

The female soul and its external and internal senses

Jheronimus Bosch's Garden of Earthly Delights as a satirical
psychology

Meinhard Michael

Publiziert auf ART-Dok. Publikationsplattform Kunst- und Bildwissenschaften
Volltextserver von arthistoricum.net – Fachinformationsdienst Kunst, Fotografie und Design,
Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg 2024.

Diese Publikation ist auf der Webseite von ART-Dok <https://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/artdok/>
dauerhaft frei verfügbar (Open Access)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.11588/artdok.00008818>

The female soul and its external and internal senses

Jheronimus Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights* as a satirical psychology

The *Garden of Earthly Delights* by Jheronimus Bosch is not a hidden object painting, but a highly sophisticated composition with almost 'scientific' content. This essay will show that the triptych contains a playful, detailed 'theory of the senses'. The *five senses* are staged in the foreground and middle ground of the painting, around a *sensus communis* in the center of this *wheel of the senses*. The central panel is divided into three parts according to the three components of the soul. The depiction of human perception goes beyond the outer or external senses; the painter also invented a structure for the internal senses or cerebral powers of man, such as *memory* and *imagination*. This sounds surprising to say the least, considering the results of previous analyses of the painting¹, and will now be explained in four steps.²

The five senses. In the foreground and middle ground of the central panel, half on land and half in the water, five large hollow fruit shells are distributed (**fig. 1**). They form a circle. This circle is held together by its center, the carrier of the mussel. It completes the circle to form the *wheel of the senses*. The catalog is diverse and yet unites a variation of the same: somnambulistic beings with friendly expressions taste fruit, touch and enjoy themselves while watching each other. **Fig. 1** shows the structure of the five containers as a circle and their center. There are no other huge spherical fruits in the picture, only these five (the one on the left is doubled, which is explained immediately). A structure of this conciseness invites us to search for a meaning.

¹ Margaret. D. Carroll, *Hieronymus Bosch. Time and Transformation in the Garden of Earthly Delights*. New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2022. – Rosa Alcoy, *El Bosco en dos tripticos del Museo del Prado*, Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2020, pp. 73-292. – Paul Vandenbroeck, *Utopia's Doom*, Leuven et al: Peters, 2017. – Joseph L. Koerner, *Bosch & Bruegel. From enemy painting to everyday life*, Oxford: Princeton, 2016. – Reindert L. Falkenburg, *The Land of Unlikeness. Hieronymus Bosch, The Garden of Earthly Delights*, Zwolle: WBooks, 2011. – Paul Vandenbroeck, *Jheronimus Bosch zogenaamde 'Tuin de Lusten*, in: *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor schone Kunsten Antwerpen*, Part I, 1989, pp. 9-209; Part II, De Graal of het Valse Liefdesparadis, 1990, pp. 9-192. – For further literature before 2016, see Bosch Research and Conservation Project (Matthis IJlinsk, Jos Koldewej, Ron Spronk et al, eds.), *Jheronimus Bosch. Catalogue raisonné*, Brussels: Mercatorfonds, 2016. – This essay is the almost identical English version (without adapting bibliographic conventions) of my article *Das Lehrbild als Karikatur. Misogyne Psychologie im Garten der Lüste von Jheronimus Bosch*, Heidelberg: *Art-Dok*, 2024. I thank Chrisha Vadamootoo for correcting this English version. Possible errors result from my changes.

² This essay expands and corrects my earlier essays: *Hüte deine Seele!. Fünf Sinne und ein Verhaltensgebot in Hieronymus Boschs Garten der Lüste*, Heidelberg: *Art-Dok*, 2017; *Wenn Paradiestore sich in Luftschlösser verwandeln. Imagination und Vision im Garten der Lüste von Hieronymus Bosch* Heidelberg: *Art-Dok*, 2018.



Fig. 1: Foreground on the left of the central panel highlighting the Wheel of the Senses of Jheronimus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, oil on oak, 205.5 x 384.9 cm, Madrid, Museo del Prado, inv. P2833 (cf. fig. 9).

Although the number five has many different meanings, attempts to find other meanings have failed. Interpreting the spheres full of lovemaking and other pleasures as ‘five stages of love’ or ‘five stages of sin’³ creates too many contradictions – and something like the ‘five wounds of Christ’, like many other things, must also be ruled out.⁴

The suspicion could arise that it is only the modern viewer who willfully contracts this structure of 5. In fact, the *wheel of the senses* does not exist in the perspective landscape of the picture. In order to grasp the sensory stations and their center, the carrier of the mussel, one must have a similar *wheel of the senses* in mind and must extract the five stations, as it were, or at least combine them *visually* on a vertical surface. You have to *imagine* the *wheel of the senses*. Up to this point, this may still seem dubious. The assumption that it must be an intended *wheel of the senses* is initially understood as an abduction or hypothesis, as it were,

³ For the stages of grace and sin, see Friedrich Ohly, *Metaphern für die Sündenstufen und die Gegenwirkungen der Gnade* (Rheinisch-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften, GW, Vorträge, G 302), Opladen 1990. The dramaturgy of the increase differs. – See Rüdiger Schnell, *Causa armoris: Liebeskonzeption und Liebesdarstellung in der mittelalterlichen Literatur*, Bern, München: Francke, 1985, pp. 26-28. – On the number five: Heinz Meyer, Rudolf Suntrup, *Lexikon der mittelalterlichen Zahlenbedeutungen*, München: Fink 1987, cols. 403-442. – Jürgen Werlitz, *Das Geheimnis der heiligen Zahlen*, Wiesbaden: Fourier, 2003, pp. 270-272.

⁴ E.g. the five temptations of the flesh according to Augustine. Cf. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, *Gottesfrage und Selbstausslegung: memoria – beata vita – temptatio*, in: Norbert Fischer, Dieter Hattrup (eds.), *Selbsterkenntnis und Gottsuche – Augustinus: Confessiones 10*, Paderborn: Schöningh, 2007, pp. 9-39, here pp. 33-34.

which is confirmed or must be rejected by the following iconographic evidence and derivations from motivic contexts.⁵

There were no models for such a scenic *wheel of the senses* around 1500.⁶ In the High Middle Ages, *animals were* arranged in wheels as symbols for the individual senses, which was no longer common around 1500, at least in the form of the *wheel of the senses*.⁷ However, the combination of the *wheel of life* and *the wheel of the senses* in a *Biblia Pauperum* in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana proves that the motif was still being taught in the second quarter of the 15th century.⁸ There, five senses, symbolized by animals, form the inner ring around the central scene with a teacher and two pupils, while the outer ring consists of eight scenes of the stages of life.⁹

Like the ancient world, the early modern period was based on the idea of on five external senses, whose hierarchy remained basically constant.¹⁰ The greater the distance the senses were able to bridge, the higher they were rated. *Sight* is followed by *hearing*, which, however, is repeatedly and explicitly emphasized, for example by Bernard of Clairvaux and Thomas Aquinas, as the gateway to knowledge to be learned, to the divine message (although the *sense of hearing* also remains ‘psychologically’ subordinate to *sight* in Thomas Aquinas). As Bernhard puts it: “Only the ear, which receives the word, has the truth.”¹¹ In third and fourth place are smell and taste. The *sense of touch* is the last, it is the immediate first sense of living beings and the basis of all other senses – and the least rational, even if it has sometimes been revalued.¹²

⁵ The game of hide-and-seek is an important aspect of the aesthetics of the painting, which is probably influenced by the *Rhétoriqueurs*. See Meinhard Michael, *Von Hypokriten und falschen Hochzeiten. Die politische Positionierung des Gartens der Lüste von Jheronimus Bosch*, Heidelberg: *Art-Dok*, 2022. – The concept of abduction according to Oskar Bätschmann: “Through creative abduction, i.e. through the discovery of connections between the elements and facts in the picture, conjectures (educated guesses) about the possible meaning of the picture are created.” See Oskar Bätschmann, *Anleitung zur Interpretation: Kunstgeschichtliche Hermeneutik*, in: Hans Belting, Heinrich Dilly, Wolfgang Kemp, Willibald Sauerländer, Martin Warnke (eds.) *Kunstgeschichte. Eine Einführung*, Berlin: Reimer, 1988³, pp.191-221, cited on p. 209 (own translation).

⁶ See Carl Nordenfalk, *The five Senses in late Medieval and Renaissance Art*, in: *Journal of Warburg and Courtauld Institute* 48 (1985), pp. 1-22.

⁷ On earlier applications, see Kristin B. Aavitsland, *Imagining the human condition in medieval Rome: the Cistercian fresco cycle at Abbazia delle Tre Fontane*, Farnham et. al.: Ashgate, 2012.

⁸ *Biblia Pauperum* of the Vatican Library, Pal.lat 871, fol. 21r., 14.25-1450; see Aavitsland 2012 (note 7), fig. 7.17. p. 236.

⁹ One may speculate whether Bosch’s practice of inventing small scenes for the senses was inspired by the scenes of the stages of life – to which the senses were assigned. On the combined circle diagrams, see Aavitsland 2012 (note 7), pp. 220-235.

¹⁰ Robert Jütte, *Geschichte der Sinne*, München: Beck, 2000, pp. 40-115.

¹¹ Marvin Döbler, *Die Mystik und die Sinne. Eine religionshistorische Untersuchung am Beispiel Bernhards von Clairvaux*, Göttingen, Bristol (CT): Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013, pp. 177-181, cited p. 180. On *hearing* in relation to the knowledge of God, see Jütte 2000 (note 10), pp. 77-79. – See also Jörg Alejandro Tellkamp, *Sinne, Gegenstände, Sensibilia. Zur Wahrnehmungslehre des Thomas von Aquin*, Leiden: Brill. 1999, on the external senses pp. 187-217 – See Peter von Moos, *Sensus communis im Mittelalter: sechster Sinn und sozialer Sinn. Epistemologische, ekklesiologische und eschatologische Aspekte*, in: Peter von Moos, *Gesammelte Studien zum Mittelalter*, 3, Münster: LIT, 2007, pp. 395-457, here p. 424.

¹² Thomas Aquinas outlined the sense of touch as a basic sense for all sentient beings and as the basis of all other senses. See Tellkamp 1999 (note 11), pp. 205-211. His order of the senses, although he did not give it much space in his work, was historically prominent and “became, to varying degrees,

The precious carpet cycle of the *Lady with the Unicorn* (around 1500, Musée de Cluny, Paris, Inv. Cl.10831-10836) proves that the theme of the *five senses* was chosen for very lavish commissions and in the best circles. Carl Nordenfalk drew attention to books of hours in which the Virgin Mary is asked for help to protect against sin with the eyes, ears, etc. In penitential ordinances, too, confession had to follow the *Five Senses*. In popular texts, the sufferings of Christ – and other things – were described along the lines of the *five senses*.¹³ Illustrations were used to invoke the individual senses – and to admonish people not to succumb to them.

