

This is all preface to engaging his unique qualities as a poet. He had traveled through Europe considerably more than other young writers of his time, and Roger Shattuck could write with justice that he was "probably the first European poet since Goethe [because] his poems are never content to speak of France alone; their prophecies and conversations and descriptions are all Europe." [Shattuck, p. 47]

Apollinaire inhabited the vowels and consonants of French like no foreigner before him; his verse inhales and exhales the perfumed sonorities of French, and if such mellifluence resounds suspiciously--perfumed sonorities, indeed!--well, a people who equate good luck with merde have obviously kept some primitive connection between the workings of their entrails and chance; Apollinaire writes at his worst in a cloud of scented bombs; at his best, there seems no delicate emotion of twilight or evening able to escape him. His poet's sense of wonder is full of startling transpositions, imperious and childlike at once. Let us give him the honor of quoting the eleventh, twelfth, and sixteenth stanzas from his first great poem, La Chanson du Mal-Aimé, written in 1903 while he was still mourning for the affair that never took place with Annie Playden:

Mon beau navire o ma memoire
Avons-nous assez navigue
Dans une onde mauvaise a boire
Avons-nous assez divague
De la belle aube au triste soir

My lovely ship my memory
We have never sailed out to sea
On that dreary wave so vile to drink
Nor have we wandered long enough
From dawn to melancholy dusk

Adieux faux amour confondu
Avec la femme qui s'eloigne
Avec celle que j'ai perdue
L'annee derniere en Allemagne
Et que je ne reverrai plus

Farewell false love whom I mistook
For a woman far away
For the lass that I did lose
A year ago in Germany
And will never see again

Mars et Venus sont revenus

Mars and Venus with their wild
mouths

Ils s'embrassent a bouches folles
Devant des sites ingenus
Ou sous les roses qui feuilloquent
De beaux dieux roses dansent nus

Have come back to embrace
All those innocent places
Beneath the blossoming rose
Where rose gods dance nakedly

Where rose gods dance nakedly. Let the line serve as our introduction to the Rose Period. Of course, La Chanson Du Mal-Aimé has only been quoted so far by its more beautiful verses. Not ten stanzas further along, we are treated to:

Rotting fish of Salonica
Endless chain of repulsive dreams
Of eyes torn out by pointed stakes
Your mother loosed an awful fart
And birthed you in a colic pool

The capacity to live with opposites in oneself confirms the point: Apollinaire and Picasso were artists to enrich each other. Ready to evoke every transport of romantic loss and longing, Apollinaire lived with an equally powerful vision of corruscation and putrescence; so he could provide the poetic overlay needed for Picasso's vision then. . Roger Shattuck, speaking of Apollinaire's life roles as clown, scholar, drunkard, gourmet, lover, criminal, devout Catholic, wandering Jew, soldier, and finally, good husband, adds:

His boldest acts and his boldest works display a desire to touch simultaneously the extremes of tragic despair and of exultant gaiety. Today we have given to the products of this boldness the name "surrealism" or rather we have accepted the name from Apollinaire himself. [Shattuck, p. 6]

The poet soon became the guide who would conduct Picasso from the Blue Period into the Rose. Other friends, other factors are also present, of course. The successful courtship of Fernande is one; a little later when Leo and Gertrude Stein enter his life, Picasso would begin to sell his paintings more regularly. That would not chill his palette. There was also his increasing interest in the Médrano Circus at the foot of

Montmartre. Picasso's mutations of palette required more, however, than the alteration of his personal circumstances. An out-size force was also needed. After all, other forces were still locking him into the Blue Period, and they were as fully emplaced as buttresses, there to wall in larger fears.

It is hopeless to attempt to comprehend Picasso without assuming that he would never let anyone come near to the immensity of dread he contained within himself. One of his most honorable achievements over the ninety-odd years of his life is that he dominated his inner terror sufficiently to use it as a stimulus to work; how he worked! Work was his nostrum for dread. So we do well to view the Blue Period as his palisade built at that time against dread. If we ask, dread of what?--there can be no answer. Dread is characterized by alienation from its root. We cannot point to the origin or the object of our fear. We know only that we are afraid, we wake up afraid, and it lives with us like a delicate nausea of the soul. In intense form, everything takes on too much meaning, and insanity begins to lurk outside the circle of sanity that one has cleared for oneself by way of some intuitive psychic contract that decides it has established boundaries with what are perceived as hostile forces.

If this sounds near to insanity itself, we are obliged to recognize that sanity is often maintained by a mental balance that depends upon insane equations. In those years, Picasso must have seen the color blue as a force in itself, an abstract power capable of holding off malign intentions. His limited palette could serve as fortress walls against invasions ready to destroy him. We can do worse than to comprehend him in this last of the Blue Period from 1904 to 1905 as a perfectly sane hard-working young artist with but one insanity, a highly useful and functioning insanity, his belief that he could not take his palette from dark blue to bright green, let us say, or brilliant red, without being rent apart.

This is shamanism. But then, where is the highly talented painter without some primitive belief that magic is a presence in his world? It is not difficult to see a painting as an occult act considering that it transforms a piece of paper, a sheet of cloth, or a cave wall into a life-like presence. If I am an actor and shape my mouth to look like the man or the emotion I am seeking to emulate, then I come closer to that man and that emotion. Conversely, if I feel myself taking on the emotional states of someone else, and am ready to cry out like him, or her, then my mouth is bound to form into similar lines. Put in simplest fashion, the actor is one person mimicking

another. A painter, however, mimics an object, which is to say that he leaves a record of the object, he transfers it to another existence, he initiates a line that becomes a particular form. Soon enough, the painter is aware that one form can often represent more than one kind of object. The figure seven can always be seen as a nose upside-down.

Let us try to conceive of Picasso's depression when he entered the Blue Period. We can assume that he was close again to fears he knew as a child. Everywhere he looked--at a stain on a wall, or a crack in a window--was evidence of an artist more divine than himself, a creator who could show a gargoyle's face in the crumbling of a slab of plaster. Were the lines of a penis at rest revealed in the drooping of a flag? Objects must have impinged on him. Objects spoke of other objects with similar form and different function. He must have believed that if he allowed himself to follow his visual stimulations, he might lose his mind. So he protected himself with a severe palette, and painted an assemblage of humans imprisoned by poverty, hunger, tragic memories and old dreads. No old man was ever as old as the young Spaniard who painted those exorcisms of the Blue Period.

In depression, therefore, was mental safety, in gloom was a force sullen as smoke to keep madness outside the circle of

the creative fires. Profound gloom was the last and best defense against psychosis, and Picasso bringing life to a surface, had to feel uncomfortably close to that all-inclusive force that brought an earthquake down on Málaga and took away his young sister in Corunna without regard for how he felt. Psychosis is the sense that one is in touch with the gods even when one does not deserve to be, or wish to be. It is then that monochromatic palettes can become filters to hold cosmic forces at bay. Have we entered the subtext of Picasso's actions through that year, 1904 to 1905, when he was courting Fernande, and painting all night, every night, like a watchman on a parapet? André Salmon describes him as "dressed altogether in blue, the blue of workingman's clothes, Picasso painted in blue by the light of a candle."

Now Apollinaire enters his life, and the poet is ready to guard the road to madness by taking excursions upon it. Since there was a side of Picasso that believed one could only find personal significance in the bizarre (as if conventional scenes, relations, still-lives and landscapes were all part of some gigantic social prison ruled by precisely those powers not particularly congenial to him) it is not surprising that the painter was ready to be influenced profoundly by a friend who had come to manhood out of a childhood and adolescence even

more uprooted, grand, debased, cockeyed, and bi-valued than Picasso's, and, as a result, was more worldly; yet, there were such unstable ingredients in Apollinaire's makeup! This variety of unique, even baroque, imbalance had led him to build structures of eccentric habit that Picasso had to admire; Apollinaire was not only a prodigious diversion, but an advanced piece of human sculpture. One had to view Guillaume Apollinaire from so many angles that he was already a spiritual model for the Cubism to come.

Together they could share a vision of damnation, apocalypse, and the downfall of the bourgeoisie. In a period of prodigious inner anxieties, the presence of social imbalance can be affirmed as a panacea. The last decade of the Nineteenth Century and the first few years of the Twentieth had produced a generation of bohemians, symbolists, and as-yet-untitled crypto-dadaists and surrealists (pataphysicians, as Alfred Jarry would call them) who were prepared--it was the only solution they could see--to blow up the world, spiritually, socially, and, if the dynamite was available, why not physically as well?

Reassured by the whiff of brimstone and brilliance they detected in each other, Picasso and Apollinaire became the best of friends. . . . Until he died, fourteen years after they met, Apollinaire would be a

Apollinaire became the best of friends. Henceforth Apollinaire would abandon his old haunts. . .and take to climbing the hill to Montmartre where he joined the bande à Picasso. And henceforth a blue chalk sign would hang on Picasso's studio door: RENDEZ-VOUS DES POETES. Salmon declared that the pen would defend and explain the canvas; and the brush would color the poem. . . .

Until he died, fourteen years after they met, Apollinaire would be a constant solace, a constant goad to Picasso. He opened up his imagination to a vast new range of intellectual stimuli: to new concepts of black humor, to the pagan past, the wilder shores of sex. Apollinaire, who was already obsessed with the works of the Marquis de Sade--"the freest spirit that ever existed," he wrote--had no difficulty converting Picasso to the cult of the Divine Marquis [nor to de Sade's] definition of art as "the perpetual immoral subversion of the existing order." [R., p. 333]

De Sade believed in absolute freedom. As a corollary, he was opposed to property. Since property commences with one's body, Sade argued that all men and women should have full if temporary rights over the bodies of all other men and women. The question of rape obviously raised by this is quickly carried over to: What does one do about murderers? Sade's answer was: Beware of the dead man's friends. If, as a consequence, everyone is obliged to live in gangs who will

serve, if need be, as avengers, the ultimate resolution of such an implicit pyramid is monarchy: When it comes to retaliation, who can be more powerful than the king?

How could it not prove convivial then to Apollinaire (and Picasso) to imbibe a philosophy containing anarchism and monarchism in the same fold? One can fashion a magical world once logic refutes itself.

