GERICAULT IN ENGLAND:
THE LITHOGRAPHIC PRINT AND THE SOCIAL WORLD OF MEN AND HORSES

by

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ABSTRACT

Images of horses appear again and again in the works of Théodore Géricault, as many art historians have observed. This preoccupation with equestrian subject matter has invariably been explained in relation to the artist’s own passion for riding and well-known prowess as a horseman. Yet this attention to personal motivations fails to explain why these images so often situate horses in ambiguous, socially volatile circumstances. The complex significance of horses in early 19th century society, which I argue was implicit in the production, circulation and reception of these representations, has yet to be adequately addressed.

I develop an argument that links Géricault’s equestrian imagery culturally and historically to a provocative moment of social turmoil in England at the dawning of its supremacy as an industrial power. One set of lithographs forms the basis for my examination, Various Subjects Drawn from Life and on Stone, published for the English print market during one of Géricault’s prolonged visits to London, in 1821. In this set of lithographs Géricault uses horses as a medium for exploring the rapid transformations that defined the political climate of the times, such as emerging concepts of nationhood and industrialization, and the resulting shifts in social identities. Géricault’s visual vocabulary participates in a deeply rooted system of beliefs that surrounded horsemanship in English society, but he subverts its traditional meanings in order to address a modern sensibility. My research draws heavily from disciplines such as economic history and social history.

Central to my analysis is that the images are encoded with what I call the “culture of horsemanship,” a body of knowledge and opinions about horses and their management that pervaded everyday experience at a time when the lives of horses and men were linked by mutual dependence. My objective is to provide a framework for exploring how Géricault’s visual strategies were directed to very specific viewships and addressed their perceptions of current social and ideological conditions. My thesis examines how, and to what extent, these lithographs of horses participate in Géricault’s appropriation of traditional modes of representing horses and their human handlers, and his transformation of them to address contemporary dilemmas of modernity and liberal values.
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INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about the instrumental role played by images of horses in the works of Théodore Géricault. Horses appear again and again, not only in the heroic representations of horses in oil paintings that Géricault exhibited at the Salons, but more notably in his countless drawings, watercolours and prints. For in these he foregrounds the kinds of horses one encounters in everyday life, and he introduces subject matter too plebeian and in some cases too controversial to accede to the ambitious parameters of academic classicism. Moreover, unlike the static renderings of horses in the gentlemanly genre of equestrian portraiture, Géricault’s equestrian imagery refuses to fit neatly into any one category of representation. Rather these images locate horses within a broadly-based culture of horsemanship that cuts across all levels of society, and they encompass the many nuances of social behaviour that bound humans and horses together in the public world of the early 19th century.

My premise is that in these informal scenes, the physical presence of horses functions as a metaphor -- a means of giving visual form to an undercurrent of ideas about the status of individuals adjusting to the new, fast-paced modern world. I argue that these works by Géricault, an intellectual who was passionately committed to liberal reforms, are like vignettes that disclose the paradoxes of progress and modernity. In essence, the politics of everyday life is played out in them through the varied roles of horses and their human handlers.
My research examines a particular set of twelve lithographic
prints, entitled Various Subjects Drawn from Life and on Stone,\(^1\)
published by Géricault in 1821 for the English print market during one
of his lengthy stays in London. (See Figures 1 through 13.) Nine of
these prints focus specifically on horses and horsemanship. Of these,
three envision the work of farriers of various nationalities: The
Flemish Farrier, A French Farrier and The English Farrier (Figures 2, 3
and 4); four reference various aspects of horsemanship in the modern
age: Horses Exercising, Horses Going to the Fair, A Party of Life-Guards
and An Arabian Horse (Figures 5, 6, 7 and 8); and two are scenes of
heavy industry: Entrance to the Adelphi Wharf and The Coal Waggon
(Figures 9 and 10).\(^2\)

Subject matter contained in three of the twelve scenes in the set
does not refer directly to horses or horsemanship. These depict the
plight of the disadvantaged urban poor: The Piper, Pity the Sorrows of a
Poor Old Man Whose Trembling Limbs Have Born Him to Your Door\(^3\) and A
Paralytic [sic] Woman (Figures 11, 12 and 13). Nevertheless, in two of
them (A Paralytic Woman and Pity of the Sorrows of a Poor Old Man),
horses appear in the background and/or jotted along the margins, and
thus the presence of horses contributes to an overall reading of these

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1 The complete title of this set of lithographs is Various Subjects Drawn
from Life and on Stone by J. Géricault. The initial, J, stands for his complete
name, Jean-Louis-André-Théodore. The frontispiece of the set is included as
Figure 1.

2 One could argue that even the frontispiece (Figure 1) participates in
the modern commentary of the set, because the wagon in the foreground looms like
huge haunches, simulating the shape of a horse in retreat, thus allowing
Géricault a punning reference to the fading away of horsepower that seems
preordained in an age of mechanization.

3 The title comes from a nursery verse.
pictures. In only one of these three scenes, The Piper, are horses completely absent. That is to say, they are conspicuous by their absence, as I will later explain.

I chose these lithographs for analysis because they highlight the omnipresence of horses in public life in the early 19th century, situating them in contexts that resonate with the social issues that dominated public discourse. I link the subject matter of these prints to three themes in particular: the social dilemmas that arose as a result of technological change in the early Industrial Revolution, especially its effects among workers and labourers; debates about national identity and its reverberations in concepts of power and racial superiority; and the marginalization of workers and the urban poor in a commercialized society that increasingly promoted the virtues of wealth.

The interaction between men and horses of various classes is delineated in Géricault's lithographs through a vocabulary of gestures and simple details of behavior. In effect, each scene discloses a mutual dependence between horses and their handlers, underscoring the essential connections that linked the activities of horses to the material goals of human society. In Entrance to the Adelphi Wharf (Figure 9), for instance, the interdependence of work horses and labourers is implied through their body language. For in this scene, men and horses form a social unit created solely for the purpose of producing a material product or service. The reciprocal roles of men and horses in 19th

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4 I use the gender-specific word "men" advisedly throughout this thesis. Horsemanship was a predominantly male preoccupation throughout the 19th century, as it had been for many centuries, and men constituted the primary audience for the art market.
century society is thus made explicit in Géricault's visual vocabulary and becomes the major focus of the prints themselves, as well as of this study.

Above all, the imagery presumes that the viewer has a deep familiarity with horses and horsemanship, gained through a lifetime of personal experience. Since visual references to horsemanship would have been read by Géricault's contemporaries in ways that are now lost to us, they need to be identified and reexamined if we are to appreciate their meaningfulness in the early 19th century context. I maintain that allusions to a cultivated knowledge of horses and their habits served as codes to the various audiences that Géricault was addressing. My aim in this thesis is to tease these out.

There are two principle themes that serve as a foundation for my analysis of Géricault's equestrian imagery in Various Subjects Drawn from Life and on Stone -- first, that horses were prime movers, in both the literal and figurative sense, of changes wrought by modernity and industrialization in early 19th century society; and second, that horsemanship was deeply ingrained in the English sensibility. I argue that it is precisely because horses were such familiar and valued contributors to the infrastructure of early 19th century society that images of them could serve, with relative ease, as symbolic sites for laying bare a particular vision of social life. More direct expressions of social ills and dilemmas, on the other hand, might not have been marketable to the various audiences that consumed lithographic imagery.

Géricault's lithographs present to the viewer a visual discourse about a specific historic moment when many aspects of ideology were ripe
for redefinition. This was the period in England following the end of
the Napoleonic wars, when the nation was readjusting to a peacetime
economy and developing a heightened sense of pride in English identity.
At the same time, British society was experiencing the social
transformations occasioned by the Industrial Revolution. Arising from
such a volatile mixture of circumstances, then, Géricault’s lithographic
scenes depicting the activities of horses and their handlers construct a
critical narrative about a new, evolving social class -- the first
generations of workers and labourers to experience the structured
discipline of industrial employment, often defining for the first time
the role of labour in an industrializing economy. Debates surrounding
the paradoxical effects of the new divisions of labour upon the living
standards of the masses had entered the public mainstream through the
works of social philosophers, such as Adam Ferguson, whose treatise
entitled An Essay on the History of Civil Society (1767) is one example
of the focused critical analysis of rational philosophy that
characterized public discourse. In everyday experience, just as in the
lithographs, modern transformations in contemporary class structure were
occurring in plain view, within the public space of the city, and were
claiming a place in the public’s awareness.

What we see in Géricault’s lithographs is an imagery that attempts
to represent the beginning of a new era and that struggles to find a
vocabulary to encompass both the social transformations taking place and

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5 Adam Ferguson, An Essay on the History of Civil Society (1767). This
work is discussed in Peter Gay, The Enlightenment: An Interpretation: The
the complex responses to them. In short, these are representations that begin to define the everyday circumstances of modern urban life. What I argue is that in the lithographs, the burden of modern social issues is projected onto the bodies of horses.

I have chosen to examine this subject because the significance of horses in Géricault’s imagery has not yet been fully considered in the literature of art history. Many art historians have, of course, noted the frequency and consistency with which horses appear throughout Géricault’s works. But in the past, scholars who have published major studies on Géricault’s life and works, while acknowledging the artist’s reliance on equestrian subject matter, have invariably explained his preoccupation with horses in terms of a personal and temperamental paradigm. That is, these scholars have implied that the artist’s own passion for riding and well-known prowess as a horseman are justification enough for the large number of these images in Géricault’s body of work.

Only one other study has focused specifically on Géricault’s horse imagery, a conference paper prepared by Carol Doyon. Her research

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assessed the artist’s use in his paintings of the ritualized moves of
dressage (a discipline with which Géricault was personally familiar).
While Doyon’s study is compelling, it does not take up the significance
of Géricault’s lithographic production.

Indeed, there can be no doubt that Théodore Géricault had an
abiding interest in horses and horsemanship. Yet I contend that his own
personal tastes for horses and horsemanship are wholly insufficient to
explain why his scenes of horses so often situate them in ambiguous,
socially volatile contexts, or why the visual narratives embedded within
them are so often inflected with cruelty or despair. As well, the highly
charged sexuality that is prominently foregrounded in many of
Géricault’s depictions of horses raises questions about the way these
images functioned for different audiences. My own work, then, probes
aspects of Géricault’s equestrian imagery that have not been previously
laid bare.

While the work of the many scholars noted above has served as a
point of departure for my own research, my investigation has led me to
search a broader range of scholarly works to find the information that
would situate Géricault’s images of horses within the social context of
early 19th century England. Particularly useful for my purposes have
been the critical writings contained in the exhibition catalogue
Théodore Géricault: The Alien Body: Tradition in Chaos, published at

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6 Serge Guilbaut, Maureen Ryan and Scott Watson, eds., Théodore
Géricault: The Alien Body: Tradition in Chaos (Vancouver: Morris and Helen
Belkin Gallery, The University of British Columbia, 1997). My own catalogue
notes for the section entitled “Stallions, Thoroughbreds and Workers” provided
the starting point for this study.
this University in 1997. Other fields of academic inquiry in art history have also proven to be fruitful sources -- for instance, the studies that have considered the function of sporting prints and equestrian portraiture in English society in the 18th century.\(^9\)

Outside of the field of art history, research by economic historians is an especially rich source of information about the impact of horsepower on economic activity.\(^{10}\) Social histories of 19th century England are important sources of data and analyses of the effects of the Industrial Revolution, on relevant intellectual issues such as the development of the idea of nationhood and national identity, as well as on the cultural milieu of the times.\(^{11}\) Another focal point of my research is the lithographic mode of producing and circulating imagery. Some excellent sources have been histories of lithography in the 19th century in England and in France.\(^{12}\)

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\(^{10}\) Proceedings from a special symposium on the economic history of horsepower have been especially useful: F. M. L. Thompson, ed., *Horses in European Economic History* (Reading: British Agricultural Society, 1983).


The Lithographs

Various Subjects Drawn from Life and on Stone was printed over a period of four months, between February and May of 1821, by Charles Hullmandel, a highly skilled fine art lithographer. Lithography was a new medium for reproducing text and pictures that was invented at the turn of the century, and Géricault had already produced a number of lithographs before he came to London. The technology had only begun to gain the same popularity in England as it had in France, and therefore Géricault was one of the first artists to make use of the medium there.

