Hieronymus Bosch
Adoration of the Magi
(detail of fig. 1)

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Bosch and the World of Sin

One of the most beautiful and monumental creations by Hieronymus Bosch, his *Adoration of the Magi* triptych (fig. 1; often copied, see cat. 44), owes many debts to previous models by artists from late-fifteenth-century Ghent and Bruges.[1] Both Hugo van der Goes and Hans Memling produced influential triptychs of the same subject (Matt. 2:1–12), so their imagery needs examination before assessing Bosch's own unique contributions.

Hugo's original triptych survives only in its centre panel (fig. 2).[2] Before a steeply receding, ruined brick wall, the Virgin and Child stand out visually, as Saint Joseph genuflects at lower left. Baby Jesus even looks outward at the pious viewer. Approaching from the right, the three kings culminate with the oldest king, kneeling in profile with prayerful hands, closest to the holy figures. Behind him a swarthy magus, dressed in fur-trimmed velvet, with his hand piously placed across his heart, bows reverently. Finally, at the right edge, a tall black magus stands quiet and erect, clad in sumptuous brocade. These three kings represent the ages of humanity, from the white-haired central figure to the youthful black man.[3] But their different skin tones reveal that these magi also represent the three continents of the known world: Africa, Asia, and Europe, awarded pride of place as the first region to accept the true, Christian faith.[4] Thus, before any New World discoveries, Netherlandish art pictured the magi as encompassing the entire globe, making their epiphany before the Christ Child truly universal. Significantly, the low viewpoint involves viewers within the open space before the Christ Child, looking up at the magi like a kneeling co-participant.

Memling's triptych, repeated again for Bruges patrician Jan Floreins (fig. 3), also includes a black magus, but here the rigid frontality of the Virgin, seated before a receding niche-like space, serves as a symbolic centre, whether as Throne of Wisdom or personified altar, before which the oldest, European king still kneels right at her feet.[5] In Floreins's Memling image, the donor also appears within the scene, but emphatically separated from the common space, kneeling in prayer behind a low brick wall. Thus Memling fuses, but also distinguishes clearly between past and present, Gospel event and its pious donor as witness.[6]

Fig. 1
Hieronymus Bosch
Adoration of the Magi
triptych
ca. 1494
Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado

Fig. 2
Hugo van der Goes
Adoration of the Magi (Monforte Altarpiece)
ca. 1470
Berlin, Gemäldegalerie

At first glance, Bosch's Prado triptych retains most of the same characters and features. It, too, features a black magus, standing at the rear of the three kingly visitors. In the ruined stable, even more dilapidated in Bosch's version, sit the Virgin and Child, visually isolated by an improvised upright support while facing the magi.[7] Against the apparent humility of the Virgin and Child, their splendor features lavish costumes and elaborate gifts, highlighted by a prominent gold figural group at the Virgin's feet.

Like his predecessors, Bosch underscores the paradox of the Incarnation, God-made-flesh, especially in this form of a newborn Child, as a deceptive snare for the devil.[8] All three painters emphasize the Virgin's humility in her unassuming dress; in Bosch's Madrid picture, the tiny, naked Child looks even more powerless. Nor has Bosch forgotten his medieval heritage. The decorated collar of the middle (Asian) magus shows a typological, Old Testament scene: the Visit of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon (1 Kings 10), the prefiguration of this very event, Adoration of the Magi. Underneath (on the lower edge of the collar), an image of a pious animal sacrifice, attended by angels, references the ritual in Solomon's Temple, plus the very purpose of traditional triptychs – altarpieces for the Mass, performed as sacrifice and sacrament. (There is, however, no evidence that any Bosch triptych ever served as an altarpiece, even in private chapels.[9]) A scene on the gift of the black magus might be another typology (2 Sam. 23:15–17), where King David is visited by three "mighty men", warriors who fetch him water from the same location, Bethlehem. The golden gift of the oldest magus on the ground shows the Sacrifice of Isaac, principal typological Old Testament precedent for the sacrifice of a favorite son as part of the divine plan; in this context, that imagery clearly foreshadows the eventual Passion of Jesus.

Closer inspection of the picture, however, breaks down the comfortable stability of Bosch's scene in details, ultimately revealing how such initial looks can deceive.[10] About the Sacrifice of Isaac gift, it rests on a base supported by ominous dark toads, suggesting hidden evil.[11] Even the discarded crown of that first magus reveals disquieting imagery: a pair of naked figures support a large, round, black jewel, while above two long-beaked birds are swallowing bright red fruits – precisely the kind of sensual indulgence, the sin of *luxuria*, which is omnipresent in Bosch's disturbing centre panel of his *Garden of Earthly Delights* (Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado; see fig. 1 in the essay by Reindert L. Falkenburg).[12] More disturbing are the costume and gift of the black magus. His luxurious costume is trimmed at neck and shoulders with sharp thistle leaves, evoking the Crown of Thorns of the Passion. The bottom of his white robe even shows monsters, birds with human heads, like offspring of the humans and birds in the *Garden of Earthly Delights*. Moreover, his gift, a silver sphere, has another golden

