

# Analysis of "american gothic" painted by grant wood essay sample



An analysis of the picture painted by Grant Wood American Gothic was painted by Grant Wood in 1930. When looking at the painting you can see two persons that obviously appear as how two persons would have looked like in the 1930s. They are simple living people, dependant on their routines and clearly living on the countryside. The man holds a pitchfork in his hand and wears typical farmer clothes and the woman wears characteristic housewife clothing. The painting does not really provide other information in addition to than the one's presented in the beginning.

The painting offers a distinct description of the rural life with contrasting point of views which in whole signifies the typical life in America in early 20th century. The two persons seen on the picture symbolizes the average American that ever so often lived on the country. There are obvious connections between the different compositions of the painting. Every detail is related to another that belongs in a long chain of associated details.

Husband and wife or father and daughter? Nobody really knows what relationship the two persons on the painting have to each other, even though I think they are related more at a father-daughter level. I have made this conclusion because my interpretation of the male on the painting is that he is defensive, standing a bit in front of the female. He has a facial expression that is rather protective and he is simultaneously staring at us intently, even menacingly, as an animal watching over his children, showing how his true animal instincts take effect when the matter comes to protection of the family domain. Anyway, the woman and the man symbolize the importance of families. However, as seen on the picture, they were not that big of a family due to several possible reasons. Maybe because of bad times in

economy or farming. The pitchfork represents the work men perform and the sweat they secrete to provide their families, but it also defines the masculinity of the character and even the evil we can identify us with that pervades the hostile world we live in.

The hard grip which the man holds the pitchfork with shows how the pair as individuals, but also as a community since they represent the average American, had to work hard for their own well being. You can see in their facial expressions that they are a little worn out and tired, maybe even to some extent miserable. Possibly a result of their dissatisfaction of their living conditions while working so hard. The neatly clothed woman is positioned a little bit in the background and officially she is in a subordinate position compared to the male. Even though the female is standing one step below than the male on the family hierarchy, I think that she is representing authority in the family; it is the females who do all the work at home, keeping everything in place and order, physically and mentally. But still, a lock has escaped her collected bunch of hair, showing that she is just as human as everybody else, full of faults her too, but that doesn't affect her self-righteousness with what she does.

What more is that she has blue eyes, which helps us to identify her as quite naive. She believes in what she hears without being critical to the source. While having an overview when puzzling the pieces that holds in the analysis of the woman we can reflect to religion in one way or another. Since the gothic house in the background of the painting is not complete, the roof is not fully visible, we can not really tell what kind of house it is, it just might be a church. This states that religion is important in America, for the family as <https://assignbuster.com/analysis-of-american-gothic-painted-by-grant-wood-essay-sample/>

well for the government since the females represents authority in general. This combined with her, the peoples, naivety marks that they lay all their trust in God, independent of the improvable existence of a higher being.

There are cultural as well as social collisions in American Gothic.

I said before that the persons on the painting are a bit sad, and taking into consideration when the painting is created we can somehow correlate the painting with the American depression that raged throughout the United States from 1929, when the stock market crashed, to 1941 as America decided to join the second World War after they had been bombed in Pearl Harbour by the Japans. What more is the cultural conflict within the painting, for example the big difference between the American lifestyle and European architecture of the house. Nevertheless the parts don't match together they stand for unity and maybe as a token of the relationship between the United States and Europe.

These theories are based upon my own interpretation of the painting, but I think that American Gothic generally is analyzed as an American self-image because the painting captures so many of the old traditional values in it. Whether Grant Wood's intention was to symbolize any of these things or not is not of importance since the painting has more impact than the artist.

All in all the painting is quite empty, there is no certain symbolism embedded in addition to the pitchfork and the gothic window. It is the details that are important to look for, and they can be analyzed differently depending on what person that is viewing the painting. We all have our own ideals and the world affects us differently. Therefore the viewer can interject <https://assignbuster.com/analysis-of-american-gothic-painted-by-grant-wood-essay-sample/>

whatever interpretation he or she wants. The picture is a mystery that you are to solve for yourself.