Thematically, the set consists of a group of scenes from urban and rural life, many envisioning the environment of London itself. It is reminiscent of several popular English print traditions, which together constitute a veritable sea of imagery: prints that celebrate (often with touches of irony) the picturesqueness and colour of everyday life.

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13 Hullmandel was "without question, the most significant figure in the development of British lithography in the first half of the 19th century." Twyman, "Charles Joseph Hullmandel," p. 42.

14 I have been unable to learn how the set was marketed. Buyers may have purchased them by subscription, receiving each one as it came from the press, over the period of four months that it took to produce the set in its entirety; this was a common way to purchase books and prints in the 19th century.

15 Since the lithographic process is quicker and cheaper than engraving or etching, the prints were accessible to a less affluent public. (Twyman, Printing 1790-1970, p. 28.) This factor influenced the way these images were circulated and received.


17 Géricault acknowledged in a letter to Dedreux-Dorcy, dated 12 February 1821, that lithography was "brand new in London, [and] is enjoying an unbelievable vogue." Quoted by Grunchec, Géricault's Horses, p. 9.
experiences, such as the well-loved late 17th century series, Cryes of the City of London, which comprises 74 studies of street people; prints that expose social ills, such as William Hogarth’s thematic, satirical A Harlot’s Progress (1732) and A Rake’s Progress (1735); or prints that present idealized views of London, a popular genre from the mid-17th century to the mid-19th century.¹⁸

Various Subjects Drawn from Life and on Stone is not exactly like any of these genres.¹⁹ Instead, it possesses certain elements of the picturesque, that is, by rendering the beauty of horses, but moderates this aesthetic refinement with an incisive social commentary, which is not confined to any one particular subject.

In fact, subject matter for the twelve scenes in the set is extremely diverse. The variety in these images and their apparent lack of interrelatedness is, I believe, one of the strategies employed in bringing together this particular collection of images into a set. The disorderliness evoked by the variety of subject matter provocatively gives form to the multi-faceted impact of rapid social change on the experiences of individuals and all social classes. Since it is very likely that viewers would have seen these twelve lithographs together in

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¹⁸ On average, one book or folio of London scenes was published per year between 1650 and 1850. But during the early 19th century, a much larger number of souvenir albums, guidebooks, sets of street views and histories were published. See Bernard Adams, London Illustrated 1604-1851: A Survey and Index of Topographical Books and Their Plates (London: The Library Association, 1983), p. xii.

¹⁹ In addition, the relationship of Géricault’s London lithographs to the popular genre of sporting prints is examined in Chapter II.
a folio, their cumulative effect must be considered. Although each scene can stand alone as a representation of a particular kind of event or situation, as a set they play off one another and have a resonance that further highlights the new social realities that represented the modern age.

As I will argue in the following pages, the broad range of subject matter presents a particular vision of a society that was caught between extremes of opulence and squalor. In one of the lithographs from the series, *Horses Exercising* (Figure 5), one sees the privileges of the powerful upper classes embodied in pleasure horses, while in the scenes of the urban poor such as *Pity the Sorrows of a Poor Old Man Whose Trembling Limbs Have Born Him to Your Door* (Figure 12), powerlessness is equated with exclusion from the culture of horsemanship that is taken for granted by more fortunate members of the society.

Moreover, the diversity presented in Géricault's lithographs seizes upon the dissonance between the birth of a way of life defined by mechanization and heavy industry, on the one hand, and the death of the age of horsemanship. Such a transition represented a fundamental shift in the way men interacted with their environment, a transformation that would put an end to what I call "the social world of men and horses."

Thus, the warm physical closeness between man and horse that is represented in two prints in the series, *A Party of Life-Guards* and *An Arabian Horse* (Figures 7 and 8), is juxtaposed in the set of lithographs

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20 During my research, both in Vancouver and in London, England, I was unable to find data which would establish patterns of viewership for this set of lithographs. Such a study would be very valuable, however.
with images of a more pragmatic interdependence that is symbolic of the new age of industrialism, as envisioned in Entrance to the Adelphi Wharf and The Coal Waggon (Figures 9 and 10). Yet even these two representations of modernity contain a foreshadowing of the paradoxes of "progress," as I shall explore.

Lorenz Eitner believes that by composing the series from such widely contrasting subject matter, Géricault "had something to say."\footnote{Eitner, Géricault, p. 228.} However, Eitner does not specify what he implies by making such an assertion. I will be looking at how contrasting sentiments and subjectivities are played out in these images, and at how their variety addresses a growing awareness among intellectuals of the dilemmas of modernity.

My thesis has three parts. Chapter I examines the lithographs in terms of what I call the "culture of horsemanship" and explores the ways in which social determinants (such as class, gender and economic status) are represented in the imagery. Chapter II places the interdependence of men and horses within the context of Enlightenment beliefs about the position of horses as an extension of the human social world, and the way this social phenomenon is represented through the medium of lithography. As well, English and Continental conventions for representing horses in art are examined and linked to the visual language of horsemanship that is employed in these lithographs. Chapter III focuses on a particular subset of lithographs within the series, comprising three images of farriers. In examining how farriers are

\footnote{Eitner, Géricault, p. 228.}
represented, Chapter III explores another aspect of modern social change that was particular to the decades of the late 18th century and early 19th century, that of nationalism and cultural difference.
CHAPTER I

HORSEPOWER: REPRESENTING THE Changing Culture of HORSEMANSHIP AT THE TIME OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Publication of Various Subjects Drawn from Life and on Stone, in 1821, occurred during one of history’s most dynamic and profound periods of change, the Industrial Revolution. London, where Géricault produced these images, was the largest city in Europe and the center of the intense vortex of activity that characterized this period of economic and social reconstruction. With his sharp “social eye,” Géricault saw glimpses into the future while he was in London, to a world of industrial production that ran a whole generation ahead of conditions in France, notes German art historian Klaus Berger.

Horsepower in the Age of Mechanization

The early 19th century has been called the “great age of the horse” because it was during this period -- before full-scale mechanization became the norm -- that horsepower replaced human power in the transition to a completely industrialized economy. Impelled by these circumstances, the number of workers whose activities were newly

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22 An extensive body of academic scholarship has analyzed the social significance of the Industrial Revolution in Britain. The debates engendered by this scholarly activity have recently been summarized in Evans, Forging of the Modern State, pp. 107-176.

23 Berger, Géricault and His Work, p. 32.


25 The conversion to full-scale mechanization was not complete until the early 20th century, with the use of the more efficient internal combustion engine.
circumscribed by a dependence on horsepower grew ever larger, driven by the competition for more efficient production.\textsuperscript{26}

In a very real sense, then, Géricault’s images of horses with their handlers can be seen to trace the trajectory of the Industrial Revolution as it reached into every layer of society. Horses, in combination with labourers, wagon drivers, farriers, grooms, peacetime soldiers, indeed even the unemployables left behind in the move toward progress, carry the burden of defining, in microcosm, the new social order as it was emerging among the earliest generations of workers in England’s capitalist society. The realm of work was a cruel environment for both men and horses, as Roy Porter has noted in his social history of English society,\textsuperscript{27} and it contained within, it many of the paradoxes inherent in the modern divisions of labour.

The notion that horses were consigned to roles that were increasingly pragmatic within the commercial sphere brings the relationship between men and horses into sharper focus, and provides a context for examining the lithographs in \textit{Various Subjects Drawn from Life and on Stone}. What we see in the London lithographs is that the values attached to class distinctions within the culture of horsemanship were being strained and reworked. In essence, the social interaction in the lithographs exposes points of vulnerability and change in the basic assumptions that men had about horsemanship.


\textsuperscript{27} Porter, \textit{English Society in the Eighteenth Century}, p. 17.
The Culture of Horsemanship

Almost everyone in English society in the early 19th century had ways of knowing horses, both in public and private contexts. Some knew horses very intimately, through daily interaction with them. Tradesmen and labourers, for example, used horses in the context of work, while more privileged men in the upper ranks knew horses through leisure pursuits, travel and the military. Yet a very large number of people, such as women, peasants and the poor, had only a superficial and vicarious knowledge of horses because economic and social positioning substantially excluded them from interacting with horses. Nevertheless, even those who were excluded from the social world of men and horses had an appreciation, perhaps unconsciously, of the importance and significance of horses in the functioning of English society, just as in our own culture, the importance of motor vehicles is ingrained our ethos, across all social levels.

Clearly, to own a horse in the early 19th century was a marker of social standing, an index of one's engagement with social and economic activity. Horses were valued, not only by aristocrats and members of the upper middle class who could afford highly-bred hunters, roadhorses and racehorses, but also by farmers and tradespeople whose goal was to own and use the best workhorses their money could buy, as historian Harold Barkley has pointed out. The astonishing diversity, both in types of

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horses and kinds of situations they were deemed to be indispensable, underscores the breadth of the culture of horsemanship.\(^{29}\)

One important marker of class in the culture of horsemanship was the practice of riding. Among men of the upper echelon of society, riding was an art, seriously pursued.\(^{30}\) In no other form of horsemanship is there such intimate contact between man and horse, who move as one and communicate through a "vocabulary" of cues and movements. As well, the aristocracy and landed gentry (that is, gentlemen whose wealth came not from trade and industry but from land) developed, through selective breeding,\(^{31}\) the special kinds of horses they desired for pleasure, transportation and commercial utility.\(^{32}\)

But by no means did everyone in the society ride horses; social class and economic variables determined who rode and who did not. Among middle class merchants, traders, shopkeepers, craftsmen and professionals, the use of horses was more allied to commerce than to gentility. Prosperous middle class people, many of whom could afford one or more horses, rode out of necessity, since without the mobility

\(^{29}\) Not all horses were fortunate to have owners who valued them, of course, and England was notorious for being "hell for horses." Many were worked or ridden to death, harshly treated, beaten and unreasonably burdened. Yet "so long as the horse contributed to its owner's self-esteem, it was highly valued." Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: A History of the Modern Sensibility* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), pp. 100-101.


\(^{31}\) Keeping genealogies of purebred horses has parallels with keeping family genealogies. Both kinds of record-keeping reflect a concern with racial and ethnic purity.

\(^{32}\) In the 19th century, it was a common belief (at least in England) that English horses had reached a state of "perfection" that existed nowhere else. See "Insufficiency of Horseflesh," *Bentley's Miscellany*, Vol. LIII (London: Chapman and Hall, 1863), p. 652.
afforded by a horse, a man's business or profession would otherwise have been limited to his own town or country parish. It was not a question of liking or not liking to ride; to succeed in life, one had to ride.  

Not infrequently, however, men of the middle class did not ride well because they lacked formal instruction, and these men suffered agonies on horseback. Such a rider was treated with comic derision by the more privileged classes.

As his biographers have pointed out, Géricault himself owned many horses over his lifetime, and was an excellent but impulsive rider. Yet the London lithographs call very little attention to the tastes of the “horsey” upper classes. In fact, in only two of the prints (Horses Exercising and A Party of Life-Guards, Figures 5 and 7) are men shown riding in the disciplined style of the upper classes (in a third, Horses Going to the Fair, Figure 6, a peasant riding the lead horse does not exhibit the flashy techniques of elite horsemanship). The rest of the lithographs in the series pair horses with people of the working classes whose knowledge of them came not from riding but from managing and caring for them, as in the three Farrier scenes (Figures 2, 3 and 4) or Entrance to the Adelphi Wharf (Figure 9). These scenes of the everyday

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34 ibid.

35 The special needs of middle class riders were acknowledged and addressed in a bluntly titled treatise by Charles Thompson, Rules for Bad Horsemen (London, 1762). It contains a wealth of practical solutions to common problems encountered by riders who did not have the advantage of being born to an equestrian lifestyle.

36 Géricault’s early death was hastened by the effects of two riding accidents. See Grunchec, Géricault’s Horses, p. 6 and Either, Géricault, pp. 117-34.
interaction of horses with men from the lower strata invite the viewer to contemplate a combination of cultural stereotypes because they juxtapose the aestheticized bodies of horses, as seen in all of the prints, with the seemingly mundane activities of labourers, farriers, grooms and wagon drivers.

Horses that are well-bred and valued for their vitality and nobility would usually be pictured more formally in contexts of power, wealth and luxury. On the other hand, stereotypical representations of workers, whose narrowly-circumscribed lives might be considered the antithesis of luxury, would have appeared in genre paintings, for instance, or embedded in landscape scenes.  

