FRESH PERSPECTIVES *on the Permanent Collection from* DARTMOUTH'S STUDENTS

A SPACE *for* DIALOGUE

CHECKLIST

Thomas Rowlandson, British, 1756–1827
Tail Piece to Volume Three of the Caricature Magazine, 1818,
etching in bistre with hand coloring
Purchased through the Adelbert Ames Jr. 1919 Fund; 2007.39.6

Honoré Victorin Daumier, French, 1808–1879
Mr. Daumier, your series . . . is . . . charming . . . (Mr. Daumier, votre serie . . . est . . . charmante . . .), plate 78 from the series *Caricaturana (Robert Macaire)*, 1838, hand-colored lithograph on wove paper
Purchased through the Class of 1935 Memorial Fund; PR.2000.39.1

What! Another caricature of us in this morning's Charivari*! . . . (Comment! Encore une Caricature sur nous . . .),*
plate 39 from the series *The Bluestockings (Les Bas-Bleus),*
1844, lithograph on wove paper
Purchased through the Hood Museum of Art Acquisitions Fund; PR.2003.15

Pierre-Nolasque Bergeret, French, 1782–1863
The Dawdlers of the Rue du Coq (Les Musards de Rue du Coq),
1804, pen lithograph with hand coloring
Purchased through the Mrs. Harvey P. Hood W'18 Fund; 2006.56

Giles Grinagain, British, active early 19th century
The Caricaturist's Apology, 1801, etching with hand coloring
Purchased through the Adelbert Ames Jr. 1919 Fund; 2007.39.5

James Gillray, British, 1757–1815
Temperance Enjoying a Frugal Meal, 1792,
etching with hand coloring
Promised gift of Jane and Raphael Bernstein; 2010.84.68

Shakespeare Sacrificed, or The Offering to Avarice, 1789,
etching and engraving with hand coloring
Promised gift of Jane and Raphael Bernstein; 2010.84.73

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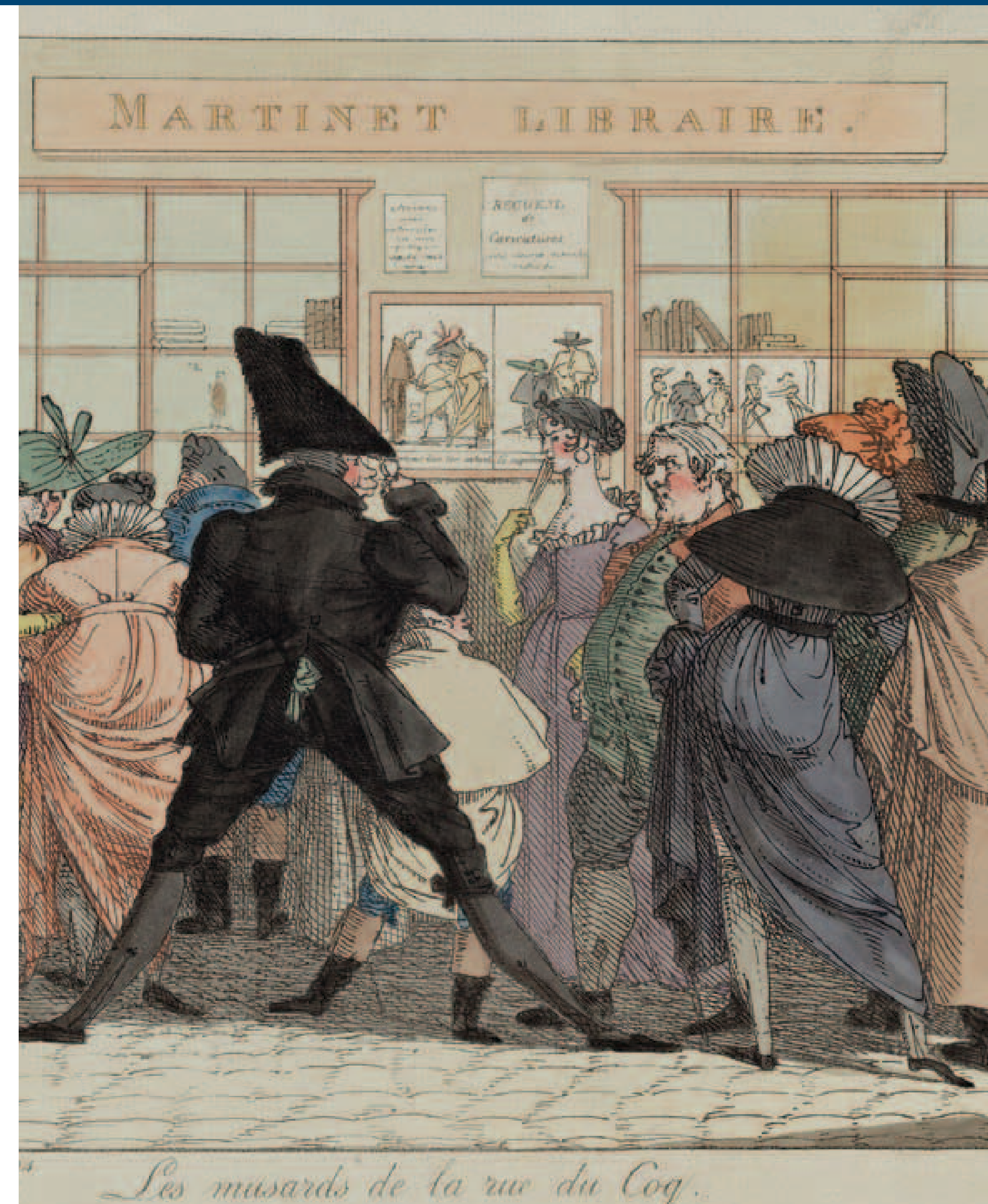


