



La Toilette. Gauguin, early Summer 1906

Oil on canvas, 59½ x 39" (151 x 99 cm)

Zervos I, 325. D.B. XV, 34. Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York. Fellows for Life Fund



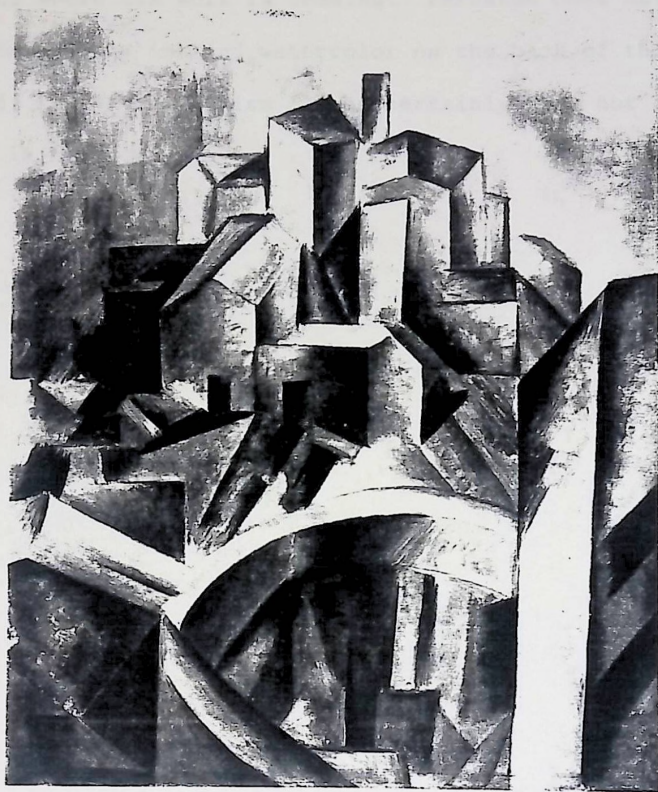
PICASSO, *Nude in an Armchair*, Horta de Ebro, summer 1909
Oil on canvas, 56 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ (92 x 73 cm)
Dax 302, Private collection

She must have writhed in mute horror; he obviously loved his work more than he loved her. Picasso's main concern now seems attached to how much the Reservoir at Horta can be brought into family resemblance with his portraits of Fernande





PICASSO, *Bust of a Woman (Fernande)*, Horta de Ebro, summer 1909
Oil on canvas, 56 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ (93 x 74 cm)
Daix 286, The Hiroshima Museum of Art



PICASSO. *Reservoir at Horta*. Horta de Ebro, summer 1909
Oil on canvas, 25 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 19 $\frac{1}{4}$ (60 x 50 cm)
Daix 280. Private collection

He even sends a postcard to Leo and Gertrude Stein, a sketch of where his work is leading. Fernande does not fare any better in the ink and watercolor on the back of this postcard. It may be Cubism but he certainly does not like what he sees in her now!



Both sides of a picture postcard of Picasso's *Woman in an Armchair* sent by Picasso to Leo and Gertrude Stein, March 23, 1909



PICASSO, *Woman's Head (Fernande)*.
Horta de Ebro, summer 1909
Ink and watercolor, 15 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 10 $\frac{1}{8}$ " (39.3 x 25.5 cm)
Dias 289, The Art Institute of Chicago,
Alfred Steglitz Collection

From the beginning, his attitude proclaims: she will recover. She does. In a photograph we have of her in Horta de Ebro, it is interesting that she is holding an unhappy child's hand. Yes. One more buried anger between Picasso and herself; the children she will never give birth to, and the recollection of the sad fiasco of the child they adopted for a week.



Fernande Olivier at Horta de Ebro, 1909

No question. Something has hardened in the relationship. The form it will take after their return to Paris is to move out of the Bateau Lavoir into an apartment at 11 Boulevard de Clichy that is worthy of a true bourgeois, and indeed the house belongs to a Minister named Delcasse who also dwells there. It is interesting that in years to come they will each ascribe the move to the inclinations of the other. In all probability, they are both correct.

A profound dichotomy in Picasso's behavior is commencing. He is half-Bohemian, half-bourgeois, and will remain so for the rest of his life, inhabiting mansions and castles before he is through, yet always refusing to furnish them in any manner consistent with his wealth or the inclinations of the architecture. He will collect junk rather than antiques; he will dress on occasion with elegance, but work in the same kind of clothes he wore at the Bateau Lavoir; he will live for the rest of his life with one thigh thrust into the camp of the wealthy, and one toe back in the poverty of the young painter. It is as if, like the majority of artists from middle-class roots who come before and after him, he can escape from the values and ambitions of his parents, but only by half.

Fernande sends a pneumatique bleue immediately to Miss Stein:

Sunday

You can, as of now, dear Gertrude, come to visit us at 11, Boulevard de Clichy. We've moved in as of this morning, but unhappily we are still far from being settled. If you wish to come tomorrow, Monday, at least one of us will be there in the afternoon. Do you wish to ask Helène if she knows a maid for me who can stay in our house? I don't want to pay more than forty francs a month, but I would need her here three or four days. Come, and the best of everything to Leo and to Alice. Till tomorrow, Fernande.

[Souvenirs Intimes, p. 237]

Her social ambitions stir. Fernande also has a divided heart. If she is famous for being the best-looking artist's mistress in Paris, she ~~still~~ remains the product of her aunt's middle-class strictures. She may adore Picasso for his vigor and his talent, but she is nonetheless ashamed of how crude he still can be. Overseeing one of the first notes Picasso sends off from Gosol to Gertrude Stein back in 1906, Fernande is obviously trying to fill any social pit her Spaniard might be digging with his semi-literate French. In her accompanying letter, we can feel her shame for his orthographical gaffes: "It seems doubtful to me that you will succeed in deciphering Pablo's letter but I think it is preferable to leave it in the original, such as it is, in this French which is more or less

eccentric." "Eccentric" -- "fantaisiste" is her word and that is a kind classification considering his butchery of French syntax and spelling. Picasso is so intelligent but so semi-illiterate, at least in French, that he may have been dyslexic. Indeed, how could his eye pass along a run of alphabetic letters wholly in series when his instinct jumps his vision from the breast to the buttocks? Fernande (in one small but final part of herself) is obviously as embarrassed by him as her aunt might be.

What a closet passion, therefore, to live in some kind of middle-class style like other successful people.

Pablo Picasso in his
studio on the
boulevard de Clichy,
1910



Picasso, Soviet Museums, p 104

We take our meals in a dining room of old mahogany furniture, served by a maid on a white tablecloth. We sleep in a room that is actually to be used for rest, in a low bed with heavy square copper posts. Behind the bedroom, at the end of the hall, there's a little living room with a sofa, a piano, a pretty Italian piece with carvings of ivory and pearl, which was sent to him by his father, and at the same time several other old, nice pieces. I might remark on the astonishment of the movers at the difference between the two studios, the old and the new. "Surely," said one of them to Raynal, who was helping Picasso, "surely these people have won a lottery."

There are two windows, and when one leans out of them, one can see sunlight and beautiful trees and gardens. Often one returns in the dawn and when one looks out the window the birds are singing and one hears them for a good moment before sleeping until eleven o'clock or midday. [Souvenirs Intimes, pp. 238-239]

All the same, her graver sense of reality never departs.

Despite everything, Pablo is already less happy here than he's been before. The servant very quickly comprehends his character, and forms a good habit of not irritating him. To the contrary, she doesn't clean his studio except when he gives the order. one doesn't sweep; he always has a horror

of dust unless it is not moving, but any powder that flies up in the air and collects on new canvases drives him wild. In the morning, naturally, one lets him sleep, and the housekeeping reflects that. The maid grows negligent and gets up late. Pablo locks himself in his new studio after two o'clock, earlier if he can, and works there until nightfall. In the winter, one doesn't go in there except to stir up the fire. Every two or three months he puts away his canvases and his trinkets in large cupboards and at last permits one to do a reasonably complete housecleaning of the studio, under the condition that nothing is upset.

On his walks he buys furniture, little objects that finish by cluttering up a studio already full. The walls are decorated with old tapestries, negro masks, musical instruments on the tables, black negro carvings that he's been collecting for several years now. Picasso's become a fanatic about that. . . [Souvenirs Intimes, p. 240]

Probably she has harangued him for a year or more to make the move, but now she is obviously worried that they have made a large mistake.

Despite our material prosperity, he's more and more in a dark mood. When one asks him what's going on, if he's annoyed or suffering, he looks back with an astounded air and answers, "No, not at

all--I'm thinking about my work." When he's at table he hardly speaks. Often, he stays silent during the length of the repast.

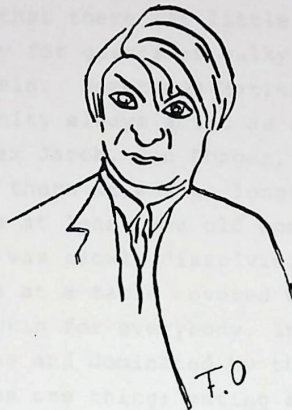
He is, however, suffering, or believes himself to be. When I first knew him, several years ago, he drank a lot, he ate it didn't matter what. He now cannot take in anything other than what's been prescribed for his diet. For several years now I've seen him drinking nothing but mineral water or milk, eating only vegetables, fish, rice that's been boiled in milk, and grapes. Perhaps it's this regimen that leaves him so sullen. [Souvenirs Intimes, p. 244]

His constant grumbling may have been due to exhaustion from incessant work. He became increasingly afraid of illness. He was terrified of getting consumption. Every morning he coughed--a pipe-smoker's cough--and every time he looked to see if he was coughing up blood. One night when he was coughing he ruptured some small blood-vessels in his throat and spat blood. He went quite out of his mind with anxiety. Salmon, who was staying in the house, was alerted and went to get a friend who was a doctor; and even though the doctor laughingly reassured him, Picasso would not be convinced.

He was nervous of everything, even before it had happened. [Picasso and His Friends, p. 129]

No matter. They have moved in order to improve their social standing, and so they work at it despite illness, depression, and the forward march of Cubism.

Picasso continued to make the round of visits to his friends, always protesting to Fernande before they set out that it was a boring waste of time, always remaining taciturn while they were there, but nevertheless unable to live without these contacts which he enjoyed in his own way. The Saturday visit to the Steins at their studio in the rue de Fleurus was a regular event. There he always met Matisse to whom he invariably paid a visit on Fridays. At the Steins they were both among the most honoured guests, Matisse with his brilliant flow of conversation and Picasso sardonic and reserved, inclined to look down on those who failed to understand him. He was particularly unhappy when asked for explanations of his work which he always tried to avoid, and which became all the more irksome in his broken French.
[Penrose, p. 150]



Pablo Picasso ~~by~~ by Fernande Olivier.

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01310-5

They also entertain regularly at home.

Picasso and Fernande not only received all comers on Sundays but they also gave small dinner-parties--small, because the table took up so much space that there was little room for guests, particularly for guests as bulky as Apollinaire and Gertrude Stein. Sometimes Matisse came, and his natural dignity always acted as a restraint; but even when Max Jacob, van Dongen, Pichot, Salmon, or Braque were there it was no longer the same; and for Fernande at least the old comradeship of their poorer days was slowly dissolving. Devouring bread and sardines at a table covered with newspaper, with one napkin for everybody, in a studio smelling of turpentine and dominated by the Demoiselles d'Avignon was one thing; eating a regular number of courses in a proper dining-room, waited upon by a starched and silent maid, was another. Whether Fernande was right about its causes or not, the change was there; it was felt by them all.

