Commentaries might be Bosch's. There is, of course, no immediate connection with his work (the nearest he comes to anything like a representation of this kind of scene is the depiction of Luxuria in the tondo of Hell to the bottom left of the Prado *Seven Deadly Sins*), but the anecdote, besides shedding light on the contacts made by Vives in the Low Countries, does at least suggest that 's-Hertogenbosch was associated, in the minds of some of Bosch's contemporaries, with demonic appearances. And that this may in some part owe to his own presence in the town is not beyond the bounds of probability.

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Pieter Bruegel and *The Feast of Fools*

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I

Pieter Bruegel the Elder's engraving *The Feast of Fools* (Fig. 1), is a fascinating work that deals directly with the concept of folly that is so close to the heart of his moralizing, didactic art.[1] The intent of this study is to discuss the way in which the print is currently understood in the light of contemporary historical evidence as well as the literary tradition of folly, in order to obtain a fuller and more accurate appreciation of its intellectual content.[2]

It is generally acknowledged that the meaning of the engraving is closely linked to the text placed directly beneath it, since both were meant to be viewed and appreciated at the same time. This text may be translated as follows:[3]

You numbskulls who are plagued with foolishness
Come to the green if you want to go bowling
Although one has lost his honour and another his money
The world values the greatest numbskulls.

Numbskulls are found in all nations
Even though they don't wear fool's caps on their heads
Who dance so gracefully
That their foolish heads spin like tops.

The foulest numbskulls waste all their substance
There are some who take others by the nose
Some of them sell trumpets, others sell spectacles
With which they deceive many nitwits.

Yet there are numbskulls who behave themselves wisely
And grasp the true sense of numbskulling
Because they accept their own folly
Their numbskulls will hit the pin best.

It has long been recognized that the game of bowls played by the fools in the foreground was a pun on the word "sottebollen" which is here translated as "numbskulls."[4] The Flemish word "sot" means "fool," while "bol" can mean either "ball" or "head." "Sottebollen" can therefore just as easily mean "foolish heads" as it can "foolish balls." The shorn heads of the fools and the bowls with which they play serve to illustrate and equate the two senses of the word "bol." Other correspondences between the image and its text have also been pointed out. For example, the third verse mentions that, "There are some who take others by the nose/ Some of them sell trumpets, others sell spectacles/ With which they deceive many nitwits." At the center of the composition, two fools are depicted pulling each other's noses. A Flemish proverb "to lead someone by the nose" meant to lead someone astray or to deceive them.[5] These two figures, then, are trying to deceive one another. Similarly, the figure on the right who brandishes a pair of spectacles may illustrate the spectacle-seller mentioned in the text. If this is the case, then this too is a personification of deceit, for spectacles were a well-known symbol of blindness and deception, while the action of selling spectacles was associated with duplicity and fraud.[6] Finally, the trumpet-seller mentioned in the text is another reference to deceit. The Flemish word for trumpet was derived from the French "trompe" which in turn drew its deceitful connotations from the verb "tromper," "to trick."[7] Although there is no trumpet-seller in Bruegel's image, it is likely that the man blowing a flute on the right of the composition is related to this passage in the text. An engraving that is usually attributed to Pieter Bruegel, executed after 1568 (Fig. 2), represents a man selling nets, trumpets, flutes, and Jew's harps.[8] Its text relays an exchange between the vendor and the man seated beside him. While the former praises his wares, the latter instructs him to take them away and deceive people "where folk are still deaf though they hear, and blind though they see." Since flutes are a

[1] This note was written at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, during the summer of 1981. During this period I was supported by a Summer Research Grant from the University of Virginia. I am grateful to Henry Millon for having placed the Center's facilities at my disposal and to the University of Virginia for having enabled me to bring this work to completion. Walter Gibson and Timothy Riggs were kind enough to read and comment on the text. I am most grateful to them for their assistance.

[2] For previous scholarship on this work see René van Bastelear, *Les Estampes de Pieter Bruegel l'ancien*, Brussels, 1908, 9, Cat. No. 195; R. van Bastelaer, and Georges Hulin de Loo, *Pieter Bruegel l'ancien. Son oeuvre et son temps*, Brussels, 1917, 98-100; Konrad Oberhuber, *Die Kunst der Graphik IV. Zwischen Renaissance und Barock*, Vienna, Albertina, 1968, Cat. No. 59; Lebeer, Cat. No. 29; Timothy Riggs, "Bruegel and His Publisher" in *Pieter Bruegel und seine Welt*, ed. O. von Simson, and M. Winner, Berlin, 1979, 165-171. Bastelaer suggested on stylistic grounds that the engraving was executed after a lost painting by Bruegel. Riggs has shown that the absence of Hieronymus Cock's signature on this print, which was published by his house "Aux quatre vents," indicates that it was printed after Cock's death in 1570.

