CHAPTER 1

Defining Caricature

Say that a reader in the Romantic period noticed the word *caricatura* when they were reading the works of Thomas Browne, or when they encountered a reference in the *Scots Magazine* to Alexander Pope being 'hurt by the caricatura of his figure'.[1] Say that they recognised this word as Italian and were curious about its origins. Which reference work could they have turned to?

The best choice, I think, would have been one of the many editions of Giuseppe Baretti's *Dictionary of the English and Italian Languages*. Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* was not an option: Johnson did not define 'caricature', and though a brief entry was added posthumously then expanded by H. J. Rodd in the 1818 edition, it contains no helpful information about the word's Italian origins. Pocket editions of Johnson's dictionary define caricature simply as 'a ludicrous, droll likeness',[2] while Thomas Sheridan's *Complete Dictionary* (1790) defines it as 'exaggerated resemblance in drawings'. If the reader was uncertain how to pronounce the word and looked it up in John Walker's *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary* (1823), they would have been referred to Baretti's dictionary.[3] Alternatively, they might have picked up the latest edition of Giuspano Graglia's *New Pocket Dictionary of the Italian and English Languages*, titled *An Italian and English Pocket Dictionary* when first published in 1787 and in its seventeenth edition by 1837.

What light would Italian have shed, for British readers in the Romantic period, on the meaning of *caricatúra*, assimilated into English as 'caricature'?

From *Caricatúra* to Caricature: A History of the Word in English

Looking it up in Baretti's dictionary, the reader does not immediately find the kind of definition they might expect from an Italian–English dictionary: a definition written in English. Baretti's first 1760 edition explains *caricatúra* in Italian – 'dicesi anche di ritratto ridicolo in cui siensi

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grandemente accresciati i diffetti' – and notes that '[t]he English have adopted the word. See *caricare in* [sic] *ritratto*'.[4] Graglia's 1787 pocket dictionary, which reproduces content from Baretti, defines *caricatúra* only as 'a caricature'. Thus, to understand the meaning of *caricatúra*, the reader must look higher on the page, where a series of definitions trace the word's etymology.

First, we have *cárica* ('charge, burden, load') and *cáricare* ('to charge, to load, to burden, to lay a burden upon'), with several examples of figurative usage such as 'to charge one with something, to lay the fault upon him'. Graglia's dictionary has *caricárla ad uno*, 'to play tricks with one', and *caricársi*, 'to take upon one's self'. In one of Baretti's examples, the reader will find a definition of pictorial caricature: to *caricare un ritratto* is 'to paint a portrait so, that the original may appear ridiculous by a kind of exaggeration of the parts of his face, yet without losing the resemblance'. Baretti's definition would have helped the English reader with *caricatúra* as it appears in *Letter to a Friend* (1690), where Browne describes the face of a dying man with a reference to Italian *caricatúra* drawings:

> [A] weak Physiognomist might say at first eye, This was a face of Earth, and that *Morta* had set her Hard-Seal upon his Temples, easily perceiving what *Caricatura* Draughts Death makes upon pined faces.[5]

This is one of the earliest references to *caricatúra* in an English-language text. Two decades later in no. 537 of the *Spectator*, John Hughes saves his reader the trouble of consulting a dictionary by providing his own definition of 'those burlesk pictures, which the Italians call Caricatura's'.[6] By the late eighteenth century, when English readers were expected to know what 'caricature' meant, Baretti's dictionary was there for any reader interested to know the history of this Italian-sounding word – especially when encountering it in its original Italian form, as in Walter Scott's *Rob Roy* (1818). After asking Frank to describe his father, a businessman, Rashleigh responds:

> 'O rare-painted portrait! [. . .] Vandyke was a dauber to you, Frank. I see thy sire before me in all his strength and weakness, loving and honouring the King as a sort of lord mayor of the empire, or chief of the board of trade, venerating the Commons, for the acts regulating the export trade, and respecting the Peers, because the Lord Chancellor sits on a wool-sack.' 'Mine was a likeness, Rashleigh; yours is a *caricatura*.'[7]

Rob Roy being set in 1715, Scott uses the period-appropriate '*caricatura*' rather than the assimilated 'caricature' in this dialogue. Baretti's explanation of *caricare un ritratto* is clearly relevant to this analogy between the two young men's opposing verbal descriptions of Mr Osbaldistone and

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two different styles of portraiture, the Flemish painting and the exaggerated comic *ritratto*.

So far, so good. But say that this reader in the Romantic period had also come across other uses of the word 'caricature' where the 'caricatures' in question are clearly not literally *ritratti*, pictures or graphic portraits, but rather instances of writing, reviewing, editing and public speaking. Letters to the editor, newspaper advertisements for comic plays, Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, the *Scots Magazine*'s review of *Frankenstein* – all these refer to textual or verbal caricatures. Would Baretti's dictionary have provided any helpful context for such references to written or spoken *caricatúra*?

> I have been told formerly, that it is the office of a Critic to discover the *beauties* as well as the *defects* of a work. Our modern reviewers present us with nothing but *caricature* (*Morning Post*, 1775).

> The best method, I believe, that can be adopted to correct a fondness for novels is to ridicule them; [. . .] if a judicious person, with some turn for humour, would read several to a young girl, and point out [. . .] how foolishly and ridiculously they caricatured human nature, just opinions might be substituted instead of romantic sentiments (Wollstonecraft, 1792).

> The taste of the day leans entirely to caricature: We have lost our relish for the simple beauties of nature. The caricature in acting, in novel-writing, in preaching, in parliamentary eloquence is entirely in rage. We are no longer satisfied with propriety and neatness; we must have something grotesque and disproportioned, cumbrous with ornament and gigantic in its dimensions (*Morning Chronicle*, 1796).

> This present evening Their Majesties Servants will act (never performed) a new Dramatick Caricature, in one act, called THE UGLY CLUB (*Morning Post and Gazetteer*, 1798).

> The Brain-Sucker. Or, the Distress of Authorship. A Serio-Comic Caricature. In a Letter from Farmer Homely, to an absent Friend (*Morning Star*, 1798).

> SIR,—After seeing my letter of the 10th instant, in your Register of Sunday last, chequered, caricatured in Italics, and pared away, as it there appeared, *ad libitum*, for to suit your own purpose, I had almost resolved to desert the correspondence (*Cobbett's Weekly Register*, 1807).

> 'The Lord of the Manor' was performed yesterday, and the House, as on Monday, was crowded to an overflow. JONES played *Young Contrast* with all that pleasantry of caricature which made the character so

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> important when the Opera was first revived at this Theatre (*Morning Post*, 1814).

> Here is one of the productions of the modern school in its highest style of caricature and exaggeration [. . .]. There never was a wilder story imagined, yet like most of the fictions of this age, it has an air of reality attached to it, by being connected with the favourite projects and passions of the times (*Scots Magazine*, 1818).[8]

None of these examples ask the reader to think specifically of drawings or graphic portraits. The *Morning Chronicle* gives several examples of caricature, all of which involve verbal expression and none of which are pictorial. For the *Scots Magazine* writer, caricature is a 'style' of writing.

