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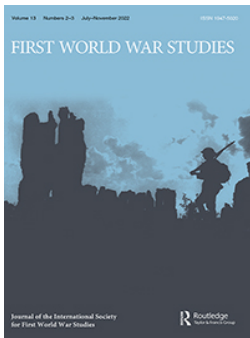
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## A visual history of First World War women and humour identified in contemporary cartoons

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# A visual history of First World War women and humour identified in contemporary cartoons

Pip Gregory 

School of History, University of Kent, Canterbury

## ABSTRACT

This article discusses the use of cartoon visual depictions of women during the First World War and the humour within them for the viewing public. Extensive historiography of women and war recognizes female contributions to the war effort, and the underlying integrity of motherhood throughout. Nonetheless, how audiences perceive visual representations of women during war do not feature within this literature to the same degree. Evaluation of cartoon humour alongside context of images of women historicizes the content and its impact on respective contemporary audiences. News publications throughout the war provide appropriate visual sources, and most for this study come from the British Cartoon Archive (BCA) at the University of Kent. The article considers three predominant tropes of female cartoon illustration during the war: the young and flighty, the elderly matron and the allegory of combatant nations. Cartoons of these womenvisibly take on new positions in war: helping the war effort or misunderstanding new situations whilst maintaining traditional positions from before the war. Humorous alterations to anticipated stereotypes provide didactic purpose showing the public how to behave, or more specifically how not to with the younger and older depictions. The final group of allegorical personas revisit older national and abstract icons to aid public morale providing relief and hilarity through enemydenigration or support and strength when visualizing home nations. This article argues how humorous cartooning of women in wartime preserved the pre-war status quo of female positions in society to provide comfort and relief to the public despite acknowledged female involvement in the war effort overall.

## ARTICLE HISTORY

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matron; allegory

## Introduction

Studies considering women's responses to or involvement in the First World War are prolific; however, this article will not address women directly as people, but rather, their humorous representations in cartoon publishing. The article seeks to demonstrate how cartoons and their humour during the Great War reinforce established societal roles in the public mind. Analysis will focus on representations of women throughout 1914–1918, with reflections on contemporary women in society, and visual recollections of suffrage campaigns from before the war.<sup>1</sup> Since the 1970s, studies have negated ideas of

**CONTACT** Pip Gregory  [p.m.gregory@kent.ac.uk](mailto:p.m.gregory@kent.ac.uk)

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the war as a 'watershed' when women broke out from their traditional stereotypes. Significant academics including Susan Grayzel, Penny Summerfield, Nicoletta Gullace and Gail Braybon, have shown how Arthur Marwick's ideas of a 'turning point' over-emphasise what came of necessity.<sup>2</sup> For example, Grayzel sees motherhood as a primary patriotic behaviour for women that remained. Summerfield too suggests women stayed within the male perspective as dependants.<sup>3</sup> Gullace, Braybon and more recently, Jonathan Rayner have highlighted aspects of women as carers in society further reinforcing static female societal roles.<sup>4</sup>

When presented in cartoons for this study, women divide into three groups: youthful irreverent women, older matrons or patriotic allegorical goddesses, each of whom fulfil traditional feminine roles in society (other than that of childhood). Youthful women provide a stage of learning, experimentation and temptation for men. The matron represents older experienced, albeit at times naïve generations whose characterization draws upon earlier visual representations of suffrage campaigners.<sup>5</sup> Then allegories serve a uniting purpose for a nation, commanding a familial draw beneath a matriarch able to contrast with the demonization of combatant nations in cartoon imagery. Among these groups, further subdivisions according to prosperity, agency, intelligence and appeal appear, but within that, each group maintains traditional stereotypical icons of female embodiment and power recognized in long hair, figure and fashion throughout the war and beyond.<sup>6</sup>

Peter Burke suggests how war art and poster images have become 'witnesses' to history and cartoons follow similarly as sources for interpretation as shown by Richard Scully.<sup>7</sup> Pictures identify contemporary perceptions of the world for historians, and further study of images provides layers of understanding taken to reflect motives and morals of the past.<sup>8</sup> Thus, although the humour surrounding women in these cartoons is ephemeral, the understanding of them and their perceived position in society is lasting and relevant. Artists' and public opinions about women during war become clear through cartoon representation of them with a predominant emphasis on naïvety and silliness. Developing acceptance of women in male roles begins to appear throughout the press; nonetheless, humour often reinforces a chance to highlight traditional perceptions of feminine weakness or incapability in cartoons. Allegorical figureheads, however, break this tradition, reinforcing a need for a mother or maternal safety net for many men in the context of war shown in the third part of this article.

Different artists created cartoons for an equal variety of audiences, although it must be noted that at this time, all cartoonists are male, cartooning for both male and female audiences. For this study, William K Haselden's work for the originally female led publication the *Daily Mirror* remains relevant in comparison to depictions of women in more mainstream male allocated publications such as *Punch* or tabloids and broadsheets. Artists for these include Percy Fearon; 'Poy' for the *Daily Mail*, and *Evening News*, Joseph Morewood Staniforth for the *Western Mail* and *News of the World*, and George Belcher, Bernard Partridge, Leonard Raven-hill and others for *Punch*. Regardless of the readership, cartoonists were predominantly men reproducing ideas about women from a patriarchal perspective, reflecting traditional domesticity of women in monogamous married life. Eberhard Demm describes these artists as the 'patriotic propagandists mobilizing their pens' for public consumption, and optimistically relief from the realities

of war.<sup>9</sup> Their interpretations of women consider traditional stereotypes despite ongoing changes brought by war.

Humour is significant to the methodology in this study for comprehending the visual material being analysed with especial focus on incongruity and relief theories of humour. Historians often avoid analysis thereof for its ephemeral nature in the wider historiography of women or war evading comedy precisely for its complexity as identified by Lesley Milne and Jakub Kazecki in their studies of humour in history.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, it is an area of study that is developing, and within this, scholars identify humour theoretically through philosophical and psychological narratives or occasionally comment for cultural identity.<sup>11</sup> However, examining physical cartoon comedy evidence and its context suits the material here analysing humour to provide deeper historical insight when combined with social and political details. Comedy is transient, and the perception of cartoons is similarly temporary, designed for viewing and discarding. As such, images align with contemporary media publications, including news articles, social events and advertisements alongside location and political biases of publications. As such, humour and visual content of cartoons combine with statements in the press, and wider contextual analysis of events, politics and personalities that can deepen overall understanding of how cartoonists presented these characters to the public.<sup>12</sup>

This article highlights how the cartoon representation of role and position for women during the war was unchanging. It also shows how images did not undermine female achievements despite humorously interpreting many of them. Cartoons ran alongside reports of women's achievements in industry, and advertisements calling for additional workers. Typological groups of cartoon women embody varieties of humour alongside facets of didacticism and agency promoted through the images. As such, cartoons demonstrate the ability to manipulate audiences and motivate them in particular directions. Cartoon women serve as humorous and familiar icons utilized for different agendas in war, be that comfort, didactic indication or gentle comedy drawing upon the former status quo in a time of change without diminishing actual achievements.