[3] The following translation is based on that provided by J. Barnouw, *The Fantasy of Pieter Bruegel*, New York, 1947, 64. It has been corrected at certain points so as to follow the Flemish original more closely.

[4] See, for example, Bastelaer and Hulin de Loo (p. 99), and Lebeer (Cat. No. 29).

[5] Jan Grauls, *Volkstaal en Volksleven in het Werk van Pieter Bruegel*, Antwerp, 1957, 103; *Woordenboek*, IX, "Neus"; Röhrich, 1973, II, "Nase."

[6] See Jean-Claude Margolin, "Des lunettes et des hommes, ou la satire des mal-voyants au XVIe siècle," *Annales, economies, sociétés, civilisations*, XXX, 1973, 375-390; Grauls, 151; *Woordenboek*, III, "Bril"; Röhrich, 1973, I, "Brille."

[7] Grauls, 151-152; E. Verwijs, and J. Verdam, *Middelnederlandsche Woordenboek*, The Hague, 1885-1941, VIII, "Tromperie."

[8] Lebeer, Cat. No. 69. The print is discussed by Grauls, 152-53.

1 Pieter Bruegel, *The Feast of Fools*, engraving. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale (courtesy Bibliothèque Royale)

visual equivalent to the trumpets and since the Flemish word "fluten," "to flute," could also mean "to betray," there is little doubt that Bruegel's flute player should also be considered a reference to fraud.[9] The presence of Jew's harps among the merchant's deceitful wares makes it likely that this instrument, which is placed by a fool in the vicinity of the flute player, should also be regarded as a symbol of deception.[10]

II

One of the most persistent aspects of the literature on the *Feast of Fools* is the suggestion that its contents reflect the celebration of "Feasts of Fools" which took place in several cities of Brabant during Bruegel's lifetime.[11] Such an interpretation, however, rests on certain unspoken assumptions that deserve careful scrutiny. First, to what extent does Bruegel's engraving constitute a reflection of reality, and, secondly, what was the nature of these "feasts of fools," and how does their social manifestation correspond with the character of Bruegel's composition?

The religious Feast of Fools was an institutionalized ritual that constituted an integral part of ecclesiastical life in the southern Netherlands from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries.[12] The festival, which was a characteristic part of the communal life of cathedral chapters, consisted in an inversion of the clerical hierarchy. The lower clergy took control of the cathedral and proceeded to hold mock services as well as drunken revels at which scandalous and indecent behavior was given free rein. At Tournai, a mock bishop was elected who was baptized with buckets of water and paraded about town, sometimes in the

[9] Grauls, 153; Verwijs and Verdam, II, "Fluten"; *Woordenboek*, III, "Fluit."

[10] The Jew's harp, which was commonly called a "mondstrom" in Flemish, is also known as a "mondfluitje" or "mouth flute" (see *Woordenboek*, IX, "Moel"; "Mond").

[11] Bastelaer and Hulin de Loo, 100; Lebeer, Cat. No. 29; Oberhuber, Cat. No. 59.

[12] For the history of the Feast of Fools as a European phenomenon, see E. Chambers, *The Medieval Stage*, Oxford, 1903, I, chaps. XIII and XIV. For its history in the Netherlands, see L. Lefebvre, "L'evêque des Fous et la Fête des Innocents à Lille," *Bulletin de la Société d'Études de la province de Cambrai*, 1901-02, 138-147; *idem*, *Histoire du Theâtre de Lille*, Lille, 1901-07, I; L. Maeterlinck, *Le genre satirique dans la peinture flamande*, Brussels, 1907, 77-80, *idem*, *Le genre satirique, fantastique et licencieux dans la sculpture flamande*, Paris, 1910, 56-59.

nude.[13] At Lille, the Feast of Fools was accompanied by a dramatic festival for which a "Prince of Fools" was responsible. Of the plays included, not all were humorous; there were also religious plays and allegorical moralities.[14]