If one is to speak, however, of magic, it is worth attempting a small exposition. For example, let us assume that magic can adhere to a painting, particularly if it is a fine work, and one owns it. For then it can be contemplated a thousand times rather than on a few occasions in a museum. Every time the owner comes to appreciate more in the work than he glimpsed before, the painting takes on an added endowment. It becomes a center of meaning, it stimulates new thought, it induces energy in the viewer--that is to say it has become a magical object. If the same can be said of a memory of athletic victory, or of a ritual ceremony, or of political leaders who take on charisma, if it can be said as well of lovers, of children, and of friends, we have a species of equation: Whatever provides us with intense connotation is magically endowed.

This is, of course, not true of all paintings we own, nor of politicians who bore us, friends and lovers who depress us, rituals that weary us, or of relations in which we lose interest. Repetition kills the soul, and a ceremony, a person, or an object can enrich us with the immanence of magic only when its nature, its artful nature, rewards further study, or calls for more relationship--that is to say, its nature defies familiarity--which is why good poetry is more magical than good prose.

Picasso was in need of magic before he could dare to leave the Blue Period; Apollinaire provided it. Here is a last look at the transition:

. . .taking his place somewhere between the blind beggars and the prostitutes, sharing with them the same cafe tables, another character makes his appearance. He is a youth disguised for a performance in which, to judge from his fragile looks, he is merely another victim, one of a troupe of players who impersonate the behavior of a society from which they are outcasts. . .[Penrose, p. 107]

Germaine reappears in a portrait:

. . .although it would be as absurd to speak of uniform sadness in the Blue Period as it would be to find general gaiety in the Rose, there are some pictures belonging to 1904 and 1905 that make one wonder how he reached the apparent detachment of Cubism without hanging himself. One of these is a big oil that shows Picasso and Germaine Pichot at the bar of the Lapin Agile with Frédéric in his wooden shoes playing a guitar in the background: Germaine, wearing a tawdry hat and a pink dress, is sulking in front of her empty glass; Picasso, dressed as a harlequin--and the red lozenges clash subtly with her pink--is half turned from her and his greenish face has a look of profound disgust and weariness. [O'Brian, p. 135]



Opposite: Picasso. Au Lapin Agile.
Paris, 1904-05. Oil on canvas.
99x100.3cm. Private collection.

It is, however, crucial to remind ourselves that Picasso's influences usually come from separate, near-incompatible sources, and Cézanne's work is so often the indisputable source. Apart from the several exhibitions Cézanne was being given in these years in Paris, there was always Vollard who kept any number of the painter's works in the store-room of his gallery. Picasso must have seen them there, perhaps had the opportunity to study many a canvas by himself, alone with the brush-stroke of the artist. There was so much about Cézanne that was not only profoundly seminal in its offering--a veritable realm of new ideas, new concepts, new explorations, but there was always his clumsy hand as well, begging to be improved upon.



Who knows how much good morale was generated for Picasso by the knowledge that he could do a better harlequin than Cezanne? Early in 1905 when Picasso, while pining for Fernande, was still very much engaged with Madeleine, a transitional work appears showing a variety of fifteen limbs in the four personages (counting the monkey) yet only the mother and child touch each other. Since this is probably in the period when Picasso is encouraging Madeleine to have an abortion, the ironies are painful. Motherhood, he seems to say (now that he will not be close to it) is the truly tender emotion--the rest is holding onto oneself. But what a harlequin!



Another transitional work is somewhat enriched for us in a story recounted by Andre Salmon.

. . . Picasso had painted without a model the extremely pure, simple image of a young Parisian workman, beardless and dressed in blue. Very much as the artist himself looked when he was at work.

One night Picasso deserted the group of friends deep in intellectual discussion: he went back to his studio and, taking up this picture, which he had left untouched for a month, gave the young artisan in it a crown of roses. By a sublime stroke of caprice, he had turned his picture into a masterpiece. [Sabartes, trans. in McCully, 1981, pp. 55-57]



Picasso. *Boy with a Pipe*. Paris, 1905.
Oil on canvas, 100x81.3cm. Mrs. John
Hay Whitney Collection, New York.

For Picasso, that wreath of red roses could have been equal to breaking through a fortified psychic structure. Before long, he was moving his palette and his themes over to the saltimbanques.

They are travelling jugglers and acrobats, performers living on the last line between society and the nomadic life, and if one is looking for influences on him, they abound. He had seen travelling circuses in Spain, and street entertainers in Paris; he was now, conceivably to console himself during the fall, winter, spring and summer of 1904-1905 when he was trying to woo Fernande, frequenting the Circus Medrano at the foot of the Butte Montmartre where he could see a troupe of

. . .lion-tamers, broad white horses, trapeze artists, jugglers, riding-girls, acrobats, clowns, and at least figuratively its harlequins: when they were in funds Picasso and his friends went there three and even four times a week. He loved the smell of the place, the artistic integrity, and the total professionalism of the people: it was an international world--Dutch clowns, Serbian tumblers, Indian elephants--making little use of any language, French or otherwise, a world apart, remote and often hungry, made up of outsiders whose contract with the public was confined to the performance of very highly skilled and often perilous motions, the fruit of endless practice.

Furthermore, the circus was a link with his past: not that the glories of the Médrano had been familiar to him, but all over the Spain of his childhood hereditary troops of tumblers were to be seen, sometimes leading apes or bears; and fire-eaters, sword-swallowers, and mountebanks were common at the fairs. They were essentially from the same world as the circus people; and it is significant that most of the "saltimbanque" pictures that he painted in those years show not so much the circus proper as dusty vagrants, wandering through bare, indeterminate landscapes in the clothes they wore for their performance, just as they were to be seen on remote roads in Spain and southern France until some twenty years ago.
[O'Brian, p. 134]

At the hub of all these influences is Apollinaire, the very center of the Rose Period, so much so, indeed, that Richardson suggests it could well be called the Apollinaire Period.

One could, in turn, speak, of Apollinaire's poetry in these years as belonging to the Picasso Era. It is interesting now to compare Picasso's work in late 1905 with some of Apollinaire's verses in the same season. How close they are! The Rose Period with its bouquet of mystery offers a subtle mood of fear and longing, of tender concern, and a full sense of the sinister edge of the silences one feels in the mood of

certain evenings when one does not know if one can cross the
night.



Left: Picasso, *The Saltimbanques*, Paris, 1905, Drypoint, 32.7 x 40.5cm, Musée Picasso, Paris.

SALTIMBANQUES

Dans la plaine des baladins
S'eloignent au long des jardins
Devant l'huis des auberges grises
Par les villages sans eglises

Et les enfants s'en vont devant
Les autres suivent en revant
Chaque arbre fruitier se resigne

Quand de tres loin ils lui font
signe

Ils ont des poids ronds ou carres

Des tambours des cerceaux dores
L'ours et le singe animaux sages
Quetent des sous sur leau passage

ACROBATS

Beyond the plain a troop of clowns
Is strolling down the garden lane
And past the doors of old gray inns
Lie churchless villages and towns

Children are running out in front
Others follow as in a dream
And now each fruit tree seems
resigned

As from afar they give the sign

Their weight they bear as round and
square

Some tambourines have gilded hoops
Wise animals the ape and bear
Beg for pennies along the way

Picasso, *Circus Family*, Paris, 1905.
Watercolor and pen on paper.
21 x 30.5 cm. The Baltimore Museum of
Art, Cone Collection.



CREPUSCULE

Sur les treteaux l'arlequin bleme
Salue d'abord les spectateurs
Des sorciers venus et Boheme
Quelques fees et les enchanteurs

Ayant decroche une etoille
Il la manie a bras tendu
Tandis que des pieds un pendu
Sonne en mesure les cymbales

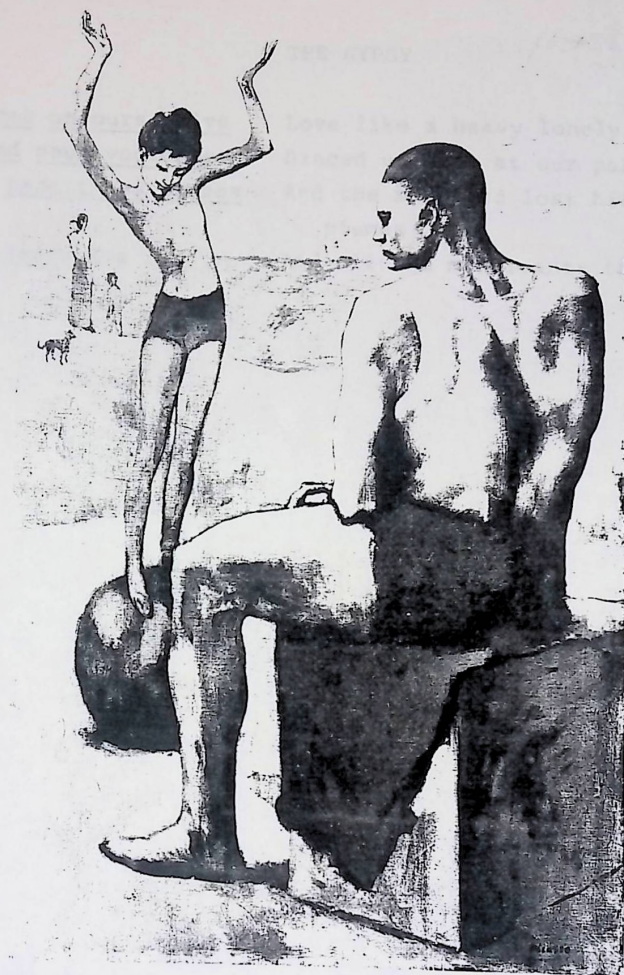
L'aveugle berce un bel enfante
La biche passe avec ses faons
Le nain regarde d'un air triste
Grandir l'arlequin trismegiste

TWILIGHT

High on the stage pale harlequin
Prepares to salute the crowd
Sorcerers come from Bohemia
A few fairies, and magicians

Having unhooked one shining star
He holds it by his outstretched arm
And all the while a hanged man rings
A cymbal with his dangling feet

The blind man rocks a lovely child
The roe walks by and all her fauns
The dwarf looks on with his sad air
And magic swells in harlequin



Picasso, *Young Acrobat on a Ball*
Paris, 1905. Oil on canvas, 117 x 75 cm
Pushkin Museum, Moscow

LA TZIGANE

L'amour lourd comme un ours prive
Dansa debout quand nous vouloumes
Et l'oiseau bleu perdit ses plumes

Et les mendiants leurs Ave

THE GYPSY

Love like a heavy lonely bear
Danced upright at our passing whim
And the bluebird lost his lovely
plumes

And all the mendicants their beads



Picasso, *The Saltimbanques*, Paris,
1905. Oil on canvas, 212.8x229.6cm.
National Gallery of Art, Washington,
D.C., Chester Dale Collection.

