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In his *Idée du peintre parfait* (1699), Roger de Piles declared that one must possess three abilities in order to truly understand the art of painting : the ability to determine what is good and bad, the ability to make a correct attribution, and the ability to distinguish an original composition from a copy. As he mused on the perils of connoisseurship, and particularly those concerning attribution, he wrote :

When a Curieux has well considered the different pictures of a master, and has formed a complete idea about his style, he may then determine the author of a picture, without being condemned for his reasons ; though a worthy connoisseur who possesses talent, through his reflections and his long term studies, may occasionally mistake the name of an author. . . he will, at least, never be deceived about the accuracy and solidity of his sentiments.

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