### Younger women

While there are three relevant types of female cartoon depictions during the First World War, the most frequent of these is the younger woman. There are further sub-divisions by intellect, and this separates the humour they offer, although there remains significant preference towards those less astute. Stereotypes applied to younger females include youthfulness, beauty, frivolity, naïvety and innocence following pre-war literary tropes of youthful domestic tradition.<sup>13</sup> Alternatively, the same beauty and youth for mentally mature women illustrates awareness of what the war involves, and what she contributes towards it.<sup>14</sup> One further division matches the young and beautiful with shrewdness, deception and manipulative tendencies. In each case, these women provoke amusement in the audience laughing at foolish approaches to character's lives. Therein there is comprehension of innate foolishness, or constructs of manipulation that make the jokes.

The audience laughs at irreverent youthful women for apparent ignorance mindlessly disappearing into Angela Woollacott's 'khaki fever' early in the war, nefariously seeking soldiers.<sup>15</sup> Although 'khaki fever' is rarely explicit in cartoons, it does appear implicitly for some youthful women. In many ways, they are the 'safe' option for male cartoonists in

that the frivolous but beautiful female poses no threat to cultural patriarchy. Coming from the middle or upper classes, society anticipates her fulfilling her role in society as temptation for men, and she will become a wife and mother without the Victorian threat of militancy or a call for suffrage.<sup>16</sup> These women do not challenge expectations or break with feminine societal traditions making their acceptance easy and recognized.

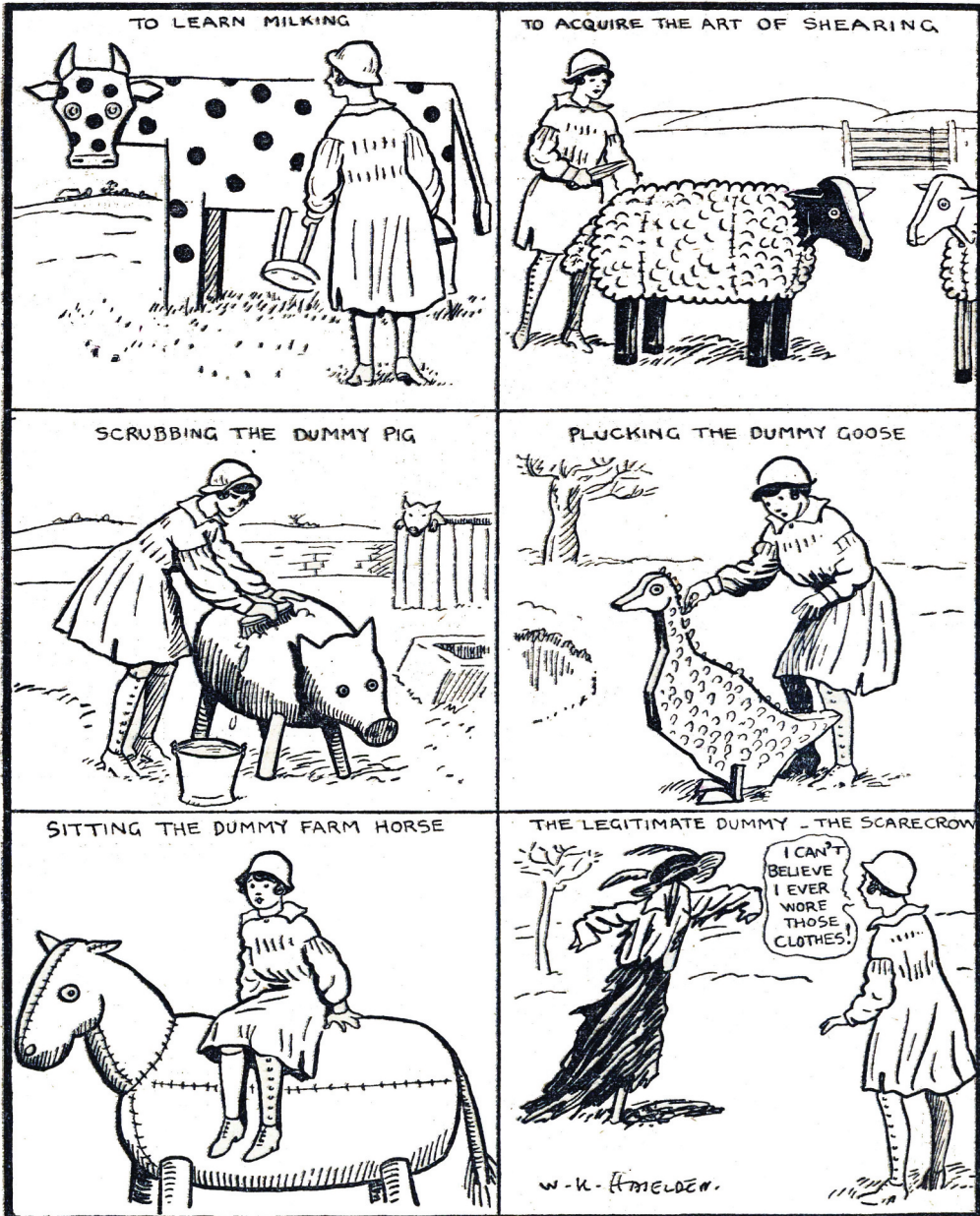
There are cartoon alternatives of women challenging traditions taking on occupations, but they create incongruous humour as although they take on men's jobs, these cartoon personalities demonstrate an inability to fulfil them.<sup>17</sup> Especially feminine women placed into male roles, provide absurdity of characters out of place for the viewer. The *Daily Mirror's* William Haselden is especially good at illustrating this point through his female characters in 1917. 'Learning to Work on the Land' April 2 exemplifies this with a young woman learning farm work skills using loosely modelled animals (Figure 1). The caption 'more and more of the totally inexperienced are being called onto the land' accompanies this image reinforced by her comment in the last section on the scarecrow's clothes that used to be hers.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, the original sketch, focuses more on 'how to train women' for such work and is accompanied by a cutting from the *Daily Mail* of the 'dummy cow' for training.<sup>19</sup>

Images of miscomprehension feature consistently in cartoons as shown above and this despite praise for women workers that existed throughout the press with numerous articles providing commendation for women fulfilling traditionally male positions.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, ongoing recruitment sought women to fulfil necessary vacancies in society left by men, and the Great War's propaganda network advertises for women to take up a variety of non-traditional roles, through the Women's Army Auxiliary Corp (WAAC).<sup>21</sup> All of which suggests that women were not perceived to be naïve and frivolous, but were able to comprehend the problems of war and respond to them astutely. Nonetheless, those represented in cartoons overwhelmingly provide humour through their incompatibility with that work.