-4-

He always loved making other people laugh and he could be brilliantly witty and animated when he wanted to be. He was a singer, a singing-teacher, a pianist, a comedian if called upon to be and the life-and-soul of all our parties. He used to improvise little plays in which he was always the main actor. I must have seen him do his imitation of a bare-footed dancer a hundred times, and each time I enjoyed it more. His trousers were rolled up to his knees to reveal two hairy legs. In shirt-sleeves, his collar wide-open to expose a

chest forested with curly black hairs, with his bare-bald head and his pince-nez, he would dance with tiny steps and pointed toe, doing his best to be graceful and making us rock with laughter at his superb overacting. It would be impossible to remember all the rich details of that performance. He used to make us laugh so much that we felt physically exhausted. There was the gay songstress, which he did with a lady's hat on his head and a translucent veil swathed about him and singing in a heady soprano which was in tune but somehow totally ridiculous. . . .

He used to sing Langouste atmospherique by Offenbach and Sur les rives de l'Adour. These and dozens of other songs used to delight us evening after evening. We never grew tired of them.
[Picasso and his Friends, pp. 59-60]

Fernande is writing about Max Jacob and the evening usually takes place in Picasso's studio at the Bateau Lavoir, their friends squeezed in on whatever will serve for a seat between the squashed tubes of paint on the floor and the ochre and cadmium yellow turds of the dogs. There will be Apollinaire, of course, and André Salmon, and Manolo the sculptor who stole his father's wallet at the moment he was throwing himself on Papa's mercy, and Paco Durrio has already given Picasso his first lessons in sculpture, and presumably there is Canals and his wife Benedetta although one reads no

mention of Sunyer any more. Van Dongen is there from time to time, and Maurice Princet the actuarial mathematician for insurance companies who is going to speak to them of Einstein's work before too long.

We have to remind ourselves that most of them were in their early twenties and smoked pipes of opium the way later generations would take to pot; if on some nights the mood grew so deep that few could pass from the filigree of their own thought to the conceivably greater depth stirring in the mind of the person beside them, well, they caroused at other times.

Here are two of the songs Jacob would sing:

Ah, superbe Pandore
Toi que mon coeur adore
Si tu resist's encore
Amon amour pour toi,
Je te le dis, crois-moi,
Il faudra final'ment
Que tu me mett's dedans

Ah, superb Pandora
You that my heart applauds
If you resist once more
My real sweet love for you
I tell you, kid, it's true,
Something has to be
Put inside of you--me!

Sur les rives de l'Adour
La-a vivait un pastour
Libre, heureux exempt de vices
Qui pechait des ecrevisses

On the banks of the Adour
There was living a pastor
Free, happy, sinless, pure
Enticing crayfish to his lure.

There is no humor so long gone and lost as translations of funny old songs sung by people who died before most of us were born, but ~~the~~ some trace of this happy delirium remains.

Vlaminck and Derain, occasionally present, were doing a sex book for money on the principle that ink and paper cost less than oil and canvas. Written by Vlaminck and called "From One Bed to Another," Derain was doing the illustrations. Vlaminck, when it came to painting, was full of his own maxims: "One doesn't paint to earn money, one paints as if one is making love." His faith: pure color. He was not a fauve for too little: "Pure color as it comes out of the tube. . . Museums are cemeteries. . . Don't set foot in them."

Sometimes the games had more than a small cutting edge. It may have been called in all solidarity the Rendezvous des Artistes but the envy felt toward Apollinaire was intense. Max Jacob had already walked his long mile to welcome Apollinaire, as if deciding that the presence of a major poet would strengthen his own ties to Picasso, but his jealousy was intense. Picasso, in turn, was not without envy of Apollinaire's culture, his command of foreign languages, his talent as a poet, his knowledge of society, and his familiarity with those who had titles or money; it was basic to despise the

ruling classes, but it was not agreeable to feel oneself wholly outside them.

Besides, Apollinaire was so above his own eccentricities that it must have been close to intolerable not to make fun of the man, at least behind his huge back. Apollinaire had the habit of signing off on the smallest message with the grandest flourish, "la main amie (the friendly hand) de Guillaume Apollinaire," and Max Jacob was quick to incite Salmon, and Picasso was ready to mock the poet's practise. Salmon returned home one white night to find a snow-filled glove wedged into his door handle. Jacob had written in English, "Snow-glove" and then "la main sanglante (the bleeding hand) de Guillaume Apollinaire."

They were soon in competition over the fine-tuning of this humor. Their letters now ended with the salutation: "The friendly hand of Guillaume Apollinaire," but then were signed Jacob, or Salmon, or Picasso. Before long, there were such variations as "The bloody hand of Max Jacob." Salmon, having doubtless recounted the splendid greeting offered him by Apollinaire's mother, inspired Maurice Princet to write: "Guillaume Apollinaire has such fear of vice that he doesn't dare look at his mother."

And then there was the following verse:

Epouser la mer'd'Apollinaire

La mer'd'Apollinaire

La mer'd'Apollinaire

De quoi qu'on aurait l'air?

De quoi qu'on aurait l'air?

"La mer'd'Apollinaire" could stand for "the mother of Apollinaire," or "the shit of Apollinaire." A mean pun!

To be wed to the mother of Apollinaire

The mother of Apollinaire

The mother of Apollinaire

What will you have for air?

What will you have for air?

Salmon's memoir, Souvenirs Sans Fin, suggests that Apollinaire was not cognizant of these ongoing amusements, but Picasso later recounted to Francoise Gilot that Apollinaire once chased Max Jacob around the studio after he heard the song. Some twelve years later in La Femme assise, back from World War I with a head wound, Apollinaire would satirize Picasso by way of a half-Spanish, half-Albanian character named Pablo Canouris who--in case anyone should fail to discern the model--had "hands of celestial blue." Canouris also had an exaggerated Spanish accent and suffered from avalanches of

jealousy due to the faithlessness of a mistress named Elvire. Often, he would threaten her with his revolver. "Elbirre, ecoute-moi oubrre-moi ie te aime, ie te adore et si tu ne m'obeis pas, ie te touerrai avec mon rebolber." Knocks on the door, then, "Oubrrre-moi, Elbirre! L'amourr c'est moi," which in translation might go something like, "Elbeera, listen to me, openna up, I love ya, I adore ya, and if you no obey me, I'll keel yiz with my rebolber. Openna up, Elbeera, luv, that's me." No one in English or American novels has spoken like this since the turn of the century, but the mis-use of "b" for "v" and the rolling of the "r's" is not without humor in French, and the grammatical errors are basic enough to suggest that Canouris-Picasso would never be able to speak the language decently, an evaluation designed to wound Picasso. Like most expatriates, he was sensitive about his French.

Invoking the revolver is no small part of Apollinaire's satire. In legend, and perhaps in fact, it was Alfred Jarry who had given Picasso the gun. While John Richardson reasonably demonstrates that Picasso and Alfred Jarry never met, the legend, abetted by Max Jacob, was that they certainly knew each other. In fact, Apollinaire and Jacob and Salmon had been friendly with Jarry and, over the years, had been detectably influenced by him, but Jarry was ill by the time Picasso encountered Apollinaire, and the closest

Picasso encountered Apollinaire, and the closest the painter came, probably, to the pataphysician was to enjoy Apollinaire's wry description of Jarry's place. It was on the second-and-a-half floor. The landlord, in possession of a house with gracious height between its landings, and greedy for more income, had succeeded in installing two floors where before there had been only one.

Jarry's place was filled with reductions. The half-floor room was the reduction of an apartment in which its occupant was quite comfortable standing up. But being taller than he, I had to stay in a stoop. The bed was the reduction of a bed; that is to say, a mere pallet. Jarry said that low beds were coming back into fashion. The writing table was the reduction of a table for Jarry wrote flat on his stomach on the floor. The furniture was the reduction of furniture--there was only the bed. On the wall hung the reduction of a picture. It was a portrait [of Jarry by Douanier Rousseau] most of which he had burned away, leaving only the head. . . .The library was the reduction of a library and that is saying a lot for it. . . .a cheap edition of Rabelais and two or three volumes of the Bibliothèque rose. On the mantel stood a large stone phallus, a gift from Felicien Rops. Jarry kept this member, which was considerably larger than life size, always covered with a violet skullcap of velvet, ever since the day the exotic monolith had frightened a certain literary lady who

was out of breath from climbing three and a half floors.

"Is that a cast?" the lady asked.

"No," said Jarry, "it's a reduction."
[Shattuck, The Banquet Years pp. 213-214]

Richardson makes the point that Max Jacob is responsible for creating the legend that Picasso knew Jarry wellm and he quotes Helene Parmelin for support: "[Picasso] regretted nnot having known Jarry, that he went to see him one day with Apollinaire but Jarry was out, 'et puis c'est fini.'" [Parmelin, p.]

That hardly kept Jacob from exercising his powers of fasntasy:

At the end of a supper, Alfred Jarry gave up his revolver to Picasso and made a gift of it to him.

. . .At that time it was recognized:

1. that the tiara of the psychic Pope Jarry was loaded in [the] revolver, [the] new distinguishing mark of [the] papacy.
2. that the gift of this emblem was the enthronement of the new psychic Picasso.
3. that the revolver sought its natural owner.
4. that the revolver was really the harbinger comet of the century. [Max Jacob, Chronique des temps heroiques, pp. 48-49]

This "mock solemnity," Richardson suggests:

. . .has always been taken at face value. No

other witness confirmed Jacob's story... Jarry evidently did not frequent the Bateau Lavoir. But he and Picasso had so many mutual friends--Apollinaire, Jacob, Salmon, the writer Cremnitz--that their paths must have come close to crossing. The symbolic gift of the revolver was probably arranged by proxy through Jacob, or as a result of Apollinaire's confiscation of it at the end of Jarry's life.

