

Spring 2011

The Rise of the Sentient Musical Instrument: A Study of Hieronymus Bosch's Musical Instruments and their Dissonant Revolution

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Recommended Citation

Young, Liza, "The Rise of the Sentient Musical Instrument: A Study of Hieronymus Bosch's Musical Instruments and their Dissonant Revolution" (2011). *Senior Projects Spring 2011*. 229.
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THE RISE OF THE SENTIENT MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

A STUDY OF HIERONYMUS BOSCH'S MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS AND THEIR
DISSONANT REVOLUTION

SENIOR PROJECT SUBMITTED TO
THE DIVISION OF THE ARTS
OF BARD COLLEGE

BY

LIZA YOUNG

ANNANDALE-ON-HUDSON, NY
MAY 2011

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project could not have been completed without my family and friends' support of my increasingly bizarre interests. A special thanks to my dad for driving me to Starbucks so I could sproj in peace, to Aunt Sue and Uncle John for supplying me with Hieronymus Bosch books with enormous pictures, and to all of you who listened to me tell the same story about ergotism multiple times a week. I am particularly grateful for The CLAAAP as well, for providing a perpetual fun-space in times of agony. I would also like to thank the members of my board, for helping turn my pitiful outline into an actual senior project. Most importantly, I must thank Jean French. It has been an honor to have her as my adviser during her final year at Bard College. This essay would not exist without her and would be a horrifying grammatical war zone.

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INTRODUCTION

During the rise of the Northern Renaissance, Hieronymus Bosch launched a violent visual revolution for the musical instrument. When he first came upon the instrument, it was hardly more than a two-dimensional imitation of the three-dimensional object. It was but a quiet prop possessed by its player. When he finished, the instrument became a dominant, sentient character with mankind as its possession. Each of his instruments found very distinct identities, which developed from cultural stereotypes and ancient associations that have since become lost on modern audiences. Much of what initially appears to be meaningless but visually amusing imagery is, in fact, iconology that was quite intelligible to fifteenth-century viewers. The key to interpreting it is through understanding the culture of Bosch's era. Curiously, rather few art historians have devoted their time to translating the meaning of Bosch's instruments as a whole. Many have analyzed the musical imagery of a particular image, including Walter S. Gibson, Laurinda Dixon, Bruce W. Holsinger and Walter Bosing to name a few, yet none have examined the instruments as a full orchestra – until now. The aim of this essay is to chart the course of the instrument's evolution through analyzing Bosch's great triptychs, as well as key secondary works, in order to interpret its meanings. It is only through examining Bosch's orchestra as a whole that the individual natures of the instruments can be fully understood. They evolve throughout the course of his career, finding new tricks to obtain independence along the way. Thus, past evaluations of isolated works have resulted in incomplete analyses, due to the lack of familiarity with important phases of the instrument's development. Consequently, the voice, an intangible musical instrument, had been completely overlooked until this belated orchestral examination. It was initially not even intended to be included in this essay. However, song's undeniable importance

became clear over the course of intensive study. Losses such as this are crucial to understanding the progression of Bosch's now esoteric visuals. What is now so often read as visual chaos is indeed very calculated imagery. Bosch's iconography is built upon an underlying web of associations and cryptic connections, which must be followed from beginning to end in order to discover the brilliant reason behind it all.

There is no indication that Bosch intended to begin such a revolution of the musical character. His early representations are in fact quite traditional. They seem to have developed from a growing obsession with music in the realm of Hell, which was perhaps inspired by Dante Alighieri's (1265-1321) own visualizations of music as torment in his *Inferno*. Written works certainly play a prominent role in the instrument's character development, particularly the works of the renowned philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BC), Italian abbot Joachim of Fiore (1135-1202), French poet Guillaume de Machaut (1300-1377), the distinguished musical theorist of Flanders, Tinctoris (1435-1511), and, naturally, the Bible. Bosch translates these texts' musical theories into visual poetry, allowing their portrayal greater freedom to grow within the canvas than they found within the page. Of course, Bosch was by no means the first artist to paint the instrument. The great Hans Memling (1430-1494) and Stefan Lochner (1400-1452) portray instruments in the hands of many docile angels, as did various other artists that are not included in this essay for the sake of a concise argument, including Jan van Eyck (1395-1441) and Geertgen tot Sint Jans (1465-1495). These preceding artists enabled Bosch's revolution by raising the visual prominence of the instruments, yet they never treated the subjects as anything other than inanimate items, nor allowed them to deviate

from proper behavior. It was not until Bosch introduced demons to his musical scenes that instrument began to act out.

Bosch's images feature demons and Hell with special flamboyance, which has resulted in various heretical accusations against him. However, his pieces are not evidence of an infatuation with the Devil, but of a medieval technique that aimed to inspire devotion to God through the terror of Evil. Much of his work was commissioned by his local church, the Brotherhood of Our Lady, of which he was an active member. The Brotherhood was a part of the pre-Protestant movement known as the *Devotio Moderna*, a branch of Catholicism that called for the humanization of Biblical figures and the exaltation of reason. Perhaps this humanization aided in the instrument's transformation. The praise of reason is certainly present, though delivered subversively through exhibiting the chaos that ensues when reason is ignored. Yet the most prominent manifestation of the movement's influence is the satirical representations of the clergy. Bosch and his brethren felt a distinct distrust for the clergy, which is apparent throughout his frequent depiction of clerical buffoons. Yet it must be understood that his criticism was not an attack against God, but a revelation of the corruption within religion, made in the hopes that it might be remedied. Bosch employed his musical instruments in a similar way, using their cultural associations with the enactment of particular sins to awaken self-consciousness within his viewers. Indeed, Bosch's work as a whole functions as a mirror of the soul, reflecting the sins that were (perhaps unwittingly) committed within the panels. As he matured as an artist, Bosch became more emboldened in creating his particular terrors. It was on this boldness that his instrument thrived, maturing from tools in the souls' downfall to self-possessed executors of punishments.

The examination of this evolution follows the rough chronology of Bosch's career, which is made difficult due to the fact that he refrained from dating any of his works. The study begins in chapter one with the introduction of Bosch's influences, background, style, and early works. It includes his first, somewhat tentative, representations of instruments, which appear in the "Heaven" (fig. 5.2) and "Judgment" (fig. 5.3) tondos of *The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*, 1490, (Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain). Chapter two analyzes three of Bosch's greatest triptychs, *The Last Judgment* (fig. 1.0), 1482 (Gemaldegalerie of the Academy of Fine Arts), *The Haywain*, (fig. 2.0), 1485-1490, (Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain), and *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, (fig. 3.0), 1500, (Museo Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon, Portugal). It is in these works that the instrument makes its most important advancements and begins to exert a desire for independence from its players. Chapter three opens with the *Devotio Moderna* and Bosch's most concentrated critiques of the clergy within two secondary works, *The Ship of Fools*, (fig. 6.0) 1490-1500, (Louvre, Paris, France), and *The Allegory of Gluttony and Lust*, (fig. 7.0), 1490-1500, (Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, USA). Although much simpler in composition than Bosch's triptychs, these smaller images are loaded with iconographical significance that is essential in understanding and affirming theories on the musical character – concerning song in particular. The chapter ventures on to explore the rich literary background of the instrument's various identities and histories, written by the aforementioned Aristotle, Tinctoris, and Guillaume de Machaut. It is there that the human aspects of the instrument become most apparent through Tinctoris' discussion of the outward and inward aspects of music in relation to the body and soul, as well as Aristotle's ancient fear of the instrument's tendency to

succumb to and inspire deviance. Supported by ancient and contemporary influences, cultural familiarity, and a concise evaluation of artistic style, chapter four delves into the climax of the instrument's independence in the "Hell" panel of *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, 1490-1510 (fig. 4.0), (Museo de Prado, Madrid, Spain). The great quartet of lute, harp, hurdy-gurdy, and flute, as well as the monstrous bagpipe, declare their matured identities in the dissonant domination of the human soul. These manipulative instruments completely invert the traditional role of player and played, forcing the souls to produce the sound, either by enslaving them to the playing of a particular instrument, or by forcing their human cries through inflicted agony. Despite the fact that so much of the original meaning is lost on twenty-first century society, the attraction of these intelligent horrors remains powerful. This is made particularly evident in chapter five's conclusion, which not only summarizes the revelations made throughout the essay, but also examines an attempt to replicate the climactic instruments in the three-dimensional world as recently as 2010.

This examination has revealed that Bosch's musical instruments have undergone more character development than most literary heroes. They have long deserved individual attention. This essay is but a first attempt to understand the complete infernal orchestra.

ONE

EARLY WORK AND INFLUENCES

“Indeed, the music made here on earth was itself no more than an imitation, an echo of the harmony which regulates the motions of the seven celestial bodies. By partaking of music on earth, men could participate to a certain measure in the supreme harmony and thereby offer to the soul the possibility of liberating itself from human passions and strains, of winning back to the happy state of its original bond with divinity by recalling the experiences of its previous existences.”¹

In typical insurgent style, Bosch’s visual revolution happened rapidly and violently. He stole the harp from the angel and gave it free will in the realm of the Devil. He allowed the drum to beat the man and the flute to sodomize him. He created instrument-demon hybrids, a new breed of life, that dominate the mortal souls in both Earth and Hell. There were, naturally, some warning signs of the impending revolution, namely within the works of Hans Memling. However, no one could have predicted the manic extent at which the movement would climax, which occurs within the “Hell” panel of the *Garden of Earthly Delights* altarpiece (fig. 4.1), some time around 1500. Only twenty years earlier, Hans Memling had first begun to toy with the musical instrument as something more than a prop – as its own character and propagator of harmonious existence.

The size, frequent appearance and strategic placement of instruments in Memling’s works span the void between the instrument as prop, seen in the Master of Cleves “Suffrage” illumination (fig. 8), 1440 (The Morgan Library, New York, USA, *The Book of Hours of Catherine of Cleves*, p. 247, “Suffrage: Cornelius and Cyprian.”), and Bosch’s *Garden of Earthly Delights*. The horn displayed in *The Book of Hours of Catherine of Cleves* is a two-dimensional prop that only goes so far as to identify Saint

¹ Wangermee, Robert, *Flemish Music and Society in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, trans. Robert Erich Wolf (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), 14.

Cornelius as himself. In his other hand he holds a similarly simple object, a pope's staff, referencing his career in life. To the right of Saint Cornelius stands another man whose identity is explained in the same manner. He holds a bishop's crook in one hand, referencing his title, while in the other hand he holds a sword, the weapon by which he was martyred. The items skim the surface of the saints' biographies, but only so far as to identify them. The sword does not strengthen the drama of Saint Cyprian's death. Saint Cornelius' horn does not supply any hint of the saint's story. These items merely function to *remind* the viewer of the story, not to deliver it, whereas Bosch's fully matured instruments are themselves the actors, as will be demonstrated presently. The props' ability to identify the men and their stories is not even very strong. They are dependent upon the inclusion of the surrounding items as their props are not entirely unique to their characters. For example, Saint Catherine is also identified by a sword, or a sword and a cartwheel, to be precise.

The whole of this illuminated image (excluding the bird-border motif) is quite simple. The flat background does not attempt to provide any setting or narrative. The image is meant only to provide a visual aid to the story that is written below. The responsibility of relaying content does not lie within the imagery, as it does in Bosch's work, but within the scripture. This is not due to the Master of Cleves' complete lack of imagination, but to the fact that the Book of Hours is a prayer book. The illuminations are accompaniments, not free standing images. Nonetheless, Cornelius' horn perfectly demonstrates the limitations of visual representations of instruments prior to Bosch's revolution. As it happens, illuminated manuscripts like this may have been some of the first works of art with which Bosch would have been familiar. Evidence in both style and

family history indicate that Bosch may have initially been trained in the art of illumination,² which implies that he would have developed early on a keen understanding of the relationship between text and image. His discovery of the potential of the image as a conveyor of complex information may have begun through experimentation with the image-narrative relationship. In 1490, in the case of the Prado Tabletop (fig. 5.0), Bosch experimented with inverting the image to text relationship. He provided the image -- the central eye of the table, as well as the tondo of Hell (fig. 5.1) -- with the responsibility of imparting the narrative, and the text with the simple task of identifying the given image. As the "Hell" panel of the *Garden of Earthly Delights* indicates, Bosch was indeed interested in role reversal, which will be further explored in chapter four.

Although various art historians believe Bosch's initial training may have been in illuminating manuscripts, there are no known surviving illuminations by his hand. The conclusion arises purely from conjecture concerning his style. He is known for his maniacally detailed panel paintings and altarpieces, which he initially produced in very conventional formalism. It was not until later in his career that he began to explore the realm of surrealism and dark fantasy. One of his earliest known works is *The Crucifixion with a Donor* (fig. 10.0), 1477 (Musée Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels). There is none of what has come to be known as stylistically "Boschian" within the painting. It is a classic (almost generic) Northern Renaissance crucifixion scene. A Netherlandish city rests at the horizon in the background, and a pastoral landscape fills the middle ground. The crucified Christ, surrounded by the Virgin, Saint John the

² Gibson, Walter S., *Hieronymus Bosch*, (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1988,) 19.

Evangelist (identified by his book), a kneeling donor, and Saint Peter (identified by his keys) dominates the panel. Bosch was a master of iconographic narrative, but none of his iconography had yet been realized. No musical instruments appear within the scene, nor do any of his other iconic symbols. The background landscape is not consumed by flames; no devil lures the donor to the underworld. The only symbols employed are deeply traditional. They identify the saints, as well as the location, Golgotha, the Place of the Skull, indicated by the scattered bones at the base of the crucified Christ. However, his conventionalism did not last for long.

By the 1480's Bosch discovered his talent for visual witticism. He began turning colloquialisms into images of clever design, such as *The Extraction of the Stone of Madness* (Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain,) (fig. 11.0), 1488. The image stars the personification of "Lubbert," the name of the stock character fool in Dutch literature, acting out a metaphor of stupidity and madness.³ Within a dark frame of golden flourishes is written in Dutch "Master, cut out this stone. My name is Lubbert das."⁴ Once again, text is employed but is secondary to the image, providing identification rather than narrative. Furthermore, the heavy Gothic lettering is quite reminiscent of the font used throughout manuscripts, evidencing scholar's belief in his early illumination education. It is clear that Bosch had by this time begun to play with symbols and to develop his peculiar language of iconography: a book and a funnel are suddenly deemed appropriate hats for the humorous critique of wayward nuns and scam surgeons. Yet still

³ The subject of the "quack physician" was very connected to Bosch's intimate relationship with the religious sect the Brotherhood of the Common Life. Gerard Groote, the Dutch preacher who founded the Common Life, described the pope in a letter to a friend as a malady in the head. He continued to depict mankind as inexperienced physicians attempting to solve the illness without fully understanding the cause. Kettelwell, Reverend S., *Thomas A Kempis and the Brothers of the Common Life, Volume I*, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1882), 149.

⁴ Dixon, Laurinda, *Bosch*, (New York: Phaidon Press Limited, 2003), 56.

no musical instrument has appeared in Bosch's work.

It wasn't until roughly 1490, with the creation of the Prado Tabletop (fig. 5.0), specifically the "Heaven" and "Judgment" tondos (figs. 5.2 and 5.3), that Bosch began to incorporate instruments into his visual narrative. Like the conventional portrayal of *The Crucifixion with Donor*, Bosch's early musical instruments behaved quite traditionally. They were subservient to the player and functioned as basic props. In both tondos the instruments are played by angels: two angels flank Christ, blasting trumpets to raise the dead for the Last Judgment, while a trio of angels welcome the good souls to Heaven with the harmonies of a harp, psaltery, and recorder. The "Judgment" tondo imitates the subject's particular formalism to the last detail. It is almost identical to the Master of Cleves own portrayal of Judgment in "The Mass of the Dead" (fig. 12.0). In both cases, Christ resides in the center of the scene, seated upon a throne of rainbows. The sword of Justice extends from one of his ears, the three-blossomed lily of purity stems from the other. Angels flank him from above, blasting their trumpets, raising the dead from cold slumber. The risen crawl from their graves, some turning their heads up to view Christ, the angels, and Heaven's gentry at the Savior's sides. Bosch's "Heaven" tondo follows a similarly traditional formula of angelic host welcoming naked souls⁵ through the cathedral gateway of Heaven. The formula for Judgment scenes is repeated throughout art history, being popularized by many great masters, including the likes of Rogier van der Weyden (1399-1464). Van der Weyden is credited as being one of the most influential of Netherlandish artists and produced a widely known *Last Judgment Altarpiece* (fig. 13.0), 1443 (Musée de l'Hotel-Dieu, Beaune, France). It is images like

⁵ The risen soul is traditionally depicted naked, distinguishing between the living, clothed soul, and the resurrected soul.

this that are the hallmarks of the age and certainly influenced subsequent artists, including Bosch. In fact, both Bosch's tondos of Heaven and Hell are quite reminiscent of van der Weyden's Judgment.