The five similar round shapes not only semantically form a circle. There is an elegant compositional mediation between them, especially in the upper section: the butterfly and a thistle stalk connect the skins of the fruits at the top right (**fig. 1**). The spread legs of the man upside down and the huge blackberry formally hold together the left station and the uppermost one. This means that the fruit peel furthest away in perspective is elaborately included. In the lower section, the flow is ensured by the groups of figures.

When the circle is understood as a *wheel of the senses*, the door to understanding the entire picture is opened. This also corresponds to the dominant use of the number five: “Like no other number, for which there is ample evidence, five can be assigned a uniform meaning: the sign of man's attachment to the natural-temporal world (five senses) and the need for redemption of the Old Covenant (five books of the law; five world ages before the birth of Christ).”¹⁴

The allocation of the individual senses is also partly understandable in the light of later iconography; in one case an older model is presumably used. The senses are distributed as follows: The *sense of taste* is staged on the blue sphere at the bottom, slightly to the left of the central axis (**fig. 1**, cf. **fig. 9** below). The duck feeds the man sitting in the skin of the fruit.¹⁵ The *wheel of the senses* continues clockwise with the *sense of touch*. The figure sitting in the

axiomatic”, Mathew Milner, *The Senses and the English Reformation*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2011, p. 15 – Albertus Magnus also retained great influence in the late Middle Ages. He is described as “the most quoted, if not most important, western medieval authority on the internal senses”. N. H. Steneck, *The Problem of the Internal Senses in the Fourteenth Century*, Diss. Univ. of Wisconsin 1970, p. 19, cited in Thomas Dewender, *Zur Rezeption der Aristotelischen Phantasielehre in der lateinischen Phantasie des Mittelalters*, in: Thomas Dewender, Thomas Welt (eds.), *Imagination - Fiktion - Kreation. Das kulturschaffende Vermögen der Phantasie*, München, Leipzig: Saur 2003, p. 151, note 61. – Cf. Katherine Park, *Pico's De Imaginatione in der Geschichte der Philosophie*, in: Eckhard Kessler (ed.) *Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola: Über die Vorstellung. De Imaginatione*. With an introduction by Charles B. Schmitt and Katharine Park, München: Fink, 1997, pp. 36-40: Albertus Magnus as “norm (...) up to the time of Pico” (p. 36). – On the revaluation of the sense of touch as a spiritual sense, see below.

¹³ As in the *Legenda Aurea* and the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*, see Herman Roodenburg, *Introduction*, in: Hermann Roodenburg, *A cultural history of the senses in the Renaissance*, London et al: Bloomsbury 2014, pp. 1-17.

¹⁴ Meyer/Suntrup 1987 (note 3), cit. sp. 403 – See generally for the Five Senses: Richard Newhauser (ed.), *A cultural history of the senses in the Middle Ages*, London et al: Bloomsbury 2014. – Roodenburg 2014 (note 13). – See also art. *Sinne*, in: Joachim Ritter, Karlfried Gründer, *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (HWPh), Basel: Schwabe, 9, 1995, cols. 823-869 (E. Scheerer).

¹⁵ Dirk Bax associates the duck with foolishness, drunkenness and allusions to the end times. See Dirk Bax, *Hieronymus Bosch, his picture-writing deciphered*, translated by M. A. Bax-Botha, Rotterdam: Balkema, 1979, pp. 93-94 – The implied sexual events in the fruit skin also take place, so to speak, orally, see Falkenburg 2011 (note 1), p. 196 and passim.

fruit capsule grasps the person who is leaning down as if to kiss them, on the chin with spread fingers (**figs. 1-2**).



Fig. 2: Detail center panel, sense of touch.

Fig. 3: Detail of the hand for the sense of touch in the *Libellus de anima et spiritu*, early 13th century Trinity College, Cambridge, Ms. 0.7.16, f. 47r.

Fig. 4: Detail center panel, detail pricked hand?

Apart from the fact that the hand itself can be a symbol for the *sense of touch*¹⁶, the monk in the illustration of the spiritual powers in the pseudo-Augustinian *Libellus de anima et spiritu* – quasi in the ‘technical literature’ – holds his hand with the ‘groping fingers’ in a similar way (**fig. 3**).¹⁷ The *sense of touch* is confirmed by another motif at the opening of this sphere (**fig. 4**). A man is grasping a branch with strong thorns on it. His index finger is stretched out as if he has pricked himself – as the *sense of touch* is occasionally characterized later.¹⁸

The third station with the transparent sphere represents the *sense of sight*. The intertwining of gazes, heads close together, has been a topos of love since the *Manessische Liederhandschrift* and Herrad’s of Landsberg *Hortus deliciarum*.¹⁹ It was used around 1500 for both mystical and sensual-natural love (**fig. 5**). The spherical shape is doubled, with an unnatural stem leading from the lower to the upper one, where it takes on the character of a thistle and forms a strawberry-like fruit from which light seems to emanate. The diagram of

¹⁶ The hand as a *symbol of the sense of touch* in Milner 2011, p. 35 – The hand and the mouth, nose, ear and eye symbolize the respective senses in an illustration by Achille Bocchi (1488-1562) from 1555. See Sylvia Ferino-Pagden (ed.), *Immagini del sentire: i cinque sensi nell'arte*, Cremona: Leonardo Arte, 1996, pp. 104-105 – An intimate pair and the touching (also) of the cheek for the *sense of touch* recurs in the *Five Senses* series by Abraham Bosse (c. 1604-1676, c. 1635), see *Les cinq sens dans la peinture*, cat. Ville de Luxembourg: Villa Lauban, 2016.

¹⁷ *Libellus de anima et spiritu*, copy of *De spiritu et anima*, early 13th century Trinity College, Cambridge, Ms. 0.7.16, f. 47r. See Leo Norpoth, *Der pseudo-augustinische Traktat De spiritu et anima* (published by the Institut für die Geschichte der Medizin der Universität München), Köln-Bochum 1971 – Cf. Park 1997 (note 12) pp. 21-61, here pp. 32-35.

¹⁸ A parrot is known to peck the hand even more often. – Even if the ‘Sleeping Beauty motif’, the spindle of the woman at the loom in the depiction of *Tactus* (around 1544) by Georg Pencz, opens up the meaning of ‘pricking’, she probably does not prick herself. See Louise Vinge, *The Five Senses. Studies in a Literary Tradition*, Lund: LiberLäromedel, 1975, pp. 54-55.

¹⁹ For Herrad von Landsberg, see Eva Schirmer, *Mystik und Minne: Frauen im Mittelalter*, Berlin: Elefant Press, 1991, ill. p. 14 – See Michel Camille, *Die Kunst der Liebe im Mittelalter*, Köln: Köhnmann, 2000, pp. 27-50: Blicke der Liebe, passim for further examples of the minne-intensive interweaving of gazes.

the human eye can be seen in the ‘glass’ sphere with a stem. Anatomical depictions before and around 1500, for example in Gregor Reisch’s *Margarita Philosophica* (1503), show round structures on a cord, the optic nerve. Bosch dealt with this freely. The strawberry satirizes the actual lens.²⁰



Fig. 5: Detail center panel, scene Sense of sight.

Fig. 6: Illustration of the eye apparatus after Alhazen, manuscript of Kitab al Manazir (De aspectibus) from 1083, MS Fatih 3212, vol. 1, fol. 81b, Sülemaniye Library, Istanbul.

The *one* fruit peel at the other stations has presumably been doubled here or supplemented by the transparent sphere because this alludes to the *two* eyes. The two connected ‘spheres of vision’ – at the bottom, a figure looks out of the opening – look like a parody of two eye circles, for example in an illustration to an Arabic anatomical treatise, if one turns it 90 degrees to the left (**fig. 6**).²¹

The *sense of smell* is located in the next spherical shell in a clockwise direction. It lies furthest back in the water between the butterfly and the giant berry, but, as noted, is formally and intensively included in the circle (**fig. 1, 9**). The giant fruit, which resembles a blackberry and which some of the men are trying to eat, glistens in several colors as if already overripe – as if the rotting process had already begun and the men were dazed. The vegetation above the opening from which the couple is looking points the same direction. Several colors there also indicate different stages of vegetation. Although flowers dominate when a convention for the *sense of smell* will have been worked out, occasionally overripe fruit is also used.²² The thistle

²⁰ See Karl Sudhoff, *Augenanatomiebilder im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert*, in: *Tradition und Naturbeobachtung in den Illustrationen medizinischer Handschriften und Frühdrucke vornehmlich des 15. Jahrhunderts* (Studien zur Geschichte der Medizin 1), Leipzig: Barth, 1907, pp. 19-26.

²¹ Influential in the Middle Ages, which – as in other cases – does not mean that Bosch must have been familiar with *these* illustrations: Eye apparatus after Alhazen, manuscript of Kitab al Manazir (De aspectibus) from 1083. MS Fatih 3212, vol. 1, fol. 81b, Sülemaniye Library, Istanbul, see David C. Lindberg, *Auge und Licht im Mittelalter. Die Entwicklung der Optik von Alkindi bis Kepler*, transl. by Matthias Althoff, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1987, p. 132, fig. 7. On anatomy, see p. 233, pp. 297-311. – See also the eye diagram after Johannes Pecham’s *Perspectiva communis*, c. 1320, Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Ashmole 1522, fol. 153v, in: Norbert Schnitzler, *Visual Turn im Mittelalter? Ein Paradigmenwechsel in der Naturwissenschaft und seine Folgen für die Theologie*, in: Kirsten Kramer, Jens Baumgarten (eds.), *Visualisierung und kultureller Transfer*, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2009, pp. 55-71, fig. 7, p. 60.

²² Les cinq sens 2016 (note 16), pp. 49-50: “Objects such as flowers, sweet-smelling fruit and vegetables and other fragrant materials are traditionally used in art to represent the sense of smell.” – Barbara Welzel states that “since the middle of the 16th century, the five senses have been provided

blossom, which leans over from the last sensory station to the *sense of smell* and has attracted the butterfly, must also be taken into account.

