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# ‘Salmen genoechte hebben met wiven?’

*The Garden of Earthly Delights*, interpretations and prejudices

*Jeanne van Waadenioijen*

## **Jeanne van Waadenioijen**

Van Waadenioijen studied art history and archaeology at the University of Amsterdam, where she earned her PhD. She participated in several research projects (including ICONCLASS) and lectured at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and Leiden University. A specialist in Italian quattrocento art and Christian iconography, she lives near Florence, where she has worked for many years as a librarian at the Dutch University Institute for Art History.

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The commemoration of the fifth centenary of the death of Jheronimus Bosch seems to me a good occasion to draw attention to the methodological problem of interpreting his works. It is not my intention to address this problem in a theoretical discourse, but by means of a concrete example, a detail from the centre panel of the *Garden of Earthly Delights* and its various interpretations (Fig. 1). I shall start with an overview of these interpretations in a more or less chronological order without any comment, with the exception of the most recent contribution, that of Margaret Sullivan. After explaining why her ingenious interpretation of the triptych, from which she derives her interpretation of our particular detail, is far from convincing, I shall return to this detail and its significance.

But let us first have a look at the detail I propose to discuss (Fig. 2). It shows three figures in a cave-like enclosure. Two of them have hairy bodies, one dark-haired, the other blonde, whereas of the third, only part of the face is visible. All three of them look in the direction of a huge rummer-like object and a group of figures behind it. The dark-haired figure points to his blonde companion reclining in front of him on the threshold of the cave. This figure, visible through a huge crystal cylinder decorated with transparent discs, supports its blonde curly-haired head with its left hand and holds a round object in its right. Something that looks like a little flower covers its mouth. What or whom do these figures represent and what is the meaning of this detail, or its role in the panel?

The first Bosch scholar who tried to identify the figures was Wilhelm Fraenger in his controversial *Millennium*:

The entrance to the cave has previously been closed with a curved sheet of crystal, but now the glass portal has tilted to one side so that we can see in. On the threshold lies a naked girl resting her blonde curly-haired head on her left hand in an attitude of watchful expectancy. In her right hand she holds an apple, identifying her as a new Eve. A second strange attribute shows that she is also a sibyl: on her lips is a seal, designating her as the keeper of secret knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

Fraenger further observed that above this sibyl appears the only man wearing clothes. He points with his right index finger to the new Eve, as if calling attention to something of great importance. Behind him appears the face of a woman. This woman and the man form a couple, the bride and bridegroom, and 'an actual marriage celebration was the occasion for the commissioning of this extraordinary work.'<sup>2</sup> The bridegroom might be Bosch or, more likely, the Grand Master of the Free Spirit. Of course, this interpretation should be seen in the light of Fraenger's hypothesis that the triptych was made as an altarpiece for an Adamite sect.

In an addendum to his dissertation, Dirk Bax, criticising Fraenger, proposed identifying the figures in the cave as Eve and her seducer Lucifer and points out Eve's role as the woman who brought sin into the world.<sup>3</sup> In a later study of what he significantly called the *Garden of*





Figure 1

Jheronimus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado  
(The open triptych)



Figure 2  
Detail from: Jheronimus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado



*Unchastity* triptych, Bax, puzzled evidently by the hairiness of the bodies, identified them as Adam and Eve, since the medieval book of Sidrac described them in this way. He identified the third figure, whose head he saw crowned with vine leaves, as Noah. Bax supposed the motif of Adam, Eve and Noah in a cave was inspired by representations of Jesus freeing the patriarchs from limbo. His conclusion: Adam, in the company of Noah, identifies Eve as she who brought sin into the world, including the sin of unchastity. Adam and Noah are the ancestors of sinful mankind.<sup>4</sup>

Following Fraenger and Bax, most authors identify the reclining figure as Eve. There is less unanimity about the identity of the pointing figure. Isabel Mateo Gomez proposed identifying this figure as St John the Baptist, as the iconography of this saint shows him pointing and wearing clothing made of camel's hair, hence the hairy body. Here the saint points not at the lamb that takes sin away, but at Eve, the origin of sin in the world.<sup>5</sup> Peter Glum, supposing the theme of the triptych to be an imminent divine judgement, wrote:

In the general context of the picture it seems that this last group could be a veiled allusion to the Last Judgment and represent the patriarchs rising from their graves or coming out of limbo, Eve holds the apple of Original Sin in her hand and Adam is behind her.<sup>6</sup>

The interpretation offered by Anna Boczkowska has its origin in her thesis that the fountain of life on the left panel is composed of the astrological and alchemical symbols of crab, sun and moon, and the main theme of the triptych is the marriage of Christ-Adam with Eve-Ecclesia.