Despite his apparent adherence to convention, Bosch does begin to dabble in unsettling the scene through the inclusion of a particular character: a demon at the Gates of Heaven. Located to the far left of the "Heaven" tondo, a frog-like demon clasps the wrists of a woman, attempting to lure her to the underworld. She gazes out at the viewer, as if asking for his opinion, seemingly undecided of her own fate. One of Bosch's characteristics is his refusal to allow the viewer peace of mind. Unease is apparent in many of the *Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* segments, including "Superbia" (fig. 5.4), in which a vain woman gazes into a mirror she does not realize is held by a devil.

In addition to this unsettling of the scene, Bosch may have made another advancement in narrative complexity via the "Heaven" tondo's psaltery, which he might very well have employed for its associations with virtue and truth. The frog-demon, located so far to the left (leading toward the tondo of "Hell,") and so similar in color to the background of the tabletop, might go unnoticed. However, the angel playing the psaltery in the central trio glances slyly to one side and points the viewer in the direction of the demon, revealing the evil intrusion. It may be that Bosch chose the psaltery to be this angel's instrument because of its divine associations theorized by Joachim of Fiore.

Joachim (1135-1202) was an Italian abbot who believed that the psaltery, typically having three sides and a circular sound hole within the middle,⁶ was a perfect

⁶ In the fifteenth century instruments frequently varied in shape and size but kept the same name.

embodiment of the Holy Trinity.⁷ The three sides of the instrument represent the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, who embody one perfect entity, which is represented as a unity by the sound hole. The ten strings of the psaltery represent God and the nine choirs of angels.⁸ These choirs were created during the sixth century by the Areopagite Pseudo-Dionysius who divided “the celestial hierarchy” into “nine choirs whose essential task is to praise the Lord.”⁹ It was then that the angels officially became known as musicians outside of the pages of the Bible. (Though Pseudo-Dionysius only mentions song amongst the choir, there are various mentions of collections of instruments throughout the Bible, including for example Psalm 150.¹⁰) Joachim referred as well to Revelations 1:8, in which God said, “I am the Alpha and the Omega,”¹¹ and visualized the Alpha as a triangular form (the shape of the psaltery) and the Omega as a circular form (the shape of the sound hole).¹² Bosch’s psaltery is rectangular rather than triangular, and, although it is difficult to discern, it does not appear to have ten strings. Nonetheless, it is quite possible that Bosch, being an important member of influential society and the church, may have been familiar with Joachim’s theory of the divine character of the particular instrument. Although the abbot had lived a distance from the Netherlands, influences

⁷ The first members of the Brotherhood of the Common Life, the pre-Protestant sect to which Bosch belonged, made a living by copying texts (Kettlewell, Rev. S., *Thomas A Kempis and the Brothers of the Common Life, Volume II* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1882,) 46). While this is only a hypothesis, it is possible that the Brotherhood may have copied and owned Joachim’s publications as his work was currently in demand.

⁸ McGinn, Bernard, *The Calabrian Abbot*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1985), 163.

⁹ Wangermeé, Robert, *Flemish Music in Society in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, (Brussels: Editions Arcade, 1968), 194. These nine divisions are, from highest to lowest: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, the Dominions, the Virtues, the Powers, the Principalities, the Archangels, the Angels.

¹⁰ Praise the Lord./Praise God in his sanctuary;/Praise him in his mighty heavens./Praise him for his acts of power;/Praise him for his surpassing greatness. /Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,/Praise him with the harp and lyre, /Praise him with tambourine and dancing,/Praise him with the strings and flute,/ Praise him with the clash of cymbals,/Praise him with resounding cymbals./Let everything that has breath praise the Lord./Praise the Lord. (Psalm 150, NIV.)

¹¹ NIV.

¹² McGinn, 164.

traveled borders with great ease, particularly between Italy, France and the Netherlands.¹³ The rectangular four-cornered shape of the psaltery may mean that Bosch was interested in Joachimism, but preferred Saint Peter's "Quaternism," which extracted the perfect unity from the Trinity, resulting in a quaternity.¹⁴ Then again, it may be purely coincidental that Bosch provided the particular angel with the psaltery. Bosch may simply have adopted the use of the psaltery due to its appearance in other artists' works.

Various mid-to-late fifteenth-century artists employed musical instruments as important aesthetic aspects of their work. One of the earliest of them is Stefan Lochner (1400-1452), a German painter trained in the Flemish style and contemporary of Rogier van der Weyden. Lochner's own *Last Judgment* (fig. 14.0), 1435 (Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne, Germany,) is quite similar to van der Weyden's. Christ again hovers above the center on his rainbow throne, flanked by trumpeting angels. Located to the left, the early Gothic Gates of Heaven are nearly identical to van der Weyden's; to the right, the chaos of Hell consumes the naked sinners. However, many deviations from the typical Northern formula are visible in Lochner's painting. For one, Hell is not only teaming with the naked damned, but also horned beasts and fanged devils, not unlike the monsters of Bosch's realm. Furthermore, the trumpets of Judgment are not the only instruments depicted. At the Gates of Heaven stand a host of angels welcoming the good souls with divine music (fig. 14.1). To the right of the gate stands Saint Peter in a blue robe backed by four angels. The first angel plays a fiddle, the second a psaltery, and the

¹³ The Italians were in fact the first artists to place musician-angels outside of scenes of Heaven and Judgment, evidencing a small yet important outside influence on the musical instrument's rebellion against tradition. (Wangermeé, 194.)

¹⁴ McGinn, 164.

third and fourth appear to be singing. At the opposite side of the gate stand three angels, one strumming a lute, another a harp, and the last, mostly obscured figure plays a flute or recorder. Standing in the rooftop balcony is yet another collection of musical angels, playing the lute, portative organ, and a triangular (Joachimian) psaltery. The expansion of instruments included in the scene is derived from Psalm 150's choir of angels, as well as the singers and harpists spoken of in the Revelations, who made music for the 144,000 souls not condemned to Hell after the Apocalypse.¹⁵ These instruments, and their players of Christian text, function as literal and metaphorical visualizations of the harmonic existence, of the perfection for which man ought to strive. However, this innocent development in the inventory of depicted instruments seems to be the planted seed that led to the eventual blossom of Bosch's Hell-dwelling instruments. Various men had attempted to curtail the presence of the instrument throughout history. The great philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BC) blacklisted a number of instruments, (which will be further discussed in chapter three,) believing them to be too complex for the human player. During Bosch's own time, the church would not allow any instrument but the organ within its walls, believing it to be an emphatically Christian instrument. Precisely when this ban was placed is unclear; the Protestant reformist John Calvin (1509-1564) explains that "it is easy to understand the prejudices against [the banned instruments'] use in the worship" because so many instruments, including the pipe, tabret, and even the harp, "were associated so intimately with the sensual heathen cults, as well as with the wild revelries and shameless performances of the degenerate theater

¹⁵ "And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth." (Revelations 14:2-3, NIV.)

and circus, it is easy to understand the prejudices against their use in the worship."¹⁶ However, the deviant associations of these instruments were kept in check by the infallibly pure and Christian angel players, as demonstrated in Lochner's *Last Judgment*.

Although there are clear similarities between Bosch and Lochner's works, it is more likely that Lochner's influence made its way to Bosch through Hans Memling. Memling (1430-1494) was, like Lochner, German, but trained and worked in the Netherlands. He was a student of van der Weyden and breathed new substance into Heaven's instruments. Memling's *The Last Judgment* (fig. 15.0), 1467-71, (National Museum in Gdansk, Poland,) follows the typical Judgment formulation, inclusive of all of Lochner's musical and demonic details, but rendered in a hand very similar to van der Weyden's -- the very same central angel (Michael) weighs the souls upon its scales. However, Memling's Heaven (fig. 15.1) is much more akin to Lochner's than to van der Weyden's. Both Memling and Lochner executed their Heavens with great attention to realism and the emotion of human experience. Their angels greet the souls with touching compassion, embracing the souls in Lochner's panel, and clothing them in Memling's. Saint Peter is depicted more prominently in the newer panel, and in the same red robes found in Bosch's "Heaven" tondo. Atop Memling's white stone, Gothic cathedral, a very Lochner-like chorus of angels crowds the balconies. They play a much larger collection of instruments, indicating the rise of their pictorial importance, leading ever closer to Bosch's revolution. On the top balcony, the angels play, from left to right, the oboe, trumpet, bells, and portative organ. The lower level of balconies holds a trio of singers in the left tower, as well as a trio of harp, lute and fiddle in the right tower.

¹⁶ Pestell, Richard, "Medieval Art and the Performance of Medieval Music," *Oxford University Press*, Early Music ser., 15, no. 1 (February 1987), 57.

Perhaps the piece that most alerted Bosch to the significance of the instrument was Memling's grand scale *Christ as Salvador Mundi* (fig. 16.0), 1480's (Koninklijk Museum Voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp, Belgium). The triptych depicts a nearly scientific display of ten different musical instruments – eleven if voice is to be included – played by angels flanking Christ. The names of these instruments are, beginning from the outer edge of the left wing and moving inward: psaltery, tromba marina, lute, folded trumpet, treble shawm, and, beginning from the outer edge of the right wing: fiddle, harp, portative organ, folded trumpet and straight trumpet.¹⁷ Set against a plain background, nothing distracts from the angels and their carefully rendered instruments. They are robust and life size, allowing for unbelievable detail. The attention that Memling paid toward his instruments, and the robust scale in which he rendered them, elevates them *almost* to equality with his angels, and thus *almost* to the level of a character. He began to blur the distinction between prop and character, but stopped just before the instrument could gain Boschian independence.

Such attention to variety and exactitude had not been paid toward musical instruments since the twelfth century when Master Matteo sculpted the twenty-four Elders of the Apocalypse on the tympanum of Santiago de Compostela.¹⁸ They play a collection of five different instruments, including the harp, lute, fiddle, psaltery and symphona. All are rendered so perfectly that craftsmen have been able to build functional replicas based off of the sculptures alone.¹⁹ This tympanum is not a typical representation of twelfth-century sculpture, but of a unique visualization of the fourth and fifth chapters

¹⁷ Montague, Jeremy. "Musical Instruments in Hans Memling's Paintings." *Early Music* 35, no. 4 (November 2007), 505.

¹⁸ Havens Caldwell, Susan; Enrico, Eugene; Smeal, David, *And They All Played A New Song*, (The Oklahoma Foundation for the Humanities, 1989).

¹⁹ Caldwell; Enrico; Smeal.

from the Book of Revelations. The Elders are described as surrounded by singing angels and as playing harps only,²⁰ yet Master Matteo added four more instruments to his devoted orchestra. Perhaps this augmentation of the Biblical inventory of instruments implies that Santiago de Compostela, the most celebrated of the pilgrimage sites, located in northern Spain, celebrated God through an unusually elaborate orchestra. Whatever the contemporary reason was, the variety of instruments may very well have influenced subsequent artists, including Memling, Lochner, and Bosch, to expand upon the lone *kithera* (harp) mentioned in the Bible. The sculptures were indeed known through the European Christian realm, even three hundred years after it was made, due to the cathedral's fame as *the* pilgrimage destination. Although the gap between Master Matteo's work and Memling's own scientific study of instruments is quite extensive, the fact that Memling chose to depict so similar a collection reveals that the instruments' delayed evolution was once again in progression.

Memling arranged his instruments in *Christ as Salvator Mundi* according to chronology and in order of hierarchy. As previously mentioned, Pseudo-Dionysus divided the angels into nine choirs, thereby designating the angels as singers. According to art historian Robert Wangermeé, early images of musical angels depict them as singers only, without instruments. The trumpet, “an instrument of glory, summons or magic,” was the first physical instrument to be visualized amongst the angels. It was not until the twelfth century that a variety of instruments was depicted, as demonstrated at Santiago de Compostela.²¹ Interestingly, the arrangement of the instruments in *Christ as Salvatore Mundi* follows this singer-trumpet-variety chronology: Christ stands erect in

²⁰ NIV, 5:8.

²¹ Wangermeé, 194.

the center, flanked within the same panel by two trios of singing angels -- the first of Heaven's musicians. Beyond the singers stand a duo of trumpeters, mirrored in both outer panels, followed by three "modern" angels playing stringed instruments. The hierarchy of the instruments reflects the same pattern. The horn belonged to the noble hunters, while trumpets, "used for war and celebration, commanding in character and virile, could be played only by specialized minstrels."²² Thus, brass instruments belonged to the top of the hierarchy. Stringed instruments, such as the harp, are known today as *the* angelic instrument, and do indeed appear in the hands of many angels, but the prestige of the stringed instrument had begun to dwindle by the fifteenth century.²³ This is most likely due to the fact that the lust-inspiring lute is a member of the same instrument group. It became the favored instrument in the courts and, due to the growing ability for people to play the instrument themselves, the lute lost its elitist status.²⁴ Furthermore, the lute had recently undergone an upgrade and now "a melody line and accompaniment could be played on it simultaneously," allowing for impromptu enjoyment of non-religious music.²⁵ Innovations like this are responsible in part for the renaissance of secular music. However, it is also because of this new ability to indulge in music-for-pleasure, rather than music-for-devotion, that the lute began to acquire a romantic temperament. As the middle ages held a suspicion for all pleasurable things, the lute became a symbol not only of romance but also of the sin of Lust, and began to lower the prestige of the entire stringed category.

²² Wangermeé, 208.

²³ Wangermeé, 209

²⁴ Wangermeé, 210.

²⁵ MENC, The National Association for Music and Education. "A Panopoly of Instruments for Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque Music." *Music Educators Journal* 65, no. 9 (May-June 1979,) 38.

In an unexpected, Bosch-like move, Memling exploits the developing character of the lute to attract his audience into the scene of *Christ as Salvator Mundi*. Seventeen characters stand within the triptych, yet only one breaks the barrier between the viewer and the panel, and gazes out of the scene. Surprisingly, this lone figure is not Christ but the lute player (fig. 16.1). Memling exploits the instrument's seductive qualities by putting it into the hands of the only angel that connects with the audience, attracting the viewer into the image via calculated allure. Essentially, Memling employs an image of his own pop culture to attract his audience. This tactic is very similar to the one Bosch uses in his "Heaven" tondo, regarding the psaltery, roughly a decade later. Yet while Memling breaks the barrier between man and the sublime, Bosch breaks the safety wall between man and evil, leaving his audience far more exposed.

Two

THE TRIPTYCHS: HEAVEN LOST

As Heaven and its music grew more flamboyant so too did Hell and its horrors, resulting in greater polarity between the supernatural worlds. Curiously, these two distant realms collapsed into each other once Bosch put his hands to them. Heaven completely disappears from Bosch's triptychs. Its angels and instruments appear scattered through Earth and Hell, as well as through Heaven's replacement, the Garden of Eden. His own *The Last Judgment* (fig. 1.0), painted sometime after 1482, (Gemaldegalerie of the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna,)²⁶ follows the usual format (i.e. a central panel containing Christ seated on a rainbow throne, etc.) but does not include Heaven. In its place stands a panel of Eden displaying the successive story of the birth of Eve, Lucifer's temptation of her and Adam, and their subsequent exile from Paradise – all of which highlight humanity's tendency toward error. Rather than positioning earth between the two fates of the human race (Heaven and Hell), suggesting that man has a choice in his own end, Bosch arranges a timeline indicating that the soul is born, sins, and unavoidably ends in Hell. It is as if Bosch turned the altarpiece on its side, shook the contents of Heaven into Earth and Hell, then snapped Heaven off completely, only to replace it with humanity's errant beginning. This removal of the high harmonic realm and redistribution of the tools of power (musical instruments) is the true beginning of Bosch's revolution.

This very removal of the angels from power (and Heaven) is depicted in the sky of the "Eden" panel (fig. 1.1). God resides within an egg-like aureole amidst a gathering of menacing clouds. Beneath him, within the roiling cloud, a battle of the angels ensues.

²⁶ Judging by the stage in his style and use of iconography, *The Last Judgment* was probably created after *The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* in 1490.

This battle is the expulsion of Lucifer, the prince of angels, and his rebel army. It was Lucifer who, inspired by Envy of Adam, ruined mankind with the fruit of knowledge. As the Rebel Angels fall, cast out by the good angels, they mutate into the monstrous beasts that become the minions of the underworld.²⁷ This Judeo-Christian legend reveals the now mostly forgotten history between demons and musical instruments. They had, long ago, been the angelic players themselves. They could only have been too happy to reclaim so noble an occupation in their new forms, unhindered by harmonic values and regulations. Without the balance of harmony, Bosch's earth falls into a dark, medieval turmoil that is scarcely discernable from that of Hell's. The only distinction is earth's inclusion of a sky, which is filled by the stock-figures of the Last Judgment. Below Christ, Hell's creatures roam the Apocalyptic landscape which is, perhaps, the Valley of Jehoshaphat described in the Old Testament.²⁸ They have equipped themselves with oversized knives, arrows, and a new weapon formerly nonexistent in their realm – music.

