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TITLE:

**CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS PROPAGANDA
WITHIN THE WORKS OF
HIERONYMOUS BOSCH
AND
LUCAS CRANACH.**

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INTRODUCTION

Propaganda, is often misinterpreted as being a modern concept. Indoctrinating, subverting, taking control of weak minds, dominating. Normally associated with politics and war, it comes as a shock to most people to discover that the word "propaganda" comes from the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide a society founded by Pope Gregory XV for the "propagation of the faith", in 1622. Society generally assumes that because the media we associate with propaganda (film, television) didn't exist before the 20th century that it couldn't have existed before then. In fact it existed long before the Catholic Church sought to use it as a means of spreading the faith. The Romans and Egyptians thrived on it, their festivals in victory, and celebration are legendary, their monuments, arches and pyramids still stand today. They had supreme control over their people, part of the reasoning behind their concepts of being Gods. Certainly the purpose - manipulation of the mass, was long in existence, before it had been given a name.

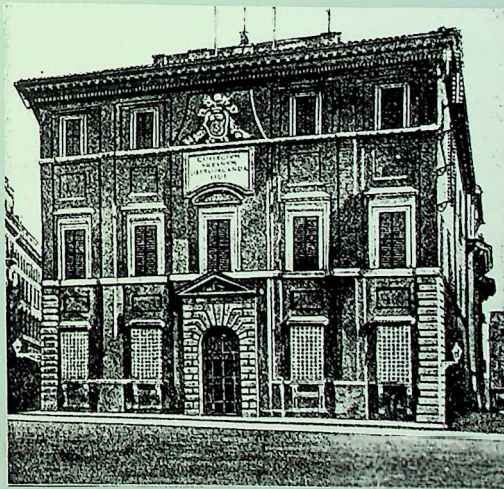
Theologians and philosophers debate endlessly whether social steering is ethically or morally wrong, but that doesn't halt its' existence. In Roman schooldays to the present, verbatim regurgitation is still the main source of learning. Anything repeated long enough or loud enough will eventually be consigned to memory. Remembering that if a society does not know any better, how can it question what it is being taught? The willingness of people to be led, is mainly due to innocence and ignorance. If one maintains the ignorance of a people, one controls what amount they should be allowed to know. Because they cannot refute it they have



1 PROPAGANDA FIDE BULL.



2 POPE GREGORY XV



3 THE PALACE OF THE CONGREGATIO DE PROPAGANDA FIDE BY BERNINI

to believe it. This is how it was in the first hundreds of years of the Church, the following dark ages and middle ages. The Catholic Church ruled by suppression.

Their defence for use of propaganda was that they wholeheartedly believed, that "their" way was the only true way. Certainly their doctrine was mostly harmless, keeping otherwise weak or naive characters from destructive or volatile acts. The concept of heaven gave them a goal to strive for, and a fervour to spread the faith further. It stopped many revolts and made control by the Papacy infinitely easier. This is hard to imagine today due to the modern Churches lack of secular power, over which, it could enforce its views.

In the pre-Renaissance years, there was precious little media available to society, to learn anything. What was in existence; paintings, sculptures, travelling storytellers, manuscripts and hand written books were controlled by the Church or State and only priests, nobles or scholars had access to really valuable knowledge. The miracle of printing shifted the control of knowledge and thus, the control of the mind.

The Church and State patrons commissioned almost all artistic works before the Renaissance rise of the Merchant Classes and freethinking. It is across this period, that Bosch and Cranach worked. This dissertation is not an attempt to condemn the religious bastions, but simply explores their methods of indoctrination and analyses, this in the works of Bosch and Cranach between the years 1470-1530. This is the immediate period before and after the Christian Reformation, where public unrest in the

arrogance and opulence of the Church, finally came to a head, when Martin Luther, a close friend of Lucas Cranach, nailed several theses to the Church door in Wittenberg, in protest of the sale of indulgences.

Charting the development and nature of changes, within the Church and Europe at this time, is hence vital if one is to discover what each artist stood for, whether he was orthodox in his views or not. What other religious sects could they be involved in, if any at all, and what bearing do they give us, as to the nature of propaganda of the day? What the Renaissance advances in learning and art meant for Northern Europe? How did the Propaganda Fide emerge and was it directly related to the spread of the new Protestant faith?

As it happens by opening each door of thought one always opens another and many important details emerge. The Spanish Inquisition were at their peak in Bosch's day i.e. they were most powerful just before the Reformation. From this one deduces that the inquisition was perhaps one of the reasons for the growing dislike and unease within the Church, and hence, in that way had it influenced Bosch and Cranach? If they had unorthodox leanings, why were they not persecuted? Many roads must be explored to understand what was happening within the minds of Cranach and Bosch, and why choose these two. How do they relate? Well, both being Northern European artists, specialising in Religious themes, but most significantly, because they were the most important propagandists of their day, one overlapping the other, on different sides of a religious split, bridging the crucial years just before and after the reformation, they seem natural choices. Their settings geographically give a good cross section of the

rapid changes taking place in Northern Europe both artistically and historically.

Bosch's period of activity covers the time when the Catholic Church was ferociously pressing the existence of Hell, and the implications for deviants of the faith. The Church had yet not accepted the new knowledge made available to all, with the Renaissance, and was in a state of frustration. This is evident in Bosch's work. Heretics were rampant at this time and Malleus Maleficarum (1478 - the Inquisitions' handbook, on identification and judgement of witches) is proof of this. Claims had been made by many scholars in the centuries following, that Boschs' pieces reflect heretical practices, but an objective analysis of his work, should serve to prove otherwise. Bosch was innocent of heresy but guilty of being one of the most influential propagandists for the Catholic Church and a vital source of inspiration for the 20th century surrealists like Dali.

Cranach, as Martin Luther's friend and associate, was instrumental in the struggle of the Protestant Reformation. Through his work he had to reanalyse the previous codes of pictorial language, the old symbolism and repressive content and replace it with a structure full of optimism and Renaissance ideology. Cranach's personal artistic development suffered, as he had to create this style. Cranach's work is inseparable from the study of Reformation art. The style he developed had to "appear" superior of intellect, full of clarity, but still interesting. There would be a lot more to show of Cranach's work if he had not been a printer, innkeeper and Mayor. This work had the burden of trying to curtail

revolts growing in the name of the new Protestant religion.

The new freedom of thought within Religion was evident in a favourite quote for Protestant Reformers. Proverbs 15:3.

The tongue of the Lord makes knowledge attractive, but the mouth of fools gushes forth with folly.

This may, on its own, also reflect Renaissance respect for knowledge, but would never previously have been uttered by the Catholic Church without the preceeding line 15:2.

The eyes of the Lord are in everyplace observing the evil, and the good.

Respect for knowledge in Bosch's time was only expressed with an accompanying affinity for God and a religious application for knowledge. Nothing in the Catholic Church could have been taken out of context. With the freedom of the new Protestant Church, research into bible doctrine opened questions concerning missing doctrines or omitted texts. Other sects had been searching for, and following such texts, the Gnostics for example. This revised interest in scriptural debate included parallels with scientific and "magical" philosophies, which was why so many heretical groups existed, and the Catholic Church has so much difficulty in controlling its people. The Faith since the beginning of the Church had been maintained by paranoia and fear. It had been vital to keep it that way if the Church was to exist in all areas; home, work, social life. The Church and State had to be

all powerful, but their accumulation of wealth and opulence made the Churches teaching seem folly. It was the Renaissance search for knowledge and truth, which challenged that folly and the Church thus split on the notion of reform, each side using art as a tool of its power. Bosch and Cranach thus became important propagators of their separate faiths.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The notion that God is always above, spying on mankind from the sky, may strike us as unpleasant, even disconcerting, but to Medieval Man it appeared as the greatest deterrent from sin. The Middle Ages, the large expanse of time from the birth of Christ, to the renaissance, is often portrayed as a time when everything stood still and Religion ruled supreme in a tyrannical grip, promising only doom eternal for those who didn't believe. This notion is to some degree true but it was not a time of complete ignorance. Students studied law, Classical literature and the Scriptures, monks produced fantastic illuminated manuscripts and some of the finest gothic buildings emerged later on by wonderful craftsmen. The literature of the ancient world was well known and though very little survives there were several masterpieces of religious art. That seems to highlight the start of problems. Art was almost unknown of, outside of its use for iconography and hence it was ideally the tool of the church. The religious cloisters housed almost all books of learning, and so, was in control of the level of education of its people. The Church was largely responsible for the length and extent of the middle ages, by the suppression of knowledge, leaving the schools of thought only to a privileged minority not essentially clergymen, but answerable to the Church certainly. Despite this, large areas of knowledge had been neglected and these included history and geography. The Far East and Africa were mysterious places. Sciences; biology, physics, chemistry and medicine were seen as dangerous, akin to alchemy and magic. The main preoccupation of these early scientists was turning base metal into gold and concocting the elixir of youth. The belief in magic was strong and

superstitions thrived on this; dragons, monsters, ghosts, goblins and witches all supposedly existed in those days.

There was an intense lack of curiosity in the mind of the Medieval, which took so much for granted. Their willingness to believe and not question, seems almost alien to our age. Renaissance scholars and artists on the other hand, started to delve deeper into man and his environment. The Renaissance folk started asking questions, not taking anything for granted. Nothing anymore - Church, State, manor, mind, land, sea, sky, the celestial sphere. This "re-naissance" was first felt in Italy, probably because as exploration was underway, so was trading and there was a rekindling of the history and stories of the land and being as it was, the centre of an Empire. Scholars Petrarch (1309-79) and Boccaccio (1313-75) wished to find Greek, Latin and Hebrew manuscripts lost since the fall of the Roman Empire. Because they searched for human as opposed to spiritual works they were called Humanists. The search for knowledge inspired the formation of libraries outside the control of the Church. The court of a Ruler became a greater display than the field of battle, with scholars debating in intellectual trivia, and art being acquired for show. Vast sums of money were being now used encouraging the development of Art, Science and Exploration.

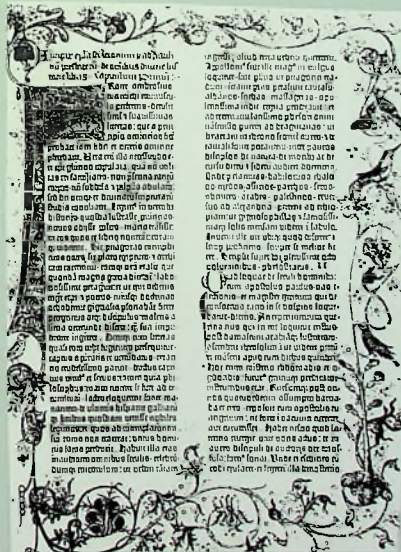
The spreading of this new found knowledge, was more than helped by the invention of the printing press. Hand written books cost a fortune, often took years to produce and were scarce. This also attributed to the limitation of knowledge in Medieval times. Then, when block printing - i.e. a whole page carved out on a wooden block - was developed, books were still as costly, but could be



4 CONSTANTINE I, EMPEROR OF BYZANTIUM



5 JOHANN GUTENBERG TESTING A PROOF



6 FIRST PAGE OF THE GUTENBERG BIBLE

produced faster. The limitations were surmounted when in Mainz a man called Johan Gutenberg (1397-1468) invented movable metal type, there is no specific date recorded, as it was Gutenberg's "secret process", but from 1439 onwards the printing press was working. Its first piece was the Gutenberg Bible. The demand for paper surpassed the technology available, and so the Chinese method of papermaking was adopted to feed the printing press. The advance in printing helped to standardise the spoken word of each language. The advance, also rapidly increased the degree of knowledge available to the public. Whereas earlier the Church or State had some degree of control over what an individual could be reading, this new freedom of thought was also potentially dangerous. Questioning the long established customs and ways of thought could lead to anarchy or disobedience, violence and certainly disorder. The definition of greater freedom did not rule out the freedom of the ability to harm others. And so the presiding rulers of Church and State started to have problems; with restrictions, censorship, revolts and fanatics.

