A Sum of Destructions: Violence, Paternity, and Art in Picasso's "Guernica"

John O. Jordan

> Isn't story-telling always a way of searching for one's origin, speaking one's conflict with the Law, entering into the dialectic of tenderness and hatred?
>
> —Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text* (1975)

The reading of Picasso's *Guernica* (Figure 1) that I wish to propose in this essay takes as its point of departure two hypotheses: first, that the painting is structured like a narrative and that it tells a story—or several related stories—which unfolds in a specific temporal sequence; and second, that one of the main elements in this narrative is the figure of the father, or what I prefer to call Picasso's myth of paternity. The relation between these two hypotheses is suggested both by the quotation from Barthes that I have taken as an epigraph and by another statement that Barthes makes in the same essay. "Every narrative," he writes, "is a staging of the (absent, hidden, hypostatized) father" (p. 10).

To discuss *Guernica* in these terms, as the narrative staging of a paternal myth, may seem at first like a refusal to engage the important historical and political significance of the painting: its relation to the Spanish Civil War and to the deadly aerial bombardment of April 26, 1937, which was the occasion for the painting and which dictated Picasso's choice of a title. I am convinced, however, that an approach along the lines I have indicated does more than just add another level of interpretation to the many that have been suggested for the painting. In addition, I believe, such an approach provides a more complete basis for understanding the social and political dimensions of *Guernica,* both as the lament for an appalling military atrocity and as the statement of a revolutionary hope for the future.

Figure 1 Picasso. *Guernica* (May to early June, 1937). Oil on canvas, 11′ 5½″ × 25′ 5 ¾″. (The Prado, Madrid.)

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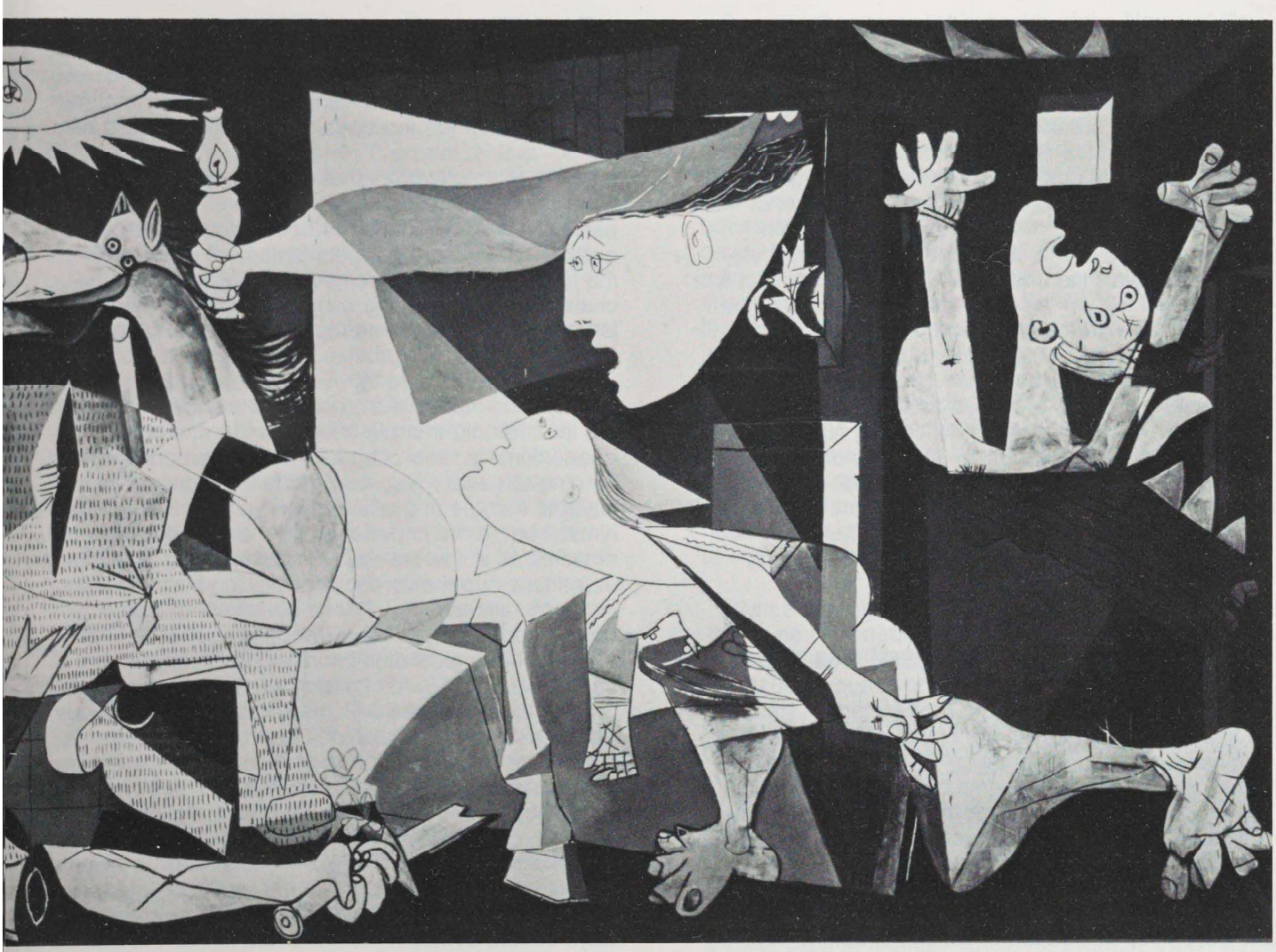


