

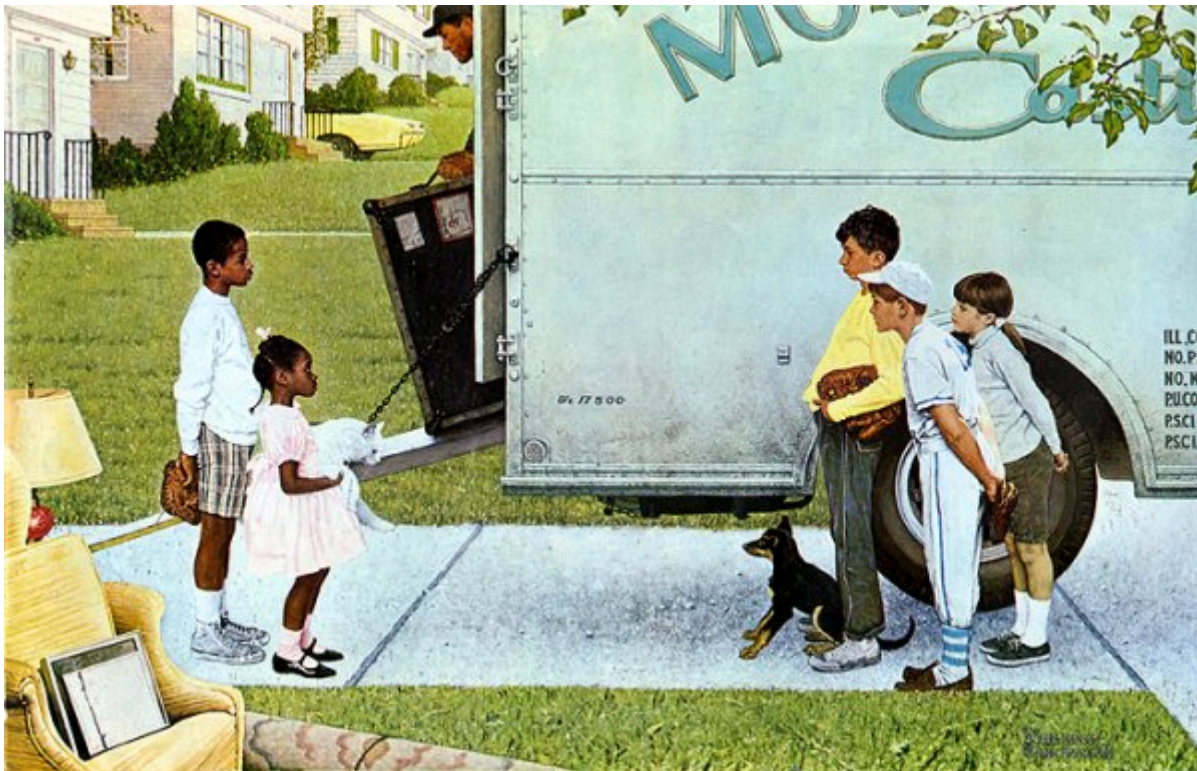
Norman Rockwell explored similar themes about civil rights and racial integration in, for example, ***New Kids in the Neighborhood / Moving in (1967)***.

Exhibition: Norman Rockwell Museum, Stockbridge, Massachusetts, USA.

The painting illustrated an article published in the magazine **LOOK** about 'the white flight'. Indeed, in the 1960s, many white Americans went to live in the residential suburbs of big cities because, as well as wanting the extra space offered by suburban homes, they feared black riots in city centers, led by the Civil Rights Movement. A few black people went to settle in these areas too.

The painting represents an evidently white, well-off neighborhood where a moving van has been parked because a black family is going to live there.

In his illustration of suburban integration, Rockwell was expressing his philosophy of tolerance. We can see the children will soon be playing with each other, but the face peering from behind a window curtain makes us wonder how the adults will react.



What can you say about this painting by N. Rockwell?

Describe its general composition (foreground, background, left, right)

Describe and compare the children's clothes, pets and accessories, the colors..

What resemblances / differences (complementary?)

Comment on the use of space, lines..

Curiosity? fear, hostility? : How do you think the children feel? Will they play together?



What can you say about this painting by N. Rockwell?

- Describe its general composition (foreground, background, left, right)

In the foreground, on the left, we can see a yellow armchair, a lamp and various files or picture frames, then a group of five children : on the right, by the armchair, there is a couple of black children with a cat, probably a brother and his sister, and on the left, facing the others, three white children with a dog.

Behind them in the middle, there is a removal van with a man unloading furniture.

In the background, a line up of residential houses stretches far behind with the back of a yellow convertible car sticking out on a pathway. In front of the houses, big lawns and pathways made of paving stones complete the picture of a comfortable suburban area.

- Describe and compare the children's clothes, pets and accessories, the colors..
What resemblances / differences (complementary?)

The black children's clothes echo those of the white children, in style and color. The boys are all wearing sneakers and bright tops. The similarity is particularly obvious between the black boy and the white children, all the more so as the boys are all carrying baseball leather gloves, thus implying they enjoy the same games. Only the little black girl stands out, she is slightly overdressed with her pink dress and shiny shoes, probably due to her young age. This conveys an image of a well-groomed, innocent little girl.

This is enhanced by the fluffy-soft, immaculate white cat she's holding. Opposite the cat, a small black dog is sitting at the tallest boy's feet. The pets are both staring at each other, on their guard but without apparent hostility, just like the children.

- Comment on the use of space, lines..

Between the two groups of children, there is an empty space representing the lack of contact between the black and white communities. The black children are standing behind a line they are unsure to be allowed to cross, although they probably are from the same social class as the white children.

On the other hand, the white children have taken the liberty to cross the line, even if they maintain a space between them and the black children. The younger white boy and girl seem to be more confident, their body slightly tilted forward, whereas the two older boys both stand straight, in the same position, holding their baseball gloves. This indicates a strong similarity between the two boys, therefore a strong possibility of them getting on .

- Curiosity? fear, hostility? : How do you think the children feel? Will they play together?

Between the children, we can feel curiosity, maybe a little fear but no hostility. Here, Norman Rockwell is asking his public : Will they talk to each other? play baseball together? Who will move first?

