

Essay Topic: Interpretation of Vermeer Painting

Entitled, "The Girl With the Wine Glass," by painter Vermeer, the subject of this painting appears to prominently be a man seducing a woman and getting her into or past a drunken state.

[DIRECT INTRO, THE WAY TO GO! BUT THE OPENING PHRASES DON'T HANG TOGETHER. NEED HELP SEEING THAT?]

The main focus of this picture is the woman, since she is the most considerably highlighted object in the painting. Also, all movement within the painting seems to point or motion towards her, and in addition she is looking straight at you.

The woman is seated in a chair in the foreground. Her dress is a shade of red, which ["MAY" OR "PROBABLY"—DO YOU SEE WHY TO SAY THAT?] represents lust. Her hair is somewhat unkempt in the front, which is not proper of the times. The man beside her is bent over her, his face shadowed, seeming to imply that his intentions are sly and perhaps somewhat devious. The woman has one hand placed in her lap and the other hand is holding a wine glass slightly up in the air. His had is touching hers, as if he is making an attempt to support her upraised hand that is holding the wine glass. [RIGHT ON!] In addition, he also seems to be motioning the wine glass towards her face, as to encourage her to drink more. His most likely reason for getting her drunk would be to take advantage of her or in some way get what he wants (most likely sexual).

On the blue-clothed table beside the man and woman on the left is a pitcher (of wine) and cloth. Under the pitcher is a white cloth. The woman is also holding onto a white cloth in her lap. This represents that she although on the verge of losing her innocence and becoming soiled, she is still hanging on to her purity and essentially holds it in her own hands. [SURE. BY NOW YOU MUST KNOW THAT VERMEER AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES USED ICONOGRAPHY IN THEIR WORK.] Also on the table is a large blue plate. On the edge of this plate are an untouched orange and a peeled orange. The fruit represents the fall from innocence. The whole orange

symbolizes the Garden of Eden (untouched, the woman is a garden; a temptation) and the peeled fruit represents the fall of Eve (giving into the temptation). [SO, WHAT DOES THIS SUGGEST ABOUT THE WOMAN? GO ON.]

On the far left side of the picture is a large stained glass window that is ajar. In stained glass is an image of a woman holding a snake. This signifies that the woman in the picture is encountering something evil (as a snake symbolizes evil), or is in an unsafe state, as one would think of holding a fairly large snake as being unsafe. [YUP. THIS WORKS ON BOTH LEVELS, DOESN'T IT?] The woman in the stained glass is also wearing red, symbolizing lust, and has a large stomach indicating fertility; possibly a precursor to the fate of the woman in the picture. [YES! EXCELLENT CHOICE OF WORDS!] The circular design below her stomach in stained glass is somewhat abstract. It is a circle cut in half vertically. On the right side it is divided into three parts. On the top is white, in the middle is red, and on the bottom is a dingy white. The white represents her innocence and purity. The red represents corruption caused by lust. The dingy white represents the fact that innocence and purity can never be regained once it is lost. On the right side of the circle is a line of ducks walking away right before the time of corruption. This represents that the woman still has a chance to hold onto her innocence and can avoid corruption by simply avoiding the temptation.

In the far left hand corner of the picture is a man sitting in a chair. His figure is faded slightly, reducing his significance to the situation. His hand is propping up his face and he is seemingly gazing into space, showing that he is not aware or merely not caring about the present situation or what might happen. This man's apathy might symbolize Vermeer's opinion towards women who drink and get themselves into situations of the like. [INTERESTING IDEA, EXCEPT FOR THE EVIDENT STRAIN OF HIS TENDONS AND THE TIGHTNESS AT THE KNUCKLE SIGNALLED BY THE WHITENESS THERE.]

The painting in the background is hard to depict but shows a man overlooking the man and the woman; his face is that of a disapproving look. [OOPS. NOT STANDARD ENGLISH PHRASING..

Although the woman is being prompted by the man to drink, she is obviously giving into the encouragement and smiling giddily. As she is seemingly in a state of lust herself, the man may not be fully to blame for the woman's state of being. [INTERESTING THOUGHT.]

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YOU LOOK CLOSELY AT SEVERAL KEY ELEMENTS, AND YOU SUPPORT MOST OF THEM IN DETAIL. OTHER ELEMENTS NEED MORE SUPPORT. YOU WRITE FLUENTLY, WITH SOME SOPHISTICATED PHRASING AND PUNCTUATION.

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