

A woman and child in the driving seat: a neo-classical art reaction essay

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A Woman and Child in the Driving Seat: A Neo-Classical Art Reaction A Woman and Child in the Driving Seat: A Neo-Classical Art Reaction A Woman and Child in the Driving Seat (1881) is another one of kind masterpiece of the neo-classical times by Mary Cassatt (1844-1926). Arresting is the element of strong contrasts, which is the hallmark of a neo-classical art: a contrast of the subject woman and child being foregrounded as against the forest and the man in the dark background; a contrast of ages, with the woman being the oldest and the child being the youngest; a contrast of genders, with the woman and the man being put at the back of each other; and a contrast of environments, with the naturalness of the forest as against the mechanistic milieu of the automobile.

Less noticeable contrasts include the way the hats affect the upper extremities of the subject woman and child, wherein the woman's hat overshadows her eyes and forehead, whereas the little girl's hat barely does. Other minute contrasts dabble on combination of colors at different intensities, which is fundamentally neo-classical (Lenzi 27). As a neo-classical art work and any other piece of art, A Woman and Child in the Driving Seat expresses both personal and social functions. Its personal function is purely the artist's expression of her feelings and ideas relative to her social background, personality, age and experience, which in this case center on the neo-classical era. Besides the emotions evoked by the aforementioned sharp contrasts, the painting's social function, on the other hand, describes the social or collective aspects of neo-classical lifestyle, such as the love of harmony, serenity, romantic, and impressionistic atmosphere, where the artist's role is mainly of a story teller, successfully depicting how people such

as the woman and the child would have lived and looked like in neo-classical times (Lenzi 43).;; Works Cited; Lenzi, Carlotta. Neoclassicism.

New York: Barnes ; Noble, 2007. 1st Art Gallery Group. Rev. of A Woman and Child in the Driving Seat, Mary Cassatt . 1st Art Gallery. 26 November 2007.

14 December 2008 ; <http://www.1st-art-gallery.com/Mary-Cassatt/A-Woman-And-Child-In-The-Driving-Seat,-1881.html>;.,.,.,.