The new emphasis on knowledge and luxury caused many problems, and those used to the "old" ways found this a difficult time not least of which was a monk called Savonarola (1452-98) who, via his strong charismatic presence and condemnation of the Renaissance aroused strong fanaticism calling for reforms and repentance. In Florence there was a huge bonfire to "cleanse" the city of luxuries. Pope Alexander VI, was not impressed however, and excommunicated him for disobedience. Continuing his own reforms Savonarola was tortured, hanged and burnt while still alive on 23 May 1498. This was but one

display of the power of the Church, but less than twenty years later Martin Luther was to defy the Church and live.

THE STATE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND CAUSES OF REFORMATION

When one considers the amount of torture, war and bloodshed that has occurred in the name of Christ, it is very hard to conceive of this as the name associated with love, and peace to all men. It is a strong point for theologians to argue; is the Church really for the common good of the people, or has the amount of evil which stemmed from it outweighed and overshadowed the good it produced? Christ seems to have a lot to answer for. In actual fact there is a great difference between the teachings of the Church, and the doctrines of Christ. Christ's teachings were simplistic and wonderfully idealistic, they were also almost impossible to teach. The mass public tends not to listen to wayward wondering prophets, and the same was true equally within the Church. To unite the ideology of the doctrine, the Church had to find its feet in the first centuries. This meant the teachings of Christ had to be edited, adopted, analysed and finally united into a form which could be preached. The preacher under this new doctrine was ultimately powerful as Christ's witness on Earth. This new doctrine was the supreme code of teaching and this was reflected by its accumulation of wealth and splendour, it came to be known as the Roman Catholic Church. The public would listen to a powerful doctrine from a powerful Church. Unfortunately power and fear go hand in hand. Overshadowed by the doctrine and its preachers, their legends and myths were designed to keep the followers in line. Instead of voluntarily keeping to the teachings of Christ, fear was keeping people in the Church, and the original teachings of Christ were lost in the intricate dogma surrounding the Church. The curiosity of people for the unknown gathered many others, as teachings, literature, mass and sacraments were all

delivered in Latin, or in chants. Mysticism shrouded the simplicity that Christ had wanted.

How come people so readily accepted Christianity as the main Religion? After grappling for years to survive during the Roman Empire, it wasn't adopted fully until Constantine made it obligatory in 328AD that it was possible to form a uniform doctrine. When that was established, and accepted, by the Emperor himself, persecution stopped and practice started. It is important to note that many writings are supposedly lost, but others were deliberately omitted, including those of St. Thomas and St. Philip, because their interpretations lent too much to free thought, and placed much emphasis on the development of the soul and inner self, independent from the centralisation of power, i.e. against the idea of papal pomp, with riches and glory but not against the papacy itself. The followers of this doctrine (the St. Thomas and St. Philip Gospels) were known as Gnostics. They were one of many "deviant" factions within the Church, constantly harassed and asked to conform. One of the most disturbing facts is that even after the persecution from the Roman Empire, the Catholic Church persecuted more people and created more martyrs for other faiths. From the fifth century to the twelfth many groups evolved from the Church, each with their own reforms, and believing themselves to be the true faith. Among these were the Arians, Catharists, Gnostics, Manichaens and the Waldenses. The Arians disbelieved the idea of the holy trinity, the Catharists were highly puritan and suppressed all sins of the flesh. (hardly the most practical of teachings for a long lineage). The Gnostics were discussed above, the Manichaens believed God is both the good spirit and the Devil both present in all matter.

7 SAVONAROLA THE FANATICAL MONK-FRA BARTOLOMEO



8 ST DOMINIC BY SCHOOL AT MESSINA



9 JOHN CALVIN BY UNKNOWN FLEMISH CATHOLIC ARTIST

The Waldanses' wished to return to the original primitive doctrines, without the dogma. This group in particular suffered harshly from persecution.

By omitting some of the teachings of Christ and adapting it so severely, this made the teachings incomplete for many who relentlessly followed the way of Christ's teachings. The doctrine as it now existed left too many questions unanswered and so many followers became dissatisfied or disillusioned, but the primitive doctrine would have answered far too much, too simply and it was the complexity, mysticism and fear of the unknown which predominated and contained the preaching of the middle ages. The suppression of knowledge was vital, if the Church was to retain the undivided attention of the masses.

*Within the Church any who asked too many of the wrong questions or asked for reforms were severely punished. Those who misinterpreted the teachings were punished, it became increasingly difficult to follow the practices of the Church, and disloyalty was growing everywhere, particularly in southern France. The combined name given to the "deviant" sects of Christianity there, was Albigenses after the town called Albi where a council was held, discussing their dissolution. Papal emissaries who were dispatched to reform the French were only run out of the area. On their retreat they encountered two Spanish priests; Bishop of Osma Diego d'Azevedo, and his sub-prior Domingo De Guzman, later to become St Dominic, founder of the Dominicans who controlled the "Inquisition". On St. Dominic's advice the papal emissaries returned to France after Rome, which agreed to Dominic's idea that the emissaries should arrive simply

clad without the regalia usual for a papal dignitary. Again, the papists were ignored and the Albigenses ruler Raymond VI was excommunicated. One of the papists was murdered and St. Dominic seized the moment to ask for a body to reform the heretics, this was granted by Innocent III. Meanwhile Innocent had long been searching for an excuse to call the heretics into line. So in 1208, war was declared on the Albigenses (and freedom of thought). It took fifteen years of warring for success, which produced not just the horrors associated with war, but the misery of the "Inquisition". The fanatical zeal was no less evident, when the City of Beziers was being attacked with several good Christians still within its walls. When faced with the question of who to kill, Arnould, Abbot of Cîteaux replied "slay all, for God will certainly know his own". 20,000 men, women and children were slain.

The following popes were supportive of the Inquisition, as Innocent III was, though it did not become known in its full sense till the reign of Gregory IX (1232). He decreed that heretics and their abettors when found by the Inquisition, should be handed to the magistrates and nobles for punishment. To be a heretic meant treason of the state and the punishment; imprisonment, execution or excommunication. To be excommunicated fully meant that one could hold no office, had no rights as a citizen, if they were ill or in trouble none could help them, and they were to be shown no charity (on pain of excommunication). "Faith, Hope and Charity, these three and the greatest of these is charity", wonderful practice of the scriptures.

Most people associate the Inquisition with the Protestant persecutions. However the Inquisition slaughtered many other than the Albigenses, these were Jews and Moslems.

Much of the motivation coming from the acquisition of their wealthy properties when they were sentenced. The greatest adversary of the Inquisition-the Reformation, did not essentially take full hold of Europe till the early 16th century, but as usual it was the spread of scholarly ideas and satires which caused the cracks to appear before the big split.

* Discussed in the Spanish Inquisition, Plaidy 1978 Chapter 3.

THE IMMEDIATE CAUSES OF THE REFORMATION

The Church needed vast sums of money to retain the splendour to which they had become accustomed. So when they needed money for anything, like the crusades or to build new churches, they got by, by selling 'Indulgences'; one could gain absolution from a sin by payment to the church, - the greater the sin, the more expensive it was. The papacy had to contend now however with more enlightened thinkers and only now were people becoming fully aware of the implications and dishonestly which this involved. Already church dominions had tithes which were hard to meet, and taxations on top of that. People were very uneasy. Sir Thomas Moore in his "Utopia" and Erasmus in Christian Prince had both spoken out about unfair taxation. Erasmus followed this by condemning the practice of false pardons, in Praise of Folly * Erasmus also studied in SHertogenbosch.

Problems really came to the fore, when, realising the difficulty the unrest was causing in the collection of indulgences, the Pope hired John Tetzel, the Dominican friar, - who was notorious for his shrewd acquisitions of indulgences. Tetzel was sent to Germany to gain money for renovations on St. Peters', he travelled with great pomp. Now, not only could people pay for past sins, they could also pay for those they were going to commit. The people were overwhelmed by his show and others were outraged. Tetzel arrived in Juterbock four miles from Wittenberg and history was about to change.

Martin Luther was teaching theology in Wittenberg University in October 1517. He was very disturbed by this

insane buying of indulgences and so he pinned several (95) theses to the door to the new church in Wittenberg. Within these Luther stated that originally these indulgences could be received if one fought in the Crusades. In the 16th century Christians only lost their money instead of their lives. The Poor as usual, were at a dreadful disadvantage. Luther was simply looking for reform, it seemed shocking that there was so much wrong in the practices of what was supposed to be preaching good. Luther certainly didn't expect to cause a revolution. Like other inquisitive minds, Luthers faith tormented him "if Christ had been poor, why was the Pope so rich?" Luther found solace in St. Paul's letters to the Romans, St. Paul had also questioned the church of his day and was a fervent seeker of justice, as a judge punishes he also pardons. Luther's protest also touched near the ideals of the lost Gospels i.e. those which were put aside because they confused the teachings of the new doctrine. The teachings of *St. Thomas and St. Philip were, as I've already stated, suspect. St. Thomas, because he was "the doubter", and St. Philip, because he associated with a magician in Samaria. This same magician called Simon who asked St. Peter (when he joined St. Philip) to give him the Holy Spirit to perform miracles, and offered money for the same. St. Peter said, "May your money go to perdition with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God for money", - Acts: 8 20-21. Had Luther been a Dominican perhaps this event of protest may have been forgotten. But Luther was an Augustinian and the rivalry between the Brotherhoods brought many to Tetzel's defence. They challenged Luther with several attacks and Tetzel claimed Luther should be burned. A challenge of the Dominican brotherhood was food for the Inquisition. In public debate and in more books and pamphlets Luther spread his beliefs and his people being sympathetic to a fellow German rather than foreign religious dictators

responded. The Reformation, like the Renaissance might never have happened without printing. The printer who produced the pamphlets from Wittenberg was Lucas Cranach, who had also single handedly to introduce artistic reform within religious context.

In the heat of the conflict Luther attacked far more than just the indulgences and Tetzels. He refused to believe in transubstantiation (the conversion of bread and wine to the body and blood at Eucharist). This lay Luther open for a death penalty. The Church needed neither Pope or clergy, every man of true faith was his own priest (Gnostic teachings), Monasteries should be closed and vicars allowed to marry. The mass should become a service of celebration other than the haunting chant of the monks. Pope Leo X gave Luther sixty days to conform and repent or be excommunicated. Luther was being hailed already as a revolutionary hero. The Holy Roman Emperor decided to intervene and the council between Luther and the Roman Empirical court took place in Worms, at The Diet of Worms. Luther defended his interpretation of the faith so well that Charles the Emperor couldn't fault him, though he disagreed with his philosophy. In 1518 Luther had to face a tribunal at Augsburg and again the power of his debate made it impossible for the authorities to bring a case against him. By 1520 the Pope had issued a Bull forbidding any countries accepting the Lutheran doctrine. The Reformation was under way. Though Luther had been allowed to live, many other reformers had not been so lucky. In England John Wycliffe (1320-89) had disputed transubstantiation and had translated the bible into his own language. He lived, but all his followers, Lollards perished. The English, French and German rulers were often at odds with the Papacy throughout its history. Germany because of its many kingdoms and divisions seemed

to suffer most because of its disorder and petty wars. Many fanatics now took the initiative to preach whatever they liked, there were the Anabaptists who believed in adult baptism and that only the poor would be saved. They destroyed and killed many of the rich. One branch of the group led by John of Leyden fought the Catholics at Münster for a year, during which time John went mad, proclaimed he was King of the Earth and married over a dozen wives, he was also slaughtered. More lasting were the reforms of Ulrich Zwingli a Swiss and John Calvin, a French man. Zwingli taught that Christ couldn't be in heaven and on Earth at the same time, and he was killed in a war between the Catholics and Protestants. Calvin however less interested in warring, called for church discipline and reform in the shape of preachers, teachers, elders and deacons, who should be elected by the congregations. This was far more rigid and community orientated than the Catholic Church. Calvinism had a similar teaching to that of Martin Bucer, predestination i.e. our fate is sealed from birth.

So within this religious atmosphere grew the works of Lucas Cranach and Hieronymous Bosch. Bosch was trying desperately to reform his own people in his own way, though he was not a priest, and Cranach, also not a priest but at the centre of the changes in Wittenberg, was trying to contain the swell of fanatic revolt and teach this new religion through his work. Though almost a generation apart, and in different areas of a disturbed Northern Europe they are perhaps the best people to illustrate the extent to which the Catholic Church influenced the works of artists at this crucial time in history. To highlight the extent to which religion pervaded all aspects of life, so intensely was it's reknown as one of the greatest forms of totalitarian propaganda ever, that is ironic, seeing

that later the Catholic Church dismissed the teachings of the Bolsheviks because they were godless, and controlled any other beliefs with their narrow doctrine.