Work and leisure, pleasure and toil, affluence and marginality, privilege and disadvantage are all played out as variations on the theme of the culture of horsemanship in the London lithographs, from elite to plebeian. Contemporary issues are layered on top of time-honoured attitudes about the social positioning of men and horses within the culture of horsemanship, so that the familiar image of the horse is newly defined by the circumstances in which he is pictured.

As I will argue in the course of this thesis, it would seem that the relationship between humble workers and noble horses is used as a code to challenge a potential viewer of the lithographic series to contemplate several disparate cultural assumptions. Intellectually, images of labourers, farriers and wagon drivers engage the viewer’s

37 Stephen Deuchar points out that the cart-horse was adopted by the Trades Union Congress during the 20th century as the symbol of labour (Sporting Art, p. 169).
awareness that the issue of labour was central to Enlightenment ideals of progress and to London’s current burgeoning commercial prosperity. At the same time, however, depictions of menial work pose a stark contrast to conventional, idealized representations of horses that circulated in paintings or print imagery. The potentially contradictory mix of upper class values (as embodied in the physicality of aestheticized horses) and social liberalism in Géricault’s visual vocabulary creates an uneasiness that is not readily resolved.

In Géricault’s lithograph *Horses Exercising* (Figure 5), for instance, the image seems to evoke the experiences of elite horsemanship by featuring Thoroughbred horses being exercised in the walled enclosure of a prosperous estate, referencing the distinctive way that horses were used in a classed society to construct an aura of power, opulence and invincibility. Although the presence of pleasure horses is used to define the pictorial space as aristocratic, the elite metaphor that it constructs is interrupted with the substitution of a groom for the horses’ affluent owner. Pointedly, the imagery draws the viewer’s attention to a servant working behind the scenes, out of public view (literally behind high walls), maintaining the well-ordered facade of luxury. Conflating two mutually exclusive notions, work and luxury, sets up a particularly intriguing conundrum for the viewer to contemplate. That is, work is seen to be the necessary partner to luxury.

Indeed, grooms that were employed on large estates enjoyed a high status among workers because of their amenable conditions of employment...
and their close association with upper class habits of horsemanship.  

In the lithographic image, the groom's regal demeanour is at odds with our traditional notion of a worker. His well-tailored clothing, his ease on horseback, the way he rides without a saddle while controlling not one, but two horses, and of course the stately setting of walled privacy all align with elite conventions of equestrian representation.  

However, his manner of dress (presumably livery of some sort) and the fact that he is exercising the horses rather than riding them in a more prestigious context are signs of his station in life. There are subtler cues, as well: the unpretentious tilt of the shoulders and head, the absence of showy display in his riding and the way he avoids eye contact with the viewer, all show that he "knows his place."

As a composition, Horses Exercising is reminiscent of painted representations like William Anderson with Two Saddle-Horses (1793) (Figure 14), by George Stubbs, a leading British painter of elite

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38 It was not uncommon for men who worked with horses to form social groups based on mutual experience and expertise, and an organization called the Horseman's Society came into existence during the 19th century. The Society had its own rituals and many secrets that bonded the group together and distinguished its members from others. Typically these men began their employment as children, and only trusted caregivers were invited to join as they matured. The existence of the Society throughout Britain insured a certain mobility among its members, should they have wished to relocate their employment. See Terry Keegan, The Heavy Horse, Its Harness and Harness Decoration (London: Penham Books, 1973), pp. 110-111.

39 The groom's appearance was all-important, because appearances counted for much in the upper class culture of horsemanship to which he was attached. All of the trappings of riding served as extensions of the power of the owner and were markers of his social standing. All were part of the management of appearances that helped to maintain upper class identity. The elite male and his entire equestrian establishment partake in qualities that are communicated through codes of appearance and self-presentation.
equestrian art during the previous century. Anderson, groom to the Prince of Wales, is shown leading a saddled horse as if to bring it to his master, who though absent from the picture, still commands the viewer’s awareness. Stubbs’ oil painting follows the conventions of 18th century horse portraiture by focusing on elite and aristocratic (in this case, royal) prerogatives of horsemanship. While I will be discussing these conventions more fully in the next chapter, the point here is that Géricault’s lithograph of an unnamed estate doesn’t register a specific horse owner and a specific horse, but rather captures an informal moment, as is suggested by the unsaddled horses, and as the title of the lithograph indicates.

In the tradition of painted representations of elite horses, as in Stubbs’ horse portraiture, a favourite groom would sometimes be informally posed standing at the horse’s head, such as in Lustre, Held by a Groom (Figure 15), imparting a sense of opulent domesticity that extended even to the stable. In Géricault’s lithographic image, however, the pairing of horse and groom at work highlights the labour that sustains luxury and the groom’s real role in constructing a gentlemanly lifestyle, that is, as a skilled worker doing a substantive job. In its own way, then, Géricault’s groom fills a void created in the third decade of the 19th century, when outmoded notions of upper class privilege were exiting the scene and new ideas about the “common” man who does the work of the world were reaching a wider audience.

40 George Stubbs, p. 176. I will be assessing the tradition of English elite equestrian art, of which George Stubbs’ horse imagery was a part, in Chapter II.
Another way the imagery constructs the new status of the common man is to equate horses and workers with the modern notion of progress in commerce and industry, an idea that provides the pretext for two of the lithographs within the series, *The Coal Waggon* and *Entrance to the Adelphi Wharf* (Figures 10 and 9). Horses in these scenes do the work that could not be accomplished by human effort alone. Yet the power of workers parallels that of horses, since in order to perform work, horses must be controlled by their handlers, without whom their energies cannot be appropriately channeled. Thus the lives of both horses and workers are seen to be defined by labour. That work horses like these would ever need to be exercised, as in *Horses Exercising* Figure 5), is ludicrous.

As these examples show, references to elite leisure pursuits, when juxtaposed with images of manual labour within the same set of lithographs, serve to accentuate the gulf between these two concepts, even while such a juxtaposition argues for a common, underlying equestrian culture that cuts across these class boundaries. Presumptions associated with the British tradition of idealized elite horse imagery are brought into conflict with the new values of productive labour in all of Géricault’s images, opening up possibilities for constructing a range of new meanings.

As Géricault’s lithographs reveal, there is a connection between horsepower and workers that is ignored by the conventions of elite equestrian imagery. We do not think of workers as participating in the rarefied disciplines of riding, or in the management of appearances that characterizes upper class imagery. Indeed the affinity of workers with
horses is based on another type of mutual interaction and interdependence. But the essential role of workers in managing the labour performed by horses frequently goes unacknowledged. Yet it is workers who turn the energies of horses into productive work.

In the working relationships portrayed in Various Subjects Drawn from Life and on Stone, teamwork is implied, but cooperation between man and horse is accomplished through an asymmetrical power relationship. That is, the physically weaker men command the potentially dangerous power of horses many times their size and weight. To function properly, man and horse had to develop a disciplined partnership, each having been schooled and trained to perform his half. The wild equine energies that are glorified in heroic depictions of horses in high art have to be suppressed.

Significantly, in one of the lithographs, Entrance to the Adelphi Wharf (Figure 9), Géricault places the viewer in the same position as the workers, behind the huge haunches of powerful but submissive horses that have been neutered to increase their tractability as working animals. (It should be noted that the same submissiveness was required of workers in the period.) From this angle, the viewer can experience vicariously the mutual dependency of men and horses. The affinity between a monumental beast and the man who controls him is a theme frequently expressed by Géricault and is here defined in the context of work.

This particular representation of the social interaction of working men and horses is framed within the context of one of London's prominent examples of stylish good taste. The Adelphi Wharf was a part
of one of the important, large-scale urban projects undertaken at the
doors of the 18th century in the spirit of improvement and commercial
growth. Standing in contrast to the chaotic jumble that characterized
much of Georgian London, the project combined multi-purpose use with
elegant design that conformed to refined Enlightenment taste.\footnote{Porter, London, p. 114.} Built
from 1768-72 from a design by Robert and William Adam, the wharf was
situated on an embankment on the Thames and was surmounted by a neo-
Classical complex containing the Royal Society of Arts and terraced
housing (Figure 16).\footnote{Entrance to the Adelphi Wharf} As an architectural feat, the complex was deemed
a success, yet the wharf had problems from the start, having been sited
almost two feet too low to accommodate the highest tides of the Thames
River.\footnote{Howevever, because of increasing commerce on the Thames, the river bank
was changing from a pleasant place into a noisy, polluted sector. Léonce
Peillard, La Vie Quotidienne à Londres au Temps de Nelson et de Wellington 1774-
1852 (Paris: Librarie Hachette, 1968), p. 104.} Perhaps this sense of failure amid success is what we are meant
to recall as we visually follow a group of men and horses on its way to
work, into the ambiguous black abyss of the Adelphi Wharf. A built-in
dramatic tension pervades the imagery, and the viewer may well ask: What
lies inside the murky darkness of the catacombs?

Entrance to the Adelphi Wharf shows the workers and horses
entering the wharf by one of the streetside entrances to the extensive
catacombs that served as the foundations for the buildings above, and
not by the showier riverside arches that were meant to exhibit refined
taste. Thus the viewer encounters the dank underbelly of the project.

\footnote{John Summerson, Georgian London (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1988), p. 117.}
Seeing the great Adelphi project from a worker’s-eye view of the back entrance reminds us that crude labourers, whose shapeless clothing easily sets them apart visually from the well-tailored elite classes, will forever be denied access to the upper class privilege of good taste, just as they lack access to money and political power. However, at the same time the image seems to draw a parallel between the strong, active role of the labourers and working horses with that of the building’s foundations. Labourers and horses, whose efforts move the goods and generate business, comprise the underside that enables the more visible amenities of urban life to flourish. Hence work horses in the Adelphi Wharf and refined horses at play in Horses Exercising are like two sides of the same coin.

Another image that places men and horses within spaces that are loaded with signifiers of success, but tinged with irony or pathos, is The Coal Waggon (Figure 10), which is set in provincial mining country. Here the beauty, power and elegance of the horses, as they strain to resist the weight of the wagon while maneuvering it downhill, is emphasized by the idealization of their muscular bodies. Yet the image locates this visual metaphor within a stark and threatening landscape, thus tempering the idea of tradition with a sense of impending loss. The visual rhetoric of this image conjures up a time of enormous social and technological change by addressing the boundary that separates horsepower and steam power.
The cargo on the wagon is coal, which was commonly used to generate steam power. According to historical accounts, horse-drawn "iron wagons" transported coal from its distant sources, over hilly terrain, to the system of canals that connected the sites of production to factories or urban areas, the sites of consumption. The first steam-driven locomotive that replaced horses in this job came into use in 1814, seven years before Géricault produced these lithographs. The Coal Waggon thus foreshadows the demise of the old culture of draught animals, taking with it a whole community of workers and horses that had sustained it, and triggering a variety of outcomes. In the lithograph, such potential for despair is graphically expressed by the downhill trajectory of the coal wagon and the force of gravity exerted by the its tremendous weight, pushing against the powerful haunches. Leaden skies overhead, a foreshadowing of the pall of smoke that was to blanket the landscape from coal-fired machinery, presages an era of environmental degradation.

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44 Peillard, La Vie Quotidienne, p. 104.
47 Peillard, La Vie Quotidienne, p. 105.
49 The imagery taps into the feeling of despondency that had begun to set in throughout the society at the turn of the century, as the once-optimistic proponents of a new political philosophy encountered the dissonance between the state of knowledge and the actual conditions of economic and social change. A poem, "The Stage-Coachman's Lament" (1841), personalizes a sense of loss at the ending of a valued way of life:
Historian Linda Colley contends that the first 30 years of the 19th century was a critical period for the industrial revolution, a time of growth for Britain's capitalist commercial elite, who were poised to exploit new improvements and modernization. Many engineering problems of the new steam age were being solved, and new approaches to production were coalescing. Economic historian Jennifer Tann claims that by the end of the 18th century, with the invention of steam power, horsepower was basically an outmoded technology.

