THE MORALIST.

Dub. Pub. by M.Cleary. 39 Nassau St.

William McCleary and the trade in pirated caricatures in early nineteenth-century Dublin: part 1 – 'Unlawfully Participating in the Profits of their Labour'

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WHILE THERE IS A RICH LITERATURE ON PUBLISHING, PRINTING AND BOOKSELLING in Georgian Dublin and equally vibrant scholarship on the proliferation of caricatures in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century London, very little has been written on the production, trading and consumption of satirical cartoons as part of the print business in Ireland.[1] This scholarly lacuna was recognised as long ago as 1907 when one of the handful of authors to consider the subject, the Rev St John Seymour, noted that while the productions of the London print shops were familiar, 'it does not appear to be generally recognised that certain print-sellers in Dublin ... issued a large number of similar prints.'[2] With the notable exception of the attention that recently has been paid to the subject by Mathew Crowther and an insightful conference paper given by James Kelly in May 2021, little has changed since Seymour wrote more than a century ago.[3] It largely remains the case too that 'these prints ... have escaped the collector's eye'.[4]

In the early decades of the nineteenth century, Dublin's trade in graphic satire was centered on a print-seller on Nassau Street, William McCleary. While he also published original caricatures (some of which are considered below), the larger part of McCleary's business involved plagiarising the work of well-known London satirists such as James Gillray, Thomas Rowlandson and George Cruikshank. To effect this, McCleary employed craftsmen to re-etch his London prototypes and others to hand-colour the resulting monochrome prints. He then sold them from his shop under his own imprint with no mention made of the original publisher or, indeed, artist. As will be discussed below, for Dublin print-sellers like McCleary – in a way that it would not have been the case in

1 – The Moralist
after an original, probably of April 1817, by Charles Williams (1796-1830)
published by William McCleary from 39 Nassau Street (private collection)

England – this unauthorised plagiarism was completely legal.

The recent discovery of a cache of more than thirty prints from McCleary's shop – many of which were previously unrecorded (Plates 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 20, 27-30) – invites reconsideration of this influential but neglected figure within the visual culture of Regency Ireland. This new group of works helpfully supplements the holdings in the National Library of Ireland, Trinity College, Dublin (a collection formed by Nicholas Robinson), and the British Museum, whose famous collection of graphic satire runs to only about a hundred Irish examples out of a total of almost eight thousand prints.[5] Remarkably, these sheets seem to have remained together since leaving McCleary's shop on Nassau Street and, never having been framed or displayed, are preserved in unusually fresh condition, giving a very accurate sense of the distinctively bright palette which is one of the distinguishing characteristics of McCleary's colourists.[6] McCleary has been little recognised at home; however, his work has, on occasion, been given its due internationally, and one of the caricatures from his shop (indeed, one of his pirated copies) was included in the landmark exhibition surveying European satire, *Infinite Jest: Caricature and Satire from Leonardo to Levine*, held at the Metropolitan Museum in New York in 2011.[7] In addition to filling a gap in the history of Dublin's print culture, a consideration of McCleary's career raises questions about the different ways in which originality and plagiarism were understood in the period, while at the same time highlighting the anomalous legal position which allowed different copyright jurisdictions to operate on either side of the Irish Sea, despite the recent Act of Union.

'LATELY PUBLISHED IN LONDON': THE MARKET FOR ENGLISH CARICATURES IN DUBLIN

By the time that McCleary started operating, there was a history going back at least half a century to the enjoyment of English caricatures in Dublin. In May 1741, well before the late Georgian heyday of English graphic satire, John Orpin of Crane Lane, off Dame Street, who was primarily a glazier, advertised for sale 'humorous and satirical prints lately published in London'.[8] In March of the same year Orpin let Dubliners know that he had 'just imported' the 'humorous and satirical print called the 'Motion and Reason for the Motion' [*recte*, 'Motion upon Motion'], an attack on Robert Walpole, and emphasised its metropolitan success: 'The demand for the above print was so great that 4000 copies were sold in London in 1 day.'[9] As with so many other sectors of the art market, a product's success in London imparted invaluable marketing value back home in Dublin.

In the same advertisement, Orpin noted that he had 'all [of] Hogarth['s] prints' in stock and, indeed, Hogarth's work was widely available in Dublin at, among others, Paul Smith's Picture Warehouse, also on Crane Lane, and at Thomas Silcock's shop opposite the Tholsel. Silcock was an entrepreneurial businessman with fingers in a number of pies, and by 1764 he had changed Orpin's importation business model to one of piracy, issuing a version of Isaac Basire's *A Companion to the Yae-ough* (1737) under his own imprint.[10] A more immediate precedent for McCleary was the Dublin publication of eight copies of

2 – William Paulet Carey (1759-1839), after Henry William Bunbury (1750-1811)
HOW TO STOP YOUR HORSE AT PLEASURE
published by William Allen, 32 Dame Street, Dublin, after 1787 (© The Trustees of the British Museum)

Henry William Bunbury's *Academy for Grown Horsemen* of 1787. These were re-engraved by William Paulet Carey, who had studied at the Dublin Society Schools, and published by William Allen of Dame Street (Plate 2).[11]

While in this instance Allen gives full credit to the original artist, when McCleary adopted, on a much larger scale, the practice of plagiarising London prints he went further in almost invariably anonymising the models he copied and subsuming individual authorship under his own imprint. As will be discussed below, there was no legal reason for this and it went against general commercial practice in London, where David Alexander notes that print-sellers found that their caricatures would 'sell on the name of the designer' alone.[12] Timothy Clayton makes a similar point: 'about 1790 caricaturists began to be sold as artistic personalities', while James Baker argues that 'collectors of satirical prints did not want inferior copies, they wanted originals from James Gillray or Thomas Rowlandson.'[13] Indeed, Baker suggests that this preference explains the general – though, as will be noted below, not total – absence of plagiarism of single sheet satire in England.

'BOUGHT ON ORMOND QUAY': McCLEARY'S BEGINNINGS

McCLEARY IS FIRST RECORDED IN BUSINESS IN 1791 WHEN HE WAS TRADING FROM premises at 31 Lower Ormond Quay on the north side of the Liffey.[14] Initially he seems to have followed a familiar and wholly respectable business model

3 – Thomas Burke (1749-1815)
after Horace Hone (1754-1825)
PORTRAIT OF FREDERICA, DUCHESS OF YORK (1767-1820)
1792
(Royal Collection Trust)

opposite

4 – A CORPULENT MILITARY OFFICER
published by William McCleary from 'Nassau Street', January 1800
(© The Trustees of the British Museum)

by associating his enterprise with a prestigious royal commission by a leading artist. An advertisement of August 1792 offered a 'new print' of Frederica, Duchess of York, which had been 'elegantly engraved' by Thomas Burke from a miniature painted by Horace Hone, 'Miniature Painter to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales' (Plate 3).[15] Hone's miniature, which is still in the Royal Collection, is also dated 1792, and Burke's print after it was published by Brydon of Charing Cross in June of that year, so McCleary was offering the Dublin public prints hot off the London presses depicting a royal princess who had very recently married the king's second son. Topicality, celebrity and, indeed, local pride – Hone's father, Nathaniel, a founding member of the Royal Academy had been born just across the river at Wood Quay and Horace was now back living in Dublin – all combined to make for a sound commercial proposition. The advertisement continues: 'A few first and best impressions may be had from Mr. H. Hone, No 34 Dorset-street; and Mr. McCleary, Printseller, Lower Ormond-quay', suggesting that in addition to tapping the market for images of royalty, Hone and McCleary were conscious of the appeal of choice impressions to print collectors. This was not, however, a segment of the market, that McCleary would in future pursue; Dublin was too small to accommodate much of a business servicing print connoisseurs. If in this instance, McCleary was simply acting as

a retailer rather than publishing in his own right, he already shows himself aware of the market in Dublin for metropolitan printed material.

As a location for retailing luxury goods, Ormond Quay was somewhat *démodé*, as shown in a satire a decade earlier on the aspirations to taste of a grocer's family in which the protagonist, forgoing a more fashionable purchase from a retailer on a premier shopping street, 'contented herself with a pair [of buckles] bought on Ormond Quay'.[16] The address of a shop could be used as an 'index of style' and a street name alone could 'act as shorthand for the worldly Dubliner'.[17] Also suggestive of the street's liminal position within the city's retail hierarchy is the fact that in March 1791, just as McCleary moved in, a neighbour, William Aldridge, who operated a rival print shop also on Ormond Quay, was charged with selling 'obscene prints for public hire'. Not every aspect of London print culture was as welcome in Dublin as decorous portraits of the Duchess of York, and the prosecuting officer, in what would become a familiar refrain, cautioned against 'export[ing] their vices from that country [England] into this'.[18]

McCLEARY OF NASSAU STREET

McCleary continued in business on Ormond Quay until he crossed the river in 1799 and subsequently operated from three different shops on Nassau Street, Nos 21, 32 and 39. Linking the city's most exclusive shopping area of College Green and Grafton Street to the great terraces of town houses on Merrion Square, Nassau Street was a perfect location from which to serve the fashionable end of the print market to which McCleary clearly aspired. McCleary, who very rarely dated his prints, marked the move – and the new century – by inscribing a caricature of a corpulent military officer with his new address and the date January 1800 (Plate 4). Almost four hundred prints can be identified as having been published by McCleary from Nassau Street, while another service that he offered – on the model of his London peers – was the hire of 'folios of caricatures'.[19] However, while productive in the field of caricature, McCleary very largely eschewed – at least as a publisher – other fields of print production, such as portraits of notable figures or the growing market for Irish topography. It is much more difficult of course to know what prints by other publishers, if any, McCleary may simply have stocked as a retailer.