Pierre-Nolasque Bergeret, *The Dawdlers of the Rue du Coq (Les Musards de Rue du Coq)* (detail), 1804, pen lithograph with hand coloring. Purchased through the Mrs. Harvey P. Hood W'18 Fund; 2006.56

AGGRESSIVE ART

Early Caricature and Self-Parody in France and England

Giles Grinagain, *The Caricaturist's Apology*, 1801, etching with hand coloring. Purchased through the Adelbert Ames Jr. 1919 Fund; 2007.39.5

During their golden age from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth centuries, caricatures produced in London and Paris mixed mirth and folly with incisive criticism in their depictions of Georgian England and, later, Napoleonic France. Often displayed in print shop windows or purchased privately, these satirical renderings of well-known figures dominated urban popular culture during a period of profound social transition. This installation touches upon the entire culture of caricature, from spectatorship to censorship. Satirizing topics including politics, gender, social class, and street life, caricatures resonated with diverse groups, capitalizing upon a novel intersection of technology and cross-class consumption as well as a larger trend toward humor as a mode of communication in general. The cult of celebrity and gossip that fueled caricatures in turn grew because of them, thanks to publishing's ability to reach a wide audience through distribution. In addition, the characters being satirized became increasingly more recognizable, due to the increased circulation of prints of all types, particularly portraits—with the ability of the public to recognize the features of various aristocrats and politicians came the opportunity for caricaturists to subvert them, often aggressively. These prints also reflect the presence of the artist within their imagery—visual jokes and allusions to physiognomies and personalities evoke for the modern viewer the political satire now on television and the Internet, including the work of Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert. In the golden-age prints displayed here lie many of the qualities that continue to define social satire today.

Chief among those qualities is the sheer impact of the product itself. Many of these caricatures include the names of their publishers and shops as a celebration of caricature-viewing culture as well as a method of self-promotion. Aristocrats and politicians often benefited from (or at times were at the mercy of) prints for their popularity; the latest gossip could be printed rapidly and disseminated widely via print shop windows. In Pierre-Nolasque Bergeret's (1782–1863) pen lithograph *Les Musards de Rue du Coq* (1804) and Thomas Rowlandson's (1756–1827) etching *Tail Piece to Volume Three of the Caricature Magazine* (1818), the artists depict the variety of viewers that might gather outside of print shops. Oftentimes, the dimensions of prints were even sized to the available windowpane. Etchings could be quickly executed and sold as single sheets in significant numbers, though they were not published in periodicals and newspapers due to the even greater volume required there (Donald, 2). Pen lithography, introduced in France in 1802, was a more efficient way to create especially crude, comically casual caricatures. These works were remarkably effective as well because of the visceral reaction viewers had to images in general, since a large percentage of the European population in the nineteenth century remained illiterate.

