



A Look at Liberty



Paul-Joseph-Victor-Dargaud (France, 1850-1912)

The Statue of Liberty in Frederic-Auguste Bartholdi's Studio Paris, 1884

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Paul-Joseph-Victor-Dargaud's painting *The Statue of Liberty in Frederic-Auguste Bartholdi's Studio Paris (1884)* commemorates the construction of Bartholdi's colossus *Liberty Enlightening the World*, better known to Americans as the Statue of Liberty. Inspired on a trip to Egypt by the grandeur of the Pyramids and the Sphinx, Bartholdi imagined a monumental statue that would be twice the size of the sphinx. Because of its size, the statue was modeled in sections. The right arm bearing the torch was the first portion completed: it was shipped to the United States in 1876 in time for the nation's centennial. Dargaud's view of the workshop represents the state at which the plaster model for the statue's left hand and arm had been completed.

- What does this painting tell us about the making of the statue? How can we tell how large it is? Is Dargaud emphasizing the statue as a technical triumph? A symbol? If so, of what?
- Like any public monument, the Statue of Liberty was created out of complex political and private agendas. Research the political maneuvering behind the statue's construction and the rise of the Third Republic in France. How did France's agenda for the statue and the United States' interpretation of her differ?

Giving "Liberty" a Voice

In "The New Colossus" the poet Emma Lazarus contrasts the soon to be installed symbol of the United States with what many consider the perfect symbol of the Greek and Roman era, the *Colossus of Rhodes*. Why might she want to draw comparisons with those ancient cultures?

In fact, although as Lazarus suggests, Bartholdi may have created the statue with the well known colossus in mind, he did not intend for it to become a symbol of welcome for

thousand's of European immigrants. Lazarus' words gave new meaning to the Statue of Liberty as a beacon of welcome. Through Lazarus' poem the statue became known as "Mother of Exiles" torch in hand to lead her new children into American success and happiness.

The New Colossus , 1883

Not like the **brazen** giant of Greek fame
With conquering limbs astride from land to land,
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightening, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows worldwide welcome: her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame,
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied **pomp!**" cries she
with silent lips." Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The **retched refuse** of your **teeming** shore,
Send these, the homeless, **tempest tossed** to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door."

- Look up the meaning of the words in **bold** in a dictionary. How do those definitions compare and contrast with the meaning within the context of Lazarus' poem?
- Compare and contrast US attitudes towards freedom and immigration, from 1883 when this was written, and today.
- If you were asked to design a new monument for the New York harbor, what would it be? What about a monument for San Francisco harbor or the border between California and Mexico?