Fig. 3
Hans Memling
Triptych of Jan Floreins
1479
Bruges, Sint-Janshospitaal

bird devouring fruit. His attendant's headdress with fruit and flowering twigs also suggests imagery of fecundity like the *Garden of Earthly Delights* (there black figures stand with bright red fruits on their heads in both foreground corners of the central panel).[13]

But most unsettling is the figure who stands in the gap between the magi at the doorway of the stable, looking in as he holds the crown of the middle king. That crown alone is disturbing: ape-like creatures reach down to grab other long-beaked birds.[14] The pale man who holds that crown is stranger still.[15] He is partially nude and reveals a sore on his leg, wrapped in crystal, like a saintly relic. He wears a turban-like headgear, surrounded by its own crown of thorns and topped by another crystal monstrance, parody of a church relic. At his waist hangs a belt, like a priestly lappet, but ending instead in a bell and decorated with similar ape-like creatures, so it parodies priestly garments. Moreover, beside this figure in the shadows is a group of dark-skinned people with grotesque, staring faces. Unique to this *Epiphany*, the main ominous figure plausibly is identified as the Antichrist, the false Messiah (though other interpretations – all emphasizing his negative charge as the presence of evil – have also been advanced by scholars). Both his reddish beard and complexion associate him with Jewish stereotypes, a point reinforced by the presence, in similar darkness near the Virgin, of the stubborn ass – without his usual Nativity animal companion, the compliant ox, symbolizing the Gentiles.[16] Adding to the negative animal symbolism, in an opening of the crumbling stable roof above the dark doorway, an owl appears, the familiar Northern symbol of fly-by-night evil.[17]

If Bosch's *Adoration* (fig. 1) foreground contains hidden imagery of evil, its distant spaces reveal conflict and disorder, the very opposite of expectations about the advent of the Prince of Peace. In the centre's left background, a mounted army with lances advances, answered by a rival force at right. The right wing shows wolves attacking travelers, while the left wing shows a bagpiper, playing the instrument of both peasants and fools, leading dances by idlers. The stable itself is assaulted by a troupe of shepherds, who climb on the roof, peer through the wall, or clamber up a tree to look at the spectacle. Though the Gospels declare (Luke 2:8–18) that the first revelation of the Nativity itself came from angels to shepherds, elsewhere among his parables Jesus scorns their dubious behavior: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber" (John 10:1). At the horizon, the city of Jerusalem, recognizable by its round Temple building, already suggests the future site of the Passion, Christ's suffering by an uncomprehending humanity, even within this image of the Nativity. Bosch's authentic oeuvre contains a number of images of the suffering of Jesus in the Passion (as well as copies after lost works): *Ecce Homo* (cat. 36); *Christ Carrying the Cross* (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum); *Christ Carrying the Cross* (Madrid, Escorial); and *Christ Mocked* (*The Crowning with Thorns*, fig. 7), as well as a close-up *Christ Carrying the Cross* (fig. 6), which is disputed.[18]

Thus Bosch's *Adoration* (fig. 1) adopts Netherlandish pictorial tradition but alters it with many indications of human evil and misbehavior. Both the magi and the shepherds, the first witnesses to the newborn Christ Child, as well as symbols of the universality of Christianity's message for all regions and classes of humanity, here are expressly marked by Bosch as agents of evil or figures of suspicion, so they also represent the same fallen world visible in the background. This vision of the relationship between God and humanity represents a sea change, even within the received Christian subject of the Adoration. Previously salvation had occurred as a straightforward process of devotion, a transaction, where the donor or viewer of a painting, such as Jan Floreins, emulated the piety of the magi. Prayer then received a direct response (like the look outward of the Christ Child in Hugo or blessing gesture in Memling). But Bosch has shifted irrevocably to a new awareness of evil and human fallibility, and he has opened a great gulf between heaven and earth. As that ready confidence in salvation has broken, for Bosch pessimism fully replaces optimism.

In Bosch's oeuvre only the rare, uniquely individual saint – in isolation from worldly temptations – can live a true life of the spirit. His paintings of saints include *Saint Jerome in Prayer* (Ghent, Museum voor Schone Kunsten); *Hermit Saints* triptych (Venice, Gallerie dell' Accademia); *Temptations of Saint Anthony* (Lisbon, Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga); *Saint John the Baptist* (cat. 27); *Saint John the Evangelist on Patmos* (cat. 28), and *Saint Christopher Carrying the Christ Child* (cat. 29).[19] Often even those holy anchorites still must face a corrupted world hidden in otherwise beautiful Bosch landscape settings. There, strange plants occupy foregrounds beside Jerome and the Baptist, while disturbing events (sinking ships, dragons and bears) inhabit settings behind the Evangelist and Christopher. Not to mention the physical torments, flying demons, black mass, and sexual temptations visited on the lonely saint in Bosch's great *Temptations of Saint Anthony* triptych in Lisbon. (On this topic see the essay by Eric De Bruyn in this catalogue.)

