

There is more in this story than a mere echo of the *Paragone*. As an ideal reconstruction of the 'first landscape' it could indeed hardly be bettered. It drives home the lesson of how little it owed to the painter's eye and how much to his imagination, how much the *Liefhebber* contributed to its origin and also how soon he was ready to recognize in any stock image of an 'Alpine rock', in any stereotype of an old castle or in any imaginary 'prospect' the very thing he had seen on his journey. And there is one more element in the story on which we must insist: the gentleman was an old friend of the ingenious painter. He usually frequented his house and returned to it from the journey with the sole purpose of telling him of all the picturesque sights he had seen. It was his acquaintance with the painter's work—we are free to interpolate—which attuned his mind to the sights of the trip. His enumeration of 'beauty spots' was already conditioned by the images he had seen before in the paintings of his friend.

In other words, I believe that the idea of natural beauty as an inspiration of art, the idea which underlies Pino's no less than more sophisticated writings, is, to say the least, a very dangerous over-simplification. Perhaps it even reverses the actual process by which man discovers the beauty of nature. We call a scenery 'picturesque'—as Richard Payne Knight knew long ago<sup>46</sup>—if it reminds us of paintings we have seen. And to the painter, in turn, nothing can become a 'motif' except what he can assimilate into the vocabulary he has already learned. As Nietzsche says of the realistic painter:

'All Nature faithfully'—But by what feint  
Can Nature be subdued to art's constraint?  
Her smallest fragment is still infinite!  
And so he paints but what he likes in it.  
What does he like? He likes what he can paint!<sup>47</sup>

The origins of landscape painting cannot be understood without constant awareness of this truth. Thus if Patinier, for instance, really embodied reminiscences of the Dinant scenery in his paintings, if Pieter Breughel really found the Alpine peaks inspiring, it was because the tradition of their art had provided them with a ready visual symbol for steep isolated rocks which made it possible for them to single out and appreciate these forms in nature.

Admittedly, such questions of priority cannot often be settled empirically. But a few examples from the sixteenth century suggest that the process of 'Art into Landscape' which is so familiar from the eighteenth-century writers on 'picturesque beauties' had already begun at such an early date.

The example of Aretino's discovery of the beauty of Venetian sunsets through the medium of Titian's colour is too well known to bear quotation,<sup>48</sup> but another instance of awakened artistic sensibility may be mentioned here even though it is a little more conjectural.