Following the condemnation of the ecclesiastical Feast of Fools at the Council of Basel in 1435 and its proscription by the Faculty of Theology of the University of Paris in 1445, the Church was increasingly involved in an attempt to suppress the institution.[15] In Lille, for example, the festival was finally banned in 1526.[16] This, however, did not result in its demise. As a result of a process that is still little understood, the dramatic festivals associated with the Feast of Fools at Lille and in several other French cities were divorced from their religious context and became the sole responsibility of secular rhetorical societies.[17] This new festival, which in the case of Lille was organized around the figure of a "King of Fools," was now celebrated in July rather than in January, as had been the case earlier. The Feast of Fools sponsored by the rhetorical societies of Brabant which was held in Brussels in July 1551 belongs to this new secular tradition.[18] Organized under the aegis of the "Prince of Fools" known as "Uncle," the festival consisted of a procession in which this figure rode a donkey, a mock court at which he dispensed justice, a fool's banquet, a fool's tournament in which fools jousted with each other on hobbyhorses, a day in which the fools roamed the city entertaining the citizens and finally another banquet attended by both the civic and the religious authorities of Brussels, at which allegorical plays were performed in honor of the city.

This brief account of what is known of both the ecclesiastical and secular celebrations of the Feast of Fools in the Netherlands offers us some perspective from which to evaluate the claims made concerning their relation to the subject of Bruegel's engraving. First, both religious and secular manifestations of this festival were essentially urban institutions in which the populace as a whole played a part. Bruegel's park-like setting with its trellised pergolas bears little resemblance to the streets and alleyways in which the processions of fools must have taken place or the markets in which the plays were performed. Secondly, all the figures in the composition wear the costume of court fools. This would prevent the identification of this scene as the representation of an ecclesiastical Feast of Fools, for the costumes worn by participants in such events are described as highly varied and quite fantastic. For example, men often dressed as women and animal disguises were common.[19] On the other hand, since the costumes worn by jesters belonging to the rhetorical societies were patterned on those worn by court fools,[20] it is quite possible that Bruegel's engraving represents a

2 Pieter Bruegel, *The Dishonest Merchant*, engraving. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale (courtesy Bibliothèque Royale)

gathering of this kind of fool, such as that which took place at Brussels in 1551. There is, however, an important consideration that forces one to rule out even this possibility. When we examine the way in which these fools are characterized, one is struck by the extent to which caricature has been used to render them grotesque. All of the figures seem filled with mindless high spirits, manifested not only in their loose and uncontrolled attitudes but in the naïve stupidity of their expressions. Time and again their features are distorted by exaggerated cries and shouts, or by pointless laughs and grins. Bruegel's rendition of these fools in fact presents the characteristics of a particular type rather than a record of figures participating in an actual event. The image of the court fool had become a widely used pictorial symbol of moral failing in both German and Netherlandish art during the course of the sixteenth century. Under the influence of Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools*, whose illustrations offer the viewer a visual representation of the equation between sin and folly on which that moralizing work depends, the figure had subsequently been used by other artists either as a means of

[13] Maeterlinck, 1907, 77.

[14] Lefebvre, 1901-02, 138.

[15] Chambers, 293.

[16] Lefebvre, 1901-02, 144.

[17] Chambers, 372-74.

[18] See W. van Eeghem, "Rhetores bruxellenses," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, XV, 1936, 47-78; R. Marijnissen, "De Eed van Meester Oom. Een Voorbeeld van Brabantse Jokkernij uit Bruegels Tijd," in *Pieter Bruegel und seine Welt*, ed. O. von Simson, and M. Winner, Berlin, 1979, 51-61.

[19] See, for example, the text of the proscription of the Feast of Fools by the University of Paris, "Priests and clerks may be seen wearing masks and monstrous visages at the hours of office. They dance in the choir dressed as women, panders or minstrels ..." (Chambers, 294).

