

The Life of Bruegel

Notes

Writing of the novel began October 20, 1998.

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Did nothing for a year and seven months.

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Timeline

Year	Age B	Event
1450		Bosch born
1502		Peter Coecke van Aelst born
1512		Mercator born
1515		Mayken Verhulst born
1516		Bosch dies
1517		Williblad Cheroo born. Anthony Perronet the Cardinal Granvelle born. Niay Serrão born.
1518		Filips de Montmorency, the Graaf de Hoorne born.
1527	0	Abraham Ortelius born in Antwerp, April 4.
1527	0	Bruegel born in Bruegel near Breda.
1532	0	Williblad Cheroo born in Florida.
1539	12	Bruegel apprentice for Pieter Coeck van Aalst in Antwerp. Williblad comes to Antwerp.
1544	17	Mercator arrested for Heresy. Mayken Coecke born.
1545	18	Pieter Huys joins Guild of St. Luke as painter. Young Mayken born.
1546	19	Hans Franckert joins Guild of St. Luke.
1547	20	O. joins Guild of St. Luke as illuminator of maps.
1548	21	Jerome Cock, age 41, opens Aux Quatre Vents, publisher of prints.
1550	23	Pieter Coecke van Aelst moves to Brussels and dies, Dec 6, leaving Mayken Verhulst-Bessemers his widow in charge of the workshop.
1551	24	B. joins Guild of St. Luke as painter, works with Peter Balten on the Mechelen glovemakers' guild triptych. O. visits Oxford, travels.
1552	25	Mercator moves to Duisberg, Germany. Bruegel leaves for Rome.
1553	26	Sells "Christ at the Sea of Tiberias" in Rome.
1554	26	B starts back from Italy in spring, gets back to Antwerp in Fall.
1555	28	Does "Twelve Large Landscapes" with Cock. In October, Charles V abdicates, puts Philip II in charge.
1556	29	"The Merchants Driven from the Temple" for Fugger. Distemper "Adoration of the Magi" for Cayas. "Fall of Icarus" for Jonghelinck. "Big Fish Eat Small fish", "Ass at School", begins "Sins". Young Mayken is 11.
1557	30	Amsterdam financial crisis. Finishes "Sins". "Wine of St. Martin's" for Franckert. "Parable of the Sower" for Jonghelinck.
1558	31	"Elck" and "Alchemist". "Temptation of St. Anthony" and "View of Naples" for Jonghelinck.
1559	32	"Battle Between Carnival and Lent" and "Netherlandish Proverbs" for Jonghelinck. Begins the "Virtues".

1560	33	“Children’s Games” for Mayken Verhulst (Mayken Coecke is 15.) Finishes “Virtues”. B. changes spelling of his name.
1561	34	The Landjuweel, Antwerp at its height. Theme: “The Benefits of Trade”. Antwerp-Brussels canal completed.
1562	35	“Rebel Angels” and “Triumph of Death” for Granvelle. “Suicide of Saul” for Franckert. “Mad Meg” for Jonghelinck. “Two Monkeys” for Ortels. Bruegel leaves Antwerp for Amsterdam. Plantin leaves Antwerp to escape heresy charges.
1563	36	Big “Tower of Babel” for Jonghelinck. “Flight to Egypt” for Granvelle and Margaret of Parma. Marries Mayken Coeck in Brussels, she is 18. House of Fugger goes bankrupt!
1564	37	“Bearing of the Cross” and “Adoration of the Kings” for Jonghelinck. Pieter the Younger born, say December. Recall of Granvelle from Brussels.
1565	38	“The Seasons” for Jonghelinck. Jonghelinck hands his collection over to Antwerp. 60,000 sentenced to death, strict enforcement of the edicts.
1566	38	The “ <i>gueux</i> ” are turned away. The iconoclasts loot the churches.
1567	40	O. and Plantin join “Family of Love”. “Land of Cockaigne” for Franckert. “Conversion of Paul” for a Catholic. Alba arrives Aug 22. De Hoorne and Egmont arrested September 9. Margaret leaves Dec 30.
1568	41	Jan born, say June. “Peasant Wedding” and “Peasant Dance” for Pilgrims. “Birdsnester” for Franckert. June 5, Egmont and de Hoorne are executed. “Beekeepers” for Plantin. “Misanthrope” and “Parable of the Blind” for Granvelle. “Magpie on the Gallows” for Mayken.
1569	42	On January 18, the Brussels city council relieves B of having to quarter Spanish soldiers. Bruegel dies, September 5.
1570		O. publishes <i>Theatrum Orbis Terrarum</i>
1578		Mayken Coecke Bruegel dies
1589		Pieter Bruegel III born
1600		Mayken Verhulst dies
1601		Jan II born
1625		Jan dies, age 57
1638		Pieter the Younger dies, age 74
1678		Jan II dies, age 77

Regarding exact dates, John Walker sent me a calculation method which indicates that, by the Julian calendar then in effect, Easter Sunday of 1556 was on April 5. This would, I believe, put Ash Wednesday at February 24, 1556 [or, as they would have called it, 1555]. We might suppose that the Carnival scene is on Monday, and that the next day is Fat Tuesday. Or we could have the Carnival on the Friday before Ash Wednesday, and the next day be Saturday.

Painting List

This is a complete list of the paintings by Peter Bruegel the Elder.
 Pictures not referred to in the book are in parentheses.

Title	Date	Patron	No.
Christ at Sea of Tiberias	1553	Guilio Clovio	1
Merchants Driven From Temple	1556	Antoinie Fugger	2
Adoration of the Kings (Watercolor)	1556	Granvelle	3
(Archangel Michael)	1557	*	4
The Fall of Icarus	1556?	Jonghelinck	5
(View of the Bay of Naples)	1557	*	6
Parable of the Sower	1557	Jonghelinck	7
Temptation of Saint Anthony	1558	Jonghelinck	8
Flemish Proverbs	1559	Jonghelinck	9
Carnival and Lent	1559	Jonghelinck	10
Children's Games	1560	Mayken Bessemers	11
Fall of the Rebel Angels	1562	Granvelle	12
Triumph of Death	1562	King Philip	13
Mad Meg	1562	Margaret of Parma	14
Two Monkeys	1562	Ortelius	15
Suicide of King Saul	1562	William of Orange	16
Tower of Babel (Big)	1563	Jonghelinck	17
Tower of Babel (Small)	1563	Self	18
Flight to Egypt	1563	Granvelle	19
(Yawning Man)	1563	Self	20
Wine of St. Martin (Copy)	1563?	Jonghelinck	39
(Head of Peasant Woman)	1564	Self	21
Bearing of the Cross	1564	Jonghelinck	22
Adoration of the Kings	1564	Jonghelinck	23
Death of the Virgin	1564	Ortelius	24
Six Months: Gloomy Day, (Lost Spring,) Hay-Making, Return of the Herd, Harvest, Hunters in the Snow	1565	Jonghelinck	25-30
Skaters and Bird Trap	1565	Self	31
(Woman Taken in Adultery)	1565	*	32
Sermon of John the Baptist	1566	William of Orange	33
Numbering at Bethlehem	1566	William of Orange	34
Massacre of the Innocents	1567	William of Orange	35
Adoration of the Kings in Snow	1567	Herman Pilgrims	36
Conversion of St. Paul	1567	Marcus Noot	37
(Visit to the Tenant Farmer)	1567	Self	38
Land of Cockaigne	1567	Hans Franckert	40
Dance of the Bride	1567	Willem Jacobsz	41

(Bridal Procession)	1567	*	42
Peasant Wedding	1567	Herman Pilgrims	43
Peasant Dance	1568	Herman Pilgrims	44
Peasant and Birdsnester	1568	Franckert	45
Beggars	1568	Plantin	46
(The Bad Shepherd)	1568	*	47
Misanthrope	1568	Granvelle	48
Parable of the Blind	1568	Granvelle	49
Magpie on the Gallows	1568	Mayken Bruegel	50

Word Count

Date	Word Count	Chap	Days In	Recent Words/ Day	Avg Words/ Day	Recent Days To Finish	Avg Days To Finish
Oct 20, 98	0		1	0	0	Infinite	Infinite
Dec 6, 98	4,133		47	89.85	87.94	1,066.97	1,090.14
Dec 7, 98	5,090		48	957	106.04	99.17	895.04
Dec 17, 98	6,618		58	152.8	114.1	611.14	818.42
Dec 30, 98	7,829		71	93.15	110.27	989.49	835.87
March 2, 99	10,767		133	47.39	80.95	1,882.95	1,102.32
March 9, 99	15,402		139	772.5	110.81	109.51	763.45
March 16, 99	16,599		146	171	113.69	487.73	733.58
March 18, 99	18,052		148	726.5	121.97	112.8	671.87
April 26, 99	18,253		187	5.15	97.61	15,873.2	837.49
May 5, 99	25,824		196	841.22	131.76	88.18	562.96
June 7, 99	28,551		229	82.64	124.68	864.58	573.06
June 13, 99	32,265		235	619	137.3	109.43	493.34
Oct 1, 99	34,700		344	22.34	100.87	2,923.01	647.37
Oct 8, 99	38,289		351	512.71	109.09	120.36	565.69
Oct 10, 99	38,483		353	97	109.02	634.2	564.27
Oct 30, 99	40,960		373	123.85	109.81	476.71	537.66
Nov 18, 99	41,021		392	3.21	104.65	18,373.52	563.58
Nov 29, 99	46,485		403	496.73	115.35	107.73	463.94
Dec 18, 99	50,733		425	193.09	119.37	255.15	412.73
Dec 29, 99	53,998		436	296.82	123.85	154.98	371.43
Jan 28, 00	58,881		466	162.77	126.35	252.62	325.44
Feb 9, 00	65,487		478	550.5	137	62.69	251.92
Feb 19, 00	67,256		488	176.9	137.82	185.1	237.59
Mar 12, 00	74,696		510	338.18	146.46	74.82	172.77
April 12, 00	86,244		541	372.52	159.42	36.93	86.29

April 30, 00	94,728		559	530.25	170.07	9.94	31
May 7, 00	99,449	15	566	674.43	175.7	12.68	48.67
May 20, 00	107,353	16	579	608	185.41	1.06	3.49

Started revising: Jan 9, 2002 107, 353 words (Only did one chap in Jan)
8 Chaps Revised, Feb 16, 2002 120,830 words
11 Chaps Revised, Feb 20, 2002 126,071 words
16 Chaps Revised, March 1, 2002 135,325 words
More Revisions for Hartwell, March 19, 2002 137,869

Lengths of my recent novels:

The Hacker And The Ants 92,000

Freeware 97,000

Saucer Wisdom 84,611

Realware 105, 351

I did *Realware* as 24 chapters each about 13 pages long.

To start with I guessed the book would be 100,000 words, and based the “Days to Finish” column on this figure up through April 30, 00.

Calculation: May 5, 1999. The four full chapters I have done weigh in at 23,319 words. That’s 5,830 words per chapter. If I were to do 13 chapters that would make 75,787 words, not quite enough. For a full 100,000, I’d want 17 chapters, which I can’t see doing.

Calculation on May 4, 2000. I have 14 chapters at 95,210 words, which makes 6,800 words per chapter. If I write 16 chapters as now intended, that makes 108, 000 words. So I’m going to change the “Days to Finish” column to reflect that. Damn, that pushes my days to finish back out again.

On May 20, 2000, I finished the first version of the book at 107,353 words.

On March 1, 2002, I finished revising the book at 135, 325 words.

Title

BRUEGEL: A HISTORICAL NOVEL.

Terry Bisson suggested calling it BRUEGEL IN LOVE: A NOVEL to make it clearer that its a novel. I kind of like this for being commercial-sounding, but am a little hesitant of this title as, in all honesty, my Bruegel is more interested in painting than in love.

Susan also reminded me that at one point I wanted to call the novel AS ABOVE SO BELOW, which is a classic mystical phrase I like a lot and which captures, I feel, something of how Bruegel thought. It would need a subtitle, maybe

AS ABOVE SO BELOW: A NOVEL OF PETER BRUEGEL.

I’ve also at times thought of GLIMPSES OF BRUEGEL or VISIONS OF BRUEGEL.

Chapter Ideas

Chapter 1. Bruegel. Alps. May, 1552. Mountain Landscape.

An Alpine chapter, featuring young Bruegel and Martin de Vos on their way to Italy. Bruegel draws his Mountain Landscape with Italian style Cloister. Then he goes down to the monastery and de Vos is already drunk. De Vos hooks up with a local trull and goes to her house.

There's been an execution of an old alchemist and his wife. De Vos is bitter about it. Bruegel meets Hans Franckert, whom he knows. They talk about paints.

In the morning Bruegel sells his drawing to Franckert. De Vos is in trouble, Bruegel has to save him, it costs him the money he got from Franckert. Then Bruegel and de Vos walk up the gorge and find a scene like *The Magpie on the Gallows*: a gallows with some people under it dancing.

Chapter 2. Bruegel. Rome. July, 1553. The Tower of Babel.

Bruegel in Rome, working with Guilio Clovio, doing a miniature for him, a "Tower of Babel" on ivory. De Vos and B do "Christ at the Sea of Tiberius" together, B the landscape and de Vos the figures.

B runs into Ortelius, also at the Sistine chapel, in Rome buying maps, they have lunch together. Scipio Fabius is there too. Mention that things are tough back in Antwerp. King of France is gearing up to fight Charles.

Bruegel and de Vos have a big falling out, de Vos does a shitty job on the figures, then does something gross with Francesca. Bruegel leaves, intending to get a ship for Palermo from the Roman port of Ostia. On the way he visits Ortelius, who is staying in a male brothel near the Coliseum. Sells O two Roman drawings for etchings: the Daedalus and Icarus and the Psyche, both of 1553, to be engraved by Hoefnagel.

Chapter 3. Ortelius. Antwerp. February, 1556. The Battle Between Carnival and Lent.

The Carnival chapter. We use Ortelius's point of view so that we can more easily jump over the intervening three years. Start with Ortelius up in the Our Lady bell-tower seeing everything.

B at the Carnival with Franckert and Anja. There's a fight in a bar, and the bad guys attack B, Ortelius, and Plantin, who is wounded. Bruegel is knocked out.

Chapter 4. Bruegel. Antwerp. February, 1556. Skaters with Bird Trap.

Bruegel wakes up. Plantin was about to take a satchel to Granvelle at the "royal villa" where Phillip is staying. O goes to get Plantin's wife, telling B to deliver Plantin's package, which B does once Plantin is looking okay.

At the royal villa, B meets Granvelle, Fugger, and Jonghelinck. He gets three deals at once. *The Merchants Driven from the Temple* for Fugger, *The Adoration of the Kings* for Granvelle, and *The Fall of Icarus* for Jonghelinck.

Anja comes to him in the night, they make love. In the morning they wake up and

are looking at the *Skaters with Bird Trap* landscape out their window. There's a little anxiety that their relationship could be deemed incestuous, as they were raised together.

Chapter 5. Ortelius. Antwerp. March, 1556. Lust.

Ortelius surprises Anja and Bruegel in bed, then waits for B downstairs at Cock's Four Winds shop. Lots of engravings by Bruegel. Bruegel and Ortelius go to the Pand together and Ortelius sees B make his deals with Jonghelinck and Fugger's secretary. B and Franckert get drunk, then turn up at Ortelius's.

Ortelius wants to flirt with Fugger's secretary, Williblad Cheroo, so they go over to Fuggers. Cheroo sells O some coins and lets B look at a Bosch triptych of the *Last Judgment with the Seven Deadly Sins*. The coins are "Danaë and the Shower of Gold" and the silver medallion of Charles V by Dürer and Krafft.

Chapter 6. Bruegel. Antwerp. September, 1560. The Peasant Wedding.

B has been engraving the Seven Sins and painting his three encyclopedia pictures. He's almost done with the *Children's Games* for Mayken Verhulst and Mayken Coecke. Anja is cheating on him.

B and Franckert dress as peasants and go to a peasant wedding. The Rode Rock show up and kill two people, set the barn on fire, B walks back home with the dog Waf, who'd belonged to one of the murdered men.

Chapter 7. Anja. Antwerp. August, 1561. The Parable of the Blind.

The Landjuweel, August 3, 1561. Bruegel has left Anja for her unfaithfulness with Williblad Cheroo and Martin de Vos, also because he wants to chase after Mayken Coecke.

B has been doing lampoons, or political cartoons, of Granvelle and Philip. Anja finds one in the street.

Anja goes to see the Landjuweel plays in the square before the Our Lady church. She sees B there, and B gets into a fight with Williblad Cheroo. B and Williblad the St. Luke's guild perform "The Blind Leading the Blind," and at the end B hugs tries to hug young Mayken. Anja gets so jealous she runs to Granvelle, who's watching from the Our Lady tower, and tells him that B drew a lampoon, also tells him that she and B are almost brother and sister.

Granvelle had B fetched and tells B he has to paint for him.

Chapter 8. Bruegel. Mechelen. April, 1562. Dulle Griet.

B is been working in a studio in the provincial (Mechelen) castle of Margaret of Parma. He's finished *Fall of the Rebel Angels* for Granvelle, and he's now working on *Triumph of Death* for Granvelle. *Dulle Griet* for Margaret of Parma. B is worried Anja will become a prostitute and die of pox. He goes out falconing with William of Orange, a.k.a. William the Sly. William mentions that Count Filip de Hoorne (Bruegel's father) had asked about B. B shows *Dulle Griet* to Margaret and she's furious.

Granvelle keeps her from having Bruegel killed, but suggests B move on, which is

just what B wanted, to get free. But Granvelle is very angry with B and says that he wants to see B be unhappy.

B makes a deal to paint *The Suicide of Saul* for William, who gives him a horse. B takes the *Two Monkeys* with him that he also painted in the palace.

Chapter 9. Ortelius. Antwerp. October, 1562. The Sermon of John the Baptist.

Ortelius is at home in his study; B shows up, back from Amsterdam. Long conversation. O bought *The Two Monkeys* from B and gave Anja the money for a dowry. Anja is marrying Peter Huys and she's pregnant. Hans Franckert married Hennie Nijland. Fugger is almost bankrupt and Williblad Cheroo has left Fugger's employ for someone new in Brussels, though Williblad hasn't told O who. B shows O the painting he did on the road, the miniature *Suicide of Saul* for William. B is full of energy, eager to go to Brussels to woo Mayken.

O takes B to a hedge-preacher's sermon with the promise of meeting Jonghelinck. The preacher is Hendrik "Family of Love" Niclaes. A Manichean, he taught that the Devil was real.

B gets a commission from Jonghelinck for a large Tower of Babel.

Williblad is there in disguise. He's left Fugger's employ, Fugger being nearly bankrupt, to work for Granvelle. O talks to him, learns that Williblad's come to warn Plantin about an arrest warrant for Plantin because one of his printer's produced Hendrik Niclaes's book, *Terra Pacis (Land of Peace)*. He tells O that, with Granvelle's encouragement, he's trying to seduce young Mayken.

Conversation between O and B. Old Mayken always lusted for Bruegel. B tells about old Mayken indecently spreading her legs for young Bruegel like in his paintings, frightening him. She and B had an affair while Master Coecke was off in Turkey. Flashback to when Master Coecke van Aelst was really pissed off about big Mayken liking B so much, he was dressed as a Turk, in green silk the color of moonlight, with featured turban and curved scimitar, painting.

B wants young Mayken more as a business thing than out of love. He's despairing of ever getting a solid social position. Of ever owning a house. He's tired of being a struggling artist.

Chapter 10. Bruegel. Brussels. November, 1562. The Peasant and the Birdsnester.

Bruegel is in Brussels, but young Mayken seems uninterested in his suit. He sets up a studio and works on The Tower of Babel for Jonghelinck. Williblad Cheroo turns up and says that he's the one who's turned Mayken's head. Williblad says he'll break off with Mayken if Peter will introduce one of Granvelle's agent's to William of Orange.

Peter feels like the stolid peasant who stands by while the birdsnester steals the nest he had his eye on. He takes action, and leads Granvelle's agent into a trap at William's palace. The assassin is killed in front of Bosch's triptych of *The Garden of Earthly Delights*.

Mayken appears and asks Bruegel, "Did you sleep with my mother?" "Yes." "Are you my father?" "No. Now will you marry me?"

Yes, she'll marry him.

Chapter 11. Mayken. Brussels. December, 1564. The Adoration of the Kings.

Bruegel and Mayken are married and things are going well. He has an assistant named Bengt, and he teaches Bengt and Mayken about the craft of painting. The despised Cardinal Granvelle is finally driven from the Netherlands. At a celebratory party at William of Orange's palace, Mayken is seduced one final time by Williblad Cheroo. Nine months later, she bears Peter a son. Bengt tells Bruegel of Mayken's infidelity, but Bruegel rises above the worries, naming the boy after himself. At the christening, the Count Filips de Hoorne finally acknowledges to Bruegel that he was indeed his father. Bruegel plays a savage prank on Bengt; he dresses up as the ghost of Master Coecke and threatens Bengt with Master Coecke's old scimitar.

Chapter 12. Bruegel. Brussels & Antwerp. January 1566. The Hunters in the Snow.

Bruegel is happy, he has his son, and he's spent the whole last year painting his six Seasons pictures, and now he's finishing the last one: *The Hunters in the Snow*. He travels up to Antwerp to deliver it to Jonghelinck, and Jonghelinck hangs the picture in a special hexagonal room that he built for series. Ortelius and Williblad Cheroo are there as well. Cheroo is very appreciative of the work, and Bruegel begins to let go of his antipathy for the man. Now Jonghelinck tells Bruegel that next month, the pictures will be whisked away and put into storage by the city to cover some bad business debts. Jonghelinck signed his deal with Antwerp all the way back in September.

Jonghelinck was known to own a Dürer, maybe a marzipan-like Mary and Jesus, painted 1512. It's been a rough year, 60,000 sentenced to death, strict enforcement of the edicts.

Peter is bewildered and distraught that his masterworks will never be seen in his country, Peter goes to Ortelius's with the sympathetic Cheroo, and the two finally reach a rapprochement. Peter finds it in his heart to forgive Williblad just as Master Coecke forgave him.

Chapter 13. Ortelius. Antwerp. August, 1566. The Beggars.

Uphill from Bruegel's house, dozens of men and women are being executed daily. Bruegel paints *The Numbering at Bethlehem*, the *Massacre of the Innocents*, *The Sermon of John the Baptist*, all in 1566, he sells them to William of Orange in Antwerp. De Hoorne discouragingly boxes them up and sends them away. Bruegel says his next two paintings will be an *Adoration of the Kings in the Snow* and a *Dance of the Bride* for two guys in Amsterdam.

The political situation has grown desperate. United in their opposition to the Spanish rule, the Netherlandish nobles are calling themselves the "Beggars." The name comes from the Regent Margaret's councilor Berlaymont. It was April, 1566, when the "gueux" were turned away. Berlaymont turned to the tearful and anxious Margaret and said, "*Quoi Madame, peur de ces gueux?*"

Williblad is living with Ortelius. Williblad is into being a Beggar, he wears a gray cloak. Ortelius, Williblad, Bruegel and Mayken go to see the Calvinist preacher Moded of Zwolle preach outside of Antwerp. Williblad runs into his new girlfriend, a woman named Niay Serrão, a woman from the “spice island” Ternate in the East Indies. When they come back into the town, the iconoclasts loot the Our Lady Church. Williblad and Niay get in on it, pulling down the cross with Christ.

Mayken gets them to save one of her father’s paintings. They’re challenged by the same evil Walloon who beat them up at the Carnival in 1556, and who burned down the barn at the peasant wedding in 1560. Williblad knocks him out and then Niay poisons him..

Williblad says that Spain was paying provocateurs to encourage the iconoclasts. Ortelius and Peter are mad at Williblad for the image-breaking. Peter rhetorically says he’s going to teach Williblad to paint as “punishment.”

Chapter 14. Mayken. Brussels. January 1567 - September, 1567. Lazy Luciousland.

William goes through the motions of arresting a few people for the Beeldenstorm and in fact has it in for Williblad. Williblad moves back to Brussels with Niay and takes up residence in a shed in Bruegel’s garden. Bruegel actually tries to teach him to paint, but Williblad doesn’t have the patience. Williblad and Niay get jobs working for a Javanese-owned inn in the harbor basin.

Bruegel uses Franckert for a model for the *Dance of the Bride*. Williblad attempts to seduce Mayken again, but she doesn’t give in. Little Peter is two. Old Bengt shows up and tells how William the Sly is leaving for Germany.

A fortieth birthday party for Peter is held in June, 1567, aboard Franckert’s ship, named *Luilekkerland* after a fairy-tale land of plenty. Ortelius announces that Alva has set out for the Netherlands through the Alps. Niay’s Javanese restaurant makes the food and then puts on a “*wayang kulit*” shadow play.

Franckert gives Bruegel a commission for a painting of the fairy-tale *Luilekkerland*. Peter also engages to paint *The Conversion of Paul* for Marcus Noot, a city father and friend of old Mayken. The *Luilekkerland* is a warning of how fearful and paralyzed and indolent the people are. The *Conversion* is a wish for a miracle.

Alva’s troops march into Brussels on August 22, 1567, a year after the Beeldenstorm. The Maykens, the Peters, Williblad, Niay and Waf are watching from a street corner. Waf runs out and barks at the soldiers. A horseman kills him with his sword.

Chapter 15. Bruegel. Brussels. June 5, 1568. The Beekeepers.

There are two soldiers quartered in B’s studio, Pedro and Jose. Mayken, is hugely pregnant. Today is the day when Peter’s “brother” de Hoerne is to get his head cut off in the public square called the Grand’ Place. Little Peter hears about it and is upset.

Bruegel has just finished his three new peasant pictures: *The Peasant Wedding*, and the *Peasant Dance* for a patron in Amsterdam, and the *Peasant and the Birdsnester* for his old friend Franckert. Carlos and Jose have vandalized the *Peasant and the Birdsnester*, they’ve drawn a crude white penis on top of the main figure’s codpiece.

Bruegel has a big attack of pain in his stomach. He repairs the picture and decides to try and scare Carlos and Jose so they won't want to stay in the attic anymore. Bengt, Williblad and Niay will help him.

Bruegel and his friends go to see Graaf de Hoorne get his head chopped off in the Grand' Place. Bruegel is impressed by the heads being on display and then being put in baskets by hooded Inquisitors to send to King Phillip. He has a vision of Christ. The heads are put in baskets that look like beehives. Bruegel thinks about beekeepers who wear baskets over their heads, forms an image for a drawing.

Back at the house, Mayken is going into labor for her new baby. Bruegel, Williblad and Bengt hide in the store-room in the corner of the attic. Niay waylays Carlos and Jose, talks to them, flirts with them, gets them to drink a bottle of gin with a great deal of ground nutmeg in it so as to make them delirious. Niay drinks the stuff too.

Niay and the soldiers go upstairs. Jose collapses, but Niay starts to have sex with Carlos. Williblad beams a scary shadow onto the attic ceiling and then Bruegel comes out wearing the old Turkish outfit of Master Coecke. Jose runs downstairs to the basement. But Niay is so delirious she thinks it really is a ghost and asks Carlos to save her. Williblad has to strangle Carlos to keep Bruegel from being killed. At that moment, Mayken gives birth to baby Jan.

Bengt and Williblad seal Carlos's body up in a crate like the paintings. The next morning Jose's memory is hazy. He thinks Carlos has deserted. Bruegel and his friends put the four boxes aboard Franckert's ship Luilekkerland, which is in the harbor, and the Captain, a friend, agrees to throw the box with Carlos into the open sea.

Back at home, Bruegel finds the Walloon sergeant with Jose and a new soldier to quarter, a man named Miguel. Though there's no suspicion on Bruegel, they've decided to arrest Williblad and Niay: Williblad for more persecution for his role in the image-breaking, and Niay for possibly being a witch.

Williblad and Niay manage to hide themselves below the decks of the Luilekkerland before they get arrested.

Chapter 16. Mayken. Brussels. January 1569 - September, 1569. The Magpie on the Gallows.

In **January**, Bruegel is weak and out of money. Marcus Noot visits to announce a little victory: on January 18, 1569, the Brussels city council relieved B of having to quarter Spanish soldiers. Corporal Miguel was something of a spy, given to nosing through Bruegel's papers. Noot has some money for Peter as well. He doesn't really expect B to actually paint the building of the Willebroek Canal.

Early in February Ortelius arrives for a visit. Bruegel is working on the *Parable of the Blind* and the *Misanthrope*. It seems Williblad has written, he's working for Granvelle again, who is now the Viceroy of Naples. Niay is with him. Williblad has arranged a commission for any two paintings at all that Brueghel cares to paint.

Ortelius has brought back the *Beekeepers*. Cock and the others are scared to publish it because it seems political, and to make it even more suspect-seeming, there happens to be a new Calvinist tract called *The Beehive of the Holy Romish Church*.

Bruegel says he was thinking of Williblad when he drew the youth climbing the tree to safety in the *Beekeepers* image. He writes a proverb on the *Beekeepers* to muddy

the water: "He who knows the nest knows it, he who has it has it." His hidden meaning is that the Family of Love are the ones who *know* the nest, while the oppressors *have* it.

Later in February, Bruegel paints *Magpie on the Gallows* for Mayken. But he pushes himself too hard, vomits up blood again, and collapses.

In the first days of **September**, Bruegel burns some savage drawings he's made of the Spaniards. He dies September 5, 1569. His last words are, "I'm ready."

In the final scene, Mayken, baby Jan and Little Peter are alone in Peter's studio, looking at his easel and a few of his paintings on the walls. The paintings are like pools you can dive into, like wells. After a bit, Little Peter walks across the room and picks up his father's brush.

Point of View

I use Bruegel, Ortelius, Anja, and Mayken. The sequence is like this.

B B O B O B A B O B M B O M B M

That's 8 Bs, 4 Os, 1 A, 3 Ms.

I had some trouble deciding which p.o.v. to use for the last chapter. I was kind of mesmerized by how well [Rocquet] presents B's last days from his p.o.v., and sort of wanted to copy that. He has B "astonished to have come to the days before his death," and has B dreaming of the Nativity, not of a representation, but of the "actual event." Well, I can have him say some of that to M.

I chose to use M because we really should have as many women's p.o.v. chaps as Ortelius gets. Also M has a good way of seeing things; her flowing quality lends itself to the exposition of chapters that run over several months. Also that's who was the closest to B by then.

Related People

Fictional Characters

Williblad Cheroo

I just checked my usual all-purpose reference source, the 1984 World Book we got our kids one Xmas, and find that when the Europeans reached Florida there were about 10,000 Indians in four main tribes, the Calus and Tequesta in the south, the Timucua in the central and northeast regions, and the Apalachee in the northwest. There were Carib Indians down in the islands. Ponce de Leon (wonder if he was the origin of the word "ponce" which means something like pimp doesn't it?) first came there in 1513 first to St. Augustine on the East, then to Charlotte Harbor on the West (which is when my Williblad Cheroo must have been conceived), and was killed by Indians when he returned to try and start a colony in Charlotte Harbor 1521 (that's when my Williblad Cheroo must have gotten on board). I'll guess those were Tequesta Indians. If Williblad were born in 1514, say, then he'd be thirteen years older than B and O, a forty-two to their twenty-nine, a little too much. So I'll have him born in 17.

In terms of Williblad being Bruegel's rival for both Anja and Mayken, I'm not sure it works to have him be so old. Also I'd kind of like him to be a shadow Bruegel, a double, and evil twin. Should I him Bruegel's age, the exact same age and even birthday

might be best? I'd have to elide a over a decade of real time and fudge Ponce de Leon's dates forward, pretend he came to Florida in 1527 and Williblad was born then, and Ponce returned and got killed in, say, 1532. That makes me uncomfortable.

Ponce might have screwed around Florida a little longer. Let's say Williblad is born in 1517, ten years before B, and just have him be older.

I need to work out the sense in which Cheroo is the "anti-Bruegel." The double, the mirror, the twin. Perhaps C is the future of art, American as he is.

Bruegel	Cheroo
God	no God
Renaissance	Postmodern
Narrative	Chaos
Peopled Landscape	Empty landscape, and beyond that: abstraction.
Paintings	Shadows (like computer graphics!)

Make Williblad a real character. Jack White. Have him in fact do something heroic towards the end of the book, perhaps getting himself killed saving the lives of Bruegel and his family. Maybe something about the billeted Spanish soldiers in B's house, maybe B kills one of them and Williblad takes the rap.

Niay leads Williblad into puppetry and then into shadow plays. The couple are like the gypsy and his wife in *The Sermon of John the Baptist*. Puppet shows are common in basements of Brussels bars, often with seditious content, and what better in terms of being non-evidentiary than the props of a shadow play.

Niay Serrão

The daughter of Francesco Serrão and the daughter of the Sultan Almanzor of Ternate. Came to Spain in 1522, aboard Magellan's last ship. Let's say she was born maybe 1517 like Williblad. At one time I thought I'd have her be pregnant in 1567, when she'd in fact be 50, but there really would be no chance of a baby. She doesn't get pregnant.

Patrons and Collectors

Hans Franckert

Franckert joins St. Luke's in 1546. "B did a great deal of work for a merchant, Hans Franckert, a noble and upright man, who found pleasure in Bruegel's company and met him every day. With this Franckert, Bruegel often went out into the country to see the peasants at their fairs and weddings. Disguised as peasants they brought gifts like the other guests, claiming relationship or kinship with the bride or groom. Here Bruegel delighted in observing the droll behavior of the peasants, how they ate, danced, drank, capered or made love." -- Carel van Mander, *Schilder-Boeck*, 1604.

Franckert moved to Antwerp from Nuremberg. Perhaps involved in trading German metals for Antwerp wares. Belonged to a Chamber of Rhetoric.

Niclaes Jonghelinck

B's best-known patron. He commissioned the "Seasons" or "Months". In February 21, 1565 (the last month of 1565 according to the calendar of the times)

Jonghelinck had to pledge his collection to the city of Antwerp. He pledged this to make up for a debt of wine-taxes owed by one Daniel de Bruyne. He owned 16 Bruegels, 20 pictures by Frans Floris, and one by Dürer. Valued at 16,000 florins, about \$320,000. Antwerp eventually gave the collection to Archduke Ernst Habsburg when he became governor in 1594.

Jonghelinck was a rich Antwerp financier who belonged to the immediate entourage of Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle, president of the council of state from 1556 to 1564. A confidant of Granvelle. A banker. Also a tax-collector.

Jonghelinck's pictures were "in his house located at ter Beken". They included "sixteen items by Bruegel including the **tower of Babylon**, a **Bearing of the Cross**, the Twelve Months..." If we suppose there really were Twelve Months, then that leaves two pictures unaccounted for. Candidates would be the three Encyclopedia pictures of 59 and 60, or the three Bosch pictures of 62 and 63. Other possibilities are the "Suicide of Saul" the "Adoration of the Kings". Also there's "The Parable of the Sower" of 1557.

If we suppose there are only **six "Twelve Months"**, that leaves eight pictures to account for. Candidates are, in order

View of the Bay of Naples, 1556

The Fall of Icarus, 1557

The Merchants Driven from the Temple?, 1557

Parable of the Sower, 1557

Temptation of Saint Anthony, 1558

Netherlandish Proverbs, 1559

Carnival and Lent, 1559

Suicide of King Saul, 1562

Tower of Babel, 1563

Wine of Saint Martin?, 1563

Bearing of the Cross, 1564

Adoration of the Kings, The London one, 1564

Six Months, 1565

Can't use "Flight to Egypt" as it belonged to Granvelle.

Give the Children's Games to Mayken Verhulst? Well, no, for how would Vienna have gotten it, then? Oh, Rudolf II could have bought it.

Abraham Ortels

He illuminated maps (joined guild of St. Luke as illuminator), and dealt in maps which he imported. He collected medals.

Ortelius's father Leonard Ortels (1500-1537) died when Ortelius was 10, came from Augsburg. Ortelius cared for his mother and his sister Elizabeth (1535? - 1594). He seems not to have married? His (other?) sister married Jacob Cole and had a son Jacobus Colius Ortelianus (1563-1628). Jacob Cole Sr. was English, and Jacob Jr. was brought up in London. His uncle Ortelius was fond of him and when he was young jokingly called him "Anthraci" or "Carbo" (puns on "Cole"). In 1589 began calling him Ortelianus. Became a silk merchant. Collected coins and medals like his uncle.

His father came from Augsburg, so could have been friends of the Franckert family.

In 1567, he and Plantin joined The Family of Love.

He put out *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* in 1570. Ortelius kept his opinions to himself and slipped across the channel to England when things got really bad. O spoke of “the Catholic evil, the *Gueux* fever, and the Huguenot dysentery.”

Here is the text of Ortelius’s funeral oration for Brueghel, which is printed in Ortelius’s *Album Amicorum* (in Latin verse):

“Peter Bruegel was the most perfect of his century; this could be denied only by the ignorant, by a rival, or by someone knowing nothing of his art. He was taken from us while still in his full manhood. I hardly know whether to incriminate Death, which perhaps thought him old enough, considering the matchless talent it had observed in him; or whether Nature feared to see herself disdained, since he had imitated her with so much art and talent.

“To the memory of his friend, Abraham Ortelius has tearfully dedicate these verses:

“Eupompos, the painter, on being asked whom of his predecessors he had chosen as a master, replied by pointing to a crowd of men: it is nature itself that we must imitate, not an artist. This observation well applies to our friend Bruegel, so that I prefer to call him, not the painters’ painter, but the painters’ nature, and I mean by this that he deserves to be imitated by all. Our Bruegel has painted — as Pliny says of Apelle — many things that cannot be painted. In all his works there is always more thought than paint. Eunapius makes the same claim for Timanthus, in Jamblique. Painters who paint graceful beings in the bloom of life and go out of their way to add to the painting an elegance which they derive from themselves, denature the whole image represented, and in departing from the chosen model likewise fail to achieve true beauty. Our Bruegel never committed this error.”

Ortelius’s atlas was engraved by Plantin, printed and sold by Coppens. Martin de Vos helped with the ornamentation. [Murray] p. 130

[Karrow] has a lot:

Ortelius was born April 4, 1527 into old Antwerp family. His father Leonard was a merchant, probably a dealer in antiquities. His mother was Anne Harrewayers, active in the family business.

Anne’s brother Jacob fled to England to escape the Inquisition for awhile. Leonard visited him in 1535 and the Ortels house was searched by Inquisition authorities for banned books.

Leonard died at 39 in 1539, when Abraham was 12. Anne took over the business. Jacob came back to Antwerp and helped raise Abraham. Abraham very close with Jacob’s son (?), his cousin Emanuel van Meteren, who moved to England in 1562.

The mother eked out a living selling antiques, Abraham and his sisters Anne and Elizabeth took up map coloring. Abraham joined the Guild of St. Luke in 1547 as an “illuminator of maps”. He also dealt in antiques, coins, maps, and books. Visited Italy 3 or 4 times in the 1550s. Met Mercator at the Frankfurt book fair in 1554.

Had an extensive collection of medals, coins, antiques and a library. Visited Paris 1559, France with Mercator in 1560, Italy in 1561. Studied everything, made contacts with scholar and editors, had big correspondence.

1564 a wall map of the world drawn by him in the cordiform projection. He did

some maps of ruins, reflecting his interest in archaeology and antiquities, like the ruin of a Roman fort in Holland, 1568. A map of the Holy Land 1567.

Got his idea for the atlas around 1568. Some say Mercator had the idea first (Mercator's biography, by Ghym). Others say it was because O had a merchant friend Gilles Hooftman, who bought all the maps he could for calculating freight of merchandise and dangers they would face, and to estimate the daily reports about European wars. Unrolling the large maps was inconvenient, so supposedly Hooftman's assistant Jan Raedemaeker had the idea of binding the maps together. So Raedemaeker told Ortelius to get all the maps he could on one sheet they could bind together. Ortelius was friends with Hooftman in the fifties. But some Italians were already making ad hoc atlases of thirty or so maps in the 1560s. O could have started the atlas project in the 1550s.

[Frayne] makes much of O's remark "*Multa pinxit, hic Brugelius, quae pingi non possunt...*" He painted many things, this Bruegel, that cannot be painted... Frayne thinks this is a reference to rebellious political messages in the work.

I got hold of the expensive book of essays about *Abraham Ortelius and the First Atlas* in the NY Public Library. Mentioned his collected letters:

Joannes Hessels, *Abraham Ortelii...*, Osnabrück: O. Zeller 1969.

O moved houses in 1561, 1563, and 1570. The 1563 house was Kammenstraat in de Vette Hen, a neighborhood known for book printers.

Frans Hogenberg engraved his maps.

He visited the Stone of Poitiers in 1560 with Filips Galle.

Bartholus Arameius is an anagram of Abrahamus Ortelius that he sometimes used.

Antoine Perronet, Cardinal de Granvelle

Born in 1516, so eleven years older than Bruegel.

