

Family and the Counter Reformation in the Age of Rubens

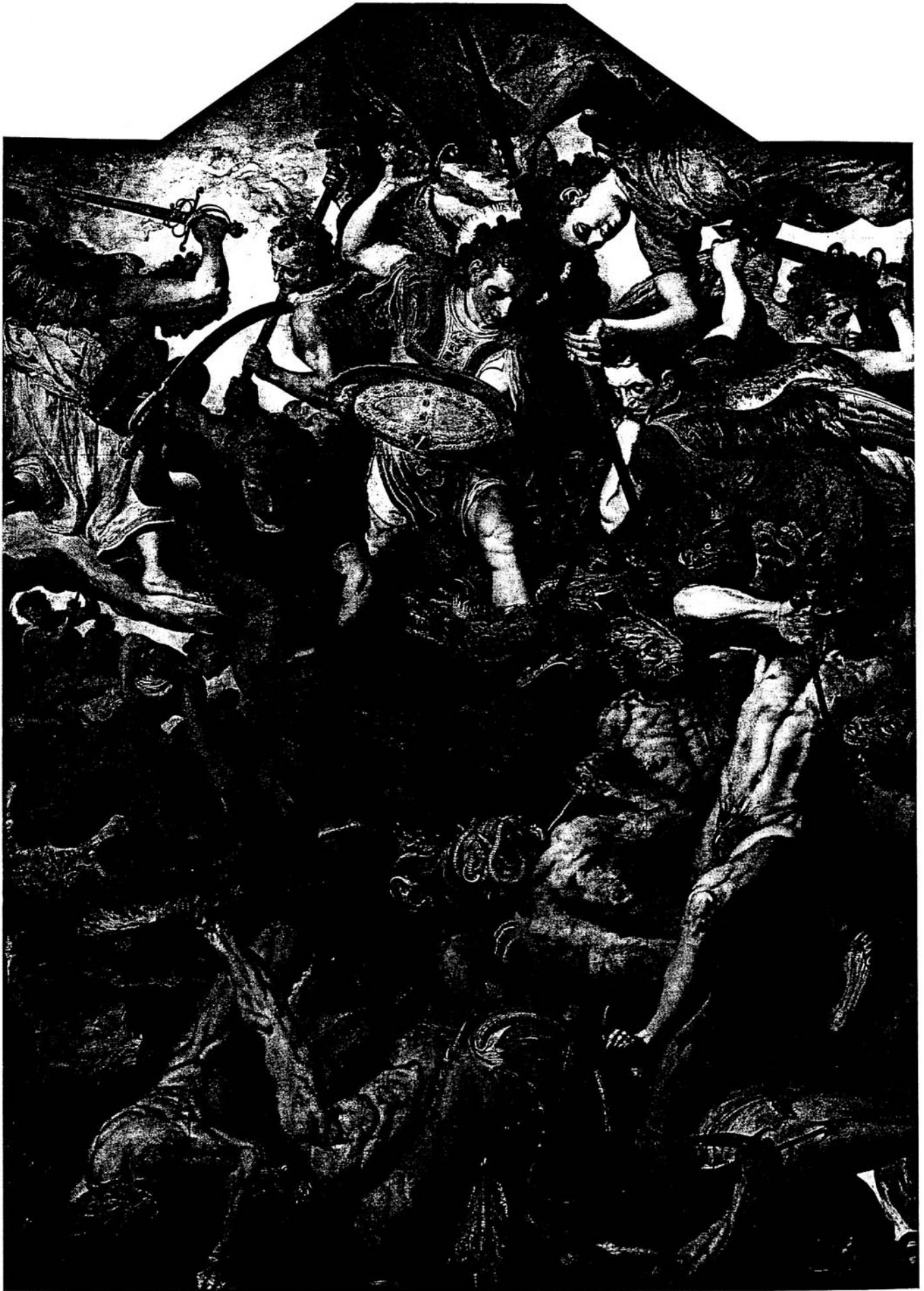
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THIS ESSAY begins with an inescapable irony. To consider the problem of Flemish painting during the Counter Reformation is to deal with paintings that are almost entirely absent from the present exhibition because they are too large to transport, or because they cannot be detached from their ecclesiastical context.¹ But their background – political, religious, and theological – is of immense importance for an understanding of all picture making during the age of Rubens. Two events are crucial. Although they date from before his birth, they continued to affect the course of painting until long after his death. The first is the Council of Trent, which passed its decree on painting in 1563; the second is the great outbreak of Iconoclasm that marked the effective beginning of the Revolt of the Netherlands against Spain in August 1566. Let us begin with the latter, not only because it is more dramatic, but because its immediate effects are clearer and easier to plot.

Much attention has already been devoted to the background, motivation, organization, and consequences of Iconoclasm in the Netherlands.² The image breaking began in Steenvoorde in the Westkwartier of Flanders on 10 August 1566, ravaged Antwerp on the fearful night of 20–21 August, and then spread like wildfire all over the Netherlands, both North and South, before finally burning itself out by the middle of October that year. Thousands of works of art of every description were lost.

The destruction was terrible and almost complete. Paintings, sculptures, and glass disappeared from churches and religious houses throughout the country.³ In Antwerp itself whole altarpieces were destroyed, or sometimes just their wings or surrounds (as occasionally happened when the central panel could be spirited away to safety). Our knowledge of Rubens's predecessors as altarpiece painters is therefore inevitably fragmentary. Thus, although the central panel of Frans Floris's famous altarpiece for the Antwerp Swordsmen (*Schermers*) – probably the most famous altarpiece of the era before Rubens – was damaged in 1566 (as recalled by an inscription of the following year), it survived (fig. 1); but its wings were lost – either then or in the course of the reframing of the altarpiece between 1640 and 1660.⁴ One has only to go through the pages of van Mander's *Lives of the Netherlandish painters* to have some sense of the scale and fury of the destruction.

The chief consequence, therefore, of the Iconoclasm of 1566, was the destruction of a good many examples of religious painting of the period before 1566. What happened in the next twenty uncertain years was almost as grievous. Although the Duke of Alba, who had been sent by Philip II to restore order in the provinces, issued instructions to repair the damaged and destroyed altars, and despite the very occasional new commission,⁵ the period of recovery was slow and difficult. Painters who had adopted one Reformed faith or another started to leave, in large numbers⁶; the churches that managed to continue holding services had neither the resources nor the will to commission new works; funds for commissions, both in the public ecclesiastical domain and in the private one were lacking, as the war strained the economy; and there was a general sense that it was futile to produce paintings at all. After all, why do so if they were constantly liable to destruction at the hands of Iconoclasts? Or at the hands of an uncontrollable militia, as happened in the case of the frightening events of November 1576 known as the Spanish Fury? In any event, years of Protestant polemic and Catholic doubt had raised a large question mark over the validity and status of painting itself. Could pictures (and *mutatis mutandis* sculptures) ever be adequate mediators between Man and God? Since they were nothing more than figured material objects, how could they ever be capable of circumscribing the fundamental uncircumscribability of the divine? Had not too much money been invested in them at the expense of the true images of God, the people, and above all the poor people, as Luther and many other of the major reformers claimed? Could fine paintings buy time off from purgatory? And were pictures –



and art in general – not simply a sensual snare from the true spirit of God, best expressed in his word?

All these, it is true, were Protestant reservations of one form or another, but they continued to reverberate throughout Rubens's lifetime. Although the Council of Trent had formulated its decree on images at its very last session in December 1563,⁷ the decree was disappointingly indefinite. It failed to deal adequately with the Protestant reservations. Few were convinced by its weak responses either to the allegations against the essence and substance of the use of images in churches, or to the many criticisms of their abuse.⁸ In short, there was not only a crisis of faith, but a crisis of faith in images. There were fewer artists left to produce them, and fewer people willing to commission them.

In Antwerp, the situation was intensely exacerbated by the so-called *Stille Beeldestorm*, or "quiet Iconoclasm," of 1581. At this time, the recently elected Calvinist City Council achieved the peaceful removal of images from the churches by replacing the Catholic deans and other officials of the guilds with Calvinist ones. The result was a renewed form of iconoclasm, this time carried out in an orderly fashion behind closed doors. Now the guilds themselves had the works removed from their own altars.⁹ They maintained not only that the images were idolatrous, but that they needed the money that would accrue from their sale to support their poorer members – especially those impoverished by the recent troubles.¹⁰ In many instances, therefore, the allegation of idolatry was little more than a convenient pretext for the removal of images. Many works were lost as a result, thus adding even further to the casualties of the great Iconoclasm of 1566 and the sporadic assaults against images in the intervening years.