If the painter and the poet never met, it was because. . . more often than not Jarry was in a state of collapse from alcohol or drugs or was away from Paris. . . Jarry barely survived the winter of 1905-1906 [and] received the last rites around the same time that the Demoiselles was receiving its last touches. The breakthrough that this painting constitutes has yet to be seen in the light of the breakthrough that Jarry had made ten years before when he crashed the barrier between fantasy and reality, and established the parodic science of "pataphysics," which would detonate all traditional canons of beauty, good taste, and propriety. To prime himself for his campaign, Jarry had embarked on a systematic dereglement de tous les sens through drink and drugs and self-destructiveness of every kind. The master plan succeeded all too well. Jarry was dead at thirty-four, leaving Picasso to reap the rewards of his martyrdom without having to pay the price of addiction. . . [but] Jarry's hold on Picasso's imagination was the more palpable for being invested in something as menacing as a gun. . .

Picasso did Jarry's "pataphysical" weapon proud; he claimed that he constantly used it to scare off bores and morons. There was the evening at Lapin Agile when he fired a fusillade of shots after three earnest young Germans had exasperated him with questions about his aesthetic theories; they fled into the night just as Manolo had done. No less Jarryesque was the time when Picasso and Manolo found themselves sharing a cab with yet another boring German, who insisted on reciting his poems. Such was the tedium

that Picasso fired through the cab's roof and left the German to be locked up by the police. Anyone who spoke ill of Cezanne would be silenced with the weapon and the threat "One more word and I fire."
[Richardson, pp. 362-364.]

A handgun is a curious rather than overpowering symbol of power. It is reputed that Jimmy Hoffa said, "Run from a knife. Move in on a gun." The theory, one has to assume, is that a man with a knife is agile enough to use it, and usually slender enough to be defending himself, although not necessarily aggressive enough to chase you, whereas a pistol cannot be employed without some inner moral justification, no matter how warped. If one walks toward a handgun, the man holding it has to decide that he has the right to fire, and may find it more difficult than he would have expected. Unlike a knife, we are not speaking of a reflex, but a moral choice. One has to feel the sanction to fire. One can, of course, make the gesture of firing into the air--so often Picasso's practise--achieving great effect without victory or defeat.

Richardson has a particularly fine passage concerning this:

Again and again (sometimes in the same work) the very same symbol is made to stand for principles or ideas that are totally antithetical. This perverse procedure, which has made

interpretation of the Demoiselles, Guernica, and much else so confusing, may well have had its source from Jarry, who sets up a symbol, knocks it down, upends it, reverses it, conflates it with other symbols in other contexts. "The identity of opposites" is how Jarry explains this phenomenon. "Not only are the signs plus and minus identical but so too, ultimately, are the concepts of day and night, light and darkness, good and evil, Christ and Antichrist." It is a theory by which Picasso would always live and paint, and, much later in life, write. "I remember," Paolo Picasso told his father, "that I used to hear you repeat again and again, 'Truth is a lie.'" [Richardson, p. 366]

Yes, and anarchism, by way of de Sade, is monarchism. Opposites can share the same habitat. A cellar is cold, dark, and evil-smelling; a cellar is warm, womb-like, protective, mysterious. Picasso, his mind dazzled into new connections by opium, must also have been seeking his way into some kind of new painting altogether separate from the Rose Period which may have seemed cloying to him now for its virtues--that all-too-successful creation of the pictorial, the evocative, the romantic, the dream-like, the tender, all tastefully sinister; but by now, in part at least, his spirit had to have been contemplating more disruptive approaches.

It we are to try to conceive of the kind of subjects that were now being discussed at times by Picasso and his poets, we have to assume, given the talents of Jacob, Apollinaire and Picasso, that they indeed pondered some

mysterious concepts. Since the turn of the century, more than

a few exceptional cultural events had occurred. A wireless message, for example, had been sent by Marconi from England to Newfoundland, 2,232 miles away. That could not help but be replete with aesthetic wonder. If the air could transmit messages, then certain of the spirits must be in consort with technology--they were painters and poets after all!--they had an instinctive feeling for the intrinsic oddity of technological transactions. The second half of the nineteenth century, by way of the steamship and the train, had demonstrated that great numbers of people could traverse space at a much greater rate than the horse, and now individuals in their own machines--automobiles!--could race along roads at the same advanced rate of speed. If distance was no longer to be measured by human or animal rates of locomotion, then space on canvas might also be pictured in a new manner.

The Wright brothers lifted up into the air at Kitty Hawk, and our elemental relation to the space above us was forever altered. A balloon had been essentially a point in the sky, but a flying machine was an arrow. Dreams now took on a new relation to reality. Since the first subway was also being completed in New York, the earth, in turn, was no longer a hearth for nature or a tomb for the departed, but a network of underground roads and man-made caves. One could begin to

conceive, as Apollinaire certainly would have been likely to, of a subterranean city, a gastro-intestinal sub-structure to the urban panoply.

In those years, Freud was already offering interpretations of dreams that could reach into any painter or poet's transports. The great bowl of the unconscious was now partially open to contemplation. Nietzsche had died, but not his intellectual presence. The same can be said for Oscar Wilde, for Toulouse-Lautrec, for Gauguin, and, for that matter, Queen Victoria. With her death, a new age was commencing; one could even say because of her death. President McKinley had been assassinated; so, too, the Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovitch, uncle of Czar Nicholas. There had been a mutiny on the battleship Potemkin, and the Czar had established a Duma. The fauves--offering a demonstration that unrestrained use of color was a force powerful enough to determine composition--were exhibiting in Paris--Matisse, Derain, Vlaminck, Braque, Dufy and Rouault were found among the fauves in the autumn of 1905. Max Jacob was studying Kabbala. Apollinaire, in La Plume, in May of 1905, six months after he had met Picasso, was writing:

It has been said. . .Picasso's work shows a precocious disillusionment. In my opinion the

contrary is true. Everything he sees enchants him and it seems to me he uses his incontestable talent in the service of an imagination that mingles delight and horror, abjection and delicacy. . . One feels that his slender acrobats, glowing in their rags, are true sons of the people: versatile, cunning, dexterous, poverty-stricken, and lying.

This was all very well, but Picasso was close already to a recognition that he must soon engage in more telling intellectual wars within himself; the Rose Period might be no more than a rest camp before he would have to go out and pursue a terrifying vision. He was approaching the determining crossroads of his aesthetic career. His father, with all the unspoken weight of an academic painter laying immutable precepts on a young talented child had imbued his son with the imperative of the artistic establishment: One must offer one's audience highly skilled works that provide refined pleasure. In the Rose Period, Picasso was still, willy-nilly, satisfying this paternal injunction.

If he had always seen life and his own existence, his own talent, as fragile, and subject to unforeseen powers of destruction, he now was coming closer to a sense that he could countermand such forces, build underground cities of the

psyche, even fight an active rather than a passive battle against the overpowering treachery that his experience suggested was always waiting in the Creation. One could commence such a war by exploring into the nature of the universe and coming back with new and artful weapons. Thereby, he could hold off the worst; he could protect some form of existence, his own, if no one else's.

We anticipate, however. Gertrude Stein was on her way to him, and her presence would change his grasp of the universe even more than her boundless vanity could have calculated. Perhaps the first effect of her never-inconsequential personality was its subtle pull on the magnetism of his early love for Fernande.

Part VI:

Gertrude Stein

1

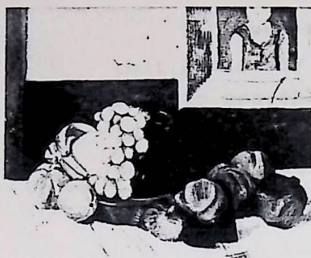
Fernando is still passionately in love with love. As a consequence, she does not always see Picasso too clearly. He is the object of her love, but this strange, small, intense, old-young man can also be, according to his mood, engaging, wickedly entertaining, or cruel. Fernando has her virtues, of which sharp perception is a worthy model to her manner, but she has almost no penetration into the aesthetic sensation of her beloved, or, for that matter, into his bad habits. Nonetheless,

-1-

Fernande is still fabulously in love with love. As a consequence, she does not always see Picasso too clearly. He is the object of her love, but this strange, small, intense, old-young man can also be, according to his mood, engaging, wickedly entertaining, or cruel. Fernande has her virtues, of which sharp perception is a worthy rival to her candor, but she has almost no penetration into the aesthetic anxieties of her beloved, or, for that matter, into his bad moods. Nonetheless,

she sees him by the manner she sees him, and so we, with added perspective, receive the benefit.

I've been trying, for some time, to paint. I have gifts. I would like to be taught, to receive Picasso's advice, which he refuses to offer. "Amuse yourself," he says to me, "that will be enough. What you do is more interesting than what you would do under the instruction of another."



Fernande Olivier. *Still Life*. Oil on canvas, 48x57 cm. Private collection.



Fernande Olivier. *Self-Portrait*; *Portrait of Picasso*. Reproduced in *Picasso et ses amis*, 1933.



Fernande Olivier. *Vase of Flowers*. Oil on canvas, 47x39 cm. Private collection.

I, however, am bothered by getting into things that arouse my passionate interest without being able to search more deeply into the subject. That is why I give myself, above all, to reading, which permits me, at least, to study seriously.

[Souvenirs Intimes, p. 194]

So she remains a dilettante, and an intelligent observer:

Little by little, one sees the art dealers arrive. Pablo detests them. They either sell works that he considers unfinished--I've heard him say that, for him, a painting is never done--he resigns himself to give up some paintings because he's forced to, lacking even the artist's supplies to work. It is always done in bad spirit, and his morale sinks the following days. [Souvenir Intimes. p. 208]

One day, however, Picasso found himself with absolutely no money, no paints, and no canvases, and he went to see Sagot, to ask him to visit his studio. The dealer knew perfectly well that only desperation would have prompted such a request.

