French Revolutionary Iconography and the Perception of Images: 1789-1795

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The way in which artists portrayed culture-shifting events during the French revolutionary era directly supported the ideals of that government. Moreover, art substantially influenced popular opinion toward the Revolution of 1789. The work of artists such as Jacques-Luis David and Jean-Louis Prieur demonstrate the enhanced importance of communication from the artist to the audience, as does the expanded distribution of caricatures and prints. Thus, depending on how an individual interprets a particular image as a form of communication, one can use these works of art to elucidate the effects of those images on the individual and on the revolution itself. Similarly, successive revolutionary governments recognized the importance of art and images as a form of communication that could be both disseminated and controlled, as evidenced by the policies enacted regarding communication and artistic expression between 1789 and 1795. David's connection to the Committee of Public Instruction outlines that recognition as a whole. By considering the images of the revolution, the interpretations of those images by their intended audiences and by the government, along with the motives of the artists, we can see that works of art had a profound influence on the revolutionary period.

To fully conceptualize the effects of popular artistry in a revolutionary context, it is necessary to examine both the content and the intent of such images. The Revolution of 1789 is marked by the upheaval of social, political, and cultural standards. Little of the contemporary society went without feeling the shifts in socio-cultural norms, and indeed the French contemporary artistic culture was no exception.

> As academic 'high art' was being subjected to increasing stringent criticism, so classical theory was gradually losing its universal validity. Traditional iconography was being cut loose from its cultural moorings and the safe refuge of

> the 'Ancients' being abandoned, metaphysical values were in crisis, and the sacred was coming under attack from both sides by reality and authenticity.[1]

Rolf Reichardt and Hubertus Khole outline the condition of traditional, "high art," within the evolving French artistic culture in the decades leading up to 1789. Their study *Visualizing the Revolution* examines shift from traditional art forms to the increased use of caricature and printed arts during the years from 1760-1810, which they assert to be a time in which the arts underwent a, "seismic structural upheaval, with France being perhaps the foremost laboratory for this cultural experiment."[2] The revolution saw extreme changes in the art field, as with all spheres of society, from culture to politics.

The importance of caricatures as a developing art form in the years leading to and that parallel the revolution rests upon their purpose and nature as a form of art in relation to their intended audience. The ability to distribute printed images and caricatures gives those particular images a distinctively larger scale of distribution than traditional or "academic" forms of "high" art within the context of the *Ancien Régime*. The significance of the distribution of popular art can be directly linked to the presence of those images within the Parisian *salons*. These *salons* were major centers of literary interest, particularly within the social and political spheres with regards to enlightened thought and opinion. Indeed, the *salon* culture influenced the ideals espoused by many different French *philosophes*, including Voltaire, during the second half of the eighteenth century.[3] The presence of popular art within the salons exemplifies the context in which those images would have been received. To understand the significance of this presence

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[1] Rolf Reichardt and Hubertus Khole, *Visualizing the Revolution: Politics and Pictorial Arts in Late Eighhteenth Century France* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008), 7.
[2] Ibid., 7.
[3] Warren Roberts, *The Public, the Populace, and Images of the French Revolution: Revolutionary Artists, Jaques-Louis David and Jean-Louis Prieur* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 11.

of prints and caricatures within the *salon* culture in its entirety, the context and intent of both the artist, and the images themselves must be explored.

In the same way that one may analyze the words of an author as a form of communication with his audience, it is possible to analyze the images presented by an author. It is within this communication, specifically in regard to the revolutionary iconography of caricatures, that the purpose (and indeed significance) of caricature art becomes apparent. The overall purpose of caricature art during the revolution connects to a broader development of artistic content. It is that content which exemplifies the motives of the artists themselves. The upheaval of the classical artistic hierarchy blurred the boundaries between historical, genre, landscape and portrait paintings, allowing for the rise to genre paintings with direct historical significance [4]

Khole and Reichardt directly demonstrate the position of artistic content within the evolution of its hierarchical form during the second half of the eighteenth century. Caricature art was no exception, and they follow this description by asserting the direct historical significance of caricature art: "This was especially the case with caricatures, which were for the most part produced anonymously, a fact, which combined with their forceful realism, meant that they were ideally suited to the expression of contemporary experiences and, above all, the sense of rupture with the past."[5] This statement compares the conditions of the change in artistic content to the purpose and place of caricature art within the context of revolutionary iconography.