Haselden establishes Miss Gladeyes in 1917 as the especially feminine female by her consistently doing 'other' than what is required of her in the context of war. She appears early in October 1917, as the embodiment of frivolity, deciding how best to dress for the air raid shelter; selecting nightgown and bonnet, unlike the scarfs, hats and coats worn by everyone else.<sup>22</sup> October 13 she returns demonstrating precisely 'why Miss Gladeye [sic] doesn't do War Work', as she spends too much of her time preparing to look good before each meal (Figure 2).<sup>23</sup> One week later, perhaps responding to letters received by the *Daily Mirror* comments made in parliament by Mr. Auckland Geddes, she believes war-work necessary, so seeks occupation.<sup>24</sup> Here Gladeyes barges into the office demanding work of the female in charge who sends her away without employment.<sup>25</sup> By the end of October, she has negotiated her way into a job using feminine wiles, corrupted a fellow worker, Miss Shyeyes, and any male staff, has been fired, and demonstrated her 'unfailing weapon of defence – tears'.<sup>26</sup> Thereafter, she is called by an 'emissary from a very high quarter' October 30 who readers anticipate will reprimand her appropriately instead, she emasculates him with her tears so that he too offers to 'put [her] case in the most favourable light possible'.<sup>27</sup>

The agency of her femininity gets her the job, and maintains it in a humorous light, while for the audience it is consistently clear that she is not helping the war at all. Indeed eventually she storms out having had enough and returns to afternoon tea with her

## HOW TO TRAIN WOMEN FOR THE LAND.



Dummy cows are being provided to train women in the task of milking, now that the call is for work on the land. A good idea! And why not other dummies too?—(By W. K. Haselden.)

Figure 1. BCA WH1323, William Haselden, 'Learning to Work on the Land', Daily Mirror, 2 April 1917. © Mirropix/Reach Licensing.

friends where she 'boasts of her services' to the war effort.<sup>28</sup> There is a lesson learnt from her conduct, she portrays the foibles of a woman who is not helping so much that others are encouraged not to be like her. While some scholars such as Philippe Vervaecke

### MISS GLADEYES TAKES UP WAR WORK.—I.



Indignant at the assertion that many girls are doing nothing for the war, Miss Gladdeyes makes for the nearest ministry of something, with at first discouraging results.—(By W. K. Haselden.)

Figure 2. BCA WH1599, William Haselden, 'Miss Gladdeyes takes up war work 1', Daily Mirror, 20 October 1917. © Mirrорpix/Reach Licensing.

reinforce an idea of Haselden being highly anti-suffrage through these images, and particularly pre-war suffrage pictures, looking to Donald Gray who speaks of humour used didactically as a common feature of Victorian laughter, the proscribed use of



Gladeyes and others is less clear. When addressing the humour, more of the didactic approach holds for this particular collection using the ridiculous to teach normality and even morality in response.<sup>29</sup>

The cartoon humour presented around women identifies inclusive and exclusive approaches considered by Helen Butcher.<sup>30</sup> Inclusive images seek to encourage women to take on men's roles, uniting genders in a like manner, and exclusive ones promote ideas that men and women are completely different.<sup>31</sup> Often such divides fall along lines of intelligence. The humour of Gladeyes is exclusive whereas intelligent women are able to inclusively share work with men, or joke about their roles alongside them. The nurse, who writes letters for a fallen soldier in *Punch* January 1916, presents an example of the woman laughing with the audience inside what became a common practice.<sup>32</sup> Here she jokes that Tommy is not being fair by calling the nurses 'a very plain lot', for him to respond 'Never mind Nurse, put it down, it'll please her'.<sup>33</sup>

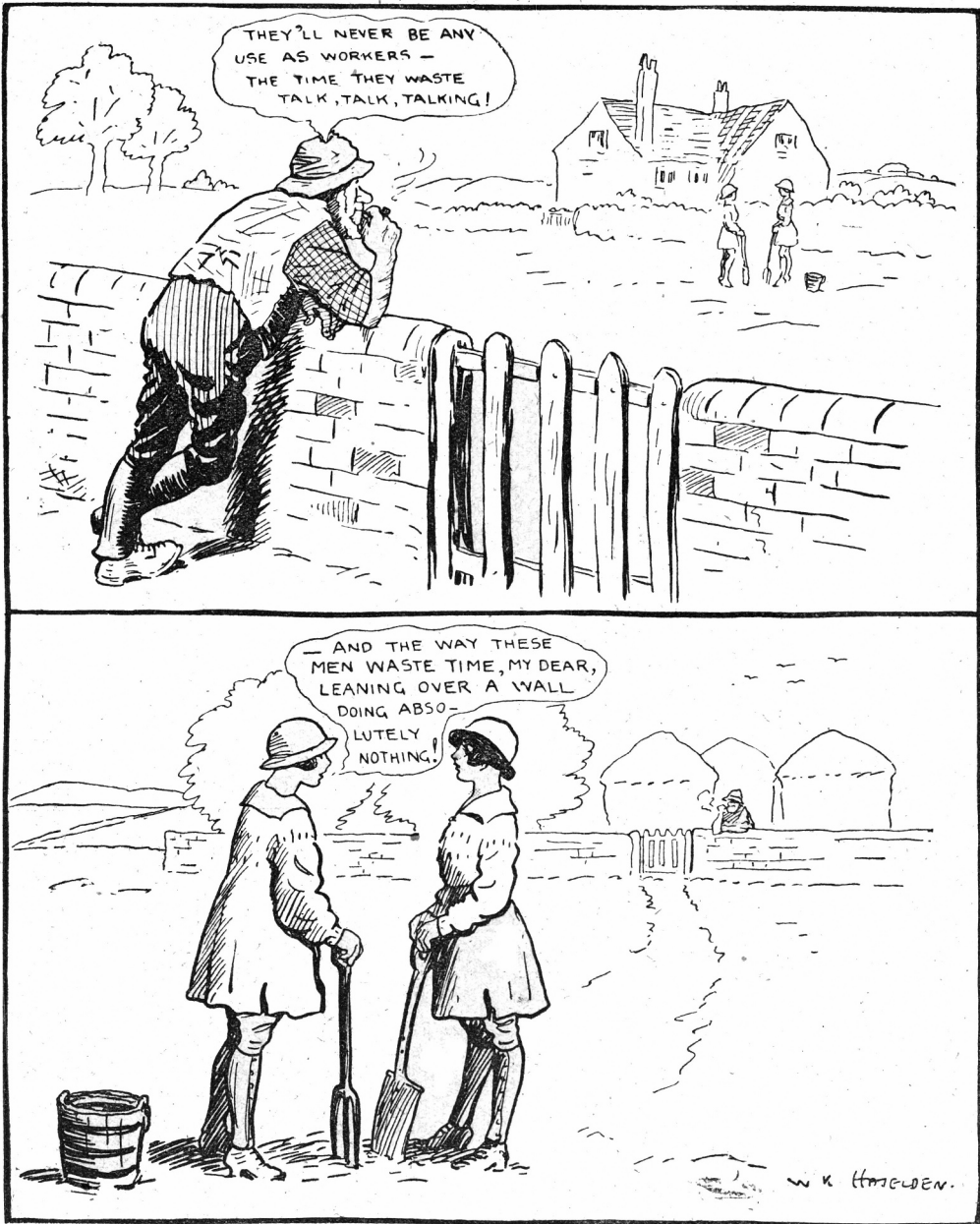
The nurse's comprehension of Tommy's 'diplomacy' provides humour that is inclusive as she accepts and becomes complicit in the joke. He is doing the right thing in the presence of an attractive woman who is assisting him, especially while writing a letter home presumably to his wife. The nurse complains jokingly, and in so doing acknowledges the positive nature of Tommy's decision reinforcing the same nature in actual soldiers' letters.<sup>34</sup> Regardless, the interaction between these characters is nothing without the audience having a cursory social knowledge of married life, and understanding that the wife at home would rather hear that the nurse is plain.<sup>35</sup> In this, the male viewer empathizes with the soldier and the need to lie, and female viewers sympathize with the nurse whilst appreciating why the wife at home might prefer the lie. The humour of the Nurse and Tommy reflects aspects of the community that surrounds them. There is an innate understanding of the problem of wartime separation as well as the tradition of 'till death do us part'.<sup>36</sup>

