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Truth in Painting—Comedic Resolution in Bruegel's *Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows*

Catherine Levesque

If comedy presupposes the acceptance of the world in all its disparateness, Bruegel's *Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows* (Fig. 6.1), his last and arguably his most beautiful painting, is comedic.¹ The spectator, here, is presented with a complex perspective; invited at once to regard an extensive prospect and to enter into the scene. Placed to appreciate the beauties of nature, he or she must also take into account the defecator, the dancers and the two observers as well as the gallows and cross. In short, Bruegel positions the spectator to contemplate both the habitual ironies and exceptional beauties of life in the world—to move into the imperfect scene even while beholding and exploring its splendors. This juxtaposition is comedic in the way it presents many textured strands of actuality; fallibility (that is the failure of prudence) rather than vice, and acceptance rather than conversion or condemnation. In true comedic fashion, the artist's craft mediates a "perilous balance" that acknowledges death but which celebrates life and art.² Moreover, with its continual play on different points of view the work's meaning is experiential. The viewer who begins as an exterior observer becomes at the end an integrated participant, distanced from but actively engaged in the world of the painting.

6.1 Pieter Bruegel, *Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows*, signed and dated 1568, 18.07× 20" (45.9 × 50.8 cm), oil on panel, Hessisches Landesmuseum, Darmstadt. Photo: Museum

Karel van Mander's short biography of Pieter Bruegel states: "In his will he left his wife a painting of a *Magpie on the Gallows*. By this magpie he meant the babbling of tongues, which he thus delivered to execution."³ "Babbling of tongues" is generally interpreted as gossip, but such chattering without meaning or reason might—I think—signify superficial imitation more generally. This emphasis should be no surprise since imitation appears as a leitmotif in commentary on Bruegel, from Ludovico Guicciardini's 1567 praise of the artist as a "grand imitatore della scienza & fantasie di Girolamo Bosco"⁴ to Ortelius' epitaph praising his friend as "not just the best of painters but 'nature's painter,'... worthy of being imitated by all."⁵ While the *Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows* directly addresses imitation as the repetition of a half truth or a truth ill understood, it also presents an ideal of true imitation.

Understanding the artist's active ability to remake natural effects in works of art through deep understanding of natural causes bears directly on the qualities of imitation and natural painting so remarked

on by Bruegel's contemporary commentators. Such true imitation also agrees with the humanist view whereby pursuit of the arts might lead to "prudence and experience." In short, true looking, like a true copy, realizes the ethical as well as the technical potential of the original. In *Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows*, Bruegel encourages the spectator to traverse the landscape—and the painting—with a discernment and judgment that echoes the humanist view of truth as an active process rather than a static virtue. Such an interpretation of true imitation—as contrasted with the superficial imitation of the magpie—might even relate to another statement by Van Mander, "Moreover, he [that is Bruegel] painted a picture of the triumph of truth (or truth breaking through), which according to his own statement was his best work."⁶ Such truth in *Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows* is inexorably linked with the craft of painting.

Bruegel situates the figures and motifs within the *Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows* to accommodate a perceiver who must observe the world of the picture from many perspectives—one who has traveled about and used his eyes. This point of view takes into account the defecator, the two observers and the dancers. They are figures who, to paraphrase the sixteenth-century natural historian Conrad Gesner, contract or expand our view of nature.⁷ Moreover, we move across a foreground framed by the defecator and his surroundings, an area painted in thick dark textured brown strokes, to the outermost borders of this world, a luminous thinly painted distance where earth, sea and sky meet. Bruegel sets out these extremes and invites us to explore their juxtaposition and the extensive landscape between them. This interchange between fore and background appears elsewhere in Bruegel's work (for example in the prints of the virtues and vices, and the paintings of the *Twelve Months*) but the closest parallel is the *Two Monkeys*.⁸ Here, too, animals associated with materialist sensual knowledge are set against a beautiful distant landscape and with birds in flight. Moreover monkeys, like magpies, are mimics of mankind.⁹

The play between fore- and background in Bruegel's picture suggests the movement of sight back and forth as a model for judgment. This "philosophical sight" recalls Erasmus' description, in the *Enchiridion*, of two worlds, one accessible to sight and one to the understanding.¹⁰ In turn, Erasmus' comment echoes Socrates' discussion of the downward or upward gaze. According to Socrates, most humans direct their gaze "downwards" towards feasting and other physical pleasures, but we can also direct our gaze "upwards" towards truth and reality.¹¹ The higher education that prepares the student for such philosophical vision focuses exclusively on disciplines that train the soul in the activity of contemplation or "seeing reality." Socrates says the philosopher who engages in such *theoria* will believe he has arrived at the Islands of the Blessed.¹² Understanding *theoria* as a journey towards knowledge

remains current in the sixteenth century. In his *Theatre of Nature*, Jean Bodin introduces one character as *theōros theaomai*—a visitor traveling the cities of the world in need of a guide who will help him mediate between sense experience and reason.¹³ Bruegel, too, lays out just such a toilsome journey in the *Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows*. Moreover, travel through the landscape encourages

awareness of Bruegel's technical achievement as a painter. The attentive viewer confronts traces that record the artist's careful manipulation of paint from the richly textured earth tones of the foreground to the stipples of juxtaposed colors in the middle ground and the lightly painted glazes of the sky. This experience of the artist's labor "grounds" any understanding of the scene.¹⁴

Man and his works are most prominent in the foreground of *The Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows*: to the left the defecator, observers and dancers, to the right the cross and mill, and the stump and gallows at the center. Of all the figures, the defecator is closest to the picture plane. Indeed, his rump extends to the edge of the picture and his feces is poised to drop at its very edge. Painted in dark earthy colors, this figure presents a pointed trace of man (and paint) as earthy matter. The defecator provides a note of crude scatology that brings forward man's physiological exigencies as well as the material basis of painting. Nonetheless, the language of excrement (as Mikhail Bakhtin points out) is linked with fertility and creation no less than death, with becoming instead of being.¹⁵ This reminder is played out across the foreground of the painting where the stump, animal skull and mixed weeds—though dead or dormant—reveal hints of life. These motifs, like the fecal matter, suggest generative possibilities: reminders of life and death are laid out before the viewer. The attentive viewer, unlike the observers within the scene, acknowledges the defecator and the sensuous apprehension of material nature that he embodies. The two men with a dog stand with their backs to the defecator and the gallows and turn toward the dancers. One man taps his foot, the other points in the general direction of the dancers and the trees just beyond. These figures stand, like Juan Luis Vives' uninitiated observer (or "ignorant peasant"), and respond at the first level of understanding generated by the action of the senses with the things seen.¹⁶ Such men, again according to Vives, "stand in awe when confronted with what nature has wrought; they see clearly wonders whose intimate essence they can barely perceive."¹⁷ This elementary appreciation of nature is rooted in the senses:

those things which serve for education and knowledge involve first the exercise of sight on the external force of Nature which means clearly the use of the senses, as for instance, we gaze at a picture, and just in the same way we look at a map on which cities, people, mountains, and rivers are placed before the eyes. This is called *aspectus* or reflection (contemplation) and he who is skilled at it is called *aspector*, or contemplator. Let the keenness of sight of the mind descend from its height to the actual workings of Nature which is concerned

with the inner essence of everything. Observation begins with the eye but knowledge with the mind.¹⁸

In short, true observation requires understanding. So he will observe the nature of things in the heavens, in clouds, and in clear weather, in the plains, on the mountains and in the woods. Hence he will seek out and get to know many things from those who inhabit those spots. Let him have recourse, for instance to gardeners, husbandmen, shepherds, and hunters, for this is what Pliny and other great authors did ... But whether he observes anything himself, or hears anyone relating his experience, not only let him keep eyes and ears intent, but his whole mind also, for great and exact concentration is necessary in observing every part of nature, in its seasons, and the essence and strength of each object of nature.¹⁹

Observation, in the *Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows*, is not at the expense of social life. Man is portrayed by Bruegel as a social being. Such social interaction is exemplified by the dancers and bagpiper who process around a small hillock, the figures who proceed farther away along the pathway and those who cluster singly and in groups throughout the distant village. These characters, involved in their own activities, ignore the gallows, though from at least one perspective it frames them. But pre-eminently, they—inhabitants of the locale—are encompassed by the surrounding trees and vegetation. The mill, grazing animals and farm to the right provide additional evidence of man and his works within nature. This emphasis on labor, especially cultivation of the land, navigation and trade, is manifest in the farms, boats, castles and distant cities that dot the far vista.

Bruegel's emphasis on labor is consistent with the role of labor and diligence as important themes in humanist texts, prints and book illustrations from his time.²⁰ Ilya Veldman describes examples of the subject in works by Lieven de Witte (1543), Hieronymus Wierix (1579) and Maarten van Heemskerck (1572), all of whom quote Job 5:7: "Man is born to work and the bird to fly." Over time, as Veldman notes, the prints take a more positive stand on man's need to labor.²¹ In Heemskerck's *The Reward of Labour and Diligence* (1572), for example, the first print of the series places the traditional theme in a context that expands the notion of just what labor and its rewards entail. The print portrays a terrestrial globe, entirely covered with instruments and tools related to art, science and manual labor (among others agriculture, navigation and fishing), that hovers above a landscape; a many-breasted woman (Natura) who stands at the

right foreground suckling a child; and a bird that flies in the sky above the globe. The caption below the image reads: “Nature brings Man into the world from the cradle to suffer hardship and toil, just as she has destined the bird to fly.”²² Though the text, like the passage from Job, emphasizes the difficulties of labor, the related illustration evokes a more positive perspective. In the picture, the juxtaposition of *Natura* with tools and with a prosperous landscape suggests the potential rewards for diligence. Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert also emphasizes the positive value of labor; man is born to toil, as the bird is born to fly, but labor is not a punishment for Adam’s sin, for birds that fly have not sinned.²³

The association in Job of man’s labor and the flying bird is, of course, also reminiscent of the bird which soars above Bruegel’s landscape. Like his humanist contemporaries, the artist places a positive inflection on man’s labor. Bruegel’s perspective accords with a writer like Vives for whom *contemplatio* should be a first step that leads the prudent man from knowledge of nature to action. Ideally, from this perspective, one moves from natural art (aimed at the investigation of nature) to invented or practical art. A merely sensuous response to nature stands in contrast to the viewpoint of the prudent man, whose stance draws on much knowledge, practical experience of life and an excellent memory—and whose work benefits society. Vives writes:

The youth will find it [nature] easier to understand than all the things pertaining to *prudentia*, for natural things he can grasp by means of his own inherent sharpness of mind; whereas that which pertains to prudence can only be taught by the experience of life, much knowledge, and faithful memory.²⁴

Notably, the artist figures for Vives as an example of one whose knowledge and understanding illustrate the superiority of art over experience. In his example, “the artist knows the elements that enter into the work of art, while the man of experience [Vives’ ‘uninitiated’ observer] sees only the finished causes.”²⁵ The elements that enter into a work of art are, in fact, most pronounced in this midsection of the painting, which forms a tapestry of color. This craft of painting is evident in the flicking patches of color that compose the bricks of the houses and the wood cross and gallows, but is most manifest in the tree trunks with their bands of blue and yellow and the leaves with their juxtaposed stippings of yellow and blue or orange, red and green. This effect of juxtaposed colors is best appreciated technically from up close, but best understood from a distance.²⁶

Bruegel accommodates, even cultivates, the prudent observer. He situates the viewer of his painting so that the viewer, unlike the figures within the painting, must take a distanced view and so confront the

prominent gallows as well as what lies beyond. Together with the neighboring cross, this reminder of death—like the coffin in Bruegel’s *Allegory of Prudence* (Fig. 6.2)—suggests the wider experience of man’s place in nature. The juxtaposed cross and gallows appear as a commonplace of country life in a number of his landscape prints, among them *Resting* (Fig. 6.3) and *Penitent Magdalen* in the *Large Landscapes*, as well as *Fortitude*, and *Justice* in the *Virtues*. Tiny torture wheels and a nearby cross also appear at the center of *Rustic Concerns* (*Large Landscapes*). Whether the juxtaposition of cross and gallows evokes the difference between earthly law and heavenly justice (as David Brumble suggests), spiritual death and life (according to Justus Müller-Hofstede) or stands as a reminder that in ancient Rome the cross was a kind of gallows, they are reminders of mortality.²⁷ Unlike the feckless birds or the figures within the *Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows*, the viewer is positioned to be mindful of these structures—especially the gallows that orient one’s perspective on all that lies beyond. Bruegel’s placement of a defecator and gallows at the far horizon of the *Blue Cloak* provides a neat counterpoint to their appearance in the *Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows*. Indeed, in the *Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows* the viewer is positioned to confront the gallows that only the most careful observer of the *Blue Cloak* will ultimately notice. The viewer of one picture begins where the viewer of the other ends. Nature, in the *Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows*, cannot be separated from the human perception of nature.

