

Werner Busch

The King Falls into the Hands of Caricature. Hanoverians in England

Durch die Hinrichtung Karls I. auf Veranlassung Cromwells im Jahr 1649 wurde das Gottesgnadentum des Königs ein erstes Mal in Frage gestellt. Als nach dem Tod von Queen Anne 1714 die Hannoveraner auf den englischen Thron kamen, galten diese den Engländern als Fremdlinge. 1760 wurde mit Georg III. zudem ein psychisch labiler, später geisteskranker König Regent. Als 1792 der französische König Ludwig XVI. inhaftiert und später hingerichtet wurde, musste das Königtum generell um seinen Fortbestand fürchten. In dieser Situation bemächtigte sich die englische Karikatur endgültig auch der königlichen Person. Wie es schrittweise dazu kam und welche Rolle dies für das königliche Porträt gespielt hat, wird in diesem Beitrag zu zeigen sein.

If I were to ask you how you would define the genre of caricature, then you would perhaps answer, after brief reflection that Caricature is basically a drawing reproduced in newspapers or magazines that comments ironically on political or social events in narrative form and both satirises the protagonists shown there by exaggerating their features and body shapes on the one hand and by reducing them at the same time to a few typical characteristics on the other hand characterising them unmistakably. Perhaps you would then add that the few typical characteristics of well-known people become binding stereotypes in the course of time and as such are sufficient to let the person become instantly recognisable. I think one could reach a consensus on such a definition. This form of caricature appears, however, at a very late stage in its history. In 1820/30 printing machines were invented that permitted text and image to be reproduced in one single printing process. Before this the illustrations had to be printed in a separate process and mostly on pages inserted into books and magazines. That was laborious work and expensive and was not worthwhile for newspapers, which were intended for consumption. So the newspaper caricature, which influences our view of caricature today, only started to exist from this point on. At the same time the first caricature newspapers came into existence, such as *La Caricature*, in 1830 or *Le Charivari* in 1832. Before this, printed caricatures were solely caricatures on single sheets or leaflets, sold by caricature shops, whose owners were printers and publishers; the caricaturists worked for them. In London in the second half of the 18th century, these shops were to be found around St. Paul's and near Parliament. The caricatures sold here would certainly fit into our definition, with the exception of the fact that they did not appear in newspapers or magazines. However, this type of single sheet

caricature is also a relatively new development. They only start to appear around 1750, namely from the synthesis of two hitherto separate genres. One of these genres is the satirical image, which, in contrast to the caricature as we defined it, knows nothing of caricaturising individual portraits, arguing rather by means of allegory and often in the context of quite long printed explanations. It sketches out scenes. The second genre is that of the drawn, caricatured, individual portrait and this alone; it was not intended to be reproduced.

Around 1750 the caricatured, individual single portrait is inserted into the satirical image.¹ Interestingly, it was amateurs who brought about this synthesis. Their drawings, which staged the caricatured people in a certain context or scene, or at least hinted at one, were reproduced by publishers; they were not engraved or etched by the amateurs themselves. The most famous amateur caricaturist – and the most important for the origin of the genre – was the field marshal and member of Parliament, George Townshend, whom one can call the inventor of modern political caricature. His main sheet, *The Recruiting Serjeant* (Illustration 1), appeared in 1757. Its topic is a political occasion important at the time. The Duke of Cumberland, to whom homage is being paid here in a temple, had undermined the government of Prime Minister Pitt, and now Henry Fox is lining up with parliamentary colleagues to inherit his position. The duke, with his fat cheek falling down to his neck, needs no further facial features to be instantly recognisable.² This head shape became a cipher and reminds us immediately of Louis Philippe's pear-shaped head, which was formed by Philipon in the circle of artists around Daumier and was adopted for the German chancellor Helmut Kohl by the caricaturists Mulatier and Alex. Henry Fox, in contrast, is shown as a fox – something that also continues for quite a long time. The allegory of humans as animals derives from satires of the Reformation period. With the exception of the last figure, all those shown are depicted in profile; this comes from the drawn individual portrait caricature, as we will see in a moment. The last figure is shown from behind – something that Townshend knew from the drawn Venetian caricatures of the 18th century, the most characteristic examples having been produced by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo. This type was not conceivable before the 18th century, for it presumes certain insights into perceptual psychology. A figure seen from behind can also be unmistakable in its contours; if we recognise it, we imagine its face. So we should note that in this early period, political caricature only knew en face, profile and rear views; all three forms revert back to a figure developed on a surface, a sort

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- 1 Werner Busch, *Die englische Karikatur in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts. Ansätze zu einer Entwicklungsgeschichte*, in: *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 40, 1977, pp. 227–244; on the pre- and early history of English caricature: Jürgen Döring, *Eine Kunstgeschichte der frühen englischen Karikatur* (Hildesheim, 1991).
 - 2 Herbert M. Atherton, *George Townshend Caricaturist*, in: *Eighteenth Century Studies* 4, 1971, pp. 437–446; Eileen Harris, *The Townshend Album*, National Portrait Gallery (London, 1974); Döring, *op.cit.*, pp. 199–202, Ill. 149; Diana Donald, *The Age of Caricature. Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III* (New Haven and London, 1996), pp. 47–50.



Illustration 1: George Townshend, *The Recruiting Serjeant or Britannia's Happy Prospect*, April 1757, etching, BM 1868,0808.4057 © Trustees of the British Museum

of ornamental outline that, once studied, is easily repeatable. Townshend amused his parliamentary colleagues greatly with his caricatures and used his drawings to slander his political opponents. This in turn was only possible in the English context of the constitutional monarchy, in which political parties, the Whigs and Tories, competed with one another. In this context, the caricature was well suited as an argument for disparagement and derision.