Haselden completes his 1917 set of younger women of the foolish land worker, the vaguely manipulative and vain Gladeyes, with intelligent women too. In this, he casts intelligent women within the inclusive framework of understanding that Butcher speaks of when he offers the other 'point of view' (Figure 3).<sup>37</sup> In this diptych, a farmer observing his workers comments at their inability to work while talking, then for the second part the same women look back at the farmer and comment on 'the way these men waste time ... leaning over a wall doing absolutely nothing!'. There is an equality of position and agency from both parts creating a humour of recognition. Each party identifies essentially the same problem in the other creating the joke incongruously, as they should all be working for the war effort, but are not.

## Older women

The second trope of female representation is that of the matron. In contrast to the young, she is elderly, overweight, arrogant, frequently from the upper classes and generally unaware of most aspects of the war. Recurrently, her design is to be ridiculed and laughed at, most of which is orientated around her age, class, intelligence and general attitudes to life. These images are also sub-divided: ugly, arrogant and stupid, merely old and silly, or the beloved grandmother. Before the war, cartoonists frequently identified characters relating to women's suffrage through manly stereotypes to presuppose desires to avoid

### A DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW.



While mere man is inclined to think that woman is prone to waste her time woman is sure that man is the greatest time-waster in the world.—(By W. K. Haselden.)

Figure 3. BCA WH1614 William Haselden, 'a different point of view', Daily Mirror, 1 October 1917. © Mirropix/Reach Licensing.

them.<sup>38</sup> Such cartoons depict women with what Margaret Stetz describes as 'generically unattractive' features; styling derived from Victorian caricature, particularly 'hatchet-faced, scowling sourpusses'.<sup>39</sup> Where the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU)

sought to promote strength and intellectual superiority through the media, cartoonists openly caricatured this, presenting negative alternatives.<sup>40</sup> The suffragists in particular were matronly whereas suffragettes could be younger women, often maintaining unattractive and militant appearances to be suspicious of or avoided, primarily in order to create humour for the audience.<sup>41</sup>

During the war, the matron replicates these older suffrage stereotypes, with gentle humour rather than specific disapprobation. Comedy created through matronly figures utilizes audience superiority or recognition. Viewers command superiority as they would not run around to create a 'movin' target [that] is more difficult to 'it' in an air-raid as George Belcher's Stout Lady believes is the best course of action in October 1917.<sup>42</sup> Equally, in many cases the audience recognizes features of older relatives stating similarly foolish things. The jesting of other characters reinforces misunderstandings of situation such as the lady who identifies an Australian soldier by the 'kangaroo feathers in his hat' using comparable ideas that an audience would recognize as incorrect.<sup>43</sup> Belcher's trademark matronly figures in *Punch*, provide characters so that viewing audiences can identify with both his humour and the matrons being laughed at.

Few of Belcher's matrons are termed mother or grandmother seen in personal manners by the audience, but rather remain illustrations of virtual nominative determinism; characters named for their appearance as the Stout or Pompous using their physical appearance to describe their personality.<sup>44</sup> When titled at all, it is as wives of unknown husbands such as Mrs Judkins who comments on the weather in the underground and how that suggests air raids are unlikely that night.<sup>45</sup> These women have unseen husbands who are perceived to be the control or intelligence in the matrimonial relationship. Such titles reaffirm their position in the social hierarchy, but keep them anonymous otherwise.

With younger women, names guide the audience to perceive them in certain ways, such as Gladeyes and Shyeyes, or a lack of name as with the women seeing things from a 'different point of view' allowed them to demonstrate greater intelligence.<sup>46</sup> In comparison, the relative anonymity of these older women means that they could be anyone with married authority. Where the matron's actions are generally as foolish as many of the younger women, there is more acceptance of what they do by the audience because of their apparent age.<sup>47</sup> Holding married titles of 'Mrs' reaffirms their domestic status as those who are subject to husbands from before the war, alternatively 'Miss' imposes spinster qualities reflected in Victorian and Edwardian character novels, negligible for war assistance.<sup>48</sup> Their age casts them beyond practical use as wartime workers, and beyond reproductive ability to provide more soldiers, yet a perceived maternal comfort embodied within the gentle humour directed at matrons is rarely vindictive or malicious.

