

La liberte guidant le peuple

People



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Art is beyond the limitations of country boundaries and its values should be shared by people from all over the world eternally. When talking about art, I have to say that France is my favorite country for the representation of art, as the country has a long history for pursuing art and fashion since Louis XIV, the King of Sun, who is a king keen on the pursuit of art and fashion.

Therefore in this summer I took the opportunity to go to Louvre Museum in Paris to pay a visit to the famous 011 paintings in the museum.

In this essay, I would like to choose one of the famous oil painting La Liberty guiding the people from my personal perspective of gendered art. On entering the museum, I could sense a strong atmosphere of history and a deep sense of reverence rose deep from my soul. Then I saw the famous painting drawn by Delicacies. In the middle of the painting is a young French lady who is calling on her villagers to fight against the Restoration of Bourbon in July Revolution.

The woman is half naked in the upper part of her body, with her breasts out. On her right hand, she is holding a flag with three colors, which represent freedom, equality and philanthropist. Now the flag has become the national flag of the Republic of France. On her left hand, she was grasping a long gun with a sharp knife on it. Though she is wearing a long dress, we can see her legs are powerful and firm, and she is leading the soldiers to move forward across the dead bodies and the ruins of the bulldogs.

The background of this painting is set before Notre Dame in Paris where there is full of the smokes from gunpowder, which shows that the war is in its hottest point. Most of the critiques believe that she is the symbol of freedom,

with great passion and romantic characters. To look at the female in detail, we can find that this woman shows a temperament of masculinity different from her own gender.

Different from John Berger's traditional opinion on man and woman in artistic works, which means that a man's presence is dependent upon the promise of power, while a woman's presence expresses her own attitude to herself, or his belief that men focus on the outside while women focus on the inner part (John Berger, 1990), here a sense of cross-gender identification is emphasized in the work as a way of showing opposition to the old binary system. As a result, the symbolic meaning in this painting is evident.

Just as the view from feminist that "gender is a social construction" this painting seems to reconstruct our social norm about the binary system. Traditionally, gender is presented as biological and predetermined instead of a culturally constructed, external performance (Sloop, 2004). So although the women act like men, their female bodies are inscribed with sexual frailty---a weakness that can only be matched by masculine strength as their rescuer is physically privileged (Sarah Cornfield, 2011).

This painting seems to doubt that: why men should be prior to women? As is seen, on the left side of the painting, there is a dead, thin male body, whose lower part of the body is naked. Also, beside the leg of the woman, there is a male enemy whose seems to be begging for the forgiveness of the woman and the working class. These two characters are uncommon in the paintings, as they show the weakness of male in trench. Throughout the history of OLL

painting, male image seldom appears weaker than female image, according to the introduction of John Berger.

What is more, on the painting: he is holding his gun high up his head alongside with the woman. Contrary to use a strong and matured male as the hero in the painting, the existence of a young boy, though not so powerful than a strong male, represents the hope emerging in the new world. On the left side of the woman, there are two men dressing very fashionably. They represent the emerging working class who are fighting against the Bourbon. But they are not the main characters in this painting, as their existence is for the purpose to highlight to woman representing freedom.

After all, all of the unusual and creative arrangements by the painter here in fact want to suggest us that everything old will be ruined and a new social norm based on love freedom and equality will be set up in the future. To sum up, the bold imagination, the rich implied meanings in this work all contribute to its successes during the whole history. This painting gives us a romantic and ideal feeling in the severe war, and constructs our traditional conception on gender, that women not always appear as a weak image and women can be more powerful men to some extent.

However, in the same time I also admit the fact that differences between male and female do exist. And in the whole painting history, as Berger has pointed out, the "ideal" is always assumed to be male and the image of the woman is designed to flatter him. In my opinion, as long as the painting

present people with the aesthetic characters of masculinity and femininity instead of torturing them. I admire the painter Eugene