* Discussed in "Gnostics" BBC 1983 Video.

* Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536) who studied in S^t Hertogenbosch with the Brotherhood of Our Lady and so must have known of Bosch before Bosch died in 1516.

HIERONYMOUS BOSCH

'The whole world lives in a darksome night in blinded sinfulness persisting, while every street sees fools existing'.

Sebastian Brant (Dutch Philosopher)
circa 1490

This perhaps reflects an ideology within the works of Hieronymous Bosch. An artist whose work epitomised the mood of the time. His themes were almost prophetic, in that changes were coming which would bring an end to a world that Christians had dominated for fifteen hundred years. More than any other artist before, Bosch vividly depicted scenes of horrific intensity reflecting the outcome of evil ways and wrongful doings. Hell never appeared so real or torturous as in his wooden panels. Accentuated all the more, by the other extremes of deep repose and contentment in his views of Heaven. Bosch was the last of the great Medieval painters, preaching hellfire and eternal damnation as a means of keeping society from vices. The Medieval preoccupation with its own mortality and death, was to give way to Reformation optimism and change. Bosch died only a year before Luthers' theses were nailed to the door of a Wittenberg church, initiating the events which completely disrupted the Old Order. Like Luther, Bosch often castigated the corruption of the clergy and monks, yet did so without rejecting the Old Medieval Church, though this was a favourite accusation for many Bosch scholars. Because of the lack of substantial evidence however, all these claims though sounding fascinating can be little more than speculation. Bosch was one of the greatest propagators of the faith and on closer examination of his work and background we shall



11 PORTRAIT OF BOSCH

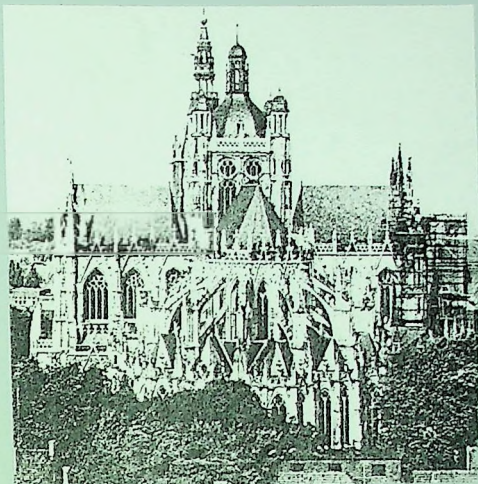


12 VIRGIN AND CHILD BY GEERTEEN TOT SINT JANS

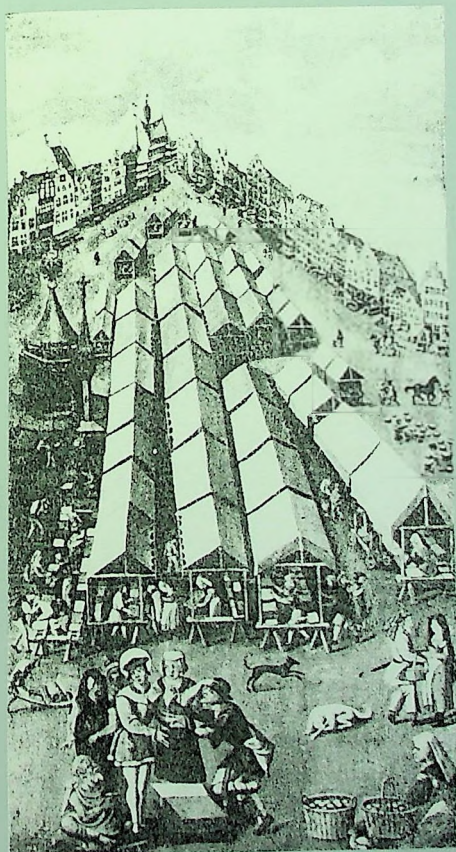
see this to be true. Only then, can we appreciate how powerful didactic and important his works were at the time, and how he was working principally for the Church.

Hieronymous Bosch was born in S-Hertogenbosch between 1450 and 1453 and it was from the city he got his name. S-Hertogenbosch being the fourth biggest city of the Brabant area, it lay in what is now the Netherlands. Principally a market town it was teeming with intense religious and intellectual activity during the 15th and 16th centuries. An attractive city near the Belgian border it remained part of the extensive territories of the ambitious Duke of Burgundy, the other main cities of Brabant being Brussels, Antwerp and Louvain. Being geographically close to such counties as Utrecht and the Rhine and Maas rivers it was the main commercial town of an agricultural area, and had extensive trade connections with Northern Europe and Italy. Cloth was its most important commodity and it was famed for its organ builders and bell founders. Its middle class merchant population determined the city character - it was devoid of the monotony of court life such as Brussels or Malines. It had no University, no Bishop but a vigorous cultural life. It had a renowned Latin school and five chambers of rhetoric, literary associations. But more particularly its religious life was flourishing. The city was surrounded by convents and monasteries especially the Brothers and Sisters of the Commonlife, a modified religious order without vows, originating in Holland in the 14th century in a movement called the Devotio Modern. It would have been impossible to fail to be influenced by such an environment. Its character exemplified the works of Thomas A' Kempis' Imitation of Christ, which doubtless Bosch and his patrons were well versed in. The Devotio Modern played an important part in the religious revival of the 15th

13 CHURCH OF ST JOHNS AT S'HERTOGENBOSCH



14 SCULPTURE AT ST JOHNS-DETAIL.



15 S'HERTOGENBOSCH THE CLOTH MARKET CIRCA TIME OF BOSCH

century and was probably responsible for the huge numbers of religious foundations around S-Hertogenbosch [by 1526 10 years after Bosch's death there was a ratio of 1 in 19 people enrolled in religious orders, a huge proportion]. This however did not mean that the entire town was quite so spiritually fervent.

The existence of so many cloisters and their economic competition, instilled an amount of animosity in the townspeople. An attitude which Bosch did not fail to pick up on in his art. Despite criticism of religious orders the moral authority of the Medieval Church had not been shaken. Religion was still predominant in every corner of life. Every guild having its own patron saint and religious festivals and holidays were treated with joy and spectacle. The power of the Church evident in the magnificent Cathedral of St. John and its wonderful sculptures and grotesques, that is, those that remain.

Bosch's ancestors Van Aken supposedly came from Aachen (Aix la Chapelle) in Germany. The first mention of them in S-Hertogenbosch is 1430. His grandfather who died in 1454 was a painter and had five sons, four at least who followed in his trade, one Anthonius Van Aken (d.circa 1478) was Hieronymous' father. Bosch left no letters or diaries and so, whatever information found about him has to be gleaned from municipal sources and accounting records of the Brotherhood of Our Lady. He had two brothers and a sister, his brother Goosen was also a painter. They all first appeared in the Church records around 1474. Between 1479 and 1481, Bosch married Aleyt Goyaerts Van der Meervere, some years his senior, they supposedly lived in 'Root Cruys' (The Red Cross) a house

near the cloth market not to be confused with rosy cross or Rosicrucian.

In 1486-87 he appears in the membership lists of the Brotherhood of our Lady, where devotions centered on a famous miracle-working image of The Virgin, the Zoete Lieve Vrouw in St Johns.

The two main aspersions cast on the faith of Bosch have been crediting him with membership in both the Rosicrucians (Wertheim Aymes) and the heretical Brethren of the Free Spirits (Fraenger). First to discredit the Rosicrucian claim. It is a fact that any Rosicrucian Movement before the beginning of the 17th century, has no real evidence to prove its existence, though by linking a few clues, it is easy to assume how they come to such a conclusion. A Rosicrucian is one who is a member of a worldwide fraternity of very ancient origin, given to the study of occult philosophy and science a branch of which flourished in Europe during the 16th and 17th centuries. In 1417 Christian Rosencreutz supposedly founded his brotherhood. Its beliefs belong to the spiritual stream of esoteric christianity. This means that emphasis of teaching was for the inner soul or spirit. Normal Christian teaching implies there is just a body and a soul i.e. the spirit and soul are one. The Rosicrucians saw themselves as protectors and guardians of this spirit. They flourished during times of great learning and change. And we know great changes were happening in Boschs' world, great scientific and geographic advances. So Rosicrucians were supposedly the intelligencia of the day, only letting people know what it was safe for them to know without it interfering with their spiritual development. The idea that a little knowledge being a dangerous thing was evident, with the Inquisition at its height. The

16 MAP OF HOLLAND, CIRCA TIME OF BOSCH



17 MASSYS-NOTARY HOLDING A ROSE (SUGGESTING ROSICRUCIAN LINKS)



18 PHILIP II OF SPAIN-TITIAN

Rosicrucians also practiced alchemy, as opposed to chemistry, and spread their theories through pictures, tablets, fairytales, legends, proverbs and songs, childrens games and acrobatic feats. Their symbol was that (of course) of the cross and rose. Another supposed link with the order, Bosch was supposed to have greatly influenced a young German painter called Quintin Massys, who, among his works produced a painting of a Notary holding a rose, a cross, and a quill, in other words he was writing Rosicrucian.

To refute these claims of Boschs connection with such an order is elementary. Despite the fact that no real documentary evidence exists on any sect of Rosicrucianism, and that is including any present group, there is very little to base a claim on. Certainly alchemy and chemistry were evident in Boschs work, but look, in which areas are they manifest. The illogical alchemic instruments are invariably in hell. If one was to illustrate a scene of a hospital would it not be wise to have done some research to refer to for credibility, but that does not make one a surgeon. This also applies to Massys picture of a notary. The notary, may have been writing about Rosicrucian theory, he may also have been writing the story of the red rose, and how the blood fell from Christ at the Crucifixion landing on the rose, permanently colouring it red. To investigate such a theory is novel and interesting but it cannot hold as fact of anything. It is wise to remember the Inquisition again. This was their age, anything vaguely straying from Catholic teaching of the day could result in death, or torture. Bosch was renown enough outside of his home city, to invite attention if his works were of heretical nature. Besides, his work was so powerful in reforming and converting sinners of the day, his work was invaluable



19 THE GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS-BOSCH

at a time of turmoil. There is also no documents to verify that he was under any suspicion, and any discrepancies as to the authenticity of his religious fervour toward the Brotherhood of Our Lady were only implied in the late 16th century and then quashed by competent credible scholars, including the famed Spanish priest Fray Jose De Siguenza in 1605. Many of Bosch's works were acquired by the deeply religious Philip the Second of Spain, including the Temptation of Saint Anthony and the Garden of Earthly Delights. Philip was one of the most papalistic monarchs ever and would never have bought a piece of dubious intent or heretical origin. No, Bosch to these charges was obviously beyond reproach and it is only on retrospect, and circumstantial evidence that such outlandish claims exist that Bosch was a member of the Brethren of Free Spirits. Against the previous more credible claims, this appears laughable. The Brethren of Free Spirits were a heretical group which flourished in Europe for hundreds of years, after it was founded in the 13th Century. They practiced promiscuity and so forth, in an attempt to return to the innocence and state of mind of the pre-original-sin Garden of Eden, hence they were called Adamites. Their concept was not unlike the free love ideals of the 60's. Fraenger claims that "The Garden of Earthly Delights", was painted for such a group of worshippers, and that this and other works were done under the influence of hallucinogenics. Rather dubious claims to say the least. Scholars object to Fraenger's claims, but naturally the public press and rag papers thrive on such sordid details. This is why the central panel of the Garden of Earthly Delights seems rather familiar.

The last certain reference to the Brethren of Free Spirits in the Netherlands is 1411, in Brussels. Regardless if the sect survived or not, Bosch was Orthodox Christian

devoted to the Virgin Mary, and Bosch's Holland was not the warmest place in the world to conduct such earthly pleasures as are present in the work of Earthly Delights. The fact is that authentic documentation does exist to Bosch being the main artist commissioned to the church of St John though many of his works were destroyed by the iconoclastic riots which later swept Europe after the Reformation.

