

# Example of essay on connoisseurship

[Art & Culture](#), [Symbolism](#)



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## **Part I. Stylistic**

The unknown work of art can be compared to the works of Paul Gauguin. However, what sets the “ Self Portrait with Halo” painting from the rest of Gauguin’s work is the use of more vivid colors, but all of them show similarities in the use of postimpressionism techniques. Gauguin’s Self-Portrait with Emile Bernard in 1888 shows similarity in terms of angles. Gauguin’s portrait with halo art and that of Gauguin’s portrait with Emile Bernard encompasses characteristics such as the use of real-life subjects models, emphasized distort form and visible brush strokes. Gauguin used his own image to emphasize the characteristic of postimpressionism in terms of using real-life subject or a portrait of the artist himself. Although the self-portrait with halo does have a signature and date in it, it still quite confusing to determine the ownership because he just used initials as compared to his other works that has his complete last name. There are also apparent differences across the works of Gauguin. For example, Gauguin used more arbitrary color in his work entitled “ The Spirit of the Dead Watching”, while the self-portrait with halo appears to have used more conventional vivid colors, which emphasizes thicker use of paint. Paul Gauguin produced the

two mentioned artworks during the final years of his career. Gauguin is among the pioneers of postimpressionism style that emerged during the 19th century, it describes the development in French art following the works of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Vincent Van Gogh. Information about Gauguin's work can be found in Conger Goodyear Collection featured in Albright-Knox Art Gallery and Van Gough Museum.

## **Part II. Subject Discussion**

Gauguin left the materialistic Europe to explore more exotic subjects in his art. In most of his work, real-life subjects were used, but they are far from the conventional subjects popular in European artistry during his time. He used more primitive subjects in South Seas as depicted in his works showing women with dark toned skin to distinguish his signature work. For example, Gauguin used dark skin toned women in “ Words of the Devil”, this artwork encompasses theme similarity in his other work such as “ The Spirit of the Dead Watching”. In addition, both works depicts similar subject of a dark skinned women. However, this usual subject used comes different in his other work such as “ The Yellow Christ” and “ The Green Christ”. These two other works encompasses symbolism that features a more religious approach that in some way contradicts his other works with darker themes.

## **Part III. Context**

19th century is the year era Realism movement in France where Gauguin was born and spent most of his life. The movement came after the Revolution of 1848 that overturned the reign of Louis-Philippe, the same time when Gauguin was born in Paris France. Realism became the cornerstone of

objective imagery of modern life in France, which greatly influenced the development of contemporary approach in art. One of the influences of the era in art is the creation of self-portraits using the artist's image of himself as the subject. This approach encompasses the process of self-discovery. Gauguin created several works featuring himself as the subject of the portrait such as the self-portrait with Emile Bernard and self-portrait dedicated to Camere. Self-portraits for artists such as Gauguin signify their symbolism of themselves, irony, sheer view of self-imagery and expression of thoughts.