Granvelle governed the Netherlands for Phillip II. Was chased out in 1564.

He definitely owned the "Flight into Egypt" of 1563. He wrote a letter after Bruegel's death commenting on how the prices of Bruegel's pictures was rising. He is said to have owned a "Parable of the Blind," (Gibson p. 122, says it was in his house in Besançon in 1607, though maybe that was a different "Parable of the Blind.")

Let's say he got "Fall of the Rebel Angels," "Flight into Egypt," and perhaps the two late pictures that are in Naples: "Parable of the Blind," and "Misanthrope."

He was the Archbishop of Mechelen.

He commissioned four tapestries after Bosch's works, including "Garden of Earthly Delights" and the "Haywain".

Jonghelinck's brother Jacob Jonghelinck was a sculptor who was one of Granvelle's favorite artists.

Jonghelinck himself was a friend of Granvelle's, J is probably who turned Granvelle onto B.

[Sullivan] quotes him, p. 123 "Behold my philosophy...to live joyously as possible, laughing at the world." see Motley, vol. 1, p. 415.

His father Nicholas Perronet was important as well.

[Frayne] p. 131 says Perronet was a Burgundian from Franche-Compté. There's a portrait of him by Anthois Mor in the KHM in which he has an expression of "bland insolence." Over the gate of La Fontaine, his country house outside the walls of Brussels,

he carved the motto: “Durate” (patiently endure).

In 1572, Granvelle’s palace was looted in the Spanish fury, and G couldn’t get his Bruegels back.

Granvelle left Antwerp in 1564, lived in France for a year, moved to Rome in 1565, negotiated a treaty between Spain, Rome and Venice and The Turk in 1570. He was then the Viceroy of Naples, and in 1575 moved to Madrid, where he lived till 1586.

Margaret of Parma

Margaret was probably the inspiration for “Mad Meg,” looting hell, her apron laden with swag. Illegitimate daughter of Charles V, thus Philips’s half-sister. Netherlands-born, though only spoke Italian. “was accustomed to wash the feet of twelve virgins every holy week,” according to Motley.

Alexander Farnese

Son of Margaret of Parma, could have been a collector, though didn’t show up till 1578. Besieged Antwerp in 1584, which may be how the late works got to Naples.

Archduke Ernst

Very fat, solemn. Antwerp gave him the Jonghelinck paintings in 1592.

Jerome Cock

[Claessen] p. 171. Son of an obscure painter, Jan Wellens. Painter, architect, poet, playwright, publisher of prints. 1545 opened his shop *In de Vier Winden*. Member of the *De Violeiren* chamber of rhetoric.

[Barnouw] p. 5 says that Jerome’s father was a close friend of Hieronymus Bosch, and that maybe Bosch was Jerome’s godfather, and that’s why he got the name (Jerome = Hieronymus.)

Liked pithy sayings using the word “cock”. “*Houdt de cocq in eeien*” or “Hold the cock in high esteem.”

[Murray] Set high standards of Flemish-style engravings. Son of the talented painter Jean Willem Cock. Born in Antwerp in 1510. Joined St. Lucas in 1545. Went to Italy for a long time, set up the “Quatre Vents” in 1553 on Exchange St. as an engraver.

He was a bit of a painter as well. It’s said Bruegel studied with him as well as with Coeck van Aelst.

[Klein] He opened “Aux Quatre Vents” in 1548, at age 41 (So born in 1507.) In 1551, the Guild of St. Luke began accepting Metal engravers as “free masters,” the same rank as master painters. Good engraver.

[Delevoy] Won admission to the Guild in 1546, went to Rome till 1548, saw prints, founded publishing house near the New Stock Exchange and corner of La Courte rue Neuve and the Rempart Sainte-Catherine. “In de Vier Winden” a favorite meeting place for intelligentsia. Possible that Bruegel carried out some artistic or commercial research work for Cock in Italy.

[Timmermans p. 200] Jerome Cock was overwhelmed by the Sistine Chapel, “never again will I touch a paintbrush”. He married a voluptuous blond Dutch woman, Katharina Volk, young and fresh as a tulip. She played the harp. His shop was on Kaiser

Street. Promised Bruegel as soon as he got into the Guild he could go to Italy.

Coorenhert

A Dutch philosopher, a deistic and tolerant humanist. Probably wrote the captions for the *Seven Sins* engravings.

Christopher Plantin

[Murray] Born 1514 in France, worked in Paris till 1548, when Henry II's anti-heresy made it unsafe. Moved to Antwerp in 1549, became a citizen and joined St. Lucas Guild in 1550. Opened a shop where he sold prints and books and his wife sold haberdashery. Bound books and decorated leather and other jewel boxes. Stabbed in 1555. Couldn't handle gilding tools anymore. Had daughters. Two sons in law, they eventually took over. Printed a book of social and moral instructions for a girl of noble family in 1555. In 1562 accused of printing a heretical book, went to Paris, creditors sold his furniture so the Church wouldn't get it. Came back in 1563. Became Philip's archtypographer in 1570.

Cartographers

Scipio Fabius

A Bolognese geographer who sometime went to Rome. On June 16, 1561, and April 14, 1565, he wrote Ortelius.

Mercator

Real name Gerhard Kremer, a.k.a. Gerhardus Mercator. 1512-1594. His projection is designed so that one inch of longitude always equals one inch of latitude. He does this by increasing the spacing between latitude lines, the reason is that higher up on the globe, a longitude inch means much less distance, so the scale of the latitude is increased so that an inch of the latitude isn't much either. The good result of doing this is that headings on Mercator's projection are accurate. The loxodrome or rhumb line on the globe is a straight line on a Mercator map: constant compass heading.

He put out the first Mercator projection map in 1569.

Born in Rupelmonde near Antwerp, had German parents. Parents died young. Attended the university of Louvain. learned math from Gemma Frisius. Surveyed Flanders himself. Published a double-cordiform world map in 1538. Arrested as a heretic in 1544. Got off the hook, but left the Netherlands in 1552, moved to Duisberg, where the Ruhr meets the Rhine, spent the rest of his life there. His neighbor Walter Ghim wrote a memoir about him. Mercator thought of his projection as being a kind of "squaring of the circle". His new projection appeared in a map of 1569, the year Brueghel died.

[Karrow] Mercator born on March 5, 1512, to poor parents Hubert and Emerentiana, who died in 1526 and 1528. Father's brother Gisbert took over, sent him to 's'Hertogenbosch (Bosch's home town!) to school run by the Brethren of the Common Life (Erasmus went there). He went there about age 15, in 1527. After three and a half years with the brothers, Gerard went to Louvain and enrolled in the university in August,

1530, aged 18, as a poor student at Castle College. Studied philosophy and took his degree in 1532. He saw the glory of God in the fabric of the world.

Friends with the greatest astronomer and mathematician of the Low Countries, Gemma Frisius. Gemma had made a pair of globes, was 4 years older. Learned art of making astronomical instruments of brass, engraving on copper and brass, and writing in italic.

Married Barbara Schellekens in August 1536, had a son and five more kids. He engraved the lettering for Gemma Frisius's globe of 1537, first to use italic hand on a map, credited as engraver. In Gemma Frisius's celestial globe of the next year he's a collaborator. Map of the Holy Land in 1537. First world map in 1538, double cordiform. Map of Flanders 1540. In 1570, Ortelius engraved it for the *Theatrum*.

Made his first globe in 1541, dedicated it to Nicolas Perrenot de Granvelle, Charles V's chancellor and Mercator's patron. Made with a hollow wooden ball, not plaster over papier-mâché, so it would be sturdier and could be used by navigators at sea, you could stick compasses into it.

Charged with "lutherye" in 1544 by the attorney general of Brabant at Louvain. Arrested him Feb 15, imprisoned in castle at Rupplemonde. 42 others arrested. 2 men burned at stake, one man beheaded, and a woman buried alive. Mercator released by the imploring of his friend, the university of Louvain, and his parish priest. He skulked off to Duisberg in March, 1552. The duchy of Cleves. He had a press for printing from copperplates in his house, probably just used for proofing. Made for the Emperor a blown crystal globe with the stars and planets engraved with a diamond, the constellations inlaid with gold. Made a tiny wooden earth globe, gave this to the Emperor at Brussels. Published map of Europe in 1554 dedicated to Granvelle.

1569 the Mercator projection map of the world.

Gemma Frisius

[Karrow] Born in Friesland, December 8, 1508. Gemma, for gem, refers to his intelligence and small size. Needed crutches as a child, got over it. Went as a poor student to Lily College of Louvain 1526, degree master of arts 1528, published an edition of Peter Apian's book on cosmography in 1529.

Attack of "English sweat" then in epidemic 1529. Made pair of globes 1530. a book on how to use them, *De Usi Globi*.

Corresponded with Copernicus in the 1530s, encouraging him. Wrote about triangulation, summarizing the technique for mapping. Made an improved sundial called Gemma's Ring. Made a number of instruments.

Married a Barbara in Louvain in 1534. Globes his primary source of income. Went to medical school, helped Vesalius get a corpse from the gallows in 1536 for dissection. Plantin sold his globes, large and small versions of both. Made his living as a doctor, but still did maps. A map of the world in 1540, based mostly on Ptolemy.

Handbook of practical arithmetic, 1540. Most popular arithmetic book of the century.

Died of kidney stones on May 25, 1555 at age 47. Last book on the astrolabe.

Family

Peter Coeck van Aelst

Bruegel's teacher. Introduced Renaissance into Antwerp. architect, decorator, painter. 1502- 1550.

The town is variously spelled Aalst, Aelst, and Alost.

Engraver as well. Known for translating Vitruvius's book on architecture, as reworked by Sebastiano Serlio. Provided illos. First architectural handbook in Netherlandish. Promoted the classical style.

He designed cartoons for tapestries, which could have had an influence on the vertical structure of Bruegel's three Wimmelbilder (Lent, Proverbs, Games).

In 1549, he helped decorate Antwerp for a visit by Charles V and Philip.

[Delavoy] says he moved to Brussels in 1544, because this is when he was appointed to court, but others believe Coecke stayed in Antwerp until 1550, moving only shortly before he died.

[Timmermans p. 156]Coecke is court painter to the Emperor. Liked to dress as a Turk, in green silk the color of moonlight, with featured turban and curved scimitar, painting. Always smoothed things out, painted everything soft and smooth as porcelain. House had a jumble of classic statues, banners, armor, rugs, vases, paintings, drawings, screen of gilded leather, cushions, Arabian tankards, Moorish weapons, helmets, bows, shields. Was commissioned to decorate Brussels and Antwerp for Emperor Charles.

I took a photo of his *Rest on the Flight to Egypt* of 1535.

Mayken Verhulst-Bessemers

Widow of Peter Coeck van Aalst. Wealthy. Perhaps she bought a couple of Bruegel's pictures. Maybe the "Children's Games" for her children to look at!

Famous as a miniature painter. She married Pieter Coeck van Aelst after the death of Coeck's first wife.

Rather stout, even-tempered, and in Coeck's portraits fills up the whole painting. Like an abbess in her manner, domineering and imperious. [Timmermans p. 164]

Mayken Coeck van Aalst

B's wife. What are her dates? She married him young, in 1563, and she died in 1578. Let's say she was 18 when they married, so she'd be born in 1544 or 1545, and lived only to 33 years of age. On B's grave she's called Mariae, for Marie, I guess. But I suppose Mayken is a nickname, a diminutive for Maria. Or Mary.

Pieter Brueghel the Younger

Brussels. There's a copy by Pieter 2 (or "de Jonge" for younger) of what must be a lost Bruegel, "The Wine of St. Martin".

Antwerp has a copy of the Procession To Calvary, and the faces of the people in it are so Will Elder, so Mad magazine.

Some sources say he was called "Hell" Brueghel, while others point to Jan for this nickname. Note that both of B's sons put the h back in their name.

Peter painted a copy of the *Feast of Saint Martin*, which has a figure with a nice

plume feather on their hat, makes me think of a tree growing.

Jan Brueghel

Seen in Vienna. “Kirchweih in Schelle”, January 29, 1614, Vienna KHM. Includes a picture of Jan and family. He looks like a “Dutch master”, a fat bearded guy with one of those disk shaped collars made of a single piece of cloth folded into loplop folds. He wears a black hat with a brim and sloping flat top. Looks like our fat poet friend Dave Kelly. The museum notes say Jan was called Flower and “Samnet” or “Velvet” Bruegel, the last because he liked to wear velvet all the time. He was the younger and more important of the two sons. He became a court painter in Brussels. Owned six townhouses, very successful. Pals with Rubens.

Politicians

Duke of Alva

[Grierson] “small head, yellowing complexion, dark eyes, and a forked beard falling over his chest.” 59 in 1567. ruthless cold, implacable

Legendary Figures

Prester John

Also called Presbyter John. A Christian priest and king whom the medieval mind believed to have a great kingdom in the East. He was supposed to be a direct descendant of one of the Magi. When they didn’t find him in Asia, they changed to expecting to find him in Africa. Ortelius’s map of Ethiopia calls it the kingdom of Prester John: “Presbiteri Iohannis, Sive, Abissinorum Imperii Descriptio.”. The black king in Brueghel’s “Adoration of the Kings” could be Prester John. Pope Alexander looked for him in 1117, Marco Polo claimed he had been killed by Genghis Khan or “Chinghis Kaan”.

The medievals thought there were some bad kings or giants in the far North called Gog and Magog and that some day they’d come and kick ass. There was supposed to be an iron wall keeping them out that would eventually break down. (Cf. our contemporary myth of an Iron Curtain!) Perhaps the Great Wall of China was the origin of this legend.

The idea was that Prester John would help the Christians against God and Magog. There was a “letter” from him saying how rich he was, which encouraged people to go to Asia looking for him.

In 1459, Fra Mauro of Venice made a world map incorporating Marco Polo’s reports. Since Prester John’s realm couldn’t be found in Asia, he put him in Africa. [Wilford] p. 45.

Artists

Pieter Aertsen

Seen in Vienna. Called “Lange Piet” 1508-1575 Antwerp/Amsterdam. “*Bauernfest*”. He used live models. I took a photo of this one.

Pieter Baltens.

Antwerp, 1527-1584. Painted a Peasant Wedding/Dance (*Volksbrueloft*) very similar to the Peasant Dance paintings of Peter the younger. The bride counts money at a table in back.

Herri met de Bles

1510-1550. Did a Bearing of the Cross of 1535 going clockwise. The composition dates back to an Eyck drawing. Herri met de Bles did another one too, this one very close to Bruegel's, around 1535 as well. He puts a dang flamingo on top of the central spindle-rock! The central weird rock is just like in B's. It has a high killing-field on the right as well.

Hieronymus Bosch

Born 1450, to a family of painters. His grandfather had a piece in the cathedral at s'Hertogenbosch. Family name was originally van Aken, meaning they lived in Aken before they moved to s'Hertogenbosch in Brabant. Married about 1480 to Aleyt Goyaerts van der Meervenne, older and richer woman settle down in a town house by the Cloth Market. Joined the Brotherhood of Our Lady in 1486. Probably ran a workshop.

The Last Judgment and the Seven Sins or *Weltgerichtstriptychon* at the Gallery of the Academy of Visual Art in Vienna. Oil tempera on oak. Location in 16th century unknown. Painted 1504-1508. In 1659, Archduke Leopold Wilhelm of the Habsburgs had it. The patron for the work is suggested by the fact that the two saints on the grisaille outer panels are St. James the Elder, the patron saint of Spain and St. Bavo, the patron of the city of Ghent. Suggests links to Spain and to Habsburg Netherlands. Probably it was someone in the entourage of Philip the Fair, also known as Phillip the Handsome or Phillip I, he lived 1478 - 1506.

Lucas Cranach the elder made a copy of the work.

On the left is the Fall of the Rebel Angels at the top, and lower down are the Expulsion From the Garden of Eden, and Eve Giving the Apple to Adam, and Eve Created from Adam's Rib. In the center is the Last Judgment at the top, with Jesus in the center and a kind of rainbow with angels bringing souls up on the left and throwing them down on the right. Then a band of burning cities on a black and brown background and then the individual scenes of torment.

The clarity of the colors. Green, blue, red, brown.

Too much to see.

The Grisaille panels show St. James on the left panel, and St. Bavo on the right panel, beside a begging leper who has his detached foot sitting on his begging blanket. Like *that'll* bring in the tips!

Looking at the picture I think of the propensity of flesh to be pierced.

The overall effect is like jewels. Rose red, pale green, light blue. The pink bodies of the humans. The background of black, brown and tan. No yellow to speak of. A blue Klein-bottle bagpipe creature just like in the Hell picture. The luminous highlights, glowing white on the backs of the dark snakes. Spoonbills. A family of inchoate shuggoth creatures in the foreground. A gryllos, a head on two feet. His rocks and cliffs are flat, undetailed, like underpainting, the same for the grass. Burning buildings, burning

cities.

On the right panel is the “Lord of Hell,” he’s shown a little like Magritte’s *The Healer*, who is an empty birdcage wrapped in a cloak. Except Bosch’s Lord of Hell is a cage of fire. Like a stove. The stomach, mouth, eyes are all fire, and sparks shoot out of the top of his head. His mouth has fangs like a cat mouth, there are many of these fearsome cat mouths on the demons.

Someone plays a trumpet with their ass. “Luxuria” is not actually “lust” it’s more “comfort”.

Looking at this picture some more, I think, “Face it, Bosch was fucking *nuts*.” A fish with legs. A guy’s butt squirting into a funnel that goes into a barrel that pours into a glutton’s mouth. A guy in a barrel of shit guarded by a firebreathing newt with a knife through his neck. Nuts, nuts, nuts. The hell door on the right has frogs on it’s border. It’s so *cruel*, so heartless. Bruegel feels a need to get past this stuff.

He has nice color effects. Verdigris on the bronze cupola of the warriors, moss on the shit-barrel. Some of the skewed proportions put me in mind of one of the nightmares of Little Nemo.

In the KHM there’s a Bearing of the Cross of 1480, a close-up in two rows of Jesus and the others. On the back of this picture is a wonderful roundel. A rectangular background or orange-red with dark lines in it. Then a circle with a grisaille of a child with a three-wheeled walker and holding a little pinwheel. Incredible picture. The grisaille of the child has a black background. The gray of the child has faint highlights of red, echoing the panel color. Bosch is the great master.

Joachim Bueckelaer

Seen in Vienna. 1536-1574. Antwerp. “*Marktweib*”. 1561. Nephew and student of Pieter Aertsen. Thomas Hart Benson realism.

Joos van Cleve

Seen in Naples. “Adoration of the Magi” 1515. Antwerp 1485-1540. A triptych. I took a photo of one of his pictures, *Lucrezia*, 1520, which has a woman stabbing herself.

Michiel Coxie

Seen in Vienna. 1549-1592. Mechelen/Brussels. “Picking the Apples”. Very Italian.

Lucas Cranach

The Holy “Sippe” of 1512. Very luminous. Figures on a background, not really tied together with perspective.

Albrecht Dürer

1471-1528. Jonghelinck owned a Dürer. Pictures of his I noticed: a painting of Mary and baby Jesus, like marzipan, done in 1512.

The one of his that I like to think Fugger owned is the following. On the front is *Portrait of a Young Man*, 1507. It shows a jock with a fur collar. The back shows a

naked old woman with sagging breasts and a bag of money, it's called *Allegory of Impermanence*.

Frans Floris

1519-1570. He painted a Last Judgment of 1565 with a really loathsome looking Satan who's a hare-lipped, pointy-eared Pan.

He had a big workshop, was one of the most systematic crank-em-out Flemish masters. Jonghelinck had 20 of his pictures. Perhaps he offered B a job. Floris had a number of standard head models he'd have his assistants "paste" into his pictures, there's a Study for a Head of 1555 in the KHM.

Joris Hoefnagel

Artist. He etched "Landscape with Mercury and Psyche" and "Landscape with the Fall of Icarus" of 1553.

[Sullivan] p. 71 says he owned works by Bruegel. He said "nature is the teacher of art." He was interested in physiognomy. Painting of Hoefnagel's wedding shows very civilized people NOT getting drunk p. 100, restrained. Maybe B's wedding was like this.

He wrote and illustrated an "emblem book" in 1569 called *Traite de la Patience*, see picture p. 124.

Frans Huys

A brother of Pieter Huys, the Boschian painter. Frans was a craftsman and artist who primarily worked as an engraver for reproduction. May have died in 1562. Engraved Bruegel's war ships drawings for Hieronymus Cock.

Pieter Huys

Seen in Brussels. There were a couple of cool Bosch-style pictures by Huys, who became an Antwerp master in 1545, 6 years before Pieter B., I wonder if they were friends. Huys was a total *Zap Comix* artist, he did a "Temptation of Saint Anthony" and a "Last Judgment." Huys has a good image of a fat naked egg-shaped man whose top half is a beehive with two eyeholes; the man's wearing black boots.

The other pre-Bruegel Fleming to work in the style of Jerome Bosch was J. Mandyn.

Worked for Plantin as an engraver.

Aertgen von Leyden

Seen in Brussels. (of Leiden) (1498-1564) did a Bosch-style "Temptation of Saint Anthony".

Jan Mandyn

The other Bosch imitator in the 1540s besides Huys. Also worked in Antwerp. Let's suppose that he painted an exact copy of the "Temptation of St. Anthony" triptych, and that he was skinny compared to Huys being fat. The two them like Laurel and Hardy, a "fat-man and thin-man" couple. If I do a Bosch chapter, maybe have these guys in it.

Note that it was especially in Mechelen where the Bosch imitators flourished:

Verbeec and Frans Crabbe van Espleghen.

Jan Massys

Seen in Vienna. 1509-1575 Antwerp. “Lot and his Daughter”.

Joos de Momper (the Younger)

1564-1635. Active in Antwerp and Brussels. Painted the Sea Storm of 1610 that used to be thought a painting of Bruegel’s. He does some traditional landscapes as well in which there’s the very clear three-layer color division: brown foreground, green middle ground, blue background.

Bernard van Orley

Seen in Naples. “Portrait of Carlo V”, Brussels, 1488-1541. What a fop Carlo looks like, big pizza hat and pointed chin. A member of the Farnese Court. To think of this lily-livered twerp mulcting Bruegel’s people makes me angry.

Marinus van Reymerswaele

Seen in Naples. Born Siressa 1495- Antwerp 1570. The “Avares” 1535. Some greedy-looking hook-nosed types.

Peter Paul Rubens

Seen in Vienna. His babies and cherubs look so fat and flesh-folded. They are like caterpillars, all those folds. 1577-1640.

Lucas van Vakkenborch

Seen in Vienna. 1535-1597. Antwerp/Linz/Frankfurt. 12 Months. Painted 1584/87. Very inferior.

Tobias Verhaecht

Seen in Antwerp. A copy of “Tower of Babel”.

Martin de Vos

Worked for Plantin as engraver. Traveled with Bruegel to Italy, was with him when he met Scipio Fabio of Bologna for sure (though perhaps they met in Rome). Was in Italy from 1552-1558.

[Sullivan] p. 143. A series of prints by Martin de Vos in the *Bibliothèque Arsenal* (Paris), bk. 719 nos. 152-8 (The Acts of Mercy), challenges the viewer to locate the figure of Christ who is introduced unobtrusively into scenes of sixteenth-century life and only identifiable by a small halo.

De Vos helped with the ornamentation of Ortelius’s atlas.

[Sullivan] p. 19 shows an engraving by him, “The Egg Dance”

[Murray] p. 138 says he worked in Frans Floris’s studio.

Things To Do

Proofing

Proofed and entered changes for chapters 1-6, February 19, 2000.

Proofed and entered changes for chaps 7-10, mid March, 2000.

Proofed and entered changes for chaps 11-16, mid May, 2000.

Proofed and entered changes for chapters 1-6, late May, 2000.

Should eventually print out these notes, circle good bits and touches that I forgot, and put them in. I think I'll wait till the next full revision to do that, I don't have the patience right now (May 18, 2000), I'm too eager to get the thing in the mail.

Things To Mention

Quicksilver vial

Have Franckert get out his vial of quicksilver again sometime. Maybe at the peasant wedding, or maybe later.

Lace Collar

I see a 1600 painting of some nobles and a Duke's body lying in state. I notice that some of their lace ruff collars are folded in a chaotic fractal fashion rather than in the traditional series of lemniscate shapes. The folds bump up and push into each other like the curves of a coastline. Use a collar like this for Peter at his wedding.

Did it.

Seals

Official documents have big red disk seals. The seal of Brussels has the archangel Michael with a sword. The documents are slit along the bottoms so a strip dangles, and the seal is affixed to the strip.

Did it.

Illuminated Bibles

Black letter bibles with illuminations.

Chess.

Stench.

Big stench from cows, a different stink from sheep.

Discarded Phrases

Mercury globules.

He doesn't say so out loud, but it makes him think of souls being born from the mind of God.

Magpie at the Gallows

Off to one side, a man squats and shits, shitting in the shadow of the gallows,

shitting on Death. [Don't use this in Chapter One, which already has enough shit in it. But use this when we come back to Bruegel painting this as his last picture.]

April

Many of the peasants were out plowing. The less fortunate ones had to pull their own plow, letting the wife or a child guide the blade. Franckert and Bruegel passed a few farmers already heading home from the Antwerp market; at this time of year the peasants had little to sell other than cabbages, milk, and the moldy remains of last fall's potatoes.

Cutting the Liar's Stick

"Maybe I could count the lies that I notice." He picked up a stick that he used to brace against the canvas for steadying his hand. "What if I make a notch in this stick for each lie you tell me. And if the stick isn't full by next summer — why then we'll marry." He looked around the room. "Where's my knife? I need to make two notches. One for last night, and one for not making me any food. Here we go." Bruegel carefully set his knife blade to the stick.

"Don't make the notches so big," said Anja, watching him. "Not that it matters. You'll hear nothing but the truth from me all winter long. And next fall we'll be wed! Oh, Peter. I love you. Come to bed. Was the fire terrible?"

Dowry for Anja from Dirk

It crossed Bruegel's mind that maybe he could approach Anja's true brother Dirk and ask him to provide his sister with a dowry substantial enough to land a husband. But — money from Dirk? Not likely.

Mayken and Peter

The closer Mayken got to Peter, the more she liked him. She'd been mistaken in regarding him as a too-familiar uncle; he had the fire and the playfulness of a schoolboy.

Fake dialog

"Something rash and stupid," said de Vos.

"A calm and longsuffering response," said Ortelius.

White blood of love

Ortelius woke late, naked in bed with the white blood of love stuck to the hairs of his belly. (This from [Yourcenar] who mentions "the white blood passed in love.")

Medieval view of cripples

Ortelius smiled at Williblad's imitation of a cripple. He shared the common opinion that a physical deformity reflected a spiritual crookedness. God made cripples as a warning, and there was no real need to pity them.

How it feels to look at a Bruegel painting.

No thoughts remained; the picture caressed the eye like a loving touch. OR Not a thought in his head.

Falconers' birdsnesting.

Bengt had mentioned to Bruegel that this was one of the ways that falconers obtained their falcons; not all birdsnesters were simply out to eat their prey.

Ortelius's Globes

"They were made by Mercator, with the help of Gemma Frisius," said Ortelius. "Ten times more accurate than the botched globes of the Reinel brothers. Did you know the Reinels mapped the Earth at half her actual size? They thought Japan and the Spice Islands were right off the west coast of the Americas. It cost Magellan two year's suffering to learn the true size of the Pacific. Yes, these new globes are right up to the minute in accuracy. I bought them from Christopher Plantin. One is of the Earth, the other of the heavens. More than mere geographers, we're cosmographers as well. Gemma died last year, poor fellow."

"What kind of name is Gemma?"

"It's Latin, Peter, for jewel. Gemma was a small, bent gnome of a man with a brilliant mind. The Gem from Friesland. The celestial globe has the constellations, you see, and the terrestrial globe shows the continents. Oh, that reminds me, I need to find my best map of America." Ortelius turned to rummage in his desk.

"I like how they've crowded things in — even where they don't know what's there," said Bruegel, slowly twirling the intricately printed terrestrial globe. "The sea monsters are marvelous." He turned his attention to the celestial globe, which was covered with dots for stars and with classical figures representing the constellations. "This is the celestial globe? I don't understand it. I'm to think of myself as being on the inside of one globe and the outside of the other? It's nonsense."

"Gemma Frisius wrote a book about his globes," said Ortelius, glancing up from his piles of maps. "*De Usi Globi*. Do you want to borrow that, too?"

Painting a Spoon

To keep Bengt occupied, Peter set him to work painting a picture of a wooden spoon. "It's a good start," Mayken heard Peter tell Bengt after the boy had been painting a few days. "But your spoon is just lying there. Make it wake up and look around. Objects are alive, you know."

"I don't know what you mean," grumbled Bengt.

"I'll show you," said Peter. And now he added a huge spoon to the pack of a man who sat near the front of his *Bearing of the Cross*. The spoon looked for all the world as if it were staring over at the group of lamenting women in the picture's foreground.

Words

genre

as a subject matter category means painting ordinary life. If done as "my, my, how quaint" it's schlock.

gueuze

A Belgian style of beer.

gryllos

A creature with its head directly on its legs

portolan charts

are sailing charts, covered with systematic rhumb lines radiating from compass

roses. Gave coasts very accurately but not the interiors.

polder

area of low-lying land that is reclaimed from water and protected by dikes.

écu, florin, stuiver, sou

money in Flanders

zot

Fool, sot.

Erdapfel

A word for a globe. Cf. *Reichsapfel* for the imperial orb, which has a cross at the top. See [Wilford] for Behaim's globe, p. 60

Mienemeuie

According to Hennie Nijland Beeson, this is an old-fashioned woman's name.

De verkeerde wereld

The topsy-turvy world. Symbolized by a *Reichsapfel* with the cross pointing down.

Ephod

An Old Testament word for something a priest uses for divining the future. An ephod has a Urim and a Thummim. Although the Mormon Joseph Smith imagined Urim and Thummim to be "stones of sight," other sources think of them as "lots" which could be dice, or coins, or perhaps jars with long and short sticks. Randomizers, in short.

Fragrant nail

Word for a clove.

Corfdrager

Middle Dutch word means "basket carrier" or "informer."

Tercio

Spanish word for a regiment of 3000 men divided into 12 companies of 250 each. Alva came with an army of four *tercios*, one each from Sardinia, Sicily, Naples, and Lombardy.

onthoofd

The Dutch word for "beheaded" is "onthoofd."

Proverbs

Bruegel should probably use a lot of proverbs, but I think it will work better if he phrases them in idiosyncratic ways. I think it's likely to be trite-sounding if I quote many proverbs directly. Here, I'll list a Dutch proverb, cognate German and/or English phrases, and a Bruegel version.

Wife

Wie moe is van gelukkige dagen, moet maar een vrouw nemen.

Wer muede ist von glucklichen tagen, muss nur ein Frau nehmen.

Who's tired of happy days need only to take a wife.
"A wife's the cure for happiness," says Bruegel.

Dog

Als twee honden vechten foor een been, loop een derde ermee heen.
Als zwei hunden fechten fuer ein knochen, lauft ein dritte damit hin.
When two dogs fight for a bone, a third runs away with it.
"Two dogs, one bone, and a magpie takes it," says Bruegel

Stork

Waar kikkers zijn, zijn ook ooievaars.
Wo Froesche sind, sind auch Storchen.
Where there's frogs, there's storks.

Historical Events

Beeldenstorm

The Beeldenstorm, ran August 10 through the end of August. It would be nice to see Ortelius's letter about the Beeldenstorm in Antwerp.

[Foote] p. 92 says the summer of 1566 was sweltering hot. Calvinist agitators started it. Destroying holy images, scattering relics, slashing and burning altar paintings, drinking Communion wine. "Coming into Oure Lady Church it looked like hell where there were above 1,000 torches burning and such a noise as if heaven and earth had gone together with falling of images and falling down of costly works."

[Claessens] in year 1566 of his timeline says that the "iconoclast gangs are riddled with provocateurs in the pay of the king of Spain."

Bruegel's Church

There is a list of the pastors of the Our Lady Chapel on the wall in Brussels. It includes these. The last of them, Ghislain De Vroede, would be the one who married and buried Bruegel.

1538: Willems, Jean (dit van Evere)

1558: Van der Voight, Arnold

1562: De Vroede, Ghislain (Bishop of Salubria)

Art and Science of the Time

Calendar

It seems important to have the chapters fill up the wheel of the year, like a series of the seasons, so I arranged it like this.

<u>Month</u>	<u>Chapters</u>
January	12
February	3 & 4
March	5

April	8
May	1
June	14, 15
July	2
August	7 & 13
September	6 & 16
October	9
November	10
December	11

May, July, February, February, March, September, August, April, October, November, May-March-December, January, August, Jan-April-June-Aug, June, Jan-September.

List of time jumps from chapter to chapter. The jump is in years, in parentheses.

1 (2) 2 (2.5) 3 (0) 4 (0) 5 (4.5) 6 (1) 7 (0.6) 8 (0.5) 9 (0.1) 10 (2) 11 (1) 12 (0.5) 13 (1) 14 (1) 15 (1) 16.

[Marijnissen], p. 48 argues that of Bruegel’s Months series goes like the following, March-April is missing, May-June is *Haymaking*, July-August *The Harvesters*, Sept-Oct is *The Return of the Herd*, Nov-Dec is *The Hunters in the Snow*, and Jan-Feb is *The Gloomy Day*. He argues that the seeming Carnival waffles in *Gloomy Day* are in fact for Epiphany (Jan 6). But wouldn’t there be snow in January? (Ask Hennie about Dutch climate.)

I kind of feel like advancing advanced all Marijnissen’s dates by one month, April-May is missing, June-July is *Haymaking*, August-Sept *The Harvesters*, Oct-Nov is *The Return of the Herd*, Dec-Jan is *The Hunters in the Snow*, and Feb-Mar is *The Gloomy Day*.

Just for kicks, I’ll copy [Frayn] p. 43, and call the March-April one *The Merrymakers* or *Pretmakers in een Berglandschap*.

The Four Humors

The four humors	blood	yellow bile, or cholera	phlegm	black bile
The four personalities	sanguine confident	choleric angry	phlegmatic impassive	melancholic pensive
The four elements	air	fire	water	earth
The four seasons	spring	summer	fall	winter
The four qualities	hot/wet 11	hot/dry 10	cold/wet 01	cold/dry 00
The four modes of art	Comedy	Romance	Tragedy	Irony

Black bile is like wine, prone to ferment, contains “pneuma”. See *The History of Melancholy*.

Relics

These are some things I saw in the Schatzkammer of the Emperor's palace in Vienna.

Unicorn Horns

I see a "unicorn sword" from Burgundy/Netherlands about 1450. The handle and the scabbard are narwhal tusk. It's made of steel, narwhal, gold, ruby, and email. *Email?* This is German for *enamel*.

There was a Phillip the Good of 1467 and a Phillip the Handsome of 1506. This latter must be the same as the Phillip the Fair whose friends owned Bosch's Last Judgment. Also known as Phillip I, he lived 1478 - 1506.

Tableware

A gold service coffee pot to use a Fuggers.

Holy Grail

A big agate bowl, rather shallow, called "Achatschale" and said, at the time, to be the Holy Grail because the Belousov Zhabotinsky patterns of the minerals seemed to spell out "Jesus's Name," though I could see no sign of this.

Holy Lance

A spear point of metal, patched with a gold "Band-Aid" around its middle, a very nice object, a bit like a Zuni fetish, dating to the Eight Century.

Crown

The crown of Karl the Great, Carolus Magnus, Charles the Great, from Nürnberg 1512, that's probably the Charles V of our book? It had jewels and "email" which is enamel.

Reichsapfel

The orb or Reichsapfel, which you have along with a szepter or scepter. It was wonderfully simple, the oldest one, simply gold, an oblate sphere with a cross on it, very similar to the shape in *The Misanthrope*. Later ones were more elaborate. "The Reichsapfel is made of gold and email."

The Throne Cradle

This was a sad thing, a heavy, unswinging metal thing with a big scary bronze eagle perched on the end. The guard said the baby they put in it died of TB.

The Golden Fleece

The Golden Fleece was an order started about 1500 to co-opt the small nobles into feeling solidarity with the big nobles and the emperor. The symbol was a gold ram dangling from a sling around his middle. Fleece is *Widderfell* in German. Curiously this

is the same logo used by Brooks Brothers.

Minerals

In the Natural History Museum of Vienna there is a “*Systematische Mineraliensammlung*.” Like a directory full of sample CAs. Imagine a 3D CA Lab to grow all of these crystals. And to grow corals too, while I’m at it. What about abandoning the grid to make it easier to grow the crystals. Use a particle system? Alife programs are a kind of particle systems, come to think of it, a particle could be a critter.

Medallions

People started making medallions, or medals, around 1400. I looked at a lot of them in the *Münzenkabinett* of the Kunsthistorisches Museum of Vienna during my late May, 1999, visit there. Was founded on Kaiser Maxmillian’s collection of 1519, which passed to his grandson Ferdinand 1564, and to his son Ferdinand of Tirol 1595. Was mostly Roman coins. I think of Borges’s *zahir*. Mostly there are medals here. But there are also two other kinds of things.

Schatzfunde. Treasure finds in one case. These are unearthed pottery containers filled with coins. The Erla treasure has 103 gold and 671 silver coins, worth ten times the yearly salary of a legionnaire. It was found in 1966, digging a ditch in northern Austria.

Miniatures. a wall of miniature portraits belonging to Ferdinand II of Tirol. 180 of them.

Les Animaux Malades de la Peste

Medallion awarded to “Rudy Rucker, Third Place, Kentucky AATF French Contest, 1961.” A brass-colored metal. Low relief, many animals with apparently a lion addressing them.

Dreifaltigkeit Medalle

Also known as the Moritzpfennig. 1542. Cast medal. Extreme high relief. By Hans Reinhardt the Elder. Given to Moritz von Sachsen.

Kaiser Karl V

Charles V, in other words. This was done by Albrecht Dürer and Hans Kraft in 1521. The planned to present this medal to the Kaiser at a Reichstag in 1521, but apparently something interfered.

Very extreme relief of the sharp faced Emperor in the middle, surrounded by 17 hammered or stamped slots. Each is a coat of arms. One of the insignia is triple size, so there are actually 15 coats of arms.

Erasmus

This is an important one, very large, shows Erasmus in a four-cornered hat similar to the one he wears in his well-known portrait. By Quentin Metsys, 1519. made in wax and copied by casting in Nuremberg. Seems like some kind of base metal, possibly bronze.

Minister Nicolas Perronet

The father of the famous Antoine Perronet. Made in 1530 by Jean Second. Silver.

Cardinal Antoine Perronet

By Jacques Jonghelinck, the brother of Nicolas Jonghelinck. Done in 1561. Silver.

Humanists

Williblad (Willibald?) Pirckheimer in shiny silver and Johannes Stabius in a duller silvery metal, the color of a nickel. These were based on designs by Dürer as well, they were made in Nuremberg.

Kaiser Konstantin the Great

A Burgundian-Flemish one done after 1400.

Danaë and the Golden Shower

Sexy, almost pornographic, Danaë lying on her back with her legs spread and her skirt pulled up in her hands, she's smiling, and there in the sky is this cloud like a jellyfish, and shooting out of it towards her are all these sperm shapes. By Adriano Fiorentino about 1495. Elisabetta Gonzaga was the model for Danaë. The caption says HOC FUGIENTI FORTUNAE DICATIS. I have no idea what that means.

Fernando Cortes

By Chistoph Weiditz, 1529. Don Fernando Cortes in a floppy round hat. Ortelius would have liked this one.

Albrecht Dürer

By Hans Schwarz, 1520. Cast of dark bronze in Augsburg, Germany. They used a wooden carving for the cast mold. It says ALBERTVS DVRER PINCTOR GERMANICUS. There's a hole drilled in at the "NC" of "PINCTOR," presumably it was suspended on something like a chain.

Printing

Info from [Murray]. Plantin used copper platens for six of his presses, he knew the value of a hard impression surface, and made use of it 3 centuries before it was generally adopted.

Paper was easy to obtain, Antwerp a distributor for paper, came from Italy, Germany, France. A good French paper was "Fine Lyons." Vellum came from Holland. Plantin used outside workers to do his binding.

Authors were paid off in books.

His books were a bit excessively decorated, featured every peculiarity of typography.

Painting

Colors used at the time, according to [Kay] and [De Wild]. De Wild took flakes of paint from paintings of the time to check. He got flakes from some 1610 Bruegel copies, probably made in B's studio so presumably using the same materials. In particular, he had copies of "Census at Bethlehem" and "Sermon on the Mount," which is a work I've not heard of.

Pigments probably used by Bruegel.