For Belcher in particular, contemporaries identified his social integrity with characters that represented real people in tone and style and this follows for other *Punch* artists.<sup>49</sup> Some cartoonists reinforce the parental nature provided with matrons by additional characters in the cartoons such as children or a partner linking to Grayzel's continued maternal theory in war.<sup>50</sup> These characters remain a generic 'mother', but also create humour through their foibles reinforced by the secondary characters. In 1916, Grannie gets upset when Nancy provides her with odd stockings to go to the air raid shelter, and in 1918 Mother gets 'a dreadful feeling' about how it is at the front when looking at modern art, until her Warrior son reassures her '[t]hank heaven, no' it is not like that.<sup>51</sup> In the first, audience superiority gently laughs at the grandmother awoken at 1:30 am for

not realizing that matching stockings are not vital. The second hints at mothers' worries about sons at the front, and soldiers' reassurances that things are not as bad as the art. Thus, the humour serves as comfort, or hints at sarcasm suggesting things might actually be worse creating inclusive comedy for maternal and soldierly audiences.<sup>52</sup>

Additions used to reinforce humour in matronly cartoons include husbands and relatives.<sup>53</sup> Sometimes they make statements, at others they observe to add facial humour. For example, when Mrs Stubbs talks to the Vicar about the Thessalonians, she hopes St. Paul received replies to his letters, since she has not from her son on the front. To this, the Vicar remains straight faced, while the husband's expression behind them reinforces the humour for the audience.<sup>54</sup> Misunderstandings of letters create shared jokes with the audience about how readers misconstrue details on both sides similar to Mother's thoughts about the art in Reynold's image of July 1918.<sup>55</sup> Other images the week before 'Mrs Stubbs' in *Punch* present an Officer on the front amused by letters from home, reinforcing ideas of misunderstandings and audience recognition of the issue.<sup>56</sup> As much as the character expression of Mr Stubbs authorizes the humour, there is also the recognized mistaken belief the public are aware of allowing audience humour.

A final set of matronly cartoons develop maternal comfort and recognition using 'DORA', the personification of the Defence of the Realm Act.<sup>57</sup> The acronym, 'DORA' was a gift to cartoonists, strangely not used with the Act's implementation. However, when she does appear in 1918, she is a grandmother nurturing British society, whilst maintaining humour in her representation. Poy in particular makes her in this form; she is approachable whilst maintaining authority, almost celebrating the social matriarch.<sup>58</sup> Poy's first image of 'DORA' presents her taking John Citizen to bed and away from his toys left at the bottom of the stairs; toys that represent aspects of legislative controls. By March 1918, morale was low throughout the British Isles, and here 'DORA' offers a comforting figure as a counter character to what Gullace calls 'patriotic motherhood' earlier in the war when mothers sent sons away to fight through the propaganda machine of the war.<sup>59</sup> Rather, the grandmotherly aspect of 'DORA' in 1918 contrasts by nurturing and preserving youthful innocence left in Britain by taking them to bed. In this form, 'DORA' actively does her bit presenting gentle familial humour of the approachable older woman, who still has authority as a national icon.

## Allegorical women

Continuing with ideas of national symbolism, women in allegorical positions take on a different manner for humour. Where there is gentle mockery of the matron for apparent nativity, or celebration of a homely parental figure, and younger women present recognised naïvety with no threats to social norms, the allegory in contrast represents a wider demographic.<sup>60</sup> Allegories appeared repeatedly throughout the war, and national representations in particular such as Britannia, Marianne and Germania are prevalent alongside abstract concepts of Victory, Liberty and Peace. With these characters, their portrayal and the humour within it is particularly dependent upon the nation they represent or the nature of any incumbent emotions. Abstract allegories present emotional celebration as opposed to the comedy seen in the older and younger women presented above. International allegories in particular take on humour in terms of mockery and ridicule for an enemy, or strength and valour for allied nations.

Victory, Liberty and Peace are celebrations of the abstract emotions they represent for all nations and their depictions reinforce those positive sentiments. Their humour is rarely hilarity, but instead a comforting good cheer or celebration rather than a stimulus for ridicule. Many of these cartoons present the figure centrally, sometimes surrounded by soldiers or as solitary 'thinking' figures that inspire thought in the viewing audience too. Raven-Hill gives us 'Liberty' after the first year of war and Partridge provides 'Victory' towards the end; both characters stride, or ride forth in Grecian splendour celebrating achievement.<sup>61</sup> Alternatively, more sombre characters such as Peace feature in the 'Children's Truce' December 1914 as a solitary thinker reflecting on the peace and celebration of children reaching for Father Christmas around the tree outside the window.<sup>62</sup> The humour in this is that of simple pleasures and comfort reflecting on pre-war nostalgia as it continues.

Nationalistic personas however, are far more open to ridicule, such as John Bull, a male British persona, less relevant here, but this is especially true of foreign nations.<sup>63</sup> Traditional stereotypes as perceived by artists outside or inside the nation feature in each national allegory and those outside are better able to use this for creating cartoon humour.<sup>64</sup> Britannia or Dame Wales, for example, follow the positive allegorical trope as with Victory and Liberty among British Artists.<sup>65</sup> Britannia is a desirable character designed to raise enthusiasm, promote strength and encourage valour whilst maintaining a deistic superiority over the viewer. As such, Britannia is the 'patriotic mother' of the nation vitriolically sending her sons to war and imbuing them with her power and presence.<sup>66</sup> Her authority in cartoons comes through her Greek costuming, weaponry, and upright stance, which do not naturally lend themselves to laughter. Nonetheless, there are times when incongruity creates humour, for example when Britannia rolls her sleeves up to lend a hand taking on a more human person in Raven-Hill's 1916 'Entente in the Kitchen'.<sup>67</sup> In this, deistic confidence and gumption remain to strengthen Britannia compared with Marianne appearing less useful despite her valid suggestions.<sup>68</sup> The contrast between the nations in this image are palpable, while Marianne's joking criticism leaves her on the side as young and superficial despite being a deity; Britannia is strong, matriarchal and shows her actions for the war.

Dame Wales rolls her sleeves up similar to Britannia and lends a hand as instructive motivation for other Welsh women to join the war effort. She equally serves as an image of allegorical support and respect for the populous not demoted in cartoon features, but taking on maternal roles over Welsh soldiers and recruits for Staniforth. Dame Wales raises the 'call for patriotism' taking centre stage among men who might enlist in 1914, encouraging them with nationalistic zeal.<sup>69</sup> By October, she and Germania nurse their respective national charges, and while the German allegory feeds the German boy gunpowder, 'despotic militarism' and 'barbarism jam', Wales feeds her recruits a good mix of sport fixtures and results, 'technical training', 'religious nationalism', 'education' and 'singing' (Figure 4).<sup>70</sup> Their feeding impact appears centrally as the Welsh soldier chases the German away in 'The Result' reinforcing the value of good men brought up in the right way by a national mother.

As an ally, Marianne features in two ways in British cartooning: highly effeminate in a similar capacity to the younger irreverent women above, or feminine despite wearing male attire, particularly the blue uniform of the French military demonstrating desire to participate.<sup>71</sup> She wears the bonnet rouge of the French Revolution reinforcing her national identity, and sometimes has a Gallic cockerel adding to the national stereotype.



Figure 4. Joseph Morewood Staniforth, 'The Two Mothers', *Western Mail*, 2 October 1914.

