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Author(s): Larry Silver
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God in the Details: Bosch and Judgment(s)

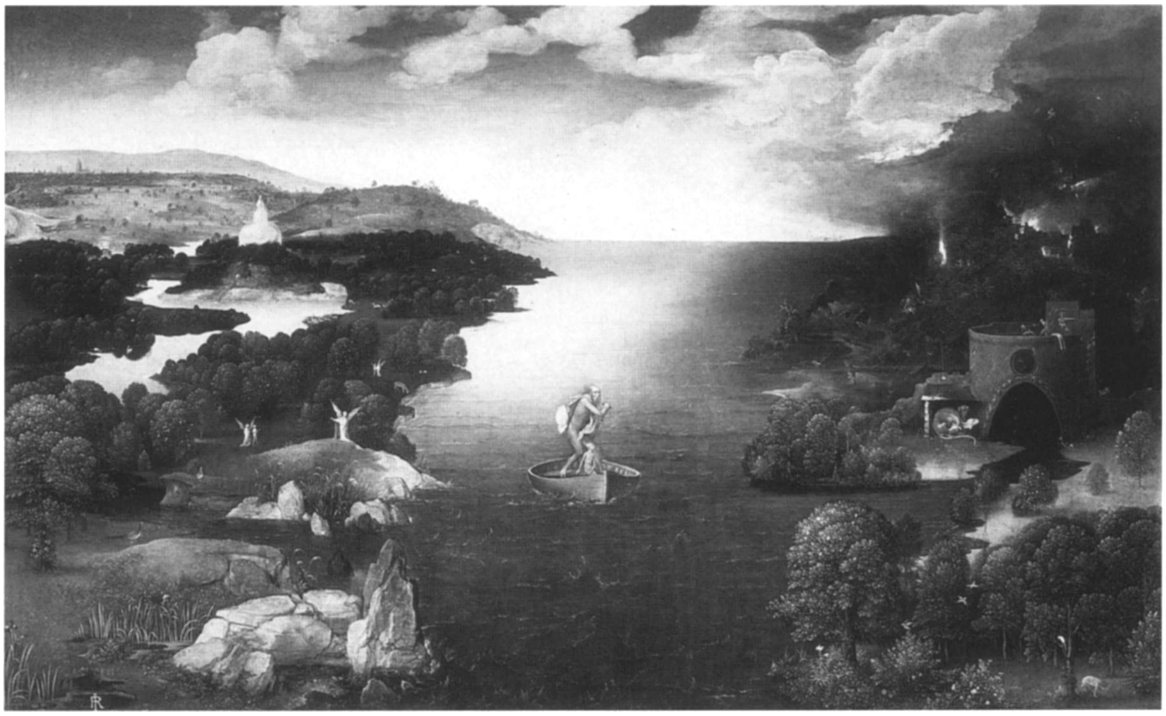
Larry Silver

> And the two angels came to Sodom at even; and Lot saw them. . . . And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great. . . .—Genesis 19:1, 11
>
> For we see divine retribution revealed from heaven and falling upon all the godless wickedness of men. In their wickedness they are stifling the truth. For all that may be known of God by men lies plain before their eyes; indeed God himself has disclosed it to them. His invisible attributes, that is to say his everlasting power and deity, have been visible, ever since the world began, to the eye of reason, in the things he has made. There is therefore no possible defense for their conduct. . . . For this reason God has given them up to the vileness of their own desires, and the consequent degradation of their bodies, because they have bartered away the true God for a false one. . . . Thus, because they have not seen fit to acknowledge God, he has given them up to their own depraved reason. This leads them to break all rules of conduct.—Romans 1:18–28
>
> For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood.—I Corinthians 13:12
>
> God is in the details.—Aby Warburg[1]

When Joachim Patinir (d. 1524) painted his vast cosmic panorama *Charon* (Museo del Prado, Madrid, Fig. 1), he situated the decisive moment of choice in a sailing vessel on a great river (the classical Styx) but poised it midway between the realms of Heaven and Hell.[2] The small figure in the boat, dwarfed by the giant ferryman, is a solitary human soul, who already glances nervously over toward the mouthlike dark gateway of Hades, guarded by the triple-headed dog, Cerberus. Even the boat itself inclines slightly in the same direction, the unfavorable *sinister* side of the viewer's right, long familiar from medieval Last Judgment scenes (and more recently in Judgment scenes by Rogier van der Weyden and Dieric Bouts in the south Netherlands) as the side of Hell and damnation. Of course, that anxious inclination toward the dark means that the soul figure fails to turn to the *dexter* side, that of Heaven, opposite, where angels are visible below the trees and unearthly crystalline structures tower above at the horizon level. Closer inspection of the entire painting shows that the very skies echo this antithetical structure: reading from left to right, the cloudless blue sky gradually gives way to dark storm clouds above the fire and brimstone of Hell.

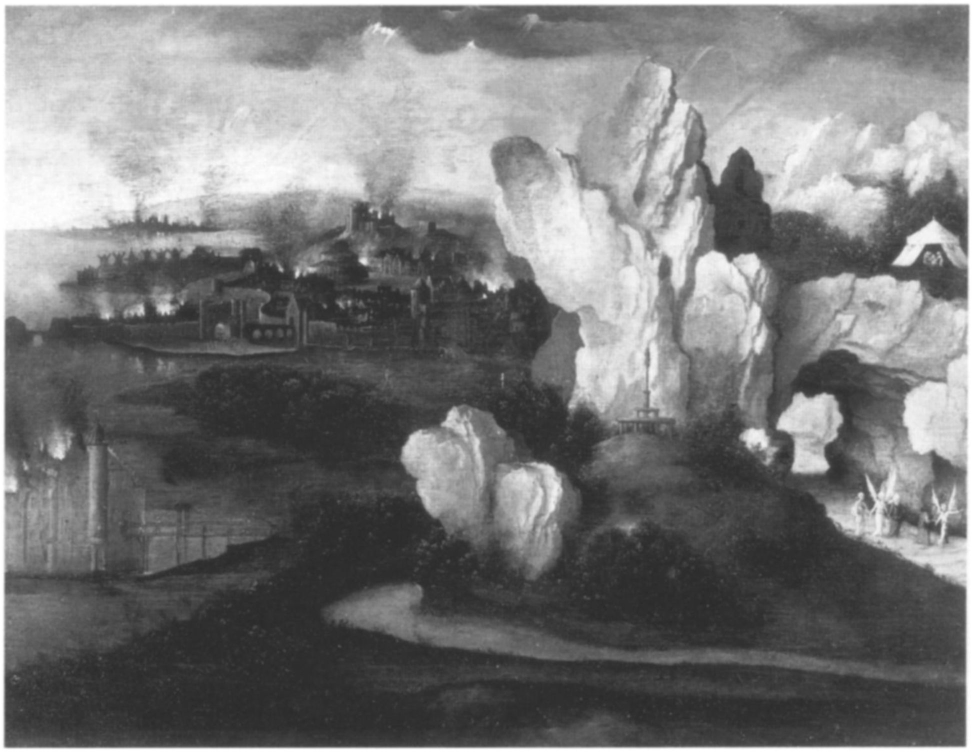
This is, of course, the visual vocabulary that Patinir adopted from the model of Hieronymus Bosch (d. 1516), particularly from his *Last Judgment* triptych (Akademie, Vienna) and from his large-scale triptychs in general, which often feature Hell scenes in the sinister wing after beginning in the idyllic forest setting of the Garden of Eden (as he did in the *Hay Wain* triptych and *The Garden of Earthly Delights,* in the Prado; see below). Such imagery also informs the detached Bosch wings of *Earthly Paradise* and *Hell,* which feature the same kind of frail and naked figures as the representation of human souls (now in the Palazzo Ducale, Venice, Fig. 17). Patinir has further loaded the contrasts of his *paysage moralisé* by placing more difficult navigation problems before the path of virtue on the viewer's left, in contrast to the flat and easy access to Hell at the viewer's right.[3] In vain does the large angel closest to the boat gesture toward the City of God behind him and beckon the soul to take the path of salvation. What is striking about this image, in contrast to the Hell-dominated worlds of Bosch's Last Judgment and Hell scenes, is Patinir's effort to strike a fragile balance between the two destinations, presenting them as an open choice for the figure in the boat, though it is clear that the scales are tilting toward the option of Hell's easier harbor. Here the judgment is human judgment, opening the possibility of temptation and error, albeit through the instrument of free will. Patinir is by no means the first artist to thematize that fallible human choice based on the sense of sight. Bosch himself is the touchstone for images concerned with worldly vision and its inherent faultiness in the process of making critical spiritual judgments.

Equally dependent on the Bosch model of burning cities of Hell is Patinir's *The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah* (Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Fig. 2).[4] This painting is dominated by the destruction by fire of the Old Testament cities whose very names conjure unspeakable immorality (Genesis 19). In this case, too, Patinir presents the viewer with different pictorial zones; the place of retreat from the burning lowlands is reached by means of a natural bridge of rock through the towering cliffs that ring the urban setting, a "narrow gate" of virtue. Angels lead the saved protagonists, Lot and his daughters, out of danger through that pathway. The Bible text itself expressly contrasts the plain of the city to the mountainous destination of escape. Of course, the key figure with choice in this story, caught between sin and salvation, is Lot's wife, who notoriously chose to disobey God's own commands not to look back at Sodom as she left. Instead, she turned away and took a final glance, only to be transformed instantly into a pillar of salt, visible as a tiny white column in the exact geometric center of the Rotterdam panel, just in front of the rocks. As the first epigraph of this essay makes clear, right seeing is a theme that appears early in the Sodom narrative. Lot stands alone in being able to discern the angels in his midst, while his contentious and sinful neighbors are blind to the true nature of the visitors and even seek to transgress both hospitality and civility with the newcomers. On account of their acts of spiritual blindness, the angels strike them literally blind. However, in this Old Testament world of sin and punishment, there is no permanent escape: even in their mountainous tent retreat, Lot and his daughters commit incest, as represented by Patinir in the upper right (a miniature scene waiting to be discovered, like Lot's wife, by the discerning and careful viewer of the picture).[5]

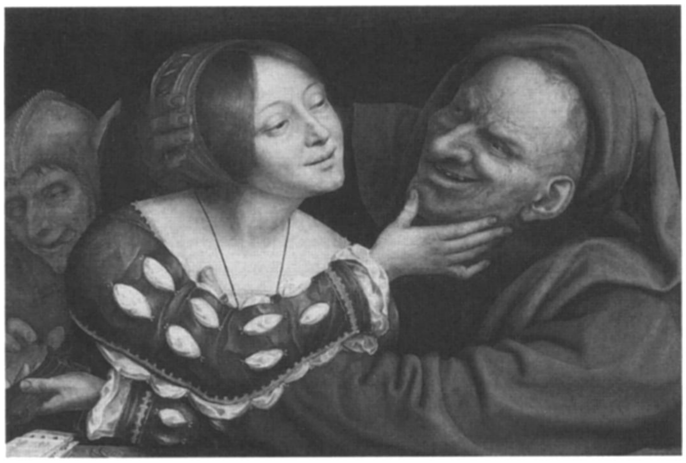


1 Joachim Patinir, *Charon,* oil on panel. Madrid, Museo del Prado (photo: Alinari/Art Resource, NY)

An explicitly secular world of sin and sight unfolds in Quinten Massys's *Ill-Matched Pair* (National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Fig. 3).[6] In this densely interlaced work, the complementary sins of avarice and lust (the subjects of Bosch's triptychs *The Hay Wain* and *The Garden of Earthly Delights,* respectively) interact directly. As he lustfully leers at her, grasping for her breast, she encourages him with a coy smile, even while she dexterously lifts his coin purse and passes it on (in what at first glance seems to be an extension of the man's own arm) to her cross-eyed confederate, a fool in coxcomb costume. Here, too, the viewer has a privileged position, able to see clearly both this hidden outcome of the double sin and its ultimate, sinful folly. By implication the grotesque ugliness of the old man,[7] his inappropriate choice of a beautiful, young partner, as well as her own evident dissipation and concupiscence (for money at least) mark this



2 Patinir, *The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah,* oil on panel. Rotterdam, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen



3 Quinten Massys, *Ill-Matched Pair,* oil on panel. Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art

image as didactic instruction through worldly, negative counterexample.

For both Patinir and Massys (d. 1530), Antwerp artists of a slightly younger generation than Bosch, the art of the celebrated master of 's Hertogenbosch served as necessary precedent both in formal terms and in the content, with its mixture of ordinary secular behavior and religious messages. This essay will investigate the connections between form and content in Bosch's oeuvre through exploration of what might be called his "iconographical style,"[8] that is, the frequent variations on the consistent theme of sight, especially faulty sight on the part of his depicted characters, which presumably can be discerned and correctly assessed by the viewer. In that process of proper discernment lies the moral instruction by Bosch to his viewer and his didactic, if usually pessimistic, Christian vision of fallen human nature in general and the need for grace.

To see the universe of moral choice connected with vision, no better or more complete Bosch work can be found than the *Seven Deadly Sins* tabletop (Prado, Fig. 4).[9] As Walter Gibson has pointed out, the circular form echoes the convex, bull's-eye mirror of the period, which itself is evident in the "Pride [*Superbia*]" scene in the image itself. Indeed, the association of the mirror as the attribute of Pride (as well as Prudence) made such mirror shapes appropriate truth-telling vehicles of self-knowledge, even wisdom, for *memento mori* messages.[10] Such mirrors, or *specula,* served in medieval moral literature as the image of comprehensive overviews, as in titles such as *Speculum humanae salvationis (Mirror of Human Salvation),* and the round shape of Bosch's tondo image reinforces this suggestion of global inclusiveness.[11] As Nicolas of Cusa exclaims in his *De visione dei* (ca. 1453):

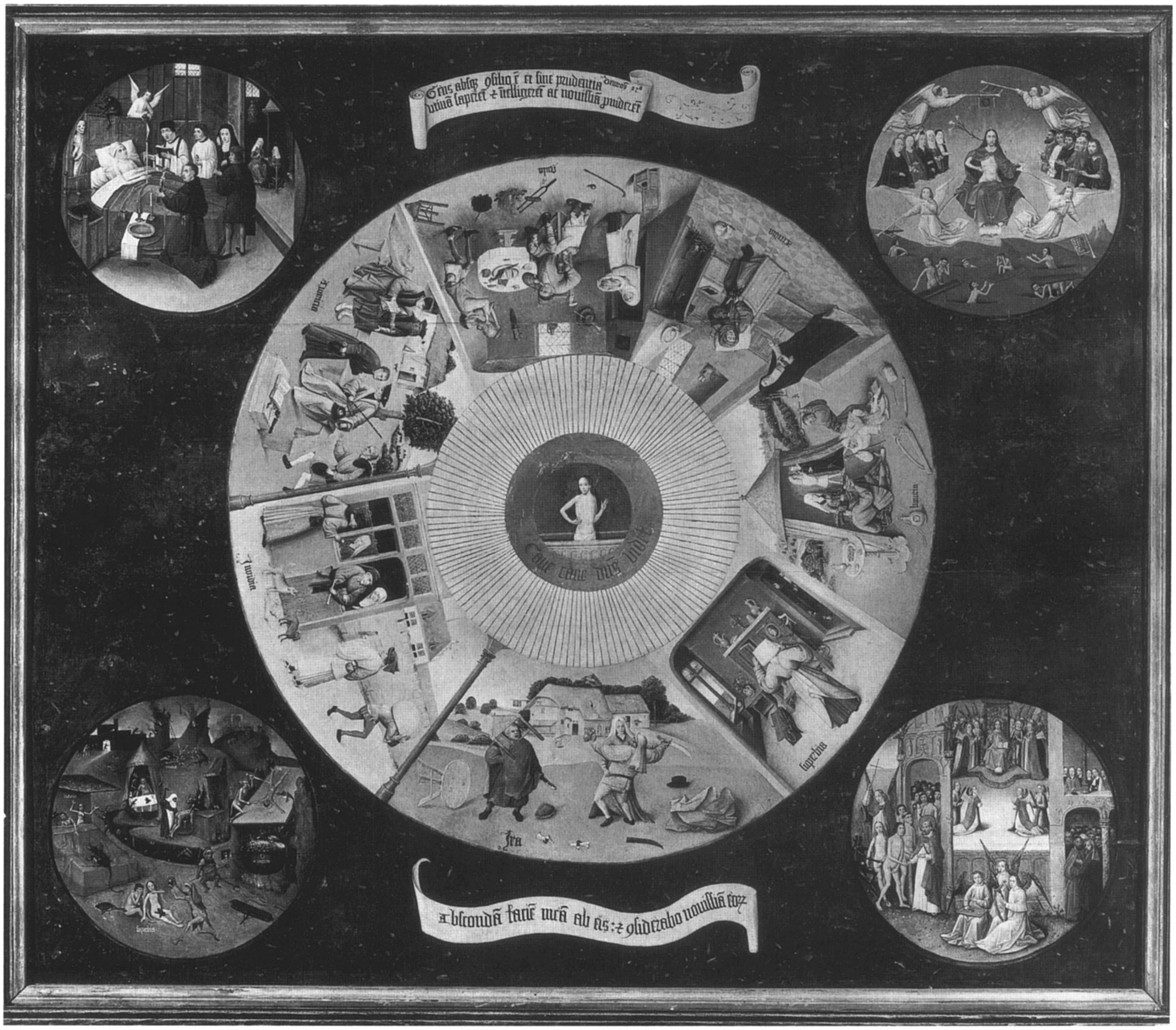
> Lord, thou seest and hast eyes. Thou art an Eye, since with thee having is being, wherefore in thyself thou dost observe all things . . . thy sight being an eye or living mirror, seeth all things in thyself . . . (and) thine Eye, Lord, reacheth to all things without turning. When our eye turneth itself to an object, 'tis because our sight seeth but through a finite angle. But the angle of thine Eye, O God, is not limited, but is infinite, being the angle of a circle, nay, of a sphere, also since thy sight is an eye of sphericity and of infinite perfection. Wherefore it seeth at one and the same time all things around, above and below.[12]

As numerous scholars have pointed out, the Madrid *Seven Deadly Sins* is composed around a circular pattern, with the scenes of worldly vices arranged radially, like spokes, out from a central point, itself inscribed within a brilliant oculus of yellow orange. At the very center—the pupil of this eyelike image—stands the half figure of the resurrected Christ in his tomb, showing the wounds he suffered on behalf of humankind. Inscribed on the innermost circle (the iris of this divine eye) around Christ is the phrase "Beware, beware, God sees (*Cave, cave, d[omin]us videt*)." Beyond this inscription the brilliant colors and beams radiating outward from the dark center suggest an equation of Christ with the sun, perhaps even the "sun of justice."[13] Because displaying his wounds is one of the marks of Christ in his role as ultimate arbiter of the fate of individual souls at the Last Judgment, this gesture and the inscription that God is watching together strongly suggest that the sins of the world are under constant scrutiny and could assure a final verdict of inexorable damnation for sinful humanity.