Now after surmising that Bosch was a religious man, a practising Christian, we can investigate his work and how brilliant it was, in terms of indoctrination and propaganda. However, chronology of his works is a difficult undertaking, as they were never dated and most were so badly damaged or overpainted it would be dangerous to guess solely by technique alone. It is better to approach his work via his imagery, content and ideals. It is assumed Bosch learned his trade from his father, or one of his uncles, their works have long been lost, so we cannot see what kind of background, visually and practically he came from. Well, the Northern provinces of the Netherlands were neither as wealthy or politically powerful as the main Brabant and Flanders were. Patronage was not so extensive. Many early Dutch paintings were also destroyed in the iconoclastic riots of the Reformation, surprisingly few survived. Though it is known, two schools flourished, that of Geerten tot Sint Jans in Haarlem and Vigo inter Virgines (real name unknown) in Delft. The decline in manuscript illumination had left Utrecht robbed of its importance. Where the unity of Van der Weyden style predominated in the South, the North lacked such a bond, local and individual styles flourished. Bosch's was principle among these. His deeply felt, expressive interpretations of bible narrative were brilliantly executed to convey and

relate their teachings. The urge to embellish the Bible with scenes drawn from life is characteristic of the middle ages, but Bosch excelled in this unconventional style of the North. He had a vision of man and his world based on what was around him every day by primary experience (except of course from his images of Hell). Bosch's early work was Northern influenced though later he showed Flemish and Southern tendencies. Regardless - Bosch was not conventional in content. The Dutch illuminators found that interpreting the scriptures into everyday images had a more powerful and immediate impact on the spectator. Bosch exploited this and illuminated the most terrifying events side by side with majestic harmony in such an evocative way. He stretched the imagination of his viewer to such an extent that they could not have looked upon it without envisioning the horror amplified by the extreme joy, and witness themselves in either position, or balanced between the folly and reality, in their own lives. An interesting factor influencing Bosch which further substantiates Bosch's orthodox Catholic leanings was his membership to the inner order of the Brotherhood of Our Lady. Closer research into this order affirms they were a Dominican Order, proud of their adept skill of Latin (you will remember S-Hertogenbosch housed at least five schools of Latin in Bosch's time). The Renaissance meant most Latin works were being translated into various languages. Most that is, except those works which could prove dangerous, without spiritual guidance, which was why the Albigenses and Lullists were obliterated. Part of the power of the Dominican Order was their incredible memory. They had a system for memorising which could be easily learnt, but was in Latin and surrounded with so much useless detail that many who tried to learn it would just cast it aside. This "artificial learning" was central to the teachings of Thomas A' Kempis which was also the main area of study of

the Brotherhood of Our Lady. Hence Bosch was privy to the secrets of the Dominican preaching system and as such, his works were more likely to be of this format, than any Rosicrucian garbled message. The facts stand that the relationship with symbolism, imagery and didactic philosophy in Bosch's work was of this orthodox Catholic Dominican Order. This also explains why, (though some may originally have thought him to be heretical) Bosch was never bothered by the Inquisition and why Philip II was so interested in his work.

This "artificial memory" - to trigger the preaching memory was, the simple relation of making memorable striking images of a particular interest and relating it directly with something in everyday life, for example, when in John's Gospel emphasis is put on the story of the cock crowing twice and Christ having been denied, the betrayal is remembered every time one hears a cock crowing, or even sees a cockrel. Everyday images directly relating to philosophical and theological teachings. A'kempis repeatedly stressed this image relation as a form of memory, which is studied even today by modern psychologists. I remember from my own schooldays, the Dominicans sometimes took the classes, and they, through this method, invariably produced better results in us, not necessarily in the biblical field of course, but sciences, literature and other fields. Giotto also knew of this kind of learning. To explore the extent of this learning and the themes prevalent in all Bosch's work would take several hundred pages therefore I will stick to just two of Bosch's works; The Last Judgement and Christ Carrying the Cross.



20 CHRIST CARRYING THE CROSS-BOSCH

Done in tempera and oil on panel in Christ Carrying the Cross the immediate reaction to the image is confusion. It is a mass confusion to the mobbing of a crowd. The arrangement has a dizzying effect. At first, Christ himself is hard to find although he is easily distinguishable as the central character. That may be paradoxical, but if the panel of the cross was not so noticeable the figure of Christ would take little while longer to find. This person looks peaceful and resigned, in a sea of snarling faces. We immediately empathise with this central character. As our attention spirals out elements in the surrounding people remind us of people we perhaps know, or worse, parts of ourselves. This relates to our immediate ideas of ourselves of being good but having many faults. In the mob we seen many scary faces and not least of which is the top right hand figure a monk, from the robes we note it is Cistercian (the most opulent of religious orders of the day). His face parallels to the figure of the thief on the lower right hand corner, asking who is really the criminal.

It is noteworthy that all the corner characters are facing backward, i.e. they go against the stream of people. The two above because of ignorance to the future, the others Veronica and Simon because they are aware of the importance of this event historically, and they are taking active rather than passive part in noting details. Veronica is contented with the image of Christ on her handkerchief having wiped his face, she realises that it is inevitable that they will kill him. Martha beside her, is simply ill with remorse and the notion of a world without Christ. She cannot understand Veronicas radiance. Behind them stands an old man confused and embittered he is verbally attacking Christ but not evilly, we know this because beside him a wide eyed simpleton, has a warm smile

and open expression. This implies that instead of being abusive, and his open hand accentuated this belief, he is questioning "How could this be happening, what kind of a criminal are you?". The simpleton has a kindly face, warm but quite lost. His attire of chained discs is a sign that he himself has bound his own fate and reflects the ideas of those around him like a chameleon, he is unquestioning. Behind them and Christ is Simon of Cyrene. Simon who came to hear the good word and ended up carrying his cross. Simon is a handsome and the most human figure in the scenario. He is the average man, who helps when he is needed and works hard, he is honest and stares backward (nostalgic) and skyward (optimistic, spiritual). He is very aware of what is happening around him, but it does not interfere with his concentration. He too has chains and a collar, he has other obligations in his life and one feels he has potential to do great and good things. Above the cross we encounter a group of whispering men. They are conspirators and among them is a Pharisee with the dotted hat who should clearly know better. An old man whispering who knows his own mind, his scriptures and though he would not act himself, has no qualms about inciting others to act. The third figure has a disc covering his ear, he is clearly not open to new ideas. He is, however ready to act and carries a kosh-type instrument with a ball at the end. In front of them we have an older figure. He wears the attire of a merchant and the expression of a judge, his pursed lips and wealth highlight his miserish state, his grip on the reformed thief is deathlike. His profile is not unlike a vulture or another bird of prey and so we can assume that this deathgrip is like the talongrip of one such bird. This man has no mercy, and will have no mercy shown him. Note, he is in league with the monk but for all his sanctimonious acting, he is ironically more doomed than the thief, whose outcome is a place in heaven. The thief

(the reformed thief) is already dead to this world, he is deathly pale and lifeless. He suffers sufficiently for his crime and the torturing of the monk cannot harm him anymore, it simply hinders the end of his earthly existence.

The Christ figure is in deep meditation, he is relaxed and oblivious to the crowd he seems steadfast. Christ carries his cross like a somnambulist. The pain means nothing, his crown has become part of him, a carpenter, at home with his wood, he is on his way home. The howling, silent scream beside him means nothing. This howler is the personification of "vacuous". He is vain, a boaster highlighted by his chain decorations around his mouth and his head "bandage" a symbol of consecration or initiation into a mystic temple. This figure is the lost soul in the crowd, (he may however simply be screaming because someone just stepped on his toe) it is the expression of inner vacancy, all talk, all boast, lost and useless in a crowd. In front of him is a colourless soldier whose bloated visage is boarish. This man has a blind faith, as much sheltered by his armour to the events around him, as to attack from weapons. He looks intentionally like a pig, grunting a pathway through the crowd. Below him the other thief is tormented by three people. His face is taunt and snarling. He will die as he lived, godless, friendless. Our sympathy is not evoked but quashed by his appearance, his scabbed, mangey head and curling lip. There is a rope about his neck, held like a noose, he is condemned to die. In the group taunting him is another mystic initiate (his head band affirms this) with more chin than sense. His unruly hair and red eyes, face with moist appearance and pierced chin are like those of a drunken pirate, but he is only a pirate to himself. Beside him again, is a strong figure which could be of either gender. "Its" face is

greenish like a lizard and it sticks out its tongue in rebuke lollingly. This is one of the ugliest most demonic faces ever. Its eyes pop wide, full of insanity. The headdress means one of two things if it is a he, he is a scribe (by the blue stripes and white cuff) if it is a she, she is a witch of some sort with lips like liver. Beside this epitome of evil is another pharisee the last of the figures, whose eyes are closed almost in appreciation of such animosity. The pharisee has a bizarre mystical hat like a wizards with a spectrum of colour showing his hypocritical study of alchemy and the brim of his hat is beaded like stars, again symbols of the study of astrology, other than scripture.

The entire picture shows a cross section of society, where everyone is easily as guilty, as either of the criminals who were condemned that day. Envy greed slothfullness all elemental in his work.

Christ Carrying the Cross done in his last years highlights the discontent of the day. The hypocritical dabbling in magic, the sinful life within cloisters, the oafish futility of war and the evil of gossip. Bosch carefully interweaves his elements into one powerful tapestry of moral teaching. His knowledge of mystic existence was not necessarily first hand but common knowledge and for research. Bosch made expressive facial gesture his own tool in this piece, which having the quintessential confusion which is Bosch, only shows faces, where he would normally use several full length figures showing the revival in physiognomy. The flow of the crowd from left to right is significant of the journey of life. The colours black, red, ochre and blue are used somberly to emphasis contrast for example the red shield protecting



21 THE LAST JUDGEMENT CENTRAL PANEL-BOSCH

Christ stands out from the shadows, as an additional shield, from our participation.

In The Last Judgement I will emphasise and explore the extent of the religious influences, paying less attention to the content and more to the ideology and theory behind it.

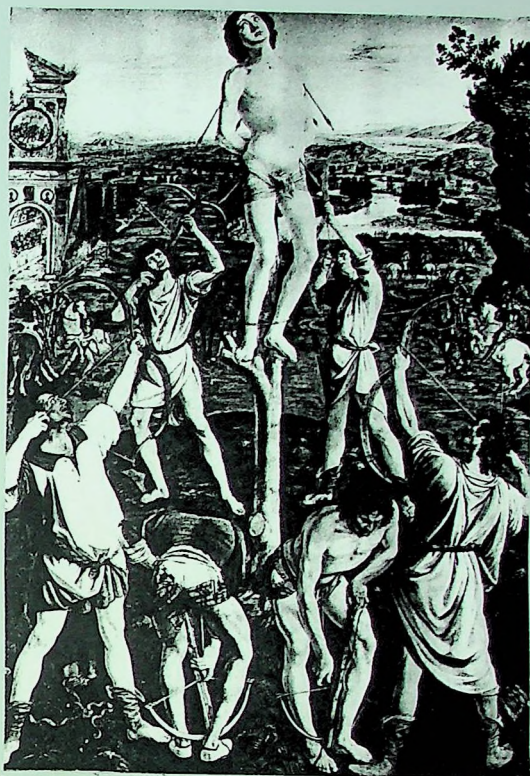
The Last Judgement

Executed in Oil on panel in triptych form the central panel dramatises the last judgement day while the left wing tells the story of Genesis and original sin. The right wing shows the extreme of the depth of hell where the punishment often fits the crime. The central panel is most interesting. Contrary to most paintings leading left to right, the daylight is usually on the right side to express optimism. This is of a peculiarly serious and pessimistic nature. Christ is seated above the general mayhem apart from all the saints even Mary, this is symbolic of the end of intercession, and the finality of life. The notion that everyone is treated the same is evident from their nakedness, no one can hide, but they are carved up between good and bad but it seems only few survive the bad. The exceptions; the solitary figure on the left being led away by an angel and in the bright skylight another few figures, even these are tracked by devils and hunters. This is the epitome of a godforsaken world, where no torture is horrendous enough to conceive of. It's value is the deterring of sin and defiance of the church is dangerous and vivid. It's message still drives home hard today. For the first time in history the full impact of judgement without the comfort of Divine company.



