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THE RECUPERATED RADICAL: PABLO PICASSO AND THE DEBATE
ON ART AND POLITICS IN FRANCE, 1942 - 1962

by

ANDREA FEESER

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art
History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University
of New York.

1996

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Art History in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

THE RECUPERATED RADICAL: PABLO PICASSO AND THE DEBATE
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by

Andrea Feeser

Adviser: Professor Jack Flam

"The Recuperated Radical: Pablo Picasso and the Debate on Art and Politics in France, 1942 - 1962" determines that Picasso was celebrated by the French Communist Party (P.C.F.) as a figurehead for its Peace Movement, and appreciated as an artist by the party only when his work accommodated propaganda requirements for Social Realism that honored Communist heroes. Such propaganda participated in postwar humanism's appeal to heroism, idealism, and productivity. This dissertation demonstrates that Picasso did not conform to these ideals in much of his work--especially in series of paintings after Delacroix's Women of Algiers (1954-55), Velázquez's Las Meninas (1957), and Manet's Déjeuner sur l'herbe (1959-62).

Picasso distanced himself from the P.C.F. after vicious attacks on his nonidealized 1953 Stalin portrait and the 1956 Soviet invasion of Hungary. Because he was devalued by

the P.C.F. for his distorted form, dismissed by abstract artists for his commitment to representation, and exploited not only by the P.C.F. but by the arts and entertainment industry for his mass appeal, Picasso turned to the past to battle with great painters in order to reaffirm his sovereignty and genius. By drawing on "primitive" styles (late cubist forms and child-like drawing), and by deploying the banal and/or the base (mundane realities, sex, and violence), Picasso's series undermine the P.C.F. notion of legible and uplifting art. However, rather than read these works as radical interventions, this dissertation argues that Picasso dismantled other artists' multivalent masterpieces into univocal attempts at possession thematized through sexual violation of the female body. By stridently asserting his mastery of art history and the female subject, Picasso attempted to mask the loss of his "self-possession": his important place in a critical, yet appreciative arts community. Rather than convey individuality and freedom (symbolically registered through increasingly loose and expressive brush marks that suggest spontaneity and the immediate transmission of a personal impression), Picasso's series chart the artist's explosive individuality trapped by the controlling confines of the P.C.F. and postwar commodity culture.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my dissertation advisers Jack Flam and Linda Nochlin for their guidance. I am also grateful for the support of the other members of my dissertation committee, Diane Kelder and Carol Armstrong. I am indebted to the Samuel H. Kress Foundation and the City University of New York Graduate Center Ph.D. Program in Art History for grants that enabled me to conduct research in France, and to devote time to writing. I greatly appreciate the comments that Debra Pughe and Hilarey Bhatt gave to me when they read portions of my dissertation, as well as the advice that Nora Heimann gave me on the process of preparing a dissertation manuscript. The following people at the Musée Picasso in Paris were extremely helpful, and I thank them very sincerely: Anne Baldessari, Laurence Berthon, Gérard Régnier, Hélène Seckel, and Jeanne Sudour. I am also grateful for the kind assistance of Michel Apel-Muller and Danielle Maïsetti at the Elsa Triolet - Louis Aragon Archives in Paris; the aid of Jean Jamin, the executor of Leiris's literary estate; and the help of Quentin Laurens at the Galerie Louise Leiris. The following people contributed to my research, for which I am indeed thankful: Jennifer Berry, Pierre Biro, Cécile Éluard Boaretto, Aline Brandauer,

Elizabeth Cowling, Caroline Cros, Abidine Dino, Johanna Drucker, Steve Harris, Blythe Kingston, Rosalind Krauss, Czeslaw Milowsz, Laurie Monahan, Jane O'Reilly, Hélène Parmelin, Jennifer Ransom, John Richardson, Jean Ristat, Leo Steinberg, Gertja Utley, and Sarah Wilson. The citations in my text will make evident my debt to numerous scholars from and of the postwar period in France.

I would like to offer special thanks to three people who have sustained me in every way possible during my work on Picasso: Elaine and Robert Feeser, and Tim Factor. I dedicate this text to you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	xi
INTRODUCTION	1

Chapter

1. THE POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE HERO IN WARTIME AND POSTWAR FRANCE	9

Who is the Hero in Postwar France?

The Big Picture

Humanism and the Hero in Wartime and
Postwar France

The Hero in Wartime and Liberation
Policy and Propaganda

Liberation Politics and the Struggle
for Power

De Gaulle and the Politics of "Grandeur"

Postwar Cultural Politics and the Heroic
Artist: Malraux

The French Communist Party and the Cult
of the Hero

The French Communist Party's Heroic
Aesthetic and Picasso

Sartre and the Existentialist Hero

Sartre and Heroic Art

Heroism and Commodity Culture

Picasso the Star as Cultural Commodity

2. PICASSO'S STALIN PORTRAIT AND <u>VERVE</u> SERIES: DISMANTLING THE HERO IN POSTWAR FRANCE?	75

Picasso and the French Communist Party

Picasso as the French Communist Party
Peace Hero

Troubling Particulars

The Stalin Portrait Affair

The Aftermath of the Portrait Affair:
Picasso's Place in the French Communist
Party

Rejection and the Verve Series: Loss and
Sublimation

Leiris: "Failed" Sublimation and a Critique
of the Hero

Leiris as Failed Hero: Failed Surrealist,
Existentialist, and Ethnographer

Has Leiris's/Picasso's Failed Hero Really
Failed?

The "Failed" Hero is Too Invested in the
Hero Myth

3. THE POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CRITIQUE OF THE
HERO IN WARTIME AND POSTWAR FRANCE: COMBATTING
ALIENATION AND INSTRUMENTALIZATION 148

Introduction

Picasso and Clandestine Surrealism During the
Occupation: Discrete Interventions

The Birth of Revolutionary Surrealism and its
Offshoots, from Cobra to the Internationale
Situationniste

Lefebvre, Socialisme ou Barbarie, and
Arguments: The Critique of Alienation and
Bureaucracy

Sartre: Existentialism Engages with Marxism

Bataille and Breton: "Useless" Critiques of
Alienated Productivity

4. PICASSO'S <u>WOMEN OF ALGIERS</u> AND THE REINSCRIPTION OF MASTERY	210
The Hero Returns	
Picasso's Dialogues with Other Great Artists and the Project of Variation as a W/whole	
The Genesis of <u>Women of Algiers</u>	
The Structure of Possession	
Algeria	
Aragon and Delacroix: The "Private" Hero	
Links Between the Private and the Political in Postwar France	
Beyond the Veil	
5. PICASSO'S <u>LAS MENINAS</u> AND <u>DÉJEUNER SUR L'HERBE</u> : WHEN THE WILL TOWARD POSSESSION SIGNALS DISPOSSESSION	257
All the More Reason to Turn Inward	
To Humanize is to Divinize?	
Picasso's <u>Las Meninas</u>	
Picasso's <u>Déjeuner sur l'herbe</u>	
Historicizing the Will Toward Possession	
CONCLUSION	303
ILLUSTRATIONS	306
BIBLIOGRAPHY	415

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1. T. Matejko, <u>Populations abandonnées, faites confiance au soldat allemand!</u> , 1940. German Poster. Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, Nanterre	306
2. Légion Française sheet music, n.d. Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, Nanterre	307
3. Eschen, <u>1^e Anniversaire de La Légion</u> , 1941. Poster. Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, Nanterre	308
4. <u>Le Socialisme contre le bolchevisme. Pour une Europe Libre</u> , 1942-43. German Poster Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, Nanterre	309
5. Jean Breton, <u>Engagez-vous: Légion Volontaires contre le bolchevisme</u> , 1942. Poster. Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, Nanterre	310
6. Olivier, <u>Gagner la guerre, reconstruire la France. M.L.N.: Mouvement de Libération Nationale</u> , n.d. Poster, 150 x 99 cm. Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, Nanterre	311
7. B. Lancy, <u>Venez U.D.S.R.: Union Démocratique et Socialiste de la Résistance</u> , March 1945. Poster, 120 x 80 cm. Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, Nanterre	312
8. <u>F.F.I.</u> , n.d. Poster for the Mouvement de Libération Nationale, 41 x 58 cm. Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, Nanterre	313
9. Pik, <u>Victoire</u> , n.d. Poster, 63 x 48 cm. Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, Nanterre	314

10. Victory calendar, 1945. 32 x 24.5 cm. Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, Nanterre 315
11. Robert Habert and B. Minne, Le Front National: Libérateur de Nice, 1944. Poster. Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, Nanterre 316
12. Boris Taslitzky, Stalin Visits Thorez in 1951, 1953. Oil on canvas. Reproduced in the 15-22 May 1953 edition of Les Lettres françaises 317
13. Pablo Picasso, Portrait of Maurice Thorez, 23 May 1945. Pencil on paper. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 14, no. 110 318
14. Vedette washing machine advertisement, 1959. Reproduced in Claire Laubier, ed., The Condition of Women in France, 1945 to the Present: A Documentary Anthology, Twentieth Century French Texts, ed. J.E. Flowers (London: Routledge, 1990), 32 319
15. Winston cigarette advertisement, 1959. Reproduced in Claire Laubier, ed., The Condition of Women in France, 1945 to the Present: A Documentary Anthology, Twentieth Century French Texts, ed. J.E. Flowers (London: Routledge, 1990), 39 ... 320
16. Jacques Prévert and Pablo Picasso at the Galerie Madoura in Vallauris, 1950. Photograph by P. Manciet. Reproduced in Centre Georges Pompidou, Picasso à l'écran (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou and la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1992), 30 321
17. Pablo Picasso and Michel Leiris at La Californie, Cannes, n.d. Photograph, D.R. Collection Jean-Jamin. Reproduced in Michel Leiris, Un génie sans piédestal et autres écrits sur Picasso, with a Foreword by Marie-Laure Bernadac (Paris: Fourbis, 1992), frontispiece 322
18. Pablo Picasso, Portrait of Maurice Thorez, 23 May 1945. Pencil on paper. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 14, no. 111 323
19. Pablo Picasso, Portrait of Nikos Belayonnis, 1952. Drawing reproduced in the 13 March 1952 edition of Les Lettres françaises 324

20. Pablo Picasso, Portrait of Henri Martin, 1952.
Drawing. Musée Saint-Denis 325
21. Pablo Picasso, Peace Dove, 1949. Photo-lithograph,
60 x 73 cm. Musée Picasso, Antibes. Reproduced
in the 24 March 1949 edition of Les Lettres
françaises 326
22. Advertisement for handkerchiefs decorated with
Paul Éluard poetry and Picasso drawings from
Visage de la Paix, reproduced in the 1-8
October 1953 edition of Les Lettres
françaises 327
23. Advertisement for a plate decorated with a drawing
by Pablo Picasso from Visage de la Paix,
reproduced in the 27 May - 3 June 1954 edition
of Les Lettres françaises 328
24. Advertisement for plates decorated by artists
including Pablo Picasso, reproduced in the
19-26 November 1953 edition of Les Lettres
françaises 329
25. Photograph of Pablo Picasso and his daughter
Paloma on the cover of the 11 October 1952
edition of Femmes Françaises 330
26. Pablo Picasso, Massacre in Korea, 18 January 1951.
Oil on plywood, 110 x 210 cm. Musée Picasso,
Paris 331
27. André Fougeron, Les Parisiennes au Marché, 1947.
Oil on canvas, 190 x 126.9 cm. Collection of
the artist 332
28. Pablo Picasso, Portrait of Josef Stalin, 8 March
1953. Drawing to commemorate the death of
Stalin reproduced in the 12-19 March 1953
edition of Les Lettres françaises 333
29. Pablo Picasso, A ta santé, 1949. Drawing to
commemorate the seventieth birthday of Stalin,
reproduced in the 9 March 1950 issue of
Les Lettres françaises 334
30. André Fougeron. Défense Nationale, 1951. Oil on
canvas, 325 x 225 cm. Museum of Bucharest 335
31. Pablo Picasso, War, 1952-53. Oil on isorel, 470 x
1024 cm. Peace Chapel, Vallauris 336

32. Pablo Picasso, Peace, 1952-53. Oil on isorel, 470
x 1024 cm. Peace Chapel, Vallauris 337
33. Pablo Picasso, from the Verve series, 19 January
1954 (VII). Ink on paper, 24 x 32 cm.
Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 16, no. 193 338
34. Pablo Picasso, The Shadow, 29 December 1953. Oil
on canvas, 130 x 196 cm. Musée Picasso,
Paris 339
35. Pablo Picasso, The Shadow on the Woman, 30 December
1953. Oil on canvas, 130.7 x 97.7 cm. Art
Gallery of Ontario, Toronto 340
36. Pablo Picasso, Nude in the Studio, 30 December
1953. Oil on canvas, 89 x 116 cm. Private
collection 341
37. Pablo Picasso, from the Verve series, 5 January
1954. Ink on paper, 32 x 24 cm. Reproduced in
Zervos, vol. 16, no. 130 342
38. Pablo Picasso, from the Verve series, 21 December
1953. Ink wash and gouache on paper, 35 x 26.5
cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 16, no. 77 343
39. Pablo Picasso, from the Verve series, 18 December
1953. Ink on paper, 35 x 26.5 cm. Reproduced
in Zervos, vo. 16, no. 67 344
40. Pablo Picasso, from the Verve series, 5 January
1954. Ink on paper, 32 x 24 cm. Reproduced in
Zervos, vol. 16, no. 132 345
41. Pablo Picasso, from the Verve series, 10 January
1954 (VIII). Ink on paper, 24 x 32 cm 346
Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 16, no. 169.
42. Pablo Picasso, from the Verve series, 11 January
1954. Ink on paper, 24 x 32 cm. Reproduced in
Zervos, vol. 16, no. 178 347
43. Pablo Picasso, from the Verve series, 20 January
1954 (I). Ink on paper, 24 x 32 cm. Reproduced
in Zervos, vol. 16, no. 194 348
44. Pablo Picasso, from the Verve series, 20 January
1954 (III). Ink on paper, 24 x 32 cm.
Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 16, no. 196 349
45. Pablo Picasso, from the Verve series, 21 January

- 1954 (I). Ink wash on paper, 24 x 32 cm.
Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 16, no. 200 350
46. Pablo Picasso, Raphael and La Fornarina, 8
September 1968 (II). Etching, 15 x 20.5 cm.
Reproduced in Bloch, vol. 2, no. 1797 351
47. Pablo Picasso, Violin and Fruit, 1913. Paper,
charcoal, and gouache on paperboard, 63.4 x
48.8 cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art 352
48. Pablo Picasso, The Peasant's Repast, 1917-18.
Oil on canvas, 161.6 x 116.3 cm. Musée Picasso,
Paris 353
49. Pablo Picasso, from the Verve series, 21 January
1954 (III). Ink wash on paper, 24 x 32 cm.
Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 16, no. 202 354
50. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 21 December 1954
(II). Ink on paper, 34.5 x 43 cm. Reproduced
in Zervos, vol. 16, no. 344 355
51. Pablo Picasso, drawing of 21 January 1954 (IV).
Ink wash on paper, 24 x 32 cm. Reproduced in
Zervos, vol. 16, no. 203 356
52. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 13 December
1954. Oil on canvas, 60 x 73 cm. Private
collection, New York 357
53. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 13 December
1954. Oil on canvas, 60 x 73 cm. Private
collection, Nevada 358
54. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 28 December
1954. Oil on canvas, 54 x 65.1 cm. Mr. and
Mrs. Victor Ganz Collection, New York 359
55. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 1 January 1955.
Oil on canvas, 46 x 54.9 cm. Private
collection 360
56. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 16 January 1955.
Oil on canvas, 46 x 54.9 cm. Private
collection, Nevada 361
57. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 17 January 1955.
Oil on canvas, 54 x 65.1 cm. Mr. and Mrs.
Daniel Saidenberg Collection, New York 362
58. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 24 January 1955.

- Oil on canvas, 129.8 x 161.9 cm. Mr. and Mrs.
Victor Ganz Collection, New York 363
59. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 25 January 1955.
Oil on canvas, 97 x 130 cm. Galerie Beyeler,
Switzerland 364
60. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 26 January 1955.
Oil on canvas, 114 x 46 cm. Private collection,
New York 365
61. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 6 February 1955.
Oil on canvas, 129.8 x 161.9 cm. Mr. and Mrs.
Victor Ganz Collection, New York 366
62. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 11 February 1955.
Oil on canvas, 130.2 x 194.9 cm. Mr. and Mrs.
Victor Ganz Collection, New York 367
63. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 14 February 1955.
Oil on canvas, 14 February 1955. Oil on canvas,
113.9 x 146 cm. Mr. and Mrs. Victor Ganz 368
Collection, New York.
64. Eugène Delacroix, Women of Algiers, 1834. Oil
on canvas, 227 x 177 cm. Musée du Louvre,
Paris 369
65. Eugène Delacroix, Women of Algiers, 1849. Oil
on canvas, 111 x 84 cm. Musée Fabre,
Montpellier 370
66. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 15 January
1955. Etching, 23.7 x 29.8 cm. Musée
Picasso, Paris 371
67. Maitres d'hier, modèles d'aujourd'hui. Photo-
collage reproduced in the 23 May 1953 edition
of Samedi Soir 372
68. Detail of Maitres d'hier, modèles d'aujourd'hui.
Photo-collage reproduced in the 23 May 1953 ... 373
edition of Samedi Soir.
69. Pablo Picasso with (from left to right), Laurent
Casanova, Maurice Thorez, Louis Aragon, Jean
Cocteau, Henri Matarasso, and Tabaru in Le
Cannet, 1956. Photograph by Paul Louis,
reproduced in the Spring 1957 edition of Le
Surréalisme même 2 374

70. Pablo Picasso on the beach at Cannes, 1965.
Photograph by Lucien Clergue 375
71. Pablo Picasso, The Fall of Icarus, 1958. Oil on
wood, 800 x 1000 cm. U.N.E.S.C.O., Paris.
Reproduced on the cover of the 16 May 1958
edition of U.N.E.S.C.O. House News/Nouvelles du
secrétariat 376
72. Diego Velázquez, Las Meninas, 1656. Oil on canvas,
310 x 269 cm. Prado, Madrid 377
73. Pablo Picasso, Woman and Window, 7 June 1956 (VI).
Page from a sketchbook, ink on paper. 33 x 42
cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 17. no. 115 378
74. Pablo Picasso, Las Meninas, 17 August 1957.
Oil on canvas. 194 x 240 cm. Museu Picasso,
Barcelona..... 379
75. Pablo Picasso, Las Meninas, 2 October 1957.
Oil on canvas, 162 x 130 cm. Museu Picasso,
Barcelona 380
76. Pablo Picasso, The Piano, 17 October 1957. Oil on
canvas, 126.8 x 94.5 cm. Museu Picasso,
Barcelona 381
77. Pablo Picasso, Portrait of Jacqueline, 12
December 1957. Oil on canvas, 113 x 86. 75 cm.
Museu Picasso, Barcelona 382
78. Pablo Picasso, Woman Before a Table, 3 April
1956, reworked 13 November 1957. Linoleum
engraving with additions in gouache, 64 x 81
cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 17, no. 403 ... 383
79. Pablo Picasso, The Trampoline, 22 July 1957. Oil
on canvas, 100 x 81 cm. Reproduced in Zervos,
vol. 17, no. 171 384
80. Pablo Picasso, Study (model in the studio), 15
December 1957 (U.N.E.S.C.O., IV). Pencil and
blue crayon on paper. 53 x 66 cm. Reproduced
in Zervos, vol. 17, no. 416 385
81. Pablo Picasso, Sleeping Nude, 17 December 1957
(U.N.E.S.C.O., II). Page from a sketchbook,
pencil on paper. 24 x 32 cm. Reproduced in
Zervos, vol. 17, no. 420 386
82. Pablo Picasso, Sleeping Nude, 17 December 1957

- (U.N.E.S.C.O., III). Page from a notebook, pencil on paper, 24 x 32 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 17, no. 421 387
83. Pablo Picasso, Sleeping Nude, 17 December 1957 (U.N.E.S.C.O., IV). Page from a sketchbook, pencil on paper, 24 x 32 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 17, no. 422 388
84. Pablo Picasso, Sleeping Nude, 17 December 1957 (U.N.E.S.C.O., V). Page from a notebook, pencil on paper, 24 x 32 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 17, no. 423 389
85. Pablo Picasso, Sleeping Nude, 17 December 1957 (U.N.E.S.C.O., VI). Page from a notebook, pencil on paper, 24 x 32 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 17, no. 424 390
86. Edouard Manet. Déjeuner sur l'herbe, 1863. Oil on canvas, 210 x 265 cm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris 391
87. Pablo Picasso, Study for the Bather from Déjeuner sur l'herbe, 11 August 1959 (II). Wash on paper, 24 x 30 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 19, no. 36 392
88. Pablo Picasso, Study for the Bather from Déjeuner sur l'herbe, 11 August 1959 (III). India ink on paper, 24 x 30 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 19, no. 35 393
89. Pablo Picasso, Study for the Bather from Déjeuner sur l'herbe, 11 August 1959 (IV). India ink on paper, 24 x 30 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 19, 37 394
90. Pablo Picasso, Costume for the Torero Miguel Dominguin, 9 August 1959 (I). Blue crayon on paper, 21 x 17 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 19, 32 395
91. Pablo Picasso, Costume for the Torero Miguel Dominguin, 9 August 1959 (II). Blue crayon on paper, 21 x 17 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 19, no. 33 396
92. Pablo Picasso, Costume for the Torero Miguel Dominguin, 9 August 1959 (III). Blue crayon on paper, 21 x 17 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 19, no. 34 397

93. Pablo Picasso, Study for Déjeuner sur l'herbe,
10 August 1959 (II). Pencil on paper. 32 x
41 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 19, no.
41 398
94. Pablo Picasso, Courtisanes and Toreros, 16-17
August 1959. Wash on paper. 50 x 65 cm.
Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 19, no. 52 399
95. Pablo Picasso, Déjeuner sur l'herbe, 27 February
1960. Oil on canvas, 114 x 146 cm. Reproduced
in Zervos, vol. 19, no. 200 400
96. Pablo Picasso, Studies of a Woman Washing Her Feet,
12 April 1960. Page from a sketchbook, pencil
on paper. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 19, no.
234 401
97. Pablo Picasso, Two Nudes, 13 April 1960 (I, II).
Page from a sketchbook, pencil on paper.
Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 19, no. 237 402
98. Pablo Picasso, Nude on a Table, 13 April 1960
(VI). Page from a sketchbook, pencil on
paper. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 19, no.
241 403
99. Pablo Picasso, Nude on a Table, 13 April 1960
(VII). Page from a sketchbook, pencil on
paper. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 19, no.
242 404
100. Pablo Picasso, Les Déjeuners, 4 June 1961 (III).
Crayon on paper, 33 x 50 cm. Reproduced in
Zervos, vol. 20, no. 13 405
101. Pablo Picasso, Les Déjeuners, 4 July 1961 (I).
Crayon on paper, 33 x 50 cm. Reproduced in
Zervos, vol. 20, no. 56 406
102. Pablo Picasso, Les Déjeuners, 4 July 1961 (II).
Crayon on paper, 33 x 50 cm. Reproduced in
Zervos, vol. 20, no. 57 407
103. Pablo Picasso, Les Déjeuners, 22 August 1961
(I). Crayon on paper, 27 x 37 cm. Reproduced
in Zervos, vol. 20, no. 120 408
104. Pablo Picasso, Les Déjeuners, 29 December 1961
(II). Crayon on paper, 24 x 32 cm. Reproduced
in Zervos, vol. 20, no. 172 409

105. Pablo Picasso, Les Déjeuners, 8 February 1962
(I). Page from a sketchbook, pencil and
crayon on paper, 23 x 32 cm. Sketchbook no.
165, p. 36 410
106. Pablo Picasso, Les Déjeuners, 8 February
1962 (II). Page from a sketchbook, pencil
and crayon on paper, 23 x 32 cm. Sketchbook
no. 165, p. 37 411
107. Pablo Picasso, Portrait of Djamila Boupacha, 8
December 1961. Drawing reproduced in the 8-14
February 1962 edition of Les Lettres françaises
and in Simone de Beauvoir and Gisèle Halimi,
Djamila Boupacha (Paris: Gallimard, 1962),
frontispiece 412
108. Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Raphael and La
Fornarina, 1840. Oil on canvas, 35 x 27 cm.
Private collection, United States 413
109. Pablo Picasso, Raphael and La Fornarina,
4 September 1968 (II). Etching, 15 x 20.5 cm.
Galerie Louise Leiris, Paris 414

INTRODUCTION

Soon after the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, writer Michel Leiris penned an urgent letter to Pablo Picasso. He informed his friend that Communists and fellow travellers upset about developments in Hungary were anxious that Picasso state his position on the events transpiring. Leiris wrote:

As I have told you on various occasions, I certainly understand at what point it is difficult--and for you more than for others--to say or do something that could contribute to the advent of a free communism instead of bringing--purely and simply--fuel to the fire of our enemies on all fronts. But this is not a reason, very much to the contrary! to not examine with a great deal of attention all the possibilities (even small) that can present themselves.¹

Leiris went on to note that Les Temps modernes, the journal that he helped Jean-Paul Sartre and his coterie edit, was planning to devote its December issue to Hungary, and that the editors hoped to publish an interview with Picasso that

¹"Ainsi que je te l'ai dit à diverses reprises, je comprends fort bien à quel point il est difficile--et pour toi plus que pour quiconque--de dire ou faire quelque chose qui puisse contribuer à l'avènement d'un communisme libre au lieu d'apporter--purement et simplement--de l'eau au moulin de nos ennemis à tous. Mais ce n'est pas une raison, bien au contraire! pour ne pas examiner avec beaucoup d'attention toutes les possibilités (même minimes) qui peuvent se présenter" (Michel Leiris, 19 November 1956 letter to Pablo Picasso, Picasso Archives, Musée Picasso, Paris). Unless otherwise stated, all translations are mine. I have not translated the names of French institutions, organizations, publications, or titles of paintings usually identified in French.

addressed the invasion. Leiris advised Picasso to reject the interview, for "by accepting it, you would seem to take Sartre's positions more or less (I'm not blind to the fact that these positions have been more varied with respect to P.C.F. leaders)."² Leiris encouraged the artist to write a letter to Sartre instead, which the journal would publish:

Couldn't you say to him something like this: "For me painting is a way of speaking and I am not a thinker nor a politician, as profound as my attachment to communism is. What do you want me to tell you? Canvases such as Guernica or Massacre in Korea express the horror that I have of violence exercised against people whomever they are, Spanish, Korean or today Hungarian (like, moreover, Egyptians) and it seems to me that they have in this respect a meaning about which one cannot be mistaken."³

By encouraging Picasso to issue a general condemnation of violence, and to position himself as a "mere" painter instead of an intellectual or politician, Leiris provided Picasso with a strategy. A strategy for maintaining a socially conscious position without condemning the Soviet Union outright (which would contribute to the right's attack

²"en acceptant, tu aurais l'air de faire plus ou moins tiennes les positions de Sartre (positions dont il ne m'a pas caché qu'elles étaient des plus divers à l'égard des dirigeants du P.C.F.)" (Ibid.).

³"Ne pourrais-tu pas lui dire quelque chose de ce genre: 'La peinture est pour moi une façon de parler et je ne suis pas un penseur non plus qu'un politicien, aussi profond que soit mon attachement que communisme. Que voulez-vous que je vous dise? De toiles comme Guernica ou les Massacres en Corée expriment l'horreur que j'ai des violences exercées contre un peuple quel qu'il soit, espagnol, coréen ou aujourd'hui hongrois (comme d'ailleurs égyptien) et il me semble qu'elles ont à cet égard une signification sur laquelle on ne peut pas se méprendre'" (Ibid.).

on communism); without incurring the wrath of French Communist Party officials (whom Picasso had angered two years earlier); or that of Sartre (France's self-appointed judge of politics). Leiris suggests that Picasso speak in the abstract rather than about specifics: although Picasso's Guernica and Massacre in Korea refer to actual historical events (the Nazi bombing of Guernica and the killing of Koreans by American soldiers), Leiris invokes them as a condemnation of violence wherever it appears. Picasso thus acts as a general spokesman for humanity, a representative of Leiris's "free communism."

Unlike Picasso, Leiris did not join the Communist party, although he was an ardent sympathizer. In a 1990 interview with the Surrealist Jean Schuster, Leiris maintained that although he had been wrongly labelled Stalinist (he had always considered Stalin "un personnage impossible" [an impossible character]), he had found "le côté monolithique du Parti" (the monolithic side of the party) efficacious.⁴ Many of Leiris's contemporaries shared this view, which was expressed most forcefully by Maurice Merleau-Ponty in the 1947 Les Temps modernes article "Humanism and Terror." In this essay, the philosopher put forth the argument that the ends may justify the means, and because the dream of Communist society appealed to many who

⁴Michel Leiris, Entre augures: Un entretien entre Michel Leiris et Jean Schuster (Paris: Le terrain vague, 1990), 27.

had lived through fascism, numerous Communists and fellow travellers held fast to this credo long after Merleau-Ponty abandoned it. Those like Leiris who could not tolerate the injustices perpetrated in the name of communism, still wished to protect the possibility of a free communism.

At a 1953 meeting of the Communist sponsored Peace Movement, Leiris called for the release of Alain Le Léap, the secretary general of the Confédération Générale du Travail (C.G.T.), who had been imprisoned by the French state for sedition since 1952. In his speech, Leiris adopted a stance very similar to position he counceled Picasso to take in 1956. Speaking of Le Léap's arrest, Leiris stated:

I am not a lawyer nor am I a political man. I don't belong to a single party and confine myself to use, as best as it seems to me, the right to vote that I share with you and all my fellow citizens. Professionally, I am a writer, and it is in my capacity as a writer, in my capacity as a man who makes a business of writing because writing for him is a way of posing human problems and of communicating the idea that he forms himself from life and the stuff of other human beings, it is very simply, in my capacity as a man interested in everything human that I would like to speak to you.⁵

⁵"Je ne suis pas un juriste et je ne suis pas non plus un homme politique. Je n'appartiens à aucun parti et me borne à user, du mieux qu'il me semble, du droit de vote que je partage avec vous et tous mes concitoyens. Professionnellement, je suis un écrivain et c'est en ma qualité d'écrivain, en ma qualité d'homme qui fait métier d'écrire parce qu'écrire est pour lui un moyen de poser des problèmes humains et de communiquer l'idée qu'il se fait de la vie et des choses à d'autres êtres humains, c'est, très simplement, en ma qualité d'homme qui s'intéresse à tout ce que humain, que je voudrais vous parler" (Michel Leiris, "La Crainte de l'autre" [1953], Lignes no. 13 [March 1991], 92.

This text reveals the key to the strategy that Leiris used to operate as a critical fellow traveller, as well as a champion of avant-garde artists and colonial independence movements: an appeal to shared humanity. By uncovering fundamental human characteristics in subjects to which his audience was either indifferent or hostile, Leiris encouraged others to accept, respect, and support difference. This conventional strategy--deployed by left and right partisans long before Leiris and alive and well today--is extremely flexible, for the "human" is a vague term that encompasses a wide range of qualities and experiences. Leiris and Picasso's postwar contemporaries in conservative, liberal, and radical camps all broadcast the need for community building in their varied plans for the material and psychic reconstruction of France. Indeed, the appeal to shared humanity operated as a central organizing principle of French postwar life, and Leiris was not the only one to understand the value of circulating Picasso's person and production within this framework.

Picasso permitted a variety of voices to speak for him, although each ventriloquist positioned Picasso as a general symbol of humanity. The French Resistance and the Allies championed Picasso as a symbol of resistance despite his ambiguous politics in occupied Paris. The French Communist party used Picasso as the cultural leader of its peace movement despite the artist's failure to conform to the

party's art dictates. Anti-Communist Americans bought, sold, and exhibited Picasso's works despite his P.C.F. membership. Picasso was thus everywhere and nowhere, a figure whose life and work was made to conform to any purpose because his stature as a great artist transcended any of his troublesome characteristics or affiliations. Indeed, because Picasso could be virtually anything to anyone, he became one of the most prominent media stars of the postwar French and international press.

Picasso thus figures among those who occupy the center of post Vichy political and cultural life, a center through which many pass, but that I would like to argue is itself structurally empty. The search for human community and wholeness that shaped much of postwar French society was a search for lost origins and/or the utopian future: a mythical time when individuals' relationships to themselves, their fellow men and women, their nation, and the world were to be stable, secure, and commanding. This impossible desire--expressed in the postwar celebration of possessions (the rise of consumer culture), and heroes (the personality cults of leaders and celebrities)--harbored the trauma of wartime occupation and collaboration when little in France was cohesive or grand.

The desire to possess self and other is hardly peculiar to postwar France (although it achieved great intellectual and artistic expression in France after the war); it forms

the cornerstone of philosophical and psychoanalytic ruminations on the relationship between the subject and object. From an early point in his career, Leiris understood that a desire to navigate internal and external control motored his own writing. As he became acquainted with Picasso, he recognized what he felt to be the same dynamic, with similar expression, in the work of the artist. Some of Leiris' fellow critics, and numerous subsequent writers have explored Picasso's reconfigurations of the real in relation to questions about the artist's command of his subjects. In fact, popular and scholarly analyses of Picasso's production tend to share a belief in the power of the artist's controlling gaze, whether critics interpret Picasso's art in light of a domineering personality, or an often aggressive reorganization of artistic conventions. Leo Steinberg's reading of Picasso as "drawing as if to possess," investigates both the psychic and formal investments in the artist's gaze. Steinberg discusses Picasso's will toward possession in relation to the artist's depiction of figures seen from multiple aspects, a mode of representation that the critic believes enabled Picasso to express his complete physical and cognitive knowledge of his subjects. The combination of front, rear, and side views of figures in a single form represents a vigorous attempt on Picasso's part to both physically possess his model and to intellectually possess the image:

[Picasso creates] objects of a perfect possessiveness, [that] occupy an invaded space ... But they represent also the opposite ... [not only] the impulse of erotic possession ... [but] the most systematic investigation of the plane surface as a receptacle of information.⁶

How can the controlling force of Picasso's oeuvre be reconciled with Picasso's seeming lack of control of his own identity in his postwar rise to superstardom? In what ways is the artist's postwar production about control and by whom? My dissertation will attempt to answer these questions in the process of exploring the relationship between art and politics in France from 1942 to 1962. I believe that because Picasso was marketed by the entertainment industry and the P.C.F. for his popular appeal; devalued (but in no way rejected) by the Communist party for clinging to the "bourgeois decadence" of distorted form; and dismissed by rising contemporary artists for adhering to representation when abstraction was coming to the fore, Picasso turned to the past to do battle with great painters in an effort to reaffirm his sovereignty and genius. However, instead of encoding his freedom (symbolically registered through an increasingly loose application of paint and open treatment of form), Picasso's series after Delacroix's Women of Algiers, Velázquez's Las Meninas, and Manet's Déjeuner sur l'herbe obsessively chart the artist's explosive individuality trapped by the

⁶Leo Steinberg, "The Algerian Women and Picasso at Large," Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth-Century Art (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 234.

dehumanizing relations demanded of P.C.F. adherents, and of Picasso's own increasing commodification as a cultural icon.

My analyses will situate Picasso's work in contemporary debates (then and now) on art and politics. Important art practices and theoretical models that shape current postmodern expressions of and ideas about gender, race, and class relations arose from the contested historical, political, and cultural realities of France in the 1940s through the early 1960s. Radical postwar French artists and writers critiqued beliefs and practices that accorded an all-powerful and all-knowing status to the heroic male promoted by political, social, and artistic institutions at the end of World War II. My study of Picasso will engage critically with the work of important left-wing thinkers who strove to articulate how all forms of representation express and shape individuals' experience of political, social, and psychic realities.

CHAPTER 1

THE POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE HERO
IN WARTIME AND POSTWAR FRANCEWho is the Hero in Postwar France?

In 1948, the philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty wrote "Man, the Hero" for inclusion in his book Sense and Non-Sense. The essay tracks a new heroism in contemporary letters, and offers it up as a historically-determined and model credo. Merleau-Ponty first defines the traditional idea of heroism:

There has always been a cult of the hero. However, insofar as a civilization believes that beyond this world lies another eternal world where good wins out over evil, the great man does not stand by himself but is the agent of a Providence. The cult of the hero does not take on its tragic cast until the end of transcendent beliefs, or at all events until the emergence of the idea of a world in process.¹

The philosopher argues that Hegel and Nietzsche are the first to detach heroism from its reliance on eternal, transcendent validation. Hegel's hero is guided by the knowledge that his actions help shape historical circumstances, which are ongoing, orderly syntheses of the rational and irrational rather than the products of static, unchanging truths.

¹Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Man, the Hero," in Sense and Non-Sense, trans., with a preface by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus, Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, ed. John Wild (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 182.

Nietzsche's superman rejects not only eternal truths as guideposts, but dispenses with any productive task that is not solely committed to his own personal power. Merleau-Ponty maintains that the contemporary hero

does not fit either Hegel's or Nietzsche's mold. He is not what Hegel called 'the steward of the World Spirit,' nor does he believe in any World Spirit which arranges everything for his success and points him clearly on his way.²

Merleau-Ponty insists that the contemporary hero acts in a wholly sovereign manner, and for the present alone. He is beholden to no one, is not indebted to the past, and need leave no legacy for the future. However, he is committed to the notion that individual freedom makes life meaningful, and that all people therefore desire and deserve it. Although his actions may not guarantee freedom for others, his behavior surely demonstrates his own freedom, and may join up with historical forces to produce a communal victory.

Merleau-Ponty wrote this essay not long after the end of World War II, when France was deep in the throes of its physical and psychic reconstruction. The French people were struggling with the legacy of military defeat, the memories of occupation and of the collaboration and resistance that it occasioned, and with the realities of economic hardship, political instability, and the beginnings of colonial insurgency. Merleau-Ponty's hero feels the weight of these

²Ibid., 184.

experiences. He is an individual devoid of faith in any overarching belief system, skeptical of anything that smacks of the self-abnegation demanded of fascism, and aware that history metes out cruel and seemingly senseless punishments. However, he retains the certain knowledge that his free actions and those of others sometimes effect a desired outcome.

Never before have men had such good evidence that the course of events is full of twists and turns, that much is asked of daring and that they are alone in the world and before one another. But sometimes--in love, in action--a harmony is created among them and events respond to their will.... is not faith, stripped of its illusions, itself that very movement which unites us with others, our present with our past, and by means of which we make everything have meaning,...? This is just what the Christian saints and the heroes of the past revolutions have always done--although they tried to believe that their fight had already been won in heaven or in History. This resource is not available to the men of today. The contemporary hero is not Lucifer; he is not even Prometheus; he is man.³

Merleau-Ponty's model of heroism guided fewer than he supposed; in fact, he wrote subsequent indictments of those (notably French Communists and his friend and fellow philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre) whom he believed had betrayed the struggle for a community of free individuals. This chapter will examine models of heroism operative in postwar France that are very different from the paradigm that Merleau-Ponty defined. The philosopher was wrong to argue that individuals and organizations had cast off devotion to transcendent truths; indeed such truths seemed to be what

³Ibid., 186-187.

many French people needed to embrace after years of pain, with many more difficulties apparently on the horizon. Purposive idealism--in many guises and promulgated by different, often opposing political and cultural camps--was the order of the day, and appeared to assure stability and progress. This chapter will analyze various manifestations of the hero cult in postwar France that promised personal freedom, but that demanded some form of individual subordination. Identifying and accounting for the conflicting forces that compromised freedoms in postwar France exposes how these forces helped to fashion a human subject that both believed itself to be sovereign and yet experienced itself as alienated: a condition of torn subjectivity profoundly manifest in Picasso's postwar art and persona. Indeed, examining the postwar hero cult in France reveals the specific ideological premises and political practices that conditioned Picasso and others to invest in a heroic subjectivity that remained beyond reach. The hero cult meshes with the rise of consumer culture in France (which literally requires people to invest in something outside of themselves), and both phenomena demonstrate that the promise of freedom comes with a very large price tag.

The Big Picture

Merleau-Ponty states that heroes have always had a place in history and indeed, the hero cult in France was by no means purely a postwar occurrence. Several years prior to Allied victory, German occupying forces, the collaborationist Pétain regime, and the Resistance all deployed the image of the hero in propaganda to secure the allegiance of French men and women. Immediately after the Occupation, the Gaullists, Socialists (S.F.I.O.), and the French Communists (P.C.F.) attempted an ultimately unsuccessful ruling coalition based on Resistance principles of ultra-nationalism and "Fighting Man's" valor. Each of the three political camps--intent on empowering themselves through social and cultural policies that promoted class and international community alliances--went their own way after de Gaulle's resignation in 1946 and the P.C.F.'s expulsion from government in 1947. This chapter will first focus on how wartime leaders, de Gaulle, and especially the Communists drew on the hero myth to further their political ambitions. I will scrutinize de Gaulle's self-promotion as the guarantor of French "grandeur" at the expense of a fully democratic political process, and the French Communist Party's blind glorification of Stalin despite mounting evidence of his cruel perversion of Marxism.

This chapter will also explore how such political and social realities informed the cultural production of the

period: how the hero myth was figured forth in artistic and literary works. The humanist heroes constructed by Gaullists and the French Communists were shaped by appeals to external "higher" goods: glorification of the nation and the citizen in the case of de Gaulle's camp, and celebration of the proletariat in the case of the P.C.F. Individuals were called upon to surrender some of their individuality, to sacrifice aspects of themselves toward the noble aim of reconstructing the larger political and social fabric. This condition was played out in the cultural sphere through the P.C.F.'s promotion of the didactic and largely anonymous Social Realist esthetic devoted to the glorification of party luminaries and to the generic proletarian revolutionary. The devaluation of the truly individual in favor of an abstract, eternal, heroic individuality was effected with infinitely more subtlety in the writing of de Gaulle's publicist André Malraux. His "museum without walls" distilled the vast diversity of world art into same-sized, black and white photographs that purportedly reveal the "grandeur" of the artist-hero rather than the historical particularities of specific creators.

The Communists and the Gaullists wanted to put the individual to use, and successfully lured followers with powerful rhetoric and imagery that reveled in abstract conceptions of freedom. The image of the creator as the freedom fighter promoted by the P.C.F. and the image of the

artist as the embodiment of freedom lauded by Malraux were notions articulated in different but often parallel terms by others responding to postwar regeneration. Jean-Paul Sartre, the intellectual who explored most visibly the issue of art and liberty in the 1940s through the early 1960s, produced "What is Literature?," his tract on engaged art in 1947, the same year the P.C.F. launched its Social Realism campaign. Opposed to the Communist party at this time (he would begin his four year rapprochement with the Communists in 1952), Sartre nevertheless understood art in terms similar to those of the P.C.F. Firmly wedded to the notion of man's intentionality and will as the determining principle (eschewing any external referent such as God, or the proletarian), Sartre maintained that art must clearly express man's absolute freedom and choice to effect change. Sartre challenged the institutions traditionally associated with idealism, morality, and nationalism: political parties, the church, and everything bourgeois. However, by privileging the will of the individual in much the same way the P.C.F. celebrated the will of the proletarian and Malraux lauded the will of the creator, Sartre initially promoted an image of the noble and free man analogous to that of the party's and that of Malraux.

These different expressions of the hero myth propped up political and cultural figures and institutions that required a stable and elevated platform from which to launch

and secure reconstruction efforts. Indeed, the physical reconstruction of France was intimately tied to its psychic reconstruction. A conflicted message circulated throughout overlapping political, social, and cultural spheres: namely, that the individual had the right to be free, but by in large, only if that freedom was put to use for others.

Humanism and the Hero in Wartime and Postwar France

The hero was a critical figure during the Occupation, and especially during the liberation and reconstruction of France.⁴ He⁵ was a crucial component of a broader social

⁴An important, complementary figure that existed during this period was the anti-hero. This character--who comes to life vividly in the work of Camus (especially in the writer's 1951 The Rebel)--expressed the profound bleakness of wartime and post-war experience sanitized by the hero cult.

⁵Female heroes appear much less frequently in wartime and postwar imagery. France as a nation was symbolized by Marianne or Joan of Arc with some frequency, but specific representations of actual women (either noted individuals or those who struggled for the liberation or reconstruction of France) occurred less often. The Communist-sponsored organization Union des Femmes Français promoted the cult of Danielle Casanova, a Communist resistance fighter who perished in a Nazi concentration camp. However, the organization also produced verbal and visual propaganda that praised motherhood in the depopulated postwar nation. Popular postwar historical imagery gathered at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris shows that the hero cult tended to focus on males, and often specific leaders (see Estampes, Bibliothèque Nationale, Histoire de France [Qb1 {1945-1957} and {1957-1976}], reel M131158-M131831, and reel M131832-M132206).

construct dominant in 1940s - 1950s France: humanism.⁶ In the 1930s, humanism was widely embraced as a "rallying point of anti-fascism."⁷ During the Occupation this phenomenon took an ugly twist. The Nazis appealed to the popular ideology by making some effort "to project Hitler's racialist conception of the 'new man' as a kind of humanist ideal."⁸ Pétain's National Revolution undertook a similar mission: French peasants and artisans were celebrated as exemplars of the noble, French race. Humanism played an important role in other French wartime circles: it retained currency among Catholics, and profoundly informed Resistance efforts.⁹ As Michael Kelly notes:

A battle waged on behalf of l'homme or les hommes was capable of inspiring extremes of dedication and heroism.... [Indeed,] the Resistance poets developed

⁶In the context of my work, humanism is any belief system "premised on ontological differences between humanity and the rest of nature, and according priority to it in the explanation of society, history and culture.... While the epistemological reference of humanism is to the human subject as the locus of experience and source of knowledge, the political stress falls on human agency and hence control over historical process" (J.O. Urmson and Jonathan Rée, eds. The Concise Encyclopedia of Western Philosophy and Philosophers [London: Unwin Hyman, 1989], s.v. "Humanism," by Kate Soper).

⁷Michael Kelly, "Humanism and National Unity: the Ideological Reconstruction of France," in The Culture of Reconstruction: European Literature, Thought, and Fiction, 1945-50, ed. Nicholas Hewitt (Houndsmills, England: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1989), 105.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., 105-106.

the notion of l'homme into a rallying call,...¹⁰

After the war, humanism provided the frame of reference to organize reconstruction efforts: its faith in man's will shaped political and cultural strategies for the regeneration of France. The varied Resistance forces under de Gaulle's jurisdiction all subscribed to a highly elevated image of man, especially the Communists, whose objectives differed radically from those of the general. From early 1945, Socialists--who were not as actively involved in the Resistance as Gaullists and Communists¹¹--"identified their

¹⁰Ibid., 106.

¹¹Marc Sadoun discusses the role of Resistance Socialists in "Les socialistes ont-ils été résistants?" in Jean-Charles Asselain, Jean-Pierre Azéma, Yves Durand, Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, Étienne Fouilloux, Patrick Fridenson, François Goguel, Stanley Hoffman, Jacques Julliard, Jean Lacoutre, Michael R. Marrus, Guy Pervillé, Denis Peschanski, René Rémond, Jean-Pierre Rioux, Henry Rousso, Marc Sadoun, and Michel Winock, Études sur la France de 1939 à nos jours, Points: Histoire (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1985), 138-153. He notes that 90 Socialists voted to give Pétain full powers in 1940, with 36 opposing the proposed dictatorship and 6 abstaining (Ibid., 139). He argues that many comforted themselves by supporting the common belief that Pétain was protecting France by playing a double role: working with both the Nazis and the Allies (Ibid., 140). Sadoun details the history of the Comité d'action socialiste (C.A.S.), a group of Socialists that cultivated "the spirit of resistance" without taking direct military action (the group worked toward the preparation of a Liberation government)(Ibid., 142-43, 149-152). He observes that the arrest and trial of Léon Blum in 1940 helped galvanize more Socialist sentiment against the Germans and Vichy (Ibid., 145). Sadoun also discusses the role of Socialists in militant Resistance groups: Libération-Nord (co-founded by Socialists and Syndicalists), a force behind paramilitary efforts in the north, and Combat, Franc-Tireur, and Libération-Sud, mixed membership groups that numbered Socialists among their directors and participants (Ibid., 146-148). He concludes "No doubt the Socialists resisted.

position as Socialist humanism."¹² French Catholics, many of whom actively or passively collaborated with the Germans,¹³ ardently embraced humanist ideals, particularly Catholics associated with Emmanuel Mounier's personalism.¹⁴

In power at Libération-Nord, in the majority at Libération-Sud and often even at M.U.R. (Mouvement Unifié de la Renaissance), influential at C.D.L.R. (Ceux de la Résistance), and at the O.C.M., they even formed the central component of the non-Communist resistance. But the party neutralized this contribution by not seizing all of the exigencies of the underground and of the Occupation" ("Ce n'est pas douteux, les socialistes ont résisté. Hégémoniques à Libération-Nord, majorités à Libération-Sud et souvent même aux M.U.R. [Mouvement Unifié de la Renaissance], influents à C.D.L.R. [Ceux de la Résistance] et à l'O.C.M., ils forment même la composante centrale de la résistance non communiste. Mais le parti a neutralisé cette contribution par impossibilité de saisir toutes les exigences de la clandestinité et de l'Occupation" [Ibid., 153]).

¹²Michael Kelly, "Humanism and National Unity," 109.

¹³"In 1940 most Catholics--and many Frenchmen--believed that the Third Republic had failed because it was corrupt; Socialists and Communists had promoted materialism; democratic institutions had not been able to withstand the crisis. The Church could redress the balance. France had not lost the war, but could yet achieve salvation through the Marshal.... Thus Catholic leaders took the initiative in acknowledging the authoritarian power of the Marshal" (Bill Halls, "Catholicism Under Vichy: a Study in Diversity and Ambiguity," in Vichy France and the Resistance: Culture and Ideology, eds. Roderick Kedward and Roger Austin [Totowa, N.J.: Barnes & Noble Books, 1985], 134).

¹⁴Personalism is the term applied to the work of those gathered around the journal Esprit (founded 1932), notably that of Mounier. Mounier and his associates were committed to spearheading a new Christian morality. Mounier's emphasis on the person within a larger community bore some similarities to Sartre's existentialist credo. Like Sartre (of the earlier 1950s), Mounier was drawn to the P.C.F.'s promise of free collective action. However, Mounier and his circle built loose alliances, and often skirted firm positions on postwar domestic and international politics. "The refusal to 'choose one's camp' is what truly marked the

Along with the Catholic church and the Communists, Mounier quarreled with Sartre's appeal to humanism. For the Church and the P.C.F., Sartre's eschewal of traditional morality made the philosopher's insistence that his existentialism was humanist (the subject of a 1945 speech), repugnant. Mounier did not dismiss the philosopher so readily, but adamantly claimed "priority for the Christian existentialist position."¹⁵

The various forms of French humanism of the 1940s and 1950s implored individuals to direct their energies toward group nation-building efforts. With humanism propelling the reconfiguration of French politics and society during and after the war, it is not surprising that a glorified image of man--the hero--became a standard feature of wartime and postwar low and high culture. The simultaneous appeal to individual and collective action was best reconciled by encouraging citizens to identify with but actually surrender themselves to larger-than-life heroic figures.

spiritualists of the Esprit circle in these [postwar] years, and it provoked predictable anger within some parts of the Catholic intellectual community" (Tony Judt, Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944-1956 [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992], 90). See Emmanuel Mounier, Le Personnalisme, Que sais-je? (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1949), for a discussion of personalism and its goals.

¹⁵Sarah Wilson, "Paris Post War: In Search of the Absolute," in Paris Post War: Art and Existentialism, 1945-55, ed. Frances Morris (London: Tate Gallery, 1993), 25.

The Hero in Wartime and Liberation Policy and Propaganda

Indeed, as David Caute has noted, when

confronted with upheavals and destruction on a huge, impersonal scale, ... men of all persuasions instinctively invest their trust in a single, omniscient leader...¹⁶

The physical and emotional devastation that war wreaked deeply affected material conditions and personal experience in France from the beginning of the war, through the Occupation, and after Liberation through the 1950s. The shame of occupation, the fear of the Germans, and the deprivations of a wartime economy encouraged the French to either accomodate themselves to their occupiers and the collaborationist Vichy government, or to pin their hopes on a liberated France by actively or passively supporting Resistance efforts. In either case, the French looked to a leader to guide them through an extraordinarily difficult time. After the war, as France struggled to rebuild itself, the population also rallied behind heroes who they believed would serve their needs through painful periods of transition.

During the Occupation of 1940-44, the Nazis and Pétain's regime courted civil allegiance through propaganda that portrayed Nazi soldiers and Pétain as powerful and noble leaders determined to protect and promote the interests of French citizens. Posters portraying noble,

¹⁶David Caute, Communism and the French Intellectuals 1914-1960 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964), 217.

heroic figures extolled Parisians to trust members of the German occupying forces (fig. 1), or they encouraged people to venerate Pétain and respect participants in the Légion Française, an organization of veterans formed by the Vichy government to promote "la mystique Maréchaliste" (the marshal's mystique)¹⁷ (figs. 2 and 3). Such propaganda employed standard visual cues to signify heroism, including idealized bodies or floating busts, and a low level viewer perspective that makes individuals represented appear elevated. With the addition of patriotic references such as the tricolor, a national monument, or a revered institution such as the family, such imagery became even more powerful and attractive. The Nazis wisely relied on the appeal of French nationalism in much propaganda, notably in their campaign against bolshevism (figs. 4 and 5). Posters depicting valiant workers or warrior-like Légion des Volontaires Français participants (combatants against bolshevism), show mighty figures surrounded by bold patches of red, white, and blue.

Like the Germans and the Marshall's government, Resistance workers also relied on the hero myth in their propaganda. Mouvement de Libération Nationale and Union Démocratique et Socialiste de la Résistance posters feature

¹⁷Jean-Paul Cointet, "La Legion," in La Propagande sous Vichy, 1940-1944, eds. Laurent Gervereau and Denis Peschanski (Paris: Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, 1990), 59.

rugged, armed fighters: some show the Resistance hero leading the way in reconstruction efforts (figs. 6 and 7), while another includes portrait busts of the Allied leaders Roosevelt, Churchill, de Gaulle, and Stalin (fig. 8). Just as busts of Pétain were widely circulated under the Vichy regime, images of de Gaulle gained currency after Liberation (figs. 9 and 10). Although he left French government in 1946, and remained on its fringes until 1958, de Gaulle was the central Resistance figure and thus a crucial heroic symbol.

Only the French Communist Party as a whole could lay an equal (and for a time greater) claim to the image of the Resistance hero. Communists had fought in numbers and with distinction in the Resistance, which gave them important political leverage in the immediate postwar period. During and after the war, Communists rallied the population to their ranks through nationalistic verbal and visual hymns to liberty. For example, a dramatic reversal of anti-Communist Nazi propaganda shows a muscle-bound, gun-toting member of the Communist Front National stepping on a German soldier amidst a backdrop of red, white, and blue (fig. 11).

Resistance poetry by Communist writers such as the former Surrealists Louis Aragon and Paul Éluard also drew on heroic and patriotic imagery. Produced by writers in hiding using pseudonyms to protect themselves, Resistance poems were circulated secretly to inspire those working against

the Germans. In his 1942 "Avis," Éluard honored the Communist martyr Georges Dudach, a journalist killed by the Nazis:

The night before his death
 Was the shortest of his life
 The thought he still lived
 Boiled the blood in his veins
 His flesh was too heavy
 His strength made him groan
 In the depths of this horror
 He started to smile
 He had not ONE friend
 But millions upon millions
 To rise up in vengeance
 And day dawned for him.¹⁸

This poem, like others by Éluard and Aragon, abandons Surrealist fantasy in favor of accessible, heroic language designed to inspire Communist fraternity and nationalism. Indeed, Resistance poems by Aragon appealed to nationalistic impulses by employing "forms and rhythms long ingrained in

¹⁸Paul Éluard, "Avis," *Oeuvres complètes*, eds. Marcelle Dumas and Lucien Scheler, with a Preface and Chronology by Lucien Scheler (Paris: Gallimard, 1968) 1: 1253, quoted in Ann Smock, "1940-1944: The Honor of Poets," in *A New History of French Literature*, ed. Denis Hollier with R. Howard Bloch, Peter Brooks, Joan De Jean, Barbara Johnson, Philip E. Lewis, Nancy K. Miller, François Rigolot, and Nancy J. Vickers (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 949-50. This poem was originally part of *L'honneur des poètes*, a clandestine anthology produced by Resistance writers. Éluard wrote the poem under the pseudonym Jean le Haut (Éluard, *Oeuvres complètes*, 1643, n. 1). As Smock notes, the Surrealist poet Benjamin Péret denounced the Resistance poets' unimaginative marriage of language and politics in his 1945 *Le déshonneur des poètes*, and the Surrealist René Char remained devoted to poetry (in his estimation), by giving up writing altogether to serve as a fighting poet in the Resistance (Smock, "1940-1944: The Honor of Poets, 951).

the French language."¹⁹ This turn to clarity and heroic rhetoric would come to structure much of the postwar debate on the relationship between art and politics.

Liberation Politics and the Struggle for Power

The heroic ideal also imbued the struggle for power in the postwar arena in France. From his 18 June 1940 call to his countrymen to fight the Germans, de Gaulle worked hard to maneuver himself to the head of a united Resistance force. Based outside of France in London, he first secured the allegiance of French colonials, whose backing enabled him to devise a sort of exiled provisional government. By 1942, de Gaulle had the support of several Resistance groups based in France, and shortly after cofounding the Comité Français de Libération National (C.F.L.N.) in 1943 with rival General Henri Giraud, de Gaulle was able to assert his own dominance of coordinated Resistance efforts. Determined to oversee the orderly resumption of control in France (and to avoid a Communist takeover), de Gaulle sent agents from London to help bring together French Resistance workers. In 1943, the Conseil National de la Résistance (C.N.R.) was created, which united underground groups with trade unions and political parties from the Third Republic. Combatants were also united under an the umbrella organization of the Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur (F.F.I.).

¹⁹Smock, 949.

Through the C.F.L.N., de Gaulle was able to organize his eventual assumption of power in France: the group identified both provisional institutions and leaders for free France. During the actual liberation of the country, local Resistance groups assumed control and took charge of dispensing their own forms of justice. Germans and French identified as collaborators were abruptly judged and sentenced, and an estimated 10,000 collaborators were killed.²⁰ Despite such anarchy and the fear that Communists would attempt to assert their control, local Resistance efforts rallied to de Gaulle and the C.F.L.N. was recognized as the provisional French government, gaining official recognition 23 October 1944. Indeed, for just over the first year after Liberation, de Gaulle ruled the country largely single-handedly, working with a Consultative Assembly comprised of party, union, and Resistance group representatives.

However, de Gaulle did not intend to rule without a mandate: his objectives included elections to be held when

²⁰This number has been disputed, with headcounts as high as 100,000 (Henry Rousso, The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France Since 1944, trans. Arthur Goldhammer [Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1991], 21). According to Rousso, "the most reliable figures on the purge may be found in Peter Novick, Resistance versus Vichy: The Purge of Collaborators in Liberated France (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), Jean-Pierre Rioux, La France de la IV^e république, vol. 1: L'Ardeur et la nécessité, 1944-1952 (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1980); and in surveys conducted by the Comité d'Histoire de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale and the Institut d'Histoire du Temps Présent" (Ibid., 336-337, n. 12).

prisoners of war and deportees returned to France. Voting took place on 21 October 1945, with women casting ballots for the first time in a national election, a concession that recognized their role in Resistance efforts. The elected Constituent Assembly was divided over how the government should be organized. De Gaulle and the newly formed Christian Democrat Mouvement Républicain Populaire (M.R.P.) favored a strong executive whereas the Communists supported an authoritative bicameral legislature. When the Socialists sided with the P.C.F., de Gaulle haughtily stepped down, assuming that he would be called back into leadership. Instead, the Assembly proceeded with its efforts to draft a constitution, passing its second draft by national referendum on 13 October 1946. The P.C.F. and S.F.I.O. position prevailed: the Council of the Republic and the National Assembly became the sites of power, with the latter retaining the greater authority, and with some restraints applied to both legislative bodies. Disgusted by a government of parties, which he correctly predicted would govern ineffectually, de Gaulle denounced the new leadership of the Fourth Republic.

De Gaulle and the Politics of "Grandeur"

The history of the Fourth Republic, which prevailed until 1958, is broadly characterized by domestic and overseas turmoil. Although economic recovery began with the

rise of consumer culture in the 1950s (achieved in part because "the Liberation did not destroy the 'trusts' it had fulminated against, and ... the new public sector ... played a decisive role afterwards in safeguarding and restructuring capitalism"²¹), France struggled with crushing deprivations in the 1940s. This economic hardship contributed to crippling strikes in 1947 and 1948. Domestic troubles were compounded by mounting difficulties between France and its colonies. The uneasy governing tripartite of Communists, Socialists, and Christian Democrats fell apart with conflicts over insurgency in Indo-China and the Renault strike. Although French Communists sympathized with Ho Chi Minh's liberation efforts in Indo-China (supporting his bid for power within the larger French Union), P.C.F. cabinet members backed the French government's attempts to restore control before negotiations with Ho Chi Minh began. Nevertheless, P.C.F. deputies failed to vote for war credits, which infuriated the Socialists. Blaming difficulties over labor unrest on the Communists, the Socialist cabinet head Paul Ramadier "fired" Communist ministers. Outside of government, the P.C.F. was accused of masterminding subsequent large-scale strikes,²² and

²¹Jean-Pierre Rioux, The Fourth Republic, 1944-1958, trans. Godfrey Rogers (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 189.

²²"The rail strike [of 1947] was based on genuine worker discontent and like the Renault strike, begun by Trotskyists" (Irwin M. Wall, French Communism in the Era of

launched a campaign against the Fourth Republic matched in virulence only by de Gaulle's attempt to turn citizens away from the government.

In April 1947, supporters of de Gaulle founded the Rassemblement du Peuple Français (R.P.F.), an organization referred to as a "rally" in light of the general's disdain of parties. The R.P.F.'s goal was to return de Gaulle to power, and Malraux, who had served as the former president's Minister of Information during the Liberation government, became the rally's propaganda director. Many were astonished by the de Gaulle-Malraux association, for the writer had been a radical leftist before the war, and had supervised information and propaganda in Canton for the Communist branch of the Chinese revolution. However, both men ardently embraced power, French supremacy, and heroism, and after Stalin's fraternization with Hitler, Malraux had come to loath the Communists as much as de Gaulle.²³

Stalin: The Quest for Unity and Integration, 1945-1962, Contributions in Political Science, ed. Bernard K. Johnpoll, no. 97 [Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983], 57). The strikes of 1948, notably the miners' strike, were a response to insufficient pay increases and concerns over nationalization. However, P.C.F. party leader Maurice Thorez "decided to politicize the labor unrest. On September 30, immediately following the strike vote, Thorez announced that French workers would never make war on the U.S.S.R." (Ibid., 85).

²³Malraux's association with the French Communists was occasioned by a shared hatred of fascism. However, the writer's glorification of individual achievement made for an uneasy alliance with the Communists. As an "apostle" of "romantic, rebellious Leftist individualism" (Janet Flanner, "The Human Condition," chap. in Men and Monuments: Profiles

According to Alexander Werth:

The reasons for which nearly 40 percent of the French people suddenly voted for de Gaulle were almost entirely negative: they voted for de Gaulle because they were discontented with economic conditions, or angry with the Communists, or so convinced that war was round the corner that they preferred to face the music under de Gaulle than under a mere M. Ramadier.²⁴

This may explain why a large portion of the population rejected established parties, but it does not address the general's appeal. Werth also observes that "as a constructive program, nothing was less precise than the program of the R.P.F."²⁵ However, de Gaulle did manage to communicate a seductive message: that the governing executive would safeguard citizens' interests by ensuring that all conflicts unresolved through legislative processes would be decided by the people themselves through national referendum.

While this latter objective must have been very appealing to the public, it largely operated as the means of setting in place de Gaulle's mandate, for his definition of

of Picasso, Matisse, Braque, and Malraux [1947; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, Inc., 1990], 41), Malraux was bound to recoil from Communist means that he felt could not justify the ends, notably any actions that themselves smacked of fascism. Along with many other French intellectuals, Malraux abandoned the Communists after the Moscow trials and the Stalin-Hitler pact. In 1942, Malraux joined Gaullist Resistance forces, and two years later, commanded combatants in Lot, Dordogne, and Corrèze.

²⁴Alexander Werth, France, 1940-1955 (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1956), 368.