The Myth of Paternity

Before proceeding to develop my two hypotheses, let me first elaborate the idea of a paternal myth as it applies to Picasso. In so doing, I shall draw on biographical information about Picasso's relationship with his father as well as on the psychoanalytic theories of Jacques Lacan, especially Lacan's important concept of the Name-of-the-Father (*le nom du père*). Picasso's myth of paternity is the story of a weak father and a strong son. In its most cryptic form, the story recounts how the father, a mediocre academic painter in provincial Spain, recognized the budding artistic genius of his 13-year-old son and handed over his brushes and palette to the adolescent prodigy, renouncing painting forever. Sabartés (1948:29–30; see also Penrose 1958:31–32), who heard it directly from the artist, gives the most detailed account of this incident, but other versions of the story and allusions to it appear in the memoirs of people who knew Picasso well. Apparently, he enjoyed telling the story, and as a result it has become part of the Picasso legend: a myth of origin cast in the form of a grave vocational crisis for the father and a startling Oedipal victory for the son.

Whether the incident actually happened and whether it took the precise form described by Sabartés are questions that cannot be answered with certainty. The episode bears a striking resemblance to the anecdote told by Vasari about the young Leonardo's arrival in the studio of the aging Verrocchio. According to Vasari, Leonardo completed the figure of an angel in a painting of Verrocchio's design. So perfect was the execution of this figure and so ashamed was the master to be outdone by a mere boy that he never touched colors again. In telling the story of his own

apprenticeship at La Coruña, Picasso may have exaggerated or fictionalized the real events in order to assert his claim to recognition as the Leonardo of his century. In his story, it is a still life and the figure of a dove (his father's favorite animal) that provoke the crisis and bring on the remarkable rite of passage.

We cannot rule out, therefore, the possibility of deliberate self-mythologizing in Picasso's account of the events at La Coruña in 1894–1895. However, we should not dismiss the story for this reason as irrelevant to Picasso's life and work. In a general sense, it remains true to Don José's predicament as an aging painter faced with the challenge of his son's prodigious talent. Moreover, the story corresponds to other things that we know about the father's life during these years: the loss of his job as museum curator in Málaga in 1891, his financial difficulties, his loneliness and depression after the move to La Coruña, and the death there of his youngest child in 1895—events that coincide with Picasso's early adolescence and with his growing sense of artistic vocation. That the father felt threatened and that both son and father recognized his vulnerability seem evident.