6.2 Pieter Bruegel, *Allegory of Prudence*, c.1559, engraving, 8.75 × 11.25" (22.3 × 28.7 cm),

Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam. Photo: Museum

6.3 Pieter Bruegel, *Milites Requiescentes* (Resting Soldiers), 1555–56, etching with engraving,

12.68× 16.57 (32.2 × 42.1 cm), Rijksprentenkabinett, Amsterdam. Photo: Museum

The distant landscape which stretches out beyond the cross and gallows in the *Landscape with Magpie on the Gallows* invites the viewer to just the sort of “optical itineraries” that scholars have noted in relation to other of Bruegel’s works.²⁸ The *Large Landscapes* especially lay out the complex web of relationships between man and landscape. Here, as in the *Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows*, the journey through landscape provides experience that leads to prudence. This perspective, common in humanist travel writing, is also implicit in Jean Bodin’s *Theatre of Nature* (1596). In Bodin’s book, he presents a tabula as a means of ordering nature—but also an invitation to explore.²⁹ Bodin, like Vives, follows Aristotle in maintaining that “all *scientia* is of universals, there can be no certain knowledge [*scientia*] of particulars.”³⁰ Still, Bodin allots the latter a crucial role in the formation of knowledge: “the

consideration of particulars brings to the unskilled [*imperitis*] sensible knowledge which we call intuitive, and to those who are skilled the teaching of perceived things brings more certain confirmation.”³¹

From which we understand that all the arts and sciences started from sensible local knowledge, which they called synthesis; but it is necessary to teach arts that are perceived and known with reason and method, and by analysis, which means from the more simple and universal things to the particular and composite ones.

But for those who are seeking knowledge of natural things it is necessary to follow a certain circular path, so that [after going] from the starting marker to the turning post we return from there to the starting point, nor should we also consider the descent, but also the ascent.³²

The *Large Landscapes* encourages just such a circuitous route. Most prints of the series combine a foreground coulisse (or lookout) that allows for an overview of a wide-ranging vista and provides many points of observation as from a path. In short, the observer is provided with two views (active and contemplative); a dual perspective that encourages awareness of the world’s rich complexities. Each path encourages a unitary movement, an excursion, a trip, or a voyage. Together they allow for multiple points of view. Such an “environmental perspective” is experiential, only with time and attentive looking does the observer realize every part of a view is connected to every other. The dynamic response to nature cultivated by Bruegel—like the humanist writers who recommend travel—places the spectator in the position of a cosmopolitan traveler.³³ The series of large landscapes, to this way of thinking, evokes an unfolding journey through distinctive locales. In these scenes, as in the *Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows*, the viewer is invited to explore a sequence of vistas. The journey in the print series acts as an interpretative framework for nature’s multiplicity and man’s varied response to the land. It also provides experience of close observation that trains the viewer to a kind of looking that encouraged prudence and refined judgment. Bruegel provides a pictorial equivalent of the *prudentia*, *scientia*, *virtus*, and *mores* demanded by such humanist travel advice.³⁴

In his seminal article on the *Large Landscapes* Justus Müller-Hofstede analyzes the prominent observers and workers within the series as exponents of the active and contemplative life.³⁵ He discusses in some detail the affinity between human industry and the activity of nature.³⁶ Müller-Hofstede’s argument recalls the humanist assertion of the interrelationships among experience, art and prudence. Stoicism, as

Müller-Hofstede describes it, underpins Bruegel's attitude towards nature. Certainly, the artist's interest in the seasons and the labors of man resonates within this explanatory framework in which the divine invention of painting as nature consists in the invention of the seasons and of things observed in the sky—exactly that which is interpreted by agriculture and navigation, activities that figure prominently in Bruegel's landscapes.

Philostratus, in his *Imagines*, specifically links the designs of nature and the invention of painting:

For one who wishes a clever theory, the invention of painting belongs to the gods—witness on earth all the designs with which the seasons paint the meadows, and the manifestations we see in the heavens—but for one who is merely seeking the origins of the art, imitation is an invention most ancient and akin to nature; and wise men invented it, calling it now painting, now plastic art.³⁷

Philostratus draws attention to the divine imitation of painting even as he notes the invention of imitation which leads to human art. He also sets up the polarity between the wise man's understanding and common thought. The problem of knowledge, so understood, is not that the world contains hidden dimensions, but that it is too large, in space and time.³⁸ Wisdom is the ability to consider the observed details within a wider—even cosmic—context.

Humanist prints often provide such a wider framework. For example, Abraham Ortelius' world map is surrounded by texts and images that lay out a stoic moral philosophy and teachings on nature provide just such a context. The quotations from Cicero and Seneca, as Müller-Hofstede points out, present an appropriate perspective on Bruegel's landscape prints.³⁹ In Ortelius' map and Bruegel's prints—as in Cicero, Seneca, Livy and Pliny the Younger—nature's variety reveals man's limited scope. Something of the same emphasis appears in *Democritus and Heraclitus* by Coornhert after Marten van Heemskerck in which the two philosophers frame a landscape.⁴⁰ Again, inscriptions guide the viewer:

Heraclitus cease shedding so many tears for this unhappy life ... Democritus, even if you have time to regard the folly of human life ... And you, do not shed tears like Heraclitus, nor roar with laughter like Democritus: endure and forebear as is proper.

