



Introduction

Be not alarmed by your doubt. *This doubt is already faith*. Believe, and hope! Right, though postponed, will have its advent; it will come to sit in judgment on the dogma and on the world. And *this day* of Judgment will be called the Revolution.

—JULES MICHELET, *HISTOIRE DE LA RÉVOLUTION FRANÇAISE*, 1847

Just look at Hippolyte Bellangé's lithograph *Eh bien oui . . . ! Charbonnier est maître chez lui* (fig. 1). Look how admirable its three protagonists appear, how formidable, with their arms around each other, one foot raised and planted on a barricade they built together. It is July 29, 1830. The revolution is over. Charles X has fallen. The man behind the collier (*charbonnier*) at center, the one doffing his top hat, lets us know the celebrations can begin. This time the Bourbon kings shall not return. In unison, the collier, National Guard, and student of the *École Polytechnique* peer to their right, beyond the two corpses at their feet and into a distance reserved for them alone. The future, which is this distance, exceeds the picture's tondo; it defies representation *hic et nunc*. In a word, it promises to be new. The gamin pulled tight to the collier's side tells us something about its possibilities. So, too, does the tricolor flying in the middle distance, its three equal parts bodied forth by the three revolutionaries. The message, here, is unambiguous. Out of this union arises a nation reformed.

La Charte ou la mort (The Charter or death). The National Guard's bearskin obscures nearly the entirety of the slogan inscribed across the tricolor's middle section. Only "La Charte" remains legible in full. The erasure, no doubt, is meant to be another sign that the revolution has concluded, that it has been won, and that victory is tantamount to resurrection. That the Charter, which in 1814 restored the Bourbon Monarchy but also established the Chamber of Deputies, stands for compromise—that it merely limits monarchy—does not seem to bother Bellangé's revolutionaries. It assures them that law,