Bosch was motivated, then, not by confidence in salvation, but by the problem of evil, particularly the origins of evil in the world, even at the moment before the advent of humanity with Adam and Eve, in the scene of the Fall of the Rebel Angels. For Bosch, humanity's predicament began with that infusion of evil, and several of his pictures

show that evil already existed in the Garden of Eden, to provide temptation for Adam and Eve. The common understanding of the Fall of the Rebel Angels was clearly established in Saint Augustine's *City of God* (book XI, chapter 13): "the fallen angels, who by their own default lost that light, did not enjoy this blessedness even before they sinned … those who are now evil did of their own will fall away from the light of goodness." In chapter 15 Augustine declares the dynamics of Satan's downfall, "it is not to be supposed that he sinned from the beginning of his created existence, but from the beginning of his sin, when by his pride he had once commenced to sin." Augustine explains that "the devil, who was good by God's creative act, but became evil by his own will, was reduced to an inferior status and derided by God's angels," and – also fundamental for Bosch – that "the flaw of wickedness is not nature, but contrary to nature, and has its origin, not in the Creator, but in the will" (book XI, chapter 17). Thus do Lucifer and his troops of rebellious angels initiate the course of evil into the world through desire.[20]

Another principal source for an image of a battle in heaven of obedient good angels against bad rebel angels comes from the end of time (Rev. 12:7–9; famously illustrated in a 1498 woodcut by Albrecht Dürer[21]), when Archangel Michael and his forces oppose the image of Satan in the form of a dragon, "that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world". But in a cyclical echo of that initial rebellion, Satan with his minions "was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him".

Bosch explicitly shows the Fall of the Rebel Angels two times on his preserved major triptychs, each time as an event in heaven above the space of the Garden of Eden, in the left wing, meant to be read from top to bottom and left to right. His theme is the origin of a corrupted world. In both the *Haywain* triptych (fig. 4) and *Last Judgement* triptych in Vienna (fig. 5) the conflict in heaven is supervised by an oversized, frontal figure of God the Father, surrounded by golden light that features the rosy glow of adoring seraphim at its edges. From the heaven of his *Haywain* triptych an all-blue and all-rose army of good angels expels the demons from the clouds, then those fallen angels literally tumble to earth, morphing into noxious winged insects or amphibious frogs as they descend.

While no depiction of the Fall of the Rebel Angels appears in the *Garden of Earthly Delights* triptych, Bosch does include similar monstrous animals around the fountain of Eden, including a three-headed amphibian crawling out of the pond as well as other hybrids never seen in any bestiary (see fig. 1 in the essay by Reindert L. Falkenburg). A dark, ominous foreground sump (cf. the Ghent *Saint Jerome*) also features composite creatures, such as a flying fish and a three-headed bird. A lion devours an antelope, a cat stalks off with a mouse, and one bird monster swallows a toad. Conflict, evil, and death already inhabit Eden.

More emphatically, in the Vienna *Last Judgement* (fig. 5) demons pervade the world, and the upper left wing scene above Eden also shows a conflict in heaven. Here too God, high and frontal and the largest figure in heaven, glows rose within an aureole, but below the conflict unfolds within clouds in black-and-white, i.e., light versus darkness. The lighter angels wield cross-shaped staffs and swords to subdue the rebels, who already are transforming into black, winged creatures as they fall onto the colourful earth of Eden. Directly beneath God, Archangel Michael is the only figure in colour, gold armor and blue wings. Thus, the culminating Apocalypse struggle is already anticipated in this primal scene.

Fig. 4
Hieronymus
Bosch
Haywain triptych
ca. 1512–1515
Madrid, Museo
Nacional
del Prado

Next spread:
Fig. 5
Hieronymus
Bosch
Last Judgement
triptych
ca. 1504–1508
Vienna, Akademie
der bildenden
Künste

Because Bosch depicts Eden with both the Fall of the Rebel Angels and the Fall of Humanity, he understood that these two willful acts truly begin human history, leading from original sin to the advent of Christ, the new Adam. That history leads inexorably to a predetermined end, the Last Judgement. Bosch's own profound consciousness of evil in the world and of human sinfulness supported his profound pessimism and emphasis on punishment and hell.

Thus, if the rare figures of saints and of Jesus himself presented themselves as humble and ordinary in appearance, in order to show the fundamental depravity of humanity, Bosch had to employ grotesque, hateful faces for lesser figures. This contrast holds especially for his images (and those of his close followers) that show the horrific tormentors of Jesus in the Passion. Even in an early work, the *Ecce Homo* (cat. 36), the humble, suffering Jesus, presented after his tortures, stoops before a menacing crowd of hostile, ugly faces, mostly upright old men in profile.[22] Many of them wear alien, exotic headwear, as does Pilate, characterized (falsely) as a Jew with a red beard and complexion.[23] His (Latin) speech in gold letters utters the words (John 19:4–7), "Behold the man!", to which the mob replies "Crucify him! Crucify him!". The site is a city hall balcony, site of judgement,[24] but the crowd already carries weapons (one spear even shows an Islamic crescent moon). Clearly their guilty verdict is already fixed.

