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'Un Bon Dessin Vaut Mieux Qu'un Long Discours'

**The Role and Impact of Cartoons
in Contemporary France**

Micheline MAUPOINT

**Submitted to the University of Sussex for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy**

January 2010

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my deceased mother who was always a great supporter of my achievements.

Acknowledgements

I am extremely grateful to my daughter Murielle whose expertise in Neuro Linguistic Programming gave me the motivation and belief to complete this thesis. I would not have done it without her help. I would also like to thank my husband for his patience and support as well all my other family members and friends.

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In writing this acknowledgment, a special thought goes to the late Solo, Director of the journal *Caricature and Caricaturistes* and to André Baur, Director of the magazine *Mieux Vaut en Rire*, his passion for cartoons was communicative.

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be,
submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any degree.

The University of Sussex

Micheline Maupoint

Thesis submitted for Doctor of Philosophy

'Un Bon Dessin Vaut Mieux Qu'un Long Discours'

The Role and Impact of Cartoons in Contemporary France

Summary

Cartoons have traditionally occupied an important place in French visual culture, and are now a permanent feature in even the most prestigious publications, including *Le Monde*, where they appear on the front page. Moreover, there is a long tradition of political cartooning which is firmly situated within the historical context of caricature and lampooning, which over the years has contributed to public debates on key issues such as politics, religion and social change. In this thesis, I focus on political cartoons and argue that the political cartoon is still significant as a cultural product and as a powerful journalistic medium at a time when the existence of the print media is threatened by new technological developments.

In order to understand how cartoons remain a powerful mode of expression in the twenty-first century, I begin by examining the historical development of cartooning, tracing its origins in grotesque art, physiognomy and caricature. I then explore a number of events in early modern European history such as the Reformation and the French Revolution to show that the medium was used as a means of mass communication, to inform a largely illiterate public, incite protest and instigate rebellion through propaganda. I show how political graphics were used as effective political weapons against the ruling authorities, in the face of tight regulation such as censorship, and underline the French artists' commitment to defend their right of expression. As I demonstrate, this commitment continues to be pursued by contemporary French cartoonists such as Plantu who is dedicated to fighting for freedom of expression and promoting peace issues, under the banner of *Le Monde* and the United Nations. In analysing a corpus of Plantu's editorial creations, I underline theoretical perspectives for 'reading' cartoons and illuminate the visual rhetoric used by cartoonists to communicate serious issues. I conclude with an assessment of the significant role that French cartoonists played during the 2006 Cartoons War to further highlight the impact of cartoons as a vehicle for political communication, and as a catalyst for debate in the twenty first century.

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Introduction

The Role & Impact of Cartoons in Contemporary France

‘Un bon dessin vaut mieux qu’un long discours’

Introduction

Cartoons are one of the oldest forms of graphic representation. From the early creations on cave dwellers’ walls, Egyptian hieroglyphics to lithography, *caricatures* and *cartoons* have evolved from an essentially archaic form into different styles and across a range of media within contemporary culture. Nowadays, cartoons are used not only for entertainment, but also as educational tools, as visual animation, as business aids and as political and social commentaries. Such a variety creates problems when defining what a cartoon is and the consequent parameters for its study. The terminology is also a matter worth considering when looking at *cartoons* in a non-English speaking context, in particular, within a Francophone framework.

Before the introduction of the word *cartoon* in its modern sense in nineteenth century Britain, all kinds of humorous and satirical, drawings and sketches, were called *caricatures*. Today, in the English language though, the term *cartoon*, is ‘a drawing executed in an exaggerated style for humorous or satirical effect’ and consequently, in the public mind, is usually viewed as a form of animated children’s entertainment although it can also be found in printed media.¹ The other form of cartoon that is widely acknowledged, is the *comic strip*. Once again largely anchored to children’s entertainment in the public’s perception, the *comic strip* is defined as ‘a sequence of drawings in boxes that tell an amusing story’ and the single-panel cartoon used to observe or comment on a particular issue.²

In France however, the term *cartoon* is more accurately defined within day to day language, to represent the various forms within which cartoons are found. Since the term *caricature* became obsolete in the early twentieth century,

¹ Definition of cartoon from Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 11th Ed. Revised (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)

² Definition of comic-strip from Concise Oxford English Dictionary, op cit.

le dessin is the simple term given to any pictorial sketch. Within newspapers and other publications, the *dessin de presse* is used to describe any type of cartoon, which appears in the press and more specifically, *le dessin politique/editorial* used to describe political and editorial cartoons.³ To highlight the transition from the humorous origins of the cartoon to its more serious form, it is useful to note that the editorial cartoon is often found on the front-page of contemporary newspapers. As with the English language, the French also make a distinction between *le dessin de presse* and the comic strip, known in France as *la bande dessinée* or *la BD*.⁴ The same term is also used to refer to comic books and *La BD d'auteur*, the authored graphic novel. Finally, *le dessin animé* relates to the animated cartoons on television or at the cinema. Thus, we can see that the French language has developed to reflect the different types and functions of cartoons and more notably, whereas in the Anglo-Saxon context, the generic terms *cartoons* and *comics* have humorous connotations this is not the case in the Francophone context. There, the terms used to define the different cartooning styles provide no link to the cartoon's humorous heritage. Indeed, in France, cartooning is a 'serious' business: recognised as an art form in itself whereby more specifically, francophone comic strips are recognised as *Le Neuvième Art* (the Ninth Art). Moreover, the medium of cartooning is regularly celebrated in international events such as the *Festival International de la Bande Dessinée* in Angoulême, and the *Salon du Dessin de Presse et d'Humour* in Saint Just Le Martel, near Limoges.

Of all the cartooning forms, *La bande dessinée* is arguably the most popular form of cartooning in France at present, acknowledged as a significant social and cultural phenomena. Indeed, over the last twenty years, *BD* has been a continued area of interest for Francophone and English speaking scholars and whilst it is outside the focus of this study, it contributes to my main objective which is to demonstrate the significance of cartoons in French culture – namely that France has a special relationship with the cartoon that follows a long historical tradition. In France, visual satire is a traditional form of political and

³ The terms *editorial cartoon* and *political cartoon* will be used inter-changeably although the editorial cartoon refers more specifically to the cartoon used to illustrate an editorial feature, typically on the front page of a newspaper.

⁴ After this necessary explanation, the English term *cartoon* will be used throughout this thesis. The term *la bande dessinée* is commonly shortened as *BD* therefore I shall use this abbreviation instead when necessary.

editorial comment, which I suggest, is necessary and worth studying for its distinctiveness and its significance. This importance is substantiated by a number of historians and art critics, including Robert Justin Goldstein and Paul Gravett who maintain that 'France is a visually advanced, progressive, cultured nation'.⁵

In France, there is a long tradition of political cartooning which is firmly situated within the historical context of graphic satire and lampooning.⁶ Political and editorial cartooning, the subject of this thesis, has gradually emerged from grotesque drawings to become a cultural form and a significant press medium, contributing, over the years, to most public debates about key issues such as politics, society, religion and social change. Indeed, by the sixteenth century, a culture of graphic protest in prints was already well established in France, wherein caricatures were used to attack the regime in power. However, in the seventeenth century a shift took place that resulted in the introduction of two specific developments to the medium: personal caricature (the distorted representation of an individual) and cartooning (the distorted representation of situations and of ideas). These new ways of lampooning were fully implemented during the eighteenth century, particularly at the time of the French Revolution when cartoons were used as instruments of political protest. The cultural form gained further importance in the nineteenth century in great part, because of developments in printing technology and the democratisation of the press that made caricatures widely accessible to all levels of society. The nineteenth century was also the time when censorship was permanently abolished and consequently a large number of titles, including satirical journals, were published. Cartoons were seen to diverge from personal caricature and develop as a news medium, in the press, in particular in satirical journals such as *La Caricature* and *Le Charivari*, in the early 1830s. This was the beginning of a tradition of lampooning as part of the press. More specifically, the *fin de siècle* in caricature was marked by the emergence of a generation of great artists whose style of drawing influenced twentieth century artists and came to characterise the modern cartoons.

⁵ Paul Gravett, *Graphic Novels to Change Your Life* (London: Aurum Press Limited, 2005), p.9.

⁶ It is useful to remark that, although in this study my focus is on French cartoons, I do not overlook the European context. One cannot understand the development of the political cartoon in France without considering key historical events in other European countries and how they influenced the French practice.

The tradition of lampooning is still maintained today, with political cartoons occupying a privileged position in most French newspapers. Indeed, political cartoons, and more accurately editorial cartoons, have traditionally benefited from front-page coverage in the French national daily press regardless of their political allegiance. Jacques Faizant's work was a feature on the front page of the right wing publication, *Le Figaro*, the oldest daily newspaper in France, for more than four decades. Equally, the left-wing *Libération* newspaper has often replaced the usual front-page photograph of its publication with a cartoon by Willem, since the late seventies. Willem's front-page cartoons have, at times, been controversial for being scornful and rude; nevertheless, since 1986, Willem has acquired a regular space in the middle pages for a daily political comment entitled *L'Oeil de Willem*. Yet, the most striking example is to be found in *Le Monde*, France's most prestigious newspaper, wherein Plantu's cartoons have been regularly published since the early seventies, and most remarkably, on the front page since 1985.

Such is the impact of political cartoons in the contemporary French press that at this moment in time, every French daily national newspaper regularly uses more than one cartoonist to illustrate its pages. This is the case for *Le Monde* which currently employs four monthly paid cartoonists (Plantu, Pessin, Pancho and Serguei) as well as several freelance artists. *Libération* welcomes several cartoonists as well, a number of which are eminent draughtsmen from the weekly satirical press (*Charlie-Hebdo* and *Le Canard Enchaîné*). They include Riss, Lefred-Thouron, Kerleroux Cabu, Tignous, and Wolinski. All these artists are also sought after by sundry magazines. For instance, Plantu is given a full page weekly feature in *L'Express*, while Cabu and Wolinski contribute regularly to *L'Évènement du Jeudi* and *Le Nouvel Observateur*. Indeed French political cartoonists have been elevated to a status equivalent to that of the journalists of the written press. I will demonstrate that a reputed cartoonist such as Plantu has an unprecedented journalistic influence, which enables him to share the reporter's mission and provides him with the opportunity to take on a pioneering role: Plantu is currently leading exhibitions and symposia, under the banner of 'Cartooning for Peace' around the world. In addition, there is now the tendency for political cartoonists to publish compilations of their political cartoons and such books are an increasingly popular buy in France. The best

example of this successful venture is Plantu who sells over 40,000 copies every year of his compilation of cartoons, published in *Le Monde* and in *L'Express*. In France, Plantu has become a household name in line with any acclaimed political journalist.

In France, visual satire is a traditional form of editorial comment, which as I suggest, is necessary and worth studying for its cultural significance and impact. So far however research has tended to focus largely on *BD*, and comparatively excluded other forms of visual satire such as animated cartoons, satirical puppetry and political graphics. Political cartooning is an intricate art form that not only brings together the written and the visual, like *BD*, but it also mobilises communication and rhetoric to present serious political matters in an entertaining way. With a lack of enquiry in the field of modern political cartooning, there is a significant gap in academic knowledge. This thesis therefore aims to offer a significant contribution to the field of political cartooning.

Today, as in the past, the individual, particularly political figures, is still 'attacked' through political graphics, as the symbol of an ideology that the cartoonist disapproves. Moreover, there is evidence that the cartoon continues to be used as a powerful instrument of criticism, propaganda and protest, able to incite debate on key political, religious and social issues. In February 2006, media frenzy erupted as a result of the publication of twelve cartoons that depicted the Prophet Muhammad. In a global context of terrorism and religiously fuelled unrest, the public attention was absorbed by these images considered offensive in the Islamic faith. The *Cartoons War*, as the controversy was named, emphasises the enduring impact that the medium possesses and prompts discussion on the limits to freedom of expression and the role of self-censorship. In particular, it demonstrates that in France, there is still a drive to maintain the old tradition of lampooning and to fight for the right of freedom of rights of expression. When the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* defended its right of freedom of expression by publishing satirical cartoons of the Prophet Mohammad, newspapers across Europe eventually joined the conflict. However, French newspapers were at the heart of the debate, republishing the controversial cartoons and running numerous editorials on the controversy. Moreover, the editorial team of the satirical publication, *Charlie Hebdo* took a

public stand for the right of freedom of expression in Europe which resulted in a number of court cases against them.

In the twenty first century, an era dominated by a plethora of graphic imagery, one has to question how twelve, 'simple' hand drawn images could create such an impact, causing tension, deaths and international conflict. This raises a number of questions such as: How have simple drawings evolved into the political graphic commentaries of today? What is the enduring appeal and impact of cartoons? More specifically, how does a political cartoon function and create meaning for its reader? What can be said in a political cartoon that cannot be written? What roles do cartoons perform and do they deliver the same levels of influence in modern day society as in previous times? What factors have supported the development and popularity of cartoons and what factors may affect the medium's future? The broad purpose of this study is to explore and answer these questions to demonstrate that, despite the threat of digital technologies, political cartoons are still a significant form of political communication in twenty first century French culture.

The thesis has a number of specific goals. Firstly, my aim is to highlight the historical development of the political cartoon as a cultural form and as a significant news medium, not only in terms of its artistic development but also as a vehicle for political comment. Secondly, I will show the political cartoon's strength as a journalistic tool and as a vehicle for debate within the press. In particular, I consider the roles that cartoons performed in the past, as a critical voice, spurring revolt by means of propaganda, or, in more democratic periods, as an agent of change. The third goal is to investigate the specificity of the French political/editorial cartoon, looking at its evolution and its place in French contemporary press, at a time when traditional print media adapts to new technological developments. I also aim to reflect on the roles that some masters, such as Honoré Daumier, have played in the past and how they have influenced their successors. The fourth goal is to explore how the political cartoon works, how it merges with its journalistic environment and exploits the broader culture to make an abstract matter comprehensible and convincing. The focus here is to underline theoretical perspectives for 'reading' cartoons and illuminate the techniques of persuasion applied by cartoonists to deliver messages – in particular, by Plantu.

Literature Review

While researching this thesis, it became evident that the existing literature concentrates on the historical perspective, but does not provide a theoretical framework for understanding the significance of modern cartoons as a cultural form and as a press medium. My research therefore covers four main areas: the history of caricature (including the grotesque and physiognomy), the press in France, visual methodologies and François Mitterrand. Emphasis is given to the early development of caricature (grotesque-physiognomy-caricature-cartoon) to illuminate an area in the field which has previously not been studied in this way.

In general, the field of caricature has been well explored by historians, and a considerable amount of literature has been published on the history of French caricature, both in French and in English, on its origins, on its development in relation to the evolution of technology and on the roles that political caricature played in French history. This field of caricature has been active in a research sense for over a century now, although early work is limited: (Wright: 1875, Champfleury, 1885).⁷ Though some of these works are monumental, their study has been essential to provide an insight into grotesque art and its development into caricature, in particular Wright's study of the grotesque in Art. However, one major criticism of Wright's work is that his illustrations are not sourced, which makes it difficult for the researcher to cite.

Overall, academic-oriented work into caricature has been sporadic, with more available beginning in the 1990s to the present day. It is, by and large, on the periods of the eighteenth and nineteenth century that French and Anglophone scholars have concentrated the most. This is especially the case with regards to specific periods of French history where the production, the control of cartoons and various political debates were more significant than at other times. Generally, it seems that very little has been written on the grotesque since Philippe Thompson (1972).⁸ However, there has been a recent interest amongst French and British scholars with regards to the grotesque in art and Literature. The series of essays contained in Frances Connelly's book (2003) are useful to understand the various applications of the grotesque as

⁷ Thomas Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grotesque In Literature And Art*, (London: Chato, 1875). Jules Champfleury, *Histoire de la Caricature Moderne*, (Paris: E. Dentu, 1885). This is the third of the five volumes that Champfleury wrote on the subject of caricature, covering from Antiquity to Louis XIV.

⁸ Philippe Thompson, *Le Grotesque*, (London: Methuen, 1972).

applied in modern culture. Whilst, this is not the focus of my study, the introduction of her book was useful in terms of defining the grotesque.⁹ Similarly, although Ralph Shikes (1969) focuses on social critique, his chapter on Daumier and his contemporaries was useful.¹⁰ For my discussion on censorship matters in nineteenth century France, in Chapter 2, I drew heavily on Robert Goldstein's research.¹¹ In terms of physiognomy, an interesting and useful, modern discussion of Lavater's work was found in Wechsler's study (1982).¹² There the author focuses on the influence of physiognomy on caricature and the attitudes of Parisian groups in nineteenth century France.

With the exception of *The Political Cartoon*, an American publication by Charles Press (1989), I have found no books dedicated solely to political cartooning.¹³ In general, when it is discussed, the topic is incorporated in other major works, in the form of articles in journals or publications that deal with comic art in general.¹⁴ Moreover, there is very little academic research on modern French political cartooning or modern French editorial cartoons. Instead, the editorial cartoon, has received attention in French magazines and trade journals.¹⁵ Press' book was inadequate for my research, because of its lack of clarity. Press has been criticised by a number of writers including for example Lord (1983) who points out that: 'Press has managed to obfuscate an art form which at its best is distinguished by its clarity and simplicity'.¹⁶ The literature that exists on political cartoons, in French, is either too general, such as Brébant's memoir (1990) or tends to focus on the pedagogic use of the cartoon (Pothier, 1986).¹⁷ Brébant's work, which deals with political cartoons in

⁹ Frances Connelly, *Modern Art and the Grotesque*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press), 2003.

¹⁰ Ralph Shikes, *The Indignant Eye*, (Boston: Bacon Press, 1969).

¹¹ Robert Goldstein, *Censorship of Political Caricature in Nineteenth Century France*, (Kent: University Press, 1989).

¹² Judith Wechsler, *A Human Comedy: Physiognomy and Caricature in 19th Century Paris*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

¹³ Charles Press, *The Political Cartoon*, (London: Associated University press Ltd, 1981).

¹⁴ A number of these publications are American – since cartoons are also important in American culture. Noteworthy is *The International Journal of Comic Art*, edited by John. A. Lent (Drexel Hill, PA), which publishes scholarly materials dealing with all aspects of comic art worldwide, including France.

¹⁵ As Plantu is considered the number one cartoonist in twenty-first century France, a number of these publications have directed their reviews on Plantu's achievements in France and abroad. They include: *L'Express*, *Paris-Match*, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, *Le Nouvel Economiste*, *Timbres magazine*, *Le Magazine des diffuseurs de France*, and *the New York Times International*.

¹⁶ M. G. Lord, Reviewed work(s): *The Political Cartoon* by Charles Press, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 98, No. 3 (Autumn, 1983), pp. 545-546

¹⁷ Frédérique Brébant, *Le dessin politique dans la presse nationale française des années 80*, memoir, (Mons: IHEC, 1990). Maguy Pothier, 'Les implicites culturels chez un dessinateur humoristique: Plantu', thesis, (Paris: Sorbonne 3. 1991).

the French press in the 1980s, is original in his approach: one of the chapters is dedicated to the relationship between the cartoonists and his victims – the politicians. Yet, this piece of writing can be criticised for being over ambitious in its claims. For instance Brébant's analysis of cartoons would have been far more useful if the author had based his analysis of political cartoons on theoretical approaches rather than simply cataloguing the various techniques used by cartoonists. A great part of Pothier's linguistic thesis is concerned with some of the ways in which Plantu's editorial cartoons can be used as a teaching aid in Modern Foreign Language classes. Although both studies are interesting and useful in their approach to discuss the political cartoon, they are either too imprecise or too definite and fail to suit my needs of a comprehensive method to 'read' the political cartoon. As far as theoretical discourses are concerned, there are a number of works on semiotics and communication theories which can provide a basis for analysing the functioning of the single panel cartoon whether as a visual language (Roland Barthes: 1964, 1967; Umberto Eco:1976) or as an act of communication (Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, 1949; Roman Jakobson: 1960).¹⁸ However, I found it useful to apply Stuart Hall's theories of 'preferred readings' to my study (1973, 1980).

The French press was another area of research. With regards to the development of the press and to issues of regulation, I have made use of Volume 1 of Elisabeth Eisenstein's book on the press as an agent of change, which focuses on early Modern Europe.¹⁹ In particular, Eisenstein discusses the impact of printing on the Protestant Reformation, the Renaissance, and the Scientific Revolution. The role that the press played during various periods of the Third Republic (1870-1940) was well documented by Jacques Lethève (1961).²⁰ When it comes to more modern times, it is clear that the popularity of the cartoonist Plantu keeps on attracting interest amongst scholars. In 2000, Rémi Pézerat wrote his doctoral thesis on Plantu's professional activities in *Le*

¹⁸ Claude Shannon And Warren Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1949), Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, (Translated by Annette Lavers & Colin Smith), (London: Jonathan Cape, 1964, 1967). Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, (London: Macmillan, 1976).

¹⁹ Elisabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University press, 1979).

²⁰ Jacques Lethève, *La Caricature et La Presse Sous La III République*, (Paris: Armand Colin, 1961).

Monde and in *L'Express*. It is the first seminal discussion on Plantu's ideology and his achievement as an editorialist and chronicler. However, although there are similarities between my treatment of Plantu's work and Pézerat's approach, the information is listed rather than discussed and Pézerat fails to look at key issues such as, for example, the reasons why Plantu's cartoons are still so prominent in a world of multi-media images and how Plantu deals with portraying the Socialist president, François Mitterrand, with whom he shared political affinities. Furthermore, my more recent study of Plantu's undertakings takes into account his militant work for *Cartooning for Peace* in the world. Mitterrand's life and career have been the subject of many biographies including William Northcutt (1992) from which I have drawn extensively for the historical background of my discussion on Mitterrand's presidency.²¹ In conclusion, the existing literature concentrates on historical perspectives but does not give a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding the power of political cartoons in modern day times.

Source and Methodologies

In order to explore the development of the political cartoon, from caricature to its modern form, it has been necessary to draw on a number of different research sources and procedures. Research for this thesis has primarily involved the printed media for the analysis of books, journal articles, reports, popular French newspapers, and archives and a wide range of cartoon images. For the bulk of my research on the history of caricature, I have used the University libraries of Sussex (England), the British Library (London) and of Paris, including Sorbonne (Paris III), The *Bibliothèque Sainte Geneviève* and the *Institut de Sciences Politiques*. With a plethora of cartoon images to choose from there was a clear need to be selective to ensure that the chosen images supported the exploration of the research questions both from a historical and theoretical perspective. There are many old caricatures that would have been worthy of study but their poor quality due to their original method of production rendered them unsuitable for reproduction in this thesis. As far as the press is concerned, for this research, I have examined many newspapers from the daily press,

²¹ Northcutt, *Mitterrand, A Political Biography*, (New York: Holmes & Meier Publisher, 1992)

included *Le Monde*, the front-page of which I explored the period from 1981 to 1995, in search for cartoons of Mitterrand by Plantu. It is useful to know that not all the cartoons presented for approval by Plantu are accepted for publishing by the Chief Editor therefore, those that have not been accepted are generally included in the books that Plantu publishes at the end of every year. I have thus used a number of cartoons from Plantu's books about Mitterrand in Chapter 4 to support the research objectives. Moreover, between February and March 2006, I have examined the archives of *Le Monde*, *Libération*, *France-Soir* and *Le Figaro* to frame my discussion on the *Cartoons War*.

Another important methodological consideration was how to select which cartoonist's work to analyse and discuss. Where a case study approach was adopted, as in Chapter 4, to allow for more intensive analysis and understanding of the complexity of cartoons, I decided that greater objectivity could be achieved by examining the works of a single cartoonist. By following the style of a renowned cartoonist such as Plantu, any changes in graphic representation could be more easily recognised by the reader. The justification for selecting Plantu was based on his reputation and lengthy career, assuring me of a suitable level of material to choose from and because of the tense situation that existed between the editorial team of *Le Monde* and Mitterrand, the reasons for which are given in Chapter 4.

What became evident was that whilst journals, books and the like offer a wealth of information regarding topics such as the history of caricature, semiotics and *la bande dessinée*, very little exists on political cartooning. With a lack of up to date research in this area, the Internet proved invaluable as a rich source of current material. In particular, the development of the *Cartoons War* was extensively reported on the World Wide Web and provided a great insight into the issue and ensuing public reaction. Whilst certain Internet based information resources lack academic credibility, the Internet medium as a whole must be recognised for the possibilities it offers in terms of accessing international material in a timely fashion. To further combat the shortage of material specific to political cartooning, I undertook 20 direct interviews with notable cartoonists and figures within the press, including Plantu and Faizant,

as well as attended a number of cartoon festivals and exhibitions in France.²² At the centre of the research sits the need to understand the complexity of how cartoons are created and their message conveyed to the reader. This primary research greatly supported the development of the thesis. In particular, these firsthand accounts and the experiences of cartoonists were critical in developing my understanding of key issues such as censorship as well as the continued role and impact of cartoons in France.

Outline of Chapters

The thesis is organised according to five chapters. The first three chapters are essential to the study in terms of establishing the French political cartoon as a cultural form, as an art form and as a significant journalistic medium in twenty first century France. These chapters are framed as reviews of history, or at least, the moments I have chosen to discuss are in chronological order, to enable the reader to understand the cartoons within their historical context.

Chapter 1 explores the development of the political cartoon, as an intricate art form, from early grotesque and physiognomic creations through to the modern sketched press cartoon. This chapter has two goals: first to underline the stylistic development of caricature and the traditional drawing techniques used by modern cartoonists and, secondly, to position the political cartoon in the environment of the French print media, both historically and presently. The chapter explores the historical development of political caricature to demonstrate its status as an established cultural form and press medium. Moreover, I discuss how the art has evolved owing to the advance in printing technology which permitted popular expression to develop. Caricatures were therefore not only a form of entertainment but also a main source of information for the illiterate masses.

Chapter 2 is concerned with how caricature has developed as a vehicle for political comment and an opinion former. I examine the ways in which caricature was a catalyst for debate at different moments in the medium's history, from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. I argue that caricature was developed through criticism and the use of propaganda, often used by the

²² Please refer to Annexe 1 for the list of interviews.

dominant classes to close off ideas. Although I focus on French political caricature, it is not possible to fully acknowledge its development in France without considering the influence of other European countries in shaping the French cartooning tradition. Indeed, according to historians such as André Blum and Thomas Wright, caricature developed as an instrument of critique during the German Reformation which opposed the Catholics and the Protestants reformers in the fifteenth century. In this instance, visual satire was used as an instrument of propaganda against the Pope and was perceived as an effective strategy by the Protestants. I then focus on France for the remaining of the discussion. Firstly, by exploring the religious and political debates under the regime of Henri III in sixteenth century France when the *Catholic League* set out to destroy the King's image. Virulent caricatures against Henri III allegedly led to his assassination. The power of caricatures was also acknowledged under Louis XIV's reign when caricatures of the King were strictly forbidden since the authorities feared their 'power'. Finally, during the French Revolution in eighteenth century France, caricature was no longer used only by the dominant class but was included in public debate, to form public opinion.

In this chapter, I also focus on the emergence of journalistic caricature in France and highlight the impact of political cartoons in France through a discussion on regulation. As a result of the increasing power of cartoonists and their work, censorship was repeatedly brought in, in an attempt to control the disruptive effect of their drawings and restrict cartoonists' freedom of expression. The mechanics of censorship were not only complicated but also they were perceived as unfair by caricaturists. Artists defied regulation with unforgettable caricatures such as *le melon* and *Anastasie*. The fact that censorship for political cartoons was stricter than for the written word provides further evidence of the impact of this medium throughout French history. Within this frame it is also interesting to explore the impact of censorship on the development of cartooning and the techniques employed by cartoonists to ensure that a level of freedom of expression was maintained. This chapter also highlights the importance of the nineteenth century for political caricature in France. It was called 'the golden age'. This period saw the emergence of caricature journals, as a subversive voice in 1830. The law of 1881 ended censorship definitively, consequently, the print media and caricature flourished.

In Chapter 3, I turn to the events at the end of the nineteenth century. The century ended with a strong political debate in 1894, with the *Dreyfus Affair* to which political cartoons were central. The affair demonstrates the strengths of caricature as an opinion former. Indeed, the *Dreyfus Affair* led to the start of nationalism in France. Jews were caricatured in anti-Semitic journals that were created for the occasion and even in the national press – *Le Figaro*. Indeed, I will demonstrate that this period marks the inception of political cartoons as a feature in the newspapers and that by the end of the nineteenth century a tradition of forceful graphic criticism was established. I also explore different moments of graphic satire in twentieth century France to examine the medium's changing languages and the impact of these changes on modern cartooning. By looking at the evolution of the art form within a more contemporary press environment, I search for the maintenance of a tradition in French cartooning.

The focus in Chapter 3 is therefore on political graphics and the editorial cartoon, and in particular, its impact on the front-page of the newspaper. From this discussion it will emerge that in France, the cartoonist has gained a professional status which places them on equal terms with journalists of the written press. Moreover, by focusing on the editorialist role of the cartoon in the modern newspaper press, I aim to explore its strengths as a vehicle for political communication, its influence and its prospective significance in a multimedia world. The choice of Jacques Faizant and Plantu is clear as a focus of study as they have both enjoyed very successful careers as cartoonists in the French daily press: Faizant's cartoons have been published in the front-page of *Le Figaro* for over forty years and Plantu in *Le Monde* for over thirty two years. Arguably, they are more representative of their newspapers than some of their colleagues of the written press.

In Chapter 4, I demonstrate that the political cartoon goes beyond the simple illustration to convey an editorial or political comment. A cartoon has a complex structure, using stereotypes, symbols and an array of rhetorical figures to create expression, emotion and provoke reaction. By bringing these aspects together, the cartoonist can narrate events, educate and even influence the reader. Indeed, in this study, I demonstrate that the editorial cartoon is a powerful form of expression that captures the essence of reality more succinctly, concisely and memorably than words. In particular, this chapter

focuses on understanding how cartoonists use a number of specific techniques to create their images and to express their opinions. I suggest that a political cartoon is an act of communication and a means of both mental and cultural representation. I show that Plantu's cartoons are characterised by his sources of inspiration, his use of cultural/historical references as well as his application of a wide range of rhetorical figures to engage with his audience. The final premise dealt with in this chapter is that a combined tradition of physiognomy (characterisation) and of lampooning, provide a functional base for a corpus of political cartoons, the satirical representation of President Mitterrand, in which the work of Plantu is central. The rationale for choosing this topic is that it presented a number of challenges to Plantu. First of all, in lampooning Mitterrand, Plantu found himself in a position to criticise someone with whom he shared political affinities. Secondly, as the appointed cartoonist in *Le Monde*, Plantu had to adhere to the ideology of the paper. He found himself in the heart of a dispute between *Le Monde* and Mitterrand which lasted during the whole of Mitterrand's presidency. The aim of the analysis of Mitterrand's cartoons is to demonstrate the effectiveness of political cartoons in communicating complex political and social messages in a succinct but powerful way.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I discuss the controversy surrounding the *Cartoons War* with a specific emphasis on France's distinctive response to the crisis. In doing so I further highlight the impact of cartoons as a journalistic medium and as a significant vehicle for political communication in the twenty first century. The legal battle that ensued between *Charlie Hebdo*, a highly satirical French publication, and representatives of the Muslim community shows the significance of press cartoons and principles of freedom of expression within France. The *Cartoons War* is a solid closure for this thesis, highlighting the impact and influence that cartoons still have in contemporary society and revealing aspects about modern frameworks of regulation, ethical considerations and inter-cultural relations that may shape the future of political cartooning.

Chapter 1

From Early Caricature to Modern Day Cartoons

‘The blessed gift of laughter is one of mankind’s prerogatives’.¹

Introduction

This chapter explores the development of political graphics as a cultural product, looking at how the cartoon has developed as an art form and medium for news, shaped by technological innovations. This chapter begins the first part of the thesis, the wider objective of which is to explain how modern French editorial cartoons have grown out of a long European tradition of caricature and how they have developed into being effective graphic commentaries, worthy of a position on the front page of the most serious daily press.

Before the introduction of the term ‘cartoon’ in nineteenth century Europe (see below, page 26), satirical and humorous drawings were referred to as caricatures. Therefore, it is with the cartoon’s origin as caricature that I begin this discussion. According to the French dictionary *Larousse*, a caricature, is a ‘gross, exaggerated distortion of an individual’s features, for satirical purposes’.² Thus, I argue that the cartoon’s origins can be traced more specifically in the grotesque, an aesthetic category that concerns ugliness and distorted figures, and in physiognomy, a pseudo-science that also deals with physical distortion, but focussing on the face. With this objective in mind, I shall explore the historical development of the grotesque within an aesthetic framework, first outlining the concept and then, examining a number of techniques used in the grotesque, to draw the conclusion that caricature arose from the practice of grotesque art by great Renaissance painters in sixteenth century Europe. Then I show how caricature has gradually gone beyond grotesque imagery and genre painting in its adaptations to modern trends of lampooning and satire, using a number of physiognomic procedures, such as zoomorphism, which is central to creating political imagery, and graphic techniques, such as ‘*simplification*’, on

¹ Gombrich, E.H. & Kris, E. *Caricature*, (London: KingPenguin Books, 1940, p.3).

² ‘Une déformation grotesque d’une personne, par exagération voulue, dans une intention satirique, des traits caractéristiques du visage ou des proportions du corps’. *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique Larousse* (Paris: Bordas, 1993, p.252).

which modern cartooning relies. Subsequently, I discuss how caricature developed from entertainment and satire, as a function of new technological developments, to being an important feature in the French print media.

The Grotesque and Caricature

It is not my purpose to review comprehensively the history of the ‘grotesque’. However, I want briefly to point out how a number of French and English academic debates help a contemporary understanding of the grotesque as a cultural form. Frances Connelly notes that the grotesque plays a prominent role in modern image culture in comparison to classical times when the genre was highly disregarded.³ Apart from its re-emergence in the fine arts, in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, the grotesque was extended to new expressive modes and incorporated in a number of different developments such as photography, mass media, psychoanalysis and more. Whilst Dadaism and surrealism provided fertile ground for the proliferation of the grotesque, the grotesque is still prominent in expressionist, symbolist, realist and abstract artworks.⁴ However, scholars agree that whenever applied to Literature or Art, definitions of the grotesque are imprecise.⁵ Descriptions include: ‘*satirical caricature, burlesque*’, (Thomas Wright: 1875; Philippe Morel: 1997), ‘*bizarre and absurd*’ (Marianne Silhouette: 2000), and ‘*monstrous and fantastic*’, (Pascaline Nicou: 2002).⁶ It is never made clear what the dividing lines are between these variations. Moreover, the grotesque often has pejorative associations. According to Philip Thompson, ‘even those writers well-disposed towards the grotesque tended to treat it as a vulgar species of the comic,

³ Indeed, during the classical period, (6th to 4th century BC), the focus was on ideal beauty. Frances. S. Connelly, *Modern Art and the Grotesque*, (Kansas City: University of Missouri, 2003), p.2.

⁴ Connelly, *Modern Art and the Grotesque*, op. cit. 3-1.

⁵ The grotesque was originally applied to visual art. In France, it appeared in non-artistic fields and in literature in the sixteenth century. François Rabelais is known for his grotesque and satirical literary works which focused on physical deformity as a comic concept. In the 1530s, Rabelais created the *Gargantua* series, the stories of two giants, *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* which at the time were perceived as shocking and unconventional – in particular, they were described vomiting, urinating and defecating after consuming extensive meals.

⁶ Thomas Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art*, (London: Chato, 1875); Philippe Morel, *Les Grotesques: les Figures de L’Imaginaire dans la Peinture Italienne dès la Fin de la Renaissance*, (Paris: Flammarion, 1997); Marielle Silhouette, ‘Le Grotesque Entre la Marge et le Cadre’, *Sociétés et Représentations*, (Paris: Nouveau Monde Editions, 2002, Vol.10, pp.9-21); Pascaline Nicou, ‘Le Grotesque dans un Poème Chevaleresque Italien du XV^e siècle, le Roman Amoureux de Matteo Maria Boiardo’, *Sociétés et Représentations*, (Paris: Nouveau Monde Editions, 2002, Vol.10, p.427-43).

closely allied to the burlesque and to caricature'.⁷ A reason for this attitude may be because, as Connelly explains, the grotesque belongs to a class of imagery, which 'has never fit comfortably within the boundaries traditionally set by either aesthetics or art history for its objects of enquiry'.⁸ For portraying the ugly, 'the grotesque destabilises certainties, pushes boundaries, shifts expectations and calls current beliefs into question'.⁹ The concept is thus indistinct, referring to a wide range of material ranging from mythological figures to the imagery of modern caricaturists such as Honoré Daumier, to writers such as François Rabelais and countless productions in contemporary art. In French language, it is generally accepted that '*grotesque*' and '*caricature*' belong to the same category and it is not unusual to talk of '*caricature grotesque*' or '*grotesque caricatural*'. Indeed, for Marianne Silhouette, the two terms are often amalgamated:

Ils ont en commun, [the grotesque and caricature] une même valeur de déterritorialisation de l'espace artistique, de son réseau de conventions. La déformation est sans conteste leur procédé par excellence.¹⁰

Historian Pascaline Nicou affirms that the term '*grotesque*' was first used during the Renaissance, in mid-fifteenth century Italy, to describe statuettes of composite creatures and distorted figures that were found in the old ruins of a Roman villa.¹¹ *Grotesque* would thus derive from the Italian word *grotteshi* (grottos), in reference to the prehistoric cave paintings where vestiges of graphic representations of human or animal distortion were first discovered. Yet, for Connelly, the term itself is a mistake, because the rooms where the statuettes were found were excavated below ground level, they were misconceived to be grottos.¹² However, this type of art pre-existed the term. Grotesque art, indeed, goes back as far as prehistoric times when paintings and drawings were found on cave walls – such as Lascaux in South-western France – showing bizarre shapes and images of gross human or animal distortion. In

⁷ Philip Thompson, *Le Grotesque*, (London: Methuen, 1972). Online version by David Lavery http://davidlavery.net/Grotesque/Major_Artists_Theorists/theorists/thomson/thomson2.html, [accessed, 16, March 2008]

⁸ Connelly, *Modern Art and the Grotesque*, p.5.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Silhouette, *Sociétés et Représentations*, op.cit.

¹¹ Nicou, 'Le Grotesque dans un Poème Chevaleresque Italien du XV^e Siècle', op cit.

¹² Connelly, *Modern Art and the Grotesque*, p.5.

this era, grotesque art was arguably, part of a system of communication, based on using visual symbols. Grotesque thus remains definitely a broad term. A number of modern definitions corroborate Thompson's statement that the main characteristic of the grotesque as an art style is 'the confusion of heterogeneous elements, the interweaving of plant, animal, human and architectural forms'.¹³ Yet, they do not seem to take into account the comic or satirical effect produced when the drawing is exaggerated out of proportion, which is fundamental. Ernst Gombrich asserts that 'even in the ancient world men knew how to produce comic effects for each other's amusement'.¹⁴ Cave drawings and hieroglyphs were perceived as amusing by commentators such as Thomas Wright, for whom the tendency to parody and ridicule was deeply implanted in human culture and was one of the earliest talents displayed by people in society.¹⁵ This was particularly pregnant in Egyptian art, wherein, as Wright points out, there was a strong spirit of parody although 'there was little gaiety or joviality in its designs and forms'.¹⁶

To understand the aesthetics of the genre, it is useful to examine some early techniques associated with the grotesque. The human representation of animals was widely used in early grotesque. According to Wright, the grotesque in art and caricature originated in the kind of imagery such as the one in Figure 1.1 below, all together humorous and satirical, representing animals employed in various human occupations. This was apparently a favourite theme in Egyptian art.¹⁷ Wright suggests that, in spite of their lack of expression, these images were designed to challenge the so-called inferiority of animals in showing that they could perform the same activities as humans; in this particular case, the drawing could have meant that the fox is able to perform several activities simultaneously, such as carrying his burden on a pole and playing of a musical instrument.¹⁸

¹³ Thomson, op.cit, 'Introduction'.

¹⁴ Gombrich, E.H. & Kris, E. *Caricature*, (London: King Penguin Books, 1940, p.3).

¹⁵ Thomas Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art*, p.2.

¹⁶ Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art*, p.3.

¹⁷ Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art*, p.2;7.

¹⁸ Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art*, p.7. Incidentally, the fox was one of the most popular animals in this kind of imagery. Below in this chapter I discuss the use of animal symbolism in medieval time.



Figure 1.1 - *The Fox Turned Piper, Egyptian Drawing.*¹⁹

The second technique that can be underlined is the portrayal of categories of humans such as deformed people. This was found in Egyptian and Greek graphic representations, cultures to which physical beauty was generally considered important. The Greek apparently favoured this type of drawing – which linked humour and satire – to parody their peers and their gods. After the fall of the Greek empire in 35 BC, the Romans imitated all Greek arts, including drama, literature and graphic art. Grottesque art flourished among the Romans. Images were drawn on every medium possible – wood, china, glass and stones. Subsequently, many relics of Greco-Roman art were found and in this way, it is suggested that the art has greatly influenced other European cultures.²⁰ Some Roman grottesque imagery is worth examining because it exploited a number of Egyptian and Greek ideas, which became common in modern times. According to Wright, Roman artists satirized extensively the various occupations of daily life by using pigmies and dwarfs as main characters. The Romans usually drew dwarfs as encephalic figures, with very small legs and arms as shown below in Figure 1.2. As Veronique Dosen suggests, the thought behind using individuals such as dwarfs and hunchbacks – as with the animal world – was to defy prejudice against them.²¹

¹⁹ All drawings in the section on grottesque art come from Wright's *A History of Caricature and Grottesque in Literature and Art*.

²⁰ Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grottesque in Literature and Art*, p.15.

²¹ Veronique Dosen examines the artistic representations of dwarfs and pygmies in the ancient civilisations of Egypt and Greece in *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt and Greece*, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1993).

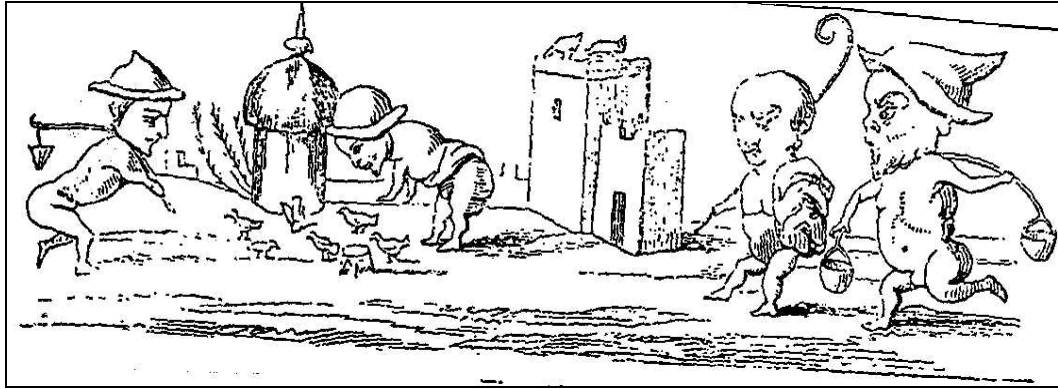


Figure 1.2 - *The Farmyard in Burlesque, Roman Drawing.*

In this scene, Wright proposes that the character on the right hand side of the picture, who carries a cane, is a supervisor visiting the farm. This would explain why the labourers are busying themselves with activities, such as carrying materials and feeding the poultry.²² The impact of this technique of the encephalic dwarfs is noteworthy since it is still in use in French cartooning (see page 31).

Yet, Noel Carroll does not agree with Wright regarding the dominance of the techniques that popularised grotesque art, and sees composite, hybrid creatures as the most influential component of the form.²³ This technique, which consists of composite creatures, a mixture of ridiculous and horrible compositions is the third technique to be discussed. Composite artwork which, according to Connelly, was considered as merely ornamental in classical times, flourished in medieval days, at a time when society was steeped in superstition and belief of the supernatural.²⁴ In fact, in the Middle Ages, grotesque art focused on the diabolical and terrifying rather than on the comic, and composite images were used as a vehicle for religious doctrine – grotesque was arguably a form of communication whereby people exchanged information through visual symbols. As Carroll explains, in the Middle Ages, people had to be devoted to the church alone otherwise, hell would be their fate.²⁵ Hence, this kind of imagery was generally used to decorate places of worship, a practice that continued throughout the High Middle Ages until the sixteenth century. Today,

²² Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art*, p.34.

²³ Noel Carroll, 'The Grotesque Today: Preliminary Notes Towards a Taxonomy', in Connelly, *Modern Art and the Grotesque*, p.294.

²⁴ Connelly, *Modern Art and the Grotesque*, p.7.

²⁵ Noel Carroll, 'The Grotesque Today: Preliminary Notes Towards a Taxonomy', p.295.

in France, examples of grotesque art, applied to sculptures dating from the thirteenth century can still be found in the form of gargoyles on the walls of the Gothic cathedrals. The demonic stone figures are set on the parapet of the external gallery of the cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris. According to Wright, it represents 'the demon, apparently looking with satisfaction upon the inhabitants of the city as they were indulging in sin and wickedness'.²⁶ At that time, animals were widely exploited for mockery and in pictorial symbolism such as in the gargoyles. Imagery used by medieval artists included monstrous figures of animals, and fantastic transformations of animals and humans as shown in Figure 1.3 below. On the left hand side is a satyr with a human torso and on the right, a satyr with goosefeet, dragon wings and a monstrous torso. Both creatures have human faces below their navel; this composition is an example of the juxtaposition of the ridiculous and the monstrous, typical of medieval satire. Wright suggests that this drawing may have been intended as a parody of the combats between the Christians and the Saracens, for the creature to the right is armed with a Saracen sabre, whilst that of the left, which is less monstrous, brandishes a Norman sword.²⁷



Figure 1.3 - *A Terrible Combat*, Medieval Drawing.

Over the centuries however, the term grotesque evolved from describing specific medieval fantastical imagery to describe 'the ugly' in general. As will be discussed below, this move coincides with the humoristic advent of caricature

²⁶ Thomas Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art*, op.cit. p.73.

²⁷ Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art*, p.98.

during the Italian Renaissance in the fifteenth century, when grotesque figures were used for mockery and entertainment. It is important to discuss further Christian demonology, not only because interest in this particular type of grotesque was maintained for a good part of the period known as the European 'Renaissance' of art and literature – from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century – but also because of its significance as a means of influence during this time. Art historian, Ernest Gombrich explains that when people were still guided by the teachings of the Church, artists expressed public fears with grotesque caricatures and images of doomsday. He suggests that these images influenced people who believed that the artists' prophecies would come true.²⁸ During the sixteenth century, great painters like Hieronimus Bosh (1450-1516) and Albrecht Dürer (1471-1564) exploited the theme of the battle between good and evil with the use of grotesque, encephalic figures and monster-like creatures. In this context, I would suggest that Bosh and Dürer contributed greatly to the development of political caricature. Bosh's encephalic creations were an inspiration for later cartoonists who adopted this technique. Indeed, Wright stresses the importance of grotesque images circulated by European painters and engravers during the Renaissance period. Such was the importance of this art form that in the sixteenth century, a school of '*grotesque diablerie*' emerged in Germany and Holland, which supported the continued prevalence of demonology and medieval legends. In particular, Flemish artist, Peter Breughel's (1525-1569) grotesque production was innovative in the way that he created animated figures out of inanimate things, such as machines, implements of various kinds, household utensils and other articles.²⁹ In the seventeenth century, the movement emerged in France where it established itself through the work of Jacques Callot (1592-1635).

The French *school of diablerie* is worth further attention because, according to Wright, it has influenced the art of caricature and French cartooning in particular.³⁰ Callot was respected as one of the most illustrious artists in the history of French art. His early contribution to the school was characteristic of his inventive imagery and drollness, as can be seen in Figure

²⁸ Ernst Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, (London: Phaidon Press -16th edition - 1995), p.120.

²⁹ Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art*, p. 293. This technique, as with zoomorphism, is one that is still in use in modern French cartooning (see Chapter 4).

³⁰ Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art*, p.308.

1.4 which represents one of Callot's demons. As Wright explains, the demoniacal character, mounted on a bizarre animal, chases a saint with a tilting javelin in his hand, but he needs to wear a pair of spectacles in order not to miss his prey.³¹

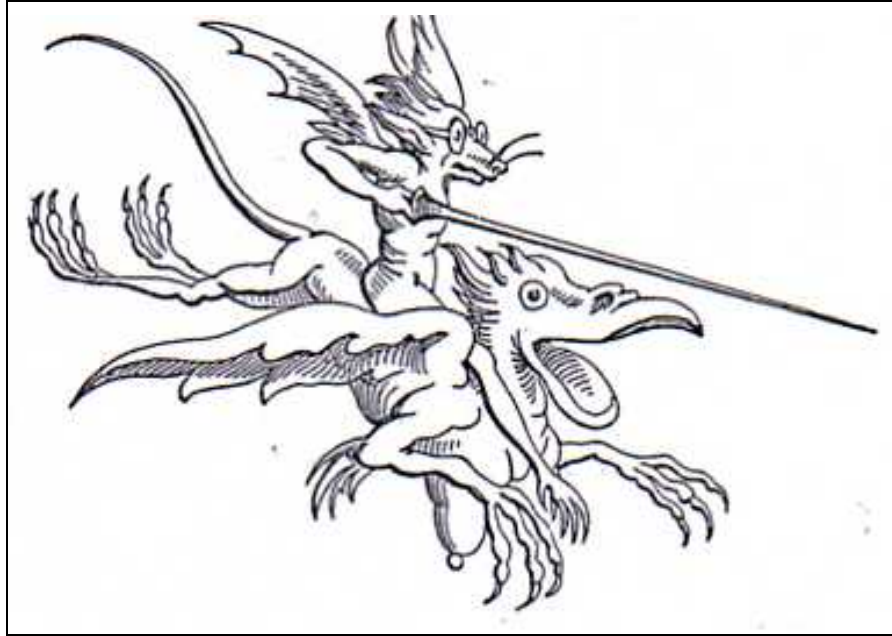


Figure 1.4 - *The Demon Tilter*, Jacques Callot (1616).

Callot was famous for his peculiar *diablerie* but also for his industrious and versatile production.³² He etched, with humour, the debauchery of the bourgeoisie, street scenes, and, when he was working in Italy, was also known for creating distorted pastiches of the Italian characters of *La Commedia Dell'Arte*. Arguably, it was in the late school of *grotesque diablerie* that, in some ways, political caricature was first initiated. As will be underlined below, grotesque artists of the sixteenth and seventeenth century gradually extended the range and scope of their prints as they became increasingly critical of the society they lived in. For instance, Callot became a great observer of humanity: his innovative series of prints documenting the atrocities of the Thirty Years War greatly influenced socially conscious artists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.³³

³¹ Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art*, p.297.

³² Callot was also a printmaker who apparently engraved only his own designs.

³³ 'Jacques Callot', *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2007. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/90069/Jacques-Callot>>, [accessed 6 Jan. 2007].

It was during the Renaissance period that the importance of the grotesque for painters – and sculptors – was recognised and new theories were developed. According to Connelly, this period ‘marked the entrance of the grotesque into the mainstream of modern expression, as a means to explore alternative modes of expression and to challenge the presumed universal of classical beauty’.³⁴ The Renaissance years also witnessed the beginning of caricature in its modern sense – the gross deformity of physical features – and thus deserves further discussion. This was the time when the most notable European painters adopted a new philosophical concept in portraiture that no longer linked beauty to good and ugly to bad, as had previously been the case. Instead, there was a fascination for representing ugliness and comic monstrosity, as a rebellion against the rigidity of Classical beauty. Up until that time, the tendency of the Classical period was to imbue subjects with as much beauty as possible. Thus, the greatest European painters of the time – including Dürer, Michelangelo (1475-1564) and Leonardo Da Vinci (1452-1519) – embarked on a momentous research into the human face, along with scientific exploration of the human anatomy, and in doing so mastered the process of gross exaggeration. In particular Da Vinci produced numerous caricatures, based on the observation of human anatomy. In Figure 1.5, below we have an example of his exploration of the head.

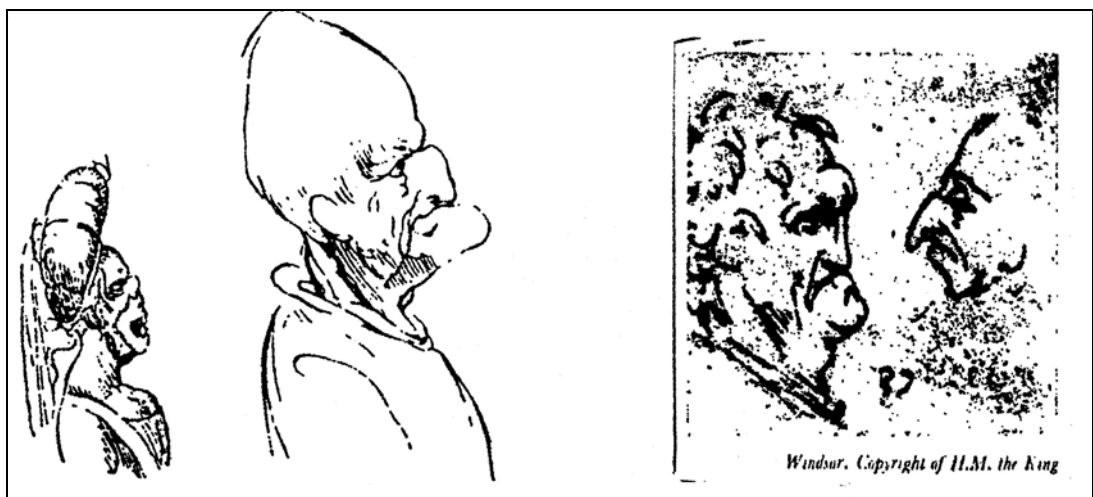


Figure 1.5 - *Grotesque Heads*, Leonardo Da Vinci (circa 1490).

³⁴ Connelly, *Modern Art and the Grotesque*, p.5.