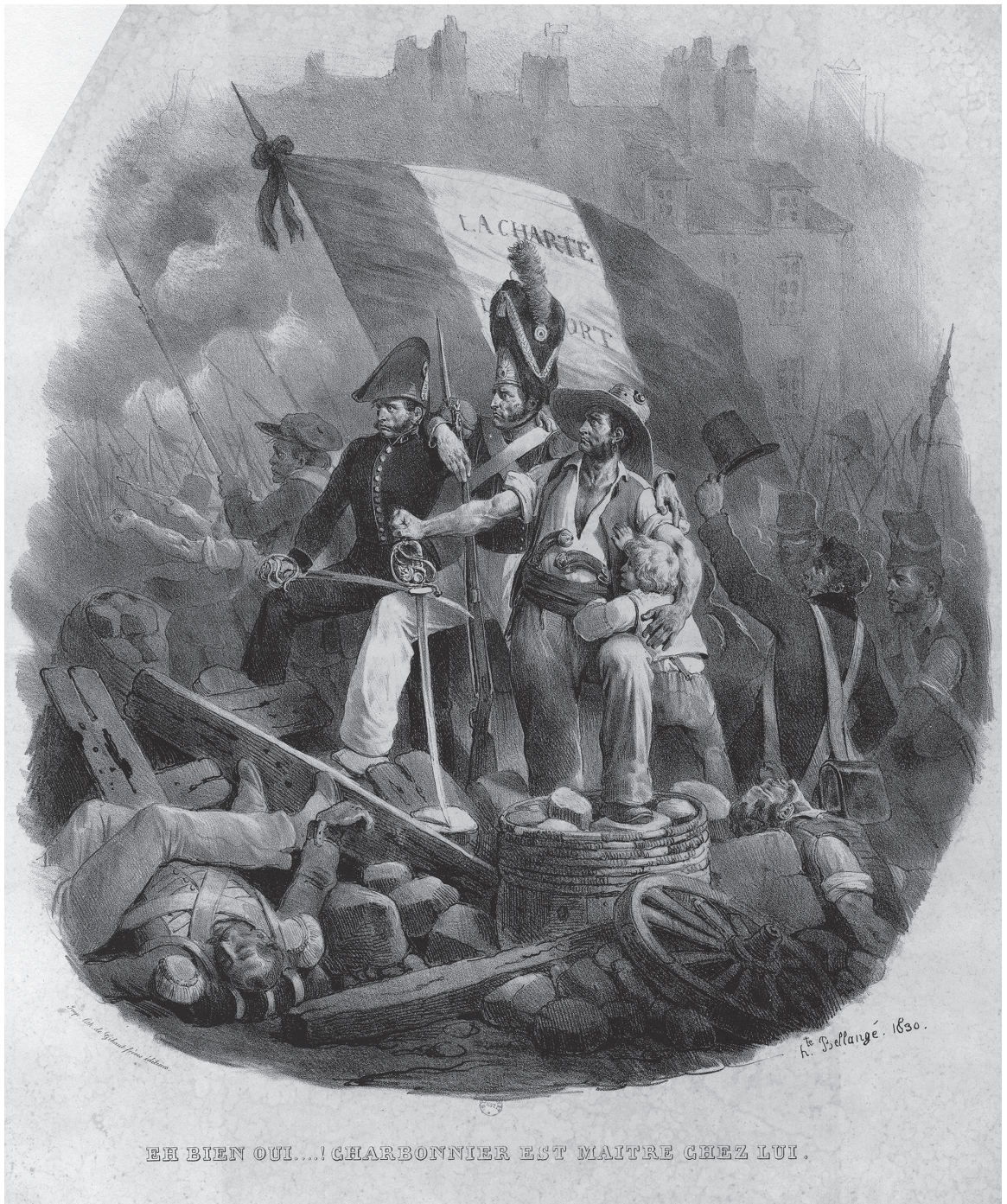


FIG. 1 Hippolyte Bellangé, *Eh bien oui...! Charbonnier est maître chez lui*, 1830. Lithograph, 41.1 × 37.2 cm. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. Photo: BnF.

both secular and reasoned, precedes monarchy: in effect, the right to rule cannot be separated from the will of “the people.” The Charter titles the monarch Head of State. It recognizes the rights of the individual and enshrines the right to property. It guarantees that the press will be free. All at once these concessions to the Revolution of 1789 were nullified when Charles X published his “Four Ordinances” on July 26.

But this is not all that seems to be at stake. “Or death” is neither a neutral declaration nor a simple counterpoint. “Or death” is an ultimatum issued by those whom charters fail to represent—that is, “those who count for nothing.”¹ The violence it thus bespeaks endangers the constitutionalism it takes as its opposite.² “Or death” defines the right of insurrection as a natural right.³ It belongs to the language of 1793. The unity emblemized by the tricolor consequently turns on the refrain’s displacement, which in this instance also happens to be its literalization. Three corpses lie in the foreground of Bellangé’s lithograph, each of them cropped at the waist. Two appear without legs, one without torso, although we may wish to read the legs and torso on the left—the legs laid over the torso—as describing a single body and therefore revealing something characteristic about the body cut down by violence of this sort. For here, in this death, the body goes topsy-turvy.

The point is not that Bellangé’s image diminishes the differences between the classes. Clearly it does not. The collier, dressed in the costume of his trade rather than his duty, appears out of step with the National Guard and the *polytechnicien*, his left leg raised while they stride with their right. The lithograph, in this way, makes room for the real substance of the historical situation in 1830, for an image of class at the moment of its codification. But it abstracts that substance. The contradictions Bellangé makes visible appear to have been resolved. This is why the collier must speak the lithograph’s caption. The order affirmed by the Charter depends on his desire to do so. Bellangé’s worker is as much “*maître*” as the others.

The street, turned against itself, figures in Bellangé’s lithograph as the site and medium of social transformation. In opposition, the collier combines with the National Guard and the *polytechnicien*. Each of them has contributed a paving stone. A scrap of wood or a barrel or a cartwheel would also have sufficed; barricades are (and were) nondiscriminating constructions, provisional collections of everyday objects put to new purposes. Contingency is the rule. Together, the three men, worker and bourgeois, have reconstituted the nation; it is now, like them, self-made.⁴ Therein resides the first myth of revolution in the nineteenth century. The barricade, in 1830, appears as its most poignant and meaningful symbolic form.

