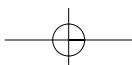


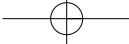
Christine Riding

Staging The Raft of the Medusa

Knowledge of the shipwreck of the *Medusa*, which occurred in July 1816, is at present largely predicated on knowledge of Géricault's painting (Figure 1). But this was not the case in the years immediately following the event. During the exhibition of *The Raft of the Medusa* in London in 1820, a reviewer in the *Globe* newspaper stated that 'The story of the shipwreck of the *Medusa*, with all its attendant horrors, is fresh in every body's mind.'¹ However, for three years – while there was indeed an accumulation of press reports, survivor accounts and pamphlets to refer to – there was no significant visual response to the shipwreck in the form of a painting before the opening of the Paris Salon in August 1819. This seems also to be true of the theatre and any other forms of entertainment. Yet in 1820 three separate spectacles on the subject of this shipwreck were available to the British public, all based, or claiming to be based, on the narrative of two raft survivors, Henri Savigny and Alexandre Corréard, first published in French in November 1817 and in English in April 1818.² These 'spectacles' were Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa*, exhibited at the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, London, from 12 June to 30 December 1820, William Thomas Moncrieff's nautical melodrama, *The Shipwreck of the Medusa: Or, The Fatal Raft!*, at the Royal Coburg Theatre (now the Old Vic) from 29 May to 28 June, and Messrs Marshalls' *Grand Marine Peristrophic Panorama of the Shipwreck of the Medusa French Frigate with the Fatal Raft*, first presented in the Pavilion in Prince's Street, Edinburgh from November 1820 to January 1821, before arriving in Dublin from 17 February to 9 June of that year, where it clashed with the onward tour of Géricault's *Medusa* (shown at the 'Rotunda', 5 February to 31 March 1821). The panorama came to London in 1823, displayed from 1 December at the Great Room, Spring Gardens, as 'the French panorama of the Shipwreck of the Medusa'.³ Moncrieff's play was revived at the Royal Coburg Theatre in 1827, and crossed the Atlantic to be adapted and performed in 1837 at the Bowery and Franklin theatres in New York City.⁴

Although Géricault's painting and the Marshalls' panorama appear to be unique versions in their medium on the subject, Moncrieff's melodrama was the first of three theatrical productions staged in Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century, two of which were premiered in Paris in 1839: *Le Naufrage de la Méduse*, a play in five acts, by Louis-François Charles Desnoyer, first performed at the Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique on 27 April, and a musical/opera of the same title, in four acts, composed by Auguste Pilati, first performed at the Théâtre de la Renaissance on 31 May. While all these spectacles were faithful, to varying degrees, to the events of the original shipwreck – with the authors of the theatrical versions largely confining





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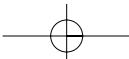


Figure 1. Théodore Géricault, *The Raft of the Medusa*, 1819, oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre. Photograph RMN

themselves to the fact of the *Medusa* being shipwrecked, after which a raft was built – they were all connected by the painting through plagiarisms or the performance of tableaux, and thereby engaged, consciously or not, with Géricault’s singular interpretation and artistic vision/intentionality. It is the interrelationship between the various spectacles and venues that is the focus of this article.

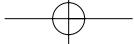
Painting versus panorama: *The Raft of the Medusa* as entertainment

But for the opportunity of an all-expenses-paid exhibition in Britain, the painting’s destiny – it remained unsold at the close of the Paris Salon – was to be rolled, stored and unseen.⁵ The events surrounding the display of *The Raft of the Medusa* in London and Dublin were the focus of Lee Johnson’s article in the *Burlington Magazine* in 1954.⁶ From that point, the exhibition at the Egyptian Hall – a diverse gallery cum auction house – has been appraised by historians as ‘a fairly prosaic opportunity’, with the proprietor William Bullock characterized as an entrepreneur and showman, ‘une espèce de Barnum’ to use Henri Houssaye’s description from 1879.⁷ Johnson comments that ‘from the start, the exhibition was planned on a popular level’, and promoted ‘to attract a large and undiscriminating clientèle’, his evidence resting on the character of Bullock and the Egyptian Hall’s ‘unaesthetic



permanent attractions', the newspaper advertisements which focused on the size of the canvas and the subject's 'anecdotal value' and finally the 'undistinguished character' of the lithograph produced by Géricault and his friend Nicolas-Toussaint Charlet as 'a souvenir illustration'.⁸ Of course exhibiting fine art as a commercial venture in rented spaces such as the Egyptian Hall had its detractors at the time. Accusations of crass commercialism were supported by similar evidence set out by Johnson. In 1820, for example, Benjamin Robert Haydon exhibited his vast canvas *Christ's Triumphal Entrance into Jerusalem* at the Egyptian Hall.⁹ Blaming the apathy of the government and public bodies towards history painters, the *London Magazine* described the artist as reduced to advertising himself like a 'quack doctor' through 'Descriptive catalogues, advertisements, and posting bills' in order to 'squeeze support from the shillings of the people'.¹⁰ This standpoint, transferred to the London exhibition of *The Raft of the Medusa*, has important repercussions for examining the concurrent exhibitions in Dublin of the painting and panorama. As Stephen Oettermann has argued (using the same 'evidence' as Johnson) the '[Egyptian Hall] exhibition was organized like a panorama' the result of which was 'huge crowds, among whom few were connoisseurs of art'.¹¹ Bernard Comment even stated that *The Raft of the Medusa* was 'exhibited at sites traditionally reserved for panoramas and dioramas'.¹² This is not true of the Egyptian Hall. Panoramic backdrops were used as scene-setters for displays (see Figure 2), but panoramas as distinct entertainments were not included in the venue's programme until the mid-1840s,¹³ and the Diorama was first shown in Regent's Park, London in September 1823.¹⁴ However, in its relatively short existence (i.e. from 1812), William Bullock had taken steps to establish the Egyptian Hall as a venue for displaying fine art, including the creation of a purpose-built exhibiting gallery (the Roman Gallery) and temporary exhibitions of large-scale history paintings, the first example being *The Judgment of Brutus* by the French artist Guillaume Guillon-Lethière, in 1816 (see Figure 3).¹⁵ Crucially, not one review of Géricault's painting in London betrays any confusion or concern about public perceptions of the work (or indeed fine art in general) in the context of this particular venue.¹⁶ On the contrary, the reviewer in the *Globe* noted that *The Raft of the Medusa* was the third 'historical work from the continental school' exhibited at the Hall, each 'a favourable specimen to convey ... the modern station of French art'; and the *Literary Gazette* went further, stating that 'great praise' was due to Bullock 'for procuring us such opportunities for examination and comparison of the two national schools; if he continues to bring over chefs d'œuvre [sic] of French painters, he will do as good a thing as could be done to advance British art. Emulation is a noble teacher.'¹⁷ But while Lee Johnson concedes that, despite Bullock's 'popularist agenda' (as he sees it), 'there is strong evidence that ... the [*Raft of the Medusa*] exhibition attracted the most distinguished attention from critics and the higher ranks of society',¹⁸ Oettermann makes the following unsubstantiated statement:

The sensational success of an ordinary (although large) painting can be explained only in terms of the preceding panorama boom, which had been designed for a mass



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Figure 2. Thomas Rowlandson, *Mr Bullock's Exhibition of Laplanders*, 1822, aquatint on paper, Guildhall Library, Corporation of London

audience and taught the general public to accept a certain kind of art. People who went to see *The Raft of the Medusa* transferred the behaviour and mode of seeing they had learned in panoramas to the flat picture; they treated it like a section of a circular painting, and it was occasionally discussed in such terms.¹⁹

What does Oettermann mean by a 'mass audience'? And what evidence does he have that visitors treated Géricault's painting as if it were a section of a panorama? If we take the Royal Academy annual exhibition as an example of a 'purer' environment within which to view fine art, we find a 'mass audience' of over 90,000 visitors within a period of approximately two months by 1822.²⁰ The Egyptian Hall exhibition attracted an estimated 40,000 visitors in six and half months and Haydon's *Christ's Triumphal Entry* had 31,000 visitors in a similar period.²¹ Given that the one shilling entrance charge was, as noted by Giles Waterfield and C. S. Matheson, sufficient to exclude the 'lower orders' from public exhibitions of art (there was the same charge at the Egyptian Hall and panorama exhibitions) I would suggest that the audience for Géricault's painting constituted a large proportion of those who habitually attended Somerset House.²² David Solkin has recently argued that 'Ostensibly designed as a showcase for the laudable achievements of the British School, and as an engine for the edification and improvement of society at large, the [Royal Academy] exhibitions were – all denials to the contrary – a doubly commercial

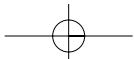
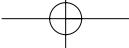




Figure 3. Anonymous, 'Roman Gallery or exhibition rooms', line engraving, reproduced in [William Bullock], *A Descriptive Synopsis of the Roman Gallery (in the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly) ... Including the Picture of the Judgement of Brutus Upon his Sons ...*, 1816, London. Photograph courtesy British Library

enterprise, operating as both a *highly profitable spectacle and a market place for expensive luxury goods* [my emphasis].' Solkin concludes that most visitors to Somerset House 'came simply to be entertained'.²³ So, was there, in this context, an appreciable difference between the Royal Academy (apart from its grandiose surroundings and the cachet of its royal associations) and the Egyptian Hall as venues for fine art, or the expectations of the publics who frequented them?