Atop the flat-roof of a pub, in the left side of earth, two risen souls have become intoxicated by demon's music (fig. 1.2). A nude man lounges upon a scarlet bed, mimicking the female nude of art history. Beside him a blue creature blows a trumpet, the instrument that once summoned the dead, and dances to his own morbid jig. Despite the Judgment subject matter, the devil's trumpet is not the classic golden instrument of the angels. It is a perversion of the trumpet of Judgment. It is a part of the creature's own blue-hued anatomy, protruding from his face as would a snout. His instrument does not awaken consciousness in the dead, but intoxicates the soul, lulling him into a vulnerable, dream-like state.

²⁷ Bosing, Walter, *Bosch: The Complete Works*, (London: Taschen, 2010,) 34.

²⁸ Joel 3:2,12, NIV.

Lost in the seduction of the music, the reclining man is completely unaware of the reptilian creatures clamoring toward his body. He perhaps is not even aware of the music, but only of another form of consumable pleasure: the naked woman before him. The woman strides across the rooftop, past an armed dragon, who turns his hideous head to watch her. A lizard-like creature succeeds in crawling up the woman's legs, and gnaws on her genitals²⁹ -- a typically Boschian punishment for vanity -- yet the woman appears to notice none of the evils about her. She strides on in a trance-like state toward a crouching ape,³⁰ who strums a lute above his head. The apes' ungainly, improper bearing of the instrument provides a stark contrast between the aristocratically poised angels of Memling's realm. Bosch's music is not the music of devotion, but of discord and sin (Lust), which is a melody the woman cannot resist. He parodies -- literally apes -- the former occupation of the angels in a most grotesque manner. He molests the harmonic purity of the instrument.

Although the instruments have not yet progressed to the point of independence from the players, they have acquired new power over the human body. In the hands of angels, the instruments could only create beauty. In the hands of devils, as demonstrated by the blue creature and ape, the instruments have obtained the ability to control mankind. They have acquired the deviant characteristics of the devils that play them in the same way that they acquired their original angelic associations.

A third, somewhat musical being crouches at the far corner of the rooftop. The

²⁹This image of a frog gnawing upon a woman's genitals is in fact a common medieval punishment for both Lust and Vanity, and appeared in various mediums of art, including the twelfth-century porch relief at Moissac abbey. The image appears again in Bosch's own *The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*, "Hell" tondo (fig. 5.1), 1485, neatly labeled as *Superbia* (Vanity).

³⁰Apes are traditional figures of immorality in medieval art (Jansen, H.W., *Apes and ape lore in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, (London: University of London, 1952,) 11.

creature, bearing the torso of a reptile and the head of man, is what was known as a gryllos. He wears a red pot atop his head, which appears something like a turban, perhaps alluding to Christian prejudice toward the infidel Turk. Where his ears ought to be appear two cymbal-like objects, apparently thrust into his skull by thin rods. If these are in fact cymbals, they present an interesting concept: that the creature loses one of his fundamental senses (hearing) because of his own anatomical instrument. Although the cymbals are a part of the hybrid's anatomy, it seems that they are as much of a hindrance to him as they are to the human souls. This may also be an early instance in which the instrument begins to dominate the player. However, as cymbals do not appear elsewhere in Bosch's work it is difficult to judge the discs. They may instead be shields, blocking his human ears from the effects of the music, suggesting that he is at risk to the effects of the music due to his human half.

Amongst the rampant chaos, Bosch includes a minute ode to the missing Heaven. Just beyond the musical rooftop a lone angel strides and points westward, where Heaven once stood, and brings a fortunate soul with him. The fact that the rooftop and this angel are so close to Heaven's former location reveals that Bosch's revolution has not yet traveled far from old ways. He still associates the left side of the painting with music and angels, despite his enthusiasm to destroy convention. This single instance of salvation in a realm of uncontained wickedness provides a startling contrast to Memling's grandiose visions of Heaven. Bosch makes available neither gates, nor velvets, nor harmony. Tragically, his duo may very well never arrive at salvation: a bowman crouches behind them, aiming at their backs.

Although the musical instruments gravitate toward the left of the central panel,

some music has fallen into the realm of “the devil and his angels”³¹. Like the “Eden” panel, “Hell” is arranged through a medieval stacking of many scenes in a single frame. Although the passage of time is immediately legible in “Eden,” it is not so in “Hell.” The story of Adam and Eve begins in the foreground with Eve’s birth and works upwards, ending in their exile. While the chaos of “Hell” is physically closer to the surface of the panel in the foreground, there is no chronological story for the eye to follow. It is unclear whether or not the story progresses through time and space, or whether the mania occurs all at once. There may in fact be no structured passage of time as we understand it. Consequentially, there can be no structure for music, an art composed entirely within the mathematical laws of time. Thus, there can be no harmony, only deviation from the divine structure that the instruments once represented.

Within the very center of the “Hell” panel, crouched atop the exotic chimney of the red tent, a creature blows a trumpet (fig. 1.4). The tent resembles the tents of Bosch’s nobles in the “Luxuria” segment of *The Seven Deadly Sins and Four Last Things* (fig. 5.5). A demon within peeks about the curtained opening, wearing a noblewoman’s headdress. A crowd of wailing souls floods within and about the tent, dragged there by Hell’s beasts. It is a scene of contrived revelry, an insufferable party of Hell’s creatures imitating courtly festivities. The trumpet blown atop the tent is dressed in a crested black flag, the court style used to announce the entrance of noble guests. However, no practiced page sounds this trumpet. The creature is in fact nothing more than an ass and arms, sounding the trumpet with his anus. This image is at once basely humorous and cruelly taunting. It goads the souls who once sought to enjoy luxury and transitory delights. It

³¹ Matthew 25:41, NIV.

goads the angels as well, whose sweet breath has been replaced with the foul air of a demon's rear. This is also a cultural reference to one of the most notorious "painters" of Hell, to Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) and his farting devil.³² The reference to the writer's *Divine Comedy* seems to continue just to the right of this devil, in the case of the Bosch's giants. Dante describes encountering what appears to be a collection of towers but are in fact giants, buried in the soil of Hell "from the navel downward."³³ Dante's description of one these giants, called Nimrod, could easily substitute as the description of Bosch's own hatted and portly figure, just beyond the green knight. In each case he manages to keep his face from sinking through the soil, as well as his "shoulders and chest, much of his belly, and both arms that hung at his sides," and possesses an incredible horn. Nimrod lacks the ability of intelligent speech, yet he is able to blast his horn louder than the clap of thunder.³⁴ Bosch's giant appears rather more sedate than Dante's, with a horn held like a pipe between his teeth. The characters are so alike it seems impossible to be a mere coincidence. While Bosch renders his instruments quite small within the scheme of torments, the fact that he included the Nimrod-like figure indicates a particular interest in music in Hell. The *Divine Comedy* describes nine neatly ordered circles of Hell,³⁵ each filled with fantastically detailed torments. However, music appears in but one of the circles, in the Malebolge, and while countless souls contribute to the constant wailing, only three figures possess a literal instrument. Considering that Bosch extracted one of these three figures out of so grand an inventory, he must have felt a particular attraction to the musical realm of Hell, which had been extensively explored through literature but

³² Bosing, Walter, *Bosch: The Complete Works*, (London: Taschen, 2010,) 35.

³³ Dante, *Inferno*, XXXI, 32.

³⁴ Dante, *Inferno*, XXXI, 10, 70-79.

³⁵ See fig. 4.6 for a map of Dante's Hell.

remained uncharted ground in painting.

Beneath the red tent and the trumpeting buttocks stands a rudimentary stone structure, not unlike the pub depicted in the “Earth” panel. Atop the structure stands a beaked creature in robes of the same green of many of Hell’s bizarre beasts (including the giant knight). In the beaked-creature’s hands he holds a bowl, perhaps in further imitation of a court’s feast. At his hip he wears a drum as if it were a sheathed sword, indicative of the instrument’s evolving identity. In the lower level niche another demon is perceived, with legs folded up nearly to his face in order to fit within the cramped space. He holds before him, somewhat above his head, a golden harp, which protrudes from the niche. Although the harp was, as previously mentioned, a member of the same category of the lute, which was in the act of falling from grace, the harp managed to maintain associations of virtuous harmony, perhaps due to its prominence within the Bible. Here Bosch exploits the harp’s associations to state that there is, literally, no room for harmony, as it does not fit within cramped space with the demon. Just below the harpist appears an entire group of musicians who have taken a female soul as their victim; this section is known as “The Infernal Concert” (fig. 1.5, close up fig. 1.6). The woman is seated upon the ground in the embrace of a black monster in a cardinal’s cap, referencing Bosch’s distrust in members of the clergy. His sentiments were not uncommon amongst his society, and appear in various of Bosch’s works, most notably within *The Ship of Fools* (fig. 6.0), 1475-1505, (Louvre, Paris, France). His sentiments reflected those of the *Devotio Moderna*, and manifest themselves in a graphic critique of the hypocritical clergy leading their congregation astray through song, which will be further examined in chapter three. *The Last Judgment*’s devil cardinal indicates the tune and lyrics of the

dissonant song in an open book before him. Behind, another green-cloaked creature leans forward to read the hymns, a lute tucked under his arm. Beside him, a flute is played by another ass, while a fourth demon plays his oboe-tail. Forcing this woman to sing may initially not seem so terrible a punishment, no matter how foul the melody, but this is not merely an instance of an unappealing tune. Harmony, and the correct achievement of it, is a metaphor for correct living, a theory that will be elaborated upon in chapter three. The intentional aim for dissonance is not merely unpleasant, but destructive to the soul. Without the pleasure of the body to distract from the suffering of the soul, the soul undergoes excruciating torment. Thus, in the afterlife, these instruments, having direct access to the unprotected soul, may be as dangerous as any whetted blade.³⁶

Both of these musical scenes take place upon and outside of very basic structures. The emphatic simplicity of these buildings seems to be a subversive comment upon Scholasticism. Scholasticism exalted logic and order, not only concerning religion but throughout all aspects of life. This theology manifested itself in architecture through the Gothic style, which climbed higher and support greater weight than architecture previously allowed due to a structure based on logic. Flying buttresses, rib vaults, running arcades, pointed arches and the like are capable of flowing seamlessly from one into another, supporting the weight of one and relying upon the strength of the next, which Scholastics compared to the flow and support of intelligent argument and reason. Gothic architecture appears in the Heavens of many Northern Renaissance artists, including the previously mentioned works of van der Weyden, Lochner and Memling. Thus it seems that Bosch's depictions of emphatically anti-Gothic structures in Earth and Hell suggest

³⁶Metaphor to be expanded upon when discussing *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* triptych.

that there is no divine logical order in these two spheres. Consequently, the surrounding musical performances, which ought to exist in a similarly Scholastic order of time, also exist in chaos.

The Last Judgment (fig. 1.0) demonstrates a great advancement in the role of the musical instrument, yet it would be some time before the revolution would be fully realized in *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (fig. 4.1). *The Haywain Triptych* (fig. 2.0), 1485-1490, exhibits another phase in the instrument's progression. Like *The Last Judgment*, *The Haywain* represents a Heavenless universe. It begins with the story of Fall of Man and the banishment of the Rebel Angels, ending in the realm of Hell, where the single musical instrument, a hunting horn, is sounded to announce the realm-wide hunt for the human souls. It is between these two panels, in the panel of earth (fig. 2.1), that Bosch exercises the new powers of the musical instrument and calls greater attention to the new limits of the angel.

Divested of his luxury as Heaven's musician, the earth-bound angel's power is reduced to one function: prayer. Seated atop the great haywain, the over-large focus of the central panel, kneels the angel. Before him sits a quartet of three humans and a demon, who throw the angel's silent new role into contrast. Below him, throwing themselves heedlessly beneath the wheels of the haywain, mankind sacrifices body and soul for the gain of evanescent wealth -- the latter of which is represented by the iconological haywain. The scene is derived from a Netherlandish song from 1470 which explains "...that God has heaped up good things on the earth like a stack of hay [*hoy* in Dutch] for the benefit of all men, but that each man wants to keep it all to himself. But

since hay is of little value, it also symbolizes the worthlessness of all worldly gain.”³⁷ It is a song of Greed (*Avaricia*) in which hay is employed as a metaphor for items of transient value.³⁸

Within this new Boschian world, undergoing the early throes of revolution, the angel is encompassed in every possible manner by the musical power now lost to him. Indeed, an underlying theme of *The Haywain* is the humiliation of the subordinate angel. In the case of Bosch’s *Last Judgment*, the angel had indeed lost ownership of the musical instruments. However, the instruments had been obtained by an equally powerful, supernatural race. The fact that mankind, the constant fools of the universe, have now claimed the instrument in *The Haywain* is nearly a greater offense to the angels than losing the instruments to the enemy. An even crueler humiliation is made through the physiognomy of the demon-member of the haywain’s quartet (which is physically quite similar to the blue demon of *The Last Judgment*). Riding atop the haywain, the demon plays a blue trumpet that has fused with his own body (fig. 2.2), forming a greater player-instrument connection than the angels ever obtained. Upon his head rests a crown and from his shoulders sprout great wings, directly parodying the likeness of the angel. Even the color of the demon’s body matches the blue hue of the angel’s gown. He is a perverse inversion of the angelic character, who kneels at the opposite end of the haywain. While the angel obtained his power, he created music for the devotion of God, whereas the demon employs this power to create music for distraction from God. His illicit music does not result in the complete inversion of the purpose of divine music in

³⁷ Bosing, 45.

³⁸ “It’s all hoey,” meaning “it’s all worthless,” originated from the Dutch language. (Tuttle, Virginia G., “Bosch’s Image of Poverty,” *The Art Bulletin* 63, no. 1 (March 1981): 91.

the sense that it does not result in the devotion of evil. Evidently, men do not need to be *led* to evil to partake in it; they merely need to be *distracted* from God. The men and women who throng the haywain are not conscious of its wicked nature. According to previous summary of the song that inspired this piece, the people may even be under the impression that they are striving to obtain God's gifts. Yet they are blinded by Greed and Lust, ignorant of the fact that the wagon's golden bounty is but hay. They are blind as well to the fact that the haywain is being driven not by cattle but by the Devil's minions, by hybrids of man and beast. Indeed, the course of the wagon progresses directly into Hell, literally into the panel of Hell itself. Only the angel and demons are aware of the fateful end of the human race.

This image of the haywain prevailed for quite some time, appearing in various artistic forms, as well as in a parade float in Antwerp in 1563.³⁹ A contemporary description of the float reveals that it directly imitated this image of Bosch, including the blue demon musician, which had acquired, at least by 1563, if not within Bosch's own time, the name Deceitful.⁴⁰ Accordingly, it is a tune of deception that the demon must be playing, a tune in which the human musicians have eagerly joined. The musicians rest between the angel and demon (mimicking the traditional triptych formula). They are comprised of a male lute-player, a singing woman, who reads from a sheet of music she holds before herself, the lute-player, and a third singing figure who kneels between them. Even the demon Deceitful has turned his head to gaze upon the composition, although it is likely he already knows the tune.

Behind the trio, in response to the strumming of the lute and sweet voices, two

³⁹ Bosing, 45.

⁴⁰ Bosing, 46.

lovers are lost in Lust; their sin is perceived by a Peeping Tom behind a neighboring tree. Considering that the result of this deceptive tune is Lust, it must be concluded that the melody is no more pure than that which the demon and ape played atop the tavern in *The Last Judgment*. Perhaps it was this same tune that first alerted and attracted the hoards of people to follow the course of the haywain. These people comprise every level of contemporary society: royalty, clergy, aristocracy, common folk and peasants flock to the haywain and its music. The majority of these men and women throw themselves upon the slow-moving haywain, clutching at the dry straws with their fists or prodding it with long pitchforks. Many have become trampled beneath their fellows-in-mania and become crushed beneath the wagon's wheels. One man has fallen from Greed (*Avaricia*) directly into Wrath (*Ira*), and cuts another man's throat at the edges of the foray.⁴¹

Curiously, not all of mankind responds to the situation of the haywain in the same fashion. A large portion of society does not succumb so completely to the allure of straw, but responds more directly to the song of deceit. Although the haywain is the visual focal point of the image, the primary subject matter is the action of deceit. Deceit is embodied by nearly every aspect of the image. It is embodied by the blue demon, by his song, by the haywain's illusion of wealth. It is carried even further along the bottom edge of the image, where a collection of the opportunistic have set up shop for the very profession of deception. To the far left, a man in a tall top hat leans forward and touches the arm of a small boy. This hat is the costume of a conjurer, a man who earns his living through swindling. He sets up shop on street corners and at town fairs, luring in fools who wish

⁴¹As evidenced in the circular formation of *The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* (fig. 5.0), the submission to one sin inherently results in the submission to another, beginning a brutal and unending cycle. E.g., the indulgence in *Luxuria* (fig. 5.5) inherently results in the indulgence of *Gula* – gluttony for sweet fruits and intoxicating wines.

to see a trick. As he performs, ensnaring the attention of his audience, his assistant sneaks his hands into the pockets of the unwitting -- a scene depicted in Bosch's own *The Conjurer* (fig. 17.0), 1475-1505 (Musée Municipal in St.-Germain-en-Laye). It is likely that the boy the conjurer of *The Haywain* has rested his hand upon is not a victim of the swindler's but his nimble assistant in trickery. Beyond them, a woman washes the buttocks of her baby and a pig rests in the mud. These are both Saturnine symbols, one referencing feces, the other representing the planet's associated animal.⁴² Those born under the sign of Saturn – “the Force of Evil”⁴³ – are born into the melancholic temperament, the temperament most prone to fall into the seduction of dark fantasy. To quote Laurinda Dixon, an art historian who delved relatively extensively into the musical realm of Hieronymus Bosch: “...the Devil loves to insinuate himself into the melancholic humor, as being a material well suited for his mocking deceptions.”⁴⁴ Fifteenth-century society believed very strongly in the art of astrology, and thus would have immediately recognized Bosch's temperamental references, assisting them in a more immediate understanding of *The Haywain's* primary subject matter.

