

Spring 2017

Portraits of the Most Sane

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Recommended Citation

Mamukelashvili, David Leonard, "Portraits of the Most Sane" (2017). *Senior Projects Spring 2017*. 173.
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Portraits of the Most Sane

Senior Project
Submitted to the Division of the Arts
of Bard College

By
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Annandale-on-Hudson, NY
May 2017

Acknowledgments

I do not know whether I'll ever be able to demonstrate or show what these five people, I'm about to name, have meant to me over these four years at Bard. I think the only way to repay you is to always hold myself to the standards that you've held me to.

First and foremost I want to mention my advisor Professor Laurie Dahlberg. The way she taught the *Art in the Age of Revolution* course made me want to stay in the horrifying ages of 1789 forever. I do not know what it takes, or causes, to neglect Impressionism, Fauvism, Pointillism, or Rococo, but whatever it is Professor Dahlberg helped me have it. Her choice of material was more colorful than Fauvism, more scenic than Impressionism, more detailed than Pointillism, and more flamboyant than Rococo. Two years later I ended up writing my Senior Project on Theodore Géricault. - Professor Dahlberg, I want to thank you for the fact that you never doubted me. I think that was my second biggest motivation. I also thank you for all the formal details with which you helped me, however, the most important was your encouragement and support. You put our student-professor relationship over my irresponsibility as a student, and calmly guided me towards the end even though I was not being the best advisee. I thank you for your personal qualities and am honored to have had conversations with you for the entire year.

Next I want to thank Professor Diana DePardo-Minsky, who has introduced me to the English language – it did not turn out to be as easy as I thought it would be. Moreover, her meticulousness and attention to detail has shaped me as a thoughtful person. “The marble not yet carved can hold any thought the greatest artist has” – everyone starts their undergrad as marbles and the professors are the artists who start carving them out. You were the first Art History

professor I had at Bard, and even though you told me to go to learning commons and learn English, I became a major to prove you wrong. I could not achieve my will regarding English comprehensibility, it still is mediocre, however, I hope I turned into a student you wanted me to be. Thank for being true to me. Your love towards your subject made me love my interests, but more importantly, your love towards your students made me want to be the one. Thank you for your kind heart and friendship, since the first day you've treated me as an adult, which always empowered me. Our *Michelangelo* class had two artists in it, and you were one of them – the way you handle your classes is another masterpiece in themselves.

Finally, I want to mention Professor Susan Merriam. I think you are Meryl Streep of Art History; and Meryl Streep can have no bad connotations. It seems so encapsulating; I do not even know how to elaborate on this. Thank you for being who you are, and the way you are who you are – this is what Professor Diana DePardo-Minsky was talking about. If Professor Laurie Dahlberg was reading this “acknowledgements” part, she'd edit every single word of it, I would have given it to her, but did not want to ruin the surprise. Professor Merriam, I always felt really comfortable in your class and within your presence. Thank you for creating such and inclusive atmosphere for all of your students – I wish I took more classes with you, however, I hope not to lose our ties.

Dear board members, you do not know how much you mean to me, and I always want to keep in touch. You three in addition to couple of other professors at Bard are the reasons to why I want to be a teacher and pursue my career in academics. I hope it works out, but what I hope the most for, is for you all to be forever healthy and happy – Thank You!

Two other people I want to mention are my mom Marianna Oakley – the first Art Historian I ever met, and my aunt Eteri Andjaparidze, the first Artist I ever met. Their

contribution to my cultural, global, and general education is second to none. With these two around, I have no clue how did my brother become an athlete. All the respect to him.

Nevertheless, I do not regret a single day of you dragging me to the museums as a two-year-old, or to the classical concerts at the age of three; well...maybe I regret some of them, but not after I hit around fourteen. With all honesty and sincerity, you have created David Mamukelashvili; one of you even did it literally. My love towards you is eternal and the only thing I regret is ever hurting your feelings. Thank you for all the nerve, help, support, criticism, encouragement, and inspiration – you are the reason to why I chose this path and wrote sixty pages of nonsense right now. I can truly go on forever, but will cut it short, to foreshadow what I did with my project in the end.

Table of Contents

Introduction – Section I.I.....	1
Section I.II.....	6
Chapter I.....	8
Chapter II – Section II.I.....	27
Section II.II.....	33
Section II.III.....	35
Chapter III – Section III.I.....	51
Section III.II.....	56
Section III.III.....	61
Conclusion.....	70

Dedicated to my Grandmother – Iveta “Bebu” Bakhtadze

'As if anything was not political at present; anything except the conduct of our statesmen...Romanticism in painting is political; it is the echo of the cannon shot of 1789. – Auguste Jal (trans. Hugh Honour)

Introduction

Section I.I - Introduction: Theories regarding the ways to look at Art

Aesthetician, James Stolnitz, in his text “The Aesthetic Attitude” from *Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art Criticism*, discusses the aesthetic judgment of works of art. He argues that the attitude we take determines how we perceive the world.¹ We pay attention to some things and we don't to the others. Our attention is selective, however, sometimes we simply are the receptors of the external world, yet possess power to look at things willingly. When we have a purpose, a direction, we look at things differently, thus the purpose guides our attention towards the perceived entity: “Now the aesthetic attitude is not the attitude which people usually adopt. The attitude which we customarily take can be called the attitude of ‘practical’ perception.”² Stolnitz straight away says that it is inevitable not to look at the artwork from the “utilitarian” perspective. We see what we like, therefore concentrate and take what we need from the art piece. Our mind, then, is the place where we determine what the artwork entails, which is not the most plausible approach to have, because the piece is subject to losing its real qualities and attributes. As Stolnitz writes, “Thus, when our attitude is ‘practical,’ we perceive things only as means to some goal which lies beyond the experience of perceiving them,” and only sometimes do we actually focus on the piece; when we look at it for the sake of enjoyment.³ This approach, the one consisting in us appreciating the aesthetic elements of the artwork is the truest way to

¹ Jerome Stolnitz, "Categories of Art," in *Aesthetics: A Critical Anthology*, ed. George Dickie, Richard Sclafani, and Ronald Roblin (New York, NY: Bedford / St. Martin's, 1989), 334.

² Stolnitz, "Categories of Art," 335.

³ Stolnitz, "Categories of Art," 335.

perceive art. Consequently, the philosopher develops an aesthetic theory of “Aesthetic Attitude,” one that urges viewers to judge and evaluate art only through its formal qualities.

For Stolnitz any work of art can be aesthetic. As he writes, “For the aesthetic attitude, things are not to be classified or studied or judged. They are in themselves pleasant or exciting to look at.”⁴ He even touches upon the grotesque imagery existing in the artworld and eventually claims that evidence of this sort, and the existence of this type of art, cannot establish that *all* objects can be aesthetic objects, but all art is aesthetic in itself.⁵ Evaluating a work of art aesthetically is the truest approach for the philosopher. Since, if we try to speculate on it, we will stumble upon multiple understandings; moreover, we will only focus upon the ones that interest us the most. This approach would not treat fairly the remaining properties and attributes of the piece. As the aesthetician writes, “In taking the aesthetic attitude, we want to make the value of the object come fully alive in our experience. Therefore we focus our attention upon the object and “key up” our capacities of imagination and emotion to respond to it.”⁶ We internalize the artwork, it exists independently of all that was surrounding it once it is in the outside world, hence, the only fair treatment we can give it is to internalize the emotions connected to it, yet simply based on, its colors, shape, size, and other aesthetic properties. Therefore, sensation can also be aesthetic, but one derived only from the formal qualities of the piece.

Kendall L. Walton in his essay, *Categories of Art*, argues that circumstances, philosophy, history, psychological state, and personal life, are often neglected when figuring out the nature of the work. Walton contradicts Stolnitz, and says that social context is as important as the aesthetic

⁴ Stolnitz, "Categories of Art," 337.

⁵ Stolnitz, "Categories of Art," 341.

⁶ Stolnitz, "Categories of Art," 338.

qualities of the piece.⁷ Walton gets to the crux of his argument when he talks about four points, which determine the value of categorizing art.⁸ In his second point, the aesthetician argues that categories themselves influence works of art, while in his third one, he claims that artists already want their works to be perceived in some way, therefore, their choice to label art cannot be omitted. These two points aid the purpose of categorizing art. Walton discusses an example of the impressionist exhibition, where one would know what to expect when going to the late 19th century exhibit, due to the times determining the period of art.⁹ Times often shape artistic periods. Once someone is born within the climax of Renaissance, he most likely will not aspire to be a byzantine artist and will start painting in the style close to his time. Furthermore, a lot of artists actually tried to go back in time, learning about “Classical” approaches to art, which influenced their styles going forward. El Greco, even though he was born at the end of Renaissance, and eventually developed a very unique technique, still traveled to Italy to master the “traditional” way of painting. Therefore, it is inevitable that historical facts help determine the properties of works of art.¹⁰

Oftentimes, we perceive everything relatively and this manner also applies to art. As Walton introduces the examples of elephants, he says that even though they are huge animals, which is their identifying characteristic, the size of a particular elephant will be determined by the class its going to fit.¹¹ Elephants can be large and small depending on the category in which they fall and their apprehension individually does not help us to have a general picture about them as animals. If the only elephant I’ve seen in life is a mini one, my knowledge of the species

⁷ Kendall L. Walton, "Categories of Art," in *Aesthetics: A Critical Anthology*, ed. George Dickie, Richard Sclafani, and Ronald Roblin (New York, NY: Bedford / St. Martin's, 1989), 395.

⁸ Walton, "Categories of Art," 408.

⁹ Walton, "Categories of Art," 399.

¹⁰ Walton, "Categories of Art," 412.

¹¹ Walton, "Categories of Art," 404.

is incorrect. As Walton claims, “Properties standard for us are not aesthetically lifeless, though the life that they have, the aesthetic effect they have on us, is typically very different from what it would be if they were variable for us.”¹²

The last example that I want to focus on is of a portrait. Walton writes in his conclusion that, “The critic must thus go beyond the work before him in order to judge it aesthetically, not only to discover what the correct categories are, but also to be able to perceive it in them.”¹³ He presents the example of twin brothers saying that, if one had an identical twin brother, and an artist painted his/her portrait, it would not mean that the artist also executed the portrait of the other one. Personality, character, history, emotional state, psychological state, would all determine the appearance of the sitter, thus, put the brother in a separate category from his twin.

Théodore Géricault’s *Portraits of the Insane*, discussed in my work, fit Walton’s theory. The paintings are not sheer representations of the insane, because the people portrayed had lived through arguably some of the toughest times in the history of France – The Revolution, Napoleon’s rule, and the Restoration. Their psyche is immensely different from all the other mentally ill sitters, who we could have encountered in Hogarth’s or Goya’s works. The mentally ill embody the history of their country, thus, are projections of France’s political and societal atmosphere. Géricault’s other works, such as *Severed Heads and Limbs*, would not be the same without the reinforcement of capital punishment in France, and the guillotine being the central “figure” in the culture. Time has determined the quality of the paintings and added an entirely different scent to the pieces. Moreover, it is not only the time of execution, but also the later decades that would have determined and shaped the works of Géricault differently too. All scholars have various approaches to his subject matters, therefore, the stage at which we receive

¹² Walton, "Categories of Art," 402.

¹³ Walton, "Categories of Art," 414.

the works in the twenty-first century are all probably re-modeled or altered within a new framework. The biography and the history of the artist also influence the pieces, as well as, his personal relationship to the ruling class and philosophical attitude.

There already existed a tendency to use art as propaganda. Napoleon tried to get Jacques-Louis David to become his personal painter.¹⁴ But even before that the artist produced works such as *Oath of Horatii*, *Death of Socrates*, and *Death of Marat*. All works, either symbolically or literally, were depictions of political events happening in France.¹⁵ Géricault, having personally met David with Horace Vernet, would step up to the plate that was already elevated, charged, and influenced by the ruling class; hence, it would be hard for him to avoid engaging with this culture.

Géricault's *Portraits of the Insane* are most often taken to be mere studies for a doctor, or without the patron can be interpreted individually – “aesthetically,” – independent of their social history, which is a reasonable approach, but the one I am not going to argue for. Instead I hold the belief that paintings are determined by the world surrounding them, moreover they are protuberances of history and the artist's socio-political views.

Before we begin, I'd like to explain the meaning of the word “political” in reference to art. Hans Haacke, in his interview *What Makes Art Political* with Jeanne Siegel says, “But I would not like to restrict so-called political art to topicality. Works that operate as a critique of ideology, without a direct link to a particular political event, should equally qualify.”¹⁶ He continues to say that the term has been exploited by a lot of art historians and people in general, reducing the works only referred to as “political” by the society, or the scholars, to be belonging

¹⁴ Johnson, Dorothy. *Jacques-Louis David. New Perspectives*. 132.

¹⁵ Anita Brookner, "The Rise of the Third Estate," in *Jacques-Louis David* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1967).

¹⁶ Jeanne Siegel, "Hans Haacke: What Makes Art Political?," in *Artwords 2: Discourse on the Early 80s* (n.p.: UMI Research Press, 1988), 54.

to that group. This indeed is a fallacy and many works even without their political content might possess a social commentary within them, “Every product of the consciousness industry contributes to the general ideological climate.”¹⁷ All works that allude to the artist’s personal relationship with his surroundings, whether it’s the political regime, just a reflection, or a personal attitude towards an issue, are “political” for me, due to the fact that even our material situations, everyday genre paintings, still lives, and the religious symbols depicted in art can subtly or directly reference the social world of the particular country. Oftentimes it was not just the image like *Liberty Leading the People* that possessed a conclusive value about the state of the physical space depicted.

Section I.II – Introduction to the Chapters

Chapter one of the project will identify scholarship existing around the *Portraits of the Insane*. It will discuss writings by: Nina Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, Lorenz Eitner, Margaret Miller, Robert Snell, John McGregor, Christopher Snells, Brendan Prendeville, Klaus Berger and E.J. Knapton. The purpose of the first chapter is to establish the fact that a lot is unknown about Géricault’s series, thus, create space for interpretation. None of the scholars agree upon the facts regarding the commissions, artistic formal decisions, or even origins of the portraits, therefore, they all are going to be discussed in order to depict the overall picture regarding Géricault’s works. Eventually, the first chapter will introduce the thesis, which is going to transition the writing into the second chapter.

¹⁷ Siegel, "Hans Haacke," 54.

The second chapter is going to discuss the political situation in France as well as Géricault's works produced before the *Portraits of the Insane* and their political nature. Some of them are going to include: *Raft of the Medusa*, *Severed Heads and Limbs*, *Charging Chasseur*, *Wounded Cuirassier*, *Negro on Horseback*, *Soldier with a Lance*, *Lion Hunt*, *Bust of Joseph*, and *Woman Repulsing a Negro*. Some of the scholars will be: Samuel L. Chatman, Pierre H. Boulle, Lawrence C. Jennings, Robert Snell, Klaus Berger and Diane Chalmers, Nina Athanassoglou-Kallmyer and F.D. Klingender. The chapter is going to argue for common, recurring, political theme in Géricault's other works dating after 1818, creating grounds for interpreting the series as also belonging to the same liberal ideology.

The third chapter is solely focusing on the *Portraits of the Insane* themselves. The series include: *The Portrait of the Kleptomaniac*, *A Woman with the Gambling Mania*, *Portrait of the Child Snatcher*, *Portrait of a Man Suffering from the Delusions of Military Grandeur*, and *Portrait of a Woman Suffering from Obsessive Envy*. The visual analysis, alongside the scholarship surrounding the interpretation of the series as Géricault's personal attitudes towards the Bourbon monarchy, is also going to be analyzed. Mainly addressed scholars are going to be: Robert Snell, Nina Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, and Lorenz Eitner. The chapter is going to be followed by the conclusion, which is going to center on Géricault's writing on art, and the value of artistry.

The paper is going to be arguing for political, liberal, and humanitarian values of the *Portraits of the Insane*, simply diverging from their common understanding as the medical studies, projecting Géricault's "leftist" ideology. Overall, perceiving the series as political works will aid, from one particular aspect, the understanding of the French "underground" art, produced during the Revolution, during the nineteenth-century "censorship."