Bosch makes the Judgment context of the *Seven Deadly Sins* explicit with both imagery and texts. The four corner roundels present the "Four Last Things": death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell, reading clockwise from above left.[14] His appended scrolls above and below the central mirror/eye bear confirming inscriptions from the Old Testament, verses of God's own words of Judgment in Deuteronomy, 32:28 (above), "For they are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them. O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end" and 32:20 (below) "I will hide my face from them, and I will see what their end shall be." These well-chosen words speak directly to the issue of faulty judgment, even false gods, and the inevitable divine punishments that follow. To that end, each of the seven sins in the central circle of scenes is punished expressly and inversely appropriately to its crime (labeled with an inscription) in the Hell roundel below.

What has largely escaped attention until now, however, is the importance of sight in the scenes of the *Seven Deadly Sins.* We have already mentioned the use of mirrors of vanity in the scene of "Pride [*Superbia*]," not only by the central woman, who adjusts the archaic and absurd linen cap she wears, but also in the background, where a vain young man holds a mirror up to his own face. This makes us notice all the more what the woman herself does not see, namely, that a demon in the same cap is the one who holds the mirror before her gaze (and the punishment for pride in Hell is for the two naked souls to be confronted with a similar demon with mirror). Our own closer inspection reveals that her rosary beads sit unused at her feet on the floor.

A few of the other deadly sins arise from covetous vision. Envy *(invidia)* is caused by seeing and wanting what one cannot have because of one's situation: the city dweller looks out his half door and points toward the rich man from the country with his falcon and his bag of goods (borne by a servant); the dog below tries and fails to reach the bone held by that same city dweller while ignoring a couple of identical

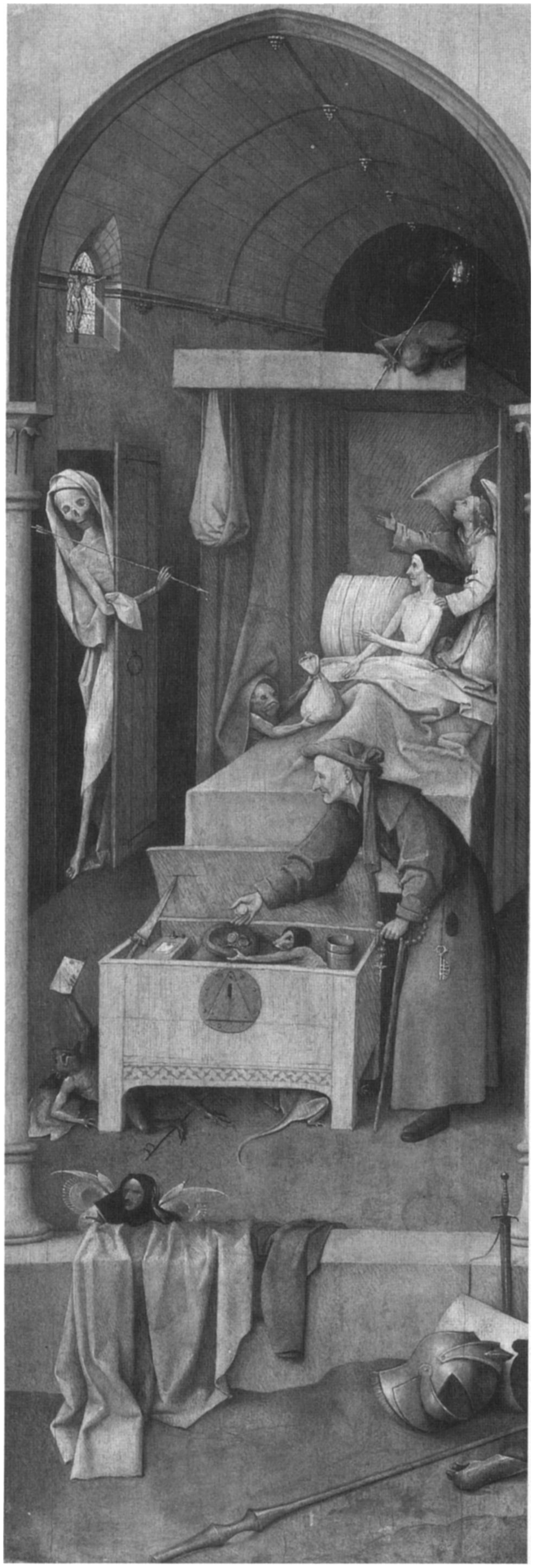


4 Hieronymus Bosch, *Seven Deadly Sins,* oil on panel. Madrid, Museo del Prado (photo: Giraudon/Art Resource, NY)

bones that lie before him on the ground. The scene of "Avarice [*Avaricia*]" is a covert judicial bribery, where the viewer, but not the participants, can discern the coin being accepted behind his back by the magistrate, who still bears both the official cap and wand of his office. What one neglects can also do harm: "Sloth [*Acedia*]" shows a cozy burgher, like the vain woman in old-fashioned costume, sleeping with his dog before the fire but neglecting his spiritual meditations, as a pious nun approaches him with a prayer book and rosary.

Surely the most powerful image about right seeing and ultimate issues of death and damnation appears in the "Death" roundel at the top left. This image scholars have long associated with the *Ars moriendi* tradition, the "Art of Dying Well," known from both didactic texts as well as engravings (Master E.S.) and woodcuts.[15] Bosch follows this tradition in showing the dying man on his deathbed receiving the last rites, the sacrament of unction. Paired on his headboard but unseen by him or by any of the visitors and officiants at his bedside, both an angel and a demon will wrestle for his soul, along with the skeletal figure of Death at the door, arrow in hand and pointed at the dying man. This is the same scenario that Bosch (in a painting equally marked by pentimenti but painted with the utmost skill, in contrast to the Prado deathbed) produced in a wing panel, *Death of the Usurer* (National Gallery of Art, Fig. 5).[16] There Death appears again at the doorway with an arrow pointed at the dying man (a former placement lay even closer to him), while the demon and angel again contest actively for his soul. The demon offers him, even at this last moment, a bag full of coins, while the angel vainly attempts to get him to look up—at both a crucifix in the high window as well as the ray of light that penetrates down from behind the cross into the dimly lit chamber. The man sits upright and his hands show his conflicted inner state, reaching at once for the proffered bag of gold and also staring and reaching (originally with a luxurious golden *pokal* goblet still in his hand, now visible only as a pentimento) toward the intruding figure of Death at his door. Clearly, the principal deathbed temptation here is avarice, although pride might also be suggested by the foreground trappings of status and power, in the form of knightly jousting equipment (hardly of any use to such an old man) and the official, seal-marked documents that demons display along with moneybags in the strongbox at the foot of the bed.[17] What this painting makes clear is that the issue of choice, expressed in the form of right seeing, is still being offered to this dying man, who opts in the (very) end for the sinful temptations of a demon rather than the way of the cross and the light urged by the angel.

In all likelihood, the Washington *Death of the Usurer* was once paired with another wing image associated with the complementary worldly vice of luxury.[18] The pendant panel has been split; originally it comprised the *Ship of Fools* (Musée du Louvre, Paris, Fig. 6) above and the so-called *Allegory of Intemperance* (Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven) below. The two other panels show the combination of lust and indulgence known among the Seven Sins as *luxuria.* We can easily compare the scene of *Luxuria* from the *Seven Deadly Sins* panel, which displays a similar combination of rich costume, taste, and eros. Common to both works is the tent with a table and the amorous couples who flirt over wine beakers. Coats of arms on the tent (Yale) or wine tankard (Prado) point to titled nobles and the tradition of the courtly gardens of love. This class satire on the part of Bosch is reinforced in the *Seven Deadly Sins* through the presence of foppish archaic costume as well as a costumed fool (with ass's ears and coxcomb, like the fool in Massys's *Ill-Matched Pair*). If we consider the Paris *Ship of Fools* to be the larger extension of the Yale fragment, we find there some of the same costly foodstuffs (especially cherries and roast fowl) and wine flasks, as well as a fool in his standard costume. Music (often an emblem of wasteful indulgence in Bosch, especially in the Hell wing of *The Garden of Earthly Delights* triptych) is common to both worlds of luxury, but the Prado panel contains both harp and recorder, while the Paris panel has only a lute.[19] What is expressly labeled as a deadly sin in the Prado panel is marked with visible signs in the Louvre panel, particularly with the owl, ominous bird of night, at the top of the unnatural tree-mast, complemented by a crescent moon on a red banner.[20] The presence of monks and nuns in the *Ship of Fools* further underscores the hypocrisy and folly of wrong behavior and personal indulgence (emblematized in the center of the boat by the giant hanging pancake, the traditional indulgence food of carnival). Like the avarice exemplified in the *Death of the Usurer,* its probable pendant, the Paris–New Haven wing embodies a deadly sin—here, luxury, both of gourmandise (rather than the sin of gluttony, with its own segment on the circle of *Sins*) and of sexuality (note that the scene of the punishment for luxury in the Hell roundel of the Prado *Sins* consists of a fornicating couple in bed with demons). Whatever the content of the missing central panel (assuming that both works were wings of a dismembered triptych), Bosch uses both of these pendant panels, just as Massys would a few decades later in his *Ill-Matched Pair,* to exemplify moral turpitude and to instruct by revealing folly and sin.

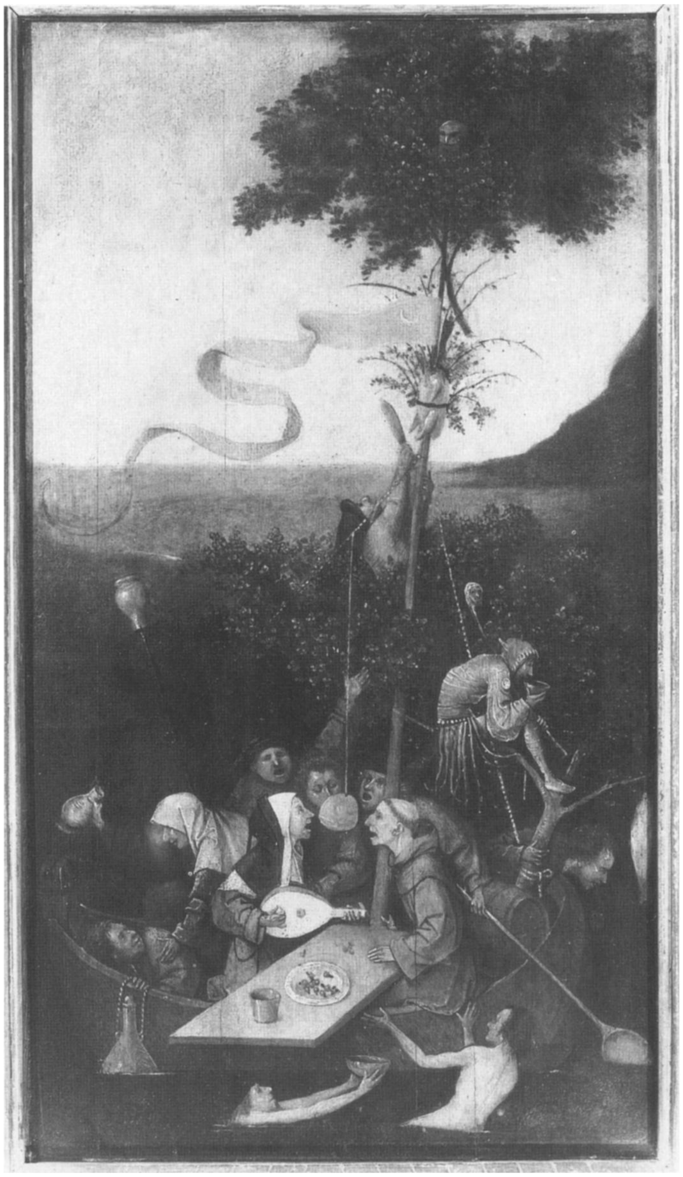


5 Bosch, *Death of the Usurer,* oil on panel. Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art

Thus far, we have seen Bosch presenting images in which the only true sight comes from outside his image, on the part of the discerning viewer, or from the eye of God in omniscient conspectus over the universe of sinful humanity. Bosch's images of saints, however, present a rich world of choices taken, which reveal to the viewer the proper path within the vast landscape of a corrupt world. We have already seen the influence of this kind of Bosch imagery in the landscapes of Patinir, such as the *Charon* (also present in the *Saint Anthony* produced in collaboration with Massys in the Prado, or the numerous Patinir images of Saint Jerome).

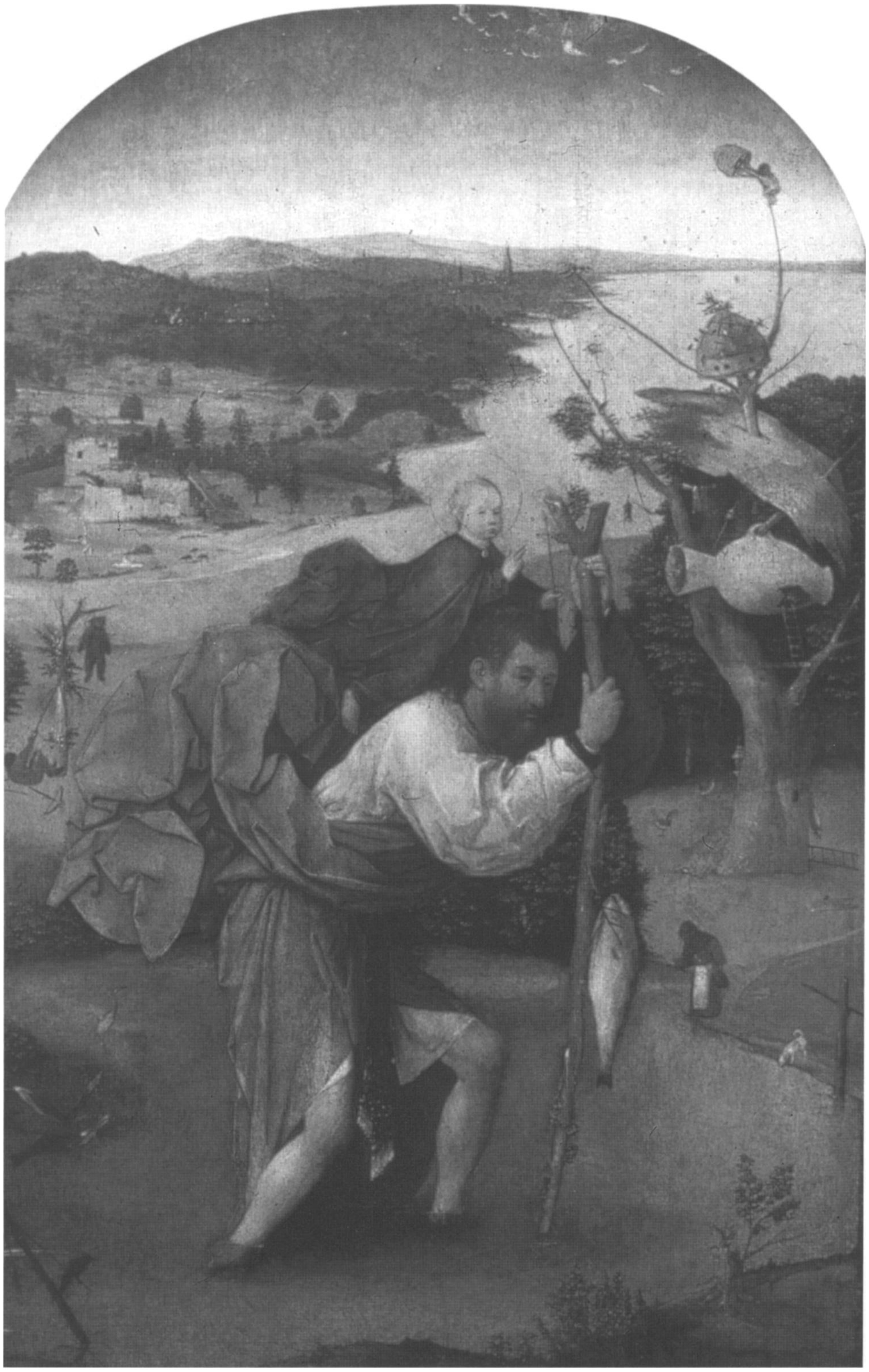
Perhaps the most dramatic saintly figure faced with a life-changing choice, literally a conversion experience, is *Saint Christopher* (Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Fig. 7).[21] According to the legend of the saint, notably in the *Golden Legend* of Jacobus de Voragine, this remarkable giant vowed to serve the most powerful of kings and eventually found his way to the Devil, only to discover that the Devil himself detoured around a roadside cross.[22] Desiring to find the source of this even greater power, Christopher went off in search of Christ, and was encouraged by a pious hermit to become a living ferryman over a great river. On meeting a small child and ferrying him across the river, Christopher felt that he had never borne such a burden, whereupon the child revealed that he had indeed carried the whole world on his shoulders in the form of Christ. The conversion of the man named "Christ-bearer" was complete.

Like most images of Saint Christopher, the Rotterdam panel depicts the process of ferrying the Christ Child (the sprouting pole of the saint refers to the legend that Christopher's staff, like that of the bachelor Saint Joseph at the altar, began to flower as a divine marker after the saint met Christ). The world through which Christopher and the Child proceed is filled with unusual, mostly unnatural sights: at the far bank a dragon emerges from a ruin, and a naked man flees in terror; beside the saint at left a winged fish is flying; behind him, a man with a crossbow hangs a dead bear in a tree; in front of him stands a hermit, but the adjacent tree with a roadside shrine on one side also has a dead, hanging fox on the other and an oversize empty and cracked jug with a fire inside mounted above, along with a dovecote and beehive. Few of these disturbing and inconsistent details have found convincing explanation (or even much discussion); however, their cumulative effect is to define the rest of the world as a dangerous place, and the empty, broken jug shelter recurs in Bosch scenes of Hell. Within our context, what is important is the presentation by Bosch, consistent with the legend, of a saint who deliberately faces up to this world of tribulation (compare it with the torments of Saint Anthony depicted by Patinir with Massys in the sky and landscape), yet who steadfastly averts his face from such worldliness and instead looks, with Christ, outward and forward at this, his moment of conversion. This saintly conduct offers a narrative of right choice and spiritual insight amid worldly distractions.