Readers could have thought of these expressions as metaphors, analogies that apply Baretti's definition of an exaggerated portrait – *caricare un ritratto* – to a 'portrait' in textual or verbal form. Indeed, verbal and textual caricatures are occasionally compared with graphic *ritratti*, whether implicitly (as in the *Gentleman's Magazine*'s profile of the Shakespearean commentator George Steevens) or explicitly (as in John Hughes's letter to *The Spectator* advertising his own 'Ode to the Creator of the World'):

> A characteristic bon mot, is a kind of oral caricature, copies of which, are multiplied by every tongue that utters it (*The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1800).[9]

> Politicians can resolve the most shining actions among men into artifice and design; others, who are soured by discontent, repulses, or ill usage, are apt to mistake their spleen for philosophy; men of profligate lives, and such as find themselves incapable of rising to any distinction among their fellow-creatures, are for pulling down all appearances of merit, which seem to upbraid them: and satirists describe nothing but deformity. From all these hands we have seen such draughts of mankind as are represented in those burlesk pictures, which the Italians call Caricatura's; where the art consists in preserving, amidst distorted proportions and aggravated features, some distinguishing likeness of the person, but in such a manner as to transform the most agreeable beauty into the most odious monster (John Hughes, no. 537 of *The Spectator*).[10]

But despite the analogies, these 'caricatures' were not simply textual versions of caricature *ritratti*, humorous portraits of individuals' distinctive physical features. None of the oral or written caricatures mentioned in these examples involve people's physical features, and only some of them are humorous; others are noted for having satirical or aesthetic impact, or being misinformative. Would a reader who consulted Baretti's explanation of *caricare un ritratto* ('to paint a portrait so, that the original may appear

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ridiculous') and his definition of *caricatúra* ('ritratto ridicolo') have thought that, in being applied so diversely to verbal 'caricatures', the English borrowing of *caricatúra* was losing its meaning?

Perhaps not, since Baretti does offer the anglophone reader an Italian precedent for 'caricature' as exaggerated speech or writing. The last of the dictionary's examples for the verb *cáricare* is 'Caricare (accrescere in parlando la cosa più che veramente sia)'. Baretti renders his definition into English as 'to enlarge, to be more vehement than it is need [sic], to exaggerate', omitting to translate his phrase 'in parlando' – 'in speaking' or 'in the telling'. The English reader could have found further linguistic justification for the 'caricature' that was not a *ritratto ridicolo* in the alternative definition for *caricare un ritratto* included in some editions of Baretti's dictionary, 'to overshadow a picture', suggesting exaggerated contrasts rather than enlarged features. If they read through all Baretti's entries under *carica–*, they would have found that *caricatúra* also meant 'the charge of a gun' ('certa quantità di munizione'), and that to *caricar l'inimico* was 'to charge or attack the enemy' – a double meaning suggesting that an exaggerated 'caricature' might be more violent and hurtful than humorous and ridiculous. Baretti's dictionary, where *caricatúra* appears alongside definitions of *cárica* and *cáricare* – and next to explanations of phrases like 'caricare un archibuso', 'caricar l'orza', 'caricare (accusare)' and 'caricare (in parlando)' – calls the English reader's attention to the fact that *caricatúra*, when it describes a graphic or verbal likeness, is a figurative usage of *cáricare*. To use the word 'caricature' to describe an overblown sermon, a distorting abridgement of one's letter to the editor about the Poor Laws, or the style of the new novel *Frankenstein*, was not to misapply *caricatúra* but to reinvest it with some of *cáricare*'s many idioms – contrast, force, impact, plenitude, addition, emphasis – that were subordinated in the *ritratto ridicolo* definition. Any reader who jumped from *Cobbett's Weekly Register* or the *Scots Magazine* to Baretti's dictionary would have been reassured that 'caricature' – used so freely of texts and speeches in the English language – was securely in the linguistic tradition of *caricatúra*.

I like to think that this scenario of mine is not hypothetical: that many readers in the Romantic period really did consult Baretti's entry for *caricatúra* – or familiarise themselves with the word's etymology elsewhere. In his *Rules for Drawing Caricaturas* (1788), Francis Grose implicitly recognises that the *ritratto ridicolo* is a 'charged' picture but not necessarily an 'overcharged' one, when he advises the amateur graphic caricaturist 'not to overcharge the peculiarities of their subjects, as they would thereby become hideous instead of ridiculous, and instead of laughter excite

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horror'.[11] Wollstonecraft insists that her satirical description of the dependent woman is 'not an overcharged picture'.[12] Austen's manuscript of readers' opinions about characters in *Emma* records one reader thinking that Miss Bates might be 'overcharged', and Thomas Babington Macaulay describes Fanny Burney's characters as 'extravagantly overcharged'.[13] English's use of 'overcharged' to mean 'over-exaggerated' indicates that English readers and writers continued to be aware of caricature's linguistic ties with *cárica* and *cáricare*.

When, in the late Georgian period, Britain's political graphic satirists became more adept in the techniques of the *ritratto ridicolo*, writers recognised these distinctive designs as 'caricature prints' – but caricature's semantic range was not eclipsed by the strengthened association with satirical prints. A letter to the *Morning Post*, in 1776, describes Robert D'Arcy, 4th Earl of Holdernesse, as 'foremost in the patronage of operas, opera singers, and every species of foreign taste, and foreign *vertu*'; thus, the writer thinks – referring to a print titled *The Idol* (c. 1756–58) – '[t]he well known satyrical print of his Lordship at the feet of Mingotti was not a *caricature*'.[14] When 'caricature' is used in late eighteenth-century newspapers and periodicals to mean a graphic portrait, it usually alludes to drawings and amateur sketches – except where there is a discussion or advertisement specifically about satirical prints, such as a notice in the *Morning Herald* that '[t]his day is published by W. Holland [. . .] A Caricature Print of Lloyd's Coffee-House, and another of Wright's Oyster-Room, the first 4s, the other 3s'.[15]

The richness of Baretti's entries under *carica–*, and the varied ways 'caricature' was used in the Romantic period as just quoted, suggest that the history of the modern graphic caricature – its development in Renaissance Italy and its export to Britain in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – is not quite as relevant as I once assumed, when it comes to the history of literature's caricature in the Romantic period. In the following pages, some context on the Italian *ritratti carichi* and on that genre's appropriation by the British elite, gives a background for British writers' understanding of graphic caricature as an artistic tradition long preceding the satirical prints of the late Georgian period.

Literature and the Caricature Print in the Romantic Period

The inception of Romanticism in British culture and literature coincides with what twentieth-century scholarship dubbed the 'Age of Caricature' (sometimes the 'golden age of caricature'), a period understood to span the

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1770s to the 1820s. In this common shorthand, 'caricature' means the genre of single-sheet satirical prints that possessed a distinctive aesthetic and that seems to have attained an artistic high point in the late Georgian period. The very phrase 'Age of Caricature' tempts literary scholars – me among them – into imagining that poets and novelists in the Romantic period might have been struck by the 'caricature' of the satirical prints, might have incorporated the prints' qualities into their own works, or might have been influenced by prints via some larger cultural phenomenon that graphic satirists helped create, with satirical prints representative of caricature as a 'spirit of the age'. Such claims often lean on phrases denoting contemporaneity ('the age of ', 'of the day', 'in the period when'): for example, Michael O'Neill remarks that '[g]reat Romantic short lyrics have something in common with the caricaturist's eye for the telling detail (this is the age of Gillray, after all)'.[16] What was the relationship between the satirical prints and the new literature being published in the Romantic period? On the way to answering that question, several points should be made about the relation of the word 'caricature' to the satirical print genre, the social status of the satirical print, and how the satirical prints and Romantic literature represented each other.