Leonardo Da Vinci, whose sketches were considered deliberately funny, is often quoted in Europe as being an early caricaturist for this particular work on the human face.³⁵ However, a number of academic critics have disagreed with this proposition. They include French poet and art critic Charles Baudelaire who argued that the *Grotesque Heads* lacked a comic element and were actually portraits that the artist executed as a 'scholar, a geometrician, a professor of natural history'.³⁶ Likewise, art historian Ernst Gombrich claims that Da Vinci's grotesque heads were not distortions but rather 'examples of reality, mere studies of ugliness'.³⁷

Certainly, in Da Vinci's time the term *caricature* was unknown. Two Italian artists, Anibale and Augusto Carrache, first coined the term 'caricature' at the end of the sixteenth century. In their art school, the two brothers decided to experiment with the grotesque distortion of the face and the human anatomy by grossly exaggerating their model's features. As explained by art critic, Natalie Aranda, 'the true purpose of caricature was conceived as "loading" the portrait with as much meaning as possible'.³⁸ This explains why the Carrache brothers called their new procedure, *caricare*: meaning in Italian to load, to overload and their invention, *caricatura* or *caricature*. Yet, the originality of the Carrache's work was that unlike Da Vinci, who had focused purely on the grotesque deformation of physical features, they made sure that their distorted portrait remained easily identifiable. The Carrache brothers had thus created an innovative genre in portraiture, and caricature became a defined concept within the Renaissance alongside the more standard portrait. From then on, a humorous tradition named 'caricature' was established for, just as had happened with the earlier grotesque imagery, these new ideas rapidly travelled with artists all over Europe being attracted to this style, even those who were still inspired by the medieval grotesque art of Dürer and Bosh.

³⁵ Kenneth Clark, *Leonardo da Vinci*, (London: Penguin Books, 1993), p.120. According to Sir Kenneth Clark, Da Vinci's grotesque Heads were the most typical of his works and became collector's pieces.

³⁶ Charles Baudelaire, 'Quelques caricaturistes étrangers', *Le Présent*, 15 October 1857. Baudelaire wrote three essays on caricature: 'De l'essence du rire et généralement du comique dans les arts plastiques', was published in *Le Portefeuille*, 8 July 1855; 'Quelques caricaturistes français' and 'Quelques caricaturistes étrangers' were published in *Le Présent*, 1 and 15 October 1857.

³⁷ Ernst Gombrich, *The Heritage of Apelles*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), p.58.

³⁸ Natalie Aranda, 'A Brief History of Caricatures', *EzineArticles.com*, 31 January 2008, <[http://EzineArticles.com/? expert=Natalie_Aranda](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Natalie_Aranda)>, [accessed 15 March 2008].

As artists extensively implemented and experimented with Carrache's technique, later variations of the original concept developed, producing portraits whose features were highly exaggerated. In this way *le portrait-charge* emerged in France, based on Bosh's encephalic figures –showing an undersized body carrying a giant, grotesque head – but on the Carrache's principles of likeness. This type of portraiture – wherein physiognomy largely contributed – was regarded as fine art and became a favourite within European aristocratic circles for its entertainment value. Paradoxically, the deformed portraits flattered their subjects who enjoyed the attention they were given and this visual form of wit became a highly prized social skill. The French Court also approved of portrait caricature for entertainment but, as will be underlined later in Chapter 2, the *portrait charge* started to have political implications and became controversial, as the caricaturist sought to use it as an instrument of criticism against the authority.³⁹

Physiognomy and Caricature

The grotesque was not merely about the combination of animals, humans and objects, physical modifications and the association of the monstrous and ridiculous, it also set the scene for the more satirical use of this medium – as deployed later in modern political cartoons. Thus, whatever the early purpose of these images, what is significant to my discussion is how the grotesque genre was developed by artists to produce caricatures. Of even more significance is the understanding of the basic principles behind the art of caricature. Indeed, caricature, as the grotesque distortion of an individual for comic effect, is often part of an attempt at character description; in other words, it deploys the principles of physiognomy. Physiognomy is 'a science that claims to deduce a person's character from a systematic analysis of his physical features'.⁴⁰ It developed from a philosophical tradition that linked physical appearance with moral traits and can be traced back to Classical Antiquity in the work of Aristotle in the third century BC. Aristotle's theory was based on 'imitation of nature'.⁴¹ In

³⁹ The *portrait charge* was still a favourite component of nineteenth century French caricature. The master of the genre was André Gill whose drawings are discussed later in Chapter 2.

⁴⁰ Graeme Tytler, *Physiognomy in the European Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p.36.

⁴¹ Ernst Gombrich, 'The Principles of Caricature', *The Gombrich Archive*, <<http://www.gombrich.co.uk/showdoc.php?id=85>>,[accessed 20 June 2008].

his treatise entitled *Physiognomonica*, Aristotle argued that the personality of a human being could be established on the basis of his resemblance to an animal. This was based on the theory that each animal had characteristics that could be found in a human's face. Aristotle's theory focussed on the relationship between human nature and animal nature but, as we know, the association between human and animal in drawings went back to earlier times. In primitive religions and in ancient cultures such as Egypt, the animal was highly significant as people believed in metempsychosis wherein the soul went into the bodies of animals after death. Wright remarks that:

One of the most natural ideas amongst all people would be to compare men with the animals whose particular qualities they possessed. One might be bold as a lion, another faithful as a dog or as cunning as a fox [...].⁴²

It was to be assumed that animal characteristics were stereotyped and part of common knowledge. In *La Méthode Zoologique dans les Traits de Physiognomonie*, Loïc Comment gives a comprehensive report of the moral characteristics of animals, as described in *Physiognomonica* and other texts, such as *L'Anonyme Latin*. According to this report, the way animals were perceived at that time has not changed much from our current twenty first century perceptions. For instance the lion, the king of animals still represents strength, courage, nobility and elegance.⁴³ From a zoological point of view, the lion is representative of the ideal human male, as was confirmed by one of the ancient texts:

Ceux qui se rapportent à l'espèce de cet animal seront des hommes ayant une très grande tête, des yeux brillants, une bouche fendue, d'amples narines, une nuque solide, des épaules et une poitrine larges, des flancs très étroits, des cuisses fines, les bouts des pieds et des mains séparés et districts, assez fortement roux, le cheveu tombant.⁴⁴

⁴² Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art*, p.5.

⁴³ Loïc Comment, *La Méthode Zoologique Dans Les Traits de Physiognomonie*, (Université de Neufchâtel: 2004), pp.68-77.

⁴⁴ J. André, *Anonyme latin, Traité de Physiognomonie*, (text compiled and translated by J. André) (Paris: Les belles Lettres, 1981), p.122.

As Comment indicates, the use of the animal world in graphics has remained inseparable from physiognomy.⁴⁵ Most notably, the use of zoomorphism is still a common practice in modern political cartooning, with, for instance, the use of the pig's head on a human's body. As I shall demonstrate later, (Chapter 2), it has become a popular and effective graphic device for caricaturists to express derogatory feelings such as repulsion and disrespect.

Another variation in portrait caricature challenged the limits of human identity with metaphorical associations to natural objects. Examples of this practice date back to the mid sixteenth century, with the physiognomic imaginative portraits created by Italian artist, Giuseppe Arcimboldo (1527-1593) who was the Royal painter of the Hapsburg emperors, Maximilian II and Rudolf II in Vienna and Prague from 1562 to 1588. Arcimboldo became famous for painting a series of grotesque heads, composed out of heteroclitic objects, plants, animals, fruits or vegetables that resemble human features such as the ones below in Figure 1.6. *Water* is composed of aquatic animals, allegorical of the water element and *Winter*, is made of cracked bark, branches and dead leaves on a decaying tree. These particular heads are part of a series of allegorical representations of the four elements and the four seasons that Arcimboldo painted for the court from 1563. It was often alleged that these unconventional portrait caricatures were merely designed to entertain the imperial family, such as the composite head of fruit and flowers produced for Rudolf II, which associates the prince to the Roman god of seasons, *Vertumnus*. However, Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann disagrees with the belief that Arcimboldo's creations were jokes and claims that instead, they were 'a visual dialogue', with a 'specific political content and an intentional message.'⁴⁶ Manuscripts written by Giovanni Battista Fonteo – Achimboldo's collaborator – in which Fonteo explained the meanings of the composite heads support Kaufmann's assertion. According to Kaufmann, Fonteo noted that the harmonious disposition between the elements and the seasons was particularly significant. As seen below with *Water*, which faces to the left, and *Winter* to the

⁴⁵ Comment, '*La Méthode Zoologique Dans Les Traits de Physiognomie*', p.63. The use by medieval artists of the peculiarities of animals to satirize and caricature mankind has already been discussed above in this section.

⁴⁶ Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, 'Arcimboldo's Imperial Allegories', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 39 Bd., H. 4, (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag GmbH München, 1976), pp.275-296. Quote from p.296. < <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1481925>>, [accessed 25 December 2008].

right, the other sets which include *Fire* and *Summer*, *Earth* and *Autumn*, *Air* and *Spring*, are organised in a symmetrical position which confront each other.⁴⁷ Fonteo's texts suggested that the portraits could be seen as a reflection on Maximilian's policies, as a prophecy of their eventual outcome, 'as allegories of the Emperor's power and of the harmony of the world under his reign'.⁴⁸

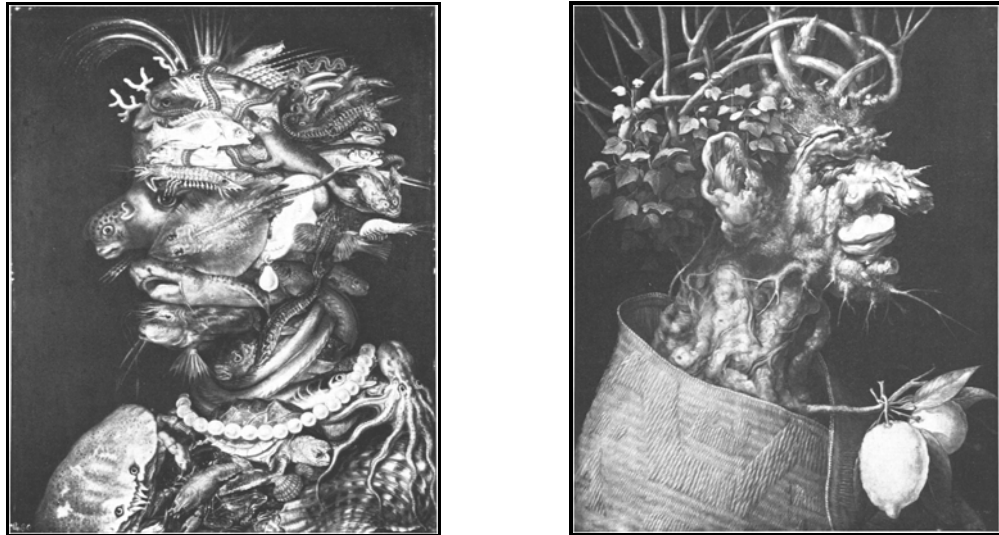


Figure 1.6 - *Water* (1566) & *Winter* (1573), Giuseppe Arcimboldo.

Thus, it is assumed that Arcimboldo's imperial iconography was meant to glorify the Hapsburgs. As Kaufmann remarks, the Emperor used the composite portraits as gifts to dignitaries, indeed, between 1572 and 1573, Arcimboldo was asked to paint four versions of *the Seasons*.⁴⁹ Despite the passing of time and the development of more modern cartooning techniques, Arcimboldo is still a source of inspiration for twenty-first century cartoonists, as will be later discussed in Chapter 4.

The discussion of physiognomic caricature as a mode of graphic expression would be incomplete without mentioning its use by French artist, Jacques Callot. Wright sees Callot as a great observer of humanity, inspired by his life experiences; in particular, by the time he spent in Italy, as a trainee and

⁴⁷ DaCosta Kaufmann, 'Arcimboldo's Imperial Allegories', op. cit, p.288. *Summer* consists of different kinds of summer fruit and vegetables. *Spring* is composed of the petals and stalks of spring flowers. *Autumn* is made up of autumn produce.

⁴⁸ DaCosta Kaufmann, 'Arcimboldo's Imperial Allegories', op. cit, p.288.

⁴⁹ DaCosta Kaufmann, 'Arcimboldo's Imperial Allegories', op. cit, p.294. *The Seasons* series were the most popular of Arcimboldo's creations. Arcimboldo created the first set of *The Seasons* in 1563. *The Seasons* are presently kept in the Louvre Museum in Paris.

as a court painter.⁵⁰ From the 1620s, Callot departed from the *bizarre-grotesque* genre and fantastic representations of his *school of diablerie* and focused on portraying social types, in particular, people ostracized by society, such as beggars, cripples, and rogues of all sorts. As Sandrine Lely remarks, in the seventeenth century, the deformed and disabled were not marginalized in society as they were to be in the following centuries: 'la recherche de la beauté et de l'harmonie n'excluaient pas une attention au corps différents pour leur potentialités expressives et leurs particularités plastiques'.⁵¹ There have been discussions amongst scholars whether Callot's observations of these people were meant to be satirical or simply entertaining. The *Balli* (the dancers), and the *Gobbi* (the hunchback), a series of prints drawn in 1622, were seen as entertaining. The latter depict the grotesque hunchbacked dwarfs who were employed as entertainers by the court of the Duke of Florence as characters of the Italian *Comedia del Arte*, acting or playing musical instruments (see Figure 1.7).⁵² Other series – also dating from 1622 – *les Gueux* (the beggars) are seen as critical. It is alleged that Callot meant to draw attention to the fact that this particular class of society included a number of impostors who falsely appealed to charity by wounds artificially represented. According to Wright, Figure 1.7 below depicts a crippled man who is 'holding up his leg to make a display of his pretended infirmity'.⁵³



Figure 1.7 - *Le Violoniste (Gobbi)*, (1621) & *Les Gueux (Beggars)*, (1622), Jacques Callot.

⁵⁰ Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art*, p.307.

⁵¹ As above discussed, graphic art of the Renaissance period challenged the classical beliefs of ideal beauty. Sandrine Lely, 'Corps Défigurés, Corps Figurés. Le Regard des Artistes Avant L'Invention du Handicap', XVI-XVIIIème siècle, *L'Approche de Genre Dans la Déconstruction Sociale du Handicap*, (Paris: Institut International de Recherche-Action, 2IRA, 2009), p.22.

⁵² Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art*, p.304.

⁵³ Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art*, p.307. Wright's argument of the false cripples is corroborated by Lely in 'Corps Défigurés, Corps Figurés. Le Regard des Artistes Avant L'Invention du Handicap', p.28.

However, I would like to suggest that the deformed bodies depicted in Rabelais' sixteenth century literature might have inspired Callot as well. After all, Rabelais was also an observer of human physiognomy – and physiology. Anyhow, Callot's caricatures of certain human types have been, apparently, one of the most imitated, and influenced the satirical presentation of typical characters in everyday situations. As Judith Weschler comments, in nineteenth-century France, 'the classification of people by types became part of the caricaturist's armoury'.⁵⁴ In particular, French artists, including Joseph Traviès, Honoré Daumier and Henri Monnier created emblematic types such as *Mayeux* (from 1830 to 1833), *Robert Macaire* (from 1835 to 1838), *Ratapoil* (from 1850 to 1853) and *Joseph Prudhomme* (from 1852 to 1870), to satirise the current political regime. Traviès conceived *Mayeux* in the context of the 1830s revolution, as a hunchback shopkeeper, who had political ambitions under the new 1830 government. Daumier's *Macaire*, in the form of a con businessman, was a satire of the July Monarchy itself and *Ratapoil*, a criticism of Louis-Napoleon's policies. Monnier's *Joseph Prudhomme* was a caricature of the bourgeoisie during three governments, from the July Monarchy, to the Second Empire.⁵⁵ As will be discussed below, this type of image carried a political message, which found support in the daily illustrated newspapers.

Thus physiognomy was a turning point for the caricaturists. It provided them with an arsenal of conventional graphic devices for their distorted representations of the individual such as large nose, big ears and the like, and such graphic conventions are still in use nowadays. Johan Casper Lavater (1741-1791) was a key figure in this field. In fact, he is widely believed to be the founder of physiognomy in its eighteenth century form – although the application of this science to painting had been identified well before his time. By initiating a new trend for physiognomic practice and analysis, Lavater further inspired portrait painting, and more specifically caricature. Lavater was also inspired to use the association between humans and animals against the fixed doctrines of Classical beauty. The sketches below (Figure 1.8) show how Lavater applied the principles of physiognomy to Apollo's ideal beauty.

⁵⁴ Judith Weschler, *A Human Comedy, Physiognomy and Caricature in Nineteenth Century Paris*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982), p.82.

⁵⁵ See Weschler, *A Human Comedy*, p.82-129.

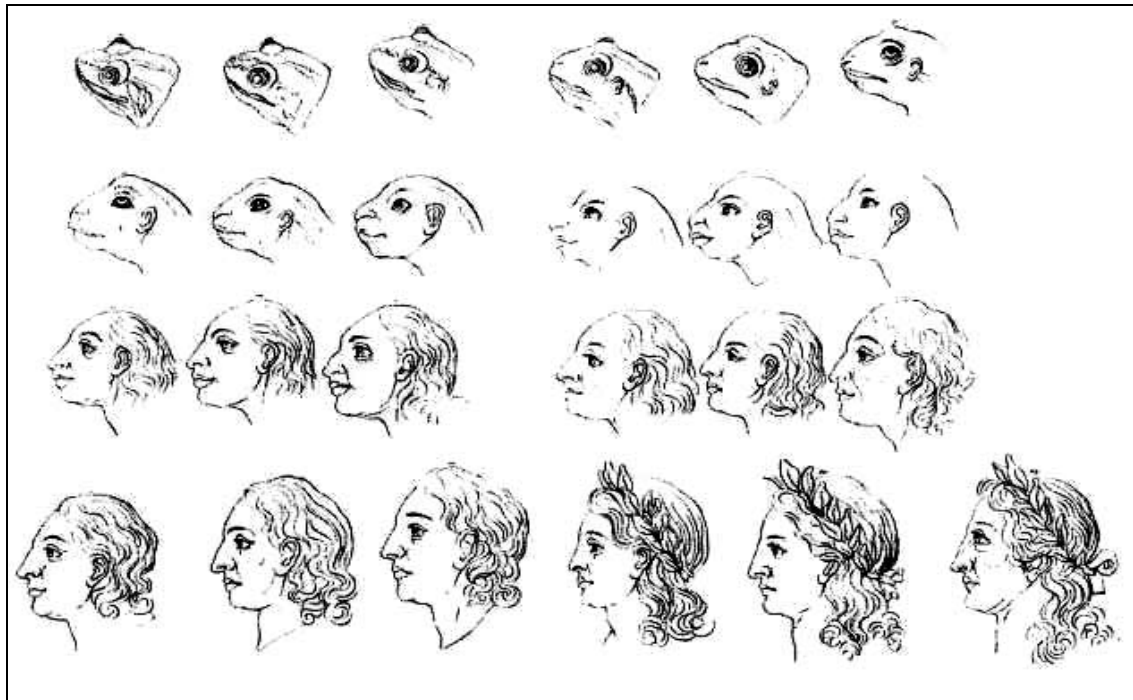


Figure 1.8 - *Evolution from Frog to Apollo*, Illustrations of Lavater's Physiognomy (1789).

It is useful to turn to Aristotle's treatise when examining this drawing. If we refer to the guidelines on animal characteristics given by the Classical texts, *Physiognomonica* and *L'Anonyme Latin*, the frog is first characterised as a vain animal.⁵⁶ It is thus safe to assume that, in using the frog-to-man metaphorical association, Lavater related Apollo's beauty to vanity. However, Lavater's main contribution to physiognomy was to compare physical beauty with moral worth. For him, physiognomy was 'the science of knowledge of the correspondence between the external and internal man, the visible superficies and the invisible contents'.⁵⁷ He believed that exterior traits could reveal moral character. Figure 1.9 below, shows how Lavater associated personality types – melancholic, phlegmatic and choleric respectively – with the physical features of the head and face.

⁵⁶ Comment, 'La méthode zoologique dans les traits de physiognomonie', p.63.

⁵⁷ Lavater, Johann Kaspar: Introduction. 'Nineteenth-Century Literary Criticism', Ed. Russell Whitaker, Vol. 142. Gale Cengage, 2005, *eNotes.com*, 2006, [accessed 16 January 2008], <<http://www.enotes.com/nineteenth-century-criticism/lavater-johann-kaspar>>.

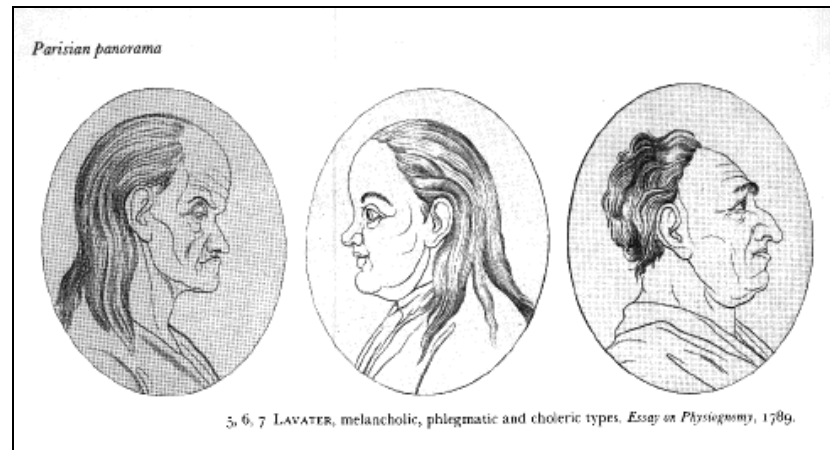


Figure 1.9 - Lavater's Personality Types (1789).

Lavater's application of physiognomy was valuable for the portraitist, enabling him to reflect further on human expressions and, moreover, to explore alternative graphic modes of expression. The symbols of physiognomic technique such as those used above in different situations – frowns, tight lips, grin and tight jaws – were particularly significant for the caricaturist who was primarily concerned with communicating serious content humorously or satirically.⁵⁸

From Caricature to Modern Cartoons

Although Lavater's version of physiognomic caricature is the most familiar to modern viewers, it does not account fully for the development of caricature into the modern cartoon, as we know it: a humorous and/or satirical drawing. In fact, this evolution had happened in seventeenth-century Italy, well before Lavater's time. Indeed, a number of writers on caricature, including Gombrich have argued that the Italian Baroque artist, Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680) should be credited with creating modern cartooning.⁵⁹ Bernini is not systematically cited when early caricature is mentioned, for he was not a painter but instead a much sought after architect, who specialised in sculpted portraiture. Having few of the caricaturist's skills, he endeavoured to draw likenesses using only a few simple lines. The result was that his drawings were comically distorted and lightly satirical. Bernini implemented his art to amuse the

⁵⁸ In Chapter 4, when I discuss graphic techniques in cartooning, we shall be able to assess how the traditional physiognomic concepts have influenced modern cartoonists.

⁵⁹ Gombrich, E.H. & Kris, E., *Caricature*, (London: The King Penguin Books, 1940), p.5.

aristocracy (just as his fellow painters did with the *portrait-charge*) and this style became a typical expression of his artistic personality. In Figure 1.10 below we have one of the most famous examples of Bernini's practice, the caricature of Cardinal Scipione Borghese.



Figure 1.10 - *Bust and Caricatured Portrait of Cardinal Borghese, Bernini (1620).*

At the time, Bernini's method could be argued to be groundbreaking. Discussing Bernini's new drawing technique, Gombrich remarked that 'a new feature was added which has ever since then constituted one of the essentials of caricature, namely simplification'.⁶⁰ Indeed, in sketching Borghese's portrait with just a few strokes, rather than drawing a full portrait, Bernini had invented 'simplification', which is the essence of the modern, single panel cartoon. Commenting on this particular drawing, Gombrich highlighted how Bernini's style was perfectly suited for caricature.

Following the lines of the compositions we realize that it was not by chance that this style came to be used for caricature, for it belongs to the essence of the joke and can scarcely be separated from its inner meaning.⁶¹

I want to suggest that 'simplification' emphasises key attributes of caricature: the draughtsman simplifies the subject matter while sustaining the viewer's ability to identify it. As can be observed, Bernini's fine-line drawing of the face of the Cardinal includes all the major components necessary for a caricature,

⁶⁰ Gombrich, E. & Kris, E. 'The Principles of Caricature', *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, Vol. 17, pp.319-42, 1938. < <http://www.gombrich.co.uk/showdoc.php?id=85> > [accessed 15 December 2007].

⁶¹ Gombrich, Ernst Kris, 'The Principles of Caricature', op.cit.

most notably the gross distortion of the cheeks, the exaggerated chin and nose while maintaining the likeness of the Cardinal. To ‘simplify’, the caricaturist omits details – such as background, clothing. Here Bernini has generalised the patterns on the Cardinal’s coat but has reproduced exactly the headdress, which is distinctive enough for the subject to be recognised immediately. As will be demonstrated in Chapter 3, details are minimised significantly in editorial cartoons. Bernini’s reduced portraits are recognised by scholars as being the archetypes of the modern day cartoons. Art curator, Irving Lavin considers Bernini’s light style of drawing as pioneering and affirms that ‘Bernini’s caricatures are the first such independent drawings which have for their subject the exaggerated features of identifiable individuals’.⁶² I would argue that Bernini’s caricatures greatly inspired modern cartooning, if only for the advantages that this graphic simplification was to provide to the draughtsman and the caricaturist – cartoonist – in particular.⁶³ As will be discussed in Chapter 3, over the years, modern press cartoonists adopted this style of simplified drawing under constraints of space. It could be argued that it is this attribute of caricature – simplification – that ensures its survival in the print media.

This investigation into grotesque art and caricature has shown that the two genres are strongly associated and that they rely on the use of physiognomy. The connections between physiognomic theory and caricature have emerged in the *portrait-charge* and the study of personality types, such as those depicted by Callot, in the seventeenth century. As for the significance of the grotesque and physiognomy in modern caricature, this is underlined in Chapter 3 when I explore the influence of historical tradition in modern cartooning and in Chapter 4 when I examine the graphic techniques used by modern cartoonists like Plantu. The above discussion therefore accounts for the beginning of caricature and cartooning as art form; an art form, which found an opening in the printed media partly owing to the advance of printing technology. It is this topic, and the evolution of cartoons as a medium for communicating news in France, that I now turn my attention to.

⁶² Irving Lavin, ‘Bernini and the Art of Social Satire’, *Drawings by Gianlorenzo Bernini from the Museum Der Bildenden Künste, Leipzig, German Democratic Republic*, Exhibition catalogue, Edited by Irving Lavin, pp. 25–54, (Princeton: Princeton University, 1981).

⁶³ The theme of simplification will be revisited throughout this thesis.

Graphic Satire, New Technologies and the Newspaper

In this section, I would like to argue that two important factors have contributed to the evolution of cartooning: the development in printing techniques enabling wider distribution of the cultural form, and the growth of the genre itself, to include satire as well as social and political caricature. Art museum curator Wendy Thompson wrote:

[...] Prior to the fifteenth century, images were not only one-of-a-kind but rare, generally found locked away in palaces, to which few had access, or affixed to the wall of a church.⁶⁴

It is clear that, without an effective means of graphic reproduction, Ancient and Medieval draughtsmen were limited in their capacity to display their works. Generally, drawings had a short life span with only the original drawing to view and only a few people ever saw the artist's work. As far as illustrated books were concerned, their creation was time consuming: drawings were usually hand drawn – on parchment – independently of the text. I would suggest that the invention of paper, the printing press and the evolution of printing techniques have played a fundamental role in the advance of European art and in the development of French cartooning in particular. This development is worth a brief review for it has been particularly significant in France.

Thompson asserts that the important development for image production occurred in the early fifteenth century, when printing was made by xylographic impression, in other words, by wood engraving. This kind of engraving required blocks of wood as a printing support. A carved inked woodblock was pressed against a sheet of paper in order to produce an impression. It was a simple and cheap method and since many impressions could be made from a single woodblock, this technology greatly improved the draughtsman's work. In 1445, the German goldsmith Johannes Gutenberg created typographic printing using a printing press. This technology, which relied on paper and oil based ink, worked on the same principles as wood engraving but using moveable letters and a hand press. By combining the two methods of hand engraving and mechanical printing, the artist was able to produce the illustrations that were to

⁶⁴ Wendy Thompson, 'The Printed Image in the West: History and Techniques' in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000.
<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/prnt/hd_prnt.htm>, [accessed 25 July 2008].

be inserted in books more quickly. In the early sixteenth century, copper engraving (etching) was invented, a technique that enabled artists to engrave their work directly on metal rather than wood. Etching was a more complicated procedure than woodcutting but the finished product was of superior quality. On the back of these improvements, woodcutting and etching spread throughout Europe amongst the great artists of the Renaissance period.⁶⁵

Duplication was groundbreaking at that time. Knowledge was no longer the prerogative of a small elite group of people. Multiple productions of written words and images provided a larger number of people with greater access to knowledge and learning. It must be remembered that in the fifteenth century, illiteracy was still high in Europe. Moreover, books were not only expensive but also mostly featured religious content. Printers endeavoured to supply reading for the common people: books varied from missals, to all kinds of manuals and more. In particular a large volume of classical literature was reproduced and translated by scholars.⁶⁶ Furthermore, printing technology emancipated not only words but also images. Prints began to replace hand drawn books and from then on graphic artists were sought after to rapidly produce woodcuts and etchings for insertion in the new literature.⁶⁷ Banning suggests that the advance in printing technology was crucial for the development of the popular press in Europe. Although the dissemination and circulation of information was to remain unchanged for a long time – via broadsheets and illustrated pamphlets sold by wandering hawkers or on street corners – the fifteenth century marked the creation of cheap illustrated booklets and the expansion of printed, single-sheet broadsides, which aimed to inform more widely on current news.⁶⁸

According to Elisabeth Eisenstein, it would seem that, printing technology brought ‘a new cultural era, of cultural transformations, diffusing and opening ideas’.⁶⁹ However, the new technologies have given rise to debates amongst contemporary scholars, the discussion of which is pertinent to this study. Some

⁶⁵ Dürer was one of the first painters to master these techniques.

⁶⁶ Tim Banning, ‘Spreading the Word Across Europe’, *BBC History Magazine*, 9 May 2002, p.15. Banning remarks that although mechanical printing technology took fifty years to diffuse across Europe the price of books fell by 65% between 1450 and 1500 in Europe.

⁶⁷ Banning, ‘Spreading the Word Across Europe’, p.16

⁶⁸ Banning, ‘Spreading the Word Across Europe’, p.18. The pamphlet was generally a small thin book composed of two or three folded sections bound together.

⁶⁹ Elisabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press As An Agent of Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p.33.

commentators, including Banning praise the fact and suggest that printing technology was one of the most revolutionary inventions in human history.⁷⁰ Others such as Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin reject the benefits of printing technology and propose that the new printing technology contributed to a certain cultural inertia in allowing the duplication of scribal work right through the sixteenth century, thus opposing the advance of new ideas during the Renaissance.⁷¹ Eisenstein holds ambivalent views. She acknowledges that the economic effects of the new printing technology were not immediate, and were limited either because the market sector was small or, as in Germany on account of an economic crisis and over production, having more scholarly texts than could be sold.⁷² However, Eisenstein underlines the importance of the invention of printing for words and images. In disagreement with Febvre and Martin, she claims that 'print culture represented a huge break from the past', stating that the earlier development of printing techniques had a great impact on the Renaissance productions (in literature and art), and on the revival of traditional theories, such as physiognomy.⁷³ Moreover, for Eisenstein, printing has brought real changes to the early modern world and shaped European society. Finally, she claims that the success of the protestant Reformation campaign against the Catholic Church was, in great part, due to the spread of printing and in particular the efficacy and impact of the pamphlets.⁷⁴ Since most of the pamphlets were illustrated with caricatures, it is safe to argue that caricatures have also played an important role in this religious struggle.

Before looking into the consequences of the new technologies in France, such as the rise of mass newspapers and the development of cartoons in the French press, I want to reflect briefly on the historical significance of the move from script to print and its impact on French caricature. First, the importance of paper must not be overlooked since it was its increased availability through mass production that made printing possible – paper was imported in Europe

⁷⁰ Banning, 'Spreading the Word Across Europe', p.17.

⁷¹ Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *L'Apparition du Livre*, (Paris: Albin Michel, 1958), p. 420.

⁷² Eisenstein, *The Printing Press As An Agent of Change*, p. 72-75.

⁷³ Elisabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution In Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

⁷⁴ Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*. The impact of the German Reformation in France and the ways the illustrated pamphlet incited public debate in sixteenth century Europe are examined in chapter 2. On the role and importance of print in the spread of information during the German Reformation, read also: Mark U. Edwards, *Printing, Propaganda and Martin Luther*, (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California, 1995).

from China in the 1390s. Paper was an essential element in the engraving process. It was cheaper than the parchment or the vellum (lamb or calf skin) and met the needs of a growing market in the European Renaissance. According to Robert Philippe, France was amongst the first European countries – after Italy and Germany – to develop a paper industry, in the 1400s.⁷⁵ It is useful to remember the historical context of the development of printing in France. The French Renaissance movement of cultural and artistic development, spread, as in other European countries from the 1500s to the 1600s and flourished, in spite of the French Wars of religion which devastated the country. The printing press only came to France in 1470, 20 years after Gutenberg's invention, but according to commentators such as Banning, France soon surpassed Germany in the quality of its typography and book production.⁷⁶ Moreover, the French apparently dominated printmaking at the peak of the development of printing technology in Europe, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. During this time a prosperous and literate middle class emerged – the bourgeoisie – who boosted the demands for reading matter in France. Therefore, apart from an increase in the number of pamphlets and translations of classical and religious works, there was a proliferation of new illustrated literature such as short stories and satirical leaflets. In particular, the Catholic/Huguenot political conflict also prompted an increase in satirical literature, as will be discussed in Chapter 2. Also of importance for French cartooning was the launch of the almanac - a small book that gathered a range of information including weather forecasts, horoscopes, gardening advice and included humorous drawings and caricatures.

Certainly, the French Court largely supported literary and artistic creation. In the 1530s, King François I was influential in promoting book reading and production through his patronage of major writers and artists of the period.⁷⁷ Cities such as Paris and Lyon became well known for printing innovation and book decorations, and Epinal for the production of popular

⁷⁵ Robert Philippe, *Political Graphics, Art as a Weapon*, (Oxford: Phaidon Press Limited, 1982), p.9.

⁷⁶ Banning, 'Spreading the Word Across Europe', p.17. Here again, this is of great interest as regard to the popularity of printing technology in France: Gutenberg had moved to Strasbourg in France to study the designs of the printing press. His printing press is apparently based on the French screw-press type used for wine making.

⁷⁷ Banning, 'Spreading the Word Across Europe', p.16.

prints.⁷⁸ According to Wright, the French artist-engraver, Jacques Callot, contributed greatly in maintaining France's prominent position in the seventeenth century printing industry. He became renowned across Europe for developing a number of technical innovations in printing such as hard-ground etching. The technique consisted of drawing through a hard acid-resistant wax that was first spread on the engraving plate. Moreover, since Callot etched only his own work, his method was more personal. This was important within the European print industry as Callot set new standards in book design and illustration, by simplifying the decoration of the frontispieces and relating its design to the meaning of the literary work.⁷⁹

As far as the French newspaper press is concerned, its development was slow; there is no record of such publications before the 1600s. It was in 1631 that a physician, Théophraste Renaudot created the first French 'newspaper'. *La Gazette de France*, as it was called was in fact a compilation of sheets, much like a pamphlet, but which reported weekly on topical news events in France. *La Gazette de France* became popular as a medium of news – especially in the French court of Louis XIV who supported its enterprise. It is said that *La Gazette de France* survived through Renaudot's descendants until the First World War.⁸⁰ However, the first daily newspaper, *Le Journal de Paris*, only appeared a century later, in 1777 and lasted until 1903. The reasons for the delay in the development of a daily newspaper are unknown. One can perhaps assume that before the eighteenth century the French were more involved in literary work than in reporting the news. Indeed, as discussed above, the seventeenth century was central to the rise of literature and the arts.⁸¹ I would also suggest that the control that the government and the Church exercised on printed matter over the years prevented the expansion of a popular daily press. Nonetheless, from its foundation, *Le Journal de Paris* aimed to appeal to a wide audience and covered a range of subjects from news and entertainment to factual meteorological information, and arguably,

⁷⁸ Banning, 'Spreading the Word Across Europe' p.17. It is useful to mention that, through the centuries and up to the 20th century, Epinal remained a centre for caricatures and comic art.

⁷⁹ Callot was previously mentioned as a great artist, in Chapter 1. Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art*, p. 303-8.

⁸⁰ Théophraste Renaudot, 'Portraits de Médecins',

<<http://www.medarus.org/Medecins/MedecinsTextes/renaudot.html>>, [accessed, 10 December 2008].

⁸¹ I discuss below in Chapter 2, the occurrence of literary gatherings – the *salons* – in seventeenth and eighteenth century France.

caricatures and cartoons.⁸² According to Raymond Kuhn, it was only after the French Revolution, when political freedom and low publishing costs were combined, that an increase in newspaper titles occurred and that the press was recognised as a medium of mass communication.⁸³ Moreover, the further development of the French press was attributable, not only to economic, political and social factors, but also to technological factors. As Kuhn comments, 'the advent of the telegraph facilitated the collection and transfer of information, while the railway was crucial in improving distribution'.⁸⁴

As far as the printing industry is concerned, the basic techniques of wood and copper engraving had remained effective in Europe for almost three hundred years since the 1500s – with some other additions such as colour printing. However, as mentioned above, in this chapter, engraving required skilled training and was rather a slow process. It could take months before the engraved plate could be taken to the printing press and be ready for the print-seller shop. Therefore, when lithography was invented in eighteenth century Germany (in 1796), it gave another boost to graphic expression. Lithographic reproduction was achieved by printing directly on a sheet of paper with a calcareous stone on which the pattern was drawn, using oil-based crayons. The lithographic stone could be erased, cleaned and prepared for a new drawing. This method was readily accepted since it was more cost effective: multiple copies from a single drawing could be produced more quickly than wood and copper engraving. It is clear that lithography was a great invention for graphic artists. They were able to display and sell their work more rapidly than before. The popular press thus recognized the commercial potential of lithography. Satirical publications, in particular, widely exploited lithography, of which most notably, *La Silhouette* founded in 1829, and *La Caricature* (1830) and *Le Charivari*, (1832) both edited by Charles Philippon.⁸⁵ Such was the appeal of

⁸² Jean-Daniel Candaux and Jean Sgard, *Dictionnaire des Journaux, 1600-1789*, (Universitas: Paris, 1991). In the *Dico-Solo*, Solo quotes a number of caricaturists who contributed to *Le Journal de Paris* – although it is not known when they joined the publication. Solo, *5000 dessinateurs de presse et quelques supports en France de Daumier à nos jours*, Paris: T  Arte, 1996), p.357.

⁸³ Raymond Kuhn, *The Media in France*, (London: Routledge, 1995), p.16.

⁸⁴ Kuhn, *The Media in France*, op. cit. p.17.

⁸⁵ Charles Philippon is later discussed as the editor of the most famous satirical publications of nineteenth century France, *La Caricature* and *Le Charivari*.

cartoons that *Le Charivari* pledged – as stated in the subtitle of the publication’s header – to give its readers a new drawing every day (see Figure 1.11 below).⁸⁶



Figure 1.11 - Header of *Le Charivari* (1834).

Further new methods of printing and other means of reproduction eventually replaced the traditional stone lithography and by the twentieth century photogravure and rotogravure – photomechanical reproduction – dominated.

These techniques use a photographic process whereby the image, or text, is transferred to a deeply etched flat plate or a cylinder covered with a rubber blanket, which then transfers the image to a printing surface – the sheet of paper. As Philippe explains, this technology was valuable: apart from being cheaper to use than the other systems, the ink dries quickly, thus making it suitable for large print-runs such as those required by the daily press.⁸⁷

Summary

This chapter has discussed the development of caricature as an art form in its own right, shaped by grotesque art and physiognomic techniques and examined its first inception in the French press. To begin with, I have underlined the most prominent techniques used in grotesque art such as zoomorphism, the portrayal of deformed people and the utilisation of grotesque composite creatures for ridicule or for portrait painting. I have demonstrated that while graphic satire was a form of mockery, it contributed to people’s beliefs, as

⁸⁶ As will be shown in Chapter 2, *Le Charivari* kept its promise, against all odds, with the contribution of great caricaturists, such as Honoré Daumier whose work dominated this period.

⁸⁷ For a detailed review of this particular printing technique see Philippe, *Political Graphics, Art as a Weapon*, p.236.

was the case with medieval religious imagery, which capitalised on demonology. The term 'caricature' was coined in sixteenth century Italy to describe a loaded, humorous portrait destined to amuse the Courts. Yet, 'simplification' remains a key feature in modern cartooning. It is clear that cross-cultural interchange was necessary for the growth of the art form. The advent of mechanical printing and new technologies helped develop mass culture and democratise caricature, making it possible to mass print illustrated broadsheets, pamphlets and other publications with satirical images. Thus, it was owing to further technological development such as lithography that French caricature found its niche in the print media, first in the weekly satirical press, then in the daily press. The development of printing technology has certainly made possible for caricature to develop within the newspaper press, even though in a more simplified form, the political cartoon. In Chapter 2, drawing on this present chapter, I shall discuss some key moments of French history when graphic satire, as a medium of news, was effectively used as a political weapon to create social and political change.

Chapter 2

Graphic Satire as a Political Weapon

‘... [artists] have used the most effective weapon at their command—their art—to needle the Establishment, duel with oppressive governments, satirize corrupt or indifferent churches, strip bare the futility of war, attack exploitation, uncover the bleak existence of the poor, and in general to make visual comment on human folly in its infinite variations’.¹

Introduction

This chapter builds on Chapter one to further discuss the development of caricature and cartoons as a cultural product and an effective medium for communication. It has two main objectives. The first objective is to show how different forms of graphic satire, such as prints, caricatures and cartoons contributed to public debate and influenced public opinion on issues of significance in society. Secondly, the chapter seeks to underline the significance of the nineteenth century for graphic satire in France, in the face of regulation. Indeed, censorship in France was not only complicated but was also perceived as unfair by cartoonists, who fought for freedom of expression.

With these objectives in mind, I explore four significant periods in French and European history between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries - The Reformation, Henri III, Louis XIV and the French Revolution - to evaluate the roles that political graphics performed as a critical voice and as an agent of change.² This period is significant, since in the fifteenth century, Europe experienced what came to be known as the *Renaissance*, a period of artistic and scientific development, during which time the art of printing began to spread and facilitated the production of pamphlets and books. The fifteenth century also marked the beginning of political protest in Europe using graphic satire. As historian Winslow Ames asserts:

¹ Ralph E. Shikes, *The Indignant Eye: The Artist as Social Critic in Prints and Drawings from the Fifteenth Century to Picasso*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p.xxiii.

² In particular, I argue that those who used caricature for criticism promoted the form. I demonstrate that political prints were a resource for the dominant classes until the event of the French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century. It is useful to point out that, although I focus on French political caricature, it is not possible to fully acknowledge its development in France without considering the influence of other European countries in shaping the French cartooning tradition.

[...] Cartoons as they are now known developed gradually out of caricature from the fifteenth century [...] Cartoons (in the modern sense of the term) came to be created in response not merely to artistic impulses but to the same sorting-out impulses that were creating the modern state and its society, its science, and its religion [...].³

The fifteenth century was also the time of the Protestant Reformation, which not only established the legitimacy of Protestantism as a fundamental part of contemporary Christianity but also gave momentum to the spirit of protest, in this case, protest against religious authority. Indeed, I shall demonstrate how satirical prints of the German Reformation enabled the European movement to promote awareness of religious abuse and prompted ideals of personal freedom and self-assertion. Discussing the role that graphic satire played during the German Reformation is pertinent to the development of French political cartoons. As Robert Giusepi claims: 'in connecting itself with national politics, the Reformation was linked historically to the Revolution'.⁴ This chapter will show how political prints gave shape to political cartooning, a genre which came to fruition in the eighteenth century, during the French Revolution.⁵

To this end, the first section of Chapter 2 focuses on the aforementioned four significant periods of French and European history. I begin by exploring the emergence of the cartoon as an instrument of protest and criticism in early modern Germany during the Protestant Reformation. The objective of this is to demonstrate the rise of caricatures and cartoons as a vehicle for religious/political communication on the back of a developing print industry. In particular, this section focuses on France where satirical graphics were used to new ends, to stimulate religious and political debate against Henri III, King of France. In sixteenth century France, the Catholics, especially the *Catholic League*, exploited the medium of graphic satire in to destroy Henri III's image and eliminate him from the throne. As Duprat explains, Henri III became the target of a carefully schemed satirical propaganda, destined to dishonour him in

³ Winslow Ames, 'Origins of Caricature and Cartoon', *Encyclopædia Britannica Online 2008*, <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1347521/caricature-and-cartoon>>, [accessed 5 July 2008].

⁴ Robert Giusepi, 'Beginning and Progress of the Renaissance', *History World International*, University of California, 2000, <<http://history-worl.org/renaissancehtm>>, [accessed 23 March 2008].

⁵ By 'political' I do not mean strictly dealing with politics or politicians but also the social dimensions of the term. I mean 'political' as opinionated, as reflecting someone's views on a particular issue.

the eyes of his subjects, and which eventually, caused his downfall and assassination.⁶

By examining Louis XIV's iconography, I will also demonstrate how political authorities of the time made effective use of political graphics to bolster their own public image. It is in this context of propaganda and against a background of rigorous censorship that critical commentary – in the form of political texts and graphics - began to circulate from abroad.⁷ In particular, I will show how seventeenth century Dutch artists mobilised satirical and political graphics to launch a highly critical visual campaign against the French King, in retaliation for his hostility against their country. Finally, to conclude the evaluation of the roles that political graphics performed as a critical voice and as an agent of change, I consider their use during the French Revolution. I argue that the French Revolution represents a significant moment when satirical images changed from an instrument of class power, to a vehicle for the expression of public opinion - encouraging political reflection and change. Having demonstrated how satirical graphics influenced public debate and opinion, in the second section of this chapter I examine the measures that were introduced by French authorities to restrict the production and distribution of such images to stem their effect. I will demonstrate how censorship was rigorously applied to political graphics in nineteenth century France and also discuss the cartoonists' struggle to protect their right of freedom of expression.

Early Graphic Protest and Criticism in Europe

As discussed in Chapter 1, graphic satire gradually extended beyond the field of painting, as a polite form of entertainment and mockery, to a form of social and political commentary. Whilst in the later European Middle Ages, satirical graphics were generally used to mock mankind and religious rituals, it was from the end of the fifteenth century that caricaturists began to focus on groups and on social and political issues, rather than on individuals.⁸ Indeed, Historian Ralph Shikes claims that the very first sign of graphic protest in Europe

⁶ Duprat, *Histoire de France par la Caricature*, p.15.

⁷ 'Propaganda', according to Paul Martin Lester, is 'the use of spoken, written, pictorial, or musical representations to influence thought and action through debatable techniques. In *Visual Communication, Images with Messages*, (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2000), p.64.

⁸ It is not to say that Court portraiture then became outmoded. As will be shown throughout this study, the *portrait charge* has remained a traditional graphic technique in France.

occurred at the end of the fifteenth century, with a series of prints, the *Grotesque Alphabet*, produced in the 1460s by German artist, Master E.S.⁹ The caricatures found in the *Grotesque Alphabet* are typical of medieval imagery, with each letter being a grotesque composition of humans, animals and objects. The print below in Figure 2.1 shows two soldiers fighting each other whilst crushing a couple of peasants beneath them. According to Shikes, this drawing 'is one of the first sharply barbed social comments in the history of prints'.¹⁰ Yet, as Shikes also notes, Master E.S. may not have intended to give any particular critical significance to his *Letter Q*. However, the historical context of the period, which was characterised by 'landlord versus peasant' and class struggle, could have inspired Master E.S. to draw the *Alphabet*. Nevertheless, what is important is that the *Grotesque Alphabet* was the first time that the peasantry was portrayed in this manner.¹¹



Figure 2.1 - *Letter Q of The Grotesque Alphabet*, Master E.S. (circa 1465).

⁹ Ralph E. Shikes, *The Indignant Eye: The Artist as Social Critic in Prints and Drawings from the Fifteenth Century to Picasso*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p.3.

¹⁰ Shikes, *The Indignant Eye: The Artist as Social Critic*, p.3.

¹¹ Shikes, *The Indignant Eye: The Artist as Social Critic*, p.4.

However, as Ames (see note 3, p.46) has also remarked, there were other forces prompting caricaturists to comment on current events in ways that were controversial. In particular, it was the unstable social and political climate of sixteenth century Europe that allowed for caricature and other forms of political graphics to develop as instruments of criticism and protest. To further examine this point, I shall now discuss the first of the four aforementioned periods in French history that I have selected to explore - the German Reformation, associated with Martin Luther's Protestant Reformation.

The Reformation

Whilst Martin Luther, a German monk, initiated the Protestant Reformation in early sixteenth century Germany, the context of the Reformation is European rather than purely German. According to Thomas Brady, 'the Protestant Reformation is to be seen as a social and religious movement between the late medieval crisis and the early modern consolidation of state and society'.¹² Mark Edwards explains that during the period of 'Renaissance', many European people were unhappy with the Pope's doctrines and the malpractices of the Roman Catholic Church, in particular on the sale of 'indulgences' (see Figure 2.3).¹³ The practice of selling 'indulgences' – repentance cards issued by the Church - to churchgoers was based on medieval dogma that sinners should not only confess for the sins that they have committed but also pay the church a repentance fee. Richard Hooker remarks that, with the invention of printing, 'indulgences could be printed in mass quantity, therefore they became big business for the Church'.¹⁴ The discussion of indulgences is noteworthy since it was one of the reasons why Luther published a set of theological writings in 1517, *Ninety-Five Theses on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences*, wherein he exposed his grievances against the Catholic Church's clergy whom he accused of corruption.¹⁵ In writing this work, Luther originally aimed to create an

¹² Thomas A Brady, 'The Protestant Reformation in German History' (Washington: German Historical Institute, 1998).

¹³ Mark, U. Edwards, *Printing Propaganda and Martin Luther*, (California: University of California Press, 1994), p.14.

¹⁴ Richard Hooker, 'Catholic Indulgences', 1999.

<<http://search.aol.com/aol/search?query=catholic+indulgences>>, [accessed 25 March 2008].

¹⁵ Edwards, *Printing Propaganda and Martin Luther*, p.14.

internal renewal of the Church, but instead, his Reformation movement led to a widespread rebellion against the Catholic Church and the Papacy. Moreover, it fuelled religious and political conflicts in many parts of Europe, dividing Catholics and Protestants, a situation which later led to several long-lasting wars of religions.

The common objective of both the Reformation and the Catholic Church's counter-Reformation campaigns was to discredit the opponent. As Thomas Wright points out, German Reformers were openly against the Pope and called for social and moral change while Catholics focused on anti-Lutherism: '...that Luther was a mere tool of the evil one, created for the purpose of bringing mischief into the world'.¹⁶ As we will see in forthcoming images, graphic art played a significant role in the effectiveness of the campaigns: prints and drawings were useful not only to chronicle the events and inform the illiterate mass but also as a powerful tool of propaganda. Indeed, both sides of the conflict used satirical prints as instruments to influence public opinion and draw people on their side (see Figures 2.2 and 2.5). Scholars of caricature, such as Thomas Wright, Robert Shikes, Charles Press and Robert Philippe have agreed that it was during the German Reformation that a noticeable change in the content of prints in Europe occurred.¹⁷ Moreover, most art historians cite the German Reformation's graphic commentaries as being the first European 'political cartoons'. In particular, Dorothy George claims that 'it was Luther who first used pictorial propaganda on a massive scale and in the service of a revolutionary movement'.¹⁸ It is worth remembering too, that the movement of people facilitated the diffusion of words and images through the circulation of printed materials, therefore, the Lutheran initiatives soon spread and influenced other European countries, including France. Moreover, as will be discussed below, the impact of Luther's Reformation was extremely significant in France: France had one of the major figures of the Protestant Reformation in John Calvin, and in the late 1590s France very nearly had a Protestant king.

¹⁶ Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grottesque in Literature and Art*, p. 251.

¹⁷ Thomas Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grottesque in Literature and Art*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1875); Charles Press, *The Political Cartoon*, (Fairleigh: Dickinson, 1981); Robert Philippe, *Political Graphics, Art as a Weapon*, (London: Phaidon Press Ltd, 1982).

¹⁸ M. Dorothy George, *English Political Caricature to 1792*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p.3.

Edwards insists on the importance of the spread of the printing press in making thoughts and doctrines available to the public in sixteenth century Germany and Europe more widely. Apparently, by the time the Reformation had begun in 1517, there were over 200 printing presses in most European cities. Presses became the primary manufacturers of Reformation publications, not only for the Protestants, but also for the Roman Catholic's anti-Reformation campaign. There was a large volume of literature, such as leaflets, pamphlets, and translations of the Bible that came out of the printing centres, used by the two camps.¹⁹ However, according to Edwards, the Reformers' anti-papal campaign was more successful than the Catholics' because the Protestants made most use of the printing technology. Their leaflets and pamphlets were printed on a large scale, making them more accessible to the people. In fact, the circulation of the Lutheran propagandist publications was so important that the Catholics were unable to keep pace and to monitor the spread of discontent against them.²⁰ Moreover, as Wright insists, the material released by Luther's supporters combined words and pictures, thus being accessible to those who could not read. Consequently, the Protestant ideas were spread more effectively.²¹ Catholics too used satirical images to criticise Luther but, as it would appear, inadequately since their graphics had a more limited impact on the campaign. 'The reformers, however, were more than a match for their opponents in this sort of warfare. Luther himself was full of comic and satiric humour, and a mass of the talent of that age was ranged on his side, both literary and artistic.'²²

The visual strategy used during the German Reformation era is worth more detailed examination for it highlights the significance and the influence of graphic satire, in particular it underlines how caricatures contributed to religious, social or political change. Reformation historians – including Wright, Shikes, George, and Edwards – agree that the Reformers' visual protest was remarkable. The Reformation imagery varied from the simple but realistic representations of events, to the grotesque personification of subjects. George

¹⁹ Edwards, *Printing Propaganda and Martin Luther*, p.14. As discussed in the previous chapter, pamphlets were easy to produce and print, fairly easy to sell and available on a large scale.

²⁰ Edwards, *Printing Propaganda and Martin Luther*, p.16.

²¹ Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art*, p.244.

²² Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art*, p.251-2.

comments that Luther entrusted his artists to use political allegory based on medieval metaphorical images and symbols, which ‘had taken strong hold of the people’s imagination’.²³ For instance, the Reformation’s visual campaign capitalised on imagery that exploited the powers of evil – such as drawn by Dürer and Bosch – to emphasize Lutheran writings.²⁴ The anti-papal message was that the pope was the Antichrist, born to call for the destruction of the world through his devilish actions – hence the medieval allegory (see Figure 2.4). Images of the Pope associated with the Devil – such as in Figure 2.2 below – were widely reproduced and positioned in prominent places throughout towns.



Figure 2.2 - *The Pope and the Devil*, Anonymous (circa 1520).