Sagot goes up with Picasso and settles on three studies. . . offers seven hundred francs for the lot; Picasso refuses. The dealer leaves and does not return. Several days go by. The painter decides to go and see him again. The dealer is still prepared to buy but this time is only offering five hundred francs for the three studies.

Picasso is furious, tells him to go to hell, and comes home in a rage.

The same performance is repeated a few days later. Sagot is only offering three hundred francs now. Driven by sheer necessity, Picasso finally accepts. [Picasso and His Friends, p. 42]

There has been so much written about Picasso's poverty in this period that one is tempted to pass over it, except that even when it was a question of economics, his determinedly quirky relation to practical life is on exhibit. He would, for example, unlike other painters, not try to exhibit: the criticisms he had received from earlier reviews had scored his self-esteem; he preferred his work to be characterized by friends like Apollinaire. In consequence, he sent paintings to neither the Salon des Independants nor to the Salon d'Automne where the painters he knew were showing. Instead, he had to listen to accounts by his friends and artistic acquaintances of the excitement aroused by the fauves and so must have had his share of envy concerning Matisse, Derain, Vlaminck, and Braque. He would stay in touch with dealers, but as we have just seen, they could drive a humiliating bargain. Once he sold ten drawings for twenty francs to Pere Soulié who dealt mainly in mattresses and bed frames, but liked to exhibit pictures

outside his shop, and on another occasion, when his bill at an art-supplies shop reached nine hundred francs, he was cut off from artist's supplies. He was also rebuffed frequently by Ambroise Vollard, who, no matter his formidable reputation in Montmartre circles for promoting Cézanne, seemed unable to decide whether he approved or disapproved of this young Spaniard whose style didn't change so much as metamorphose; when Picasso sent a work over to Vollard by way of Max Jacob, the dealer turned down the painting. "The belfry," he said to Max, "is crooked. Your friend is mad. Go away." Or, so Jacob reports the dialogue.

One time, their studio cat, as hungry as her master and mistress, went prowling over the rooftops and came back with a large piece of stolen sausage. Fernande maintains that it was washed well, and I "cooked it for us, who are much obliged, however, to share it with Minou."

One day, when we were absolutely without anything, somebody came by to ask Picasso to do a series of drawings for L'Assiette ^{au} ~~du~~ Beurre, a humorous review then in vogue. The offer was for eight hundred francs. He studied me, looking to know whether I wished he would accept it. He had a most unhappy air. I made him a sign, "No." He

insisted, "Don't you want it? I understand, you know, I would do it for you." But--"No," I told him, "--it isn't necessary for you to do anything that makes you unhappy." And I was thinking, Why, why do it? He will be disgusted, sad. And I, who am happy, wouldn't I then be unhappy? All right, then, let's avoid all that and everything will be fine. Tonight, however, won't we be hungry without our restaurant? And I am often without shoes. But I still had my little flask of perfume, my powder, my books, my tea, and Pablo's tenderness.
[Souvenir Intimes, p. 202]

It is a fetching tale of young lovers, but she leaves out some of the background. This offer has come by way of Kies Van Dongen who is the in-house artist for L'Assiette ^{au} ~~de~~ Beurre and has passed this 800-franc job on to Picasso. On the one hand, an offer of friendship; on the other, Van Dongen did use Fernande as a model in the summer of 1905 while Picasso was having his fling in Holland, and Van Dongen, we may recall, owned an even wilder reputation than Picasso in Bateau Lavoir circles concerning conquests with women. Now, a year later in 1906, he has painted Fernande most attractively, and certainly with more insinuation than Picasso.



Van Dongen, *Portrait of Fernande Olivier*. Paris, 1905. Oil on canvas.
1905 Stem, Samir Traboulsi Collection.



1905

1905

One can ask, therefore, how much these two portraits of Fernande were a factor in Picasso's reluctance to accept the assignment.

On the other hand, he would play ceaselessly with Van Dongen's child, Gusie:

She could do with him anything she wished. I didn't know until then that he could please himself so with children. We had often wished to have one for ourselves, but this wish never realized itself, so it was necessary for us to content ourselves with little Miss Van Dongen. [Souvenir Intimes, p. 232]

While the evidence is not wholly established, the likelihood is that because of her Percheron, Fernande could no longer have a child. Harlequin's wife now begins to appear as a mother.



Picasso. *Harlequin's Family*. Paris.
1905. Crayons and wash on paper.
16.5×12.4 cm. Private collection.
Inscribed to Fernande.

Richardson asks, "but why the baby?" and provides an answer:

"Just as he had chided Madeleine for the non-birth of his child in a series of Madonnas, he now implicitly chides Fernande for her inability to have children."
[Richardson, p. 343]

It is another mating of opposite motives for Picasso: the best and the worst in himself can be satisfied. We are asked to feel the pathetique of the man who is ready to love Fernande and their child; on the other hand, she is also being punished. She lost her womb before she ever met him, and that he will not forgive.

Picasso, whose morbid, sickly jealousy is the unique cause of our occasional fights, has forbidden me to go to the Lapin Agile alone. One day, the proprietor, Frede, being attacked, had answered through his window by firing his pistol on a man who was menacing him. The next day, I did go alone to see his wife Berthe in order to hear the

news about it. Picasso, who followed with the same idea, found me there. I received the most unexpected and formidable blow and felt myself being pushed brutally and without concealment out of this place, under the horrified and ironic looks of the curious people who were gathered on the terrace. [Souvenir Intimes, p. 197]

His jealousy is so intense that he locks her in when he leaves the Bateau Lavoir, indeed, he will not allow her out by herself. She can stay home and read; he will shop, he will see what is going on in the streets. He knows her well enough to suspect that she is no more trustworthy than himself.

The other day I opened my door and the neighbors and the concierge were all in front of it, crying out to me that there'd been a fire started in one of the studios, under ours. We would all burn up in this building of wood, and me with it. By the time I dressed, the fire was out. An alcohol lamp had burst, no more. However, I was afraid retrospectively. Pablo often closed and double-locked the door in order to keep me from going out. After that, he, feeling a good deal of fear when I told him the story, no longer carried the keys. [Souvenir Intimes, p. 205]

The unhappy outbreaks, however, continue:

Pablo had a stupid, jealous scene coming back yesterday evening toward midnight. We'd been at Lapin, and it seemed that I had unwittingly attracted some looks from one of the diners. I, then, reproached Pablo for some of his familiarities with women who are more or less friends. Hadn't I even found one of them sitting on his lap?

At last, I became angry and, no longer knowing what I was doing, leapt out to the street and swept down rue Lepic, crying with rage. No longer even asking myself where I was going to put up for the night, still running. Pablo, who had followed, took me brusquely by the arm and wanted to go back to the studio. I refused to follow him, and he wouldn't let go. We were almost fighting. But my anger gave way to a sort of despair, and at last I let myself be brought to our house.

The danger is that after such scenes, I begin to think of the meanness of the material life that I lead. I couldn't resist remarking on this to Pablo. He turned pale, didn't say anything. I thought that he would be angry with me, that I had lost something delicate between us, but I made no apologies and went to bed. He began to work and I slept for a long time before he stretched out near me.

I didn't hear Pablo leave. When I awoke toward noon, he was gone. I had fear. My love came back, reawakened most powerfully. I regretted my behavior. I asked myself if he would come back, or if I was never to see him again. I didn't have the courage to get up. I tried to go back to sleep, and I'd almost succeeded when I heard the

door open and Pablo came in. He came near the bed and said to me, "You sleep? You still want me?" I looked at him. He held out several bills and a little package of perfume. Dear Pablo! If you knew how, at that moment, one thing alone made me happy. Your presence. Your love. [Souvenir Intimes, pp. 204-205]

It is tempting to receive all this as evidence of a passionate romance and to a degree, it was: Long after it had ended, the romance, purified by recollection, continued to live in Fernande's mind. If, in actuality, there had often been the day-to-day reality that goes on between sexual roommates grating dependably on each other's nicer instincts, she hardly suggests any of that in her account. Yet by the time they break up in 1912, it is obvious that they do not get on any more. It is nice, however, to think that they were happy for a period, and that their love might have survived if not for the entrance of Gertrude.

Such a premise is, however, without demonstrable foundation. New women were almost as important to Picasso as new concepts for his work, and since Fernande was sometimes ready to repay his infidelities with her own, their relationship contained no small potentiality to come apart. Moreover, Fernande's bourgeois roots had to irritate his

own--she was an avid social climber. Given her miserable childhood as an illegitimate niece in a ferociously French middle-class family, her social ambitions are comprehensible, but that, too, had to grate on Picasso. A judge can rarely forgive you for a crime he is capable of committing himself, and Picasso had his own tightly concealed inclination for social advancement. It was just that he was considerably better at it.

We cannot blame Gertrude Stein, therefore, if the romance eventually failed, but it is hard to believe she was a force to keep them together. Too great a strain of barely concealed contempt for Fernande lurks in Stein's writings. In The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, (that classic tour-de-force of narcissism where Gertrude Stein had the wit to write about herself through the eyes of Alice while never allowing her mouthpiece one irreligious reaction to her beloved mistress), we learn that Fernande is not to be taken too seriously. If Alice B. Toklas sounds most of the time like Gertrude Stein, lay it to Gertrude's reluctance to sound like Alice any longer than necessary. After all, why be Toklas when one can be Stein?

The geniuses came and talked with Gertrude Stein and the wives sat with me. How they unroll, an endless vista through the years. I began with Fernande and then there were Madame Matisse and Marcelle Braque and Josette Gris and Eve Picasso and Bridget Gibb and Marjory Gibb and Hadley and Pauline Hemingway and Mrs. Sherwood Anderson and Mrs. Bravig Imbs and Mrs. Ford Madox Ford and endless others, geniuses, near geniuses and might be geniuses, all having wives, and I have sat and talked with them all all the wives and later on, well later on too, I have sat and talked with all. But I began with Fernande. [The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, pp. 105-106]

Fernande was. . .not the least amusing. We talked hats. Fernande had two subjects hats and perfumes. The first day we talked hats. She liked hats, and had the true french feeling about a hat, if a hat did not provoke some witticism from a man on the street the hat was not a success. Later on once in Montmartre she and I were walking together. She had on a large yellow hat and I had on a much smaller blue one. As we were walking along a workman stopped and called out, there go the sun and the moon shining together. Ah, said Fernande to me with a radiant smile, you see our hats are a success. [The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, p. 17]



Picasso and Fernande in Montmartre.
c.1906. Musée Picasso, Paris.