²⁵Ibid., 369.

executive power was authoritarian. His previous leadership role, along with his speeches and writing, explicitly put forward the image of a virtually absolute ruler whose objectives were to secure the prestige of France and its people. In his lectures published in 1932 as The Edge of the Sword (a kind of blueprint for de Gaulle's career), the general constructs the ideal of a heroic leader whose selfless actions on the part of France nevertheless accord the leader extreme personal power. He writes:

When faced with the challenge of events, the man of character has recourse to himself. His instinctive response is to leave his mark on action, to take responsibility for it, to make it his own business.... he embraces action with the pride of a master; for if he takes a hand in it, it will become his, and he is ready to enjoy success on condition that it is really his own, and that he derives no profit from it.²⁶

As this passage indicates, de Gaulle's emphasis on "owning" action and the glory that it provides is supported by his belief that the leader acts purely for the benefit of the nation. This higher good, to promote and protect the grandeur of France, ennobles the heroic leader:

It is essential that the plan on which the leader has concentrated all his faculties shall bear the mark of grandeur. It must, indeed, respond to the cravings felt by men who, imperfect themselves, seek perfection in the end they are called upon to serve. Conscious of their own limitations and restricted by nature, they give free reign to unlimited hopes, and each measuring his own littleness, accepts the need for collective action on condition that it contribute to an end which is, in itself, great. No leader will ever succeed in

²⁶Charles de Gaulle, The Edge of the Sword, trans. Gerard Hopkins (New York: Criterion Books, 1960), 41.

asserting himself unless he can touch that spring.²⁷ Concretely, de Gaulle's grandeur translated into the reestablishment of France as a major, independent world power. Although the appeal to absolutes evident in his writing would suggest that his policy was governed by a belief in fixed truths, he proved to be a flexible and contingent thinker: he held on to his primary goal of French ascendancy, but altered his strategies considerably to attain his larger objectives. The most spectacular example of such maneuvering occurred after de Gaulle returned to power in 1958, when the Fourth Republic proved incapable of dealing with the mounting threat of civil war over the struggle for Algerian independence. A committed colonialist during the forties and earlier fifties--for he believed that France's overseas possessions were part of what assured its status as a powerful nation²⁸--de Gaulle ended up procuring

²⁷Ibid., 64.

²⁸I will discuss the Algerian war at greater length in subsequent chapters. De Gaulle's political investment in French colonies was keen. When he briefly governed France after liberation, de Gaulle attempted to reassert French control in Indo-China in the face of Communist insurgency. Werth notes: "On March 24, 1945, de Gaulle had issued a statement saying that there would be a Federal Government of Indo-China, presided over by a Governor-General representing France, and composed of French and native ministers; there would also be a 'mixed' Assembly. It was, roughly what Daladier had proposed fifteen years before, and less than what Indo-China had under the Vichy regime! At that stage, however, de Gaulle was primarily concerned not with internal Indo-Chinese problems, but with French prestige..." (Werth, France, 1940-1955, 330). Once out of office, de Gaulle's involvement with the colonies was less direct, but critical. From 1956 on, the general's supporters worked to overthrow

Algeria's freedom. He "sacrificed" the colony in order to pull a ruptured country from the brink of civil war.

In the 1940s, de Gaulle understood grandeur as a means of restoring France's pride, which had been decimated along with the nation's physical terrain. This translated into a directive to fight during the war even if it entailed the death of Vichy French, or later if the battle seemed hopeless, as in Indo-China.²⁹ For although de Gaulle was in a position to understand better than almost anyone a country's desire for independence from a foreign power, this was a course of events that he could not permit at a point when he felt that colonies helped define France's greatness.

Grandeur for de Gaulle also translated into economic reconstruction to guarantee a financially strong nation. Although his primary objective of obtaining an overhauled political system with an empowered executive prevented him from immersing himself in economic concerns, his brief pre-Liberation reign put in place a turn toward technocracy that

the republic through strident appeals to nationalism including vehement support for a French Algeria. De Gaulle's followers established the Union pour la Nouvelle République (U.N.R.) in 1958 (a few weeks prior to the election of a new government), and an important component of the organization was Jacques Soustelle's Union pour le Renouveau Français, committed to keeping Algeria French (See Nicholas Wahl, The Fifth Republic: France's New Political System, Studies in Political Science [New York: Random House, 1959], 16-19).

²⁹Stanley Hoffman, "The Hero as History: de Gaulle's War Memoirs," chap. in Decline or Renewal? France Since the 1930s (New York: The Viking Press, 1974), 192.

would come to structure postwar French existence. Soon after liberation, de Gaulle oversaw the nationalization of several critical industries: coal mines of the Nord and Pas-de-Calais, the Gnome and Rhône works, the Renault works, the merchant navy, and civil aviation. Werth quotes prophetic criticism of such measures from a contemporary issue of

Combat:

The high officials in France have two prevalent tendencies--either to be ultra-conservative or to go in for what might be called "reformist fascism." Especially the high financial officials should no longer be the same people, if anything new is to be done in France. For it is not the Ministers who guide the officials, but vice versa.... There is a real danger of the old République des Camarades ... being succeeded by a République de Techniciens.³⁰

Although de Gaulle's celebration of the heroic leader was ambitious and grandiose, he was able to embody and act out this figure largely because he enlisted the aid of organized and efficient technocrats such as Malraux, the person most active in promoting the general's notion of the hero.

Postwar Cultural Politics and the Heroic Artist: Malraux

By 1949, the strength and popularity of the R.P.F. began to decline, primarily because economic conditions were beginning to improve, and those who feared the Communists were relieved to see them out of government.³¹ In short,

³⁰Werth, 231, quoting Combat, 14 February 1944.

³¹Werth, 369. He also states that fear of war was abating.

the conditions that seemed to call for extraordinary leadership were slowly fading and would not recur again until the 1958 crisis in Algeria. However, during the two years of the R.P.F.'s ascendancy, Malraux was extremely successful in tapping into French fears and anxieties, and directing these energies into mass support for de Gaulle.

As de Gaulle's Minister of Information during the liberation government, Malraux had overseen a large scale project to produce replicas of French art masterpieces that were disseminated to schools and public institutions in order to instill French pride in the nation's cultural patrimony. As de Gaulle's R.P.F. propaganda director, Malraux channeled his love of art and appreciation for its didactic potential into the production of propaganda posters. Contemporary observer and American journalist Janet Flanner described two of Malraux's more notable creations and recorded the writer's remarks about his efforts:

All along the Paris boulevards, walls came alive with his enormous, magnificent reproductions of the aroused Republic as "France," sculpted by Rodin, with the Gaullist Cross of Lorraine added for identification, and of a superb, little-known sketch (it was in the Musée de Dijon) by the sculptor François Rude of "La Marseillaise," with head aloft and draperies flying, which as a statue is now the most famous of any adorning the Arc de Triomphe.... "We have to set a high tone," Malraux said of his aesthetic publicity. "We cannot use the style of a grocer selling pickles,

for they are not what the General has to offer."³²

A "high tone" courses through all of Malraux's work, for beginning with his career as an adventurer and revolutionary, he shared de Gaulle's belief that great men must lead with the motivation of great ideals. Like de Gaulle, Malraux also asserted that the hero's actions are beyond reproach if they actualize his noble vision. For example, a very young Malraux defied political authorities in Cambodia by removing Khmer statues from around Bantay Srei, a temple in the general vicinity of the Angkor Wat complex. Although the French government backed Malraux's art expedition to "rescue" the statues from the jungle's encroachment, Bantay Srei lay within French colonial jurisdiction, and Malraux was arrested for plundering. His sentence was ultimately dropped when the colonial court discovered that the statues were the property of the King of Cambodia, for Cambodia was a protectorate, and therefore not French territory.

An oddly parallel cultural colonialism lies at the heart of Malraux's most ambitious project devoted to art, Le musée imaginaire begun in 1935, published in 1947, and expanded in 1951 under the title Les voix du silence. Although Malraux's imaginary museum was conceived of as a vast photographic archive, and not an actual repository of

³²Janet Flanner, "The Human Condition," Men and Monuments: Profiles of Picasso, Matisse, Braque, and Malraux, 51.

works removed from their original sites or country of manufacture, the will toward possession and decontextualization evident in the writer's episode with Khmer statuary also informs his museum. For Malraux believed that photography captured the essence of each work--not in its historical particularities--but in terms of what it communicated about its creator and about its relationship to all of art. Indeed, Malraux analyzed photography's ability to enlarge or shrink works, as well as its capacity to focus on details, which he felt revealed aesthetic affinities among culturally different objects.³³

As Rosalind Krauss has pointed out, Malraux dramatically altered the preconceptions of one of the most important sources for his museum, Walter Benjamin's 1936 "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." Benjamin appreciated photography's potential to subvert the almost sacred quality bestowed on art. He believed that the "aura" attributed to an artwork stemmed from the work's status as the unique product of a revered creator, and that it thus embodied his genius. Benjamin felt that the photograph--a reproduction rather than an original--broke

³³"... photography imparts a family likeness to objects that have actually but slight affinity. With the result that such different objects as a miniature, a piece of tapestry, a statue and a medieval stained-glass window, when reproduced on the same page, may seem members of the same family.... [Each] has practically lost what was specific to it--but their common style is by so much the gainer" (André Malraux, The Voices of Silence, trans. Stuart Gilbert [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1953], 21).

the "auratic" spell and heralded the possibility of a new, political art form, which he supposed would be documentary.

However,

for Malraux, photography simply transferred the experience of aura--or the power exerted by art--from the elitist spaces of the 19th-century museum to the more widely accessible, and preeminently 20th-century, pages of the art book.³⁴

Malraux's huge, deluxe art book was hardly widely accessible as it was very costly (Janet Flanner notes that it cost 2,500 francs, "a tenth of an average, worried family's monthly income"³⁵), but his sentiment was certainly populist. However, just as de Gaulle lobbied for the popular election of the president and for popular referendums in order to establish a mandate for his authoritarian vision, Malraux created a hypothetically popular space as the forum for his elitist conception of art. For although Malraux valued a wide range of styles produced by many different societies, he leveled these diverse achievements to an appreciation of how they radiated the creator's aura. This celebration of the artist as hero is evident in the following description of the modern artist, couched in colonialist rhetoric:

That thrill of creation which we experience when we see

³⁴Rosalind Krauss, "The Ministry of Fate," in A New History of French Literature, ed. Denis Hollier with R. Howard Bloch, et. al., 1002.

³⁵Janet Flanner, Paris Journal, 1944-1965, ed. William Shawn (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich), 87. She observes that the book was a luxurious collector's item.

a masterpiece is not unlike the feeling of the artist who created it; such a work is a fragment of the world which he has annexed and which belongs to him alone.... The artist has not only expelled his masters from the canvas, but reality as well--not necessarily the outer aspects of reality, but reality at its deepest level--the "scheme of things"--and replaced it by his own.³⁶

Malraux lauds the modern artist, whom he values for having freed art from servitude to overt narrative (guided by religion or a bourgeois taste for accessible sentiment), and for creating works that have broken with earlier stylistic precedents to reveal a personal stamp. For the writer, the creator is the ultimate hero: he transcends the banal particulars of history and the achievements of earlier masters to produce works that embody man's capacity for original greatness. He becomes the figure that inspires and uplifts others: who projects them into a noble sphere outside the smallness and regularity of their lives, and the darkness of ultimate death.

Though a Byzantine mosaic, a Rubens, a work by Rembrandt and one by Cézanne display a mastery distinct in kind, each imbued in its own manner with that which has been mastered, all unite with the paintings of the Magdalenian epoch in speaking the immemorial language of Man the conqueror, though the territory conquered was not the same. The lesson of the Nara Buddha and of the Sivaic Death Dancers is not a lesson of Buddhism or Hinduisim, and our Museum without Walls opens up a field of infinite possibilities bequeathed us by the past, revealing long-forgotten vestiges of that unflagging creative drive which affirms man's victorious presence. Each of the masterpieces is a purification of the world, but their common message is that of their existence, and the victory of each individual artist over his servitude, spreading like ripples on the sea of time, implements art's eternal victory over the

³⁶Malraux, Voices of Silence, 461.

human situation.³⁷

Ordinary individual existences are of no particular interest to Malraux; the value of humanity is writ very large and expressed as a collective force embodied in the brute will of heroic artists who dominate the phenomenal world by binding it within their personal vision. Malraux's reader can only enter into this glory by association, by vicariously identifying with the writer's conqueror/creator.

Such a perspective speaks to Malraux's support for de Gaulle and also to his fascination with Picasso, who in light of the writer's heroic construct, became for Malraux "the sign of the artist who has appropriated the musée imaginaire in his diversity of style, and who ... consciously creat[ed] his own posterity."³⁸

³⁷Ibid., 639. Malraux discusses a great deal of history in his weighty tome, but he perceives it as information that enhances our larger understanding of art as an expression of cultural values. Cultural values are deemed important as broad expressions of all men's desire to triumph over the chaos of life, and to provide it with meaning. Malraux valorizes art (notably modern painting) that makes evident the artist's mastery of the world around him (his subordination of things seen to his personal style), and derides the art of delectation which reproduces the visible, for he sees this work as catering to a passive interest in merely drinking in the world rather than making something great of it. He maintains: "There is no such thing as a styleless art, and every style implies a significance of Man, his orientation by supreme value, overt or immanent.... But delectation is not concerned with values, only with sensations and thus with moments only; whereas true arts and cultures relate Man to duration, sometimes to eternity..." (Ibid., 525).

³⁸Wilson, "Paris Postwar: in Search of the Absolute," 44. On the subject of Malraux and Picasso, Pierre Cabanne observes: "When Malraux writes, 'It had been in the Grands-

The French Communist Party and the Cult of the Hero

The P.C.F. was equally invested in the hero myth, and like de Gaulle and Malraux, projected a populist concern for the self-sacrificing, heroic everyman, while promoting the real power of a select few. For French Communists, Stalin and Thorez were the central icons. The cult of personality surrounding these two men was monumental in 1940s - 1950s France: French Communists pinned their hopes for a peaceful country and world community on these two Communist heroes. Thorez was honored for his position as the P.C.F. chief, and Stalin was not only revered as the head of the first Communist nation, but was celebrated as one of the Allied victors. Indeed, P.C.F. propaganda frequently reminded French citizens that the Red Army had helped secure French liberty.

Stalin and Thorez courted this devotion through personality cults fed by verbal and visual propaganda.

Augustins studio that we first spoke of the Museum Without Walls,' we know right away who is talking. We are given fair warning: the conversation is to take place on the highest of levels, not that of individuals but of civilizations and Art, ... it will be Malraux's rhetoric handling both questions and answers, while Picasso is shunted aside" (Pierre Cabanne, Pablo Picasso: His Life and Times, trans. Harold J. Salemsen [New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1977], 376). Indeed, Malraux's Picasso's Mask, published in France the year after the artist's death, embeds Picasso into the writer's lofty conception of art's purpose: "...by countering nature's noises with a musical scale, [Picasso] foresaw that art countered Creation, and indeed life itself, with artistic creation" (André Malraux, Picasso's Mask, trans. June Guicharnaud with Jacques Guicharnaud [New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976], 266).

Heroic, noble images of the two leaders were widely disseminated in France (figs. 12 and 13). The obsequious celebrations surrounding Stalin's seventieth birthday in 1949 and Thorez's fiftieth birthday in 1950 produced numerous idealized representations of the two politicians. Such images enjoyed popularity in part due to the ease with which the Catholic tradition's emphasis on icons and relics was secularized by the P.C.F.³⁹ Indeed, the 1950 third edition of Thorez's autobiography Fils du peuple, with artists' portraits of the leader such as one of Picasso's 1945 drawings (fig. 13), served as a virtual devotional reader for ardent P.C.F. adherents.⁴⁰

Blind glorification of party leaders characterized the French Communist party up until the events of 1956: Khrushchev's report on the crimes perpetrated under Stalin's authority, the Polish revolution, and the Soviet Union's repression of the Hungarian uprising. Indeed, hero worship was such a pronounced phenomenon that even the revelation and continuation of repressions were justified by some party

³⁹Wall, French Communism in the Era of Stalin, 99.

⁴⁰"In February 1949 Cahiers du Communisme published a photo of Thorez with a caption describing him as the incarnation of the French working class and Leninism. "The second edition of Thorez's biography, Fils du Peuple, appeared to reviews calling it 'the book of the working class,' the workers' guide and educator of a new type of man" (Ibid., 102). Wall also notes that notes for suggested readings from Fils du Peuple and Thorez's Oeuvres appeared monthly in Cahiers du Communisme, along with study questions (Ibid., 140).

devotees. However, before this crucial year, it was de rigueur for party leadership and many French Communists or their sympathizers to rationalize or deny violent acts perpetrated by Communists.

French intellectuals' often blind embrace of Stalinism has been chronicled by many, and continues to elicit scathing commentary up to the present day. Tony Judt's recent book is a merciless indictment of Communist and fellow traveller intellectuals in France after the war. He discusses how few in France spoke out against the show trials in the Soviet Union and the Eastern European "democracies." Judt observes that the 1936-38 Moscow show trials were merely relegated to past history after the war rather than understood as "institutional characteristics of communism."⁴¹ He notes that "nonpartisan Western commentators" only began to "take notice" of Communist repression in Eastern Europe with the 1947 execution of Nicola Petkov in Bulgaria, and details a series of under-reported horrors including the "crescendo of political trials culminating in that of László Rajk in Budapest" in 1949; the 1949 purges and trial of Koci Xoxe in Albania; the massive purges and trials in Czechoslovakia that came to a head with the trial of Rudolf Slánsky and thirteen others in 1952; and the Romanian trials "reaching into 1954" with the

⁴¹Tony Judt, Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944-1956, 102.

case against Lucretiu Patrascanu.⁴² As a brief example of how French Communists blinded themselves to accusations leveled against their Eastern European comrades, consider the following exchange characteristic of P.C.F. vituperation.

In 1949, David Rousset, a cofounder with Sartre, Albert Camus, and Gérard Rosenthal of the Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire (R.D.R.), appealed to all former political deportees to lobby for a commission to investigate alleged human rights violations in Soviet work camps. P.C.F. officials were infuriated since they were already under scrutiny by anti-Communist commentators because of several of the more spectacular trials and purges in Eastern Europe.⁴³ Five days later, P.C.F. member Pierre Daix accused Rousset of "trying to divert attention from the injustices of the capitalist world and of fomenting a new,

⁴²Ibid., 103-105. The Soviet "doctors' plot" of 1953 in which several Jewish doctors were accused of killing Zhdanov in 1948 and of plotting with the U.S. and Zionists to kill Stalin, received prominent coverage in the Communist press. In L'Humanité, Roger Garaudy compared the accused doctors to Nazi death camp doctors, arguing that many of the latter had also been Jews (Wall, 162, citing Roger Garaudy, L'Humanité, 14 January, 2 February 1953). The doctors were rehabilitated later the same year.

⁴³Caute, Communism and the French Intellectuals, 1914-1960, 183. Marshal Josef Tito of Yugoslavia was one of the more high profile victims of Soviet purges. "Among the catalogue of Tito's sins was the accusation of a 'Bukharinite' policy in the countryside, a coddling of the capitalist peasantry providing the social basis of a revived petty-bourgeois nationalism" (Wall, 76). Yugoslavia was expelled from the Soviet bloc in 1948 for its deviations from orthodox Stalinism.

Hitlerian war against the Soviet Union."⁴⁴ Daix argued that only corrective labor existed in the U.S.S.R., and that citizens received a maximum sentence of one month from popularly-elected judges whom citizens had the power to dismiss. Daix's statement deeply angered Sartre and his colleague Merleau-Ponty. In January 1950, they examined mounting evidence compiled from press items and accounts from former prisoners, and declared that forced labor without judgement and time limit did indeed exist in the U.S.S.R., "accessing the probable number of detainees at between ten and fifteen million."⁴⁵ Ignoring their evidence and refusing to engage in a true dialogue over the issue, Daix merely asked of the two philosophers: "With whom are you? With the people of the Soviet Union, who are building a new society, or with their enemies?"⁴⁶ As Judt records, such blind loyalty to Stalin led to dramatic schisms within the P.C.F. itself, and the French party orchestrated its own purges in which the ousted were "accused of deviations similar to those of the East European victims (Titoism, nationalism, indiscipline, and so on)."⁴⁷ Among Communist ranks, hero worship often had extremely dire

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid., quoting Daix in Les Lettres francaises, 19 January 1950.

⁴⁷Judt, Past Imperfect, 111.

consequences.

The French Communist Party's Heroic Aesthetic and Picasso

Picasso linked his person and his work to the P.C.F. cause when he joined the party in 1944, and participated in the party's production of noble and accessible images. His portraits of key Communist officials such as Thorez proffered a bland naturalism vaguely in keeping with the party's embrace of Social Realism from 1947. Picasso's 1949 peace dove, cranked out in countless variations for P.C.F. Congress posters, scarves, and mass-produced party bibelots such as plates, concretely embody Picasso's use value as the party's heroic leader of the Communist peace offensive.

In the story on the front page of the Communist newspaper L'Humanité that announced Picasso's decision to join the "Parti de la Renaissance française" (party of the French Renaissance), Picasso is billed not only as the most famous living artist and the master of contemporary painting, but as a participant in the Spanish resistance against Franco.⁴⁸ In another article, he is virtually canonized by Éluard in the heroic language typical of French Communist writers:

Today I saw Pablo Picasso and Marcel Cachin embrace one another. And I witnessed the nobility of [the artist's] mind and heart while hearing Picasso thank

⁴⁸Marcel Cachin, "Picasso a apporté son adhésion au Parti de la Renaissance française," L'Humanité, 5 October 1944, 1.

the people of France while joining its greatest party: that of those shot [as Resistance fighters]."⁹

Grandiose hymns such as this--like the noble portrayals of the masculine combatant plastered across popular imagery--had great ideological currency during reconstruction because they promoted the notion of man as enlightened, powerful, and committed: a hero capable of rebuilding a destroyed nation. Because social and political problems just after the war were extreme and overwhelming, the cultural sphere quickly became very important, because for many, it appeared to be one arena that could be stabilized and controlled. Indeed, P.C.F. adherents took this notion one step further: they believed that art could promote social change. They therefore embraced inspirational, didactic work portrayed in an accessible, naturalistic manner. Heroic subject matter figured through Soviet Social Realism--modified by nationalistic references to past great French art--became the primary P.C.F. standard.

Initially, French Communists debated the question of a party style. Writer Roger Garaudy maintained that "There is not a Communist party aesthetic.... A Communist painter has the right to paint like Picasso. And he has the right to

⁹"J'ai vu aujourd'hui Pablo Picasso et Marcel Cachin s'embrasser. Et j'ai vérifié la noblesse de l'intelligence et du coeur en entendant Picasso remercier le peuple de France en adhérant à son plus grand Parti: celui des Fusillés" (Paul Éluard, "Promesse inouïe," L'Humanité, 5 October 1944, 1). Cachin founded L'Humanité in 1904.

paint otherwise."⁵⁰ However, dialogue was quickly shut down by Aragon, the P.C.F.'s primary cultural spokesman. Responding to Garaudy in Les Lettres françaises, the newspaper for cultural affairs that Aragon would take over in 1952, the former surrealist maintained that the P.C.F. did have an aesthetic and that it was realism.⁵¹ Indeed, Aragon became one of the most prominent champions of French Social Realism, or Nouveau Réalisme, the term he first employed in his 1937 speech "Réalisme socialiste et réalisme français" ("Socialist Realism and French Realism") reprinted in 1949 in Nouvelle critique. In this essay he singles out the work of fifteenth-century French painters, Watteau, the Le Nain brothers, Chardin, David, Courbet, Manet, Seurat, Cézanne, and Picasso. Stylistically, the artists Aragon admires vary widely, but he implies that each articulates a reality specific to his time:

At the critical moment of all new art, of that which has the least air of being preoccupied with reality, there is reality first. Look at an apple in a Cézanne, the apple which was no longer a sufficient subject for painting, as the landscape was still not a sufficient subject in the time of Poussin. Look at the packet of tobacco at the beginning of Cubism. Again, real

⁵⁰"Il n'y a pas une esthétique du parti communiste.... Un peintre communiste a le droit de peindre comme Picasso. Et il a le droit de peindre autrement" (Roger Garaudy, "Artistes sans uniformes," Arts de France no. 9 [October 1946], quoted in Sarah Wilson, "Debats autour du Réalisme Socialiste," Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris-Paris 1937-1957 [Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou and Gallimard, 1981; 1992], 308).

⁵¹Louis Aragon, "L'Art zone libre?," Les Lettres françaises, 29 November 1946, quoted in *Ibid.*

objects enter painting as when Hugo introduced the pear in a poem. This is what the future heralds.⁵²

Such a perspective provided Aragon with latitude to praise the work of both those like party favorite André Fougeron who painted in the style of Social Realism, and artists like Picasso, whose work rarely conformed to Soviet art dictates. Indeed, as Sarah Wilson details in her dissertation on French leftist art and politics from ca. 1935 - 1955, Aragon presided over a divided party art policy.

The double promotion of both hardline militant painters and more prestigious "peace fighters" in the arts allowed a stylistic flexibility and a hold on aspects of later modernism essential to the French Communist Party's intellectual and artistic prestige. Condoned to some extent by the Cominform at World Peace Congresses in the 1950s, this bipartite policy differed vastly from the prescribed academic art current in the Soviet Union, and was to create irreconcilable tensions exposed in the debates of 1952-3.⁵³

Picasso's party membership was a double-edged sword for

⁵²"Au moment aigu de tout art nouveau, de celui qui a le moins l'air de se préoccuper de la réalité, il y a la réalité d'abord. Voyez la pomme chez Cézanne, la pomme qui ne suffisait plus à faire un tableau, comme du temps de Poussin ne suffisait pas encore le paysage. Voyez au début du cubisme le paquet de tabac. De nouveaux objets réels entrent dans la peinture comme lorsque Hugo introduit la poire dans un poème. C'est cela que l'avenir retiendra" (Louis Aragon, "Réalisme socialiste et réalisme français" Aragon: Écrits sur l'art moderne, ed. Jean Ristat with a Preface by Jacques Leenhardt [1937; reprint, Paris: Flammarion, 1981], 62).

⁵³Sarah Wilson, "Art and Politics of the Left in France, ca. 1935-1955" (Ph.D. diss., The Courtauld Institute, 1992), 392. One of these debates centered on Les journées d'étude de plasticiens of 1952, a conference on party art policy called by Larent Casanova (the P.C.F. liaison with intellectuals) at Aragon's request (see chapter 2, 24, n. 42). The second debate to which Wilson refers is the Stalin portrait scandal, which I detail in chapter 2.

Communist officials: the distortion in most of his work radically diverged from orthodox Soviet art, but his fame provided the P.C.F. with an invaluable public relations tool. Indeed, Picasso's prominent role in the 1946 exhibition "Art et Résistance," organized by Les Amis des Francs-Tireurs et partisans français, points to the conflation of the heroic Resistance fighter and the heroic artist that the P.C.F. came to exploit to justify their embrace of Picasso. Picasso's name figures at the top of an exhibitors' statement also issued by the famous but less politically-committed Henri Matisse, Albert Marquet, and Pierre Bonnard. They maintain:

The undersigned are not usually on declarations or manifestoes. Painters, they take painting for their language, and believe that they can better serve their country and humanity by painting than by all other activity. That is why, associating themselves with the exhibition ART ET RÉSISTANCE, they found it natural that their work and their art bear witness to what binds them to French heroism.⁵⁴

As the symbolic leader of the party's peace movement,

⁵⁴"Les soussignés ne sont coutumiers ni des déclarations ni des manifestes. Peintres, ils tiennent la peinture pour leur langage, et croient mieux servir leur pays et l'humanité en peignant que par toute autre activité. C'est pourquoi, s'associant à l'Exposition ART ET RÉSISTANCE, ils ont trouvé que leur travail et leur art témoignassent de ce qui les lie à le héroïsme français..." (Artist statement signed by Picasso, Matisse, Marquet, and Bonnard for "Art et Résistance," an exhibition organized by Les Amis des Francs-Tireurs et partisans français at the Musée des Arts Modernes, 15 February - 15 March 1946, n.p.).

Picasso was glorified as a heroic man.⁵⁵ However, Picasso won this adulation at the expense of being taken seriously as an artist: the P.C.F. ignored or refuted the rich particularity of his work. Valued for his celebrity status, he was devalued as an artist, a phenomenon that I will explore in greater depth in chapter 2.

Sartre and the Existentialist Hero

Just as the overwhelming experiences of war, occupation, and liberation prompted the French to turn toward heroes to negotiate complex realities, these historical events also occasioned profound explorations of personal identity. While many were content to lose themselves in the opposing forms of heroic collectivity offered by de Gaulle and the P.C.F., others were extremely wary of any move that suggested surrendering their selves to an outside force. For these individuals, such a perceived

⁵⁵Picasso served as a leader of another politically-charged organization, the Front National des Arts (F.N.A.). He was named president of the F.N.A. in 1943, when its initial president Maurice Denis was killed in a car accident. One of the first orders of business for the F.N.A. (which met in Picasso's rue des Grands Augustins studio) was to hand down "les décrets de l'indignité nationale" to artists accused of collaboration during the war. André Fougeron, appointed Secretary General of the organization, was put in charge of this task (see Wilson, "Art and Politics of the Left in France, ca. 1935-1955," 260-266). The exact nature of Picasso's involvement in this committee has yet to be clearly defined: it certainly afforded him prestige and provoked fear and hostility in those artists who had cause to believe that they would be severely judged by the F.N.A.

abnegation suggested the fascist mass movements that lead to World War II. Indeed, the seemingly inhuman phenomena of wartime and postwar great power politics and technology made many feel that both world and local events were orchestrated by forces beyond their control, leaving multitudes hungry for the experience of personal freedom. The confusing and painful realities of collaboration, stridently denounced by vengeful Communists and glossed over by Gaullists and many Catholics,⁵⁶ forced the issue of individual accountability, encouraging many to reflect on his or her role in the social fabric. It was in this milieu that Sartre and his circle found their voices, for

When so much else seemed to indicate human reality was determined and unfree, the existentialists stubbornly and tenaciously advanced the view that to be human was

⁵⁶Henry Rousso details how de Gaulle both condemned Vichy and excused Pétain as a means of retaining the support of those whom he had lead in the Resistance, and of courting pro-Pétain forces. In his bid to wrest power from the Fourth Republic, de Gaulle played "a double game. In calling for a pardon for Pétain, he was not only voicing his own personal sentiments but also distancing himself from the excesses of the purge and, like other political leaders, sought to shift blame to the Communists alone. In continuing to condemn Vichy on principle, however, he remained the supreme résistant.... [He needed] the Resistance and Pétain, as an indispensable element of what was then the basis of his political platform, the call for national unity" (Henry Rousso, The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France Since 1944, 39). Rousso also argues that "the culture of traditional Catholicism played a crucial part in shaping and sustaining a Pétainist view of history.... The Association pour Défendre la Mémoire du Maréchal Pétain [A.D.M.P.] openly proclaimed its adherence to traditional Catholic values, ... and functioned like a religious sect and developed a veritable catechism of maréchalisme" (Ibid., 297-298). See n. 13 on Catholic collaboration during the war.

to be free.⁵⁷

For Sartre, de Beauvoir and other existentialists, individual freedom meant the ability of consciousness to transcend the brute materiality of the person as an object, thus enabling the person to act as a subject who shapes his or her situation. The person in bad faith permitted him- or herself to be an object: to define him- or herself through others' perspectives and expectations. Sartre's initial work dismisses that which circumscribes the absolute autonomy of the individual: he discounted the very real constraints that historical and material circumstance impose on people, decried any form of collective action, and loathed the supposed controlling gaze of others: the look that defines an individual in terms outside his or her own intentionality. Sartre's writing (notably his 1943 existentialist credo Being and Nothingness), is invested in the power of individual intentionality. Extraordinarily hostile to distanced, contemplative thought, Sartre articulated a theory of being that rejected "an opaque transcendental ego intruding into the translucency of pure, active consciousness."⁵⁸ The philosopher dispensed with theoretical positions that posit a roadblock between

⁵⁷Arthur Hirsh, The French New Left: An Intellectual History from Sartre to Gorz (Boston: South End Press, 1981), 22.

⁵⁸Martin Jay, Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 186.

individuals and direct experience. Sartre dismissed Edmund Husserl's notion of the "I" and Sigmund Freud's idea of the unconscious because both disrupted the model of consciousness as pure spontaneity.⁵⁹ Sartre argued that men and women must organize the real through imagination and then take charge of their experience through action rather than contemplation.

... imagination is precisely the active function of consciousness that transcends or nihilates the reality of the perceived world. As such, it serves as a model for the negation and lack that Sartre would soon identify with the "for-itself" [consciousness] in Being and Nothingness. What is vital for understanding his larger argument is that Sartre distinguished images from perception, visual or otherwise, and identified them with the intentionality of action instead. As a result, he was able to describe consciousness less in terms of visual transparency than in those of pure nihilating action.⁶⁰

In his 1938 Nausea, Sartre showed how materiality resists individuals' attempts to transcend and control brute reality through abstract, purely reflective conceptualization. Sartre's hero Roquentin is nauseated by the base, tactile otherness of experience that cannot be made meaningful through "visual reflection" that turns things into "conceptual ideas."⁶¹ Roquentin is separated from concrete

⁵⁹Ibid. Jay states "the later Sartre would nuance his categorical opposition between transparent consciousness and the alien opacity introduced into it from without, in the first phase of his work, it reigned supreme" (Ibid). In his later work, Sartre would make some use of psychoanalytic concepts to do so.

⁶⁰Ibid., 283.

⁶¹Ibid., 286.

interaction with reality because he draws on abstract categories of thought; were he actively involved with shaping his life, with living directly, he would have no opportunity for alienating contemplation. Sartre understood consciousness as immediacy and therefore argued in favor of immediate experience and action. For Sartre,

Consciousness was in the world, like everything else, except that its content, its concrete existence, was not defined by its structure. Consciousness always went beyond what it was, always transcended what it was, fixing and positioning itself in the world.... It was openness itself, a kind of infinity. Furthermore, value or meaning emerged out of the concrete, specific relationships of this consciousness with this world. As a man threw his consciousness into the world, meanings appeared for him, and it was out of his freedom to relate himself to this or that that his values took shape.⁶²

In Sartre's early writing, each person was beyond the reach of any historical particularity, creating him- or herself freely at each moment. Nothing but the freedom of another could circumscribe a subject. Attaching such importance to individual intentionality and will, Sartre logically but paradoxically argued that the relationship between self and other is defined by subordination: the individual needs the other's freedom so that he or she can experience him- or herself as truly free.⁶³ Drawing on

⁶²Mark Poster, Existential Marxism in Postwar France: from Sartre to Althusser (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975), 82-83.

⁶³Judith Butler discusses the sadomasochism in Sartre's model of human interaction in extremely nuanced terms, showing how his terroristic vision of the gaze enfolds within itself a form of mutual empowerment. She focuses on

visual metaphors, Sartre states that when another looks at us, we are defined by all of the value judgments harbored by that gaze.

I grasp the Other's look at the very center of my act as the solidification and alienation of my own possibilities.... The Other as a look is only that--my transcendence transcended. Of course I still am my possibilities in the mode of non-thetic consciousness (of) these possibilities. But at the same time the look alienates them from me."⁶⁴

Sartre's discussion of the relationship between lovers and the philosopher's understanding of desire. "The projects of sadism and masochism necessarily convert into each other, for all flesh gives rise to intentionality and all intentional transcendence requires a ground in corporeal life.... the sadist can only pursue his project of domination insofar as he blinds himself to the futility of the reflexive project simultaneously at work, i.e., the pursuit of disembodiment. The sadist requires of the masochist ... to be the body the sadist endeavors not to be.... [However,] enjoyment or pleasure foils the sexual project of disembodiment, for pleasure reveals consciousness as a body..." (Judith P. Butler, Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France [New York: Columbia University Press, 1987], 145). The masochist's relationship to corporeality is more obvious: s/he identifies him- or herself fully with the body being looked at in order to support the other's freedom bound within the gaze. The value of Sartre's sadomasochist model arises from the fluidity of its positions, and especially because each position "appropriate[s] the power of the negative and express[es] it in the form of freedom (Ibid., 151). Indeed, Butler argues that for Sartre, desire had a constitutive role: "before the look of the Other, the self is a body and sustains instrumental relations with the world, but remains at a distance from its own flesh and from the sensible presence of Others and the world.... The desire of the Other brings that self into being; it does not cause that self to exist, but rather, to assume its being, that is, to begin its process of creating itself through determinate acts which are affirmed through the recognition of the Other" (Ibid.).

⁶⁴Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966), 352.

This emphasis on individual intentionality which both enables people to define themselves and to be defined by others, points to the major flaw in Sartre's early program for social reconstruction. The philosopher embraced the goal of Socialist society, the breakdown of all hierarchies so that human interaction would consist of free relations among free individuals. However, since he perceived others as always delimiting the individual, it is unclear from his early writing how total transformation of the social is meant to transpire.⁶⁵

Thus, although Sartre argued that authoritarian postwar communism required a theory of individual subjectivity to be truly democratic and effective (a critique that helped launch the reformulation of Marxism by the French left), his initial dogmatic eschewal of historical materialism severely limited his early philosophy as a social theory. However, although existentialism originally provided no blueprint for collective action, it gained tremendous coverage in the critical and popular press, spawning a faddish and fashionable following. As Annie Cohen-Solal explains, existentialism became

a meaningless word that everybody seemed to understand, a presumed philosophical movement that everybody seemed to know, a vague and nebulous daily behavior that

⁶⁵Hirsh, The New French Left, 29.

everybody seemed to adopt.⁶⁶

Existentialism's conflicted coupling of despairing social relations and transcendent heroic individuality spoke to a generation crushed by the horrors of war who wished to reclaim their selves and remake their world. Sartre's rejection of the bourgeois institutions and values associated with the painful wartime and immediate postwar periods--especially Pétain's glorification of nation, family, and church--outraged but fascinated many, and certainly spoke to rebellious youth. Indeed, Sartre's ideas were so stimulating that those who had trouble wading through the philosopher's hefty Being and Nothingness turned towards Christine Cronan's Petit catéchisme de l'existentialisme pour les profanes (A Small Catechism of Existentialism for the Profane), "an accelerated, hypervulgarized course in existentialism, a digest for every occasion ... [that] sold like hot cakes."⁶⁷ Sartre's message that the individual can cast off oppressive institutions and redefine him- or herself in terms freely determined by that self, seemed to elevate each individual to the hero of his or her own life.

⁶⁶Annie Cohen-Solal, Sartre: A Life, trans. Anna Cancogni, ed. Norman Macafee (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987), 264.

⁶⁷Ibid.

Sartre and Heroic Art

Sartre's 1947 "What is Literature?" politicized this credo by calling for politically-engaged writing. In this essay, Sartre argues that the writer should use transparent, clear language to reveal the truth about the world. He maintains that this revelation will prompt the writer and his/her readers to assume responsibility for this truth: to insure that it permits rather than represses individuals' freedom. Sartre denounces poets as writers who are unwilling to use language to promote action, describing them as creators of opaque texts who merely play with language's formal capacities. He also downplays painting, for he sees it acting primarily as a carrier of emotion and of multiple meanings "that can never quite be heard and that would take an infinity of words to express."⁶⁸ This impatience with ambiguity and insistence that language both reveal the truth and direct behavior parallels de Gaulle's and the P.C.F.'s faith in heroic didacticism: The Edge of the Sword's blueprint for the reinvigoration of military leadership, and Social Realism's crusade to illustrate and incite worker solidarity. Although Sartre's text develops insightful critiques of capitalist and Communist instrumentalization of

⁶⁸Jean-Paul Sartre, "What is Literature?," in "What is Literature?" and Other Essays, with an Introduction by Steven Ungar (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), 28.

individuals,⁶⁹ his primary thesis is that the "free" writer must turn him- or herself into a productive agent who rejects "useless" expressions of creativity in order to manufacture a clear message.

The most beautiful book in the world will not save a child from pain; one does not redeem evil, one fights it; the most beautiful book in the world redeems itself; it also redeems the artist. But not the man. Any more than the man redeems the artist. We want the man and the artist to work their salvation together, we want the work to be at the same time an act; we want it to be explicitly conceived as a weapon in the struggle that men wage against evil.⁷⁰

Sartre stridently promoted this model of heroic individual engagement through the 1940s and into the early 1950s. In 1952, following the failure of his *Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire* (meant to be a collective of politically engaged individuals); continued French support for de Gaulle; American aggression in Korea; and the French government's brutal suppression of Communist anti-American demonstrations, Sartre abruptly shifted his allegiance from a model of individual action to the P.C.F. conception of collective action. However, as Merleau-Ponty argued in his 1955 Adventures of the Dialectic, when Sartre embraced Stalinism, he merely replaced his faith in the supreme power

⁶⁹He notes: "Two world powers, neither of which is bourgeois and neither of which is European, are disputing the possession of the universe. The triumph of one means the advent of state control and international bureaucracy; of the other, the coming of abstract capitalism. Everybody a civil servant? Everybody an employee?" (Ibid., 200).

⁷⁰Ibid., 240.

of the cogito with that of the proletariat. Merleau-Ponty understood that it was Sartre's

"purely subjective" philosophy ... [that lead] Sartre to his "purely" activist communism--which no longer ... [believed] in truth or revolution or history," and which ... [conceived of] the Party in terrorist fashion as the infallible interpreter of the will of the proletariat."⁷¹

Unlike Sartre, in the 1950s, Merleau-Ponty was not able to justify repressive behavior (such as that evidenced in the two philosophers' exposé of Soviet labor camps) with the argument that excesses are tolerable in light of Stalinism's larger beneficial project.⁷² So, although Sartre jettisoned his earlier rejection of collective action and seemingly surrendered his insistence on individual autonomy, his 1952 - 1956 courtship with Stalinism in fact merely

⁷¹Anna Boschetti, The Intellectual Enterprise: Sartre and "Les Temps modernes", trans. Richard C. McCleary (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 203.

⁷²It is very important to note that in 1947, Merleau-Ponty was able to argue that the ends may justify the means. In his essay "Humanism and Terror" of that year he stated that we may suppose that history has meaning and that the proletariat and the Communists are the bearers of revolutionary change. He claimed that "if these premises are correct, then the purges and show trials of the thirties in Moscow are shown to have been not only tactically and strategically wise but historically just.... The verdict of the future is not yet in. But we have no choice but to act as though it will be positive, because to renounce Marxism ... would be to dig the grave of Reason in history" (Judt, 120). By 1952, Merleau-Ponty was disabused of his faith in communism and retreated from his 1947 position. See H. Stuart Hughes' The Obstructed Path for a fuller explication of Merleau-Ponty's argument and an account of the philosopher's ultimate repudiation of communism (H. Stuart Hughes, Between Commitment and Disillusion: The Obstructed Path and The Sea Change, 1930-1965 [Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1987], 200-203).

substituted his model of individual heroism for that of collective heroism tied to a supreme individual will: that of Stalin. As I have already illustrated, this dynamic in the abstract also structures de Gaulle's conception of heroism.

Heroism and Commodity Culture

The various versions of the hero cult that I have examined so far share an emphasis on subordinating aspects of one's individuality to a larger project that intends the reconfiguration of history and social experience. The individual is encouraged to identify with a higher good embodied in heroic leaders or creators, or in the case of existentialism, in a free, heroic self that paradoxically, must offer up constructive projects to recreate the real. The emphasis on defining the self through the other that existentialism openly expressed and that Gaullism and French Communism obfuscated, was acted out in other social relations that were equally powerful as the hero cult. The postwar economic boom that bred consumer culture in France also encouraged individuals to see themselves in external reflections of their own subjectivity. Just as adherence to versions of the hero cult promised to lift French citizens from the difficult or banal particulars of their lives, consuming an ever expanding array of goods and services appeared to herald a fuller existence. The actual cost of

cost of investing in commodities, and the relationship it bears to investing in heroes is best expressed in the postwar explosion of the entertainment industry, where heroes were most obviously commodities.

The entertainment industry, propelled by developments in mass communication crowned by the advent of television, was a crucial component of postwar French society. Reconstruction efforts in France spawned extraordinary economic growth in the 1950s that provided citizens with increased spending power and a plethora of commodities meant to enhance lifestyles. Eager to rebuild a materially and psychically impoverished nation after the disasters of war and collaboration, Fourth Republic governments steadily actualized goals set forward in the 1947-53 economic plan authored by Jean Monnet and the 1954-57 economic plan put forward by Etienne Hirsch. The first focused on the development of the agricultural machinery, cement, coal, electricity, steel, and transportation industries; and the second sought a broader development of the economy by facilitating improvements in agriculture, external trade, housing, living standards, and industrial modernization. Far-ranging changes were effected by a general strategic shift in government planning: policy making went from the hands of parliament members to the administration's "strong-

willed premiers or finance ministers."⁷³

A program loosely connected to planning was the government-sponsored productivity drive ... [which] owed its inspiration to the Americans who staffed the Marshall Plan mission in France. They proposed organizing French labor-management visits to the United States in order to help the French catch up with the best practice. In 1950 a decree established a Comité National de la Productivité ... [which] was to advise the government on how to promote productivity.... The committee enthusiastically adopted the American consumer economy and the American human relations approach to industrial relations. It launched a campaign to change the spending habits of French consumers, inform industrialists, and calm labor's fears about raising output.⁷⁴

The resulting managed economy, organized by technocrats⁷⁵ and facilitated by government and big-business collaboration, was enormously successful in economic terms. Based on conditions in 1949, purchasing power went up by 18 points in 1953 and steadily rose to an increase of 45 points in 1957. Production rates from 1949 to 1953 through 1957 also shot up dramatically: in 1953 household appliances went up 102 points, and radios, TVs, and record players went up

⁷³Richard F. Kuisel, Capitalism and the State in Modern France: Renovation and Economic Management in the Twentieth Century (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 254-255.

⁷⁴Ibid., 262-263.

⁷⁵"France's industrial take-off during the 1950s led to changing demands being placed upon the workforce: more technical and managerial staff were needed to run the new industries, at the expense firstly of farmers, and later of manual workers" (Henri Mendras with Alistair Cole, Social Change in Modern France: Towards a Cultural Anthropology of the Fifth Republic [Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press; Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1991], 41).

66 points; by 1957 the former had increased by 462 points and the latter by 413 points.⁷⁶

These last two statistics point to lifestyle changes that affected other first world nations after World War II and that characterize consumer culture: the streamlining of work afforded by technological developments and the commodification of leisure. Although it is indisputable that France's material circumstances improved dramatically, individuals' experiences of consumerism were far from uniformly positive. The popular Poujadist movement pointed to the fact that many citizens felt swallowed up by the effects of a managed economy. Shopkeeper Pierre Poujade and his supporters argued that the French were "being drugged by 'progressive' propaganda about efficiency while the planners surreptitiously sought to eliminate small farms and shops."⁷⁷ Indeed, increased technologization and bureaucratization encouraged isolation within professional and political life: people often came to experience themselves as cogs in the wheels of large-scale industry at a distant remove from their government. However, French

⁷⁶These statistics appear in Nicholas Wahl, The Fifth Republic: France's New Political System, 21. In Wahl's table, increases are based on the value of 100 being assigned to the year 1949.

⁷⁷Kuisel, Capitalism and the State in Modern France, 271. Poujade began his grass-roots movement in 1953 and organized it around what he believed to be unjustly heavy taxes aimed at small business. His Union de défense des commerçants et artisans (U.D.C.A.) came to take on larger issues, putting its clout behind a French Algeria.

modernization and its eradication of the particular in favor of the large-scale, bred a form of collectivization that harbored within itself a paradoxical and false promise of individual fulfillment. This sham redemption is evident in 1950s advertising which promises that big business' time-saving appliances and leisure goods hold the key to personal happiness and gratification (figs. 14 and 15). A similar form of salvation was offered through the stars of the entertainment industry, packaged celebrities who functioned as glamorous surrogates for affirming inter-personal relationships. As Edgar Morin argues:

The ethics of leisure was born from the new needs of the twentieth century; it orients the affirmation of personality beyond the cursed zone of 'piece-work' to the exaltation of those activities which counterbalance and cast such servitude into oblivion. The star ... expresses the ideals of the ethics of leisure; but, furthermore, provides these ideals with a concrete outlet by offering them the most exquisite, most entrancing, most individualistic, most immediately consumable fruit of leisure: love.⁷⁸

Although the amorous does not specifically inform every consumer's relationship to a star, the lover's surrender of self to another in order to recover an enhanced self through that other certainly describes the consumer-star relationship. This is the site where the hero cult and commodity culture meet, and both phenomena found expression through Picasso.

⁷⁸Edgar Morin, The Stars: An Account of the Star System in Motion Pictures, trans. Richard Howard, Evergreen Profile Book 7 (New York: Grove Press, Inc.; London: John Calder, 1960), 177.

Picasso the Star as Cultural Commodity

In the 1949 article "Picasso: l'homme le plus discuté du monde," author René Miquel asserts:

There is a Picasso case as there is a de Gaulle case, a Stalin case, a Maurice Chevalier case. Picasso has been a subject of passionate conversation for forty years, but especially since 1945, the year when his name and his personality overflowed the surroundings of art lovers, snobs, and worldly people to penetrate common surroundings, right up to the office. He is everywhere, in Beverly Hills and in Rio de Janeiro, in Stockholm and in Moscow. He's also the most talked about man in the world and more without doubt for aesthetic questions (of which most people--they avow--don't hear a drop) than because one canvas by him, that he produces in several hours, is worth a fortune.⁷⁹

Notably, the author compares Picasso's fame to that of two important political heroes in France, and to that of a star entertainer of the period. For Picasso occupied both the political and entertainment milieus. His fame as an artistic innovator was neatly appropriated by the P.C.F., who pushed him as their heroic cultural icon, and his resulting increased visibility fed into the burgeoning postwar entertainment industry's promotion of saleable

⁷⁹ "Il y a un cas Picasso comme il y a un cas de Gaulle, un cas Staline, un cas Maurice Chevalier. Picasso est un sujet de conversation passionnée depuis quarante ans, mais spécialement depuis 1945, année où son nom et sa personnalité ont débordé le cadre des amateurs, des snobs et des gens du monde pour pénétrer dans le commun, jusqu'à l'office. Il est partout, à Beverley-Hills et à Rio-de-Janeiro, à Stockholm et à Moscou. C'est aussi l'homme le plus discuté du monde et plus sans doute pour des questions d'esthétique (auxquelles la plupart des gens--ils l'avouent --n'entendent goutte) que parce qu'une toile de lui, qu'il enlève en quelques heures, vaut une fortune" (René Miquel, "Picasso: l'homme le plus discuté du monde," 19, unidentified article in the Picasso Archives, Musée Picasso, Paris).

personalities. Picasso's association with powerful political and cultural figures, his wealth, and his romances with considerably younger women, fascinated a public conditioned to invest in larger-than-life figures. Following his ironic observations about the value of Picasso's art, Miguel notes, and a 1960 survey in the women's magazine Réalités confirms, that Picasso's art mattered little to a public fascinated with his persona. Sympathetic and sycophantic responses to questions about the artist as a man figure throughout the magazine's poll; however, overwhelmingly hostile remarks surface when people answer questions about the man as an artist. Jean Clay, who comments on the results of the survey, concludes with a truism that the P.C.F. exploited: that the majority of French people expect an artist to provide them with an image that is "faithful" to nature and inspiring.⁸⁰ Clay also observes that:

... the survey enables us to measure the abyss that separates contemporary creators--even the most renowned--from the general public. Modern means of diffusion have greatly contributed to disseminating names, to making reputations: it is by radio, magazines, film (documentaries and current events films), television--look at popular singers--that the crowd has heard about such painter or such style. But one would believe that the mass media only spread anecdotes, picturesque or familiar details that surround the life of an artist without ever showing his

⁸⁰Jean Clay, with a Survey directed by Marthe de la Rochfoucauld, "Les Français jugent Picasso," Réalités: femina - illustration no. 169 (February 1960): 73.

without ever showing his profound aim as a creator.⁸¹

David Douglas Duncan's books that document Picasso's later years through photographs epitomize this phenomenon: although many of the pictures represent Picasso the artist, or record works that Picasso created, a great number of the images are devoted to portraying Picasso the entertainer: a clown peering from behind masks of his own making or striding about in the costumes which appear to have littered his various homes in the south of France (figs. 16 and 17). Indeed, a 1957 Time profile of the artist, which notes Picasso's wealth and labels him a "living legend," records carefully the legend's whimsical ways:

He picks up a black Spanish cape from a pile of clothes, flings it around his shoulders with the lordly grace of a matador, tops it off with a Spanish hat from the pile.... Next thing the visitor knows, Picasso is romping on the lawn with his pet goat.⁸²

The number of visual and verbal images of Picasso as entertainer and as entertainment suggest that the artist participated in a dynamic that Andy Warhol would later

⁸¹ "... l'enquête permet de mesurer l'abîme qui sépare les créateurs contemporains--même les plus renommés--de la masse du public. Les moyens de diffusion modernes ont fortement contribué à répandre des noms, à fabriquer des réputations: c'est par la radio, les magazines, le cinéma (documentaires et actualités), la télévision--voire les chansonniers--que les foules ont entendu parler de tel peintre ou tel style. Mais on croirait que les "mass-media" n'ont diffusé que les anecdotes, les détails pittoresques ou familiers qui entourent la vie d'un artiste sans jamais montrer sa visée profonde de créateur" (Ibid.).

⁸² "Picasso: Protean Genius of Modern Art," Time, 27 May 1957, 80.

whole-heartedly exploit: the artist as a vehicle for the postwar media (expanded through television) to produce a spectacle for an increasingly commodity-oriented public to consume. This spectacle, whether played out in the Communist or "bourgeois" press, followed a consistent logic despite the differences in the images of Picasso offered (heroic Resistance fighter or clowning living legend): the production of "a single dazzling, protean, visually produced persona-- ... which appears to be everywhere and also nowhere."⁶³

Picasso's friend and fellow Communist Hélène Parmelin produced the verbal analog to Duncan's visual record of the artist as a subject both everywhere and nowhere. Her multiple personal accounts of Picasso as man and artist (luxurious publications which follow the same lush, coffee-table art book format that Duncan also used) alternate between adoring praise for his art and humanity, and biting criticism of his selfish and sometimes cruel behavior. She paints a verbal image of a creator both overwhelmingly in control of others and out of control of himself. Parmelin vividly describes the desire that Picasso generated: his fame drew people from all walks of life to him. Some wanted his financial resources, some wanted to bask in the light of his stardom, and others wanted his work, for the latter

⁶³Linda Nochlin, response to "Traditions of the Self," symposium papers for the Whitney Humanities Center, The Yale Journal of Criticism vol.5, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 119-120.

could secure a buyer's prestige or promote a personal or public cause.⁸⁴ The mountains of material collected in Picasso's archives attest to the artist's magnetism: boxes of correspondence from all over the world, ranging from the thanks of striking French miners grateful for financial support to queries from wealthy American collectors interested in purchasing paintings. If, as Parmelin attests, Picasso passed an eye over everything that was sent to him (even if he viewed a fraction of what remains of his papers), he must have struggled to carve out private time for his own work. Indeed, Parmelin argues that Picasso declared war against himself and those who sought him out:

He fought against himself, who wanted and did not want to see those whom he wanted and did not want to see, but more often did not want than did want, even when they were they dearest friends in the world.... He fought against recommendations and letters of introduction, against the journalist who telephoned him from New York for his opinion about the easing of tension in the international situation, and against the press agencies who besieged his house at the slightest incident in the art world or elsewhere.⁸⁵

This fame may have generated desire--the spectacle that produced the endless barrage of requests to have a little of what Picasso had (money, genius)--but in itself does not seem to have been very desirable. As a public persona, Picasso had only what privacy his money could buy, and even

⁸⁴See Hélène Parmelin, "The King of Californie," chapter in Picasso Plain: An Intimate Portrait, trans. Humphrey Hare (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1963).

⁸⁵Ibid., 74.

palatial homes in southern France far from the French capital did not guarantee seclusion when he wanted it. Nor did his fame insure respect or carefully measured critical appraisal. His notoriety merely meant that all that he did would be examined, and that because of his elevated status, his work would most likely be thoughtlessly praised by those who wanted to be close to him or dismissed by those who wished to dethrone him.

Pierre Reverdy's 1957 prose poem "Picasso: Solidarity of the Genius and the Dwarf," captures the more chilling aspects of the artist's fame. Reverdy describes Picasso as a man who has "created and organized the greatest, most efficient, the most solid system of publicity in the world."⁸⁶ He also observes that this phenomenon is a particular effect of the historical moment and its investment in persona:

We have arrived at a time when it is no longer the work, but the man that counts. The work is only an instrument of publicity to attract attention to the man who produced it. That is why we must try to discover what is most remarkable in him...⁸⁷

In comments that he assigns to Picasso, Reverdy evokes the burden of Picasso's fame:

Oh, but genius is not at all what people think. In fact, it is nothing but a kind of emptiness in the pit of the stomach, an obsession, a mania, an awful blank,

⁸⁶Pierre Reverdy, "Picasso: Solidarity of the Genius and the Dwarf," translated by Louise Varèse, Art News Annual 26 (1957): 193.

⁸⁷Ibid.

a vice, an excess of proliferation, a tyranny which creates another, and leaves you not a day or night of peace or sleep, rivets you to the quest for fame--that puff of smoke which barely is able to appease for fleeting moments the terrible throbbing pains of ambition. Tyrannized by inexorable ambition, a genius is the man who in turn is royally provided with the means of tyrannizing others. Why should he--how could he leave them in peace since he is in the same hell which the most mediocre of them succeed in being so cheaply happy?⁸⁸

In subsequent chapters, I will determine how Picasso's series after canonical paintings by master artists relate specifically to Picasso's fame, how these works are intimately tied to Picasso's production of himself as a heroic, dazzling, protean persona desperate to escape the emptiness that Reverdy describes. I will develop this argument by drawing on the work of Picasso's critic contemporaries who explored the relations among three important postwar realities: the effects of power cloaked by the hero myth, the rise of consumer society, and alienation in a material and psychic landscape of seeming plenty. However, before I examine Picasso's series after other great painters, I will study a group of Picasso works that seem to challenge the postwar hero myth within which the artist was deeply embedded.

⁸⁸Ibid., 162.

CHAPTER 2

PICASSO'S STALIN PORTRAIT AND VERVE SERIES:
DISMANTLING THE HERO IN POSTWAR FRANCE?

In 1953, Picasso created a portrait and a series that challenge the hero myth pervasive in French society from the wartime through the 1950s: his March 1953 drawing of Stalin for Les Lettres françaises, and his 28 November 1953 - 3 February 1954 works on paper treating the artist and model theme for the publication Verve. Rejection and loss shape the content and structure of both works. Picasso's dismissal of the French Communist Party's aesthetic tenets and the party's repudiation of Picasso's artistic freedom inform the Stalin portrait and its reception. These factors, as well as contemporary artists' rebuke of Picasso's approach to artmaking, Picasso's disdain for their work, and especially Françoise Gilot's split from Picasso, motor the Verve series: degraded depictions of the great artist, the heroic icon to which Picasso was powerfully wedded after World War II. However, although both Picasso's portrait and series destabilize the image of the hero, the artist's cavalier treatment of the monumental Stalin and his debased representation of the male artist cannot be viewed outside of Picasso's own entrapment within the postwar hero myth. Picasso's extraordinary fame enabled him to surmount

attacks occasioned by the Stalin portrait and his investment in this status prompted him to repress his meditations on loss embodied in the Verve pictures.

The drive to idolize Picasso, to bill him as a hero despite his failure to conform to various ideals, absorbed the energies of many, who often had very different relationships to the artist's work. Indeed; the liberal writer Michel Leiris ennobled the masochistic imagery of the Verve series in a critical move that recalls the Stalinist French Communist Party's celebration of human icons such as Picasso. Although Leiris' complex understanding of realism differed radically from that of the party (realism being the core issue of the Stalin portrait affair), the strategy that Leiris developed to "humanize" the difficult and sometimes disagreeable work of Picasso parallels a broad postwar dynamic that sanitized the ambiguity, anxiety, and violence in French postwar experience and its cultural products. The degree to which Picasso's work resists and accommodates sublimation, and the manner in which Leiris' writing contends with the artist's subversion of ideals provide a key to understanding the complex relationship between the realities of and the expectations for image making in reconstruction France.

Picasso and the French Communist Party

Picasso's adherence to the French Communist Party on 4 October 1944 must be viewed in light of the postwar version of the hero cult, especially as embodied in Communist propaganda. The liberation of Paris one and a half months prior to Picasso's declaration of party membership was an enormous victory for the Resistance forces, comprised of numerous Communists. The Resistance fighters' coalition, the Forces françaises de l'intérieur (F.F.I.), contained many Communist combatants from the organization Francs-Tireurs et partisans français (F.T.P.F.), and the F.F.I. freed Paris along with soldiers under General Leclerc. The P.C.F. gained in popularity after liberation, and many French notables, moved by Communist Resistance efforts and attracted to the party's program of humanist ideals, joined P.C.F. ranks.¹

Picasso had not been involved in French Resistance activities, but was almost certainly sympathetic to the movement. Several of his good friends participated in the

¹Sunil Khilnani notes that "between 1945 and 1951 [the P.C.F.] commanded the votes of nearly a third of the French electorate. The rise in the French Party's fortunes was part of a general European pattern; the years immediately following the defeat of Fascist governments seemed, particularly in the countries of Mediterranean Europe, to promise the beginning of sweeping social and institutional improvements" (Sunil Khilnani, Arguing Revolution: The Intellectual Left in Postwar France [New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1993], 17. Sunil cites Tony Judt, ed., Resistance and Revolution in Mediterranean Europe, 1939-1948, London: Routledge, 1989).

Resistance, including the writers Aragon, Éluard, Robert Desnos, Georges Hugnet, and Leiris. Picasso provided assistance to some rebel causes during the war: he contributed money to Spanish republicans, and helped finance the oppositional, clandestine Surrealist group La Main à Plume.² It must be noted, however, that although the Nazis banned him from showing his work, and he claimed not to have sold any during the war,³ Picasso not only sold pieces to individuals associated with the Resistance such as Louise Leiris (who had taken over the gallery of Picasso's Jewish dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler), Éluard, and Hugnet, but exchanged works with the dealer Martin Fabiani, who was later accused of having aided Germans in the disposal of artwork seized from Jews.⁴ Indeed, Picasso even sold a drawing to a German soldier and collector.⁵ These dealings were not common knowledge, and are in keeping with Picasso's contradictory nature, which permeated all aspects of his

²Michèle C. Cone, Artists Under Vichy: A Case of Prejudice and Persecution (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992), 151-152.

³Picasso told an American journalist that he was forbidden to sell his work (Peter D. Whitney, "Picasso is Safe," San Francisco Chronicle, 3 September 1944, Barr Archives, Picasso IX.A.3.; quoted in *Ibid.*, 146).

⁴*Ibid.*, 147-148.

⁵"Ein Stuttgarter Samler als Soldat bei Picasso in Paris," in Stuttgart Staatsgalerie, Picasso in der Stuttgart Staatsgalerie, text by Gunther Thiem and Karin Maur (Stuttgart: Stuttgart Staatsgalerie, 1981), 36, quoted in *Ibid.*, 149.

personal and professional life. Given his eminent prewar stature and the fact that he remained in France despite having been labelled a "degenerate" artist by the Nazis, Picasso was easily incorporated into the postwar and specifically P.C.F. hero cult.⁶

According to Gilot, Picasso's decision to join the party was informed by his friendships with Aragon and Eluard, as well as by his exposure to Laurent Casanova, a Communist Resistance activist (who became the supervisor of P.C.F. intellectuals) sheltered by Michel and Louise Leiris.⁷ It is likely that Picasso, as with many French citizens, genuinely wished to participate in the P.C.F.'s campaign for extended equal rights. He may have felt that his energies and those of other artists could be harnessed to the noble cause of rebuilding a democratic France. He declared:

Joining the Communist party is the logical conclusion of my whole life, my whole work. For, I am proud to state, I have never considered painting as an art of simple entertainment, or escape; I wanted, through line and color, since those were my weapons, to go deeper into the knowledge of the world and men, so that that

⁶Since Picasso's death, his activities during the Occupation have come under greater scrutiny. One of the more strident indictments of Picasso's supposed passive collaboration with the Germans appears in "Picasso et la politique," Le Crapouillot, no. 25 (May-June 1973): 17-19. A balanced consideration of Picasso's war years in Paris appears in Cone's Artists Under Vichy, in the chapter "Picasso's War in Occupied Paris."

⁷Françoise Gilot and Carlton Lake, Life with Picasso (1964; reprint, New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1989), 63.

knowledge might free each of us increasingly every day; I was trying in my way to say what I considered truest, most correct, best, which naturally would be most beautiful, as all great artists know.... Is it not the Communist party that works hardest at understanding and molding the world,.... Was it not the Communists who were the bravest in France, just as they were in the U.S.S.R. or my own Spain?...⁸

This statement is very important, for Picasso's rather bland and conventional definition of himself as heroic artist was the manner in which his art was understood by the right and left alike. Celebrated by many modern art enthusiasts as the ultimate transcriber of the world's and man's inner truth (the role often assigned to avant-garde artists since Romanticism), the painter of the moving political painting Guernica was also felt by many to embody art's humanity and freedom. Such a romanticized notion of the artist was certainly not new or particular to Picasso, but became inflated in the postwar period. It commingled with the grandiose, heroic rhetoric broadcast by all associated with the Resistance, rhetoric especially deployed by the Communists to secure their growing prestige and power.⁹ Indeed, Picasso's final comments in the quote above point to the Communist party's attractiveness for many who had lived in France during the war. It must be noted

⁸Pablo, Picasso, "Pourquoi j'ai adhéré au Parti Communiste," L'Humanité, 29-30 October 1944, 1, translated by and quoted in Arianna Stassinopoulos Huffington, Picasso: Creator and Destroyer (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 288-289.

