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Sawaros Sasanarakkij

Honore Daumier

Word Count: 811 words

The one who is a political and social satire painter, who paints mainly caricature artworks, who understands the social classes' gap, and who originally presents impressionism technique, is Honore Daumier. He had discovered impressionism which is still the technique of modern art today. All his artworks generally are inspired by the French society in Paris and highly original, both in their styles and subjects. He, a French caricature painter, was always interested in political and social situation happening in France and launched many artworks which one day caused him to be imprisoned by the government. The most interesting thing about Honore Daumier is that he embodied the political and social satires through his caricature paintings and also using his individual technique, namely impressionism.

As a painter, Honore Daumier was the first impressionist who originally introduced impressionism to modern art. Impressionism artworks are the pictures that faces and bodies of the subjects are devoured by surroundings especially light and become one element with atmosphere, however, these artworks contradict his usual work because of deficiency of humorous meaning or comic style.¹

¹ Jean Adhemar. "Honore Daumier." Britannica. 31 Jan. 2013.
<<http://global.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/152400/Honore-Daumier>>

In the Street, Mother with Child, Don Quixote and Sancho Pansa are three examples of impressionism technique painted by Daumier.² In the Street mainly composites of mother with two children walking on the street but by using this techniques, he did not paint the main subjects clearly – no crystal-clear faces and shapes which they are devoured by surroundings. The second picture, Mother with Child, shows only a mother with white dress holding her little baby. In this work, they obviously blend with environment, though they have totally different and opposite color to the scenes. The last example of this technique is Don Quixote and Sancho Pansa, a nobility and a farmer that is the character in novel. Because of their quick thinking, inventiveness, and pervade society, many artists and painters including Honore Daumier have been produced artworks about them and this picture is one of his favorite themes.

Back to his childhood life, Honore Daumier was born on February 26, 1808. He dreamt to be a poet since he was young so his family decided to move to Paris where he could attend a school that offered good education. But when time passed by, his artistic talent was surfaced thus he began to paint caricature paintings including lithography work. His artistic talents and techniques such as impressionism are admirably shown on both painting and lithography. Daumier always thought that he was drawing his last picture so that he could intentionally draw and devote himself for painting.

Daumier notes for caricature paintings sometimes in the expression way of comic, his artworks usually show about social and political satires, corruptible politicians, unfair lawyers and judges, immoral doctors, classes in society, and also

² Wikipedia contributors. "Honore Daumier." Wikipaintings. 31 Jan. 2013.
< www.wikipaintings.org/en/honore-daumier >

royalties. In 1831, he participated as a staff in *La Caricature*, a political journal which criticized the French government.³ Then he bravely launched the caricature of King Louis Philippe as Gargantua like a big monster swallowing French citizens' money.⁴ From this attack, he was imprisoned for six months.

After he was freed, the *La Caricature* was closed by the government. However, he still continued producing his ironic work for new magazine called *La Charivari* which actually owned by the same entrepreneur as last firm.⁵ Why did he continue working in this field? It is said that though he lived in Paris with the higher cultural society since he was young, Paris was not as charming and beautiful for him as it is for others. Instead it desperately influenced him of negative attitude yet seriously inspired him for his paintings. His motivation mostly came from everything in Paris which was probably a theater for him.

Turning into a social satire painter, Honore Daumier also realized how each class in the society was treated differently as he expressed through his paintings of the three-part series namely First-Class Carriage, Second-Class Carriage, and lastly Third-Class Carriage.⁶ In the Third-Class Carriage, there is one isolated family sitting and facing away from other passengers. The mother who is holding her baby in her

³ Simon Howard. *500 years of Illustration*. 2011. P.176.

⁴ Nicolas Pioch. "Honore Daumier." *Ibiblio*. 31 Jan. 2013.
<<http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/daumier/>>

⁵ Brain Conin. "Honore Daumier." *Goodcomics*. 1 Feb. 2013
<<http://goodcomics.comicbookresources.com/2008/10/02/stars-of-political-cartooning-honore-daumier/>>

⁶ Artble contributors. "Honore Daumier." *Artble*. 1 Feb. 2013
<http://www.artble.com/artists/honore_daumier/>

arms looks sorrowful and beside her, the grandmother who looks like she is thinking of her indigent experience and having no determined terminal.

On the contrary, the characteristics of passengers in First-Class Carriage imply that their life is better than lower class passengers. It seems that people are dressing in elegant clothes and having their own definite terminal. In this carriage, it is not as crowded as the lower one therefore they can sit comfortably. It is crystal-clear that people in different classes are not getting equal benefit.

Even though Horone Daumier, the political and social satire painter with original technique, was jailed and compelled by French government, he still painted his caricature works until he was nearly blind. His artworks were ignored until one year of after his death and being appreciated till today.