But by 1581 the *reconquista* of The Netherlands by Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma, was already under way. Antwerp finally capitulated in August 1584, and the Southern Provinces were effectively regained for the Spanish Crown.¹¹ Farnese ordered the restoration of Catholic services, and included amongst the conditions of capitulation the instruction to restore or rebuild the damaged churches. In Antwerp Cathedral alone the guilds of the Schoolmasters and Soapboilers, Smiths, Shoemakers, Barbers and Surgeons, *Oude Handboog* (Crossbowmen),¹² Cellarers and Vintners, Bakers and Millers, and *Oude Voetboog* (Longbowmen), to name only a few, all set about raising funds for new paintings.¹³ The chief beneficiaries of this boom in commissions were the brothers Ambrosius, Hieronymus I, and Frans I Francken, and, above all, Marten de Vos, who replaced Frans Floris as the dominant figure in Antwerp painting.

But barely had de Vos died in 1604, when a new phase in Antwerp painting – the greatest in its history – began. It was inaugurated by two events in very different spheres: firstly, the return of Rubens from Italy at the end of 1608, and secondly, the signing of the Twelve Year Truce between Spain and the Northern Netherlands in 1609. From the point of view of the revival of painting in the South, it is hard to imagine a happier combination of circumstances. Rubens had more than proved his mettle in Italy, having made the vast paintings for the Jesuit Church in Mantua (see cat. 5) and Santa Croce in Gerusalemme in Rome, and having just completed the decoration of the high altar of the prestigious Chiesa Nuova there too (cat. 7).¹⁴ Indeed, as a specimen of his gigantic talent, he brought back with him the first – and superior – version of the picture he painted for the high altar of the Oratorians, and installed it in the Abbey Church of St. Michael, near the tomb of his beloved mother.

Circumstances could not, in fact, have been more favorable for a promising young painter. With the political situation now stabilized, and the local economy once again on its feet (though it would never be as strong as it had been in its heyday), an immense program of ecclesiastical building and rebuilding began. This was encouraged and subsidized by the Archdukes Albert and Isabella,¹⁵ who would soon not only become Rubens's patrons, but also take him as their confidante. Almost everywhere (or so it must have seemed) funds were made available for the restoration of the old altarpieces and the commissioning of new ones. The new churches and monasteries offered even further opportunities. It would be hard to list even a small portion of the possibilities that were opened up throughout much of Rubens's life, for even in the 1630s the program of repair, renewal, restoration, and reestablishment continued.

Take Antwerp in the decade after Rubens's return from Italy. Immediately after the signing of the truce, work began once again on the still-unfinished Churches of St. Paul and St. James; in 1611 the church of the Capuchins (still a new order in the Netherlands)¹⁶ was begun, while in 1615 the first stone was laid of what would become the finest Jesuit church in the whole of North-

Fig. 1. Frans Floris, *Fall of the Rebel Angels*, oil on panel, 303 x 220 cm, Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, inv. 112.

ern Europe. The same year saw the foundation of the church of the Augustinians; while in 1616 the church of another new order, that of the convent of the Annunciate sisters, was begun.¹⁷ For the Dominican Church of St. Paul Rubens began painting the complex altarpiece showing the *Dispute over the Real Presence in the Holy Sacrament (The Glorification of the Holy Eucharist)*¹⁸ and the smaller one of the *Adoration of the Shepherds*¹⁹ almost immediately after he returned from Italy. Within a few years he produced a fine *Flagellation*²⁰ for a cycle of eighteen paintings devoted to the Cycle of the Rosary (appropriately, since this was a cult much encouraged by the Dominican order), to which both the very young van Dyck and Jordaens also contributed (see Vlieghe).²¹ By the end of the decade he had produced the huge *St. Dominic and St. Francis of Assisi Protecting the World from the Wrath of Christ*²² and along with Jan Brueghel and others had begun negotiations to buy Caravaggio's great *Madonna of the Rosary* to install in the church. For the Church of St. James (St. Jacobskerk) he would eventually paint the altarpiece for his own funerary chapel at the very end of his life.²³ And for the resplendent new Jesuit church he immediately started painting not only the two great works for the high altar glorifying the founding fathers of the Order, St. Ignatius Loyola (Introduction, fig. 25) and St. Francis Xavier,²⁴ but also the stupendous series of paintings for the ceilings of the aisles and the galleries (see cats. 18 and 19).²⁵ Barely had he finished these, when he started working on the *Adoration of the Magi* for the Abbey Church of St. Michael,²⁶ and then on the high altarpiece of the Augustinian church, which would be one of the crowning achievements of his religious painting in the 1620s.²⁷

As if this were not enough, one has also to reckon in those works commissioned as direct replacements for paintings that had been lost in the iconoclastic period, such as the great *Descent from the Cross* (Introduction, fig. 18) painted in 1611-14 for the altar of the *Kolveniers* (harquebusiers) in Antwerp Cathedral,²⁸ and, above all, the *Assumption* (fig. 2) for the high altar of the Cathedral, commissioned from Rubens in 1609-10 against the competition of his old teacher Otto van Veen (the most important painter in Antwerp and the stylistic link between de Vos and Rubens), but only completed, after many vicissitudes in 1626.²⁹ The prehistory of both works is significant. The *Assumption* was commissioned to replace a *Nativity* by Frans Floris, which itself had only been a stopgap measure. Originally belonging to the Gardeners' guild, Floris's work had only been moved to the high altar in 1585, to serve as a temporary replacement for the old high altarpiece of the *Assumption*, also by Floris and removed (and lost) in the "silent" iconoclasm of 1581.³⁰ With the *Kolveniers* the story is very different but equally telling. They seem to have had more than the usual difficulty in raising the necessary funds to comply with Farnese's 1585 order to repair and restore the damaged altars and altarpieces. Indeed, we know from a request of 1611 that the *Kolveniers* had repeatedly been urged to commission an altarpiece that would measure up to the many other new altarpieces which had recently been installed in the Cathedral.³¹ And so they did, magnificently. The scale and ambition of Rubens's work appears as a direct response to the challenge of all the other new work commissioned in the wake of the disasters of 1566 and 1581.

To survey Rubens's output of religious works for public and private patrons in the decade that followed his return from Italy is to have one's breath taken away. It is testimony, of course, to the unparalleled energy and inventiveness of the artist, but it is also a direct consequence of the opportunities provided by three related factors: first by the Iconoclasm which had cleared the ground, sometimes literally, for new commissions; second by the renewed political and economic confidence afforded by the truce; and third by the religious and spiritual recovery associated with the Catholic revival not only in Antwerp but throughout Catholic Europe.³² The altarpieces Rubens painted in Antwerp and Brussels are too numerous to list here; but the commissions flooded in from every quarter. From Ghent, for example, came the commission, discussed below, for a new high altarpiece for the church of St. Bavo,³³ from Mechelen an altarpiece for the Fishmongers in *Onze-Lieve-Vrouwe over de Dijle*³⁴ and the high altarpiece for St. John's (see cat. 9, fig. 4),³⁵ and then more commissions still, from Lille, Cambrai, Tournai, Valenciennes, Bergues, and so on, almost without pause.³⁶ Under any circumstances Rubens would have been the most sought-after of painters; but the extraordinary production of the second decade is unimaginable without the opportunities offered in the wake of the devastation of the forty-two years preceding his return to Antwerp. And the only parallel – when we think of that town alone – for such an unprecedented opportunity afforded by catastrophe for an artist of genius occurs is a later and a Protestant one: it is Christopher Wren's rebuilding of London churches after the Great Fire of September 1666. But that is another story altogether.



Fig. 2. Peter Paul Rubens, *The Assumption of the Virgin*, oil on panel, 487.6 x 205.2 cm, Antwerp, Cathedral (Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk).

The effect of the great drama in the Netherlands on religious painting could hardly be better illustrated than by a comparison between the well-known Dutch church interiors of Pieter Saenredam on the one hand and those of Hendrick van Steenwijck or Pieter Neeffs on the other (cat. 77). Saenredam depicts the brilliant and whitewashed interiors of the great churches of the Northern provinces, stripped of their idolatrous imagery and almost every other kind of adornment; while Steenwijck and Neeffs show the often crepuscular and fitfully lit interiors of both real and imaginary churches, furnished as they once were with great triptychs and every other kind of visual aid to devotion. The Dutch churches, suffused though they may be with the splendor of a more than earthly illumination, testify to a new, more secular interest in the possibilities of painting. The Flemish ones evince a kind of nostalgia for the way things were – at least within churches. Though painted well into the seventeenth century, they continued to show altarpieces and other devotional pictures in now outdated formats, and decorations that had certainly been superseded. Instead of showing church interiors as they were, they betray a longing for the way they once had been. The Dutch painter generally has casual visitors within the churches, if he has them at all, but the Flemish pictures are inhabited by people intent on their devotions, celebrating Mass, or, occasionally but significantly, admiring the pictures. No contrast could be more revealing about the different states of visual culture in the North and in the South than this, nor about the different status of religious images. In the North, vigorously stimulated by an influx of painters who no longer had much interest in painting religious works, painting had become predominantly secular; in the South, the opportunities for painting altarpieces and every other kind of devotional picture were possibly even more abundant than they ever had been before.