[O'Brian, p. 177]

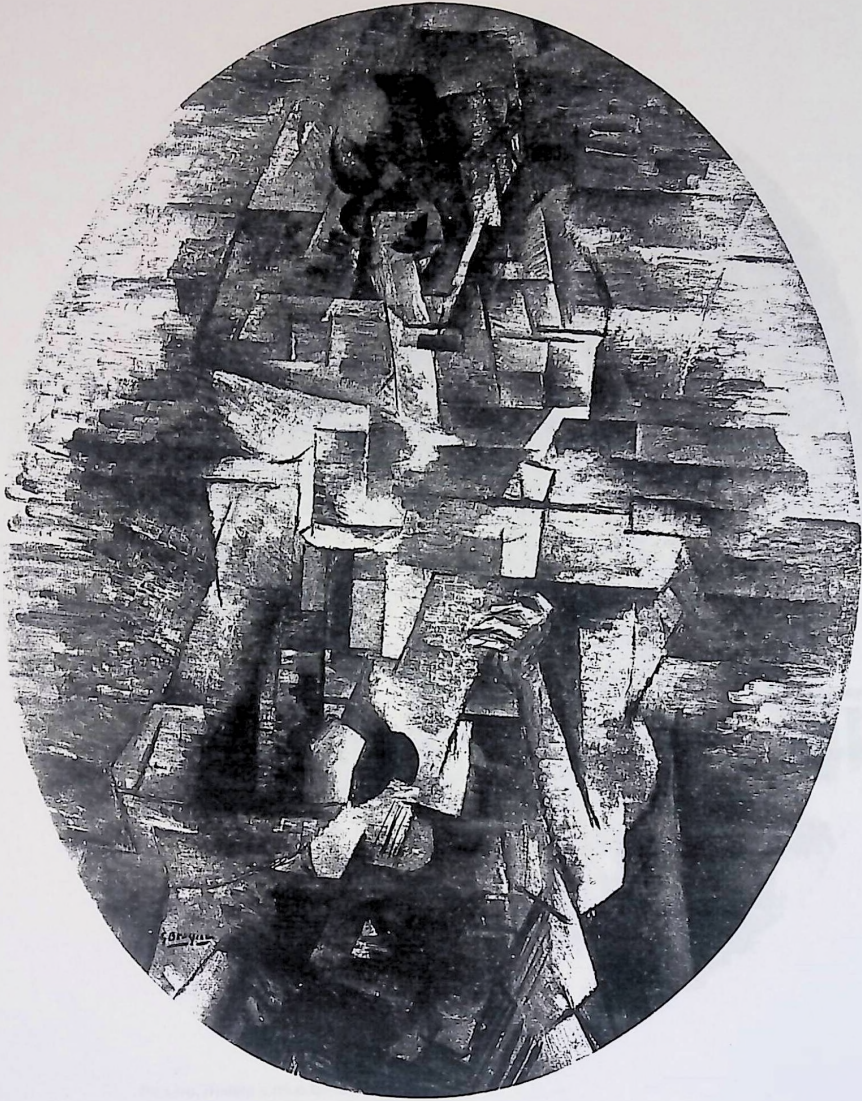
Perhaps, with all else, the gray and brown palette of cubism could be seen as a reflection of long periods of depression walking with one's head down, staring at the wet cobblestones of Paris streets on an Autumn rainy day.

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Nor was work prospering. After their early and brilliant collaboration, Picasso and Braque were now engaging some of the bottomless difficulties implicit in the very concept of Cubism. It not impossible that the move to Boulevard de Clichy contributed to a loss of invention, but, whatever the cause, it can be argued that from the fall of 1909 until the summer of 1911, with all notable exceptions granted, Cubism was languishing. While Braque and Picasso maintained their close collaboration for the six months they were both in Paris from

November 1909 through April 1910, and again from December 1910 through July 1911, their product lacked the reverberation of its beginnings and would not reach its period of highest realization until the fall of 1912.

There are, of course, few movements in art as inimical to such generalization as Picasso's and Braque's Cubism, but the peril acknowledged, and with all notable exceptions soon cited, there is still a blurring of purpose in Picasso's Woman with a Mandolin (which looks more like a Braque) and a mechanical heaping up of planes, empty of real complexity, in Braque's Woman with a Mandolin (which looks like a second-rate Picasso).



Brown, E. *Woman with a Mandolin*. Paris, [spring] 1910
Oil on canvas (oval), 36 1/4 x 28 3/4 (92 x 75 cm)
Romilly 71, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich



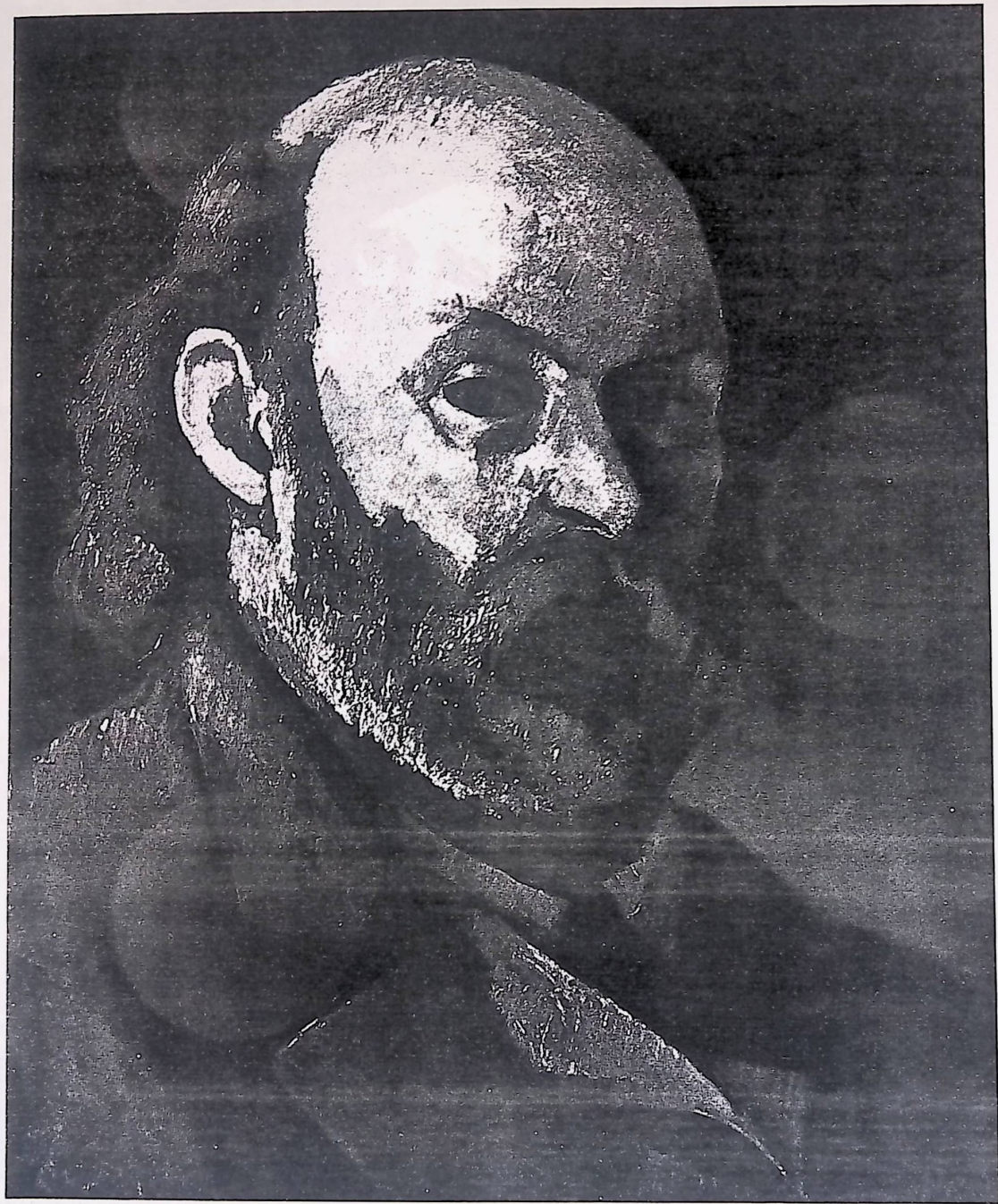
PICASSO, *Woman with a Mandolin*. Paris, spring 1910
Oil on canvas (oval), 31½ × 25½" (80 × 64 cm)
Daix 541. Private collection, Switzerland

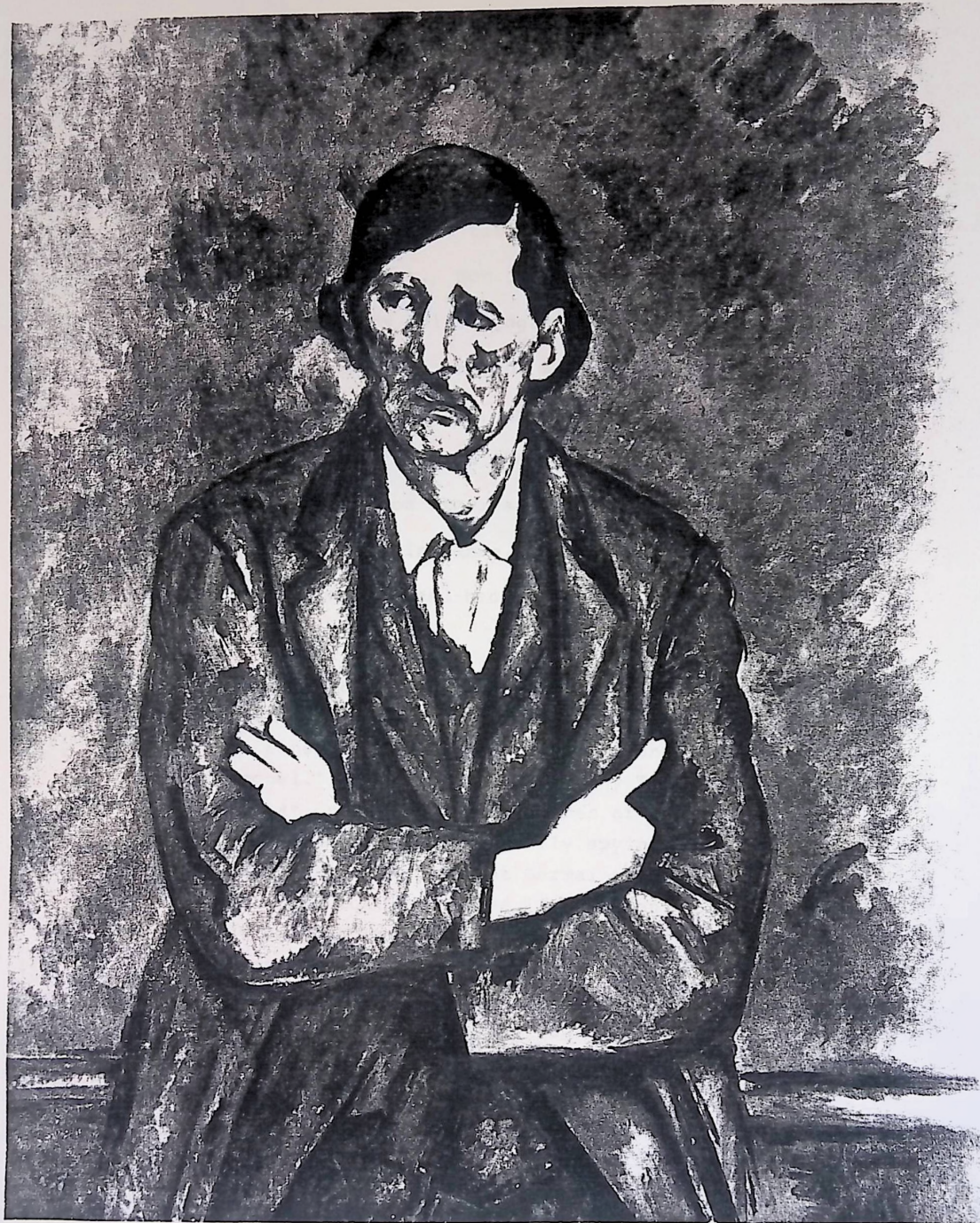
Equally, the Portrait of Wilhelm Uhde may be renowned for too little. If it is one of the first cubist portraits, it is still relatively barren of invention (barren, at any rate, for Picasso) and seems as much a charming caricature as a Cubist work.