⁹Caute, 162-163.

that however much Picasso may have identified with the P.C.F.'s noble goals, it is also probable that he wished to participate in the glory covering the party and the romantic heroism that it exuded. By joining the P.C.F., he secured even greater notoriety in general, as well as prestige in the eyes of those who supported Communism.

Picasso as the French Communist Party Peace Hero

Although Picasso's many naturalistic portraits of party officials such as P.C.F. leader Maurice Thorez¹⁰ (fig. 18), Communist martyrs such as Nikos Belayonnis¹¹ (fig. 19), and

¹⁰Picasso made three portraits of the P.C.F. chief on 23 May 1945. One of the portraits appeared in a 1950 edition of Thorez's 1937 autobiography Fils du peuple, and in "De Marx à Staline," the last official show of French Social Realism. Dominique Berthet notes that the inclusion of the portrait in this exhibition of 14-31 May 1953 following Picasso's "disrespectful" portrait of Stalin, may have been intended to remind viewers of Picasso's ability to produce naturalistic images (Dominique Berthet, Le P.C.F., la culture et l'art (1947-1954) [Paris: La Table Ronde, 1990], 193).

¹¹Picasso's portrait of Belayonnis, who was a Greek Communist insurgent, appeared in the 9 March 1952 edition of L'Humanité-Dimanche and in the 13 March 1952 edition of Les Lettres françaises. When Belayonnis was executed by the Greek government on 30 March 1952, Picasso wrote a stream-of-consciousness hymn to the Communist martyr. The Surrealist nature of this piece, in keeping with Picasso's poetry and plays, raises the question of authorship of the artist's official political statements. The style of his explanation for adhering to the party is quite formal and correct, with a grandiloquence unlike the artist's other writing. Arianna Stassinopoulos Huffington argues that Eluard produced many of Picasso's statements (Arianna Stassinopoulos Huffington, Picasso: Creator and Destroyer, 294). That others wrote with if not for Picasso is borne out by Claude Roy's account of Picasso's Belayonnis statement: "We're trying to compose a short text in which he

activists championed by the party such as Henri Martin¹² (fig. 20) conform in a general way to the party's aesthetic tenets of Social Realism,¹³ Picasso was popularly known for

[Picasso] could express his horror. I'm putting down simple phrases, suggesting a word.... Picasso is silent, overcome by his suffering. Suddenly he takes the piece of paper on which we in vain had tried to capture his anger and he leaves to go down to his studio. Half an hour goes by. Picasso reappears and hands me a short text--a cry..." (Claude Roy, L'Amour de la peinture: Goya, Picasso et autres peintres [Paris: Gallimard, 1956], 97-98, quoted in Dore Ashton, Picasso on Art: A Selection of Views [1972; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, Inc., 1988], 150).

¹²The drawing of Henri Martin, a sailor who was imprisoned for having left the French navy and for decrying its activities in Indo-China, was featured in the show "Témoignage pour Henri Martin," which opened 20 March 1952 at the Union des Femmes Françaises exhibition site. The drawing also appeared in the 21 June 1953 edition of l'Humanité-Dimanche. The Communist party and numerous French intellectuals including de Beauvoir, Leiris, and Sartre supported Martin's position and sought his release. Picasso signed a petition that called for Martin's freedom (see correspondence sent to Picasso from le Comité National de Défense d'Henri Martin, Associations politiques françaises material, Picasso Archives, Musée Picasso, Paris).

¹³Sarah Wilson argues that Picasso's portraits were at odds with P.C.F. sponsored realism and suggests that the artist's depictions of Belayonnis and Martin may have further antagonized Social Realist artists already frustrated by the P.C.F.'s divided policy on artmaking (Sarah Wilson, "Art and the Politics of the Left in France, ca. 1935-1955," 368-369). While this is an important observation, I am not convinced that Picasso's naturalistic portraits deeply troubled Social Realists and their supporters, who were very angered by Picasso's truly distorted works. The Stalin portrait was the only portrait that elicited an extremely negative response. Indeed, a party member critical of the Stalin portrait whose comments were published in Les Lettres françaises wrote the following: "I didn't produce a written critique because I am not qualified to judge all the works of the great artist who is Picasso, but I cannot refrain from calling to mind portraits by the same author, for example, of Maurice Thorez in 'Fils du Peuple,' Paul Eluard, Belayonnis, Henri Martin,

confounding all illusionistic conventions of representation. Indeed, his favored status among several top P.C.F. officials was resented and occasionally decried by hardline Soviet and French Communist artists and critics. However, one naturalistic drawing that Picasso produced assured him a prominent position with the party as their peace artist: his dove for the Communist sponsored 1948 Congress for Intellectuals for Peace in Wroclaw, Poland¹⁴ (fig. 21). The event was the first of several congresses that became the cornerstones of the party's Peace Movement, a crusade launched to battle Cold War anti-Communism and to strengthen P.C.F. visibility and credibility.¹⁵ Picasso did not design the dove as the congress emblem, in fact, the drawing merely depicted one of his many pigeons. Aragon selected

in which one finds familiar faces" ("Je n'ai pas fait une critique écrite car je ne suis pas qualifié pour juger toutes les oeuvres du grand peintre qu'est Picasso, mais je n'ai pu m'empêcher d'évoquer des portraits du même auteur, par exemple Maurice Thorez dans "Fils du Peuple", Paul Éluard, Belayonnis, Henri Martin, dans lesquels on retrouve des visages familiers" [letter by Georges l'... published in the 26 March - 2 April 1953 edition of Les Lettres françaises]).

¹⁴Picasso's peace dove is the most famous example of his naturalistic allegorical work for the P.C.F., but he also created several images in which a pair of beautiful young women embodying communist "brotherhood" hold a dove between them. Picasso's dove did not free him from criticism: as I will subsequently note, a Soviet delegate at the Peace Congress vociferously denounced Picasso's work.

¹⁵See Caute, Communism and the French Intellectuals, 190, and Irwin M. Wall, French Communism in the Era of Stalin: The Quest for Unity and Integration, 1945 - 1962 Contributions in Political Science Series (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983), 95-97.

the work while perusing some of the artist's drawings, and christened it a dove. This dove, and the countless others Picasso produced for P.C.F. propaganda, became enormously popular. A P.C.F. promotional piece on Picasso's dove for the 1950 peace congress notes that

there is no place on the globe or no form in which the white dove has not appeared.... to our knowledge, no image has ever benefited from such diffusion and such popularity.¹⁶

The dove thus became not only the symbol of peace, but of Picasso's value to the party. The issue of Picasso's often unorthodox art vs. his alluring stature was resolved by celebrating him as the heroic P.C.F. peace artist,¹⁷ an

¹⁶"Il n'est pas un lieu du globe ou sous quelque forme que ce soit la colombe blanche n'ait été apportée.... A notre connaissance, il n'est pas une image qui ait jamais bénéficié d'une telle diffusion et d'une telle popularité" ("L'Essor de la colombe," included in a 11 April 1949 Aragon letter to Picasso, Picasso Archives, Picasso Museum, Paris).

¹⁷Pierre Daix notes that the P.C.F. resolved the problem of promoting Social Realism and avant-garde work by select artists through a "formula: Fougeron, the party declared, was fighting at his 'battlement of Communism;' and Picasso, at his 'battlement' as a 'partisan of peace'" (Pierre Daix, Picasso: Life and Art, trans. Olivia Emmet [New York: Icon Editions, HarperCollins Publishers, 1993], 305). Dominique Berthet notes that between 1947 and 1953, Picasso appeared rarely in the pages of l'Humanité, the official P.C.F. organ, whereas Fougeron was often cited in the newspaper (Dominique Berthet Le P.C.F., la culture et l'art, 43-44. She maintains: "Picasso does not benefit from a favored place in this daily. Picasso is never presented to the public as a Communist painter. When one speaks of him--a rare thing--it is as a member of the P.C.F. or as a defender and painter of peace" ("Picasso ne bénéficie pas dans ce quotidien d'une place de choix. Jamais Picasso n'est présenté au public comme un peintre communiste. Lorsque on parle de lui--chose assez rare--c'est en tant que membre du P.C.F. ou en tant que défenseur et peintre de la

honor formally recognized when the 1950 Lenin Peace Prize was conferred on Picasso.¹⁸ Indeed, once the party determined that it could market itself through Picasso, it exploited this relationship in concrete, pecuniary terms: the artist's peace dove and other allegorical peace images were transferred onto a host of paraphernalia (including scarves, handkerchiefs, and plates) that were advertised in P.C.F. publications (figs. 22, 23, and 24). The P.C.F. thus turned a blind eye to Marx's critique of commodity fetishism, using Picasso's person and products to enhance party prestige, a strategy that partakes of postwar capitalism's growing reliance on celebrity endorsements.¹⁹

A feature article in the Communist magazine Femmes

paix" [Ibid., 43]). Sarah Wilson describes the P.C.F.'s "bipartite strategy" thus: "From 1950 onwards the imagery of death and barricades was countered by a Peace campaign, waged militantly not only by the Communists, but by their political adversaries. Here, the Maison de la Pensée Française [a P.C.F. exhibition venue] painters, Léger, Matisse, and Picasso came into their own, providing an alternative image of prestige, an alternative iconography 'au service du Parti'" (Wilson, "Art and the Politics of the Left in France, ca. 1935-1955," 324-325).

¹⁸Picasso's investment in this role is recorded by James Lord, who witnessed the artist harangue Éluard about the prize: "Picasso energetically declared that nobody was more deserving than he was, that he had an undeniable right to the prize, and that 'if there was any justice' he would receive it.... he demanded that Éluard do whatever was needed to be done to make certain the prizewinner was the right one" (James Lord, Picasso and Dora: A Personal Memoir [New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1993], 83). Picasso received the Lenin Peace Prize again in 1962.

¹⁹See Edgar Morin, "Star-Merchandise," chap. in The Stars: An Account of the Star-System in Motion Pictures, 135-141.

Françaises filled with sentimental photos of Picasso and his family aptly illustrates Picasso's public relations value. The cover photo shows a beatific Picasso embracing his own dove (daughter Paloma, whose name means dove in Spanish), and labels the artist "the great painter, friend of peace" (fig. 25). The article glorifies Picasso for having revived the pottery tradition in his home town Vallauris, for being a devoted father, and especially for being the champion of peace. The author briefly refers to Picasso's 1950 Massacre in Korea (a painting to which I will return), noting that its portrayal of mothers and children about to be shot evokes the horror and brutality of war. She quickly follows this observation with fawning praise for Picasso's equally powerful ability to evoke "gentleness and hope" embodied in his famous dove. As with countless other articles in the Communist press, the author venerates Picasso as a hero of peace. Her closing statement concerning a Picasso child and dove reproduction employs vaunted rhetoric meant to appeal specifically to females:

In his turn, the child with dove is going to visit the world. He will captivate all mothers. All women will wish that their cherubs could know the happiness of being able to hold to their breasts the beautiful bird of peace, symbol of the friendship that we wish to see reign over the earth.²⁰

²⁰"A son tour, l'enfant à la colombe va visiter le monde. Il captivera toutes les mamans. Toutes voudront que leurs chérubins, à elles, connaissent la douceur de pouvoir serrer sur leur poitrines le bel oiseau de paix, symbole de l'amitié que nous voulons voir régner sur la terre" (Elo Barel, "Quelques instants avec Picasso," Femmes Françaises,

Troubling Particulars

Concerning his transformed pigeon, Picasso made the following, ironically prescient remarks:

Poor old Aragon, he doesn't know anything about pigeons. And as for the gentle dove, what a myth that is! There's no crueller animal. I had some here and they pecked a poor little pigeon to death because they didn't like it.²¹

If French Communists fancied themselves doves, Picasso's observation about the birds aptly characterize aspects of party members' behavior when Picasso pushed P.C.F. boundaries too far. As long as the rhetoric and practice involving the artist remained large, non-specific, and heroic, relations between Picasso and the P.C.F. were peaceful and mutually beneficial. However, in 1948, the same year his dove first graced P.C.F. propaganda, Picasso ruffled the feathers of both Americans and Soviet Communists. In that year of Cold War recrimination, after the publication of the Boston Manifesto in support of modern art, curator J.J. Sweeney cabled Picasso seeking his endorsement of modern art's safety. Picasso was apparently

11 October 1952, 4.) Picasso's 1901 The Child with a Dove was reproduced as a postcard by the Rassemblement des Femmes pour la Paix. A letter from Emilienne Brunfaut in Picasso's archives thanks the artist for permission to use the image in this manner (Emilienne Brunfaut, Brussels, to Pablo Picasso, 7 November 1949, letter, Picasso Archives, Associations politiques françaises material, Associations Femmes file, Musée Picasso, Paris).

²¹Picasso quoted in Geneviève Laporte, Sunshine at Midnight: Memories of Picasso and Cocteau, trans. Douglas Cooper (New York: Macmillan, 1975), 7-8.

furious, insisting that art was not "safe" but "subversive."

According to Gilot, he maintained that

It's something that should not be free. Art and liberty, like the fire of Prometheus, are things one must steal, to be used against the established order...²²

Such a combative and aggressively individualistic attitude also must have informed Picasso's angry outburst at the 1948 peace congress. When a member of the Soviet delegation decried Picasso's "impressionist-surrealist" style, the artist called him a "party hack," and proceeded to give him a lesson in art history, informing the Russian that he had used the wrong terminology and should have instead lambasted Picasso as the creator of cubism.²³

So the rather contrary Picasso, the artist who joined the Communist Party but who also sold his works to wealthy Americans through Sam Kootz's gallery in New York, was quite consistent when it came to making art. He held capitalists and Communists alike to the romantic, heroic, and often politically non-specific terms of discourse surrounding his work. Indeed, Picasso stated unequivocally in an interview with an American soldier and painter that

²²Picasso quoted in Françoise Gilot and Carlton Lake, Life with Picasso, 197, quoted by Serge Guilbaut, "Postwar Painting Games: The Rough and the Slick," in Reconstructing Modernism: Art in New York, Paris, and Montreal 1945-1964, ed. Serge Guilbaut (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1990), 66.

²³Huffington, 343. Huffington's account of this exchange appears to have come from the author's interview with Dominique Desanti, a P.C.F. delegate at the congress.

If I were a chemist, Communist or fascist--if I obtain in my mixture a red liquid it doesn't mean that I am expressing Communist propaganda, does it?.... I just want to reproduce the objects for what they are and not for what they mean. If you give meaning to certain things in my paintings it may be very true, but it was not my idea to give it this meaning. What ideas and conclusions you have got I obtained too, but instinctively, unconsciously. I make a painting for the painting.²⁴

But what of Picasso's art? Was all of the "subversive" artist's work as "safe" as his dove? Did it read as neutrally as his statements about it? Certainly his Massacre in Korea (fig. 26) shown at the 1951 Salon de Mai, was not perceived as a neutral statement, nor was his 1953 commemorative portrait of Stalin published that year in Les Lettres françaises.

The first of the two works was inspired by reports of atrocities committed by American soldiers in Korea: America was accused of napalming helpless villages, of heartlessly evacuating large groups of civilians from their homes, and would later be condemned for purportedly using biological warfare. French Communists genuinely protested the tragedies in Korea, but also exploited American involvement in the country in order "to pose as champions of peace and national independence."²⁵ Glossing over the fact that North Korea was universally believed to have invaded the

²⁴Picasso quoted in Jerome Seckler, "Picasso Explains," New Masses, 13 March 1945, 4-7, reproduced in Dore Ashton, Picasso on Art, 140.

²⁵Caute, 190-91.

southern portion of the country (for example, Picasso's friend Parmelin's book Noir sur Blanc emphasized the South as the aggressor²⁶), French Communists vehemently decried American and U.N. troops for intervening in the Korean conflict. Massacre in Korea, with its violent, accusatory title and subject alarmed Americans. In his essay on Cold War politics and art in France and America, Serge Guilbaut quotes an exchange about the painting between critic Thomas Hess and Museum of Modern Art director Alfred Barr. Informing Barr that the work was rumored to represent "American soldiers committing an atrocity on North Korean civilians," Hess asked Barr if Massacre in Korea was indeed a piece of Communist propaganda. The museum director responded that the painting was definitely anti-American propaganda, although Picasso might dismiss such an accusation as he had denied that Guernica was a political statement.²⁷ Indeed, Picasso was careful to say at a later point that

To call up the face of war I have never thought of any particular trait, only that of monstrosity. Still less of the helmet or uniform of the American or any other army. I have nothing against the Americans. I am on the side of men, of all men.²⁸

²⁶Ibid., 191.

²⁷Serge Guilbaut, "Postwar Painting Games: The Rough and the Slick," 67, 69.

²⁸Picasso quoted in Antonello Trombadori, "Parlo con la pittura," (in Mario de Micheli, Scritti di Picasso [Milan: Feltrinelli, 1964]) in Ashton, 158.

Despite his appeal to universal fraternity, because of Picasso's political affiliation and the type of coverage the war was receiving in the Communist press, it would have been naive for anyone to have believed, whatever Picasso's intentions may have been, that Massacre in Korea functioned merely as a general statement about the horrors of war. However, the power and persuasiveness of the work as propaganda is another issue: Picasso's rather stiff and leaden painting generalizes the victims and aggressors, and secures the work to the history of art rather than the history of the moment by borrowing compositional motifs from Goya's Third of May and Manet's At the Barricades. Indeed, when compared to the bulk of Picasso's painting, the canvas appears to concede to French Social Realism's focus on naturalism and homages to past great realist art. Picasso's comments to the English poet John Pudney around the time of liberation suggest that the artist considered the value of a more focused, controlled aesthetic, a perspective extolled by his literary Communist friends:

Art which is more disciplined, liberty which is less uncontrolled: that is the artist's defense and shield in times like these. This is probably the moment for poets to write sonnets.²⁹

Such a statement blatantly contradicts Picasso's more individualistic and anarchistic outbursts such as that

²⁹Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Picasso: Fifty Years of His Art (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1946), 242-43, quoted in Daix, Picasso: Life and Art, 278.

recorded by Gilot cited above. However, along with the artist's more naturalistic (and thus "disciplined" works), it demonstrates Picasso's willingness to produce more controlled and didactic images. With respect to the message conveyed by Picasso's conciliatory Massacre in Korea, John Berger argues:

The soldiers, despite their sten-guns, are so heraldic and archaic that either we lose the sense that this is a modern massacre, or else we consider the soldiers as symbols of an eternal, unchanging force of cruelty and evil. Either way our indignation, which the painting was meant to provoke, is blunted.³⁰

Contemporary critics also dismissed the picture. Communists did not discuss Massacre in Korea much; the powerful party leader Auguste Lecoœur (the French Social Realist Fougerson's primary champion), saw to it that the work did not get a great deal of press.³¹ Indeed, the party virtually boycotted the painting not only because it contained some distortion,³² but because P.C.F. members could not reconcile their image of heroic Korean comrades with Picasso's passive female nudes.³³ The brief mention

³⁰John Berger, The Success and Failure of Picasso, updated with a new Preface by the author (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989), 114.

³¹Cabanne, Pablo Picasso: His Life and Times, 298-99.

³²Wilson, "Art and Politics of the Left in France, ca. 1935-1955," 363. Wilson notes that party members decried the painting for its lack of expected realism and specificity.

³³Daix argues that "the P.C.F. assumed a posture which was tantamount to boycott. For them any identification of the valiant Chinese and Korean comrades with these female

that the painting received in the Femmes Françaises piece discussed above is fairly exceptional, for Picasso may have produced a more visually accessible image, but he failed to create a sufficiently valiant and heroic picture. Although the party condoned painting that focused on the downtrodden's misery, such imagery had to elicit an empathetic response. Fougeron's miserablist Les Parisiennes au Marché (fig. 27) conformed to such P.C.F. criteria. Legible and historically-grounded like Picasso's painting (Fougeron's inspiration came from Renaissance painting, which he had studied in Rome³⁴), Les Parisiennes au Marché depicts female victims of war shortages as proud, noble figures.

nudes striking soldierly postures was impossible" (Daix, Picasso: Life and Art, 305). Verdès-Leroux provides the following: "when Picasso painted Massacre in Korea, the party considered, reports Hélène Parmelin, that it was wide of the mark! [...] The canvas should have illustrated all the political givens of the problem... There is an idea of resignation in this massacre, which is not 'politically' just" ("lorsque Picasso peignit Massacre en Corée, le parti considéra, rapporte Hélène Parmelin, que 'ça tape à côté! [...] La toile devrait illustrer toutes les données politiques du problème... Il y a dans ce massacre une idée de résignation, qui n'est pas juste 'politiquement'" [Hélène Parmelin, Libérez les communistes! (Paris: Stock, 1979), 248, quoted in Jeannine Verdès-Leroux, Au service du Parti: Le parti communiste, les intellectuels, et la culture (1944-1956) [Paris: Fayard/Éditions de Minuit], 314).

³⁴Guilbaut maintains: "divesting traditional forms of their usual use, Fougeron also subverted them by transforming happy, transparent light on the faces of angels and virgins into dark shadows over the profiles of baffled, suffering working-class women" (Guilbaut, 44).

The Stalin Portrait Affair

The extent to which Picasso's work communicated a powerful and desired message directly and effectively became a critical issue in the controversy surrounding the artist's commemorative portrait of Stalin. Portraiture was perhaps the most important category of P.C.F. art because it was the primary visual means of promoting the hero myth. The call for entries for the 1953 Communist exhibition "De Marx à Staline" ("From Marx to Stalin"), issued to Picasso and other artists not long before Picasso made his Stalin drawing, makes this link evident. The exhibition committee specifically requested portraits from participants (floral studies were acceptable if they included a portrait), and provided a list of party heroes as suitable subjects.³⁵

Commissioned for a tribute issue of Les Lettres françaises devoted to Stalin's recent death, Picasso's portrait of the Soviet leader (fig. 28) barely made the publishing deadline. As Gilot describes the event, Aragon, who oversaw Les Lettres françaises, gave Picasso an afternoon to produce the portrait, a time constraint that

³⁵A copy of this text exists in the Picasso Archives. Among the recommended subjects are Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Thorez, Jules Guesde (who founded the journal l'Égalité in 1877), Cachin, Rosa Luxembourg and Karl Liebknecht [sic], and Jeanne Labourde (the first French female Communist). The text was enclosed with a 29 January 1953 letter sent to Picasso from Boris Taslitzky (who organized the "De Marx à Staline" exhibition with André Fougeron and Édouard Pignon), Picasso Archives, Associations politiques françaises material, Parti Communiste file, Musée Picasso, Paris.

agitated Picasso, as did the artist's unfamiliarity with his subject. Apparently, Picasso felt that he needed to work from a photograph, a curious requirement given his usual habit of proceeding from memory.³⁶ Although Stalin's visage was among the most reproduced in the postwar period, Picasso claimed not to remember how the leader looked, "except that he wears a uniform with big buttons down the front, has a military cap, and a large mustache."³⁷ However, Picasso did not incorporate these remembered visual characteristics into his drawing (with the exception of the mustache), all of which signal Stalin's status as a powerful leader. Picasso also eschewed the confident, spare, naturalistic line that he had employed in previous portraits of Communist heroes (see figs. 1, 2, and 3). Instead, Picasso drew Stalin in a naive manner: the Soviet commander's head is a simple oval resting on a tube-like neck, and his hair and facial features are bland

³⁶Wilson notes that Daix maintains that he felt the Stalin portrait resembled a photo of Stalin as a young man reproduced in Regards that Daix had sent to Picasso (Pierre Daix, J'ai cru au matin [Paris: Editions Robert Laffont, 1976], 371, cited in Wilson, "Art and Politics of the Left in France, ca. 1935-1955," 403, n. 118). Wilson compares the portrait to a picture of Stalin that served as the frontispiece to Oeuvres de J. Staline, vol. 1, 1901-1907, trans. under the direction of Georges Cogniot (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1953) (Ibid.). She goes on to mention, however, that Picasso did not refer to a photograph during his interview with the Agence Associated Press (Ibid.). Gilot asserts that she provided Picasso with "an old newspaper photograph that might have been a picture of Stalin at the age of about forty" (Gilot and Lake, 277).

³⁷Picasso quoted in Gilot and Lake, 277.

abbreviations. Only his mustache is singled out, but not for special treatment: it droops limply. According to Gilot, Aragon recognized that the deadline he imposed on Picasso was tight, and assured Gilot it was better for the artist to do the drawing "somehow than not to do it at all."³⁸ Indeed, Aragon and his fellow editor Pierre Daix quickly approved the somewhat insipid drawing, viewing it as "an affirmation of Stalin's perennial youth."³⁹

Few understood the drawing in such favorable terms. In fact, Lecoœur saw the portrait as an implicit challenge to the Communist tenets of Social Realism, and condemned the picture "without doubting the sentiments of the great artist Picasso whose attachment to the working class is well-known."⁴⁰ Aragon received letters denouncing the portrait, and was forced to read them at a P.C.F. Paris meeting and to publish extracts from them in Les Lettres françaises. One of the most damaging letters was penned by Fougeron, who--like virtually all French Communists--blamed Aragon for the publication of the disappointing drawing. Fougeron lamented the portrait's poor reflection on the party:

... if, a great artist in 1953 is incapable of making a good but simple drawing of the face of the man most

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Wall, 164.

⁴⁰"Sans mettre en doute les sentiments du grand artiste Picasso, dont chacun connaît l'attachement à la cause de la classe ouvrière,...", "Sur un portrait de Staline," Les Lettres françaises, 19 - 26 March 1953, 1.

loved by the workers of the entire world, that gives the measure of our weakness in this domain in our country which counts among its artistic past the greatest portraitists that Painting has known. A photo should have been reproduced, or better, an upright work by a Soviet artist...⁴¹

Certainly Picasso was more than capable of "good but simple drawing" as his other naturalistic drawings attest. The time limitations imposed on Picasso hardly account for his lackluster picture: those who have seen Picasso drawing in Henri-Georges Clouzot's 1956 film Mystère Picasso, recognize that the artist could work rapidly with great assurance and seemed to pride himself on his speed. Whether Picasso simply did not care enough⁴² or decided to thumb his nose at party art dictates, he seems to have absented himself from the work. Just as any truly recognizable image of Stalin is missing in the portrait, so is any recognizable

⁴¹"...si, un grand artiste en 1953 est incapable de faire un bon mais simple dessin du visage de l'homme le plus aimé des prolétaires du monde entier, cela donne la mesure de nos faiblesses dans ce domaine dans notre pays qui compte pourtant dans son passé artistique les plus grands portraitistes que la Peinture ait connus. Alors il fallait simplement reproduire une photo, ou mieux, l'oeuvre probe d'un artiste soviétique ..." (André Fougeron, letter in Les Lettres Françaises, 26 March - 2 April 1953). According to Daix, the party censored every letter that approved of the work. He also maintains that Thorez let Picasso know that "he disapproved of the condemnation of the Portrait of Stalin. However, diplomatic politics required that this opinion be kept secret until September 1953" (Daix, 310).

⁴²It is virtually inconceivable that he cared too much (and thus felt pressured by the commission): Gilot's account of the portrait affair suggests Picasso's nonchalance (Gilot and Lake, 277-278), and Daix has chronicled the painter's impatience with Communist hierarchy (see Daix, 299, 304-305, 320-321).

trace of Picasso's sure hand. Not only does Picasso fail to provide the party with good Social Realism, he fails to provide the party with good Picasso realism. It is certainly possible to understand this absence of self as an absence of commitment to P.C.F. art policy, for Picasso had already made abundantly clear that he would not adhere strictly to the party's requirements for art. More notable, however, is his unwillingness or inability to make Stalin heroic in any artistic terms, and this violation riled Communists at every level of the P.C.F. community.

Rather than interpret Picasso's banal portrait as a deliberate affront to the P.C.F. hero cult, I believe that the picture is best understood as an actual manifestation of this cult, but as it applied to Picasso. The artist's stature afforded the party such valuable prestige that Picasso's previous challenges to the P.C.F. Social Realist aesthetic were accommodated begrudgingly. Although Massacre in Korea was received coldly, it was not condemned resoundingly. Moreover, the P.C.F. had published an earlier Picasso homage to Stalin that was in no way reverential: a 1950 birthday greeting depicting a lifted glass and the familiar toast "à ta santé" ("to your health") (fig. 29). Picasso had even surmounted an implicit attack in 1952 when party artists divided over the P.C.F.'s policy on art quarreled. That year, a meeting that had been called to resolve these tensions ended inconclusively. Two letters

were written: one to Thorez that commented on world events and acknowledged his 1950 affirmation of Social Realism, and another to Picasso praising him as a peace artist.⁴³ Thus, although the complaints against Picasso were very serious in some quarters, the artist met with little pronounced criticism until the Stalin portrait. Accustomed to almost unconditional acceptance, Picasso seems to have felt free to submit whatever he believed suited a commission. Picasso was a product of the hero myth himself, a hero who miscalculated the effects of failing to mythologize the party's greatest hero: Stalin.

Despite this grave error, the personal nature of Fougeron's attack on Picasso's portrait is fairly exceptional: Picasso himself was not crucified for his grievous mistake. For as Lecoœur had said, he was "the great artist Picasso." Stature alone did not save Aragon, who became the prime target of party wrath and political machinations. Although Picasso's portrait was decried in the Communist press, mocked in liberal and conservative

⁴³Les journées d'étude de plasticiens was called by Casanova at Aragon's request. Aragon had written a series of celebratory articles on Soviet art (goaded to do so by André Breton, who had mocked Aragon's preceding silence on Soviet art), and these articles prompted a "rebellion" among non-Social Realist Communist painters such as Pignon. Picasso, Léger, and Matisse (who was not a P.C.F. member but a fellow traveller of sorts) did not attend the meeting, and little came of the attempt to quell artists' grumblings. Pignon and Picasso did reluctantly sign the letter to Thorez, which diffused some of the hostility toward the non-Social Realist camp (Wilson, "Art and Politics of the Left in France, ca. 1935-1955," 369-370, 401, n. 94).

news, and the artist himself was hounded by reporters for comments about the affair, it was Aragon who was truly beleaguered by the left and right alike. A contemporary interpretation of the event spells out the critical difference between Picasso's and Aragon's positions:

the incident shows that not even Picasso can defy without reprimand an order that faces should look like photographs and that all artistic production should be accessible to the whole working class and be of direct utility to the revolution.

The incident is much more serious however, for M. Aragon than for Picasso since the latter can always go on selling his pictures to the rich bourgeoisie whereas Aragon as party editor and author of party novels is dependent on party favor.⁴⁴

Picasso's fame was in no way contingent on P.C.F. endorsement, whereas Aragon's lot was tied intimately to his place within the party. Aragon carefully tracked assessments of the portrait affair, hiring a clipping service to follow the flurry surrounding the event. The press in his archive on the portrait demonstrates the degree to which Aragon was singled out in the uproar. Picasso is quoted as either brusquely brushing the matter aside (some journalists quote him as uttering "tant pis" ["too bad"]) when asked how he viewed fellow Communists' disappointment in his work),⁴⁵ or defending his honorable intentions while

⁴⁴Extract from Johannesburg Star, South Africa, 20 March 1953, page number not included; newsclipping in Stalin portrait affair file, Elsa Triolet - Louis Aragon Archives, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris.

⁴⁵Picasso is quoted as having made the following statement to the press: "The remarks that I made yesterday morning to a journalist while leaving my home, have already

acknowledging their lame results.

A 9 March 1953 article in Nice Matin reveals the roles in which Aragon and Picasso were cast, as well as Picasso's rejoinder to criticism leveled at his portrait. Journalist Daniel Provence first quotes from Lecoœur's statement, recording the official's acknowledgement of the artist's stature and proceeding to note the rancor directed at Aragon:

The French Communist Party secretariat regrets that comrade Aragon, Central Committee member and director of the Lettres françaises who, otherwise struggles courageously for the development of realist art, has permitted this publication.⁴⁶

been considerably distorted. For example, people have already attributed this phrase to me: 'It does not have a pleasing air, too bad' ... I did not say 'too bad,' and you understand that I could not have said it. I would like to be agreeable with you, but I have nothing more to add. I was asked to make a drawing, I did it, as I felt it, for the rest, I can say nothing" ("Les propos que j'ai tenus hier matin à un journaliste en sortant de chez moi, ont été déjà considérablement déformés. On m'a, par exemple, prêté cette phrase: 'Ça n'a pas l'air d'avoir plu, tant pis'... je n'ai pas dit: 'Tant pis', et vous comprendrez que je n'ai pas pu le dire. Je voudrais être aimable avec vous, mais je ne peux rien vous dire de plus. On m'a demandé un dessin, je l'ai fait, comme je le sentais, sur le reste, je ne peux rien déclarer" ["Picasso," Soir {Marseille}, 19 March 1953, page number not included; newsclipping from the Stalin portrait affair file, Elsa Triolet - Louis Aragon Archives, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris]).

⁴⁶"Le secrétariat du Parti communiste français regrette que le camarade Aragon, membre du Comité central et directeur des Lettres françaises qui, par ailleurs, lutte courageusement pour le développement de l'art réaliste, ait permis cette publication" (Lecoœur quoted in Daniel Provence, "Staline vu par Picasso," Nice Matin 9 March 1953, 1, 5; press clipping in the Stalin portrait affair file, Elsa Triolet - Louis Aragon Archives, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris).

Provence, who claims in his headline that Picasso is "appalled to be reprimanded by the Communist party for a portrait of Stalin judged 'unpublishable'" ("ulcéré d'être blâmé par le Parti communiste pour un portrait de Staline jugé 'impubliable'"), questions the artist about the affair. He first quotes Picasso as maintaining that he offered the drawing as a poet would offer a poem, and that the work was meant to demonstrate his respect and affection for the Soviet leader. Picasso is then recorded as observing that the drawing is perhaps not his most successful, but that judgment is a matter of opinion and that he believes the reaction to the portrait to be overblown.⁴⁷ Provence proceeds to quote the following:

I do not understand! Ordinarily one does not 'bawl out' people who send condolences. One does not find fault with the tears of those who follow a casket. It is customary to be grateful even if the funeral wreath is not beautiful or if the flowers are faded.⁴⁸

Once again, Picasso insists that his audience view his work in broad terms as a poetic statement which reflects his generous intentions. Although he acknowledges that the work may be uninspired (he claims that this is really a matter of opinion), he suggests that merely his act of offering an homage is admirable. He thus implicitly criticizes those

⁴⁷Ibid., 5.

⁴⁸"Je ne comprends pas! D'ordinaire on "n'en gueule" pas les gens qui envoient des condoléances. On ne reproche pas les larmes de ceux qui suivent un cercueil. Il est d'usage de remercier même si la couronne n'est pas belle ou si les fleurs sont fanées" (Ibid.).

who fail to see the real hero in the picture: Picasso himself. The left and the right have ignored the ways in which Picasso has failed to live up to their ideals before, and Picasso's portrait and his position on the portrait challenge them to do the same once again.

Without the equivalent of Picasso's fame to shield him, Aragon required the saving graces of good political fortune, fortune he was ultimately able to use to shift P.C.F. art policy. Aragon's autocritique "A haute voix" ("Out Loud"), combines chest-beating with finger-wagging. He admits to having been too individualistic: of having relied on his own somewhat bourgeois taste rather than considering what would have had mass appeal. However, Aragon also accuses some Stalin portrait critics of being populist, and suggests that specialists alone are qualified to comment on their areas of expertise.⁴⁹ This latter move provided Aragon with the

⁴⁹"... this error, ... is perhaps not mine alone, because this is a common occurrence for many, I speak of people of culture, who judge art according to style more than according to what is represented.... I recognize in myself traces of old individualism that I nevertheless fight.... [But] let us imagine what would result in mathematics or simply in the construction of a table, if you and I, who are not mathematicians, nor carpentars, were to settle things that we don't understand. That the problem of creation in art must extend to the masses does not mean that it is the masses who create. It does not mean that the 'spontaneous' truth comes from the masses, outside of all study, of all knowledge, of all science" ("... cette erreur, ... n'est peut-être pas seulement la mienne, parce que c'est le fait commun de beaucoup, je parle des gens de culture, que de juger en art sur la manière plus que sur la représentation.... je reconnaissais en moi les traces du vieil individualisme que je combats pourtant.... [Mais] imaginons ce que cela donnerait dans les mathématiques ou

platform from which he subsequently cleared himself, punished others (namely, Fougeron), and redirected P.C.F. cultural policy. However, Aragon's vindication was only secured through the actions of Thorez, the primary French party cult figure. In 1950, suffering from a stroke, Thorez had been flown from France to the U.S.S.R. by a team of Soviet doctors. Stalin's camp argued that Thorez would receive better medical care and protection from potential assassins in the Soviet Union. During Thorez's absence, Jacques Duclos assumed leadership of the P.C.F., with Lecoœur as his chief assistant. At this point, Lecoœur stridently promoted Soviet-favored Social Realism, and in 1951, work by Fougeron--such as his series depicting the life of French coal miners--was celebrated triumphantly (fig. 30). Championing Social Realism was one of numerous tactics (which included organizing an anti-Zionist campaign and pushing the Stalin cult in France), that Lecoœur deployed to position himself as a likely candidate to assume P.C.F. leadership.⁵⁰ Indeed, he had briefly assumed this role in 1952 when Duclos was imprisoned "on trumped-up

simplement dans la construction d'une table, si vous et moi, qui ne sommes ni mathématiciens, ni menuisiers, nous venions trancher de choses que nous ne connaissons pas. Que le problème de la création en art doive tendre vers la masse ne signifie pas que c'est la masse qui crée. Ne signifie pas que la vérité 'spontanée' sort des masses, en dehors de toute étude, de toute connaissance, de toute science" [Louis Aragon, "A haute voix," Les Lettres françaises, 9-16 April 1953, 1,4]].

⁵⁰Wall, 164.

charges of planning an insurrection."⁵¹

Humiliating Aragon (Thorez's favorite), over the Picasso portrait was another means for Lecoœur to curry favor with the Soviet Union.⁵² This attempt to ingratiate himself with Soviet leaders backfired dramatically, for Thorez was ready to resume direct control of the P.C.F. When Thorez announced his return to France from the U.S.S.R. later in 1953, Aragon's ordeal was over, and in anticipation of his pending security, the poet produced a laudatory poem in heroic and aggrandizing language to honor the party head:

O women smile and mingle your braids
 These two words like flowers, never faded
 He returns I repeat these two words without end
 All is colored by these words after these two years
 He returns he returns he comes he is going to come
 From now on the happiness of everyone is in our hands
 And one already hears the days to come singing about
 this.⁵³

⁵¹Ibid., 144. Duclos was arrested the same evening that Paris-based Communists orchestrated a demonstration against General Matthew Ridgeway, who had been appointed American commander in Paris. The P.C.F. accused Ridgeway of unleashing the alleged American germ warfare campaign in Korea. Two dead pigeons were found in Duclos's car, and despite Mme. Duclos's assertion that they were meant for dinner, the police argued that they were carrier pigeons (Ibid., 136, 143-144).

⁵²Ibid., 164.

⁵³O femmes souriez et mêlez à vos tresses
 Ces deux mots-là comme des fleurs, jamais fanées
 Il revient Je redis ces deux mots-là sans cesse
 Tout se colore d'eux après ces deux années
 Il revient il revient il vient il va venir
 En avant le bonheur de tous est dans nos mains
 Il semble qu'a le dire on ouvre l'avenir
 Et l'on entend déjà chanter les lendemains.

This is the last verse of the poem, and is quoted in Caute,

Once Thorez was firmly reinstalled as the P.C.F. leader, Aragon was rehabilitated. Foreseeing this course of events, Duclos had attempted to cover his flank by questioning Lecoeur's handling of the Picasso affair. He maintained:

we can even ask ourselves whether ... [Lecoeur's] declaration relative to a portrait by Picasso has not to an extent permitted our enemies to campaign among intellectuals whom they seek to turn away from us...⁵⁴

By June 1954, during a party congress, Aragon used his renewed stature to reframe the P.C.F.'s position on cultural issues.

222. A number of French journalists parodied this obsequious poem. One of the more humorous makes the link between Aragon's precarious position and Thorez's return:

...
He returns a hope dilates my breast
Reward the just and punish the bastards
Remember sirs a portrait of Stalin
You who treated me like Pablo's dealer

...
I criticized myself in the "Lettres françaises"
And received kicks from fougeron [sic]
But Maurice returns....

(Il revient un espoir dilate ma poitrine
Récompenser le juste et punir les salauds
Souvenez-vous messieurs du portrait de Staline
Vous qui m'avez traité de marchand de Pablo

...
Je m'autocritique dans les "Lettres françaises"
Et recevais les coups de pied du fougeron [sic]
Mais Maurice revient ...)

This poem was written by J.-P. Lacroix in "A la manière de... Aragon: Il revient (suite)," Canard Enchaîné, 15 April 1953, page number not included, press clipping from the Stalin portrait affair file, Elsa Triolet - Louis Aragon Archives, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris.

⁵⁴Jacques Duclos quoted in L'Humanité, 9 March 1953, cited by Wall, 165.

[He] soundly condemned Lecoœur's crude ... [Social Realism] as an example of the cult of spontaneity, sectarian adventurism, and liquidationism. [He maintained that] there was a relationship between artistic creation and the working class. But the party could only define a tendency; it was up to the artist to translate directives into cultural reality. Party art was possible, but it must not be sectarian, vulgar, schematic, or crudely declarative, nor could it be confused with individual works by party members; one could be in the P.C.F. and still not do party art (presumably like Picasso).⁵⁵

So the party's problem of promoting avant-garde artists was resolved and freedom for artistic expression was secured, although Aragon continued to provide artists with direction by maintaining that "the critical reevaluation of our national patrimony is one of the determining tasks of party art."⁵⁶ Indeed, Aragon quickly reasserted his control over the cultural domain. The writer turned on Fougeron, attacking his anti-American Civilisation Atlantique shown at the 1953 Salon de Mai. Aragon vehemently decried Fougeron's new style with its references to Mexican mural painting and Surrealist juxtaposition,⁵⁷

⁵⁵Ibid., 175

⁵⁶"Le réévaluation critique de notre patrimoine national est l'une des tâches déterminantes de l'art de parti" (Louis Aragon, "L'Art de Parti en France," La Nouvelle Critique no. 57 [July-August 1954]: 22]).

⁵⁷Wilson, "Art and Politics of the Left in France, ca. 1935-1955," 384. According to Wilson, Aragon's attack on Fougeron's experiments may have been influenced by recent Soviet writing on art. Victor Prokoviev's September 1953 and February 1954 La Nouvelle Critique articles condemned all manifestations of pseudo-realist art, including surrealism and primitivism (Ibid.). Wilson also states that Aragon may have found Fougeron's anti-Americanism inopportune in the current political turbulence following

virtually crushing the artist's career in his scathing critique.

The Aftermath of the Portrait Affair: Picasso's Place in the French Communist Party

Although Picasso's stature spared him the rough treatment that Aragon received, the Stalin portrait affair confirmed that the P.C.F. did not value Picasso for his artmaking per se, but for the fame that his art had brought him. Although party art dictates softened after the Stalin portrait affair, and Picasso's art met with greater appreciation, Picasso was still largely celebrated in general terms as a "great" man. Indeed, the portrait served as a sharp reminder that Picasso could not be trusted to do propaganda, and could only be packaged reliably as the peace hero. The P.C.F. thus continued to promote him in this capacity, most notably in conjunction with his 1952-53 murals War and Peace (figs. 31 and 32), which were installed in a deconsecrated chapel in Vallauris in February 1954. The Russian critic Ilya Ehrenbourg's 15-22 May 1953 article for Les Lettres françaises is a case in point. "Picasso et la paix" ("Picasso and Peace"), a French translation of Ehrenbourg's piece published in an Italian periodical devoted to Picasso's concurrent exhibition in Rome, avoids

Stalin's death. She argues that "with the possibility of milder or reconciliatory tactics in view, Picasso was obviously a more valuable asset to the Party..." (Ibid., 383).

concrete observations about the artist's work, merely honoring Picasso as a personality. Ehrenbourg states:

I do not want to begin speaking here of the creative genius of Picasso; I would only like to underscore the importance that his work had for my own work as a writer. Most certainly what we see once again in his work is still very far from the combination of feelings that characterizes men of the new society, but I believe that everyone recognizes in Picasso an artist of an extraordinary strength and sincerity...⁵⁸

Acknowledging obliquely that Picasso's work does not conform to Communist aesthetics, Ehrenbourg lauds Picasso as a great man, and moves on to praise his peace dove and the artist's activities as a peace fighter. Ehrenbourg notes that Picasso's work figures in the collections of "Americans and snobs," but suggests that the artist transcends these troublesome associations by his good works as a Communist. Ehrenbourg cites Picasso's participation in peace congresses, and ends his article on a sentimental anecdote. At a 1949 Rome meeting of the Partisans of Peace, Ehrenbourg found Picasso at a restaurant in the company of workers. The writer's ruminations on Picasso's solidarity with the proletariat slides without transition into a celebration of art itself:

⁵⁸"Je ne veux pas entreprendre de parler ici du génie créateur de Picasso; je voudrais seulement souligner l'importance qu'a eue son oeuvre pour mon propre travail d'écrivain. Certes ce qui se trouve de nouveau dans son oeuvre est encore bien loin de cet ensemble de sentiments qui caractérise les hommes de la nouvelle société, mais je crois que tous reconnaissent dans Picasso un artiste d'une force et d'une sincérité extraordinaires..." (Ilya Ehrenbourg, "Picasso et la paix," Les Lettres françaises, 15-22 May 1953, 1).

Workers rushed toward Picasso. They began to embrace him. He was very moved and the workers proud and happy. It was a marvelous, unforgettable picture. It had a profound sensibility that moved everyone, which can be brought to mind by just these few words: the workers of Rome, Pablo Picasso, the dove. And at this moment, I too was proud: for art.⁵⁹

Even Picasso's friend and cautious critic of Social Realism, Hélène Parmelin, skirts an in-depth discussion of War and Peace's style, preferring to focus on Picasso's stature in her 17 May 1953 l'Humanité piece on the murals. Although she notes that some viewers will question the distortion in a number of the mural figures, Parmelin does not dwell on the relationship of Picasso's style to party art. She merely rejoices in the timeless and timely nature of the artist's subject matter, aligning Picasso with other great painters of the past who have illustrated war and peace, and praises her friend for his painted plea for worldwide fraternity. When she asks whether the mural will be understood, Parmelin argues that viewers hostile to the work will be bourgeois rather than Communist:

Understood by whom? Not by all those whom we know repudiate his fresco for its subject like they attacked Massacre in Korea for its subject; not the snobs, bankers' wives and ministers' mistresses of fashionable Paris; as Ilya Ehrenburg has said: but [understood] by his friends, his comrades, the workers of the world for whom he made doves that don't know boundaries and that

⁵⁹"Des ouvriers se sont précipités vers Picasso. Ils se sont mis à l'embrasser. Lui était très ému et les ouvriers fiers et heureux. C'était un tableau merveilleux, inoubliable. Il contient un sens profond, qui émeut tout le monde rien qu'à le rappeler par ces simples mots: les ouvriers de Rome, Pablo Picasso, la colombe. Et à ce instant-là, moi aussi j'ai été fier: pour l'art" (Ibid.).

have become a little like a common language for all the people of the earth.⁶⁰

Picasso the peace hero and great artist in the abstract is venerated, and Picasso the creator of very particular, stylistically diverse works is ignored.⁶¹

⁶⁰"Comprise de qui? Non pas de tous ceux dont il sait bien qu'ils renieront sa fresque pour son sujet comme ils attaquèrent Massacre au Corée pour le sien; non pas des snobs, du Tout-Paris "des femmes de banquiers et des maîtresses de ministres;" comme dirait Ilya Ehrenbourg: mais de ses amis, de ses camarades, des travailleurs du monde pour lesquels il créa faut de colombes que ne connaissent pas de frontières et qui sont devenues un peu du langage commun à tous les peuples de la terre" (Hélène Parmelin, "Picasso, La Guerre et La Paix," L'Humanité, 17 May 1953, 3).

⁶¹Parmelin will devote much subsequent writing to Picasso's subject matter and style. Her 1954 Les Massacre des innocents. L'Art et la guerre furthers her meditations on art and the theme of peace, but addresses the subject in relation to questions about style: "One admits that in certain periods of History the values of content prevail over all others; that all work destined to serve peace must encounter if not admiration, than at least respect. And [one admits] that it would be fruitless to value such and such technique of today over such and such other. Time will stir up innumerable canvasses. They are bound to be discovered because so many exist. Their diversity favors formal research" ("On conviendra qu'en certaines périodes de l'Histoire les valeurs de contenu l'emportent sur tout autre; que toute oeuvre destinée à servir la paix doive rencontrer sinon l'admiration, tout au moins le respect. Et qu'il serait vain de désigner comme seule valable telle ou telle technique d'aujourd'hui contre telle ou telle autre. Le temps brassera ces toiles innombrables. Leur multiplicité est propice aux découvertes. Leur diversité favorise les recherches formelles" [Hélène Parmelin, Les Massacres des Innocents: L'Art et la guerre (Paris: Éditions Cercle d'Art, 1954), 131]). In keeping with Aragon's call for artists to draw from the national patrimony, Parmelin goes on to argue that artists "find themselves on the road of great art if, leaning on national tradition, and by impregnating themselves entirely with the hopes of the people among whom they work, and with whom they share difficulties, they give themselves over to joy without equal in the true discovery of art, of true liberty: that which

Claude Roy's essay on Picasso's War and Peace does discuss the artist's style at some length, but suggestively rather than critically. Roy argues that Picasso's distortions reflect the artist's emotional responses to his subjects and that Picasso's personal expressions reveal a general truth that all of humanity can appreciate. This general truth is a belief in the importance of freedom: freedom from war, and freedom from confining, de-humanizing labor. This latter point is a very discrete subtext in Roy's narrative, which focuses largely on how Picasso makes the unattractive meaningful. Roy asserts that the "genius" leaves nothing to fate; that the starting point of art and industry is the will to transform the natural. However, for Roy, Picasso's transformations work with, rather than against nature, for they reveal essential human experiences. For instance, Picasso's painted busts of women done in Royan just before the German occupation of the town reveal in their distortion the cruel horror of war.⁶² Roy states that this is an example of the "true" realism also at work in Picasso's War and Peace murals, which communicate through

comes from soil" ("se trouvent sur le chemin du grand art si, s'appuyant sur la tradition nationale, et s'imprégnant tout entiers des aspirations du peuple au sein duquel ils travaillent, et dont ils partagent les angoisses, ils s'abandonnent aux joies sans égales de la vraie découverte en art, de la vraie liberté: celle qui tient à la terre" [Ibid.]).

⁶²Claude Roy, La Guerre et la paix (Paris: Editions Cercle d'Art, 1954), 70-71.

the artist's expressive (vs. purely descriptive) forms both the outrage of war and the joy of peace.⁶³ Such ruminations lead Roy back to the recurring theme of Picasso the peace artist, which Roy links to the more general image of the heroic artist who battles his subject:

Picasso is the herald, the hero of this time when men have understood better what war was, [understood] that they have not lived that which could have been peace, that which (and that [Picasso] affirms) will be peace.... [...] For weeks [Picasso] lived a furious battle,... If people nearby had had fine-tuned ears, they would have had to have heard, coming from Vallauris, a mysterious cannonade, the muffled drumming of a prodigious barrage of fire. Picasso was at war with war.⁶⁴

This characterization of Picasso contrasts markedly with Roy's opening remarks on the artist, that he is resoundingly human: "Pablo Picasso also has two arms, two legs, a head, a nose, a heart, and all appearances of being human."⁶⁵ This seemingly conflicted portrait of the artist appears in much writing on Picasso and is merely a strategy for making him both awe-inspiring and accessible at the same

⁶³Ibid., 39.

⁶⁴"Picasso est le héraut, le héros de ces temps où les hommes ont mieux su ce qu'était la guerre, qu'ils n'ont vécu ce que pourrait être la paix, ce que sera (et cela il l'affirme) la paix.... [...] Il a livré là pendant des semaines une bataille furieuse,... Si les gens des environs avaient eu l'oreille vraiment fine, ils auraient dû entendre, venant de Vallauris, une canonnade mystérieuse, le tamborinement sourd d'un prodigieux tir de barrage. Picasso était en guerre avec la guerre" (Ibid.).

⁶⁵"Pablo Picasso a également deux bras, deux jambes, une tête, un nez, un coeur, et toutes les apparences d'un être humain" (Ibid., 11.).

time, a strategy that I will explore in greater length later in this chapter. However, I would like to focus on one of Roy's assertions about Picasso as legend/everyman, for it subtly (and probably unconsciously) disrupts a project that elegantly commodifies Picasso's "freedom."

Roy's La Guerre et la paix, published by the Communist-owned Éditions Cercle d'Art, is a luxurious coffee table book lavishly illustrated with Picasso's preparatory drawings for the murals and printed on heavy paper in a limited edition. The book even features a separate, original lithograph by Picasso. Costly to produce and expensive to buy, the exclusive book must have been beyond the means of many readers. It is an extremely upscale version of Picasso "products" (such as plates and scarves) that the party manufactured to market their peace artist.⁶⁶ Roy's almost folksy characterization of Picasso in these practically embossed pages seems incongruous at best, and his closing statement appears strangely out of place in such a rarefied document:

I dream of a world, I desire a world, we create a world where the word work will no longer have two meanings: the one attributed bitterly to the man who returns to the factory, to the building site, to the office, to the mine, to the fields without joy, and the one attributed to this young Picasso of seventy-two years, sparkling this afternoon with all his beautiful human brilliance, and who says "to work" like one says "out

⁶⁶I would like to thank Sarah Wilson for informing me that the Éditions Cercle d'Art undertook Communist projects, and for pointing out that its production of sumptuous volumes was an odd venture for a Communist concern.

into the sun."⁶⁷

This meditation on labor is a subtle reminder of the joys of true creative freedom (and thus a careful break from aesthetic dogmatism), but it is also an emphatic restatement of the dream of communism. Apparently the irony of voicing this dream within the pages of a luxurious commodity that packaged Picasso's freedom for a select few to consume was lost on Roy and the editors at Éditions Cercle d'Art.

Rejection and the Verve Series: Loss and Sublimation

Thus the P.C.F. did continue to view Picasso in the general, grand terms of the postwar hero myth,--the very terms that the artist himself demanded--and the party's assessment of Picasso's work rarely extended beyond the superficial. According to Picasso biographer Pierre Cabanne, the P.C.F.'s empty praise, a covert form of rejection, affected the artist deeply:

Picasso thought that his party friends would pull him out from his solitude as a creator; certainly they had given him an extraordinary popular audience, but they regarded him above all like a star. As a Communist, his solitude is, paradoxically still larger because of the Communists; the man is venerated, but the work, when it does not conform to the party's aesthetic, is

⁶⁷"Je rêve d'un monde, je désire un monde, nous créons un monde où le mot travail n'aura plus deux sens: celui que lui donne amèrement l'homme qui retourne à l'usine, au chantier, au bureau, à la mine, aux champs sans joie, et celui que lui donne ce jeune Picasso de soixante-douze ans, brillant cet après-midi de tout son bel éclat humain, et qui dit 'au travail' comme on dit 'au soleil.'" (Ibid., 151).

isolated, or one feigns to ignore it...⁶⁸

This subtle repudiation by the P.C.F.--a paradoxical effect of hero-worshipping the artist and briefly overt during the Stalin portrait affair--roughly coincided with a more personal form of rejection: the departure of Picasso's companion Françoise Gilot. Both events appear to have encouraged Picasso to evaluate his own monumental stature as an artist and as a man. Whereas the Stalin portrait affair exposed how very awkwardly the veil of P.C.F. heroic humanism cloaked Picasso's role within the party, Picasso's Verve series explores human truths beneath other facades: the stereotypes of the heroic male creator and his inspirational but passive muse.

The Verve series' 180 works on paper (mostly drawings) frequently pair bodies--primarily males with females--but

⁶⁸"Picasso pensait que ses amis du Parti l'arracheraient à sa solitude de createur; certes ils lui avaient donné une extraordinaire audience populaire, mais ils le regardaient surtout comme une vedette. Communiste, sa solitude est, paradoxalement, plus grande encore du fait des communistes; l'homme est vénéré, mais l'oeuvre, quand elle n'est pas conforme à l'esthétique du Parti, est écartée, ou on feint de l'ignorer..." (Pierre Cabanne, "Guernica" et la guerre (1937-1955), vol. 3, Le siècle de Picasso [1975; reprint, Paris: Denoël, 1992], 302). Cabanne also notes "We know from Georges Tabaraud, little suspect of malevolence with respect to Picasso and to contemporary Russian art, that when [Picasso] will paint War and Peace, he will have under his eyes the reproduction of a canvas by the most 'pompiers' of official Soviet painter, the illustrious Geurassimov!" ("Nous savons par Georges Tabaraud, peu suspect de malveillance à l'égard de Picasso et de l'art russe contemporain, que lorsque celui-ci peindra la Guerre et la Paix, il aura sous les yeux la reproduction d'une toile du plus 'pompiers' des peintres officiels soviétiques, l'illustre Geurassimov!" [Ibid.]).

sometimes depict couples of the same sex. Picasso's predominate theme is that of the male artist and his female model, although some drawings reveal couples sporting masks in front of one another, and other pictures cluster a small group of puzzled people in front of a large abstract canvas (fig. 33). This latter image speak to the debate surrounding representational and abstract art that divided the Parisian art world after World War II. Although he was thought to have contributed to the development of abstraction, and was denounced by some Communists for his deformations of the "real," Picasso and his supporters believed that his work profoundly expressed lived experience, which they maintained abstract art was incapable of doing. Picasso's musings on abstract art's lack of meaning probably reflect his own anger and anxiety about the ascendancy of abstraction in the Parisian art world,⁶⁹ and

⁶⁹Gilot records Picasso's opinion about Jackson Pollock and abstract expressionism: "I'm against that sort of stuff. As far as these new painters are concerned, I think it is a mistake to let oneself go completely and lose oneself in the gesture. Giving oneself up entirely to the action of painting--there's something in that which displeases me enormously. It's not at all that I hold to a rational conception of painting--I have nothing in common, for example with a man like Poussin--but in any case the unconscious is so strong in us that it expresses itself in one fashion or another.... So why should we deliberately hand ourselves over to it?..." (Gilot and Lake, 269-270). Parmelin's correspondence with Picasso points to the artist's disdain for abstraction. A 9 July 1954 postcard from Parmelin to Picasso that features a geometric abstraction by Magnelli, jokingly states "Excuse-moi, je n'en ai pas trouvé d'Hartung..." ("Excuse me, I did not find a Hartung"). In a 3 February 1959 letter to Picasso, Parmelin dismisses a current exhibition of American

the ridicule those among its practitioners and supporters heaped onto Picasso. In his 1956 book L'Aventure de l'art abstrait, prominent critic Michel Ragon voiced criticisms that had general currency after the war:

Picasso of whom one speaks so much! Picasso, adored star, who attracts as many tourists to the coast of Antibes as the Eiffel Tower of 1900 attracted suckers to Paris, where is his influence? Picasso is becoming more distant. The young are detaching themselves from this "encumbering genius" of whom it has been said that he constitutes a repertory of art history.

"A Picasso" wrote Apollinaire "studies an object like one dissects a cadaver." The time for vivisection is over. The artist of today creates a new world.⁷⁰

Rejecting the literal abstraction that rejected him, Picasso's series also spurns "figurative" abstraction: the heroic idealism that informed some of his own naturalistic pictures for the P.C.F., and that shaped the Social Realism many of his fellow Communists continued to embrace. Indeed,

abstraction: "... the Americans put on a damned Cartesian exhibition of their explosions at the Modern Art Museum. It is funny.... Pollock amuses me. And standing before [this work], damned silent, damned meditative, people reason..." ("les Américains font une exposition vachement cartésienne de leurs explosions du Musée d'Art Moderne. C'est amusant.... Moi Pollock, ça m'amuse. Et debout devant, vachement silencieux, vachement méditatifs, les gens font de raisonnement...") [See the Parmelin correspondence file, Picasso Archives, Musée Picasso, Paris]).

⁷⁰"Picasso dont on parle tant! Picasso, vedette adulée, qui attire autant de touristes du côté d'Antibes que la Tour Eiffel de 1900 attirait de gogos à Paris, où est son influence? Picasso s'éloigne. Les jeunes se détachent de ce 'génie encombrant' dont on a dit qu'il constituait un répertoire de l'histoire de l'art.

'Un Picasso,' écrivait Apollinaire, 'étudie un objet comme on dissèque un cadavre.' Le temps de la vivisection est fini. L'artiste d'aujourd'hui construit un monde neuf" (Michel Ragon, L'aventure de l'art abstrait [Paris: Robert Laffont, 1956], 70).

what is compelling about the Verve series is that it challenges two central stereotypes in many forms of representation: the heroic, vital, accomplished male creator; and the glorious, passive, accommodating female muse.

In an essay that addresses the Verve series and related pictures, Denis Hollier explores how Picasso maps out relationships between the artist and model that are far from ideal. He first examines Picasso's 1953 paintings The Shadow, The Shadow on the Woman, and Nude in the Studio (figs. 34, 35, and 36). The first two works depict Picasso and Gilot's bedroom, a supine Gilot, and Picasso's shadow, a dark projection of the artist who suddenly turns away from a window toward his companion. Hollier uncovers the sexual dimension of this gap between the shadowy subject and his full-bodied object. In his analysis of The Shadow, Hollier describes how Picasso's phallic shadow thrusts forcefully into the picture plane and through the body of the reclining Gilot. The writer compares this penetration to the similarly impaled space of Les Demoiselles d'Avignon, which is cut by the sharply projecting edge of a table. Hollier observes, however, that both penetrated paintings register the expulsion of male presence: the male sailor and student present in early versions of the Demoiselles are absent from the finished canvas, and Picasso's shadow, not his person, appears in The Shadow.

The third painting pushes this logic of impassioned separation further: Gilot has left the bedroom and now inhabits the studio as a model, and the shadowy presence of Picasso the man has disappeared along with any possibility of passionate embrace. With Nude in the Studio, Gilot is gone in reality (she has actually abandoned the artist), and Picasso has actually "left ... [his] body at the [studio] door"⁷¹: the erotic charge of the bedroom is replaced with the detached observation of the studio. Hollier argues that Nude in the Studio is a "victory of sublimation," although not triumphant sublimation, for the painting launches the Verve series, works that are entirely structured by loss: the separation of the model from the artist.

The Verve series spells out this split between the painting subject and the painted object in a visual metaphor: although the artist is shown working from the model, his canvas physically separates him from her.⁷² Picasso shows how the artist's work actually divorces him and others from his model through the example of abstract

⁷¹"... laisse ... [son] corps à la porte," Denis Hollier, "Portrait de l'artiste en son absence," Les Cahiers du Musée National d'Art Moderne 30 (Winter 1989): 12.

⁷²Ibid., 13. Hollier also notes that Picasso explodes continuous space through his practice of creating different stylistic registers in a single work (Ibid.). The author discusses the structure of the Verve images as an example of the general dynamic at work in Picasso's oeuvre. Hollier notes that Picasso works from memory, recording what is not actually present as a physical model, but that which he has embraced through an examination of the visual array (Ibid., 8).

painting: characters in the Verve series admire the painter's abstract canvas and ignore the female model who inspired it⁷³ (fig. 33). In literal abstraction, not only is the model physically absent, but for Picasso, a concrete relationship with that model is also missing. This condemnation of non-objective painting operates as an obvious metaphor for the distance inscribed in all painting. Figurative and literal abstraction are merely different forms of sublimation: distanced contemplation that excises or mutes the physical relationship between the painter and his model. By isolating this dynamic in the Verve series, Hollier not only shows how the series specifically sublimates Picasso's personal loss of Gilot, but how it generally operates as a meditation on the gulf that always separates the artist from his model.⁷⁴

Leiris: "Failed" Sublimation and a Critique of the Hero

Michel Leiris's 1954 essay "Picasso and the Human Comedy, or the Avatars of Big Foot" also explores the gap between the artist and model in the Verve series. Leiris

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Hollier argues that the loss of the object which Picasso explores involves the informe, the term that Leiris' friend Georges Bataille coined to signify all that undoes hierarchy and that expresses the base. Hollier references Bataille's 1930 homage to Picasso "Rotten Sun," which counters man's tendency toward elevated abstraction with an appreciation for "le héros cornélien [qui] aspire à descendre" ("the Cornelian hero who aspires to descend" [Ibid., 6]).

focuses on the male bodies in the works and reads them as surrogates for Picasso. He informs his readers that the series operates as a visual journal that documents "a crisis in [Picasso's] private life leading him to the most general sort of questioning"⁷⁵. After this oblique allusion to Gilot's departure, the writer notes how Picasso frequently represents young, beautiful female models posing for aged, repulsive, and seemingly impotent male artists (figs. 37 and 38). Leiris argues that this scenario deconstructs the stereotype of the artistic male genius who remains forever productive and desirable, revealing instead that such a man is subject to the vicissitudes of aging like all mortals. The Verve series demonstrates that neither the artist's genius nor his fame shield him from loss:

In this immense masquerade ... the stupefying skill of the artist seems itself to be an irony: never has so much artistic genius been more gaily deployed to make fun of art, and never has anyone demonstrated in so peremptory a way that, finally, nothing essential has changed--put into check by physical decline, before the checkmate of absolute separation--for this man who does everything he wants to with his brain and his ten fingers. Behind all the spectacles, each one more dazzling, that this artist who so lives up to the name dispenses like a "producer," and despite the renown that can result from it, nothing has changed for him and he remains just as defenseless as most mortals: a clown ... No man--however clever he may be--escapes the human condition, and neither art nor love can eliminate the passing of time⁷⁶

⁷⁵Michel Leiris, "Picasso and the Human Comedy, or the Avatars of Big Foot," in Brisées: Broken Branches, trans. Lydia Davis (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1989), 168.

