

REINTERPRETING HIERONYMUS BOSCH'S *TABLE TOP OF THE SEVEN*
DEADLY SINS AND THE FOUR LAST THINGS THROUGH THE SEVEN
DAY PRAYERS OF THE *DEVOTIO MODERNA*

Eunyoung Hwang, B.A., M.F.A.

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APPROVED:

Scott Montgomery, Major Professor

Larry Gleeson, Committee Member

Don Schol, Committee Member and Associate Dean

William McCarter, Chair of Art History and Art
Education

Jack Davis, Dean of the School of Visual Art

C. Neal Tate, Dean of the Robert B. Toulouse School of
Graduate Studies

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This thesis examines Hieronymus Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*. Instead of using an iconographical analysis, the thesis investigates the relationship between Bosch's art and the *Devotio Moderna*, which has been speculated by many Bosch scholars. For this reason, a close study was done to examine the *Devotio Moderna* and its influence on Bosch's painting. Particular interest is paid to the seven day prayers of the *Devotio Moderna*, the subjects depicted in Bosch's painting, how Bosch's painting blesses its viewer during the time of one's prayer, and how the use of gaze ties all of these ideas together.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Hieronymus Bosch(c. 1450-1516) is one of the most unique and intriguing figures in the history of Northern Renaissance Art. Bosch is best known for his paintings that include subject matter dealing with human folly, sin, and vice. He is also known for his works depicting gruesome monsters. There are many scholarly works which offer a number of theories explaining the subject matter of his paintings. However, because of the difficulty of analyzing his works in terms of a chronological approach, since none of his works is actually dated, and since Bosch himself never wrote any account of his life or paintings, there is still a great deal of debate among scholars concerning the development and interpretation of his works. Scholars such as Walter Gibson and Dirk Bax have analyzed Bosch's paintings in terms of his subject matter and themes, specifically his depictions of satire, temptation,

and social commentary.¹

Even though Bosch lived during the era which is associated with the Northern Renaissance (between 1400-1600), his works also reveal the substantial influence of the Medieval tradition. It is his unique style of combining elements of Medieval and Renaissance art that marks him as a transitional artist. Bosch is believed to have begun his career as a painter of miniatures, possibly in Utrecht.² Bosch probably painted Books of Hours, which were popular private devotional books. As Dirk Bax notes in his monograph on Bosch, it is acknowledged that Bosch's works are done in the fashion of Jan van Eyck's precursors in the late fourteenth and the early fifteenth centuries.³ Bosch's portrayal of human figures--with small upper torsos and heavy bellies--as seen in the nude figures of *Garden of Earthly Delights*, resembles Medieval figures rather than Renaissance figures. This Medieval fashion that Bosch used

¹ Walter Gibson, *Hieronymus Bosch*, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1973). Henceforth referred to as Gibson, 1973a; Dirk Bax, *Hieronymus Bosch: His Picture-Writing Deciphered*, trans. M.A. Bax-Botha (Rotterdam: A.A. Balkema; New Jersey: Abner Scharm, 1979).

² Gibson, 1973a, 26.

³ Bax, 324-5.

in many of his paintings is a major point of debate among scholars in classifying him as either a transitional artist or as a Medieval artist.⁴

As with many other artists of his time, Bosch's artistic talent was passed down to him from his family. His family name--Van Aken, originally from the German town of Aachen--first appeared in his hometown, s'Hertogenbosch, around the thirteenth century, and for generations, records show the last name Van Aken registered among the painters in that town.⁵ It is significant to pay attention to Bosch's financial and social status in his hometown. According to the tax records of s'Hertogenbosch, Bosch belonged to the wealthiest and highest class and, by 1505, he was in the top one percent of the wealthiest citizens in

⁴ Dirk Bax notes that Bosch followed Medieval tradition. However, Bosch combined Medieval elements into his contemporary style which distinguished his art from that of other artists. Bax, 324-5; Charles de Tolnay notes that Bosch was influenced by the Gothic style with which he was familiar because s'Hertogenbosch maintained a conservative artistic tradition. Charles de Tolnay, *Hieronymus Bosch*, trans. Michael Bullock and Henry Mins, (London: Methren, 1966), 11; Walter Gibson indicates that Bosch's works represent the style of Dutch illuminators and panel-painters of the fifteenth century, Gibson, 1973a, 153.

⁵ Carl Linfert, *Hieronymus Bosch*, trans. Robert Erich Wolf, (New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc. Publishers., 1971), 7.

s'Hertogenbosch.⁶ However, many painters of his time were regarded as lower class craftsmen. Due to their status as craftsmen, artists during this time were regulated by their patrons. The existing contracts between painters and patrons indicate that even the use of colors, numbers of figures, and other restrictions were determined by the patrons to fulfill their own desires, rather than those of artists.⁷ Even Albrecht Dürer(1471-1528), who was regarded as a genius in Northern Renaissance Germany and admired by both Northern and Italian artists, was limited in the use of his materials. Dürer's financial difficulties were often indicated in his letters to his patrons in the early sixteenth century. In these letters, Dürer suggested that an increase of funds should be given to him so he could

⁶ Bruno Blondè and Hans Vlieghe. "Social Status of Hieronymus Bosch," *Burlington Magazine* 131 (1989): 700.

⁷ Michael Baxandall, 'Contracts and the Client's Control' in *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-century Italy*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 2-3.

produce better works with better materials.⁸ Bosch's financial wealth might have given him freedom to express different subject matter and maintain his contact with upper classes. As a member of the wealthiest social class and owner of several properties in his hometown, he may not have had to depend on outside commissions for his livelihood. Bosch's financial status may have given him the freedom to explore his creativity rather than simply satisfy his patrons' wishes.

Among Bosch's most intriguing works is the *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* (illustration 1). The painting has been a focus of studies only in the last few decades. Until the early 1970s, scholars treated Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* as a minor work by the artist due

⁸ Albrecht Dürer, 'Letters from Venice to Wilibald Pirckheimer' in *Durer's record of Journals to Venice and the Low Countries*, ed. Roger Fry, (New York: Dover Publishers, Inc., 1995), 3-30; see also Wolfgang Stechow, 'Albrecht Dürer' in *Northern Renaissance Art 1400-1600: Sources and Documents*, ed. H.W. Janson, (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1966), 85-124.

to the debate on its authorship and date.⁹ Like many of Bosch's other paintings, the *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* has been interpreted in terms of the Folly of Man and the Seven Deadly Sins.¹⁰

Because the exact date of painting's execution is unknown, scholars have suggested that Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* was painted during the early period (c. 1480-85), the middle period (1485-1500), or the late period (1500-1516) of the artist's

⁹ Walter Gibson, "Hieronymus Bosch and the Mirror of Man: the Authorship and Iconography of the Tabletop of the Seven Deadly Sins," *Oud Holland* 87 (1973): 205. Henceforth referred to as Gibson, 1973b.

¹⁰ Walter Gibson notes that Bosch's painting reflects man's sin in the eye of God and Bosch follows Gregory the Great's order of the Seven Deadly Sins, with the exception of gluttony and sloth, Gibson, 1973b, 210; Frances Jowell writes that the painting was used to teach the viewer as a sermon, so that he/she could pursue a better life, Frances Jowell, "The Paintings of Hieronymus Bosch," *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine* 58 (1965): 131-136. Carl Linfert also indicates that Bosch's painting has a deep moralizing meaning, Linfert, 10.

career.¹¹ The identification of the patron, if any, is unknown, as is the painting's original location. However, like many of his other works, it was in the collection of Philip II of Spain in the late sixteenth century in El Escorial. The painting, like many of Bosch's other paintings, was brought to the Prado Museum in Madrid at the time of the Spanish Civil War and remains there today.¹²

Bosch's painting is composed of four roundels at the corners, surrounding a central roundel which is conceived as the Eye of God. The corner roundels depict Death, the Last Judgment, Heaven, and Hell. By using this roundel composition, Bosch turned the central circle into an eye where the image of Christ as the Man of Sorrows looks at the viewer. In the outer circle, Bosch depicted the Seven Deadly Sins: *Ira* (Anger), *Invidia* (Envy), *Avaricia* (Avarice), *Gula* (Gluttony), *Accidia* (Sloth), *Luxuria*

¹¹ The early period was suggested by James Snyder, 'Gardens of Heaven and Hell in the Arts of Bosch' in *Northern Renaissance Art: Painting, Sculpture, the Graphic Art From 1350 to 1575*, (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc. and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1985), 196 and Martin Tarangul, *Bosch*, trans. Andreea Gheorghitoiy (London: Abbey Library, 1974), 8; the middle period was suggested by de Tolnay, 15 and Gibson, 1973a, 33; the late period was suggested by Linfert, 9.

¹² <http://museoprado.mcu.es/prado/html/i39.html>

(Lust), and *Superbia* (Pride). The Latin inscription on the inner circle reads, '*Cave cave Deus Videt* (Beware Beware God Sees).' It seems that Bosch painted the Seven Deadly Sins in public and domestic settings so that his contemporaries could easily associate themselves with the sinners. Two banderols are juxtaposed surrounding the central eye in the painting. The banderol above the central image reads as follows:

'For they are a nation of void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them. O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.'¹³

The banderol below the central image reads, 'I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be.'¹⁴

These inscriptions reinforce the pictorial warning addressing sinners who have lost all sense of being watched by God. The Four Last Things at the corners of the painting represent what man faces in his immediately before and after death. They place the individual's death in a cosmic context of Divine Judgment. The Four Last Things were

¹³ Gibson, 1973a, 36; Deuteronomy 32:28. '*Gens absque consilio est et sine prudential. Utinam saperent et intelligerent ac novissima providerent.*'

¹⁴ Gibson, 1973a, 36; Deuteronomy 32:29. '*Abscondam faciem meam ab eis et considerabo novissima eorum.*'

associated with the teachings of Christianity to make people aware of their own sins and of their ultimate fate. They bring the contemplation of morality and personal salvation directly into the context of the individual's own life and eternal fate.

The use of roundels as the dominant parts of the composition, particularly as an eye reflecting God's creations, was not Bosch's invention. A similar design of the Seven Deadly Sins, also configured as a roundel, appeared in an English wall fresco of the fourteenth century (illustration 2).¹⁵ Nicholas of Cusa's *the Vision of God*, written in 1453 likens the Divine Eye of a great mirror which reflects all creation, illustrating God's ability to see all his creations.¹⁶ Bosch also used the roundel composition in many of his other works, such as *The Christ Child with a Walking-Frame*, *The Stone Operation*, *The Wayfarer*, and *Christ Crowned with Thorns* (illustration 3). In these paintings, Bosch used the roundel composition as a

¹⁵ *The Seven Deadly Sins*, fourteenth century, wall fresco, formerly in Ingatestone church in England. Gibson, 1973a, 35.

¹⁶ *The Vision of God*, written in 1453 by the German Nicholas of Cusa, Gibson, 1973a, 35.

framing device rather than a central focus of the composition. However, it is Bosch's creativity that turned the roundel design into the eye in the *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*. As noted above, in this painting, Bosch transformed the circular composition into an eye by using the inner circle as a pupil and the outer circle as a vitreous body (illustration 4).¹⁷ He painted an image of Christ as the Man of Sorrows in the inner circle as a pupil (illustration 5). Thus, the most striking scene is the center of the pupil in which Christ is rising out of the sarcophagus, displaying his wounds. Rays of light form an iris, and the Seven Deadly Sins in the outer circle define the vitreous body.

During Bosch's time, images of Christ as Redeemer were often used to evoke emotion in the viewer. For example, the *Man of Sorrows* (illustration 6) by Geertgen tot Sint Jans expresses powerful emotion which evokes the viewer's desire to be a part of Christ's Passion—to feel the pain of Christ as many medieval meditations encouraged

¹⁷ Although scholars--such as Gibson, Bax, etc.--note the outer circle as a cornea, this particular part should be identified as a vitreous body since cornea refers to the clear covering of an eye.

people to do.¹⁸ In his *Man of Sorrows*, Geertgen tot Sint Jans used both physical and emotional approaches to interact with the viewer. The overall composition of the painting has been cropped around the four edges. This device allows visual continuation of the picture plane to the viewer's space by inviting the viewer to the event depicted in the painting. He also used the image of Christ as the Man of Sorrows to bring out a viewer's compassion as one sees the physical suffering of the image of Christ. The Man of Sorrows portrays Christ showing his wounds, often with the implements of his Passion.¹⁹ Another device used by the artist is the direct gaze of Christ to grasp the viewer's attention.

The use of the direct gaze was common in devotional images during this time, as the holy figure or a secondary figure in the painting looks out at the viewer and elicits the viewer's compassion. However, the image of Christ in Bosch's painting is less bloody than that of Geertgen tot Sint Jans. Also, due to its composition and setting in a

¹⁸ Henk van Os et al., *The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe, 1300-1500*, trans. Michael Joyle, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 128.

¹⁹ James Hall, *Dictionary of Symbols and Subjects in Art*, (New York: Harper and Row Publishers Inc., 1974), 197.

larger pictorial context, Bosch's image of Christ has a different impact on its viewer. Although Christ is showing his wounds and looking out at the viewer, it is Christ's gaze and man's sin reflected upon the eye that makes the viewer aware of himself or herself. The direct eye contact between Christ and the viewer is augmented by the input of the gaze through the giant eye of God which turns the viewer into the subject. The gaze of Christ functions as a mediator by involving the viewer with the figures and scenes of the painting.²⁰

Walter Gibson suggests that Bosch's painting was used as a visual reinforcement in a time of contemplation as an exhaustive inquiry into the viewer's morals which a religious person was encouraged to avow.²¹ Through the Eye of God, one sees himself or herself and becomes aware of personal sin. Perhaps more striking is the fact that God appears to see all human sins as reflected upon the Eye of God. The written inscription reinforces this reading along with representing the interaction between the image and

²⁰ The use of gaze as a mediator will be discussed further in chapter four.

²¹ Gibson, 1973a, 37.

text. The inscription below Christ is written as a warning to the viewer that God sees all. However, the inscriptions on the banderols are written in first person as though evoking God's response when the viewer reads and sees this image.²²

During the Medieval era, people were preoccupied with the notion of sin. The Seven Deadly Sins, a common subject of preaching in the Medieval period, were believed to cause punishment and the destruction of one's soul.²³ It was one of the most common sources of fear of the late Medieval Christianity which was reflected in the literature of this period.²⁴ Scholars in Bosch's time, such as Erasmus of Rotterdam, Sebastian Brant, and Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa were concerned with sin, and they wrote literature dealing

²² See footnote 13 and 14 on page 8.

²³ Norton Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins: An Introduction to the History of a Religious Concept, with Special Reference to Medieval English Literature*, (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1952), 43.

²⁴ Robert N. Swanson, *Religion and Devotion in Europe c. 1215-1515*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 194.

with human folly and sin.²⁵ Likewise Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471) wrote *Of the Imitation of Christ*, in which he urged man to imitate the life of Christ to redeem himself or herself. Bosch must have been aware of these literary works. Certainly, his painting, the *Ship of Fools* (c. 1495), is parallel to Sebastian Brant's nearly contemporary treatise of the same name.

In his works, Bosch mostly depicted subject matter and themes of concern to the popular religious movement known as the *Devotio Moderna*, Modern Devotion. Due to its popularity among the citizens of s'Hertogenbosch, speculations have risen regarding the relationship between the *Devotio Moderna* and Bosch, particularly Bosch's potential involvement with the *Devotio Moderna*.²⁶ Over the years, studies of the *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins* and the *Four Last Things* have focused on its use as an aid

²⁵ Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools* (1494) and Erasmus of Rotterdam's *In Praise of Folly* (1504) deal with human folly; Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa's *De Originali Peccato* (Concerning Original Sin in 1529) deals with sin.

