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PABLO AND FERNANDE:

Portrait of Picasso

as a Young Man

an interpretive biography

by

Norman Mailer

To Mike  
Once again an inscription  
given in full pleasure. One  
cannot always say that  
Cheers, old Duddy  
Norman

|           |                             |
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Exhibit

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Part I:

I, the King

To read

## Preface

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To come



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Picasso, delivered at 11:15 P.M. in the city of Málaga, October 25, 1881, came out still-born. He did not breathe, neither did he cry. The midwife gave up and turned her attention to the mother. If it had not been for the presence of his uncle, Dr. Salvador Ruiz, the infant might never have come to life. Don Salvador, however, leaned over the inert delivery, and exhaled cigar smoke into its nostrils. Picasso stirred. Picasso screamed. A genius came to life. His first breath must have entered on a rush of fecal-smelling smoke,

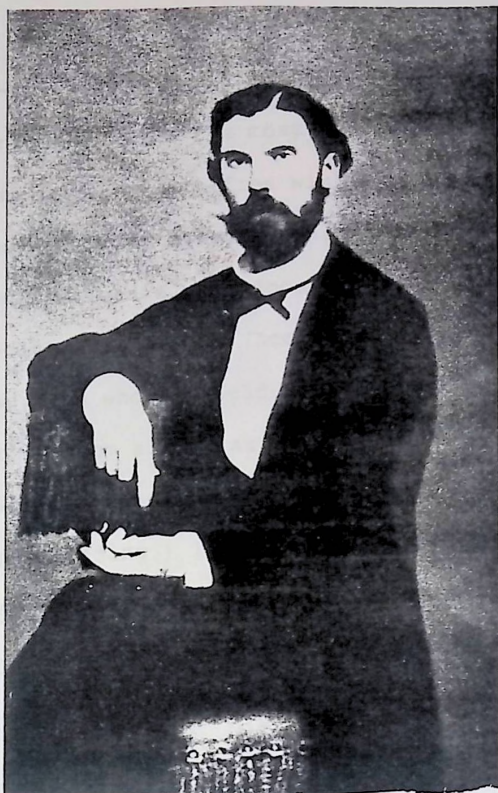
searing to the throat, scorching to the lungs, and laced with the stimulants of nicotine. It is not unfair to say that the harsh spirit of tobacco is seldom absent from his later work.

Since such family accounts are open to exaggeration, Don Salvador may not actually have shocked the newborn into life. All the same, the story is agreeable. It explains much. Spanish surgeons, for example, do not like to give anesthesia to gored toreros when cleaning out the wound. Their premise is that the body will heal faster if it has suffered the pain; it must be quintessentially Spanish to assume that reality is the indispensable element in a cure. Don Salvador could have been offering that whiff of smoke as an objective correlative: "Wake up, niño," might have been the message: "Life in these parts will smell no worse than this."

While rapid summary is cousin to gross summary, a quick pass ought to be taken through the milieu surrounding the infant. Picasso's father, José Ruiz Blasco, was the next-to-youngest son in a large family which could trace its way back to a few aristocratic ancestors. One of them, Juan de León, a knight renowned for bravery, was killed in 1481 in the battle of Granada and another had been an Archbishop of Lima who became a Captain-General of Peru in the seventeenth century. By 1850, however, the family was middle-class;

Picasso's paternal grandfather manufactured gloves. While several of his sons became successful professionals: a doctor, a diplomat of lower rank, a canon in the cathedral, Picasso's father, José, who called himself a painter, did not work too hard at it as a young man, and was for a time a man about town.





*Pinasse, Secret Museum, p. 12*



Tall, elegant, blue-eyed, he was titled "the Englishman" by his Malagueño friends and was easily the most spoiled member of the family, even managing to live rent-free with his older brother Pablo, the canon. Keeping himself apart from serious romantic attachments, he indulged a well-documented predilection for upper-class brothels. (According to Picasso's Catalan biographer Palau, the whores would await their clients "in a conventional sitting-room almost as if they were daughters of the bourgeoisie," and the mise-en-scène would include knitting, sewing, reading.) [Palau, Picasso: Life and Work of the Early Years 1881-1907, p. 22] For its illustrative suggestion of the mise-en-scène, we can take a look at a canvas of the period by Cezanne.

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14. INTERIOR WITH GIRL PLAYING THE PIANO. 1891-92

oil, 32 1/2 x 24 1/2

Able to keep himself relatively free of earning a living until he was thirty-seven, José Ruiz was finally obliged to go to work as an art instructor at the Escuela de Bellas Artes in Málaga, and five years later, at forty-two, he married María Picasso López, who was then twenty-five. It is the measure of his vanity that he stated his age on the wedding certificate as thirty-six.

He had married down. His bride was short, dark, plump, and without a dowry. She came from a less distinguished family. What she could offer to the marriage were her large funds of energy and a set of thrifty habits well-equipped to make the most of the restricted income that came in from two low-paying jobs: art instructor and curator at the local museum where he developed a facility for restoring old paintings.





Picasso's grandmother Ines López Robles, with her daughter María (left) and María Picasso López. Musée Picasso, Paris.

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His wife brought with her the women of her family--her widowed mother, her two spinster sisters, Eladia and Heliodora, and a maid. The child first to be sired by any of the Ruiz-Blasco brothers would now spend his next few years surrounded by five women all eager to be of service to him, all ready to take delight in his every move; they make up his first royal entourage. He was christened Pablo Diego José Francisco de Paulo Juan Nepumoceno María de los Remedios Crispín Crispiano Santísima Trinidad Ruiz y Picasso or, in brief, Pablo Ruiz. As an example of prevailing sentiment, his mother would later say, "He was an angel and a devil in beauty. No one could cease looking at him." [Gertrude Stein, Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, p. 221.)



Picasso enfant, photographie.

P190 skvia

Of course, his mother claimed to have told him when he was an adolescent: "If you become a soldier, you'll be a general. If you become a priest, you'll end up as the Pope!" [Gilot and Lake, Life with Picasso, p. 60.]

Nineteen years later, in Barcelona in 1900, just before embarking for Paris on his first visit, he would do a self-portrait (now lost) that he titled, "Yo--El Rey," and would sign it three times for emphasis. We can take measure of the self-importance that burgeons in a small boy adored by so many women. Of course, he only remains a king within the limits of a maiden-aunt world; he is defenseless so soon as he steps outside.

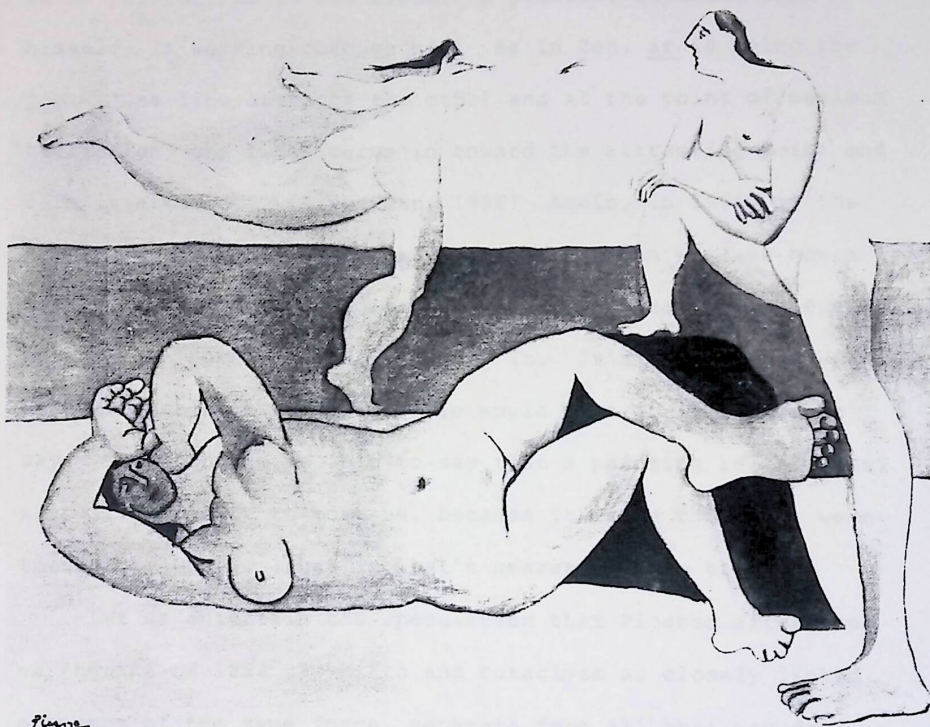
His sister, Lola, was born three years later just three days after an earthquake. The family had to flee their apartment on the Plaza de la Merced to stay for a few nights in the studio of Don José's most prestigious friend (and employer) Muñoz Degrain whose atelier was built on a high rock outcrop that would presumably prove secure against earthquakes. The conjecture is reasonable: Two huge and near-simultaneous happenings in the life of a three-year-old were now powerfully associated. Just before the massive disruption caused by a baby princess entering this princely life, came an equally overpowering event. Three days before her birth, the earth