The more profound significance of Picasso's myth of paternity lies not in its correspondence to empirical fact or in its usefulness for the kind of literal-minded biographical criticism that Rosalind Krauss (1981) has attacked as "art history of the proper name." Rather, its importance pertains to the status of the La Coruña story as what Fredric Jameson (in a different context) calls a *fantasm,* or fantasy master narrative. Such a master narrative, writes Jameson (1981:180), "is an unstable or contradictory structure, whose persistent actantial functions and events (which are in life restaged again and again with different actors and on different levels) demand repetition, permutation, and the ceaseless generation of various structural 'resolutions' which are never satisfactory, and whose initial form is that of . . . waking fantasies, day dreams, and wish-fulfillments." Jameson also makes the point, particularly important for *Guernica,* that the family situation in such fantasms is social as well as personal or "psychoanalytic" and that family relationships often mediate those of class—and also, we might add, those of politics and gender. Regardless of its basis in fact, Picasso's myth of paternity thus stands as an implicit subtext or phantom pentimento beneath many (though certainly not all) of Picasso's major works, among them *Guernica.* It also provides Picasso with the model for his conception of himself as a revolutionary artist—the restless overreacher ("I do not seek, I find"), forever changing styles and breaking with the art of the past, including his own.

The La Coruña episode, as we have considered it thus far, leaves out several important elements that are necessary to a fuller understanding of Picasso's paternal myth. These elements can be briefly enumerated. They include the son's ambivalence toward his father—that is, the positive feelings of admiration and the wish to emulate him that go along with the hostile fantasies of destruction and the wish to usurp his place. They also include the tremendous sense of guilt felt by the son when his fantasy of overthrowing the father suddenly becomes a reality, and they include an accompanying wish to take care of the father and to make some reparation for the grievous injury inflicted on him.

Finally, they include the necessary accommodation that all sons must make to paternal authority if they are to enter into the rule-governed activities of language, kinship, and culture. This accommodation, according to Lacan, results from the intervention via the Oedipal triangle of the father, who stands not only for himself but, more importantly (for he may be absent or weak, as in the case of Don José), for the function of the Law and the symbolic order, to which the father himself is also subject. The father's intervention is experienced by the son as a symbolic castration. The phallus, the original signifier of desire, is given up and displaced by what Lacan calls the paternal metaphor or the Name-of-the-Father:[1] a signifier that fuses patronymics (*nom*) with prohibition (*non*). This displacement generates in turn a chain of other signifiers that designate the paternal function. The son's fantasy of murdering and castrating the father implies not only his rebellion against paternal constraint but also the recognition of his sonship—that is, of his position as castrated and his desire to possess the object that he knows is lacking. The son's submission to the always absent Symbolic Father binds him to the Law and constitutes the acceptance of his place as a participant within the cultural order.

Thus, although it is manifestly a story of paternal weakness and filial triumph, Picasso's myth of paternity contains other complicating and contradictory features: ambivalence, guilt, and accommodation to the very Law that seemed to have been overthrown. The father's palette and brushes are examples of the paternal metaphor, passed from one generation to the next according to the law of patrilineal succession. The father's act of renunciation involves the yielding of phallic power over his successor and at the same time the transmission of that power in a form that guarantees the father's survival through the son's progeny and, more importantly, through the son's art. The dove that Picasso recalls painting functions as a mediating term between son and father, confirming their new alliance. Like the ram that substitutes for the son in the sacrifice of Isaac, the dove absorbs the intergenerational conflict and carries the mark of cas-

tration. According to Sabartés, the bird was dissected, its feet cut off and pinned to a board where they served the young boy as a model. Also like the ram, the dove has seminal connotations; *paloma,* for example, is a common children's word in Spanish for penis.