Few believed in this myth or expressed it with greater conviction and eloquence than the historian Jules Michelet, who, in 1831, linked the barricades of the 1830 revolution to the discovery of a “people.” “What distinguishes the July Revolution,” he maintained,

“is that it presented the first example of a revolution without heroes, without proper names; triumph belonged to no one in particular. Society did everything. The revolution of the fourteenth century was absolved and embodied in the Maiden of Orleans, a pure and affecting victim who represented the people and died for it. Here, not a proper name; no one planned it, no one led it; no one person eclipsed the others. After the victory, one searched for a hero; and one found a people.”⁵ History in its present form, which Michelet identified with the eternal struggle of “man against nature, mind against matter, liberty against fatality,” had reached its resolution.⁶ Or so Michelet concluded at the time, certain that among the ruins of these centuries-old structures of bondage he glimpsed the “social genius” of France and thus the presentiment of humanity’s full realization.⁷ Namelessness for Michelet had nothing to do with the nonsignifying, flattening sameness of anonymity. “The people” of 1830 was a social being, not a social category; its arrival, which announced the triumph of the nation over individualism, nullified social categories altogether. Everyone was *peuple*, Michelet insisted. In his eyes, the singularity of 1830 pertained to the whole it expressed, not the individual parts that constituted it. For these parts, he thought, were individual merely in appearance; their significance derived from their status as symbols of the unity they were striving to become.⁸

“I believe in the repose of the future.”⁹ For Michelet, the barricades of 1830 created a space for freedom, transfiguring the diffuse and scattered, by association, into a unity, many and one at the same time.¹⁰ In building these barricades, “the people” recognized itself as such; subsequently, it acted as such. Victor Hugo compared the occasion to a metamorphosis. “Yesterday you were only a mob,” he exclaimed. “You are a people today!”¹¹ Hugo wanted this image of progress to strike a distinctive note. He was speaking on the anniversary of the insurrection of August 10, 1792, when thousands of *sans-culottes*—the mob of yesterday—stormed the Tuileries and deposed Louis XVI. Allusions to the radicalism of Years I and II were commonplace at the time (Bellangé’s “or death” was one of them), and the invocation almost always turned, as it does in Hugo, on the moderation and goodwill demonstrated by the revolutionaries of 1830. The July Days were “glorious”—this is the implication—because the illumination of reason subdued the “hideous smile” of vengeance, molding the disorder and incoherence of insurrection, the impetuous *foule*, into an “intelligent being,” a “conscience held in common,” in short, a politics.¹² For Hugo and his ilk, the legitimacy of the July Revolution resided not in the recovery or fulfillment of 1789—the path from *le 10 août* to regicide and the Law of Suspects was one-way—but in its correction of 1789. This work of revision, as the title of one pamphlet declared, was the work of “the people”: *La Révolution de 89 et 93, seconde édition revue et corrigée par le peuple en 1830*.¹³

Hugo's conception of "the people" in 1830 had only a partial relation to Michelet's messianic vision of redemption. The two "peoples" shared a point of origin. I have little doubt, however, that Michelet would have found the essential role Hugo assigned to politics—that is, Hugo's mistrust of "the people"—dangerously contradictory, no less so than he found the principle of class struggle. Michelet's "people" was formed by instinct; "universal sympathy" animated it.¹⁴ To insist otherwise, or to insist that "the people" belonged to anything other than itself, was, for the Michelet of 1831, to push against the grain of universal history. "One cannot strictly oppose the bourgeoisie to the people," Michelet concluded, ". . . which would result in the creation of two nations."¹⁵ In the New Jerusalem, "the people" appeared undivided. It did not have enemies.