The newly identified caricatures illuminate McCleary's publishing practice in the Nassau Street years, at the same time illustrating aspects of his pirating methods and offering several clues as to the operation

5 – James Gillray
(1756-1815)
OH! THAT THIS TOO TOO SOLID FLESH WOULD MELT
published by Hannah Humphrey (c.1745-1818) on 20th March 1791
(© Trustees of the British Museum)

6 – OH! THAT THIS TOO TOO SOLID FLESH WOULD MELT
after an original by James Gillray (1756-1815)
published by William McCleary from 32 Nassau Street
(private collection)

7 – THE FASHIONS OF THE DAY – OR TIME PAST AND TIME PRESENT
(inscribed: 'The year (1740) A lady's full dress of bombazeen. The year (1808) Lady's undress of Bum-be-seen.')
after an original by George Murgatroyd Woodward (1765-1809), published by William McCleary from 21 Nassau Street
(courtesy Metropolitan Museum, New York / Purchase, Harry G. Friedman Bequest, 1967)

of his shop and the nature of his market. The earliest print that McCleary copied was Gillray's *Oh! That this too too solidflesh would melt*, which had originally been issued in London in March 1791 (Plates 5, 6). However, as McCleary gives his address on the print as 32 Nassau Street, to which he did not move until about 1808, there was clearly a time lag of several years between its issue in London and the appearance of the pirated edition in Dublin. McCleary's etcher closely copied Gillray's original, though the image is in reverse – an inevitable result if an original is copied directly onto another copper plate. As usual, McCleary omitted Gillray's name and Hannah Humphrey's address as publisher, but keeps the ironic indication of the print's purpose: 'Designed for the Shakespeare Gallery'. The print's title is taken from the famous soliloquy in *Hamlet*, Act 1: Scene 2, but the line quoted, which opens the Prince's musings on 'self-slaughter', is given a comic alternative meaning. The robust corporality of the clergyman's *innamorata* offers little suggestion that her flesh will 'thaw, and resolve itself into a dew' any time soon.[20] On the original, the inscription refers to John Boydell's famous Shakespeare Gallery on Pall Mall, but on McCleary's copy it is given (perhaps quite accidental) local significance as a similar Irish Shakespeare Gallery had been operated by James Woodmason on Dublin's Exchequer Street since May 1793 – another instance, of course, of London artistic fashions being imitated in Dublin.[21]

This print is typical of one of the categories of London caricature that McCleary

8 – Alexander McDonald
(fl. c.1820)
A Divne [sic] in his Glory
after an original of May 1799
by George Murgatroyd Woodward
(1765-1809) and Isaac Cruikshank
(1764-1811)
published by William McCleary from
21 Nassau Street
(private collection)

opposite

9 – The Letrim [sic] Trashers or Paddy trashing the 11 sheaf!!
published by William McCleary from
21 Nassau Street
(© The Trustees of the British Museum)

chose to copy. He shows a marked – and unsurprising – preference for universal themes of social satire rather than involved caricature that demanded specific knowledge of London political or society goings-on. In her 1834 novel *Helen*, published at the end of both her and McCleary's careers, Maria Edgeworth wrote how many caricatures were only comprehensible to the initiated. 'Foreigners cannot well understand our local allusions, our Cruikshanks [*sic*] is to them unintelligible.'[22] *Helen* is set in England, and, as so often with Edgeworth, it is unclear if Ireland should be classed as familiar or foreign – or both – but it certainly seems the case that McCleary did not think his customers ready for the intricate political allegories that Cruikshank, and especially Gillray, sometimes devised. Instead, McCleary generally preferred to copy caricatures which took as their subject lapses in manners or mores – excesses in fashion, for example, or faux pas in etiquette or comportment. These more generic satires, accessible to all, had the additional advantage of greater longevity – a longer shelf-life.[23] *The Fashions of the Day* after George Woodward, for example, has fun (not very sophisticated fun it must be said) with the revealing nature of Regency female dress and the contrast with the sobriety of an earlier era (Plate 7), while *Dos à Dos – Accidents in Quadrille Dancing*, after George Cruikshank, is one of a series collected in an album in the National Library of Ireland which finds gentle humour in the potential pitfalls of ballroom dancing.[24]

Other timeless themes that McCleary copied include ill-matched lovers and lecherous clergy, which have been stock subjects for humour since Boccaccio and Chaucer. Even better – as in *Oh! That this too too solid flesh* or *A Divne* [sic] *in his Glory* (Plate

8) – was a combination of the two themes. However, local conditions could add specific charge to the particular reception of universal themes. Attacks on the established church were rather more problematic in Dublin than London, and *A Divne*, copied after an original of May 1799 by George Murgatroyd Woodward and Isaac Cruikshank, in which a clergyman canoodles with two doxies, or prostitutes, would have lent little support to the case for tithe contributions to the established church, which was the cause of bitter dispute in Ireland and which was the subject of an original print by McCleary that is surprisingly sympathetic to the anti-tithe campaign, *The Letrim* [sic] *Trashers*... (Plate 9).[25] This would have made for an interesting and potentially subversive juxtaposition with *A Divne in his Glory* in McCleary's print shop window.

A Divne is unusual within McCleary's output in giving an indication of the identity of the etcher of the pirated version with the signature 'A Mc D S[culpsi]t' at bottom left. These initials can be identified as those of Alexander McDonald (or McDonnell), who, Strickland records, worked for McCleary in about 1820.[26] McDonald's initials appear very occasionally elsewhere on McCleary's productions, for example on a pair of scenes of medical incompetence (another subject for satire with a very long pedigree) – *A Going! A Going!* (Plate 10) and *Giving up the Ghost or One Too Many*.[27] It is tempting to try to identify McDonald's hand in other, unsigned, prints from McCleary's shop – for example, in *The Cholic* (Plate 11), the etched line seems closely comparable to *A Divne*.[28] However, the similarities are emphasised by the fact that it and *A Divne* were almost certainly coloured by the same hand. The sofas on which the clergyman and doxies and the afflicted

AGOING! AGOING!

10 – Alexander McDonald (or McDonnell),
after an original by Thomas Rowlandson (1757–1827)
after Richard Newton (1777-1798)
A GOING! A GOING!
published by William McCleary from 32 Nassau Street
(private collection)

11 – THE CHOLIC
after an original by George Cruikshank (1792-1878),
after Captain Frederick Marryat (1792-1848)
published by William McCleary from 39 Nassau Street
(private collection)

above left
12 – Thomas Rowlandson (1757-1827)
A CAKE IN DANGER
published by Thomas Rowlandson 20 April 1806
(Royal Collection Trust)

13 – A CAKE IN DANGER
after an original of April 1806 by Thomas Rowlandson
published by William McCleary from 32 Nassau Street
(private collection)

lady sit are given the same (elegantly Regency) yellow and crimson colour scheme, while the carpets are a similar green. These colours do not reflect, at any remove, known impressions of the originals, which themselves are far from uniformly coloured. In general, McCleary's colourists adopt a distinctive bright, even acidic, palette and there is often closer correspondence between his prints – even when coping originals by different artists – than between a pirated print and its prototype.

McCleary, no doubt, followed London practice as to the division of roles, and the colourists would have been quite different artisans from McDonald and his fellow etchers, paid, no doubt, on a piecework basis.[29] Writing in 1907 – closer in time to the period of McCleary's activity than we are to him – St John Seymour seems to preserve an accurate tradition when he notes that the hand-colouring was done by 'special men who made a business of it'.[30] At an earlier date the young George Barret, later to win fame as landscape painter in London, had 'found employment in colouring prints' for Thomas Silcock who, as noted above, was one of the first Dublin print sellers to pirate London models.[31] St

14 – AH! SURE SUCH A PAIR WAS NEVER SEEN SO JUSTLY FORM'D TO MEET BY NATURE
after an original of June 1820 by George Cruikshank published by William McCleary from 39 Nassau Street (private collection)

15 – George Cruikshank (1792-1878)
A R-Y-L VISIT TO A FOREIGN CAPITAL, OR THE AMBASSADOR NOT AT HOME!!
published by Hannah Humphrey (c.1745-1818) on 15th Sept 1817 (© Trustees of the British Museum)

16 – A R-Y-L VISIT TO A FOREIGN CAPITAL, OR THE AMBASSADOR NOT AT HOME!!
artist and publisher unknown, but presumably Dublin, after an original by George Cruikshank (1792-1878) published by Hannah Humphrey on 15th Sept 1817 (private collection)

John Seymour further notes the variety in the quality of the colouring, which, at its best, 'evinces the hand of a true artist'.[32] An attractive feature of McCleary's colourists is the pink wash borders that appear on several of his prints, including *Oh! That this too too solid flesh would melt*.