This final advice articulates a practical wisdom that balances aloofness and experience, an approach consistent with the pursuit of human affairs that typifies the landscape below the horizon of Bruegel's "mixed" landscapes.⁴¹

If the association between travel and prudence in Bruegel's landscapes accords with humanist travel advice, it also evokes the association between art and prudence.⁴² For Vives, "There are even those whose pursuit of the arts leads them to 'prudence and experience'."⁴³ Ideally man moves from *contemplatio* to *actio*, from natural to invented or practical art. Activity and labor enhance man's perception of nature's power.⁴⁴ Moreover, natural art, aimed at the investigation of nature, is the progenitor of practical art. According to this view, since knowledge and understanding are more properly said to belong to art than to experience, art is superior to experience.⁴⁵ Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert emphasizes even more than Vives that real knowledge of things cannot be separated from their use.⁴⁶ According to Coornhert, for travel, as for proper living, one needs reason, practice, time, instruction and observation; true knowledge comes from investigation.⁴⁷ In order to come to such true knowledge (*wetenschap*) one needs reason, understanding, thought, time and practice.⁴⁸ In this painting, Bruegel's high vantage and extensive vista present the world in all its wondrous variety, it also encourages diligence and detachment in gathering knowledge recommended by humanists.

"Fantasy" and "science" as remarked on by Guicciardini and described by Vives draw attention to a way of understanding Bruegel's combination of close empirical observation of selected elements, his ordering of nature and his moral perspective. From the start, according to this point of view, the observed facts must be subjected to a gradual and systematic process of abstraction leading from the unique qualities of objects singularly observed to the collective characteristics, or class, of things.⁴⁹ Vives notes that in the mind there are especially two functions, the power of observing, and the power of judging and determining with regard to those things that the mind has seen. The former is concerned mainly with observation, but the latter has regard to man's actions.⁵⁰ Of necessity imagination/fantasy foregrounds the judgment of the artist since from the start the observed facts must be subjected to a gradual and systematic process of abstraction leading from the observed composite to the abstracted simple. In the words of Vives, he must "penetrate beyond accidents to the substance of things ... in the practical arts the contemplative knowledge yielded by *scientia* becomes the springboard for their creation."⁵¹ Vives' subsequent characterization of the

relation between nature and art, art as a second nature, is consistent with this understanding of the artist as both one who notices detail and one who must order nature; both observer and judge.⁵²

If the wide landscape vista in the *Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows* can be understood in the context of an experiential journey towards prudence and understanding, then what of the horizon to which it leads? Here, I believe, the busy harbors and distant mountains of the *Large Landscapes* provide only the slightest precedent for the luminous horizon of the painting. Indeed, the emphasis in the *Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows* on the quality of painting, from the viscous texture of the foreground to the thinly painted distance, calls attention to technique. Likewise the range of color is remarkable. This meeting of land, sea and sky in the *Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows* leads the observer both to the outermost boundary of the world and also to the limits of what an artist can portray. Painting, here, evokes Philostratus' account of the superiority of painting over the other plastic arts. Though all plastic arts have their excellences, he points out that only painting excels in each and every form. "Its strategic superiority comes from the use of color, for color makes it able to represent not just the contents of the world, but the air that contains them all."⁵³ Only the wise man, according to Philostratus, is positioned to appreciate both the perceived object, the details of things, within the broadest cosmic framework. In *The Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows* the transition from the dark texture of the foreground to the thin veil of color in the far background manifests the "grounds" of painting, its artificiality and craft. But at the same time it embodies processes of art that imitate those of nature—and of philosophical looking from the gaze immersed in sensuous material knowledge to the gaze "upwards" towards truth and reality.⁵⁴

Bruegel's transformative vision deserves more attention in light of contemporary accounts of his "natural painting." Commentators close to Bruegel's own time are consistent in emphasizing the artist as a natural painter, that is, one who emulated the processes of nature, not just its appearance. We ought, I think, to take Van Mander at his word when he says that

Pieter painted many pictures from life on his journey, so that it was said of him that while he visited the Alps, he had swallowed all the mountains and cliffs, and, upon coming home, he had spit them forth upon his canvas and panels; so remarkably was he able to follow these and other works of nature.⁵⁵

Such regurgitation surely suggests this generative process. So too, consider Ortelius' suggestive language in his funeral oration: "And this Bruegel I speak so highly of has painted many things which cannot be painted . . . In all his work he would have us understand far more than he shows us."⁵⁶ This image of Bruegel

as a painter of that which cannot be painted is suggestive; moreover it points to discussions on the relationship between the visible and the invisible in his own day.⁵⁷

Technē as a bridge between theory and practice is a theme echoed by Bruegel's humanist contemporaries Vives and Coornhert. Indeed, for them technē (or the artist's dexterity) mediates between perception of material reality and understanding. For Vives, the mind first grasps the outward mixture of things created by nature; a first level of meaning is generated by the interaction of the senses with the observed things.⁵⁸ Only then is the human mind ready to penetrate to its simpler and internal structure. This initial insight explains why "man stands in awe of what nature has wrought; he sees clearly wonders whose intimate essence he can barely perceive."⁵⁹ Sense perception is the crucial raw material, but in order to become a universal norm it must pass through two filters; the imagination—fantasy and speculative. Again, the artist must combine close attention to detail and the ability to order the larger picture; to observe and judge.⁶⁰

Bruegel's optics of insight places new emphasis on the role of the artist and the viewer, as well as on the significance of media. With its presentation of art as a mediated experience, his drawing *Artist and the Connoisseur* (Fig. 6.4) provides a sly introduction to the subtle distinction among different ways of seeing. The difference between the visually active artist and the passively receptive connoisseur places the viewer in a new perspective, he is aware of two models of sight and of the work itself.⁶¹ Bruegel's stress in the drawing on the ways people see things and on the processes of art parallels contemporaneous attitudes towards nature. The artist's perception is direct, though his vision is mediated by the brush poised in the air as he looks with fierce intensity beyond the edge of the drawing. In contrast, the "connoisseur" looks over the artist's shoulder. Though he adopts a position congruent to that of the painter, he does not see in the way the artist sees, nor does the viewer. Rather we are provided with a wider perspective that encompasses both men. Unlike the connoisseur we know what we are looking at. It is as if we peer over Bruegel's shoulder (as opposed to the artist within the work) at the drawing. In contrast to the beholder within the drawing, we are aware of our position in relation to the work and of vision's relativity.⁶² We are forced to distinguish between experience at first hand where the observer becomes aware of something, and experience at second hand where the observer is made aware of something. We are sensible that our perception has been mediated by the artist (Bruegel). As the sixteenth-century humanist Rudolf Agricola points out, we admire not so much the thing represented as the talent of the representer.⁶³ Of necessity this

process foregrounds the artist, since from the start observed facts must be judged and subjected to a gradual and systematic process of abstraction. Such reflexive observation (*contemplatio*) also requires testing precepts against the demands of sensory reality. Hence, art (in the sense of *ars*), as pointed out by Vives, is a discipline that falls between mere dexterity and that which is only contemplative and theoretical.⁶⁴ Moreover, to see properly the viewer must imitate the artist.