Then as now, "the people" was afflicted by semantic ambiguity. No true referent existed for it. On the one hand, "the people" was inclusive and denoted an integral body politic. In the abstract, it designated a social totality without remainder. On the other hand, "the people" was radically exclusive, rooted in the maldistribution of political power and material resources. According to this usage, "the people" formed a subset that comprised nothing but remainder; "the people" there signified the destitute, the marginal, the vanquished, the *déclassé*—in short, "the part that [had] no part."¹⁶ Neither wholly one nor the other, "the people," instead, figured the dialectical relation between the divergent social bodies for which it stood, between inclusion and exclusion, difference and equivalence, unlimited expansion and expulsion, political abstraction and sociological specificity.¹⁷ Where the one was given form by the unity it expressed—"the people" as nation—the other was contingent, unpredictable, fragmented, shapeless, *informe*.

All of which is to say that "the people" was never a thing—positive, definable almost mathematically, a unitary subject—but a provisional object of political discourse and social ideology, of identification rather than identity. Accordingly, "the people" did not make itself seen or heard by direct means; its appearance was always already mediated, always already a matter of form.¹⁸ The exception to this rule—indeed, the exception that proved the rule—lay in moments of revolt, deliberate acts of contradiction and negation, moments when, in other words, "the people" defied those who represented it or the representations to which it had hitherto been made to conform. In revolt, "the people" came forward independently on behalf of its own interests; "the people" assembled.¹⁹ In so doing, it exposed the insubstantiality of "the people" as a conceptual ideal, producing fissures in an otherwise universalizing language of political and natural rights, *les droits de l'homme et du citoyen*.

In 1830, Michelet misrecognized the object of his admiration. He later wrote of the modern bourgeoisie's determination to distinguish its position in society as a "class

apart”;²⁰ he never had much to say about the conditions of Black slaves in the colonies; he forged *La Femme* into an archetype, admirable and dependent; eventually, he conceded that “the people,” “mute by itself,” only spoke through an *homme de génie*.²¹ In his effort to wrest “the people” away from the ideologists in 1831, Michelet could not, as it were, avoid becoming one himself. His constitutive idea of the nation prefigured kinds of social experience and practice that did not exist in everyday life. A “wish-image,” then: in the July barricades Michelet sought to transcend, not illuminate, the incompleteness of the social order.²² It was an image he held fast until the June Days of 1848 confronted him with a prospect he no longer regarded as his own, one for which he could not write.²³ Riven by a cruel violence, Michelet’s “people” emerged from the catastrophe of 1848 wounded and bleeding. History lay in ruins.

In the days and weeks after the 1830 revolution, lithographs of the street fighting flowed from the presses. Together, these prints created the barricade’s first imagery. *Eh bien oui . . . ! Charbonnier est maître chez lui* is typical of the patterns of representation that quickly coalesced.²⁴ There, as nearly everywhere else, the worker embodies “the people.” Like the National Guard and the *polytechnicien*, he appears in uniform: *blouse* or *chemise blanche* with *carmagnole*, sleeves rolled up to reveal a muscular forearm, collar open to reveal a powerful breast, pants torn at the knee, a *casquette* or *chapeau mou*. Sometimes his smock is replaced by castoffs from the local garrison, ragged and piecemeal, but worn with dignity and pride. In general, he stands at center, usually behind the barricade, occasionally on the barricade; in a few instances, he builds a barricade. Whatever the scenario, the barricade, often no more than a small pile of paving stones interspersed with spars of wood, almost never provides him with cover. It operates neither as roadblock nor as entrenchment. The worker does the lion’s share of the fighting, but he never turns swinish, criminal, “dangerous.” He is essentially good; the violence he exercises is tempered by benevolence. Should he be offered a *verre*, he insists that it be cut (*Seulement de l’eau rougie, la petite mère*) (fig. 2); he does not steal; he fires pragmatically (*Tirez sur les chefs et les chevaux. Jeune gens . . . f . . . tez vous du reste*) (fig. 3); when his adversaries are defenseless, he protects them from the mob. The words he speaks are crude but quaint, often humorous, a *patois* which is, nevertheless, not his own (*Eh ben, as tu touché Jean Louis? Ah dam j’scais pas . . . ma foi j’ai tiré dans l’tas*) (fig. 4). In short, his goals remain modest; he is patient; he fights for a constitution (fig. 5). The thought of overstepping does not occur to him. After the battle he will lay down his weapons and return to the workshop. Only once or twice—in Honoré Daumier’s *L’Épicier* (fig. 6) and Nicolas-Toussaint Charlet’s *L’Allocution* (fig. 7)—do his intentions seem uncertain. The small heap of paving stones, in these instances, becomes a solid wall, stretching top to bottom and cutting the picture in two; behind it, the

