ART 106; Museum Paper

 [Name of the Writer]

[Name of the Institution]

ART 106; Museum Paper

# *Introduction*

I visited the Museum of Modern Art in the New York City. The art piece that attracted my attention was a beautiful painting “The Starry Night. A Dutch painter Vincent Van Gogh made this oil on canvas in September 1889. This painting is regarded as one of the finest works of Van Gogh. The beautiful view of the east-facing window of Gogh’s asylum room is described in the painting. The Western culture calls this painting as one of the most recognized paintings of history. The Starry Night has been a permanent art piece in the Museum of Modern Art since the year 1941.

***The Starry Night***

Gogh has used a vivid and unusual style to portray the dark sky with shining stars, a crescent moon, whirling clouds, and a peaceful village. He made the painting when he stayed in an asylum for several months due to some illness related to mental disorders. Gogh has used dark colors for the village and bright colors for the windows in this painting. The dot-to-dot and lines effect by the curving contours catch the attention of the viewers through which the silence of a starry night can be felt. Yellow color is dominant in the painting and the use of this yellow with white gives a spiral effect of the objects to the viewers. The sky was painted by Gogh using cobalt blue and ultramarine while the moon and stars were painted using zinc yellow and Indian yellow. Nature in the painting is portrayed in an imaginary way. The tall trees stretching from earth to sky seem that they want to leave the earth and join the moon and stars. The village is structured on the right side of the canvas with glowing yellow houses against the rolling blue hills. The harmonious match of colors and the perfect use of brushstrokes of various sizes and orientation is displayed in the dynamic composition of the objects of different sizes. A contrast of life and death may be depicted in the painting as Gogh tries to show luminous stars and a peaceful but gloomy village. Only the hemispherical moon and brightly shining stars are the sources of light in the picture. It also represents that the whole world looks gloomy at night but the sky is still bright because of the moon light and shining stars. A strong emotion is conveyed by the dimness of the dark night sky, which reflects his associative and multilayered thinking and his quest to overcome his mental illness and suffering.

Van Gogh suffered from mental illness throughout his life. once he cut off his ear after fighting with his friend Paul Gaugin, the famous French artist. This incident lead him to be committed to a mental asylum. While at the mental health asylum, he painted The Starry Night during severe moods of despair and suffering. Gogh always painted by observing, but he was limited to subjects that were in his surroundings. Therefore, this magnificent painting was created by his strong memory and vivid imagination. It is believed that Van Gogh did not sleep for three nights to finish this abstract landscape painting. New ways of working and theories were being introduced when The Starry Night was painted. The artists were moving away from the traditional methods used in painting and a sense of modernity was being introduced. The Cyprus tree in the painting is an illustration of his suffering from illness as the tree is considered as a symbol of mourning in the Mediterranean. The Cyprus tree is a darker element presented in the painting. The impatience of Gogh is shown by the swirling brushstrokes and it gives an impression that his brush had been constantly moving. Gogh wanted to paint reality in a higher and purer state. Due to his mental illness, the art critics of that time criticized his work and claimed that his style was childish and sloppy. Impressionism was the technique that was followed by the painters of that time. They painted the attractive landscapes that looked exactly like photographs. However, The Starry Night and other such paintings symbolized the expression of internal feelings of the artists. It gave way to another technique called Expressionism. This painting is famous no because of the negative emotions of Gogh; rather it depicts the strong feelings of hope conveyed by him through the portrayal of bright stars shining in the dark sky.

***Comparison***

A friend of mine visited the Guggenheim Museum and found the wonderful art piece “The Hermitage at Pontoise” by Camille Pissarro in 1867. It is a beautiful oil on canvas displaying the French landscapes. This mesmerizing painting contains the trademarks of Impressionism, which is the opposite of Gogh’s The Starry Night that portrayed Expressionism. It is a village path with a cluster of houses. The town of Pontoise is almost 25 miles away from Paris. Pissarro lived in that town from 1866 to 1883. The atmospheric effects of the amazing rural scene are neatly painted on the canvas without any loose brush effects. It is a traditional painting with the scenes that are far away from the real world. A strong impression from daily life is given for example, few people are seen walking or standing on the ground such as a woman with load on her head and children resting in the grass. Light and dark shading contrasts are used for this attractive painting which portray the deep artistic sense of the painter. The painter using different colors and shades for creating magnificent effects gives a fascinating picture of landscape. The verdant greenery, stonework of the buildings, and earthy fields depict the natural and perfect captures from the nature. He usually aims to provide a canvas fully green to the people beholding his art. He has made a masterful and clever use of light and shade to catch the attention of the viewers. The rugged life of ordinary people is mostly depicted in the art of Pissarro. He tries to evoke the emotions of relaxation and calmness in a scene where normally depression can be depicted.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, all the pieces of art have their own importance and significance. There is no limit to the beauty of shades, colors, and contrasts used by the painters to create wonderful paintings. The paintings following the Impressionism technique have their own importance as we get to see the perfection of the portraits and landscapes. Expressionism makes us look into the personal impressions of the artists as they portray the things going around their minds. Both paintings caught my eyes because of the contents and compositions added by the painters. Every piece of art depicts a certain message or form and represents a specific genre. The Starry Night by Van Gogh gives a beautiful message that nighttime is not just about worries, miseries, and darkness. It can sometimes contain a ray of hope that illuminates the dark thoughts. The Hermitage at Pontoise by Camille Pissarro is a realistic work of art that gives a message that we must look for some hope in our rugged lives. It is a serene landscape that displays people involved in their routine activities having a strong connection with nature. Each of these two paintings is a wonderful and amazing masterpiece of the painters.

# End Notes

Aragón, José Luis, Gerardo G. Naumis, Ming Bai, Manuel Torres, and Philip K. Maini. 2008. “Turbulent Luminance in Impassioned van Gogh Paintings.” *Journal of Mathematical Imaging and Vision* 30 (3): 275–83.

Denke, Heinrich. 2017. *Painting Vincent Van Gogh Starry Night*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

Zhao, Yonghui, Roy S. Berns, Lawrence A. Taplin, and James Coddington. 2008. “An Investigation of Multispectral Imaging for the Mapping of Pigments in Paintings.” In *Computer Image Analysis in the Study of Art*, 6810:681007. International Society for Optics and Photonics.

Zelazko, Alicja. 2018. *The Starry Night.* November. Accessed October 2019. https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Starry-Night.