This particular caricature is a double-headed drawing which shows the Pope’s profile which, when inverted, turns into the Devil’s profile.²⁵ The design was reproduced on medals, china and pottery and the like. As George notes, the Reformation campaign’s Pope/Devil head ‘has had a prolonged influence on graphic satire’.²⁶ Indeed, this graphic technique in which the nose of one face becomes the chin of the other is still in use in modern cartooning.

²³ George, *English Political Caricature to 1792*, 1959, p.5.

²⁴ Dürer and Bosch’s art was discussed in Chapter one, p.23.

²⁵ George, *English Political Caricature to 1792*, 1959, p.6.

²⁶ George, *English Political Caricature to 1792*, 1959, p.6.

Besides allegory and satire, the Reformation artists also capitalised on the pre-eminence of the Church and used Biblical associations that could be universally recognised. The most cited example of this is shown below, in Figure 2.3.

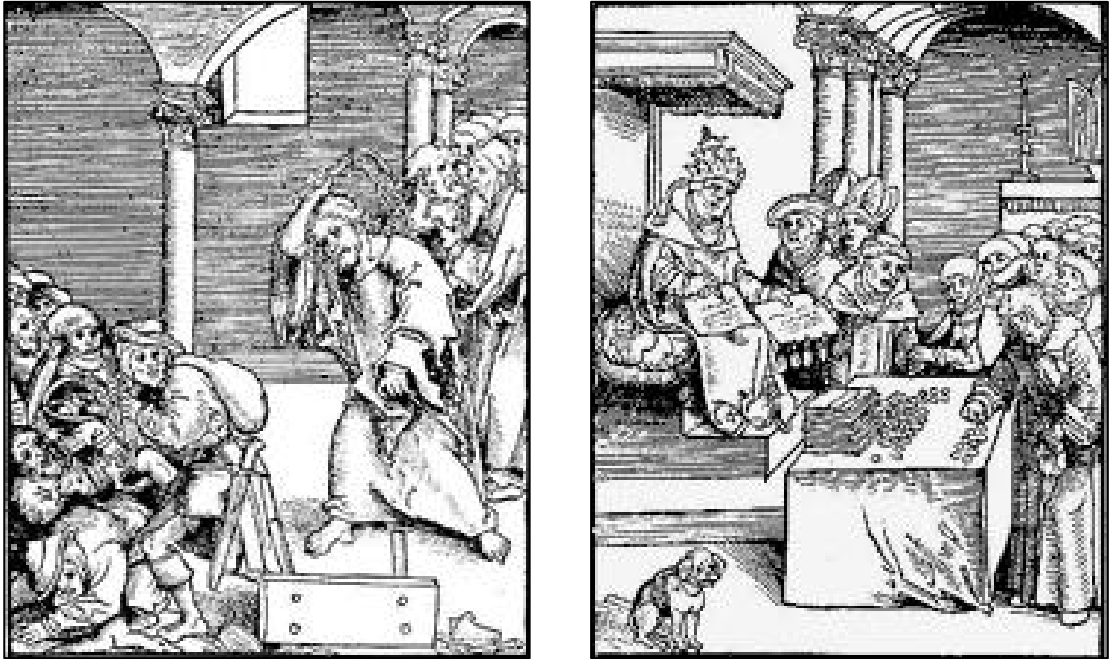


Figure 2.3 - *Passional Christi und Antichristi*, Lucas Cranach the Elder (1521).

The two woodcuts, from a pamphlet entitled 'Antichristi', by Lucas Cranach the Elder, contrast Christ's humanity against the Pope's vanity and greed, another favourite theme in the Reformers' catalogue. The first image illustrates a well-known theme in the Catholic faith: that of Jesus chasing the merchants out of the Temple, rejecting any trade on Christian grounds. In the second image, the Pope is seated on a throne in the Church from which he sells indulgences to the public. The money on the table gives evidence that the business is flourishing. According to Dan Backer, whilst these cartoons were simple illustrations with no text, they were nonetheless highly critical of the Pope. From this perspective, they can be viewed as two powerful political images, intending to raise awareness of the changes that needed to be made within the Church.²⁷

As Wright explains a number of illustrations, found in Protestants' leaflets and pamphlets, compared Christ's ascension into heaven with the

²⁷ Dan Backer, 'A brief History of Caricatures', University of Virginia, 1996, <<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~MA96/PUCK/intro.html>>, [accessed 17 February 2008].

Pope's descent into hell. In Figure 2.4 below, 'a troop of demons, of the most varied and singular forms' throws the Pope into the flames of hell where some of his monks are ready to welcome him.²⁸



Figure 2.4 - *The Descent of the Pope*, Lucas Cranach the Elder (1521).

While the Protestant Reformers aimed to change views and shape public opinion, the counter-Reformation used written and visual propaganda to defend their ideology. The Catholics challenged the Protestant's arguments 'after they had been published rather than printing or publishing reactive work'.²⁹ Instead of targeting the masses through printed works, as the Protestants did, the Catholics aimed most of their literature at influential people, such as priests during their assembly, within the churches.³⁰ Their anti-Lutheran message also sought to depict the Protestant leader as the devil (see Figure 2.5 below).

²⁸ Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art*, p.253.

²⁹ Edwards, *Printing Propaganda and Martin Luther*, p.38.

³⁰ Edwards, *Printing Propaganda and Martin Luther*, p.38.



Figure 2.5 - *The Devil with Bagpipes*, Ernard Schön (1535).

The coloured woodcut above represents a grotesque character whose abdomen is transformed into a sneering face, perched on the shoulders of a monk – Luther, most likely – using his head as if it were a bagpipe. Wright sees this caricature as ‘a broad intimation that Luther was a mere tool of the evil one, created for the purpose of bringing mischief into the world’.³¹ As for Shikes, the meaning is clear: ‘the language of monks and friars is the music of Beelzebub’.³²

Edwards remarks that the Catholic propagandists included the German Peasant’s War in their anti-Lutheran propaganda. When it ended, in 1525, the Catholics blamed the revolt and all the turmoil caused by it on the Protestant

³¹ Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art*, p.252.

³² Shikes, *The Indignant Eye: The Artist as Social Critic in Prints and Drawings from the Fifteenth Century to Picasso*, p.54.

leader. They blamed him for having misled the lower class and failing to live up to his teachings – in particular not fighting for human rights.³³ Historians are unclear on the exact causes of the Peasants' War that broke out in 1524; whether it was a mere popular revolt against masters or nobility or whether it was linked with religious issues such as the desire to free oneself from the tyranny of the church (i.e, the indulgences). Shikes claims that Luther's postulates 'fomented rebellious feelings in many parts of Germany among peasant leaders who found justification for revolt in Luther's advocacy of the Bible as supreme authority'.³⁴ As the Reformation developed, the peasant class perceived the movement as a means of social empowerment - becoming aware of the potential for secular freedom - and started an insurrection to obtain agrarian rights. According to Shikes, the Peasants' War was in fact a response to Luther's wish for democratic reform.³⁵ However, it is said that Luther rejected the Peasants' War and agreed for it to be brought to an end. Nevertheless, after over 100,000 people died during the uprising, Luther was held responsible for the bloodshed by the Counter-Reformation movement.

Like most of the public, Albrecht Dürer, regarded as one of the greatest artists of the Northern Renaissance, came to know of Luther's radical ideologies not from hearing his sermons in person but, from the pamphlets that were distributed widely across Europe as a function of the newly invented printed presses. Although Dürer was Catholic in faith, he was sympathetic to Luther's doctrines and used his art to campaign against injustice. When it came to graphically representing the Peasants' War, Dürer engaged with the violence of the time rather than launching a personal attack on Luther. Shikes asserts that Dürer's drawings about the Peasants' War 'showed no hatred; they were crude but with significant suggestion'.³⁶ This can be seen in Figure 2.6 below, where a peasant, stabbed in the back, is sat on top of a monument which represents all the values that he had been fighting for, and for which he has died.

³³ Edwards, *Printing Propaganda and Martin Luther*, p.149.

³⁴ Ralph Shikes, *The Indignant Eye: The Artist as Social Critic in Prints and Drawings from the Fifteenth Century to Picasso*, p. 38-39.

³⁵ Shikes, *The Indignant Eye: The Artist as Social Critic in Prints and Drawings from the Fifteenth Century to Picasso*, p.15.

³⁶ Shikes, *The Indignant Eye: The Artist as Social Critic in Prints and Drawings from the Fifteenth Century to Picasso*, p.15.

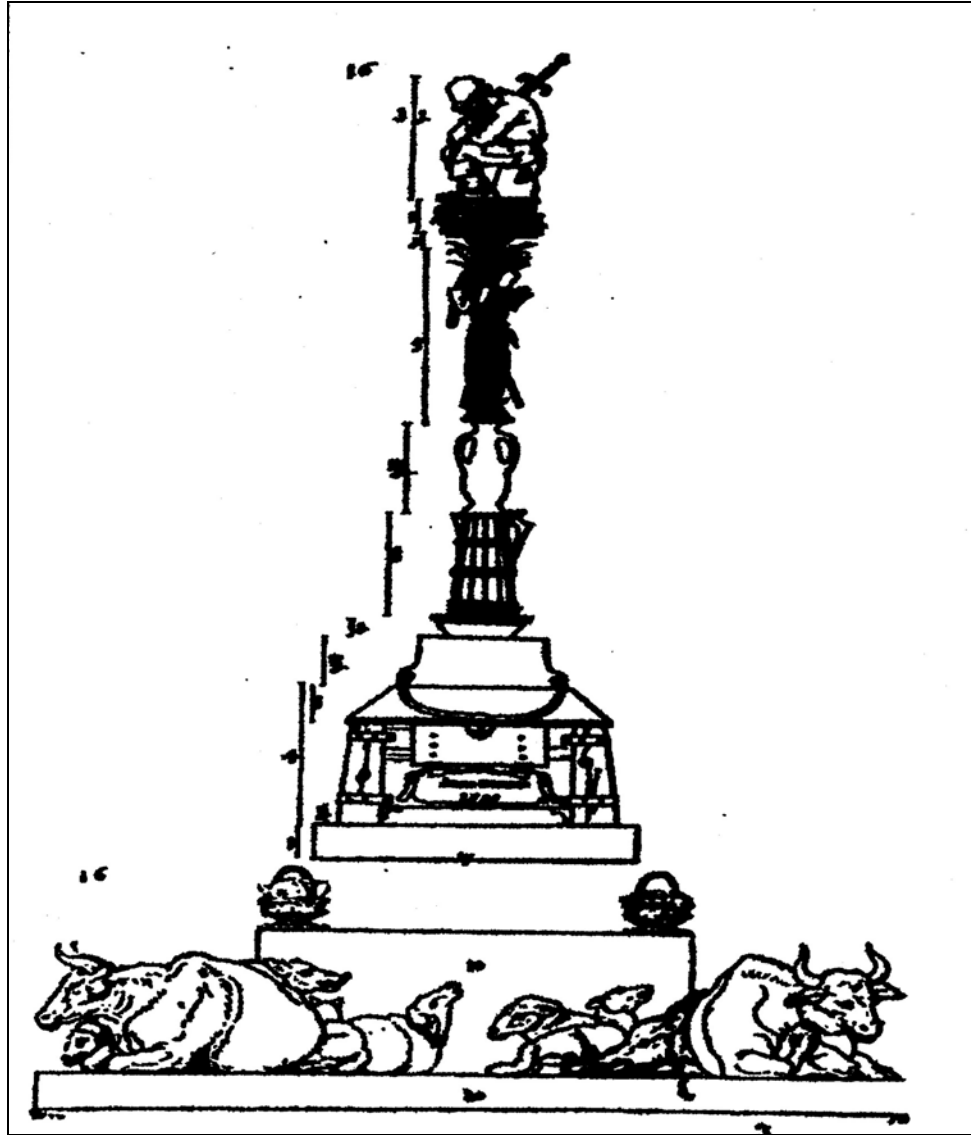


Figure 2.6 - *Peasant Monument*, Albrecht Dürer (1525).

Dürer's graphic commentaries of the Peasants' War were deemed impactful by the authorities of the time such that the leaflets and pamphlets that carried his cartoons were banned. Shikes indicates that three of Dürer's friends – who were also his pupils – were sent to Court accused of spreading new social ideas through their representations of the German peasantry.³⁷ In this way it becomes clear that the prints, caricatures and cartoons of the Reformation era marked a departure from the medieval tradition of graphic art as a form of satire, and introduced the use of this political graphics as a means of social protest and criticism.

³⁷Shikes, *The Indignant Eye: The Artist as Social Critic in Prints and Drawings from the Fifteenth Century to Picasso*, p.16.

A comprehensive discussion of the consequences of Luther's Reformation is outside the remit of this study. However, I have highlighted the importance and influence of the German Reformation and how from that period on, graphic satire was used to new ends, as a political tool. Most notably, the Lutheran ideas of Protestant reform spread to other European countries including France, where as Shikes points out, the Reformation movement led by Jean Calvin became even more significant than in Germany.³⁸ France was divided between Calvinists (the Huguenots) and Catholics (most of the nobility). Calvin's Protestantism generated religious wars that involved most European states and the 'Wars of Religion' broke out in France in 1562. From then on, there was a climate of political tensions, intensified by religious reforms, lasting until the mid-seventeenth century. France witnessed an era of almost continuous civil war under the regimes of the three Valois Kings - Francois II, Charles IX and Henri III. A number of French historians, including André Blum and Annie Duprat agree that it was out of such events and circumstances that modern political caricature – in its strict meaning of "comment on political events or personalities" – developed in sixteenth century France.³⁹ Blum clearly states that:

Au milieu de ces désordres et de ces déchirements, la littérature et l'art entrent dans la vie active. La gravure se fait militante, l'estampe se mêle à la vie politique. [...] On assiste à la naissance de la caricature politique.⁴⁰

Blum explains that although caricature had been used to satirise Luther and the Catholic Church, 'it was above all in France that the religious and political problems, inextricably mingled were interpreted in caricatural form'.⁴¹ It is therefore now to France, and the specific examples of King Henri III, Louis XIV and the French Revolution, that I turn my full attention to in order to further establish the growing power and influence of graphic satire as instruments of criticism and propaganda from the sixteenth century.

³⁸ Shikes, *The Indignant Eye: The Artist as Social Critic in Prints and Drawings from the Fifteenth Century to Picasso*, p.18.

³⁹ André Blum, *L'Estampe Satirique en France Pendant les Guerres de Religion; Essai sur les Origines de la Caricature Politique*, (Paris: M. Briard and E. Brière, 1881). Annie Duprat, *Histoire de France par la Caricature*, (Paris: Larousse, 1999).

⁴⁰ Blum, *L'Estampe Satirique en France Pendant les Guerres de Religion; Essai sur les Origines de la Caricature Politique*, p. 233.

⁴¹ Blum, *L'Estampe Satirique en France Pendant les Guerres de Religion; Essai sur les Origines de la Caricature Politique*, p. 232.

Henri III: Satire and Derision

When examining French history, it is evident that it was during the reign of Henri III de Valois that widespread political critique of the French monarchy emerged. According to Blum, it was a mixture of political events and propaganda that twisted the opinion of the French public against their King.⁴² Henry III was one of the most openly criticised monarchs in sixteenth century France, not only because he was unable to put an end to any of the religious, social or political conflicts that existed at the time but also because of what was seen as his deviant effeminacy. A brief account of his reign reveals that soon after his coronation in 1574, Henri III was confronted by *Catholic League (La Ligue)*, an activist Catholic movement directed by the De Guise family. *The League* viewed Henry III a danger to the Roman Catholic Church, because of his previous affiliations with the Protestant Huguenots and his recognition of a Protestant successor.⁴³ Not only did *The League* judge Henri III incapable of governing France but his right to the throne was also disputed on behalf of the De Guise dynasty. Moreover, they disliked him for his sexual reputation and other vices connected to his love of pleasure. It is said that Henri III feared his rivals and so arranged to have them killed. It was after two of the Dukes of Guise were murdered, in 1588, that *The League* produced the most audacious pamphlets and forceful political caricatures against Henri III.⁴⁴ As Duprat mentions, the campaign to bring shame to and discredit the King was well organised. The controversy that surrounded Henry III produced a plethora of illustrated pamphlets, a great number of which were verbally aggressive.⁴⁵ The drawings, always anonymous – due to fears of reprisals - focused on Henri III's alleged corruption and represented the King in all types of repulsive situations. As the pamphleteers accused him of many wrongdoings and transvestite behaviour to associations with the devil, he was portrayed as a homosexual, a hermaphrodite, a bloodthirsty monster and a murderous heretic. In particular, a

⁴² Blum, *L'Estampe Satirique en France Pendant les Guerres de Religion; Essai sur les Origines de la Caricature Politique*, p.256.

⁴³ Between 1559 and 1589 three kings, without any descendants, ruled over France, thus creating tension and hostility in the kingdom. In particular, in 1584, when Henri III died without an heir he was succeeded by his descendant, Henri de Navarre (Henri IV), who was of Protestant faith. Henri IV was later forced to become a Catholic to remain the King of France.

⁴⁴ Duprat, *Histoire de France par la Caricature*, p.16-17.

⁴⁵ Annie Duprat, 'Les Régalia, au Crible de la Caricature du XVI au XVIII ème Siècle', *Bulletin du Centre du Château de Versailles, Objets et Insignes du Pouvoir*, December, 2005, p.4.

number of images suggested that Henri III was a rapist. In Figure 2.7 below, the King is depicted as attacking a young virgin nun who is praying in a church. Henri III's arm is readily identifiable by the *Fleur de Lys*, his personal coat of arms printed on the sleeve of his robe.



Figure 2.7 - *Le Viol de La Vierge Religieuse, Violée à Poissy*, Anonymous (1589).

This print appeared in a large broadsheet at the time and the adjoining text was incisive:

Où il y avait une belle vierge professe, laquelle de force (nonobstant toutes les remontrances qu'elle peut faire disant qu'elle était dédiée à Dieu) Henri de Valois n'étant qu'un Scipion en continence mais vrai sacrilège de ce qui est offert à la même divinité, viola cette pauvre vierge [...].⁴⁶

Blum insists that the illustrated pamphlets and broadsheets of this period were extremely bold, and persuasive of Henri III's deeds, especially during the last period of his reign, when they accused him of horrifically murdering the Dukes of Guise (see Figure 2.8 below).⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Annie Duprat, 'La Caricature, Arme au Poing: L'Assassinat de Henri III', *Sociétés et Représentations*, Vol. 10, (Paris: CREDHESS, 2001), p.112-113. The broadsheet was a large sheet of printed text and illustrations, regarded as the ancestor of the modern newspaper.

⁴⁷ Blum, *L'Estampe Satirique en France Pendant les Guerres de Religion; Essai sur les Origines de la Caricature Politique*, p.256-257.



Figure 2.8 - *The Assassination of the Duke of De Guise*, Anonymous (1588).

It can be suggested that the above (Figure 2.8) seeks to emphasise the King's cruelty and arouse sympathy for the De Guise family. It implies that Henri III arranged the assassination of his rivals and also organised the disposal of their bodies: he is seen in the background supervising the carving up and incineration of the corpses. It is not surprising that such political graphics served to cultivate a negative image of the King and provoked public hatred of him. Indeed, rumours of Henri III's alleged murderous activities and their graphic representations turned the French people against their King and eventually there were widespread calls for his punishment and even death. It is reported in historical accounts that *The League* apparently commissioned Jacques Clément, a radical Dominican monk, to stab Henri III to death on 1 August 1589, in revenge for the murder of the Dukes. Draughtsmen extensively recorded the assassination and some of the prints portrayed the events in a succession of images resembling today's cartoons strip. A specific example of this is found in the composition below, (Figure 2.9) in which the informative value of the print is increased by encompassing a four of scenes, in sequence, within one image.

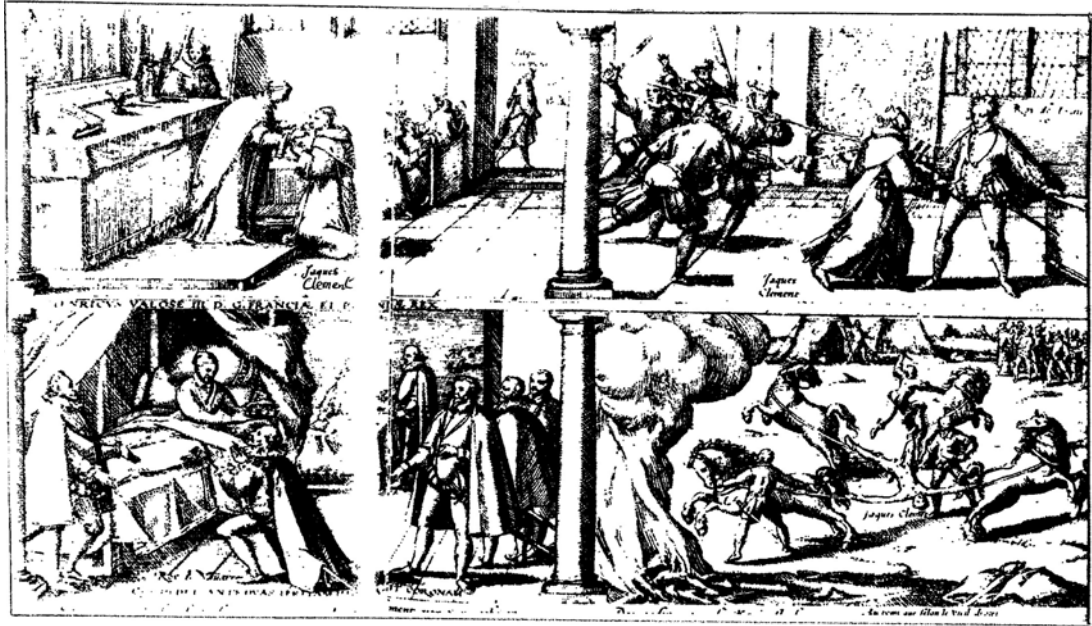


Figure 2.9 - *The Assassination of Henri III of France, Anonymous (1589).*

In the first scene, in the top left hand corner, Clément is seen taking the Holy Host to ask for forgiveness in preparation for the crime he is about to commit. In the second scene, in the top right corner, Clément is drawn attacking Henri III in spite of the intervention of the King's guards. In the third scene, in the bottom left hand corner, the dying King crowns his successor and in the last picture, on the right, Clément is quartered to death.⁴⁸

The graphical representations of Henry III point to a monarchical imagery that was still medieval in aspect. Indeed, at a time when people were concerned with religious beliefs, the satirical images of Henri III exploited popular medieval allegory such as the *diablerie* and the monstrous. Shocking images such as the portrayal of the Henri III as the Devil and a murderer were intended to underline the King's vices and to destroy any faith in the attributes of the monarchy.⁴⁹ Whilst these satirical drawings are not 'caricatures' in the strict sense of being physiognomic distortions, these images are still relevant to this study. As Keith Cameron points out:

Just as in formal portraits of the period certain features of the subject were highlighted or played down to suit contemporary taste, so the

⁴⁸ As explained by Philippe, *Political Graphics, Art as a Weapon*, p.72.

⁴⁹ On the subject of Henri III's controversial private life, read Katherine Crawford's article: 'Love, Sodomy, and Scandal: Controlling the Sexual Reputation of Henri III', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol.12, No.4 (University of Texas, Oct., 2003), pp.513-542.

pamphleteer, to suit his needs, highlighted or diminished the force of the gossip and the alleged acts concerning Henri III. We are here face to face with the technique of exaggeration, a technique which is the very essence of satire.⁵⁰

Further, I would highlight that the satirical iconography in relation to Henri III did not aim to be artistic but was meant to convey *The League's* strong opinions and such images were therefore political in intent. A claim such as the one that Duprat puts forward, when she writes that 'le roi Henri III a été mis à mort symboliquement par l'image et le pamphlet' – the King was killed by visual symbolism as much as by Clément's knife – confirms the impact.⁵¹ Indeed, in agreement with Duprat, other historians, such as Blum and Shikes, have alleged that the powerful iconography and derogatory words of the pamphlets may well have incited Clément to become a regicide and contributed to a general hatred of Henri III. Although the monk was duly punished for his act, many people, including the supporters of *The League*, influenced by political graphics, saw him as a martyr. As Cameron asserts, 'Jacques Clément was immediately canonized in the minds of the people as soon as it was learned how he had assassinated the King...'⁵²

Louis XIV: Satire and Propaganda

Whilst *The League* successfully used images within the media for political aims, there was no significant political criticism in the French printed media for over a hundred years after the reign of Henry IV de Valois, Henri III's successor.⁵³ In line with Renault, I would suggest that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as a consequence of Henri III's assassination, the government supervised all printed material with the keen awareness of the possible influence and impact of any political imagery that disapproved of the regime. Above all, with the establishment of absolute monarchic power, political criticism, written and graphic, was repressed by governmental decree under the

⁵⁰ Keith Cameron, *Henri III, A Maligned or Malignant King?* (Exeter: Exeter University Printing Unit, 1978), p.11.

⁵¹ Duprat, 'La Caricature, Arme au Poing', p.115.

⁵² Cameron, *Henri III, A Maligned or Malignant King?*, p.35.

⁵³ Jean-Michel Renault, *Censures et Caricatures, Les Images Interdites et le Combat de L'Histoire de la Presse en France et dans le Monde*, (Montpellier: Pat à Pan, 2006), p.22. Henri III was the last of the Valois family. After his death, Henri of Navarre became Henri IV of France. He was the first of the new Bourbon dynasty. Henri IV reigned from 1589 to 1610. His son, Louis XIII, replaced him.

regimes of Louis XIII (1610-1643) and Louis XIV (1643-1715).⁵⁴ Under such circumstances, it is relevant to examine briefly the type of political imagery that was produced in France, above all, during Louis XIV's extensive time in power. Louis XIV's regime produced an iconography designed to convince the public of the King's legitimate supremacy. 'Propaganda' is an apt term to use here since the government was concerned not only with representing the King in a heroic light but also in spreading 'official interpretations' of specific events of the reign.⁵⁵ It is possible that such an endeavour aimed to protect the King from the effects of potential anti-royal imagery as experienced by Henri III. As Peter Burke remarks, 'amongst the European governments of the seventeenth century, it was the French who were the most concerned with the ways in which their King was represented'.⁵⁶

Louis XIV's life and political career was the subject of much attention in France and in Europe and was associated with greatness and glory by some commentators – hence he is also known as the 'Sun King'. For, in a country that had been weakened by feudalism and ravaged by religious wars, when Louis XIV came to power in 1643, he consolidated absolute monarchy. Even though the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) had left many parts of Europe, like Germany and Holland, devastated and the middle class poor, the situation was different in France. Louis XIV managed to destroy the religious privileges of the Protestant movement, and turned France into a powerful country by reunifying the State and the Roman Catholic Church.⁵⁷ Amongst other 'accomplishments', the invasion of Protestant Holland by French troops in 1674 and the subsequent annexation of foreign provinces also increased Louis XIV's authority.

Consequently, the government of the 'Sun King' committed itself to celebrating Louis XIV's achievements and to strengthening his reputation in France and further afield. An official and far reaching propaganda campaign was launched, making use of various forms of media and techniques such as tapestries, medals, printed texts and graphics by way of engravings, broadsheets and illustrated pamphlets. In particular, the *Gazette de France*, the

⁵⁴ Renault, *Censures et Caricatures, les images interdites et le combat de l'histoire de la Presse en France et dans le monde*, p.24.

⁵⁵ Peter Burke, 'Fabrication of Louis XIV', *History Today*, February 1992, p.23.

⁵⁶ Peter Burke, 'Fabrication of Louis XIV', *History Today*, February 1992, p.22.

⁵⁷ In signing the *Edict of Nantes*, in 1598, Henri IV had established freedom of worship in France, and gave rights to the French Protestants. Louis XIV revoked the treaty in 1685.

only newspaper at the time, was the main supporter of the King's propaganda.⁵⁸ The collaboration of the *Gazette* was important, as this periodical was the only vehicle for the expression of political viewpoints since the beginning of the sixteenth century. The government was then assured of its cooperation in presenting a favourable image of the King, with representations commissioned to add to his glory. The propaganda was well organised. According to Burke, it aimed at three audiences: firstly the private circles of the French Court, secondly, the foreign courts and finally, posterity in the form of landmarks, such as buildings and monuments.⁵⁹ To this end, a number of poets and artists were assigned to accompany the King during battles, commissioned to transform ordinary events into heroic acts.

Nevertheless, in spite of all Louis XIV's domestic propaganda efforts, his government could not prevent foreign criticism, nor could it stem the release of seditious images from abroad. Indeed, the most biting criticism of the Louis XIV and his regime came from abroad since, in France, words and images were under the strict control of royal censorship: printed subject matter had to be patriotic and approved of by the Court, or the authors faced prosecution.⁶⁰ Under such constraints, a number of French artists fled from the tyranny of royal censors and settled in neighbouring Holland, a country that had a far greater degree of freedom of expression. It was from this location that a large number of satirical prints, parodying Louis XIV's monarchy, were circulated, initiating a propagandist campaign against the 'Sun King'. This episode is significant in demonstrating the emergence of cartoons within a political context. Indeed, a number of historians concur that the Dutch caricatures of Louis XIV have played an important role in the history of political caricature in France. In the introduction to his chapter on modern French caricature, Wright states:

Modern political caricature, born, as we have seen in France, may be considered to have its cradle in Holland [...]. It possessed at that time some of the most skilful artists and best engravers in Europe [...].⁶¹

⁵⁸ In Chapter 1, I discussed the launch of the *Gazette of France* in 1631 and its political loyalty to Cardinal Richelieu.

⁵⁹ The latter is interesting in the way that it is possible to find examples of such use of propaganda by modern French rulers such as François Mitterrand's 'Grands Travaux' in twentieth century France.

⁶⁰ Blum, *L'Estampe Satirique en France Pendant les Guerres de Religion; Essai sur les Origines de la Caricature Politique*, p. 260. Censorship issues and freedom of graphic expression under various French political regimes such as the reign of Louis XIV are further discussed below in Chapter 2.

⁶¹ Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grottesque in Literature and Art*, p.406.

In order to understand this statement, it is useful to review briefly the circumstances that generated the foreign criticism against the French monarch. It is clear that the King's arrogance as a supreme ruler and his religious intolerance were much criticised by pamphleteers and caricaturists all over Europe. In addition, Louis XIV's aim to expand French territory into Holland resulted in the Dutch War lasting from 1672 to 1678. During this period, Winslow Ames claims that the first arguably modern campaign, drawing on a range of graphic styles, was waged against Louis's politics:

[...] It (the campaign) was modern in that it was on a large scale, published on a fairly regular serial basis, much like that of the modern daily newspaper, editorial cartoon (though the newspaper was still in the letter-and gazette stage) [...].⁶²

A group of famous Dutch artists – painters and engravers – led by Romeyn de Hooghe and Cornelius Dusart launched the campaign with drawings sold cheaply, distributed either as part of a pamphlet or as broadsheets with single images. It is important to note that in France, these political graphics were circulated *sous le manteau* (under cover). Dutch artists focused on condemning the atrocities perpetrated by the French King in Holland but a great number of drawings also personally attacked the King and what represented his image. Some drawings used the attributes of the monarchy - for instance, the King's coat of arms or the sun, the emblem that the King had adopted - in a negative way (see Figure 2.10 below).⁶³ The Dutch campaign against Louis XIV initiated a new trend in political cartooning. Ernst Gombrich and Ernst Kris point out that:

The tone of political propaganda pictures had somewhat changed since the days of the Reformation. Not that coarseness and abuse were altogether abandoned, but Dutch and English broadsides had discovered the power of laughter. They abounded in puns and humorous allusions.⁶⁴

⁶² Winslow Ames, 'Caricature and Cartoon', *Encyclopædia Britannica. Britannica Encyclopedia online*, 2006, [accessed 12 June 2006]. <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1347521/caricature-and-cartoon>>.

⁶³ Duprat, 'Les Régalia, au Crible de la Caricature du XVI ème au XVIII ème Siècle', p.12.

⁶⁴ Ernst Gombrich and Ernst Kris, *Caricature*, (Harmondsworth: The King Penguin Books, 1940), p.17.



Figure 2.10 - *Allegory Against Louis XIV*, Romeyn de Hooghe (1701).

Gombrich and Ernst Kris interpret the above print (Figure 2.10), as Louis XIV 'driving on the sun god's chariot through the Zodiac' and suggest that his court painters might have portrayed the King in such a glorious pose. Indeed, Burke reports that Louis was usually portrayed 'surrounded by a whole cluster of dignity-bestowing props such as orbs, sceptres, swords, thunderbolts, chariots and various kinds of military trophy'.⁶⁵ However, this particular print satirises the situation because Louis XIV is old and tired, and stands on crutches in the chariot – whose wheels are broken. The chariot is driven by one of his mistresses, Madame de Maintenon who looks aged too. The allegory is emphasised by the fantastical animals, which can be seen as waiting for their frail and vulnerable prey. Indeed, the theme of the King still courting despite his old age, was widely exploited in words and pictures.⁶⁶

Some of the drawings, like the allegorical print below in Figure 2.11 below, offered strong critiques of Louis XIV's politics. Here, the combination of the King's emblematic sun with the hood of the Inquisitor in the background implies that the 'Sun King' had turned into a member of the Inquisition. The titles of the print – *Le Roy de France, L'Homme Immortel, Chef de la Sainte Ligue* – also suggest that Louis XIV had connections with the *Catholic League*, which was then seen as a violent and extremist group.

⁶⁵ Peter Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV*, (Yale: Yale University Press, 1994), p.33.

⁶⁶ Louis XIV was in his seventies when he died.



Figure 2.11 – *Le Roy de France*, Cornelis Dusart (1691).

The caption at the bottom of the drawing reinforces the allusive graphic message and confirms that Louis XIV used his influence deceitfully. It reads:

Mon soleil par sa force éclaira l'hérétique
 Il chassa tout d'un coup les brouillards de Calvin
 Non pas par un zèle divin
 Mais afin de cacher ma fine politique ⁶⁷

In a third example below, (Figure 2.12) one finds the traditional double face graphic technique used during the Reformation era which, when inverted, becomes that of a malevolent creature or fierce animal. The fact that De Hooghe associated Louis XIV with the lion is meaningful, since the lion is a symbol of bravery and also of cruelty (see earlier discussion in Chapter 1, page 28).

⁶⁷ Annie Duprat, *Histoire de France par la Caricature*, (Paris: Larousse, 1999), p.28.



Figure 2.12 - *Louis XIV/Lion*, Romeyn De Hooghe (1701).

It is clear from this small selection of Dutch political graphics from the seventeenth century, that the satirical representation of Louis XIV was not strictly caricatural. The features of the King are not distorted – no encephalic construction or zoomorphism is apparent. On the contrary, it seems that the satirical representations were based on the already existing iconography of Louis XIV – as it was deployed on medals, coins and the like, and partly on signs and symbols to suggest aspects of his politics and private life.

It must be remembered that Louis XIV maintained an active propaganda campaign to cultivate a positive representation of his reign and that tight censorship measures prevented the production of anti-Louis XIV political graphics within France. It is useful therefore to turn to the drawings of foreign artists to emphasise the use of political graphics as a tool for the critique of the French ruling class. Indeed, as claimed by Shikes the works of certain artists, in particular De Hooghe's, helped mobilise European countries against Louis XIV for his production was far superior to other political prints flooding the country.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Shikes, *The Indignant Eye: The Artist as Social Critic in Prints and Drawings from the Fifteenth Century to Picasso*, p.57.

Thus I have demonstrated how during this period, graphic satire was as a tool in the battle for public opinion – both by the French government to cultivate a positive image of the regime and mobilised by other forces to persuade a French public to organise against the ruling aristocracy. The readers of the pamphlets or broadsheets for whom these political graphics were intended would have understood the openly subversive humour and the antagonistic messages that they contained – since the accompanying text was used to make the message even clearer. However, as will be discussed, it only took a break in the social and political structure of France, at the end of the eighteenth century, to stimulate the open production and distribution of political caricatures with a polemical and revolutionary content.

Caricatures and the French Revolution

Although the ‘Sun-King’ was known for being a patron of the visual arts and commissioning various artists to work in Versailles, he exercised his monarchic power over the printed media to stem the flow of controversial ideas and to prevent graphic satire from developing in France. However, despite measures of censorship, graphic satire did not completely disappear from the French artistic field. On the contrary, as Michel Melot points out, in a bid to stifle caricature in France, Louis XIV’s policies, ironically, encouraged its development in Holland and England and encouraged a black market for foreign caricatures to prosper in France – some of them made by French artists who had fled to Holland.⁶⁹ Caricatures became a favourite in the aristocratic circles, in the *salons* where the lower nobility and the French bourgeoisie, the wealthy middle class, gathered to exchange news and ideas.

The significance and development of the ‘public sphere’ across the *coffeehouses* and *salons* of eighteenth century France and Europe must be emphasised as contributing to the emergence of the cartoon as a democratic tool. Indeed, Habermas talks of the significance of the ‘public sphere’ in mid eighteenth century Europe as ‘a realm of social life in which public opinion can be formed’, as ‘a sphere which mediates between society and state, in which

⁶⁹ Michel Melot, ‘Caricature and The Revolution, The Situation in France in 1789’ in *Politics and Polemics: French Caricature and the French Revolution, 1789-1799*, (Grunwald: Centre for the Graphic Arts), 1989, p.27.

the public organizes itself as the bearer of public opinion'.⁷⁰ Moreover, 'those occupied in trades and professions developed into a sphere of bourgeois society which would stand apart from the state as a genuine area of private autonomy', the *bourgeois public sphere*.⁷¹ According to Melot, 'caricature found its public both in the comfortable and cultured segment of the bourgeoisie and the rebellious faction of the nobility, which was familiar with art and antagonistic toward absolute monarchy'.⁷² The latter group received and distributed revolutionary newspapers and anti-monarchist cartoons from abroad, but as Melot explains, the lower nobility's moral codes prevented them from becoming the source of a new culture.⁷³ A new form of graphic satire – more vulgar – thus developed within the *bourgeois public sphere* which included those in liberal professions, such as professors, lawyers, members of Parliament and the like, who were highly literate and politically alert, involved in public discussion of various matters, including literature and arts in the French *salons*. Melot notes a spectacular progress in the print market in the 1750s as the commerce of prints flourished within the lower nobility and the intellectual middle class.⁷⁴ However, political graphics cannot be isolated from the development of newspapers, which played a significant role in the bourgeois public sphere, as Habermas points out. The second half of the eighteenth century saw an important change in the newspaper business. From being 'mere compilations of notices', newspapers became 'leaders of public opinion'.⁷⁵ Caricature arguably contributed to this change in focus.

In particular, 'the events of the Revolution brought about the birth of a new mode, that of reportage', as artists started to draw and paint scenes of current events.⁷⁶ This was the historical moment when graphic satire ceased to be a tool of the dominant class and instead, developed as a resource for subordinates to criticize the dominant class. Graphic satire encouraged political

⁷⁰ Jürgen Habermas; Sarah Lennox; Frank Lennox, 'The Public Sphere: An Encyclopaedia Article (1964)', *New German Critique*, No.4, (Autumn 1974), p.49-50.

⁷¹ Habermas, 'The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article', p.51.

⁷² Melot, 'Caricature and the Revolution, The Situation in France in 1789' in *Politics and Polemics: French Caricature and the French Revolution, 1789- 1799*, p.28.

⁷³ Melot, 'Caricature and the Revolution, The Situation in France in 1789', p.28.

⁷⁴ Melot, 'Caricature and the Revolution, The Situation in France in 1789', p.29.

⁷⁵ Habermas, 'The Public sphere: An Encyclopedia Article', p.53.

⁷⁶ Melot, 'Caricature and the Revolution, The Situation in France in 1789', p.31.

debate and mobilised public opinion and as such can be viewed as an agent of change.

The Revolutionary period, from 1789 to 1799 was a key moment in French history, marking the end of the *Ancien Régime* of absolute monarchy and other aristocratic privileges, and establishing new principles such as the liberty of the individual. It was a period of profound conflict between classes: royalty, the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie and the working class.⁷⁷ The French Revolution was precipitated by the French nobility, protesting against Louis XIV's absolute monarchy and the loss of their own powers, but the movement for political change soon embraced the bourgeoisie and finally took on a popular dimension, with the active involvement of the working class, especially in Paris. After the fall of the monarchy in 1789, a Constituent Assembly of revolutionaries adopted the *Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme*, which stated that the free communication of ideas and opinions was a fundamental human right and that every citizen should be allowed to speak, write and print freely. As a result of the introduction of this new regulation, 350 journals and periodicals were created. From then on, caricatures became an important part of journalism as will be discussed below (see Chapter 3).

In pre-Revolutionary years, the idea that art could be used to influence public opinion was already widely acknowledged. During the middle of the eighteenth century, under the reign of Louis XV (1715-1774), pamphlets and caricatures provided a stimulus for political change and the overthrow of the aristocracy. The political climate did not improve under the following monarch, Louis XVI from 1774. At that time even the aristocracy and the Clergy protested against Louis XVI's regime. When they were asked to pay taxes, they considered it a breach of their privileged status. Consequently on the eve of the Revolution, political communications were everywhere, in songs, leaflets, prints, poems, comic plays and etchings. During the revolutionary struggle, both Republicans and Royalists capitalised on political graphics as an effective instrument to promote their views and shape public opinion. According to Melot,

⁷⁷ They include: Michel Vovelle, *La Révolution Française*, (Paris: Armand Colin, 1992); Jacques Solé, *La Révolution en Questions*, (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1988); Antoine de Baecque, *La Caricature Révolutionnaire*, Préface by Michel Vovelle, (Paris: Presses du CNRS, 1988) Albert Soboul, *A Short History of The French Revolution, 1789-1799*, (California: University of California Press, 1977), and Georges Lefebvre, *The French Revolution from its Origins to 1793*, (Colombia: Colombia University Press, 1971).

'printed images formed a highly polemical discourse with the intent to establish the bases for a new and political consensus'.⁷⁸ However, the Revolutionary caricatures were more prolific and more resourceful than the 'anti-revolutionary images' as Michel Vovelle confirms. In the preface to Antoine de Baecque's book, *La Caricature Révolutionnaire*, Vovelle writes:

S'appropriant l'arme du rire, utilisant la violence de l'insulte, la caricature révolutionnaire ouvre sur une certaine pratique de la liberté sans entraves. A ce titre, elle est bien, durant la période où elle explose entre 1789 et 92, l'une des créations les plus révolutionnaires de la Révolution.⁷⁹

De Baecque himself points out that graphic satire became a fashionable genre during the Revolution and that caricature seemed to be the most appropriate medium to defend the ideals of liberty and equality that the Revolution seemed to embrace.⁸⁰ Revolutionary groups organised parades in which they exhibited a range of political graphics, such as paintings and caricatures, which described their actions. Perhaps, amongst these various means of expression, drawings had the most impact, as they were cheap, and were displayed extensively throughout the streets. Lynn Hunt comments that: 'for the illiterate populace, images fixed the impression of revolutionary happenings much more indelibly than the printed word'.⁸¹ De Baecque talks about 'le commerce de la caricature' in the period of Revolution, explaining how even non-professional artists earned a good living with their drawings. At that time, drawings were still mainly produced as etchings, and then sold by print sellers in the streets and the business was lucrative.⁸²

Thus, all types of caricatures were available. Some aimed to promote change by mobilizing public sentiment in favor of a New France. In this spirit,

⁷⁸ Melot, 'Caricature and the Revolution, The Situation in France in 1789', p.25.

⁷⁹ Michel Vovelle, in *La Caricature Révolutionnaire*, p.9. In spite of the abundant literature on the general history of the French Revolution, there are only a few studies on caricatures of the French Revolution.

⁸⁰ De Baecque, *La Caricature Révolutionnaire*, p.13. Prints of the Royal family in this section come from this publication.

⁸¹ Lynn Hunt, 'The Political Psychology of Revolutionary Caricatures', University of Pennsylvania, in *Politics and Polemics: French Caricature and the French Revolution, 1789- 1799*, p.33.

⁸² Antoine de Baecque, *La Caricature Révolutionnaire*, p.23. De Baecque noted that whilst it is claimed that caricature was the major art form of this period, nevertheless, amongst the numerous publications, no French artist was distinguished and most of the prints that are available today are anonymous (500 artworks out of 600 recorded between 1789 and 1792). De Baecque suggests some reasons why caricaturists chose to remain anonymous: caricature was still considered as a 'low art', therefore it was best not to sign one's work if one intended to make a career in Fine Arts. Also, although censorship was relaxed after Louis XIV's reign, the police maintained control on the sale and traffic of prints, therefore, artists and engravers preferred to remain cautious.

the Republican movement commissioned prints depicting liberty and equality. Other images aimed to erode the respect that the monarchy and clergy previously benefitted from. Images drew from the traditions of the grotesque, the symbolic, satirical allegory; from puns, and even from the pornographic and scatological. The real, and alleged, debauchery of nobility and the clergy was fully emphasised. Political and satirical stereotypes, like the *Aristocrat*, the *Patriot* and the *Republican*, were created through caricature. However, whilst the royal family was the target of many caricatures, the King was never denigrated to the same extent as the Queen. Hunt suggests that, ‘perhaps because the habit of thinking of him as sacred in his person made such attacks seem too sacrilegious, even for the most ardent of revolutionaries’.⁸³ Marie-Antoinette, as did other members of the court, became the subject of a satirical bestiary, (see Figure 2.13 below). However, the graphic representations of the Queen always portrayed her as sexually voracious. In fact, as Hunt comments, caricatures aimed to discredit her as the mother of the King’s heirs.⁸⁴ In Figure 2.13, the French reader would understand that *La Poule d’Autriche* not only refers to Marie-Antoinette’s origins, as an Austrian, but also as a prostitute – *une poule* in French slang.



Figure 2.13 - *La Poule d’Autriche*, Anonymous (1790).

⁸³ Lynn Hunt, ‘The Political Psychology of Revolutionary Caricatures’, p.37.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

The fidelity of the Queen, which was seen as essential to the purity of the royal blood line, became the main focus of criticism in the Revolutionary period. The Queen was portrayed in the most licentious scenes, as demonstrated in Figure 2.14 below. As Hunt remarks, 'the representations of the Queen's presumed sexual promiscuity called into question the basis of the regime in certain genealogy'.⁸⁵

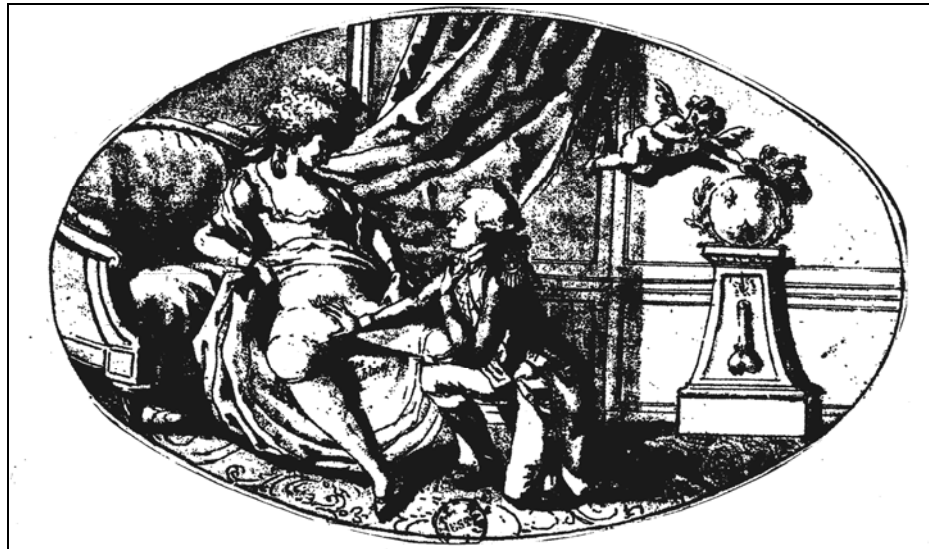


Figure 2.14 - *Le Boudoir*, Anonymous (1790).

Caricatures from the French Revolution period have often been described as being a display of bad taste.⁸⁶ In fact, obscene and scatological drawings of members of the royalty and the Church were meant not only to shock the public but most of all to dishonour and desanctify the image upon which their authority had been built. Such shocking pictures had been published before in France and Europe well before the reign of Louis XVI. For instance, caricatures would show the Regent having an enema or defecating in public places. Revolutionary caricature became even more vituperative after the deposed royal family fled to Varennes in June 1791 in order to avoid being beheaded. The royal escape through the sewers of the Tuileries was captured in a number of caricatures (such as in Figure 2.15). In the print below, the royal family is seen wading in excrement; the women showing their underwear, with their skirts tucked up in order to escape quickly.

⁸⁵ Lynn Hunt, 'The Political Psychology of Revolutionary Caricatures', p.37.

⁸⁶ Annie Duprat, *Histoire de France par la caricature*, p.43.

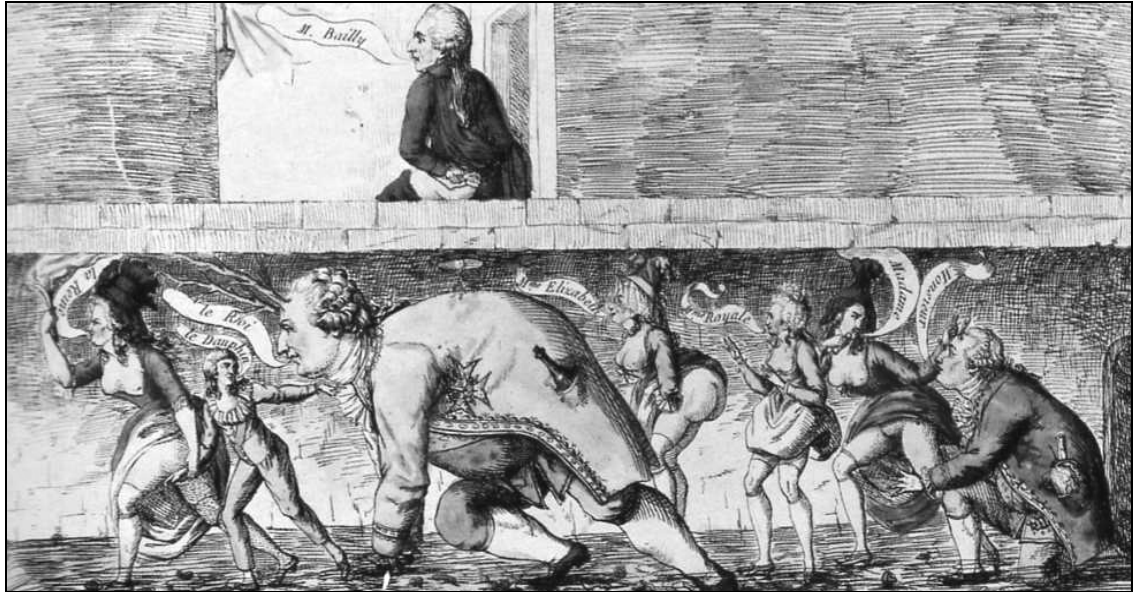


Figure 2.15 - *The Flight of the Royal Family*, Anonymous (1791).

Generally, caricaturists exploited Louis XVI's taste for gastronomy and the pleasures of life and portrayed him as a foolish drunkard, impotent and stubborn as a pig. In Figure 2.16, the pig – King Louis XVI – is brought back to his stable – the Tuileries, after trying to escape the death penalty on 21 June 1791.



Figure 2.16 - *The Pig-Louis XVI*, Anonymous (1791).

It is clear that with such demeaning images, the royal family could no longer function as a model for social and political order. As Hunt points out, 'caricatures did more than convey information they actively shaped views of events and personalities. Ridiculing the King and Queen in printed images, for example, helped prepare the public for their execution in 1793'.⁸⁷

Caricature became even more significant during the later *Reign of Terror* and the government of Robespierre that followed the execution of Louis XVI in 1793. According to Francois Forcadell, Robespierre commissioned a number of great artists, including the famous Jean-Louis David, to draw caricatures designed to specifically educate and inform the illiterate public. Giving credibility to the caricatures, they mobilised public opinion against anti-republicans freely using allegory and symbols.⁸⁸ In particular, the guillotine and the Sword of Damocles were the most popular symbols warning the royalists of their fate.⁸⁹

In contrast, very little literature exists on anti-revolutionary caricatures, 'as if they had not existed' states Claude Langlois.⁹⁰ Such caricatures were visible for only a short period of time, at the beginning of the Revolution, during the ten months that preceded the fall of the monarchy. As Langlois explains, the anti-revolutionary images that existed had two main purposes: to glorify the monarchy and criticize the *Sans-Culottes*.⁹¹ Following the first massacres and decapitations in the streets of Paris, the Royalists' caricatures invited people to distance themselves from the bloody acts executed by the Republicans. Images of heads on pikes such as below (Figure 2.17), warned the onlooker to keep away from the idea of people's justice, which was represented as condemnable in comparison to the King's. Yet, according to Langlois, the Royalists lost their 'cause', in great part because they did not fully understand the importance of caricature as a powerful medium and, consequently left the monopoly to the Republicans, in spite of an influential royalist press.⁹²

⁸⁷ Lynn Hunt, 'The Political Psychology of Revolutionary Caricatures', p.34.

⁸⁸ François Forcadell, *Histoire de la Caricature Française* (Paris: Syros Alternatives, 1989), p.28. According to Forcadell, the famous artists were commissioned to: 'réveiller l'esprit public et faire sentir combien sont atroces et ridicules les ennemis de la république'.

⁸⁹ The use of such graphic techniques is discussed in Chapter 4.

⁹⁰ Claude Langlois, *La Caricature Contre Révolutionnaire*, (Paris: Presses du CNRS, 1988), p.7. Langlois wrote about the Revolution counter-revolutionary caricatures as 'un corpus ignoré'.

⁹¹ The term *Sans-Culottes* was used to depict the typical Republican militant. He wore a typical uniform and headress, the Phrygian cap, a symbol of freedom.

⁹² As discussed earlier in this chapter, a similar situation occurred during the German Reformation. As it turned out, the Pope's propaganda campaign was less successful than Luther's because he was reluctant to use caricature as a tool for his own propaganda.



Figure 2.17 - *Royalist Cartoon of the French Revolution, Anonymous (1789).*

After 1792, royalist caricature lost its vigour, disappearing with the King's death in 1793. In fact, the strongest anti-revolutionary caricatures, those hostile to the Revolution, were found abroad; in particular, the virulent work of British cartoonists, such as, James Gillray, Thomas Rowlandson and George Cruikshank.⁹³ At first, many in Britain had sympathised with the ideals of the French Revolution, seeing it as a corrective to tyranny but they reacted critically to the news of barbarities practiced in Paris: bloody massacres of prisoners, sexual violence and even, allegedly, cannibalism. Indeed, as news travelled, British caricatures immortalised the horrors of the French Revolution and

⁹³ For a comprehensive report on The French Revolution and the Propaganda War of the 1790s as seen by British cartoonists, read: Richard Godfrey, *James Gillray, The Art of Caricature*, (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 2001), p.90-132 and Diana Donald, *The Age of Caricature*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), p.142-156.

distributed them across Europe. British anti-revolutionary caricature was at its height after the execution of Louis XVI, just before Britain and France officially declared war.