6.4 Pieter Bruegel, *The Artist and Connoisseur*, mid-1560s, pen and grey-brown ink, with touches of dark brown ink, 9.75 × 8.5" (25.5 × 21.5 cm), Albertina, Vienna, Graphische Sammlung. Photo: Museum

This way of looking is echoed by Karel van Mander in his book of advice to young painters (*Den Grondt der edel vry schilderkunst*)

I might proudly praise the ... excellent design of the ... prints of the clever Bruegel. As if we were [with him] on the cliffs and rocks of the Alps, he teaches us to depict, without too much trouble, how one looks down into dizzying abysses, at steep crags, cloud-kissing pine trees, vast distances, and rushing streams.⁶⁵

This perspective on the role of imitation in art is well exemplified in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*.

... imitation is in our nature ... "Well then imitation is of two kinds, Damis. Let us hold that one kind is the imitation of both the hand and the mind, this one is painting, and the other the imitation of the mind alone." "It is not of two kinds," said Damis. "The one kind we should consider as more perfect, since it is painting, which can depict with the mind and the hand, whereas the other is part of the first since one can comprehend and copy things without being a painter, but he cannot use his hand to represent them. . . ." "Well then Damis," said Apollonius, "we are both agreed that the art of imitation comes to humans from nature, but that of painting, from skill" ". . . those who view the works of painters need the imitative faculty" ⁶⁶

Implicit in this reading of the *Landscape with a Magpie on the Gallows* is the seminal role of imitation. If the artist emulates nature in the creation of his work, moving from the raw material of his media and his immediate sensuous perceptions to a refined technique and transformed vision, so too must the viewer emulate the artist. Bruegel's *Large Landscapes* exemplify how art, and requisite attentiveness to visual

images, can inculcate judgment and prudence. Again, it is just these qualities—his skill in art and genius for imitation—that are praised by Bruegel’s contemporaries.

Abraham Ortelius’ inscription on the posthumous edition of Bruegel’s *Death of the Virgin* reads that he dedicated this with grief to the memory of his artist friend and adds:

The painter Eupompus, asked which of his predecessors he should take as a model, is said to have mentioned numerous names and finally replied that it is Nature herself that should be imitated, not the artist. This applies to our Bruegel, whose pictures, as I always say, bear the stamp of nature rather than art. Indeed I would call him not the best of painters but the essence of painters. I therefore name him as the painter who deserves to be imitated by everyone.⁶⁶

According to J. A. Fernández-Santamaría, Vives divides the arts into three categories (1) arts that observe the external aspects of nature (empiricism); (2) arts that aim at the intimate aspects of nature; and (3) arts that man, compelled by his own sociability, invents and develops, these last beget the *prudencia* that makes the creation of *bonitas* possible.⁶⁷ This third possibility—which embraces the good [life] espoused by humanists such as Vives—requires a simultaneous and twofold endeavor: understanding and imitating nature. Such an approach mediates between common dexterity and pure contemplation; between mechanical skill and demonstrable knowledge. Consequently, this humanist view of the relationship between nature and art (as a second nature), and the attitude of the prudent man to both, requires just the sort of double perspective Bruegel provides in his landscapes.

Bruegel’s prints reveal his rethinking of traditional subject matter even as analysis of his drawing and painting technique affirms the role of nature and the processes of art emphasized in all sixteenth-century accounts of his work. Bruegel’s self-consciousness about the way we see things, and about process, parallels attitudes toward the physical world in contemporaneous nature studies. Indeed, this understanding of wisdom and its relation to human craft is central here, as is the shift in the perceived relationship between art and nature, between sight and insight. Such emphasis on the play between observation and craft (eye and hand) is in accord with the humanist admonition to learn by means of experience, and even ultimately privileges art over experience in the formation of the prudent man. In Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert’s words:

It is true that one principally finds two sciences, each tending towards a peculiar end, the observed knowledge of the truth and the practice of the truth, and practice requires inner work of perceiving, reflecting, reasoning and weighing

one thing against another. Those who only contemplate without practice never attain moral virtue, that observed (contemplated) knowledge of the truth and practical [knowledge] of the truth, and the practical addresses the activity of the virtue of the eyes. Observation requires considering, perceiving, reflecting, reasoning, and weighing one thing against another. So that here as in a lazy man's field his mind is nothing else than weeds of painful and prickly thistles and dry thorns of harmful mis-understanding. Thus it goes to the other side with practical knowledge. For this one goes with observation. Because what one does not rightly understand, one cannot rightly do. It remains then only in contemplation, without coming into practice, therefore it shall never come forth as moral virtue (which I primarily handle here).⁶⁸

It is a perspective Coornhert reiterates—"No one knows an art who has not practiced it."⁶⁹ Likewise, he asserts that for something to be brought out into the day of clear knowledge two things are needed: observation and practice.⁷⁰ In short, art requires practical experience.

For sixteenth-century humanists, practical reason must know both the end to be obtained and the means of reaching it. Notably art (*ars*), as Vives points out, is a discipline that falls between mere dexterity (the province of the common artisan) and the sphere of what is purely contemplative and theoretical.⁷¹ The orientation towards practical art is even more emphatic in the writings of Coornhert, for whom real knowledge of things cannot be separated from their use.⁷² In his *Vande Kennisse ende Wetenschap (Of Knowledge and Science)*, Coornhert describes the conditions for "true necessary representation" as dependent on "undoubted proof, sought from the principles of practice or from the law of nature. And this is named science."⁷³ Coornhert admonishes his reader to learn by doing, and even ultimately privileges such practical art over mere observation in the formation of the prudent man.⁷⁴ As an example he describes the ineffectiveness of lessons to be had from observation without actually handling material in a goldsmith's workshop.⁷⁵ In his words, "Inattentive (careless) emptiness cultivates weeds, but thoughtful work brings forth the corn of understanding."⁷⁶ Sixteenth-century humanists are consistent in asserting the affinity between human industry and the activity of nature. Again, Justus Müller-Hofstede addresses the pertinence of (neo)stoic attitudes toward the relationship between the active and contemplative life for Bruegel's prints.⁷⁷ Müller-Hofstede links exponents of the active and contemplative life within the prints to humanist emphasis on the affinity between human industry and the activity of nature. Prudence plays a seminal role

