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# ICONOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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01

**pre-iconographic description -  
natural meaning**

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- WE CAN SEE TWO PERSONS IN THE MIDDLE, A MAN AND A YOUNG WOMAN DRESSED IN A WHITE DRESS, SO IT IS A WEDDING
  - THE MAN IS HOLDING A CANDLE, AND THERE IS ANOTHER MAN IN A GOLDEN GOWN – THE ACTION TAKES PLACE IN A CHURCH. THE COUPLE IS WEARING EXPENSIVE CLOTHING
  - THERE IS A BIG AGE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BETWEEN THE GROOM AND THE BRIDE
  - IT IS A WEDDING, BUT NO ONE IS SMILING AND CELEBRATING
  - THE GROOM IS HOLDING THE CANDLE UPRIGHT, WHEREAS THE BRIDE'S HAND IS LAYING ON HER DRESS

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02

**iconographic analyze -  
conventional meaning**

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- THIS PAINTING OF VASILIIY PUKIREV WAS PAINTED IN 1962, AND ITS NAME IS TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH AS 'Mésalliance' OR 'The arranged marriage'
  - THE PAINTING DEPICTS A RELIGIOUS MARRIAGE ACCORDING TO THE ORTHODOX TRADITION
  - ALTHOUGH THE PAINTING SEEMS TO FOLLOW THE 'REALISTIC' STYLE, THERE ARE TWO FEMALE FIGURES THAT REVEAL THE CONNECTION TO THE 'OTHER WORLD'. THERE IS AN OLD WOMAN STANDING NEXT TO THE GROOM, AND ONE MORE OLD WOMAN IS BEHIND THE PRIEST. BOTH OF THEM ARE 'BRIDES', AS THEY HAVE FLOWER CROWNS THAT ONLY A BRIDE PUT ON DURING A WEDDING. THEIR DRESSES ARE WHITE, BUT THEY REMIND NOT ONLY A WEDDING DRESS BUT ALSO A FUNERAL SAVAN. THAT'S HOW WE KNOW THAT THEY ARE PHANTASMS S OF THE PREVIOUS WIVES OF THE GROOM WHO HAVE ALREADY DIED
  - THE MAN STANDING BEHIND THE BRIDE IS THE GROOMSMAN/BEST MAN, AND BY HIS HEAVY LOOK ON THE GROOM WE KNOW THAT HE HAS DEEP FEELINGS FOR THE BRIDE
  - ANOTHER MAN WHO IS LOOKING DIRECTLY AT THE VIEWER AS IF ASKING A QUESTION





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03

**iconological analyze - intrinsic  
meaning**

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- THERE ARE MANY VERSIONS OF WHO WERE THE REAL PROTOTYPES OF THE BEST MAN AND THE SECOND MAN LOOKING 'OUT' OF THE PICTURE. THE FIRST VERSION SAYS THAT THE BEST MAN IS PUKIREV'S CLOSE FRIEND WHOSE BELOVED ONE WAS MARRIED TO AN OLD AND RICH MAN. THE SECOND VERSION, WHICH HAS MORE EVIDENCE, CLAIMS THAT THE PAINTER ACTUALLY PAINTED A CASE FROM HIS OWN BIOGRAPHY, AND THE BEST MAN IS HIS SELF-PORTRAIT
  - THE LAST INTERPRETATION GIVES DEEPER MEANING. THE COMPLEX WAY ITS CHARACTERS LOOK AT EACH OTHER TURN IT INTO AN ICON-LIKE PAINTING. WE SEE THE PRIEST WHO BENDS IN FRONT OF THE BRIDE, AS HE UNDERSTANDS THAT HER FUTURE, LIKE THAT ONE OF PREVIOUS TWO BRIDES, WILL BE FULL OF SUFFERING. THAT'S WHY THE BRIDE IS PAINTING IN A MARTYR-LIKE FASHION
  - THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT SHOWS HOW AFTER THIS PAINTING BECAME WELL-KNOWN, MANY ELDERLY STATESMEN AND ARISTOCRATS CHANGED THEIR MIND ABOUT GETTING MARRIED WITH YOUNG GIRLS, AS THEY COULD RECOGNISE THEMSELVES IN THE GROOM, AND THEY DID NOT WANT TO REPEAT HIS GRAVE MISTAKE