6 Bosch, *Ship of Fools*, oil on panel. Paris, Musée du Louvre (photo: Giraudon/Art Resource, NY)

A similar saintly focus on the spiritual and rejection of the sinful can be seen in Bosch's *Saint John on Patmos* (Staatliche Museen, Berlin, Fig. 8). This image, of course, captures the moment when the author of the Book of Revelations beholds the apocalyptic "woman in the sun" (Rev. 12:1–2), usually identified with the Virgin (and the emerging cult of the rosary) in late medieval devotion.[23] The theme of John the Evangelist writing in response to his celestial vision had already been painted on the wing of a major altarpiece in Bruges by Hans Memling, the triptych of *The Two Saints John* in the St. John Hospital (1474–79).[24] What Bosch has added, characteristically, to this theme is the lurking presence behind the saint of a small, black demon, who occupies the right corner as the antipode to the eagle attribute of the saint. Important here is the fact that the bespectacled demon (hence with flawed vision) casts his own envious eyes on the inkpot and quills at the feet of the saint,[25] and also that John himself, guided by the mediating upward gesture of a blue angel (in contrast to the usurer's lack of attention given to an angel), keeps his "eyes on the prize" of his epiphany. The saint ignores not only the demonic presence behind and below him but also the burning ships and the vista of the harbor beyond.[26]

Ultimately, the most precarious test of a saint and his spiritual vision appears in Bosch's *Temptation of Saint Anthony*

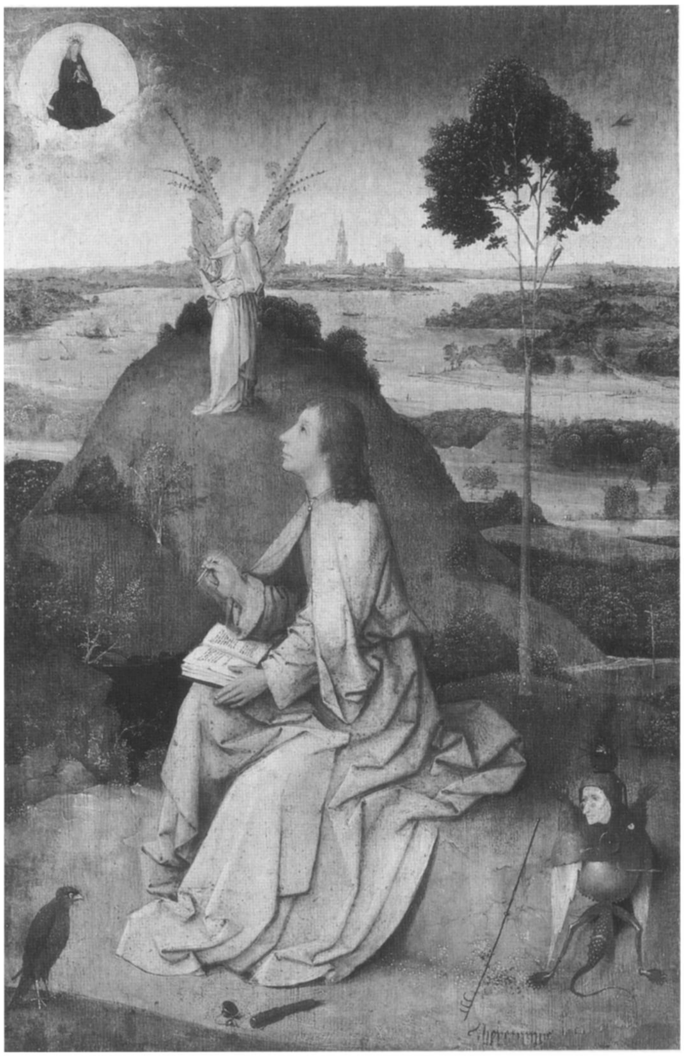


7 Bosch, *Saint Christopher,* oil on panel. Rotterdam, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen (photo: Art Resource, NY)

triptych (Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon, Fig. 9). In the central panel, Anthony is surrounded by a host of demons, whose sybaritic table and proffered wine beaker recall nothing so much as the sinful settings of Bosch's "Luxuria" images (the same elements recur in the lower corner of the *Saint Anthony* triptych's right wing, where a nude woman represents carnal temptation), but here they have usually been interpreted as a Black Mass. Ominous animals, including an owl atop a pig-headed man, a toad with an egg, and a dog in fool's cap, mark the scene as fraught with evil. From this unwholesome company the kneeling saint deliberately turns outward and away—toward the viewer—while making a gesture of blessing. In the direction of his previous gaze, a tiny figure of Christ stands within a dark chamber, beside an altar table, complete with chalice, candle, and crucifix. Crowned with a cruciform halo, Christ echoes the blessing gesture of Anthony. Within the overall visual welter of this central panel, Christ is difficult for the viewer to pick out, made more difficult with the saint's face turned away from this, the true altar. However, almost like the angel in *Saint John on Patmos,* he gestures to help the viewer find the proper spiritual vision in the midst of this hell on earth. This triptych presents an evil world, filled with ruins, with flaming buildings, with hybrid demons and unnatural creatures, such as flying fish and skating birds. Bosch's Saint Anthony withdraws, like the later Patinir *Saint Anthony,* from both temptations and tribulations. It is the viewer who is much more likely to become fascinated and transfixed in front of such a panoply of fascinating and bizarre creatures and spaces, making the tiny figure of Christ in the central distance recede all the more from view, a "still small voice" amid the clamor. Like the usurer, still distracted by demons and attractions on his deathbed, the pious viewer needs to put appearances aside, to cut through the profane to find the sacred. In this respect, the small gesture by the kneeling Anthony, echoing the blessing by Christ himself, offers visual intervention as well as saintly mediation to strengthen the more easily distracted viewer.

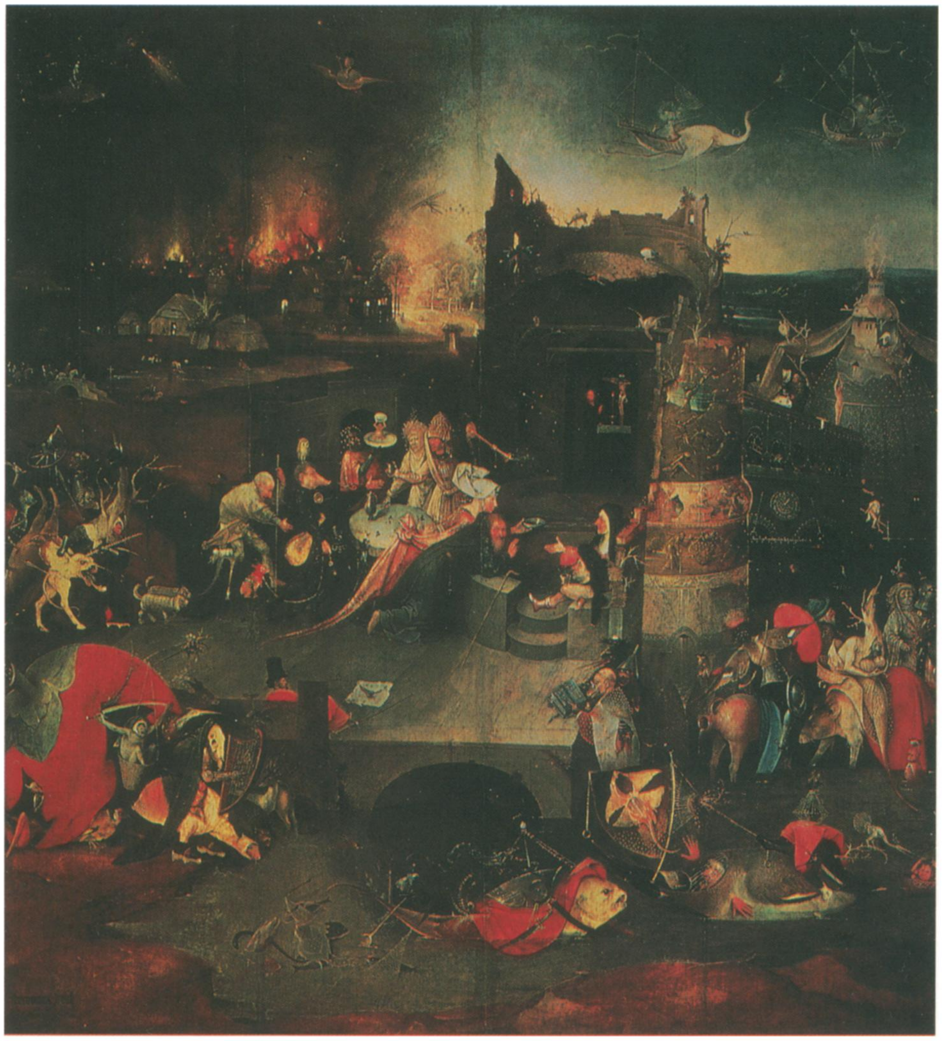
Surrounding the steadfast Anthony, a host of parodic details situates the saint and the mass amid perversions of sacred imagery, such as the parody of the Holy Family at the lower right of the center panel, where a demonic tree-woman, riding a rat, holds a swaddled infant, mimicking the Virgin en route to Bethlehem; this same figure is surrounded on both sides by caricatures of nobles in armor or fancy dress, as if in evocation of the Magi en route to the Nativity. Beside them a trio of demons, one of them wearing spectacles, standing in the filthy water of corruption, appear to be reading a prayer book. Above all of these figures stands a ruined columnar structure with Old Testament and pagan religious scenes, which show disturbing details. Reading from bottom to top, in the first scene, we see the spies returning to the land of Canaan with their giant grape cluster—a prefiguration of the Baptism in typological images, such as the *Biblia pauperum,* but also used by Bosch (with other oversize or unnatural fruit) as a symbol of forbidden knowledge.[27] One level up is pictured a sacrifice before a pagan idol of a demon (with an owl standing behind the image in a cracked opening), then, moving up again, the dance around the Golden Calf, contrasted with the scene above it of Moses receiving the tablets of the Law from God in Heaven, which explicitly reverses and criticizes the idolatry pictured below it (and, by implication, the welter of visions that surround and crowd Saint Anthony in all three panels of a triptych, which probably itself served as an altarpiece for the celebration of the mass). All of these images serve to underscore the difference between following the spirit and heeding divine commands or else allowing the fallible need for worldly sensations or visible manifestations, whether fruit or idols, to dictate one's choice.

Ultimately, the interpretation of Bosch that emerges from these disparate images tallies with the one developed by Father José de Sigüenza in the early seventeenth century, when he associated the rich inventions and fascinating details of Bosch's demons with the phantasms of a disturbed mind. Speaking of Saint Anthony in one of Bosch's numerous versions of that saint's temptations and tribulations, he says:



8 Bosch, *Saint John on Patmos,* oil on panel. Berlin, Staatliche Museen

> In one place one observes the saint, the prince of hermits, with his serene, devout, contemplative face; his soul calm and full of peace; elsewhere he is surrounded by the endless fantasies and monsters that the archfiend creates in order to confuse, worry, and disturb that pious soul and his steadfast love. For that purpose Bosch conjures up animals, wild chimeras, monsters, conflagrations, images of death, screams, threats, vipers, lions, dragons, and horrible birds of so many kinds that one must admire him for his ability to give shape to so many ideas. And all this he did in order to prove that a soul that is supported by the grace of God and elevated by His hand to a like way of life cannot at all be dislodged or diverted from its goal even though, in the imagination and to the outer and inner eye, the devil depicts what can excite laughter or vain delight or anger or other inordinate passions . . . and it makes me stop to consider my own misery and weakness and how far I am from that perfection when I become upset and lose my composure because of unimportant trifles, as when I lose my solitude, my silence, my shelter, and even my patience. And all the ingenuity of the devil and hell could accomplish so little in deceiving this saint that I feel the



9 Bosch, *Temptation of Saint Anthony,* center panel, oil on panel. Lisbon, Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga (photo: Art Resource, NY)

> Lord is just as ready to help me as him, if I would only have the courage to go out and do battle.[28]

Bosch's rich and mysterious pictorial invention became the hallmark of his art and was the quality most imitated by his numerous followers, who continued to produce pictures of demonic Last Judgments and Temptations of Saint Anthony for the entire span of the sixteenth century.[29] Yet (as Father Sigüenza realized already by 1605) what Bosch consistently presents in his images of saints is their steadfast resistance to that very fascination, their disdain for the corruption and complexity of the world, in a traditional Christian ascetic tradition of the *contemptus mundi.*[30]

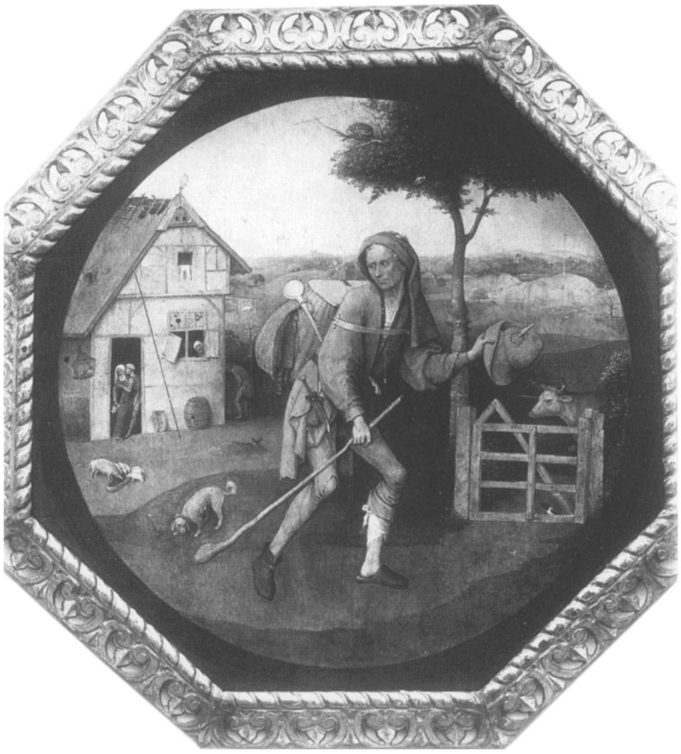
Passage through the world by an ordinary, nonsaintly individual, Bosch's *Pedlar* (Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Fig. 10), takes place in a circular frame that suggests it should be read—by an insightful viewer—allegorically.[31] Identified as a vagabond,[32] poor and idle, this threadbare and white-haired figure passes by a disreputable tavern-brothel, its disrepair marked with missing panes of glass and hanging shutter, its dissipation signaled as a brothel by the caged bird beside the entrance. Outside it a woman with a wine can is accosted by a soldier in the open doorway. While beset by a snarling dog and standing underneath an ominous owl, the aging vagrant must pass onward through a gate on a road that leads to open country (with gallows) in the distance. He makes his way with difficulty through the world, in part because he also is dissolute and perennially poor (and must have been long since, to judge by his unshaven white stubble). One is reminded of the proverb in the lower center of Pieter Bruegel's enormous Berlin panel *Netherlandish Proverbs,* of 1560, which shows a similar poor man, like the Rotterdam *Pedlar* in mismatched footwear, ragged clothing, and bandaged leg, who personifies the saying "He who wants to make his way through the world will have to stoop [or bow and scrape, in more vernacular English]."[33] The significance of two animals just beyond the gate, a cow and a magpie, remains unclear (and has been variously interpreted), but for our purposes it is evident that the wanderer continues to look backward instead of forward, mindful of the dog but not yet conscious of the obstacles in his path, let alone the owl above his head.[34]

As scholars have long noted, virtually the same white-haired figure appears on the exterior of *The Hay Wain* triptych (Escorial and Prado, Fig. 11).[35] He, too, carries a long stick, plus the same wicker backpack with spoon, and he wears the same garment with a worn knee and an open shirt. He, too, is looking backward instead of forward on his path, but this figure runs a real risk by attending to the snarling dog, for he is fast approaching a narrow bridge and might well fall into a ditch (like the "blind following the blind" in the parable). This is another world filled with greater dangers: in addition to the dog at his heels, a trio of highway brigands is robbing and tying up another traveler at the tree behind him; meanwhile (underneath a roadside chapel) a man and woman, ignoring their flock of sheep (bad shepherds?), dance idly to the tune of a peasant with a bagpipe at the tree in front of him. Death also fills this arcadia. Above the head of the traveler atop a hill sits a gallows; the bones of a skeletal horse become carrion for ravens in the lower left corner, opposite the ditch. Picking his way between the countryside versions of "death and the devil," or the enactment of the deadly sins of avarice (or anger—the theft) and luxury (the dancing), this poor and frail voyager really has no good choices to make, and in his care for his safety he remains at risk, for this is a world marked as filled with evils.[36] It lacks the supernatural characters of the *Usurer,* where death, angel, and demon intervene in the earthly life of an old man. However, those transcendent figures do appear in *The Hay Wain* triptych (unlike the Rotterdam *Pedlar* tondo) on the inside panels, where the sense of procession continues.

The theme of *The Hay Wain* triptych is worldly avarice and deception. The overall movement of the entire open retable (Fig. 12) proceeds from left to right, from the Garden of Eden through the world to the gates of Hell itself.[37] And there is movement in time, starting from the top left, where the rebel angels are cast out of Heaven and descend to Earth in the form of noxious insects and other demonic shapes. Time then unfolds in Eden as well, beginning with the creation of Eve and continuing through the Fall to the Expulsion from the Garden in the lowermost foreground. This expulsion of the First Parents into the postlapsarian world sets up the basic procession of the center panel, which focuses on the grasping of hay, the symbol of worldly goods with the overtones of vanity, since "all flesh is grass."[38]

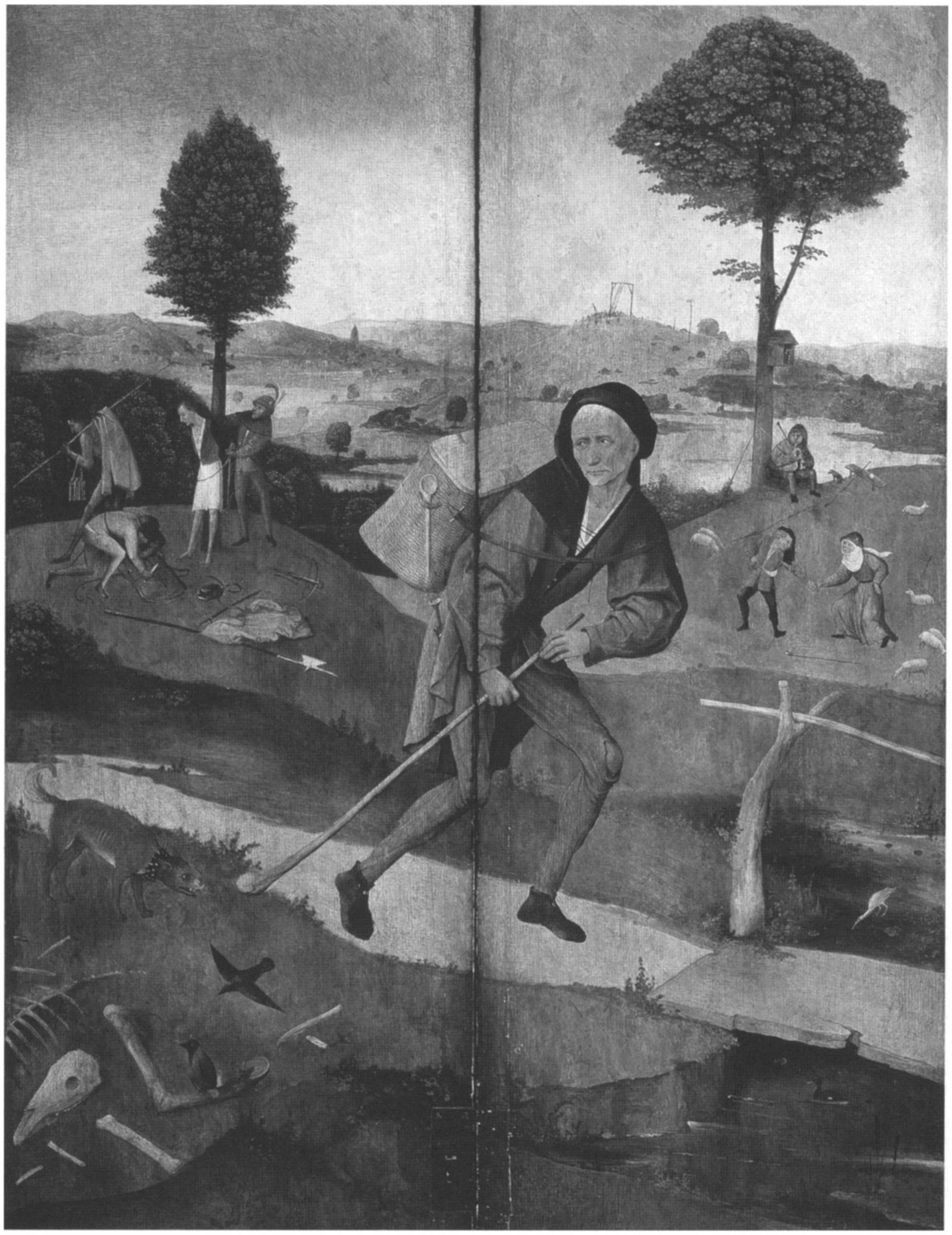
In the central panel of *The Hay Wain* with the hay wagon symbol, no particular time frame is presented, but contemporary costumes suggest a moral point with universal significance for society as a whole. Once again, Bosch makes explicit social criticism, showing the rich and powerful of the world on horseback, including figures expressly dressed in the ceremonial costumes of pope, emperor, and (slightly archaic) Burgundian dukes, comfortably following the massive hay wagon, while lower classes, including figures with exotic Levantine turbans (standing in front of the horsemen), are obliged to fight one another for whatever meager scraps they can obtain. Fierce conflicts have erupted, and some figures have fallen down precariously in front of the ponderous wheels. The figures actually pulling the massive pole of the wagon turn out to be demons, typical Bosch hybrids with legs and bodies as well as spare parts compiled from insect, reptile, and rodent components. They are moving into the Hell wing past the same kind of alien rock and plant forms seen as the mark of evil on earth in works of saintly retreat, such as the *Saint John the Baptist* or *Saint Jerome.*