[20] See the drawing representing the costume of Juerken, the fool of the Antwerp rhetorical chamber, the "Gilliflower," during the ceremonial entry into that city by the participants in the drama festival of 1561 (Edward van Even, *Het Landjuweel van Antwerpen in 1561*, Louvain, 1861, pl. VII). The drawing, which is part of the album commemorating the festival of 1561, is preserved in the Royal Library in Brussels. Van Even's attribution of this drawing to Frans Floris has been rejected by Carl van de Velde (*Frans Floris 1519/20-1570 Leven en Werken*, Brussels, 1975, 33, n. 3. I am grateful to Walter Gibson for this reference). Van de Velde suggests that the drawings in this album postdate the drama festival and may have been executed as late as the 1580's. However, he does not rule out the possibility that they were executed after lost originals by Floris.

representing sinful or anti-social behavior or as a means by which such conduct could be pointed out and commented upon.[21] Bruegel himself made use of the figure of the court fool for both these purposes. In the painting *Christ Carrying the Cross* of 1564 in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, a court fool is included in the company of those mobbing Christ who has just fallen under the weight of the Cross. By including a figure of a court fool among the persecutors of Christ, Bruegel suggests that their actions are foolish and therefore sinful. In the drawing for the engraving known as *The Alchemist* of 1559, the folly of the alchemist's misguided attempts to turn base metals into precious ones is indicated by the fool who assists him by working the bellows at his brazier. Not content merely to symbolize the Alchemist's folly by the fool's presence, Bruegel's symbolic figure aims a wink at the spectator so that his significance within the composition cannot be overlooked.

In light of Bruegel's use of the figure of the court fool for moralizing purposes in other contexts, it is reasonable to assume that the figures in the *Feast of Fools* bear similar implications. As one would expect, Bruegel's subject is more closely linked to the pictorial conventions of his day than to historical circumstances. Rather than representing the activities of an actual Feast of Fools therefore, Bruegel's subject is more likely to constitute an allegory of folly.[22]

The representation of visual equivalents for verbal expressions and the use of allegorical personifications are only two of the expressive codes used by Bruegel in the execution of his engraving. One of the most striking characteristics of the print is the importance of gesture. One of the most prominent of these is the "fig" gesture made by the fool standing in the foreground who holds an owl on his left arm. This gesture, which is perhaps one of the most common in Western Europe, possesses an obscene significance derived from its being a visual metaphor of the sex act.[23] The fact that this fool should be associated with an owl may not be wholly coincidental. While the owl was known as a general symbol of evil, it was sometimes used to refer to the specific sin of lust.[24] Both gesture and bird therefore serve to define this fool as lustful and suggestive. Although the violin attached to the fool's belt may simply belong to the music-making function ascribed to several of the fools in the foreground, it may also be a reference to the secondary significance of the Flemish word "vedelen," "to fiddle," meaning "to make love."[25] Just as prominent as the fig gesture is the "nose-thumbing" action of the fool on his left. In contrast to the "fig," this sign does not seem to have had an obscene meaning, but rather to have been a gesture of derision and mockery.[26] Other gestures that may be identified in this composition are the "moon-casting" gesture of the fool to the left of the nose-pulling couple[27] and the "mouth-stretching" gesture of one of the fools on the upper left.[28] The former had an obviously offensive meaning, meant to conjure up images of defecation and excrement, while the latter seems to have had a derogatory significance intended to offend and insult

[21] For a discussion of the origins of the use of the figure of the court fool as a visual symbol of moral failure, see K. Moxey, "Master E. S. and the Folly of Love," *Simiolus*, XI, 1981, 125-148. In the Netherlands the figure is first used as a symbol of moral turpitude in the work of Jerome Bosch. Prominent examples of the use of the fool to symbolize immorality or to indicate the moral failings of others are found in the work of Quentin Massys and Lucas van Leyden.