Horror is met face to face alone. Devils and demons slaughter everyone they find, in the most inventive manners possible. A fully clad normal looking woman fries a few cutlets of a person, ready to add two eggs to the pan, but she is a witch, evident by her birdlike taloned feet. On a tree hangs a collection of dead bodies pierced and arrowridden like Saint Sebastian. The vilest instruments of destruction are conceived, cooking, mincing, drowning by sewerage consumption, dismemberment, hunted, overstretched, ironshod, impaled every worst nightmare is present. The seven deadly sins (a Bosch pet subject) are also present. The glutton is the victim of the sewerage intake. The lusty lovers are set upon by lizards and demons who plan befitting ends for both. The slothful are worked to death on treadmills which kill fellow humans in turn. The vain and proud are scalped alive and debased. The jealous have their lives prolonged to see the misery and wish to die. The angry are further enraged by slow deaths. Bosch has introduced so many details to express his Orthodoxy it is hard to mention all of them. Again Bosch draws attention to gambling and dabbling with the occult. In the foreground a portly figure is slowly dying, he is already stabbed but he argues with an occult demon, the figure has perhaps already sold his soul to escape the torture of death, but a demon is hardly going to keep a bargain. The moral never gamble with the devil or dabble in the occult. The whole theme of The Last Judgement is moralistic.

There is, like every good feature film, something in it for everybody, something to make one repent. The devastation is infinite and stretches far beyond the horizon where fire consumes the few buildings standing. The saying that no one knows either the time or place rings in ones ears as the immediacy of the event is



24 SAINT SEBASTION-POLLAIMOLO 1475,
SIMILAR TO BOSCHS' DETAIL



23 THE LAST JUDGEMENT-SECTIONS



realised. Christ still has his mouth open, from uttering the commands for Last Judgement. The elements of eggs, fish, knives, ladders and wheels as everyday instruments - is particularly unnerving when they face one as instruments of death. The steely knife to purify, the egg as fertility, the ladder, the search to better oneself all insignificant in the ensuing catastrophe. The obvious extent of such arrangement is that the Catholic religion pervaded every single facet of life. No stone left unturned and Bosch does an excellent job of reaching into the depths of the subconscious, using whatever method or image possible to keep one in the path of the faith.

The presence of so many musical instruments gives an indication of the volume of confusion and frustration. The sound of musical discord empathising with the mass slaughter, makes the peeling of bells and chanting of choirs most welcoming. How inviting after witnessing such an image as the Last Judgement must listening to the voice of a priest have been. Imagine how much, every move a person made, had to conform with the church.

The wing panels are of the Garden of Eden and Hell. Eden, as anticipated, is idyllic, but its amalgamation with The Last Judgement acts as a reminder of original sin. The foreground is the beginning, the creation of Adam and Eve but further into the distance the scenes become darker as the sin transpires. The landscape is for reaching almost infinite and hence draws the viewer into the setting. Looking onward the darkness in the sky becomes clearer, it is the fallen angels tumbling from heaven. The paradise is broken and lost forever. It is most likely from such an image, as a whole, the preacher would have produced a catchphrase like the "Devil makes work for

idle hands", hence the falling of Adam and Eve. Such phrases would have been useless without material to illustrate the idea. Words can be easily forgotten unless given a visual picture to link it with (the memory works of Thomas A'Kempis).

The panel of Hell is apparently less gruesome than the central panel. But upon close inspection the extent to which this is true becomes painfully obvious, these lost souls are living the life of the damned. They are in an eternity of barbaric torture, continually dying in perpetual torment. One can envisage the misery and hear the piercing screeching sound it makes by the new instruments of torture. The landscape is not unlike the Earth of the Last Day, but the spectacle by its existence alone is more terrible.

The Last Judgement as a triptych is a powerful statement against sin and a boon for reform certainly one of Bosch's greatest triumphs. Although from the pieces I have selected to discuss it may appear that Boschs work was entirely condemnatory or straying from the faith, full of the doom that made the church so powerful in Medieval times. Yet he also produced many redeeming pieces, the Adoration of the Magi, the Prodigal Son. Yet around him and across Europe the winds of change were already blowing. More and other humanists were already beginning teaching that salvation could be more simply achieved by living and working in this world, contrary to the supposed church ideology that our earthly life should be burdensome, so we may reap the rewards in heaven. Only one year after Bosch's death, Martin Luther was to pin his theses to the church in Wittenberg, initiating the events leading to the Reformation. Like Luther, Bosch often

castigated the corruption within the Clergy, yet he did not reject the Old Order or severely conflict with their beliefs.

Bosch's works were highly original, they gave a vivid and realistic form to his religion's ideas and values, which had sustained Christianity for centuries. In Bosch's art, the dying middle ages flared to a new brilliance before disappearing forever. His work cannot merely be regarded as ordinary painting. By their content matter and quality of execution and representation, they evoke curiosity, they urge to be read more deeply into. Boschs' pieces initially appear to be intricate, irrational chaos when in fact they were didactic and organised, but they never came across as contrived. Deeply religious by nature, Bosch's paintings were illustrious presentations of the secret writings and symbols of the religious order of which he was a member, the Brotherhood of Our Lady.

Bosch's work shows a strong obsession with death however, which was compounded by the greater horror, the firm conviction that after the dissolution of the body the soul continued to exist. This presented the possibility of being doomed to external suffering, something Bosch particularly wanted to save his fellow men from at all costs. The depiction of the afterlife and its consequences is what Bosch made his own and this was his greatest contribution to Western Painting and Church ideology.

LUCAS CRANACH

It was the very qualities in the work of Lucas Cranach from the 16th century that made his work so unpopular in following centuries, which was a pity as Cranach is looked on today again as one of the three great German painters, including Dürer and Holbein. Though for many years his work was not the critics favourite, when his 1500-1505 work had been reviewed, he was reinstated again with the other two. Cranach was known as the "Master of Saxony", Martin Luthers' favourite painter and friend, and the Orthodox Protestant painter from the protestant north east. His work had a "spiritual ease" about it. There showed little trace of the extreme tension and confusion of the spiritual struggles around him, though closer study shows us it is there. But his work in fact, seemed to bring an air of contentment and superiority. His work served to persuade with its supposed clarity, among such confusion. In comparison Boschs work reflected the inner turmoil and torment of the mind, toward the end of the medieval period. Cranach however reintroduced control, composure, knowledgeable serenity and an optimism which was much needed at the time. The Reformation was hardly an easy transition period as all eyes were fixed on Wittenberg.

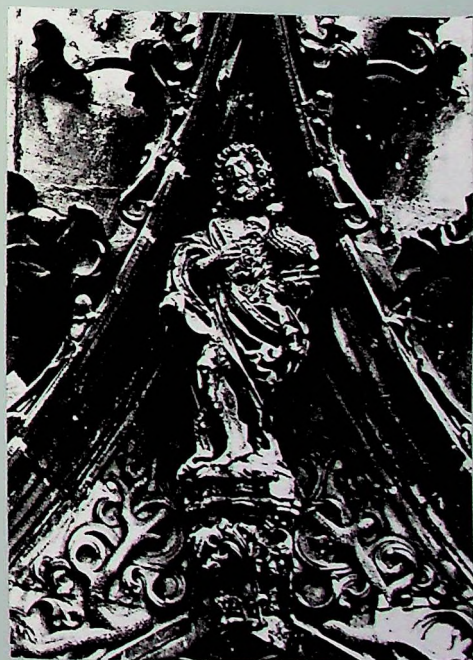
Cranach was born in a franconian town in the Bamberg community called Kronach in 1472. It was from this town he took his name. It was close to the border of the Saxon territories. Like Bosch his father before him was also a painter, and his previous name "Mahler" (like Boschs' Van Aken) meant painter. There is little written documentation about Kronach at that time but Nuremberg was the closest influential centre. Cranach is supposed to



25 KRONACH



26 THE HOLY KINSHIP
PORTRAIT OF CRANACH AND HIS FAMILY 1505



27 SCULPTURE DETAIL BY CRANACH AT
THE CHURCH OF ST JOHN, KRONACH

have trained in his fathers workshop. The only existing influential work from that time was a sculpture of St John at the local parish church.

In 1503 it was evident from his style that he had moved to Vienna. The panel of Schottenschrift seems to affirm this. In fact Cranach may have been working there from as early as 1500. As the most obvious route would have carried him through Bamberg, Nuremberg, Regensburg, Posa, Linz and further down the Danube, these travels would have shown him a lot. They instilled in Cranach a lack of inhibition and his work became rather moody and free. As any traveller knows, the experience picked up from these adventures, makes one a student of life. This worldiness becomes an extraordinary source of inspiration. Cranach soon came into contact with Durers woodcuts "The Apocalypse" and the "Great Passion". This evoked in him a deeper understanding in the handling of the human form. Cranach was far more aware of the strength of dramatic expression and representation of feeling. Durer influenced Cranach in his woodcuts, as previously Cranach knew precious little of this art.

Cranachs early days in Vienna display a great turmoil, a thirst for knowledge perhaps, but his use of form, content and colour point more toward the spiritual. The colours were the boldest he had ever used and his brushstrokes were broad and wieldy. The hectic pace at which these seem to have been produced with gnarled and unkempt twisted figures is reminiscent of Grünewald. The looseness of the flora, like that of Altdorfer, though he just preceeded both. This work 1500-1505 is charged with an explosive energy, a passion for ideals, for life. The spark of inspiration must have been great.



28 THE ALTARPIECE OF ST CATHERINE, DETAIL ,CRANACH



29 ST JEROME IN THE WILDERNESS FROM CRANACHS' EARLY WORK

However from 1505 onwards, Cranachs work lost that something which the critics, acknowledged made him great. He was still undoubtedly good, but lacked the vibrance and excellence, previous. It was as though he had started something wonderful and had become disillusioned or sceptical. To examine what caused these changes, one has to look outside his work and find the external noyances which were both historical and geographic. In 1505 Cranach is recorded to have been working in the court of Frederick the Wise of Wittenberg. It was late 1504 or early 1505, as there is quite a bit of work from 1505. In any case it is intriguing to question why Frederick chose Cranach, Fredericks Saxony was young, as a state, and yet did he perhaps foresee the forthcoming Reformation and the hypnotic effect Cranachs work had on people. When all Germany were raving about the realism of contemporary work and the immediate reactions these evoked (e.g. a sketch of Dürers mother). Cranachs work could be looked into more. It was not as directly realistic, it was more subtle. There was something in Cranachs work which could be meditated on, which was one reason his alter pieces were in such demand. Throughout the surrounding turmoil, they retained composure, while everyone else was cramming as many themes and ideas into one piece, there remained a simplicity in Cranachs work. It still stood out as exciting, but capable and understandable. For example, if one looks at Bosch one finds something new in it each time, this makes it difficult to keep the same line of thought so one goes away thinking many things. This literally makes ones head spin. Cranachs pieces however though equally didactic are far less confusing and more to the point. Their superior influence encourages one to go away feeling one has learnt something and it makes logical sense so it must be right. This is how many folk were converted, simplicity was a boon for meditation, which was one of the aims of the Reformation. It was possible that



30(b) THE CRUCIFIXION -CRANACH
WOODCUT AFTER DURER.

Frederick may have met Cranach before, Cranach being so close to the Saxon border. Another possibility was that Cranach by reputation (he had drawn a portrait of the Emperor Maximilian on the wall from memory) may have been recommended by the Emperor.

Once into courtly surrounds Cranach's style settled into what was considered more safe and profitable. His loyalty to the Saxon kings never waned and he remained through three electors, till he died. Frederick the Wise (d 1525) and John Frederick the Magnanimous, with whom he was supposed to be on rather intimate terms.

During Frederick's reign he produced mainly altarpieces and decorated walls. In John's he secured smaller panels on more secular subjects, this allowed plenty of time to do more commissions from outside the immediate court (for Cardinal Albrecht of Brandenburg and princes). John Frederick's reign brought many large altarpieces, the Reformation was well off the ground and the need for new style panels was very large.