Vividness of palette is again apparent in McCleary's *A Cake in Danger* (Plate 13), after a print of April 1806 by Thomas Rowlandson, with the colours vibrant almost to the point of garishness. A 'cake' (slang for a fool) is here the victim of two pickpocketing 'ladies'.[33] However, the colourist has, for some reason, changed the scene from night time, as in Rowlandson's original (Plate 12), to bright daylight, thereby making the lamp and, indeed, the night watchman himself, redundant. McDonald – and, no doubt other etchers whose names are not recorded – and the artisans who hand-coloured their work were clearly given considerable latitude in copying their London models, and at least in the case of *A Cake in Danger* there is a sense that what mattered most to the public was the enjoyment of brightly coloured decorative images of slightly risqué subject matter. Exceptions to this general licence in following the palette of the originals, such as *Ah! Sure such a pair was never seen so justly form'd to meet by nature*, copied from George


This Palace will lodge us well Sir Bergamot
A R_Y_L Visit to a Foreign Capital or. The Ambassador, not at home — !! — April 1817


This Palace will lodge us well Sir Bergamot.
Vite! Vite!!
7 Lits de Maitre —
13 — de Domestiques —
A R_Y_L Visit to a Foreign Capital or the Ambassador not at home.

17 – Charles Williams (1796-1830)
THE MORALIST
published by Samuel William Fores (1761-1838)
probably in April 1817
(© The Trustees of the British Museum)

18 – THE MORALIST
after an original, probably of April 1817,
by Charles Williams
published by William McCleary from 39 Nassau Street
(private collection)

19 – Thomas Rowlandson (1757–1827)
after George Murgatroyd Woodward (1765-1809)
A SAILOR'S MARRIAGE
published by Thomas Rowlandson, 25 May 1805
(Metropolitan Museum, New York / The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1959)

20 – A SAILOR'S MARRIAGE
after an original of May 1805 by Thomas Rowlandson,
after George Murgatroyd Woodward
published by William McCleary from 39 Nassau Street
(private collection)

Cruikshank's famous print of 1820 (Plate 14), demonstrate, however, that the colourists could be alive to the role of colour in transmitting meaning and humour. Here it is a crucial part of the joke that the bags from which the king and his estranged wife emerge be green as they refer to the brief, or evidence, bags in which the alleged proof of Caroline's adultery was presented to the Milan commission; as Henry Brougham, Caroline's supporter, hinted ominously, 'if the King had a green bag the Queen might have one too.'[34]

The relative sophistication of McCleary's productions is nicely shown by a comparison with another plagiarised print which also comprised part of the new group but which does not bear his imprint. *A R-y-l visit to a foreign capital, or The Ambassador not at home!!* (Plate 16) is a very crude copy of George Cruikshank's original of 1817 (Plate 15) in which much of the detail is eliminated. One of the turbaned footmen on the left margin is omitted, as is the lion in the royal coat of arms above the entrance arch, while the stout woman watching the arrival of the Princess of Wales at the British embassy

A SAILORS MARRIAGE.

A SAILOR'S MARRIAGE.

in Vienna is cropped so severely that only about a quarter of her body survives. Presumably, the copyist misunderstood the relative size of the image he had to copy and the plate on which he was working. It is noteworthy, however, that this distinctly botched copy was still coloured – if again noticeably crudely – and so presumably was seen as having a value and marketability. In addition to the primary differential between the London original and the Dublin copy there were also levels of quality – and presumably price and audience – within the Dublin market.

In several instances, by contrast, the changes McCleary's prints make to their original result in an admittedly different but equally interesting final product. Sometimes even a distinct improvement is made in the copying process and the changes included are well-judged additions rather than simplifications or misunderstandings, as seems to be the case elsewhere. His pirated copy of *The Moralist* (Plates 1, 18), after a print by Charles Williams (Plate 17) (published by Fores, probably in April 1817), makes the inappropriately coy reader of Laurence Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* and Christoph Christian Sturm's *Reflections* distinctly more coquettish (with some physical enhancements to her charms) and helpfully adds a portrait of Rousseau to fill up the large expanse of blank wall behind her. Similarly, in his version of Rowlandson's *A Sailor's Marriage* (Plates 19, 20) – itself not wholly original as based on an idea by George Murgatroyd Woodward – the typically grotesque physiognomies are certainly simplified and the bravura linear brilliance sacrificed, but, arguably, the overall effect is punchier than in the original. Certainly, here at any rate, McCleary does not slavishly follow his London model but instead produces something quite individual.

McCLEARY'S 'ORIGINAL' GRAPHIC OEUVRE

A COROLLARY OF MCCLEARY'S FAILURE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE TRUE AUTHORSHIP OF the prints that he pirated is that he does not claim ownership of his 'own' designs. He may have felt it counterproductive to assert the originality of a small proportion of the prints on sale in his shop as this would leave open to question the problematic authorship status of the remainder. Ambiguity probably suited him, and both original and plagiarised images were subsumed under the catch-all phrase 'Published by McCleary'. It is difficult accordingly to determine with certainty that an image is an 'original' by McCleary, although the fact that there seems to be no evidence that he drew or etched himself makes this a problematic term in itself. In the absence of the customary designations of ownership of the composition ('invenit') on the prints themselves, the design of a print can be identified as an 'in house' production of McCleary's shop – though probably not the product of his own hand – if no prototype of it is recorded under another name and especially if it has Irish, or specifically Dublin subject matter.[35]

Some examples illustrate McCleary's original prints. *The Terrified Dandies* (Plate 21) shows a scene on Carlisle (now O'Connell) Bridge in which a potent mix of class, gender, presumably confession, and, it is hinted, sexuality, collide to comic effect.[36] The broad humour, offering a stark contrast between the etiolated figures and beautiful attire of the dandies and the substantial, barefooted woman with brawny arms and heaving

21 – THE TERRIFIED DANDIES. A SCENE ON CARLISLE BRIDGE
published by William McCleary from 32 Nassau Street
(© The Trustees of the British Museum)

22 – The Irish Representative honesty Mead, or a downblow to Corruption
published by William McCleary from 21 Nassau Street

23 – Mrs Rock, lady of Captain Rock, c.1822-24
published by William McCleary (no address given)

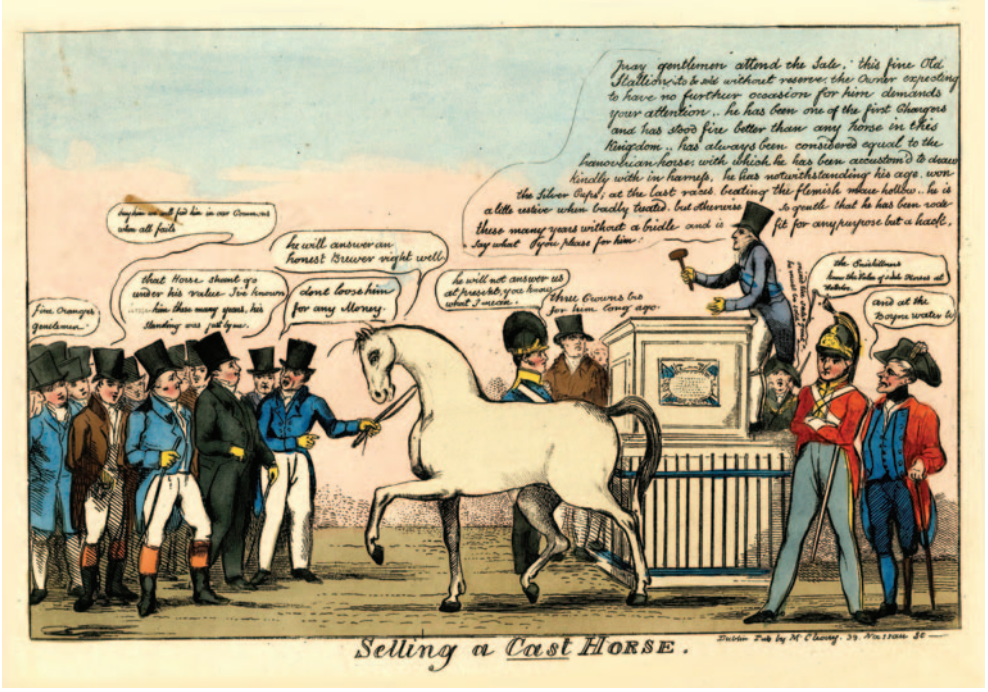
opposite

24 – Attributed to Joseph Gleadah
Selling a Cast Horse, 1822
published by William McCleary from 39 Nassau Street

(22-24 © The Trustees of the British Museum)

bosom, a creel basket strapped round her neck, is given added bite by the Dublin setting, taking place as it does at one of the most frequently traversed spots in the city. The comic thrust of the caricature can be understood at a glance, with no need to read the text, and McCleary's designer clearly understands the principles of exaggeration and contrast, mixed with misogyny and ethnic stereotyping, which were defining characteristics of so much graphic satire.