White

Flake White used till 1893, carbonate of lead. Toxic. "Painter's colic" is the old name for lead poisoning. Also called Flake White. Produced by putting thin sheets of lead in vinegar, setting in a warm place. White stuff forms on the lead and you scrape it off. Its formula is 2PbCO_3 .

Whiting, or natural chalk, is used as a ground. The finest grade is Paris white.

Black

Ivory Black or *Carbon Black* is made by charring animal bones or ivory or peach pits. Walrus tusks, in particular, were used. *Lamp Black* made from soot collected when fatty oils are burnt. *Bitumen* was used as well.

Red

Vermilion is mercuric sulfide. Cinnabar is mined in Austria. Highly toxic. HgS.

Madder lake is made from the roots of the madder plant. It's red. A "Lake" is a color in which dye has been precipitated onto some particles which are then mixed with oil. Madder grew in Zeeland.

Yellow

Massicot is gotten by heating White Lead. It's formula is PbO. Poisonous yellow arsenic sulfide is also used.

Green

Malachite is a mineral that occurs with azurite in nature.

Blue

Natural Ultramarine made with great expense and labor from lapis lazuli, a semiprecious stone. "used with strict economy, the amount often stipulated in the contract and thereby influencing the price of the painting." [Kay] Natural Ultramarine cost 10-60 guilders per ounce. They used a "mud process" to separate it from the matrix. [De Wild].

Azurite is a mineral always found mixed with Malachite. It's formula starts CuCO_3 Found in the "Census."

Other Materials used by Bruegel

Ink

Sepia is made from the ink-bag of the Mediterranean cuttlefish or squid. Used in inks, bleaches in sunlight.

Oils, Solvents, Grounds and Varnishes

Linseed oil is sometimes sun-thickened, dries more rapidly. If you heat it up to a very high temperature without air, it get polymerized, gets smoother, it's called *stand oil*.

Walnut Oil is made by grinding and pressing walnuts. Tin and clear oil, dries

rapidly. Turns rancid eventually, used by Da Vinci and Van Dyck.

Turpentine is distilled from the gum of a pine tree. The solid left behind is rosin. "Spirits of turpentine."

Dammar is a resin from a Malayan tree, used to make a varnish.

Strasbourg Turpentine and *Venice Turpentine* are balsams, thick varnish-like liquids from bark of coniferous trees. Diluted with alcohol or turpentine.

Grinding. Grind pigments with turpentine, beeswax, linseed oil.

Glazing. Use stand oil, dammar, turpentine.

Contemporary Pigments probably not used by Bruegel

Naples Yellow is made of lead antimoniate. Toxic.

Indian Yellow is made from the urine of cows fed on mango leaves.

Yellow Ocher, *Gold Ocher*, and *Raw Sienna* are earth yellows.

Earth colors (ochers, umbers) are mined from beds of earth. Maybe be roasted or calcined.

Venetian Red, *English Red*, *Spanish Red*, *Caput Mortuum*, *Indian Red*, *Light Red*, and *Burnt Sienna* are all earth reds from warm brick to violet brown.

Terre Verte, also known as Green Earth or Veronese Earth is a gray-green earth, uses a lot of linseed oil in grinding.

Burnt Green Earth or *Verona Brown*. *Burnt Sienna*. *Burnt Umber* and *Raw Umber*.

Carmine is made from an insect, the cochineal insects of Central America and I believe North Africa. It's a dye.

Willebroek Canal

Since its birth in the Middle Ages, the city of Brussels, thanks to the Senne / Zenne, has had access to the sea. But as the river slowed down and silted up, it became necessary, as early as the 15th century, to create an artificial waterway that would link the city, via the Rupel and Antwerp, to commercial maritime outlets. At the time, it took over a hundred years to overcome the opposition of the city of Mechelen, which charged a considerable toll on boats using the Senne / Zenne. The proposed canal, by going through Willebroek to join the Rupel near Boom, circumvented the city of Mechelen, depriving it of this source of income.

The Rupel Canal, constructed in eleven years thanks to techniques that were entirely new at that time, was inaugurated with great pomp on October 10th, 1561.

The port of Brussels was reworked at the same time, and had several basins added over the next centuries. All this made for a very busy, commercial neighborhood within the city walls: the quartier Sainte-Catherine / Sint-Katelijnewijk.

I see a lot of maps of the canal in the Musee Communale of Brussels.

Ships *did* sail on the Willebroek canal, at least in one direction. A horse pulled them in the other direction, using an exceedingly long tow-rope. They had huge keels attached to their sides like the canoe in Maine to control sideways drift. They were called barques.

The canal came into town around St. Catherine's, right along the Quai au Bois a Brûler where our hotel in Brussels was. Just outside the city wall was a little area called

the Merchant's Basin. These little docking spots weren't vast at all, just little squares half the size of a city block.

Engraving

Engraving is a separate activity from printing.

Puppetry and Shadow Plays

I've been reading up on "wayang," the Javanese shadow plays, also known as "Chinese shadows" later on in Europe. This was popular in Java, Bali, and Malaya. I'm imagining that Williblad's Ternatean woman friend Niay will introduce them to it.

I like the idea of shadow puppets because: (a) they're like Flatland, (b) they prefigure, in some way, film and video, (c) they symbolize the world of appearances vs. the world of Reality (Plato).

Bruegel actually uses shadows very little in his paintings. There are dark patches under people and things, but never (?) a sharp-edged shadow. His worlds are like interiors with uniform light. Actually a typical thing, probably, in the cloudy Netherlands.

50 Bruegel Paintings

(Seen, *Want to Visit, or **to Revisit)

4 Warm-ups

****Christ and the Lake of Tiberias. 1553. New York private.***

He sold this one in Rome, it's in the Doria Pamphili Gallery, I found out too late to visit it.

The Adoration of the Kings. 1556. (tempera) Brussels.

I could barely see this one, it was really dimly lit as it's falling apart. Maybe this was for an early patron.

[The Merchants Driven From the Temple. 1555? Copenhagen.]

[The Archangel Michael. 1556?. Lost.]

4 Early Landscapes

****View of Bay of Naples. 1556. Rome***

Landscape With The Fall of Icarus. 1557.

Brussels.

Reminded me of Thomas Hart Benton, the plowing. This flowing, moderne, geometric style is called "Mannerism". Quite lightly painted, not as crisp as it seems in reproduction. It's questionable if Bruegel did this particular one, as several copies exist, all of which are in bad condition. They could all be copies of a lost original.

The perspective is off, the ship is too big compared to how far it looks. Icarus looks too big compared to the ship. This is definitely an early, non-masterful work.

Parable of the Sower. 1557. San Diego Timken.

The thing that struck me the most is that there is a tiny figure of a woman squatting to shit or piss by a wheat field and in a tree nearby is a reddish figure of a man spying on her. The figures are so small you can't be totally sure this is what's happening, but it seems quite likely. The picture has been cleaned too much and the mountains in back are a crappy-looking color of pale turquoise. There are a group of people by the river, presumably listening to Jesus tell the parable. There are birds pecking up some of the seeds, some seeds have grown up to weak stalks amid stones, some are choked in brambles. On oak, dated 1557, signed Brueghel. Bruegel was a voyeur, a peeper, and this kind of makes sense, he was such a sensualist of the eyes, loving to see the details.

****Temptation of St. Anthony. 1558. Washington.***

3 Encyclopedia Pictures

These are also called *Wimmelbilder*, for "teeming figure picture". The perspective trick is that [Foote, p. 147] "he appears to move his vantage point progressively higher as the picture recedes...In addition, he usually painted these background figures larger than they would appear under normal rules of perspective." I think another way of thinking of this is that he paints it as if he were inside a Hollow Earth, with the distant landscape bending up to rise high, so that you are effectively looking down at it. Maybe B. *did* go into the Hollow Earth!

****Flemish Proverbs. 1559. Berlin.***

There's a good unexpurgated list of these in [Hagen, pp. 36-37].

The Battle Between Carnival and Lent. 1559. Vienna.

Bruegel is down in the left hand corner rolling dice. A seven (6 & 1). Wearing a convex mirror on his back, a mirror to hold the world. 3 waffles on his head. A green "swim cap" on his head. A long slender basket, why? He dices with an executioner! They are gambling for waffles, and I think Bruegel has just lost one, the executioner seems to be picking it up. Bruegel is like "Oh no!"

There's a pregnant beggar.

Re the Carnival figure on the barrel: All fat people look alike.

There is a pig eating shit between the two combatants. The split fool in the center, a Haf'N'Haf. Carnival/clean.

The children behind Lent hold noise-makers. There's a waffle iron in the fire on the left.

Children's Games. 1560. Vienna.

Along with "Flemish Proverbs" this is the third of Bruegel's "Wimmelbilder", also called "encyclopedic pictures." This has always been my least favorite of his pictures. The perspective is fucked up and the children are so unchildlike.

This scene is as if seen from an attic. The picture shows some people actually looking down from attic windows, and once can project one's point of view into them.

While looking at this picture in Vienna, May, 1999, I got into a conversation with an Austrian woman named Brigitte who was painting an oil copy of *Children's Games* for a client in Tahoe. She said that not everyone could get permission to copy the paintings, the Museum Director tells some of them "go practice, you're not good enough yet." In her opinion Peter the Younger's copies are "grauenhaft," she doesn't like his colors or how he does the faces. She turns strict when some school children press up and try and touch her copy, which is resting on the floor. "Kinder! Abstand halten!" And then she drags her painting a little further behind the velvet rope.

There's a peeing girl in this picture, she's under an arch.

3 Bosch Pictures

The Fall of the Rebel Angels. 1562. Brussels.

There's eleven good angels and a lot of rebel angels, who've turned partly or (mostly) wholly into assemblages or collages of humans and animals, including butterflies and an opossum, it's a veritable atlas of fauna including a lobster (called "kreeft" in Flemish). I tried to count the rebel angels — not because I care about the number, but as a way of forcing myself to look at each and every one of them. They're organized as an amorphous cone of figures coming out of a big disk of light, and the edges of the cone break into clear creatures. The first time I counted, I got 57, the next, looking harder and including more of the smaller ones, I got 93. The picture reminds me a bit of Bruegel's painting of "The Death Of The Virgin Mary", the heap of beings.

A wonderful *kwaad kuiken* with a *kwaad ei*, that is, a demon bird with an egg falling out.

*****The Triumph of Death. (1562). Prado.***

A little like a parody of the tapestries celebrating the Victories of Charles V, and in engravings by Johannes Stradanus, "A victory of Charles V" p. [Gibson, 116].

Delevoey p. 102, thinks it as later work because of the way he's systematized his earlier encyclopedic layout, and the way he "lets the arabesque take care of the intricate undulations of the ground...masterly fusion of medieval with the spirit of the Renaissance." Cf. Dance of Death: "*Theghens de doot en is gheen verweeren.*" (Against death there is no arming.)

Supposedly ([Delevoey] p. 109), Bruegel painted this picture while at Philip's Court, but it is more likely he painted it at Margaret of Parma's palace. Note that a king (Philip) is being shown the fatal hourglass and that a cardinal (Granvelle) is dying in the arms of a skeleton.

****Mad Meg. 1562. Antwerp.***

[Frayne]"A crazy old biddy staggering out of hell with her apron full of the swag she's looted from its unfortunate inhabitants." Margaret of Parma!

There's two monkeys penned behind bars, lower right, just like in the following picture of the two monkeys!

2 Miniatures

****Two Monkeys. 1562. Berlin.***

Symbol of Spanish oppression? [Frayne] points out that the hazelnuts are typically from Barcelona, from Spain, the “peanuts” you get paid for being a Spanish slave.

The Suicide of King Saul. 1562. Vienna. (Miniature).

Maybe he did this with the help of Mayken Verhulst, who was herself a famous miniaturist.

I looked up the story of Saul in *The Idiot’s Guide to the Bible in Borders Books*. The story is all of the first Book of Samuel, with the suicide at the end in Chapter 33. Saul was anointed by God to be the King of Israel, but then, for no really good reason, God turned against him and started favoring the shepherd boy David. David slew Goliath and people started thinking he was greater than Saul. David wanted to marry Saul’s daughter, and Saul asked for 100 Philistine foreskins, and David came up with them by killing a bunch of Philistines. Saul had it in for David anyway, and in fact hounded him out of Israel and into the land of the Philistines, but David never tried to kill Saul. Saul was impulsive, couldn’t negotiate, and tended to piss off God. Finally the Philistine army killed his sons and cornered him and he killed himself lest they get him. His armor-bearer killed himself too.

One might think of Saul and the armor-bearer as King Phillip and Granvelle, with the absent David being, perhaps, William of Orange.

2 Tower of Babel & 1 Landscape

****The Tower of Babel. 1563. Rotterdam.***

The Tower of Babel. 1563. Vienna.

The details of little houses sitting on the galleries. Like houses built along the side of a cathedral. Indeed the Tower of Babel is reminiscent of the Antwerp Cathedral, just being finished when Bruegel lived there. The houses are brick and stucco. The Tower is granite on the outside, brick within.

It’s a starship.

The men in the gerbil wheel of the crane lifting the granite block.

I think the guy right behind the king could be Bruegel. He has that dreamy looking-around quality to him.

Note the town wall like Antwerp.

It has a pair of “eyes,” the two blank windows in the middle. It’s a bit like a decaying skull. Also like an anthill. Although the levels aren’t horizontal, I think the tower is a “telescope” type rather than a screw type. [Benet] points out that the different levels have different window designs, which argues against there being a continuous spiral flow from level to level.

****Flight into Egypt. 1563. London (Courtland).***

This was definitely in Granvelle's collection. A remarkably dull and conventional picture for B to have done so late in life, probably it's what dumb Granvelle asked for, pig-blind oppressor that he was.

2 Portrait Miniatures

Yawning Man (miniature). 1563. Brussels.

Very immediate. Some think this might represent Sloth.

Head of a Peasant Woman. 1564. Munich.

Small picture. The woman so alert yet dumb, so eager and credulous, so young yet old, so darling. A woman from B's village? I saw a woman just like her in Antwerp.

3 Major Religious Paintings

The Bearing of the Cross. 1564. Vienna.

Brueghel at the right side of the picture. He looks like a calm, noble hippie. Like Dennis Hopper a little. His shoulders back. Just *looking*. His mild hands folded. *Praying*. Looking at Christ.

Ah, the blue of the sky. The figures so crisply outlined. After the other Flemish masters this picture is so *clear*. Like Piero della Francesca.

Next to Bruegel is Judas. The silly Patinir rock in the middle is like the axle of a mill's grindstone. The perspective viewpoint shifts as you move up, just like in *Children's Games*. In fact at the bottom, the perspective is almost like you're looking down at your feet. And at the top, you're a bird.

This is a fairly exact copy of a composition by Herri met de Bles. Apparently this was a standard Flemish painter's theme at the time.

The Adoration of the Kings. 1564. London.

BRUEGEL MDLXIII says the signature. (At least I wrote this down when I saw it in London, but then why does everyone date it 1564? Maybe it says MDLXIII?) How clear and fresh the canvas is. The three kings are in a triangle of gaze, each looking at a gift held by one of the other kings. Balthazar looks like Jimi Hendrix at the Monterey Pop festival. He has a beautiful pointed-toe red boot. Fringed chamois leather cape. His gift is a gold ship called a "nef". It holds a green enameled shell, and within the shell is a tiny live monkey.

The gallery note by the picture says that Bruegel put soldier in his pictures because for most of his life the Netherlands were occupied by Spanish soldiers. This touch makes it seem so *real*. Makes me want to write Bruegel's life. The rainy Flemish day.

Mary looks like a hot piece of ass: full lips. A guy whispers in Joseph's ear. Either it's about the gifts or he's saying "You're a cuckold, Mary puts out." Joseph looks undisturbed.

In the background are a bunch of interesting characters. A scholarly Jew (?) with

glasses. Josef's accountant? There's a classic Bruegel fool. And a fat guy like Bill the oyster man at our market.

****The Death of the Virgin. 1564. Banbury.***

[Frayne] thinks that the figures along the left of the bed are the wretched Netherlanders.

5 Seasons & 1 Bird Trap

At first it seems there's a date problem with these. There is a record of Jonghelinck pledging the "Twelve Months" in February 21, 1565, so it seems they must have been finished by then. Yet they are all dated 1565. [Siepel] explains that "Feb 1565" was really "Feb 1566" in *our* calendar because back then they used a calendar which started its year in the early spring, at the solstice, so that Feb 1565 would be at the very end of the year.

[Siepel] argues the Seasons were in the order listed below.

The Gloomy Day. 1565. Vienna.

Rainy stormy March day. Use this weather in the end of Chapter 5.

A guy at the bottom left is pissing. The guy at the bottom right is like "Yaar! I've got waffles!" Like Isabel's line, "Say I'm eating candy!"

Spring. 1565. Lost.

****Hay-making. 1565. Prague.***

Return Of The Herd. 1565. Vienna.

A man is trapping birds. Like the devil trapping people. The shepherds are like fat larvae with hats. The peaceful busy peasants. No different than the cows.

The beautiful fatness of the cows, the pearlike shape of the one seen from the rear near the bottom. Reminds me of the Zen "Cow Herding" pictures.

A guy on horseback on the right looks like the Uncle Fester character of the cartoonist Charles Addams.

I feel a compulsion to cowishly say "Mur!" out loud every time I see this picture.

It's done fast, using very thin paint.

In the far background is a gallows, reversed in that "impossible figure" way like the gallows in "The Magpie On The Gallows".

The way the tree on the right has "grown itself" into a particular pattern. Like a life.

The trees in the *Bridal Procession* are a similar series of arcs. On a bike tour in Bruges I see a lot of these trees and realize that Bruegel was simply painting the actual trees he saw: my bike-tour guide calls them poplars.

*****The Harvest. 1565. NYC Met.***

Far in the background is a tiny figure that is, I believe, a shitting man. As I told Hana Machotka when we were looking at this picture in the Met, years ago, "There's

always a shitting man in a Bruegel picture if you look hard enough.” (That’s not always true, actually.) This landscape may be based on Lake Geneva.

There’s a man in a tree on the right, shaking it really hard, his arms totally wrapped around a branch. Apples are falling. There’s a bushy tree behind a branchy tree and it seems the paint of the bushy tree has bled through the paint of the branchy tree, so it’s a little hard to read.

The far background is very simplified. The audio guide says “Modern Art begins with this picture.”

The Hunters In The Snow. 1565. Vienna.

“How I longed to travel into that landscape...” The perfection of the branches. “It touched deep memories of my childhood when my own eyes were bright and young.” The daringly dark man against the dark bushes.

The heartbreaking eagerness of the fat puppy amidst the dogs. This picture is so full of *love*.

What does the Inn sign say? “Die is Zuden Hof”?

When I look at this with my friend Lothar, he says there is “jedge Menge” of birds. A lot of them. They’re the same sizes as the people on the ice. People, birds, dogs — all are the same.

Suppose B owns a dog like the puppy floundering through the snow towards the front of the dog-pack. Name him “Waf.” The cold damp air. The exquisite tracery of the branches.

[Frayn] puts it well, p. 41, in his description of the (imaginary missing sixth Months picture) *Merrymakers*. “And away the eye goes once more, and the heart with it, out into the vast atmospheric depths of the picture, into deeper and deeper blue, to the blue sea and the blue sky above it.”

Winter Landscape with Skaters And Bird Trap. 1565. Brussels.

This is Bruegel’s most copied picture. Some of the birds look smart and wised up. The hole in the wall is *so* sly.

2 Protestant Pictures

The Woman Taken In Adultery. 1565. London.

This is a small grisaille of Christ and “The Woman Taken In Adultery.” Jesus is writing in the sand. “DIE SONDER SUND IST / DIE ...” Or, “Who without sin is/ the [first stone let him throw.]” By BRUEGEL MDLXV. This picture is small, I have trouble looking at it well. This lesson was said to be a favorite among Protestants, another heavy historical touch, to know that the Protestant reformation and the Catholic counter-reformation were raging through the Lowlands.

*****The Sermon of John the Baptist. 1566. Budapest.***

In the upper right is a group believed to be Bruegel, his wife Marijke Coecke D’Alost, and his mother-in-law Mayken Verhulst-Bessemers. This is an open air preacher.

3 Flemish Bible Scenes

The Numbering At Bethlehem. 1566. Brussels.

This is great. The shed on the right is so good, so gnarly. Only a few brushstrokes for the branches. The museum note says it's the country near Breda in Northern Brabant, and that the ruined castle is the Old Covenant and the church is the New Covenant. The clarity of the tree on the left against the sky, slightly reminiscent of motel art. I think there's a painting by Ben Shahn that has a tree like this. [Frayne] mentions that the three heads of oppression are "inquisition, occupation, and taxation."

Someone dragging out a pig to slaughter. Holding him by his ear.

The beer wagons.

The Massacre of the Innocents 1567 or 1564. Vienna.

Vienna. (Original is in Rotterdam.)

The barrel looks similar to a barrel in the Census at Bethlehem.

****Adoration of the Kings in the Snow. 1567. Wintherthur.***

3 Wishes

The Conversion of St. Paul. 1567. Vienna.

No fleck of color on the black mounted soldier (the Duke of Alba?). Even his neck is swathed in black.

The remarkably different trees in this picture.

The yellow coat and the leather-feathers hat like a heraldic thing. Boulders are not Max-Ernst-faked by a similar-fractal-technique (i.e. glopping on paint and pressing it with something flat and picking the flat up). Bruegel draws the pits and shadows, the cracks. Nobody can equal this. There *is* use of fractal analogue-simulation in the dark rock at lower right.

Overall feeling about his landscapes is "How does he do that?"

Looking at the picture I forget to verbalize after awhile. My eye takes over and my inner voice falls silent.

The fog is like an ocean in the sky, upper right. Lothar thought it was a "bergsee."

The yellow guy behind Paul is like "Whoah!"

What a lovely patch of white to blue in the upper left quadrant. The great depth of the view at the left. At every level he places a clue to the depth, the little people, the birds, the ships. He's not using linear perspective so much as the placement of things and the use of fog.

I see views like this the day I hike up on the Rax plateau.

The rhythm of the lines of the pikes and harnesses.

The profile of the man in the middle looking left. Lothar says he's "vertrottelt."

The troops seem to be turning back, realizing what surely was B's heartfelt wish: that Alba not invade the Netherlands.

Note the vertical slits in the tunic of some of the guys.

The Land of Cockaigne. 1567. Munich.

Brueghel's "*Schlaraffenland*," with the newcomer eating his way there through a cloud of rice pudding; the soldier, the writer, and the peasant lying fatlegged on the ground under the pie-tree, the *Schwein* with a knife tucked into his skin, the egg with the spoon, the goose with its neck on the plate, the undone codpieces of the fat, loafing men.

Dutch name is *Luilekkerland*, [Delevoy, p. 68.] Also spelled *Luyeleckerlandt* [Marijnessen] note 92. Also called "*het luy leckerlandt*." [De Beers] p. 250. *Luy* means lazy, *lekker* means tasty.

I kind of dislike the French/English name "The Land of Cockaigne." *Cockaigne* comes from "little cake."

The Wine of Saint Martin's. 1567. Vienna

Lost painting, maybe 1567, part of a copy exists in Vienna. St. Martin in front has the same kind of head feather as the front figure in *The Conversion of Paul*, so it seems reasonable to date it the same. The subject matter is akin to that of *Land of Cockaigne*, i.e. it shows people getting lots of free wine just as *Land of Cockaigne* shows people getting free food.

There is a copy of the whole picture in Brussels in the Royal Museum of Fine Arts. An immense dog-pile of drunk people crawling around on a giant keg in the middle of the picture, and St. Martin on the right with his head feather, sitting on a horse, with some cripples looking up to him.

6 Peasants

****The Dance of the Bride. 1566. Detroit.***

The Bridal Procession. 1567. Brussels.

This is in the Communal Museum of Brussels on the Grand Place, rather than in the Royal Museum of Fine Arts. Distemper on oak panel. Not fully attributed to Bruegel, but I think it's authentic.

The men are on the left, the women on the right.

There is some question as to the authenticity of this painting, but it seems real to me. The perspective is right — especially the tricky bit of the dog in the foreground — and the faces are lively. Overall there is the rapid, light touch characteristic of Bruegel. I can't quite decide, through the glass cover, if its on oak or cloth, though later I find out it's tempera on oak.

There's a skull in the lower right corner like in the *Bearing of the Cross*. A shepherd is running into the picture in a Bruegelian fashion. The women are on the left, the men on the right. The bride is *fat*. Pregnant? I notice in back a very dark man and a starved looking wolfhound. Death and Waf?

Who is the groom? The perennial question in Bruegel's wedding pictures. I take him to be the handsome young man in profile who wears a sword and walks roughly even with the bride, or a few paces ahead. Right at the bride's side is a red-hatted man I take to be her brother.

The two most noticeable figures are a spaniel and an old man, both near the front

of the procession, both looking back. The man looks at the bride, a kind, wistful expression on his face. I take him to be the bride's father, and a stand-in for Bruegel, who symbolically looks back on his life in this picture. The coat on the fond-looking man is a bit like the coat on the city-man in the *Peasant Wedding*. His hat has a striking outline. The dog is looking at the man I take to be the groom. The gazes cross like an X.

Bruegel's ability to sketch and characterize the particular details of things. To see the details in the first place is hard.

There's a windmill in back, a square one of the same type I later see on the city wall of Bruges.

There are some mushrooms below the tree on the left, just like in the *Misanthrope*.

The Peasant Wedding. 1568. Vienna.

Long sticks on the bagpipes. I'm inclined to think the groom is the man in the red hat, passing food *towards* the bride. The motion of a husband, to penetrate the wife. Note that near him are no less than three phallic symbols pointing towards the wife: the man's arm, the knife on the table, and the salt-cellar (?) on the table. Note also that at the end of the man's arm is an ellipse of an angle-seen dish that is oriented and located in the right location to represent the bride's vagina.

The people watching from high up suggest to the viewer other viewpoint possibilities. A bird sits in a barrel near the top.

The background straw looks like gold.

The man pouring beer looks like my cousin Rudolf.

There's a guzzler in the corner. They're drinking Belgian beer, not wine. All have two-handled mugs.

Perhaps Bruegel is the clerk or notary at the right-hand corner.

Lothar thinks the bossy guy leaning back from the right end of the bench in front might be the groom — I feel almost angry at this suggestion, I'm so into rooting for "my" guy to be the groom. It occurs to me that the bossy guy might be the groom's father. He's a bit anxious, not just bossy. Yes, he's the groom's Dad, of course the groom would have someone with him, probably his mother is dead. The bride is unique, like an egg. The groom is multifarious and uncertain, like sperm.

The "Bruegel" figures in his picture are super projection points.

[Murray] p. 160, says there are no more than 20 guests because Charles V had made an edict that no more than 20 Flemings could gather in one room.

The Peasant Dance. 1568. Vienna.

The same motley fool appears here as in *The Battle of Carnival and Lent*. The dancing woman in the middle is the same as the bride in the *Peasant Wedding*. The drunk man is me/Ortelius. The thing on the ground in front is definitely a broken-off handle. But it's a round handle and all the other handles are flat.

I want to learn the dance step of the arriving redneck.

Might Bruegel be the lonely watcher figure?

The frozen time of this picture is striking. Always the same off-balance moment.

The Peasant and the Birdsnester. 1568. Vienna.

What does it mean? Maybe: The Smug Peasant ~ Italian Art and the Thieving Peasant ~ Bruegel. The Nest is Nature and Truth.

No contradiction between being a peasant by origin and a humanist. Like me.

The guy in the tree is not happy. Is he falling? No, he's not falling, just struggling. On the left is a white pyramid, seemingly a tetrahedron of marble? Or is that a house or barn roof. Maybe relate this to the Masons and to Ortelius? Perhaps the smug peasant is pointing at the "pyramid" and not at the nest. He's saying "I know higher truth," but even so he falls in the creek.

There is a third human figure in the picture, a woman in the far background on the right of the smug peasant. She is looking towards the "pyramid". Two horses are going into a barn at the right rear.

The peasant's face is like a child's

The woman in the far back is kind of spooky. Is there a human figure under the tree back there? No, it's too short. A dog?

I think the sack on the ground is the nest catcher's, i.e. it belongs to the guy in the tree, he set it down before climbing.

The walker's stick points to the pyramid too. What about him stepping into the water? Is this a joke on the Michelangelo influence?

The Flemish proverb means the pushy guy gets the girl. Nest ~ pussy. "*Die das Nest wissen, wissen es, die es rauben, haben es.*"

Visit to the Tenant Farmer

This is a copy by Jan "Samnet" Brueghel of 1597. The Herr his wife and maybe a sister are visiting the peasants. The Herr is giving the peasant man a "zuckerhut" which is a large dome-shaped chunk of sugar, like a bishop's miter. The Lady is giving the a gold coin to one of the grubby peasant children. How weary the peasant man looks, his face is gray and his nose is red.

6 Last Pictures

*****The Cripples, 1568, Louvre.***

The panel, now at the Louvre, is signed and dated 1568 and bears inscriptions on its reverse side in Netherlandish script: [*k*] *ruepelen - hooch - dat u nering beteren moeg* meaning, "Cripples - high - may your business improve" or "Cripple, may it go better with you." 1

****The Parable of the Bad Shepherd. 1568. Philadelphia.***

The Misanthrope. 1568. Naples.

"*Tempera su tela*" say the museum notes. It's tempera on cloth. There's vertical oval patches of water damage along the left half. It's scraped near the top center right. Signed BRUEGEL 1568.

It strikes me to think of this as Bruegel's last self-portrait. Admittedly the line of

the nose doesn't match the line of the nose in "John the Baptist" and in "Procession to Calvary." But the beard and the folded hands remind me of the Bruegel likeness in "Procession to Calvary". I have the feeling that when he painted this he knew he was mortally ill. The Misanthrope is headed to the left, into death, with mushrooms growing under the rotten trees. 'Shrooms = decay. They're porcini.

It has this caption, in a really weird script:

"Om dat de Vierelt is soe ongetru

Daer om gha ic in den ru."

For that the World is so untrue

There fore go I in the sorrow.

The "*in den ru*" is squeezed together. It hits me *wow*, that *I'm Ru!* In a synchronistic sense, Bruegel is saying he will go "*in den ru*" meaning "into a book by Rudy Rucker"! Too bad he doesn't look a little happier about it.

Six 'shrooms, are they porcini? Two big ones on the left, then three more by the tree.

Note that among the sheep in the back, three are black and one is a *goat*.

The *zakkenroller* pickpocket looks like the Birdsnester smug peasant guy, his mouth. But, no, he's *mean*, glaring. The cross on the sphere around him makes me think of the Catholic Church. Actually the shape is exactly that of the imperial orb, the "*Reichsapfel*." Very fitting that the Reichsapfel has a thief inside it! As the Habsburgs were continually picking the pockets of the poor to pay for their extravagances and their wars.

The purse is shaped like a heart with its arteries and veins. The pickpocket is taking the misanthrope's heart. Might Bruegel have had heart disease? Angioplasty.

There's a fire on the horizon, maybe a city being burned.

You get the feeling Bruegel really is sad, painting this. But he has this deep ambivalence, even about his depression. He thinks let's do a *prank* on the sad guy! So he strews those four sharp jack-shaped things. (The correct English name of one of these objects is a "caltrop".) And steal his purse!

The misanthrope doesn't notice, he doesn't care. He's bitter, unhappy. This picture is *so* down. The only bright spot is the pipe-smoking shepherd in the background.

It's singular how the limbs of the *zakkenroller* penetrate the glass of the orb. He's drawn fuzzier inside the glass, with a halo effect around all edges.

The Parable Of The Blind. 1568. Naples.

BRVEGEL M. D. LX VIII

A worn patch in the right center. Tempera on canvas.

On the upper left there are three odd shapes near a closed window. I think they must be gourds hanging from a tree as birdhouses.

The pyramid of the roof looks like the pyramid in "The Peasant and the Birdsnester", so maybe that one is a roof too. Note that both of these pictures have the pyramid and have a man falling into the water. A connection with baptism?

Six blind men. Other figures? Yes, faint in the worn area are a big cow, a smaller cow, a peasant walking away. And there's a peasant sitting on a wall by the church with a stick on his shoulder.

The six blind men from left to right:

1) Dumb, happy, plodding. 2) My friend Alfred from AA, a worrier. He's "in" the pyramidal roof, wears a cross, is richer than the others. A mason? He looks a bit like the landowner in the "Peasant Wedding". 3) Really really blind, not of this world. 4) Eager smart, "The Connoisseur", starting to fall. 5) Full fall, yelling. Face a bit like the Peasant's face in "The Peasant And The Birdsnester." No eyes and no teeth. A face of skin. 6) On his back. Feet rendered very clearly. Italian Renaissance perspective, like Masaccio's Christ.

There are only 5 sticks for the 6 men. Whose stick is missing? It's a bit of a visual puzzle, like Sam Loyds' "Get Off The Earth". Though really I guess it boils down to 4 and 5 sharing a single stick. The missing stick is on the shoulder of the guy on the wall of the church.

There's a big puffy white iris blossom over the ditch of water.

In this picture and "The Misanthrope" there is the same milky gray sky and dun Earth. Winter. A depressing pair. Bruegel knew he was dying.

[Frayne] reading the picture as the king of Spain and his lieutenants and collaborators leading the Netherlandish folk into disaster

The Magpie On The Gallows. 1568. Darmstadt.

Note that the gallows is an impossible figure. Shitting man means "I don't give a shit about death." The dancing figures. This landscape is an example of a "Weltbild" or world picture or cosmic landscape.

Drawings and Engravings

1556 Temptation of St. Anthony (With "Peterskopf" in water).

1557 Big Fish Eat Little Fish

Plans And Proposals

Possible Scenes

B as a child. ("Children's Games").

B in the Alps. ("Conversion of Paul", Mountain Landscape drawings.)

Ortelius meets B. ("Battle of Carnival and Lent")

B sees some Bosch's Last Judgment.

The Antwerp Landjuweel of 1561. ("Hoboken Fair" and the "Feast of St. Martin's")

Plantin charged with printing heresy and flees to Paris, 1562. Returned 1563.

B breaks up with his girlfriend the maid. ("Peasant and the Birdsnester")

B marries Mayken. ("Bridal Procession")

B drops the 'H' and stops painting Bosch style. Vices/Virtues.

Big contract with Jonghelinck. ("The Twelve Seasons")

B at the hedge sermon ("John the Baptist")

In the country with Franckert. (Peasant Wedding, Peasant Dance.)

An execution (“Bearing of the Cross” 1564)

B sick. (“Misanthrope”, “Blind leading Blind”).

Have Williblad dressed up like an American Indian when breaking the images in the Our Lady. (U.S. response to Old World culture!)

Mevrouw, the neighbor, makes trouble for Bruegel. Trouble over Bruegel’s dog Waf. Give Mevrouw the same implacable moronic hatred of B that the neighbor lady and her daughters have for me.

Proposal for As Above So Below: A Life of Peter Bruegel (Summer, 1999)

***Proposal for a Historical Novel
by Rudy Rucker***

The Pitch

As Above So Below: A Life of Bruegel is a historical novel about the life of the Sixteenth Century Flemish master Peter Bruegel the Elder. The book has no overt fantasy or science-fiction elements. It gives a literary, historically accurate picture of Bruegel and his world, with lots of romance, humor, intrigue, and “eyeball kicks.” *As Above So Below: A Life of Bruegel* is written in a cinematic present-tense style, with a large number of visual images. There is a wealth of plot and incident to keeps things moving along.

The book will be some 100,000 words long, with 32,000 words written so far. I expect to finish it by October, 2000. Some disparate examples of the kind of book I have in mind are E. L. Doctorow’s *Ragtime*, Irving Stone’s *The Agony and the Ecstasy*, and Thomas Pynchon’s *Mason and Dixon*.

I envision several types of readers for *As Above So Below: A Life of Bruegel*. First, of course, are the readers of my twenty other books. Second, Bruegel is an extremely popular artist, and people interested in his art are likely to want to read the book. A third group consists of people interested in the dreamy pleasure of escaping into past worlds. Fourth, it is my hope that the book may be viewed as an unusual work of significant value, attracting a wide readership interested in the latest literary sensation.

For those fascinated by Bruegel’s paintings, *As Above So Below: A Life of Bruegel* provides a way to *go inside* the worlds that Bruegel paints. It’s like bringing some of the paintings to life and seeing what happened next. The book’s prose evokes the same kinds of images and sensations that Bruegel produces with his paints.

As Above So Below: A Life of Bruegel helps the reader to empathize with the way in which this great artist thought. We come to see Bruegel’s paintings as informed by rich and loving observation. Bruegel shows humankind as an integral part of the world and his realism is uniquely compassionate.

An interesting aspect of *As Above So Below: A Life of Bruegel* is that there are a number of interesting parallels between Bruegel’s time and our own. The invention of perspective and the printing press caused an intellectual revolution similar to that we’re currently undergoing as a result of the invention of the computer and the Web. And in Bruegel’s time as in ours, great political injustices were carried out under the name of

religion. Another somewhat modern feature of the Sixteenth Century is that it was a time when multinational banking interests were becoming more powerful than local governments. It is suggestive that Bruegel spent his later years in Brussels, now the head of the European Union.

As Above So Below: A Life of Bruegel shares some of Bruegel's comic vulgarity and his disrespect for the established order. Yet beyond the clowning, the tale presents ordinary life in a transcendental way, just as one sees in Bruegel's mature works.

Bruegel's Life

Very little is known about Bruegel's life. These are the solid facts: He was born about 1527 and joined the Antwerp Painter's Guild in 1551. He traveled to Rome in 1552, and after that he lived mostly in Antwerp and Brussels. He was an apprentice to the artist Peter Coecke, and he married Coecke's daughter Mayken in 1563. He executed a number of his paintings for a wealthy Antwerp financier called Nicolas Jonghelinck, who went bankrupt in 1566. He was friends with Abraham Ortelius, the cartographer who published the first world atlas. He died in 1569 at the age of 44 of unknown natural causes.

Given the lack of hard information, the only way to flesh out a full life of Bruegel is to write a novel. This has been attempted twice before, by a Belgian writer and by a French writer. The English editions of these books are Felix Timmermans, *Peter Bruegel, or Droll Peter* (Coward-McCann, NY 1930) and Claude-Henri Rocquet, *Bruegel: The Workshop of Dreams* (U. of Chicago Press 1991). Neither one of these books is entirely successful; the Timmermans book is fairly sentimental and unliterary, while the Rocquet book is more of an art-historical meditation than a novel. They leave plenty of room in the market for a good novel about the life of Bruegel.

I am filling in the details by doing a fair amount of historical research. The time in which Bruegel lived was indeed an interesting one. The great navigators had recently discovered the New World. The technology for printing images as well as words was in its first bloom. The onset of the Protestant Reformation had provoked the Church's Counter Reformation and the Inquisition. The crowned heads of Europe were bankrupting themselves to pay mercenary troops, and financiers and bankers were beginning to gain the reins of power. The Middle Ages had given way to the Renaissance.

During Bruegel's lifetime, the Netherlands (now divided into Holland and Belgium) were a single kingdom under the control of Spain. There was a strong movement towards Calvinism and Lutheranism in the Netherlands, and the Spanish rulers responded with ruthless oppression. Many so-called heretics were burned, hung, beheaded, and buried alive. Nevertheless, Sixteenth Century Antwerp was one of the richest ports in the world, with hundreds of ships coming in on every tide.

Bruegel's Oeuvre

I do not plan to include any reproductions of Bruegel's work in my book, as I want it to stand alone as a novel. In any case, one of my goals is to produce an effect in words that is analogous to the effects of Bruegel's paintings. But to help put this proposal into context, let's quickly review his work.

Some forty-nine of Bruegel's paintings still exist. The paintings group themselves into several periods. He began with some landscapes, including *The Fall of Icarus*. Next came three "encyclopedia paintings," which include *Children's Games* and *Netherlandish Proverbs*. Probably at the instigation of some Spanish patrons, he then did three Bosch-style scenes of Hell, including *The Triumph of Death*. He painted a *Tower of Babel* and then his monumental series of the six *Seasons*, including the *Harvest* and the *Hunters in the Snow*. Following this came a number of pictures allegorically presenting the struggles between the Protestants and Catholics in the Netherlands. Next he painted what are probably his best-known pictures, the *Peasant Wedding* and the *Peasant Dance*. And in the last two years of his life he painted an increasingly bleak series of pictures including the *Bad Shepherd*, the *Parable of the Blind* and his final *Magpie on the Gallows*.

Bruegel's paintings were popular in his lifetime, and within ten years after his death they were so highly valued as to be unobtainable. The Habsburgs were avid collectors of his work, and bought up many of his masterpieces. Today twelve Bruegels hang in the Art Historic Museum of Vienna, Austria.

Bruegel also executed a large number of drawings to be made into engravings, particularly during the early part of his career. These include landscapes, illustrations of proverbs, and Boschian grotesqueries.