We should take a look at the origin of the two components of the genre because it is only by understanding how they arose that we can actually gain access to our topic, which deals with how the king managed to fall into the hands of caricature. In terms of chronology, the satirical image is the older component of the political scenic caricature of the 18th century. One finds the earliest examples in the late 15th century, but the genre gains its actual function as a weapon in the struggles of the Reformation. Famous examples such as the pope as a donkey, the monk-calf or Pope Alexander VI as a diabolical monster with bird's talons show clearly that the animal allegory appeared to be the most appropriate weapon.³ It should be empha-

3 Eduard Fuchs, *Die Karikatur der europäischen Völker*, vol. 1, Vom Altertum bis zum Jahr 1848, (4th ed. Munich, 1921), pp. 42–77; Konrad Hoffmann, *Typologie, Exemplarik und reformatorische Bildsatire*, in: Josef Nolte, Hella Tompert and Christof Winhorst (eds), *Spätmittelalter und frühe Neuzeit. Kontinuität und Umbruch. Tübinger Beiträge zur Geschichtsforschung*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart, 1978), pp. 189–210; *ibid.*, *Die reformatorische Volksbewegung im Bilderkampf*, in: *Exh. cat. Martin Luther und die Reformation in Deutschland*, Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nürnberg, (Frankfurt a. M., 1983), pp. 219–254; Peter-Klaus Schuster, *Abstraktion, Agitation und Einfühlung*.

sised that the satirical image of the Reformation did not yet know the distortion of the individual portrait. The second component of modern caricature, the drawn and not reproduced, caricatured representation of an individual person emerged in the 1580s and 90s in the circle around the Carracci, a Bolognese artist family (Illustration 2). In this circle, which was also organised as a small academy, there were discussions with scholars, especially with church dignitaries, about art and its possibilities. This is easily explained. Since 1545, in reaction to the Reformation, the Council of Trent had been taking place as part of the Counter-Reformation, and during the last session in 1563, judgement was passed on the question of art, with a clear tendency. When dealing with biblical topics the artists should stick closely to the text of the Bible, not embellish the scenes as they chose and expressly avoid lewd topics; but a certain powerful urgency – for example in depicting scenes of martyrdom – would do no harm, in order to touch the emotions of the faithful. This was still couched in relatively general terms, so it was the task of the official interpreters of the Tridentine Edicts to deliver binding and detailed guidelines. And the main interpreters, the later canonised Carlo Borromeo, and Gabriele Paleotti, both resided in Milan resp. Bologna as archbishops. It was a question of exploring the possibilities and limits of art, and this was exactly what was being discussed in the Carracci workshop: as artists they were sounding out the limits. Regarding caricature, they asked themselves: How far can I distort a face and still guarantee a recognisable likeness? The Carracci conducted a whole number of experiments that opened up new means of expression in their intellectual circle of art. It was the legitimacy of the means of expression that was being discussed in this Counter-Reformation debate. Contrary to the assumptions of researchers, the question remains unsettled whether the caricatures created by Agostino Carracci, the actual inventor of the genre, and his brother Annibale were already of particular people or whether through experimenting on paper caricatures of particular types were being made. At any rate it is certain that the drawn, caricatured portrait of individual people emerged from these beginnings.⁴

It is astounding – and cannot be emphasised enough – that the history of this genre evolved, from about 1600 to about 1750, almost exclusively at the papal court. Just about all papal court artists drew caricatures – from Guercino and Domenichino, through Bernini, perhaps the most ingenious caricature draughtsman of all times, who also introduced the genre at the court of Louis XIV, down to Pier Leone Ghezzi, who particularly liked caricaturing the English travellers on the Grand Tour.⁵

Formen protestantischer Kunst im 16. Jahrhundert, in: *Exh. cat. Luther und die Folgen für die Kunst*, ed. Werner Hofmann, Hamburger Kunsthalle (Munich, 1983), pp. 115–125 and subsequent catalogue nos.

4 Anthony Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy 1450–1600*, (6th ed. Oxford, 1966), pp. 103–136; Donald Posner, *Annibale Carracci. A Study in the Reform of Italian Painting around 1590*, 2 vols. (London, 1971).

5 The literature on Italian caricature continues to be completely inadequate, cf. at least *Exh. cat. Guercino Drawings in The Art Museum Princeton* (Princeton, 1969); Irvin Lavin, *High and Low*



Illustration 2: Agostino Carracci, *Grottesque Heads and Caricatures*, 1594

His caricatures were so popular that the travellers went to him to let themselves be caricatured as they would to an official portrait session. This suggests to us that in the first 150 years of their existence there was something very exclusive about drawn caricatures, they were not made public, they remained at the papal court or in closed aristocratic circles, serving to amuse them – an amusement that this circle could afford; they were laughing at themselves and were not being scoffed at by a public audience. Such circles were able to enjoy the caricature as an intellectual experiment and understood caricature as the dialectic counterpart to fine art, to the official portrait. Just as caricature makes something appear ugly, the official portrait enhances one's appearance – the artistic process of careful deviation is more or less identical – even Winckelmann still defined caricature in this way. Bernini preferred profile and en-face depictions and developed an amazingly convincing method of abbreviation, which sketched memorable two-dimensional figures. We are fortunate to possess a

before their Time: Bernini and the Art of Social Satire, in: Kirk Varnedoe and Adam Gopnik (eds), *Modern Art and Popular Culture: Readings in High and Low* (New York, 1990), pp. 19–50; Anne Thurmann-Jajes, *Pier Leone Ghezzi und die Karikatur*, phil. Diss. Bochum 1993 (Bremen 1998); Werner Busch, *Guercino und Rembrandt. Eine Begegnung der besonderen Art*, in: *Rembrandt – Wissenschaft auf der Suche. Beiträge des Internationalen Symposiums Berlin. 4. und 5. November 2006*, ed. Holm Bevers i.a. [Beiheft des Jahrbuchs der Berliner Museen, N.F. 51, 2009] (Berlin, 2009), pp. 87–95.