Beyond, a quack dentist has set up office. Dentists, along with physicians and chemists, were generally distrusted during the middle ages. As all three professions remained rather mysterious and unexplored to the common fifteenth-century man, he was an easy subject of their dishonesty. The miniature dentist's office, set up along the roadside, somewhat resembles another of Bosch's works, *The Extraction of the Stone of Madness* (fig. 11.0). Previously introduced in chapter one, the painting visualizes the

⁴² Dixon, 264.

⁴³ Francis, Anne F., (New York: Exposition Press, 1980,) 31.

⁴⁴ Dixon, 267.

attempt to cheat one's way to divine knowledge. It portrays an errant doctor extracting wisdom in the form of a golden flower from the brain of Lubbert, the stock character fool. Essentially, the image narrates a story between a false doctor and a deceived simpleton, an image that perfectly parallels *The Haywain's* dentist and patient.

Just past the dentist's table stands the most interesting member of the artful deceivers: a man dressed in imitation of Deceitful. He stands directly beneath the blue demon, dressed in a jesterly costume of the same blue hue. In his hands he holds a bagpipe, the symbol of male genitalia,⁴⁵ which nearly matches the blue of his ensemble. He is held on a thin leash, and turns his head as if listening to the woman who controls the other end, who happens to be a nun. Here again is a manifestation of Bosch's distrust of the clergy. Kneeling and with hand out in gesticulation, the nun seems to be directing her liveried fool in his duties. It appears that, due to his costume and possession of an instrument, he is meant to imitate the demon Deceitful and lure the easily-deceived audience to the benefit of the clerical members. As a leashed possession of the nun's, this bagpiper holds the role of a dog. The image of a dog typically implies the sentiment of loyalty, however Bosch's symbology is far more esoteric than that. This demon-imitator's role as the nun's dog is likely a reference to a popular trope used in "late medieval Passion texts and illustrations... refer[ing] to Christ's tormentors as dogs."⁴⁶ By luring mankind to his deception, the bagpiper lures them to commit the sins for which Christ sacrificed his life. Above the parade of unconscious crime, Christ looks down upon those who caused his agony, wounded palms turned out as if in disbelief.

⁴⁵ Ausoni, Alberto, *Music in Art*, (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2009,) 137.

⁴⁶ Silver, Larry, "God in the Details: Bosch and Judgment(s)," *The Art Bulletin* 83, no. 4 (December 2001), 92.

This is the Christ of Sorrows, the image of Christ most frequently used by the *Devotio Moderna*. Even the nuns, wedded to Christ in spirit, offend Him, tempting those they ought to save. It is unclear as to what exactly it is that the nun and her fellow sisters are selling. However, as they possess no items for trade, yet are in the act of filling a great sack with wealth (hay), it may be that they are seeking to sell indulgences, which was one of the clergy's greatest scams. This is particularly plausible as their labor ensues before an over-indulgent (fat) monk, the clerical member who practiced the selling of indulgences.

The Haywain marks a pivotal point in the revolution of the musical instrument, documenting the instrument's transference into the hands of not only the supernatural demons, but also the errant human race. Additionally, the triptych exhibits the instrument's ability to exert control by altering the fate of the human figures through the song of deception, whereas *The Last Judgment's* instruments appear only to have enticed the already-damned.

Bosch's subsequent triptych, *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* (fig. 3.0), 1500, abandons the traditional subject matter even further than did *The Haywain*. It depicts not the sequential fall of man, but the episodic tale of the tormented Saint Anthony, a saint whose perfect piety provoked the wrath of the demons. This triptych delves even further into iconology and cultural history than his previous work. It speaks not merely of a concern for broken morality, but also of a specific malady of the body and mind. The fifteenth-century Netherlands suffered from a particular infection called ergot, a mold that grew in damp grain. When baked, this mold transformed into the psychedelic drug

LSD, which resulted in horrific hallucinations of beasts⁴⁷ and a fire-like burning sensation of the limbs, as well as infections of the flesh, which often advanced to gangrene.⁴⁸ The fire-like sensations and psychedelic monsters were compared to the torments that Saint Anthony underwent at the hands of the spiteful demons, seeking to sway the saint from his loyalty to God. Ergot poisoning was known at the time as “Saint Anthony’s fire,” and it was to him that the sufferers prayed for relief. *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* exhibits the life of the saint as seen through the eyes of someone suffering from ergotism. The monsters around him seem to represent two indistinguishable categories of devils, one of which is the very real hallucinations that the poisoned encountered. The second represent the demons that tortured Saint Anthony.⁴⁹ They wrecked physical havoc upon him, which is demonstrated in the sky of the triptych’s left panel (fig. 3.1), but is more fully realized in a popular print by Martin Schongauer (1448-1491) (fig. 3.6) made in the 1470’s. The demons also attempted to break the saint’s connection to God through emotional and psychological deceptions. In the middle-left of the right panel a bathing woman stands before the saint, holding her hand before her genitalia. Her ploy of shame is negated by the fact that she stands within the rather vaginal opening of a dead tree, draped in a silk the color of Lust (scarlet). She is the Devil-Queen who came in disguise and lured Saint Anthony into a world of illusions and false charity. Yet, when she attempted to seduce the saint he realized that she was

⁴⁷Bosing, 86.

⁴⁸Due to the gangrene infections, many victims of ergot poisoning were forced to have their limbs amputated. In preparation for the Last Judgment, which society was convinced was rapidly approaching, hospitals (Anonite monasteries) hung the amputated limbs in the doorways so that the resurrected might return to collect their missing members. Such an image is depicted in fig. 4.5, a woodcut from 1445. (Dixon, 181.)

⁴⁹The first *Vitae* of Saint Anthony was written by a contemporary of his, Saint Athanasius, a monk who lived with Saint Anthony for some time. A copy of his writings was first produced in the Netherlands in 1490, a decade before Bosch’s triptych. (Francis, 27).

but another evil.⁵⁰ As seen in Bosch's panel, the saint has turned his face from the Devil-Queen, refusing her temptations. Interestingly, his gaze lands upon a trumpeting fool with a sausage dangling from his instrument before his own face. The presence of so many demons does not necessarily mean that Satan has overpowered God, but that "God permitted Satan to send tribulations to men for the good of their souls. God allows the Devil to attack the saint... 'so that by outward temptation [he] may grow in grace.'"⁵¹ It was, of course, Saint Anthony's growth in grace that so irritated the devils. However, it seems that figures within Bosch's images do not succeed so well in denying temptation.

One member of the easily tempted is the trumpeter of the right panel (fig. 3.3). He could be a minion of the She-Devil, a hallucination, or merely a mortal in foolish clothing, it is unclear. What is clear is that he has become entranced with both the instrument and the sausage dangling from. The end of the instrument, which may in fact be a separate horn thrust into a trumpet, is smoking, cooking the sausage, cultivating decadent scents. The player is dominated by his hunger for the sausage (*Gula*). He raises the instrument to an unnatural angle so that he might gaze upon the bit of meat with greater ease. His cheeks are filled with air, clearly in the act of blowing into the instrument. Indeed it seems that he must blow in order to keep the fire burning inside the horn, in order to roast his current fixation to perfection. He is like a base horse, following a carrot at the end of a stick, and the manipulative driver is the instrument itself. The man is no longer in control. He has succumbed to the level of a fool through his submission to sin, thereby allowing the empowered instrument to take complete advantage of him. The trumpet has, literally and metaphorically, turned back upon him.

⁵⁰ Bosing, 82. [Original sources "The Lives of the Fathers" and "The Golden Legend."]

⁵¹ Saint Augustine, *City of God*, xx, 8.

Interestingly, it seems that the trumpet has trapped its victim not through aural senses, but through the false promise of olfactory and gustatory senses, acknowledging the instrument's desire to evolve from its traditional function.

A second gryllos creature, located in the middle-left of the left panel (fig. 3.1, for close up fig. 3.8), also demonstrates a submission to his instrument. He is without arms or torso, being merely a pair of booted legs, tailed buttocks, and capped head. Despite his challenging physicality, he is bent forward, cheeks full, striving rather compulsively to play a set of bagpipes. As with so many of Bosch's images, this one bears a particular allusion to sexuality. The bagpipe is, as previously mentioned, an image of male genitalia, thus a symbol of masculine power and dominance. This creature, rendered so grotesquely and powerlessly, yet with the visage of a man, seems to strive to dominate the instrument and (re)claim a masculine identity. However, his expression of frustration reveals his inability to dominate the bagpipe. The chanter (finger piece) knocks him about the knees, mocking that which is not there (both the hands to play it and the sexual organ of power.) The musical instrument is no longer submissive to the player, quite the opposite, and it seems it has become somewhat sentient due to its goading nature and refusal of power.

Within the same panel, a trio sings beneath a bridge, a location so often attributed to goblins of ill intent. Atop it cross two Anonite monks and a commoner⁵² carrying Saint Anthony, who has fallen unconscious, perhaps weary from the devils' torments. The saint's hand points directly to the head of the devil holding the sheet of music, who

⁵² According to Bosing, the commoner may be a self-portrait of Bosch. This association with the Anonite monks, and in the assistance of the saint himself, enforces Bosch's identity as a good man, not, as anachronistic historians believed, as a heretic.

bears a rather joyful expression on his sallow face. It seems that Saint Anthony is attempting to reveal, even unconsciously, the presence of dissonance. Dissonance is, of course, the failure to live harmoniously, i.e. properly. As Saint Anthony is still living within the presence of song, he and his aids undergo no bodily pain, though he appears to be somewhat aware of the assault to his soul.

A second instance of song and a quartet of instruments appears within the grand central panel (fig. 3.4). The manic stylistic manner in which Bosch rendered this image is clearly a painting made later in his career, when his predilection for visual clamor was near its peak. The panel is crowded with minutely detailed figures, again reflecting the medieval fear of empty space, but is paired with a modern understanding of perspective in distant landscape. The noise of the figures entertains the eye any place it lands, yet the focus of the scene is clearly upon the central stage of a ruined building (fig. 3.5). A party of nobility gathers about a table bearing a decanter and distributes the beverage amongst themselves. Although this is a gathering of the upper class, it is not the typical frivolous party. The drink they are consuming is not alcohol, but a tonic known as the holy vintage, which was the most trusted remedy for ergot poisoning.⁵³ The tonic was made from distilled mandrake root, which soothed the pain of Saint Anthony's fire, but resulted in a second round of hallucinations. The distilled root was widely available, but the most powerful form of the remedy, the holy vintage, was not. This rarer remedy was served by monastic followers of Saint Anthony, the Anonites, but once a year on the

⁵³ Both Dixon and art historian Jacques van Lennep argue that this communion is not the "black mass" previous authors have supposed to be, stating that "the scene reflects the healing ritual of the holy vintage as seen through hallucinating eyes." They cite the surgically amputated foot before Saint Anthony as evidence of medical practice, and explain that the shallow dish in the hand of the saint's neighbor as being particular to the serving of the vintage. (Dixon, "Bosch's 'St. Anthony Triptych' --An Apothecary's Apotheosis," *Art Journal*, Vol. 44, No. 2, Art and Science: Part I, Life Sciences (Summer, 1984,)) 122.

Feast of Ascension. It was considered exceptionally powerful because it was poured over the actual bones of Saint Anthony himself.⁵⁴ Victims of the poisoning would make pilgrimage to the select Anonite monasteries that provided the remedy, which was distributed in small drops only to the most severely afflicted. Although ergot poisoning affected all classes, the attendants of Bosch's holy vintage communion appear to be mostly comprised of the wealthy. Only one peasant is present, and he appears on the outskirts of the communion, as if excluded. It would seem that these nobles have succumbed to Greed (*Avaricia*) and Extravagance (*Luxuria*) and purchased not a few drops of the vintage, but full goblets and saucers worth's for private consumption. The hallucinations of their illness become manifest in their physiognomies: A man without arms or torso appears beside a nun, balancing a goblet on his knee; a cloaked figure behind the apparent hosts of the communion bears a beak-like trumpet, which smokes, alluding to the inner fire that tortures him; neighboring him stands a woman who has lost her color entirely, in both skin and clothing, and closes her fingers around a small mandrake apple;⁵⁵ across the table a man, holding a lute beneath his arm and just approaching the gathering, bears the face of a pig. This aristocrat-pig is a highly intriguing character of multiple interpretations. Firstly, he is an aristocratic pig, which blatantly comments on the piggish, i.e. gluttonous, disposition of the over-indulgent wealthy. The pig is, as mentioned in reference to *The Haywain*, a symbol of Saturn, the planet of evil, and of melancholia, the temperament of fantasy. The same planetary associations are perfectly applicable in this scenario of melancholia

⁵⁴ Dixon, 182.

⁵⁵ The mandrake apple was also employed in the medical response to ergotism. Its juices possess anesthetic qualities, and were used to put patients to sleep before the amputation of infected limbs. Interestingly, lying almost directly beneath the white lady, toward the front of the stage, rests a small, disembodied foot on a white handkerchief. (Dixon, 188)

(fantasy/hallucinations). Additionally, pigs are the animal companion and symbol of Saint Anthony, and were bred in Anonite monasteries during the fifteenth century, fostering strong contemporary associations of the pig with the saint.⁵⁶ Thus this single aristocrat-pig personifies the temperamental elements of the subject, the face of the disease itself, and the *Gula* of his class. Atop his head perches the owl of drunkenness and evil, surveying the careless distribution of the precious elixir.

The tools necessary for the harvesting of the mandrake all appear within this central scene; they are a sword, a dog, and a trumpet. The aristocrat-pig possesses two of these items: a small sword rests at his hip, and a small dog in a red jester's cap sits at the end of a golden leash. Two more dogs trail behind the lame peasant. The third tool appears in the physiognomy of the previously mentioned cloaked figure across the table. These seemingly arbitrary items were necessary to harvest a mandrake due to an incredible scream that the root was said to emit upon its extraction from the earth.⁵⁷ The scream was so powerful that it rendered the hearer either insane or dead. In order to avoid so unhappy an end, the harvester would tether a dog to the mandrake and have him pull. Upon its uprooting, the trumpet would be sounded to drown the deadly scream before it was finally silenced by a hit from the sword. Aside from being an amusing anecdote, the instructions on mandrake harvesting demonstrate a rare instance in which a trumpet was employed for salvational ability.

The aristocrat's dog recalls the image of the nun's leashed bagpiper, and the interpretation of the image of a dog as a metaphor for Christ's tormentors. Yet this

⁵⁶ Dixon, 182.

⁵⁷ Clark, Raymond J., "A Note on Medea's Plant and the Mandrake," *Folklore*, Vol. 79, No. 3 (Autumn, 1968), 228.

interpretation does not fit the context of the scene. This dog represents foolishness. Bosch frequently painted dogs in imitation of human activity, revealing the baseness of our actions. The dog's red hood and capulet are the recognizable costume of the hired fool, the courtly jester. To fifteenth-century audiences, the peasant was as recognizably a fool as the jester. Poverty, or more precisely, the involuntary lack of wealth, was considered divine punishment for foolish behavior, not the arbitrary outcome of being born into the lower class.⁵⁸ The peasant represents everything shameful about the lower class. He is dressed in rags and a single shoe, leans on a pilgrim's cane, and suffers in the leg from either the effects of ergot poisoning or gout, a common malady of Bosch's pilgrims and drunks. His contorted body lunges toward the lute beneath the aristocrat-pig's arm, as if he supposed he could thief the icon of wealth and manage a slick escape on one foot. The dog stands between the peasant's legs, aligning them in their societal roles as fools.