The important role of Eve-Venus in the iconographic program of the triptych has been stressed by the placing of her image in the lower right corner of the central panel. Eve, enclosed in a transparent tube, has a bitten apple in her hand. Her figure resembles the physiognomical type of Venus who is usually shown with a fruit or shell in her hand. A man dressed in black points his hand at Eve. Therefore, I suppose that this man and the woman beside him are the bridegroom and bride. They are probably the unknown donors of the triptych, which was made to commemorate their marriage.<sup>7</sup>

Patrick Reuterswärd, the first to note the presence of more hairy beings, or wild people, in the centre panel, also took for granted that the hairy figure with the round object in the cave represents a woman.

We can safely assume that she is the key figure, since her mouth is sealed and she is shielded by a transparent semicylindrical prism, reinforced by equally transparent discs. Such devices serve to emphasize that she is the bearer of a secret. Since Adam and Eve occasionally were represented as wild people we need not *a priori* rule out the Adam and Eve identification. It is worth noting that the woman contemplates a fruit, which, however, she has not yet tasted. On the other hand, the presence of other wild

people in this section of the panel makes it reasonable to infer that Bosch here wished primarily to remind us of the wild forest people as a species in general.<sup>8</sup>

Marijnissen was not very convinced by the interpretations of his predecessors. He too saw the reclining figure as a woman, although he doubted she was Eve. He further observed that the pointing figure is intended as an important message for understanding the whole, but that it is far from sure that the pointing gesture is an accusatory one. Yet it cannot be excluded that the woman represented the temptress of man and the origin of sin.<sup>9</sup>

The iconography of the wild people, together with that of Adam and Eve in a cave, was thoroughly investigated by Paul Vandebroek. He suspected that the cave could have something to do with the wild man iconography. Yet he maintained the Adam and Eve identification, asserting that the presence of other wild women in the panel indicated that human ‘lawlessness’ is the consequence of the Fall for which the woman is to blame.<sup>10</sup> The result of Vandebroek’s wild man research was concisely summed up by Larry Silver, who saw the reclining figure in the cave as a woman but not Eve, for she seems to belong, as does the figure behind her, to the species of the wild people: ‘These wild, humanlike beings, which essentially embody extraordinary power and follow their natural unbounded impulses, were current elements of courtly representations in luxurious works of art ... Wild men were also known for their impetuous animal lust.’<sup>11</sup> I, too, doubted whether the wild men in the cave could be identified as Adam and Eve, since they were not hairy but covered by hides.<sup>12</sup> In his review of my book, Eric de Bruyn thought to correct me: the figures in the cave are those of Adam and Eve, since they were hairy as a punishment for their sin, in line with Bax, who was quoting Sidrac.<sup>13</sup> From the context of the citation, however, it is clear that Sidrac is talking about the ordinary body hair of adult human beings.

Evidently De Bruyn overlooked Erwin Pokorny’s review of Hans Belting’s *Garden of the Earthly Delights*, as did I.<sup>14</sup> Or was I so prejudiced that I did not see what is evident, namely that the supposed Eve does not have breasts, but a hairy torso, an important detail for a correct interpretation? According to Reindert Falkenburg, therefore,

It is questionable ... whether they represent the first human couple. The sitting figure, who evokes the *typus melancholicus*, may not even be a woman. The fruit in the hand ..., even if it does not represent the traditional apple, does evoke the story of the Fall, of course.<sup>15</sup>

It seems most plausible to him that they represent wild people; the melancholic posture ‘may be understood as a visual marker for the Fall, or even limbo.’<sup>16</sup>