Through the examination of the above four historical periods I have demonstrated how political graphics developed as a cultural product and an effective means of communication – in many cases contributing to significant social and political change. It is important to note that the specific shift from satirical graphics to political caricature took place within a context of strict regulation and changing political regimes in nineteenth century France. It is hence to the mechanism of French censorship that I now turn my discussion to.

The Mechanics of French Censorship

In order to discuss issues of censorship of caricature, it is necessary to examine the regulations that were applied to the printed media in general. Censorship took on a whole new meaning, following the invention of the printing press, in mid-fifteenth century Europe. As more books were written and published and more widely disseminated, ideas viewed as rebellious and heretical, spread beyond the censors' control. According to Sue Curry Jansen, Catholic French censors attempted to forbid printing entirely in the sixteenth century to prevent the Reformation movement. As they did not achieve their goal, censorship became stricter and punishment was diverse from the banning and burning of books to executions of authors and artists.⁹⁴ Similarly, the measures implemented by French regimes to control the perceived abuse and influence of offensive images were at times extreme. For instance, there is the case of Louis XIV – at the end of the seventeenth century – who ordered a caricaturist to be burnt alive for producing a drawing that showed him in the company of his alleged mistresses.⁹⁵ However, as Goldstein remarks, in the eighteenth century, the rights of the individual came into political focus, and subsequently became subject to legislative protection.⁹⁶ As an aftermath of the Revolution, *The*

⁹⁴Sue Curry Jansen, *Censorship, The Knot That Binds Power and Knowledge*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p.79.

⁹⁵ Jean-Michel Renault, *Censure et Caricatures, Les Images Interdites et le Combat de l'Histoire de la Presse en France et dans le Monde*, (Montpellier: Pat à Pan, 2006), p.24. Political criticism, written and graphic, has been controlled by governmental decrees since the establishment of absolute monarchic power, under the reign of Louis XIV.

⁹⁶ Robert Justin Goldstein, *Censorship of Political Caricature in Nineteenth Century France*, (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1989) p.85.

Declaration of the Rights of Man gave freedom of expression to the public. Signed on August 26, 1789, the law stipulated that: 'Tout citoyen peut donc parler, imprimer librement, sauf de répondre de l'abus de cette liberté, dans les cas déterminés par la loi': French citizens were thus given the power to express themselves freely through speech and print unless they abused the law. Press illustrations benefited from this new found liberty but political prints continued to come under the scrutiny of the censors who still had the power to limit production and sale of prints, or control the bookshops that sold them. It is from this period that taxes on printing materials were levied. They were maintained until 1881 when the Press Law was applied. This action was meant to drive the publishing world into bankruptcy. A duty stamp per published broadsheet was also created. Likewise, a 'timbre royal' was applied to publications that were approved by the French authorities. Several modifications to the law occurred during the subsequent regimes, and the various Constitutions that were later established. In the nineteenth century, the most important amendment regarding caricatures occurred in 1820 – during the period of restoration of the Bourbon monarchy – in the form of prior censorship to control seditious images against Louis XVIII. Prior censorship is the stemming of any type of expression – oral, written, or otherwise before it is produced, or in the case of a publication, to ban its distribution. Already in existence for the printed word, it meant that authors had to submit their work for approval before publishing, so that any offensive material could be seized before being made public. It is clear that this new regulation applied to political images, violated the Rights of Man; it limited and constrained artists and put further restrictions on the distribution of their caricatures.

Goldstein notes that prior censorship was not limited to France. Political cartoons were subject to prior censorship in every major European country, throughout the nineteenth century and up to the First World War, and in some countries such as France, prior censorship of caricature was maintained well after it was abolished for the printed word.⁹⁷ The rationale for this situation, as

⁹⁷ Britain was an exception in Europe. Prior censorship of both drawings and words had been abolished in that country since 1695. In: Goldstein, *Censorship of Political Caricature in Nineteenth Century France*, p.86. On the situation in Britain, see, M. Dorothy George, *English Political Caricature to 1792*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), and M. Dorothy George, *English Political Caricature, 1793-1832*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959).

Goldstein suggests, was the threat that caricatures were seen to pose: 'by speaking directly to people's senses and emotions, they [caricatures] were equivalent to an incitement to immediate action, which could not be remedied by post-publication prosecution'.⁹⁸ Caricatures were quickly assimilated by the viewer and once the allegedly offensive material was published, it was generally too late to stop its destructive action, thus prior censorship was regarded as the only way to avoid the damage that 'subversive graphics' could cause. However, political caricature did not disappear in France after 1820. The restriction simply meant that it was impossible to publish drawings, which were perceived as overtly ridiculing the monarchy or governmental rules. Caricaturists however, found new ways to evade the law. As will be later discussed in this section, some clever designs were allowed through censorship. They include symbols repeatedly used by artists such as lobsters and crabs that suggested 'walking backwards' or scissors, which represented the actions of censorship.

Goldstein reports that evidence suggests that caricatures caused anxiety amongst the censors and the authorities. In 1823, the Paris Police Prefect urged a crackdown on itinerant sellers of prints, on the grounds that such traders were spreading dangerous ideas among the 'lower classes of society'.⁹⁹ Another major restriction to French caricaturists' freedom of expression occurred in mid-nineteenth century, introduced by Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte in 1852, when he put an end to the democratic government of the Second Republic (1848-1852). The 'authorisation rule', as it was hereafter called, required artists to obtain permission from the subjects of their drawings. As Goldstein comments, this new regulation, which lasted until 1881, was meant to prevent invasion of privacy but it served as a dual censorship since any caricature of people had to be approved both by the censors and by the person(s) depicted. This was time-consuming and made it impossible for caricaturists to keep up to date with the reporting of current events.¹⁰⁰

Thus, French caricaturists worked within a regime of censorship throughout most of the nineteenth century. There were however, periods of political instability, when censorship laws were relaxed or eliminated altogether.

⁹⁸ Robert J. Goldstein, 'Censorship of Caricature in France, 1815-1914', in *French History*, Vol. 3. No 1, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p.72.

⁹⁹ Goldstein, 'Censorship of Caricature in France, 1815-1914', p.72.

¹⁰⁰ Goldstein, 'Censorship of Political Caricature in Nineteenth Century France', p.78.

These moments usually correspond to the downfall of previous regimes such as in 1815, after the fifteen-year rule of Napoleon Bonaparte; in 1830, in the aftermath of the July Revolution, which overthrew Charles X; in 1848, during the Second Republic and at the beginning of the Third Republic in 1870. Prior censorship of caricatures was also abolished during 1830-1835, 1848-1852 and 1870-1871. During such times of relaxed censorship in the nineteenth century, a significant number of political caricatures were produced, giving caricaturists the opportunity to not only express their resentment towards the authorities by openly attacking the mechanics of censorship, but also to celebrate and further develop their art with originality and inventiveness.¹⁰¹

The Caricaturist's Struggle for Freedom of Expression

French caricaturists in the nineteenth-century fought restrictions on freedom of expression in two ways. Firstly, they openly defied the censors in spite of government regulations and repressions. Secondly, caricaturists used a range of, 'technical evasions', as Goldstein calls it, to disguise political criticism under visual puns and other forms.¹⁰² These two ways of dealing with censorship rules were underlined by Charles Philipon, and his team of caricaturists in the early 1830s and by André Gill in the mid-nineteenth century.

Philipon was a republican caricaturist and editor, who initiated a 'caricature war' against the ruling authorities to defend the right of freedom of expression. He started with the fallen regime of Charles X, during the revolution of July 1830, and then turned his artistic attacks against the July Monarchy, the new regime of Louis-Philippe.¹⁰³ Philipon benefited from having a printing business in his family, which allowed him to set up two major satirical journals,

¹⁰¹ For comprehensive studies of nineteenth-century French political caricature censorship in English and French language, see: Bertrand Tillier, *La République: La Caricature Politique en France, 1870-1914*, (Paris: CRNS, 1997) and from the same author, *À la Charge! La Caricature en France de 1789 à 2000*, (Paris: Éditions de l'Amateur, 2005), Philippe Régnier, *La Caricature entre République et Censure: L'Imagerie Satirique en France de 1830 à 1880: Un Discours de Résistance?* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1996). The following works focus on political caricature in France during the 1830s: David Kerr, *Caricature and French Political Culture, 1830-1848*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) and Sandy Petrey, *In the Court of the Pear King: French Culture and the Rise of Realism*, (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2005).

¹⁰² Robert J. Goldstein, 'Fighting French Censorship', 1815-1881, *The French Review*, Vol.71, No 5, 1998, pp.785-796; p.789.

¹⁰³ According to Goldstein, the Revolution of July 1830 was partly caused by attempts by Charles X to impose new controls on the press. He was forced to abdicate, following riots against his oppressive regime and was succeeded by King Louis-Philippe of the D'Orléans dynasty. In: *Censorship of Political Caricature in Nineteenth Century France*, p.92.

La Caricature and *Le Charivari*.¹⁰⁴ A number of factors are said to have supported Philipon's venture. First of all, the increasing mechanisation of the printing press which was then fully operative in France along with the introduction of lithography which – as previously discussed – was easier for the artist to use and cheaper for the publisher to run. Most significantly, in 1830, censorship was abolished therefore enabling Philipon greater freedom of expression. According to Henri Beraldi, it was in *La Caricature* that the republican Philipon and his fellow artists – Honoré Daumier, Granville, Charles-Joseph Travies, Henri Monnier and Gavarni amongst others – fought 'a war to the death' against Louis-Philippe's regime, at the risk of their personal freedom.¹⁰⁵ The reason for this animosity is to be found in the political context of the early 1830s, when Charles X was overthrown, and Louis Philippe of the Orleans dynasty was placed on the throne.¹⁰⁶ Irene Collins explains that Louis-Philippe became King of France in part because of the support of the press.¹⁰⁷ Daily newspapers such as *La Gazette de France* – which was still prominent – and *Les Débats* had presented Louis-Philippe to their readers as 'the guardian of France against counter-revolution on the one hand and republican disorder on the other'.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, Louis-Philippe had agreed that he would endorse a revised constitution, the 'Charter of 1830'. Amongst the revisions, the Charter gave more freedom of opinion to the press and stated that censorship would never be re-established. Yet, it was not long before the content of press came under control again and a print stamp tax was imposed on every publication. It is clear that such measures had an impact on the price and therefore the circulation of newspapers, including Philipon's publications; hence his graphic attacks against Louis Philippe's regime. The subversive articles and caricatures published in *La Caricature* thus focused on the monarch, blaming the King for not having kept his promises. Historians agree that Philipon's journal was

¹¹ *La Caricature* was published weekly in the size of our modern tabloid paper, with pages of text and several hand-coloured lithographed caricatures and lasted from 1830 until 1835. *Le Charivari* was a four-page daily newspaper that Philipon had created in 1832, while he was imprisoned for the offensive material published in *La Caricature*. *Le Charivari* survived until 1936.

¹⁰⁵ Henri Beraldi, *Les Graveurs du XIX^{ème} Siècle* (Paris: Conquet, 1888) pp.115,119. Quoted in Goldstein, *Censorship of Political Caricature in Nineteenth Century France*, (Oxford University Press: 1989), p.128.

¹⁰⁶ Charles X of the Bourbon dynasty was forced to abdicate, following riots against his oppressive regime.

¹⁰⁷ Irene Collins, *The Government and the Newspaper Press in France, 1814-1881*, (Oxford University Press, 1959), p.53-60.

¹⁰⁸ Collins, *The Government and the Newspaper Press in France*, p.61.

audacious and that the caricatures contained within it appeared to be influential. They include Thureau-Dangin who claims that Philipon's publications 'had such audacity, such importance, a power so destructive, that history cannot neglect these illustrated papers, which from other points of view it would be tempted to scorn.'¹⁰⁹ Others have argued that Philipon's caricatures were more advanced and 'dangerous' than the printed word. In particular, Bayard described Charles Philipon as 'the creator of modern political caricature' and *La Caricature* as 'the most fearful of the weapons which the republicans brandished the weekly journal against Louis-Philippe'.¹¹⁰ It happened that, on one occasion, in *Le Charivari*, Philipon sketched Louis-Philippe with a pear as his head. The derision came especially from the fact that the word pear, *la poire*, in colloquial French connotes stupidity. The design became popular and was adopted by his colleagues as the basis of numerous grotesque depictions of King Louis-Philippe. This caused Philipon to be prosecuted for *lèse majesté* by the government.¹¹¹ In his caricature, Philipon used physiognomic principles to exploit the King's features in a *portrait-charge* of four sketches (see Figure 2.18 below) that associated the King's head to a pear.

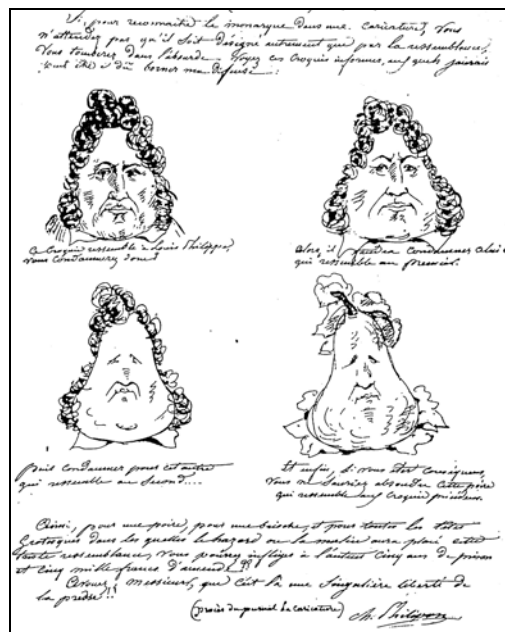


Figure 2.18 - *La Poire Louis Philippe*, Philipon (1831).

¹⁰⁹ Paul Thureau-Dangin, *Histoire de la Monarchie de Juillet* (Paris: Plon, 1888), p.575. Quoted in Goldstein, *Censorship of Political Caricature in Nineteenth Century France*, op.cit, p.128.

¹¹⁰ Emile Bayard, *La Caricature et les Caricaturistes* (Paris: Delagrave, 1900), p.24 & 32. Quoted in Goldstein, *Censorship of Political Caricature in Nineteenth Century France*, op.cit, p.124.

¹¹¹ *The Pear* was published in *La Caricature* No 56, 22 November 1831.

When in court, Philipon showed the sketches to the jury, arguing that while the figure in the caricature looked like the King, there was no legal way to establish it was the King, therefore there were no grounds for prosecution. In the end, Philipon was found not guilty of defamation, but was nevertheless fined. It is suggested that as a result of Philipon's drawings, 'the pear became a symbol of popular imagery, literature and graffiti which was scrawled all over the walls of Paris'.¹¹² Indeed, 'the pear' became worthy of being quoted by famous French writers of the time, including Stendhal, Victor Hugo and Balzac.¹¹³ Meanwhile, Philipon repeated his offence again and again in spite of government repression until *La Caricature* – which was seized numerous times – was forced out of business, in 1835. Philipon published the findings of the final trial on the front page of his other magazine, *Le Charivari*, with the calligraphic type designed in the shape of a pear (see Figure 2.19).

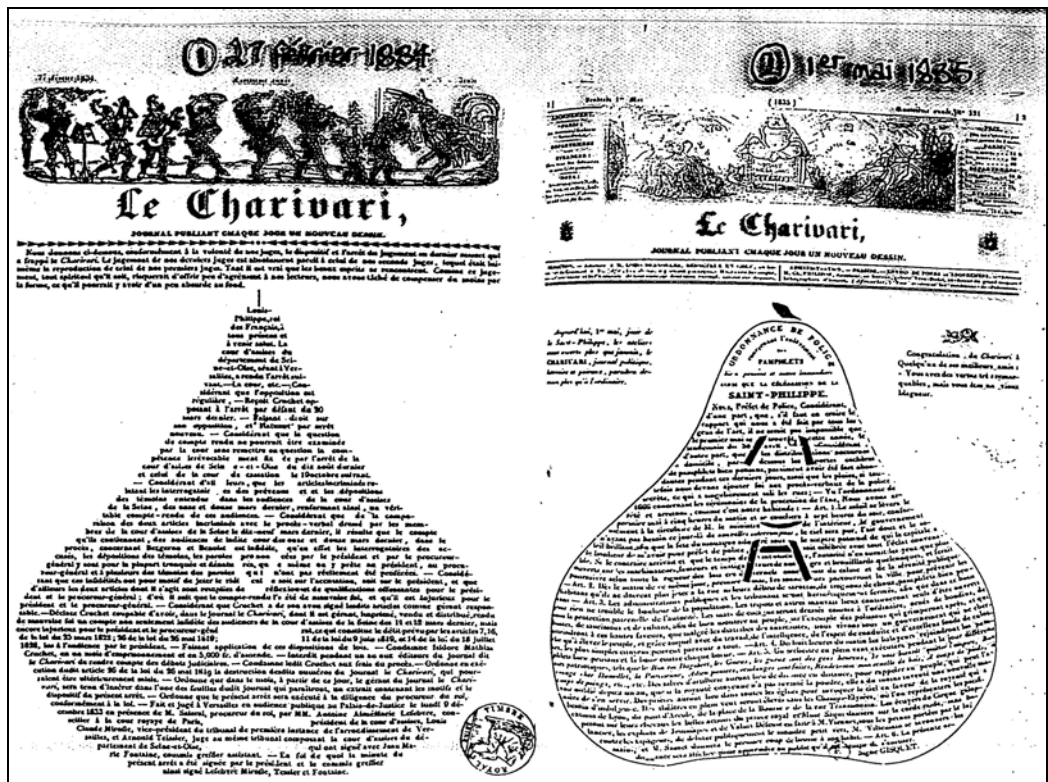


Figure 2.19 - Les Poires, Philipon (1835).

¹¹² Goldstein, *Censorship of Political Caricature in Nineteenth Century France*, op.cit. p.128.

¹¹³ It must be noted that it was not unusual for French literature to give credits to the caricaturists of their time. In particular, Charles Baudelaire, greatly admired the political graphic works of the 1830s and more specifically, Daumier's caricatures. This is discussed in *The Painter of Modern Life* (London: Phaidon, 1964), p.172 and in Michele Hannoosh, *Baudelaire and Caricature*, (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1954).

Philipon's collaborators also attracted the anger of Louis-Philippe's government; in particular, Daumier who capitalised on the pear imagery to criticise the King. Below, in Figure 2.20 is Daumier's depiction of Louis-Philippe as Gargantua.



Figure 2.20 - Louis Philippe-Gargantua, Daumier (1831).

The drawing represents the pear-headed King sitting on a toilet throne, consuming the poor French people's possessions and excreting them to his supporters. By depicting the Louis-Phillipe as the ogre, Gargantua, Daumier followed a long tradition of portraying the heads of governments as greedy giants, feeding on the labour and property of their subjects. The ogre was a familiar representation of Louis XVI, for example, in the years that preceded the French Revolution. However, as the director of *La Caricature*, Philipon was responsible for open defiance of censorship, which was manifest in his journals. According to Goldstein, between 1831 and 1833, 'when prior censorship of caricatures was released but post-publication prosecutions were possible on a variety of vague grounds', Philipon was brought to court ten times for offensive material published in *La Caricature*. During that time he was convicted three times, imprisoned for thirteen months and was fined large sums of money.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ Goldstein, 'Fighting French Censorship', op.cit. p.790. Daumier was fined 500 FF and sentenced to five months in jail (from September 1832 to January 1833) as a result of his characterisation of the Louis-Philippe as Gargantua.

According to Weschler, there is evidence that Philipon's journals reached a wider audience, than before, as from the 1830s, 'there was a constant growth of the number of caricatural publications, newspapers, journals albums and series of prints'.¹¹⁵ Apparently, by 1832, the number of newspapers sold in France increased by 50 per cent. As Weschler remarks, 'caricature, as seen in the papers in the cafes, may have been a means of getting a visual report and editorial on the day's political and social activities'.¹¹⁶ Louis-Philippe was therefore finally driven to restore censorship in order to suppress the written, graphic and indeed physical attacks against his person.¹¹⁷ Consequently, censorship was thus once again imposed on the written press, in 1835. Fines and taxes were increased leading to the closure of a large number of journals. This was when Philipon was forced to close down *La Caricature*, following numerable seizures and fines. He created another non-political caricature journal, *La Caricature Provisoire* but continued to openly criticise the government in his other journal, *Le Charivari*. In the autumn of 1835, the September laws were passed, reinstating prior censorship on caricatures and especially prohibiting the exhibition of graphics, caricatures and lithography in public places. Fines, imprisonment and the banning of publications were the order of the day until the overthrow of Louis-Philippe in 1848.

Despite such measure though, as on previous occasions, censorship did not succeed in stopping caricatures from lampooning the regime. Ways of avoiding the censorship laws included the secret circulation of critical images (*sous le manteau*). Cartoonists also disguised their political criticism within social commentaries and developed fictional characters to represent and denounce the corruption of the rich and upper class and at the same time, to criticise 'the government which tolerated, encouraged and intertwined with these developments'.¹¹⁸ In fact, it was for this purpose, that Daumier created the cartoon character, Robert Macaire, a swindler bourgeois, whose corrupted life

¹¹⁵ Weschler, *A Human Comedy*, p192.

¹¹⁶ Weschler, *A Human Comedy*, p194.

¹¹⁷ In July 1835, there had even been an assassination attempt on the King. According to Wechsler, Fieschi, a Corsican man, made the assassination attempt, assisted by two members of the Leftist Society for the Rights of Man. Wechsler, *A Human Comedy, Physiognomy and Caricature in Nineteenth Century Paris*, op.cit. p.194.

¹¹⁸ Goldstein, *Censorship of Political Caricature in Nineteenth Century France*, p.95.

Literature indicates that a wide range of government policies under Louis-Philippe were condemned on moral grounds and the entire economic, social and political system was seen as corrupt.

and adventures reflected the government of Louis-Philippe's regime (see Figure 2.21 below).¹¹⁹

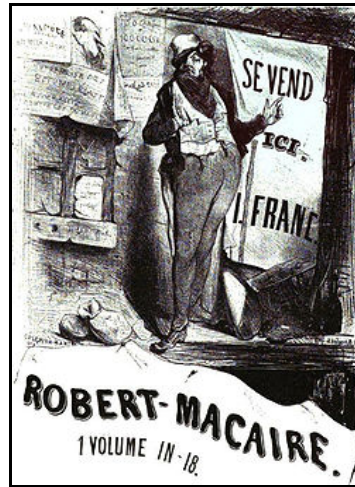


Figure 2.21 – *Robert Macaire*, Daumier & Philipon (circa 1836).

Other techniques of evading censorship were inventive, including the use of symbols and allegories to disguise political messages. This was adopted by caricaturist André Gill, who dominated the scene in the early years of the Third Republic, from 1870 until 1879.¹²⁰ In 1870, graphic artists focused their criticism on the arbitrariness of the deposed regime of Napoleon III, and then they attacked the new republican government whose politics was confused and uncertain, led by a coalition of Bonapartists, pro-royalists, and republicans. The republican Gill can be compared to Philipon not only because he directed two major satirical publications but also for his determination for the ‘freedom of the pen’. Indeed, Gill was known for constantly defying censorship and like Philipon, he was prosecuted many times. His caricatures in *L’Eclipse* and *La Lune Rousse* were banned on several occasions on the grounds that they were perplexing and threatening.¹²¹ An example of the kind of evasive technique used by Gill is found *Le Melon*, (Figure 2.22 below), a caricature that Gill published in *L’Eclipse* – his own publication – in retaliation for censorship harassment.

¹¹⁹ Daumier painted over one hundred lithographs on the subject, from 1836 to 1838. According to Goldstein, ‘the weekly Macaire cartoons were very successful; they encouraged a kind of complicity with the readers’. In: Goldstein, *Censorship of Political Caricature in Nineteenth Century France*, p.95.

¹²⁰ Napoleon III was overthrown from his regime, the Second Empire in September 1870. As it usually happened during a change of political regime, restrictions on freedom of the press and on caricature were abolished. In this case, censorship was suspended for one year.

¹²¹ Goldstein, ‘Censorship of Caricature in France’, 1815-1914’, op.cit. p.81.



Figure 2.22 - *Le Melon*, André Gill (1868).

With the production of *Le Melon*, Gill revived the technique used by Philipon some thirty-five years earlier. For his defence in court, Gill declared that the melon was not supposed to represent anyone in particular, but somehow, the censors considered that the fruit was deleterious and Gill was prosecuted for producing obscene graphics. However, Gill's greatest allegorical creation was *Madame Anastasie*, an old lady holding a large pair of scissors, to cut the caricaturist's work (see Figure 2.23 below). She can be seen as the stereotype of the 'concierge', listening to everything. She carries an owl on her shoulders, which is also symbolic of night watching. This drawing remained to the present day the symbol of censorship.



Figure 2.23 - *Madame Anastasie*, André Gill (1874).

On July 29, 1881, a law on the Freedom of the press was passed, which abolished the prior censorship of images and gave back to the press its freedom of expression. The law promoted a rapid expansion in the size and range of the French mass media. It is said that by 1882, over 3,500 periodical publications appeared in France. These changes to the press industry also benefited caricature: some 350 caricature journals were launched during this time.¹²² As might be expected, in wartime, the press was once again controlled for fear of espionage, and censorship of both words and images was reinforced by decree on August 5, 1914. It was abolished after the conflict, but reinstated for the next World War, in 1939. This time, not less than fourteen decrees restricted all types of written and visual offences, including libels, foreign propaganda, and affront to public indecency. However, whilst censorship has officially disappeared in France since the Second World War, I would like to suggest that freedom of graphic expression exists today as a result of caricaturists' struggle to preserve their rights. Nonetheless, the subject is not closed. Despite the relaxation of the laws, satirical journals were still prosecuted in the 1950s and 1960s. For instance, *Siné Massacre*, was fined on several occasions when images of President Charles De Gaulle were perceived to be too insulting. Similarly, *Charlie Hebdo* was fined for commenting on De Gaulle's death with a caricature, which was perceived as offensive. Nowadays, in France, freedom of expression, of speech as well as of the press, is guaranteed under the French Constitution of the Fifth Republic, founded in 1958, based on the principles of the 1789 French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) is also committed to the respect of human rights since 1950. In particular, Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights provides the right to freedom of expression, subject to certain restrictions that are 'in accordance with law' and 'necessary in a democratic society' but, as the law stipulates, the agreements do not prevent states from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or

¹²² Raymond Kuhn, *The Media in France*, (London: Routledge, 1994), pp.47-49. Kuhn explained that before 1881, French law had a complex and unclear set of laws that regulated public commentary. With the Press Law, publishing was liberalised; in particular, the government was denied the power to suppress newspapers. Offences such as the *délits d'opinion* (crimes of opinion, or types of prohibited speech) were abolished.

cinema enterprises.¹²³ The modern instruments of regulation are, in fact, more concerned with libel, acts of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime.¹²⁴

Summary

This chapter has explored the development of political caricature marked by religious, social and political crises during key moments in European history - the German Reformation in the sixteenth century; the reigns of Henri III and Louis XIV in the sixteenth and seventeenth century; and the French Revolution in the eighteenth century. I have traced caricature as a political weapon whilst pointing to how it was mobilised to different political ends and adopted different graphic styles during particular historical moments. It was a tool of propaganda for the ruling class and a more democratic tool of protest and criticism within the public sphere, during the French Revolution. I have also highlighted the importance of a more commercial press. During the German Reformation, the Protestants promoted caricature, by embracing mass production techniques. The print media enabled artists such as Albrecht Dürer to express and widely communicate their indignation at the lower class conditions of poverty and injustice in the fifteenth century. Caricatures then played an important role in shaping the religious and political debates during the reign of Henri III. In this case, the Catholics exploited the medium to undermine Henri III reign and even provoke his assassination. In examining the satirical iconography of Henri III and Louis XIV, it was possible to observe how royal attributes were used in a negative ways by caricaturists. Louis XIV's absolute and oppressive power actually encouraged the development and circulation of political caricature abroad and promoted the development of graphic critique within a public sphere. By the mid-eighteenth century, a satire was established in France in a pre-Revolutionary climate where the people began to gain a voice through the daily press. Political graphics became a part of a democratic process contributing to political debate and the formation of public opinion. Caricature was no longer just a resource for the dominant class. On the contrary, the royal

¹²³ European Court of Human Rights, <http://echr.coe.int/NR/rdonlyres/F4430C1D-B0D6-4E2D-A071-71F5A677C653/0/ECHRTravauxART10DH5615EN1338895.pdf>, <accessed 15 December 2008>

¹²⁴ Ibid.

family was desanctified and humiliated through pamphlets and broadsheets readily available in the streets. By the last decades of the eighteenth century, the rhetoric of the visual press had become gradually more partisan, vitriolic and boundless. It was thus in such an environment that graphic satire, in particular caricature, flourished, when journalism and propaganda merged and the rhetoric of the press became more political, extreme and violent.

I have also demonstrated that political graphics, a product of the age of revolution, became in the post-revolutionary modern world, a model for artistic expression in general. I have underlined the importance of the nineteenth century, a century marked by political instability, for graphic satire in France and the emergence of caricature journals as a subversive voice in the 1830s. Indeed, I have shown that from that time onwards, caricaturists such as Philipon, Daumier and Gill persistently defied censorship laws in order to fight for the right of freedom of expression. In many respects, I would suggest that regulation helped to shape the style, techniques and development of political graphics during this time. With this established, I shall now consider the patterns, trends and growth of caricature as it emerged into the modern world. In Chapter 3, I shall specifically focus on the development of caricature into cartoons in the twentieth and the twenty-first century, with a particular emphasis on the role played by cartoons in the editorial pages of the press.

Chapter 3

From Caricature to Political Cartoon

‘... les images triviales, les croquis de la foule et de la rue, les caricatures, sont souvent le miroir le plus fidèle de la vie’.¹

Introduction

The main objective of this chapter is to show the political cartoon as a cultural product and an important journalistic tool in France at the beginning of the third millennium, shaped not only by a distinctive artistic tradition but also by specific French political issues such as the monarchy and complex regulation. Before discussing the twenty-first century, I will examine three historical periods, which I argue, have affected the development of caricature and influenced modern political cartooning: the *fin de siècle* (highlighted by the Dreyfus Affair), the interwar period (1920-1930) and the end of the 1960s, which were marked by social and cultural change, the consequences of which were echoed in graphic art. By examining cartoons in a contemporary press environment, I aim to investigate whether political graphics have the same impact in more modern day times as they did in nineteenth-century France, a period which is referred to as ‘the golden age of caricature’. By focusing on the editorialist role of the cartoon in the modern newspaper press, I seek to evaluate its significance and its potential influence, at a time when the existence of the print media is continuously threatened by new technological developments. The work of artists such as Jacques Faizant and Jean Plantureux, who have been leading cartoonists in France for a number of years, highlight the medium’s strengths and its authority within the modern-day French press.² I underline how French graphic artists have achieved recognition, attaining a professional status that, for a long time was reserved only for journalists of the written press. I suggest that the evolution of the cartoonists’ working conditions has had an effect on the form and content of their productions. Plantu is presently a militant figure, fighting for freedom of expression and Human rights, under the banner of *Le*

¹ Charles Baudelaire, *Le Spleen de Paris*, (1857-1867).

² Jean Plantureux is more widely known in the media as Plantu.

Monde, a prestigious daily newspaper in France. In recent years, *Le Monde's* unique system of journalistic ownership, its distinctive politics, and its investigative journalism have been the subject of interest and debate within the contemporary French press. These debates frame the last part of this chapter, which explores the role that Plantu plays within *Le Monde's* environment and the significance of Plantu's political cartoons on the front-page of the paper. This discussion serves as a precursor to Chapter 4, which provides a detailed analysis of Plantu's representations of the late French president François Mitterrand in *Le Monde*, a theme which was inspired by the continuing hostility that existed between the editorial direction of the daily newspaper and Mitterrand, during the whole of his presidency.

Fin de Siècle and the Dreyfus Affair

The nineteenth century was an important period for the growth of both graphic satire and the press in spite of censorship rules. As mentioned in Chapter 2, a number of caricaturists, including Philipon and Gill, popularised the medium, via their satirical publications and found new way to develop the form through their quest to defy regulations. The late nineteenth century saw the expansion of leisure, consumption, technological advances and urbanization, yet it was an unsettled period as far as politics were concerned.³ A comprehensive discussion on the political, social, and cultural changes and issues of the *fin de siècle*, and the debates that they raised amongst scholars are subjects outside the scope of this discussion. It can however be suggested that painting and graphic art, and in particular cartooning, were affected by the rules of the time. During the *fin de siècle*, the medium's changing ways were characterised by the emergence of a generation of fine art satirists. Noteworthy was that at the end of the century, the State began to lose its control over the Arts.⁴ As Jill Forbes and Michael Kelly explain, the French State exerted a stronghold on the art world; 'the *Academy* was at the same time the arbiter of taste and the main purchaser of art works'.⁵ Yet, when, by the 1850s, Impressionist artists such as Claude Monet, Edgard Degas and Édouard Manet, departed from the tradition

³ For a comprehensive discussion of this topic see: Jill Forbes and Michael Kelly, *French cultural Studies*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p.47.

⁴ I have discussed this matter in Chapter 2.

⁵ Forbes and Kelly, *French cultural Studies*, p.28.

of classical painting to adopt 'direct open-air painting' of nude bodies, the *Academy of Arts* rejected their works.⁶ Consequently, Impressionist artists began to gather and organise independent exhibitions such as the *Salons des Refusés* alongside the official art world of the Salon. What is most relevant to my discussion here is the fact that the situation incited a number of Impressionist artists to desert the bourgeois salons and dedicate themselves to political cartooning in the daily press instead. Discussing Modernism in Art prior to World War 1, Patricia Leighton confirms that 'painters such as Jules-Felix Grandjouan and Bernard Naudin Abel Faivre, Jean-Louis Forain, Adolphe Willette, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, René Georges Hermann-Paul, Lucien Métivet and Henri-Gabriel Ibels – who were educated in famous ateliers and Arts schools such as Beaux-Arts and Arts Décoratifs – abandoned painting altogether in favour of political satire in journals costing half a franc and addressed to both the masses and left-wing intellectuals'.⁷ As they became politically engaged, for or against the new republic, there was a need to reach a different audience: the working class. Anarchist and radical socialist artists manifested their political allegiances in journals such as *La Guerre Sociale*, the anarcho-syndicalist, *La Voix du Peuple* (the official voice of the Confédération Générale du Travail – French trade Union) or the anarcho-communist *Les Temps Nouveaux*, that also sponsored the art exhibitions.⁸ The *fin de siècle* was thus significant for marking the inception of graphic satire as a feature in the newspaper press, as Jacques Lethève confirms:

Incontestablement, le niveau de la caricature s'élève à la fin du siècle et l'équipe de dessinateurs qui s'affirment entre 1880 et 1895 est une des plus brillantes que la France ait connues. [...] La demande grandissante de caricatures a certainement attiré des artistes qui, devant des débouchés moins nombreux auraient cherché fortune ailleurs.⁹

Indeed, as Lethève remarks, the importance of the caricaturist within the journalistic environment started during this period, when a new generation of caricaturists found employment in the national daily press. As an example,

⁶ Forbes and Kelly, *French cultural Studies*, p.21.

⁷ Patricia Leighton, 'Réveil Anarchiste: Salon Painting, Political Satire, Modernist Art', *Modernism/Modernity*, Vol2. No2 (1995), p.18.

⁸ Leighton, 'Réveil Anarchiste: Salon Painting, Political Satire, Modernist Art', p.24.

⁹ Jacques Lethève, *La Caricature et la Presse sous la Troisième République*, (Paris: Armand Colin, 1961), p.49.

although conservative in nature, *Le Figaro* regularly employed Louis Forain, a prominent Impressionist artist who was the director of the *Salon des Refusés*, and a number of anarchists such as Charles Léandre and Caran d'Ache. It is within this climate that the Dreyfus Affair took place. The controversial affair revolved around Alfred Dreyfus, a French Jewish army officer who was dishonoured and imprisoned in 1894, for the alleged sale of war secrets to the Germans. Caricatures played a significant role in the affair, mobilised by both 'anti-Dreyfusards' and 'Dreyfusards' to further their campaign.

Amongst the abundant literature that was written on the Dreyfus Affair, the work of historian Nancy Fitch stands out because it highlights the significance and impact of caricatures. Whilst Fitch discussed comprehensively how the patriotic turmoil of the Dreyfus period had a political impact on rural France, she also underlined the importance of the anti-Dreyfusards imagery and how the public drew on cartoon images, published in newspapers, to build a new anti-Semitic ideology. Indeed, as Finch suggests, press cartoons played an important role in constructing anti-Dreyfus views, especially amongst the French rural masses:

While mass circulation newspapers alone did much to make the affair what it was, their presence was made all the more relevant by an explosion in the production of anti-Semitic images, [...]. The use of visual images probably increased the circulation of small, sensationalist newspapers such as *La Croix* [...].¹⁰

In particular, Fitch was concerned with the way the Dreyfus Affair was adopted by the public in rural areas of France and how Anti-Semitic ideology was deployed as a means to warn the rural masses of the danger of the cosmopolitan Jews. Jews were depicted as speculators, threatening their livelihood, for instance, local agriculture. It is worth noting that the Anti-Semites benefited from the evolution of technology that followed the post-Revolutionary period.¹¹ Anti-Semitic titles such as *La Croix*, quickly acquired an influence in

¹⁰ Nancy Fitch, 'Mass Culture, Mass Parliamentary Politics, and Modern Anti-Semitism: The Dreyfus Affair in Rural France', *American Historical Review*, Vol. 97, No. 1 (Feb., 1992), pp.55-95. Quote p.62.

¹¹ Read more on the subject in: Theodore Zeldin, *France, 1848-1945: Taste & Corruption* (London:1980). The development of the rotary press and photogravure meant that, with a wider distribution, newspapers were cheap and could reach rural areas of France. Zeldin explained that following these new technologies in the 1880s, newspapers began to circulate through rural areas and soon rural illiteracy was eliminated.

rural France. *La Croix* was significant not only for its wide distribution but also for its use of illustrations. According to Fitch:

The success of the images, however, lay in the Anti-Semites' abilities to reconfigure some significant traditional associations. In the process, they kept these associations alive in popular memories but in new forms.¹²

Finally, Fitch interpreted this display of anti-Semitism as a reaction against the social integration of Jews into French society (and in rural areas in particular). As the author further explained, the Dreyfus Affair would never have been brought to the attention of people in the countryside without extensive propagandist imagery. 'Anti-Dreyfusards' graphic artists drew from a repertoire of cartoon images of Jews, most of which were familiar and demeaning', in order to portray Dreyfus as a traitor.¹³ In addition to such images in the newspapers, a range of anti-Dreyfus propagandist artefacts were produced, including postcards, stereotyping Jews. Furthermore, children were provided with cartoon-based paper toys such as shown in Figure 3.1 below, to play with. 'The Last Judgement' as it was called, suggested ways of killing Dreyfus and labelled him as a 'dirty beast'.¹⁴ As explained by Fitch, this paper toy was one of the most vicious paper novelties produced in that period. The game consisted of pulling on the man's arm to hang Dreyfus, 'the traitor'.

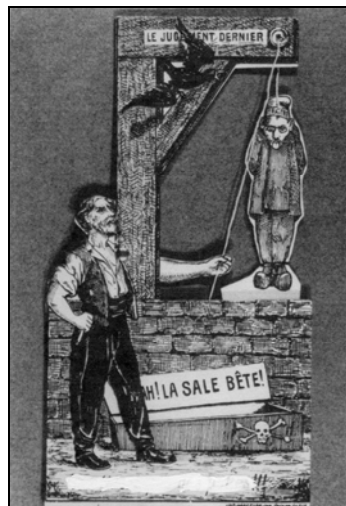


Figure 3.1 - *The Last Judgement*, Anonymous (1888).

¹² Nancy Fitch, 'Mass Culture, Mass Parliamentary Politics, and Modern Anti-Semitism', p.67.

¹³ Nancy Fitch, 'Mass Culture, Mass Parliamentary Politics, and Modern Anti-Semitism', p.62.

¹⁴ Nancy Fitch, 'Mass Culture, Mass Parliamentary Politics, and Modern Anti-Semitism', p.63.

Fitch's suggests that only a few people rallied for Dreyfus but in fact, the argument divided French society into two camps for the duration of the time that Dreyfus was imprisoned, from 1894 to 1906. Dreyfusards, Anti-Dreyfusards, members of the army, artists, intellectuals, and politicians took sides – famous writer, Emile Zola being the key figure of the pro-Dreyfus debate. Indeed, caricature supported the debate through its images that tended to be violent, and incriminating, with the intention to influence the other to its side. The double cartoon by Caran d'Ache, below in Figure 3.2, is a sarcastic comment on this division: in the first image, the family had agreed *not* to discuss the Dreyfus Affair; yet in the second cartoon, the agreement had been broken and a vicious fight ensued.



Figure 3.2 - 'Ils Ont Parlé', Caran d'Ache (1898).

Caran d'Ache was apparently against Jews: in 1898, he founded *Psst...!*, a journal which was dedicated to publishing anti-Semitic caricatures. While the contribution of the press in this affair is recognised, debating issues such as anti-Semitism, the law and other relevant matters, it is clear that the cartoons

contributed to this type of journalism and acted as a visual polemic. The repercussions following the Dreyfus Affair were indeed important. Fitch suggests that it prompted the emergence of anti-Semitic, nationalist politics and the formation of a 'radical right' in the end of the nineteenth century in France.¹⁵ According to Paula Hyman, 'the mass distribution through the press of powerful anti-Semitic images was influential in shaping the popular perception of Jews in France during the following decades'.¹⁶ As a matter of fact, the Dreyfus Affair and consequent issues such as anti-Semitism and religious intolerance prompted a law to be introduced in 1905 separating church and state. The importance of this matter and the role of cartoons cannot be underestimated, since almost a century later; the Dreyfus Affair still makes the news. Although Dreyfus's innocence was eventually recognised in 1906, the controversy was never totally cleared. In 1985, a statue of Alfred Dreyfus by artist Tim was refused approval for its display in the courtyard of *Ecole Militaire* in Paris by the Army. It was only in 1988, under François Mitterrand's presidential mandate that the statue found a place in the Tuileries Garden.

At the turn of the century, from 1901, in parallel to their contribution to the Dreyfus Affair in the newspaper press, the same graphic artists contributed to *L'Assiette au Beurre*, which was perceived as the most anarchistic and satirical publication of the period. According to Lethève, *L'Assiette au Beurre* was the fiercest of the pre-war political journals, in great part because of its visual appeal. Although it was not politically aligned, it was anti-establishment, anti-militarist, anti-clerical and even anti-Semitic.¹⁷ *L'Assiette au Beurre* was an expensive, weekly publication designed for the bourgeois readership of the Montmartre cafes. Yet, it is noteworthy, because it introduced a noticeable stylistic change characterised by a humorous satirical content in prints, which influenced the next generation of inter war cartoonists. An important feature of these political graphics was that they were often openly pornographic yet subtle; refined, painted rather than sketched, coloured and at times with detailed captions. Portraits-charges or grotesque images had disappeared and satirical humour prevailed as a main tool for criticism. In spite of being humorous, the

¹⁵ Nancy Fitch, 'Mass Culture, Mass Parliamentary Politics, and Modern Anti-Semitism', p. 57.

¹⁶ Paula Hyman, 'The Dreyfus Affair, The Visual And The Historical', *The Journal of Modern History* 61, (March 1989), p.88-109.

¹⁷ Lethève, *La Caricature et la Presse Sous la Troisième République*, p.73.

drawing below (Figure 3.3), offers a critique of the Third Republic French medical system which was seen as inadequate by some.

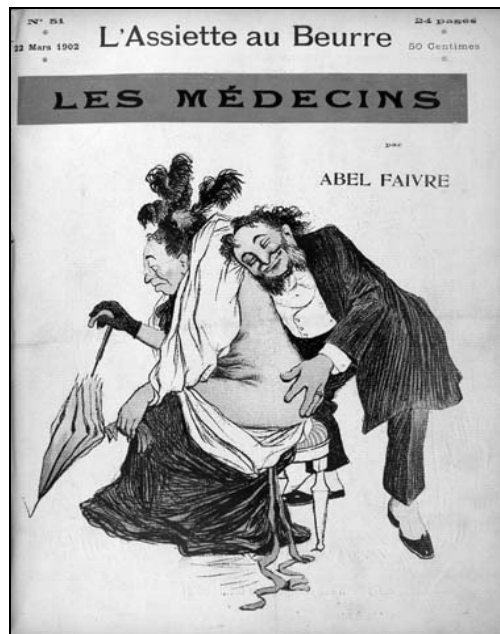


Figure 3.3 - *L'Assiette au Beurre*, Abel Faivre (1902).

I suggest that this form of cartooning was influenced by the unconventional ambiance of the Parisian Montmartre cabarets. Indeed it is useful to remember that the *fin de siècle* – often referred as *La Belle Époque* (from 1870 -1914) – was an era of scientific and cultural progress in Europe, a time when art of every kind flourished as never before. In particular, Paris was considered as the capital of fashion and Art. As Lefèvre explains, along with political concerns regarding the newly established Republic, there was also a need for distraction and gentle mockery. Therefore, caricaturists also turned to ridicule everyday life. In particular, a large number of magazines with a light tone – *journaux légers* – as Lefèvre calls them, were created for the rich bourgeois readership that congregated in the Parisian salons and cabarets in the Parisian district of Montmartre.¹⁸ Some titles were unequivocal: *La Vie en Rose*, *L'Amour*, *Frou-Frou*, *Sans Gêne*, *Lapin Agile*, *Moulin Rouge* and *Le Chat Noir*.

This period established a new tradition in humorous satirical drawing, which was not without its problems. The move from gross caricature to humorous, sophisticated parody during the *Belle Époque* generated debate

¹⁸ Lefèvre, *La Caricature et la Presse Sous la Troisième République*, p.71.

amongst creators, a situation that, according to Christian Delporte, created a fracture between generations.¹⁹ The dispute was mainly about the occurrence of the term ‘humorist’ at the turn of the twentieth century. The fine arts’ younger generation of Impressionist artists refused to be assigned the classic designation of ‘caricaturist’, which apparently suited better their predecessors’ production – for example, grotesque *portrait-charge* work, which was not on a par with the kind of satirical humour they wanted to implement. It was in this spirit that the director of *Le Rire*, Felix Juven, founded *Le Salon des Humoristes* in 1901. This was followed by *La Société des Dessinateurs Humoristes* in 1904.

In 1914, Europe went to war and the press came under renewed regulation. A number of titles disappeared and with them, caricatures. The leading daily publications that survived, such as *Le Figaro*, *Le Matin*, and *L’Echo de Paris*, were eager to contribute to the war with powerful caricatures against the enemy. As Delporte notes, a number of French humorists willingly turned into fierce graphic commentators, praising *le poilu* – the French soldier – who fervently went to the barricades, or they were truly propagandist anti-German. *Le Boche* (the German) was traditionally represented as a cruel rapist, as shown below in Figure 3.4 below.



Figure 3.4 - *Le Boche*, Anonymous (1914).

¹⁹ Delporte, ‘Le Dessinateur de Presse, de l’Artiste au Journaliste’, *Vingtième Siècle, Revue d’Histoire*, Vol. 35, 1992, p.31.

Delporte further comments that in 1918, at the end of the war, the prominent humorists who illustrated the dailies and magazines of the *Belle Époque* era returned to their salons and to their subtle, humorous satire, with little desire for politics.²⁰ The period known as *L'Entre-Deux Guerres*, between World War I and World War II, attracted a different type of graphic artist, who coveted a journalistic position more than artistic fame. They were to bring major changes to the cartooning medium and to the caricaturists' working conditions.

L'Entre-Deux Guerres

In the early 1920s the *Cartel de Gauche* (coalition of the left-wing parties against the conservative right-wing nationalist bloc) created political instability. This situation gave a boost to the press and to political graphics, which until then were confined to *Le Canard Enchaîné* and *L'Humanité*, France's communist newspaper. As Delporte comments, the opinion press strategically capitalised on graphic satire to influence public opinion.²¹ At that time, there was a selection of Parisian opinion papers such as the right-wing *L'Action Française*, *La Liberté*, *L'Echo de Paris* and *Candide* and the left-wing, *Marianne*, *L'Ami du Peuple*, and *Gringoire*, willing to employ political cartoonists who had no artistic education. The emergence of this 'new generation' of graphic commentators, which included, amongst others Jean Sennep, Raoul Cabrol, Gus Bofa and Roger Chancel, is significant, as they initiated the modern political cartoon: 'the editorial cartoon' featuring in the front page of the daily newspaper. In fact, according to Delporte, what this group desired most was to work with the newspaper press and to become journalists. It is clear that press artists had to abide by the rules set by the editorial board in the same way as their peers of the written press did, working 'in the field' as reporters. Other restrictions included working under time limits and drawing on a smaller scale, to fit the space allocated on the page. The 1920s thus marked another important stylistic change in graphic satire which focused on the act of simplification.²² Henri-Paul

²⁰ Delporte, 'Le Dessinateur de Presse, de l'Artiste au Journaliste', p.34.

²¹ Delporte, 'Le Dessinateur de Presse, de l'Artiste au Journaliste', p.33.

²² One can argue that this evolution explains why nowadays the term *caricature* is used differently; most probably because *caricature* was originally used to design the charged - heavily deformed - portrait of a bigger size.

Gassier is often cited as one of the first draughtsmen who skilfully amended his style:

Il (Gassier) adapta la technique de la caricature à celle des journaux en réduisant à l'essentiel les traits d'un visage, en privilégiant l'idée et non la dimension purement esthétique du dessin, en s'attachant à suivre, comme un journaliste, une actualité souvent touffue.²³

As Delporte asserts, in this type of 'line drawing' it is the idea that matters the most. We are indeed dealing with a graphic commentary set in the frame of a single image, the political cartoon the potential of which I further discuss below in this chapter.²⁴ The 1920s' graphic artists had broken with the artistic field and moved nearer to the journalistic field. However, a great disparity existed between writers and draughtsmen for a long time. Although, from 1925, they were officially referred to as *journalistes – dessinateurs*, it was only in the mid 1930s that press artists started to gain professional recognition.

In France, since 1918, the journalistic trade has relied on a trade Union representative – the *Syndicat National des Journalistes*. Still a leading force today, the *SNJ* is responsible for the many improvements in the profession, such as promoting a professional journalist's card, the 'press card'. However, the working conditions of graphic artists contributing to the press have often been difficult in the course of French history. With few artists enjoying cartooning as their main occupation, their financial situation was often insecure. However, in the twentieth century the situation improved, at least for those who contributed to the press on a regular basis, when they became eligible for a professional status as journalists. The 1935 Act of the French Working Code set up by the *SNJ* was significant as it determined the professional status of cartoonists. According to this act, a professional journalist is anyone 'whose main, regular and remunerated activity consists of professional practice for a daily or periodical publication published in France or for a French News Agency'.²⁵ Consequently, cartoonists who fulfilled the necessary conditions, in full-time employment, were acknowledged by the *SNJ* as journalists who

²³ Christian Delporte, cited in Solo, *50 Dessinateurs de Presse et Quelques Supports* (Paris: Groupe Té. Arte, 1996), p.254.

²⁴ From now on, in the context of modern cartoons, I shall use 'cartoon' instead of 'caricature'.

²⁵ 'Le reporter-dessinateur a pour occupation la recherche, la création, la mise en œuvre des documents dessinés inspirés par l'actualité: reportages, croquis, caricatures, dessins humoristiques, illustrations d'articles à l'exclusion formelle de tous textes et dessins publicitaires'. *Le Livret SNJ du Journaliste*, (Paris: S. N. J., 2001) p.3.

express themselves graphically. However, it was only in 1974, that the working conditions of freelance press artists finally improved dramatically, with a revision of the Working Code (*La Loi Cressard*), to include all those who contributed to the press on a freelance basis – including graphic artists.²⁶ With access to the ‘press card’, artists thus became entitled to the same benefits, privileges and status enjoyed by employed journalists.

The changes in working conditions have had a significant impact on the survival of cartooning: by providing added security, the profession became more attractive as a career and consequently, the number of graphic artists who were able to apply for a press card increased significantly.²⁷ Moreover, artist’s salaries and freelance fees were positively affected by the increased professionalization of cartooning. However, it must be stated that cartooning fees vary dramatically, depending on a number of factors, including, the artist’s reputation in the press world, and the type of publication that accepts the work as well as the size and frequency of the work. According to the SNJ, the average price tends to be less than €100 per political graphic.²⁸ As an indication in the variance in fees for political graphics, Emmanuel Besson, a freelance graphic artist from Lyons, reported that he was paid €305 for a cartoon for the front page of the weekly magazine *Marianne* and €468 for one in the middle pages of the magazine *Phosphore*.²⁹ Besson confirms however, that the front-page drawing usually receives a higher fee. Notwithstanding the inconsistency in the modern cartoonists’ wages, a number of cartoonists, including Besson, claim that the improvements in their working status, and in particular the right to apply for a journalistic press card, have contributed in great part to the survival of press cartooning in France. In particular, I would suggest that the editorial/political cartoon featured on many front pages of newspapers, has played a significant role in maintaining a strong tradition of cartooning in French

²⁵ The amendment stipulates that: ‘Sont assimilés aux journalistes professionnels, les collaborateurs directs de la rédaction: rédacteurs-traducteurs [...] reporters-dessinateurs [...]’. ‘Extraits du Code du Travail’, *Le Livret SNJ du Journaliste*, p.3. In 2004, with all categories included, there were approximately 37,000 journalists in possession of an official press card in France. To be granted the press card, in 2004, the freelance journalist had to earn a minimum of €3,500 per annum. ‘Les Grilles de Salaire’ SNJ, <http://www.snj.fr/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=39> [accessed 20 February 2005].

²⁷ For the reader interested in the statistical data, please refer to ‘Les Grilles de Salaire’, SNJ. <http://www.snj.fr/rubrique.php3?id_article=727>. [accessed 20 February 2005].

²⁸ Please refer to ‘Les Grilles de Salaire’, SNJ. <http://www.snj.fr/rubrique.php3?id_article=727>. [accessed 20 February 2005].

