

# Oppositions in romanticism

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Liberty leading the people- Romantic period artwork This is a painting done by Eugene Delacroix as a way to mark the 1830 July revolution that could have ended up with Charles X the reigning monarch being overthrown. It was created in the year 1830 during the romanticism art movement. Delacroix used oil to paint it and its size is 260 cm high and 325 cm in length. The painting has a lot of historical reference as well as displaying human emotions: from heroism all the way to angry despair. The painting's incredible colors are the ones controlling the composition together with intense brushstrokes that result in unforgettable canvas (Pijet, 2009). The painting has a complex interaction that exists between the areas that have dark shadows and the brightly colored ones. As a result, there are detailed contrasts that come out for instance the rapid-fire brushwork blends with the surface and bring out movement and energy of the painting. The way Delacroix uses color is extremely prominent. The colors white, bright red and blue, which is on the flag at the canvas center makes the viewer, discover a journey. The flag colors he uses are not just for the sake of aesthetic pleasure but they also act as representation of both the revolution as well as France. From the liberty painting, one can see the fighters come together in liberty. The color yellow on the dress is similar to the one that is on the wounded man's yellow scarf. There is use of light in a delicate and sparingly way. As a way to bring out the heroine, cannons smoke radiance together with the sunlight emanate on the liberty's head which gives prominence to her power. There is light that shines on the dead fighter who is below her as a way to remembrance of the people who fought for the freedom of Paris (Pijet, 2009). Judging from the painting Delacroix uses a woman who is

loosely dressed in order to show the cause of the revolution was pure and it was meant to campaign for change and freedom. People in France hold these values high in regard. The woman is also barefooted which emphasizes on the Greek goddess who stands for victory (Pijet, 2009). Despite the fact that the revolution was extremely challenging, the woman in the painting together with the young boy on her left and soldiers on her right waiving rifles and pistols up in the air show that they emerged victorious. The revolution shows people from all walks of life and ages celebrating their victory as they march ahead as a united people. During the Romantic period, war was a drive to many paintings because it combines violence, terror as well as heroism. The fact that Delacroix paints the woman with her breasts exposed signifies that the woman is not a real person but an idea he wants to express in form of a human figure. The woman figure in this case demonstrates democracy. Besides the woman figure, two men also stand out. Even though they are standing next to each other, it is clear that they come from different classes. One man has a top hat and a jacket that shows he is of a middleclass level; the other man is wearing a cap and a white shirt depicting a laborer or a person of a low class. The message Delacroix was trying to prove is despite the different classes the people come from, they however come together to rebel against aristocracy. The place where all this is taking place is clear from the Notre Dame church towers that can be seen on the paintings background on the right side (Pijet, 2009). In spite of Delacroix being one of the Romantic painters he later became a very influential painter on the impressionist school. Reason being, in his painting there is use of different brushstrokes; fine, long, short and sweeping ones. In

his paintings, the characters are lively as seen in the liberty leading the people painting. The woman holding the flag has her breasts bare; she is also charging the people following her to march on without minding that they are stepping on dead people. On the other hand, the young boy is carrying two pistols in his hand, which is unusual for a boy, his age. The characters are all extremely moving and full of emotion. Similar to Delacroix's impressionist successors he is able to capture the importance of a single moment. Delacroix uses a woman figure as the focus of his painting because people associate positive things with her and particularly protective motherhood. The compositional structure of this painting encourages the viewer to have an emotional moment while relating to the historical event that took place. A closer look at the painting reveals that Delacroix's main target was a way of creating a reality impression (Pijet, 2009). He wanted the viewer to see how real the situation back then was and relate to today's events. Through his style, Delacroix painting shows how the demography of the French looked like at the time. Work Cited Pijet, Andre. Delacroix's painting liberty leading the people. (2009). Retrieved on 17th November 2013 from <http://pijet.com/2009/03/21/delacroixs-painting-liberty-leading-the-people/>