What is missing from this characterization (written a quarter of a century later in a style that owes as much to early Hemingway as Ernie once owed to early Stein) is that Alice spoke so little French that she had to take lessons from Fernande. It is not easy to be amusing with someone who does not speak your language! As for Gertrude, however, let there be no mistake. She is more than amusing. On page five of The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, she gives, by way of Alice, the balanced measure of herself:

I may say that only three times in my life have I met a genius and each time a bell within me rang and I was not mistaken, and I may say in each case it was before there was any general recognition of the quality of genius in them. The three geniuses of whom I wish to speak are Gertrude Stein, Pablo Picasso and Alfred Whitehead. I have met many important people, I have met several great people but I have only known three first class geniuses and in each case on sight within me something rang. In no one of the three cases have I been mistaken. In this way my new full life began. [The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, pp. 5-6]

Patrick O'Brian gives a brief description of the first meeting with Picasso:

Leo and Gertrude Stein, wandering along the rue Lafitte, saw two paintings in Sagot's shop that pleased them, the one by a young Spaniard whose name is not recorded, the other by Picasso. Stein bought the first and showed interest in the painter of the second, so Sagot sent him to Pere Soulie [who] perceived that they were Americans and therefore asked as much for his Picasso as Vollard asked for the Cezannes the Steins were then buying. They went back to Sagot who laughed and said that in a few days he would have a big Picasso for them, presumably at a reasonable price. When they returned to the rue Lafitte the dealer showed them the "Fillette a la corbeille fleurie," a slim rebellious blackhaired child, worm-naked but for a little necklace and a hair-ribbon, looking sullenly at the painter as she stands on something tawny and holds an ornamental basket of red flowers, brilliant against the blue-grey background. Gertrude Stein did not like the picture; she found the child's long legs and big feet repulsive. But in the ensuing contest she was defeated; the price of a hundred and fifty francs was paid, and Leo Stein carried the "Fillette" home to the rue de Fleur^u~~A~~s to join the Cezannes, the Gauguins and Matisses.

Presently the Steins were taken to Picasso's studio by a French writer who knew him, and they bought eight hundred francs' worth of pictures straight away. [O'Brian, p. 39]



-2-

Here is Fernande's description of the same meeting:

One day Picasso and I had the surprise of seeing two Americans come to our studio, a brother and a sister, Leo and Gertrude Stein. He had the air of a professor, bald, with gold-rimmed spectacles, a long curled red beard, a wicked eye. A tall thin stiff body with cultivated gestures. She, fat, short, powerfully built, a beautiful strong head with noble features, highly accented intelligent eyes that see a lot, a clear spirit, masculine in her voice, in all her appearance. . .



Gertrude Stein dans
son appartement
27, rue de Fleurus
à Paris, vers 1905.

...of the world, which lately seem to
...the world of ...-a with ...
... who ... from a ...
... of the ... Gertrude is
... they were even comfortably ...

Gertrude Stein, who was an explosive temper, came
in another evening and there were her brother, Alfy
(wounded) and a stranger. The girl did not like the
stranger's looks. Who is that, said she to Alfy.
I don't know him, said Alfy. He looks like a
cow, said Gertrude Stein. He is worse than that,
said Alfy. ...

... had studied medicine at Johns Hopkins and Alfy
... he was a writer ...
... who gave up painting, ...

Stein 77

Both of the Steins were dressed in chestnut-colored corduroys and were wearing sandals. Too sure of themselves to pay attention to what others think, the brother is interested in being a painter and she in writing. She has received compliments from H. G. Wells and is more than a little proud of that. [Souvenirs Intimes, p. 210]

On this occasion, it was the brother one might notice first. He was tall, he was arrogant. Focused on the intellectual passions of his mind, he was barely able to contain his contempt for the minds of others--a rich American eccentric, in short, who happened to come from a German-Jewish family so little Jewish that if Leo was like Gertrude in attitude, they were even comfortably anti-Semitic.

Gertrude Stein, who has an explosive temper, came in another evening and there were her brother, Alfy (Maurer) and a stranger. She did not like the stranger's looks. Who is that, said she to Alfy. I didn't bring him, said Alfy. He looks like a Jew, said Gertrude Stein, he is worse than that, says Alfy. [Alice B. Toklas, p. 13]

Leo Stein had studied medicine at Johns Hopkins and did not practice; he was a writer not able to write for four decades, a painter who gave up painting, an art connoisseur who

spent time with Bernard Berenson only to become an early collector of the avant-garde, yet would be so repelled by cubism that he ceased collecting. He had a "neurosis," as he would explain it. He must have been, when not overbearing, a somewhat comic figure; Picasso's gouache in 1906 captures the formidable side, just as the artist's earlier sketches in 1905 reveal Leo's awkwardness:



Picasso, *Portrait of Leo Stein, Paris*,
1906, Gouache on cardboard,
24.8 x 17.2 cm. The Baltimore Museum
of Art, Cone Collection

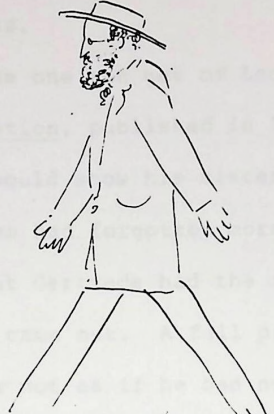
673

III

7-11-10

7-11-10

7-11-10



Pen

673

674

Aunt

675

D. Duncan

Zeremon III

673, 674, 675,

680

Plate 82

Prin, 1735, Pen



The portrait in 1906 may represent Picasso's attempt to flatter a patron; it seems evident that the earlier sketches (which may never have been shown to the subject) take pleasure in his ungainliness.

The best sense one can get of Leo Stein, however, is from his book, Appreciation, published in 1947. It was intended to be the work that would show his sister up; he wished to demonstrate that he had forgotten more about painting than she had ever known, but Gertrude had the immaculate timing to die shortly before it came out. A full page of excerpt is worth presenting: It is not as if he had nothing to say, it is-- but here is the excerpt:

. . .one day it occurred to me to ask the definite question: how does a painter see when he paints? . . .There must be a possibility of seeing things in such a way that they are related to the picture without being it. The problem is to see, and then to learn what was particular about his way of seeing. There is no use speculating when one can experiment; so I began to experiment.

I put on a table a plate of the kind common in Italy, an earthenware plate with a simple pattern in color, and this I looked at every day for minutes or for hours. I had in mind to see it as a picture, and waited for it to become one. In time it did. The change came suddenly when the plate as

an inventorial object, one made up of parts that could be separately listed, a certain shape, certain colors applied to it, and so on, went over into a composition to which all these elements were merely contributory. The painted composition on the plate ceased to be on it but became a part of a larger composition which was the plate as a whole. I had made a beginning to seeing pictorially.

What had been begun was carried out in all directions. I wanted to be able to see anything as a composition, and found that it was possible to do this. I tried it on everything from a scrap of paper torn from the corner of a sheet, to a line of trees extending half a mile into the distance; and I found that with practice seeing pictures was possible everywhere. . .

This habit of mine of seeing pictorial composition in nature, and seeing it anywhere and whenever I am so inclined, in little or on the grandest scale, makes me difficult in the acceptance of pictures. Such a landscape as Claude's and Turner's is for me picturesque only, not really pictorial. It is landscape as anyone sees it, composed, that is, within the limits of a naturalistic vision. In many cases Cézanne does not get beyond that in his composition as a whole. Only in China and Japan was this higher grade of landscape common, and its greatest master in Europe is Poussin. [pp. 103-104]

Stein is an archetype of the ideologue who legislates aesthetics. His definition of art is:

. . .nature seen in the light of its significance. Then, recognizing that this significance was one of form, I added 'formal' to 'significance. Significant form was then born for me.

He exhibits a mind more powerful than Gertrude's, but even as she is a social creature whose greatest appreciation is for the ripples of social surface, so he is, by his own definition, an "explainer," and people who explain are an obstacle to be avoided in social life--"never complain, never explain." He lives for the supremacy of opinion, dependably his own; her judgements are always social, which is to say, paradoxical--she would have been perfectly capable of making the following remark: Apollinaire has strictures in his talent but his manners are redeeming while André Salmon has talent in his strictures but no manners.

One can conceive of Leo Stein grinding his molars at having to listen to such profitless equations when he is ready to declare that surrealism is overrated because it is structureless and no aesthetic can exist without structure.

It is tempting to imagine them together at rue de Fleurus. They were obviously once so close as brother and sister that she followed him to Johns Hopkins in order to study medicine alongside him, at which she was apparently a notable failure.

In anatomy, she could never succeed in drawing the human brain, or would it be fairer to say, she came up with drawings of the brain that were like no others? She was always delighted, or pretended to be, in her absolute lack of depth, her resolute refusal to associate with the occult or the profound. Her self-satisfaction at this characteristic beams out of her prose in the Autobiography:

Gertrude Stein never had subconscious reactions, nor was she a successful subject for automatic writing. One of the students in the psychological seminar of which Gertrude Stein, although an undergraduate was at William James' particular request a member, was carrying on a series of experiments on suggestions to the subconscious. When he read his paper on the result of his experiments, he began by explaining that one of his subjects gave absolutely no response and as this much lowered the average and made the conclusion of his experiments false he wished to be allowed to cut this record out. Whose record is it, said James. Miss Stein's, said the student. Ah, said James, if Miss Stein gave no response I should say that was as normal not to give a response as to give one and decidedly the result must not be cut out.
[p. 97]

She certainly detested the deep. Her pleasures were her values, and her values were social. So-and-so has a well-cut suit, she might have written at any time, but here-and-now does not. That is because here-and-now is half-German and half-Armenian and, as everyone knows, Armenians and Germans never mix. It is more than worthy of the kind of talk one would later hear from people who congregated around Andy Warhol.