The Electors of Saxony were dealing with a relatively new settlement. Saxony had little of its own tradition left, and even less cultural and artistic pieces to show. Frederick and his ancestors were trying to change that. Most of their population were of foreign stock, and Cranach was very much left to form the artistic culture on his own. Hence Cranach was in great demand and he produced a workshop, so it was not solely he, who would finish each work, though it was certainly his hand for the important details and conceptions. Cranach was obviously popular with his neighbours and in 1537 was elected

Burgomeister of Wittenberg. Occasionally foreign nobles and princes would come and summons him for pieces, and he would have to leave his workshop, and craft houses. He was not just a painter he was a printer, woodcutter, interior designer, court dress designer, heraldic arms and crest designer and recorder of the 'booty' of the various hunts. Cranach was highly adaptable and the perfect employee, always open to the demands of the court. His career now revolved around his friendship with Martin Luther the teachings of the theologians, Humanists and the newly founded University.

Cranach became particularly adept at woodcuts and his pieces along with Dürers are some of the finest ever, particularly his early Wittenberg pieces, but to adhere mainly to his paintings is the best way of determining the effect of the propaganda, for our purposes. One of his best paintings, was the Alterpiece of St Catherine (c 1505). This is typical of the change Cranachs work was undergoing. On its left shutter one has St Barbara, St. Nicola, and St Margaret, on the right St Dorothy, St Agnes and St Cunigunde. The subject was of course martyrdom, but it is full of inner contradictions e.g. St Catherine is unemotional, lifeless and there is an uneasy awkward dealing of heterogeneous elements which seem very mixed up. There is little trace of horror. The emotion seems to be contained due to the suppression of Cranachs' own emotions. His inner frustration is apparent from his change to lighter brushwork and endless attention to detail.

After this Cranach pursues a search for beauty - the perfect female face. The works of this time produce endless sensuous stares, sculpted thick pouts, the coy

charm of youth, and the passions of womanhood. What Cranach was experimenting on, was not for his own titillation, but to combine the spiritual and sensual, what seemed to happen was that he lost his individuality, and his work became more typical.

The limitations enforced on Cranach during 1505-1510 because of his commissions was unfortunate, in the respect that he didn't have the chance to really develop and explore the extent of his earlier potential. He swapped his passion of instinct, for the calmness of reason. The work which overwhelmed became detached, selective, methodical and eventually prejudiced.

Cranach visited the Netherlands in 1508, and many historians try to search for this influence in his work. There was no substantially obvious changes, although anything which he greatly admired he depicted or copied in a polish style including his own self styled Bosch, The Last Judgement. The identification of Cranachs' studio work towards the 1520's is easier authenticated, though much could be attributed to his assistants copying his style. Cranach took time to study his craft again in smaller devotional panels, and half length Madonnas. From 1520 onward he showed an increasing interest in the study of the naked human form and seems to have searched for every possible opportunity to apply the nude in portrayal. This was the Renaissance influence and local taste. Through this display of eroticism, his nudes still retained an atmosphere of innocence. They were smooth, softly contoured and sinuous, (completely unlike Rubens' much later). These works seem suspended in time, like dolls. Their classical approach does not entirely rule out the development of Mannerism though its



31 THE ELECTORS OF SAXONY-CRANACH , HIS PATRONS



32 CARDINAL ALBRECHT OF BRANDENBURG AS ST JEROME-CRANACH

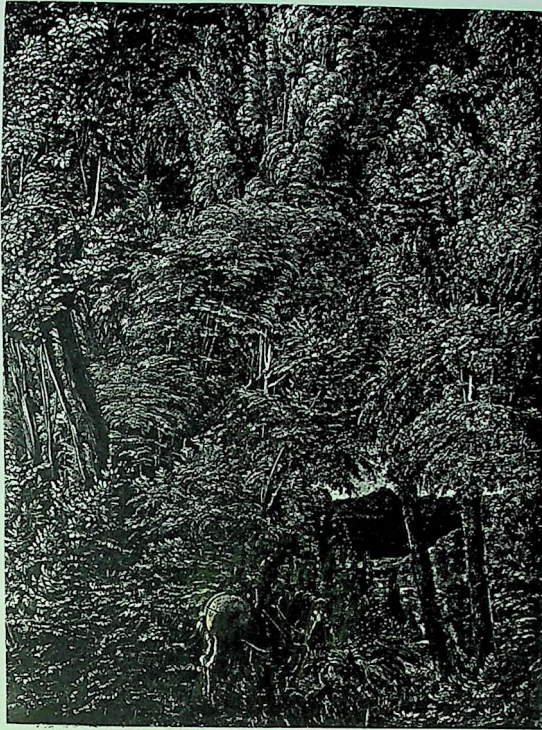


33 THE GOLDEN AGE-CRANACH SHOWING HIS LATER INTEREST IN HUMAN FORM

juxtapositioning with folk art, and a romanticism, makes Cranachs work quite original and also prophetic of many "developing" styles, not to come for many years.

Although Cranachs personal leanings were somewhat questionable, he had at least two sons, of whom were painters. Hans the elder (d 1537) and his youngest Lucas, continued working in his workshop though, he never really emerged from his fathers shadow. Lucas the elder, still produced the main body of work from the studio, particularly the portraitures. It is worth noting that although Cranachs' later works were done in the workshop with many apprentices, they didn't produce a factory line of manufactured pieces which was predominant in the practices of Dutch workshops. Great care was devoted into altering versions of the same theme so that no two were exactly alike.

Cranachs early portraits encompassed what he saw directly, their intimacy was more than apparent in the expression of facial features, as well as the wielding stroke of the brush. This style changed nevertheless in Wittenberg, as direct consequence of what he had to undertake i.e. there were important things happening there, a different approach was required, history was being made and Cranach had to record it for posterity. Hence his portraits of the Electors of Saxony, breathe an immortality which makes them both relatable to, and possessors of a wisdom transcending our own. Cranachs' people all appear superior. As this different style developed, out went the urge for intricate material detail, and in came spirituality, objectivity, clarity, neatness of form, a search for aggressive masculinity and the feminine ideal. Nature began to take second place to the trophies of the



34 ST GEORGE-ALTDORFER SHOWING GERMAN NATURALISM



35 DÜRERS' MOTHER, SHOWING GERMAN ROMANTIC IDEALISM

hunt (the Electors were each skilled huntsmen). Despite his stylistic handling of the human form, Cranach still retained a medieval conception of perspective. Due to sense of space, like most Northern artists he preferred to embellish outer forms, than cope with the geometry required to harmonise a piece.

The changes in religious attitudes and Luthers' victory, transformed the conception and content required in devotional paintings. Alterpieces of the new faith, were required at an alarming rate relative to the success of the Reformation. As Cranach was Luthers' friend he was seen as the most faithful recorder of his beliefs, he was the most obvious and fervent instigator of Luthers' teachings. The usually Christian legends were overlooked for a time, in favour of images of Christ and the passion. The Crucifixion and the Madonnas were all steeped in heavy didactic imagery. "An intense faith is a fertile soil for pictorial creation, but theology is stony ground", Jacob Rosenberg. Luther appreciated the arts and was very much in favour of them being used to spread his faith. As a theologian and writer of religious principles, thus reforming history he also saw it as necessary for painters to adopt a particular typifying style for correct interpretation. In effect he was introducing a set of guidelines by which scenes from the bible could or could not, be depicted.

Cranach may have welcomed these "restrictions", as other work commitments might have infringed on his creative thinking time. Cranach, taking advantage of the Electors need to prove their power and affluence, opened a tavern, a pharmacy, and acquired a printing press to produce Luthers books. He was also given much to preside and

administer over. The socio-political, economic and religious trends were vital in influencing his work. Wittenberg was afterall, the centre of the Reformation which engaged the interest of all Christendom, everyone was looking towards this small city for what was the latest teaching. Within this framework of change, Cranachs' work was producing the styles of German Renaissance late Gothic, Italian high Renaissance and Mannerism.

An interesting item arose on the research of this thesis and that was the claim that, Martin Luther was a high member in the Rosicrucian order, the proof being his seal - a rose and a cross at its centre. If all this is so, well then it could open up a whole new perspective on the works of Cranach, who would certainly also have to be a member. There is almost as much insubstantial evidence to link Cranach with Roscrucianism as there was for Bosch e.g. Martin Luthers' use of the rose and the cross motif as his personal seal, would seem to indicate such a belief. If his beliefs and friendship were as we know, of great importance to Cranach they would serve largely, to influence his work and personal beliefs, and he would also most likely have been a member of Roscrucianism. The state of mind in Germany would have been just perfect to form a brethren of this order. The increasing awareness of science, philosophy and the Renaissance teachings would leave most scholars, hungry for pursuit of the inner self. In fact, though Boschs' work may at first appear heretical, there is more to link Cranach with an other order like Roscrucianism, rather than the Protestant way which we know beyond doubt, he was a special part of.



36 MARTIN LUTHERS SEAL



37 MARTIN LUTHER-CRANACH

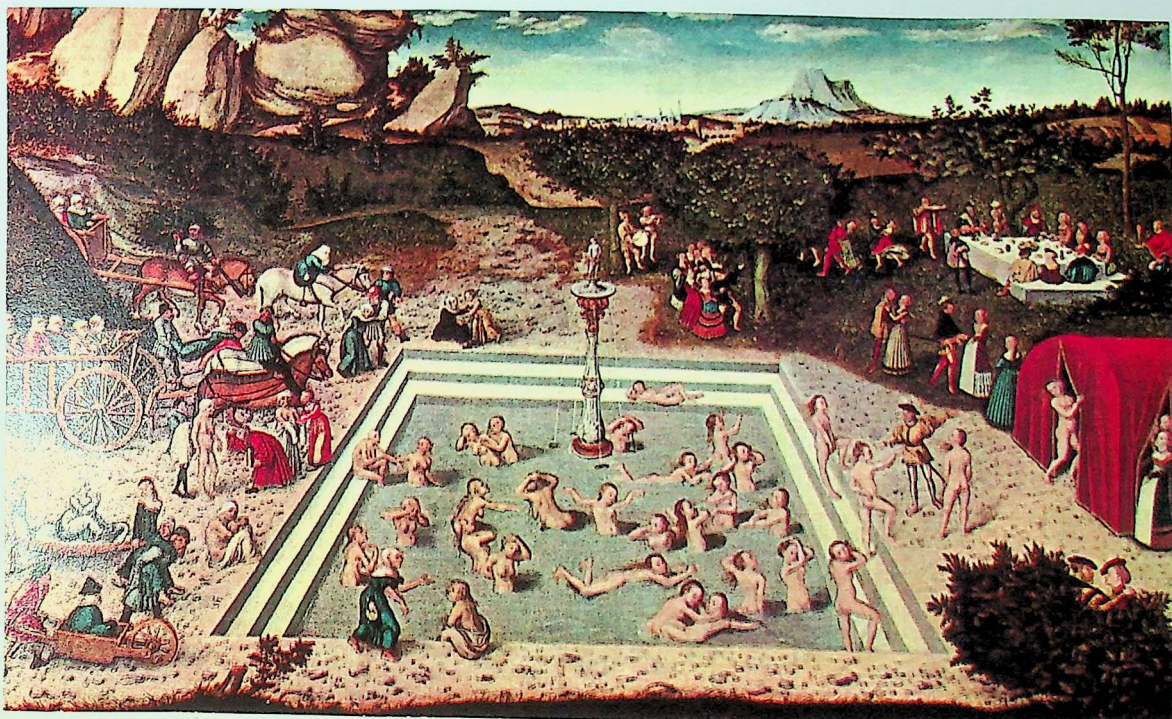
The supposed common belief in Roscrucianism came to general notice when in 1609 the Fama Fraternatis was produced claiming its mythical founder Christian Rosencrantz (1378-1484, 106 years old) worked mainly in Germany, with eight other such brethren, and on his death they dispersed worldwide, spreading their newfound knowledge. The authors of the Fama Fraternatis were deliberately anonymous, other than that they stated they were Lutherans. This perhaps further implies that as such all Lutherans were Rosicrucian in nature. However remember that as St Dominic and St Francis started out, it was only their followers misinterpretation of their doctrines which tarred them with the same brush as the Inquisition. The fact that no substantial evidence exists to fully confirm or denounce this idea leaves one only to speculate and find answers within the works of Cranach.

The works which I would like to discuss of Cranachs' are the Fountain of Youth for exploring any possibility with Roscrucianism, and Christ and the Adultrous. I would like to show some of the immediate changes in style this Protestant Reformation produced with reference to these pieces, and the Virgin and Child under the Apple Tree. To clear the matter of beliefs it is best to start with the Fountain of Youth, which was executed about 1546.