⁷⁶Ibid., 179.

Leiris maintains that Picasso is the producer of a spectacle that dramatizes his own failure and loss: the great artist and great man is demoted to the role of a professionally and sexually impotent, aged clown whose female muse abandons him. Elsewhere, Leiris is clear that aging is just one aspect of the human condition that drives a wedge between the subject and all the objects of his desire. It is merely one experience that erodes the ideal selves individuals strive to be: youthful, accomplished, recognized beings who are fully self-possessed and in possession of their objects.⁷⁷

Leiris is careful to show that the artist's failure to idealize the relationship between the subject and his objects is a historical phenomenon, a product of Romanticism. He maintains that in the nineteenth century, a period of social and political revolution, two conceptions of the artist evolved: "the myth of the artist as demiurge (built upon religion's rubble...)" and "the myth of the artist scorned."⁷⁸ Leiris traces the latter from the writings of Baudelaire, Nerval, Mallarmé, and Roussel to the last film of Chaplin, "the-man-who-no-longer-makes-people-

⁷⁷Picasso's involvement with the P.C.F. contributed to the disintegration of his heroic self: the party used the artist's fame but had little use for his individual artistic achievements.

⁷⁸Ibid., 175.

laugh."⁷⁹ Leiris implies that Romantic creators provide a sharp critique of modern society: the "demiurges" try to transform the world while the outcasts indict it.

Romanticism offers

A bitter argument against life as society has shaped it for us, a challenging of reality as a whole, Romanticism oscillates between lyricism and irony: when the poet stops transfiguring it, it is in order to demystify by embarking on a sharp criticism. He who uses irony as a mask and as a weapon is in a good position to know that under the laughter there are often tears and that if the truth is only theater, beneath the theater there is a truth...⁸⁰

This truth for Leiris is the message of failed sublimation, the inability of even the great artist to retain his heroic status. The elevated hero of the modern and the contemporary postwar imagination is destined to fall like all men. He may be a powerful demiurge in command of himself and others for a time, but he will also find himself an outcast, whose only strength is the truth that he embodies: that he is a subject distanced radically from his objects, "separated by a gap that no one, whatever his genius, will ever be able to bridge."⁸¹

Leiris maintains that this revelation bears some relation to revolution:

Picasso...shares with the great public puppet Charlie Chaplin...the privilege of being the most glorious artist of our time,... [and we] cannot forget that both

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid., 176.

⁸¹Ibid., 177.

of them--almost simultaneously presenting themselves onstage with barely any makeup on, with almost brutal awkwardness--are contemporaries of a worldwide social revolution.⁸²

The writer ends his essay with this suggestive observation, an assertion that implies another direct, historical link between contemporary Romantic artists (Picasso and Chaplin) and the social. But what is this link? Is Leiris further extending his argument that the Romantic artist as outcast indicts society by showing that its trappings (most notably fame) cannot guard against loss? In order to tease out a more precise interpretation of Leiris's conclusion, Leiris's work must itself be situated within a historical context.

Leiris as Failed Hero: Failed Surrealist, Existentialist, and Ethnographer

Leiris's "Picasso and the Human Comedy, or the Avatars of Big Foot" essay weds Leiris's pre-war tauromachy writings with existentialist concerns. For Leiris, who worked performatively through autobiography (a dynamic he located in all of Picasso's production), the writer/artist must take "risks" that mirror that of the torero facing the bull. Leiris equates the torero's mortal risk with a different type of exposure for the creator: the revelation of all of one's inadequacies. This baseness was humanness for Leiris, and he (like his friend Georges Bataille) believed that it undermines idealized presuppositions of what it is to be

⁸²Ibid., 181.

human.

As a younger man involved with Surrealism, Leiris embraced the Romantic image of the self-sacrificing poet as a kind of redemption figure: as one who "could save author and readers from the sin of unjustified existence."⁸³ This belief informed the development of Leiris's confessional literature, which focused on the particulars and intimacies of his own life. From the 1930s, Leiris turned to the study of African peoples through ethnography, and during his participation in the 1931-33 Dakar-Djibouti mission, he produced a history of the expedition that focused more on his experience than that of the "natives." In the course of his extended confrontation with a radically other culture, Leiris became particularly aware of how the objects of his study affected him, which made "objective" reportage virtually impossible for the young ethnographer. He detailed his extraordinary difficulties in Africa in vivid detail, and in documenting repeated physical and emotional breakdowns, he seriously undermined the image of the confident, controlling ethnographer safely distanced from the people he examines.

Leiris's 1939 Manhood (completed in 1935) is perhaps the most vivid example of what would become Leiris's favored

⁸³Leah Hewitt, "Between Movements: Leiris in Literary History," in Yale French Studies: On Leiris, ed. Marc Blanchard, no. 81 (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University, 1992), 82.

aesthetic: the marriage of masochistic self-exposure with mythic themes. Indeed, virtually all of Leiris's literary works share an interest in locating the universal in the painfully personal. The following quote from Manhood eloquently reveals what became the author's project:

Always beneath or above concrete events, I remain a prisoner of this alternative: the world as a real object which dominates and devours me (like Judith) in suffering and in fear, or else the world as a pure fantasy which dissolves in my hands, which I destroy (like Lucrece thrusting home the danger) without ever succeeding in possessing it. Perhaps, above all, the question for me is to escape this dilemma by finding a way in which the world and myself--object and subject--confront each other on an equal footing, as the matador stands before the bull.⁸⁴

After the war, Leiris, like many of his literary and artistic contemporaries, was drawn to the ideal of work committed to the betterment of society. The postwar hero myth fed into his own fantasies of self-sacrifice. However, unlike his friend Picasso, he did not commit himself to the P.C.F., but became a fellow traveler extremely sympathetic to Communist goals. Although Leiris was active in the Resistance and spoke out against government oppression in the 1940s - 1950s, he hesitated to give himself over completely to a political party or to a cause. In Fourbis, the first volume of his four-part autobiography, he explored this reluctance, confessing his unwillingness to risk

⁸⁴Michel Leiris, Manhood: A Journey from Childhood into the Fierce Order of Virility, trans. Richard Howard, with a Foreword by Susan Sontag (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 141.

extreme, active exposure (the possibility of death in Resistance efforts for example), a "sin" that he believed cut him off from the momentous social events that he lived through.⁸⁵ Leiris forged a different sort of political alliance with Sartre and the Temps modernes circle, partially embracing Sartre's notion of committed literature first put forth in the philosopher's 1947 "What is Literature?". Leiris' postwar preface to Manhood, "Literature Considered as a Tauromachy," redefines committed literature as writing to which the author is totally committed.⁸⁶ Rather than insist on actively changing the public sphere, Leiris suggests that it is the private sphere he wishes to transform. Such an endeavor is not entirely insular, however, for Leiris believed in the "importance of gleaning from personal experience something that ... [would] help himself and others better understand the human condition."⁸⁷

An argument that Leiris puts forward in his 1950 text "The Ethnographer Faced with Colonialism" demonstrates how Leiris linked his thoughts about the human condition to political realities. The failed "hero" of this speech,

⁸⁵Allan Stoekl, "Leiris's Unwritten Autobiography," chap. in Politics, Writing, Mutilation: The Cases of Bataille, Blanchot, Roussel, Leiris, and Ponge (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 56.

⁸⁶Hewitt, "Between Movements: Leiris in Literary History," 82-83.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 90.

which Leiris delivered at the Association des Travailleurs Scientifiques, shares a number of similarities with the failed artist in "Picasso and the Human Comedy." In this speech, however, Leiris is somewhat more concrete about the failed ethnographer's relationship to political struggle. Understanding the position that Leiris sets out in "The Ethnographer Faced with Colonialism" clarifies some of the ambiguity in the writer's essay on Picasso.

In the speech, Leiris situates the ethnographer within history, much as he subsequently embeds the Romantic artist in the social. Leiris confronts the problem of belonging to a dominant class that exploits colonial peoples, and of being an individual opposed to such degradation, which is cloaked in elevated rhetoric that masks brute realities.

The diffusion of Western culture, conceived as the most perfect despite inventions such as mustard gas (which Mussolini used against the Abyssinians) and now the atomic bomb (with which the Old World is threatened by the American government), the cultivation of regions that would have remained unproductive without this, the advancement of Christianity and of hygiene--these are the reasons most often cited, of all the good or bad reasons that modern colonialism can come up with, for dominating countries and exploiting their inhabitants by alienating them from themselves. As we must not forget, Hitler's Germany also claimed to be embarking on a humanitarian mission when it masked its brigandage behind the idea of a regeneration of Europe and justified its extermination campaigns by a certain eugenics.⁸⁸

Leiris declares that although ethnographers are by definition representatives of repressive colonial regimes,

⁸⁸Michel Leiris, "The Ethnographer Faced with Colonialism," in Brisées: Broken Branches, 112-113.

as scholars with a sympathetic understanding of the colonized, it is ethnographers' responsibility to "defend these societies and their aspirations, even if such aspirations conflict with the so-called national interests and are the object of scandal."⁸⁹ He also insists that if the ethnographer can offer anything of value to the colonized, it is education: not the dissemination of Western values that would encourage continued subordination, but the spread of ideas and information that would further the

⁸⁹Ibid., 115. Leiris will later partake of such a scandal: the "Déclaration sur le droit à l'insoumission dans la guerre d'Algérie," also known as the "Manifeste des 121". The manifesto, published in the French press in September and October 1960, was the initiative of Jean Schuster and Dionys Mascolo and largely the work of Maurice Blanchot. Leiris was one of the first French intellectuals to sign this manifesto, and after doing so, he was called up before the organization that oversaw his employment, the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (see Michel Leiris, Journal, 1922-1989, ed. Jean Jamin [Paris: Gallimard, 1992], 911, n. 2). Picasso did not sign this manifesto. He was sent a copy of it with the following message typed below the signatures: "Since its publication, 1 September 1960, the enclosed declaration provoked a preliminary investigation against X. Judging that this declaration must receive, in the shortest time, the largest number of new signatures possible, I declare that I countersign it in view of a new publication...." ("Depuis sa publication, le 1^{er} Septembre 1960, la déclaration ci-jointe a provoqué l'ouverture d'une information contre X. Jugeant que cette déclaration doit recevoir, dans les plus brefs délais, le plus grand nombre possible de signatures nouvelles, je déclare la contresigner en vue d'une nouvelle publication..." [see the "Déclaration sur le droit à l'insoumission dans la guerre d'Algérie," Associations politiques françaises material, Picasso Archives, Musée Picasso, Paris]). For a detailed history of the manifesto, see Eric Losfeld, ed., Tracts surréalistes et déclarations collectives, 1922-1969, vol. 2: 1940-1969 (Paris: Le terrain vague with the aid of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1982), 390-396.

struggles of indigenous peoples against colonial capitalism.⁹⁰

However, rather than paint himself as an empowered and enlightened champion of the oppressed, Leiris states that his position is critically compromised. Having sketched out two poles that the ethnographer could occupy, positions that roughly approximate those of the Romantic "outcast" and "demiurge" (one who criticizes existing conditions and one who seeks transformation), Leiris maintains that he is actually somewhat immobilized. He admits that he is part of a privileged, bourgeois class that as a whole, is trapped by the myth of personal freedom in Eurocentric, capitalistic society. He has not fully committed himself to the battle against capitalism, the common enemy of both colonizers and colonized. The ethnographer is therefore not a confident, domineering exploiter or liberator, but a compromised, questioning man riven by the contradictions of having and not having power:

From a broader point of view, one should recall that, as we too live under the domination of economic forces we cannot control, we are subject to our own oppression, and it is hard to see how the construction of a world freed from this oppression could take place unless all those who must submit to its consequences, whether they are colonized peoples or not, unite against the common enemy represented by a bourgeoisie too attached to its position as dominant class not to seek--consciously or unconsciously--to maintain at all costs such a state of oppression. [...]

So long as he has not resolved to strive for his

⁹⁰Leiris, "The Ethnographer Faced with Colonialism", 120-21.

own liberation by taking part in the battle being fought in his own country, the ethnographer torn by the anxiety just described will not cease to grapple with his contradictions.⁹¹

The concerned, caring ethnographer loses his noble aura: he is a failed agent of capitalism and a failed agent of revolution. He is dispossessed, both of himself and others:

It remains true that if the ethnographer perhaps sinks his own ship, as far as the colonizers are concerned, by attempting to speak too frankly, by attempting to give his enlightened assistance to peoples currently fighting for their freedom, still he may, as far as the colonized are concerned, be no more than an interfering busybody; for material liberation ... can only come about through means more violent and more immediate than those available, as such, to the scholar.⁹²

By revealing the raw weaknesses of the privileged through masochistic self-representation, Leiris collapses the myths about these figures that provide them with the ability to transcend others, and by extension into the political sphere, the authority to direct others. This stance, when read against Leiris's conclusion to "Picasso and the Human Comedy," fleshes out the author's critique of the artist as hero. The failed ethnographer and the failed artist do not take part in social struggle--Picasso and Chaplin "are contemporaries of" not participants in "a worldwide social revolution"--for they are too invested in and divested by the destructive forces of heroic, idealized Western humanism. The myth of freedom and power proffered by

⁹¹Ibid. 130-131.

⁹²Ibid., 131.

capitalism is too seductive to relinquish completely, and its failure to provide in reality an experience of empowered repleteness, is ultimately drastically disempowering.

Picasso and Chaplin become very different sorts of heroes: exemplars of the dispossession we all live. They are the human, non-heroic everyman.

Has Leiris's/Picasso's Failed Hero Really Failed?

Leaving behind Leiris's images of the world, and returning to his world of images, a close examination of females in the Verve series problematizes Leiris's thesis of the disempowered hero as applied to Picasso's work. For Leiris' construct implies that the failed hero (the compromised ethnographer or the aged, mortal creator) is radically cut off from the objects who sustain him (the revolutionary colonized or the youthful, female muse). Picasso's series loosens but does not break these ties, for his objects remain subject to his manipulation. However unempowered the artist's male characters may appear, and despite the fact that many of the women are nonidealized and/or active, females largely function as props for Picasso's subversive treatment of men rather than as productive beings in their own right. Women figure as perfect, unattainable muses (figs. 39 and 40); decrepit models who act as memento mori rather than as a different sort of subject (figs. 41 and 42); or they are caricatured

as unattractive painters who seem equally foolish as their male counterparts (figs. 43 and 44). Thus the women in Picasso's series are either idealized or debased--the conventional representation of women--and both extremes merely inscribe the female as the ground on which the male artist expresses his own sense of loss and disempowerment. There is one important exception to these configurations of women that pairs a dignified and creative woman painter with a female model (fig. 45).

This female painter seems to suggest that an empowered woman had a place in Picasso's imagination. However, although she does function as an independent female subject (it is important to note that she is pictured only once in a series of over one hundred images!), she also operates as a personal symbol of loss: a surrogate for Gilot. Her presence in the Verve series openly spells out the private form of Picasso's rejection: his abandonment by Gilot, who was herself an accomplished artist. Speaking of Picasso's meeting with Chaplin, with whom the painter identified (as countless photos of the artist clowning attest and Gilot's reminiscences record⁹³), Gilot maintained:

[Picasso must have drawn a parallel], even if unconsciously, between our own precarious personal situation and the story of [Limelight]: the aging clown who not only brings the young dancer out of her paralysis but is ready to sacrifice himself and turn her over to a younger man and thus allow her to embark

⁹³Gilot and Lake, 349-350.

on her life as a woman.⁹⁴

Picasso did not let his companion go in such a graceful manner (his split with her was bitter), but he does depict Gilot's surrogate--the female painter--as a dignified, self-possessed creator. There is no place for the male artist in this picture: a woman has usurped his position of power and confidently stands before his female model.

The confident woman painter is thus the most overt embodiment of the separation between the artist and model that Hollier recounts, for by assigning the role of painter to Gilot the model, Picasso has radically absented himself from the work. This self-abnegation parallels a dynamic that Leiris sets in play in his essay on the Verve works. The woman's usurpation of the great artist's role, and Leiris's almost abject account of the great artist's impotence, are profound acknowledgements of masculine lack. For Leiris, this inscription of male disempowerment registers a critical component of the struggle between subject and object, a struggle that structures the real, and thus realism for the writer. This struggle is embodied in the desire and attempt to both hold open and close the gap between subject and object as they are expressed in literary and artistic translations of lived experience. In his own work and in Picasso's, Leiris tracked male lack via the creator's inability to capture completely meaning and

⁹⁴Gilot and Lake, 351.

presence in language, exploring the ways in which verbal and visual metaphors signal the proximity to but ultimately the distance from that which the subject wishes to convey. In meditations on Picasso's realism that Leiris recorded in his journal, the writer maintains that a certain distance must exist between the creator and that which he works upon. The separation is embodied in the effects of the creator's work, which transforms the "real" appearance of the object⁹⁵.

This distance cannot be illegible (for that would shut out the possibility of communication) and is provocative, for Leiris argues that it compels the viewer to attempt to bridge the gap, a separation that Leiris eroticizes:

The work must, certainly, be "readable" but not without a certain effort that mobilizes us; it requires, on our part, an active participation. Likewise, amorous desire demands that we cannot satisfy this desire without a certain effort to efface the distance between us and the object of our desire;...⁹⁶

Thus realism for Leiris--the expression of subjective experience of the objective--is modeled on carnal

⁹⁵Michel Leiris, Journal, 1922-1989, ed. Jean Jamin (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), entries of 27 March 1982, and 23, 25, 26, 27-29 April 1982, 750-53.

⁹⁶"L'oeuvre doit être, certes, "lisible" mais non sans un certain effort qui nous mobilise; elle requiert, de notre part, une participation active. De même, le désir amoureux exige que nous ne puissions satisfaire ce désir sans un certain effort pour effacer la distance entre nous et l'objet de notre désir;..." (Ibid., 753). It is worth noting that Leiris is discussing Picasso's naturalistic portrait of his wife Olga during these ruminations. In this case, the distance for Picasso is less a gap between what the real and pictured object of his gaze looks like, than a distance between his usual way of working (by distorting forms) and his use of descriptive line.

intersubjectivity: one attempts a union with that which is recognized as being other. Elsewhere, Leiris is clear that this attempt to interweave subject and object never results in the desired closure, but that it always remains a struggle to negotiate this absence. Commenting on the late work of Picasso, Leiris argues:

There is no doubt in my mind that the essential resilience of the perpetual energy that was the prodigious workhorse Picasso--who had a spirit too eager and curious to have ever cozily chosen a single style unto itself--derived, much more than from an aesthetic preoccupation ... from that furious need to say and to be at all costs heard, the need that pushes the true creator to call upon whatever substance or faculty he can in order to begin a dialogue with the speechless universe, to the extent that such a collusion is conceivable.⁹⁷

This description of Picasso's process, the drive toward self expression that it records, betrays a strong desire to contain an elusive other's threat to potency and wholeness. Although Picasso and Leiris vividly acknowledge professional and personal lack in the Verve series--the absence of heroic status as an artist, and of the woman with whom Picasso had made a life and produced a family--Leiris steps in to fill the abyss with his reading of the abject artist as everyman. Leiris had a personal investment in sublimating Picasso's series. The writer's interest in Picasso's masochistic treatment of the creator reflects Leiris's own self-

⁹⁷Michel Leiris, "Saying," Galerie Louise Leiris, Picasso (Paris: Galerie Louise Leiris, 1984); translated by Mortimer Schiff and reprinted in Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Pablo Picasso: Meeting in Montreal (Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1985), 76.

emasculation: his inability to be what he thinks is a truly heroic activist. For Leiris, Picasso's great artist may be feeble, but he thereby reveals his shared humanity: his lack of power puts him on the same level as all other men. He thus becomes a different sort of hero, the common man identified with the clown Chaplin.

As I have already noted in my discussion of Claude Roy's La Guerre et la paix, writers frequently characterized Picasso in both divine and resolutely human terms. This strategy for making a noted figure larger-than-life and accessible--a prominent feature of writing on human icons⁹⁸--surfaced in much of the press that Chaplin received. For example, a reviewer commenting on Chaplin's Limelight in the pages of Les Lettres francaises writes that the film:

is the work of a great humanist. It brings a pure and pressing message of hope and of confidence in life, in a world prey to war and oppression. It seems that the grandest of humble humans had tried for all of his life to transmit it, this message, to his fellow creatures who welcomed it with joy, like their friend, like one of them, each time that they would see him on the

⁹⁸Edgar Morin notes that the mass marketing of film and the introduction of realism in the movies through sound and more natural makeup occasioned a semi-secularization of the gods and goddesses of the screen (Morin, 16-18). He argues, however, that: "The star system seems to be ruled by a thermostat: if the humanizing tendency that reduces the star to the human scale brushes everyday life a little too closely, an internal mechanism re-establishes her distance, a new artifice exalts her, she recovers altitude" (Ibid., 32).

screen.⁹⁹

Indeed, Chaplin the great little man was a recurring image in Communist publications, and the famous clown became another important peace ambassador for the P.C.F.¹⁰⁰ In the July 1954 issue of Défense de la Paix, a journal founded by the fellow traveller Pierre Cot and an organ of the Communist sponsored Peace Movement, Chaplin is honored as the 1953 International Peace Prize recipient in "Charles Chaplin: Friend of Men." Chaplin's bumbling, soft persona

⁹⁹"est l'oeuvre d'un grand humaniste. Il apport un pur et pressant message d'espoir et de confiance en la vie, dans un monde en proie à la guerre et à l'oppression. Il semble que le plus grand des humbles humains ait essayé toute sa vie durant de le transmettre, ce message, à ses congénères qui l'accueillaient avec joie, comme leur ami, comme un de leurs, chaque fois qu'ils le voyaient paraître sur l'écran." (Harry Robinson, "Le Noveau chef-d'oeuvre de Chaplin est un film tragique. Ce que fut la reception générale du film 'Limelight' à Londres," Les Lettres françaises, 23-30 October 1952, 8).

¹⁰⁰Aragon alluded to Chaplin's importance for the P.C.F. in a letter to Picasso: "You will surely understand the incomparable usefulness that could be yours for contact with Chaplin and you can understand that it is not a question for me of desire that I may have to see this great man to whom we have, formerly, sent a telegram signed by our two names, that had him then reproached by the Commission on Anti-American Activities. Our commune meeting with him could have very important consequences..." ("Tu comprendras surement l'utilité incomparable que peut être la tienne pour le contact avec Chaplin et tu peux comprendre qu'il ne s'agit pas pour moi du désir que je peux avoir de voir ce grand homme auquel nous avons, jadis, envoyé un telegramme signé de nos deux noms, qui lui a été ensuite reproché par la Commission des Activités non-américaines. Notre entrevue commune avec lui peut avoir des conséquences très importantes..." [Louis Aragon, Paris, to Pablo Picasso, Vallauris {?}, 16 October 1952, letter in the Aragon correspondence file, Picasso Archives, Musée Picasso, Paris]).

is not specifically evoked in this article, although the actor and director is characterized as a humble, gentle soul. Such a portrait stands in stark contrast to that of the hyper-masculine P.C.F. Resistance hero, but it is equally reverential:

To know him personally is an authentic privilege, because it is only thus that one is assured that the poet, the mime, and the philosopher that live in Chaplin are animated by the same heart: the heart of a friend of men.¹⁰¹

Thus the "weak" great man can be elided with the postwar peace hero if he is figured as a man among all brothers. I insist on the masculine aspect of this scenario because male heroes, whether "macho" or "soft," had a privileged place in postwar French society. Although women received the vote in France in 1945, in part to recognize their contributions to Resistance efforts, the percentage of women in politics by 1946 was only 6.31 percent, a percentage which dropped to 3.6 percent by 1951 and 1.5 percent by 1958.¹⁰² Simone de

¹⁰¹"Le connaître personnellement est un privilège authentique, car c'est alors seulement qu'on peut s'assurer que le poète, le mime et le philosophe qui vivent en Chaplin sont animés d'un même cœur: le cœur d'un ami des hommes" (Jorge Zalamea, "Charles Chaplin: Friend of Men," Défense de la Paix no. 38 [July 1954]: 17)). This issue of the magazine is in the Picasso Archives, Musée Picasso, Paris.

¹⁰²Claire Laubier, ed., The Condition of Women in France, 1945 to the Present: A Documentary Anthology, Twentieth Century French Texts, ed. J.E. Flower (London: Routledge, 1990), 1. Laubier also notes that women received the vote because they were needed in a postwar work force that lacked manpower, and because women in general had received better educations due to the nationwide transition from largely agricultural to industrial labor (Ibid.).

Beauvoir's voice was one of a very few who called for women's rights in the immediate postwar arena¹⁰³; even highly powerful political figures such as the P.C.F.'s Jeannette Vermeersch, the only female member of the Central Committee and the Political Bureau, promoted the P.C.F.'s message that women should see themselves as wives and mothers who devoted their energies to their husbands' and children's needs.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, just as Picasso's female

¹⁰³"Throughout the postwar decades, the Ligue Française pour le Droit des Femmes (League of Women's Rights) monitored equal rights practice and the lack of it, pointing out discrimination and protesting, urging women to action. From the mid-1950s, a movement in favor of legalizing contraception provided the spearhead of progressive thinking about women's lives; from the mid-1950s onwards, women politicians attempted to force revision of the Civil Code onto the political agenda.... However, this did not add up to a groundswell of opposition to the ideal of domesticity: issues of women's rights, analyses of women's 'condition', remained disparate discourses--they were not posited as a general challenge to women's oppression, and they addressed very specific audiences, who either did not know of each other or who disagreed over the most basic questions" (Claire Duchen, Women's Rights and Women's Lives in France, 1944-1968 [London: Routledge, 1994], 3-4).

¹⁰⁴The Union des Femmes Françaises (U.F.F.) was the primary Communist organization for women, and Vermeersch (who was Thorez's wife), played a central role in it. She fought for women's political and economic rights, but was also instrumental in championing women's traditional roles as wives and mothers. After the extreme loss of life during World War II, women were encouraged to produce children, and part of the program from the first U.F.F. congress (17-20 June 1945) reads: "A condition of a country's greatness is the number of its children ... Women are ready to make the great effort to increase the number of children..." ("Une condition de la grandeur d'un pays est le nombre de ses enfants ... Les femmes sont prêtes à faire le grand effort d'élever de nombreux enfants..." [Renée Rousseau, Les Femmes Rouges: chronique des années Vermeersch (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 1983), 51]). Another extract from the U.F.F.'s program of action states: "In this new role as

models support his reconfiguration of the male subject in the Verve series, women in reconstruction France supported men engaged in the process of remaking themselves.

Hollier's essay on Picasso's artist and model works also points to the artist's investment in containing lack. Reassessing Picasso's The Shadow and Bedroom of the Artist, Hollier notes that the female model in both works is asleep and thus closed off to the painter who depicts her. He argues, however, that:

It is not a question of a simple exclusion. And it is here that bereavement metamorphosizes into vanity, that is to say into glory. Absent from her thoughts, I am at the same time the witness of this absence. I penetrate into her thoughts in order to verify that I am not there. This absence, which is mine, I witness it and, in some way, I appropriate it [...] Could there be a better image of glory, this manner of being there where one is not, this conquest, this mastery, this appropriation of absence?¹⁰⁵

Hollier uncovers the sexual dimension of this appropriation of absence. Comparing Picasso to Icarus--whose aspiration upward necessarily includes a fall--Hollier asserts that

citizen, they do not forget a single one of their duties as mother and wife" ("Dans ce rôle nouveau de citoyenne, elles n'oublient aucun de leurs devoirs de mère et d'épouse" [Ibid., 52]).

¹⁰⁵"Il ne s'agit pas d'exclusion simple. Et c'est ici que le deuil se métamorphose en vanité, c'est-à-dire en gloire. Absent de ses pensées, je suis en même temps le témoin de cette absence. Je pénètre dans ses pensées pour vérifier que je n'y suis pas. Cette absence, qui est la mienne, j'y assiste et, en quelque sorte, je me l'approprie. [...] Y aurait-il une meilleure image de la gloire, cette manière d'être là où l'on n'est pas, que cette conquête, cette maîtrise, cette appropriation de l'absence?" (Hollier, "Portrait de l'artiste en son absence," 14).

Picasso holds apart and brings together the opposed states of sublimation and eroticization metaphorically embodied in ascent and descent. Analyzing Picasso's 1968 etchings of Raphael and his model La Fornarina, Hollier notes that in one image, Picasso elides the separation between artmaking and lovemaking by depicting Raphael having sex with and painting his model (fig. 46). In this image, male lack is contained by literally and physically closing the gap between self and other, guaranteeing both sexual and artistic potency.

The "Failed" Hero is Too Invested in the Hero Myth

In her book on male subjectivity, Kaja Silverman suggests that if male masochism comes too close to destabilizing male authority, it is bound to be recuperated and reinscribed within phallocentric discourse. She charts this scenario in another postwar cultural domain, describing how male lack is contained in American war films of the 1940s. Silverman first demonstrates that films such as It's a Wonderful Life and The Best Years of Our Lives register male impotence by depicting war veterans as weak, damaged men. Feeble male characters are offset against strong females. Silverman notes the historical factors which account for this phenomenon: World War II veterans were sometimes disabled, often could not maintain their wartime prestige in civilian life, and sometimes found their jobs

filled by women.¹⁰⁶ Although such threats to masculinity were recorded openly in the films Silverman studies, she shows that they were suppressed quickly in movies such as The Guilt of Janet Ames. In this movie, the "heroine" ultimately shifts the blame for her husband's death from his war comrades to herself: she sees that she "let" him die without fulfilling his dreams for a home and child.¹⁰⁷

Silverman refers to this dynamic in Freudian terms as the binding process. She observes that it operates initially as the means to destabilize the "dominant fiction": beliefs accepted as truths that do not really appear to reflect the truth, such as the myth of male supremacy at work in the postwar hero cult. She goes on to state, however, that

when the process of binding takes place on a larger, cultural level, it involves ... the gradual reaffirmation and reconstitution of the dominant fiction. In the aftermath of World War II, this reaffirmation and reconstitution occurred at the level of a wide range of textual practices, from Hollywood cinema, to advertisements for kitchen appliances, to Dior's "New Look." However, at least within Hollywood cinema, the historical trauma of the war had to be registered before it could be bound,...¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶Kaja Silverman, "Historical Trauma and Male Subjectivity," in Male Subjectivity at the Margins (New York: Routledge, 1992), 53.

¹⁰⁷Silverman quotes Janet Ames: "I've been blaming five men for David's death when I should have blamed myself. I felt guilty ... I let him die with all his dreams unfinished... It was I who refused to plan a house ... David did want a child..." (Ibid., 117).

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 64.

Thus, when a challenge to controlling beliefs and the practices they support becomes too threatening, it is deflected and reabsorbed by the dominant culture.

As I have already noted, Leiris's celebration of the weak artist as a different sort of hero recuperates Picasso's impotent creator. Although Leiris's reading of Picasso's Verve series is rich and nuanced, and demonstrates dramatically that the great artist is fundamentally riven from the objects of his desire, it also harbors a drive to contain this radical lack. When less thoughtful Picasso supporters (notably P.C.F. writers) recognized the non-ideal in the artist's production, their attendant anxiety compelled them to sanitize the artist and to elevate him into the pantheon of postwar heroes. When Picasso himself felt the full force of the lack that the Verve series acknowledges, he also attempted to plug the gap that his work opened up.

In "Picasso and the Human Comedy, or the Avatars of Big Foot," Leiris refers to the artist's past experiments with the art of others, and points specifically to Picasso's will to control:

Is making something else out of a picture by Manet, El Greco, Cranach, Courbet, or Poussin really a different procedure from the constant invention of new signs for the figuration of the same objects, and isn't it the case that to use the work of an earlier painter for one's own purposes is to treat it as something integrated into life, something one can't allow simply to lie there, ... Nothing ... could remain inert once it came under Picasso's eye or into his hands.... [he is unable] to accept the idea that any creature or

object whatsoever should simply be there, as it is, forever, the same inability to leave anything in repose.¹⁰⁹

I believe that Picasso's rapid turn to his own versions of canonical masterpieces by other great artists attempts to fill the void that the Stalin portrait affair marked and that the Verve series plumbed. Unable to function as a heroic party artist, a heroic model for the young avant-garde, or for a time, as the hero of his own erotic life, Picasso turned to the private, safer realm of past great art, to interlocutors other than party officials or powerful female muses. As an ironic and willful gesture, he subverted Aragon's call for art that updates past masterpieces. Rather than produce legible and didactic homages to realist painting, Picasso battled with Delacroix, Velázquez, and Manet to produce fragmented and obsessive series of works after the canonical paintings Women of Algiers, Las Meninas, and Déjeuner sur l'herbe. In each series, Picasso stridently attempted to assert his greatness as an artist by usurping the place of his artistic "fathers." He also tried to reaffirm his masterful masculinity through form and content that restores the female model to the role of a malleable, subservient, and sexually-dominated object. His series subvert lofty ideals and their attendant sublimation, but they most certainly

¹⁰⁹Leiris, "Picasso and the Human Comedy, or the Avatars of Big Foot," 174.

strive to contain the threat to male potency that such a critique occasions. Before examining the specific ramifications of this dynamic, I will examine the work of several artists and writers who sustained challenges to the postwar hero cult embodied in Stalinism and consumer age capitalism. The groups and individuals engaged in this work formed an interweaving web whose threads spun periodically into Picasso's life. More importantly, however, the cross-pollination of ideas that occurred among these various critics produced very powerful critiques of the French postwar political and social fabric and its imbrication with cultural production. Their work provides the theoretical framework for understanding Picasso's series as the products of a recuperated radical.

CHAPTER 3

THE POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CRITIQUE OF THE HERO
IN WARTIME AND POSTWAR FRANCE:
COMBATTING ALIENATION AND INSTRUMENTALIZATIONIntroduction

While the hero myth served real social and psychic needs in wartime and postwar France, it also cloaked complex and repressive realities in sanitized rhetoric and imagery. It regularly provided the privileged and the powerful with the ideological tools to act in their own interests and occasioned betrayals of human truths that prompted numerous attacks on political, social, and cultural practices. This chapter will investigate these critiques: the reworked Surrealism of André Breton, Georges Bataille, and various splinter groups; the retooled Marxism of Henri Lefebvre, and the groups Les Temps modernes, Socialisme ou Barbarie, and Arguments; and the melding of Surrealist and Marxist principles in the groups Cobra, and the Internationale Situationniste. My primary objective will be to demonstrate how the work of these diverse critics--who analyzed the often repressive effects of purposive idealism and who championed everyday experience rather than elevated heroism--provides the historical analyses and critical perspectives necessary to understand and account for Picasso's participation in, shift away from, but ultimate

entrapment within the hero myth. I will investigate these critics' analyses of bureaucratization, instrumentalization, and alienation--conditions that infused many aspects of France's postwar consumerist age--because I believe that their work sheds light on the popular and private construction of Picasso's subjectivity and artistic production. In this chapter I will show how the above cultural workers understood that both capitalism and Stalinist communism seemed to offer freedom, but instead encouraged individuals to divest themselves of true empowerment by investing in heroic icons and consumer goods. As I have already indicated with Picasso, as with other postwar media stars, these investments comingled.

Picasso and Clandestine Surrealism During the Occupation:
Discrete Interventions

Many of the critiques that this chapter will examine were indebted to Surrealism or direct outgrowths of it. André Breton's Surrealism, inaugurated in 1924, was a full-fledged attack on bourgeois idealism. The initial Surrealists decried bourgeois institutions such as capitalism, colonialism, and contemporary Christianity for the repressions enacted under their auspices. The name of their group expressed the Surrealists' desire to rise above the real: both in terms of how they understood it as a mundane pursuit of material goods and carefully circumscribed social relations, as well as how they felt

such experience was expressed in realist aesthetics. For Breton and his followers, virtually all forms of the real in modern France excluded truly vital activities and relationships, which the Surrealists felt had to be informed by the irrational as manifest in non-western and non-bourgeois phenomena. Breton and his group explored marginalized artistic, social, and political formations (like tribal arts, insane behavior, and radical activism) as the means of liberating themselves and others from dominant mores that the Surrealists believed denied creative, empowered individual and communal experience. The Surrealists soon came to understand that the world could not be overthrown through aesthetic activity alone (Aragon had written that he placed "the spirit of revolt above any politics"¹). From 1925-27 they joined political forces with Communists, engaged with them periodically thereafter, but ultimately linked up with Leon Trotsky and his followers (from 1938) once it became clear to the Surrealists that Stalinist communism denied aesthetic and political freedoms.²

¹Louis Aragon in comments to Jean Bernier (editor of the leftist review Clarté) quoted by Maurice Nadeau, The History of Surrealism, trans. Richard Howard, introduction by Roger Shattuck (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1989), 101.

²The outbreak of the Moroccan war in which the Riffs under Abd-el-Krim fought against French colonialism propelled the Surrealists toward communism (as it was represented to them by the Clarté circle). The Surrealists did not join the French Communist Party but formed a united front with Clarté members, the Philophosies group (Henri Lefebvre was a member), and Belgian Surrealists involved

During World War II, Breton and other Surrealists left France in fear for their lives; the Surrealist leader would not return to Paris until 1946. Breton continued his work abroad in Martinique, Haiti, and primarily the United States where other notable Surrealists gathered around him in New York. Although Maurice Nadeau, the popular chronicler of Surrealism, does not delve into wartime Surrealist activity in France, it has been largely reconstructed through the efforts of Michel Fauré in Histoire du surréalisme sous l'Occupation. This book records the activities of the group La Main à Plume, created by former members of the dadaist group Les Réverbères such as Noël Arnaud, Jean-François Chabrun, and Gérard de Sède. The name La Main à Plume came from the Rimbaud line "La main à plume vaut la main à charrue" (The hand with a pen is as worthy as the hand at a plow) from the poet's Une saison en enfer, and was probably a veiled critique of Pétain's "return to the soil" fascism.³ Indeed the activities of the group as a whole

with the periodical Correspondence. Breton and his followers abandoned fellow travelling in 1927 when it became evident that the Surrealists' creative autonomy would be compromised (See Ibid., chapter 8). Breton and his allies came to embrace Marxist thought as expressed in the work of Trotsky. In 1938 the Surrealist leader, his political hero Trotsky, and his friend Diego Rivera produced the manifesto "Pour un art révolutionnaire indépendant," an argument for artistic freedom in the face of Soviet-sponsored Social Realism and an indictment of Stalinist totalitarianism (Ibid, 209).

³Alain and Odette Virmaux, La constellation surréaliste (Lyon: La Manufacture, 1987), 121.

were a careful challenge to the bourgeois ideals of national pride and Christian righteousness exploited by collaborationist ideology through lofty rhetoric.

Countering the accessible, heroic, realist art favored by the Nazis, Pétainistes, and ultimately Communists, La Main à Plume exhibited and published Surrealist art. In 1941, La Main à Plume had its first exhibition, held at the Galerie Matières et Formes, which was attended by three members of the Nazi Propagandastaffel. The group distributed a tract that attacked the nationalistic and often religious tones of much current painting. Despite the group's provocative stance, the collaborationist press ran favorable reviews of the show, which as Sarah Wilson notes, reveals the extent to which the Nazis were willing to let "deviations" in the art world slide.⁴ Nevertheless, the group risked danger with its clandestine publications, and some of its members were arrested, sent to concentration camps, or shot during

⁴She characterizes this phenomenon as the Nazi "politique de souplesse," or flexible politics (Wilson, "Art and Politics of the Left in France, ca. 1935-1955," 247). Herbert Lottman maintains: "German censorship seemed more flexible than Vichy's. If there was no apparent challenge to Nazi thought and goals, the work passed, while Vichy's censorship was founded on rigid doctrine: nationalism, religious conservatism, the repudiation of Socialism. Another reason a writer took a greater risk in Vichy was that the Pétain regime was staffed with native Frenchmen, who knew more about the mentality of the various authors whose works were submitted than the Germans" (Herbert R. Lottman, The Left Bank: Writers, Artists, and Politics from the Popular Front to the Cold War [San Francisco: Halo Books, 1991], 154).

Resistance efforts.⁵

La Main à Plume produced a small but sovereign sphere of creative freedom in its clandestine booklets⁶ that celebrated love, fantasy, and dreams. The group reproduced Picasso's 1942 Object (his bull's head made from a bicycle seat and handlebars), and a variety of other works by the artist in the 1944 pamphlet Pages Libres de la Main à plume consacré Picasso. Picasso was honored by these Surrealists not only for his work (which courted the imagination and the irrational) but for his support for La Main à Plume: he provided much of the funds necessary to finance their work.⁷ According to Fauré, Picasso was introduced to La

⁵La Main à Plume members Tita (Edith Hirshowa) and Hans Schoenhoff were deported and never returned; Marc Patin, conscripted to work in Germany, died in Berlin of illness; Resistance fighters Jean-Pierre Mulotte, Marco Menegoz, Robert Ruis, and Jean Simonpoli were shot; Jean-Claude Diamant-Berger was killed during Resistance combat (see Eric Losfeld, ed., Tracts surréalistes et déclarations collectives, 1940-1960, vol. 2, xiv), and Arnaud, Jean-François Chabrun, and Jacques Bureau were arrested by the Abwehr (Wilson, "Art and Politics of the Left in France, ca. 1935-1955", 249).

⁶The group published separate booklets to avoid Nazi censorship; titles of publications were always different so as to avoid drawing attention to the group (Virmaux, La constellation surréaliste, 122).

⁷In a letter to Michèle Cone, La Main à Plume member Noël Arnaud stated: "The gifts made by Picasso to La Main à Plume were spent first to finance the publications and second (and in parallel) to help with the daily survival of the members of the group who entered clandestinity in larger and larger numbers. The gifts of Picasso were either gifts in money or in graphics ... [which were sold largely through Picasso's friend the Surrealist Georges Hugnet]" (Michèle C. Cone, quoting a letter to her from Noël Arnaud, 16 April 1984, in Cone, 152. In terms of Picasso's own politics and

Main à Plume members by the Spanish artist J.-V. Manuel and kept in contact with the group through Éluard.⁸ Labelled a "degenerate" artist by the Nazis, officially barred from exhibiting, and even reviled by fellow artist Maurice de Vlaminck,⁹ Picasso seemed determined to promote creative

art during the war, although some of his work of the early 1940s has been read as a veiled critique of fascism, Picasso by no means launched a full scale attack on German or collaborationist social or artistic policy. Indeed, the content of his work during the war years was overtly commonplace (he painted primarily still lifes, interiors with women, and portraits), although some critics have interpreted these works as covert commentary on the deprivation and tyranny that many French people suffered under German occupation (see Leo Steinberg, "Who Knows the Meaning of Ugliness," in Gert Schiff, ed., Picasso in Perspective [Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976], 137-139; Mary-Margaret Goggin, "Picasso and His Art During the German Occupation: 1940-1944" [Ph. D. diss., Stanford University, 1985], 394-408; and "1937-1945: The War Years" in Jean Sutherland Boggs, Picasso and Things, with essays by Marie-Laure Bernadac and Brigitte Léal [Cleveland: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1992], 240-294). In terms of style, these critics have also interpreted Picasso's reworked cubism (in which multiple planes are melded into one form rather than dispersed across the canvas), and use of spikey, jagged elements, as the formal means of conveying the anxiety and horror generated by the war. However, as Mary-Margaret Goggin asserts in her study of Picasso's wartime production: "Although Picasso did not rely upon obvious symbols, either conventional ones or his own, to convey his attitudes or feelings about the war and Occupation, his art reflects a variety of Occupation circumstances and his reactions to them. In all Picasso's art, however, including that of the Occupation years, his concerns with artistic problems underlay almost all his work (Goggin, "Picasso and His Art During the German Occupation: 1940-1944", 406).

⁸Michel Fauré, Histoire du surréalisme sous l'Occupation: Les Réverbères - La Main à Plume (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1982), 115.

⁹In June 1942, one month after the sculpture of Hitler's favorite Arnold Brekner was showcased at the L'Orangerie in Paris, Vlaminck condemned Picasso's modernist

work that flouted the heroic realism sanctioned by fascist art dictates.

Committed to absolute artistic freedom, La Main à Plume ultimately rejected initial member and Picasso's friend Éluard for embracing the classical, didactic, and nationalistic poetry practiced by Communist Resistance writers such as Aragon, and for contributing to a collaboratist publication.¹⁰ La Main à Plume clarified its position on Éluard's more realist poetry in a letter written to the self-exiled Breton, which never reached the Surrealist luminary.

Very quickly, it seemed to us that the battle of the free zone poetry publications, preserved in devotion, enveloped in their holy shroud and their tricolor flag,

distortion--which he linked to moral degeneration and the demise of art--in the publication Comoedia (see Maurice de Vlaminck, "Opinions libres ... sur la peinture," Comoedia, 6 June 1942, 1, 6).

¹⁰In 1942, La Main à Plume published Éluard's Poésie et Vérité which included the poet's "Liberté," one of the most famous Resistance poems. However, the clandestine surrealists subsequently reviled Éluard for his turn to more classical and nationalistic poetry (Éluard joined the P.C.F. and the Resistance in 1942). Benjamin Péret, associated with La Main à Plume but living in Mexico during the war to avoid the Nazis (he had been imprisoned in 1940 for having founded a Trotskyist cell in the army), wrote one of the most scathing critiques of such Resistance poetry in his 1945 "Le déshonneur des poètes" (later republished in Socialisme ou barbarie 5 [July-August 1959] at the author's death). La Main à Plume further attacked Éluard in "Vieille Canaille" of 1943, which castigated the poet for publishing his review of Luc Dietrich photographs in L'Echo des Étudiants, which featured the article "Renseignements pratiques pour les départs en Allemagne" (advice for those participating in the French labor in Germany campaign) in the same issue (see "Vieille Canaille," reproduced in Michel Fauré, Histoire du surréalisme sous l'Occupation, 246-247).

[that] this battle was decidedly not ours.... In the free zone ... the poets were talking, singing, shouting, but they were the words of preachers, church songs, and cries of mystical masturbation.... Three hundred pages of religious propaganda, ten patriotic lines very vaguely anti-German, such was most often the ideological content of these journals of circumstances. ... and P.[aul] É.[luard] wished to convince us, that it was necessary to accept without balking the three hundred cretinizing pages, because there were the ten small tricolor lines by some Mr. Aragon.¹¹

The group also rejected what they felt to be the mystical bent of Messages, a journal with which they had collaborated. In the tract "Nom de Dieu" ("Name of God") of 1 May 1943, *La Main à Plume* members villified Georges Bataille and his intellectual "offspring" associated with the publication. Adhering to Breton's prewar position as exemplified in his Second Manifesto, *La Main à Plume* members were deeply disdainful of any work that possessed religious overtones, especially as many Catholics in France were collaborators. A copy of "Nom de Dieu," as well as another titled "Joyeux Noël" (Joyous Noel)--an indictment of an

¹¹"Très vite, il nous apparut que le combat des poétailions de zone libre, confits en dévotion, enveloppés de leur Saint-Suaire et leur drapeau tricolore, ce combat décidément n'était pas le nôtre.... En zone libre ... les poètes parlaient, chataient, criaient, mais c'étaient des paroles de prédicateurs, des chants d'église et les cris de la masturbation mystique.... Trois cents pages de propagande religieuse, dix vers patriotiques très vaguement anti-allemands, tel était le plus souvent le contenu idéologique de ces revues de circonstances. Et l'on voulait, et P.[aul] E.[luard] aurait voulu nous convaincre, qu'il fallait admettre sans rechigner les trois cents pages crétinisantes, parce qu'il y avait les dix petits vers tricolores d'un quelconque Monsieur Aragon" ([Lettre à André Breton], from Noël Arnaud, Jacques Bureau, Jean-François Chabrun, and Marc Patin, Paris, 14 July 1943 [never received], in Losfeld, 15).

attack on Georges Hugnet by Noël Arnaud¹²--figure in Picasso's archives, attesting to his association with the clandestine surrealists, and to group members' interest in keeping the artist informed of its internal politics.

Although La Main à Plume members attacked manifestations of what they thought to be purposive idealism (whether bourgeois, fascist, or Communist), they restricted their critiques to the cultural sphere and engaged in no overt activism. In their letter to Breton, group members stated:

The conditions that were given to us in which to live and act were not of a nature to permit us a showy occupation and [were] for all the more reason scandalous. It is why we decided to remain with a plan in some way encyclopedic, first of all refusing ourselves all polemics pertaining to actuality in order to better be able to maintain publically the current of Surrealist thought on poetic ground, regardless of other activities more directly efficacious taken by those among us who had the possibility of being

¹²Éluard asked that the group admit his friend the Surrealist artist, film maker, poet, and art dealer Hugnet into La Main à Plume in early 1942, which provoked heated debate (members were already divided over Éluard's presence). According to Fauré: "Adolphe Acker appears particularly reluctant to have known them personally and adds, full of rancor towards Éluard, that the latter 'wants to give lessons in virtue, while he lives by selling pictures to the Germans'" ("Adolphe Acker se montre particulièrement réticent pour les avoir connues personnellement et ajoute, plein de rancœur envers Éluard, que ce dernier 'veut donner les leçons de vertu, alors qu'il vit en vendant les tableaux aux Allemands" [Fauré, 116]). Fauré notes that Hugnet's admission to La Main à Plume guaranteed Éluard's and Picasso's cooperation with the group (Ibid., 117). Éluard and Hugnet were expelled from La Main à Plume in 1943. The group member's letter to Breton states that Éluard was admitted into their circle in the first place because he afforded many important contacts ([Lettre à André Breton] in Losfeld, 14).

engaged.¹³

However, because the cultural sphere was subject to stringent controls--with sanctioned wartime art proffering idealized naturalism infused with heroic, moralistic sentiment--members of La Main à Plume offered up their celebration of multiple, individualistic, and experimental voices at considerable risk.

The Birth of Revolutionary Surrealism and its Offshoots,
from Cobra to the Internationale Situationniste

Despite many La Main à Plume members' disdain for the nationalistic and sometimes quasi-religious poetry practiced by Communist poets such as Aragon and Éluard, some of these wartime Surrealists embraced communism.¹⁴ Arnaud and Edouard Jaguer¹⁵ joined the French section of the Belgian

¹³"Les conditions dans lesquelles il nous était donné de vivre et d'agir n'étaient pas de nature à nous permettre une activité tapageuse et à plus forte raison scandaleuse. C'est pourquoi nous nous décidâmes à rester sur un plan en quelque sorte encyclopédique, nous refusant tout d'abord à toute polémique d'actualité pour mieux pouvoir maintenir publiquement le courant de la pensée surréaliste sur le terrain poétique, indépendamment des autres activités plus directement efficaces menées par ceux d'entre nous qui avaient la possibilité de s'y livrer" ([Lettre à André Breton], 13).

¹⁴Chabrun, de Sède, and Boris Rybak were anti-Stalinist; André Stil went on to join the P.C.F., becoming the editor-in-chief at L'Humanité.

¹⁵Jaguer founded journal Rixes in 1950 and Phases in 1954, both of which promoted abstraction and the latter of which was favorably reviewed by Cobra (see Le Petit Cobra no. 3 [Spring 1950]). Phases no. 5/6 contains an article by Alain Jouffroy that cites Kostas Axelos in an Arguments article (see Alain Jouffroy, "A Jean-Pierre Duprey le supérieur inconnu," Phases, no. 5/6 [1959/1960]).

Christian Dotremont's 1947/48 Revolutionary Surrealism, which subsequently became a part of the group Cobra, sympathetic to communism but hostile to Social Realism. Picasso's archives contain a copy of the 14 June 1947 minutes of a French Revolutionary Surrealist meeting, which is notable for its dialogue with Breton over the role of postwar Surrealism. Responding to a letter from Breton--which in turn answers questions from the Revolutionary Surrealists about Breton's goals--group members debated Breton's disavowal of the Communist party, and his turn toward mysticism.¹⁶ Breton felt so strongly that the Communist party impinged upon social and artistic freedoms, that in 1944 he broke off his relations with Picasso (whom he had praised lavishly in his prewar writings), when the artist joined the P.C.F. As I will discuss in a subsequent section, Breton embraced the occult in his postwar work because he had come to perceive it as a realm of great liberty. Arnaud and other Revolutionary Surrealists dismissed what they felt was Breton's escape from lived experience, and most likely attempted to inform Picasso of their debates with Breton to suggest that Revolutionary Surrealism's great artistic experimentation and commitment to politics could enrich the Communists' cultural policy.

¹⁶Minutes from the 14 June 1947 meeting of the French Revolutionary Surrealists, copy in the Picasso Archives, Associations culturelles et artistiques (France et étranger) material, Musée Picasso, Paris.

Cobra (a name that refers to Copenhagen, Brussels, and Amsterdam)--the heir to shortlived Revolutionary Surrealism (which published only one journal issue)¹⁷--produced art and writing critically sited at the nexus of art and politics from 1948 to its demise in 1951. Three artists' groups came together to found Cobra: the Danish group Host, the Belgian Revolutionary Surrealists, and the Dutch group Reflex. Like Les Réverbères and La Main à Plume, as well as the contemporary Internationale Lettriste, Cobra valued spontaneity and automatism in the arts. Cobra also shared the Compagnie Art Brut's (1948-1951) fascination with naive art.¹⁸ Indeed, Cobra participated in the general postwar

¹⁷Christian Dotremont, a Belgian Surrealist and militant Communist closely involved with French Surrealist circles, was an important force behind Cobra. His journal Les Deux Soeurs, published in 1946-1947, was a critical catalyst for Revolutionary Surrealism.

¹⁸Michel Tapié, a founding member of the Compagnie Art Brut, had been an important contributor to Réverbères. Unlike Cobra, however, Tapié's embrace of the "primitive" was not political. A sculptor and critic, Tapié brought together two of the most powerful postwar art currents under his term Art Autre: gestural abstraction and outsider art, or Art Brut. He embraced the former after viewing Fautrier's Les Otages exhibition at the Galerie René Drouin in 1945, and became involved in the latter through his friend Dubuffet. In 1947, Dubuffet asked Tapié to manage his Foyer de l'art brut at the Galerie René Drouin, an exhibition site devoted to Dubuffet's collection of "primitive" art by the unschooled and the insane. In 1948, Tapié joined Dubuffet, Breton, Jean Paulhan and others in the creation of the Compagnie Art Brut. That same year, Tapié participated in the Galerie Colette Allendy exhibition H.W.P.S.M.T.B., penning remarks on art that were published in the small catalogue. In the overblown language characteristic of his subsequent writing, he laid down the credo he would develop most fully in his book Un art autre: "Life is only a succession of presents. Historical

speculations on the past are therefore sterile and artificial, and philosophical on the future or destiny. Therefore, let us plunge perpetually into the present, ... Incoherence? All the better, but not necessarily: systematizing incoherence would be another cliché, would wear down this totally free availability, outside of which man becomes [part of] a herd (or a man of the rank and file)" ("La vie n'est que une succession de présents. Stérilement artificielles sont donc les spéculations historiques sur le passé et philosophiques sur l'avenir ou le devenir. Plongeons donc perpétuellement dans le présent, ... Incohérence? Tant mieux, mais pas nécessairement: systématiser l'incohérence serait un autre poncif, entamerait cette disponibilité totalement libre hors de laquelle l'homme devient troupeau [ou homme de troupe]" [Michel Tapié, "Éthique," H.W.P.S.M.T.B. {Paris: Galerie Colette Allendy, 1948}, n.p.]). As with the early Sartre, Tapié dismissed any forces that acted to confine the individual will: he summarily discounted the "isms" of art history, arguing that dada's nihilism permitted a *tabula rasa* for contemporary artists. He maintained that artists' forays into marginalized art forms and virile experiments with abstraction wholly constituted the creative and full expression of each artist's individuality. In vague but assertive language, Tapié argued that the extremes of emotion (both positive and negative) and physical action expended in the production of art released a transformative energy that would remake the present into a glorious future. In his 1952 text Un art autre, which followed an exhibition of the same name, Tapié celebrated the work of informel artists, a term that he coined to encompass painters as diverse as Fautrier, Dubuffet, and Mathieu. This term was meant to describe the practices of his personal heroes, who eschewed all previous criteria for artmaking, whether they remained figural or went abstract. Profoundly anti-humanist, Tapié praised the raw energy, cruel distortion, and often grotesque content or texture that many postwar painters produced. However, Tapié either sublimated the dark ambivalence and angry energy that he located in the art he championed, or he celebrated this energy as an expression of male potency. Tapié's presentation of Georges Mathieu's work in Un art autre is especially noteworthy, for it most vehemently underscores the critic's investment in the heroic individual. Tapié applauds Mathieu's confrontation with and dominance of the "void": the empty white canvas that signifies the clean slate that each procession of presents offers. With the creation of every painting, Mathieu recreates himself in an exercise of constant renewal. Tapié's insistence on Mathieu's dominance of the void (or the *informel*, whose incoherence Tapié inconsistently

celebration of the "primitive" in the arts: like other avant-garde circles it supposed that art free of bourgeois, capitalistic associations held the key to postwar renewal.¹⁹ With slogans such as "Le réalisme c'est la

celebrates)--which he describes in eroticized and colonialist terms (his metaphors refer to orgasm and the discovery of El Dorado by Conquistadors) (see Steve Harris, "'By the Fixed Star:' Surrealism and the Argument for Abstraction in Postwar Paris," seminar paper, University of British Columbia, 1990, 18)--expresses a faith in heroic individualism that parallels Sartre's early writing, and Malraux's hymn to the great artist. However, whereas Sartre and Malraux (like their sometimes enemies the Communists) come to support collective political action commanded by a heroic leader, Tapié remains resolutely apolitical and hostile to the notion of creating a new future through group efforts. Tapié's artist participates in the naive myth of absolute, unharnessed freedom, a powerful version of the postwar hero cult embraced by those who balked at the idea of being put to work for others. Picasso invested in this model of individual heroism when the pressures of incarnating an abstract yet popular hero for others became too demanding.

¹⁹As recent exhibitions of postwar French art have amply shown, artists with extremely varied backgrounds, experiences, and affiliations were largely preoccupied with plastic metaphors for new beginnings in their postwar production. As Germaine Viatte states in her essay for the 1982 exhibition of postwar French art in London: "There was a need for direct and brutal communication--obscene if necessary--to supplant dead forms of language, a need to explore the force and the potential of the human body, to question the predetermined...(Germaine Viatte, "Aftermath: A New Generation," in Barbican Centre, Aftermath: France 1945-54. New Images of Man [London: The Barbican Centre, 1982], 13). Following the footsteps of modern forebearers horrified by the events of W.W. I, artists cast off established artistic idioms and mined the work of tribal cultures, children, or the insane: populations not associated with the bourgeois or fascist institutions linked to wartime experience. Artists also explored various forms of abstraction as a means of signalling profoundly personal expression and experience divorced from worldly events. However, since all forms of representation were hotly contested in the wartime and postwar arena, it is important to note that primitivism and abstraction were also deployed

négation de la réalité" ("Realism is the negation of reality") and "C'est en forçant qu'on devient Fougeron" ("One becomes Fougeron by force") plastered across its pages,²⁰ it set its aesthetic clearly at the opposite end of the Social Realism espoused by the Communist party. However, Cobra members felt their project was deeply political.²¹ They championed free art making as a means of investigating desires that had been trapped by bourgeois, capitalistic society, and of unleashing these desires replete with their revolutionary potential to transform contemporary life. In the final statement of the article "C'est notre désir qui fait la révolution," ("Our Desire

in concretely political ways. As a notable example, the shimmering smudges of Fautrier's 1942-45 Les Otages series were meant to represent the crushed bodies and spirits of those murdered by the Nazis.

²⁰The former appeared in Cobra, no. 4 (n.d. [1949]), 12 (see Cobra, 1948-1951, complete facsimile edition [Paris: Éditions Jean-Michel Place, 1980], n.p.); the latter appeared as a separate sheet, Le Tout petit Cobra, no. 4, a 1950 engraving by Pierre Alechinsky (see *Ibid.*, n.p.).

²¹Dotremont battled with the Communist party to carve out a space for avant-garde political art. In 1949, he "tried unavailingly to stake out a claim for artistic autonomy at the Communist-controlled Salle Pleyel peace congress in Paris, and in November matters came to a head at the Cobra exhibition in Amsterdam at the Stedelijk Museum. The wave of purges and show trials had already begun in Eastern Europe, and Dotremont's second attempt, at an experimental poetry reading, to clarify his political position led to barracking, forcible ejections, and fistfights" (Peter Wollen, "Bitter Victory: The Art and Politics of the Situationist International," in Elisabeth Sussman, ed., On the Passage of a Few People Through a Rather Brief Moment in Time: The Situationist International 1957-1972 [Cambridge, Mass. and London: The M.I.T. Press; Boston: The Institute of Contemporary Art, 1989], 44).

Makes Revolution") in the fourth issue of the journal Cobra, Constant argues that current social relations prohibit individuals from understanding and living their desires, but that desire can be awakened through artistic experimentation, which should burst through the institutional bonds that regulate and restrict life:

... artists began the discovery of creation, extinguished since present culture was established, creation being the means par excellence of knowledge therefore of liberation, therefore revolution. Present culture, individualist, replaced creation by artistic production that only produced signs of a tragic impotence, only the cries of despair of the individual chained by aesthetic interdictions: One must not...²²

Thus stated, Cobra's goals seem to parallel those of Breton's Surrealism, although Cobra members, many of whom had been involved in Revolutionary Surrealism, felt that postwar Surrealism had degenerated into mystical escapism, and dismissed much of the abstraction practiced by some orthodox Surrealists and diverse artists in the postwar arts community. Asger Jorn, one of Cobra's most notable artists and theorists, put forward a model for free, revolutionary art in his 1948 essay "Magi og Skønne Kunster" ("Magic and the Fine Arts"). In this essay, Jorn argued in favor of art

²²"... les artistes se sont mis à la découverte de la création, étouffée depuis que la culture actuelle s'est établie, la création étant le moyen par excellence de la connaissance donc de la libération, donc la révolution. La culture actuelle, individualiste, a remplacé la création par la production artistique qui n'a produit que les signes d'une impuissance tragique, que les cris de désespoir de l'individu enchaîné par les interdictions esthétiques: Il ne faut pas..." (Constant, "C'est notre désir qui fait la révolution," Cobra, no. 4 [n.d. [1949]]: 4).

that did not function merely as the inscription of one individual reality, but which could speak to society as a whole by revealing man's capacity for meaningful and sustaining creation. He argued that current social relations prevented people from producing a truly popular means of expression, but that artists could work toward fostering community. His later Modifications series, exhibited in Paris some ten years after his "Magic and the Fine Arts" essay, attempts to effect such direct communication with viewers. Graffitied and overpainted reproductions of master paintings, Jorn intended the works to operate as

the transformation of paintings as commodities (objects bought in the market) into sites of spontaneous, natural creativity--the revaluation of exchange value as natural use value--... itself a prefiguration of a truly communal society.²³

These pictures were produced when Jorn and other former members of Cobra worked with the Internationale Situationniste (I.S.). The group surfaced in 1957, and brought together artist-theorists from the the Internationale Lettriste (I.L.) and from Jorn's Mouvement Internationale pour un Bauhaus Imaginiste (M.I.B.I.).²⁴

²³Wollen, "Bitter Victory," 48.