Significantly, these demons remain completely unnoticed by all who focus on the great mound of hay; even the figures crowded behind the demons fail to notice them. Although none of the people in the lower foreground vies for a share of hay, they are instead intent on their practices of worldly deception, depicted in striking variety. Perhaps the most explicit is the quack dentist with his strange and colorful robes and his pseudomedicine sign with a heart above a table with medicaments. Like the monk-surgeon in the *Stone of Folly,* this quack is working on a hapless patient, here extracting a tooth and a fee. Church orders fare little better in this foreground area: a fat father superior sits idly with a drink while a quartet of laboring nuns fill his large sack with hay. One of the four also turns to a fool, dressed in blue (often the color of deceit) and playing the bagpipe, instrument of folly. On the other side of the quack doctor is a gypsy camp, the two gypsy women marked by their distinctive turbans, vestiges of their alleged "Egyptian" origins.[39] One of them is telling the fortune of a rich, fashionably dressed woman, while the other is wiping the bare bottom of one of the numerous children, as if in commentary on the waste value of such fortune readings. At the far left side, a blind man with a boy as his guide attempts to move into the area of the wagon; with a child on his back, he is clearly a beggar, a class that was usually suspected of faking infirmities and general idleness.[40] Hence, this figure could embody both blindness and deceit!



10 Bosch, *Pedlar,* oil on panel. Rotterdam, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen (photo: Marburg/Art Resource, NY)

The central panel has a marked vertical axis running up from these foreground deceivers to a figure of Christ. Positioned at the very center and top of the image, he appears as a vision out of Heaven, bathed in golden light within the break of a cloud. Like the Christ at the center of the oculus in the *Seven Deadly Sins,* this Man of Sorrows figure, wearing a royal red robe, displays his wounds before the golden background. As in the *Usurer,* the only figure to look up and take note of Christ is an angel, kneeling and with hands clasped in prayer. The other figures located in this privileged position atop the mountain of goods and wealth are again the idle rich, indulging in their selfish luxury, with fancy (again,

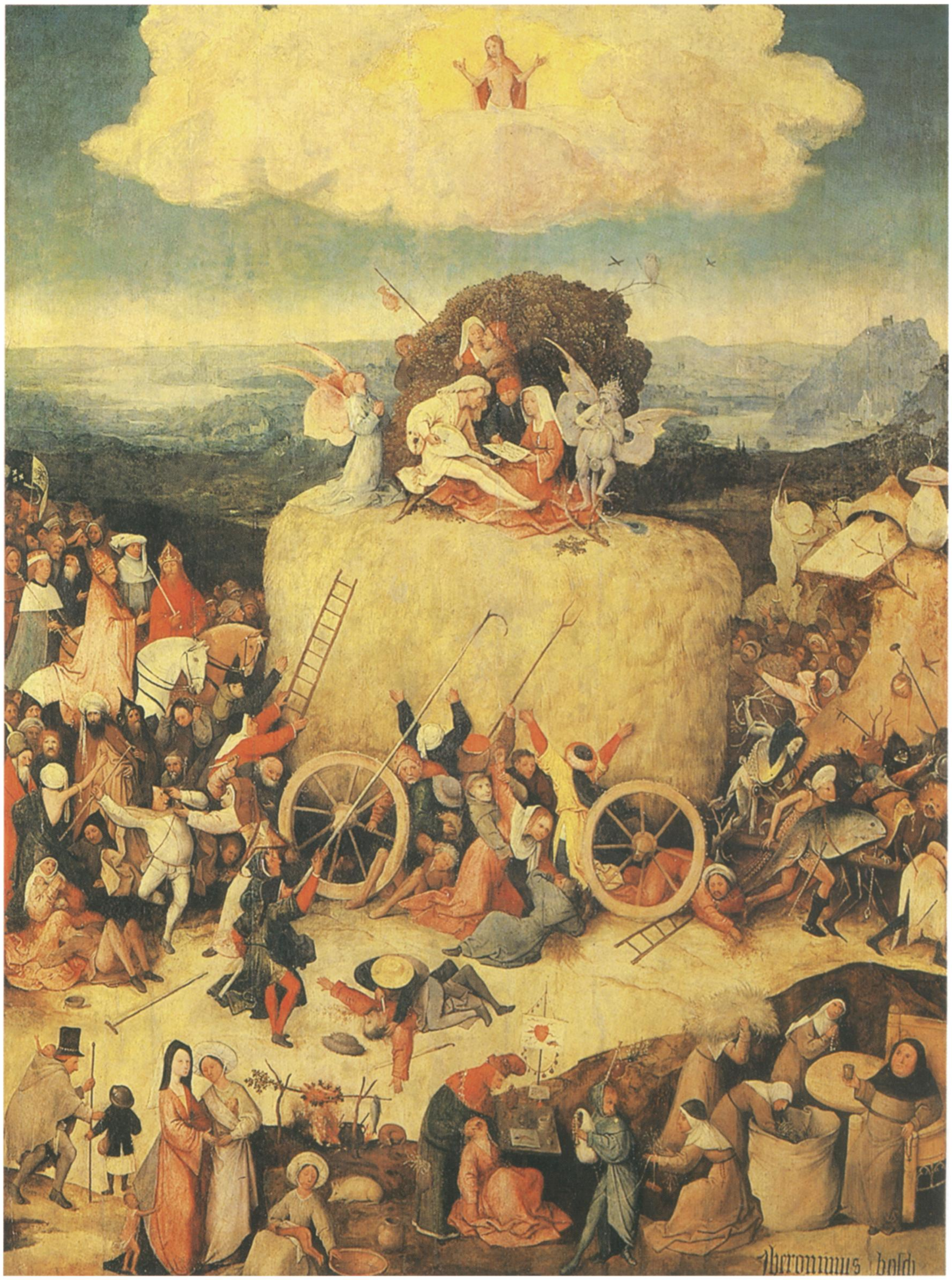


11 Bosch, *The Hay Wain* triptych, exterior, oil on panel. Madrid, Museo del Prado (photo: Scala/Art Resource, NY)

archaic) costume and the music of love. They are accompanied by a blue devil, whose participation in the scene opposite the angel underscores the choice made by the sinful riders on the wagon. Just to punctuate the message for the attentive viewer, an owl perches imperturbably on a branch above the blue devil.

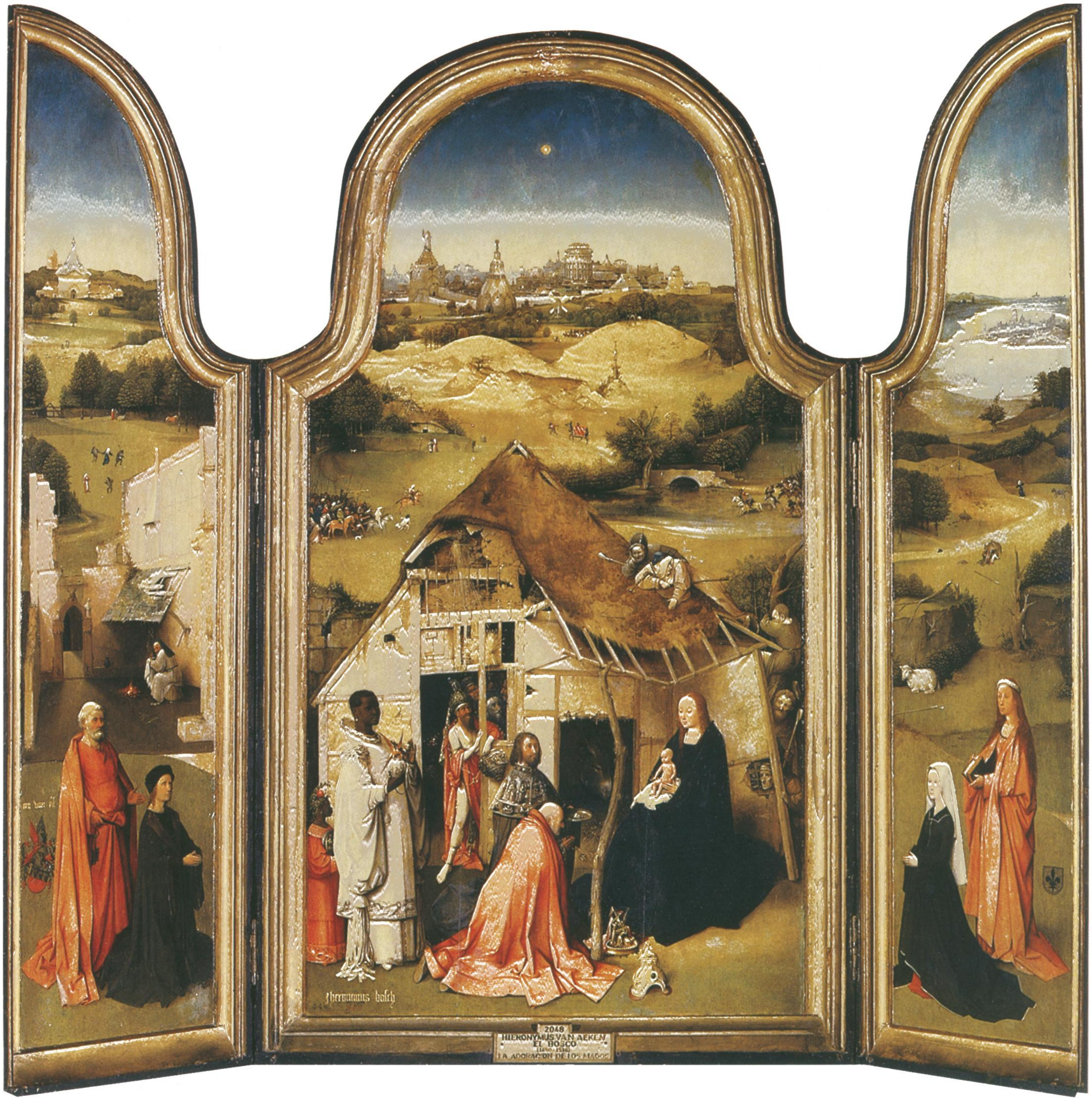
Thus, the interior of *The Hay Wain* presents another pilgrimage—akin to the hazardous journey of the *Pedlar* on its exterior—from the expulsion of evil from Heaven and from Eden at the left to the punishments of Hell at the right. In the middle—the earth as lived experience—a corrupt Church and state participate in the vanity and folly, and along with the dominance of avarice, luxury and other deadly sins abide. Sharp-sighted viewers alone will note the warning signs of owls or demons and realize that the most visible figures of the foreground are all deceivers, including hypocritical, greedy mendicants of the Church. Only by noticing either the kneeling angel, who retreats inwardly (like Bosch's saints) into prayer in defense against all this indulgence, or by finding the ultimate object of contemplation, Christ in Heaven,[41] can the viewer heed the message at the (top) margin in the midst of such distraction on the main path.

The figure of Christ presents a paradox that invites confusion and can be deceptive. As if to deceive the Devil himself, this humblest of men turns out to be the Son of God.[42] Of all Bosch's Gospel images, the most mysterious yet most important for investigating the issue of vision and spirituality is the *Epiphany* triptych (Prado, Fig. 13).[43] That work begins with the implications of Christ's Incarnation as the snare of the Devil and clearly builds on fifteenth-century Flemish triptych models, which had featured both the Nativity and the Adoration of the Magi as models for the veneration of the body of Christ in the mass.[44] In Bosch's version, typically, the air of menace becomes pervasive, both in the form of the Magi



12 Bosch, *The Hay Wain* triptych (photo: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY)

themselves as well as through the overall background setting of the narrative. For one thing, there is a distinct hierarchy between the figures, with the Virgin and Child, despite their unadorned simplicity of dress, visually isolated by a shed support from everyone else. Details of the gifts of the Magi suggest something of the same typological and fraught thematic content as the column reliefs in the center of the Lisbon *Temptation of Saint Anthony*. At the feet of the Virgin one notes the gift of the oldest Magus, a gilded metalwork sculpture of the Sacrifice of Isaac, Old Testament precedent for the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Yet the helmet on the ground beside that metalwork is crowned by a pair of birds eating fruit, a suggestive animal indulgence in the sin of luxury (and miniature of *The Garden of Earthly Delights;* see below). The elaborate relief collar of the second Magus shows the Visit of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon, prototype of this very Adoration, underneath a scene of Old Testament sacrifice (probably the Sacrifice of Manoah, Judges 13, where



13 Bosch, *Epiphany* triptych, oil on panel. Madrid, Museo del Prado (photo: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY)

the story of Samson alludes to the Virgin birth), which suggests the antecedent under Law to the offering of the mass in the Christian era, under grace.

The remaining two prominent figures across the foreground of the central panel are considerably more ominous in their details. The black Magus, youngest of the three, carries an orb surmounted by a golden bird, which shows a scene of a king receiving visitors (probably David receiving water from three mighty men, another Old Testament prototype of the Magi), in echo of the main subject of the triptych. In addition, this same Magus has a sumptuous white robe, whose collar and shoulders bear decorative crown of thorns motifs, as if to suggest the torments of Christ at the hands of authority figures, such as in Bosch's *Ecce Homo,* and whose hem is more explicitly ornamented as representing evil with bird-people, demons of the kind Bosch has used in his scenes of saintly tribulation. The hem of his black attendant's robe displays fish demons devouring one another, and the fruit atop his head suggests the same unnatural fecundity that Bosch revealed in the evil pods of a world of temptation (not only in the landscapes of meditating saints but also in *The Garden of Earthly Delights*).

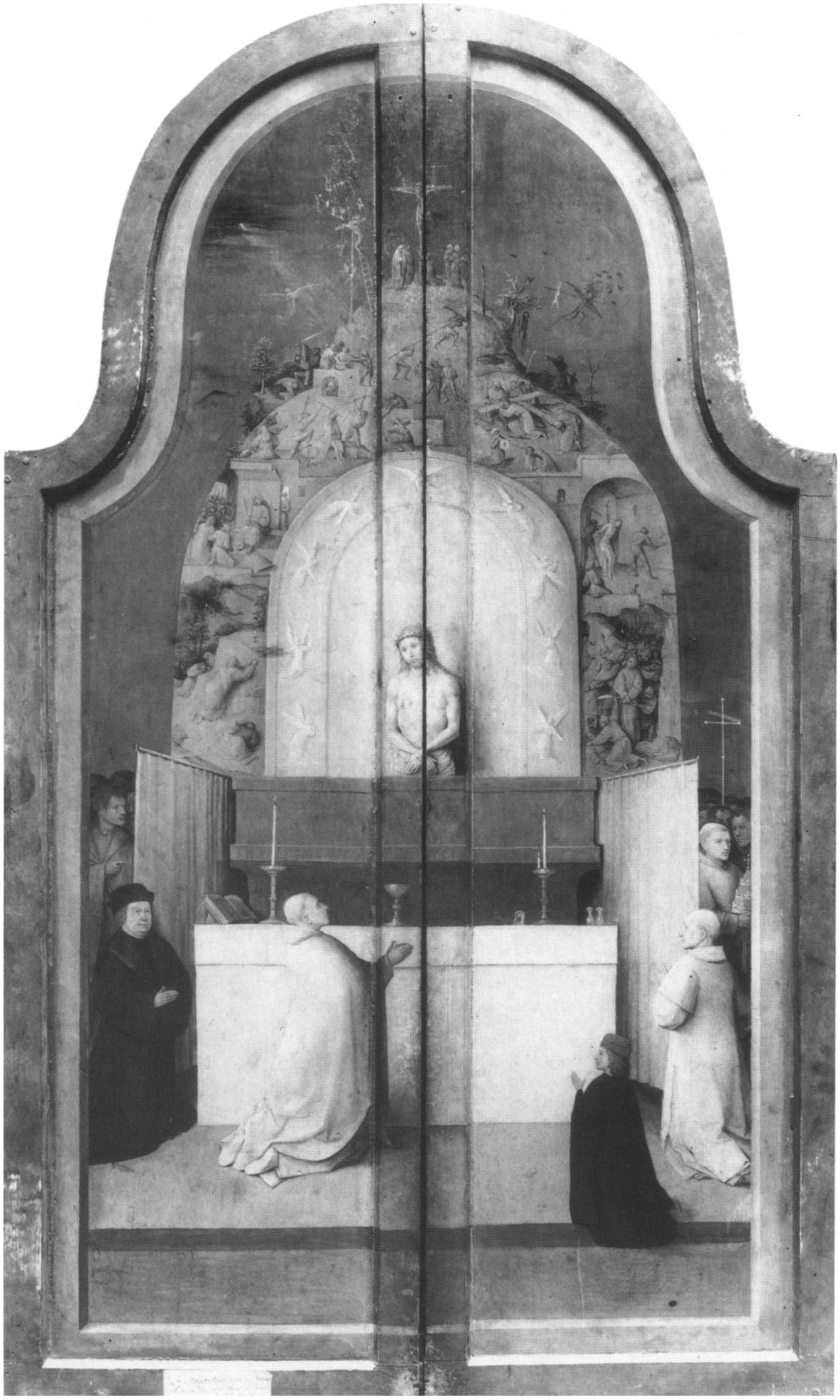
Most frightening and puzzling of all the figures is the foremost figure of the Magi's retinue, the figure standing just inside the door of the shed, looking on and holding the metal helmet of the second Magus.[45] That helmet shows a row of toadlike demons, ominous enough in itself, suggesting the underlying evil beneath the seeming benevolence of the kingly visitors. But the other attributes of the figure in the hut really set him apart. Like Christ he carries red kingly robes and a crown of thorns (around a turbanlike hat) but is largely nude, as if in mocking imitation (before the fact) of the Man of Sorrows. He also bears on his leg a visible wound encased in a glass container, like the reliquary shrines for treasured relics, often bones, of deceased and venerated saints, yet he is very much alive. From his belt hangs a sash with a bell, ornamented with more toads, as if in black parody of the celebration of the mass and possibly connected to the description of bells on the costume of the temple high priest of the Old Testament. Based on these details and others, Lotte Brand Philip characterized this man, surrounded by other ugly and leering faces, akin to those of the *Ecce Homo,* as the Antichrist; his antipodal relation to Christ's own characteristic features indeed suggests a negative construction, evil opposed to the sacred. In his role as a follower of kings rather than a commander in his own right, he cannot be the Antichrist, but he is surely another parody of religion and its authority.[46]