This attention paid to the distinction between the social statuses of the aristocrat-pig and the lame peasant is dually manifest by the instruments they possess. The lute is, of course, the instrument of the court. It symbolizes the Luxuria of the first class, the romance, the decadence, the prestige. It is the possession of all of this for which the peasant so arthritically grasps. Distracted by his desire for grandeur, the peasant does not even venture a glance toward the holy vintage, despite the fact that he may be the most physically afflicted. The aristocrat glances back snidely, unconcerned for the aims of the frail peasant. It is not as though the peasant were devoid of a musical instrument, he does indeed possess one. However, his instrument is the hurdy-gurdy, a simple, embarrassing

⁵⁸ Linfert, Carl, *Bosch*, (New York: Abrams, Inc., n.d.,) 12.

instrument played only by beggars and peasants.⁵⁹ It was played by the mere turning of a crank, providing even the uneducated fool a means with which he could earn handouts. Both instruments represent distinctly separate social statuses and the relationship between such classes. They embody the complete essence of their human possessors, demonstrating an unusually quiet development of the musical instrument from silent prop to autonomous character. They do not forcefully dominate the men who possess them, yet neither do the men dominate the instruments by playing them. They do not literally meld with the men's flesh, yet they have inarguably fused with their possessor's character. This is unlike a mere character association, as in previous cases of the harp and the angels. Whereas the angel could play any instrument and automatically imbue it with its angelic characteristics, the aristocrat and peasant possess the single instruments of their very distinct social circles. They are instruments that would never be played in the other's world. Were the human figures to be represented *only* by the hurdy-gurdy and the lute, the relationship of the one to the other would still be intelligible, demonstrating a new independence of the Boschian instrument.

To the lower left of the communion, a great red mandrake apple lies at the side of a river, broken open from the inside by a collection of devils. One green-hooded creature with the face of a cow's skull, dressed in a knight's armor, plays a golden harp (fig. 3.9). He rides a plucked goose that bears the snout of a sheep and wears fifteenth-century clogs. Across the river from him stand three hellish singers (fig. 3.10). Intestines spill from the side of the foremost singer, a monk, who has been relocated from the church mass and placed before the corrupt communion. Below them passes the brown and

⁵⁹ Dixon, 267.

yellow sail of a most unusual boat: a great body of a goose, devoid of neck and head, caging a bespectacled singing man within. His arms, which protrude from the sides of the bird-boat, seem to have become permanently fixed in place, not unlike a reinterpretation of the humiliating stocks. The whole of the musical man and boat is a rather Frankensteinian reinterpretation of the gondolas the nobility enjoyed riding in while listening to their minstrels. Song has now appeared in Bosch's works on multiple occasions, allowing for a deeper understanding of its interpretation. As previously demonstrated in the "Infernal Concert" of *The Last Judgment* (fig. 1.6), the discord of the song represents the discord of incorrect living, and thereby the torture of the soul, unprotected by the body. *The Haywain* (fig. 2.1) demonstrates that song plays a unique function in the realm of the living, which was a song of deception. While these interpretations hold fast, they are not unique to song. All instances of dissonance assault the harmony of the soul, whereas the deceit of *The Haywain* was brought about by the demon Deceitful. Through the analysis of these two instances of song in conjunction with the left and central panels of *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, it becomes evident that song induces the sleep of reason. Naturally, this is not precisely the same *Sleep of Reason* depicted in Francisco Goya's (1746 – 1848) etching (fig. 3.7), produced in 1799 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). Nonetheless, the ideology behind them is relatively the same, despite being created roughly three hundred years apart. It is the notion that dark fantasies emerge when self-awareness and reason fall asleep. Similarly, both artists' works came into being in the wake of new and logic-based philosophies -- the Enlightenment and the *Devotio Moderna*. Both of these movements share a common philosophical root that begins with Plato (428 BC – 327 BC) and Aristotle, the original

benefactors of reason.⁶⁰ The female singer of “The Infernal Concert” certainly demonstrates unreasonable calm, while her neighboring souls collapse from various agonies. *The Haywain*’s song of deception is in itself a song of the sleep of reason, considering that deception can only be achieved when intelligent reason fails. As for *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, the left wing (fig. 3.1) portrays the saint to be literally asleep and pointing to the singers, as if charging them responsible for his deliverance to the world of hallucinations before him. In the central panel (fig. 3.4), the unreasonable songs of the Frankensteinian gondola and wounded monk seem perfect scores for a world so mutated and devoid of common sense. Thus the intangible musical instrument, the voice in song, has developed into perhaps the most surreptitious character. It appeared first in the (visual) realm of the angels, due to Pseudo-Dionysus, and often takes the first step in Bosch’s world toward musically dominating the mortal characters through melodious anesthesia.

One could argue that *all* of Bosch’s music results in the sleep of reason, however each of his physical instruments drives their victims to unreasonable acts through specific sins associated with the particular instrument. For example, *The Last Judgment*’s ape and lute (fig. 1.2) results in the naked woman’s unreasonable infatuation with him, an illogical response that is driven directly through the Lust that is inspired by the lute. Furthermore, the physical instruments do not *always* result in the unreasonable. For example, the left wing image of *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* (fig. 3.8) depicts a gryllos’ attempt to best the icon of his desired and missing member. Although the image is unusual, there is a metaphorical sense of logic behind it. It is song only that numbs

⁶⁰Saebo, Magne, *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretations*, (Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008,) 108.

consciousness without suggesting a following course for sinful action.

Within the very midst of this ludicrous overlap of the practical and the impractical, Saint Anthony rests against a low wall in the central panel (fig. 3.4). He appears to have been in conversation with the nun, the man without a torso, and a very fashionably dressed noblewoman, but has turned his face toward the viewer, breaking the barrier between the canvas and the viewer. He holds his hand up in a sign of blessing, marking himself as the benevolent character within the hallucinogenic mania. In the distance behind him, within a dark alcove of the ruined building, stands Christ. He holds his hand in the very same sign of blessing, uniting him and the saint in a mutual endeavor to save the human race. He stands beside a crucified figure of Himself and a single lit candle, recalling the image of the Trinity, and gazes out toward the communion. The contrast between His small and intimate communion with the communion of the nobles echoes the humble sentiments of the reformation of Catholicism, the *Devotio Moderna*.

THREE

THE DEVOTIO MODERNA AND THE PHILOSOPHICAL THEORY OF THE
MUSICAL SOUL

“...*The music will correspond to their minds; for as their minds are perverted from the natural state so there are perverted modes and highly strung and unnaturally colored melodies.*”⁶¹

The *Devotio Moderna* (Modern Devotion) was a movement that sought to close the distance between the devotee and the devoted. It removed the Catholic *Luxuria* from the practice of worship, not in any sort iconoclastic method, but merely to avoid inappropriate ostentation. Perhaps the strongest aim of the movement was to return religion to the people and exclude the middleman – the corrupt clergy – by living within a community of brotherly equality.⁶² The movement commenced in Deventer, Holland, with Gerard Groote and was sanctioned by the pope in 1311.⁶³ The original members of the Brotherhood, known as the Brotherhood of the Common Life, lived in a small community, which functioned somewhat like a monastery, but without official ceremony or procedure. Without any imposed hierarchy of clerical titles, the Brotherhood maintained a normal relationship with society, unlike the Catholic monks who often became secluded from reality behind their monastic walls.

The influence of the *Devotio Moderna* is apparent throughout Netherlandish art, illuminating the importance of art history in the understanding of past cultures. Such effects begin to appear most strongly during the early fifteenth century, particularly within the works of the Master of Flemalle. Perhaps the most influential artwork of the Northern Renaissance was made by this master, the piece being *The Merode Altarpiece* (fig. 9.0), 1425, (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Cloisters Collection, New York). The

⁶¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 8, VI.

⁶² Kettelwell, *Vol. II*, 11.

⁶³ Kettelwell, *Vol. I*, 161.

composition of the piece is rendered in a natural, realist arrangement, free from the constraints of tropes (i.e. religious symmetry, etc.). The reason for this realism is due almost entirely to the influence of the *Devotio Moderna*, which exalted reason and a realistic portrayal of religious figures. The Virgin sits humbly on the floor, rather than upon an ostentatious throne, within a contemporary Dutch home that opens up to both an ordinary Dutch street view, and to the two kneeling patrons, rendered with as much care as the divine Madonna and Gabriel. The entire image is rendered as a very real historical scene, one that was quite connected to the viewers' lives. Bosch applies these realist portrayals of mystic imagery to his work in reverse, in which the realism is so often subordinate to the mysticism. Additionally, he portrays the ideals of the *Devotio Moderna* through images of the errors that the reformation sought to fix, particularly the corruption of the clergy, unlike the Master of Flemalle's more traditional praise of the *Devotio's* humble nature. These images of ridicule,⁶⁴ meant to reveal the essential wolf in lambskin, resulted in anachronistic accusations against Bosch, which damned him as a heretic. It was not until nearly one hundred years after his death in 1516 that such accusations arose, once his iconography had been blurred by the fluidity of culture. Of all the accusations against Bosch, the most notorious was made by Wilhelm Fraenger (1890-1964), who believed that Bosch's wild, Lust-riddled scenes of mortal sin were a reflection of his involvement with the Brotherhood of the Free Spirit.⁶⁵ This brotherhood, which was entirely unconnected from the *Devotio Moderna*, practiced an existence without acknowledgment of sin. They aimed to live as Adam had lived before the fall of man, before sin was born, and thus are also known as the Adamites. They are believed to have

⁶⁴ See figs. 1.6, 2.2 and 3.11 for previously discussed depictions of the corrupt clergy.

⁶⁵ Gibson, 10.

“practiced sexual promiscuity as a part of their religious rites, through which they attempted to achieve the state of innocence possessed by Adam before the Fall.”⁶⁶ Fraenger cites the central panel of *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (fig. 4.0), 1510, (Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain) as the strongest piece of evidence in his theory, which is indeed a rather orgiastic depiction of man. However, there is no evidence that Bosch was affiliated with any religious movement other than the Brotherhood of Our Lady, a benevolent sect of the *Devotio Moderna*, let alone a member of a heretical movement like the Adamites. His central panel is likely a mirror of the soul, reflecting man’s obsession with the transient sensualities of human existence. Furthermore, the Brotherhood of the Free Life does not appear in any documented references beyond the year 1411,⁶⁷ and was presumed to have been exterminated by 1421, roughly thirty years before Bosch’s birth.⁶⁸

These late accusations indicate how extreme cultural views change over the course of history. The majority of Bosch’s works was commissioned by the local church, cathedral, and the Brotherhood of Our Lady, revealing that the original intent of his paintings was to inspire devotion. Furthermore, several of his paintings, including *The Garden of Earthly Delights*,⁶⁹ became the prized possessions of Phillip II of Spain (ruled 1554-1598), the madly religious king who played an active role in the Spanish Inquisition.⁷⁰ It is highly unlikely that so devout a man would have collected Bosch’s works had he suspected them to be heretical. Clearly, contemporary audiences found no trouble in interpreting the correct meaning of Bosch’s works. His mockery of the clergy

⁶⁶ Gibson, 10.

⁶⁷ Gibson, 10.

⁶⁸ Silver, 621.

⁶⁹ Gibson, 12.

⁷⁰ Gibson, 11.

was received as humorous and radical within the context of the new religion, never heretical.

Of these images of mockery *The Ship of Fools* (fig. 6.0) presents the most blatant sentiment of distrust. The single panel depicts an image of an overcrowded boat of Gluttony, whose masts were never finished and remain as trees. The two most prominent figures are a nun, who sings and strums a lute, and a singing monk who sits directly across from her. Their mouths are drawn open by song, but also by the Eucharist pancake that dangles from a line before them, much like the sausage in *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* (fig. 3.3). They worship the bread before them, the body of Christ, yet they go about it in a most incorrect manner. Lost in the merriment of wine, song, and romantic lute, the nun and monk no longer remember the suffering their Lord underwent for them, and merely worship a dangling pancake, the traditional carnival food.⁷¹ As it has in the past, the lute behaves as an instigator of Lust, which is enacted through the desire for the pancake and the foolish merriment in general. The instrument's association with the court implies that the gravity of the Eucharist has dissolved into something as mindless as a court's revel, a mindlessness that is ever so much the worse as it is conducted by those who swore to lead mankind in piety. The inaccuracy of clergy's conduct is subtly reflected in the inaccuracy of the nun's playing. The placement of her strumming fingers are so far below the sound hole that the tune she plays would, if the viewer could hear it, sound dull and brittle. Nonetheless, the fools of the little ship have become enraptured by the song. The romance of the tune lures the nun and monk not only toward the delicacy of the pancake, but also toward each other's open mouths, as if subconsciously desiring to

⁷¹ Silver, 630.

kiss. Various items particular to Lust appear throughout the image, including the plate of cherries and the large decanter cooling in the waters beside the ship.⁷² These are also items of Gluttony, a sin that is highly connected to Lust as both involve consuming and giving in to a physical desire. Behind the nun and monk three men have joined in their errant devotion, singing along to the tune of the lute. One of these men holds the boat's tiller, but has become so entranced by the meaningless song and pancake that he no longer guides their course. Not one passenger has a care for his own end, physically or spiritually. As demonstrated in chapter two, song in the realm of the living induces the sleep of self-awareness, resulting in their commitment of sin. They are anesthetized to the harm they are committing against their souls through their inharmonious acts. Not even the nun and monk are aware that they are leading their congregation in error. They are mere fools themselves, leading mankind in the song of imbeciles.

It seems that those who do not participate in the song are not victims of the lute's Lust. Rather, they have fallen completely into Gluttony. They consume the wine of the Eucharist like common wine, once again expressing that they have forgotten the original meaning behind the practice of communion. One of Bosch's iconic fools sits within the branches of a tree-mast, slurping the blood of Christ as a man beneath him vomits over the stern, demonstrating the unpleasant results of his committed sin. Another man, similarly inspired by *Gula*, scales the mainmast aiming to cut down a cooked chicken that has, for some inane reason, been speared onto it. Thrust into the beheaded bird is the ship's flag, which provides insight into the folly of *The Ship of Fools'* passengers.

The flag bears a crescent moon, the planetary symbol of the phlegmatic

⁷² The cherries and decanter depict Lust again in *The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*, "Luxuria" segment, fig. 5.5.

temperament. This temperament is highly connected to the moon, considered an unstable planet due to its perpetually changing shape. Phlegmatics are connected to the sea as well, which is itself equally tied to the moon's fluctuations. The brain, being an organ surrounded by fluid, is the organ most affected by the cycles of the moon, and was believed to oscillate in cycle with the planet. Thus the phlegmatic temperament was most prone to bouts of stupidity and insanity – to the loss of reason.⁷³ Considering this understanding of the phlegmatic temperament, it is clear that Bosch is not only accusing the clergy of being foolish, but of being completely insane. The ship of madness amidst a body of water is essentially a metaphor for an addled brain in cerebrospinal fluid. It may be that the brain, the organ that controls the thoughts and actions of the body, is yet another metaphor of the corrupt church and its clergy, who so frequently disseminated false information to their congregation, the limbs of religion. It seems that Bosch has interpreted man's witless consumption of church dogma as the submission to Gluttony, the sin which, incidentally, is also associated with the moon.⁷⁴ By devoting themselves to Lust and Gluttony, the ship's fools follow the wrong god, thereby committing heresy, which is further insinuated by the flag's crescent moon emblem, the emblem of the heretical Turk.

The message of *The Ship of Fools* continues in *The Allegory of Gluttony and Lust* (fig. 7.0), 1490-1500. Now two separate panels, the latter originally comprised the lower half of the former as a complete image.⁷⁵ Two lovers flirt beneath a red canopy to the left, sharing a saucer of wine upon the banks of a shore, a shore that has been strewn with the

⁷³ "Lunacy" is directly derived from "luna."

⁷⁴ Dixon, 83.

⁷⁵ Dixon, 69.

clothes of nude bathers. Two of these bathers cluster to the ship in the now severed section. Within the *Allegory*, one bather paddles toward shore, carrying a platter of meat atop his head, continuing the moronic antics of the gluttonously inclined. More bathers swarm a floating barrel of wine, which is straddled by a rotund man wearing an upside-down funnel as a hat and blowing a long trumpet. Considering that this image was originally connected to *The Ship of Fools*, the trumpet must have been intended to play in some form of harmony with the nun's lute and the song of the insane. Riding the barrel as if it were a boat, and bearing a mast-like tree in one arm, he is his own vessel of foolishness, Lust, and Gluttony. He announces the arrival of the wine, himself, and the continuance of insanity via the sounding of his trumpet.