The final element in Picasso's paternal myth that needs elaboration is the role of Don José as his son's art teacher. Few art historians would accord much significance to the father's influence on his son's art beyond 1896 or 1897, by which time the young painter had definitively rejected the sterile exercises of the academy for the excitement of the *modernismo* movement and the more cosmopolitan world of Barcelona's bohemian cafés. By the age of 16, in works such as *Science and Charity* and *The First Communion,* he had fully mastered the academic style of painting and had nothing more to learn from his father's lessons. Considered as a painter in his own right, Don José is a negligible figure of limited ability, hardly a potent role model for his ambitious and rebellious son. Considered, however, as the bearer and transmitter of a tradition, he assumes much greater importance in Picasso's art than his meager talent would otherwise suggest.

The tradition that Don José carried and passed on to his son was that of classical figure drawing—the foundation of all naturalistic representation since the Renaissance and a tradition itself based on classical sculpture. Academic art instruction in the nineteenth century began always in the *salon antique,* where students were put to work drawing human figures, using plaster casts of Greek and Roman antiquities as their models. It was this rigorous discipline that Don José imposed on his son in La Coruña and perhaps even before that in Málaga. Photographs of the father's studio at the Academy of San Telmo in Málaga show it jammed with the plaster statuary that he set his pupils to copying. Among the earliest drawings that we have by Picasso are several that faithfully reproduce classical fragments and figures from the Parthenon, completed, we must suppose, under his father's exacting eye. Behind the mediocre academic painter, therefore, and behind the person of Don José, stands the figure of the Law, Lacan's Symbolic Father: *le nom du père.* This absent, hypostatized father is the tradition of classical figuration and naturalistic drawing that Picasso, as leader of the modernist revolt, helped to overthrow, but it is the same tradition that he helped to sustain through his periodic reversions to a "classical" style and through the purity of line in all his work, regardless of style or period.

Perhaps the strongest indicator of the Name-of-the-Father in Picasso's career as a whole is his stubborn repudiation of abstract art. No artist before him had moved so radically toward breaking with the idea of painting as naturalistic representation, yet he refused to take the final step into abstraction. "There is no abstract art," he told Zervos in 1935. "You must always start with something. Afterward you can remove all traces of reality. There's no danger then, anyway, because the idea of the object will have left an indelible mark (quoted in Barr 1946:273). The refusal of abstraction and the insistence on fidelity to "the idea of the object" are evidence, I would argue, of Picasso's accommodation to the symbolic authority of the Father—an authority greater than that of Don José but transmitted through him and through the debased institution of the academy. Thus rebellion and accommodation, innovation and tradition, all have their place in Picasso's paternal myth. How different parts of the myth combine and take their place in a specific narrative structure will become more apparent as we turn to a closer examination of *Guernica.*

Guernica as a Narrative

In order to support the assertion that *Guernica* is structured like a narrative and that the story it tells has a definite sequence and direction, we must first identify what that story is. Any interpretation of *Guernica* needs to begin with a basic question: what is the subject of the painting? What is *Guernica* about? If this question has seldom been asked in so blunt a fashion, it is probably because the answer to it has always seemed obvious. *Guernica* is about the event that its title names, the bombing by German planes of a small town in northern Spain on April 26, 1937. All the circumstances surrounding the execution of the painting support this identification. Picasso was an outspoken supporter of the Republican cause. He had done other works, notably the *Dream and Lie of Franco,* which take the Civil War as a subject. *Guernica* was painted on commission for the Spanish government-in-exile to be displayed in its pavillion at the 1937 World's Fair in Paris. Picasso drew his first sketches for the commissioned project on May 1, only a few days after news of the bombing reached him in Paris. On many occasions, he emphasized the explicitly political purpose of the painting. Finally, of course, there is the title. Picasso rarely gave specific titles to his works, *Guernica* thus being an important exception to his customary practice. All these facts confirm the self-evident conclusion: the subject of *Guernica* is Guernica.