Chapter I

Scholarship on *The Portraits of the Insane*

He was blond, his beard even had a pronounced reddish tinge. His head was well formed, regular, of great nobility. The masculine energy of the face was tempered and embellished by a marked expression of gentleness... Tall rather than short, he had a strong and slender body. He was remarkably well-built. Vernet used to say that he had never seen a more handsome man. His legs in particular were superb, like those of the horse tamer in the center of the 'Race of the Barberi, as M. Dorcy tells me. He dressed carefully, and followed the fashion, not without a certain affectation: he was a man of the world, and equal to the best horsemen of the period...'”¹⁸
 – Charles Clément

The scholarship on Géricault's works is as limited as his short-lived life. The artist died at the age of thirty-two in 1824 and executed his most notable series *The Portraits of the Insane* in 1822-23. Some sources claim that there were ten initial portraits painted by the artist.¹⁹ However, Louis Viardot, who was a journalist, translator, and former director of Theatre des Italiens in Paris, was only able to find five rolled-up canvasses in Baden-Baden, Germany, in 1863.²⁰

Starting with the date and the naming of the series, there is a lot of confusion surrounding the portraits. It is unknown whether Géricault had given them titles. Most of the sources concerning their titles refer to the people who had some sort of connection to the portraits after Géricault's death. The same applies to Georget, the doctor who could have possibly commissioned the series; no written records remain of either of them talking about the series or

¹⁸ Lorenz Eitner, *Géricault* (Los Angeles, CA: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1971), 167.

¹⁹ Eitner, *Géricault*, 25. Eitner, alongside Snell, Kallmyer, and other commentators tend to claim of the existence of ten portraits.

²⁰ Robert Snell, *Portraits of the Insane* (London, UK: Karnac Books, 2017), 13.

referring to them somehow. Therefore, whether Georget had labeled the portraits is also undefined. Robert Snell, in his research about the series and his book *Portraits of the Insane* writes that Louis Viardot, the person who found the portraits in Germany, identified them as representing the five types of monomania, thus giving them the names known to us today. However, two other prominent scholars on the series, Margaret Miller and Nina Athanassoglou-Kallmyer argue that the portraits were named by Géricault's biographer, Charles Clement.²¹ While writing about the history of the portraits Clement and Viardot refer to the portraits according to their modern names. It is hard for me to argue for either of them; since the two were contemporaries, there is no real evidence to who started mentioning the series first. However, I am more inclined to say that Viardot was the one who titled Géricault's works since Clement only commented on the artist's life, and the titles would have already been identified/given before he would document the painter's biography. Moreover, Margaret Miller in her article, *Géricault's Paintings of the Insane* argues that claims, which are proposed by Clement, are inaccurate when dealing with Georget's position in the hospital where he worked, dating the psychiatrist doctor's death, and also, his dating of the series.²² Thus, Clement's claims could be questioned overall about different aspects of Géricault's life, especially concerning the *Portraits of the Insane*, which are associated with Georget and have insufficient scholarship on them.

As for the years, 1822/23 are often claimed to be the ones when Géricault produced his series. Nevertheless, it is of question whether this dating is accurate or not as well. One of the theories surrounding the execution of the portraits claims that Dr. Jean-Etoinne Georget had visited Géricault after his mental breakdown in 1819, and offered the artist to paint the mentally

²¹ Margaret Miller, "Géricault's Paintings of the Insane," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 4, no. 3/4 (April 1941): 151, JSTOR (750413). Nina M. Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Théodore Géricault* (London: Phaidon, 2010), 189.

²² Miller, "Géricault's Paintings," 152.

ill (his other patients) as part of his treatment.²³ If this theory was true, the portraits would have been done in the winter of 1819-20 and not after Géricault's return from England in December of 1821. Another possibility is the beginning of 1822, when Géricault's health was still stable, because later, during 1823, his tuberculosis and a tumor forming at the bottom of his spine would take over his physical strength. Nonetheless, during the winter of 1822, going into 1823, Géricault's health would improve temporarily and that is the period which is often argued for its connection with the portraits. If we take this given date to be the one when Géricault had executed the series, it would imply that portraits were done relatively quickly, each within couple of days. As Lorenz Eitner writes in his book *Géricault, His Life and Work*, "All five of the extant *Portraits of the Insane* give the impression of having been painted with great speed and assurance, perhaps in single sittings. The execution of the whole series evidently progressed rapidly, without hesitations or corrections, unassisted by any preparatory studies; no drawings or painted sketches for any of the portraits have yet come to light."²⁴ Robert Snell backs up this claim. The psychotherapist (Snell) uses Eitner's writing to argue for Géricault's artistic mastery and fluency.²⁵ Even though, there are no known sketches or other preparatory drawings, which give grounds to the assertion that the portraits were very fast paced, I am still inclined to disagree with the argument that claims that the portraits were done in late 1822/early 1823, due to the whole process of commissioning. If, indeed, Georget was the one commissioning the portraits, or even offering them as a type of therapy, Géricault would have taken time to execute them. If the latter was the case and Géricault used the works as his return to mental stability, than they would have definitely taken longer than (approximately) ten days or two weeks. It would have been a process of slow recovery offered by the doctor. Furthermore, if they were commissions, then the

²³ Lorenz Eitner, *Géricault, His Life and Work* (London: Orbis Pub., 1983), 242.

²⁴ Eitner, *Géricault, His Life*, 247.

²⁵ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 19.

original theory of them being done rapidly in early 1823 appears even more wrong, due to, the nature of commissions. The artist would likely have done sketches, met the patients, and talked with them in order to understand them. Géricault would have requested their “folders”, studied their behavior, and spoken to Georget about them, yet none of the correspondence between the two exists. All the sitters are given individuality and are treated with care by the artist, therefore, they would have most likely taken much longer than couple of weeks.

The absence of correspondence might imply them being done very quickly, yet not for Georget, because his commission, whether direct or therapeutic, would have been a long process. In this case, the motivation behind the portraits starts to become a bit blurrier. That is why I am eager to claim that the portraits were done during early 1822, right after his return from England. In this case, Géricault would have had time to execute them even if they were commissions, or would have had a reason to paint them out of his own interest since it is known that the artist was positively charged from his visits to England. But this is just a theory proposed by me and regardless, most of the scholars have dated the portraits by 1822-23. Although what is more important within this context, and what am I trying to show is a simple fact that even starting with the date or the names of the series, a lot is unknown about the works, including their motivation, or any type of reason behind their execution, which opens up the doors for multiple interpretations.

Consequently, that is the reason I am trying to develop my own theory; there are enough grounds for elucidations, if not clarification. I believe for the portraits to have been done early in 1822, before Géricault’s health issues and upon his return from England. Influenced by the stable and democratic type of life there and the artist’s care about the subject matter, given that his maternal grandfather and an uncle on his mother’s side, have died of insanity, Géricault would

have treated the commission or non-commission with a lot of responsibility and attention.²⁶

Especially in the case of it being his own decision to execute the portraits, the artists would have had means to say something with them. Moreover, he would surely have been inspired by some sort of an idea and would have invested more within the series as well. However, once again, there are not enough grounds to support this proposition.

There is no consensus about the purpose of works either. Most often, the portraits are said to have been commissioned by the psychiatric doctor Etienne-Jean Georget, who was a doctor and friend of Géricault's, and who was also the student of one of the most prominent psychiatrists of the time, Jean-Etienne Dominique Esquirol. The myth surrounding the series argues that Georget wanted Géricault to execute the works because he thought it would aid him in studying his patients. The doctor was working on developing the term "monomania". The term describing an illness, a delusion, which prompts people to develop one sort of mania, an obsession, ultimately leading to madness and insanity.²⁷ As Nina Athanassoglou-Kallmyer writes in her book, *Theodore Gericault*,

Such criminal implications brought Gericault's portraits even closer to Georget's theories. For another significant contribution by Georget was in the field of legal medicine. He was a pioneer advocate of the insanity plea for crimes committed while in the throes of monomaniacal delusion. His publications in the 1820s and 1830s launched a campaign calling for insane criminals to be released from prosecution and assigned instead to specialized hospitals for treatment.²⁸

Kallmyer seems to be saying that Georget was actively involved in changing the manner of treating the insane criminals, arguing for their transfer to specialized hospitals. Géricault's portraits may follow the same lines, portraying the mentally ill whose insanity suggests some criminal activities such as: child abuse, theft, gambling, etc. Therefore, for Athanassoglou-

²⁷ Mono in Latin means one.

²⁸ Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Théodore Géricault*, 205.

Kallmyer, it is a bit hard to avoid this close connection between Géricault's series and Georget's publications during the same period of time.

Eitner agrees with Athanassoglou-Kallmyer regarding the connections between Géricault and Georget, saying, "Clement knew of ten portraits but had exact information only about the five that still survive. According to him, Gericault painted them after his return from England for a friend, the alienist Etienne-Jean Georget (1795-1828), who he calls – not quite correctly – the chief physician of the Salpetriere, the women's asylum of Paris."²⁹ Both scholars claim Georget to be at the potential receiving end of the commission. Athanassoglou-Kallmyer published her book about Géricault in 2010, Eitner's was published in 1983. Therefore, Eitner's direct referral to Georget and his friendship with Géricault could have easily led Athanassoglou-Kallmyer to making the connection between the nature of the series and Georget's undertakings during the time of the execution of the portraits. Eitner and Athanassoglou-Kallmyer agree on the theory that Georget either commissioned or received the portraits from Géricault willingly, which argues for the portraits to have been executed under some medical intentions. So, could the portraits have carried simply empirical medical intentions? Or been devoid of any sort of moral grounds, being just the commissions made by a doctor?

Georget himself was the third generation of modern psychiatrists in France. His mentor Jean-Etienne-Dominique Esquirol was the student of Philippe Pinel, a psychiatrist who had started the liberation of the mentally ill from the prisons; thus, it made sense for Georget to continue his legacy. As for Esquirol, he started coining different types of manias, actually of five kinds, which bordered the topics said to be portrayed by Géricault in his series; however were not directly related. Georget carried out the wishes and developed the thoughts of his

²⁹ Eitner, *Géricault, His Life*, 242.

predecessors, uniting their ideologies and giving them a new take too, as he made significant steps in medicine and criminal justice, moreover, possibly involved art to portray the mentally ill from an entirely new standpoint. Consequently, all of the theories argued by Eitner or Kallmyer can be conceivably correct.

However, John McGregor in his book from 1978, *The Discovery of the Art of the Insane*, writes, “Unfortunately, no document exists concerning the commissioning of the later *Portraits of the Insane*, or of the nature of the commission and it is not likely that a written record ever existed.”³⁰ Art Historian Margaret Miller also commented on the matter saying, “It is unfortunate that no account of the meeting or collaboration between Georget and Géricault exists.”³¹ Margaret Miller published her article in 1941-42 and it is quite likely that the later scholars Athanassoglou-Kallmyer and Eitner had more information to argue from. Nevertheless, even though McGregor and Miller do not directly oppose Athanassoglou-Kallmyer and Eitner, they make their claims unlikely. If there are no documents signifying the relationship between Géricault and Georget, which seems to be the case, it is very hard to attribute the series to a commission made by the psychiatrist. The truth is debatable, and is as unlikely to be uncovered as the real date of the series, hence, once again the haziness surrounding the portraits by Géricault emerges in the picture.

Consequently, due to the concordance of the earlier two scholars and the later ones as well, it is difficult to attribute the paintings to Georget’s commission. McGregor even continues to claim, “Why the portraits were executed has never been properly explained. The more plausible suggestions see them either as preparatory studies for engravings for a new edition of *De la Folie* or as substitutes for actual patients in the lecture room where cases were under

³⁰ John Monroe MacGregor, *The Discovery of the Art of the Insane* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 41-42.

³¹ Miller, "Géricault's Paintings," 158.

discussion.”³² The scholar proposes the series to have been done for a magazine about the insane, which is an entirely new theory. But what remains unchanged is that there seems to be an agreement upon the ambiguity of the genesis of the portraits. Nevertheless, most of the commentators and scholars do claim that the series were extremely important to Géricault and carried a personal meaning to the artist.

The portraits were created after the French Revolution, Napoleonic rule, and the Restoration. These were tumultuous times for France. Political turmoil, chaos, and uncertainty governed the country. As Edmund Burke wrote in his book from 1790, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*,

To make a government requires no great prudence. Settle the seat of power; teach obedience: and the work is done. To give freedom is still more easy. It is not necessary to guide; it only requires to let go the reign. But to form a *free government*; that is, to temper together these opposite elements of liberty and restraint in one consistent work, requires much thought, deep reflection, a sagacious, powerful, and combining mind. This I do not find in those who take the lead in the national assembly.³³

The instability and inconsistency in the government, with multiple revolutions and war, led to certain madness, whether literally or figuratively within the citizens of France. Burke reflects that he did not find the government free, but rather very confounded and conventional. Even capital punishment, such as beheading, was introduced in France to deal with all sorts of criminals in the nineteenth century regardless of their condition.³⁴ Thus, the increase in the number of psychiatric patients was no surprise. With Napoleon coming to power in 1899, things did not get better after the Revolution. A lot of wars started, as the leader wanted to conquer the

³² MacGregor, *The Discovery*, 41-42.

³³ Edmund Burke and L. G. Mitchell, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 247.

³⁴ Stefan Germer, "Pleasurable Fear: Géricault and uncanny trends at the opening of the nineteenth century," *Art History* 22, no. 2 (June 1999): 160.

lands. Moreover people started to sense that Napoleon's government, claiming to be of the people, was not too different from the previous monarchical regime. Therefore, the dissatisfaction and confusion would continue to exist in the nation. Napoleon would finally be overthrown in 1815, however, the re-established Bourbon Monarchy would do no good to the country as well. E.J Knapton, in his article *Some Aspect of the Bourbon Restoration of 1814*, talks about the process of change in power during the mid 1810s. None of the sides would want to concede command, thus, multiple allies and groups were formed in order to overthrow Napoleon, until finally achieving it through the "action of Bordeaux."³⁵ While overthrowing Napoleon it was sort of the quite civil war going on in France. Louis XVIII was announced the leader, yet his government was still oppressive and unjust. Therefore, after almost twenty-six years of perplexity nothing would change and French government would continue to try and establish complete dictatorship.³⁶ The *Portraits of the Insane* were painted almost ten years after the coronation of Louis XVIII, halfway through the Restoration and a stain of history would definitely stick to the series. As Athanassoglou-Kallmyer claims,

While appearing to abide by the conventions of portraiture, Géricault's portraits stand instead as its ironic inversion. Challenged here is portraiture's very identity as a genre associated with rational social order, self-aggrandizement and the establishment of an authoritative social presence. Géricault's featured individuals, sprung from the dark underbelly of a society ruled by crime and madness, pose as the negation of sanctioned social and moral hierarchies, as emissaries of an upside-down world in which madmen now occupy the wall of fame for the edification of their sane audiences. Esquirol described the world of the asylum in just these terms, as society turned on its head, humankind reverted to a primordial state in which uncontrolled instincts replaced reason, and crime ruled over virtue.

She concludes, "Madness was the catalyst that revealed humanity's innermost nature, its darkest

³⁵ E. K. Knapton, "Some Aspects of the Bourbon Restoration of 1814," *The Journal of Modern History* 6, no. 6 (December 1934): 416, JSTOR (1871641).

³⁶ Politics of France are discussed in the second chapter more thoroughly through Géricault's political pieces.

truth, the ultimate aim of Géricault's quest."³⁷ With his *Portraits of the Insane*, Géricault challenged the nature of portraiture, which has historically been associated with rational social order, power, sanity, and authoritative social presence.³⁸ As insanity commanded the streets of Paris, starting from the Revolution until the Restoration, as madmen dominated the socio-political picture, Géricault took it upon himself to portray the state of the "governing" mentality or the condition of his fellow citizens. In other words, political art being made "underground" due to the repression, could have criticized the government, or simply alluded to insanity taking over the French society's rationale.

Portrait of the Child Snatcher (1), *The Portrait of the Kleptomaniac* (2), *A Woman with the Gambling Mania* (3), *Portrait of a Man Suffering from the Delusions of Military Grandeur* (4), and *Portrait of a Woman Suffering from Obsessive Envy* (5), are the five works representing the inversion of the French mindset. Nina Athanassoglou-Kallmyer describes the portraits to have an earthy palette, with touches of bright color. The faces of the sitters are clear, while the clothing and the background are broadly brushed.³⁹ She says that in their appearance they resembled Géricault's most political and notable works *The Raft of the Medusa*, and *Severed Heads and Limbs*.⁴⁰ They also possessed the same somber disposition and also were fascinated with unusual and peculiar themes. The bodies are painted like busts, showing only the upper part of the entire human physique. The light mostly falls on the faces of the sitters from the left side of the canvas.

