. George and the Dragon*, discussed earlier (Figure 1). George III, like Napoleon, is a caricature, but he occupies the victor's position within the image and assumes the role of Britannia's savior.

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[19] Rauser, *Caricature Unmasked*, 20. Rauser defines this phenomenon as "the paradox of satire."

It is significant that Pitt rather than Britannia stands in for the British nation in *The Plum-pudding*. As anxieties deepened over the changing domestic and political roles of women, public debates and prints evolved to accommodate a discussion of women's place in British society. As a result, British print artists replaced conventional depictions of Britannia as a steadfast, noble figure (Figure 2) with her portrayal as a distraught, defenseless woman in need of male protection (Figure 1). Furthermore, during the late eighteenth century it became more and more common for kings and politicians, such as George III and William Pitt, to represent the British nation as a whole. This masculinization of Britain erased the need for a female allegory of Britain and fostered the development of her more comical counterpart, John Bull.

Chapter Two
Deviant Women and "Petticoat Government"

John Bull is an allegory of Britain that is best described as being more English than British.[20] Unlike Britannia, a more inclusive allegory that simultaneously refers to England, Wales, Scotland, and to some extent Ireland, John Bull exemplifies characteristics associated most often with England and is thus affiliated more closely with markers of English identity.[21] He is generally depicted as a stocky, middle-aged working class man with a large belly, a fondness for ale and beef, and a blunt, no-nonsense attitude. In contrast to Britannia, his physical characteristics are not idealized and are often rendered in such detail as to suggest mimicry of an actual person. It is for this reason that I categorize John Bull as both allegory and caricature, as someone who simultaneously points to the English nation and the average English Joe. This flexibility widened the possibilities for John Bull's role within satirical prints, as he could equally glorify and condemn the English nation, and often did so within the same image.

A fitting example that demonstrates the satirical value of John Bull is Gillray's *French Liberty. British Slavery.*, made in 1792, the same year that Rowlandson published *The Contrast* (Figure 9). In both images, Britain and France are contrasted with one another as binaries. Each allegory is contained within its own frame and is surrounded with accoutrements that relate to the character and political circumstances of each nation.

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[20] For more information about the history and usage of John Bull in British culture, see Tamara L. Hunt, *Defining John Bull: Political Caricature and National Identity in Late Georgian England* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003).

[21] Ibid; 147.

However, in *French Liberty. British Slavery.*, the contrast between these nations plays out between two men rather than two women, and while the Frenchman retains aspects of the French Medusa and thus communicates a sense of femininity, John Bull presents a radically different and more thoroughly masculine depiction of Britain.

In the left half of the image, France is represented by a starving sans-culotte whose clothes are in tatters, exposing his knee, thigh, and buttocks. He sits on a wooden stool and warms his talon-like feet by the fire, chews on a raw onion, and says "O Sacre Dieu! – vat blessing be de Liberté vive le Assemblé Nationale! – no more Tax! no more Slavery! – all Free Citizen! ha hah! by Gar, how ve live! – ve svim in de Milk & Honey!"[22] To the left and on the ground lies a violin and a sword, and on the table behind the Frenchman sits a bowl filled with snails, most of which are still alive and slithering on the outside of the container. The floor and walls of his home are in a state of disrepair, and a map inscribed "Map of French Conquests" displays a confusing and illegible jumble of boundary lines.

In contrast, John Bull is a morbidly obese yet well dressed Englishman. His shoes are slashed to provide relief for his swollen, gouty feet, and his wig is removed and hanging on his armrest. He leans forward in his luxurious plush, red chair and, with his tablecloth tied around his neck, carves into a hefty serving of beef, saying "Ah! this cursed Ministry! they'll ruin us, with their damn'd Taxes! why, Zounds! – they're making Slaves of us all, & Starving us to Death!" Beside his chunk of meat are "a foaming tankard and a decanter of Hock," and the bright red flush of his cheeks suggests

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[22] British Museum Website, "French Liberty. British Slavery." http://www.britishmuseum.org/ (5 April 2013).

that he has already consumed a great deal of alcohol.[23] The patterned, carpeted floor

demonstrates the wealth of John Bull, as does the gold statue of Britannia displayed on a

shelf on the pale blue wall. Unlike the Britannia of *The Contrast*, the Britannia in *French

Liberty. British Slavery.* is a sort of trinket that reinforces John Bull's words but

nonetheless leaves him in the spotlight. Instead of her shield, Britannia holds a large sack

of "sterling" along with her spear, referencing John Bull's comment that Britain is

draining its people by over-taxing them. At the same time, her sack of coins may also

speak to his individual wealth, highlighting the potentiality of John Bull to

simultaneously represent the nation and the average working class man.

       Although Britannia often assumes a secondary role to John Bull during the late

eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in some instances she is the primary allegory of

Britain. George Cruikshank's *Death or Liberty!* of 1819 shows Britannia being molested

by Radical Reform, an emaciated figure with grayish skin and a skeletal face (Figure 10).

His mask, which mirrors the flesh tone of Britannia, suggests the artificiality of his claims

to instill liberty and virtue, as masks present false and temporary facades while hiding the

true identity of the wearer. To top it all off, Radical Reform wears a Liberty cap, which

holds his mask securely against his face. A Liberty cap also adorns the top of his staff,

barely concealing a snake swirling around the wooden pole and baring its pronged

tongue. This double masking draws a visual connection between the staff and Radical

Reform's masked face, twice reinforcing the treachery and falseness of Britannia's

adversary. His flowing green cape, labeled "Radical Reform," stretches far out behind

him and creates a tent-like covering for his army of supporters, which includes a Medusa-

like figure spewing fire from her mouth, a figure made of chains, and other similarly

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[23] Ibid.

nightmarish creatures. The dark shading behind these figures suggests that an extensive horde is following in their wake, and the fire and smoke framing Radical Reform's army aligns them with representations of demons bursting forth from the mouth of hell.