caricature and an official bust of one and the same person, both by Bernini: of Cardinal Scipione Borghese (Illustrations 3 and 4). The bust shows the stout, but very lively cardinal, who was one of Bernini's most important clients, in a transitory moment unusual for a sculpture. The cardinal seems to be speaking, at the same time thinking and reacting to someone facing him. Such a strategy for bringing somebody to life is typical of Bernini, though it was not undisputed in the context of the demands made on classical art – which was supposed to capture a lasting impression rather than a fleeting moment. The caricature reduces Scipione Borghese's appearance to its cogent features and arranges them in a remarkably ornamental figure – one that works with symmetrical correspondences. The fat cheeks, the goatee beard, the bulbous nose, the eyes sunk in rolls of fat, the broad, fleshy shoulders, each marked with strongly simplified strokes: once one has seen this, one cannot forget it again and will imagine it even when looking at the official bust. The cardinal is stuck with this image – and this demonstrates the power of caricature right from the start. In Bernini's case this may have been something enjoyed by an insider – something that will have amused the cardinal, too – but beware the moment something like this becomes public.⁶

A first step into the public eye was taken by the aristocratic Englishmen on the Grand Tour in Rome, without actually aiming at a specific public. If they had themselves caricatured by Pier Leone Ghezzi, took these caricatures with them to England, showed them to friends as a form of evening entertainment, this then broadening out to become a fashion, then it is only a short step to wanting to have them reproduced, in order to give them to friends and acquaintances as gifts. But then it is no longer possible to limit their circulation. The first Ghezzi caricatures were being reproduced in England in about 1730, for example by Arthur Pond, who went into serial production of such pictures.⁷ In Germany Matthias Oesterreich undertook something similar around 1750. The reception of Italian caricature in England was very close to the origins of amateur caricature and must be seen as its precondition. But before tracing the professionalising of caricature, we need to look at the further path of satirical image as a political weapon, since this is where people were thinking about the image of the king.

The obvious examples to use for this are the satires of Louis XIV, who not only had propagandist imagery programmes designed in Versailles, but also staged his whole existence as a scenic production. Hundreds of programmatic medallions swamped Europe and set out the image of the sun king, who saw himself as a second Apollo. Thus, in the Versailles fresco, his court artist Charles Lebrun places him in a sun chariot and has him rule over the stars and peoples. This exaggerated claim could not but

6 Werner Busch, *Die Autonomie der Kunst*, in: *ibid.* and Peter Schmoock (eds), *Kunst. Die Geschichte ihrer Funktionen* (Weinheim and Berlin, 1987), pp. 192–199.

7 Henry M. Hake, Pond's and Knapton's Imitations of Drawings, in: *Print Collector's Quarterly* 9, 1922, pp. 325 ff.; Louise Lippincott, *Selling Art in Georgian London. The Rise of Arthur Pond*, (New Haven and London, 1983).



Illustration 3: Gianlorenzo Bernini, Caricature of Cardinal Scipione Borghese, drawing
© Rome, Vatican Library



Illustration 4: Gianlorenzo Bernini, Bust of Cardinal Scipione Borghese, 1632, marble
© Rome, Galleria Borghese

provoke furious reactions among his opponents. It was obvious to imagine the sun chariot crashing down, thereby replacing the allusion to Apollo with one to Phaeton, who was not capable of steering the horses harnessed to the sun chariot, was thrown off his course and plummeted down to Orcus. This scene is to be found on numerous counter-medallions, though one should note that while the sun king does meet with an evil end, the imagery remains within the allegorical tradition and the king's features are not distorted.⁸ This is also confirmed, ultimately, by the pamphlet propaganda directed at Louis that swamped France from Holland. If Louis XIV is represented directly in satirical images or in pamphlet literature, it remains an undistorted portrait, as a German etching of 1702 entitled *The Hawker of Versailles* (Illustration 5) demonstrates, which recognisably follows Hyacinthe Rigaud's often repeated official state portrait of Louis XIV of 1701. Romeyn de Hooghe's illustration of his *Aesopus in Europa* (Illustration 6) is from the same time, 1701/02, and is more interesting inasmuch as it develops the Phaeton iconography further and the defamation of Louis as a person increases. Even if his features are still not really caricatured, he does nevertheless become a ridiculous figure. His seat in the sun chariot, from which he has risen with some difficulty, is shaped like a toilet stool, he is using crutches and is try-

⁸ Hendrik Ziegler, *Der Sonnenkönig und seine Feinde. Die Bildpropaganda Ludwig XIV. in der Kritik* (Petersberg, 2010), pp. 21–74; Fuchs, *op.cit.*, pp. 78–88.

DER AVSRVFER, ZV. VERSAILLES.

AVF DES KÖNIGS BEFEHL.

hört meine Herrn so jemand einige von
diesen Schifften (so in dieser Liſta vermeldet)
in den Französiſchen See Häfen wird
lieffern ſolle vor jedes 30000 gulden
Zu einer Verehrung gemessen.