Another work, close to Bosch (previously firmly attributed to him), *Christ Carrying the Cross* (fig. 6),

Fig. 6
Follower of
Hieronymus Bosch
Christ Carrying the Cross
ca. 1510
Ghent, Museum voor Schone Kunsten

Fig. 7
Hieronymus Bosch
Christ Mocked (The Crowning with Thorns)
ca. 1510
London,
The National Gallery

presented at close-up half-length, shows how much the use of grotesque faces had intensified across the span of the artist's career.[25] Once more the central head of Jesus sinks in humility and suffering, looking away from viewer contact. Here he is complemented by the modest, fair Saint Veronica in profile, her own eyes downcast. These two holy figures contrast utterly with dense surrounding heads – hostile, staring, dark-skinned grotesques, including the two bound thieves. Another half-length Bosch Passion scene, *Christ Mocked* (*The Crowning with Thorns*, fig. 7) surrounds a serene, central Jesus, who looks outward, challenging the viewer for compassion, while within surrounding, contrasting, ugly faces, including a Muslim with a crescent in the lower left.[26]

Good evidence shows that Bosch's outlook influenced major artists in the sixteenth century, particularly Quinten Massijs (ca. 1465 – 1530) in Antwerp.[27] In Massijs's own half-length *Adoration of the Magi* in New York (fig. 8), we see even the magi with grotesque features, as they near the Madonna and Child, isolated at left before a curtain.[28] While the basic image still references Hugo's *Monforte Altarpiece* (fig. 2) with its black magus and composition, it now emphatically uses caricature for faces, especially profile heads derived from Leonardo da Vinci's drawings. In his ugly appearance, the old, European magus in prayer now appears more spiritually distant from the attractive holy figures.[29] Massijs had already used one Leonardo model (Windsor, Royal Library, inv. 12495) for tormentors in his shutter of the *Martyrdom of John the Evangelist* (1508–1511, Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten).[30] In Massijs's New York *Adoration*, the magi and their retinue use expressive gestures and faces to convey their hostility, astonishment, or confusion about this turning point in human history. In similar fashion, Massijs's own *Ecce Homo* (ca. 1520–1525, fig. 9) adopts Bosch's hideous torturers atop the Roman balcony, where a central, subdued Jesus stands, crowned with thorns and bound by ropes. In this case, however, a viewer connects, not with the suffering Savior, but rather with the ugly crowd below, where Massijs locates his point of view.[31] The moral is plain – we observers are now included within the jeering crowd that will pass execution judgement on this vulnerable

Fig. 8
Quinten Massijs
Adoration of the Magi
1526
New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Fig. 9
Quinten Massijs
Christ Presented to the People (Ecce Homo)
ca. 1520–1525
Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado

prisoner. Our own eye contact goes instead to a heavy, unattractive man with finger rings in the lower corner.

Bosch's contributions to the history of art, however, extend importantly beyond explicitly religious pictures. His engagement with the theology of sin and free will also led him to represent temptations and bad choices in several of his worldly triptychs: the *Haywain*, the *Garden of Earthly Delights*, and a dismembered work, the *Wayfarer* (named for its exterior), whose inner wings survive without the missing centerpiece.[32] The basic theme of the *Haywain* (fig. 4) is worldly greed, the sin of avarice, as each figure in the centre panel strives to accumulate worthless hay, though some with privilege get to ride, while others struggle with each other on foot; in the foreground various deceivers (gypsy fortune-teller, quack doctor, fool with bagpipe) as well as a blind man, possibly a false beggar with a hurdy-gurdy, pursue their own misguided gains.[33] Atop the giant hay wagon itself, the sin of luxury prevails, with music-making by idlers and lustful groping in the bushes. The tune is carried by a blue devil, while the attending angel, kneeling in prayer, is the only one to look up and perceive the Man of Sorrows up in heaven, displaying his wounds while looking down at worldly misbehavior below.[34] Just as in the *Garden of Earthly Delights*, the end of this chosen indulgence and sinfulness climaxes in hell, as the hay wagon reaches its inevitable destination on the right shutter. Similarly, the lustfulness and gluttony in the false paradise centre of the *Garden of Earthly Delights* culminates that same sin, *luxuria*, at the destination on its right shutter, another Bosch version of hell.[35]

The interior wings of the *Wayfarer* triptych consist of two worldly subjects, which together recast the dual themes of the *Haywain* triptych and *Garden of Earthly Delights*: avarice and luxury. The Avarice wing, *Death and the Miser* (Washington, National Gallery of Art, fig. 10), shows the old man on his deathbed, but even with the figure of skeletal Death in his doorway, he still reaches for a bag of money, tempting him by a toad-like demon.[36]

Fig. 10
Hieronymus Bosch
Death and the Miser
ca. 1500–1510
Washington, National Gallery of Art

Pentimenti reveal that the miser also once held in his now-empty hand a precious goblet (like the magi gifts), while in the foreground his chest of possessions, which includes sealed legal documents and even more money, is infested by other demons, inside and underneath. Foreground sword and armor, trappings of nobility, lie idle on the ground. Repentance still remains possible; an angel at his shoulder tries to counter the demons by gesturing to a crucifix in a window above, with beams of (divine) light entering the room. But the avaricious miser has his eyes only on Death at the door. Here Bosch shows consequences of that fall to earth by the insect-like demons of his triptych wings. They lie in wait to tempt the desires of weaker mortals.