²⁴With the dissolution of Cobra, the journal Phases became the base in Paris for the organization of experimental art exhibitions (with Michel Ragon, a former French correspondent for Cobra, as the driving force). Jaeger, a former member of La Main à Plume and Revolutionary Surrealism, was not only the founder of Rixes and Phases, but a contributor to Yves Bonnefoy's revue La Révolution la

The I.L. was a radical group that in 1952 broke away from Isidore Isou's dadaist Lettriste movement (founded in 1946) in order to pursue activist aims, and which published the journal Potlach. Under Isou, the Lettrists were involved with an aesthetic and sometimes social project that attempted to effect change through artistic innovation, trying "to perfect the dadaist break between words and meanings by freeing letters from words themselves."²⁵ In 1952, a contingent of Lettrists disenchanted with Isou's formalism protested Charlie Chaplin's visit to Paris. Their attack on Chaplin was explicit and fierce, for the dissident Lettrists perceived his work as the "diversion of one's living strength toward an empty heaven, where everything was true and nothing was possible."²⁶ In their tract against Chaplin they wrote:

Because you've identified yourself with the weak and the oppressed, to attack you has been to attack the weak and the oppressed--but in the shadow of your rattan cane some could already see the nightstick of a cop. You are "he-who-turns-the-other-cheek"--the other cheek of the buttock--but for us, the young and the

nut. These publications shared Cobra's goal of subverting rationalism and positivism through artmaking.

²⁵Sadie Plant, The Most Radical Gesture: The Situationist International in a Postmodern Age (London: Routledge, 1992), 55.

²⁶Greil Marcus, Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 341.

beautiful, the only answer to suffering is revolution.²⁷

Unlike the P.C.F. or Leiris, who perceived Chaplin as a heroic everyman with whom people could identify, the radical Lettrists argued that Chaplin's films encouraged the disenfranchised to dream away their plight: to obtain comfort from the actor-director's sympathetic portrayal of their hardship rather than to struggle to transform their lot. The Chaplin protest sparked disagreements among Lettrists that prompted Guy Debord, Serge Berna, Jean-L. Brau, and Gil J. Wolman to venture off on their own as the I.L. (Debord's circle attacked Chaplin's sentimentality with a vehemence that Isou's group rejected). In a letter to Combat (never published), I.L. members described their project as an attack on what I have been defining as the postwar hero cult: "We believe that the most urgent expression of freedom is the destruction of idols, especially when they claim to represent freedom."²⁸

The L.I. journal Potlach focused on the articulation of

²⁷"Finois les pieds plats," by the l'Internationale Lettriste, signed by Serge Berna, Jean-L. Brau, Guy-Ernest Debord, and Gil Wolman, reproduced in Gérard Berreby, ed., Documents relatifs à la fondation de l'Internationale Situationniste (Paris: Éditions Allia, 1985), 147; translated by Sophie Rosenberg and quoted in Marcus, Lipstick Traces, 340.

²⁸"Position de l'Internationale lettriste," letter refused by Combat (2 November 1952), in Internationale Lettriste, no. 1, reprinted in Berreby, Documents relatifs à la fondation de l'Internationale Situationniste, 151; translated by Sophie Rosenberg and quoted in Marcus, 343.

détournement, the reconfiguration of existing visual and verbal codes to produce revolutionary meaning out of the stuff of everyday life. It also explored unitary urbanism, a theory of creative artistic and technical involvement with the cityscape that proposed to transform radically and joyfully citizens' increasingly alienated urban existences.²⁹ This utopian project developed concepts on which the Internationale Situationniste (I.S.) would build--the dérive (non purposive adventures in the city) and psychogeography (the cityscape viewed through its impact on emotions)--which meshed nicely with the goal set forth by Jorn's M.I.B.I.: the infusion of pleasure and play into functionalism. Jorn founded the M.I.B.I. in 1953, and it pulled together former Cobra adherents with participants in Enrico Baj's Arte Nucleare Painting movement.³⁰ From 1955

²⁹This work was indebted to L.I. member Ivan Chtcheglov's essay "Formulaire pour un urbanisme nouveau" which called for the construction of an urbanscape shaped by "the whole spectrum of feelings one encounters by chance in everyday life, and experienced through "continuous dérive" (Ivan Chtcheglov [as Gilles Ivain], "Formulaire pour un urbanisme nouveau" [1953], Internationale Situationniste no. 1 [June 1958], 15-20; quoted in Marcus, 171).

³⁰The Arte Nucleare group was founded by Baj and Sergio Damgelo in 1951. Picasso's archives contain two Arte Nucleare posters; Prefigurazione, the 1953 "prospettive del movimento di pittura nucleare" ("the prospectus for the movement of nuclear pictures") (in which a short tract entitled "Danger Public: Argument Manifeste" was enclosed); and an undated form letter requesting information about and catalogues for the artist's exhibitions. Correspondents listed on the latter document include Enrico Baj, Asger Jorn, and Edouard Jaquer (Picasso Archives, Associations culturelles et artistiques (France et étranger) material, Musée Picasso, Paris).

the group gathered around the archaeologist and artist Giuseppe Pinot-Gallizio in Alba. Jorn envisioned the M.I.B.I. as a collective project in which artists would reverse the Bauhaus' subordination of the aesthetic to technologically driven function. In 1956, Jorn and Pinot-Gallizio sponsored the First World Congress of Free Artists at Alba,³¹ and Constant and Wolman (the I.L. representative) were among those who attended.

Besides a common approach to urbanism, there were other issues that linked Jorn, Pinot-Gallizio, and Constant with the L.I.: a revolutionary political position independent of both Stalinism and Trotskyism (and their artistic correlates, Social Realism and orthodox Surrealism), a dedicated seriousness about the theory and goals of art combined with an unswerving avant-gardism, and a common interest in the transformation of everyday life, in festivity, in play, and in waste or excess (as defined by the norms of a purposive rationalism).³²

The following year at Cosio d'Arroscia, the like-minded M.I.B.I. and I.L. joined forces as the Internationale

³¹"Before the conference began there was a split with the Belgian representative Christian Dotremont, ... Enrico Baj was excluded on the first day and the conference then confirmed its break with the Nuclearists.... Indeed, only four of the conference delegates (Asger Jorn, Pierro Simondo, Elena Verrone, and Constant) ever joined the Situationist International. Of these, Simondo and Verrone, were excluded in January 1958, while Constant resigned in the summer of 1960, and Jorn followed suit in April 1961 (Karen Eliot, "Basic Banalities," appendix in Jean Barrot, What is Situationism?, trans. L.M. [London: Unpopular Books, 1987; reprint, Fort Bragg, Calif.: Flatland, 1991], 49.

³²Wollen, 46.

Situationniste.³³ Debord, who emerged as the most visible and uncompromising of the Situationist theorists, detailed the group's philosophy and mission in his 1957 "Raport sur la construction des situations et sur les conditions de l'organisation et de l'action de la tendance situationniste internationale" ("Report on the Construction of Situations and on the International Situationist Tendency's Conditions of Organization and Action"). In this text, Debord decries contemporary society's tendency toward specialization and fragmentation, which affords certain individuals recognition, but on the condition that no unitary critique of political and social repression emerge from their activity. Debord acknowledges Surrealism's important refutation of the bourgeois, Christian idealism that can enable such repression, but notes that the movement's postwar celebration of the irrational merely plays into the hands of a consumer culture that has watered down Surrealism

³³The term "Situationist" pointed to the group's commitment to transform concretely lived experience. "'So far philosophers and artists have only interpreted situations,' they declared, paraphrasing Marx and taking a swipe at Sartre: 'the point now is to transform them. Since man is the product of the situations he goes through, it is essential to create human situations. Since the individual is defined by his situation, he wants the power to create situations worthy of his desires'" ("Questionnaire," Internationale Situationniste, 9 [August 1964], translated in Ken Knabb, trans. and ed., Situationist International Anthology [Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981], 138; quoted by Plant, The Most Radical Gesture, 20).

into "ordinary aesthetic commerce."³⁴ Indeed, Debord claims that all conventional art is similarly drained of its radical potential, and that "integral art, which has been talked about so much, can only be realized at the level of urbanism .. [that] can no longer correspond to any of the traditional aesthetic categories."³⁵ Debord puts forward a conception of revolutionary art that is the logical extension of the L.I.'s and the M.I.B.I.'s experiments:

Unitary urbanism is dynamic, that is, in close relation to styles of behavior.... this new architecture will primarily be based not on free, poetic lines and forms--in the sense that today's "lyrical abstract" painting uses those words--but rather on the atmospheric effects of rooms, hallways, streets, atmospheres linked to the gestures they contain. Architecture must advance by taking emotionally moving situations, rather than emotionally moving forms, as the materials it works with.... The most general goal must be to extend the nonmediocre part of life, to reduce the empty moments of life as much as possible.³⁶

Summing up the most critical contributions of avant-garde activities, including those of the Situationists, Debord notes succinctly that revolutionary art frees citizens from the psychic and material impact of the hero myth:

the most pertinent revolutionary experiments in culture have sought to break the spectator's psychological identification with the hero so as to draw him into activity by provoking his capacities to revolutionize

³⁴Guy Debord, "Report on the Construction of Situations and on the International Situationist Tendency's Conditions of Organization and Action," in Knabb, Situationist International Anthology, 20.

³⁵Ibid., 23.

³⁶Ibid., 23-24.

his own life.³⁷

Debord's critique of the spectator refers to his conceptualization of spectacle as the determining category of experience under late capitalism. Debord theorized his understanding of spectacle most fully in his 1967 Society of the Spectacle. However, his primary thesis--that individuals seek fulfillment through passive consumption which actually defers happiness because capitalism must perpetuate desire for commodities--is developed in earlier texts published in the group's journal Internationale Situationniste. In a 1958 essay, the group conceptualizes "situations" as active, creative events in which individuals live their desires, rather than displace them onto the actions of others or objects produced by others. The situation is the antithesis of the bourgeois investment in work, church, and heroic leader, each of which demands the time and energy of the individual in return for an empty promise of self-fulfillment.

Pirandello and Brecht have already expressed the destruction of the theatrical spectacle and pointed out a few of the requirements for going beyond it. It could be said that the construction of situations will replace the theater in the same sense that the real construction of life has tended more and more to replace religion. Clearly the principal domain we are going to replace and fulfill is poetry, which burned itself out by taking its position at the vanguard of our time and has now completely disappeared.

Real individual fulfillment, which is also involved in the artistic experience that the Situationists are discovering, entails the collective

³⁷Ibid., 25.

takeover of the world. Until this happens there will be no real individuals--only specters haunting the things anarchically presented to them by others.³⁸

I would now like to focus on other groups of cultural workers who developed similar theses, and will discuss the shared ideological premises that made the pervasive critique of the hero cult and its logic possible.

Lefebvre, Socialisme ou Barbarie, and Arguments: the Critique of Alienation and Bureaucracy

Like the Situationists, the writers involved with the journals Socialisme ou barbarie and Arguments analyzed the ways in which authoritarian institutions--ranging from capitalism itself to the Stalinist version of communism--impinged upon the freedom of individuals by turning every aspect of their lives into sets of highly controlled relations. These critics claimed that all experience was lived in terms of production and use value rather than "useless" pleasure. They shared Debord's belief that even leisure had been colonized by capitalism's will to put a price tag on everything. All maintained that postwar workers/consumers are so alienated and instrumentalized by their own activities that they blindly participate in the commodification of play, their last realm of freedom. However, these writers, determined to retool the Marxism

³⁸"Preliminary Problems in Constructing a Situation," Internationale Situationniste, no. 1 (June 1958), in Knabb, 44.

perverted by the Stalinists, argued that play and the pleasures of everyday, mundane existence could be wrenched away from and challenge the forces of pure productivity.

The philosopher Lefebvre made a critical contribution to postwar Marxist thought, and at various stages was tied intimately to important revolutionary groups. Lefebvre was allied with the Surrealists in 1925, when the Philosophies group to which he belonged issued a joint statement against the Riff War with Breton's circle. Lefebvre was profoundly influenced by Breton (despite his later tirade against Surrealism), "not only [for] the idea of the transformation of everyday life, a fundamental surrealist concept, but even [for] his introduction to Hegel and Marx."³⁹ In the 1940s, Dotremont introduced Lefebvre's writing on everyday life (which first dates from the 1930s) into Revolutionary Surrealism, and Constant's Cobra manifesto on an architecture for situations is arguably informed by Lefebvre's 1947 Critique de la vie quotidienne: introduction (Critique of Daily Life: Introduction).⁴⁰ Debord audited one of the philosopher's university courses, and from 1956 Lefebvre was involved covertly with the dissident Communist

³⁹Wollen, 34.

⁴⁰Michel Trebitsch, preface in Henri Lefebvre, Critique of Everyday Life, vol. 1, trans. John Moore (London: Verso, 1991), xxvii.

publications Voies Nouvelles and La Voie Communiste,⁴¹ and contributed to Arguments.

During much of his membership in the P.C.F. (from 1928 until 1956), Lefebvre functioned as the party's foremost Marxist thinker, producing popularized and vulgarized versions of Marxist philosophy. During this period, Lefebvre also violently attacked Surrealism and Existentialism as decadent manifestations of bourgeois culture, although as Michel Trebitsch notes, Lefebvre's aims paralleled those of Sartre:

Lefebvre's pre-war themes of the "total man" and his dialectic of the conceived and the lived were echoed by Sartre's definition of existence as the reconciliation between thinking and living.⁴²

However, despite his generally orthodox behavior as a Communist, Lefebvre fell from grace with the P.C.F., notably

⁴¹Lefebvre made several contributions to Voies Nouvelles, including an interview about his 1959 autobiography La Somme et le reste (which recounted how the P.C.F. severely reprimanded him for his later critiques of the party) with François Chatelet (see Voies Nouvelles, no. 9 [June 1959]: 21-23). Sartre and Parmelin also contributed to this journal, and the May 1958 edition of Voies Nouvelles contained an interview with Parmelin's husband and Picasso's friend Edouard Pignon about Picasso's U.N.E.S.C.O. mural (see Voies Nouvelles, no. 2 [May 1958]: 20-23). Copies of La Voie Communiste exist in Picasso's archives, along with letters from those responsible for the publication. An undated letter with a copy of the November 1958 edition of the journal informs Picasso that this edition was seized by police because of articles that denounce French repression in North Africa. The letter also requests Picasso's help with circulating the journal (Picasso Archives, Associations politiques françaises material, Parti Communiste files, Musée Picasso, Paris).

⁴²Trebitsch, "Preface," in Henri Lefebvre, Critique of Everyday Life, xi.

for his application of the young Marx's theory of alienation to all aspects of everyday life rather than merely to the economic and political spheres. The radical potential of this critical move was not lost on the narrow thinkers who dominated P.C.F. leadership. Indeed, this expanded notion of alienation permitted Lefebvre and others affected by his work to develop a powerful critique of hegemonic capitalist and Stalinist bureaucracy. Lefebvre's ideas about everyday life and alienation were developed first as a sustained critique in his 1947 Critique de la vie quotidienne, introduction, which was followed by two further in-depth studies in 1961 (Fondements d'une sociologie de la quotidienneté [Foundations for a Sociology of the Quotidian]) and 1968 (La Vie quotidienne dans la monde moderne [Daily Life in the Modern World]). The first text informed Situationist theorizing, and the second two engaged with Situationist ideas. Indeed, Lefebvre and the Situationists participated in fruitful exchanges until 1963, when their relations broke down among accusations of plagiarism.⁴³

In his Critique, Lefebvre argued that pre-industrial societies enjoyed an integrated and satisfying everyday life

⁴³See Trebitsch's preface, xxvii-xxviii on relations between Lefebvre and the Situationists. Lefebvre's 1965 book La Proclamation de la Commune (The Commune Proclamation) was a particular bone of contention: the Situationists vociferously denounced Lefebvre for plagiarizing them in this work. Lefebvre issued counter accusations concerning plagiarism.

in which daily events renewed and sustained personal and communal experience. He maintained that industrialization under capitalism destroyed this form of community and communication by trivializing, routinizing, and banalizing daily occurrences through the division of labor, as well as through increasingly abstract representations of human relations. He argued that the processes and products of one's thoughts and actions under late capitalism do not bind people to one another; daily activities fragment people into individuals who seek connection with others by (often literally) buying into that which seems to promise wholeness. Lefebvre expressed such alienation in these terms:

[Alienation] replaces out-moded ideological "centers of interest" by a new interest in individual and social man. It enables us to discover how man (every man) gives in to illusions in which he thinks he can discover and possess his own self, and the self-inflicted anguish which ensues; or how he struggles to bring to light his "core" of human reality..."

Lefebvre extended this critique to Stalinist ideology, but it was the writers who formed the group Socialisme ou Barbarie (1949 - 1965) who produced the earliest sustained attack on the Soviet Union and its institutionalized repression. The group Socialisme ou Barbarie and its journal of the same name were founded in 1949 by the ex-Trotskyists Cornelius Castoriadis and Claude Lefort. Castoriadis was a Greek student of economics, law, and

"Henri Lefebvre, Critique of Everyday Life, 168.

philosophy who joined the Communist Party in Greece as a resistance fighter. However, he rejected Stalinism and subsequently joined the Trotskyist Fourth International. In 1945 he moved to Paris, where he continued his schooling and met Lefort. Lefort studied philosophy with Merleau-Ponty in the early 1940s and became good friends with the noted philosopher, who influenced Lefort's decision to join the Trotskyist Parti Communiste Internationale (P.C.I.). Lefort and Castoriadis's work together ultimately developed into an analysis of the Soviet Union that diverged from the Trotskyist critique. Lefort and Castoriadis agreed with Trotsky that the U.S.S.R. had developed a bureaucracy first to insure the distribution of limited resources among the population, but secondly, and most importantly, to guarantee Stalin's personal power. Trotsky maintained that his leadership would dismantle this "degenerated workers' state," "presumably by the displacement of Stalin and his bureaucracy with Trotsky and his followers."⁴⁵ Castoriadis and Lefort argued that bureaucracy itself had to be eliminated, for it was a key structure of advanced capitalism whereby technocrats replaced the bourgeoisie as those who controlled the workers. After breaking with the P.C.I., and through the journal Socialisme ou barbarie, Castoriadis, Lefort, and their colleagues extended this

⁴⁵Hirsh, 110. My discussion of Socialisme ou Barbarie is indebted to this book.

critique to all bureaucratic societies, Communist and capitalist alike. The difficulty of producing popular and extensive criticism of bureaucracy and the U.S.S.R. in particular is evident in the small following that the group developed. Sartre and other intellectuals committed to the Soviet Union during the height of the cold war snubbed or castigated *Socialisme and Barbarie*, "claiming the thrust of its orientation played into the hands of the political right."⁴⁶ Castoriadis's and Lefort's ideas were only built upon in a wider arena after 1956, when the Soviets invaded Hungary.⁴⁷ After 1958, *Socialisme ou Barbarie* itself shifted direction, with Castoriadis and Lefort ultimately rejecting Marxist analysis as a tool for comprehending the widespread transformation of French society under a Gaullist technocracy. However, the group's theoretical concerns made a significant contribution to new left thinking in France. Their early assessment and careful analysis of Stalinist communism as a mechanistic and terroristic means of

⁴⁶Ibid., 113. As Hirsh notes, Sartre, Castoriadis, and Lefort battled over the 1952 Ridgeway affair. The P.C.F. organized demonstrations against General Ridgeway's instatement in Paris: the Communists accused the American commander of using bacteriological warfare in Korea. The French government cracked down on the P.C.F. and arrested party leaders including Duclos. The workers failed to respond to a P.C.F. call for strikes, a development celebrated by *Socialisme ou Barbarie*. Sartre's attacks on Castoriadis and Lefort contributed to Sartre's break with Merleau-Ponty, who drew on some of *Socialisme ou Barbarie*'s ideas in devising his assessment of Sartre's "ultrabolshevism" (Ibid., 112-14, 132-133, n. 11).

⁴⁷Ibid., 114.

consolidating power over the freedoms of individuals fed into strands of thought developed by the Arguments group and at various points, by Sartre. Their interest in the alienation produced by bureaucratization also resonated with the work of the I.S. In the introduction to the first issue of their journal, *Socialisme ou Barbarie* expressed succinctly their refusal of P.C.F. bureaucracy, which extinguished true revolutionary struggle in favor of advancing its own pursuit of power:

The proletariat, in France as in other countries, finds its majority alienated and mystified by bureaucracy. It is mystified ideologically, when it adopts as its own interest, as a lesser evil, the politics of bureaucracy, reformist or Stalinist, it is alienated in its action even as struggles that it undertakes in order to defend its immediate interests are most often and as soon as they have a certain scale, annexed by the Stalinist bureaucracy as an instrument of its national and international politics.⁴⁸

I have already noted how the effects of such alienation, and of the discrepancies between ideological messages and actual practices in everyday life, were contested by the I.S. In fact, Debord collaborated with

⁴⁸"Le proletariat, aussi bien que en France que dans les autres pays, se trouve dans sa majorité aliéné et mystifié par sa bureaucratie. Il est mystifié idéologiquement, lorsqu'il adopte, soit comme son propre intérêt, soit comme un "moindre mal", la politique de la bureaucratie, "réformiste" ou stalinienne, il est aliéné dans son action même puisque les luttes qu'il entreprend pour défendre ses intérêts immédiats sont le plus souvent et dès qu'elles ont une certaine envergure, annexées par la bureaucratie stalinienne comme instrument de sa politique nationale et internationale" (Introduction to the essay "Socialisme ou barbarie," Socialisme ou barbarie no. 1 [March-April 1949]: 5).

Socialisme ou Barbarie, and issued a joint manifesto with Socialisme ou Barbarie member Pierre Canjeurs in 1960.⁴⁹ Many of Socialisme ou Barbarie's concerns were further explored by the group Arguments, who published in their journal of the same name analyses of Socialisme ou Barbarie's work, and translations of key texts by other radical French and foreign Marxists who challenged Stalinism and the rise of consumerism. Although many of the positions put forward in the journal Arguments paralleled those of the Situationists, especially the perspectives of Lefebvre, it is important to note that the Arguments group did not cite the work of the I.S. Indeed, Debord and his colleagues boycotted Arguments in 1960, claiming that much published in the journal was incoherent, unoriginal, and often conformist.⁵⁰

Arguments was founded in 1956 by intellectuals who had been expelled from or who left the P.C.F., including

⁴⁹Peter Wollen states that Debord wrote a joint manifesto with Castoriadis (Wollen, 25), however, Jean-François Martos identifies the collaborator as Canjeurs (Jean-François Martos, Histoire de L'Internationale Situationniste [Paris: Éditions Gérard Lebovici, 1989], 140). Debord joined Socialisme ou Barbarie for awhile, although this is not mentioned in I.S. texts. He was a member of the Socialisme ou Barbarie team sent to Belgium in 1960 during the great strike in that country (Barrot, What is Situationism?, 20).

⁵⁰The last edition of Arguments (1962) published Lefebvre's article on the Commune that the Situationists maintained was plagiarized from their writing (see the Internationale Situationniste no. 5 [December 1960]: 13).

Lefebvre, Kostas Axelos⁵¹, Jean Duvigneaud, Pierre Fougereyrollas, and Edgar Morin. Roland Barthes and Dionys Mascolo also contributed to the publication. Morin (whose 1959 autocritique concerning his Stalinist past and expulsion from the party is a powerful indictment of the P.C.F. hero cult), was a prime mover behind the journal. He had joined the P.C.F. with the fervor of a Resistance fighter enthralled by the party's hymns to Communist equality and fraternity. He soon discovered, however, that the P.C.F. forbade a critical assessment of its political and cultural policies. Rather than abandon Marxism with Communism, Morin used the theoretical models put forward by Socialisme ou Barbarie to formulate his social and cultural criticism. He visited Polish worker councils fighting for self-management with Lefort and Mascolo during the struggles of 1956, and after his return to France, planned the meetings that lead to the founding of Arguments. The intellectuals who formed the group

experienced bourgeois society as fundamentally alienated politically, economically, culturally, and personally. They had viewed the Communist movement as a vehicle for overcoming alienation only to find new and more elaborate forms of it. Outside the Party they returned to philosophy as the vehicle for expressing this experience.⁵²

The group turned to Marx's early work on alienation,

⁵¹Axelos was Gilot's friend and lover, and was instrumental in convincing her to leave Picasso (see Huffington, 390-391).

⁵²Hirsh, 91.

particularly the 1844 Manuscripts, and also examined Existentialist writing, particularly that of Heidegger and Sartre. Sartre's thought was especially important to his former critic Lefebvre, who used

Sartre's notion of authenticity [the individual's commitment to transcend his or her material limitations] as a basis for developing concepts of satisfaction, play, and the festival as viable channels for resolving alienation.⁵³

Indeed, Lefebvre published his criticism of Stalinist Communism, his 1957 "Le Marxisme et la pensée française" ("Marxism and French Thought"), in Sartre's journal Les Temps modernes. Arguments studied the work of other critical thinkers, devoting their journal's pages to Marxist writers such as Theodor Adorno, Karl Korsch, Georg Lukács, and Herbert Marcuse.⁵⁴ I find the group's interest in the writing of Lukács particularly notable, for the Hungarian philosopher's analyses of reification--the instrumentalization and ultimate objectification of human relations as relationships among things--certainly

⁵³Ibid., 92.

⁵⁴Poster summarizes the contributions of these thinkers as follows: "[Lukács'] ... Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein of 1923 foreshadowed the discussion of the concept of alienation; ... [Korsch's] ... Marxismus und Philosophie of 1923 was an early attempt to bring Marxist criticism to the Marxist movement itself; and ... [Marcuse's] ... Hegels Ontologie und die Grundlegung einer Theorie der Geschichtlichkeit of 1932 took some of its impulses from the existentialism of Martin Heidegger. Marcuse later joined the Frankfurt School Marxists (Horkheimer, Adorno, Fromm, et al.), whose project of developing a 'critical theory of society' was the basis on the Western Marxist tradition" (Poster, Existential Marxism in Postwar France, 43).

complements Lefebvre's analysis of alienation.⁵⁵

A quote from Morin's autocritique encapsulates the concerns of Arguments members:

the petty-bourgeois life of comfort becomes a passive life of play with dreams, pastimes, distractions; the great technical adventure requires an active life of play where man, becoming aware of just this adventure, attempts to live.⁵⁶

This formulation recalls Situationist theorizing, and despite the S.I.'s hostility toward Arguments and eventually Lefebvre, many similarities exist among the ideas espoused by the different groups' members. For example, through Arguments, Mascolo expanded on his 1953 theory of needs which focused on the nonmaterial aspects of human

⁵⁵Arguments translated three chapters of Lukács' 1923 History and Class Consciousness: "What is Orthodox Marxism?" (in Arguments no. 3 [1957]:), "Marxist Rosa Luxemburg" (Arguments no. 5 [1957]: 21-32), and "The Phenomenon of Reification" (Arguments no. 11 [December 1958]: 14-31). It is important to note that the editorial staff indicated that Lukács disavowed this earlier work at the time of its translation in Arguments, and that the journal published a letter from the philosopher (in no. 5) condemning the presentation of his 1923 texts. Lukács' exploration of Marx's early writings in his 1923 book were subject to the same criticism from Stalinist quarters that Lefebvre experienced. His departures from the party line had more dire consequences. Lukács acted on his unorthodox convictions in 1956 when he joined up with revolutionary insurgents in Hungary; he was captured by Soviet troops and held in Rumania until 1957. Picasso received a letter from Géza Képes, the General Secretary of the Hungarian Writers Association, asking Picasso to protest Lukács' deportation. At the time this letter was written, Lukács' friends and admirers did not know where he had been taken (see Géza Képes, Budapest, to Picasso, 27 November 1956, letter in the Picasso Archives, Associations culturelles et artistiques material, Picasso Museum, Paris).

⁵⁶Edgar Morin, Autocritique (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1959), 153; quoted in Poster, 217.

requirements rooted to emotion;⁵⁷ Axelos developed a theory of poetic play to challenge the stultifying effects of dehumanized, capitalist work; and Lefebvre added the concept of poesis ("the experience and creation of human nature")⁵⁸ to Marx's concept of praxis (which only accounted for instrumental interactions). Poesis called for the production of new, self-actualizing situations in which the individual recreates him- or herself outside the narrow confines of bourgeois morality and institutional identity. Poesis recalls both Situationist and Sartrean theorizing, and such a confluence in thought points to the rich interweaving of social analyses produced in postwar France. I would now like to turn to the Sartrean critique, which (as I have already indicated in chapter 1), was at certain key points out of synch with the other leftist positions I have discussed. Nevertheless, Sartre and his circle made invaluable contributions to the rise of the new left.

Sartre: Existentialism Engages with Marxism

As a young teacher and writer, Sartre was aloof from

⁵⁷For a discussion of Mascolo's theory, developed in his 1953 book Le Communisme, see Leslie Hill, Marguerite Duras: Apocalyptic Desires (London: Routledge, 1993), 166, n. 8.

⁵⁸Poster, 241.

politics⁵⁹ although as a self-styled bohemian, he shared the avant-garde's general disdain of the bourgeoisie. His experience of war as a soldier (especially his imprisonment in a P.O.W. camp) politicized Sartre, whose first experiment with intellectual politics was through the anti-Nazi group Socialisme et Liberté. Sartre formed Socialisme et Liberté with Merleau-Ponty and de Beauvoir in 1941, but disbanded it when people associated with the group were arrested.⁶⁰ As I noted in chapter 1, Sartre's emphasis on absolute individual freedom made him highly suspect of collective action, and his early work includes a full-blown attack on Marxism and its Communist manifestations. However, during the Occupation, he worked with the Communist-dominated Comité National des Écrivains (C.N.E.), and contributed articles to its organ Les Lettres françaises. However, after Liberation, when the P.C.F. began to position itself as a leading force in national and world politics, the party vehemently attacked Sartre's existentialism as an escapist,

⁵⁹"Sartre always considered himself a man of the left, yet prior to 1940 he took no active part in politics. He went to the 14 July 1935 Popular Front demonstration in Paris more as an observer than as a participant. He never voted, not even for the Popular Front candidates of 1936" (Hirsh, 24). My account of Sartre's politicization is indebted to Hirsh and Poster.

⁶⁰Communists who perceived Sartre as a political rival spread rumors that he had obtained his release from the P.O.W. camp because he was a German agent. These rumors detracted from Socialisme et Liberté's activity, and when group contacts were arrested, Sartre insisted on disbanding Socialisme et Liberté (Steven Ungar, introduction to Sartre, "What is Literature? and Other Essays, 4-5).

bourgeois philosophy. Sartre engaged in bitter polemics with party theorists and in 1948, attempted to produce a political path which steered clear of both communism and capitalism by co-founding the Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire (R.D.R.). Meant to function as a collective of activist individuals,⁶¹ the group fell apart when Sartre accused R.D.R. co-founder David Rousset of working to align the group with an American political agenda.⁶² Sartre spent a good deal of his vast intellectual resources and energy decrying the conformism and repression operative in both capitalism and Stalinism, and castigated the Communist party incessantly for not developing a theory of revolutionary subjectivity. Indeed, when Sartre did decide to embrace historical materialism and to integrate it with his existentialism, he was able to make invaluable contributions to a theory of the revolutionary subject.

Sartre's initial sustained engagement with Marxist thought unfolded during a period of overt fellow-travelling. Expelled from government 1947, the P.C.F. was subject to

⁶¹"Unlike the C.P. [Communist Party], the political direction of the R.D.R. would be determined from below, in the local cells, where everyone would actively participate in the decision-making. R.D.R. chapters would be laboratories in which workers would experience and develop leadership capacities, thereby generating the new, free subjects of history" (Poster, 141-142).

⁶²A 30 April 1949 R.D.R. "International Day for Resistance to Dictatorship and War" was supported by the U.S. Embassy and the "Communist-purged" U.S. labor federation (C.I.O.) (Hirsh, 44).

repressive measures, most notably during the 1952 Ridgeway affair when party leaders were arrested for fear that they would orchestrate large-scale unrest. This event helped drive Sartre into the P.C.F.'s arms, and as I have shown in chapter 1, the philosopher did not use this marriage to devise a truly critical Marxism. Indeed, Sartre joined forces with the Communists just when many of their more thoughtful fellows were abandoning the party. Sartre's blind embrace of the party as the bearer of revolutionary change and the proletariat's will contributed to the end of his important friendships with Merleau-Ponty and Camus. Both men criticized the party for the injustices enacted in its name, and Sartre attacked the two thinkers for retreating toward supposedly individual solutions to the problem of alienation.⁶³

It was Sartre's break with the P.C.F. after the events of 1956 that freed him to create a truly critical Marxism. Although his earlier work provided himself and others with

⁶³Merleau-Ponty was deeply disillusioned by the political machinations involved in the Korean War (for example, Communist propaganda maintained that the South had attacked first, which was not the case). The philosopher came to put great stock in the politics of Pierre Mendès-France, and began to write for L'Express. His writing differed from that which Sartre went on to produce, for Merleau-Ponty felt increasingly that the intellectual could not hope to affect worldly events and might best experience human connection through culture. Sartre and Camus fell out over the latter's 1951 The Rebel. Sartre believed essentially that the ends could justify the means, whereas Camus rejected any form of coercion or violence to meet political objectives.

the intellectual tools to produce a theory of revolutionary subjectivity, it was through his 1960 Critique of Dialectical Reason and the lengthy text which prefaced it, Search for a Method, that Sartre devised "a rigorous systematic effort ... to revitalize Marxism by pinpointing the sources of its problems and providing it with an ontological foundation."⁶⁴ Sartre's earlier writing, like that of Marx, attempted to formulate the person's place in the world through a reconsideration of Hegel's Phenomenology. Sartre's existentialism and Marxism both reject the notion of autonomy: for Sartre, an individual's existence was shaped through the controlling look of the other (a metaphor for one's definition through others' expectations), while for Marx, a person was defined through social relations.⁶⁵ Whereas Sartre and Marx left open a critical space for self-realization, Stalinist communism subjected the individual to the highly controlled and controlling effects of bureaucratization attacked by the radical Marxists I have discussed in this chapter.

The work of Sartre's colleagues de Beauvoir and Merleau-Ponty probably helped Sartre reconcile his notion of the free individual with the limitations of historical experience. In 1949, de Beauvoir published The Second Sex, a book that studied women's oppression through a melding of

⁶⁴Hirsh, 56.

⁶⁵Poster, 105.

existentialist concerns and historical analysis of social restrictions. Sartre had encouraged her to write the book, and the example of Leiris's confessional literature provided de Beauvoir with the license to examine the problem of women in part through the lens of personal experience.⁶⁶ De Beauvoir's assessment of the real constraints that prohibited women from achieving self-realization is a model of historically-grounded intellectual inquiry that may have shaped Sartre's later embrace of historical particulars. A critical approach to history is also evident in Merleau-Ponty's critique of Sartre's ultra-bolshevism, which as I have already noted, accused Sartre of substituting the over-arching will of the party for that of the cogito. Although Sartre claimed to have rejected the mind/body dualism, it was Merleau-Ponty who examined most thoroughly the intersubjective space between subject and object, and experience and thought. As such, the individual was more immediately and radically social for Merleau-Ponty, although later in his life, he retreated from activism and faith in revolutionary struggle.⁶⁷ However, he injected contingency

⁶⁶De Beauvoir wrote: "I liked Leiris' L'Age d'homme [Manhood]; such sacrificial essays, in which the author strips himself bare without excuses, appealed to me" (Simone de Beauvoir, Force of Circumstance, trans. Richard Howard [London: Penguin Books, 1968], 103).

⁶⁷Merleau-Ponty argued that a proletarian class no longer existed as such in the Western world, and believed that many left-leaning intellectuals shifted their attention to colonial struggles after 1956 because they saw these peoples as a new revolutionary class. Merleau-Ponty

into deterministic Marxism and history into Sartre's existentialism, by noting that "freedom modifies history only by taking up the meaning which history was offering at the moment in question."⁶⁸ Sartre absorbed Merleau-Ponty's notion of a body both shaped by and shaping its experience, and when he began to study seriously the plight of the working class, Sartre investigated the social constraints that thwarted the proletariat's realization of freedom.⁶⁹

Sartre's 1952 biographical study of Jean Genet revealed the philosopher's interest in understanding the individual as an expression of forces that define the larger social field. Although this important study was written at the point when Sartre embraced the P.C.F., and emphasizes the

believed that the colonized shared no one vision for their emancipation and that on a case-by-case basis, it was evident that even reactionary tendencies shaped colonial insurgency. When asked about his position on the French presence in Africa, Merleau-Ponty said that he did not want France to withdraw because: "... I think she [France] was able to and still is able to do some good there, and because I would rather be a part of a country which does something in history than of a country which submits to it" (Merleau-Ponty, "On Madagascar" [interview] in Signs, trans. with an introduction by Richard C. McCleary, Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, ed. John Wild [Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1964], 336). The philosopher advocated autonomous regimes in colonial countries so that they could "get the means of political expression so that their affairs may become really theirs, and their representatives may obtain from France the maximum it can do in the direction of a 'handout economy'" (Ibid., 335).

⁶⁸Merleau-Ponty in Phenomenology of Perception, trans. C. Smith (London, 1962), 450, quoted in Poster, 152.

⁶⁹Poster, 166-167.

individual's freedom to choose over social constraint, it nevertheless demonstrates that Sartre's existentialism facilitated critical social analysis. Sartre argued that the criminal Genet fashioned himself willfully into the asocial, "degenerate" other that controlling, rigid bourgeois society designated him to be. As such, he became a living indictment of that society. Addressing the fundamental alienation of life under capitalist domination, Sartre's text made possible the following critique:

... people are both objects and subjects to each another in a way that combines the unity and the separation of each to each [...] Marxist community is prevented by historical walls that push people away from each other. The barriers of class, race, and sex position us socially to regard each other as things, while we internalize this situation, and at the same time, experience ourselves as isolated."⁷⁰

It is the seeds of this argument that radical Marxist thinkers first sow, and that Sartre himself later tends. In Search for a Method, he castigated contemporary Marxism for

throwing over to the side of chance all the concrete determinations of human life and for not preserving anything of historical totalization except its abstract skeleton of universality. The result is that it has entirely lost the meaning of what it is to be human.⁷¹

Sartre condemns the Stalinist incarnation of Marxism for upholding an analytical method that operates as a form of idealism, working through a priori principles rather than

⁷⁰Ibid., 198.

⁷¹Sartre in Search for a Method, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York, 1963), 82-83; quoted in Hirsh, 60.

concepts derived from lived experience.⁷² Sartre seeks out mediations between historical determinations and individual experience, drawing on several methods of inquiry to bridge the gaps, including insights gleaned from psychoanalysis and sociology. The totalizing⁷³ project of Sartre's Critique provides an important analysis of alienation and bureaucratization that draws together and enriches critical strands in the expanding fabric of the postwar new left. In the book, Sartre proposes a model of collective action based on the concept of the group in fusion, which avoids bureaucratization by refusing to institutionalize itself. Sartre's inability to account for the creation and maintenance of such collectives brought on the ultimate collapse of his totalizing vision, and eventually caused him to renounce the importance of the intellectual in revolutionary struggle.⁷⁴ However, in the words of Arthur Hirsh:

The significance of the Critique for new left social theory is evident.... [Sartre's] earlier existentialist view of alienation is now grounded in the socio-historical framework, and he has taken society and history into account without abandoning the primacy of individual praxis. For, the individual he

⁷²Hirsh, 60.

⁷³One of the primary objectives of Sartre's Critique was to determine whether the dialectic could fully account for the individual's relationship to society through history: whether it could encompass experience as a totality.

⁷⁴Khilnani, Arguing Revolution: The Intellectual Left in Postwar France, 76-77.

considers is now the social individual, whose alienation is surpassed in social action and social commitment.⁷⁵

Bataille and Breton: "Useless" Critiques of Alienated Productivity

Bataille developed a critique of alienation under capitalism and Stalinist communism that shares some common ground with the later work of Sartre and the other theorists discussed above. From his break with Breton's Surrealism in 1929, Bataille began articulating a rich theory of base materialism informed by his exploration of ethnology and opening out onto the field of sociology. Decrying Breton and his followers for their idealism, he explored the abject (informe) to understand how it unmakes hierarchies that result in repressive practices. Although his fascination with violence led to a brief flirtation with fascism in the 1930s,⁷⁶ Bataille's experience of war's horror prompted him

⁷⁵Hirsh, 80.

⁷⁶This was in the context of his work with Contre-Attaque formed in 1935 as "an anti-popular front group set up 'to defend the revolutionary position betrayed by Stalin' (Breton)" (Michael Richardson, "Introduction," in Georges Bataille, The Absence of Myth: Writings on Surrealism, ed., trans., with an introduction by Michael Richardson [London: Verso, 1994], 10). Breton and his Surrealist followers left the group after Jean Dautry suggested that it "explore the idea of sur-fascism which would surpass fascism in the way the surrealism had surpassed realism" (Ibid.). Bataille's own willingness to explore fascism is evident in remarks that he made during a November 1935 meeting of Contre-Attaque: "We want to give precise answers to questions that demand precise answers, but we maintain that what is essential lies elsewhere. We must contribute to the masses' awareness of their own power; we are sure that strength

to account for violence historically in his writing from the 1940s. Like his close friend the ethnographer Leiris, and Breton (with whom he reconciled after the war), Bataille continued to investigate how the marginal (and in his case, the base) challenges domineering incarnations of idealism. He demonstrated repeatedly that individuals and society itself are always torn between the need to "spend" (enjoy non-productive pleasure) and to "accumulate" (work in order to produce and acquire). During the postwar period, Bataille and Breton argued that art and politics are separate realms: art represents a sphere of freedom that reflects the individual's position vis à vis society, whereas politics is a place of action in which one attempts actively to effect real conditions. Although such a stance might suggest that Bataille was essentially apolitical after the war, he was only understood in such terms by activists like Sartre and the Revolutionary Surrealists who promoted a marriage of art and politics. Both Sartre and the Revolutionary Surrealists--who did not appreciate fully the strength of Bataille's critique of their common enemy, alienation--attacked Bataille for his interest in mystical

results less from strategy than from collective exaltation, and exaltation can come only from words that touch not the reason but the passions of the masses" (Georges Bataille, "Popular Front in the Streets," in Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1936, ed. with an introduction by Allan Stoekl, trans. by Allan Stoekl with Carl R. Lovitt and Donald M. Leslie, Jr., Theory and History of Literature Series, eds. Wlad Godzich and Jochen Schulte-Sasse [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985], 167).

experience, just as Breton was dismissed on similar grounds. Bataille valued internal experience--which he theorized more rigorously than Breton--for its potential challenge to all forms of productivity. He understood mysticism, eroticism, and violence as forces of pure "useless" expenditure, experiences that therefore escape recuperation by the capitalist and Stalinist will to put all human activity to an alienated use. Bataille's position was thus more radical than that of Sartre (who never fully relinquished the notion of the individual in control), and an extreme extension of Situationist logic, whereby all human activity was meant to be purely pleasurable.⁷⁷ Indeed, Sartre's review of Bataille's 1943 L'Expérience intérieure (Inner Experience), illustrates how difficult it was (and is) to integrate Bataille's thesis into a purposive, activist critique of alienation. Sartre could not understand how Bataille's communal communication, thematized through wild festivity

⁷⁷Bataille and members of the Internationale Lettriste sometimes thematized "useless" expenditure along similar lines, notably with respect to potlach. Bataille conceived of potlach as important communal exchange in which members of a group came together to renounce utility and productivity. Greil Marcus argues: "Bataille was laying down a challenge; twenty-one years later, the [Internationale Lettriste] picked it up [when they named their journal Potlach].... As an absolute the potlach was an exchange of everything that could not be put on the market; for it to function all commodities had to be taken off the market and raised above it, until the poorest trinket could symbolize the whole life of the tribe. So it would be, when the new civilization came into being; God would be dead, and everything would be sacred" (Marcus, 397).

such as potlach, sacrifice, or the more intimate experience of sex, could "enter the path of new enterprises to contribute to the formation of a new humanity that exceeds itself toward new goals."⁷⁸

Bataille's first attempts to integrate his theory of useless expenditure with practice date to the 1930s. He helped form the "contre-église" Acéphale in 1936 (which included Pierre Klossowski and purportedly Jacques Lacan) in the wake of disappointment in Surrealism and Soviet Marxism,⁷⁹ and the College of Sociology in 1937 (which included Klossowski, Leiris, and Roger Callois). Bataille's associate Klossowski was then involved in the Catholic journal Esprit that espoused Mounier's personalism, which attacked the instrumentalizing logic of fascism, capitalism, and Soviet communism. At this time, Bataille and his colleagues modelled themselves after the "tragic man" (their exemplar being Sade) who is self-destructive and refuses utilitarianism.⁸⁰ Unlike the Surrealists who found Sade liberating because he expressed the impossible, Bataille and Klossowski felt that Sade voiced the claims of those society

⁷⁸Jean-Paul Sartre, "Un Nouveau Mystique [1943]," in Situations I (Paris: Gallimard, 1947), 187, quoted in Michèle Richman, Reading Georges Bataille: Beyond the Gift (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 116.

⁷⁹Bataille had been a member of the Trotskyist group Cercle Communiste Démocratique from 1931-1934.

⁸⁰Carolyn J. Dean, The Self and Its Pleasures: Bataille, Lacan, and the History of the Decentered Subject (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992), 172.

marginalized.⁸¹

However, as Carolyn Dean notes, after the violence of the war it became imperative for many intellectuals to understand what Sade had actually said rather than to interpret his work metaphysically or psychologically. For Bataille in the 1950s,

Sade was no longer a tragic man whose silence paradoxically asserted the claims of existence in a reified world. Instead, he seemed to herald the triumph of that kind of instrumental rationality. He embodied the logical consequences of an imperative to be the law to which one at the same time necessarily, categorically submits.⁸²

Bataille asserted that Sade's violence (that which he perpetrated and that which he experienced as an outlaw) exposes violence within civilization, against the state's claim that it exists outside its own domain. However,

the transgressive, self-dissolving potential of [Sade's] violence (if we are to believe Bataille) is never realized, because it is always transposed into a 'reflective, rationalized, violent will' that depersonalizes human interaction, turns human beings into executioners.⁸³

This is the same logic that Bataille applies to his

⁸¹Klossowski argued in his pre-war reading of Sade that the libertine's evil is sanctioned by God's evil/indifference and that the libertine manifests a desire for God by provoking him through denying him (just like the child who perceives beating as an act of love). The libertine evidences his masochism further by destroying the victim who must exist in order to provide him with pleasure (see Ibid., 173-178 for an analysis of Klossowski's early position on Sade).

⁸²Ibid., 198.

⁸³Ibid., 188.

assessment of Sartre's analysis of Genet. Rather than remain content with Sartre's observations that Genet has become the asocial and evil other that society has constructed, Bataille argues that Genet's lawlessness merely reinscribes alienated relations, for the criminal reproduces the cold, instrumental human interactions that have shaped him.⁸⁴

Bataille believed that art could provide one important sphere for truly free expression and interaction, however, unlike Sartre and other engaged writers, he felt that for art to remain free, it had to be divorced from action. Instead of eschewing activism (which is purposive by definition), Bataille argued for its importance, stressing however, that it must be understood for what it is, namely the will to affect and control others. Some of Bataille's most thoughtful political criticism of the postwar period appeared in his journal Critique, which he began in 1946.⁸⁵ When he concerned himself with art, however, although he saw it as expressive of social realities, he maintained the following view:

Art represents a small domain of freedom outside the

⁸⁴See Georges Bataille, "Genet," in Literature and Evil, trans. Alastair Hamilton (London: Marion Boyars, 1990), 173-208. See also Richman's discussion of Sartre's and Bataille's analyses of Genet and sovereignty in Richman, Reading George Bataille: Beyond the Gift, 134-137.

⁸⁵The journal published and publishes (it remains an important intellectual forum today) a wide variety of social and cultural criticism.

realm of action, paying for its liberty through its renunciation of the real world. This is a heavy price, and there are few writers who do not dream of recapturing lost reality: but for it, they must pay in the other direction, renouncing liberty and serving propaganda.⁸⁶

Breton understood the logic of this position, and his postwar stance on the relationship between art and politics broadly parallels that of Bataille. Breton retained his activist stance of the prewar years, and remained a painful thorn in the side of capitalists and Stalinists alike, who suffered strident attacks from his sharp tongue and pen. However, Breton promoted art as a model of free relations and liberated human creativity, viewing the work of postwar Surrealists as a utopian enterprise that heralded social change.⁸⁷ However, as Steve Harris has pointed out in his analysis of postwar Surrealist art theory, Breton's understanding of Surrealist art as a metaphorical model of individual liberty offered a very weak challenge to a postwar consumerist logic that thrived on packaging freedom.⁸⁸

⁸⁶Georges Bataille, Oeuvres complètes, vol. 5: La Somme athéologique II, Sur Nietzsche, Memorandum, Annexes, eds. Henri Ronse and Jean-Michel Rey (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), 22; quoted in Richman, 132.

⁸⁷Harris, "'By the Fixed Star'" 12.

⁸⁸Harris argues that the Surrealists "moved from one impossibility to another--from the impossibility of revolutionary politics in the face of Stalinist hegemony, against which they defended a free artistic production, to the impossibility of consumer society, in which art's exchange value superseded all questions of content" (Ibid., 5-6).

Absent from France during World War II, Breton continued his Surrealist attack on the instrumental relations promoted by capitalism and Soviet communism in publications launched in Martinique, Mexico, and the United States.⁸⁹ Upon his return to France in 1946, Breton sought to restore his prewar prestige in the face of dramatic political and cultural realignments. His former colleagues Aragon and Éluard were important figures in the powerful P.C.F., Sartre's existentialism had captured the hearts and minds of the youthful audience that once embraced Surrealism, and Surrealism itself had splintered into a variety of factions that battled with one another over the role of art and politics. Just as he remained an ardent critic of capitalist and Stalinist power machinations, Breton continued to support the 1938 manifesto "Pour un art révolutionnaire indépendant" ("For an Independent Revolutionary Art"), which he had drawn up with Trotsky (assassinated in 1940), and Rivera. In 1947--the same year that the P.C.F. promoted Social Realism with a vengeance, and Sartre published "What is Literature?"--Breton and the Surrealist's "Rupture inaugurale" ("Inaugural Rupture"), dismissed the P.C.F.'s and Sartre's attempts to put art in the service of politics. Breton and his followers decried

⁸⁹Breton helped found Tropiques with Aimé Césaire in Martinique in 1941, and in 1942 inaugurated the New York publication VVV (with Max Ernst, Marcel Duchamp, and David Hare), and the Mexican review Dyn (with Wolfgang Paalen).

the Soviets' and Sartre's desire to organize "revolution" along very particular lines; instead the Surrealists upheld a passionate belief in permanent revolution, in the constant rebuttal of vs. submission to authority. In the political sphere of activism, Breton's utopianism manifested itself in his alignment with Sartre's R.D.R. (in which both set aside their mutual hostility to forge a political path separate from those of capitalism and communism), and his alignment with Garry Davis' Citizens of the World movement, a rather naive attempt to tear down repressive international and national political barriers.⁹⁰

In the cultural sphere, Breton interrupted the Communist Tristan Tzara's 1947 anti-Surrealist speech at the Louvre, and orchestrated the international exhibition "Le Surréalisme en 1947" ("Surrealism in 1947"), devoted to mysticism, and which invited participants to create a new myth for contemporary society.⁹¹ Rejecting traditional

⁹⁰Davis, a young ex-G.I., renounced his American citizenship on 25 May 1948 to begin his Citizens of the World campaign. The Surrealists abandoned Davis' cause when he accepted the support of ministers for his activism in favor of conscientious objection (see Herbert S. Gershman, The Surrealist Revolution in France [Ann Arbor: Ann Arbor Paperbacks, The University of Michigan Press, 1974], 112).

⁹¹Bataille contributed the short piece "Absence of Myth" to the catalogue. Michael Richardson summarizes Bataille's thoughts on this topic and its relation to Surrealism in these terms: "The myth of contemporary society, therefore, was an 'absence of myth,' since that society had deluded itself into believing it was without myth by making a myth of its very denial. Furthermore, it believed it no longer had a need for myth, that it had evolved beyond dependence upon ritual to establish a

religion, catalogue and exhibition contributors explored the possibility of Surrealist art as the site for restorative communal experience. The show itself was modelled on an occult initiation (it included a "salle des superstitions" [superstitions room] designed by the architect Frederick Kiesler with L'Homme Angoissé [The Anquished Man] by Kiesler and Hare, La Cascade architecturale [The Architectural Waterfall] by Miró, and L'Echelle qui annonce la mort [The Ladder that Announces Death] by Tanguy), and featured a range of artists and styles of art, including some abstraction. Indeed, by 1952 abstraction was a critical category of art making for Breton. His interest in postwar abstraction was informed by his association with Charles Estienne, a defender of gestural abstraction who lambasted geometric abstraction (for what he he took to be its cold rationality and decorative qualities) in his influential 1950 pamphlet "L'Art abstrait est-il un academisme?" ("Is Abstract Art an Academicism?"). By aligning himself with abstraction, as well as with naive art (especially through

mediation between mankind and the rest of creation, since man now had domination over nature.... Both Bataille and the Surrealists were convinced that this was profoundly misguided... [...] [Surrealism explored] the primitive -- not to recreate what had been lost, but to gain an insight into it, and as a means of practical knowledge to confront the 'absence of myth' in contemporary society (Richardson, introduction to Bataille, The Absence of Myth, 13-14).

the Compagnie Art Brut⁹²), Breton attempted to make Surrealism a particularly contemporary phenomenon that incorporated current art practices.⁹³ Because abstraction and Art Brut metaphorically suggested renewal in the postwar cultural climate, their formal and theoretical concerns meshed with Breton's visionary project. Breton's embrace of abstraction and outsider art also had a very concrete political dimension: both art forms celebrated the creativity of individuals or marginalized, "non-productive" groups (the insane, children, or tribal peoples for example) and were thus situated at the opposite pole of Social Realism. Breton organized his attacks on Communist theory and practice to show how the party's repression manifested itself at every level of experience. For example, in 1950, Breton published an open letter to Éluard in Combat, urging his former colleague to use his position to intervene on behalf of the Czech historian Zavis Kalandra, a victim of Stalinist persecution. Éluard revealed his true Stalinist colors by responding with the indifferent "I'm too busy with

⁹²A copy of Dubuffet's 1948 "Notice sur la Compagnie de l'Art Brut" ("Notice on the Art Brut Company"), and a bulletin d'adhesion (membership form) for the group exist in Picasso's archives (Picasso Archives, Associations culturelles et artistiques (France et étranger) materials, Musée Picasso, Paris).

⁹³Harris argues that "as a group with a past, Surrealism was quite naturally concerned to show that it was not merely an historical movement that had perhaps had its day, but that it was the contemporary historical expression of ideas which predated its own existence and which would continue into the future" (Harris, 26).

the innocent [victims of capitalism] who assert their innocence to worry about the guilty who proclaim their guilt."⁹⁴ In 1952, Breton published in Arts "Pourquoi nous cache-t'on la peinture russe contemporaine?" ("Why is Contemporary Russian Art Hidden from Us?"), a direct challenge to Aragon's espousal of Social Realism, and the catalyst for Aragon's "Réflexions sur l'art soviétique" ("Reflections on Soviet Art"), labored defenses of contemporary Soviet art that appeared in Les Lettres françaises.⁹⁵ In his essay, Breton argued that even if Picasso and the fellow traveller Matisse did not produce orthodox Social Realism, they were guilty of sanctioning repressive art dictates that their own work escaped. Indeed, Breton and Benjamin Péret produced the text of a humorous cartoon that lampooned Picasso's different periods, and that ridiculed the artist's compromised position within the P.C.F.⁹⁶

Surrealist publications such as Néon (1948-49), Médium (1952-55), and Le Surréalisme, même (1956-58) were often the launching pads for equally strident attacks on Communist or

⁹⁴Eluard quoted by Judt, 141. As Judt notes, the events that lead to Kalandra's execution followed "a by-then classic sequence of arrest and confession" (Ibid.).

⁹⁵See Wilson, "Art and Politics of the Left in France, ca. 1935-1955," 366-368 for a discussion of Aragon's essays.

⁹⁶André Béhar, André Breton: Le grand indésirable (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1990), 412.

capitalist repressive measures.⁹⁷ These journals also reproduced Surrealist literary and visual work, which by the later 1950s, evidenced a particularly strong interest in eroticism. Indeed, the 1959 Surrealist exhibition was devoted to this realm of experience, and featured Jean Benoît's performance piece dedicated to Sade, and Duchamp's famous rubber breast on the cover of the exhibition catalogue. Breton's catalogue essay cites Bataille approvingly, demonstrating the importance of Bataille's view of eroticism for later Surrealist art making. Indeed, by the later 1950s, lyrical abstraction proved problematic for Breton and a number of his followers, for they saw how easily it could be appropriated by those with conservative agendas (in 1957, the abstractionist and former Surrealist Simon Hantai organized a performance with Mathieu that championed the European colonization of the new world), or banal commercial interests (much abstraction had become an empty but saleable sign of individual "freedom"⁹⁸).

⁹⁷Le 14 Juillet (a title suggested by Breton), a publication codirected by Dionys Mascolo and the young Surrealist Jean Schuster, was not a Surrealist journal per se, but had Surrealist support. During its short run (three numbers in 1958) it maintained a sustained attack against de Gaulle's government.

⁹⁸As Harris observes, much postwar abstraction "was an art of individualism, but one whose signs referred to nothing other than the circumstances of its own making; in the abstract world of commerce in which they were circulating, this was equivalent to a principle of exchange" (Harris, 36). In his essay for the 1959 Surrealist exhibition, José Pierre wrote: "Pollock dead, tachism-fascism is triumphant at the house of Tapié-Mathieu, and

Returning to his prewar celebration of erotic love, Breton now also championed Bataille's espousal of eroticism as shared pleasure that transgresses bourgeois society's emphasis on purposive, ideal activities such as work and Christian charity.⁹⁹ Shedding any emphasis on stylistic cohesion, Breton and his followers favored artistic eclecticism as a model of freedom, and "deviant" eroticism as a revolutionary activity.

Notwithstanding the Surrealists' tendency to reproduce typical and often potentially repressive erotic formations (they continued to privilege heterosexuality and male sexual

branches of [this] house now ring the knell of a form of expressionism that is exploited too continually by those who say nothing. Lyrical abstraction, except in very rare moments, has too often been a gesture without soul, an assembly of recipes without profound human implications" ("Pollock mort, le tachisme-fascisme triomphant de la maison Tapié-Mathieu et succursales sonne en même temps le glas d'une forme d'expression trop continûment exploitée par des diseurs de riens. L'abstraction lyrique, sauf en de très rare moments, a trop souvent été un geste sans âme, un assemble de recettes sans implications humaines profondes" [José Pierre, "Le Surréalisme et l'Art Moderne," in Galerie Daniel Cordier, Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme 1959-1960 {Paris: Galerie Daniel Cordier, 1959}, 42]).

⁹⁹Dean's observations about those who examined assumptions about identity (sexual and otherwise) in France before W.W. II, can be extended to the work of Bataille and the Surrealists after the war: "... Surrealists impeded and expressed the dissolution of the boundaries between normal and deviant and reason and desire implicit in the Great War's [and W.W. II's] intensification of anxieties about identities of all sorts. In their ... projects to normalize or rehabilitate deviant identities, they thus laid the foundation for the undoing of identity, for what I have called the unraveling or unbinding of the self" (Dean, 248).

domination¹⁰⁰), their focus on the erotic betrayed the same strategical error harbored in their marriage with abstraction. Eroticism like abstraction became a cultural sign emptied of most of its revolutionary charge in postwar France. Abstraction could signal virtually anything (as Fautrier's indictment of Nazi brutality in his Otages series and Hantai's homage to colonialism attest), broadly suggesting any form of "freedom;" and "free" sexuality had been linked systematically to sales in France since the inception of the full-blown entertainment industry of the nineteenth century.¹⁰¹ Thus whereas the Surrealists mounted an important attack on purposive idealism in their activism, their cultural production often fell victim to the postwar craze for commodified freedom.¹⁰² Their work was not the "useless" critique of bureaucratized and instrumentalized society theorized by Bataille and the Situationists.

Nevertheless, Breton's Surrealism was a catalyst for new left critics, and Breton himself launched an important

¹⁰⁰An exception to the rule of male sexual supremacy can be found in poetry by Joyce Mansour (1928-1986).

¹⁰¹Henri Toulouse-Lautrec's numerous advertisements for erotic entertainment (from the irreverent sexual frankness of can-can dancers to the theatrical sensuality of Loie Fuller) are now "high" art testimonies to this linkage.

¹⁰²When the Surrealists closed their gallery A L'Etoile Scellée in 1956 (it had opened in 1952), it was in part because they recognized the problem of commercialization (see Harris, 36-37).

if flawed critique of the hero myth in postwar France. The phenomenon that compromised his project--the ways in which Surrealist cultural production leant itself to commodification--affected countless other writers and artists, most notably, Picasso. Having laid the theoretical groundwork for a critique of Picasso's series after canonical paintings, I would now like to turn to an in-depth examination of them.

CHAPTER 4

PICASSO'S WOMEN OF ALGIERS AND THE REINSCRIPTION OF MASTERYThe Hero Returns

In her 1949 The Second Sex, Simone de Beauvoir analyzed and critiqued females' roles in history, indicting men for conditioning women to define themselves in terms of positions subordinate to men. In her chapter "Situation and Character," de Beauvoir argues that patriarchy encourages people--especially women--to bow down before heroes.

In France generals like Boulanger, Pétain, and de Gaulle have always had the support of the women; and one recalls with what fluttering pens the lady journalists on the Communist paper L'Humanité formerly celebrated Tito and his splendid uniform. The general, the dictator--eagle-eyed, square-jawed--is the heavenly father demanded by all serious right-thinkers, the absolute guarantor of all values. Women's ineffectiveness and ignorance are what give rise to the respect accorded by them to heroes and to the laws of the masculine world; they accept them not through sound judgment but by an act of faith...¹

De Beauvoir maintains that because women have been denied access to the masculine world of reason and action--in which men are taught to believe that they can affect their own lot and conditions in the world--women let men act for them. De Beauvoir asserts that women remain bound within prisons over which they are given no control: bodies "swayed by the lunar

¹Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex, trans. and ed. H.M. Parshley, with and Introduction by Deirdre Bair (New York: Vintage Books, Random House, Inc., 1989), 600.

rhthym" and the kitchen with its "capricious ... alchemy."² De Beauvoir's woman--"lost in the midst of the world as if she were at the heart of an immense, vague nebula"³--is the fertile, open expanse against which man defines and asserts himself. "The husband wants to find himself in his wife, the lover in his mistress, ... he is seeking in her the myth of his virility, of his sovereignty, of his immediate reality."⁴ De Beauvoir links women's station to that of others whose servitude secures dominant men's freedom, and observes that all those who are enslaved are encouraged to believe that they are free from the hardships borne of decision-making and acting.

Like the carefree wretches gaily scratching at their vermin, like the merry Negroes laughing under the lash and those joyous Tunisian Arabs burying their starved children with a smile, woman enjoys that incomparable privilege: irresponsibility. Free from troublesome burdens and cares, she obviously has "the better part."⁵

Understanding sexism, classicism, racism, and colonialism in relation to patriarchy is now a common activist and

²Ibid., 598. De Beauvoir argues that "household activities come close to being technical operations, but they are too rudimentary, too monotonous, to prove to a woman the laws of mechanical causation" (Ibid.). She also asserts that household events are uncontrollable: some things can be cleaned while others resist cleaning, other things break "all by themselves, [and there are] dusts that spring up like plants" (Ibid.).

³Ibid., 599.

⁴Ibid., 719.

⁵Ibid., 720.

scholarly practice; the linkage in 1949 made de Beauvoir's book one of the most controversial of the postwar period.⁶ De Beauvoir's stark, cruel assessment of women, and her bitterly ironic characterization of other underprivileged members of society reflect the marginalization of devalued peoples as well as the mounting anger harbored by man's others that was unleashed in workers' strikes, colonial insurgency, and with seeming less frequency, in French campaigns for women's rights.⁷ Such threats to empowered males--men most visibly embodied in the heroes I have discussed and de Beauvoir acknowledges--occasioned displays of male aggression and mastery on the part of those in authority.⁸ With pointed sarcasm, de Beauvoir maintains

⁶The book was denounced by the right and left alike. It was placed on the Pope's blacklist and dismissed by the French Communist Party. De Beauvoir chronicled her book's reception in her autobiographical Force of Circumstance, noting the venomous reactions The Second Sex "provoked among large numbers of men, who flooded her with obscene letters and insults" (Laubier, The Condition of Women in France: 1945 to the Present, A Documentary Anthology, 17).

⁷Elaine Marks' and Isabelle de Courtivron's chronology of feminism in France notes only one prominent feminist campaign (other than de Beauvoir's) in the period after World War II up to 1962: Dr. Marie-Andrée Lagroua Weill-Hallé's founding of the French Movement for Family Planning, and her battle against the 1920 law which banned the sale of contraceptives in France (Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron, eds., New French Feminisms: An Anthology [New York: Schocken Books, 1981], 23).