Intimations of evil abound in the background landscape, which extends across all three panels. As in the outside of *The Hay Wain* or in the setting of *Saint Christopher,* a worldly expanse presents a variety of dangers and distractions: on the right wing wolves attack travelers (as the traditional lamb of Saint Agnes cowers at the edge of the foreground space); on the left wing a bagpipe leads idle dancers. Behind the main stall of the center panel armies mass for conflict before an exotic large city. In the left wing, the figure of Saint Joseph appears in the middle distance, well behind the kneeling donor figure with his patron saint, Saint Peter.[47] Hovering between the idle dancers in the distance and the sanctity of the patron saint, Joseph is barely recognizable as a sacred figure in his own right. His back is turned to the viewer, and he sits on a wicker hamper, engaged in the humblest of activities, drying a cloth diaper by a fire, underneath an improvised lean-to shelter against the decaying stone structure of the main building. Instead of being glorified through his proximity to the Madonna and Child (or even being included with them in the principal visual space), Joseph seems to have been demoted in both spatial and familial terms to menial servant status.[48] He is shown as distinctly aged and modest in dress (like the two Bosch *Pedlars*), yet like the Joseph figure in Robert Campin's Mérode triptych, this figure might be just the simple and worldly artisan figure positioned to deceive and distract the Devil from the real purpose of the Incarnation. Brand Philip astutely observes that in addition to the dancers beyond Joseph in the open fields, the very gate near him is surmounted by an inverted toad and ornamented with demonic figures on its doorposts, so this saintly provider and husband, like Bosch's penitent saints, Jerome and John the Baptist, is surrounded by evil; also like them he can still participate in the divine plan without having to be physically near or in visual contact with the holy. Once again, perceiving the spiritual significance behind humble worldly appearances is critical for the discerning pious viewer, who would otherwise mistake both the nature and the role of Joseph in the Gospel message. We also note that Saint Joseph even turns his back on the remainder of the Holy Family.

Moreover, shepherds, figures who had been models of benevolent adoration in earlier Flemish Nativity settings (as in Robert Campin's Dijon *Nativity* or Hugo van der Goes's Uffizi Portinari Altarpiece), here clamber dangerously on the top of the shed and peer through its ruined walls. Brand Philip is surely correct to connect this behavior to a parable (John 10:1–2) in which the invasion of the symbolic sheepfold is associated with the negative type of Christ as Good Shepherd: "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; but he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep."

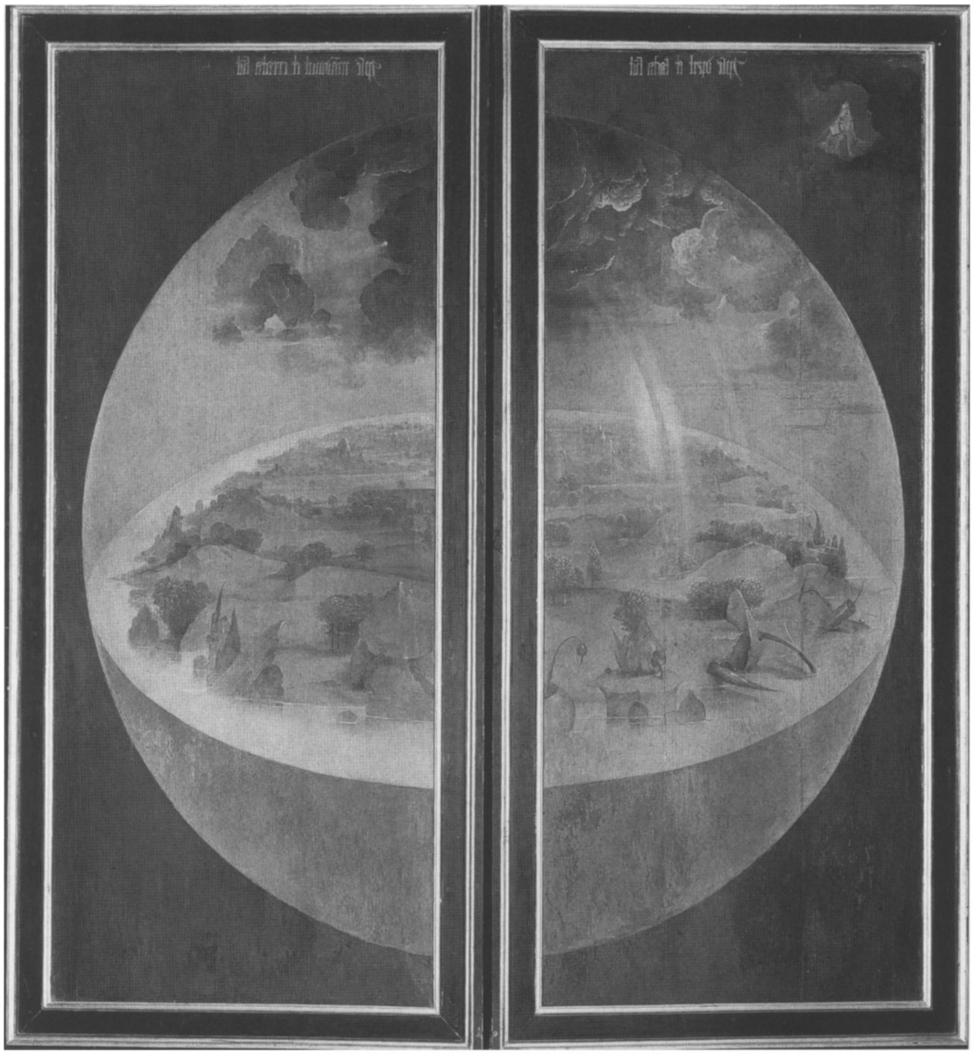
Bosch thus reverses the norm of the benign Magi and shepherds engaged in the adoring veneration of Christ in a scene that serves in Flemish art as the foundation of the mass and of the altarpiece itself as a ritual object.[49] Their suggestions of evil unfold within and before a world that is further punctuated with evil, but the detection of their corruption requires the discerning eye of faith, able to pick out the telling and significant details of gifts or of costumes, since the Magi still enact their roles according to pictorial tradition.

The issue of faith and its relation to the visible world returns on the outside scene of the Prado *Epiphany* triptych, which depicts the Mass of Saint Gregory (Fig. 14). This late medieval legend tells how Christ's real presence manifested miraculously in the form of the Man of Sorrows before the celebrant pope, Gregory I. As a theme this miracle complements the institution of the mass through the Incarnation and Nativity on the interior of the same altarpiece.[50] But in fact its message is one of confirmation by vision in the face of spiritual doubts about the physical transformation of the mass into the body and blood of Christ. In most representations of this miracle, the *arma Christi,*[51] or the tokens of the Passion, also manifest themselves behind the standing figure of the Savior on the altar, presented to the vision of the kneeling pope-saint. In Bosch's version of the scene the actual Passion events are laid out in a scenic tableau, almost cinematically ascending a large arch-shaped structure, to culminate in the Crucifixion.[52] In this grisaille world the darker background gradually gives way to the ultimate sacred central brightness of Christ (resembling the unassuming figure in Heaven atop the interior of *The Hay Wain* triptych as well as the central figure in the oculus of the *Seven Deadly Sins*), surrounded by an arched ring of angels at the center of the joined panels. The kneeling priest below clasps his hands in prayer like the angels beholding their own visions of Christ (as in *The Hay Wain* and *Usurer*); his physical isolation from the other figures, who are crowded into corners of the image, marks his saintly status.[53] Strikingly, the only figures depicted in color are a pair of donors, who kneel in prayer at the front and side margins of the image but are still vouchsafed an experience of Gregory's vision, once more as witnesses (compare the lost donor figures in Bosch's Frankfurt *Ecce Homo*). They do not behold Christ directly but principally stare at Gregory, as if receiving the overall vision through their saintly intercessor (as the *Saint John on Patmos* makes use of an angelic intercessor to provide his vision of Revelations).



14 Bosch, *Epiphany* triptych, exterior (photo: Art Resource, NY)

While seeming to confirm the validity of the sacrament of the Eucharist as well as the special sanctity of the sainted Pope Gregory I, Bosch's exterior scene can equally be seen as a call (on the everyday side of the altarpiece) to the pious beholder to "keep faith" with the sacred ritual and not to waver in his belief in its tenets or dogma (particularly transubstantiation, dogma since 1215).[54] Bosch's choice of this scene offers consolation that even the pope-saint himself had doubted but then had his doubts dispelled by this very miracle. Here, seeing was surely believing, but truly spiritual seeing was itself



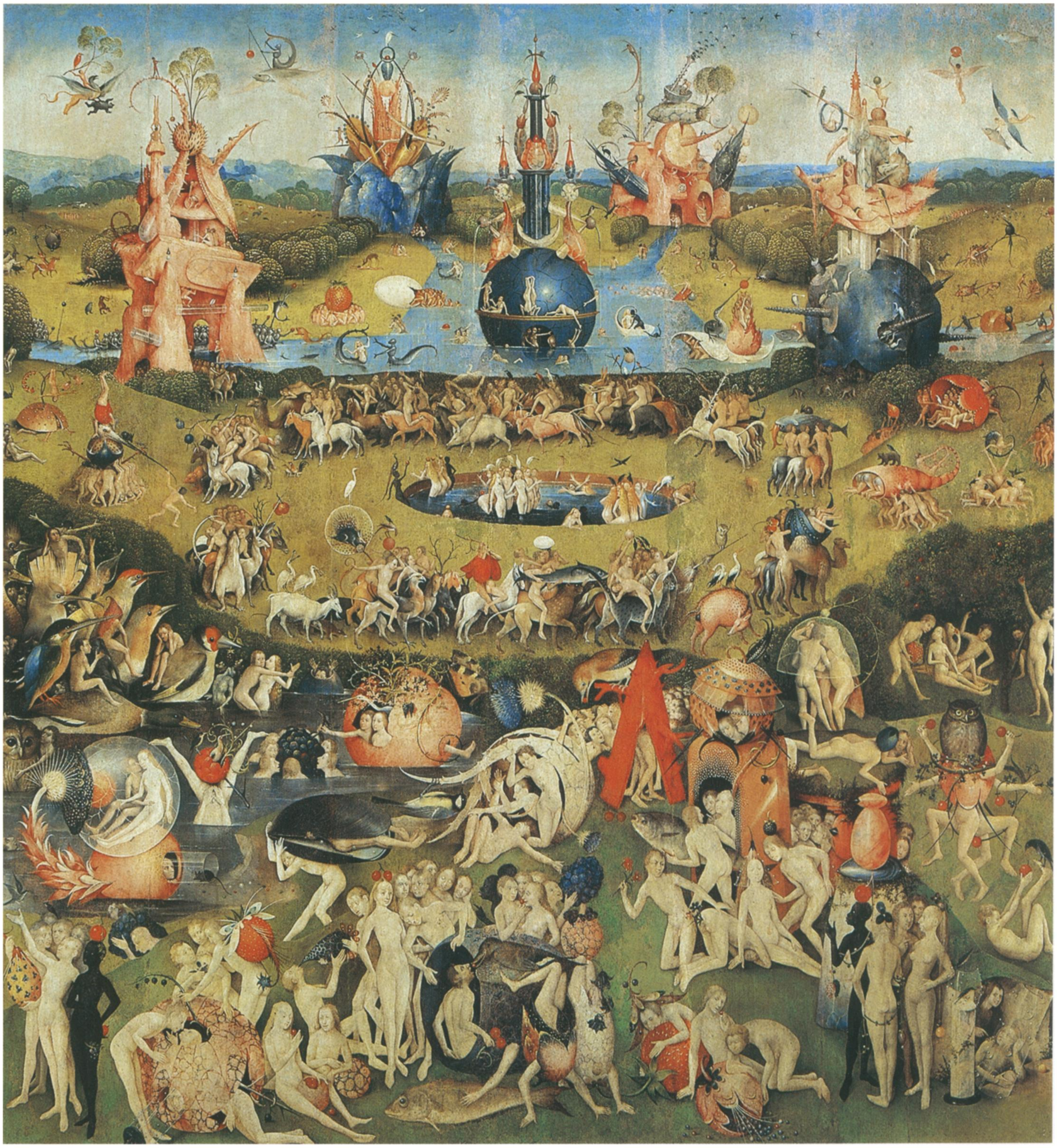
15 Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights,* exterior, oil on panel. Madrid, Museo del Prado (photo: Scala/Art Resource, NY)

a miracle, uniquely manifested by divine grace to this holiest of prayerful petitioners.

For Bosch, then, sight and insight remained paramount themes of realizing a spiritual life in painting. Most of his imagery concerns itself with deceptions and distractions of various kinds, to both the viewer of his pictures and the figures within them; however, there remains a fundamental link between his deceived or distracted figures within the "secular" works (such as the *Seven Deadly Sins, Pedlar,* or the figures in the center of *The Hay Wain* triptych) and the temptations or unnatural visions, whether demons or fecund fruits, presented to meditating saints in the wilderness (Anthony, John the Evangelist). All of the basic choices and need for clear spiritual priorities crystallize in Patinir's *Charon* (a work clearly derived from Bosch) in the figure of the individual soul, who, like Saint Christopher, must make his choice between the powers of good and evil in the midst of a mighty stream. Only the hermit saint, with his contemplative life and *contemptus mundi* meditations, manages to evade most worldly temptations and sins, but even hermits are beset by their own fantasies and weaknesses, embodied in the hybrid absurdities and excesses of the demons and landscapes around them.

Bosch's depiction of evil as unnatural and hybrid yet preternaturally fecund (rather than as the product of his use of some particular occult lore, such as alchemy or astrology) seems to be the simplest and most sensible explanation for his presentation of corruption. It especially renders intelligible those oversize and, significantly, hollow dwellings fused with living humans or oversize objects, such as the jug-house of *Saint Christopher,* the man-inn of the *Saint Anthony,* or the tree-man in the Hell wing of *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (where the giant birds and fruits signal corruption and a world of evil, probably the world before the Flood; see below). It should be noted that these details appear far more often in Bosch imitations throughout the remainder of the sixteenth century,[55] so if they are the result of esoteric knowledge in any way, that point quickly got lost in a host of bad translations.

As a final test of this outlook toward viewing, let us examine the most famous of Bosch works, the triptych of *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (Prado, Figs. 15, 16).[56] This is also a work that proceeds with an inexorable progress of time, starting on its exterior with a scene from Creation, then moving, as if with the eye of a reader, from left to right across the interior from Eden through the eponymous Garden to Hell, much as in the interior of *The Hay Wain* triptych.



16 Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (photo: Scala/Art Resource, NY)

In fact, much of the content of the image is already set up by the (traditional) grisaille exterior (Fig. 15). A tiny and distant figure of God the Father in a spherical Heaven appears in the upper left, speaking the words that generate the very forces and results of Creation itself; however, the words are drawn not from the familiar Creation text of Genesis 1 but rather from Psalm 33:9, specifically, the Latin verse "Ipse dixit et fact su[n]t/ Ipse ma[n]davit et creata su[n]t" (For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded and it stood forth). The result of this literal mandate is an unpopulated world within a crystal sphere of Earth, an island surrounded by water and punctuated by giant floral structures, akin to both the rocks and the flora of the interior panels as well as the alien growths in the Ghent *Saint Jerome* or the Madrid *Saint John the Baptist.* Traditionally, the exteriors of triptychs offer the earliest moment of the narrative, often the Annunciation (in advance of the Virgin and Child on an interior). In this case, the Creation scene is chronologically first in sequence, presumably representing the third day of Creation, when the land was separated from the water (Gen. 1:9–13), followed by God's own unequivocally positive assessment of his handiwork, "And God saw that it was good." This is the moment of origin for "vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, upon the earth." These very trees will loom large in Eden on the interior left wing, and fruit, seed, indeed, fecundity of every kind, will dominate the unusual Garden of Earthly Delights centerpiece. Clearly, there is supposed to be continuity between the space created on the third day, as shown on the exterior, and the continuous horizon landscape of the left and center interior panels, as well as details of the cherries on curving stalks or other vegetal forms.

What had been viewed entirely from above and from a vast celestial distance by God the Father on the exterior is then seen close-up on the interior (Fig. 16). In the left wing, a Christ-like figure of God intervenes between Adam and Eve in the midst of Paradise; the holy figure stares directly outward from the setting toward the viewer, as Adam stares intently at his Creator and Eve demurely hovers with downcast eyes. This is a Paradise already imbued with overripeness, as well as violence and evil. The attentive viewer will notice disturbing anomalies: animals attacking one another (a cat at lower left withdrawing with a mouse in its maws, a lion at the top right that has slain an antelope), misbegotten multiheaded creatures (a bird with three heads above the fetid pond, another three-headed amphibian crawling out of the central pond), and numerous traditional and dark symbols of evil, death, or decay (toads, worms or serpents, crows), not to mention the trademark Boschian hybrid monsters, such as the monklike fish floating and reading within the ominously dark waters of the foreground sump (compare the Ghent *Saint Jerome*). At the precise center of this garden, in its own niche within the fountain of Paradise, perches the very embodiment of mystery and evil: an owl.[57] Less threatening but exotic animals in the landscape derive from authoritative period "documentation" of "the East": the giraffe, elephant, and "kangaroo" are copied from Bernhard von Breydenbach's illustrated guide to the Holy Land of 1486 and the exotic "East."[58] The viewer can make a clear distinction in the arbor of the Garden of Eden between the three choices of trees: a standard date palm in the upper right, a more conventional apple tree behind the main figures, and, beside Adam, a "dragon tree," also taken from German graphic sources (including Martin Schongauer and Albrecht Dürer as well as woodcuts of Paradise in the 1493 *Nuremberg Chronicle*) to signify the (other) forbidden tree of eternal life, as described in Genesis 2:9: "And out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."[59] Thus, making the distinctions between animals and trees becomes the task of each viewer as well as a fundamental element of the life choice and consequent Fall of the First Parents, who eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil and are expelled from the garden *before* they can partake of the remaining tree (Gen. 3:22–23):

> Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever"—therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden. . . .