began moving under his feet; he was swept up in a blanket and carried by his father to a house that would stand against seismic convulsions. It was no small matter that the place belonged to a man seen as most important by his parents. Muñoz Degrain was principal of the Escuela des Bellas Artes, and the most established painter in Malaga.

Psychic equations abound. The best protection against earthquakes belonged to the best painter in town. Birth appeared to be the after-effect of a cataclysm. And women with large bellies could be seen as omens of earthquake and birth. It is interesting to note that the large misshapen gargoyles of women he would paint in the 1920's are not so much gamboling on the beach as teetering on their feet. For that matter, his maternal grandmother, still living with them, was a very fat lady with a powerful presence.

*Three Bathers*, Juan-les-Pins, June 1920  
(dated on painting 1923)  
Oil and charcoal on wood, 31 7/8" x 39 3/4" (81 x 100 cm)  
Zervos IV, 169, Collection Stephen Hahn, New York



By the 1950's and 1960's, when Picasso had become a gargantuan phenomenon of media celebrity, one theme often returns in his interviews. It is that something is happening as he paints. He is not alone. A process, separate from himself, is working through him. As in Zen, it is doing the job: "One line attracts the other and at the point of maximum attraction, the lines curve in toward the attracting point and form is altered." [Lieberman, 1956] Again, in 1964, at the age of 83, he made an unusual remark for a man who was now a Communist, and long a dedicated atheist. He said to Hélène Parmelin: "Something holy, that's it. It's a word that we should be able to use but people would take it in the wrong way. You ought to be able to say that a painting is as it is, with its capacity to move us, because it is as though it were touched by God. . .that is what's nearest to the truth."

Let us entertain the speculation that Picasso after the earthquake of 1884 saw birth and cataclysm as closely linked elements of the same force, separate from all that was daily and predictable in life: this was the force that others referred to as God, and God could express Himself in negative miracles (disasters) and in positive ones as well--the drawings that emerged from his hand. So, at the heart of the universe was a disruptive power never too far away from the mysterious



act of drawing: be it said that Picasso was already no stranger to this world. The family legend is that his first word was "piz," for "lapiz," a pencil, and with it in his hand he could do astonishingly well for a child still learning to talk. We can pass over the states of excitement engendered in the court of five women at this display of early talent, but contemplate the depth of emotion in the father. An academic artist who worked slavishly for his realistic effects, he had become modestly celebrated by now if only locally as a painter of pigeons. They were his favorite subject, and his commercial trademark if you happened to live in Malaga and were looking for an oil painting full of pigeons.



José Ruiz Blasco. *The Pigeon Loft*. Oil on canvas. 102 x 147 cm. Málaga, 1878. Ayuntamiento, Málaga.



José Ruiz Blasco. *Pigeons*. Oil on canvas. Private collection.

He was therefore a painter trapped at his own competent level of mediocrity. So don José must have had the same sense of mission (and redemption) that an ex-athlete of no particular renown might feel if his son demonstrated exceptional ability in his father's sport. The father would now have a future. One could be manager for a prodigious talent. To the photographer, Brassai, Picasso said in 1966: "My first drawings could never be exhibited in an exposition of children's drawings. The awkwardness and naiveté of childhood were almost absent from them. . . Their precision, their exactitude frightens me. . . My father was a professor of drawing, and it was probably he who pushed me prematurely in that direction."

On the other hand, the boy had difficulty in reading and writing, and was wholly unable to comprehend arithmetic. He was petrified when he had to go to school. Each morning, on his way to class, he was dragged by the maid kicking and screaming through the streets and into the classroom.



Pablo Picasso, 1885  
Pablo Picasso with  
his sister Lola, 1888



*Picasso, Soviet Museums, p 13*

At his desk, the six-year-old could not concentrate. He would, no matter what the teacher was instructing, devote himself to drawing. Sometimes, he would get up and wander about, or tap on the window at people passing below on the street. The young prince had been thrown into the bull pen of a county jail. The contrast between his presence at home, and these scandalous entrances into a room full of boys his age may have created a fear of new social worlds that would not leave him for the rest of his life. He showed such panic for these new surroundings that his father transferred him to a small private institution, the Colegio de San Rafael, presided over by a friend. The new headmaster, apprised of the boy's unique artistic abilities and exceptional terrors, permitted him to leave class and sit in the kitchen with his wife while she was preparing a meal. There, he was able to draw until his father came to take him home. "If," said the headmaster to don José, "you wish your son to learn from my wife how to cook or how to bathe our baby, we can continue with the same conditions, but if you want something more. . ." Yes, something more. How to obtain it?

There was good reason for the child's inability to learn arithmetic: the numbers did not impinge on him as concepts; rather, they struck his eye as forms. Later, he would remark

that, as a child, he had always thought the figure seven was a nose drawn upside-down. Jaime Sabartès, his dedicated memoirist, has Picasso recalling a few verbal sentiments when going home from school, "I'll show them what I can do! They'll see how I can concentrate. I won't miss a single detail. . . The little eye of the pigeon is round like an 0. Under the 0 is a 6 for the breast, underneath that a 3. The eyes are like 2's, and so are the wings. . ."

We can propose that if the 0 was an eye, then the integer 1 might have signified a person in the distance and 2 was a man or woman kneeling in prayer. If 3 was turned on its side, it became breasts or buttocks--what childish glee! Yes, how he could concentrate on his studies! The number 4 might seem a sailboat in the Mediterranean, 5 a phallus and testicles, 6 a wineskin that men drank from at bullfights, 7 is our friend the nose, and 8 is a head on a body, his fat grandmother perhaps, while 9 might be a flower on a curved stem.

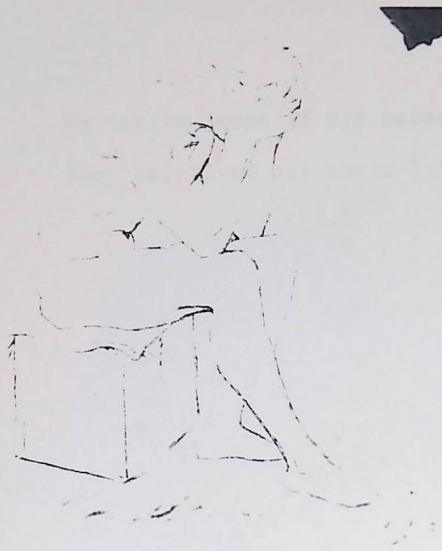
The <sup>ex</sup>amples are arbitrary. In whatever manner he saw each number, it is safe to assume they lived in him as forms; he could not, therefore, comprehend them as ciphers. In any case, he was drawing all the time. His own pencil lines must have had a significance for him as clear as words. We have to conceive of what a small miracle in these early years were



lines on a piece of paper. To Picasso, a face emerging under his pencil was a bridge to the world outside him, and equal to another child's wonder on recognizing that speech could bring food or comfort. Since the forms left by his pencil were as real to him as words, it must have been not at all difficult to believe that pictures could produce results as directly as spoken language; both were magical processes. So it was not unnatural to assume that as one drew, one dodged through a field of forces able to produce earthquakes and infants. As one of the forces in that field, he could, however, be relatively safe within it.