FIG. 2 Hippolyte Bellangé, *Seulement de l'eau rougie, la petite mère* (29 Juillet 1830), 1830. Lithograph, 20.9 × 16.6 cm. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. Photo: BnF.



FIG. 3 Auguste Raffet, *Tirez sur les chefs et les chevaux. Jeune gens... f... tez vous du reste* (28 Juillet 1830), 1830. Lithograph, 19.4 × 30.9 cm. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. Photo: BnF.



FIG. 4 Hippolyte Bellangé, *Eh ben, as tu touché Jean Louis? Ah dam j'scrais pas... ma foi j'ai tiré dans l'as* (28 Juillet 1830), 1830. Lithograph, 21.2 × 17.1 cm. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. Photo: BnF.

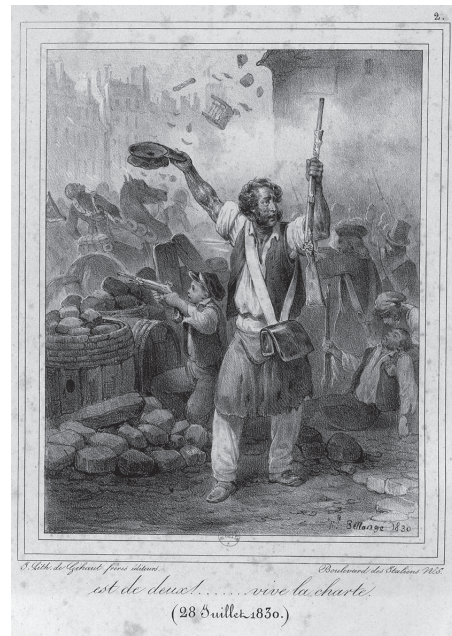


FIG. 5 Hippolyte Bellangé, *est de deux!... vive la charte!* (28 Juillet 1830), 1830. Lithograph, 21.5 × 16.8 cm. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. Photo: BnF.

insurgé readies his next move. The graffito on Charlet's wall reads: "A good place to die for the Nation."

Almost as a rule, painters took their lead from the *imprimeries*, repeating or adapting the forms of the lithographers whose prints had been circulating in the streets of Paris for months. Nearly fifty paintings of the July barricades were shown at the Salon of 1831. The new king, Louis-Philippe I, had given instructions that any submission dealing with the revolution be accepted; he wished to have the two—the barricade and the so-called July Monarchy—appear indivisible. For the most part the jury complied.²⁵ Two small paintings by Philippe-Auguste Jeanron, an unknown at the time, were nevertheless rejected; neither of them has survived. We are told that the first, 1830, depicted a worker wounded on a barricade, and that the second, 1831, showed the same man dying in his garret, "not on account of his wounds," Victor Schoelcher adds, "but on account of his dreadful poverty."²⁶ Not only had Jeanron violated the terms of the official mythology; he had reimagined the *trait d'héroïsme* as tragedy. Together, the two paintings revealed the revolution's limits and discrepancies. Therefore, they had to go. The future, if it was to be figured at all, needed to look something more like Jeanron's third entry, *Les Petits Patriotes* (fig. 8), whose smoking, pensive rascals, decked out in



FIG. 6 Honoré Daumier, *L'Épicier qui n'était pas bête...* (DR 7), 1830. Lithograph, 20.4 × 17.1 cm. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. Photo: BnF.



FIG. 7 Nicolas-Toussaint Charlet, *L'Allocution (28 juillet 1830)*, 1830. Lithograph, 25.6 × 32.9 cm. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. Photo: BnF.