Nevertheless, ironically the use of horses expanded greatly during the 19th century, paralleling the growth of capitalism. During the 19th century, the world domestic horse population actually doubled, reaching its peak in the early 20c. Horsepower flourished because, for small businesses, it was cost effective compared with making an enormous outlay of capital to convert to steam. By the early 19th century, horsepower had a long history and many firm adherents, and it managed to

"... Farewell to my four iron greys, And the rest of the prads [horses] that I drive! In these selfish and steam-sniffing days, 'Tisn't fit for good horses to live..." "The Stage-Coachman's Lament," Bentley's Miscellany, vol. X, 1841, p. 97.

Colley, Britons, p. 163.


Harold Barkley, The Role of the Horse, p. 131.

ibid., p. 138.

But for large industries requiring many horses, steam power was viable. One large coal mine, for instance, employed 600 people and 1,000 horses, and during the Napoleonic Wars "the price of fodder rose to heights which impelled the search for some alternative means of communication." Harold Pollins, Britain's Railways: An Industrial History (Totawa, NJ: Rowan and Littlefield, 1971), p. 20.
outlast the steam engine. Horses were not only a cheaper alternative to converting to steam, but they were always plentiful, because of well-established systems of breeding and trading that had been in place since at least the 17th century.

Horses Going to the Fair (Figure 6) makes reference to the breeding system that sustained British industry and agriculture. Horse fairs, held at frequent intervals throughout England, were an integral part of the horse breeding and marketing institutions of the period and were lively social events centered around the culture of horsemanship. There, professional breeders and dealers took the opportunity to see and be seen, to buy and sell stock, as well as to exhibit stallions in order to advertise stud services. Géricault underscores the fair’s function as a site for promoting the breeding potential of stallions by conspicuously displaying the sexual characteristics of the male horses, such as the strongly arched neck and prominent testicles, and with the phallic symbolism of the erect smokestack that rises in their midst.

In Horses Going to the Fair (Figure 6), the body of the horse, with its potent sexual energy, serves as a site for expressing the idea of a moveable "currency" that circulated throughout the country, as well as overseas, through the business of horse breeding, which carried with

58 Keith Chivers, "The Supply of Horses in Great Britain in the Nineteenth Century," Thompson, ed., Horses in European Economic History, p. 34.
59 This is probably the chimney for an underground structure.
60 Chivers, "Supply of Horses," p. 33. Large numbers of horses were exported to Europe to replenish losses caused by the Napoleonic wars. Reliable records for exports and imports are not available for the first half of the
it many social and cultural connotations.\textsuperscript{61} The imagery contrasts the
celebrated beauty and nobility of heavy horses with the simplicity of
the farm workers. Whereas more formal imagery might have shown these
horses with their wealthy owner, the lithographic imagery goes behind
the scenes to reveal the off-hand familiarity of worker and horse.

\textbf{Exclusion from the Culture of Horsemanship}

In this chapter, I have used the concept of a "culture of
horsemanship" to explore the ways social positioning and economic
circumstances determined one's relationship to horses in 19th century
England, and I have discussed the ways these social models appear in
Géricault's London lithographs within a modern context. It seems clear,
as well, that groups and individuals may be characterized as being
excluded from such a culture of horsemanship.

Women are a case in point. In Géricault's 1821 lithographs, women
do not appear in any role related to horses.\textsuperscript{62} Indeed, only upper class
women rode horses in the 19th century, and then only for sport; to move
from one place to another, upper class women rode in carriages driven by
servants. Women of the middle and lower classes were consigned to carts

\textsuperscript{61} That the concept of breeding is expressed through the maleness of
stallions, and not through its female counterpart in mares, is a projection onto
horses of society's concerns for the perpetuation of physical and cultural
traits through the male line, I would argue.

\textsuperscript{62} Linda Nochlin, in "Géricault, or the Absence of Women," October, 68
(Spring 1994), speculates that horses, which Géricault invariably represents as
sensual bodies in his production, fill the central place that is commonly
associated with women in the works of some other artists, i.e., as sensuous
bodies of desire. (p. 51).
or carriages or walking, and the kinds of labour performed by women did not bring them into contact with horses. According to Roy Porter, men and women were believed to be naturally different and destined to occupy separate realms of experience. Horsemanship was a man's prerogative.

When women do appear in Géricault’s London lithographs, however, it is in the context of disease and poverty. The enigmatic presence of the disabled, helpless woman in *A Paralytic Woman* (Figure 13) is juxtaposed with the shadowy evocation of the refined, horse-drawn hearse in the background, the symbol of her living death. The mobility afforded by the horses, whose elegance is simply and effectively conveyed by a narrow glimpse of their cropped tails, poignantly defines the lowly position of the poor woman and her crude man-servant, who has assumed the role of “horse” in pulling her wheeled chair.

In a different way, the poor (in both urban and rural contexts) inhabited a world dominated by the culture of horses but had no hope of participating through ownership. In *The Piper*, and *Pity the Sorrow of a Poor Old Man* (Figures 11 and 12), the misery of disadvantaged Londoners is accentuated when viewed against the horse-driven world of commerce

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depicted by the other scenes in the set, from which they are isolated by poverty and disease.

In Géricault's lithograph *Pity the Sorrows of a Poor Old Man* (Figure 12), the old man lies in the path of a horse-drawn manure wagon that rounds the corner in the background. His position in life as a down-and-out has-been is thereby equated with the dung on the street. Here the horses that pull the wagon have useful work to do, while the man, whose tattered but refined clothing bespeaks a former life of dignity, is deprived of his role in life. This is surely a world out of control, where the mad rush of modern times is evoked by the open window of the bakery which, as Roy Porter has indicated, allowed passersby to take their buns and biscuits and to throw their pence in without taking the time, even in raw weather, to enter the warm shop.  

The images of magnificent work horses and usefully employed farm labourers that appear as jottings on the margins of the lithograph, as if to simulate a sketchbook, intensify the sense of isolation and exclusion that is experienced by the old man. The sketches in the margins contrast his world of urban squalor with allusions to the simpler (i.e., happier) lives of the robust rural poor. Ironically, it is these rural peasants who may indeed be next wave of displaced workers to experience the ironies of industrialization, as waves of rural folk migrated to industrial centers like London, seeking employment doing the kinds of unskilled jobs that were available in the city.

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Even the very absence of horses in the lithograph called *The Piper* (Figure 11), I would further contend, contributes to the meaning and function of a scene that epitomizes despair. Consigned by his blindness to a life devoid of colour and detail -- as symbolized by the distressing, high, blank urban walls of his surroundings -- the man and his tiny dog (the opposite of a horse in size and temperament) inhabit a corner of society away from the visual cues that are taken for granted by the sighted world. For the poor and disadvantaged, exclusion from all the amenities and opportunities of the culture of horsemanship defines their status in life and deepens the sense of tragedy surrounding their plight.
CHAPTER II

THE SOCIAL WORLD OF MEN AND HORSES IN 19TH CENTURY ENGLAND

AND ITS REPRESENTATION THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF LITHOGRAPHY

In the preceding chapter, I have discussed several of the scenes in Géricault's lithographic set, *Various Subjects Drawn from Life and on Stone*, in order to show how these images were bound up with ideas about the status of individuals adjusting to the new, fast-paced modern world as the Industrial Revolution transformed both urban and rural life in Britain.

It is not my intention to treat Géricault's lithographs of men and horses merely as a graphic record of this particularly dynamic moment of transformation in English society, but rather to consider how the images themselves define that moment by challenging a familiar, popular configuration of the horse in art and recasting it within a modern framework and sensibility. By that I mean that Géricault's equestrian imagery departs from a popular mode of representing horses as adjuncts to a rural, elite sporting ideal. By relocating horses to new spheres of activity that take as their frame of reference the urbanized milieu, as discussed in the last chapter, the artist uses this position to reveal and critique the ironies of the modern world, where shifting social identities were fracturing traditional modes of representation. Thus the London lithographs had the potential to address the interests of a new audience that was attuned to the democratizing possibilities inherent in the recently-invented art of lithographic printmaking.66 In the

following pages I will explore the ways Géricault appropriates, but then subverts, popular practices of equestrian imagery, as well as the role played by the medium of lithography in creating this shift to a more "modern" subject matter.

**Géricault in England: The Visual Language of Horsemanship**

Although in many ways Géricault was a stranger in London and an outsider to its culture, his own personal interest in horses gave him something in common with the horse-loving English public. The stereotypical Englishman and his passion for horses, often the butt of jokes, is evoked in a review of a 1995 exhibition of 18th and 19th century sporting art at the Tate Gallery, which begins: "Their French counterparts might have commissioned portraits of their mistresses, but what the English aristocracy and squirearchy wanted from an artist was a picture of their horse." Accordingly, nowhere else in Europe did the art of the horse flourish as it did in England.

It is apparent from his writings and correspondence that Géricault greatly enjoyed the ambiance of British horsemanship. Art historian

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68 ibid., p. 19. In the late 18th century, Arthur Young stated: "In everything that concerns the stable, the English far exceed the French; horses, grooms, harness, and change of equipage." Quoted in Porter, English Society in the Eighteenth Century, p. 228.
69 Géricault's preoccupation with horsemanship apparently prevailed over his motivation to fraternize with other artists, who had formed an informal community across town around Newman Street (locally known as "Art Street"), a part of London where animal painters and many other noted artists of the day (and their students) lived. In a letter written in February 1821, he expressed his intention to use his experiences with the English equestrian culture to make easy money and to attract commissions, in his words "to exploit the English craze for lithography, go down to the stables, draw horses, and return 'covered with gold.'" Eitner, Géricault, p. 221.
Régis Michel states that Géricault gave himself over to his “passion for horses” while in London, where he took up residence adjacent to Hyde Park, near stables owned by his friend Adam Elmore, a popular seller of fine horses.

There Géricault would have participated in the social milieu that surrounded English horsemanship. Equestrian pursuits, such as the sports of hunting, racing and riding, were bound up with ideals of virtue and nobility that validated the superior position of the upper classes in English society. Hence horses themselves were the focus of intense interest because of their instrumental function in defining the exclusivity of this elevated sphere of activity associated with the upper middle classes, landed gentry and aristocracy. There was an enormous proliferation of horse art during the 18th century that is strongly imbued with these class associations.

Thus there was a “visual language” surrounding the idea of horses and horsemanship that was deeply rooted in English society and that communicated the moral worth of horses to a wide audience through representations of horses and their upper class owners. Géricault, a gentleman himself, knew this visual language and used it in his work. But in the London lithographs we see the familiar language of

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71 Géricault routinely went to the stables to be with these horses and to sketch them in all their activities, says Suzanne Lodge in “Géricault in England,” Burlington Magazine, vol. CVII (1965), p. 617. Hyde Park was a popular place for members of high society to meet to ride “on such horses as England alone could then produce.” Stella Margetson, Regency London (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), p. 72.
72 Deuchar, Sporting Art, p. 27.
73 ibid., pp. 59-60.
horsemanship used strategically as a mode of representation in a new, more modern context, in circumstances that illuminate the issues that were engaging contemporary thinkers and activists.