As with *The Contrast*, Britannia is equipped with her paraphernalia of justice, but in this case, these objects are of no match against the threat of revolution and civil war. She leans against the rock of religion, the foundation of British liberty, and raises her sword of laws, which quivers as it draws its power from the sun, symbolized by the British crown. Her protective lion roars in the distance and charges toward his master's enemy, but he is too late as Radical Reform is already in the act of violating Britannia's virtue. She is shown on her knees in near defeat at the hands of her male aggressor, who firmly grasps her left breast and pulls on her hair near the scalp. Britannia's Union Jack shield leans against her left leg and lower torso to protect her from Radical Reform's menacing arrow and hourglass genitals hanging from a black sash tied at his waist.

Despite Britannia's refusal to surrender, as evidenced by her clenched left fist and her firm grasp on her sword, her imminent defeat is ensured by Radical Reform's dominant physical position and endless mob of supporters. The overall diagonal slant of the composition, seen in the rightward leaning bodies of the main characters and reinforced by Radical Reform's army and the fire and smoke billowing from left to right, denies any hope that Britannia might make a successful comeback.

Although Radical Reform represents the internal threat of civil war, the allegory closely resembles the external threat of the French Medusa, as both are uncontrollable forces characterized by demonic features, aggressive poses, and the will to overturn the civic order. This fluidity between the visual vocabulary of internal strife and external

threat broadens the potential incubus for political reform and treats it as an evil assault that in all cases causes harm to the nation, the government, and the people. However, the centrality of the female body in British prints depicting revolution and civil war, whether as a malevolent Medusa figure or as a defeated, feminized Britannia, speaks to larger discussions of changing gender roles. In the decades prior to 1789, the increasing participation of women in political activities, especially as campaigners rallying popular support for their favorite politicians, raised concern over a trend toward so-called "petticoat government."[24]

The Westminster election of 1784 marked a major shift in public attitudes toward female participation in political activities.[25] The support of Georgiana Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, and other aristocratic women played a significant role in the debate between Prime Minister William Pitt and Charles James Fox, who challenged the legitimacy of Pitt's appointment by George III.[26] In the Westminster election, Fox fought to keep his constituency and won a narrow victory against his two opponents, Pittites Lord Hood and Sir Cecil Wray. The Duchess publicly backed Fox by walking London streets and handing out medals to Fox's supporters, knocking on undecided voters' doors to garner their favor, and socializing with working class men and women in pubs. Pitt's supporters attacked the Duchess on these grounds, calling her a "woman of the streets"

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[24] The Oxford English Dictionary defines "petticoat government" as "rule by, or undue predominance or influence of women in domestic, political, or public life." *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "petticoat government."

[25] Tamara L. Hunt, *Defining John Bull: Political Caricature and National Identity in Late Georgian England* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003), 125.

[26] George III appointed Pitt (Tory) because he disapproved of the Fox-North Coalition (Whig). Pitt had very little support in the House of Commons and the supporters of Charles James Fox and Lord North felt that the constitution of the country had been violated.

who uses her charm and beauty to solicit support for Fox, her rumored lover. Print artists

capitalized on the gossip and depicted Cavendish as a prostitute who offers kisses and

other favors in exchange for the Whig vote. One such example is Rowlandson's *Every*

man has his hobby horse, contemporary with the Duchess' campaigning efforts for the

1784 Westminster election (Figure 11). In the image, the Duchess carries a man on her

back as she walks toward a hotel, presumably in the hopes that a sexual encounter will

secure his vote. In this example, a politically active woman is made the center of a joke

and treated as someone to be laughed at rather than taken seriously. This is not to say

that all depictions of the Duchess were unfavorable. The following quote from a widely

read newspaper demonstrates the admiration that many held for Cavendish:

> "Every liberal mind revolts at the wretched abuse now leveled at the most amiable of our
> countrywomen! The base and burring hand of calumny, however, is raised in vain
> against the *lovely Devon* and her *sister patriots*, who at this juncture so much resemble
> those *fair celestials* of the *Grecian bard*, whose *attributes of divinity* never appeared so
> brilliant as when forming a shield for the *heroic leader* of an *oppressed people*!"[27]

In this description, the Duchess is assigned the role of Britannia, shielding her

people from oppression in the manner of Athena, the goddess of wisdom and virtue.

Thus, in the decades prior to the French Revolution, the suitability of the female body as

an allegory for the nation was being questioned. Whether or not women were deemed

appropriate as representations of Britain depended on one's political leanings, and as this

debate played out in newspapers, journals, and prints, imagery of Britannia became much

more varied and contested.

By the time Rowlandson published *The Contrast* in 1792, conventional depictions

of Britannia as a woman of power and stability were relatively rare. At this point eight

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[27] *Morning Herald and Daily Advertiser* (London, England), Saturday, April 24, 1784; Issue
1090.

years had passed since the Westminster election and condemnation of politically active women had not abated. Furthermore, the hands-on participation of French women during the French Revolution prompted the perception of political women as a universal threat and allowed the opposition to group British women together with France and the horrors of the Revolution. French women, ranging from Marie Antoinette to the participants in the Women's March to Versailles, embodied British anxieties about the increasing presence of women in British campaigning efforts. British print artists capitalized on this perceived similarity between British and French women and drew on imagery produced across the Channel to depict the female body as monstrous and threatening.

After 1789, British and French artists produced hundreds of satirical prints mocking the deposed French Queen. In the aftermath of the royals' flight to Varennes in June of 1791, an anonymous French artist produced *Les deux ne font qu'un* (Figure 12). In the image, Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette are shown as a double-headed beast. The King and Queen are recognizable by their faces, but their composite body is made up of two halves of two different quadruped animals.[28] Louis XVI is shown with two long horns, a white furry body, and hooves in the manner of an English mountain goat. Marie Antoinette, in contrast, appears to have the body of a leopard with pronounced teats, drawing attention to her female sex. The Queen is also wearing tall red, yellow, and blue plumes on her head, which reference her former taste for extravagant dress, and Medusa-esque snakes are seen sprouting out from behind her hair. In this image, Marie

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[28] As noted by De Baecque, French political prints made during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries use the body as a metaphor to make more abstract notions, such as the "individual, human community, [and] even the universe," easier to understand. A healthy body implies prosperity, whereas a monstrous, fat, or sickly body indicates corruption and calamity. *Les deux ne font qu'un* falls into the latter category. For more information about the monstrous body in French satirical imagery, see Antoine de Baecque, *La Caricature Revolutionnaire* (Paris: Presses du C.N.R.S., 1988).