A recent study by Margaret Sullivan illustrates how difficult it is to avoid being influenced by the observations of predecessors. For although it is in the interest of her hypothesis that the supposed Eve figure is a man, she writes:



Figure 3  
Detail from: Jheronimus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado  
(the triptych closed)

The apocalyptic context also accounts for the two figures in the cavelike enclosure in the lower right. They are not naked and do not engage in lustful behaviour. Instead of acting as participants they look out at the viewer with the man in the dark, shaggy-looking garment pointing at an oddly androgynous figure holding an apple, the perennial symbol of sexual temptation.<sup>17</sup>

She identifies them as Elijah and Enoch, the two witnesses in sackcloth mentioned in Revelation. This is a surprising identification, as the two witnesses are usually represented as Old Testament prophets, bearded and preaching in the open. Nevertheless, according to Sullivan, 'In a painting without explanatory text the behaviour of the figures in a cave-like enclosure, the dark, hairy garment, and pointing finger were effective devices for identifying the two witnesses.'<sup>18</sup> This identification should be seen in the context of her hypothesis that the left panel does not represent God creating Adam and Eve, but the Antichrist instigating humankind to sin. Moreover, the whole triptych is a vision of the future, the end time when 'false Christs and false prophets will arise', a vision to which the beholder is prepared by the way the world is represented on the outer wings, as an oracular dream. I will therefore take a closer look at these representations, starting with the outer wings (Fig. 3).

When closed, the outer wings show God in the upper left corner, visible in an opening in dark clouds. He is seated with a hand raised and an open book in his lap. The raised hand indicates that he is speaking and the book represents the Word by which he created all, referred to in the Latin inscription on the wings: *Ipse dixit et facta su[n]t – Ipse ma[n]davit et creata su[n]t* (For he spoke and they were made: he commanded and they were created), verse 9 from psalm 32 (33). This psalm is an exhortation to praise God, and to trust in him. The representation also includes a huge crystal globe. Floating in the middle of this globe is the earth surrounded by water. Apart from some strange rock-shaped forms from which sprout enormous fruits and thorns, this representation follows medieval descriptions. Dirc van Delft, for example, describes how God created a firmament, solid and shining as a crystal, and in the book of Sidrac we can read the words God spoke when He wanted to create the world, the same words we find on the outer wings.<sup>19</sup> The aspect of this world can be compared to that of an egg: the firmament is the shell, the water surrounding the earth the white of the egg, the earth the yolk, and this world is round and smooth as an apple. Bosch's representation with the dramatically light and dark clouds, alluding to the separation of light and darkness and the Fall of the Rebel Angels, also mentioned by Sidrac, is surely more poetic than Sidrac's description. But to conclude from this that Bosch represented a dream would be rather tenuous.

When opened, we see on the left panel a sunny landscape with plants, animals and three human figures, usually interpreted as God with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Fig. 4). Sullivan observes, as others did before, that Bosch's representation is not according to the iconographical tradition. God does not create Eve from Adam's rib nor does He unite them in marriage. Moreover, the Garden is populated by ferocious and monstrous animals. Finally, God does not have a halo and is not represented as a venerable old man with a beard,



but as 'a young man, bare-headed with brown hair, a sparse beard and a pink almost reddish complexion'.<sup>20</sup> She therefore suspects that the figure with the reddish complexion, red being the colour of the devil, is not God but the Antichrist, 'who begins his reign by presenting the male with a demonic woman and tempting him with the sin of lust'.<sup>21</sup> However, in the visual arts of Bosch's time, Christ is more often represented with a reddish complexion, and it was not unusual to represent God the Creator, with or without a halo, in the shape of Christ. For the Son is the perfect image of the Father and is the one through whom beings are created and formed.<sup>22</sup> The man and woman do not represent the marriage of Adam and Eve according to tradition, but that is no reason to deny that they represent Adam and Eve. In fact Bosch's representation was not inspired by Genesis 2:18-24, which speaks of the creation of Eve from Adam's rib and their marriage, but is based on Genesis 1:27-28:

And God created man to his own image: to the image of God he created him: male and female he created them. And God blessed them, saying: Increase and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and rule over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and all living creatures that move upon the earth.