²⁹ In conversation with the author on 19 May 2005. *Marianne* is a national far-right magazine. *Phosphore* is a pedagogic publication for children.

visual culture. As I shall now demonstrate, this phenomenon owes much to the editorial cartooning prowess of individuals such as Jacques Faizant and Plantu. By examining key aspects of the careers of such prominent cartoonists, it is possible to gain further important insights into the journalistic and editorialist roles of the press artist in the second half of the twentieth century.

Editorial Cartoons and Faizant

The term *editorial* usually refers to the leading article in the newspaper. By definition it is: 'a front-page commentary, signed or not, that voices the opinion of the chief editor or of a journalist'.³⁰ In other words, an editorial is important both in terms of prominent position and for being written by someone who holds an important position in the newspaper. The fact that a cartoon can act as an editorial highlights its significance and deserves special consideration. An editorial cartoon is a concise analysis of daily events. On this basis, the cartoonist does not only seek merely to inform but also he wants to comment on topical information, to give his opinion and to provoke a reaction.

The editorial cartoon is greatly respected by the French daily press, since, by tradition, it has reserved a space for it in the newspaper. In particular, *Le Figaro*, a leading French newspaper, was the first to publish Jacques Faizant's cartoons on the front page, serving in an editorial capacity. Over time, such was the French public's expectation of the appearance of a cartoon on the front page of the newspaper, that for a considerable period, if for any reason the cartoon was not present, a small note would inform the reader of the reason for its absence.³¹ Facts such as these further demonstrate the importance of cartoons and their prominent position in modern French visual culture. Faizant however, is remembered not only for his editorial style but also for his long contribution to *Le Figaro* since 1967. Most notably, for a number of years Faizant was a significant member of *Le Figaro's* editorial board committee and therefore in a position to influence the direction of the newspaper's reporting.

³⁰ Definition translated from the French, *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique*, (Paris: Larousse, 1998), p.515.

³¹ Faizant's cartoons were moved to the middle pages of *Le Figaro* when it became the trend to keep the space on the front page for photos.

Faizant was a post-second World War artist who admits that he had no artistic training.³² Starting a professional career in the Air Force, he then had a number of jobs such as a dockworker, courier, hotel manager and singer. As far as cartooning is concerned, he first became interested in developing his drawing abilities when he joined an animation studio that was in need of animated cartoons for a short length film. When the studio's future became unstable, Faizant turned to the press for work. Indeed, after the *Liberation*, there was a strong desire for communication as a form of recreation, and the flourishing press welcomed humour. As Jacques Faizant commented:

Après la guerre; il y avait un nombre incroyable de publications qui employaient plusieurs dessinateurs, dans toutes les colonnes...Mais c'était plutôt du dessin social et humoristique...La vraie satire se trouvait seulement dans *Le Canard Enchaîné* [...].³³

It was then that Faizant experienced working as a freelance humorist. His cartoons were visual gags, lampooning everyday situations and providing a critique of French society. Faizant is said to have achieved his greatest work with social cartoons and stereotypes, specially with the creation of *Les Vieilles Dames*, a gentle satire of the bourgeoisie, personified by a group of old ladies, always dressed in black (Figure 3.5 below).³⁴



Figure 3.5 - *Les Vieilles Dames et les Loisirs*, Faizant (1973).

³² This review is based on one of the rare monographs to be devoted to political cartoonists in France: Jean-Pierre Tibéri, *L'Humour au Quotidien* (Paris: S.E.L.D, 1991), as well as personal interviews with Faizant in personal conversation with Micheline Maupoint, 20 April 1998.

³³ Faizant, in conversation with Micheline Maupoint, 20 April 1998.

³⁴ Jacques Faizant, *Les Vieilles Dames et Les Loisirs*, (Paris: Denoel, 1973). The cartoons were first published in the weekly magazine *Paris-Match*.

However, because he claimed no artistic education, Faizant thought of himself more as a journalist than a cartoonist:

Je ne suis pas artiste graphique. Je suis un journaliste. Ce que je demande à mon dessin c'est de coller avec ce que je veux exprimer.³⁵

What set Faizant's work apart from others in the field of cartooning was his more humorous approach that conveyed powerful messages with a gentle tone. With this as his trademark, in 1959, Faizant followed the trend and increasingly moved towards drawing political cartoons. In doing so, he modelled himself on the *entre-deux Guerres* artists, in particular on Gassier, learning to modify his lines and his caricatures and, to make his captions more impactful.

In 1967 Faizant took over from Jean Sennep, the appointed cartoonist of *Le Figaro* and started his career as an editorialist on the front-page of *Le Figaro*. As a cartoonist, Faizant revealed that he inherited a great deal from Sennep and considered him as his mentor.³⁶ Even more significantly, the alignment of Faizant's personal and professional values to that of *Le Figaro*, enabled him to openly express and develop his journalistic opinions through his cartoons.

Je suis un homme de droite qui dessine dans un journal de droite pour des lecteurs de droite qui partagent mes opinions [...] Je ne suis pas militant, je ne travaille pas dans le journal d'un parti.³⁷

Moreover, Faizant's editorial cartooning career was greatly inspired by President Charles de Gaulle, as he confirmed:

De Gaulle m'a beaucoup inspiré. Je me demande si je me serais lancé dans le dessin politique s'il n'y avait pas eu de Gaulle.³⁸

Faizant's first political cartoon of de Gaulle was in 1960, commenting on the French defeat at the Olympic games in Rome. Whilst, he caricatured de Gaulle

³⁵ Faizant in conversation with Micheline Maupoint, 20 April 1998.

³⁶ Faizant in conversation with Micheline Maupoint, 20 April 1998.

³⁷ 'Je suis un homme de droite qui dessine dans un journal de droite pour des lecteurs de droite qui partagent mes opinions [...] Je ne suis pas militant, je ne travaille pas dans le journal d'un parti'. Tibéri, *L'Humour au Quotidien*, p.104.

³⁸ According to Tibéri, De Gaulle was a favourite subject for caricaturists'; his physiognomy and size invited satire. *L'Humour au Quotidien*, p.81.

in all sorts of situations: his depictions of de Gaulle and Marianne (see Figure 3.6 below), are perceived as unforgettable.³⁹



Figure 3.6 – *Marianne*, French Commemorative Stamp.

In fact, Faizant had a great admiration for the President and when de Gaulle died on 11 November 1970, he was grief-stricken.⁴⁰ He depicted Marianne, identified by her Phrygian cap, weeping on the trunk of a fallen oak (see Figure 3.7 below).⁴¹ Faizant uses the oak tree as a metaphor for de Gaulle's strength and status.



Figure 3.7 - *De Gaulle and Marianne*, Faizant (1970).

³⁹ Marianne is a national symbol of the French Republic. Marianne is usually depicted wearing a Phrygian cap – *le bonnet rouge*. – representing the values of liberty and reason.

⁴⁰ Faizant spoke of his grief in conversation with Micheline Maupoint, 20 April 1998.

⁴¹ Faizant uses the oak as a metaphor for de Gaulle's strength and status.

Throughout his career, Faizant produced over 30,000 cartoons for *Le Figaro* and he became a front-page institution in the 1960s. Faizant's position on *Le Figaro's* editorial board contributed to his status and that of political cartoons in general. Faizant believed in the significance and role of the editorial cartooning in the twentieth century and beyond. However, he was pessimistic regarding the future of humoristic cartoons. He claimed that the events of May 1968, a widespread strike that paralyzed France for several weeks, were detrimental for humoristic cartoons. Faizant believed that the social and moral shift from conservative ideals to more liberal ones caused a rupture between humorists and political cartoonists. Faizant stated that '1968 a marqué la division entre les dessinateurs de presse et les humoristes. Depuis ce temps chacun a gardé son terrain'.⁴²

Faizant passed away in 2005, after a long and successful career of political cartooning, firstly as a humorist and later as an editorialist. Due to his contribution to journalism, politics and society, a great homage was paid to him upon his death. It is now considered that Plantu has replaced him as the eminent editorialist of the time.

Plantu's Work

Le Monde publishes a daily editorial cartoon by Plantu on its front page. The single panel cartoon occupies only a small area of the page but, printed as it is on the centre of the page, it is immediately visible on the presentation racks of the vending kiosks. The position of Plantu's cartoon on the front-page of France's most prestigious daily newspaper is both significant and contentious. Indeed, the term *cartoon* connotes humour and this type of graphic may seem out of place in a publication that is known for its seriousness in presentation and delivery of information. However, it is true that for a long time, *Le Monde* was reluctant to insert any kind of illustrations in its pages. Illustrations were considered to be in conflict with the paper's need to maintain an austere image, a tradition imposed by its founder Hubert Beuve-Méry.⁴³ Yet, today, after drawing for over 30 years in *Le Monde*, Plantu has become famous in France and across the world. Without a doubt, Plantu represents *Le Monde* as an

⁴² Faizant in conversation with Micheline Maupoint, 20 April 1998.

⁴³ The reasons why and when *Le Monde* came to accept to publish cartoons will be discussed below.

editorialist for the newspaper. His cartoons are significant enough to play a central part in the 'serious' press and to enable him to engage in humanitarian work, achievements that I shall discuss shortly. However, in order to understand how Plantu reached such a privileged status, and to evaluate the importance of his work, it is useful to briefly review his life and career.⁴⁴

Unlike Jacques Faizant, Plantu, attended art school. Indeed, the twenty-year old Plantu gave up his medical studies to join the famous Belgian Arts School, the *Institut Saint-Luc*, directed by Hergé.⁴⁵ He confided to the magazine *Le Point*:

Le dessin, j'en rêvais, mais sans y croire vraiment. J'aimais aussi la musique classique et je rêvais aussi d'être compositeur. [...] Un soir de 1971, j'annonce à mes parents que j'arrête médecine, que je vais faire de la BD à Bruxelles et que je me marie!⁴⁶

However, for financial reasons, Plantu returned to France without completing the course. Then married, Plantu had to find employment to support his family. He undertook a number of jobs, mainly during the day, which allowed him to devote himself to drawing at night. Determined to succeed he offered his drawings to various publications: *Terre des Hommes*, *Pariscope*, *Bonne Soirée*, *Croissance des Jeunes Nations*, *l'Etudiant*, and the satirical magazine, *Le Canard Enchaîné*. Clearly, Plantu had to adapt his style and humor to align with the specific requirements and brand of each publication. As far as *Le Monde* is concerned, Plantu presented his drawings to them with little expectation of being accepted. *Le Monde's* rigorousness was proverbial, and although the new editorial board was willing to be more innovative after Beuve-Méry retired from his editorship in 1969, the newspaper still maintained its severe tradition.⁴⁷

Unbeknown to Plantu, several people with a new vision for *Le Monde* were later to play an important role in his career. It was Bernard Lauzanne, then Editorial Director of *Le Monde*, who first accepted Plantu's drawings in 1972. The first of Plantu's political cartoons to be published in *Le Monde* appeared in the middle pages of the evening newspaper, under the political column. The

⁴⁴ For more information on *Le Monde* and Plantu's life, read Micheline Maupoint, 'Plantu: The Editorial in Caricatures, An Analysis of the Role and the Impact of Plantu's Political Cartoons in the French Daily Newspaper, *Le Monde*, *The International Journal of Comic Art*, Volume 4, N0.2, November 2002, p.53-69.

⁴⁵ Hergé, born Henri Rémi, the creator of *The Adventures of Tintin*.

⁴⁶ Michel Richard, 'Plantu, Trait Pour Trait', *Le Point*, 23 January 1989.

⁴⁷ As explained by Christian Massol, Editorial Director of *Le Monde*, to Micheline Maupoint at *Le Monde*, 17 April 2001.

cartoon was a commentary on the peace process in Vietnam for which Plantu drew a dove, the symbol of peace, carrying a question mark in its beak instead of the usual olive branch, as seen in Figure 3.8 below.

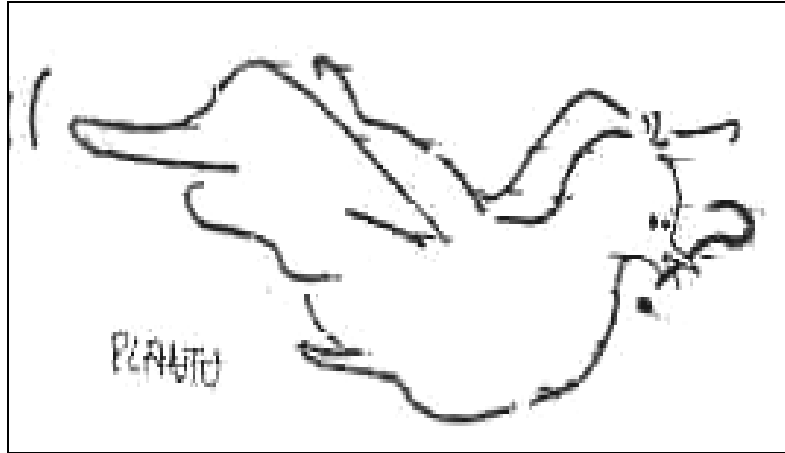


Figure 3.8 – Cartoon by Plantu, *Le Monde* (1 October 1972).

However, working under the supervision of the then Managing Director, Jacques Fauvet, proved to be a difficult period for Plantu who trained as a comic strip artist. Indeed the demands that Fauvet imposed on Plantu were very restrictive: cartoons were to be drawn with straight lines, without shadows, stripes or text. Plantu recalls the period when, to satisfy *Le Monde's* editorial board, he had 'to learn how to draw without words'.⁴⁸ In 1974, Claude Julien, then Managing Director of *Le Monde Diplomatique* - one of *Le Monde's* supplements - asked Plantu to produce a monthly commentary on events in the Third World. This was a subject that already inspired Plantu therefore, he fully committed himself to expose misery and abuse, to denounce injustice, cruelty and shameless capitalist exploitation. He soon became known as *Le Dessinateur Tiers Mondiste*, the specialist in Third World issues.⁴⁹ Finally in 1982, Claude Lamotte, who succeeded Bernard Lausanne as Editorial Director, requested that Plantu's cartoon be published on the front page of the Saturday issue. The Managing Director of the time, André Laurens, also wanted to do without the tradition of texts. He had agreed with Lausanne that there was a need 'to renew the French tradition of political cartooning, to illuminate the front

⁴⁸ Plantu in conversation with Micheline Maupoint, 15 April 1998.

⁴⁹ Plantu in conversation with Micheline Maupoint, 15 April 1998. Christian Massol also explained that publishing cartoons in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, on a regular basis, enabled *Le Monde's* readers to accept this type of images in *Le Monde's* other publications.

page and to catch the reader's eye straight away'.⁵⁰ They therefore agreed to introduce editorial cartoons on the front page of *Le Monde*, a tradition that has been maintained by their successors ever since. In 1985, Publishing Director André Fontaine asked Plantu to sign a contract to produce a minimum of 24 cartoons per month to appear on the front page. One can see in Figure 3.9 below, the difference in the front-page design once Plantu's cartoon was introduced.

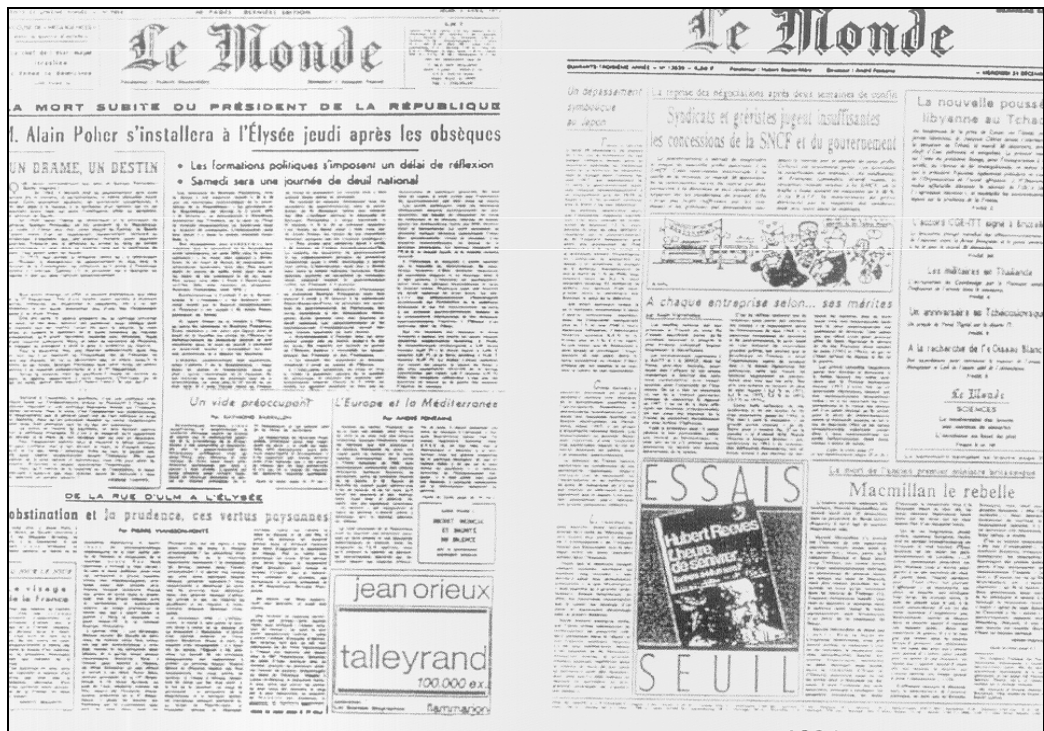


Figure 3.9 - The Front Page of *Le Monde*, (1974 & 1985).

For Plantu, having his cartoon published daily on the front page of *Le Monde* meant the beginning of a prosperous career. Soon after, Plantu started to be solicited by other French media, including radio and television. On television, he was invited to join a team of cartoonists who were commissioned to draw live during Michel Polac's political debates, *Droit de Réponse*, in 1987. Plantu speaks of this experience as having been a very positive one, for there he learnt how to draw according to a specific prompt, to express his ideas rapidly but with clarity and without any unnecessary embellishment.⁵¹ This on-screen experience also served a secondary purpose: thanks to the television

⁵⁰ 'Portrait d'un Quotidien', special issue of *Le Monde*, February 2001, p.2.

⁵¹ 'Portrait d'un Quotidien', p.2.

programme, Plantu became known to *Le Monde's* readers and gained respect amongst his fellow journalists on the editorial team. Whilst he was indebted to *Le Monde* for being catapulted into the position of front-page editorialist, this experience caused him some anxiety as he later commented:

Je profite de l'image du *Monde*. La force de mon dessin, c'est aussi qu'il est entouré de gris et de sérieux.[...] Il y a une coqueluche autour du dessin. Tant mieux. Mais à côté du gars qui s'est trimbalé trois mois en Ethiopie ou ailleurs, que l'on ne voie que moi, c'est un peu injuste.⁵²

Plantu's accomplishments must be acknowledged for they highlight the cartoonist's importance in contemporary France. One must not forget however, that Plantu has been commenting on the world's socio-political events for over three decades, and, the list of subjects that he critically observed therefore is extensive. Examples of events that Plantu commented on include the economic crisis of 1973 that put the oil-exporting countries on the map. He has reported through his drawings on the Yom Kippur war in 1973, the Camp David agreement in 1978, the war between Iran and Iraq from 1980 to 1987, the fall of the Eastern Bloc countries and the Kosovan war. There are also other matters like the abuse of the Third World countries by the West, the development of the European community and a wide range of environmental and biological issues.

However, the events that are the most significant in Plantu's professional life and that greatly influenced his notoriety revolve around his meetings with the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat and the Israeli Foreign Secretary Shimon Peres.⁵³ Indeed, Plantu had already commented on the events in this part of the world but in the early 1990s, he was given the opportunity to play an active role as a reporter-journalist when *Le Monde* entrusted him to interview both Yasser Arafat and Shimon Peres.⁵⁴ It was the first time that a French cartoonist had ever received such an opportunity. In fact, Plantu met Yasser Arafat on two

⁵² Michel Richard, 'Plantu, Trait Pour Trait'. At that time, Plantu could not foresee that *Le Monde* would entrust him with special missions such as being the representative of the newspaper abroad.

⁵³ The account of Plantu's trip to the Middle East was published by the author in 'Plantu, The Editorial in Caricatures: An Analysis of the Role and the Impact of Plantu's Political Cartoons in the French Daily Newspaper, *Le Monde*'. *International Journal of Comic Art*, Vol. 4, No 2, (November 2002), pp.53-69. Plantu's graphic comments on the events in the Middle East countries, were published in both *Le Monde* and *L'Express* and are compiled in his book of cartoons titled: *Plantu, Reproche-Orient, de la Guerre du Kippour à la Guerre du Golfe*. (Paris : Seuil, *Le Monde* Editions, 1991).

⁵⁴ The second meeting with Arafat and the meeting with Peres were recorded and later shown twice on France 2, as part of the television programme *La Vingt Cinquième Heure*, in April 1992 and February 1993.

occasions of which the first was in May 1991, in Tunis. Arafat summoned the cartoonist in order to discuss Plantu's graphic comments on the Israeli-Arab conflict. Plantu was far from expecting this call, as he explained to Marianne Payot:

Je faisais une exposition à Tunis : Le soir à mon hotel, coup de téléphone, Arafat souhaitait me voir, j'ai d'abord cru à une blague. Puis on m'a fait traverser la ville avec quelques hommes baraqués bardés de kalchnikovs, tous feux éteints. C'était incroyable, j'ai discuté la nuit entière avec le chef de l'OLP. Il me parlait de mes dessins tout en me faisant des tartines de miel [...].⁵⁵

During the interview, which was tense at times, the PLO representative contested the content of some of Plantu's cartoons. Arafat wanted to explain his position in view of Plantu's criticisms of the situation, as for example, in the cartoons featured in Figure 3.10 and 3.11, which he particularly disliked. In Figure 3.10 below, Plantu comments on the alleged friendship between Yasser Arafat and Saddam Hussein and on the perceived lack of solidarity shown by the Palestinian leader towards the Kuwaiti Community during the Gulf War.



Figure 3.10 - The Gulf War, (Reproche-Orient p.125).
"Another cry-baby demanding the liberation of his occupied land!"

⁵⁵ Marianne Payot, 'Plantu, le Trait et la Politique', *Lire*, December 1995.



Figure 3.11 – Terrorist Attacks, (Reproche-Orient p.87).
"I had said: no bombings!"

In Figure 3.11 above, Yasser Arafat is depicted as having no control over the Palestinian terrorist attacks: he is shouting his orders at a non-existent audience. On discussing this cartoon, Arafat stopped the interview. However, he agreed to meet Plantu again and, a few months later, in November, the cartoonist returned to Tunis with a camera crew to record the second meeting. During this more formal interview, Arafat expressed his wish for reconciliation with Israel in the map and drawings that Plantu had sketched for the purpose. In the cartoon below, Figure 3.12, it was Yasser Arafat that completed Plantu's sketch of the two flags. After colouring in the Palestinian flag, Arafat drew the Star of David on the Israeli flag and coloured it in blue.

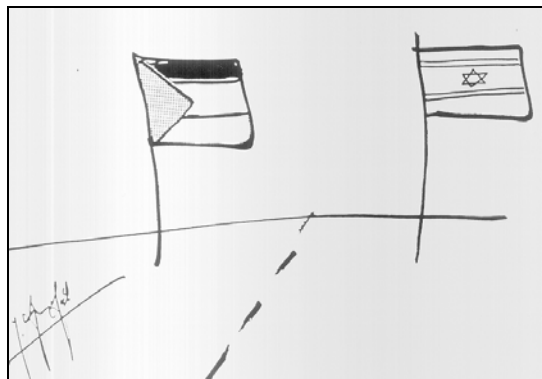


Figure 3.12 - The Two Flags Coloured and Signed by Yasser Arafat, (November 1991).

However, as a representative of *Le Monde*, a newspaper dedicated to impartiality, Plantu also wished to meet the Israeli leader. Thus, in November 1992, whilst the French President, François Mitterrand visited Israel, Plantu arranged an interview with Shimon Peres, in Jerusalem. As Arafat had

previously done, Shimon Peres signed the cartoons presented by Plantu and added to the drawings the frontiers of Israel with Palestine and even hearts on another (see Figures 3.13 to 3.18 below).

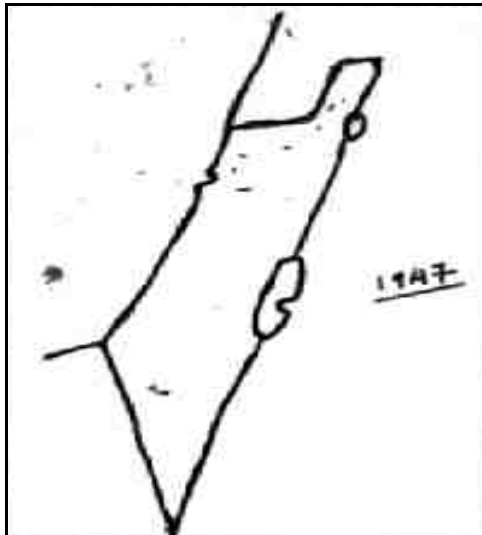


Figure 3.13 - Palestine by Arafat (May 1991).
Arafat drew the frontiers of his country as they were in 1947, before the creation of the state of Israel.

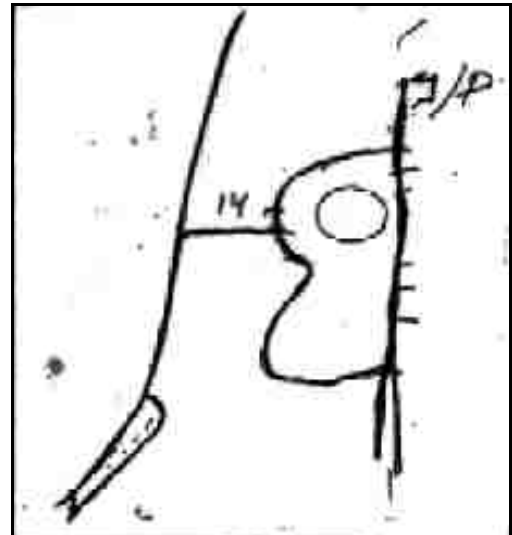


Figure 3.14 - Israel by Peres (November 1992).
Peres drew the Israeli borders to enclose an autonomous state of Palestine.

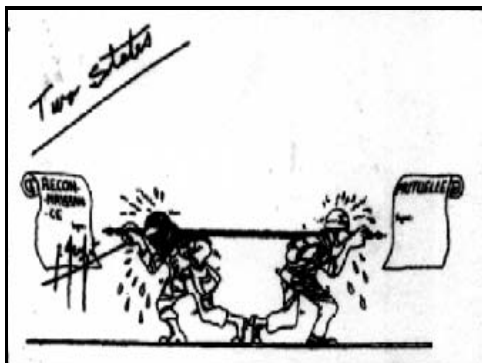


Figure 3.15 - Cartoon signed by Yasser Arafat in 1991.

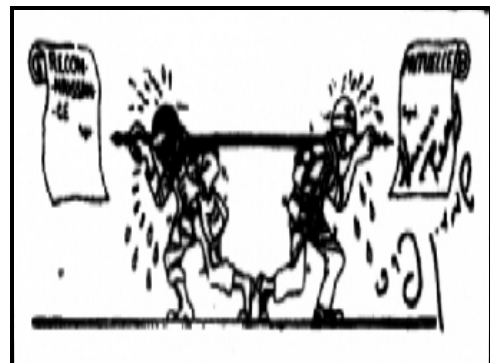


Figure 3.16 - A similar drawing signed by Peres in 1992.

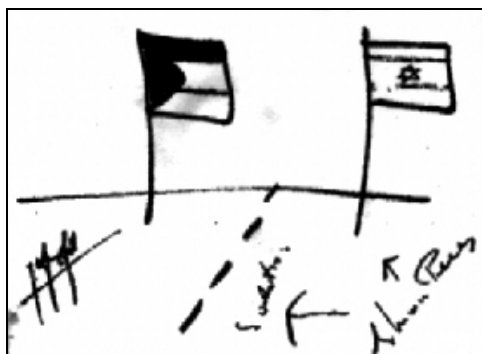
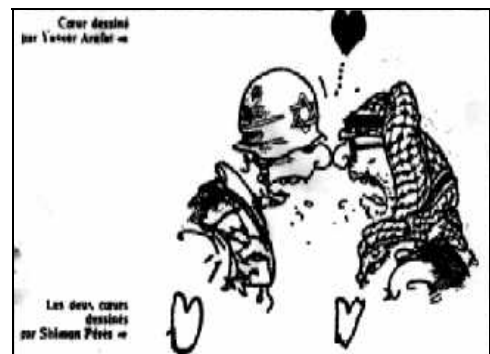


Figure 3.17 - The Two Flags: in 1992, Peres added his signature to the cartoon signed by Arafat in 1991.



3.18 - The Hearts of Friendship drawn on Plantu's cartoon by Peres in 1992.

Thirteen years later, in 2004, the political situation between the two territories had worsened and Plantu was to meet Yasser Arafat again. Although Yasser Arafat was a prisoner, locked up in his own dilapidated palace of Ramallah, Plantu was granted a visit. The Palestinian leader talked about his situation with great bitterness.⁵⁶ Again, he evoked his hopes for peace in the Middle East by signing Plantu's drawing of a dove carrying in its beak the Israeli flag with the Star of David on it (Figure 3.19).

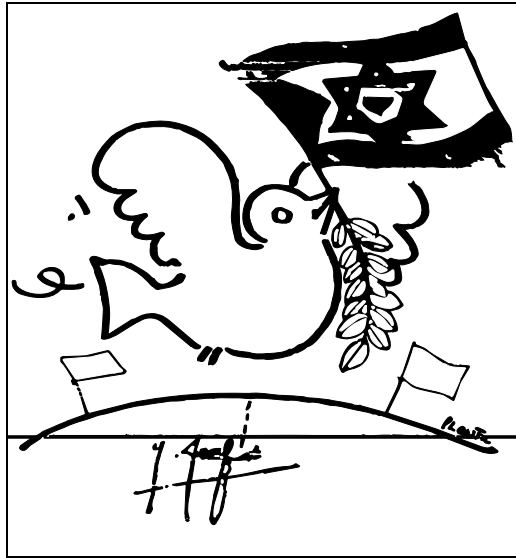


Figure 3.19 – *Middle East Peace*, *Le Monde* (25 June 2004).

The moments that *Le Monde's* cartoonist spent with the two leaders are very significant for their historic value and to further demonstrate the influence of editorial cartooning. Most significantly, prior to the ratification of the Oslo Agreements in 1993, it was the first time that Yasser Arafat and Shimon Peres had co-signed a document. Due to the historic importance of this event, soon after Plantu exhibited the cartoon with the *Two Flags* (Figure 3.17) at the International Scoop Festival in Angers where he was granted the *Prix du Document Rare* for it.⁵⁷ Aside from the political impact of these drawings these unique events bolstered Plantu's editorial cartoonist image immensely. As Sonia Gauthier remarked, the cartoonist may not have played a determining

⁵⁶ The interview was published in *Le Monde* on 25 June 2004.

⁵⁷ This festival was created in 1986, with the approval of UNESCO and the CNRS (*Centre National de Recherche Scientifique*) to provide journalists with the opportunity 'to think about mankind and the world we are living in'. For more information see Festival International du Scoop et du Journalisme, <<http://perso.orange.fr/festivalscoop/Fr/Index.htm>>

role in the peace negotiations in the Middle East, but his intervention showed that the two political personalities thought highly of Plantu's graphic expression and as *Le Monde's* cartoonist he was viewed as a valid representative of the French press.⁵⁸ As a consequence of Plantu's work in the Middle East and further afield he has received numerous public accolades including being voted 'Journalist of the Year' by the weekly magazine *Communications et Business* in 1987; and in 1988, he won the Prix Mumm and in 1989 he obtained the Prix de l'Humour Noir.

Plantu's work is not limited to his daily appearances on *Le Monde's* front page. He is a very versatile artist. Since 1991, he has also been contributing to the magazine *L'Express*. There, every week, he is allocated an entire page to enable him to comment on worldwide events. In December 2001 *L'Express* published a compilation of the cartoons that Plantu had drawn during the year; it sold 600,000 copies. Plantu's humanitarian and militant work should not be overlooked either. For example, in 1998, the French postal service entrusted Plantu to design a stamp to raise money for the international humanitarian organisation, *Médecins sans Frontières*, of which 8.5 million stamps were issued to support the cause. In the same year, UNESCO asked Plantu to illustrate several leaflets to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Seven years after his first philatelic experience, Plantu was again called upon by the Post Office in 2005 to design an editorial stamp to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Liberation of the Concentration Camps. (See below, in Figure 3.20).



Figure 3.20 - Commemorative Stamp, Plantu (Issued 25 April 2005).

⁵⁸ Sonia Gauthier, *Ici, Guebwiller, le lycée Deck parle à Plantu*, (Guebwiller: Lycée Deck, 1995), p.14.

This new commission was particularly significant for Plantu. He explained the message in his stamp to Pierre Julien, during an interview for *Timbres Magazine*:

J'ai cherché à rendre hommage au-delà du drame des gens qui ont été victimes des camps, aux libérateurs: aux soviets et aux américains. [...] Il est remarquable que la Poste m'ait permis de faire un timbre éditorial et non pas un timbre qui aurait été une sorte de "politiquement correct". La Poste m'a accordé une prise de position politique, ce qui m'a plu. [...] Pourvu que le choc graphique permette qu'il (le lecteur) rentre dans : "il y a des gens qui ont souffert"... "ces gens-là sont libérés"... "par qui"... En trois secondes! C'est comme cela qu'il faut voir le timbre: comme un hommage de trois secondes.
59

Plantu frequently exhibits his work abroad for humanitarian causes. For example, in March 2005, an exhibition was organised in his honour by the Cairo Press Syndicate, in Egypt, on behalf of UNICEF, to raise awareness to the ongoing crisis in Darfur (Sudan). This participation in humanitarian causes suits Plantu for he is also militant in his determination to use his talent and his fame to help spread peace across the world. Indeed, the meetings with Yasser Arafat and Shimon Perez made Plantu realise the importance of his role as an editorialist:

A cette occasion, je me suis rendu compte que le langage du dessin était non seulement capable de rassembler mais aussi de faire passer un message qui transgresse les interdits : à l'époque Yasser Arafat était non seulement incapable de dire la phrase "je reconnais l'Etat d'Israël" et pourtant, avec un feutre bleu, il a dessiné l'étoile de David du drapeau israélien. [...] Depuis, je me suis beaucoup interrogé sur le rôle du dessinateur de presse. Les caricatures sont très souvent mises en cause pour la causticité de leur dessin, cela est très normal; mais je me suis aperçu qu'il y avait un blocage entre deux cultures opposées, celle de l'Orient et celle de l'Occident. [...] Souvent les dessinateurs ont un angle de vue d'attaque unilatéral : le travail du caricaturiste devient alors plus proche du militant que du journaliste.⁶⁰

Thus, Plantu was motivated by the powerful effects of the aforementioned meetings and decided to initiate a series of gatherings with International cartoonists in order to reflect on their journalistic role and find ways to promote

⁵⁹ Pierre Julien, 'Plantu Signe un Timbre sur la Libération des Camps', *Timbres Magazine*, Hors-programme, April 2005. *Timbres Magazine* is a French specialist magazine for stamps collectors.

⁶⁰ 'Cartooning for Peace' UNRIC, <<http://www.cartooningforpeace.org/16-10-2006>> ,16 October 2006, [accessed 10 December 2006].

peace. After Plantu had appealed several times to Kofi Anan, in 2002 the UN Secretary agreed to sponsor the meetings. For the previous four years, the UN had already organised a series of conferences dealing with intolerance.⁶¹ The fifth conference 'Cartooning for Peace', was then organised by Plantu, with a seminar and an exhibition of cartoons, at the UN Headquarters in New York, on 16 October 2006. This event was sponsored by *Le Monde*, the French Ministry of Culture, the Museum of Caricature in Antibes (France), the Salon du Dessin de Presse et d' Humour in St. Just Le Martel (France), and the Emory University's Claus M. Halle Institute for Global Learning (Atlanta, Georgia). At that time, the issue of the responsibilities of cartoonists was highly topical following the controversial portrayal of Islamic Prophet Muhammad and the subsequent riots over the 'Cartoons War'. I shall explore the issues of cartooning responsibilities and the 'Cartoons War' in more detail in Chapter 5.

Summary

This chapter has reviewed the evolution of French graphic satire in the twentieth-century and the early twenty-first century to evaluate the significance and the impact of political caricature during key moments in the medium's recent history. To start with, I have underlined the medium's stylistic changes during the *fin de siècle* and the interwar period when, French graphic artists finally achieved professional recognition within the newspaper industry. Graphic satire evolved from sophisticated lithographs to single panel cartoons to fit in the pages of modern newspapers, marking the end of an era in caricature. French caricature may have evolved in form and content to suit the changing times but in my view, the evolution in the artist's professional status had two important outcomes. With the growth of mass production and a plethora of publications in France, the artist acquired a new level of choice, the freedom to contribute to different publications whatever their personal political inclination. Moreover, political cartoonists benefited the most from this evolution in their trade, able to find employment regardless of their political ideologies.

⁶¹ The seminars explored ways to promote understanding amongst the peoples. They were titled: *Confronting anti-Semitism* on 24 June 2004; *Confronting Islamophobia* on 7 December 2004; *Fanning the Flame of Intolerance* on 3 May 2005, and *Combating Genocide* on 21 November 2005.

In this chapter, I have also reviewed the professional achievement of two of France's most famous editorial cartoonists, Jacques Faizant and Plantu. The evaluation of their work highlights that Faizant maintained the post-World War II humorist tradition, finding a 'niche' on the front page of *Le Figaro*, whereas Plantu in many respects rejected conformism and used his art as a platform for democratic debate. I suggest that between the two cartoonist's editorial work, it is Plantu's cartoons that best highlight the medium's influence and prominence in France and abroad. I propose that in the same way that nineteenth-century French graphic artists fought for their rights of expression with powerful caricatures, today Plantu fights for peace with his editorial creations.

In the following chapter, I will further discuss Plantu's work but more specifically in relation to his style of cartooning. Through the examination of Plantu's graphic representations of the late French President François Mitterrand, I show how historical cartooning conventions, modern cultural influences and communication theories are illustrated within Plantu's editorial cartoons, thus reinforcing the proposition that the cartoon is a cultural form in its own right and an effective medium of communication.

Chapter 4

The Editorial Cartoon: An Act of Communication

'A cartoon, although packaged within a deceptively simple frame, is a complex exercise in semiotic analysis. No other art form, in print or screen media, combines words, pictures, and meanings in such an interwoven way'.¹

Introduction

Building on the previous chapter, which discussed the development of the editorial cartoon and its prominence in modern French culture, Chapter 4 investigates how such cartoons function, in terms of how they communicate information and convey meaning, and aims to examine what might be described as techniques of persuasion used by cartoonists to communicate serious issues. The main objective of the chapter is to explore the nature of the editorial cartoon in order to demonstrate its effectiveness in delivering complex messages, with the focus on Plantu's artistic approach. In analysing Plantu's graphic representations of the late French President, François Mitterrand, I explore Plantu's cartooning style and the conventions and cultural influences he draws upon to chronicle topical events in spite of challenges such as drawing against someone with whom he has political affiliations to. On a broader note, this chapter aims to further demonstrate how editorial graphics maintained their role in twentieth century France as a catalyst for debate.

Cartooning is a powerful communication medium that benefits from a number of advantages. Firstly, I have suggested that the medium is more accessible to those who do not have strong language skills, and secondly it can significantly influence public opinion. Moreover, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, editorial cartoons, whether social or political, perform an important journalistic role. The editorial cartoon's prime position in newspapers, its effectiveness in reporting on topical events and the growing influence of cartoonists in the printed media, point to the medium as an important aspect of modern journalism. However, the power of the cartoon is often overlooked as simply a form of entertainment, because of its roots in caricature and humour.

¹ Paul Martin Lester, *Images with Messages*, (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2000), p.199.

But, as Lester argues, the cartoon is more complex than it initially appears.² Indeed, I suggest that the political cartoon is the product of a creative act, which constructs and conveys ‘meanings’. As a visual commentary, it reflects an opinion – the subjective expression of an individual. Furthermore, the consumption of the editorial cartoon is not a passive act: it requires the participation of the reader to interpret it.

This chapter is organised in three sections. First, I look at how images such as editorial cartoons communicate meaning. I suggest that semiotics, the study of the meaning of signs in aural, verbal or visual representations, rather than the more linear ‘transmission’ model of Shannon & Weaver, is an appropriate method through which to analyse political cartoons. Whilst a number of semiotic theorists, such as Roman Jakobson and Umberto Eco offer ways of analysing communication, my main focus will be on Roland Barthes and Stuart Hall’s work, for their approach of ‘encoding’ and ‘decoding’ messages. In the second section, I examine the cartooning conventions and techniques that the cartoonist Plantu uses to try to construct, in Hall’s words, a ‘preferred meaning’.³ In particular, I propose that Plantu’s personal style of cartooning is characterised by his awareness of cartooning traditions, his utilisation of cultural/historical references, as well as his application of a wide range of rhetorical figures to engage the audience. In the final section of this chapter, I focus on Plantu’s representation of the late President François Mitterrand, from 1981 to 1995, to demonstrate the power of editorial cartooning in capturing and commenting on major social and political events and scandals that surrounded the presidency. In particular, I place the emphasis on Mitterrand’s relationship with *Le Monde*, since the election of a Socialist president presented a number of challenges for *Le Monde*’s front-page cartoonist. Indeed, traditionally, the essence of editorial cartooning is to draw ‘against’ the subject. In this case, Plantu was required to criticize Mitterrand, someone with whom he had a personal political affinity. As an editorial cartoonist, and journalist, Plantu was expected to represent the view of the newspaper, which in *Le Monde*’s case, was supposed to be neutral. Yet, as Christian Massol comments, ‘*Le Monde* is not as politically disengaged, as it

² Paul Martin Lester, *Images with Messages*, (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2000), p.199.

³ The notion of ‘preferred reading’ was introduced by Stuart Hall.

likes to suggest'.⁴ In the mid 1970s, under Jacques Fauvet's management, *Le Monde* moved towards Socialism in a bid to support Mitterrand against Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the right-centrist president, in the presidential election of 1974. Mitterrand's eventual election in 1981 was significant as he represented change in French society. He was the first candidate from the Left to be elected through universal suffrage, ending 23-years of the Right in power under the Fifth Republic. Yet, *Le Monde's* alliance with Mitterrand did not last. As Sue Collard explains, 'the loss of neutrality and new collusion with the party of government had not been appreciated by its readers' and readership declined.⁵ It is in reaction to this situation that *Le Monde* changed its reporting to a more investigative style. The relationship between *Le Monde* and Mitterrand deteriorated when the newspaper aggressively investigated some of Mitterrand's affairs. This matter is discussed in greater detail below. It is well known in France that *Le Monde* maintained a hostile position towards Mitterrand during his double *septennat*. Thus, it is particularly interesting to study how Plantu managed to represent Mitterrand, in line with *Le Monde's* changing editorial policy. The antagonism that existed between *Le Monde's* management team and Mitterrand during the whole of his presidency gives good reason for the choice of a corpus of images of President Mitterrand as a case study.

The Political Cartoon: An Act of Semiotic Communication

Before looking at how cartoons communicate meaning it is useful to have an understanding of 'visual representations'. According to Stuart Hall, *representation* means 'using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent the world meaningfully, to other people'.⁶ It involves the use of language, signs and images that represent things. Political cartooning uses graphic art to represent the world, to communicate meaning about a specific event or political personality. It is then safe to argue that, in these terms, political cartoons belong to a 'system of representation', that is to say that they

⁴ In conversation with Micheline Maupoint in *Le Monde's* headquarters, April 18 2002. Christian Massol was appointed Chief Editor in 2001.

⁵ Sue Collard, 'Le Monde and Mitterrand: Challenging the Yellow Line', *The Web Journal of Media French Studies*, Vol. 7, December 2008.

<<http://wjfms.ncl.ac.uk/collard.pdf>> [accessed 15 March 2009].

⁶ Stuart Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, (London: Sage, 2001), p.15.

'work as a language', by using some language-like elements to express a concept or an idea. As Hall explains:

These elements are part of our natural and material world; but their importance for language is not what they *are* but what they *do*, their function. They construct meaning and transmit it. They signify. They don't have any clear meaning in *themselves*. Rather, they are the vehicles or media which *carry meaning* because they operate as symbols, which stand for or represent (i.e. symbolise) the meanings we wish to communicate, To use another metaphor, they (the elements of representation discussed earlier) function as *signs*. Signs stand for or *represent* our concepts, ideas and feelings in such a way as to enable others to 'read', decode or interpret their meaning in roughly the same way we do.⁷

Thus, given that political cartoons form part of such representational systems, my focus is on establishing the relevance of a semiotic approach to the analysis of political cartoons. Semiotics is broadly conceived as the linguistic system that describes how people convey meaning, how they convey ideas for themselves or to others, whether through words or in other ways. Semiotics is a methodological tool that helps to understand the processes of communication and the construction of meaning, therefore, is an appropriate method for the study of cartoons. My aim here is not to retrace the history of the discipline, but rather to highlight its relevance to the analysis of cartoons.

Semiotics, better known as 'semiology' in French culture, is commonly defined as 'the study of signs' or 'the study of sign systems' in culture. The discipline owes its foundations and its scientific organisation to the work of two scholars in Switzerland and in America, Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce respectively. In Saussure's linguistic model the production of meaning depended on the activity of *signs* within a language as Douglas.S. Clarke points out:

Semiology is to have as its subject matter, all the devices used in human society for the purpose of communication, including both linguistic expressions and non-linguistic devices such as gestures and signals within non-linguistic codes.⁸

⁷ Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, p.15.

⁸ Douglas S. Clarke, *Principles of Semiotics*, (New York: Routledge & P. Kegan, 1987), p.29.

The *sign* is implicitly a communicative device between people who wish to communicate or express something.⁹ However, Saussure's main insight was to argue that a **sign** was made up of two different elements, the **signifier** which was the form – the actual word, image, object – and the **signified** that was the mental concept, the idea, with which the form was associated. Saussure theorised that if both elements were required to produce meaning, the relation between them was fixed by our cultural and linguistic codes, by social conventions that are specific to each society. Thus, the relationship between signifier and signified was established on the basis of a system of unwritten rules: in other words, a language and its cultural references. What is also of significance here is the assumption that all cultural objects work like languages, that is to say, in order to convey meaning they make use of signs and are subject to inherited codes and structures which are culturally specific.

However, as Daniel Chandler remarks: 'structuralist semioticians tend to focus on the internal structure of the text rather than on the processes involved in its construction or interpretation'.¹⁰ For modern critics such as Thomas Sebeok: 'The subject matter of semiotics, it is often credited, is the exchange of any messages whatsoever, in a word, communication',¹¹ where *communication* as James Carey describes is, 'a symbolic process whereby reality is produced, maintained, repaired and transformed'.¹² In Umberto Eco's terms: 'to communicate is to use the entire world as a semiotic apparatus. I believe that culture is that, and nothing else'.¹³ It follows that signs, codes and cultures can construct any form of non-verbal communication, such as cartooning. Therefore, single panel cartoons like editorial cartoons can be considered as particular aspects of the communication system in the sense that the primary aim of the image is to exchange a message during a bilateral semiotic interaction. Indeed, it can be suggested that these cartoons are 'active' communicative acts in the terms discussed and illustrated by Claude Shannon

⁹ Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz gives this simple definition of the *sign*: "A sign is something present that stands for something absent, as a cross represent Christianity; a sign system, also termed a code, is a collection of signs and rules for their use", in *Semiotics and Communication: Signs, Codes, Cultures*, (New Jersey: L.E.A, 1993) p.6.

¹⁰ Daniel Chandler, *Semiotics for Beginners*, 'Encoding-Decoding', February 2001 <<http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem08c.html>>, [accessed 15 March 2005].

¹¹ Thomas A. Sebeok, 'The Doctrine of Signs', J. Deely, B. Williams, & F.E. Kruse, *Frontiers in Semiotics*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p.36.

¹² James W. Carey, 'A Cultural Approach to Communication', *Communications*, 2 (Paris: Seuil, 1975), p.10.

¹³ Umberto Eco, 'Social Life as a Sign System', *Structuralism: An Introduction*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), p.57.

and Warren Weaver's theory of communication. The theory states that communication takes place in a linear form through the *communication chain*, as represented below:¹⁴

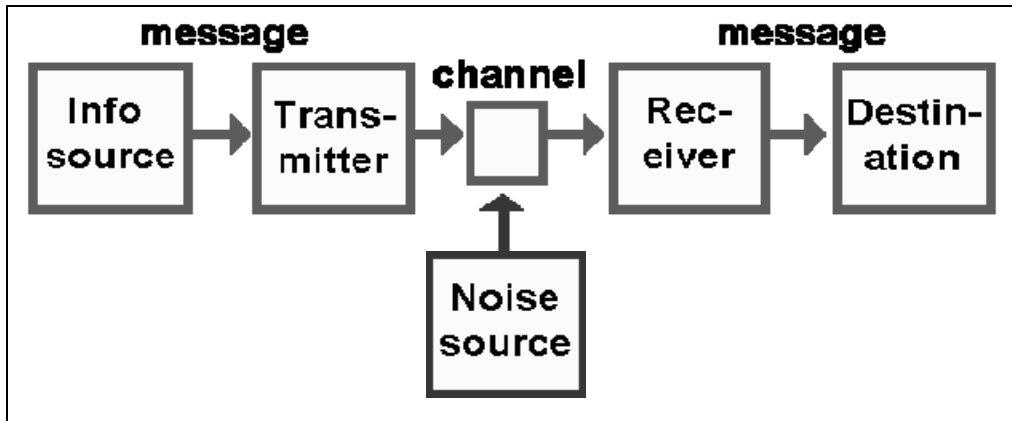


Figure 4.1 - *The Communication Chain*, Shannon & Weaver (1948).

The communication chain is defined as a physical medium of transmission where signals rather than signs are necessary elements of the transmission. In this instance, sign-producers and sign-receivers interact visually. The original model consisted of five elements, *information source*, *transmitter*, *channel*, *receiver*, and *destination*, as seen above in Figure 4.1. Applied to cartoons, I suggest that the *transmitter* (the cartoonist) sends a *message* (his graphic comment) to a *receiver* (the reader of the image) via a *channel* (the newspaper); the *information source* is the reference - the subject to be illustrated and commented on. The *receiver*, at the *destination*, can evaluate the meanings of the various signals sent through the messages by the *transmitter*.

However, I propose that Shannon and Weaver's basic model fails to take into account the complexities of communication and does not consider the importance of the context and the codes, nor the issue of interpretation or misinterpretation. The potential for misinterpretation exists in all forms of communication and the editorial cartoon is particularly vulnerable as its message is expressed in one statement only: the image. Following the legacy of Saussure, a number of semioticians, including Roman Jakobson (1960), have criticized the process of communication in terms of a linear chain.¹⁵ Within

¹⁴ Claude. E. Shannon & Warren, Weaver., *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1949), p.7.

¹⁵ See Thomas. A. Sebeok (Ed.), 'Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics', *Style in Language*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1960), pp.350-377.

the field of structuralism, Roland Barthes and Stuart Hall offer theoretical perspectives that, I suggest, are more relevant to the focus of this study.¹⁶ The French theorist Barthes was inspired by Jakobson's work and began to study the subject of semiotics, not so much as a process of communication but as an attitude. He believed that the importance of semiology resides in its functionality and he searched for meaning in human behaviour. Indeed, Barthes often claimed to be fascinated by the meaning of things and events that surround us in everyday life.¹⁷ It was in the mid 1960s that Barthes introduced a form of analysis to interpret popular culture as myths. He argued that objects and cultural events were part of a structural sign system that should be considered as texts to be 'read'. For Barthes, as Hall explains, 'since all cultural objects convey meaning and all cultural practices depend on meaning, they must make use of signs, they must work like language does'.¹⁸ As far as visual communication is concerned, the visual semiotics of Roland Barthes and more especially, his application of the Saussurian dichotomy *signifier-signified* to myths is useful for investigating the meanings included in different types of images. Having recognised the representation process by which meaning is produced, first the sign, then the codes, Barthes highlighted two levels of meaning within the sign:

Tout système de signification comporte un plan d'expression (celui des signifiants) et un plan de contenu (celui des signifiés) qui sont en relation. Au niveau de l'image, le premier plan est celui de la dénotation et le second, celui de la connotation.¹⁹

Furthermore, Barthes made a distinction between the two levels: the first level is a representative, denotative level, (the level of *denotation*) which is purely descriptive. In short, the *denotational* message is the literal visual message, an iconic message that is fairly easy to 'read', a simple matter of recognising who or what is depicted there, what he/she/it is doing. The second level is symbolic and connotative, (the level of *connotation*) where one interprets the sign. Connotation is a non-linguistic element that is concerned with the context and the content of the sign system. For Barthes, the way to analyse culture was

¹⁶ See Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, (trans. Annette Lavers & Colin Smith), (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967).

¹⁷ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. Translated by R. Howard, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1982).

¹⁸ Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, op. cit. p.36.

¹⁹ Roland Barthes, 'Rhétorique de l'image', *Communications 4*, (Paris: Seuil, 1964) p.130.

through connotations: the connotational message carries a range of higher-level meanings, broader concepts, which *signifiers* need to carefully decode. As explained by Catherine Kerbrat-Orecchioni:

Dans la *connotation* le sens est suggéré et son décodage est plus aléatoire. Le sens connotatif lui est subjectif, il s'expliquera en grande partie par le contexte socio-culturel du lecteur. La même image peut évoquer des significations différentes. Ces significations secondes, les connotations vont s'exprimer à travers des procédés rhétoriques comme la métaphore, l'ironie, etc [...].²⁰

It is clear that connotations are highly significant in regards to interpretation, or misinterpretation, of visual messages. Barthes has also considered the role that drawings such as cartoons played in society. He underlined that they were polysemic and therefore not easy to 'read' as they were open to multiple interpretations from different readers:

Dans l' image elle-même, il ya bien des modes de lecture: un schéma se prête à la signification beaucoup plus qu'un dessin, une imitation plus qu'un original, une caricature plus qu'un portrait.²¹

In studying the relation between the linguistic message, the caption that is often found in cartoons, and the iconic message, Barthes proposed that they functioned either as *anchorage* or as *relay*:

L'ancrage est la fonction la plus fréquente du message linguistique; on la retrouve communément dans la photographie de presse et la publicité. La fonction de relais est plus rare (du moins en ce qui concerne l'image fixe); on la retrouve surtout dans les dessins humoristiques et les bandes dessinées. Ici la parole et l'image sont dans un rapport complémentaire.²²

Building on Barthes' work, in the early 1970s Hall underlined the process of *coding* and *encoding* as signifying practices and put forward the notion of *preferred meaning* and *preferred reading*, which could be established at the level of transmitting and receiving a message, using a range of technical codes. The *preferred meaning* is the meaning, which is encoded into the message, either deliberately or at an unconscious level. The *preferred reading* concerns how the message is received, whether it is distorted or not.²³ This approach is

²⁰ Catherine Kerbrat-Orecchioni, *La Connotation*, (Lyon: Presses Universitaires, 1977) p.17.