The Narrative

I plan to break the book into three parts, like a triptych. Part One is finished, and accompanies this proposal. Below I outline the action of the three parts. The action outlined for the two as-yet-unwritten parts will change somewhat as I write them. And the threads of the plot will be pulled much tighter once I have all the scenes in place.

About half the chapters are from Bruegel's viewpoint and half from the viewpoint of his friend Abraham Ortelius, a map-maker born the same year as Bruegel.

Part One

Bruegel sets out on an overland journey to Italy from Antwerp. He's a young artist, out to see the world. He's traveling with another young artist named Martin de Vos, a comic character whose drunkenness and lustfulness gets him into several scrapes. As Bruegel and de Vos continue up the Alps, they come across a gallows where a heretic has just been hung.

In Rome, Bruegel and de Vos stay with Guilio Clovio, a painter of miniatures. By way of paying for their room and board, Bruegel and de Vos do some painting. A venial Cardinal helps them see the Sistine Chapel frescoes by Michelangelo. De Vos is crushed by Michelangelo's mastery, but Bruegel is inspired. They run into Abraham Ortelius, whom they know from Antwerp. Ortelius is in Rome buy antiquities and maps. Thanks to de Vos's lecherous pursuit of Clovio's daughter, Bruegel has to leave Rome. On the way out, he stops by Ortelius's inn, where he discovers Ortelius having sex with a young man. He assures Ortelius that he won't tell anyone this secret.

After Ortelius and Bruegel make their separate ways back to Antwerp, they run into each other at a Carnival street-festival. Bruegel is supporting himself doing drawings for engravings by the printer Jerome Cock. He's accompanied by a flirtatious woman named Anja, who is almost a half-sister to him. Bruegel was a foundling raised by Anja's parents, although never formally adopted. Bruegel's gotten Anja a job in Antwerp as a

maid. Anja stays on at the Carnival, but Bruegel, Ortelius and the printer Christopher Plantin start home together. Some drunk Spaniards attack Plantin, wounding him. Plantin has a leather case he's just made for the secretary of the Spanish King Philip, who's currently in town to be crowned ruler of the Netherlands.

When Bruegel takes the leather case to the villa where Philip is staying, he meets two Antwerp financiers: Fugger and Jonghelinck. On the spur of the moment, the two bankers each order a painting from Bruegel. Bruegel's career has begun. When he returns to his room, Anja appears and spends the night with him. Even though it may legalistically be a form of incest, they decide to live together for the time being. Bruegel is uneasy about the decision.

The next day Bruegel and Ortelius go the Antwerp "Schilderspand," or Painter's Market, to work out the details of Bruegel's new commissions with Jonghelinck and with a secretary of Fugger's. Bruegel is anxious that he won't be able to paint well enough. Fugger's secretary is a striking man named Williblad Cheroo. He's the son of the explorer Ponce de Leon and of a Florida Indian woman, both of whom are now dead. Williblad came to the Old World from America when he was eight. Bruegel and Ortelius follow Williblad to the wealthy Fugger's house. Although Ortelius is sexually attracted to Williblad, Williblad's interest in Ortelius lies only in getting maps from him, and possibly in enlisting him into a rebellious Protestant cabal. At Fugger's house, Bruegel is able to study a great triptych by the recently deceased Hieronymus Bosch. Although Bruegel has been worried all day about having let Anja move in, he now resigns himself, and heads home ready both for Anja and his painting commissions.

Part II

The colorful Anja turns out to be a difficult woman to live with. She has numerous affairs with other men, including Williblad Cheroo. Anja also runs up a lot of debts. Bruegel is obsessively drawing Bosch-style images for engraving, even though he's dissatisfied with having a reputation as the "new Bosch." He keeps remembering his carefree days working as an apprentice to Master Coecke van Aelst, now dead. Van Aelst's wife Mayken, who is a painter in her own right, was the first woman that Bruegel ever felt attracted to. Bruegel goes to visit Mayken and is smitten with love for her sixteen-year-old daughter, also named Mayken. Bruegel paints the *Children's Games* for the two Maykens for a very low price. Mother Mayken knows Bruegel is living with Anja, and tells Bruegel that any thought of his being young Mayken's suitor is out of the question for now.

Bruegel's problems with Anja come to a head at the great Antwerp "Land Jubilee," the biggest sales and cultural festival for many years. It's a wild, "Bruegelian" debauch, with Bruegel's merchant friend Hans Franckert in the thick of it. Bruegel and Anja separate, but Anja keeps Bruegel's apartment. Bruegel moves temporarily to Mechelen, the then-capital of the Netherlands, halfway between Antwerp and Brussels.

Bruegel gets commissions for three Bosch-style paintings. The first two are for King Philip's right-hand man, the Cardinal Granvelle. The third is for the Spanish-appointed governor of the Netherlands, Margaret of Parma. Although he's working on the picture in a studio in Margaret's castle, Bruegel outrageously produces *Mad Meg*, a depiction of a savage madwoman harrowing Hell. He falls into such severe disfavor with the authorities that his life is in danger.

Bruegel returns to Antwerp to stay for awhile in Ortelius's house. The Inquisition keeps getting more brutal. Ortelius's sodomite and humanist leanings get him into trouble, and Bruegel too is in real danger. Williblad Cheroo prevails on the wealthy Fugger to save Ortelius and Bruegel's necks, and Bruegel paints a miniature of two monkeys in chains for Fugger. Fugger isn't really amused, although he's interested in the rising value of Bruegel's paintings. He sends Williblad Cheroo to acquire the *Children's Games* from the two Maykens.

Meanwhile Bruegel gets some more painting commissions from the banker Jonghelinck. He's going to start painting in his own style, rather than in his recent Bosch style. Bruegel goes to Brussels and proposes to young Mayken and, with her mother's blessing, she accepts.

Part III

Ortelius visits Bruegel and the two Maykens at their house in Brussels. Young Mayken has just given birth to a son, Peter Bruegel the Younger. Bruegel is inordinately happy, although at the same time, he's tormented by a suspicion that Williblad Cheroo might have been the child's father.

Bruegel paints his great cycle of the *Seasons* for Jonghelinck. He's set up a painter's workshop and has several apprentices. He's immersed in nature and at one with the Cosmos. Jonghelinck is happy with the pictures, but shortly after they're delivered to him, he's driven into bankruptcy by one of Fugger's maneuvers, and Jonghelinck has to hand his pictures over to the City of Antwerp, which in turn gives the pictures to Fugger's clients the Habsburgs.

Bruegel is approached by the man he's long suspected to be his father, Count Jan de Hoorne. De Hoorne is involved with an attempt by the Netherlandish nobles to throw off the rule of Spain and to secure religious freedom. De Hoorne commissions a series of five Protestant-influenced paintings by Bruegel. But then De Hoorne is horribly put to death.

Bruegel's old friend Hans Franckert appears to cheer Bruegel up. Franckert has gotten rich and is in a position to commission several paintings. He and Bruegel go to some peasant festivals together and Bruegel paints his great *Peasant* pictures.

Bruegel's health begins failing, ostensibly as the result of all the poisonous pigments he's worked with over the years, but really due to a systematic poisoning by some Spanish soldiers who are billeted in his house. Franckert wants more peasant pictures, but Bruegel is ready, once again, to move on artistically. Williblad Cheroo turns up and says Fugger will buy whatever Bruegel feels like painting. He paints his solemn last canvases, cheered by his family and by the birth of his second son Jan.

In the final scene, Bruegel is dead, and Ortelius is alone in a room of Bruegel's paintings, the paintings just sitting there, like pools you can dive into, like endlessly deep wells of inspiration.

Proposal for Bruegel (March 7, 2000)

***A historical novel by Rudy Rucker
March 7, 2000***

The Concept

Bruegel is a historical novel about the life of the Sixteenth Century Flemish master Peter Bruegel the Elder. As a historical work, it gives a realistic, well-researched picture of Bruegel and his world. As a novel, it is a lively tale centering on Bruegel's lifelong struggle to become a great artist. There are subplots involving Bruegel's romantic life and his involvement with the politics of the time.

The book consists of fifteen chapters, with each chapter named after one of Bruegel's paintings. Some chapters describe the creation of the corresponding work; while others only use the picture for inspiration, a little as if Bruegel's images might be photographs or diary notes.

The completed novel will be 100,000 words long, with some 71,000 words written so far. I expect to finish it by August, 2000.

There are three possible forms in which the book could be published. Most simply, it could be printed with no illustrations. Secondly, it could be printed with a single color illustration for each of the fifteen chapters. Or, thirdly, it could be produced like an art-historical monograph, with illustrations of perhaps thirty of his paintings and drawings, as well as illustrations of details of some of the works. If it proves economically feasible, I would prefer the third, most ambitious, approach, and would be happy to carry out the extra work needed to bring this vision to fruition.

Some disparate examples of the kind of novel I have in mind are E. L. Doctorow's *Ragtime*, Irving Stone's *The Agony and the Ecstasy*, and Thomas Pynchon's *Mason and Dixon*. If, as I hope, the book is published in the art-book format, it will also be comparable to Simon Schama's *Rembrandt's Eyes* and Peter Robb's *M: The Man Who Became Caravaggio*.

I envision several types of readers for *Bruegel*. First, of course, are the readers of my twenty other books. Second, Bruegel is an extremely popular artist, and people interested in his art are likely to want to read the book. A third group consists of people interested in the dreamy pleasure of escaping into past worlds. Fourth, it is my hope that the book may be viewed as an unusual work of significant value, attracting a wide readership interested in the latest literary sensation.

For those fascinated by Bruegel's paintings, *Bruegel* provides a way to *go inside* the worlds that Bruegel paints. It's like bringing some of the paintings to life and seeing what happened next. The book's prose tries to evoke the same kinds of images and sensations that Bruegel produces with his paints.

Bruegel helps the reader to empathize with the way in which this great artist thought. We come to see Bruegel's paintings as informed by rich and loving observation. Bruegel's uniquely compassionate realism shows humankind as an integral part of the world.

An interesting aspect of *Bruegel* is that there are a number of interesting parallels between Bruegel's time and our own. The invention of perspective and the printing press caused an intellectual revolution similar to that we're currently undergoing as a result of the invention of the computer and the Web. And in Bruegel's time as in ours, great political injustices were carried out under the name of religion. Another somewhat modern feature of the Sixteenth Century is that it was a time when multinational banking interests were becoming more powerful than local governments.

Bruegel shares some of Bruegel's comic vulgarity and his disrespect for the established order. Yet beyond the clowning, the tale presents ordinary life in a transcendental way, just as one sees in Bruegel's mature works.

Bruegel's Life

Very little is known about Bruegel's life. These are the solid facts: He was born about 1527 and joined the Antwerp Painter's Guild in 1551. He traveled to Rome in 1552, and after that he lived mostly in Antwerp and Brussels. He was an apprentice to the artist Peter Coecke, and he married Coecke's daughter Mayken in 1563. He executed a number of his paintings for a wealthy Antwerp financier called Nicolas Jonghelinck, who went bankrupt in 1566. He was friends with Abraham Ortelius, the cartographer who published the first world atlas. He died in 1569 at the age of 42 of unknown natural causes.

Given the lack of hard information, the only way to flesh out a full life of Bruegel is to write a novel. This has been attempted twice before, by a Belgian writer and by a French writer. The English editions of these books are Felix Timmermans, *Peter Bruegel, or Droll Peter* (Coward-McCann, NY 1930) and Claude-Henri Rocquet, *Bruegel: The Workshop of Dreams* (U. of Chicago Press 1991). Neither one of these books is entirely successful. The Timmermans book is fairly sentimental and unliterary, and the Rocquet book, though quite wonderful, is more of an art-historical meditation than a novel. They leave plenty of room in the market for a richly imagined novel about the life of Bruegel.

I am filling in the details by doing a fair amount of historical research. The time in which Bruegel lived was indeed an interesting one. The great navigators had recently discovered the New World. The technology for printing images as well as words was in its first bloom. The onset of the Protestant Reformation had provoked the Church's Counter Reformation and the Inquisition. The crowned heads of Europe were bankrupting themselves to pay mercenary troops, and financiers and bankers were beginning to gain the reins of power. The Middle Ages had given way to the Renaissance.

During Bruegel's lifetime, the Netherlands (now divided into Holland and Belgium) were a single kingdom under the control of Spain. There was a strong movement towards Calvinism in the Netherlands, and the Spanish rulers responded with ruthless oppression. Many so-called heretics were burned, hung, beheaded, and buried alive. Nevertheless, Sixteenth Century Antwerp was one of the richest ports in the world, with hundreds of ships coming in on every tide.

Bruegel's Oeuvre

To help put my proposal into context, let's quickly review Bruegel's work.

Some forty-nine of Bruegel's paintings still exist. The paintings group themselves into several periods. He began with some landscapes, including *The Fall of Icarus*. Next came three "encyclopedia paintings," which include *Children's Games* and *The Battle of Carnival and Lent*. Probably at the instigation of some Spanish patrons, he then did three Bosch-style scenes of Hell, including *Dulle Griet* and *The Triumph of Death*. He painted a *Tower of Babel* and then his monumental series of the six *Seasons*, including the *Harvest* and the *Hunters in the Snow*. Following this came a number of pictures, such as the *Slaughter of the Innocents*, which recast biblical scenes in terms of the struggles in the Netherlands. Next he painted what are probably his best-known pictures, the *Peasant Wedding* and the *Peasant Dance*. In the last two years of his life he painted an increasingly bleak series of pictures including the *Misanthrope* and the *Parable of the Blind*. And his very last work, *The Magpie on the Gallows*, is an optimistic, gentle landscape.

Bruegel's paintings were popular in his lifetime, and within ten years after his death they were so highly valued as to be unobtainable. The Habsburgs in particular were avid collectors of his work, and obtained most of his masterpieces. Today twelve Bruegels hang in the Art Historic Museum of Vienna.

Bruegel also executed a large number of drawings to be made into engravings, particularly during the early part of his career. These include landscapes, illustrations of proverbs, and Boschian grotesqueries.

The Narrative

Below I list and outline the action of the book's fifteen chapters. Chapters One through Ten are completed. The projected action for Chapters Eleven through Fifteen may still change a little.

About half the chapters are written from Bruegel's viewpoint and half from the viewpoint of people around him: including his friend Ortelius, his girlfriend Anja, and his wife Mayken.

I might also mention that, with the exception of Williblad Cheroo, all of my characters are based on historical figures. Cheroo is a character added for plot reasons, he is kind of a dark double of Bruegel's, alternately his worst enemy and his best friend.

As mentioned above, the chapters are named after works by Bruegel, but the works named do not always correspond to the time period which the chapter describes, sometimes the works are being alluded to in a less direct fashion.

Chapter One. Mountain Landscape. The French-Italian Alps, May, 1552

We meet Peter Bruegel on an overland journey to Italy from Antwerp. He's a young artist, out to see the world. He sketches a mountain and makes his first sale to a traveling Antwerp merchant named Hans Franckert. Almost immediately Bruegel has to sacrifice the gold coin he got for his drawing to pay off a cuckolded husband who's threatening the life of his traveling companion, Martin de Vos. As Bruegel and de Vos continue up the Alps, they come across a gallows where an alchemist has just been hung for heresy. It's a portent of the religious persecution to come.

Chapter Two. The Tower of Babel. Rome, July, 1553.

In Rome, Bruegel and de Vos stay with Guilio Clovio, a painter of miniatures. In return for his room and board, Bruegel first paints a very bad picture with de Vos, and then paints a successful miniature Tower of Babel. A venial Cardinal helps Bruegel see the Sistine Chapel frescoes by Michelangelo. Though he admires the work, Bruegel feels that he wants to paint in a more colloquial and realistic style. He encounters Abraham Ortelius, a map dealer whom he knows from Antwerp. Stopping by Ortelius's inn, Bruegel discovers Ortelius having sex with a young man. He assures Ortelius the secret is safe with him, and this seals their friendship.

Chapter Three. The Battle Of Carnival and Lent. Antwerp, February, 1556.

After Ortelius and Bruegel make their separate ways back to Antwerp, they run into each other at a Carnival street-festival. Bruegel is supporting himself doing drawings for engravings by the printer Jerome Cock, and is hoping to sell some paintings. He's spending time with a childhood friend named Anja. Bruegel was a foundling, raised by Anja's parents. He and Anja suspect that a noble named Count Filips de Hoorne was his father.

Bruegel, Ortelius and the printer Christopher Plantin start home together. Some drunk Spaniards attack Plantin, wounding him. Plantin has a leather case he's just made for the secretary of the Spanish King Philip, who's currently in town to be crowned ruler of the Netherlands.

Chapter Four. Skaters with Bird Trap. Antwerp, February, 1556.

Bruegel takes Plantin's leather case to the villa where Philip is staying. There he meets two Antwerp financiers: Fugger and Jonghelinck. In addition, the Cardinal Granvelle is at the villa; he is King Philip's right-hand man. On the spur of the moment, Granvelle and the two bankers each order a painting from Bruegel. Bruegel's career has begun. When he returns to his room, Anja shows up and spends the night with him. They decide to live together for the time being.

Chapter Five. Luxuria. Antwerp, March, 1556.

Bruegel and Ortelius go to the Antwerp Painter's Market to work out the details of Bruegel's new commissions. Fugger's secretary is a striking man named Williblad Cheroo, the son of the explorer Ponce de Leon and of a Florida Indian. Ortelius is sexually attracted to Williblad. Ortelius and Bruegel accompany Cheroo to Fugger's house, where Bruegel is able to study a great triptych by the dead master Hieronymus Bosch. Bruegel is anxious that he won't be able to paint as well.

Chapter Six. The Peasant Wedding. Antwerp, September, 1560.

Bruegel's painting career is moving along slowly. He's been engraving the Seven Sins and painting his three "encyclopedia pictures," two for Jonghelinck and one for a girl named Mayken. Mayken is the daughter of Master Coecke, the deceased artist whom Bruegel served his apprenticeship with. Anja is cheating on Bruegel with Williblad Cheroo and Bruegel is depressed.

Bruegel and Franckert dress as peasants and go to a peasant wedding. Some Spanish mercenary soldiers show up and kill two people. Bruegel walks back home, determined to do something against the Spanish oppressors.

Chapter Seven. The Parable of the Blind. Antwerp, August, 1561.

Bruegel has thrown Anja out for her unfaithfulness, also because he wants to court Mayken Coecke. He's been unproductive of late, spending all his time doing lampoons, or political cartoons, of Cardinal Granvelle and Philip.

Anja goes to see an Antwerp street-festival of plays, and finds Bruegel fighting with Williblad. Bruegel, Ortelius, Williblad and Mayken perform in a play called "The Blind Leading the Blind." At the end of the play, Bruegel hugs tries to hug Mayken. Anja gets so jealous she runs to Granvelle, and tells him that Bruegel has been drawing lampoons of him.

Granvelle has Bruegel fetched and tells Bruegel he has to paint a series of Bosch-style Hell pictures for him and for the Regent Margaret, who serves as King Philip's local ruler of the Netherlands.

Chapter Eight. Dulle Griet. Mechelen, April, 1562.

Bruegel is working in a studio in Margaret's castle in Mechelen between Antwerp and Brussels. He's finished two Hell pictures for Granvelle and King Philip. He's just completing a third for the Regent Margaret. He's tired of having to imitate Bosch, and he's worried about Anja's fate. He's also still trying to press forward his courtship of Mayken.

He makes friends with the rebellious Netherlandish noble William of Orange, a.k.a. William the Sly. They go out falconing together, and when they return, Bruegel shows his new picture to Margaret and she's furious. The picture, *Dulle Griet*, contains an insulting caricature of the stupid, unlovely Margaret herself.

Due to his interest in collecting Bruegel's art, Granvelle keeps Margaret from having him executed, but he angrily suggests that Bruegel leave the country for a time. Bruegel makes a deal to paint a small picture for William, who gives him a horse. He heads off for a six-month stay in Amsterdam.

Chapter Nine. The Sermon of John the Baptist. Antwerp, October, 1562.

Ortelius is at home in his study; Bruegel shows up, back from Amsterdam. Bruegel talks about how tired he is of being poor and unsettled at the age of 35. He learns that both Anja and his friend Franckert have married. Yet he's still single and all but homeless.

He wants to marry Mayken, if only so that he can move into a fine established house with an art business. Mayken's father Master Coecke is dead, and Bruegel has a long-standing friendship with Mayken's mother, who's also named Mayken. In fact, he had an affair with old Mayken many years ago. He worries that young Mayken senses this. He mentions that when Master Coecke discovered the affair he threatened Bruegel with a scimitar.

Ortelius takes Bruegel to a secret sermon by a Calvinist preacher; Bruegel goes mainly because he hopes to meet his patron Jonghelinck there, and indeed he does.

After the sermon a man with a scarf over his face approaches Ortelius; it's Williblad Cheroo. Williblad is working for Cardinal Granvelle in Brussels. He's come here to warn the printer Plantin of an impending arrest.

Williblad tells Ortelius that he's seducing Mayken Coecke in Brussels because both Williblad and Cardinal Granvelle want to see Bruegel suffer.

Chapter Ten. *The Peasant and the Birdsnester. Brussels, November, 1562.*

Bruegel is in Brussels, but young Mayken is uninterested in his suit. He sets up a studio and works on a painting for Jonghelinck. Williblad Cheroo turns up and says that he's the one who's turned Mayken's head. Williblad says he'll break off with Mayken if Peter will introduce one of Granvelle's assassins to William of Orange.

Bruegel suddenly feels like a simpleton peasant who stands by while a birdsnester steals the nest he had his eye on. He takes action, and leads Granvelle's assassin into a trap at William's palace. The man is killed in front of Bosch's triptych of *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, which William owns. Bruegel wipes some of the splattered blood from the painting.

Mayken appears and asks Bruegel, "Did you sleep with my mother?" "Yes." "Are you my father?" "No." Now, finally, Mayken agrees to marry him.

Chapter Eleven. *The Adoration of the Kings. Brussels, May, 1563 - Dec, 1564.*

Bruegel and Mayken are married and things are going well. He has an assistant named Bengt, and he teaches Bengt and Mayken about the craft of painting. The despised Cardinal Granvelle is finally driven from the Netherlands. At a celebratory party at William of Orange's palace, Mayken is seduced one final time by Williblad Cheroo. Nine months later, she bears Peter a son. Bengt tells Bruegel of Mayken's infidelity, but Bruegel rises above the worries, naming the boy after himself. At the christening, the Count Filips de Hoorne finally acknowledges to Bruegel that he was indeed his father. Bruegel plays a savage prank on Bengt; he dresses up as the ghost of Master Coecke and threatens Bengt with Master Coecke's old scimitar.

Chapter Twelve. *The Hunters in the Snow. Brussels, January, 1566.*

Bruegel is happy, he has his son, and he's spent the whole last year painting his six Seasons pictures, and now he's finishing the last one: *The Hunters in the Snow*. He travels up to Antwerp to deliver it to Jonghelinck, and Jonghelinck hangs the picture in a special hexagonal room that he built for series. Ortelius and Williblad Cheroo are there as well. Cheroo is very appreciative of the work, and Bruegel begins to let go of his antipathy for the man. Now Jonghelinck tells Bruegel that next month, the pictures will be whisked away and put into storage by the city to cover some bad business debts.

Peter is bewildered and distraught that his masterworks will never be seen in his country, Peter goes to Ortelius's with the sympathetic Cheroo, and the two finally reach a rapprochement. Peter finds it in his heart to forgive Williblad just as Master Coecke forgave him.

Chapter Thirteen. *The Beggars. Antwerp, August, 1566.*

Bruegel's father Count Filips de Hoorne commissions a series of political paintings such as the *Massacre of the Innocents*, a biblical theme which really shows blood-thirsty Spanish mercenaries.

The political situation has grown desperate. United in their opposition to the Spanish rule, the Netherlandish nobles are calling themselves the "Beggars." (The name comes from the Regent Margaret, who contemptuously called the petitioning nobles beggars.) Uphill from Bruegel's house, dozens of men and women are being executed daily.

A wave of iconoclasm breaks out; people storm into churches, destroying holy images, scattering relics, slashing and burning altar paintings, drinking Communion wine. Ortelius watches Williblad loot a church. Bruegel is upset, even furious, about the destruction of the art. He resolves to start selling his paintings further away from home, he has some clients in Amsterdam.

Chapter Fourteen. The Misanthrope. Brussels, June, 1568.

Bruegel sees Filips de Hoorne, beheaded in the public square. Things are worse than ever. Spanish soldiers are billeted in Bruegel's house. One of them is lodged in Bruegel's studio, and when he damages Bruegel's *Peasant Dance* Bruegel decides to frighten him with the same prank he used on Bengt: he dresses up as Master Coecke's ghost. But instead of running, the soldier attacks him, and Bruegel ends up slitting the man's throat. Williblad Cheroo is visiting Bruegel's house with Ortelius for the christening of Bruegel's second son, named Jan. Williblad steps forward to spirit the soldier's body out of the house, saving Bruegel's life. Williblad is seen with the body on the edge of town, and he pays with his own life.

Chapter Fifteen. The Magpie on the Gallows. Brussels, September, 1569.

Bruegel's son Peter the Younger is talking with his father, who's dying of lead and mercury poisoning from the years of exposure to poisonous paints. Bruegel is dabbing away at one last painting, a landscape. And then he dies. In the final scene, little Peter alone in a room of Bruegel's paintings. The paintings are just sitting there, like pools you could dive into, like wells. Little Peter picks up a brush.

Proposal for Bruegel

A historical novel by Rudy Rucker

May 20, 2000

The Concept

I have been fascinated by the paintings of Peter Bruegel the Elder ever since I first saw them in a book as a boy. I've always wanted to go into the world of these pictures, and to learn more about the genius who painted them. Put differently, I wanted to bring his paintings to life and see what happens next.

Bruegel is my historical novel about the life of this Sixteenth Century Flemish painter. Relatively little is known about Bruegel's life. I've fleshed out his story by historical research into his times and by a close study of his pictures, which can be regarded as images, sometimes symbolic, of events in this artist's life. Some interesting new interpretations for the pictures have emerged in the process of matching them up with this newly imagined life story.

To make the book work as a novel, I've structured it as a series of linked episodes that flow into each other to develop a rising plot that reaches several climaxes. Some of the high points are: the burning of a barn at a peasant wedding, the murder of an assassin in front of a painting by Hieronymus Bosch, the smashing of all the art in a cathedral by Calvinist image-breakers, the seduction of Bruegel's wife by the son of an American Indian, the beheading of a noble whom Bruegel believes to be his brother, and the strangling of a Spanish soldier quartered in Bruegel's house.

The plot centers on three areas: career, romance, and political violence. Like any professional artist, finding patrons is one of Bruegel's most pressing concerns, and I work out the details of how he did this. Bruegel's romantic life is interesting: he sleeps with the wife of his master, takes a mistress for several years, marries his old master's daughter, and then nearly loses her to another man. The politics of the time were quite dramatic. Bruegel's Netherlands was under the rule of the Spanish king, and was tormented by the Inquisition, with thousands of citizens being executed. Bruegel's art often held veiled or overt political messages, and he was at several points in grave danger of losing his life.

Beyond all plot considerations, I've tried to find ways for the reader to empathize with the way in which this great artist worked and thought. Bruegel's paintings are informed by rich and loving observation. His uniquely compassionate realism shows humankind as an integral part of the world. I've tried to let the book's prose evoke the same kinds of images and sensations that Bruegel produced with his paints.

I should also mention that *Bruegel* shares some of Bruegel's comic vulgarity and his disrespect for the established order. Yet beyond the clowning, the tale seeks to present ordinary life in a transcendental way, just as one sees in Bruegel's mature works.

Bruegel is 107,000 words long and is broken into sixteen chapters, with each chapter having the inner coherence of a short story. Each chapter is named after one of Bruegel's paintings and in some way works out the ideas of the picture in question.

In this version of the manuscript, I've placed a black-and-white reproduction of

the relevant painting at the start of each chapter. Although there is no absolute necessity for these illustrations to appear in the book, they might be a nice addition if this were to prove feasible in terms of printing costs and the availability of permissions from the museums who own the paintings.

Comparable Books

Some recent books whose readers might enjoy *Bruegel* are the following.

Bruegel's Life

Very little is known about Bruegel's life — which makes him a good subject for a historical novel!

These are the solid facts: He was born about 1527 and joined the Antwerp Painter's Guild in 1551. He traveled to Rome in 1552, and after that he lived mostly in Antwerp and Brussels. He was an apprentice to the artist Peter Coecke, and he married Coecke's daughter Mayken in 1563. He executed about a third of his paintings for a single customer, a wealthy Antwerp financier called Nicolas Jonghelinck, who went bankrupt in 1566 and forfeited his art collection to the City of Antwerp. Bruegel was friends with Abraham Ortelius, the cartographer who published the first world atlas. He died in 1569 at the age of 42 of unknown natural causes.

Given the lack of hard information, the only way to flesh out a full life of Bruegel is to write a novel. This has been attempted twice before, by a Belgian writer and by a French writer. The English editions of these books are Felix Timmermans, *Peter Bruegel, or Droll Peter* (Coward-McCann, NY 1930) and Claude-Henri Rocquet, *Brvegel: The Workshop of Dreams* (U. of Chicago Press 1991). Neither one of these books is entirely successful. The Timmermans book is fairly sentimental and unliterary, and the Rocquet book, though quite wonderful, is more of an art-historical meditation than a novel. They leave plenty of room in the market for a richly imagined novel about the life of Bruegel.

The time in which Bruegel lived was an interesting one. The great navigators had recently discovered the New World. The technology for printing images as well as words was in its first bloom. The onset of the Protestant Reformation had provoked the Church's Counter Reformation and the Inquisition. The crowned heads of Europe were bankrupting themselves to pay mercenary troops, and financiers and bankers were beginning to gain the reins of power. The Middle Ages had given way to the Renaissance.

During Bruegel's lifetime, the Netherlands (now divided into Holland and Belgium) were a single kingdom under the control of Spain. There was a strong movement towards Calvinism in the Netherlands, and the Spanish rulers responded with ruthless oppression. Many so-called heretics were burned, hung, beheaded, and buried alive. Nevertheless, Sixteenth Century Antwerp was extremely cosmopolitan and was one of the richest ports in the world, with hundreds of ships coming in on every tide.

Bruegel's Oeuvre

To help put my proposal into context, let's quickly review Bruegel's work. Some forty-nine of Bruegel's paintings still exist. The paintings group themselves

into several periods. He began with some landscapes, including *The Fall of Icarus*. Next came three “encyclopedia paintings,” which include *Children’s Games* and *The Battle of Carnival and Lent*. Probably at the instigation of some Spanish patrons, he then did three Bosch-style scenes of Hell, including *Dulle Griet* and *The Triumph of Death*. He painted a *Tower of Babel* and then his monumental series of the six *Seasons*, including the *Harvest* and the *Hunters in the Snow*. Following this came a number of pictures, such as the *Slaughter of the Innocents*, which recast biblical scenes in terms of the struggles in the Netherlands. Next he painted what are probably his best-known pictures, the *Peasant Wedding* and the *Peasant Dance*. In the last two years of his life he painted an increasingly bleak series of pictures including the *Misanthrope* and the *Parable of the Blind*. And his very last work, *The Magpie on the Gallows*, is an optimistic, gentle landscape.

Bruegel’s paintings were popular in his lifetime, and within ten years after his death they were so highly valued as to be unobtainable. The Habsburgs in particular were avid collectors of his work, and obtained most of his masterpieces. Today twelve Bruegels hang in the Art Historic Museum of Vienna.

Bruegel also executed a large number of drawings to be made into engravings, particularly during the early part of his career. These include landscapes, illustrations of proverbs, and Boschian grotesqueries.

The Narrative

Below I list and outline the action of the book’s sixteen chapters.

Half the chapters are written from Bruegel’s viewpoint and half from the viewpoint of people around him: including his friend Ortelius, his girlfriend Anja, and his wife Mayken.

I might also mention that, with the exception of Williblad Cheroo, all of my characters are based on historical figures. Cheroo is the son of the explorer Ponce de Leon and a Florida Indian. He is kind of a dark double of Bruegel’s: initially his worst enemy and ultimately his best friend.

As mentioned above, the chapters are named after works by Bruegel, but the works named do not always correspond to the time period which the chapter describes, sometimes the works are being alluded to in a less direct fashion.

Chapter One. Mountain Landscape. The French-Italian Alps, May, 1552

We meet Peter Bruegel on an overland journey to Italy from Antwerp. He’s a young artist, out to see the world. He sketches a mountain and makes his first sale to a traveling Antwerp merchant named Hans Franckert. Almost immediately Bruegel has to sacrifice the gold coin he got for his drawing to pay off a cuckolded husband who’s threatening the life of his traveling companion, Martin de Vos. As Bruegel and de Vos continue up the Alps, they come across a gallows where an alchemist has just been hung for heresy. It’s a portent of the religious persecution to come. This gallows will reappear again in the final painting which Bruegel makes in the book’s last chapter.

Chapter Two. The Tower of Babel. Rome, July, 1553.

In Rome, Bruegel and de Vos stay with Guilio Clovio, a painter of miniatures. In

return for his room and board, Bruegel first paints a very bad picture with de Vos, and then paints a successful miniature *Tower of Babel*. A venial Cardinal helps Bruegel see the Sistine Chapel frescoes by Michelangelo. Though he admires the work, Bruegel feels that he wants to paint in a more colloquial and realistic style. He encounters Abraham Ortelius, a map dealer whom he knows from Antwerp. Stopping by Ortelius's inn, Bruegel discovers Ortelius having sex with a young man. He assures Ortelius the secret is safe with him, and this seals their friendship.

Chapter Three. The Battle Of Carnival and Lent. Antwerp, February, 1556.

After Ortelius and Bruegel make their separate ways back to Antwerp, they run into each other at a Carnival street-festival. Bruegel is supporting himself doing drawings for engravings by the printer Jerome Cock, and is hoping to sell some paintings. He's spending time with a childhood friend named Anja. Bruegel was a foundling, raised by Anja's parents. He and Anja suspect that a noble named Count Filips de Hoorne was his father.

Bruegel, Ortelius and the printer Christopher Plantin start home together. Some drunk Spaniards attack Plantin, wounding him. Plantin has a leather case he's just made for the secretary of the Spanish King Philip, who's currently in town to be crowned ruler of the Netherlands.

Chapter Four. Skaters with Bird Trap. Antwerp, February, 1556.

Bruegel takes Plantin's leather case to the villa where Philip is staying. There he meets two Antwerp financiers: Fugger and Jonghelinck. In addition, the Cardinal Granvelle is at the villa; he is King Philip's right-hand man. On the spur of the moment, Granvelle and the two bankers each order a painting from Bruegel. Bruegel's career has begun. When he returns to his room, Anja shows up and spends the night with him. They decide to live together for the time being.

Chapter Five. Luxuria. Antwerp, March, 1556.

Bruegel and Ortelius go to the Antwerp Painter's Market to work out the details of Bruegel's new commissions. Fugger's secretary is a striking man named Williblad Cheroo, the son of the explorer Ponce de Leon and of a Florida Indian. Ortelius is sexually attracted to Williblad. Ortelius and Bruegel accompany Cheroo to Fugger's house, where Bruegel is able to study a great triptych by the dead master Hieronymus Bosch. Bruegel is anxious that he won't be able to paint as well.

Chapter Six. The Peasant Wedding. Antwerp, September, 1560.

Bruegel's painting career is moving along slowly. He's been engraving the Seven Sins and painting his three "encyclopedia pictures," two for Jonghelinck and one for a girl named Mayken. Mayken is the daughter of Master Coecke, the deceased artist whom Bruegel served his apprenticeship with. Anja is cheating on Bruegel with Williblad Cheroo and Bruegel is depressed.

Bruegel and Franckert dress as peasants and go to a peasant wedding. Some Spanish mercenary soldiers show up and kill two people. Bruegel walks back home, determined to do something against the Spanish oppressors.

Chapter Seven. The Parable of the Blind. Antwerp, August, 1561.

Bruegel has thrown Anja out for her unfaithfulness, also because he wants to court Mayken Coecke. He's been unproductive of late, spending all his time doing lampoons, or political cartoons, of Cardinal Granvelle and Philip.

Anja goes to see an Antwerp street-festival of plays, and finds Bruegel fighting with Williblad. Bruegel, Ortelius, Williblad and Mayken perform in a play called "The Blind Leading the Blind." At the end of the play, Bruegel hugs tries to hug Mayken. Anja gets so jealous she runs to Granvelle, and tells him that Bruegel has been drawing lampoons of him.

Granvelle has Bruegel fetched and tells Bruegel he has to paint a series of Bosch-style Hell pictures for him and for the Regent Margaret, who serves as King Philip's local ruler of the Netherlands.

Chapter Eight. Dulle Griet. Mechelen, April, 1562.

Bruegel is working in a studio in Margaret's castle in Mechelen between Antwerp and Brussels. He's finished two Hell pictures for Granvelle and King Philip. He's just completing a third for the Regent Margaret. He's tired of having to imitate Bosch, and he's worried about Anja's fate. He's also still trying to press forward his courtship of Mayken.

He makes friends with the rebellious Netherlandish noble William of Orange, a.k.a. William the Sly. They go out falconing together, and when they return, Bruegel shows his new picture to Margaret and she's furious. The picture, *Dulle Griet*, contains an insulting caricature of the stupid, unlovely Margaret herself.

Due to his interest in collecting Bruegel's art, Granvelle keeps Margaret from having him executed, but he angrily suggests that Bruegel leave the country for a time. Bruegel makes a deal to paint a small picture for William, who gives him a horse. He heads off for a six-month stay in Amsterdam.

Chapter Nine. The Sermon of John the Baptist. Antwerp, October, 1562.

Ortelius is at home in his study; Bruegel shows up, back from Amsterdam. Bruegel talks about how tired he is of being poor and unsettled at the age of 35. He learns that both Anja and his friend Franckert have married. Yet he's still single and all but homeless.

He wants to marry Mayken, if only so that he can move into a fine established house with an art business. Mayken's father Master Coecke is dead, and Bruegel has a long-standing friendship with Mayken's mother, who's also named Mayken. In fact, he had an affair with old Mayken many years ago. He worries that young Mayken senses this. He mentions that when Master Coecke discovered the affair he threatened Bruegel with a scimitar.

Ortelius takes Bruegel to a secret sermon by a Calvinist preacher; Bruegel goes mainly because he hopes to meet his patron Jonghelinck there, and indeed he does.

After the sermon a man with a scarf over his face approaches Ortelius; it's Williblad Cheroo. Williblad is working for Cardinal Granvelle in Brussels. He's come here to warn the printer Plantin of an impending arrest.

Williblad tells Ortelius that he's seducing Mayken Coecke in Brussels because

both Williblad and Cardinal Granvelle want to see Bruegel suffer.

Chapter Ten. The Peasant and the Birdsnester. Brussels, November, 1562.

Bruegel is in Brussels, but young Mayken is uninterested in his suit. He sets up a studio and works on a painting for Jonghelinck. Williblad Cheroo turns up and says that he's the one who's turned Mayken's head. Williblad says he'll break off with Mayken if Peter will introduce one of Granvelle's assassins to William of Orange.

Bruegel suddenly feels like a simpleton peasant who stands by while a birdsnester steals the nest he had his eye on. He takes action, and leads Granvelle's assassin into a trap at William's palace. The man is killed in front of Bosch's triptych of *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, which William owns. Bruegel wipes some of the splattered blood from the painting.

Mayken appears and asks Bruegel, "Did you sleep with my mother?" "Yes." "Are you my father?" "No." Now, finally, Mayken agrees to marry him.

Chapter 11. Mayken. Brussels. December, 1564. The Adoration of the Kings.

Bruegel and Mayken are married and things are going well. He has an assistant named Bengt, and he teaches Bengt and Mayken about the craft of painting. The despised Cardinal Granvelle is finally driven from the Netherlands. At a celebratory party at William of Orange's palace, Mayken is seduced one final time by Williblad Cheroo. Nine months later, she bears Peter a son. Bengt tells Bruegel of Mayken's infidelity, but Bruegel rises above the worries, naming the boy after himself. At the christening, the Count Filips de Hoorne finally acknowledges to Bruegel that he was indeed his father. Bruegel plays a savage prank on Bengt; he dresses up as the ghost of Master Coecke and threatens Bengt with Master Coecke's old scimitar.

Chapter 12. Bruegel. Brussels & Antwerp. January 1566. The Hunters in the Snow.

Bruegel is happy, he has his son, and he's spent the whole last year painting his six Seasons pictures, and now he's finishing the last one: *The Hunters in the Snow*. He travels up to Antwerp to deliver it to Jonghelinck, and Jonghelinck hangs the picture in a special hexagonal room that he built for series. Ortelius and Williblad Cheroo are there as well. Cheroo is very appreciative of the work, and Bruegel begins to let go of his antipathy for the man. Now Jonghelinck tells Bruegel that next month, the pictures will be whisked away and put into storage by the city to cover some bad business debts. Jonghelinck signed his deal with Antwerp all the way back in September.