Johnson's article also established the assumption that the exhibition of Géricault's painting was a relative failure (in visitor numbers) in Dublin because of the competition posed by the Marshalls' panorama, which, the argument goes, presented a more comprehensive entertainment of 10,000 square feet of painted canvas, a printed description, seating, music, artificial lighting and heating.²⁴ Perhaps most significant for this interpretation, as Richard Altick has noted, was that the Marshalls 'had the inestimable advantage over Géricault of providing a running pictorial narrative of the dreadful sequence of events, whereas the French painter could portray only one moment'.²⁵ Thus, given that the 'majority of people still knew the difference between an ordinary painting and panorama', according to Oettermann, 'they instinctively preferred the latter'.²⁶ But the exhibition in Dublin was not a straightforward competition between a painting and a panorama on the same subject, which admittedly may have dissuaded some visitors from viewing both. The peristrophic or moving panorama used by the

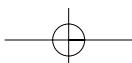


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Marshalls was a huge piece of painted canvas rolled onto a spool, which was fed vertically across a proscenium onto an empty spool on the other side. Each scene (or 'view', as they are described in the accompanying description) in isolation and, in effect, framed by the proscenium, would have had the appearance, in very general terms, of a large-scale easel painting such as Géricault's *Medusa*.²⁷ 'View V', the final scene of the panorama, showed the sighting of a ship by the remaining raft survivors, that is, the same moment depicted in *The Raft of the Medusa*.²⁸ While Géricault considered a number of events in Savigny and Corréard's narrative, he focused on the passage describing the first sighting of the brig the *Argus*, which occurred only hours prior to the actual rescue:

On the 17th, in the morning, the sun appeared entirely free from clouds; after having put up our prayers to the Almighty, we divided among us, a part of our wine; every one was taking with delight his small portion, when a captain of infantry looking towards the horizon, descried a ship, and announced it to us by an exclamation of joy: we perceived it was a brig; but it was at a very great distance; we could distinguish only the tops of the masts. The sight of this vessel excited in us, a transport of joy which it would be difficult to describe; each of us believed his deliverance certain, and we gave a thousand thanks to God; yet, fears mingled with our hopes: we straitened [sic] some hoops of casks, to the end of which we tied handkerchiefs of different colours. A man, assisted by us all together, mounted to the top of the mast and waved these little flags. For about half an hour, we were suspended between hope and fear; some thought they saw the ship become larger, and others affirmed that its course carried it from us: these latter were the only ones whose eyes were not fascinated by hope, for the brig disappeared.²⁹

Géricault's choice of moment was relatively obscure in the context of both Savigny and Corréard's lengthy and eventful text and the political ramifications of the *Medusa* shipwreck and was not, I would suggest, the obvious selection for the final scene of a panorama purporting to narrate the story. Why not paint the actual rescue, or the arrival of the raft's survivors in Senegal, which includes a description of the courtesy and compassion of a group of British officers, in direct contrast to the behaviour of the French? Surely this would be a gratifying conclusion for a British audience? (Both events were illustrated in the third edition of Savigny and Corréard's narrative.) Indeed the fifth scene of the panorama (the advertisement in Dublin specifies the final scene not as the fifth but the sixth, suggesting the addition of another) is the only one dealing directly with the events on the raft after it was abandoned. And the text in the panorama's accompanying description makes clear that the scene itself, with figures 'the size of life', resembles Géricault's composition significantly in certain elements not mentioned in Savigny and Corréard's text – itself largely devoid of precise details. These include the signalling figure standing on the cask, supported by another survivor, and the central positioning and associated actions of Savigny and Corréard.³⁰ The text also resembles details and expressions within Bullock's text and is even prefaced with the same quotation (albeit truncated) from Robert Southey's 'The Voyage' from his *Madoc* (1805).³¹ This suggests two possibilities as far as the likelihood of Géricault's painting influencing the panorama is concerned: that the Marshalls saw the original canvas or the numerous available engravings



after it (most likely the one Géricault executed for the London exhibition) and that they certainly read a copy of Bullock's description (*The Raft of the Medusa* was on public exhibition from 12 June, and the panorama opened in Edinburgh on 12 November).³² By incorporating the painting's composition into the panorama, the Marshalls cancelled out Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa* as a separate and exclusive exhibition experience.

The Salon and the Egyptian Hall: one painting, different perspectives

In 1972, Lorenz Eitner opined that 'Devoid of political implications for the general British public', Géricault's painting was 'appreciated by them for the sake of its subject [that is, in showing the last remaining survivors on the raft], as much for the "power of art and ability of the artist"'.³³ While it is impossible, given the paucity of evidence, to state just how 'the general British public' appreciated *The Raft of the Medusa*, published critical responses do give the impression of greater clarity and focus than those in Paris, in appreciating the painting as a 'work of art' rather than as a political statement or reportage. Reviews dwell on the subject (in particular the challenge it posed to the artist) and the success and failures of Géricault's response to it, and position the painting in the context of contemporary French art, largely agreeing that the artist had 'broken the trammels of [Jacques-Louis David's] system' and had produced a work of significance and originality.³⁴ However, the exhibition experiences at the Paris Salon and the Egyptian Hall differed significantly, beyond the greater political relevance of the *Medusa* controversy which inevitably influenced critical responses in Paris. At the Salon, *The Raft of the Medusa* was one (albeit the largest) of 100 large-scale paintings out of a collective total of over 1,200 easel works. In London, the painting was the star attraction. Unlike other large subject paintings presented in the Salon's printed catalogue with specific titles and a short description, Géricault's painting was given the generic title of 'Scène de naufrage'.³⁵ At the Egyptian Hall, the newspaper advertisements and 15-page printed description, which included a summary of the events of the shipwreck and a description of the painting itself, gave the specific context and the moment depicted. At the Salon, the painting was hung high in the Louvre's Salon Carré, over the entrance to the long gallery, thus occupying the wall space traditionally reserved for history painting, but surrounded, frame to frame, by other works of art. As Solkin noted, the Royal Academy employed a similar 'cheek by jowl' hanging policy, which elicited complaints from contemporary observers that 'the setting made it impossible to give individual works of art the close attention they deserved'.³⁶ This must also have been true of the Salon. In 1816, Bullock described the Roman Gallery at the Egyptian Hall, where *The Raft of the Medusa* was exhibited, as an 'apartment ... sixty feet in length, by twenty-seven feet in breadth, and is of proportionate height'.³⁷ At 24 feet by 18, Géricault's painting must have been placed low, perhaps within a few feet of the ground (especially given its status as an exhibit) and without doubt dominated (if not overwhelmed) the rest of the room, hung 'with about two hundred Cabinet and Gallery Pictures, chiefly by eminent Masters of the Old School'.³⁸ The significance of the hanging height in terms of compositional legibility and artistic intention – given the manner in which the

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raft itself is contrived to 'project' into the viewer's plain, thus blurring the line between spectator and participant – is demonstrated by the lowering of *The Raft of the Medusa* during the Salon exhibition at the behest of Géricault.³⁹ As Eitner has noted, the Salon of 1819 'was one of the last uncontested manifestations by the pupils of David and his many imitators and vulgarizers, who constituted what was called the French School'.⁴⁰ And, as the most significant Salon since the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy after the Napoleonic Wars, the official art there reflected the change of government, with royal and religious/biblical subjects ousting imperial and outstripping classical ones.⁴¹

Within this loaded artistic and spatial context *The Raft of the Medusa* was compared, contrasted and judged. And in this context, the novelty of Géricault's subject, interpretation and formal innovations would have been all the more striking. Thus the criticisms at the Salon concerning the painting and suggestions for its improvement, summarized by Eitner as about its 'somber monochromy, its inappropriate monumentality [as a genre subject], its lack of an "interesting" narrative' and 'mistakes in the choice of dramatic moment' are consequently more complex than simply denoting political or artistic prejudices.⁴² Indeed complaints concerning the narrative and choice of dramatic moment are viewed by subsequent commentators, with the benefit of hindsight and detachment from the *Medusa* controversy itself, as evidence of a lack of understanding concerning artistic intention and ambition.⁴³ But given that most reviewers in 1819 had little difficulty in discerning the *Medusa* shipwreck as the generic subject/ inspiration, the general events of which would have been known to all the reviewers (if not the Salon visitors in general), one might forgive them for thinking that Géricault had selected a relatively obscure moment of hoped-for rescue, in comparison to more politically charged and *Medusa*-specific episodes, in particular the abandonment of the raft by those in command.

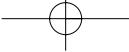
While it is beyond the scope of this article to detail Géricault's approximations with and departures from Savigny and Corréard's text, and the bearing these may have had on spectator reactions, I will demonstrate my point with the line from the *Medusa* narrative quoted above: 'each of us believed his deliverance certain, and we gave a thousand thanks to God'. In the painting, Géricault de-emphasizes the act of praying, the signifier of the survivors' belief/hope in a providential delivery (as described by the authors) by placing the only praying man in the absolute background, thus subverting the viewer's expectation of a scene of potential deliverance (after all, most attendees at the Paris Salon would have known that the men represented in the painting survived). This serves not only to bring to prominence the sheer physical effort of a group of men attempting to save *themselves* by signalling towards the ship but also the uncertainty they feel in the outcome. As Savigny and Corréard stated, 'fears mingled with our hopes'. In this context, the dramatic force of *The Raft of the Medusa* derives from its representation of perpetual suspense. In parallel, earlier studies for the final composition depict the *Argus* clearly visible on the horizon (see Figure 4). But as the project developed, the ship receded into the far distance, thus exaggerating the disparity in scale between the ship and the raft survivors, between, Géricault



Figure 4. Théodore Géricault, *The Raft of the Medusa*, first sketch, 1819, oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre. Photograph RMN

seems to suggest, their hope and their reality.⁴⁴ The first sighting of the brig *Argus* is in fact the last of a number of sightings and 'good omens' described by Savigny and Corréard that were experienced and interpreted by the raft survivors. All of these turn out to be illusions, including the *Argus*, which (to quote the authors' significant choice of word) 'disappeared'. Géricault's painting – described by Bullock and utilized by the Marshalls, Moncrieff and others – thus represents not the momentary delay prior to inevitable rescue but the ultimate ordeal of the shipwrecked men, frozen for eternity, the direct consequence of which, as Savigny and Corréard bitterly noted, was despair: 'From the delirium of joy, we fell into profound despondency and grief; we envied the fate of those whom we had seen perish at our side'.