A well-known group of paintings by David Teniers the Younger provides a further illustration of attitudes in the South. In a painting now in the Prado, a monkey paints a picture while another looks on with the aid of a magnifying glass (fig. 3). Its companion shows a similar scene, but with a monkey-sculptor instead of the simian painter.³⁷ Art, of course, is the ape of nature; but are not monkeys also stupid, sensual, blind to the life of the spirit? It is true that Teniers painted a large number of works showing monkeys engaged in a whole variety of activities, but it cannot be mere accident that the activity of painting is one of them. What is more, the monkey-painter works in a studio full of the kinds of non-religious paintings that were being produced in the Northern Netherlands at the time, just as the monkey-sculptor's workshop is kitted out with fragments of classical works, and he chisels away, altogether significantly, at the herm of satyr. In no case is a religious or devotional work anywhere to be seen. The message seems clear enough.

In other paintings by Teniers, however, it is the destroyers of art who are the monkeys and asses. Several compositions by him – and by Frans Francken the Younger – show typical small cabinets of the seventeenth century, where the works are broken and trampled upon by monkey- and donkey-iconoclasts, as if to remind the viewer of the stupidity of those who attack art. Teniers himself repeatedly painted the picture collection of Leopold Wilhelm, both in the shape of portrayals of Leopold's own collection, or as copies after the famous works within it, whether sacred, secular, and altogether profane (cats. 124 and 126, 127, 128). This dichotomy between love of pictures and doubts about them offers a further indication of the fundamental ambiguity of



Fig. 3. David Teniers II, *The Monkey Painter*, oil on panel, 24 x 32 cm, Madrid, Museo del Prado, inv. 1805.



Fig. 4. David Teniers II and Frans Francken II, *The Interior of a Picture Gallery*, oil on panel, 58.5 x 79 cm, London, Courtauld Institute, Princes Gate Collection, inv. 47.

attitude towards the nature and validity of visual imagery throughout the period. In the end, Teniers comes out clearly on the side of painting (the gallery-pictures such as cats. 124 and 125 leave one in no doubt of this at all); but his pictures of the ape-artists represent a full awareness of the other side of the question. However surprising it may be to find that the vestiges of anti-image sentiment lasted so long, this does indeed seem to have been the case. In fact, I would argue that Catholic misgivings about art – about its fundamental sensuality, for example – had as much of an influence on the art of the period as the much-vaunted ways in which it was used for spiritual and anagogical inspiration, whether on the grand, theatrical, and decorative scale, or on the small and intimately emotional one. Nothing could reveal this more clearly than the painting by Teniers and Francken (probably showing the cabinet of Pieter Steevens) in the Princes Gate collection in London (fig. 4), where the picture hanging on the wall on the left shows donkey- iconoclasts engaged in the destruction of paintings, while two connoisseurs engage in a discussion of well-known portraits by van Eyck and Rembrandt.³⁸ The implication, at first, may seem clear enough; but opposite the connoisseurs, as if in mute commentary on their engagement with art, sits an ape, eating a nut and chained to a ball: the very epitome of our enslavement to our material and sensual nature.³⁹

It has become much harder these days to speak of the influence of the Counter Reformation on art.⁴⁰ In the first place, historians have begun to question the validity of the label itself.⁴¹ Some prefer to speak broadly of the Catholic Reform,⁴² or of the Catholic Revival; others suggest that the old notion of the Counter Reformation be divided into periods of Reaction, Reform, and Revival. But even if one retains the generic term “Counter Reformation,” how exactly is one to speak of its influence on art? Can one really say that particular events (such as Iconoclasm), or certain synodal decrees (such as those of the Council of Trent and the local provincial synods), actually caused pictures to look the way they do? Or that even vaguer and more diffuse phenomena, such as the rise of new devotions, an increased emphasis on spiritual intensity, or a renewed confidence in the Church itself, had specific consequences for pictures? Many have tried; but the examples of failure, from Werner Weisbach’s *Der Barock als Kunst der Gegenreformation* (1921) to the recurrent attempts to prove or disprove a specifically Jesuit influence, are legion.⁴³

There is no need to end with an *aporia*, however. In fact, a number of developments in religious art during the period can be directly attributed to the effects of what used unhesitatingly to be called the Counter Reformation. First there is the reinvigoration of the old religious orders and the founding of new ones, initially under Farnese and then in the course of the great religious revival sponsored by the archdukes.⁴⁴ After 1584 the expelled clergy, monks, canons regular, and Jesuits all started returning to the South and rebuilding their houses. In that year, for example, Farnese helped found the first Capuchin convent in Antwerp; this was followed by a whole series of others in the next twenty years (Rubens painted altarpieces for the houses in Cologne and Lille),⁴⁵ so that by 1632 the Capuchins had eighteen houses. The Mendicant orders were almost all thoroughly renewed. Six of the ten monasteries belonging to the Augustinian Friars destroyed in the iconoclastic period were rapidly rebuilt, with no fewer than eleven more added between 1588 and 1622. Between 1601 and 1624 alone they founded thirteen new schools for young men. The first Netherlandish Carmel according to the Reform of St. Theresa was erected in Brussels in 1607; others swiftly followed (Rubens painted the high altarpieces for both the Brussels and the Antwerp Disalzed Carmelites).⁴⁶ And all the while the Jesuits continued to burgeon and flourish.⁴⁷ Opportunities for every kind of artist, from the painter of high altarpieces to the lowest producer of popular prints, were more abundant than ever before.

Indeed, it is in the popular domain that the religious reform and revival may be said to have had its most striking effects. The consequences for the visual arts are immense, not simply in painting, but above all in the production of popular prints. In addition to the emphasis on older devotions, such as the Rosary (the Dominican cult par excellence), many of the new orders encouraged the growth of a range of popular devotions, such as those of the Sweet Name of Jesus, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Holy Infant, and the Holy Family. The very names of these devotions provide some indication of the kind of sentimentality that characterizes much of the print production of the period following 1609.⁴⁸ It is not an accident that François de Sales’s *Introduction à la vie dévot*, which first appeared in 1608, should have enjoyed such swift and widespread popularity in the Netherlands. And while it is true that many of the devotions, both the new and the revived ones, are represented with the kind of sweet expansiveness that is already present in

the work of the Wierix brothers, the mystical and ecstatic qualities of everyday devotional prints (one has only to think of the Theresan Carmelites), and the element of what has been generically called simple popular (*volkse*) pathos (of the kind propagated by the Capuchins),⁴⁹ seem substantially to increase as one moves towards the middle of the century.⁵⁰ While the work of the major print producer in the last three decades of the sixteenth century, Marten de Vos, already shows an increase in the range and detail of subject matter derived from scripture and from the lives of the saints, there is none of the sweetness of the later period, and nothing like the variety of cult and saints represented.

Much of this, not surprisingly, is reflected in the wide range of images associated with pilgrimage. One of the most striking features of the new forms of religiosity in the early seventeenth century is the devotion to cult images of the Virgin and saints. It was as if such images offered proof of the validity of the Catholic cult of images as a whole, and of the possibility of religious art in general.⁵¹ It is no coincidence that in the very years that Rubens was preparing his great altarpiece in Rome intended to include within it the miraculous image of the Madonna della Valli-cella,⁵² Justus Lipsius was writing his comprehensive treatises on the origins and miracles of the two great Marian shrines of the Netherlands, Hal (Halle) and Scherpenheuvel (Montaigu).⁵³ Scherpenheuvel in particular afforded an exceptional variety of opportunities for artists who ranged from the lowliest and crudest printmakers to Wenceslas Coeberger, court painter and architect, inter alia, to the archdukes, and to a painter such as Theodoor van Loon.