The fifth fruit peel also appears problematic – as long as one assumes the later conventions.²³ It should represent the *sense of hearing* (**Fig. 1**). It stands out because of its paleness, which distinguishes it from all the others. The paleness includes the men in the skin of this fruit. Seen in this way, it is the most withered of the fruit shells. Its semantic basis is a prickly thistle. Despite the ostentatious paleness, two thistle flowers grow out of it, one pointing downwards, the larger one upwards.

Although the great tit represents this sense again later – as a songbird – the action of the three figures is puzzling.²⁴ In order to understand them, one must first take into account that this *wheel of the senses* is not a neutral representation of the senses, but a representation of their misuse – in the religious and moral sense. This is immediately apparent in the case of *taste* and *sight*, but should also be taken for granted in the case of *touch* (kiss) and *smell* (the men are greedy, ‘fixated’ on the fruit like flies, sometimes as if fainting).

This is the only way to understand that the fifth sphere – located on the central axis of the painting – is about the *sense of hearing* as hearing the *wrong thing* and about death through hearing the wrong thing; possibly, because tradition suggests it, also understood as the *sum of all the senses*. A man is lying on his back like the man in Bosch’s *Vision of hell* in Venice, whose neck has just been cut by a devil (Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia, inv. 182; 184.²⁵ The figure in the *Haywain* is used in a similar sense (Madrid, Museo del Prado, inv. P02052).²⁶ Death or the threat of death is also meant in the *Garden of Earthly Delights*. The hand of the reclining man, which is raised by his neighbor, is flesh-colored, while the rest of his body is pale. The gaze from the picture of the third man comments on this staged threat.²⁷

Older models of the representation of the *sense of hearing* offer an explanation. In the carpet cycle of the *Lady with the Unicorn* and almost half a century later by Georg Pencz, the *sense of hearing* is depicted with a musical instrument, but this is not yet a convention.²⁸ In

with numerous, sometimes quite different enrichments of content in a conventionalized basic pattern, so that a discursive scene can be mapped, but not a fixed framework of meaning, the characteristics of which could be used unchecked for mutual explanation.” See Barbara Welzel, *Sehen mit allen Sinnen? Die Fünf Sinne am erzherzoglichen Hof von Isabella und Albrecht in Brüssel am Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts*, in: Andrea Gottdang, Regina Wohlfarth (eds.), *Mit allen Sinnen. Seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and feeling in art*, Leipzig: Henschel 2010, pp. 11-30, cited on p. 13.

²³ On the painters’ difficulties in finding a suitable expression specifically for hearing, see Frank Büttner, *HörenSehen. Klänge in der Malerei der Renaissance und des Barocks*, in: Gottdang/Wohlfarth 2010 (note 22), pp. 46-68, here pp. 49-50.

²⁴ Carroll 2022 (note 1), p. 133, even recognized casual banter just before erotic pleasure.

²⁵ Or of the Bosch workshop. Or, with Fritz Koreny, of the master of the Prado *Haywain*, see Fritz Koreny, Gabriele Bartz, Erwin Pokorny, *Hieronymus Bosch: Die Zeichnungen: Workshop and Succession to the End of the 16th Century. Catalogue raisonné*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2012.

²⁶ Catalogue Raisonné 2016 (note 1), pp. 312-313 with further examples.

²⁷ Charles Cuttler, who described Bosch as the inventor of the *double image* north of the Alps, discovered – presumably before the last restoration – a skull in the shape of the pale fruit bowl with the three men. The figures and their dark background would ‘draw in’ eyes, nose line and a gaping mouth into which the reclining man just disappears, see Charles Cuttler, *Hieronymus Bosch. Late Works*, London: Pindar, 2012, pp. 122-124.

²⁸ Cf. Ferino-Pagden 1996 (note 16), pp. 86-89, pp. 106-107; which does not exclude the earlier use of musical instruments for the sense of hearing, for example in an initial to *De sensu* by Aristotle, Paris, 13th century, Geneva, Bibliothèque publique et universitaire, Lat. 76, fol. 246. See Christina

older depictions of the senses, there is the motif of someone hearing something that causes them to fall asleep and then ‘die’ because they have finally succumbed to the sensual power, for example in the *Bestiaire d'Amour* (around 1250) by Richard de Fournival (1201-1259/60). His adaptation of the Christian-based *Physiologus* as a love lament or even ‘romance novel’ remained well-known in the following centuries. Six of the 22 surviving manuscripts are “probablement du dernier quart” of the 15th century. There are translations into German and Dutch, although reception in Italy predominates, and the text was adapted many times by other poets.²⁹ In the *Bestiaire d'amour*, “falling asleep” is part of a long series of thoughts on the effects of the senses, especially *sight*, *hearing* and *smell*.

As a prelude, the Aristotelian-influenced poet pays tribute to *memory*. God, who loves his creation, endowed man with *memory* as a special power of the soul. “Cette mémoire possède deux portes : la vue et l'ouïe.”. This names the two ways into this “maison Memoire” – a formulation that prompted illuminators to invent *memory* figuratively.³⁰ The final section of this essay will show that there is also a ‘door to memory’ in the *Garden of Earthly Delights*.

The poet laments his unrequited love. He describes how the individual senses are involved when he is ensnared and captivated by his beloved. He particularly emphasizes *sight* and *hearing*. He should have plugged his ears, he complains, but failed to do so. The voice of his beloved beguiles him: “At all events, I went and lulled myself with the siren’s song, that is with the sweetness of your acquaintance and of your fair words. When I heard them I was captured.”³¹ He falls asleep to her beautiful singing and her pleasant words, and falling asleep is the first step towards (love metaphorical) death.³² The speaker then emphasizes the *smell* and summarizes the effect of the senses: “That is why I say that these three senses have

Lechtermann, *Berühren und Berührtwerden: das was der belde ein begin*, in: C. Stephen Jaeger, Ingrid Kasten (eds.), *Codierungen von Emotionen im Mittelalter / Emotions and Sensibilities in the Middle Ages*, Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2003, pp. 251-270, here pp. 266, 270 (fig.6).

²⁹ Richard de Fournival: *Le Bestiaire d'amour et la Response de Bestiaire. Publication, traduction, présentation et notes par Gabriel Bianciotto*, Paris: Champion, 2009, here pp. 37-41, pp. 95-107, cited p. 96. – See Vinge 1975 (note 18), pp. 53-58. – For the surviving manuscripts see https://www.arlima.net/qt/richard_de_fournival.html – 20.11.2023. – The anthology Ms. 10394-10414, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, was in the possession of the Library of Burgundy, see <https://portail.bibliissima.fr/ark:/43093/mdata58524f79fdd77255b6dbbc84483284e2614a2086> – 20.11.23.

³⁰ *Bestiaire* 1, 13, 17, Bianciotto 2009 (note 29) pp. 154-157. Original text: “maison Memoire”, Bianciotto translates “logis de Mémoire”. I quote according to modern French with this exception. – The two doors into the house of *memory* next to the figuration of *memory* as a woman e.g. in the manuscript BNF, Paris, FPN fr.12469, 1st half of 14th century, fol.1r. See <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b525132672/f5.item.r=12469#> – 10.10.23.

³¹ “Mais quoi qu'il en soit, je me rendis auprès de vous et je m'endormis au chant de la sirène, c'est à dire à la douceur de votre fréquentation et de vos paroles agréables; et à les entendre, je fus pris au piège.” *Bestiaire* 14, 11-15, see Bianciotto 2009 (note 29) p. 189. – Engl. cit. from Jeanette Beer, *Beasts of Love. Richard de Fournival's Bestiaire d'amour and a Woman's Response*, Toronto et.al.: University of Toronto Press, 2003, cit. p. 49. Beer pp. 47-49 on the sirens as a misogynistic symbol for women, against whose whispers (see Eve and the Fall of Man) one must protect oneself.

³² See Vinge 1975 (note 18), p. 55. The unicorn also falls asleep through the sweet smell of the maiden. – Falling asleep was also illustrated. Both as the unicorn falling asleep (see three examples on https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestiaire_d%27Amour – 18.11.23) and also by the sirens (e.g. manuscript *Le Bestiaire d'Amour*, BNF, Inv. Français 412, f. 230v) as well as in the form of Argus falling asleep – who had been lulled to sleep by Mercury’s voice, see *Le Bestiaire d'amour*, 1st quarter. 14th century, Northern France, Bodleian Library, MS.Douce 308, fol. 96r.

captured me: Hearing, sight, smell. And if I had been captured by the other two senses, namely the sense of taste when kissing and the sense of touch when cuddling and hugging, I would have been put to sleep completely. For man is asleep when he no longer feels his five senses. And all the danger comes from this infatuation through love. For all sleep is followed by death, just like the unicorn that falls asleep in the womb of the virgin, or a man who is beguiled by the siren.”³³

For a painter around 1500 who – with or without the help of a scientific adviser – was looking for a pictorial idea for the depiction of the *five senses*, it could have been inspiring to draw on a text such as the *Bestiaire*. There, the love story and the *five senses* were combined with inner soul forces such as *reason* and *memory*.³⁴ The painter was willing and able to do without the animals; he used the more modern aspect of the text to depict his version of an abuse of the senses. As in Richard de Fournival’s work, *sight* and *hearing* are emphasized, with *smell* placed between them. Falling asleep or the subsequent death initially punishes hearing and possibly also bundles the defeat of all the senses as a whole.³⁵

Around 1500, even Olivier de la Marche varied the *five senses* in surprising ways. His “Doctrin et loz pour Madame Aliénor d’Austrice” (1498) begins classically with *sight* and *hearing*.³⁶ However, the poet then goes on to add *mouth* and *foot/hand* and concludes the group of five with the *heart*. Although ‘rewritten’ for poetic purposes, he treats the classical convention very freely and follows Aristotle as little as Richard de Fournival.

Under these somewhat unstable circumstances, it is permissible to ask whether the painter of the *Garden of Earthly Delights* was possibly inspired by Richard de Fournival’s older practice of modeling the effect of *hearing* and possibly of the senses as a whole. If so, then the *wheel of the senses* is brought to its fatal conclusion with the station of false or absent *hearing*. The circle of misused senses ‘closes’ on the central axis between the perverted fountain of paradise above and secret fellatio in the fruit bowl below with a threat of death. The meaning of this ‘finale’ will be revealed immediately.