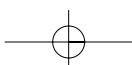
Without the benefit of a printed description or specific title, Géricault's painting undoubtedly challenged the assumptions and expectations of its viewers at the Salon (that is, in illustrating one scene from a sequence of events with a known outcome), as is demonstrated by the response of Count O'Mahoney, printed in *Le Conservateur*:



Nothing can mitigate these horrors. *All must die, there is no chance of salvation, since none of them raises his arms towards Him whom the winds and seas obey* [my emphasis]. Shut unto themselves, they will sink from the abyss of the waters into that of Eternity. For as they have forgotten God, so they have forgotten one another. They receive no consolation and they offer none: egoism has reached its last extreme.⁴⁵

In his discussion on the content of the Salon as influencing critical responses to *The Raft of the Medusa*, Brian Grosskurth suggests that O'Mahoney noted the emphasis on physical suffering over spiritual deliverance in part because of the juxtaposition of subjects denoting traditional Christian piety and above all those images showing life triumphing over death through divine intervention.⁴⁶ In this context, Jean-Bruno Gassies' painting (no.492, *Jésus et St.-Pierre marchant sur la mer*) showing Christ in a storm upbraiding the terrified apostle for his lack of faith – 'Homme de peu de foi, pourquoi avez-vous douté?' – may well have struck Salon visitors as pertinent to the men in Géricault's painting.⁴⁷ But the significance of O'Mahoney's comment is that Géricault's interpretation not only instils a similar state of uncertainty in the spectator as that experienced by the raft survivors, but allows or encourages a re-interpretation of the known events: the painting represents men who in reality survived, but for O'Mahoney because of their lack of Christian faith, 'All must die'. This raises the question of how Géricault's interpretation impinges on, reworks and perhaps supplants Savigny and Corréard's version of events, as demonstrated by the 'father and son' group (to be discussed later). But, equally, in attempting to textually define the moment within the original narrative, Bullock and others may be said to have diffused the dramatic power of the painting, reducing it to pictorial reportage. In fact Bullock's description conflates the events from the first sighting of the brig *Argus* to the final rescue and significantly re-emphasizes prayer as an action denoting faith in the raft survivors. In doing so, he breaks the moment of suspense and relocates Géricault's painting within a sequence of events with a known outcome: *The Raft of the Medusa* is now an unequivocal scene of impending salvation.⁴⁸

The practical reason for this reworking may be the inclusion by Géricault of the tent (centre, left) which Savigny and Corréard describe as being constructed after the raft survivors lost sight of the *Argus*.⁴⁹ This is one of a number of examples where Géricault's interpretation is made to fit the event itself. Bullock's description is the first printed account, for example, identifying three portraits within the painting, those of Savigny, Corréard and Lavallette.⁵⁰ The Marshalls' description goes further, assigning to the various figures the names of all the raft survivors listed in Savigny and Corréard's narrative, excepting Coudin, a midshipman. The purpose of 'naming', certainly in the case of the panorama, is to persuade the spectators that they are witnessing a factual and thus authentic representation. At the beginning of their description the Marshalls state that the panorama was 'executed under the immediate directions of one of the survivors' and 'the Proprietors therefore pledge themselves as to its accuracy'.⁵¹ But, despite these assurances, neither Géricault's painting nor the Marshalls' panorama is an authentic representation, which Bullock at least acknowledges in his description:



Who can hope to paint the expression of countenances worn by such varied suffering?
 ... Art has its limits which human skill cannot pass, but Imagination, like Nature,
 knows no bounds, and happy is the painter if he succeeds in only inducing in the spectator a
 frame of mind susceptible of conceiving the scene [my emphasis] which he has endeavoured
 to trace.⁵²

But perhaps the hidden agenda for the Marshalls was to disguise their debt to Géricault's painting, thus undermining it as a singular artistic response (supporting my view that, by plagiarizing the painting, the Marshalls cancelled it out as a distinct exhibit). This is above all true of a group within the composition consisting of a white-haired and bearded man who crouches, holding the outstretched body of a youth across his knee (situated in the centre foreground). Savigny and Corréard do not mention a father and son in this context, but do describe an event that occurred in the narrative before the sighting of the *Argus*, of a boy aged 12 who 'expired in the arms of Mr. Coudin, who had not ceased to show him the kindest attention'.⁵³ As noted by Eitner, the older man, depicted by Géricault as a type, was a cliché in French art of 'the father' or 'the father in despair' and it is therefore not surprising that critics at the Salon, irrespective of their familiarity with Savigny and Corréard's text, should have designated the group as 'father and son'.⁵⁴ In addition, one critic in *Le Courrier Royal* noted the group's resemblance to Joshua Reynolds' painting of Ugolino and his sons, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1773 (other critics alluded to Ugolino as part of a general response to Géricault's painting, rather than in relation to this specific group). Ugolino is a cruel and, in the context of the *Medusa* shipwreck, resonant episode from Dante's *Inferno*, involving incarceration, prolonged suffering, despair, cannibalism and death. It was thus a signifier of a number of nightmarish events, including cannibalism, which occurred on the raft. That Géricault had this episode from Dante in mind is demonstrated by a drawing he made of Ugolino in 1817 prior to executing a composition drawing with cannibalism as a theme for his painting.⁵⁵ But even though the inclusion of the group was primarily a complex and loaded artistic invention/conceit, the identification of 'the father and son' appears in Bullock's description, thus establishing the group as authentic participants on the raft: 'a young man has just expired in the arms of his aged father, the violence of whose parental grief renders him insensible to the joyful tidings which wholly engross the rest; life is no longer desirable to him, he has lost all he loved on earth, his only child is dead! and horror and despair are irrevocably fixed upon his countenance'⁵⁶

The Marshalls, having plagiarized this detail of Géricault's composition, copied the passage almost verbatim, with the exception of identifying the 'aged father' erroneously as one of the raft survivors.⁵⁷ Corréard appended a very similar description (gleaned from Bullock's text?) to an engraved version of Géricault's *The Raft of the Medusa* in the third edition (1821) of his and Savigny's narrative, in the knowledge that the 'father and son' identification was not true to their version of events (see Figure 5). For Corréard, the *Medusa* shipwreck was a live issue in 1821 and Géricault's painting, as a powerful visual testimony to the injustice for which he continued to demand correction and compensation, was not on public display. Clearly, Corréard sought to re-

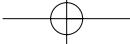


Figure 5. C. Motte after Théodore Géricault, *The Raft of the Medusa*, 1821, lithograph, reproduced in Jean-Baptiste-Henri Savigny and Alexandre Corréard, *Naufrage de la Frégate la Méduse*, 3rd Edition, Paris, Chez Corréard, plate 4. Photograph courtesy British Library

engage his readership with the event and Géricault's interpretation of it. But in the process he gave himself the contradictory task of presenting the painting as both a truthful record of the event and the product of the artist's imagination. Thus the expression of the figures 'sont énergiques et tout-à-fait conformes à la vérité historique' and 'Telle est assez fidèlement la marche de cette vaste composition, à laquelle la variété des poses et la vérité des mouvements donnent un grand caractère'.⁵⁸ But Corréard may also have grasped the opportunity to correct or re-direct Géricault's interpretation via the 'father and son' group. Perhaps the most problematic theme within the narrative, in a societal context, was cannibalism, which was certainly focused upon by those attempting to undermine Savigny and Corréard's version of events and was mentioned by Salon reviewers. In his text, Corréard expunges the 'father and son' group of any connotations of cannibalism, and emphasizes it, as indeed do Bullock and the Marshalls, as a moment of unmitigated and, more importantly, incontrovertible human tragedy and thus one guaranteed to provoke a sympathetic response in the viewing public.⁵⁹ Lord Byron's controversial 'shipwreck canto' from *Don Juan* (contemporaneous with Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa*) includes a description of a father and his dying son, which was highlighted by British reviewers as a rare passage of 'deep pathos'.⁶⁰ Significantly, it was based on an actual account of the shipwreck of the *Juno*, the author of which noted, 'This scene made an impression even on us, whose feelings were in a manner dead to the world, and almost to

ourselves, and to who[m] the sight of misery was now become habitual.⁶¹ Thus the 'father and son' motif within *The Raft of the Medusa*, invented by Géricault and 'authenticated' by Bullock, the Marshalls and Corréard, had a wider social currency as a symbol of supreme suffering and despair and thus served as a cue to the spectator for an empathetic rather than a judgemental reading of the subject.

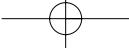
Society and national identity: Géricault, Byron and Moncrieff's melodrama

That 1819 should have produced two controversial (and seemingly independently conceived) interpretations of shipwrecks, by Géricault and by Byron, is remarkable. Thus the timing alone may explain Moncrieff's utilization of both within his *Medusa* melodrama of 1820. Clearly he aimed to exploit the dramatic potential of 'shipwreck' as a theatrical event, spurred by its integration as a mainstay of popular culture at this time. Indeed, remarking on the *Medusa* melodrama in 1830, Moncrieff acknowledged the fascination and thus marketability of 'shipwreck' in the context of sublime/gothic horror:

Tales of shipwreck possess a wild and melancholy interest: like ghost-stories, they draw us closer round the fire on long winter nights; and when we hear 'a brother sailor sing the dangers of the sea,' the rain rattling against the casement, and the wind whistling down the chimney, realize the fearful illusion, and terror pictures to the haunted imagination, the spirit of the storm.⁶²

Moncrieff's melodrama is generally held by scholars to be the first fully fledged nautical melodrama, the genre coming to maturity only in the 1820s and 1830s. And the theatre world was ever vigilant in gauging and exploiting trends and events that had captured the public's imagination. Moncrieff's choice of subject – perhaps influenced by the furore generated by Géricault's painting in 1819 or its projected exhibition in London – underlines the topicality and, I argue, the particular resonance of this shipwreck for a British public and the audience/patronage base of the Royal Coburg Theatre. But while these considerations undoubtedly drew Moncrieff to the subject, the *Medusa* disaster itself was filtered through the conventions of melodrama, which inevitably meant a drastic reworking of all but the very basic structure of Savigny and Corréard's text. Thus the play includes a cast of good and evil stereotypes – only two of whom correlate with the actual *Medusa* shipwreck – villain-crossed lovers (necessitating the inclusion of a disguised heroine, Eugenie), musical accompaniment, a nautical ballet and spectacular stage scenery, which comprised, according to the theatre's playbill, of 'Various Panoramic Views of the Ocean and Red Deserts of Zaara [sic]' and a 'View of the Raft, sailing amidst Novel and Extensive Moving Scenery, calculated to shew [sic] the HORRIBLE SITUATION OF THE SUFFERERS ON BOARD'.⁶³

From Théophile Gautier's descriptions of the Paris theatre productions it is clear that tableaux of Géricault's painting were integral to the theatrical direction from 1839.⁶⁴ In the case of Moncrieff's melodrama, performed nearly two decades previously, the adoption of a tableau is less precisely determined. In 1831, the melodrama's script (or 'acted copy' as it is described) was



published in Richardson's *New Minor Drama*, accompanied by an engraving by Mr G. Armstrong, as stated in the preface written by Moncrieff, 'from a Drawing taken in the Theatre by Mr. Seymour', which bears a resemblance to *The Raft of the Medusa*, with the signalling figure and the 'father and son' group (see Figure 6).⁶⁵ This suggests that the tableau was performed in the 1827 revival. However, as Martin Meisel has noted, the theatre playbill for 19 June 1820 (that is, a week after the opening of the Egyptian Hall exhibition) advertised additional performances of the melodrama because of:

the great anxiety expressed by many of the Patrons of this Theatre, to witness the Representation of 'THE SHIPWRECK of the MEDUSA; or, THE FATAL RAFT,' – in which the deplorable state of the surviving Crew of that Vessel on the Raft a short time previous to their Discovery & Preservation, as depicted in the Great Picture now Exhibiting in Pall Mall, 15 only remaining, after thirteen days abandonment, out of one hundred and fifty that had originally embarked, is so pathetically and correctly delineated, has determined the Proprietors to continue it, as an Afterpiece, for a few Nights longer.⁶⁶

Given the specific mention of *The Raft of the Medusa*, the subsequent two-week overlap of the theatre run and the Egyptian Hall exhibition, and the recognition factor for a proportion of the audience who may have seen Géricault's painting, it seems likely that a tableau was performed as early as 1820.