No order made greater use of the possibilities of printed imagery than the Jesuits. They did so in ways that were in perfect concord with the intensely visual principles on which the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius were based. While those exercises were largely predicated on the summoning up of the most vivid possible internal images, his successors were quick to realize the potential of real images as aids to devotion. And since the aim, amongst the Jesuits, was to reach as wide an audience as possible, and to touch the hearts of the thousands of young men entrusted to their pedagogical care, it was natural that such imagery should take the form of printed illustration. One of the first great specimens – though this was a superior and expensive production – was the *Evangelicae historiae imagines* composed by Ignatius's great friend, Jerome Nadal, and illustrated with over 150 engravings by the Wierix brothers.⁵⁴ This was followed by an extraordinary efflorescence of devotional emblem books, in which edifying, hortatory text and image are integrated with a uniformity of purpose unprecedented in the history of art. The numbers of Jesuit writers of such practical handbooks of devotion are legion, and their works ran into one edition after another. Amongst the most popular were writers such as Joannes David, Hermannus Hugo, Antonius Sucquet, Willem Hesius, Adriaen Poirters – to mention only a very few of the most successful⁵⁵; but there were many others, including those for whom Rubens himself provided the book illustrations and title pages, such as Carolus Scribani, Baltasar Cordier, Leonardus Lessius, and Heribertus Rosweyde.⁵⁶ In the very year in which Rubens died there appeared that great culmination of all the Jesuit illustrated books, the celebration of the first hundred years of the Order, the *Imago primi saeculi*.⁵⁷

Of course it is true that the other orders also included amongst their number many good and efficient writers of illustrated devotional handbooks, but no order had so high a proportion of such writers as the Jesuits. It may be difficult to plot the extent to which one can speak of a specifically Jesuit art in the seventeenth century, especially in Rome, and it may be even more difficult – given the elusiveness of the categories – to fix with any degree of precision the relations between Jesuit art and the baroque style (since that discussion has focused so largely on painting and architecture),⁵⁸ but the situation with printed imagery is considerably clearer. Had it not been for the Counter Reformation in general and the Jesuits in particular, devotional book illustration would never have proliferated in the way it did in the very years of Rubens's lifetime.

It hardly needs to be pointed out, however, that the consequences for paintings and prints were very different indeed. Pictures and prints have different functions and, often but not always, different audiences. Pictures, generally, are expensive, prints substantially cheaper. The function of altarpieces is tied to their ritual context in ways that prints hardly ever are. But it would be wrong, in considering the art of the period, to see them as wholly divergent. Knowledge of the great altarpieces and other religious paintings is disseminated by their transformations, both stylistic and iconographic, in reproductive form. Selective reproduction in popular prints – that is, the reproduction of parts of altarpieces and other devotional pictures – is just as informative.⁵⁹

Indeed, one of the most interesting aspects of the art of the period between, roughly, 1630 and 1650 is the adaptation of a range of features from high art into its lower forms, from book illustrations and prayer cards, to pilgrimage pennants and an enormous variety of printed devotionalia. No one has yet made a careful study of the implications of the downward transformation of canonical prototypes, either in terms of the history of art or the history of art's audiences.⁶⁰ And no period would more fruitfully repay examination than this one, where prints were used on a more massive scale than ever before in the service of religious propaganda and the purposes of approved edification.

The reverse has not been attempted either. Little research has been done on the upward influence of popular devotional and religious prints – the influence, therefore, from low to high. In thinking about this for the period from 1609 on, certain general phenomena become very clear indeed. One, for example, is the progressive sentimentalization of altarpieces, not only after the death of Rubens, but already before.⁶¹ Whatever the internal stylistic pressures on the development of altarpieces, there can be no doubt of the influence of popular prints and book illustrations. The public for pictures had been irrevocably conditioned by a diet of sweetly exhortative or vigorously and graphically emotional imagery, disseminated in the form of everyday engravings. It had also grown accustomed to complex iconographies, made possible by the complex and detailed captions and accompanying texts that explained them. And it had learned of a vast number of saints who had not generally entered the repertoire of the painters. Indeed – as we shall see – there was a period when the presence of saints on altarpieces, at least on their central panels, was specifically discouraged. But in time, as the iconography of pictures became more complex too, more saints than ever before began invading the altarpieces.⁶²

Rubens's 1626 high altar for the Antwerp Augustinians⁶³ represents the first stage in the intensification of this trend. By the early 1630s the new and recently established confraternities seem to have had no difficulty in obtaining altarpieces dominated by their patron saints, as with Rubens's own *St. Ildefonso* (fig. 5)⁶⁴ and van Dyck's two exceptionally beautiful altarpieces of 1629 and 1630 for the Jesuit Sodality of the Blessed Virgin, of which he was himself a member.⁶⁵ By the middle of the century one may begin to speak of a veritable hagiographic proliferation. And the Bollandists had begun to work. They had to sort out the canonical from the non-canonical, the authorized from the popular – and the two by no means always coincided. It is no accident that the first volume of the *Acta Sanctorum* appeared just three years after the death of Rubens.

While we may remain sceptical, therefore, about attempts to define the more general influence of the Counter Reformation on art, the great iconographic treatises by Emile Mâle and J. B. Knipping, for all their diffuseness, provide an abundance of information about the way in which Catholic religious art after the Counter Reformation differed from what went before – at least from the iconographic point of view. Knipping offers many detailed explications of the intricacies of both new and old devotional subject matter, while Mâle attempts to insert such details into more general iconographic patterns. And although his concerns are with the whole of European painting, there are also, in the Netherlands specifically, some distinctive iconographic features that appear after the Council of Trent in each of the major phases of the period as a whole.

In the period between 1585 and 1609, for example, there was a predilection for large altarpieces showing the martyrdom of saints in vivid and gruesome detail.⁶⁶ There can be little question that this taste for martyrdoms – if it can be called that – is to be related not only to the great Counter Reformation martyrologia that appeared at this time, but also to the graphic accounts of contemporary Catholic martyrs, beginning with Richard Verstegen's *Theatrum crudelitatum hereticorum nostri temporis*, which appeared in Antwerp in 1587. But if there was any group that made much play of the contemporary martyrdoms – not only at the hands of the Protestants but also, of course, by more exotic persecutors, such as the Indians at Goa in 1583 and the Japanese at Nagasaki in 1597 – it was the Jesuits. The predilection for the representation of martyrdoms in Antwerp is to be paralleled by the work of Jesuit painters in Rome, most notably in the extraordinary cycle in *Santo Stefano Rotondo*, as well as by the obsessive fetishization of the details of martyrdom and torture itself that reaches its high point in books such as Antonio Gallonio's popular *Trattato de gli instrumenti di martirio, e delle varie maniere di martoriare usate da gentili contro christiani*, first published in Rome in 1591.⁶⁷

There can be no question that Rubens must have recalled the grim fascination of works such as these when he came to paint some of the dramatic and sometimes horrifying altarpieces of the



Fig. 5. Peter Paul Rubens. *The St. Ildefonso Altarpiece*, oil on panel, center 352 x 236 cm, whole 352 x 454 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, invs. 678, 698.

1630s. Most striking of all, of course, is the huge altarpiece showing the *Martyrdom of St. Livinus* for the Jesuit church of St. Livinus in Ghent,⁶⁸ but its tone of fervid drama and emotion is also to be found in more conventional subjects, such as the great *Carrying of the Cross* for the newly restored Benedictine Abbey of Afflighem (both works now in Brussels).⁶⁹ It is worth recording that the Provost of Afflighem at this time – he had just instituted a wide-ranging reform of the Abbey – was Benedictus van Haeften who, paradoxically enough, was also the author of one of the sweetest devotional emblem books of all, the *Schola cordis*. This work first appeared in Antwerp in 1629,⁷⁰ but six years later van Haeften published the *Regia via crucis*, with a title page according to a design by Rubens.⁷¹ By this time Rubens had almost certainly begun to paint the picture for the new high altar of the Abbey. Such are the poles of taste and pictorialization at the height of the Catholic Revival in the Netherlands.

In all this there lies a problem. Had not the Synod of Antwerp declared in 1610 that only scenes from the Life of Christ and the New Testament should be represented on the central panels of altarpieces?⁷² Everyone has heard of how Rubens was obliged to place the patron saint of the Antwerp Kolveniers, St. Christopher (already then known to be an apocryphal saint), on the reverse of his great high altarpiece for them⁷³; and it is clear that many of the works of the second decade concentrate on Christological, Eschatological, and Mariological subjects. In many of the smaller altarpieces, often in the by now slightly old-fashioned triptych format, the eucharistic dimension of Christ's suffering was strongly emphasized (cat. 13).⁷⁴ Altarpieces showing scenes from the Infancy or Passion of Christ, or referring directly to the Resurrection,⁷⁵ or of the Last Judgment and the Assumption of the Virgin dominate the production of that period. But at the same time works such as the *Martyrdom of St. Stephen* for the Benedictine Abbey of St. Amand near Valenciennes,⁷⁶ the *Last Communion of St. Francis* for the Franciscan Church in Antwerp,⁷⁷ and many

others, seem to infringe this principle. Most notable in this group are the two high altars for the Jesuit church, glorifying the founder and the first great missionary of the order, painted at least four years before their canonization. It is hard to imagine a clearer indication of the self-assurance of the Jesuit order or a more striking infringement of the basic principles of iconography as enunciated by the Council of Trent and the local synods that followed in its wake – to say nothing of the many treatises that followed in the wake of the Iconoclasm of 1566, all written in an attempt to purify Catholic art of the abuses discovered in it by the Protestants.