The other inner shutter of the *Wayfarer* triptych is now divided. The larger, top portion (cat. 9/A) shows *The Ship of Fools*, a pleasure boat with a tree for a mast that drifts toward viewer left with an oversized spoon at its stern, serving either as oar or rudder. Up the tree an ominous owl perches and a banner with an Islamic crescent flutters; both give the entire scene a negative cast, despite its pleasurable indulgences – drinking especially, whether from crocks at the front or a metal wine cooler hanging over the side. Swimmers bring cups and reach for cherries on an extended table, while one voyager in the stern vomits over the side. But the main attraction of the ship is food: a giant pancake, the food of carnival indulgence, hangs down in the centre, and seems to be the goal of many open mouths, even including a nun and a monk; however, they might also be singing, since she strums a lute. Finally, leaning on the lower branch of a tree

Fig. 11
Hieronymus Bosch
The Pedlar
ca. 1500–1510
Rotterdam,
Museum Boijmans
Van Beuningen

sits a fool, dressed in traditional costume with asses' ears and a talking-stick *(marot)*, held like a mock scepter, as he also lifts a cup; appropriately he is facing backward from the ship's direction.[37] The bottom fragment of the same shutter, called *An Allegory of Intemperance* (cat. 9/B) continues the watery space with drinkers, and features a fat man riding a vat of beer, pushed along by other swimmers. Another figure swims with a meat pie that obscures his head. Discarded clothes fill out the bottom shore, but beside them an aristocratic tent with heraldry on it is used as a love bower by a pair of figures around a table. Thus, the divided shutter of the *Wayfarer* triptych represents the sin of *luxuria*, a combination of gluttony and lust.

The surviving exterior of the triptych (loosely replicating the same figure on the exterior of the *Haywain* triptych) shows an itinerant, ragged, aged pedlar (fig. 11), painted in the subdued, greyish tones often used for triptych exteriors and located in a circle that suggests a global significance. He is passing a tavern that doubles as a brothel, as the

Fig. 12
Quinten Massijs
Ill-Matched Lovers
ca. 1520–1525
Washington, National
Gallery of Art

flirtation in the doorway as well as the hanging birdcage suggest. A man urinating at the side shows the effects of more indulgences from *The Ship of Fools* wing. The pedlar turns wistfully back in the direction of this nefarious house, either because he has already left his meager coin there, and/or because he still is tempted to turn that way, despite a snarling dog that blocks the path.[38] In the *Haywain* exterior, he must contend with more than the dog, since along his proposed path lie more dangers: a gallows, a set of brigands robbing unwary travelers, and finally idle notes by a bagpipe of a lazy shepherd (like the Madrid *Adoration* wing). Violence and temptations punish the human condition.

These scenes of daily life have become known as "genre" imagery, and in many respects, Bosch is the pioneering figure, whether or not he includes demons with the temptations and punishments (though hellfire is never far away, especially on the triptych wings).[39] Again, Quinten Massijs picks up the initiative. In his *Ill-Matched Lovers* (fig. 12) he uses different means to make the same critical point about human temptations and bad decisions.[40] In this case, the imbalance consists of their difference in ages, where the lustful old man uses payment to entice an attractive young woman, but she too has ulterior motives, specifically her avarice for that very payment. Thus these two half-length figures, with the man's grotesque features literally copied from the same Leonardo drawing (Windsor, Royal Library, inv. 12495) that Massijs had used earlier, combine the ultimate vices for Bosch's great triptychs: lust and avarice. Underscoring the folly of both actors in this pair, is a third figure, a fool, in costume with coxcomb and asses' ears, who finally receives the sinful coinpurse.

But Bosch is perhaps best known for the hell scenes, usually found on the right shutters of his triptychs. In addition to the *Haywain* (fig. 4) and the *Garden of Earthly Delights* (see fig. 1 in the essay by Reindert L. Falkenburg), Bosch's shows an extended hell representation in the middle and on the right wing of his largest work, the Vienna *Last Judgement* triptych (fig. 5). A very rare Bosch scene of

Fig. 13
Hieronymus Bosch and workshop
Last Judgement triptych
ca. 1500
Bruges, Groeninge-museum

heaven on the left wing of his small *Last Judgement* in Bruges accompanies the familiar hell scene on its right wing (fig. 13).[41] Both the Vienna and Bruges triptychs, however, feature central panels without the conventional resurrection of the dead as a neutral event, neither good nor evil: instead, both works present devastating, hellish torments that appear across them. Indeed, Vienna essentially lacks a heaven at all, except for a tiny golden cloud in the upper left corner of the centre Judgement panel; otherwise, its left wing only shows the Fall of the Rebel Angels and original sin in Eden, rather than the heaven, more earthbound, on the left wing of Bruges).