Occasionally, caricatures by McCleary also took political events for their subject matter, and, like London caricaturists, he was not necessarily consistent in his stance. A crude etching (Plate 22), *The Irish Representative honesty Mead, or a downblow to Corruption*, refers to the county Down by-election of 1805 in which Colonel John Meade defeated Viscount Castlereagh in a bitterly fought contest. This takes an anti-government position – Castlereagh had just been appointed Secretary of State for War – and the print would have found a ready market both in Dublin, where the result was widely celebrated, and in the constituency itself, where anti-Castlereagh prints circulated around the time of the election.[37] Tensions within the post-Union settlement were also, on occasion, alluded to. Different movements of agrarian violence form the background to *Letrim* [sic] *Trashers* (Plate 9) and *Mrs Rock, Lady of Captain Rock* (Plate 23). Rockite activities had disturbed much of the south of Ireland, particularly Munster, in 1821-24, and this, or slightly later, is presumably the date of McCleary's print, the copy of which in the British Museum is folded for posting – itself suggestive evidence of how his caricatures circulated – and bears the postmark 1822 or, rather less likely, 1832. Mrs Rock is mentioned in passing as a character in Thomas Moore's fictitious *Memoirs of Captain Rock, the celebrated Irish chieftain, written by himself* (London, 1824), and Moore's novel and McCleary's



25 – William Elmes
(fl. 1804-1816)
PRIME BANG UP AT HACKNEY, OR A PEEP AT THE BALLOON
published by Thomas Tegg (1776-1845) on 20th August 1811
(© The Trustees of the British Museum)

print offer a confused reflection of the practice of Rockite adherents dressing in women's clothing when perpetrating acts of violence.[38] Urban dissent was also addressed. A surprisingly sympathetic view of an act of vandalism on Grinling Gibbons's statue of King William on College Green, *A Finishing Touch*, is dated 2nd November 1805, shortly after supporters of Catholic Emancipation had painted the statue black with a mixture of tar and grease.[39] A rather different political stance is taken in *Selling a Cast Horse*, which attacks the lord lieutenant, the Marquess Wellesley, for his plans in 1822 to ban the provocative commemoration of the Battle of the Boyne held annually at the same statue (Plate 24).[40] London caricaturists, notably Gillray, were sometimes bought off by payments from the government, and a letter from McCleary to William Gregory, the influential under secretary to the lord lieutenant, requesting financial support to publish a manuscript or help to obtain a government position tantalises about possible links with the administration.[41] It is difficult to see that the handful of political prints McCleary produced would have given Dublin Castle much cause for alarm, though of course the absence of more

26 – PRIME BANG UP AT DRUMCONDRA, OR A PEEP AT THE BALLOON in part after an original of 20th August 1811 by William Elmes, published by William McCleary from 32 Nassau Street, 1812 (© The Trustees of the British Museum)

biting criticism is conceivably explicable by McCleary receiving the occasional state subvention.[42]

Sometimes McCleary cashed in on topical Dublin events by rushing out a print in response to public interest in the newsworthy. It is noticeable, however, how comparatively rarely he did this; certainly it was not a mainstay of his business.[43] One of his few dated works, published in the winter of 1812, *Prime Bang up at Drumcondra, or a Peep at the Balloon* (Plate 26) illustrates the launch in October that year of a balloon carrying the pioneering aviator James Sadler in his attempt to cross the Irish Sea. The setting is the grounds of Belvedere House, just north of Dublin, with shipping visible in the bay and in the distance Howth Head. The balloon, its crimson and yellow silk accurately depicted, is emblazoned with the patriotic motifs of harp and shamrock flanking the coat of arms of the City of Dublin as it floats serenely above the clouds with the gallant balloonist raising his hat and waving a flag. The event was witnessed by the lord lieutenant, the Duke of Richmond, and a large component of Dublin's fashionable world, but the viceroy

and his wife are nowhere to be seen in McCleary's print, which instead focuses on a violent mass brawl in the foreground, reminiscent of images of faction fights in depictions of Donnybrook Fair. Maria Edgeworth, who was also present that day with her father, Richard Lovell Edgeworth, himself keenly interested in aeronautics, left a somewhat breathless account which differs markedly in mood and almost every detail from the picture of the event offered by McCleary's print. Edgeworth recorded 'well-dressed groups' on the terrace of Belvedere House, but noted that 'the commonalty' were 'outside in fields at half-price', and it is the latter instead of the genteel classes that McCleary chooses to depict for exaggeratedly comic effect.[44] Here the lack of subtlety in the drawing and crudity in the application of colour combine effectively to create a demotic aesthetic and evoke the melee of the crowd.

While this is a distinctly Irish image in its topography, symbolism and specific details such as the man waving a shillelagh, the line between original and copy is blurred. Though part of the European-wide craze for ballooning prints, McCleary's inspiration is specifically an image by William Elmes published in August the previous year, *Prime Bang up at Hackney, or a Peep at the Balloon* (Plate 25), whose title he hardly bothers to amend.[45] In effect, what McCleary has done is create an Irish version of this English print to mark the event at Drumcondra. It is neither wholly original nor a mere copy; perhaps the best way to describe the print, borrowing a phrase from post-modern aesthetics, is as an 'appropriation' of the original.

There is then a spectrum of invention and imitation within McCleary's production from unashamed plagiarism to slightly – and sometimes happily – altered copies to, as here, cleverly reworked versions of English originals and, finally, to completely original prints. Arguably, even with his 'original' prints McCleary performs a sort of plagiarism by publishing the work of his anonymous draftsmen and engravers under his name alone. However, authorship of graphic satire was often layered, with London caricaturists frequently using a sketch by another hand as the basis of their work. So, *The Cholic* (Plate 11), published by McCleary, was copied from an etching by George Cruikshank, which itself was after a drawing by Captain Frederick Marryat. As noted earlier, *A Sailor's Marriage* (Plate 20) was taken from a print by Thomas Rowlandson, which in turn was based on an idea by George Murgatroyd Woodward (Plate 19). Both prints were then hand-coloured by anonymous artisans whose role in the production imparts a large degree of the prints' attraction.

Given this complex chain of creation, referring to 'original' and 'copy' is not always straightforward or necessarily useful. Indeed, James Baker in his recent study of the 'business' of satirical prints argues that differences in printing, and especially colouring, meant that to an extent 'every late Georgian satirical print was unique' and that it is an error to treat them as 'reproductions in a modern sense'.[46] A similar shift in understanding of the process of their creation – and a fluid definition of originality – will offer a richer understanding of McCleary's oeuvre, which has been too easily dismissed hitherto as just pirated copies. Despite the fact that so many of his prints owe their compositions to pre-existing models, the caricatures from his shop are wholly recognisable and, in their own way, original, nicely exemplifying the paradox at the core of so much Irish decorative art, which Toby Barnard characterises as simultaneously 'distinctive and derivative'.[47]

THE FRENCH CONNECTION

While the example of London makers was invariably the primary influence on the taste of the buying public in Dublin, styles and objects from continental Europe were also coveted, acquired and imitated.[48] French prints circulated widely and served as influential models across a wide spectrum of the visual arts from furniture to plasterwork.[49] As early as January 1701, John Felster was advertising the sale by auction of a 'variety of fine curious French prints', while in September 1753 Thomas McLoughlin, a framemaker at the corner of Pembroke Street and Copper Alley, let Dubliners know that he 'has a very curious collection of French prints, just laid in, done in a most elegant manner'.[50] Combining with this century-old appeal of French prints, in the period coinciding with much of McCleary's early career, the whole of Europe had been transfixed by the rise and fall of Napoleon, who quickly became the most caricatured figure of his day with over a thousand images drawn by English artists alone.[51] Presumably not long after Waterloo and Bonaparte's final exile, McCleary responded to this market with his plagiarised *Fast Colours* (Plate 27), a copy of an 1815 print by George Cruikshank after George Humphrey. Here Louis XVIII, in the guise of a corpulent wash-

27 – Fast Colours
after an original of 26th October 1815 by George Cruikshank (1792-1878) after George Humphrey (c.1773-c.1831)
published by William McCleary from 32 Nassau Street (private collection)

28 – An Early Lesson of Dancing !
after an original of June 1819
by Henri Buguet (1761-c.1833)
published by William McCleary from
39 Nassau Street
(private collection)

opposite

29 – Les Invisibles
after an original of 1810 by James
Gillray (1756-1815)
published by William McCleary from
32 Nassau Street
(private collection)

erwoman, tries to blanch a tricolour, using holy water as detergent, as the exiled Napoleon looks on from St Helena. By 1826, with peace re-established in Europe, McCleary was also importing prints directly from France. In November that year he advertised that he had 'just received from Paris, by the Dorset, of Bourdeaux [sic], a large collection of the latest FRENCH PRINTS, coloured and plain, after the first Masters'.[52] McCleary implies a buying trip to the Continent, noting that he had 'personally collected' the 'above articles', and states that he would 'sell them on the most reasonable terms'. He singles out several engravings specifically relating to Napoleon: 'when First Consul' and 'Reviewing his Troop at the Thuilleries [*sic*]'.[53]

While McCleary physically imported prints from France whereas he seems in general to have pirated English prints, he made the occasional copy of French caricatures too. *An Early Lesson of Dancing!* (Plate 28) is copied, in the same direction, from *Lord-tolan prenant sa leçon de danse*, plate 7 of the series *Les Passions* by Henri Buguet.[54] The transnational nature of the print trade and the multiple layers of influence that this could lead to is further illustrated by another print by McCleary which has a long and multinational pedigree. *Les Invisibles* (Plate 29) parodies, as often elsewhere, fashion taken to excess, and copies Gillray's print of 1810, which itself is derived from a series satirising French manners under Napoleon, *Le suprême bon ton*, by the publisher Aaron Martinet.[55] This print was copied not only by McCleary but also by his rival James Sidebotham of Sackville Street, who will feature in Part 2 of this article, or, adding an extra layer of

plagiarism, a more likely sequence of events is that McCleary copied Sidebotham's copy.