That Géricault uses the horse as a vehicle for exposing the contested issues of the early Industrial Revolution was not incidental. Indeed, it is precisely because of their omnipresence and incalculable value as essential parts of the contemporary social world that horses constituted a formidable site for examining the dynamic issues that were changing the everyday lives of people of all classes in 19th century England. This point is made by Serge Guilbaut when he states in the catalogue for the 1997 Géricault exhibition at the Belkin Gallery, "The horse seems to be for Géricault a screen on which he can, without shame and fear, project the saga of his modern experience. [Thus] The animal also becomes the pretext for a series of philosophical and political reflections." 74

Géricault had a deep engagement with liberal political causes and was steeped in a humanistic philosophical tradition. 75 He felt the "necessity to document or comment on the anxieties and shifts of modern


75 A recent trend in Géricault scholarship has advanced an appreciation of his involvement in radical causes, such as the liberal opposition to the Restoration. Scholarly attention is thus being directed to aspects of his imagery that are fraught with the tensions and ambiguities inherent in provocative, sometimes volatile, challenges to established authority. (Maureen Ryan, "Liberal Ironies," Guilbaut, Ryan, Watson, eds., The Alien Body, p. 21.) Bruno Chenique, commenting on Géricault’s exploration of the subtle imagery of industrialism in the 1820s, cites Géricault’s lithographs as being part of his "revolutionary artistic practice" (emphasis his), not only because they depart so dramatically from his earlier heroic imagery in paintings, but because of the poignant way Géricault represents the modern dilemma of workers. Bruno Chenique, "On the Far Left of Géricault," Guilbaut, Ryan, Watson, eds., The Alien Body, pp. 80-81.
life," according to Guilbaut.\textsuperscript{76} Géricault aligned himself with the progressive artists and activists who subscribed to liberal ideals, and who were committed to making the goals of free thought and action the rationale for their artistic production.\textsuperscript{77} His many "political" works of art are by now well recognized. The \textit{Raft of the Medusa} (1819), for instance, caused a certain notoriety in his own lifetime because of its engagement with the "divisive subject of colonial affairs." Its subject matter and mode of representation, as art historian Maureen Ryan has argued, "stood as a concerted attempt on the part of the artist to challenge the painting of history with both a radically modern subject and a new pictorial language".\textsuperscript{78} Géricault's friendships also bear witness to his leftist leanings, as Bruno Chenique has shown in his recent article, "On the Far Left of Géricault."\textsuperscript{79} Closer to his own time, the 19th century French historian Jules Michelet called Géricault "a spokesman for the democratic middle class."\textsuperscript{80}

Géricault's awareness of the world around him gave rise to what Suzanne Lodge has called the "painfully sensitive" perceptions evoked in his English works.\textsuperscript{81} Géricault must have explored with interest the

\textsuperscript{76} Guilbaut, "Introduction," p. 5.
\textsuperscript{78} Ryan, "Liberal Ironies," p. 22.
\textsuperscript{79} Chenique, "On the Far Left."
\textsuperscript{80} F. D. Klingender, "Géricault as Seen in 1848," \textit{Burlington Magazine}, Oct 1942, p. 255. Michelet wrote an homage to Géricault during the 1848 Revolution, in a lecture that was censored by the government and therefore never delivered publicly. Klingender's article contains a translation of the lecture that was published posthumously in 1877, along with other works by Michelet, entitled \textit{L'Étudiant}.
\textsuperscript{81} Lodge, "Géricault in England," p. 616.
much-vaunted liberalism of England and contrasted the English social milieu with the more repressive regime in Restoration France.

Politically, the post-Napoleonic war period constituted a turning point in the making of modern Britain, as historian of British culture Linda Colley has noted. For the elite, the period immediately after the victory at Waterloo was a time for "a recasting of what it meant to be British." As a site of intense, accelerating industrialization and urbanization, Britain’s vitality stood in contrast to that of its European neighbors, particularly France, where an ultra-conservative political climate emerged in the wake of war and revolutionary social upheaval. By contrast, Britain was a place of optimism, where the new order was anticipated with enthusiasm. Géricault no doubt experienced this contrast acutely.

Géricault’s liberal political orientation in France would have surely sensitized him to the position of the underclasses in Britain and opened up for him a particularly acute awareness of the dilemmas of modern life, as experienced by the most vulnerable members of the society — labourers, workers and those who were marginalized or whose livelihoods were made obsolete by new practices and technologies. By projecting these social concerns onto horses, I suggest, these lithographs transformed the cultural practice of envisioning horses as adjuncts of elite beliefs and practices, into one that could encompass

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82 Colley, Britons, pp. 207 and 338.
83 ibid., p. 158.
84 Géricault’s 19th century biographer, Charles Clément observed only that “It is unbelievable how quickly Géricault penetrated the English character.” Quoted in Berger, Géricault and His Work, p. 83.
the values of a more broadly-based population, as I shall presently
describe. As will emerge, Géricault’s treatment of equestrian subjects
represented a dramatic change from traditional practice, yet his imagery
is successful precisely because it evokes for audiences both the much-
valued beauty of horses and their importance position within the social
world, two sentiments with which English audiences could identify.

The English had a well-defined aesthetic standard in equestrian
imagery, arising most notably from two inter-related genres that
functioned to link horses to cultural ideals. First, oil portraits of
horses were de rigueur among the rural landed gentry (those who “wanted
a picture of their horse”) for whom these commissioned works were part
of the management of appearances that helped to solidify the position of
the power elite in England. The second (and more important) genre of horse
imagery, sporting art, promoted the notion that rural equestrian sport
was healthy, virtuous, brought beneficial contact with nature, and
represented a corrective to the dissipating influences of the towns and
cities. Sets of sporting prints were commissioned and subscribed to,
and London printers were producing works at prices to match every purse
up until the mid-19th century.

86 Deuchar, Sporting Art, p. 93ff.
87 ibid., p. 57.
Widely circulated as prints intended as wall decoration, and frequently displayed in publicly accessible places such as shop windows, pubs and coffee shops, sporting art was instrumental in constructing a public image of the role of rural sport in English society. Thus the familiar image of the horse as symbolic of a coveted lifestyle of wealth, leisure, power and virtue enjoyed a currency that was not limited to those who commissioned and/or collected sporting art, but in fact held sway among the public at large. As urbanization increased, nostalgia for the uncomplicated rural life began to emerge as a pretext for the popularity of these images. Essential to this construct was the notion of the horse as beautiful, athletic and elegantly groomed. The conventions of elite equestrian representation, then, enjoyed broad recognition, if not universal favour, in 19th century England.

An example of these elite conventions is found in the work of the English painter and portraitist George Stubbs, whose work was well known to Gericault. Stubbs' equestrian studies, which were sought-after by his audience of land-owners and imitated by less famous artists, framed the noble beauty and power of horses within a very personal and individualistic context. That is, Stubbs' horse portraiture has much

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89 Sporting prints were popular forms of wall decoration in entry halls, where the subject matter provided a transition from inside to outside, and in dining rooms, where game was frequently on the menu.
90 Deuchar, Sporting Art, p. 1.
91 ibid., p. 154.
92 Not everyone approved of sportsmen and their activities. A critical view of sport had many vocal adherents, encouraged by liberal social and political developments that cast the world of upper class leisure in disrepute. (ibid., Chapters 4 and 5).
93 Stubbs' greatest contribution to the refinement of equestrian art is his influential treatise entitled The Anatomy of the Horse (1766), based on his
in common with its human counterpart; the subject is named, and the intent is to project onto the horse a depth of character that sets him apart from all others (as in Figure 17, Hambletonian, Rubbing Down, 1800). Géricault's mentor, Carle Vernet, was an adherent of this English style of equestrian representation; Lorenz Eitner speculates that Géricault's horse studies "owed much to his example, and that it was Vernet who originally encouraged him to follow this peculiarly English direction."94

As has been noted briefly in the preceding chapter, Géricault's renderings of horses in the London lithographs are atypical of English style in important ways, not only in terms of subject matter, but also in the way they depart from English conventions of representation. Rather, Géricault's representations employ visual strategies that were more commonly practiced on the Continent, where elite horses were perceived as high-spirited and sexually-charged.95 To wit, in Horses Going to the Fair (Figure 6), A French Farrier (Figure 3) or A Party of Life-Guards (Figure 7), for example, Géricault's horses are represented as bold and excitable, seeming to have a will of their own. In these images, the horses abound with a self-contained energy, in marked dissections of horse cadavers. Géricault knew this work well and had intended to develop and publish his own lithographic series on equine anatomy. Philippe Gruncheec, Master Drawings by Géricault (Washington: International Exhibitions Foundation, 1985), p. 181.

94 Eitner, Géricault, p. 38.

95 Eitner briefly discusses the ways English conventions of representation differ from those of the French (Géricault, p. 38). In addition, Sally Mitchell, in The Dictionary of British Equestrian Art (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Antique Collector's Club, 1985), p. 191, states that the work of Alfred de Dreux "displays the power and fire more frequently to be found in Continental work than English," inferring that a difference in style between England and the Continent is discernible.
contrast with Stubbs’ portrayals of benevolent, subservient gentility, which perhaps served as a model for the calmer, more sedate imagery of Géricault’s An Arabian Horse (Figure 8) in the lithographic set.96

Looking at his work as a whole, more often than not, Géricault’s horses are stallions, whose bodies construct a virile identity by exaggerating the markers of masculinity.97 That is, they have bulging muscles (in contrast to Stubbs’ subdued anatomical accuracy), and frequently the stallion’s arched neck and strong haunches are exaggerated, as in Horses Going to the Fair (Figure 6). The testicles are unusually (and unnaturally) large and prominent. The idea of male potency and sexual energy is often conveyed by viewing the horses from the rear and at eye level, with tails docked or tied into phallic shapes, as in the lithographs Horses Going to the Fair, The Flemish Farrier, and The English Farrier (Figures 6, 2 and 4).

Stallions, with their exuberant, barely controlled, sexually-charged energy, frequently served as Géricault’s vehicle for conveying social and individual forces in turmoil. Many drawings and painted representations made by the artist earlier in his career, such as Le Chasseur de la Garde (1812) (Figure 19), or his studies for The Race of Riderless Horses (1817) (Figure 20), project onto horses the personality

96 See Stubbs’ A Grey Horse with an Arabian Groom at Creswell Craggs (Figure 18).

traits valued in upper class men, that is, "masculine power and panache."98 The absence of elite references like these in Géricault's London lithographs signifies a departure from this frame of reference and alerts the viewer to the artist's focus on a new paradigm -- a new representation of power in the social world.

My point here is that stylistically, Géricault's studies of English horses in Various Subjects Drawn from Life and on Stone fit neither the English nor the Continental model, but rather unite these two languages of horsemanship. The resulting pictorial vocabulary naturalizes the anatomical correctness and narrative drive of the English tradition, while simultaneously hinting at the spirited, potent energy that typifies Continental representations. Géricault's unique articulation of the horse's noble beauty in the 1821 lithographic set takes on an additional cachet by being relocated within the context of everyday scenes, populated by the lower classes and not the high-born gentry of the British tradition, represented by Stubbs' horse portraiture or sporting imagery. It was within the urbanized ideals of profit and progress that transformations in social realities were being played out by the ordinary people Géricault elects to represent -- farriers, labourers, grooms and peacetime soldiers -- whose very identities were being reconstituted within a shifting economic and social model of the Industrial Revolution.

98 ibid., p. 239.
Enlightenment Ideology: The Interdependence of Men and Horses

In all of the scenes of modern life in Géricault’s Various Subjects Drawn from Life and on Stone, one theme recurs with striking regularity: horses are always shown in relation to people. That is, horses are always portrayed as occupying a position in the social world of human society and as participating in human activities of the highest priority, such as commerce, industry, defense and transportation. Whereas in late 20th century Western culture, we might assign to horses a status solely within the natural world, their role in Géricault’s lithographs is shown to be interdependent and complementary to that of people, across all social classes. References to the bonds between men and horses in the upper classes may be found in Horses Exercising (Figure 5), while in Entrance to the Adelphi Wharf (Figure 9) and The Coal Waggon (Figure 10) horses are teamed with men of the working classes. Over and over (and in dramatic contrast to the idealized activities conjured up by sporting imagery), the lithographs reinforce the notion that horses and their handlers are inextricably bound together in what I see to be a “social world of men and horses.”

As cultural historian Alex Potts has argued, envisioning the natural world of animals as if it were an extension of the rational, social world of human affairs was a convention of humanistic, Enlightenment pictorial representation during the late 18th and early 19th centuries.99 The visual practice of projecting human values onto

certain animals aligned with prevailing scientific notions about the order of things. For instance, in Stubbs’ Lustre, Held by a Groom, 1760-62 (Figure 15), the relationship between the social and the natural (i.e., the groom and the horse) is seen to be one of mutual interaction and interdependency. Horse and groom are thus two parts of a whole.\textsuperscript{100} This pre-Darwinian way of envisioning the animal world as part of a seamless cultural and social reality may be usefully contrasted with more recent systems of scientific classification. In the contemporary world of the 20th century, we set up discrete categories which can be compared and viewed in opposition to one another. Whereas we might assume that the horse occupies one clearly defined and separate sphere of existence, and the groom another, in 18th and early 19th century thought, when the natural and the social were inextricably bound together, the human world and the animal world were viewed as one seamless hierarchy, with men at the top and animals positioned in decending order, from most domesticated to most wild.\textsuperscript{101}

The Representation of Everyday Life

Another striking feature of the lithographs Géricault produced in London is that they are constructed so as to seem spontaneous,

\textsuperscript{100} Of all the animals, horses and dogs were seen to be the most closely linked to human society by their social and economic symbiosis, followed by other animals in descending order from most domesticated to most wild. In a ranking system, animals were perceived to have worth according to their utility to humanity. Since horses and dogs contributed more tangible and intangible services to their owners than other animals, they frequently enjoyed the privileges of high status, at least in the middle and upper classes. They were housed in relative comfort, were sometimes better fed than servants, and were even included in family portraits, as well as having their own individual portraits. Thomas, Man and the Natural World, pp. 53 and 117.