The 1828 volume of Richardson's *New Minor Drama* includes the acted copy of a burletta entitled 'A New Don Juan' by John Baldwin Buckstone.⁶⁷ The preface, again written by Moncrieff and dated May 1828, makes reference to the notoriety of Byron's *Don Juan* and his own admiration for the poet and the poem.⁶⁸ But while Buckstone omitted the shipwreck of the *Trinidadada* entirely, Moncrieff incorporated two incidents from Canto II (Stanza 74, involving the casting of lots using Julia's love letter to Juan, and Stanza 99, with the sighting and capture of a turtle, which is viewed as both food and a 'good omen') into the *Medusa* melodrama at the moment when the survivors on the raft consider cannibalism.⁶⁹ As previously stated, Moncrieff's utilization of Géricault's and Byron's work may have been simply opportune. But the playwright may also have recognized in their separate representations certain parities of theme and emphasis, a notion that permeated comparisons between painter and poet throughout the nineteenth century. In 1879, for example, Barbey D'Aurevilly suggested that 'the painter of the *Raft of the Medusa* certainly has a glorious consanguinity with the poet who has given us the anguish and afflictions of another raft, in the shipwreck of the second canto of *Don Juan*'.⁷⁰ As noted by Eitner and others, Géricault's appropriation from the 1820s as a paradigm of 'the Romantic Artist' was constructed with Byron, or the Byronic hero, in mind (both men died at a similar age in 1824). And this association has even extended to *The Raft of the Medusa* itself, described by Jules Michelet as being of Byronic inspiration.⁷¹ In fact Géricault's painting and Canto II – the so-called 'shipwreck canto' – of *Don Juan*, which in terms of subject is the most relevant potential influence on Géricault, are exact contemporaries: the first two cantos of the poem were published in July 1819, the same month that Géricault submitted his painting for exhibition. But what of D'Aurevilly's notion of 'consanguinity'?

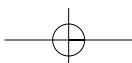


Figure 6. G. Armstrong, frontispiece to William Moncrieff, 'Shipwreck of the Medusa; or, The Fatal Raft', in Richardson's *New Minor Drama*, London: Thomas Richardson 1831. Photograph courtesy British Library

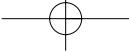


Shipwreck of the Medusa.

Jack. Hey! that shot?—hurrah! it is a boat, and we are saved.

Act III. scene 1

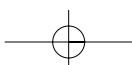
Analogies can be made between Géricault's and Byron's shipwreck representations, for example, in their monumentality of scale (the painting's dimensions and larger-than-life figures; the poem in the duration of the narrative) and the interplay between the sublime and the grotesque. And critical reactions also correlate, in stating admiration or censure. Even so, words such as 'originality', 'strength', 'energy', 'vigour', 'freedom' and 'boldness' pervade the majority of reviews, good and bad. But in the spirit of 'Ut poesis pittura', a number of British reviewers specifically described Byron and the shipwreck passage in visual artistic terms, which perhaps facilitated



the notions of commonality between the painting and the poem in the minds of subsequent commentators. The *Monthly Review* described Byron as both a painter and a writer and the *Edinburgh Review* noted that 'the best and worst part of the whole is without doubt the description of the shipwreck. As a piece of terrible painting, it is as much superior as can be to every description of the kind ... that has ever been created'.⁷² But the correlation between *The Raft of the Medusa* and *Don Juan* may also have arisen from a shared inspiration. In narrating the storm and shipwreck of the *Trinidad* in Canto II, Byron incorporated incidents from actual shipwrecks largely gleaned from John Graham Dalyell's *Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea* (1812). The suggestion has also been made that he was influenced by the *Medusa* shipwreck.⁷³ Certainly Byron, who despised the Bourbon monarchy and even refused to visit Restoration Paris, may, like Géricault, have perceived the *Medusa* story as symbolic of the tyranny of the new government and the political and social flux of post-Waterloo France and Europe as a whole. It is highly probable not only that Byron knew of the disaster through press reports but, as Peter Cochran has noted, that 'the book by Savigny and Corréard arrived on Byron's desk at an opportune moment', an opinion previously espoused by Eitner, who stated that 'it would be difficult to account otherwise for the many parallels in incident and significance between [Byron's] poem, and Géricault's picture'.⁷⁴ Byron's reference to a raft in *Don Juan* is one such incident and given the timing it would surely have resonated with British and French readers as a reference to the *Medusa*. Indeed the *New Bon Ton* magazine published a review of *Don Juan* in August 1819 stating that Byron's shipwreck passage 'is neither more nor less than the dreadful tale of the French frigate, *La Meduse*, with the horrors of the Raft related verbatim'.⁷⁵ The same assumption was made by David Carey in his review of Géricault's painting at the Paris Salon, published in the *Monthly Magazine* in June 1820, which constitutes, on current evidence, the first printed co-reference to *Don Juan* and *The Raft of the Medusa*:

The dreadful account of the 'Shipwreck of the Medusa' affords a distressing picture of calamitous and hideous circumstances to the imagination; but a painter hazards much in attempting to convey the particulars of that event to the canvas. Lord Byron has tried his able and eccentric pen on the subject, – he has succeeded in exciting disgust, more than commiseration, for the fate of the sufferers, or admiration for his own talents.⁷⁶

On the basis of fact, these assumptions are unfounded but they may reflect the topicality of the shipwreck, previously mentioned. But if the events of the Savigny and Corréard's text were condensed – the fear and confusion when the *Medusa* runs aground, the futile attempts to save the ship, the abandonment of the ship to board lifeboats and a raft, the impulse of the crew and soldiers to drink, madness, cannibalism, and so on – the shipwreck appears to correlate with *Don Juan*, although such incidents were by no means unique to the *Medusa* and arguably the most politically and socially charged elements (excepting cannibalism) – such as the incompetence of the Royalist captain, the abandonment of the raft by those in command, the bloody mutinies against the officers or the execution of the weaker survivors to save provisions – do not find parallels in the poem. If Byron omitted the episodes of



abandonment and mutiny, so, of course, did Géricault, who progressively moved away from episodes of treachery and violence between men, so evident in the early stages of Savigny and Corréard's narrative, towards a visualization of a monumental struggle to survive, or, more accurately, of man's will to survive. Equally in *Don Juan*, human beings on the whole do not react to each other but to the external and internal forces of nature, against which they seem to be largely powerless. The execution of Pedrillo to be consumed by the shipwreck survivors is, of course, a violent act by man against man. But the act, as Byron presents it, is not gratuitous but expedient. As he informs the reader, 'None in particular had sought or planned it;/ T'was nature gnawed them to this resolution' (II, 75, v-vi). With the raft survivors cast as hapless victims of circumstance, Géricault also suggests that none of their actions were sought or planned.

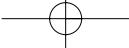
In his discussion on ambiguity and scepticism in relation to the 'shipwreck canto', Andrew Cooper has noted that Byron 'articulates the descent [of the shipwrecked into Hell] as a series of mishaps in which hopes are raised only to be dashed'.⁷⁷ In this context, prayer, as in *The Raft of the Medusa*, becomes simply one of a number of actions or reactions acted out by desperate, dying men. The theme of 'hopes raised only to be dashed' is integral to the narrative and, of course, Géricault's interpretation. As Savigny and Corréard concluded, 'Our destiny, on the fatal raft, was to be incessantly tossed between transitory illusions and continued torments, and we never experienced an agreeable sensation without being, in a manner, condemned to atone for it, by the anguish of some new suffering, by the irritating pangs of hope always deceived'.⁷⁸ What Géricault and Byron thus visualize/realize, to use Cooper's phrase, is 'the law of attrition at sea', both physical and psychological, when, as Byron describes it, 'Famine, despair, cold, thirst, and heat had done/ Their work on them by turns' (II, 102, i-ii).⁷⁹ Doubt replaces conviction; disunity replaces common purpose. And the sighting of land or a ship at the close of their respective ordeals brings only further confusion and disbelief:

The boat made way; yet now they were so low,
They knew not where nor what they were about.
Some fancied they saw land, and some said, 'No!'
(II, 96, iii-v)

And the rest rubbed their eyes and saw a bay
Or thought they saw, and shaped their course for the shore ...
(II, 97, v-vi)

And then of these some part burst into tears,
And others, looking with a stupid stare,
Could not yet separate their hopes from fears
And seemed as if they had no further care ...
(II, 98, i-iv)

Here, then, is the 'consanguinity' between the poet and the painter in their representations of shipwreck, the resonance of which is not particularized to those experiencing the shipwrecks of the *Trinidadada* or *Medusa*, but to the human race as a whole. To quote Cooper once more, '*Don Juan* baffled



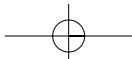
contemporaries and incurred accusations of cynicism because its first readers did not realize that Byron had transferred the locus of meaning from within the poem outside to them.⁸⁰ And in Géricault's painting, as previously noted, the raft of the *Medusa* projects into the viewer's plane, thus blurring the line between participant and spectator. In this context, the following observation by Byron, at the beginning of Canto 14, serves as an epithet to the universal significance of the poem and painting:

If from great Nature's or our own abyss
Of thought we could but snatch a certainty,
Perhaps mankind might find the path they miss ...
(XIV, 1, i–iii)

Given that Moncrieff's melodrama was created specifically to entertain the British public, his reworking of the *Medusa* shipwreck and assimilation of the painting and the poem are of particular significance. But melodrama – a theatrical genre developed in the late eighteenth century – is itself significant as a means of bringing resolution to the subject of the *Medusa* shipwreck. For Michael Booth,

The world of melodrama is a world of certainties where confusion, doubt, and perplexity are absent; a world of absolutes where virtue and vice coexist in pure whiteness and pure blackness; and a world of justice where after immense struggle and torment good triumphs over, and punishes evil. The superiority of such a world over the entirely unsatisfactory everyday world, hardly needs demonstration, and it is this romantic and escapist appeal that goes a long way to explain the enduring popularity of melodrama.⁸¹

Thus violence, physical disaster and emotional agony, mediated through the reassuringly predictable world of melodrama, are 'only a lengthy prelude to inevitable happiness and the apotheosis of virtue'.⁸² The primary means via which order and sense of community are restored is through the figure of a fearless, heroic, British sailor, Jack Gallant, the character based on the jolly, honest, jargon-speaking sailors of popular fiction. When the issue of cannibalism arises, for example, Jack rallies the survivors, which includes his naval and social 'superiors', reminding them that they have 'the hearts of human beings' and, rather than commit such an atrocity, they must accept death and take their 'passage to heaven together', a decision followed by the immediate arrival of food, divinely sent, in the shape of the turtle ('Thank God, thank God, we are for another day saved').⁸³ Thus, the episode that Byron describes as a hopeful interpretation by desperate men in a moment of supreme crisis ('They thought that in such perils more than chance/ Had sent them this for their deliverance' (II, 99, vii–viii)) becomes a providential reward for abstaining from cannibalism: the triumph, it would seem, of civilized man over barbarism. And when all hope appears to have gone, Jack elects to scuttle the raft rather than leave the survivors to a lingering, painful death, at which point a ship (one imagines providentially) appears on the horizon. In this trajectory of noble resolution and timely intervention, the inclusion of a tableau at the moment when the rescue ship is sighted is crucial in bringing



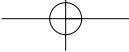
the societal chaos of *The Raft of the Medusa*, and by association *Don Juan*, to a satisfactory conclusion. Thus when Eugenie spies the ship, Jack parallels the notion of the *Argus* in the narrative and painting as an illusion, but one which speedily becomes reality, followed by certainty and salvation: 'Tis [sic] but delusion, lady. Hey! That shot! ... hurrah! it is a boat, and we are saved!'⁸⁴ And significantly, in the tableau as represented by Armstrong's engraving, Jack replaces the black figure signalling towards the *Argus* at the apex of Géricault's composition.

Clearly Jack gratified existing notions of national character, the comic/serious inference being that, had a British sailor been on board the *Medusa* in reality, the outcome would have been altogether different. As Marvin Carlson has noted in relation to the development of the Jack Tar character in nautical melodrama after the Napoleonic Wars, these 'expressions of bravery, pride, defiance, and patriotism are almost universal in such plays and compatible enough with the reputation of the victorious English navy'.⁸⁵ And identical notions of national character were evident in British reactions to the *Medusa* shipwreck itself, published in newspapers, journals and prefaces to translations of survivor accounts (with which Moncrieff seems to have been familiar), the general conclusion being that, given the courage, moral strength and sense of duty characteristic of the native seaman, no such disaster could have befallen a British ship. As one commentator observed,

It is but candour, however, to assert, that the British ... are superior to the people of any other country, in the calmness with which they face the most imminent danger, *in the fortitude with which they bear up against misfortune, and in the unanimity with which they will exert themselves for the common safety*; these qualities form, in fact, a part of the national character, from whatever cause they proceed.⁸⁶

Thus the inclusion of Jack Gallant appears to be a straightforward registering of national self-esteem and congratulation in the years following the Napoleonic War. However, the reputation of the British Navy may not have been so uncontested. In his discussion of Jane Austen and her portrayal of the Navy, Brian Southam has noted that after Trafalgar (1805) and St Domingo (1806) the naval record of containment 'was tame and unmemorable, with no engagement of such magnitude and none to provide such a stirring brew of tragedy and triumph'. The Army's success at Waterloo (1815), in contrast, 'was fresh in memory'.⁸⁷ Interestingly, Byron acknowledges this displacement in the popular perception of the Navy for the Army in Canto I of *Don Juan* (1819) which, of course, Moncrieff had read:

Nelson was once Britainna's god of war
And still should be so, but the tide has turned.
There's no more to be said of Trafalgar;
'Tis with our hero quietly inurned,
Because the army's grown more popular,
At which the naval people are concerned.
Besides the Prince is all for the land service.
Forgetting Duncan, Nelson, Howe, and Jervis.
(I, 4, i-viii)



In the *Medusa* melodrama, Jack Gallant accepts the position of boatswain on the *Medusa* because he is unemployed:

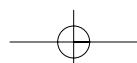
I've fought and bled for old England – I've been wrecked and lost my all, and past my life in her service, and though she neglects and deserts her brave tars just now, damn me if I'll ever desert her: she may one day reflect on our services and reward them; but whether she does or no, when the hour of peril comes and a presumptuous enemy dares to invade her shores, Old England will find, as she always has done, her best defenses in her wooden walls.⁸⁸

This passage not only explains the presence of a British sailor on a French ship, but also highlights an issue perhaps close to the hearts of Moncrieff's audience. The Royal Coburg Theatre and the Surrey Theatre (called the Royal Circus up to 1810) were located on the South Bank and had close associations with the navy and shipping in general, with off-duty (or even unemployed?) sailors attending theatre productions.⁸⁹ Thus the Royal Coburg theatre had a vested interest not only in presenting flattering portrayals of British sailors to the gratification of specific patrons, but also to give a voice to their concerns and grievances. The *Medusa* shipwreck, mediated through the melodramatic formula of sensation, certainty and resolution, not only reasserted/affirmed social conceptions and structures, but perhaps sought to reinstate the British Navy and the British sailor at the forefront of the national consciousness.

The subject of this article develops themes pursued from my curatorial involvement in an exhibition held at Tate Britain entitled Constable to Delacroix: British Art and French Romantics (2003). All quotations from Byron's Don Juan cited in this article are taken from Lord Byron, Don Juan, T. G. Stephens, E. Steffan and W. W. Pratt eds., Penguin Classics, reprinted 1996.

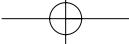
Notes

1 *The Globe*, 12 June 1820, p.3. As numerous commentators have observed, the *Medusa* was more than just another (albeit sensational) maritime disaster. In France it became a *cause célèbre*, embroiled in the complexities of Bourbon-restoration politics and tensions between the Liberal and Royalist factions, the nation's fraught colonial ambitions (the *Medusa* was the flagship of a convoy taking soldiers and official passengers to re-establish the French colony at Senegal) and, as events progressed, with the highly emotive subject of the slave trade. However, in the context of the present article, it is worth laying out here the main events concerning those abandoned on the raft, as described by Jean-Baptiste-Henri Savigny and Alexandre Corréard in *Naufrage de la frégate la Méduse*, Paris, 1817 (2nd edition 1818; 3rd, 4th, 5th editions, 1821). According to Savigny and Corréard (and history) responsibility for the catastrophe that claimed over 150 lives lay with the *Medusa*'s captain, Hugues Deroys de Chaumareys, an aristocrat recently returned from exile, and by extension the Minister of the Marine, Vicomte Dubouchage, who appointed him. Determined to exclude naval officers who had fought for Napoleon, Dubouchage made his selection on the basis of de Chaumareys' aristocratic pedigree and pro-Bourbon sympathies, not on his merits as a sea captain: at the time the *Medusa* set sail in June 1816, de Chaumareys had not served on board a French ship for twenty years. His incompetence, both in terms of seamanship and above all leadership, led to the grounding of the *Medusa* on 2 July and encouraged the panic that swept those on board. After attempts to re-float the stricken vessel, the decision was made to abandon her. Approximately 250 people made their disorganized way into small boats, leaving the rest, the vast majority of whom were ordinary soldiers, with sailors and a handful of low-ranking officers and civilians, to a makeshift raft. This, it was agreed, would be towed to safety. In the haste to get to shore, the towropes were (according to Savigny and Corréard) deliberately untied, leaving 149 men and one woman stranded. With few provisions and no navigational equipment, the situation on the raft rapidly deteriorated. Outbreaks of mutiny and acts of mindless violence occurred from the second day, and by the fourth all the survivors were practicing cannibalism. On the eighth day, in order to extend the remaining provisions, the fittest among the survivors elected to throw the badly injured and dying overboard. The final 15 men survived for another five days until their rescue by the brig the *Argus*. Five died shortly afterwards in St Louis, the colonial capital of Senegal, leaving 10 survivors of the original group.



The *Medusa* shipwreck was a national scandal before the first edition of Savigny and Corréard's narrative. After returning to France, Savigny submitted an account of the disaster to the French authorities, which was leaked to the anti-Bourbon broadsheet, the *Journal des débats* (13 September 1816). Given the events before, during and after the shipwreck, which implicated everyone from Dubouchage to de Chaumareys and the higher-ranking officers, it is not surprising that an official cover-up was attempted, including a lenient prison sentence for de Chaumareys. In view of the atrocities committed on the raft, not even the survivors were immune. Indeed a scramble ensued on all sides to save face, apportion blame and win the public relations battle. Without employment and hope of reparation from the government, Savigny and Corréard decided to collaborate on an extended narrative, which became a best seller. At precisely the same time, Théodore Géricault was searching for a contentious contemporary subject to monumentalize on canvas. By early 1818 he had made the acquaintance of Savigny and Corréard and it was their emotive account of the shipwreck that inspired his painting.