[22] While the use of a bowling green as a setting for allegory is, as far as I know, virtually unprecedented in the visual arts of this period, the idea is not unknown in literature. Thus, at the Antwerp drama festival in 1561, one of the rhetorical societies of the town of Diest presented a play with the title "De Sottebollen," "The Numbskulls" (*Spelen van sinne vol scoone moralisacien ...*, Antwerp, 1562, aaa I, verso — bbb I recto). Not only is the setting for the action a bowling green, but the play makes the same play on the word "Sottebol" as in the text to Bruegel's engraving. It is possible that one work is dependent upon the other, but this is by no means necessary, since the allegories they represent have very different meanings. Whereas in the play each of the fools is meant to personify a particular type of sin, this, as will be seen, is not the case in Bruegel's engraving. Other examples of the use of a bowling green for allegorical purposes may be found in the pamphlet literature on the Reformation as well as in the work of the Nuremberg poet Hans Sachs. The pamphlet entitled "Das Kegelspil," "The Game of Ninepins," which was published in Augsburg in 1522, is illustrated with a woodcut representing Martin Luther, Ulrich von Hutten, and Desiderius Erasmus about to play ninepins with a bowling ball identified as "Holy Scripture." ("Das Kegelspil," ed. Alfred Götze, in Otto Clemen, *Flugschriften aus den ersten Jahren der Reformation* [1st ed. Halle, 1907-11], Nieuwkoop, 1967 III, 219-260). The pins they aim at are identified as members of the laity, and the game is observed by onlookers identified as the pope, a cardinal, a bishop, and the emperor. The pamphlet represents a Catholic viewpoint in which various representatives of orthodoxy complain about the uproar and confusion caused by the spread of reformed ideas. Hans Sachs's poem, entitled "The Beautiful Woman's Bowling Green" of 1556, uses the bowling green for an allegory of the "power of women" (Hans Sachs, *Sämtliche Fabeln und Schwänke*, ed. E. Goetze, Halle, 1893-1913, I, No. 167). The poem describes how a group of beautiful and fashionably dressed young women play ninepins using men dressed in fool's costume as objects of their aim. Drawn there by their lust, the men, who represent all walks of life, are helpless to escape being knocked over by the balls. Their fate, on being overturned, is to suffer illness, poverty, and dishonor. The prize set aside for the fool who lasts longest is a fool's cap.

[23] E. Hoffmann-Krayer, and H. Bächtold-Stäubli, *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, Berlin, 1927-1941, II, "Feige"; Oskar Moser, "Zu Geschichte und kenntnis der volkstümlichen Gebärden," *Carinthia*, CXLIV, 1954, 735-774, 766-772; Röhrich, 1967, 19-22; *idem*, 1973, I, "Feige"; Liselotte Hausmann and Lenz Kriss-Rettenbeck, *Amulett und Talisman. Erscheinungsform und Geschichte*, Munich, 1966, 203-04; Desmond Morris, *et al.*, *Gestures*, New York, 1979, 147-160.

[24] See Heinrich Schwarz and Volker Plagemann, *Reallexikon zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, VI, Munich, 1973, cols. 267-322, 308-09. The symbolism of the only other animal in this scene, the cat on the shoulders of one of the fools in the foreground, is more difficult to ascertain. Although cats were occasionally used as symbols of lust in this period (see E. de Jongh, "Erotica in Vogelperspectief. De dubbelzinnigheid van een reeks 17de eeuwse genrevoorstellingen," *Simiolus*, III, 1968-69, 22-74, 47-48), it seems doubtful whether this can be its meaning in this context. The fool on whose shoulder the cat sits is characterized as a scribe by the quill pen stuck behind his ear as well as by the ink pot he carries at his belt. Furthermore, the figure represents an old man whose actions and gestures are in no way suggestive. It is likely, therefore, that the cat on his shoulders is a reference to a proverb or a saying that remains unidentified.

[25] Verwijs and Verdam (as in n. 7), VIII, "Vedele"; *Woordenboek*, XVIII, "Vedel"; "Vedelen." See also L. Röhrich, "Das verführte und das verführende Mädchen," *Festschrift für Siegfried Gutenbrunner*, ed. O. Bandle, H. Klingender, and F. Maurer, Heidelberg, 1972, 183-193, 188-89, for the use of the obscene sense of "veelken" ("fiddle") in a Flemish 16th-century folk song.

[26] *Woordenboek*, IX, "Neus"; Röhrich, 1967, 25-27; *idem*, 1973, II, "Nase"; "Schnippchen"; Archer Taylor, "The Shanghai Gesture," *Folklore Fellows Communications*, CLXVI, 1956, 3-76; Morris (as in n. 23), 25-42.

[27] Röhrich, 1973, I, "Arsch."

[28] Röhrich, 1967, 26-27, *idem*, 1973,I, "Gähnmaul."

the person at whom it was directed. These varied gestures do not possess a common meaning, nor are they directed at any particular figure. Rather than endowing the composition with special significance based on their particular symbolism, they simply serve to characterize the fools as uncouth and obscene.