Beneath all of her impenetrable psychic skin, as hard-larded as a walrus, she must have been sitting upon wounds, traumae, volcanoes--we don't know: she never lets us know. Once she did reveal that she was happy in her childhood when her father, a cold, domineering man, died, and it could certainly have been no routine matter to be an open practicing lesbian at the turn of the century, but she will never give us any of that. She is instead forever impressive in her own determined way, the way of a hostess; it was probably her first talent. As a writer, it is hard to say whether her reputation would be larger now, or non-existent if Hemingway had not been her pupil in the Twenties, but he was--he took the live ember of her perception of a new kind of prose and carried it to places that affected generations of writers; if he had not come along, her work might have

perished. Little of it does more than entertain us today; much of it is pretentious or, worse, lumpy. She can be a very bad writer. Her book, Picasso, published in 1938, shows a lazy mind, self-indulgent, show-off, slab-sided in her rhythms, spoiled silly, swollen in her sense of the importance of her perceptions and surprisingly unable to make a good point and keep it. The truth is that apart from her recognition of Picasso's talent--which is admittedly no small matter--she did not understand much else about him, and kept faking it.

Despite the incisive things she often has to say, her vanity proves too oppressive. She must understand everything and characterize everything whether she is near to the subject or not. At her worst she shovels obese generalizations from one pile of words to another. Here, for example, is her reaction in 1938 to Picasso's work following his marriage in 1918 to Olga Kokhlova.

The Spanish character is a mixture of Europe and the Orient, the Russian character is a mixture of the European and the Oriental but it is neither the same Europe nor the same Orient, but as it is the same mixture the struggle to become once more himself was harder than ever and from 1924 to 1935 this struggle lasted.

During this time his consolation was cubism, the harlequins big and little, and his struggle was in the large pictures where the forms in spite of being fantastic forms were forms like everybody sees them were, if you wish, pornographic forms, in a word forms like Russians can see them but not forms like a Spaniard can see them. [p.41]

It was, in retrospect, inevitable that she and Picasso were absolutely taken with one another, she who could approach the deep only by way of these orotund excrescences, and Picasso who would never speak of it for fear of being plummeted instantly into the center of the abyss.

- 3 -

We are too far ahead. Olga Kokhlova is more than a decade away, and Picasso's relationship to Gertrude Stein was at its most intense during the first few years.

He had an instinctive and immediate reaction to her. Gertrude stimulated him from the start. While neither of them can recall in interviews or memoirs how she began to model for him, they both agree that he asked her to sit very soon after, or indeed, upon their first meeting, and their early psychic interplay took place with an easel and a canvas between them.

She would ride a horse-drawn tram-car from Odeon to Montmartre and climb the Butte on foot. At the Bateau Lavoir she would sit through many an afternoon--there were ninety such sittings by her unreliable count--and so through the fall of 1905 and the spring of 1906 she would take the trip to his studio and he would paint and wipe out and paint again while Fernande, invariably present, would read aloud from one or another French classic.

Fernande spoke a very elegant French, some lapses of course into montmartrois that I found difficult to follow, but as she had been educated to be a schoolmistress, her voice was lovely. . .
[Alice B. Toklas, p. 24]

In such manner would the hours pass and it is hardly possible not to speculate on their inner state. Richardson does it well for us:

. . . a powerful charge was generated between them, a deep psychic feeling that went way beyond friendship and yet was not in the least amorous, often not even amicable; a feeling that would flourish, despite all manner of rows, until the mid-1930s. Gertrude came to enjoy posing, she said: "the long, still hours followed by a long dark walk intensified the concentration with which she was creating her sentences." And so, while the artist wrestled on canvas with Gertrude as if she were a sphinx whose image held the key to the future of his art, the sitter ruminated on her work in progress. "The long still hours" enabled her to compose the "Melanctha" section of Three Lives--usually considered the best part. [Richardson, p. 404]

In the evening when the sitting was completed, Gertrude would walk down the hill, stroll across the Right Bank, cross the Seine and return to 27 Rue de Fleurus. When it was a Saturday, Picasso and Fernande would accompany her, and they would all dine at her home. The Saturday night salon had begun.

It grew quickly. Picasso was soon able to invite Apollinaire and Max Jacob to accompany him, and to their ranks were added any number of visiting Americans and several of Gertrude's friends. One of them, a spinster from Baltimore

named Etta Cone, used to find the Picassos "appalling but romantic."

Gertrude by way of Alice's dependable if ersatz voice has another description of Picasso's social appearance:

. . .small, quick-moving but not restless, his eyes having a strange faculty of opening wide and drinking in what he wished to see. He had the isolation and movement of the head of a bull-fighter at the head of their procession.

[Alice B. Toklas, p. 14]

Others will use the same image to describe him: A year or two later, entering a room followed by men as large in size as Braque, Derain and Vlaminck, several memoirs, Fernande's and Salmon's among others, speak of Picasso as the torero at the head of his cuadrilla; and when he is an old man, he will look like nothing so much as a venerable ganadero, proud of the bulls he has raised; we do well to remember the little boy who was brought by his father to visit a famous bull-fighter in his hotel room in Malaga early on a Sunday afternoon before the trip to the plaza and the corrida. He had been placed on the bull-fighter's lap and was dazzled by the suit of lights.

Now--what an actor Picasso would have made!--he dazzles odd American ladies with his panache and his utter lack of it. Alice Toklas describes how in the course of the first meal Picasso would have at the Rue de Fleurus, he was placed at Gertrude's right hand. When she picked up a piece of bread, he grabbed it back from her, and cried out, "It's mine," only to look sheepish immediately thereafter.

Brothers and sisters snatch bread from each other while growing up. Obviously, Pablo and Gertrude were related from the start. How much she must have reminded him of his fat aunts in Málaga, and his hefty nude models in Holland.

He had also to be impressed by the Stein collection. By dint of careful choices, it had been well commenced. "On all the walls," as Alice writes, "were pictures, Cézannes, Matisses, Gauguins, Renoirs, a little Daumier, and a Toulouse-Lautrec. Here is a corner of the room by 1907.

New hanging of pictures at the Steins' apartment at 27 rue de Fleurus, 1907. Picasso's portrait of Gertrude hangs above Matisse's *Woman with a Hat*, beside other Matisse's, a Manet and a Renoir. On the left wall are Picasso's *Standing Nude* (1906; see illustration, p. 446), *Boy with a Milk Can* (1905-06) and two *Heads* as well as a Florentine Madonna. The Baltimore Museum of Art, Cone Archives.



Apollinaire, a frequent guest by way of Picasso at rue de Fleurus, did not necessarily take the Steins too seriously. About them, he was to make only this small reference in 1907:

Vallotton is exhibiting six paintings, among which is a portrait of Mlle. Stein, that American lady who with her brother and a group of her relatives constitute the most unexpected patronage of the arts in our time.

Leurs pieds nus sont chaussés de sandales
delphiques,
Ils levent vers le ciel des fronts
scientifique:

No more than Delphic sandals on their bare feet
 Yet such scientific brows glimpse heaven's suite

Those sandals have sometimes done them harm. Caterers and soft-drink vendors are especially averse to them.

Often when these millionaires want to relax on the terrace of a cafe on one of the boulevards, the waiters refuse to serve them and politely inform them that the drinks at the cafe are too expensive for people in sandals.

But they could not care less about the ways of waiters and calmly pursue their aesthetic experiments. [Breunig, Apollinaire on Art, p. 29]

Afterward, back in the Bateau Lavoir, the next week would commence with more sittings. At this point, Picasso's sentiments about social status are nice to estimate. It is never routine to be a snob and a bohemian at once! Back in Barcelona, during the Blue Period, Picasso and his friend de

Soto spent much time together:

Since they wanted to look elegant and had only one pair of gloves between them, they used to share it, keeping one bare hand in a pocket and gesturing ostentatiously with the gloved one. I remember Picasso telling me how elegant he felt, dressed in a green suit which he passionately admired, and his single glove. [Picasso and his Friends, p. 23]

It is worth remembering that this is the same de Soto who is drawn in the winter of 1902-03 with a whore on his lap--a glove for one hand, a raunchy finger for the other. That can serve as an image for Picasso's social life now that Gertrude Stein has provided the glove.

A year or so later, Matisse would take his daughter Marguerite on a visit to the Bateau Lavoir:

More than fifty years later she still remembered. . .Fernande's extraordinary beauty, [and] her way of producing sugar for their coffee--she went to a cupboard, scooped up a handful, and emptied it onto a clear space on the filthy table. [O'Brian, p. 140]

Fernande is his match. A lovely French accent and a casual sense of service.

The outcome of all those ninety sittings is, of course, engraved in art history by now: Gertrude, in her blithe fashion gives the account via Alice:

Spring was coming and the sittings were coming to an end. All of a sudden one day Picasso painted out the whole head. I can't see you any longer

when I look, he said irritably. And so the picture was left like that.

Nobody remembers being particularly disappointed or particularly annoyed at this ending to the long series of posings. . . Gertrude Stein and her brother were going to Italy as was at that time their habit. Pablo and Fernande were going to Spain, she for the first time, and she had to buy a dress and a hat and perfumes and a cooking stove. All french women in those days when they went from one country to another took along a french oil stove to cook on. [Alice B. Toklas, p. 65]

By way of Gertrude, it is all part of the flow. Picasso paints out a head, and Fernande buys a hat, a dress, some perfume, an oil stove. Nothing is more important, suggests Gertrude, than a conjunction. One thing does lead to another and then another. Structure is structureless, a river; how Leo must have hated her ever-flowing mind with never a composition to point to, nor a foundation.

4 Hopefully, we are close enough to Picasso to assume that if life is a river, he was encountering a rapids. It was not like him to use a model, nor was there a precedent for using the same model over and over in the same pose. His virtuosity as a painter, his facility, his speed, were all elements of his pride. He could work faster and better than any other young

painters around. Now he is marooned for months trying to capture a short and very stocky woman.