²¹ R. Barthes, *Mythologies*, (Paris: Seuil, 1970), p.193.

²² R. Barthes, 'Rhétorique de l'image', op.cit, p.45.

²³ Simon During (Ed.), Stuart Hall, 'Encoding and Decoding', *The Cultural Studies*, (London: Routledge, 1973).

significant since, in *decoding* the message, the *receiver* may find different levels of meaning and the communication may fail if the *transmitter* and the *receiver* of the message use different codes.²⁴ This theory can be applied in a number of communication situations where the codes differ, such as when the group does not share the same cultures, same beliefs or the same ideas. As I shall argue in the following chapter, the 2006 'Cartoons War', which set Western and Islamic cultures against one another, is a solid example of the application of different codes and its effect on the 'preferred reading'.

Thus, it is useful to be aware of the socio-cultural and aesthetic codes when it comes to analyzing images like political cartoons, because it is through these codes that culture and ideology is revealed. Culture, as seen by Hall, consists of ideas or representations that a group of people share.²⁵ In the visual communication process, these ideas are expressed through *codes* and the *transmitter* uses signs from various codes to ensure the effective communication of his message. However, the *receiver* should also identify the codes that have been used in the message if he/she is to understand and accurately interpret the message. Messages are associated with meanings; therefore, they require the mental process of *encoding* and *decoding*. As I shall demonstrate throughout this chapter, in cartoons, this process is somehow simplified because of the fact that most of the elements of the cultural codes are conventional. In other words, they form a type of codified, universal language common to both the *transmitter* and *receiver's* culture and as such, they are supposed to be easily identified. The elements in the codes are supposed to lead to the same connotations therefore they are convenient for a cartoonist to use. Symbols and stereotyped motives are examples of these graphic conventions (see Figure 4.4, p.134).

It is worth noting the specificity of the political cartoon. It is an iconic message with the following characteristics: its perception is global and immediate and it can offer multiple meanings. In the iconic message, the *signifier* reflects the referent, creating the feeling of 'being there' or of immediate understanding. Yet, as Hall explains, icons give us the impression of immediate understanding because, 'at the level of denotation, the literal level, meaning is

²⁴ Hall, 'Encoding and Decoding', op.cit. p.100.

²⁵ Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, op. cit. p.3.

almost universally recognized this being due to certain socio-cultural codes which are learned at such an early age that they appear to be 'naturally' given'.²⁶ It is clear that, in 'reading' the literal message, at the denotative level, we can only recognize what we already know and, as explained by Barthes, 'this is a matter of almost anthropological knowledge'.²⁷ Barthes suggests here that, full of this inborn knowledge, we can easily 'decode' the visual message. The elements of the political cartoon are thus discursive: the iconic signs enunciate the cartoonist's discourse. Starting with the frame, its size, its position in the page, the graphics and the speech bubbles; in Barthes' words, they all act as necessary *relays* to the meaning process. Moreover, Plantu's editorial cartoon, in the prime position of the front page of *Le Monde*, is a form of rhetorical discourse because, in the same way as a political discourse does, it aims to persuade the reader to agree to his point of view. As Plantu explains: 'Avant tout je veux faire passer une idée, mon message, mon opinion, sur une situation précise, à tous les lecteurs du *Monde*, et si ils sont d'accord avec moi, c'est tant mieux.'²⁸

Graphic Techniques: Codes and Rhetoric

As we have seen, the drawing of a cartoon relies on a host of visual and linguistic codes to create the intended meaning for the viewer. For this to take place, cartoonists share a number of conventions and techniques that enable their messages to be immediately recognised and understood. According to Andre Baur, there are four codes used by editorial cartoonists that are almost indissociable: the codes of expression, exaggeration, identity and resemblance.²⁹ The code of expression consists of a variety of graphic conventions that enables the cartoonist not only to express emotions but also actions; they are easily understood by the reader as they represent common facial expressions: for instance, raised eyebrows are used to express surprise and lines placed around the body can suggest that the character is moving. The code of exaggeration, based on the principles of caricature, functions like a distorting mirror by exaggerating the characteristics or deformations of a

²⁶ Stuart Hall 'Encoding/Decoding', *Culture, Media, Language*, (London: Hutchinson, 1980), p.132.

²⁷ Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, (London: Fontana, 1977), p.36.

²⁸ In conversation with Micheline Maupoint, *Le Monde's* headquarters, 21 April 2000.

²⁹ Andre Baur, *Mieux vaut en Rire*, Thionville, issue 30, June 1993.

subject: for example, a big nose will be made bigger, a wide mouth will be made wider, and a fat body will be made fatter. Plantu's characters are no exceptions to these rules, as is shown here in Figure 4.2 below. Plantu's cartoon images show various political figures' features exaggerated and/or deformed, such as Mitterrand's nose and chin and, the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher's prominent nose, buck teeth and disappearing chin.



Figure 4.2 – Graphic Representations of Politicians, Plantu.
 From top left: François Mitterrand, Jean Lecanuet & George Marchais,
 From bottom left: Margaret Thatcher, Michel Rocard & Raymond Barre.

The third code, of identity, derives from the code of exaggeration and is essential in political cartooning. This involves studying the subject to capture his behaviour in order to find some specific elements about his manners or his appearance that the cartoonist can use to create a specific cartoon identity. What results from the process is very personal cartoon identity which once within the public domain becomes a rhetorical code in its own right. However, for the majority of cartoonists, the construction of a cartoon identity for a political personality is not always an easy task, since this needs to be done whilst maintaining a resemblance to the subject.³⁰ In political cartooning, the code of resemblance demands that the exaggeration of the physical features of a person does not impede recognition. Indeed, one must be able to immediately recognize the political personality from the representation. Where the subject is unknown to the public, the cartoonist has no alternative than to label him by name. Jacques Faizant, who allegedly invented this device, explained that, on occasions when a stranger was catapulted into ministerial functions and he was

³⁰ As explained in Chapter 1, it is important to maintain the resemblance of the original subject in caricature.

asked to produce a drawing the next day, he had to equip this person with a satchel bearing his name:

On est quand même obligé de lui mettre une petite serviette avec son nom et sa fonction parce que sinon les lecteurs se diraient: 'Qui c'est celui-là? Qu'est-ce qu'il fait dans le dessin?'.³¹

This technique of using 'accessories' has since been widely employed by editorial cartoonists. Plantu for example often reveals a subject's identity and/or function by labeling their briefcase or their clothing (as demonstrated in Figure 4.3 below and also Figure 3.10, p.114).



Figure 4.3 - *The Use of Accessories*, Plantu (1989 & 1990).

However, it seems that the code of resemblance is not always strictly respected. In fact, although it is useful to have a close resemblance with the subject, this does not really matter: once a cartoonist has chosen a particular representation for a political personality, he abides by it and over time it becomes familiar to the public. In other words, the identity cartoonists create for a personality becomes a new symbol for that individual and a convention that can then be used by other cartoonists to represent the person.

Apart from the graphic codes, the cartoonist also needs to rely on a specific body of pre-existing socio-cultural knowledge, that is to say a variety of symbols and stereotypes and a range of rhetorical figures. This will allow him to quickly and effectively summarize his ideas without the need for words. The symbol is a graphic device that makes it possible to materialise an abstraction. For example, the dove is universally adopted as a symbol of peace whilst the

³¹ In *Mieux Vaut en Rire*, (Thionville: André Baur, issue 7, June 1987).

skeleton with a scythe represents death.³² A favourite object can also become a symbol for subject's representation, an object without which he cannot exist. Examples of the use of symbols in Plantu's work include Edouard Balladur's sedan chair and the cactus that Jean Lecanuet always carries in his arms (see Figure 4.6, p.136 and Figure 4.2, p.132 respectively).³³ These symbols are sometimes stereotypical in their nature, the equivalent of a 'cliché', and are common to a group of people. Stereotypes are useful to the cartoonist not only because they are part of collective knowledge but also because they enable him to quickly represent a group of people. Most people are able to associate the man wearing a beret, carrying a baguette and a bottle of wine, with a Frenchman. Figure 4.4 below, shows some specific examples of stereotypes used by Plantu: the Englishman with his top hat reading a quality paper, the overweight American tourist and the Frenchman wearing a dressing gown and beret sat in his arm chair.

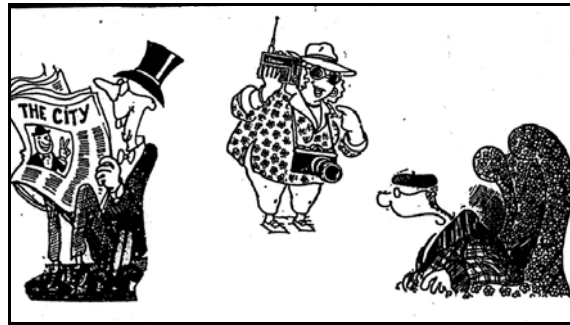


Figure 4.4 - *Stereotypes Commonly Used, Plantu.*

In creating a cartoon, the editorial cartoonist's primary aim is to capture the attention of the reader and arouse their emotions so that they react to a particular situation. However, the use of iconic devices is not always sufficient to achieve this; the cartoonist sometimes needs to go beyond the codes of expression, exaggeration, identity and resemblance, and beyond symbols and stereotypes. It is therefore useful to have knowledge of the rhetorical figures

³² The dove was adopted as a modern symbol of peace after the painter Pablo Picasso drew it on a poster for the World Peace Congress in 1949. The idea came from an old European tale saying that if a dove flew around a house where someone was dying then his soul would be at peace.

³³ The cactus was used to mock the fact that Lecanuet had been refused the function of Foreign Minister in Chirac's new government in 1986. The idea came to Plantu after watching a play where the main character could not part from a pot plant. The hilarity that this situation caused suggested to Plantu to equip Lecanuet with a cactus, as Lecanuet was known to take his holidays in the Egyptian desert. As discussed by Plantu in conversation with Micheline Maupoint, 21 April 2000.

employed by cartoonists in order to understand how drawings are constructed for 'preferred meaning' and how specific messages are conveyed.³⁴

A rhetorical figure is a figure of speech, 'a word or phrase used in a non-literal sense for rhetorical or vivid effect'.³⁵ Metaphors, similes, and hyperbole are all common figures of speech. According to this definition, the field of rhetoric is in linguistics but the basic principles of rhetoric can be generalised and also be applied to visual images. In political cartooning, rhetoric is used in both the text and the image for its power of emphasis and persuasion. Rhetorical figures are useful not only to convince the reader of a fact but also to make him react to the political situation. In rhetoric, cartoonists often use a type of figures of speech: the *trope*, which is 'a figurative or metaphorical use of a word or expression'.³⁶ The trope can convey a meaning other than the literal, therefore it is particularly useful at the level of connotation. It enables the cartoonist to represent human emotions through external actions. As I shall demonstrate further in this chapter, a series of tropes, such as metaphor, allegory, derision, sarcasm, and irony, used in the representation of Mitterrand by Plantu, demonstrate the mimetic function of Plantu's cartoons. The visual metaphor is used to represent an abstraction, for instance a pile of gold coins represents opulence. It should be noted that allegory, the representation of an idea with symbols, derives from metaphor and include representations of peace through a dove or of death with a skeleton. Other modes of figuration used by cartoonists include personification (giving human features to inanimate objects) and zoomorphism (giving animal characteristics to humans) and hyperbole. *Hyperbole* is used to exaggerate a fact or to give emphasis to something specific. The cartoon below, that refers to the election of Laurent Fabius as Prime Minister in 1984, illustrates both *metaphor* and *hyperbole*. Whilst Mitterrand initially benefitted from the support of the Communist Party to achieve his presidency, the cartoon comments on how overtime he gradually disposed of Communist Ministers at the National Assembly until eventually only four remained. George Marchais, the Leader of the Communist Party, is seen

³⁴ Here I illustrate only some of the rhetorical figures used in cartooning. More will be highlighted when they occur in the corpus of cartoons of Mitterrand.

³⁵ Definition of 'Figure of Speech', *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 11th Ed., Revised, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

³⁶ Definition of 'Trope', *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, op cit.

cutting off a branch, Mitterrand's exaggerated nose, on which the Ministers are perched (see Figure 4.5 below). It is clear in this cartoon, featured on the front-page of *Le Monde*, that Plantu openly insinuates that the President is a liar through the use of his reference to the Pinocchio-like nose.

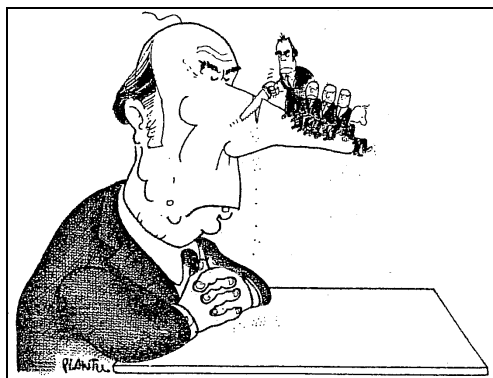


Figure 4.5 – *Mitterrand's Nose*, Plantu (*Le Monde*, 20 July 1984)

Derision and *sarcasm* derive from *irony*, which in linguistics is the 'the expression of meaning through the use of language signifying the opposite, typically for humorous effect'.³⁷ In the visual, it is usually the opposition between words and the image that gives this trope a value. The cartoonist places words in the speech bubble that are wrong or contradictory, in order to highlight the hypocrisy or the thoughtlessness of this person. The reference in Plantu's cartoon, below in Figure 4.6, is of the stock market crash of 1987. The irony in the message comes from the fact that the news caused panic amongst Balladur's sedan-porters while the Finance Minister remained absolutely calm and was forced to carry his own chair.

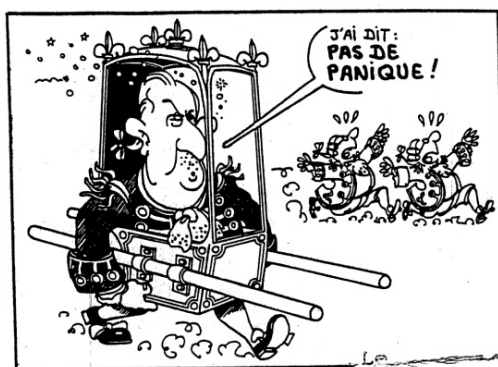


Figure 4.6 – *Irony*, Plantu (1987)

³⁷ Definition of 'Irony', *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, op cit.

Whilst there are a plethora of codes and conventions employed by cartoonists to graphically represent their subject, it is evident that like all artists, each cartoonist will have their own sources of inspiration that influence their creativity. In addition, the ideas contained in a editorial cartoons are as important as the aesthetics of the drawing. To highlight this point I will demonstrate how Plantu's cartoons are significantly influenced by cultural references such as the theatre and literature.

Plantu's Cultural Borrowings

Since his youth, Plantu has been passionately interested in the performing arts. Indeed, for years, he studied the masterpieces of French drama, vaudeville, comedy and farce. He analysed the gestures and the expressions of his favorite characters and used them in his drawings consequently, many of Plantu's cartoons are staged, constructed with attention to detail, as in a real play.³⁸ It was when Plantu met the Polish director Tadeusz Kantor in the mid-1970s that he was inspired to employ a new scenography: a stage set that is no longer still, where actors move out of the frame, escaping from their predetermined role, where they become themselves spectators. Tadeusz Kantor (1815-1990) was an artist, writer and scenic designer who developed an innovative and original theatrical genre whereby the visual was more important than the text. His plays drew from silent movies whereby music replaced texts and words and the entire production was based on images and symbols. On stage the scenes were disjointed, macabre at times, with actors looking dead or moving about like puppets in common places, like cafés or public halls.³⁹ The theatrical space was unusual: actors moved in and out of picture frames, through open or sliding doors. They often hid behind screens and the use of theatrical space was also significant. Doors, screens, dummies, objects and all other theatrical props were carefully selected for their function and were an essential part of the production. For Kantor, this type of production represented a *theatre of reality* in which spectators were expected to feel emotions, to connect with the images or their

³⁸ Plantu, in conversation with Micheline Maupoint, 24 October 2000. Plantu wanted to be an actor. He started studying the subject at University but had to give up his studies for financial reasons. Nevertheless, today he shares this passion with his wife who teaches drama at the *Institut d'Etudes Théâtrales* in Paris. My remarks on the influence of Kantor's theatre on Plantu are based on information taken from *Plantu, Sculptures et Dessin*, pp.29-31, (Paris: Musées, 2003).

³⁹ Kantor was always on stage, as he wanted to better communicate his ideas and emotions to the audience, *Plantu, Sculptures et Dessin*, p.30.

associations and with the objects too.⁴⁰ Kantor's entire *mise en scène* was considered 'as being worked out like a drawing' and this is very likely the peculiarity that attracted the young Plantu when he first discovered Kantor's theatre.⁴¹ There are many similarities with Kantor's theatrical world in much of Plantu's work. The cartoon in Figure 4.7 below refers to the divergence that occurred between members of the right coalition in 1988. Here Jacques Chirac and Edouard Balladur disagree with the centrist, Raymond Barre. A situation that was a serious matter in the run up to the presidential elections became a farce under Plantu's pen. Here, Plantu created an atmosphere of derision with out dated costumes and old fashioned theatrical props: Raymond Barre is depicted with a syringe, as if he was capable of curing the illness that was affecting his political party. His attitude and the puns are ridiculous to the point of causing hilarity, with text and image *relaying* to reinforce the derision. Within the frame, the decor is theatrical and in great part Kantorian: we see the audience, a crowd of spectators looking up at the characters on stage, each one playing his role, and Barre standing behind his lectern. The characters look real in expressing emotions of anger or laughter. Even the 'two Mitterrand's' contemplating the scene, from above the frame, are part of the set as if they were back stage technicians of a real performance. Plantu placed them there, looking at the scene with amusement, to imply that although Mitterrand did not want to take any part in this play (the dispute between members of the right political wing) he was interested enough to follow the debate from afar and was certainly pleased about their disagreement.



Figure 4.7 - The Two Mitterrands Contemplate a Dispute between Members of the Right Coalition, Plantu.

⁴⁰ As explained by Brunella Erulli in 'The space of emotions', *The New York Times*, 9, May 1982.

⁴¹ Brunella Erulli, op.cit.

Another of Plantu's favorite borrowings from Kantor's theater is the utilization of props such as ropes. For Kantor, the prop was an essential feature on stage; indissociable from the actor, it was an object that gave him his identity. One such use of the prop, was that of attaching to the actor, his companion or opponent, either as a dummy carried on his back or a weight on the shoulders. Like Kantor, Plantu makes great use of props such as I have previously shown with the examples of Balladur's sedan chair and Lecanuet's cactus (Figure 4.6, p.136 and Figure 4.2, p.132 respectively). Plantu also often uses the rope as a prop, tying up two antagonists back to back, as in this cartoon below where Jacques Chirac is tightly attached to François Mitterrand (Figure 4.8 below). As I discuss below, the relationship between Chirac and Mitterrand was far from being harmonious.

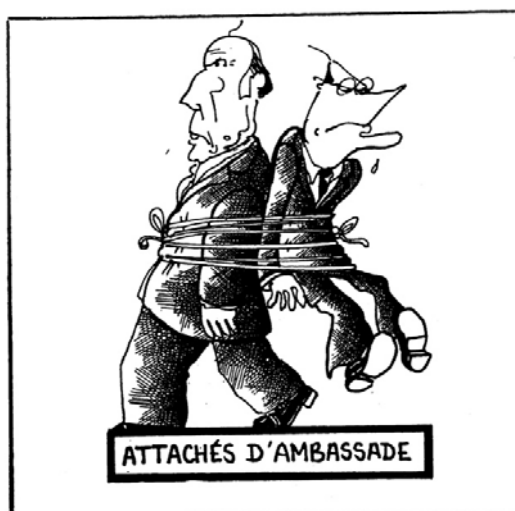


Figure 4.8 – *Attachés D'Ambassade*, Plantu (1986).

Another Kantorian feature recurrent in Plantu's work is the repetition of a character. Kantor used to recruit twin actors to perform in his plays or equip actors with a dummy, created as their double (as seen in Figure 4.7 on the previous page). In general, the 'double' serves a humorous purpose like Dupont and Dupond, created by Hergé – the Thomson Twins in English.⁴² Figure 4.9 below shows an example of this. Here, the twins are not strictly 'identical' because they are the political opponents Chirac-Mitterrand.

⁴² This is a cultural borrowing from Hergé, the creator of the *bande dessinée* *TinTin*. Plantu often uses French literature as a source of inspiration.

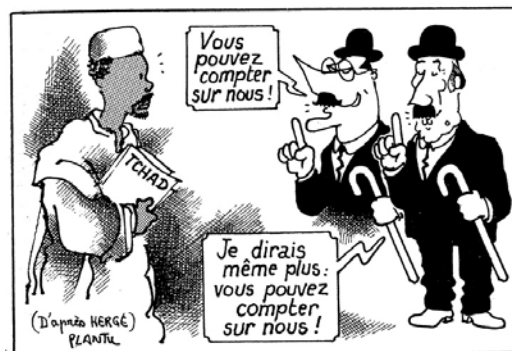


Figure 4.9 - Mitterrand and Chirac As Dupont And Dupond, Plantu.

Plantu's Representation of Mitterrand's Presidency

It is useful to review briefly François Mitterrand's private life for, within the course of his 50 years of political life in France, Mitterrand projected a very complex image. Mitterrand's biographers, such as Colombani, Moll and Northcutt, distinguish between the man and the president, between his private and his public life, while showing that his strong personality and his personal qualities influenced his political career. Geneviève Moll claims that François Mitterrand was born a leader.⁴³ For her, 'tout est dans l'enfance', thus stipulating that Mitterrand's childhood shaped his character.

François Mitterrand was apparently a stubborn, self-determined, mischievous child who always wanted to lead (even in games), hated to lose and loved to contradict. At the same time, he was known to seek solitude and to avidly read books that he borrowed from his parents' erudite library.⁴⁴ Eager for learning, the young François Mitterrand went to Paris to study Law, where he first engaged in politics via contributions to the press as a journalist. He graduated in 1938 but had no time to practice as in September 1939, he was drafted into military service. He was a Sergeant in the Infantry when in 1940 he was captured and imprisoned in Germany. According to his own account and those of most of his biographers, it was this period as a soldier that shaped Mitterrand as a leader. Indeed, Mitterrand liked to recount how eighteen months imprisonment in the German camps developed his leadership skills.⁴⁵ Highly educated, he organised his free time writing in a small journal published by the

⁴³ Geneviève Moll, *François Mitterrand, Le Roman de sa Vie* (Paris: Sand, 1995), p.11.

⁴⁴ Mitterrand tells of his passion for reading in *La Paille et le Grain*. (Paris: Flammarion, 1975), p.18.

⁴⁵ Mitterrand tells of his experience of using tactics to restore discipline amongst the prisoners. He wrote about one occasion when he had to divide the food amongst the angry prisoners: 'Spectacle rare et instructif. J'ai assisté à la naissance du contrat social'. In *Ma Part de Vérité*, op.cit., p.20.

camp, of which he eventually became chief editor. He apparently impressed his fellow companions with his knowledge and culture, with his oratorical skills, so much that he was caricatured as a Roman emperor in a special edition of the journal (see Figure 4.10 below).⁴⁶ It is interesting to note that at that time, Mitterrand's personality and presence already inspired such images. Indeed, the association of Mitterrand with a king, 'an emperor in republican clothing', is one that was recurrent in the media during the whole of his presidency.⁴⁷



Figure 4.10 - Caricature of François Mitterrand, Monsour (1941).

Mitterrand escaped from the German prisoner of war camp in December 1941. But, apart from his upbringing and his experiences as a prisoner of the Nazis, other life experiences have significantly influenced Mitterrand and, more or less, later determined his conduct as a Head of State. In wartime, Mitterrand was also a member of the French Resistance, an important period for him since it was when he commenced a friendly relationship with the Communist Party.⁴⁸ There is also his relationship with de Gaulle, a man that he both admired and detested at the same time. This feeling was mutual. Both men were passionate about their country, but each had a different idea of France and what was required for its successful future. Finally, there is the fact that he was an experienced politician, since from 1946 he devoted his entire adult life to politics, serving in eleven different governments under the Fourth Republic (1946-1958).

⁴⁶ At the Stalag IXA camp in Germany, in 1941. Today this portrait belongs to M.J Desmarets, who was a prisoner at Stalag at the same time as François Mitterrand.

⁴⁷ A formulation used by R. Tiersky in *François Mitterrand, The Last President*, (New York: St.Martin's Press, 2000), p.38.

⁴⁸ Mitterrand wrote: 'C'est dans la Résistance que je m'habituai à pratiquer les communistes. De ce temps datent des amitiés que les années n'ont pas atténuées'. In *Ma Part de Vérité*, op.cit. p.22.

However, more is known of Mitterrand's political career than his private life because he was a very secretive man. In particular, he was alleged to be a serial womaniser. Moreover, he had a mistress, Anne Pingeot, and a daughter from her whom he kept secret until the last years of his life. He also kept his illness a secret throughout his years in office; an illness he had known of since 1981, the year when he was elected president. It was also revealed that he worked for the collaborationist Vichy government during the War. All these facts were not publicly known until just before his death. Hence, Mitterrand was given several nicknames to reflect his personality and his actions and editorial cartoonists readily adopted these nicknames to influence their cartoons. He was nicknamed 'Sphinx' for being inscrutable and 'Machiavelli' for being devious and manipulative. He was called 'God' for his architectural realizations and 'Tonton Mitterrand' (Uncle Mitterrand) by the satirical press.⁴⁹ I would suggest that Mitterrand's background and personality was the perfect target for satire much in the same way as former president de Gaulle was. Cartoonists capitalised on Mitterrand's so-called monarchical attitude, on his power complex, what the French called his 'folie des grandeurs' (delusion of grandeur), which manifested in extravagant *Great Projects* in the French capital, all designed to crown the glory of his presidency.

Before I engage in a review of the key aspects of Mitterrand's fourteen-year presidency, as represented by Plantu's cartoons, I would like to stress a specific point that will become useful later in understanding the context of Plantu's cartoons. French politics have been marked by a strong 'presidentialisation' - that is to say that the main political personalities are portrayed as absolute monarchs. This is perhaps a result of the consolidation of presidential power in France under the Fifth French Republic. With the constitutional reform of 1962 the President's will took precedence over the decisions of the National Assembly. In this regard, de Gaulle's successors to the presidency, Georges Pompidou (1969-1974) and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (1974-1981) were also dominant presidents. Yet, it is worth noting that the Socialist François Mitterrand had always criticised this situation as an abuse of

⁴⁹ Apparently, this nickname was first given to him by members of the Socialist party who admired him, some say that it was a code name that he had during the war, for others, it was how his bodyguards called him in private. For caricatures of Mitterrand as 'Tonton', see the work of Cabu, the appointed cartoonist of *Le Canard Enchaîné: Tonton 1^{er}, Roi de France*, (Paris: Belfond, 1988) and *Tonton Accro*, (Paris: Albin Michel, 1988).

democracy and on his election, left wing politicians (both Socialists and Communists) expected the National Assembly to have a greater influence. Nonetheless, in the end, like his predecessors, Mitterrand accepted the 'rules' set by de Gaulle's government. It was reported that soon after his election, Mitterrand declared to the press: 'Les institutions n'étaient pas faites à mon intention, mais elles sont bien faites pour moi'.⁵⁰ As Wayne Northcutt suggests, in spite of difficult circumstances and a diverse entourage, Mitterrand's ability to adapt and change was a significant contributor to his continued political power during his fourteen year 'reign'.

In each of these periods, Mitterrand adjusted his political rhetoric to fit the situation at hand. His ability to change his rhetoric at the appropriate time, one of the consistent characteristics of his political career, coupled with significant policy shifts, has given a different face to each period of his presidency.⁵¹

Indeed François Mitterrand is recalled as a highly pragmatic president. Mitterrand was quoted for often saying: 'Dans ma vie, je n'ai jamais accepté de n'avoir aucune marge de manoeuvre: On m'a coincé. Je vais me décoincer'.⁵² From Mitterrand's numerous biographies it emerges that the two presidential mandates were very different. With his ability to scheme, Mitterrand demonstrated political dexterity throughout his presidency, and also generated debate over the way in which he organised political power. These accounts of Mitterrand's character are important as they shape my examination of the way Mitterrand was portrayed by Plantu further in this chapter.

It is clear that personalisation of politics is well suited to caricature: Charles de Gaulle and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, upper class by their names, were often depicted as arrogant Kings ruling over France and Europe. Mitterrand, if not noble, has been extensively caricatured as a monarch, not only for his haughtiness but also for his belief in the grandeur of France. Cartoonists however possess the skill to bring their subjects 'down to earth' through their satirical representations, the exaggerated and deformed features belittle the characters. The humorous situations that the cartoonists puts them

⁵⁰ In 1964, under De Gaulle's presidency, Mitterrand wrote a political essay wherein he openly rejected the constitutional practices of the Fifth Republic. François Mitterrand, *Le Coup d'État Permanent* (Paris: Plon, 1964).

⁵¹ Wayne Northcutt, *Mitterrand, A Political Biography*, op.cit, p.16.

⁵² As it was reported by Jean-Marie Colombani, in *Portrait du Président*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), p.113.

in highlights their ineptitude to deal with their problems and makes a mockery of them. Thus, politicians become ‘normal’ people through their defects and weaknesses, as will be demonstrated in this chapter. Plantu’s view was that Mitterrand was an ambitious and strong-minded person, with a strong sense of hierarchy, making strategic decisions without consulting or informing his Ministers and often, without considering the consequences for his government. He was also a shrewd tactician and a ‘manipulator’ of people.⁵³ I will show throughout this section that Plantu’s views of Mitterrand greatly influenced his graphic representation of the President.

When Plantu joined *Le Monde*, Mitterrand was a candidate in the presidential election – an election that he lost to Giscard D’Estaing. Plantu’s very first drawings of Mitterrand can be perceived as clumsy and unattractive but they already demonstrated his metaphoric skills. In the cartoon in Figure 4.11 below, Mitterrand is drawn watering a rose, which represents socialism, as if watering his hopes to lead the Socialist Party.⁵⁴ The figure’s head is a little out of proportion but at this early stage in his career as a cartoonist Plantu was more concerned with upholding the code of resemblance. Plantu explains that it was only through experience that he was able to adopt a greater repertoire of rhetorical codes that enabled him to exaggerate features whilst maintaining the necessary resemblance of the subject.⁵⁵

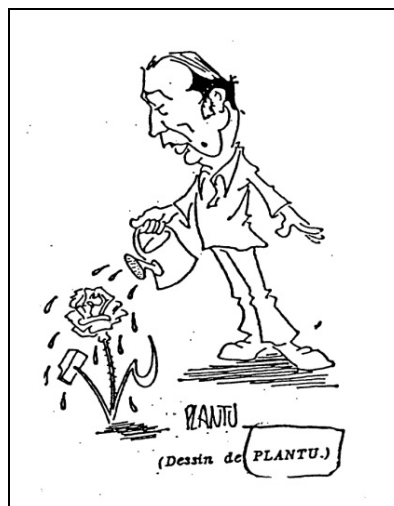


Figure 4.11 - *Plantu’s Mitterrand*, Plantu (1973).

⁵³ Plantu in conversation with Micheline Maupoint, 16 February 1998.

⁵⁴ The early caricatures of Mitterrand were taken from: M., Pothier, *Les Implicites Culturels Chez un Dessinateur Humoristique Plantu*, (Paris: Sorbonne, 1991).

⁵⁵ Plantu in conversation with Micheline Maupoint, 16 February 1998.

In the above image, Plantu's lines are straight and the angles sharp to satisfy the graphic conventions imposed by *Le Monde's* Director, Jacques Fauvet. At the time the Editor wanted drawings with simple lines and without text or speech bubbles, in order to blend with the austere presentation of the paper. Nonetheless, Plantu distanced himself from these constraints rather quickly by first crosshatching his character's costumes.⁵⁶ Over an extended period it can be seen how Plantu's drawings have evolved: his Mitterrand gaining in corpulence as much as his cartoons gained in style and coherence, see Figure 4.12 below.

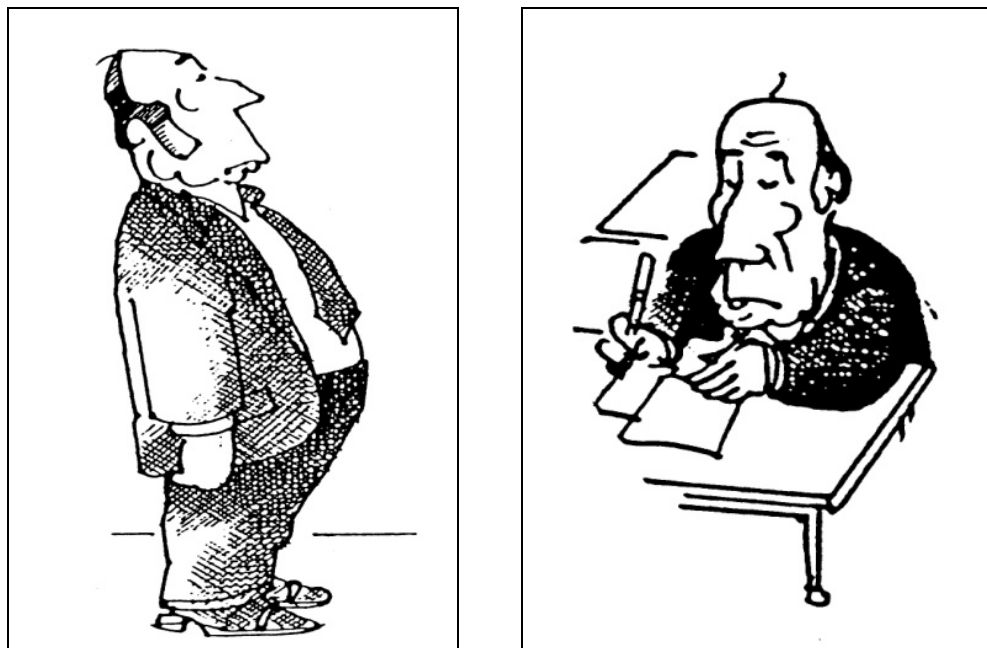


Figure 4.12 - *Plantu's Mitterrand* (1981 & 1986 respectively).

François Mitterrand was elected president of the French Republic on 10 May 1981, an historic moment, as depicted by Plantu. In the cartoon below (Figure 4.13), Plantu drew Mitterrand entering the History of France book through the main entrance. Mitterrand is portrayed as walking proudly because after 16 years he has finally fulfilled his ambition.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Plantu, in conversation with Micheline Maupoint in *Le Monde*, Paris, 15 April 1998. It must be remembered that, above all, Plantu is an humorist. At his debut as a cartoonist in *Le Monde*, he found it difficult to draw without a speech bubble because he first trained as a comic strip artist.

⁵⁷ It was the third time that Mitterrand had run for presidency. In 1965, he ran against De Gaulle, and in 1974, he ran against Valéry Giscard d'Estaing.



Figure 4.13 – *President Mitterrand (May 1981)*.

What is most notable about this cartoon is how supportive Plantu's drawing is of Mitterrand's achievement, in line with *Le Monde's* editorial stance at that time. Mitterrand was seen to bring new life to French politics. As Rodney Benson comments: 'when Mitterrand won the presidential election in 1981, *Le Monde* had achieved its long-standing political goal'. For the newspaper, 'it was a victory for democracy and for the alternation of power'.⁵⁸ Another reason for the historical reference utilised by Plantu is that since Mitterrand had reunited the left, the communist party and several other left-wing groups gave him their support at the presidential elections and thus helped him to his victory. As Northcutt asserts:

Mitterrand had thus accomplished his long-term objectives: the Left had been brought into balance with the Right, the Communists now lagged behind the Socialists in the vote tally, and the Left was now in power. History had been made.⁵⁹

From the very first days of his election, Mitterrand showed that he was determined to fully exercise his presidential powers by first surrounding himself with members of his party and then dissolving the National Assembly, which was right wing in majority. The beginning of his presidency was also marked by

⁵⁸ As stated by Alain Rollatt to Rodney Benson, 'La Fin du Monde? Tradition and Change in the French Press', *French Politics, Culture & Society*, Vol.22, No.1, Spring 2004.

⁵⁹ Northcutt, *op.cit.*, p.90.

the abolition of the death penalty in September 1981. Plantu represented the event with a focus on the Minister of Justice, Robert Badinter, who, for many years had fought against the death penalty. Badinter is portrayed with a satisfied look for having, at last, destroyed the symbol of the death penalty, which in France is widely recognised as the guillotine (Figure 4.14 below). However, since Badinter was not a publicly well-known figure, Plantu made use of the technique of the labeled suitcase as a means of identify the politician.

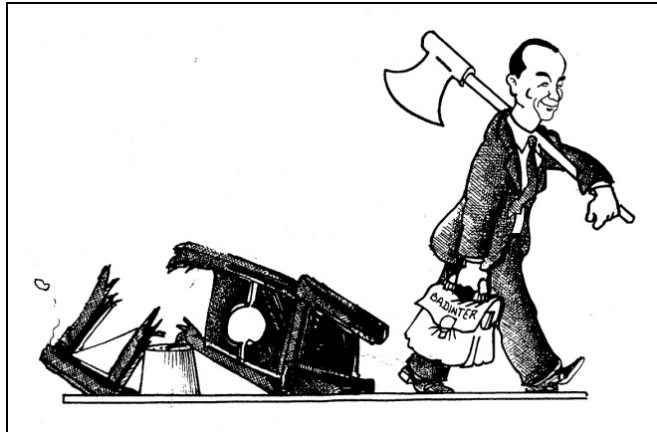


Figure 4.14 - *Abolition of the Death Penalty*, Plantu (September 1981).

Despite the public's desire for political and social change, the abolition of capital punishment was probably his only major achievement in the first year of his presidency. Faced with high levels of unemployment, the Socialist government instigated an ambitious programme of economic and social reforms to stimulate public growth, improve the welfare state and above all tackle social injustice.⁶⁰ According to Tiersky 'they (the Socialists) pursued a decidedly ideological programme dedicated to incompatible ends'.⁶¹ Amongst several measures on the agenda, was the decentralization of the French administrative system that aimed to give greater financial and administrative power to the *communes* and the *departments*, an issue that had been studied by French governments since the Fourth Republic, but never implemented.⁶² Amongst the social measures that were enacted during the two first years of Mitterrand's government were the introduction of a wealth tax and improved welfare benefits aimed at helping the

⁶⁰ They were traditionally the focus points for French Socialism. Quoting Jacques Julliard: 'La tradition socialiste française (...) a essentiellement conçu le socialisme comme la gestion par l'Etat de la production et de la prévoyance sociale' in *La Faute à Rousseau* (Paris: Seuil, 1985), p.194.

⁶¹ R. Tiersky, *François Mitterrand: The Last President* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), p.48.

⁶² Alan Clark, *Anthologie Mitterrand* (Paris: Methuen, 1986), p.33.

underprivileged class.⁶³ Finally, a series of laws, the *Auroux* laws, were voted to make working practices more efficient and to increase worker's rights in the factory and strengthen the role of the trade unions.



Figure 4.15 – *The Auroux Law*, Plantu (1981).

Above, in Figure 4.15, Plantu used anachronism to show that France's manual labour was in desperate need of these laws. He exaggerated the situation by drawing a scene set in the Middle Ages at the time of the building of Notre-Dame, the Parisian cathedral. There, Plantu hints that whilst workers' conditions were primitive before Mitterrand, the *Auroux* law would change their condition, as confirmed by the speech bubble. Historical accounts demonstrate that a year later, the programme established by the new Socialist government had failed to succeed: the budget was in deficit and inflation was up. Although they gave more power to some Unions, the *Auroux* Laws hardly modified the existing relationship between employers and Trade Unions.⁶⁴ It is recorded that by spring 1982, just a year after Mitterrand's election, the number of job seekers had reached two million; taxes were raised to pay for state expenditure, the value of the Franc was down and the economy was in real trouble.

⁶³ Clark comments that this section of French society, 'les défavorisés' – as they are called in French – had been disregarded by the liberal capitalist policy of the former president Giscard D'Estaing. In *Anthologie Mitterrand*, p.33.

⁶⁴ Such as the CGT - Confédération Générale du Travail

This detailed account of the circumstances was necessary to highlight Mitterrand's determination to pursue his ideological program. Northcutt sees Mitterrand as 'an idealist with a professed ignorance of economics', stressing that 'such economic idealism during Year 1 of his presidency created enormous problems for Mitterrand, his government, his party and the nation'.⁶⁵ Indeed, the situation became alarming following the results of the regional elections in March 1982 where the Left lost significant political support. The government then realised the need to revise its policies. Jacques Delors, the then Finance Minister, conceived a programme of austerity, known in France as *la politique de rigueur*: a devaluation of the Franc, the freezing of wages and prices, cutback on credit and other budget restrictions. In other words, the people of France were driven to 'tighten their belts', by the new Socialist government as Plantu expresses, below in Figure 4.16. This cartoon is metaphorical and allegorical. The metaphor is found in the idea of *se serrer la ceinture*, with a large belt that is pulled very tightly, the buckle of which is the rose, the allegorical emblem of the Socialist party.



Figure 4.16 - *La Politique de Rigueur*, Plantu, (1982)

⁶⁵ Northcutt, *Mitterrand, A Political Biography*, p.6.

The expression on the character's face, in the above cartoon, is one of dissatisfaction and surprise. Plantu intended to show that these economic measures were not what the public expected. In fact, this cartoon marked a departure from Plantu's previously supportive characterisation of Mitterrand's policies towards a more satirical representation.⁶⁶

The rigorous economic measures introduced by the government were slow to produce results. As a matter of fact, in 1983 the French economy was still very weak, inflation was still high and again, the municipal elections in March were marked by a high rate of abstention amongst the electorate of the Left. Plantu repeatedly showed that Mitterrand did not offer support to his government during these difficult times. As a first example, there is a cartoon that Plantu drew in 1983, at a time when the nation reacted angrily to the Socialists' new programme of reforms. The situation is described in the next cartoon (Figure 4.17) where we see the Prime Minister, Pierre Mauroy, and Finance Minister, Jacques Delors, wearing glasses, both being hit by filth after announcing their programme of reforms. The character behind them is Mitterrand, who voices his support, without looking up from his desk at the scene. The projectiles do not reach Mitterrand, for his Ministers' bodies protect him. *Irony* and *sarcasm* are manifest in this cartoon. His discourse, in the speech bubble, is clearly in contradiction with the situation. Indeed, during the 1981 electoral campaign, Mitterrand had claimed his intention to take responsibility for social and economic policies. He had stated:

Je serai [...] dans l'action, et le gouvernement avec moi, afin [...] de marquer le cours nouveau des choses, de démontrer qu'il est possible de marier le progrès social et une saine relance de l'économie, l'un épaulant l'autre, et inversement.⁶⁷

Plantu's way of implying that the President did not intend to shoulder the blame for their mistakes was to draw Mitterrand busying himself at his desk, oblivious of surrounding events, while the representatives of his government are being assaulted.

⁶⁶ Plantu in conversation with Micheline Maupoint, 16 February 1998.

⁶⁷ During an interview published in *Le Monde*, 25 April 1981, quoted in *Anthologie Mitterrand*, p.34.



Figure 4.17 - 'Hold on! I support you!', Plantu (1983).

As Mitterrand's presidency continued, *Le Monde* became increasingly critical of the 'blunders' of the Socialist government. Indeed, as Benson explains:

Once the elections parties were over, *Le Monde* found itself in a full-scale identity crisis. Its intellectual and professional clout within the journalistic field was compromised by its close association with Mitterrand, and readership began to decline.⁶⁸

Le Monde's response to the decline in sales was to adopt a more aggressive style of reporting on Mitterrand's government and Plantu openly criticised the the Socialist government. *Le Monde* had reason to criticize Mitterrand's government as strikes and demonstrations were the order of the day. Public confidence in Prime Minister Mauroy's, government had hit its lowest level since 1981, so much that, on 12 July 1984, in order to divert the nation's anger away from his government, Mitterrand went on television to address the nation, offering to revise the Constitution. Nevertheless, soon after, Mauroy was dismissed, and replaced by a young economist, Laurent Fabius. As Northcutt remarks, although the economy had improved a little, following the *politique de rigueur*, that Mauroy had introduced, the Socialists feared the 1986 legislative

⁶⁸ Rodney Benson, 'La Fin du Monde? Tradition and Change in the French Press', *French Politics, Culture and Society*, Vol.22, No.1, Spring 2004, p.111.

elections.⁶⁹ In Figure 4.18 below, Plantu ironically commented on the situation, whereby Mitterrand was preparing himself for a political *cohabitation* with members of the opposition. The cartoon shows former members of Mitterrand's Socialist government, Fabius, Hernu and Chevènement, helping him to get used to the faces of his adversaries, by wearing the masks of Chirac, of Giscard d'Estaing and of Barre. In the cartoon, Mitterrand admits that he will find it difficult to adapt to the new government.⁷⁰

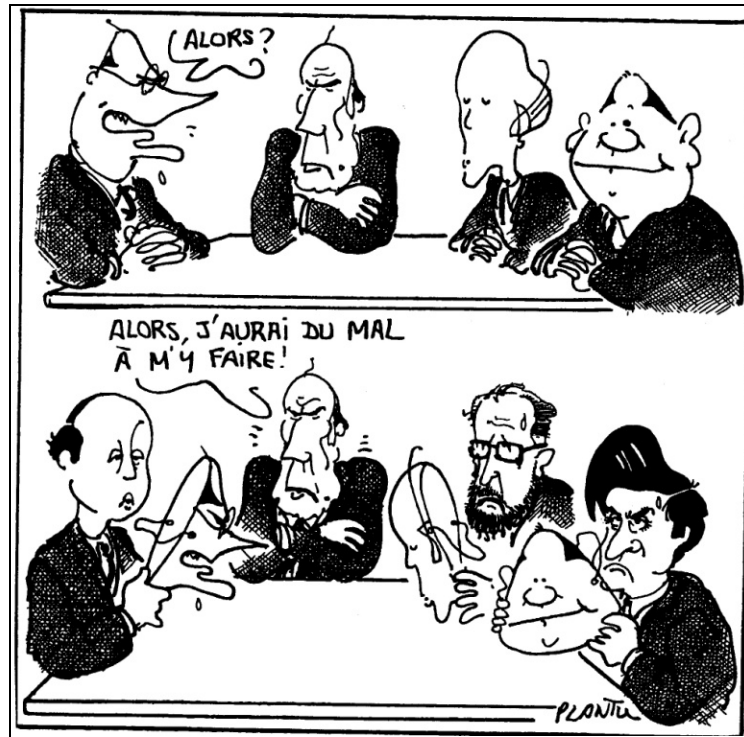


Figure 4.18 – *Les Masques*, Plantu (*Le Monde*, 29 May 1985).

In March 1986, the Left lost out to the Conservative party during the legislative elections. The conservative victory meant that Mitterrand had to reorganize his government and share the executive power with a right-wing Prime Minister. This was the beginning of two periods of *cohabitation* during Mitterrand's presidency, 1986-1988 and 1993-1995, an unprecedented situation in the history of the Fifth republic. Indeed, since Charles de Gaulle drew up the Constitution in 1958, the President and Prime Minister had always shared the same Conservative political ideology.

⁶⁹ Northcutt, *Mitterrand, a Political Biography*, p.228.

⁷⁰ The cartoon provides an additional illustration of Plantu's use of theatrical props as inspired by Kantor.

It was Jacques Chirac, mayor of Paris who was appointed as Prime Minister in 1986. According to *Le Monde's* journalist, Jean-Marie Colombani, cohabitation came as a political challenge for Mitterrand. Colombani describes this cohabitation as 'a political drama in three acts'.⁷¹ Northcutt complies with this breakdown and explains that Act One was the period of the first six months of cohabitation, when both the President and the Prime Minister, concerned with their own political popularity, aimed to project a public image of 'an harmonious odd couple'.⁷²

It is useful to know that Chirac was one of Mitterrand's old Gaullist adversaries, in order to understand that this cohabitation was soon to develop into a political combat. Indeed, Jacques Chirac was an ambitious politician, once Prime Minister from 1974 to 1976 during Giscard d'Estaing's presidency. He challenged both Giscard d'Estaing and Mitterrand for the presidency in 1981. All the same, during this 'coexistence', as he preferred to call it, Mitterrand was eager to preserve his powers in defence and foreign affairs and not take a 'back seat' to Jacques Chirac.

Plantu effectively satirised the so-called 'harmonious' relationship between Mitterrand and Chirac in the two cartoons below (see Figures 4.19 and 4.20). Both cartoons refer to the Tokyo G7 summit that the French leaders attended from 4 to 6 May 1986. It was the President alone who was expected to represent France at the meeting of the seven industrialised Western countries. In spite of breaking G7's conventions, Chirac invited himself to the meeting on the grounds that he was the one in charge of France's economic matters.⁷³ In the cartoon below (Figure 4.19), Plantu describes the President's departure to Japan, by showing Mitterrand quietly carrying his suitcases, trying to avoid Chirac, who follows him everywhere like his shadow. Plantu translates this idea by drawing Chirac as Mitterrand's shadow, to emphasise, though metaphor, the fact that Mitterrand could not rid himself of Chirac's presence. The representation of Chirac as a slobbering shadow, symbolizes not only Chirac's hunger and eagerness to walk in Mitterrand's steps, but also the animosity that

⁷¹ *Le Monde*, 30 October 1986.

⁷² Northcutt explains that Jacques Chirac wanted to show that Mitterrand did not have total control over foreign policy. In fact, because he was in charge of the government's travel budget, Chirac invited himself to several of Mitterrand's official missions; however, they always traveled on different planes. In *Mitterrand, a Political Biography*, pp. 227-230.

existed between the two men. The fact that Mitterrand tiptoes away is also suggestive of the President's tendency for 'secrecy' as previously discussed.

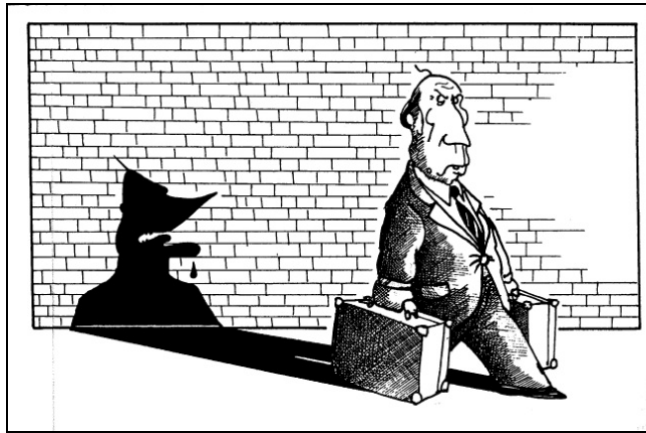


Figure 4.19 - *Tokyo G7 Summit*, Plantu (*Le Monde*, 4 May 1986).

In Figure 4.20 below, Plantu exaggerates the alleged 'harmonious' relationship between the two French leaders, suggesting that in the public view of other countries, the relationship between Chirac and Mitterrand appeared close. Here, as the meeting progresses, Chirac and Mitterrand embrace like two young lovers would, oblivious to their surroundings. Their expressions, the tears of emotion running down their faces and the hearts above their heads demonstrate their feelings towards one another. Amongst the members of the summit that witness their love affair are the Japanese Prime Minister, Nakasone who seems deeply moved by them, the US President, Ronald Reagan who seems irritated by their conduct, and the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher who looks shocked by the public display of affection.

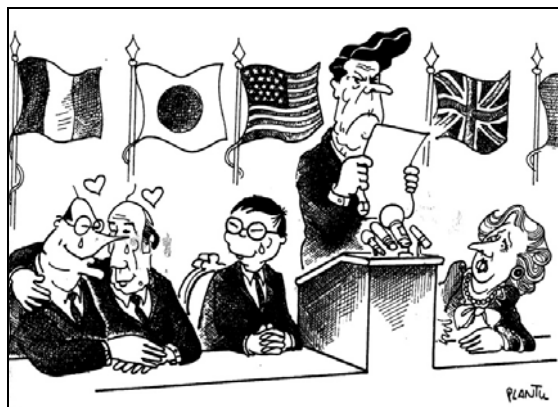


Figure 4.20 - *The Tokyo Summit*, Plantu (*Le Monde*, 7 May 1986).

However, in truth, the friction continued to escalate between Mitterrand and Chirac during the months leading up to the presidential election after they both announced their candidacy for the presidency.⁷⁴ When, on 24 April 1988, during the first round of the presidential elections, Jean-Marie Le Pen, the leader of the extreme-Right Party gained 14% of the votes, *Le Monde* openly blamed Mitterrand for Le Pen's unprecedented success. In 1985 Mitterrand had re-established the party-list proportional representation. This system of voting was controversial because it allowed the elections of extreme right deputies. André Fontaine, the then Director of *Le Monde*, wrote:

S'il (Le Pen) connaît un tel succès, ne nous le dissimulons pas, ce n'est pas seulement parce que le retour à la proportionnelle en 1896 a ouvert la boîte de Pandore. C'est parce que celle-ci débordait des ressentiments de trop de français qui pour toutes sorte de raisons, mauvaises ou bonnes ne se sentent plus chez eux en France.⁷⁵

As for Plantu, by then, he had anticipated that Mitterrand could win the elections and could preside over France for another seven-year term and had created a double for Mitterrand, in the Kantorian tradition, Mitterrand 2 (see Figure 4.21 below). In the cartoons, the twins are identical but what identifies each is their tie and their attitudes. Mitterrand 1 is generally portrayed as cheerful and naïve at times, while Mitterrand 2 usually looks worried or angry, always blaming his double for his wrongdoing. After the first round of elections, Plantu's cartoon on the front page of *Le Monde* wittingly echoed Fontaine's comment on the same day. It suggests that Le Pen's success represents a threat for the forthcoming elections. Indeed, with 35 National Front deputies elected at the Assembly, one could fear a resurgence of Nationalism. In the first image, in Figure 4.21, Mitterrand 1 congratulates Mitterrand 2 for his initial success. In the second image however, Mitterrand 2 does not reciprocate the praise but instead furiously blames Mitterrand 1 for permitting Le Pen to gain 14% of the votes. The trampoline is used metaphorically to suggest that it was *la proportionnelle*, which made it possible for Le Pen to leap to success.

