

Ordo Antichristianus Illuminati®
The Crazy World of Hieronymus Bosch
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The Artist's representations were a satire against the church and paganism of his time. Some of the artist's work was of satire more in either direction. The famous painting in the Garden of Earthly Delights exists somewhere between the two extremes. The artwork negates the occult medieval representations. The occult goes with the artist's idea of the pictures. There seems to be autonomy and dualistic forces set on fire by their own apocalypse. It seems to suggest some noumenon while describing nothing, a type of crisis. Bosch addresses the ideas of the macabre and fantastic in his art without a real sense of closure. The viewer must appreciate an overall look at the panels to get the whole picture. The representation of evil in the work incarnates itself through the symbolism of the times. The human agency of the Arte Work reveals itself via the superstitious mind set of the dark ages of Europe and the Christian world.

Evil manifests itself in a grotesque panorama of demonic-chthonic influence. The Prince of Darkness consumes the centre stage in this drama. However, you cannot see the Prince of Darkness anywhere. The satanic and demonic evil of these paintings objectify themselves in forms of apocalyptic heresy. What kind of person would make these kinds of paintings nearly four hundred years ago? Was the artist a madman or was he sane? Was the artist Bosch confused or seeing with perception? And, how are we supposed to view his work? Should it be judged on a merely formalistic basis by its colour and form and not its meaning? Is there meaning behind the images that create new meaning when juxtaposed? Symbols and Arte contain a five interstice of vision and thought, not mere form and ideas. Furthermore, this type of symbolism cannot be supported by words. Is this the vision of a schizophrenic or a combination produced by a hallucination like a nightmare that cannot be explained? The mistake is trying to rationalize these words into verbal terms. The paintings can exist on their own terms subjectively. In the case of Bosch, rationalization only leads to misunderstanding. Hieronymus Bosch did not belong to any school of thought. However, no artist can develop out of complete autonomy. Hieronymus Bosch's work was developed out of the pressures of his era. There seems to a greatness

of religious importance attached to his work. Perhaps this is how he attempted to heighten religious experience. This would establish himself apart from his contemporaries. This does not diminish the artist's credit. He compromised his lack of reality with sublime images of heaven and hell.

The paintings are more easily understood through the mind's eye of the people of his genre. Sources of Bosch's world would not exclude sorcery. Sorcerers of the artist's genre were those whom were in the service of Lucifer. They had the power to command nature and demons. These sorcerers attended the Sabbath where they were servants of the Witch King's Satan, and they had the power to hold their own ceremonies and rites making the infernal legions servants of him. They met in scary places where the superstitious would never, ever tread. They would cloak themselves in white, wear black conical hats, carry swords and cast ritual circles. They would pray to the Christian god and cast rites in the name of Satan and the infernal hordes.

There were pictures of necromancy that the artist seems to have usurped for his diabolical context. The *Lisbon Triptych* showed very similar attributes for the symbolism of the Tarot. Philosophers from many parts of the world met in La Fez, Morocco. This place became a learning denizen after the Library of Alexandria's demise. The adepts who met there from the four corners of the known world found that they could express themselves in visual terminology. This is one theory of how the Tarot came to exist, via the pack of cards, and thus was an inspiration to the visual terminology of the work and Arte of Hieronymus Bosch.

It is interesting to note that instead of inventing the devil as any sort of macabre featured animal, Bosch's renderings were a type never seen before. Bosch portrayed Satan as a monstrous hybrid of insects, bits and pieces of machines, human anatomy, reptiles, etc. The method employed was to remove the Christ figure from centre stage, a most radical procedure for the dark ages era. Bosch was a realist who did not use the symbols of his time like the other painters of his day. His vision of chaos and disorder were taken from the cosmos and materialized on the earthly plane. So you could see the afterlife take place in the natural world.

The artist's painting of the "*The Ship of Fools*" was inspired by a Netherlands poem from 1513. "*The Ship of Fools*" itself was meant as a metaphor of the Roman Catholic Church. The bow of the boat contains a monk and a nun. They take centre stage invigourating the power centre of the painting. Nothing signifies the exact mood of the central figures. The focus moves from figure to figure around the composition. A pancake dangles between the monk and the nun symbolizing the Shrovetide Feast on the eve of Lent. None of them can be taken as real: the man losing his dinner overboard, the swimmers, and a fool on the mast. Once again, outwardly everything appears unproblematic. However, the boat itself is no longer seaworthy. In Bosch's time voyages with sinful monks were commonplace far and wide. This adds to nebulous attention given to the unexplained. Here one finds a monk and a nun finding agreement in the same blasphemous action. For example, the cake suspended from above would signify the host on an altar set with chalice and paten. It is difficult to say if this vessel drifts on a shallow inlet or is on the high seas. Bosch painted a topsy-turvy world where everyone is at ease and the outcome is unsure.

