

# A girl with a pearl earring

Society, Gender Socialization



Samantha Fain Dr. Elizabeth Wise CHM 165 3/15/2012 Book Report: Girl with a Pearl Earring The Girl with a Pearl Earring is a historical fictional novel about the famous painting created by the artist Johannes Vermeer. The story takes place in the 17th century in Delft, Holland. The novel chronicles the actions that led up to the painting of Girl with a Pearl Earring. The subject of the painting is a young girl named Griet, who goes to live with Johannes Vermeer's family and be a second maid to their growing household. Vermeer really introduces Griet to the world of paint and even goes as far as to employ her as his assistant.

Vermeer did not waste any time showing his new assistant, Griet, how to mix paints. Vermeer started off by sending Griet to pick up materials to grind up and make his paints. Vermeer showed Griet how to make paint by grinding up different materials with a muller. Griet finds she is not as quick as the artist, but Vermeer mentions that some materials are easier than others to grind. Griet often rubs the paste in between her fingers to check for consistency. Also, the finer the materials were ground, the brighter the colors. Vermeer often used linseed oil and white lead, and bones while creating his paints.

Most things in everyday life are made up of many colors that the average person never takes the time to notice. Vermeer first explains this to Griet when he is pointing out the colors of the clouds. Many people would describe clouds as plain white, but Vermeer and Griet point out that many colors make up clouds and they are not pure white. Vermeer carries this thought throughout all his paintings. Vermeer focuses on great tones and hues in his painting making him stand apart from other artists of his time. Light is very

important to the painting process, but Vermeer put a special focus on the way that light can affect paint.

Vermeer's studio was where he spent most of his time and it had to be just so. The windows were kept dirty because the dirt buildup changed the amount of light in the room, and Vermeer was particular about how much light he let in. Vermeer's paintings showed his knowledge of light because he used it to bring much realism to his work. The use of Camera obscura is another one of Vermeer's techniques. A Camera obscura is an optical device that projects an image of its surroundings on a screen. Vermeer showed the Camera obscura to Griet and took the opportunity to get closer to her as they look through the small hole.

The Camera obscura helps to see composition and color. Sometimes, a camera Obscura is used to trace the outline of the paint onto the canvas. All in all, Vermeer was an artist ahead of his time who employed many different painting techniques that were revolutionary at the time. By Vermeer taking on Griet as an assistant he introduced her to the world of paint and how it can affect people's perceptions in everyday life. Griet never thought being a maid and assistant to Vermeer would lead to infamous painting that is called today's Dutch Mona Lisa.