Most Bosch imitators across the sixteenth century actively responded to his inventively conceived and omnipresent demons, both those who torment sinners in hell and even those tempting steadfast hermit saints, especially Anthony. The *Temptation of Saint Anthony* (cat. 67) by Jan Mandijn (ca. 1500 – ca. 1559/1560) can represent the many variations and imitations of Bosch themes, featuring both flying and creeping demons, composites out of various noxious animals, which fill a hellish fire landscape. Bosch imitations, known as *diabeleries*, became a staple of prints as well as paintings, many of them falsely signed or crediting Bosch as "inventor".[42] But his imagery of

Fig. 14
Joachim Patinir
Landscape with the Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah
ca. 1520
Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen

fools and sinners, drawn from Bosch's *The Ship of Fools*, also resurfaced, for example, in the painting *Concert in the Egg* (cat. 13).

Less directly, but importantly, Bosch's imagery pervaded other pictures, such as the landscapes of Joachim Patinir (active between 1515–1524).[43] His debt to Bosch is obvious in his fiery *Landscape with the Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah* (fig. 14). But Patinir also borrows imagery of hell, presented along with heaven as a choice to a miniature soul in the boat of *Charon Crossing the River Styx* (ca. 1520–1524, Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado). Another obvious debt to Bosch is Patinir's collaboration, with figures by Massijs, on a large landscape with *Temptations of Saint Anthony* (ca. 1520–1524, Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado).[44]

Bosch's continuing popularity in the imagination and in the marketplace extended to the paintings and prints of Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1526/1530–1569), who was even called a "second Bosch" by early commentators.[45] This continuity should be considered a survival rather than a revival of Bosch. Bruegel's early *Saint Anthony* and *Last Judgement* engravings (1558), for example, are full of Boschian demons. But more fully imaginative recreations of Bosch models shape his series of the *Seven Deadly Sins*, designed for publication by Bruegel in 1557.[46] From that series, already called *drôleries* in his lifetime by French humanist Christophe Plantin, his *Luxuria (Lust)* (cat. 76) composes variations on the theme of the *Garden of Earthly Delights*, by showing couples entwined in crystal orbs within aphrodisiac mussel shells as well as tended bowers of love, all in a broad landscape filled with – now amusingly invented – demons.[47] Bruegel also painted Boschian themes in a Boschian idiom, also infused with amusing inventiveness for the demons in question, especially his *Fall of the Rebel Angels* (1562, Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique) and his *Mad Meg (Dullet Griet)* (fig. 15).[48] In the latter work

Fig. 15
Pieter Bruegel
the Elder
Mad Meg
(Dullet Griet)
1563
Antwerp, Museum
Mayer van
den Bergh

he shows the traditional medieval mouth of hell, but now under attack from an army of viragos, women stronger than the devil and his legion of demons.

A final Bruegel painting reveals just how lasting Bosch's model was for later art, even of traditional religious themes. In his own *Adoration of the Magi* (fig. 16) Bruegel makes a tight vertical composition around the central figures of Madonna and (a distinctly weak and unattractive) Christ Child.[49] The three magi from every continent reappear here with their gifts, again ominous in details, especially the ship with shell and jewel held by ape, brought by the black magus, but also in pagan figures on the hem of the oldest king.[50] These magi also display grotesque faces like Bosch and Massijs, and even the Child squirming – possibly even recoiling – on Mary's lap parodies Michelangelo's Bruges *Madonna and Child* in the Church of Our Lady. While no Antichrist stands in this setting, magi attendants now bear military arms and armor, and their uncomprehending or hostile faces include eyeglasses, markers of stupidity or folly. Bruegel's magi thus emerge from a disordered world, and, like Massijs's *Ecce Homo* (fig. 9), the viewer shares in it, viewing the scene across a gap from their same low, kneeling viewpoint. A century later Bruegel's *Adoration* (fig. 16) marks a major change from Hugo's dignified *Monforte Altarpiece* (fig. 2), now placed within a sinful, strife-ridden, desire-filled early modern world – crucially changed forever, even for traditional Christian art, by the vision (and visions) of Hieronymus Bosch.