III

In seeking to understand the meaning of Bruegel's engraving as a whole, insight into its intellectual content may be derived by comparing it with a work that may very well have been one of its iconographic sources. Although Bruegel's engraving appears to have no immediate iconographic precursors, one of the few Netherlandish precedents for his theme is Frans Hogenberg's *Dance of Fools* etching which was executed between 1550 and 1560 (Fig. 3).[29] The similarities between the works are general rather than specific. Hogenberg's print, like Bruegel's, is exclusively dedicated to the representation of gamboling fools. However, his composition is an elaborate allegory in which each fool personifies a particular moral failing. The texts placed beside each of them describe the type of sin they personify. The moral to be drawn from the image as a whole is pointed out by the figures who look down on the scene in the background. While one of them observes that the number of fools is infinite because every man seeks his own advantage above all other considerations, the other says, "Whoever can maintain measure and rule in all things/Can escape from this dance of fools." It is clear from the text of Bruegel's engraving that his image is of a very different type than that executed by Hogenberg. Whereas each of Hogenberg's figures represents a particular sin, Bruegel's fools are not individuated in this manner. The various plays on words exploited by the image such as "nose-pulling," as well as "spectacle and trumpet selling," serve only to characterize certain figures as personifications of deceit. Similarly, the gestures characterize several of the other figures as rude and improper rather than to make distinctions among them. Bruegel's engraving appears to deal with the concept of folly as such rather than with its social manifestations. In this respect the work resembles a woodcut broadsheet by Hans Sebald Beham called *The Nose Dance at Gümpelsbrunn* (Fig. 4) of 1534, which was provided with a text by the Nuremberg poet Hans Sachs.[30] Not only does the composition, with its large-scale foreground figures and its secondary figure groups scattered across a rising ground plane, bear a resemblance to Bruegel's engraving, but the subject of the composition is folly itself. The text informs us that the scene represents a Church festival in which the peasants celebrate the occasion in a variety of ways. The event that dominates the scene is a round dance in which not only peasants but burghers and a court fool all provided with grotesquely large noses take part. According to the text, these figures compete for prizes that are to be awarded the largest noses of all. The text further informs us, though the woodcut does not illustrate this, that when the music strikes up the fools grab each other by the nose and pull one another about. That the event takes place at "Gümpelsbrunn" which may be loosely translated as "Fools Town" indicates that the dancers are engaged in foolishness, and the presence of a court fool among the company, the length of the dancers' noses, and their pulling each other about by them all serve to characterize them as personifications of folly. This subject and Bruegel's both concentrate on the general idea of folly, define one of its major characteristics as deceit, and use the expression to "pull someone by the nose" in order to do so.

The moralizing text appended to the *Feast of Fools* engraving confirms this interpretation of the work as a general allegory of folly. Whereas Hogenberg's print urges restraint in all things, recommending the middle way as the means by which to evade the sins which the various fools personify, the last verse of Bruegel's engraving makes a very different point: "Yet there are numbskulls who behave themselves wisely/And grasp the true sense of numbskulling/Because they accept their own folly/Their numbskulls will hit the pin best." Virtue in this case does not consist in evading folly but in understanding it. Whereas according to the *Dance of Fools* folly is to be evaded by means of control and moderation, the *Feast of Fools* seeks a solution in understanding and self-knowledge. Such a concept of folly can have only one source. In his *Praise of Folly*, Erasmus used sophisticated irony to transform the accepted notion of folly.[31] By placing his eulogy of folly in the mouth of Dame Folly herself, he created a fascinatingly ambiguous text in which every positive statement is negated as a consequence of the character of the person making it.[32] The extraordinary achievement of this brilliant literary conceit is that in the guise of playfulness and artistry, the concept of folly is provided with a new humanistic definition. Folly, or the human capacity to err, is defined a necessary constituent of human affairs — an inescapable aspect of the human condition. If it were not for folly, claims Dame Folly, humanity could not stand to live together in society, let along reproduce and perpetuate the race.

Whereas the fools in Bruegel's image are defined as grotesque, deceitful, and obscene by means of their appearance, their actions, and their gestures, so that they constitute an effective illustration of the moral dangers of human folly, the text beneath the image transcends the definition of folly on which this characterization depends, to suggest that folly is an integral part of the human experience. Those who recognize the contingency of the human condition, the necessary nature of human error, will be better able to understand and thereby rectify the lapses of their own behavior. The text substitutes understanding and self-awareness for repression. It implies that insight into human nature is an effective way of evading its potential for anti-social behavior.[33] While it is unlikely that Bruegel had anything to do with the composition of this text, such a sentiment was by no means foreign to his thought process. His *Everyman* engraving of 1558 (Fig. 5), which is accompanied by a text that is sharply critical of human egoism and avarice, bears the legend "Nobody

[29] F. Hollstein, *Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts, ca. 1450-1700*, Amsterdam, 1949-, IX, Cat. No. 41. The print is discussed by J. Grauls, "De Blauwe Huijk," *Gentsche Bijdragen tot de Kunstgeschiedenis*, VI, 1939-1940, 161-229, 168-174.