When the development of the content of popular artistic images are placed within the ideals of the *salon* culture in Paris, the position of caricatures becomes clear. Caricatures and

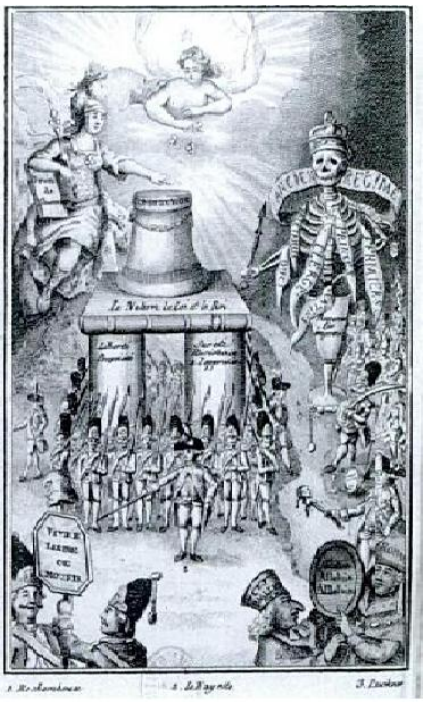
[4] Reichardt and Khole, *Visualizing the Revolution*, 8.
[5] Ibid., 8.

popular art were poised directly for political (and indeed historical) significance. They acquired a wide base of distribution to an "enlightened" audience. Additionally, they exemplified a shift in content toward the "rapture" in established societal norms. "Artists became highly politicized, and conscious of contemporary events," Reichardt and Khole explain, because "innovative symbolism was introduced, leading to experimentation with provocatively expressive and emotional processes of representation, which was further developed, given form, and 'ennobled'."[6] Much in the same way that the *philosophes* wrote to express political or social opinion, artists began to create politicized art. It is the emergence of political motives within an artistic context that positions caricature art in a significant relationship with the political developments prior to, and indeed within, the revolutionary government's emergence in 1789.

Let us turn now to the content of the images. Most of these images were printed anonymously, so contextualizing the political motives of the artist can be problematic. However, by looking at the publications including these caricatures, it is possible to categorize them into a particular political base. Moreover, the content itself presents a politicized backing. The appearance of the work, "Ancien Régime," was printed as the front-piece for the paperback political almanac, *Gifts for the Men Citizens and the Women Citizens*, "for the third year of Liberty" in 1790. The name of this almanac resonates with the revolutionary theory of *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*. Aside from the publication itself, the content of this etching is itself a representation of pro-revolutionary imagery. The image depicts the Rhine as a geographical and symbolic boundary. The right side of the image shows the town of Koblenz as a center of royalist sentiment, with an army of nobles and clergy poised for assault on the French side of the Rhine. The royalists are standing in the shadow of a large skeleton depicted as a wilting flower emerging from a wine glass, the petals of which bear the names of noble titles such as *ducs,*

[6] Ibid., 8.

clergé, fermiers, and *catins.*[7] The flower bears the overall title of *Ancien Régime* and is represented as extracting no more strength from the wine glass, labeled as *revenus des emigrants*.[8] The left bank, representing France, is labeled as, *nouveau régime,* or "new regime." This side of the Rhine is illuminated by an angel above, and dominated by a large structure bearing references to the moderate revolutionary philosophy. The "Constitution" is set at the top of the structure, and is supported first by the slogan "the Nation, the Law and the King," which is in turn supported by the terms, "Liberty, Property, Security, Resistance against oppression."[9] Both the appearance of this etching in the politically pro-revolutionary almanac, and the content of the work itself, exemplifies the increase in political motive by the artist, who remains anonymous. The nature and development of popular imagery and artistry during the revolution has roots of strong political sentiment, and the effects of that sentiment on the revolution can be made clear by examining the attitudes towards art and symbolism by the revolutionary governments.