There is another dispute over the formal appearance of the inhabitants of the mental asylum. It is uncertain whether it was Géricault, Georget, or a third party who decided that the

³⁷ Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Théodore Géricault*, 205.

³⁸ Rand, Richard, Kathleen M. Morris, and David Ekserdjian. *Eye to Eye: European Portraits 1450-1850*. Williamstown, MA: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2011.

³⁹ Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Théodore Géricault*, 89.

⁴⁰ Discussed in the next chapter.

series should be executed in in this manner, imitating and yet contrasting the portraits of the nobility and using the same palette as Géricault's other famous works. As MacGregor argues, "The decision to portray these individuals using the conventional half-length portrait format, in full face, without either background or accessories indicative of their disturbed condition, should not be attributed to Géricault."⁴¹ Nevertheless, McGregor also claims that, "There's no actual documentation of the relationship or any type of contact between Georget and Géricault, especially on the matters of technical aspects of the painting, not even mentioning the simple letter or any sort of communication about the commission."⁴² This claim however, seems to contradict McGregor's declaration that Géricault cannot be credited with any decisions surrounding the portraits. It is also unclear whether or not the colors used were very specific to Géricault, or to his works in general. Margaret Miller once again supports McGregor's view saying, "Whether it was Géricault or Georget who decided that their physiognomic portrayal of the insane should take form of posed portraits it is impossible to say. Most of the Esquirol drawings are either profile busts, or unposed full length studies, depicting the patients in straight-jackets, restraining chair against the background of a hospital interior."⁴³ Miller also states that it is unknown who actually decided the formal appearance of the portraits. She does, however, add that most of Esquirol's drawings happened to be busts or unposed full-length studies within the hospital interior. This assertion makes Géricault's approach unique — though the similarities in representations of the sitters as busts could represent Esquirol's influence on Géricault. The main difference was still the location of the insane. Géricault shows no signs of a hospital, or of a generally recognizable interior setting, except in a very shady manner in one of his portraits.⁴⁴

⁴¹ MacGregor, *The Discovery*, 43.

⁴² MacGregor, *The Discovery*, 42.

⁴³ Miller, "Géricault's Paintings," 159.

⁴⁴ Discussed in the third chapter.

He shows little concern in depicting his sitters with their full-length bodies. However, if Esquirol had influenced Géricault, then Georget's involvement in the series can be argued for. Yet, all can be questioned.

As much as Athanassoglou-Kallmyer can argue for unreason within Géricault's works,⁴⁵ it cannot be omitted that the painter is very mindful and conscientious of the state of his sitters and in fact, Miller has seen in this a humanist's sensibility: "Géricault, respectful of the sensibilities of his sitters, tactfully represents them in no specific environment, such as a hospital room, which might betray their segregation from normal society, and in no particular action which might dramatize their disease and so isolate them from the experience of average spectator."⁴⁶ Géricault places the patients in a space unknown to the viewer, which pushes them to exist within our space. In this way, their segregation from the viewer and society is erased. The portraits emerge from the canvas into the world of the spectators, uniting us with them. It is also worth remembering that madness was present in Géricault's family, moreover he supposedly had experienced it himself.⁴⁷ However, whether the sitters or the public ever saw the portraits is unknown. Nonetheless, the effect that Géricault conveyed cannot be dismissed, especially when it is certain that Géricault treated insanity in a very special manner, interpreting "insanity not in terms of behavior, but as a state of mind, which, though disordered and clinically classifiable, emphasizes rather than obliterates individuality."⁴⁸ The artist emphasized character and gave identity to the people that are always perceived under a vague label: the insane. He separated them from each other, simply urging the spectator to look at them, meet them, and understand them.

⁴⁵ Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Théodore Géricault*, 205.

⁴⁶ Miller, "Géricault's Paintings," 153.

⁴⁷ Géricault had a mental breakdown in 1819, putting him on therapy. He also attempted suicide in 1822 and 1823 – these three instances are going to be mentioned in the subsequent chapters as well.

⁴⁸ Miller, "Géricault's Paintings," 153.

Another commentator on Géricault's portraits takes a very different stance from all the aforementioned art historians. Brendan Prendeville, in his "The Features of Insanity, As Seen by Géricault and by Buchner", 1995, finds the portraits to be "far away" from the viewer:

Of more decisive importance is the fact that the sitters' gazes turn towards the invisible objects of their preoccupation so that we feel ourselves to be looking at them from a distinct remove. The serial character of the portraits strengthens this effect, since we look (or must imagine ourselves looking) at five of a kind. No compassionate feelings on our part will ever bring them closer; the painter has in fact done nothing to elicit feeling, has striven instead simply to ensure that everything we see is seen as arising from within what is given.⁴⁹

As Prendeville argues, Géricault distances the viewers from the portraits and invites us to look at them for the purpose of studying them. According to the art historian, the spectator should not be engaging with the sitters on an emotional level, but rather on a technical one. This idea is in keeping with his view on the series itself, as the writer diverges from the ideas and positions offered by McGregor, Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, or Miller. He is of the opinion that in fact, Esquirol, and not Georget, commissioned the portraits. Georget was only their owner. As Prendeville writes, "Attempts to define an historical and interpretive context for them have centered upon the career and ideas of psychiatric doctor Etienne-Jean Georget, who reportedly had owned them,"⁵⁰ later continuing, "None of these theories is decisively supported by the evidence, which is insecure even respecting the link with Georget – a commission by Esquirol would in fact make rather more sense. The most that might be cautiously agreed on is a characterization of the paintings as portraits of mental patients which are likely to have been connected with Esquirol and his associates."⁵¹ The claim that Esquirol commissioned them and not Georget – who actually studied and owned them, is startling, yet it is worth remembering that

⁴⁹ Brendan Prendeville, "The Features of Insanity, as Seen by Géricault and by Buchner," *Oxford Art Journal* 18, no. 1 (1995): 96, JSTOR (1360597).

⁵⁰ Prendeville, "The Features," 97.

⁵¹ Prendeville, "The Features," 101.

Géricault could have drawn examples and technique in executing his series from Georget's teacher. Nevertheless, in the ambiguity of the situation, anything could be possible.

Unlike other writers, Predeville finds the portraits to serve a direct purpose: "What I am suggesting is not that Géricault, in depicting subjects treated by contemporary medical scientists, took fundamental guidance from them, but rather that similar principles governed the respective ways in which artists and scientists approached these subjects."⁵² He takes a step further by giving meaning and intention to Géricault himself, portraying his interest in creating the series as well. Predeville's argument is that the artistic and medical approaches to matters such as studying the mentally ill were very similar. Moreover, we can propose that Géricault would have had grounds and curiosity in the subject, as he himself was a patient in the mental asylum.⁵³ Predeville's research also cites an earlier theory of Denise Aime-Azam, that "Géricault suffered a mental breakdown in the autumn of 1819, suggesting that he received help from Dr. Georget and painted the portraits of him, either as therapy or out of gratitude."⁵⁴ Predeville does not give this theory much credence. If Géricault actually painted the portraits out of his interest, then Predeville's theory of the portraits being commissioned by Esquirol could not be true. He even elaborates on this topic saying, "More recently Albert Boime has taken up Lorenz Eitner's suggestion that the portraits might have had some connection with Georget's known interest in the application of psychiatry to criminal cases."⁵⁵ Apparently, Georget also had an interest in applying psychiatry to criminal cases and it would have made sense if he had asked Géricault to execute the portraits. In any case, the artist could have known the doctor's ideas and motivations; they were very good friends. In this way, if he really were a patient, he could have painted the

⁵² Predeville, "The Features," 98.

⁵³ See footnote 30.

⁵⁴ Predeville, "The Features," 101.

⁵⁵ Predeville, "The Features," 101.

portraits to show his gratitude for the treatment that he had received.

One last theory surrounding the execution of the portraits is proposed by two different scholars. Klaus Berger, in his book *Gericault and His Work*, proposed that the series of portraits were done for Dr. Georget's new book *De la Folie* and were supposed to serve an illustrational purpose. The paintings did not coincide with the cases presented in the book, although, there is a possibility they had been done for it.⁵⁶ However, Berger struggles to find the meaning behind executing the portraits as paintings and not as prints. The series could have definitely been scaled down appropriately, but executing them already as prints in lithography, the medium with which Géricault had experience would have made more sense. Overall, the sizes of the portraits vary. However, the heads are almost life-size, making the portraits themselves average around sixty centimeters in height and fifty in their width. Klaus Berger's confusion about the motivation behind the portraits is not surprising. He wrote his article in 1969, which makes his scholarship the second oldest referenced here, thus there would have definitely been some lack of information due to the absence of sources. Berger would not have much to draw from or make any conclusions, which makes his theory about *The Portraits of the Insane* a little broad and unreliable, yet not necessarily untrue.

All the portraits except one are hung on eye level in five different museums, including one in Lyon (*Portrait of a Woman Suffering from Obsessive Envy*), Ghent (*The Portrait of the Kleptomaniac*), the Louvre (*A Woman with Gambling Mania*), the Springfield Museum of Art, Massachusetts (*Portrait of the Child Snatcher*) and the Reinhart Collection, Winterthur, Switzerland (*Portrait of a Man Suffering from the Delusions of Military Grandeur*). Only the *Portrait of a Woman Suffering from Obsessive Envy*, is hung a little lower than the others, to which Prendeville attributes the following motive: "The Lyon woman is viewed slightly from

⁵⁶ Klaus Berger, *Gericault and His Work: By Klaus Berger*, reprint. ed. (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1978), 88.

above so that her large brow lends emphasis to the menace of her eyes.”⁵⁷ However, I disagree with this choice. The curatorial approach and the decision to exhibit them exactly on the eye level prompts the spectators to engage with the insane. They are invited to join the space of the “asylum”, and even more, to try and look them into the eyes, as the sitters try to look into empty space behind the spectators. Nonetheless, arguably the most famous out the five portraits, *The Woman Suffering From Obsessive Envy* diverges from this uniform appearance of the series within these five museums. But overall, it is nevertheless uncertain if the portraits were meant to be hung anywhere in particular or exhibited in general.

As of 2017, scholars are still in disagreement. Miller’s (1941-42), Berger’s (1969), McGregor’s (1978), Eitner’s (1983), Prendeville’s (1995), Athanassoglou-Kallmyer’s (2010), or Robert Snell’s (2017) books and articles do not come into an agreement. Snell takes the most neutral stance, discussing all of the theories, yet since his book is mostly concerned with the series’ influence on developing modern medicine, he does not indulge in finding the roots or means behind the portraits. Snell sees portraits as the means to arguing for modern psychiatry, writing a lot about Pinel, Esquirol, and Georget, although, he still seems a little uncertain about Géricault’s motivation, at some point even arguing for the series to be representing seven deadly sins.⁵⁸ Snell makes it clear that a lot can be said about modern psychiatry by studying Géricault, yet the real reason behind the execution of the series is still ambiguous. Nonetheless, he does talk about the “moral” approach to treating patients, especially the very sensible ones, arguing for Pinel being very strict on doctors being rational, or Esquirol identifying with enlightened tradition of Locke and agreeing with the statement that melancholy can be “very appropriate for

⁵⁷ Prendeville, “The Features,” 97.

⁵⁸ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 25.

the growth of the arts and sciences.”⁵⁹ Pinel would listen to his patients often, while Esquirol would experience the same feelings and physical states that his patients were suffering from. “Reliability” was a vital aspect of both psychologists; and probably of Georget as well, as he was the student of both of them. Therefore, I find it very intriguing that Géricault’s portraits can fit within this description. The patients, as represented by Géricault, are very “common,” and furthermore seem more preoccupied with their own thoughts than with insanity, which leads me to make certain assumptions on Géricault’s motivation behind his series.

Snell argues for the portraits to have had simple specialist status. However, they have progressed from any possible beginnings as professional studies, and have grown to be taken and interpreted to be works of art as well. As Snell claims, the modernist “might focus on the anti-illusionism of the paintings, on the way in which the painter has drawn attention to the material bases of his work and, as a contemporary Brechtian and Marxist critic has put it, torn away a sanctifying veil of aesthetic form”⁶⁰ However, as Snell continues and I would agree, this does not get in the way of them being disturbing and having certain uncanniness within them. Géricault’s sitters aren’t preoccupied with the public and its view of them, thus what “Géricault was registering was a common human response to being interned and disenfranchised: the sitters’ withdrawal from contact may have been strategic, the only authentic or dignified option open to them.”⁶¹ The sitters try to avoid its viewer’s, they reflect upon something thus, Géricault’s intentions with them are unclear. Although the clothing, coloring, setting, look, aura, and all surrounding them suggest more than just a study and them being simple works. “Are they mirrors of a “serious”, self-absorbed, self-seeking society?”⁶² The sitters seem to be taking

⁵⁹ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 77.

⁶⁰ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 24.

⁶¹ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 25.

⁶² Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 25.

themselves very seriously, yet seem to be very lost within their thoughts; thus, is the whole series ironic and allegorical of French bouergois or the government? The open-endedness of the interpretations is aided by Snell's claim that: "For all their degrees of motility they also seem frozen in time – as if the regime in power in the early 1820s, the restored Bourbon monarchy, in it attempts to put the clock back to the years before 1789, had at last succeeded in making time stand still." Thus it has halted the development of the whole nation, ultimately leading to their insanity. "They breathe the atmosphere of the post-revolutionary period", and it is evident they have been through a lot, and that politics and the instability of their country might have led them insane.

Because there is very little known about the portraits, I intend to argue, that Géricault would not have executed them with any single particular idea in mind. Being a member of the philanthropist movement, a deep humanitarian, and a constant activist against the political structures, Géricault must have invested some meaning or a message behind the series.⁶³ As Athanassoglou-Kallmyer writes, "With their bloody gashes brutally exhibited, their eyes rolling in anguish and their features distorted in pain, Géricault's images of guillotined heads appeal to the beholder's innermost humanitarian feelings with a force greater than a scientific pamphlet or a vehement political speech. For like-minded advocates of abolition of the death penalty, their message was unequivocal."⁶⁴ Géricault's *Severed Heads and Limbs* definitely advocate the abolition of the capital punishment as the artist is deeply preoccupied by the fate of the society. Together with, Snell, Miller, Berger, and even Eitner, Christopher Sells also comments on Géricault's political viewpoints saying, "Thus armed, Eitner has been able to put forward with some confidence the hypothesis that Géricault's treatment of the *Inquisition* theme was inspired

⁶³ The French philanthropist and humanitarian movements will be discussed in the next chapter.

⁶⁴ Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Théodore Géricault*, 149.

by the French military expedition which overthrew the Spanish liberal regime in 1823 and restored the tyrannical authority of Ferdinand VII. Géricault would have been making a criticism of this action by recalling the more creditable deed of an earlier French occupying army in Spain.”⁶⁵ Many of the scholars portray Géricault as deeply involved in political movements, having strong feelings about the regime and fighting for his position. Therefore, in my paper dealing the *Portraits of the Insane*, using all of these scholars, and using Géricault’s other works alongside his biography, I’d like to suggest that Géricault executed them while being concerned about the fate of the French people. Through the works, he therefore diagnosed the nation, the government, or evaluated the state of the society during the years of 1822-23. I believe these works by Géricault are as politically charged as the *Raft of the Medusa*, *Wounded Cuirassier*, or even the portraits of unidentified black males, which I will argue hold a similar significance. In fact, by painting *The Portraits of the Insane* Géricault takes a stab at the French governmental regime and equates multiple social classes with insanity, arguing for the nation’s overall madness, and urging society to question their very existence, as his sitters appear to be questioning their own being and existence, opening up “the broadest question about identity, subjectivity, and projection: “who am I? But rather am I who I think I am?”⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Christopher Sells, "After the 'Raft of the Medusa': Géricault's Later Projects," *The Burlington Magazine* 128, no. 1001 (August 1986): 564, JSTOR (882654).

⁶⁶ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 42.