⁸With respect to the strikes (and colonial struggles) of 1947 Irwin Wall notes that "Bidault, again the foreign minister, insisted that no concessions be granted the strikers until order was restored, the same policy he followed in Indo-China" (Wall, 67). Attempts to restore domestic order resulted in armed conflict. 1948 strikers

that when confronted with the demands of others, "the munificent capitalists, the generous colonialists, the superb males, stick to their guns"⁹ to defend their freedom. This chapter will examine Picasso's series Women of Algiers in light of de Beauvoir's critique, determining how the series can be situated within both broad and specific struggles by men to assert control in the face of challenges to heroic masculine identity.

From 13 December 1954 to 14 February 1955, Picasso produced more than fifteen paintings and numerous drawings and graphics after Delacroix's two paintings Women of Algiers. In one of the most incisive essays on the structure of Picasso's painting, Leo Steinberg analyzes this series as an example par excellence of Picasso's method of "drawing as if to possess." I entirely support Steinberg's description of these works as the visual condensation of an object's every aspect into a single plane, and agree that this convergence metaphorically embodies the artist's will to possess empirical data and carnal knowledge. This latter thrust is thematized through the phallic visual puns sprinkled across the series: indeed, one harem woman is

literally went up against government forces as they had the year before, with workers "defending their flooding pits in pitched battles against tanks and half-tracks" (Ibid., 86). I will discuss colonial conflicts in this chapter, however, see chapter 1, n. 28 for comments on de Gaulle's relationship to colonialism.

⁹De Beauvoir, The Second Sex, 721.

distorted to read as an erect penis (fig. 54).

I would like to understand this structural dynamic in historical terms. The series followed hard on Picasso's Verve works, and I believe that the Women of Algiers functioned in part as a means for the artist to close down the ambiguity opened up by his derisory treatment of the creator. Picasso directed his energies toward a specific painter, Delacroix, and restored the female model securely to the role of a malleable and subservient object. Picasso's choice of a Romantic painter as an interlocutor for a major series of paintings is significant. Turning away from the realm of instrumental P.C.F. propaganda to the private sphere of high art, Picasso chose to battle with a prime symbol of artistic individuality. Indeed, even Picasso's subject of theme and variation--a project that encourages subjective interpretation--points to his interest in exploring painting as a private arena.

The insular nature of his understaking stands in stark contrast to a very different sort of project with an Algerian theme. In January 1953, Picasso's fellow Communist painters, the Social Realists Boris Taslitzky and Mireille Mialhe exhibited a group of works in the show Algérie '52. Their works revealed the misery of Algeria's native population under colonial rule. Taslitzky and Mialhe employed naturalistic style as a weapon against oppression, rather than as a means of reproducing the glossy and sexy

Orientalism some of their nineteenth-century forebearers manufactured. One year after this show, a month before Picasso began his Women of Algiers, the social unrest in Algeria led to the violence that ultimately triggered the Algerian war. Although Picasso received countless tracts from Algerian and French groups opposed to French colonialism, he did not produce an image directly related to the violence until 1961. Although his Women of Algiers is not specifically linked to events in Algeria, I will argue that his "drawing as if to possess" must be seen within a broad context of mastery and aggression, forces that appear when an established and controlling entity (like colonialist France, like the great artist Picasso) is threatened.

Picasso's Dialogues with Other Great Artists and the Project of Variation as a W/hole

Picasso reworked old master and modernist compositions at various points throughout his career, although the work of his artist predecessors preoccupied him the most in the 1950s and 1960s. Picasso created variations of well-known images as early as 1902-07 (works based on Manet's Olympia and Ingres' Grande Odalisque), and incorporated numerous specific and loose references to pictures by canonical artists in his production of the late 1960s until his death in 1973. Notable variations by Picasso include his 1917-18 The Peasants' Repast after Louis Le Nain; his 1932 works after Grünewald's Isenheim Altarpiece; his 1944 gouaches

based on Nicolas Poussin's The Triumph of Pan; his 1949 lithographs after Lucas Cranach's Bathsheba; and his 1950 paintings Portrait of a Painter after El Greco and Young Ladies on the Banks of the Seine after Gustave Courbet. In her 1991 dissertation on Picasso's variations of works by the old masters, Susan Galassi states that prior to the mid 1950s, Picasso's versions of other artists' images

arose more or less spontaneously--as a joke, as a response to work he came across by accident, as a means of exploring a formal problem or theme which interested him at the moment. They were most often made in passing, and often to refuel his creative energies when he had reached an impasse in other areas of his work.¹⁰

Galassi argues that Picasso's variations of the mid 1950s through the early 1960s represent a more sustained and specific project: a renewal of the artist's creative energies and "a means of bridging past and present at a time in which Picasso was himself becoming increasingly a part of history."¹¹ I will amplify this latter point considerably in my analysis of the artist's series after Delacroix. Certainly the scale of Picasso's series done between 1954-1962 sets them apart from the artist's earlier and later variations: he produced over fifteen painted versions of Women of Algiers along with numerous drawings and graphics; created nearly fifty pictures related to Las Meninas (August

¹⁰Susan Grace Galassi, "'Games of Wit': Picasso's Variations on the Old Masters," (Ph.D. diss., Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1991), 323.

¹¹Ibid., 327.

17-30 December 1957)); and devised over one hundred and eighty versions of Déjeuner sur l'herbe (August 1959-July 1962).¹² These series were among the largest and most complex that Picasso created (especially the Las Meninas and Le déjeuner sur l'herbe works), and thus must have been particularly meaningful for the artist.

Galassi asserts that all of Picasso's variations broadly express the formal logic of Cubism. She maintains that in the artist's variations

the eroding of boundaries that was fundamental to Cubism was extended from the language of representation and concept of style to the notion of the work of art itself as a unique and permanent object, and to the issue of individual authorship.¹³

Galassi mentions Rosalind Krauss' argument that Picasso's later work, including his paraphrases of other artists' pictures, is deeply indebted to structural principles inherent in Cubist collage. Krauss states that Picasso's collage dispenses with the model of painting as transcribed presence. Collage elements do not describe external reality by setting in place a supposed one-to-one correspondence between image and thing represented, but instead operate as a system of signs that always signify more than one thing.

¹²Picasso finally made more than twenty works based on Poussin's and David's paintings The Rape of the Sabines (October 1962-February 1963). I will not analyze this series because of its debt to more than one artist and because of its more modest scale compared to the Déjeuner sur l'herbe. Picasso's Rape of the Sabines is neither as focused nor as obsessive as the preceding series.

¹³Ibid., 37-38.

Analyzing Picasso's 1913 Violin and Fruit (fig. 47), Krauss notes that a strip of newsprint reads as both an opaque, clearly delineated form and as "an analogue for traditional systems for describing light and atmosphere--sfumato, hatching, or pointillism."¹⁴ Krauss relates this structural system of opposition to that devised by Heinrich Wölfflin--his "set of master terms: closed/open, line/color, planarity/recession"¹⁵--and argues that Picasso's post-Cubist multiplicity of style and paraphrases continue collage's work of replacing apparently seamless meaning with multivalency. Krauss declares:

Modernism's goal has always been to objectify the formal constituents of a given medium, making these, beginning with the ground that is the origin of their existence, the objects of vision. Collage problematizes that goal by setting up discourse in place of presence, a discourse founded on a buried origin [the actual ground plane is obscured by elements pasted directly onto it], a discourse founded by absence. And this discourse leads ceaselessly through the maze of the polar alternatives of painting as a system--a system inaugurated through the loss of an origin that can never be objectified, only represented.¹⁶

For Krauss, Picasso's paraphrases participate in this larger "System as Style."¹⁷ She anchors her argument to the artist's variation on Le Nain's The Peasant's Repast (fig.

¹⁴Rosalind Krauss, "Re-Presenting Picasso," Art in America 68 (December 1980): 94.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., 96.

¹⁷Ibid.

48) in which Picasso reproduces the Le Nain picture through a pointillist technique that references his own use of colored patches in 1914-16 Cubism as well as Seurat's, the Nabis', and the Fauves' Neo-Impressionist styles.¹⁸

Picasso represents his or others' contributions to the formal innovations of art history to produce works that yield no singular locus of meaning, but multiple references. Such images break down traditional notions of authorship, originality, and accessibility.

This model of dispossession would seem to contradict Steinberg's "drawing as if to possess" thesis in which Women of Algiers and other post-Cubist works are seen to reconfigure analytic Cubism by reintegrating dispersed planes into one form, thereby expressing the multiple aspects of that form from one vantage point. However, I will show that Krauss' and Steinberg's formal analyses of Picasso's variations are linked and are best understood as informing one another if anchored to historical events. As Krauss observes, Picasso's will toward mastery in Steinberg's model is itself a battle against dispossession, "the failure of vision to encompass the multiplicity of external reality."¹⁹ Picasso's series record both this failure (what Krauss describes as the play of oppositions

¹⁸Ibid., 92. Krauss also maintains that Picasso references Manet "as the 'original' borrower from Le Nain in a work like The Old Musician (1862) among others" (Ibid.).

¹⁹Ibid., 92.

and multiple references that defer immediacy) and Picasso's attempt to master this failure (what Steinberg details as the artist's condensation of empirical and carnal knowledge in a single image). In demonstrating how both opposing conditions can be true, I will maintain that Picasso's relationship to the control of external reality extends beyond formal issues to concerns about his lived experience, specifically, the construction of his self image.

The Genesis of Women of Algiers

In one of the drawings for the Verve series, Picasso specifically evokes the harem (fig. 49). In this drawing, a bulky middle-aged and bearded painter frowns in concentration as he works at his canvas, while three voluptuous models pose on a bed with a fan and Oriental urn as props. The contrast between the painter fully absorbed in his work and the particularly sensuous reclining nude--who twists and lifts her limbs to accentuate her full breasts and buttocks--underscores the Verve series' theme of separation between the artist and the immediacy of the model. The painter's physiognomy and the depiction of a languorous odalisque suggests that Picasso may have had his rival Matisse in mind when he executed the drawing. Certainly Picasso made the link between the harem theme taken up in Women of Algiers and Matisse: not long after he began the series, Matisse died, and Picasso informed Roland

Penrose that the deceased artist had bequeathed his odalisques to Picasso.²⁰ Picasso incorporated another personal reference in the Women of Algiers series: his new lover and subsequent wife Jacqueline Roque serves as a model for one of the harem women (fig. 50). It is likely that Picasso first entertained the possibility of this connection in his Verve series: the next drawing that he completed after that which alluded to Matisse and the odalisque theme contained a head whose dark brow, aquiline nose and long neck resemble those of Roque (fig. 51). Picasso knew Roque as early as autumn 1952 when she came to work in the Ramié ceramic studio with which Picasso was affiliated.²¹ A Picasso drawing of Roque shown barebreasted suggests that the artist and model were well acquainted with one another by 27 January 1954 (the date of this drawing),²² several days after the Verve bust (dated 21 January 1954).

Picasso may have also associated his Women of Algiers

²⁰Roland Penrose, Picasso: His Life and Work, 3d ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 396. Steinberg demonstrates that Picasso thought of Matisse during his work on the Women of Algiers series by noting that in Picasso's fifth version of the theme, one of his nudes is blue, a color that Matisse favored for nudes and a choice that Picasso had previously criticized (Leo Steinberg, "The Algerian Women and Picasso at Large," Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth-Century Art [London: Oxford University Press, 1972], 133-136).

²¹Gilot and Lake, 358.

²²Daix mentions this drawing (owned by Catherine Roque), first exhibited in 1990-91 at the Museo Picasso in Barcelona (Daix, 319).

with Gilot. Ten years earlier, Picasso and Gilot had gone to the Louvre to study several of Picasso's paintings (which the artist was donating to the Musée d'Art Moderne) in relation to works by other artists. Picasso examined several of his paintings from the 1930s and 1940s²³ next to masterworks of his choice, notably Delacroix's 1822-24 The Massacre of Chios, 1926 Death of Sardanapalus, and Women of Algiers.²⁴ Gilot claims that Picasso had often told her of his intention to do a version of the latter painting, and that the artist took her to the Louvre about once a month to analyze the work.²⁵ Gilot suggests that Picasso may have viewed Delacroix with something approaching jealous rivalry, for when she queried Picasso about the Romantic painter, she notes that "his eyes narrowed and he said, 'That bastard. He's really good.'"²⁶

Because Picasso began the Women of Algiers series not long after the Verve series, and because the two Verve drawings discussed above contain subject matter that

²³A "gray-and-white seated figure from 1937-38, the handsome Blue Enamelled Casserole of 1945, The Rocking Chair of 1943, The Muse of 1935, a 1936 still life with a lemon and oranges, another still life, of 1943, with three glasses and a bowl of cherries, a 1944 portrait of Dora Maar in blue, and an earlier, very colorful portrait of her done in 1938" (Gilot and Lake, 202). Picasso donated two other works, his 1926 The Milliner's Workshop and Serenade of 1942, which were too large to move around (Ibid.).

²⁴Ibid., 203.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

informed the works after Delacroix, it is likely that the formal and conceptual concerns of the earlier series impact upon those of the later series. The theme of dispossession at work in the Verve images--the artist's failure to possess his model and muse as well his failure to be a self-possessed, confident creator--is replaced with a vision of the artist in charge of his pictorial vocabulary and relationships to interlocutors, both professional and personal. Picasso does not represent a surrogate for himself in the Women of Algiers series, but does provide viewers with works that leave an almost physically palpable presence of his controlling hand.

The Structure of Possession

In his essay "The Algerian Women and Picasso at Large," Steinberg demonstrates that critics of Cubism who saw a single object's various aspects (understood as simultaneity) in Picasso's analytic Cubist painting were misguided;²⁷

²⁷One of the earliest critics of cubism to declare the art simultaneous was the painter Jean Metzinger. Metzinger had been drawn into a circle of writers and artists associated with the Abbaye de Créteil (in operation from 1906-08), who were preoccupied with the notion of simultaneity. One of the group's members, Jules Romains, published the book of poems La Vie Unanime in 1908, which was the core text of Unanimism. The central idea of this philosophical and literary movement "was that collective sentiment, the most salient feature of contemporary life, could neither be focused in one point of view nor established in any single representative type" (Daniel Robbins, "From Symbolism to Cubism: The Abbaye of Créteil," Art Journal 23, 2 [Winter 1963-64], 115). In the autumn of 1910, Metzinger wrote "Note on Painting" which praises

that in fact, these paintings express the dispersion of an object's aspects.

Within the Cubist style, the ideas of corporeal integrity and aspect-simultaneity are antagonistic; designedly incompatible. The faceted objects that appear in the first Cubist phase (late 1908 to 1910) retain a good deal of density, but they suggest little interest in simultaneous point of view. And by the time that interest develops in Cubism's later phases, objects are drained of mass and the picture is flat.²⁸

Steinberg locates the origin of Picasso's multiple aspect figures in the artist's work of around 1907, when Picasso started to distort facial features and to collapse the intervals between them. However, with the exceptions of the squatting figure in the 1907 Demoiselles d'Avignon, a drawing related to this painting, and the 1908 The Bather, the possibilities of figural simultaneity opened up by Picasso's innovations remained largely unexplored until synthetic Cubism, from which point on, multiple aspect figures increasingly populate Picasso's work.²⁹ Steinberg

Picasso, Georges Braque, Robert Delaunay, and Henri Le Fauconnier for their supposed use of successive and simultaneous view (achieved through mobile perspective), that Metzinger celebrates for allowing an artist to transcribe his intellectual, emotional, and tactile perceptions about objects on the canvas (Jean Metzinger, "Note on Painting," Pan, October-November 1910, 649-651; translated and reprinted in part in Edward F. Fry, Cubism [New York: Oxford University Press, 1966], 59-60).

²⁸Steinberg, "The Algerian Women and Picasso at Large," 155.

²⁹Steinberg, "The Algerian Women and Picasso at Large," 167-168, 173, 194. See also Leo Steinberg, "The Philosophical Brothel," reprinted in October 44 (Spring 1988): 57, n. 44.

shows that from the later 1930s, Picasso began to produce "twin-sighted profiles" in which the artist "bypasses the median" of the conflated frontal and profile views that he produced in the 1920s, thereby making the newer constructions dependent on "the set of a few wayward organs."³⁰ Steinberg argues that in the 1940s, Picasso incorporated a variety of aspects (no longer just front and side views) into a single figure that became increasingly fleshy and solid.³¹ Steinberg illustrates how the artist proceeded to subject a vast array of objects (animals, furniture, still lifes, human figures) to this simultaneous visual embrace. The writer maintains, however, that the Women of Algiers series became Picasso's most complex meditation on multiple aspect figures, for the works explore simultaneity in conjunction "with the problem of space integration."³²

Steinberg's formal analysis of the series is masterful. He carefully documents how from canvas to canvas, Picasso works his way toward figures (notably the sleeper at right) who contort their various, voluptuous body parts toward a frontal position that allows the viewer to visually absorb

³⁰Ibid., 196-197, 199.

³¹Ibid., 205-208.

³²Ibid., 230.

their abundance from one standpoint (figs. 52-63).³³

Steinberg highlights the aggressive sexual impulses that motor Picasso's formal experiments, noting the artist's overt phallic references (in particular, the niche behind the smoker at left), and Picasso's focus on massive breasts and buttocks vigorously thrust toward the spectator's space. The art historian reads these contortions as visual metaphors of both sexual and cognitive possession: Picasso combines carnal knowledge of bodily experience with pictorial information recorded by eyes with all-encompassing vision. Steinberg extends this interpretation to his analysis of the space in the series' final picture (fig. 63), a space which cups the servant and sleeper. For Steinberg, this space is both vaginal and cerebral:

The idea of such immediate knowledge as subject of representation furnishes one impulse for the conflation of aspects in the ... [Women of Algiers]. Servant and Sleeper, objects of a perfect possessiveness, occupy an invaded space, like the inside of a pocket, like a cat's cradle.

But they represent also the opposite--a program as cerebral as any undertaken in twentieth-century art. Their physical simultaneities are evolved through tireless tries and adjustments to make their limited surface convey a maximum of three-dimensional fact; ... information beyond the limitations of physiological sight.³⁴

³³Because Steinberg could not study the canvas dated 13 February 1955--which he labels N in his essay, and reproduces separately on page 154 of "The Algerian Women and Picasso at Large"--he does not bring an analysis of it to bear on his argument. This in no way compromises his argument: the painting can easily be understood in terms of his thesis.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 234.

By demonstrating that the Women of Algiers series is extraordinarily innovative in formal terms, Steinberg rescues Picasso's later work from the superficial and derisory treatment it has received from some critics.³⁵ By showing how inextricably Picasso's eroticism is bound up within his inventive pictorial structure, Steinberg saves the artist's aggressive sexuality from moralizing. Indeed, although he acknowledges that Picasso's vigorously reorganized female nudes may express "an exercise of power over the female,"³⁶ Steinberg encourages us to view the nudes as the artist's most thoughtful and felt expression of human reality rather than as sadistic images.³⁷ I share Steinberg's disinterest in simple moralizing--in suggesting that Picasso's distorted nudes merely express sexual aggressiveness and hostility to women--but I am interested in expanding on the art historian's observations about Picasso's coporealized vision:

His mind looks at the natural world with fixed, focused vision, and, at the same time, with a meta-physiological sight which can roam, orbit, embrace, and

³⁵Ibid., 140.

³⁶Ibid., 226.

³⁷Steinberg states "... Picasso may not think they are ugly at all--not if he can make them real. I suspect that Picasso does not 'distort,' but seeks only to realize. In the last analysis, realization is what they are about" (Ibid.). Steinberg also argues that Picasso's simultaneous women of the 1940s act as the artist's condemnation of a world lost in the violence of war: "the degradation of a cherished perfection [the female form] becomes an index of the general sink" (Ibid.).

return with a harvest of portable aspects.... it is a matter of power, but of a power which, as it resides in the evidence of his dual vision, constantly innovates and renews its claims. The other nature which the king has by grace of succession and the one-man corporation by contract law, the artist must wring from the visual world, win again and again by the means of the images he creates.... To maintain his sense of sovereignty over what he beholds demands the unceasing invention of simultaneities--just as his sense of physical confrontation with the world requires a constant renewal of his fixed-focus vision. He needs his imagery to attest both his manhood and his power to transcend its physical limitations. And he needs the representation of natural forms in ever-new simultaneities for the perpetual reconfirmation of a power which exists only as it expands.³⁸

I have quoted this passage at length because it clearly states that sovereignty is at issue, explains how power is inscribed within Picasso's work, and moreover, because it shows how the artist is invested not only in the cognitive/corporeal embrace of simultaneity, but in the strength of his "fixed-focus" vision. Indeed, Steinberg observes that Picasso's final canvas in the Women of Algiers series combines both types of representation: the smoker is recorded in "iconic frontality" whereas the sleeper is rendered simultaneously³⁹ (fig. 63). In the work that culminates the series, Picasso sharply contrasts his own abilities: his adept handling of the naturalistic human form (the expression of his human vision), and his virtuoso, eroticized manipulation of the female nude (the product of his superhuman vision). As Steinberg argues in the quote

³⁸Ibid., 223.

³⁹Ibid., 234.

above, this combination allows Picasso to affirm both his humanness ("manhood") and "to transcend its physical limitations."

This investment in being human and superhuman is what I find most compelling about the artist's work. Certainly Steinberg shows that Picasso's exploration of simultaneity--with its attendant superhuman impulse--predates the Women of Algiers, but I think that he has demonstrated that the series represents the artist's most sustained and complex meditation on mobile vision up to the point of the series' realization. What prompted Picasso to implode figures and space in 1954-55? And why did he explore corporealized vision via Delacroix? Steinberg suggests that Picasso used Delacroix's two versions of the Women of Algiers as a point of departure because the different construction of the two works harbor the two types of vision that Picasso addressess in the series. The Louvre version of Delacroix's theme opens up the space to the viewer, positioning him or her in direct relation to the harem women. However, in the Montpellier Delacroix, the figures are pushed back onto a stage setting: "the rights of possession or habitual companionship implied by the Louvre picture become a voyeur's privilege"⁴⁰ (figs. 64 and 65). Were such formal considerations and the psychological identifications they invite the only motivations behind Picasso's exploration of

⁴⁰Ibid., 130.

the Women of Algiers?

More Motivation to Possess

As I have suggested in my introduction to this chapter, and as Krauss makes evident in her discussion of Picasso that I have cited, dispossession as a formal and intellectual enterprise structures Picasso's Cubist collage and arguably on a broad level, Picasso's oeuvre as a whole. Picasso's experiments with separate pictorial registers within a single work (collage providing the most overt examples), across a number of related works (such as the Women of Algiers), and even understood as the overall project of post-Cubist production (i.e.: the fact that he never settled into one style), problematize the classical conception of picture-making as a secure and knowable one-to-one relation between the image and its object. Picasso's scrambling of the traditional picture plane (the window onto the world) ruptures the usual model of vision at work in European painting from the Renaissance: vision understood as the medium in representation through which one records, processes, and anchors human experience. Picasso's visual puns (which court multiple vs. fixed meaning), along with his diverse styles and paraphrases of himself and others (which show that pictures are constructed interpretations rather than transparent transcriptions) subvert the notion that art registers and reflects an artist's individual and

direct grasp of the external reality to which we all have ready access. This is the challenge of much modernist art (issued from many different formal and conceptual perspectives), and is precisely why many of Picasso's hardline Communist comrades rejected his non-naturalistic work.

Picasso himself also struggled against his experiments with dispossession. Indeed, I would argue that Steinberg's analysis of Picasso's simultaneity traces how the artist invented a new form of pictorial possessiveness from the very formal components that had enabled him to rupture the traditional model of cognitive visual possession in the first place. Whereas much of Picasso's oeuvre explodes the supposed fixed perspective of optical vision, an equally substantial body of work implodes Picasso's pictorial signs for dispersion into visual metaphors for possession.

The formal dispossession that Picasso investigated in the Verve series (in which Picasso positioned the canvas as a barrier between the artist and his model) pictures a psychic dispossession that Picasso worked hard to overcome in his Women of Algiers. The Verve series focuses on the creative and sexual impotence of the artist, and when he produced the series, Picasso was largely dismissed by younger artists, devalued as a creator by the P.C.F., commodified by burgeoning consumer culture, and rejected by his companion/model. What better way to reassert his

stature as an artist than by stepping outside the claims of contemporary art and cultural politics (away from new avant-garde rebels and P.C.F. ideologues) into the timeless realm of great painting populated by powerful but silent creators (the history of art and its deceased, canonical masters)? What better way to reclaim his stature as a man than by emptying his work of its associations with a failed relationship (Gilot the partner and the study companion at the Louvre) and filling it with references to a secure union (Roque the new lover as model for a harem woman)? It seems to me that it must have been restorative and satisfying to produce extraordinarily physical visual metaphors for both creative and sexual powers.

Although she does not address the directly personal impetus that informed Picasso's dialogue with Delacroix, Catherine Francblin is very clear about the professional motivation. She maintains:

In order to leave the impasse to which his relations with the P.C.F. led, Picasso is driven to make a return to former masters and this return is equally a return to his former way of painting.... isn't it a sort of "reappropriation" of the memory of painting? Against the ideology of the tabla rasa, against amnesia elevated to the rank of supreme moral quality, Picasso remembers what he loves. From the ... [Women of Algiers] cycle, references to cultural heritage multiply more explicitly.⁴¹

⁴¹"Pour sortir de l'impasse où l'ont fourvoyé ses rapports avec le P.C.F., Picasso est conduit à faire retour aux maîtres anciens et ce retour est également un retour à son ancienne façon de peindre.... n'est-elle pas une sorte de 'réappropriation' de la mémoire de la peinture? Contre l'idéologie de la table rase, contre l'amnésie élevée au

For Francblin, Delacroix is part of the cultural patrimony condemned by the P.C.F. (I will demonstrate that this was not the case); by embracing the sensuality of Delacroix's Romanticism and making its eroticism overt, Picasso celebrates the passion of much great art and rejects the pedantry of most Social Realism. Francblin extends this argument by making a universalized claim for the effects of rebellious sex: "the break with Social Realism plays out where ruptures within families always play out: at the brothel."⁴² She further maintains that

The brothel, with respect to the heralded society of happiness, represents the space of its negativity.... Formerly, the fact that Picasso had transformed the private place (closed) of the harem into a public place registers, with a very fine sensibility, one of the large mutations of this century. As each person knows, we live in a world more and more socialized, socializing, witness Socialist, and sexuality itself is no longer henceforth a secret adventure. I wonder after all if abstraction born from the distortion of the figure is not, itself also, a consequence of the process of "publicizing." Abstraction is perhaps a means of resisting global socialization, a sort of denial inflicted on gregarious language. In any case, in the explosion of the ... [Women of Algiers], under the brush of Picasso, something private, something of the subject was saved.⁴³

rang de qualité morale suprême, Picasso se souvient de ce qu'il aime. A partir du cycle des Femmes d'Alger, les références à l'héritage culturel se multiplient plus explicitement" (Catherine Francblin, "Le retour au bordel," Art Press 50 [July-August 1981]: 15).

⁴²"la rupture avec le réalisme socialisme se consomme là où se consomment toujours les ruptures de famille: au bordel" (Ibid.).

⁴³"Le bordel, en regard de la société de bonheur annoncée, représente l'espace de sa négativité.... Par ailleurs, le fait que Picasso ait transformé le lieu privé (fermé) du harem

This argument echoes the radical claims often made for avant-garde artists from Romanticism on: that by asserting the private and the individual, a creator indicts bureaucratic political and economic regimes and the increasingly dehumanized effects of such institutions' power. I agree with Franchlin that Picasso sought to "save" his subjectivity from its devaluation by the P.C.F. and in this light suggest that Delacroix's status as the Romantic individualist par excellence made his painting particularly attractive to Picasso. However, I would like to push Franchlin's point about privatization further than she does. Picasso's Women of Algiers series was shown together only once: it was exhibited in Paris, Munich, Hamburg, and Cologne in the summer of 1955, and was then quickly dispersed into largely private collections." The works certainly did not attain the same visibility that the artist's work for the P.C.F. did. The private--in terms of content, form, and reception--seems to structure this series

en un lieu public enregistré avec une sensibilité très fine une des grandes mutations de ce siècle. Comme chacun sait, nous vivons dans un monde de plus en plus socialisé, socialisant, voire socialiste, et la sexualité elle-même n'est plus désormais une aventure secrète. Je me demande après tout si l'abstraction née de la distortion de la figure n'est pas, elle aussi, une conséquence de ce processus de "publication." L'abstraction est peut-être une manière de résister à la socialisation globale, une sorte de démenti infligé au langage grégaire. En tous cas, dans l'éclatement des Femmes d'Alger, sous le pinceau de Picasso, quelque chose de privé, quelque chose de l'ordre sujet a été sauvé" (Ibid.).

"Klaus Gallwitz, Picasso: The Heroic Years (New York: Abbeville Press, 1985), 136.

rather profoundly. I will return to this important point after examining how the works acknowledge (but do not embrace) important external realities.

Algeria

In her essay on Picasso's relationships to other great artists, Marie-Laure Bernadac argues that Picasso was drawn to Delacroix's Women of Algiers for many reasons: the physical resemblance between Roque and the harem women, the paintings' "voluptuous" Orientalism, the connection between such Orientalism and the recently deceased Matisse, and the beginning of the Algerian insurrection.⁴⁵ In her short discussion of the series, Bernadac focuses on the Women of Algiers' debt to Matisse, seeing the works as an homage to this artist both in terms of the odalisque theme and the vibrant color. Bernadac's very suggestive claim--that the series is motivated in part by events in Algeria--remains unexplored.

This is not surprising, for there is no direct evidence that links the Women of Algiers to mounting tensions in Algeria. Like most people in France, Picasso probably saw the headlines announcing the 1 November 1954 insurrection in

⁴⁵Marie-Laure Bernadac, "Picasso et les peintres du passé," in Georges Boudaille, Picasso (Paris: Nouvelles Éditions françaises, 1985), 130.

Algeria splashed across newspapers such as L'Aurore,⁴⁶ France-Soir, and Le Monde. On that day, several uprisings in various parts of Algeria erupted.⁴⁷ The outbreaks were directed inside Algeria by Larbi Ben M'Hidi, Didouche Mourad, Rabah Bitat, Krim Belkacem, Mohammed Boudiaf, and Mostefa Ben Boulaïd⁴⁸ of the Front de Libération National (F.L.N.), an organization founded the preceding month. Each of these men were former members of the Mouvement pour le Triomphe des Libertés Démocratiques (M.L.T.D.), a group established in 1946 that founded a paramilitary organization called l'Organisation Spéciale (O.S.) the following year. The O.S. was dismantled by the French police in 1950 after the group's 1949 attack in Oran. In early 1954, members of the M.T.L.D. who were convinced that armed insurrection was the only way to achieve democracy in Algeria, formed the

⁴⁶A right-wing publication that "tended to attribute to the 'North Africans' (often quite arbitrarily) any burglaries, robberies and other crimes committed in the Paris area..." (Werth, 731).

⁴⁷Riots took place in 1945 in Setif and Constantine and were ruthlessly put down by French police. They occurred the same day that the French were celebrating liberation in France, and were touched off when Muslims called for Algerian independence. A policeman killed a demonstrator, and twenty-one French citizens were murdered (Paul Clay Sorum, Intellectuals and Decolonization in France [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977], 3).

⁴⁸Principals in Cairo were Aït Ahmed, Ahmed Ben Bella, Mohamed Khider and M. Boudiaf (See Benjamin Stora, "Chronologie," in Laurent Gervereau, Jean-Pierre Rioux, and Benjamin Stora, eds., La France en guerre d'Algérie, Novembre 1954 - Juillet 1962 [Paris: Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, 1992], 313).

Comité Révolutionnaire pour l'Unité et l'Action (C.R.U.A.).

At the end of June that year, Mohammed Boudaif called a meeting of twenty-two former O.S. members to prepare for insurrection. The leaders of the November 1 uprisings emerged from this group.⁴⁹

Many French were blind to the anger of colonials in Algeria. The native populations and their French colonizers by in large lived separate lives divided by language, culture, education, and class.⁵⁰ Algerian land in the hands of the French was used to farm crops often not suited to the terrain, and in the case of wine, to produce products that Muslims could not use. After the 1954 insurrection, a commission of French parliament members wrote a report that analyzed the economic basis of unrest:

We do not wish to underrate the great things done by France in Algeria; but we must admit that Europeans have benefited from these improvements far more than the natives.... The natives are like so many shadows moving against the background of European prosperity and artificial security. No man with any feeling for his fellow men can fail to be struck by the appalling poverty still existing in numerous regions of Algeria.⁵¹

With the land and its crops owned by the French and worked

⁴⁹The F.L.N. killed nine. See Charles-Robert Ageron, "Aux Origines de la Toussaint 1954," in *Ibid.*, 26-28.

⁵⁰See *Ibid.*, 20-26 for an in-depth discussion of these dividing factors.

⁵¹June 1955 Parliamentary Commission report by Pineau, Lejeune (Socialist), Jean-Moreau (right-wing), Jacquet (Gaullist), and de Chevigné ("colonialist" M.R.P.) published 1 July 1955 and quoted by Werth, 732.

by native Algerians for menial remuneration, the latter were denied any meaningful relationship to their country. Cultural, religious, and educational disempowerment followed on economic marginalization.

If Picasso read a letter and pamphlet that he had received one year earlier, he may have been better informed than many people in France about injustices in Algeria. The 14 November 1953 letter, written on behalf of the Parti Communiste Algérien (P.C.A.), requested that Picasso protest the use of the French penal code's article 80 to jail several Algerian Communist activists who promoted Algerian independence and Arab solidarity. This article was invoked to uphold the widely held belief that Algeria and its inhabitants were French, and that any separatist activities were therefore illegal. Indeed, the article was used to repudiate Algerian nationalists' claim that Algeria had been a nation before the French colonized it. In the pamphlet enclosed with the letter to Picasso, Bachir Hadj Ali--an activist sentenced to a year in prison and fined 240,000 francs for writing an article in favor of Algerian independence in Liberté--argues that policies and practices in Algeria deny Algerians their ethnic identity and basic human rights. He cites brutal injustices:

We desire the end of the colonial regime because it signifies the suffocation of liberties. The number of Liberté that validates for us these pursuits was seized. No notification was made to the journal's administration on the subject of this arbitrary measure and this, despite steps taken. The suffocation of

liberties is illustrated by the imprisonments of Algerian patriots, by the tortures that the Aix Court of Appeals expressly condemned, by the violation of progressive orders of the Statute of Algeria that allows the organization of the Arab language...⁵²

Picasso did not send the pre-printed protest form at the back of the pamphlet. Indeed, he may have never read the pamphlet or the letter, for both documents represent just one of countless cries for help that the artist received. However, segments of the French press followed events in Algeria, and sometimes, the effects of colonial repression were reported. Shortly after the November insurrection, François Mauriac wrote in his "Bloc-Note" for L'Express "It is necessary to stop at any cost the police who torture."⁵³ Several weeks later, L'Observateur, L'Express, and the

⁵²"Nous voulons la fin du régime colonial parce qu'il signifie l'étouffement des libertés. Ainsi le numéro de Liberté qui nous vaut ces poursuites a été saisi. Aucune notification n'a été faite à l'Administration du journal au sujet de cette mesure arbitraire et ce, malgré les démarches effectuées. L'étouffement des libertés est illustrés par les emprisonnements de patriotes algériens, par les tortures que la Cour d'Appel d'Aix a condamnés expressement, par la violation des dispositions progressistes du Statut de l'Algérie qui prévoient l'organisation de la langue arabe..." (Bachir Hadj Ali, "Proces du 13 Octobre 1953: Intervention de Bachir Hadj Ali," in Parti Communiste Algérien, L'Article 80 contre la personnalité algérienne et les traditions anti-colonialistes du peuple français [Alger, Algeria: Imprimerie Koechlin, 1953], 9). This tract was accompanied by a 14 November 1953 letter from the Parti Communiste Algérien in Alger. Both are in the Picasso Archives, Associations politiques étrangers material, Algérie file, Musée Picasso, Paris.

⁵³"Coûte que coûte, il faut empêcher la police de torturer" (François Mauriac, Bloc-notes (1952-1957) [Paris: Flammarion, 1958], 133, cited by Jean-Pierre Rioux, "La Torture," in Gervereau, Rioux, and Stora, eds., La France en guerre d'Algerie, 92).

Communist press also cited incidents of "cruelty inflicted upon suspects and detained Muslims."⁵⁴ Communist papers broadcast the P.C.F.'s cautious call for democracy in Algeria, with coverage of the hostilities that Picasso may have followed in party publications most likely reflecting the P.C.F.'s moderate stance. The party did not support the claims of revolutionary Algerians that pre-French Algeria was a nation, and was sympathetic to the fact that many French settlers in Algeria were members of the working class "as much victimized by the colonial interests as the Muslim population."⁵⁵ The P.C.F. believed that

France and Algeria were bound by indissoluble ties, but the links needed to be transformed: the colonialist relationship must become a freely negotiated one based on reciprocal equality. While condemning French repression the P.C.F. also repudiated 'individual acts [of terrorism]' by rebel forces, which were calculated to play into the hands of the most reactionary pro-colonial elements in the metropole. In subsequent years the P.C.F. did not deviate from this line in any substantial way. It adapted its call for negotiation to the reality of domination of the rebel forces by the Algerian National Liberation Front, but the issue of terrorism estranged the party from the nationalist leadership.⁵⁶

Although its political manoeuvres were careful, the P.C.F. did decry the sufferings of indigenous Algerians. Boris Taslitzky and Mireille Mialhe's January 1953 exhibition Algérie '52 recorded the racism and destitution

⁵⁴Rioux, Ibid.

⁵⁵Wall, 188.

⁵⁶Ibid., 189.

that scarred the lives of many in Algeria. As Social Realist works, the artists' pictures captured native peoples' agony in accessible detail. The provocative subject matter was made explicit with specific titles such as Mialhe's sketches 88% des enfants sont sans écoles (88% of Children are without Schools), C'est le colon qui vend le pain (It is the Colonist who Sells Pains), and Taslitzky's drawing Les femmes arrêtent un train dans lequel se trouve des prisonniers politiques (Women Stop a Train in which Political Prisoners are Found). Perhaps the most incendiary work "was Taslitzky's Femmes d'Oran [Women of Oran], painted in panorama format ... in which the women actually lift their veils to attack the armed policemen attempting to disband striking dockers."⁵⁷ Indeed the works' overt critique of colonialism so angered French authorities that "the police removed the pole supporting the exhibition poster."⁵⁸

Jean-Pierre's review of the exhibition for Les Lettres françaises stresses the manner in which the artists' sympathetic perspective and naturalistic style makes the pain of Algerians very real to viewers. Like the pictures

⁵⁷Sarah Wilson, "Art and Politics of the Left in France, ca. 1935-1955," 374.

⁵⁸Ibid. Wilson also notes the the Communist publishing house Éditions Cercle d'Art issued two publications: a folder of color plates and a work that included drawings and Jacques Dubois' poem "Afrique du Nord" which contained the line "'Assez de sang, assez de sang, INDÉPENDANCE!'" (Ibid.).

themselves, the reviewer invites the spectator/reader to empathize with the plight of colonials, although Jean-Pierre encourages his audience to relate this plight to the hardships of workers.

But Mireille Mialhe and Boris Taslitzky are not content to draw up a painting faithful to the wrongdoings of a century of colonialization, to deliver a terrible and persuasive indictment. Their information goes further. They equally show a people aware of its rights, men and women for whom combat merges with that of workers in our country.⁵⁹

In specifying how the artists' message is conveyed effectively through style, the critic makes an interesting comparison: he relates the work of Mialhe to Delacroix. Jean-Pierre first notes that Mialhe's Jeunes Travailleurs agricoles (Young Agricultural Workers) (a painting that shows Arab women working in a field supervised by a "pied-noir" [a French Algerian]) was rejected by the jurors of the previous Salon d'Automne. After berating these jurors for their "servility" and "political hatred," Jean-Pierre declares:

Therefore, who will dare deny that this painting does not authentically renew the tradition of Delacroix? The color, the rhythms, the composition multiply the power of expressed feeling. One will permit me the

⁵⁹"Mais Mireille Mialhe comme Boris Taslitzky ne se contentent [sic] pas de dresser un tableau fidèle des méfaits d'un siècle de colonisation, de prononcer un terrible et persuasif réquisitoire. Leur information va plus loin. Ils montrent également un peuple qui a pris conscience de ses droits, des hommes et des femmes dont le combat se confond avec celui des travailleurs de chez nous" (Jean-Pierre, "Un Succès du Nouveau Réalisme: La bouleversante exposition de Mireille Mialhe et Boris Taslitzky," Les Lettres françaises, 8-15 January 1953, 7).

expression: everyone receives "a blow to the stomach."⁶⁰

To invoke Delacroix in the context of Social Realism seems rather extraordinary, for Massacre at Chios is one of Delacroix's few overt references to political injustice. Indeed, Mialhe and Taslitzky have discarded Delacroix's favored Romantic Orientalism and erected in its place unflinching transcriptions of colonialist violations.⁶¹ However, Jean-Pierre's awkward attempt to confer a "master's" status onto Mialhe is understandable, for Social Realist painting was belittled by established modernists and avant-garde artists. I cannot claim that Picasso was aware of this superficial parallel drawn between Delacroix and a Social Realist fellow Communist, but I will argue that the party's call to update the nation's cultural patrimony informed Picasso's foray into the Women of Algiers. In exploring this connection, I will contrast Mialhe and Taslitzky's expressly public, political project, with Picasso's private, personal undertaking.

Aragon and Delacroix: The "Private" Hero

In chapter 2, I noted that when Aragon and Picasso were

⁶⁰"Qui donc osera nier que cette peinture ne renoue pas authentiquement avec la tradition de Delacroix? La couleur, les rythmes, la composition multiplient la puissance du sentiment exprimé. On me permettra le mot: chacun reçoit "un coup à l'estomac." (Ibid.).

⁶¹Wilson, 342.

rehabilitated after the Stalin portrait affair, Aragon was able to loosen up party dictates for art. Social Realism was no longer the only style accepted by the P.C.F., although the party did not immediately welcome radically-distorted or non-objective art. Indeed, Aragon encouraged artists to link their work to past great French art.⁶² One year after the Algérie '52 exhibition and a few months before his revision of P.C.F. art policy, Aragon published the essay "Géricault et Delacroix, ou le réel et l'imaginaire" ("Géricault and Delacroix, or the Real and the Imaginary") in Les Lettres françaises, an essay which evaluates the contributions of the two great French painters. In this piece, Aragon portrays Géricault as a true realist: a political man sensitive to wrongs committed during the Empire, and devoted to depicting the trials of real people rather than timeless ideals embodied in heroic characters such as those painted by David.⁶³ Aragon describes Delacroix as an artist who embraced both the real and the imagination, and maintains that this contradiction expressed the contradictions of Delacroix's time. Aragon states that Delacroix's love of the imagination won out over his interest in the real, that in fact, despite his fascination with Géricault, Delacroix "will reproach his

⁶²See chapter 2, 32, n. 55.

⁶³Louis Aragon, "Géricault et Delacroix, ou le réel et l'imaginaire," Les Lettres françaises, 21-28 January 1954, 1, 10.

master for his taste for detail, the lack of unity in his canvasses that he ascribed to this taste. It is the typical Romantic reproach to the Realist."⁶⁴ Aragon charts Delacroix's contradictory exploration of the real, citing as examples the artist's studies of nature and the model, his interest in photography, and his time-specific works the Massacre at Chios and the 1831 The Barricade. Aragon is careful to remind his readers, however, that Delacroix was no political revolutionary and that he spoke out adamantly against realism, detesting works such as Courbet's Bathers of the 1853 salon. Aragon suggests that Delacroix abandoned his own encounters with realism for historical and political reasons:

In 1854, there was no longer anyone to paint, neither Napoleon III, neither Morny, nor their enemies: society, for a moment in equilibrium, was no longer that of the bourgeoisie forty years earlier, which even before having received a foreign king, had through the fault of the emperor and his marshals, his cursed heroes, for art that of Balzac, Charlet, or Géricault. It could no more support the image of its masters than that of the anonymous of the barricades. Because after the June days [the worker uprisings of 1948], during which began the great fear of workers' insurrections, one could no longer play with fire. It required, yes, imaginary heroes.⁶⁵

⁶⁴"reprochera à son maître le goût de détail, le manque d'unité dans ses toiles qu'il met au compte de ce goût. C'est là le reproche typique du romantique au réaliste" (Ibid., 10).

⁶⁵"En 1854, il n'y avait plus personne à peindre, ni Napoleon III, ni Morny, ni leurs ennemis: la société, pour un instant en équilibre, n'était plus celle de la bourgeoisie quarante ans plus tôt, qui, même avant reçu un roi de l'étranger, avait, à défaut de l'Empereur et de ses maréchaux, ses héros maudits, pour l'art de Balzac, de Charlet, ou de Géricault. Elle ne pouvait pas plus

Aragon says that France at mid-century did not favor realist work (like The Barricade); that one could no longer celebrate the downtrodden because of the very real threat that the working man posed. Aragon argues that Delacroix thus looked for and found safe, imaginary heroes, such as the colorful figures that populated the artist's Orientalist paintings. Acknowledging Delacroix's apoliticism, Aragon nevertheless concludes his essay with a plea possibly directed toward diehard Social Realists:

Without doubt, if we put ourselves into the artist's skin we would feel there perfectly independent of politics, that which one also calls history. I know that. But I could not recommend too much to my contemporaries to study Delacroix, to try to read him in the light of these thirty plus years that made of the young boy with the bent back on the Raft of the Medusa [Delacroix] the painful point of all the contradictions of art, the plaything of the most terrible winds, and one of the greatest French painters.⁶⁶

Although Aragon elaborates no further, one can infer that

supporter l'image de ses maîtres que celle des anonymes des barricades. Car, après les Journées de Juin, où avait commencé la grande peur des insurrections ouvrières, on ne pouvait plus jouer avec le feu. Il fallait, oui, des héros imaginaires (Ibid., 10).

⁶⁶"Sans doute, et que si nous nous mettions dans la peau de l'artiste nous nous y sentirions parfaitement indépendants de la politique, qu'on appelle aussi l'histoire. Je sais cela. Mais je ne pourrais trop recommander à mes contemporains d'étudier Delacroix, de chercher à le lire à la lumière de ces trente et quelques années qui firent du petit garçon au dos courbé sur le Radeau de la Méduse [Raft of the Medusa] le point sensible de toutes les contradictions de l'art, le jouet des plus terribles vents et l'un des plus grands peintres français" (Ibid.). Delacroix served as an actual model for Géricault's Raft of the Medusa.

for the writer, Delacroix becomes the hero (he is "one of the greatest French painters") of the private sphere. Aragon suggests that Delacroix turned toward the drama and wonder of the imagination because there were no living heroes on the historical stage with whom the painter could identify. Although Aragon does not specify clearly in this article exactly what it is that his contemporaries should study in the work of Delacroix, he implies that it is the artist's break from the "real" both in terms of form and content. Aragon acknowledges that great painters do not have to ally themselves directly with radical politics's interventions in concrete experience, and suggests that artists' importance stems instead from how their work broadly expresses the complexities of their times. Aragon also seems to champion (very obliquely) the artist's inner vision and how it can fundamentally transform the manner in which the world is pictured. Indeed, the writer argues for a kind of mechanistic, dialectical model of artistic creation in which artists who work in a realist style are of necessity followed by those who court the imagination:

"Delacroix follows Géricault, like Manet will follow Courbet. They respectively have striking similarities and profound differences."⁶⁷ Aragon's essay is a measured endorsement for non-realist art and the private claims of

⁶⁷"Delacroix suit Géricault, comme Manet suivra Courbet. Ils ont respectivement ces ressemblances frappantes, et ces dissemblances profondes" (Ibid.).

image making. Picasso knew Aragon's thoughts on Delacroix and realism and seemingly pushed Aragon's apology for Delacroix to the furthest extreme, in part to validate the kind of heroic individualism that the P.C.F. had attacked during its overt embrace of Social Realism.⁶⁸ Picasso subverted Mialhe and Taslitzky's own subverted and politicized Romantic Orientalism, restoring Delacroix's genre to an absolute expression of the private imagination.

Links Between the Private and the Political in Postwar France

In her article "Starting Afresh: Hygiene and Modernization in Postwar France," Kristin Ross uncovers a fascinating relationship between the turn toward privatization in 1950s France and the Algerian war. She investigates this phenomenon through literary and visual representations of cleanliness, and how such images offset the French people's fear of and battle against "pollution" by Algerian natives. Her reading is immensely powerful because it demonstrates how the will to sanitize fostered social repression against France's female population via consumer culture, and enabled extreme physical violence against Algerian colonials through systemized torture. Ross begins her essay by showing how frequently metaphors for

⁶⁸After Gilot left Picasso, the artist broke off his friendly relations with Aragon. Picasso felt that Aragon and Triolet had sided with Gilot, which infuriated him. He would not see Aragon until the summer of 1972 (Daix, 339).

cleanliness appear in postwar French letters and advertisements. Both reference or promote burgeoning industry's countless hygienic products. The woman and the home are the primary targets for this obsession with cleanliness: a commodified sparkle glimmers on the female body and within the private sector of the modern home chock full of new appliances and cleaning agents. Ross is careful to document the price for which this dazzling shine is purchased. She notes that to sanitize

is less a moral activity than one that involves making something absolutely (and eternally) new: the object outside history, untouched by time--the object and one's relation to it unchanging, as in a functionalist equilibrium, endlessly reproducing itself. [...] the will to cleanliness ... [can be linked to] a retreat inside a controlled, rationally created environment superior to one engendered historically. This movement of retreat, or repliement (folding back inward)--the dominant social movement of the period--was theorized at the time by [Henri] Lefebvre and Cornelius Castoriadis under the name of "privatization." Privatization is certainly nothing new; its historical particularly or palpability in the late 1950s and early 1960s can only be seen as the result of an acceleration in the process by which various spheres of life become progressively separated from one another ... It emerges when a society's most important characteristic becomes its success in destroying the political socialization of individuals, such that one experiences public or even social matters not only as hostile or foreign but also as out of one's grasp...⁶⁹

Ross demonstrates that the social/political experience that seems particularly beyond the grasp of the French is their changing relationship to Algeria. From 1954, the colony

⁶⁹Kristin Ross, "Starting Afresh: Hygiene and Modernization in Postwar France," October 67 (Winter 1994): 45.

that many French perceived as an integral part of their identity became a place against which they seemed to have fewer and fewer claims. Formerly the embodiment of racial, cultural, and economic otherness that in its "backwardness" secured a French sense of superiority, Algeria was assuming control of itself as a sovereign power. The Algerian war radically destabilized French authority and might. This challenge to what de Gaulle understood as France's grandeur--a construction that de Beauvoir would certainly characterize as masculine--occasioned a compensatory reassertion of mastery within another sphere: the feminine domain. As Ross argues:

A chain of equivalences is at work here; the prevailing logic runs something like this: if the woman is clean, the family is clean, the nation is clean. If the French woman is dirty, then France is dirty and backward. But France can't be dirty and backward, because that is the role played by the colonies. But there are no more colonies. If Algeria is becoming an independent nation, then France must become a modern nation: some distinction between the two must still prevail.⁷⁰

Although I do not want to link Picasso's form of privatization with cleansing (the overt eroticization of his Women of Algiers as well as his less than fastidious application of paint in the series can hardly be viewed as "pure"), I do want to view it in terms of the turning in away from the social and the political that Ross describes. In my analysis of Picasso's Verve series and Stalin

⁷⁰Ibid., 27.

portrait, I have shown how Picasso was devalued by fellow Communists, abandoned by his companion, dismissed by many contemporary artists and critics, and celebrated superficially by the popular press. With the death of his final great artist rival Matisse, Picasso must have felt particularly alone and outside the control of much of his social and political experience. Rather than endlessly cleaning a possession to make it always new and eternal, Picasso turned to the timeless realm of great art to repeatedly make new and eternal his own self-possession: his image of himself as a brilliant creator. For Picasso, interior experience was not so much the home (although it was in part, for he rarely ventured outside his house/studios in southern France) as art lived as a private world of imagination. This private world provided a sanctuary from public art which at the time was largely a forum to debate the political. I find it compelling that like the social privatization examined by Ross, the privatization that Picasso experienced also expressed itself through the body of the woman. Ross charts a shift in French identity, a nexus of national interests that struggled to control the female body (and its extension into the domestic sphere) to compensate for France's inability to control Algeria. The pictorial metaphors for visual and sexual mastery in Picasso's Women of Algiers express a will to control the female body (and its extension into the

erotic sphere of the harem and the often sublimated sphere of the studio) that compensates for the artist's lack of control over his identity. Because Picasso identified sexual with artistic prowess and because both had been seriously challenged, it is not surprising that the artist chose to reinscribe his own mastery through an aggressive sexual and cognitive reconfiguration of the female body. It is also logical that he would try to best an acknowledged master painter and understandable that that interlocutor would be Delacroix since Picasso wished to validate the inner world of the imagination. However, because the struggle for Algeria was becoming exceedingly public and political, I find it particularly jarring that Picasso should express his own privatization through an apolitical, eroticized investigation of an Algerian theme. It suggests how easily the actual experience of the privileged male's others (the woman, those racially different) can be ignored and/or (literally in this case), romanticized, a point made forcefully in the quotes from de Beauvoir's The Second Sex that began this chapter. Picasso need not have concerned himself with the ways in which his chosen theme may have resonated on the political stage, for he had stepped off of it to produce his Women of Algiers series. Securely separated from the realm of current events by the veil of traditional Orientalist painting, the series nevertheless partakes of the logic of Orientalism, which as Edward Said

argues, is profoundly historical.

[Orientalism] is, rather than expresses, a certain will or intention to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world; it is, above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political (as with a colonial or imperial establishment), power intellectual (as with reigning sciences ...), power cultural (as with orthodoxies and canons of taste, texts, values), power moral (as with ideas about what "we" do and what "they" cannot do or understand as "we" do).⁷¹

Picasso's series embodies such "an uneven exchange with various kinds of power" for its reinscription of mastery does not itself reflect "a direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw," but expresses a private will to power shaped by the cultural values embedded within the tradition of Orientalist painting. These cultural values--the linked devaluation of women and racial others that de Beauvoir identifies in The Second Sex--permitted nineteenth century artists such as Delacroix to view the Near East as "a project of the imagination, a fantasy space or screen onto which strong desires--erotic, sadistic, or both--could be projected with impunity."⁷² Although the erotic and sadistic fantasy that structures

⁷¹Edward Said, Orientalism (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1979), 12. Linda Nochlin has explored such negotiations of power in nineteenth-century Orientalist painting in "The Imaginary Orient" (1983), in The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1989), 33-59.

⁷²Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient," 41.

Picasso's Women of Algiers displaces a will to control into the realm of art, it manifests compensation for power lost in the artist's sexual and professional experience. A horrific compensatory sadism held sway in the lived Orientalism of the time, when "confronted with the breakdown of colonial society and the spread of the F.L.N. throughout Algeria, part of the French army resorted to torture to maintain its domination."⁷³

Beyond the Veil

Approximately mid way through his series of paintings for Women of Algiers, Picasso worked on several etchings of the theme. I find his etching dated 15 January 1955 (fig. 66) especially interesting because of the veil or screen incorporated into the composition. This screen, a fine vertical mesh that runs from the right hand top portion of the image to just below the bottom of the recumbant figure, only thinly veils this woman's legs, genitalia, and buttocks. The screen seems hardly intentional: it may have begun as a patch of cross-hatching that gradually encroached upon the composition, or it may have initially described a

⁷³Martin Evans, "The French Army and The Algerian War: Crisis of Identity," in War and Society in Twentieth-Century France, ed. Michael Scriven and Peter Wagstaff (New York: Berg Publishers Limited, 1991), 153. He also maintains "the identity of the colonial soldier was based upon the idea of a superior, coherent white masculinity. It was an identity that was arrived at through the relegation of woman and colonized peoples to objects..." (Ibid.).

section of patterned wall or floor that spread across a quarter of the picture surface. That it took on almost a life of its own, providing Picasso with an opportunity for playful or absent-minded design, is suggested by the X's and dark dots that the artist randomly inscribed within the small boxes that form the screen mesh. Several of these dots are clustered neatly on each cheek of the harem woman's buttocks, with a few more placed near her vagina. Although more dots travel like ants up the woman's legs, the viewer's eyes are pulled back to the model's sexual center, for a jagged, pointy tray is situated directly below the woman's bottom, seemily suggesting that this portion of the body is on offer. This screen suggests a conflicted will that on the one hand, seems focused on the surface of the image, and on the other hand, that appears intent to perforate the surface veil to penetrate the woman below. This contradiction certainly expresses Picasso's lifelong preoccupation with the picture plane's capacity to register both flatness and depth, but it also evokes a kind of psychological tension: a veiled embodiment of that which is inaccessible but deeply desired. Picasso's subsequent series of paintings after another acknowledged masterwork seemingly abandons any reflection on frustrated sexual will (although I will show that Picasso's Las Meninas does harbor a sexual dimension), advancing instead other powerful visual metaphors for possession. However, Picasso's later Déjeuner

sur l'herbe series does revisit sexualized possession, this time with a vehemence that tears away any veiled reference to thwarted penetration.

CHAPTER 5

PICASSO'S LAS MENINAS AND DÉJEUNER SUR L'HERBE:
WHEN THE WILL TOWARD POSSESSION SIGNALS DISPOSSESSION

A large-scale photographic spread labelled "Maîtres d'hier, modèles d'aujourd'hui" ("Yesterday's Masters, Today's Models"), graces the pages of the 23 May 1953 edition of Samedi-Soir. It contains six photomontages arranged in rows of three stacked upon one another to form a cube (fig. 67). Each montage consists of a picture of a famous French person's face grafted onto the bust or body of a well-known painted figure, and a pithy, humorous caption identifies each collision between past and present greatness. For example, a rather prissy de Gaulle three-quarters profile protrudes from the bust of a woman by Holbein, Cocteau's head rests on the shoulders of Watteau's Gilles, and Edith Piaf's face peers out from a medieval Virgin of the "German School." Perhaps the funniest of the lot depicts Picasso (it combines a gender switch with an abrupt shift in scale): the artist's head is joined to the body of Velázquez's Infanta, and the underlying text reads: "Aragon, méfie-toi de la petite infante de Mouscou!" ("Aragon, mistrust Moscow's small child!") (fig. 68). Following closely on the Stalin portrait affair, the parody acknowledges Picasso's contradictory position as P.C.F.

status symbol and troublemaker: he is Moscow's unruly, untrustworthy child. By infantilizing Picasso, the humorist suggests that the artist is subordinate and immature; by feminizing him, the creator of this image implies that the artist is weak and possibly emotional (note the artist's grimace). These coded allusions are amusing because they undermine Picasso's popular image as a powerful, secure, masculine star. Despite this détournement, the photomontage also underscores Picasso's star status: the artist shares the spread with other popular icons such as de Gaulle and Piaf, whose mutually reinforcing statures are further highlighted by their elision with art masterworks.

Although I found this edition of Samedi-Soir in Picasso's archive, I do not want to claim that the picture of Picasso as Velázquez's Infanta directly informed Picasso's 1957 series after Las Meninas. The series did, however, respond to a dynamic harbored within the photomontage. The picture mocks Picasso's standing within the party, his power as an artist, and as a man. When Picasso does battle with Velázquez's Las Meninas, he inserts himself into the center of Velázquez's world in order to restore the dignity and self-possession that the photomontage suggests Picasso had lost.

I have already argued that Picasso struggled to recapture a sense of mastery within the private sphere of art rather than on the public stages of media spectacle or

party platform. I have focused on this turn toward privatization for two reasons: because Picasso's "losses" were not publicly figured as such (he retained his symbolic stature despite the Stalin portrait fiasco), and because Picasso, like others in postwar France, had little actual control over the public sphere and invested in compensatory representations of power and agency. To make this point, I have argued that Picasso represented sexual mastery and formal virtuosity in the Women of Algiers to counter the loss of Gilot and of his artistic standing in the avant-garde. I view Picasso's Las Meninas and Déjeuner sur l'herbe series as part of the artist's ongoing project to secure his self-possession by dispossessing his canonical forbearers of their own subjects. Rather than reframe the history of painting within the confines of heroic P.C.F. ideological directives, Picasso retooled the content and styles of Velázquez's and Manet's paintings to make their masterworks his. This obsessive drive toward possession is figured in both formal and sexual terms as in the Women of Algiers (although the latter is not evident in Las Meninas), but the compositional and carnal metaphors are reworked. The brilliant condensation of these metaphors in the Women of Algiers as "drawing as if to possess" slackens in the subsequent series; indeed, dispersion rather than condensation more effectively describes the dynamic at work in Picasso's Las Meninas and Déjeuner sur l'herbe. This

chapter will reveal that Picasso's battle for self-possession in these series becomes a powerfully overdetermined display of psychic dispossession that points to Picasso's actual disempowerment in the face of all the fame and money that stardom brought him.

All the More Reason to Turn Inward

From 17 August to 30 December 1957, Picasso produced approximately fifty-eight paintings based on Velázquez's Las Meninas. In one of her many pieces on Picasso's later career, the artist's friend Parmelin describes the extremely solitary nature of Picasso's undertaking: daily, the painter locked himself in a special room devoted to the series, often embarking on or emerging from his work angry and frustrated. He let no one see the product of his labors until the series was virtually complete. This vision of the tortured artist alone with his soul-wrenching and heroic labor is celebrated fully in Parmelin's text, as she charts her own tense and breathless anticipation of viewing the outcome of the artist's private battle. The following quote from Parmelin underscores the private nature of Picasso's enterprise, as well as his and his audience's investment in the series.

He worked two flights up in the room with the outdoor balcony where the pigeons were kept. Often he would lock himself in, and for as long as he could stand it. As soon as the chore of lunch was over he would "go upstairs" and sometimes he wouldn't come down till ten o'clock. He lived alone with his "Meninas"... the

dialogue with Delacroix, the life with Delacroix,... as Picasso's real or imaginary interlocutor, never caused the ravages that Velázquez committed when he set foot in La Californie. [...] We thought we were about to experience a revelation, and that by the path of this struggle in which Picasso was engaged, though it was not given to us to know what it was about, we should reach a dazzling door which would open out on reality, would allow us to come a little nearer to, go a little farther toward, see a little better the pulsing evil wound.¹

The "we" that Parmelin mentions includes Picasso's wife Roque, Picasso's friend and Parmelin's husband the painter Pignon, the photographer David Douglas Duncan, as well as Michel and Louise Leiris. The "pulsing evil wound" that Parmelin associates with reality is not identified as concretely, nor does the writer explain how Picasso's Las Meninas bear any specific relationship to the real. Except, perhaps the reality of Picasso's private life and work, to which she has privileged access, and which she and Duncan will record in articles and books (verbally and visually respectively) for large audiences to consume.

Parmelin notes that Picasso liked to tease his friends with tantalizing hints that he might show them his Las Meninas only to put them off. Clearly Picasso enjoyed the power of keeping his work away from those Parmelin disingenuously insists were not wont to offer "ready-made admiration and the fervor of a clique disposed in advance to

¹Hélène Parmelin, "Picasso and Las Meninas," The Yale Review 47 (June 1958): 581-582.

uncork its flask of worship."² Does Picasso's delight in manipulating his coterie explain his near obsession with keeping his Las Meninas to himself? Parmelin recounts that he was more forthcoming with other ongoing projects, which littered his palatial home:

The model of the U.N.E.S.C.O. building for which Picasso is to paint immense panels was on the floor near the parrot cage. [...and] All over the place were contreplaqué faces on which he had been at work in the period of furious persistence that preceded the "Meninas." Faces, profiles, faces within faces and within profiles and the other way 'round, each with one great dark eye.³

By privatizing his work on the series, Picasso participates in the further mythologization of himself as heroic artist, a construction that Parmelin shores up in her account of her friend's Las Meninas. Reality--which Parmelin obliquely claims the series exposes, but which I believe the series veils--is certainly something from which Picasso might want to retreat in 1957. Picasso had previously evidenced a strong desire to wrap himself in the mantle of artistic genius, but after 1956 would have good cause to eschew his public, political persona in order to seek affirmation in the more private, timeless realm of great art.

A series of events in 1956--the publication of Khrushchev's "secret" report that "revealed" Stalin's crimes, revolution in Poland, and the Soviet invasion of

²Ibid., 585.

³Ibid., 578.