[30] Max Geisberg, *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut, 1500-1550*, trans. Walter Strauss, New York, 1974, I, Cat. No. G. 262. The print was first compared with the *Feast of Fools* by Franzepp Würtenberger, *Pieter Bruegel d. Ä. und die deutsche Kunst*, Wiesbaden, 1957, 119-120.

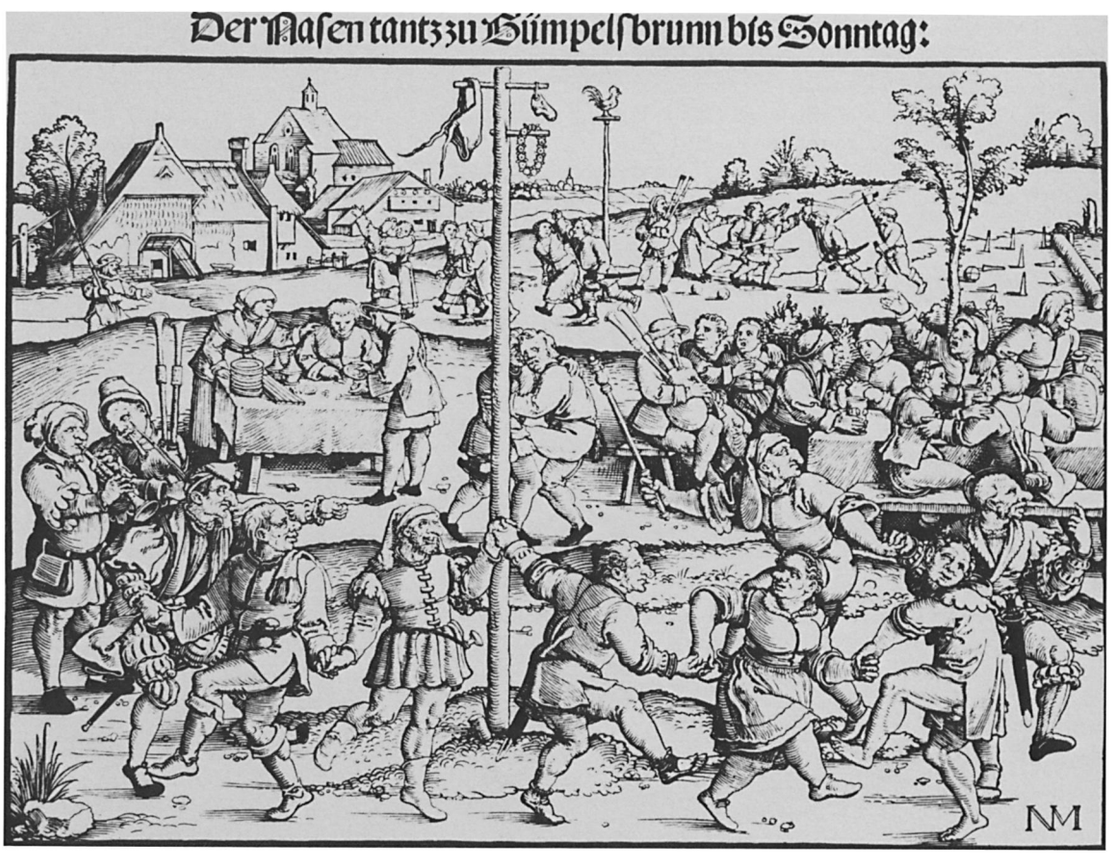
[31] See the new translation by Clarence Miller, New Haven and London, 1979.

[32] For a brilliant analysis of Erasmus's exploitation of ambiguity, see Walter Kaiser, *Praisers of Folly, Erasmus, Rabelais, Shakespeare*, Cambridge, 1963.

[33] For the effectiveness of self-knowledge as a means of controlling the vices to which the human soul is subject, see Erasmus's comment in his *Handbook of the Christian Knight*, "Surely a soldier who knows neither his own forces nor those of the enemy is quite useless. Yet our war is with ourselves: the hostile battle lines spring forth in opposition to us from our very flesh itself" (trans. John Dolan, Notre Dame, 1962, 78).