Chapter II

Section II.I – Slavery in France

In arguing that the *Portraits of the Insane* are an expression of Géricault's lifelong humanist points of view, it is useful to consider the political and humanist content of his earlier works. The works discussed in this chapter are going to be post 1818 productions; therefore, they will provide background and are precursors to the *Portraits of the Insane*. The works will set the tone for Géricault's ideas and subject matter during this time, moreover, they will show the area within which he was trying to work, as they are crucial in understanding the later series.

In his article "*There are no Slaves in France*": *A Re-examination of Slave Laws in Eighteenth Century France*, Samuel L. Chatman writes,

The French maxim that 'There are no slaves in France' was perpetuated by French pride in the "Freedom Principle." In reality, however, slavery did exist in France. This is borne out in the numerous lawsuits for manumission. Obviously, if all the people were free no one would have needed to be freed. Also, the implementation of various types of legislation regarding slavery also suggest the existence of slavery. Finally, the language used by the *philosophes* and in the laws acknowledged the presence of slaves in the country. Perhaps, the maxim should have read 'There are no slaves in France, except for African Slaves.'⁶⁷

France and slavery had a complicated relationship starting back in 1315 when the French declared that all Africans entering the country would be freed. As it is the case with modern political promises and statements as well, the country did not back its words and slavery was still present on the part of the Iberian Peninsula. De Pontchartrain, Minister of Marine, reinforced this idea again in 1691; however, once again it did not seem to be fulfilled. The next instance when the French government initiated to regulate its situation with slavery was in 1777 with *Declaration pour la police des noirs* the legislation that challenged not the slavery in itself, but

⁶⁷ Samuel L. Chatman, "'There are no Slaves in France': A Re-Examination of Slave Laws in Eighteenth Century," *The Journal of Negro History* 85, no. 3 (2000): 151, JSTOR (2649071).

attempted to control the ports from which Africans were being brought in.⁶⁸ It restricted the French from bringing in mulattoes or blacks; which means that the ports were coordinated through skin color rather than occupation. The government thought that the new system would drop the slavery rates within the country since most of the slaves happened to have darker skin than the French, hence, instead of looking at their paperwork they could make decisions upon their visual appearance.⁶⁹ The law was harsh and heavily controlled, nonetheless, people still found ways to smuggle in the slaves.⁷⁰

Pierre H. Boulle conducted a research upon the documents/statistical information existing in France in all sorts of subjects including taxation, economy, hygiene, or basically any list requested by central authorities. These documents would speak and show forth the information of people living in the country during the eighteenth century, after 1777. In case, the person filing out a document would be a non-white resident, the local authorities would document his or her age, skin color, name, status (slave/free), employer's name, place of residence, the date of entrance into the country, etc.,⁷¹ Therefore, after looking at the archives the historian found that more than two thousand registered non-whites lived in France during early 1780's, "In total, I have been able to compile for the year 1777 a list of 2,240 nonwhite French residents (2,053 certain and 187 possible ones), representing between 41.6 percent and 44.8 percent of the approximately five thousand nonwhites estimated to have lived in France at any time during the

⁶⁸ Chatman, "There are no Slaves," 149.

⁶⁹ Pierre H. Boulle, "Slave and Other Nonwhite Children in Late-Eighteenth-Century France," *Ohio University Press*, 2009, 173, JSTOR. "Not surprisingly, the more African the child's ancestry, the more that child was likely to be a slave. Among those of African descent, over 90 percent of boys and girls declared to be black were slaves."

⁷⁰ Chatman, "There are no Slaves," 148-149.

⁷¹ Boulle, "Slave and Other," 170. Chatman also comments on the same "cards" saying on page 147, "Owners usually stated that they wanted to teach their slaves trades and instruct them in the tenets of Catholicism. These letters of registrations of slaves at port authorities are sources of evidence that slavery did exist in France. In addition, the letters also show how France justified African slavery."

latter part of the eighteenth century.”⁷² Out of these registered inhabitants of the country approximately 1500 happened to be males, and around 650 females. Some of the individuals could not be identified by gender.⁷³ Chatman reports five thousand to be the highest estimate ever given by historians, however, these numbers are speculative since it is unknown how reliable are the documents or the sources. Regardless, the maxim that the French held themselves to, that “There are no slaves in France,” was wrong and incorrect.

The maxims advocated by the “egalitarian” French society caused a common misconception that slavery was either gone or marginalized only to the rural locations in France. As Boulle writes, “It was fashionable in early-modern aristocratic circles to own an African male child as a domestic servant.”⁷⁴ If someone could afford a slave they probably were from a high economic background therefore would have lived either in major cities or owned private houses in rural areas, however, originally would be from the cities. Thus, slavery was most likely present in all areas of the country. As Boulle argues, the children (starting from age twelve) were demanded the most due to their “bright” futures, and all the years they could serve their masters.⁷⁵ Slaves could not own property, get contracts, take parts in trials, or marry without consent of their owners. Their chiefs would also inherit all of their money due to the fact that

⁷² Boulle, “Slave and Other,” 170.

⁷³ Boulle, “Slave and Other,” 171.

⁷⁴ Boulle, “Slave and Other,” 169. On page 182 Boulle also comments on what could have happened to the slaves afterwards, as they grew within the particular households, “Looking beyond our corpus of children, and through cases of non-whites for years other than 1777, we get some hints of what happened to these little blacks. Some remained in the service of their initial masters, though not always happily so, as the case of Madame du Barry’s Zamor shows. Other slaves, once they became adults, sought their freedom and payment of back wages from the courts, usually claiming some sort of ill-treatment.”

⁷⁵ Boulle, “Slave and Other,” 171-172. “Between 13.3 percent and 13.5 percent of the corpus were under thirteen years old – close to the period of puberty, at least for boys – which is here taken as the time of transition to adulthood.”

they (slaves) were properties in themselves not entitled to have any sort of land or independent business affiliations.⁷⁶

The remaining acts of slavery and stagnation of the country on liberal levels would cause the formation of a new abolitionist movement, eleven years after the act of 1777, *Société de Amis des Noirs*. This was the first explicit French abolitionist movement, founded by a journalist Jacques Pierre Brissot and his associate Etienne Claviere, with close collaboration of Count Honoré de Maribeu. Lawrence C. Jennings, in his article *French Anti-Slavery (The Movement for the Abolition of Slavery in France)* writes, "...the Amis des Noirs was inspired by the humanitarianism and egalitarian currents of thought implicit in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment."⁷⁷ "Amis de noirs" was formed on the basis of the *London Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade* founded in May 1787. Ironically enough, the British were dominant and most successful in abolishing slavery on rapid terms. Therefore, determined abolitionist movements in England would influence Géricault during his visits there in 1819, 20, and 21. The British influence once again would prompt France to focus on the repression of the slave trade, rather than slavery in general.⁷⁸ The movement "avoided appeals to public opinion except through the published media, and never had more than 150 adherents. Besides attacking the slave trade, it became involved in the campaign for equal rights for what were then called 'free persons of color'".⁷⁹

The movement formed right before the revolution in 1789 did not last too long. Once Napoleon came to power in 1799, being married to the Creole Josephine,⁸⁰ moreover being

⁷⁶ Chatman, "There are no Slaves," 145 and 147.

⁷⁷ Lawrence C. Jennings, "Napoleonic and Restoration Anti-Slavery," in *French Anti-Slavery: the Movement for the Abolition of Slavery in France, 1802-1848* (n.p.: Cambridge University Press, n.d.), 1.

⁷⁸ Jennings, "Napoleonic and Restoration," 2.

⁷⁹ Jennings, "Napoleonic and Restoration," 2.

⁸⁰ Creole Josephine was "white Creole", owning plantation in Martinique.

favorable to colonial interests, he vouched for slavery.⁸¹ Napoleon reintroduced and reestablished slavery and slave trade finally in 1802. As Jennings writes, “Censorship prevented most abolitionist writings, or even publications on the colonies in general, from 1802 until 1817. The failure by Bonaparte to reconquer Saint-Domingue, and the publicity given to massacres of white perpetrated there, reduced sympathy for blacks in France. Proponents of slavery and the slave trade emerged victorious.”⁸² Slavery remained in France until the fall of the emperor in 1814.

Napoleon would come back to power for hundred days in 1815 before his final fall at Waterloo. The monarch, Louis XVIII, taking Napoleon’s place continued to thrust abolitionism and erase it entirely. As Jennings writes,

The abolitionists were isolated and accused by the new Ultraroyalists of being the allies of France’s conqueror, England. Because the abolitionists who still remained (Grégoire, Lafayette, Benjamin Constant, baron Auguste de Stael-Holstien, and the duc Victor de Broglie) had no popular support or financial resources, they were indeed obliged to rely on the British once again for documentation and funding.⁸³

The funding from the British was also complicating due to Louis XVIII’s government and its support of slavery. The hardships within the liberal movements eventually led to the arguments arising between the leaders of Société de “Amis des noirs”. Auguste de Stael one of the heads of the movement argued with Grégoire and Lafayette, two other leaders, what ultimately led to the fall of the society during the late 1810’s. However, the British support and influence was not seized and continued during 1820’s leading to the establishment of a new philanthropist/abolitionist movement *Société de la moral chrétienne*. The movement would

⁸¹ Jennings, "Napoleonic and Restoration," 3-4.

⁸² Jennings, "Napoleonic and Restoration," 4. As Jennings continues on the same page, “Napoleonic officialdom gave full support to a whole series of publications promoting colonial interests while systematically blocking any organized abolitionist effort.”

⁸³ Jennings, "Napoleonic and Restoration," 5.

continue to exist until its fall in 1860-1861.⁸⁴ As Jennings puts it, “The Société de la morale chrétienne could be described as a liberal, nondenominational philanthropic society, inspired by both universalist Enlightenment and religious principles, which devoted itself to advancing moral and social issues through education, propaganda, and political activism, while in the process indicting government’s retrograde social policies.”⁸⁵ Protestants played a big role in French liberal societies, imposing their altruistic values upon the social norms.⁸⁶

After having slight troubles during the July Revolution in 1830, “Morale chrétienne” would almost the entire abolition of slavery in France during the mid 1830’s.⁸⁷ The revolution started in 1789 in order to defeat monarchy and authoritative regime, also vouching to eliminate slavery and all sorts of oppression from the government. With the material, moral, or exemplary help from Britain, both the societies of “Amis de noirs” and “Morale chretienne” were trying to defeat slavery, preventing the events of 1790’s to take place again.⁸⁸

Géricault was born at the height of the revolution in 1791. In 1794, when he was three, French government would, for a little while, declare slaves free and citizens, nonetheless, not for too long. Later, when the artist turned eleven, Napoleon finally reinstated slavery in the country; it would last beyond his reign. In 1821, when the group “Morale chretienne” was formed Géricault was thirty years old, having a better understanding of the political systems and regimes than ever in his life.

⁸⁴ Jennings, "Napoleonic and Restoration," 8-9.

⁸⁵ Jennings, "Napoleonic and Restoration," 11.

⁸⁶ Jennings, "Napoleonic and Restoration," 10.

⁸⁷ Jennings claims on page nineteen, another humanitarian organization was formed in 1834 and slavery as an issue was rarely addressed. Chatman, "There are no Slaves," 145. Slavery would officially be abolished in 1848 when “legislation was enacted that abolished slavery throughout France and the empire.”

⁸⁸ Jennings, "Napoleonic and Restoration," 22. Morale chretienne” was made of young liberals, while “Amis de noirs” was more of an elderly organization. None of them had abundant members, nevertheless, had the important ones. Both movements were products of post-revolutionary liberal movements advocating the rights of French citizens and equality.

Section II.II – Géricault - Slavery, Liberalism, and Personal facts.

Jean-Louis-André-Théodore Géricault would have experienced slavery first hand growing up in his family. As Robert Snell writes, “There can be little doubt that the family wealth rested on slavery.”⁸⁹ Géricault’s family ran a tobacco business and was materially well supported. Therefore, it is quite likely that some slaves were present in the painter’s surroundings during the early years of his life. Snell even continues on to question whether this guilt has somehow prompted to produce the works that he did, eventually saying that, “In the social and political climate of the Empire a young artist of Géricault’s education and disposition could hardly fail to be aware of art’s relationship to the rest of society, and to want somehow to develop it.”⁹⁰ How much was Géricault’s intention to connect society with the art is unknown, however, the elements of unifications can definitely be sensed within his heart.

As we know Géricault had traveled to heart of the political liberalism – Italy, and most active abolitionist country - England couple of times. He would have been influenced by their treatment of art and society’s comprehension of it. Moreover, in 1817, upon his return to France from Rome he moved right next to Horace Vernet.⁹¹ Géricault who was used to living alone, now joined the circle of Horace’s liberal friends after joining Vernet in his neighborhood. As Robert Snell comments,

Several of Géricault’s friends and members of Vernet’s circle, including Vernet himself, were members of a liberal grouping called the Société de la Morale Chrétienne (one of many such societies, pressure groups and *cenacles* that formed themselves during the period), which was committed to Greek independence, prison reform, and the abolition of slave trade. They also advocated the repeal of the death penalty.⁹²

⁸⁹ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 30.

⁹⁰ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 31.

⁹¹ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 36.

⁹² Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 40.

Vernet and many others belonged to “Morale chrétienne” and Géricault spent a lot of time with them after 1817, all of whom held leftist, liberal, beliefs. Therefore, the possibility of Géricault’s art being influenced by the overall mindset and ideas of the group, is very high. In 1818 he started producing a series lithographs of with Napoleonic themes. He printed the images of soldiers, demi-soldiers, such as those who could have posed threat to the public order and the existing regime.⁹³ The medium itself allowed Géricault to respond quickly to the ongoing events in France and kept him up to date with all of happenings.

As Nina Athanassoglou Kallmyer and Robert Snell write, it is clear that from around 1818 until his death in 1824, Géricault’s works became politically charged. Kallmyer even refers to this period of Géricault’s as “ideologically militant romanticism”.⁹⁴ Géricault painted as a citizen and a philosopher and his paintings were statements about humanity in general, speaking to the ordinary people.⁹⁵

It is relevant to consider that Géricault had more than one mental breakdown during his life. He had attempted suicide in 1822, possibly again in 1823, however, eventually died of tuberculosis and tumor in his lower spine in 1824. Growing up in France during the Revolution, Napoleonic Wars, and Restoration would not have been easy. It has been also reported that Géricault endured a terrible scandal surrounding his fathering of a child with the wife of his maternal aunt, Alexandrine-Modeste Caruel, which if true, may have influenced his negative views of social conservatism.⁹⁶ For his portrayal of liberal attitude in his *Raft of the Medusa*, Géricault had developed delusions that Bourbon monarchy supporters were attempting to kill

⁹³ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 37.

⁹⁴ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 35. Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Théodore Géricault*, 86.

⁹⁵ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 39.

⁹⁶ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 34.

him.⁹⁷ Under the repressive rule, even later, it made sense that Dr. Lacheze, stumbling upon Géricault's portraits, rolled them up and hid them from view.

It is useful to look at some of the artist's other key works in order to see the consistency of the liberal and even radical political ideology that underlies the argument of the *Portraits of the Insane* being political representations of Géricault's philosophy. Therefore, the next section of this chapter is going to discuss the artist's works in which there are links to the expression of his liberal, progressive, humanitarian stance. The themes of social injustice and equality are often present in Géricault's paintings that portray him as a very sensitive artist. First, I will focus on Géricault's views on racial equality and his inclusive humanism. Next, the paintings of *Severed Heads and Limbs* will be presented as showing the harsh realities of French rule and jurisprudence. Afterwards, the paintings of the *Chasseur and Cuirassier* are going to be examined as the representations of individual's ambivalent relationship to the state. Finally, some overall judgments are going to be drawn from the discussion of all of these works.