in developing a proper stance. Müller-Hofstede further notes that Bruegel is one of the first artists to draw attention to landscape as the “subject for viewing,” and for art, and so implies that what he depicts is memorable and worth seeing.⁷⁸ To this way of thinking, experience is necessary for art. In their journey framework, individual motifs and experience of varied (or mixed) landscapes the *Large Landscapes* provide an apt example of the vicarious experience of the world and the actual experience of attentive looking. This perspective is also established in the first print of the *Large Landscapes*, the *Prospectus Tyburtinus* (Fig. 6.5), where an artist is precariously poised on a rock looking at the falls below him. In subsequent prints the viewer follows precipitous roadways and comes to appreciate the tenuous toe-hold. Moreover, the viewer traces the artist’s route, or more properly his translation from the ambient to pictorial—the strokes, stippling and flecks that convey the prospect. The perceiver must come to recognize the particulars of the picture—the medium, the technique, the style, the composition, the surface and the way the surface has been treated. In the *Large Landscapes*, and even more so in the *Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows*, Bruegel draws attention to the work of art—the object, as well as the labor that produced it.

6.5 Pieter Bruegel *Prospectus Tyburtinus* (View of Tivoli), 1555–56, etching with engraving, 12.6 × 16.5" (32 × 42 cm), Rijksprentankabinett, Amsterdam. Photo: Museum

Such emphasis on imitation—especially in positing a distinction between true and false imitation as ascent and descent—recalls Philostratus’ famous passage on this subject from his *Apollonius of Tyana*.⁷⁹

This man Euxenus from Heracleia on the Pontus, knew the beliefs of Pythagorus as birds know what they learn from humans. Birds express wishes like “Good day,” “All the best,” and “God bless you,” without knowing what they mean or feeling any goodwill for humans , but simply because their tongues have been trained. But Apollonius was like those young eagles with wings still undeveloped that fly beside their parents as they practice flight under their guidance; when they are able to soar they rise higher than their parents, especially if they see them to be gluttons that keep near the ground to gorge themselves.⁸⁰

In another passage, Apollonius addresses the theme of truth in painting:

“Damis,” he said, “Is there such a thing as painting?” “Yes” said Damis, “If there is such a thing as truth.” “What does this art do?” “It blends all the colors there are,” said Damis, “blue with green, white with black, red with yellow.”

“What does it blend them for?” asked Apollonius, “since it is not simply for superficial color, like made-up women.” “For imitation,” Damis replied, “in order to reproduce dogs, horses, humans, ships everything under the sun” . . . “So painting is imitation Damis? “Of course.””⁸¹

It is, according to this passage, in the very act of blending colors to represent everything under the sun that the truth of painting resides. Moreover, painting and truth are inexorably linked. My contention is that this is the theme of the *Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows*. True looking, like a true copy, realizes the ethical as well as the technical potential of the original. In this realization of painting truth triumphs (or breaks through). Apollonius’ comparison between birds who repeat wishes without knowing what they mean and feel “simply because their tongues have been trained” and young eagles “still undeveloped that fly beside their parents as they practice flight under their guidance” is all the more suggestive given that, on his death, Bruegel left the *Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows* to his wife.⁸² Moreover, the painting seems to have remained in his family for some time, since his sons Pieter and Jan copied it.⁸³ If, as I believe, Bruegel encourages the viewer to emulate the process of discovery and judgment manifest in his work in order to attain (in Juan Luis Vives’ words) “prudence through art,” their copies take on an added poignancy.⁸⁴

¹ R. Genaille “La pie sur le gibet,” in *Institut historique belge de Rome. Études d’histoire de l’art* 4 (Brussels, 1980): pp. 143–52 provides the most comprehensive analysis of this painting. Genaille considers possible political and proverbial associations but emphasizes contrast between the drama of the figures dancing under the shadow of the gallows and the serene landscape. For more recent analysis see Walter Gibson, *Mirror of the Earth: the World Landscape of Sixteenth-Century Painting* (Princeton, 1989), p. 75; Ethan Matt Kavaler, *Parables of Order and Enterprise* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 223–33; Barbara Budnick, “Questions of Irony in Pieter Bruegel’s Magpie on the Gallows,” *Georg-Bloch-Jahrbuch des Kunsthistorisches Instituts der Universität Zürich*, 2000, pp. 69–82; and Stephanie Porras, “Resisting Allegory: Pieter Bruegel’s Magpie on the Gallows,” *Rebus*, 1 (2008): 1–15. See also Jane ten Brink Goldsmith, “Pieter Bruegel the Elder and the Matter of Italy,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 23 (1992): 233, who identifies the theme of truth in the painting as a truth to nature, that is, truth as the embodiment of a heightened state of sensory perception.

² René Girard, “Perilous Balance: a Comic Hypothesis,” *Modern Language Notes* 87 (1972): 818–23. Laughter, for Girard, is a “slippery affair” that positions the spectator between moral pessimism and satiric glee over human foibles.

“In laughter, for a few brief moments, we seem to have the best of two incompatible worlds” (p. 822). It is the business of the artist (the professional) to mediate this “perilous balance.” My thanks to David Smith for pointing out this source.

³ Karel van Mander, *The Lives of the Illustrious Netherlandish and German Painters*, trans. Hessel Miedema, v. 1 (Doornspijk, 1994), pp. 190–94.

⁴ Lodovico Guicciardini, *Descrittione di M. Lodovico Guicciardini patricio fiorentino, di tutti i Paesi Bassi, altrimenti detti Germania Inferiore; con piu carte di geographia del paese, & col ritratto naturale di piu terre principale*. Antwerp, 1567, 99D.

⁵ David Freedberg, “The Life of Pieter Bruegel the Elder,” in David Freedberg (ed.), *The Prints of Pieter Bruegel the Elder*, (Tokyo, 1989), pp. 21–4 and by the same author, “Allusion and Topicality in the Work of Pieter Bruegel: The Implications of a Forgotten Polemic,” in David Freedberg (ed.), *The Prints of Pieter Bruegel the Elder*, pp. 55–7, 61–5.