Hungary--drove many P.C.F. members and sympathizers from the party.⁴ The latter occurrence, proof that Khrushchev was not opposed to using tactics that Stalin would have favored, particularly horrified many French intellectuals. In the autumn of 1956, the Soviet Union asserted its brutally possessive claims on Hungary by suppressing uprisings prompted by the desire for less authoritarian government. Parmelin, in letters to Picasso now housed in the artist's archive, recounted to her friend the suppression of renegade Communists in Eastern Europe. The anger, fear, and sorrow that color this private correspondence contrasts sharply with Parmelin's earlier, public Stalinist propaganda. The letters also demonstrate that she kept Picasso well informed of the occurrences from which his cloistered existence shielded him. Indeed, by making events in Eastern Europe real to Picasso (for example, on 21 November 1956, Parmelin

⁴Many intellectuals, Sartre chief among them, switched their revolutionary energies into anti-colonialist activism. Picasso did lend rather bland support to the black artists and writers association with the publication Présence Africaine by providing them with illustrations for their 1956 and 1959 congresses. Responding to Alouine Diop's request (channelled through Leiris) for images that would symbolize the valiant efforts of undervalued black creators to produce radical and literally uplifting work, Picasso gave Diop a naturalistic, noble bust of a black man (which also appeared on the cover of his friend the West Indian Aimé Césaire's Cahier d'un retour au pays natal), and then a spare line drawing of four figures (meant to represent the four races) lifting a dove toward heaven, which was a study for his earlier War and Peace murals. Since these works were also designed for other projects, they cannot be read as deeply thoughtful meditations on the work of those surrounding Présence Africaine.

wrote to the artist that Polish workers held aloft in the streets a reproduction of Massacre in Korea⁵), Parmelin was able to convince Picasso to participate in a public denunciation of the Hungarian invasion. Picasso signed a letter--with Parmelin, Pignon, and seven other notables--addressed to the P.C.F. Central Committee and which called for the convocation of a special session to discuss the Soviet presence in Hungary. The letter, published in Le Monde, was carefully worded, for although its signatories noted the "malaise profond" ("profound disquiet") caused by "l'invraisemblable pauvreté des informations de L'Humanité sur Hongrie" ("unlikely lack of of information at L'Humanité on Hungary") they also protested "in advance against any tendentious interpretation" of their letter and any questioning of their "fidelity to the Party and its unity."⁶ A special meeting never took place, and the Central Committee issued a very strong statement against those who came to be known of as "The Ten."⁷ Parmelin was largely held accountable for the "fractional" missive, and it is likely that it was only Picasso's fame that protected

⁵Hélène Parmelin to Pablo Picasso, 21 November 1956, Picasso Archives, Musée Picasso, Paris.

⁶Le Monde, 21 November 1956, quoted in Cauter, 228.

⁷This letter was published in L'Humanité; a copy of it exists in the Picasso Archives, Associations politiques françaises material, Musée Picasso, Paris.

her and the others who signed the letter from retribution.⁸

Parmelin was not alone in working to persuade Picasso to address Communist repression. Earlier in the year, the Polish poet Czeslaw Milosz published a letter in Preuves⁹ condemning the artist for his association with a party that permitted Picasso artistic liberty while it crushed the artistic and political freedoms of others. Milosz wrote:

In the years when painting was systematically destroyed in the U.S.S.R. and in the people's democracies, you put your name on manifestoes that glorified Stalin's regime. At the same time, you mocked Social Realism, demonstrating by that that certain artistic methods are only valid where the police's reach is long enough. You were right to profit from your privilege but you seem to be one for whom beauty is more than the subject of aesthetic considerations, this solidarity was refused by you.... I accuse you Picasso, and not only you, but all the Western artists and intellectuals who let speech be trapped. In this period of cruelties and sufferings, all of you, free to choose, you have chosen the most prudent conformism.¹⁰

⁸Daix, 330.

⁹Preuves was the "mouthpiece" of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom founded in 1952 by James Burnham, James T. Farrell, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and Sidney Hook, "and affiliated with the Congress for Cultural Freedom (an organization that one can characterize, at least until 1953, as pursuing right-wing liberalism in its active fight against Russia and Communism in the field of ideas)" (Guilbaut, 73). Milosz did not know the history of the publication's affiliations when he wrote his letter to Picasso. The poet also did not receive any response to his letter either from Picasso or any other party member (Czeslaw Milosz in conversation with Andrea Feeser, 7 April 1995, Berkeley, California).

¹⁰"Dans les années où la peinture était systématiquement détruite en U.R.S.S. et dans les démocraties populaires, vous prêtiez votre nom aux manifestes qui glorifiaient le régime de Staline. En même temps, vous vous moquiez du réalisme socialiste, démontrant par cela que certaines méthodes artistiques ne sont valables

Milosz's charges predated another public missive to Picasso by the artist's friend James Lord, published in Combat several days before "The Ten's" letter appeared in Le Monde. Lord, an American who had gained access to Picasso's studio and home first as a soldier and subsequently as an admirer, rebuked the artist for his continued commitment to the P.C.F. after the Soviet invasion of Hungary. Like Milosz, Lord received no response from Picasso, although the artist's friend Douglas Cooper castigated Lord, perhaps on Picasso's behalf.¹¹ Reflecting later on his letter to the artist, and to Picasso's relationship to communism, Lord observed:

... Communism gradually became an element of Picassian mythology which he [Picasso] could hardly repudiate without seeming to lose something essential to himself, since everything pertaining to that self was essential to it.... Picasso's gradual withdrawal from the world began at about this time, in his mid-seventies.

que là seulement où la main de la police est assez longue. Vous aviez raison de profiter de votre privilège, mais vous semblez lesquels la beauté est plus que le sujet de considérations esthétiques, cette solidarité était par vous refusée.... Je vous accuse, Picasso, et non seulement vous, mais tous les artistes et intellectuels occidentaux qui se sont laissé prendre au piège de la parole. Dans cette période de cruautés et de souffrances, vous tous, libres de choisir, vous choisissiez le conformisme le plus prudent" (Czeslaw Milosz, "Lettre à Picasso," Preuves [June 1956]: 5-7 [extract], quoted in Jeannine Verdès-Leroux, Le réveil des somnambules: Le parti communiste, les intellectuels et la culture (1956 - 1985) [Paris: Fayard/Éditions de Minuit, 1987], 355).

¹¹Lord's letter of 9 November 1956 was first sent to Picasso, and Cooper contacted Lord by telephone shortly after Picasso received the letter. Lord had the letter published in Combat on 17 November (Lord, Picasso and Dora: A Personal Memoir, 297-298).

Courtiers and sycophants were not lacking, but he saw almost nobody else, and his mistress [Roque], whom he married in 1961, made sure that the unwelcome, including the artist's own children, were refused admittance.¹²

Although Picasso's pursuit of greater privacy began in the later 1940s when he spent more time in southern France, it is important that Lord notes the linkage between Picasso's politics and increasing withdrawal from public life after 1956. It is also significant that Lord's letter identifies the force that both drove Picasso into and out of the spotlight: namely, the artist's stature. In his letter, Lord implored Picasso:

Because you have been willing to live as a symbol as well as a man I ask you to identify a personal nobility with the nobility of what you symbolize.... I ask you to stand before the civilization which has created you, honored you, and supported you, to judge yourself according to the principles which have inspired your life, and to make known this judgement to those who, like me, ask only to love and admire you still.¹³

Having been able to maintain good standing among those at every point along the political spectrum--despite having represented questionable perspectives in a variety of circumstances (namely P.C.F. affiliation in a capitalist art market, and displeasure with the P.C.F.'s silence about Hungary)--it is not surprising that Picasso cooled but did not sever his relationship with the party. In effect, he followed the advice of Leiris, who during the troubles of

¹²Ibid., 300.

¹³Ibid., 297.

1956, encouraged Picasso to maintain his position as a general symbol of humanity. As I noted in the introduction to my dissertation, Leiris provided Picasso with a strategy to evade condemnation from the left or the right should Picasso wish to respond directly to the U.S.S.R.'s invasion of Hungary. In keeping with his interest in representing both himself and Picasso as creators who embody "everyman," Leiris encouraged his friend to maintain that

For me painting is a way of speaking and I am not a thinker nor a politician, as profound as my attachment to communism is. What do you want me to tell you? Canvasses like Guernica or Massacre in Korea express the horror that I have of violence exercised against people whomever they are, ...¹⁴

Leiris's scripted response for Picasso, intended for but not published in Les Temps modernes¹⁵, evidences the logic of those who decried the Soviet presence in Hungary, but who upheld a strained commitment to the P.C.F.'s "ends justifies the means" policy. This policy in its coarsest form was supported by Georges Tabaraud, "editor of the Nice Patriote, and Moscow's local 'eye' on Picasso,"¹⁶ who would later

¹⁴"La peinture est pour moi une façon de parler et je ne suis pas un penseur non plus qu'un politician, aussi profond que soit mon attachement que communisme.... De toiles comme Guernica ou les Massacres en Corée expriment l'horreur que j'ai des violences exercées contre un peuple quel qu'il soit,..." (Michel Leiris, 19 November 1956 letter to Pablo Picasso, Picasso Archives, Musée Picasso, Paris).

¹⁵See the introduction to my dissertation, 1-2 for a discussion of this letter.

¹⁶Pierre Cabanne, Pablo Picasso: His Life and Times, trans. Harold J. Salemonson [New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1977], 478.

argue that the many letters about Hungary that the artist received (in addition to those published by Milosz and Lord), reflected a concerted effort on the part of "la grande bourgeoisie" to break the artist's solidarity with the party of the working class.¹⁷ That Picasso was able to remain a general symbol of human freedom for the P.C.F., even after signing "The Ten's" letter to the Central Committee, is evident in a photograph of December 1956 that Benjamin Péret published in his 1957 Le surréalisme même¹⁸ article on the horrors of Soviet communism (fig. 69). Attired jauntily, stationed confidently, and positioned centrally, Picasso is surrounded by P.C.F. luminaries Maurice Thorez, Laurent Casanova, and Louis Aragon. The caption reads: "quelques jours après la répression sanglante de la révolution hongroise, tout va manifestement pour le mieux sur la Côte d'Azur" ("several days after the bloody repression of the Hungarian revolution, all proceeds obviously for the better on the Côte d'Azur"). It is significant that this photograph was taken in the south of

¹⁷See Georges Tabaraud, "Le camarade Picasso," in La Nouvelle Critique no. 130 [special number in honor of Picasso's eightieth birthday] (November 1961): 73-81. Cabanne recounts a heated argument between Tabaraud and the actor and Communist Yves Montand in which the former defended while the latter decried the Soviet invasion of Hungary. "Picasso took in every word, watching each of them carefully in turn, noting reactions and gestures, but never saying a word himself" (Cabanne, Pablo Picasso: His Life and Times, 478).

¹⁸Péret's untitled and unpaginated article appears in Le Surréalisme même 2 (Spring 1957).

France, for it symbolizes the fact that those who wished to make use of Picasso often literally met the artist on his own ground. From the mid-1950s on, fewer people had access to the cloistered artist, whose privacy Rosalind Krauss evokes in the following description of Picasso's home in Mougins:

This huge stone house, surrounded by vineyards and ancient olive trees, hung with cloaks of bougainvillea, seemed like a fortress erected against the world. A canal running below fed the pool onto which the terrace opened. "My Seine," Jacqueline liked to call it, reminding her listeners that she and Picasso had not left this stronghold for Paris for at least a decade.¹⁹

Picasso could only remain the heroic everyman for the left and right alike by avoiding secure placement within one camp or the other. As Picasso's mythic stature increased, and political events heated up, each side needed his endorsement--not his "messy" particularities--more. Picasso had to abstract and absent himself to remain all things for everyone. How could he sustain himself as a creator in such circumstances?

To Humanize is to Divinize?

Roland Barthes' "The Writer on Holiday" presents an argument about the creator's status that completely inverts Leiris' apology for the artist as everyman. In his short essay (roughly concurrent with Leiris' 1954 "Picasso and the

¹⁹Rosalind E. Krauss, The Optical Unconscious (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1993), 198.

Human Comedy"), Barthes comments on contemporary records of famous writers on holiday. Barthes observes that even though photographs of the famous enjoying a vacation like any worker might make the notable seem more "human," in fact, the writer becomes more extraordinary. In a stinging analysis of heroic, creative "genius," Barthes writes:

... unlike the other workers, who change their essence, and on the beach are no longer anything but holiday-makers, the writer keeps his writer's nature everywhere. By having holidays, he displays the sign of his being human; but the god remains, one is a writer as Louis XIV was king, even on the commode. Thus the function of the man of letters is to human labor rather as ambrosia is to bread; a miraculous, eternal substance, which condescends to take a social form so that its prestigious difference is better grasped. All this prepares one for the same idea of the writer as a superman, as a kind of intrinsically different being which society puts in the window so as to use to the best advantage the artificial singularity which it has granted him.²⁰

Picasso playfully acknowledged this condition in a Lucien Clergue photograph (fig. 70). In this picture, Picasso lounges on the beach with a towel wrapped toga-like about his middle, gesturing toward the water like a benevolent deity. That Picasso was not always comfortable with his importance that he caricatures in the photo, is evident in Pierre Cabanne's account of the artist's frustration about encroachments on his privacy in the mid-1950s:

... the hill overlooking [his home] la Californie was bought by developers of high-rise apartments: the villa could soon be surrounded by towers.... Picasso was not in a good mood. There had been too much talk about him

²⁰Roland Barthes, "The Writer on Holiday," in *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: The Noonday Press, 1972), 30.

that summer; when he went to the beach, people stared. "I'm one of the public monuments of the Côte d'Azur," he shouted to me on the telephone.²¹

Picasso's ultimate response to this frustration with his own institutionalization points to his exceedingly contradictory investments in his private and public self. In 1958, not long after his U.N.E.S.C.O. mural dubbed The Fall of Icarus (fig. 71) by Georges Salles was received with extreme ambivalence, Picasso bought the chateau at Vauvenargues that graced paintings by Cézanne of Mont Ste.-Victoire. His huge new home afforded Picasso with great privacy, tremendous space to hang his own work and that which he collected by master painters, and heightened prestige: he crowed to his dealer Kahnweiler that he'd bought Cézanne's "original" Mont Ste.-Victoire.²² Picasso shielded himself from being both admired too much and too little (U.N.E.S.C.O. delegates were disenchanted with the artist's stick figure mural, and Communist party officials "could not hide their embarrassment at this new work"²³), by taking over and sequestering himself within his great forbearer Cézanne's literal space.

²¹Daix, 339.

²²Cabanne, 488-491.

²³Ibid., 488. Picasso presented his work to U.N.E.S.C.O. and P.C.F. delegates in a schoolyard near his home to assuage their concerns that he was not taking the mural commission seriously and not sharing with them his plans for it. "Probably for the first time in his life, in this schoolyard, before ten or so people from whom he could not anticipate the slightest speck of truth, Picasso felt alone, terribly, tragically alone. In a loneliness that could only grow greater. Until it became despair" (Ibid.).

This impulse to occupy and hide inside the space of artistic tradition also informs Picasso's creative work, specifically his Las Meninas and Déjeuner sur l'herbe. Ironically, Picasso first attempted to win back his self-importance and self-possession in these works through a banal exploration of his own particulars: what made him in Leiris's eyes an "everyman."

Picasso's Las Meninas

Each of Picasso's series that I will discuss in this chapter focuses on one of two themes that consistently run throughout Picasso's oeuvre: Las Meninas concentrates on spatial interrelationships, and Déjeuner sur l'Herbe contends with interpersonal (specifically sexual) relationships.²⁴ In the original Las Meninas (1656) (fig. 72), Velázquez masterfully manipulates space in order to devise a complex meditation on the issue of representation. A variety of spaces coexist in the work, and yet they are never all fully present to those who inhabit, or those who view the image. The numerous paintings that cover the walls of the artist's studio are illegible; the exterior room

²⁴Las Meninas and Déjeuner sur l'herbe can also be understood as arenas in which Picasso explored the state of being both inside and outside Spanish and French experience (both paintings have been viewed as specific products of their cultures). Picasso never abandoned his Spanishness yet refused to leave France for Spain. Battling with a "Spanish" and a "French" painting allowed Picasso to embrace and reject elements of Spanish and French culture and art history.

behind the open door is invisible to those figures who face the front of the composition; deep embrasures hide the apertures of the studio's windows; the vast expanse of canvas on which the artist works is completely turned away from the spectator; and the mirror on the back wall reflects only a small portion of the room's contents: the visages of the king and queen that most of the figures are meant to be regarding²⁵ (although it is the spectator who actually occupies their space). As Michel Foucault has observed:

It may be that, in this picture, as in all the representations of which it is, as it were, the manifest essence, the profound invisibility of what one sees is inseparable from the invisibility of the person seeing - despite all mirrors, reflections, imitations, and portraits.²⁶

Rather than manifest pure presence, the cohabitating, different spaces in Velázquez's oil point to the lack of fullness in representation. This sense of absence is ironically enhanced through the painting's multiple pairings. As Foucault has noted, several of the figures are coupled, and each of the three pairs located in the foreground express opposing states: one person looks out toward the sovereigns/spectator, while the other directs his or her gaze inwards.²⁷ More dramatically, Velázquez pairs

²⁵Michel Foucault, "Las Meninas," chap. in The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences (New York: Random House, Inc., 1970), 7.

²⁶Ibid., 16.

²⁷Ibid., 12.

two framed oppositional spaces: next to the solid mirror that reflects the couple in front of the figures, he places the door that opens out into a space behind the group. This juxtaposition of front and back, closed and open, and inside and outside, is further enforced through the ambiguous status of the man at the door, a figure who is either coming or going.

Approximately one year before embarking on his own versions of Las Meninas, Picasso made a number of drawings on a theme that interested him upon the completion of his Women of Algiers series: he depicted a woman in an armchair looking at a canvas on an easel.²⁸ In several of the drawings, the canvas possesses a large, staring eye similar to that of the woman, and in a few of the images, the two eyes meet (fig. 73). Thus prior to his exploration of Las Meninas, Picasso was specifically engaged by the theme of the model in the studio, the notion of an exchange of gazes between the viewer and the viewed, and the concept of fusing the model/spectator and the image--issues that Velázquez's painting challenges.

²⁸These drawings conflate several earlier images: depictions of Picasso's own studio (Christian Zervos, ed. Pablo Picasso: Oeuvres [Paris: Editions "Cahiers d'Art," 1932-78], vol. 17, nos. 56-59), and of a woman (probably his wife Roque) in an armchair (Ibid., nos. 48-49, 55). They are also indebted to Picasso's Women of Algiers, works based on the theme of the model in the studio. In an earlier version of the woman regarding the canvas, Roque wears the turban she wore in several versions of Women of Algiers (Ibid., no. 62); in another, Picasso has included the brazier featured in the series (Ibid., no. 63).

Picasso's first version of the entire composition of Las Meninas represents his most sustained and in depth encounter with Velázquez's work (fig. 74). Although Picasso employed strong colors (often green, red, and yellow) in later renditions, he executed this painting in grisaille, a choice that enabled him to focus on structural composition, and that may refer both to Velázquez's silvery palette, and to Picasso's analytic Cubist works. Indeed the left half of Picasso's oil is fragmented into crystalline pieces that recall (although they are more legible than) analytic Cubist constructions. By specifically breaking down the towering figure of the artist, and the canvas on which he works, Picasso captures the momentary aspect of the painter's gesture, as he pauses to regard his models before applying another stroke of paint.²⁹ This fragmentation, juxtaposed with the more intact planes and figures on the right side of the painting, boldly underscores the numerous oppositions which infuse Picasso's entire composition--oppositions more subtly articulated in Velázquez's work.³⁰ A dark ceiling

²⁹Foucault, "Las Meninas," 3.

³⁰As Marie-Laure Bernadac has noted, this juxtaposition may also refer to Picasso's personal transition from the shattered planes of analytic Cubism, to the solid, more clearly defined shapes that comprised his synthetic Cubist work (Marie-Laure Bernadac, "Picasso 1953 - 1972: Painting as Model," in Tate Gallery, Late Picasso: Paintings, Sculpture, Drawings, Prints, 1953-72, with essays by Brigitte Baer, Marie-Laure Bernadac, Michel Leiris, John Richardson, and David Sylvester [London: Tate Gallery, 1988], 62.)

fixture occupies a light ground, and vice versa; the nun and her male companion are fused together like opposite sides of a coin; and the faces of the Infanta and especially of the artist, are bifurcated, as if two separate faces have joined in a kiss.³¹ These splits, as well as the extreme illegibility of the king's and queen's faces in the mirror, emphasize the frailty of vision less overtly exposed in Velázquez's painting. Two of the key figures of the construction, the artist (the creator of representation), and the Infanta (the exact center of the painting), do not directly gaze at the sovereigns/viewer (that function is retained by other members of the entourage), nor are the sovereigns clearly visible to the spectator. Picasso emphatically asserts that which Velázquez more gently points toward: the viewer is not sovereign; representation is not replete.

Picasso's greater literalism is also evident in his

³¹This splitting of the Infanta's and of the artist's face suggests that Picasso identified the two with one another, and by extension, himself (the artist) with the Infanta. As the Samedi Soir collage punned, and as I will demonstrate, Picasso, like the Infanta, is ultimately at the center of Picasso's Las Meninas. This willingness to identify himself with a female and a child (even if unconscious) is extraordinary: as the collage makes evident, the link can imply all that is "weak" about childhood and femininity. I believe that it demonstrates Picasso's desire to be revered royalty around whom attendants flock: a figure whose power transcends her/his seeming fragility (i.e.: Picasso's increasing impotence coded as the Infanta's youth and gender). Picasso's biographers have noted that in his later years spent in increasingly palatial homes, Picasso surrounded himself with sycophants seemingly happy to play courtier to his king.

addition of specifically descriptive details to Velázquez's composition. Unlike his predecessor, Picasso includes a light source in the painting: he depicts the actual windows through which sunlight pours, and either as a joke, or by mistake, he turns the paintings in Velázquez's interior into window shutters. Picasso also alters the shape of the dog to resemble that of his own pet³², an example of the personalizing transformations that appear rather frequently in his later works, and that mark a space identified with another artist, his own.

Picasso's subsequent versions of Las Meninas primarily focus on one or a few characters, although he executed several more works that describe the whole composition, generally, however, missing one or more components. None of these pictures explore the dynamics of representation with the complexity of Picasso's grisaille painting, although in the version the artist created 2 October 1957 (fig. 75), he cleverly focuses on the tension between oppositions embodied in the visitor at the door by making the lines and planes of the entire construction converge at the point where he stands. Most of Picasso's further renditions are single illustrations of the Infanta, recreated using many colors and different stylistic means, ranging from very schematic, linear approaches, to thickly painted, impressionistic versions.

³²Ibid.

Despite their varied colors and changing stylistic appearances, Picasso's numerous Infantas remain virtually the same--even the bifurcation of their faces.³³ Picasso makes no significant discovery in repeatedly producing her image; he seems caught within an empty gesture that contrasts markedly with his first fruitful analysis of Velázquez's painting. His involvement with the Infanta suggests a kind of inertia, "a binding of energy to a constant level,"³⁴ and a lack of interest in further innovation. The rote, "assembly-line" Infantas seem metaphorically linked to Picasso's actual mass produced wares: on one level the trinkets designed by him marketed by the P.C.F., and on another, the large quantities of ceramics that Picasso produced, which the party prominently exhibited in order to "confirm the new myth of Picasso as an 'homme du peuple [man of the people].'"³⁵

However, Picasso's focus on repeating the Infantas also

³³There is one exception to this: Picasso produced a bust portrait of the Infanta in which her face remains whole (Zervos, vol. 17, no. 408).

³⁴Norman Bryson, Tradition and Desire: From David to Delacroix (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 157.

³⁵Wilson, "Art and the Politics of the Left in France, ca. 1935-1955," 344. Wilson notes that at the 1948 Wrocław Peace Congress, an exhibition of Picasso's ceramics was featured in the congress vestibule (the artist gave twenty plates to the National Museum of Wrocław); and that upon Picasso's return to France, "Picasso exhibited almost one-tenth of his ceramic production from Vallauris in November 1948, at the pro-Communist Maison de la Pensée Française" (Ibid., 343-44).

reflects an interest in possession, the antithesis of Velázquez's painting, but a theme that informs a great deal of Picasso's production and that I have discussed at length in my analysis of the artist's Women of Algiers. While Picasso's line breaks the Infanta's face down into a fusion of profile components, implying an understanding of her various visual (and perhaps metaphorically, her emotional) aspects, it also repeatedly traces the outlines of her body and face, reproducing her over and over again in a reassurance of her presence. It is as if Picasso became trapped by the desire to embrace a fullness that his work on Las Meninas demonstrated to be lacking.³⁶

This move toward possession and presence is humorously evident in several works related to the Las Meninas series. As if to claim Velázquez's depicted studio as his own, Picasso painted several views outside his home, seen through windows recalling those he added to Velázquez's composition. He also devised a picture based on the young page in Las Meninas, The Piano (fig. 76). In this image, the boy's suspended movement in Velázquez's construction is given a specific context: as a musician playing the piano, his gesture is purposeful and no longer ambiguous. In an

³⁶Picasso's exploration of elemental shapes and colors in his Las Meninas series furthers the notion that he is pulling apart, examining, and finally attempting to stabilize the spatial ambiguities that Velázquez has embedded in his painting. Picasso's focus on the triangle--a very stable form--reinforces this interest in "pinning down" the composition.

additional painting Picasso made before he ceased work on Las Meninas, the artist created a bust portrait of his wife in a heavy, painted frame (fig. 77), a representation that recalls the mirror in Velázquez's canvas. Picasso employs Roque (the supreme model of his final years), to dispossess Velázquez's sovereign models, and by clearly enframing her, implies that representation can be securely knowable and fixed. In his 1959 essay "Picasso et les Ménines de Velázquez," Leiris applauds his friend's incorporation of such biographical detail into the Las Meninas series. In effect, Leiris argues that by including self-referential details, Picasso animates a nonliving masterpiece by actually inhabiting Velázquez's composition.

When one looks at Velázquez's Les Ménines [Las Meninas], meeting place of phantoms among which the spectator seems invited to rank, what one looks at is one of the greatest and one of the most singular among the masterpieces that our culture has produced.

When one looks at Picasso's Velázquez's Les Ménines and related paintings that are like pages of a keepsake reaching for the monumental whatever may be their dimensions, what one looks at are still products of a culture but gifted, each as much as another, with the capacity of being there like living beings. If the pigeons, the landscapes and the figures of pure intimacy tend to merge with the variations in Les Ménines in the manner in which the Infanta, the dwarf, and the duenna of Velázquez become "ménines" in the spirit of today's spectator... isn't it because Picasso has incarnated himself there to such a degree that one can believe that "Picasso not the Ménines of Velázquez"--realist antithesis of a chimerical "Velázquez not the Méninas of Picasso"--would be the strict definition?³⁷

³⁷ "Quand on regarde Les Ménines de Velázquez, rendez-vous de fantômes parmi lesquels le spectateur semble invité à se compter, ce qu'on regarde c'est l'un des plus grands et

As in the Leiris essay "Picasso and the Human Comedy," Picasso is a great artist because his work is informed by that which makes him a man like others: the banal particulars of his life. Rather than explore the anxiety that prompted Picasso to dispossess Velázquez of his masterpiece, Leiris instead asserts that his friend has "humanized" a distant cultural icon.

Ironically, just prior to executing The Piano and the portrait of Roque, Picasso reworked two lithographs that he had produced the previous year, images once again of a woman in an armchair (Roque) in front of a painting. In these two pictures, the space depicted in the canvas on the easel, is the studio space the model occupies in fig. 73. However, unlike the drawing of the woman united with the canvas, the painting represented in the reworked picture is wholly distinct from the woman, who in the second of the two works,

des plus singuliers d'entre les chefs-d'oeuvre que notre culture a produits. Quand on regarde Les Ménines de Velázquez par Picasso et ces autres tableaux qui sont comme des feuillets de keepsake atteignant au monumental quelles que soient leurs dimensions, ce qu'on regarde ce sont encore des produits de culture mais doués, les uns autant que les autres, de la capacité d'être là comme des êtres vivants. Si les pigeons, les paysages et les figures de pure intimité tendent à se fondre avec les variations sur Les Ménines à la façon dont l'Infante, la naine et la duègne de Velázquez se font "ménines" dans l'esprit du spectateur d'aujourd'hui ... n'est-ce que pas parce que Picasso s'y est incarné à tel point qu'il est permis de croire que "Picasso pas les Ménines de Velázquez"--antithèse réaliste d'un chimériques "Velázquez pas les Ménines de Picasso"--en serait la stricte définition?" (Michel Leiris, "Picasso et les Ménines de Velázquez" [1959], in Un Génie sans piédestal et autres écrits sur Picasso, with a Foreward by Marie-Laure Bernadac [Paris: Fourbis, 1992], 76).

closes her eyes (fig. 78). Returning to these particular images suggests that Picasso clearly did not forget the full implications of Las Meninas: the viewer and the viewed certainly inform each other, but they are separate and cannot completely "see" one another.³⁸ Picasso chose, however, not to dwell on this conclusion.

Immediately after finishing the framed portrait of Jacqueline, Picasso turned to a series of preparatory watercolors and drawings for the painting commission from U.N.E.S.C.O., and his numerous versions of the same theme reveal a certain debt to the issues pertaining to spatial ambiguities and representation raised by Las Meninas. In each rendition a forcefully rearranged nude lies prone with a canvas either behind her or grafted onto her. In many versions, a large painting of figures resembling canvases on stretchers³⁹ (who appear in numerous drawings of the period, and who are featured in an oil completed somewhat earlier, The Trampoline [fig. 79]) occupies the right foreground, facing out toward the viewer and away from the model (fig. 80). Like fig. 78, but unlike fig. 73, the model remains separate from the painting next to her.

³⁸A condition of representation aptly expressed by Jacques Lacan: "You never look at me from the place which I see you" (Jacques Lacan, "The Line and Light," chap. in The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan [New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978], 103).

³⁹Picasso's bronze Bathers (1956) are sculpted replicas of these figures, and also resemble stretchers and canvases.

However, in these later compositions, a woman is herself literally turned into a picture, and is juxtaposed with a painting of pictures that have been personified. Picasso collapses this tension concerning the fusion/separation of model and image in subsequent drawings in which he focuses on the body of the woman, breaking her out into variously arranged and shaped forms (figs. 81, 82, 83, 84, and 85). In these exercises Picasso attempts to show the woman in a number of positions at once by experimenting with different ways of revealing the woman's front, rear, and sides. Bearing in mind Steinberg's assessment of Picasso's line, the drawings represent a vigorous attempt on the artist's part to both physically possess the model and to intellectually possess the image. Unlike Picasso's numerous depictions of the Infanta, a thoughtful process of discovery underlies his repeated images of the supine nude: Picasso's economical line condenses a great deal of spatial information into a single image. However, as with his Infantas, the push toward possession elides the issue of absence in representation addressed by Las Meninas.

Picasso's Déjeuner sur l'herbe

Picasso's next series based on the work of another artist, Déjeuner sur l'herbe after Manet's painting of 1863 (fig. 86), completely forgoes the ambiguities of representation evident in Las Meninas. Instead Picasso

becomes obsessively involved with a repetitive narrative that unravels the ambivalence evident in Manet's image. Like most of Picasso's late pictures, Manet's Déjeuner sur l'herbe is also shaped by the work of earlier artists. Two naked women and two clothed men enjoying a pastoral setting appear in Giorgione's (and/or Titian's?) Pastoral Symphony (ca. 1508), and Manet's figural composition is mirrored in the ca. 1520 engraving The Judgement of Paris (after Raphael) by Marcantonio Raimondi (an image often discussed as having been a direct source for Manet's painting⁴⁰).

Unlike the weight and substantiality of the figures who occupy the scenarios devised by Giorgione (and/or Titian?) and Raimondi, Manet's figures possess a kind of two-dimensionality characteristic of most of his work. And rather than create a clearly legible setting in which to situate the men and women, Manet has devised a disjointed and illogical space. The water in which the woman in the background bathes is barely readable, and the section of ground between her and the others has been so radically foreshortened that the perspective is skewed: she is not much smaller than her companions and appears to hover above them. The two men and the naked woman with them sit

⁴⁰Raphael's composition is itself indebted to an earlier source, the River Gods, a detail from a Roman sarcophagus (3rd c. A.D.) at the Villa Medici in Rome (H.W. Janson, with Dora Jane Janson, History of Art: A Survey of the Major Visual Arts from the Dawn of History to the Present Day, 2 ed. [Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc.; New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1977], 15-16).

awkwardly in the grass, resembling cutouts glued to a field of green. This irreality is heightened by the ambiguous relationships among the figures: the bathing woman remains partially dressed, the nude appears as untouched as the plentiful fruit tumbling from the basket, and the strangely-hatted man with the cane expounds to the other man and the nude while they calmly fix their gazes on the viewer. None of the figures truly interact with one another, although ironically, the women's déshabillé points to an especially intimate encounter. Thus, in a manner quite different from that of Las Meninas, Déjeuner sur l'herbe also addresses issues of presence and absence in representation. Although Manet invokes art of the past through compositional similarities, he displaces the quotations by employing stylistic means that counter those of his predecessors: flat when compared to Giorgione's (and/or Titian's?) bodies, his figures nevertheless exude a fleshy, painterly quality, that Raimondi's engraved bodies cannot possess.⁴¹ In addition, his figures' disjointed relations, and their uneasy

⁴¹Rosalind Krauss has discussed Manet's stylistic reversal of earlier artists' work to which he was indebted in terms of a systematic manipulation of opposition: "To experience Titian's Venus of Urbino as the substructure of Manet's Olympia is precisely to perceive the play of oppositions that make up the stylistic code. Manet's linearity ... replaces Titian's painterly color; his planarity supplants Titian's use of recession; and, on the plane of content, lubricity is substituted for chastity. Thus if the Olympia invokes the category 'Painting,' it does so in terms of the very code of oppositions by which painting secures its intelligibility as Style" (Krauss, "Re-Presenting Picasso," 93).

positioning within an unnatural space, undercut the implication of a sexual liaison and its physical closeness. However, although all of the signs that point toward the notion of possession (of the past, of space, and of the body) are destabilized, they are not negated, especially those which address sexual possession: although the nude remains untouched, she is offered to her male companions and to the viewer as an object of visual and physical delectation.⁴²

Picasso's long involvement with Déjeuner sur l'herbe centers on and literalizes Manet's reference to sexual possession. Although Picasso made his first sketches after Manet's painting in 1954,⁴³ he did not begin extensive work on his series until August 1959. His initial works, like the vast majority of his images based on Déjeuner sur l'herbe, are numerous drawings resembling cartoon narratives in which one or several of the figures change position from

⁴²In his analysis of Manet's Olympia (1863), T.J. Clark maintains that she escapes total male objectification in part through the artist's treatment of her flesh: pasty and muddied, her "naked" body pointedly contrasts with that of the academic "nude," constructed for easy consumption (T.J. Clark, "Olympia's Choice," chap. in The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers [Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984], 131-139). The "naked" woman in Déjeuner sur l'Herbe (the same woman who modeled for Olympia) conforms to Manet's emphasis on denaturalization in the composition, a strategy that affirms the image's status as representation. However, although the woman's "nakedness" belies effortless commodification, it undeniably brands her a sexual object.

⁴³The naturalistic drawing is a 29 June 1954 page from a sketchbook in the collection of the Musée Picasso, Paris.

frame to frame. Among Picasso's first drawings are those based on the bathing woman (nude in his rendition) (figs. 87, 88, and 89), which were immediately preceded by drawings of a torero's costume (figs. 90, 91, and 92). The rhyming of shapes between these two different subjects--the curving of their shoulders and their extended arms--suggests that the artist perceived a certain affinity between the theme of the bullring, and that of an encounter between men and women,⁴⁴ and indeed, subsequent drawings indicate that Picasso did conflate them. The artist's following images include the other figures in the composition (fig. 93) and introduce a motif that will reappear repeatedly in the series: the bather's breasts, neck, and head are fashioned in a manner meant to resemble a phallus,⁴⁵ a visual pun that highlights the sexual undercurrent of the composition.

Immediately following these pictures, Picasso became momentarily involved with a separate narrative. The story begins with a bull fight and culminates in a bordello scene

⁴⁴Perhaps at the level of dominance: the torero fights to dominate the bull, and eventually, the men in Picasso's Déjeuner sur l'Herbe struggle to sexually dominate the women (figs. 39 and 40).

⁴⁵Krauss notes this transformation in a discussion of Picasso's Dejeuner sur l'herbe, crediting Robert Rosenblum with having first made this observation with regard to earlier pictures in Picasso's oeuvre (Rosalind Krauss, "The Im/Pulse to See," in Vision and Visuality, Hal Foster, ed., Dia Art Foundation Discussions in Contemporary Culture, no. 2 [Seattle: Bay Press, 1988], 73); also see Robert Rosenblum, "Picasso and the Anatomy of Eroticism," in Schiff, Picasso in Perspective, 77).

that contains a reference to both Las Meninas and Déjeuner sur l'herbe (fig. 94). Two nude women (prostitutes) sit with two clothed men (toreros) while in the background, a man stands on the threshold of the doorway, poised either to enter or to exit. The ambiguity of this figure's presence, a reminder of the frailty of representation evident in Velázquez's painting, is nullified by the unambiguous nature of the foreground activity: the prostitute to the right crudely offers herself to her male companion by spreading her legs.

Picasso's phallic references are more pronounced in his next renditions of Déjeuner sur l'herbe (fig. 95) (he pointedly distorts the right male's hand and arm, and continues to manipulate the shape of the bather's breasts, neck, and head), and subsequent drawings further his play on the transformation and rearrangement of the female body. In an extensive series of drawings based on two of his favorite subjects, a woman leaning over to attend to her foot, and a woman in an armchair, Picasso methodically dismembers the females' bodies and reorganizes the various parts on a table (figs. 96, 97, 98, and 99). Unlike his drawings of a prone nude seen from multiple aspects, these works make no attempt to condense information--to experiment with the degree of three-dimensionality that can be suggested on a single plane. Instead, these images graphically illustrate a singularity of vision: the perception of the female body as

infinitely malleable--an object of perfect possession. The sexual dimension of this possessiveness resurfaces in Picasso's ensuing illustrations of a torero following a bullfight: after having been entertained by the provocative dance of a voluptuous nude, the torero is shown having sex with her.

Just before Picasso resumed work on Déjeuner sur l'herbe, he created several drawings on a theme that he executed repeatedly during the course of his career: a sleeping person juxtaposed with someone awake. The most powerful of these images depict the individual awake watching the sleeper (fig. 100). As Steinberg has pointed out in his analysis of this configuration, the gender of two of the companions changes (men regard women, and vice versa, and women attend women), and the watcher never disrupts the sleeper; Picasso merely contrasts "dependent states of being that exclude one another."⁴⁶ This reference to physical and emotional exclusion, expressed through a pairing of oppositional modes (a condition of Las Meninas), contrasts markedly with the violent invasiveness of the artist's dissected nudes. Picasso's subsequent drawings of Déjeuner sur l'herbe, executed in rapid and dizzying succession, and remain uniformed by his brief meditation on exclusivity; instead they move steadily toward explicit sexual

⁴⁶Leo Steinberg, "Picasso's Sleepwatchers," Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth-Century Art, 105.

possession.

Picasso's following works--several paintings, and voluminous drawings--feature a number of variations on Manet's composition. The artist occasionally focuses on a single figure (always one of the women), the hatted man and one or both of the women, or devises a construction with all of the figures, who often engage in activities unrelated to those in Manet's painting. For example, in many of his versions, Picasso's bather no longer stoops to wash herself, but bends over to pick a flower. She is also occasionally shown urinating, an activity highlighted in Picasso's 1965 canvas Woman Pissing, an oil that possibly conflates two Rembrandt etchings, one of which is based on the same theme.⁴⁷ Additionally, the man located to the left side of the work, when not absented or reduced to a marginal presence, is sometimes shown lying on his stomach, either reading, writing, or listening to his male companion. These compositional alterations, along with Picasso's transformations of the figures' shapes and sizes, and his shifts in stylistic approaches (figs. 101, 102, 103, and 104⁴⁸), suggest an interest in a different kind of

⁴⁷Gert Schiff offered this hypothesis in his catalogue based on Picasso's late work (Gert Schiff, Picasso: The Last Years, 1963-1973 [New York: George Braziller, Inc., in association with the Grey Art Gallery and Study Center, New York University, 1983], 33-34, illus. 46, 47, and 48).

⁴⁸Fig. 103 also paraphrases Ingres: Picasso's classicizing mode may allude to the painter's Neo-classical style, and the nude with the turban appears to make a direct

possessiveness: a compulsion to make the work of another artist very much his own through extreme variation.

In her discussion of Picasso's Déjeuner sur l'herbe drawings, Krauss focuses on those he created through an animation stand method (figs. 101 and 102). In these drawings, Picasso merely retraced the lines embossed in a sketchbook page from the preceding sheet of paper, changing only the manner in which he filled in the contours. For Krauss, this process speaks to a "voluptuous succumbing to the unconscious productivity of the device,"⁴⁹ an activity that signals the artist's entrapment within a repetition compulsion. Although Picasso was not literally stuck within the flipbook mechanism (most of his drawings are not executed in this manner), his fixation on a kind of empty repetition, evident in his work on the Infanta in Las Meninas, or the women dissected on tables, is dramatically apparent in his Déjeuner sur l'herbe drawings.

Krauss relates Picasso's repetitious images to Jean-Francois Lyotard's notion of the matrix, a concept indebted to Sigmund Freud's understanding of the compulsion to repeat.

Belonging to the unconscious, the matrix is the form of the primary process as it operates invisibly, behind the constraints of repression, such that only

reference to Ingres' famous Odalisque of 1814. Note that in the background of fig. 104 Picasso has included a reference to his rearranged women on tables.

⁴⁹Krauss, "The Im/Pulse to See," 70.

its fantasmatic products ever surface ... [its] condition of superimposition and simultaneous presence means that the matrix, ... cannot be understood in terms of structure. For the matrix does not ... [maintain] oppositions in a rule-governed system; rather it courts the transformation of everything into its opposite, thereby undermining the productive work of structure.⁵⁰

Lyotard conceptualizes the matrix through the example of "A Child is Being Beaten," the description Freud affixed to several of his patients' obsessional fantasies that centered on this theme, and Krauss rehearses Lyotard's analysis in order to secure its relation to the death drive.

The anxiety that is part of the affect of "A Child is Being Beaten," combining with its erotic pleasure, arises precisely from the force of the rupture that is recurrent in the rhythm of the figure, ... which is not experienced as the onset of yet another contact, but as ... that discontinuity which is death. Thus it is the death drive, operating below the pleasure principle, that transcodes this rhythm ... into a compulsion to repeat.⁵¹

For Krauss, Picasso's push toward the erotic encounter, framed within a repetetive process (and increasingly overt in succeeding images of rape⁵²), (figs. 105 and 106),

⁵⁰Ibid., 64. See Jean-Francois Lyotard's Discours, Figure (Paris: Éditions Klincksieck, 1971) for his discussion of the matrix.

⁵¹Ibid., 67.

⁵²In an additional meditation on exclusivity, just prior to some of his most phallogocentric versions of Manet's painting, Picasso created several renditions of a sleeping woman and an awake man on a bed (Zervos, vol. 20, nos. 304-326).

At roughly the same time Picasso was showing women dismembered and raped in his Déjeuner sur l'herbe series (he would ultimately turn the latter into commodities--a series of ceramic tiles), he produced a noble line drawing of Djamila Boupacha, an Algerian F.L.N. resistance fighter who

demonstrates the operative condition of the artist's late work: "a feeble attempt to erect eros in defense against what was really happening to him--which was death."⁵³

Krauss' primary interest in Picasso's late work is his enslavement to a repetitive process; she finds the issue of whether "he was a dirty old man or a voyeur, ... irrelevant."⁵⁴ Certainly the form of the artist's repetition compulsion is significant,⁵⁵ but its content speaks to a set of dynamics that reveal both a shift in his work (with regard to the type of images he created), and a point of stasis (in terms of his sustained engagement with the female body).

One of the most notable changes that occurs in

was tortured and raped by French soldiers (fig. 107). It is extremely jarring to compare this lovely image that graced propaganda to free Boupacha (spearheaded by Gisèle Halimi and de Beavoir) with Picasso's concurrent tortured and raped women of Déjeuner sur l'herbe. The stylistic contrast supports Steinberg's assertion that Picasso needed both "human" (naturalistic) and "superhuman" (distorted) line to express his creativity. The sadism evident in Boupacha's ordeal and Picasso's series underscores the argument that I developed in my chapter on the Women of Algiers: that the female body functions as the site of male violence motored by the fear of impotence (the loss of a colony or the loss of artistic "genius").

⁵³Krauss' response to a question asked during the general discussion featured in the "Vision and Visuality" symposium, published as Foster, Vision and Visuality, 83.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵However, Krauss overemphasizes Picasso's involvement with the animation stand method; most of his drawings were not executed through this process. Picasso's activity was not as passive as Krauss describes it as having been.

Picasso's late production is a more profound interest in narrativity, in imparting a sense of descriptiveness and a lack of ambiguity uncharacteristic of his earlier work. Although Picasso constructed a number of "stories," throughout his career, (perhaps the most notable being his 1930-37 series of etchings known as The Vollard Suite), many of which featured repetitive elements, much of his production contained paintings for which William Rubin's term "iconic"⁵⁶ is appropriate. Rather than construct an image with a clear story line, Picasso devised heavily condensed images suffused with a range of interpretive possibilities. Les Demoiselles d'Avignon (1907) is the most well known example of such a picture, and Picasso's working method for this painting contrasts dramatically with that used in his renditions of Las Meninas and Déjeuner sur l'herbe. Rather than deconstruct a complex, ambiguous construction into a series of more literal, or narrativized components (as he did with Velázquez's and Manet's oils), Picasso began Les Demoiselles d'Avignon with an exhaustive number of narrative sketches (many featuring a scholar and a sailor in a bordello), that he gradually edited and melded into a single, imploded image. Ironically, although he continued to create multiple aspect figures in his later

⁵⁶See William Rubin, "From Narrative to 'Iconic' in Picasso: The Buried Allegory in Bread and Fruitdish on a Table and the Role of Les Demoiselles d'Avignon," Art Bulletin 65 (December 1988): 615-649.

years, Picasso seemed increasingly intolerant of pictures which themselves could be viewed from a variety of aspects. He came to pursue a kind of fixity in representation, manifestly symbolized in the sexual possession of the female body, the primary subject (perhaps more often the object) of his entire oeuvre.

One of Picasso's final series based on a painting by another artist, is his group of etchings after Ingres's Raphael and La Fornarina (fig. 108), an image itself (of which several versions exist) indebted to the work of an earlier painter. Infinitely more graphic than his Déjeuner sur l'herbe series, Picasso's pictures form an explicitly sexual narrative. Transforming Ingres' allusions to the artist's sexual relationship with his model into a variety of representations of copulation, Picasso takes additional liberties with the figural composition: he adds several, changing historical personages as voyeurs--the Pope, perhaps Michelangelo, and other less certain individuals. In several images he shows the artist actually painting the model he embraces (fig. 109), a gesture that appears in Picasso's earlier more chaste treatments of the painter and model theme. For Steinberg, this image after Ingres reveals a key to Picasso's production: that the artist used "sexuality to make visible the immediacy of communion with art."⁵⁷ For Norman Bryson, Picasso's Raphael and La

⁵⁷Steinberg, "The Philosophical Brothel," 64.

Fornarina represents an explosive break from his artistic forebearers:

And above all, Picasso understands the fate of artistic latecoming, ... as a struggle which in the end (for Picasso) can only be resolved by radical violence--art as an act of defiant procreation conducted under the gaze of history and authority...⁵⁸

Both scholars' observations reveal important truths about Picasso's art. However, another general truth about Picasso emerges from a consideration of these etchings: his artistic vision, whether it encompassed a variety of perspectives, or whether it narrowed to a single point of view, seems to have been to a large degree determined by the strength of his need to possess the object of his gaze. Later in his life, perhaps in light of his impending death (as Krauss and others have suggested), and certainly in light of his fame (which brought him both empty praise and contempt), the need to possess representation, to elide the absence that it truly harbors, drove Picasso to repeat compulsively a variety of images (predominantly of proffered or possessed women) in an attempt to secure their presence, and to make them his own. Picasso increasingly eschewed "iconic" imagery (manifest in much of his previous work, and embodied in Manet's Déjeuner sur l'herbe, and especially in Velázquez's Las Meninas) in favor of the fixity and literalness of narrative. Ironically, instead of producing

⁵⁸Bryson, Tradition and Desire: From David to Delacroix, 147.

replete imagery, he often ended up emptying pictures out. A great number of Picasso's final works feature vapid women with gaping vaginas. Meant to signal a point of possession, they instead mark a void.

Historicizing the Will Toward Possession

I have already discussed theoretical work of the 1950s and the present day that addresses the links between alienation, privatization, and mastery. In concluding my analysis of Picasso's series after canonical pictures, I would like to amplify the relationships among these historical conditions and the manner in which I believe they shaped Picasso's late oeuvre.

In his 1956 preface to his 1947 book Critique of Everyday Life, Lefebvre elaborates on Marx's analysis of the wedge that capitalism (and Stalinist bureaucracy as Lefebvre would later argue) drives between productive and private life. Forced into a highly specialized sphere of production, which alienates the individual from the entire process and end result of his or her labor, the worker increasingly turns to private life as the arena of fulfillment. Lefebvre argues that those who manufacture leisure-time goods (I maintain that painting falls into this category), increasingly exploit sex and violence as a means of breaking up the routine and boring character of productive life. On erotic images in particular, Lefebvre

stated:

The sudden eruption of sexuality in the domain of the image--and more generally in leisure--calls for an investigation in its own right.... Images with a (more or less explicit) erotic meaning, or simply the display of a woman's body, are violently attractive. The excessive use of such images in advertising has not yet exhausted the effect they have on us, and we may conclude that they correspond to something profound. Displays of sexuality and nudity break with everyday life, and provide the sense of a break which people look for in leisure.... It is a kind of escapism which from certain angles is more like a generalized neurosis: this sexuality is depressing, this eroticism is weary and wearying, mechanical.... With "modern" eroticism we step outside of the everyday, without actually leaving it: it shocks, it seems brutal, and yet this effect is superficial, pure appearance, leading us back towards the secret of the everyday--dissatisfaction.⁵⁹

Although the erotic was a mainstay of Picasso's work well before he began series after others' masterpieces, the extent to which it conditions his series (even works related to Las Meninas) is profound. The will toward possession as a sexual and ultimately violent (in Déjeuner sur l'herbe) dynamic is manifest both in terms of content and structure in the three series that I have analyzed. Lefebvre's comments quoted above underscore the thesis that I have been developing: that Picasso's ultimately obsessive carnal metaphors for possession attempt to compensate for the artist's flagging mastery of his self image, which circulated widely in the postwar political arena and which was manipulated by others and by Picasso to embody the often

⁵⁹Henri Lefebvre, Foreward (1956) in Critique of Everyday Life, 35.

empty notion of what a hero had to be. The artist's ultimately literal and sadistic treatment of sexual possession (the rape scenes of Déjeuner sur l'herbe) can further be understood in relation to Bataille's conception of false sovereignty. As I noted in chapter 3, after the war Bataille came to understand Sade's sexual cruelty as the embodiment of society's drive to utilize the individual: Sade was not a man who upheld the claims of pure freedom to contest the overly rational state, but a product of a culture that willed the destruction of others to maintain authority. Quoting Dean once again:

Sade was no longer a tragic man whose silence paradoxically asserted the claims of existence in a reified world. Instead, he seemed to herald the triumph of that kind of instrumental rationality. He embodied the logical consequences of an imperative to be the law to which one at the same time necessarily, categorically submits.⁶⁰

Bataille argues that by purely objectifying rather than sharing with his partners, Sade merely reinscribes the domineering master/slave relationships that structure society; certainly this dynamic describes the narratives and structures of Picasso's Women of Algiers, Déjeuner sur l'herbe, and less obviously Las Meninas.

Bataille's 1947 essay on Baudelaire reprinted in the philosopher's 1957 book Literature and Evil provides another valuable meditation on the lived experience that suffuses creative production. In his Baudelaire text, Bataille

⁶⁰Dean, 198.

argues that the creator is always aware of himself while watching others, for he wishes to record his understanding of things in an absolutely subjective versus objective manner. Indeed, Bataille maintains that the poet wishes to be the object, to fully incorporate it so that it becomes an expression of himself. Bataille states that this emphasis on the self is a quality that all individuals possess, but that it is extraordinarily heightened with the creator. In a rich passage, Bataille addresses the universal nature of subjectivity, noting that people express it both comunally and alone:

We cannot sufficiently emphasize the certainty of irreplaceable uniqueness which is at the basis of not only poetic genius ... but of every religion ... and of each country. It is quite true that poetry has always corresponded to the desire to recuperate, to mould in a tangible, external forum a unique existence which was first unformed and which would otherwise only have been palpable within something, within an individual or a group.⁶¹

Bataille explores this will toward sovereignty in the context of the human imperative (reinforced by capitalism) to "spend" or "accumulate." He historically analyzes this situation, viewing both Romanticism and the workers' movement as a rebellion against the instrumentalization of human activity inherent in capitalism. He maintains that the celebration of the individual in Romanticism merely invites bourgeois recuperation, for

the only constant element among individuals is interest

⁶¹Bataille, "Baudelaire," in Literature and Evil, 46.

in increasing resources which the capitalist enterprises have the opportunity of satisfying. The individual is therefore the goal of bourgeois society...⁶²

I believe that his observation, combined with Lefebvre's analysis of erotic imagery, aptly accounts for Picasso's position as the recuperated radical. Instrumentalized by the P.C.F. via the hero myth of French reconstruction, and commodified as the individual by the postwar arts and entertainment industry, Picasso's attempt to reclaim his self nevertheless functioned within the very logic of consumerist subjectivity. Seeking affirmation from the institutions that alienated him, Picasso participated in the hegemonic construction of the great man, turning himself into the manufacturer of willful, but increasingly empty gestures toward possession figured through the female body.

⁶²Ibid., 56.

CONCLUSION

I have argued throughout this dissertation that utility and productivity were forces that fundamentally shaped French experience in the postwar period. The project of making France grand again after a war that devastated the country materially and psychically, required the production of heroes and goods in which people could figuratively and literally invest. Much of this work empowered a few at the expense of many, who surrendered much of themselves in order to work for and buy into what they supposed would be freedom. Although Picasso most certainly benefitted from his status as a heroic figure--he had all the physical trappings of success--he too suffered from the social imperative to produce and consume, although in his case, he was the commodity. Picasso's work to reclaim himself in the face of his de-humanization drove him into projects in which he attempted to supersede his artistic forefathers and sexually dominate his female models. Such an aggressive strategy itself was not new for Picasso; its increasingly frenzied and obsessive application was. This desperate machismo of Picasso's later years was fueled by the artist's understanding that as he aged, he would eventually become less productive, less able to wage his momentous battle for self-possession.

De Beauvoir concludes her book Old Age, published one year before Picasso died, by asserting that the dismissal of the elderly emphasizes society's demands on individuals' productivity. She poignantly documents how the use value of older people declines as their material contributions fall off, a hard reality that Picasso desperately fought, for his level of production radically increased as he became older. The repetitive, often agitated character of the works that comprise his series Women of Algiers, Las Meninas, and Déjeuner sur l'herbe suggests a subjectivity assaulted by the need to produce. De Beauvoir's meditations on Sartre's constant struggle (heightened as he aged) to perform--motivated by his difficulty in recognizing his own value apart from public acclaim--describes a dynamic that I have charted in Picasso's later career. De Beauvoir's quotes from Leiris, in which he maintains that art is a dying man's last resource when the world's expectations become harder to fulfill, eloquently speak to Picasso's retreat into the realm of art to win back his self-possession.

In Old Age, de Beauvoir writes:

Society cares about the individual only in so far as he is profitable. The young know this. Their anxiety as they enter in upon social life matches the anguish of the old as they are exhausted from it. Between these two ages, the problem is hidden by routine. The young man dreads this machine that is about to seize hold of him, and sometimes he tries to defend himself by throwing half-bricks; the old man, rejected by it, exhausted and naked, has nothing left but his eyes to weep with. Between youth and age there turns the machine, the crusher of men--men who let themselves be crushed because it never occurs to them

that they can escape it. Once we have understood what the state of the aged really is, we cannot satisfy ourselves with calling for a more generous "old-age policy," higher pensions, decent housing and organized leisure. It is the whole system that is at issue and our claims cannot be otherwise than radical--change life itself.¹

Although I have argued that Picasso was a recuperated radical, there is a radical lesson to be learned from the artist's later work: de Beauvoir's insistence that life itself change so that we are not crushed by labor and investments that we (wrongly) suppose secure our liberty. Picasso understood that such change can only occur when the true freedom of creativity meets up with the power of political insurgency. Sadly, he did not live at a point in history when, to quote Debord, "the suppression and the realization of art ... [were] inseparable aspects of a single supersession of art."²

¹Simone de Beauvoir, Old Age, trans. Patrick O'Brian (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1986), 604.

²Guy Debord, Society of the Spectacle (1967; reprint, Detroit: Black & Red, 1983), statement 191.

**POPULATIONS
abandonnées,**



***faites confiance*
AU SOLDAT ALLEMAND!**

Fig. 1. T. Matejko, Populations abandonnées, faites confiance au soldat allemand!, 1940. German Poster. Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, Nanterre.



Fig. 2. Légion Française sheet music, n.d. Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, Nanterre.



Fig. 3. Eschen, 1^{er} Anniversaire de La Légion, 1941. Poster. Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, Nanterre.

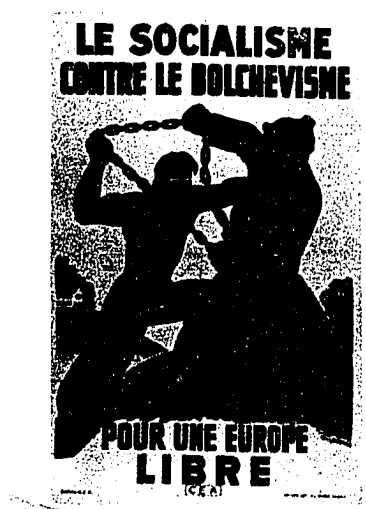


Fig. 4. Le Socialisme contre le bolchevisme. Pour une Europe Libre, 1942-43. German Poster. Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, Nanterre.



Fig. 5. Jean Breton, Engagez-vous: Légion Volontaires contre le bolchevisme, 1942. Poster. Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, Nanterre.



Fig. 6. Olivier, Gagner la guerre, reconstruire la France.
M.L.N.: Mouvement de Libération Nationale, n.d. Poster, 150
 x 99 cm. Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale
 Contemporaine, Nanterre.

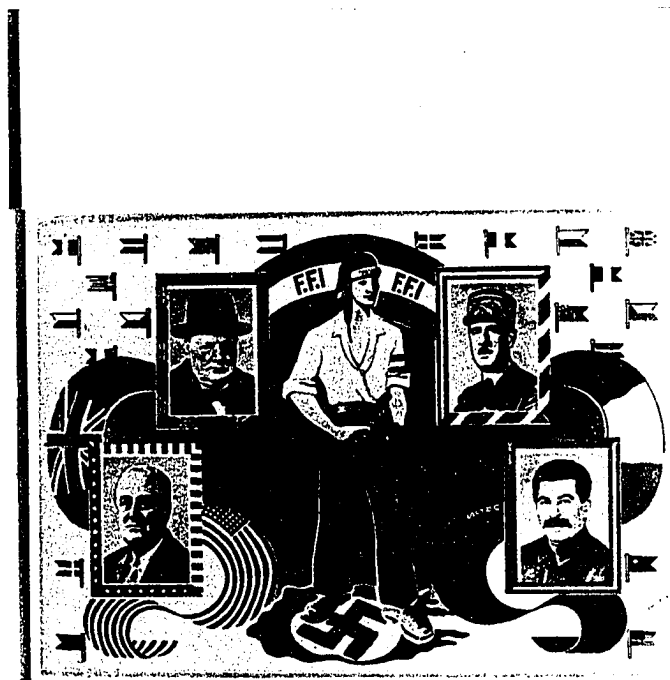


Fig. 8. F.F.I., n.d. Poster for the Mouvement de Libération Nationale, 41 x 58 cm. Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, Nanterre.



Fig. 9. Pik, Victoire, n.d. Poster, 63 x 48 cm.
Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine,
Nanterre.



Fig. 10. Victory calendar, 1945. 32 x 24.5 cm. Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, Nanterre.



Fig. 11. Robert Habert and B. Minne, Le Front National: Libérateur de Nice, 1944. Poster. Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, Nanterre.



Fig. 12. Boris Taslitzky, Stalin Visits Thorez in 1951, 1953. Oil on canvas. Reproduced in the 15-22 May 1953 edition of Les Lettres françaises.



Fig. 13. Pablo Picasso, Portrait of Maurice Thorez, 23 May 1945. Pencil on paper. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 14, no. 110.

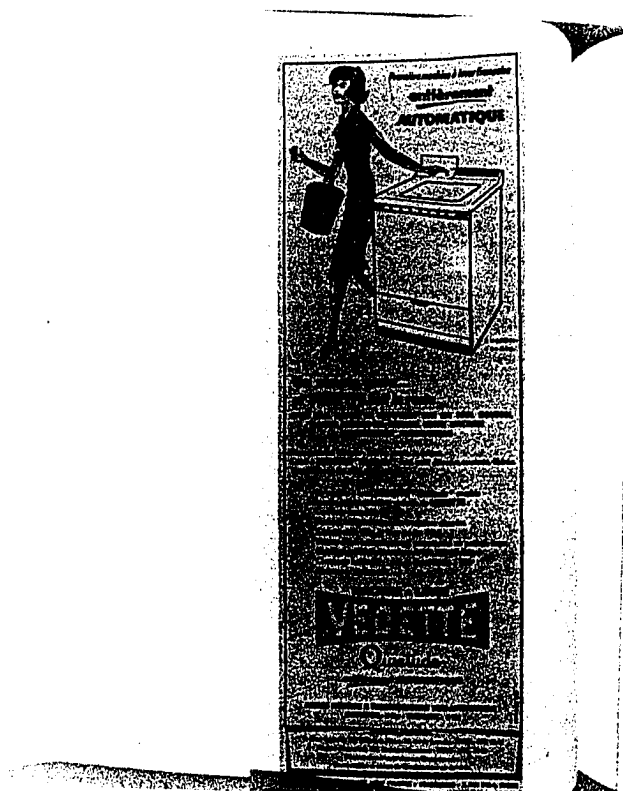


Fig. 14. Vedette washing machine advertisement, 1959.
 Reproduced in Claire Laubier, ed., The Condition of Women in
 France, 1945 to the Present: A Documentary Anthology,
 Twentieth Century French Texts, ed. J.E. Flowers (London:
 Routledge, 1990), 32.



Fig. 15. Winston cigarette advertisement, 1959. Reproduced in Claire Laubier, ed., The Condition of Women in France, 1945 to the Present: A Documentary Anthology, Twentieth Century French Texts, ed. J.E. Flowers (London: Routledge, 1990), 39.



Fig. 16. Jacques Prévert and Pablo Picasso at the Galerie Madoura in Vallauris, 1950. Photograph by P. Manciet. Reproduced in Centre Georges Pompidou, Picasso à l'écran (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou and la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1992), 30.



Fig. 17. Pablo Picasso and Michel Leiris at La Californie, Cannes, n.d. Photograph, D.R. Collection Jean-Jamin. Reproduced in Michel Leiris, Un génie sans piédestal et autres écrits sur Picasso, with a Foreword by Marie-Laure Bernadac (Paris: Fourbis, 1992), frontispiece.

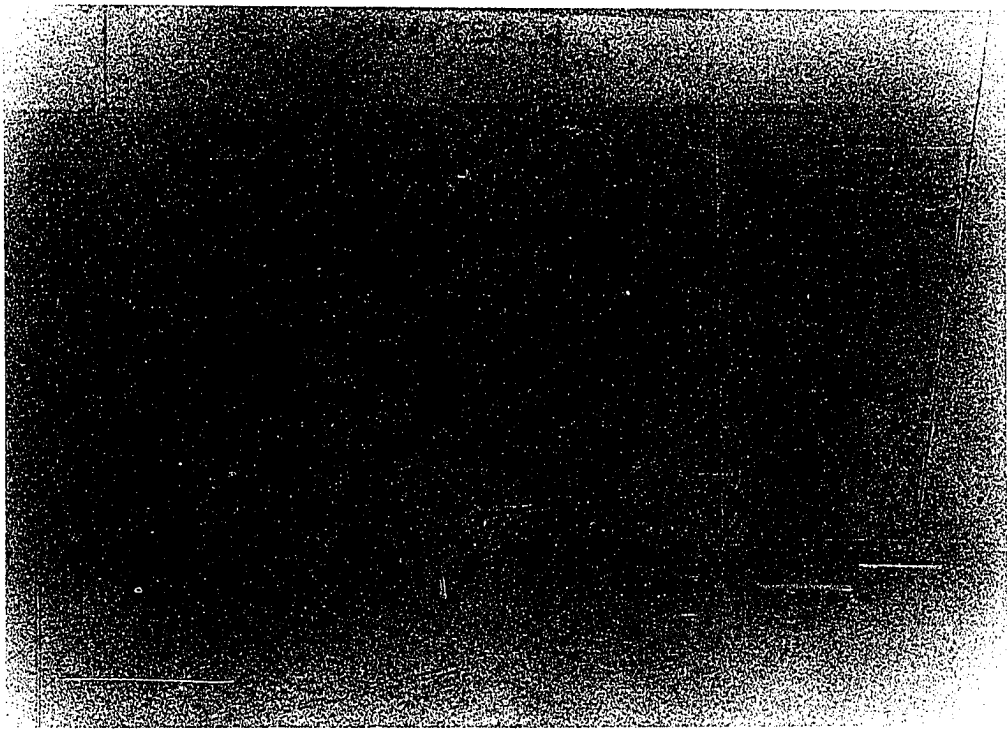


Fig. 18. Pablo Picasso, Portrait of Maurice Thorez, 23 May 1945. Pencil on paper. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 14, no. 111.