Section II.III – Other Political Works

Géricault's interest in politics showed itself through multiple works, couple of years earlier than the execution of the *Portraits of the Insane*. Around 1818, until 1820 the artist painted the *Raft of the Medusa*, portraits and scenes of black men, and also *Severed Heads and Limbs*. All of these works seem to be reflecting the actual events happening in France, however, they elevated in their appearance, meaning that, stylistically, they all stress the points that the artist wanted to convey. Moreover, the works aim to exaggerate and dramatize the feelings and emotions raised in the viewer after their viewing. As Berger and Diane Chalmers Johnson write

⁹⁷ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 41.

in *Arts as Confrontation: The Black Man in the Work of Géricault*, “He became an active democrat, allowing his choice of artistic subject matter to be determined by his political and philosophical convictions. Replacing ancient fables with contemporary themes of significant social meaning, Géricault began a new phase in his artistic career.”⁹⁸ Géricault became an active democrat joining several humanitarian efforts with his friends, one of them being Georget himself. Nonetheless, visual artists did not usually deal with political questions at the time, as it was dangerous for the artists to express their views under the authoritative restoration government. According to Berger and Chalmers:

The arts were not to tamper with political questions. In this prohibitive atmosphere, discussions of such questions went underground in small, quiet gatherings of dissatisfied democrats. The young Géricault was received into a such a group at Horace Vernet’s atelier. Gathered here were the “retired” generals of Napoleon’s army – Lamarque, Foy, Bro; the “treasonable” Deputy J.A. Manuel; Beranger, the poet of freedom; Antoine-Vincent Arnault, biographer of the Corsican; and even the future king, Louis-Philippe, who was nicknamed “duc de Valmy” in memory of the Revolution. The members of this circle shared a critical view of the stifling policies of the Restoration. They yearned for freedom, for activity, for the vanished age of Napoleon.⁹⁹

Discussions of politics happened underground, where artists and intellectuals were not heard, due to these circles often sharing a critical stance regarding the return of the Bourbon monarchy. As mentioned in the previous section: Géricault, Horace Vernet, Georget, and other famous names were members of these secret societies. However, Géricault did not intend to stay hidden for a long time and searched for a way to transmit his message concerning the societal conditions. As Berger writes, “He realized also that through the black man his art could deal with the concepts of modern society in a concrete way, and that such an art could then become a means of social and political confrontation,” Continuing to say that the issue of slavery was a scorching moral

⁹⁸ Klaus Berger and Diane Chalmers Johnson, “Art as Confrontation: The Black Man in the Work of Géricault,” *The Massachusetts Review, Inc.* 10, no. 2 (1969): 2, JSTOR (25087857).

⁹⁹ Berger and Chalmers Johnson, “Art as Confrontation,” 2.

and political problem that Géricault refused to ignore.¹⁰⁰ Racial discrimination was one of the many problems France was facing at the times; therefore, Géricault decided to tackle the socio-political situation by challenging the idea of slavery.

With Horace Vernet, the artist had travelled to Italy and England in 1819, finally returning back to France in 1821.¹⁰¹ Great Britain was one of the first countries to have abolished slavery and Géricault had witnessed it all while traveling back and forth between his homeland and England. Thus, the artist wanted to bring the same ideas to his own country and started by executing the reproduction of one of the most popular contemporary British works, *The Prize Fight* (6). Thomas Rowlandson painted a well-known watercolor of the subject in 1787, however, multiple artists have reproduced the scene and almost none of them, except Géricault have used a black and a white man as their subject matter.¹⁰² Most of the reproductions portray two white men fighting in a boxing match, and it was Géricault who used the theme in order to expand on different societal matters. Moreover, these English boxing pictures typically include the name of the winning and losing boxers. Géricault, however, decided to omit this part from his piece of work and leave it ambiguous, challenging the government in foreshadowing the emerging victory of the black society. In his lithograph of 1818, Géricault portrays two men fighting in a boxing match. Both of them lean back in exactly the same fashion. Their postures are also identical as they get ready to fight. They are in the center of the action, surrounded by people either staring at them, or arguing. One man, in the background, on the left side of the black boxer, wears a tuxedo, so does another one on the right behind the white one. This can be

¹⁰⁰ Berger and Chalmers Johnson, "Art as Confrontation," 1.

¹⁰¹ Berger and Chalmers Johnson, "Art as Confrontation," 3. "After a year in Italy studying the great classical tradition of Western art, the young painter had lost none of his democratic convictions. He was confident, perhaps even over confident, that he could find a way to combine the strength of classical monumental art with contemporary events of significance." Also, see Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Théodore Géricault*. 220.

¹⁰² I do not know the exact number of artist who have reproduced the work.

suggesting the social class that attended these fights. The two fighters are equal in all ways; their bodies are identically muscular. They both wear long pants and shoes. The fact that the medium was of lithograph, Géricault could have produced many of them, popularizing the subject matter rapidly. The similarities/equality between the two boxers probably were alluding to the racial tension in the country. Géricault by executing the lithographs most likely was challenging the fight between classes and the idea of slavery in France. As he does not tell his viewers the outcome of the fight, he at least, indicates the social fight that is not over yet.

Even though slavery and equality were of great importance to the artist, Géricault saw the fight for the abolition of slavery as the fight for the freedom of all men.¹⁰³ He took it to be the responsibility of everyone to establish the freethinking, modern France. As Berger writes, “The black man became for Theodore Géricault a symbol of the grandeur and the misery of all human existence.”¹⁰⁴ Géricault glorified a black man and for him all of these images became allegories of misery of human existence and the fight for the independence or freedom. His first couple of abolitionist works triggered and opened up Géricault himself, making him more brave with the subject matter. The artist used the subject of slavery and racial oppression to also portray his equalitarian views to the public. The images of slavery, inequality, and discrimination could enable the artist to touch upon the themes that would otherwise would be hard to deal with in pictorial terms.¹⁰⁵

Some other works also touching upon the subject matter are: *Negro on Horseback* (7), *Soldier With Lance* (8), and *Lion Hunt* (9). The *Negro on Horseback*, 1823 is another lithograph, therefore, would have been also small in size. The image shows a black male mounting a horse

¹⁰³ Berger and Chalmers Johnson, "Art as Confrontation," 1.

¹⁰⁴ Berger and Chalmers Johnson, "Art as Confrontation," 12.

¹⁰⁵ Berger and Chalmers Johnson, "Art as Confrontation," 3-4.

literally involved in a fight. The fight can be symbolic of his fight of freedom. The horse has its hooves up and ready to keep running. The face shows determination. The man is dressed simply, not in a traditional armor. He wears cotton-like t-shirt and shorts. Instead of a saddle, animal skin such as leopard's skin is used. This detail certainly alludes to the lack of material power and also different historic background, one associated with savagery, nativity, and killing more. The soldiers that the man is fighting are dressed in traditional garments and perhaps are members of the French army. The French soldiers can be seen on the right, while other black males fighting alongside the central figure, are in the background on his left. The weapons, including spears and bow and arrow, seem to contrast with the guns of the French military. The way the black male is riding his horse is reminiscent of Renaissance and Baroque portrayals of leaders. But the painting that Géricault was trying to draw parallels with is Jacques-Louis David's *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* (10). Created in 1801-1805, Géricault would have definitely seen the piece, as it became one of the most important paintings of the leader. Napoleon himself loved David, thus, his rendition of his portrait would have been his favorite as well. The leader stares out at the viewer indicting his leadership and power, while crossing one of the most dangerous and tough passages in the Alps. Géricault's equestrian does not look out at the viewer, but tries to spot his next victim from the oppressive and tyrannical army.

Made in around 1820, *Soldier with a Lance* is another representation of a "native" preparing to defend his land and honor. It is done in brush over pencil in 1822-23 and is in the collection of Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University. The man occupies the entire space on the paper and with a step towards his left looks at the oncoming "trouble". He could have been posing for the artist, however, the meaning underneath the piece would have been the same no matter the background of the story of how did the lithograph come about. By painting him as a

soldier ready to fight, Géricault equates the black male with other paintings of the army officers in history of art. As the man frowns, he seems mentally and morally ready for the fight.

Another work at the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard is the *Lion Hunt*. Painted in water color, also in 1822-23, the image portrays a nonwhite man on a horse saving a black male from a lion. As the lion has its back two paws against another horse, it most likely that it had attacked the man while he was sitting on the horse. Lions were and are often featured on the emblems of different countries. Spain and Italy had them on their monarchic symbols, while France did not. However, the animal still has an artistic implication of power and dominance. Being the rulers of the jungle, lions often are associated with the kings. The story beneath the water color painting can be representing the Bourbon monarchy's attack on equality; the one that was criticized, attacked, and stabbed by the liberals, predicting the victory of the humanitarian movements. The man on the ground is naked, with his spear being far away from him, symbolizing the weakness of the black race under the authoritarian rule. All of these works came about a year before Géricault's death, and during the little stumble of the humanitarian movements. It seems as if Géricault tried to aid the organizations and discreetly portray the conflict existing between the abolitionists and the government, indicating the readiness and power of the racial minorities to fight for their freedom.

Géricault had also executed multiple portraits of the black sitters. One of them, for example, is the *Bust of Joseph* (14), formerly in the collection of Hans E. Buhler, Switzerland. The painting is done in oil on canvas in 1818-19, and is the same size approximately as the *Portraits of the Insane*, (more or less sixty by forty centimeters). The man looks out into space in front of him, avoiding the eye contact with the viewer. We do not see his body, just the white collar sticking out of his jacket. The background is dark, which indicates Géricault inviting the

viewer to look at him closely, reading his eyes, thus his soul. It is almost impossible not to notice drastic stylistic similarities between the *Insane Series* and these portraits. As the palette and the appearance of the sitters is very similar to the *Insane Series* it would follow that formal decisions in the *Portraits of the Insane* were made by the artist himself. All of this could be hinting at the portraits of the insane having a subtext in them as well, along with any “commissioned” value. The *Bust of Joseph* and many other portraits are on the verge of being naturalistic or idealized representations. Even though, they are natural, the way the sitter’s hold themselves suggests high morality and dignity. Earlier, only the rich would commission artworks representing themselves; moreover these sitters definitely did not have money to get their portraits done, however, by executing the black sitters portraits, Géricault equates them with the former bourgeois, placing them on the same pedestal, if not higher due to their very humanizing and moral glances signifying their pure souls.

As much as Géricault can be perceived as an activist against the monarchical reign and its decisions, he also has one work where his motivations are ambiguous. *Woman Repulsing a Negro* (11), a sculpture made out of terra cotta in 1818, currently the courtesy of Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, portrays a woman trying to push away a black male off her. They both have one of their knees down as the black man tries to hold on to her. The position seems quite sexual and alludes to the man being on the verge of raping her. Furthermore, both of them are naked and the face of the young man is very determined. Whether Géricault was trying to symbolize something through this piece is unknown, moreover, the assumptions are going to lead to a lot of speculations. Overall, the tone of the piece does not seem to be positive or as egalitarian as would be expected from the artist. There definitely is the space for interpretation

and the breakdown of the piece; however, I do not intend to get into projecting some theories that would have no factual or textual grounds.

The highpoint of Géricault's racial studies and works, and arguably his most famous painting, came after the *Prize Fight* but before the latter mentioned works. Géricault's *The Raft of the Medusa* (12) is an iconic image of Romanticism, moreover one of the strongest demonstrations of Géricault's anti-Restoration, free-thinking humanism. During the Salon of 1819 the *Raft of the Medusa* was the only uncommissioned piece, moreover, it was one of the three paintings ever executed by Géricault to have been exhibited. As Berger writes, "The social implications and political indictments which were only occasionally suggested by Copley and Girodet, were to become major themes for Géricault. In 1818 he painted the huge *Raft of the Medusa*, a work which was the center of a public scandal that had little to do with questions of art."¹⁰⁶ The painting caused turmoil, because it clearly opposed the restoration and advocated the liberal attitude. Being purely Géricault's desire the painting encapsulates the artist's personal views on the government. The story itself was very controversial. The ship called "Meduse" departed the French coast with three others. It was one of the first important political maneuvers made by the restoration government as Napoleon had fallen just a year before. The French ships were sailing in order to accept the British return of Senegal. However, to win time the Meduse went too fast and eventually lost its route, crashing into pieces. It was a terrible loss for the government and many blamed Louis XVIII for the disaster, as they thought that he was the one who appointed the captain for the ship. Theories vary on who exactly appointed the captain; nevertheless, more theories emerged about the wreckage itself, some of them arguing that there was a purposeful demolition of the ship as a response to the traitors and deserters from the

¹⁰⁶ Berger and Chalmers Johnson, "Art as Confrontation," 5.

war.¹⁰⁷ The government tried to bury the incident quickly, but Géricault permanently infused it in every French citizen thereafter.

At the same time that the government tried to forget the disaster, Géricault was looking for a subject by which he could attack Bourbon Monarchy, and “Medusa” could not have been a better one.¹⁰⁸ Berger quotes another writer, “As one writer has put it, ‘Géricault’s success rested not only on his artistic qualities. If he wanted to provoke a political scandal, he calculated only too well. The government would not allow the name *Medusa* in the catalogue, and substituted the harmless title, *Shipwreck Scene*.’”¹⁰⁹ However, people noticed the connection between the piece and the contemporary events provoking a discussion that was very unfavorable to the government of Louis XVIII.

The Raft of the Medusa received mixed reviews. The reception was not as welcoming as Géricault and his friends thought it would be. Thus, the artist expressed himself by writing a letter addressed to the people,

This year our journalists have reached the pinnacle of the ridiculous. Every picture is judged first on the spirit in which it is painted. So you will hear a liberal writer praising the patriotic brush-stroke or the nationalist color of a certain work. The same work, judged by a reactionary, is not only a revolutionary composition dominated by a generally seditious tone, but also one in which the faces are filled with an expression of hatred for our paternal government. Finally, I have been accused by a certain *White Banner* of having libelled the entire Navy Department in one ‘character’ head.¹¹⁰

As much as Géricault tried to explain himself and try to create a neutral atmosphere in regards to his work, the brushwork and the timing of the work spoke for themselves. In 1818 a strong abolitionist movement was organizing around Europe, especially in England, where Géricault

¹⁰⁷ Berger and Chalmers Johnson, "Art as Confrontation," 6.

¹⁰⁸ Berger and Chalmers Johnson, "Art as Confrontation," 6.

¹⁰⁹ Berger and Chalmers Johnson, "Art as Confrontation," 7.

¹¹⁰ Berger and Chalmers Johnson, "Art as Confrontation," 7.. A letter written by Géricault containing the final phase is printed by Louis Batissier, “Géricault,” *Revue du XIX siècle*, 1842.

had travelled before and the next year as well. Thus, giving a black male a prominent position on his canvas was not a momentary decision. Géricault witnessing the unfolding of the racial tensions delivered one of the strongest messages to the society. There are a lot of dead bodies on the raft, most of them of being white. Nevertheless, all of these bodies lead to a triangle formed by three black figures located at the very top of the raft. The men are waving at the tiny, distant ship, fighting for their survival. One of the theories shared by Art Historian Gregor Wedekind, quoted by Snell is that the retaking of Senegal would resume the slave trade between African country and France.¹¹¹ The ship did not make it, and the three black, alongside some others survived. There are a lot of triangles formed by the ropes, bodies, waves and the composition in general present in the painting, reminiscing classical symbolism in art. The black male at the top of the raft is the highest point of the triangle created by the raft and the composition. He is the figure to which the viewer's eye ascends to when reading the work from left to right. The black male can therefore be seen not only a survivor but a symbol of salvation and liberation.¹¹² The man remains anonymous, the fact that equates him with all men. The leading figure of the canvas fights for his life, representing and serving as an allegory to the rights of the nonwhite French community.

In this painting, Géricault took a step beyond advertising libertarian movement and criticized the government directly as well, for as Berger and Chalmers have pointed out,

Not only is the Navy accused of incompetence by the tragedy itself; the entire government, as well as the public, is forced to accept the work or be accused of discrimination, for there at the climax of the scene, the one man strong enough to attract salvation for the rest, is the Negro. Gericault forced a confrontation through this painting – a confrontation of the people of France with the depiction of a black man as not only an equal, but perhaps a superior being.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 38.

¹¹² Berger and Chalmers Johnson, "Art as Confrontation," 9.

¹¹³ Berger and Chalmers Johnson, "Art as Confrontation," 7.

The black male is portrayed stronger, sturdier, and having a will to live. He stands above the whites and is superior in his determination to everyone else in the painting. Géricault reminds the viewers of the tragedy, emphasizing the incompetence of everyone in power, once again showing his rebellious character by also arguing for freedom and equality.