The replication of Marianne in cartoons connects to past disputes between Britain and France creating humorous incongruity as they now work together.<sup>72</sup> Her representation is beautiful and positive, albeit at times reckless; nonetheless, she is a character to follow as she storms forward with French troops behind her in replication of *Liberté* from the Revolution.<sup>73</sup> For Louis Raemaekers, a Dutch artist drawing for the *Times*, and therefore for a British audience, Marianne particularly takes on the feminine, but ruthless leadership role, almost as a female Napoleon.<sup>74</sup> In contrast, Raven-Hill emphasizes the ultra-feminine model of the French nation in *Punch*, giving her wide eyes and a rounded figure. Regardless, these characters present with humorous respect.

The enemy to Britain, on the other hand, is Germania who before the war was equally young and feminine as the other deities in British and German portrayals.<sup>75</sup> For German artists during the war, she parallels Britannia in Britain; often an armoured warrior woman on horseback, whereas, allied artists begin to change her character, creating humour or promoting derision of the enemy.<sup>76</sup> As such, for British artists she appears skeletal and demonic, or becomes an old and malicious matron.<sup>77</sup> Projected upon this character is a loss of rationale and sanity by Raemaekers when she develops older physical characteristics. In this case, Germania gains weight, but not in a positive comforting manner, rather as a representation of someone who has lost control (Figure 5). In



Figure 5. BCA fNC1487 R3, Louis Raemaekers, 'Lusitania Amok', a Neutral's Indictment, April 1916.

'Lusitania Amok', she wields knives with splatters of blood on her dress. In addition, her mouth is wide-open, hair flying around a florid red face and her posture that of a demonic dance promoting further negative stereotypes. However, alongside this,

traditional motifs of national identity including the yellow colouring of her gown and the German Eagle on her chest also feature.<sup>78</sup>

British domestic cartoonists also present Germania, although often less manically. There are hints of German manipulation where she is physically strength and regal prominence similar to Britannia and Marianne, but at the same time, she pulls away a mask labelled 'civilization' revealing a haggard face beneath in Poy's 'The Mask Off' from August 1914.<sup>79</sup> Images of this nature, suggest a previous friendship with Germany now tainted by war. There remains acknowledgement of Germany's power and battle strength through her physical depiction, but removing that visage hides an older face that alters the audience perception of Germany's power in a less threatening way. Here she becomes parallel to the matrons discussed earlier, who pose no threat to the social structure in wartime and as such, the German nation is no longer a serious threat.

Further degeneration of the pre-war Goddess appears when making her physically older; thus, presented similarly to 'DORA', Germania is grandmother to the nation, or in particular, to the Kaiser (Figure 4). This is not a vicious representation as Raemaekers might offer, but rather casts her as harmless, sentimental or ignorant, as with so many British matrons above. Naturally, humour resonates around these versions as she berates the Kaiser for his actions, or simply cannot comprehend what is occurring, as that was not how she raised him.<sup>80</sup> For British artists, the matron once again plays a strong role in the depiction of the German allegory when she looks for good in her 'grandson' the Kaiser. In places, these images can cast similarity to a matronly Queen Victoria; the grandmother to both Kaiser Wilhelm II and King George V, which adds layers of international incongruity, as the Kaiser is clearly doing the wrong thing from a British perspective. Nonetheless, the reprimand continues the humour for that audience.

## Conclusion

Recent developments in the historiography surrounding women and the Great War continue to highlight women as workers and significant contributors to the Great War whilst maintaining their innate authority as 'mothers'.<sup>81</sup> Contemporary newspapers acknowledged contributions and advertised for more women to assist the WAAC after its 1917 conception, as well as helping to recruit land and munitions workers.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, the press identified a reassessment of the 'change that has come over man's conception of women', and thus, long established social patriarchy knew of and accepted wartime changes of gender roles in society.<sup>83</sup> Yet despite such calls and acknowledgements in the press, the visual representation of women in cartoons does not specifically change, but rather maintains the former status quo. This article addresses three forms of female representation through the war in cartooning: the young, the matron and allegorical figureheads who each transcend earlier images of the same in the press. Analysis of these representations of women demonstrate a social need to see the recognized in times of war, and represent a means of forming objective social security.

For younger women, excessive presentation of traditional standards of femininity and class highlight didactic points, teaching the population how to behave such as with Haselden's Miss Gladeyes who openly does what is wrong in the context of war to show the public how not to behave in a laughable fashion.<sup>84</sup> Gentle derision of working



women incapable of fulfilling formerly male roles in cartoons use irony of depiction to indicate that women were indeed able to fulfil such roles, as the mistakes they make are comically too obvious to be accurate of actual people in society.<sup>85</sup> Alternatively, cartoon women of greater apparent intelligence illustrate how they contribute to war efforts as nurses or on the land whilst using incongruous humour of such knowledge without its complete demonstrable fulfilment.<sup>86</sup>

Elderly upper-class matrons represent arrogance or ignorance highlighting the confusion of their situations to inspire audience superiority unless that matron served a purpose of compassion and comfort such as 'DORA' before the war's end.<sup>87</sup> Matrons especially represent a traditional status quo of female images. Perceived to be mothers or grandmothers who are no longer reproductively viable to create new soldiers for the war, cartoon matrons thereby provide jokes for the audience accepted as natural responses to their age.<sup>88</sup> As wives of often of unseen husbands, they have some assumed social authority that is inverted through comments they make assuming that it is best to keep moving to 'avoid being [h]it'.<sup>89</sup> Visually, these women invoke older cartoon styling from Victorian and Edwardian suffrage campaigns with masculine traits again over emphasized, but in the context of war, the humour added to them visually making them safe depictions who no longer advocate suffrage ideals in the context of active war.<sup>90</sup>

Then finally, allegorical women in cartoons allow images to support public morale with abstract notions of Peace and Victory, or provide national allegories of Britannia, Marianne and Germania that contrast combatant nations, and within this, one new matron appears as a national carer in the form of 'DORA'.<sup>91</sup> International allegories provide established recognized figures as symbols of pride for home nations depicting feminine strength displaying knowledge of how to care for and nurture the lands they represent through Britannia and Dame Wales.<sup>92</sup> Additionally, the new character of 'DORA' provides further reassurance that she is caring for the nation as a whole through government guidance. Alternatively, when used to represent an enemy, all positive attributions reverse making her appear stupid or comically unhinged mentally, and thereby ineffective as an enemy.<sup>93</sup> For cartoonists, making an enemy seem foolish or even mad served to provide comfort for audiences, reducing public fears of enemy prowess. Competency for these long established national allegories offer hints to former relations; Marianne is not quite as practical as Britannia is, and Germania removes her mask of civilization to demonstrate hierarchies humorously for public reassurance.<sup>94</sup>