Jonghelinck was known to own a Dürer, maybe a marzipan-like Mary and Jesus, painted 1512. It's been a rough year, 60,000 sentenced to death, strict enforcement of the edicts.

Peter is bewildered and distraught that his masterworks will never be seen in his country, Peter goes to Ortelius's with the sympathetic Cheroo, and the two finally reach a rapprochement. Peter finds it in his heart to forgive Williblad just as Master Coecke forgave him.

Chapter 13. Ortelius. Antwerp. August, 1566. The Beggars.

Uphill from Bruegel's house, dozens of men and women are being executed daily. Bruegel paints *The Numbering at Bethlehem*, the *Massacre of the Innocents*, *The Sermon of John the Baptist*, all in 1566, he sells them to William of Orange in Antwerp. De Hoorne discouragingly boxes them up and sends them away. Bruegel says his next two paintings will be an *Adoration of the Kings in the Snow* and a *Dance of the Bride* for two guys in Amsterdam.

The political situation has grown desperate. United in their opposition to the Spanish rule, the Netherlandish nobles are calling themselves the "Beggars." The name comes from the Regent Margaret's councilor Berlaymont. It was April, 1566, when the "gueux" were turned away. Berlaymont turned to the tearful and anxious Margaret and said, "*Quoi Madame, peur de ces gueux?*"

Williblad is living with Ortelius. Williblad is into being a Beggar, he wears a gray cloak. Ortelius, Williblad, Bruegel and Mayken go to see the Calvinist preacher Moded of Zwolle preach outside of Antwerp. Williblad runs into his new girlfriend, a woman named Niay Serrão, a woman from the "spice island" Ternate in the East Indies. When they come back into the town, the iconoclasts loot the Our Lady Church. Williblad and Niay get in on it, pulling down the cross with Christ.

Mayken gets them to save one of her father's paintings. They're challenged by the same evil Walloon who beat them up at the Carnival in 1556, and who burned down the barn at the peasant wedding in 1560. Williblad knocks him out and then Niay poisons him..

Williblad says that Spain was paying provocateurs to encourage the iconoclasts. Ortelius and Peter are mad at Williblad for the image-breaking. Peter rhetorically says he's going to teach Williblad to paint as "punishment."

Chapter 14. Mayken. Brussels. January 1567 - September, 1567. Lazy Luciousland.

William goes through the motions of arresting a few people for the Beeldenstorm and in fact has it in for Williblad. Williblad moves back to Brussels with Niay and takes up residence in a shed in Bruegel's garden. Bruegel actually tries to teach him to paint, but Williblad doesn't have the patience. Williblad and Niay get jobs working for a Javanese-owned inn in the harbor basin.

Bruegel uses Franckert for a model for the *Dance of the Bride*. Williblad attempts to seduce Mayken again, but she doesn't give in. Little Peter is two. Old Bengt shows up and tells how William the Sly is leaving for Germany.

A fortieth birthday party for Peter is held in June, 1567, aboard Franckert's ship, named *Luilekkerland* after a fairy-tale land of plenty. Ortelius announces that Alva has set out for the Netherlands through the Alps. Niay's Javanese restaurant makes the food and then puts on a "*wayang kulit*" shadow play.

Franckert gives Bruegel a commission for a painting of the fairy-tale *Luilekkerland*. Peter also engages to paint *The Conversion of Paul* for Marcus Noot, a city father and friend of old Mayken. The *Luilekkerland* is a warning of how fearful and paralyzed and indolent the people are. The *Conversion* is a wish for a miracle.

Alva's troops march into Brussels on August 22, 1567, a year after the

Beeldenstorm. The Maykens, the Peters, Williblad, Niay and Waf are watching from a street corner. Waf runs out and barks at the soldiers. A horseman kills him with his sword.

Chapter 15. Bruegel. Brussels. June 5, 1568. The Beekeepers.

There are two soldiers quartered in B's studio, Pedro and Jose. Mayken, is hugely pregnant. Today is the day when Peter's "brother" de Hoorne is to get his head cut off in the public square called the Grand' Place. Little Peter hears about it and is upset.

Bruegel has just finished his three new peasant pictures: *The Peasant Wedding*, and the *Peasant Dance* for a patron in Amsterdam, and the *Peasant and the Birdsnester* for his old friend Franckert. Carlos and Jose have vandalized the *Peasant and the Birdsnester*, they've drawn a crude white penis on top of the main figure's codpiece. Bruegel has a big attack of pain in his stomach. He repairs the picture and decides to try and scare Carlos and Jose so they won't want to stay in the attic anymore. Bengt, Williblad and Niay will help him.

Bruegel and his friends go to see Graaf de Hoorne get his head chopped off in the Grand' Place. Bruegel is impressed by the heads being on display and then being put in baskets by hooded Inquisitors to send to King Phillip. He has a vision of Christ. The heads are put in baskets that look like beehives. Bruegel thinks about beekeepers who wear baskets over their heads, forms an image for a drawing.

Back at the house, Mayken is going into labor for her new baby. Bruegel, Williblad and Bengt hide in the store-room in the corner of the attic. Niay waylays Carlos and Jose, talks to them, flirts with them, gets them to drink a bottle of gin with a great deal of ground nutmeg in it so as to make them delirious. Niay drinks the stuff too.

Niay and the soldiers go upstairs. Jose collapses, but Niay starts to have sex with Carlos. Williblad beams a scary shadow onto the attic ceiling and then Bruegel comes out wearing the old Turkish outfit of Master Coecke. Jose runs downstairs to the basement. But Niay is so delirious she thinks it really is a ghost and asks Carlos to save her. Williblad has to strangle Carlos to keep Bruegel from being killed. At that moment, Mayken gives birth to baby Jan.

Bengt and Williblad seal Carlos's body up in a crate like the paintings. The next morning Jose's memory is hazy. He thinks Carlos has deserted. Bruegel and his friends put the four boxes aboard Franckert's ship *Luilekkerland*, which is in the harbor, and the Captain, a friend, agrees to throw the box with Carlos into the open sea.

Back at home, Bruegel finds the Walloon sergeant with Jose and a new soldier to quarter, a man named Miguel. Though there's no suspicion on Bruegel, they've decided to arrest Williblad and Niay: Williblad for more persecution for his role in the image-breaking, and Niay for possibly being a witch.

Williblad and Niay manage to hide themselves below the decks of the *Luilekkerland* before they get arrested.

Chapter 16. Mayken. Brussels. January 1569 - September, 1569. The Magpie on the Gallows.

In **January**, Bruegel is weak and out of money. Marcus Noot visits to announce a little victory: on January 18, 1569, the Brussels city council relieved B of having to

quarter Spanish soldiers. Corporal Miguel was something of a spy, given to nosing through Bruegel's papers. Noot has some money for Peter as well. He doesn't really expect B to actually paint the building of the Willebroek Canal.

Early in February Ortelius arrives for a visit. Bruegel is working on the *Parable of the Blind* and the *Misanthrope*. It seems Williblad has written, he's working for Granvelle again, who is now the Viceroy of Naples. Niay is with him. Williblad has arranged a commission for any two paintings at all that Brueghel cares to paint.

Ortelius has brought back the *Beekeepers*. Cock and the others are scared to publish it because it seems political, and to make it even more suspect-seeming, there happens to be a new Calvinist tract called *The Beehive of the Holy Romish Church*.

Bruegel says he was thinking of Williblad when he drew the youth climbing the tree to safety in the *Beekeepers* image. He writes a proverb on the *Beekeepers* to muddy the water: "He who knows the nest knows it, he who has it has it." His hidden meaning is that the Family of Love are the ones who *know* the nest, while the oppressors *have* it.

Later in February, Bruegel paints *Magpie on the Gallows* for Mayken. But he pushes himself too hard, vomits up blood again, and collapses.

In the first days of **September**, Bruegel burns some savage drawings he's made of the Spaniards. He dies September 5, 1569. His last words are, "I'm ready."

In the final scene, Mayken, baby Jan and Little Peter are alone in Peter's studio, looking at his easel and a few of his paintings on the walls. The paintings are like pools you can dive into, like wells. After a bit, Little Peter walks across the room and picks up his father's brush.

Sources

Books and Articles to Look For

Look at Ludovico Guicciardini Account of the Lowlands again.
Try and get hold of Ortelius's letters.

Mapmaking

[Campbell] Tony Campbell, Early Maps

Abbeville Press, NY 1981.

Has some of Ortelius's maps.

Map of Iceland (1585) includes fourteen fierce beasts in the water near Iceland, especially on the south, and the beasts are in fact lettered, with a description of each one printed on the back of the map. One "sleepeth twelve houres together hanging by his two long teeth upon some rocke or cliffe," another "hath bene seene to stand a whole day together upright upon his taile . . . and greedily seeketh after mans flesh," another "hast his head bigger than all the body beside" and has "many very strong teeth" ideal for making chessmen, which satisfies one of the Icelanders obsessions. Also has a lot of bears on ice floes. The creatures are really whales, and walruses. Sows has having two spouts usually, also big snaggle teeth and often big paws. He got the monsters from Olaus Magnus's large map of the Northern Regions of about 1535.

Map of the Azores, 1584. Red paint around the stonemason label, yellow banners, blue-green tint in the sea, sea printed with dots, a cartouche with verdigris entablature and gargoyles.

Ortelius liked making maps on classical and biblical themes. 1586, Map illustrating the life of Abraham. Has cartouches with sacrifice of Isaac, Sodom an Gomorrah, etc. Mountains like little bumps.

[Dekker] Dekker and van der Krogt, Globes from the Western World.

Zwemmer (London 1993).

Johann Schöner, active in Nuremberg in 1533 made the first printed earth globe in 1515, sky globe in 1517. Idea of printing the map on gores, then gluing it to a globe. Schoener had a printing shop in Bamberg. Used woodblocks he cut himself. First to make a terrestrial and celestial the same size. Sold them in Nuremberg. Taught math there. Set up workshop there, 1530s. Inspired the Low Lands.

Gemma Frisius of Louvain started making globes about 1536. Wrote about instruments like astrolabes and armillary spheres.

Pair of globes by Gerard Mercator, 16 in diameter, made in Louvain. Sold his globes in pairs, matching set of terrestrial (1541) and celestial (1551) globes. Got the idea from Johann Schoener, active in Nuremberg, 1533 From then globes were always sold in pairs. Mercator's the best so far. First with correct loxodromes or rhumb lines. Demands so great that orders couldn't be rapidly filled. Paste on the gores, color by hand, varnish. Plantin asked 12 guilders for a pair of Gemma Frisius globes with wooden

meridians, 16 guilders with brass meridians, 24 guilders for a pair of Mercator globes with brass meridians.

Luxury manuscript (non printed) globes also existed.

Mercator's celestial globe has all the stars and classical looking engraved gods and beasts for the constellations. Sagittarius is a centaur, Capricorn is a goat with a fish tail, Aquarius is falling to one side, pouring out a jar of water, a man. Pisces a fish, Pegasus a very large horse. Auis or Cygnus a big swan. Delphinus an Ortelius style fish.

[Karrow] Robert W. Karrow, *Mapmakers of the Sixteenth Century and Their Maps: Bio-Bibliographies of the Cartographers of Abraham Ortelius, 1570.*

Info on Ortelius and Mercator.

[Robinson] Arthur Robinson, *Sale & Morrison, Elts of Cartography*

(Wiley 1978)

The medieval maps were called “**T in O**” maps because they were designed with the Jerusalem in the center, and with the East at the top, surmounted by an island of Paradise. The Mediterranean was the upright of the T and the Don on the left and the Nile on the right were the crossbars. The land hung down on left and right, Europe (Japeth) on the left, Asia (Shem) on top, Africa (Ham) on right. And a circular river Oceanus went around it. Note that it looks also like an embryo in the womb.

In the “Age of Discovery” (15th and 16th C) mapping expanded.

The printing Press was invented in Europe about 1450. Was still pretty new technology for B. The maps were embellished with scrolls, compass roses.

Maps of 16th C embellished with Stonemason things and leather things like straps.

Historical

[Unknown], *Book about Ortelius*

I Xeroxed a bunch of this book at Stanford and forgot to note who it's by. It's a book about Ortelius and has a good introduction about his life.

Ortelius developed his map book for Gilles Hoofman (1521-1581), the richest and most powerful Antwerp merchant. Possibly I should replace Fugger with Hoofman. Hoofman's assistant Jan Raedemaeker tells about O coming up with the book of maps.

There is an edition of Ortelius's correspondence, J. Hessel, *Abraham Ortelii Epistulae* (Cambridge 1887). This has, in particular, a letter to his cousin Emanuel van Meteren in London about the “Image-breaking storm in Antwerp.”

O published a monograph about two rare coins.

This book says O didn't actually get big-time into maps until 1563. So maybe I shouldn't have him doing maps so much in the early chapters. But yet O joined the St. Luke's guild as an “illuminator of maps” already in 1547..

There is a terrific painting by Hans Francken II of “An art collection, probably that of Abraham Ortelius”. It has paintings, sculptures, and some unusual shells like cone

shells and tritons.

[Geyl], P. *The Revolt of the Netherlands (1555-1609)*

Williams and Norgate (London 1932).

Good map of the Netherlands, showing the linguistic dividing line, horizontal, just below Brussels.

He distinguishes some names for geography and languages. *Netherlands* is the whole region. *Netherlandish* is the adjective form. *Netherlandish* began being used for their Dutch-like language in mid-16th Century, but the word *Flemish* was more common in the southern part of the Netherlands. The language can also be called *Nederduitsch* as opposed to *Hoogduitsch*, which is German. *Flemish* also means a resident of Flanders. Foreigners often used *Flemish* in the sense of *Netherlandish*, to include Brabanders and Hollanders.

He mentions the big Land Jubilee of Antwerp in 1561.

P. 93. "It is a small matter, or revenge, thus to have destroyed the images, which are only a species of idolatry, since the ecclesiastics have done us a thousand times more hurt and hindrance through their persecutions which broke those statues which God Himself had made and for which He once shed His precious blood, namely our dearest friends, fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers." -- Remark by a Calvinist of Ghent about the image-breaking.

After the Beeldenstorm, Margaret signed an Accord of August 23 to allow more freedom, but then she started taking it back. Orange wanted to fight, but Egmont wouldn't go along. They couldn't get the League of Nobles back together.

Orange refused a special new oath of allegiance to the King, but Egmont signed it, Feb 1567.

Orange tried to raise money among the Calvinists, but they wouldn't come up with much. Some Calvinists had troops and wanted to take over Antwerp, and got massacred outside it. Orange made his people stay inside Antwerp, and people were mad at him. He gave up and left for Dillenburg in April, 1567.

Meanwhile Philip had appointed the Duke of Alva to come. He raised regiments of Spanish infantry in Italy. "Italian sodomites and Spanish scum."

Philip wanted to crush the Netherlands and get rid of the nobility entirely. Margaret considered resisting Alva, but let him come. The people were passive. Alva said he was there only to help. As soon as Hoorne came back from Germany, he and Egmont were arrested, September 8.

Special court to punish those who had caused the commotions of they ear past.

Among the members of the Blood council was a De Vargas, who'd been sentenced for dishonor in Spain. Alva loved his zeal, a brilliant contrast to the hesitations and the juridical scrupulousness displayed by the natives. De Vargas knew no French and bullied his colleagues and victims in bad Latin. "non curamus privilegios vestros." Alva: "Everyone must be made to live in constant fear of the roof breaking down over his head. The towns must be punished for their rebelliousness with the loss of their privileges; a godly sum must be squeezed out of private persons; more tax."

Many emigrations. The "Iron Duke."

On June 5, Egmont and Hoorne were executed at the Great Market Square.

Orange wanted to invade.

Alva proposed a 10% tax on every exchange. Called "The Tenth Penny."

[Grierson] Edward Grierson, *The Fatal Inheritance*

Philip II and the Spanish Netherlands.

Grierson seems very pro-royalty, and against the Protestants; he makes light of the Inquisition, belittles the death-toll. Tries to make Alva sympathetic! I don't find this book congenial.

Philip was born in 1527. He got a bad reputation when he was 19, roistering in Brussels, this would have been 1546.

Giovanni Pietro Caraffa, Pope Paul IV, hated Spain. Was 80 when pope! He called Spaniards "a race accursed of God, the spawn of Jews and Moors, the dregs of the earth."

A good description of Brussels, quoted from [Motley] is on p. 44.

Popes: Paul III 1534, Julius III 1550, Marcellus II 1555, Paul IV 1555 -1566.

p. 51. Margaret was a "bon viveur" (i.e. alcoholic) with gout.

William was the Sly, not the Silent.

The Spanish troops left January, 1561. A few months later came the plan for the new bishoprics. Inquisition wasn't as rough in Antwerp, they lightened up for the sake of trade.

William of Orange married Princess Anna of Saxony in May, 1561, or 1562?

The Walloon south Catholics reacted to the Beeldenstorm. The "leveling" nature of the riots. Egmont even persecuted heretics in Flanders.

In Feb 1567 there were rumors of a paralyzing blow by Spain against Netherlands to come. Margaret demanded a new oath of loyalty. Egmont said yes, Orange and Hoogstraaten said no.

Calvinists called "synod" at Antwerp and declared right to resist.

Orange let John Marnix of Tholouse die outside the Antwerp walls. He said he kept the gates closed lest the Regent's troops come IN. The Calvinists felt he stopped them from going OUT. This happened March 12 - 15. The rebellion sputtered. Orange resigned on April 1567.

[Guicciardini], Ludovico. *Description de la cite d'Anver.*

Anvers 1920

Also known as: *The description of the low Countries and of the Provinces thereof London*, 1953. [Another source gives *The Description of the Low Countreys* as London 1593.] Description of all the Lowlands, edited by Paule Ciselet and Marie Delcourt (Brussels, 1943)

Antwerp is the "port, fairground and marketplace of all Europe, because of which there is a coming and going, a loading and unloading, a chaos insomuch as an infinite number of persons, outsiders as well as those from the locality come together here and work." they make "woolens, linens, tapestries, Turkish rugs, fustian, armor, munitions, leathers, colors, earthenware, gold plate silver plate, trimmings of metals, silk, cotton, wool, velvets, satins, damasks, refine metals, wax, sugar, produce cinnabar."

[Jardine], Lisa. *Worldly Goods*

(W. W. Norton, 1996).

She focuses on the materialism of the Renaissance, on how many good things are shown in their paintings, the paintings thus a bit like yuppie catalogs. p. 178 has a passage from Ortelius about how authors don't get paid for their books, only get gift copies. p. 219 has a Titian portrait of Philip II. Tells about Plantin's 8-page kiss-ass book for Philip. p. 385 talks about Pieter Coecke van Aelst's book of woodcuts, *The Customs and the Habits of the Turks*, (Antwerp 1553). Says Philip came to the Netherlands in 1549, and Coeck did a tapestry of it. Charles V kicked ass in Tunis and had a dozen lavish tapestries made, billed to Maria of Hungary, given to Charles V, who gave them to Philip II. All were Habsburgs.

[Kossmann and Mellink] *Texts concerning the Revolt of the Netherlands*

(Cambridge U. Press, 1974).

Lots of letters from Philip II to the duchess of Parma, other letters too.

What a sleazy mealy-mouthed murdering prick Phillip was!

"What is at stake is ... respect for our holy Catholic faith ..." And p. 54, in a letter of 1565, "As to the proceedings of the inquisitors, you must endeavor to support them... I cannot but be very much affected by the lampoons which are continually spread abroad and posted up in the Netherlands without the offenders being punished. I pray you ... this does not remain unpunished." "since the men condemned to die advance to execution not in silence, but as martyrs dying for a cause you should consider whether they ought not to be executed in secret in some way or other (though it is true that a public execution also serves to set an example)..."

A good account by a Calvinist about the image-breakers. He talks about "the religion" meaning Calvinism. He imagines that God did most of the image-breaking, for how else could it have happened so fast?

[Mander], Carel van. *Schilder Boek*

[Motley] *John Lothrop Motley, Rise of the Dutch Republic, Volume 1.*

DH186.5 .M7 1898a

Everyone says this is very over-the-top in terms of being pro-revolution. Need to look at this one. Then I saw Sheckley mention it as something one of his detective characters was reading! Had to get through interlibrary loan, as SJSU lost their copy.

Part II of Volume One is Administration of the Duchess Margaret, 1559-1567, exactly the period that I care about. Vol 1, Part II, Chap 1, starting p. 195 has a sketch of Margaret and of Granvelle.

Administration of the **Duchess Margaret**, 1559-1567. Margaret. The natural daughter (bastard) of Charles V and his first. Her mother was a Van der Ghenst of Oudenarde, was adopted and brought up by the distinguished house of Hoogstraaten. She was honorably acknowledged, and was in the care of the Emperor's sister Mary, the Queen Dowager of Hungary. "The huntress-queen communicated her tastes to her youthful niece, and Margaret soon outrivalled her instructress. The ardor with which she pursued the stag." At 12, she was married to the degenerate Alexander de Medici, a

worn-out debauchee of 27, nephew of the pope or perhaps the pope's bastard. He was assassinated by a kinsman Lorenzo de Medici within a year. A few years later she was married to Ottavio Farnese, nephew of Paul the Third, she was 20, he was 13. Was averse to him, but after he went off to war, got wounded and came back, she grew fond of him. Ottavio was made the Duke of Parma and Piacenza. They had twins. She was imperious. Philip made her regent of Netherlands to conciliate the Duke, who really wanted something else, that Philip take a Spanish citadel out of Piacenza.

She was 37 when she came to the Netherlands. "She felt a greater horror for heretics than for any other species of malefactors, and looked up to her father's bloody edicts as if they had been special revelations from on high. She was most strenuous in her observance of Roman rites, and was accustomed to wash the pussies [WHOOOPS, I mean, feet] of twelve virgins every holy week, and to endow them in marriage afterwards." p. 197.

Her personal appearance was masculine. "The famous moustache upon her upper lip..." p. 198 Subject to sever attacks of gout, rare in a woman. Maybe she was an alcoholic. Mad Meg looks like one.

Drawing of her in Motley shows a woman with a big ruff makes her head look like its sitting on a platter and ruffs at her cuffs the same.

She had a state council: Berlaymont, Viglius, Arras, William of Orange, and Egmont. She also had a Consulta, a secret inner committee that did the real ruling. The Consulta was Viglius, and Antoine Perronet, a.k.a. Granvelle.

Alexander Farnese was the son of Margaret of Parma, could have been a collector, though didn't show up till 1578. Besieged Antwerp in 1584, which may be how the late works got to Naples.

Viglius van Aytta van Zuichem was very anti-heretic. Helped write the notorious Charles V Edict of Blood of 1550. Was almost Phillip's tutor but instead was a professor at Inglestadt. Studied at Louvain, Paris, and Padua. "For a common person to shut the door and to pray to Him who seeth in secret was, in his opinion, to open wide the gate of destruction for all the land, and to bring in the Father of Evil at once to fly away with the whole population, body and soul. . . . 'Those who [pray in private] have a contempt for all religion, and are neither more nor less than atheists. This vague, fireside liberty should be by every possible means extirpated; therefore did Christ institute shepherds to drive his wandering sheep back into the fold of the true Church; thus only can we guard the lambs against he ravening wolves, and prevent them being carried away from the flock of Christ to the flock of Belial. Liberty of religion or of conscience, as they call it, ought never to be tolerated.' " p. 199. His real motive was, says Motley, that he hoped to get a fat bishopric(k) and be one of those shepherds, hauling in the golden fleeces with his crook.

William of Orange was a Catholic. "It was only tanners, dyers, and apostate priests who were Protestants at that day in [1559] the Netherlands." He led an easy joyous luxurious princely life. "Banquets, masquerades, tournaments, the chase . . ." p. 207. Regal hospitality. The splendid Nassau palace in Brussels was always open. The reputation of his table. Feasting continued night and day. "From early morning till noon, t he breakfast-tables were spread with wines and luxurious viands in constant succession, to all comers and at every moment. The dinner and supper were daily banquets for a

multitude of guests.” Highest nobles came, but men of lower degree were welcomed with a charming hospitality. Winning address and gentle manners of the Prince. Graceful , familiar, caressing and yet dignified. Good breeding.

Running low on money. Much in debt. “ ‘My greatest difficulty, he adds, ‘as usual, is on account of the falconers.’ p. 209. The knightly sport of falconry. When in the country, the consoled himself by taking every day a heron in the clouds. His falconers cost him annually 1500 florins. Total debts of maybe a million florins.

Credible military commander. He was called William the Silent, but wasn’t that silent, really.

Granvelle plotted to have him murdered.

Cardinal Granvelle, Anthony Perrenot, Bishop of Arras. Chief of the Consulta used by the Duchess Regent. Father was a minister of Emperor Charles. Anthony was eldest of 13 children. Born in 1517. Studied at Dole, Padua, Paris, Louvain. Spoken 7 languages by age 20. Canon of Liege at age 23. His father got the rich bishopric of Arras for him. Emperor Charles made him a councilor of state in 1543.

Ready-witted, smooth and fluent, fertile in expedients, courageous resolute. Good at managing. Could govern under appearance of obeying. Exquisite tact. Chameleon. When with Philip, he aced sullen and hesitating, but endowed with his own eloquence. Corresponded a lot. A 40 page letter to Phillip, who loved business epistles.

Always called Phillip “the master”. He was greedy. Supposedly his grandfather was a blacksmith, though he denied this.

Discussion of Spanish Inquisition on p. 277. Condemned man was attired in a yellow robe without sleeves embroidered all over with black figures of devils, and a paper conical miter hat was placed on his head, and on the hat a picture of a person being burned with imps dancing around. Tongue gagged. Head shaved and crown scraped with bits of glass to remove the oil of his consecration, if a priest. Charles V started an Inquisition in the Netherlands.

One of the most notorious inquisitors was Peter Titlemann, p. 283. Grotesque terrible goblin, careering through the countryside alone, smiting peasants on head with a club, dragging people from their beds torturing strangling, etc. The sheriff was called “Red-Rod”, asked Titlemann how he could get away with it? He said, “ I seize only the innocent, who make no resistance and let themselves be taken like lambs.” A crime to read the Bible. A tapestry weaver burned alive for copying some hymns from a book printed in Geneva. A merchant burned for his opinions, an idiot whom the condemned man had fed found the half-burnt skeleton of the heretic and carried it to the burgomaster and magistrate, threw it before them, “There murderers! Ye have eaten is flesh, now eat his bones!”

A heretic , a velvet manufacturer, on Christmas day went to the Cathedral, snatched the consecrated host, broke it into bits, “do you take this thing to be Jesus Christ?” threw fragments on the ground and trampled them. He was dragged on a hurdle with mouth closed with a gag, right and hand foot burned and twisted off between hot irons. Tongue torn out by roots. Arms and legs fastened behind back, hung by a chain over a slow fire and roasted, p. 286.

Granvelle was hated more and more. Constant butt of the Rhetoric Chambers who made “homespun poetry and street farces out of raw material of public sentiment.”

Made fun of monks. Authorities wanted to repress. Granvelle forbade them to ridicule the Scriptures. Made fun of the newly appointed bishops. Poems pasted on walls. farces enacted in every street. Someone gave Granvelle a drawing as a hen on a brood of eggs hatching bishops. Devil hovering over Granvelle's head saying "This is my beloved Son."

Nobles liked to go to masquerades dressed as priests or monks. They put foxtails on their hats to symbolize that soon they would hunt down the old fox Granvelle.

[Murray], John J., Antwerp in the Age of Plantin and Brueghel

(University of Oklahoma Press, 1970)

High and extremely thick walls, white stone with terraced brick tops. Seven gates and a moat. Doric gates, elaborate, magnificent masonry. Walls extend along the river as well.

Scheldt has tide of 12 feet.

Antwerp a "magnificent mass of pointed gables, spires, and turrets." Bell tower and steeples of the Church of Our Lady.

Very crowded. About 13,000 houses and 9 people per house.

"Street of the Stews" has bathhouses, taverns, and brothels for both sexes.

Lean years from drought in 1545, 1556, 1565.

Diverse languages, sailors, porters, vendors, a Babel of tongues.

Churchmen, thieves, ladies, fishwives, nuns, prostitutes. Widespread crime.

Charles V abdicated in 1555, putting Philip II in charge.

At fair time there were booths in the Great Market Place, or *Grootemarktplatz*.

Glove sellers in corner of churchyard by Our Lady had an area called *Handschoenmarkt*.

South Germany had copper, silver, quicksilver. They traded a lot with Antwerp, particularly buying spices. Nürnberg or Nuremberg is in Southeast Germany. Many High German merchants became citizens of Antwerp, transferring headquarters from Germany to Antwerp. Fuggers was the name of a rich family. The Lisbon-Antwerp-South German spice trade moved back to Lisbon in mid century

As many as 500 ships came in on a single tide, laden with grain and herring.

Biggest trade center in the world. 1000 freight wagons a week.

They didn't have permanent stores, mostly sold things through fairs.

Antwerp mirrors in elaborate frames. Flemish workmanship in stained glass.

Saint Lucas Guild for artists, engravers, printers, and painters.

Plantin's publishing house was De Gulden Passer "The Golden Compasses". He was in Saint Lucas Guild. Only became a printer in 1555, till then he was a leatherworker and bookbinder. "In 1555 he was delivering a richly wrought leather case to Gabriel de Cayas, secretary to Philip II. As he crossed the Meier at twilight, some drunken hoodlums mistook him for a guitar player against whom they had a grudge. They stabbed Plantin in the shoulder, nearly killed him. On recovery unable to handle gilding tools and gave up bookbinding for printing." p. 75

In 1547, Peter Schuddemate of the *Violet* performing group, or Chamber of Rhetoric, was beheaded in Antwerp for writing heretical *spelen van sinne*. Violet founded by members of Saint Lucas Guild. Performed at Land Jubilees or *Landjewel*. The biggest was in 1561, and the organizer, Antoine van Straelen got beheaded for it

1567. Dramatic historical accounts based on the bible, lives of saints, morality plays, farces. “Everyman” was Flemish! Denouncing Alba or Rome led to beheading.

“In 1460 the Guild of St. Luke built a pand in the churchyard of Our Lady where art works were sold until 1540, at which time the works were moved to shops over the New Bourse, or New Stock Exchange. Art works were also sold at the home of the painter or at the Guild Hall. Workmanship and materials were closely scrutinized ... one reason Flemish paintings have endured so well...” p. 152 Works were often purchased sight unseen, cargoes were assembled in bulk for shipment to Spain. Almost like Tijuana velvet Elvises.

When the Church wants to put pressure on a feudal Lord, they *interdict* his manor or his fiefdom and nobody there can have any sacraments. The peasants complain so much that the Lord gives in.

Traders: Flemish had wool, Italians had silk, spice, perfume, Germans had fur, lumber, stone.

Streets of Antwerp have cobblestones. Stores: Druggist, tailor, barber. There’s so little land inside a city wall that the dwellings are up to 6 stories high.

In a craft you start as an unpaid apprentice to a master, then you become a paid journeyman, then after you produce a “masterpiece” the other masters say you can be a master too.

National Dictionary of Biography, “Ortelius”

Biography of Ortelius (1527-1598) mentions that his “Album Amicorum” is preserved at Pembroke College, Cambridge.

[Parker], Geoffrey. Spain and the Netherlands 1559-1659

(1979, Enslow Pub., N. J.)

Book of essays, mostly about later times. Philip was preoccupied with war against the Ottomans in the Mediterranean, which is one reason why he was always so slow to respond to events in the Netherlands. Removed the troops 1561, partly because he needed them elsewhere. Granvelle was removed in March, 1564. In 154, Egmont when to Spain to ask for more freedom, both political and religious. Egmont left court in March 1565, thinking his requests would be approved. It was 17 October 1565 that Philip finally said, no, you’re not getting any of it. This was his “Letters form the Segovia Woods.” He’d been busy worrying about the Turks invading Malta. This is when the nobles went to see Margaret and she called them *gueux*. In 1566 Margaret moderated the heresy laws. Sultan’s offensive began in 1566. The *Beeldenstorm* or wave of iconoclasm was in August of 1566. In 29, November 1566, Philip decided to send Alva at head of an army of 60,000 to the Netherlands.

[Sybesma], Jetske, “The Reception of Bruegel’s Beekeepers:

A Matter of Choice,” Art Bulletin, Sept 1991, Vol 73, pp. 467-478.

Discusses meaning of the drawing. Why drawn and not engraved? Probably viewed as too risky in terms of being thought heretical, particularly after the publication of Marnix’s tract about the Church as a Beehive in 1569.

This book is called *De Biënkorf der H. Roomsche Kercke* in 1569, with the

“beehive” also spelled “*Bijenkorf*” in 1858, and spelled “*Byencorf*” in 1659.

She has a fairly unconvincing argument that the saying written on the picture has two missing words. The writing is believed to really be by Bruegel.

Makes the point that the church in the background doesn’t have a cross on it, so could be Protestant.

The beekeepers are washing out the hives? The boy in the tree is hiding from them. He SEES the nest, in fact he sees two kinds of nests (Catholic and Protestant), and the inquisitors think they HAVE it.

Says that in the *Peasant and the Birdsnester*, the guy in the tree is holding a mature bird. (It does look pretty big.) She thinks the proverb for this one should be “You can see by the nest what kind of bird is in it.”

She mentions that in 1568, “goose” started meaning gueux, because William crossed the Meuse to invade, she quotes a folk song about the goose swimming the river.

The big plant is probably a plantain, also known as *Weegbree*. Marnix’s book came out in January 1669.

The picture is cut on the right so the date is MDLXV*, which could be 1565-1568. Sybesma thinks the cut was deliberate so that nobody could prove the picture was drawn AFTER the image-breaking of MDLXVI, leaving most of the date however so everyone could see it was BEFORE MDCLXIX, the date of Marnix’s book. This is pushing it, I think.

[Wilford], John. The Mapmakers

(Knopf 1981).

Good stuff on medieval maps and Prester John.

Literature

[Erasmus], In Praise of Folly, 1511.

Erasmus was an Augustinian monk in Rotterdam. IPOF written in 1509 for his friend Thomas More (viz. spissitude). “If a philosopher wants to be a father, it’s Folly he has to call on.” (to be fond and foolish). “The older a Dutchman is, the stupider he is: *Hoe ouder, hoe botter Hollander.*” War is the greatest folly, it does more harm than good to both sides. “It’s the spongers, pimps, robbers, murderers, peasants, morons, debtors, and that sort of scum of the earth who provide the glories of war, not the philosophers and their midnight oil.” “Let’s compare the lot of a wise man with that of a clown. ..a paragon of wisdom ... who has frittered away all his boyhood and youth in acquiring learning, has lost the happiest part of his life in endless wakeful nights, toil and care, never tastes a drop of pleasure ... thrifty, impoverished, miserable, grumpy, harsh, disagreeable, pale and thin, sickly and bleary-eyed, prematurely white-haired and senile...a splendid picture of a wise man.” p. 57. A kind of Erasmian self-parody.

Alchemists searching land and sea for a “fifth element.”

With indulgences, you can’t buy souls out of hell, but can buy off time in purgatory, p. 64

“The worst pleases the most people, since the majority of men are prone to folly. An artist is all the more pleased with himself and them ore generally admired the less

skilled he is.” p. 68

“statues carved in stone and colored with paint ... when the stupid and thick-headed give their devotion to images instead of to the divinities they represent.” p. 75

“If you could look down from the moon, as Menippus once did, on the countless hordes of mortals, you’d think you saw a swarm of flies or gnats quarrelling amongst themselves, fighting, plotting, stealing, playing, making love, being born, growing old, and dying. It’s hard to believe how much trouble and tragedy this tiny little creature can stir up, short-lived as he is...” p. 77

Types of folly. Schoolmasters hold first place. “famished and dirty as they are amidst their hordes of students in their schools...there they grow old with toil and deaf with the clamor, wasting away in the stench and filth. Yet ... in their own eyes they are first among men, and enjoy ...[to]...terrify the trembling crowd with threatening voice and looks...venting their fury in any way they please like the famous ass of Cumae [reference to Aesop’s ass in a lion’s skin] Meanwhile the squalor they live in is sheer elegance to them...they get even more happiness out of their remarkable belief in their own learning.” p. 79

Philosophers boast they can see “ideas, universals, separate forms, prime matters, quiddities, ecceties” Quiddities or essences defined the nature of a particular object whether or not they existed. Ecceties were individual natures distinct from universal nature. p. 85.

“Could God have taken on the form of a gourd? If so, how could a gourd have preached sermons, performed miracles, and been nailed to the cross?” p. 87

The apostles did not know that, “a mediocre drawing sketched in charcoal on a wall should be worshipped in the same manner as Christ himself, provided that it had tow finders outstretched, long hair, and three rays sticking out from the halo fastened to the back of its head.” p. 91

[Hofmann], Gert. *The Parable of the Blind*.

(Fromm 1985.)

A Samuel Beckett type book about the blind men Bruegel used for models. Bruegel, barely appears, just sits off at a distance making the blind men fall down over and over again so he can paint them.

“Reaching out in wider and wider circles over the table we slowly eat up every scrap and drink up every drop.”

Of Bruegel. “the people he’d pained for life earlier had all died or been killed, and ... to him it made a difference whether he painted someone who was still alive or a dead person.” p. 114 “it’s quite impossible to paint the picture the way it has to be painted, terrible and beautiful enough.” “it was something strange, the brush stroke.” “he paints, so as not to waste a moment, after his long doubtings, with speed and frenzy, not thinking of much else.”

The order of the men falling down, matching Bruegel’s picture is, from last to first, Malente, Bellejambe, two unnamed men called “we”, Slitman, and Ripolus. Kwaadtraag, Mooibeen?

[Rocquet], Claude-Henri, Bruegel: The Workshop of Dreams

(U. of Chicago Press 1991, translated from Denoël 1987).

Bruegel unknown like Shakespeare.

1) *Trip to Holland*. B visits Dirck Coornhert in Haarlem. Coornhert has ties with *Familia Caritatis*, which is led by Hendrick Niclaes in Antwerp. House full of books. Plantin's left Antwerp too. B at loose ends, wandering. Time is dripping away. Cows are superb animals! Different kinds of windmills, the ones where whole thing pivots or only the head pivots. B draws some of them.

2) *Antwerp*. He must have spoken in proverbs, inventing them when needed. Quips. Could tell long stories, too. Has a ship in most pictures. Hundreds of painters. "Schilderpand" was a pictures exchange. p.29 "a permanent exhibition held beneath the arcades, nearly spilling into the street." "pand" means "paw" or "premises". So it doesn't have to be outside, it would still be a Schilderpand when it's inside and upstairs above the Bourse. "Tapesierspand" was a tapestry exchange, built in 1552, a magnificent public building like the Butcher's house. Books, chased arms, helmets and breastplates, diamonds, jewelry, gold cups, Nuremberg watches set with rubies, looking glasses, rosaries, perfumes, laces, Venetian ceramic and crystal.

Charles allowed intellectual license in Antwerp because it was a rich port.

Maybe the "Brunswick Monogrammist" was Mayken Bessemers Verhulst? Seems like B became influenced by the Monogrammist only after his 1562 trip to Amsterdam.

"The world is a parable."

3) *Coeck*. Mayken Verhulst, Pieter Coeck van Aalst's second wife, excelled in the technique of tempera, which looked like tapestry, was a specialty of Mechelen. Bruegel became Pieter Coecke van Aalst's apprentice when he was 10 or 13, say in 1539, after Coecke got back from Turkey. "House was aswirl with tapestries, paintings, designs for facades and gardens, stained-glass windows" This is the year he published *The making of columns with their capitals and their proportions...* In 1549, Coeck designed some stage sets to celebrate Philip's visit. Mayken was in a miniature-painting contest with Anne Smijters. B did paint a miniature for Giulio Clovio in Italy, a "Tower of Babel" and a "Ships in a Storm."

Pieter Coeck built a mansion in Antwerp. Perhaps B helped build it while an apprentice, which was roughly 1540-1550, ages 13-23. Maybe it went up in 1545. Facades, courtyards, gardens porticos, Corinthian columns, long halls, marble staircases, hexagonal library, floor a mosaic of gold and grapevine in the music room. Friezes in the main courtyard. A palazzo. Painting by Floris of Neptune. Feast of fish and crabs. Peter supposedly sees Mary on her birthday, coming down the stairs, her long blonde hair, it's love? But she wasn't born till 1545, she'd be 0.

Good description of Four Winds on p. 49.

Maybe B was a boy in a village, and Coeck came by in his carriage and saw a drawing of B's of a horse on the barn wall and asked him to be apprentice, p. 57.