The *wheel of the senses* in the *Garden of Earthly Delights* ranks the external senses neither exactly physiologically nor theologically, but according to the visual logic pursued. The two

³³ “Pour che di je que je fui pris a ches trois sens, a oïr, a veoir et a flairier. Et se je perfuse pris as autres deus sens, au gouster en baisant et au tochier en acolant, dont parfusse je a droit endormis : car adont dort li hom quanti l ne sent nul de ses .v. sens. Et de l’endormir d’amour vient tout li peril, car a tous les endormis d’amour sieut li mors, et a l’unicorne qui s’endort a la puchele, et a l’homme qui s’endort a le seraine.” *Bestiaire* 16, 32-39, Bianciotto 2009 (note 29) pp. 204-206. p. 27. – Jeanette Beer (Beer 2003, – note 31 – p. 56 and note 9, p. 182) justifies Richard de Fournival’s change in the Aristotelian order of the senses compared to his source (Pierre de Beauvais) by saying “because voice is his main theme”.

³⁴ See below for the inner soul forces.

³⁵ *Sight* and *hearing*, as the noblest senses, are responsible for the defeat and the loss of *intellect* and *memory* (followed a little later by the will). “C’est ainsi que je fus pris par l’ouïe et par la vue : ce ne fut donc pas étonnant si je perdis mon intelligence et ma mémoire...” *Bestiaire* 16, 1-4, Bianciotto 2009 (note 29) pp. 200-201. – On memory and will in the *Garden of Earthly Delights*, see below. – Jeanette Beer interpreted the fact that the sirens in the *Bestiaire d’Amour* only put three senses to sleep, *sight*, *hearing* and *smell*, as an indication by the author-cleric that he had had no sexual relations with his beloved – with *taste* and *touch* he is ‘pure’. See Beer 2003 (note 31), pp. 62-63. All five senses are abused in the *Garden of Earthly Delights*.

³⁶ Vinge 1975 (note 18), p. 62, with Olivier de la Marche also referring to the special suitability of hearing: “The ear should serve to hear valuable teachers and teachings.”

lowest senses, *taste* and *touch*, form the basis of what was generally believed.³⁷ It makes sense that the *sense of touch*, as the basal sense, has been moved a little closer than the sense of taste to the lowest edge of the image – to the viewer (**figs. 1, 9**). The *sense of sight* could also have been placed on the left because this creates a formal parallel to Adam in paradise.³⁸ Adam looking at the Creator is also a formulation of *seeing*.³⁹ This scene on the left panel hovers above the central picture as a great model: directing the gaze towards God. In contrast, the man in the transparent sphere, his head tilted slightly upwards just like the forefather in paradise, directs his very intense gaze towards a naked woman.

The fact that food is eaten when *smelled*, explicitly touched when *seen* and so on – could mean interferences that have also been known from the *five senses* since antiquity (and were emphasized by Richard de Fournival). It is also possible that the circle of these senses in the ‘erotic image’ is intended to emphasize the *sense of touch*. Having begun with secret sex in *taste*, *touch* is used in all the fruit peels, sometimes explicitly sexually. The sense of touch was extremely discredited in the 15th century because it was directly associated with sexuality and lust, *tactus* became “the erotic symbol par excellence, which artists and poets frequently resorted to, and not only in the early modern period”.⁴⁰

The *sensus communis*. With this hypothesis of the fivefold structure of the fruit shells as a circle or a *wheel of the five senses*, the framework for their center is given. In every theory of perception of the early modern period – going back to Aristotle’s *De anima* - there is a point at which the outer five senses are coordinated (**figs. 1, 7**).

The perceptions of the individual senses are not worth much in themselves; they must be coordinated by internal processes. However the inner processing was differentiated, a *sensus communis* was binding, with Augustine the “ruler and judge” (*moderator et iudex*) of the senses.⁴¹

³⁷ These two senses have equivalents in the main vices/deadly sins: Luxuria and Gula. See Rainer Jehl, *Melancholia und Acedia: ein Beitrag zur Anthropologie und Ethik Bonaventuras*, Paderborn et.al.: Schöningh, 1984, p. 204. An exception is Thomas Aquinas, who combines taste and smell as the lowest pair, see Tellkamp 1999 (note 11), pp. 214-217.

³⁸ The reference between the couple in the glass case and the Adam/Eve couple is already in Camille 2000 (note 19), p. 165.

³⁹ Falkenburg 2011 (note 1), pp. 66, 126 and passim.

⁴⁰ Jütte 2000 (note 10), pp. 82-83, cited in 83, p. 113. – However, due to the ambiguity of the image – which Falkenburg 2011 (note 1) has already described in detail – it should be noted that the order of the senses is reversed when they serve as *spiritual inner* senses for the encounter with God. Then touch and taste are the most intense, whereas sight, hearing and smell serve to prepare us for this. See Niklaus Largier, *Tactus Spiritualis. Remarques sur le Toucher, la Volupté, et les Sens Spirituels au Moyen Âge*, in: Claudio Leonardi (ed.), *La pelle umana* (Micrologus, 13), pp. 233-250. Idem, *Inner Senses – Outer Senses. The Practice of Emotions in Medieval Mysticism*, in: Jaeger / Kasten (eds.), 2003 (note 28), pp. 3-15. The order of the senses in the image can also be understood as a persiflage of the inner spiritual sensory activity, which was constructed analogously to the outer one.

⁴¹ Dewender 2003 (fig. 12), pp. 141-160, cited p. 144 – See Eugene Vance, *Seeing God. Augustine, Sensation, and the Mind’s Eye*, in: Stephen G. Nichols, Andreas Kahlitz, Alison Calhoun (eds.), *Rethinking the Medieval Senses. Heritage, Fascinations, Frames*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008, pp. 13-29. – *Imaginatio* (or *phantasia*) as the force that processes the signals usually starts at the central *sensus communis*; sometimes even *opinio*, a faculty of reason, “which examines perception and imagination and proposes its judgment on them to the intellect.” Von Moos

Only through this does the sensory stimulus become available, as it were. Not yet in Aristotle, it is later generally counted among the inner senses or mental faculties. In Augustine, as *sensus interior*, it performs the “pre-reflective function of receiving, integrating and transmitting sensory data”, without being controlled by reason.⁴²

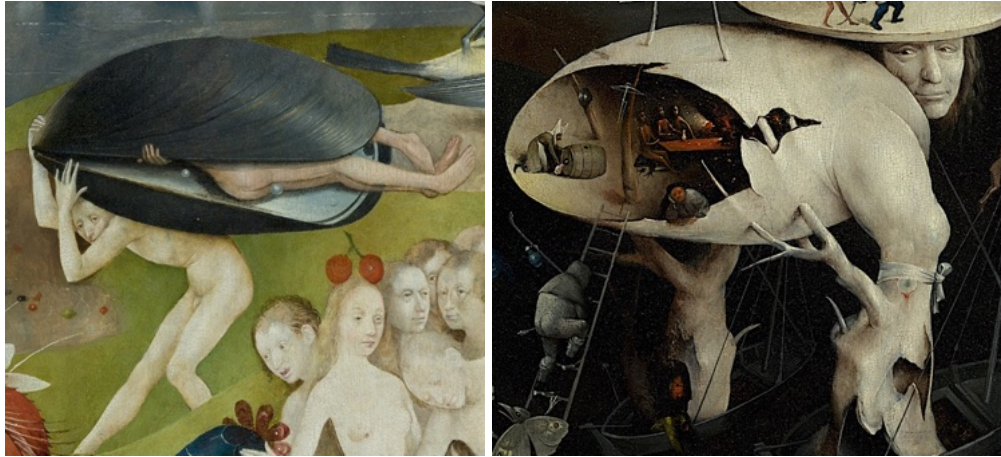


Fig. 7: Central panel, detail of the curved ‘back’ of the carrier of the mussel.

Fig. 8: Hell panel, detail of the curved ‘back’ of the Tree-man.

The circle only becomes a wheel with the shell as its hub (**Fig. 1**). Fittingly, the center of the five identical fruit peels has a different shape to the five outer stations, because this is not the location of another sense, but – possibly – the *sensus communis* in the sense of the late Middle Ages.⁴³

It is easy to assume that this position should not be understood as positive or neutral either. On the one hand, the man bends under his burden like the Tree-man and, like the Tree-man, he turns around (**figs. 7-8**).⁴⁴ The naked couple in an unambiguous position in its shell is a

2007 (note 10), pp. 404-405. – See art. *Seele II Middle Ages*, HWPh (note 14), 9, 1995, cols. 12-22 (P. Mojsisch, U. R. Jeck, O. Pluta), art. *Seele III Renaissance*, cols. 22-26 (E.P. Mahoney).

⁴² Art. *Sensus communis*, *Handwörterbuch der Rhetorik*, ed. by Gert Ueding, 8, 2007, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, cols. 841-847 (F. Neumann), cit. 843 (own translation). For further determinations see also art. *Sensus Communis I, Antike*, HWPh (note 14), 9, 1995 (Th. Leinkauf), cols. 622-633; *Mittelalter* (Th. Dewender), cols. 634-639.

⁴³ The structure of the *inner* powers of the soul is described below, which will make it clear that the *sensus communis* would actually belong there. – Aristotle uses different terms, his *common sense* is interpreted in different ways. See Daniel Heller-Roazen, *Common Sense. Greek, Arabic, Latin*, in: *Rethinking 2008* (note 42), pp. 30-50, here pp. 35-36. – A manuscript from the middle of the 15th century even applies the circular model to the relationship between *sensus communis* and the inner powers of the mind. Under a head with the brain cavities and the inner senses distributed within them, the sentence explains: “Note that the *sensus communis* is a certain power from which all other special powers are derived and into which they flow. It resembles the center of a circle, for as many lines end there, so the individual senses end in the *sensus communis*.” Durham, Univ. Library, Ms. Cosin V.IV. 7, f. 47r. See Edwin Clarke, Kenneth Dewhurst, *Die Funktionen des Gehirns. Lokalisationstheorien von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, München: Heinz Moos Verlag 1973, cited pp. 26-27, fig. 23, p. 26.