This can be inferred not only from God's gesture, referring to his benediction, and the words 'Increase and multiply', but also by the fact that Bosch represents Adam half erect, with his eyes wide open and his feet touching those of God. This last motif can be found more often in the visual arts and signifies that Adam was created in God's image. The same is true for his wide open eyes and half erect posture, indicating that God had just animated him.<sup>23</sup> According to the theological view, also current during the Middle Ages (for example as set out by Sidrac who was echoing Augustine), the likeness with God is not in the body but in the soul, a spiritual substance, endowed with intelligence and free will.<sup>24</sup> God made a wife for Adam, to aid him in the work of generating his kind, with the intention, explains Sidrac (always on the authority of Augustine), of filling the empty chairs of the rebellious angels with the offspring of the first parents, while pointing out that not everybody is considered, however, but only those worthy of this glory.<sup>25</sup>

As for the ferocious and monstrous animals which should not appear in the Garden of Eden, according to Augustine (or Jacop van Maerlant for those who prefer a Dutch source), the first human couple lived together with all animals in Paradise, where, before the Fall, they had nothing to fear of them.<sup>26</sup> Observation of these animals, moreover, offers man a healthy instruction: when he sees how all animals, from the biggest elephant to the smallest worm, strive for survival, he will understand how he has to exert himself in order to gain eternal life.<sup>27</sup> That man was made to rule over the animals proves that man was created in God's image and likeness: that is, endowed with intelligence and a free will. Genesis 1:28, however, can also be explained allegorically, with the animals signifying the carnal passions and impulses which man has in common with animals, but which he should master with temperance and moderation. Otherwise he is nothing but an animal.<sup>28</sup> The ferocious lion, the pig defending her young and the bear eager for honey behave according to their nature. As for the dragon:



Figure 4  
Detail from: Jheronimus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado (Paradise)



God foresaw that even the beasts devoid of rational will ... would live more securely and peaceably with their own kind than men ... For not even lions or dragons have ever waged with their kind such wars as men have waged with one another.<sup>29</sup>

The passages from Augustine do not explain, however, the monstrous beings crawling out of the water and hiding in a dark cave, nor those assembled in and near the pool in the foreground of the painting. According to the current view in the Middle Ages, deformity was a sign of evil. Evil in the definition of Thomas Aquinas is a privation of form or order or due measure.<sup>30</sup> The strange forms on the outer wings and those in the background of the Garden of Eden, together with the monstrous beings are indications that evil, introduced into the world by the rebellious angels, already existed before the creation of man, since sin is ascribed to the instigation of the Devil.<sup>31</sup> There is no reason to suppose that the signs of evil in Bosch's Garden of Eden have to do with the Antichrist and the end time. What Bosch thought to represent is that man, made in God's image and likeness, in contrast to the brute beasts, is free to choose between virtue and vice. This choice is guided by his will and decided by his intellect. Bosch has God look at the beholders and invite them thus to realize that they, too, are created in God's image and likeness.<sup>32</sup>

Keeping in mind the image and texts on the outer wings and the creation of Adam and Eve in God's image on the left inner wing, let us return to the hairy cave-dwellers. Who are they and what message are they supposed to convey? From the abundant iconographical material collected by Vandenbroeck, it follows that the hairy beings cannot but represent wild men, beings not capable of speech, not endowed with a human soul, and symbols of bestial and brutish lust. The supposed Eve is just such a being, not a woman but a young man with long curly hair according to the fashion at the end of the fifteenth century.<sup>33</sup> This fashionable wild youngster is represented in the attitude of someone lost in thought. He seems to look in the direction of a female of the same species visible behind a huge rummer-like object containing a couple of birds. The wild young man behind the thoughtful figure calls our attention to the reclining figure by his pointing gesture, while his gaze, as that of the being behind him, leads the eye of the beholder to what must be the embodiment of the thoughts of his reclining companion, to the 'rummer' and the figures behind it. In the context of what is going on in the garden it is not difficult to guess the nature of the thoughts. Behind the 'rummer' we see another pointing young wild (?) man calling our attention by his gesture to a wild young woman. The sight of an attractive woman, explains Sidrac, entirely in agreement with the current view of the time, arouses a desire in the heart by the thought of the enjoyment.<sup>34</sup> Merely thinking of this enjoyment suffices to arouse the desire, as does abundant eating and drinking. The thought of the enjoyment causes the expansion of the member which is made in the manner of a bladder (a notion that might have inspired the bladder-like transparent ball protruding from a prickly, thistle-like flower with a couple inside) (Fig. 5).<sup>35</sup> In answer to the question 'Salmen genoechte hebben met wiven?' (Shall one enjoy women?), Sidrac explains that there are two ways to enjoy women, a spiritual one and a carnal one.<sup>36</sup> The spiritual one consists of a man having intercourse with his lawful wife in order to create offspring that will