PICASSO. *Portrait of Wilhelm Uhde*. Paris, spring[-autumn] 1910
Oil on canvas, 31 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 25 $\frac{3}{4}$ " (81 × 60 cm)
Daix 338. Private collection

How much better by comparison are two portraits by
Cézanne, each of which anticipates Cubism:





69. MAN WITH CROSSED ARMS. 1895-1900

Oil 36 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 28 $\frac{3}{4}$

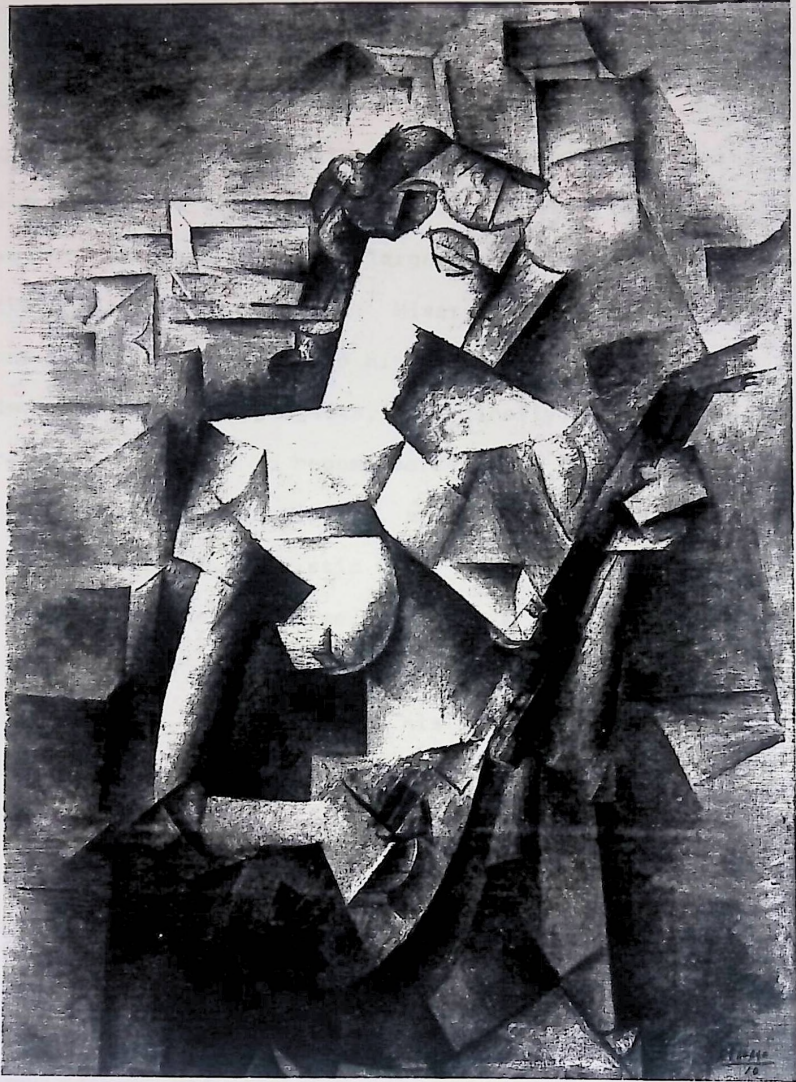
George Grosz
Ver. P. 101
P. 101

At this point, Picasso seems to be searching rather than finding. Another portrait titled Girl with a Mandolin is of the model Fanny Tellier. Not conspicuously inventive (but for the innovation of its full-fledged breast) it also seems unfinished. Probably it was, or so indicates the Picasso biographer, MacBurney-Hastie, who, while rarely to be caught citing a reference, is, with the availability of such liberty, usually ready with good stories.

Picasso, in this instance, was working at the reserve studio he still maintained back at the Bateau Lavoir:

Another bone of contention was his sudden absences from "home" for a day or two at a time while he was "working on an important picture with a model." . . .and this one, Fanny Tellier, had a reputation for romping with her artists. Fernande never descended to physically spying on them, though she arranged that Germaine should "pop down from time to time to see if they wanted anything," but the picture confirmed her worst fears. . .the centrepiece is really her right breast which almost hangs out of the canvas as if it were a ripe pear. After some not too subtle nagging, the girl did not turn up one day for a sitting and he was discouraged from finding out why.

[MacBurney-Hastie, Picasso's Women, p. 61]



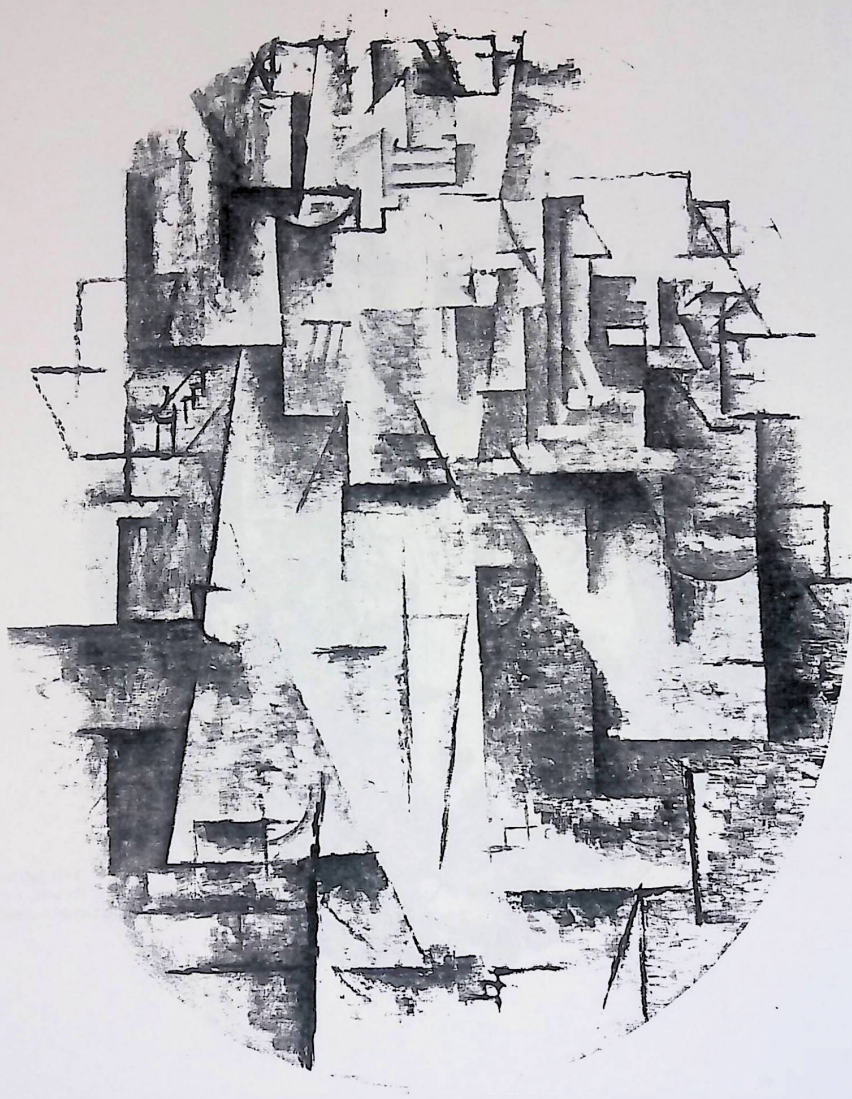
PICASSO, *Girl with a Mandolin (Fanny Tellier)*. Paris, spring 1910
Oil on canvas, 39½ × 29" (100.3 × 73.6 cm)
Daix 346. The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Nelson A. Rockefeller Bequest

Of course, one can never make a clear case that personal unhappiness is going to have a discernible effect on the quality of Picasso's work. He is the embodiment of the mighty ego of a great artist which is also equal to stating that he was not vain except in the largest manner--he was dedicated to the importance of his work. Misery, like happiness, might be one more factor that could hinder or contribute to the development of his projects, but, finally, his emotional state rarely was allowed to become more than a factor. Only catastrophe could derail him, and that, given his dedicated concentration, his artistic will, might not even show its impact for quite some time. Indeed, a catastrophe was waiting for him in September of 1911, an event powerful enough to shift his character for the rest of his life, but the artistic results would not be visible for most of the following year.

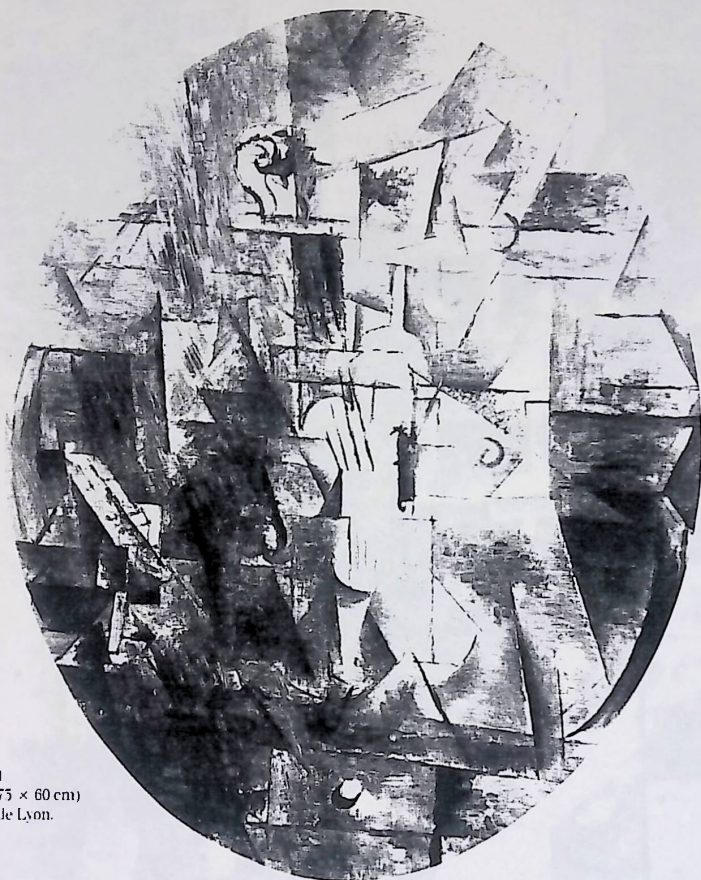
One anticipates. More immediately, we can say that by 1910 he had not only committed himself with but partial success to an exploration into the depths and demons that congregate in that no-man's-land between art and the outreaches of existence, but was also growing more and more miserable with his new surroundings, and with Fernande.

Certainly, examples of work that is less than inspired are not hard to locate in this period. Braque's Violin, done by

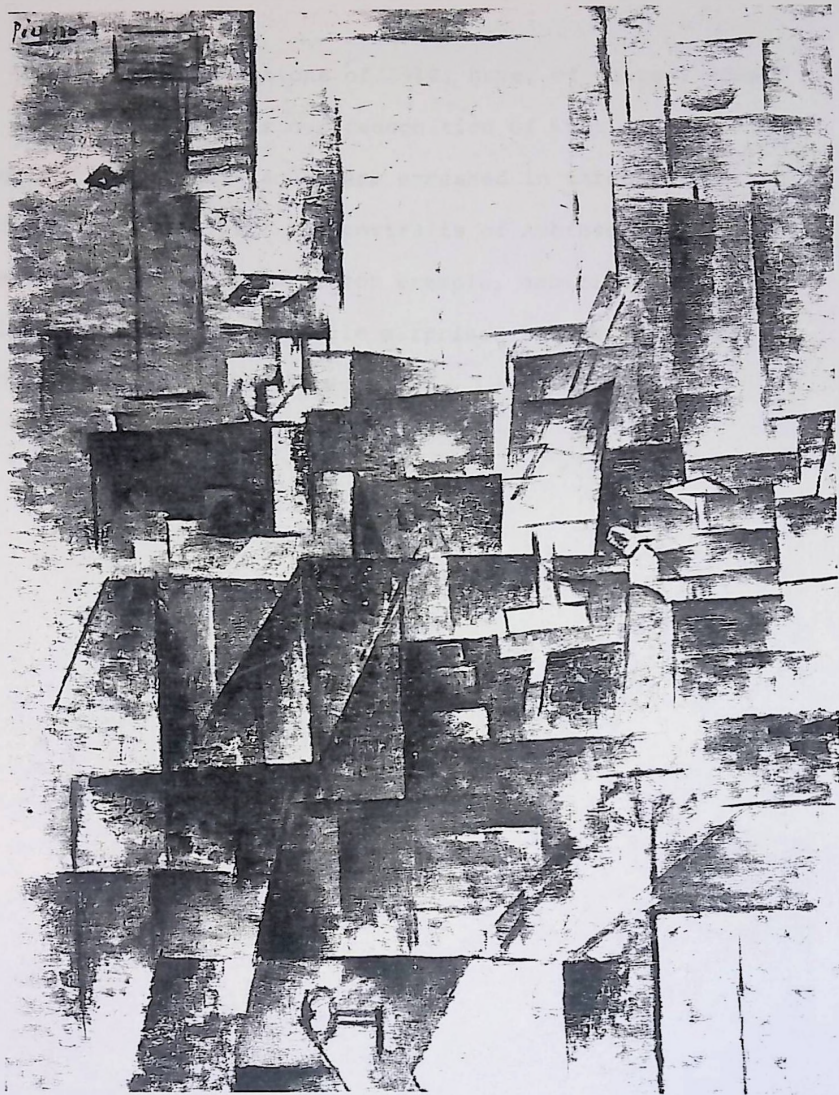
the spring of 1911, matches Picasso's La Pointe de la Cité in lack of invention, and the same can be said for The Dressing Table which is not much more complex than an exercise.