A second sister, Concepcion (Concha) was born when he was six; a few years later, the family was obliged for economic reasons to move to Corunna on the northern coast of Spain. The municipal museum of Málaga where, as curator, don José had earned a good part of his income, had closed down. In Corunna, however, that petrified boy who could not bear to go to school became more manly, at least by his own account in an interview not published until 1982. [Antonio Olano, La Coruna] He speaks of becoming a prime member of a gang. By the age of eleven, he claims: "My friends and I spent our time chasing stray cats with shotguns, and once on Calle de Damas, we caused a real massacre. . ."

Being educated now by priests he even picked up a smattering of Latin. At the School of Fine Arts, between the ages of eleven and thirteen, he did drawings that are exceptionally advanced for his age.

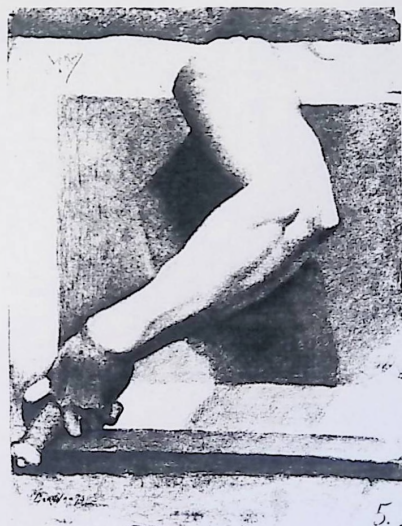


*Above: Picasso. Profile Studies.*  
Corunna, 1892-93. Conté crayon on  
paper. 23.7 x 31 cm. Heirs of the artist.

*Left: Picasso. Seated Male Nude.*  
Corunna, 1893. Conté crayon on paper.  
51.8 x 36.5 cm. Heirs of the artist.

*Below left: Picasso. Plaster Cast of a  
Leg.* Corunna, 1893-94. Charcoal on  
paper. 51 x 27 cm. Heirs of the artist.

*Below: Picasso. Plaster Cast of an Arm.*  
Corunna, 1894. Charcoal and conté  
crayon on paper. 45 x 34 cm. Museu  
Picasso, Barcelona.





He thrived even if his parents, uprooted from the Malaga where they had lived all their life, were now depressed.



Picasso, *Doña Maria*. Corunna, 1894.  
Conté crayon on sketchbook page.  
19.5x13.5cm. Museu Picasso,  
Barcelona.

CORUNNA



Picasso, *Don José*. Corunna, January 1,  
1895. Pencil with white chalk on  
sketchbook page, 13.5x19.5cm. Museu  
Picasso, Barcelona.

Of course, the drawings were done just ten days before the youngest daughter would die of diphtheria on January 10, 1895, at the age of seven. The sketch he did of Conchita was probably done the previous spring: [PR of Conchita, Richardson, p. 49]





Picasso, *Conchita* Corunna, 1894.  
Pencil on sketchbook page,  
19.5x13.5cm. Museu Picasso,  
Barcelona.

By the end of the year, however, Conchita had been sick for weeks. To conceal from the child how serious was her condition, the Christmas season had been celebrated, but the family knew she was mortally ill. Her thirteen-year-old brother, desperate to save her, was, as Richardson puts it, "in the combustible state peculiar to hypersensitive boys . . . He vowed to God that he would never paint or draw again if Conchita's life was spared."

It was, if Picasso told the truth, a prodigious vow. A boy of thirteen was placing his talent on the altar. Only a saint would not have had some perverse reactions: Maybe one did not love Conchita as much as one loved one's ability to draw. Jacqueline Roque, Picasso's second and last wife, was told by him of this vow but had no idea whether it "had been made to a priest, [was delivered] at the instigation of his parents, or [came] out of some inner urge." [Richardson, p. 49] It was not unlikely that the boy "might well have given way to temptation and painted. All the more reason for guilt." [Richardson, p. 49]

Picasso safeguarded this story until he told it nearly six decades later to Francoise Gilot, then to Jacqueline Roque. His confidante, Sabartes, was never included. Perhaps it could only be told to women close to him. To be so young, so

passionate, so dedicated to a sister, and to betray his word, to feel tainted when she died. His young genius now had a flaw. What if God was not only an overlord of the field of forces, but a judge who kept the record of broken vows.

On his side, don José seems never to have recovered from Conchita's death. Depressed for all of the three and a half years they had been in Corunna, don José would walk a few blocks each day to the school where he taught, then come back after work to stare out the window. He would study the rain. In place of the coterie of friends and relatives in Malaga, he now had no old cronies to keep him company in these cold and northern reaches. He was marooned in a seaport on the winter Atlantic, and did not even have an occasional patron for his pigeons. In Málaga, he had been an active father to the boy, and they enjoyed going to bullfights.

my father, a great aficionado, took me to Cara Ancha's hotel room in Málaga, either before or after the bullfight. It's one of my most vivid childhood recollections. I was on his lap, looking at him, overwhelmed. [Otero, p. 43-44]

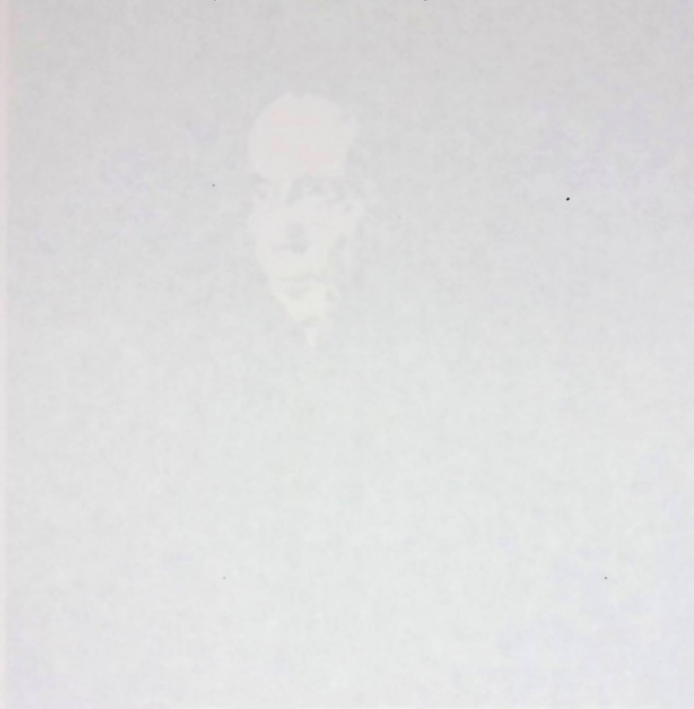
Now, in Corunna, don José was surrounded by his dark little wife, dark little son, and dark little daughter. He had lost the one child, Conchita, who offered promise of being tall



and fair. He had not even been able to afford a decent burial plot nor a headstone. He grieved. In legend, he hands his paints and brushes over to his son. Since there are paintings by José Ruiz dated after this period, and he certainly continued to teach art for many years, the story, as told by Picasso some decades later to Sabartes, may really signify that by the age of thirteen or fourteen, the boy must have decided that he had little to pick up any longer from his father's intellectual hand-me-downs on how to paint, no matter how these maxims had been passed on by two centuries of academic painters. Nonetheless, his father was still guiding his career. Don José proceeded to arrange a first if unsuccessful show for the adolescent in a Corunna gallery, and over the next few years, after the family's move to Barcelona, don José would still oversee his son's major artistic projects, particularly the subject matter.