Antoinette is fused with the allegory of Medusa, Britain's common shorthand for France and the destructive force driving the horrific events of the Revolution. In this way, the Queen is represented as a dangerous body, and the fact that she is equal in size to Louis XVI indicates the she possesses just as much, or possibly even more, power than her husband. Even so, the pair is satirized through this ridiculous amalgamation, and the head of cabbage near the King's feet further heightens the folly of their public personas.

The increasing political power of everyday women, such as Pitt's female supporters and the women of the March to Versailles, as well as of high society women, such as Georgiana Cavendish and Marie Antoinette, fostered the shift away from representations of Britannia as a noble harbinger of justice and liberty toward her depiction as a weak and defenseless woman. It is within this political climate that images like Rowlandson's *The Contrast* became less frequent and works similar in theme to Cruikshank's *Death or Liberty!* gained popularity. It is also during this time that the depiction of France as Medusa, an evil and uncontrollable force that brings death and destruction, evolved to reference debates about women's political activities in Britain. In this way, the female body simultaneously satirizes the French Revolution and the politically active woman. An analysis of another of Gillray's works demonstrates how the female body served critiques of British women in ostensibly francocentric images.

In Gillray's, *Alecto and her train, at the gate of PandaeMonium:-or-The recruiting sarjeant enlisting John-Bull, into the Revolution Service*, produced in 1791, an encounter takes place between Alecto, a French Medusa type, and John Bull (Figure 13).[29] The print satirizes British radicals who were sympathetic to the French

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[29] Alecto (Αληκτώ) translates as "insatiable anger." She is a Fury whose physical appearance closely mirrors that of Medusa. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, it was Alecto's charge to unleash chaos on the

Revolution, in this case by presenting John Bull, the leftmost figure, as an unkempt

working class man who is confused about how to react to Alecto's recruitment call. On

both sides of Alecto stand British politicians who supported revolutionary efforts in

France. On her left is politician Richard Brinsley Sheridan, who plays a fife, and on her

right is Fox, beating on a drum emblematized with the head of Medusa, who in this case

serves as an allegory for Discord.[30] Alecto and her supporters stand in front of the Crown

& Anchor Tavern, which was a common meeting place in London for supporters of

political reform.[31] Bursting forth from the tavern's door is a beaming orange fire with

miniature demons, bats, imps, and other flying, nightmarish creatures emerging from the

flames. An extensive exchange of dialogue occurs between the figures, beginning with

Alecto. She extends a handful of assignats toward John Bull and says the following[32]:

> "Come on my brave Lad, take this bounty-money, & enter into my Company of
> Gentlemen Volunteers enlisted in the cause of Liberty – I'll find you present pay and free
> quarters, & I'll lead you where you shall fill your knapsack with Plunder; - nay Man,
> never talk about your old Master the Farmer, I'll find you Hundreds of Masters as good
> as he; Zounds I'll make you one of the Masters of England yourself: - come on, I say,
> keres riches for you, - come on; the glorious 14th of July is approaching, when Monarchs
> are to be crush'd like maggots, & brave men like yourself are to be put in their places –

Trojans and thus aid the Greeks in their struggle for victory: "Thus having said, she sinks beneath the ground, with furious haste, and shoots the Stygian sound, to rouse Alecto from th' infernal seat of her dire sisters, and their dark retreat. This Fury, fit for her intent, she chose; one who delights in wars and human woes. Ev'n Pluto hates his own misshapen race; her sister Furies fly her hideous face; so frightful are the forms the monster takes, so fierce the hissings of her speckled snakes." Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Book VII, via *The Internet Classics Archive*: http://classics.mit.edu/Virgil/aeneid.html (5 April 2013).

[30] The British Museum Website, "Alecto and her train, at the gate of PandaeMonium:-or-The recruiting sarjeant enlisting John-Bull, into the Revolution Service," http://www.britishmuseum.org/ (5 April 2013). It is worth noting that dance and music, especially drum-playing, were seen as banal activities of "uncivilized" or "savage" peoples during the eighteenth century.

[31] A key example is the Friends of Parliamentary Reform Meeting, which took place on May 19, 1790 in the Crown & Anchor Tavern.

[32] The Oxford English Dictionary defines "assignat" as "paper money issues by the revolutionary government of France, on security of the state lands." *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "assignat."

here hold your hand, enter boldly in the cause of Freedom, & cry Huzza – Vive la
Nation! Huzza"[33]

John Bull scratches his head, holding his hat and a pitchfork in his other hand, and

gives Alecto the following reply:

> "Wounds, Master Sarjeant, an I should enter into your sarvice, what'll Varmer-George
> say to I, for leaving 'en without warning? – and yet I is half in love with the sound of
> your drum; & wishes to leave off Ploughing & dunging, & wear one of your vine
> cockades, & be a French Gentleman; - & yet, dangs it, it goes against ones heart to leave
> the Varmer; - ah Varmer George has been a rare good Measter to I! – but, am I to have all
> them fine paper Moneys – but to leave my old Measter! Ah me! I dozes'nt know what to
> do, not I!"[34]

In this exchange, John Bull is slow-witted and indecisive, calling to mind the fact

that some British politicians ill-advisedly supported the French cause during the political

debates of 1791. Alecto acts as both the French Medusa, a bringer of chaos aligned with

demons and hell, and as a female recruiter for political reform, perhaps recalling the

Duchess of Devonshire and other politically active women. However, a third reading of

the figure is made possible by the blackness of her skin. During the eighteenth and

nineteenth centuries, British print artists often conflated demons with black bodies or

amalgamated the two, resulting in black hybrid creatures. I argue that Gillray depicted

Alecto with a black body to call to mind the enslaved and potentially rebellious Africans

working in Britain's West Indian colonies. In this context, Alecto, a recruiter staging a

revolution and asking for support, also addresses anxieties about slave uprisings and

debates about abolition. Furthermore, the blackness and demonic nature of her body

further links her to pseudo-scientific discourse during the period and reestablishes the

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[33] The British Museum Website, "Alecto and her train," http://www.britishmuseum.org/ (5 April
2013).