PICASSO, *La Pointe de la Cité*, Paris, [spring] 1911
Oil on canvas (oval), 35½ × 28" (90 × 71 cm)
Daix 400, Private collection



Baouf, *Violin*, [Paris, spring] 1911
Oil on canvas (oval), 28 3/4 x 25 3/8" (75 x 60 cm)
Romilly 95, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon.
Gift of Raoul La Roche

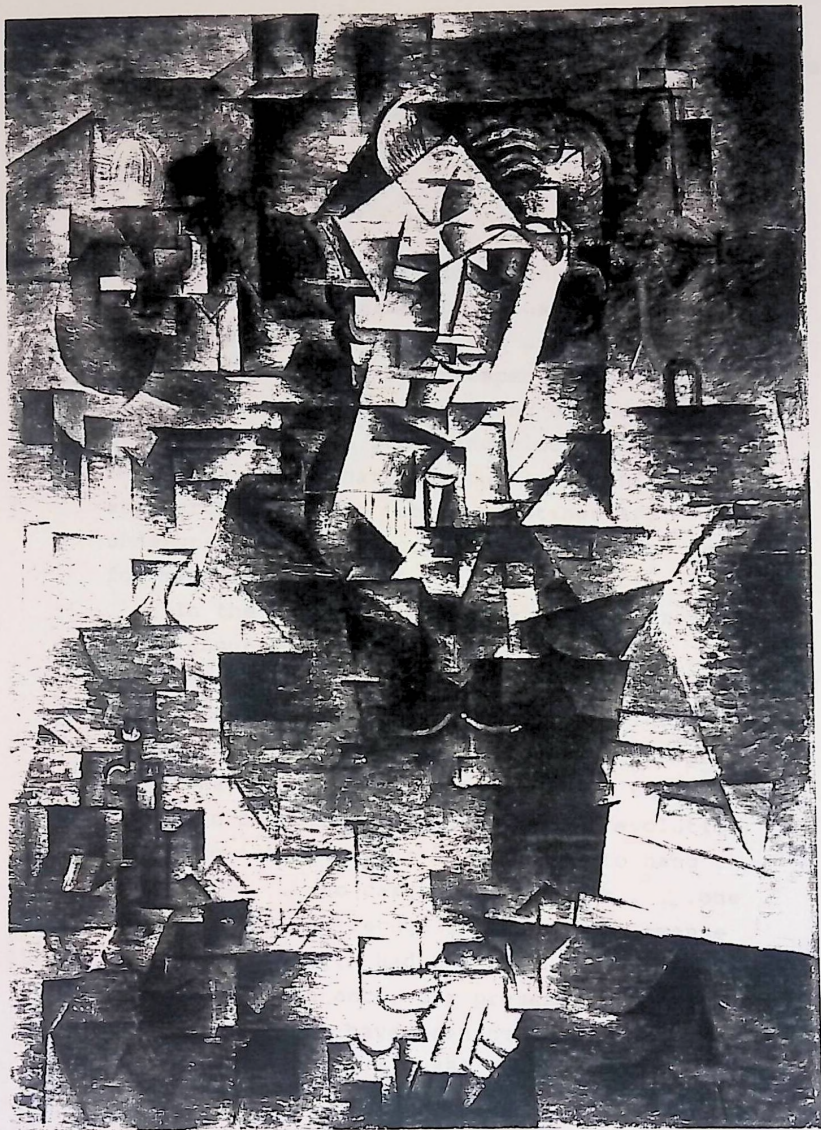


PICASSO, *The Dressing Table*, [Paris, autumn] 1910
Oil on canvas, 24 × 18½" (61 × 46 cm)
Dax 556, The Colin Collection, New York

The splendid exceptions of 1910, have, of course, come down to us and they blur our recognition of what a dull struggle Picasso and Braque were enmeshed in through 1910 and the first part of 1911. The portraits of Ambrose Vollard and Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler are, for example, ambitious, vertiginous, and full of little surprises--which are the first demands to make of a Cubist work.



PICASSO, *Portrait of Ambroise Vollard*. Paris, spring[-autumn] 1910
Oil on canvas, 56¼ × 25½" (92 × 65 cm)
Dax 337. The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow



PICASSO, *Portrait of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler*. Paris, autumn–winter 1910
Oil on canvas, 39½ × 28¾" (100.6 × 72.8 cm)
Daix 568. The Art Institute of Chicago.
Gift of Mrs. Gilbert W. Chapman in memory of Charles B. Goodspeed

Let us redress this description of pervasive depression and middling work with a couple of excerpts that remind us of the difficulties.

For so perilous an enterprise one had to sacrifice the entire illusionist apparatus of painting, that is, everything the public was used to, everything it judged a picture by: perspective, lighting, shading, values, to say nothing of the subject, which remained the stumbling block of taste.

In view of that, the public's panic, anger, and sarcasm against Cubist paintings are understandable. How could such works not be taken for madness or hoaxes?

In the name of the Surrealists, Breton was to write about Picasso in 1928:

By what miracle did this man. . . happen to have what it took to give shape to what up to then had remained in the domain of wildest fantasy? What revolution had to take place in him for him to hang on to it? . . .to dare an open break . . .one cannot fail to recognize Picasso's immense responsibility. Had the will of this man faltered even once, our present endeavors would at least have been postponed, if not lost. [Cabanne, p. 138]

Picasso knew as much himself. His motto in Cubist years was taken from a sign affixed to the cabin of tourist boats on the Seine: "Talking to the Pilot is Forbidden."

Indeed, considering this creative pressure, it is worth noting that not all of his hours on the Boulevard de Clichy were unreservedly dour:

He loves animals more and more. The big dog Frika, faithful and sweet, softens him. My little monkey, Monina, takes her meals with us and does him a thousand misdeeds, which he not only accepts but is amused by. He lets her take his cigarettes or the fruit he is eating. She will ensconce herself on his chest or put herself at her own ease. He loves to see this animal so confident, and the cruel little things that she does to Max Jacob, who is afraid of her, as of all animals. We have, at the moment, three cats, a dog, the monkey. Pablo loves to have his house filled with animals. [Souvenirs Intimes, p. 245]

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There has been no attempt to give any detailed account in this book of Picasso's relations with art dealers nor with the contemporary critics who were writing about him, but Cubism was, with all else, a cultural phenomenon, and so some attention ought to be paid to its early reception before we contemplate the explosiveness of the episode in 1911 when Apollinaire was arrested and Picasso interrogated by the Paris police for the theft of the Mona Lisa from the Louvre. That encounter with the police would shift both men's lives

profoundly; within a year it would alter the ground of Cubism altogether.

Cabanne gives a pithy summary of gallery activity in the immediate years before the scandal at the Louvre:

In 1910 Fernand Leger met Braque and Picasso at Kahnweiler's gallery. [Leger] had already exhibited at the Salon d'Automne of 1908 and 1909, and . . . was in touch with a group of young avant-gardists, Brancusi, Marcel Duchamp, Metzinger, La Fresnaye, Gleizes, Le Fauconnier, who in their various ways were to subscribe to a sort of tangible cubism closer to Cézanne's heritage than to Picasso's and Braque's researches. All of them exhibited in the two anti-academic salons, the Automne and the Independants, along with Picabia, Kupka, Delaunay, Herbin, and the sculptors Duchamp-Villon and Archipenko, while the champions of what was called "orthodox Cubism," Braque and Picasso, showed their work only at Kahnweiler's.

"We held no more one-man shows after the Braque in 1908," Kahnweiler told me. "We just hung the paintings. [Braque and Picasso] worked quietly and I advanced them money to live on. They brought the works in, collected what was owed them, we hung the pictures, and those who wanted to, came to see them. Not too many, but we knew we could depend on them. Artists came, too, and people who didn't like this sort of thing but wanted to keep informed, to know about this Cubism the papers were making fun of.

"Try to picture the period, entirely different from today. There were very few galleries, infrequent exhibits, no advertising. The Salons were all the general public saw."

"Was it not an unusual gesture of contempt for critics and public for Braque and Picasso not to enter them?"

"Yes, but mainly it was contempt for the sarcasm and insults. You can't imagine how Cubism was hated in some circles. And even worse, there were people who went to the Independants or the Salon d'Automne just to laugh. Or to start trouble. . ."

When Kahnweiler says today that. . .Picasso's success was due exclusively to his genius "for joy and enthusiasm," that is not really the whole story. He does not mention that, sale of paintings aside, his painters, Picasso most of all, owed everything to him. Mistrustful at first, Picasso became quickly and totally sure of his young and ingenious dealer, an unusually faithful friend, a daring art lover, and a wily businessman. He once said to someone, "What would have become of us if Kahnweiler had not had good business sense?" And that was true. [Cabanne, pp. 138-139]

Kahnweiler would also become the most authoritative interpreter of Cubism, and many of his analyses, derived from private conversations with Braque and Picasso, have by now taken on the imprimatur of received wisdom. Picasso, however,

rarely talked about his work and then usually in ways to mislead, for he was invariably gnostic and paradoxical-- "There is no Cubism." Braque, in his turn, did not necessarily understand all that Picasso was up to, and also did not like to discuss his own work, but Kahnweiler was a man with a clear and logical mind, and an unadmitted passion to express himself. So, the series of wholly confident exegeses he handed down from his gallery in the new church, can also be taken as no more than what Kahnweiler might have declared about his own paintings if God had made him an artist and a Cubist. While he certainly reacted with large emotion to Picasso's and Braque's offerings, he spoke and wrote about them in such a way as to seal in the mystery of just why they affected him and a few others so intensely.

Kahnweiler offers the first and best of a good many curatorial interpretations of Cubism. Today, Since many of the expositors are fuctionaries in the art world, teachers, critics, or dedicated museum staff, ~~and so~~ the formality and aridity of ~~the~~ criticism does not help the understanding of the general public but does serve the purposes of an art hierarchy. It restrains the professional interpreter from ever becoming too unconventional and conceivably wrong--just about a fatal hazard to one's career--and by its use of conceptual jargon

(where the vocabulary often takes years--for strangers!--to comprehend in full) the cult of high art is reinforced. With Cubism, such insulating effects have, over the years, proliferated. There may be no movement in art about which so much has been written and so little is comprehended by the average museum-goer who is left with nothing but an understanding that Cubism is a great, disturbing, and revolutionary phenomenon in art; of course, they are also deprived of the reassurance an amateur museum-goer needs most vitally--that is, an aesthetic appreciation which can actually be felt. Most viewers of the classic works of Cubism feel little more than a dull anxiety as they study what is up before them on the wall.

How much the language surrounding cubism has to do with their lack of response. For example, (and this paragraph is no better nor worse as an example than a hundred others) there is Raymond Cogniat's statement that Picasso and Braque:

needed to arrive at a total conception of the picture which henceforth is an object in itself, independent of the realistic imitation of a motif, an object having its own architecture, space, and perspective, and which is not a series of planes obtained by the methods of traditional perspective, an object which causes the work to form a

homogeneous whole, closed up on itself. [Raymond
Cogniat, Georges Braque, p. 65, Crown, NY, 1078]

The prose tells us more about the need of art critics to generate a private language than it suggests any honest desire to explain the peculiar effect of Cubism on the viewer. We may be confused when we look at a Picasso or a Braque of these years, but all the same we know that something very odd is going on. That something odd cannot be explained by any of the vocabularies that the critics have given us. They do not help us to explain to ourselves that a Cubist canvas is more a creature than an object. Instead, most writing about this art is restricted to a discussion of the artist's technical innovations in the treatment of perspective, surface, and planes; the near-impenetrability of the critical jargon is startling to anyone schooled in a literary tradition. It is as if one were to write ^{about} Remembrance of Things Past by limiting discussion to no more than Proust's syntax.

We may as well go back to Kahnweiler, the prime malefactor behind such hermeneutics. The excerpt here is heavily edited, yet remains, a necessary investment of our concentration, but then what is the nature of our complaint if it is not that the

interpretations are more difficult to follow than Cubism itself?

Years of research had proved that closed form did not permit an expression sufficient for the two artists' aims. Closed form accepts objects as contained by their own surfaces, viz., the skin; it then endeavors to represent this closed body, and, since no object is visible without light, to paint this "skin" as the contact point between the body and light where both merge into colour. This chiaroscuro can provide only an illusion of the form of objects. In the actual three-dimensional world the object is there to be touched even after light is eliminated. Memory images of tactile perceptions can also be verified on visible bodies. The different accommodations of the retina of the eye enable us, as it were, to "touch" three-dimensional objects from a distance. . . . Picasso's new method made it possible to represent the form of objects and their position in space instead of attempting to imitate them through illusionistic means. . . . the painter no longer has to limit himself to depicting the object as it would appear from one given viewpoint, but wherever necessary for fuller comprehension, can show it from several sides and from above and below. . . .