As did many of his London peers, McCleary combined his print-selling business with a trade in high-end stationery. The 1826 advertisement lists a remarkably diverse array of artists' supplies and other goods that had formed part of the same consignment from Paris, including Swiss crayons, French and Italian chalks, and ivory as a support for miniature painting.[56] Nor did McCleary limit himself to artistic accoutrements, but also listed as just having arrived from Paris 'French guitars' and even 'a few cases of genuine Eau de Cologne'. Clearly supplying a ready demand, McCleary continued to import directly from Paris into the following decade. On 6th December 1834, for example, he announced the arrival of a batch of goodies just in time for the Christmas market, including 'nut oil, badger hair and sable brushes'.[57] Coinciding with this delivery was a shipment just arrived from London which included 'a large assortment of Whatman's best drawing, sketching and cartridge paper'.[58] Also advertised at the same time was a 'lithographic printing press, on the best construction, with different articles belonging to it, to be sold'. It seems unlikely that this had been purchased as stock but instead it is probably evidence of an aborted attempt on McCleary's part to update his technology from the copper plates he had used hitherto to exploit instead the still relatively new technique of printing on stone.[59]

In the advertisement, McCleary describes his customer base as 'amateurs and artists', a phrase rather revealing in its word order. His advertisements give a clear sense that rather than servicing the needs of working artists, he was operating at the top end of

30 – French Fire Side
probably modified after an unidentified original
published by William McCleary from 39 Nassau Street (private collection)

the fancy-goods market, appealing to Dublin's haute bourgeoisie and also the far-from-negligible proportion of the landed classes who still shopped in Dublin, even if some had given up their town houses in the aftermath of the Act of Union.[60] Perhaps revealingly as to the aspirational level at which he was positioning his business, when he came to advertise for an apprentice McCleary insisted that the 'lad, about fourteen years of age' should have 'genteel connections'.[61] Reading between the lines, it would also seem that McCleary's retail offering was aimed largely, if certainly not exclusively, at a female customer base. This is apparent in his marketing of 'wax crayons and sheet wax for artificial flowers' and imported harp strings – the playing of which instrument was very much a female accomplishment in the early decades of the nineteenth century.[62]

The target market that these advertisements and the location of his shop on Nassau Street suggest is interesting in itself, and details of the operation of McCleary's business complement research on, for example, Josiah Wedgwood's shop on Sackville Street as part of our growing knowledge of Dublin's vibrant retail landscape in the early decades of the nineteenth century.[63] The history of the material world of post-Union Ireland has still to be written, though it is now clear that the 'grim picture' predicted at the time and often recounted since 'of exiting peers, a diminishing manufacturing base and a decaying urban fabric' is far from accurate or, at least, complete.[64] However, for the purposes of this article, any additional information as to his customers is of most interest for the

oblique, but still suggestive, light it sheds on the nature of McCleary's pirating of London cartoons. There was an obvious potential for synergy between the two sides of the business, an opportunity to cross-market prints to shoppers popping in to collect some sable brushes (and vice versa), and the essential gentility of his customer base may explain the noticeable rarity of McCleary pirating the graphically obscene and often scatological humour in which Gillray and, particularly, Rowlandson revelled.[65] Instead, an image such as *French Fire Side* (Plate 30) evokes the same elegant world of Parisian politesse that he had tried to conjure up in his advertisements, even if its over-refinement is gently parodied.

Historians of caricature have frequently raised the question of the 'extent of their circulation beyond the London elite'.[66] Clearly, pirated copies at least were widely available in Dublin. However, the smart retail environment on Nassau Street offers its own answer (impressionistic certainly and incomplete, but suggestive nonetheless) to the related questions 'of how far satirical prints had a truly popular appeal' and 'the social complexion of those who saw them or bought then'. In Ireland it seems that their – at least initial – consumer was the genteel, and probably predominantly female, shopper for expensive stationery.[67]

A LEGAL LOOPHOLE

While referring to McCleary's business practice as piracy implies that his activity was illegitimate, given the absence in Ireland of copyright legislation covering images, such copying was not actually illegal. As is well known, throughout the eighteenth century Dublin was a major centre of plagiarised book publishing, and indeed the absence of copyright was celebrated by some as an expression of Irish political and literary identity.[68] In the wake of the Act of Union, however, legislation (41 Geo. III, c.107, enacted in 1801) extended to Ireland some, but crucially not all, of the provisions of the copyright laws of Britain.[69] The effect of this was immediate, and the Dublin trade in reprints declined precipitously while the import of books from Britain soared: 'the real impact of the 1801 Act was to secure for the British booksellers an increasingly lucrative "overseas" market'.[70] The act, which brought Ireland under the British copyright jurisdiction (extending the library deposit requirement to include Trinity College and King's Inns), stated its purpose as 'the encouragement of learning, in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, by securing the copies and copyright of printed books, to the authors of such books'. No mention, however, was made of images, and for the whole of the period in which McCleary operated, the provisions of the Engraving Copyright Act (8 Geo.2 c.13, known as the Hogarth Act after its chief promoter), which had protected prints in England since 1735 – as long as they were original compositions – did not apply to Ireland, even after protection was finally granted to literary property in 1801.[71] This created the circumstances in which McCleary's trade could flourish with no threat of legal sanction.

Copyright law can only protect those who choose to avail of it, and James Gillray for one did not. Although in England prints were safeguarded by the Hogarth Act and

31 – James Gillray (1756-1815), "The Friend of the People", & his petty-new-tax-gatherer, paying John Bull a visit published by Hannah Humphrey (c.1745-1818) on 28th May 1806 (© The Trustees of the British Museum)

subsequent legislation, the piracy of caricature was not totally unknown. *The Patriot turned Plagarist* [sic] (Plate 32) is a copy in the same direction by Charles Williams of Gillray's print's '*The Friend of the People'* (Plate 31). The print was published by Samuel William Fores in June 1806, just a month after the appearance of the original, and the ironic change of title shows that Williams and Fores retained their sense of humour even when flagrantly – and in this case, illegally – copying Gillray's work. This breach of the law was, perhaps surprisingly, tolerated by Gillray. The month after this pirated print appeared, Johann Christian Hüttner, who wrote extensively on English caricature for the Weimar journal *London und Paris* and who knew Gillray well, explained Fores's practice, though rather exaggerating its extent. 'Fores, who struggles in vain to conjure up works which would stand comparison with those of Gillray, plagiarises his designs, so that it is possible to buy very poor, usually somewhat reduced, copies of all Gillray's caricatures from him.' Hüttner writes that 'many people are ignorant of this theft, and unwittingly buy copies from Fores instead of the originals', before noting that 'Gillray puts up with

32 – Charles Williams (active 1796-1830) THE PATRIOT TURNED PLAGARIST [SIC], OR THE PETTY TAX GATHERERS HUNTING JOHN BULL *published by Samuel William Fores (1761-1838) in June 1806, after an original by James Gillray (© The Trustees of the British Museum)*

this piracy, without attempting to protect his property' because 'a caricature is not the kind of thing one would care to go to law about' – certainly not a proposition with which his great predecessor William Hogarth would have agreed.[72]

It was not until 1836 that the Engravings Copyright (Ireland) Act (6 & 7 Will.IV, c.59) extended the same protection to images that they had enjoyed in England for a century past. It is unclear why this situation was tolerated by the Westminster Parliament for thirty-five years after the Act of Union had declared that 'the subjects of Great Britain and Ireland shall be on the same footing in respect of trade and navigation'. In 1858 a report by the Artistic Copyright Committee addressed to the Council of the Society of Arts noted the anomalous position that had been created: 'Up to the time of the passing of that Act engravings first published in England might be and were pirated in Ireland with perfect immunity.'[73] However, with the exception of McCleary and a few other copyists of London caricatures it seems that the market for pirated copies of prints was small in comparison to the highly effective eighteenth-century industry reprinting English books.

The very fact that it took Parliament so long to close this loophole suggests that it was not causing a major problem. What particularly bothered English booksellers was the lost market share not so much in Ireland, but at home, as Irish reprints were exported back to England, and even on to North America, and sold at often half the price of the originals. By contrast, it seems highly unlikely that McCleary would have met with much success if he had tried to export his copies of Gillray and Rowlandson to England, where, despite Fores's efforts at plagiarism, a higher premium was given to the status of both the caricaturist and the original print. Timothy Clayton puts it well in explaining why Fores went unpunished, and this would apply equally, or indeed even more so, to imported plagiarisms from Ireland: 'no customer of Hannah Humphrey would stoop to buy a Gillray idea that had not been etched by Gillray.'[74] Instead, McCleary supplied his home market on a relatively small scale (the rarity of his prints hints at the modest size of his print runs), and there is no record of London print-sellers raising objections; instead, like Gillray with Fores, a blind eye was turned. While the 1801 legislation had an immediate, detrimental effect on the trade of pirating books, some decades later it was market forces and a dramatic change in taste rather than the 1836 legislation that spelt the end for the Dublin trade in pirating single-sheet graphic satire.

