

Nanopublication – A Painting's Misreading Breeds Creation – But the Ricochet Never Finds Its Way Back to Wood

by Arnaud Quercy

The framework's claim that loss – not fidelity – is the generative engine, and that each reception counts as an equally legitimate event, tracks Corn's own account closely enough to call this a real grip (P13, P17). But that pattern is general enough that intentional-fallacy criticism or reader-response theory already describes the same case without any of this framework's apparatus – which is exactly where the cheap-fit worry enters. The one claim specific enough to be a genuine test, the bilateral ricochet of P18a, is the one the case does not supply: the decades of reappropriation never reach back to a living Wood capable of discovering what his invariant produced. The line sits there – between a generative-loss/multiplication pattern that holds but proves little, and a sharper relational claim that this source shows has no landing site once the emitter is gone.

WHAT THE SOURCE SAYS ^[1]

Wanda Corn's new book argues that American Gothic became iconic precisely because it was immediately misread: Wood said he painted a father and his daughter in a decorative, geometric style drawn from Midwestern regionalism, but the press and public saw a married couple, and that misreading – not the painting's stated meaning – is what made it endlessly adaptable. Corn documents hundreds of reappropriations across a century: butter sculptures at state fairs, gay-rights versions, feminist reworkings showing the woman leaving for work, and – earliest and most surprising – Black Chicago artists in the 1930s who used the two-figures-before-a-house motif to tell migration stories. Beneath this, Corn also reads a felt unease in the work, tied to Wood's own closeted life and failed marriage, that she says keeps the image from settling into simple nostalgia.

WHERE THE LENS GRIPS

Corn's central claim – that the painting's immediate misreading as a married couple, against Wood's stated father-daughter intent, is 'key to the painting's success, allowing

for endless adaptation' – reads cleanly against P13's claim that lossless, 1=1 transmission produces no event: the source's own logic is that had the intended sense held, no cascade would have followed. That cascade, with Corn treating each appropriation (butter sculpture, gay-rights image, feminist rework, Ellison's migration scene) as its own legitimate reading rather than a deviation to rank against the others, fits P17's claim that a single emission yields N receptions of equal legitimacy, none superior to another.

WHERE IT BREAKS

P18a's specific mechanism is absent. The ricochet as stated requires the disclosed invariant to return toward the emitter, who then 'discovers what their invariant generated.' Wood did disclose his intent early (father and daughter, decorative geometry), and the public's divergent reading did not correct – it proliferated into new strata, matching the first half of P18a. But the second half has no site to land on: Wood died in 1942, decades before the gay-rights and feminist reworkings Corn catalogs. P15 grants that 'one death skews the system; it does not end it' through the surviving material – but the specifically bilateral architecture of the ricochet (a reconfigured emitter who redeploys as transformed emitter) is simply missing from this chain, which runs receiver to receiver and never back to source. This reading is contestable: a defender could say the ricochet lands on Corn's own book, which addresses itself to Wood's recorded intention and reconfigures how it will be held against the accumulated misreadings – the archive standing in for the emitter. I read this as a break rather than a fit because P18a's own wording presumes an emitter capable of discovery, and substituting 'archive' for 'emitter' is not a move the proposition licenses as written.

PROPOSITIONAL GRID ^[2]

Read this grid. "Not evaluated" does **not** mean the source has nothing to say about that proposition. It means **the reading did not**

instruct it. That is not a result, and it counts in no denominator. A silence, by contrast, is a finding: the reading touched the proposition without concluding, or noted its absence itself.

Evaluated

proposi-tion		audit status	relational verdict
P13	Generative Loss	not audited	evidence-for
P15	Relational Transmission	not audited	open-question
P17	Multiplication of Creation	not audited	triviality-warning
P18a	The Ricochet Effect	not audited	pressure-against

Not evaluated (33) – P1, P2, P3, P3a, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P14, P14a, P14b, P16, P16a, P18, P19, P19a, P20, P21, P22, P23, P24, P25, P26, P27, P28, P29, P30, P31

Overall verdict: Bounded / Cheap fit – boundary case – taxonomy of the August 2026 pass, predating the move to relational verdicts. Kept as metadata: the gap between the two forms is data, not residue. This reading’s judgement is in the grid above.

Reading of 2026-10-24 · model claude-sonnet-5 · source 9,387 chars · 1 attempt(s)

REFERENCES

[1] How Did 'American Gothic' Become So Iconic? This Art Historian Spent Five Decades Investigating.. ARTnews.com, 2026-10-24. <https://www.artnews.com/art-in-america/aia-reviews/american-gothic-wanda-corn-iconic-midwest-grant-wood-1234803480/>

[2] Quercy, A. (2026). The 31 Propositions of Ideamorphism. <https://ideamorphism.org/en/publications/2026/03/the-31-propositions-of-ideamorphism.html>

EPISTEMIC PROFILE

Claim type	boundary reading
Voice	third person analysis
Epistemic status	bounded grip
Methodology	Boundary-finding lens applied to one source, model claude-sonnet-5, 1 attempt(s), traceability check passed.

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