This expulsion, of course, is rendered literally in the left wing of *The Hay Wain* triptych, but *The Garden of Delights* more subtly leaves us with the conjunction of Adam and Eve through divine intervention. This curious scene is a contract of the First Parents with their Creator (and his injunctions and commandments) as well as a compact between the two figures, whether Eve is construed (as in Gen. 2:18) as a "helper fit for him" or else as the peer of Adam, also created in the very image of God (as in Gen. 1:27–28):

> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

The failure of humankind to live up to this blessing, indeed, the very negation of this condition of dominion, is the subject of the center panel, whether or not it is, as Ernst Gombrich argued, the "days before Noah," which is in any case a metaphor for the last days and not a literal historical moment.[60] Here, the flora and fauna have run riot, and their hold over men and women is complete. Giant birds and fish, overripe and oversize fruit are the principals of this new, decadent "garden of earthly delights."

Moreover, even those organic elements no longer confine themselves to what God had constructed on the fifth day—just prior to the creation of Adam and his ordained dominion—as their limits of kind or of place (Gen. 1:20–25), where birds are supposed to fly above the Earth and sea creatures swarm within the waters, "according to their kinds." Instead, the central panel shows fish on the ground or in flight, giant birds in water (including two prominent oversize owls, facing the viewer and embraced by nude figures at both lower left and right). The smaller, nude humans no longer practice dominion over the animal kingdom; on the contrary, they seem clearly dependent on the animals as well as the giant berries and other fruit. Many of them in the foreground evince a desire to fuse with their environment, wearing fruits on their heads or crawling through giant pods and eggs or taking up residence in the crystal growths or leaf forms of the flora. Among themselves, the humans do not confine themselves to their own kind: blacks mingle easily with whites, and both sexes seem happy to practice "polymorphous perversity," including floral sodomy and group physical inversion.

Several observations present themselves. First, as noted, the background rock forms appear to be variants of the original giant flora of both the grisaille exterior and the distant background of the Eden panel, and those forms already appear to be a fluid blend of the vegetable and the mineral. Plants can generate transparent crystal globes from pink stalks that emerge from fruitlike pods, while at the same time distant rock forms seem to sprout floral crowns and podlike growths. As those interpreters who have seen the influence of alchemy on this Boschian world have already observed, the entire skyline as well as many of the foreground environments offer a world composed of mutable yet highly organic substances.[61]

In addition, the emphasis on both flowers and fruit, especially in conjunction with their indulgent consumption, offers its own inflation and perversion of one of the principal forms of devotional meditation in late medieval spirituality.[62] Here literal experience as well as imagined experience of the taste and smell of fruit and flowers induce an associative identification with the Virgin and Child. This is corroborated and complemented by visualizations in fifteenth-century Flemish spiritual literature and, especially, by Flemish pictures—the heritage of Bosch's own work. The origin of many of these metaphors and images is the biblical "Song of Songs" and its later Christian commentaries, which led to the association of Mary and Christ as the bride and bridegroom of those powerful erotic verses and made them tools of the contemplative process and images of the love of God. Yet whether we choose to take (with visual art) the *hortus conclusus,* the enclosed garden, as the synecdoche of the Virgin Mary or else see it (with meditational literature) more as the location of the inspiriting of the devout soul, the Garden of Delights by Bosch utterly breaks open that image and creates a site of carnal knowledge, the very continuation of the knowledge from the forbidden tree in Eden.

Indeed, in the right middle ground of the Prado center panel, Bosch presents a dense group of postlapsarian nudes (but depicted without postlapsarian shame, just above a large owl); they pluck cherries and strawberries from a fertile grove, as if reenacting Original Sin in collective indulgence. At the very center of the *Garden,* men frenziedly dancing and riding (on every conceivable animal) circle a pool full of female nudes in an expanded morris dance.[63] What Bosch presents, along with aphrodisiac giant mussels and other eroticized environmental stimulants, is the literal inversion of the enclosed garden and its flora, which can include sensual, self-indulgent figures who literally stand on their heads or have actual fruits or flowers "on their minds."

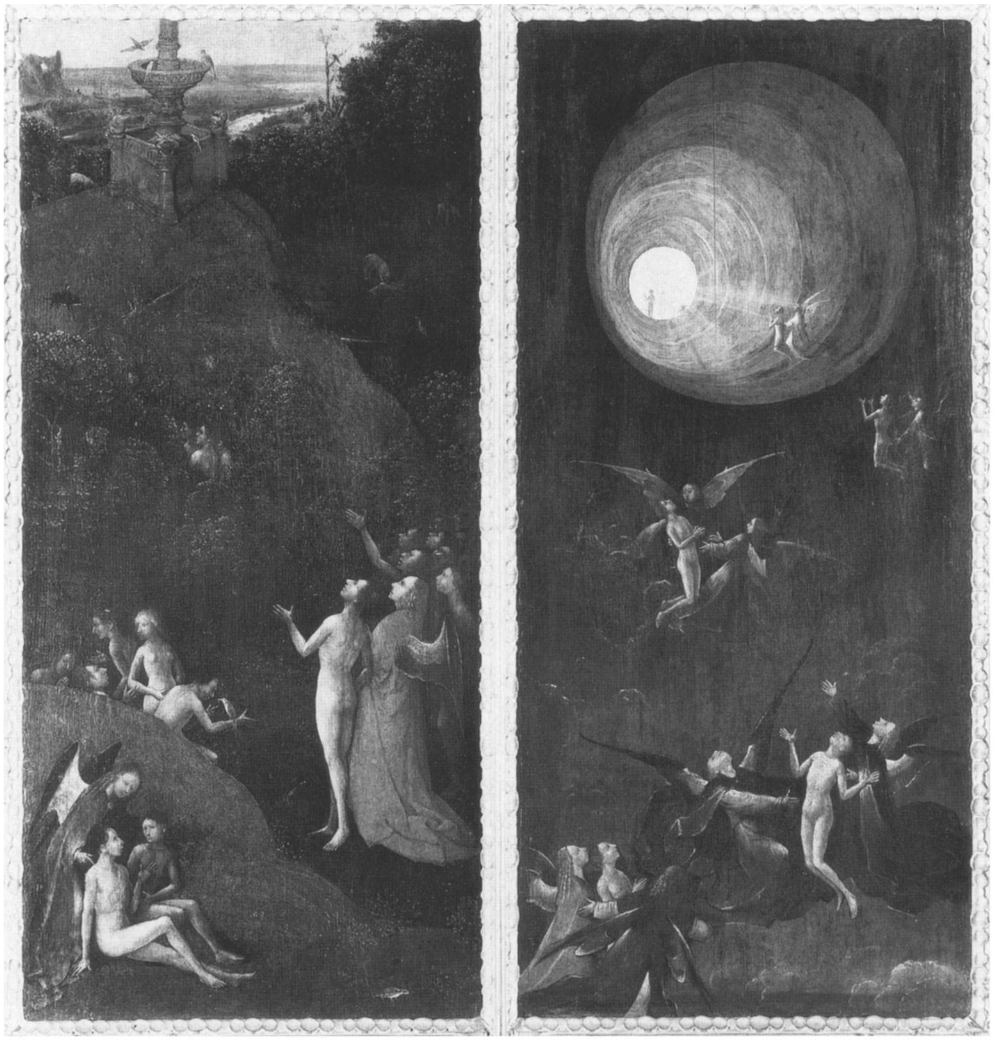
This willful perversion of the prevailing practices of late medieval spiritual devotions is reinforced by Bosch's use of the very form traditionally devoted to altarpieces: the triptych. By multiplying the details of his pictures and amplifying the number of figures, Bosch compels viewer engagement, even prurient voyeurism, including the powerful roster of punishments meted out in the inevitable Hell wing panel at the right, where the wages of sin from Eden through the Garden of Delights are harvested. The theme of Judgment and punishment is signaled expressly by the artist through his choice of Psalm 33 for his exterior inscription rather than the more familiar Genesis text of Creation. If we take his suggestion a step further and reexamine the remainder of the Psalm text, we discover a clarion call to the "righteous" and what sounds like the very opposite of what the center panel depicts:

> Praise befits the upright. . . .
> For the word of the Lord is upright;
> and all his work is done in faithfulness.
> He loves righteousness and justice;
> the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord. . . .
> Let all the earth fear the Lord,
> let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe
>   of him! . . .
> The Lord looks down from heaven,
> he sees all the sons of men;
> from where he sits enthroned he looks forth
> on all the inhabitants of the earth,
> he who fashions the hearts of them all,
> and observes all their deeds. . . .

Bosch thus suggests that the words of his chosen Psalm will be fulfilled by the Judgment implied in the Hell panel, and his Garden of Delights is posited as the very negation of righteous behavior, occasioned by the continuation of the obsessive search for ultimate knowledge of good and evil by the wayward, perverse descendants of Adam and Eve. They then find the resulting punishment in Hell, a punishment that is fitted to the crime, sin by sin.

Rather than see this image as a literal moment of the "days of Noah" after the Fall (although by definition all scenes with multiple humans take place after the Fall), Bosch gives us good grounds for thinking of these figures (like Patinir's tiny nude in the boat of *Charon*) as souls. His paired images of Heaven and Hell in four panels (Palazzo Ducale, Venice, Fig. 17) present similar nude figures in actual spaces as well as descending or ascending in cosmic space at the utmost extremes. There is, in fact, one site (like Patinir's *dexter* side of *Charon*) with an earthly Paradise, which closely resembles the Paradise wing of *The Garden of Earthly Delights* in showing a central fountain amid verdant groves, despite the ominous presence of a carnivorous lion with its prey. In this case, however, angels accompany a rather sedate cluster of naked figures of both sexes, presumably the resurrected figures familiar from Judgment panels of the previous century (compare, among others, Rogier van der Weyden). But the incompleteness of this earthly Paradise wing can be seen by contrasting it with the ultimate fulfillment of the souls, who (again accompanied by winged angels) ascend in the final Venice panel into the empyrean, which is a perfect circle of light within concentric circles of progressively diminished brightness. Here, one is immediately reminded of the exterior of *The Garden of Earthly Delights* triptych, where God sits above a similarly spherical Earth and beyond a cloud-filled heavenly sky, as the figural image of light, yet small and distant.

The chosen Psalm text also points to the importance of true sight, spiritual vision, on the part of "the Lord [who] looks down from heaven." And this is the clue to how attentive viewers are to understand the ultimate message of *The Garden of Earthly Delights.* They cannot help being immersed in the world of the triptych interior, lost and fascinated by the myriad details of a carnal world, filled with the temptations and indulgences of opulent, available plant and animal life. The original sin of seeking "knowledge of good and evil" is replicated, even multiplied by the size and the quantity of these fruits, which result only in carnal knowledge, a materialism and sensualism that is the very opposite of the medita-



17 Bosch, *Earthly Paradise* and *Paradise,* oil on panel. Venice, Palazzo Ducale (photo: Alinari/Art Resource, NY)

tional use of fruit and flowers in order to find divine love and true wisdom, centered on the soul and not the physical body. Thus, these figures commit the ultimate error of taking the form for the substance, taking sight (and the other senses) as the equivalent of spirit, in-sight. The tradition of viewing spiritual Christian subjects within the Flemish triptych of the previous century has here been replaced by Bosch with a perverted vision, embodying faulty vision itself, the phantasms already discerned by Father de Sigüenza, who also commented at length on the significance of this very picture, which he called "The Strawberry Plant," as "done with a thousand fantasies and observations that serve as warnings."[64]

How, then, is one to turn one's eye to the spiritual? What is the small, revealing detail of the inner voice that the pious viewer can use to escape being enfolded in the sinful world of "earthly delights"? How can the viewer, like Bosch's depicted saints Jerome or John the Baptist, succeed in turning away from pernicious pods? In fact, that focused spiritual perception—the true seeing with believing that has been the theme of this entire essay—exists only on the outside of this altarpiece, in the form of God's own viewpoint, high above that corrupted and distracting worldliness on earth. As with the epiphanies of the *Usurer,* of *Saint Anthony,* of *Saint John on Patmos,* and atop the analogous center panel of *The Hay Wain,* one must cast one's gaze heavenward (and inward) to receive the true epiphany by ignoring the larger world. This can be accomplished only by remembering that one is in the perpetual view of God and by remaining righteous, which one can do by turning one's eye—the inner eye of faith, not corrupted or tempted by the eye of worldly engagement—upward to God himself. In this case, the viewer must go outside the very framework of a conventional, but misleading triptych interior.[65] Only by leaving the garden can the viewer truly hope to exercise correct judgments and avoid the pitfalls that lead to the fires of Hell.

Within the history of Flemish art Bosch was the one who fostered the advent of broad landscape vistas with their own intrinsic importance to the principal subjects of either saints or sinners. Those landscapes were not mere backgrounds; the details of activities in them became important keys to the understanding of the world as a site of evil and corruption, so in this respect they served truly as "world landscapes" in the overall Boschian vision, even where they presented beautiful settings. This essay has attempted to show how the artist provided clues to the understanding of his view of everyday life as well as the more hidden (and difficult) path of holiness by means of significant details, which sometimes reverse the prevailing sense of the overall picture (from evil to good in the *Usurer,* from good to evil in the Prado *Epiphany* triptych).

Throughout his oeuvre Bosch tested the simple claim that seeing is believing and reserved his ultimate spiritual message for the discerning and pious beholder, hidden in plain sight like the parables of Christ: "But blessed are your eyes, for they see. . . ." (Matt. 13:16).[66]

Larry Silver is Farquhar Professor at the University of Pennsylvania. Past president of both the College Art Association and the Historians of Netherlandish Art, he publishes on early modern painting and graphics from both the Low Countries and Germanic lands. He also serves as executive editor of CAA.Reviews *[Department of History of Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6208, lasilver@sas.upenn.edu].*

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Notes

The author is much indebted to a number of individuals for reading earlier versions of this paper and for sharing their own views of the artist. In particular, Lynn Jacobs has been a stalwart interlocutor throughout. Most of all, thanks go to Reindert Falkenburg, many of whose ideas and discussions on Netherlandish art have shaped—and continue to shape—these arguments. Perhaps wisely, Falkenburg demurred from co-authorship of this article, and he cannot be held responsible for its shortcomings, but he deserves much of the credit for whatever validity it might have.

1. For a rich discussion of Aby Warburg's celebrated, possibly apocryphal quotation and its roots, see William Heckscher, "*Petites perceptions:* An Account of *sortes Warburgianae,*" *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 4 (1974): 101–34, reprinted in Heckscher, *Art and Literature: Studies in Relationship,* ed. Egon Verheyen (Baden-Baden: Koerner, 1985), 435–66. For biblical citations, I have used the *Oxford Annotated Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962).

2. Falkenburg, 102–17, English ed. (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1988), 73–82, offers the fullest discussion of the content of this neglected picture. See also idem, "Marginal Motifs in Early Flemish Landscape Paintings," in *Herri met de Bles,* ed. Norman Muller, Betsy Rosasco, and James Marrow (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), 153–69, esp. 158–59. In many respects, this analysis of Bosch derives from Falkenburg's earlier published insights into Patinir, met de Bles, and Pieter Bruegel.

3. On the *paysage moralisé,* see Erwin Panofsky, *Hercules am Scheidewege* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1930); idem, "The Early History of Man in Two Cycles of Paintings by Piero di Cosimo," in *Studies in Iconology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), 64–65. On Bosch's constructions of triptychs, see the excellent overview by Jacobs. Of course, for Patinir, the contrast between the world of elevated peaks and flat plains is fundamental not only as a pictorial counterpoint but also as a moral antinomy between the high/virtuous and the low/worldly. For this reading, see Falkenburg passim; also idem, "Antithetical Iconography in Early Netherlandish Landscape Painting," in *Bruegel and Netherlandish Landscape Painting from the National Gallery, Prague* (Tokyo: National Museum of Western Art, 1990), 25–36.

4. A second version of this image is in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. See *Van Eyck to Bruegel 1400 to 1500: Dutch and Flemish Paintings in the Collection of the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen* (Rotterdam: Boymans-van Beuningen Museum, 1994), 220–25.

5. The issue of sight as the key to discerning, and thus choosing, the path to salvation amid temptation is made the thematic center of Patinir's collaboration with Quinten Massys in *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* (also in the Prado, a work collected, alongside many Bosch images, by Philip II by 1574). See Falkenburg, 87–88; and Larry Silver, *The Paintings of Quinten Massys* (Totowa, N.J.: Abner Schram, 1984), 124–25. In particular, the three beautiful women who assail the weakly protesting saint with their charms are revealed in the lizardlike finish to the train of the olive gown at left to be demonic temptresses in disguise. Moreover, the presence of a triad of beauties simultaneously evokes the classical story (with its catastrophically discordant consequences of the Trojan War) of the Judgment of Paris, while the apple they extend to Saint Anthony alludes not only to the golden apple of Discord to be awarded by Paris but also, of course, to the original apple of temptation and carnal sin, the apple of Eden, extended by Eve to a weakly reluctant Adam. In addition, the evanescence of even the greatest of earthly beauty is explicitly underscored for the viewer alone—but not for either the temptresses or the saint within the picture, all of whom turn away—in the form of the withered, brown-skinned crone behind them. Wearing a ridiculous and archaic costume, she exposes her flaccid breasts and points to her wrinkled face as if in warning of the ravages of time and the vanity of faded youth and beauty. In this work the explicit sacred path of mountains and wilderness retreat are signaled by the cloister as well as the tent occupied by the saint at the elevated left side of this "world landscape."

6. Silver (as in n. 5), 143–45; idem, "The *Ill-Matched Pair* of Quinten Massys," *Studies in the History of Art* 6 (1974): 104–24.

7. Of course, Bosch featured just such ugliness as the visible manifestation of moral turpitude, and his use doubtless shaped Massys's moral construction of his secular images (as well as his images, like those of Bosch, of Christ's tormentors); however, for Massys, the pictorial models of Leonardo da Vinci's grotesque drawings can explicitly be connected to paintings such as the Washington *Ill-Matched Pair.* See Silver, "Power and Pelf: A New-Found *Old Man* by Massys," *Simiolus* 9 (1977): 63–92; for the triangle of Leonardo, Bosch, and Albrecht Dürer, see Jan Białostocki, "Opus quinque dierum: Dürer's 'Christ among the Doctors' and Its Sources," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 22 (1959): 17–34.

8. The phrase "iconographical style" is borrowed from Kurt Bauch, *Studien zur Kunstgeschichte* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1967), applied in discussion to Rembrandt, "Ikonographischer Stil: Zur Frage der Inhalte in Rembrandts Kunst," 123–51, a work too little studied for its methodological insight by later scholars. A similar approach to the complementarity of iconography and style can be found in the corpus of Wolfgang Stechow; for an appreciation, see David Levine and Nicola Courtright, "Wolfgang Stechow and the Art of Iconography," *Bulletin of the Allen Memorial Art Museum* 51–52 (1998): 5–14. See also the work of Jan Białostocki.

