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Jillian Lerner, *Graphic Culture: Illustration and Artistic Enterprise in Paris, 1830-1848*. Montreal, Quebec: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2018. x + 254 pp. Figures, notes, bibliography and index. \$49.95 CAD & USD (pb). ISBN: 978-0-7735-5455-9.

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The period of the July Monarchy in France (1830-1848) is well known for its popular visual culture in the form of illustrated books and journals, prints and posters. The expansion of this market was influenced by significant political changes framed by revolutions at both ends of the period. In 1830 Charles X (the ultraconservative final Bourbon monarch) and his censorship was replaced by a charter guaranteeing freedom of the press. Under the "Citizen King" Louis-Philippe, trade and commerce grew and the middle class began to expand—both forces that encouraged further development of print culture—although it should be noted that members of the lower classes could increasingly access illustrations in shop windows and public libraries. While there have been many scholarly studies of the political caricature that flourished under Louis-Philippe (and was usually directed at his person or policies), Jillian Lerner explores aspects of print culture during the same period, including fashion illustrations and costume designs, portraits and caricatures of celebrities, posters, and illustrated city guides that require a more nuanced examination of the social and commercial milieu and a closer analysis of the images themselves to truly understand their significance. This material, Lerner argues, provides not only a greater understanding of the broader context in which July Monarchy caricatures existed, but also explains how ideas first explored in this period, despite their rootedness in contingent definitions of terms such as "popular" and "commercial success," informed the graphic culture of the last half of the nineteenth century.

Lerner deftly combines archival research at French institutions (such as the Bibliothèque Nationale's Cabinet des Estampes and the Musée de la Publicité), close readings of individual works, and an interdisciplinary approach made necessary by the fundamental connectedness of print culture with, on the one hand, nearly anything and everything that was published and, on the other hand, potentially anything that was intended to be promoted for consumption in an increasingly commercial marketplace. The study is carefully limited to examine the beginnings of artistic and social notions of modernity, especially as evident in studies of manners and types, and places a special focus on the work of Guillaume Sulpice Chevalier (known as Gavarni, 1804-1866) and Achille Devéria (1800-1857). The choice of these two comparatively understudied artists, who have been dismissed by critics as too feminine but were nonetheless very influential in their time serves Lerner's goal "to understand how sketches of fashions and manners were consciously positioned within old and new systems of visual representation and

actively embedded in social and economic history” (p. 4). The episodic nature of literary and/or visual depictions of manners made them adaptable to different content and contexts and therefore more marketable; one of Lerner’s key assumptions is that their study is made significant by their dual role as “...pioneering *products* circulating within an emerging capitalistic market for culture and discursive *producers* of commonly held social values and modes of experience” (p. 6).

Lerner’s close readings of prints are pithy and engaging, and, for those general readers who may choose to skim past the occasional interjection of semiotic theory and its attendant jargon, easy to understand. Her formal analysis takes its cue from a combination of Jean Baudrillard’s *visible criteria*, described by Lerner as “...guidelines for assessing the potential meanings conveyed in gestures, fashions, habits, social performances and idiomatic speech, the micro-distinctions crystallized in bodies, things, pictures, and other less obvious semiotic surfaces” (p. 9). The work of Margaret Cohen and Anne Higgonet inspired Lerner to focus on works exhibiting self-reflexivity as critical *mises en abyme*, (for instance fashion illustrations that express more about the creator of the image than the clothing depicted).^[1] Lerner describes such self-reflective images are both “...exemplary objects situated in pivotal zones of the cultural field and rich pictorial statements that endeavour to bring their own situation to light” (p. 17).