Ancien Régime, Unknown Artist, 1793

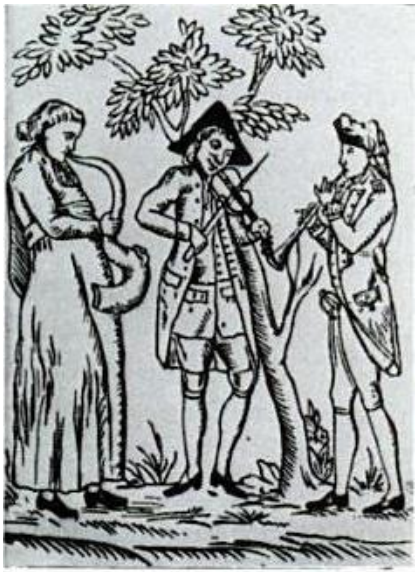
The mere recognition of symbols and art as an agent for promoting a particular political view point gives that art a certain degree of significance within the contexts of both revolutionary iconography, and of the historical process itself. Not only did the revolutionary government acknowledge the change of art to its politicized form, it recognizes the possibility of government intervention within that politically active sphere of society, and subsequently follows that path of political imagery and symbolism. Khole and Reichardt directly

[7] Dukes, clergy, farmers, and whores.
[8] Income of emigrants.
[9] Reichardt and Khole, Visualizing the Revolution, 51.

detail the Committee of Public Safety's attitudes and policies towards caricature art and prints as a form of political activism.

> When print making was developing into a form of political mass medium during the revolution, it was only a small step to utilizing it strategically as a weapon. The Committee of Public Safety then undertook this, setting up a secret fund for political propaganda in autumn 1793. On 12 September deputy Jacques-Louis David was commissioned to use his talents and the means within his power to increase the quantity of engravings and caricatures apt to awaken the public spirit and to 'bring home to people how atrocious and ridiculous are the enemies of liberty and of the republic.'[10]

The funding provided for politicized engravings and caricatures, along with deputation of David indicates that the National Convention both understands the importance of caricatures and artistic popular images in a political setting, and that they acted by implementing policies to use those types of images to forward popular belief in pro-revolutionary political rhetoric.



Unknown Title, Unknown Author, Unknown Date

The detailing of the Committee's recognition of imagery as a political motivator is followed by an outline of the initial policies which were undertaken to push popular images further into that role. "According to the records, by October 5, 1794 at least eighteen such caricatures had been presented to the Committee of Public Safety, 1,000 to 1,500 reproductions being made from each, around half of them colored. The colored prints cost from ten to twenty-five *sols*, the others usually sold for around four *sols*. The Fifteen artists involved received honorarium of some 1,000 to 3,000 *livres.*" [11] From these figures, the extent to which the Committee of Public Safety was willing to further the

[10] Ibid ., 39-40.
[11] Ibid ., 40.

politicization of popular art, with pro-revolutionary sentiment, becomes clear. Increased funding under the Robespierre's Committee delineates the relationship between popular imagery, and the revolutionary government.

In addition to considering government policy, we should also consider the relationship between those images and their audience. While the government itself may make policies for a broad audience, in individual still views the image itself. It is the content and intent of that image, as described, that holds a particular motive, and that motive may hold different rhetoric based on the image and the context of its presentation. The convening French revolutionary government established policies to increase the positive reception of revolutionary ideals to a broad audience.

These images display varying degrees of radicalism, depending upon the content and motive of the piece itself. The *Ancien Régime* the content and purpose of which has been outlined, holds a certain level of political radicalism within its outline of the royalist *Émigrés* being depicted as a decrepit skeletal figure with no place in the new constitutionally based power in France. However, images could range from moderate to radically revolutionary, and indeed royalist. As any form of communication may hold varying tones and rhetoric, the art and revolutionary iconography between 1789 and 1795 would have held varying political themes, each with their own individual purpose based on the related political backing. However, in order to understand the relationship between the revolutionary governments and caricature art throughout the revolutionary period, it is necessary to maintain a focus the images that present distinctly pro-revolutionary themes.

To contrast the politically radical theme of the *Ancien Régime* one may study the theme of a more politically moderate image. A print, with no apparent title and an anonymous

illustrator, presents the drawn image of a bishop, commoner, and aristocrat playing music together. This harmonious depiction outlines the hope for an accord between the three Estates of 1789.[12] This print conveys a much more moderate political message than has been outlined in the description of the *Ancien Régime* etching. The disparity between the rhetoric of the two images exemplifies the varying degrees of radicalism that is found within French revolutionary iconography.