Keep in mind that most of the literature about Bosch's paintings from his century is missing. However, learned historians would agree that 16th century scholars were dismayed by the content of the Dutch master's output. Bosch's work caused great commotion from the critics in Spain during the counter-reformation. They accused the artist of witchcraft and sorcery in the Roman Catholic countries. Dominicos Lampsonius' {1572} comments on the "infernial Bosch:" "*What are these things you gaze upon, with your astonished eye and your pallid face? They are like ghosts of the dead, specters from Erebus, that flutter before you.*" Also, Felipe de Guevara says, "*Strange likenesses of things, licentious fantasies and clever caprices.*": In Venice his art was described as a "*fabric of dreams*" {*Michiel*}, and "*chimeras, demons, visions, and eccentricities.*" Boschini uses the words "*infinite extravagances of forms, so that anyone who sees them is astonished and stupefied.*" {*Zanetti*}.

The artist's venue of zoological species comprises a habitat most suitable for the mundane and the exotic. This says something about the bestiaries of his time and life. Bosch includes common animals from his own climate and other creatures from the four corners of the

world. He even goes so far as to invent his own creatures like snakes with human faces, birds on ice skates and devils with crossbows. The living fish becomes a symbol for lust. The owl symbolizes wisdom or heresy. And the toad is Satan himself. This makes for a wonderful catastrophic confluence of influence causing controversy in the bestiary.

The ancient art of Alchemy which goes back to fifth millennium China was considered "false" to the chemist of the medieval period. Alchemy still was making advances in the Dark Ages and was concerned primarily with the transmutation of turning base metals into gold and the search for the *Alkahest* and the *panacea*. They were looking for universal solvent and a remedy for all disease, the philosopher's stone and illumination. This provided great inspiration for Bosch. In "*The Garden of Earthly Delights*," {1504-1505} Bosch puts some of his own alchemy to work. In the hallowed out tree, Man is where transformation occurs. The black, white, and red colours signify the stages of heated mercury. The central panel of "*The Garden of Earthly Delights*" is a scene commanding homage to lust. Here, the viewer will find a fountainhead surrounded by a bounty of naked women who are encircled by nude men riding fantastic beasts. In the background is an egg around which people seem to be forming a gathering. This alludes to the crucible of alchemy where magical and chemical transmutation occurs. Lastly, humans and animals morph into each other creating new life, respectively.

The artist was before his time in regards to surrealism and science fiction. It is interesting to note that you can find sources for his morphological creations in a series of woodcuts called "*La Mer des Hystoires*" {c. 1488}. In the "*The Garden of Earthly Delights*," the student of psychology might even find Freudian attributes: a winged man flies in the sky carried by a red berry. This could very similarly symbolize the temporary nature of pleasure supported by a primary sense of lust. The theme of lust continues throughout "*The Garden of Earthly Delights*" Lust is personified by a couple of lovers set sinfully naked in a crystal sphere. The glass sphere is associated with alchemy and an ancient Flemish saying is, "*happiness is like a glass which soon breaks.*" There is a clear tube-like device launched into a head inside a fruit foundation. It has a mouse running towards its mouth. The device symbolizes masculinity. The mouse alludes to false doctrine leading followers astray.

By the end of the 1500s when ideological import was in turmoil on the timeline of Europe, politics and religion were being reevaluated to the core. There seemed to be a great amount of disdain for the Roman Catholic Church. The masses were dissatisfied with the Catholic Church's bigotry, wealth, and self-importance. They had a voice and a leader by the name of Martin Luther. He was a German monk who did not believe in the symbolism of the Catholic mass. Martin Luther instigated the Reformation. The changes going on in Europe towards the end of Bosch's life were not strange to him. This gave meaning to the artist's work and how he thought. It would affect humanity.

Hieronymus Bosch lived an uneventful quiet life. The artist resided in a town called *Hertogenbosch*. The town the artist was born in is in present day Holland. There is not much recorded about the artist's social life. However, in 1480 he was married to Aleys Goyaerts Van de Meervenne. She came from the Dutch aristocracy. Marriage into the aristocracy served as a catalyst for Bosch's career. And thus, he became a respected member of the Brotherhood of Our Lady. This was an Order focused on the mother of God, good works, charity, and community. Bosch was the only registered painter at the time and received many commissions. Nothing disturbed the tranquil life of Bosch which he divided between the Brotherhood, works for God, and his wife.

One detailed painting of very critical importance is "*The Temptation of Saint Anthony*." This is another painting noted for its panels. There is an interesting story behind this painting involving the artist's background. When Bosch was growing up there was a serious fire that inflamed most of the town. This served as a prelude to the artist's use of fire as subject matter. The town of Hertogenbosch was reduced to ashes. This event figured prominently in the artist's memory. It was an awful experience that fused itself into the very framework of Bosch's mind. The fabric of his canvas became the fiery gulfs of his infernal empire. This signified the artist's later version of human torment corrosive of heedless divine law. The motif of fire and sulphur fall from the night. In ^{A.D.} 271 Saint Anthony, then 21, left to live in the wilderness. The imagery of Saint Anthony was established according to the biographer Jacob of Varagine. The artist depicted the Saint's sufferings from two types of temptation. One is being carried off into the atmosphere by demons. Saint Anthony is taken high into

the air by a winged frog, soaring vessels and fish completely engrossed in the infested elements. The Saint is helped by companions after his fall. Real and fantastic images merge into one in the infernal landscape. Here we find a hill is formed by a man crawling on all fours. There is an obvious reference to sodomy. The man's rear end serves as a shelter to Saint Anthony. Some retreats are makeshift brothels, an accusation of mortal sin.

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