If London artists and publishers seem to have been relatively relaxed about their work being pirated in Dublin (and they had, in any case, no legal redress), McCleary's local rival, James Sidebotham of Sackville Street, was decidedly less sanguine when McCleary started plagiarising *his* work. Part 2 of this article will tell the story of an extraordinary spat in which Sidebotham deployed the language of law and the imagery of justice in the absence of applicable legislation, putting the following words in McCleary's mouth: 'Having but little brains of my own I feel no compunction in taking advantage of what nature has imparted to others, by servilely copying their productions & unlawfully participating in the profits of their labour.'[75] However strongly Sidebotham felt, he was wrong – as indeed have been more recent writers on the subject – to describe McCleary's plagiarism as unlawful.[76] While Fores's piracy of Gillray was illegal in one city of the newly unified country, McCleary's of Gillray – and Sidebotham – in another, was not.

'TO BE SOLD CHEAP'

By the time of the 1836 legislation which finally gave protection in Ireland to engraved images, McCleary was quite likely already dead. The date of his demise has not yet been established, but it seems to have occurred sometime between 6th December 1834, when he is named in the advertisement in the *Dublin Evening Packet and Correspondent*, and 16th December 1837, when, under the headline 'CASE OF REAL DISTRESS', it is his wife rather than McCleary himself, as would be customary, who was listed as one of those receiving the donations that were being solicited for 'the widow of an eminent artist [who had been] reduced to the most poignant distress, by the sudden death of her husband'.[77] Although the widow's name is not mentioned (because of the 'reluctance she has to make her wants known'), with some degree of certainty the deceased artist can be identified as Henry Brocas Senior, who died on 20th October that year.[78]

33 – John Doyle (HB)
(1797-1868)
THIS IS NO CARICATURE
(portrait of the Duke and Duchess of St Albans) published by Thomas McLean (1788-1875) on 1 October 1827 (© The Trustees of the British Museum)

The near coincidence of the date of McCleary's death and the passing of legislation which put an end to the loophole by which he had been able to plagiarise with impunity the work of the great London caricaturists is striking. However, it seems he had ceased the practice for more than a decade *before* the law changed. The vogue for graphic satire in the tradition of Rowlandson and Gillray – even in the slightly sanitised version that McCleary pirated – came gradually to an end in the teens of the century and changed even more so in the following decades with taste becoming increasingly prudish.[79] While he continued in business until the mid-1830s, no original London caricature copied by McCleary in the collections of the National Library of Ireland or the British Museum seems to date from after about 1820, and it is likely that McCleary's sourcing prints in France was a calculated market response to this decline in the taste for London caricature. By 1834, the date of Edgeworth's Helen, which has already been cited, it did not need explanation that Georgian caricatures brought out in polite company were 'too broad, too coarse' and 'Lady Cecilia threw them under the table that they might not be seen by the

foreigners'.[80] It was this change in taste – the move from caricature to cartoon, largely complete in time for Victoria's accession three years later – rather than the belated application of legislation outlawing the piracy of images that brought a close to this chapter in the history of graphic satire in Ireland. With Dublin having ridden on the coat-tails of London caricaturists for decades, it is nicely appropriate, or ironic, that the leading purveyor of the new, more gentle, humour of the 1830s was the Irishman John Doyle, who, under the pseudonymic initials HB, came to dominate the London's market for cartoons.[81] (Plate 33)

The final, and belated, end of the line for the publishing side of McCleary's business came in April 1839 when the 'copper-plate printing press' on which he had produced his works was offered for sale, along with 'some hundreds of engraved copper plates' described as 'being part of the stock of the late Mr. William McCleary's establishment'.[82] The advertisement, prefaced by the headline 'TO BE SOLD CHEAP', continues somewhat optimistically, 'the plates are in good order, and the subjects on them well chosen; they would be an acquisition to any person commencing the printselling, stationery or book line.' If McCleary steered well clear of the excesses of vulgar obscenity which had characterised much London graphic satire, it is difficult to see a reissue of, say, *A Divne* [sic] *in his Glory* (Plate 8) selling well in the changed times at the end of the 1830s. The advertisement tacitly acknowledges this by concluding its sales pitch on McCleary's plates with the somewhat bathetic 'country dealers would find them well worth their attention'. It is not recorded if via this route London satire was further diffused into the Irish provinces and McCleary's plates have disappeared, no doubt their copper repurposed.[83] It is tempting, however, if of course unverifiable, to hypothesise that the recently discovered cache of McCleary's caricatures which has reawakened interest in his practice also left Nassau Street around this date, perhaps as a representative collection of his years in business.[84] If by this date taste had turned firmly against Georgian satire, the market for elegant artists' supplies, fine imported paper and associated bibelots proved more enduring, with the 1839 newspaper notice which announced the symbolic sale of McCleary's printing press noting that the business would carry on without him and inviting Dubliners to 'apply at 39 Nassau Street, where every article in the fancy stationery, may be had on the most reasonable terms'.

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ENDNOTES

1 An earlier version of this paper was presented by Silvia Beltrametti as an online talk, 'Pirated Caricatures in Nineteenth-Century Dublin', Caxton Club of Chicago, 17th March 2021. For the Irish book trade, see Robert Munter, *A Dictionary of the Print Trade in Ireland, 1550-1775* (New York, 1988); James W. Phillips, *Printing and Bookselling in Dublin, 1670-1800* (Dublin, 1998); M. Pollard, *A Dictionary of Members of the Dublin Book Trade 1550-1800* (London, 2000); Máire Kennedy, '"Politicks, Coffee and News": the Dublin Book Trade in the Eighteenth Century', *Dublin Historical Record*, LVIII, no. 1, 2005, 76-85; Toby Barnard, *Brought to Book: print in Ireland, 1680-1784* (Dublin, 2017). For graphic satire in London, see George M. Dorothy, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, vols 5-11 (London, 1935-54); Diana Donald, *The Age of Caricature: satirical prints in the reign of George III* (New Haven and London, 1996); Vic Gatrell, *City of Laughter: sex and satire in eighteenth-century London* (London, 2006); James Baker, *The Business of Satirical Prints in Late-Georgian England* (Basingstoke, 2017). For caricatures produced in Ireland, see St John Seymour, 'Old Dublin Caricatures', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, ser. 5, XVII, 1907, 69-73, and, in general, Anne Hodge, 'Graphic Satire in Ireland to 1900', in Nicola Figgis (ed.), *Art and Architecture of Ireland, Volume 2: Painting 1600-1900* (Dublin, New Haven and London, 2015) 116-20, and especially Mathew Crowther, 'The Second City of Laughter, Dublin and the Irish trade in satirical prints in the long eighteenth-century', a post on the blog The Printshop Window, 1st June 2015, https://theprintshopwindow.wordpress.com/2015/06/01/the-second-city-of-laughter-dublin-and-the-irish-trade-in-satirical-prints-during-the-long-18th-century. See, too, Nicholas K. Robinson, *Edmund Burke, A Life in Caricature* (New Haven and London, 1996).

2 Seymour, 'Old Dublin Caricatures', 69.

3 Crowther, 'The Second City of Laughter'; James Kelly, 'The Impact of the English Visual Caricature Tradition on the Production of Single-sheet Caricature in Ireland, 1780-1830', paper delivered to the online conference 'Speculative Minds: Commerce, Experiment, Innovation, and the Arts in Georgian Ireland', Maynooth University and the Irish Georgian Society, 27th May 2021.

4 Seymour, 'Old Dublin Caricatures', 69.

5 Over 7,800 satirical prints are catalogued in the British Museum for the period 1780-1820. Baker, *The Business of Satirical Prints*, 9. Most unusually there is a noticeable absence of overlap between the holdings of prints by McCleary in the British Museum, the National Library of Ireland and Trinity College, Dublin.

6 The grounds for this suggestion are wholly circumstantial but seem compelling nonetheless. The alternative, that this was a group assembled more recently by a dedicated collector of McCleary's work but never framed, seems inherently unlikely. Dublin caricatures have rarely been collected systematically in the way that several collections of, say, Gillray's work have been formed. See, for example, *The Draper Hill Collection of James Gillray Prints and Drawings*, Phillips' auction catalogue, 26th June 2001. There is no physical evidence that the sheets were at one time pasted into an album, as was common practice.

7 Constance C. McPhee and Nadine M. Orenstein, *Infinite Jest: caricature and satire from Leonardo to Levine*, Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition catalogue (New York, 2011) 123.

8 *Dublin Newsletter*, 12th-16th May 1741.

9 *Faulkner's Dublin Journal*, 7th-10th March 1741.

10 British Museum, no. 1870,0514.2837.

11 For Carey's interesting biography, see Walter Strickland, *A Dictionary of Irish Artists*, 2 Vols (Dublin, 1913) I, 154-56.

12 David Alexander, *Richard Newton and English Caricatures in the 1790s* (Manchester, 1998) 25.

13 Timothy Clayton, 'The London Printsellers and the Export of English Graphic Prints', in Anorthe Kremers and Elizabeth Reich (eds), *Loyal Subversion? Caricatures from the personal union between England and Hanover (1714-1837)* (Göttingen, 2014) 153; Baker, *The Business of Satirical Prints*, 185.