Because of the importance of political rhetoric in this period, we should consider caricature art, etchings, and prints on the same level as other modes of literary communication. The importance of this within the context of the revolution rests on the level of literacy in late eighteenth-century France. With a literacy rate of thirty-seven percent in 1789, the use of art as a means of conveying a message increases the audience of politicized art and images.[13] Had the revolutionary governments relied purely upon written texts to appeal to an illiterate audience, the spread of revolutionary rhetoric and ideals would have been far more limited. A substantial illiterate audience requires a simple form of medium to which caricature art fits well. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the reception and interpretation of popular art and imagery on its audience (on an individual level). To understand an image's message, it is first essential to analyze the reception of that image by its intended audience. Understanding the effects of an image on an individual's perception of the world is vital to interpreting how an image is, and was, interpreted by a particular individual.

The reception of popular or widely produced images by an individual, within the context of revolutionary iconography, can be directly related to the reception of most popular images found in various forms and styles. Recent studies in the perception of images by an individual

[12] Noel Parker, *Portrayals of Revolution: Images, Debates, and Patterns of Thought on the French Revolution* (Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire: Simon & Schuster Int., 1990), 100.
[13] William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 399.

exemplify the degree and manner in which those pro-revolutionary images were received by individuals. It is necessary to recognize the contextual differences between modern and contemporary popular images, but by applying the political and social conditions of the revolution to a common reception of an image by an individual, individual's perception of the image.

Today, the most recognizable form of mass media production is television. In the same way that a still image may hold a political position, so may moving images. This relationship between these two particular modes of communication is equally similar to that between literature and images as has been outlined. Modern interpretations and studies of television and mass media as a mode of communication are therefore applicable.

These studies focus themselves on the relationship between the images itself and its interpretation by an individual audience. Researchers of marketing and marketing psychology Robert S. Sawyer and Rashmi Adaval published a report on the interaction between verbal and non-verbal information in relation to memory and judgment. This study outlines that viewing fictional events on television can influence an individual's perceptions of real events that occur in the real world.[14] These studies deal with both an individual's perception of political and social norms, and of the use of violence in a real world context. They are therefore directly connected to the content and purpose of caricature art used by the revolutionary governments in France between 1789 and 1795.

This study outlines the change of real world perceptions towards politics as a result of viewing fictional images through television programs. While propaganda and biased political media are the obvious example of this, fictional images being used as entertainment are the

[14] L.J. Shrum ed., *The Psychology of Entertainment Media: Blurring the Lines Between Entertainment and Persuasion* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., 2004),139.

center of the study. The entertainment value of caricature images and revolutionary iconography relates to the use of popular imagery in recent entertainment media. Sawyer and Adaval have shown that "exposure to women and African Americans as heads of state, lawyers, or scientists could increase people's perceptions that their occupancy of these roles is commonplace and, therefore, could also increase their acceptance of individuals holding these positions in the real world."[15] The possible political perceptions of an individual can be changed by viewing a particular image, with its intended message presented as being commonplace in society

Artists and governments can also use mass media to alter social norms. This can be seen in a comparison between what common property is for an individual, and what an individual's perception of what is normal concerning property as presented on television. The example given in Sawyer and Adaval's study gives an example of an individual's perception of affluence as a socio-cultural norm. This example outlines that individuals might use the situations viewed on television as standards to which they may compare to evaluate their own life circumstances. As a result they may be motivated to engage in behavior to achieve those standards. "Heavy television viewers," Sawyer and Adaval claim, "overestimate the proportion of people with possessions that exemplify an affluent lifestyle…they may be more inclined than other individuals to evaluate their own life circumstances unfavorably in retain to this implicit standard of affluence and may try to acquire possessions or engage in other activities that require them to live beyond their means."[16] Thus, individuals change the way they react in real world circumstances to imitate the content of a popular image, interpreting it to be socially expected or normal.

[15] Ibid., 139.
[16] Ibid.,139.