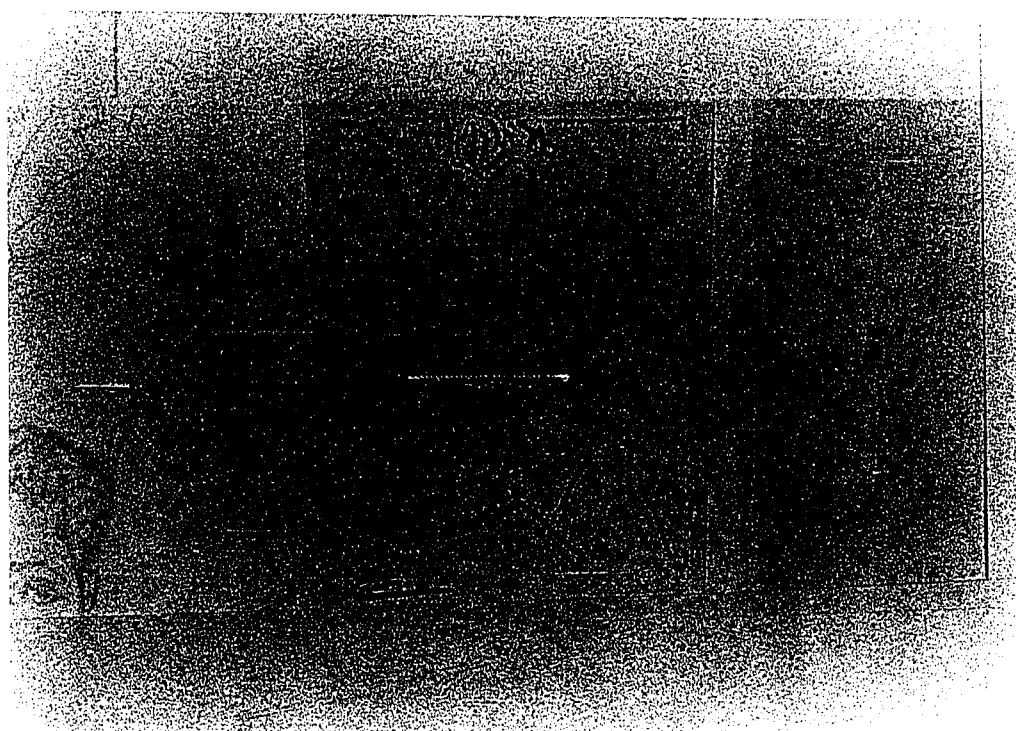


Fig. 19. Pablo Picasso, Portrait of Nikos Belayonnis, 1952. Drawing reproduced in the 13 March 1952 edition of Les Lettres françaises.



Fig. 20. Pablo Picasso, Portrait of Henri Martin, 1952.
Drawing. Musée Saint-Denis.



Fig. 21. Pablo Picasso, Peace Dove, 1949. Photo-lithograph, 60 x 73 cm. Musée Picasso, Antibes. Reproduced in the 24 March 1949 edition of Les Lettres françaises.



Fig. 22. Advertisement for handkerchiefs decorated with Paul Éluard poetry and Picasso drawings from Visage de la Paix, reproduced in the 1-8 October 1953 edition of Les Lettres françaises.



Fig. 23. Advertisement for a plate decorated with a drawing by Pablo Picasso from Visage de la Paix, reproduced in the 27 May - 3 June 1954 edition of Les Lettres françaises.

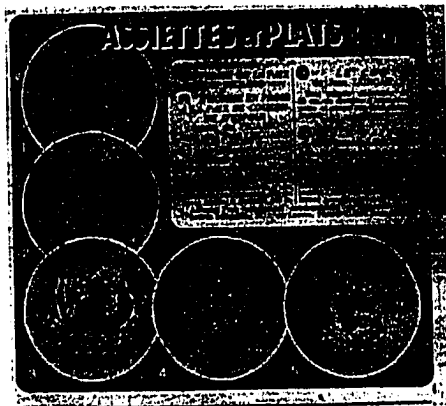


Fig. 24. Advertisement for plates decorated by artists including Pablo Picasso, reproduced in the 19-26 November 1953 edition of Les Lettres françaises.



Fig. 25. Photograph of Pablo Picasso and his daughter Paloma on the cover of the 11 October 1952 edition of Femmes Françaises.



Fig. 26. Pablo Picasso, Massacre in Korea, 18 January 1951.
Oil on plywood, 110 x 210 cm. Musée Picasso, Paris.



Fig. 27. André Fougeron, Les Parisiennes au Marché, 1947.
Oil on canvas, 190 x 126.9 cm. Collection of the artist.



Fig. 28. Pablo Picasso, Portrait of Josef Stalin, 8 March 1953. Drawing to commemorate the death of Stalin reproduced in the 12-19 March 1953 edition of Les Lettres françaises.

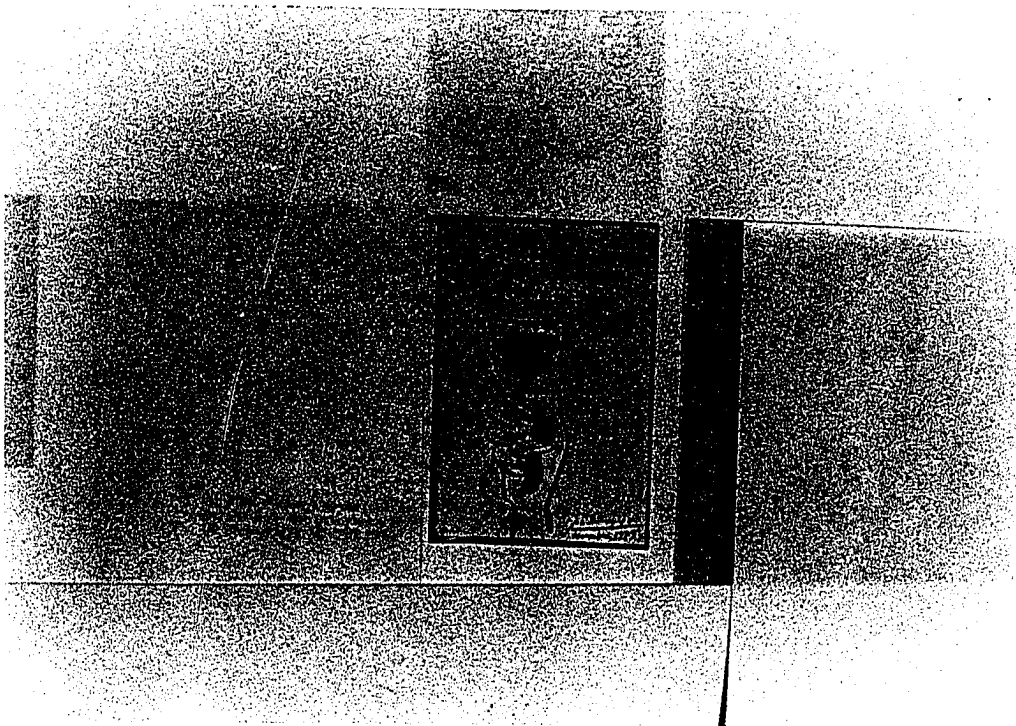


Fig. 29. Pablo Picasso, A ta santé, 1949. Drawing to commemorate the seventieth birthday of Stalin, reproduced in the 9 March 1950 issue of Les Lettres françaises.



Fig. 30. André Fougeron. Défense Nationale, 1951. Oil on canvas, 325 x 225 cm. Museum of Bucharest.

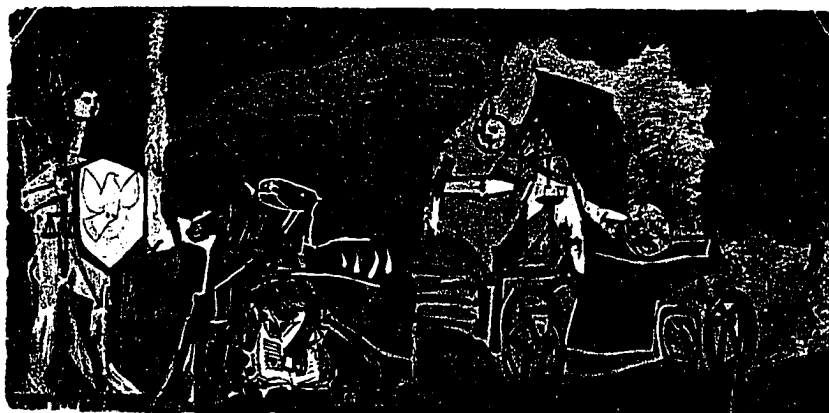


Fig. 31. Pablo Picasso, War, 1952-53. Oil on isorel, 470 x 1024 cm. Peace Chapel, Vallauris.



Fig. 32. Pablo Picasso, Peace, 1952-53. Oil on isorel, 470 x 1024 cm. Peace Chapel, Vallauris.

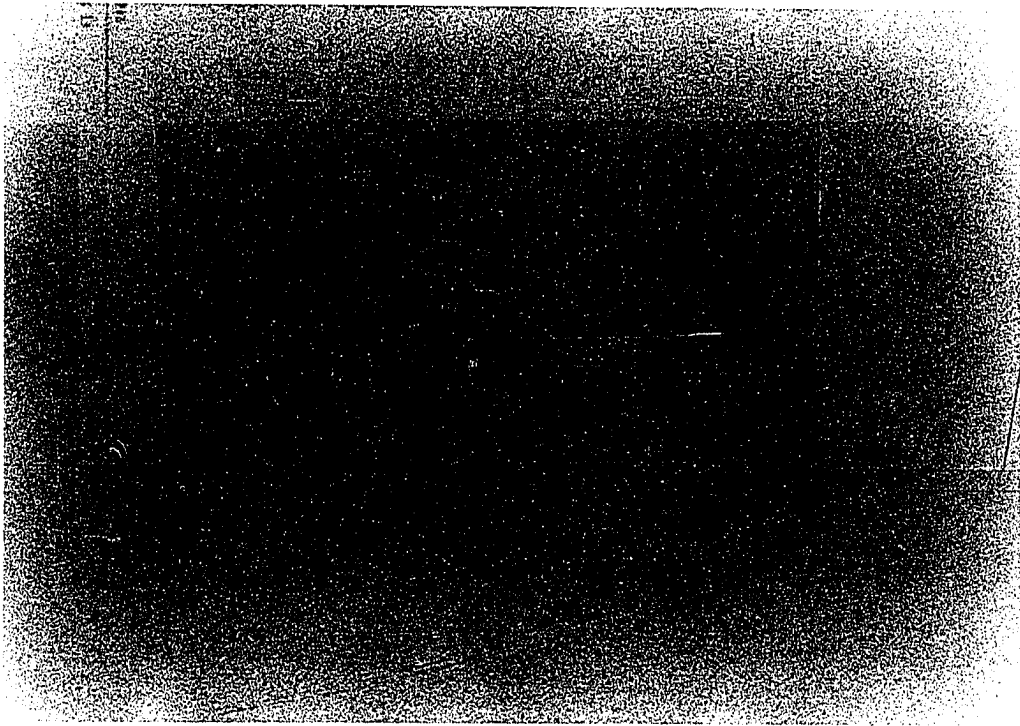


Fig. 33. Pablo Picasso, from the Verve series, 19 January 1954 (VII). Ink on paper, 24 x 32 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 16, no. 193.



Fig. 34. Pablo Picasso, The Shadow, 29 December 1953. Oil on canvas, 130 x 196 cm. Musée Picasso, Paris.



Fig. 35. Pablo Picasso, The Shadow on the Woman, 30 December 1953. Oil on canvas, 130.7 x 97.7 cm. Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.



Fig. 36. Pablo Picasso, Nude in the Studio, 30 December 1953. Oil on canvas, 89 x 116 cm. Private collection.



Fig. 37. Pablo Picasso, from the Verve series, 5 January 1954. Ink on paper, 32 x 24 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 16, no. 130.



Fig. 38. Pablo Picasso, from the Verve series, 21 December 1953. Ink wash and gouache on paper, 35 x 26.5 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 16, no. 77.

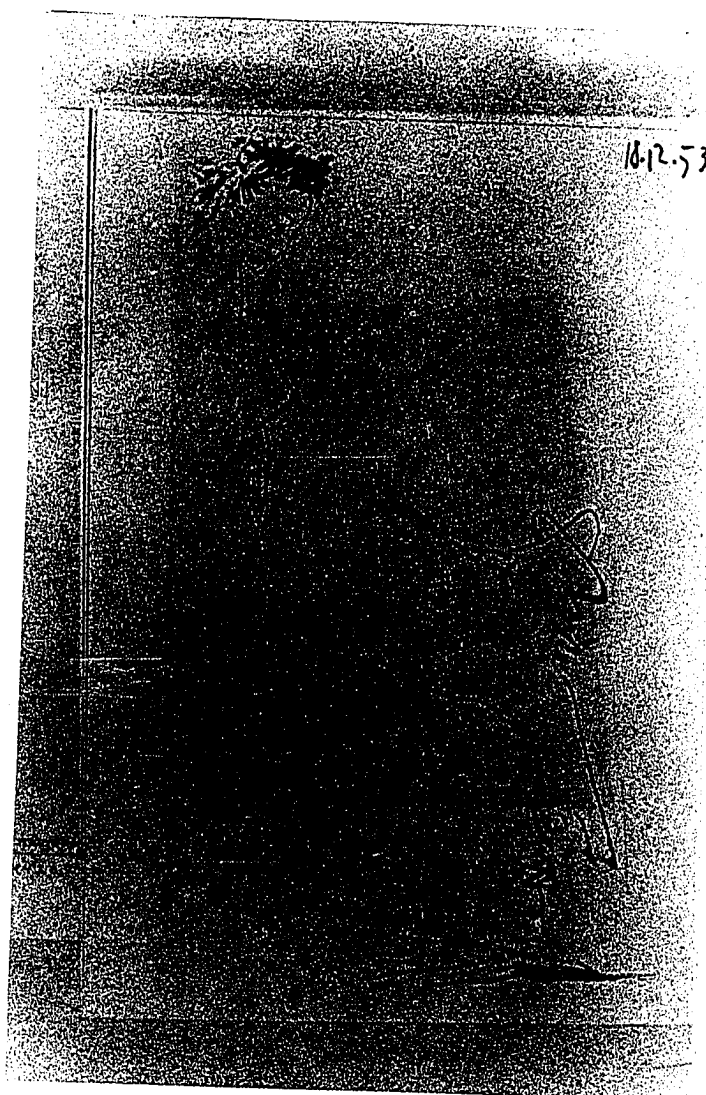


Fig. 39. Pablo Picasso, from the Verve series, 18 December 1953. Ink on paper, 35 x 26.5 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vo. 16, no. 67.



Fig. 40. Pablo Picasso, from the Verve series, 5 January 1954. Ink on paper, 32 x 24 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 16, no. 132.



Fig. 41. Pablo Picasso, from the Verve series, 10 January 1954 (VIII). Ink on paper, 24 x 32 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 16, no. 169.



Fig. 42. Pablo Picasso, from the Verve series, 11 January 1954. Ink on paper, 24 x 32 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 16, no. 178.

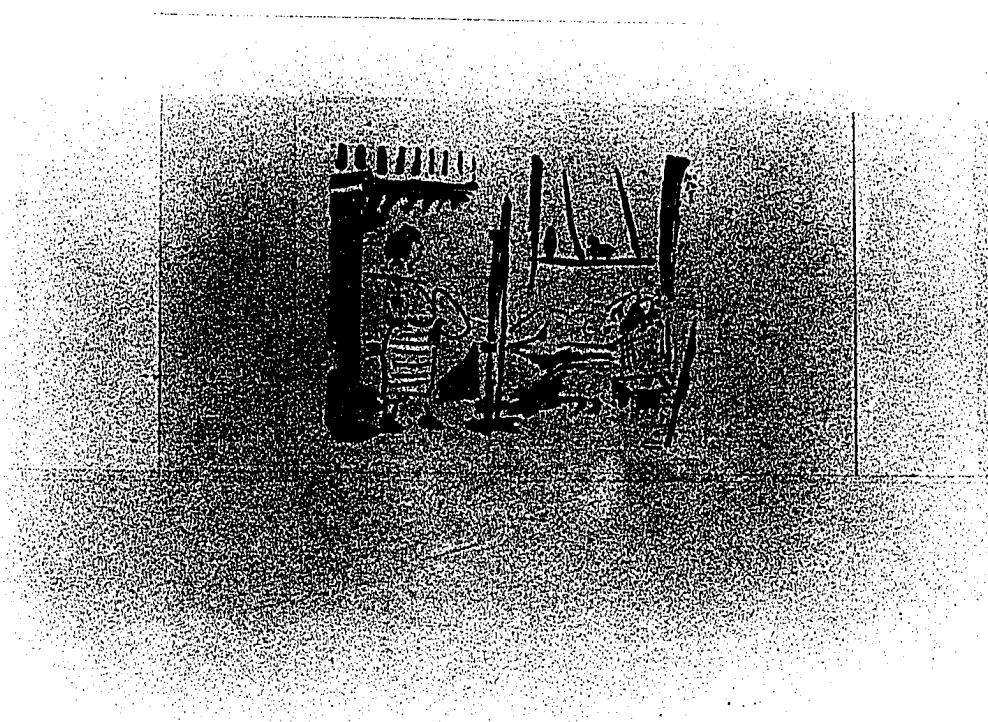


Fig. 43. Pablo Picasso, from the Verve series, 20 January 1954 (I). Ink on paper, 24 x 32 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 16, no. 194.

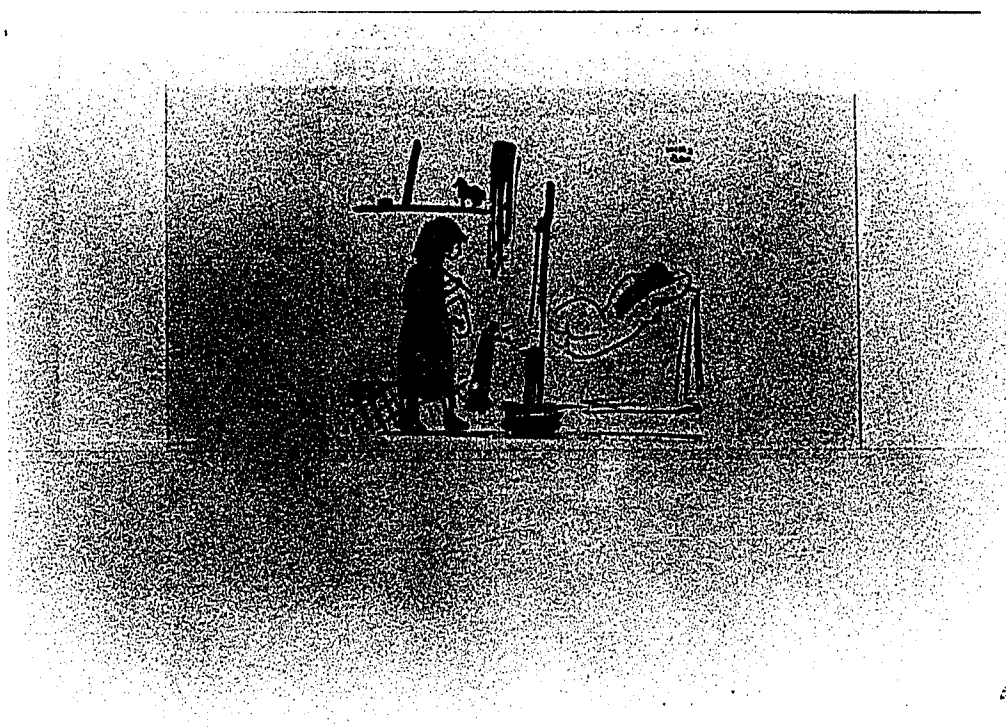


Fig. 44. Pablo Picasso, from the Verve series, 20 January 1954 (III). Ink on paper, 24 x 32 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 16, no. 196.



Fig. 45. Pablo Picasso, from the Verve series, 21 January 1954 (I). Ink wash on paper, 24 x 32 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 16, no. 200.

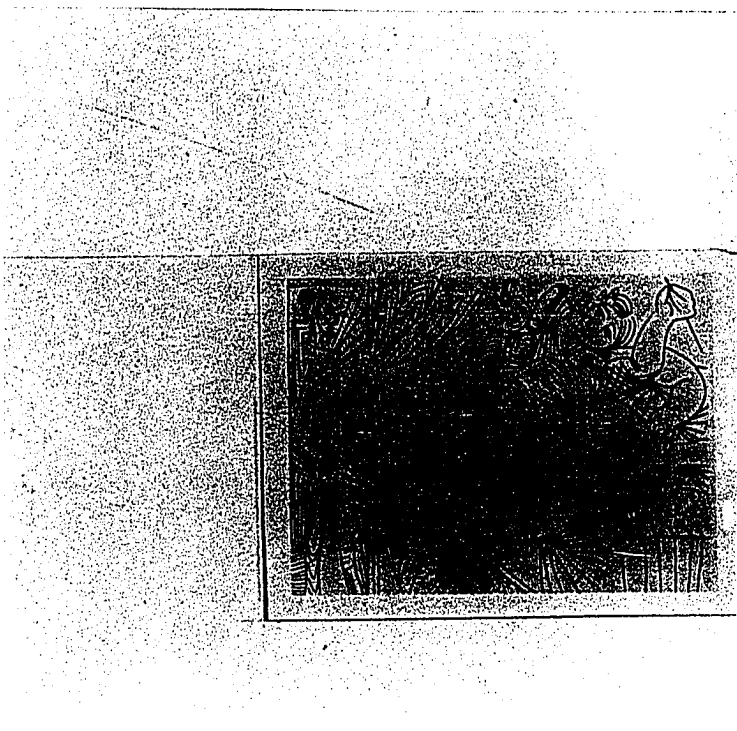


Fig. 46. Pablo Picasso, Raphael and La Fornarina, 8 September 1968 (II). Etching, 15 x 20.5 cm. Reproduced in Bloch, vol. 2, no. 1797.

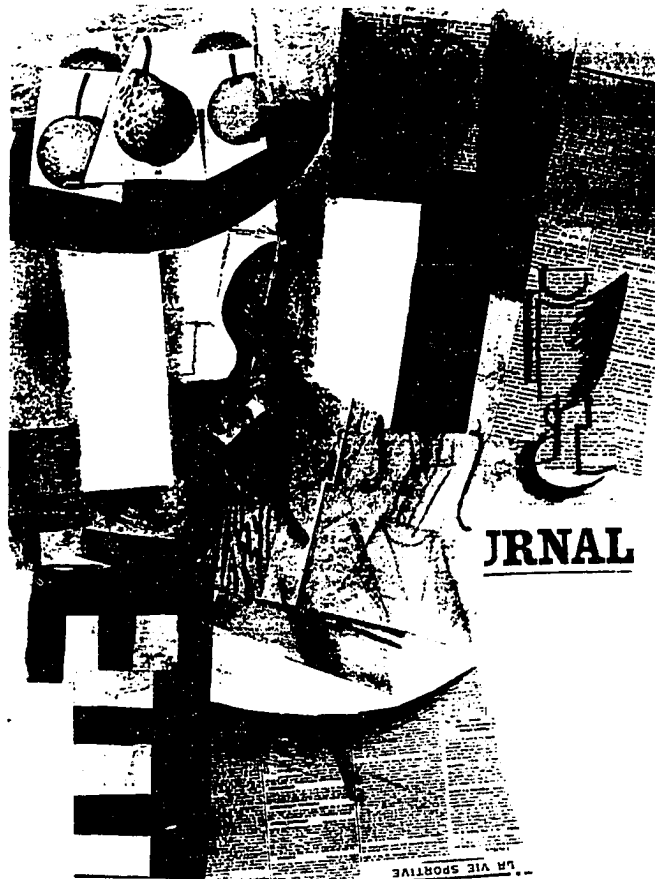


Fig. 47. Pablo Picasso, Violin and Fruit, 1913. Paper, charcoal, and gouache on paperboard, 63.4 x 48.8 cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art.



Fig. 48. Pablo Picasso, The Peasant's Repast, 1917-18.
Oil on canvas, 161.6 x 116.3 cm. Musée Picasso, Paris.

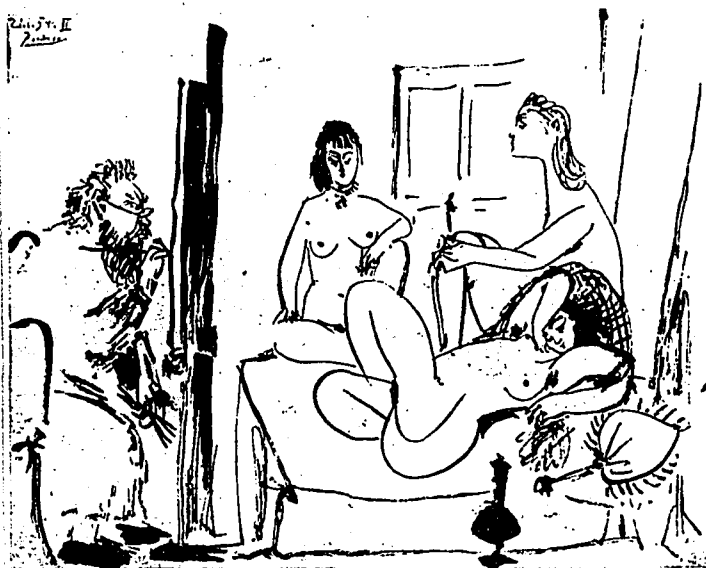


Fig. 49. Pablo Picasso, from the Verve series, 21 January 1954 (III). Ink wash on paper, 24 x 32 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 16, no. 202.



Fig. 50. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 21 December 1954 (II). Ink on paper, 34.5 x 43 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 16, no. 344.

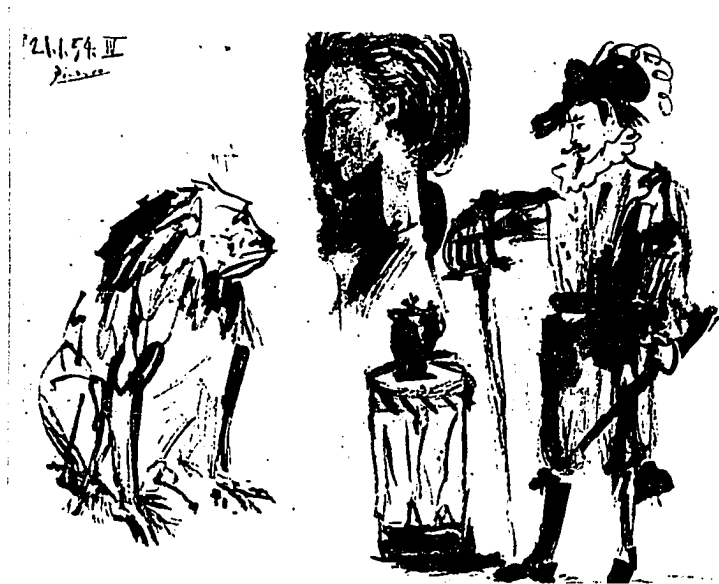


Fig. 51. Pablo Picasso, drawing of 21 January 1954 (IV). Ink wash on paper, 24 x 32 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 16, no. 203.



Fig. 52. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 13 December 1954.
Oil on canvas, 60 x 73 cm. Private collection, New York.



Fig. 53. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 13 December 1954.
Oil on canvas, 60 x 73 cm. Private collection, Nevada.



Fig. 54. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 28 December 1954.
Oil on canvas, 54 x 65.1 cm. Mr. and Mrs. Victor Ganz
Collection, New York.

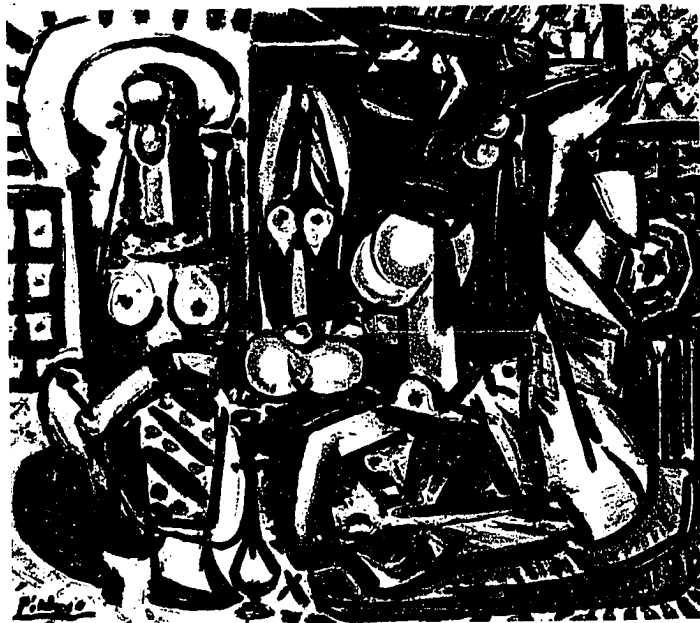


Fig. 55. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 1 January 1955.
Oil on canvas, 46 x 54.9 cm. Private collection.



Fig. 56. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 16 January 1955.
Oil on canvas, 46 x 54.9 cm. Private collection, Nevada.



Fig. 57. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 17 January 1955. Oil on canvas, 54 x 65.1 cm. Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Saidenberg Collection, New York.



Fig. 58. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 24 January 1955.
Oil on canvas, 129.8 x 161.9 cm. Mr. and Mrs. Victor Ganz
Collection, New York.



Fig. 59. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 25 January 1955.
Oil on canvas, 97 x 130 cm. Galerie Beyeler, Switzerland.



Fig. 60. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 26 January 1955.
Oil on canvas, 114 x 46 cm. Private collection, New York.



Fig. 61. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 6 February 1955.
Oil on canvas, 129.8 x 161.9 cm. Mr. and Mrs. Victor Ganz
Collection, New York.



Fig. 62. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 11 February 1955.
Oil on canvas, 130.2 x 194.9 cm. Mr. and Mrs. Victor Ganz
Collection, New York.

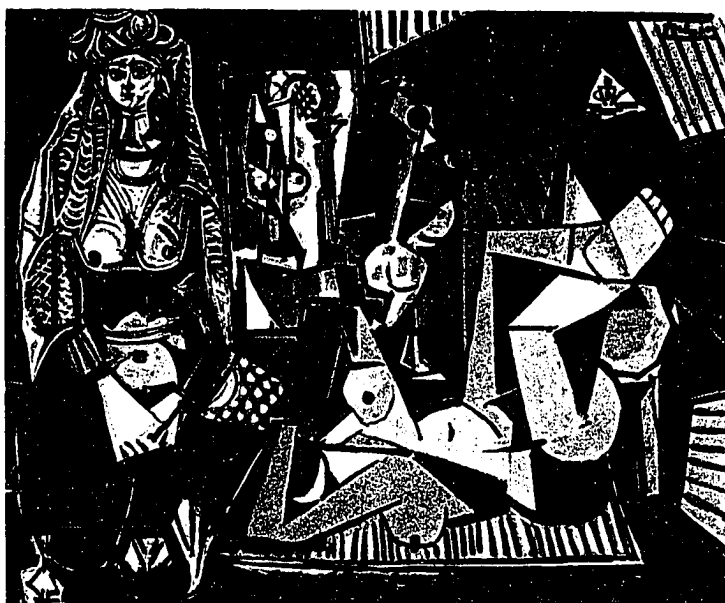


Fig. 63. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 14 February 1955. Oil on canvas, 14 February 1955. Oil on canvas, 113.9 x 146 cm. Mr. and Mrs. Victor Ganz Collection, New York.



Fig. 64. Eugène Delacroix, Women of Algiers, 1834. Oil on canvas, 227 x 177 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Fig. 65. Eugène Delacroix, Women of Algiers, 1849. Oil on canvas, 111 x 84 cm. Musée Fabre, Montpellier.

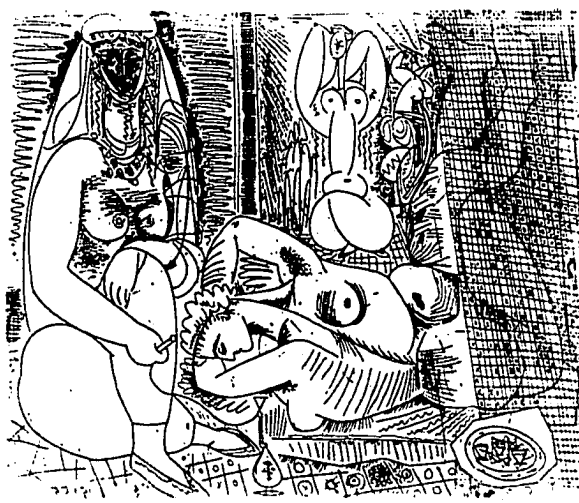


Fig. 66. Pablo Picasso, Women of Algiers, 15 January 1955.
Etching, 23.7 x 29.8 cm. Musée Picasso, Paris.



Fig. 67. Maitres d'hier, modèles d'aujourd'hui. Photo-collage reproduced in the 23 May 1953 edition of Samedi Soir.

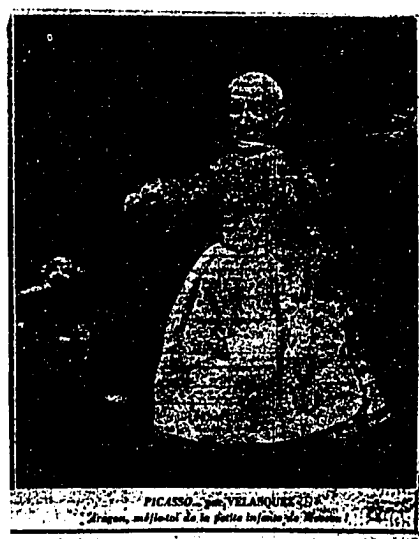


Fig. 68. Detail of Maitres d'hier, modèles d'aujourd'hui. Photo-collage reproduced in the 23 May 1953 edition of Samedi Soir.



Le Cannet, Décembre 56 - quelques jours après la répression sanglante
de la révolution hongroise - tout va manifestement pour le mieux
sur la Côte d'Azur. De gauche à droite: Laurent Casanova, Maurice
Thorez, Aragon, Picasso, Cocteau, Henri Matarasso, Tabaru.

Photo: Paul Louis

Fig. 69. Pablo Picasso with (from left to right), Laurent Casanova, Maurice Thorez, Louis Aragon, Jean Cocteau, Henri Matarasso, and Tabaru in Le Cannet, 1956. Photograph by Paul Louis, reproduced in the Spring 1957 edition of Le Surréalisme même 2.



Fig. 70. Pablo Picasso on the beach at Cannes, 1965.
Photograph by Lucien Clergue.



Fig. 71. Pablo Picasso, The Fall of Icarus, 1958. Oil on wood, 800 x 1000 cm. U.N.E.S.C.O., Paris. Reproduced on the cover of the 16 May 1958 edition of U.N.E.S.C.O. House News/Nouvelles du secrétariat.



Fig. 72. Diego Velázquez, Las Meninas, 1656. Oil on canvas, 310 x 269 cm. Prado, Madrid.

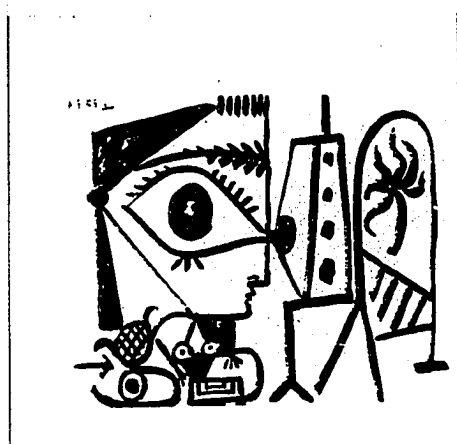


Fig. 73. Pablo Picasso, Woman and Window, 7 June 1956 (VI).
Page from a sketchbook, ink on paper. 33 x 42 cm. Reproduced
in Zervos, vol. 17. no. 115.

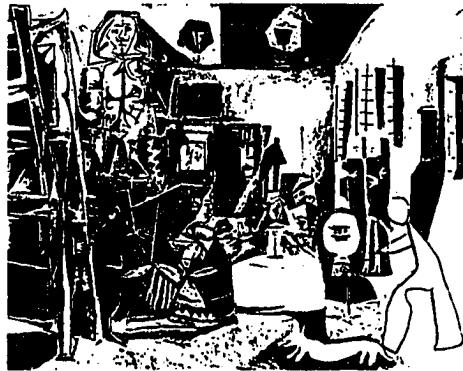


Fig. 74. Pablo Picasso, Las Meninas, 17 August 1957. Oil on canvas. 194 x 240 cm. Museu Picasso, Barcelona.



Fig. 75. Pablo Picasso, Las Meninas, 2 October 1957. Oil on canvas, 162 x 130 cm. Museu Picasso, Barcelona.



Fig. 76. Pablo Picasso, The Piano, 17 October 1957. Oil on canvas, 126.8 x 94.5 cm. Museu Picasso, Barcelona.



Fig. 77. Pablo Picasso, Portrait of Jacqueline, 12 December 1957. Oil on canvas, 113 x 86. 75 cm. Museu Picasso, Barcelona.



Fig. 78. Pablo Picasso, Woman Before a Table, 3 April 1956, reworked 13 November 1957. Linoleum engraving with additions in gouache, 64 x 81 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 17, no. 403.

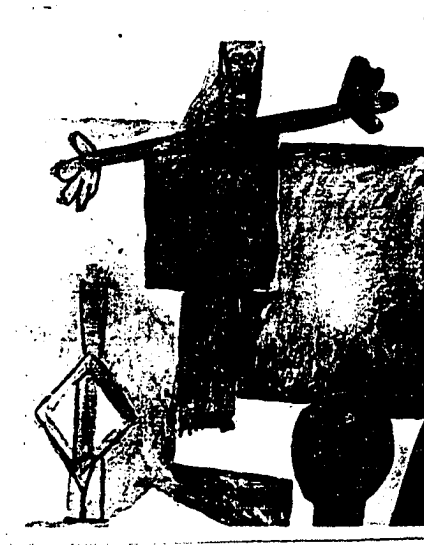


Fig. 79. Pablo Picasso, The Trampoline, 22 July 1957. Oil on canvas, 100 x 81 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 17, no. 171.

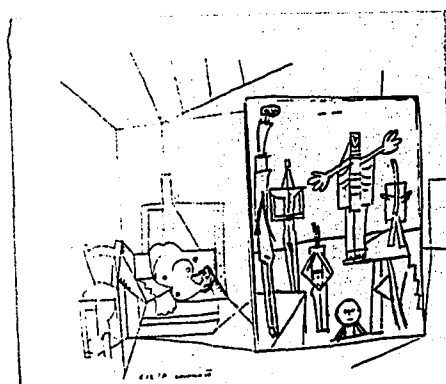


Fig. 80. Pablo Picasso, Study (model in the studio), 15 December 1957 (U.N.E.S.C.O., IV). Pencil and blue crayon on paper. 53 x 66 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 17, no. 416.

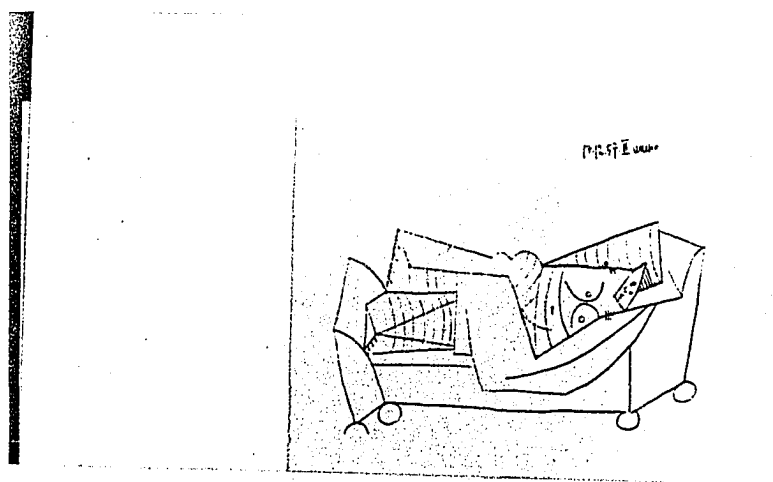


Fig. 81. Pablo Picasso, Sleeping Nude, 17 December 1957
(U.N.E.S.C.O., II). Page from a sketchbook, pencil on paper.
24 x 32 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 17, no. 420.

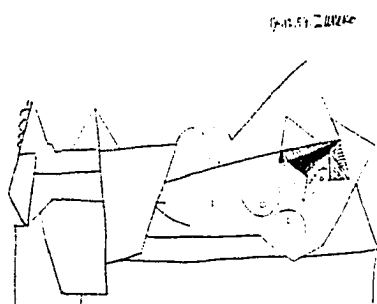


Fig. 82. Pablo Picasso, Sleeping Nude, 17 December 1957 (U.N.E.S.C.O., III). Page from a notebook, pencil on paper, 24 x 32 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 17, no. 421.

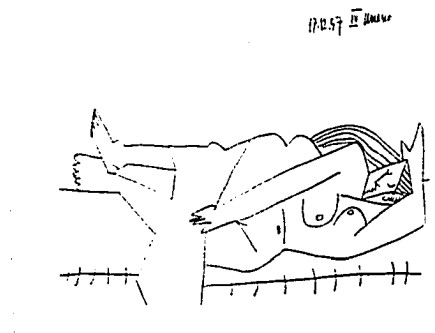


Fig. 83. Pablo Picasso, Sleeping Nude, 17 December 1957 (U.N.E.S.C.O., IV). Page from a sketchbook, pencil on paper, 24 x 32 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 17, no. 422.

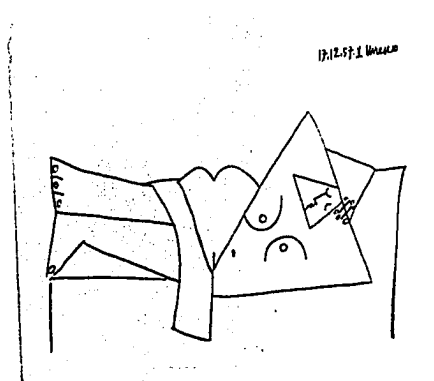


Fig. 84. Pablo Picasso, Sleeping Nude, 17 December 1957 (U.N.E.S.C.O., V). Page from a notebook, pencil on paper, 24 x 32 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 17, no. 423.

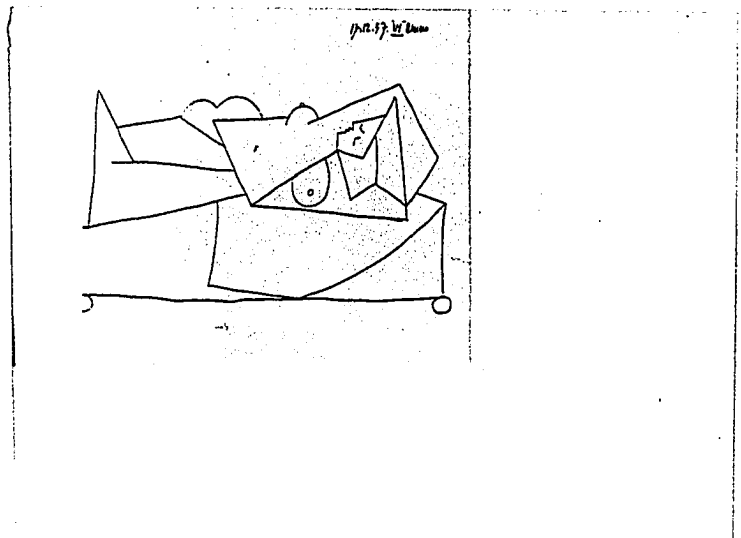


Fig. 85. Pablo Picasso, Sleeping Nude, 17 December 1957 (U.N.E.S.C.O., VI). Page from a notebook, pencil on paper, 24 x 32 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 17, no. 424.



Fig. 86. Edouard Manet. Déjeuner sur l'herbe, 1863. Oil on canvas, 210 x 265 cm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

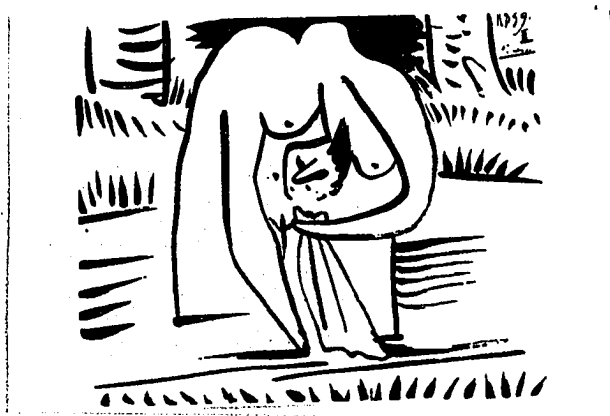


Fig. 87. Pablo Picasso, Study for the Bather from Déjeuner sur l'herbe, 11 August 1959 (II). Wash on paper, 24 x 30 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 19, no. 36.



Fig. 88. Pablo Picasso, Study for the Bather from Déjeuner sur l'herbe, 11 August 1959 (III). India ink on paper, 24 x 30 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 19, no. 35.



Fig. 89. Pablo Picasso, Study for the Bather from Déjeuner sur l'herbe, 11 August 1959 (IV). India ink on paper, 24 x 30 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 19, 37.



Fig. 90. Pablo Picasso, Costume for the Torero Miguel Dominquin, 9 August 1959 (I). Blue crayon on paper, 21 x 17 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 19, 32.

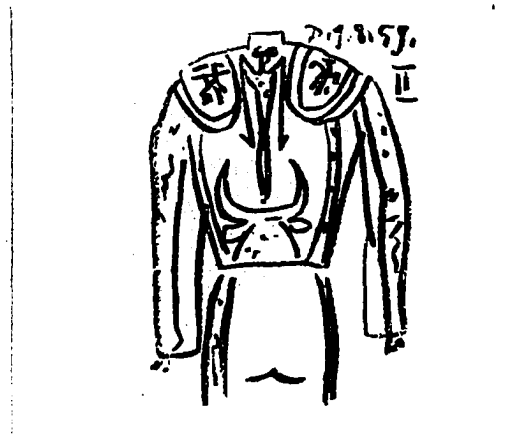


Fig. 91. Pablo Picasso, Costume for the Torero Miguel Dominguin, 9 August 1959 (II). Blue crayon on paper, 21 x 17 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 19, no. 33.

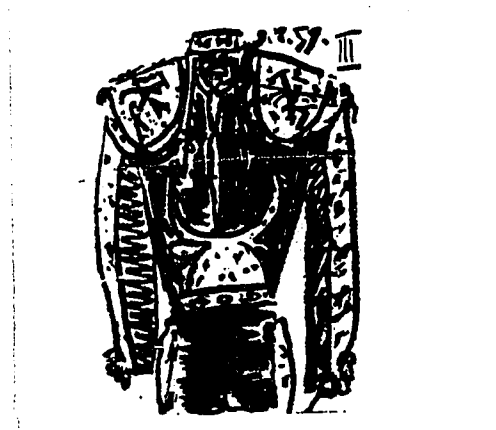


Fig. 92. Pablo Picasso, Costume for the Torero Miguel Dominguin, 9 August 1959 (III). Blue crayon on paper, 21 x 17 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 19, no. 34.



Fig. 93. Pablo Picasso, Study for Déjeuner sur l'herbe, 10 August 1959 (II). Pencil on paper. 32 x 41 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 19, no. 41.



Fig. 94. Pablo Picasso, Courtisanes and Toreros, 16-17 August 1959. Wash on paper. 50 x 65 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 19, no. 52.



Fig. 95. Pablo Picasso, Déjeuner sur l'herbe, 27 February 1960. Oil on canvas, 114 x 146 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 19, no. 200.

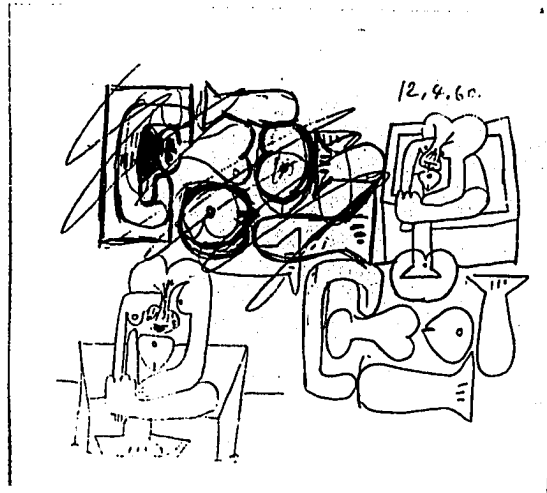


Fig. 96. Pablo Picasso, Studies of a Woman Washing Her Feet, 12 April 1960. Page from a sketchbook, pencil on paper. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 19, no. 234.

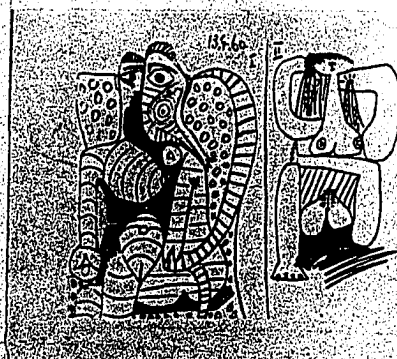


Fig. 97. Pablo Picasso, Two Nudes, 13 April 1960 (I, II).
Page from a sketchbook, pencil on paper. Reproduced in
Zervos, vol. 19, no. 237.

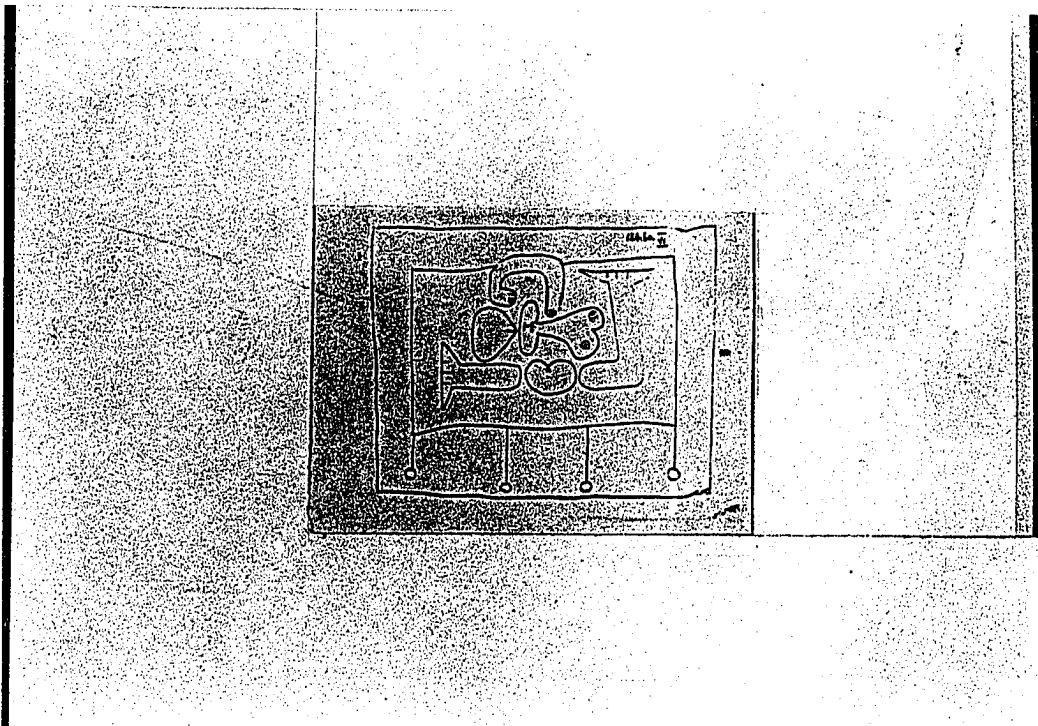


Fig. 98. Pablo Picasso, Nude on a Table, 13 April 1960 (VI). Page from a sketchbook, pencil on paper. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 19, no. 241.

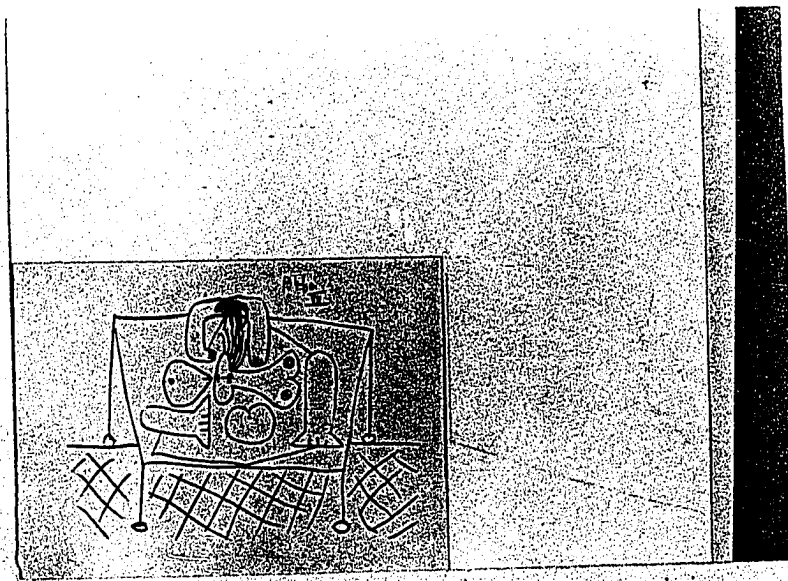


Fig. 99. Pablo Picasso, Nude on a Table, 13 April 1960 (VII). Page from a sketchbook, pencil on paper. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 19, no. 242.

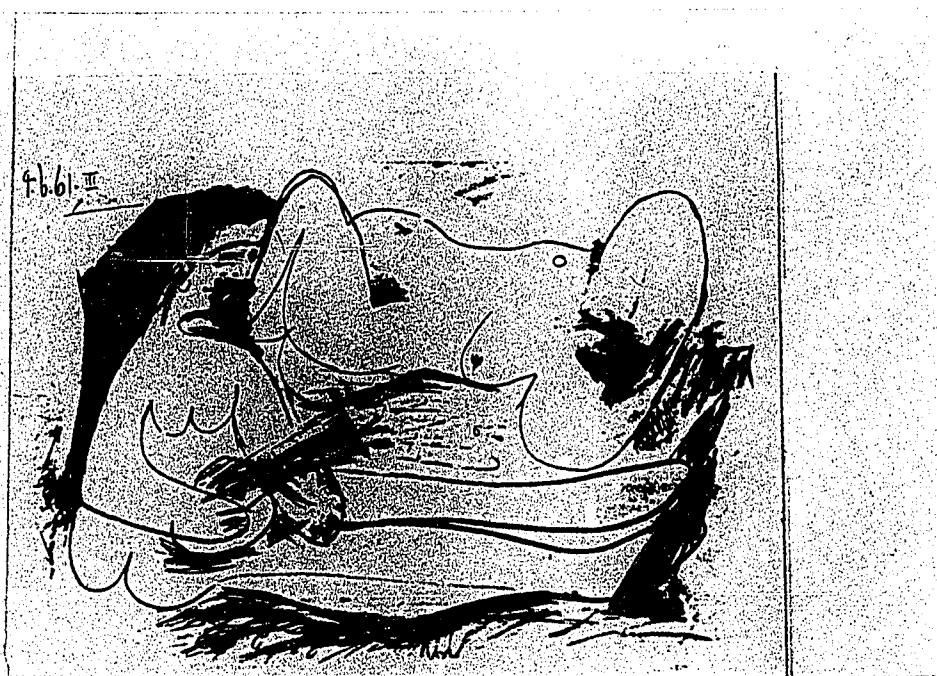


Fig. 100. Pablo Picasso, Les Déjeuners, 4 June 1961 (III). Crayon on paper, 33 x 50 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 20, no. 13.

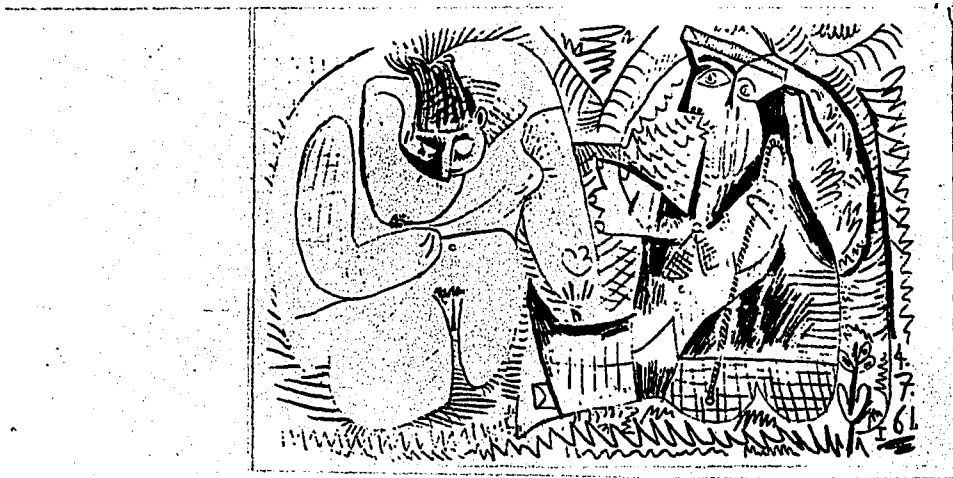


Fig. 101. Pablo Picasso, Les Déjeuners, 4 July 1961 (I).
Crayon on paper, 33 x 50 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 20,
no. 56.

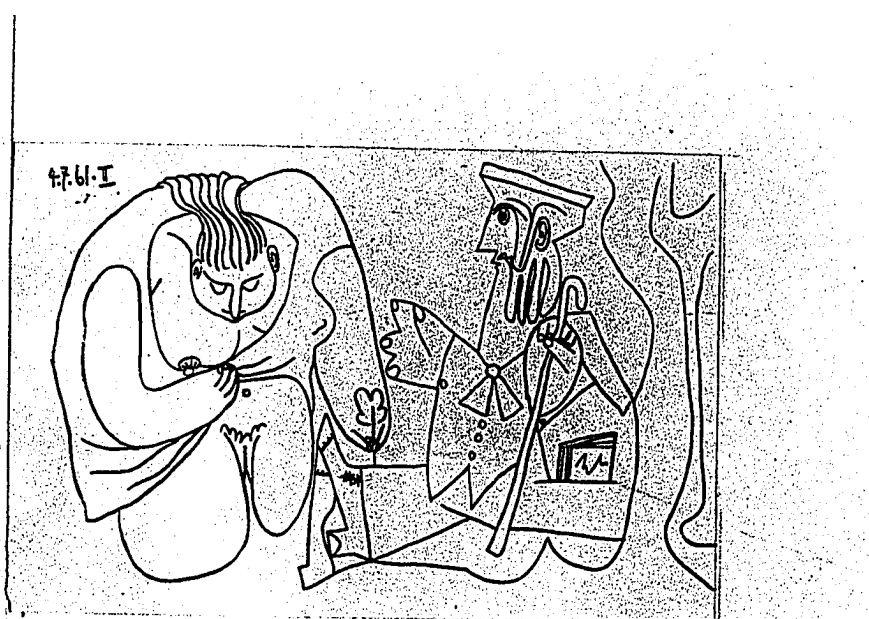


Fig. 102. Pablo Picasso, Les Déjeuners, 4 July 1961 (II). Crayon on paper, 33 x 50 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 20, no. 57.



Fig. 103. Pablo Picasso, Les Déjeuners, 22 August 1961 (I). Crayon on paper, 27 x 37 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 20, no. 120.

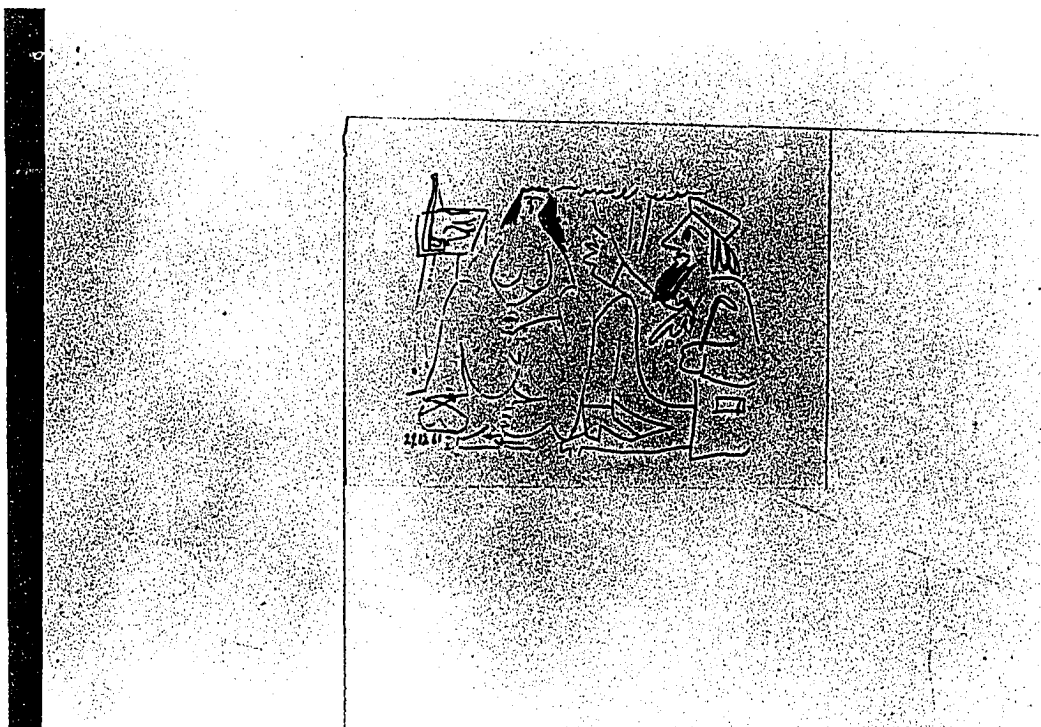


Fig. 104. Pablo Picasso, Les Déjeuners, 29 December 1961 (II). Crayon on paper, 24 x 32 cm. Reproduced in Zervos, vol. 20, no. 172.

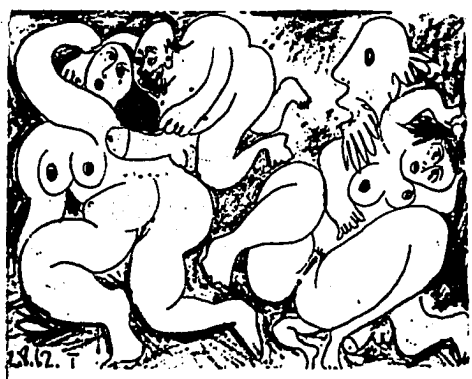


Fig. 105. Pablo Picasso, Les Déjeuners, 8 February 1962
(I). Page from a sketchbook, pencil and crayon on paper, 23
x 32 cm. Sketchbook no. 165, p. 36.

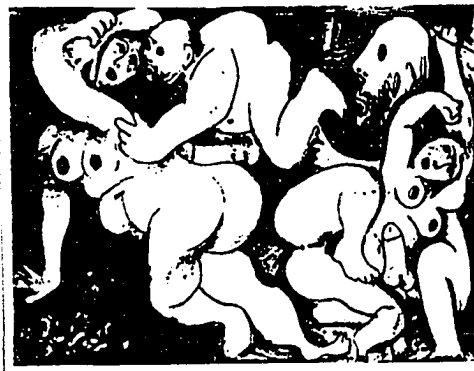


Fig. 106. Pablo Picasso, Les Déjeuners, 8 February 1962
(II). Page from a sketchbook, pencil and crayon on paper, 23
x 32 cm. Sketchbook no. 165, p. 37.



Fig. 107. Pablo Picasso, Portrait of Djamila Boupacha, 8 December 1961. Drawing reproduced in the 8-14 February 1962 edition of Les Lettres françaises and in Simone de Beauvoir and Gisèle Halimi, Djamila Boupacha (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), frontispiece.



Fig. 108. Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Raphael and La Fornarina, 1840. Oil on canvas, 35 x 27 cm. Private collection, United States.



Fig. 109. Pablo Picasso, Raphael and La Fornarina, 4 September 1968 (II). Etching, 15 x 20.5 cm. Galerie Louise Leiris, Paris.

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