The whole of this piece draws to mind a passage written by historian Rob C. Wegmen, analyzing the musical theory of Tinctoris (1435-1511), a Flemish composer and *the* eminent musical theorist of the fifteenth century:

As Tinctoris affirms in another context, 'the sense of hearing is very often fallacious' (T, i.34). On more than one occasion he inveighs against those who, intoxicated by their imperfect aural sensations, praise crude singers above excellent musicians, or prefer calf-like bellowing over angelic song (E, xiii.io; T, i.35). Such listeners might as well have ass's ears (T,i.36). Whoever sings without understanding is like a *bestia*, an animal with ears but without reason (D, 'Musicus'). Similarly, when Tinctoris, in 1481, heard Turkish prisoners-of-war at Naples consoling themselves with music, he considered their 'songs... in truth so crude and absurd that it alone was quite sufficient to demonstrate their barbarity' (I, IV).⁷⁶

The characters within *The Ship of Fools* and *The Allegory of Gluttony and Lust* are surely “intoxicated by their imperfect aural sensations,” having “ears without reason,” and are indeed equated to the barbarianism of Turks by the crescent moon flag. The tree-bound

⁷⁶ Wegmen, Rob C., “Sense and Sensibility in Late-Medieval Music,” *Early Music* (May, 1995), 306.

jester even wears the literal ears of a beast, and recalls similar animal-eared listeners (e.g. the jester of the “Luxuria” segment (fig. 65.5), wearing the ears of a white ass.) This passage accurately describes so much of Bosch’s work that it seems impossible he could have been unaware of Tinctoris’ theories on music. If Bosch did not know of Tinctoris by name, he certainly understood music through Tinctoris’ theorizations. Much of the ambiguity of Bosch’s musical iconography becomes suddenly transparent through Tinctoris’ slant of perception. Half the battle of understanding Bosch’s imagery is finding the ability to view the work through a contemporaneous eye.

Tinctoris was one of the first to present a critical reading and theoretical response to music, and he did so with incredible severity. He drew up hundreds of pages of laws concerning musical practice, pertaining to the correct ways of composing, playing, and even listening. Tinctoris handles music as a volatile element of dual nature. One of his most well known writings is his “Eight Rules of Composition,” which neatly directs the composer away from musical error, error that was not merely perceived as incorrect, but as “forbidden” and dangerous.⁷⁷ He hypothesized that, much like the character of man, the character of music is subject to both vice and virtue, which can be distinguished by

⁷⁷ Rule #1: Begin and finish with perfect consonance. It is however not wrong if the singer is improvising a counterpoint and ends with imperfect consonance, but in that case, the movement should be many-voiced. Sixth or octave doubling of the bass is not allowed.
 Rule #2 Follow together with ténor up and down in imperfect and perfect consonances of the same kind. (Third and sixth parallels are recommended, fifth and octave parallels are forbidden.)
 Rule #3 If ténor remains on the same note, you can add both perfect and imperfect consonances.
 Rule #4 The counterpointed part should have a melodic closed form even if ténor makes big leaps.
 Rule #5 Don't put cadence on a note if it ruins the development of the melody.
 Rule #6 It's forbidden to repeat the same melodic turn above a cantus firmus of equally long notes, unless cantus firmus has a repetition in itself.
 Rule #7 Avoid two or more consecutive cadences of the same pitch even if cantus firmus allows it.
 Rule #8 In all counterpoint, try to achieve manifoldness and variety by altering measure, tempo, and cadences. Use syncopes, imitations, canons, and pauses. But remember that an ordinary chanson uses less different styles than a motet and a motet uses less different styles than a mass. (Tinctoris, *De Contrapuncto*, III.)

dissonance and consonance respectively.⁷⁸ He admitted that music could not exist without both dissonance and consonance, much in the way that man cannot exist without vice and virtue, yet advised an attempt to banish dissonance. He, and many theorists of surrounding eras, referred to consonance as technically “sweet,” a quality possessed by music that was both outwardly and inwardly in tune. Like the human form, music possesses both an outward and an inward nature. The outward pertains to aesthetic quality, to the pleasant sound of the notes. The inward concerns the underlying essence of the music, which, if built upon the proper constructs of composition, will embody virtue; it is the essential soul of the music. A listener untrained in musical theory may be able to appreciate the outward nature of music, yet the true “sweetness of polyphony... cannot be achieved without full control of the music’s inwardly perceived nature.”⁷⁹ The music is essentially unfulfilled if it is not understood on both inner and outer levels, even if it is properly constructed and performed, revealing a fundamental relationship between audience and music that Bosch has alluded to throughout his images. Bosch has very clearly warned his viewers of the danger of music to the soul, yet it is only through returning to contemporaneous philosophy that it becomes apparent that man is as much of a threat to music as it is to him. Suddenly, it is clear that the angels are not the only ones humiliated by the fall of music, that the mortal soul is not the only victim of corrupt melody and ignorance. Music, specifically the inward soul of music, is a parallel victim. The outward aspects may continue, like the human body, but the soul of the music fails. The motive behind Bosch’s musical revolution is at once made clear.

⁷⁸ Wegmen, 304.

⁷⁹ Wegmen, 306.

Aristotle, referred to throughout Tinctoris' works,⁸⁰ originated this idea of an intrinsic relationship between man and music. He states in his work *Politics*, "the vulgarity of the spectator tends to lower the character of the music and therefore of the performers," revealing a domino effect between audience, music, and performer. He goes on to say that "...they [the audience] look to him [the performer]-- he makes them what they are, and fashions even their bodies by the movements which he expects them to exhibit."⁸¹ Aristotle thus introduces a formative aspect of music that is present in Bosch's work, but easily overlooked. He essentially states that both man and music must be pure in body and soul, else one will ruin the other. While it is clear that man forms the structure of music, literally composes it with pen and ink, Aristotle reveals that music likewise forms man. He declares: "in listening to such strains our souls undergo a change."⁸² He suggests that when an audience does not understand the soul of the music, the music becomes unfulfilled, a tune without all-important reason. The player, having failed, through no fault of his own, to deliver a proper song, becomes himself unfulfilled, a man without reason. Thus he plays a new reasonless tune, a dissonant tune – in essence at least, if not also tonally -- which infects the audience, a formerly merely naïve mass, rendering them not only uneducated, but consumers of the song of vice. Their ignorant status led them straight to the status of sinner. Now enlightened to the symbiotic relationship of audience, music and performer, a question arises concerning each of Bosch's musical scenarios: who instigated the unanimous downfall of all three? In the majority of his works, including *The Last Judgment* (fig. 1.0) and *The Haywain* (fig. 2.0),

⁸⁰ *De Natura et Proprietate Tonorum/Concerning the Nature and Property of Tones* lists Aristotle as practically every other source for information.

⁸¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 8, part V.

⁸² Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 8, part V.

the culprit is unmistakably the demonic performer(s). Their evil is then spread to the other two groups and returns to the demonic instigator, like an undying echo, until the demon silences the manifold abuse. However, in an image like *The Ship of Fools* (fig. 6.0), in which no demon is present, who can be blamed? Although the nun and monk are the key figures of the image, the image is abundant in laymen fools. Bosch may very well have exerted a deep felt sentiment of exasperation for these fools, still swallowing corrupt doctrine even in the light of the new devotion, and intended the population of fools to be the instigators of ruin. However, understanding Bosch's views of the clergy as, in effect, demons in clerical costume, it is far more likely that they, the disseminators of religious falsehoods (religious dissonance) are the ones guilty for the molestation of mortal and musical harmony. Regardless, Aristotle's enlightenment adds a new level of suspicion to each scene of musical downfall.

Aristotle's treatment of music as an explosive element is certainly what inspired Tinctoris' own handling of it. The latter's extensive instructions on the correct breaking of the musical beast, and of training the human mind and ear, is an elaborate response to Aristotle's approach to solving the riddle of the man-music relationship. Whereas Tinctoris provides the technical practices for learning music correctly, Aristotle explains the necessary education through philosophical theories based on logic, rather than compositional formulae. As mentioned before, Aristotle blacklisted a collection of instruments considered too difficult to master, but does not suggest banning music altogether. After all, music, when in the proper setting, is a rather angelic entity with the power to transform those around it. Instead, Aristotle declares that mankind be taught how to correctly understand and interact with music early in life, prior to puberty. He

alerts the student to the three benevolent forms of music: ethical melodies, melodies of action, and passionate or inspiring melodies, each of which corresponds to particular modes, being modes of education, purgation and relaxed listening. While the last mode does indeed approve of indulgence, a rarity of the age, it can only be enjoyed by the educated class *after* their daily labors have been dutifully performed.⁸³ Aristotle describes the overall education of man as the tuning of the soul, like that of an instrument, fostering an even more intimate link between musical and mortal harmony. “There seems to be in us a sort of affinity to musical modes and rhythms,” he says, “which makes some philosophers say that the soul is a tuning, others, that it possesses tuning.”⁸⁴ Following this course of thought, the untuned or out-of-tune soul is a dissonant soul, a soul belonging to vice, which must be avoided at all costs. It is evident that the church took Aristotle’s demands for musical education quite seriously as a Customal from eleventh-century Dijon required out-of-tune singers to be beaten:

At...all the Hours, if the boys commit any fault in the psalmody or other singing...let there be no sort of delay, but let them be stripped forthwith of frock and cowl, and beaten in their shirt only, with pliant and smooth osier rods provided for that special purpose.”⁸⁵

Aristotle instilled, officially if not originally, a great distrust of the musical creature, which may have influenced the shaping of music into the fearful entity it is in Bosch’s paintings.

Clearly, the fifteenth century had an exceptionally human opinion of music. Music had both an aesthetic “body” and inner soul, was susceptible to evil, but could

⁸³ Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 8, part VII.

⁸⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 8, part V.

⁸⁵ Dent, Edward J., “Social Aspects of Medieval Music,” *The Oxford History of Music*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929) 191.

avoid a bitter end through logical structure. It was even divided, by Tinctoris, into four categories of plaintive, cheerful, stern, and neutral, paralleling the four humors of the human character, melancholic, sanguine, choleric, and phlegmatic.⁸⁶ As the four humors were affiliated with specific character traits, so were the four categories of music affiliated with particular emotional responses. This human opinion of music was indeed the ideal environment in which Bosch's musical revolution could gestate, allowing music, already perceived as something so alive and responsive to social atmosphere, to finally abandon the submissive role. Out of all of Bosch's works, none exemplifies his revolution, and the humanness of his instruments, better than the "Hell" panel of *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (fig. 5.1).

⁸⁶ Tinctoris, *De Natura et Proprietate Tonorum/Concerning the Nature and Property of Tones*, (Colorado Springs: The Colorado College Music Press, 1967,) 5.

FOUR

THE REVOLUTION

*Out of the barrel-organ, the mandolin and the harp Bosch forms an orchestra of instruments of vengeance that draw their harmonies from men's suffering.*⁸⁷

The musical instrument has at this stage forsaken *The Garden of Earthly Delight's* Paradise and Earth, finding Hell to be the advantageous environment. It is there that man discovers the musical creature he disrespected in life, now sentient, vengeful and dominant. Unhindered by constructs of time, legal order, harmonic value, or reason, the instruments swell to monstrous size and play the sinners' souls to the fateful melodies they composed in life. In the center of the panel stands an impressive quartet of instruments, who have made it their duty to sound the human soul. They are the lute, the harp, the hurdy-gurdy, and the flute. The quartet is nearly identical to the collection of instruments found in *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* (3.4), differing only in the instance of the flute and trumpet, which are quite alike in form and function – both even emit smoke from its open end. Above the quartet, in a more distant stratosphere, an ample bagpipe rests atop the head of the tree-man inn, circled by a parade of souls and demon escorts. These instruments fulfill the final phase in the role reversal of the player and instrument; they are the climax that has been developing throughout Bosch's oeuvre. The instruments assault the souls from every vantage point, caging the souls within their musical bodies, even crawling into the "bodies" of the souls themselves. Some have interpreted this depiction of Hell's music as an inversion of "the music of the flesh,"⁸⁸ a

⁸⁷ Snyder, James, *Bosch in Perspective*, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1973), 60.

⁸⁸ Holsinger, Bruce W., *Music, Body, and Desire in Medieval Culture: Hildegard of Bingen to Chaucer* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001,) 255.

term typically used in the context of *Luxuria*.⁸⁹ Although its original meaning was a romantic description of indulgence in the senses of the body, Bosch renders the term more literally, using spiritual flesh as the Devil's musical instruments. It is interesting to note that this visualization of Hell as a realm that utilizes humans as instruments runs parallel with Dante's literary vision. As noted in chapter two, Dante's expository descriptions of the *Inferno* illustrate a Hell of many levels and wild torments, which correspond to the committed sin even more explicitly than Bosch's own punishment-to-sin order.⁹⁰ Upon Dante's entrance into the Malebolge, the eighth circle of Hell, he encounters torture in the form of dissonant music:

When we had climbed above the final cloister
of the Malebolge, so that its lay brothers
were able to appear before our eyes,

I felt a force of strange laments, like arrows
whose shafts are barbed with pity; and at this,
I had to place my hands across my ears.

Just like the sufferings that all the sick
of Val di Chiana's hospitals, Maremma's,
Sardina's, from July until September

would muster if assembled in one ditch...⁹¹

Bosch seems to have manifested the assault to Dante's ears in magnified form by two great ears, which stand just beyond the tree-man tavern. The ears are pierced through the top by what could be either an arrow or a hatpin. They flank a great knife, filling the space where the handle ought to be. Whether this image is a direct manifestation of Dante's experience or not, it certainly insists upon the magnitude of acoustic torture. The

⁸⁹ Gibson, 98.

⁹⁰ See fig. 4.3 for a map of Dante's ordered *Inferno*.

⁹¹ Dante, *Inferno*, XXIX, 43-49.

inclusion of a head is completely irrelevant for it is the ears' experience that Bosch wishes to underscore. It is as if Bosch is declaring that the Devil has taken the ears as his, turning what once belonged to man (auditory pleasures and the literal ears) into a weapon against him. Indeed, guard-like demons stand within the folds of the ear and between the lobes, grasping at the miserable souls and dragging them into the ears -- perhaps for a magnified experience within.

Dante's musical torment continues throughout the Malebolge, which Italian writer Eduardo Sanguinetti refers to as "anti-music,"⁹² meaning "a perversion of everything that is conventional to music."⁹³ He describes the underworld through particularly illustrative prose, saying: "the sound space is occupied almost exclusively by screams and lamentations or, to be precise, by a degraded human and demonic vocality in the inevitable register of crying and teeth grinding."⁹⁴ This "anti-music" rings quite strongly of Tinctoris' consonance and the unstructured music that Aristotle sought to banish. It also sounds quite like the "sound space" of Bosch's Hell. Although there can be no final conclusion as to what extent Bosch drew his imagery from Dante's *Inferno*, Bosch's enormous harp, piercing a Christ-like soul with its many strings, seems *almost* to embody Dante's experience of the "strange laments," feeling "like arrows whose shafts are barbed with pity." However, Bosch's Hell does not likely have room for such pity. A much stronger connection between Bosch and Dante lies in the image of the lute, which is presented by both as a noble and spiteful character. Bosch's voluptuous lute stands on end, at an intimidating height, wearing a soul like a morbid jewel about its neck; he hangs

⁹² Sanguinetti, Eduardo, "Infernal and Acoustics: Sacred Song and Earthly Song," *Lectura Dantis* 6, (1990), 149.

⁹³ Roglieri, Maria Ann, "Twentieth-Century Musical Interpretations of the 'Anti-Music in Dante's Inferno,'" *Italica* 79, no. 2 (Summer 2002), 150.

⁹⁴ Sanguinetti, 149.

by his backward-bound arms. Dante's lute is a literal man, Master Adam, mutated into the instrument's shape for having fallaciously lived as a wealthy man through the production of counterfeit florins.⁹⁵ Although Bosch is less explicit in his comments, both men exploit the instrument for its noble character, criticizing those who doted too much upon *Luxuria*. Furthermore, Dante presents the idea of instrument-body hybrids, which, along with the gargoyles and grotesques of the Middle Ages, could have influenced Bosch's many instrument-snouted demons. Yet Bosch never blurs the distinction between man and instrument as Dante does. They remain very separate and very opposite entities throughout his works, even when the music is literally written upon the bodies of his victims.

In continuing the analysis of the lute, the viewer discovers what appears to be a further critique of the noble class and its tendency toward *Luxuria*. The lute does not sit upon the ground, but is couched atop an open book of musical composition and the back of a soul. The lute's position atop the book implies a connection to the educated class (if not also the noble need for comfortable seating), not unlike the inclusion of books in portraiture. However, its position also obscures the notes, defeating the book's purpose. What remains unobscured is the naked buttocks of the soul it also rests atop, upon which a second score has been written. An unsettlingly jubilant choir sings from the souls' rear, forgetting the more proper composition beneath the lute. This seems to allude to the self-defeating practice of luxury in the realm of privilege, suggesting that even those educated in music's inward aspects (which the nobility ideally should be) forget the soul and take

⁹⁵"I saw one fashioned like a lute /...The heavy dropsy, which so disproportions /the limbs with unassimilated humors /that there's no match between the face and belly, /had made him part his lips like a consumptive, /who will, because of thirst, let one lip drop /down to his chin and lift the other up." (Dante, *Inferno*, XXX, 49-55).

pleasure only in the “music of the flesh.” The lute’s romantic and pleasure-inclined nature anticipates such an inclination toward aesthetics over virtue. Indeed it seems the Hell’s lute, and those influenced by it, viewed virtue as a blight upon luxury, considering that the instrument of virtue, the harp, extends from the belly of the lute like an enormous growth.