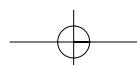
- 2 Jean-Baptiste-Henri Savigny and Alexandre Corréard, *Narrative of a Voyage to Senegal in 1816, Comprising an Account of the Shipwreck of the Medusa*, London, 1818. The first account of the shipwreck in English was published in *The Times*, 11 September 1816, that is, before the publication of Savigny's account in the *Journal des débats*. The account was followed up by another, 'Shipwreck of the Meduse French Frigate (from the Journal des Débats)', in *The Times*, 17 September 1816, p.2.
 - 3 The advertisements, printed in the *Literary Gazette* from 29 November, state that the *Medusa* panorama was shown in the 'Lower Room', the main spectacle being the Marshalls' peristrophic panorama of the Battles of Ligny, Les Quatre Bras and Waterloo (*Literary Gazette*, No.358, 29 November 1823, p.766).
 - 4 The Royal Coburg Theatre playbill (now in the British Library) for Tuesday 21 August 1827, states that the revival was performed only until the following Saturday, due to the availability of Thomas Potter Cooke, who played Jack Gallant in the original 1820 production. The New York productions are recorded in George C. D. Odell, *Annals of the New York Stage*, volume IV: 1834–1843, New York: Columbia University Press, 1928, pp.234–5, 239. The entries read: 'The Bowery Theatre, November 27th 1837, The Shipwreck of the Medusa, with Anderson as King Zaide, Asten as Mohammed, Jenkins as Adolph, and Mrs. Herring as Eugenia', and 'The Franklin Theatre, The Shipwreck of the Medusa presented [J. S.] Wallace as Jack Gallant, "with a hornpipe"'. The New York Public Library holds the acted copy of Moncrieff's play used by the prompt (the specific theatre is not stated) with amendments to the text, which makes clear that the melodrama was given a patriotic spin for an American audience. Thus Jack Gallant is described as a 'Yankee tar', etc.
 - 5 Lorenz Eitner, *Géricault's Raft of the Medusa*, London: Phaidon Press, 1972, p.61.
 - 6 Lee Johnson, 'The Raft of the Medusa in Great Britain', *Burlington Magazine*, vol. XCVI, August 1954, pp.249–54.
 - 7 Eitner, *Géricault's Raft*, p.62; the quotation from Houssaye is in Johnson, ibid., p.250. Nigel Leask, who describes Bullock as a 'Pickwickian entrepreneur, showman, naturalist, antiquarian, and proprietor of the Egyptian Hall' has recently offered a less trivializing assessment of his career and influence in his 'William Bullock's Mexico and the Reassertion of "Popular" Curiosity in *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770–1840*', Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, pp.299–314 (Bullock quote on p.301). The only substantial counter-argument to the description of the London exhibition of Géricault's painting as a purely commercial venture has been that posed by Albert Boime in *Art of Exclusion: Representing Blacks in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990, pp.50–64), which, in analysing *The Raft of the Medusa*, focuses on the black figure hailing the distant ship – 'the most active member of the group and ... the compositional and thematic hub of the picture' – as indicative of a provocative anti-slavery stance taken by both Géricault and raft survivor Alexandre Corréard (p.53). Thus, in Boime's opinion, the London exhibition and Géricault's subsequent plans for a monumental pendant depicting the cruelties of the slave trade' suggest that the artist was in contact with English abolitionists during his 1820–21 stay in London, and that the Egyptian Hall exhibition itself 'was timed to coincide with the flurry of antislavery agitation in that period' (p.61). Interestingly this particular line of enquiry has not been pursued by Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby in her discussion on *The Raft of the Medusa*, cannibalism and race: *Extremities: Painting Empire in Post-revolutionary France* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002, pp.165–235), or by Albert Alhadeff, *The Raft of the Medusa: Géricault, Art, and Race* (Munich and New York: Prestel, 2002). If the abolitionist content/agenda was a selling point for the exhibition, then the wily William Bullock may be said to have 'missed a trick' in not alluding to it in the 15-page printed description that he produced (and in all likelihood wrote) to accompany the exhibition. Certainly the art critical responses in the London press during 1820 (which in other ways seem to have taken cues from Bullock's description) only mention in passing the black figures in the painting, with no reference to the topicality of the work in the context of the ongoing anti-slavery debate. This would seem to confirm Eitner's opinion, more generally applied to the *Medusa* shipwreck and its repercussions, that the painting was 'devoid of political implications for the general British public' (Eitner, *Géricault's Raft*, p.63).
 - 8 Johnson, 'The Raft', p.250. Page 2 of the Egyptian Hall's printed description of *The Raft of the Medusa* introduces the work and gives a quotation from the *Edinburgh Review*, which emphasizes Bullock's strategy of utilizing the British public's awareness/interest in the original shipwreck and marketing the exhibition both as an 'artworld event' and a spectacle of sublime horror:
- A/Concise Description/of/Monsieur Jerricault's/GREAT PICTURE,/Twenty-four Feet long by Eighteen
high,/REPRESENTING THE SURVIVING CREW OF THE/Medusa French Frigate,/(15 out of 150)/AFTER
REMAINING THIRTEEN DAYS ON THE RAFT,/Partly immersed in Water, and without Provision,/JUST



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DESCRYING THE VESSEL / THAT RESCUED THEM FROM THEIR DREADFUL / SITUATION, / "The
subterranean scenes of Ann Radcliffe, and all the imaginary horrors of our melo-drame and our
tragedies, shrink to nothing before the real horrors of this dreadful catastrophe." *Edinboro' Review.* / *The above magnificent Picture, which was painted for the Exhibition at the Louvre, in 1819, and excited the greatest interest and admiration; Together with about two hundred Cabinet and Gallery Pictures, chiefly by eminent Masters of the Old School./ is NOW OPEN FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION, AT THE ROMAN GALLERY, / EGYPTIAN HALL, PICCADILLY. / Admission One Shilling./ Printed by w. SMITH, King Street, Long Acre [London, 1820]*

- 9 Unlike Géricault, Haydon, who from 1820 exhibited regularly at the Egyptian Hall, funded the exhibition entirely, which included renting space from Bullock, producing a descriptive pamphlet (*Description of Mr Haydon's Picture of Christ's Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem, and other pictures; now exhibiting at Bullock's Great Room, Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, London, 1820, sixpence*) and advertising in London newspapers. See David Blayney Brown et al., *Benjamin Robert Haydon, 1786–1846*, exhibition catalogue, Grasmere: Wordsworth Trust, 1996, pp.12–13, 68–74, 132; Richard Altick, *The Shows of London*, Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1978, pp.243, 409, 413–14; and William Whitley, *Art in England, 1800–1820*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928, pp.314–318.
- 10 *The London Magazine*, vol.V, May 1820, p.583.
- 11 Stephen Oettermann, *Panorama: History of a Mass Medium*, trans. D. L. Schneider, New York: Zone Books, 1997, p.131.
- 12 Bernard Comment, *Panorama*, English-language translation, London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 1999, p.144.
- 13 Altick, *The Shows*, pp.182, 205, 274.
- 14 Patrick Noon et al., *Constable to Delacroix: British Art and the French Romantics*, exhibition catalogue, London: Tate Publishing, 2003, p.102.
- 15 As with Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa*, *The Judgement of Brutus* was exhibited in the Roman Gallery and accompanied by a descriptive pamphlet with a line engraving by Pinelli after Lethière, folded and attached, not separate. The descriptive pamphlet gives details of the Roman Gallery, its contents (sold in 1819, excepting Lethière's painting) and decoration in 1816, and a new suite of rooms for the purposes of sales by auction. The engraving (p.18) showing a room interior was identified by Eitner as the Roman Gallery, but the positioning within the pamphlet suggests that it represents the new sale rooms (see Figure 3). However, it may, in general terms, reflect the scale and design of the former. Eitner has suggested that Lethière's son, Auguste, informed Géricault about the exhibition, which persuaded him to take the painting to London; see Eitner, *Géricault's Raft*, p.62. Interestingly, Christopher Sells noted in 1986 that Bullock himself had arrived in Calais on 7 September 1819 – that is, after the Salon had opened – and 'may therefore have been to see the *Raft of the Medusa* ... before committing himself to exhibit it'; see 'New Light on Géricault, his Travels and his Friends, 1816–23', *Apollo*, vol. cxxxii, June 1986, p.390. It is also possible that if Bullock visited the Salon, perhaps with the express purpose of finding an appropriate work for exhibition, it was he who instigated negotiations with Géricault.
- 16 See *The Literary Gazette and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences*, 10 June 1820, p.xx; *The Globe*, 12 June 1820, p.3; *The Morning Post*, 13 June 1820, p.3; *The Times*, 22 June 1820, p.3; *The Literary Gazette and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences*, 1 July 1820, p.427; *The Examiner*, 16 July 1820, all printed in Denise Aimé-Azam, *Mazepa – Géricault et Son Temps*, Paris: Plon, 1956, p.328.
- 17 *The Globe*, p.3; *The Literary Gazette*, 1 July, p.427. It may be that, as an example of foreign art, the critics were not as concerned about the context of private exhibitions and public perceptions of art, as the *London Magazine* was in relation to Haydon and other native artists. For British reactions to the shipwreck, see also Christine Riding, 'The *Raft of the Medusa* in Britain: Audience and Context', in Noon et al., *Constable to Delacroix*, pp. 66–73, and Christine Riding, 'The Fatal Raft', *History Today*, vol. 53, no.2, February 2003, pp.38–44.
- 18 Johnson quotes the comment printed in *The British Press* that the private view of *The Raft of the Medusa* exhibition (12 June 1820) was attended by 'the Marquis of Stafford, the Bishops of Ely and Carlisle, and a number of the most eminent patrons of the Fine Arts together with several members of the Royal Academy'. Géricault attended the Royal Academy annual dinner on 5 May 1821 at the invitation of its President, Thomas Lawrence, an indication of the esteem with which he was held by the London art world, based to a large extent on the London exhibition of his painting: see William Whitley, *Art in England, 1821–37*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930, p.6.
- 19 Oettermann, *Panorama*, p.131.
- 20 David Solkin. "'This Great Mart of Genius': The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House, 1780–1836", in David Solkin, ed., *Art on the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House 1780–1836*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001, p.5. The Royal Academy included the work of visiting foreign artists at the annual exhibition, but at 24 by 18 feet, *The Raft of the Medusa* would undoubtedly have tested the limits of the institution's hospitality and, for Géricault, may have brought critical and public acclaim, but no guaranteed income via entrance fees, unlike at the Egyptian Hall. For further discussion on foreign artists and art at the Royal Academy, see Anne Puetz, 'Foreign Exhibitors and the British School at the Royal Academy, 1768–1823', in Solkin, ed., *Art on the Line*, pp.229–41. Ann Bermingham, in her discussion on the interrelationship between landscape painting at the annual exhibition, panorama and other landscape entertainments, has noted that large-scale



paintings 'were not particularly welcome' not only because they took up valuable space at Somerset House but because they also undermined the visual impact of smaller works: see Ann Bermingham, 'Landscape-O-Rama: The Exhibition Landscape at Somerset House and the Rise of Popular Landscape Entertainments', in Solkin, ed., *Art on the Line*, p.128.