At this point, Braque's introduction of undistorted real objects into the painting takes on its full significance. When "real details" are thus introduced, the result is stimulus which carries with it memory images. Combining the

"real" stimulus and the scheme of forms, these images construct the finished objects in the mind. Thus, the desired physical representation comes into being in the spectator's mind. . .

In the words of Locke, these painters distinguish between primary and secondary qualities. They endeavour to represent the primary, or most important qualities, as exactly as possible. In painting, these are: the object's form, and its position in space. They merely suggest the secondary characteristics such as colour and tactile quality, leaving their incorporation into the object to the mind of the spectator.

This new language has given painting an unprecedented freedom. It is no longer bound to the more or less verisimilar optic image which describes the object from a single viewpoint. It can, in order to give a thorough representation of the objects primary characteristics, depict them as stereometric drawing on the plane, or through several representations of the same objects, can provide an analytic study of that object which the spectator then fuses once again in his mind. . .

[From Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, Der Weg zum Kubismus, Munich, 1920; translated from the German by Henry Aronson as The Rise of Cubism, New York, 1949, pp. 10-13.]

In Kahnweiler's interview with Cremieux [CK title, date]
he gives away his underlying prejudices--call it his secret
desire:

We must not forget something[^] that is absolutely
fundamental, in my opinion, to the comprehension of
Cubism and of what, for me, is truly modern art:
the fact that painting is a form of writing. [my
italics] Painting is a form of writing that
creates signs. A woman in a painting is not a
woman; she is a group of signs that I read as
"woman." When one writes on a sheet of paper
"f-e-m-m-e," someone who knows French and who knows
how to read will read not only the word "femme,"
but he will see, so to speak, a woman. The same is
true of painting; there is no difference.
Fundamentally, painting has never been a mirror of
the external world, nor has it ever been similar to
photography; it has been a creation of signs, which
were always read correctly by contemporaries, after
a certain apprenticeship, of course. Well, the
Cubists created signs that were unquestionably new,
and this is what made it difficult to read their
paintings for such a long time. [p. 57]

As a writer, it is agreeable to assume that painting is a
species of annex to literature, a "plastic" form of
communication, a creation of signs. Yet, what signs! Cubism
was an attempt to write more than one thing at once. If we are

to speak of its likeness to verbal description, let us recognize that the kind of writing to which it bears comparison is to be found in Finnegan's Wake. Kahnweiler, therefore, keeps us away from the point. Cubism is not exciting because it is able to give a highly trained eye some shiver of pleasure at its manipulation of objects and planes, that will give us a feeling of three-dimensionality in the dark, no, Cubism is compelling because it is eerie, resonant, vertiginous, and quivers with the uneasy recognition that our sense of the passage of time has been exercised, that as we stare at the depths and circumnavigations of the objects (call it the creatures and vistas of each complex in the canvas) we have stepped right out of our sense of the present into that other mysterious tense of time which is time-other-than-the-present (whether it be one's sense of the future or one's recollection of the past) and so puts us into that terrain of the psyche where night, dreams, memories, and primitive stirrings dwell. Our unarticulated knowledge that past and future have a more profound relation to each other in the topography of time than does the present tense to either, also comes alive. To work upon us so with a painting is powerful and disturbing. For the present tense was the established time-frame of Western art until the arrival of Cubism; the present tense was frozen

forever into the vision that any given artist provided for us. The present tense rewarded us with a two-dimensional canvas that gave the illusion of three dimensions; the present tense was the here-and-now of existence, fixed forever. In the centuries before photography, that was hardly a mean achievement. A moment in life had been captured eternally (or for as long as the pigment would last) and that was a bulwark against the dissolutions of mortality and memory, of future and past.

There is a famous story told by Fernande of the Bande a Picasso:

At a time when we were eager to experience new and different sensations. . .we had gathered at Princet's. . .taking hashish. Princet, Max, Apollinaire and Picasso expanded in ways which revealed a great deal about them." Princet simply wept about his wife, who had just left him; Apollinaire shouted with delight and fantasized that he was in a brothel; Max Jacob, an old hand at these experiences, sat in a corner beatifically happy, while Picasso, in a state of nervous ecstasy, hallucinated that he had invented photography and might as well kill himself as he had nothing left to learn. "He appeared to have had a revelation that one day he would be prevented from developing. He would come to the end and find a wall which would impede all progress. No longer would he be able to learn, or discover, or understand, or penetrate little by little into the secrets of an art which he wanted to make new and fresh." [P&F, p.]

At the time, Picasso was in his Rose Period, and his paintings were already in rebellion against the clarity and high definition of the present tense. Part of the indefinable appeal of the Rose Period was the way it always seemed to be invoking a brooding past and an uneasy future. That night on hashish, the problem must have become apparent. One had to find a way to paint works that would embody past, present, and future in one; such ambition must have seemed as insubstantial as the hashish dream he was in.

To be brutally explicit about the power of Cubism is to recognize, therefore, the inadmissable: Cubism is much concerned with death and dissolution. Picasso at the age of seven perceived the sign for the number seven as a nose upside-down. One is tempted to argue that Cubism grew out of the inside of the nose, for indeed, its interior is often a cavernous, clotted intricate web, full of bogs, stalactites, stalagmites, filament-like hairs; in many Cubist canvases, the vision develops into a dreamlike verisimilitude of the inside

of a torso or, equally, the maze of a city. But then, can we recognize that our interior anatomy is a species of vertical city?

We can certainly entertain the idea that much of the Cubism of 1910, 1911. and 1912, consciously or unconsciously, is an exploration of death. Some of the paintings, if we dare to entertain the vision, have the appearance of corpses, their flesh in strips and tatters, organs open. As Apollinaire would write in 1912, "Picasso studies an object as a surgeon dissects a cadaver."



PICASSO, *Woman in an Armchair*. Paris, spring 1910
Oil on canvas, 37 × 29½" (94 × 75 cm)
Daix 544, National Gallery, Prague

If this thesis is too horrific for the overt feel of many a given canvas, well, it may be an exaggeration to make the point, but it is not altogether unwarranted; with everything else, Cubist paintings are sinister; they inspire us with uneasiness (and Picasso accomplishes this effect much more often than Braque-- indeed, it is one of the ways to tell the painters apart.) Picasso's canvasses usually look as if he is absolutely confident of what he is seeing, is truly gazing into a great and often ominous depth, whereas Braque, generally, seems merely to be searching. Of course in later years, Picasso would say to an interviewer, "I do not search; I find!"

What can be agreed upon is that Picasso was looking to paint past, present, and future, stasis and motion, growth and decomposition, the perceptions of infancy and the dissolutions of death, and do them all at once and in each painting. So he was as much engaged in capturing the whole as was Einstein in his ongoing quest for a General Theory to explain all of motion, space, time, gravity and energy in one formula.

Since Picasso may not have been free of dyslexia and mathematics, in any case, beyond him, how would he be ready to deal with mathematical symbols when every bend in a line was, to him, an evocation of form?

Nonetheless, talk of the fourth dimension was not uncommon at the Bateau Lavoir during the years from 1905 to 1910. Maurice Princet, one of the hashish smokers, and an actuary by profession was also a schooled mathematician and he would speak of the new geometries and of theories concerning relativity. Apollinaire with his prodigious appetite for cosmic and romantic new connections, not only spoke of the fourth dimension but would write about it. Manolo, in 1930, would tell Josep Pia, "I witnessed the birth of Cubism. If my memory does not fail me, Picasso used to talk a lot then about the fourth dimension and he carried around the mathematics book of Henri Poincaré." Max Weber who had a few conversations with Picasso in 1908 would write in an article published in Camera Work [CK date]

In plastic work I believe there is a fourth dimension which may be described as a consciousness of a great and overwhelming sense of space-magnitude in all directions at one time, and is brought into existence through the three known measurements. It is not a physical entity or a mathematical hypothesis, nor an optical illusion. It is real, and can be perceived and felt. It exists outside and in the presence of objects, it is the space that envelops a tree, a tower, a mountain, or any solid; or the intervals between

objects or volumes of matter if receptively beheld.
..It arouses imagination and stirs emotion. it is
the immensity of all things. [Linda Dalrymple
Henderson, Fourth Dimension: Non- Euclidean
Geometry in Modern Art, Princeton university Press,
1983, p. 168]

Apollinaire, who, in the next excerpt, gives no more
evidence than Max Weber of understanding the fourth dimension,
must certainly have enjoyed those discussions of it in company
with Picasso, Braque, Jacob, Princet, and André Salmon, and in
his book, Les Peintres Cubistes, published in 1913, he engages
the matter:

Until now, the three dimensions of Euclid's
geometry were sufficient to the restiveness felt by
great artists yearning for the infinite. . . Today
scholars no longer limit themselves to the three
dimensions of Euclid. The painters have been led
quite naturally, one might say by intuition, to
preoccupy themselves with new possibilities of
spatial measurement which, in the language of the
modern studios, are designated by the term fourth
dimension.

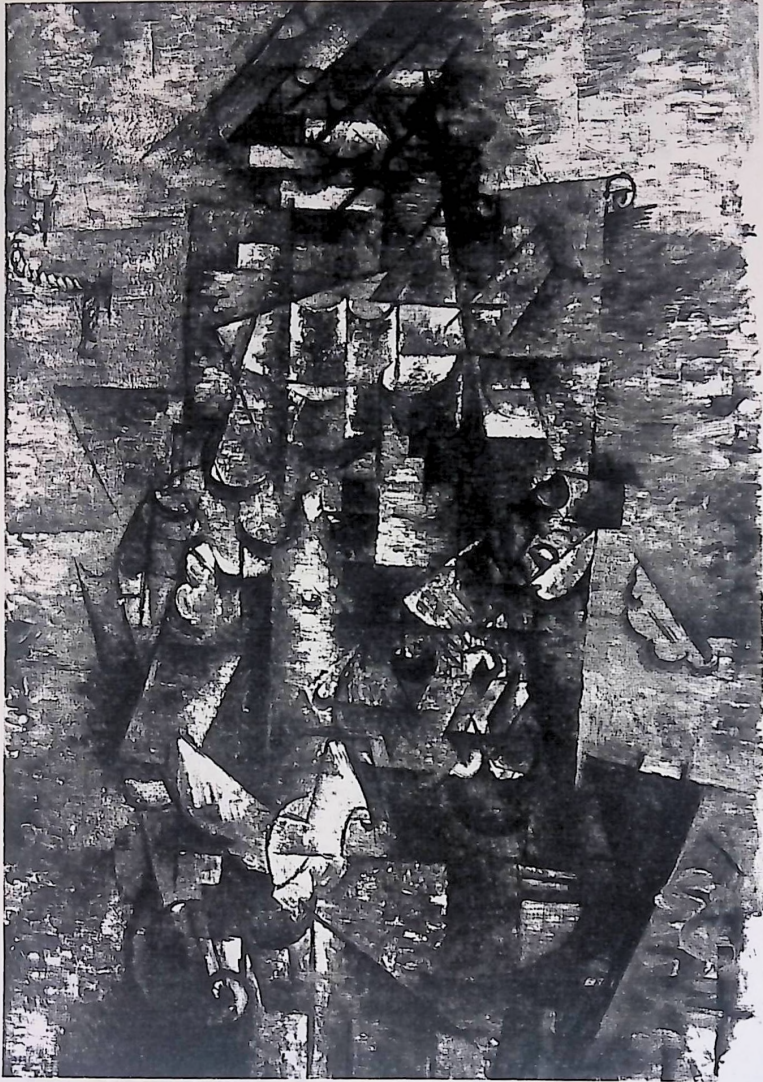
As it presents itself to the mind, from the
plastic point of view, the fourth dimension appears
to be engendered by the three known dimensions: it
represents the immensity of space eternalizing
itself in all directions at any given moment. It

is space itself, the dimension of the infinite; the fourth dimension endows objects with plasticity...