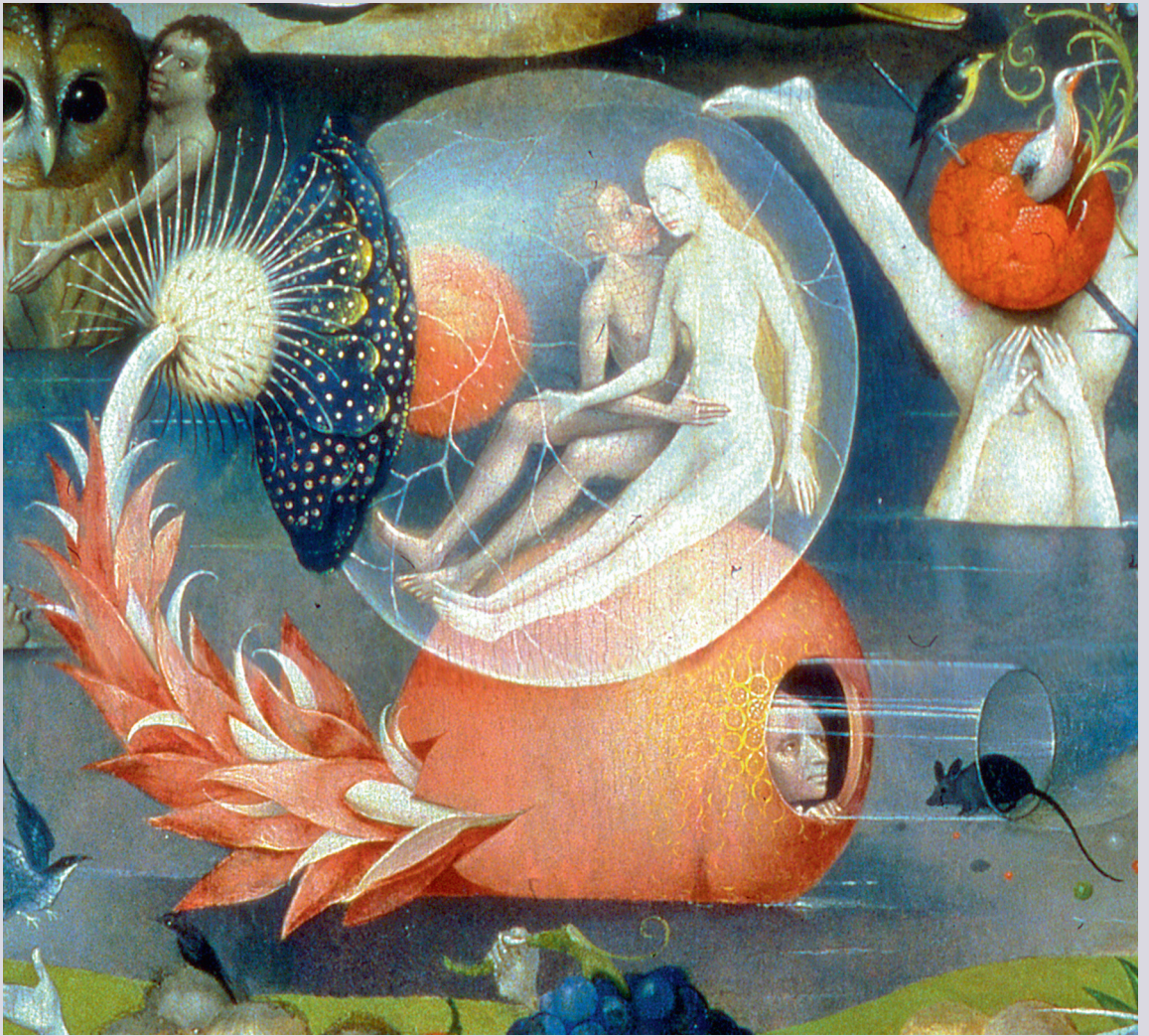


Figure 5  
Detail from: Jheronimus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado





Figure 6  
Detail from: Jheronimus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado





Figure 7  
Detail from: Jheronimus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado

praise the Lord. The carnal enjoyment is according to the manner of beasts driven by their impulses, knowing no shame and copulating openly. He who indulges in such enjoyment lives out his life as a beast and acts contrary to God's commandment.

The youngsters in the garden, in their nakedness similar to wild men, to the brute creation, behave like those who, to use a metaphor from the prologue of the book of Sidrac, prefer picking thorns and thistles in an orchard full of good fruits (Fig. 6).<sup>37</sup> The consequences of this foolish behaviour are held up to us in the Hell panel. For it is foolish, according to John of Salesbury referring to Augustine's *On Free Will*, to want lesser (earthly) goods instead of higher (eternal) goods, and the error of inflamed passion opens a labyrinthine path to the precipice.<sup>38</sup> The apparent disorder in the Garden reflects the disordered desires of the youngsters leaving no doubt about the sinfulness of their behaviour,<sup>39</sup> emphasised by the big fish looking at us just beneath the merrymaking youngsters in the foreground: 'biden visschen suldi bekinnen/lieden die de werelt minnen', that is: 'in the fishes you should recognize people who love the world.' For their eyes and their skin are, like those of fishes, so hard that no spiritual lesson may penetrate their intellects (Fig. 7).<sup>40</sup> Instead of ruling 'over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and all living creatures that move upon the earth', as becomes beings created in the image of God, they are ruled by them. The youngsters in the Garden are imprisoned, sometimes quite literally, in the empty shells of their carnal appetites, of ephemeral worldly pleasures.

- 1 W. Fraenger, *Hieronymus Bosch. Das tausendjährige Reich*, Coburg, 1947. Quoted after *The Millennium of Hieronymus Bosch*. New York, 1989, p. 135.
- 2 *Ibid.*
- 3 D. Bax, *Ontcijfering van Jeroen Bosch*. Amsterdam 1948 (Diss. Nijmegen, 1949), p. 304.
- 4 D. Bax, *Beschrijving en poging tot verklaring van het Tuin der Onkuisheidsdrieliuk van Jeroen Bosch. Gevoeld door kritiek op Fraenger* (Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Nederlandse Academie van Wetenschappen, Afdeling Letterkunde, N.R. 63, 2). Amsterdam, 1956, pp. 37-41/129.
- 5 I. Mateo Gomez, "El grupo de la cueva en el panel central del *Jardin de las Delicias*, del Bosco", in: *Archivo español de arte*, 36 (1963) pp. 253-257, in particular p. 257.
- 6 Peter Glum, "Divine Judgment in Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*", in: *The Art Bulletin*, 57 (1976), pp. 45-54, in particular p. 54.
- 7 A. Boczkowska, "The Crab, the Sun, the Moon and Venus: studies in the iconology of Hieronymus's triptych the *Garden of the Earthly Delights*", in: *Oud Holland* 91 (1977), pp. 197-231, in particular p. 215.
- 8 P. Reuterswärd, "A new clue to Bosch's *Garden of Delights*", in: *The Art Bulletin* 64 (1982), pp. 636-38.
- 9 R.H. Marijnissen and P. Ruyffelaere, *Hiëronimus Bosch. Het Volledige oeuvre*. Antwerpen, 1987, p. 94.
- 10 P. Vandenbroek, "Jheronimus Bosch' zogenaamde Tuin der Lusten.II", in: *Jaarboek van het Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen*, 1990, p. 9-188, in particular pp. 11/18-23.
- 11 L. Silver, *Hieronymus Bosch*. München, 2006, p. 58.
- 12 J. van Waadenoijen, *De 'geheimtaal' van Jheronimus Bosch: een interpretatie van zijn werk*. Hilversum, 2007, p. 239.
- 13 E. de Bruyn, "Review on Jeanne van Waadenoijen, 'De "geheimtaal" van Jheronimus Bosch: een