²¹ Johnson, 'The Raft', p.253.

²² See for example C. S. Matheson, '"A Shilling Well Laid Out": The Royal Academy's Early Public' in Solkin, ed., *Art on the Line*, p.40.

²³ Solkin, '"This Great Mart of Genius"', pp.8, 5.

²⁴ Johnson, 'The Raft', p.251; Altick, *The Shows*, pp.409–10; Oettermann, *Panorama*, pp.131–2.

²⁵ Altick, *The Shows*, p.410.

²⁶ Oettermann, *Panorama*, p.131.

²⁷ Ralph Hyde, *Panoramania! The Art and Entertainment of the 'All-Embracing' View*, exhibition catalogue, London: Barbican Art Gallery, 1988, p.39.

²⁸ View v is described as 'Representing the surviving crew of the Medusa, (15 out of 150,) after remaining 13 days on the Raft, partly immersed in water, and without provisions, just descriyng the Vessel that rescued them from their dreadful situation'; see *Description of Messrs. Marshall's [sic] Grand Marine Peristrophic Panorama of the Shipwreck of the Medusa French Frigate with the Fatal Raft. And the Raft as it appeared on the 13th day, with 15 survivors, at the moment they descried the Brig Argus, which saved them*, Edinburgh, 1820, p.15.

²⁹ Savigny and Corréard, *Voyage to Senegal*, pp.135–6.

³⁰ The Marshalls' description (p.15) includes the following excerpts relating to Géricault's painting:

- a) 'In the foreground of the picture is the raft, with part of the sail, visible; the raft floats high in the water, after being lightened of 135 persons, luggage, &c.'
- b) 'Coste, the sailor, is upon the cask, waving a piece of an old ensign, tied to a stick: the sailor is leaning on Courtade, the master-gunner.'
- c) 'In the centre is M. Savigny, the surgeon, in his uniform, sitting: his look is resigned, and indicates that he has scarce a hope of being saved; his friend, Corread, is standing in a military-cloak ... he is pointing to the ship, and telling Savigny of its approach, and endeavours to inspire him with a feeling of confidence which he himself but faintly entertains.'
- d) 'Some fragments of arms and uniforms are strewed [sic] on the planks; and in the extreme distance, in the horizon, is the Brig Argus, that saved them.'

³¹ The quotation reads:

Tis pleasant by the cheerful hearth to hear/Of tempests and the dangers of the deep,/ And to pause at times, and feel that we are safe;/ Then listen to the perilous tale again,/ And with an eager and suspended soul,/ Woo terror to delight us: but to hear/The roaring of the raging element,/ To know all human skill, all human strength/ Avail not: to look round and only see/The mountain wave incumbent with its weight/ Of bursting waters, o'er the reeling bark-/ Oh God! This is indeed a dreadful thing!/ And he who has endured the horror once/ Of such an hour, doth never hear the storm/Howl round his home, but he remembers it,/ And thinks upon the suffering mariner.'
(Robert Southey, 'The Voyage' from *Madoc* (IV, 40–1), London: Longmans, 1805)

The quotation cited in the Marshalls' description starts from 'but to hear/The roaring of the raging element'.

³² The timing of these two spectacles is crucial in gauging the potential influence of Géricault's painting on the panorama. Oettermann stated (*Panorama*, p.57) that the 'length of time it took to produce a panorama depended on the size of the canvas and the experience of the painters. The average was about a year from the start of the preparatory stages to the finished product.' If one year is the approximate yardstick for the production of any type of panorama, then the Marshalls would have had over a year from the opening of the Paris Salon (thus presenting the possibility of Géricault's painting having spurred the whole project) or four and half months from the beginning of the Egyptian Hall exhibition. The latter scenario, although opening up a number of possibilities, perhaps suggests that the *Medusa* panorama was already in production, but that View V was added or adapted to incorporate details from Géricault's composition. Still, the *Medusa* shipwreck was an unusual subject for a panorama, given that, as stated by Thomas Pfau, the stock subjects were battles of the French and Napoleonic wars, views of major European capitals and exotic cities and landscapes of historical or religious interest; see Thomas Pfau, *The Lessons of Romanticism: a Critical Companion*, Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998, pp.130–31.

³³ Eitner, *Géricault's Raft*, p.63; the quote is from an unknown source.

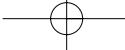
³⁴ *The Times*, 22 June 1820, p.3.

³⁵ *Explication des Ouvrages de Peinture, Sculpture, Architecture et Gravure, des Artistes Vivans, exposés au Musée Royal des Arts, le 25 Août 1819*, Paris, 1819, reprinted in *Paris Salon de 1819, 1822*, New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1977, p.58.

³⁶ Solkin, '"This Great Mart of Genius"', p.8.

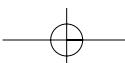
³⁷ *Descriptive Synopsis of the Roman Gallery*, London: 1816, p.6.

³⁸ Title page, *A Concise Description of Monsieur Jerricault's Great Picture*, np.



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- 39 Eitner, *Géricault's Raft*, p.40. Eugène Delacroix, who modelled for one of the figures in *The Raft of the Medusa*, commented on the lowering of the painting mid-way through the Salon, with some insight concerning the importance of the positioning of the work and its impact on the viewer: 'On a descendu le tableau des Naufragés et on les voit de plein pieds, pour ainsi dire. De sorte qu'on se croit déjà un pieds dans l'eau. Il faut l'avoir vu d'assez près, pour en sentir tout le mérite' (quoted *ibid.*).
- 40 *Ibid.*, p.4.
- 41 *Ibid.*, pp.4–5.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p.58.
- 43 *Ibid.*, p.42.
- 44 One drawing is in the collection of the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen. Another drawing and two oil sketches are both in the collection of the Musée du Louvre.
- 45 Quoted in Eitner, *Géricault's Raft*, p.59. Interestingly, in the context of the capacity for Géricault's interpretation to replace Savigny and Corréard's version of events, the Religious Tract Society published a short story entitled 'Jack Stuart and the Wreck of the "Medusa"' in 1850, during which the character Jack Stuart, an old mariner, relates the story of the *Medusa* shipwreck to a group of children, stating that 'If ever there was a time when men should call upon God and feel nobody else could save them, that was the time. But my father said he never heard that they did; and so what followed wasn't so much to be wondered at' (London [1850], p.2). The text is accompanied by a crude illustration after the central section of *The Raft of the Medusa*.
- 46 Brian Grosskurth, 'The Representation of Death in the Painting of Géricault and Delacroix during the First and Second Bourbon Restorations, 1814–1830', unpublished Dphil dissertation, Oxford University, 1989 (2 volumes), vol.1, p.167.
- 47 *Explication des Ouvrages de Peinture*, p.56.
- 48 The passage in the Egyptian Hall description reads: 'One hundred and thirty-five beings met death upon this raft, leaving only fifteen in a wounded and emaciated state to cling to Hope for their deliverance./Hope, so dear to the human heart, once more raised the desponding spirits of these unfortunate men; with a spontaneous impulse they lifted their eyes to Heaven, and gave thanks to their Almighty Protector [my emphasis]: they then, by means of a top-gallant mast and some remnant of sails, constructed a sort of awning to protect them from the burning rays of the sun, and under its shelter they laid them down to sleep, for the first time ... About eight o'clock, one of these unhappy beings crept, as by inspiration, from beneath the awning which shrouded his worn-out messmates, and descried in the horizon the sails of a vessel; the violence of his joy overpowered his emaciated frame, he stretches out his arms towards his companions, with a violent effort he scarcely articulates "Nous-Sauvés," and falls on his face: then accents of deliverance reanimate the almost livid countenance of the rest, who rally their drooping strength, and forgetting at once their sufferings and their wounds, even the weakest among them, crawled from beneath the awning to behold the vessel which was to save them'; see *A Concise Description of Monsieur Jerricault's Great Picture*, p.11.
- 49 Savigny and Corréard, *Voyage to Senegal*, p.136.
- 50 *A Concise Description of Monsieur Jerricault's Great Picture*, pp.12–13.
- 51 Preface, *Description of Messrs. Marshall's [sic] Grand Marine Peristrophic Panorama*, np. In the case of View v, the Marshalls incorporated the only significant detail in Savigny and Corréard's narrative (*Voyage to Senegal*, p.135), being that of a survivor up the mast signalling with handkerchiefs attached to straightened hoops, supported by others: 'Jean Charles, a black soldier, is partly up the mast, supported by Thomas, the pilot, and Griffon du Bellay, ex-clerk of the navy, he is waving a straightened hoop with some handkerchiefs upon it, to attract the notice of the Argus'; see *Description of Messrs. Marshall's [sic] Grand Marine Peristrophic Panorama*, p.15. Jean Charles, the only black survivor of the raft mentioned by Savigny and Corréard, is thought to be represented in Géricault's painting as the figure signalling on the cask.
- 52 *A Concise Description of Monsieur Jerricault's Great Picture*, p.12.
- 53 Savigny and Corréard, *Voyage to Senegal*, p.117.
- 54 Eitner, *Géricault's Raft*, pp.44–5, 155.
- 55 The drawing of Ugolino is in the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris. The composition drawing dated 1818 on the subject of cannibalism is in a private collection in Paris.
- 56 *A Concise Description of Monsieur Jerricault's Great Picture*, pp.13–14.
- 57 The Marshalls' text reads: 'François, the hospital-keeper, is sitting with his dead son, who has just expired, the violence of whose parental grief renders him insensible to the joyful tidings which wholly engross the rest: life is no longer desirable to him; his only child is dead, and horror and despair are irrecoverably fixed upon his countenance'; see *Description of Messrs. Marshall's [sic] Grand Marine Peristrophic Panorama*, p.15.
- 58 Savigny and Corréard, *Naufrage de la frégate la Méduse*, 3rd edition, pp.157, 156.
- 59 *Ibid.*, p.157.
- 60 [Byron] 'Don Juan, I-II' (1819), *New Monthly Magazine*, XII, August 1819, p.77. This and other reviews of *Don Juan* are reprinted in Donald H. Reiman, ed., *The Romantics Reviewed: Contemporary Reviews of*

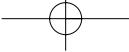


British Romantic Writers, Part B: 'Byron and the Regency Society Poets', (3 vols.), New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1972.