At first sight, then, none of the official and theological recommendations seem to have had much effect. The Council of Trent and the Synod of Mechelen might insist on ecclesiastical supervision and the approval of all new altars and the avoidance of anything that could possibly be construed as licentious.⁷⁸ Yet, in practice, these principles seem to have been largely ignored. Johannes Molanus might inveigh against the representation of the naked Christ Child,⁷⁹ but to little avail. It might seem that painting continued pretty much as before; but to come to a conclusion along these lines would be too easy.

One needs, to begin with, to acknowledge the full extent of the theoretical interest in religious painting awakened by the Council of Trent and the Iconoclasm of 1566. This interest was not simply in the use and abuse of painting, but in deeper and more complex matters such as the validity, uses, effectiveness, and proper domain of religious art. The consequence was a profound reevaluation not simply of the justification and purpose of art within the church, but also of the ways in which, while avoiding the dangers of the seductiveness and lies of art, the painter might yet harness its powers – now acknowledged and discussed more fully than ever before – in the service of the faith. Having been roundly and deeply criticized for the ways in which it could mislead men and women, painting became a newly refined instrument of exhortation and edification.

It was only after the very last session of the Council of Trent, in the days before Christmas 1563 (when it finally passed its decree on images) that the great and comprehensive Counter Reformation treatises on art, from Molanus on to Paleotti and Federigo Borromeo, began to be published.⁸⁰ On the surface, it is true, their many iconographic strictures may seem to have been to no avail. But if we consider the matter a little more closely, it becomes clear that there are a number of areas in which the works of such writers – and the spirit that informed them – were of considerable consequence for painting. Thus, while Molanus disapproved of patently apocryphal subjects such as the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin, he was nevertheless prepared to tolerate them on the grounds of their popular appeal. They were everyday, traditional, and beneficial. Subjects such as these, far from being harmful, served in the edification of simple folk, and in the strengthening of their faith.⁸¹ This, of course, was a traditional concern of all writers on images, both for and against. But subjects like the Seven Joys and Sorrows of the Virgin did, in fact, die out. It may seem that writers such as Molanus were little more than voices crying in the wilderness, and that theological strictures on painting had little effect.

Once again, however, things are not quite what they seem. Apocryphal subjects in painting indeed became much less frequent. And for all the claims of an audience largely appealed to by way of printed imagery, painting did become much more attentive to what was iconographically well founded. Molanus brought the full weight of his critical skills, honed as the editor not only of Augustine but also of Usuardus's martyrology,⁸² to the old tales. He sifted the scriptural and canonical from the apocryphal, from the uncanonical popular, and from what he called the probable. At the same time, the need to establish the accuracy and well-foundedness of scriptural and hagiographic subjects is reflected not only in the early Counter Reformation writers on art (such as Molanus) and the great hagiographic archaeologists (from Baronius to the Bollandists), but also in painting.⁸³ There may have turned out to be more saints in pictures, and more popular saints, but there was also more security about the sources. The sources were investigated and established – and then confirmed by their appearance in art.

But the struggle to realize the needs of a broader audience for pictures had other consequences too. Following the incessant attacks on paintings and sculptures as adequate mediators between men and women on the one hand and Christ and his saints on the other, and in the wake of the relative valorization of word over image by so many of the Protestant writers, the Church revived many of the old justifications of images. Most practically of all, and with particular vigor, it took up the old notion of paintings as the books of the illiterate. Paintings became larger than ever before, and one sought, by a variety of stylistic means, to make them ever more

readable and more accessible. Although it may be difficult to define the stylistic means, it does seem possible to isolate some of the structural trends that went along with them.

For example: it is entirely in keeping with the reevaluation of the function and validity of art that already from 1570 on – as Molanus remarked – the old sculpted altarpieces, damaged or destroyed by the Iconoclasts, should have been replaced by painted altarpieces.⁸⁴ This trend continued even more strongly after the restoration of 1585, and received its greatest impetus with the advent of Rubens.⁸⁵ From 1609 on, altarpieces also became larger than ever before; and they continued to grow. Figures within them became more readable from a distance – just as befitted the new and larger churches then being built to contain the larger crowds anticipated by the promoters of the spiritual revival. Expressions, too, became more accessible (whether tenderly approachable or dolorously suffering) and gestures much clearer.

But just as proof of the causes of stylistic change is always elusive, almost everything art historians claim about the relations between stylistic change and post-Tridentine attitudes can be qualified, modified, or supplemented. In order to avoid the dangers of reductionism, explanation in the history of art must allow, firstly, for the influence of historical, economic, and other contextual factors; secondly, for the internal engine of stylistic evolution and for the fact that artists do not work in an artistic vacuum; and finally, for the possibility of great individual innovation.

All these factors come together when we consider the scale and format of altarpieces. With scale, for example, it is not only because churches were larger and altarpieces had to be accordingly more legible that paintings themselves became larger than ever before. Even before Rubens's return to Antwerp there had been a trend towards large-scale altarpieces, both in the Netherlands and in Italy itself. That return, however, meant both the appearance of an extraordinary talent on the local scene and the establishment of a workshop that from then on simply facilitated the production of large-scale altarpieces.

How is all this to be related to other economic factors? Following the signing of the Twelve Year Truce in 1609, Antwerp's economy received a sudden (though admittedly short-lived) boost. Capital shifted still further from the hands of the guilds to private individuals. Their spiritual investment in the revival of Catholicism could at last be demonstrated in the material realm without running the risk of incurring the old Protestant charges that it was better to clothe the poor – the true images of God – than to adorn the churches. Now one could even do both. Following the Twelve Year Truce, as Frans Baudouin has pointed out, the chief sponsors of new works – both large and small – were private individuals rather than the guilds themselves.⁸⁶

While it would be hazardous to suggest any direct correlation between private wealth and scale (since such a claim would have to be balanced by the fairly constant contemporary claim to modesty), it does seem that the new group of wealthy patrons had a strong stake in ensuring the conservatism of altarpieces, at least for a while. One of the most striking aspects of Rubens's altarpieces of the second decade is the retention of the triptych format. Such patrons would have had several distinguished examples, both from the past and the present, to follow. A particularly revealing instance of the vagaries of this phenomenon is provided by the history of the commission for the high altar of St. Bavo in Ghent. The sketch of 1612, in triptych form,⁸⁷ was commissioned by Carolus Maes, Bishop of Ghent from 1610 to 1612. But such a work was never executed, since Maes's successor, Hendrick van der Burch, did not want a painting above the high altar at all. Instead, he commissioned a sculpted effigy of St. Bavo enclosed in a marble niche. When he, in turn, was succeeded by Antonius Triest in 1622, Rubens finally got his commission back again – but this time he painted the single-panel altarpiece, much more in keeping with current fashion, that still hangs in the church (albeit in a side chapel).⁸⁸ The Archduchess Isabella herself, however, retained her nostalgia for older types of devotional pictures even beyond this period. As late as the early 1630s Rubens painted the great and luminous St. Ildefonso triptych (fig. 5) which Isabella presented to the Chapel of the Brotherhood of St. Ildefonso in the Church of Sint Jacob op den Coudenberg in Brussels.⁸⁹ Both in subject and style this work is quite inconceivable outside the context of both Counter Reformation and Catholic Revival.

There are more complicated problems and paradoxes yet. At first, the Counter Reformation treatises on art, of which Molanus and Paleotti are the great Northern and Southern examples, give the impression of offering little more than an overwhelming array of cautions, restrictions, and prohibitions. They may seem – the occasional tolerance of someone like Molanus notwithstanding – to consist of little more than lists of what one could and could not paint, and of

restatements of the Tridentine insistence on the ecclesiastical control and supervision of art. But to conclude from this that the effects of such treatises were entirely negative would be superficial, not only for religious painting, but also for every other class of painting – especially that wide variety of landscape, genre, and still life that we generally associate with the Golden Age of Dutch painting, but which also flourished, as never before, in the Southern Netherlands. Paradoxically enough, the Counter Reformation treatises may even have provided a spur and a stimulus to the growth of all these genres. With landscape, genre, still-life, and painting after nature generally, one could paint more or less what one liked, free from the many inhibitions that constantly arose in the case of purely religious painting. It was as if one could now paint everything that one could see in the world of nature, as if the Calvinist recommendation to paint only those things which the eyes are capable of seeing, *quorum sunt capaces oculi*, was taken up even more seriously in the Southern Netherlands than it was in the North. Is it in this light that we are to understand the turn to vegetable and market scenes, full of the most attentive still lifes in the work of Pieter Aertsen and Joachim Beuckelaer already in the 1550s? To say nothing of the careful still lifes of Frans Snyders, Clara Peeters, Jacob van Es, Jan Davidsz. de Heem, Osias Beert, and Pieter Boel of almost one hundred years later?