\textsuperscript{101} Potts, “Natural Order,” p. 14.
unrehearsed and unposed. The set claims, through its title, to be drawn from everyday life. Moreover, the images profess a certain authenticity by capturing the scenes from behind or at oblique angles, so that the viewer is looking at the subjects at close range, recreating the effects of the impromptu and unexpected vistas offered up on the street. London viewers would surely have encountered the poor in the streets, as envisioned in *Pity the Sorrows of a Poor Old Man* (Figure 12), or glimpses of the Life Guards (Figure 7) preparing to go on parade, or wagons or carts filling lanes or thoroughfares, as in *The Coal Waggon* or *Pity of the Sorrow of the Old Man* (Figures 10 and 12).

The imagery in *Various Subjects Drawn from Life and on Stone* thus claims, in visual terms, to be innocent of deception, in contrast to the authoritarian nature of the elite equestrian imagery of the previous century. In Géricault’s London lithographs, the everyday is represented by grooms (*Horses Exercising*, Figure 5) and workers (the three *Farrier* prints, Figures 2, 3 and 4), exposing what might be called the underside of elite life and showing the infrastructure that supports the upside that is customarily scrutinized by historians and idealized in the art of the Academy.

As Bruno Chenique has pointed out in his study of Géricault’s political allegiances, the lithographs that Géricault produced in the 1820s depart from the artist’s own earlier works, which drew upon classical referents and represented the “moment” with monumental, passionate intensity. ¹⁰² In the lithographs, Géricault broke away from a

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classical lexicon, where horse and rider seem fused into one taut, centaur-like creature that is laden with symbolic and mythological connotations. Instead of making reference to this heroic value system, the artist takes up a visual language that activates more subtle pictorial conventions, like those of genre painting, as Lorenz Eitner has suggested. The depiction of ordinary people encountering everyday situations (as in The Coal Waggon, Figure 10, where the viewer can identify commonplace references to the modern world of industry), allows for the introduction of more original, open-ended readings of cultural sub-texts by a modern audience that would not as easily identify with the codes of Classicism.

In effect, as a set, the lithographs turn the social hierarchy upside down, showing that elite horses and common horses occupy the same realm. All of the images participate in reformulated ways of representing the culture of horsemanship, in conformity with current, informed perceptions about social reality. Horses are all different, these images seem to assert, and one kind of horse is as vital as another. The substitution of workers (as in Entrance to the Adelphi Wharf, Figure 9), farriers (as in the three studies of farriers, Figures 2, 3 and 4) and grooms (as in Horses Exercising, Figure 5) for more privileged riders from the middle and upper classes shifts these images to a modern world where horses are meant to be seen as a means to various ends, rather than merely being accessories to wealth and power. The interaction of men and horses, therefore, has a broader, less fixed,

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103 Eitner, Géricault, p. 222.
meaning in this imagery than in traditional examples of equestrian representation.

Lithography and the Representation of Everyday Life

The lithographic process itself facilitated the production of spontaneous-seeming images like those in Géricault’s 1821 lithographic set. Once established in London, the instant popularity of lithography may be gauged by the phenomenal growth that occurred in the London lithographic printing industry as a whole. As Beatrice Farwell, a specialist in French lithography of the early 19th century, has documented, the invention of lithography coincided with a number of social developments that created a different market from that for high art. These factors included: the growth of urban culture that included a new bourgeois and popular mass market; the vicissitudes of press freedom and censorship; violent shifts in the political climate through war and revolution; the romantic movement in art and literature which placed new value on personal expression; and the establishment of a commodity-based culture created by capitalism. Farwell equates the virtual explosion

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104 Charles Joseph Hullmandel, who printed Géricault’s London work, was one of 11 lithographers in the city in 1821, and one of only two who specialized in producing the work of fine artists. However, the total number of lithographic printers almost doubled by the following year, to 20, giving some indication of the rapid growth in the production of images and the audience for purchasing them. The history of lithography in London is discussed in three works by Michael Twyman: “Charles Joseph Hullmandel: Lithographic Printer Extraordinaire,” loc. cit.; A Directory of London Lithographic Printers, 1800-1850 (London Print Historical Society, 1976); “Lithographic Stone and the Printing Trade in the 19th Century,” Journal of the Print Historical Society, #8 (1972).

105 Farwell, “The Charged Image,” p. 9-10. As Farwell suggests, visual language was but one medium of expression that was changed by the spirit of freedom and equality in the 18th and 19th centuries. English poets such as William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, both of them fervent supporters of democracy and of liberal ideals, began to forge a new poetic language, based
of lithographic imagery with a preoccupation with the experiences of ordinary people, to the overall striving for democratization in public forms of expression.\textsuperscript{106}

Géricault's lithographs, like those of Goya and Delacroix, combine high art with a medium of expression usually associated with more common, ordinary prints, says Farwell.\textsuperscript{107} Indeed, Géricault's scenes of contemporary life raise profound issues without reference to either the formal conventions or the classical analogies that traditionally alerted the viewer to socially significant subject matter. In short, the artist's lithographs produced as part of the 1821 series venture to reveal the moral dilemmas that lie hidden beneath the seemingly smooth surface of a burgeoning urban environment in transition. The physical presence of horses in Géricault's series thus serves to bridge the gap between the mannered formality of an old order, on the one hand, and the more open society of the new order, with its unpredictable shifts in roles and expectations, on the other.

For the buyer who had the choice of purchasing these lithographs, rather than untroubled views of country sporting pursuits, Géricault's vision of old traditions meeting the sometimes rude impact of the modern offered a challenging intellectual commentary on changing social realities, cloaked in terms of the visual pleasures of beautiful horses. Lithography was considered an appropriate medium for visually recalling on rustic subject matter and the diction of the "common man." The conventions of musical composition shifted to facilitate the expression of emotional states, as can be traced in the works of Ludwig von Beethoven and Franz Schubert, during the early 19th century.

\textsuperscript{106} ibid.
\textsuperscript{107} ibid., p. 11.
and reconstructing everyday assumptions about life that otherwise would resist easy definition. Because these assumptions were flexible and sometimes contradictory, their meanings were constantly being negotiated. Yet while Géricault's prints ostensibly embody a documentary or anecdotal approach to imaging the "stuff" of everyday life, embedded in them is a critical rhetoric that addresses cultural stereotypes in the form of often-ambiguous, shifting metaphors, as will be discussed in the next chapter. Lithography thus functions as a mirror held up, not to ideal behaviour, but to social custom as it manifests itself in ordinary lives.

My speculation is that Géricault's Various Subjects Drawn from Life and on Stone was meant to appeal to an artistically astute public with enlightened sensibilities, and targeted an audience that was open to new possibilities and alert to the vicissitudes of change -- that is, well-informed men who, like the artist himself, had the means to participate in the art market and a heightened social awareness.

Judging from the popularity of sporting prints and scenes of public life, the English had a taste for pictures that had a narrative, quasi-literary quality. In contrast, the questioning approach to everyday life and its ambiguities that is expressed in the lithographic series would have had an appeal to a new audience who could have comprehended Géricault's penetrating look at life in chaotic modern times.

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109 Various Subjects Drawn from Life and on Stone reportedly sold well, yet Géricault did not profit from their publication, and it is not clear why.
CHAPTER III

HORSES, FARRIERS AND THE ISSUE OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

Three scenes in Géricault's lithographic set, Various Subjects Drawn from Life and on Stone, project the issue of national identity onto the personal identity of the horse and the farrier, an important worker in a horse-centered society. These are The Flemish Farrier, A French Farrier and The English Farrier (Figures 2, 3, and 4). Because farriers were such familiar figures to the 19th century audience that Géricault was addressing in this lithographic series, and because their role was so vital to the functioning of the economy, images of them could serve as particularly effective sites for objectifying cultural issues.

His publisher, Rodwell and Martin, objected to Géricault's sometimes dark visions of English life (presumably the scenes of the urban poor), fearing that they were not "the most direct route to the hearts of English connoisseurs," (Eitner, Géricault, p. 228.) However, Eitner's explanation appears to be inconsistent with reports by Géricault's 19th century biographer, Charles Clément, who says the series actually had an enthusiastic reception. According to Clément, "the publisher deprived him of whatever profit he might have expected." (Quoted in Grunche, Géricault's Horses, p. 9.) Géricault apparently was sufficiently committed to the success of the project that he ended up spending some of his own money to see it to completion. After Géricault returned to France later in 1821, he contracted with a French publisher to rework the images in the set, changing some of the details to address French practices and identities. He also edited out some of the details, and most significantly, eliminated the images of the urban poor. Perhaps it was the unpleasantness surrounding the problematic nature of the images of the urban poor that prompted their elimination from the lithographic set Géricault published in France. Jennifer Durrie states that "the tough censorship laws instituted in France after 1817, that would have resisted having visual reminders of the post-Napoleonic social instability and poverty," combined with France's distinctively different viewing tastes, may have necessitated the editing out of the scenes of distress and poverty. Jennifer Durrie, "The High/Low Politics of the Body Through Print Media: Géricault's English Lithographic Series 1820/21," (Vancouver, The University of British Columbia, 1997. Unpublished).

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Indeed, images of farriers (and/or blacksmiths)\textsuperscript{110} are repeatedly encountered in genre and landscape paintings in the 19th century and the late decades of the 18th century.\textsuperscript{111} Typically, these images picture the farrier as a humble hero embedded in the rural landscape, but for the most part, horses in these paintings are consigned to a minor, passive role in defining the farrier’s identity. Many of these representations link the farrier’s practical, everyday labours to themes derived from mythology or religion.\textsuperscript{112} Evocations of the farrier’s mythic powers in visual imagery, furthermore, directly parallel the characterization of farriers in the prodigious body of oral and written literature from throughout Europe that envisions him as trickster, artist, magician and man of mystery.\textsuperscript{113} The publication in 1821 of Walter Scott’s Kenilworth, with its enigmatic farrier hero, Wayland Smith, shows that the ancient mythos surrounding the farrier was still relevant enough to be understood by an audience of English readers in the early 19th century.\textsuperscript{114}

\textsuperscript{110} A farrier is for practical purposes synonymous with a blacksmith, but the skills of the latter also include metal working of all types, such as tool manufacturing. Some large estates with major holdings of horses employed resident farriers, but few village blacksmiths could afford to specialize.

\textsuperscript{111} In England, farriers appeared in painting by George Morland, James Ward, Edwin Landseer and Joseph Wright of Derby. Géricault mentioned in his correspondence his admiration for the works of Ward and Landseer. See Oliver Beckett, \textit{The Life and Work of James Ward, R.A., 1769-1859: The Forgotten Genius} (Sussex: The Book Guild, 1995), p. 112. There is a striking similarity between Géricault’s portrayal of \textit{The Piper} (Figure 11) and Ward’s representation of a peasant and his dog in \textit{The Farrier’s Shop} (c.1805).

\textsuperscript{112} See for instance the works of Wright of Derby.


What is particularly distinctive about Géricault’s treatment of the subject of the farrier, I argue in this chapter, is that it overturns both the heroic and the mythic referents usually attached to farriers and instead connects this old, familiar subject to the contemporary issues of national identity and the status of workers in the industrializing economy. Furthermore, the imagery projects these themes onto the bodies of horses, whose spontaneous animal nature becomes the metaphor for validating the authenticity of national identity.

In the political atmosphere of early 19th century England, when questions of nationhood formed the substance of considerable public discourse, the titles of these prints are particularly suggestive. With their definitive reference to three different nationalities, the titles suggest that even an activity as fundamental as shoeing a horse can differ enough from one nationality to another to be recognized by an informed eye.