The artist did many studies in order to portray the gruesome details of the shipwreck. However, the studies and works themselves begin to carry their own political connotations and references to other misdeeds of the Bourbon monarchy. Géricault started showing interest in the grotesque imagery regarding capital punishment in France. Liberal opposition of the government demanded the abolition of the death penalty starting 1791, however, came to its highest around 1818-19. By 1820 “Géricault was fully immersed in the left-wing ideology”, but his *Severed Heads and Limbs* (13) came before that in around 1817-18.¹¹⁴ Some of them were studies done for the *Raft of the Medusa*, but then became separate works portraying the artists’ curiosity in the human body. They also demonstrate his relationship towards the executions that took place in France during the times of the Revolution. Some of them are drawings but most of them are oil on panel. Their sizes vary, nevertheless, they are not big: being around forty or fifty centimeters in width and length. Géricault’s painted heads are covered in blood, while mouths and eyes are still wide open. It seems the artist was trying to capture the idea of immediacy and the moment, in and of itself. The paintings are very “photographic”, depicting the heads probably right after the executions due to their “fresh” states. Interestingly enough, soon after Géricault painted his series of the body parts, questions were raised about the abolition of deadly punishments and amongst the group that led the movement against capital punishment were Géricault’s friends and patrons, such as Horace Vernet, the British architect and archaeologist Charles Cockerell

¹¹⁴ Nina Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, "Géricault's Severed Heads and Limbs: The Politics and Aesthetics of the Scaffold," *The Art Bulletin* 74, no. 4 (December 1992): 604, JSTOR (3045912).

(whom Géricault had met in Italy and was to see again during his visit to England), and the duc d'Orléans.¹¹⁵ This underscores the fact that Géricault was definitely aware of the socio-political attitude towards the guillotine and capital punishment, and probably even supported the movement that fought for its abolition. Furthermore, as multiple sources claim, Géricault and Georget too, were both members of philanthropist movement that defended human rights and urged peace amongst their co-citizens.

This makes one think that the paintings despite serving any personal means of fascination were also meant to wake complacent French society by inducing terror and showing the nauseating images of the decapitated heads, which were the products of French rule and laws. Thus, Géricault could have been questioning the beliefs and methods of finding justice in the world.¹¹⁶ Unfortunately, even though there are enough grounds for arguing that these images indeed were the reflections of the troubled contemporary world of the artists, they were never meant to be seen by the public and would have remained hidden from the society, and kept by Géricault. That is why they are often perceived as studies and often taken literally by modern viewers, but their background is so strong, it is just impossible to omit the social context they were created in. Therefore, this does not denounce them of their meaning or the implications behind them. The power of the severed heads and limbs transcended its technical aspects and most likely were an argument and an example set by Géricault in order to prompt the rationalization of the French mind.

Géricault indulged in horror and treated it with ambivalence, taking a very modern stance. His *Severed Heads and Limbs* and the portraits of the black men had their own subtexts

¹¹⁵ Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Théodore Géricault*, 148.

¹¹⁶ Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Théodore Géricault*, 149. "With their bloody gashes brutally exhibited, their eyes rolling in anguish and their features distorted in pain, Géricault's images of guillotined heads appeal to the beholder's innermost humanitarian feelings with a force greater than a scientific pamphlet or a vehement political speech. For like-minded advocates of abolition of the death penalty, their message was unequivocal."

eventually criticizing the ruling class.¹¹⁷ Besides the medical interest, which was always present, the severed heads and limbs have often been linked to the *Portraits of the Insane*. Despite them being executed three years apart, both of the commissions depict Géricault's humane personality and his deep interest in sentimentality. Both the *Portraits of the Insane* and the *Severed Heads and Limbs* affirm something properly human. They demand attention, as their representation is very real and engaging.¹¹⁸ One cannot help but relate to the subject matter of both artworks.

Before the paintings of the black men or the *Medusa* Géricault did not indulge much in political works. He had done lithographs of Napoleon a year before (15), 1817, nonetheless nothing more explicit before, except for the two large paintings of soldiers: *The Wounded Cuirassier Leaving the Battle* (16) and the *Charging Chasseur* (17). Both of them are done in oil on canvas. The *Cuirassier* was painted in 1814, while the *Chasseur* in 1812. Their sizes are almost similar, the *Cuirassier* being 358 cm in height and 294 in width. The *Chasseur* on the other hand is 349 cm in height and 266 in width. Both paintings are in possession of Louvre museum, Paris, France. The two paintings could have been taken as simple representations of the soldiers, nonetheless, they happen to be as politically charged as all other liberal works that he had done later in his life.

As Nina Athanassoglou-Kallmyer writes, the “soldiers” done in two years apart can definitely be linked with each other, as they possess multiple similarities, “Distillations of implied larger narrative and conceptual wholes – of a battle, of a nation in distress – they have been likened to magnified vignettes by art critics Henri Zerner and Charles Rosen. Succinctly, they transcend factual chronicle to convey the epic nature of the Empire's final collapse”.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Théodore Géricault*, 149.

¹¹⁸ Predeville, "The Features," 99.

¹¹⁹ Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Théodore Géricault*, 32.

Having similar palette and scenery, both of the artworks serve the same meaning. The name of *The Charging Chasseur* suggest that he should be moving forward and attacking the enemy. However, the soldier looks back with fear. His horse as well has terrorized eyes. The illusion that the artist creates is of the horse stepping into flames, which actually exists in the background. This could be hinting to the fall of the chasseur as well as the loss of the battle. We encounter the horses backside turned towards us. Moreover, nor the palette or the background are triumphant, they consist of dark colors, emphasizing struggle and fear. Nothing is victorious about the chasseur either who watches his back. As Robert Snell writes, “The painting registers the sheer scale and bloodiness of Napoleonic ambitions. With its dramatic composition, it shows a moment of extreme physical and emotional tension, of danger and excitement.”¹²⁰

The same applies to the *Wounded Cuirassier*, its horse is even more scared than of the *Chasseur's*. Interestingly enough, cuirassiers were the low ranked soldiers, primarily used on the battlefield as pawns. However, Napoleon increased the power of cuirassiers during his rule, by using them as his primary soldiers in wars. He promoted them to a higher rank; it was the move that won the hearts of the people, representing majority of the French army. By this decision, Napoleon, one more time portrayed himself as the ruler of the people. Hence, Gericault's decision to depict a wounded cuirassier can't be attributed to sheer coincidence; as the soldier has dismounted and barely controls the animal, which also in fear tries to escape. He too looks back, resting on his sword, dressed in a classic French military garment as well. The cuirassier melancholically looks back at the battlefield, as he watches his power fade. That is the reason for him being “wounded:” the two paintings portray the, supposedly, decent time for Napoleon and

¹²⁰ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 31.

the bad one. In one case of 1812 his soldier is charging forward, while in the other, from 1814, retrieving.

These two paintings can be connected to the lithographs made by the artist about Napoleon later in his life. The series is also an interesting demonstration of a political sensibility, especially after the fall of the emperor. Out of twenty lithographs, seven concerned Napoleon and his life. The recurring theme of the ruler leaves it unquestionable that Géricault was intrigued by his figure. Whether the artist was trying to emphasize the power or the decline of Napoleon is not documented, and only can be speculated on by looking at the artwork. But one thing becomes clear when studying his Napoleonic soldiers and even the black male soldier: Géricault, in addition to criticizing the government, was very interested in the human psyche as well. All of his black sitters, or even the Napoleonic soldiers are deeply involved in their own thoughts and the viewer's can make judgments only by reading their minds. All of them are alone in his artworks and by their looks can the spectator make subsequent claims about the stories in the paintings. Whether it was *Soldier with Lance*, *Charging Chasseur*, or *Wounded Cuirassier* Géricault hinted at political situations mostly through the mental representation of his subject matter, with some other details around them.

After painting the African slaves, Napoleon's soldiers, *Severed Heads and Limbs*, *The Meduse*, Géricault moved on to one of his final series: *The Portraits of the Insane*, where he worked with the mentally ill patients. While he had never depicted this precise subject before, the theme is animated by the humanist, politically liberal ideology that he had been expressing in his major works for many years.

Géricault was often regarded as ‘a spokesman of the democratic middle class,’ a humanist who inquires about the state of our society.¹²¹ This can be sensed through all of his above-mentioned works. The artist criticized the government, but also was against chaos and violence, ultimately urging peace and equality. The compassionate and charitable feelings of the artist are not doubted, nor are the humanistic statements made by the *Raft of the Medusa*, or works concerning the black society and slavery. The artist argued for liberty, equality, and freedom. As Liberal Bonapartist Critic Jal Augustine wrote about *The Raft of the Medusa*, “Beyond this the politics began. ‘The Salon is as political as the elections are; the brush and chisel are party tools just as much as the pen is.’”¹²² Géricault wasted no time in making sure that his works since 1817 were heavily charged with political messages. They all carry a deep personal meaning to the artist, therefore, it cannot be neglected that *Portraits of the Insane* not only fall in the same phase with these works, but might be the culmination of all of his nationalistic works. Done a year before his death and a couple of years after the *Raft of the Medusa*, *Prize Fight*, *Soldier with Lance*, *Severed Heads and Limbs*, etc., *The Portraits of the Insane* carry as much personal and political weight as all of these Géricault’s previous works.

¹²¹ F. D. Klingender, "Géricault as Seen in 1848," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 81, no. 475 (October 1942): 255, JSTOR (868517).

¹²² Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Théodore Géricault*, 99. A statement that proved to be more than true in relation to Géricault’s *The Raft of the Medusa*.”

Chapter III

Section III.I – Scholarship on the Political Insanity of the Series

As ample amounts of Géricault's works were considered to be politically charged, the *Portraits of the Insane* were no exception and they too have a history of being associated with Géricault's or sometimes Georget's socio-cultural views. As Robert Snell writes, "the portraits subtly implicate us in the political from the start."¹²³ Snell refers to Wedekind, another commentator on Géricault, to extend his theory of a "different" perception of the series, who wrote that Géricault: "resorted to such artistic artificiality to achieve the very opposite: truth and proximity to life."¹²⁴ Snell supposes that the portraits might have been intended to be seen as political statements made by the artist or the commissioner, however, the furthest Snell goes is to question and challenge the reception of the series:

"What was their status? How were they to be approached? As art or medical illustration? Viardot himself felt that they would be equally at home in the Ecole de Medicine or the establishment of Dr. Emile Blanche, the best known psychiatrist of the period – or next to the *Raft* in the Louvre, where one of them, the Monomane du Jeu (gambler), does indeed now hang."¹²⁵

The series could have belonged anywhere. Among the shelves of psychiatrists, or in the Louvre next to "public political and aesthetic manifesto."¹²⁶ Their ambiguity can possibly suggest any sort of connotation. Since there are no records of them before 1863, the portraits are not known as either the medical or "humanistic" works. However, Robert Snell suggests that if we consider the socio-diagnostic title for the portrait of *Portrait of the Child Snatcher*, which would be *The*

¹²³ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 17.

¹²⁴ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 19.

¹²⁵ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 20.

¹²⁶ Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, "Géricault's Severed," 617.

Paedophile, we have a modern way of registering the tension and the incoherence between the motifs behind the series.¹²⁷ Viardot, arguably the first person to have commented on the works, was himself an opponent of the autocratic Napoleonic regime.¹²⁸ Therefore, a slight politicization could have come from the scholar too, yet Snell does not shy away from asking: “Are they mirrors of a ‘serious’, self-absorbed, self-seeking society?”¹²⁹ The question is more than valid since they do possess the traits and qualities of mirroring a somber, arrogant, society. Max Beerbohm, quoted by Snell, argues that, “Only the insane take themselves quite seriously,” thus, considering the past political turmoil, Géricault could have been alluding to the bourgeois, or anyone seeking power and taking themselves very seriously; especially during times of instability and authoritative regime.

Another art critic quoted by Snell, Théophile Thoré, was also a republican who avoided talking about the series, stating, “Alas! It’s less the quality of the painting that gives it its value than its subject or charm,” moreover, responding to Viardot, he asked, “Where would you put such things?”¹³⁰ Thoré definitely saw the portraits to have possessed a deeper meaning than just being sheer representations of the mentally ill. He took the subject matter to be a central aspect of the meaning of art and thus seems reluctant to talk about the series due to their complex theme. He did not see a place for the portraits anywhere, though, he did believe in their “Marxian” power. Snell asks the question: “Did the existence of the paintings somehow compromise Géricault’s status, in Thoré’s mind, as a liberal hero?”¹³¹ As the *Raft of the Medusa* was taken as an attack on conservatism, Thoré could have “baptized” Géricault as a liberal hero; a person challenging contemporary dogmatic thought of his times, and someone trying to destroy

¹²⁷ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 21.

¹²⁸ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 13.

¹²⁹ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 25.

¹³⁰ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 21.

¹³¹ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 21.

the “conventional.” The sitters of the series are clearly poor, yet are not represented in a traditional demeaning manner. Snell writes, “In this reading, as Thoré had intuited, Géricault was undermining the integrity of one of the academically sanctioned artistic genres; in this way too he can be enlisted as the forerunner of modernism, taking his place near the head of a lineage that runs through Courbet and Realism to Manet and the Impressionists and beyond; the 1991 Grand Palais exhibition promoted him as a “subjective Realist”.¹³² Géricault was surpassing his time, overstepping the boundaries of “aestheticism” and reaching the point of equating art with the “real.”

The same was seen by Brendan Prendeville who writes that freedom was the political theme that tied Géricault’s art most closely to its time.¹³³ Moreover, he argues that the audience of the scientific discoveries about the human body was the same as that of the painters and writers, namely the “artistic” world:

They too represented the body by means of images and metaphors: even a specialized term like ‘lésion morale’ was figurative. Conversely, the high rhetoric of history painting had been reformulated by David so as to involve a new measure of realism; with respect, that is, to the body and its states of being – and to its state of extinction, for the fleshliness of this new painted body was not of the timeless Baroque kind, but was mortal, existential, modern.¹³⁴

Monroe Beardsley, in his writing *Philosophy of Literature*, talks about the fusion between the real and the fictitious. Making it impossible to draw the line between the two entities, Prendeville seems to be arguing for the same within the “artworld” after Neoclassicism (or David), moreover attributing Géricault to the list of painters who united the “real” with the “fictitious” who in fact represented truthful reflection/response to the world.

¹³² Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 24.

¹³³ Prendeville, “The Features,” 100.

¹³⁴ Prendeville, “The Features,” 98.

This might at first seem as a far stretch and too much of a speculation. Nevertheless, if we consider Georget's writings in the *De La Folie*, quoted by Margeret Miller, we will see that even he held a very unique view upon the treatment of the insane.¹³⁵ Georget claims that the number of insane people had increased in several countries struggling with equality. The low-social classes have been revolting, while the people of high rank and notability had become overprotective of their power, which has caused the disorder within the bourgeois too. This situation did not necessarily mean the degradation or decadence of the society to Miller, however, it definitely indicated the increase in mental disorders within the politically unstable countries; and France was one of them.¹³⁶ Georget ends up speaking about the projections of madness on page thirty-one, arguing that instability within the country causes fury, violence, and agitation among people. The psychiatrist even praises the members of society who had remained willingly rational and conscious of their state of being during tumultuous times.

This certainly does not tell us anything about Géricault's intentions within the portraits. Intentions themselves are almost always impossible to identify and can only be speculated about through different sorts of evidence. However, it makes the objectives and views of a potential commissioner of the series clear to the viewer. Even if Georget did not commission the series,

¹³⁵ Georget, *De la Folie, ou alienation mentale*, extrait du dictionnaire de médecine, Paris, 1823, 7-8. Le nombre des aliénés a du s'accroître dans plusieurs pays, en raison du développement et de l'activité des facultés humaines, qui ont gagné, depuis un demi-siècle environ, les degrés moyens et inférieurs de la société, en raison des intérêts divers et puissants qui ont occupé les hommes de tous les rangs, des événements et des découvertes de toute sorte, qui ont fixé l'attention publique, des chocs des passions véhémentes qui ont ébranlé profondément certains états.