⁶ Van Mander, *Lives*, pp. 194–5. The Dutch (p. 195) reads “daer de waerheyt doorbreeckt.” Miedema translates this as “the truth will out.” Elsewhere translated as “truth breaking through.”

⁷ Lisa Vergara, “The Printed Landscapes of Pieter Bruegel,” in David Freedberg (ed.), *The Prints of Pieter Bruegel the Elder* (Tokyo, 1989), p. 85, cites Conrad Gesner’s 1555 account of his ascent of Mons Fractus.

⁸ Margaret Sullivan, “Pieter Bruegel’s Two Monkeys: A New Interpretation,” *Art Bulletin* 63 (1981): 114–26.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.121–3. Sullivan emphasizes the monkey as indicative of human folly in immoderate desire for material goods. See also Horst Janson, *Apes and Ape Lore in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (London, 1952), Chapter 5.

¹⁰ Erasmus, *Enchiridion*, translated by Raymond Himelick (Bloomington, 1963), p. xiv, describes the two worlds, one accessible to the understanding and one to sight. See also Andrea Wilson Nightingale, *Spectacles of Truth in Classical Greek Philosophy: Theoria in its Cultural Context* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 86, 96, and 97.

¹¹ Nightingale, *Spectacles*, p. 80.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 83..

¹³ Ann Blair, *The Theater of Nature: Jean Bodin and Renaissance Science* (Princeton, 1997), pp. 55–6.

¹⁴ Joseph Koerner, “Unmasking the World: Bruegel’s Ethnography,” *Common Knowledge* 10 (2004): 240–41.

¹⁵ Bakhtin, Mikhail, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington, 1984), pp. 148–49, 175, and 336.

¹⁶ J.A. Fernández-Santamaría, *The Theater of Man: J. L. Vives on Society* (Philadelphia, 1998), p. 89.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 89 and n. 12.

¹⁸ Juan Luis Vives, *Vives: On Education, a translation of the “De Tradendis Disciplinis” of Juan Luis Vives*, trans. and introduction by Foster Watson (Cambridge, 1913), p. 41; Fernández-Santamaría, *The Theater of Man*, pp. 84–5, n.1.

¹⁹ Vives, *On Education*, pp. 170–71.

²⁰ Ilya M. Veldman, “Images of Labor and Diligence in Sixteenth-Century Netherlandish Prints: The Work Ethic Rooted in Civic Morality or Protestantism?” in *Simiolus* 21 (1992): 230–59.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 233–5, 250–51 254–9. Veldman discusses (pp. 254–9) the Italian association of labor and diligence with the desire to attain distinction in the arts and sciences.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 231. She gives the Dutch text (note 23): “Nature brengt den mensch der werelt van tsoch der wieghen,/Tot moeyte en arbeyt, als den voghel tot vlieghe[n].”

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

²⁴ Fernández-Santamaría, *The Theater of Man*, p. 92.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 83–4, n.1.

²⁶ Eva Keuls, “Plato on Painting” *American Journal of Philology* 95 (1974): 105–06 discusses Plato’s suggestive use of skiagraphia as a metaphor. The philosopher’s assumption that skiagraphia refers to the juxtaposition of colors that are best seen at a distance revealing as is the metaphor itself. “Is it not also true of their pleasures that they are of necessity intermingled with pains? They are mere phantoms of true pleasure, *skiagraphiai*, as it were, deriving their color from the juxtaposition of contrasts, whereby both (pleasure and pains) become intensified” (Plato, *Republic* 386 b-c). See also Eva Keuls, “Skiagraphia Once Again,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 79 (1975): 2–3. More pertinent, perhaps, for Bruegel’s milieu, is the allusion to tapestry in Aristotle’s *De sensu* (440 b; Kreuls, “Plato on Painting,” p. 12) where the philosopher notes the blurring effect of distance. Aristotle *De Meteorologica*, trans. H.D.P. Lee (Cambridge, 1952) pp. 263-265 (375a); Kreuls (p. 16) notes the “unspeakable” alterations which colors undergo in the crafts of weaving and tapestry-making as a result of juxtaposition. As Kreuls points out (p. 3) modern color theories were first articulated by Michel-Eugène Chevreul, director of dyes at the Gobelins factory. P. Struycken, “Color Mixtures According to Democritus and Plato,” in *Mnemosyne* 56 (2003): 273–305 argues that specific color mixtures described in Democritus and Plato pertain to natural phenomena and processes.

²⁷ David Brumble, “Pieter Bruegel the Elder: The Allegory of Landscape,” in *Art Quarterly* 2 (1979): 130–31 and Justus Müller-Hofstede, “Zur Interpretation von Pieter Bruegel’s Landschaft Ästhetischer Landschaftsbegriff und Stoische Weltbetrachtung,” in Otto von Simson and Matthias Winner (eds.), *Pieter Bruegel und seine Welt* (Berlin, 1975): 126 n. 205.

²⁸ Vergara, “Printed Landscapes,” p. 85 notes Bruegel’s invitation to repeated wanderings. Walter Melion, *Shaping the Netherlandish Canon* (Chicago, 1991), p. 176 uses this phrase but it is a perspective suggested already by Van Mander in *Den Grondt der... schilderkunst*, 1604, Chapter VIII. See also James Gibson, p. 65.

²⁹ Blair, *The Theater of Nature*, pp. 55–6, 98, 160.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 140–41.