This siege of tedium in Corunna came to an end for don José through an exchange of positions. A teacher at La Llotja School of Fine Arts in Barcelona wished to move to Corunna. So, the Ruiz family, by way of a detour to vacation in Málaga, was soon able to move on to their new post. The young man who embarked from the north coast of Spain for Barcelona was exceptionally accomplished for his age. His father had not

trained him for too little. The oil of Aunt Pepe, painted on  
that quick family visit to Málaga, tells us as much.



Portrait of Aunt Pepe, Málaga, 1914-15  
Oil on canvas, 25 x 35 x 10 cm  
Museum of Modern Art, New York

[23 pages, 1914-15]



*Portrait of Aunt Pepa, Málaga, c. 1895-96*  
Oil on canvas, 22 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 19 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (57.5 x 50.5 cm)  
Zervos XXI. 38. Museo Picasso, Barcelona

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There, in Barcelona, the adolescent Picasso would confront the stimulating shock of a triumphant industrial revolution and make the leap, with one bound, into the twentieth century. Behind him he would leave an ancien régime whose outlook, scarcely touched by the Enlightenment, was closer to the seventeenth century than to modern times... The rolling stock of the railroad, put through some fifteen years earlier, resembled that of Hollywood westerns; the young Picasso almost always traveled by sea. [Daix, Picasso: Life and Art, p. 3]

In Barcelona, Picasso's sense of importance would develop into a rich view of himself as a rogue, an outlaw, a conquistador ready for artistic battles not yet waged. At Corunna, he had underlined only one word in his Latin grammar--latrocinor--"I am a pirate; I am a raider." In Barcelona, such roles took on more reality. In those years, the city was to the rest of Spain as New York is to America. Barcelona offered him acquaintances among the art students at La Llotja who, seen through the eyes of a fourteen-year-old, were anarchists, madmen, wild men--in short, young middle-class students like himself--and they were all full of the intoxication that they were surrounded by a dead and stifling bourgeois world that was there to be thrown over; they were the ones who would do it. The Ruiz family came to Barcelona in September of 1895, and except for occasional sojourns in Malaga, Madrid, and Horta de Ebro, Picasso was going to stay in the capital of Catalonia over the next five years. It was not until the fall of 1900 that he would make his first trip to Paris.

What an adolescence those five years offered! If Picasso had a profoundly divided nature, it was the saving mark of his wit to proceed in opposed directions at once, and the early years in Barcelona embody that phenomenon. On the one hand, don José, was steering his son toward religious subjects. If a

good part of the family's emotional resources was still immersed in Conchita's death, the Ruiz-Blasco tradition was, moreover, pious, and don Salvador (of the cigar smoke) had become not only the richest member of the family, but the most devout, so he would be most approving of the new direction. Since there were also rich prizes to be won in competitions, the adolescent managed in his first year in Barcelona to complete a major painting called First Communion.





2, XXI, 49, 23

First Communion

Barcelona 1896 oil on canvas

166 x 118 cm

Museu Picasso, Barcelona

Don José sat as the model for the father, his sister Lola was the communicant, and the son of a friend of his father sat for the altar boy. It is worth noting that the fourteen-year-old painter not only treats all these principals with a separate emphasis on their individual presence, but indeed, the candelabra, the floral arrangement, and the altar cloth are just as carefully drafted and painted. The immanence of objects is entering his life. The sentimental Catholicism of the treatment is enhanced by his primitive regard for the mysterious value of inanimate objects.

He does other religious works as well:





Picasso, *Altar Boy*, Barcelona, 1896. Oil on canvas, 76x50cm. Sala Collection, Abbey of Montserrat.



Picasso, *Christ Appearing to Blessed Marguerite Marie Alacoque*, Barcelona, c.1896. Oil on canvas, 24.4x18.5cm. Museu Picasso, Barcelona.



but given his lively use of all that is set at opposites in himself, it need not surprise us that he spends a good deal of time in his fourteenth and fifteenth years visiting the brothels in the Barrio Chino of Barcelona. We are contemplating religious devotion and precocious debauch in a fourteen-year-old!

Picasso's legend would have it that he was an unusually magnetic personality from early adolescence on, proved irresistible even then to the prostitutes he visited, and knew more about sex before he was sixteen than most men will ever know. It was certainly not a legend he was about to contravene in later years, but it is not easy to believe. "Yes," he said once to Antonina Vallentin,

"I was still quite small"--and a malicious smile gave light to his eyes and a turn to his mouth. "I didn't wait for the age of reason to commence, who knows? If I had waited for the age of reason, reason itself might have kept me from doing it."

At this point, Richardson sees a few difficulties with Picasso's claim.

. . .where the boy found the cash for prostitutes is a mystery. His pocket money would not have sufficed. Did older friends treat him to the occasional girl, or were his boyish charms such that the motherly whores did not charge him? All those loving older women must have brought back his childhood in

## Málaga.

Such an hypothesis is conceivable, of course, but one has to question how many loving women were in the Barrio Chino. While he could, with his facility for drawing, have charmed many a whore, a visit to a brothel was more likely to have been a harsh if extraordinary experience for a young art student. In 1948, more than fifty years after Picasso's introduction to the Barrio Chino, the look of the place suggested that it had not changed in a hundred years. The buildings were very old, the streets were wet alleys, and the particular house shown to the American visitor by Loyalist friends (who wished to present a prime example of the conditions of social depravity under Franco) happened to be the most famous whorehouse in the quarter. In a large bare room, along a dais some sixty or seventy feet in length, forty or more women in bras and panties were bellowing out in loud voices the catalogue of their tricks and specialties before a near mob of a couple of hundred men. Studying the whores avidly, just about all of these potential customers were puffing away on cigarettes as if to raise a wall of smoke before the gates of perdition. The density of smoke in that room cannot be exaggerated.

Every thirty seconds or so, one of the women engaged in this cacophony of carnal advertisement would succeed in capturing one of the men. Holding her client by the hand, she would walk off the dais, and lead him promptly to a grilled window where he would purchase a ticket in triplicate, one stub for the house, a receipt for the client, and a copy for the woman; then, still proceeding hand in hand, they would mount a staircase divided down the middle by a balustrade, the railing installed to separate up-coming traffic from down-going; on the latter side, whores in the process of saying farewell would come down the stairs to take up a position again on the dais. All the while, cigarette smoke pressed against the ceiling. Despite one's Loyalist sympathies, it seemed difficult to believe that all of this could be uniquely Franco's fault. Our brothel in the Barrio Chino possessed an air of nonstop avidity echoing back through a century.

Yet, if the legend is correct, we are asked to believe that a once-delicate child who had to be dragged by the maid to school, had now metamorphosed into a phenomenally precocious whorehouse habitue just eight years later. Picasso would later become the first master of metamorphosis, but it is asking a lot to see him there ready for action at the age of fourteen and fifteen. The answer may be that he would go to these places



with a physically powerful friend, Manuel Pallarès, whom he had met in class at La Llotja.



Picasso, *Portrait of Manuel Pallares*  
Barcelona, 1895. Oil on board.  
35.3 x 25. Ex-Pallares collection.