14 McCleary subsequently traded from No. 18; Pollard, *The Dublin Book Trade*, 377.

15 *Hibernian Journal,* 10th August 1792.

16 *Dublin Evening Post,* 21st September 1782, quoted Sarah Foster, '"Ornament and Splendour": Shops and Shopping in Georgian Dublin', *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies,* XV (Dublin, 2012) 14.

[17] Foster, 'Shops and Shopping in Georgian Dublin', 14.

[18] *Hibernian Journal*, 30th March and 6th April 1791, cited in Martyn J. Powell, *The Politics of Consumption in Eighteenth-Century Ireland* (London, 2005) 134.

[19] *King of the Romans, McCleary's Public Characters No. 302* (British Museum, no. 1959,0728.6)

[20] Gillray, to make his joke work, prefers the First Folio's reading of 'solid' to the First and Second Quarto's 'sallied', as in besieged or assailed. This itself has sometimes been emended to sullied. See Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor, *Hamlet, rev. ed.* (London, 2016) 205-06.

[21] In June 1789 Gillray had pilloried Boydell's gallery in *Shakespeare Sacrificed; or the Offering to Avarice*, for which see most recently, Christina Oberstebrink, 'Gillray and Royalty, the Politics of High and Low in Eighteenth-century Art', in Kremers and Reich, *Loyal Subversion?*, 58-68. For the Dublin Shakespeare gallery, see Robin Hamlyn, 'An Irish Shakespeare Gallery', *Burlington Magazine*, vol. 120, no. 905, August 1978, 515-29.

[22] Susan Manly and Clíona Ó Gallchoir (eds), *The Novels and Selected Works of Maria Edgeworth, Volume 9, Helen* (London and New York, 1999) 211. For a different view of the comprehensibility of London caricatures on the continent, see Baker, *The Business of Satirical Prints*, 134. Edgeworth's point is, however, reinforced by a German commentator, Pastor Wendeborn, in London in the 1780s describing his compatriots: 'They laugh at them, and become merry, though they are entirely unacquainted with the persons, the manners, and the customs which are ridiculed. The wit and satire of such prints, being generally both local, are entirely lost on them.' Quoted in Christiane Banerji and Diana Donald, *Gillray Observed, the Earliest Account of his Caricatures in London und Paris* (Cambridge, 1999) 1. While copies of London graphic satire circulated in Germany, they required extensive textual exegesis for their humour to be understood; *ibid*., passim.

[23] There are exceptions: *John Bull and his Favourite Statue of Bronze!!*, for example, relates to a specifically London controversy over a proposed statue of William Pitt, a public subscription for which was opened at Lloyd's on 8th May 1802. McCleary's print is copied directly from one issued two days later by William Holland of Oxford Street.

[24] Nicely illustrating the ongoing circulation of McCleary's prints, his version of *The Fashions of the Day* serves as the frontispiece piece to a recent study of neo-classical dress, Amelia Rauser, *The Age of Undress, Art, Fashion, and the Classical Ideal in the 1790s* (New Haven and London, 2020), in which, with a certain poetic justice, McCleary's involvement in the production of the print is not credited.

[25] *The Letrim* [sic] *Trashers or Paddy Trashing the 11 Sheaf!!* makes reference to the Thresher movement which disturbed north Connaught, particularly counties Sligo, Leitrim and Roscommon, in 1806 and the following year. Tithes, the tax on the general population to support the established church of which few were members, and which fell unduly harshly on the cultivation of potatoes, was a principal grievance of the movement. Two figures attack a clergyman who has collected the fat of the land, with a speech bubble making the link between agrarian violence and political nationalism – a link that Dublin Castle was ever-keen to disavow: 'I wish we had them Rogues that took our Parliament House away and left us nothing but plenty of starvation. We'd trash while there would be a grane [*sic*] of bribery left.' If politically naïve in supposing that the pre-Union Irish polity would have been more likely to abolish tithes than Westminster (the exact opposite was the case), this is a rare instance within visual print culture of a degree of understanding being shown to the causes of agrarian violence, or, at least, a certain even-handedness of treatment.

[26] Strickland, *Dictionary*, II, 56. One further printmaker who seems to have worked for McCleary in the 1820s is the shadowy figure Joseph (or Joshua) Gleadah. *Selling a Cast Horse* and several other cartoons have been attributed to him, and the drawing style is certainly comparable to that of Gleadah's signed caricature, *Cockney Laureate Elected*. George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires*, X, 1952, 177. Gleadah was a versatile, jobbing engraver who produced topographical prints, including a view of Dunluce Castle, county Antrim, after Andrew Nicholl (1830), and executed a few engravings for John Varley's *A Treatise on the Principles of Landscape Design* and an engraving of the old theatre at Covent Garden (1815).

[27] The originals which McCleary and McDonald pirated were etched by Thomas Rowlandson

after Richard Newton and published in London by Thomas Tegg. Most unusually here, McCleary who invariably removes the original artist's and publisher's names before inserting his own, keeps Richard Newton's signature, or rather adds it. The whole plate was re-etched so a conscious decision seems to have been made to acknowledge Newton's authorship. It is curious that it is Newton's name of all the caricaturists that McCleary plagiarised that he chose to acknowledge, while ruthlessly suppressing the authorship of the much better known Gillray, Cruikshank and Rowlandson. Newton had died in obscurity aged twenty-one in 1798, approximately fifteen years before the appearance of Rowlandson's prints. See Alexander, *Richard Newton*, 164, which dates *Giving up the Ghost* to ?1813 and *A Going! A Going!* to 10th June 1809. For Newton's posthumous reputation, see *ibid*., 55-56. For the subject in general, see Fiona Haslam, *From Hogarth to Rowlandson, Medicine in Art in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Liverpool, 1996).

28 The original was etched by George Cruikshank after Captain Frederick Marryat and published by George Humphrey in February 1819.

29 Again following London practice, McCleary would not have paid for the colouring of more prints than were likely to sell in the short term.

30 St John Seymour, 'Old Dublin Caricatures', 69

31 Strickland, *Dictionary*, I, 29.

32 St John Seymour, 'Old Dublin Caricatures', 69

33 Part of the humour of Rowlandson's image is its punning on the rather more literally applied title of a work by John Russell, *The Cake in Danger*, which shows a young boy (possibly the artist's son Tom) holding a currant bun which is being eyed greedily by a spaniel. Exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1788 and engraved the same year by William Nutter (*sic*), this was a popular and frequently copied work of which Russell himself made a replica as late as 1802, not long before Rowlandson produced his print (Christie's, *Old Master and Early British Drawings and Watercolours*, 6th December 2012, lot 200). The ever-irreverent Rowlandson would have enjoyed giving a less wholesome twist to this sentimental image by the famously pious Methodist artist.

34 Quoted in Richard A. Vogler, *Graphic Works of George Cruikshank* (New York 1979) 135. For a suggestive discussion of Cruikshank's original, see Robert L. Patten, 'Signifying Shape in Pan-European Caricature', in Todd Porterfield (ed.), *The Efflorescence of Caricature, 1759-1838* (London and New York, 2011) 147-50.

35 It can be taken as strongly corroborative, if circumstantial, evidence in his favour if the only other recorded impressions of a print are also published under his imprint. While it is conceivable that in certain instances McCleary copied a now lost prototype, this is unlikely given the comprehensive nature of the collections of London caricatures in the British Museum and elsewhere. Irish subject matter alone is not, however, enough to indicate McCleary's 'authorship' as he republished material of Irish interest but of London origin, and, as will be explored in Part 2 of this article, he also pirated compositions from his Dublin as well as his London peers.

36 The letterpress tells the story: 'A couple of those screw'd up articles called dandies, strutting over Carlisle Bridge, attracting the notice of the populace by their delicate foppery and effeminate appearance. A gentleman passing resolving to have a bit of sport with them, called upon an ugly ragged wench, and promised her a pound note in case she'd seize on the two and lustily kiss them which she immediately accomplish'd, to the great terror of the poor dandies and the still greater enjoyment of the gentleman and spectators.'

37 John Bew, *Castlereagh, Enlightenment War and Tyranny* (London, 2011) 204-05.

38 James S. Donnelly Jr, *Captain Rock, The Irish Agrarian Rebellion of 1821-1824* (Madison, WI, 2009) 112.

39 Attention to this print was first drawn in a post on the blog theprintshopwindow.com on 3rd October 2015, https://theprintshopwindow.wordpress.com/2015/10/03/blacking-king-billy-a-finishing-touch-1805, accessed 7th August 2020.

40 For further published satires by McCleary relating to this controversy, see *A Theological Antodite Firing Off the Lees of opposition* (British Museum, no. 1876,0510.973) and *The Marquess Wellesley's Hounds in Full Cry!!* (British Museum, no. 1868,0808.8833).

41 National Archives, CSO/RP/1821/887. According to the catalogue of the National Archives, the letter is seemingly incorrectly dated 'Appril [*sic*] 16th 1802', but is annotated on the reverse by the Chief Secretary's indexer, November 1821, 'probably when the letter was received at Dublin Castle'. Due to Covid-related travel restrictions and institutional closures, it has not been possible to consult this source in the original.