Antwerp had some foreign animals even in B's time, not a real zoo, but a lion and a rhino. Monkeys, parrots.

4) *Brussels*. Les Marolles crappy. Playing children. Under the execution hill. B joined St. Luke's Guild as schilder, same time as Hieronymus Cock, *corporen*

plaetsnyder (copperplate engraver). Supposedly St. Luke drew a portrait of Virgin Mary, that's why he's the saint for painters.

Speculates B born in Grote Brogel and Kleine Brogel villages near Bree in Kampen. Lesser and Greater Brogel, like the Fat and the Lean. "*Brogel*" means scrubland.

Imagines Mayken Verhulst encouraging Peter to come to Brussels, and giving him the little house on Hoogstraat, telling him to get apprentices. Brussels beautiful.

The colors call each other up, responding, like instruments tuning. "Grisaille is already a color"

5) *Triumph of Death*. "naked as a dog"

6) *Hoogstraat*. B added windows to top story for light and used this for his workshop. Had apprentices in a side room fixing paints. He had coins from Rome. He had a globe he'd constructed and painted at Ortelius's workshop for fun.

"His visit to yesterday's work is his morning prayer." Prays to Bosch, who seems to stand by him sometimes. Looks at his work by candlelight.

Knows melancholy.

7) *Icarus*. Youth seems a shining time only in retrospect.

8) *Mayken*. A wedding. Harvest time. Harvest of love, harvest of babies. Maybe B is the town guy in velvet.

B's own wedding dinner held at a country house belonging to Pieter Coeck in a wooded spot in Brussels.

9) *Jonghelinck*. The "Seasons" for hanging in a rotunda. The tasks of men beneath the heavens. B liked to move a small empty frame around in front of his big pictures to see if each little piece made a nice picture.

10) *Letter to Ortelius*. "After such a work ('The Seasons') a man feels he can die because he is sure he was not born in vain. It is a major piece of painting that sums up my life." Working on "Birdtrap" and "Adoration in the Snow."

11) *Religious war*. The hedge sermons. "John the Baptist".

12) *Beggars*. The iconoclasts. *Beeldenstorm*. Maybe B gave Ortelius the "Death of Mary" (or "Dormition") for Aug 15, 1565, feast of the Assumption. Ortelius's caption.

13) *Schlaraffenland*. B could place side by side what he saw and what he dreamed.

14) 1567. Prince of Orange. "Conversion of Paul". The troops a "horrible Babel of Spanish butchers and Italian sodomites." Ten thousand men on the march, mercenaries.

15) "*Parable of the Blind*". The hill behind B's house is a Golgotha with instruments of torture. No Spanish in the taverns. Still had puppet theaters. "The Misanthrope", he no longer has the heart to show a man laughing at the world's folly, it's become too much. "Cripples" has inscription on back, "*Cruepelen, hooch, dat u nering bern moeg.*" meaning "Cripple may it go better with you." Maybe "Cripples" is small because B was on the road, not in his workshop, maybe up in Antwerp looking for a ship to take him and his family to England, other painters had gone there, or to Amsterdam. Maybe Ortelius made the inscription on the back of "Cripples". Regarding "The Parable of the Blind," how terrible blindness would seem to a painter.

16) *Council of Blood*. Alba tortured a caretaker to find Bosch's "Garden of

Delights” hidden in the wall of William of Orange’s house. Egmont executed.

17) *The whale picture*.

18) *Death*. The magpie couple in “The Magpie on the Gallows” is like a peasant couple, like B and Mayken. “He is astonished to have come to the days preceding his death.” Deathbed vision of being actually at the Nativity. Strange how the workshop is empty and the easels and palettes are there just as before. The birds there just the same. He died September 5, 1569.

Rocquet wrote another Bruegel book, an art book, called *La Ferveur des Hivers*, Mame, 1993, which looks quite good, but is only in French.

[Timmermans], Felix. Peter Bruegel, or Droll Peter.

(Coward-McCann, NY 1930).

A novelistic life of Bruegel by a Flemish author.

Smells of flowers, of manure, butter and red radishes. Butter, stables, milk, bacon, honey. At the port: pitch, cinnamon, hides, pepper, nutmeg, fruit.

Devoured lines and colors with his eyes. Drawing came as naturally as breathing.

The Kermess with the Dragon Play, musicians, booth with toys, pancakes and rosaries, dances, bowlers, brawlers, drinkers. A fool with bells, beggars and cripples. Colored pennants.

Gleams of color from the cock on the manure pile and sputtering smithy fire.

Love heights: trees, mills, churches. Paints as if looking from an attic window.

Village of mud huts between the dark forest and the river. Eventually plundered by the wandering troops of Maarten van Rossum, with many murders.

Sick person’s table littered with shells filled with medicine, earthworms, and oil.

Crazy wanderer Motley Jim with a cloak covered inside and out with parchment pictures of saints, one for every day of the year.

Sensed something simple behind the outward aspect of things, something pure and bright.

B: White stockings, cock feathers and a spoon on his green hat, plum-colored breeches, red waistcoat and gray jacket with muttonleg sleeves. Others: Bright-brown coat, black breeches, blue waistcoat, dirty-white shirt with red stripes, yellow hair. Peasants: hobnailed boots, white cotton stockings darned at the knees, red waistcoats, shirts without collars, brown hands, velvet hats red or green.

B: Big brown eyes.

Workmen in distance like tiny dots, glistening curve of the river, galleons with taut sails. Shadows like dark emeralds on bright fields. Galleon sailing by field he works in.

Highest sail of windmill has gay, artificial birds fastened on it, you shoot at them with a bow and arrow.

Table groaning beneath earthen and pewter jugs and pitchers, geese, calves’ kidneys, roast pigs, pigs’ feet, calves’ heads, sausage, hams, bacon, legs of mutton, carps, partridges, woodsnipe, rabbits.

Loud hum of bagpipes and shrill sound of fifes like buzzing of large insects.

Steady fine drizzle.

Always banners and processions in the big city. Gay shells lie along the shore.

Row of willows. Two windmills.

Slept in barns, played bagpipe and begged. Fights between the beggars and the rich peasants. Woman bit into the bright red cheek of a scratched up fat face.

Freight-sleds in the snow, with bells on the horses.

Mayken wets Bruegel when he first holds her on his lap.

Alchemist Joseph in Antwerp lives in abandoned brewery. He says “beer is a vibration of matter that I value not for the sake of the beer but because of the number we live by numbers...” [Timmermans p. 150]

Stomach aches.

Only allowed to sign your pictures after you’re in the Guild.

Alpine peaks shining like gods in the heavens. Deep silence of the alps. The garment that God embroidered for the world.

After the innumerable “Last Suppers” and “Carrying the Cross” he saw the peasants’ feasts and the rabble at a public execution. Thought of Jesus in Brabant. Liked the landscape more. Missed the fog. In Rome he visits Ostia, the port, and gets on a ship to Palermo. But he missed Brabant. Came back in January t St. George’s Gate.

His traveling coat was heavy with his drawings.

Drinkers “drown the God within themselves.”

Brussels people are called “Cookie-eaters,” Antwerpens called “Sinjores” or “Great Lords.”

Frans Floris a big boozier, p. 233.

Books he read: Erasmus *Praise of Folly*, Plutarch, Thomas a Kempis, *Reynard the Fox* (*Reinicke Fuchs*), *Till Eulenspiegel*, *Legend of Beatrice*, Rabelais *Pantagruel*.

Chamber of Rhetoricians put on mystery plays or literary sessions. *Everyman*.

Wedding. Bride large and color of red cabbage, pregnant. Bridegroom elderly lean gray peasant.

Dream of cats means treachery.

Rosy Venuses and allegorical figures wandering beneath foliage golden-brown as syrup, wind fluttering in every garment and veil.

Of his art: “What nonsense in comparison with human hearts.”

Behind the house in Brussels was Cricket-Meadow Hill. Gallows black and threatening, dancing beneath it hands on hips, legs in air.

Calls his son Pieterke.

Plays ghost trick on apprentices with a sheet.

Sick: yellow skin, sunken cheeks, large eyes accustomed to feeling pain. Busied himself only with suffering, became pitifully thin. Older by the day, bent back, gray beard, mouth open in anguish.

Insists on being a rebel *and* a Catholic. Why should he have to choose.

Tells Mayken to burn the satirical drawings because “I should not want your white body to be roasted.”

[Frayne], Michael. *Headlong*.

Novel, Metropolitan imprint of Henry Holt, 1999.

A very clever book. A man finds the lost “Spring” panel of the Seasons cycle. He’s a meek little British academic, the painting is the house of a local landed gentleman,

he tries to con the gent out of the picture and ends up burning it. Lots of detours into extensive Bruegel scholarship.

Quotes Max Friedlander as saying how hard it is to describe a picture in detail, enjoining the “strictest economy of words,” limiting oneself to “aphoristic remarks, put together unsystematically.”

Mentions a Family of Love book called *Terra Pacis* (Land of Peace), Plantin, Antwerp 1555-1562. The critic H. Stein-Schneider, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, Feb 1986, claims Bruegel was influenced by this book. Same critic says Ortelius and Plantin were members of the Hendrik Niclaes family of love. Between 1550 and 1562, Plantin printed stuff for him. Sexual ascetics, by the way, despite the promising name.

Says Ortelius’s map of Salzburg in the *Theatrum* shows a little man, a walker, a *travailler*, striding along, supposedly a symbol of the traveler in *Tera Pacis*.

Talks about “The Calumny of Appelles,” a drawing. Suggests B’s old maid girlfriend was sending the officials, like Cardinal Granvelle, long letters in green ink full of wild allegations. Says B worried about gossip.

Has a lot of good quotes from Motley, I have to get that book. By 1565, nobody talked about anything but the inquisition. Says heretics were starting to be executed by drowning in their cells, how depressing.

[Yourcenar], Marguerite, *The Abyss*

(1968, translated 1976, The Noonday Press, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, NY)

For fear of fire, set a candle in a bowl of water. Colas Gheel working with Zeno on making a mechanical loom. Zeno talks about Epicurus’ atoms, falsity of Aquinas’s proofs of God. p. 24

Calvinists view Catholics as “idolaters.” p. 81. Hate “Satans in brocade vestments, golden calves and worldly idols.” p. 88

Woman wears a guimpes, sings popular madrigals and Church motets. p. 83

The year had four great Fairs. p. 86

A fop in a plumed bonnet and a striped codpiece, p. 93

plague traveled slowly from the Orient, to the sound of bells ringing. p. 93

roast venison and eel pie, p. 104

“the white blood passed in love,” p. 115

decency forbade to hang a woman, her skirts billowing in mid-air, p. 152

Walloon guards steel-helmeted and leather-breeched, p. 152

tax upon foodstuffs. p. 160

butter wrapped in a cabbage leaf, or a piece of shortbread, or a handful of chestnuts, p. 164

small stone bench. shutter hook. p. 183.

robe and cowl. p. 185

good rap about elements p. 187.

The Great Work of the alchemists. *Solve et Coagula*. p. 189 The Great work goes through the Black Phase, the White Phase, and finally the Red Phase.

The Tyrant is slaughtering our Patriots while claiming to avenge God. p. 199. Another nickname for Philip is the Foreigner, p. 201. If you confess then you are hung or beheaded instead of burned.

The image breakers. Stormed the church with hammers, smashing the statues.
Stole the embroidered skirts, cloak. The man is Han. The soldiers find the cloth and pearls in his house, beat his mother to death, he shoots them with a harquebus. p. 207
“you have too little faith to be a heretic,” p. 210
torturing Egmont’s steward to find Bosch picture, p. 216
the rabble were delighted at heart by the image breakers, p. 236
Greete, a name.
A gallows where a body had hung so long in sun wind rain it was like a comfortable old thing, like rags, wood, faded and gentle. p.256
broom stuck in roof’s dovecote means an inn is also a brothel. p. 257
A fancy cabinet with small twisted columns, decorated with jasper, ebony and ivory, p. 320

[Ungern-Sternberg], Alexander. The Breughel Brothers.

(Little, Brown, Boston 1854, translated from German by G. Henry Lodge).
Sternberg lived 1806-1868. Translator says this is a unique kind of book, common in Germany, but unknown in U.S., an “art novel.”

This is a very peculiar book. I skimmed through it rapidly at the New York Public Library. The author seems not to realize that there was a Peter Bruegel the Elder as well as a Younger. He writes about a “Lucas” and a “John Breughel,” as well as a Peter Kock (Master Coecke, I guess), and it comes out during the book that Lucas is the “mad painter Peter Breughel” who painted some Hell scenes, one of which seems to be *Dulle Griet*. It’s completely screwy. It’s also very gay, in the foppiest old-fashioned way, opens with a lingering description of the colors in the cheeks of a sleeping page, with Peter Kock (!) spreading apart the boy’s legs a bit so as to improve his pose. Tons and tons of talk about colors, which is kind of interesting. He speaks of the Netherlands as a not fully formed place where water and earth aren’t properly separated. I’d like to look at this again at my leisure, will try and get from interlibrary loan.

Art Books

[Barnouw], Adriaan, The Fantasy of Peter Brueghel

Lear Publishers, NY, 1947.
Pleasant book with copies of many engravings, printed with sepia backgrounds. Art history info is somewhat inaccurate, but he remarks that Jerome Cock’s father was friends with Bosch, and that maybe Jerome was named after him.

[Claessens], Bob and Jeanne Rousseau, Bruegel

(Alpine Fine Arts 1969.)
Big, beautifully printed book, originally from Fonds Mercator on 400th anniversary of B’s death.
Chapter 1) **The Sources.** The seven documents.
Chapter 2.1) **A Teeming World.** Humanism and the 16th C. Rise of the Burgher class. The religions were like this:
Catholic: the rulers and high nobles.

Lutheran: the lower nobles.
Calvinist: the bourgeoisie.
Anabaptist: the disenfranchised and desperate.
Chapter 2.2) **The Century of the Habsburgs.** Political History in B's life.
Chapter 3.1) **Myth and History.** B's life. Breda vs. Grote Brogel near Bree in Limburg.
Chapter 3.2) **The Heart and the Spirit.** B's politics and worldview.
Chapter 3.3) **The Eye and the Hand.** B's techniques.

[Delevoy], Robert, *Bruegel*

(Rizzoli, 1990). Translated from French.
P. 10, Oral tradition that B born in Ooievaarsnest in parish of Groote-Brögel. Farm belonged to the de Hornes family and perhaps Count Philippe de Hornes, subsequently one of the Duke of Alva's victims, notice the young peasant.
Thinks the 3 encyclopedia pictures were for Hans Franckert.
Dutch rhyme about the Blue Cloak, or *Blauwe Huyck*. "*Foukens die geern hier en daer den offer ontfangen/ Moeten hair mans de blau huycke omhangen.*" (The woman who gladly welcomes offers here and there/ Must hang the Blue Cloak around her husband.)
p. 88, 60,000 sentenced to death in 1565 or 1566, strict enforcement of the edicts.
p. 109. 17th C picture dealers claimed B painted "Triumph of Death" at the Emperor's personal cabinet, but historically speaking things indicate it was painted in Margaret of Parma's palace.

[De Wild], Martin. *The Scientific Examination of Pictures*

(G. Bell 1929) Stanford Art ND1140.W53

[Foote], Timothy. *The World of Bruegel*

(Time-Life 1968.)
Very nice book. Bruegel c.1525-1569.
1) **The Northern View: Art in the Netherlands**
2) **Giving the Devil His Due.** Bruegel probably painted like Bosch because he was asked to. Bosch was still popular. 12 copies of Bosch's "Temptation of St. Anthony" triptych were in circulation, some by Bosch, some by his workshop, some posthumous. Gunpowder just starting to be used in Europe. Penitents whipping themselves. Bosch's symbol-animals, p. 47. *Malleus Malificarum* published 1489.
3) **"Peasant" Bruegel.** "The Four Winds Printshop, as a combined art dealing center, coffee-house and informal hangout for intellectuals, became a Netherlands landmark. From it, for 20 years starting in 1548, Cock dominated the print trade..." p. 75.
Bruegel may have gotten his start by copying Bosch pictures to line drawings that could then be engraved. His original engravings were the Large Landscape Series of the alps, followed by a series of views of Brabant villages, followed by Boschlike grotesqueries, harvesting, studies of sailing ships, and finally the 7 Sins and 7 Virtues.
B probably struck out on his own as a painter in 1563, when he married Mayken

and moved to Brussels.

Flemish oil paintings very popular. “A whole upper floor of the New Stock Exchange [, or New Bourse,]was reserved exclusively for the trade in works of art...Spain the heaviest buyer...demands met by members of the Saint Luke guild...Antwerp boasted more licensed painters (some 300) than licensed butchers.” p. 77 This is the indoor version of the *Schilderpad* which was outdoors only until 1460.

B was favorite of Hans Franckert, Abraham Ortelius, Nicolaes Jonghelinck, and Cardinal Granvelle. p. 78.

4) **Parables and Parallels in the Bible.** Philip II was known to get the shits in battle, so stayed at his desk. Hated Netherlands. Wanted to replace local clergy with Spanish career priests. Enforced the Edict of Blood, starting in 1559, put Margaret of Parma in charge. Granvelle retired in 1564. Bible was accepted as historical truth. Not such a gap between B’s time and the Bible times. Imagined not much had changed, the tech hadn’t changed much for sure. Tower of Babel could be a warning against Philip’s plans for unifying the Netherlands. “Suicide of King Saul” could have to do with the due between William the Silent and Philip. “Conversion of Paul” with Alba’s approach. “Massacre of the Innocents” could be Walloon cavalry mercenaries. “The Cripples” could be like *Les Gueux*. But “To intend such a painting as a symbol of covert sympathy with the *Gueux* would be like using a portrait of Dracula to encourage blood-bank donations.” Ortelius kept his opinions to himself and slipped across the channel to England when things got really bad. O spoke of “the Catholic evil, the *Gueux* fever, and the Huguenot dysentery.” p. 99.

5) **Low Life in High Art.** “Peasant Wedding” is a landmark in the history of art, as a straightforward and natural rendering of everyday life. No piety, no preaching. The term “realism” did not even exist. B’s realism is a persistent inclination of eye and hand.. The legendary inventor of beer is a Fleming, a King of Beer named Gambrinus. Rat poison salesman swung strings of rats. “Young folk joined hands to skate barefoot on hard ground made slippery with ripe garbage.” p. 118 If you had a compound fracture of a limb, the result was usually amputation. Dr. Anthony Torrilhon claims B must have been a doctor, so well did he understand what was wrong with cripples. B did “*naer het leven*” sketches, “after the life”. B had “a visual memory of a precision and intensity that was remarkable even among artists.” Artists studios served as schools, were crowded with young students, models and assistants grinding fresh pigments. B a “pictorial novelist”.

6) **In Dispraise of Folly.** A “Peterskopf” is a man whose head smokes with rage. Fishing boats has “leg-of-mutton sails”. *Wimmelbild*. B combines rug-like old-time approach of separate figures with modern perspective approach, but keeps figures apart by kind of bending the landscape up. Also he paints the far away figures bigger than right. Moral of Icarus is “A man dies, and t he world hardly blinks.”

7) **Painter of Work and Weather.** Landscape tradition before B. First people would work in some landscape as the Garden of Eden. Then Patinir got into cosmic or universal landscapes from a high vantage point. Influenced by map makers and the age of exploration. Bird’s eye renderings of famous cities were coming into fashion, where houses are sketched upon street plans. Patinir made the figures smaller and smaller. But he used the fake rock outcroppings. B had the idea of putting *real* people into his

landscapes. *The Seasons* painting cycle was an outgrowth of the Books of Hours. Probably there were 6 and B painted them all at once, moving from one to the other. It was natural to work on many at once because the paint was slow to dry. The oak panels were aged for 10 years, primed with white chalky coat of fine white plaster and glue. Surfaces built up layer by layer. *Hunters in the Snow*, for instance, has a lemon yellow underlayer that glows through the brown fronts of the houses. Took weeks for the proper drying. Great passage on p. 167. Was probably happy to do the Seasons, with no hassle about religion. Jonghelinck hired fashionable and expensive Frans Floris to decorate his mansion. "Pieter Bruegel is the great master of the walk-in painting."

[Gibson], Walter S. Bruegel

(Thames and Hudson, 1977)

In Middle Ages, the Alps were feared, regarded as blemishes deposited by the Flood. Between "Christ on the Sea of Tiberias" 1553 and "Parable of the Sower" 1557 there is a great increase in the fractal dimension.

The Bagpipe has erotic connotations. p. 46

Bruegel's devils not quite as real as in Bosch's day.

Proverbs are big in Erasmus and Rabelais.

The encyclopedia pictures are like "world theaters".

Note how every brick is there and even a crack in the wall in the church in "Battle of Carnival and Lent".

"Mad Meg" is inspired by a proverb: "She could plunder in front of Hell and return unscathed." Netherlands at that time was governed by a woman, Margaret of Parma.

"Triumph of Death" a little like a parody of the tapestries celebrating the Victories of Charles V, and in engravings by Johannes Stradanus, "A victory of Charles V" p. 116.

The "Family of Love" included Ortelius and Plantin. Curious that Ortelius liked such an R.C. picture as "Death of the Virgin", well it must be that he was still Catholic even if in the Family.

Granvelle owned "Flight to Egypt" of 1563 and several others. B could have met Granvelle through Jonghelinck's brother Jacob Jonghelinck was a sculptor who was one of Granvelle's favorite artists.

The commission to do the paintings commemorating the building of the canal from Brussels to Antwerp may be what brought B to Brussels.

Transitions between the levels of the landscape is smoother than ever in "The Hunters in the Snow."

"The Months" are truly cosmic, combine the details of rustic duties with the vast framework of the earth and the year. The weather.

Brides let hair hang free.

[Hagen], Rose-Marie & Ranier. Pieter Bruegel, Taschen 1994.

[Kay], Reed. The Painter's Guide to Studio Methods and Materials

(Prentice-Hall, 1983.)

[Klein], H. Arthur., *Graphic Worlds of P. Bruegel*

(Dover NY 1963.)

[Roberts] Keith, *Bruegel*

(Phaidon, 1971.)

[Siepel], Wilfred., *Pieter Bruegel the Elder*

at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, (Skira 1998)

[Sullivan], Margaret. *Bruegel's Peasants*

Art and Audience in the Northern Renaissance (Cambridge U. Press 1994).

She seems to be hung up on whether or not Bruegel is “really” a peasant. Her burden is apparently to argue that peasants are stupid and evil and Bruegel wasn't one.

Good footnotes. A footnote on p. 142-3 remarks that some Renaissance artists had a “hieroglyphic” quality and that a viewers of Aertsen' pictures looked for visual puns. van Mander says people amused themselves by seeing how long it took to detect a tiny owl in many of Bliss's paintings. I see viewers as searching Bruegel's pictures for the *shitting man*.

[Marijnissen], R.H. & M. Seidel.

(G. P. Putnam's, NY 1971)

Photos by Max Seidel, notes by Roger Marijnissen.

A very thick book with lots and lots of pictures and good footnotes.

This book attributes *Triumph of Death* to 1562 (not to 1568, as many others do).

p. 23. The theater-festival known as the Landjuweel was held in Antwerp in 1561. The rhetoricians outdid one another in tributes the merchants. Note that there was a big gap between the rich merchants and financiers on the one hand and the peasants, artisans, employees and shopkeepers, who had no share in the profits.

Note 143 on p. 69. The Landjuweel was a national theater contest held by the Rederijkerskamer or schools of rhetoric. August 3, 1561, was a biggie, with 14 schools of rhetoric participating. “Wat den mensch aldermeest tot conste verweect?” “What makes man most responsive to art?” The texts were published in 1562 “Spelen van sinne ... Andtweren op d'Lant Juweel...” by M. Willem Siluius/Drucker der Con. Ma. Am. 1562” See e. Van Even, *Het Landjuweel van Antwerpen in 1561*, Louvain, 1861.

p. 26 For Lent they fry sausages. The waffles are flavored with cloves, cinnamon pepper, saffron and many other spices.

p. 30 and note 106 on p. 63. There was some author or legendary figure called Till Eulenspiegel who appears in a chapbook first published in 1550, oldest extant edition is from 1515. Then in 1867 Carles de Coster wrote a literary work distinct from the chapbook, about a guy who is really an 1800s anticlerical. Always keep in mind the Protestant Reformation was really an attempt to improve the Church from within.

In 1559 the Brussels celebration via theater of a peace treaty led to trouble because the Corenbloom (Cornflower) School of Rhetoric put on a play called the Barefoot Brothers that may have made fun of the Franciscans. Granvelle himself ordered an investigation.

p.30 Nobody looks happy or lighthearted in B's pictures. The children are careworn.

[Mayer], Ralph. *The Artist's Handbook of Materials and Techniques*.

Look for this.

[Seipel2], Wilfried. *Pieter Bruegel*

the Elder at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, Supplement, Skira 1998

[Tolnay], Charles de. *The Drawings of Peter Bruegel*

the Elder, (The Twin Editions 1952)

This is a lovely book, with good reproductions even though it's so old. Very interesting, full commentary.

p. 7 Bruegel sensed in natural formations a single all-embracing life. p. forms of Nature mean for Bruegel living things. Trees and bushes the "hair" of a mountain. Nature as a living being. Bruegel creates enormous living beings when he draws mountains. He had p. 11, (a) fearless gaze that could look at gigantic, (b) belief that something gigantic could be a rational unity, (c) a sensuousness that let him think of world as a living thing. His lofty viewpoint is a higher view that remains forever concealed to those who live below. Catches the totality of the world.

His humans, on the other hand, are handled like puppets, like Bosch. To B, humanity meant folly. A puppet stage. The Bosch style was antiquated, B used it deliberately. His objects are alive. Hylozoism.

Note that Bruegel's 1558 drawing "Elck" relates to the morality play *Elckerlyc*, or *Everyman*. , p. 71

[Vöheringer], Christian, *Pieter Bruegel*,

Könemann, 1999.

Very nice illos. Not too well translated from Germany, at times hard to understand. Perversely argues that *Magpie on the Gallows* was done with the other early landscapes about 1560, even though its dated 1568, says maybe somebody just put that date on because van Mander mentions B. left it to Mayken.

Has a map showing Jonghelinck's villa outside Antwerp's city walls. Mentions the house and others like it were destroyed during Alessandro Farnese's siege of Antwerp in 1585.

Remarks that *The Peasant and the Birdsnester* looks as if it might have been drawn in a convex mirror.

Points out the toppled gray idol in the little bird-house-like shrine on a tree at the right side of *The Flight Into Egypt*.

Mentions that Granvelle moved to Naples after Brussels (in 1564), and that could be why the *Misanthrope* and the *Parable of the Blind* ended up there, maybe Granvelle owned them, and maybe they were on cloth to make it easier to ship them!

Jonghelinck was a tax official as well as a financier, p. 116. His friend de Bruyne owed 16,000 guilders. He had misappropriated money as a tax collector. So let's say that Jonghelinck had failed to collect the taxes as he was supposed to. Says this was a time of

corruption in Antwerp.

Refers to the mountain in *Luilekkerland* as “dough.”

Suggests the beekeepers are informers of the inquisition and that the boy in the tree is fleeing them. The churches are the hives. The church/hive analogy is suggested by Philipp Marnix, *De Biejenkorf der Heilige Roomsche Kercke*, a (hanging-offense) Protestant tract published about 1569.

Falconry

[Illingworth], Frank, Falcons and Falconry

(Fletcher & Son, 1948, Norwich, England)

A good little book about picking and raising a falcon. Of particular importance is p. 119. Valkenswaard by the Holland/Belgium border had the best hawk-catchers in Europe. They tripped the wild falcon during migrations using bow-nets. (Cf. *The Return of the Herd!*) The catchers hid in huts, they tethered some shrikes who scream at the sight of falcons, and they baited a bow-net with live pigeons. When hawks flew by the shrikes screamed, attracting the hawks' attention, the hawks came down to eat the pigeons, the catchers pulled a cord controlling the bow-net. They caught Passage Gyrfalcons and Passage Peregrines and local birds such as Gosses. The birds were auctioned at a Hawk Mart. The family names of falconers in the Valkenswaard area include: Bots, Daams, Dankers, Van den Heuvel, Peels, and Mollen.

Description of peregrines, p. 78. The stoop, wings almost closed, that culminates in a *thunk* and a puff of feathers. Color blackish-blue back and wings, black-capped heads, breast from white and fawn. Dark eyes ringed with yellow cere, a black moustache, yellow legs and feet, blue-black talons. Female about 2 pounds, tiercel (the word for a male because he's a third smaller) 1.5 pounds. Their cry is staccato, *hek ek ek ek ek*.

[Woodford], M. H. A Manual of Falconry

(Unwin Bros., Surrey, England, 1960).

The most complete book, with good info about hunting with falcons. Good glossary in back, boy what a lot of special works falconry has: wonderful. And there's even a table with the Dutch equivalents of falconry terms.

Peregrine is the most spectacular. To fly at grouse or partridge one needs two (a pair of falcons is a “cast”). Also a pointer for finding the game and a spaniel for flushing it. Flying at rooks is easier, you don't need a dog. The “jess” is the leather straps on a falcons legs that you use to hold it down with. The bells are Indian, a half-tone apart. A clear sound in the sky. The lure is a dummy or a dead pigeon. The glove is on your left hand. Halfway up the forearm. Dutch hood made up of three pieces of leather, sewn together to form body and two eyepieces. billiard cloth stretched over the eyepieces to be light tight. A plume of cock feathers garnished with colored wool and bound with fine brass wire is fixed to the crown of the hood. Like a little helmet.

A hawk's swoop is called a “stoop”. While circling around high up they are said to be “waiting on.” A baby hawk is an eyas. If you let your hawk fly free to get exercise it's said to be at hack. Usually you put heavy hacking bells on the hawk so it can't catch

food.

You can fly a hawk out of the hood, by quickly taking off the hood and letting it go after something, like a rook. Or you can fly it at the lure, letting it fly up high, wait on, and stoop. The “pitch” is how high it flies up. Rising spirally up to a height is called “ringing up”. “Raking away” is when the hawk flies off instead of pursuing the game. A “well-hacked” eyas (i.e. a hawk raised from fledgling stage and given chance to fly freely) has flown a lot, as has a passage hawk (i.e. a wild hawk trapped).

The Spice Islands

[Andaya], Leonard Y., The World of Maluku:

Eastern Indonesia in the Early Modern Period, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1993.

The “holy trinity of spices” in the middle ages were cloves, nutmeg and mace. Cloves grow on trees only on two islands Tidore and Ternate, east of Celebes near Halmahera, in the archipelago called the Moluccas or Maluku. In the southern part of the archipelago were the Banda islands, which is where nutmeg grows. You get there by sailing to Goa, to the Maldives, to Ceylon, to Sumatra, to Malacca on the Malay peninsula, through the Straits of Malacca, through the Java Sea between Borneo to the North and Java to the south, past Celebes and then north through the Banda Sea.

“People would harvest the trees by breaking clove-bearing branches and then carrying them in baskets to waiting ships to be exchanged for foreign goods [cloth and knives].

Portuguese first set up a fort in Malacca and then on Ternate. Their Alfonso de Albuquerque conquered Malacca (a.k.a. Melaka) in 1511. Francisco Serrão ended up on Ternate in 1512, using a junk loaded with cloves, nutmeg and mace. Sultan Abu Lais and the Ternatens welcomed him. Sultan wanted support against the neighbor “twin” island Tidore, whom he was always fighting with.

In 1521 the two remaining ships of Magellan’s expedition arrived in Tidore and Sultan Mansur of Tidore tried to make a similar deal. Portuguese quickly built a fort in Ternate.

Once some Portuguese foraged for good in Tidore and the natives killed a few. To get even, the Portuguese captain got one of the local chiefs, a “sangaji” and cut off his hands, tied his arms behind his back and set two mastiffs on him. The guy went into the sea, the dogs followed, he bit the dogs with his teeth and drowned them one by one, then drowned himself.

[Corn], Charles, The Scents of Eden:

A Narrative of the Spice Trade, Kodansha, 1998.

Serrão ingratiated himself in the Moluccas by helping the Hitu in a fight against the villagers of Ceram. Ternate and Tidore both invited him, they sailed 300 miles, across the equator, to “the twin islands of Ternate and Tidore, separated by a mile-wide channel, each a rugged towering volcanic cone forested with clove trees and encircled by treacherous coral reefs, lying 3 or 4 miles off the larger island of Halmahera.” p. 29. Sulfur-crested white cockatoos, brightly plumed parrots, plump green pigeons. Sago

palms. Clove trees carpeted the lower slopes. Serrão was nearly the first European to make it here.

Serrão became the personal counselor of the Sultan Abu Lais. The native rajah. Serrão dressed for state occasions in Portuguese armor. He thrived, and took either a Javanese wife or a wife who was a daughter of the Sultan Almanzor of Tidore.

He took quill in hand and wrote his friend Magellan. Magellan used maps drawn by Pedro and Jorge Reinel of Portugal, their maps showed the Moluccas in Spain's sphere, that is, towards the West. Used the inaccurate Reinels globe. Magellan thought it would be shorter to sail past the Americas to get there, he thought the world was half as big around as it is. Got Spain's King Charles to fund a trip, set out on March 22, 1518 with four ships.

In November 6, 1521, Magellan's two remaining ships made Tidore, sailed southeast from the Philippines through the Celebes Sea. Followed the spine of mountains on Celebes, the coastline of Moro and Atching on the Island of Halmahera. Gentle smoky rise of Ternate and Tidore. Went to Tidore instead of Ternate. Sultan Almanzor of Tidore welcomed them. Serrão was dead, poisoned. Widow of Serrão (possibly Almanzor's daughter), approached the *Trinidad* and *Victoria* with their two children. The crew went to visit the widow in Ternate. The *Victoria* sailed just before Christmas Day, 1521, the Portuguese sank the *Trinidad*. The *Victoria* made it back to Spain on September 6, 1522. p. 55.

Suppose we call the daughter Niay Serrão, because one of Almanzor's daughters was Niay Tsjili (p. 59).

Overlay

I haven't gotten around to finishing section, in which I intend to list every scene that I describe from one of Bruegel's pictures. I speak of this as "excerpting" a picture.

[Pictures which are *mentioned* but not *excerpted* are in brackets.]

Chapter One

Mountain Landscape with Italian Style Cloister, Brown ink. De Tolnay 2. 1552.

River Valley, with Mountain in Background. Brown ink. De Tolnay 3. 1552.

The Magpie on the Gallows. Painting.

Chapter Two

Chapter Three

The Tower of Babel. Painting. (View of Antwerp.)

The Battle of Carnival and Lent. Painting.

The Dirty Bride, or, The Wedding of Mopsus and Nisa. B.216. 1570.

The Robbery. Painting.

Chapter Four

Pride. Engraving. (Philip's court.)

[Landscape with the Fall of Icarus. Etching. De Tolnay R13. 1553.]

The Adoration of the Kings in the Snow. Painting. (For the snowflakes.)
Bird Trap with Skaters. Painting.

Chapter Five

European Notes

September 21, 1998. Antwerp. Bruegel.

We're in Antwerp now. I've had breakfast and taken a walk. I got a book about Bruegel, by Keith Roberts (Pantheon), in Edinburgh and have been reading it. I've decided to make Pieter Bruegel the Elder a focus of this trip. I'd kind of like to write a historical novel about the family.

The workshop of Pieter the Younger copied the "Netherlandish Proverbs". Jan painted flowers. Jan was fat and rich, a friend of Rubens. The Rubens religious art has huge mannerist human figures. Later in life Bruegel was starting to use monumental humans.

I keep looking for parallels between myself and Bruegel. Me as a novelist and writer, him as a painter and engraver. His paintings never made it into churches as altar pieces because they were satirical (e.g. a man who won't help Christ carry His cross is wearing a rosary) and obscene or vulgar (shitting and pissing). I am never quite accepted into the standard SF canon, perhaps due to vulgarity — or too much intelligence. Victorian scholars mistook Bruegel for a peasant, when in fact he was a cultured man. The tension between his overall landscape or theme (SF plot or science idea) and the specific individuality of his people. I want ever stronger characters, akin to Bruegel's increasingly large human figures. He prided himself on drawing from life; I pride myself on my transreal trick of basing my characters on real people.

Walking around inside the big Antwerp cathedral today. Christ, but Roman Catholic religious art makes me want to puke after awhile. So vapid and unreal and knuckled-under to the fat-bellied powers of the Church. Might Bruegel have felt this way?

Walking down the streets of Antwerp, I'm thinking that the genes waling around me are the **SAME GENES** that Bruegel was surrounded by. Like a little pond of fish. It's been 450 years ~ 15 generations. Compare this to 7 generations from Hegel to my grandchildren, if I had any.

The people here so far have seemed a bit rapacious and unfriendly. They speak Flemish. The cabdriver charged \$15 to drive us 5 minutes from the train station to the hotel, which seemed like too much. He told us one interesting fact (?) though: he says the cathedral was sitting on "cow hides", and that's why it doesn't sink into the soft mud. We got on the wrong (slow) train from Brussels to Antwerp, which upset me. The museum in Antwerp that has the one Bruegel ("Mad Meg" or "Dulle Griet") is closed for renovation. We've had the local food — mussels — twice; the second night they weren't as good. The street stink of sewer gas; it must be hard to drain here in the wet lowlands. In the morning when we stepped out into the square with the huge cathedral, there was a twentyish boy running along screaming. His hair was soaked with dried and with fresh bright red blood. Some of his friends were trying to catch him. He wasn't so much screaming as squealing. When we walked by the renovation-closed museum a bald old man stopped and stared at us all the way down the block. Very surreal.

But I'm a baby to be complaining. Here's a list of some things to be grateful for.

I'm not working. I have a sexy, loving wife. I can afford this big trip. We have a good hotel room in the heart of town. I have a new research topic (Bruegel) which I'm excited about. I finished writing *Realware*. I'm sober. It's a sunny day. I'm healthy. I just ate a great Belgian endive (*witloof*) and Roquefort salad. The dinner two days ago was great. I have good shoes. I have a nice new shirt and a new vest from Scotland. I'm checking my email. The world exists and I'm alive.

Of all the paintings in the enormous Museo Nazionale in Naples, only the Bruegels, only the *Misanthrope* and the *Parable of the Blind*, seem to have something to say. The unbelievable richness of the collection. The degenerate jabbering Italians. Their insane trove of art.

The Spaniards taking over Catholicism for political enslavement of the Netherlands is like the Republikkkans taking over Christianity for rightwing oppression. Bosch -> Patinier -> Bruegel.

Tell Bruegel's story from the point of view of Ortelius.

Bruegel worked with Pieter Balters in Mechelen, midway between Brussels and Antwerp.

The Farnese family related to Carlo V had a small Farnese court in Brussels. The influenced Parma to like Flemish art. Ranuccio confiscated 2 Bruegels from the Masi family collection in 1612, these are the two in Naples.

"Fiammingo" is "Flemish" in Italian.

Leaving the Naples museum, I think "Sigh, goodbye Bruegel, goodbye Europe."

Psychically Bruegel anticipated color reproduction. His color paintings reproduce so well. He knew about this because of having done so many drawings for engraving.

September 22, 1998. Brussels. Bruegel; I become him.

Sylvia's on the train for Geneva now, and I'm alone till I see her again in three or four days. I miss her, but it's exciting to be alone. Well, actually it feel rootless and mortal, I feel like a piece of dust drifting around. But what adventure.

I'm getting the night train, 14 hour to Vienna, so I have the day to kill here in Brussels. I visited the 6 Bruegels in the Belgian Royal Museum of Fine Arts.

- (1) *The Fall of the Rebel Angels*. 1562.
- (2) *Landscape With The Fall of Icarus*. 1567. (Several versions exist.)
- (3) *The Numbering At Bethlehem*. 1566.
- (4) *The Adoration of the Magi* (tempera on canvas). 1556.
- (5) *Winter Landscape With Skaters And Bird Trap*. 1565.
- (6) *Yawning Man* (miniature).

I take a lot of notes on these pictures, but I'm going to stop copying the Bruegel notes into my journal and put them in a separate Bruegel Notes document.

A Flemish phrase in the elevator "UIT SLUITEND" meaning I don't know what, but it sounds slatternly. A "hoer" is a whore, but "huur" is rent (hire). I walked through a red light district yesterday where you could huur a hoer, they were sitting in windows with red & blue fluorescent lights — only problem, all of them were either bitter-looking (and why shouldn't they be?) Africans or men in drag with bulges in their undies. I hasten to add that I wasn't there a customer, I was merely gathering colorful street scene type

material, ahem. One more funny Flemish word is “ZAKKENROLLER” for pickpocket.