It is clear that the painting of nature, of things exactly – or more or less exactly – as they are seen, becomes much more of an agenda for the Counter Reformation writers on art than is immediately apparent. After all, most of these writers express their concern about the licentiousness of the imagination, both of artist and beholder. The artist was not supposed to give himself over to free invention. He was to stay with what he could see. He had to follow approved and serious authors. There were to be no free-flowing, individualistic excesses of style. One had, in short, to cleave to things as they were (however complex such a criterion may now seem to us). No wonder that Jan Brueghel became the favorite painter of Federigo Borromeo, the writer not only of the *De pictura sacra* of 1624 but also of that great paean to the collecting of cabinet pictures, the *Musaeum* of 1625! And no wonder that one of the closest supporters and friends of that great and epistemologically omnivorous naturalist and doctor of Bologna, Ulisse Aldrovandi, was none other than Gabriele Cardinal Paleotti. Aldrovandi himself wrote a series of *Avvertimenti* about painting (as well as several pages on the painting of monstrosities) to Paleotti,⁹⁰ while Paleotti's own *Discorso intorno le immagini sacre e profane* appeared (in still unfinished form) in Bologna in 1582. It is in this work, just as in Federigo Borromeo's *De pictura sacra* and *Musaeum* of 1624-1625 that we find crystallized the same belief in verisimilitude – "il perno della trattatistica controriformistica" as Giuseppe Olmi has rightly called it⁹¹ – that makes its first appearance in visual form in the work of the first great masters of Flemish still life and low life, Pieter Aertsen and Joachim Beuckelaer in Antwerp and of Bartolommeo Passerotti and Vincenzo Campi a few years later in Bologna itself (and then, of course, in that of the Carracci). It is also in this context that we must set the hard realism – to use the term broadly – of the low-life scenes of Brouwer and Teniers, as well as of extraordinary works such as Joos de Momper's and Jan Brueghel's painting of bleaching fields from the Prado (cat. 87).

If, then, the major religious paintings of the age of Rubens are necessarily absent from this exhibition, almost every other class of painting is well represented within it. It reminds us that the achievements in landscape, genre, still life (and portraiture too) are not by any means solely to be associated with Holland in its Golden Age. Each one of these classes are pursued with vigor, devotion, and success in the Southern Netherlands as well. Each grows from a realistic strain that is already present in the religious paintings of the fifteenth century as well as in the works of Pieter Bruegel the Elder. Each is fostered, paradoxically yet irrefragably, by the new attitudes toward art that arise in reaction to the Reformation and in the wake of the Tridentine recommendations, as well as in direct consequence of Iconoclasm in the Netherlands. Nowhere is the love for the new kinds of painting more fully and significantly revealed than in David Teniers's many paintings of the Gallery of the Archduke Leopold Wilhelm – those paintings that represent the culmination of the taste for cabinet pictures in the Southern Netherlands between ca. 1630 and ca. 1650 (cats. 124 and 125).⁹² In works such as these, the religious functions of pictures give way to new epistemological paradigms and to a hitherto unsuspected intensity of desire to collect the objects of art. Images need no longer mediate between man and the divine. They are treasured for their objecthood, for their status as works of art and antiquity, and for their mirroring of nature.

But at the same time, as we recall from Teniers's painting of the monkey-painter from the Prado, the Ape of Nature is also the simian fool who produces the contents of the cabinets so treasured by the new bourgeois and aristocratic patrons – to say nothing of the royal ones. Yet these were the same collectors who now turned, more than ever before, to God's manifestation in the intricacies and minutiae of nature. The pictures in the cabinets became as valuable as the most precious of the other objects within them, the gems and the strange and exotic *curiosa* from other lands. Symbols of vanity they may sometimes have been, but their material and epistemological status had irrevocably changed. So too had that of the painters of easel pictures. The social and economic status of a painter like Joachim Beuckelaer could not have been more different than that of David Teniers the Younger.⁹³ A sea of change had come about. While the painting of altarpieces never really lost its prestige, the prestige of easel pictures – despite the ape – was higher than it had ever been.

It may seem easy enough to claim that this great change in the status of painting – from being valued for its essentially mediatory function to being valued for its artistic qualities alone – is to be attributed to Reformation attitudes to art.⁹⁴ But the matter, as we have seen, is considerably more complicated. Art could never entirely escape from its association with the world of the senses, however much that association might be harnessed for the purposes of edification in the course of the Catholic Revival. Nor could nature ever cease to remind one of God, however much it might be transformed in representation. The value of a picture, in short, could never lie solely in how it showed the world of things. This is the clear lesson to be drawn from the Catholic response to the challenge of the Reformation.

1. Some large-scale compositions, however, are represented by oil sketches such as Rubens's *The Nativity* (cat. 18) and the two sketches for the Eucharist tapestry series (cats. 21 and 22), van Dyck's *Betrayal of Christ* (cat. 37); while smaller finished paintings such as Jan Boeckhorst's *Adoration of the Magi* (cat. 52), Gaspar de Crayer's *Adolescent Virgin* (cat. 50), Abraham van Diepenbeek's *Vision of St Ignatius Loyola* (cat. 51), Bertholet Flémal's *Mary with the Dead Christ* (cat. 131), Abraham Janssen's magnificent *Dead Christ* (cat. 3), and Rubens's *Holy Family* (cat. 27) and *Lamentation* (cat. 13) are obviously relevant to any consideration of Counter Reformation iconography. But not even the largest of these works can match the scale of the great altarpieces produced during the period.

2. For summaries of events, circumstances, and bibliography, see D. Freedberg, "De Kunst en de Beeldenstorm, 1525-1580. De Noordelijke Nederlanden" / "Art and Iconoclasm 1525-1580. The Case of the Northern Netherlands," in exh. cat. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, *Kunst voor de Beeldenstorm. Noordnederlandse Kunst 1525-1580* (1986), pp. 39-84; and idem, *Iconoclasm and Painting in the Revolt of the Netherlands 1566-1609* (New York/London, 1988).

3. For a survey of major works destroyed or damaged in the North Netherlands, see Freedberg 1986.

4. For the inscription, see Génard 1856, p. 177. For the history of the altarpiece see C. van de Velde, *Frans Floris (1519/20-1570) Leven en Werken (Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België. Klasse der Schone Kunsten, 37, no. 30)* (Brussels, 1975), pp. 210-213.

5. Such as Marten de Vos's *St. Thomas altarpiece* of 1574 for the Furriers (*Bontwerkers*) and Michiel Coxcie's *St. Sebastian altarpiece* for the *Oude Handboog* (i.e. the first guild of Longbowmen); see Zweite 1980, no. 56, pp. 285-286, and J. Vervaeke, "Catalogus van de altaarstukken van gilden en ambachten uit de Onze-Lieve-Vrouwewerker van Antwerpen en bewaard in het Koninklijk Museum," *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerpen*, 1976, pp. 212-213 and 215-216.

6. J. Briels, *De Zuidnederlandse Immigratie, 1572-1630* (Bussum 1978) and Briels 1987 give the most detailed account of the immigration of painters from the Southern to the Northern Provinces and elsewhere.

7. For the text of the decree, see *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta*, ed. Centro di Documentazione, Istituto per le Scienze Religiose, Bologna (Freiburg-im-Breisgau, 1962), pp. 750-752, as well as Freedberg 1988, pp. 264-265.

8. On the Protestant criticisms and the Catholic response as for-

mulated in the decree – as well as the problem of the extent of its effectiveness – see D. Freedberg, "Johannes Molanus on Provocative Paintings," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 34 (1971), pp. 229-245; Freedberg 1976a; idem, "The Hidden God: Image and Interdiction in the Netherlands in the Sixteenth Century," *Art History* 5 (1982), pp. 133-153; and Freedberg 1988, especially pp. 134-166.