- 61 William Mackay, *Narrative of the Shipwreck of the Juno*, London: John Murray, 1798, p.20.
- 62 'Remarks', on 'Shipwreck of the Medusa; or, the Fatal Raft! A Drama in Three Acts by W. T. Moncrieff', in Richardson's *New Minor Drama* (series), London: Thomas Richardson, 1831, p.v.
- 63 As Moncrieff himself noted, in the 'Remarks' accompanying the printed text of his *Shipwreck of the Medusa* melodrama, 'It will be seen the author of this drama has deviated materially, in some instances, from his text [that is Savigny and Corréard's narrative] for the purposes of dramatic effect'; (*ibid.*, p.viii).
- 64 Théophile Gautier, *L'Art Dramatique en France depuis vingt-cinq ans*, vol. 1: 1837–9, Paris 1858, pp.237, 261–63. Perhaps because of his familiarity with Géricault's painting, as well as his interest in the *Medusa* shipwreck, Gautier devoted a long passage within his appraisal of the two productions to comparing the tableaux after *The Raft of the Medusa*. He states, concerning the Ambigu-Comique production, that there were two tableaux performed, 'Un est intimé du *Passage du tropique*, de M. Biard, l'autre du *Radeau de la Méduse*, de Géricault'; see p.237. Interestingly, in view of the discussion later in this article concerning Géricault and Byron, Gautier continued, 'Entre ces tableaux, il y a la différence de M. Biard à Géricault; toute la différence d'une charge de Vadé avec sa gaieté de carnival à un sombre poème byronien' (p.237). For Gautier's responses to these productions see also Martin Meisel, *Realizations: Narratives, Pictorial and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-century England*, Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983, p.193.
- 65 In his discussion on the development of the genre, Louis James has noted that 'the tendency of melodrama to flow into the significant static tableau is energized by the basic effect of violent destruction of this tableau, of alteration of mood and scene', suggesting that this particular dramatic conceit, generic to all melodramas, would have lent itself to the performance of tableaux of works of art; see Louis James, 'Performance and Politics in Popular drama', in David Bradby, Louis James and Bernard Sharratt, eds., *Aspects of Popular Entertainment in Theatre, Film and Television, 1800–1976*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980, p.12. This gives weight to the idea that a tableau of *The Raft of the Medusa* was performed in 1820.
- 66 Quoted in Meisel, *Realizations*, p.190. An original edition of the Royal Coburg Theatre playbill is held in the Theatre Museum (Victoria and Albert Museum) archive, London.
- 67 John Baldwin Buckstone, "'A New Don Juan, an Operatical, Satirical, Poetical, Egotistical, Melodrammatical, Extravaganzical, but Strictly Moral Burletta,' in Two Acts (Founded on Lord Byron's celebrated Poem)', in Richardson's *New Minor Drama*, vol.1, London, 1828. It was first performed at the Adelphi Theatre.
- 68 Moncrieff wrote in the 'Remarks' accompanying 'A New Don Juan', that 'the mock squeamishness of the present age of cant, had rendered it the fashion to cry down this celebrated Poem, on the score of immorality, and has thereby prevented its merits obtaining that justice which posterity will inevitably award them. Its variety, imagination, pathos, humor, nature and sublimity, will in after times irrevocably stamp it one of the most wonderful productions of this, or any other age'; see *New Minor Drama*, 1828, np.
- 69 The two instances translated from *Don Juan* to Moncrieff's melodrama are as follows:

Don Juan, Canto II, Stanza 74:
 At length the lots were torn up and prepared,
 But of materials that much shock the Muse.
 Having no paper, for the want of better,
 They took by force from Juan Julia's letter.

Don Juan, Canto II, Stanza 99:
 The day before, fast sleeping on the water,
 They found a turtle of the hawksbill kind,
 And by good fortune gliding softly, caught her,
 Which yielded a day's life and to their mind
 Proved even still a more nutritious matter,
 Because it left encouragement behind.
 They thought that in such perils more than chance
 Had sent them this for their deliverance.
- 70 Quoted in Alhadoff, *Raft of the Medusa*, pp.29–30.
- 71 Jules Michelet, *Géricault*, first published Paris 1848, reprinted by L'Echoppe [Caen], 1991, p.30. For discussion of Géricault's reputation see Lorenz Eitner, *Géricault*, exhibition catalogue, Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1971, pp.7–15. Perhaps the most significant pictorial conflation of Byron, Géricault and *Don Juan* is Delacroix's *The Shipwreck of Don Juan*, exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1841. Critics immediately compared the painting to Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa*, and Delacroix, who greatly admired both the painter and the painting, undoubtedly drew inspiration from both in executing the scene. For further discussion of *The Shipwreck of Don Juan* see Lee Johnson, *The Paintings of Eugène Delacroix: A Critical Catalogue, 1832–1863*, vol.III (Text), Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986, pp.100–104.
- 72 'Lord Byron's Mazeppa and Don Juan', *Monthly Review*, vol.LXXXIX, July 1819, p.321; 'Remarks on Don Juan', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, vol.v, Aug. 1819, p.518. According to some French critics, in



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responding to the intense emotions and strongly visual descriptions which pervade Byron's poetry, artists were merely translating the poet's world view from page to canvas. In 1835, a writer in *L'Artiste* stated, 'Comes the painter upon this sensual and exact recipe and the painter has only to paint'; (quoted in Patrick Noon, 'Colour and Effect', in Noon et al., *Constable to Delacroix*, p.18). Having established the truism, the writer noted in response to Delacroix's *The Prisoner of Chillon* (1834, Musée du Louvre) that 'One has but to reread the poem to see how little the poet left for the painter to invent ... And that is M. Eugene Delacroix's painting, in a word. Lord Byron drew it, M. Eugene Delacroix added the colour'; (quoted in Bartélémy Jobert, *Delacroix*, Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998, p.238).

- 73 See Eitner, *Géricault's Raft*, pp.45-6, 54-5, 155; Frederick W. Shilstone, 'A Grandfather, a Raft, a Tradition: The Shipwreck Scene in Byron's *Don Juan*', *Tennessee Studies in Literature*, vol. xxv, University of Tennessee Press, 1980; Peter Cochran, 'Don Juan, Canto II: A Reconsideration of some of Byron's Borrowing from his Shipwreck Sources', *Byron Journal*, no. 19, 1991, pp.141-5; Alhadoff, *Raft*, pp.29-34; and Christine Riding, "'If there is any certainty on earth, it is our pain, only suffering is real": *Don Juan* and the *Raft of the Medusa*', *Byron Journal*, forthcoming, 2005.
 - 74 Cochran, 'Don Juan', p.142; Eitner, *Géricault's Raft*, p.45.
 - 75 'Don Juan', *The New Bon Ton Magazine*, vol.III, August 1819, p.236.
 - 76 David Carey, 'State of the Fine Arts in France', *The Monthly Magazine*, vol.xxxxviii, No.340, 1 June 1820, p.417.
 - 77 Andrew M. Cooper, 'Shipwreck and Skepticism: *Don Juan* Canto II', *Keats-Shelley Journal*, vol.42, 1983, p.67.
 - 78 Savigny and Corréard, *Voyage to Senegal*, p.123.
 - 79 Quoted in Cooper, 'Shipwreck and Skepticism', p.67.
 - 80 Ibid., p.68.
 - 81 Michael Booth, *English Melodrama*, London: H. Jenkins, 1965, pp.108-09.
 - 82 Ibid., p.108.
 - 83 Moncrieff, 'The Shipwreck of the Medusa', Act II, Scene iv, pp.34, 35.
 - 84 Ibid., Act III, Scene ii, p.38.
 - 85 Marvin Carlson, '"He Never Should Bow Down to a Domineering Frown": Class Tensions and Nautical Melodrama', in Michael Hays and Anastasia Nikolopoulous, eds., *Melodrama: The Cultural Emergence of a Genre*, London: Macmillan Press, 1996, p.152.
 - 86 Anon, *The Shipwreck of the Alceste and the Shipwreck of the Medusa*, Dublin, 1822, p.172. In this particular case, the commentator was comparing the seemingly exemplary conduct of a British crew and captain during the shipwreck of HMS *Alceste* in 1816 and the French crew and captain on the *Medusa*. The voyage narrative by the ship's surgeon, John McLeod (*Narrative of a Voyage in His Majesty's late ship Alceste*, London, 1817) was reviewed by the *Edinburgh Review* in 1818, in the same article as a review of Savigny and Corréard's English edition. The article is long and complex, but the writer dwells on notions of British and French national character, using the two shipwrecks as evidence, and concludes: 'where the valour of a Frenchman begins to fail, the courage of an Englishman rises, from the resources he finds within his mind and heart. He is circumspect while the tempest only threatens; but intrepid when it bursts upon him. He requires no motive, but danger, to be brave; and his fortitude does not abandon him, even when his courage can be of no avail'; (Article V, *Edinburgh Review*, vol.30, September 1818, p.403).
 - 87 Brian Southam, *Jane Austen and the Navy*, London: Hambledon and London, 2000, p.257.
 - 88 Moncrieff, Act I, Scene ii, p.14.
 - 89 Carlson, 'He Never Should', pp.152-3. The role of the Royal Coburg Theatre (and the theatre world in general) in promoting such notions of British national character at this time is demonstrated by the playbill for 22 June 1818 (in the British Library), advertising the 'North Pole; or, the Arctic Expedition' melodrama, which notes that the:
- subject of the Melo-Drama is partly founded on the present Expedition to the Artic Regions, and intended to give as correct an idea as possible of the dreadful dangers and hardships our gallant Countrymen are about to expose themselves to, for the benefit of the present and future ages. By a succession, therefore, of truly interesting and critical situations, - The Crew of one of the Vessels, after suffering the horrors of Shipwreck, will be exposed to that of Famine; and as interest follows interest, so shall anxiety attend each opening Scene, till the termination shall prove, that, native Courage and Perserverence [sic], with Providence on their side; will triumph over difficulties, and ensure that success which has ever attended British Intrepidity.