9. Scholars continue to dispute the authenticity and the date of this work. For a summary of views, see Marijnissen, 329–46. The work is documented as a Bosch already in the late 16th century by both de Guevara (1560s, who suggests that it might be by a pupil) and Father José de Sigüenza (1605), and it entered the Escorial collections as a donation of Philip II in 1574. For the fullest study of this work, see Walter Gibson, "Hieronymus Bosch and the Mirror of Man: The Authorship and Iconography of the Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins," *Oud Holland* 87 (1973): 205–26. Gibson evinces reservations about the untypical "short, sturdy figures . . . dark, heavy outlines and hard brightly colored surfaces" as well as the crude execution of the four corner medallions. Other scholars (including Charles de Tolnay and Ludwig von Baldass) have seen such weaknesses as a sign of a youthful work, although K. G. Boon has identified some specifics of costume as fashions of the 1490s, the period of Bosch's early maturity. Certainly the work is unlikely to be a copy, because its numerous pentimenti are clearly evident to the unaided eye.

10. For the literary image of the mirror in medieval and early modern literature, see Gibson (as in n. 9). Among many possible discussions of the vastly inclusive metaphor of the mirror, see also Gustav Hartlaub, *Zaubers des Spiegels* (Munich: Piper, 1951); Lucien Dällenbach, *The Mirror in the Text,* trans. Jeremy Whiteley (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); James Marrow, "'In desen speigell': A New Form of 'Memento Mori' in Fifteenth-Century Netherlandish Art," in *Essays in Northern European Art Presented to Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann* (Doornspijk: Davaco, 1983), 154–63; Heinrich Schwartz, "The Mirror in Art," *Art Quarterly* 15 (1952): 96–118; idem, "The Mirror of the Artist and the Mirror of the Devout," in *Studies in the History of Art Dedicated to William Suida* (London: Phaidon, 1959), 90–105; Jan Białostocki, "Man and Mirror in Painting: Reality and Transience," in *Studies in Late Medieval and Renaissance Painting in Honor of Millard Meiss,* ed. Irving Lavin and John Plummer (New York: New York University Press, 1977), 61–72, reprinted in Białostocki, *The Message of Images* (Vienna: IRSA, 1988), 93–107; Suzanne Sulzberger, "Observations sur le chef-d'oeuvre de Quentin Metsys," *Bulletin des Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique* 14 (1965): 27–34; and W. M. Zucker, "Reflections on Reflections," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 20 (1962): 239–50. Frequent mention is made to roughly contemporary uses of the mirror image in theological writing and its equation with the unblinking, all-seeing eye of God, such as Nicholas of Cusa's *De visione dei* (ca. 1453).

11. Marrow (as in n. 10), 158; Herbert Grabes, *The Mutable Glass: Mirror-Imagery in Titles and Texts of the Middle Ages and the English Renaissance,* trans. Gordon Collier (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); and James Wimsatt, *Allegory and Mirror* (New York: Pegasus, 1970), esp. 137–62.

12. Nicholas of Cusa, *De visione dei,* quoted in Gibson (as in n. 9), 217; see John Dolan, *Unity and Reform: Selected Writings of Nicholas de Cusa* (South Bend, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1962), 147. The first publication of *De visione dei* was in Strasbourg, 1489. This work is not posited as a source in any sense for the Bosch image but rather as a vivid verbal crystallization of his visual construct.

13. Erwin Panofsky, "Albrecht Dürer and Classical Antiquity," in *Meaning and the Visual Arts* (New York: Doubleday, 1955), 256–65, discussing Dürer's engraving *Sol iustitiae* (B.79). Of course, the association of the sun, chief among planets in the pre-Copernican universe, with kingship and divinity (or both, such as Louis XIV as the Sun King) is widespread among many cultures.

14. See Morton Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1952); *Europe in Torment, 1450–1550,* exh. cat., Brown University at the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, 1974; Émile Mâle, *Religious Art in France: The Late Middle Ages,* trans. Marthiel Mathews (1908; reprint, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 318–55; also Eva Lachner and Karl-August Wirth, "Dinge, vier letzte," in *Reallexikon zur deutschen Kuntgeschichte,* ed. Otto Schmitt (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1937–), vol. 4 (1958), cols. 12–22. For a recent primer with bibliography on the subject of Death, including its role in the "Four Last Things," see Paul Binski, *Medieval Death* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996), esp. 164–203.

15. Marijnissen, n. 36, 54, for references. On the general tradition, Binski (as in n. 14), 39–43; Wilhelm Schreiber and Hildegarde Zimmerman, "Ars moriendi," in Schmitt (as in n. 14), vol. 1, cols. 1121–27; and Mary Catherine O'Connor, *The Art of Dying Well* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942).

16. John Hand and Martha Wolff, *Early Netherlandish Painting* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1986), 16–22, with references.

17. On the basis of these items, hoarded and stored by the old man, Vandenbroeck, 96–97, identifies the dying man as a usurer rather than a miser, as he had traditionally been termed.

18. Hand and Wolff (as in n. 16), with references. The principal arguments for this pairing of the two wings in Washington and the Musée du Louvre, Paris (with the New Haven fragment), were advanced by Lotte Brand Philip, Seymour, Eisler, and, especially, Anne Morganstern, "The Rest of Bosch's *Ship of Fools,*" *Art Bulletin* 66 (1984): 299–302.

19. Ironically, these instruments tend to occur in images with angelic musicians in 15th-century Flemish paintings, presumably as prestige instruments associated with (heavenly) court life, in contrast to the more vulgar bagpipes and other peasant instruments. See Emanuel Winternitz, *Musical Instruments and Their Symbolism in Western Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), esp. 66–85, 129–49; and Reinhold Hammerstein, *Die Musik der Engel* (Bern: Francke, 1962). See the related thoughts in verse by Sebastian Brant in his 1494 *The Ship of Fools,* "Of Impatience of Punishment" (no. 54): "If bagpipes you enjoy and prize/And harps and lutes you would despise,/ You ride a fool's sled, are unwise." Brant, *The Ship of Fools,* trans. and ed. Edwin Zeydel (New York: Dover, 1944), 186.

20. Certainly, the crescent moon could have been associated with Islam and thus with heresy and enemies of Christianity by Bosch, but it is equally possible that this image reinforces the negative, nighttime associations of the owl itself with evil (opposite to the association of the divine with light, as in the sun motif of the *Seven Deadly Sins* or the light coming past the window with the crucifix in the Washington *Usurer*). On the multifarious symbolism of the owl, almost always negative, see Vandenbroeck, 75; also idem, "Bubo Significans: Die Eule als Sinnbild von Schlechtigkeit und Torheit, vor allem in der niederländischen und deutschen Bilddarstellung und bei Jheronimus Bosch I," *Jaarboek Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen,* 1985: 19–135; and Heinrich Schwarz and Volker Plagemann, "Eule," in Schmitt (as in n. 14), vol. 6 (1973), cols. 267–322.

21. *Van Eyck to Bruegel* (as in n. 4), 84–89, with references. In particular, see Falkenburg, 93. Although not mentioned by Falkenburg, there is another Patinir image of Saint Christopher (Escorial), which in a horizontal format presents a similarly disturbing (inverted pot, snarling dogs, vagabonds) river landscape with a naval battle, cities on fire, and advancing armies; see Robert Koch, *Joachim Patinir* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 40–41, no. 18, figs. 49–52.

22. Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend,* trans. William Ryan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), vol. 2, 10–14: "He was called Christophoros, the Christ-bearer. He bore Christ in four ways, namely, on his shoulders when he carried him across the river, in his body by mortification, in his mind by devotion, and in his mouth by confessing Christ and preaching him." A depiction of the rare scene of Christopher's denial of the Devil for Christ at the roadside cross appears as the exterior of a small, personal triptych, *Calvary* (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam) by "Jan de Cock"; see Max Friedländer, *Early Netherlandish Painting,* vol. 11 (Leiden: Sijthoff, 1974), no. 112. Friedländer, 39, failed to identify this narrative, calling it a "Christian Knight" versus an "Infernal Cavalcade." On this picture, see most recently Jan Piet Filedt Kok, "Over de *Calvarieberg:* Albrecht Dürer in Leiden, omstreeks 1520," *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 44 (1996): esp. 351, figs. 21–22.

23. Sixten Ringbom, "*Maria in sole* and the Virgin of the Rosary," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 25 (1962): 326–30; see also Henk van Os et al., *The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe 1300–1500* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 151–56.

24. Dirk de Vos, *Hans Memling* (Ghent: Ludion, 1994), 150–57, no. 31; Vida Hull, *Hans Memling's Painting for the Hospital of Saint John in Bruges* (New York: Garland, 1981), 51–78.

25. J. G. van Gelder, "Der Teufel stiehlt das Tintenfass," in *Kunsthistorische Forschungen Otto Pächt zu Ehren,* ed. A. Rosenauer and G. Weber (Salzburg: Residenz, 1972), 173–88.

26. In Bosch's other scenes of saints, they display a similar fixity of gaze, which is more the inner gaze of meditation, or insight, than the outer gaze of earthly sight. This spiritual vision characterizes the saints' retreats in corrupt wilderness settings in *Saint John the Baptist* (Lazaro Galdiano Museum, Madrid) and *Saint Jerome* (Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent). The Madrid image features overripe and oversize fruit pods, akin to the alien and giant forms featured in the decadent center panel of *The Garden of Earthly Delights;* although seated just behind this imposing plant, the Baptist reclines, lost in thought, his finger pointing to the object of his meditation, the Lamb of God. That gesture is a visual exhortation to the viewer to keep the same priorities and to follow the prophet's injunction to "Behold the Lamb of God" (John 1:36). Clearly, meditation and spiritual focus, inner and spiritual "beholding," constitute the right path in the face of the world's temptations and tribulations. In similar fashion, Saint Jerome prostrates himself abjectly on his crucifix alongside a dark and fetid cesspool, punctuated by a pair of black lizards and presided over by an ominous owl behind him, akin to Saint John's black demon. Like John's eagle, Jerome's attribute, a small lion, also appears at his side, but hesitates anxiously on the edge of that pool. Several of the same large red pods grow before the saint's face, with another large one floating empty into the sump. Unperturbed by his surroundings, Jerome keeps his eyes cast down and his hands firmly clasped in prayer around the crucifix. According to legend, Jerome's retreat included mortification of his flesh against lustful visions and temptations, again recalling Patinir's and Massys's *Saint Anthony,* but here the struggle is internal: the saint has clearly chosen to ignore his corrupt surroundings and literally to embrace the cross, eyes shut in meditation.

27. Num. 13:24. Significantly, this passage mentions that the dispatching of the spies came as a result of the Lord's command to Moses. After forty days (the same number of days that Noah spent on the ark and of Christ's temptation by Satan in the wilderness), the return of the spies with their bounty only further frightened the people, who, taking the inhabitants of Canaan to be giants, thus resisted the leadership of Moses (who also appears in contrast to the people in the Golden Calf episode pictured just above on the same column): "If the Lord delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land which flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against the Lord; and do not fear the people of the land . . . the Lord is with us" (Num. 14:8–9). The entire episode becomes a test of resolve and of confidence in the divine plan against seemingly superior forces, akin to the test imposed on Anthony in the adjacent scenes. On the general significance of the theme of Anthony's temptation as a test of the inner faith of the spiritual man, see Jean-Michel Massing, "Sicut erat in diebus Antonii: The Devils under the Bridge in the *Tribulations of Saint Anthony* by Hieronymus Bosch in Lisbon," in *Sight and Insight: Essays on Art and Criticism in Honor of E. H. Gombrich at 85,* ed. John Onians (London: Phaidon, 1994), 108–27. This conflict between the mystical orientation of the meditative saint and his sinful fantasies, embodied by the demons, sometimes in the form of a voluptuous nude woman, resembles the antithetical impulses described by Saint Jerome.

28. Father José de Sigüenza, quoted in James Snyder, *Bosch in Perspective* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973), 18–29, 34–37; see also Jean-Michel Massing, catalogue entry, in *Circa 1492,* ed. Jay Levenson, exh. cat., National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1991, 134–36, no. 18; see also Massing (as in n. 27).

29. Gerd Unverfehrt, *Hieronymus Bosch: Studien zur Rezeption seiner Kunst im frühen 16. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Mann, 1980); and Larry Silver, "Second Bosch," in *Kunst voor de markt 1500–1700,* ed. Reindert Falkenburg et al., *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 50 (1999): 31–58.

30. This point is made most forcefully by Walter Gibson, *Hieronymus Bosch* (New York: Praeger, 1973); for the context of contemporary spirituality, see the useful overview by Jean Delumeau, *Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture 13th–18th Centuries,* trans. Eric Nicholson (1983; reprint, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990).

31. *Van Eyck to Bruegel* (as in n. 4), 90–95, with references. See also Falkenburg, 124–26, stressing the allegorical reading of this image as a "pilgrimage of life"; and Vandenbroeck, 62–69. The muted tones of the painting and its original thickness as well as the vertical join down its exact middle together suggest that it originally served as the exterior, joined wing ensemble of a triptych, like the similar figure on the outside of *The Hay Wain* triptych. Inspection of the planks identifies the panel, traditionally reckoned as late in Bosch's career, to date from the same time as the (equally muted in color and adeptly painted) Washington *Usurer* (*Van Eyck to Bruegel,* 20, Peter Klein, "Dendrochronological Analyses of Panels from the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries").

32. Konrad Renger, "Versuch einer neuen Deutung von Hieronymus Boschs Rotterdamer Tondo," *Oud Holland* 84 (1969): 67–76. Because of the man's poverty and his air of repentance, this picture was formerly interpreted as the penitent Prodigal Son of the parable (Luke 15:11–32) after his expulsion from the world of wine and women, soon after his patrimony was squandered. On the connection between scenes of loose living and the Prodigal Son, see idem, *Lockere Gesellschaft* (Berlin: Mann, 1970), esp. 23–70. Vandenbroek, 58–68, underscores with Renger the disreputable character associated with beggars during Bosch's lifetime.

33. Mark Meadow, "On the Structure of Knowledge in Bruegel's Netherlandish Proverbs," *Volkskundig Bulletin* 18 (1992): 141–69, esp. 147, fig. 2, pointing out the juxtaposition between this ragged poor man struggling to get through the globe in contrast to the foppish rich man beside him, who has a tiny world balanced effortlessly on his thumb.

34. When Bosch presents other images of ordinary individuals adrift in a sea of temptations, deceptions, and corruption, he shows them as subject to missteps and mistakes, often the product of faulty vision. We have already seen examples of this kind of "secular" subject in the *Seven Deadly Sins* as well as in the *Usurer* and *Ship of Fools,* although these wing panels (whether originally

paired or not) might well have come out of a triptych context with an explicit religious message. For individual panels of individual deceptions, an early example (perhaps only surviving in copies) is the *Conjurer* (Musée Municipal, St-Germain-en-Laye). Here, false miracles deceive the gullible, as the magician stands on one side of the image before a table filled with the standard items of his trade of prestidigitation: cups and balls with a wand. On the table sits a toad, and from the mouth of a gaping spectator opposite the magician another toad seems to issue forth. While that one audience member is fully caught up in the effect of magic, her pocket is being picked efficiently by the bespectacled man directly behind her (who may, like the fool in Massys's *Ill-Matched Pair,* be a confederate of the magician). If this pickpocket were not injunction enough for the sharp-eyed viewer to beware of details in this composition, other cues await detection: the magician carries in the basket at his waist another owl (associated with blindness and deceit as well as evil more generally), and he has a pet of a small dog in jester's costume (like the one in the Lisbon *Saint Anthony*), which cannot be seen by his audience. Regardless of the original context or other possible readings of the *Conjurer,* Bosch has clearly taken up the very theme of false vision and deceit in this overtly secular subject.

Folly and deceit reappear in another Bosch composition, usually ascribed to his early period, the *Stone of Folly* (Prado). Here again we find a circular composition, evocative of both mirror and global universality (in the sense of *speculum* as encompassing). This puzzling little picture has received remarkably little attention in comparison with Bosch's other, often glossed works. Like the *Seven Deadly Sins,* it carries an inscription, in florid script and Dutch vernacular, which reads in translation: "Master cut the stone out quickly/ My name is Lubbert Das." The central conceit of this image is a quack operation on an imaginary part of the human body, the "stone of folly," believed in popular lore to be a site of stupidity or madness. The silly name indicates the client-victim of this quackery as a simpleton from the country, and indeed the "operation" takes place before a vast and airy landscape. What is striking about this representation of the scene is Bosch's overtone of mock-religion. Both a monk and a nun, whose useless prayer book sits precariously atop her head (literally "on her mind," but known rather than actually used as an instrument of prayer), look on. They are situated around another of the round tables that in other Bosch contexts signal luxurious indulgence; he holds a drinking tankard. The actual surgeon wears the badge of a city messenger (compare the figure at the gate in Robert Campin's Mérode Altarpiece, Cloisters, New York) as well as a monk's cowl, with the absurd headgear of an inverted (also useless) funnel. Thus, he seems to be an official representative of both civic and Church institutions and is revealed to be a fool. The object being "removed" from the man's forehead is not even a stone but a flower (a second flower is already on the table), another comic inversion, akin to the useless funnel-hat or book-as-hat, or else an image of deceit in its own right, akin to the fruits of evil in the landscapes with meditating saints. The entire process is clearly an elaborate deception, specifically abetted (with seeming high seriousness) by religious orders, whose spiritual calling is at least as suspect as those of the monk and the nun in the *Ship of Fools.*

35. Falkenburg, 124–25. See also Virginia Tuttle, "Bosch's Image of Poverty," *Art Bulletin* 63 (1981): 88–95.

36. Gibson (as in n. 9), 223–26, fig. 15, adduces a German woodcut allegory, the *Mirror of Understanding* (*Spiegel der Vernunft,* Graphische Sammlung, Munich), dated 148(8?), which shows a circular form like the Rotterdam tondo, encircled by labels. In the center of the mirror stands a Christian pilgrim, with both staff and backpack, making his way across a crude bridge of logs. Behind him the Devil tugs at him, while across the bridge a skeleton of Death takes aim at him with bow and arrow. Above, an angel points to a decalogue surmounted with a crucifix; below lie open graves with corpses. The relevance of this imagery for Bosch is evident, including the death, devil, and angel figures who confront his usurer, and the bridge and suggestion of age and travel remain particularly relevant to the Rotterdam tondo as well as *The Hay Wain* exterior. Around the frame of this woodcut mirror are eight scenes in segments, as in the *Seven Deadly Sins,* but with images of Heaven, Hell, and the Last Judgment.

37. For the orientation of *The Hay Wain* triptych arrangement, particularly in relation to other Bosch triptychs, see Jacobs. I am most grateful to Professor Jacobs for sharing his work with me prior to its publication.