The satirical prints of the late Georgian era, laden with text and intertextual allusions, are a literary genre in their own right. Literary critics' recent forays into the study of the genre are made possible by decades of work by print and art historians – most significantly the eleven-volume *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires Preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, which not only systematised the British Museum's collection of thousands of single-sheet prints and caricature drawings but also annotated them with relevant historical information and identified the individuals depicted. Between 1868 and 1883 Frederic George Stephens, founder member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, compiled the first four volumes, comprising BM Sat 1 to 4838. Historian Mary Dorothy George took up the project in 1930, completing seven further volumes between 1935 and 1954. At the end of the twentieth century a new generation of print historians aimed to understand the genre in its broader cultural and socio-economic contexts, with Eirwen E.C Nicholson's 1994 PhD thesis, a review and critical analysis of scholarship on political prints c. 1640–c. 1832, in the vanguard. Critics have had the benefit of print historian Diana Donald's persuasively titled *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III* (1996); and for any literary critic with a serious interest in the topic, James Baker's account of the genre's socio-economic history in *The Business of Satirical Prints in Late-Georgian England* (2017) is indispensable.

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Now a new generation of scholars subject the eighteenth-century satirical print to cultural historicism, critical theory and close-reading techniques – notably Amelia Rauser's ground-breaking study *Caricature Unmasked: Irony, Authenticity and Individualism in Eighteenth-Century English Prints* (2008), *The Efflorescence of Caricature, 1759–1838*, a collection of essays edited by Todd Porterfield (2011), Ian Haywood's *Romanticism and Caricature* (2014), Temi Odumosu's *Africans in English Caricature, 1769–1819* (2017) and David Taylor's *The Politics of Parody: A Literary History of Caricature, 1760–1830* (2018).[17] While Odumosu uses a more capacious definition where 'caricature' can refer to satirical characterisations in plays, novels and periodicals as well as in satirical prints, generally these book titles reflect the pattern that has emerged in the study of satirical prints as a literary genre, of the word 'caricature' habitually standing in for the genre of the single-sheet satirical print. It is true that, as scholars acknowledge, the Georgian satirical print drew heavily on the techniques of Italian caricature portraiture, and some artists often used more extravagant, fantastic imagery than previous 'emblematic' political prints had done. However, caricature was not synonymous with the single-sheet satirical print at any point during 'the Age of Caricature' itself. Nor is it clear that we can expect to find significant lines of influence running directly between satirical prints and the new literature published in the Romantic period.

Due to the satirical prints' borrowing from an established literary canon – Shakespeare, *Paradise Lost*, *Don Quixote*, *Gulliver's Travels*[18] – as well as from Gothic imagery and from the idioms of the press, it is inevitable that there are coincidences in imagery and wording between Cruikshank and Scott, between Gillray and Shelley. For example, as Haywood points out, *Frankenstein* shares its subtitle with George Cruikshank's satire on Napoleon exiled to Elba, *The Modern Prometheus, or Downfall of Tyranny* (1814).[19] Cruikshank certainly did not invent the phrase: it appears in a wide range of contemporary publications, for example referring to the electro-magnetic therapist James Graham in 1781, and to the anti-vaccination Benjamin Moseley in 1805, before being applied to Napoleon in 1815.[20] Shaftesbury may have coined the phrase to cast aspersion on con artists, writing in *The Moralists* (1709) of 'our modern PROMETHEUS'S, *the Mountebanks*, who perform'd such Wonders [. . .]. Shou'd we dare to make such *Empiricks* of the Gods, and such a *Patient* of poor Nature?'[21] Perhaps most pertinently, given the link between Galvanism and Frankenstein's electrified oak tree, the epithet was applied to Benjamin Franklin. A poem published in the *London Evening*

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Post in 1777 portrays Franklin ascending to heaven 'in chains of wire, / To perish by his stolen fire', describing him in a footnote as 'this arch patriot, philosopher, modern Prometheus, and rebel'.[22] Contemporary references to Napoleon as Prometheus – including Cruikshank's print – dwell on Prometheus chained rather than on Promethean fire. Shelley's tagging of Frankenstein as a Prometheus draws on any number of negative associations the 'modern Prometheus' had gathered since Shaftesbury's ironic statement in the early 1700s.

Looking beyond such coincidences of imagery and allusion between literature and satirical prints, it can be argued that the late-Georgian satirical print 'evokes a parallel with Romantic aesthetics' more generally, as Haywood does: 'to the extent that it showcases a distorting application of the inspirational imagination, we can regard caricature as renegade Romanticism'.[23] E. H. Gombrich supposes that around the time of the late-Georgian print, Romanticism was inculcating a taste for 'the weirdest combinations of symbols, the most grotesque conglomerations of images, [. . .] phantoms, nightmares, and apparitions'.[24] Robert Patten sees the late-Georgian caricature print as 'another manifestation of the Romantic movement' in the sense of 'the exploration of individuality and difference which confuted Augustan assumptions about universal norms'.[25]

I would suggest, however, that the extravagant imagery of some late-Georgian satirical prints – most prominently Gillray's – should not be allowed to dominate any discussion of 'caricature' as a cultural phenomenon with close connections to literature in the Romantic period. Parallels between Romanticism and late-Georgian satirical prints cannot be grounded in an argument that novelists and poets of the Romantic period generally saw satirical prints as the model for a 'caricature' applicable beyond the most topical political events and matters of high society. Moreover, the comic and grotesque artistic techniques that became associated with *caricatúra* preceded the satirical print genre by hundreds of years – marginal drawings in medieval manuscripts, stone gargoyles, the 'fancy head' genre – and British connoisseurs were well aware of the modern caricature portrait's origins in the Italian Renaissance, with *Bell's Court and Fashionable Magazine* in 1815 observing that '[i]t is to no less persons than to those eminent restorers of the art of painting, Michel Angelo, and Leonardi di Vinci, that we are indebted for some of the first caricatures which have ever appeared in modern times'.[26]

British interest in modern graphic *caricatúra* was sparked by the comic *ritratti carichi* of sixteenth-century Italy that are credited to Annibale Carracci, a Bolognese painter of altarpieces and frescoes paid for by elite

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families. These early modern graphic caricatures followed a literary fad for short satirical 'portraits' in verse, and Donald Posner suggests that the first *ritratti carichi* were pictorial illustrations for these verses.[27] Only a few examples survive of the caricatures by Carracci and his fellows: Malvasia's *Life of the Carracci* mentions drawings of people depicted variously as dwarfed and hunchbacked, with animalistic physiognomies, or made to resemble inanimate objects. E. H. Gombrich identifies these techniques with 'the theoretical discovery of the difference between likeness and equivalence'.[28] Carracci named the *perfetta deformità* ('perfect deformity'), a distinctive physical aberration supposed to contain the essence of a person's real physical likeness, and which could be exaggerated or made the basis of a fantastic portrait that still, thanks to the perfect deformity, resembled the subject.[29] Anne Summerscale notes that Carracci conceived of his *caricatúra* as something greater and more intellectual than mere 'comic distortion'; rather, it was a realism born of perverse creativity, which sat alongside the Carracci family's artistic reform movement.[30] In 1582, when the Carracci founded a school for artists in Bologna, the Academia degli Incamminati ('Academy of Those Who Are Making Progress'), fine art was dominated by the strand of Renaissance art that came to be seen as exaggeratedly elegant, 'Mannerism'. The Carracci advocated a return to nature, flouting church doctrine by allowing artists to draw nudes from live models.[31] *Ritratti carichi*, visual jokes that captured individuals' physical likenesses in unflattering ways, became fashionable in the elite society that patronised the Academia's painting. Noble men and women tried their hands at caricaturing each other, as well as commissioning professional portraits of themselves, their family and friends. The trend was imported to Britain by connoisseurs who returned from their Grand Tour with group portraits of themselves and their travelling companions: desirable souvenirs, especially if drawn by an acclaimed artist such as Pier Leone Ghezzi or the Italian-trained English painter Thomas Patch.[32] When the British elites took up caricaturing as a hobby, enterprising publishers offered engraving and printing services so that amateur caricaturists could distribute copies of their drawings around the social circle that would recognise the likeness.

