

Landscape with the fall of icarus painting analysis

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Painting by Pieter Bruegel the Elder

Pieter Brueghel, a 16th century Renaissance painter whose paintings have allegorical meanings. His painting Landscape with the Fall of Icarus was his only subject taken from Greek mythology.

While his contemporaries' work focused more on religious subjects, Brueghel on the other hand made his own mark by creating his own painting style; he was famous for his landscape paintings inhabited by peasants.

His painting of icarus which is rich in imagery portrays the season of spring when Icarus fell into the sea, there is a farmer plowing the field, and the sea shore is busy with different activities. All these things come to life in Brueghel's painting.

W. H. Auden's poem, Musee des Beaux Arts was written upon his visit to the Museum of Fine Arts in Brussels in 1938. His poem was influenced by Pieter Brueghel's painting, Landscape with the Fall of Icarus.

For Auden, the poem reflected the people's indifference toward human suffering. The "miraculous birth" of a child was seen as insignificant since the children went about "skating on a pond at the edge of the wood" not mindful of the great occurrence which Auden likened to the birth of Christ. While ordinary people could disregard such phenomenal events; Auden pointed out that the Old Masters concentrated on such themes that were reflected on their art works.

It is also surprising that no one noticed the fall of Icarus into the sea, there was a splatter and there was an implication that Icarus was drowning and yet

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no one cared. The farmer continued plowing his field, the ship did not bother to stop and help Icarus instead it continued to sail. Auden believed that in Breughel's painting, the fall of Icarus is parallel to the martyrdom of Christ. The Old Masters like Pieter Brueghel managed to create such great works of art to serve as a reminder of human suffering.