[34] Ibid.

perceived racial hierarchies advocated by both France and Britain during the eighteenth

and nineteenth centuries.

Chapter Three
Alecto, Slave Uprisings, and Demonic Imagery

Before discussing the ways in which a black Alecto would have referenced and participated in contentious debates during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it is necessary to first consider the prominence of the black body in literature, poetry, theater, and politics during this moment. Examination of popular culture in Britain reveals that the black body served as a site for the discussion of hotly contested issues. An example of an early work that casts an African man and woman as lead characters is Aphra Behn's novella, *Oroonoko*, written in 1688. In the story, Imoinda is described as a great beauty coveted not only by her husband Prince Oroonoko but also by her husband's grandfather, an Akan King, and many other male characters in the story, including both white slave-owners and enslaved black men.[35] Throughout the story, Imoinda and Oroonoko face incredible odds to remain husband and wife and to gain freedom after they are enslaved. After Oroonoko is unable to arrange for his pregnant wife to be sent home to Ghana, the former Prince stages an unsuccessful slave revolt. Once it becomes certain that Oroonoko will be killed as punishment for his uprising, Imoinda agrees to his plan to kill her by his own hand so that she does not have to suffer rape and continued enslavement. Oroonoko sorrowfully mourns her decapitated body, but when he is publicly executed by bodily dismemberment, the former Prince bears the pain in stoic silence.

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[35] Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko: Or, The Royal Slave. A True History*. (London: Printed for Will. Canning, at his Shop in the Temple-Cloysters, 1688).

Oroonoko was not an immediate success when it was first published in 1688, but throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries many British writers and poets, both male and female, took up their pens and recycled the story, often reworking Imoinda's character in the process. In *Imoinda's Shade: Marriage and the African Woman in Eighteenth-Century British Literature, 1759-1808*, Lyndon J. Dominique examines these later versions of Behn's story and examines "how the fictional African woman is constructed and employed to… test the successes and failures of Britain's preoccupation with the issue of slavery and the extent of the nation's love for freedom."[36] During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Imoinda, or rather the *idea* of Imoinda, served as a vehicle for debating the slavery issue and was equally appropriated by pro-slavery advocates. For example, Thomas Southerne used Behn's story for his play, *Oroonoko: A Tragedy*, which first hit the stage in 1695 and remained popular throughout the eighteenth century. Southerne chose to cast a white woman as Imoinda, erasing her blackness, while a white man in blackface played the role of Oroonoko. This change of Imoinda's race transferred the beauty and power of the black heroine to a white, English heroine, directing the sympathy of the audience away from the enslaved black woman.

The addition of whiteness and the erasure of blackness in Southerne's later, rewritten version of Behn's *Oroonoko* demonstrate the malleability of the story and its potentiality to simultaneously support pro-slavery and anti-slavery positions. In fact, Behn's 1688 version, which undoubtedly sympathizes with the black protagonists Oroonoko and Imoinda, could have been interpreted by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century pro-slavery advocates as justifying the practice of slavery. After all, Oroonoko's

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[36] Lyndon J. Dominique, *Imoinda's Shade: Marriage and the African Woman in Eighteenth-Century British Literature, 1759-1808* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2012), 17.

slave uprising ultimately fails, the Prince receives fatal punishment for his attempt to overturn the status quo, and the institution of slavery is upheld.

Anxieties about slave uprisings and the abolitionist movement manifest in British prints, and especially in Gillray's *Alecto and her train*, in interesting ways. On one level, Alecto is shown attempting to buy English support for the French cause, as she hands John Bull a small wad of cash while telling him of the liberty and wealth to be had from supporting France. On another level, Alecto's black skin, in conjunction with her tattered clothing, might mark her as an enslaved person who tries to buy her freedom from John Bull. Her unkemptness implies not only her state as an enslaved African but also that she does not know how to dress correctly. However, Alecto is aligned with the white body through both her French dress and her camaraderie with her British supporters. The conflation between the French national body, the bodies of Britons who support the French cause, and the enslaved African body of Alecto complicates the black-white dichotomy and equally casts Frenchmen, "traitorous" Britons, and enslaved Africans as Britain's "Others." Furthermore, the stark contrast between Alecto's threadbare clothing and her promises of riches demonstrates the falsity of her claim as well as the threat that abolition poses to the trade and wealth of Britain and its colonies. If John Bull joins Alecto, it is implied that he, too, will dress in rags and lose the earnings associated with Empire and made possible by the institution of slavery. In this way, the image addresses the abolition debate at home in England through an image whose French subject is explicitly communicated through the title, text, and military dress of Alecto.

In the image, Alecto is depicted as a demonic force standing before the hellmouth door of the Crown & Anchor Tavern, driving the bloody revolution in France.

Furthermore, Alecto's recruitment speech attempts to lure John Bull with promises of

riches and power, revealing the corruption of her call to support the French cause. Her

words contrast vividly with the recruitment speech of Oroonoko, who argues eloquently

for the redemption and freedom of his black comrades based on moral grounds. His

speech is worth quoting in full:

> "*Caesar* [Oroonoko][37], having singl'd out these Men from the Women and Children, made an Harangue to 'em of the Miseries, and Ignominies of Slavery; counting up all their Toyls and Sufferings, under such Loads, Burdens, and Drudgeries, as were fitter for Beasts than Men; Senseless Brutes, than Humane Souls. He told 'em it was not for Days, Months, or Years, but for Eternity; there was no end to be of their Misfortunes: They suffer'd not like Men who might find a Glory, and Fortitude in Oppression; but like Dogs that lov'd the Whip and Bell, and fawn'd the more they were beaten: That they had lost the Divine Quality of Men, and were become insensible Asses, fit only to bear; nay worse: an Ass, or Dog, or Horse having done his Duty, cou'd lye down in Retreat, and rise to Work again, and while he did his Duty indur'd no Stripes; but Men, Villanous, Senseless Men, such as they, Toyl'd on all the tedious Week till Black *Friday*; and then, whether they Work'd or not, whether they were Faulty or Meriting, they promiscuously, the innocent with the Guilty, suffer'd the infamous Whip, the sordid Stripes, from their Fellow Slaves till their Blood trickled from all Parts of their Body; Blood, whose every drop ought to be Reveng'd with a Life of some of those Tyrants, that impose it; *And why*, said he, *my dear Friends and Fellow-sufferers, shou'd we be Slaves to an unknown People? Have they Vanquish'd us Nobly in Fight? Have they Wone us in Honourable Battel? And are we, by the chance of War, become their Slaves? This wou'd not anger a Noble Heart, this wou'd not animate a Souldiers Soul; no, but we are Bought and Sold like Apes, or Monkeys, to be the Sport of Women, Fools and Cowards; and the Support of Rogues, Runagades, that have abandon'd their own Countries, for Rapin, Murders, Thefts and Villanies: Do you not hear every Day how they upbraid each other with infamy of Life, below the Wildest Salvages; and shall we render Obedience to such a degenerate Race, who have no one Humane Vertue left, to distinguish 'em from the vilest Creatures? Will you, I say, suffer the Lash from such Hands?* They all Reply'd, with one accord, *No, no, no; Caesar* [Oroonoko] *has spoke like a Great Captain; like a Great King.*"[38]

Oroonoko's recruitment call for black revolutionaries pinpoints the heart of late

eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century debate on the slavery issue. For France,

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[37] Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko,* 32, 36. Behn often refers to Oroonoko as "Caesar," perhaps emphasizing her depiction of him as an avid reader who "admir'd the Romans." In a similar vein, the author describes Imoinda as a "black Venus." In this way, both characters are inserted into Western, and specifically Roman, history.

[38] Ibid; 182-6.

"slavery was one of the irresolvable contradictions of Revolutionary politics."[39][40] It

conflicted with the ideology of universal liberty, yet it was absolutely crucial to the

financial success of the nation, as France's most productive colony, Saint Domingue,

"depended…on over 500,000 slaves cultivating sugar and coffee."[41] It is because of this

latter point that the French formulated an argument to explain the perceived inferiority of

blacks in racial, pseudo-scientific terms. While Britons also engaged in "scientific"

discourse concerning the black race, their reasoning for doing so was quite different. In

lieu of revolutionary ideology, there was instead an insistence on the continuance of

traditional governmental practices and economic stability, ensured by the exploitation of

the black body and the production of sugar, palm oil, and other products by enslaved

Africans in the British West Indies. These different yet complementary schools of

French and British thought are visually represented in Gillray's *Alecto and her train*.

This perpetuates the notion held by pro-slavery Britons and Frenchmen that Africans are

inferior to whites in physical, intellectual, and cultural terms and are thus unfit to handle

money. While both the British and the French need slavery to bolster their economies,

only Britons are fiscally responsible and understand the value of traditional government,

despite John Bull's hesitation and consideration of Alecto's tempting offer. Thus, *Alecto*

and her train argues that France's bloody revolution and the subjugation of blacks follow

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[39] Darcy Grigsby, *Extremities: Painting Empire in Post-Revolutionary France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002) 17.

[40] In 1794, the First Republic of France abolished slavery in all French colonies. In 1802 Napoleon reinstated slavery, and in 1848 the Second Republic definitively abolished the institution.

[41] Grigsby, *Extremities*, 17.

the natural order of things, demonstrating the fallibility of both the French and enslaved

Africans while proving the superiority of Britons.

Alecto's body is wiry yet imposing, with strong, clearly defined biceps and

forearm muscles, shriveled breasts, and masculine facial features. She is not unlike

Rowlandson's Medusa in *The Contrast*, who is shown in a similar manner with masculine

traits, an aggressive stance, and phallic accoutrements (Figure 2). This masculinization

of Alecto's body, which emphasizes her physical capacity to revolt and to cause harm,

intensifies the threat of the French Revolution, and aligns it with slave uprisings through

the form of the black body. Her demon-like appearance serves a similar purpose by

situating her within a long-standing tradition of black demon imagery in Europe,

exemplified by the Black Hellmouth shown devouring demonic creatures in *The Hours of*

Catherine of Cleves (Figure 14). By highlighting Alecto's masculine, threatening, and

demonic attributes, this image parallels "scientific" discourse about the malevolent and

degenerate nature of blacks during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries.

As Andrew S. Curran demonstrates in *The Anatomy of Blackness: Science & Slavery in*

an Age of Enlightenment, anatomical dissections of blacks often furthered racist and pro-

slavery motives. The Dutch anatomist Anton van Leeuwenhoek claimed that his research

indicated that blackness originated from "dark scales" found in one of the tissue layers of

the skin.[42] This assertion and other similar "findings" linked the black body to the

fantastical bodies of the devil, demons, and all kinds of nightmarish imagery.

An example of another French-themed work that utilizes the black body to

comment on the perceived demonic nature of black people and to address debates on the

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[42] Andrew S. Curran, *The Anatomy of Blackness: Science & Slavery in an Age of Enlightenment*
(Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2011), 1.

abolition of slavery is Gillray's *The French Consular-Triumverate, settl'ing the New Constitution*, produced in 1800 (Figure 15). In the satirical print, Napoleon (rightmost figure) is shown seated at a table with his Second and Third Consuls, Cambacéiès (leftmost figure) and Sieyès. Napoleon is hard at work writing the "Nouvelle Constitution," while the torn "Constitution of 1793" and a bundled stack of "Vielles Constitutions" rest on the floor beneath and next to his left boot. The two Consuls study their notes pensively, touching their feathered quills to their lips in a similar gesture. Behind the table, a fourth Frenchman stretches open a gold curtain to reveal a series of pigeon-holes inscribed "Constitution de Parade," "Constitution du Sang," "Constitution de Foutre," "Constitution de Despotism," and "Constitution de Vol[eur?]."[43] A miniature guillotine sits on top of the cabinet.