The most prominent of the publishers were Mary and Matthew Darly, who engraved portraits by George Marquess Townshend. Mary Darly created a drawing manual, *A Book of Carricaturas* (1762), to appeal to her clientele. In a run-on sentence introducing the book, she calls attention to caricaturing's fashionably aristocratic and Continental origins, while patriotically endorsing the British upper ranks' talent for this new pastime:

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> Carricatura is the burlesque of Character, or an exaggeration of nature, when not very pleasing it's a manner of drawing that has & still is held in great esteem both by the Italiens [sic] & French, some of our Nobility & Gentility at this time do equal, if not excel any thing of the kind that has ever been done in any other country, tis the most diverting species of designing & will certainly keep those that practise it out of the hippo [hypochondria], or Vapours & that it may have such an effect on her friends is the wish of M^y^ Darly.[33]

Darly's emphasis on amateur caricaturing as a way of dispelling the kinds of 'nervous' disorders now understood as 'depression' and 'anxiety' accords with eighteenth-century *caricatúra* as a hobby carried out behind closed doors and among peers: social, entertaining, even therapeutic. Manuals like Darly's play into the social pressure or encouragement to become a caricaturist, promising to teach caricaturing even to readers not talented at drawing with artistic formulae and diagrams. *A Book of Carricaturas* recommends that the would-be caricaturist begin by examining their subject's linear profile and sorting it into one of four categories – straight, convex, concave, or with the S-shaped curve of the ogive arch or 'ogee'. Later in the century, antiquarian Francis Grose attempts a more granular categorisation of faces into types of noses and mouths. His *Rules for Drawing Caricaturas* (1788) also gives tips for using these categories to caricature faces briefly glimpsed: 'When a caricaturist wishes to delineate any face he may see in a place where it would be improper or impossible to draw it, he may commit it to his memory, by parsing it in his mind (as school-boys term it) by naming the contour and the different species of features of which it is constructed, as school-boys point out the different parts of the speech in a Latin sentence.'[34] This grammar of the face helped artists to draw from life, and quickly, with a sketchy quality being part of the desired aesthetic. In some surviving examples of amateur caricaturing, multiple *ritratti carichi* float in empty space on a single page (in the manner of Leonardo Da Vinci's sheets of grotesque and 'fancy heads'), usually untitled and sometimes using reusing paper, such as with George Clerk's drawing on a printed legal document catalogued as 'Heads of Two Men'.[35] Looking back on the inscrutable fashions of the past, a writer for *The Athenaeum* in 1888 remarks with wonder that Grose's manual was 'one of several books professing to give instructions in an art which nowadays no one would think of taking lessons in, though a century ago it seems to have been regarded as a "genteel accomplishment"'.[36]

The appeal of caricaturing as a pursuit for gentlemen and gentlewoman amateurs continued into the nineteenth century, when it was less exclusive

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to the highest ranks of British society. In Walter Scott's circles, John Gibson Lockhart and Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe were known for *ritratti carichi* of private acquaintances. Writing to Lord Montagu in 1824, Scott asks, 'Did you get Lockhart set to drawing Caricatures—he has a pretty talent that way'.[37] Jonathan Henry Christie reports how, in their Balliol days, Lockhart 'was an incessant caricaturist [. . .] his papers, his books, and the walls of his rooms [. . .] crowded with portraits of his friends and himself'.[38] *Redgauntlet* draws inspiration from Lockhart's penchant for caricaturing as a law student, describing Darsie Latimer's notebook 'filled with caricatures of the professors and my fellow students'.[39] Whereas Lockhart gave up the practice in later life, Sharpe used his talent to illustrate Bannatyne Club publications, and had a volume of his drawings printed as *Portraits of an Amateur* (1833). Thackeray – known for his essay on the professional graphic satirist George Cruikshank – shows awareness of *caricatúra*'s status as a private entertainment for elite amateurs in *Vanity Fair*, where Becky Sharp endears herself to Lord Steyne by verbally 'caricaturing Lady Jane and her ways', and by sketching 'a caricature of Sir Pitt Crawley'.[40] Caricaturing continued to be practised for the enjoyment of the artists and their circles, from the watercolour comic tableaux of Jemima Blackburn, to Edward Lear's self-portraits, to Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell's private magazine *Hyde Park Gate News*. Blackburn routinely associated with earls and countesses her contemporary amateur caricaturist Ella Taylor also moved in high society, indicating that in the second half of the nineteenth century *ritratti carichi* continued to be a creative outlet for upper-class British men and women.[41]

The late Georgian period saw the emergence of single-sheet satirical prints enhanced by the techniques of *ritratti carichi*. These prints were the work of professional artists and were printed and distributed more widely than the Darlys' customers' designs. However, commercial 'caricature prints' still effectively *belonged* to those elites. In the 1780s, artists including James Sayers, Richard Newton, Thomas Rowlandson, David Allan, John Kay and Isaac Cruikshank capitalised on the fashion for amateur caricaturing with new kinds of *ritratti carichi* that would interest well-connected consumers. The intended consumer of single-sheet satirical prints had intimate knowledge through social acquaintance of the people depicted in them – their personal histories and rivalries, their faces and physiques, their mannerisms and speech tics. In many cases, these graphic satirists offered an enhanced version of the Darlys' services: they would gratify their clients with professionally executed designs based on the clients' sketches and ideas. Most of James Gillray's prints were based

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on submissions from gentlemen amateurs: drawings, verbal descriptions of scenes and brief textual prompts. David Taylor gives an account of an extensive collaboration between Gillray and Captain Thomas Bradyll, son of an MP and heir to estates in Cumbria, for the 1803 print *The King of Brobdingnag, and Gulliver*.[42] Gillray's correspondence shows that he corresponded about designs with politicians including George Canning, John Hookham Frere, Sir John Dalrymple, Nathaniel Sneyd and Lord Bateman – and many more letters to Gillray are unsigned.[43] One note from Canning suggests that Gillray could be kept on a tight leash, though instructions were delivered politely: 'It is particularly wished that the Print of Mr. Sheridan No. 5 of the French Habits, which Mr. Gillray was so good as to send for inspection to-day, may not be published. If Mr. G. can call to-morrow, the reason will be explained to him.'[44] Nineteenth-century commentators on Georgian satirical prints, unaware of the extent to which Gillray and Cruikshank were satirists for hire who served individuals in government, misrepresent them as independent agents with their own political agendas. An essay in *The Athenaeum* describes Gillray as 'a sort of public and private spy', 'a caterpillar on the green-leaf of reputation' who 'loved to crawl over those whom Fame had marked as her own' and who felt personal hatred for 'his political adversaries'.[45] In general, however, the prints toed the line by expressing socially conservative, politically reactionary and royalist attitudes – especially when the focus moved from parliamentary conflicts to wider social or diplomatic concerns. A satire on Pitt in a Gillray print was not a call to revolution. Nicholson's work systematically presents research to dispel the myth that the single-sheet satirical print addressed a large public and could appeal 'even [or] especially to the illiterate', as some scholars had suggested.[46]