Sawyer and Adaval outline their hypothesis in a detailed overview of a study of a study that supports the theory that visual images, stimulated by pictures or video presentations, can influence the impact of information that people receive after viewing those images. The study itself centers on perceptions and exposure to violence, and states that people may be motivated to believe that the world is just (that people may believe that those receiving aggression and violence deserve what they got). Those who excessively view television violence may be more inclined than occasional viewers to believe that perpetrators of violence will be punished, and indeed that those who receive consistent exposure to violence in the media may hold an increased tolerance for aggression in the real world.[17]

The study presented by Adaval and Sawyer presented a group of participants with twelve pictures, nine of which showed objects and events that presented aggression, but were unlikely to be seen as offensive, such as a criminal being subdued or a boxing match. They hypothesized that these images would activate concepts that aggression is normal and socially sanctioned. The next set of images, however, varied over a control group, and a group that would present images that would have been perceived as negative repercussions to violence. The control group presented objects that would be seen as unpleasant, but were unrelated to aggression including deformed children and smoking advertisements, while the second set contained images depicting severely negative outcomes of aggression such as a lynching and a violent image of a dead soldier. These violent images were hypothesized to activate concepts that human beings were cruel and inhumane, and that those concepts would be applied to a real world scenario, outlined in the second half of the experiment. The participants were then introduced to a "new" experiment, in which they were presented with a questionnaire in which the participants were asked to consider the factors important in judging criminal cases and that different participants

[17] Ibid., 139.

were being asked to consider different types of crime, and that they would personally be presented with the crime of rape. In actuality, all participants were being asked to consider the crime of rape as a criminal case. The questionnaire itself contained descriptions of four rape cases that varied in terms of whether the alleged rapist knew the victim or was a total stranger, and if the victim did or did not attempt to resist. After reading each scenario, the participant then reported their reactions in the form of two questions concerning both their belief of whether or not the defendant should be convicted, and their belief of whether or not the defendant was actually convicted. Other questions included whether or not the victim was responsible for the incident (had they provoked the rape or did not try to resist or escape).[18]

The experimenters assumed that the pictures to which the participants were exposed in the first experiment (violent or non-violent in conjunction with socially sanctioned acts of aggression) would activate concepts that would then be applied to their implications of the rape scenarios presented during the second experiment. The belief that the defendant should be convicted, and subsequently believed to have been convicted, was hypothesized to follow during the second experiment. The results of the study, however, expressed that the participants' beliefs that the defendant was and should be convicted was changed only slightly, and that participants held decreased beliefs that the defendant was convicted relative to control conditions, and held increased beliefs that he should be convicted relative images presenting negatives associated with violence. Although exposure to severely negative outcomes of aggression failed to influence the belief that the defendant should be convicted, those images did significantly increase the belief that the defendant actually had been convicted. This subsequently motivated the participants to reaffirm the hypothesis that exposure to negative consequences of aggression

[18] Ibid.,140-141.

threatened participants perceptions that the world is just, and subsequently promoted the belief that the defendant got what he deserved.[19]

This study demonstrates one of the possible ways that consistent exposure to violent images can indeed lead an individual to be influenced by relating violence in a real world context. However, it is necessary to keep in mind the contextual differences between contemporary popular images and modern mass media production. As has been outlined, revolutionary iconography, primarily within etchings, prints, and caricatures, held varying degrees of violence and radicalism. Each of these images would have held their own uses to its particular political intent. Adaval and Sawyer's study supports the theory that those images, if presented consistently to a particular audience, can indeed change that audience's perspectives on similar real world events. Subsequently, the effects of caricature art and popular imagery in a revolutionary context become clear. The revolutionary governments, particularly under the national convention and Robespierre's Committee of Public Safety, influenced the progression of events between 1789 and 1795, and were funded to further politicize popular art.

In the same way that popular imagery may hold a political motive within its theme, so may traditional or "high" art. As was the case with caricatures, prints, and etchings, traditional art forms underwent similar transformations during the latter half of the eighteenth century. One of the most pivotal developments within the art world at the time can be seen within the rise of neo-classicism. This movement, at the center of the change in artistic context and form during the French revolution, exemplifies each of the key changes occurring within art, several of which have been seen within the developments within contemporary popular art. The increase in moral seriousness within content, the sense of purpose, along with the severity of classical art and architecture came together in the, "desire for art embodying austere moral virtues in a severe

[19] Ibid., 141.

manner, supposedly reproducing a classical aesthetic style: 'noble simplicity and quiet grandeur', as Winckelmann put it in the 1750s."[20] It is this development and sense of purpose that is present within all art forms of late eighteenth century, which exemplifies the politicization of traditional art forms within the context of the revolution.