⁴⁴ Both are formally and morally ‘bent’ like the *homo curvatus* in the behavioral commandment, see Fig. 10 below.

provocation, as is, of course, the mussel itself.⁴⁵ In the earlier *wheels of the five senses* painted on walls, for example in Constance, Peterborough and Rome, a rich or powerful man was placed in the center. In the case of the mural cycle in Tre Fontane in Rome, he is interpreted negatively. He is the man who allows himself to be seduced by the senses and ignores the death this causes.⁴⁶ It was therefore not necessary to invent a negative interpretation of the ‘hub’ of the *wheel of the senses* for the *Garden of Earthly Delights*.⁴⁷ Later, too, personifications of the senses are brought together to warn against their misuse.⁴⁸

This representation of the external senses (a *sensus communis* is always included) is not a rational template, but a visualization of sensual danger. For a concrete person, the five stations and their *sensus communis* would be a denunciation. All the senses are abused, with a possible final capitulation to the senses – on the central axis – a final warning of death is sketched out. All in all, the circle of 5 thus proves to be an order of the senses in the religious, moral, theological horizon – as far as we can be sure of that now.⁴⁹

The tripartite division of the central panel as a historical landscape and a garden of souls

It is not in itself unusual for a depiction of a *locus amoenus* to make use of the five senses.⁵⁰ However, the psychology of the *Garden of Earthly Delights* is far from exhausted with the five external senses and the *sensus communis*. The (other) inner mental powers are also described. In order to understand the argumentation of the fourth section, it is necessary to discuss the tripartite division of the central panel in this third section. The three sections on the central panel that can be quickly grasped are the front section below the dense hedge, the middle section with the wild ride around the pond and the upper section around the expanse of water and the four rivers (**fig. 9**). The tripartite division has – again a hypothesis or abduction – a psychological and a historical level. This is initially based on the idea of projecting the creation story as a historical landscape into a three-part ‘garden’. This idea possibly comes from Bernard of Clairvaux, who sketches such a historical panorama in his Sermons on the Song of Songs: “History is therefore a garden; it is divided into three parts. It comprises the creation, the reconciliation and the restoration of the world: the creation is like the laying out of the garden and the planting, but the reconciliation is, as it were, the sprouting forth of the

⁴⁵ General erotic and sexual meaning in Bax, Dirk, *Beschrijving en poging tot verklaring van het tuin der onkuisheidriek van Jeroen Bosch*, in: *Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen*, AFD, Letterkunde (Nieuwe reeks, deel LXIII, No. 2), Amsterdam 1956, on the shell p. 43. See also Bax 1979 (note 15), pp. 258-261, p. 285.

⁴⁶ Aavitsland 2012 (note 7), pp. 211-212.

⁴⁷ Bax 1956 (note 45), pp. 45, 49-50 and passim, understood the fruit skins as shells for the ‘in scille zijn’, which could mean a quarrel for those inside, but also a struggle for love. Understood in this way, the five ‘sense-shells’ and the ‘communis-shell’ differ only gradually. – Vandenbroeck 1989 (note 1) devotes 27 pages to the various spherical forms (pp. 121-147). On pp. 147 and passim he interprets the fruit shells and spheres as indicators of sexuality, love, morally for *luxuria*, the *huge* shells also for the ‘false paradise’ and ‘wild nature’.

⁴⁸ See Jütte 2000 (note 10), pp. 96-97 on the engraving by Adam van Noort/Adriaen Collaert from the beginning of the 17th century, e.g. British Museum, Inv. F, 11.95.

⁴⁹ Then the foreground should not be the “total chaos of acts and events”, Vandenbroeck 1990 (note 1) p. 167, nor the “cheerful chaos” that the Catalogue Raisonné 2016 (note 1, p. 369) still assumes.

⁵⁰ Michel Zink, *The Place of the Senses*, in: *Rethinking* 2008 (note 42), pp. 93-101.

seeds and plants. (...) Finally, the restoration will be at the end of time. (...) So you have three times in the garden of the historical sense.”⁵¹



Fig. 9: Hieronymus Bosch, Garden of Earthly Delights, center panel.

In the *Garden of Earthly Delights*, the basic idea is adopted and the story of creation is divided into the – in the dream⁵² twisted! – times *ante legem* (top), *sub lege* (middle) and *sub gratia* (bottom).⁵³ This *historical* structure, the temporal organization of the image since creation, is a fascinating subject, but cannot be pursued further here.⁵⁴ For the subject discussed here, it is crucial that psychological states were attributed to each of the historical

⁵¹ Bernhard von Clairvaux, *Sermones super Cantica Canticorum / Predigten über das Hohelied*, Sermon 23, in: Gerhard B. Winkler (ed.) *Bernhard von Clairvaux. Sämtliche Werke, lateinisch/deutsch*, V, Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 1994, p. 331 (own translation). – See Döbler 2013 (note 11), pp. 137-142. The idea is already in Fraenger’s work, albeit with reference to Joachim von Fiore. Cf. Wilhelm Fraenger, *Hieronymus Bosch, with a contribution by Patrick Reuterswärd*, Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1975, p. 29.

⁵² I assume that the foreground figure in the cave at the bottom right of the central panel has just awoken from a dream that is both erotic and didactic, as the – slightly modified – dream gesture with the hand on the cheek indicates. See Meinhard Michael, (e.g.), *The Garden of Earthly Delights by Hieronymus Bosch as a dream to be deciphered*, Heidelberg: Art-Dok, 2020.

⁵³ The vertical time diagram – the general practice of depicting events further back (top) in the picture – was apparently common before perspective depictions. See the illustration to Richard of St. Victor, *De arca Noe morali et mystica*, known only as a description. See Christel Meier, *Malerei des Unsichtbaren. Über den Zusammenhang von Erkenntnistheorie und Bildstruktur im Mittelalter*, in: Wolfgang Harms (ed.) *Text und Bild, Bild und Text*. DFG-Symposium 1988, Stuttgart: Metzler, 1990 (digital 2016), pp. 35-65, here p. 52. Already in Richard von St. Viktor with the assignment to the times *ante legem/sub lege/sub gratia*.

⁵⁴ See Meinhard Michael, *Einen Herzschlag lang hinüber. The disposition of time in Hieronymus Bosch’s Garden of Earthly Delights*, Heidelberg: Art-Dok, 2017.

stages. This was done primarily with regard to the senses – as a development from the ‘old man’, who is at the mercy of the senses, to the ‘new man’, who masters the senses thanks to his perspective on God. With such a model, the three parts in the *Garden of Earthly Delights* (the three historical areas) are parallelized with three parts of the soul. The basis is the threefold division of the soul since Aristotle, which was adopted by the scholastic theologians and remained valid until well after 1500: *vegetativa*, *sensitiva* and *rationalis*, roughly speaking for the plant, animal and exclusively human components.

The front area (historically: *sub gratia*) stands for the *anima rationalis*, the middle (*sub lege*) for *anima sensitiva*, the rear (*ante legem*) for *anima vegetativa*. The plant parts of the soul (rear) are responsible for growth and nutrition, the animal parts (middle) for movement and reproduction, only the human being (front) has freedom of will, for example when choosing between good and evil. With this allocation of the three parts of the soul to the three parts of the middle panel, we now also understand why the hedge represents an insurmountable boundary between the lower area and the area above, because it is the boundary between the lower and the two upper areas (**Fig. 9**). The hedge separates the ‘body’ above (*vegetativa* and *sensitiva*) from the ‘mind’ (*rationalis*) below. Within the ‘body’, i.e. between the middle and upper areas, the separation is not so strict. The two outer ‘gates of paradise’ mediate, as it were, on the border between the two upper parts of the soul.

The easiest to understand is the characterization of the equestrian circle as the third responsible for movement and reproduction, which is possibly one reason for the present testicles of the equestrian animals. Perhaps the painter was also inspired by the diagnosis that such *sensitive* existence has a will but no reason.

The fact that the foreground represents the *anima rationalis* may be surprising in view of what is happening, but it is justifiable. Only here is freedom of decision possible. It is depicted in a catchy way in the group of three at the front right (**fig. 10**). Slightly isolated from its surroundings, it represents a kind of ‘reading instruction’ for the whole picture and an appeal for correct behavior.⁵⁵ Two men are bent over a plump and a withered giant berry respectively. The one at the back is sinking his teeth into it. They have *bent* over sensual things and personify the *homo curvatus* (or *incurvatus*), who bends over earthly things, as it were, instead of turning *upright* towards God.⁵⁶ Note here too the formal parallel between the two bent men and the respective ‘arch of the back’ in the shell-bearer and the Tree-man on the one hand, and the contrast with Adam on the other (**figs. 7-8, 10-11**). In the underdrawing, the plan had been to have Adam lying half-supported on his right elbow.⁵⁷ This would have been a traditional posture at the creation of Eve, during Adam’s dream, to which the scene with Eve’s posture continues to allude.⁵⁸ However, it was decided for the painting that Adam should sit upright.

⁵⁵ See Michael 2017 (note 2).

⁵⁶ On *homo curvatus* since Augustine, see Guido Bausenhardt, ‘Stolz - geschwellte Brust auf schwächtigen Beinen’, in: *Die Sieben Todsünden - zwischen Reiz und Reue*, ed. by Peter Nickl, Münster: LIT, 2009, pp.75-96.

⁵⁷ Carmen Garrido, Roger Van Schoute, *Bosch at the Museo del Prado. Technical Study*. Madrid, Editorial Palacios y Museos, 2001, p. 164.

⁵⁸ Falkenburg 2011 (note 1), pp. 66-70.



Fig. 10: Detail of central panel, animal-vegetable betrayal of God – upside down – and behavioral commandment with bent back (*homo curvatus*) versus *erectus* appeal.

Fig. 11: Detail of the Paradise panel, Adam upright with his feet crossed and his left foot on the robe of the Creator (but his left hand on his thigh).

The better behavior in dealing with sensual seduction is evidently shown by the man between the two bent ones (**fig. 10**). He sits upright – almost like Adam – and tastes, or rather demonstrates how carefully he tastes, in contrast to his neighbors. In short, we see a model of free will and the divergent directions of decision: upright or bent.

The consequences of the negative decision – and now directly in relation to sensitive-animal and vegetative-plant soul parts – are shown next to it. The two figures upside down are wrapped in ‘shells’ in which plant and animal details (eggshells) are mixed (**fig. 10**). These figures also refer to Adam in paradise, but in a different detail and as an antithesis: the feet of the figure on the right are not visible, while those of the figure on the left are attached to the duck and tucked under its feathers. This is an important detail because it perverts the gesture of Adam’s left foot. Adam places his foot on God’s robe, indicating his part in the divine providence in his sleep during Eve’s creation (**Fig. 11**).

The two upside-down figures have betrayed their mission to ‘become like God’ to such an extent that they are transformed back into pre-rational, ‘vegetable-animal’ existences. The motif could in turn come from Bernard of Clairvaux. He comforted his confreres that the resemblance “to the image of a calf eating grass (Ps 105:20)” was not the final resolution. What is written in the Bible about the dissimilarity that has occurred since the fall of man, “it does not say because this similarity has been destroyed, but superimposed by another. The soul has not entirely stripped itself of its innate form, but has put on a different one. The latter was added, not the former lost.”⁵⁹ What matters to him is that the animal likeness acquired through the neglected will can be ‘undressed’ again at any time. This is precisely what the two figures upside down in the *Garden of Earthly Delights* convey with their animal-like, plant-like skin (**fig. 10**). This is one of the details with which the punishment that befalls the Tree-man on the hell panel is already indicated on the central panel – anything but coincidental, also as a plant-animal existence made of tree and egg and so on.