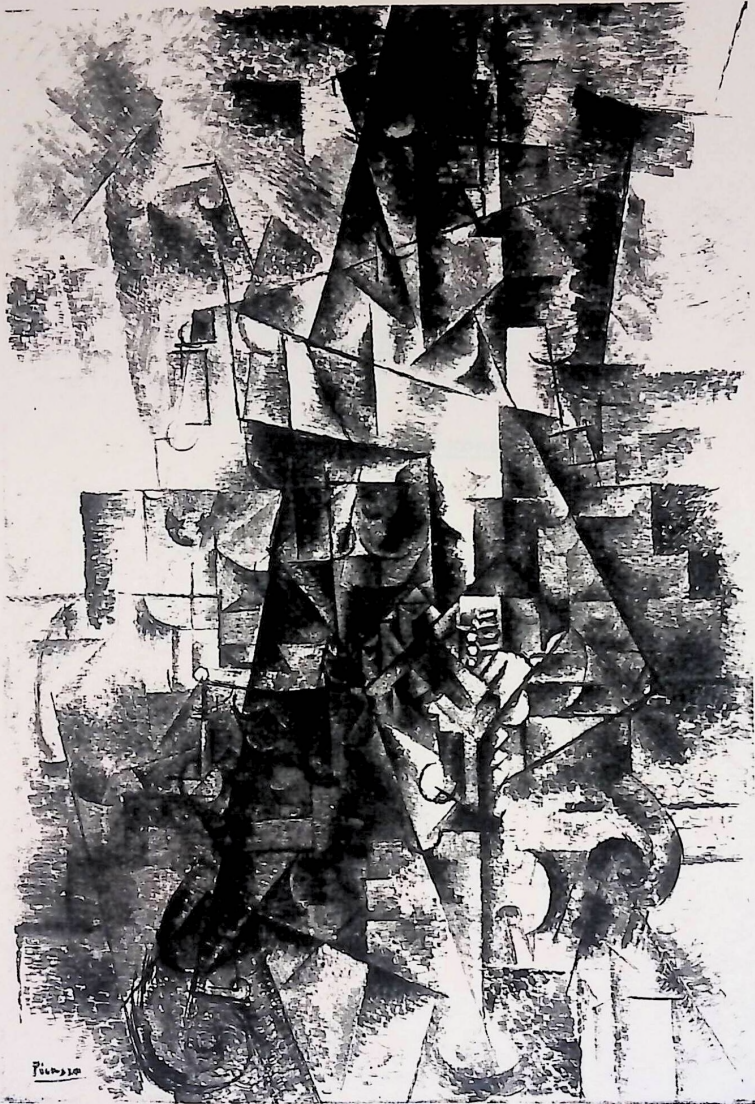
Finally, I must point out that the fourth dimension--this utopian expression should be analyzed and explained, so that nothing more than historical interest may be attached to it--has come to stand for the aspirations and premonitions of the many young artists who contemplate Egyptian, negro and oceanic sculptures, meditate on various scientific works, and live in anticipation of a sublime art. [Apollinaire, Les Peintres Cubistes, pp. 15-17.]

"Sublime art." That was exactly what Apollinaire, as self-appointed impressario of world culture, was looking to present; "fourth dimension" might be the phrase to start the wheel and keep it rolling. Certainly, it could do no harm. The fourth dimension would accompany their efforts--an orchestra of the scientific cultures to offer reverberation to their isolated artistic voices. If followers of Picasso, Cubists like Gleize and Metzinger, were soon full of theories concerning the fourth dimension and wrote polemics about its relation to their work, Picasso was quick to repudiate them. Cubism was his feeling for the universe, and if the result he obtained made one unable to distinguish a landscape from a slum

tenement, and if both could also be the echo of a young girl on an autopsy table in Horta de Ebro, well, each painting was there to stand as a universe, full of multitudes.



BRAQUE, *Man with a Guitar* [Céret, summer 1911]
Oil on canvas, 45¼ × 51⅞" (116.2 × 80.9 cm)
Romilly 99, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest



PICASSO, *Accordionist*. Céret, summer 1911
Oil on canvas, 51¼ × 35⅞" (130 × 89.5 cm)
Daix 424. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

Part X:

The Mona Lisa

During the first two weeks of April in 1911, Leonardo da Vinci's most renowned military service in Saint Mark-in-Belvedere, how devoted he was to this is the primary interruption to his painting may be deduced from the photographs preserved and he took of each other about this time.

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During the first two weeks of April in 1911, Braque did his required military service in Saint Mars-la-Brière; how devoted he was to this twice-yearly interruption to his painting may be deduced from the photographs Picasso and he took of each other about this time.



Braque wearing his military reserve uniform, in Picasso's studio at 11, boulevard de Clichy, c. 1911, photographed by Picasso

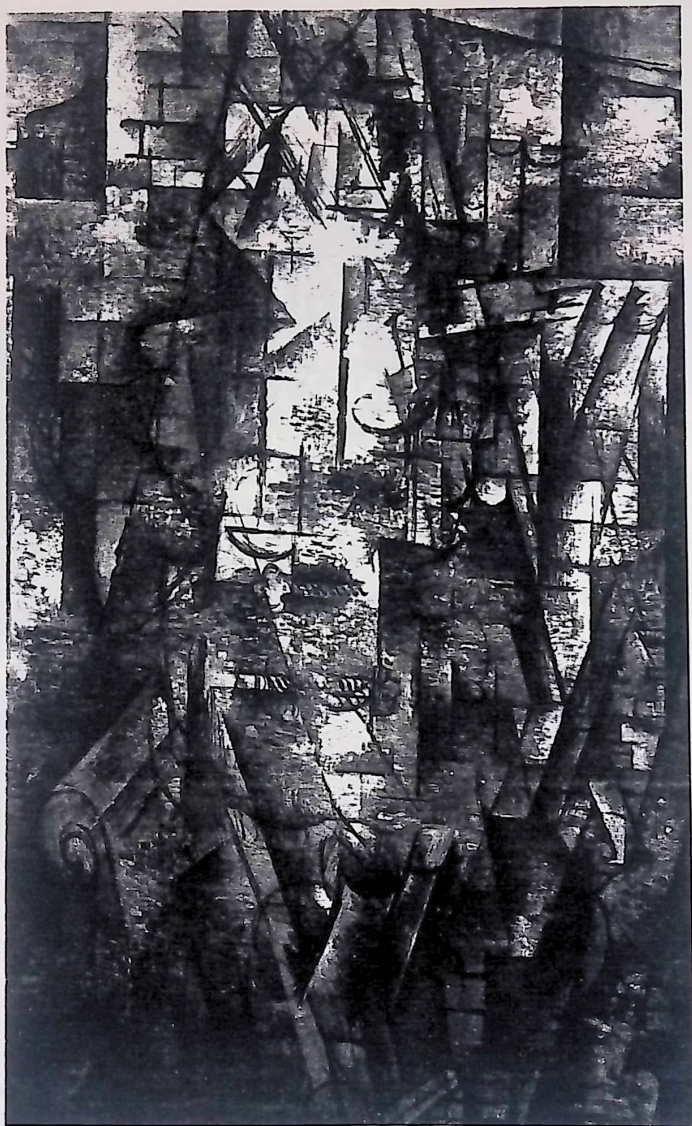


Picasso in his 11, boulevard de Clichy studio, wearing Braque's military reserve uniform, c. 1911, photographed by Braque

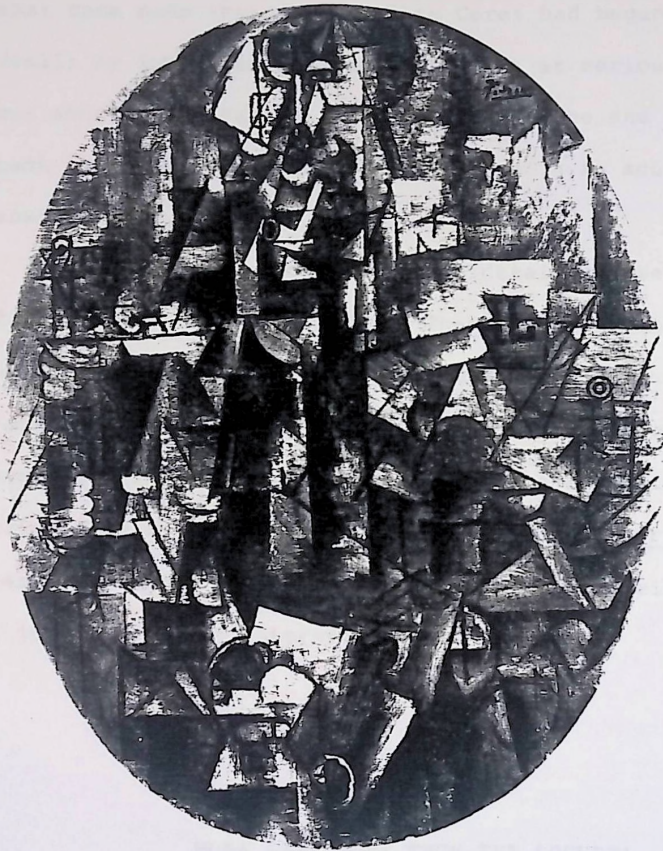
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Except for each brief period given over to the army, Braque had been in Paris since December of 1910, and he and Picasso had resumed their practise of close collaboration and would continue to do so until July at which point Picasso left for Céret in the Midi where his friend Manolo had settled with his wife, Totote. Fernande remained behind in Paris on Boulevard de Clichy, but by August, Picasso was begging her to join him. "Yesterday, all day long, I didn't get a letter from you, and this morning I'm not waiting any more, but hope this afternoon I'll be more lucky. . . .I hope that in a very few days you will be here," a kindly translation of the French-- "Yer, toute le journe, je ne ai pas eu de letre de toi. . ."

She arrived, and so did Braque, and work progressed. In the next two weeks, Picasso and Braque both worked at a great rate, in stylistic compatibility.



Bischof F. *Woman Reading*. Cèret, autumn 1911
Oil on canvas, 51 1/2 x 52" (130 x 81 cm)
Romilly 92, Collection Ernst Beyeler, Basel



PICASSO, *Man with a Pipe*. Céret, [August] 1911
Oil on canvas (oval), 55 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 27 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (90.7 × 71 cm)
Daix 422. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

p. 4 B, p. 200

By August 30, however, Picasso could not have been free of all worry. An event that may have seemed amusing when he first read about it a week earlier in the Paris newspapers that came made their way down to Céret had begun to seem less droll; by September 3, Picasso thought it serious enough to cut short his vacation; by September 4, he and Fernande were back in Paris to be met by Apollinaire in an acute state of anxiety.

It is worth following in some detail our several sources for the events that followed. There is first the thorough account provided by Francis Steegmuller in his noteworthy book on Apollinaire; then Fernande's recollections of the event are indispensable; and the same can be said for the clips from an enterprising daily, the Paris-Journal, whose series of ironic news stories were obviously being written by a journalist with literary resources.

Wednesday, August 23, 1911:

MONA LISA GONE FROM THE LOUVRE!

The Police, Late on the Scene, Surround
the Museum--

Investigation Leads Nowhere--

Robbery, or Practical Joke?

. . .in the eyes of the public, even the uneducated, the Mona Lisa occupies a privileged position that is not to be accounted for by its value alone. For many, the Mona Lisa is the Louvre. . .

No wonder everyone was dumbfounded yesterday afternoon when the city. . . suddenly heard the incredible news: "The Mona Lisa has disappeared! The Mona Lisa has been stolen!"

In the Louvre, as is easily imaginable, there was considerable excitement, indeed, near-panic. . . . A captain of the guards, suddenly noticing that the wall space in the Salon Carré ordinarily occupied by the Mona Lisa was vacant, gave the alarm. What had happened to the picture? . . .

All curators and department heads who happened to be in Paris were hastily summoned. . .The Prefect of Police was also alerted, and he immediately ordered M. Hamard to go to the Louvre, taking with him sixty inspectors and a number of regular police.

M. Hamard's first step was to order all the doors of the Louvre palace to be locked, and to evacuate all the galleries of the museum. At the same time he stationed policemen on the roof to intercept the thief should he attempt to use that route to escape . . .

Apollinaire had been doing an occasional piece for another newspaper, L'Intransigeant; now, a day later, he published his opinion of the theft:

The Mona Lisa was so beautiful that her perfection has come to be taken for granted.

There are not many works of which this can be said. . . .

But what shall we say of "The guard that watches the gates of the Louvre?"...

The pictures, even the smallest, are not padlocked to the walls, as they are in most museums abroad. Furthermore, it is a fact that the guards have never been drilled in how to rescue pictures in case of a fire.

The situation is one of carelessness, negligence, indifference...

Steegmuller continues the account:

That same day Paris-Journal [was] offering readers such assorted bits of information as [that] the Louvre had recently received a postcard addressed to "Mona Lisa, Louvre Museum, Paris," and bearing as a message a "red-hot love declaration, peppered with 'I love you's' and 'I adore you's,'" leading certain officials to wonder whether the

theft might not be the work of an erotomane. During the days that followed, Paris-Journal kept its readers regularly amused in this fashion. But L'Intransigeant contained no more articles about the theft of the Mona Lisa. Why was [Apollinaire] silent? Why had his first and only article about it been so much duller than those in Paris-Journal? Praise of the Mona Lisa's beauty comes oddly from the pen of Apollinaire, who had recently [declared] at one of Paul Fort's Tuesday evening poetry readings at the Closerie des Lilas that "all museums should be destroyed because they paralyze the imagination."