The relationship between revolutionary activity and art rests upon the connection between politics and culture as a whole. While caricature art can be directly tied to Parisian salon culture, work by artists such as Jaques-Louis David, Jean-Louis Prieur, Jacques-Philippe Caresme, and others, can be directly connected to the evolving socio-cultural sphere in its entirety. In his analysis of the cultural and artistic developments alongside the revolution, Noel Parker places neo-classical art in juxtaposition with revolutionary theatre and festival culture.[21]

The Oath of Horatii, Jaques Louis David 1789

The connection with theatre as a form of both art and communication is clear, however, the particularly heavy influence of political philosophy on revolutionary festival culture is more relatable to the sphere of neo-classicism and its imagery. The manifestations of pro-revolution political rhetoric (particularly that of Rousseau and his egalitarian philosophy) are found within structure of the festival itself. The significance of open-air oath-taking and revolutionary symbols of unity, law, and a free nation exemplify revolutionary philosophy. The fact that these oaths are, "self-created, not given by God through

[20] Noel, *Portrayals of Revolution*, 76.
[21] Ibid., 38-75.

the intermediary of a king," exemplifies Rousseau's philosophies on man and government in a real world context. [22]

To further solidify the connection between revolutionary festivals and contemporary egalitarian philosophy to the evolving field of art, Parker examines the symbolism of revolutionary rhetoric within the festivals themselves. While art may hold symbolism to convey a particular message within its content, festivals held similar, politically motivated, themes within their intent and presentation. Parker cites the "Festival of Reason," which, "took its procession to the Convention (imitating the frequent marches of petitioning crowds), so as to form out of the participants a party in the current political conflict. This was days after the bishop and the clergy of Paris had resigned their Catholic priestly functions to the sovereign people (in the form of the convention, and agreed that 'there should no longer be any other public religion than that of liberty and sacred equality.'"[23] Here the symbolism within the acts of the "Festival of Reason" exemplifies the heavy hand of revolutionary political philosophy of festivals.

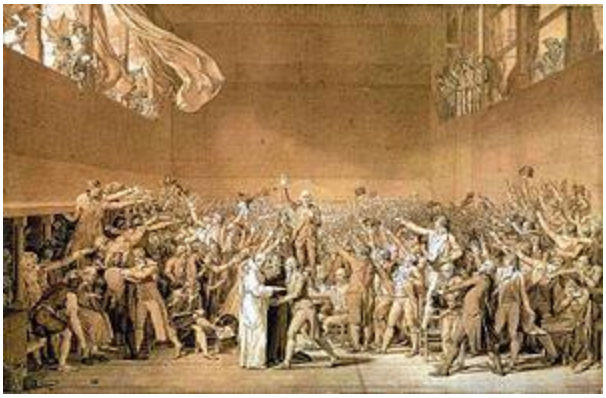
The use of symbolism within neo-classical art of the revolutionary period is the connecting point for Parkers juxtaposition of politically significant aspects of contemporary culture. The difference between the symbolism of festivals and those found within art can be seen within both the acts of the festivals (as been previously outlined), and the content of neo-classical art. While festivals held symbolic acts relative to contemporary culture, neo-classicism relied on symbols of the classics and ancients to forward their political messages. Although the symbols themselves are taken directly from classical art, architecture, and symbolism, the messages remain contemporary to the artists of late eighteenth century France. Indeed the messages and intent are apparent by examining the elements of classical images within the

[22] Ibid., 61.
[23] Ibid., 61-62.

context of pro-revolutionary philosophy. Therefore an examination of the content of neo-classical art is necessary to understand its place within revolutionary iconography as a whole.

One of the most recognizable images of the French neo-classicism movement is Jaques-Louis David's *Oath of Horatii*. The popularity of this work is well-deserved, as it is a premier example of the culmination of revolutionary and classical symbolism, with strong pro-revolutionary political undertones. The work itself represents the story of Roman legend, about the three Horatii brothers. During a war between Rome and the rival city Alba Longa, the three brothers rise to the defense of Rome by agreeing to combat three brothers from the opposing Curiatii family. The left side of the picture is dominated by the strong figures of the three brothers, posing in salute as they receive swords from their father, who is seen at the center of the image. The family's women are positioned in a submissive stance at the bottom right of the scene, suggesting that they are unable to rise to the role of the "defender" as the three brothers.[24]

The revolutionary undertones may be seen within the classical imagery used by David in a context contemporary to the creation of the work itself. The sons of Horatii represent the young of the family, swearing an oath of defense to their father. Their hands outstretched toward the presented swords, in conjunction with their prominence of posture exemplify the willingness to die for the safety of the family as a whole.