⁷⁴ See, Plantu, *Le Petit Mitterrand Illustré, 1981-1996*, (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1996).

⁷⁵ André Fontaine, *Le Monde*, 26 April 1988, p.3.

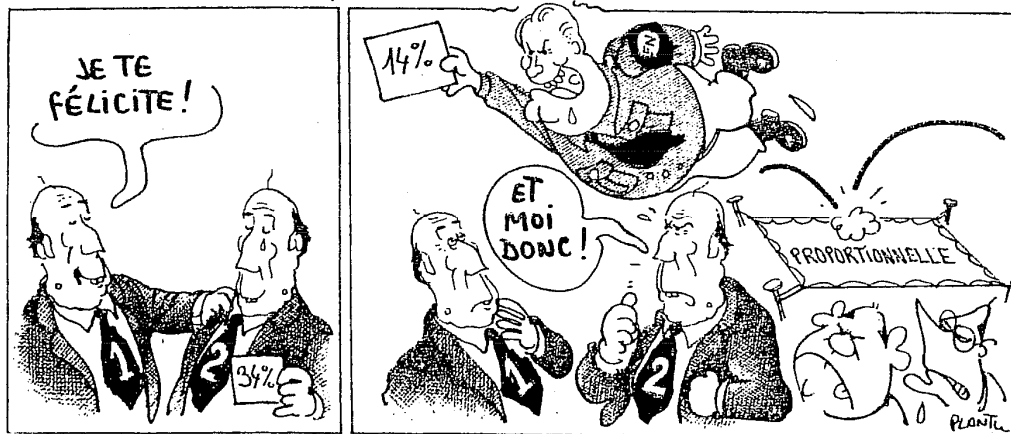


Figure 4.21 - *The 1988 Elections*, Plantu (*Le Monde*, 26 April 1988).

In May 1988, Jacques Chirac resigned and Mitterrand appointed the Socialist Michel Rocard who had been successful in the municipal elections as his Prime Minister. For Plantu the drawing matter was similar to the previous years of the cohabitation of Chirac-Mitterrand, since Rocard was one of Mitterrand's former political opponents and that they did not get on well. In this cartoon (Figure 4.22 below), Plantu highlights the incompatibility that existed between Mitterrand and his Prime Minister during the early 1980s. The use of *hyperbole* enables Plantu to exaggerate the situation by drawing a proud Michel Rocard, made taller than normal by his victory, looking down on the other members of his party.



Figure 4.22 - *Using Hyperbole*, Plantu (*Le Monde*, 21 March 1989).
Mitterrand: 'This one will be difficult to handle, now!'

François Mitterrand's presidency was to end in 1995. The victory of the opposition in the legislative elections of 1993 clearly meant a second period of Left-Right cohabitation unless the seventy-seven year-old President resigned. Mitterrand did not resign, although by then it was public knowledge that he was suffering from prostate cancer. The regime of cohabitation was back but with Edouard Balladur as Prime Minister, instead of Jacques Chirac who had refused to serve again with Mitterrand.

However, it was not just the cohabitation that was to impact on Mitterrand's presidency. As I previously mentioned, as a function of declining sales, *Le Monde's* journalistic style became 'investigative' on a permanent basis, leading to 'scoop' and 'scandal' based editorials.⁷⁶ In particular, Edwy Plenel, a young political reporter, led *Le Monde's* new investigative reporting and focused on Mitterrand's private and political affairs. Consequently, a number of 'scandals' surrounding Mitterrand such as *The Rainbow Warrior*, *L'Affaire des Écoutes*, regarding illegal telephone tapping and the controversial *Armistice Day* gave *Le Monde* more ammunition to criticise Mitterrand and his government, thus re-establishing the newspaper's credibility and reputation of independence.⁷⁷

Political Scandals

On 10 July 1985, the Rainbow Warrior, a Greenpeace ship protesting against French nuclear testing in the South Pacific, was sunk in Auckland, New Zealand causing one casualty. Two officers of the French intelligence secret service, in disguise, were arrested, accused of the bombing and charged with murder. *Le Monde* further investigated the matter and revealed on 17 September that it was a team of military frogmen sent by the French Intelligence Service that had conducted the sabotage. A French enquiry led by Bernard Tricot, the State's Adviser, cleared the agents of all charges but the Defense Minister, Charles Hernu, a close friend of Mitterrand was forced to resign. According to Collard, 'this was the first time that a Minister had been forced to resign as a result of a press campaign and it was a significant moment for relations between politics

⁷⁶ However, it was not the first time that *Le Monde* used investigative reporting. In 1979, *Le Monde* had investigated a gift of diamonds from African dictator Bokasa that President Giscard d'Estaing allegedly accepted. On this matter, read Patrick Eveno, *Le Monde, 1944-1995: Histoire d'Une Entreprise de Presse* (Paris: le Monde-Éditions, 1996), p.308.

⁷⁷ Benson, 'La Fin du Monde? Tradition and Change in the French Press', p.111.

and the media.⁷⁸ As Collard comments, 'Plenel consolidated his reputation in 1985, as a result of his investigation into the Rainbow Warrior Affair'.⁷⁹ Such was the focus of Plenel's reporting that by the mid 1990s, he had written two books against Mitterrand.⁸⁰ However, as I later discuss, when Plenel was promoted as Editor in 1994, *Le Monde's* attacks against Mitterrand intensified, under the new Managing Director, Jean-Marie Colombani.

Plantu drew a total of eighteen cartoons for the front page of *Le Monde* on the Rainbow Warrior Affair. Two cartoons, in particular, demonstrate Plantu's style and use of graphic rhetoric to provide a satirical commentary on the events. The first one below (Figure 4.23) shows a diver and two secret agents coming out of Tricot's office. Plantu's cartoon implies that although the three men were involved in the bombing of the Rainbow Warrior, they have just been cleared of all charges and the use of the halo gives them the appearance of innocence.⁸¹ It was later discovered that François Mitterrand had commissioned the bombing.⁸²



Figure 4.23 - *Tricot's Report on the Rainbow Warrior Affair*, Plantu (August 1985).

⁷⁸ Sue Collard, '*Le Monde and Mitterrand*', op.cit.

⁷⁹ Collard, '*Le Monde and Mitterrand*', op.cit.

⁸⁰ Edwy Plenel, *La Part d'Ombre*, Paris: Stock, 1992. Plenel, *Un Temps de Chien*, Paris: Stock, 1994.

⁸¹ The presentation of the villain with a halo accentuates his insincerity. This graphic device was widely used by cartoonists during the Rainbow Warrior affair.

⁸² According to Hervé Gattegno's article in 1986, a year after the event, admiral Lacoste revealed in a secret report that François Mitterrand personally asked him to sink the Rainbow Warrior. H. Gattegno, 'Greenpeace, Vingt Ans Après: le Rapport Secret de l'Amiral Lacoste', *Le Monde*, 10 July 2005.

In the other cartoon, Figure 4.24 below, Plantu juxtaposed two different international affairs that involved the French government. He shows Mitterrand sat at his desk, positioned between two doors. On the left of the picture, Edgard Pisani, the then Minister in charge of the overseas territory of New Caledonia, is keeping the door shut on a matter that Mitterrand considers settled.⁸³ The water filtering out of the side of the door, the position of Pisani's body and the sweat on his forehead enable Plantu to suggest that whilst the door has been closed on the matter, it could blow open at any time. On the other side of the president, the 'Greenpeace door' is blown off its hinges and a huge wave of water carries Hernu away. With the metaphor of the wave *qui balaye tout sur son passage* Plantu insinuates that the *Greenpeace affair* was like another wave of scandal threatening to sweep out the Socialist government.

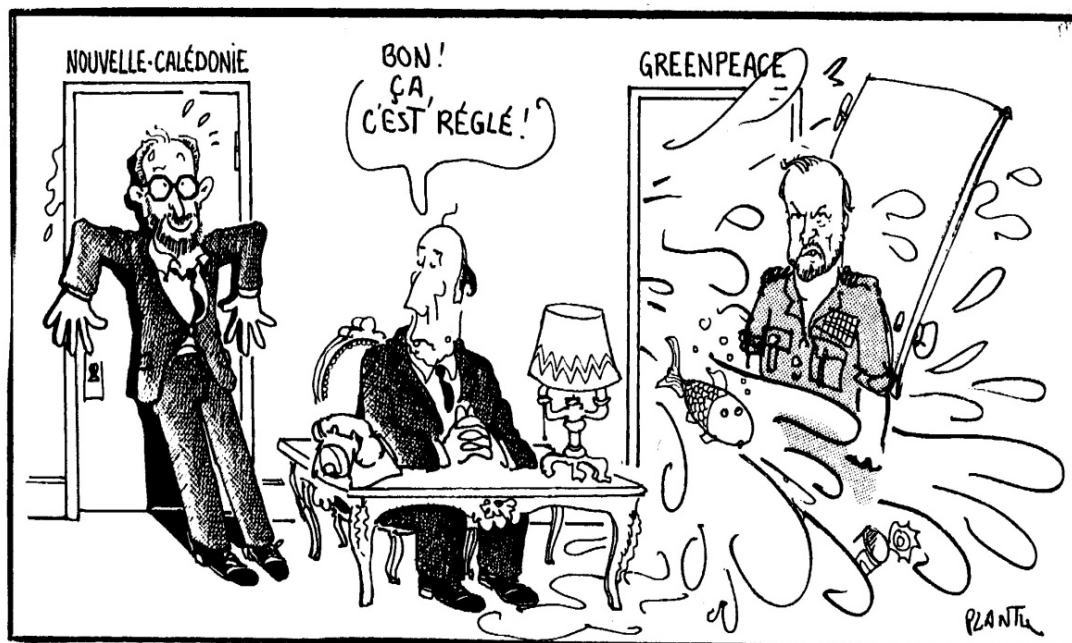


Figure 4.24 - *The Rainbow Warrior Affair, Le Monde* (3 August 1985).

The underlying critique from Plantu is that, once again, the President readily detaches himself from the actions of his government and his responsibilities as the Head of State. The impact of continued representations of Mitterrand in this way, by Plantu, must be considered, as with other rhetorical codes they can eventually become engrained in the public mind. This specific representation of

⁸³ The conflict in New Caledonia related to the independence movement of a French overseas territory. Pisani proposed measures for self-determination in the 'Matignon Agreement'. In April 1985 the government decided to divide the island into four regions.

Mitterrand being very calm and composed despite the events surrounding him is recurrent in Plantu's cartoons throughout the whole of Mitterrand's presidency.

The second major political scandal that I want to refer to is that of the *Telephone Tapping Affair*. It was in 1993, that the newspaper *Libération* revealed having in its possession transcripts of private conversations of over 3,000 phone conversations of several hundred people, including several from *Le Monde*, *Libération*, and *Le Canard Enchaîné*, whose investigations threatened to impede Mitterrand's personal and professional affairs.⁸⁴ The illegal tapping commissioned by Mitterrand started in 1982. It was directed by a former Chief of Gendarmerie, Christian Prouteau within a special unit based at the Elysee palace.⁸⁵ Mitterrand's special unit was closed in 1986. The affair eventually went to court in November 2004. The proceedings lasted until September 2005 and cost the state millions of Francs in lawyers' fees to defend and clear the name of Mitterrand's collaborators, civil servants and police officers. Mitterrand was posthumously held accountable for the illegal phone tapping and nominal sentences were handed down to the former members of the unit on the grounds of damage to people's private life. Michel Prouteau for instance, was sentenced to eight months of imprisonment with deferment and a fine of €2800; the case was closed without all the mysteries ever being resolved.⁸⁶ Here, in the cartoon below, Figure 4.25, Plantu satirically illustrates the wiretapping of *Le Monde's* director with a cartoon where Mitterrand turns down the offer of an issue of the newspaper because as he says: "he has already read the news on the telephone!"

⁸⁴ Apparently, the tapping that was officially created for national safety was set up to cover Mitterrand's many secrets, amongst others, his illness (he suffered from prostate cancer) and the existence of a second family to whom he fathered an illegitimate daughter.

⁸⁵ Christian Prouteau himself gives a comprehensive account of this affair, of other scandals and of the life at the Elysee palace under François Mitterrand in two publications: *Mémoires d'Etat*, (Paris: Michel Lafon), 1998 and *Au Service du Président*, (Paris, Michel Lafon, 1999).

⁸⁶ One of the mysteries surrounding this affair was the fact that Pierre-Yves Guézou, the person who had given the transcripts of the wiretapping to *Libération* committed suicide in 1994, for unknown reasons.



Figure 4.25 - *The Telephone Tapping Scandal*, Plantu (1982-1986)

In addition to Mitterrand's perceived detachment from his government's actions we can also pick up on his past affiliations, shifting loyalties and secrecies behind his 'Machiavelli' nickname. One of the affairs that further reinforced this portrayal and tarnished the president's image was that of the *Armistice Day* controversy whereby he was criticized by the media for laying a wreath of flowers on the grave of Philippe Pétain each Armistice Day. Pétain was the head of the French collaborationist government at Vichy during World War II and thus these presidential tributes were found offensive and re-instigated questions about France's role in the Holocaust. In the cartoon below, (Figure 4.26) Plantu expresses the ambiguity that surrounds this issue and Mitterrand's affiliations when he worked for the Vichy government. Moreover, whilst Mitterrand was regarded during World War II as a friend of the Jewish people, it is also known that he was allied to René Bousquet, (Vichy's chief of police), who organised the rounding-up of Jews in the Velodrome d'Hiver in Paris on 16 July 1942. Throughout his political career, Mitterrand was also reproached for being decorated with the *Francisque*, an award given to civil servants by the collaborationist Vichy regime. Incidentally, Mitterrand always denied having received it.⁸⁷ It is with the use of the double character, reminiscent of Kantor's theatre, in the cartoon below (Figure 4.26), each with their tribute, that Plantu expresses the doubts that surround Mitterrand's affiliations. It is evident from

⁸⁷ Northcutt explains that Mitterrand defended his contribution to the Vichy regime and the fact that the *Francisque* was a 'marvellous cover for an underground Resistance operative'. *Mitterrand, A Political Biography*, p.29.

Plantu's drawing that the President does not give much away through his impassive expression but that he is willing to support both causes.

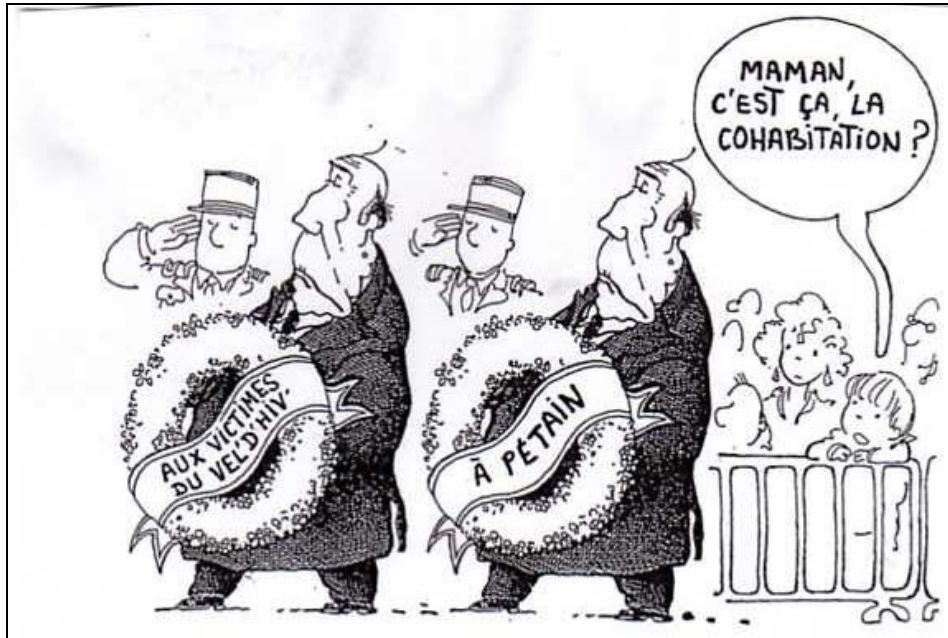


Figure 4.26 – *Armistice Day*, Plantu (1994).
Mum, is that the cohabitation?

Le Monde's persistent investigation of Mitterrand's personal and professional activities during his presidency caused great hostility between the newspaper and the President. Jean-Marie Colombani, the then Managing Director of *Le Monde*, stated that it was a case of open confrontation with Mitterrand:

Nous sommes un journal d'information et [que] nous ne devons pas céder aux pratiques de la communication. Tous les lieux de Pouvoir et d'influence ont mis au point des stratégies de communication. Il faut aller chercher ce qu'il ya derrière la communication et le révéler aux lecteurs.⁸⁸

Mitterrand's biographers all agree on the fact that, from the beginning of his presidency, the President did not much like the press for political and personal reasons. As Renaud Lecadre, journalist in *Libération* wrote:

Mitterrand avait une mentalité obsidionale contre tout ce qui était imprimé dans la presse pour des raisons politiques et personnelles.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Speaking at the Assemblée Générale des lecteurs du Monde. Quoted in Patrick Eveno, *Histoire du Journal Le Monde*, (Paris: Albin Michel, 2004), p.533.

⁸⁹ R. Lecadre, 'Ecoutes de l'Elysée: Joxe charge Mitterrand et pleure', *Libération*, 7 December 2004, p.17.

In 1994, following *Le Monde's* numerous articles including investigations into his Vichy past and his health, the President decided to reduce the number of issues of *Le Monde* that were bought daily for the Elysee palace staff, 20 issues down from 110. Plantu commented on Mitterrand's vindictive attitude towards the newspaper a number of times. In the cartoon below, (Figure 4.27) Plantu highlights the president's pettiness by linking two events, *Le Monde's* fiftieth anniversary and the decision by Mitterrand not to read the paper.



Figure 4.27 - *Le Monde's* Fiftieth Birthday, Plantu (18 December 1994).

Through the review of a selection of Plantu's cartoons it can be seen that Mitterrand's presidency was controversial on a number of levels, both professionally and personally. After a long battle with cancer, he passed away on 26 January 1996, aged seventy seven. However, despite the perceived failings of his government and his personal indiscretions, after his death his popularity rose significantly. Plantu captured the sentiment through the cartoon below (Figure 4.28) showing the poll rising off the graph and into the sky. Sat at his desk is the new President, Jacques Chirac with his new Prime Minister, Alain Juppé. By the tears on his face, it even looks as if Chirac missed François Mitterrand.

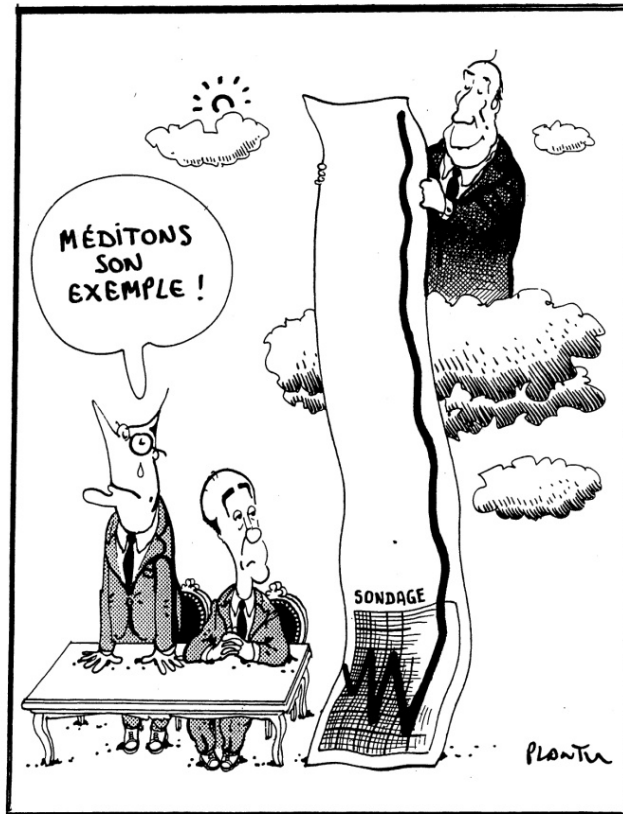


Figure 4.28 - *Tribute to Mitterrand*, Plantu (*Le Monde*, 10 January 1996).

Summary

This chapter has demonstrated the effectiveness of Plantu's cartoons in chronicling a prominent political career and in conveying powerful editorial messages. I have shown how Plantu commented on Mitterrand's two terms of presidency in line with *Le Monde's* shifting allegiances. Most notably, *Le Monde* supported Mitterrand during the 1981 elections, and then gradually moved away from him in order to boost its readership. *Le Monde's* investigations, often viewed as more Anglo-Saxon styles of reporting, were seen as a threat to the president's power as they often aimed to discredit him. Mitterrand consequently grew increasingly hostile towards the newspaper, especially since Plantu's cartoons in particular, on the front page of *Le Monde*, were able to quickly mobilize the readers' attention with punchy and humorous graphic commentaries of the President's actions. Despite his political affiliations with the President, Plantu's cartoons were at times caustic and satirical of the many contradictions that existed in France's political world throughout this period. Indeed, through a selection of Plantu's cartoons, I have observed the changing

representation of Mitterrand during the course of his presidency. From being calm and impassible at the beginning of his presidency, Mitterrand gradually became irritated and angry. This representation reflects the changing circumstances and the scandals that prevailed throughout Mitterrand's presidency.

Building on Hall (1973 and 1980) and Barthes (1974), in this chapter I have identified the techniques used by cartoonists and more specifically, Plantu to 'encode' messages. The meanings of Plantu's cartoons can be found at the level of connotation, underlining Plantu's personal style and his powerful rhetoric. My analysis of the above cartoons has shown how Plantu's use of rhetoric contributed to the cumulative effect of his representation of Mitterrand, especially in terms of the President's alleged duplicitous, evasive and secretive personality traits. I suggest that Plantu conveyed impactful editorial messages that other journalists would perhaps have been unable to through the written word. Reviewing the corpus of cartoons in this chapter, it is possible to interpret Plantu's 'preferred meaning' in these representations as often characterizing the President as scheming, secretive and generally unsupportive. I would suggest that Plantu was able to clearly convey these particular messages, more easily through the cartooning medium and the use of humour, than if they had been expressed through words alone. On this basis, cartoonists often push the boundaries of humour and graphic commentary beyond what can be perceived as acceptable. Indeed, Mitterrand was irritated by Plantu's cartoons and the messages they communicated and this was also observed in other media. In reference to Figure 4.22 above, the magazine *Le Point*, commented that:

'un dessin de Plantu dans Le Monde avive l'irritation Mitterrandienne. On y voit un Rocard grandi à l'excès face à un Fabius, un Mauroy et un Mitterrand proprement ébahis. L'addition sera servie au conseil des ministres'.⁹⁰

The demonstration of the continuing significance of cartoons, most particularly in contemporary France, is the key objective of this study and thus in the next chapter, I focus on the Danish Cartoons War to illustrate the impact that the 'preferred reading' of such images can have.

⁹⁰ *Le Point*, no. 868, 8 May 1989.

Chapter Five

The *Cartoons War* Controversy

‘La démocratie, c’est la possibilité de la critique, de l’échange des arguments et de la caricature, surtout par le biais des dessins. C’est ça, la démocratie, et ça, ce n’est pas négociable’.¹

Introduction

In this final chapter, I consider the impact of cartoons as a journalistic medium and a vehicle for political communication in the twenty first century through the examination of the *Cartoons War* – initiated in September 2005 by the publication of 12 cartoons representing the Prophet Muhammad and the Islamic faith in the Danish press. The publication, and re-publication, of these cartoons across the World caused mounting political tension and wide spread outrage, especially, amongst the people of the Islamic world. Political demonstrations, the petitioning of governments, judicial investigations and even deaths ensued as a function of the publication of the Muhammad inspired images. These events highlight the impact and influence that supposedly ‘simple’ and archaic images such as cartoons still have in modern day society.

The publication of the cartoons raises a number of significant issues that I explore in the following three sections. Firstly, by examining the twelve images in question, I highlight how cartooning conventions and rhetorical codes were used to create a ‘preferred reading’ that aimed to criticize the Islamic faith and its spiritual leader. I show that whilst some of the cartoons were gentle and even ambiguous in their meaning, others were explicitly controversial in their representation of the Prophet. With prior knowledge of cultural sensitivities, including the fact that the Islamic faith forbids any form of visual representation of Muhammad, I suggest that the cartoonists, and indeed publishers, were largely aware of the potential reaction that their drawings would provoke. This is highly significant as in the second section of this chapter, I focus on the outcomes of the controversy and in particular the development of the *Cartoons War* on the international stage. The events that took place, as a function of the original publication and reprinting of the cartoons, provide solid evidence of the

¹ Nicolas Sarkozy, on television. ‘Questions Qui Fâchent’, *LCI* (La Chaîne Info), 2 February 2006.

continuing influence and reach of political graphics into the twenty first century and the ethical problems linked with such images. The third section, takes up further the issues of the limits of freedom of graphic expression and the role of self-censorship. In particular, in this section I analyze French participation in the *Cartoons War*. With France being historically linked to censorship matters and a determination to defend the right of freedom of expression, as discussed in Chapter 2, the *Cartoons War* provides a pertinent and contemporary case study of the ongoing dilemmas faced by French cartoonists and publications within the context of *laïcité* (secularism).² An analysis of the debate in France aims to further demonstrate the significance and impact of cartoons in this country. It raises questions about the public role of the press, about the ways in which journalism is used as a vehicle for the expression of various and, often, polemical opinions. Moreover, the *Cartoons War* highlights the difficulties encountered with modern frameworks of regulation and contemporary inter-cultural relations.

The Twelve Cartoons

The *Cartoons War* began on 17 September 2005, with the publication of an article in the Danish newspaper *Politiken*, which discussed the ‘profound fear of criticism of Islam’ in Denmark and its repercussions on self-censorship.³ The article referred principally to the difficulty encountered by writer and journalist Kare Bluitgen in finding a cartoonist to illustrate the children’s book he was writing regarding the Koran and the life of the Prophet Muhammad.⁴ Whilst, it is strictly prohibited by the Muslim faith to visually portray the Prophet Muhammad in any shape or form, Bluitgen questioned why all the cartoonists he approached, bar one, refused to contribute to his book, and why the cartoonist who did agree, insisted on remaining anonymous. The article opened up a debate on the issues of self-censorship and freedom of speech in the Danish press, prompting the publication of many articles on the subject.

However, it was the daily newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* that launched the controversy when its Editor, Flemming Rose, decided to test whether the views

² In particular regarding wearing religious symbols in public places. Likewise, *laïcité* has also often been held responsible for the stigmatisation of the Muslim minority in France

³ ‘Dyb Angst for Kritik af Islam’, *Politiken*, 17 September 2005.

⁴ Kare Bluitgen, *Koranen og Profeten Muhammeds Liv (The Koran and the Life of the Prophet Muhammad)*, (Copenhagen: Host and Sons, 2006).

of Islamic radicals were indeed impacting freedom of expression in Denmark.⁵ To this end, he invited Danish cartoonists to submit graphic representations of the Prophet Muhammad 'as they perceived him'. Only twelve artists out of the forty who were commissioned, of which three of them were already working for the *Jyllands-Posten*, chose to respond with a drawing. On 30 September 2005, their twelve drawings of Prophet Muhammad, as featured in Figure 5.1 below, were published on page 3 of the newspaper accompanied by an editorial by Rose.



Figure 5.1 - The 12 Cartoons, Various Cartoonists (2005)

⁵ Founded in 1871, *Morgenavisen Jyllands-Posten* is Denmark's largest circulation daily. It is a self-described 'liberal newspaper independent of political, financial, organizational, religious and commercial interests.' 'What lies behind the name *Morgenavisen Jyllands-Posten*?' *Jyllands-Posten*, 22 February 2006, <<http://www.jp.dk/udland/artikel?aid=3564748;fid=11328>>, [accessed 23 March 2006].

In his centre-page editorial, Flemming Rose wrote:

The modern, secular society is rejected by some Muslims. They demand a special position, insisting on special consideration of their own religious feelings. It is incompatible with contemporary democracy and freedom of speech, where you must be ready to put up with insults, mockery, and ridicule. [...] We are on our way to a slippery slope where no one can tell how self-censorship will end. That is why *Jyllands-Posten* has invited members of the Danish editorial cartoonists union to draw Muhammad as they see him. [...].⁶

Thus, the Editor of the *Jyllands-Posten* explained that the article and cartoons were published to raise awareness of the issues of self-censorship in Denmark. Indeed, the editorial board of the *Jyllands-Posten* publicly rejected what they saw as the growing pressure that Muslim groups were putting on secular societies. To appreciate the situation, it is useful to know, as Mohamed Sifaoui remarks that a general climate of apprehension reined in Denmark since the murder of film director Theo Van Gogh in Amsterdam, in November 2004.⁷ Van Gogh was shot dead by a radical Islamist after his controversial film 'Submission' was aired on Dutch television. The film openly criticised the violence perpetrated against women, and highlighted such violence as prevalent in Islamic culture. The death of Van Gogh was followed by a number of other violent attacks on non-Muslim Danish citizens. Thus, Rose's stance, prompted by Bluitgen's difficulties in recruiting cartoonists for his children's book, was the desire to draw attention to 'the culmination of instances of self-censorship' for fear of consequences.⁸

Turning my focus to the images themselves, I suggest that from a Western perspective, six of the cartoons, as we shall see in Figures 5.2 – 5.8, are not overtly critical of Islam. A possible reason for this may have been that, based on the fear of reprisals, some cartoonists chose to draw 'around' the subject rather than providing their graphic representation of Muhammad himself

⁶ Flemming Rose, 'Muhammeds Ansigt' ('The Face of Muhammad'), *The Jyllands-Posten*, 30 September 2005.

⁷ Mohamed Sifaoui, *L'Affaire des Caricatures, Dessins et Manipulations* (Paris: Editions Privé, 2006). Sifaoui is also a journalist. In the heart of the crisis, he followed secretly the imams in the Middle East to understand why the controversy on the Danish caricatures had developed so drastically. His book is the only one written to date on the affair, is a comprehensive report of his own investigation.

⁸ Flemming Rose, 'Why I Published Those Cartoons', *The Washington Post Company*, 17 February 2006. <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/17/AR2006021702499.html>> [accessed 20 February 2006].

as instructed by Flemming Rose.⁹ This is evident in the first cartoon by Sørensen (see Figure 5.2 below), which captures the cartoonist's fear of reprisals from Islamic extremists for depicting the Prophet. In the cartoon, an artist is seen nervously working at his desk, shielding with his arm the bearded face he is drawing. The reader can immediately interpret that the face is that of the Prophet from the symbolic use of the Arabic headdress and the name Muhammad labelled at the top of the paper.



Figure 5.2 - Cartoon by Arne Sørensen

Equally, the focus of the cartoon by Lars Refn below (see Figure 5.3) is on the *Jyllands-Posten* cartoonists themselves. The cartoon shows a pupil pointing at a chalkboard on which a message is written in Farsi stating that the '*Jyllands-Posten* journalists are a bunch of reactionary provocateurs'. The boy is labelled 'Mohammed, Valby School, 7' which apparently means that he is a second-generation child of immigrants in Denmark.¹⁰ I suggest that the cartoon demonstrates that at least Refn, if not the other cartoonists and *Jyllands-Posten* team, anticipated that the publication of the cartoons would provoke a reaction from the Islamic world.

⁹ Nevertheless, as I discuss below, cartoons are polysemic, therefore they have the potential of offering several meanings and 'preferred readings' which in the case of the Danish cartoons had significant consequences.

¹⁰ As explained in: 'The Jyllands-Posten Cartoons Controversy', *Wikipedia*, <http://wikipedia.org/Descriptions_of-the-Jyllands-Posten-Muhammad_cartoons>, (accessed 30 March 2006).

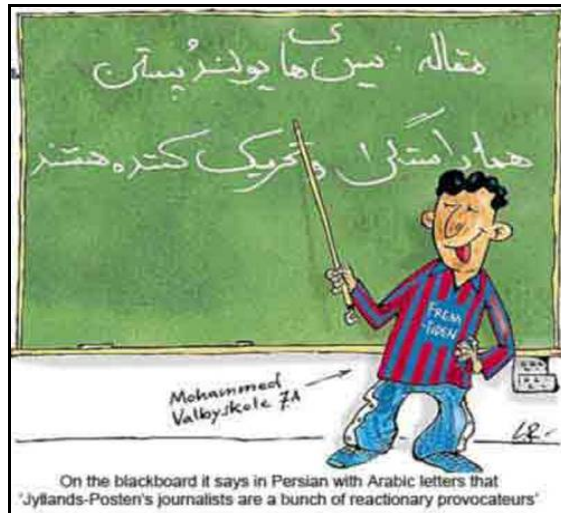


Figure 5.3 - Cartoon by Lars Refn

The third cartoon is a good example of a cartoonist choosing to draw around the subject. In the cartoon in Figure 5.4 below, the character that smiles as an orange drops into his turban is the writer Kare Bluitgen holding a child's drawing of the Prophet. In terms of cultural codes, it is useful to know that, in Denmark, the orange connotes the expression of 'a stroke of luck'.¹¹ Significantly, with the words 'PR stunt' written on the orange, it would appear that Bob Katzennelson, the author of the cartoon, implies that the issue of drawing the Prophet is nothing but a publicity stunt by Mr. Bluitgen to sell his children's book. Therefore I suggest that this cartoon is focused more on criticising the children's writer, Bluitgen, than in providing the reader with Katzennelson personal graphic interpretation of Muhammad.



Figure 5.4 - Cartoon by Bob Katzennelson

¹¹ In reference to the fairy tale of an orange that fell into Aladdin's turban and made him rich.

The next three cartoons are definitely focused on the representation of the Islamic Prophet. The cartoon, in Figure 5.5 below, by Peder Bundgaard, is a simple representation of Muhammad constructed using the symbols of Islam, namely the star, the crescent and the colour green. From a Western perspective there is nothing overtly critical of the Prophet in this image and indeed I propose that this image could be interpreted as patriotic as it depicts Muhammad as the symbol of the Islamic faith.



Figure 5.5 - Cartoon by Peder Bundgaard

Similarly, the cartoon in Figure 5.6 below does not appear to outwardly criticise the Islamic faith and its representative. Instead, the cartoonist, Claus Seidel, seems to comply with Bluitgen's initial task of providing an illustration of the Prophet for a children's book, by depicting Muhammad walking in the desert with his donkey. The cartoon exhibits a marked absence of any satirical content. Indeed, the use of soft lines, scale, background scenery and colour could all be viewed as contributing to an overall harmonious representation of the Prophet.

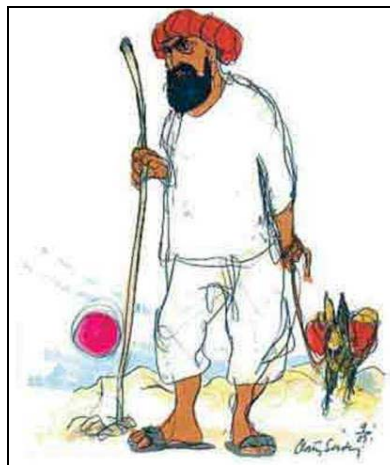


Figure 5.6 - Cartoon by Claus Seidel

The last of the six cartoons, that is quite gentle and does not overtly criticise the Prophet Muhhamed, is featured below in Figure 5.7. The cartoon by Annette Carlsen, shows someone trying to pick Muhammad out of a police line-up in which all seven people are wearing turbans. Whilst the CND medallion and halo are used as symbols by the cartoonist to characterise two of the people in the line, not all the suspects, are immediately identifiable. The only one which is clearly identifiable is that of Mr. Bluitgen who is holding a sign with his name. It is unclear which of the suspects is the Prophet, probably due to the absence of an accepted image of Muhammad, hence the caption states, 'Hm... I don't recognize him'. However, based on the colour green being a symbol of Islam I suggest that the Prophet is represented by person number 5.



Figure 5.7 - Cartoon by Annette Carlsen

The next six cartoons however can be argued to be much more contentious, of which Figure 5.8 below is undoubtedly the most controversial and caused the greatest uproar from both Islamic and non-Islamic communities. By representing the Prophet carrying a lit bomb in his turban I suggest that Kurt Westergaard explicitly implies a link between the Islamic faith and terrorism.

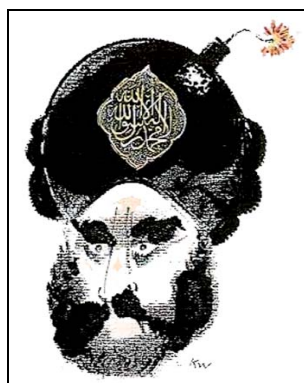


Figure 5.8 - Cartoon by Kurt Westergaard

Next, Rasmus Sand Hoyer's cartoon below (in Figure 5.9) shows Muhammad, in an aggressive stance, with a dagger in his hand, accompanied by two fearful, veiled women behind him. I propose that Hoyer seeks to highlight the submissive role of women in the Islamic world through this cartoon.



Figure 5.9 - Cartoon by Rasmus Sand Hoyer

The focus of the cartoon in Figure 5.10 below, by Erik Abild Sorensen, is also on women in Muslim society. In this abstract cartoon, I suggest that Sorensen uses the symbols of Islam, the moon and star, to construct an image of Islamic women's head dresses. The translation of the text: 'Prophet, you must be daft and dumb to keep women under the yoke!', seems to support this interpretation. Whilst the imagery itself is ambiguous, the caption in the cartoon *anchors* the meaning of the message, the insult, to the Islamic spiritual leader.

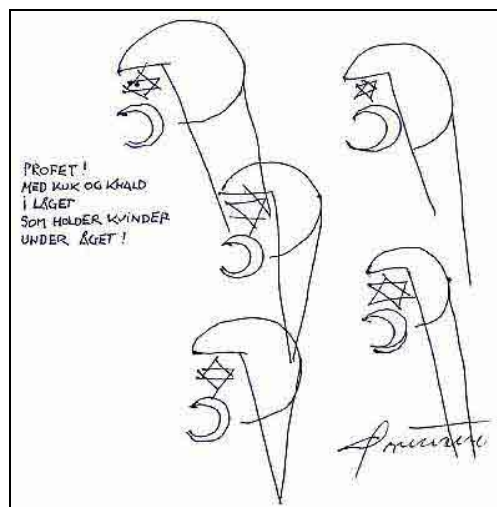


Figure 5.10 - Cartoon by Erik Abild Sorensen

Other cartoons are less directly focused on political messages, such as terrorism and women's rights, and attempt to be more humorous through the use of visual puns. For instance, Poul Erik Poulsen, in Figure 5.11 below, drew Muhammad wearing loose pants and with his hands tucked in his tunic. Most significantly, Poulsen depicts the Prophet with glowing crescents coming out of his turban. The crescents are indistinct, ambiguously leaving the reader to question whether they form a halo or a pair of horns and therefore, whether Muhammed is an angel or the devil.

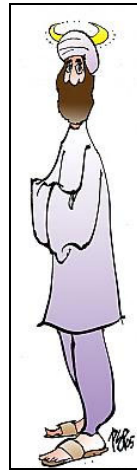


Figure 5.11 - Cartoon by Poul Erik Poulsen

The next cartoon in Figure 5.12 is probably the wittiest of all, despite its suggestions of terrorism. Here the Prophet, dressed as an Imam is standing on a cloud, as if in paradise; instructing suicide bombers to stop their attacks because they have run out of their promised reward, seventy two virgins.



Figure 5.12 - Cartoon by Jens Julius

Finally, in Figure 5.13, Franz Fuchsel uses his cartoon as an opportunity to call for restraint from the Islamic society. In the cartoon below the Prophet is shown examining a sheet of paper, most likely his caricature, and instructing his guards intent on bloody revenge to take it 'easy'. Once again, I suggest that this cartoon is further evidence that the cartoonists involved were aware of the potential repercussions of the publication of the drawings.

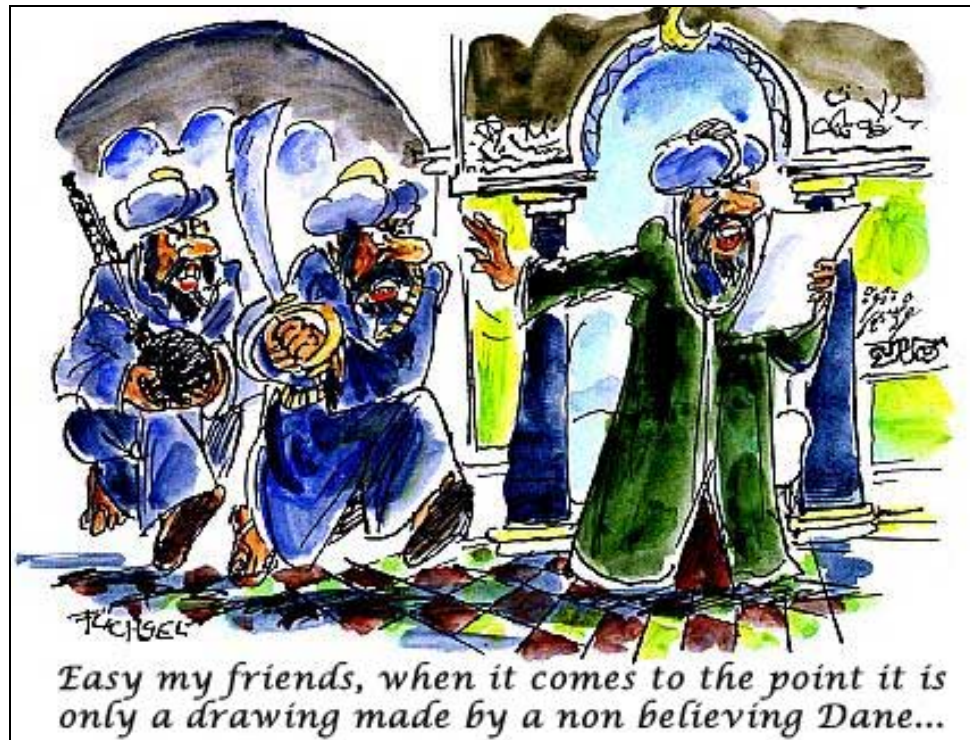


Figure 5.13 - Cartoon by Franz Fuchsel

Outcomes of the Controversy

The above analysis of the twelve cartoons demonstrates that the cartoonists' representations of Muhammad varied from the gentle and ambiguous to the most controversial. However, since any image that depicts the Islamic Prophet is considered blasphemous by followers of Islam, the Danish Muslim community called for an apology. Peaceful protests started outside the offices of the *Jyllands-Posten* from early October 2005 but by 14 October 2005, the number of protesters in the streets of Copenhagen had reached 4,000. Ahmed Abu Laban and Akhmad-Akkari, two of the most distinguished clerics in Denmark, contacted the Organisation of the Islamic Faith for support. As a group, they sent letters to the *Jyllands-Posten* and on 20 October 2005, submitted some

17,000 signatures to Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the Danish Prime Minister, requesting a meeting with him to discuss the government's response to the cartoons. As Mr. Rasmussen refused any meeting, it was left to the Danish Courts to consider the case, and the *Jyllands-Posten* was put under judicial investigation. The plaintiffs called for the Danish Criminal Code to prosecute the newspaper for blasphemy and insults towards their religious community. The investigation was not pursued however as Danish judges eventually ruled the cartoons' case a subject of public interest rather than a criminal offence. The judicial verdict, together with Rasmussen's refusal to meet with the Islamic leaders, further fuelled international tension, causing death threats to be issued against the cartoonists and a group of Danish Imams to take the matter further afield. Consequently, at the beginning of December 2005, they set out on a tour of the Middle East with a 43-page document that included the original twelve Danish cartoons, clippings from the Danish press and 10 more drawings that were, allegedly, published in another Danish newspaper, the *Weekendavisen*. They perceived these documents as not only incriminating the *Jyllands-Posten* but also the whole of the Danish media.¹² As Sifaoui suggests: 'en réalité, dans ce dossier à charge, où se multiplient contrevérités et contradictions, Abou Laban et ses amis ont essayé insidieusement de présenter le Danemark comme un pays 'Islamophobe' et raciste'.¹³

The group of clerics went to Egypt and Lebanon to inform Muslims about the offensive pictures and their torment, seeking the international support of the religious personalities of the Muslim world. On 6 December 2005, they aired their grievances at the summit of Muslim nations held in Mecca, where 56 Islamic nations were represented. There, the dossier was distributed to an audience of influential Arabic political leaders and heads of state. The dossier caused outrage across the Muslim world, as it contained images and photo manipulations that were considerably more extreme than the cartoons originally published by the *Jyllands-Posten*. Amongst others, there was a picture suggesting that the Prophet Muhammad engaged in bestiality (in Figure 5.14 below), and a cartoon depicting him as a paedophile (in Figure 5.15 below).

¹² Sifaoui, *L'Affaire des Caricatures*, p.77-84.

¹³ Sifaoui, *L'Affaire des Caricatures*, p.78.

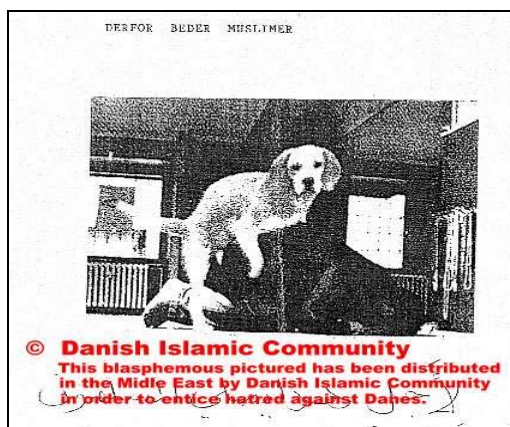


Figure 5.14 – ‘Why Muslims Pray’

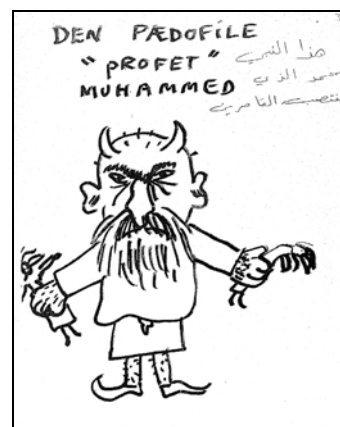


Figure 5.15 – ‘The Prophet as a Paedophile’

A further photo of a man with a pig’s head, squealing was also said to represent the Prophet Muhammad (see Figure 5.16 below).

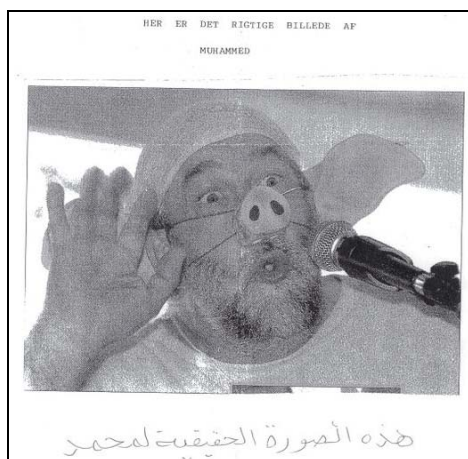


Figure 5.16 – ‘The True Image of Muhammad’

It was by chance that an Internet surfer discovered that the pig’s head picture above, was in fact a copy of an old press photograph taken from a French competition, whereby contestants acted as pigs. The photograph (which was never meant to represent Muhammad) was posted on the contestant’s web site on 15 August 2005.¹⁴ However, the fact that some of the images within the Imam’s document were a forgery did not diminish the power and impact that they had. Indeed, the delegates of the summit of Muslim nations viewed the images within sacrilegious and accused the Danish press of ‘Islam phobia’. The Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) demanded not only that the Danish

¹⁴ Dennis Nixon, ‘Danish Imams Busted’, *Neandernews*, <<http://www.Neandernews.com>>, 6 February 2006, (accessed 30 March 2006). This popular contest happened in Trie-sur-Biaise, a small village in the French Pyrennees. Bob D’Emde, a photographer from the *Associated Press*, took this picture of the prizewinner contestant, Jacques Barrot.

authorities prosecute the *Jyllands-Posten*, but also that international sanctions be imposed upon Denmark. From then on, a campaign was levied against all things Danish.

However, the row further escalated when the Western media republished some of the original twelve cartoons in solidarity with the *Jyllands-Posten*, setting off what became known around the world as the *Cartoons War*.¹⁵ The decision to reprint the original cartoons came first from the Norwegian Christian newspaper, *Mazinet* on 10 January 2006, who wanted to support the freedom of the press and to confront the problem. Its Editor-in-Chief, Vebjoern Selbekk confirmed his decision to republish the cartoons by saying: 'We are ourselves a nation that has been exposed to increasing Muslim violence against freedom of expression'.¹⁶ I suggest that Selbekk refers to the well-known Salman Rushdie affair in 1993, when the Norwegian editor of the *Satanic Verses* was the victim of a murder attempt.¹⁷

The re-publication of the Danish cartoons increased anger in the Islamic world, putting pressure on European countries to stop the reproduction of the cartoons. Some countries such as Saudi Arabia recalled their ambassadors from Denmark to show their disapproval of the republication of the cartoons. By the end of January 2006, a wave of protest, and violent attacks on foreigners in Muslim countries forced the *Jyllands-Posten* to publicly apologise on its website, in Danish, Arabic and English, claiming that it was simply an issue of freedom of expression and that they did not intend to offend the Muslim faith. Selbekk, of the *Mazinet*, initially reluctant to apologise, finally expressed his regrets to the Muslim community too. In his statement, he declared that the reprinting of the cartoons was 'not aimed at provoking Muslims but that it was justifiable under freedom of expression laws'.¹⁸ Yet, although the Danish Imams accepted the statements, the justification was rejected by the wider Muslim world.

¹⁵ This term was first used by Daniel Howden and David Hardakerin in their article: 'How a Meeting of Leaders in Mecca Set off the Cartoons War Around the World', *The Independent*, 10 February 2006.

¹⁶ 'Danish Prime Minister Shocked at Lies', *The Brussels Journal*, <<http://www.brusselsjournal.com/node/658>>, 11 January 2006, [accessed 15 February 2006].

¹⁷ In 1988, Salman Rushdie published *The Satanic Verses*, a book which was seen as controversial since it was inspired in part by the life of the Islamic prophet, Muhammad. Ayatollah Khomeini, Leader of Iran issued a fatwa calling on all good Muslims to kill Rushdie and his publishers.

¹⁸ 'Muslim World Protests Prophet Caricatures Despite Apology', *Die.Deutsche Welle*, <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/021444,18880_18,00.html>, 31 January 2006, [accessed 5 March 2006].

However, it should be noted that throughout the Muslim world, a few editors also decided to print a number of the Danish cartoons. While, in the main, they denounced the satirical intent of the cartoons, they often aimed to appeal against the extreme violence that the images had provoked. Examples include two Jordanian weekly tabloids, *Al Mehwar* and *Al-Shinan*, which reprinted the cartoons along with an editorial urging Muslims to be 'reasonable'. According to *The Guardian*, on 2 February 2006, *Al-Shinan* reprinted three of the Danish cartoons, including that of Muhammad wearing a turban with the lit fuse, with an appeal for compassion: 'This is how the Danish newspaper portrayed prophet Muhammad, may God's blessing and peace be upon him'.¹⁹ By mid-February 2006, the Danish cartoons had appeared or reappeared in the press of most Nordic countries, as well as in France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Switzerland and Spain. Tension increased even in countries that had decided not to reproduce the Danish cartoons, such as Great Britain and America. As the crisis continued and as editors and publishers in several countries showed no contrition at the decision to republish the offensive cartoons, international leaders and European commissioners called for peace. *Le Monde* reported that France, the US and America joined forces to plead for the respect of Muslim beliefs.²⁰ President Bush, who had so far managed to avoid entering the debate, urged the American media not to publish the cartoons 'in respect of Islam'. He explained his feelings to King Abdullah of Jordan in saying: 'We believe in a free press. We also recognize that with freedom comes responsibilities'.²¹ UN Secretary, Kofi Annan remarked that although he supported freedom of the press, 'it should always be exercised in a way that fully respects religious beliefs and tenets of all religion'. British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, in commenting on *France-Soir's* special issue praised the British press for not getting involved. He was reported to have said:

There is freedom of speech, we all respect that, but there is no obligation to insult or to be gratuitously inflammatory. [...] I believe the

¹⁹ Chris Mc Greal and Nicholas Watts, 'New Wave of Muslim Protest in Cartoon Row', *The Guardian*, 3 February 2006.

²⁰ AFP, 'Londres, Paris et Washington Tentent de Désamorcer l'Affaire des Caricatures', *Le Monde.fr*, <http://www.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/acheter.cgi?offre=ARCHIVES&type_item=ART_ARCH_30J&objet_id=933037>, 3 February 2006, [accessed 5 March 2006].

²¹ 'President Bush Welcomes King Abdullah of Jordan to the White House', *The White House.com*, <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/02/20060208-1.html>>, 8 February 2006 [accessed 5 March 2006].

republication of these cartoons has been unnecessary, it has been insensitive, it has been disrespectful, and it has been wrong. [...] I place on record my regard for the British media, which has shown considerable responsibility and sensitivity.²²

EU commissioner Peter Mandelson urged editors to remain neutral and not to reprint the Danish cartoons for they were 'bound to offend' after a BBC television channel showed the front page of *France-Soir* and the Danish cartoons during its midday news bulletin, on 2 February 2006.²³ The BBC had justified this action by claiming that the images were broadcast 'responsibly', 'in full context', and 'to give audiences an understanding of the strong feelings evoked by the story'.²⁴

It was only, then Interior Minister, Nicolas Sarkozy who came out strongly in defence of freedom of graphic expression when he spoke out on the satellite television channel LCI:

La caricature c'est l'excès. A tout prendre, je préfère l'excès de caricature à l'excès de censure". [...] Bien sûr, il faut éviter de blesser les convictions des personnes, mais encore une fois, je préfère qu'on prenne le risque de blesser que le risque de la censure. Quand je vois qu'il y a des fatwas qui sont lancées sur les Danois [...] et que l'on prend pour cible la totalité des ressortissants et des soldats danois, c'est rien moins qu'extrêmement choquant [...] [...] Lorsque la caricature va au-delà du raisonnable, ce sont les tribunaux qui en jugent et pas les autorités religieuses, et pas les gouvernements des pays musulmans. [...].²⁵

Intellectuals too called for a peaceful dialogue. During an interview with the British newspaper, *The Guardian*, Tariq Ramadan said:

The time has come for women and men who reject this dangerous division of people into two worlds to start building bridges based on common values. [...] We need to promote an open, self-critical approach, to repudiate exclusive truths and narrow-minded, binary visions of the world.²⁶

²² Kerstin Gehmlic, 'Anger Over Mohammad Cartoon Spreads' *Reuters News Agency*, <http://watch.windsofchange.net/2006/06_0130_0205.htm>, 3 February 2006, [accessed 25 March 2006].