The explanation is to be found in the personality and exploits of a young Belgian named Géry Pieret, who had acted for a time, like Baron Mollet, as Apollinaire's "secretary": [Pieret] appealed to Apollinaire's fancy as a refugee from the establishment; he had been a boxer and a stoker, [yet] Pieret's Latin was excellent, and his wit was diverting and original.

For example, one day he had said to Marie Laurencin, "Madame Marie, this afternoon I am going to the Louvre: can I bring you anything you need?" Given the question, everyone assumed he was offering to shop for Marie in the Magasins du Louvre, a department store on the Rue de Rivoli often referred to by Parisians as "the Louvre"; but that evening he turned up at Apollinaire's apartment bearing two Iberian stone sculptured heads, which he gleefully announced had indeed come from the Louvre--the museum.

This coup must have aroused much mirth among the artistic revolutionaries in Montmartre, and

when Pieret announced that he was, as usual, in need of cash, and offered the statues for sale, they were recommended to Picasso, who bought them and who subsequently, with his usual flair, found a new inspiration in these antiquities from his native Spain. Indeed, in 1907 Picasso. . .was just beginning "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon" and. . . anyone who looks at the Demoiselles can see Pieret's stolen heads-- or at least their ears [my italics] --in the two central figures.
[Steegmuller, Apollinaire, pp. 187 et seq]



Les Femmes d'Alger
219. *Les Femmes d'Alger*



Head of a Man, Iberian; Cerro de los Santos.
3th-3rd century B.C. Stone, 8 1/2" (21 cm) high.
Musée des Antiquités Nationales, Saint-
Germain-en-Laye. One of two sculptures
bought by Picasso from Gery Pieret in March
1907.

Fernande's account exonerates Picasso of the direct act of buying stolen art-works, but her piety fails to convince.

Géry, whom Apollinaire had taken to see Picasso, had given the painter two quite beautiful little stone masks, without revealing where he had got them from. He only said that they should not be exhibited too conspicuously. Picasso was enchanted, and he treasured these gifts and buried them at the very back of a cupboard. . . .

Years had gone by. We used to come across these little masterpieces occasionally if we were rummaging in the old Norman cupboard; but we never gave them a thought. [Picasso and His Friends, p. 146]

Given the next news story, Picasso, in the south of France, must, had to be sharing Apollinaire's sense that events in Paris were rushing to crisis and confrontation:

Paris-Journal, August 29, 1911:

A THIEF BRINGS US A STATUE STOLEN FROM
THE LOUVRE

Yesterday morning's mail brought
Paris-Journal a rather strange letter...

"On the 7th of May, 1911, I stole a
Phoenician statuette from one of the

galleries of the Louvre. I am holding it at your disposition, in return for the sum of ____ francs. . ."

Now, Paris-Journal, even though it has offered 50,000 francs to anyone who would bring in the Mona Lisa, has never undertaken to ransom all the works of art stolen from the Louvre.

Still. . . one of our reporters went to the appointed place at the appointed time. There he met a young man. . . between twenty and twenty-five, very well-mannered, with a certain chic americain, whose face and look and behavior bespoke at once a kind heart and a certain lack of scruple. This was "The Thief"--since so he must be called.

The thief [showed] our reporter the contents of his letter. He showed him the object that he claimed to have taken from the Louvre [and then] consented to put into writing, for Paris-Journal, the story of his theft, which we herewith reproduce:

We can ask whether the letter that follows^{was}_A written by Géry Pieret or by our anonymous and engaging reporter for Paris-Journal?

"It was in March, 1907, that I entered the Louvre for the first time--a young man with time to kill and no money to spend. . . . It was about one o'clock. I found myself in the gallery of Asiatic antiquities. A single guard was sitting motionless. I was about to climb the stairs leading to the floor above when I noticed a half-open door on my left. I had only to push on it and found myself in a room filled with hieroglyphics and Egyptian statues. . . the place impressed me profoundly because of the deep silence and the absence of any human being. I walked through several adjoining rooms, [before] I suddenly realized how easy it would be to pick up and take away almost any object of moderate size.

"Being absolutely alone, and hearing no sounds whatever, I took the time to examine about fifty heads that were there, and I chose one of a woman. . . put the statue under my arm, pulled up the collar of my overcoat with my left hand, and calmly walked out, asking my way of the guard, who was still completely motionless.

"I sold the statue to a Parisian painter friend of mine. He gave me a little money--fifty francs, I think, which I lost the same night in a billiard parlor.

"'What of it?' I said to myself.
'All Phoenicia is there for the taking.'

"The very next day I took a man's head with enormous ears--a detail that fascinated me. And three days later a plaster fragment covered with hieroglyphs. . .

"Then I emigrated.

"I made a little money in Mexico, and decided to return to France and form an art collection at very little expense. Last May 7 I went to my Phoenician room, and . . . took the head of a woman, and stuffed it into my trousers. . . Now one of my colleagues has spoiled all my plans for a collection by making this hullabaloo in the paintings department. I regret this exceedingly, since there is a strange, almost voluptuous charm about stealing works of art, and I shall probably have to wait several years before resuming my activities. . ."

Steegmuller takes up the narrative:

The reporter from the Paris-Journal who had interviewed the thief took the stolen head to the office of the newspaper. . .where it was examined by a Louvre curator and identified as belonging to the museum's collection not of Phoenicia, but of Iberian antiquities. The curator confessed that the museum had not even noticed its absence. "The person who turned the statuette over to us," Paris-Journal concluded, "is requested to come to our office, "where he will receive the sum of money

agreed upon. As for the statuette itself, our readers can see it on exhibiton today, in our window." [Steegmuller, Apollinaire, p. 196]

Since André Salmon was the art critic for Paris-Journal, and the journalistic style is in his vein, it is hard not to suppose that Salmon was doing these pieces; for instance the story in the newspaper the folowing day has an odd headline: "First Restitution." Steegmuller pursues a further possibility:

Does the word "first". . .hint that André Salmon. . . had already learned from his friends Apollinaire and Picasso that the two heads stolen from the Louvre in 1907 were still in existence, in Picasso's possession, and that the frightened poet and equally frightened painter had decided to return those heads, too, via Paris-Journal?

We do not know that Apollinaire and Picasso were yet in touch by the end of August, but there is reason to assume that Salmon, like many another close friend of Picasso and Apollinaire, had, since 1907, been able to examine on one or another occasion those Iberian heads (with their close identity around the ears to Les Demoiselles D'Avignon), and

Salmon would, of course, have known Pieret well when the Belgian was secretary to Apollinaire. Doubtless, Salmon had also heard some version of the story about Marie Laurencin and the Louvre. Steegmuller writes: "It is also possible that Pieret had not approached Paris-Journal by letter. . . but through personal contact with Salmon."





André Salmon, c. 1907-12

This seems likely. For that matter, all of Pieret's letters could have been written by André Salmon. The affair speaks of the kind of hoax that he was fond of--we can recall his explanation of false delirium tremens at the banquet for Rousseau. Moreover, Apollinaire who would soon produce several versions of events, suggests in one that an effective method of getting rid of stolen material is precisely to use the press. Speaking of Pieret, he writes that Géry sold the statues to

X, whose name, thanks to me, was never mentioned in this affair. I tried, long before 1911, still back in 1907 or 1908--to persuade X to give the statues back to the Louvre, but . . . he told me that he had damaged the statues in an attempt to discover certain secrets of the classic yet barbaric art to which they belonged. The method I had found for returning them would have been perfectly safe and honorable for him. . . We would have suggested to the newspaper Le Matin that it demonstrate publicly that the treasures in the Louvre were poorly guarded--by stealing first one statue (sensation!) and then another (second sensation!). If this had been done there would have been no trouble.

Clear enough. If Apollinaire could come up with this method of returning stolen art works, so could André Salmon.

It is tempting to speculate that both Salmon and Apollinaire may have been overseeing some of Pieret's moves.

Let us continue with Appollinaire's account:

In 1911 the fellow who had stolen [the heads in 1907] turned up again. He came to see me, arriving from America, his pockets full of money which he then proceeded to lose at the races. Penniless, he stole another statue. I had to help him--he was down and out--so I took him into my flat and tried to get him to return the statue; he refused, so I had to put him out, along with the statue. A few days later the Mona Lisa was stolen. I thought, as the police later thought, that he was the thief. . . He was not, but he sold his statue to Paris-Journal, which returned it to the Louvre. I went to see X, to tell him how unfortunate it was that he had damaged the other two heads, and in what a dangerous position this placed him. I found him terrified. He confessed that he had lied to me, and that the statues were intact. I told him to turn them in, under pledge of secrecy, to Paris-Journal, which he did. Grande scandale!

Here, Apollinaire's account of the restitution is wholly at variance with Fernande's, and it is possible his memory (or even his recollection of the lies he had already told)

was playing him false; it is time to pick up Fernande's account of how the statues were returned.

Fernando thanks to have learned and explains
"happening to jump last" and another on the day of Flores's
return from Cuba whereupon she presents to frightened and
furious Apollinar, who told Fernando that he was
terrified that legal action might be taken (and) added that
business was complicated too."

-2-

Fernande chooses to have Picasso and Apollinaire
"happening to bump into" one another on the day of Picasso's
return from Céret whereupon she presents "a frightened and
frantic Apollinaire. . .who told Picasso that he was. . .
terrified that legal action might be taken [and] added that
Picasso was implicated too."

I can see them both now: contrite children, stunned by fear and making plans to flee the country. It was due to me that their despair just stopped short of really drastic measures. They decided to stay in Paris and get rid of the compromising objects immediately. But how could this be done?

Finally, after a hurried dinner and an interminable evening of waiting--for they had made up their minds to go that night and throw the suitcase containing the sculptures into the Seine--they left on foot at about midnight, carrying the suitcase. They returned at two in the morning, absolutely dog-tired. They still had the suitcase, and its contents.

They had wandered up and down, unable to hit on the propitious moment or simply not daring to deliver themselves of their parcel. They thought they were being followed. Their imaginations dreamed up a thousand possible occurrences, each more fantastic than the last. Though I shared their alarm, I had observed them closely earlier that evening. I am sure that without realizing it, they were seeing themselves as characters in a play; so much so that, though neither of them knew the first thing about cards, they had, during the agonizing hours of waiting for the fateful moment when they were to leave for the Seine, pretended to play cards, like gangsters.

In the end Apollinaire spent the night at Picasso's and went the next morning to the offices of the Paris-Journal, where he offered them the "undesirable works of art," on condition that their source be kept a secret. [Picasso and His Friends, pp. 147-148]

Paris-Journal September 6, 1911:

Yesterday our mail contained a letter written on a typewriter. This document emanated from the mysterious art-lover whose identity neither the sagacity of our fellow newspapermen nor the professional skill of the police has as yet been able to discover.

He asked us, of course, to promise discretion, and offered to come in person in the event that we cared to take the responsibility of returning the stolen statues to the Louvre without involving him.

Naturally we accepted, our prime consideration being that our national collections be complete.

A VISIT

At the appointed time, the mysterious visitor was announced. Our editor-in-chief received him.

The statement by the possessor of the sculptures can be summed up in a few words:

An amateur artist, fairly well to do, his greatest pleasure is in collecting works of art.

The sculptures in question were offered to him a few years ago.

Seeing these examples of a rather crude artistic style, he had no idea that they might have come from the Louvre, and

attracted by the relatively low price asked for them, he purchased them.

But recently his attention was drawn to the thief's story as published in the Paris-Journal, a story that has had wide repercussions. . . The thief's mention of two other objects quickly convinced him that he had them in his collection.

His dismay is easy to imagine. At first he did not know how to proceed, and then it occurred to him that he might have recourse to Paris-Journal.

As soon as this story appeared, the police must have all but waylaid the editor of Paris-Journal. If Salmon was the reporter, that surely would have been no well-kept secret in the newspaper office; if Salmon was then questioned, and his story of meeting Pieret did not hold up, he may, under the threat of arrest, have given Apollinaire's name to the police. If so this would seem an act of outsize treachery; Salmon would be betraying a friend who had recited inspirational verses for Salmon's wedding in 1909:

"I know that only those will remake the world who are
rooted in poetry

Paris is decked out in flags because my friend

André Salmon is to be married here."

