

3 July 2017

http://www.wga.hu/detail_s/g/gogh_van/10/portra07.jpg



Eugene Boch (The Poet), 1888, Oil on Canvas
http://www.wga.hu/detail_s/g/gogh_van/12/cypress01.jpg



Starry Night, 1889, Oil on Canvas
<http://b02.deliver.odai.yale.edu/3b/07/3b072179-2fc7-42bc-87cc-9ee4d782b270/ag-obj->

[12507-002-pub-med.jpg](http://www.wga.hu/detail_s/g/gogh_van/10/pub-med.jpg)



Le Café du nuit (The Night Café), 1888, Oil on Canvas

Compare and Contrast: Van Gogh's *The Poet*, *The Night Café*, and *Starry Night*

Vincent van Gogh lived from 1853 to 1890, so he painted these canvases toward the end of his short life.

First, subject. The subjects in these paintings are different: The poet's subject is the poet Eugene Boch. He was van Gogh's friend. Van Gogh wrote to his own brother, Theo, about Boch to say that he wanted to paint Boch's portrait. I rather liked how he described it, so I'll quote van Gogh himself: "I would like to convey in the picture my appreciation, the love that I have for him. So I will paint him just as he is, as faithfully as I can [...]." That feels very intimate to me, and reading that in van Gogh's letter to his brother made the portrait much more meaningful to me.

The subject of *Starry Night*, of course, is the night sky. He painted this portrait outside under the stars. With this portrait, however, he did not attempt to adhere to reality in the portrayal of the night sky. This is a lot closer to post-impressionism than to naturalistic depiction.

The broad subject of the *Night Café* is the Gare. This painting is a late night scene, it looks like the clock in the painting is pointing to quarter

past midnight. This painting, I think, has many subjects. The setting is one, but also the café patrons are subjects, and they all have few details, but they do give off a feeling of tiredness, and like the café is nearing closing time. It is an interesting scene.

Light and color. I noticed how warm the colors are in *The Night Café*, whereas *Starry Night* has very cool colors. The Poet, on the other hand, has a balance of warm and cool colors. The *Night Café* feels like it takes place in the warmth of an indoor, cozy café. The Poet looks like he is glowing in contrast with the deep blue starry background. The Poet himself looks and feels warm; I can feel love and kindness from his eyes. I wonder if van Gogh was able to capture that accurately. In *Starry Night* I can feel the coolness of being outside at night. The colors are bright, cool, and crisp. I think he really captured the breeze felt outside on a hill above a town.

These three paintings are each beautiful in their own right, and they all evoke different emotions. All three paintings have strong grounding in post-impressionist stylings, albeit on a gradient. Their color tones are consistent with all of them, including *The Poet* with its warm and cool contrasts.