[42] It is striking that this body of visual material from the opening decades of the nineteenth century has been almost entirely overlooked by scholars. McCleary's political prints would certainly reward the scrutiny, which is outside the scope of this article on his activity as a plagiarist. It was pleasing to learn, after this article was written, that Professor James Kelly has embarked on research on the subject.

[43] Another print illustrates what was without doubt the most noteworthy of all events in early nineteenth-century Dublin, *The Landing of his Most gracious Majesty King George the Fourth at the Pier of Howth on the memorable 12th August 1821*.

[44] Frances Anne Beaufort Edgeworth, *A Memoir of Maria Edgeworth: with a Selection from Her Letters by the Late Mrs Edgeworth*, 2 vols (London, 1867) I, 256. In general, see Mark Davies, *King of all Balloons: the adventurous life of James Sadler, the first English aeronaut* (Stroud, 2015) and Brian MacMahon, *Ascent or Die: Richard Crosbie, pioneer of balloon flight* (Dublin, 2010) 187-209.

[45] By William Elmes, published by Thomas Tegg in August 1811.

[46] Baker, *The Business of Satirical Prints*, 119.

[47] Toby Barnard, review of *Land, Politics and Society in Eighteenth-Century Tipperary* by Thomas P. Power, *Eighteenth-Century Ireland / Iris an dá chultúr*, X, 1995, 160.

[48] William Laffan, 'Colonial Ireland: Artistic Crossroads', in William Laffan and Christopher Monkhouse (eds), *Ireland; Crossroads of Art and Design, 1690-1840*, Art Institute of Chicago exhibition catalogue (Chicago, 2015) 18-35.

[49] Reciprocally, there was a strong demand for English prints in France and elsewhere on the continent; see Anthony Griffiths, 'English Prints in eighteenth-century Paris', *Print Quarterly*, vol. 22, no. 4, December 2005, 375-96, and Clayton, 'The London Printsellers and the Export of English Graphic Prints', 140-61.

[50] *London Gazette*, 29th January 1701; *Universal Advertiser*, 18th September 1753.

[51] Timothy Clayton and Sheila O'Connell, *Bonaparte and the British: prints and propaganda in the age of Napoleon* (London, 2015) and Mark Bryant, *Napoleonic Wars in Cartoons* (London, 2015).

[52] *Dublin Evening Mail*, 29th November 1826. Bordeaux, whence the shipment had departed, had a sizeable Irish trading and viticultural community; Louis Cullen, John Shovlin and Thomas Truxes (eds), *The Bordeaux-Dublin Letters, 1757: correspondence of an Irish community abroad*, vol. 53 (Oxford, 2013).

[53] There were numerous engraved portraits of Napoleon as First Consul making it difficult to determine which McCleary purchased for sale back in Dublin. However, a likely candidate for the second print is *Vue de la grande parade passée par le premier consul dans la cour du palais des Thuilliers* by Pierre Adrien Le Beau after Claude Louis Desrais (*c*.1800).

[54] The authors are grateful to Mathew Crowther for identifying this source.

[55] McPhee and Orenstein, *Infinite Jest*, 125. For the appeal of French fashion in Dublin, see Sarah Foster, '"An Honourable station in respect of commerce, as well as constitutional liberty", retailing, consumption and economic nationalism in Dublin, 1720-85', in Gillian O'Brien and Finola O'Kane (eds), *Georgian Dublin* (Dublin, 2008) 30-31.

[56] *Dublin Evening Mail*, 29th November 1826. For the supply of artists' materials in Ireland, see Nicola Figgis, 'Methods and Materials', in Figgis (ed.), *Art and Architecture of Ireland, Volume II*, 138-41. For luxury retail in Georgian Dublin, see Foster, 'Shops and Shopping in Georgian Dublin', 12-33.

[57] *Dublin Evening Packet and Correspondent*, 6th December 1834.

[58] *ibid*. Although there was a busy paper-making industry in Ireland, with thirty-two paper makers and warehouses listed in Dublin in 1824, much high-quality French, English, Dutch and Italian paper was imported. Figgis, 'Methods and Materials', 139, and, in general, Phillips, *Printing and Bookselling*, 151-96 and Pollard, *Dictionary*, 648-49.

[59] Lithography allowed for huge editions to be produced and was famously deployed by the Parisian satirical magazine *Le Charivari*, which had first appeared in 1832 and its greatest cartoonist Honoré Daumier. It was a medium also used to great effect in London by the leading art entrepreneur of the day, Rudolph Ackermann.

[60] David Dickson. 'Death of a Capital? Dublin and the Consequences of Union', in Peter Clark and Raymond Gillespie (eds), *Two Capitals, London and Dublin, 1500-1840* (Proceedings of the British Academy, 107) (Oxford, 2001) 124. Professional artists were better served by suppliers like Mrs John Ball, who, in January 1810,

when advertising her paints, specified that 'professors and wholesale purchasers [would] experience liberal allowances'. Among the outlets that stocked Mrs Ball's pigments was the stationery shop of William Figgis a few doors from McCleary's on Nassau Street. *Freeman's Journal*, 15th January 1810, quoted in Figgis, 'Methods and Materials', 139.

61 *Dublin Evening Packet and Correspondent*, 6th December 1834.

62 Samuel Dixon, who ran a similarly diversified art emporium in Dublin in the previous century, was more explicit in his gendered marketing pitch, offering 'flower pieces, drawings in Indian ink, landscapes in oyl [sic] for chimneys, and small ditto done on vellum in watercolour fit for ladies' closets'. *Universal Advertiser*, 6th December 1755.

63 Mairéad Reynolds, 'Wedgwood in Dublin 1772-1777', *Irish Arts Review,* vol. 1, no. 2, Summer, 1984, 36-39, and Anna Moran, 'Merchants and Material Culture in Early Nineteenth-Century Dublin: a Consumer Case Study', *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies*, XI (Dublin, 2008) 140-59.

64 Moran, 'Merchants and Material Culture', 142.

65 James Baker notes a similar gender bias in relation to Rudolph Ackermann's London emporium: '[his] choice to sell only light apolitical satire was as a consequence of the feminine character of both much of his wares and customers'. Baker, *The Business of Satirical Prints*, 169.

66 Banerji and Donald, *Gillray Observed*, xiii.

67 *ibid*. A different interpretation is, however, possible, and the paucity of evidence invites caution. McCleary's move to trading in luxury stationery may have been designed to fill the gap left by the decline in the market for pirated London caricature rather than the two sides of the business operating in tandem.

68 Adrian Johns, *Piracy, The Intellectual Property Wars from Gutenberg to Gates* (Chicago and London, 2009) 174.

69 See Phillips, *Printing and Bookselling in Dublin*, 103-147; Johns, *Piracy*, 145-77; Ronan Deazley, 'Commentary on Copyright Act 1801', in Lionel Bently and Martin Kretschmer (eds), *Primary Sources on Copyright (1450-1900)*, 2008, www.copyrighthistory.org.

70 Deazley, 'Commentary on Copyright Act'.

71 The 1735 act was supplemented by further legislation in 1766 and 1777; Baker, *The Business of Satirical Prints*, 184.

72 *London und Paris,* no. 18, 1806, contribution dated 18th July 1806; see Banerji and Donald, *Gillray Observed*, 246. This unwittingly echoes the unscrupulous practice not unknown today of passing off as original prints by Gillray restrikes from the later edition by Henry Bohn.

73 *Journal of the Society of Arts*, 26th March 1858.

74 Clayton, 'The London Printsellers and the Export of English Graphic Prints', 154.

75 On a print, *The Extinguisher,* published by Sidebotham which will be discussed in Part 2 of this article.

76 For example, Baker, *The Business of Satirical Prints*, 138, writes that in Dublin 'satirical prints imported from London were copied illegally and at length'.

77 *Saunders News-Letter*, 16th December 1837. Pointing up the anomaly of Mrs McCleary fronting the advertisement, and hence suggesting her husband was dead by this date, is the fact that the other two co-ordinators of the appeal were male – Mr Waller of Suffolk Street and Michael Gaffney, a print-seller of 32 Lower Sackville Street.

78 Strickland, *Dictionary*, I, 88-89.

79 For the move to respectability in the second and especially third decade of the century and 'satire's deepening obsolescence', see Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, 574-95.

80 Manly and Ó Gallchoir, *The Novels and Selected Works of Maria Edgeworth*, 211-12; see also Brian Maidment, 'Caricature and the Comic Image in the 1830s', *Writing in the Age of William IV* (Yearbook of English Studies, no. 48) (London, 2018) 54-81.

81 The gulf between Doyle's cartoons and those of the eighteenth century and Regency periods is nicely, and approvingly, expressed by Strickland: 'The subjects related to the political events and the political men of the time treated without the exaggeration and coarseness of the caricature of Gillray, and drawn with a humour never descending to vulgarity.' Strickland, *Dictionary*, I, 298.

82 *Saunders's News-Letter*, 15th April 1839.

83 For Gillray's copper plates, see Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, 417. Several survive, see, for example, The Draper Hill Collection, 2001, lot 12.

84 It is noticeable that the group includes images dating from each of McCleary's three addresses on Nassau Street and based on prototypes dating from most years of the period from 1800-20.

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