[34] Lebeer, Cat. No. 26. The print is discussed at length by J. Grauls, "Uit Bruegels Spreekwoorden," *Annuaire des Musées Royaux des Beaux Arts de Belgique*, II, 1939, 91-107. See also Carl Stridbeck, *Bruegelstudien* (1st ed. Stockholm, 1956), Soest, 1977 43-61.

3 Frans Hogenberg, *Dance of Fools*, etching. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale (courtesy Bibliothèque Royale)



4 Sebald Beham, *The Nose Dance at Gümpelsbrunn*, woodcut. Gotha, Schlossmuseum (courtesy Museen der Stadt Gotha)

5 Pieter Bruegel, *Everyman*, engraving. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale (courtesy Bibliothèque Royale)

knows himself."[34] The text beneath the image informs the viewer that as long as every man pursues his own material advantage, he will not find himself. Thus self-knowledge is equated with an awareness of one's personal potential for sin as well as with the desire to avoid it in much the same way as in the *Feast of Fools* engraving. The significance of Bruegel's print therefore has two dimensions. On the one hand, the image is an allegory of folly as reprehensible and anti-social conduct; on the other the text suggests that self-knowledge is the key by which such moral failings may be overcome.

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William Holman Hunt's "Oriental Mania" and His Uffizi *Self-portrait*

George P. Landow

In 1907 William Holman Hunt, one of the last surviving members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, donated his *Self-portrait* (Fig. 1) to the Uffizi Gallery at that institution's invitation. By one of those ironies that Hunt's life and career so frequently produced, this work, which was supposed to signify that he had achieved international recognition, has been almost totally neglected by students of Hunt, Pre-Raphaelitism, and British art. In fact, the painting seems to have been virtually unknown until its inclusion in the 1971 Pitti Palace exhibition "Firenze e l'Inghilterra."[1] Although the catalogue of the exhibition reproduces the *Self-portrait*, it contains little information about it, and the relevant catalogue entry confines itself to general remarks about Hunt and the Pre-Raphaelite movement.

This little-studied work would deserve our attention if only because it is the finest self-portrait painted by an original member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. But the Uffizi *Self-portrait* also adds to our knowledge of Hunt at mid-career and has the additional importance of being the pictorial means by which the artist chose to sum up his life and art.

Hunt's manner of depicting himself in his *Self-portrait* embodies the kind of complex public and private meanings that characterize his major works. The painting's chief private meanings for the artist — what we may term his family program — derive from the fact that Hunt began it as a companion-piece to his portrait of his first wife, Fanny, who died in Florence on December 20, 1866, shortly after giving birth to their son, Cyril (Figs. 2-3). The artist himself explained the relationship between these two works in a letter of November 19, 1867, which he wrote to his close friend, the Rugby drawing master John Lucas Tupper. After mentioning the portrait medallion of Hunt that Tupper had exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1865, he added:

> I wish so much you had done one of my dear wife, that poor little Cyril, my baby, might have both father and mother to look at when another generation has found all of our places empty. I am busy here now principally to satisfy this desire, painting a portrait from a photograph done of the mother some weeks before her marriage. I hope to be able with some

[1] See the catalogue of the exhibition, *Firenze e l'Inghilterra: Rapporti artistici e culturali dal XVI al XX secolo*, Florence, Palazzo Pitti, July-September 1971, No. 82. I would like to thank the authorities of the Uffizi Gallery for kindly informing me about this exhibition when I first made inquiries about the *Self-portrait*, and I would also like to thank my student Ms. Terry Hackford for obtaining a photocopy of this catalogue for me.

I discovered the existence of the *Self-portrait* in 1974 when I came upon a photograph of it in a trunk containing various Hunt memorabilia that belonged to Mrs. Elizabeth Burt Tompkin, one of the artist's heirs. This trunk also contained previously unpublished photographs of the artist, his family, and friends. In one of these photographs, which may have assisted Hunt in painting his *Self-portrait*, he appears seated with his son Cyril upon his lap; the picture is inscribed: "Edith from Holman Feb 11, 1875 2 Wilton Terrace. Taken at Oxford 1872 after return from the East" (Fig. 2). I would like to express my sincere thanks to Elizabeth and Warwick Tompkin, without whose hospitality and encouragement this essay could never have been written, for granting permission to publish Hunt materials in their possession.