- interpretatie van zijn werk,’ Hilversum 2007”, in: *Oud Holland* 121 (2009), pp. 64-69, in particular pp. 67-68.
- 14 E. Pokorny, “Review on Hans Belting ‘Hieronymus Bosch. Garten der Lüste’, München 2002”, in: *Kunstchronik*, 9/10 (2003), pp. 519-523, in particular p. 522.
- 15 R. Falkenburg, *The Land of Unlikeness: Hieronymus Bosch, The Garden of Earthly Delights*. Zwolle, 2011. p. 198.
- 16 *Ibid.*
- 17 M.A. Sullivan, “The timely art of Hieronymus Bosch: the left panel of *The Garden of Earthly Delights*”, in: *Oud Holland*, 127 (2014), pp. 165-195, in particular p. 179.
- 18 M.A. Sullivan, *op. cit.* (note 17), p. 179.
- 19 Dirc van Delf, *Tafel van den Kersten ghelove. Deel 2: Winterstuc*, (edited by L.M.Fr. Daniëls). Antwerpen / Nijmegen-Utrecht 1937, pp. 17-18; *Het Boek van Sidrac* (edited by J.F.J. van Tol). Amsterdam, 1936, p. 53, v. 15-23.
- 20 M.A. Sullivan, *op. cit.* (note 17), p. 186.
- 21 *Ibid.*
- 22 Augustine, *Enarrationes in psalmos, in psalmo* 32, II.4; Matthew Drever, *Image, Identity, and the Forming of the Augustinian Soul*. New York, 2013, p. 18. See for an example of the reddish complexion of Christ *Miniature of The Holy Trinity, the Croy-Arenberg Book of Hours*, Antwerp, Coll. Dukes of Arenberg, f. 195v.
- 23 E. Kirschbaum and W. Braunfels (eds.), *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie* (Vol.1-8). Rome/Freiburg, 1968 – 1976, *sv.* Adam und Eva.
- 24 Sidrac, *op. cit.* (note 19), p. 53; Augustine, *The city of God* (translated by Marcus Dods). New York, 1950, bk. XII, ch. 23, p. 407; bk. XXII, ch. 1, p. 811; Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, III, 20.
- 25 Augustine, *op. cit.* (note 22), XII, 23, p. 407; Sidrac, *op. cit.* (note 14), pp. 96-97; Augustine, *op. cit.* (note 22), XXII, 1, p. 811. According to Thomas Aquinas (*On Evil* (edited with an introduction and notes by Brian Davies, translated by Richard Regan) Oxford, 2003, p. 466) human beings were created chiefly to enjoy God and to complete the universe, not to compensate for the fall of angels. God holds Eve by the wrist, a gesture indicating not that He is marrying Eve, but that He gives her in marriage, that he hands her over from the tutelage of her father to that of her husband (*cf. Miniature of Maria of Brabant’s marriage with the French king Philip III of France, Chroniques de France*, London, British Library, Royal MS 20 C VIII, f. 10; K. von Amira, *Die Handgebärden in den Bilderhandschriften des Sachsenspiegels*. München, 1905, p. 241)
- 26 Augustine, *De Genesis ad litteram*, VIII, 10. 21. Augustine, *op. cit.* (note 22), XIV, 11, p. 458. See Bax, *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 298.
- 27 Augustine, *De Genesis ad litteram* III, 16.25.
- 28 Augustine, *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*, I, 20. 31.
- 29 Augustine, *op. cit.* (note 22), XII, 22, p. 406.
- 30 Thomas Aquinas, *op.cit.* (note 25), p. 108. A. Sharpe, “Evil”, in: *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York, 1909. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05649a.htm> : ‘Christian philosophy has, like the Hebrew, uniformly attributed moral and physical evil to the action of created free will. Man has himself brought about the evil from which he suffers by transgressing the law of God, on obedience to which his happiness depended.’
- 31 Wisdom 2:24. In the background of the left panel, black birds enter a kind of trap under the watchful