The Fountain of Youth has an almost carnival atmosphere to it and is highly optimistic in its content. The Freedom, of a new Reformation society is most obvious, and it reflects also the Renaissance ideas of alchemy, nature and science. Note there is no presence of God watching in the sky, there is no trace of doom. The blue sky reaches into a bright horizon with broken clouds. The season is summer (by the foliage) and the rocky precipices are left behind

for a countryside of open fields, exciting towns, and hope. The predominant robes of the figures on the left hand side are greyish blue while on the right, after rejuvenation, red boldly dominates.

The fountain is a simplistic study of perspective and it seems more of a pool of youth than a fountain. The actual fountain is almost insignificant in bulk, were it not for its centering in the picture. To the left we have the arrival of the bathers. They are all old women which is curious. Perhaps because there is greater proportion of old ladies in life than old men, perhaps the ladies wish to possess some discretion, perhaps the ladies are simply allowed first. In any case it is a liberation for women, maybe because a religious freedom is allowing their burdens to be lifted and they feel thirty years younger, or perhaps a poolfull of men simply didn't appeal to the patron. Another assumption is the influence of mannerism in Cranachs work. The search for the ideal figure and the effect of Renaissance interest in Classical proportions. The dramatic change between youth and age in women is also a factor. The old women many of whom seem apprehensive of the idea of such a change, are symbolic of the doubt many had about the changes the Renaissance and Reformation were introducing. Some characters are very divided in contemplation and simply sit by the side of the pool. It is a daunting change. They are brought sick, old, on stretchers and examined by a supposed doctor. Though this figure could equally be clerical, the tonsure the red robes the large black tooled book, he may be choosing who deserves such a second chance, who is worthy of rejuvenation. The stripping is all part of releasing the young girl inside. The dowdy drapes and cladding are replaced on the other side by fashionable attire which makes the most of the figure and cleavage. The picture



38 THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH-CRANACH

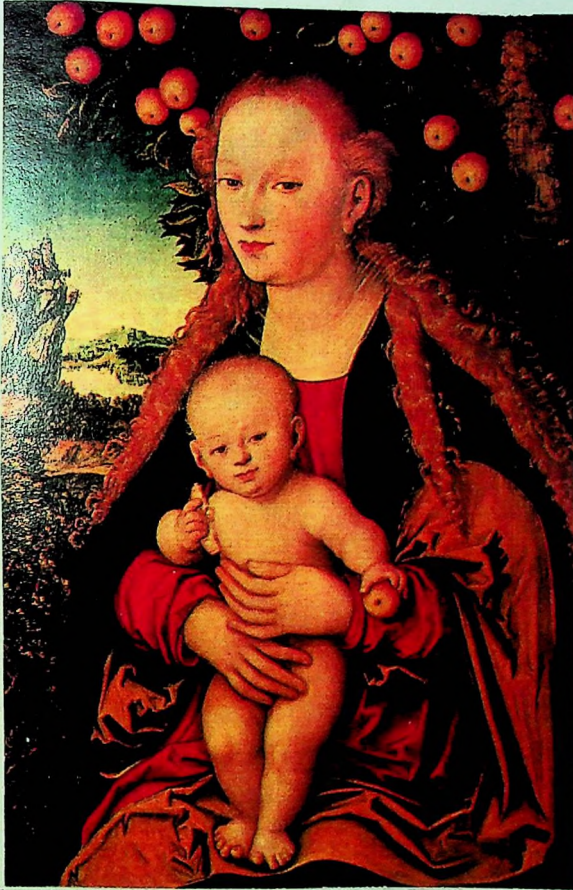


39 THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH DETAIL

records wonderfully the fashions of the time on the left what the poorer people wore and left the newfound opulence.

The bathers once in the pool fully relax, transform and swim around, washing with great attention to detail. Their dull lifeless skin is changed to bright fleshy pink, it becomes firm and solid. The right hand side bathers exude radiance and delight in their youth. There is nothing dubious in the nature of this font, though immediately it appears like that one in Bosch's Garden of Earthly Delights. The effect of the font does not change the nature of the person themselves it merely gives them another chance to experience youth, and the revelry which ensues is not sordid or blasphemous. On dressing the beauties emerge, to conduct themselves how generations of suppression did not allow them to act, but there is nothing so wicked as is symbolised in Bosch's garden. The ladies feast, dance, listen to music, court respectfully but there is no anarchy. The presence of music suggests the notion that it was no longer sinful to listen to, and the dancing is joyful expression. The only possible sordid detail could be the couple talking in the bushes, but they are fully clad and conversing. If this picture was Rosicrucian in nature, there would be a lot more symbolism dealing with intellect.

The other possible contradiction is that it was a fountain of youth, a main preoccupation with the scientists involved with Rosicrucianism was their search for gold from base metal, and the elixir of youth. But this had been a mythical goal, for centuries, before then. Scholars may again say the red colours on the right symbolise



41 VIRGIN AND CHILD UNDER THE
APPLE TREE-CRANACH



42 VIRGIN GIVING SUCK-ROBERT CAMPIN

conversion to Roscrucianism, but red is simply a bold colour of strength and youth.

The story of the fountain of youth is symbolic of the personal conflict during the Reformation. The experiences are without retribution, emphasising Luthers preaching of a forgiving God. It is a lesson on rejoicing in our youth, without loosing composure. There are no demons to punish, for there is nothing sordid in laughter and music, and conversations between men and women. The loose brushwork in the landscape echos the newfound freedom of thought. A fresh air prevails. It hasn't the heavy moral message of Bosch but the humanity which made Luther such a charismatic figure. In emphasising with characters we form our own ideas, and morals are a part of these characters, hence without the fire and brimstone, we can still exist in a moral society, that man is basically good and only retaliates against forcefully imposed rules. Luther and Cranach were Renaissance style thinkers, they did not want war and revolt, only reform.

The Reformation ideology of course meant there would be amendments to traditional styles of religious pictures. One of the particular changes which Cranach is largely responsible for is the new style of depicting Our Lady, and Christ. In Virgin and Child under the Apple Tree this becomes clear. Mary is idealised as a young very beautiful mother at one with nature and positively earthly. The apple tree is significant in that one Lutheran argument was about whether or not Our Lady was born with original sin. The apple was often shown as the fruit given to Adam by Eve, and the apples behind Mary's head are to remind us of this. In other words that even the purest of us are not without sin but that does not

stop us from producing divine works or following a devout life. Therefore as Our Lady (though blessed) was one of us, it makes her infinitely more approachable and understanding. The strong earthy reds, browns, and gold tones in her robe are warming, unlike the stark cold intangible blues like lapis-lazuli and sky blue. The blue remains for tradition, in her outer cloak but it is a warm blue a greeny blue, it blends with her surroundings. Her hair is red, long and flowing. It is uncovered like it is in most Virgin pictures. A wisp of a veil is draped around her neck across her hair but it quite transparent. Our Lady is a symbol of mother nature, the mother of us all. Thee child in her arms could be any child but for his wise face. He is eating some bread held in his hand and holding an apple in the other. Christ grew up in other words like any other child but with a firm grasp of sin, the bread is symbolic, it teaches that Christ did not mean us to starve and do without, but live sensibly. The holy family is contrasted against a bright horizon with new style buildings and waterways. The scene is idyllic peaceful and beautiful. The figures have no halos and hence could be anybody, though it is obvious who they are from the classical pose. This depicting style was more revolutionary than Robert Campins' Virgin which was giving suck, it was earthy but far cruder. This new image of Mary made her everyones mother, sister or friend. That is what reform was about. Identifying with the church figures and adopting the faith into everyday life.

The notion that God was forgiving and just, was central to Lutheran ideology. Though of course forgiveness was not bought about through monetary exchange. Reform meant reform in all areas not just in doctrine. There was no use in changing rules unless people changed with them. The forgiving God was a particularly comforting figure and



43 CHRIST AND THE ADULTRESS-CRANACH



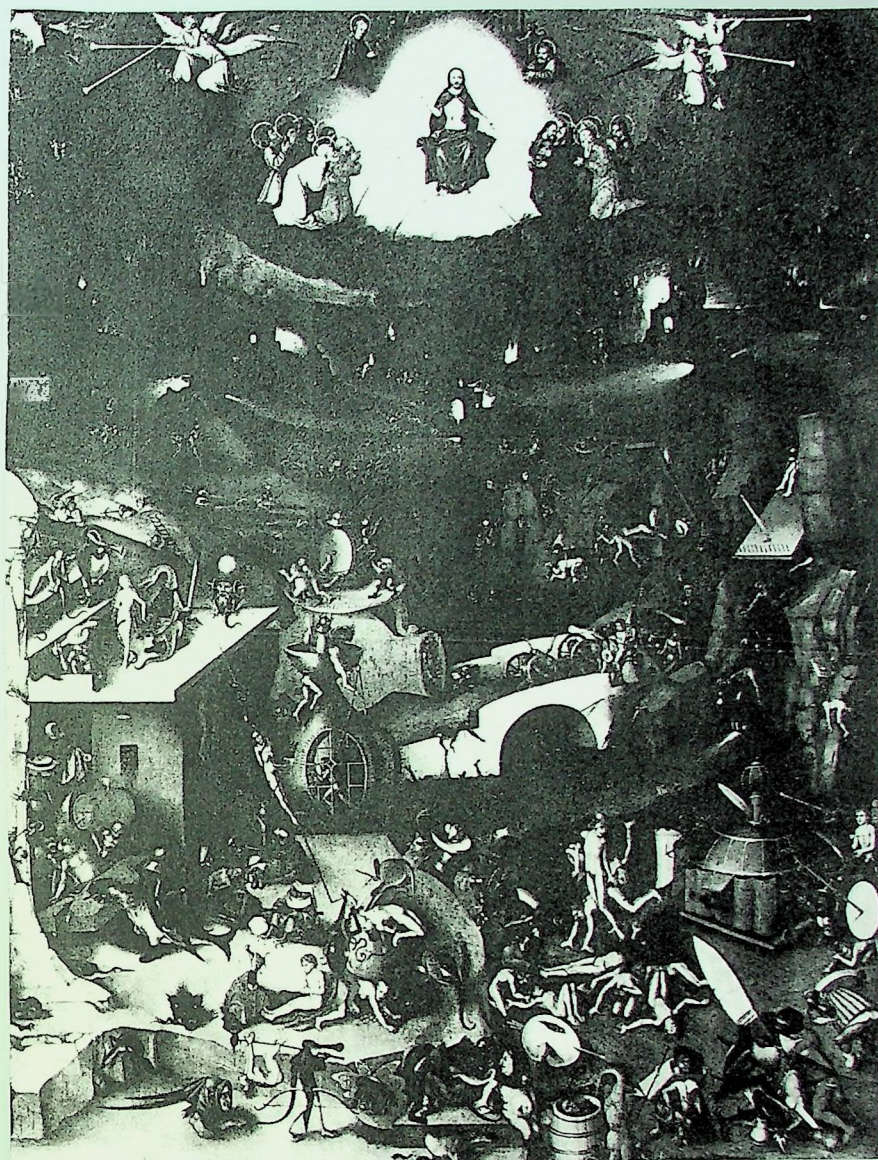
44 THE WEDDING FEAST AT CANA-BOSCH, LACK OF JOYFUL EXPRESSION

so the painting of Christ and the Adultrress became a popular one. Cranach did several versions of this and his son helped greatly in the later ones.

