

shared by these two different elements they become related, especially when we consider that one, the windows are permeable by light and the other, the doors of the cabinet solid and opaque.

Although the evidence for my theory is all circumstantial and even the theory itself somewhat beyond the pale I am fascinated by the amount of evidence for it and the way it is used and where it is used. Nothing is more astonishing than the V, and the [III] in the context of an actual date even though that date is meant to be read as 1669. The fact that a part of it also reads as something else is pure Vermeer.

My main doubts about this theory, however, have to do with how specific Vermeer would have been about his own life. As a painter, would being half-blind be something he would want put into any work? True, the explosion of 1654

had to be traumatic for anyone who experienced it, even
peripherally and certainly for Vermeer whose eyes were his
living. Not until I investigated The Music Lesson and The Concert
would I again encounter another ^{specific} autobiographical incident
important enough to be the reason for the creation of two
of these works. And in looking back at all of the complexities and
the noble sublimation of The Art of Painting I see that it
too has its origins in a particular incident in Vermeer's spiritual
life. Other artists of Vermeer's time could be quite
autobiographical and were; often, so this is not as unusual
as I think, nor is it at all rare that you find such specifics
in a work whose ultimate purpose is an expression of the universe.
In fact this is the basis of most art, throughout its
long history. That Vermeer chooses to explore the
world of the Geographer may in itself be telling us

that is on this level of 'earthly things' that his inner personal story unfolds. When I look at the picture according to its title I come away knowing nothing about either the man, his personal work or the subject of Geography itself.

And yet if my theory ^{is} were true, it would not only explain many curious qualities in Vermeer's work, it would make The Geographer a far more interesting picture and give it a powerful reason for being.

A final note here. Anthony van Leeuwenhoek, a famous scientist associated with optical instruments was Vermeer's exact contemporary, lived in Delft and played a part as a city-appointed executor of Vermeer's last will and testament. Although no evidence exists that they were even acquaintances much less friends, Delft was a small town and both men were involved with the camera obscura,

an image-projection device. If Vermeer had lost the sight in his right eye this would explain the often ambiguous sense of depth in many of his works some of which is awkward enough to bother a knowledgeable viewer no matter what his aesthetic reasons may have been. These are all mysteries that will remain so, but speculation is one of the great pleasures of the historian, just so long as they remain aware of it. I will turn now to a painting that certainly looks related to The Geographer and we will see what it has to tell us.

The Astronomer

There are two known examples of Dirk Van Baburen's
The Procuress in extant, the original in The Boston Museum
of Fine Arts and another in a European museum. Who
knows this latter one may even be a Vermeer?

1 Cover followed by Frontispiece

2 Title page - The Red Lion
etc

3 Full title and author + Red lion logo

4 dedication for Stu, who played such a large part in this.

5 Quote 'Les Temps découvre' W. Dalton

6 Contents

List of illustrations Frontispiece then I, II, III etc

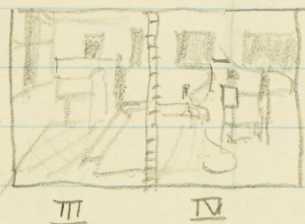
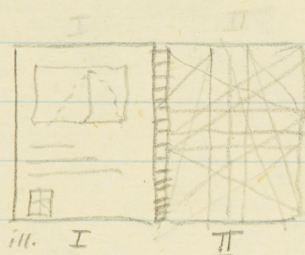
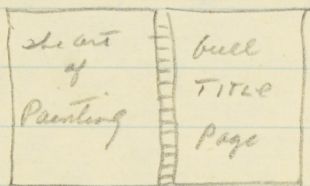
Chapter one The Art of Painting (could be called section I)

Chap 2 The Concert & The Music Lesson

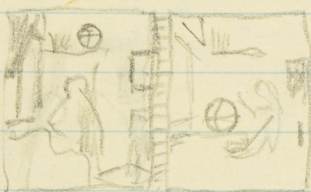
Chapter 3 The Geographer & Astronomer

Conclusion? Is there one?

Bibliography



the music Lesson the Concert



Geographer

Astronomer