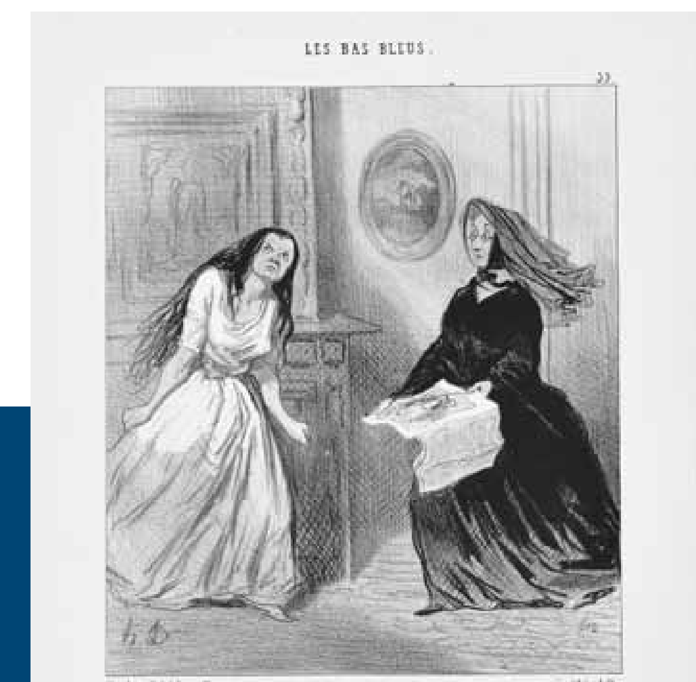
Also like modern satire, golden-age caricatures depended upon the force of a renowned creator's personality. James Gillray (1756–1815) earned his living by following the latest gossip as well as trends in contemporary art to create successful parodies. His specific references—to cultural figures including Shakespeare as well as various politicians and even his own publishers—connected his humor directly to its contemporary audience: "In the process, he rarely failed to debunk a single heroic stereotype, moralizing posture, or pious gesture" (Hart, 9). The two pieces by Gillray in this installation, *Shakespeare Sacrificed* (1789) and *Temperance Enjoying a Frugal Meal* (1792), also reflect growing tensions over freedom of expression, appropriateness, and censorship. Gillray and his peers ultimately preserved the caustic nature of their artistry only by cleverly masking their controversial and even obscene humor with visual allusions and hidden references.

The two prints by the equally renowned Honoré Victorin Daumier (1808–1879), *What! Another caricature of us in this morning's* Charivari*!* (1844) and *Mr. Daumier, your series . . . is . . . charming . . .* (1838), mark a transition in the subject matter of this French caricaturist's work that was also due to censorship. After having spent six months in prison in 1832 for an extremely critical caricature of a politician, Daumier began making series of prints based on recurring characters represented by himself and his publisher. In both pieces, Daumier refers to his own craft in a self-mocking way, yet manages to maintain his aloof perch. The subject matter varies from the parody of female intellectuals to his personal life. In response to censorship, then, caricaturists began to use themselves to represent others, in turn adding to the tension that was inherent in the craft.

Of course, old laws protecting the reputation of the aristocracy were rarely invoked during the peak of caricature in England, so actual prosecution of caricaturists and printsellers for libel was rare (Donald, 15). Lawsuits would have drawn more attention to the medium (and its targets' giving more impetus to both artists and printsellers. Giles Grinagain's *The Caricaturist's Apology* (1808) illustrates the power of caricaturists to tarnish reputations. Self-denigration in caricature not only added to the humor but also created a link between the artist and the viewer through the self-consciousness of the medium itself.

Viewers of these caricatures today might miss the humor within them, which sometimes depends upon subtle visual symbols or words linked to long-past issues and people. Yet the practice of satire—a lampooning of shared cultural contexts that transcends class through the accessibility of its media—is as familiar as ever. Tabloids and especially the countless websites devoted to popular culture reveal the perpetual attraction of *schadenfreude*, the pleasure we derive from the misfortune of others with particular cultural, political, or social stature. The specific styles and voice of a caricaturist continues to depend upon his or her personality, and the art remains as self-conscious as ever. Though the precise references may be lost, the spirit of these golden-age prints remains strong.

Dylan Hayley Leavitt '11, The Kathryn Conroy Intern



Honore Victorin Daumier, *What! Another caricature of us in this morning's* Charivari*! . . .*, 1844, print, lithograph on wove paper. Purchased through the Hood Museum of Art Acquisitions Fund; PR.2003.15.

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