The outlined tripartite division of the central panel now provides the basis for understanding the depiction of the inner senses and the spiritual forces in the *Garden of Earthly Delights*. Once again, I must ask for patience: Neither the tripartite division of the painting as a historical landscape (*ante legem, sub lege, sub gratia*) nor its symbolic

⁵⁹ Clairvaux 1994 (note 51) VI, 1995, II, 82. sermon, p. 601.

occupancy with mental states or parts of the soul (*vegetativa, sensitiva, rationalis*) has any probative force on its own. However, the system of the inner senses, to which the next section is devoted, can be understood with these presuppositions.

The inner senses or mental powers. We are talking about the mental faculties of the soul when it processes current external sensory impressions or draws on them. The term *sensus interior* was probably first used by Augustine.⁶⁰ It should be remembered in advance that, following Galen, these mental powers were usually located in three brain ventricles.⁶¹ The doctrine of the five internal senses, analogous to the five external senses, had been adopted by Avicenna, and he was sometimes understood to assume a separate location for each faculty.⁶² By 1500, however, Galen's three cerebral ventricles, into which the mental powers were sorted, had reasserted themselves. **Fig. 13** shows a head depiction attributed to Albrecht Dürer with five mental powers in three ventricles; I will come back to this. What Bosch does with this initial position in the *Garden of Earthly Delights* is one of his typical inversions. Starting from the cave at the bottom right, three small architectural elements are placed diagonally in the foreground (**fig. 12, cf. fig. 9**). These three details in one axis should be discussed as a trio, unless one assumes that they were arranged so closely together by chance. The three small structures are firstly the famous coral tent, or rather tree tent; secondly the portal (in which two men stand) with an extension behind it (with several men); thirdly, half concealed by the group of figures next to the cave, the bluish-white column stump on which a shell and what appears to be a giant marble egg are balanced.

As will be explained shortly, the painter has placed the *cogitative power* (*vis cogitativa*) in the tree tent, the *imagination* and *memory* in the central portal and in the extension behind it, and the *fantasy* in the whitish column form. Instead of the traditional three cavities in the brain, the internal powers of the mind are housed in three small architectures; the three cerebral chambers are moved outwards, as it were (in this sense, inversely). The internal senses thus continue the representation of the five external senses to the right, they connect

⁶⁰ Tellkamp 1999 (note 11), p. 226. – Simon Kemp, Garth J.O. Fletcher, *The medieval theory of the inner senses*, in: *The American Journal of Psychology* 106 (1993), 4, pp. 559-576. – E. Ruth Harvey, *The inward wits: Psychological theory in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, London: Warburg Institute, 1975. – It is therefore not about the five *spiritual* (mystical) inner senses, with whose construction the encounter with God was distanced from (natural) sensory perception, but about the basic psychological structure. On the practice of the inner *spiritual* senses, see Niklas Largier, *Inner Senses – Outer Senses. The Practice of Emotions in Medieval Mysticism*, in: Jaeger/Kasten 2003 (note 29), pp. 3-15.

⁶¹ Sometimes also in the heart, but if in the brain, the three cavities are binding. For Galen's three faculties of imagination, thinking and memory in the three cerebral chambers see Dewender 1995 (note 42).

⁶² See Dag Nicholas Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima in the Latin West: the formation of a peripatetic philosophy of the soul 1160-1300*, London/Turin: Warburg Institute/Nino Aragno Editore 2000. – See also Thomas Dewender 2003 (note 12), pp. 146-149. 11), pp. 141-160, especially pp. 146-149. – See also Christel Meier, *Imaginatio und phantasia in Enzyklopädien vom Hochmittelalter bis zur Frühen Neuzeit*, in Dewender/Welt 2003 (note 12), pp. 161-181.

directly to hearing – therefore understood as the ‘final’ point of the circle of the external senses (cf. Fig. 9).⁶³

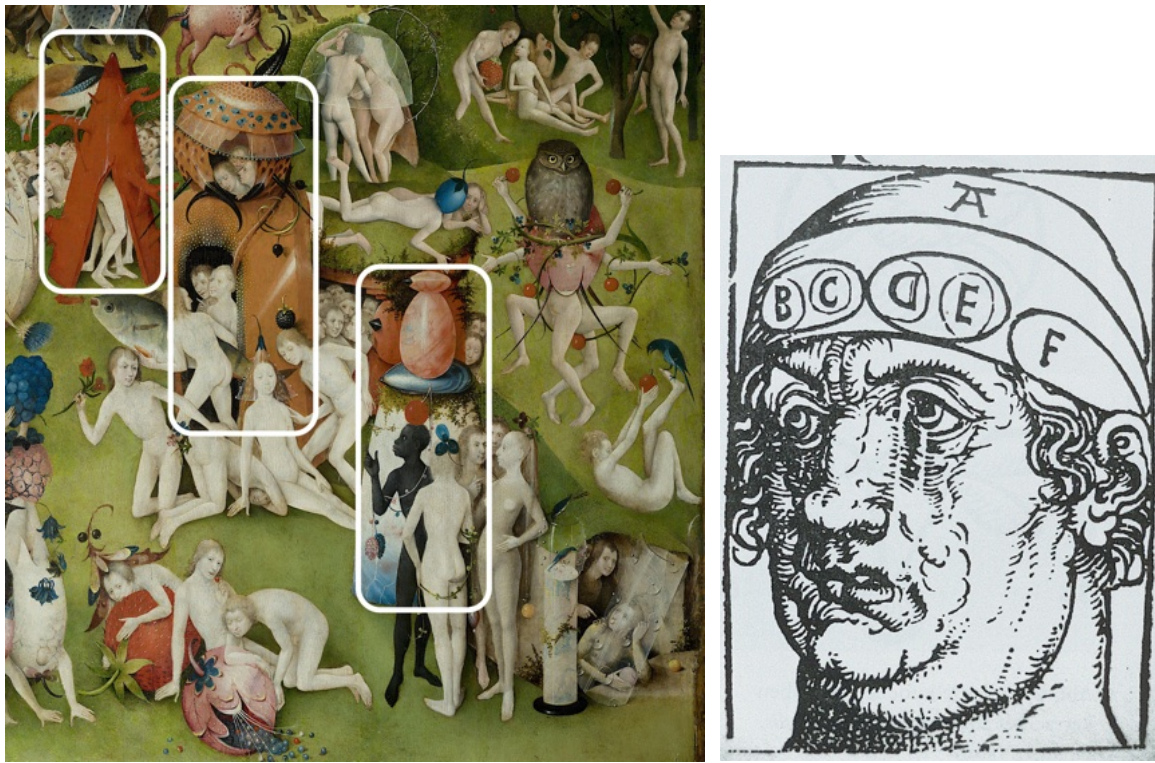


Fig. 12: Detail of the central panel, three small architectures for the internal senses.

Fig. 13: Albrecht Dürer, *Caput physicum* with three brain ventricles, woodcut, 7.2 x 5.2 cm, Ludovicus de Prussia, *Trilogium Animae*, Nuremberg, Anton Koberger 1498.

The initial iconographic inspiration for these identifications came from Conrad Gesner (1516-1565), the Swiss polymath. He added several passages to his exposition of Aristotle's theory of perception in *De anima* and provided them with illustrations in 1586, to which Eduard-Rudolf Müllener has devoted a study.⁶⁴ The illustrations provide information about the system of the senses and the powers of the mind, the composition of the human soul and its relationship to the divine spirit – they interpret Aristotle and the psychology based on him.

Gesner is named as the author of the first image reproduced here. It is possible that “all the pictures are by him”.⁶⁵ Gesner, born in the year of Bosch's death, is of course not discussed as a possible source, but as an indication of how Aristotle's teachings could possibly have been used as a model for a picture.

The *figura quinta* (fig. 14) should first serve as a comparison and confirmation that the horizontal tripartite division of the central panel of the *Garden of Earthly Delights* is based on the tripartite division of the soul. In Gesner's work, the soul is divided into three circles from

⁶³ A successor to the *Garden of Earthly Delights* could be Bartolomeo Delbene's admittedly more complex walled city of souls with five gates, into which one enters by *listening*, dated 1585, printed 1609, see Vinge 1975 (note 18), pp. 79-84.

⁶⁴ See Eduard-Rudolf Müllener: *Konrad Geßner's illustrations to 'De Anima'*, in: *Gesnerus* 22 (1965), pp. 160-175.

⁶⁵ Müllener 1965 (note 64), p. 161.

bottom to top below the winged angelic realm and the cloudy omnipotence: The *anima vegetativa* is followed by *anima sensitiva* in the middle and *anima rationalis* at the top. The overlapping of the circles conveys that the separation is a theoretical model for the soul, which is homogeneous in reality. The highest part of the soul borders on the celestial spheres. The external senses begin (or end) at the middle circle, at the sensitive soul, which is its characteristic distinction. As can be seen from the length of the lines, the senses are traditionally – or Aristotelianly correct – arranged according to their range.

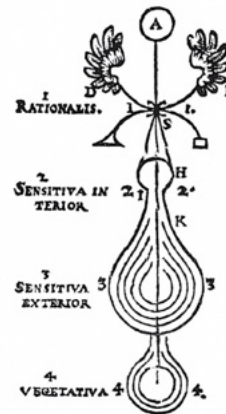
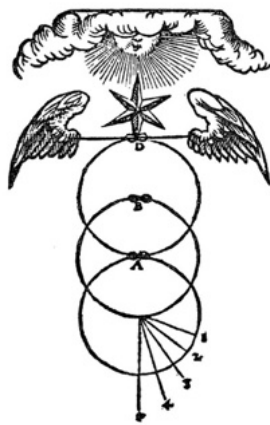


Fig. 14: *Figura quinta* to *De Anima*, Konrad Gesner, 1586.⁶⁶

Fig. 15: *Figura sexta* to *De Anima*, Konrad Gesner, 1586.

Fig. 16: *Figura septima* to *De Anima*, Konrad Gesner, 1586.