Fig. 16
Pieter Bruegel
the Elder
Adoration of the Magi
1564
London,
The National Gallery

NOTES

1. The latest catalogue of Bosch works is that of the Bosch Research and Conservation Project (BRCP), hereafter Ilsink et al. 2016. For the Prado *Adoration*, see ibid., 198–215, cat. 9 and *Madrid* 2016a, 195–207, cat. 10.
   The work is dated by the museum ca. 1494 on the basis of the donor figures, the Scheyve family, and their heraldry on the side panels; Madrid 2016a, 40, 196.
   Bosch chronology is, to put it mildly, unsettled, so this essay will not pretend to assign any dates to works, however, see Vermet 2010, 296–319.
2. Dhanens 1998, 186–219; Jacobs 2012, 143–76, 189–219 (on Bosch triptychs).
   A major instance of ongoing Hugo influence in the early sixteenth century is Jan Gossaert's *Adoration* (ca. 1510–1515; London, The National Gallery), Campbell 2014, 352–83.
3. Sears 1986.
4. Koerner 2010, 7–92, esp. 63–75 for Bosch.
5. De Vos 1994, 112–14, cat. 13; for Floreins's triptych, signed and dated, see ibid., 158–61, cat. 32. For the symbolism of Mary as throne of Wisdom or altar, see Lane 1984, 14–35, 60–74; Forsyth 1972.
6. Büttner 1983, esp. 119–41.
7. The religious hierarchy here is further separated by the placement of Saint Joseph deep in the open ruin background space of the left wing, far from the Virgin and Child; moreover, his normal role as companion and guardian is relegated to drying the diapers for Baby Jesus! Humility, indeed.
8. Acres 2013, 159–65.
   Almost invisible in Hugo's giant *Portinari Altarpiece* (ca. 1473–1476, Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi) is a figure of Satan, as an observer, hiding in the darkness behind a column of the ruined building; see Acres 2013, 175–79; Walker 1960, 218–19.
   Another, more literal snare for the devil is the mousetrap fashioned by Saint Joseph in Robert Campin's *Mérode Altarpiece* (New York, The Met Cloisters); Acres 2013, 198–99; Schapiro 1979, 1–19.
9. Paul Vandenbroeck even argues that with their unique iconography, "allegories of sin", they were unsuited for the Mass; Vandenbroeck 2001a, 192. For problems of altarpieces as category, see Williamson 2004, 341–406; Hills 1990, 34–48.
   On typology, see Eichberger and Perlove ed. 2018, esp. in the light of the late medieval *Biblia Pauperum*, 161–63, fig. 7.5, and the *Speculum humanae salvationis.* See also Hughes 2006, 133–50, esp. 144–47, fig. 8.
10. Acres 2013, 165–69, 246–47; Pinson 1996, 159–75, esp. 162–67; Strickland 2016.
    In general, see Silver 2001, 626–50.
11. Vervoort 2001, 145–52.
12. Ilsink et al. 2016, 356–79, cat. 21; *Madrid* 2016a, 330–47, cat. 46.
13. See also Ilsink et al. 2016, 422–30, cat. 26; probably a studio work, though pentimenti reveal that it is the original of several copies and variants. See Silver 2015, 1–19.
14. For understanding apes as subhuman and as symbols of lustfulness, Acres 2013, 183–90; Janson 1952.
15. Strickland 2016, esp. 71–88, "Most, if not all, of the iconographical details of Bosch's pale figure may be linked to beliefs about Antichrist …" ibid., 76.
    Philip 1953, 267–93, first addressed the figure in depth.
16. Strickland 2016, 82–84; Koerner 2016, 111–13, both citing Isa. 1:3. For the Jewish stereotypes, see Strickland 2016, 76–88, 91–98. For negative views of blackness, including the black magus, see Strickland 2011, 1–50; Mellinkoff 1994, 119–78, esp. 145–59 for red hair and skin, 168 for his sore and its association with leprosy and Jews.
17. Vandenbroeck 1985, 19–135.
18. Ilsink et al. 2016, 224–67, cats. 11–14, and 442–49, cat. 29 (Ghent); *Madrid* 2016a, 222–30, cats. 17–19.
19. Ilsink et al. 2016, 110–88, cats. 1–7; *Madrid* 2016a, 238–48, 260–71; cats. 23–24, 28–31; Silver 2006b, 195–236.
20. Link 1995.
21. Schoch, Mende, and Scherbaum 2001–2004, vol. 2, 2002, 94–96, cat. 122.
22. Ilsink et al. 2016, 224–35, cat. 11; *Madrid* 2016a, 222–24, cat. 17. The original donors, including a Dominican monk, are shown kneeling, facing the crowd, and uttering their own (Latin) prayer, "Save us, Christ Redeemer".
    However, they were over-painted early and only restored in 1983. Their piety, kneeling in contrast to the standing mob, also contrasts with a red flag in the background with Islam's crescent.
23. Mellinkoff 1994, esp. 57–94 (headgear), 119–78 (red hair and skin).
24. Compare the Lucas van Leyden engraving, *Ecce Homo* (1510), which emphasizes the City Hall setting with small figures. *Washington–Boston* 1983, 96–97, cat. 30.