¹³⁶ Georget, *De la Folie, ou alienation mentale*, extrait du dictionnaire de médecine, Paris, 1823, 8. Ainsi la folie est particulièrement commune dans les pays libres, chez les peuples agités par les factions et les partis, soumis à des commotions politiques violentes qui bouleversent tous les éléments de la société, à des révolutions qui compromettent tous les intérêts... dans les contrées ravagées par des guerres multipliées; chez les nations éclairées, industrieuses, commerçantes' en un mot, cette maladie naît et se multiplie avec les circonstances qui excitent vivement l'attention, activent l'esprit, et mettent en jeu toutes les passions de l'homme. - Thus madness is particularly common in free countries, among the people agitated by factions and parties, subjected to violent political commotions which upset all the elements of society, revolutions that compromise all interests ... Countered by multiple wars; Among illuminated, industrious, and commercial nations, in a word, this disease is born and multiplies with the circumstances which excite the attention, activate the mind, and bring into play all the passions of man.

the friendship between the two could have most likely resulted in Géricault being familiar with contemporary view on the concept of a socially implicated insanity. Prendeville too agrees with other scholars upon Géricault's friend's involvement in different liberal factions, but he even takes a step further by stating, "Géricault might just be counted a member too..."¹³⁷ Overall, common ideology within Géricault's social circle would have informed the portraits and motifs behind their execution.

Some scholars have restricted themselves from simply identifying them as insane, without attributing the subject matter to any cause or background, as Snell writes: "Later nineteenth-century commentators assessed them by similar criteria; for the critic Maurice Hamel, writing in 1887, they were merely representations of human nature "fallen into bestiality." ¹³⁸ Whether they were simply the representations of the insane, medical studies, or Géricault's personal responses to the socio-political structures of France is unknown, yet the grounds for interpreting them as political works are supported by the earlier scholarly commentary. Even Snell, a psychoanalyst, admits that they seem to be frozen in time – "as if the regime in power in the early 1820s, the restored Bourbon monarchy, in its attempts to put the clock back to the years before 1789, had at last succeeded in making time stand still. They breathe the atmosphere of the post-Revolutionary period. Like characters from Balzac, the sitters might be its residue, surviving human figments from the Revolutionary and Napoleonic dream."¹³⁹ The portraits encompass the time of their creation. They incorporate history within them and breathe the air of the revolutionary period. Consequently, we can think of them as the representations of the state of French society after the revolution, the Napoleonic wars, and the Restoration. Figuratively speaking, the palette, looks, subject matter, and other formal qualities, indicate that it is as if the

¹³⁷ Prendeville, "The Features," 100.

¹³⁸ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 21. Cited from Miller, "Géricault's Paintings," 152.

¹³⁹ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 26-27.

revolutionaries had frozen, went crazy, as the Bourbon monarchy had been re-established in 1815.

Each portrait presents different clues and carries its own, independent meaning that in its entirety adds to the overall judgment of the series.

Section III.II – Visual Analysis

Portrait of a Woman Suffering from Obsessive Envy

Certainly there's something off about her. Her messy hair sticks out from a white bonnet. She wears a ragged brown shawl and gazes into the deep space in front of her. She seems like she hates the world, and the living; as Robert Snell argues, this portrait prompted Viardot to cite Voltaire, describing her as the “sad lover of the dead, she hates the living”.¹⁴⁰ *Portrait of a Woman Suffering from Obsessive Envy* is compositionally more complex than the other portraits from the series. The patterns starting with the bonnet are continued on her shawl. Due to the coloring of her shawl we only see her face explicitly. The “V” shaped red scarf contrasts the oval formed by the sitter's head and the bonnet. The laces of the bonnets are untied, hinting at the “freedom” of her mental state. The messy, untidy, and shambolic appearance can be reflective of her personality or the state of being. Also referred to as “The Hyena of the Salpetriere,” the woman looks angry. Her closed mouth suggests that she is ready to speak and is about to say something. She seems to be tormented with life, thus, stares out into space confronting the “non-existent” space. While she frowns her eyes are red. The red eyes can be suggesting that the sitter

¹⁴⁰ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 16.

is tired, worked, or stressed. The dark background blends in with the colors of her shawl. *Woman Suffering from Obsessive Envy* is the only sitter whose neck is visible. Showing of a lot of skin can be suggestive of excessive madness or of a particular disorder within her mind. There is no hint of the placement of neither her arms nor any other body parts.

A Woman with the Gambling Mania

A Woman with the Gambling Mania looks into space in front of her. She seems to be old, physically weak, and short, as her head sinks into her wide shoulders. We do not see her hands, or other parts of the body except the face. The glare is unidentified; it can be either of sorrow, disappointment, or of dominance and confrontation. Her mouth curls up to our right, which causes her eye to flinch a bit, as if she is confused with something. Her hair, as in the *Woman Suffering from Obsessive Envy* sticks out from her white cap. The white cap and the white robe that she wears underneath her shawl, which look similar to the one worn by the previous sitter, frame her face, making it stand out in the painting. To her right, at the level of her chest, a slight line is visible that can be suggestive of a chair, since we cannot tell within the portraits whether the sitters are standing or seated. Moreover, she holds a walking stick, which forms a diagonal in front of her body, and due to it being tilted; one can assume that she is not holding it in the moment, thus, is sitting on a chair of some sort. Also, the portrait of *A Woman with Gambling Mania* is the only one suggesting some sort of space. If one looks to her left, some rectangles/squares are visible that could be representing brickwork, alluding to a room, or some kind of a wall. Lastly, Robert Snell claims that “In a more ancient classification and

iconography, she would undoubtedly be a melancholic.”¹⁴¹ Melancholia was a subject matter often associated with depression and in fact an unstable human mind, which slowly evolved into it being a representation of sensitiveness of the insane.

Portrait of the Child Snatcher

“Chiaroscuro”, the play of light and dark, is most evident in the *Portrait of the Child Snatcher*. The palette seems to be uniform except in the face, which lights up against the dark. The sitter, as all others, looks to the side. His eyes are watery, showing him in the state of regret and sorrow. As he looks into the ethereal space, the child snatcher looks like he is about to cry. He is very still, not indicating any motion, unlike *The Woman Suffering from Obsessive Envy* or other portraits from the series that suggest motion. The sitter could have been in this position for a long time and there is no sign of him moving anytime soon as he goes down “memory lane”. His age is hard to determine. He neither looks old, or young; thus, can be of any age at all. Like other sitters, the Child Snatcher has a downward turn to his mouth, however, it is clear that he is very sad. His forehead is lit the most, which might not be an accident since it happens to be the part of his body where his mind is located. And if he is indeed mentally ill, that’s the part that should be malfunctioning for him. But this is just a speculation. The Child Snatcher has an upright posture and a white collar shows from underneath his cloak. He also wears a hat, like the mentally ill in previous two portraits.

The Portrait of the Kleptomaniac,

¹⁴¹ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 15.

The Kleptomaniac is evidently the youngest of all the sitters. The lighting is most even on his face, compared to the other portraits. The Kleptomaniac looks to his left. He does not seem to be longing like the Child Snatcher, but more confronting the “person”/“idea” he is contemplating. He also has a white collar protruding from his shawl. The body blends in with the background and there is no suggestion of the placing of his hands. He is the only one out of all of the mentally ill from the series not to have a hat or something on his head. Instead, we see his messy hair and scruffy beard, suggesting disorder. His right eye is open wide, while his eyebrows are raised as if questioning the authority that commands over him; making him look arrogant and pompous. The Kleptomaniac has a little touch of red on his nose, while his mouth is downturned from displeasure. There is definitely a different dynamic in this portrait in relation to the others. The sitter seems to be very self-centered, having certain impulsiveness to him. The Kleptomaniac looks dangerous, as Robert Snell writes, he had acquired the name of the “mad murderer” at some point in history, due to his authoritative glare, nonetheless, we know him as the kleptomaniac today.¹⁴² The Kleptomaniac’s intense glare makes us treat him like a criminal more, rather than a mentally ill patient. The Envious Woman also looks as if she is about to curse at someone and speak, however, the Kleptomaniac doesn’t suggest that much physical action, if any at all, nevertheless, seems to be more confrontational than any others of the sitters.

Portrait of a Man Suffering from the Delusions of Military Grandeur

The Man Suffering from the Delusions of Military Grandeur, on the other hand, is clearly the oldest of the male sitters. The lighting here is bright, as in the previous portrait,

¹⁴² Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 19.

however, the face is less lit than of the Kleptomaniac. Furthermore, the clothing and the background of the sitter has the most light out of all the portraits. There is a fair amount of white in the left top side of the background. This could have been due to bad conservation, but also could have been an artistic decision. The Man with the Military Delusions does not wear a shawl; instead we see it folded on his shoulder. The “Military Marshal” wears a vest over a white shirt, over which he has a “medallion”, along with a hat. Snell argues for the “medallion” to be a number tag with “121” on it, referring to his patient numeration or a hospital tag.¹⁴³ Viardot referred to it as “medaille de commissionnaire” – the messenger’s or courier’s identification.¹⁴⁴ Nonetheless, the allusion to the Military Medal cannot be omitted. Moreover, the hat that the sitter wears is of the “bonnet de police” – the cap worn by Napoleonic veterans retired on half pay under the Restoration.¹⁴⁵ The “Soldier” looks to his left. He seems to have accepted his fate as a person, however, his delusions show themselves in his appearance and mental state within the institution where he is. The “Military Marshall” has a scruffy beard and his mouth is also facing downward, yet we do not see displeasure on his face as much as indifference and pride. The sitter is posing in a way, showing off his “rank” and self to the painter. He is very self-conscious of the artist, as Snell quotes Viardot, “He believed he was a Marshal of France, manoeuvring battalions from morning to evening, and winning at least a battle a day. He is proud, this one, arrogant, and as radiant as Caesar must have been after the battle of Pharsalus.”¹⁴⁶ The way light falls onto his face, portraying him fading into darkness serves the idea of chiaroscuro emphasizing his “post” and fortified stature.

¹⁴³ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 17.

¹⁴⁴ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 17.

¹⁴⁵ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 17.

¹⁴⁶ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 17.

Section III.III – Politics in *The Portraits of the Insane*

All of the sitters can be associated with the social issues existing in Géricault's France. *Portrait of a Man Suffering from the Delusions of Military Grandeur* is probably the easiest portrait to be interpreted as a political work. It undeniably is redolent of the *Charging Chasseur* and the *Wounded Cuirassier*. Nonetheless, unlike the two previous soldiers looks confident. He is fortified and proud of his military past. The "commander" calls back the Napoleonic rule. He might even be taking himself to be as good of a leader as Napoleon was himself.¹⁴⁷ Margaret Miller states that contemporary accounts suggested that there was an increase in delusions of military grandeur under the rule of Napoleon.¹⁴⁸ The society wanted to be as triumphant as their leader. So wants the mentally ill patient, and it is the content in itself that provokes a lot of questions. As Robert Snell writes, the military commander registered the contemporary anxiety existing in the nation after the fall of Napoleon.¹⁴⁹ The psychoanalyst identifies the sitter as the *demi-solde*: ex-imperial soldier in permanent mourning of his ruler, thus, the eternal enemy of the Second Restoration.¹⁵⁰ The portraits most likely portray the tension between the Bonapartists and the Bourbon Monarchy. But what is more important is that, Géricault decides to focus the attention on one particular man, who serves as a symbol of all men suffering from the same sort of mania. He reduces the big political tension to feeling, emotion, and appearance. Indicating the stage to which the external world has led the people. The man even has a medallion alluding to some sort of a war medal – the one representing the fight between his conscious and mentally ill state. The portrait of a Man with Delusions of Military Grandeur could have been an allegory of

¹⁴⁷ Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Théodore Géricault*, 186.

¹⁴⁸ Miller, "Géricault's Paintings," 163.

¹⁴⁹ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 161.

¹⁵⁰ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 161.

all Napoleon's ex-soldiers or supporters, or of the representatives of Bourbon Monarchy.

However, within the boundaries of my theory the universal truth was that Géricault saw the soldiers on the verge of the mental breakdown.

The Portrait of the Kleptomaniac is referring to the "underworld" of the French community. He is a thief, a pickpocket, a bandit, and a beggar. The fact that the man steals is already representing a problem, yet this sinner has a disease and is constantly urged to rob. He is the youngest out of all, signifying the only method of survival for the new generations in France. He is a criminal, however, was driven to the state where he is right now.

The Portrait of the Child Abductor "...makes more oblique reference to another, increasingly discussed social evil. He would not have been short of victims."¹⁵¹ He is also a criminal, but of a higher rank. He too is mentally ill. His eyes suggest longing either for the future or the past. Whichever is the right answer, turns the perception of his character by 180 degrees. The statement made by Snell regarding the number of his victims, could be proposing his evil, but also indicating the general disorder within the French society.

Another person belonging to the dark world is *A Woman with the Gambling Mania*. Gambling was an issue during the times of the Restoration. A lot of money was paid to Paris lottery that showed the dominance of such institutions.¹⁵² People were poor and addressed different sorts of means for survival. A Gambling Woman was no exception. Moral objects were raised, as people demanded the protection of the poor, yet monarchical state did not pay much attention to it. This portrait is also the one indicating some sort of space behind the sitters.

Interestingly enough, this woman is the only one out of the five suggesting physical movement

¹⁵¹ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 156.

¹⁵² Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 155. "The woman driven mad by the lottery is a case in point according to a London correspondent in 1826, 25,388,800 francs were paid into the Paris lottery (one of France's five) between 1816 and 1820, that is, about a million sterling per annum (in 1826 values)."

as she holds the walking stick. Géricault might be reminding the viewers of the existence of space, their actual habitat, yet does not necessarily portray them in a hospital to avoid the rigid categorization by the critics.

Portrait of a Woman Suffering from Obsessive Envy is more of a general reflection on mental illness in France. The woman seems rabid, which is caused by her attitude towards the world around her. She too yearns for power, material security, and all of the attributes signifying the “good life,” and once she does not achieve the desired states, it leads to the demolition of her psyche. A lot of people would have had the same sort of an issue in France. There are no exact numbers to how many did actually go insane, however, the large gaps between the social classes would have definitely aided the insanity of not just the inferior side, but the superior as well.

Individually all the sitters possess a character, are independent, and can be talked upon separately. But, I think it is their collectiveness that refers to their status the most. They need to be looked at in their totality, on the same plane, within the same box. There are a series, produced either very rapidly or slowly, though belonging to the same commission/idea. The state in which all of the sitters are in itself can be linked to the idea of liberalism and equality. Monomania was firmly associated with liberalism later in the 1820s.¹⁵³ This was due to Georget’s activity in court, yet Géricault’s portraits would have definitely come handy. The sickness had evolved to being a liberal tool as a lot of criminals were pardoned from prisons and sent to the mental asylums. This little reform aided the humanitarian movements, catalyzing the processes of modernization. Therefore, even if Georget commissioned the pieces, they, at least partially, served the purpose of opening the minds of the people. “Monomania” developed by Pinel, Esquirol, and Georget, and its attribution to a lot of lawbreakers, at certain level,

¹⁵³ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 143.

represented the progress of the society. If it was Géricault's decision to execute the series with the inclination towards this condition, it is quite possible for him to have been trying to make the political statements regarding the treatment of the convicts, or portraying the state of the French society. It is almost undoubted that the sitters were of materially insecure backgrounds, but if one looks closely, multiple social classes can actually be involved within the *Portraits of the Insane*. As Eitner claimed, they do not look to be representations of lunatics right away, "In their uneasy stillness the figures have an impressive presence; seen from a distance, they resemble formal, middle-class portraits."¹⁵⁴ Middle class was the dominant one in terms of its representatives in France; thus, there is a chance for all of the sitters to have been alluding to the majority of the French population. The Envious Woman would belong to the poor, the Gambler as well, yet would have more than the previously mentioned sitter, probably fluctuating from class to class depending on her luck. The Kleptomaniac's background is uncertain, since his success at his craft probably determined a lot. The Child Snatcher could have belonged to any class, but I'd attribute him to the middle one, due to his mental state of sorrow and regret. The man could have had enough education to reflect upon his past, which he would not get at the bottom of the food chain. As for the Military Commander, he, I'd suggest was of actually a high rank. Once, maybe a Napoleonic soldier, now suffering from Grandeur, could have held a high position on the social ladder. Moreover, the ambiguous pendant on his neck, if proved to be a military medal, would not have been possessed by him from nowhere, and the sitter might have actually earned it. Therefore, if this theory is true, Géricault, or maybe Georget, selected the sitters so that they united multiple social hierarchies in one series. If this were untrue, and all of the sitters truly were poor, the theory would not have really diverged from its plane since the social backgrounds

¹⁵⁴ Eitner, *Géricault, His Life*. 245.

of all the sitters are different. Géricault did not execute the kleptomaniacs, the child snatchers, or just the “insane,” in broad terms, but took one of each, possessing a story within themselves and combined them. Thus, their perception and interpretation can be arguing for the artist’s overall representation of French society as insane; due to the diversity of histories.