9. F. Prims, "De Beeldstormerij van 1581," *Antwerpiensia 1939* (Antwerp, 1940), pp. 183-189; Freedberg 1976b, p. 128.

10. See F. Prims, "Altarstudien," *Antwerpiensia 1938* (Antwerp, 1939), pp. 183-188; and idem, "Altarstudien," *Antwerpiensia 1939* (Antwerp, 1940), pp. 357-363.

11. On the significance of 1584 for the history of Flemish art, see the excellent article by F. Baudouin ("1585: De Val van Antwerpen. Ook een Belangrijke Datum voor de Kunstgeschiedenis der Nederlanden," in Willem van Oranje, 1584-1984 [Herdenkingen door de Koninklijke Academiën van België, 12 October 1984] [Brussels, 1985], pp. 87-103) as well as the observations in Baudouin 1989, especially p. 333.

12. The case of the fate of the altarpiece of the *Oude Handboog* is an interesting and typical one for these years. Since their altar was seriously damaged in 1566, the deans commissioned a new one as early as 1575, from Michiel Coxcie. The central panel, a *Martyrdom of St. Sebastian*, survives in Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, no. 371 (see Vervaeke 1976, pp. 214-216); but the wings were lost during the peaceful Iconoclasm of 1581. To replace these, the guild commissioned Ambrosius Francken to paint new wings, at some point after the restoration of 1585, and possibly in the early years of the next century. These wings also survive in Antwerp [Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, nos. 151-154]. See Freedberg 1976b, pp. 128-131, and figs. 6 and 7.

13. Prims, "Beeldstormerij," 1940, Prims 1939, and Prims, "Altarstudien," 1940 provide the original summaries of the archival evidence; but see also Freedberg 1976b, and Vervaeke 1976 for further discussion and information.

14. Jaffé 1959, pp. 1-39; J. Müller Hofstede, "Zu Rubens's zweiten Altarwerk für Santa Maria in Vallicella," *Niederlands Kunsthistorisch Jahrbuch* 17 (1966), pp. 1-78; Hertzner 1979, pp. 117-132; Jaffé 1977, pp. 85-121.

15. A. Pasture, *La restauration religieuse aux Pays-Bas catholiques sous les Archiducs Albert et Isabelle (1596-1633)* (Université de Louvain, Recueil de Travaux, 2me série, 3me fascicule [Louvain, 1925]) remains the basic – and excellent – source for the work of reli-

16. See Stephanus Axters, O.P., *Geschiedenis van de Vroomheid in de Nederlanden*, vol. 4: Na Trente (Antwerp, 1960), pp. 44-58 on the Capuchins in the Netherlands.
17. See Baudouin 1977, p. 65 for a good outline of these new foundations, as well as a succinct sketch of the consequences of the Twelve Year Truce. On the newly introduced order of the Annunciates, see Axters 1960, pp. 59-68.
18. Vlieghe 1972, no. 56.
19. Ill. Baudouin 1977, p. 69, plate 14.
20. Oldenbourg 1921, p. 87; Rooses 1886-92, vol. 2 (1888), no. 269.
21. Christ Bearing the Cross (Glück 1931, p. 11) and a Crucifixion (d'Hulst 1982, p. 78, pl. 45) respectively.
22. Vlieghe 1972, no. 88.
23. Oldenbourg 1921, p. 426; Rooses 1886-92, vol. 1 (1886), no. 207.
24. Oldenbourg 1921, pp. 204-205; Vlieghe 1972, nos. 115 and 104 respectively.
25. Martin 1968 gives a comprehensive overview and analysis.
26. Oldenbourg 1921, p. 277; Rooses 1886-92, vol. 1 (1886), no. 174.
27. Oldenbourg 1921, p. 305; Rooses 1886-92, vol. 1 (1886), no. 214.
28. Rooses 1886-92, vol. 2 (1888), nos. 307-310, pp. 105-123; and J. van den Nieuwenhuizen, "Histoire matérielle de la Descente de Croix de Rubens," *Bulletin de l'Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique* 5 (1962), pp. 40-44. Martin 1969 gives a good selection of the sources and critical writing.
29. D. Freedberg, "A Source for Rubens's *Modello* of the Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin in Leningrad: A Case Study in the Response to Images," *The Burlington Magazine* 120 (1978), pp. 432-441; C. van de Velde, "Rubens's Hemelvaart van Maria in de Kathedraal te Antwerpen," *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerpen* 1975, pp. 245-277; and Freedberg 1984, pp. 174-175 and 191-193.
30. C. van de Velde, "De Aanbidding der Herders van Frans Floris," *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerpen* 1961, pp. 59-73; van de Velde, Floris, 1975, pp. 280-282.
31. Baudouin 1977, p. 368, note 24.
32. One of the best surveys of the relations between the Counter Reformation and Rubens's religious work of the decade after his return from Italy is provided by Glen 1977, whose pioneering work on the subject has too often remained neglected by scholars (including myself).
33. See Vlieghe 1972, nos. 71 and 72 (Oldenbourg 1921, p. 275) and pp. 105-109 for the complex history of the commission and its eventual execution.
34. Oldenbourg 1921, p. 172; Rooses 1886-92, vol. 2 (1888), nos. 245-252.
35. Oldenbourg 1921, p. 164; Rooses 1886-92, vol. 1 (1886), nos. 162-169.
36. Also to be included, for example, is the sequence of large and impressive works commissioned by the Elector Palatine Wolfgang Wilhelm for the churches of Neuburg. On these, see the excellent study (with valuable remarks on Counter Reformation elements in their iconography) by Konrad Renger, *Peter Paul Rubens. Altäre für Bayern* (Munich, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, 1990 [Studio-Ausstellung, Alte Pinakothek, 9 November 1990-13 January 1991]).
37. Madrid, Museo del Prado, no. 1806
38. London, Courtauld Institute of Art, Princes Gate collection, no. 47; Briels 1980, pp. 164-166.
39. See the very many other paintings with this feature, such as the picture by Frans Francken the Younger in Wilton (Speth-Holterhoff 1957, pl. 20) - and this is to leave out the many cases of monkeys tied to a ball and chain, or with spectacles, or still other allegorical accoutrements in the seventeenth-century pictures of cabinets d'amateur; see, for example, cat. 125.
40. For the classic examples of the twenties, see W. Weisbach, *Der Barock als Kunst der Gegenreformation* (Berlin, 1921) (Counter Reformation and baroque); and N. Pevsner, "Gegenreformation und Manierismus," *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft* 46 (1925), pp. 243-262 (Counter Reformation and mannerism).
41. See, amongst very many, the excellent work by Hubert Jedin and Paolo Prodi, for example, H. Jedin, "Entstehung und Tragweite des Trinerer Dekrets über der Bilderverehrung," *Tübinger* H. Jedin, "Das Tridentinum und die bildenden Künste. Bemerkungen zu Paolo Prodi, Ricerche . . ." *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 74 (1963), pp. 321-339; and P. Prodi, "Ricerche sulla teoria delle arti figurative nella riforma cattolica," *Archivio italiano per la storia della pietà* (1962 [1965]), pp. 121-212.
42. The most distinguished piece on the subject is, of course, Prodi 1962; but see also, for example, T. A. Parker, "The Papacy, Catholic Reform and Christian Missions," in *The Cambridge Modern History*, vol. 3: *The Counter Reformation and Price Revolution* (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 67-90.
43. In addition to Weisbach 1921, see also F. Zeri, *Pittura e Controriforma. L' "arte senza tempo" di Scipione de Gaeta* (Turin, 1957); and R. Wittkower and I. Jaffe, eds., *Baroque Art: The Jesuit Contribution* (New York, 1972) for a good overview.
44. Pasture 1925.
45. St. Francis Receiving the Stigmata (Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum; Oldenbourg 1921, p. 94; Vlieghe 1972, no. 90); *The Descent from the Cross* (Lille, Musée des Beaux-Arts; Oldenbourg 1921, p. 89; Rooses 1886-92, vol. 2, [1888], no. 311).
46. *The Assumption of the Virgin* (Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Oldenbourg 1921, p. 120; Freedberg 1984, no. 38) and *The Transverberation of St. Theresa of Avila* (destroyed in 1940; Vlieghe 1972, vol. 2, nos. 150-152) for Brussels; and *St. Theresa of Avila Interceding for Bernardino de Mendoza* (Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten; Oldenbourg 1921, p. 339; Vlieghe 1972, no. 155) for Antwerp. It ought perhaps to be observed here that *The Glorification of the Eucharist* (for which the sketch survives in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Freedberg 1984, nos. 17-17a) was painted not for the Discalzated Carmelites in Antwerp, but for the Shod Carmelites there.
47. See A. Poncelet, S.J., *Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus dans les anciens Pays-Bas*, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1927-28); Pasture 1925, pp. 308-312; and Axters 1960, pp. 22-43 for details.
48. For this and other aspects of popular print production in the age of Rubens, see D. Freedberg, "Prints and the Status of Images in Flanders," in H. Zerner, ed., *Le Stampe e la diffusione delle Immagini e degli Stili* (Atti del XXIV Congresso Internazionale di Storia dell'Arte, 1979, vol. 8) (Bologna, 1983), pp. 39-54. On the devotional uses of infant imagery, see also Freedberg 1981.
49. Axters 1960, p. 53.
50. See also Baudouin 1989, pp. 344-345 and 354-357 for further excellent comments on these trends.
51. See the comments in M. Warnke, "Italienische Bildtabernakel bis zum Frühbarock," *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* (1968), pp. 77-90; and Freedberg 1981 on the relations between cult images of the Virgin and the Tridentine position on the veneration.
52. Müller Hofstede 1966, Warnke 1968, Hertzner 1979, and Freedberg 1981 all discuss Rubens's task of enclosing the miraculous image of the Madonna della Vallicella in his high altarpiece for the Oratorians against the background of contemporary attitudes to Roman and other cult images of the Virgin.
53. J. Lipsius, *Diva Virgo Hallensis. Beneficia eius et miracula fide atque ordine descripta* (Antwerp, 1604); J. Lipsius, *Diva Sichemiensis sive Aspicollis. Nova eius beneficia et admiranda* (Antwerp, 1605).
54. On Nadal's work and on its relation to the Ignatian principles of visualization and imitation, see T. Buser, "Jerome Nadal and Early Jesuit Art in Rome," *Art Bulletin* 58 (1976), pp. 424-433; and Freedberg 1978b with further relevant bibliographic references in footnotes; on the illustrations in Nadal, see now also M.-B. Wadell, *Evangelicae Historiae Imagines. Entstehungsgeschichte und Vorlagen* (Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis/Gothenburg Studies in Art and Architecture, 3) (Göteborg, 1985).
55. The basic reference work for all such writers remains M. Praz, *Studies in Seventeenth-Century Imagery* (2nd ed. Rome, 1964).
56. See Judson, van de Velde 1978 (for Rubens's work) and A. and A. de Backer, and C. Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque des écrivains de la Compagnie de Jésus*, 3 vols. (Louvain, 1869-76) for further bibliographic references.
57. *Imago Primi Saeculi Societatis Iesu a Provincia Flandro-Belgica eiusdem Societatis representata* (Antwerp: Plantin-Moretus, Anno Societatis Saeculari, 1640).
58. See amongst many possible examples, J. Vanuxem, "Les