Such women in cartooning representation at each level or age and social standing demonstrate an element of nostalgia for pre-war times that provide comfort.<sup>95</sup> Visual stereotypes of women serve to uphold traditional ideals of feminine places in society, establishing pre-war social roles in the minds of readers. Cartooning twists the rigidity of those cultural norms and stereotypes, not falsifying ideas about women as such, but re-establishing them in comic form allowing humour to alleviate the tensions of war.<sup>96</sup> Traditional roles of younger women offering temptation for men alter taking on masculine working roles, but comically incompetent. The matron demonstrates awareness of pre-war life identified in wartime situations ineffectively and allegorical women represent the pride of a nation or denigration of the enemy to reduce their military prowess. For each of these representations, the known is safe in times of undeniable change through world conflict. The humour these cartoons present to audiences utilizes traditional,

recognizable and at times iconic forms of illustration incongruously to provide reassurance and comfort. Predominantly the humour depicting these women shows them absurdly and utilizes presumed attitudes of audience superiority combined with their recognition of people they know represented in the women shown and overwhelming humorous relief.<sup>97</sup>

## Notes

1. Cartoons discussed here are selected predominantly from those available through the British Cartoon Archive (BCA) at the University of Kent. This is not an exclusive set of contemporary cartooning.
2. Braybon, *Women Workers*; Grayzel, *Women and the First World War*; Summerfield, "Women and War," 307–8; Gullace, *The Blood of Our Sons*; Andrews, et al., *Women's Histories*; Higgonett et al., eds., *Behind the Lines*; Marwick, *Women at War*.
3. See Grayzel, *Women's Identities*; Summerfield, "Women and War," 307–8.
4. See Braybon, *Women Workers*; Gullace, *Blood of Our Sons*; Rayner, "Carers, Combatants and Clandestine."
5. Broadley, *Painting Suffragettes*, 159–83.
6. Pickering, *Stereotyping*, 5.
7. Burke, *Eyewitnessing*; Scully & Quartly, *Drawing the Line*.
8. See Mitchell, *Iconology*; Aulich and Hewitt, *Seduction or Instruction?*.
9. Demm, "Caricatures," 1.
10. Milne, *Laughter and War*, 1–5; Kazecki, *Laughter in the Trenches*, 1–2.
11. Rürger, "Laughter and War in Berlin"; Eastman, *The Sense of Humour*; Kazecki, *Laughter in the Trenches*, chapter 2; Tholas-Disset & Ritzenhoff, *Humour, Entertainment and Popular Culture*; Gorgula, "Oh It's a Lovely War," 33–50.
12. See Scully, *British Images of Germany*.
13. Pickering, *Stereotyping*, 5; Braybon and Summerfield, *Out of the Cage*, 16.
14. Andrews et al., *Women's Histories*; Fell, *Women as Veterans*, 162–5, 135; Downs, *War Work*, 74.
15. Woollacott, "Khaki Fever," 325–47.
16. See Smith, *British Women's Suffrage*, 34–56; Atkinson, *Rise up Women!*.
17. See Morrow, "Brothers Tingo." *Punch*, February 14, 1917; Armour, "Ullo Missy." *Punch*, June 7, 1916, 383.
18. Haselden, "Learning to work on the Land." *Daily Mirror*, October 2, 1917, 6; Haselden, "Women: Decorative Soul." *Daily Mirror*, September 5, 1917, 6.
19. See BCA WH1323 reverse attached image.
20. Especially reference to the Queen's "Work for Women Fund." *Times*, August 12, 1914–1918; "Women and Farm Labour." *Times*, January 29, 1915, 9; "The War Work of Women." *The Graphic*, May 13, 1916, 15; "Testing the Women Farm Workers." *Birmingham Daily Post*, October 5, 1917, 3; "The Mission of Working Women." *Leicester Chronicle*, October 31, 1914, 3; "Helping in the War." *The Sphere*, May 27, 1916, 16.
21. See NAM. 1993-11-1-110, Unknown Artist, "Women's Army Auxiliary Corp," c. 1915; TNA EXT 1/315 part 2, IWM PST 5476, Artist, "Women Urgently Wanted for the WAAC," c. 1916. TNA EXT 1/315 part 17, Artist, "These Women are Doing Their Bit," c. 1915; IWM PST 6542.
22. Haselden, "Miss Gladeyes in the Air-Raids." *Daily Mirror*, October 4, 1917, 6.
23. Haselden, "Why Miss Gladeye doesn't do War Work." *Daily Mirror*, October 13, 1917, 6.
24. "The Girl Who Stays at Home." *Daily Mirror*, October 15, 1917, 5; "Slackers' everywhere." *Daily Mirror*, October 15, 1917, 5; "The Hunt for Slackers." *Daily Mirror*, October 17, 1917, 6; "Is Anybody Still doing Nothing for the War?" *Daily Mirror*, October 22, 1917, 5; see Woollacott, *On Her Their Lives Depend*, 67–8.