While Pallarès, tall and well-built, the stolid son of wealthy peasants, was six years older, he was soon captivated by the personality of the fourteen-year-old who worked at the easel next to him. In an interview with Pierre Cabanne in 1972, Pallarès, then ninety-six, recalled their early friendship with what one hopes is some measure of accuracy:

He was appealing and way ahead of the others who were all five or six years older. . . He grasped everything very quickly, although he paid no apparent attention to what the professors were saying. Picasso had no artistic culture, but had extraordinary curiosity. . . absorbed things in the blink of an eye and remembered them months later. He was unlike the others in every respect. Sometimes he would be very excited, at other times he could go for hours without saying a word. He could get angry easily, but calm down just as fast. He was aware of his superiority over us, but never showed it. He often seemed melancholy as if he had just thought of some sad things. His face would cloud over, his eyes become dark. He neither seemed nor acted like a boy his age. He was very mature.

There is a self portrait Picasso did of himself at this time that suggests a considerably more inhibited view of himself.





Above: Picasso, *Self-Portrait*, Barcelona,  
1896. Oil on canvas, 32.7×23.6cm.  
Museu Picasso, Barcelona.

In any event, the twenty-year-old and the fourteen-year-old were inseparable. They took walks down the Rambla together, sketched together, went to cafes together; if Picasso frequented the Barrio Chino with anything like the frequency he claimed, Pallarès, presumably, was taking care of the tariff. Picasso, in return, would insist that his parents invite Pallarès each Sunday to dinner as a prerequisite to his own attendance. After a few such get-togethers, don José and doña Maria came to the conclusion that the new, mature, and physically powerful friend was a benign influence on their temperamental son, the older brother he had never had. When alone, however, neither Picasso nor Pallarès seem conspicuously adult. Picasso recalls leading Pallarès up to the roof of his studio in order to lower a coin to the ground, the money attached to an invisible black thread. Whenever someone bent over to pick it up, they would snatch it back. Great glee! At other times, they might drop pebbles on people passing below. In Barcelona's February Carnival of 1896--or was it 1897?--Pallarès cannot remember--they went together dressed as women. Picasso made a male conquest--a most persistent seducer--whom Pallarès got rid of by knocking him down with a punch. They were great and loyal friends and remained so for life. At the age of ninety, Pallarès would

still come to visit Picasso each summer at Mougins.

Over his first couple of years in Barcelona, Picasso was busy at work. First Communion was shown at the such ✓ locally famous painters as Ramon Casas and Santiago Rusiñol, and in 1897, another work, Science and Charity, received an honorable mention in Madrid at the General Fine Arts Exhibition, its selection probably not hindered by the presence on the jury of of Muñoz Degrain, his father's old patron.



*Below: Picasso. Science and Charity.*  
Barcelona, 1897. Oil on canvas,  
197×249.5cm. Museu Picasso,  
Barcelona.



Once again, don José had been the model. "Every time I draw a man," Picasso said in later years, "I think of my father. To me, man is don José, and will be all my life."  
[Brassai, Picasso and Company, p. 56]

In this connection there is an anecdote in Picasso's Women by MacGregor-Hastie that is without attribution and so comes doubtless from Tristan Tzara, who by his own account was a great intimate of Picasso's from the 1920's through the 1950's and served MacGregor-Hastie as "an almost bottomless pit from which I mined Picasso tales long before I thought of writing this book."

MacGregor-Hastie, speaking of this period, informs us that Picasso, before quitting Barcelona for Madrid

...found a way to lose his virginity. Even before the holiday, he had his eye on a young girl who drew wine in the bar above which he had his secret studio. She was a tall thin girl, unlike the voluptuous women most male virgins are attracted to, but she had a ribald sense of humour and made him laugh. She said later that one day, while she was laughing with him, he got her up against a barrel and "made himself a man." Looking at her spare body and red hair, he said to a friend that it had been "like fucking his father."

Of course, the story may be worth no more than its paragraph. Tristan Tzara was not only a raconteur but a surrealist, which is about equal to saying that a made-up tale always had the virtue of being untarnished. Bourgeois truth, after all, was always sullied, and so distortion was a better guide to truth. All the same, the story, if at all valid, might have a touch of connection to Picasso's evolving decision over the next few years to change his signature. Pablo Ruiz was yet to become P. Ruiz Picasso, then P.R. Picasso, and finally, by 1901, certainly at what pain to Don José is not agreeable to contemplate, Pablo Picasso. The name fell more happily on the ear--it indeed suggested a significantly more interesting painter, and his fellow students would not speak ill, to his face at least, of this change, but it was hardly a routine matter at the turn of the century (when masculine bonding in Spain was still as powerful as blood, death-vows and honor) for a young man to take his mother's name in preference to his father's. Adding to this identification with mis-identification (which, paradoxically, he correctly anticipated would offer him a more profound sense of identity) was his physical resemblance to his mother--he would always belong to her short, dark, sturdy Mediterranean stock, "so



small that her feet did not touch the ground when she was sitting." [ASH (Arianna Stassinopolous Huffington), p. 37]



Portrait of José Ruiz Blasco, the Artist's  
Father. Barcelona, 1896  
Watercolor, 10 1/8 x 7" (25.5 x 17.8 cm) P23  
Zervos XXI, 28. Museo Picasso, Barcelona MOMA



Portrait of the Artist's Mother. Barcelona.  
1896. Pastel, 19 3/4 x 15 3/4" (49.8 x 39 cm).  
Zervos XXI, 40. Museo Picasso, Barcelona.

P18  
MOMA

His father, however, must have been feeling not unsatisfied in 1897 when Science and Charity looked to be offering a small but positive effect on his son's career. While a critic in Madrid calling himself El Sastre de Campillo mocked the treatment of the invalid's hand-- "isn't the doctor taking the pulse of a glove?"-- the prestige of an Honorable Mention and quite possibly the skills of the painting itself impressed not only Muñoz Degrain (who was now one of the most important teachers in Spain's most prestigious art school, the Royal Academy of San Fernando in Madrid) but also excited his uncle don Salvador who, now married to a Malagueña of impeccably aristocratic family and able to live in a house at 49 Alameda, one of the best addresses in Málaga, was the effective head of the family.

Don José and his family went back to visit for their summer vacation in 1897, taking Science and Charity with them. It had been up for sale in Madrid at the extremely high figure of 1500 pesetas (half of don José's annual salary), but had not sold; now, presented as a gift to Don Salvador, he was sufficiently impressed to hang it in the front hall. Science and Charity! It is virtually a logo for the good doctor. Ready to join with don José in planning for the young painter's future, it was agreed to send the boy to the Royal Academy in



Madrid; don Salvador rounded up all the relatives in Málaga to contribute their share of the expense. Picasso, who found the stipend small, described it to Sabartes as "a pittance. . . . Just enough to keep me from starving to death," and Sabartes adds, "Dreaming of fat dividends [the family] all contributed their share as if they were purchasing stock in a oil well or a mine at a time when it was cheap." [Sabartes, 1946, p. 40]

The arrangement did not work out. Perhaps don Salvador should have taken a better look at Science and Charity. It may be sentimental, pious, and posed, but there are rebellious if subtle elements. As Richardson points out, rust streaks from the shutters offer a "prescient passage. . . the whitewashed wall [is stained] with utterly real dribbles," a painterly choice that was considerably advanced for its time.

There is also the mirror above the sick woman's head. It is an extraordinary object to be found in an impoverished room; the ecclesiastical and the sexual are brought together in a flamboyant frame that suggests a baroque vagina. If such a visual metaphor would hardly go unremarked today, Picasso could then count, doubtless, on the certainty that his relatives were not about to separate an object from the word that signified it--a mirror was a mirror--what would it matter what it looked

like? Emblematic of his future humor, however, it lives on the wall of that painting vibrantly at odds with the theme.

Picasso would not do much work in Madrid. Alone, resentful of his family's eagerness to direct his career, there in the capital to be freed of the academic constraints of La Llotja, he was frustrated to discover that instruction at the Royal Academy was even more constrained than at La Llotja. "Here in Spain," he would write to a friend, "we are not as stupid as we usually appear, we are just very poorly educated."

