

Institution: University of Warwick
Unit of Assessment: 28 Modern Languages and Linguistics
Title of case study: Understanding the French Revolution through print culture in education and heritage
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>The research has shown the ways in which responses to the trauma of the French Revolution are revealed in contemporary printed images and fiction. A collection of prints at Waddesdon Manor (National Trust) formed the basis of activities which have brought a greater awareness of the ramifications of the Revolution among the broader public, improved the knowledge-base of heritage industry staff, and supported teaching in schools. Insights into the prints have been used to create educational resources which introduce new research methods and themes to primary and secondary pupils in History, Citizenship and Modern Foreign Languages. Waddesdon has drawn on the research to realise an important aspect of its institutional strategy through the development of an online catalogue and an exhibition.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The intersection between politics and culture is a central research theme in Warwick's French Studies department. Within this theme, Dr Katherine Astbury (appointed 1999) researches responses to and representations of French Revolutionary events in contemporary texts and images. Her most recent monograph (2012) examines how print media were used to reflect both individual and collective responses to the trauma of the French Revolution. Her research challenges previous conclusions that narrative production in the 1790s was largely a-political, and demonstrates how the bestselling novels of the decade are instead reflections on the emotional and psychological effects of the Revolution and of the Terror in particular.</p> <p>Denial is the first stage in the grieving process experienced by trauma survivors. Therefore, novels or images which are not overtly political are not examples of escapism or a desire to avoid the trauma, but rather represent the author's or artist's attempt to come to terms with the traumatic experience. Only after retreat into a safe location is it possible for the trauma sufferer to restore the social bonds and affective ties shattered by the traumatic event and begin to relive the experience by confronting it. Eventually, it becomes possible for survivors to bear witness and tell of the trauma, come to terms with the experience, and reconnect with ordinary life and society. Trauma victims often want to both deny and declare their experiences. Reading these texts therefore means attending to implicit as well as explicit meanings in order to uncover what is being avoided as well as what is being articulated. Analysing symbols and gestures portrayed in novels and images produced during the 1790s is a means for accessing individual reactions to the collective trauma. For example, the émigré novel, a sub-genre of the sentimental novel which Astbury explored in her 2011 article, used the wounded émigré rescued by peasants as a common motif. It was depicted frequently in illustrations and frontispieces, as the representation of retreat into a place where the social bonds and trust broken by the Revolution could be restored.</p> <p>Dr Astbury's expertise in printed narrative and visual responses to trauma in the French Revolution led to an AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA), in parallel with Queen Mary, University of London, to explore images of the French Revolution in the <i>Tableaux de la Révolution française</i>, a unique collection of prints at Waddesdon Manor. Acquired by Baron Ferdinand Rothschild in the 1890s, the <i>Tableaux</i> comprise 4 bound volumes of nearly 500 images – from crude etchings to sophisticated propaganda – which record and satirise the major events of the French Revolution from a range of political standpoints. The bulk of the prints were produced during the 1790s</p>

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following the relaxation of censorship laws in 1788-89. The dramatic upsurge in the number of prints on the market demonstrates the importance of narrative and imagery to the illustrators and the consumers of these works. The successfully completed PhD at Warwick (Claire Trévien, 2008-2012) examined the presentation of spectacle in the prints 1789-94. Spectacle and theatricality reflected the traumatic experiences of the Revolution as readers craved increasingly sensational materials in response to the increasingly extraordinary political and social reality. The CDA produced an online catalogue and database of the *Tableaux* prints which is available on the Waddesdon Manor website.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Astbury, *Narrative Responses to the Trauma of the French Revolution* (Oxford: Legenda, 2012) ISBN: 978-1-907975-42-4. [REF2; peer reviewed]

Astbury, 'The Trans-National Dimensions of the Émigré Novel during the French Revolution', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 23.4 (Summer 2011), pp. 801-832. [REF2; peer reviewed]

Tableaux de la Révolution Database: <http://www.waddesdon.org.uk/collection/special-projects/tableaux> (available from November 2011)

Grants:

AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award, PI Dr Katherine Astbury; non-academic organisation partner Waddesdon Manor (National Trust), 2008-2012, £45,000.

British Academy Small Research Grant, Literary Responses to the trauma of the Revolution, Jan 2006-Jan 2008, £6,500.

AHRC Research Leave Award, Apr-Jun 2008, £18,767.

British Academy Small Research Grant, Fiction in the Periodicals of the Revolutionary Period, 1789-95, Sep 2003-Aug 2004, £2,000.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Key prints from the *Tableaux* collection at Waddesdon Manor were used to create teaching resources and educational activities, introducing primary and secondary school pupils to the Revolution and to source analysis. The research has improved understanding of the *Tableaux* at Waddesdon among its staff and visitors (both virtual and in person) and supported the historic house in achieving elements of its institutional strategy.

1. Impact on the Heritage Industry

'Waddesdon Manor's mission is to enhance understanding and enjoyment of the collections, and research is the foundation on which this should be built.' (Curator). Warwick's projects (digital catalogue, exhibition, and educational resources) based on research into the *Tableaux* have helped Waddesdon work towards this. Waddesdon's institutional strategy involves creating a general online catalogue (for completion 2015/6), and the *Tableaux* project has contributed significantly to this objective. 400 prints were catalogued, digitised and contextualised by doctoral students Claire Trévien (Warwick) and Paul Davidson (QMUL), supervised by Astbury, Colin Jones (Professor of History, QMUL) and Juliet Carey (Curator of Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture, Waddesdon). The academic supervisors had overall responsibility for the research, ensuring the accuracy of historical interpretation and understanding. They verified the translations, worked closely on the in-depth commentaries for 54 feature prints, and helped to prepare the introductory material for the digital catalogue. Astbury's expertise on the symbolic projection of political attitudes

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towards or against the Revolution fed directly into the interpretation of the prints. For instance, Astbury's research into the use of the natural world as a response to the Revolution was important since 300 of the 400 prints contain recurrent motifs recalling the rootedness of the natural world. Astbury identified in her 2011 article that trees were often used to represent the stability of the old order and the constancy of the natural world in the face of revolutionary upheaval.