25. Haselden, "Miss Gladeyes Takes up War Work I." *Daily Mirror*, October 20, 1917, 6.
26. Haselden, "Miss Gladeyes Takes up War Work V." *Daily Mirror*, October 25, 1917, 6; see Stearns, "Girls, Boys, and Emotions," 36–74, fn. 12.
27. Haselden, "Miss Gladeyes Takes up War Work IX." *Daily Mirror*, October 30, 1917, 6.
28. Haselden, "Miss Gladeyes Resigns from her War Work." *Daily Mirror*, November 1, 1917, 6.
29. Vervaecke, "Patriotisme Philanthropique et Citoyenneté Féminine," 57–70; Gray, "The Uses of Victorian Laughter," 146–7.
30. Butcher, "Images of Women in the Media," 317–25.
31. Butcher, "Images of Women in the Media," 322.
32. See Hanna, "War Letters"; Lee, *War Girls*, 226–7; IWM ART 5234, William Hatherell, "The Last Message," 1918.
33. Pegram "Tommy dictating a letter." *Punch*, January 19, 1916, 57.
34. Hanna, "War Letters"; Lee, *War Girls*.
35. See Cohen, *Jokes*, 12–31.
36. See Anderson and Little, "All's Fair," 901–22.
37. Haselden, "A Different Point of View." *Daily Mirror*, October 1, 1917, 5; Butcher, "Images of Women in the Media."
38. See Stetz, "The Laugh of the New Woman," 221; Kindred, "The Portrayal of Women in the Cartoons of William Kerridge Haselden 1906–1930," 33; Broadley, *Painting Suffragettes*, 159–83.
39. Stetz, "The Laugh of the New Woman," 221; Garrett and Thomas, *Suffrage and the Arts*.
40. See Mercer, "Media and Militancy," 471–86.
41. See Partridge, "The Shrieking Sister." *Punch*, January 17, 1906; Sambourne, "The Angel in 'The House.'" *Punch*, June 14, 1884; Haselden, "Suffragettes." *Daily Mirror*, April 24, 1906, 6; Haselden, "Women's suffrage: Will they Get it?" *Daily Mirror*, November 29, 1907, 6; Haselden, "Suggestions for Suffragettes." *Daily Mirror*, November 16, 1909, 6.
42. Belcher, "Stout lady." *Punch*, October 31, 1917, 301.
43. Belcher, "That's One of Them Australian Soldiers." February 2, 1916, 91.
44. Belcher, "Pompous Lady [who] Shall Descend at Knightsbridge." *Punch*, December 16, 1914, 505; Belcher, "Stout Lady." *Punch*, October 31, 1917, 301.
45. Belcher, Mrs. Judkins, *Punch*, December 19, 1917, 411.
46. Haselden, "Miss Gladeyes Takes up War Work V." *Daily Mirror*, October 25, 1917, 6; Haselden, "A Different Point of View." *Daily Mirror*, October 1, 1917, 5.
47. See Thane, *Old Age in English History*.
48. See Liggins, *Odd Women?*
49. "Life and Character." *Punch*, April 17, 1918, 211.
50. Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War*.
51. Townsend, "GRANNIE." *Punch*, February 16, 1916; Reynolds, "War Pictures." *Punch*, July 31, 1918.
52. Butcher, "Images of Women in the Media," 317–25.
53. See Townsend, "GRANNIE." *Punch*, February 16, 1916; Reynolds, "War Pictures." *Punch*, July 31, 1918.
54. Belcher, "These Salonikans, Mrs Stubbs." *Punch*, March 29, 1916, 213.
55. Reynolds, "War Pictures." *Punch*, July 31, 1918.
56. See Artist, "Officer at Front." *Punch*, March 22, 1916, 197.
57. See Turner, *British Politics and the Great War*, 59.
58. "Poy," "And so to bed," *Daily Mail*, c. January-February, 1918; Haselden, "Things that Need Not Continue in Peace Time." *Daily Mirror*, January 2, 1919; Whitelaw, "The Stayer." *Passing Show*, July 16, 1921; Partridge, "Cramping his Style." *Punch*, April 9, 1919; Strube, "A Wee 'Deoch-an-Dora.'" *Daily Express*, November 30, 1928.
59. Gullace, *Blood of Our Sons*, 53–69. See Raemaekers, "My Son go and Fight for your Motherland," *Neutral's Indictment*; Keeley, "Women of Britain Say Go!," Imperial War Museum, 1915.
60. Tuchman, "The Symbolic Annihilation of Women by the Mass Media," 169–70.

61. Raven-Hill, "After One Year." *Punch*, August 11, 1914; Partridge, "Victory." *Punch*, November 20, 1918.
62. Partridge, "The Children's Peace." *Punch*, December, 1915.
63. For John Bull see Taylor, "John Bull and the Iconography of Public Opinion in England," 93–128.
64. Larkin, "The Cartoonist as Outsider"; Pickering, *Stereotypes*, 30.
65. Raven-Hill, "After One Year" 1914; Partridge, "Victory," 1918.
66. Raemaekers, "My Son, Go and Fight for your Motherland," 1916; Gullace, *Blood of Our Sons*, 53–69.
67. Raven-Hill, "The Entente in the Kitchen." *Punch*, December 17, 1916.
68. Davis, "Anglo-French Relationship".
69. Staniforth, "Pro Patria." *Western Times*, December 11, 1917.
70. Staniforth, "The Two Mothers." *Western Mail*, October 2, 1914.
71. See Raemaekers, "Liberté, Liberté, Chérie," *Neutral's Indictment*.
72. Davis, "The Anglo-French Relationship"; Allan, "Female Bodies," 43.
73. See Delacroix, "La Liberté Guidant le Peuple," 1830.
74. Raemaekers, "Liberté, Liberté, Chérie"; Larkin, "The Cartoonist as Outsider".
75. See Partridge, "The Call of the Blood." *Punch*, March 31, 1909.
76. See, Johnson, "Die Göttliche Sarah." (The Divine Sarah) *Kladderadatsch*, August 30, 1914.
77. See "Poy," "The Mask Off." *Weekly Dispatch*, August, 1914.
78. Raemaekers, "Lusitania Amok," 1916).
79. "Poy," "The Mask Off." *Weekly Dispatch*, August, 1914.
80. See "Poy," "The Day, But not the Year." *Weekly Dispatch*, August, 1914; "Poy," "The Man Who Was," c. 1918; "Poy," "Second Thoughts," c. 1918.
81. Lee, *War Girls*; Braybon, *Evidence, History and the Great War*; Grayzel, *Women and the First World War*; Fell, *Women as Veterans*; Rayner, "Carer, Combatant, Clandestine."
82. Permeswaran, "Women's Army Auxiliary Corps"; "Women Urgently Wanted for the WAAC." *Sheffield Evening Telegraph*, September 24, 1917; "W.A.A.C & W.R.N.S.," *Illustrated London News*, 16 March 1918.
83. "The Future of the Women Worker." *Daily Mirror*, May 19, 1919, 7.
84. Haselden, "Miss Gladeyes," October–November, 1917; Gray, "The Uses of Victorian Laughter," 146–7.
85. Haselden, "Learning to work on the Land"; Morrow, "Brothers Tingo"; Armour, "Ullo Missy."
86. Pegram "Tommy dictating a letter"; Haselden, "Different Point of View."
87. Belcher, "Australian Soldiers"; "Poy," "And so to Bed."
88. Townsend, "GRANNIE."
89. Belcher, "Stout lady."
90. Stetz, "Laugh of the New Woman," in Wagner-Lawlor (ed.)'s, *Victorian Comic Spirit*, 221.
91. Partridge, "The Children's Peace." *Punch*, December, 1915; Partridge, "Victory"; Raven-Hill, "Entente in the Kitchen"; "Poy," "And so to bed."
92. Raemaekers, "My Son go and Fight for your Motherland," *Neutral's Indictment*; Raven-Hill, "Woman Power." *Punch*, May 15, 1918, 307; Staniforth, "The Two Mothers."
93. Raemaekers, "Lusitania Amok"; "Poy," "Mask Off."
94. Raven-Hill, "Entente in the Kitchen"; "Poy," "Mask Off."
95. Roper, "Nostalgia."
96. Pickering, *Stereotyping*, 12.
97. Kazecki, *Laughter in the Trenches*, chapter 2; Tholas-Disset & Ritzenhoff, *Humour, Entertainment and Popular Culture*; Milne, *Laughter and War*.

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## ORCID

Pip Gregory  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4891-5520>

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