Indeed, most satirical prints were neither priced nor designed to be accessed and understood by the lower classes. Prolific collectors were Sarah Sophia Banks, George III, George IV and Sir William Augustus Fraser, who bequeathed his eleven morocco-bound folios of caricature prints to the House of Lords Library. The prints' consumers were often, like the satirists' clients, members of the political classes. Nicholson presents a compelling account of the satirical prints as peer-to-peer satire.[47] Baker gives an account of the late-Georgian print shop and the 'polite classes' who were its core market.[48] H. T. Dickinson highlights that most political satirical prints assumed a high level of political literacy, and Taylor demonstrates the high level of cultural literacy that readers would need to appreciate the prints' dense parodies of classical texts.[49] Many prints

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include phrases and quotations in French and Latin. There are comic imitations of fashionably controversial fine art, such as the burlesques of Fuseli's 1781 painting *The Nightmare*, and Gillray's 1798 print *The Apotheosis of Hoche*, suggested to him by the MP and *Anti-Jacobin* contributor John Hookham Frere.[50] Graphic satirists also assumed, of course, that their patrons were connoisseurs of comic *caricatúra*. By using portraiture techniques distinctive to the *ritratti carichi* brought back from Italy and emulated by amateur caricaturists in British high society, late-Georgian satirical prints created an aesthetic that was familiarly high-end.

Where novelists in the Romantic period use the word 'caricature' in referring to satirical prints, they thematise the prints as material objects associated with the frivolous leisure pursuits of aristocrats and with the machinations of political elites – a fair representation of the social world discussed in the last section. Mary Brunton's novel *Self-control* (1811), for example, gives an authentic view of the market for caricature prints, with print shop owners on the lookout for a wealthy lady wanting 'to make some addition to her cabinet', and protagonist Laura encountering 'the elegant, the accomplished, Colonel Hargrave' – 'one of the best bred men in the kingdom', an individual of 'the highest polish' – in a print shop. Hargrave does not notice Laura at first because he is 'busied in examining a book of caricatures', and she 'hoped that the caricatures would not long continue so very interesting'.[51] Hargrave's caricatures resonate with Robert Ferrars's jewelled pin in *Sense and Sensibility*: costly, fascinating and (in the novel's view) trivial objects from which the man's interest must be detached if the heroine is to advance *her* interest. Brunton evokes the 'book of caricatures' as something perhaps beyond the genteel reader's income, yet certainly beneath her attention. For Brunton, caricature portraits – whether professional or amateur – are neither artistically valuable nor satirically purposeful but merely a material trapping of petty vices. The protagonist in *Discipline* (1814) teases her guardian by 'hid[ing] her prayer-book' and 'past[ing] caricatures on the inside of her pew in church';[52] later, when she draws caricature portraits of people at an auction of expensive objects, she becomes a participant in the scene she is attempting to satirise:

> As the sale proceeded, a hundred useless toys were exposed, and called forth a hundred vain and unlovely emotions [. . .]. I took out my pencil to caricature a group, in which a spare dame, whose face combined no common contrast of projection and concavity, was darting from her sea-green eyes sidelong flames upon a china jar, which was surveyed with complacent smiles by its round and rosy purchaser. But my labours were

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> interrupted, and from an amused spectator of the scene, I was converted into a keen actor, when the auctioneer exposed a tortoise-shell dressing-box, magnificently inlaid with gold.[53]

Edgeworth, the only writer who refers to specific prints in her novels, shares Brunton's association of caricature drawing and satirical prints with a dissolute elite society: in an episode involving caricature drawings in *Belinda* (1801), she alludes to the prints that satirised Duchess of Devonshire's alleged methods of political canvassing in 1784;[54] in *Ennui* (1809), one character compares another to an Irish satirical print, exclaiming that he is '"the caricature of *the English fire-side* outdone!"';[55] and in *Helen* (1834), party guests are presented with 'a heap of coarse caricatures [. . .] party caricatures' as after-dinner entertainment. The novel's protagonist hides them under the table '"[f]or the honour of England"', and substitutes 'a portfolio of caricatures in a different style'.[56] When Edgeworth meditates that 'humour only can ensure [these prints'] permanence; the personality dies with the person', she gives the example of 'the famous old print of the minister rat-catcher, in the Westminster election' – a timely reference since readers in the 1830s could have recalled the newest spate of prints on the theme of 'placemen ratters', which mocked Wellington's soliciting of votes for the passage of the Roman Catholic Relief Act. Robert Southey and Samuel Taylor Coleridge capitalised on that trend in the prints by reissuing an updated anti-Catholic version of their satirical ballad 'The Devil's Thoughts' as *The Devil's Walk*, with plates by Robert Cruikshank including an image of Wellington associating with the Devil calculated to please ultra-tory readers.[57]

The ways that living writers themselves feature in late-Georgian satirical prints makes plain the genre's association with celebrity and social exclusivity. Southey and Charles Lamb are represented as political radicals in the inaugural number of the *Anti-Jacobin* (1797–99), founded by George Canning while Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, endorsed by Pitt and supported by the Treasury. At the time, Southey and Lamb did not have significant public profiles; being unfamiliar with the writers' actual physical appearances, Gillray represents them as an ass and a frog, without caricaturing their real faces. For Southey, the experience was gratifying rather than humiliating, and in multiple letters he encourages his friends and family to seek out a copy of the magazine: 'Did you know that I have been caricatured in the Anti-Jacobine [sic] Magazine together with Lloyd, Lamb, the Duke of Bedford—Fox &c &c &c? the fellow has not however libelled my likeness, because he did not know it—so he has clapt an Asse's

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head on my shoulders.'[58] Here, the word 'caricature' is used to mean a mocking, ludicrous representation rather than an artistic technique of linear exaggerated resemblance. Southey is apparently delighted at being satirised in the company of more illustrious 'jacobins' such as Fox and the Duke of Bedford. Since the *Anti-Jacobin*'s readership is relatively small and pro-government, he cannot trust that his acquaintances will come across it of their own accord, and at two shillings the illustrated magazine is not cheap: 'If you have not already seen your acquaintance caricatured', he writes to a friend, 'pray send for the first number of the Anti-Jacobine Magazine. the caricature is worth two shillings, & you will not be amused the less for not recognizing the likeness'.[59] Despite the lack of physical likeness, this print was proof positive that Southey was not beneath the notice of people in high places. He could have imagined lords and ladies noticing him as they read the *Anti-Jacobin* over breakfast in bed. Concluding another letter Southey mentions, 'you have I suppose seen my asinine honours in the Jacobine Magazine'.[60] Gillray's portrait of the writer as an ass labelled 'Southey', in a magazine so closely tied to Pitt's government, had little power to damage his reputation before his reading public and could even enhance his standing. Even if his face and physique were unknown, he was someone worth satirising.