The digitised prints, which went online in 2011, have allowed Waddesdon to display part of the collection not normally accessible to the public. It has strengthened Waddesdon's links with outside institutions and raised awareness of the collections among the academic and curatorial communities, and with the broader public. Having the prints digitised has allowed them to be featured in other forums, such as the BBC History Extra Website in February 2013 (1197 page views to July 2013). Waddesdon has also benefited from increased exposure to school pupils who have been introduced to the prints through the resource packs developed by Astbury.

The research was also presented as an exhibition, 'A Subversive Art: Prints of the French Revolution' at Waddesdon, seen by an estimated 45,000 visitors April-November 2011, co-curated by Trévien, Davidson and Phillippa Plock (Waddesdon). The *Tableaux* volumes were displayed alongside the digital catalogue and 20 poster-size reproductions of prints (with explanatory text), selected to give visitors a sense of the various print techniques used and the political messages conveyed in the prints. Contrasting images were displayed side by side which allowed visitors to appreciate the complexities of Rothschild's collecting tastes, not usually a feature of the visitor experience. The exhibition was accompanied by a special interest day (Oct 2012; 16 participants) and a trail throughout the house which drew attention to objects and individuals associated with the French Revolution. The trail was singled out for praise in the Enjoy England Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance scheme annual visitors' report (2011) as being a 'stimulus for visitors to more fully appreciate the extensive contents [of the house].'

2. Impact on Education

The research has been used to develop educational initiatives to enhance teaching and learning of the national curriculum in Modern Foreign Languages (MFL), History, Literature and Citizenship at primary and secondary level. 300 secondary schools and FE colleges in the UK received the resource pack for History A-Level and IB students developed from the prints by Astbury (with educational expertise from A-level history teacher Andy Holland). Astbury's research was used to establish the historical framework, identify the prints' key themes and highlight the importance of symbolism, the possibility of implicitly communicated messages, and the illustrators' motives to understand better the meaning of the prints. The pack and supplementary online resources are available to download via the Historical Association website and Warwick's French department website. Since the resource packs were made available in September 2012, there have been a combined 3,753 hits and 343 downloads. Teachers who have used the packs have said that it has helped support the acquisition of historical knowledge: 'I used the images to develop their skills in analysing primary evidence as well as deepening their synoptic understanding. The texts were very clear and provided valuable contextual information.' (A2 Level AQA Module 'France and the Enlightenment', John Cleveland College, Hinckley, Leics.) According to the Access to HE History course leader at North Warwickshire College, 'No one in the group had formally studied the French Revolution prior to coming onto the course. However, with the Waddesdon material as a focal point, they were able to assimilate new ideas and concepts quickly and efficiently. They seem to have enjoyed the Unit to the extent that their enthusiasm drove them to independently organise a visit to Waddesdon during the Easter break.' Students on the Access to HE course found that the prints improved their understanding of the subject, 'To be able to understand key factors during the French Revolution after only a few weeks would not have been possible without the prints.'

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(Student Feedback)

The material has been adapted to suit a variety of courses at primary and secondary level and have been supplemented throughout the 2012-13 academic year by curriculum support days and student research projects guided by Astbury. Over 200 students from around the country, ranging from Year 6 to Sixth Form, were introduced to the prints to learn about the French Revolution; how to analyse visual material for research; and how the themes in the prints, such as trauma, are relevant for their courses. Highlights include a workshop at Oxford High School (4.10.2012) for 20 GCSE and A-Level French students. 50 Year 9 pupils attended a day about Revolutionary propaganda (26.3.2013) where 75% felt that learning how to analyse prints greatly helped with understanding the French Revolution and could be applied to historical study in other areas. Nearly all of the pupils (97%) understood that culture played an important role in politics as a result of the session. The material has also proved useful for students in Languages, English Literature and History: 22 Sixth-form students in these subjects learned about literary and visual representations of gender, violence and power in the eighteenth century (21.3.2013) by comparing the depiction of Marie-Antoinette in the prints with modern film portrayal.

The material has also been adapted successfully for primary school pupils: in Spring 2013, 42 Year 6 pupils in KS2 Citizenship undertook a research project on the Revolutionary prints, following a workshop on campus. The finished projects were presented at an awards evening in June. One student has said of his experience 'Through this piece of writing, I believe that I have developed my research and finding information skills.' (Holbrook Primary School, Coventry, Summer 2013).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Enjoy England Secret Visit Report [provided by Waddesdon Manor]
2. Exhibition visitor numbers and feedback [provided by Waddesdon Manor]
3. Statements from Waddesdon Head of Collections and Curator, Web Content
4. Recorded feedback from teachers about the resource pack
5. Recorded student feedback from schools events
6. Uptake of educational material, number of hits/downloads, etc
7. BBC History Extra <http://www.historyextra.com/gallery/images-french-revolution>. Page views provided by BBC History Extra by email.