The green cloth covering the working table is pinned back to reveal a curious scene taking place below Napoleon and his Consuls (Figure 16). In this partitioned space, two figures are shown beating their tools against a red-hot, bent piece of metal set upon another hard surface, perhaps made of stone. In the background and to the left, a third figure uses a bellows to blast air onto the fire, keeping the furnace working at full capacity. In the foreground near the feet of the figures lay newly forged shackles or chains, either cooling or ready to be put to use.

At first glance, and especially due to their rather small size within the overall composition, one might recognize the figures as enslaved black men by not only the color of their skin but also the vigorous work that they are shown performing. However, further observation reveals that the figures, or at least the two on the right, have long, spade-

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[43] British Museum Website, "The French Consular-Triumverate, settl'ing the New Constitution," http://www.britishmuseum.org/ (5 April 2013).

tipped tails. The British Museum website describes these figures as "fire-lit demons forging fetters" and offers no further explanation of either their identity or their function within the satirical print.[44] However, the placement of this vignette directly below Napoleon and his working table demonstrates that it is of vital importance to the image and that it plays a starring albeit less immediately recognizable role within the work.

To determine the significance of these figures within the image, it is necessary to first consider why they might be labeled as "fire-lit demons forging fetters." Other than their long, spade-tipped tails, what features mark these figures as demons? An analysis of other satirical prints involving demon imagery reveals that the answer lies partly in the black color of their skin. To illustrate this point, I return to *Alecto and her train*, which Gillray made nine years prior to *The French Consular-Triumverate* (Figure 17). As I argued previously, Alecto simultaneously refers to the French national body, Medusa, the politically active woman, demons, and the rebel slave via the fusion of traits associated with these motifs. In addition, Alecto is shown with a darker skin tone than that of John Bull and her English supporters. Her darkened skin links her with the small demons fluttering out of the flaming door of the Crown & Anchor Tavern and further marks her as a demon in her own right. Alecto's webbed wings drive home this point, as does the similarly toned demon hovering just to the right of her right wing.

Another example of this formula of combining a dark skin tone with animal body parts to reference demons is found in *Bony's visions of a great little man's night comforts*, made by an anonymous British artist in 1811 (Figure 18). In this satirical print, Napoleon awakes from a nightmare in his bed to find himself surrounded by a fantastical vision. For this discussion, I would like to focus on a specific figure in the image, what

[44] Ibid.

the British Museum describes as "a grotesque bird with the head of a negro," located

above and to the right of Napoleon and directly in his line of sight (Figure 19). The

creature is composed of a human head and a bird's body with darkened skin, visually

linking it to the imperial eagle hovering directly above Napoleon's and Josephine's

heads. A speech bubble ushering forth from its mouth says, "I am Toussaint," identifying

the human-bird creature as Toussaint Louverture, the leader of the Haitian Revolution. In

The French Consular-Triumverate, the figures' tails perform a similar function as

Alecto's webbed wings and as Toussaint Louverture's bird-like body: this one animalistic

trait, in combination with a darkened skin tone, marks the figures as demons. However,

the designation of these figures as demons does not undo their undeniable reference to the

enslaved black body, signaled by their physically demanding labor.

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the enslaved black body

featured prominently in British public debate, popular literature, and visual culture. In *An

Inquiry into Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), Adam Smith argues that

Britain's high duties on sugar produced in its West Indian colonies "prohibit a great

people… from making all that they can of every part of their own produce," as they are

prevented from refining the sugar before it is shipped to England.[45] Smith argues that

Britain unjustly violates "the most sacred rights of mankind" by implementing these

duties, which "are only impertinent badges of slavery imposed upon them" by the mother

country.[46] By referring to the people of the West Indies as "a great people," Smith aligns

British-born colonists and indigenous peoples rather than separating them by social or

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[45] Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. W. B. Todd, 2 vols. (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1981), vol. 2, 581-2.

[46] Ibid.

ethnic boundaries. In so doing, he blurs the divisions between the white body and the

black body. This deliberate grouping widens the scope of Smith's discussion, allowing

for inclusion of mulattoes, people of mixed white and black descent, and inviting readers

to consider other "great peoples" that are treated similarly to the people of Britain's West

Indian colonies.

To elucidate this last point and to demonstrate how this process works in British

prints, I return to the detail of "fire-lit demons forging fetters" in Gillray's *The French

Consular-Triumverate* (Figure 16). In the detail, the slave-like demons are shown

performing blacksmith work, a type of physically demanding labor that was crucial to

British industry in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[47] However, British

blacksmiths were members of the working class and often lived and worked in the

countryside rather than in London. As Kay Dian Kriz notes in *Slavery, Sugar, and the

Culture of Refinement: Picturing the British West Indies, 1700-1840,* "African slaves

were often compared with Britain's working classes within political debates on domestic

labor and West Indian slavery."[48] The same is true for the demons in *The French

Consular-Triumverate,* which simultaneously refer to the black body and a type of

manual labor associated with English, Welsh, and Scottish working class men more often

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[47] Paine includes blacksmiths' tools among the weapons used by the French during the Revolution. When describing the "nocturnal enterprises" of Parisians, he says "the night was spent in providing themselves with every sort of weapon they could make or procure: guns, swords, blacksmiths' hammers, carpenters' axes, iron crows, pikes, halberts, pitchforks, spits, clubs, etc., etc." In addition to the blacksmiths' hammers, the other weapons further align French revolutionaries with the working class man. Paine, *Rights of Man,* 18.

[48] Kay Dian Kriz, *Slavery, Sugar, and the Culture of Refinement: Picturing the British West Indies, 1700-1840* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 7. Kriz discusses Richard Cumberland's popular comedy "The West Indian" to illustrate this point. "In an advertisement for a volume of his comedies published in 1791 he explained that the 'level manners of a polish'd country, like this [England], do not supply much matter for the comic muse…[therefore]…I have found myself obliged either to dive into the lower class of men, or betake myself to the out-skirts of the empire; the center is too equal and refined for such purposes.'"

than with enslaved black men.[49] Furthermore, Gillray's depiction of slave-like demons

performing blacksmith work further links British working class men to enslaved black

men through the term "blacksmith" itself. The prefix "black" references the forging of

iron or black metal, but in this case "black" may also be a pun on the color of the smiths'

skin.