We should not forget the artists approach to the racial issues or the capital punishment. He took one problem and approached it from many angles, sliding in the hints and details of his personal relationship to the contemporary world. The method could have been similar in *The Portraits of Insane*. As the artist delved into the subject matter, he executed ten portraits of all different sitters: diverging in gender, age, type of monomania, and maybe even race. All together, the portraits seem to be speaking of a problem, which is much bigger than just medicine. Moreover, there is less evidence of them being medical studies. The treatment used with the patients did not even focus on anything but their ethical development. As Robert Snell writes, moral “treatment must aim to work on the patient’s feelings and ideas.”¹⁵⁵ The patients, then, often reflected upon their feelings, thoughts, etc., probably often touching upon the injustice in the world, leading to the asylum. The portraits have no indication or subtexts of serving the purpose of recognized medical examination. The patients, if treated, would be “cured” theoretically, through the re-examination of their minds, and re-evaluation of their values. Maybe it was enough for Georget to just look at them and understand his patients, but realistically he could have done the same any day, and Géricault would not have been needed to execute the works either. All of sitters are against the dark background, stressing their emotional experience and cognitive tension; the one maybe shared by the rest of the country. As Robert Snell writes,

¹⁵⁵ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 146.

In line with Georget's clinical thinking, the portraits reflect both *le physique* – passions impact on the brain and body can invest the person – and *le moral* – the sitters are not deprived of mind, or of sharply differentiated individualities. As such, the portraits are products of the humanizing, democratising impetus of the post-Revolutionary period, and contributions to it; they are not than just throwbacks to the 1790's. Géricault was engaged in a larger project, to paint contemporary history, but as a history without heroes.¹⁵⁶

Géricault painted the harsh reality existing in France. The country had no heroes and more and more people fell into the trap of freedom, the one that ultimately led to their madness. The portraits are throwbacks to the 1790s, they are throwbacks to 1800s as well, and to 1815s, but more importantly they are the representations of the truth existing in 1820s: "Contemporary history is inscribed in the faces and bodies of his sitters: portraits, like the *Chasseur's*, as bearers of historical weight."¹⁵⁷ The sitters in the series are the symbols of France at the times when they were painted.

Robert Snell refers to Esquirol to touch upon insanity during the Restoration. The number of mentally ill patients was on the rise,

An additional reason for the increase in madness during the Restoration lay in general lowering of morals and standards of behaviour since the Revolution, the decline of religion, and the "cold egotism" of a society in which, across the social classes, "each lived for himself". For madness was in the last analysis "a disease of civilization", rooted in the state of contemporary morals even more than politics.¹⁵⁸

Madness had become the disease of the civilization. The preceding history and events of the Revolution and the Napoleonic wars had led to setting the standards of conduct very low. The country was unstable on all fronts. People sought power as a lot of prominent positions were always opening up. Everyone wanted to rule and gain control over multiple ruling factions. Moreover, the society, especially the lower class, smelled opportunity, which was leading to

¹⁵⁶ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 151.

¹⁵⁷ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 151-152.

¹⁵⁸ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 153.

their immoral decisions. Some of them are portrayed in the portraits; yet, they all are the results of the unrestrained times. Géricault's sitters are all allegorically embodying the society living during the Restoration; the one lusting for control and supremacy. It was not that these particular five or ten people were going mad, but that the country in itself was going insane, and ironically enough these were the five that had time to reflect upon their decisions and stand higher than other, "free" citizens. Therefore, in some sense, Géricault's sitters seem to be the most sane, having their portraits executed, they are identified as insane and possess a chance to evaluate themselves, while all the "free" citizens are chained to slave morality not even being aware of their conditions.

Portraits also serve the purpose for the artist to come to grips with reality. Géricault, distanced from the truths had a chance to reflect upon the state of his country through his works. Bodies of his sitters are in themselves dissolved in the anxieties of the times. Esquirol and Georget had special views concerning madness and history, which undoubtedly show in Géricault's series.¹⁵⁹ The body-language of the sitters, as their glares, and feelings of discontent, make the viewers live the aura of the 1820's. The palette is also very dark. Most of the colors used are: black and brown contrasting with the skin-colored pink, and red features on the faces of the sitters. Sense of blood is infused in their appearance, as well as the eternal lust, developed by their manias. All the sitters are linked, and as much as they are the representations of contemporary history, they are also the victims of it. The country has killed its generations. Dictatorship and war have spared no one, including the artist himself. The sense of self-identification of Géricault with the sitters is also present. The artist's past mental breakdowns were not only due to his personal problems. He could have felt the pain of his country and in an

¹⁵⁹ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 152.

odd way associated himself with his sitters. He too was mad, attempting suicide various times. History had destroyed the bourgeois too; there was no one escaping the torture of time.

This theory is often counteracted with the idea that Georget was a materialist man and he would not allow Géricault to dig deep, if it indeed was his commission. However, Georget was not as materialistic as art historians have been portraying him.¹⁶⁰ Later in his life he had joined a humanitarian movement as well, and even without this decision, the explanation of his “baptizing” as materialist was simply a misunderstanding of his writings and the texts. Georget, even though different from Pinel and Esquirol, still followed their footsteps and did not diverge much from his mentors, and also attributed the *Meduse* to have been influencing the public consciousness. Medicine was on the rise, while the religion was on the fall, which also played a huge role in majorly catholic country. People needed hope and it was nowhere to be located.

It is possible, if not true, that as the London Lithographs, or any other Géricault’s political works, the portraits made direct social and political commentary, criticizing the history in and of itself, moreover, portraying the condition of the French society.¹⁶¹ Snell also quotes another art historian Milton Brown who saw the portraits as being respectful of humanity and dignity, belonging to the genre of the Revolutionary portraits.¹⁶² The series did not just one meaning. They explored the idea of the “human” too, alongside madness, history, government, and psyche. It should not be neglected that the works are great in their aesthetic appearance as well. The brushwork, juxtaposition of colors, curves, and other formal attributes are masterful. Revolutionary crown of the times definitely echoed Géricaultian approach to existence in 1820’s.¹⁶³ Robert Snell also adds that, “Géricault’s painting of course has an another, underlying

¹⁶⁰ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 144-145.

¹⁶¹ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 155.

¹⁶² Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 150.

¹⁶³ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 158.

twist, which is made explicit by Baudelaire in a line from the key poem “Le vin de l’assassin” in *Les Fleurs du mal*: “We are all more or less mad!”¹⁶⁴ The madness did not refer to artistic creativity or anything of that sort in this context, but to borderline of sanity, which is crossed multiple times during the lives of stable people too. The portraits are making vast statements about rationality in the Western World. They criticize and destroy, however also portray immense sorrow and disappointment from the artist’s side. To execute these works a year before his death, while having tuberculosis, Géricault knew exactly what he was stepping into and probably regretted that he could not help more but to show the harsh reality of the society he was living in.

¹⁶⁴ Snell, *Portraits of the Insane*, 158.

Conclusion

After arguing for the *Portraits of the Insane* to have been the projections of Géricault's personal humanitarian ideology, it is hard to believe that the artists did not regard art as a primal necessity of the people, but referred to it as the "fruit of abundance," developing ones imagination.¹⁶⁵ Due to that reason, the craft would be at its highest during the times when the nation was at its strongest both, economically and politically.¹⁶⁶ The overall economic power of the country would aid the commercialization of painters' works; moreover, in a strong state there would have been more commissions due to the material or financial rigidity. Therefore, the wealth of the nation directly influenced the progress of the craft. Géricault also stated that France was in need of painters such as Gros, Gérard, Guérin, or Girodet and was losing its golden generation step by step.¹⁶⁷ It is unknown when did Géricault write this document talking about the academy and the arts in general, however, no matter the date, the situation in France would have been horrible, since it always was during his short life.

Personally, I believe that the stability of the country aids the progression of art during the times when it is produced, truly helping the artists to gain fame and make significant steps in their craft. However, the riotous times can provide the subject matter worth exploring and developing as well. Political art, produced during the times of wars or certain misfortunes of the nation, holds something different than an art piece made in the times of steadiness and rigidity. It might even make the artwork more relatable after the centuries, since the turmoil will never be

¹⁶⁵ Théodore Géricault, "Théodore Géricault (1791-1824) on Genius and Academies," in *Art in Theory: 1815-1900 (An Anthology of Changing Ideas)*, ed. Charles Harrison, Paul Wood, and Jason Gaiger (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), 24.

¹⁶⁶ Géricault, "Théodore Géricault," 23. "The arts flourished in Venice when it was a rich and powerful republic; Holland, when master of the seas, equally marked her greatness with masterpieces in all the arts."

¹⁶⁷ Géricault, "Théodore Géricault," 25.

avoided and the flames of war are never going to extinguish. Art is a strong medium, the language of which is spoken by everyone; thus, the canvas can become the biggest weapon available to the nation. I'm against categorization of art. My introduction serves the purpose of welcoming the reader into the project but not into my mind. There is no right way to approach art; it can be as personal as someone's character or mood. Both the "Aesthetic" and non-aesthetic theories fail since they cannot keep up with the progression of the field; and in order to progress, the old must often be forgotten. Sometimes existentialism is critical in moving forward. Negation is what led to development of the arts: emergence of Baroque from Renaissance, Rococo from Baroque, Romanticism from Neoclassicism, or Impressionism from Realism, to name a few. Art gains different meanings overtime and this event should keep reoccurring forever.

Even though the painter's opinions about the arts were different from expected, this attitude of Géricault's was not influencing his perception of an artist as a notion; and *Portraits of the Insane* did indeed fulfill the role and calling of a true, genius (for Géricault). Artist's role is unidentifiable in the society, while art as much as it is something, is nothing as well. There is no universal, eternal, doctrine applying to the description of who the artist is, or what is art – but this line of ambiguity is what creates curiosity to it, and ironically enough, curiosity is the only thing that a field needs for it to survive.

Géricault believed in the creative power of individual genius. However, he did not support the art schools, saying no one could excel at their craft around others mastering the same thing. The genius of imagination would be lost, due to the subconscious influence of the fellow artists. Géricault indirectly criticized the Prix de Rome since it motivated the people, who could have been worthy additions to many other available professions, to paint.¹⁶⁸ Géricault located the strength of a human within him or herself stating, "The man who truly has a vocation has no fear

¹⁶⁸ Géricault, "Théodore Géricault," 25.

of obstacles, as he is sure to overcome them; they often provide themselves the means to overcome them.”¹⁶⁹ A defeated obstacle was just another necessary condition for someone to have been a worthy artist. The artists were true heroes who exercised their genius and were not afraid to challenge themselves. “These are the men that a nation must strive to produce – men who allow nothing, not poverty nor persecution, to stand in their way.”¹⁷⁰ The artist was an independent fighter who fought for the rights of all, not allowing anything to stand between him and his choice of work. They were people who stayed quite until they were needed, but when they were asked for nothing stopped them from making the biggest statements with their work - “They simmer like volcanoes, bound to erupt, for such is their nature, burning to light up the way and astonish the world.”¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ Géricault, "Théodore Géricault," 25.

¹⁷⁰ Géricault, "Théodore Géricault," 26.

¹⁷¹ Géricault, "Théodore Géricault," 26.

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Appendix

1. Théodore Géricault. *Portrait of the Child Snatcher*. c.1822-23. Oil on canvas. 86.8 X 54 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, MA. Image Courtesy of: [pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com).



2. Théodore Géricault. *The Portrait of the Kleptomaniac*. c.1822-23. Oil on canvas. 61.2 X 50.1 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Ghent, Belgium. Image Courtesy of: [pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com)



3. Théodore Géricault. *A Woman with Gambling Mania*. c.1822-23. Oil on canvas. 77 X 64 cm. Louvre, Paris, France. Image Courtesy of: [pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com)



4. Théodore Géricault. *Portrait of a Man Suffering from the Delusions of Military Grandeur*. c.1822-23. Oil on canvas. 81 X 65 cm. Collection Oskar Reinhart "Am Römerholz," Winterthur, Switzerland. Image Courtesy of: <http://madamepickwickartblog.com/>



5. Théodore Géricault. *Portrait of a Woman Suffering from Obsessive Envy*. c.1822-23. Oil on canvas. 72 X 58 cm. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon, France. Image Courtesy of: [pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com)



6. Théodore Géricault. *The Prize Fight*. c. 1818. Lithograph on wove paper. Image courtesy of: fineartamerica.com



7. Théodore Géricault. *Negro on Horseback*. c. 1818. Lithograph. Harvard Fogg Art Museum, MA. Image courtesy of: harvardartmuseums.com



8. Théodore Géricault. *Soldier With a Lance*. c. 1820. Harvard Fogg Art Museum, MA. Image courtesy of: [wikimedia.com](https://www.wikimedia.com)



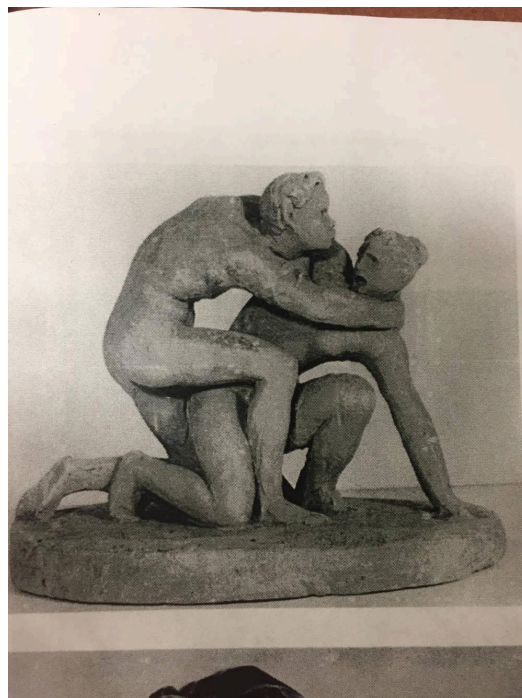
9. Théodore Géricault. *Lion Hunt*. 1818-20. Watercolor. 32.2 X 40.8 cm. Harvard Fogg Art Museum, MA. Image courtesy of: <http://www.harvardartmuseums.org/>



10. Jacques-Louis David. *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*. 1801. Oil on canvas. 261 X 221 cm. Chateau de Malmaison, Rueil-Malmaison. Image courtesy of www.khanacademy.org



11. Théodore Géricault. *Woman Repulsing a Negro*. c. 1818. Terra cotta. Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo. Picture taken from Klaus Berger and Diane Chalmers Johnson article, *Art as Confrontation: The Black Man in the Work of Géricault*.



12. Théodore Géricault. *The Raft of the Medusa*. 1819. Oil on canvas. 491 X 716 cm. Louvre, Paris, France. Image courtesy of: wikipedia.com



13. Théodore Géricault. *Severed Heads and Limbs: Guillotined Heads*. c.1818-1820. Oil on canvas. 50 X 61 cm. Nationalmuseum, Stockholm. Image courtesy of: pinterest.com
-----, *Study of Feet and Hands*. c. 1818-19. Oil on canvas. 52 X 64 cm. Musée Fabre, Montpellier. Image courtesy of: pinterest.com



14. Théodore Géricault. *Bust of Joseph*. Exact information unavailable. Formerly in the collection of Hans E. Buhler, Berg am Irchel, Switzerland. Image courtesy of pinterest.com



15. Théodore Géricault. *Napoleonic Lithographs: Passage du Mont St. Bernard (Napoleon's Army Crossing the St. Bernard Pass)*. 1817. Lithograph on wove paper. 35.9 X 41.6 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Image courtesy of artsy.net

----- *Napoleonic Lithographs: Retreat from Russia*. 1818. Lithograph on wove paper. 44.5 X 36.2 cm. National Gallery of art, Washington, D.C. Image courtesy of artsy.net



16. Théodore Géricault. *The Wounded Cuirassier Leaving the Battle*. 1814. Oil on canvas. 358 X 294 cm. Louvre, Paris, France. Image courtesy of: [pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com)



17. Théodore Géricault. *Charging Chasseur*. 1812. Oil on canvas. 349 X 266 cm. Louvre, Paris, France. Image Courtesy of: [wikipedia.com](https://www.wikipedia.com)

