

Comparison of Guernica and the Hall of the Bulls

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Analysis Assignment 4.1 – Ancient/Modern Essay

Introduction

The phenomenon that we call “Art” has always been a part of human existence, just like eating, sleeping, and talking. Our ancient ancestors, who used to live in caves in the upper Paleolithic era dating back to 17000 to 15000 BCE, spent valuable time creating astonishing images on the cave walls of Lascaux Caves. The discovery of these remarkable images painted on the walls of Lascaux caves is evidence of the creativity that had always been an essential part of our makeup. The present essay intends to draw a formal comparison between Picasso’s “Guernica” and Lascaux’s Hall of the Bulls, evaluate the driving force involved in the making of these paintings, and compare the themes and message of the paintings.

Discussion

Vogelkop Bowerbird decorates its nest with objects like flowers, seeds, and leaves in a very careful manner, segregating them depending on colour and the size of the object to distinguish the neatness of its garden from the wild tangle of the wild. But the question remains: is it creative? The answer is “no”; the bird is doing it only to attract the female; it lacks the ingenuity and curiosity of the human art that we will analyze in this paper by comparing Lascaux’s Hall of the Bulls and Picasso’s Guernica. The most interesting thing about this analysis is the time (17000 years approx.) that divides these paintings. Nonetheless, the similarities are remarkable (Furlani, 2007). This point also raises the question of how far we have reached in the process of creativity. Are we more creative than our Paleolithic ancestors? Picasso’s Guernica is a massive work with a width of (3.49 m x 7.77 m), painted in monochrome, filled with graphic and agonized images of chaos and disorder. The painting style is abstract, which links it with Cubism, the famous art movement of the 20th century.

The painting contains a variety of objects, including mutilated bodies of both animals and humans and some objects like bulls and horses represent the symbolism of in-depth themes of human agony and war (Arnheim, 2006). The objects include a bull, a woman with a dead child, a dead soldier, a dying horse, and so on, which are put together in a seemingly uncontrolled manner. The painting is not a pleasant sight to behold. It depicts the utmost atrocities of war and the suffering and brutality of human beings on their fellow beings. The objects in the painting are synonymous with cartoons, yet the impact is magnanimous as the sheer sight of the painting gives an impression of hate and disgust.

Hall of the Bulls is one of the most heavily painted areas of the cave. The objects of the painting include only animals of various kinds, such as bulls, horses, bison, and lions. Like Guernica, the figures are superimposed and painted between and across each other. They don't seem to follow any pattern at all, and Guernica's sense of chaos is also evident in the Hall of Bulls. The two dominant bulls are facing each other and may be ready for a fight.

There is no background in the paintings, the rocks provide the background, the cartoon-like figures in the painting, and the haphazard structure yet the clever layout of the composition resembles cubism as we have already seen in Picasso. The animals, like the figures in Picasso, are plucked out of their natural environment into an abstraction that signifies disorder, wilderness, and fear of survival and extinction. It is a primitive world where our ancestors used to live in caves, and they were well aware of the impending perils of the natural world and natural forces. Although the intention is different in both depictions, the paintings share many similarities in style and form. One was painted in 17000 BCE, and the other was painted less than a century before, portraying the horrors of their surroundings. Both paintings depict an impression of fear, fear of death and destruction in Guernica, and the way the animals are tripping over each other may allude to the fear of being killed and eaten either by the hunter-gatherers or animals.

The most significant similarity is the absence of perspective and background. We don't know where those objects of mutilated bodies of humans and animals are placed and hence, there is a possibility that the bulls in the Hall of the Bulls are either running at each other or running on the cave walls, it is uncertain (Reichold and Bernhard, 2003). The cavemen were equally uncertain of their position in this world as we are today. The Paleolithic hunter-gatherer was well aware of the dangers of his chaotic world and his struggle for survival. The paintings give a sense of the mysterious nature of our journey from cave to civilization. Unlike the realistic depiction of the objects, the paintings give an imaginative view of the world in chaos and cruelty subject to decomposition.

Conclusion

Now we can answer that question we raised at the beginning of the analysis, our ancestors were equally creative they knew their position in the grand scheme of things as they depicted the struggle for evolution among species, our civilized world is equally chaotic and fearful, and maybe we are going through an evolutionary struggle. On the surface, Guernica depicts the truth about the atrocities of war in a form and style very similar to the one in the Paleolithic era.

Works Cited

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