38. For an extensive discussion of the interpretation of hay, see Vandenbroeck (as in n. 20); J. Grauls, "Taalkundige toelichting bij het hooi en den hooiwagen," and Louis Lebeer, "Het hooi en de hooiwagen inde beeldende kunsten," *Gentsche Bijdragen tot de Kunstgeschiedenis* 5 (1938): 156–77, and 141–55.

39. On gypsies, see Charles Cuttler, "Exotics in Fifteenth Century Art: Comments on Oriental and Gypsy Costume," in *Liber amicorum Herman Liebaers,* ed. Frans Van Wijngaerden et al. (Brussels: n.p., 1984), 419–34, with references. Also Fritz Grossmann, "Cornelis van Dalem Re-examined," *Burlington Magazine* 96 (1954): 42–51; and François de Vaux de Folteier, "Iconographie des 'Egyptiens,' precisions sur le costume ancien des tsiganes," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts,* 6th ser., 68 (1966): 165–72. The local history of this group is O. van Kappen, *Geschiedenis der Ziegeuners in Nederland* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1965).

40. Larry Silver, "Of Beggars—Lucas van Leyden and Sebastian Brant," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 39 (1976): 253–57; and Magdi Tóth-Ubbens, *Verloren beelden van miserabele bedelaars* (Ghent: Mij. de Tijdstroom, 1987). For beggars in general, Elisabeth Sudeck, *Bettlerdarstellungen vom Ende des XV. Jahrhundert bis Rembrandt* (Strasbourg: Heitz, 1931); Vandenbroeck, 43–68; and Lucinda Reinold, "The Representation of the Beggar as Rogue in Dutch Seventeenth-Century Art," Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1981; also Eddy de Jongh and Ger Luijten, *Mirror of Everyday Life: Genre Prints in the Netherlands 1550–1700,* exh. cat., Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 1997, esp. 111–14, no. 17. On the theme of blindness in Bosch, Patinir, and more generally, Kahren Hellerstedt, "The Blind Man and His Guide in Netherlandish Painting," *Simiolus* 13 (1983): 163–81.

41. On the figure of Christ as the snare for the Devil, a view espoused by Augustine, see the mousetrap metaphor in Campin's Mérode Altarpiece as elucidated by Meyer Schapiro, "'Muscipula Diaboli': The Symbolism of the Mérode Altarpiece," *Art Bulletin* 27 (1945): 182–87. Note also the presence of the Devil lurking in the background of the Nativity in the Portinari Altarpiece by Hugo van der Goes, as observed by Robert Walker, "The Demon in the Portinari Altarpiece," *Art Bulletin* 42 (1960): 218–19. According to Voragine's *Golden Legend,* the Incarnation of Christ was staged for "the confusion of demons" and also to enable man "to obtain pardon from sins, to cure his weakness, and to humble his pride." See Jacobus de Voragine (as in n. 22), vol. 1, 37–42, esp. 41–42.

42. Bosch explored the problem of Christ's fate to be "despised and rejected of men." When Bosch painted scenes from the Gospels, he often emphasized the gulf between evil and grotesque humankind and the frail humility of a persecuted Christ. This particular imagery appears already in his early *Ecce Homo* (Staedel, Frankfurt). Here, too, Christ appears as a modest figure, already mocked with the crown of thorns and royal mantle above his nakedness and bent over with the burden of his wounds and abuse. He is surrounded by ugly and fatuously overdressed representatives of Roman rule, who closely resemble the "Orientalist" Levantine figures of *The Hay Wain* interior. An owl stands poised in a window of the justice building, looking down on the scene. Below, a dense crowd of similarly well-dressed yet exotic figures with grotesque faces in glaring profile raise their voices in a chorus, conveyed by inscribed gold letters, "Crucifige eu[m]" (crucify him), in response to Pilate's own words, "Ecce homo" (John 19:4–6). In the right background a red banner with a crescent moon conveys the suggestion that this is a Holy Land proleptically held in the "infidel" hands of Islam, and one of the weapons above the crowd is a halberd with crescent. A toad decorates the shield of a man at the right edge of the panel. The background bridge also appears to have pagan idols on pedestals. The lower left corner of the Bosch panel originally conveyed an alternate form of behavior, now effaced but visible as a ghostly pentimento (after restoration), that contrasts with this hate-filled scene of misapprehension and lack of forgiveness. A group of figures kneels there in prayer, witnessing the scene but expressing contrary sentiments. Their golden speech reads, "Salva nos xp[ist]e r[e]de[m]ptor" (Save us Christ, redeemer!); one of the figures, taller and central in the group, is clearly a tonsured Dominican monk. Even in this early Bosch Passion narrative, general humanity is shown as cruel and hateful in a world of idols and false beliefs, which rejects Christ and his message; however, exceptional individuals exist who see clearly and follow the true faith, in this case, within the century-old tradition of Netherlandish altarpiece or votive religious narratives, which they behold as witnesses. Their clear vision is not the vision of the eye but of the spirit: they face straight ahead, opposite to the direction of the rabble and without the need for upraised eyes or heads. This is true spiritual insight, like the insight provided only to the faithful by the parables uttered by Christ (Matt. 13:13) and in stark contrast to the ordinary sensory impressions of the sinful, "because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand."

Bosch followed up this early contrast between good and evil especially through physiognomy by making a number of half-length images, some preserved only through copies, of Christ tormented by jeering and grotesque crowds (such as his Escorial *Christ with Thorns,* also in a tondo shape, surrounded by a grisaille border with angels combating demons). Perhaps his most spectacular image of this kind is the Ghent *Christ Carrying the Cross,* where the oppositions of light and dark skins as well as of normal features with vicious grotesques distinguish Christ and Saint Veronica from the spiritual evil that surrounds them. For our purposes, it is also noteworthy that both Christ and Veronica withdraw into themselves, with eyes downcast, while their evil antitypes stare and glare with eyes wide open. Here, with Christ at the center of the image and all of the faces seen close-up, a viewer can make no mistakes about an unequivocal visual choice.

43. Falkenburg, 93–96, with attention to the role of landscape and its evidence of evil in the world as part of the interpretation of the interior scene.

44. Barbara Lane, *The Altar and the Altarpiece* (New York: Icon, 1984), 41–78; and F. O. Büttner, *Imitatio pietatis* (Berlin: Mann, 1983), 19–33, 77–85.

45. The most extreme of the interpretations of this figure, as the "Jewish Messiah," whom she identifies with the Antichrist, is Lotte Brand Philip, "The Prado *Epiphany* by Jerome Bosch," *Art Bulletin* 35 (1953): 267–93. Her sources, Jewish legends, were almost certainly not available as such to Bosch. The use of frogs as an ornament for this figure is related to the same passage on "foul spirits" from Revelations (16:13–14), adduced in his interpretation of Bosch's *Conjurer* by Jeffrey Hamburger, "Bosch's *Conjurer:* An Attack on Magic and Sacramental Heresy," *Simiolus* 14 (1984): 4–23. Ernst Gombrich's interpretative revision substituted Herod as the identity of this mysterious figure;

Gombrich, "The Evidence of Images," in *Interpretation: Theory and Practice,* ed. Charles Singleton (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969), 35–104, esp. 75–89. In part this substitute interpretation is based on late medieval legends of the three kings, which claim that Herod and his army followed the Magi in order to discover the newborn king, whom he feared. See Marijnissen, 239–40, citing a 15th-century Dutch version of the 14th-century retold Gospel in Latin, the *Vita Christi,* by Ludolph the Carthusian.

46. Most conveniently for the Antichrist legends, Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium,* rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), esp. 33–36, locating the source of these legends in the exalted king above all gods of Daniel's dream as well as Saint Paul's warnings to the Thessalonians and Revelations, where he is the pseudomessiah. Such an assertive and prominent figure would not likely be hidden in the retinue of the Magi or under the dark sill of a humble shed.

47. The heraldry of the donor was identified by Paul Lafond in 1914 as Bronckhorst, surmounted with the inscription "Een voer al" (one for all), making the subject of the Magi particularly apt, as these kings from the corners of the globe embody universal homage of Christ by all nations. Therefore, the depicted individual would be Peter Bronckhorst. This painting's history reveals it to have been confiscated in 1568 by the duke of Alba from its owner near Brussels, Sir Jehan de Casembroot (b. ca. 1525), and then presented to King Philip II of Spain, who sent it to the Escorial in 1574, where it was inventoried (Karl Justi, "Die Werke des H. Bosch in Spanien," *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 10 [1889]: 142). For references, see Marijnissen, 234.

48. Cynthia Hahn, "'Joseph Will Perfect, Mary Enlighten, and Jesus Save Thee': The Holy Family as Marriage Model in the Mérode Triptych," *Art Bulletin* 68 (1986): 54–66, builds on the original discussion by Schapiro (as in n. 48 above) on Joseph's increasingly important late medieval role in the Holy Family, albeit usually in a role invested with numerous domestic chores. Hahn, 61, fig. 5, also points to the importance of the chimney in Campin's Mérode Altarpiece as a reference to the fire of *luxuria,* noting the figural carvings at the side of the fireplace and an index of the presence of unchaste living. In this respect the separated placement by Bosch, who also follows tradition in emphasizing the wizened age of Joseph, serves as an emphatic reminder of the chastity of the Holy Family and its freedom from carnal lust. In this respect, Brand Philip's argument (as in n. 45), 281–82, is pertinent, where she sees the smoke vent as part of its often superstitious connotation as the passage of entrance by demons and witches into a house (note the modern American figure of Santa Claus, an adaptation of Saint Nicholas, who also comes down a chimney). This association further places Joseph in proximity to evil impulses, but following Schapiro's argument, he is further "bait" to tempt and deceive the Devil himself in the mission of the Incarnation.

49. Lane (as in n. 44), esp. 50–77.

50. *Die Messe Gregors des Grossen,* exh. cat., Schnütgen Museum, Cologne, 1982; Lane (as in n. 44), 129; and Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 121–22, 308–9. The popularity of this legend is relatively close in time to Bosch, primarily from the 15th century in art.

51. Rudolph Berliner, "Arma christi," *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* 6 (1955): 35–152.

52. Scholars have cogently connected this arrangement of Passion scenes around a central figure of Christ with the grisaille reverse of the Berlin *Saint John on Patmos,* which shows in the center of its oculus a traditional symbol of Christ, the pelican pricking its breast to feed its young on its own blood. This oculus appears on the reverse of an image of a saintly revelation and conveys a sense of prioritized seeing of good over evil or worldly distractions (burning ships appear in the harbor before a great city in the background of John's Patmos). Thus, it is particularly appropriate before such a spiritual seer (see-er) as John to focus exclusively on Christ and the Passion in a global tondo shape. However, the Passion scenes are read clockwise in the Berlin painting, from three o'clock on the radial dial, rather than rising on both sides to a climax at the top, as is the case in the Prado image. Moreover, the scenes end not with the Crucifixion but rather with the Entombment.

53. Brand Philip (as in n. 45), 288–91, is surely right to notice the unusual attention given by Bosch to the sin and punishment of Judas in this Prado exterior. She argues, "For Bosch, the Passion of Christ is the result of evil in the world," with Judas as the embodiment of that evil, in particular, the hanging of Judas (for which she finds a manuscript parallel, fig. 28; she cites Oswald Goetz, "Hie henckt Judas," in *Form und Inhalt: Festschrift für Otto Schmidt* [Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1951], 105–37). Bosch not only shows Judas hanging on the gallows as a moral example pointed out by a father to his child (whom she analogizes to the donors below the altar on the same exterior), he also portrays a demon carrying away the soul of the miscreant on a pole, like the torments visited on sinners in the Hell wings of his triptychs. Surely discerning viewers are expected to attend to a significant, if tiny, detail like this one as they meticulously reenact the full Passion narrative in meditative re-creation. And the Judas figure reinforces the need, so perceptively sketched (if overinterpreted) by Brand Philip in her pioneering article, to attend to the significant details of apparently ordinary religious representations in order to discern the elements of evil behind worldly appearances or to see past those worldly appearances to their ultimate spiritual significance.

54. Rubin (as in n. 50); Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 91–130, esp. 102–7, on "seeing and believing." The singling out of Jews and heretics as outsiders to the belief in the miracle of the Eucharist suggests analogies to Judas's betrayal of the teaching of Christ, stressed in the Passion scenes above the miracle of the Mass of Saint Gregory.

55. Silver (as in n. 29); Unverfehrt (as in n. 29). The tree-man also appears excerpted as the basis of a drawing, often credited to Bosch himself, in the Albertina, Vienna (Unverfehrt, 43).

56. The most recent full-scale study of this work is Paul Vandenbroeck, "Jheronumus Boschs zogenaamde Tuin der Lusten," pt. 1, *Jaarboek Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen,* 1989: 9–210, and "De Graal of het Valse Liefdesparadijs," pt. 2, 1990: 9–192. See also Jacobs.

57. See n. 20 above.

58. Götz Pochat, *Der Exotismus während des Mittelalters und der Renaissance* (Stockholm: Almqvist und Wiksell, 1970), 93–142, esp. 119–33, with discussion of the Bosch *Garden of Earthly Delights* and its use of the Erhard Reuwich woodcut illustrations to Bernhard von Breydenbach's popular publication on the Holy Land, *Peregrenatio in Terram Sanctam* (Mainz, 1486).

59. Pochat (as in n. 58); also Robert Koch, "Martin Schongauer's Dragon Tree," in *Tribute to Wolfgang Stechow,* ed. Walter Strauss, special issue of *Print Review,* no. 5 (spring 1976): 114–19.

60. Ernst Gombrich, "Bosch's 'Garden of Earthly Delights': A Progress Report," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 32 (1969): 162–70; also Vandenbroeck (as in n. 56), pt. 2, 72–91. It should be pointed out that "as it was in the days of Noah" is itself a metaphor, not a literal reality, which is taken to be the condition (Matt. 24:37–39) of an imminent Last Judgment, related just before the parable of the wise and foolish virgins (25:1–13): "As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they did not know until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the son of man."

61. The principal interpreter of Bosch and alchemy is Laurinda Dixon, "Bosch's Garden of Delights Triptych: Remnants of a 'Fossil Science,'" *Art Bulletin* 68 (1981): 96–113; idem, *Alchemical Imagery in Bosch's Garden of Delights* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1983). For a broader view of these fluid boundaries and their grounding in an "artisanal" understanding of cosmic principles, chiefly for contemporary Germany, see Larry Silver and Pamela Smith, "Splendor in the Grass: *Maria genetrix* as the Image of Nature's Miracles," in *Merchants and Marvels: Commerce, Art and the Representation of Nature in Early Modern Europe,* ed. Pamela Smith and Paula Findlen (New York: Routledge, in press).

62. Here the fullest discussion is Reindert Falkenburg, *The Fruit of Devotion* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1994), which focuses on the Netherlandish tradition of Madonna and Child images: "if the consumption of fruit and flowers in the *Andachtsbilder* of the Virgin and Child refers to the love union between bride and Bridegroom, the love is that between Mary and Christ, not Christ and the soul. While it is true that the consumptive allegories in the garden tracts are employed to describe the love union between Christ and Mary (in the Incarnation), they are *primarily* employed to describe the union of the devout soul with its heavenly Bridegroom. . . . Yet when one takes into account the religious function these paintings had and analyzes the form and the impact of the devotional image on its invisible counterpart—the viewer—it is possible to identify a convergence between *Andachtsbilder* and devotional texts" (78).

63. Walter Gibson, "The Garden of Earthly Delights by Hieronymus Bosch: The Iconography of the Central Panel," *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 24 (1973): 1–26. See also Thea Vignau Wilberg-Schuurman, *Hoofse minne en burgerlijke liefde in de prentkunst rond 1500* (Leiden: Nijhoff, 1983), esp. 31–37, for the morris dance, or *moriskendans.*

64. De Sigüenza, quoted in Snyder (as in n. 28), 38–41: "the strawberry plant elsewhere called *maiotas,* which leaves hardly any taste behind once it is eaten. . . . The other painting of the vanity and glory and the passing taste of strawberries or the strawberry plant and its pleasant odor that is hardily [*sic; recte,* hardly] remembered once it has passed. . . . And thus these monsters and fantasies are made for such vile and vulgar ends as for the pleasure of vengeance and sensuality, of appearance and esteem, and other such things that do not even reach the palate nor wet the mouth, but are like the taste and delicate flavor of the strawberry or strawberry plant and the fragrance of their flowers, on which many people still try to sustain themselves . . . one can reap great profit by observing himself thus portrayed true to life from the inside, unless one does not realize what is inside himself and has become so blind that he is not aware of the passions and vices that keep him transformed into a beast, or rather so many beasts."

65. In some respects this overwhelming and distracting imaginary world of Bosch should be taken as a challenge to the viewer, rather than as the celebration of artistic invention as fantasy and license, which is ascribed to the artist by Keith Moxey, "Making 'Genius,'" in *The Practice of Theory* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994), 111–47. Certainly, this very inventiveness was precisely what gave Bosch his recognizable individual style and his continual appeal for imitators throughout the 16th century; see Silver (as in n. 29). It should be clear that in this interpretation Bosch indulges in an extended test of the medieval *contemptus mundi* tradition every bit as much as he exemplifies the emerging modern artistic concept of a recognizable pictorial genius of the nascent Renaissance. Although the consequences of Bosch's fantasy and signature style surely had lasting consequences regarding artistic innovation and personal style, these need not have been his principal motivations or separable formal issues from his overall content.

66. This long article is not the place to discuss the history of outlooks toward the sense of sight from medieval to modern assessments. However, the lingering assessment of vision as a "seductress" akin to the nude Venus has been magisterially surveyed for the work of Hendrik Goltzius and the end of the 16th century by Eric Jan Sluijter, "Venus, Visus and Pictura," in *Seductress of Sight* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2000), 86–159, whose title cites the critical verses (1624) of Dirck Raphaelsz Camphuyzen, 10–12, who calls painting "the mother of all foolish vanities . . . the common bait for the uneasy heart overwhelmed by choice." These remarks of a century later still echo the sentiments outlined in this study. More concretely, the image by Goltzius of *Sight,* an engraving of an attractive young woman from the Five Senses series (ca. 1596, fig. 74), bears an inscription in Latin declaring, "When all too flirtatious eyes are poorly reined in, foolish youth tumbles headlong into evil." Even Goltzius's chaste first engraving of *Visus* (ca. 1578, fig. 71) bore the inscription, "To prevent the glittering semblance of things from deceiving your eyes, keep your eyes under control with chaste reins." For earlier studies of the 16th century and its Netherlandish aftermath, see Carl Nordenfalk, "The Five Senses in Flemish Art before 1600," in *Netherlandish Mannerism,* ed. Görel Cavalli-Björkman (Stockholm: Nationalmuseum, 1985), 135–54; and Justus Müller Hofstede, "*Non saturatur oculus visu*—Zur Allegorie des Gesichts von Peter Paul Rubens und Jan Bruegel d. Ä.," in *Wort und Bild in der niederländischen Kunst und Literatur des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts,* ed. H. Vekeman and J. Müller Hofstede (Erfstadt: Lukassen, 1984), 243–89. Most recently see the more general remarks by Harry Berger Jr., "Technologies: The System of Early Modern Painting," in *Fictions of the Pose* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), esp. 35–42.