This ambiguous depiction of the slave-like demons is not only intentional but also

vital for their role within the composition of Gillray's print. The figures are shown

directly below the Frenchmen's table, suggesting that they form the foundation for the

work performed above. Furthermore, the fact that they are positioned underneath the

tablecloth, which would veil and thus hide the figures under normal circumstances,

suggests that they are meant to be kept secret and hidden away. However, the tablecloth

is inexplicably pinned back in the manner of a stage curtain, treating the figures as actors

playing their parts in a miniature theater within the overall composition. The ambiguity

of the figures, as well as their placement below the Frenchmen's table, categorizes them

as behind-the-scenes contributors for political decision-making and as the secret

machinery behind the façade of Napoleon's regime. The close proximity of this scene to

Napoleon's "LIBERTÉ"-inscribed sword enhances the irony of this re-writing of the

French constitution. Furthermore, the fact that the tablecloth does not completely

separate the "inside" space of the figures from the "outside" space of the Frenchman, as

seen by the small gap of floor that transitions the foreground of the blacksmithing scene

to the carpet at the Frenchmen's feet, suggests a linkage between these inner and outer

realms. In other words, some sort of connection exists between demons and mortals,

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[49] Colley, *Britons,* xiii.

black men and French men, manual laborers and politicians, and the enslaved body and the national body.

The black figures in *The French Consular-Triumverate* comment on the nature and mechanics of Napoleon's political cabinet in powerful ways through their potentiality for various readings. On one level, the figures represent black men who are shown forging the chains that serve to enslave them. On another level, the figures represent demons forging shackles that will chain the souls of the deceased to hell. On a third level, the demons act as metaphors for the three Frenchmen above – Napoleon, Cambacéiès, and Sieyès – who are forging a new and temporary constitution that will, like the defunct constitutions strewn about Napoleon's boots, pretend to ensure the liberty of the French people yet in reality chains them as though they are slaves. It is through these complex interrelations that the black body fused with the perceived demonic nature of French politics, providing harsh commentary on Napoleon's regime and addressing debates within Britain about scientific "findings" on black Africans and the institution of slavery.

Conclusion

An "us"-versus-"them" mentality existed between Britain and France prior to the period discussed in this thesis, but it is especially during the moment of the French Revolution and its immediate aftermath that Britons forged an increasingly unified national identity in opposition to their foremost "Other," the French. The loss of the thirteen colonies during the American Revolution was a significant blow to the British economy that threatened more broadly the imperial basis for the nation's wealth. The outbreak of the French Revolution shortly thereafter posed an even greater danger, due not only to the close proximity of Britain and France but also to the positioning of the two nations as equally powerful and competitive global powers. In other words, if revolution could take root on French soil, who is to say that the same could not happen in Britain?

With an especially unprecedented and bloody revolution wreaking havoc just beyond England's southern shores, Britons in favor of maintaining the stability of British government entered into a multifaceted debate with those who supported the French cause. This debate played out in a number of widely accessible arenas such as public discourse, brochures, periodicals, novels, plays, and – as demonstrated in this thesis – satirical imagery. I have exhibited the complexity of discussions about the French Revolution and its repercussions and how satirical imagery functioned within this politically active climate. Artists such as Rowlandson, Gillray, and Cruikshank produced works that condemned events taking place in France, as well as zeal for French support.

However, satirical images made by these artists, and especially by Gillray, often comment negatively on British political stances, behaviors, and cultural practices more broadly, treating Britain in a similar manner as France. Therefore, the British satirical tradition is not a partisan art form that attacks only France. Rather, it is also an inward-looking medium that casts a critical eye on all subjects tackled by its sly, harsh-witted humor. It follows then that issues and anxieties specific to Britain manifest in British satirical imagery just as much and indeed more often than those particular to France. However, what is less immediately obvious is the way in which French-centered images simultaneously address anxieties about a variety of concurrent events and ideologies pertaining to shifting power relations within Britain and beyond, reaching as far as its West Indian colonies. The British satirical prints I discussed earlier demonstrate how and to what extent France became a foil for Britain during this period of passionate, controversial, and pervasive debate.

In this thesis, I have argued that British satirical prints produced between 1789 and 1821 addressed first and foremost the concern that revolutionary ideas in France would make their way across the Channel and deconstruct the political, patriarchal, and imperial stability that had remained undisturbed since the Glorious Revolution. Satirical artists depicted this unease predominantly by contrasting a favorable yet not necessarily flawless personification of Britain with an ominous or comical French counterpart. British satirical prints also took up the issue of evolving gender roles and, more specifically, the increasingly prevalent role of British women as power players during election campaigns and as recruiters for votes in favor of their preferred candidates. Backlash against the advancement of politically active women manifested in

representations of a weakened Britannia defeated by a male aggressor and in depictions of a violent and diabolical French Medusa with the intent and potential to tempt and harm the men with whom she interacts. Lastly, British satirical prints addressed British debates about slavery and anxieties about potential slave uprisings. Images that tackled this issue portrayed blacks as unkempt, wicked creatures who lack legitimate reasons for their claims to freedom and as demons who provide the machinery for demented undertakings, such as political decision-making by Frenchmen in positions of power.

The fusion of French politics with contemporary British debates on women and blacks in British satirical prints enhanced the role of these images as instigators of and participants in political discourse. Because they are so tied to political events, satirical prints have a short shelf life in comparison with other types of artworks. One of the ways that Rowlandson, Gillray, and Cruikshank increased the relevancy of their works is by loading each figure with visual characteristics that speak to immediate events, general trends in power relations, and theoretical debates. This conscious expansion of their works' referential potentiality increased the marketability of their art and, by giving people plenty of avenues for discussion, kept their images in the spotlight longer than they would have remained otherwise. The complexity of British satirical prints invites further study, and the multiplicity of meaning within each image, especially those by the artists discussed in this thesis, begs not only nuanced interpretation but also a thorough consideration of how satirical imagery functioned within eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British culture.