Durch diese Frauen-Glock beruff ich alle Leute. Er wolte auf den Thron IACOBUM wieder setzen.
Und mache ihnen Ruind den höhst. betriben. Stand. Und meinde dergestalt mit ihm die Macht zu See
Des grossen Ludewigs, der seine Flott zur Beute. Zu theilen, aber heut verkehrt sich das Verlegen
Aniuzo sehen muß in seiner Feinde Hand. In dem er selbst mit Fug muß Klagen Ach und Weh:



Illustration 6: Romeyn de Hooghe, Louis XIV as Phaeton, aus: Aesopus in Europa, 1701/02, etching

ing in vain to follow his mistress Mme de Maintenon, who has taken over steering the horses harnessed to the chariot and has completely failed in this task, also when influenced by Louis's opponents from the Grand Alliance of 1701. Even though Louis may still be surrounded by the sun's splendour, his fall, like that of Phaeton, who was incapable of steering, seems to lie directly ahead. So, with the following example of Louis XIV, the point has been made why the king, despite all the attacks, was not subject to individual caricaturing. The English author William Thackeray, who was also a good draughtsman, published a travel account in 1840 with the title *The Paris Sketch Book*. The frontispiece, designed by himself, shows Louis XIV as a three-fold figure, as it were (Illustration 7). The first one is called 'Rex' and shows the royal robes together with the wig arranged on a coat stand, as was already generally familiar from Rigaud's state portrait of 1701. The second figure, called 'Ludovicus', shows the wigless Louis, a sad, puny person walking with a stick in private clothes, who can hardly stand on his skinny legs. Then, in the third figure, the synthesis takes place of the first and second appearance, now sub-titled 'Ludovicus Rex'. Clothes make the man. What is concealed behind this was expressed by Ernst Kantorowicz in a famous book title in 1957: *The King's Two Bodies*. According to medieval doctrine, the king possesses two bodies, one of which stands for the body politic – 'L'état c'est moi', as Louis XIV is said to have expressed it – the other is his body natural. Since the king is anointed by God's grace and merges with the body politic, he is inviolable. This



You see at once, that majesty is made out of the wig, the high-heeled shoes, and cloak . . . Thus do barbers and cobblers make the gods that we worship.

William Thackeray

Illustration 7: William Thackeray, *Louis XIV. A Historical Study. Rex – Ludovicus – Ludovicus Rex*, Frontispiece in the *Paris Sketch Book*, 1840, etching, BM 1961,1012.335 © Trustees of the British Museum

taboo was maintained as far as the 18th century and was thus valid for caricaturists, too. It would be sacrilegious to distort the king's features.⁹

But to be able to understand how the caricaturists' struggle to gain control over the king was fought out at the time of the French Revolution, one still needs to mention an important development in English history. In 1688 the Glorious Revolution took place with the bloodless expulsion of the Stuart King James II, thereby ringing in the end of the Catholic dynasty. To avoid a Catholic succession with the support of either party Parliament had called for William III of Orange, who defeated the Catholic Jacobites in Ireland and triggered off James II's flight. That led, in 1689, to the Bill of Rights, i. e. to a separation of powers into legislative and executive and to the guarantee of freedom and of private property. Since this point in time, England has had a

⁹ Eva Horn, Vom Porträt des Königs zum Antlitz des Führers. Zur Struktur des modernen Herrscherbildes, in: Alexander Honold and Ralf Simon (eds), *Das erzählende und das erzählte Bild* (Munich, 2010), pp. 131–141, based on: Louis Marin, *Das Porträt des Königs* (Berlin, 2005) and *ibid.*, *Le corps glorieux du Roi et son portrait*, in: *ibid.*, *La parole mangée* (Paris, 1986), esp. pp. 219–225; Ernst Kantorowicz, *Die zwei Körper des Königs. Eine Studie zur politischen Theologie des Mittelalters* (reprint Munich, 1990).

constitutional monarchy, which firmly curtails the power of the monarchy, reducing it for the most part to representative duties. This is also of great importance inasmuch as the king's divine right was thereby dropped. The monarch can style himself 'The father of the people', as George III was to do, but his actions are no longer sacrosanct; they are publicly controlled. This makes it easier, so to speak, for the caricaturists to get the king into their clutches, though one also has to state that, as far as the individual portrait is concerned, the king still enjoyed a period of grace for quite a long time, and it was not until the events of the French Revolution that the last scruples were removed. In England, getting closer to the king's face was a step taken via the Princes of Wales. That needs to be explained briefly. After the death of Queen Anne in 1714, the rule of the Hanoverians began in accordance with the Act of Settlement. The first two Georges hardly spoke a word of English, the second did at least understand it; they were a foreign body in the country, George II also on account of his German mistresses blessed with English titles of nobility. The first George was the first to quarrel fiercely with his son, the Prince of Wales – thus pushing him politically into opposition. From then onwards each Prince of Wales established something like a counter-court, gathering opposition politicians around him and waiting for his chance to inherit his father. Furthermore, the first George preferred to be in Hanover, making it easier for the Prince to scheme against him. Robert Walpole sided with the King and particularly with the Queen, thereby coming to power and managing to stay in the position of prime minister with the support of the Queen, even after the death of George I in 1727. George II was just as stubborn as his father, but very much more caught up in political business, just as was his much more intelligent wife, Caroline, who betted on Sir Robert Walpole – something that brought England, despite all the corruption of the latter's ministry, a decided period of peace up to Walpole's resignation in 1742. In his desire for peace Walpole did however lose touch more and more with international politics. Clashes with France began, above all over supremacy in the colonies, which finally led to the Seven Years' War from 1756 to 1763. George II had problems with his son, the next Prince of Wales, from an early stage, who began to gather the forces of opposition around him in the early 1730s. Just like his father as the Crown Prince, Frederick Louis rented Leicester House, which became the centre of the opposition; in fact it was a second or alternative court right up to the death of George II in 1760. This was despite the fact that the Prince of Wales died unexpectedly in 1751; but his wife continued the opposition politics, knowing that her son would one day become king. She had William Pitt the Elder on her side, a gifted orator, who was more than a match for the royal ministry, thereby strengthening the opposition. Pitt pleaded for war with France, knowing that he had the backing of the aspiring middle-class, which grasped the fact that mercantile interests were involved. At the end of George II's life, Pitt and the opposition had achieved their goal. When George III came to the throne in 1760 he was barely 22 years old, extremely insecure and in search of a father figure for the whole of his life, which he repeatedly looked for among the influential politicians, who ultimately pursued their own interests. At