Canning himself would have understood Southey's delighted reaction to appearing in one of Gillray's elaborate designs: Canning's personal relationship with Gillray began when, through their mutual acquaintance John Sneyd, he persuaded the artist to include his portrait in a satirical print. As Taylor explains, for Canning's peers this inclusion 'would unequivocally signal his arrival on the political stage'.[61] Similarly, an appearance in a satirical print suggested that a writer had considerable cultural impact. Scott was the most frequently portrayed, appearing in prints by Charles Williams, Thomas Hood, Robert Cruikshank, Henry Thomas Aiken and John Doyle between 1812 and 1827.[62] Due to Byron's status as an aristocrat and a 'fashionable' individual, his physical likeness, manners and deeds were far better known, and the satires correspondingly more personal.[63] Southey's excitement about being raised from obscurity into the colourful pages of the *Anti-Jacobin* – 'Did you know I have been caricatured' – and Lord Byron's celebrity in the prints, both fit with the satirical print genre's reputation as a 'low' genre for high society.

I have hunted for references to the 'caricature' of London-centric satirical print culture among the published works of the writers who most strongly represent the Romantic period in literary scholarship. Besides Edgeworth's thematising of caricature prints in *Belinda*, *Ennui* and

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Helen, there is a possible reference to the satirical print genre in Percy Shelley's satirical closet drama *Oedipus Tyrannus; or, Swellfoot the Tyrant* (1820), where government ministers plot to smear Queen Caroline in the press. The litigious 'green bag' supposed to contain evidence of her guilt actually contains a 'fatal liquor' that will make her appear in the public eye like 'a ghastly caricature / Of what was human' and '[b]e called adulterer, drunkard, liar, wretch' regardless of what she has actually done.[64] Shelley may be alluding here to the graphic caricature of satirical prints, given the green bag's power to transform Caroline's physical appearance from 'gentlest looks / To savage, foul, and fierce deformity'. However, Shelley is almost certainly referring to the power of the journalistic press more generally, to apotheosise individuals as well as satirise them – and his emphasis on the press's influence over common people suggests that the green bag contains more newspapers and pamphlets than satirical prints, which were expensive to purchase or hire. In *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the House of Lords tells a crowd of gullible pigs that if Caroline is innocent, the contents of the bag will transform her into an angel raining down 'blessings in the shape of comfits': 'just the sort of thing / Swine will believe'.

In none of these examples does the writer position the satirical prints as the genre of caricature, or as particularly important to ideas about emphasis and exaggeration that could be applied to literary works. Walter Scott's interest in John Kay is the exception that proves the rule. While Kay did produce satirical prints and portraits with distinct political meanings, Scott's reference to 'Kay's caricatures' in *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* is clearly aimed at graphic caricature's potential for social documentary and historical record. Kay's portraits of Edinburgh characters have been thought to be comparatively 'gentle' and 'polite',[65] too different from Gillray's and the Cruikshanks' prints to be comfortably included in overviews of late-Georgian satire. Scott was a collector of political satirical prints and held Gillray to be the best artist in the genre.[66] But his admiring reference to 'Kay's caricatures' in *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* indicates that the pre-Gillray understanding of *caricatúra* was alive and well in the early nineteenth century. I consider Kay's significance to Scott's novel-writing in Chapter 3.

It is unfortunate for literary criticism that Kay has been marginalised in the study of late-Georgian graphic caricature, when his are the only 'caricatures' explicitly claimed as a model for a literary work's textual description of people and places. Neglecting Kay's work in Edinburgh, and the collection of prints Scott kept at Abbotsford,[67] is convenient to scholarship's tendency to overlook Scottishness in the phenomenon of

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late-Georgian graphic satire. For scholars working on British graphic satire, Kay is an afterthought when he is mentioned at all. Some have used phrases like 'the golden age of *English* caricature', despite the fact that Gillray's and the Cruikshank family's connections with Scotland should be well known from scholarship such as Robert Patten's work on George Cruikshank.[68] Early in his career, Isaac moved his family from Edinburgh (where he may have picked up professional caricaturing from Kay) to London, where the Cruikshanks attended a Scottish church; and dialogue in one of George and Robert's collaborative prints shows familiarity with Scottish English despite living in London their whole adult lives.

These satirists' Scottish origins were common knowledge during their lifetimes, with Gillray and Cruikshank being recognisably Scottish names, and were emphasised in nineteenth-century biographies. Whereas Gillray's Lanarkshire father fought under the Duke of Cumberland in Flanders, the Cruikshanks were historically Jacobites. In 1833, the *Monthly Magazine* highlights the Cruikshanks' Jacobite credentials on both sides of the family line:

> Prior to the famous "forty-five," the name of Cruikshank, or as it used to be spelt by its Scotch proprietors, Crookshank, appears to have been recorded only in the Highland fogs. The mother of George was a Mac Naghten. The Crookshanks and the Mac Naghtens were both Charlie Stewart's men. Many of them were killed and more of them wounded at Preston Pans, and Culloden.[69]

The *Morning Chronicle*'s 1851 retrospective of 'Gillray's Caricatures' identifies him as 'the son of a Scotsman, who lost an arm at Fontenoy'.[70] Gillray, notorious for alcoholism and dementia in the last years of his life,[71] was not then proudly claimed as an English caricaturist, the brightest star of a golden age.

If any graphic satirist could be seen to fill that role, it was William Hogarth. John Barrell notes that the adjective 'Hogarthian' appeared in print during Hogarth's lifetime.[72] Commentators in the Romantic period describe Hogarth's works as 'comic paintings' and 'portraits', or as 'caricatures' so good they were scarcely caricatures at all. The *Monthly Magazine*, reviewing *Melincourt* in 1817, declares that Peacock 'finishes his portraits like Hogarth, while the portraits in [some other comic novels] are mere sign-posts or coarse caricatures'.[73] Hazlitt claims that the faces in Hogarth's works 'go to the very verge of caricature and yet never (we believe in any single instance) go beyond it'.[74] In an essay in *The Athenaeum*, Hogarth and his works are praised, yet denied the immortality

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of artistic 'genius', sharing Edgeworth's idea of graphic satire in *Helen* as ephemeral, fatally concerned with temporary goings-on:

> The political caricatures of that wonderful man [Hogarth] were felt and understood in their day [. . .] but to the children of this age they appear only as extravagant riddles, which no one has the patience to solve. They have gone to that oblivion from which there is no redemption: indeed, the most successful of caricatures can be only for a passing moment. They deal only with the personal defects or the fleeting follies of the creatures of the hour [. . .]. In caricatures, as in candles, there are wicks which will soon consume them; and the memories of the artists themselves may be safely permitted to perish with them.[75]

Hogarth could still be lumped in with the late-Georgian satirists, on the grounds that 'you had to be there' to appreciate his jokes.

The literati's conceptions in the Romantic period of amateur caricaturing and caricature prints – highly exclusive, highly specific and thus short-lived – are at odds with a fundamental ideal of literary realism, the 'originality' of individualised characters that are particularised without being comic or satirically rendered portraits of unique and living individuals. Writers would have hoped to achieve broader appeal, make light reading more respectable and give readers more lasting pleasure, by distancing the idea that leisure reading offered characters as identities to be deciphered and narratives as puzzles to be solved. In Chapter 2, I consider the Romantic literary sphere's wariness of prosopographic caricature as a context for the values of realist character-writing that emerge in the late eighteenth century's critical reception of *The Spectator*.