Salmon, however, had jeered with Max Jacob over "the friendly hand of Guillaume Apollinaire," and, quite likely, ^{was} envious of Apollinaire's larger talent. While it is a dubious procedure to judge a man's character by his politics, it may be worth inserting that Salmon would later be allied with the Vichy government during the Second World War, a move to the right which, given his bohemian decades, suggests that he had a larger than normal share of the need to preserve himself in preference to his friends. If the police succeeded in pressing him to the point where he had to choose between turning Apollinaire in, or being accused himself of having stolen the statues, the question is answered by the result: Apollinaire was visited quickly enough by the police.

Le Matin, September 9, 1911:

Judge Drioux arrests an art critic, M. Guillaume Apollinaire, in connection with the Egyptian statuettes stolen from the Louvre

It was not without emotion and surprise that Paris learned last night of the arrest made by the Surété in

connection with the recent restitution of Phoenician statuettes stolen from the Louvre in 1907.

The name of the person arrested is enough to account for this reaction. He is M. Guillaume Kostrowsky [sic], known in literature and art as Guillaume Apollinaire. . .

He is secretary of a literary review, Les Marges, and the author of a book entitled L'Heresiarque et Cie, which was a candidate for the last Prix Goncourt. He writes for numerous other magazines and reviews; indeed the readers of Le Matin have seen short stories by him in our department, "Tales of a Thousand and One Mornings."

Such is the man who was arrested the night before last on the order of M. Drioux, on the charge of "harboring a criminal." What exactly are the charges against him? Both the Public Prosecutor and the police are making a considerable mystery of the affair.

"Without endangering progress already made," Le Matin was informed, "we can say nothing except that we are on the trail of a gang of international thieves who came to France for the purpose of despoiling our museums. M. Guillaume Apollinaire committed the error of giving shelter to one of these criminals. Was he aware of what he was doing? That is what we are to determine."

BEFORE THE JUDGE

The interrogation of M. Apollinaire lasted well into the night. . . M. Drioux informed him that anonymous denunciations had been received by the Public Prosecutor's office, stating that he had been in contact with the thief of the Phoenician statuettes, and also that he was a receiver of stolen goods, having recently returned, via Paris-Journal, two other busts belonging to the same collection.

On hearing these charges, M. Apollinaire protested vigorously, but shortly admitted that he was acquainted with the person who had committed the robbery.

"But," he added, "there is nothing in law that forces me to reveal his name to the authorities."

"In that case," replied M. Drioux, "I charge you with complicity in harboring a criminal."

And the investigating magistrate immediately signed a warrant of arrest.

At that moment, M. Guillaume Apollinaire, aghast at the measure taken against him, exclaimed:

"All I can tell you is that I knew the thief of the statuettes. He is a young Belgian. I employed him as secretary for a few weeks. But when I learned that he was a thief I discharged

him, and took it on myself to return, via Paris-Journal, the things he had stolen. What have I done wrong?"

And M. Apollinaire finally consented to reveal the name of his robber-secretary.

Nevertheless M. Drioux affirmed the warrant of arrest that he had just signed and M. Apollinaire was forthwith placed in a cell. . .

Steegmuller continues the scenario:

But the police persisted in believing, or in claiming to believe, that the vanished G ry Pieret belonged to an international band of crooks, whose purpose in coming to France had been to strip the country's museums, and who might have taken the Mona Lisa: it was because of the possible knowledge of this gang that Apollinaire was held for further questioning. Petitions protesting his arrest, signed by many artists and writers, were delivered to the police and the investigating magistrate. [Steegmuller, p. 205]

At this point we can take up again Fernande's account:

Hearing nothing from our friend we were worried, but we didn't dare go and see him. [A few days later], at about seven o'clock, there was a ring at Picasso's door. As the maid had not come down yet, it was I who opened the door to a

plainclothes policeman, who flashed his card, introduced himself, and summoned Picasso to follow him in order to appear before the examining magistrate at nine o'clock.

Trembling, Picasso dressed with haste, and I had to help him as he was almost out of his mind with fear.

The good-natured policeman was friendly, smiling, cunning, and insinuating, and he did his best to make us talk; but Picasso was consumed by suspicion and would say nothing. He arrived at the Prefecture of Police with the policeman, still not understanding what was wanted of him. The bus between Pigalle and the Halle-aux-Vins, in which he had to ride, was haunted for many a day by those unfortunate memories. The detective was not allowed to take a taxi at his client's expense. [Picasso and His Friends, pp. 146-148]

Arriving at the police station after a long wait, Picasso was brought into the chambers of the examining magistrate where he saw Apollinaire, pale, undone, unshaven, his collar torn, his shirt open, without a tie, skinny, smaller, a lamentable wreck and painful to look at. Arrested for two days, treated for a few days just like a criminal, he had attested to everything they wanted. In his avowals, truth was the least part. What wouldn't he have sworn in order to be allowed to rest?

Very upset by this, Picasso, trembling already, was lost. His courage failed him that morning, but then, even when he was dressing, he had been shaking with fright. The scene that he told me afterward is impossible to describe. He too would say whatever the investigators wanted him

to declare. Besides, Guillaume had sworn to so many real and false things that he had compromised his friend completely. Who wouldn't he have compromised in his panic? It appears that they both wept before the judge who turned out to be reasonably paternal, but could hardly keep a severe air before their childish misery. Soon enough, some would begin to say that Picasso had denied his friend. That he pretended not to know him.

This is completely false. He didn't desert him. On the contrary! His friendship for Apollinaire was manifest.

Picasso was not charged but was told to keep himself as a witness at the disposition of the investigation.

Apollinaire was sent to the La Santé Prison, and only got out of it after several days.

[Souvenirs Intimes, pp. 249-250]

Fernande is too casual about Apollinaire's exit from prison. He had one last test of his wits before accomplishing that:

Paris-Journal, September 13, 1911:

THE THEFTS IN THE LOUVRE

RELEASE OF M. G. APOLLINAIRE

The Public Prosecutor realizes that the charges made against the author of "L'Heresiarque et Cie" are without basis

. . .M. Guillaume Apollinaire's bad dream is ended. Yesterday M. Drioux, the investigating magistrate, finally. . . restored him to his mother and to his innumerable friends.

THE INTERROGATION

It was at three o'clock that Apollinaire, pushing through the crowd of reporters, photographers, and friends from the worlds of journalism, letters, and the arts, come to bring him the comfort of their sympathy, entered the magistrate's office. A policeman accompanied him. Apollinaire--we deplore this inadmissible harshness on the part of the prison authorities--was handcuffed. Nor had the authorities thought of providing a taxi for his trip from the Santé to the Palais de Justice--taxis, apparently, are reserved for bigger game. . .Apollinaire is penniless: he had stolen nothing, and lives solely by his pen.

Maître José Théry was present to defend his client. . .and shook hands with the individual described by the Surêté as "chief of an international gang come to France to despoil our museums."

Even in the Surété they write novels--very bad ones!

Apollinaire replied candidly and with good grace to the magistrate's questions. . . "You admit that even though you knew it was stolen, you kept that third statue, stolen in 1911, in your house from June 14 to August 21?"

"Certainly. It was in Pieret's suitcase. I kept everything--the man, the suitcase, and the statue in the suitcase. I assure you that I wasn't very happy about it, but I did not think that I was committing a serious sin." ...

"Such a degree of indulgence surprises me," said M. Drioux, who had been following M. Apollinaire with interest.

"Here is part of my reason," said M. Apollinaire. "Pieret is a little bit of my creation. He is very queer, very strange, and after studying him I made him the hero of one of the last short stories in my L'Heresiarque et Cie. So it would have been a kind of literary ingratitude to let him starve. . . ."

At the conclusion of interrogation, Apollinaire's lawyer petitioned that his client be provisionally released, and M. Drioux consented. Apollinaire then wrote a piece describing his journey from prison to court:

Paris-Journal, September 14

MES PRISONS

by Guillaume Apollinaire

. . .The ride in the police car seemed extremely long. I was locked in a kind of cage where it was very hot. The guard told me I would do well to take off my collar and put it in my pocket.

At the Palais de Justice they locked me in one of the narrow, stinking cells of the "Mousetrap," where I waited from eleven in the morning until three in the afternoon, my face glued to the bars, to see who passed by in the corridor. Four mortal hours: how they dragged! Eventually, the long wait ended, and a guard led me, handcuffed, to the magistrate's office.

What a surprise to find myself suddenly stared at like a strange beast! All at once fifty cameras were aimed at me; the magnesium flashes gave a dramatic aspect to this scene in which I was playing a role. I soon recognized a few friends and acquaintances: I think that I must have laughed and wept at the same time. . .

There remains one obligation for me to fulfill: let me express here my thanks to all the newspapers, all the writers, all the artists who have given

me such touching evidence of solidarity and esteem.

I hope that I may be forgiven for not yet having thanked each person separately. But that will be done, by letter or by personal call. However, mere observance of the simple rules of politeness will not make me consider that I have paid my debt of gratitude.

We can return to Steegmuller:

It was indeed commonly recounted in Apollinaire's circle that. . .he had had to experience the peculiarly bitter despair that comes from the defection of a close friend. Despite Fernande Olivier's loyal denial, the story gradually found its way into print. The painter Albert Gleizes. . .wrote in 1946: "Guillaume had suffered very much in the course of the interrogations that the investigating magistrate had subjected him to. Especially in his affections. Didn't one of his dearest friends deny him when they were brought face to face, losing his head so completely as to declare that he did not know him? Apollinaire spoke to me about this with bitterness, and without hiding his dismay."

In 1952 was printed Apollinaire's version of the whole affair, written to a friend in 1915. "They arrested me, thinking that I knew the whereabouts of the Mona Lisa because I had had a 'secretary' who stole statues from the Louvre. I admitted having had the 'secretary' but refused to

betray him; they grilled me and threatened to search the homes of all persons close to me. Finally, in order to avoid causing great trouble to my amie and to my mother and brother, I was compelled to tell about X___: I did not describe his actual part in the affair, I merely said that he had been taken advantage of, and that he had never known the antiquities he had bought came from the Louvre. Next afternoon, confrontation with X___, who denied knowing anything whatever about the affair. I thought I was lost, but the investigating magistrate saw that I had done nothing wrong, and was simply being victimized by the police because I refused to betray the fugitive to them, and he authorized me to question the witness; and using the maieutics dear to Socrates I quickly forced X___ to admit that everything I had said was true." [Steegmuller, pp. 216-218]

How interesting it would be to have a transcript of those maieutics! Forty-eight years after 1911, Picasso spoke of his part in the event. (The italics will be mine.)

Paris-Presse, June 20, 1959:

PICASSO NOW CONFESSES

Gilbert Prouteau is preparing an art film in which the great contemporary

painters will play themselves. Last week he went to solicit the participation of Picasso.

"I know you," the Seigneur of Vauvenargues said to him. "You are the one who taught me that there is such a thing as remorse, when I saw your film on Apollinaire last year. During the hour I spent watching it, I was thirty years old again. And I think I shed a tear or two..."

"Memories, Maître?"

"Yes, but not the kind you are thinking. I can admit it now. I did not behave very well with 'Apo' on one occasion. It was after the affair of the theft of the Mona Lisa. Guillaume had returned the picture in care of a newspaper, but despite that precaution our little group was being watched rather carefully. We wanted above all to repeat our offense. We were at the age of the gratuitous act. Such childishness amused us, and the idea of owning a series of little statues for a few days delighted me. It wasn't robbery, just a good joke. No sooner said than done. But this time the police were ready. I took fright and wanted to throw the package into the Seine. 'Apo' was against it.

"'They don't belong to us,' he said.

"And he got himself arrested.

Naturally, they confronted us. I can see him there now, with his handcuffs and his

look of a big, placid boy. He smiled at me as I came in, but I made no sign.

"When the judge asked me: 'Do you know this gentleman?' I was suddenly terribly frightened, and without knowing what I was saying, I answered: 'I have never seen this man.'

"I saw Guillaume's expression change. The blood ebbed from his face. I am still ashamed..."

Steegmuller gives us a portrait of Apollinaire in the aftermath:

During the months that followed his provisional release, Apollinaire's life was badly out of joint. . . nothing bites more savagely into the personality--especially of a man whose position in society is as equivocal as Apollinaire's: bastard, foreigner, writer of erotica, poet--than first-hand evidence and public proclamation that society does indeed consider one contemptible and expendable. "Monsieur Apollinaire, vous etes une canaille!" one of the police officials is said to have shouted at him; and for someone of Apollinaire's carefully built-up name and personality this is to be made to tremble on the brink of the abyss. . . someone who met him at this time wrote that he was "depressed, considered himself deserted by all, irretrievably ruined; he had been much affected by his incarceration in the

Santé and the unconcealed pleasure that certain malicious fellow-writers had taken in his plight." [Given his provisional release, he also] feared being expelled from France as an undesirable foreigner... [Steegmuller, pp. 222-223]