first he was committed to the Earl of Bute. After a first fit of madness in 1765 he turned away from Bute and brought Pitt back to power. The international unrest, the clashes in America and domestic problems were too much for the king. The attacks of an increasingly independent press grew in number, in particular those made by the left-wing political gambler John Wilkes in his newspaper *The North Briton*, especially as Wilkes was devoted to the notion of freedom, which on the one hand strengthened parliamentary power and which on the other hand was understood by the strong entrepreneurs in the early Industrial Revolution as economic freedom, particularly by those from the country. No wonder that the events in France were welcomed in their circles, especially in the early phase of the French Revolution. The weakening of the monarchy was their item on the agenda, even to the point of wishing to abolish the monarchy. However, the king began to defend himself, insisted on his inherited rights, swore to uphold the constitution strictly; he recognised the threat from the newly rich, who were engaged in international business. The opposition, particularly in the shape of Charles Fox, made mistakes by attacking the monarchy as an institution. After all the attacks he had had to bear from all sides, this gradually brought the people on the side of the king. Above all he refused to give up the right of appointing ministers. The opposition forces fought tooth and nail to change this. Without royal consent, no minister could be pushed through; eventually he was in a position to dismiss the whole government. Which is what he did do to bring William Pitt the Younger to power. The people were wary of accepting Fox's anti-monarchical extremist position and saw in Pitt the more moderate political party; thus the king and Pitt won the elections of 1784.

But in October 1788 the king again relapsed into insanity. It was not only the political events, but above all family problems that probably triggered this off. George II was a family man, even though he did perform the marriage with Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz for reasons of state and she really was extremely ugly, which – as we shall see – did not escape the caricaturists; nevertheless, he was really devoted to the woman who bore him 15 children and he was clearly an affectionate father – for which his sons in particular did not thank him in the least. George III, modest and full of a sense of duty, to the point of being completely stubborn in this respect, had sons who lived extravagantly and ran up huge debts, which even led to crises of state, since Parliament was involved in settling the debts. And the worst was without doubt the Prince of Wales: a charming, unrestrained bon viveur, who was truly opposed to his father and in 1788, when his father was taken ill, already believed that he would soon be able to inherit him. He sided with his father's arch-enemy, Charles Fox, and so it has been said, rightly, that the Prince of Wales, with Fox, his unofficial prime minister, became the monarch of the reform-oriented Whigs. Even his sympathies for the events in France were clearly revealed. In 1785 he married his mistress Mrs Fitzherbert, which appeared particularly scandalous, as she was a convinced Catholic. That was too much for the king, sworn as he was to the constitution; he resorted to all possible measures against his son, despite being fond of him as his father. The

king's insanity appeared incurable; he had to be forced into a strait-jacket. Yet hardly half a year later, in February 1789 – incidentally, one should note that the Bastille was stormed in July – the king came to his senses again and was able to take up his official duties again, though to a reduced extent. His struggle touched the public, he became a popular figure, his loyalty to England and the constitution became all the more significant, when the events of the French Revolution passed over into the phase of terror, when the September murders of the Swiss Guard and the clergy took place in 1792, when the French king was arrested, executed in January 1793, just as Queen Marie-Antoinette was subsequently, and when the Dauphin, the heir to the throne and still a child, was killed. The fear that the Revolution might spread to England grew continuously, which strengthened the king and weakened the opposition; it was not just caricature that made of Charles Fox a bloodthirsty *sans-culotte*. The Prince of Wales continued to devote himself to his excesses and was in the public's bad books. And although the king's health became worse and worse, until he finally went insane for ever in 1811, as the embodiment of the institution of monarchy he continued to represent the state. In 1812 the Prince of Wales became Prince Regent until his father's death in 1820.¹⁰

In this tendency towards a power vacuum it was no longer possible to hold caricature in check, all the more so since some of its proponents, especially James Gillray, took on an extremely anti-French attitude. It has already been said that the amateur caricatures of the late 1750s had brought about the synthesis of drawn individual caricature with satirical image, the latter acting with the help of allegory, thereby establishing the scenic modern caricature as a genre. It was only after 1770 that the first professional caricaturists came onto the scene, in particular the aforementioned James Gillray, born in 1757, and Thomas Rowlandson, born one year earlier. George II, who died in 1760, managed to escape the true professional caricature. The amateur caricaturists were concerned with the members of Parliament, for the most part excluding the king. One exception was George Bickham, who had the king appear on his pages in the 1740s, oscillating between satire and caricature. But it is precisely his example that demonstrates what problems he had in caricaturing the royal physiognomy. In a caricature of 1742, Walpole and George II, accompanied by their mistresses, are playing shuttlecock with the Duke of Argyll (Illustration 8). One or other of the textual allusions may be obscene, the physiognomies are not distorted, it is only the king's happy smile that does not conform with etiquette. One can recognise a certain tendency towards exaggerating typical features: the pointed nose, the large, somewhat piercing, bulging eyes, yet these are not yet really the features of a caricature. If the features are distorted – and, to stress it once again, this is definitely the exception – then this is a conscious approximation to an animal. George II can become a bird, his

¹⁰ A still convincing portrayal of the historical and political development in 18th-century England and the role of the kings: J.H. Plumb, *The First Four Georges* (3rd ed. Manchester, 1967); from the perspective of caricature: Donald, *op.cit.*



Illustration 8: George Bickham, *The Court Shuttle Cock*, 1740, etching, BM 1868,0808.3679
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basic physiognomy can suggest this tendency towards allegorisation. This is at best on the border to caricature.