Tennis Court Oath Jaques-Louis David 1791

Historian Warren Roberts outlines the purpose of the painting when he notes that "*The Oath of Horatii* can be read as a Rousseauist discourse with men of heroic resolve, swearing a patriotic oath as women abandon themselves to feelings

[24] Norman Bryson, *Tradition and Desire: From David to Delacroix* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 63 -85.

appropriate to their gender. The separation of men and women in the painting is consistent with the writings of Rousseau."[25] Both the position of women within the painting, and the act of vowing to defend the "father" land at the cost of one's own life exemplify the work as a manifestation of Rousseauist philosophy, and present the painting in a revolutionary light.

David's *The Oath of Horatii* presents the context and significance of revolutionary iconography, which can be seen both within the purpose of the painting itself, and its connection to a more contemporary form of David's neo-classical revolutionary intent. The work would have been presented in a similar framework to the caricatures that have been outlined within the Parisian salons.[26] The presence of high art within *salon* culture presents the connection between the motives of the art itself, and the philosophy of the salons themselves. Here one can gets a feel for the culmination between all socio-cultural spheres, and indeed of the eminent revolutionary undertones present within the cultural changes occurring on all levels. That undertone of philosophy can be applied to the connection between *The Oath of Horatii* and David's *Tennis Court Oath*. This work presents a glorified version of the events during the convening of the Estates General in 1789. The image depicts the members convening vowing that they would not disband until the King transformed the Estates General into a National Assembly.[27]

Roberts outlines a clear connection between the two "Oath" images. Within David's, *Tennis Court Oath* there are three figures positioned in stances comparable to those of the father and his three sons within the *Oath of Horatii*. Roberts highlights the position of deputy Martin Dauch of Castellane at the far right of the image, stating that, "One must swear the oath willingly and out of conscience, each deputy, each individual, enters into a collective will volitionally. By pressing his hands against his chest, Dauch creates a dissonance between himself and the

[25] Roberts, *Revolutionary Artists*, 23.
[26] Ibid., 231.
[27] Ibid., 229.

deputies whose arms are extended in patriotic oath."[28] The connection between the two works becomes clear from Robert's analysis. This connection further shows the politicization of the neo-classicist art movement.

The aspects of Rousseau's philosophies that pervade within David's work exemplify both himself and his work as a form of pro-revolutionary discourse. As with caricature art, David's work within neo-classicism is essentially a form of communication. The politicized nature of his work is further exemplified by his connections with the Convention and the Committee of Public Safety, which has been briefly highlighted within the analysis of caricature art and popular imagery. What takes this connection to a higher plane of significance is David's seat on the Committee of Public Information.[29]

While the Committee of Public Safety had played a pivotal roll in the distribution and funding for caricature art and popular imagery, David (and indeed the Committee of Public Instruction) applied a similar approach to a wider cultural audience. The policies of this committee centered more upon the cultural symbolism and morals outlined within the descriptions of public events, such as theatre and festivals. Indeed these policies held strong sentiment to Rousseauist thought and philosophy. The culture of the revolution, and indeed the new socio-political, and indeed socio-cultural world that would result, was based upon those ideals. The Committee of Public Instruction, as its name suggests, would take its place in applying those morals to society as a whole. Indeed, "The diffusion of an appropriate common culture was thought to be so fundamental that the obligation to provide it was even written into

[28] Ibid., 231.
[29] Ibid., xiii.

the revolutionary constitutions."[30] Neo-classical art, in its position alongside a broader socio-cultural scope, would also have been applied to the same effect.

The connection between revolutionary art and iconography and the policies of the revolutionary governments is a significant historical development. This essay has shown the importance of recognizing that art and mass media images directly influence political and socio-cultural movements. It has also shown the importance of using iconography within a historical context. The impact of art and imagery on an individual exemplifies its importance both within a modern psychosocial context, and within the context of the French Revolution of 1789. The evolution and politicization of art in France during the latter half of the eighteenth century exemplifies the importance, and indeed the uses of art and imagery within the historical developments and events occurring between 1789 and 1795. The placement of revolutionary iconography into a historical context is essentially to fully conceptualizing the impact of the revolution on eighteenth century French society, politics, and culture.

[30] Noel, *Portrayals of Revolutions,* 2.