Distorted People, Distorted Texts: 'Caricature' in Critique

I have pointed out that British literary culture's understanding of 'caricature' as a term applicable to texts precedes the distinctive late-Georgian satirical print with its increased use of Italianate caricature portraiture. The caricature talk that emerged in the late eighteenth-century literary sphere originated in the appropriation of 'caricature' from the *ritratti carichi* brought to Britain by the Grand Tour: literary culture transferred *caricatúra*'s sense of techniques for exaggerated visual resemblance (more differentiated lines, darker shadows) to *caricatúra* in the sense of techniques for exaggerated textual description (too much, too often, too incongruously or contrastingly), with varied usage of 'caricature' recapturing the richness of *caricatúra*'s connotations and etymology in Italian.

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But there was an intermediate step, I argue, in this transfer from the critique of pictures to the critique of texts. From the early years of *ritratti carichi* and *caricatúra* becoming known in Britain, anglophone writers used the vocabulary of caricature to describe real human bodies – and later, real human minds. 'Caricature' was a pliable metaphor for evoking the disturbing effect of a physical body that was unnatural and real, uncanny in its distorted resemblance of what it should ideally be. In Chapter 6, I discuss these descriptions of 'flesh-caricatures' in writing by Thomas Browne, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Mary Wollstonecraft as precursors to the 'horrid realism' local to grotesque bodies in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and 'Transformation', as well as in Scott's novels, from *The Black Dwarf* to *The Talisman*. By metaphorising *caricatúra* – effectively saying that 'this person resembles a picture that exaggerates yet resembles a person' – writers literalise *caricatúra*, imagining an artistic representation of a real thing into the thing itself.

When Thomas Holcroft translated Johann Caspar Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente* (1775–78) into English, the author's reliance on the literalisation of *caricatúra* to evoke physical deformity frustrated the translator's preference for varying vocabulary. Lavater uses 'Carricatur' and 'Karikatur' often enough that Holcroft runs out of synonyms:

> By *Caricature*, the Author appears to mean nothing more than an imperfect drawing, and by *Ideal*, sometimes perfect beauty, sometimes a fancy piece. These words occur so frequently that they must inevitably be often retained in the translation.[76]

Whether or not Holcroft manages to pick up all the connotations of Lavater's 'Carricatur' with his various synonyms, his translation is an instance of a Romantic-period reader needing to figure out what 'caricature' could mean for writers engaged in social and cultural critique. Clearly, Lavater was not making a straightforward analogy with the *caricatúra* of the *ritratti carichi*, which were deliberately distorted and intended to be comic or otherwise entertaining. The bodies and faces he saw around him were failures, 'imperfect drawings' of the human form, pitiable or horrific:

> Carrikaturen aller Arten treff' ich an.—Die Bemerkung entgeht mir nie, dass der Pobel zusammengenommen ordentlich die grobste Carrikatur des National-Stadt-Dorf-characters ist.[77]

Holcroft translates:

> I constantly find that the vulgar, collectively, whether of nation, town, or village, are the most distorted.

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Omitting to translate the first sentence as 'I meet all kinds of caricatures', and substituting the phrase 'most distorted' instead of 'die grobste Carrikatur', Holcroft may have wanted to avoid readers assuming that Lavater finds these beings humorous, or sees them as distinctive individuals. These connotations of 'caricature' would be at odds with Lavater's disgusted tone or would contradict his seeing the common people *zusammengenommen*. Holcroft retains the word 'caricature' in a passage about family (mis)resemblance, where individual human beings are distorted versions of other particular human beings: if men 'abandon themselves to their passions' and sink 'deep in degeneracy', Lavater warns in Holcroft's translation, 'what variety of more or less gross, vulgar, caricatures will rise in succession, from father to son!'[78] I imagine Holcroft, suspicious of Lavater's seemingly figurative uses of 'Carrikaturen', picking up Baretti's dictionary to reassure himself that 'Carrikatur' had an etymological link with *caricare un ritratto* in the sense of failing to copy reality closely enough.

Indeed, this meaning of *caricatúra* – an inadvertently bad drawing, particularly of a human body – was influential in the Romantic literary sphere's appropriation of 'caricature' as a term of criticism, and fundamental to the anti-caricature rhetoric in Romantic character talk that I will discuss later. The distinction between a deliberate *caricatúra* and a *ritratto caricato* is debated in an exchange of letters published in successive numbers of the *Monthly Review* in 1758. The first letter in the exchange (signed 'B') is better known to scholars, for its response to Hogarth's caption for *The Bench* (1758): Lynch mentions it in her analysis of the stance Hogarth takes on 'caricature' in *The Analysis of Beauty* (1743) and his caption for *Characters and Caricaturas* (1743).[79] A second letter, responding to the first, contextualises 'B' and Hogarth's disagreement over the meaning of *caricatúra* in the difference between *caricato* and *caricatúra* as technical terms for visual art.

Seen as part of a conversation about the meaning of caricature, these letters show a desire to categorise *caricatúra* as either a pejorative term or a name for a particular set of techniques and their aesthetic effects. In his caption for *The Bench*, Hogarth – like Holcroft in his translation of Lavater – tries to relegate 'caricature' to a single meaning: 'That which has, of late years, got the name of *Caracatura*, is, or ought to be, totally divested of every stroke that hath a tendency to good Drawing.' He compares it to 'the early scrawlings of a child' that make a reductive and inadvertently 'comical resemblance' of the human form, as opposed to '*Outré*', which 'signifies [. . .] the exaggerated outlines of a figure, all the

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parts of which may be in other respects, a perfect and true picture of nature'. (To illustrate this, Hogarth gives an example that metaphorises and literalises pictorial exaggeration, suggesting that '[a] Giant or Dwarf may be called a common man *Outré*'.)

B, writing to the *Monthly Review*, requests that Hogarth give up his definition of caricature as an inadvertently bad drawing for the deliberately exaggerated *ritratto ridicolo*, referring to the Carracci's *perfetta deformità*:

> I must beg leave to differ with the Author [Hogarth], as to what he says of the meaning of those words [*Caracatura* and *Outré*] being commonly mistaken. I have conversed a good deal with Painters, with Connoisseurs, and with people entirely ignorant of Painting; and yet never remember to have heard them misapplied *before*: nor, indeed, do I recollect any three terms of art, in the meaning of which mankind are generally agreed. With submission to so great an Artist, I must beg leave to say, that his definition of *Caracatura* is entirely wrong [. . .]. *Caracatura*, means the distinguishing figure of a person or thing ludicrously exaggerated, yet so as to preserve the similitude of the original, regardless of any circumstances that may arise for good or bad Drawing. As to the word *Outré*, it never meant any thing more than simply exaggerated.[80]

A third gentleman writes in from Worcester to agree with B's definition, which he thinks 'follows the surer guidance of the common sense and general acceptation, of the word'. The Worcester connoisseur's main purpose, however, is to point out that the similarity in the words 'character' and 'caricature' is mere coincidence, that they are not etymologically linked, arguing that 'caricature' should be used only as part of the specialised vocabulary of the visual arts. After correcting Hogarth's and B's spelling of the word, he separates the *ritratto caricato* from the *ritratto ridicolo* or *ritratto carichi*:

> CARACATURA has (some people will be suprized at it) no meaning whatever: nor is there any such word in the Italian, the French, or the English Dictionaries. There is, indeed, a word used by Italian painters, which is written *Caricatura*, which in English we should translate [to] a charging, or a loading, and perhaps an over-charging, or an over-loading,—and is derived from *carica*, a charge or load; hence *caricato*, loaded. [. . .]
>
> But to return to *Caricato* and *Caricatura*, as technical terms of painting, we shall observe, that the masters in Italy have frequent occasion for the first of these words, when they point out the faults of their disciples, who, in the copies they make, commonly exaggerate those almost imperceptible flexures and curvatures of the outlines [. . .]. The master then says, *Avete troppo caricato questo muscolo, questo naso, questo Ginocchio, &c.* That is, you have loaded, or charged, or exaggerated, this muscle, this nose, this knee, &c.