²⁶ Anne Simonson, "On Spiritual Creativity in Hieronymus Bosch," *Fifteenth Century Studies* 18 (1991): 231.

to meditation.²⁷ In this light, scholars have speculated on the relationship between Bosch and the *Devotio Moderna*. However, thus far, little solid evidence has come to light to support this theory. The *Devotio Moderna* emphasized imitating the Passion of Christ; this same passion is among the favorite subjects depicted by Bosch as can be seen in his *Christ Crowned with Thorns* (illustration 32). His images of the *Wayfarer* also parallels the *Devotio Moderna's* teachings on poverty. Given these thematic connections, the study of Bosch's paintings should focus on the subjects depicted and their parallel to the themes of the *Devotio Moderna*.

Since the Middle Ages, the predominant religion in western culture has been Christianity. The art produced during this time reflects the belief of Christian thoughts and teachings.²⁸ Visual images produced during this time have dual roles based on the status of the viewers. The

²⁷ Gibson acknowledges that the painting was used as a visual aid in time of the meditation, Gibson, 1973a, 37; Wilhelm Fraenger, also notes the painting as an aid to meditation, Wilhelm Fraenger, *Hieronymus Bosch*, trans. Helen Sebba, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1983), 268.

²⁸ See Michael Camille, "Seeing and Reading: Some Visual Implications of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy," *Art History* 8 (1985): 24-49.

majority of the population was illiterate. A common man was able to learn about Christian teachings through the visual images which functioned as a communicator to the illiterate. Through the repetition of clear, didactic images, it was simple and easy to identify the messages that were necessary for the illiterate to understand the teachings of Christianity. For this reason, images had a great impact on these viewers since they functioned as the visual sources for religious understanding.

For the upper class audiences who were literate, images served as visual aids during the time of their meditations. Images were used as a secondary element during personal prayers upon the religious ideas. Since Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* contains written inscriptions in Latin, it is certain that the painting was done for someone with high education who could read and contemplate upon the inscriptions' significance. For this reason, the study of Bosch's painting should focus on the written words to provide, as well as prove, the connection between the art and the literature of the time.

As an ongoing study, several questions are raised concerning the meaning and function of Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*. For example, did this painting have any relation to the *Devotio Moderna*, as many scholars relate Bosch with the movement? Given the artist's choice of composition, turning the central roundel into an eye, one should question the role it plays in this painting. Is the painting the subject for the viewer to look at or vice versa? How might the viewer turn into a subject who is being watched under Christ's gaze? What better way to look into one's soul than through the eye that depicts the image of Christ who looks directly at the viewer. After all, the eye is the window of the soul. All these questions can be answered by examining the iconographical, social, and religious content of Bosch's time in relation to the theoretical concept of gaze.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This thesis will analyze Hieronymus Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* and the way in which the gaze of Christ turns the viewer into the subject of the painting. The thesis will contextualize this

by examining the *Devotio Moderna* and the meaning of the gaze, as well as a theory of perception.

METHODOLOGY

This research is based on an examination of the composition of the painting as well as an understanding of the concept of the gaze. The methodology of this thesis is similar to that found in David Freedberg's *The Power of Images: Studies and the History and Theory of Response* and John Shearman's *Only Connect...Art and the Spectator in the Italian Renaissance*. By utilizing both of these authors' perceptual theories, this thesis attempts to analyze the iconographical, social, and religious content of Bosch's time to determine how they are related to his work. It is important to understand the image's function to its audience. Bosch painted the image of Christ looking out at the viewers in his other works such as *Christ Carrying the Cross* and *Christ Crowned with Thorns*. Through the use of the gaze in these paintings, as well as in the *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*, the viewer becomes the subject who is being watched, rather than the one who is watching the painting. For this reason, this thesis examines the function of the visual image and its

audience to show their relation to the use of the gaze in Bosch's painting.

Since Bosch's work was examined in terms of its impact on its proposed audience, it was important to understand Bosch's painting from an anthropological perspective. For instance, Michael Baxandall's *Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany* is an example of the employment of these methodologies. Baxandall looks into the limewood sculptures based on geographical, social, cultural, and religious influence, rather than using iconography as a core of his methodology. Baxandall's anthropological perspective of examining the limewood sculptures and how they are interrelated with the society who produced them is an approach that will be used in this thesis. For this reason, various sources were used for this approach.

This thesis paid attention to the compositional design of Bosch's painting and the religious movement of the *Devotio Moderna* in the late Medieval era. Since the *Devotio Moderna* was a popular religious movement in Bosch's hometown during his life, it is important to look into what the *Devotio Moderna* was and how it impacted its believers.

Primary sources include translated writings from Thomas à Kempis' *Of Imitations of Christ* and *Devotio Moderna: Basic Writings*. These sources provide insight into the religious belief of the time as it is reflected in the painting's iconography and composition. This thesis also looks at several monographs on Bosch such as Walter Gibson's *Hieronymus Bosch*, Charles de Tolnay's *Hieronymus Bosch*, and Roger H. Marijnissen's *Hieronymus Bosch: The Complete Works* to gain a better understanding of the artist and his works. Secondary sources also include Sixten Ringbom's 'Some Pictorial Conventions for the Recounting of Thoughts and Experiences in Late Medieval Art' in *Medieval Iconography and Narrative*, as well as John A. Walker and Sarah Chaplin's 'Look, the Gaze and Surveillance' in *Visual Cultures: An Introduction*. The former source provides the significance of Bosch's use of juxtaposition in his painting. The latter source helps to understand the theoretical concept of the gaze and its relationship to the painting, the artist, and the viewer. This thesis attempts to analyze the meaning of the gaze and how the gaze in the painting turns the viewer into the subject. This thesis looks into Michael Baxandall's notion of a "period eye" in

his *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy*. This source will be helpful in understanding how people viewed the world around them during Bosch's time.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Although much literature has been written about Hieronymus Bosch, most of the monographic publications are based on iconographical and stylistic analysis. Other publications deal with analyzing Bosch's work in the context of human folly, social satire, and surrealistic images. For example, Dirk Bax's *Hieronymus Bosch* is based on the iconographical interpretation of Bosch's works.²⁹ Bax regards Bosch as an innovator who incorporated the Medieval tradition to create something of his own. He notes that Bosch's use of monsters was derived from the Medieval tradition as seen on the flying buttresses of the Cathedral of St. John in s'Hertogenbosch. However, it was Bosch's creativity that combine the monsters with human figures in his paintings, thereby creating gruesome images such as those in his *Garden of Earthly Delights*. Bax points out that Bosch used common earthly objects in his paintings.

²⁹ See footnote 1 on page 2.

However, Bosch's innovation transformed common everyday objects into new objects in his paintings.

In his book, *Hieronymus Bosch*, Carl Linfert gives individual analyses of Bosch's works.³⁰ He also points out the importance of Bosch's drawings as preliminary sketches for the paintings. However, unlike other scholars, Linfert dates Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* to a time period late in the artist's career due to Bosch's realistic depiction of folly.

In his "Hieronymus Bosch and the Mirror of Man: the Authorship and Iconography of the Tabletop of the Seven Deadly Sins," Walter Gibson summarizes the iconography of the painting with the notion of the mirror image.³¹ Gibson notes that human sins are reflected through the image of the eye as a mirror. The author notes that the Eye of God in Bosch's painting has a more complex function than what it initially appears to have. The mirror metaphor expresses the concept that God is the mirror or archetype of the soul. The Seven Deadly Sins have been used since early Christian thought, and they reflect the sins of man in the

³⁰ See footnote 5 on page 3.

³¹ See footnote 9 on page 6.

eye of God. In conclusion, Gibson notes that the image was created to aid personal meditation.

In *Hieronymus Bosch: The Complete Works*, Roger H. Marijnissen provides an extensive collection of sources by other authors.³² Marijnissen tracks down written sources of the provenance of the *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* as early as the sixteenth century and gives several thorough examples of other scholars' studies of Bosch's painting. He also breaks down the painting by each component part. For example, he provides a detailed iconographical analysis of the Seven Deadly Sins individually.

In his *Hieronymus Bosch*, Charles de Tolnay regards Bosch as an innovator who broke away from the conventional ties with the church by creating an independent form for the viewer.³³ He focuses on the context of the *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* in the Medieval tradition of virtue imagery. De Tolnay notes that Bosch's representation of genre scenes secularizes the

³² Roger H. Marijnisse, *Hieronymus Bosch: The Complete Works*, trans. Ted Alkins et al., (New York: Tabard Press, 1987).

³³ See footnote 4 on page 3.

abstract concepts of virtue to aid the viewer in better understanding the painting. In Bosch's painting, vice takes on forms from everyday life rather than allegorical personifications as was previously common.

It is these concepts that are most interesting in Walter Gibson's *Hieronymus Bosch*.³⁴ Rather than trying to interpret Bosch's paintings in chronological order, he analyzes Bosch's works based on the subject matter and themes which were most often depicted by the artist. Gibson also makes an anthropological interpretation of Bosch's works based on social and cultural contexts as opposed to focusing only on aspects intrinsic to the painting. He notes the importance of the Medieval attitude of the artist. Gibson relates Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* to a fourteenth century poem by Guillaume de Degulleville, *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*, and a fifteenth century poem by Sebastain Brant, *The Ship of Fools*. Gibson notes that the human condition and fate are presented in a series of circular images displaying a remarkable vitality and keenness and psychological observation.

³⁴ See footnote 1 on page 2.

Although there is an extensive amount of literature on Hieronymus Bosch, only the limited number of sources cited above analyze Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*. These studies focus mainly on the painting in terms of its composition through the themes of the folly of man. Although Gibson gives a more satisfactory analysis of Bosch's painting compared to other authors, his study is still limited by its focus on the humanistic interpretation of sin and the eye in the painting. It is important to re-examine this painting through a perceptual theory in conjunction with religious, social, and cultural aspects of Bosch's time instead of focusing on one aspect. But most of all, this thesis examines the use of Christ's gaze and audience response to the painting. The gaze of Christ interacts with the viewer, and looks upon human sins. The gaze of Christ makes the viewer part of the subject in Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*.

CHAPTER TWO

HIERONYMUS BOSCH'S *TABLE TOP OF THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS*
AND *THE FOUR LAST THINGS*

Erwin Panofsky's *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character* was revolutionary in the study of Northern Renaissance Art.³⁵ This book was a milestone which validated Northern Renaissance Art as a new avenue of study for scholars. From Panofsky's publication until the early 1980s, iconography was the central focus of the study of Northern Renaissance Art.³⁶ However, the trend of study, since the early 1980s, has shifted from Panofsky's iconographic approach to the study of social context, due, in part, to Michael Baxandall's publication of the *Limewood*

³⁵ Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character*, (New York: Harvard University Press and Harper and Row Publishers, 1953); see also Larry Silver, "The State of Research in Northern European Art of the Renaissance Era," *Art Bulletin* 68 (1986): 518.

³⁶ Silver, 518.

Sculptors of Renaissance Germany.³⁷ Since much study has already been done on iconography, and because the study of iconography has limitations when it is applied without its context, more scholars are paying attention to the meaning and function of art rather than iconography as an isolated phenomenon.³⁸

Because of the popularity of iconographic interpretation, Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* has been the focus of studies based on its symbolism, subject matter, and its relation to some of Bosch's other paintings. Although Bosch painted several other works depicting Death, the Last Judgment, the Seven Deadly Sins, and Christ as the Man of Sorrows--such as *Seven Deadly Sins*, *the Death and the Miser*, *Haywain*, and *Christ with Thorns*--, the composition of the *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* is unique in

³⁷ Michael Baxandall, *Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany*, (New Heaven and London: Yale University Press, 1980).

³⁸ For example, most of works published prior to 1980s dealt with iconographic interpretation of Bosch's works such as Bax, Ludwig von Baldass, *Hieronymus Bosch*, (New York: Henry N. Abrams, 1960), and Robert L. Delevoy, *Bosch: Biographical and Critical Study*, (New York: Crown Publishers Inc., 1960).

its representation among other European paintings.³⁹ This chapter will focus on each subject depicted in Bosch's painting.

The Passion of Christ

As stated earlier, Christ in the center of the circle is surrounded by 128 rays of light which reach out to the outer circle where the scenes of the Seven Deadly Sins are depicted (illustration 4 and 5). This image of Christ as the Man of Sorrows illustrates Christ's compassion and salvation for mankind.⁴⁰ It reminds the viewer what Christ has done to save mankind's soul. This half-length image of Christ was one of the popular themes depicted by Bosch. In many of his paintings, Bosch portrayed the suffering image of Christ as a "half-length *Andachtsbild*" as seen in *Christ*

³⁹ Von Baldass, 22-3: *Seven Deadly Sins*, currently located in the Fine Art Foundation, Switzerland, the *Death and the Miser*, currently located in the National Gallery in Washington D. C., *Haywain*, currently located in the Prado Museum in Spain, and *Christ with Thorns*, currently located in the Prado Museum in Spain.

⁴⁰ Van Os et al., 106.

Carrying the Cross and *Christ Crowned with Thorns*.⁴¹

Although there is no record of Christ as the Man of Sorrows in the Gospels, this image of Christ was developed and popularized during the late Middle Ages.⁴²

The Seven Deadly Sins

The combination of the Seven Deadly Sins with the image of Christ as the Man of Sorrows presents a great contrast to the viewer as one looks at mankind's vices and the sacrifices that Christ made for sinful man. The Christian belief that Christ suffered for the redemption of man's sins evokes the viewer's personalized guilt as he sees the suffering image of Christ. As stated earlier, in the late Middle Ages, the vices and virtues, along with the Seven Deadly Sins, were popular subjects depicted by

⁴¹ Sixten Ringbom, *Narrative to Icon: the Rise of the Dramatic Close-up in Fifteenth-Century Devotional Painting*, Acta Academiae Aboensis, ser. A. Humanioria, vol. 31 (Abo: Abo Akademi, 1965), 156; *Christ Carrying the Cross* is currently located in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Ghent, and *Christ Crowned with Thorns* is located in the National Gallery, London.

⁴² James H. Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: A study of the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative*, ed. J. Deschamps and P. J. J. Van Thiel, vol. 1, *Ars Neerlandica*, (Brussels: Van Ghemmert Publishing Company, 1979), 46.

artists. These vices and virtues were represented in human or animal forms that were often incorporated into contemporary settings.⁴³ In the early fifth century text, *Psychomachia*, by Prudentinus, these vices were depicted in allegorical human forms.⁴⁴ In Bosch's painting, these vices are portrayed through the everyday life of his contemporaries which serve as direct representations of each sin rather than allegorical depictions. Thus, the scenes depicted in Bosch's painting, due to its detailed images, reflect Bosch's close observation of daily life and nature thereby forging a connection between the viewer's experience and the subjects depicted in the painting. For example, Robert L. Delevoy notes that the landscape in Bosch's painting resembles the scenery of Oirschot where the artist lived early in his career.⁴⁵

⁴³ Baldass, 22.

⁴⁴ Adolf E. M. Katzenellenbogen, *Allegories of the Virtues and Vices in Medieval Art from Early Christian Times to the Thirteenth Century*, (London: The Warburg Institute; New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1939, 1964), 1; *Aurelii Prudentii Clementis Carmina*, ed. Joannes Bergman (Corp. Script. Eccl. Lat. LXI, Viena-Leipzig, 1926), 165ff.

⁴⁵ Delevoy, 21.

Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* is still problematic to many scholars as to whether it was actually used as a table top or not. When one understands its function as a table top or a painting to be hung on the wall, he/she will then be able to determine the order of reading the Seven Deadly Sins. For example, was it actually used as a table top? If so, then it explains the composition of the Seven Deadly Sins which the viewer has to move around to see each depiction of the Seven Deadly Sins. However, this brings out problems of looking at the *Four Last Things*, the image of Christ emerging from the sarcophagus, and the inscriptions. Is there any particular order of reading the Seven Deadly Sins, or could the Seven Deadly Sins be read without any particular order? The design of the Seven Deadly Sins, as seen in illustration 4, is similar to a rose window. Bosch must have been familiar with the design of the rose windows which were important in Gothic architecture. It is possible that Bosch was thinking about rose windows when he painted the Seven Deadly Sins as he participated and designed

stained-glass windows for the Church of St. John.⁴⁶ Considering this compositional device of the Seven Deadly Sins, one might ponder the possibility that Bosch was familiar with the "metaphysics of light," an important part of the theology of Pseudo-Dionysius which is associated with Gothic art.⁴⁷ Like a radiating light that God scatters on the world, there is no particular order of reading the Seven Deadly Sins because they are all the basis of human sins which caused the death of Christ. This also makes a contrast between the divine power of Christ and his salvation for mankind and human vices which caused his death.

Due to the lack of information written by the artist in regard to this particular piece, one cannot be sure whether there is a particular order in which the Seven Deadly Sins should be read. For this reason, the reading of the Seven Deadly Sins in this chapter is based on the way one perceives the image of Christ and starting with the

⁴⁶ Gibson, 1973a, 17.

⁴⁷ Michael Camille, *Gothic Art: Glorious Visions*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1996), 42.

image below Christ and reading clockwise from Anger to Pride.

Anger (*Ira*)

Below Christ is the scene of Anger (illustration 7). Standford M. Lyman notes that Anger is possibly the most menacing and temperamental emotion of human nature which grounds the downfall of communal regulation.⁴⁸ In this aspect, Anger endangers human virtues.⁴⁹ Anger (illustration 8) is portrayed on the façade of Amiens Cathedral as a lady terrorizing a monk who is studying.⁵⁰ Among the three fundamental sins, Pride and Envy being the other two, Anger isolates man from himself, whereas Pride isolates him from God, and Envy isolates him from neighbor.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Standford M. Lyman, *The Seven Deadly Sins: Society and Evil*, (New York: General Hall, Inc., 1989), 110.

⁴⁹ Lyman, 111.

⁵⁰ Emile Mâle notes that at Paris Cathedral, Anger is portrayed as a layman, whereas, at Chartres and Amiens, it is portrayed as a woman. Emile Mâle, *The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century*, trans. Dora Nussey, (New York and London: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1958), 123; Lyman, 111.

⁵¹ Lyman, 111; In the central roundel, Bosch depicted these three fundamental sins right below the image of Christ.

In Bosch's painting, Anger depicts a fight between two drunken men in front of a country brothel. A woman tries to stop a man armed with a sword by holding him. Erik Larsen suggests that the woman is the lady of the house who is trying to calm her husband.⁵² With her right hand, she holds him by his belt while she grapples with the hilt of his sword with her left hand. It looks as though she has control over the drunken man. Meanwhile, the man on the left side wears a chair on his head as though it could protect him from the other man's sword. He looks like he is struggling more with his own cloak, which overlaps his body, than with the other man. To his left, a table is overturned, presumably from an early phase of this struggle. The overall representation of a fight scene with objects on the ground and human gestures representing emotion indicates Bosch's close observation of the dramatic effects of fighting. George Huppert notes that the public brothel was one of the last available places for a

⁵² Erik Larsen, *Heironymus Bosch*, (New York: Smithmark Publishers, 1998), 114.

journeyman to rest.⁵³ Bosch might have used this setting, with which he was familiar, since he was a journeyman before he became a master and witnessed these activities in person. But, one cannot be sure who these characters are or even who started the fight and why he started it.

The turbulence of the fight scene makes a great contrast to the peaceful Flemish landscape in the background. Bosch, as a pious person, might have disapproved of the public brothel, although it was not considered as a disgrace in the society and was managed through the government system.⁵⁴ Bosch might have looked at it as a vice in the society. The parallel between peaceful nature and disgraceful human act is carried out through the contrast between the fight and the beautiful landscape.

Envy (*Invidia*)

The scene following Anger is Envy (illustration 9).

⁵³ George Huppert, *After the Black Death: A Social History of Early Modern Europe*, ed. Harbey J. Gratt, *Interdisciplinary Studies in History*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986), 39.

⁵⁴ Huppert, 38.

Envy, a danger to human relationships, depicts a presumably rejected suitor in front of an urban shop.⁵⁵ A young nobleman is represented holding a hawk on his hand while he watches two couples—a young woman with her lover who offers a flower to her and an elderly couple, probably her parents. While the older man inside of the shop looks out at the young nobleman, the young couple on the left show their tender affection. Although the nobleman is depicted in the foreground along with the young couple, he appears detached from them.

Although this scene represents Envy, it is not certain what is actually going on. If it is a depiction of a rejected suitor then who, among these two men, is rejected by whom? It appears that the older man is in favor of the nobleman by the way he looks at him. However, his daughter appears to favor the young man who is offering a flower to her. The figure to the right who carries a bag might hold the answer. If he is making a delivery of marriage dowry to the nobleman's estate, then the young man is the rejected suitor. Yet, by the way the young nobleman

⁵⁵ Lyman, 184.

looks at the young couple, it appears that the marriage arrangement was made by the old man and the young nobleman without any consideration of the young woman.

The old man is holding a bone in his hand while a gray dog, below the window, is barking at him. It looks as though the dog is close to getting his bone while another dog on the right side watches him enviously; similar to the way in which the young man watches the young couple. This particular scene parallels the dog's envy with that of the nobleman.

Greed (*Avaricia*)

The next scene following Envy is Greed (illustration 10). As some regard it, Greed is the prime sin which inverts affection to passion, relaxation to laziness, appetite to gorge, dignity to self-ego, displeasure to outrage, and respect to jealousy.⁵⁶ Greed is associated with human desire, and, as a sin, it correlates with man's anxiety toward richness and property.⁵⁷ The association of

⁵⁶ James Ogilvy, 'Greed,' ed. Robert C. Solomon, *Wicked Pleasures: Meditations on the Seven "Deadly" Sins*, (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999), 87.

⁵⁷ Lyman, 232.

greed with money goes back to the thirteenth century. On the façade of Amiens Cathedral, Greed (illustration 11) is personified as an image of a woman sitting on a bench, putting money into a chest.⁵⁸

Bosch depicts Greed through an image of a corrupted magistrate taking bribes from both sides of claimants in a case. He sits on a bench holding a *bailiff*, a stick known as a *baljuqsroede* or *doornstocxken*, which symbolizes his status as a judge.⁵⁹ While listening to one claimant, he reaches out his left hand to receive a bribe from the other. The man on the right side is handing over his money to the judge, indicating the corruption of justice by peoples' greed. The setting of this scene is similar to that of Anger in that both depict the parallel between nature and shameful human activities which take place in God's creation.

Gluttony (*Gula*)

⁵⁸ Mâle, 117; Lyman, 233-4.

⁵⁹ Marijnissen, 332.

Gluttony (illustration 12) follows Greed, and it is associated with people who have a great appetite for food.⁶⁰ In a thirteenth century manuscript of the *Miroir de Vie et de Mort*, Gula is portrayed as a woman holding a glass.⁶¹ In Bosch's painting, it is depicted as a peasant family at mealtime. The fat man sitting in the table is eating and drinking without sharing his main course with a skinny beggar on the right who is only drinking. His wife enters the room with a cooked bird on a plate. The fat little boy reaches out for the food, and, like his father, his greed for food is represented here as he stands beside his father and gorges. In this case, Gluttony represents man's greed in regard to food which follows the previous scene, suggesting a link between Greed and Gluttony.

Sloth (*Accidia*)

Sloth, *accidie* in Middle English, means 'without care.'⁶² In mental and physical aspects, Sloth is associated with a deficiency of compassion toward oneself or to others

⁶⁰ Lyman, 212.

⁶¹ *Miroir de Vie et de Mort*, 1276, in Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, MS. 2200, f. 164; Mâle, 107-8.

⁶² Lyman, 5.

in a person who is passive, inactive, and sluggish.⁶³ In the Gospels, *acedia* is most impressively illustrated in the sleeping Apostles in Gethsemane and the Lord's warning words, "'Vigilate et orate,'"⁶⁴ In the popular Medieval book of Guillaume de Deguileville's *Pelerinage de la vie humaine*, an early fourteenth-century work, Sloth is portrayed as an old woman whose master is the chief butcher of Hell. She ambushes the pilgrim hero, young people, and sailors when they are vulnerable.⁶⁵ The portrayal of the sins as traps set by the devil makes an outstanding example to the viewer as it addresses the weakness of mankind and the lack of his faith in God that lead him to Hell. The idea of a careless mind and action toward God creates a contrast to the viewer: the image of Christ as the Man of Sorrows juxtaposed against human sins.

⁶³ Lyman, 5.

⁶⁴ 'Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The Sprit indeed is willing, but the Flesh is week.' Matthew 26: 41; Siegfried Wenzel, *The Sin of Sloth: Acedia in Medieval Thoughts and Literature*, (North Carolina: the University of North Carolina Press, 1960, 1967), 102.

⁶⁵ Guillaume de Deguileviile, *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*. Trans. John Lydgate(1426), ed. Furnivallank K.B. Locock, (London: 1899-1904), cited in Bloomfield, 269; also see Lyman, 7-8.

In Bosch's painting, Sloth (illustration 13) depicts a man taking a nap in front of a fireplace at a time when he is supposed to be reading the Bible or a Books of Hours. His closed book is laid on top of a long bench facing the viewer. Next to him, his dog cuddles up and takes a nap, like his master. Here, as in the scene of Envy, Bosch used another parallel between humans and dogs. This might be an indication of a message about sin as a part of man's lower, bestial nature, while the choice of virtue connects man to his higher potential. In this scene, a woman points at the sleeping man with her left hand while holding a book--probably the Bible or a prayer book--with her right hand. It is not certain whether she is a nun or a lay sister. However, it was common for the Sisters of Common Life to dress simply and modestly so that they did not draw attention from men.⁶⁶ It is a moralizing scene which points out the laziness of a man who is not fulfilling his daily

⁶⁶ Salome Sticken (1369-1449) to the Sisters of the Common Life, English version in van Engen, 180-1; see also Hyma, 1924, 583.

ritual of personal piety.⁶⁷ The use of two main figures, who show contrasting attitudes toward devotion, in this image closely resembles the story of the wise and foolish Virgins that stresses the need to be ever alert and ready for the Kingdom of Heaven.⁶⁸

Lust (*Luxuria*)

Lust correlates with man's irresistible desire for intercourse.⁶⁹ It is a sin commonly associated with the Fall of Man which caused the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. On Amiens Cathedral, Lust is depicted as a couple embracing.⁷⁰ Bosch depicts Lust (illustration 14) through two young aristocratic couples in a tent surrounded by a peaceful landscape. Both couples are drinking and chatting while two fools amuse them. Outside of the tent, a bowl of cherries is laid on top of the table along with a wine bottle. Cherries, along with musical instruments on

⁶⁷ Martin Tarangul identifies the man sleeping by the fire is a priest who is not fulfilling his religious duty, whereas most other scholars note him as a common man not fulfilling his daily duty, Tarangul, 7.

⁶⁸ Matthew 25: 1-13.

⁶⁹ Lyman, 53.

⁷⁰ Mâle, 119.

the ground, represent symbols of lust.⁷¹ The setting of the peaceful landscape in this scene reminds the viewer of God's creation of the Garden of Eden. It is obvious that Bosch placed these foolish couples in the outdoor landscape to remind the viewer that God's creation of the pure and peaceful place has been corrupted by human beings' foolish desires. This image makes a great contrast to the image of Courtly Love which is also represented through the aristocrats as seen in Housebook Master's *Pair of Lovers* (c.1485). Courtly Love depicts how the aristocrats supposedly behaved in a dignified courtly manner. Throughout the Seven Deadly Sins, Bosch used universal social strata to make a statement that, regardless of one's status in the society, man has a weakness which leads him to sin.⁷²

⁷¹ Hall, 217-9. Bagpipes, lute harp, lyre, organ, and viol symbolize lust.

⁷² The scenes of Anger, Envy, Sloth, and Pride are portrayed through middle class bourgeois. Greed is portrayed through a representative of the state and law, Greed is portrayed through the lower peasant family, and Lust through the aristocrats.

Pride (*Superbia*)

The last sin depicted in the painting is Pride (illustration 15), which was often regarded as one of the most dangerous sins rooted in one's pride against God. This sin can be seen in the story of the fallen angel, Lucifer, and Gregory the Great indicated that *superbia* is the base of all sins.⁷³ Pride disassociates man from God and society and leaves him without any companions.⁷⁴ Pride is, in part, a sin of judgment, an intellectual deviation, involving bias in favor of oneself.⁷⁵

In Bosch's painting, Pride portrays a woman wearing a fashionable hat in front of a mirror. The scene is depicted inside of a house where the woman stands alone. Because the woman is only concentrating on her appearance, she does not realize that the mirror is held by Lucifer. Lucifer was a fallen angel, exiled to Hell by his own pride over God. Lucifer is also seen as the origin of evil in the world and

⁷³ Lyman, 136.

⁷⁴ Lyman, 136-7.

⁷⁵ Jerome New, 'Pride and Identity,' ed. Robert C. Solomon, *Wicked Pleasures: Meditations of the Seven "Deadly" Sins*, (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999), 54.

Bosch explores this in some of his triptychs, particularly the *Last Judgment*. Also, during the Medieval period, Lucifer was portrayed in human form with a number of demonic appearances.⁷⁶ Here, Lucifer holds the mirror while wearing a hat which resembles the one worn by the woman. Bosch uses a mirror as a reflection of blindness of mankind, a common device in analogous works of Medieval art. A mirror held by a skeleton--representing death--was often depicted in Medieval and Northern Renaissance art to remind the viewer that the physical beauty of external appearance is not important. In Laux Furtenagel's *Portrait of the Artist Hans Burgkmair and His Wife Anna* (illustration 16) and in the sixteenth-century German print of *The Devil's and the Angel's Mirrors* (illustration 17), the artists used mirrors as devices which reflect the image of a skeleton rather than the physical reflection of the sitters. By this device, they represent the notion that, regardless of age, gender, and social status, death comes

⁷⁶ Hall, 272.

to all.⁷⁷ Yet, human beings are blinded by their own appearances. Because of their pride over their own physicality, they do not see the devil's temptations.

The Four Last Things

The Four Last Things--Death, the Last Judgment, Paradise or Heaven, and Hell--are depicted on the outer corners of the painting. This placement is similar to the use of the four medallions of the virtues placed at the corners of the pictures seen in the *Unknown Ruler* (illustration 18) and *the Archbishop Frederick and the Cardinal Virtues* (illustration 19).⁷⁸

Death

The scene of Death (illustration 20) in the upper-left corner depicts a man on his death bed surrounded by members of the clergy. An angel and a devil are both present at his death bed: the angel on the right side of the bedboard and the devil on the left. The significance of

⁷⁷ This is also associated with a *Memento Mori*.

⁷⁸ Katzenellenbogen, 32; *Unknown Ruler and the Cardinal Virtues*, from *Cambrai Gospels*, 9th century Cambrai, Bibilothèque Municipale and *Archbishop Frederick and the Cardinal Virtues*, from *Rhenish Lectionary*, c. 1130, Cologne Cathedral.

their placement is parallel to the placement of Heaven on the lower right, and Hell, on the lower left corners. On the left side of the bed is a skeleton holding an arrow pointed at the dying man. The monk in the foreground is holding a crucifix. This is a dramatic image as it represents the last moments of a man as he is about to make his final choice which will determine his afterlife. The subject matter and composition of this scene is very close to Bosch's painting of *Death of the Miser* (illustration 21).