25. Ilsink et al. 2016, 442–49, cat. 29; see also *Madrid* 2016a, 219–21, cat. 16, for a half-length *Passion* triptych (Valencia, Museo de Bellas Artes) by a close follower of Bosch.
    On Bosch and the suffering Christ, see Ringbom 1965, esp. 142–70. For period use of grotesques, see Białostocki 1959, 17–34.
26. Ilsink et al. 2016, 260–66, cat. 14; *Madrid* 2016a, 216–18, cat. 15; see also Parshall 2006, 373–79, dating the work to the rough middle of Bosch's career, ca. 1485–1500, but arguing that modifications during the process of painting show Bosch softening the uncompromising anger that usually surrounds Jesus from Passion tormentors.
    The spiked dog collar on one figure derives from Psalm 22:17, "Dogs surround me; a pack of evil ones closes in on me, like lions they maul my hands and feet." (quoted from *Jewish Study Bible*); see Marrow 1979, 39–40.
27. Silver 1984, esp. 91–95, 143–45, 220, 223, 226, cats. 31, 35, 40.
28. *New York* 1998, 368–70, cat. 99.
29. Windsor, Royal Library, inv. 12500; Gombrich 1976, 57–75, esp. fig. 180. *New York* 2003, 416–17, 451–68; cats. 59–60, 69–76, fig. 161.
30. Silver 2014, 13–33.
31. Nirenberg 2015, 45–53.
32. Ilsink et al. 2016, 316–79, cats. 19–21; *Madrid* 2016a, 283–301, 330–46; cats. 35–39, 46.
33. On the symbolism of hay, see Vandenbroeck 1984, 39–66; Hellerstedt 1983, 163–81; Hellerstedt 1981, 16–30.
34. Mersmann 1952; Merback 2013, 77–116.
35. Falkenburg 2011 elucidates how faulty vision also underlies most of the illusions in that much-studied triptych. For the *Garden*'s central, false paradise, see Vandenbroeck 2017; Vandenbroeck 2017–2018. A humorous, but equally flawed vision of unfettered appetite appears in Pieter Bruegel's *Land of Cockaigne* (1567; Munich, Alte Pinakothek). There, instead of unlimited sexuality, the three medieval orders of society are allowed carefree gluttony without expending any effort and without any ultimate conclusion in hell.
36. About the panels related to the dismantled triptych, see Ilsink et al. 2016, 200–19, cats. 19a-c; *Madrid* 2016a, 292–301, cat. 36 (*The Pedlar*, Rotterdam Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen); cat. 37 (*The Ship of Fools*, Paris, Musée du Louvre); cat. 38 (*An Allegory of Intemperance,* New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery), and cat. 39 (*Death and the Miser*, Washington, National Gallery of Art). While scholarly consensus places the *Death and the Miser* as the right interior shutter, I contend instead that the angle of viewing its receding domestic ceiling works better if it is imagined to the viewer left, seen from a central position.
    Reinforcing that view is the fact that *The Ship of Fools* is actually drifting leftward, so it could be seen as moving toward the centre from the right edge, which also cuts off the tent of pleasure of *An Allegory of Intemperance.*
37. On fools and folly, *Rotterdam* 2008a, 215–29; Silver 2019.
38. Fullest discussion of the painting is De Bruyn 2001, with earlier literature.
39. *Rotterdam* 2015–2016, esp. 54–71. For Massijs, see ibid., 93–101; also Silver 2006a.
40. Stewart 1978. For Massijs and followers on avarice, Silver 2006a, 53–86; also Woodall 2014, 39–75.
41. Four separate panels of *Visions of the Hereafter* (Venice, Accademia), show images of both heaven and hell; Ilsink et al. 2016, 278–315, cats. 16–18; *Madrid* 2016a, 313–21, cats. 41–42.
    Unlike the unusual Venice tetrad, some commentators, including this one, see the Bruges triptych as a workshop pastiche rather than the hand of Bosch himself. For the huge Vienna triptych, also with Eden and the Fall of the Rebel Angels on its left wing, see Büttner et al. 2017, esp. fig. 19, showing the few, small figures of saved souls elevated to heaven (akin to the corresponding separate Venice panel), in contrast to the vast crowds of sinners punished elsewhere across the triptych.
42. Silver 2006a, 133–59.
    For paintings, see Unverfehrt 1980; for prints, see *Saint Louis – Cambridge* 2015–2016.
43. Falkenburg 2007, 61–79; *Madrid* 2007, 150–69, 242–55, cats. 1–2, 14.
44. *Madrid* 2007, 150–63, 242–55; cats 1, 14.
45. Silver 2006a, 143–52; Ilsink 2009.
46. *Rotterdam – New York* 2001, esp. 137–65, cats. 36–57; *Vienna* 2018–2019, 64–71, cats. 19–21.
47. For Bruegel's shift from Boschian cruelty toward viewer amusement, see Gibson 2006, esp. 28–37, discussing *Sloth* and *Pride* from the same *Seven Deadly Sins* series.
48. *Vienna* 2018–2019, 168–71, cat. 61; Meganck 2014.
    For the subject, see Gibson 2006, 124–44.
49. *Vienna* 2018–2019, 190–93, cat. 66; Campbell 2014, 176–97.
50. Pinson 1994, 109–28; Pinson 1996, 159–75; Müller 2002, 167–211.