Brussels is French-speaking, unlike Antwerp, which was Flemish-speaking. In Antwerp people repeatedly started talking to me in Flemish. I *look* Flemish! “These are my people,” I kept telling Sylvia. There is a well-known ancient Flemish family of harpsichord makers called RUCKERS. I always thought the Bosch and Bruegel faces looked like mine, e.g. the drunk man in “The Peasant Dance.” From now on, when anyone asks what kind of name “Rucker” is, I’ll say “Flemish”! It’s *not* German after all. Indeed, when I lived in Germany, the name “Rucker” was quite unfamiliar to them, and they often spelled it “Rocker”.

In Antwerp a really pretty, tall, Bruegel-faced young woman with dark hair and a baby stroller asked me, in Flemish, what time it was. She could have been Mayken Coecke van Aelst, Bruegel’s wife!

Get this, diary, I just visited the house of Bruegel’s granddaughter — and possibly his house as well — in the Marolles district of Brussels on the Hoogstraat, just a few blocks down from the Notre Dame de la Chapelle, which is where Pieter and Mayken were married in 1563, and where he was buried in 1569. If he lived in that house, how local and touching. 6 short blocks down HOOGSTRAAT from the church to his house. I lit a candle costing 20 Belgian francs (~60 cents), first I put in only 19 francs, then worried I better not stint, so added an extra 20 franc coin. I knelt and prayed — for what? Oh, to say “Hi” to Bruegel, and that I’m thinking about him and might try and write about him and/or try and learn to paint a little like him.

I wrote this up over an omelet in a sidewalk cafe in Brussels. While I was writing, a man begged me for money, he had the gentlest smile, his hat held out, I shook my head, writing, and he said “C’est article...” and wandered off — what if it was Bruegel I just refused? I should give to the next beggar I see. I then walked a block, and sat down for a dessert in different cafe. I saw one of those European women who make me think of a big 50s populuxe American car — the plump lips and strong teeth like a grille, **THE BEZIER CURVE CHEEKS**, a thick bob of dyed blonde hair, huge knockers under a tight silky chartreuse woman top, skin bronzed from studio tan. She was 2 cafes down. Very snobby-looking. Now she’s gone, I missed seeing her walk by because I was distracted by my outrageously delicious Belgian dessert, a cylinder of cream and meringue covered with chocolate shavings. Never mind about any populuxe Euro woman, dessert is readily attainable.

I’m going back to the museum to look at some engravings (I think) that I requested at the *Cabinet des Estampes* of the museum. I asked for La Cuisine Maigre, La Cuisine Grasse, and L’Homme A La Recherche De Lui Même. Thin Man, Fat Man, and Me.

So I went and did that. Actual fucking Bruegel drawings had been engraved and printed by Hieronymus Cock in 15-whatever and I was sitting there looking at them and even touching one with the tip of my finger. They gave me four different versions (states? editions?) of the Man In Search Of Himself. He’s labeled ELCK (everyman) and looks with a lantern in like sacks and barrels, the goof. A woman curator at the Cabinet Des Estampes told me to get Louis Lebeer, “Brueghel Les Estampes Completes”, Fonds Mercator, Antwerp 1973.

“t’Hooft” is a name I keep thinking of today, an irrelevant half-remembered or

made up name, just because its so Flemish and because Hoof is from a cow.

After the engravings there was almost no time and I ran back up to the Bruegel paintings. I felt such *sorrow* leaving them. “Goodbye, I love you.” Like such perfection and it’s so sad to leave it. The other painters of the time are muddy and dumb. Bruegel is clear, intelligent. I was almost in tears leaving the museum.

I ducked into a Museum of Musical Instruments hoping to see a 16th Century Flemish bagpipe — they had lots of bagpipes there, but only from the 19th and 20th C, and none from Flanders. I would suppose the leather sack would rot away over the years, but some 16th C nozzles could have survived. The thing I *did* see in the music museum was a “virginal” — a keyboard instrument like a rectangular box on legs — made by Andreas Ruckers, Antwerp 1620. Peter Rucker came to America in 1690. This particular virginal appears in a painting by Vermeer. They had a print of the painting right next to the virginal. The “s” at the end of “Ruckers” means nothing, it’s common in the Lowlands to put an “s” after the name of the son, in fact Bruegel’s name is spelled “Bruegels” in one document. Since I’m Flemish, maybe Bruegel and I are related! After today, I feel a spark of him alive in me & will fan it more.

So I got on the Brussels Metro to the train station to catch the night train (7 PM - 9:45 AM) to Vienna to visit B’s 12 pictures there. And on the metro I get into this SF trip that Bruegel’s alive inside me, looking through my eyes. I’ve “twinked” him as I used to say — this being a word I made up to mean thinking or praying or somehow summoning up a replica-model of another person in your own head. And I’m looking with Bruegel eyes at the subway platform. The diabolical magic moving stairs, is this Hell? Yet the people look the same, albeit very strangely clothed. The sight of a train so odd & the columns holding up the roof, a girl is sitting & singing — beautifully — for money and for the 2nd time I deny a beggar, though the Bruegel inside me wants to go over to her, the only living lovely thing in this human ants-nest subway dungeon.

I follow signs for the train station — supposedly reachable from the subway stop — and end up in half-finished construction (there’s a lot of that in Belgium, they seem to be slackers). The sun is setting, light on a glass building, no sign of green, just pipes and stone and glass and asphalt and for a minute I’m so into being Bruegel that I’m utterly lost and confused.

So then I have to push Bruegel down so I can find my train, get my suitcase out of baggage claim, change some money to pay for that, etc. And finally I’m up on the platform and — for Bruegel — I fill my fountain pen from a bottle I carry in my suitcase. Pelikan ink. Bruegel is interested in the fountain pen of course. I take out a paper and try to draw a few faces I’d seen, in particular the face of a new Mayken I saw, she sat across from me in the Metro, sweet mouth intelligent eyes, and where is *my* Mayken-Sylvia now — I’m such a piece of dust.

As I write this I’m in a sleeps-three train cabin all my myself, the two others get on in Cologne at 10:40 PM, I think I’ll get myself in bed before they show up, perhaps two tipsy randy populuxe women,— fat chance and anyway 3’s a crowd. I went for the 3-cabin over the 2-cabin both because its \$30 cheaper and because it feels “safer” not to be cooped up with *one* other person.

September 23, Vienna.

I took the overnight train here yesterday. It was good, I slept quite well. Just talked to Sylvia on the phone; she's frazzled, she can't find a hotel for us in Venice, I suggest she come meet me in Vienna, though she's also thinking of Verona. All "V" cities all of a sudden. Vienna is nice, I wouldn't mind spending extra time here.

I saw 12 Bruegels this morning.

- 1) The Battle Between Carnival and Lent. 1559.
- 2) Children's Games. 1560.
- 3) The Suicide of King Saul. 1562.
- 4) The Tower of Babel. 1563.
- 5) The Procession to Calvary. 1564.
- 6) The Gloomy Day. 1565.
- 7) Return Of The Herd. 1565.
- 8) The Hunters In The Snow. 1565.
- 9) The Conversion of St. Paul. 1567.
- [X] The Massacre of the Innocents (by Pieter the Younger) 1567.]
- 10) The Peasant and the Birdnester. 1568.
- 11) The Peasant Dance. 1568.
- 12) The Peasant Wedding. 1568.

Overwhelming but, in a way, not as overwhelming as Brussels where there was more a feeling of having them to myself. The pictures here aren't so easy to see. Some are glassed over, some are blocked by two artist women who are painting strong-smelling oil copies of their own, there are big tour-groups, there is a rope that if you lean over it a beeper goes off, the light seems dim, my legs are so very tired. My "sperm tail" legs can barely beat anymore.

September 25, 1998. Vienna. Email to kids about Bruegel, Sylvia.

I am stoked about Bruegel. I know so much about him now. There are pictures by like his father in law and his sons and his grandson and his friends. He was pals with Ortelius who 'wrote' the first Atlas.

I plan to do a historical novel (maybe not SF?) about Bruegel's life, and write it from the point of view of his friend Ortelius, who I can relate to as a voice because cartography is a bit mathy. The fractals of coastlines and of painting, though they wouldn't MENTION fractals, of course (unless a timetraveller gets involved). Bruegel had such an interesting life. I can relate to him, as he like me was a peasant who became a cultured man. (Kentuckian = peasant).

I've been lighting candles to Bruegel in all the churches, did I tell you I prayed at his grave.

The end of his life was clouded by the Spanish who were being real pricks. They controlled the Netherlands which was Holland and Belgium. It was the time of the reformation, when the Protestants (Anabaptists) split off from the RC church. There was a political thing about Spain being Roman Catholic and occupying the Netherlands, who were kind of Protestant. they hung a lot of people. Brueghel was mainly a humanist, he cared about people, not so much about the religious labels. didn't like seeing people get hanged. He was sick for the last year of his life, maybe it was cancer, nobody knows and

I kind of have to make that part up or make a good guess. Will have to do some research. TB a possibility too I guess. Or someone says it might have been arthritis and a stomach ulcer. We know he didn't die suddenly because he was painting really fast, most of his masterworks in the last 6 years and then no paintings for a year and then he was buried. At the time the Spanish soldiers were quartered in his house! He drew some really mocking pictures of them that he had his wife burn so she wouldn't get in trouble. Her name was Mayken. She was the daughter of his first teachers, a man and woman who both were artists in Antwerp. I could go on about this stuff for a long time...and hopefully I will. I don't THINK anyone has written a novel about his life yet, I hope not, I hope someone else isn't just starting, but of course I would do it differently anyway, but still. IT might be interesting to include some photos of his pix. Well, don't talk about this too much to anyone else, I don't want like someone to 'steal' the idea, not that an idea can really be stolen.

September 26, 1998. Vienna. Laundry, Sylvia is here, Bruegel.

I've been to see the Bruegels every day — 3 days so far — and am learning more and more. I have a lot of notes on them I'll type into the Bruegel Notes.DOC instead of here. I always carry a folded-in-four piece of paper in my back pocket to write on.

I'm excited about the idea of writing a novel about Bruegel. I emailed the kids about that yesterday, as pasted in just above this entry.

I do think there will be a way. Maybe a time travel book. Then I could have a contemporary viewpoint as well. Or have it be Ortelius hanging out with Bruegel's collector Nicolaes Jonghelinck in Antwerp, talking about the pictures. I know Ian Watson wrote an SF book called *The Garden Of Earthly Delights* about a Bosch picture and I believe there was an anthology called *Pictures At An Exhibition* of SF stories set in paintings.

[There actually *is* already a kind of novel about Bruegel's life, I've learned since coming back to the States. It's Claude-Henri Rocquet, *Bruegel or the Workshop of Dreams*, (French original, Denoël 1987) (English translation, University of Chicago Press 1991). It's pretty good, though it still leaves me some room. Also Marguerite Yourcenar, *The Abyss*, (English translation from the French, Farrar Strauss & Giroux 1976) seems to be set in the Lowlands of the 16th Century, though this is not about painters.]

Tangential idea: what about doing Bruegel as a film script? My inclination is to do the novel first, to have something tangible, but maybe it's worth thinking about a script. If nothing else, it would serve as a good outline for a novel. But I have a fear about doing it as a script, both technical — I'm unfamiliar with the medium — and “political” in that I'm anxious that the collaborative, compromising script process would destroy the idea, perhaps even killing it before I get anything written. On the other hand, why not surrender some control and accept collaboration. And just imagine an animation sequence inside the world of his paintings.

A final thought: Sylvia remarks, “Why not just let the Bruegel thing be a hobby, something you're interested in? It doesn't necessarily have to turn into a book.” Which is true as well. I don't have to “own” the subject and put my stamp on it.

September 29, 1998. Vienna to Siena. Bruegel's Alps.

Four days I visited the big B. in the Kunsthistorisches Museum. One day the museum was closed and one day I was too tired. *So* tired, my legs and body are. The fifteen hour train trip comes as a welcome rest, “a day no pigs [as in feet] would die.”

Now the train is going through “Bruegel’s Alps” as I think of them now, the mountains at the top of Italy that he traveled through in 1552, though really I guess he came down further West, closer to Brussels than to Vienna. Imagine B’s reactions to seeing the Alps. “The land — it rises up high high into the air!” The blue ranges of the more distant hills, the low gray clouds. The trees are displayed so three-dimensionally, rotating as you pass them by.

More imagined remarks by B: “And in places the rock bones show through the green flesh of the hills.” “The plane of the world is tilted.” “The hills rising up like waves in water.”

Sunday afternoon, the 27th, there was a strange moment — S and I went to the Circus Roncalli at 3 PM, it was lovely, so full of color and laughter and love. And then we came outside and there was a chill in the air, and some low gray clouds — though still with blue showing through — and some of the leaves on the tree were yellow and it was like all of a sudden it was Fall, and it had come perhaps gradually and we’d been too busy playing to notice, it had been Summer when we left home, but now we’d stayed away so long that it was Fall, us off in a distant city, a feeling of having stayed away longer than I’d realized, and a feeling, too, that, in the great “year” of my life it’s Fall. It turned to Fall while we were at the Circus.

As we come into Italy, I’m scared. On the other hand, it’s nice to hear two women chattering in Italian on the train. They seem like parrots. As soon as we are in their home country, the waiters on the train become surly and rude.

October 1 & 2, 1998. Siena. Landscape. God, Jesus.

Siena makes me think of Bruegel landscapes. The successive scrimps of the hills, bluer in the distance. The surface of the Earth here is like a restless sea. Looking at Sieneese art, I note the crisp way the faces stand out in the 13th C icons.

Humanity is everywhere, like fish in a reef, like flowers in a field, all with the same powers of visualization and planning.

Restaurants called “Rosticceria”. “I’m roasting!”

The olive trees are shoots from centuries old trunk stubs. The stubs are covered with thick green moss, and the dirt around the trunks is plowed, probably to keep the weeds down.

The Tuscan hills. The chestnuts, oaks with acorns, porcini mushrooms and wild pigs — all fit together in a musky, nutty whole.

This morning I borrowed a mountain bike from the Villa Scacciapensieri and rode out into some of the Chianti hills. I had a lovely view of Siena from one mountaintop winery. I kept thinking about Bruegel. A few peasants were visible working the fields, six of them even picking the big sweet dark Chianti grapes, the peasants dressed in light blue cotton overalls and using red plastic buckets. And I was thinking about Chris Langton, what he said at the Digital Biota 2 conference in Cambridge: “It’s all biology, folks: our cities, this projector, and even that damned computer.” [Langton hates

Windows machines, as he's an unreconstructed Unix guy.] "Our artifacts are things that we grow — no different than seashells or termite mounds." To think of man not as some mistaken invader, and of machines not as some blight upon Nature — it's a comforting, integrated, *Bruegelian* world view.

On my bike ride I stopped in a "basilica" (church) on a hilltop and was struck by God. "I made all of this," He seemed to say. It's all biology, all part of a whole, the divine Light in each and every fiber of everything there is. Looking at yet another painting of Christ being lowered from the cross, I'm thinking, "All *right* already, I *will* let this into my heart." Remembering solemn, hippy, wise, noble Bruegel staring, hands folded, at Christ with the cross in "The Procession to Calvary" — what does the Christ story mean? God is universal, yet Christ is just a man. His story means Love and Compassion and, how clearly, Let Go Let God. Even if you get crucified, the Passion story tells us, God can still save you, can still raise you from the dead.

October 3, 1998, Email about Bruegel to Susan Protter.

Hi Susan,

I'm in a cybercafe in Rome, it's raining and this is a nice way to pass some time. Doing something normal instead of all this touring! One more week to go. It's been great. I talked to Sante, will do the interview on Tuesday.

Hey, I wanted to tell you the idea I'm into for my next book. I want to do a historical somewhat biographical novel about the painter Pieter Bruegel (also spelled Brueghel). I have been visiting all his paintings in Vienna especially, also in Brussels and saw his house and church where he was married and buried, plan to see 2 more in Naples. I've been reading up on his life.

The broad outlines of his life are known, but very little detail, so I can fill a lot in. This would take of course a good bit of research about the period. He lived in the 16th century in the Netherlands (now Belgium), first in a village, then in Antwerp, then in Brussels. He died of some lingering disease at age 44 in Brussels, leaving his wife Mayken who he married at age 38, and two sons. A big issue in his life was the Reformation and counter Reformation. Though Catholic, he had some sympathy for the >Protestants, as the Spanish army was occupying the Netherlands and hanging Protestants out of political motives. The turning of his religion into a force of oppression is to me analogous to the right wing Christians of our time.

I think I might write the book from the point of view of Brueghel's friend Abraham Ortelius who produced the first ever atlas of the world. Kind of math kind of guy.

Could get into some of the fractal aspects of paint, not calling them fractals of course. The big vision of Bruegel I like is how he integrates Man into the World.

I know what he looks like because he put himself into some of his pictures. He had long hair and a long straight nose, not a fat peasant-looking guy. Looked more like a solemn hippie, like Dennis Hopper in *Easy Rider*.

For now I see this as a straight bio-novel with no SF aspect, though that may yet come. It could all transmute. But it's something I feel more excited about than any other project. Though it seems very hard.

A practical question would be whether I would include copies of his pictures.

This would mean paying a photographer, the pics are public domain, but photos of them are owned. Might give the book a different feel to have the pics though, could be cool. Certainly would save a lot of time instead of trying to recreate them with words.

I also have ideas for several film scripts to pitch, and have even toyed with idea of having Bruegel be a script.

More about this later.

October 4, 1998. Rome. Bruegel and Christ.

The first place we went to was the Rome Pantheon. It has Corinthian columns. The squares in the dome are arranged five high and in a circle of 28.

How the time is passing. I really am ready to go home and finish writing *Real Programming: Windows Software Engineering Projects With Artificial Life*. Or whatever the hell it's going to be called.

I keep having this feeling of having stayed too long. Like in a fairy tale where the girl goes down for a day to the land at the bottom of the well, and when she comes back, she's been gone for a hundred years.

And how best to do the Bruegel book? I'd like something I can polish off in a year—I don't want to make a life's work of it. A simple option: show the pictures and for each one have a commentary by Ortelius which adds up to a novel. Could even hoax it. Say I *found* the Ortelius stuff. And me write an intro.

"I'm Flemish." I love it. My new line. My roots!

Rome — the Eternal City. Lots of noisy traffic. Wonderful yellows, pinky-beige, ochers, fauns, umbers in the colors of the walls. [Sante DiRenzo later says, "All buildings in Rome are painted one of two colors. A yellow or a pink."] The Mausoleum of Augustus and the Pantheon are both made of a very thin, flat kind of brick. Really old-looking bricks.

I washed all my underwear and socks in the sink and forgot to save out a pair of undies, so borrowed a pair of S's panties. What twins we've become! We had some fun at bedtime, stripped to our identical undies, we ended up fucking with them still on, S sitting on top, she said "Is this *us* fucking or is it only the panties talking to each other." And then we took them off and I got on top for the finish. We've been having good sex every 2-4 days which is, I think, more than at home.

I'm sitting by the Castel Sant'Angelo, off to my left is the Sant'Angelo bridge over the Tiber, the bridge lined with angels holding, some of them, big heavy crucifixes.

My old dislike of Christianity and especially Roman Catholicism keeps wanting to flare up and I keep wanting to instead try on a Bruegelian love of Christ. The Light of God shining through a human form: Jesus. Love and Forgiveness. "My problem isn't Christ, it's just the Christians." This could have been an issue for Bruegel too. He certainly makes fun of the Church, and the Duke of Alba was of course laying waste to B's people in the name of the Church. The main thing I need to work on, though, is simply to let Jesus into my heart. Sometimes I can almost feel him standing next to me.

October 5, 1998. Rome. Sylvia lost and found. St. Peter's.

Of course after that last pious journal rap, I ended up doing something selfish yesterday by losing S at a chaotic bus stop — it wasn't deliberate, but I could have tried

harder to find her than I did. I was tired and confused. There's a big risk in any human starting to think he or she is "walking with Christ" — I think this is even more dangerous than thinking one is "doing God's will". This line of thought promotes a tendency to still be the same asshole, but to be self-righteous about it. It's a real dangerous area. I think the trap is that once you start thinking of any man (such as Christ) being God, it's less of a jump to think of yourself as God. What a screwy religion.

A bit later Sylvia and I found each other again at St. Peter's and it was so nice. The ushers there are very tough-looking dudes.

October 8, 1998. Rome To Naples. Landscape, Museo Nazionale..

I had breakfast with a boy, a "ragazzo" named Roberto, one of my fans, a physics student in Rome. He had a list of big questions for me, like I used to have for Gödel, and indeed he said, "I'm 21, I feel like you visiting Gödel, there is a similar ratio." A nice thought, though I'm certainly no King Kurt.

I'm taking the train alone to Naples for a day. Looking out the train window. The beauty of the sky today. Low fluffy clouds, almost touching the ground, but well separated, with a goodly amount of watery blue sky to see — like Spring. But, no, it's Fall, isn't it. The **CLOUDS ARE LOW** and close enough to be noticeably three-dimensional, like weightless thickets in the air. Ravishing. The heart-blooming feeling of soft clouds and streaks of light rain. Roberto said, "I have never traveled, but I am sure that nowhere is the sky so beautiful as in Rome." (In *Realware* I should have Yoke drift off into contemplation of the clouds at least one more time.)

I spend the day visiting two Bruegels in the Museo or Galleria Nazionale in the Capodimonte park of Naples. Hard to find the 2 Bruegels in the endless galleries. The unbelievable richness of the collection. The degenerate jabbering Italians and their insane trove of art. Nobody but nobody is in there except the Italian guards. It feels like a high-school late in the afternoon after almost everyone's gone home, just a small clique of people left, a clique I'm not in. The Bs are such a sudden oasis of intelligence in this wilderness of schlock and shit. Yes, of all the paintings in the enormous Museo Nazionale in Naples, only the Bruegels, only the "Misanthrope" and the "Parable of the Blind" seem to have something to say.

Some notes on "The Misanthrope". "Tempera su tela" say the museum notes. Meaning it's tempera on cloth. There's vertical oval patches of water damage along the left half. It's scraped near the top center right. Signed BRVEGEL 1568.

It strikes me to think of this as Bruegel's last self-portrait. Admittedly the line of the nose doesn't match the line of the nose in "John the Baptist" and in "Procession to Calvary." But the beard and the folded hands remind me of the Bruegel likeness in "Procession to Calvary". I have the feeling that when he painted this he knew he was mortally ill. The Misanthrope is headed to the left, into death, with mushrooms growing under the rotten trees. Shrooms = decay. They're porcinis?

It has this caption, in a really weird script:

"Om dat de Vierelt is soe ongetru

Daer om gha ic in den ru."

For that the World is so untrue

There fore go I in the sorrow.

The “in den ru” is squeezed together. It hits me WOW, that *I’m RU!* In a synchronistic sense, Bruegel is saying he will go “in den ru” meaning “into a book by Rudy Rucker”! Too bad he doesn’t look a little happier about it.

In this picture and “The Parable of the Blind” right next to it, there is the same milky gray sky and dun Earth. Winter. A depressing pair. Bruegel knew he was dying.

Had a very nice lunch in the museum cafe, great vegetables. “Contorni” they call vegetables in Italy. These were Naples style with garlic and hot peppers, four kinds: mushrooms, chicory, spinach, and some other green.

Leaving the Naples museum, I think “Sigh, goodbye Brueghel, goodbye Europe.”

Riding back to Rome on the train, the clouds are lit from behind, the sun down west over the Mediterranean. Fields with streams, irrigation ditches, ponds, fens. Now and then the orange-edged clouds can be seen reflected in a patch of ruffled green water — exquisite. A line of pines (cypress?), their green tops blended into one worm, their bare trunks twisting down like legs.

Journal

October 15, 1998. Los Gatos. A Bruegel Script Proposal.

Just for closure, here's a copy of a script proposal I sent out today, along with six other ideas, just threw this in for kicks, though it's probably not the way I'd want to do it, and seems really unworthy of Bruegel. [In fact the next day I withdrew this proposal.]

Saving Bruegel

A physicist loves the paintings of the 16th Century Flemish master Pieter Bruegel. He is in Vienna looking at the Bruegel paintings in the art museum there, and meets a woman while looking at one of the paintings. It turns out she is an art historian; she tells him that Bruegel died so young, of a slow illness at the age of 44, and that most of his great paintings were done in the second to last year of his life. The physicist is working on a time-machine, as it happens. The woman reaches the conclusion that Bruegel was poisoned by the Spanish soldiers he was forced to billet in his Brussels house. So they decide to go back in time to save Bruegel. They arrive in the Brussels of 1560, a Babel-like city, lots of different races. They pose as wealthy collectors, get to know Bruegel, go out to some peasant festivals with him, all of them dressed as peasants to blend in. When they get the opportunity to try and prevent Bruegel's poisoning, it works at first, but then the consistency of the Cosmos asserts itself: you can't change the past. There's a kind of timequake that throws the man and woman out of the timeline and into the world of Bruegel's paintings. Eventually the man gets back to the present, but the woman doesn't make it. The man can still see her, though, in the backgrounds of some of Bruegel's pictures.

October 19, 1998. Email to Greg. Painting And Writing.

"The Parable of the Sower" is indeed like "The Fall of Icarus". Painted from a high, nearly omniscient, viewpoint both show a hill in the lower left, water along the top-left-to-lower-right diagonal and mountains in the top right. "Icarus" is in a more "Mannerist" style, i.e. kind of Thomas Hart Benton, with curving somewhat abstracted lines in the body of the ploughman. The "Sower" landscape feels bigger, more like you could go into it. (There's less water and more mountain in the back.) In each there is a city in the distance. How one longs to travel into these landscapes, yes.

As you say, Greg, B's paintings are like novels, I've often thought that too. Yet, when B was really hitting it, like in 1568, the last year before he fell ill and died, he did six or seven of them: "The Wedding Feast," "The Peasant Dance," "The Peasant and the Birdsnester," "The Misanthrope," maybe "The Parable of the Bad Shepherd" (which lives in Philadelphia!), "The Parable of the Blind," and "The Magpie on the Gallows." So it's not quite like a novel in terms of how long it takes to do it. But a B painting does feel like more than a short story, it feels like a novel in that it contains a whole world.

Maybe the 2D nature of a painting's presentation makes it easier to instantly evoke that sensation (as opposed to the 1D crawl through a book's words). Not that paintings and books really have to be comparable anyway. But it's interesting to think about. A big trick in either one is how to suggest the endless levels of Nature's detail

with the radically finite resources of a square meter of canvas or a hundred thousand words.

Painting uses the trick of perspective at the high end, and, at the low end, the fact that the fractal structure of paint is like (as above so below) the fractal structure of plants and dirt. Writing uses, maybe, the trick of narrative at the high end and, at the low end, the telling detail, especially the "random" detail. At first it doesn't look like writing owns a shortcut fractal trick like paint-scumbling. But yes it does, the fractal, multiply linked nature of language is the Muse's gift to writers: the way that a word can mean so much more than it "ought" to, just those few little letters, but it hooks into all these associations and manages, like paint, to signify more than itself.

October 19, 1998. Objects talking to me.

Working on a cabinet yesterday, drilling holes to add a catch, I noticed once again how tools and objects always "talk" to me when I work with them. Bruegel's pictures talk to him as he works. And looking at an orange, candle-lit pumpkin in the evening, I was marveling at all the oranges in it. And the dark lines of shadow and the whitish lines of light.

October 23, 1998. Email DiFilippo. Dick & writing non-SF novel.

[Message 1]

I sent REALWARE off to Avon, and a nonfiction anthology called SEEK! to John Oakes. I'm on sabbatical and feel like writing a lot. I'm in fact just now (as of yesterday) started on a new novel that will, I think, be historical and not SF at all. Called, I think, *Ortelius and Bruegel*. My real interest is the 16th C Flemish painter Bruegel, but for a foil I plan to put in his friend Abraham Ortels (a.k.a. Ortelius) a mapmaker who produced the first atlas in 1570, the year after Bruegel died, too young, only about 45. An obvious role model for me is Mason and Dixon, and I think I will use Pynchon's move of writing the whole thing in present tense, as if narrating a movie or something I'm watching. Which of course is what I will be doing, watching it in the chamber of my skull, and looking forward to it. It's such an interesting tale and period that I feel adding on SF would just be gilding the lily. And would of course, as usual, guarantee its relegation to our usual genre urinal, I mean file-drawer. I mean if these slumming literary types can write an SF thing and get it out in the fucking New Yorker, like Martin Amis this week, an SFster oughtta be able to write a non-SF book, right. I am, however, sensitive to a feeling I did have when reading one of Phil Dick's non-SF books that he was like HOLDING OUT ON ME. I'd be like, alright here's the usual depressing repetitive people, Phil, but where's the redemptive brain-rush of the fab SF? So in reading a non-SF book by me, some scientifiction aficionados might also think, alright Rucker where's the GOOD STUFF.

[Message 2, a half hour later.] Having just sent you that email and laid down on my couch looking at fat Mason and Dixon and the page or so I've written on ORTELIUS AND BRUEGEL, and seeing how hard it would be, in fact, to use Pynchon's present tense style which is at the same time hopping from consciousness to consciousness including subtly his own yet not falling ever into the tar pit of Wandering Viewpoint, as I say, seeing how hard it is and doubting I could do it, I feel like a vain blowhard to have

been saying I would. In addition I feel uneasy about trumpeting to you my plan for the book, I have a sinking don't leave-the-game-in-the-locker-room kind of thought. And fourth wouldn't want to bruit this plan about far and wide, certainly, before getting a good solid start on it.

So take all I said with a huge grain of salt, and keep mum to all and sundry about my dream of a plan, this a mere between the sheets murmur that hopeful the Ghost of Quackly Manor himself won't overhear.

October 26, 1998. Email to Greg. Should I use a pseudonym for Bruegel?

My next book is looking like it may well be a non-SF novel about Bruegel. I'm fooling around writing on a first chapter. I don't want to say "historical novel" as that's kind of a genre in itself and the dream is to get out of genre-hood. Funny that I'm thinking of doing this, as last time you were here, Greg, you were saying, "Rudy why don't you write a historical novel, like the first half of HOLLOW EARTH but without all that fucking science fiction in the second half," and I was all defiant and defensive and, "That would be as lame as Joey Ramone playing jazz." Though then we remembered that Charlie Watts plays jazz.

I'm a little worried that a book by RR, people might feel short-changed if there's no SF in it. S had this idea that maybe for my Bruegel novel I should use a pseudonym, then also I'd probably have a better chance of a good advance. Maybe Jan Bitters should be my name. Of course then maybe nobody would publish it at all. I've never yet had more than one publisher offer to publish one of my books, so it always feels really marginal like I could so easily not get out at all.

October 27, 1998. How historically accurate do I have to be with Bruegel?

I have people in the "square by the Our Lady," yet, strictly speaking, they'd be in the Grootemarktplatz which is one block over. On the other hand, Bruegel's "Battle of Carnival and Lent" shows a square with a church on it. So which am I to be faithful to, the historical geographical place or the place shown in Brueghel's paintings? It seems better to go with the paintings, to allow myself the same freedom as Brueghel, to combine and condense the scenes as needed.

Here's a relevant passage from [Tolnay] p. 46, where he's talking about how B would combine parts of disparate landscape drawings into single scenes for his engravings, or would take one drawing apart and use the pieces in separate engravings.

"Thus we see how the artist disposed with sovereign freedom the store of motifs which he had garnered in his preliminary sketches, arranging them, unfettered by any petty considerations of literal truth, and mindful only of the inner reality of his creations. We see him now combining things actually unrelated to a new, convincing and firmly constructed unity, and now separating what seemed at first inseparable, thereupon to weld the parts again into new and independent unities."

December 21, 1998. Difficulty getting The Life of Bruegel started.

I've been worrying about how to continue the Bruegel book, I got 20 pages done and then I couldn't see where I was going, the chapter goes off on a tangent with Ortelius seeing Christopher Plantin get stabbed, and Bruegel nowhere around. I've been feeling a

little despairing about the book, almost like giving up, but it's just too rich to give up on, there's so much material and I want so much to write it. Today I went back and started a new chapter from B's point of view, which I'd been kind of scared to do, but it's going good, I'm doing B in the Alps drawing. I think I'll call it *The Life of Bruegel*, not *Ortelius and Bruegel*, as I don't care enough about Ortelius to want him to take up half the book. I may instead have a series of other p.o.v. to alternate with Bruegel's p.o.v.

Bruce Sterling got a rave 2 page review of his new book *Distraction in Time* magazine. I wrote him an email he answered, kind of funny, I pasted it into my Journal. As always, I wonder if I should be more like Sterling. But of course it's quite impossible, I can only be like Rudy. I can only write what I want to write. But certainly *The Life of Bruegel* is not all that likely to be a runaway best-seller. When I was at the World Fantasy Convention in Monterey at Halloween I talked to this successful old SF writer, Robert Silverberg, and he was like "Yeah, I wrote a historical novel, it didn't do too well. And Jack Dann did one, and so-and-so did one..." Like writing a historical novel is a not-so-unusual thing for an SF writer to do, a kind of foible, a little vacation from SF. Maybe it comes naturally to us, given our expertise at imagining *other worlds*. Silverberg was encouraging though, he was like, "Get it out of your system, write what you have to, the main thing is to keep writing, and don't ruin it by trying to make it an SF book, what is Bruegel going to do, get a new kind of paint from the saucer aliens? No, just go ahead and do it with integrity."

I'm getting a new \$3,280 computer tomorrow, they always cost that much because I always add on features to get to that level. I'll be able then to work on my *Software Projects* book, hopefully. On my existing computer, whenever I try and work on the current file for the book, my machine crashes because, I think, the file is too big for the RAM, and when I try and add RAM to this pieced-together old box it crashes even more. I'm starting to feel like working on this book at last, if only to get a break from the struggle of fictionalizing! I still have thoughts about the non-technical non-fiction computer book I'd like to do. Today I like the title *After Computers* for it.

February 19, 1999. At the Van Eyck to Bruegel show at the Met.

"Distemper" is tempera on linen, can be rolled up for portability, a plus in selling to foreigners. There was a big Bosch in the 16th Century. The source of all those "Temptation of Saint Anthony" pictures is something in the Golden Legend, a 13th Century guy called Jacobus de Voraigne.

A lot of the Netherlandish artists did portraits, many of rich Italian bankers like from the Medici family.

A polyptych is an altarpiece type work on multiple canvases.

Patinir's "Penitence of St. Jerome."

Joos van Cleve has a picture with a landscape background, a portrait, and a foreground still-life.

There was a yearly art fair called a Pand where everyone had art booths.

March 2, 1999. Email to Laidlaw about my Bruegel.

I'm doing it as a fairly straight historical novel. Not too much known about his life, so I have a fair amount of freedom. Though there's plenty of facts about the times

(1550 in the now-Belgian part of Netherlands). I'm staring at his pictures a lot to get the local color and to find things to describe inside the scenes. I don't have a clear overall plot yet. My initial plan is to have each chapter about 6,000 words long and have it have the integrity of a short story. The general plot may simply follow his life, the struggle to become an established artist, the marriage, the too-early death (~42). I don't think I'll spring any SF rabbits.

Initially I thought I *had* to put in SF, but now I don't think so. I'm pretty sure I can sell it somewhere and it's something I want to do. I've always wanted to get *into* B's paintings, and this is a way to do it. I broached the idea to the strangely friendly Robert Silverberg at the World Fantasy Con, and he was all, "Oh yeah, most SF writers do a historical sooner or later. And don't worry about putting in SF. You don't need the Saucers to be giving Bruegel a new color of paint. Just do the book."

I think I saw that book you mentioned [Peter Beagle apparently wrote a book about *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, which was essentially a piece of layman's art criticism, with I guess some historical and maybe some fictional stuff thrown in]. Ian Watson also did a book with a similar title that is an SF novel on a planet that "is" that painting. At this point I would not want to see either book, due to the "anxiety of influence." From my glances at them, I thought they sucked, it goes without saying, I thought they didn't carry the full weight of being a novel, instead expected the very existence of the painting to do the heavy lifting of reader mesmerization. My goal in *The Life of Bruegel* is to create a verbal equivalent of his works, not by describing them, but by creating an equivalent atmosphere from words. It might be nice to have some reproductions in my book, but I'm writing assuming there won't be any, assuming in fact that the reader might not see a single one of B's paintings ever, this self-denial is to focus the intensity of the task I need to do. Maybe you had something similar in mind with your photo-related novel?

March 10, 1999. The Images.

It might be nice — or maybe not — to have a postscript to the book with a kind of "overlay" like they have for the Bruegel *Wimmelbilder*, with each reference named. My overlay would indicate which pictures were being used where. I might as well document this in any case, so I'll add an Overlay section to these notes.

April 26, 1999. Back to Work.

I've been away from *The Life of Bruegel* for about six weeks now.

I was working on my *Software Projects* textbook like a fiend, then sent a chunk off to Addison-Wesley and stopped for awhile, maybe till July. It was starting to feel like it was coming together, but it's a kind of work that's very robotic and unsatisfying, just a kind of hack'n'type as fast as you can kind of thing, with never enough hours in the day. Feels too much like I'm back at work teaching. If I hit it again in July I should be able to get a reasonable draft done in time for Fall term anyway. Also might as well wait and see what A-W says.

So then I was working on a great short story called "The Square Root of Pythagoras" with Paul Di Filippo, that really came out well, a gem, the work of a mature master, made all the better by Di Filippo's enthusiasm, planning, and plot and style ideas.

One for the ages, dramatizing Pythagoras's discovery that the ratio between a square's diagonal and its side is *apeiron*, that is not equal to any ratio of whole numbers. I started it at Di Filippo's while visiting him, we started it right after I'd been telling him about my nightmare vision of the Beetlejuice Monkey at the Mondo house years ago, and he was right on that, and worked that fuckin' Beetle into the first sentence of the story as one of the *apeiron* beings Pythagoras is having nightmares about! I think of the Beetle as a 3D Mandelbrot set, something I've always wanted to see.

I did the last touch-up on Pythagoras today and mailed it off along with something else I finished today, a paper called "Continuous-Valued Cellular Automata in Two Dimensions," it's for a proceedings volume for the Constructive CAs conference I went to in Santa Fe this fall. It came out pretty well, too, nice tables and figures and equations and footnotes. Even went up to Stanford with Sylvia on Saturday and checked out two references I'd heard of. I feel like a real mathematician and litterateur, sending out these two items.

I am so eager to get back to Bruegel now, the break has made me really long for the book. I made towards it while waiting for Sylvia at Monterey Community College a couple of weeks ago when we went down there for the day.

June 14, 1999. Reasons for Writing the Bruegel Book.

It's time to knock off for the summer and get to work on my SJSU stuff. So I finished Chapter Five, and, with that, Part One of the book and plan to send it off to the agent and some publishers. And I'm working on a proposal to accompany the chunk. Here's something I wrote about why I want to write the book. I don't plan to include this in the proposal after all — editors are interested in why people might *read* my book more than in why I want to *write* it, this not being, after all, a grant application. So I actually changed this into that kind of a passage.

By the way, after much internal debate, inertial won out and I'm sending it to Susan Protter as usual. Our plan is straightforward: send the manuscript to my three current publishers, Avon, Tor, and Four Walls Eight Windows.

Anyway here's the draft reasons why I want to write the book:

My first reason for writing the book is that I have a lifelong fascination with Bruegel's paintings. I've always longed to *go inside* the worlds of Bruegel's paintings, and this is my way of getting there. Some parts of the book will in fact be set inside the scenes which Bruegel shows.

A second reason for the book is that I'm interested in trying to understand and mimic the way in which this great artist works. Bruegel's paintings are informed by such rich and loving observation; his realism is so uniquely compassionate. Bruegel shows humankind as an integral part of the world. My hope for the book is that I can write a story which has the qualities as Bruegel's pictures.

A third reason for writing *Bruegel* is that I think there are a number of interesting parallels between Bruegel's time and our own. The invention of perspective and the printing press caused an intellectual revolution similar to that we're currently undergoing as a result of the invention of the computer and the Web. Great injustices were carried out under the name of religion, and today we see this happening as well.

A final reason for my wanting to write a life of Bruegel is that I feel a personal

resonance with the man. As a science-fiction writer, I relate to Bruegel's occasional demonic imagery. As a cyberpunk, I enjoy Bruegel's frequent vulgarity. As a transrealist, I like to present ordinary life in a transcendental way, which is the essence of Bruegel's later works.

September 11, 1999. Doubts about Bruegel.

So now I'm back at SJSU again. It's been a mixed bag. On the one hand it's nice to see the students, in their great diversity and humanity. Nice to be dealing with real people instead of with the endless, ever-increasing flow of email to answer.

Avon turned down the Bruegel proposal, not enough historical detail and they didn't like the present tense. Four Walls Eight Windows turned it down, he has no interest in the subject and found it odd the book was in the "first person" (it's not). Hartwell at Tor hasn't read it yet, and who knows if he will.