Figure 1. James Gillray, *St. George and the Dragon*, 1805, hand-colored etching (The British Museum, London).

Figure 2. Thomas Rowlandson, *The Contrast*, 1792, hand-colored etching (The British Museum, London).
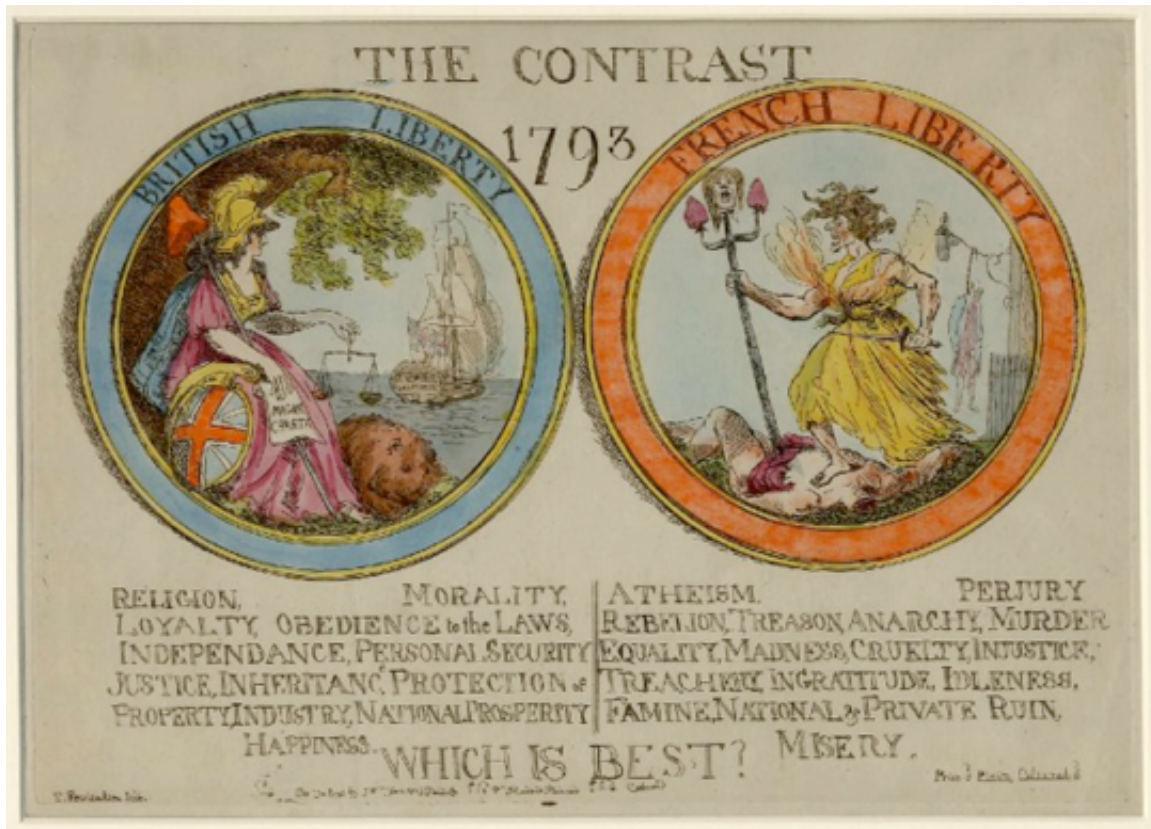
Figure 3. Thomas Rowlandson, *The Contrast*, 1793, hand-colored etching (The British Museum, London).

Figure 4. Lord George Murray, after Thomas Rowlandson, *The Contrast*, 1793, earthenware mug with bluish "pearl-ware" glaze (The British Museum, London).

Figure 5. Anonymous, *The Gallic Cock and English Lyon*, 1739. Reproduced from Linda Colley. *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.

Figure 6. Philippe de Loutherbourg, *The British Lion and the French Cock*, c.1797, sketch. Reproduced from Linda Colley. *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.

Figure 7. Eighteenth-Century Copper Halfpennies, 1795.

Figure 8. James Gillray, *The Plumb-pudding in Danger: -or- State Epicures taking un Petit Souper*, 1805, hand-colored etching (The British Museum, London).

Figure 9. James Gillray, *French Liberty. British Slavery.,* 1792, hand-colored etching
(The British Museum, London).

Figure 10. George Cruikshank, *Death or Liberty! Or Britannia & the virtues of the constitution in danger of violation from the grt political libertinem radical reform!*, 1819, hand-colored etching (The British Museum, London).

Figure 11. Thomas Rowlandson, *Every man has his hobby horse*, 1784, hand-colored
etching (The British Museum, London).

Figure 12. Anonymous, *Les deux ne font qu'un*, 1791, hand-colored etching (The British Museum, London).

Figure 13. James Gillray, *Alecto and her train, at the gate of PandaeMonium:-or-The recruiting sarjeant enlisting John-Bull, into the Revolution Service*, 1791, hand-colored etching (The British Museum, London).

Figure 14. Black Hellmouth in *The Hours of Catherine of Cleves*, c.1435-60, illuminated manuscript (The Morgan Library, New York).

Figure 15. James Gillray, *The French Consular-Triumverate, settl'ing the New Constitution*, 1800, hand-colored etching (The British Museum, London).

Figure 16. James Gillray, "Fire-lit demons forging fetters," from *The French Consular-Triumverate, settl'ing the New Constitution*, 1800, hand-colored etching (The British Museum, London).

Figure 17. James Gillray, "Alecto," from *Alecto and her train, at the gate of PandaeMonium:-or-The recruiting sarjeant enlisting John-Bull, into the Revolution Service*, 1791, hand-colored etching (The British Museum, London).

Figure 18. Anonymous artist, *Bony's visions or a great little man's night comforts*, 1811, aquatint etching (The British Museum, London).

Figure 19. Anonymous artist, "Toussaint," from *Bony's visions or a great little man's night comforts*, 1811, aquatint etching (The British Museum, London).

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