FIG. 8 Philippe-Auguste Jeanron, *Les Petits Patriotes*, 1831. Oil on canvas, 100 × 80 cm. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Caen. Photo © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, New York (Daniel Arnaudet).

a gendarme's bicorne and a lancer's shako, "playing with a charming gravity at being soldiers in July," seemed at ease with their "modest historical dimensions."²⁷ After all, one of them is tuckered out. Critics found Jeanron's masquerading *enfants* delightful. They did not detect in the image of youth a question about who the future was for. The barricade they saw had the appearance of a lookout, its *chef*, standing straight, peering beyond the picture rather than into it—rather, that is, than at the wreckage and death that come even with victory. He is a *sentinelle* on "the day after the battle."²⁸

Of all the barricade pictures exhibited in 1831, none proved more momentous, none more admired or more reviled, than Eugène Delacroix's *Le 28 juillet 1830: La Liberté guidant le peuple* (fig. 9). A large, imposing work—Delacroix famously imagined that the canvas, at 260 by 325 centimeters, could serve as just compensation for his absence from the street fighting—*La Liberté guidant le peuple* invested the July Days with world-historical importance, on par with the Revolution of 1789 and the Greek Wars of Independence.²⁹ No one mistook the painting for charming. No one called it modest or delightful. No one found it assuring.³⁰ Nevertheless, several critics did see something of Jeanron's *Petits Patriotes* in Delacroix's *grande machine*. Partly the resemblance was technical; neither painting put the world in (perspectival) order. But the critics who raised the issue—Gustave Planche, Barthélémy Hauréau, Schoelcher, all of them friends and allies, all of them favorably disposed—were largely unconcerned with faulty drawing. What mattered, for them, was the way Jeanron and Delacroix brought the revolution up close and how the disproportion of fore- and middle ground—the *enfants* and the cleaning crew, the crowd around Liberty and the one behind—heightened the effect.³¹ Everywhere else, the revolution, fitted to the format of a battle scene, happened at a distance. Either that, or it moved, virtually, into the picture (figs. 10–11).

In defiance of the norm, Jeanron has one of his *petits patriotes* stare us down. He angles the wooden spar of the barricade such that it appears to transgress the picture plane, its near edge, moreover, red with blood. Our distance from this barricade is measured by the width of a single paving stone. Should we attempt to enter the picture, moving past the wooden spar and the stagelike barricade it supports, we quickly run up against the sharpened corner of a massive building, a solid block of stone unbroken by doors or windows. *Les Petits Patriotes* works hard to keep us to one side. It does not want us to inhabit a world that has fallen.

Delacroix activates the illusion of proximity his painting shares with Jeanron's. He directs the charge Liberty leads toward us and crops his picture at top, left, and right, as if to let us know how much time we have to get out of the way. He then fills the painting's shallow foreground with corpses: a worker, nearly entirely naked except for his *chemise* and a single blue sock; a National Guard, his uniform splayed open, one boot missing; a *cuirassier*, his body severed by the painting's right edge. We are made



FIG. 9 Eugène Delacroix, *Le 28 juillet 1830: La Liberté guidant le peuple*, 1831. Oil on canvas, 260 × 325 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris. Photo © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, New York (Michel Urtado).

FIG. 10 Joseph Beaume and Charles Mozin, *Attaque de l'Hôtel de Ville de Paris, le 28 juillet 1830*, 1831. Oil on canvas, 145 × 210 cm. Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles. Photo © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, New York (Gérard Blot).

FIG. 11 Hippolyte Lecomte, *Combat de la rue de Rohan*, 1831. Oil on canvas, 43 × 60 cm. Musée Carnavalet, Paris. Photo: CCo Paris Musées / Musée Carnavalet—Histoire de Paris.





