

# Example of essay on dave hickey's interpretation of norman rockwell's paintings

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Through his theory, Fredrick Jameson presents the notion of postmodernism as an extension of modernism. He argues that, it is essential for the society to adopt postmodernism largely not as a style but rather as a context of cultural dominance. He believed that postmodernism was the major movement responsible for the control of our world popular culture. Fredrick Jameson diligently reiterated that any sustained commitments with utopia would end up bringing us back to the discredited concept of totality itself through our postmodernism imaginations. The utopia, as Jameson explains, is the dream deep inside a human being that can be realized if the utopian principles are constituted. He managed to develop the genre of utopia when he presented the dialectical thinking on his Marxism presentation, where on one hand he asserts that utopia is practically impossible since it is indispensable while on the other hand it re-emerges as a transformative dialectic. Having outlined some of the concepts of dialectic Utopia in regard to Jameson theory, I will discuss the role of Utopian desire in Dave Hickey's interpretation of Norman Rockwell's paintings.

In his book *The Air Guitar: Essays on Art and Democracy*, art critic Dave Hickey takes on Norman Rockwell's works of art. Rockwell is perceived by many art lovers as more of an illustrator than a fine arts painter. He is famed for numerous painterly works such as the four freedoms and the great depression. Rockwell style of small-town of England realism, also known as regionalism is perceived by many critics such as Dave Hickey as the abstract of modern art. Hickey ridicules Rockwell works of art without inflection. He criticizes Rockwell for the aversion to the problems of the American city life. In connection to Jameson utopian theory, Hickey focuses

on the utopian dimensions that provide knowledge and criticisms in our popular culture. It is for this reason that he ends up depicting Norman Rockwell as a less serious artist who desires to portray the contemporary life of Americans. Jameson stated that, the connection between the utopian genres may be grabbed by first identifying ones past and future with their present life. Dave hickey effortlessly tries to communicate the idiosyncrasy of the cultural experiences of the popular culture in America from the second half of the twentieth century.

However, Hickey defends Rockwell by claiming that most of the people confuse this artist's profession to their own. He mentions most of the critics being professors, preachers, and various social critics who have majored in passing judgments and imposing norms which Norman Rockwell did not touch on. He claims that Rockwell is always giving the best that he can to the world as he deems fit. He portrays various aspects that depict aspects of our social world existing with the realm of civility that do not hurt us too terribly. But he claims that it is not Utopia (Hickey 40) Dave hickey further asserts that Norman Rockwell is far from being regarded as a fascist manipulator as most of these critics mostly claim him to be. He praises the works of Johnny Mercer and Norman Rockwell claiming that they taught him to sing and see respectively. He is captivated by Johnny Mercer's lyrics fools come in, where wise men fear to tread, and so I come to you my love, my heart above my head (37) Rockwell and Mercer appear to be very important artists in the life of Dave Hickey; they remind him of the Jam sessions that he had attended.

Jameson explains that insofar a class of consciousness seeks to express the

unity of collectivity, and then it can be regarded to as Utopian. Jameson further explains that, “ the general collectivity of whatever kind utopian provided such collectiveness are themselves figures for the ultimate concrete collective life of an achieved utopian or a classless society”(Jameson, 291). It is for this reason that the interpretation of Norman Rockwell and Jonny Mercer by Hickey is solely based on the utopian genre and the context and exclusivity of their art. He puts it simply that, Normans paintings and Johnny Mercer’s music do not really have any special avenue (Hickey 37). Therefore, since this form art does not have the institutional guarantee of our attention, then it must be carefully be selected every individual.

In his interpretation of the works of art by Rockwell and Mercer, Hickey explains that Human art and language celebrates Norman Rockwell’s great gift of seeing and portraying the lives of the American people in painting. He says” this is what he celebrates and insists upon, that ‘ normal’ life, in this country it is not normal at all” (Hickey 39). Through his interpretation, Rockwell is acknowledged for the portraying America for the good things that it should be remembered for, but he ultimately avoided portraying poverty, the social unrests. He failed in demonstrating the ugly vices in America which is part of realism as Jameson explained. In response to his critics, Norman Rockwell said that he paints life as he desires (Utopia) it to be.

## **Works cited**

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