The same can be said of a caricature called *The Queen of Hungary's Whetstone* (Illustration 9) of 1744. It is certainly obscene. Maria-Theresa has gathered up her skirts with her legs wide apart and is pissing on the whetstone to cool it. A weapon against France and Prussia, whose invalid soldiers appear on the right, is being sharpened, and George II is happily turning the whetstone. Yet neither Maria-Theresa nor George II is really being caricatured. Scatological matter often turns up in early satire, since the satire of the Reformation it has been part of the basic repertoire of the satirical image. Nevertheless, it does not represent a real attack on the individual body of the queen or king.¹¹

The royal princes first have to stand in for that. In James Gillray's caricature of 21 April 1786 (Illustration 10) the problem that George III had with his sons is expressed succinctly. The king is coming from the royal treasury with Queen Charlotte; they are carrying off endless amounts of money in order to settle the national debt. That is paradox in a two-fold sense, not only because the national debt could hardly be settled from the state reserves, but also because George and Charlotte were extremely niggardly, as the caricaturists often accused them of being. Pitt, who has also helped himself, and is thereby declared to be open to bribery, is handing the king

¹¹ On Bickham cf. esp. Döring, op.cit., passim (cf. Index) and Ill. 71, 81 und 82.



Illustration 9: George Bickham, *The Queen of Hungary's Whetstone*, approx. 1744, etching, BM 1868,0808.376 © Trustees of the British Museum



Illustration 10: James Gillray, *A new way to pay the National-Debt*, 21 April 1786, etching, BM 1868,0808.12472 © Trustees of the British Museum

a further bulging sack of money, but on the right appears a completely tattered Prince of Wales. An elegantly dressed man, who can be identified as the Duc d'Orléans – a note on the wall of the treasury shows two intertwined hands, a classical friendship symbol with Orléans written on it – and indeed the duke is offering the prince to settle his horrendous debts.¹² The friendship between these two, irritating enough with all the tension between France and England, was to take on an explosive form, for the Duc d'Orléans, not called Philippe Egalité in vain, had voted for the death of his cousin, King Louis XVI of France, and thus there is a caricature by Isaac Cruikshank that shows Philippe Egalité alongside the guillotine holding Louis XVI's head, struck off and dripping with blood, in his hand. The print was created less than four weeks after the event.¹³ The duke's sympathies for the radical path of the Revolution are thus transferred via the Prince of Wales to his political entourage and to Charles Fox in particular. The English supporters of the revolution during its first phase had hoped that a sort of second Glorious Revolution would take place in France and that the French would adopt the English system of a constitutional monarchy. The belief was upheld until 1792. For a while the English still supported the moderate Girondists and basically they also delineated the position of the circle surrounding the Prince of Wales. But the English anti-French propaganda quickly turned Fox into a Jacobin and a sans-culotte, bloodthirsty, a dagger hidden in his cloak and thus a potential king's murderer.¹⁴ In a caricature by Gillray from 5 April 1788, the Prince of Wales is shown after his wedding night with Mrs Fitzherbert, with whom he was living in amorganatic marriage. The date of the caricature is irritating; the event, which is supposed to have taken place in France after the prince's flight with his mistress, already lay two years back. It can only be explained by the fact that the English relationship to France was particularly tense, just as was the relationship of George III to his son. The Prince of Wales, with his sympathies for France, must have appeared like a traitor. But even on such an occasion the prince's physiognomy is not really distorted.¹⁵ During the Revolution itself the boundaries between caricature and serious portrait were finally no longer clear-cut. The pair of opposites portrayed by Gillray on 2 July 1792 is a famous one, showing on the one page the Prince of Wales's meal (Illustration 11) and on the other that of his parents, King George and Queen Charlotte (Illustration 12).¹⁶ And although Gillray basically stands more for the position

12 Donald, *op.cit.*, p. 69 and Ill. 72; M. Dorothy George, *English Political Caricature. A Study of Opinion and Propaganda*, vol. 1, To 1792 (Oxford, 1959), pp. 189 f.

13 David Bindman, *The Shadow of the Guillotine. Britain and the French Revolution*, The British Museum, London 1989, Cat. no. 109, pp. 136 f.

14 Donald, *op.cit.*, pp. 162 f. and Ill. 175.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 69 and Ill. 71; Vic Gatrell, *City of Laughter. Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-Century London* (London, 2007), pp. 324 f. and Ill. 142.

16 *Ibid.*, pp. 100 f. and Ill. 110; coloured illustration of both graphics: Exh. cat. James Gillray 1757–1815. *Meisterwerke der Karikatur*, Wilhelm-Busch-Museum Hannover; Staatsgalerie Stuttgart; Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg (Stuttgart, 1986), cat. nos 35a und b, p. 201 and Ill. pp. 70 and 71; Gatrell *op.cit.*, pp. 215–218 and Ill. 90.



Illustration 11: James Gillray, *A Voluptuary under the Horrors of Digestion*, 2 July 1792, etching, BM 1868,0808.6219 © Trustees of the British Museum

of the king and Pitt, by being contrasted both parties come out it equally badly. The prince's stomach is dangerously stretched, he has already wolfed down mountains of meat, the bones are lying on his plate, the chamber pot behind him has already had to accommodate the puked up contents of his gluttony, now he is poking around in his teeth with a fork – for someone of princely lineage a faux pas of the first order.