- Jésuites et la peinture du XVII^e siècle," *Revue des Arts* 8 (1958), pp. 85-91, with Wittkower, Jaffé 1972 offering a good overview of the bibliography as well as a variety of possible approaches.
59. For examples, see Freedberg 1983 and the abundant illustrations in Knipping 1974.
60. Freedberg, "Source," 1978, and Freedberg 1983.
61. See Baudouin 1989, p. 354.
62. Well discussed by Baudouin 1989, pp. 350-351 and 356-357.
63. Oldenbourg 1921, p. 305; Rooses 1886-92, vol. 1 (1886), no. 214.
64. Oldenbourg 1921, p. 325; Vlieghe 1972, no. 117.
65. *Madonna and Child with Saints and Madonna and Child Adored by the Blessed Herman Joseph* (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, nos. 482, 388; Glück 1931, pp. 241 and 243).
66. Freedberg 1976b.
67. See Freedberg, 1976b, with full bibliographic details, as well as Buser 1976.
68. Oldenbourg 1921, p. 417; Vlieghe 1972, no. 127.
69. Oldenbourg 1921, p. 419; Rooses 1886-92, vol. 2 (1888), no. 274.
70. Praz 1964, pp. 361-362.
71. Judson, van de Velde 1978, no. 71.
72. As decreed by the Third Provincial Council of 26 June-20 July 1607 and the Antwerp Diocesan Synod of 11 May 1610; P. F. X. de Ram, ed., *Synodicon Belgicum, sive Acta omnium Ecclesiarum Belgii celebrato concilio tridentino usque ad concordatum anno 1801* (Mechelen, 1828), pp. 142-143.
73. Rooses 1886-92, vol. 2 (1888), p. 113 gives the basic information.
74. As, for example, in the triptych painted for the tomb of Jan Michiels in Antwerp Cathedral (the so-called *Christ à la Paille*), and a whole series of paintings showing the Lamentation or the Entombment; see Eisler 1967.
75. On these works – often epitaph paintings – and their characteristic stylistic features, see Freedberg 1978b and Freedberg 1984.
76. Oldenbourg 1921, p. 158; Vlieghe 1972, no. 146.
77. Oldenbourg 1921, p. 190; Vlieghe 1972, no. 102.
78. For the Council of Trent's decree, see *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta* 1962, pp. 750-752; for the two important decrees of the Synod of Mechelen in 1570 and 1607, see de Ram 1828, pp. 107 and 387, as well as C. Geudens, *Het Hoofdambacht der meesters (Godsdienst en Kunstzin)* (Antwerp, 1891), p. 73, note 1. Freedberg 1988, p. 229, and Freedberg 1976a, give some instances of the comparatively mild restrictions and interventions that ensued.
79. Freedberg, 1971.
80. J. Molanus, *De Picturis et Imaginibus Sacris* (Louvain, 1570); *De Historia Sanctarum Imaginum et Picturarum* (Louvain, 1590, 1594, and several later editions); G. Paleotti, *Discorso intorno le immagini sacre e profane, divisi in 5 libri, dove si scuoprono vari abusi loro e si dichiara il modo che cristianamente si dee osservare nelle chiese e ne' luoghi pubblici* (Bologna, 1582 [only the first two books were actually published; Latin ed., Ingolstadt, 1594]); F. Borromeo, *De Pictura Sacra libri duo, accedit eiusdem Musaeum* (Milan, 1625). For the spate of pro-image works in the Netherlands that followed in the wake of the Council of Trent and the 1566 Iconoclasm, see Freedberg, 1988, pp. 67-94.
81. J. Molanus, *De Historia Sanctarum Imaginum et Picturarum*, ed. J. N. Paquot (Louvain, 1771), pp. 89-90, 93, 319-330. For other examples of this approach – and this kind of tolerance – see Freedberg 1982, p. 136 and notes.
82. See Freedberg 1971 for the scanty biographical references – still not supplemented further – to Molanus's life and work.
83. Molanus himself, it should be remembered, published an *Indiculus Sanctorum Belgii* in Louvain, 1573 (a later edition followed in Antwerp in 1583), three years after the first publication of the first edition of the great work on painting that subsequently became known as the *De Historia Sanctarum Imaginum et Picturarum* (the 1570 edition was called the *De Picturis et Imaginibus Sacris, Liber unus, tractans de vitandis circa eas abusibus ac de earundem significationibus*). He then went on, in 1596, to publish the larger *Natales Sanctorum Belgii* in Louvain in 1596 (reprinted at least once in Douai in 1616).
84. Molanus ed. Paquot 1771, p. 203; Baudouin 1989, p. 334.
85. See the good remarks on this subject in Baudouin 1989, pp. 339-341.
86. F. Baudouin, "Religious und Malerei nach der Teilung der Niederlande," in A. Buck, ed., *Renaissance-Reformation. Gegensätze und Gemeinsamkeiten, (Wolfenbütteler Abhandlungen zur Renaissance Forschung, 5)* (Weisbaden, 1984), pp. 15-16.
87. London, The National Gallery, no. 57; Vlieghe 1972, no. 71.
88. Vlieghe 1972, no. 72. For the long history of this commission, see G. Martin, in London, National Gallery, cat. 1970, pp. 130-133, and Vlieghe 1972, pp. 105-109.
89. Vlieghe 1972, no. 117, with earlier literature.
90. Barocchi, *Trattati d'Arte del Cinquecento* (Bari, 1960-62), vol. 2, pp. 511-517; G. Olmi, "Osservazione della natura e raffigurazione in Ulisse Aldrovandi (1552-1605)," *Annali dell'Istituto storico germanico-italiano in Trento* 3 (1977), pp. 177-180.
91. Olmi 1977, p. 168.
92. The basic reference work remains Speth-Holterhoff 1957.
93. On Teniers's social status and aspirations, see Kahr 1975 and the corrections by Davidson (Letter to the Editor, *Art Bulletin* 58 [1976], pp. 317-318) and Dreher 1977, as well as the long piece by Dreher 1978.
94. On this see the particularly suggestive pages in H. Belting, *Bild und Kult: Eine Geschichte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst* (Munich, 1990), pp. 1-5.