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Two years later, the Worcester connoisseur might have read with approval Baretti's entries under *carica–*. What Hogarth calls 'Caracatura', he explains, is actually the drawing *troppo caricato*, whereas the exaggerations of *caricatúra* are intentional:

> *Una Caricatura* is the technical term used precisely to express a kind of drawing, which delights in an artificial exaggeration of particular features, by means of which exaggeration the portrait of a very decent person may appear strikingly like, and at the same time be rendered whimsically ridiculous.
>
> Of these *Caricaturas* excellent examples may be seen among the works of Leonardo da Vinci, Annibale Caracci, Carlo Marratti, &c. and even of Mr. Hogarth, *that are not totally divested of every stroke which hath a tendency to good drawing*.[81]

Hogarth and his respondents attempt to disentangle the different ways in which *caricatúra* was being used and mark some usages as erroneous, whereas later in the century – when 'caricature' is increasingly written and pronounced in an anglicised fashion – caricature talk is more accepting of the word's fluidity.

Caricature talk in the Romantic period accepts *caricatúra*'s multivalence and applicability, beyond graphic satire and beyond the visual arts altogether. Hazlitt makes the generalised pronouncement that '[a]rt is at once a miniature and a caricature of nature', and accuses Michelangelo's sculptures of 'tread[ing] on the verge of caricature' with '*extreme* forms, massy, gigantic, supernatural'.[82] Felix Mendelssohn deplores the 'perverted caricatures' in the 'distorted cantus firmus of the "Dies Irae," to which the witches are dancing' in Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*.[83] Francis Jeffrey complains of 'harsh caricature' in Scott's *Guy Mannering*.[84] The *Critical Review* accuses Byron of 'having collected together a greater mass of offensive and disgusting objects than any poet ever did before – of having aspired to heap together caricatures of enormous guilt'.[85] The *Monthly Review* makes a case for deliberately exaggerating physicalised emotion on the stage: 'In the language of the theatre, the expression of every emotion ought to be not merely distinct, but obvious; the object should be magnified, *colossalized*, (if we may coin such an expression,) into conspicuousness. Like the pictured passions of Charles Le Brun, those of the playhouse ought somewhat to caricature nature, in order to be instantly and definitely visible and distinguishable'.[86] Painting, sculpture, music, novels, poetry, stage performance: this freedom of usage, where 'caricature' is limited neither to graphic satire, nor satire nor the visual arts generally, is reflected in several dictionaries published during the Romantic period. In H. J. Rodd's 1818 edition of Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language*,

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Rodd's examples for 'caricature' and 'to caricature' include caricature drawings, but he defines the terms without reference to visual art, as 'the representation of a person or circumstance, so as to render the original ridiculous, without losing the resemblance' and 'to ridicule; to represent unfairly'. Walker's *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary*, first published in 1823, argues that using 'caricature' to describe any kind of representation or imitation simply extends what is already a 'metaphorical signification' in using *caricatúra* to mean an exaggerated drawing:

> This word, though not in Johnson, I have not scrupled to insert, from its frequent and legitimate usage. Baretti tells us that the literal sense of this word is *certa quantita di munizione che si mettee nell' archibuso o altro*, which, in English, signifies the charge of a gun; but its metaphorical signification, and the only one in which the English use it, as he tells us, *dichesi anche di ritratto ridicolo in cui sensei grandemente accresciute [sic]i diffetti*, when applied to paintings, chiefly portraits, the heightening of some features, and lowering others, which we call in English overcharging, and which will make a very ugly picture, not unlike a handsome person: whence any exaggerated character, which is redundant in some of its parts, and defective in others, is called a Caricature.[87]

This definition's easy transition from the deliberate *ritratto ridicolo* to 'any exaggerated character' is one of several instances suggesting Romantic-period English's acceptance that 'caricature' comprised multiple interrelated definitions and could have positive or negative connotations depending on the context.

For example, in Wollstonecraft's *Vindication*, we have not only the deliberate caricature *and* the incompetent caricature, the accurate caricature *and* the misrepresenting caricature, the pictorial caricature *and* the textual caricature, but also the literalised caricature as in Lavater's social critique. Wollstonecraft imagines that 'the discriminating outline of a caricature' could fully capture the details that her text does not include, 'the domestic miseries and petty vices' diffused by warped femininity. When she offers a description of dependent womanhood, she insists that it is 'not an overcharged' representation. She claims to have noticed a woman's eye, having 'glanced coldly over a most exquisite picture, rest, sparkling with pleasure, on a caricature rudely sketched'. She refers to silly novels 'caricatur[ing] human nature', and (in the first edition of the *Vindication*) to artificially sentimental literary style: 'pretty superlatives' that are actually 'nothings—these caricatures of the real beauty of sensibility'.[88] Finally, Wollstonecraft claims that the Protestant Dissenter's body, like the female body, has been physically caricatured alongside the distortion of mental character:

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> Were not dissenters [. . .] a class of people, with strict truth characterized by cunning? And may I not lay some stress on this fact to prove, that when any power but reason curbs the free spirit of man, dissimulation is practised, and the various shifts of art are naturally called forth? Great attention to decorum, which was carried to a degree of scrupulosity, and all that puerile bustle about trifles and consequential solemnity, which Butler's caricature of a dissenter brings before the imagination, shaped their persons as well as their minds in the mould of prim littleness. [. . .] Oppression thus formed many of the features of their character perfectly to coincide with that of the oppressed half of mankind; for is it not notorious, that dissenters were like women, fond of deliberating together, and asking advice of each other, till by a complication of little contrivances, some little end was brought about?[89]

Here, Wollstonecraft alludes to the titular character of *Hubridas* (1663–78), referring to a comic textual caricature simultaneously with literalising caricature into a horrifically shrunken body. Such 'flesh-caricatures', which I explore further in Chapter 6, use the *troppo caricato* definition of caricature for social critique.

Literary criticism in the Romantic period, on the other hand, uses *troppo caricato* in an anti-caricature rhetoric deploring supposedly exaggerated or disproportioned textual properties of literary works: their style, their structure, their variegation. Critique's literalisation of 'caricature' into flesh-caricature played a role in cementing this rhetorical use of 'caricature' – in association with other terms like 'disproportion', 'distortion' and 'exaggeration' – to deplore works that apparently failed to shape their content into proper forms.

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