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- ³² Ibid., pp. 98–99 and n. 75.
- ³³ Catherine Levesque, *Journey through the Landscape in Seventeenth-Century Holland: the Haarlem Print Series and Dutch Identity* (State College PA, 1994), pp. 19–23.
- ³⁴ Dirk Volkertsz. Coornhert, *Zedekunst Dat is Wellevenkunst*, B. Becker (ed.) (Utrecht, 1982; first edition Leiden, 1942) pp. 8–11, Levesque, *Journey Through Landscape*, pp. 21–2
- ³⁵ Müller-Hofstede, “Zur Interpretation von Bruegel’s Landschaft,” pp. 116–20.
- ³⁶ Ibid., pp. 120–22.
- ³⁷ Philostratus, *Imagines*, trans. Arthur Fairbanks (Cambridge, 1979), p. 3.
- ³⁸ Karel Thein, “Gods and Painters: Philostratus the Elder, Stoic Phantasia and the Strategy of Describing,” *Ramus: Critical Studies in Greek and Roman Literature* 31 (2002), p. 138.
- ³⁹ Müller-Hofstede, “Zur Interpretation von Bruegel’s Landschaft,” pp. 127–37.
- ⁴⁰ Ilya Veldman, *Maarten van Heemskerck and Dutch Humanism in the Sixteenth Century*, trans. Michael Hoyle (Amsterdam, 1977), pp. 78–79 and Levesque, *Journey Through Landscape*, pp. 24–5.
- ⁴¹ Müller-Hofstede, “Zur Interpretation von Bruegel’s Landschaft,” p. 123.
- ⁴² Levesque, *Journey Through Landscape*, pp. 19–22.
- ⁴³ Vives, *On Education*, p. 24.
- ⁴⁴ Jan Białostocki, “Die Geburt der Modernen Landschaftsmalerei,” *Bulletin de Musée National de Varsovie* 14 (1973): 8–11.
- ⁴⁵ Fernández-Santamaría, *The Theater of Man*, p. 83.
- ⁴⁶ Coornhert, *Zedekunst*, p. 122.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 124–6.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 124–6.
- ⁴⁹ Fernández-Santamaría, *The Theater of Man*, p.119.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 92.
- ⁵¹ Ibid., p.88.
- ⁵² Ibid., p. 92.
- ⁵³ Thein, “Gods and Painters,” p. 137.
- ⁵⁴ Nightingale, *Spectacles*, p. 80.
- ⁵⁵ Van Mander, *Lives*, p. 191.
- ⁵⁶ Freedberg, “Allusion and Topicality,” pp. 57, 62, 65.
- ⁵⁷ Massimo Luigi Bianchi, “The Visible and Invisible. From Alchemy to Paracelsus,” in Rattansi and Clericuzio, *Alchemy and Chemistry* (Dordrecht, 1994), p. 18.

⁵⁸ Fernández-Santamaría, *The Theater of Man*, p. 89.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁶² Lyckle de Vries, “With a Coarse Brush: Pieter Bruegel’s ‘Brooding Artist,’” *Source* 23 (2004): 38–48. My thanks to Lyckle de Vries for pointing out his reading of this work in which the artist within the drawing appears as an “inspired” dauber who, in contrast to *pictus doctus* Bruegel, paints with a coarse brush.

⁶³ Michael Baxendall, “Rudolf Agricola on Art and Patrons,” in *Words for Pictures* (New Haven, 2003), p. 74.

⁶⁴ Fernández-Santamaría, *The Theater of Man*, p. 105.

⁶⁵ Karel van Mander, *Den grondt der edel vry schilderconst* (Haarlem, 1604), Chapter VIII.

⁶⁶ Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, books I – IV, ed. and trans. by Christopher P. Jones (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 182 – 183. [A latin edition published in Bologna in 1501.]

⁶⁶ Freedberg, “Allusion and Topicality,” pp. 57, 62, 65. Abraham Ortelius, *Album Amicorum*, MS about 1573, Cambridge, Pembroke College.

⁶⁷ Fernández-Santamaría, *The Theater of Man*, p. 97.

⁶⁸ Coornhert, *Zedekunst*, p. 131: 52. “Wel is waar datmen vint voornemelyck tweereleye wetenschappen. elck tot een zonderling eynde streckende, zo dat de betrachtelycke kennisse opte waarheyd, ende die hantteereleycke opte werckinghe der dueghden ‘t oghe heeft. Maar des niet te min en werdt noch die betrachtelycke van niemanden verkreghen zonder dat innerlycke werck vant betrachten, van anmercken, van nadencken, redenlycke werck vant betrachten, van anmercken, van nadencken, redenpleghinge ende overweghinghe van ‘t een teghen ‘t ander. 53. Zo dat hier al mede op des Luijards acker zyns ghemoeds niet anders en wast dan ‘t onkruyd vande pynlycke ende stekelighe distelen ende doornen des quetselycken onverstands. Zo mede ghaat het over d’ander zyde met de hanreerlycke kennisse. Voor deze ghaat de betrachtelycke. 54. Want watmen te voren niet recht. Inder daad.. Blyftse dan oock alleen inde betrachtig, zonder te komen inde hantteering, daar en zal nemmermeer zedelycke dueghde (daar af ick voorneemlyck hier handele) uyt voortkomen.”

⁶⁹ Coornhert, *Zedekunst*, p. 129.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

⁷¹ Fernández-Santamaría, *The Theater of Man*, p. 87.

⁷² Coornhert, *Zedekunst*, pp. 122–3.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 131.

⁷⁷ Müller-Hofstede, “Zur Interpretation von Bruegel’s Landschaft,” p. 122.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 119.

⁷⁹ Philostratus, *Apollonius*, pp. 45–47. See also Nina Seribrennikov “Imitating Nature/Imitating Bruegel,” in *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 47 (1996): 227 cites a Du Bellay Sonnet (VII) in which the poet describes the flight of an eagle—the poet (artists) ascends heavenwards following “le maternal exemple”—falls. See G. Castor, *Pléiade Poetics: a study in sixteenth-century thought and terminology* (Cambridge, 1964) pp. 195–9; also K. Aspley et al. (eds.), *Myth and Legend in French Literature* (London, 1982) and P. Sharratt, “Du Bellay and the Icarus complex,” pp. 73–92.

⁸⁰ Philostratus, *Apollonius*, pp. 181–3 [18].

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 47.

⁸² Van Mander, *Lives*, p. 195.

⁸³ Klaus Ertz and Christa Nitze-Ertz (eds.), *Pieter Bruegel der Jüngere-Jan Brueghel der Ältere: Flämische Malerei um 1600 Tradition und Fortschritt* (Essen, 1997), pp. 390–393, and Klaus Ertz, *Jan Brueghel der Ältere (1568–1625): Die Gemälde mit Kritischem Oeuvrekatalog* (Cologne, 1979), pp. 104–105, no. 8 (p. 558). J. B. Bedaux and A. van Gool, “Bruegel’s birthyear: motive of an ars/natura transformation,” *Simiolus* 7 (1974), p. 137 gives (in translation) the inscription on a print depicting Pieter Bruegel (the Younger): “As Bruegel the Elder copies nature, so the son copies/his father. Nature lives in a art as expressed by the father’s/hand. Art lives in nature, as achieved by the son’s genius/nature is to art as the father is to the son.”

⁸⁴ Vives, *On Education*, p. 24.