It is obvious that this was an important subject to Bosch as he created a painting that is entirely devoted to it. In *Death of the Miser*, both the angel and devils are present at the miser's death bed. Death stands at the door and the miser, in his death bed, is still tempted by the money sack handed out by a devil while the angel calls attention to the image of a crucifix which appears in the window.⁷⁹

The subject depicted here relates to the *Ars Moriendi*. *Ars Moriendi*--the art of dying--was a popular

⁷⁹ Anne M. Morganster, "The Pawns in Bosch's *Death and the Miser*," *Studies in the History of Art* 12 (1982): 33.

book among the laity and commoners and was widely published during the Middle Ages. The *Ars Moriendi* is a complex subject matter that depicts Medieval man's belief and faith. It was popular in the form of block books so it could be widely distributed and owned by the common laymen who could not obtain lavish Books of Hours. It depicts the struggle between devils and angels over a dying man's soul.⁸⁰ Adrian and Joyce Lancaster Wilson note that the significance of the earliest version of the xylographic *Ars Moriendi* in the Netherlands is that it is recognized as the respected *chef d'oeuvre* of the Netherlandish block books.⁸¹ They depict images of clerics and a dying man as supplement to the texts.⁸²

Death played an important role in the minds of Medieval people as the Black Death caused a major decrease in the population. Although the Black Death reached its

⁸⁰ *The Oxford Dictionary of Art*, ed. Ian Chilvers et al., (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 25-6.

⁸¹ Adrian Wilson and Joyce Lancaster Wilson, *A Medieval Mirror: Speculum Humanae Salvationis 1324-1500*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: The University of California Press, 1984), 98.

⁸² A. Wilson and J. Wilson, 98.

peak during the fourteenth century, it reappeared sporadically over the next three hundred years in Europe.⁸³ Also, as one looked at the Black Death as a sign of punishment from God, many turned their fear of God to Christianity, which increased their spirituality and the patronage of art. Since the painting depicts what man faces in his last moment of death and what follows after that, it is possible that Bosch painted this painting as a reflection of the *Ars Moriendi* which was popular during this time. Since the subject depicted in the painting represent the Seven Deadly Sins and the consequences of these sins after death, it is possible that the *Ars Moriendi* had an influence on Bosch.

A critical point in the *Ars Moriendi* is the weighing of the man's soul to determine his fate after death. In his last moments, he has the final choice to make. He has the option to show his faith in God. If he chooses God, he will be guided to the doors of Heaven by angels. However, if he chooses the devil, he will be damned to Hell for eternity. A

⁸³ De Lamar Jensen, *Renaissance Europe: Age of Recovery and Reconciliation*, (Massachusetts and Toronto: D. C. Heath and company, 1981), 86.

man's temptation toward worldly objects and sin is the weakest part of human nature which reflects the sin of Greed. In his last moment on Earth, man does not need material possessions; however, it is man's greed that blinds him. The faithful man--the righteous one--will look upon the angel or the sign of Christ to show his faith in God and ignore earthly temptations. This will guide him to Heaven where he is greeted by angels. *Ars Moriendi* also reflects Medieval man's fascination with, and fear of, the Last Judgment.

The Last Judgment

On the upper right is a scene of the Last Judgment (illustration 22) which represents the second coming of Christ as the divine judge. It is one of the most popular subjects depicted in the visual arts during Medieval time. The notion of death, end of the world, and the judgment fascinated people and directed many of their actions and thoughts. The popularity of the Last Judgment as a theme can be observed in the carved portals of Medieval churches, to remind people of the eternal significance of their actions as they enter and leave the buildings. This can be seen in the central Tympanum of the south portal of St.

Pierre, Moissac, France (illustration 23) and the tympanum of the west portal of Chartres Cathedral (illustration 24). In Bosch's painting, Christ, in his red cloak, is sitting on the rainbow, while below his feet is the crystal globe, possibly depicting the heavenly Jerusalem. To Christ's right are the female saints, and to his left are the male saints. Here, Bosch arranged the group of females to Christ's right where the righteous are usually depicted. Below Christ, the dead rise from the ground to be judged and sent to either Heaven or Hell. The sinful ones will be guided to Hell, and the righteous will be guided to Heaven.

Heaven

On the lower right is a scene of Heaven (illustration 25). It represents the righteous ones entering the doors of Heaven as they are greeted by angels: these are the people who are blessed by God. A group of angels is playing heavenly music to welcome the righteous ones while they line up to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. St. Peter stands in front of the door of the Kingdom of Heaven as he greets the righteous ones while the Archangel Michael, protects a woman from a devil who grabs her arm. In the middle of the Kingdom of Heaven, Christ sits as the divine ruler giving

his blessing to the righteous. The façade of the Kingdom of the Heaven in this scene is built in the Gothic style. It shows the verticality of the Gothic manner, perhaps reflecting the architectural style of the Church of St. John in s'Hertogenbosh, with which Bosch was familiar. It was not new to use the familiar Gothic architectural element as a part of the representation of Heaven to remind the viewer that the church is a gate to Heaven where one can save his or her soul. Artists during this time used images which were familiar to the audience so that they could have better experiences with Christianity without having a hard time associating themselves with a particular teaching of Christianity.

Hell

On the lower left is a scene of Hell (illustration 26) which represents the torture of the sinners. Bosch repeats the same sins he portrayed in the Seven Deadly Sins depicted in the central roundel of the painting. In this scene of Hell, each sin is clearly labeled in Latin. Anger depicts a man carved up by a devil. Envy is represented by men who are torn up by dogs. Greed is portrayed by men melted in a large pot with gold and bodily fluids. Gluttony

depicts a devil feeding a fat man with gruesome frogs and lizards. Sloth is illustrated by a man beaten up by a devil wearing a habit which resembles the habit of the nun from Sloth in the central roundel. Lust depicts a couple in a bed joined by monsters. Pride is depicted in the foreground through a couple. A devil is holding a mirror in front of the female, and the male is bullied by a peacock. Here Bosch makes a conscious link to the Seven Deadly Sins by showing what might follow in Hell. It is interesting to note that Bosch, as he did in the central roundel and the banderols, used the combination of image and text as he represents the particular sins.

The function of Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* has been studied in the context that the painting was used as an aid to meditation. Wilhelm Fraenger notes that, "Bosch's panel, which art history has hitherto classified as a 'genre painting with a moral message' is in fact a psychagogic work designed to produce a spiritual cartharsis in the viewer who contemplated and walked around it."⁸⁴ Fraenger also notes

⁸⁴ Fraenger, 268.

that the roundel composition should be understood as a focus of the painting as it concentrates the viewer's spiritual meditation on the core of the painting.⁸⁵

Therefore, Fraenger indicates that the central circle is the focus of the painting where Bosch stimulates "spiritual concentration and meditation" in the audience.

The painting could also be a representation of the spiritual vision of a particular patron. It is possible that this particular panel represents the visionary images seen by the patron during his or her time of prayer. In the late Medieval period, a pious person's private ownership of the devotional images started to grow.⁸⁶ This continued into the Renaissance, and during the fifteenth century, visionary images and images which stemmed from contemplative scripts represented a pious person's spiritual experience in Flemish art.⁸⁷ This type of art was popular as seen in Bridget of Sweden's vision of *Nativity* as depicted in *Geertgen tot Sint Jans* (illustration 27) and

⁸⁵ Fraenger, 268.

⁸⁶ Camille, 115.

⁸⁷ Craig Harbison, "Visions and Meditations in Early Flemish Painting," *Simiolus* 15 (1985): 94.

Jan van Eyck's *Madonna and Child with Canon George van der Paele* (illustration 28).⁸⁸

If Bosch's painting was commissioned to record the patron's personal experience, then who commissioned the painting? After all, there are no records of this particular painting prior to its ownership by Philip II of Spain. Is it possible that since the lay sister is the only one who actually points at the sinner in the Seven Deadly Sins, could the painting have been done for the Sisters of Common Life? With the rising popularity of the *Devotio Moderna*, three houses for the sisters were established in s'Hertogenbosch in the fifteenth century.⁸⁹ By the middle of the fifteenth century, one of the sister houses in s'Hertogenbosch had five hundred sisters which led to building of additional house in Vught to assist additional two hundred sisters.⁹⁰ However, these Sisters of the Common

⁸⁸ Harbison, 1985, 95, 100-1.

⁸⁹ Post, 268.

⁹⁰ *Geradi Magni Epistolae*, ed. W. Mulder, in Series of *Ons Geet Geeestelyk Erf*, Antwerpen, 58 (1933): 216; see also *The Modern Deotion: Confrontation with Reformation and Humanism* for English translation. Post, 269.

Life transformed their congregations into convents.⁹¹ If this transition or even the existence of the sister houses in s'Hertogenbosch might have any influence on Bosch, then, this would explain the group of female saints depicted on Christ's right in the Last Judgment (illustration 22): since one of the female saints standing last in the line is dressed similarly to the lay sister depicted in the Sloth. Since the rise of female spirituality during the Middle Ages continued into Bosch's era, it could have given him an opportunity to create a work based on this female patronage.⁹²

⁹¹ Post, 495.

⁹² As it is stated earlier, in chapter three, the Sisters of Common Life originated among the pious women who were the followers of Geert Groot in Deventor.

CHAPTER THREE
REINTERPRETING BOSCH'S *TABLE TOP OF THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS*
AND THE FOUR LAST THINGS THROUGH THE SEVEN DAY PRAYERS
OF THE *DEVOTIO MODERNA*

In order to gain a better understanding of Bosch's painting, which was painted several centuries ago, careful attention must be paid to the culture in which Bosch lived and produced his work. Understanding the beliefs of this time is important in order to correlate the relationship between the image and its audience. This allows one to look at the visual source as a reflection of the time that the work of art mirrored. Also, the relationship between visual images and the literature of the time--as mentioned earlier--is an important factor in understanding the relationship between the image and the words.

Therefore, this chapter will examine a particular religious movement known as the *Devotio Moderna*. It will provide evidence that links the relationship between Bosch and the *Devotio Moderna*. Though this has been proposed by

many scholars, no definitive evidence has been offered to establish this link. It is important to pay attention to the personal piety of this time which influenced the production of many devotional works. Understanding personal piety is a key point in providing the relevance between personal piety and how Bosch's painting reflected it as well as how the painting was viewed by its audience. This context of personal piety, reflected in the visual imagery, appears to determine the function of the painting.

The movement known as the *Devotio Moderna* originated in the Netherlands by Geert Groote (1340-1384) of Deventer. Geert Groote was the son of a wealthy merchant; he was educated in Canon law, medicine, astrology, natural philosophy, and theology; and he earned a title of magister in the arts.⁹³ The aim of Geert Groote, through preaching the *Devotio Moderna*, was to constitute "the devotion of the apostolic community" to his contemporaries rather than

⁹³ From the introduction by Johan van Engen in *Devotio Moderna: Basic Writings*, trans. Johan van Engen, (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1988), 36-7; *Devotio Moderna: Basic Writings* contains a general historical background of the *Devotio Moderna* and its originator, Geert Groote, and translated versions of the collective letters and prayers of the movement both for the sisters and brothers.

fabricate something new.⁹⁴ Therefore, restoring the Scriptures in the context of contemporary life was important to the members of the *Devotio Moderna*.⁹⁵

The *Devotio Moderna* started with a small group of women who later formed the Sisters of the Common Life in Groote's hometown then spread out to other parts of Europe.⁹⁶ Although they formed a monastic order, they neither took accustomed pledges nor requested its endorsement from the Pope.⁹⁷ The Sisters of the Common Life inspired and influenced a group of similarly spiritual men who later formed the Brethren of Common Life. The *Devotio Moderna* embraced the common laymen and lower classes.⁹⁸

The *Devotio Moderna* was a spiritual movement that focused on individual piety and prayer. For this reason, it was important for a member to identify with the Passion of

⁹⁴ Van Engen in Introduction of *Devotio Moderna: Basic Writings*, 40.

⁹⁵ Van Engen in Introduction of *Devotio Moderna: Basic Writings*, 40.

⁹⁶ A. Wilson and J. Wilson, 19.

⁹⁷ Albert Hyma, *The Christian Renaissance: A History of the "Devotio Moderna,"* (Connecticut: Archon Book, 1965), 48.

⁹⁸ Hyma, 1965, 48.

Christ and to experience Christ's exemplary suffering and salvation to devote one's spirituality and affection for pious living.⁹⁹ Along with imitating the life of Christ, one should comprehend three levels: recognizing Christ's humanity, uncovering Christ's holiness, and uniting with God.¹⁰⁰ In order to succeed in these endeavors, four exercises were required: "lectio (spiritual reading), meditatio [meditation], oratio (prayer), and contemplatio [contemplation]," which focused on Christ's passion.¹⁰¹ The wide spread practice of the *Devotio Moderna's* imitation of the life of Christ was not a new movement. In the late Middle Ages, it was important for the Medieval man to experience the salvation of Christ. Thomas à Kempis in his *Of Imitation of Christ* addressed the importance of

⁹⁹ van Engen in Introduction of *Devotio Moderna: Basic Writings*, 25.; also see page 59, it is noted that the core of *Devotio Moderna* focus on the pious life and the passion of Christ.

¹⁰⁰ Otto Gründler, *Devotio Moderna*, ed. Jill Raitt et al., *Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation* vol 17 *World Spirituality: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest*, (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 182.

¹⁰¹ Gründler, 182.

meditating on the life of Christ.¹⁰² Ludolph of Saxony (d. 1373), in that same era, also addressed the importance of imitating the life of Christ. He wrote:

Lord Jesus Christ...Grant me the grace to anoint thee with fragrant spices by fervent devotion and useful speech; to wrap thee in a shroud and linens by purity of affection and conscience; to grieve over thee with tears of repentance and compassion; to carry thee in the arms of loving and humble deeds; to buy thee in my heart by undistracted recollection and meditation. Then may I merit to come with thee to the glory of the resurrection. Amen.¹⁰³

For these inner and physical meditations for the private prayers, pilgrimage was popular. This late Medieval piety is also reflected in the writings of this time such as Bridget of Sweden's visions (d. 1378), and the writings of Rhineland mystics and the creation of devotional images such as pieta and crucifixion that proliferated the widespread belief of this practice.

The importance of Christ and his passion to the members of the *Devotio Moderna* was that Christ was the epitome of one's consciousness, moderation, humbleness, and

¹⁰² See Thomas à Kempis, *Of Imitation of Christ*.

¹⁰³ Ludolph of Saxony, *Vita Christi*, translation by Sister Mary Immaculate Bodenstedt in *Praying the Life of Christ*, Salzburg, 1973, p. 160; see also Harbison, 1985, 90.

good behavior.¹⁰⁴ Since the practice of the *Devotio Moderna* is similar to late Medieval piety, the *Devotio Moderna* was not a radical or heretic movement, but more of an organized expression of the late Medieval trends of study and devotion. The importance of Christ is noted by Peter of Dieburg in his writing to the members of the *Devotio Moderna* at Hildesheim. He notes that "Christ is the only true temple, the only source of grace and Christian burial."¹⁰⁵ He asserted the importance of an inner spirituality through Christ.

The members of the *Devotio Moderna* focused their lives in reading and meditating.¹⁰⁶ For this reason, it was important for a member to copy and produce the manuscripts which can be associated with the popularity of the *Ars*

¹⁰⁴ Gründler, 183.

¹⁰⁵ Van Engen Introduction of *Devotio Moderna: Basic Writings*, 56.; Peter of Dieburg, *Chronicle of the House of Brothers at Hildesheim*, ed. Richard Doebner, *Annalen und Akten der Brüder des gemeinsamen Lebens im Lychtenhofe zu Hildesheim* (Hannover Leipzig, 1903).

¹⁰⁶ Van Engen Introduction of *Devotio Moderna, Basic Writings*, 59.