The harp’s crucified soul is conceivably the most affecting image within the rampant chaos, appearing so like Christ. To imagine brushing the finger against the strings might move the viewer to wince for His agony. However, while the classic image of the crucified Christ reminds the viewer that He died for the sins of each man, this harp-hung soul reminds the viewer of the end of each man of sin. He is not suffering for the welfare of the human race, but for his own selfish indulgences. The similarity of form and opposition of nature between the two recalls the character of the Antichrist. Also called the Man of Lawlessness,⁹⁶ he appears like Christ but is in fact the spirit of evil, and appears skulking in the doorway of Bosch’s *Adoration of the Magi* (fig. 4.7) 1490-1510, (Museo del Prado Madrid).⁹⁷ Following this vein of thought, torment in the imitation of Christ’s own torment is indeed a fitting end for the Antichrist, now judiciously speared by strings that evoke the divine rays of light seen in illuminated manuscripts. The soul is presented to the viewer from the back, rather than frontally, again like Christ but in reverse. Rendered faceless, the soul also represents everyman, or, more precisely, the everyman of sin, thus equating each sinner with the abhorrent Antichrist.

⁹⁶ Thessalonians 2:4, NIV.

⁹⁷ The presence of the Antichrist is such an atypical inclusion in an Adoration scene that it implies Bosch had a particular fascination with the figure, evidencing a link between the Antichrist and the harp-hung soul.

Aristotle, and consequently Tinctoris, placed the harp on the list of instruments that were not to be attempted to be played. The list included two versions of the harp, “the Lydian harp, and the many-stringed lyre,” as well as the flute, heptagon, triangle, sambuca, “and the like – which are intended to only give pleasure to the hearer, and require extraordinary skill of hand.”⁹⁸ The harp, and its blacklisted fellows, are, through Aristotle’s reasoning, too outwardly pleasing for the human soul to properly handle, leaving it only for the hands of the angels.⁹⁹ Prior to Bosch’s redistribution of Heaven’s instruments, the harp was *the* divine instrument. As mentioned earlier, the harp survived the degradation the lute brought to the stringed instrument category, a survival that was likely due in part to a medieval metaphor of Christ as the “harp of salvation.”

“...Christian ascetics, hagiographers, theologians, artists, and poets insisted on the musicality of the human frame; skin, tendons, throat, torso could be beaten, stretched, plucked, blown through, and strummed to produce resonances that were in accord with the pitch and timbre of the crucified Jesus, whose exposed ribs and extended sinews turned him into the harp of salvation in countless medieval allegories.”¹⁰⁰

While Bosch’s harp-strung soul is anything but a harp of salvation, it is not difficult to imagine that this soul might replicate the “pitch and timber” of the tormented Christ as he dangles upon the strings. It is made apparent, once again, that musical instruments were intimately bound to the human body and soul, and were literally constructed by animal organs. Intestines were pulled taut to create strings, hide provided drumheads and the bagpipe’s bag, etc. In fact the word *kithara*, or *cithara*, the Greek word used for “harp” throughout early translations of the bible, is the same word used for “chest.”

⁹⁸ Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 8, VI.

⁹⁹ His list, of course, did not include the handling of instruments outside of earth.

¹⁰⁰ Ginsberg, Warren, “Review,” *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 55, No. 1, (Winter, 2003), 78.

[T]he form of the cithara [*kithara*] was originally like that of the human chest, because it gives forth sound as the chest gives forth voice...The strings [*chordae*] are so called from *cor* [heart], because the striking of the strings of the cithara is like the beating of the heart in the breast.¹⁰¹

In the fourteenth century, French poet and composer Guillaume de Machaut (1377-1300) wrote a lengthy poem regarding an allegorical harp, which resembles Bosch's harp on multiple levels. The poem is titled *Dit de la harpe* and is a revision of an episode in Ovid's telling of *Orpheus and Euridice* known as *Ovide moralisé*.¹⁰² The poem tells the story of Orpheus, a masterly harpist, who gave up both music and women after the second death of his love, Eurydice.¹⁰³ Both versions go to great lengths discussing the allegorical harp. In Ovid's poem, the harp possesses seven strings, anchored top and bottom by fourteen pegs. The top pegs represent Christ enacting the Seven Sacraments, while the bottom pegs represent the devotee's imitation of Him. Between them, the strings represent the Seven Sacraments themselves.¹⁰⁴ As the pegs represent man's direct connection to and imitation of Christ, they demonstrate "the presence of the divine in human acts, and thus the possibility of human salvation."¹⁰⁵ In Machaut's reinterpretation, the allegorical harp represents the twenty-five virtues of his sweetheart through twenty-five strings. Machaut's strings are not held in place by the pegs of the Sacraments, which have been interpreted to mean that Machaut's virtues are

¹⁰¹ Lille, Alan of, *De planctu Naturae/The Complaint of Nature*, (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1980), 2.247-48, 818. Perhaps a great deal of the loss of the instrument's humanness today is because these pieces of the body have been replaced by synthetics.

¹⁰² Machaut's popularity lasted throughout the fifteenth century, and he himself appeared within multiple fourteenth century French manuscripts (fig. 4.8). Considering that many Northern illuminators traveled to France for commissions, it is likely that Machaut's popularity traveled to the Netherlands somewhat quickly.

¹⁰³ In Ovid's version, Orpheus' renouncement of women was quite homoerotic as he turned his attentions to young boys, which Machaut completely removes from his version, creating a story more acceptable by Christian society.

¹⁰⁴ Holsinger, 319.

¹⁰⁵ Holsinger, 324.

without anchor, subject to human capriciousness. Concerning practicality, a lack of pegs leaves the harp without the ability to be tuned; thus its pitch (its virtue, according to Tinctoris) cannot be corrected should it begin to fail. The harp depicted in *The Garden of Earthly Delights*' "Hell" is also without pegs, which ought to be part of the instrument's standard make up, insinuating that the Devil's harp is also unanchored by piety, though not without virtue. It is, after all, punishing in response to sin, not tormenting without cause.

Should this harp be a relation to Machaut's, it contains as many personas within its frame as it does strings. For in the case of Machaut's harp, "[The strings] are not only attributed to a specific human individual, but are themselves living, breathing personifications whose familial relations and even rivalries are part of the poem's subject."¹⁰⁶ Considering the evolution of the musical instrument from a mere prop to major character, it is not at all unreasonable to suggest that each of Bosch's strings exists in individual consciousness. Such a theory would also lend a much more vengeful sense to the harp's nature, as virtue's revenge would not be enacted by one but by twenty-one. The greatest divergence between Bosch and Machaut's harps is that the former's is four strings short. Yet according to historian Bruce W. Holsinger, Machaut arbitrarily added extra strings toward the end of his poem, yet fails to mention the initial count.¹⁰⁷ This ambiguous addition allows room for conjecture, though nothing more, that the initial count was perhaps twenty-one.

The harp leans away from the lute, creating an inverse image of its own triangular shape in the negative space between it and the hurdy-gurdy. Filling what is, essentially,

¹⁰⁶ Holsinger, 323.

¹⁰⁷ Holsinger, 324.

virtue's negative image is the jubilant choir. A red-dressed demon directs the choir in the following of the notes inked across the soul's buttocks, ignoring the open book beside him. A second book rests atop a second demon's head, referencing foolish conduct.¹⁰⁸ The only theory that could account for the choir's merriment is the theory, developed through the course of this essay, that song produces the sleep of reason. Surrounded by Hell's horrors, both auditory and visual, only those who have completely lost their sanity could possibly experience anything but terror. The three singers to the left of the choir are actually smiling, unaware that they are reading from the backside of one of their own, crushed beneath the weight of two mammoth instruments and their two tortured souls. However, as the nature of Hell is pain, it must be concluded that the singers' numbing slumber is only temporary. Perhaps their torment is the repeated shock of awakening in the bowls of Hell, fraternizing with the demons. Perhaps this awakening is made even more agonizing through what is essentially unconscious masochism, delivered through the harmonic destruction their song brings to the soul, as first seen in "The Infernal Concert of *The Last Judgment* (fig. 1.6).

To the choir's left stands the hurdy-gurdy, the most ungainly member of the quartet. Like the lute, it possesses a distinct social status (the peasants/fools) and raises itself to full height, exerting its new autonomist will. It is no longer confined to the lap of a common peasant¹⁰⁹ but now confines the peasants to its own body, forcing *them* to make the dissonant melody. The reversal of the relationship of size between man and instrument has, as in the case of the entire quartet, been reversed and exaggerated,

¹⁰⁸ The Dutch word for "hat" was the same word for "guard" or "care." To be without a hat, in the case of a Boschian pun, meant to be without guard against sin, without care for one's end. (Tuttle, Virginia G., "Bosch's Image of Poverty," *The Art Bulletin* 63, No. 1, (March, 1981), 95.)

¹⁰⁹ See fig. 4.5 for the correct positioning of the instrument and a harshly stereotypical view of the hurdy-gurdy, which still held strong almost two centuries later.

enthusiastically tyrannizing man. The instrument not only bears souls upon its body, but now also within. A woman peers out of the sound hole on one side of the fingerboard, clanging a triangle out of the other. Her torment is hidden within the hurdy-gurdy's body, yet it is easy to imagine the rotating cogs that surround her, kept in motion by the soul above. It may seem curious that the triangle should remain in the woman's hands during the climax of the instrument's liberation. However, her playing of the triangle is an effect of Hell's role reversal, in which she must produce the music as mankind had forced the instruments to do in life. It seems to be another interpretation of the "music of the flesh," only directed through the triangle rather than her own vocalization of pain.

The reason for the inclusion of the triangle is rather ambiguous. It has not been included in any of the previously mentioned paintings, neither by Bosch nor another artist. There is little cultural history surrounding the triangle, unlike the other instruments of Bosch's inventory. Kurt Falk, a German writer and historian, states that the triangle was used within the church to keep the congregation alert. However, he provides no evidence for his theory and even goes on to reduce his argument by saying that the woman's triangle is lulling the surrounding souls to sleep,¹¹⁰ which is completely absurd amidst Hell's cacophony.¹¹¹ The only credible historical note made on the triangle is Aristotle's inclusion of it upon his list of banned instruments. Although the triangle appears to be the simplest of instruments, Aristotle viewed it as too complex and too intellectually uninspiring for the human race. His reasons must have been based upon a complexity of the triangle's inward aspects, as its outward nature is most simplistic,

¹¹⁰ Note that Falk means a literal sleep, not a "sleep" of consciousness as in the case of song.

¹¹¹ Furthermore, the only instrument approved of within the church was the organ, as mentioned in Chapter Two, although it is likely that not all churches adhered to the regulation.

being sounded by the clanging of the beater against the body. The triangle is no more difficult to play than the hurdy-gurdy and the turning of its crank. Conclusively, the peasants, having no knowledge of Aristotle's ban of the instrument, may have perceived and employed the triangle as one of their own. Theoretically, their amateur playing of the triangle would have begun a particularly severe Aristotelian domino effect of tarnished consonance. Indeed, the woman seems to be distracted not only from the inwardness of her music, but also from the outwardness, as she gazes nervously above her toward the soul turning the hurdy-gurdy's crank.

The hurdy-gurdy player lies across the instrument, both hands filled with the icons of poverty. With one he holds the bowl and disc that Duke Phillip the Good required beggars to bear to distinguish their low status;¹¹² with the other he turns the great instrument's crank. Like the woman, the male soul is compelled to play the hurdy-gurdy, now slave to the production of sound. Behind him crouches a rather esoteric figure balancing an egg upon his back, which he is about to destroy with a mallet. The egg is a symbol of perfection and rebirth, often seen in context with the Virgin,¹¹³ and throughout Bosch's alchemical allegories. The implication is that the egg is incubating a perfect essence of some kind within itself. Yet this egg is in the most inhospitable environment, being too precariously balanced atop a soul of sin, atop poverty's instrument, within Hell, *and* about to be shattered by a mallet. The image seems to refer to the imperfection of the damned and the hopelessness of a new beginning. Its proximity to the hurdy-gurdy's

¹¹² Dixon, 267.

¹¹³ See fig. 4.9 for a more common portrayal of the egg, which hovers above the Virgin and Child in Andrea Montagne's *San Zeno Altarpiece*, 1460, Basilica di San Zeno, Verona, Italy.

slave suggests the eternity of the latter's role as a humiliated peasant, forever bound to the winding of the crank.

The final of the quartet's instruments is the mammoth flute. It is not a transverse flute, yet is played by a side mouthpiece, and is closed at one end. Various art historians have attempted to correctly identify the instrument, tentatively calling it early versions of the pommer or bombardon, yet most have avoided the trouble and simply refer to it as a flute. This enormous instrument is yet another of Aristotle's banned items. His reasoning behind the ban stems from an ancient myth in which Athena, goddess of wisdom, threw the instrument away because it not only "made the face ugly," but also "contributes nothing to the mind."¹¹⁴ As stated within *Politics*, instruments were only worth the trouble if they inspired virtue, such as the desire for education. Like Bosch, he acknowledged the presence of character within musical instruments, characters that not only influence but also alter the spirit of the listener.¹¹⁵ Aristotle elaborated on the character of the influential flute, saying that "the flute is not an instrument which is expressive of moral character; it is too exciting. The proper time for using it is when the performance aims not at instruction, but at the relief of the passions..."¹¹⁶ Of course man has never been able to correctly control such relief of passions; it is so often his downfall. Considering the flute's identity with the relief of immoral character it suddenly becomes clear why Bosch's flutes have been repeatedly inserted into his characters' rears (see figs. 1.4, 1.6, 4.2). Homosexuality was, not surprisingly, considered highly immoral during the fifteenth century. Thus, the performance of sodomy with the instrument of immoral

¹¹⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 8, VI.

¹¹⁵ Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 8, V.

¹¹⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 8, VI.

passion was a clear manifestation of the flute's debauched influence. While the great flute of the quartet does not sodomize either of its victims, it directly parallels a smaller flute that does, assimilating their characters. Various similarly homoerotic instruments of more typical size surround the scene: a hunting horn stems from the sodomized soul's head, perhaps referencing the hunt for homosexual satisfaction, being literally on his mind -- a theory which is further suggested by the rabbit below, a highly fertile animal, who sounds the same instrument for the hunt of the human soul; directly beneath the hunting horn lies a sackbut, another instrument on Aristotle's blacklist for inspiring too much passion; and lastly, a large drum. Although the drum is the least phallic of the surrounding instruments, it is perhaps second in line to the flute concerning its homoerotic nature. The evidence lies within the "Luxuria" segment of *The Seven Deadly Sins and Four Last Things* (fig. 5.5). As previously mentioned, this segment expresses indulgence in the desire of the senses, which of course includes physical desire. The drum appears in the foreground of the image, lying at the end of a string of instruments of progressively deviant behavior (harp, recorder/flute, drum). The angle of the drumstick mimics the angle of the neighboring rider's raised spoon. The rider and his steed -- a jester dressed like the ass or *bestia* slandered by Tinctoris¹¹⁷ -- are actually another Boschian visualization of "obscene lust." They enact the ancient Flemish saying, "to strike through the buttocks," meaning, "to perform degenerate behavior," to commit sodomy.¹¹⁸ The rider has actually beaten the jester so violently that his costume has torn, exposing his naked rear. The similarities between the drum, drumstick, and the jester and rider are too

¹¹⁷ Wegmen, 306.

¹¹⁸ Newhauser, Richard, *The Seven Deadly Sins: from Communities to Individuals* (The Netherlands: Hotei Publishing, 2007), 247.

similar to be coincidental. They are alike not only in the angles of the stick and spoon, but in the color and position of the bodies of the drum and jester. Thus the drum acquires the homoerotic nature of Luxuria's players, which, it seems, particularly due to its inclusion in Hell's scene of sodomy, has been carried through to *The Garden of Earthly Delights*. A demon embraces the drum in Hell and beats it, tormenting physically and aurally the man locked inside, who gazes out in terror through a small window. Once again, the instrument enforces the state of its supremacy through the complete ingestion of the human soul.

As for the great flute itself, it forces its weight upon the back of the sodomized soul, imitating a perverse scene of Christ on the road to Calvary. Behind him a man wears an unusual cap topped with a flag similar to that of *The Ship of Fools* (fig. 6.0) and blows into the flute's mouthpiece. As a flag of identity, it can be concluded that this man is either a heretical Turk or an inane phlegmatic – perhaps both. In accordance with Athena's distaste for the instrument, the player's face has become distorted by the great breaths of air necessary to sound so large an instrument. Although this flautist does not resemble the slender, naked aesthetic of Bosch's souls, he does not exactly resemble a demon either. Unless Bosch has gone so far as to implicate the Turk, through Christian prejudice, as a member of Satan's army, the identification of this player's race cannot be determined.¹¹⁹ As seen throughout the quartet, the souls do not demonstrate any apathy toward the surrounding suffering of their own kind, negating any attempt to identify him by a show of empathy or lack thereof. From the open end of the instrument a single arm and the top of a head can be seen, as well as a stream of smoke. The image recalls the

¹¹⁹ A collection of Turks appears in the same *Adoration of the Magi* (fig. 4.7) scene of the lurking Antichrist, revealing a characteristic of Bosch to include one with the other.

smoking trumpets of *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* (figs. 3.3, 3.5), yet this time the fires that burn within do not represent the pangs of ergotism, but rather the flames of Hell.

