

**John Richard Moores, *Representations of France in English Satirical Prints 1740-1832*. New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Pp. 261. ISBN 9781137380135.**

British graphic satires and caricatures from the Romantic period have been getting more attention from scholars across the humanities; most notably, from the disciplines of Art History and English, see for instance Joseph Monteyne's *From Still Life to the Screen* (2013) and Ian Haywood's *Romanticism and Caricature* (2013). John Richard Moores offers a recent methodological case study within the discipline of History. *Representations of France in English Satirical Prints* examines graphic satires and caricatures as a body of historical evidence. Moores places these prints in the service of a longstanding debate about nationalism, asking: How strong was 'Francophobia' in Britain between 1740 and 1832? He specifically targets the conservative, loyalist nationalism that emerged in the eighteenth century as described by Linda Colley and Gerald Newman, and aims to soften the idea of British fear of the French. He instead stresses the humanizing aspects of the French ridiculed in British graphic satire during this period; these satires actually targeted English politics and society, he claims, more than the French themselves (although they did that too). Divided into six chapters, plus a short conclusion, the book engages several predictable themes within this framework: food and fashion, Kings and leaders, war and peace, revolution, and women.

Moores establishes two admirable aims: contributing an answer to a large historical debate about Anglo-French relations, while at the same time giving close readings of prints that sufficiently recognizes their complexity as cultural objects. While compelling, these aims often appear at odds in a survey format where the questions being asked, and the established categories, are too broad to accommodate detailed analysis of individual prints. The latter claim especially, about the value of satirical prints, would have been much more impactful had he engaged more with other disciplines and expanded his visual analysis. In his discussion of the print *Billingsgate Triumphant* from 1775 in Chapter 2 (47-48), for instance, Moores eliminates discussion of its prominent scatological and homosexual themes, and thus reduces the image to issues of gender. While effeminacy and weakness are important for imagining the French fop, homosexuality is far from relegated 'to Victorian times' (38). This chapter rightly concludes that these satires of French food and fashion were comical and intimidating, and critical and sympathetic all at the same time.

Despite this weakness in visual analysis, each chapter offers several clever insights into the production of prints that are worth further thought, such as the connotations of beef in relation to the French, and the claim that prints at this time seem to take a collectively Rousseauian interpretation of Enlightenment culture. Other examples include how Napoleon in the guise of Gulliver could be considered a heroic role (92), how stereotypes of the monkey can be construed as positive (they are still more human-like than other animals) (120), how representations of the peace after the Treaty of Amiens deserve more attention (129), and how British soldiers rarely kill the French in satire (147).

Most importantly, Moores identifies a longstanding problem in scholarship discussing visual images: the use of art as merely an illustration of something else. Avoiding this problem has become standard in several fields (beyond Art History where the complaint originated), but Moores correctly states that the methodology used to analyze these prints, especially in the discipline of history it seems, is still developing despite more attention from historians (19). Some disciplines – and even scholars that regularly engage with graphic satire and print culture –

still maintain an ambivalent relationship to it (Moore himself even wavers on the value of satire as an historical document in a criticism of Vic Gatrell (13-14)). As various academics grapple with methodological approaches to satirical prints, one thing remains clear: these satires demand that continued, and increasingly sophisticated, questions be asked about them. This remains particularly true of humor. The use of humor as ‘evidence’ presents challenges of interpretation that too easily dissuade scholars from engaging with it. Arguably, Moore’s emphasis on the relief theory of humor (209, 212) does a disservice to other theories of humor – the superiority and incongruity theories – and might have led to the misinterpretation of certain prints, such as his claim that the *Apotheosis of Hoche* is ‘largely humorless’ (159). Gillray’s gleeful parody of Catholic art may well have pleased many of its viewers and even directly incited laughter from those familiar with the Sistine Chapel.

Overall, the book offers a useful survey of prints from this period for students and the general reader. Hopefully it will persuade historians to give increased consideration to graphic satire, and encourage scholars to challenge the false dichotomy (that Moore occasionally reifies) at the heart of francophobia. After all, can fear and hatred ever be fully separated from desire and fascination?

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