Moriendi.¹⁰⁷ The significance of the *Ars Moriendi* to the *Devotio Moderna* is that the *Ars Moriendi* contains the combination of texts and image as a tool for devotional use by the hearts of the Brethren of the Common Life.¹⁰⁸ The *Ars Moriendi*'s popularity was due to the people's fascination with sin and death and perhaps more so with the notion of personal salvation. Due to the fear of the Black Death that began in the fourteenth century, members of the clergy used the images and written words as a handbook for priests. These handbooks contained a dying man in his bed accompanied by clerics in order to ease the devoted one's death and secure his/her beatific afterlife.¹⁰⁹

To understand its popularity in Northern Europe, it is important to look at the geographical location (illustration 29) which is significant in terms of the rise of the *Devotio Moderna* and its influence on the humanists of this time. In Northern Europe, the rise of humanism and

¹⁰⁷ A. Wilson and J. Wilson, 20; Pieter F. J. Obbema, "Van schrijven naar drukken," in *Boeken in Nederland*, ed. Ernst Braches, (Amsterdam, 1979), 21.

¹⁰⁸ A. Wilson and J. Wilson, 21.

¹⁰⁹ A. Wilson and J. Wilson, 98.

spirituality influenced scholars to produce many popular books. In many aspects, the *Devotio Moderna* was the core movement which increased the popularity of the scholars in Northern Europe. Under this influence, writers such as Thomas à Kempis and Gerald Zerbolt of Zutphen (1367-1398) wrote books which dealt with spirituality.¹¹⁰ The impact of the *Devotio Moderna* was quite significant. The movement not only influenced the humanists but also superseded the previous religious movements based on Bernard of Clairvaux and Francis of Assisi-not only in the Netherlands but in other parts of European countries such as France and Germany.¹¹¹

The *Devotio Moderna* was popular in the Netherlands and other parts of European countries before the Reformation, during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. Otto Gründler notes that not until the turn of the twentieth century, was the movement associated

¹¹⁰ Albert Hyma, *The Christian Renaissance: A History of the Devotio Moderna*, (Archon Books: Connecticut, 1965), 3; Thomas à Kempis wrote *Of the Imitation of Christ* and Gerald Zerbolt of Zutphen wrote *Spiritual Ascensions*.

¹¹¹ Hyma, 1965, 3-4.

with both heresy and the Reformation.¹¹² He notes that, due to its influence on the humanists of the time, the *Devotio Moderna* was viewed as an advocate of the Reformation. However, its importance should emphasize the fact that the movement was not radical, but rather traditional in its core of emphasis on prayer. In this regard, it is important to pay attention to the fact that the *Devotio Moderna* was developed as a branch of Catholic practice by Geert Groote.

Over the years, many scholars have speculated that the *Devotio Moderna* was associated with Bosch due to its popularity in s'Hertogenbosch.¹¹³ S'Hertogenbosch was one of many thriving mercantile centers where many middle and upper class bourgeois lived. It was a wealthy town because of the population's lively trade with other communal towns. The *Devotio Moderna* was particularly popular here with

¹¹² Gründler, 179.

¹¹³ Walter Gibson notes the significance of the *Devotio Moderna* in s'Hertogenbosch without indicating its direct relationship to Bosch. Gibson, 1973a, 13-4, and 49. Erik Larsen emphasizes the importance of the *Devotio Moderna* in s'Hertogenbosch without connecting its significance with Bosch, Larsen, 7. Anne Simonson indicates that the *Devotio Moderna*'s practice of copying manuscripts influenced Bosch's creativity. Simonson, 231.

these bourgeois who wished to increase their spirituality.¹¹⁴

Since there are no written sources which prove Bosch's direct connection to the *Devotio Moderna*, speculation on Bosch's relationship to the movement is based on its popularity in his hometown and apparent similarities between his works and the interests of the *Devotio Moderna*.¹¹⁵ Despite this, no clear evidence which pinpoints a direct relationship between the two has previously been found. Through the only existing record of the artist, the account books of the Brotherhood of Our Lady—the movement devoted to the veneration of the Virgin that flourished in the late Middle Ages, it is assured that Bosch was an active member who participated in many liturgical events and even donated his works to the Church of St. John.¹¹⁶ These records show Bosch's relationship to the Catholic Church of St. John in s'Hertogenbosch. It is

¹¹⁴ Simonson quotes (p. 229) from Pater Gerlach, "Het geestlijk klimaat in de stad 's-Hertogenbosch ten tiide van Jeroen Bosch," *Brabantia* 18 (1969): 51-62.

¹¹⁵ See footnote 102 on page 59.

¹¹⁶ Gibson, 1973a, 15-6.

recorded that Bosch's family was among the artists who worked on the project of decorating the Church of St. John.¹¹⁷ Also, several records show that Bosch designed stained-glass windows and a chandelier for the Church of St. John in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.¹¹⁸

The relationship between Bosch and the church is reflected in his paintings as well. The setting of the Seven Deadly Sins might be the reflection of Bosch's involvement with the church's liturgical plays. The figures in each scene are presented in the foreground as though they are acting in a play. Also, in the scene of Heaven, the façade of the Kingdom of Heaven is shown with the verticality of the Gothic style, which resembles the exterior of the Church of St. John. However, it seems that scholars have paid attention to the records of the Brotherhood of Our Lady without connecting their importance to the *Devotio Moderna*.

Although many scholars have indicated the relationship between Bosch and the *Devotio Moderna*, their

¹¹⁷ Gibson, 1973a, 17.

¹¹⁸ Gibson, 1973a, 17.

speculations lack factual evidence. The relationship between the movement and Bosch should emphasise the fact that the teachings of the *Devotio Moderna*--imitating the Life and Passion of Christ, poverty, reading of the scriptures of the desert fathers such as St. Jerome and St. Anthony, etc.--were among Bosch's favored subjects. Also, Bosch's style, reminiscent of miniatures and book illuminating manuscripts which the members of the *Devotio Moderna* undertook to copy, suggests a close parallel with the movement.

However, two important pieces of evidence are the relationship between the *Devotio Moderna* and the Church of St. John and the subjects depicted in Bosch's painting and the daily prayers of the *Devotio Moderna*. During the fourteenth century, two schools were founded in s'Hertogenbosch by the members of the *Devotio Moderna*.¹¹⁹ One of the schools was initially connected with the Church

¹¹⁹ Post, *The Modern Devotion: Confrontation with Reformation and Humanism*, ed. Heiko A. Oberman et al., vol III, *Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), 392.

of St. John.¹²⁰ Bosch might have been aware of the movement through his involvement with the Church of St. John.

The most important evidence indicating the relationship between the *Devotio Moderna* and Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* is found in a daily routine that is emphasized by the believers of the *Devotio Moderna* as stated in the *Constitution of the House of Zwolle*. For their daily routines:

Whereas the fear of the Lord is necessary to those who wish to overcome evil, it is expedient for each of us to meditate on such subjects as lead one to fear the Lord, like sin, death, judgment, and hell. But lest continued fear might engender dejection and despair, we shall have to add more hopeful subject matter for meditation, such as the kingdom of heaven, the blessings of God, the life of Christ, and his passion. These subjects we shall arrange in such a way that on Saturdays we shall meditate on sin, Sundays on the kingdom of heaven, Mondays on death, Tuesdays on the blessings of God, Wednesdays on the final judgment, Thursdays on the pains of hell, and Fridays on the passion of Christ.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Post, 392.

¹²¹ Albert Hyma, *The Brethren of Common Life*, (Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950), 110; see *Constitution of the House at Zwolle*, pp. 241-2, and *Constitution of the House of Deventer*, fol. 2B-3D. It is believed that the selection and arrangement of the subject matter was the work of Florentius Radewijns; Gündler, 187-8.

This also was a standard form of prayer by the members of the *Devotio Moderna* in the time of their congregation. A similar translation of the prayer is listed under 'Materials for Meditation,' written in Latin by Jacobus Tariecti:

Since the fear of the Lord is indispensable for those wishing to make progress-for he who is without fear will not be able to be justified...it is expeditious for each of us to reflect untiringly on those matters which provoke a man to the fear of God, namely, on sin, death, judgment, and hell...all these matters we are accustomed so to alternate that we meditate on the sin on Saturday, the kingdom of heaven on Sunday, death on Monday, the benefits of God on Tuesday, judgment on Wednesday, the pains of hell on Thursday, and the passion of our Lord on Friday. It is also good to meditate on the passion each day during mass, beginning with the life of our Lord on Sunday and subsequently taking up some aspect of the passion each day, as we have mentioned.¹²²

These seven day meditations(illustration 31) are reflected in the themes of Bosch's painting (illustration 30). Illustrations 30 and 31 show the daily meditation of

¹²² M. Schoengen, *Jacobus Traiecti alias de voecht, Narratio de inchoatione domus clericorum in Zwollis* (Amsterdam, 1908), 139-73.; English version of the translation is in *Devotio Moderna: Basic Writings*, 156, it is listed under 'Materials for Meditation' listed as the 'customs in any house' in the 'A Customary for Brothers.'

the *Devotio Moderna* compared with the themes depicted in Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*.

A close comparison of the two reveals not only similarities but a close affinity between them. The exactitude with which Bosch's panel echoes the prayers of the *Devotio Moderna* suggests that his painting was specifically based on them. Thus, Bosch's painting can be understood as a visualization of the seven day prayers of the *Devotio Moderna*. Starting from Monday's prayer of the *Devotio Moderna*, Death is placed on the upper-left corner in Bosch's painting. Monday's prayer on death is depicted in Bosch's painting through the scene of a dying man facing his last moment when he must finally choose the angel or the devil, to determine his fate. Tuesday's prayer of the Blessing of God is depicted on the lower-right corner. God's blessing for the blessed ones are depicted here in the Kingdom of Heaven, surrounded by the peaceful scenery where the angels play musical instruments, and they enter the doors of Heaven. Wednesday's prayer on the Last Judgment is placed in the upper-right corner. The prayer upon the second coming of Christ is represented here

through the scene with which many are familiar. Christ, as the divine judge, sits on the rainbow as the dead rise from their graves. Thursday's prayer of Hell is placed on the lower left. The prayer of Hell depicts the torture of the sinners to which the viewers might be condemned if they choose the devil. Friday's prayer on the Passion of Christ is placed in the inner most circle of the painting. The Passion of Christ as the Man of Sorrows gazes out to the viewer displaying his wounds of the stigma. This image strikes the viewer's attention as he/she faces the suffering of Christ caused by his/her own sins. Saturday's prayer on Sins is placed on the outer circle. Here, the Seven Deadly Sins are arranged in a manner that surrounds the suffering of Christ, making a great contrast and reminding the viewers of their own sins which caused the death and suffering of Christ. Finally, Sunday's prayer on Heaven is placed in the lower right corner. This scene, going back to Tuesday's prayer of the Blessing of God, depicts the blessed ones entering the doors of Heaven to join with the saints, angels, and Christ who waits for them on his throne.

The seven daily meditations of the Brethren of the Common Life--Death, Blessing of God, the Last Judgment, Hell, the Passion of Christ, Sins, and Heaven--are exactly the same themes depicted in Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*. These daily prayers of the *Devotio Moderna* and the subject depicted in Bosch's painting provide the evidence of the artist's direct relationship to the movement. There is no written record indicating whether Bosch was a member of the *Devotio Moderna* or not, but the daily prayers of the Brethren of Common Life depicted in Bosch's painting show that Bosch was aware of these prayers.

Noting the connection between the *Devotio Moderna* and Bosch, the composition in Bosch's painting takes on additional meaning. Illustration 32 shows the daily prayers of the *Devotio Moderna* following the seven day prayers as seen by the viewer. Starting from Monday to Tuesday's prayer, the direction starts from the upper left to the lower right by creating a diagonal line. Moving from Tuesday to Wednesday's prayer, the direction moves from lower right to the upper right. From Wednesday to Thursday's prayer, it moves from the upper right to the

lower left by creating another diagonal line. From Thursday to Friday's prayer, the direction moves from the lower left to the inner circle of the central roundel where the image of Christ is depicted. From Friday to Saturday, the direction moves to the outer central circle where the Seven Deadly Sins are depicted. Finally, from Saturday to Sunday's prayer, it moves from central circle to the lower right by going back to the Kingdom of Heaven.

By looking at illustration 32 and following the seven day prayers, one can see how this reading creates the sign of benediction used in the time of meditation. The two diagonals from the upper left to the lower right and the upper right to the lower left show the sign of benediction turned forty five degrees counter-clockwise. This sign of benediction adds strong evidence that Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* is a devotional painting. This strongly supports the theory that the painting functioned as an aid to meditation as well as its use in the time of daily prayers by the members of the *Devotio Moderna*. The sign of benediction suggests that the painting was a part of the ritual performance through which the viewer enacted the seven day meditations. The painting,

being a part of performance in the time of the daily prayers, no longer served as an object which was observed but as something with which the audience could participate during the recitation of the prayers. Due to the subject matter depicted here, the painting shows a direct relationship to the *Devotio Moderna* and the possibility that the painting was either done for Bosch himself in the time of his meditations or for other members of the *Devotio Moderna*.

Illustration 32 demonstrates additional significance of the painting's composition. Christ is depicted in the center of the painting, and when one follows the seven day prayers, all the directions go through the center where the image of Christ is depicted as the Man of Sorrows. It shows the important role of Christ as the core subject of prayers for the members of the *Devotio Moderna*. Also, as a devotional painting, it gives an optimistic view to its audience. As one notices, the Kingdom of Heaven is emphasized twice here as the final destination. This painting reminds the viewer that he chooses his own fate.

Those who choose the right passage will be blessed by Christ. In the Kingdom of Heaven, Christ's hand gesture adds strong support to the function of the painting as an aid to meditation as his blessing, carried throughout the painting, creates an enactment of benediction. This compositional device used by Bosch is unique.

Since the painting blesses its viewer, its function is similar to a monstrance's function which was used by a priest during communion. A monstrance (illustration 33) is a container that has a crystal cylinder in the center which holds "the Host or a relic."¹²³ For its use during mass and its function to hold the host--which represents Christ--the overall representation of the monstrance is close to Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*. Like the Host, in Bosch's painting, Christ is placed in the center and the whole composition creates a sign of benediction. Therefore, the use of Bosch's painting in a time of meditation creates an atmosphere for the viewer, an experience similar to the blessing with the monstrance during the communion.

The use of Bosch's painting during the time of the viewer's meditation also explains the columns used by the artist in the scene of Envy. As mentioned earlier, in the scene of Envy, Bosch used the columns as a framing device. Since it is the only place in the painting that the artist used columns to separate one scene from the rest of the composition, they might have symbolic meanings rather than serve as a decorative architectural element. Whether Bosch used them as a reminder to the viewer to acknowledge the significance of the Last Judgment in regard to the threat of punishment in Hell is not certain. However, the use of columns here directs and reminds the viewer of the significance of the Last Judgment that all human beings, regardless of their gender or status in society, will stand before God to be judged upon their sins. It is here that the faith of man will determine his destination after death: the sinful man who caused the suffering of Christ will be led to Hell, and the righteous one will be led to the Kingdom of Heaven.

¹²³ Charles C. Kovacs III, 'Monstrances' in *Eucharistic Vessels of the Middle Ages*, (Busch-Reisinger Museum, 1975), 97.

The overall composition gives several insights to the viewer. By looking at the twin columns, the viewer's eyes are visually directed from the Last Judgment, Sloth, the Man of Sorrows, and Envy to Hell, whereas Death, Greed, the Man of Sorrows, and Pride lead the viewer's eyes to the Kingdom of Heaven. The significance of these devices draw the visual attention of the viewer. As seen in illustration 1, two major architectural elements are used in the Seven Deadly Sins: twin columns in Envy and interior walls in Pride. These architectural elements provide significant meaning to the composition. Envy, framed by two columns, is open wide to Hell in terms of the spatial element. However, the interior walls framing Pride create a narrow space leading to Heaven. These two elements are important because, as a meditative piece, they offer viewers the possibility that Heaven and Hell are open to all human beings and it is up to the viewer to choose the right passage. The painting also reminds the viewer that the doors of Heaven are hard to reach because one has to endure all the temptations in the world, and virtuously follow Christ's exemplary life. If one endures the temptations and chooses the angel, the doors of Heaven will be opened.