He lived poorly as well. Soon enough he began to disappoint Muñoz Degraín who dispatched letters to don José criticizing in detail the absenteeism, lack of work, and general bohemianism of the prize son and such word also got back to don Salvador who cut off the stipend. Picasso, now living on the pittance that his parents could scrape together, found himself too poor to rent a studio, and was reduced to painting in the open air.

It is a curious time. Almost next to nothing is known of those eight months in Madrid. Picasso did very little work, and of that, nothing possessed much significance, yet it is possible that in the course of living alone in an unheated room and having no close friends in the city, a young sketch pad artist tramping the streets, he may have developed the

beginning of a confidence that he could live on next to nothing as a bohemian, which, never a routine confidence to forge, would serve him later in Paris.

He may also have been struggling against illness. He spent more and more time in bed in the spring of 1898, came down with what could have been scarlet fever, or, equally, a venereal disease, and for his convalescence, returned to Barcelona to discover that the city was in an ugly ferment. The attempt to subjugate the revolution going on in Cuba had just taken another disastrous turn; the sinking of the Maine in Havana Harbor made it almost certain that the U.S. would soon go to war with Spain. Conscription, in consequence, was being closely enforced. Pallarès, to avoid the draft, decided to go back to his native village, Horta de Ebro, an isolated place in the mountain wilds near the border between Aragon and Catalonia. There, Pallarès could hide out.

Picasso went along to these uplands. He would stay at the Pallarès farm for the next half year. As Jaime Sabartes, his future acolyte would describe it in his memoir: [pp. 42-43]

He walked in the woods, cleaned out the stables, tended the animals. . . learned to take care of the chickens and a horse, to draw water from the well, tie the proper knot, balance the



load on an ass, milk a cow, cook good rice, light a fire in an open place and so many other things that he often says, "All I know, I learned in Pallarès' village."

Six decades later, during the 1960s, Picasso and Pallarès would still be amused by Sabartes' description; Pallarès even remarked that Picasso may have "taken part in village life [but] never played at being a peasant." [Cabanne, p. 430]

Of course, it hardly matters how directly he participated. Picasso's eye provided him with no mean intellect; he must not only have acquired a sure sense of how an agricultural life functioned, but a knowledge of the advantages as well as the difficulties of this more basic existence. His arrival at Horta de Ebro came, for example, by way of an arduous trip.

They took the train to Tortosa, where Pallarès' brother was waiting for them with a mule. They piled their easels, canvases, color-boxes, and baggage on to the mule and walked, first up the fertile valley of the Ebro, with its orange-groves still in flower and its rice-paddies, then they struck southward across the mountains for its tributary, the Canaleta. Sometimes one or another would perch himself on the baggage and ride for a while, but most of the time they walked, rising continually into a new air and a new

vegetation--arbutus, rosemary, lentiscus, rock-rose, thyme--the highland country with vast stretches of bare mountain, forests of Aleppo pine, and wastes: only a few primitive villages in the fertile parts and an occasional isolated dwelling, a saw-mill where there was running water, a charcoal-burner's or a lonely shepherd's hut. The road dwindled as they went, and in fifteen miles or so it was no more than a mule-track. In a deep and sunless gorge, haunted by vultures, it wound about on either side of a rapid stream, crossing it by fords in the less dangerous places: but by the time they reached the end they had traveled close on twenty miles and there were only two hours to go--only three or four more great mountains to cross and they would be home.

For one who had never been outside a town and who had never walked five and twenty miles in his life, even with the help of a mule, this was a striking introduction to a new world--a world in which it was natural to step out briskly in the falling dusk, because of wolves. [O'Brian, pp. 57-58]

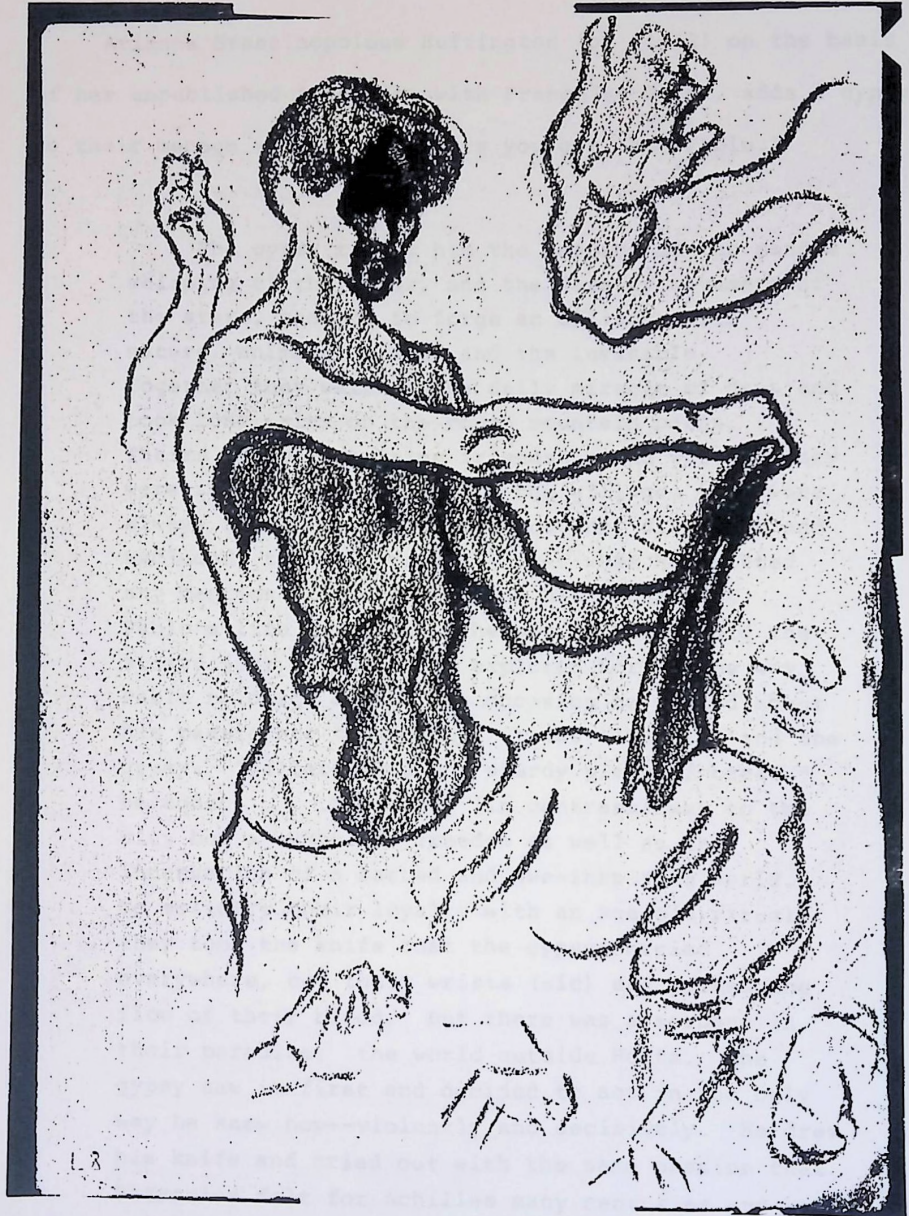
A few days later, Pallarès and he packed food, canvas and oil paints, and went further up into the mountains to paint, setting on a natural shelter beneath a huge boulder perched above a fast-running mountain stream that went hurtling through a gorge below.

With only the occasional poacher to see them, they went native, Picasso recalled. They daubed their cave with paint, threw off their clothes and stayed naked. At night they slept on a huge bed of hay they had cut; they washed under a waterfall. (Laporte, Sunshine at Midnight, p. 26)

About this time, he did a self-portrait of himself sketching.