Lerner has constructed the text as a series of case studies in cultural entrepreneurship, and begins with a chapter dedicated to the development of the illustrator—or, better, the professional term of the time: *dessinateur*—as a concept and a profession, which informs the idea of the “painter of modern life” taken up by writers and artists later in the nineteenth century. *Physiologies* of artist-types and related characters, as well as artist self-caricatures, are probed to understand how creative individuals embody the roles of different social classes as they self-identify with life around them. The availability of print methods of the time is explained but Lerner focuses most on lithography and the prevalence of graphic examples that leverage sketchiness to suggest quick-paced attempts to capture the changing nature of Paris (but with marks similar to painting, also capable of broaching the subject of high versus low visual culture). If these latter remarks sound like the Impressionism of the 1870s-1880s that is precisely Lerner’s intent: she convincingly argues that both the preferred subjects, working methods and underpinning ideas (save the stylistic specifics influenced by *Japonisme* and photography) were being explored by artists in this earlier period.

The second chapter shifts the focus to the idea of the editor/curator and the compilation of guidebooks to Paris with a special emphasis on *Le Diable à Paris* (1844-1866). Here self-reflexivity is enacted in a series of illustrations of the book’s editor, Pierre-Jules Hetzel, in multiple roles including devil, dandy and ragpicker who holds a magic lantern (one of the first technologies to allow moving images). This item suggests not only a continuity with the latter part of the century, but also bridges paper with real-life spectacles to be witnessed in action on the streets and in the theatres, underscoring the optic, artistic, social and communication skills necessary to transcribe and illustrate Paris during this period.

Posters, window displays and other marketing strategies are explored in the third chapter, as are illustrated typologies. Advertisements for books and publishers and the encyclopaedia of Parisian types *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes* (1839-1842), especially Gavarni’s frontispiece for the tome, which depicts a poster hanger doing his work while a group of bystanders

assemble, are rich self-reflexive exemplars that allow the roles of artist, writer and publisher of *physiologies* to be examined with the same depth as the types contained within.

The fourth chapter is devoted to fashion and the domestic routines of wealthy women with a special emphasis on Achille Devéria's album of fashion plates *Les Heures du Jour* (1829). In this modern secular version of the Middle Age prayerbooks, or books of hours, the artist's friends and relatives, notably his sister and amateur artist Laure Devéria, play important supporting and self-reflexive roles in this layered analysis of not only manners and habits, but also the spaces, objects, technologies and relationships forming the basis of Parisian life in this period. More than mere fashion plates to be consumed, in *Les Heures* Déveria was marketing himself as a promoter of images and ideas, as fashion and brand designers continue to do today.

The final chapter is dedicated to the fashion illustrations and costume designs of Gavarni, who took an active role in the planning of masked balls and collaborated with Virginie Déjazet, famous for transgressive stage performances *en débardeur*. Lerner considers methods of self-publicity by celebrities, performativity of gender and social class, and the intersection of print, stage and street in public spectacles and also the spaces of prostitution, where the *débardeur* and other costumes became popular. Gavarni's work chronicled not only the official performative spaces of the opera and theatre, but also a more modern carnival where traditional Italian types such as polichinelle are replaced by fancy versions of historical costumes which allow the wearer to be a different--and sometimes transgressed--version of themselves rather than a fully-formed character created by someone else.

Because Lerner concludes most chapters with a convincing explanation of the significance of the explored themes to later nineteenth-century developments, the conclusion for the book falls a bit flat by comparison. Nonetheless it summarizes the trends which were discontinued and those which were developed further in the decades to follow. A series of colour plates in the middle of the book is a welcome surprise, showcasing the Devéria fashion plates and providing demonstration of the early use of red as an effective "single-color printing" strategy for visual emphasis in cheap posters. Lerner convincingly demonstrates that the period of the July Monarchy deserves continued study. The book should be of interest to cultural, literary and visual historians as well as current-day practitioners of "old" and new media.

NOTES

[1] Margaret Cohen and Anne Higgonnet, "Complex Culture" in Vanessa R. Schwartz and Jeannene M. Przyblyski, eds., *The Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture Reader*, 15-26. (New York: Routledge, 2004).

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