However, if one is weak and falls for the temptations, he will be led to Hell. It is the viewer's daily prayers that will guide him into the Kingdom of Heaven. During the viewer's daily prayers in front of the painting, the viewer looks into his own soul and meditates. The painting serves as a visual aid to the viewer as well as being a part of the performance ritual in the time of a pious person's daily meditations. The painting, by accompanying these daily prayers of the *Devotio Moderna*, plays an important role in the mind of the viewer as he looks at the painting as a visual aid and prays upon the seven day prayers. Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* serves as a sermon to the viewer as one interprets the painting through the daily prayers and visually experiences the sign of benediction.

CHAPTER FOUR
UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF THE GAZE AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN
THE IMAGE AND THE VIEWER

The focus of this chapter is to examine the meaning of the gaze and its use in Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*. Particular interest will be focused on Bosch's use of Christ's gaze which allows the viewer to have a better understanding of the subject depicted in the painting. Some of Bosch's other paintings with images of Christ gazing out at the viewer will be discussed for comparison. Understanding the role of the gaze will explain how Bosch emphasized the seven day prayers of the *Devotio Moderna* and how the gaze turns the viewer into a subject who is watched by God.

The notion of the gaze which explains the relationship between the viewer and the image has been a focus of study in recent years. In the visual arts, the gaze establishes the interaction between the subject and the viewer.¹²⁴ The gaze carries several different meanings when it is used in a part of the visual arts. Whether it is applied to a painting or sculpture, gaze can invite the viewer to become a part of an event depicted, it can represent the relationship between the figure depicted and the viewer, or it can reflect the psychological interaction between the viewer and the subject of art.¹²⁵ In other words, there must be two parties involved in order to understand the use of the gaze in the visual arts: one who gazes out at the viewer and another who engages.

The gaze does not limit itself to the action of visual experience. It refers not only to visual but also physical movement, so gazing refers to an extensive

¹²⁴ Margaret Olin, 'Gaze,' ed. Richard Shiff and Robert S. Nelson, *Critical Terms for Art History*, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 209.

¹²⁵ John A. Walker and Sarah Chaplin, 'Look, the Gaze and Surveillance,' *Visual Culture*, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 98.

operation of human activities.¹²⁶ The significance of the gaze used in the painting is that, through its use, the artist creates an environment in which he or she directs the viewer's attention.¹²⁷ In other words, the artist creates an atmosphere where the subject depicted in the art can communicate with the viewer through the use of the gaze. Thus, the gaze becomes a mediator between the painting and the viewer. In doing so, it can evoke the viewer's compassion.

In many of his paintings, Bosch used the image of Christ looking out at the viewer in order to connect the image with its audience. This can be seen in several versions of *Christ Crowned with Thorns* (illustration 3 and 35) and *Christ Carrying the Cross* (illustration 34). In both paintings of *Christ Crowned with Thorns*, Bosch depicts Christ surrounded by his tormentors while he looks out toward the viewer. In *Christ Carrying the Cross* (illustration 34), Christ is surrounded by his tormentors and Saint Veronica. Although Christ closes his eyes and

¹²⁶ Ivan Illich, "Guarding the Eye in the Age of Show," *Res* 28 (1995): 49.

¹²⁷ Anne Bush, "Through the Looking Glass: Territories of the Historiographic Gaze," *Visual Language* 28 (1994): 222.

Saint Veronica turns her head from the event, she holds a veil which depicts the imprinted face of Christ looking out at the viewer. For Bosch, the Passion of Christ was an important subject. Throughout his career, he devoted several paintings to this subject. Christ's gaze in these paintings brings out the viewer's compassion as one sees the image of the suffering Christ looking at him/her. Through the use of the gaze in these paintings, the viewer's emotion is evoked and, through interacting with the image of Christ, the viewer becomes aware of Christ's suffering and experiences Christ's exemplary life through these visual images. For a Medieval person who was aware of the physical suffering of Christ, the direct eye contact with Christ could have influenced him or her deeply.¹²⁸

Christ's gaze in Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* can be interpreted as an interaction between the viewer and the image of Christ. The gaze plays the role of communicator between the viewer

¹²⁸ John Berger et al., *Way of Seeing*, (London: British Broadcasting Corporation; New York: Penguin, 1972), 8.

and the painting.¹²⁹ Christ, as the Man of Sorrows (illustration 5), looks out at the viewer while he points to his wound with his right hand while showing his left hand to the viewer. The overall composition of the central roundel, as a whole, has a significant meaning. The 'half-length *Andachtsbild*' image of Christ is surrounded by the Seven Deadly Sins, which, as a whole, presents the all-seeing divine power of God. The gaze of Christ in this painting not only invites the viewer into the painting, but it also has a striking effect by turning the viewer into the subject who is being watched by God.

The gaze becomes an important mediator between the viewer and the painting. It turns the viewer into the subject who is being watched rather than one who is watching.¹³⁰ Through the image of Christ and his gaze, the viewer becomes aware of himself or herself. Christ shows his wounds as the reflection of his salvation for mankind. A Christian, seeing this striking image of Christ looking

¹²⁹ James Marrow, "Symbol and Meaning in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and the Early Renaissance," *Simiolus* 17 (1987): 165.

¹³⁰ Marc Benesimon, "The Significance of Eye Imagery in the Renaissance from Bosch to Montaigne," *Yale French Studies* 47 (1972): 267.

directly at him or her, becomes aware of his or her own consciousness. The viewer looks at his or her own reflection through the image of Christ and sees the sin which caused the death of the redeemer.

Because of the compositional device used in the central roundel--the image of Christ in the pupil of the Eye of God, the rays of light as an iris, and the Seven Deadly Sins as a cornea--the eye here has dual meanings. When it is interpreted as the Eye of God, it represents man's sins as seen in God's eye. However, when the eye is interpreted as the eye of everyman who sees his or her own reflection through the suffering of Christ, it is a reflection of one's own consciousness that is displaced in the central roundel. Through this reflection, one sees the image of the suffering Christ and meditates upon one's own sins.

Another significance of placing the image of Christ in the center of the painting is to emphasize the seven day meditations of the *Devotio Moderna* with the subject depicted in the painting. As the viewer meditates upon the seven day prayers and sees the image of Christ looking

directly at him or her, he or she becomes conscious of himself or herself. This then allows the viewer to become aware of the choices he or she will be making when it is time for the viewer to face his or her last moment and choose his or her own fate under the eye of God. The use of the eye, which correlates with one's sight, played a significant role in visual art and literature during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.¹³¹ Bosch's painting, as an agent of watching, becomes a strong participant in the performative act in a time of the viewer's daily prayers.

Another significant element that supports the function of the painting as a performative agent is Bosch's use of juxtaposition. This device interacted with the Medieval viewer's engagement with the scene depicted.¹³² Thus the use of juxtaposition in Bosch's painting can be interpreted as the final stage in a time of meditation when

¹³¹ Benesimon, 266.

¹³² Sixten Ringbom, 'Some Pictorial Conventions for the Recounting of Thoughts and Experiences in Late Medieval Art,' ed. Felmming G. Anderson et al., *Proceedings of the Fourth International Symposium Organized by the Centre of the Study of Vernacular Literature in the Middle Ages*, held at Odense University on 19-20 Nov. 1979, (Odense: Odense University Press, 1980), 45.

the prayer of a pious person takes over the spiritual ascent. Since the painting was intended as a devotional piece, the juxtaposition of the roundels and overall composition can be interpreted as a moment when the prayer of the pious person takes over the spiritual experience between earth and heaven during meditation. As illustration 28 represents, Bosch's painting shows a strong correlation to its use by the members of the *Devotio Moderna*. An image used during a pious person's meditation works as a visual aid of a "recipient of prayer and benediction."¹³³ By examining the use of juxtaposition and the use of devotional paintings, it is certain that the eye in Bosch's painting functions as the doors to one's own consciousness and through it, the viewer looks at his or her own reflection.¹³⁴

Christ's gaze in Bosch's painting draws the viewer's attention. When a member of the *Devotio Moderna* looked at the painting during his daily prayers, he underwent serious self-examination which was possible because "visual images

¹³³ Ringbom, 1965, 53.

¹³⁴ Bensimon, 277.

served as a still more effective vehicle for compassionate meditation."¹³⁵ Through examining Bosch's paintings of Christ, one realizes that it is one of the many subjects favored by the artist. Also, it is the core of the prayer and contemplation among the members of the *Devotio Moderna*.

Without the gaze of Christ, the painting would not have as great an impact on its viewer in a time of meditation. When the viewer meditates upon the seven day prayers of the *Devotio Moderna*, he/she sees the image of Christ as the Man of Sorrows looking at him or her. Through this interaction with Christ, the viewer examines his own morals and keeps his faith in God. The viewer's world is not the physical environment where he lives but the one that is reflected in the Eye of God. As the viewer prays upon the seven day prayers, he will be guided to the Kingdom of Heaven where he will be greeted by the angels and face Christ without any shame or guilt upon the death of the redeemer. The righteous person will keep his faith in God as he sees the image of Christ in the Eye of God.

¹³⁵ David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 173.

The eye creates an eternal exchange of the interaction between the viewer and Christ.¹³⁶ As the image reflects the 'inner perception' of the viewer, Bosch's painting reflects the viewer's own consciousness in choosing between right and wrong as he undergoes the daily meditations of the seven day prayers of the *Devotio Moderna*.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Bush, 226.

¹³⁷ Ivan Illich, "Guarding the Eye in the Age of Show," *Res* 28 (1995): 55.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

In last a couple of decades, Bosch scholarship was not very active. Probably the last publication which deals with an individual study of Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*, in English, is Walter Gibson's article which was published in 1973.¹³⁸ For this reason, citing from the current scholarship on this painting was not available. Due to the lack of scholarly publication on this particular painting, this thesis opened its chapter by giving individual study of the subjects

¹³⁸ See footnote 9 on page 6.

depicted in Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*. It is important to look at each of the scenes to have a better understanding of the painting. For this purpose, careful attention was paid to understanding how the Seven Deadly Sins were portrayed during Medieval time and how the subject depicted in the painting reflected similarities to Bosch's other paintings with the same context, as well as interrelating some of the devices which were repeatedly used by Bosch. These include the use of parallels or comparison between human actions or emotions with the animals and particular human activities in particular scenes which contrast with its setting in nature.

Particular attention was paid to examining the relationship between Bosch and the *Devotio Moderna* which has been addressed by many scholars without solid evidence to support the theory. In order to identify the direct and concrete relationship between the movement and Bosch, it was important to look into the significance of the *Devotio Moderna* in Bosch's time and its popularity in s'Hertogenbosch. The most solid evidence presented here is the interrelationship between the Church of St. John and

the *Devotio Moderna*, and the seven day prayers of the movement which are exactly the same subjects depicted in Bosch's painting. Through examining the daily prayers of the movement and comparing these with the subjects depicted in Bosch's painting, the strong connection between two have been addressed. To support the painting's use during meditation, particular emphasis was given to interpreting how the seven day prayers create a sign of benediction by following Monday through Sunday's prayers.

Examination of Bosch's use of gaze revealed how it changed the role between the painting and the viewer by turning the viewer into a subject being watched by God. Although the written inscriptions in the painting reinforce the relationship between the viewer and the painting, through the gaze as a mediator between the two, the viewer becomes conscious of his/her behaviors. A typical role of the viewer, as an observer, is reversed in Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*. The viewers become an active part of the painting as they are watched by God.

There are many other ways of understanding Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* which were not addressed in this thesis. Given the specific focus of this thesis in establishing the link between Bosch and the *Devotio Moderna*, this thesis did not examine other facets which can be used to understand the painting. However, these aspects should be developed in order to have a better understanding of Bosch's painting.

In conclusion, Bosch's painting works as an agent of performative act to the viewer when it is interpreted through the seven day prayers of the *Devotio Moderna*. Bosch's painting mirrors the time when the religious movement was at its height in s'Hertogenbosch. It also mirrors Bosch's contemporary life through his depictions of the Seven Deadly Sins and how people might have viewed their own sins. The concordance between the daily prayers of the *Devotio Moderna* and Bosch's painting also reflects the relationship between text and image. The written words of the daily prayers by the members of the *Devotio Moderna* are carried out through Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*. The relationship

between the text and image, as seen in many other works of this time, represents the common interaction between the two, particularly the beliefs of the members of the *Devotio Moderna* in Bosch's painting and Christ which reinforces the viewer's spiritual experience. However, much study has to be done to understand and refine the meaning and function of the painting, and how it might have impacted its viewer in Bosch's time. As is true of many of Bosch's other paintings, the *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* has many symbolic layers which the viewer should keep in mind.

As stated earlier, Bosch's painting is a complex piece with many layers of symbolic meanings. Therefore, it should be studied thoroughly from different perspectives to gain a better understanding of the painting.

Illustration 1. Hieronymus Bosch, *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*, current location: Prado Museum, Madrid, Spain, oil on panel, 47 ¼ X 59. (Photo source: English version of *El Bosco*, Al Deasa: Tf. Editores, 1995, p. 24-5)



Illustration 2. *Seven Deadly Sins*, English wall fresco, formerly in Ingatestone Church, England.
 (Photo Source: Walter Gibson, *Hieronymus Bosch*, London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1973, p. 35)



Illustration 3. Hieronymus Bosch, *Christ Crowned with Thorns*, current location: El Escorial, Madrid, Spain, oil on panel, 61 $\frac{3}{4}$ X 76 $\frac{3}{4}$.

(Photo source: Walter Gibson, *Hieronymus Bosch*, London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1973, p. 125)



Illustration 4. Hieronymus Bosch, *The Eye of God*, detail from the *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*.

(Photo source: English version of *El Bosco*, Al Deasa: Tf. Editores, 1995, p. 24-5)



Illustration 5. Hieronymus Bosch, Christ emerging from Sarcophagus, detail from the *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*.

(Photo source: Gary Schwartz, *Hieronymus Bosch*, New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc, 1997, p. 21)



Illustration 6. Geertgen tot Sint Jans, *Man of Sorrows*, current location, Centraal Museum, Utrecht, oil on panel, 9 5/8 X 9 1/2.