It is interesting to note that the angle of the great flute directly parallels the angle of the great harp, as do the extended right hands of their tormented souls. The echo of one instrument in another aligns the two as a pair, which is in fact a complementary pair, embodying virtue in the case of the harp and vice in the case of the flute. The coupling of instruments continues through the lute and hurdy-gurdy, which are aligned through their inverse verticality, physical shape, and opposing social statuses. In fact, it seems that every instrument within Hell has formed an alliance with another instrument, exacting torments as a team. The woman within the hurdy-gurdy angles the triangle's beater to the man-trapping drum below, an angle that is repeated by the drumstick. Likewise, the hunting horn and sackbut, the only brass instruments affiliated with the quartet, frame the sodomized man between them, while the small flute mimics the greater one weighing upon the soul's back. Only song stands by itself, although it must be noted that it is directed by not one but two demons, continuing the sense of unity amongst Hell's ranks.

All of this takes place before a sizeable bird-like figure, who consumes souls and then defecates them whole into a pit beneath his toilet-throne. Dixon believes this enthroned creature, bearing a cauldron as a crown, surrounded by sinners of Vanity, Greed, Gluttony, and Sloth is Satan himself.¹²⁰ Surely, he gobbles souls not so unlike Dante's Lucifer, who forever grinds Judas, Brutus, and Cassius within the mouths of his three heads. While it would be quite interesting to perceive the mammoth quartet as a

¹²⁰ Dixon, 265.

performance for the Devil, there are too many differences between the enthroned bird and Dante's Lucifer. Bosch's creature has but one head, passes his anonymous victims through his body, and does not live within Hell's frozen center as Dante described. Gibson's theory stands much stronger, stating that the bird is derived from a beaked monster within the *Vision of Tundale* "who digested the souls of the lecherous clergy" and defecated them into a new realm of torments.¹²¹ Including the physical/functional similarities of the *Tundale* monster, and Bosch's own criticism of the clergy, this interpretation is much more plausible. Furthermore, a collection of women in white, nun-like headdresses clusters nervously behind the toilet-throne, bearing Turkish moons atop their wimples. Perhaps it is for these corrupt clerics that the quartet appears as somewhat of a perverse allusion to such scenes as the Crucifixion and the episodes of the Passion. If the hurdy-gurdy were to be removed from the quartet, the lute, harp and flute would, as a trio, resemble the scenes of the Passion in reverse, beginning with the Deposition, the Crucifixion, and Christ on the Road to Calvary. Of course the hurdy-gurdy *is* present within the trio, it is the largest of them all, disrupting any traditional reading of the instrumental display. It seems almost predictable that of all the instruments to interrupt the divine order it would be the hurdy-gurdy, the instrument of the graceless peasants. One would hardly expect the virtuous harp to cause a disruption, even as a parody of itself in the hands of a demon. Such expectations of the instruments are indicative of the maturation of the musical character. Perhaps the most pivotal moment in the instruments' evolution of character came to pass in the noble communion of *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*. As discussed in chapter two, it was within that communion that the instrument

¹²¹ Gibson, 98.

first expressed its ability to represent a character by itself, free from a human/demon character, although the human characters were in fact included. Each of the great instruments of Hell's quartet demonstrates the same ability to express its individual character, only now they have finally been liberated from human possession. While the souls still possess the ability to sound the instruments, as in the case of the two souls of the hurdy-gurdy, it is now the instruments that command the human race to perform, be it through enslaving the player to the instrument or sounding the soul through cries of torment as if the souls were instruments themselves. In either case, the human is irrefutably submissive; he has lost his free will to the instruments. Furthermore, the souls are – save for the one bearing the beggar's bowl – completely divested of any personal effects. They do not sport costumes of a specific rank, nor are they surrounded by any non-musical symbols of preferred vice, which so often appear about Bosch's characters. It is now left to the omniscient instruments to explain the nature of the indistinguishable souls. Oddly enough, this ability to identify the human characters was the original function of the instrument, as discussed in chapter one concerning Saint Cornelius' horn (fig. 8.0). But of course the rules have since radically changed. Identification is no longer the instrument's key purpose. It is no longer the prop, but is now the character, mammoth in scale, literally belittling the human souls through the medieval hierarchy of scaling size to importance. It is in fact impossible to adequately label anything other than the mallet and perhaps the egg as props within the grand quartet. It could be argued that Bosch has gone so far as to render the souls as "props" upon which the instruments deliver revenge. The souls are, after all, rather unindividualized, and their presence does indeed identify the instruments as Hell's instruments of torture. However, it seems more accurate to say

that the role reversal results in a *partial* rendering of the soul as a prop. To say they lose themselves completely would weaken the sense of terror Bosch has so artfully targeted toward the human race. Though his souls are quite the generic representation, being uniformly Netherlandish in coloring and body type, and with unvarying hairstyles, they express individuality through their reactions. Bosch has considered the psychology behind each of his characters. He renders one woman, just below the hurdy-gurdy, as a slave to Greed: she wears a giant die upon her head and parts her mouth to cry out, reaching fearfully for her male companion who has been assaulted by a demon. Yet another woman, nearly identical to the first, internalizes her agony: sitting before the toilet-throne, she gazes into the mirrored rear of one demon while another wraps his arms about her torso and a frog crawls up her chest. They may be uniform in physicality but they are unique in psychology.

One of the images that most emphatically taunts man's loss of control is a small scene above the great lute. An enormous cow's skull acts as roof for some semblance of a church. Beneath, a clergyman employs a soul as a pew and reads from a parody of the Bible beside a bird-headed monk with a spoon-like beak. A red-hued mass and a melancholic blue creature peer in from beyond a low wall, as if listening to the clergyman read aloud. Between them a monkey-like monster throws the complete weight of his body into the sounding of the large brass bell above them, calling the masses to church. However, the bell's clapper has been replaced by a soul, whose feet dangle beyond the bell's rim as he is flung again and again against the brass interior. Deeper in the recesses of the bell tower ruins a second bell rests in temporary silence (reiterating the coupling first seen in the quartet), employing another soul as its clapper; he hangs upside-down

and observes his impending fate. What a bell with a soul as its clapper must sound like is impossible to guess, yet each “ring” of the bell acts as a proclamation of the souls’ now involuntary submission to their new dark lord and his instruments of discordant devotion. The monkey monster gazes up at the pitiful soul, his face drawn back with glee.

To the side of the scene of the bells, two demons coax a hesitant soul to climb the ladder into the tree-man tavern. As mentioned earlier, the tree-man wears an enormous and fleshy bagpipe atop a disc upon his head, the image of which is duplicated in the tavern’s sign. Three couples are visible parading about the obscenely large organ of the male sex, which has become the essential center of their world. They surround the bagpipe as if it were some icon of worship, recalling Biblical warnings such as King Nebuchadnezzar’s gold image and the furnace of death.¹²² In the passage, the king demands his subjects to fall to worship his golden image “as soon as [they] hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music” or be thrown “immediately into the blazing furnace.” While the bagpipe is not listed amongst the text, its role as a male symbol allows it to stand in for the king’s image. The scene seems to reveal that even those who followed the king’s blasphemous orders eventually landed within the blazing furnace. The souls that surround the bagpipe are paired off with demon escorts in the appearance of a nun, bird, and noble. A fourth demon is poised upon the edge of the great bladder and directs the instrument’s blast upon the back of a passing soul, who has turned back in surprise though his nunish escort pays no mind to the sound. It seems the music has no ill effect upon the demons in the least. Both the bell and bagpipe scenes demonstrate most pronouncedly the unified relationship between the

¹²² Daniel 3:5, NIV.

demons and the instruments. They work as a team, exhibiting a much greater sense of loyalty than do the human souls. The demons are the essential handymen of Hell, delivering the souls to the possession of the instruments (as seen in the case of the great lute), conducting the souls in song, and sounding the instruments when outside effort is necessary. It is clear that the instruments can force the souls to sound them, but cannot sound themselves; they must rely on the assistance of the demons. Bosch curtailed the revolution and refused the instruments the ability to sound their own bodies. The reason behind this restriction may be that the self-sounding instrument might produce the most perfect of melodies considering that it would, theoretically, have complete knowledge of its own inward and outward aspects. Thus, if Bosch had allowed his instruments this ability, Hell might not be flooded with sound so horrific it irrefutably functions as torment or anti-music. Surely, there can be no more inwardly and outwardly dissonant players – aside perhaps from Satan himself -- than Hell's devils and the damned. Conclusively, Bosch's stall in the evolution of the musical character ensures that the only sounds in Hell are the most wholly corrupt, are the most devastating to human ears. He ensures that their new power is a fine-edge perfection of dissonance.

FIVE

CONCLUSION

As evident throughout this essay, Hieronymus Bosch was not the first to perceive human traits within the musical instrument. He was, however, the first to allow them the power they had found in literature. The instrument had far evolved in the written world, having become the obsession of Aristotle, Joachim, Dante, Machaut, Tinctoris, and more besides. Yet artistically its progression had remained predominantly stagnant since Master Matteo's twenty-four elders during the twelfth century. Bosch turned to literature to stimulate new life in the instrument. He utilized these sources to his best advantage, either through their direct inspiration or through contemporary cultural views that had developed from them. However, while a great deal of the instrument's development is due to Bosch's educated lifestyle, its success is largely due to the strong footing it found in common culture. The courtly lutist, the impoverished hurdy-gurdy player, and their fellow instrumental characters found their power in basic stereotypes. While philosophy, theology, and literature quite literally provided the delicate body and soul of Bosch's instruments, their found muscle came from common culture. Bosch delved into the sociology of his own society, extracting prejudices, stereotypes, and popular associations that had already been divvied out amongst the instruments but had never been so extensively illustrated. Their individual identities were likely recognizable to fifteenth-century culture without much meditation.¹²³

It is no wonder that Bosch was so inspired by his own culture. It was a fanatically religious world, in which members of society inadvertently consumed LSD with their

¹²³ The image of the lute was likely a symbol of medieval pop culture and status in a very similar way as an image of Andy Warhol's diamond dust shoes is today.

daily bread, and believed that tomorrow would bring the Apocalypse. The fifteenth-century Netherlands was a veritable breeding ground for surrealism before Surrealism even existed – yet the surrealism was in effect real. As indicated throughout Bosch’s triptychs, demons were a true threat to the order of the world. Bosch realized society’s fear of them through his union between the demons and instruments. The alliance allowed the latter to gorge upon the Devil’s vices, resulting its ability to transcend harmony and virtue, both inwardly and outwardly, compositionally and aesthetically. Despite the instrument’s growing preference for anesthetizing reason, inspiring deceit, and tormenting the soul, it never completely abandons its manners. It does not fight against Hell’s underlying order, nor does it ever turn upon its own kind or neglect its office as the soul’s tormentor. Indeed, Bosch made a particular effort to control his chaos. This is evident not only through the instrument’s “proper” behavior in Hell, the resemblance between his layers of torments and Dante’s, but also through the exclusion of one particular instrument: the psaltery.

The psaltery makes a single appearance in the “Heaven” tondo of *The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* (fig. 5.2), amongst the angelic trio. The painting was made early on in the evolution of the instrument; hence it functions rather demurely and has yet to fall from the angel’s grasp. The instrument demonstrates a rather advanced desire to become more than a silent prop by assisting the angel in breaking the barrier between the canvas and viewer, and in the revelation of the demonic intruder. Despite the psaltery’s popularity throughout the works of other preceding and contemporary artists, particularly Memling, it never appears in Bosch’s works again. It was too much of a threat to the evolution of Bosch’s other instruments. For according to Joachim of Fiore,

first discussed in chapter one, the psaltery symbolizes the perfect manifestation of the Holy Trinity. It is the *homo novus*, the embodiment of “the human being ‘infused’ with the virtues that enable the Beast to be conquered.”¹²⁴ Consequently, if Bosch were to include the fully matured and active instrument capable of destroying Evil in Hell he would risk undermining the Devil’s power. Were the Devil’s authority to be questioned, let alone broken, the hidden structure of Boschian Hell would, hypothetically, fall into anarchy. What exactly that would look like in an already manic world is impossible to imagine, yet understanding Joachim’s view of the psaltery certainly reveals the probable cause behind Bosch’s distaste for it. He worked from a rather select inventory of instruments, dedicating his fostering of desired character on the most promising and, for the most part, the most culturally relevant instruments.

It is quite apparent that the final success of the instrumental character is largely due to its relocation to Hell. On earth it could not fully free itself from the human race, which is so inclined to possess and dominate and seek sensory pleasure. Anecdotally, the celebrities of the revolution, the instruments of *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, literally refuse to be played by mankind. In 2010 a team of musicologists, craftsmen and academics from the Bates Collection at Oxford University created exact replicas of ten¹²⁵ of Bosch’s instruments and found that they were, aside from the flute and drum, completely unplayable. The rest were “either impossible to make or painful to hear.”¹²⁶ The lute actually fell apart when the team attempted to tune it, while the hurdy-gurdy made nothing more than a “half-hearted buzzing noise.” One of the researchers, Andy

¹²⁴ Holsinger, 210.

¹²⁵ Lute, harp, hurdy-gurdy, shawm, bagpipe, drum, flute, trumpet, the last two remain unlisted.

¹²⁶ Leith, Sam, “Shocking News from Oxford: You Can’t Play the Flute with Your Bottom,” *The Guardian*, (November, 2010).

Lamb, complained that the hurdy-gurdy's "strings are in the wrong position and there is even a superfluous string, while the trumpet has been coiled so many times that it is unfeasible to play and its intervals are almost certainly wrong."¹²⁷ While it is novel that these instruments, for the most part, refused the human player the joy of fine music, the discrepancies in Bosch's style raise a question: did Bosch intentionally deform his musical instruments to create suitably unobtainable instruments, or is their failed functionality merely due to the fact that he was a painter, not a craftsman? The Oxford team had replicated the instruments with hopes to play them, implying that even such experts had, at least initially, believed Bosch's instruments to be accurately painted. Yet Lamb indicates in later complaints that the hurdy-gurdy, the most problematic of the instruments (in keeping with its appropriately graceless character), was not fashioned to be held in the proper horizontal manner, nor were the strings placed where human fingers could easily reach them. However, it must be taken into consideration that Bosch was painting artistic characters, not technical diagrams. It is much more likely that his hurdy-gurdy is unplayable simply because, as an artist, Bosch was intent upon the details of aesthetics rather than the instruments functionality in the three-dimensional world. He is certainly a master of bodily distortions, a fact that could be argued in promotion of intentional deformation. Yet his nightmarish figures are blatant in their deformation. They could never trick a team of modern professionals into believing in their reality. Conclusively, the sacrifice of the instruments' precision seems to have originated from a lack of artistic importance and technical familiarity. Not even Memling's life-size instruments in *Christ as Salvator Mundi* (fig. 16.0) are as technically accurate as they

¹²⁷ University of Oxford, Bates Exhibits Musical Instruments of Torture, last modified November 4, 2010, http://www.ox.ac.uk/media/news_stories/2010/100411_1.html.

appear – and Bosch's are significantly smaller.¹²⁸ Nonetheless, the fact that Bosch's instruments actually maintain their freedom from human control in the literal world is quite amusing.

The evolution of the instrument from prop to sentient character was not likely a planned one, as stated in the introduction, but the result of Bosch's progressive obsession with and exploration of the possibilities within Hell. His obsession began quite subtly with the psaltery in chapter one and the almost tentative rendering of Nimrod's horn in chapter two, but quickly erupted in revolution through the likes of the demon Deceitful and the aristocrat-pig, and found victory in Hell's *Garden of Earthly Delights*. The distinct progression of the complete orchestra provides the viewer with a possible guide for a chronological study of his oeuvre. Although the apparent progression cannot account for instances in which Bosch may have returned to a former style of instrument representation, this essay has proven that there is a rather coherent course of development between his introduction of the instrument and its grand climax. Thus the examination of the complete collection of Bosch's instruments is radical not only in the discovery of their full identities, but also in the provision of a new method for future chronological study of his undated paintings. It seems the significance of Bosch's instruments has no end. They exert their power in every aspect of Bosch's works. They allude to their revolution before Bosch had even awoken to their full potential. The former overlook of Bosch's complete orchestra was an insult to his labors and a detriment to art historical study. However, Bosch and his instruments have evidenced quite clearly that man is perpetually a creature of error. By circumventing his fallible control, the musical

¹²⁸ Montague, Jeremy , "Musical Instruments in Hans Memling's Paintings," *Early Music* 35, no. 4 (November, 2007,) 505.

instrument managed, for a brief time in history, to subdue the constant fool and exist in supernatural monumentality outside of his limitations.