With the help of two further illustrations from Gesner's *De anima*, the tree-tent can now be derived as a form for the *cogitative power*. In the *Figura sexta* (fig. 15), the higher spheres are now represented by the angel with head and wings. The subject is not the components of the soul itself and perception, but the position of man in creation between 'below' and 'above'. Just to go into the essentials here: The larger circle below the angelic sphere contains the *five senses* (1-5), again represented as five lines of different lengths. They meet in the *sensus communis*, the small middle circle (6) as the center of sensory perception. Imagination or fantasy (7) sits above it. The keystone of the mental processes is a small triangle (8). In Gesner's diagram, it stands for *dianoia*. Depending on the recourse to the ancient thinkers, *dianoia* is understood as a faculty of the mind as both the discursive mind (in relation to the more comprehensive reason) and the human-moving powers of reason in relation to divine wisdom as a whole.⁶⁷

As a *dianoia triangle*, Gesner's diagram shows the highest, *still* sensual-earthly areas of the human spirit, at the apex also those with which it is able to connect with the divine spirit.⁶⁸ To clarify this, let us take a look at the third illustration (Fig. 16). Gesner is now primarily concerned with the *transformation* from the earthly-sensual, vegetative-sensitive body to the spirit, which is able to recognize God (circle A above). To this end, he divides into the

⁶⁶ Reproduced after Müllener 1965 (note 64).

⁶⁷ See art. *Vernunft, Verstand IV. Renaissance und frühe Neuzeit*, in: HWPh (note 14), 11, 2001, cols. 796-809 (Th. Leinkauf).

⁶⁸ See Leinkauf 2001 (note 67).

vegetative soul below (4) and within the sensitive soul above into the *sensitiva exterior* like an onion with five layers (3), connected to the world via the five senses, and in turn above the narrower *sensitiva interior* (2). The open transitions are intended to illustrate the work of the *spiritus* as the transporter of spiritual events. The inner processes of the soul in the thickening at the top of the *sensitiva interior* purify, as it were, the sensory representations. They are then sent through the narrow triangle of *dianoia* (S) to the *anima rationalis* (1), here consisting of two half arcs.⁶⁹ (The designations H / I / K to the left and right of (2) stand for *memoria* / *phantasia* / *sensus communis*.)

A simple analogy now allows us to draw up the next hypothesis for the *Garden of Earthly Delights*. The triangle of the spiritual power closest to God, rationality, appears in Gesner's model, I repeat with a view to the painting, 'above' the senses and the *sensus communis*. The tree-tent-triangle is in the same *diagrammatic-schematic* position as Gesner's *dianoia triangle*: at the upper boundary of the lower third of the painting (*anima rationalis*), it reaches upwards *over* the hedge into the next area – into the sensitive (animal) layer of the soul (**fig. 9**) – as only very select details in the painting do. It does not protrude into the *higher* sphere, but into the 'animal' one. The simple reason for this is that the order of Gesner/Aristotle has been reversed in the *Garden of Earthly Delights*, because the distance from the divine order is caricatured.

On closer inspection, the tree tent is a highly rational shape in itself. It is an isosceles triangle and is twice as high as it is wide, except for a few millimeters. Measure and number apply here, not least in contrast to *fantasy*, as will be shown in a moment. And there are, of all things, five larger branches from which the stumps can be seen – in other words, the tree's shoots have been trimmed in favor of its geometry. These details and of course the placement suggest that the tree tent, like Gesner's triangle, is a form of the *vis cogitativa*.

The positioning is basically – in keeping with what is happening in the tent – a debacle. To put it another way, the triangle does not reach up into an 'English zone', but 'down into the body'. The mind is denounced. The power of the mind, which is there precisely to purify the polluting influences of the senses, is instead defiled by the spirit of the plump testicles that reigns in the circle of riders. The fact that the (five) limbs overlap in the tent, as sexual activity is repeatedly implied, is no longer surprising.

Just as the *rational geometry* of the triangle explicitly characterizes the mind, the symbolic function of the other two small architectures can also be deduced from their form. Thanks to Gesner's diagram, the selection is manageable. In most cases, four or five internal senses were assumed (rarely more), often depending on whether or not a distinction was made between fantasy and imagination. In addition, there was the power of reason *vis cogitativa*, the power of judgment *vis estimativa*, the *memory vis memorativa* and the *sensus communis*.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ The half-arch open at the bottom with a small triangle and a square at the ends of the arches represents further powers of thought (*doxa, ratiocinatio*). See Müllener 1965 (note 64), p. 172.

⁷⁰ On the longevity of the ancient models of the inner senses and the three-part soul up to Gregor Reisch's *Margarita philosophica* (1503), see Ernst Florey, *MEMORIA: Geschichte der Konzepte über die Natur des Gedächtnisses*, in: Ernst Florey, Olaf Breidbach (eds.), *Das Gehirn – Organ der Seele? Zur Ideengeschichte der Neurobiologie*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1993, pp. 151-215; on the ancient theories pp. 151-169 - Thomas Aquinas has four inner mental faculties: 1. *sensus communis*, 2. *phantasia* or *imaginatio*, 3. *memoria* or *reminiscentia* and 4. *vis cogitativa* or, as an animal equivalent, *vis aestimativa*. See Tellkamp 1999 (note 11), pp. 218-294, here pp. 225-230.

The *Garden of Earthly Delights* does not follow the familiar head patterns correctly. There, the caves are placed one behind the other, from the forehead to the back. In the picture, however, they are offset next to each other. In the head models, the *sensus communis* and *imaginatio* are usually housed in the first cavity, for example as B and C in the woodcut in the *Trilogium Animae* (Fig. 13). In the second ventricle of the brain, the Prutenus illustration brings together D *phantasia* and E *vis estimativa*, a frequent combination. *Memory* is always localized in the posterior cerebral ventricle (F). In the *Garden of Earthly Delights*, in addition to the tent as the cogitative power, the portal with the extension must be understood as (positive) *imagination* with the *memory* (Fig. 12). The bluish-white shimmering pillar next to it represents the (negative) fantasy.

Fantasy. To begin with the latter: A smooth shell lies as if in a nest on the vegetation covering the tapered and then sawed-off unreal form. The oblique, precarious positioning of the shell is further emphasized by the unstable position of the egg-shaped marble above it (Fig. 17).

This equilibristic instability is a characteristic of the perverted paradise gates in the background. They are a deliberately chaotic hodgepodge, senseless architecture. The sizes and directions of neighboring forms alternate rudely, pillars support nothing, there are glass support beams and generally wild growth overflows (figs. 9; 18). The upper end of the second gate from the right is symptomatic of the unstable risk of the shell and the marble egg in front. A spindle with a whitish-bluish pattern (like the column stump in the foreground) is vaguely wedged into the cut-open hemisphere above. A semicircular trough with two figures balances on the spindle, held only by a – spatially unreal – penetrating pipe (fig. 18).



Fig. 17: Detail of central panel, foreground, unstable position as an indication of unstable fantasy.

Fig. 18: Detail of central panel, third gate of paradise with daring construction.

This formal climate recurs in the front area *exclusively* above the shimmering column stump.

⁷¹ It should be borne in mind that on the opposite side, in that trio of internal senses, the equilateral triangle symbolizes the *cogitative power*, cramped by the strict triangle of measure and number. In contrast, the small architecture for the *imagination* celebrates a formal climate that seems to warn that fantasy structures can collapse like a house of cards.

⁷¹ Also only there – in the ‘head’ of the marble egg (Fig. 17) – is a black diamond tip mounted, as it appears at the back of the left-hand gate of paradise.

Imagination and memory. It is the largest of the three small architectures. The shape of the portal with the extension behind it also indicates what it symbolizes. The men are pushing up from behind and below, two are standing on the threshold of the portal. One can recognize in this the idea that the contents of memory reach the front from the rear, from the third cerebral chamber. *Imagination* has been attributed the greatest role in the processing of all signals. Neither without it nor without *memory* is thinking possible, they belong together. The portal should therefore stand for the *imagination*.

The fact that the depicted mind is occupied with content that rises from behind would be the corresponding process for dreams or sleep. The *spiritus*, the means of transportation of mental processes, ascends the back and, if there are no current sensory impressions during sleep, brings the information stored in the *memory* to the front. There it is then processed by the cognitive and estimative powers and by the common sense (these processes were calculated differently).

This should refer specifically to the work of the psyche in the dream. For it is all too obvious that to the left of the portal care has been taken to ensure that there is *no* contact *whatsoever* between the portal and the triangle of the power of the mind (difficult to recognize in **fig. 12**). This is because the cogitative power cannot intervene in the dream, it remains apart from what the imagination produces. On the other hand, to the right of the portal, the transition between *imagination/memory* (portal/extension) and *fantasy* (whitish column) is fluid, also in formal terms: the two bulbous forms with black diamond-cut tips both on the portal extension and next to it as a marble egg are proof of this. For the *imagination* rules in dreams as it wills.

So far, we have a basic structure of perception and its processing: the external *five senses*, plus *common sense*, *cogitative power*, *memory*, *imagination* and *fantasy*, i.e. also five internal senses. Apart from the initial assignment of the power of the mind to the tent through the illustration by Conrad Gesner, the derivation of the other four mental powers was based on combinatorial form-interpretation or image grammar.⁷² This is undoubtedly risky. So the question must also be asked: Is it possible that the architectures should be thought of in a series one after the other? Then the *sensus communis* would belong in the tree tent as the ‘first cerebral chamber’. According to the previously suggested reading, the *sensus communis* would be placed in the middle of the *five senses*. However, it is much less likely that this is intended to be ‘Aristotelian’ than that the *formal* model of the older *wheels of the senses* is at work. And both the strict rational form of the triangle and the analogy with Gesner's illustrations speak in favor of a *cogitative form*.

Or, another question, was an *estimative*, an evaluative spiritual force omitted – or overlooked – in the *Garden of Earthly Delights*? Well, the *Garden of Earthly Delights* is not a theoretical treatise, but an image. Moreover, as with the *wheel of the senses*, it must be noted that the internal senses are not a neutral representation either. It is possible that the sequence

⁷² A syntax operates between the elements that have been linked interpretatively by abduction – as in the picture: Only syntax “is able to reduce the polysemy of the figurative signs and to combine the individual elements of meaning into overarching units of meaning, actual visual texts.” Felix Thürlemann, *Abschied von der Ikone: Das Bildkonzept Robert Campins und seine Rezeption in Malerei und Kunstgeschichte*, in: *Anamorphosen der Rhetorik. Die Wahrheitsspiele der Renaissance*, ed. by Gerhart Schröder, Barbara Cassin, Gisela Febel, Michel Narcy, München: Fink, 1997, pp. 249-266, cited on p. 263 (own translation).

was chosen to place the (negative) fantasy directly next to the cave with the awakening woman and to bring its cognitive power, the tree tent, further away and into contact with the sensitive layer of the soul.

