Understanding Art Test

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# Comparing and Contrasting Paganini

## Historical Position

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres was born on August 29, 1780, in Montauban, France (Bio, 2013. His father taught him about art, but Ingres wanted to know more, and he soon moved on to find new ways of learning. Although Ingres’s portraits are considered some of his most admired work, he despised them regardless of his skills at capturing the subjects personalities through themHe did, however love creating history paintings, and ended up creating a number of these paintings. When he was around 60 years old, he was considered to be the greatest living artist, in France, at that time. As Ingres got older, he created female nude paintings, which are considered to be his most famous works. Although critics loved to hate Ingres’s works, “Ingres was, of course, influential nonetheless and a leader in the Neoclassical movement and he inspired many great artists included Picasso and Matisse” (Artble, 2013). Jean-Auguste Dominique Ingres died on January 14, 1867 in Paris, France (Bio, 2013).

Eugene Delacroix was born on April 26, 1798, in Charenton-Saint-Maurice, France (Bio, 2013), to a family that was artistic; he started to study art when he was seventeen years old, and studied under Baron Pierre-Narcisse Guerin, who was an academic painter. He idolized Michelangelo and he enjoyed decorating government building’s ceilings and walls, because they made him feel as if he was closer to Michelangelo. Not only was he influenced by Michelangelo, but he was also influenced by Peter Paul Rubens and various English painters such as: John Constable and Richard Bonington; he also proved to be an inspiration for many artists as well (Artble, 2013). Eugene Delacroix died on August 13, 1863 in Paris, France (Bio, 2013).

## Purpose of Art

The purpose of Jean-Auguste Ingres’s pencil drawning of Niccolo Paganini, portrays that there is a gentleman underneath this famous musician, and that he can be presented formal and shown in an historical fashion. The purpose of Eugene Delacroix’s oil painting of Paganini shows the romanticized version of him; how his music, and him as an artist, can be portrayed to show the emotions, the essence, and the passion of this man and his music.

## Materials and Methods

The ground that Jean – August Ingres used for “The Violinist Niccolo Paginini” is pencil on paper; the dimensions are 298 x 218 mm, and it is located in Musée du Louvre in Paris, France (Web Gallery of Art, n.d.). Although this is a pencil drawing done in pencil, Jean – Auguste Ingres has created a lot of emotion and character in his drawing; he has used both contour and gestural lines in his drawing. The contour lines has given Niccolo Paganini his shape and form; however, gestural lines have also been used to give essence to his image. Eugene Delacroix ‘s ground that he used to create his portrait of Niccolo Paganini was oil on cardboard on wood panel; the dimensions of the portrait are 17 5/8 x 11 7/8 inches (or 44.77 x 30.16 centimeters), and it is located in The Phillips Collection (The Phillips Collection, 2012). The figure of Niccolo Paganini is painted with Paganini wearing a dark outfit which blends together with the ground; his face, hands, and his shirt are the images that the eye is drawn to first, since the light is falling on them, making them bright against his clothes and the background. The bow of the violin also stands out against the violin itself, it shines in the light; however, the violin itself blends in with his outfit and the background.

Although these are two different portraits, by different artists, they were both striving to capture the same thing, the essence of Niccolo Paganini; however, the essences that both artists captured of the musician are different. Ingres captured a more serene side of Paganini, as he stands posing for his portrait with his violin under his arm, he appears to almost be smiling.In the portrait that Delacroix captured, Paganini is playing his violin, and the passion that Paganini felt when he was playing the violin was captured. These two representations of Niccolo Paganini show the difference between the neoclassical and the romanticism movements (RUGU, 2013).

**Style and Movement**

Jean – Auguste Ingres portrait, “The Violinist Niccolo Paganini” is considered to be a neoclassical sketch; the artists “defined the style with their emphasis on formal composition, historic subject matter, contemporary settings and costumes, rigidity, solidity, and monumentality in the spirit of classical revival” (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013). Jean – Auguste Ingres sketched Niccolo Paganini in a formal composition, Paganini is dressed wearing the proper outfit of his time as a violinist; he has his violin held under his arm, and a calm look on his face. Ingres observed Paganini first hand, he was able to get Paganini to pose for him while he drew the sketch; Ingres and Paganini both played the violin and played together on numerous occasions, and had formed a friendship between each other (Ayrshire Arts Network, 2012).

Eugene Delacroix’s portrait, “Paganini”, is considered to be a romantic painting; “with its emphasis on the imagination and emotion, Romanticism emerged as a response to the disillusionment with the Enlightenment values of reason and order in the aftermath of the French Revolution of 1789” (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013). Delacroix portrayed the passion and the emotion that Paganini had when he was performing; he did this by creating a relationship between the figure and the ground, making them blend together, and by having the light shine on his hands, face, and shirt. Delacroix is showing the viewer what the audience felt while watching Paganini play; the viewer can see the passion on Paganini’s face as he is consumed by his passion for his music.

Although these are two representations, they show the difference between the two movements; Delacroix’s portrayal is romanticizing Niccolo Paganini’s music, and the artist himself, while Ingres’s portrayal is showing Paganini in a more subtle form, much like “the man behind the music”.

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