eye of a big black bird on top of it, possibly an allusion to the Fall of the Rebel Angels and the presence of evil in the world. See W.A. van der Vet, *Het Biënboec van Thomas van Cantimpré en zijn exempelen* (diss. Leiden, 1902), p. 151-52 for the bad reputation of the raven, once white but after copulation in the ark black, coveting corpses as the devil human souls. The dragon tree with the strange vine may allude to the Fall, the turning away from God, cf. Deuteronomium 32,32: 'Their vines are of the vineyard of Sodom, and of the suburbs of Gomorrha: their grapes are grapes of gall, and their clusters most bitter. Their wine is the gall of dragons, and the venom of asps, which is incurable.' Cf. also Isaiah 5.2: 'and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.' Jeremias II, 21: 'Yet I planted thee a chosen vineyard, all true seed: how then art thou turned unto me into that which is good for nothing, O strange vineyard?'

- 32 Adam looks at his Creator, not at Eve.
- 33 Albrecht Dürer, *Self-portrait*, 1498. Madrid, Museo del Prado.
- 34 Sidrac, op.cit. (note 17) p. 137, v. 31-38, p. 38, v.1-11.
- 35 Sidrac, op.cit. (note 17) p.185, v. 1-22.
- 36 Sidrac, op.cit. (note 17), p. 118, v. 3-19.
- 37 Sidrac, op.cit. (note 17), p. 1, v. 21-24. The look of both the hairy and black woman (?) behind the 'rummer' directs the eye of the beholder towards the thistle flower. Sherry C. M. Lindquist (ed.), *The Meanings of Nudity in Medieval Art*. Farnham, 2012, p. 23. See for the meaning of the youthful age of the people in the 'Garden' Dirc van Delf, op. cit. (note 17 ), [28] 28-37: 'Die derde is adolescencia, dat hiet ioncheit. Dese beghint [29] van vijftien iaren ende duert tot acht en twintich iaren. In [30] welcke outhet so is die mensche bequaem ghenoech te winnen [31] sijn ghelijc inder naturen ende after dese tijt so volcht ghe [32] meenlic die mensch sijn wiltheit ende wert ontbonden tot [33] onsuverheden, dat grote scade is, want anders soude die men-[34] sche an sinen lichaem starc werden ende an sijne zielen son- [35] derlinge wijs, dat hem die dieren soudē lichtelic onderda[36] nich wesen, quade menschen voor hem ontsien ende veel meer [37] wonders kennen dan hi nu doet.'
- 38 John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, VII,1; Augustine, *De libero arbitrio*, I, 4, 10-12; Thomas Aquinas, op. cit. (note 22), p.125; see also J. van Ruysbroek, *The spiritual espousals* (translated from the Dutch with an introduction by Eric Colledge). London, sd., p. 60: 'To the damned He gives everlasting woe and torment, because they have despised and rejected an everlasting good for the sake of a good that is transitory.' See for the meaning of the cavalcade in the round of the young men on unbridled riding-animals Augustine, op. cit. (note 21), XIV, 19: 'That it is now necessary, as it was not before man sinned, to bridle anger and lust by the restraining influence of wisdom.' See for the animals representing vices Augustine, op. cit. (note 25.) Basil, explaining in a homily on Gen. 1,26: 'let him have dominion over the beasts,' points out that the many vices in the hearts of his listeners are like beasts. Created for commanding, man should dominate the passions, dominate the beasts, the fowls. (Basilius, *Sur l'origine de l'homme: Hom. X et XI de l'Hexaéméron* (Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes par A. Smets et M. van Esbroeck) (Sources Chrétiennes 160) Paris 1970, pp. 216-221. See also Ruysbroec, op. cit., p. 73: 'For to give consent to sin or to the delights which human nature desires as does a beast, that is to separate oneself from God.'
- 39 J. van Maerlant, "Der naturen bloeme" (edited by M. Gysseling), in: Instituut voor Nederlandse Lexicologie (samenstelling en redactie), Cd-rom Middelnederlands. Den Haag/ Antwerpen, 1998, p. 178. [http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/maer002dern02\\_01/](http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/maer002dern02_01/)