**Main Argument:** The Enlightenment has contradictions that manifest in art in the battle between Neo-Classicism and Romanticism, and the convergences between the two movements. On one side of the contradictions of the Enlightenment are reason, empirical observation, concrete experience, the belief in scientific rationality and progress, and on the other side - a romanticist insistence on feeling and affect, on poetic language, fascination with irrationality, forces of darkness and the sublime.

**Part I: Aesthetic Experience**

Kant’s notion of disinterested aesthetic judgment that establishes the latter as a bridge between sensuousness and morality:

“As regards the agreeable every one concedes that his judgment, which he bases on a private feeling, and in which he declares that an object pleases him, is restricted merely to himself personally. Thus he does not take it amiss if, when he says that Canary-wine is agreeable, another corrects the expression and reminds him that he ought to say: It is agreeable to me.”

“...but when he puts a thing on a pedestal and calls it beautiful, he demands the same delight from others. He judges not merely for himself, but for all men, and then speaks of beauty as if it were a property of things. ”

Immanuel Kant, “Second Moment of Judgment of Taste, As To Its Quantity”, *Critique of Judgment*, 1794

Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Mankind* (1794): endows Kant’s notion of aesthetic autonomy with a social function:

In the conditions of the division of labor, the emergence of “specialists”, and rupture between reason and the senses, art has the capacity to put together the shuttered halves of humanity.

**Part II: Baroque vs. Neo-Classicism (A Call for Order)**

The late Baroque period in France, or Rococo (mid to late 18th c): stands for Absolute Monarchy, decadent indulgence in sensuousness, emphasizes color at the expense of line, the subject matter includes mythological scenes, landscapes, cupids, nudes, nymphs and so on. Artists: Francoise Boucher, Jean-Honoré Fragonard, etc.
Neo-Classicism: Advanced by Jean-Louis David, included Jean-Batiste-Simeon Chardin, Jean-Batiste Greuze, Elizabeth-Louise Vigée Lebrun, William Hogarth, Anton Raphael Mengs amongst others. Emphasizes line over color; returns to the ideals of Classical Antiquity; establishes a hierarchy between genres; conceives of painting as a moral tale of sacrifice and virtue; stands for the republican ideals of liberty, equality and brotherhood; drapes the political contradiction of its time in Roman garments.

“...the Revolution of 1789-1814 draped itself alternately in the guise of the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire... But unheroic though bourgeois society is, it nevertheless needed heroism, sacrifice, terror, civil war, and national wars to bring it into being. And in the austere classical traditions of the Roman Republic the bourgeois gladiators found the ideals and the art forms, the self-deceptions, that they needed to conceal from themselves the bourgeois-limited content of their struggles and to keep their passion on the high plane of great historic tragedy.”

Karl Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte
Written: December 1851-March 1852;

**Part III Neoclassicism vs. Romanticism (Limits of Representation)**


Themes: struggle with nature, limits of human experience, political freedom and liberation

Form: Pyramidal and X-shaped dynamic composition, emphasis on, and at times even autonomy of color in relation to the object of representation

**Conclusion**
Delacroix’s painting *Liberty Guiding the People* (1831) brings the two contradictions of the Enlightenment together: on the one hand, the belief in the human capacity to produce historical change, and on the other hand, the limits of the means of representation to render history as a knowable and controllable force.