Arianna Stassinopolous Huffington [p. 41-42] on the basis of her unpublished interview with Francoise Gilot, adds a gypsy to their menage who is "two years younger than Pablo."

The gypsy taught him the meaning of the random chirping of the birds, and the faraway movement of the stars, and how to forge an alliance with nature, animals, trees, and the invisible. Together they watched the daily miracle of dawn and took long walks on the rough mountain paths. Theirs became a burning friendship and whether they were in the cave or back in the village, they were always together. Pallarès, suddenly displaced and excluded, took his revenge later when he omitted any mention of the gypsy from his account of Pablo's life in Horta. The way Pallarès told the story, just he and Pablo explored Horta; the way Pablo told it, on the one occasion he talked about his passionate friendship, it was always he and the gypsy. "Pallarès was the sturdy piece of bread," he added. . . .The gypsy [in contrast] was to the city boy a symbol of freedom as well as the incarnation of a sacred and awe-inspiring world. To solidify their loyalty with an age-old ritual, they took the knife that the gypsy carried everywhere, cut their wrists (sic) and joined the flow of their blood. But there was a serpent in their paradise: the world outside Horta. The gypsy saw it first and decided to act in the only way he knew how--violently and decisively. He drew his knife and cried out with the same passion that Patroclus felt for Achilles many centuries and



cultures before: "I love you too much. I must go away. Otherwise I will have to kill you because you are not a gypsy." . . .He did not love less but his love had become an unbearable weight, and so that same night he vanished forever, wounding Pablo's feelings and leaving him even more bewildered. Everything about Horta seemed empty now. He left for Barcelona alone this time, determined to throw himself into the world which had separated him from the gypsy and like Achilles, to conquer it.

While much is obviously wrong with this description, the style does offer an explanation of why Cambridge intellectuals generally eschew violent subjects. Huffington, ignoring the tradition, pays the price.

All the same, there is every possibility that Picasso had a number of homosexual episodes in his youth. Richardson, however, takes pains at every turn to protect Picasso's heterosexual sanctity, and now uses his well-earned authority to dispose of the gypsy.

The mule boy has been misrepresented by Stassinopolous Huffington. On no evidence, whatsoever, she accuses Picasso of having "a burning friendship" that burgeoned into a passionate love affair "physically as well as metaphorically true" with this child.



Stassinopolos Huffington claims he was a gypsy "two years younger than Picasso and... also a painter." Pallarès, who is a most reliable witness, says he was around ten years old--about what he looks in Picasso's drawing. [R. p. 492]



Picasso. *Goatberd*. Horta. 1898.  
Black chalk on paper. 32x24cm.  
Musée Picasso, Paris.

He was certainly not a painter and he was unlikely to have been a gypsy. Stassinopulos Huffington's informant was apparently Francoise Gilot. She has confused the mule boy with Fabian de Castro who was staying in the Bateau Lavoir studio when Picasso moved there in 1904. . . De Castro was a gypsy and developed such an admiration for Picasso's work that he later became a painter. . . True, [he] developed a fixation about Picasso and therefore fulfills the role of lover better than a ten-year-old muleteer at Horta; true again they both shared a rug on the floor, but there is no evidence or likelihood of a sexual relationship. [Richardson, p. 492]

Whether the cave proved a site of homosexual idylls, or but a stage in male bonding, is hardly knowable. What can be uncontested is that Picasso had his share of primitive experiences that month, and picked up a few more in the half-year sojourn which followed in the village of Horta de Ebro; insights into peasant life were acquired that would remain as part of his creative stock for the rest of his life.

This is not to suggest that he fell in love with the simple life and would paint icons of the Spanish peasant. Part of his strength, after all, is in his resolute avoidance of piety, and besides, he would soon learn more than he wished to know about death in primitive places.



Richardson mentions an autopsy that Picasso witnessed in the company of Pallarès. An old woman of the village and her granddaughter were apparently killed by lightning. To make certain of this, their bodies were dissected. Shades of Frankenstein, the autopsy was performed at night in the gravedigger's shed with no more light than was offered by a lantern. In this Gothic setting, the night watchman took his saw and made a cut from the top of the scalp down to the neck in order to expose the girl's brain to the doctor's probe. The night watchman also smoked a cigar (described as blood-stained) through the course of the act. Watching, Picasso turned ill and had to quit the shed. Patrick O'Brian, in his biography, suggested that "the vertical dissection [may] have had some effect upon [Picasso's] own treatment of the human head in later days." Richardson is appalled by this "bizarre idea" and decides on his own authority that double profiles have a pictorial, not an autopsical, origin. "Far from affecting Picasso's style, this grisly spectacle is more likely to have reactivated the trauma of Conchita's death and--who knows?--the trauma of his own bloody birth in which cigar smoke had played such an important part." [R. p. 106]

Given the intimate ferocity of Picasso's eye, one does not have to agree with Richardson. If nothing declares the state





Picasso des Maître, Plate 42  
Standing Woman, May, 1958  
 Oil on canvas, 34 1/4" x 32" private collection









2, IX 104, 216

Tête de Femme 14 August 1938

oil on canvas, 65 x 50 cm.

Portrait of a woman - oil on paper  
Purchased 10 June 1948 64 x 46 cm  
Z-X-525-151





Nonetheless, he would return to Barcelona feeling manly, and full of himself, or, at least, such is the tale he presents in the self-portrait done at the end of his stay in Horta de Ebro.





Picasso. *Self-Portrait*. Horta or Barcelona, 1899. Conté crayon on paper, 33.6x23.5cm. Heirs of the artist.

...the whole of Europe was then  
industrialized. It had a horribly poverty-stricken  
population, living in ghastly filthy thousands of  
wretched were packed into the squalid herring  
Spain where a dubious fauna of whores, killers,  
dancers, fast-pods and street artists, permeated  
the huge mass of workers exploited by their bosses,  
and now there were super-added the sick and wounded  
repatriated from Overseas-Lost Cuba, forgotten at  
made in order for the fomenting of rebellion.  
(Cabanne, p. 16)

Some general sense of sympathy toward the poor may have  
sprung in him at this time, but it would have had no real  
against his absolute belief in success. And a deterioration of  
the situation was necessary. ...  
...and he must have felt all but spiritually dispossessed

Having lost Cuba and the Philippines by December 1898, the  
authority of imperial and monarchical Spain was seriously  
impaired.

Pierre Cabanne offers a vivid portrait of the Barcelona to  
which Picasso returned early in 1899:

. . .a city of contrasts, drunkenly turning toward  
the northern breezes wafting in fragrances of  
Nietzsche and Novalis, delighting in Cesar Franck.  
Alongside its anarchist troublemakers and its

aesthetes, its staid bourgeois and pious industrialists, it had a horribly poverty-stricken population, living in sordid filth; thousands of wretches were penned into the notorious barrio chino where a dubious fauna of whores, killers, deserters, foot-pads and street urchins permeated the huge mass of workers exploited by their bosses, and now there were super-added the sick and wounded repatriated from forever-lost Cuba, forgotten and made to order for the fomenters of rebellion.  
[Cabanne, p. 46]

Some general sense of sympathy toward the poor may have stirred in him at this time, but it would have had to war against his sizable ambition to succeed. Add a detestation of the bourgeois means necessary for commercial success as a painter, and he must have felt all but spiritually dispossessed himself. Indeed, he would remain so for the rest of his life. There would never be anything to which he belonged wholeheartedly. During the Civil War in the late Thirties, he would form an intense attachment to Spain, but then he could not, after the victory of Franco, return; in any event, such love ~~was~~ came late. At seventeen, he was no Spanish patriot and felt contempt for this crumbling empire and its complacent bourgeoisie who had managed the country so badly--he was also estranged from his mother and father. They might adore him and



support him, but there was nothing in their minds to impress him unless it was his father's limited managerial talents. Already, Picasso had rejected the precise route laid out for his career by don José which would have him strive first to win prizes at State exhibitions and thus acquire a prestigious teaching post. That, once achieved, he could plump out his income by a growing reputation as a portrait artist, a successor to Muñoz Degrain. That held no light for Picasso's sardonic eye. Already, his instinct must have sensed what prodigious upheavals were commencing in art.