We have to make the assumption that he is at a major crossroads in his life. He has been working in the Rose Period long enough to recognize that it is a sinecure, not a breakthrough. He keeps hearing praise of the fauves and of Matisse from people he respects--particularly he is obliged to listen to Leo Stein pointing to Matisse^{us} probably the most important young painter around because he is at the forefront of the avant-garde. The Rose Period is lovely, but it is safe. No one has to tell Picasso. He has Gauguin and Cézanne as his models, and they have brought something radically new to painting. He is a young competitive artist with the best-looking mistress in town, but he does not wish to be known for extraordinarily talented depictions of lovely and slightly sinister twilights with saltimbanques, not at all; he wishes to push on into a visual world never explored, not even necessarily glimpsed. What we can count on is that in the person of Gertrude Stein he saw the embodiment of a set of exceptions to life that he, by his own perception, was also approaching. With his instinct, powerful, palpable, ready to seize many an instant, he must have sensed that she was an

appropriate Sphinx for him. She offered clues to his artistic future.

We have to assume that he is not only God-driven in his ambitions (which is to say that he wishes to reach some recognition of how God does it) but that he feels an uncomfortable intimacy with the Deity. God is more dangerous than a full-grown bull in the ring when you are only a naked man; God creates earthquakes and lets your youngest sister die, God allows your beloved friend Casagemas to kill himself over a woman, God drives Max Jacob mad from time to time, usually when Max, far out on drugs, comes closest to Him.

God, however, is also a colleague. When Picasso draws, the line that delineates a limb seems to spring up out of some collaboration between his hand and the power that conceived the design of that limb--God may be as amorphous as a cloud, but God is also as clear as a well-defined form. God is a dangerous foe because some of His secrets seem to be there to capture. That may indeed be the question. Can one enter the logic by which the forms of a human being are put together? Can one search out God's intentions, experiments, rejections, new explorations?

The key is there in form. Form is the language that God has decided to share with a few painters, the very best

painters. They are apostles serving the mystery of form. They know more about it than other men and women; they know that a tree can have virtually the same form as a torso. To a verbal mind, tree and torso are separate words and so are wholly separate objects, each with an integrity that cannot be shared. But to Picasso in Paris in 1906 with a power to draw that has to be terrifying even to him, to this young artist with a mistress into whose body he has been exploring, even as she has explored his, to Picasso at the age of twenty-five taking off on opium into exceptional odesseys of his mind, it is no small matter that a tree can share the same form as a torso, and a man and a woman are not separate entities but meet and coalesce and cross over in gender. Even if we take his explorations with Fernande as no more than sex revealed by opium, his mind had to be influenced by new ideas of his own gender. He did the shopping and the housekeeping, and she was larger than he was. As O'Brian describes it,

the beautiful slattern Fernande, lying in bed at the Bateau Lavoir, sleepily watching Picasso sweep the lane that led from the divan "along a narrow valley among the empty sardine-tins and the respectable depth of oyster-shells" to his easel.

Fernande may have been his best-found pleasure, but she was also his equal and more; he lived in a state of bohemian tyranny where the sordid cohabited with the ideal, and he must often have felt--if in no other place than his dreams--that she was more of a man than he was.

Now, with Gertrude, he could feel himself in the presence of another possibility for love, which is to say he could lock himself into the person of another woman.

Not all love affairs are carnal; some can rest on the weight of the meditation each can inspire in the other. Pablo and Gertrude must have gone through their plenitude of sittings engaged in unspoken psychic transactions that concerned the future power and status of each other. They must have sensed on meeting that at last each had encountered another person with an ambition as large as one's own. Perhaps they struggled silently through those meetings over who could steal the most from the other, a witch and a warlock contesting a lust for power which the other could augment or diminish. Since neither was much removed from the mean-spirited and the diabolical, the real question is whether the sum of their game was for good or for ill.

That calculation is beyond our means, but it is safe to assume that Gertrude Stein was the most monumental cross-over

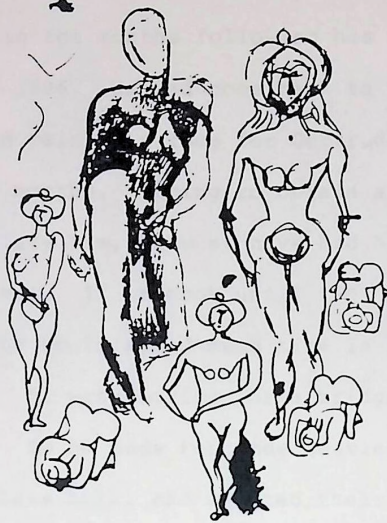
in gender that he had ever encountered. He had to be knowing about this. With Fernande, he had entered the essential ambiguity of deep sex where one's masculinity or femininity was forever turning into its opposite, so that a phallus, once emplaced within a vagina became more aware of the vagina than its own phallitude--that is to say, one is, at the moment, a vagina as much as a phallus, or, for a woman, vice-versa, a phallus just so much as a vagina--then, no matter one's physical appearance, one has, in the depths of sex, crossed over into androgyny.

Picasso was obsessed with the subject. For good cause-- it spoke to his preoccupation with form. The range of Gertrude Stein's crossover from woman to man could simply not be charted by ordinary means; if she was more like a man than a woman, so she was still by birth a woman, and so a focus for his own preoccupation with androgyny. That confirmed his private sense of himself in acts with Fernande (as well, doubtless, with many another woman). If in the act he felt himself to be part man here, part woman there, whole man here, whole woman there, then sex might be seen as a pool where forms swam over into other forms.

For Picasso, the virtue of androgyny was that it traversed contexts; a nude of a woman to which one added a phallus

produced a man; a woman on kneeling could show a back that looked like a pair of testicles and a phallus. Forms might tell you more about reality than words.



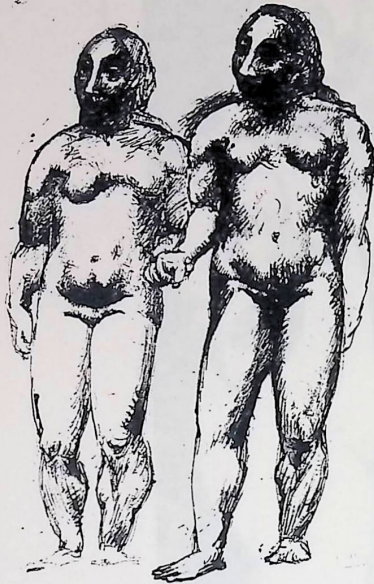


Left Picasso Nude studies, Paris, 1907
Pen on paper, 32x25cm. Whereabouts
unknown.



10-26 Paris
La maison de Picasso

The drawings on the previous page were done early in 1907. That was in the months following his return from Spain in the summer of 1906. He had come back to the studio at the Bateau Lavoir and painted a face for Gertrude that satisfied him. It had taken months. Trying to obtain a portrait of Stein which would satisfy him, he must have had his fill of fantasies and alternatives. If it took until 1907 to draw a woman with a phallus, he would spend much time in 1906 attempting the opposite: he was looking for a bridge between Fernande and Gertrude. So he made Fernande heavier and gave Gertrude somewhat less bulk, and equated their faces, their expressions.



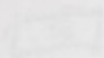
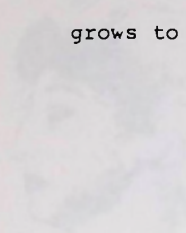
Top left: Picasso. Two Nudes Holding Hands. Paris, 1906. Pen and wash on paper. 18 x 32 cm. Private collection.

Above: Picasso. Woman Seated and Woman Standing. Paris, 1906. Charcoal on paper. 61.5 x 47 cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Louise and Walter Arnsberg Collection.



Picasso, *Two Nudes*, Paris, 1906, Oil on canvas, 151.3x93cm. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of G. David Thompson in honor of Alfred H. Barr, Jr.

He also made Fernande look older in order to bring her physiognomy closer to Gertrude. So we are given Fernande as he thinks she might look in ten or fifteen years if, that is, she grows to resemble Gertrude.



2nd II 745-91

Fernande

H. 10/10/92

2nd II 747-91

Fernande

G. 10/10/92



745

Zenos VI 745-91

Fernando's

Mini de plomb 1906



747

Zenos VI 747-91

Fernande

Crayon 1922

Mainly, he wrestles with the enigma of Miss Stein. He must work on the premise that if he can solve the riddle she represents, much else will open. She is so exceptionally authoritative. God has come down to visit us in the form of a woman who acts like a man. It must add to his conviction that she is a creature brought forth by the deep to provide him with salient clues.

Failing completely to capture any authoritative sense of her by the spring of 1906, he must paint out her face; sometime in this period, however, he has come up with a formidable study of an earth goddess.



(357) A

Nude Woman standing
Pencil Paris, 1906

Lot J 357

Still engaged in his contemplation of her, he paints one of the last of his Rose Period pictures. If it does not contain the hue of rose, it is one of his best, all the same, one of his most famous, and forces the suggestion that he is the boy leading a horse more powerful than himself. Would Gertrude have liked or disliked the notion? She did, in any event, purchase the painting.



Above: Picasso. *Boy Leading a Horse*.
Paris, 1906. Oil on canvas, 221×130cm.
Collection William S. Paley, New York.

The actual portrait of Stein was, of course, to become famous. The hands are worthy of Ingres and the face is an astounding mask. The eyes are unseeing, or rather, in-seeing, and hint at the force within herself Gertrude never revealed except by the stubbornness of her literary style. She is not only a portrait but a presence.

She also stands at the crossroads of where Picasso can go next. Three years down the road, there will no longer be a road so much as a network of forms where one can view a cornucopia of cross-overs between a still life, a human and a forest, between a forest and a city; in short, Cubism. But first, the Sphinx must be fashioned in a formal portrait with no more than a hint of the painter's underlying ambition to be ready to examine the laws of existence. If a part of him had to be terrified of such sacrilegious pursuits, his work would throw up shields to protect him and hold him back as often as he would sally forth to attack conventional vision. It is hopeless to understand Picasso without comprehending that he was not only a painter but a primitive hunter and a medicine man. If Les Demoiselles d'Avignon, now less than a year away, can in large be comprehended as an exorcism, a literal scarecrow--there to repel spirits and demons--Gertrude's

portrait precedes it. In relation to what was to come, her painting sits like a great stone god obscuring the path.

That he does a portrait of himself on a canvas almost as large in the same period can be no coincidence. There he is, her younger sibling, her fellow mask. He looks haunted. He is hiding both of them.