Visual allusions to markers of national identity were by no means novel to 19th century audiences, yet interest in England’s preeminence as a nation made the topic of nationalism particularly relevant during this sensitive post-war period. In fact, national identity had served as a pretext for exploring issues of cultural difference, particularly in printed imagery, from at least the late Renaissance. Prints depicting the costumes of various nationalities, for instance, were popular forms of imagery that circulated as sets of engravings and etchings throughout 19th century England.

\[\text{Colley, Britons, p. 59.}\]
Europe in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. In these posed vignettes, showing individuals wearing the distinctive attire of various national and ethnic groups, stereotypes are derived from details of fashion, nuances of body language and standards of beauty. These visual codes define the social boundaries that separate one nationality, ethnic group or social class from another, projecting onto the figures the values and attitudes that were used by members of one nationality to define the national character of another.

Géricault's prints of farriers and horses are analogous to these costume prints, in that they attempt to link national identity with physically observable traits. By stereotyping the national traits of farriers and horses, they highlight the forces that separate society into discreet, observable entities.

Géricault’s Farrier Imagery

In The Flemish Farrier, A French Farrier and The English Farrier (Figure 2, 3 and 4), English audiences encountered a visual vocabulary that departed from the pastoral, ethereal farrier imagery to which they had become accustomed in contemporary paintings.116

Instead of locating the farrier within a broad landscape, as would be typical of contemporary representations of the farrier, the composition of all three prints crops the imagery so as to give the viewer a closer, more intimate access to the subject itself. Unencumbered by extraneous detail, these prints are filled to the edges

116 See footnote 111 on page 53 for examples of contemporary paintings of farriers.
with the two principle figures -- the farrier and the horse -- as if to draw attention to the energy and vitality of their interaction. An additional source of interest that viewers could derive from the imagery is that the bodies of men and horses are posed in ways that closely resemble the style of Academic representations. For instance, the stance of the Flemish farrier recalls the pose of the figures on the left side of J. L. David's well-known history painting Oath of the Horatii (1785), and all three lithographs repeat the male figures and horses in Géricault's own studies of the race of the Barberi horses.¹¹⁷

What would be apparent to an early 19th century viewer is the differences in practice that separated one style of farriery from another in these three studies -- for instance, the way the English and French farriers cradle the hoof in their lap, while the Flemish farrier uses a stand (said to be a lazy man's way of doing things¹¹⁸). These gestures would have served as meaningful cues to those with an intimate knowledge of the care of horses. Moreover, the works' titles encourage the viewer to look first for differences and contrasts among the images. We are meant to see differences in identity embedded within them. Yet although there are variations in the mode of dress and ethnic characteristics among the three representations, the role of the farrier himself is represented as a "type" that could cross cultural lines

¹¹⁷ While in Italy in 1817, Géricault observed the annual race of the Barberi horses in the Corso at Carnival time. Intending to make this event the subject of a painting for the Salon of that year, he made numerous preparatory drawings and oil sketches (of which Figure 20 is one), but he never completed a painting of this subject for the Salon. Eitner, Géricault, pp. 117-134.

without significant changes in character or disposition. More to the point, the traditional heroic public persona of the farrier is absent; instead he is represented as a labourer, doing his job.

Earlier in his career, Géricault had taken up the heroic subject of the farrier, in oils and on a far larger scale than in the lithographic prints of 1821. In composing The Farrier’s Signboard (1814) (Figure 21), he eliminated much of the contextualizing background of landscape- and genre-based paintings, as he did in the lithographs, but his depiction of the farrier still conjures up heroic values, communicated through body language and presentation. Lorenz Eitner reads The Farrier’s Signboard as "an allegory of passion subdued by will," or alternatively "as France conquered but unappeased; as the horse of war tamed for peaceful work; as practical reason triumphant over emotion," once again locating the metaphor in the farrier himself. There is an incongruity between the Signboard image and the 1821 farrier lithographs, as Eitner notes. "The Signboard’s heroic flamboyance has quietened to descriptive prose, its compactly monumental grouping has resolved itself into a discursive genre scene." In other words, in the lithographs, scenes of farriers engaged in hard manual labour have stripped away the macho bravado associated with heroic, mythic interpretations of the farrier’s status. Thus viewers might bring a "cultural memory" of the farrier’s mythic persona to their viewership, but the farrier’s shop now serves as a point of departure for exploring an alternative cultural perspective.

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119 Eitner, Géricault, p. 57.
120 ibid., p. 230.
Géricault’s own liberal political orientation may explain the shift in emphasis that relocated the folkloric character of the farrier to the modern everyday world of work. In France, the role of folklore was engendering a debate in the aftermath of the Enlightenment. Mythology, which had become the locus of much scholarly interest and activity, was valued by some for its authentic “primitive” wisdom and its usefulness in constructing historical “truth,” but for others, notably the liberal Philosophes who challenged the traditional forms of knowledge that had supported the authority of feudalism, the Catholic Church and the monarchy, folklore was thought to be antithetical to the pursuit of scientific and rational thought.\(^1\)

Géricault aligned himself with the liberal philosophical beliefs of the Idéologues, a group that continued into the Napoleonic era the Enlightenment project which sanctioned rational thinking and respect for the individual. Idéologues were those who subscribed to the anti-authoritarian stance of earlier Philosophes, and who advocated a new moral code, and wanted to preserve and strengthen the achievements of both the Enlightenment and the Revolution. Man was the product of his environment, they believed, and the ongoing reform of a political system that led people down paths of ignorance and brutishness was the only way to achieve freedom.\(^2\) Folklore represented an impediment to that goal, and therefore, the Idéologues wanted to end the people’s reliance on the


unrealistic, outmoded crutch of mythology. This new political ideology opened up the potential for exploring alternative ways of representing subjects that had previous been defined in mythic terms.

Representing the Farrier as Worker

The focus of the farrier images is on the physicality of both the farriers and the horses. In all three images in Géricault’s series, the incredible physical strength of the farrier is accentuated, as he bends, reaches and strains against the weight of the horse. He sweats from exertion and the heat of the forge. The work is dirty, exhausting and demands a total commitment of body and mind -- work that is more notable for its utility than for its mystery. Transforming the farrier into an ordinary worker, as Géricault does, removes him from mythology and relocates him to the social mainstream of the modern 19th century.

With the farrier no longer encumbered with the weighty symbolism of the hero, the viewer can focus on the farrier’s interaction with the horse. What we see is a reciprocal relationship at a personal level, revealing a quasi-social interdependency. Man-serves-horse as much as horse-serves-man.

Recognizing the interaction of man and horse for what it is -- that is, a working relationship -- greatly expands the possibilities for interpreting the imagery. I would argue that the driving force in these images is not to be found in the farrier, but in the horses themselves. Their titles notwithstanding, each of these compositions centers on the horse, whose immense bulk takes up most of the space within the picture fields; whose barely contained energies animate the images; and whose
remarkable physicality could, it seems, at any moment overcome that of the farrier. Instead of presuming that the horse functions primarily as an accessory to the farrier, as in more traditional imagery, it is the horse that motivates the farrier's actions. By breaking free of the conventional constraints of the genre, these pictures make *horses*, not farriers, the central trope of the imagery and give them the task of anchoring the imagery.

Using the practices surrounding the care and maintenance of horses in different cultures as a pretext for the narrative, Géricault's farrier lithographs make sweeping generalizations about perceived national identities as represented by horses of different types. We see the stolid, bucolic temperament of the agrarian Flemish (Figure 2), for instance, in the peaceful temperament of the easily managed workhorse, so calm and dependable that a peasant is able to relax close to his body. The farrier goes about his work in lazy man's fashion, using a shoeing stand, and it seems that only the demanding toddler on the right objects to the tedious passage of time.

Géricault represents the French state under contemporary Bourbon rule as a horse blinkered, heavily harnessed and burdened with drudgery -- like a slave (Figure 3). Alone among the three images, and indeed unusual for farrier imagery in general, the French horse is represented as fully harnessed, not in a relaxed state as suggested by the other two images. Yet in spite of attempts to restrain him, he pulls back against the forces that control him, showing his spirited defiance and his
potential for unpredictable action. Rebellion is written in the horse's body language, and the farrier's glance anticipates trouble.

To his privileged English audience the artist seems to pay deference, by representing the English horses as refined animals of sport and leisure, blue-bloods of conspicuously good breeding (Figure 4). Or is the lavishness of the surroundings a comment on an anachronistic preoccupation with luxury that continued to consume the resources of the privileged, even as the rights of ordinary people were more forcefully asserting themselves? In the lithograph of the English farrier, there are two farriers, not one, and they are shown at work, not in a humble shoeing shed in the village where they could toil they lives away in obscurity, but rather in a stone and brick stable with a cobbled floor, on the estate of a family of means. The horses themselves are "clothed" in fitted blankets, to make them sweat during their daily training gallops. Just as in Horses Exercising (Figure 5), the imagery interposes the concept of everyday labour with the maintenance of upper class lifestyles.

In giving horses a sense of identity, the artist calls upon the viewer's knowledge of the culture of horses and horsemanship. Géricault never seems to stop reminding the viewer that horses are wild creatures at heart -- with intense desires and instincts -- and that horses can not help but be what they are. But different horses express this free

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123 See also Serge Guilbaut's similar reading of Géricault's Cheval de Plâtrier: the Horse of the Plasterer, 1798, in Guilbaut, Ryan, Watson, eds., The Alien Body, p. 17.

124 Sweating a horse was thought to be beneficial and to contribute to the fitness of pleasure horses. Mitchell, Dictionary of British Equestrian Art, p. 21.
spirit in different ways, as Géricault’s many drawings, watercolours and oil paintings attest. In these three lithographs of everyday, “naturally-occurring” events in the lives of horses, behavioural differences between horses are made to represent the perceived “natural” traits of different nationalities -- the unconscious, inborn, intuitive traits that were believed to separate one nationality or race from another as new concepts of nationalism were forming. As viewers, we are compelled to project onto horses the attributes of Flemands, Frenchmen and Englishmen. The farrier’s shop, rooted in the soil of the nation and a fixture of the cultural landscape, thus becomes an ideal site for exploring contemporaneous concepts of nationalism and difference.

National Identity in 19th Century England

The use of horses as metaphors for nationalistic traits would not have seemed strange in post-Enlightenment England; nor would hints of English superiority have escaped the notice of Géricault’s audience. The notion that various nationalities could be differentiated from one another and defined in terms of a definite style of living came directly out of the intellectual and political debates in late Enlightenment. In fact, London itself was becoming a hodgepodge of various nationalities whose customs and habits were conspicuous for all to see.\(^{125}\)

Considerable scholarly attention has recently been focused on how national identity evolved during the 18th and 19th centuries. These studies focus on events of the late 18th century, when new nations and

\(^{125}\) Porter, *London*, p. 95.
governments were coming into being. The shared, aristocratic values that had once sustained the cosmopolitan sentiments that united European countries were coming into conflict with new modes of thought and were beginning to break down under the combined stresses of revolutions and industrialization. The rising ambitions of the merchant and professional classes presaged the beginning of a new order,126 when a striving for wider rights and freedoms was being played out in the context of national sentiments. And as the imagery in Various Subjects Drawn from Life and on Stone corroborates, a new visual vocabulary for representing new cultural values was struggling to emerge.

Gerald Newman, in his book The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History 1740-1830, presents a synthesis of the events that formed the genesis of English national identity. According to Newman, a series of provocations brought about by successive wars and revolutions, along with better communications and more extensive trade, resulted in a sense of crisis, out of which arose an elaboration of nationalist ideology all over Europe. Newman describes nationalism as "the inseparable ideological counterpart of modernization," (emphasis his) because it facilitated the breakdown of intellectual and social barriers and introduced disciplines aimed at national betterment.127

National identity is an inward-looking phenomenon that encourages citizens to imagine a shared experience with others within a defined community, as Benedict Anderson has suggested.128 A sense of shared

127 ibid., p. 54 (the emphasis is his).
responsibility inspires loyalty to a national and cultural identity. It creates a homogeneity within the group, but at the same time it specifically excludes others whose ways of thinking and behaving become peculiar and perhaps distasteful by comparison.\textsuperscript{129} People, in other words, define themselves by knowing who and what they are not, says Linda Colley.\textsuperscript{130} Notions of "difference" and "otherness," and especially of superiority and inferiority are easily mapped onto such constructs.