FIG. 12 Théodore Géricault, *Le Radeau de la Méduse*, 1819. Oil on canvas, 491 × 716 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris. Photo © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, New York (Michel Urtado).

to peer into the hollow, black depth of the *cuirassier's* shako, whose nearness is matched only by lifeless hands and feet. *La Liberté guidant le peuple* takes Théodore Géricault's *Radeau de la Méduse* (fig. 12) and rotates it 180 degrees, the latter's raft now transfigured in the barricade, the *sénégalais* crowning its far end transformed into Marianne, the surging, wall-like wave that threatens to capsize Géricault's makeshift vessel vaporized and diffused, the smoke of gunfire at the moment of victory.³² Shapeless and expanding, this nimbus bred of civil war advances with the crowd, grows thicker with the crowd, its density intensified rather than alleviated by the distant—too distant!—view of the city. If we can make out the towers of Notre-Dame, dappled with blue, white, and red, it is so that we can put this scene in context. When the tricolor was displayed from their heights on the twenty-eighth, everyone knew who had won. History drives on in *La Liberté guidant le peuple*, as it does in *Les Petits Patriotes*, not toward some fictive horizon deep in the picture space but one located somewhere in our space, somewhere behind us or to our left. The shift in direction has a profound effect: it reorients the relation between the revolution and the sense of time its image captures. The two paintings figure the limits of picturing; they put us in contact with the revolution. We

share its ground. The difference between the two works is that Jeanron's painting stays still. That is its modesty.

Like nearly every other painter—in this regard, Jeanron remains exceptional—Delacroix drew freely from the lithographers, reprising forms and iconographies that, by 1831, had already codified the revolution's image: the same low-lying barricade constructed with paving stones and spars of wood, the same *dramatis personae*—workers in *chemise* or *blouse*, gamins and *polytechniciens* and National Guards, a young bourgeois, probably a student, in *haut-de-forme* and *redingote*. Only now “the people” faces out. The *polytechnicien* falls back into the crowd, a mere head and bicorne among the pack; the National Guard lies dead across the foreground, a different kind of raw material for the barricade; the gamin brandishes two pistols. The countenance “the people” thus presented—more *travailleur* than *homme du peuple*—was not one the bourgeois of 1831 wished to look at.³³ The *Journal des artistes* had one worker speak the offense to another: “I'd really like to know why there are only gamins in *Liberty*, two or three workers, and an odd amphibian who has an appearance I can't make sense of at all. Was this rabble, as they say, all that was there during these famous days?” “Tell me, where'd the artist find these lowlifes,” his companion responds. “Who said we were all as ugly as Cossacks? You'd really have to be steaming mad to go looking for them when so many fine folks were in the crowds.” Smearred with mud, even one's *semblable* starts to resemble a savage; top hats, too, become *canaille* should the environment dictate.

Real impropriety, however, belonged to the half-naked, working-class woman in whom this “people” saw itself (fig. 13). The exchange continues:

Say . . . funny thing about the painting: the virago holding the flag, doesn't she have only one leg? How convenient for climbing barricades!

And her bosom, it's entirely naked and filthy! How obscene! You know the fulsome Louise, whom we rolled to the Stock Exchange on a cannon . . . she was turned all the way around and even then didn't have the gall to strip down to her waist.

They say she's an allegorical figure.

Allegory explains little. Take the dead man rotting at the foot of the barricade. I'd like to know who was despicable enough to take his pants and his sock, and to make a cravat out of his shirt. Is he allegorical too?³⁴

The dialogue is satire; written *en poissard*, it is meant to split “the people” in two. Its bias and tendentiousness are explicit. Yet as satire, the dialogue points toward a distinctive quality of Delacroix's painting. The problem for Delacroix's detractors is not that *Liberty* disobeys the conventions of allegorical personification; it is *how* she disobeys.



FIG. 13 Eugène Delacroix, detail of *La Liberté guidant le peuple* (fig. 9). Photo © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, New York (Michel Urtado).