(Photo source: James Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art: Paintings, Sculpture, the Graphic Art from 1350 to 1575*, New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc. and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1985, p. 176)

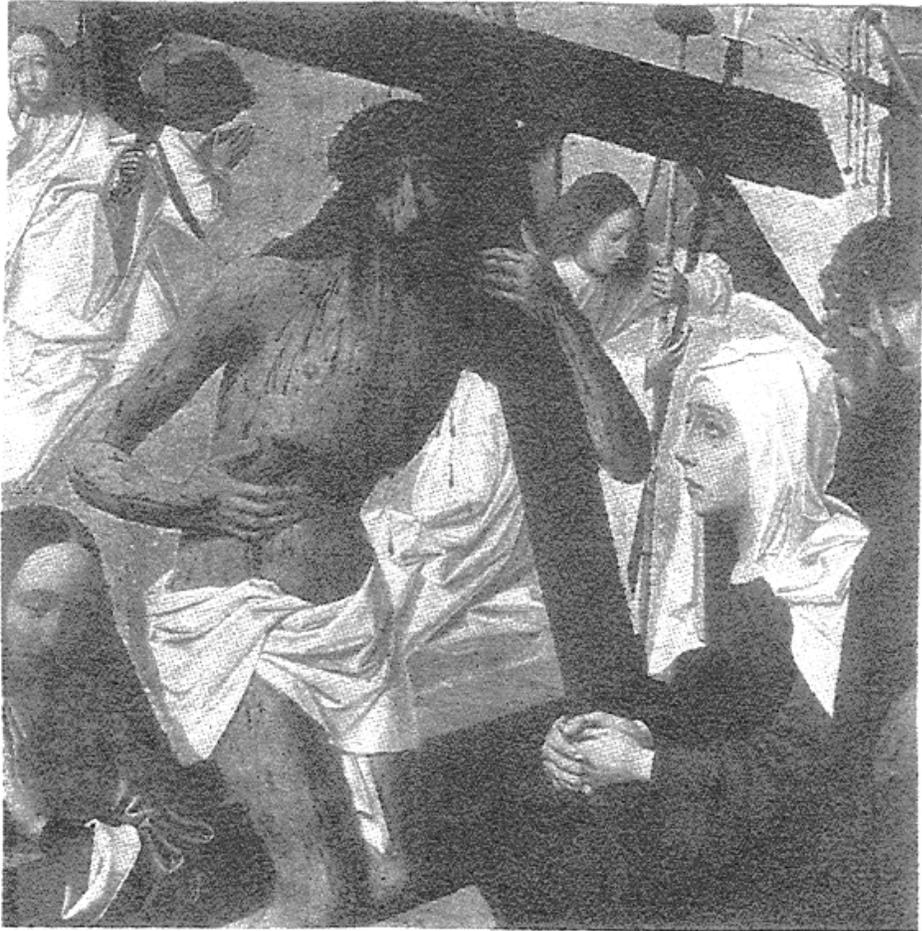


Illustration 7. Anger, detail from the *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*.
(Photo source: English version of *El Bosco*, Al Deasa: Tf. Editores, 1995, p. 26)



Illustration 8. Anger, from Amiens Cathedral, 13th century.
(Photo source: Emile Mâle, *Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century*, London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd.; New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1913, p. 124)



Illustration 9. Envy, detail from the *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*.
(Photo source: English version of *El Bosco*, Al Deasa: Tf. Editores, 1995, p. 27)



Illustration 10. Greed, from Amiens Cathedral, 13th century.

(Photo source: Emile Mâle, *Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century*, London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd.; New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1913, p. 114)



Illustration 11. Greed, detail from the *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*.

(Photo source: English version of *El Bosco*, Al Deasa: Tf. Editores, 1995, p. 28)



Illustration 12. Gluttony, detail from the *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*.
(Photo source: English version of *El Bosco*, Al Deasa: Tf. Editores, 1995, p. 29)



Illustration 13. Sloth, detail from the *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*.

(Photo source: English version of *El Bosco*, Al Deasa: Tf. Editores, 1995, p. 30)



Illustration 14. Lust, detail from the *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*.
(Photo source: English version of *El Bosco*, Al Deasa: Tf. Editores, 1995, p. 31)



Illustration 15. Pride, detail from the *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*.

(Photo source: English version of *El Bosco*, Al Deasa: Tf. Editores, 1995, p. 32)



Illustration 16. Laux Furgengel, *Portrait of the artist Hans Burgkmair and His Wife Anna*.

(Photo source: James Marrow, "Symbol and Meaning in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and the Early Renaissance," *Simiolus* 17 (1987): p. 163)



Illustration 17. *Devils and the Angel's Mirrors.*

(Photo source: James Marrow, "Symbol and Meaning in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and the Early Renaissance," *Simiolus* 17 (1987): p. 162)



Illustration 18. *Unknown Ruler, Cambrai Gospels, second half of the 9th century, Cambrai, Bibliotheque Municipale.* (Photo source: Adolf Katzenellenbogen, *Allegories of the Virtues and the Vices in Medieval Art* p. XVII)



Illustration 19. *Archibishop Frederick and the Cardinal Virtues*, Rhenish Lectionary, c. 1130. Cologne Cathedral. (Photo source: Adolf Katzenellenbogen, *Allegories of the Virtues and the Vices in Medieval Art from Early Christian Times to the Thirteenth Century*, London: The Warburg Institute; New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1939, p. XVIII)

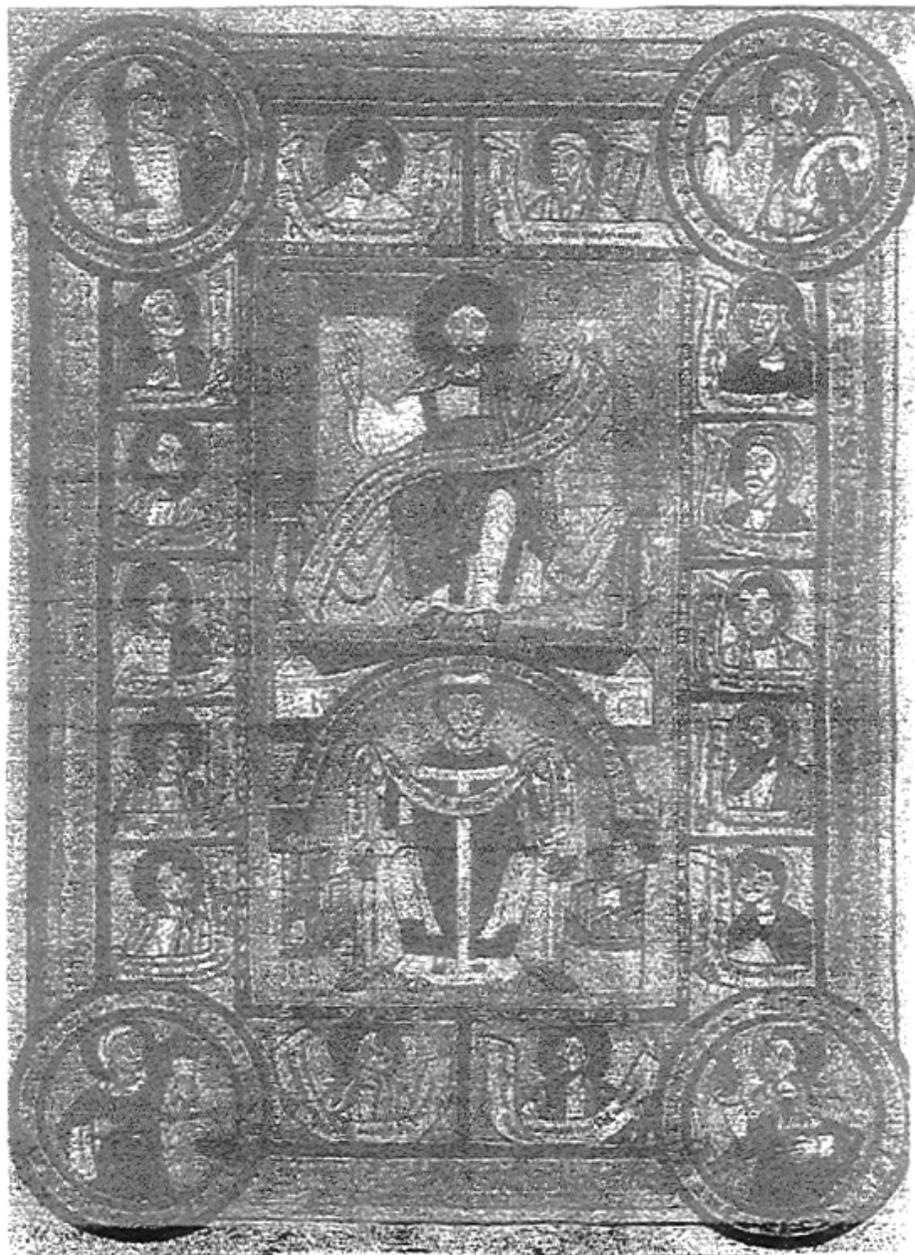


Illustration 20. Death, detail from the *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*.
(Photo source: English version of *El Bosco*, Al Deasa: Tf. Editores, 1995, p. 33)



Illustration 21. Hieronymus Bosch, *Death and the Miser*, c. 1500, current location: National Gallery of Art, Washington D. C., oil on panel, 36 ½ X 12 ¼.

(Photo source: James Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art: Paintings, Sculpture, the Graphic Art from 1350 to 1575*, New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc. and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1985, p. 201)

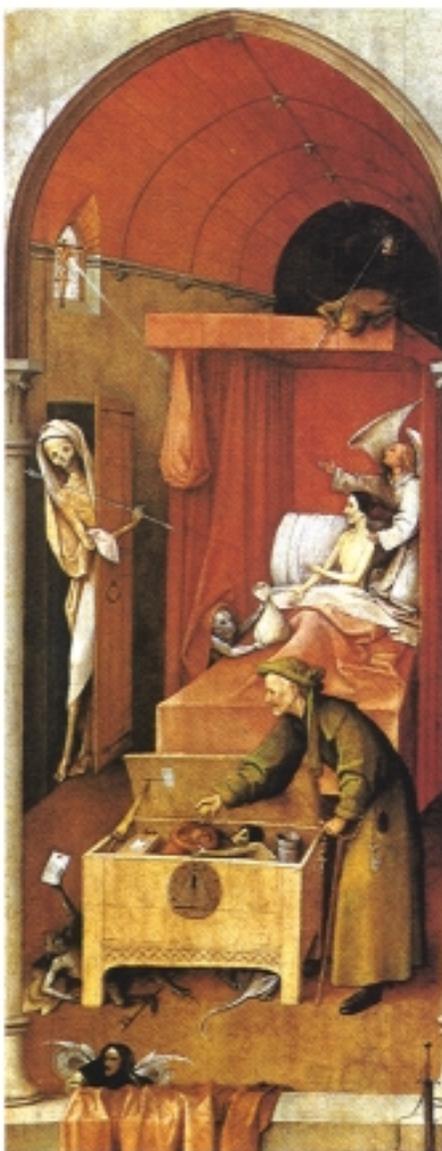


Illustration 22. The Last Judgment, detail from *the Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*.
(Photo source: English version of *El Bosco*, Al Deasa: Tf. Editores, 1995, p. 34)



Illustration 23. Tympanum of the South Portal of St. Pierre, Moissac, France.
(Photo source: Richard G. Tansey and Fred S. Kleiner, *Art Through the Ages*, vol. 1, 10th edition, 1996, p. 400)

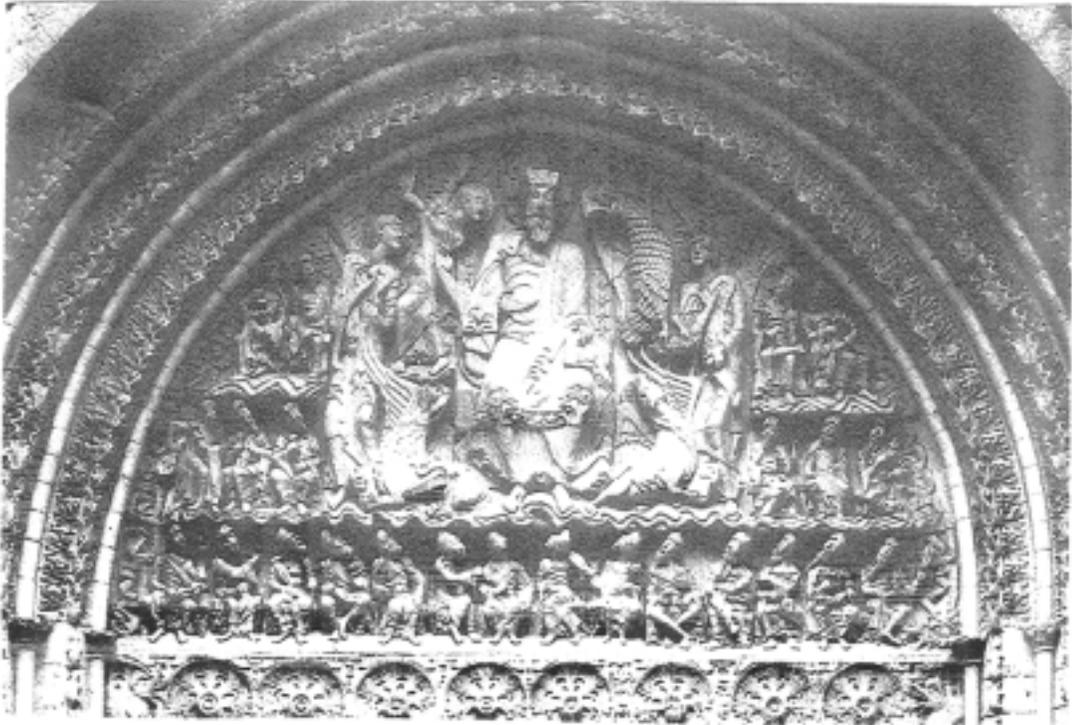


Illustration 24. Royal Portal of Chartres Cathedral.
(Photo source: Richard G. Tansey and Fred S. Kleinert, *Art Through the Ages*, vol. 1, 10th edition, 1996, p. 428)

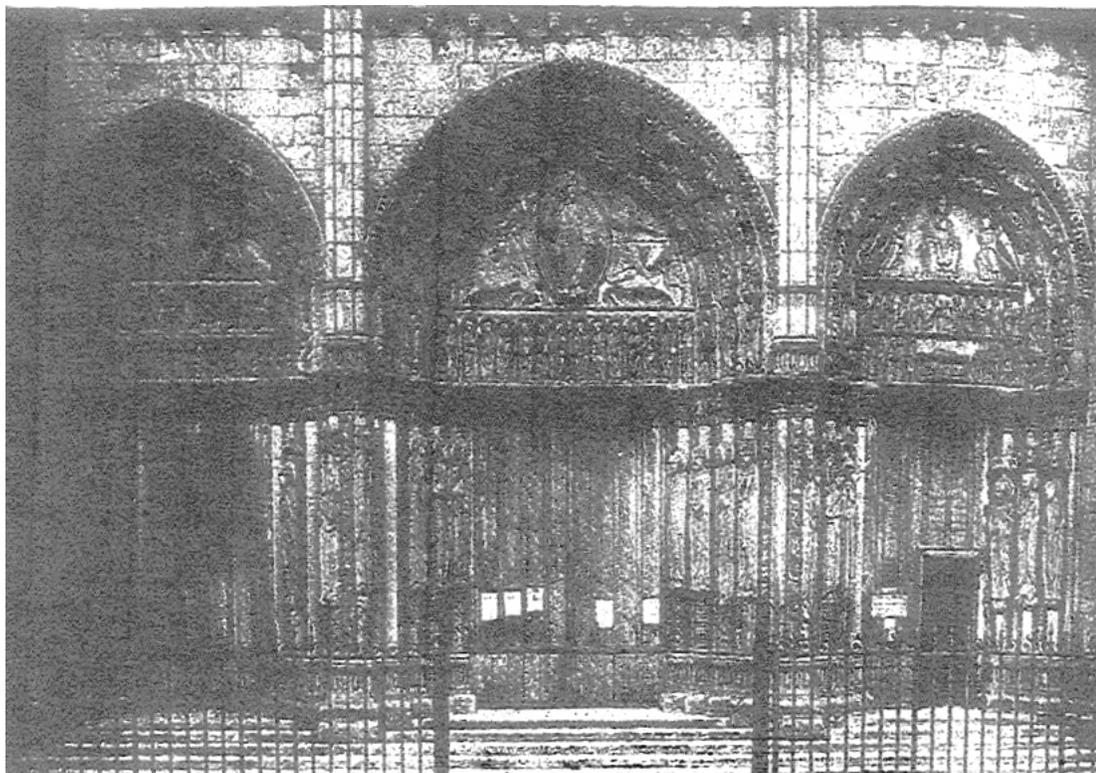


Illustration 25. Heaven, detail from the *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*.
(Photo source: English version of *El Bosco*, Al Deasa: Tf. Editores, 1995, p. 36)



Illustration 26. Hell, detail from the *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*.
(Photo source: English version of *El Bosco*, Al Deasa: Tf. Editores, 1995, p. 35)



Illustration 27. Geertgen tot Sint Jans, *Night Nativity*, c. 1480 -85, current location: National Gallery, London, oil on panel, 13 ³/₈ X 9 ⁷/₈.