The background story was that when Jesus was in Galilee, the Scribes and Pharisees brought forward a woman caught in the act of adultery (they were testing him) and asked what was to be done with her, as Moses said that such a woman should be stoned. Jesus replied "Let the sinless one among you, throw the first stone". One by one they dispersed and Jesus asked "has no one condemned you?" "no one Lord", she said "Then I do not condemn you either. Go, and sin no more". During the middle ages an adultrress could easily be accused of bewitching a man, and could be burned at the stake, a man was rarely punished. This piece of Cranachs' highlights the unfairness of the past, the forgiving of his present time, and its building in the future. Mary Magdelene the adultrress was highly significant in Reformation art, she was living proof that God was all forgiving and that a reformed sinner, no matter what the crime, could still enter the Kingdom of Heaven. The composition shows a collection of half figures questioning, testing gathered around our Lord. The adultrress's wrist is grasped by Jesus in reassurance and defence. The scene reads from left to right. On the left are the scribes and pharisees eagerly trying to trap Christ on his judgement. The red hatted men are the pharisees symbolic of the Catholic cardinals holding rigidly to the teachings of the bible and richly clad. The scribes have blue green hats and this image is because of the inks they used. Their attention to detail is noted by their inquisitive intense stares. The front character is a soldier off duty and ally to the pharisees, this is clear from his chainmail and armour, over which is dressed a costume of the day. He has in

his right hand a rock ready to throw, he is a merciless bloodthirsty character. In his left he grasps his sword showing his quick temper. His face is twisted and gnarled, chin jutting out in defiance, face frowning in narrow minded hate. The hand gesture by the pharisee is both to hold him back and give Christ a chance to defend the adultress. Christ looks earnestly into the face of the soldier showing no animosity. His mouth is almost smiling and this contradicts Benedictine and Dominican philosophy that smiling and laughter are evil. (Note in Bosch's Wedding Feast at Cana not one person is smiling or enjoying themselves as we today would imagine). Freud points out that the importance of all smiling laughter and jokes is to release instincts and desires which are normally restrained by inhibitions of a moral or social nature. Also Cranachs' Christ is distinctly Jewish reminding any Inquisitors that they, whom they persecuted, were of the same blood as our Lord. Note the twisted strands of long ringlets and dark eyes. His gestures are peaceful and competent, his composure only serves to further aggravate the soldier. The adultress is almost an innocent bystander in all this. She is downcast and repentant but instead of being shown as a prostitute, she is depicted as very normal, fallible and still in possession of inner purity (her white gown bodice) with the burden of passion orange/red sleeves. She is merely in need of guidance and correction. The adultress is even veiled (humility).

She seems purer than all at the left side the picture. Behind her are the apostles who look with objectivity on all aspects of the proceeding. Their positioning is vital (they stand behind her). One stares at her worriedly aware of the complications her association could merit, with the teachings of his master. Another watches



45 THE LAST JUDGEMENT-CRANACHS' VERSION OF BOSCHS'

closely what happens between Christ and the crowd. Behind him another apostle looks sadly at the girl, in pity at such a waste. The last apostle watches closely the gestures of Christ and those of the soldier, realising if Christ fails with his intervention, the girl loses her life. Centred at the top is an inscription in German, contrary to the Latin stressed by the Catholic church of the day. The picture epitomises the defence of the wayward, the forgiveness of God, the narrow minded belief of word for word account of quoting from biblical sources - if one did such a thing, "if ones eyes ailed thee", they would be plucked out. Cranach cleverly decoded the old scriptures with Luther, and between them the Reformation took a firm and competent stance against the orthodox views of the Catholic Church. This seems more than apparent in his works though he was very much aware of the power such work as Bosch produced, as he had seen and studied it first hand, even copying some for reference. Cranach had as much of a burden on his shoulders, to support the whole "artistic" Reformation, almost on his own. While Bosch was fighting to save the existing, floundering, orthodox church, which had survived for so long.

CONCLUSION

Any investigation into religious propaganda within the works of Hieronymous Bosch and Lucas Cranach must start by tracing the very roots of religious propaganda. In so doing, it uncovers several inexcusable atrocities, performed by the Church in the name of God. These atrocities may or may not have influenced their artistic work directly, but were nevertheless a firm indication of contemporary happenings.

Historical background emphasising the importance of the Renaissance and optimism brought by geographic explorations must all be included, in studying Bosch and Cranach. The events of the day were bound to effect their thinking and personal direction. It would seem surreal to visualise the extent of power which religion had, in Europe, before the rebirth of knowledge and free thought liberated by the Renaissance. It is equally difficult to appreciate how difficult it had been to dare ask for Religious reform before the Renaissance. The emergence of groups like the Inquisition, with the Papal backing, instead of preaching the "goodness" of the faith, and 'thus' converting, chose instead to eliminate all opposition to the faith. By some twisted logic they believed they held the Divine right of power over peoples lives torturing thousands into religious submission.

The opulence and increasing awareness of corruption within the Church led many who truly believed in the scriptures, to be disgusted enough to employ their own reforms. Some like St Francis and St Benedict revelled in the simplicity of poverty and formed their own orders, but were still

directly answerable to the papacy. When Martin Luther and his followers asked for reform, they did so by directly attacking the papacy and survived incurring its wrath (only by diplomacy), to form Luthers' own church. Had his pleas for reform been asked earlier, in such a manner, death would have been inevitable. Although the art and literary worlds were in the midst of a Renaissance the Church was firmly in the middle ages, by this I mean it was largely unchanged since the 1200's. The Millennium had expired with all its implications of Apocalypse and it had become increasingly difficult to instill the fear of God in the people, as had been heretofore possible. The Renaissance therefore was not received by the Church with open arms. It became a volatile and threatening period.

The fact that Bosch and Cranach overlap in traversing such a confusing part of history adds to their mystique. It comes as no surprise to find then that most scholars revel in the notion that both were members of secret societies rebelling against established religion. Though, if this were true their works would certainly have disappeared as fast as the particular societies were dissolved. It would have made this study infinitely easier if for example, both had been Rosicrucian, but this is only romantic speculation.

The imminent changes in Boschs' world, and continuing unease around him, infused the atmosphere of his works. This confusion all around him, amassed and exaggerated; beyond all proportion, mixed with his strong religious fervour; provided the impetus for his work. These were not the crazed rantings of the Brethren of the Free Spirits or Adamites. Each of his pieces had a strong lesson to teach in morality and prudence. A concept which

was not quite so apparent in the following centuries of freedom of thought, and optimism. The low output of supply of Boschs work is attributed to the fact that he was a craftsman, an artisan, as were most people in his city. Only when specifically requested did he produce the splendid panels which he is so famed for today. The truth hard to come to terms with, is that the diabolical, didactic works of Bosch were deeply pious in origin, and his membership of secret societies stretches no further than the Brotherhood of Our Lady. The extent of Religious influences in his work is almost total in that everything he did was dedicated to the Church. The teachings of the Brotherhood explain nearly all Boschs intricate details and the rest relate to his surroundings, historical, geographical, environmental, which were changing so fast around him, leading him to grasp in entirety each concept of life death and the afterlife.

What exactly he achieved was a systematic spreading of the Christian faith using the memory methods taught by the Brotherhood of Our Lady, which was Dominican in concept. Using symbolism and dramatic imagery it trips a memory connection (e.g. cat; woman; cat; mouse; cat; witch; cat; mephistopheles). Specialising in calling sinners to repent with his own vivid interpretations of Hell, his work "saved" many, and probably frightened even the most brave and bold into penance. Since the year 1000AD had passed by, and doomsday had not come, many, due to independent thinking brought about by the Renaissance, were doubting the existence of hell. Bosch almost single handedly reinvented the concept. Despite works like *Dantes' Inferno, hell was difficult for people to actually visualise. Boschs' surreal images left very little doubt as to its existence. Seeing for many was believing. Boschs' works were entirely used for teaching,

if they weren't there would never have been so many intricate scenes within scenes, and attention to detail. Condemning alchemy and music he used every provocative visual device to save, what he saw as deviant souls. Bosch was a religiously motivated man and a very learned one.

Testament to the power of Bosch's work lies in the fact that his town s'Hertogenbosch seems almost isolated by being predominantly Catholic in a protestant country even today. The town was hardly affected by the Reformation at all.

Bosch never ceases to amaze each generation. The lack of substantial information about him only adds to its mystery. His influence was vital in the works of the 20th century surrealists, and psychologists are still baffled about logical, cohesive, analysis of his work. Nothing however, can take away the immediate impact made by Bosch's work on one's first encounter. He achieves his own immortality through his work, through the power of his own propaganda. Many of his works made their way to Spain, mainly by Philip II for use as research for the Counter Reformation artists and for himself. While one is lost in awe at the level of detail and imagery in his work it becomes easy to forget he was once one of the most significant visual propagators of the faith.

Lucas Cranach on the other hand, had religion not intervened, might have been remembered as one of the greatest German artists of nature in the same vein as Albrecht Altdorfer. This was the direction his work was taking until his call to court in 1505. His earlier

preoccupation with nature gave way on his arrival in Saxony to a more ridged courtly style, more controlled and idealised. His relationship with Luther although instrumental in his propagation of the protestant faith, is the main submission in accusations of his being a member of the Rosicrucian order. But as we have surmised, this group, though possibly existing sporadically in the 17th and early 20th centuries, was of doubtful existence in Cranachs' day. Luther would never have drawn so much attention to himself if he had been a Rosicrucian, as membership of such a secret society, even by accusation, would have been enough for the Inquisition to act on, and yet they found nothing. Cranach is as blameless for existing in such an order as Bosch was. The Reformations' artistic changes were quite enough for Cranach to undertake. The formation of his own workshop for painting alone, reflected the emerging of the time, of painters not only as craftsmen, but artist in their own right. Cranachs' religious fervour may not have been as ferocious as that of Bosch but was just as significant. Cranach had to reanalyse (with Luthers' help), the brand new scheme of religious perception, to clarify any scepticism which the new interpretation of scripture and belief had produced.

The small changes which Cranach introduced, like the disappearance of Our Ladys' halo and an earthier more approachable Christ were considered revolutionary. Though not necessarily his own idea, he was the first to fully encapsulate, adapt and employ the entire religious Reformation into a visual style with new rules and beliefs.

Cranach as already discussed, painted many themes though not all religious. His artistry was used as a tool by all

in Saxony, and Wittenberg especially. He had numerous secular diversions from his work, which shows how religion no longer completely dominated the artistic world and society in general. However for his proximity to the centre of new Reformation teaching, he was the ideal candidate to produce "visually" its doctrine, for other areas to interpret. Hence Cranachs' work was vital, if the Reformation was to continue existing and spreading. Thus Cranach was the first and most important visual propagator of the protestant faith.

Cranach astonishingly restructured established Christian notions of how things were perceived. Greater emphasis was placed on Christ, rather than Mary who is seen rather as a source of prayerful intervention, and hence more earthly and relatable to.

The all forgiving reasoning Christ predominates. Christ becomes a tangible loving figure in Cranachs' work while still retaining the austere composure acceptable for such an important person. This formal austerity and aloofness in his work creates an impression of higher intellect and wisdom. It is this mental composure which made the viewer believe in the competence and clarity of the new church the Reformation Church. This in turn suppressed many whose anger and frustration would have led to rioting. When one identifies intellect within a picture, one imagines that the intellect reflects ones own and so, if the figure in the picture would use rational diplomacy instead of arms, so also the viewer will lay down his arms, at least that was the psychology intended.

To make his work more relatable to, in other countries, Cranach took advantage of the High Renaissance and mannerist styles taking place in southern Europe. By using these light and shade techniques, and composition mixed with his Bavarian naturalism, he created a style which made him popular visually and powerful religiously. Cranach was very fashionable in his day. He was perhaps the Northern Europe answer to the Renaissance man, active in Religion, society, literature and art, one must respect his bravery in the face of the Catholic church, his timeliness for his arrival in Wittenberg and his business acumen. Cranach realised the importance of art in capturing the imagination of people. He so indoctrinated people not by force and fear but by persuasion, subtlety, appealing to ones' intellect and the power of appearing competent in the face of so much frustration and confusion.

Boschs' struggle against the decay of the Catholic church by Renaissance secular ideologies, contrasts with Cranachs' assistance in the fight for reform and freedom of thought. Though they are united by their art, their beliefs took different paths, highlighting the changes which can take place within one generation.

The combining of Religion and State in the spiritual and secular dominance of society was mainly executed by suppression and ignorance. The removal of these confines instigated by the Renaissance and the introduction of the printing press, led Bosch to one aspect of propaganda and Cranach to the other. Their importance can still be felt now hundreds of years later. Both churches are still flourishing. Their services as artists made them invaluable in controlling religious devouts and deviants

alike. Cranach and Bosch are true monuments to the power of the visual image and testimony to the power and existence of Christian Religious propaganda.

* Dantes' Inferno poem specialising in the horror of hell. Dante b.1265 d.1321.

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