Add to this a subtler alienation. He was an Andalusian in Catalan country; that was not unlike being a poor Puerto Rican on Park Avenue. Sabartes would write: "Among Barcelonians of my class, the word Andalusian [is] never pronounced without a grimace of repulsion." To a Catalan, "Andalusian means a bullfighter, a gypsy, a 'wise guy' who drinks and dances flamenco. . .tight trousers, short vests, cordoban hats and cock and bull stories, ugh!" If there was a people in Spain who would claim machismo for their own, it was Andalusians; if they were scorned in the radical North it was because they were also Catholic, conservative, authoritarian, and soon enough, Falangists. (Franco's rebellion would find its first support in Andalusia.) By contrast, Catalans, speaking a language as

separate from Spanish as Portuguese, considered themselves an old race with their own bona-fide aristocracy.

Picasso could barely comprehend the tongue when he first came to live in Barcelona; if he was accepted by some of his fellow students for his talent and unique personality, it was in spite of being an Andalusian. Speaking nothing but Catalan during his six months in Horta de Ebro, he was, however, fluent on his return. He had also appropriated a new identity: he was now a self-declared Catalan himself. That may have been the subtlest alienation of them all: at the core, one could only feel more fraudulent.

Add the paradox of being endowed with an exceptional intelligence in company with an undeveloped education (if indeed he did not suffer from learning disabilities). Living among nihilistic and relatively cultivated middle-class students, he must at that time have hardly been able to contribute to the coffee-house discussions of Art Nouveau and modernism, Jugendstil, Sezession, German Expressionism, and the work of Edvard Munch and Toulouse-Lautrec, but Bakunin's basic anarchist principle: "Let us put our trust in the eternal spirit which destroys and annihilates only because it is the unsearchable and eternally creative source of all life. The urge to destroy is also a creative urge"--was there for him

to take in as a credo, and he would not have ignored Nietzsche's declaration (which would later prove even more valuable to Hitler): "I myself am fate and have conditioned existence for all eternity."

Most of all, however, he picked up the tenets of "modernism." In Barcelona in 1899, that called for the artist to play all the roles necessary to arm the spirit of change: one must be ready to act as painter, sculptor, poster artist, dramatist, polemicist, cafe-owner, architect, interior decorator, and/or impresario--whatever could open the time to the aims of modernism.

The leading protagonist of this movement, the painter, Santiago Rusiñol, who had the cachet of having studied in Paris with Puvis de Chavannes (and now painted like Whistler) offered the following manifesto in a speech at the Festa Modernista in 1893, three years before the Ruiz family even moved to Barcelona:

[Our aim is] to translate eternal verities into wild paradox; to extract life from the abnormal, the extraordinary, the outrageous, to express the horror of the rational mind as it contemplates the pit. . . As Casellas has said, "the aesthetic form of this art is radiant and nebulous, prosaic and



great, mystic and sensual, refined and barbaric, medieval and modernista at the same time."

Picasso had been furnished with a text. If he needed a corollary, Rusiñol added: "We prefer to be symbolists and unstable, and even crazy and decadent, rather than fallen and meek."

By 1899, the movement had its own cafe, Els Quatre Gats, a coffee-house, restaurant, bar and inn that soon became a center for the most advanced bohemian circles of Barcelona in the late '90s. Rusiñol and Ramon Casas, Isidro Nonell, Ricard Canals, and Miguel Utrillo (father of Maurice) were the established painters who formed a nucleus, meeting there on many a night.

*Below:* Picasso. *At Els Quatre Gats*.  
Barcelona, 1900. Oil on canvas.  
41x28cm. Private collection.



*Above:* Picasso. Menu for Els Quatre  
Gats. Barcelona, 1899-1900.  
21.8x16.4 cm. Museu Picasso,  
Barcelona.

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*la Gran of Els Quatre Gats, c.1899. Photo: Mas.*



Since these men were about ten years older than Picasso, he did not often drink with them, but in the Andalusian's own tertullia was Jaime Sabartes, a new friend who thirty-five years later, would become his secretary, his confidante, and the all-but-official curator of the legend.

Sabartes, as is evident from the charcoal and watercolor Picasso did of him in 1900 not long after their first meeting, declares his nature by his appearance (or is it that we are responding to Picasso's talent for characterization?).



Picasso. *Sabartès Seated*. Barcelona. 1900. Charcoal and watercolor on paper, 48.4×32.5cm. Museu Picasso, Barcelona.

Richardson (p. 117) describes him nicely, "Sabartes was pathologically submissive and eager to play Dr. Watson to Picasso's Sherlock Holmes." As Sabartes says, "I was the best friend with whom he could carry on a conversation because I did not insist on imposing my point of view. . .The friend with whom one can entertain oneself when one has no money to spend." [Sabartes p. 19]

It need come as no surprise that Sabartes detested all of Picasso's other friends whom he saw as good for little but wasted evenings in bars, in brothels, or at bullfights. "Sabartes," quoting Richardson again (p. 117), "lacked talent, charm, and looks (he resembled a myopic sacristan but with large sensual lips). . .However, like many of Picasso's Barcelona friends, Sabartes came from a prosperous family and did not have to worry about earning his living. . ."

Add one more element to Sabartes--his slavishness. Even his admiration is cloying. In Picasso: An Intimate Portrait (p. 26), published almost forty years later, he takes us for a ride on the good horse Hyperbole:

. . .It was my first visit to his studio in Escuditters Blancs Street. It was noon. My eyes were still dazzled by what they had seen among his papers and sketchbooks. Picasso. . .intensified my



confusion with his fixed stare. As I stepped in front of him to say goodbye, I was ready to bow, stunned by the magic power that emanated from his whole being, the marvelous power of a magus, offering gifts so rich in surprises and hope.

Picasso was more intimate, however, with another friend, Carles Casagemas, whom Sabartes, as one would expect, did not approve of at all. One is tempted to claim (on the merits of the ink and watercolor that Picasso did of Casagemas also in 1900) that there are few caricatures of a young aesthete which tell us as much. Picasso was influenced doubtless by Aubrey Beardsley who had died in 1899 at the age of twenty-six, but then what an excellent influence it proved to be for this portrait!



Picasso. *Casagemas as a Dandy*.  
Barcelona, 1900. Ink and watercolor on  
paper, 18.5×14.5cm. Whereabouts  
unknown.

Casagemas, devoted to Verlaine, came from a wealthy and sophisticated family. The youngest child, he was very spoiled--so young and spoiled that he had a platonic love affair with the daughter of one of his sisters, a romantic by-product of his addiction to morphine and his serious devotion to booze. He was also involved in anarquismo, decadente, and Catalanisme and had set up headquarters in a wing of his parents large apartment on Carrer Non de la Rambla. There, he kept a studio in which Picasso and he worked together and on Sunday afternoons, he would conduct a salon, open in the main to art school students and more or less penniless friends from the university who were all too ready to drink Casagemas' brandy and coffee, recite a few poems, and bellow out a Catalan song or two, particularly the marching anthem, "Els Sagadors."

✓ For a year and a half, Casagemas and Picasso were rarely apart, indeed, their most significant separations would take place at the door to a brothel. There, Casagemas, whether on drugs, drunk, or sober, would find some excuse to leave; it is generally accepted that he was impotent, and it was the monumental burden of his life. Since he also had an intense interest in firearms, he must,