(Photo source: James Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art: Paintings, Sculpture, the Graphic Art from 1350 to 1575*, New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc. and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1985, p. 177)

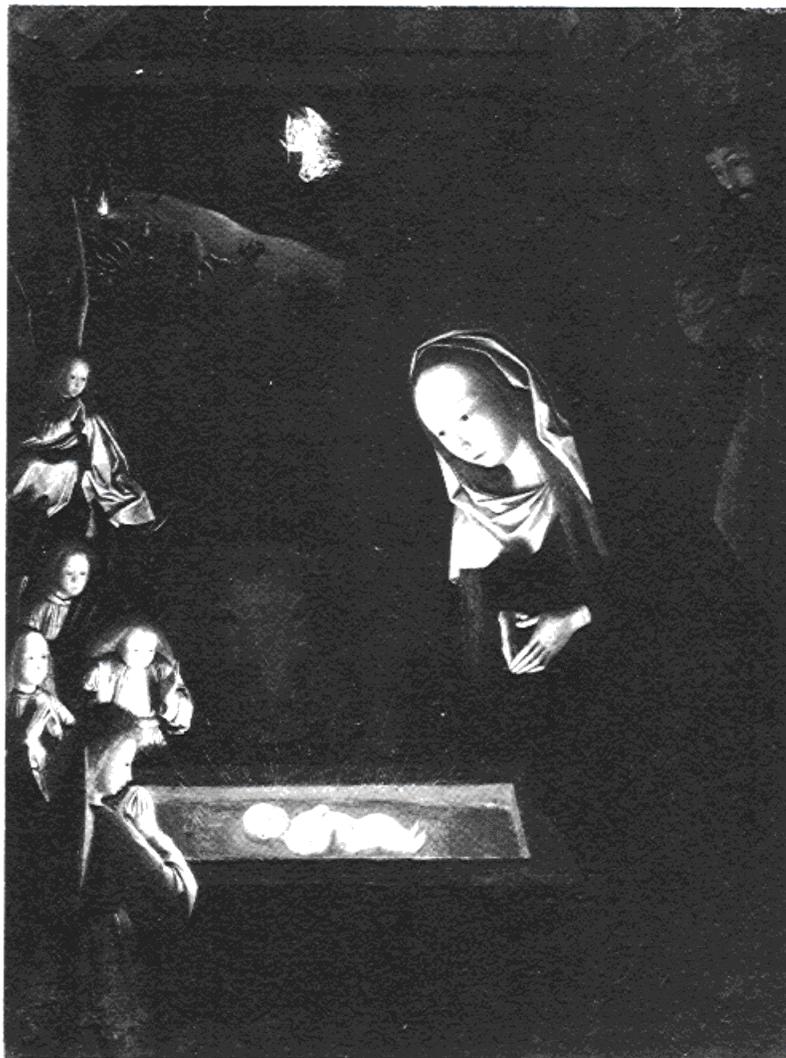


Illustration 28. Jan van Eyck, *Madonna and Child with Canon George van der Paele*, current location: Groeningemuseum, Bruges, c. 1436, oil and tempera on panel, 48 X 61 ⁷/₈. (Photo source: Otto Pächt, *Van Eyck and the Founders of Early Netherlandish Painting*, London: Harvey Miller Publishers; München: Simhart & Co., 1994, p. 97)



Illustration 29. Map of Europe.

(Photo source: James Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art: Paintings, Sculpture, the Graphic Art from 1350 to 1575*, New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc. and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1985, back of the cover page)



Illustration 30. Subject depicted in Bosch's *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*.
(Source: author)

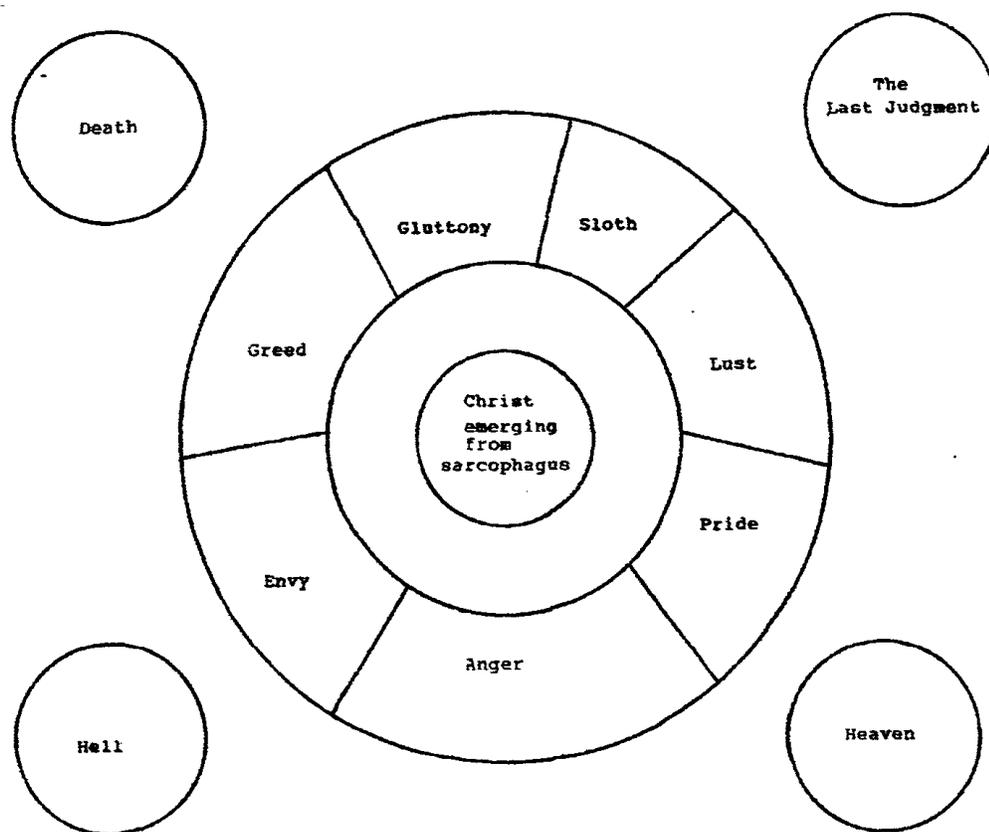


Illustration 31. Themes of the Seven Day Prayers of the *Devotio Moderna*.
(Source: author)

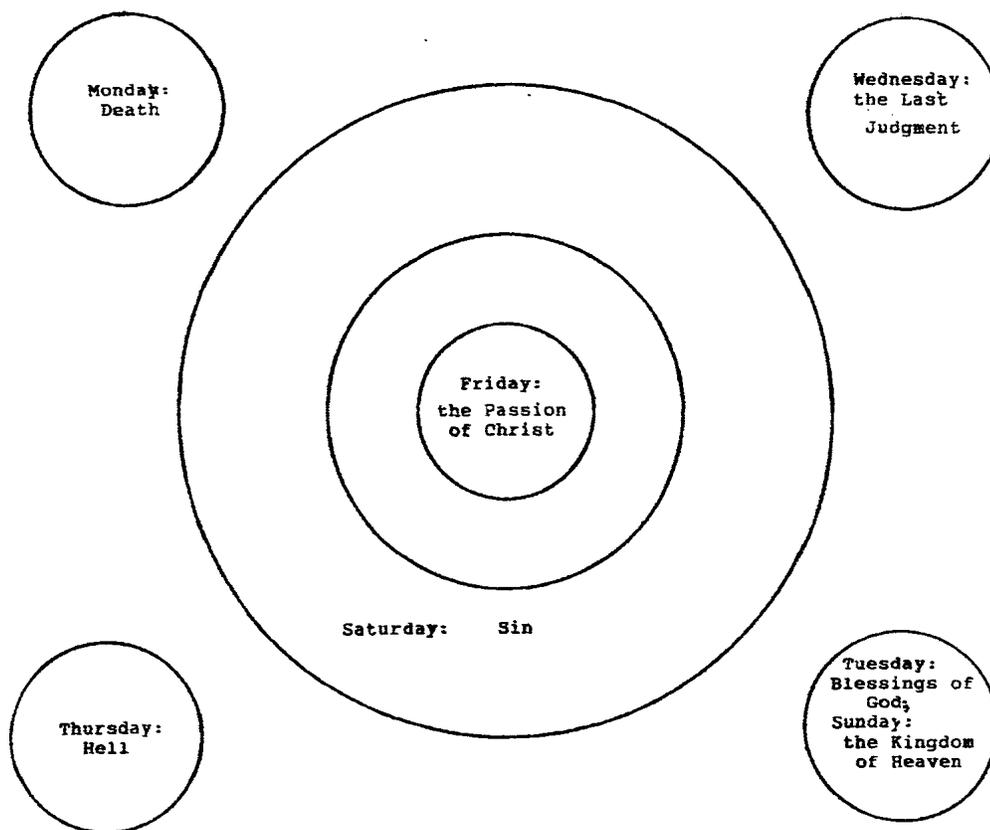


Illustration 32. The Sign of Benediction Created by following the subject of the *Table Top of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* through the Seven Day Prayers of the *Devotio Moderna*.

(Source: author)

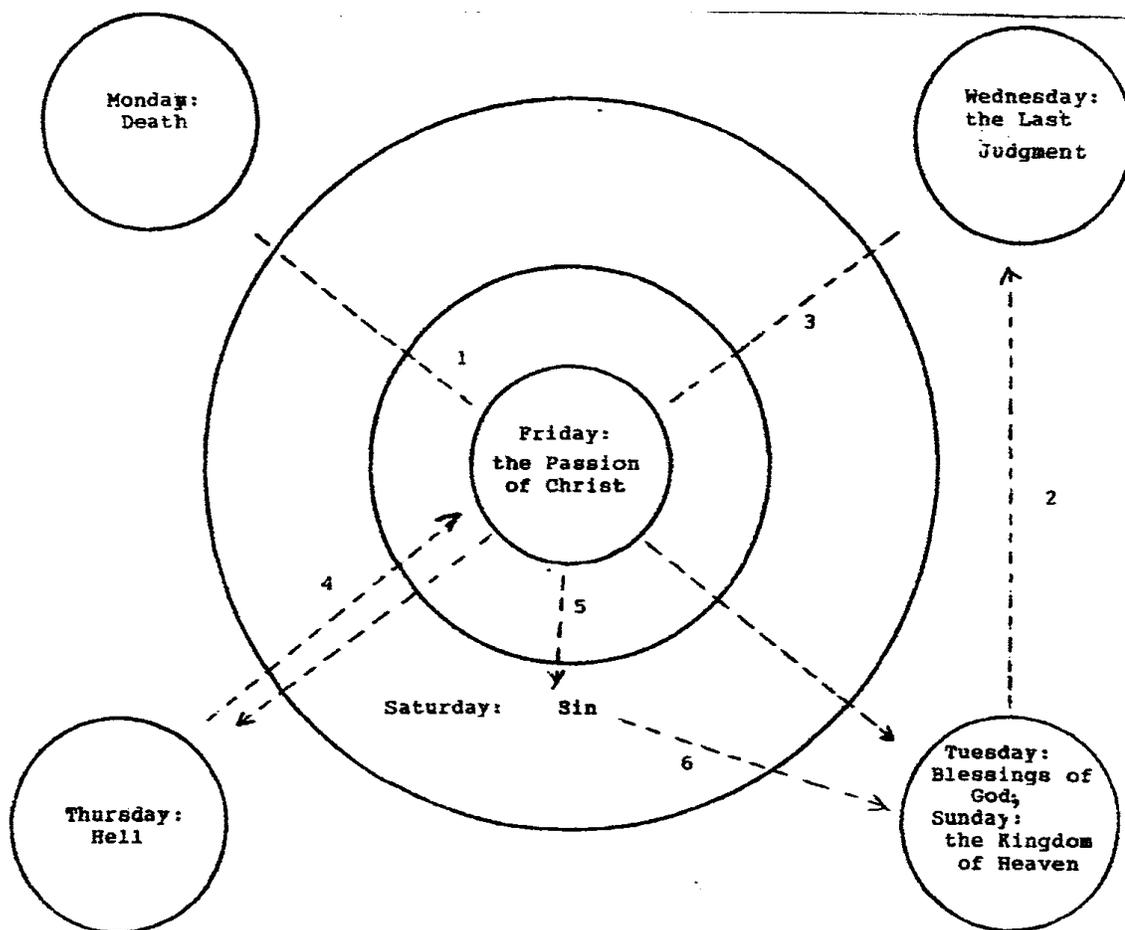


Illustration 33. Monstrance from Purmerend, Northern Holland, c. 1500, current location: Rijksmuseum Het Catharijneconvent, Utrecht, 92 cm.

(Photo source: Jeremy Dupertuis Bangs, *Church Art and Architecture in the Low Countries before 1566*, Missouri: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, Inc., 1997, p. 160)

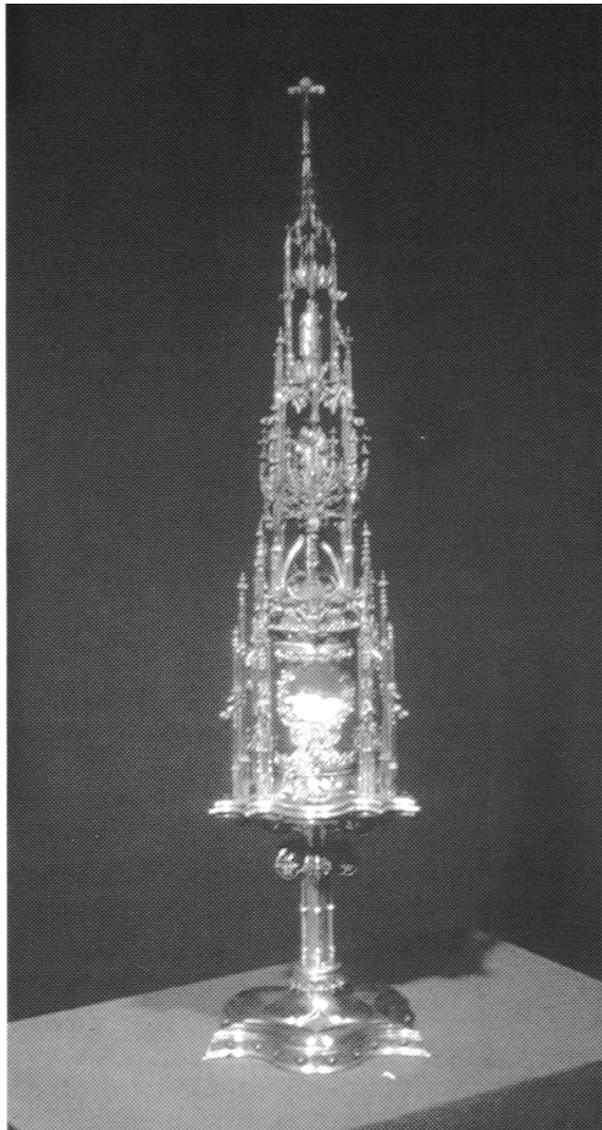


Illustration 34. Hieronymus Bosch, *Christ Carrying the Cross*, oil on panel, current location: Musee des Beaux-Arts, Ghent, 29 ¹/₈ X 31 ⁷/₈.

(Photo Source: Walter Gibson, *Hieronymus Bosch*, London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1973, p. 127)



Illustration 35. Hieronymus Bosch, *Christ Crowned with Thorns*, current location: National Gallery, London, Oil on panel, 29 x 23 ¼.

(Photo Source: Walter Gibson, *Hieronymus Bosch*, London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1973, p. 127)



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