She presents the necessary signs of abstraction: female nudity, stolid face in profile, a *bonnet rouge*, arm and hand raised and clutching a tricolor. And yet these signs, which distance Liberty's body, appear inseparable from their opposites: exposed breasts that are "concrete and sensual," a dress made of "rough proletarian cloth," a "businesslike musket," passages of darkened pigment that easily read as dirt or hair, a tricolor that is not whole.³⁵ Delacroix's Liberty is shot through with competing signifiers—a missing leg, class, nakedness, time—and these discrepancies render her non-self-identical, a refractory combination of political ideal and female flesh. She is one and the other, "allegory appearing in one place, on one particular day."³⁶ Thus, she is neither. And once the metaphor falters, once the pure referent blackens with gunpowder and sex and death, the conditionality of this referent becomes irrepressible. A pantless, sockless corpse rotting in the street might be allegory, too; a *chemise* might tidy up into a *cravate*.

“Is this an ode? Or is it satire?” Schoelcher inquired.

Is it Pindar celebrating Hieron’s triumph? Or is it Horace reproaching Paris for his cowardice? The blood which flows abundantly, the cracked skulls, the figures soiled with dirt and blood, these mature old men who defile the minds of children, and this improvised hero who deposes with dull eyes, sunken cheeks, and blue lips, having spent her life in the cabaret, drunk and hideously debauched—is this a satire of combat, mocking the victory and the price it cost? Or are we to believe in the joyful and celestial expression of this allegorical figure, this vigorous and young Liberty who dominates the entire composition, who soars over this scene of murder and misery like an angel with wings outstretched? If I must speak my piece, at the risk of error and foolish conjecture, I’ll say that I see in the painting incontestable traces of both of these opposed sentiments: ode and satire, enthusiasm and contempt, admiration and disgust, aspiration toward a better future and, at the same time, a bitter and grievous recollection of the past!³⁷

Schoelcher is right: *La Liberté guidant le peuple* does not settle into a single system of representation. “The people” in front moves one way; “the people” behind moves another. *La Liberté guidant le peuple* crosses frames of reference. It is ode and it is satire. Neither genre holds sway nor sublates the other. For Schoelcher, ode and satire—allegory and history, “the people” as nation and “the people” as mob—appear in Delacroix’s painting as antinomies, opposing “sentiments” with distinctive temporalities. Odes illuminate the future, he says, and satires the past. A “dialectical error” therefore organizes the painting, Schoelcher concludes, and Delacroix’s allegory, a “living type,” “an odd amphibian,” embodies the resulting paradox.³⁸ Yet it is not Liberty who, in the end, faces out from this deadlocked present. Her “joyful and celestial expression” looks right. In Delacroix’s image of the barricade, it is the *canaille* that miraculously emerges from the depths.

When the Salon closed on September 8, the minister of the interior, Casimir Périer, purchased *La Liberté guidant le peuple* and, despite the painting’s ambiguities, had it put on display in the Musée royal.³⁹ By 1832, however, the painting was locked away in storage. I suspect the revolt of Lyons’s *canuts* in November, a four-day battle triggered by the refusal of manufacturers to regulate the price of silk and hence stabilize wages, informed the decision.⁴⁰ The special status of *La Liberté guidant le peuple* had nevertheless already been sealed: “the birth of an idea,” Théophile Thoré later said of the picture, “[was] likewise the birth of a generation.”⁴¹ For the next two decades (indeed, up until our present day), one could not imagine the revolution or address the revolution’s promises and betrayals without recalling Delacroix’s painting.⁴² Even in absence,

La Liberté guidant le peuple shaped the meaning of revolution in the nineteenth century. The persistence with which Delacroix's painting did so—as an object of emulation, as foil, as limitation—is what the following chapters go on to describe.

Postscriptum

In the spring of 1848, after the February Revolution toppled the July Monarchy, Jeanron, whom the Provisional Government appointed directeur général des Musées nationaux, pulled *La Liberté guidant le peuple* out of the shadows. Once again Delacroix's painting could be aligned with the myth of revolution. Once again, its ambiguities proved inconvenient. By June, the Second Republic had splintered, and the “popular masses,” newly christened “the industrial proletariat,” (re)formed as a “class apart”—“a nation within the nation.”⁴³ They pled: *Le pain ou la mort!* Thousands fought to the death that summer, after which *La Liberté guidant le peuple* disappeared. Worker and bourgeois marched off in different directions. No more did they appear as two halves of “the people” dreaming of wholeness.⁴⁴