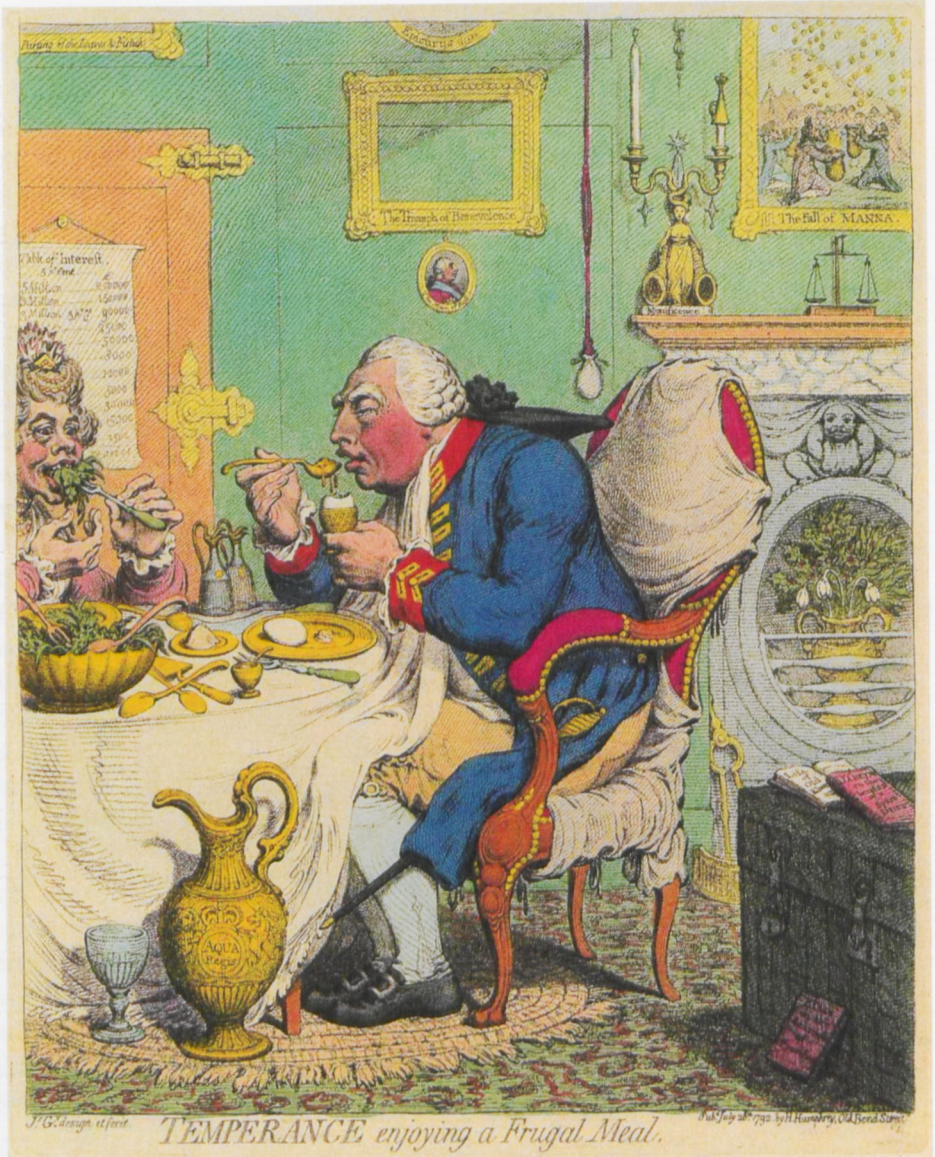


Illustration 12: James Gillray, *Temperance Enjoying a Frugal Meal*, 2 Juli 1792, etching, BM 1868,0808.6224 © Trustees of the British Museum

Above him, like the commentary of a picture within a picture, as Hogarth before him particularly liked to use it, there is a portrait of Luigi Cornaro, who wrote an autobiographical treatise entitled *Discourses on the sober life* more or less at the end of his life. Truly, a *memento mori* for the prince. If one looks out of the window, then one learns that the prince is not only a slave to his appetite for food, games and lust, he also has a craving for erecting buildings. Unfinished colonnades are to be seen –

here, too, incidentally a quote from Hogarth's *Marriage à la Mode*, scene 1. His face is still not really distorted. However scandalous the prince's behaviour may be and however much public offence it may cause, he remains the potential king. A revealing detail shows well that the intention to portrait the prince is stronger than that of caricaturing him. As long as the facial features are depicted in detail, as long as the fleshy forms appear carefully dotted – this contradicts the caricature's principles of reducing and simplifying as far as possible.

It is no different in the royal counterpart. Here, thrift is being practised; the king's and queen's miserliness was proverbial, the king is eating boiled eggs, the queen salad. To take good care of the royal armchair, they have not even removed the protective covering. They are drinking water rather than alcohol, bottles of which the prince was consuming. Here, too, the behaviour of the royal couple is commented upon on the wall. The figure of 'munificence', generosity, standing on the mantelpiece, is holding two huge horns of plenty, empty unfortunately. And above the king there is an empty picture frame. But the title of the picture that has been removed is named on the frame: 'The Triumph of Benevolence'. Now, the niggardly royal figures are truly not benefactors. But the allusion actually goes further here, for the picture title refers to a poem by Samuel Jackson Pratt of 1786, in which the good deeds of the prison reformer, John Howard, are praised, and Gillray himself had executed a serious etching of this in 1788, celebrating the benefactor Howard as a redeemer.¹⁷ Above the empty frame there is enough to see of an oval frame to recognise the inscription 'Epicure'. Clearly this is the counterpart to the portrait of Cornaro with his appeal for restraint in the image of the Prince of Wales, for Epicure was, as is well-known, in contrast a pleasure-seeker, and one really cannot say that of poor George III.