Considerations as to which psychological system could have been the starting point for the picture are also difficult because the hub of the *wheel of the senses* was the obvious place for the *sensus communis* and because its now free space had to be replaced in the ‘front’ cerebral cave. It should be ruled out that the dominant shape of the trio, portal/extension, is to be thought of as the equivalent of the first cave and the neighbors as the second and third. Because the *memory* would be out of place in the “first cave”. And now to the right and left of it, it also seems out of place. For the, once again, ‘rational’ form of the tent triangle appears just as well as a force of understanding, *vis cogitativa*, as the unreal tree column with its unstable, wild equilibristics as a form of *phantasia*.

As far as calculations go, all psychological theories that see the *sensus communis* as being controlled by a complexly conceived imagination (from Avicenna to Pico della Mirandola) must be excluded. This includes the fact that in the *Garden of Earthly Delights* the reproducing *imagination* and the creative *imagination (fantasy)* are more likely to be conceived as separate mental powers than as two capacities of a single mental power – because then they would not have been allowed to operate in two places (even if they were connected). The basis should be a theory based on *five* internal sense powers. They were to be distinguished as *sensus communis*, a *power of understanding (cogitative)*, *imagination*, *memory* and *fantasy*, even if only four were placed in the three classical ‘locations’. They are not in the usual order and the *sensus communis* is in the middle of the senses instead.

Olga Weijer's investigation of the terms *imaginatio* and *phantasia* by Dutch philosophers around 1500 revealed that the authors differentiate between them or not, depending on whether they follow Albertus Magnus (five inner senses) or rather Thomas Aquinas (four).⁷³ To conclude from this that the triptych could be precisely positioned in this respect could be problematic in view of the aforementioned methodological limitations for a picture.

If one considers the basic situation of a woman awakening from a dream, the conclusion suggests itself that the equilibristically balancing forms in the foreground indicate, as it were, the mental power of fantasy, and the forms in the background the results, namely the inadmissible phantasms that her dream brought her. Symbolically and formally, they proclaim the greatest conceivable scandal: the gates of paradise are perverted. It may come as a surprise that this picture, a ‘gold standard’ of *fantasy*, gives her a negative diagnosis, but this is of course part of the misogynistic tone: it is a woman who dreams in such a confused way.

Two additional observations and concluding remarks: Of course, the divine grace reaches the woman in the cave, exactly on her imagination, in the middle of her forehead (**fig. 19**). Everywhere in the picture, on the smallest details, you can see reflective strips of an unknown light source. In my opinion, they are an echo of the powerful light-reflective stripes on the

⁷³ Olga Weijers, *Le Pouvoir d'imagination chez les philosophes néerlandais du Xve siècle*, in: Marta Fattori, Massimo Luigi Bianchi (eds.), *Phantasia-Imaginatio*, V. Colloquio Internazionale, Roma 9-11 gennaio 1986, Roma, Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1988 pp. 205-220.

outside view, on creation (not illustrated here). God's created love and grace, God's spirit, naturally rests on all things and people, regardless of whether they accept this offer or not.⁷⁴



Fig. 19: Central panel, detail, woman with double stripes over forehead and whole body.

Fig. 20: Central panel, detail, reflection on the portal, on the 'Imagination'.

Fig. 21: Central panel, detail, caricatured 'animal instinct': feeding from the tent (*vis cogitativa*) as a *vis 'aestimativa* scene'.

In order to make it clear that the awakening of the woman consists precisely in the correction of her false imagination, the painter has once again placed this reflection of light on the portal – the place of imagination – beautifully framed between two fruits above and below (**fig. 20**). Basically, the woman is awakened like St. Magdalene in later depictions, turning upwards just as the ray of light from the Holy Spirit hits her.⁷⁵

As far as we have understood so far, the picture operates freely with psychological theorems beyond the conventional schemes. As noted, the tree tent is presumably the form for the *cogitative power* (*vis cogitativa*). Understood in this way, the scene behind it catches the eye as particularly funny. A red-backed shrike sits on a branch stump of the tree tent and apparently reaches down a fruit in its beak, where a group of men open their mouths upwards like baby birds (**fig. 21**). Thomas Aquinas distinguished the direct-affective *vis aestimativa* (the sheep reacts instinctively to the wolf) from the *vis cogitativa*.⁷⁶ The cognitive quality is reserved for humans as an already generalizing and therefore higher rational ability. However, according to Thomas, infants sometimes react affectively in a similar way to animals. The infant reacts to the mother's breast, that is the example of Aquinas, to a certain extent with a

⁷⁴ The fact that this light of creation appears in the form of a double rainbow, as if in black and white graphics, supports this thesis. The sign of the covenant appears 'before its time has come' because the external view is not a faithful representation of the (first three days of) creation, but its interpretation. The 'rainbow' is an argument, not a natural phenomenon.

⁷⁵ See, for example, the *Penitent Mary Magdalene* by Orazio Gentileschi (c. 1625, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. 179), who turns towards the light from her hand like the woman in the cave in the *Garden of Earthly Delights*, see <https://www.khm.at/objektdb/detail/792/> – 10.9.2023. The strip of light in the *Conversion of the Magdalene* by Gottfried Schalcken (1700, Leiden Collection GS-114) is also in three parts, see <https://www.theleidencollection.com/viewer/conversion-of-mary-magdalen/> – 10.9.2023. – See Meinhard Michael, *Magdalena mit Bundeszeichen im Garten der Lüste von Hieronymus Bosch – und bei Godefridus Schalcken?*, Heidelberg: *Art-Dok*, 2017.

⁷⁶ Tellkamp 1999 (note 11), pp. 271-281. Averroes had already opposed the animal instinct to the cogitative faculty, see Dewender 2003 (note 12), p. 149.

vis aestimativa. And he makes a fundamental distinction between animals and humans as ‘estimative’ or ‘cogitative’ and ascribes a specific function to the *vis aestimativa* as *instinctus naturalis*. It doesn’t take long to explain why, if the tree tent is the place for the cogitation power, the events behind it with the open mouths caricature all those who are like ‘animal infants’, in which it only reaches as far as the *vis estimativa*.

Those who only know the traditional readings of the *Garden of Earthly Delights*, who may even consider it a ‘hidden object’, will think it unlikely that the strip of light on the portal could have anything to do with the *imagination*, or that the men with their open mouths are meant to caricature their merely animalistic powers of reason. The psychological interpretation began with the hypothesis that five senses are depicted in a *wheel of the senses* that does not exist anywhere else in this form and that must be extracted from the landscape, as it were. The subsequent considerations were begun on this unstable basis, understood as an abduction. The subsequently proposed construct of internal senses can also refer to (almost) no iconographic background. Nevertheless, on ‘image-grammatical’ grounds, the *wheel of the five senses* and the structure of the inner senses together *provide* sufficient evidence. The misused individual external senses, finalized on the central axis of the picture, meet the inner powers of the soul right there and instruct them so absurdly that the whole dream of paradise is perverted.

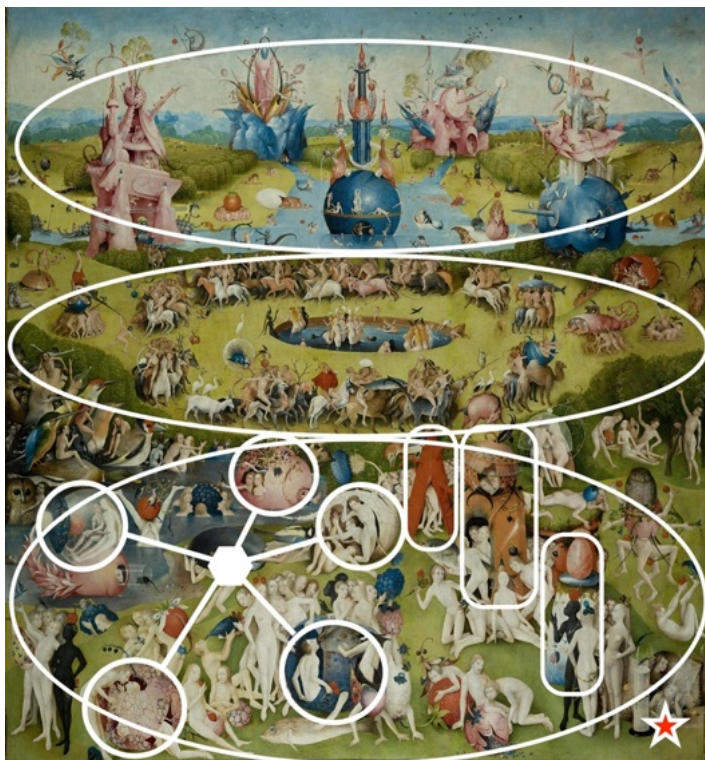


Fig. 22: Central panel: Diagrammatical structure of the psychological level

With the at least tenable anchoring between the theoretical background and a series of image details, the case arises that a later hypothesis lends a higher degree of probability to the earlier one – and then, conversely, the earlier one authenticates the later hypothesis. This is a circular argument, and yet one cannot deny the credibility of its results. The density of details that can be integrated into the psychological explanation is high. It is much higher than in all the

interpretations offered to date. The interpretation proposed here brings us much closer to the *Garden of Earthly Delights* than before. Should this just be the result of extensive intellectual acrobatics? The psychological details in question were still topical at the end of the 15th century, and not only in the course of the battles between Dominicans and Franciscans.⁷⁷ The *Garden of Earthly Delights* uses a woman who has just awoken from a dream to create a negative image of a psyche that women (like effeminate men) are better off avoiding. The depiction of the psyche is not an end in itself or the actual teaching content of the picture, but serves to characterize this woman, and to presumably also other layers of meaning in the picture.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Katharine Park, *Albert's Influence on Late Medieval Psychology*, in: *Albertus Magnus and the Sciences. Commemorative Essays 1980*, ed. by James A. Weisheipl OP, Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1980, pp. 501-535.

⁷⁸ See Meinhard Michael, *Bestrafter Geldwechsler ohne Maß und Verstand? 'Discretio spirituum' und der 'Goldene Brief' als Methode und Quelle im Garten der Lüste von Hieronymus Bosch*, Heidelberg: Art-Dok, 2018. – Meinhard Michael, *Neues von der Nonnen-Sau. Die Hauptfigur und der Konzepteur des Gartens der Lüste von Hieronymus Bosch*, Heidelberg: Art-Dok, 2020 – Meinhard Michael, *Von Hypokriten und falschen Hochzeiten. Die politische Positionierung des Gartens der Lüste von Hieronymus Bosch*, Heidelberg: Art-Dok, 2022.