An example of the contemporary discourse on national identity provides a useful case in point, illustrating how extreme positions were articulated in constructing an English ideology. In 1770, John Andrews wrote a lengthy treatise called \textit{A Review of the Characters of the Principal Nations in Europe, in 2 Volumes}, "to animadvert on those Peculiarities whereon the Disparity between (countries) is strikingly founded, and which, like Features in the human Countenance, render them all conspicuously different from each other."\textsuperscript{131} Andrews' self-serving adulation of the English in this work arises from a sense of superiority in intellectual endowments and in freedom of thought to which he attributed Britain's exceptional status. In England, he claims, "Every man has thought for himself."\textsuperscript{132} "There is no people according to the unanimous Avowal of Foreigners, over whom Prejudices have so little influence as the English,"\textsuperscript{133} Andrews somewhat paradoxically asserts.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{129} Newman, \textit{Rise of English Nationalism}, pp. 52-56.
\item \textsuperscript{130} Linda Colley, \textit{Britons}, p. 6.
\item \textsuperscript{132} ibid., p. 7.
\item \textsuperscript{133} ibid., p. 8.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
By contrast, Andrews condemns the Italians ("Few Countries in Europe [are] worse governed, and no People, in many Parts more wretched"), the Spanish ("Agriculture with them, is little more than scratching the Surface of the Earth"), and the French ("our natural Enemies . . . In a Civil and a Political light, they are amazingly degenerate; and are fallen to a Degree of Pusillanimity and Abjectness equally low with that of any European Nation whatever").

As useful as Andrews' model of national consciousness is for locating changing political attitudes within the dominant cultural hierarchy and its political agendas, it can not explain the more subtle nuances of identity that are defined in the everydayness of Géricault's farrier lithographs. Far from presuming a dramatic clash of identities, as Andrews' very Anglocentric text would suggest, the prints employ the visual language of nationalism to tease out suggestive behavioural cues that define "nation" as it is perceived through the common language of lived experience. We see these elusive cues in details of interaction taking place within the congested picture field -- such as the coarseness or refinement of the surroundings, the spirited or languid body language of the horses, the perceptibly different techniques for shoeing and for horse management. In the prints, the blurry distinctions that separate one identity from another, what Homi Bhabha calls "those in-between spaces through which the meanings of cultural and political
authority are negotiated," are never categorical but are constantly in the process of hybridizing, producing new meanings and ideologies.

The marginal social positioning of farriers is significant here; for it is not their role to use horses, but rather to prepare them so that others can use them. It is in this context of marginality and the everyday, then, that we may usefully situate a new construction of national identity through the imagery of horses and farriers. The vocabulary resonates with a cultural awareness that functions at the level of individual experience, social reality, and intuition, and only remotely attaches to the rhetoric of political hierarchies.

As I have been arguing throughout this thesis, the level of comfort and pleasure that Britons felt in relation to horses, as cherished objects, opened up a level of understanding with an English audience that allowed for the exploration of a range of metaphors. Horses do not serve as substitutes for people in Géricault’s works within the series, or as accessories to the actions of people, but share equally in the social landscape with their human handlers. The empathy toward horses felt by the viewer has the potential to affect the way a concept such as nationalism is perceived. To wit, it permits a broader reading of the issues of national identity. The lithographs imply that national identity, like the identity of horses, may be based in nature but is brought to consciousness piecemeal, through conditioning and through the everyday “ordinariness” that one encounters while living life.

The Power of "Ordinariness"

Another example of the revealing nature of ordinariness, combined with an awareness of national identity, in Géricault's London lithographs is A Party of Life-Guards (Figure 7). This unusual depiction of the military aesthetic departs in several ways from the established genres of military representation. Here nameless soldiers are shown neither as idealized heroes, as in courtly portraits of military heroism, nor gloriously in the heat of battle, but rather are caught off guard -- literally and figuratively -- enjoying a break like ordinary people. The slack musculature of one of the horses, the way his head hangs in an attitude of repose, departs emphatically from the taut, emotionally-charged representations of horses in battle or as accessories to images of military heroism. Another horse acts up in an undisciplined way.

Though splendidly uniformed, the Life-Guards have let go of the rigid postures that protocol demands of them in public, while the shadowy figures of other Life-Guards standing at attention recedes into the distance, reminding the viewer of the primary function of this elite unit. A quality of seemingly artless informality allows the viewer to envision himself physically within the social space of the image and thereby to accept the action as authentic.

Further interest is generated by the choice of the Life-Guards as subject matter. Although their primary function was -- and still is -- to guard the monarch, the Life-Guards had recently gone to war against the French. At Waterloo, Life-Guards fought against French cuirassiers with "a thirst for glory," as it is reported in their official
history. 138 Away from the theater of warfare, they occupied center stage in the peacetime pageantry that symbolized Britain as a unique national entity. 139

As in the Farrier series, A Party of Life-Guards uses images of horses, not only to represent British national identity and beliefs about racial and national ascendancy, but also to aggrandize an English audience with references to Britain’s military preeminence in relation to other nations.

The National Identity of Horses

That horses may so effectively be used as signifiers of nationality relates to commonly held beliefs about the national identities of horses themselves that were part of the informal lore of horses and horsemanship. This aspect of horse lore is summarized in an extraordinary book of horse wisdom published in France at the end of the 17th century and translated for English audiences in the 18th century under the title The Compleat Horseman, Discovering the Surest Marks of the Beauty, Goodness, Faults and Imperfections of Horses. 140 This book represents the prevailing knowledge and beliefs about horses in European culture.

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139 It is possible that images like A Party of Life-Guards were meant to fill a demand for peacetime military imagery by a large market of veterans of Britain’s military campaigns. Farwell, Charged Image, p. 171.

Its author describes the physical and behavioural attributes of horses of different nations:

"The Barbs are of one kind of shape, Spanish horses of another, and Turkish horses differ also in their shapes one from another; The Neapolitan horses have likewise one shape, and the Frizland and strong knit Dutch horses differ in shapes from them all; yet nevertheless the horses of all their Countreys are perfectly well shap’t in their kinds, and according to the different structures of their Bodies, and although there be also different Sizes amongst all these various kinds, yet when I see a horse, I can immediately discover whether he be a Barb, Spanish, Turk, Neapolitan, or strong Dutch horse." 141

Using terminology that might equally well be used to describe a person, the author of this manual sets out in detail the "personal" qualities of each nationality of horse. The Spanish horse is "the wisest, far the wisest, and strangely wise beyond any Mans imagination, but I just tell you they are not the easier drest for that, because they observe too much with their eyes, and their Memories are too good. . ."; 142 the English horse is "less wise than the Barb, fearfull and skittish for the most part, and dogged and rebellious to the Mannage. . ."; 143 and so forth.

Of the Arabian horse, Sifur de Solleysell claims:

"The Arabian Horse is commonly nurst, (as it is reported) with Camels milk, and there are the strangest reports in the world of these Horses, for it is affirmed by credible Persons, that the price of a Right Arabian, will be sometimes one thousand, two thousand and three thousand pistols a horse, (an intolerable and incredible price) and that the Arabs are as carefull and diligent in keeping the Genealogies of their Horses, as an Princes can be in keeping any of their own Pedigrees. . ." 144

141 ibid., p. 209.
143 ibid., p. 9. Mannage means the art of horsemanship and the training of horses.
144 ibid., p. 12.
These remarks provide a way to interpret the cultural references in Géricault’s An Arabian Horse (Figure 8). They suggest that a horse of a certain nationality displays certain behaviours simply because he is the product of a certain blood heritage. The great value, in monetary terms, placed on Arabian horses in particular is in direct proportion to assurances of the purity of these bloodlines. Everything about the lithograph of The Arabian Horse speaks to the purity of the Arabian horse as a gauge of his worth: his outstanding conformation, the unique facial features that distinguish an Arab from any other horse, his exaggerated, small stature, and of course the Orientalist flavour of the native habitat, constructed through both the desert setting and the exotically dressed Bedoin handler. The concept of purity is further symbolized by the setting, an island isolated from all sources of contamination, and by the format of the composition, a vignette.

References to racial purity as indicators of monetary value are, however, insufficient to explain the intense, emotional human interaction that is acted out within this image. The devotion of the Bedoin to his horse resembles the affection bestowed upon a love-object. This imagery, in other words, reinforces a belief system that was already in place, providing to viewers yet another construction of national identity by calling up agreed-upon cultural concepts, such as those evoked by James Christie Whyte in History of the British Turf. He makes certain assumptions about the effects of nurturing interactions with human beings upon the personality of the horse, suggesting that a horse is not simply the product of his genes, but also of his environment, a more liberal, rational approach:
“Nothing can exceed the attachment that exists between the poor Arab and his horse, often his whole stock of wealth. The mare and her foal inhabit the same tent with his family, and are caressed by all. The body of a mare is often the pillow of her master, and more frequently of his children, who roll about upon her and the foal, without the least risk. Nothing... can surpass the gentleness of the Turkish horses, and their obedience to their master and grooms is very great. The reason is, they always treat them with great kindness... They took them into their own habitations, cleansed, combed, and caressed them with as much affection as they would their own children. They hung something like a jewel about their necks, and a broad ribbon, which was full of amulets against poison, which they are most afraid of. They never strike them, the grooms that dress them being as gentle as their masters...”

As these writings suggest, the visual interest in horses expressed in The Arabian Horse also include a complex system of beliefs anchored in notions of national identity and unity. Horses, serving as the focus of aesthetic appreciation, were vehicles of expressing abstract understandings of behaviour that extend to the human sphere.

Thus it is useful to consider how images of horses functioned to express both the unity that binds people together and the differences that fragment human beings into opposing factions. These are concerns that are fraught with anxieties and conflict. Therefore I suggest that the nuances of national identity could activate sentiments that are more acceptably expressed through the imagery of horses than the more problematic representation of human society.

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145 Quoted in Dent, Horse Through Fifty Centuries, pp. 191-193.
CONCLUSION

My aim in this thesis has been to open up a critical study of Géricault's lithographic images of horses, in order to show that in these works horses functioned as vehicles that could confront the ironies and paradoxes inherent in a modern, urban-oriented culture -- issues with which Géricault was passionately involved. Using his lithographic set *Various Subjects Drawn from Life and on Stone* as prime examples, I have argued that these works were meaningful to 19th century viewers precisely because they were informed by contemporary intellectual debates about the status of individuals and the nature of public life in the politically sensitive post-Napoleonic era, at a time when the effects of the Industrial Revolution could no longer be ignored in the urban and rural spaces of Britain. As one of the first exponents of the lithographic medium, with its potential to liberate imagery from its traditional conventions, Géricault represented horses and their human handlers as standing on the cutting edge of the modern experience.

Above all, horses symbolized mobility -- in both the literal and figurative senses -- for the masses, as well as the privileged, who lived in the horse-centered culture of the 19th century, where social and economic life revolved around the trusted interdependence of men and horses. Thus the familiar figure of the horse, shown in everyday activities with labourers, grooms, wagon drivers and guards, could serve as a code to challenge the well-ordered facade of progress, revealing the paradoxes, the pain and the disorder that lay behind the scenes.
In seeking to find a vocabulary that would define and give artistic form to the many controversies that arose out of concern by Enlightenment and by subsequent thinkers about the dilemmas facing the "common man," Géricault’s London lithographs precede by twenty to thirty years the social consciousness for which the novels of Charles Dickens are revered. The circulation of these lithographic images to a receptive London print market, therefore, is a commentary on the social significance of visual forms.

The English social landscape was fertile ground for producing and circulating images that resonated with public concerns about cultural change, not only because England was demographically positioned to be the first industrialized nation in Europe, but also because the country had the intellectual and political resources to question the very nature of modern progress. The visual narratives contained in the twelve lithographs Géricault published in London in 1821 project a liberal awareness of the paradoxes of modernity -- prospects that were at once exciting and terrifying -- onto the bodies of horses of all kinds. Elite Thoroughbreds, valued Arabian horses, faithful working animals and spirited stallions thus came to serve as the "natural" conveyors of ideas about the kinds of transformations that were engaging the various audiences for lithographic prints. The imagery in the London lithographs allows for the construction of critical narratives to be

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147 Evans, Forging of the Modern State, p. 372.
played out in an ostensibly neutral territory -- the body of the horse -- where the dilemmas of modern social life could be articulated with impunity.
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