²³ Ian Marland and Susan Bell, 'Blasphemous Cartoons Shown on British TV as Muslims Vent Outrage', *The Scotsman*, <<http://news.scotsman.com/topics.cfm?tid=1381&id=172632006>>, 3 February 2006, [accessed 25 March 2006].

²⁴ 'Muhammad Cartoon Row Intensifies', *BBC News Europe*, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4670370.stm>> 3 February 2006, [accessed 25 March 2006].

²⁵ 'Questions Qui Fâchent', LCI (La Chaîne Info), 2 February 2006.

²⁶ Quoted in: 'Cartoon Conflicts', *The Guardian*, 6 February 2006. Tariq Ramadan is a senior research fellow at the Lokahi Foundation in London and a visiting fellow at Oxford University.

Despite the pleas for peace, the impact of the cartoons was significant, including the burning down of embassies and consulates, boycotts of European products, casualties and even deaths.²⁷ Such a politically and religiously tense situation arose in Europe, as Sifaoui points out, in the context of post '9/11', in 2001; of the Madrid bombings, in 2004, of those in London in 2005 and certainly of Van Gogh's murder'.²⁸

French Participation in the Cartoons War

Having discussed the context of the *Cartoons War* and the Danish motivations for challenging the issue of freedom of expression, I now wish to examine the French contribution to this controversy and in particular, the reasons why some French publications chose to republish the Danish cartoons whilst others didn't.²⁹

The response from the French media to the Danish caricatures of Prophet Muhammad was spontaneous: they supported the Danish cause - even when they did not reproduce the cartoons. This assertion is based on my examination of a number of French daily national newspapers published between 1 February and 1 March 2006, *France-Soir*, *Libération* and *Le Monde*, who published the cartoons, and *Le Figaro*, who did not. With the addition of two weekly satirical publications: *Charlie Hebdo*, that found itself at the heart of the controversy and *Le Canard Enchaîné*, who did not publish the cartoons but commented on the affair; I believe this sample of the French press is adequate to draw pertinent conclusions.³⁰

Two main themes have emerged from the many opinion articles published in the above sample. Defending freedom of expression was definitely the dominant discourse. The second, highlighted the need for tolerance, respect for cultural differences and religious beliefs. It is important to note that French society has an inherent belief in the freedom of speech and secular values.

²⁷ In total, over the months following the publishing of the cartoons, it was reported that across Western Africa, 'the death toll reached at least 80'.

²⁸ Mohamed Sifaoui, *L'affaire des caricatures*, (Paris: Editions Privé, 2006), p.42.

²⁹ Please refer to Annexe 2, for a chronological list of events in France.

³⁰ The Danish cartoons did not appear in the French press after mid February. As far as articles are concerned, the debate was at its peak during this period. These newspapers are representative of the French media: *France-Soir* and *Le Figaro* have a right, political stance. *Libération*, *Le Monde* and *Charlie Hebdo* are left wing newspapers. I have also viewed and listened to a number of television and radio programs discussing the affair, and in which cartoonists and politicians were interviewed.

Amongst other European countries that determinedly defended their right of freedom of speech, France is probably the most noticeable, for having gained its Human Rights as a result of a Revolution. Moreover, as discussed in Chapter 2, historically, French cartoonists maintained a strong tradition of political lampooning despite the repeated introduction of censorship. In that context, critical commentary takes place as much through political graphics as in written journalism. It is therefore not surprising that a number of French newspapers chose to reproduce the controversial Danish cartoons in spite of Muslim protests and international unrest.

France-Soir was the first French newspaper to re-publish all the twelve Danish drawings. They appeared in the middle pages of the publication with, as a taster, on the front page, a cartoon by Delize showing four religious figures (a Buddhist, a Jewish, a Muslim and a Christian) floating on a cloud. The headline read: 'Yes, we have the right to caricature God'. In the cartoon, the prophet with the turban looks angry. The Christian version of God next to him says: 'Don't complain, Muhammad, we've all been caricatured here' (Figure 5.17 below).



Figure 5.17 – Cartoon by Delize, *France-Soir* (1 February 2006).

The position taken by the editorial board of *France-Soir*, was that religious dogma had no place in a secular society.³¹ Editor-in-Chief, Serge Faubert defended his decision to reprint the Danish cartoons and stated that he would never apologise to the Muslim community. He explained:

Il n'y a dans les dessins incriminés aucune intention raciste, aucune volonté de dénigrement d'une communauté en tant que telle. Certains sont drôles, d'autres moins, voilà tout. Et c'est pour le démontrer que nous avons choisi de les publier.[...] Non, nous ne nous excuserons jamais d'être libres de parler, de penser, de croire...Puisque ces docteurs auto-proclamés de la foi en font une question de principe, il faut être ferme. Clamons le autant qu'il sera nécessaire : on a le droit de caricaturer Mahomet, Jésus, Boudhah, Yahvé et toutes les déclinaisons du théisme. Cela s'appelle la liberté d'expression.³²

However, on the next day, the newspaper's French-Egyptian owner, Raymond Lakah, apologised to the Muslim community and dismissed Faubert and his Director of Publishing, Jacques Lefranc for printing the cartoons. As Lakah explained, he did so: 'in a strong sign of respect to the intimate convictions and beliefs of each individual'.³³ Nevertheless, the media including *Le Monde* suggested that Lakah's reaction was motivated by his Egyptian nationality and his desire to dispose of his bankrupt newspaper.³⁴

French cartoonists and journalists of *Le Monde*, *Libération* and *Charlie Hebdo* also opted for defending freedom of expression by showing solidarity with *Jylland-Posten* and *France-Soir*. *Le Monde* first attempted to circumvent the problem by choosing to reprint a number of cartoons on 1 February 2006 relevant to Christianity. *Le Monde* then published two of the original Danish cartoons and one by Plantu, (see Figure 5.18 below).³⁵ As discussed in Chapter 4, Plantu having embraced the democratic values of the *Le Monde* responded to the *Cartoons War* controversy with a front page cartoon that combined issues of freedom of expression and ethics, with humour and diplomacy. In the

³¹ 'France enters Muslim cartoon row', *BBC News Europe*, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4669360.stm>>, 1 February 2006, [accessed 5 March 2006].

³² 'Caricatures de Mahomet, il Faut Accepter d'être Choqué dans ses Convictions' *Quotidien Permanent NouvelObs.com* <<http://permanent.nouvelobs.com/medias/20060202/OBS4798.html>>, 2 February 2006, (accessed 5 March 2006).

³³ In *Le Monde*, 4 February, 2006

³⁴ *France-Soir's* owner, Raymond (Rami) Lakah holds a dual nationality. In 2000, he was elected as an MP in the Egyptian Parliament but his election was questioned because of his dual nationality. Heavily in debt, when law suits were filed against him, he apparently fled Egypt to settle in France. He claims having paid his debts in Egypt but it is well known, at the time of writing, that *France-Soir* faces financial difficulties.

³⁵ The day following the publication of the cartoons there was apparently a bomb threat at *France-Soir*, in 'Alerte à la Bombe dans les Locaux de France-Soir', *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 5 February 2006.

cartoon, Plantu shows an artist's hand, creating a sketch of a bearded man through the repeated use of the sentence: 'I must not draw Mohammed'. At the top of the pencil is a minaret from where an Imam monitors the sketch through a telescope. Clearly, Plantu suggests that the cartoonist's freedom of expression is under threat. The cartoon is mischievous and subtly self-referential. In this way, the Plantu evades being blamed for openly depicting Prophet Muhammad. While clearly supporting freedom of expression, *Le Monde*, as Plantu explained, found it difficult to address the situation vis-à-vis its intellectual readership. 'C'était une situation assez difficile, beaucoup de lecteurs ont désapprouvé notre participation à ce débat'.³⁶ As a whole, it looks as if *Le Monde* sought to appease angry Muslims, whilst openly defending the right of freedom of expression under the principles of *laïcité*.

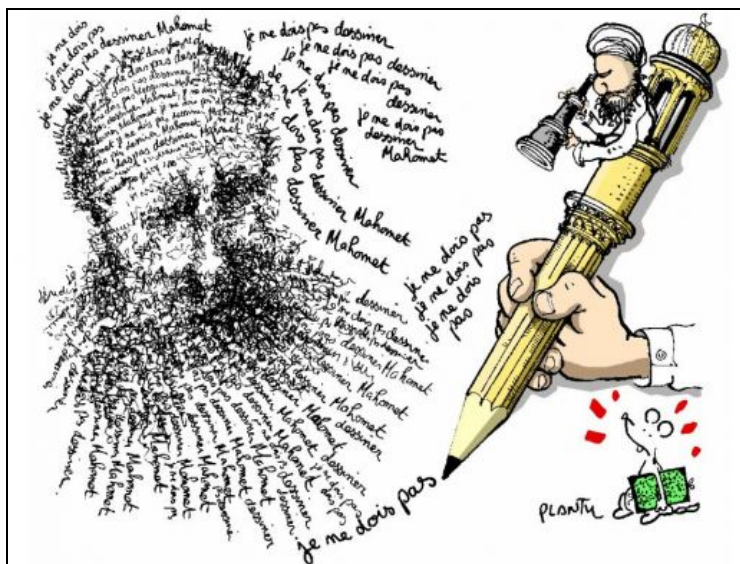


Figure 5.18 – Cartoon by Plantu, *Le Monde* (3 February 2006).

It should be noted that although *Le Monde* was an active supporter of the right of freedom of expression, and published two of the Danish cartoons, it disagreed with *Jyllands-Posten's* initiative to depict Mohammad and suggested that the paper had made unfair and unkind representations of Islam, terrorism, and suicide in some of the cartoons.³⁷ The left-wing publication, *Libération* also felt uncomfortable in publishing the Danish cartoons. It first claimed that the

³⁶ Plantu, in conversation with Micheline Maupoint, 29 September 2007, Saint-Just-Le Martel.

³⁷ *Le Monde*, 'Caricatures Libres', 3 February 2006.

cartoons were of poor quality and not worth reprinting.³⁸ However, on 3 February 2006, in spite of numerous threats against *France-Soir*, *Libération* published two of the Danish cartoons.³⁹

The most significant French press contribution to the *Cartoons War* undoubtedly came from the French left-wing press, in particular, the weekly satirical publication, *Charlie Hebdo*.⁴⁰ It participated in the debates on 1 February, with long articles that underlined how France had a long tradition of caricature, pastiche and offense, which was part of French cultural identity. On Wednesday 8 February 2006, it published a special issue on the cartoons controversy. The twelve Danish cartoons appeared on Page 2 of the publication, along with a strong editorial by the Editor in Chief, Philippe Val. Yet, the more controversial comments on the events came from Cabu, *Charlie Hebdo*'s main cartoonist. Cabu openly declared his atheism, and attacked all faiths as 'stupid' (hence, the caption in his cartoon below in Figure 5.19). Cabu also criticized the Muslim moderates, accusing them of not reacting to the terrorists acts committed in the name of Islam.⁴¹ Cabu drew the cover of the issue dated 8 February, showing Prophet Muhammad crying over his fate.⁴²



Figure 5.19 - Cover of *Charlie Hebdo*, Cabu (8 February 2006).

³⁸ *Libération*, 31 January 2006

³⁹ One of the cartoons was of the Prophet with the bomb shaped turban. The cartoons were accompanied by an article, 'Libération défend la liberté d'expression', *Libération*, 3 February 2006.

⁴⁰ Like *Le Canard Enchaîné*, *Charlie Hebdo* boasts of being liberal, nonconformist, with a freedom of tone. It is known for being very critical of Catholicism and a defender of the principle of *laïcité*.

⁴¹ *Charlie Hebdo*, 1 and 8 February 2006.

⁴² Cabu: Jean Cabut, (1938-) is one of the founders of the satirical publication *Hara-Kiri* in 1960, which later became *Charlie Hebdo*. After *Charlie Hebdo* was discontinued for a number of years, Cabu launched it again, in collaboration with Philippe Val, in 1992. He presently works for both *Charlie Hebdo* and *Le Canard Enchaîné*.

Philippe Val justified the publication of the Danish cartoons and by extension the paper's right to blaspheme:

C'est un personnage historique [Mohamed] qui appartient à l'humanité. Par conséquent, même si les sunnites n'ont pas le droit de représenter son image, dans les pays qui ont conquis la liberté d'expression, on peut le représenter comme on veut.⁴³

This issue of 8 February 2006 was a commercial success, selling 160,000 copies compared to the normal circulation of 100,000. Moreover, another 400,000 copies were reprinted and sold the following day. Yet, the publication of this particular issue was highly controversial. Indeed, a group of French Muslim organisations, the *Grand Mosques of Paris and Lyon* and the *Council of Muslim Faith* (CFCM), eager to prevent the republication of the controversial cartoons in *Charlie Hebdo*, had sued the newspaper, arguing that the cartoons drew an offensive link between Islam and terrorism. They asked for its confiscation, before printing, on the grounds that it undermined the principle of their faith.⁴⁴ The judges refused to ban the publication on those grounds, not for the contents of the claim but because the CFCM had failed to strictly follow 'several points of procedure' in recording their case.⁴⁵ Philippe Val commented to the press: 'C'est une bonne nouvelle pour tous' [...] 'Nous défendons le droit de la caricature et de la satire'.⁴⁶

The Muslim World League joined the *CFCM* and the *Grand Mosques of Paris and Lyon* and instituted legal proceedings against *Charlie Hebdo* for public insult towards the Muslim people and their religion. One of the solicitors defending the Muslim cause explained that there were also allegations of racism:

Charlie voudrait faire croire que c'est le procès de la liberté d'expression: Nous ne reprochons pas le principe de la publication des caricatures. Nous poursuivons Charlie pour les quelques caricatures que nous estimons constituer une injure raciste.⁴⁷

⁴³ Quoted in 'Petit Glossaire d'une Semaine Caricaturale', *Charlie Hebdo*, 8 February 2006.

⁴⁴ The case was reminiscent of the nineteenth century, when prior censorship was introduced in France to prevent publication and distribution of works that could undermine authority. It can be suggested that it is because these images were deemed to have significant public influence that such measures of control were deemed necessary.

⁴⁵ 'French Court OKs Muhammad's Cartoons', *Reuters. News 24.com*, <http://www.news24.com/News24/World/News/0,2-10-1462_1877099,00.html>, 7 February 2006, (accessed 30 March 2006).

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ Alexandra Bogaert, 'Les Caricatures de Mahomet Conduisent Charlie Hebdo au Tribunal' *Libération*, 22 September 2006.

At the beginning of March 2006, *Charlie Hebdo* made the news again for publishing a manifesto entitled, 'Together against the New Totalitarianism'. This document was created by a group of twelve intellectuals who decided to 'call for resistance against fundamentalism and Islamic totalitarianism'. Those who signed the statement include Philippe Val himself, Salman Rushdie, author of *The Satanic Verses* and Ayaan Hirsi Ali, the writer of the film *Submission* which allegedly sparked the assassination of the Director, Theo Van Gogh in 2004. In this document, they expressed their support of the universality of freedom of expression and warned against what they called 'a new totalitarian global menace: Islamism'.⁴⁸ The manifesto, translated into Danish, was published in the *Jyllands-Posten* (see Annexe 3).

The other satirical publication, *Le Canard Enchaîné*, another staunch defender of freedom of expression and *laïcité*, focused on reminding its readers that Imams are like priests, therefore, they were religious enemies of secularism. On 8 February 2006, it published an issue dedicated to the *Cartoons War* which did not use the Danish cartoons but instead, produced its own cartoons on the subject.

As far as the politicians are concerned, only the then Interior Minister, Nicolas Sarkozy came out strongly in defence of freedom of graphic expression when he spoke out on the satellite television channel LCI:

La caricature c'est l'excès. A tout prendre, je préfère l'excès de caricature à l'excès de censure". [...] Bien sûr, il faut éviter de blesser les convictions des personnes, mais encore une fois, je préfère qu'on prenne le risque de blesser que le risque de la censure. Quand je vois qu'il y a des *fatwas* qui sont lancées sur les Danois [...] et que l'on prend pour cible la totalité des ressortissants et des soldats danois, c'est rien moins qu'extrêmement choquant [...] La démocratie, c'est la possibilité de la critique, de l'échange des arguments et de la caricature, surtout par le biais des dessins. C'est ça, la démocratie, et ça, ce n'est pas négociable. [...] Lorsque la caricature va au-delà du raisonnable, ce sont les tribunaux qui en jugent et pas les autorités religieuses, et pas les gouvernements des pays musulmans. [...].⁴⁹

Based on the French response to the *Cartoons War*, we could be mistaken for assuming that the right of freedom of expression is absolute. However, even

⁴⁸ Read the full text on: 'Writers issue cartoon row warning against Islamic totalitarianism', *BBC News Europe*, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4763520.stm>>, 1 February 2006, (accessed 10 February 2006).

⁴⁹ 'Questions qui fâchent', LCI (La Chaîne Info), 2 February 2006.

under French law, freedom of speech and expression exists within set limits. Philippe Val, one of the proponents of absolute freedom of expression, was well aware of these restrictions:

Si elle est un fait dans les États de droit, [la liberté d'expression] elle n'en est pas moins réglementée par le législateur. La diffamation, le racisme, l'insulte aux personnes, relèvent des tribunaux de la République. Charlie Hebdo a régulièrement été attaqué par les extrémistes chrétiens et nous avons gagné ces procès. Précision capitale : les lois qui encadrent cette liberté protègent des personnes, non des mythes.⁵⁰

Moreover, Val makes a distinction between the defamation of people and that of 'mythical' characters. This introduction of the notion of the individual's right not to be insulted or defamed takes us to the issue of self-censorship and the responsibility of the press. It seems that it is above all a matter of personal ethics and accountability – even more so with sensitive issues like the representation of the Islamic Prophet. Indeed, as previously mentioned, some countries chose not to publish the aforementioned cartoons and some cartoonists reflected on the issue skilfully when they produced their own comment.

The second theme that emerges from France's response to the Danish cartoons is the belief that freedom of speech should come with ethics and moral responsibilities. This was underlined by *Le Figaro*, which showed neutrality and chose not to publish the cartoons.⁵¹ The paper advocated the need for self-censorship for written and graphic expression in such cases: 'l'autocensure peut se révéler nécessaire car ce que la loi autorise, la conscience l'interdit. [...] On peut faire aussi un mauvais usage de la presse'.⁵² Some members of the French government tried to balance defending freedom of expression on the one hand and respecting others' religious beliefs on the other. The then President Jacques Chirac also commented on the need for drawing a fine line between freedom of expression and the respect of the other's cultural and religious differences:

⁵⁰ Quoted in 'Petit glossaire d'une semaine caricaturale', Charlie Hebdo, op.cit.

⁵¹ To my knowledge, this choice was never justified. However, *Le Figaro* was known for being close to Jacques Chirac's government. As Chirac was against the republication of the cartoons, one can assume that his was the reason why *Le Figaro* did not publish the cartoons.

⁵² *Le Figaro*, 2 February 2006.

Sur la question des caricatures et des réactions qu'elles provoquent dans le monde musulman, je rappelle que si la liberté d'expression est un des fondements de la République, celle-ci repose également sur les valeurs de tolérance et de respect de toutes les croyances. [...] Tout ce qui peut blesser les convictions d'autrui, en particulier les convictions religieuses, doit être évité. La liberté d'expression doit s'exercer dans un esprit de responsabilité. Je condamne toutes les provocations manifestes.⁵³

Prime Minister, Dominique de Villepin urged for a compromise:

Il faut concilier l'exigence de liberté et l'exigence de respect et éviter bien sûr tout ce qui blesse inutilement et en particulier dans le domaine des convictions religieuses.⁵⁴

Another important point to make regarding the *Cartoons War* controversy is that critique and commentary did not only take place in the written press and audio visual media but also within the cartooning field. As an example, the *Cartoons War* was the subject of a round table discussion at the 25th *Salon International de la Caricature, du Dessin de Presse et d'Humour* and for some cartoonists including Loup, Cabu, and Plantu, initially, the matter seemed insignificant, as the Danish cartoons were deemed uninteresting and not even humorous. In fact, they were difficult to understand without translations or reference to the Danish or Islamic cultural context. The Director of the exhibition, Gérard Vandembroucke, a specialist in cartooning, pointed out that they were simply bad cartoons that he would never have accepted in any of his exhibitions.⁵⁵ Plantu also highlighted one important skill required to be an effective cartoonist, which was to be able to provoke a reaction within the reader whilst remaining aware of cultural sensitivities:

Je suis pour secouer le cocotier de tous les intégrismes religieux mais en même temps, il faut sentir les sensibilités des lecteurs. Il faut que ce soit violent, en sachant qu'on a un regard culturel.⁵⁶

Comic strip author Marcel Gotlib echoed his colleagues' concerns about limiting freedom of expression in cartooning. He feared a growing 'political correctness' which he blamed on religious extremists.⁵⁷

⁵³ Allocution by president Jacques Chirac, 6 February 2006.

⁵⁴ Krystell Lebrun, 'Caricatures de Mohamed, Villepin prend ses distances', *L'Express*, 3 February 2006.

⁵⁵ *Salon International de la caricature, du dessin de presse et d'humour*, Saint-Just-Le Martel, near Limoges (France), 6 October 2006.

⁵⁶ *Le Monde*, 3 February 2006.

The various events and debates over these caricatures, that occurred between the Autumn of 2005 and the Spring of 2006, have brought to light the significance of cartooning in modern day society. In October 2006, an international gathering of political cartoonists met under the banner of *Cartooning for Peace* at the United Nations headquarters, to discuss the 'power of their pens', and the pressures on their changing profession, which demands taking personal responsibility for their acts.⁵⁸ The power of the political cartoon and the responsibility of the political cartoonist was highlighted with reference to the Danish cartoons episode. In the opening remarks at the gathering, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan declared that:

Cartoons can encourage us to look critically at ourselves, and increase our empathy for the sufferings and frustration of others, but they can also do the opposite. They have, in short, a big responsibility.⁵⁹

At the time of writing, the Danish cartoons controversy is still present in the French media, highlighting the significant impact that these images have had. The lawsuit against *Charlie Hebdo* went before the Court of Jurisdiction in Paris, in February and March 2007 and Charlie Hebdo won their case on 22 March 2007. The court ruled that the publishing of the cartoons by *Charlie Hebdo* had mainly contributed to a public debate of general interest, 'un débat public d'intérêt général'.⁶⁰ The *Union of Islamic Organisations of France* (UOIF) and the *Muslim World League* appealed against this decision. On 3 March 2008, The *Paris Court of Appeal*, to which the *Muslim World League* and UOIF had referred the matter, confirmed the discharge of *Charlie Hebdo*. The French press had won the battle for freedom of expression.

Summary

The *Cartoons War* has emphasised the significance of cartooning as a powerful medium of expression in the twenty first century and the continued political

⁵⁷ *Le Monde*, 2 February 2006.

⁵⁸ In chapter 3, I have mentioned that Plantu was the initiator of *Cartooning for Peace*. He is supported in this mission by Gerard Vandenbrooke, Director of the *Salon du Dessin de Presse et D'Humour* in Saint-Jus-Le Martel, near Limoges (France).

⁵⁹ Paul Burkhardt, 'Political Cartoonists Talk Shop at U.N.', *The Associated Press*, 16 October 2006. *WashingtonPost.com*,

<<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/16/AR2006101601340.html>>.

⁶⁰ Pascale-Robert Diard, 'Charlie Hebdo Relaxé dans l'Affaire des Caricatures de Mahomet', *Le Monde*, 24 March 2007.

impact of such images. In particular, the cartoons highlight the effect of cultural differences on the decoding of 'preferred meanings'. Whilst the cartoons were largely perceived as meaningless by most Westerners and even described as poor examples of cartooning by those in the industry, the response was markedly different from the Muslim community.

When the Danish cartoons are examined semiotically, in Barthes' and Hall's view, it is clear that the cartoons took on different meanings according to how they were encoded and how the 'audience' received and decoded them.⁶¹

Hall asserts:

Before this message (the encoded message) can have an 'effect', satisfy a 'need', or be put to a 'use', it must be appropriated as a meaningful discourse and be meaningfully decoded. It is this set of decoded meanings which have an effect, influence, entertain, instruct or persuade, with very complex perceptual, cognitive, emotional, ideological or behavioural consequences.⁶²

Meanings are produced from culture and general knowledge; therefore, it is difficult to accept that the cartoonists did not foresee the political and religious impact their cartoons would have – especially as Islamic fundamentalism has been at the forefront of the public's attention since 9/11. Some of the twelve drawings emphasize the polysemic nature of cartoons and the ambiguity of meaning since they can connote various meanings depending on the audience (the readers, the consumers; Hall, 1973) and their level of background knowledge. However, some of the rhetorical codes and conventions used by the cartoonists, including bombs, daggers and suicide bombers, are clearly offensive, at the level of denotation. The first connotations that emerge are that the Prophet is a violent terrorist and a suppressor of women's rights. Undoubtedly, the cartoonists were aware of the 'preferred meaning' encoded in their representations of Muhammad which aimed to provoke a specific and arguably predictable reaction from Islamic readers who interpreted the cartoons as racist and religiously intolerant.

⁶¹ On 'audiences', see Philip J. Hanes, 'The Advantages and Limitations of a Focus on Audience in Media Studies', 2000, <<http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Students/pph9701.html>>, [accessed 3 May 2007], and Jon Cruz and Justin Lewis *Viewing, Reading, Listening: Audiences and Cultural Reception*, (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1994).

⁶² Simon During (Ed.), Stuart Hall, 'Encoding, Decoding', *The Cultural Studies Reader*, (London: Routledge, 1973), 93.

Whilst the *Cartoons War* engaged an international audience, I have demonstrated that France, perhaps more than any other European country, actively defied requests from the Islamic groups to stop publication of the offensive cartoons, in a bid to defend cartoonists' freedom of expression. The handling of the Danish cartoons controversy in France has highlighted the country's attachment to secular ideals and French cartoonists' lasting commitment to fight for traditional values in the twenty-first century. I have underlined the role that the satirical press has played in this affair, in particular, the allegiance of *Charlie Hebdo's* editorial team and cartoonists in defending their 'cause'. The French cartoonists' determined approach in this case has raised debates about the public role of the newspaper press, its limitations and in particular the issues of self-censorship and respect of cultural sensitivities.

Conclusion

The aim of this concluding chapter is to draw together the different points of this study and to reflect on the central themes of my argument concerning the continuing role of the cartoon in the twentieth century. Central to this is the historical development of the cartoon as a cultural form, a medium of news, and as a political weapon. I argue that today, political cartoons are still a powerful form of editorial commentary, a catalyst for debate and possibly, an agent of change. By confronting the past and the present and observing how cartooning today is able to incite reflection and appeal to the public, I assess how the cartoon functions, how it acts within its journalistic environment and draws from visual language to make abstract issues more widely accessible.

In the course of these discussions, I have investigated the art form from its inception. Namely, I have demonstrated how during the course of modern history, cartoons have been used as instruments of criticism, social protest and propaganda. Moreover, I have explored how the cartoon's effectiveness at creating widespread ridicule of authority and mobilising public opinion, prompted a number of attempts to control their impact through sanctions and censorship. I have shown that the graphic conventions of caricature, codes and stereotypes and the use of rhetorical figures such as puns and metaphors combine to deliver the often highly emotive function of a cartoon. The unquestionable power of the cartoon derives from the ability it gives to the producer of the image and to the reader to create his/her 'preferred reading'.

The Cartoon as a Cultural Form and as a Medium of News

To reveal the cartoon as a cultural product, I have mapped out its development, in Chapter 1, from grotesque art to caricature. This examination underlined a number of techniques used by ancient civilisations to mock or lampoon others. These 'foundational' techniques were adopted by later artists as part of their graphic repertoire. In the sixteenth century, Giuseppe Arcimboldo created composite portraits based from this grotesque imagery. The significance of grotesque images must be highlighted, for in the Middle Ages, grotesque imagery contributed to and influenced people's religious beliefs. This imagery

which was allegorical in style was used by masters such as Albrecht Durer or Hieronymus Bosh, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. At a time of high levels of public illiteracy, grotesque prints were also useful as a form of communication. Grotesque combined with physiognomy (a pseudo-science which focused on the face) became what we know as modern caricature, and was used to create le *portrait charge*, a popular source of entertainment in the royal courts of France. The modern cartoon (the sketch drawing) later appeared as a result of the 'simplification' of caricature and was adopted for its convenience as it fitted easily on pamphlets. The development in printing technology in fifteenth century Europe gave a considerable boost to the art, making printing and the dissemination of such graphics easier.

I have shown that throughout history, caricatures and cartoons have performed a variety of roles. Caricatures started to become 'political' during the religious debates of the German Reformation, in the sixteenth century. The two parties in conflict were Martin Luther and the Catholic Church. It is alleged that it is at this time when these types of images first became critical, with propagandist intent, used to dishonour the other and attract public opinion. Political caricatures were more formally established in France in the sixteenth century when images started to become politically driven. Indeed, it is said that critical images of Henri III contributed to his assassination. The effectiveness of cartoons to draw attention to the failings of the bourgeoisie and monarchy was further highlighted by the events discussed regarding mid-nineteenth century France.

In reviewing the historical context of cartoons, I have shown that cartoons can be encoded to serve the intentions of various groups in addition to the political agenda of the cartoonist. Other examples of the powerful role of cartoons as propaganda include virulent images of the royal family during the French revolution, which succeeded in discrediting and humiliating them. Such images pursued them wherever they tried to escape, even in the sewers of Paris (Figure 2.15, p.76). Although commentators agree that the French Revolution was the moment when caricature and derision was truly elevated to a political art form, there were debates amongst scholars about how revolutionary caricature developed. Antoine De Baeque suggests that the first revolutionary caricatures date back to 1789, from the fall of the Bastille but were

geared towards counter-revolutionary combat against enemies outside the Republic. Before then, cartoons were part of the democratic process and consequently were not necessarily subversive. Caricatures of the Revolution on the other hand, were viewed as being effective in transmitting a political message.

Caricature gained greater importance in the nineteenth century, not only as a cultural form but also as a catalyst for political commentary. This evolution happened, in great part, because of printing innovations and a developing press, which made cartoons more accessible to all levels of society.¹ To start with, the republican artist Charles Philipon capitalised on lithography and created two major caricature journals in the 1830s: *La Caricature* in 1830, and *Le Charivari* in 1832. The anti-monarchist publications focused on lambasting King Louis Philippe and his regime during the July Monarchy, in particular between 1830 and 1835, a period which, according to Jacques Lethève, remains 'une des plus grandes périodes de l'art caricatural'.² Cartoons of the time had a massive impact on the credibility of King Louis Philippe, resulting in him being labelled as a 'pear' for the remainder of his life, as a consequence of one infamous cartoon (see Figure 2.18, p.84). It is therefore alleged that the virulent caricatures drawn by *La Caricature's* artists played an important role in deteriorating the King's popularity and fueled opposition of the monarchy until it culminated with the Revolution of 1848. It was finally under the Third Republic, that the Press Law (*La Loi sur la Liberté de la Presse du 29 Juillet 1881*) was passed which banished press censorship ineradicably. Although the law was amended several times after its enactment, it remains in force to the present day and is considered in France as a legal statement on the freedom of the press and freedom of speech. The immediate effect of the law was to considerably expand the range and size of the press and some of the most famous satirical journals were launched then, including *Le Courrier Français* (1884 -1913). During World War I, the French revolutionaries used cartoons and satirical journals as anti-German propagandist material. The cartoons, for

¹ The nineteenth century, as seen by historians of French art and literature spreads from 1800 until the onset of the First World War in 1914 a period which witnessed different governmental regimes. Jürgen Habermas (translation by Thomas Burger), *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, Massachusset: MIT Press, 1989), p. 30.

² Jacques Lethève, *La Caricature et la Presse sous la Troisième République* (Paris : Armand Colin, 1961), p.12.

example, represented the German soldier as an assassin, barbaric rapist, pillaging everywhere he went (Figure 3.4, p.101). The impact of these images was such that the satirical publication, *Le Canard Enchaîné* was created in 1915 to provide the French with a comprehensive collection of images that provided an alternative view of the war.

Another notable example of the impact of cartoons is in their role in journalism. Plantu's daily, front-page editorial cartoons in *Le Monde* provides evidence that the editorial cartoon has unshackled itself from its cliché of being a basic form of entertainment. In modern France, the cartoon is enjoyed not only for its entertainment value and satirical humour but is favoured as a fundamental component of the political press enjoying the same prestige as journalism. Indeed, as discussed in Chapter 3, editorial cartoonists such as Faizant and Plantu insist on the importance of their journalistic role. Their visual commentary not only reports on the topical issues of the day but also aims to provoke public reaction. The unparalleled impact of Plantu's work has not however just been confined to French territories. A more recent role of the political cartoon, in response to the rising status of certain cartoonists has been that of promoting peace. Plantu is probably the most instrumental cartoonist involved in the promotion of humanitarian causes and the quest for peace. I have highlighted how through various exhibitions, Plantu raises awareness of topical issues. His latest venture towards his ideals has been that of the *Cartooning for Peace* conference which brings together key political and cartooning figures including Plantu himself and the UN Secretary, Kofi Anan. Certainly, Plantu's greatest achievement towards world peace has been his dialogue with Arafat and Peres in 1991 and 1992. Never before had the Palestinian and Israeli leaders engaged in political discussions with a cartoonist. The impact of Plantu and his cartoon's peacekeeping role was that his cartoons proved to be an effective medium in enabling the two leaders to work towards reconciliation. I suggest that for two world leaders to express themselves through cartoons would imply that they both recognised the value and power of the medium. Hence, whilst the situation between the Palestinian state and Israel has yet to be resolved, it is nevertheless important to recognise the contribution that cartoons can make even in such tense diplomatic situations.

So, whilst I have proven the role and impact of editorial cartoons, it is clear that like any medium, there are constraints and limitations. Firstly, and paradoxically, what makes the editorial cartoon so effective is the same as what provides it with limitations. The fact that anyone can look at a cartoon and create his or her own meaning makes it a very powerful and widely accessible medium. However, whilst centuries ago, communities were much smaller than today and thus cartoons remained relatively local, in this modern day era, a cartoon can travel the world in seconds – exposing it to different nationalities, cultures, and social backgrounds. This means that whilst the cartoon can produce an immediate impact, the risk of misinterpretation is heightened. Recent events such as the publication of cartoons of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad by Danish cartoonists have shown the hysteria and violence that cartoon images can inflame. Such examples provide evidence of the power that cartoons have as a form of expression to incite passion, anger and debate across cultures, nations and religions. In this instance, the cartoons brought to the surface the religious unease and intolerance that currently existed in many communities. The *Cartoons War* also provides clear evidence that press cartoons viewed outside of their intended social context can produce ‘unexpected’ results (although I suggest that some of the cartoons were likely to cause offence from the outset). Moreover, this risk is further exacerbated when the cartoon has an absence of textual components. So whilst an editorial cartoon is more concise and succinct than words in its representation of complex events and characters, I suggest that the accuracy of the viewer’s interpretation may be increased by the presence of captions and other forms of informative text.

The corpus of cartoons related to Mitterrand’s presidency clearly provides further evidence of the powerful use of this medium in contemporary times as an instrument for criticism. Most notably Plantu’s work very much reflects and is aligned with what biographers such as Northcutt (1992) state about the President’s career and personality. In particular, I have shown through Plantu’s cartoons that the main areas of criticism inflicted on Mitterrand were of his tendencies towards secrecy, manipulation and over-ambitiousness. By examining Mitterrand’s cartoons I have confirmed that in contemporary French culture, the cartoon is a stable part of daily life, undertaking a number of roles including both as a commentator of events and a satirical entertainer. In all

these aspects, I have shown that the cartoon has a significant impact on French culture (and beyond), able to inform, influence and provoke its readers.

Cartoons as a Powerful Form of Expression

This study has also demonstrated that the cartoon is a universal form of expression and communication, crossing cultural, national and language barriers. Acting as a metaphor/analogy, each individual can apply his or her own connotation to the image based on his or her beliefs, experiences and socio-demographic background and consequently, adopt his or her 'preferred meaning'. It is clear that one of the main attributes of the cartoon, is that it can express an idea, succinctly, thus providing an immediate impact. Indeed, the effect of the cartoon has been shown to connect with the emotions of the viewer, causing emotive reactions from laughter to violent indignation. In chapter 4, I have demonstrated that the cartoon's construction is in keeping with the theories that underpin communication and interpretation such as Shannon and Weaver (1949) and Hall (1973). Mitterrand's cartoons clearly show how such images act as signs and can be considered as acts of communication (Jakobson, 1960). Most significantly, cartoons rely on the viewer progressing through the stages of *denotation* and *connotation* and *coding* and *decoding* to determine meaning (Barthes, 1964 and 1967, Hall, 1973).

The study of cartoons of François Mitterrand has confirmed that the power of cartoons as a form of expression lies in the graphic conventions and rhetoric that are skilfully brought together by the cartoonist within an image. The graphic conventions detailed in Chapter 4, are clear to see in Plantu's work. In particular the codes of expression, identity, exaggeration and resemblance all come together effectively to create Mitterrand's caricature. A powerful example of the application of the code of identity and resemblance is that Plantu can even make a shadow take on the characteristics of a particular person. In Figure 4.19, Chirac is depicted as Mitterrand's shadow, easily recognisable by the sharp pointed nose and the drop of spittle, features that Plantu had *anchored* to him. With the 'actors' (such as Chirac and Mitterrand) being easily recognisable by the public, Plantu was then able to exploit stereotypes and symbols along with his own rhetoric to succinctly bring political 'scenes' to life. The symbol of the rose (Figure 4.16, p.149) and the dove (Figure 3.8, p.111)

provide the reader with additional information to make sense of the image before them. The power of the cartoon as a form of expression has been further demonstrated in Plantu's talent in creating new stereotypes. For example, Jean Lecanuet was given the prop of a cactus plant in Plantu's cartoons to forever link him to his time of 'exile' in the desert. Thus, it is apparent that these graphic conventions enable the public to understand the situation expressed by a cartoon more quickly than reading a full editorial. I suggest that it is by drawing on the collective knowledge of his viewers and by using a range of visual codes and rhetorical figures, as well as drawing upon sources of inspiration such as the Kantorian theatre, that Plantu is able to create such memorable cartoons.

It is useful to understand the political, economic, social and intellectual milieu from which Mitterrand emerged in order to understand such an enigmatic and complex character. Northcutt (1992, p.5) explained 'the five key life experiences that have influenced Mitterrand, the man and the politician: his bourgeois Catholic upbringing, his wartime experiences (as a captive) and his Resistance activities, his extensive ministerial experience under the Fourth Republic (1946-1958) during which he served in eleven different governments, his relationship with French communism and his anti-communism, and finally, his relationship with and perception of de Gaulle and the Gaullists as well as the evolution of his own anti-Gaullism'. Plantu has a solid appreciation of his subject's background, and he was therefore able to powerfully denote the events regarding Mitterrand's personality and current events during his presidency. The cartoons of Mitterrand that I chose to analyse are in harmony with the key aspects of Mitterrand's life that Northcutt underlined. For instance, the *Armistice Day* cartoon (Figure 4.26, p.162) alludes to his secretive manner and raises questions about his allegiances during the war. For instance, the double that Plantu created for Mitterrand provides the reader with connotations of the President being 'two faced'. This cartoon shows two Mitterrands, a common theme in many of Plantu's cartoons, as in Figure 4.21, where the technique is employed to express how Mitterrand blames his mistakes on his previous personification during his first term of office thus, clearly distancing himself from current events. Through such representations, Plantu claims that even people in Mitterrand's own government could not count on the President's

support in times of need (Figure 4.17, p.151). Even when Mitterrand's administration is saturated with scandals, image of the president being a calm and calculating person is perpetuated by representing him sat at his desk, unmoved by events (Figure 4.24, p.159). Thus, whilst it is helpful to have an appreciation of the current events of Mitterrand's political career, just by viewing a handful of cartoons, even the reader who knows little of the French politics of the time, would be able to perceive the myths surrounding President's character. And as 'un bon dessin vaut mieux qu'un long discours', the impact of the propagation of such myths in editorial cartoons (especially on the front page of a leading newspaper such as *Le Monde*) can be phenomenal – influencing public opinion regardless of the truth that exists.

To summarise, I suggest that there are two main strands that come out of the study of the historical growth of political cartoons in France. Firstly, caricature/political cartoons have been initially used on behalf of the dominant power when the ruling class exploited graphic satire in order to close off ideas which threatened their supremacy and, as a tool of propaganda, to influence public opinion. This was the case during the German Reformation movement in the early sixteenth century. The religious conflict between Catholics and Protestants, which involved a number of European countries, including France, was, according to historians, the moment when the cartoon was perceived as an important device for getting a message across. It is alleged that Martin Luther won the Reformation as a result of his visual campaign which capitalised on pamphlets illustrated with seditious images against the Pope. A similar situation occurred later in France, when the *Catholic League* set out to destroy the public image of King Henri III.

Secondly, caricature developed as a satirical form among the bourgeoisie, within their public sphere, in discursive places such as *salons* and coffee houses wherein news and ideas were freely exchanged.³ According to Habermas, 'the bourgeoisie public sphere' had emerged independently from the Court society, against the authority of the state, in early eighteenth century Europe, owing to 'historical circumstances' like the Enlightenment, growing rates

³ The aristocratic class has traditionally attracted to their circles, writers, poets, and artists to whom they often offered their patronage. This practice existed also in the bourgeoisie public sphere.

of literacy and development of the press and transport.⁴ Caricature contributed to the public sphere as part of the democratic process and engaged in political debate. In the French salons, satirical drawings poked fun at the authority (the aristocracy, the clergy, and the royal family). It was in such a climate of liberal democracy that the 1789-1799 Revolution generated.

I suggest that cartoons have enjoyed a long period of success throughout history because of their adaptation to different roles: criticism, propaganda, protest, commentary and entertainment to name but a few. Indeed, the more cartoons take on a greater variety of roles, the further they cement themselves within modern day society and the greater their impact on society as a whole. In particular, in France, the satirical medium is enjoying a prosperous period, with high profile features in 'institutional' publications such as *Le Canard Enchaîné* and *Charlie Hebdo*. These papers are on the front line of satirical commentary, dicing with lawsuits on a regular basis to maintain their tradition of lampooning and their right to freedom of expression. Meanwhile, political and editorial cartoons continue to be featured on the front-pages of the most prestigious of France's daily press thus demonstrating their more serious cultural form.

The Future of Editorial Cartoons

So what does the future hold for political and editorial cartoons and their artists? I believe that there are a number of key factors that will influence this medium in the near future. Firstly, with competing priorities for space from other images including photographs and more significantly, income generating advertisements, cartoonists have to adapt their art to an increasingly smaller frame size. This has benefits and disadvantages. On one side, it is conceivable that the increasing size constraints imposed upon the cartoonists could eventually squeeze their cartoons out of print. On the other hand though, these new challenges could prompt cartoonists to continue to evolve their art and become more sophisticated in the way they attract the viewer's attention, maintaining the concise approach to capturing reality that has proved so successful to date.

⁴ Jürgen Habermas (translation by Thomas Burger), *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, Massachusset: MIT Press, 1989), p. xi.

In light of the *Cartoons War*, what is perhaps even more concerning is the issue of freedom of expression and the effectiveness of censorship. As I have demonstrated, the cartoon's origins and popularity lie in its satirical content and provocative nature, all of which in many instances contravenes current political and cultural sensitivities. In the future, perhaps there will be an increasing need for cartoonists to exert self-censorship in order to avoid, where possible, diplomatic incidents based on cartoonists' militant desire to freely express their opinions without regard to cultural sensitivities. This fine balancing act is likely to be one of the biggest challenges that the cartoonist faces – maintaining the core aspect of what makes an editorial cartoon a powerful form of expression versus the need to temper its virulence.

I suggest that the Internet might offer a solution to both of these issues. Firstly, the Internet can provide cartoonists with a fast, easily accessible platform through which their work can be exhibited without any of the constraints that exist when drawing for the press. Moreover, the Internet may provide a medium through which cartoonists can more freely express their opinions without being restricted by the censorship and political correctness of the printed press. Thus, the future of editorial cartooning is certain to be an interesting paradox: cartoonists using the Internet to continue to amuse and educate the public, whilst upholding their right of freedom of expression to comment on world events, without inciting social unrest.

Recommendations for Further Research

Any subject of academic research will have limitations to its approach. It is clear that whilst I have undeniably demonstrated the impact that cartoons have on the general public, the only analysis of the effect upon the individual reader has been through my interpretation of the cartoons and the feedback from interviews with the cartoonists and newspaper Editors. Knowing what we now know in terms of the massive influence of cultural representations, collective stereotypes and other such codes of interpretation it is also feasible that interpretation can be distorted by more individualistic filters such as beliefs, personal opinion, socio-demographic backgrounds and other cultural factors.

Thus, the natural next step to further this research would be to use a more quantitative approach to assess the individuals' interpretation of editorial

cartoons. This field of study would be able to understand more accurately the link between the cartoonist's intention and the reader's subsequent reception. For as previously mentioned, whilst the power of this medium lies in its accessibility, it can be open to misinterpretation. In the future, it would be important for cartoonists to have a more informed understanding of how their techniques create meaning, within a multi-cultural world, so that they can be even more effective in how they convey their intended messages. Many questions still need to be explored. For example, do Plantu's cartoons produce the same impact and effect as other cartoonists? What specific techniques make a 'good' cartoon? What is the single biggest factor that influences interpretation? To this end, future research could also make comparisons between the techniques and effects of different cartoonists, different countries, different subject matters and also people from different socio-demographic backgrounds. In doing so, the research would further enrich our understanding of the cartoon as a cultural form and its impact.

ANNEXES

Annexe 1

List of Interviews

I have conducted interview with figures of the press and cartoonists at the Head Office of their newspaper or during meetings at various festivals of 'Dessin de Presse':

- André Baur, Director of the journal *Mieux Vaut en Rire*, from 1998 to 2000
- Christian Delporte, historian and author, (15 April 1999)
- Alain Granrémy, Editor in Chief at *Le Canard Enchaîné*, (29 September 2000)
- François Forcadell, historian and author, (21 April 2000)
- Christian Massol, Editor in Chief of *Le Monde* (17 April 2001, 18 April 2002)
- Solo, Director of the journal *Caricature et Caricaturistes* from 1998 to 2000

Caricaturists and Journalists

- Jean-Louis Savignac, *L'Yonne Républicaine* from 1998
- Alex Watson from 2000
- Plantu, *Le Monde* and St.Just-Le-Martel (16 February, 15-17 April 1998, 21-28 April 2000, 24 October 2000, 29 September 2007)
- Serguei, *Le Monde* (15 April 1998)
- Pancho, *Le Monde* (15 April 1998)
- Jacques Faizant, *Le Figaro* (20 April 1998)
- Trez, *France-Soir* (20 April 1998)
- Tignous, *Charlie-Hebdo* (21 April 2000)
- Michel Kichka (29 September 2000, 2 October 2004)
- Mric, caricaturist (11 June 2003)
- Emmanuel Besson (19 May 2005)
- Pétilion (26 March 2005)
- Cabu, *Charlie-Hebdo* (26 March 2005, 29 September 2007)
- Loup (29 September 2007)

Annexe 2

Chronology of *Cartoons War* Events in France

02/11/2004

Théo Van Gogh (réalisateur) est assassiné par un islamiste à Amsterdam

30/09/2005

Flemming Rose, directeur de la publication Jyllands-Posten (Danemark) publie les 12 caricatures du prophète Mahomet

01/02/2006

Les 12 caricatures sont publiées dans France Soir qui titre en Une : « Oui on a le droit de caricaturer Dieu »

07/02/2006

Les organisations musulmanes, dont le Conseil français du culte musulman (CFCM), demandent la saisie du numéro de Charlie Hebdo à paraître le mercredi. Elles sont déboutées.

08/02/2006

Charlie Hebdo consacre son numéro aux caricatures avec en Une, le dessin de Cabu « C'est dur d'être aimé par des cons »

09/02/2006

L'hebdomadaire L'Espresso publie à son tour un dossier sur les caricatures

10/02/2006

Le Conseil français du culte musulman (CFCM) décide d'engager une action en justice contre les journaux français ayant reproduit les caricatures du prophète Mahomet

06/02/2007

Charlie Hebdo s'explique devant la presse française et internationale

07/02/2007

1^{er} jour du procès à la 17^e chambre du tribunal correctionnel de Paris

08/02/2007

2^{ème} jour du procès

22/03/2007

Verdict : les parties plaignantes sont déboutées. L'Union des Organisations Islamiques de France (UOIF) et la Ligue islamique mondiale font appel

12/03/2008

La cour d'appel de Paris saisie par l'UOIF et la Ligue islamique mondiale confirme la relaxe de Charlie Hebdo. Le tribunal considère que la publication de Charlie Hebdo participait à « un débat public d'intérêt général »

Annexe 3

Manifesto: Together Against the New Totalitarianism

'Having overcome fascism, Nazism and Stalinism, the world is faced by a new totalitarian global menace: Islamism.

We: writers, journalists and intellectuals, call for resistance to religious totalitarianism and for the promotion of freedom, equality of opportunity and secularism for all.

Recent events following the publication of the cartoons of Mohammed in European newspapers have clearly shown the need to fight for these universal values. This fight will not be won by force of arms, but in the market place of ideas. It is not about a clash of civilizations nor about hostility between East and West, but a global struggle between democracy and theocracy.

Like every totalitarianism, Islamism is fed by fear and frustration. The preachers of hate play on these feelings, building their battalions to create a world opposed to freedom and equality. But we say loud and clear: nothing, not even despair, can justify the choice of obscurantism, totalitarianism and hatred. Islamism is an ideology that destroys equality, freedom and secularism wherever it appears. Its success can only lead to a world of injustice and domination: of men over women, and of the extremists over all others. To counter this we must fight for universal rights for all: for the oppressed and for those suffering discrimination.

We reject cultural relativism which insists that men and women of Muslim background be deprived of the right to equality, freedom and secularism in the name of culture or tradition.

We refuse to renounce our spirit of criticism for fear of being accused of «Islamophobia», an unfortunate term which confuses criticism of Islam with stigmatization of believers.

We appeal for the universality of freedom of expression, so that the critical spirit can flourish on every continent, against every abuse and every dogma.

We appeal to democrats and free spirits in every land to make our century one of enlightenment, not obscurantism'.

12 Signatures

Ayaan Hirsi Ali , Chahla Chafiq, Caroline Fourest, Bernard-Henri Lévy, Irshad Manji Mehdi Mozaffari, Maryam Namazie, Taslima Nasreen, Salman Rushdie, Antoine Sfeir, Philippe Val, Ibn Warraq.

Mercredi 1 mars 2006

Presentations of Signatures

Ayaan Hirsi Ali - Ayaan Hirsi Ali, from somalian origin, is member of Dutch parliament, member of the liberal party VVD. Writer of the film *Submission* which caused the assassination of Theo Van Gogh by an Islamist in November 2004, she lives under police protection.

Chahla Chafiq - Chahla Chafiq, of Iranian origin, exiled in France is a novelist and an essayist. She's the author of *Le Nouvel Homme Islamiste, la Prison Politique en Iran* (2002). She also wrote novels such as *Chemins et Brouillard* (2005).

Caroline Fourest - Essayist, Editor in Chief of *Prochoix* (a review who defend liberties against dogmatic and integrist ideologies), author of several reference books on « laïcité » and fanaticism : *Tirs Croisés : La Laïcité à l'Épreuve des Intégrismes Juif, Chrétien et Musulman* (with Fiammetta Venner), *Frère Tariq : Discours, Stratégie et Méthode de Tariq Ramadan*, et *la Tentation Obscurantiste* (Grasset, 2005). She received the National prize of Laïcité in 2005.

Bernard-Henri Lévy - French philosopher, born in Algeria, engaged against all the XXth century « ism » (Fascism, antisemitism, totalitarianism, terrorism), he is the author of *La Barbarie à Visage Humain, L'Idéologie Française, La Pureté Dangereuse*, and more recently *American Vertigo*.

Irshad Manji - Irshad Manji is a Fellow at Yale University and the internationally best-selling author of *The Trouble with Islam Today: A Muslim's Call for Reform in Her Faith* (en français: "Musulmane Mais Libre"). She speaks out for free expression based on the Koran itself. Born in Uganda, she escaped with her family - muslims from India - to live in Canada when she was 4. Her TV shows and books are very successful.

Mehdi Mozaffari - Mehdi Mozaffari, professor from Iranian origin and exiled in Denmark, is the author of several articles and books on Islam and Islamism such as : *Authority in Islam: From Muhammad to Khomeini, Fatwa: Violence and Discourtesy and Globalization and Civilizations*.

Maryam Namazie - Writer, TV International English producer; Director of the Worker-communist Party of Iran's International Relations; and 2005 winner of the National Secular Society's Secularist of the Year award.

Taslina Nasreen - Taslina Nasreen was born in Bangladesh. Doctor, her positions defending women and minorities brought her in trouble with a committee of integrist called « Destroy Taslima » and to be persecuted as « apostate ».

Salman Rushdie - Salman Rushdie is the author of nine novels, including *Midnight's Children, The Satanic Verses* and, most recently, *Shalimar the Clown*. He has received many literary awards, including the Booker Prize, the Whitbread Prize for Best Novel, Germany's Author of the Year Award, the European Union's Aristeion Prize, the Budapest Grand Prize for Literature, the

Premio Mantova, and the Austrian State Prize for European Literature. He is a Commandeur of the Ordre des Arts et Lettres, an Honorary Professor in the Humanities at M.I.T., and the president of PEN American Center. His books have been translated into over 40 languages.

Philippe Val - Director of Publication of Charlie Hebdo (Leftwing french newspaper who have republished the cartoons on the prophet Muhammad by solidarity with the danish citizens targeted by islamists).

Ibn Warraq - Ibn Warraq , author notably of *Why I am Not a Muslim ; Leaving Islam: Apostates Speak Out* ; and *The Origins of the Koran* , is at present Research Fellow at a New York Institute conducting philological and historical research into the Origins of Islam and its Holy Book.

Antoine Sfeir - Born in Lebanon, Christian, Antoine Sfeir chose french nationality to live in an universalist and « laïc » (real secular) country. He is the Director of *Les Cahiers de l'Orient* and has published several reference books on Islamism including *Les Réseaux d'Allah* (2001) et *Liberté, Égalité, Islam: La République Face au Communautarisme* (2005).

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