I blew the rest of the summer after Vienna working on my Software Engineering book, *Live Windows*. I did a lot of hacking to get the code for it done, and it's still not all done, it still needs a couple more programs. I'm using the first 140,000 words of the book as a text in my course though. Sent a copy off to Addison-Wesley.

I've been away from Bruegel so long I'm losing confidence. Should I change it all to past tense? Should I add science fiction? I could do the tense thing, but I don't see that as the key thing. I mean Pynchon writes historicals in present tense, Neal Stephenson's new historical *Necronomicon* is present tense, and this book I read today, *Headlong* by Michael Frayn is present tense. I read *Headlong* because it's a new book, with a front page NY Times review about ... a man who finds the missing sixth canvas in Bruegel's "The Six Seasons" cycle. Written by a British playwright.

September 13, 1999. Rededication to the Great Work.

Today I reread the Bruegel manuscript. The tense works fine, I don't see any reason to change that. And the book has such integrity and flow. I can't easily see jerrybuilding an SF time-travel thing onto it, though possibly there could be some magic involving Williblad Cheroo. Really, damn it, the Life itself is so interesting, I just want to write that. And I think the book thus far is as good as anything I've ever written. I need to just finish it. If I focus, maybe I can finish it by next June, and if it's not a moneymaker, so be it, I'll write a moneymaker next, maybe.

December 26, 1999. Half done.

The Bruegel book, called *Bruegel : A Novel* is moving along nicely, I keep managing to get back to it, getting respites from the blood-lust hacking frenzies. I've got 52 thousand words done now, with a projected length of 90 to 100 thousand. Eight chapters done with, say, seven to go. Each chapter is like a short story, I'm using the "long breath" I used in *Realware*, of having each chapter contain an entire arc of narrative. Starting each new chapter is, thus, an effort, as each time I have to figure out a nice thing for it. Each chapter also a bit like a painting, of course.

I did go ahead and change the book to past tense in the hopes that'll help make it easier to sell. I had some nice correspondence with Michael Frayn, I even found a mistake in his book *Headlong* that he says he'll correct in paperback.

December 31, 1999. A fancy edition.

It would, after all, be nice to have good color or at least black and white reproductions of the Bruegel paintings in my book. Although I've been writing it without consciously expecting to have the illos, I myself am in fact very aware of the pictures as I write and reread. I have the pictures at my fingertips. And many people I mention the book to --- in fact most people --- really don't know what Bruegel's paintings look like. Isn't it a bit quixotic and self-deluding to imagine that the book without the illustrations could work as well for them as a book with the illustrations? Wouldn't it be vain and foolish for me to think that I have so well translated B into words that there's no need for the illos? Wouldn't it be nice to really do the book right?

What I have in mind by "doing it right" is something like the following. Have all the illos (other than the drawings) in color. Have illos both of the whole pictures mentioned and of the details mentioned. Have the illos without captions, just smoothly dropped into the text, with the text flowing around them in the case of small details, or with the text taking up part of the page when the image is large. Have a list of captions keyed to the page numbers in back. (Maybe have an annotated bibliography in back, maybe van Mander's piece, maybe a timeline? Probably better not to do academic overkill.) To begin with, I think I should make up a mock-up of what I have in mind, print the colored pages out in color, and submit it to publishers in that form. I would need to figure out how to put illos nicely into Word or it might be worthwhile getting hold of Pagemaker from that ex-student of mine who works for Adobe and using that. Maybe I could get Georgia to help me a little. Eventually I'd need to find out about getting hold of photo rights and what it would cost to print in color.

Although I'm writing the book with the intention that it be able to stand alone simply as pure text, I think I'd rather submit it in the fancy format, so that the publishers would think of doing it that way from the start. There could be a kind of positive effect of the book's production expense make it seem like a more interesting project to them. I saw a slogan recently, "If you settle for less than you think you're worth, you'll get less than you imagined."

March 7, 2000. Letter to Holt.

Mr. John Macrae, Henry Holt & Company, 115 West 18th. St., New York 10011
Dear Mr. Macrae,

I'm the author of twenty-one published books, and I'd like you to consider publishing my new novel *Bruegel*. I enclose a list of my book publications and a proposal for the *Bruegel* book.

The reason I thought of submitting this book to Henry Holt & Company is two-fold. Firstly, I very much enjoyed Michael Frayn's novel *Headlong*, which involved a fair amount of Bruegel scholarship. Secondly, in this weekend's Times book review, I read about Peter Robb's *M: The Man Who Became Caravaggio*. This book sounds rather similar in scope and intent to my own work-in-progress.

If you're interested, I'd be glad to send you the manuscript, which is presently about 3/4 done. I will in fact be on a visit to New York from March 24 to March 29, and would be delighted to meet with you in person, if you think this might be fruitful.

My literary agent Susan Protter says she knows you; her phone number is

(212)840-0480.

March 10, 2000. The pictures change as I work.

I'm finally on *The Hunters in the Snow*. I've been a little scared of this one. It's a big chapter I've looked forward to.

Just now I had a kind of spooky-feeling experience. I figured out that Peter would be using a Belgian wagon to haul his six *Seasons* pictures up to Antwerp, and I was wondering if a wagon like that could make it through the snow, and I looked over at the *Hunters in the Snow* that I have on my wall by my desk, and it felt like there was this twinkling in the middle of the picture, and then all of a sudden there was a Belgian wagon there.

I'm imagining, just for fun, that the Belgian wagon didn't "used" to be in the *Hunters in the Snow*. That in fact Bruegel's pictures are changing a little bit as I write about them. But the changes are uniform across all of spacetime, so when my copy of *Hunters in the Snow* changes, so do all the others, and all of everyone's memories about the picture. Reality shifts to a slightly different parallel sheet. And I only notice this at the instant it happens, and even then I can never be sure.

More realistically, reality hasn't changed, it's my mind that changed. The Belgian wagon was always there, but I wasn't aware of it. But I might have been subconsciously aware of it, and already been integrating it into my plans. At the instant when I consciously see it, yes all of the *Hunters in the Snow* in MY world do change: they didn't used to have a Belgian wagon because I didn't notice it any of the copies. But now I notice it in all the copies. So "all the copies have changed."

March 31, 2000. Trip to NYC.

I saw David Hartwell of Tor in NY and he was pretty encouraging about publishing Bruegel. He said color illos were out of the question, but maybe I could do black and white.

Susan Protter mentioned the two novels *Girl with Pearl Earring* and *The Blue Flower* being about Dutch painters or paintings and that I should see who published them.

May 4, 2000. Home stretch.

I really feel like I'm on the home stretch now. I finally got Chapter 15 started today. For each of these ending chapters I'm having to absorb all these minutiae of the turbulent history of the Netherlands during the year being depicted, and then I digest it and have it come out smooth and natural, as easily as a couple talking in bed. Once I can get the first few pages of each chapter the rest comes pretty easy. I'm trying to give each chapter it's own contained shape, so the book is a little like a series of linked short stories. Having color illos seems less important to me than it did awhile ago, I think I was obsessing about it as a way of avoiding the hard work of the finish.

May 18, 2000. I'm finished.

I wrote the last page on May 15. Now I proofed Chaps 11-16 and need to type in the changes and then I think I can print it, Xerox it, and send it off. It seems like a wonderful book. Very moving. What a thing it is, to have achieved this years-long

dream. I hardly know what to think. I don't think I could have pulled it off if I hadn't been sober.

On May 16, I ran off to a meeting with the Mondo crew — R. U. Sirius, Queen Mu, St. Jude and Bart Nagel — to discuss helping to edit a new Mondo book like *The User's Guide* we did in 1992. Frightened of the vacuum of no project, maybe. On more mature consideration, working on the Mondo project doesn't seem like a great idea. As Susan once told me, "choose your projects, don't let the projects choose you."

Regarding the illos for the book, they no longer seem so important at all. Maybe I'll forgo them entirely, no point in putting off the publishers. After somebody decides to buy it, we might discuss that possibility. But no point in adding that baggage now. It feels to me as if maybe the descriptions of the pictures are enough.

As for the cover illustration, I kind of lean towards *The Beekeepers*. It's so surrealistic and not like what people expect, it's really very much like a Magritte. And it would be a kick for the reader to find out my version of the secret meaning of the picture in the last two chapters.

May 24, 2000. Ready to mail it off.

Day before yesterday I stayed up till 1AM scanning my sixteen chapter pictures into the Photoshop I just installed for this purpose. I sized them all to be a full page, put them into black and white, and twiddled the contrast. Only scanned at 300 dpi as otherwise the computer tends to choke. They look pretty good, not great, but good enough, and they'd be better in print.

Yesterday I got six Xeroxes made at Staples, and last night started reading it from the start and of course I'm finding so many errors in the early chapters that I'm going to have to reprint them again.

For now I'm planning to send it to Susan and to Hartwell at Tor. Susan may send it on to some others, though her inclination is just to go with Tor if they'll take it. She thinks it wiser to stay with a publisher rather than hopping around.

Just now, as chance would have it, a package of the Portuguese edition of Software arrived at my door. And what do they have on the cover? A detail of Bosch's *Removal of the Stone of Folly*. It's like I really *am* Bruegel, at some level!

Rereading the book, I decided to change the title of Chapter Four to *The Fall of Icarus* instead of *Winter Landscape with Bird Trap*. It fits better, and the former is a much more popular picture. Earlier I'd resisted using *Icarus* out of a perverse desire not to use the first Bruegel picture that many people mention, but why should I do that? Also I hadn't realized where to use it, before I'd thought for Chapter Five, but it doesn't exactly work there. *Icarus* is perfect for B hooking up with Anja in Chap Four. What they see out the window really is *Winter Landscape with Bird Trap*, but that can just be a secret treat.

OK, now I reread and reprinted Chaps 1-6. I'm going out now to Xerox those fixes, and then I'll going to send copies of the book to Susan, Hartwell, Greg, Hennie and Michael Beeson, and my Hollywood agent Freedman (I talked to an exec at Phoenix today and he was sort of interested, also Freedman, once I told him there's lots of killing and lots of sex.)

I still can't believe it's done. Thank you, God! Thank you, Peter!

June 26, 2000. Brussels sights and visit to Ghent.

So now I'm back in Belgium on vacation with Sylvia.

The most impressive thing is the Grand Place. Here there is a beer hall called Roy D'Espagne. Hanging from all the lamps are inflated pigs bladders. Rustling, crisp membranes. The traditional symbol of folly.

Paul Delvaux was a Belgian Surrealist who lived to be 90. He liked to paint nude women in cityscapes. In the Bourse Metro stop in Brussels is a big mural by him put up in the 1970s. It's on an arch above the tracks. The tracks run out from under it. It has women — clothed — and lots of trolleys. The painting seems a bit cheesy, a bit primitive, until the actual metro cars roll out from under it, looking very much like the trolleys in the picture. Magic.

I see Bruegel's *Bridal Procession* in the Musée Communale of Brussels, which is a hodgepodge collection with a few artworks, some models of the city and a collection of Manikin Pis costumes. I make some notes on the painting, but I'll paste those into the Bruegel novel notes rather than here.

Outside the museum is a plaque commemorating the beheading of Egmont and de Hoorne on this very spot. The Dutch word for "beheaded" is "*onthoofd*." Plural of *Graf* is *Graven*.

I see a 1600 painting of some nobles and a Duke's body lying in state. I notice that some of their lace ruff collars are folded in a chaotic fractal fashion rather than in the traditional series of lemniscate shapes. The folds bump up and push into each other like the curves of a coastline. Use a collar like this for Peter at his wedding.

The trees in the *Bridal Procession* are a series of arcs. Later on a bike tour in Bruges I see a lot of these trees and realize that Bruegel was simply painting the actual trees he saw: my bike-tour guide calls them poplars.

Official documents have big red disk seals. The seal of Brussels has the archangel Michael with a sword. The documents are slit along the bottoms so a strip dangles, and the seal is affixed to the strip.

Black letter bibles with illuminations.

Ships *did* sail on the Willebroek canal, at least in one direction. A horse pulled them in the other direction, using an exceedingly long tow-rope. They had huge keels attached to their sides like the canoe in Maine to control sideways drift. They were called barques.

On the train to Ghent (Gand in Flemish) I look out the window. Hedges between fields, well not exactly hedges, more disorganized and natural. Bushes and little trees grown up along the fence line.

The cows in the fields, some lying down, just like in B's pictures.

We come upon a Renaissance Faire in the heart of Ghent. People in costumes in striped tents, hay bales scattered around. There are jugglers, bagpipers, dancers, acrobats, a strongman, some play chess. For 200 BF (about \$3) I am allowed to shoot a crossbow four times — this is so synchronistic, as I had B do this in the book. A woman in a Renaissance velvet dress instructs me, speaking softly in Flemish. Her skin is clear, her eyes a wonderful pale gray blue, pink cheeks. Her voice like a quiet trickle of water. I get worried I won't be able to handle the bow and ask her to switch to English, but for the rest of day I regret this, wishing I could have heard more of that low, quiet Flemish from

a “Mayken.”

Sylvia and I sit in a cafe called Zenon. A feeling of deep peace. The owner helps his little spotted dog to hop up onto a chair next to a boy with his mother.

The gray sky.

The watery feel of the fire at the Renaissance Faire, it's flames pale in the daylight, the eye-smarting smoke welcome enough, as it accompanies the heat. A man wears a shirt divided vertically, brown on the left, red on the right.

I look up Belgian plants in a bookstore.

Trees: Chestnut, ash, beech, lime (linden), cypress, maple, oak, holly, yew, poplar.

Shrubs: Juniper, hornbeam hedge, witchhazel.

Flowers: foxglove, lavender, ivy, roses.

Sunday there's a bird market in the Grand Place. Some beautiful little birds like Easter eggs that have different segments dipped in separate colors. They're Gouldian Finches from Australia.

I visit the museum of Chocolate. Chocolate didn't come to Europe until the 1500s, with the first major shipment to Spain in, oh-oh, 1585. Though Cortez brought a bit of it back in 1528. The encyclopedia says cocoa was only a fashionable beverage in 1707. Coffee came from Arabia to Turkey during the 1500s and to Europe in the 1600s.

I imagine that B would see the brush strokes that it would take to paint something. Looking at a flower, he'd see a stroke per petal. A hand. His hand might twitch a little as he looks, as if holding a brush.

Note also B's ability to see outlines. Like Toulouse-Lautrec. The masses and shapes. Seeing patches.

Different levels of sight: brushstrokes, patches, the landscape, people's faces and emotions.

The beer wagons in *The Numbering at Bethlehem*.

That winter day...

On my last visit to the Royal Fine Arts Museum, I notice my feeling of being rushed when I look at B's pictures. My avidity. My desire to cloak myself in the borrowed plumage of B's pictures. To take them on, to possess them. An ignoble emotion. Avid. Like the scenesters derided by Thomas Merton in *Zen and the Birds of Appetite*. Of the avid twinkling: imagine someone hungrily trying to be *me*. The fruitlessness of the task. I'm often just worrying about trivia. Only fitfully am I “awake.” Can I let go now? Bruegel was a man. A human. I don't have to be cool. Let him rest.

In the *Fall of the Rebel Angels*, a wonderful *kwaad kuiken* with a *kwaad ei*. I sketch it in my notebook.

The feeling that I missed *something*. I didn't make B active enough. His observation is an *act*. I made him too passive. Like me. A despairing feeling that, in the end, I don't really know Bruegel at all. Borges says some things like this about B's contemporary Shakespeare in “Everything and Nothing.” [Collected Fictions, pp. 319-320.]

“There was no one inside him; behind his face and his words there was no more than a slight chill, a dream someone had failed to dream. At first he thought that everyone was like him, but he surprise and

bewilderment of an acquaintance to whom he began to describe that hollowness showed him his error...

“[He] trained himself to the habit of feigning that he was somebody, so that his ‘nobodiness’ might not be discovered...No one was as man men as that man — that man whose repertoire was all the appearances of being.

“...one morning he was overwhelmed with the surfeit and horror of being so many [people].

“...before or after he died, he discovered himself standing before God, and said to Him: *I, who have been so many men in vain, wish to be one, to be myself.* God’s voice answered: *I, too, am not I; I dreamed the world as you, Shakespeare, dreamed your own work, and among the forms of my dream are you, who like me are many, yet no one.*”

--- J. L. Borges

Someone dragging out a pig to slaughter. Holding him by his ear.

In Icarus, the perspective is off, the ship is too big compared to how far it looks.

Icarus looks too big compared to the ship.

Amazing how the fields out the train window are still B’s fields.

I need more deft facial descriptions. Two or three adjectives (cf. brushstrokes) to capture some distinct essence.

Her small mouth like a slit in the crust of an uncooked pie.

Her lower jaw jutted in a way that made him imagine the skull beneath her slightly blemished skin.

Meekly fuzzed pate bowed in a doze.

The girl with the sweet rectangular face, private and dreaming. Serious. Her rapid long legs. Her left foot kicks out with each step. Life is no laughing matter.

Woman on the boat. Big teeth, flat greasy hair, a smile like a grimace.

A man playing cards. Long gentle eyelashes like a calf’s. A crisp line of nose, a mouth with a sensual wriggle. His legs shorter than expected.

Man smoking. Face blooming with broken veins, hair like straw, eyes mild and fearful.

Woman reading. Dour little mouth, eyes two lines, a slight hook to her nose.

Woman telling me to move. Lower lip longer than her mouth is wide, the lip projecting forward.

Flemish woman in the art museum in Bruges. White long blouse, red skirt, white hair, transparent old skin, knobbed features, bright blue eyes.

June 28, 2000. Bruges, a bike tour through Bruegel’s landscapes.

Bruges was called “Bruges-la-morte” at the turn of the century, Bruges the Dead. It’s a fully medieval town; in spots you can stand in an intersection and see only sixteenth-century buildings in every direction, along with lovely canals. Almshouses, palaces. Very Bruegelian.

We see a few pictures in a local museum. There’s a Flemish woman there I stare at. She’s suspicious of my intent gaze. Sylvia says I do this: “You stare really hard at

someone and smile vaguely. They don't know you're already thinking about something else, but forgot to move your neck." There's copy of Bruegel painting there, and the Flemish woman says "Brögel." Not Broogel or Broygel but Broegel or Brögel.

A painting by Rogier van der Weyden, *St. Luke Painting the Virgin*, 1435. It belonged to the chapel of the Brussels Painters' Guild.

I go on a bike tour. I listen to one of the tourists talking, Julie from Florida, who has a perfect California-girl accent. I figure the trick is to drop your jaw slack (as if in shock) at the end of the words you wish to emphasize. Go straight to open-mouthed astonishment. So say "It was EMP-taaah," instead of "It was EMP-TEE."

So then I'm out in the Bruegel landscapes, really and truly in them. The tall gently curving trees that I'd noticed so much in pictures like *Sermon of John the Baptist* or *Magpie on the Gallows* or *The Harvesters*. They line the canals, they are, says the guide when I ask, poplars. Heart-shaped leaves.

The knobbed Flemish trees with sprouts coming out of them are willows. The peasants cut of the branches each year because a sprouting tree sucks up twice as much water from the ground, and one of the reasons to have a tree is to dry the soil.

I sketch a little landscape near Damme, perfect Bruegel scenery. A huge stench from the cows, a different stink from the sheep.

July 10, 2000. Hartwell wants revisions.

I find this in an email from Hartwell at Tor. He wants revisions before considering making an offer.

"The major stuff: I don't feel that Peter is a rounded character, nor that any of the other major characters are sufficiently developed (although Mayken finally comes close). Williblad is potentially a great character, the Indian trickster transplanted to Europe — but his motivations never make enough sense. Ortelius is likeable, but the dots are not all connected (religion, perversity, intellectual fascination with maps, etc.). And most centrally, Peter never comes alive except when he's talking/thinking about a painting. His feelings are reported, not felt. I don't for a minute believe he'd make up with Williblad after Mayken's fling.

"What's good about the book is the richness of detail about the background. It's like you painted the background of a Bruegel painting without the foreground images. The real title for the manuscript as it stands is "Glimpses of Bruegel, at Important Moments." But that's not enough for a fully satisfying novel."

So, *sigh*, I take this in and write back:

"I'm glad to hear you're still interested in the Bruegel book. The revisions you suggest are useful and reasonable. As you say, this draft is a bit like an underpainting that needs to have the foreground figures fleshed out. The task now is to make Peter, Ortelius, Williblad and Mayken more solid. I have some ideas about how to do it: my plan is to give them more individualizing traits, greatly expand their internal monologues, and thicken the interactions they have with each other. Any further suggestions you might have before I start the revisions would be appreciated."

In the meantime, Susan also has an editor named Hillary at Dutton (publishers of *Girl with Pearl Earring*) looking at it, so we'll see what she says. Probably she would say something like Hartwell, so I'm going to start thinking about how to do it.

I really hate the cheap way that mainstream novels go about doing a characterization by simply having internal monologues in which the characters repeat over and over and over the same thoughts. It's so trashy and obvious, so middlebrow, such a dumb trick. Nyoo-na-nyoo-na-nyoo, nyoo-na-nyoo-na-nyoo, nyoo-na-nyoo-na-nyoo, nyoo-na-nyoo-na-nyoo, over and over. "I'm proud and need money" or "Does he love me," like that. So fucking boring. That's why so many stupid books are so fat. Page after page of repeating each character's nyoo-na. Maybe I need to try using the nyoo-na trick, and I'm just resisting here. "Wheenk" is a better name than "Nyoo-na." Look at my thoughts for instance, they do that too, the nyoo-na treadmill. But to me it's always seemed so lame to write like that, it makes me want to scream. But has this been like a conscious artistic decision of mine or has it been a kind of fear and laziness?

One way out, a little bit, is to have Bruegel NOT think the same things twice. I'd like to use that "hollow" characterization that Borges gives of Shakespeare. Make B kind of cold.

July 20, 2000. Greg Gibson's comments.

I sent Greg the Bruegel manuscript when I sent it to Hartwell, and Greg eventually emailed me a bunch of comments, a series of emails while he was reading the book. I'll excerpt them here.

"I'm about half way through the first volume right now, reading it before bed every night, and enjoying it. It seems to have a determined air of innocent sweetness, as if that's how you saw the period, or saw it through B's art. Which surprises me, since I was expecting something grittier and rawer somehow.(maybe how I see the period.)

"If I have any criticism so far it's only that the story doesn't seem to be getting anywhere; that it's just a picaresque adventure which, because it's Bruegel, isn't enough. I like that Ortelius is gay, and I LOVED the barroom brawl which I just finished... ended last night with Plantin getting knifed... But your TOR editor is right, I think. The characters have too much surface, need more interior.

"Just about finished that first half, and it's taking on the aura of a fairy tale... All these great names turning up in the same yarn like a Doctorow book is fun. The way Bruegel can get knocked unconscious with a blow to the head then get up and negotiate three commissions also has that fabular element. In real life he'd be in the hospital. In a detective novel there'd be a paragraph about the headache and nausea, comparing it unfavorably to the aftermath of a binge drunk. The delicately non-explicit sex, hetero and homo, also adds to this air.

"I want more cityscapes and room descriptions, character delineations, etc. You're very good at those, and they're satisfying and add to the magical sense.

"Maybe the characters DON'T need more interior, but something like the fabular aspect ought to be ratcheted up a bit. I want to know I'm engrossed in a TALE not just another historical novel...

"The story didn't really get rolling till the peasant wedding, (B crawling over the corpse!) and nothing happens inside him until Anja fucks him over. That takes 120 pages, and I think it's just too long for any reader, not just me.

"Painting-as-chapter-theme is a good idea, but it doesn't really sustain interest in your main character.

“I think all your subsidiary characters are marvelous. You paint them as Bruegel did. But really, we need something going on inside Bruegel to keep us with the story. Like those great, odd flashes he has where everything in the world starts looking like a symbol... that way you have of showing him, in that instance from the inside out, is lacking in the first part of the book and needs to be there.

“One thing I'd change is the reunion scene between Peter & Mayken after the foiled assassination. It reads too much like a horse opera... I mean, it's been done before. You wouldn't have to change much to make it less corny. Maybe she hears it's Peter who's been stabbed and realizes the depth of her feeling for him... Of course, all the ways of getting the boy & girl together have been done before, but having them just stand there and declare is probably the least interesting way of handling this emotionally satisfying scene.

“Just got to Waf's death scene. Very well rendered! I swear you've got at least as much pooch sensibility as you do human. And they called me the Dog...

“Minor criticism for this section... The list of Guilds in the city square appeared in alphabetical order. You might as well cut the section out of the encyclopedia and staple it to the page...

“Finished it. Very touching, Roo. Last couple of chaps. very sweet.

“Also, I forgot to tell you, I just loved being present when Ortelius, a figure well known to me, invented the atlas I have long been unable to afford at auction.

“The story does get better as it goes along. I think the pacing problem might make it tough to sell to your publisher just as it is, but I don't have any brilliant ideas. Maybe you could start the book on p. 39, for example, or even on p. 60. ‘The gunshot woke Bruegel’ is as good as an opening line can get, in my opinion. So you miss a few paintings...”

August 2, 2000. Email with Laidlaw

Rudy:

David Hartwell seems to have rejected my Bruegel book unless maybe I do a rewrite (which I may yet do), and I think he wants more inner stuff in the characters. So I'm reading a popular book called *GIRL WITH PEARL EARRING* about Vermeer's maid. I sent Bruegel to that same house (Dutton) and hope they may be more interested than Tor. The trick I always notice in a book like *GIRL WITH PEARL EARRING* is they have the character be worried about something and fucking REPEAT THE WORRY every two or three pages. Phil Dick always did that ad nauseam. Maybe that's why he's so well-loved. I have like this missing heart or something and need to study how to do it. I know I actually DO think that way, the same wheenk-wheenk-wheenk myoo-da-nyoo thought loops all day long. So I should learn how to put them in. This is a time when it actually wouldn't be bad to be teaching writing, I could talk out the process with my class.

Marc wrote back:

I do think you're right that if you can simply figure out a mental-loop-layering technique you could slip it in and give your story the requisite neurotic content. It's surprising how often purely technical tricks and gimmicks can simply be applied and they work. It's a late-stage revision process, too. I'd always figure that stuff out at the last minute and then wonder how I'd ever thought the book would work without it.

Rudy wrote:

That's it exactly. It really is surprising how simple the tricks are. Like if you just mention a few times how menacing a character is, then when you finally let him smile, the reader is so happy and relieved. I do this with Whitey Mydol. And when you add some new twist near the end, you go back and about 50 words each in two or three places and the reader feels, yes, it was coming all along.

I guess the thing hanging me up now is exactly what Bruegel is neurotic ABOUT. I'd sort of like to have him obsessed with seeing women piss, but have a feeling I shouldn't do that, it won't go over well. I have a spare copy of the manuscript kicking around now, maybe I should send it to you and you might think of something? Not to burden you with reading assignments.

Marc wrote:

No, I'd love to see the latest version of Breughel. I suggested that he do a bit more topical magical-thinking. Maybe you could take whatever neurotic thought loop you come up with and give it some appropriate supernatural/astrological structure, and make it something that just constantly gnaws away at him. Maybe it is women pissing. Maybe there's some mysterious thing he sort of remembers from childhood...it can be this sexual obsession, but it's veiled as a mystery, something transgressive about it, so it eats away at him even as he justifies his artistic reportage of this natural biological event...somehow making it a luminous touchstone for him. I don't know. Or have him obsessed with some part of his astrological chart or some bit of worry about his fate, you know, a fortune someone told him that he worries might come true...and at the end of the book you can play with that. What would be best is to figure out something that simply takes advantage of everything you've already written, and just deepens what's there...not adding any new scenes, really.

August 6, 2000. Visited Parable of the Sower.

We were in San Diego this week, and I saw *Parable of the Sower* at the Timkin museum in Balboa Park in S.D. Greg had mentioned he used to look at this picture in the Navy, so I sent him a postcard of it.

The thing that struck me the most is that there is a tiny figure of a woman squatting to shit or piss by a wheat field and in a tree nearby is a reddish figure of a man spying on her. The figures are so small you can't be totally sure this is what's happening, but it seems quite likely. The picture has been cleaned too much and the mountains in back are a crappy-looking color of pale turquoise. There are a group of people by the river, presumably listening to Jesus tell the parable. There are birds pecking up some of the seeds, some seeds have grown up to weak stalks amid stones, some are choked in brambles. On oak, dated 1557, signed Brueghel. Bruegel was a voyeur, a peeper, and this kind of makes sense, he was such a sensualist of the eyes, loving to see the details.

October 17, 2000. Still trying to sell it

So Hartwell said he wanted a rewrite before an offer. And Penguin (owner of Dutton, who published Tracy Chevalier, *Girl with Pearl Earring*) turned it down for

having insufficiently rich characters and for being written in too modern a style. Now it's at Henry Holt (owner of Metropolitan, who published Michael Frayn, *Headlong*). I'm not all that optimistic about Holt as I already sent a proposal to Jack Macrae there a while back and he never answered. But meanwhile Hartwell told Susan P. that he probably would be able to make an offer around Christmas. So that's good. A paperback of Frayn's book came out and in the afterword he thanks "Rudy Rucker, an American reader (working on his own novel about Bruegel)" for pointing out the gibbet in *Return of the Herd* and the false perspective of the gallows in *The Magpie on the Gallows*.

January 8, 2001. Hartwell, Harvesters in NYC.

Jan 7 I went to see Hartwell at his house. I wait all day to talk to him about what's uppermost in my mind, that is, "Are you going to buy *Bruegel* and *Spaceland*?" Makes me think a little of Bruegel himself courting his patrons. At dinner he says yes.

On Jan 8 I went to see Hartwell at his office, and he took me to meet Tom Doherty again, the owner of Tor, and Hartwell said to Tom that he was buying *Bruegel* (and had been, he said, consulting with me on the plot) and buying *Spaceland*. This is good. Tor is a big house. Hartwell likes me and understands me. He's talking editions of maybe 7,500 hardback each for these books.

On the 10th, Wednesday, Sylvia and I rode the train up to the Met. Visited Bruegel's *Harvesters* of course. She noticed some monks swimming naked in a pond, something I hadn't remarked upon before. Still the mystery of Bruegel's *self*. When I finish *Spaceland* Hartwell says he'll have some chapter by chapter suggestions to pep up my novel, make Peter and Mayken more rounded, give the book more of a linear plot. Saw some nice Vermeers.

February 28, 2001. A Fleming Advises on Pronunciation.

From email with: Marysa <Marysa.Demoor@rug.ac.be>. (Recently I've been using the name "Rudy Rucker the Elder" as my email signature.) This Marysa emailed me to ask about my Bruegel book that she saw mentioned in Frayn's afterword!

<Begin email>

Q: <Rudy Rucker the Elder wrote:> One question. I am always arguing with people about how to pronounce Bruegel's name. I like to say something like BROO-gel, so the first part sounds like "true". Many others like to say something like BROY-gel, so the first part sounds like "toy" Which would you recommend?

A: <Marysa answered> Well, actually it's neither. Do you know how to pronounce the German 'ö' of the French 'euh' (as when they cannot immediately find the correct word)? That's the sound you see.

Q: By the way, we say the "g" hard liike in "goose" and don't try to reproduce the Flemish sound that would be closer, I think, to a "gch"

A: I know that. The Flemish 'g' is a bit like the 'ch' in Scottish 'loch' only voiced.
<End of email>

Recently I was at a party and thought again of how Bruegel used to often, in his crowd scenes, paint a man standing off to one side with a slightly blank or maybe wistful expression, *watching*. If you're a shy person who stands off to one side watching, then if you're a writer as well, you can at least figure you're getting material.

I am still waiting, hoping, for a contract from Hartwell. I finally paid off the three museums who already sent me pictures for the book, they'd been dunning me, especially the Germans. It was kind of a big deal to get the checks in DM for them, I had to go the only bank in San Jose that does it, and pay like \$15 extra per check, and these were only checks for like \$40. If I ever get the deal, it'll be easier to do it again.

May 23, 2001. I Get an Offer! (Email to Marc Laidlaw)

On the novel front, I got offers today from Hartwell for my BRUEGEL novel and for my new SF novel SPACELAND. I'd tried Bruegel at a bunch of places, and in the end, only Hartwell would go for it. SPACELAND had been turned down by my *Ware publisher, Avon, because the sales of REALWARE were in their opinion too low, so they're more or less getting rid of me. So that brought me to Hartwell on that front as well. He doesn't promise it'll make it into paperback, they need a printing of at least 30,000 for paperback.

July 5, 2001. Starting to think about the rewrite.

Last night I was at a public dance on the library lawn in Los Gatos, me alone with Sylvia still out of town, and I had such a strong identification with Bruegel. The lonely watching man he always puts into his wedding dance pictures. I saw a pair of girls just like the girls in the Peasant Wedding, the big one holding the two hands of the little one half her size, and the two bouncing a little. I saw stocky women making those ecstatic leg lifts, and their doughty husbands doing their stiff best to shake their booties.

In the afternoon there was the Fourth of July concert from the String Orchestra on the High School lawn. That good old corny American stuff, the Red, White, and Blue, the ice-cream, the excited (or sweatily crying) kids. Skaters. Braided ponytails. Sousa marches.

January 9, 2002. Starting the Rewrite.

So now I'm in NYC with Sylvia, temporarily away from the nagging endless textbook. I'm seeing Hartwell this week, so it's the right time to think about B. again. In principle the deadline for the revisions was December 15, but Hartwell's in no rush. I reread his comments, they're really quite reasonable. Let's reprint them here for reference.

“The major stuff: I don't feel that Peter is a rounded character, nor that any of the other major characters are sufficiently developed (although Mayken finally comes close). Williblad is potentially a great character, the Indian trickster transplanted to Europe — but his motivations never make enough sense. Ortelius is likeable, but the dots are not all connected (religion, perversity, intellectual fascination with maps, etc.). And most centrally, Peter never comes alive except when he's talking/thinking about a painting. His feelings are reported, not felt. I don't for a minute believe he'd make up with Williblad after Mayken's fling.

“What's good about the book is the richness of detail about the background. It's like you painted the background of a Bruegel painting without the foreground images. The real title for the manuscript as it stands is "Glimpses of Bruegel, at Important Moments." But that's not enough for a fully satisfying novel.”

So now to work. I'm rereading it and putting in the wheenk-wheenk-wheenk of B's thoughts. The colors atop the underpainting. It was callow in places as well. Also I'm going to be looser about using obscenity, good God, that's all I used to do, I don't have to pretend to be such a bluenose now that I'm getting old. If I don't tell the truth of how I imagine Bruegel now, then when will I get around to it? Example of the new dispensation, where De Vos suggests figures B. could add to his drawing of the mountain.

"Joseph and Mary on the way to Egypt," suggested de Vos. "The hermit Saint Anthony. The repentant Mary Magdalene taking a piss."

"I'd like that," smiled Bruegel. He was known among his friends for his fondness of sketching people in their private moments.

Yes!

Filling in the colors is the main thing, though. And the wheenk-wheenk-wheenk. That's my code phrase to stand for the necessary repetitions of the same hopes, fears, memories, and obsessions that an author uses to give a character the semblance of a personality. I used to call it "nyoo-nya." It's a particular trick I tend to neglect. Partly because I never got good at doing it, partly because I had a kind of contempt for it as I've so often seen it overdone. The reason I call this stylistic trick "wheenk-wheenk-wheenk" harks back to time I went back to teaching after being a highly-paid programmer at AutoDesk and I felt desperate, like A Square returning to Flatland, like a rabbit in a trap. And I imagined the noise the trapped rabbit would make: *wheenk-wheenk-wheenk*. This desperate trapped-rabbit scream inside my skull as I walked down the beige institutional halls of the university, once again the servant of the pullulating student body, once again the peer of the puttering profs, once again the pawn of the administrators' powers. So, by extension (metonymy?), I came to use this phrase to stand for any very intense recurrent thought pattern a person has.

January 18, 2002. Revised Chapter One, New Title.

So now I've finished revising Chapter One, and it feels pretty good. Wheenking it up. I can do this. It'll be a great book. Talking to fellow Kentuckian, SF-writer, and Susan-Protter-client Terry Bisson the other night after my reading at the KGB Bar in NYC, he suggested the title *Bruegel in Love*. It's tempting. It's commercial, it makes clear this is a novel and not an art history tome, it sticks in the mind, and it's reasonably justifiable as B does have romance in the book: an affair with Anja, marriage to Mayken, jealousy of Williblad. Bisson has worked as an advertising copywriter, in fact he wrote the jacket copy for my *57th Franz Kafka* years ago.

But, really, it would be kind of fake, as the book isn't mainly about Bruegel's love life.

February 4, 2002. Done Chapter Four.

I thought about the title some more and discussed it with Tor, and the sales force had opinions back and forth, and I sent this email to Moshe Feder, who's David Hartwell's assistant.

Both of the title : subtitle combinations AS ABOVE SO BELOW: A NOVEL OF PETER BRUEGEL or BRUEGEL: A NOVEL make clear that it's (1) a novel that is (2)

about Peter Bruegel, which are the key points to communicate. I will be happy either way.

Pro AS ABOVE SO BELOW:

Because I recently started to worry that since there are some art books called simply BRUEGEL, it might be good to have a title that doesn't sound like an art book. Also there's the possible issue that people are maybe unsure about how to pronounce "Bruegel," so maybe it's better not to force the point in the title. There's something nice about the dreaminess and mystery of AS ABOVE SO BELOW. And it captures the notion that Bruegel paints the human affairs of worldly man as part of the cosmic whole of the landscape. The phrase is a traditional mystical phrase (the Theosophists used it) meaning something like "on Earth as it is in Heaven." Most novels about painters don't actually use the painter's name in the title, cf. *THE AGONY AND THE ECSTASY* as a primo example. How will people know the book is about Bruegel? We'll have it in the subtitle and probably have a Bruegel picture on the cover to make clear it deals with him.

Pro BRUEGEL:

There is something nice about the conciseness and punchiness of the title BRUEGEL. And it's nice to have the catchy name of BRUEGEL up there in the title.

They decided on AS ABOVE SO BELOW, which is, I feel better. And now, rewriting it, I'm in fact working that phrase in more often.

It's good to be reworking it, making it richer, prefiguring things (because now I know what's gonna happen!), trying to give the characters plausible personalities.

Looking at one of Ronna Schulkin Pearce's painting's the other day — we were over there for Superbowl Sunday — and noticing how much better she's gotten over the years, and how the increased richness of her pictures has to do with her laying on more and more layers, working the material more and more, I can see that indeed, it's good to be painting on new stuff to my Bruegel word-picture.

Hartwell wants it done by end of February, and I was, of course, frantically worried I won't have time to get it done, but I'm finding I can do a whole chapter on a single long, solid day (such as today, in which I did Chapter Four), so with twelve to go and the date February 4, it looks like if I can work on it three or four days a week for the rest of the month I can get it done, and that seems quite feasible, since I have a two day a week teaching schedule.

And then I feel like, gee, I need to buff the revisions again, but I can do that in March, probably squeeze a buff in before copy edit, and if not, then just work the buffs into that.

It wasn't till September, 2002, that I remembered I once published a story about a Mandelbrot-set-shaped UFO called "As Above, So Below," and even turned the story into a one-act play that was performed in Fort Worth. That's okay, it's a great phrase.

March 1, 2002. Done Revising.

So today I finished the revisions. It comes in at 30,000 words longer than before, I did most of it in February, pretty much a thousand words a day for a month, which is a lot, at least for me. Working at white heat. It's all I've done for the last month or five weeks. I think it's really good now. I mailed it off to Hartwell. I buffed the later

chapters, but some of the earlier chapters I don't think I reread after the revisions, but can't face the buff right now. Get it in the mail. I'll reread the whole thing later.

I feel like this is as good a book as I can do. Like Bruegel's *Seasons*, it's a peak of my career. Amazing to think I did it. I hope it sells well, to me it feels like it should.

March 19, 2002. Hartwell's Final Changes.

Hartwell sent me pages with his further changes to the book. He managed to put his finger on every short-cut I took, ferret out every weak spot, peel away each loose fleck of paint. So I thought about it for a week, did some notes, and got all the changes typed in yesterday and last night and even a bit this morning, 2,500 more words. "Finished off a novel before breakfast," I did, and emailed it off. The very last change requested was to deepen Franckert's character. So I gave him cirrhosis; so much for merrily waving a mug of beer. Didn't even print and read the latest changes, some of them, didn't even reread onscreen. No time, no time, no time. And no more energy. Fix it up in copy edit. Get it the hell outta here. Dab, dab, dab, and hammer it into the crate. A fucking masterpiece.

I've been feeling kind of threadbare of late, worn thin by the seemingly endless rounds of revisions and copy edits on *Spaceland*, *Software Engineering and Computer Games*, and *As Above So Below*. Insanity to be publishing three books in less than six months. Like you love dessert, yeah, and then you have to eat a whole table of sweets at once.