Another late example is showing the Prince of Wales. He had hardly mended his ways, he eventually married Caroline of Brunswick for reasons of state and dutifully sired an heir, only to continue indulging himself in his customary excesses. How he behaves towards his wife, who is sitting on the sofa and shyly clasping the baby, is made clear in an anonymous caricature of 31 May 1796, which can probably be ascribed to Isaac Cruikshank (Illustration 13). The prince is losing his temper and kicking over the tea-table, behind him the cuckolded husband of Lady Jersey, who is lying sprawled on her sofa in an obscenely welcoming posture, is opening the door and is even offering his good lady to the Prince of Wales. The motive with the tea-table kicked over again derives from Hogarth, taken here from scene 2 of *A Harlot's Progress* from 1732. Once one has realised the origin, the Prince of Wales becomes even more of a lecher. The prince has not only got a map of Jersey in his pocket, he is also holding a text called 'Thoughts on Despotism' in his hand. So even when portraying a domestic scene, the political dimension is not far off; he was still regarded as a supporter of the revolution, who would like to transplant French conditions to

¹⁷ Werner Busch, Romneys 'Howard'. Revolution und Abstraktion, in: Städel-Jahrbuch, N.F. 16, 1997, pp. 289–332, esp. pp. 296–300.

The fear that the revolution might spill over into England was particularly great at this time. On 16 August 1792, after the events of 10 August, when the French king was removed from power, Richard Newton depicted the reaction of the English king to the alarming news in a caricature as grandiose as it was striking. The horrified Pitt is informing the thunderstruck king, and Queen Charlotte is hoarding money as a precaution, in case flight becomes necessary.²¹ The dethronement of Louis is likened to hell breaking loose in Paris. The caricature of the reading of Paine's treatise is more moderate, but the different sympathies are clear – and again the king and queen are involved. The couple is characterised wonderfully: Burke is raving, Fox is greatly satisfied, the king cannot believe it, Baron Hawkesbury is reading with pleasure, the queen is rolling her eyes, Hannah More, the philanthropist, is enjoying what she reads, and Pitt is losing his temper, which Sheridan cannot understand. The texts attached, which will not be discussed here, make clear the different reactions. But then, on receipt of another piece of shocking news, which Pitt brings the royal couple (Illustration 15) – it concerns the murder of the Swedish king – Gillray loses all moderation, and the king and queen are unmasked in a most wicked manner and caricatured.²² The page is dated to 11 April 1792; disaster is coming closer and closer. As a result of the fright, the king and queen are relieving themselves on a double shit-stool. In the true sense of the word they have lost all control of their reactions. The reversal thereby performed is really cynical. The king has let his trousers down and come clean: an English sansculotte from the opposite camp. The king's gobbledygook exposes him even more. This royal physiognomy can no longer pass for a mere portrait; caricature has now taken over control. The thin Pitt, the simple king, the nasty queen – they are all of a kind.

Gillray can still retract here, Richard Newton cannot; he belongs, alongside Isaac Cruikshank, to those supporters of the revolution that do not change their opinion even after the execution of the French king in January 1793. And his publisher William Holland was in total agreement with him, which led to the publisher having to end up in Newgate prison in 1793 on the charge of circulating inflammatory literature. One should realise that censure applied to book publishing, whilst there was an amazing amount of freedom for graphic art. Richard Newton made no secret of his opinion of the king. In a small caricature of 1798 (Illustration 16), by which time Gillray had long been bought over by the government, John Bull, the embodiment of England, is taking pleasure in farting at a poster of the king, with Pitt loudly declaring this to be treason. At the same time Newton lets the people's sun rise. His sympathies are clear, and the king is simply left with a blank look of incomprehension.²³ Newton behaves in a similar way after the September murders of 1792, which, as mentioned, had also led to a massacre among the clergy. Some of those who managed to escape emigrated to England, and now the king and queen, with collecting boxes, are trying

21 *Ibid.*, Cat. no. 47, p. 106.

22 Donald, *op.cit.*, p. 146 and Ill. 157.

23 *Ibid.*, pp. 161 f. and Ill. 173; Gatrell, *op.cit.*, p. 483 and Ill. 235.



Illustration 14: Anonymus, *Contrasted Opinions of Paine's Pamphlet*, 26 May 1791, etching © Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge



Illustration 15: James Gillray, *Taking Physick; -or- The News of Shooting the King of Sweden!*, 11 April 1792, etching, BM 1868,0808.6181 © Trustees of the British Museum



Illustration 16: Richard Newton, *Treason!!!*,
19 March 1798, etching, BM 1868,0808.6712
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to take care of their support – which, knowing their miserliness, in itself makes an unintentionally humorous impression (Illustration 17). But the caricaturing of the royal couple, particularly of Charlotte, stops at nothing, not even rank. Newton is in the position to create unmistakable figures using very few features. The king has found a particularly expressive pose; the butler in *Dinner for One* could not have presented a better one.²⁴ Step by step the significance of the monarchy is being undermined; the king no longer needs to be executed.

What remains of him after being dismantled in this way? In spite of everything he can still become idealised, as was the old, ailing George III. He is still suitable for trashy magazines, he can socialise on the same level with the stars and starlets, he can become a legend of what used to be, or he can, as was the case more recently, simply abdicate and become a private person. For the private aspect of his person is no longer really cloaked by his representative persona. The king now only has one body. With his resignation as pope, Joseph Ratzinger has abandoned the last bastion of the doctrine of the Two Bodies.

²⁴ Bindman, op.cit., Cat. no. 218 and Ill. p. 208 (wrongly called no. 219).