Several difficulties arise, however, when one attempts to read the painting as a literal portrayal of the bombing. First, as Rudolf Arnheim has pointed out (1962:20), the town of Guernica was attacked on a sunny spring afternoon at 4:30, whereas the painting clearly suggests darkness or, more precisely, night.[2] A second difficulty, according to Arnheim, derives from the fact that the enemy is not present. Neither airplanes nor bombs are visible; moreover, there is no figure that can be identified with certainty as a corpse. The only "dead" person in the completed mural is a statue. The figure conventionally read as a "dead infant" might be sick, or wounded, or unconscious, or very much alive. Arnheim has no trouble accounting for these "deviations from the historical facts," suggesting that the darkness is symbolic and that the absence of the enemy is consistent with Picasso's emphasis on the suffering victims. There is, however, another, much simpler explanation for the two so-called deviations. They are not deviations at all. Arnheim, like other interpreters of *Guernica* until very recently, has overlooked the literal subject of the painting. It is not the bombing of Guernica, but another, equally specific event: the Málaga earthquake of December 1884, which took place when Picasso was 3 years old.[3]

In identifying the earthquake as the literal subject of *Guernica,* I do not wish to exclude other levels of reference in the painting, notably to the bombing and to political events in Spain as well as to Picasso's myth of paternity. Nor do I mean to deny Picasso's reliance on iconography of the bullfight and the Crucifixion, aspects of the painting that have been discussed in detail by other scholars.[4] The earthquake, however, is the initial, literal referent that organizes the other patterns of significance, and it is therefore with the earthquake that one must begin. It functions not merely as one overtone of meaning among others, but as a central organizing device that Picasso used in order to control his symbolic motifs and shape them into a coherent design.

Evidence to support the earthquake identification has been available for many years. Consider, for example, the following conversation reported by Malraux (1976:39):

> Before *Guernica* was taken, in 1937, to the Spanish Republican Pavillion at the Paris World's Fair, I had told Picasso, "We don't believe very much in subject matter, but you must agree that this time the subject matter will have served you well." He replied that, indeed, he didn't believe very much in subject matter, but he believed in themes—so long as they were expressed symbolically. . . . What he considered themes (and I quote) were birth, pregnancy, murder, the couple, death, rebellion, and, perhaps, the kiss.

It is an interesting but puzzling exchange. Malraux assumes that he knows what the subject of the painting is. Without denying or confirming his friend's assumption, Picasso responds by listing a series of symbolic themes. What are we to make of this list? Is Picasso still speaking of *Guernica,* or do these themes have only a general applicability to his art? Is Picasso's answer serious, or is he being coy and self-protective? "The kiss" has no relevance to the painting, nor, apparently, does "the couple." "Murder," "death," and "rebellion" come closer to the usual ways of thinking about *Guernica,* but why do these themes follow "birth" and "pregnancy" on the list? In order to make sense of Picasso's response, we need to pursue the question of the painting's subject.

If the conversation with Malraux contains a clue as to this subject, it is a conversation with Picasso's close friend and private secretary, Jaime Sabartés, that provides us with its certain identification. In 1946, Sabartés published his biographical memoir, *Picasso: portraits et souvenirs* (published in English in 1948). The memoir is rich in anecdotal material, based on many intimate conversations between the two friends. It is, in particular, the best available source of information about Picasso's early years in Málaga and La Coruña. Toward the beginning of the memoir, Sabartés recounts the following story:

> Early one night in mid-December 1884, Don Pepe [Don José] was chatting with some friends in the back room of the drugstore where they used to get together to discuss all manner of things. Suddenly they were aware of a vibration which flung to the floor all the bottles lined up on the shelves. The friends separated hastily, Don Pepe returning home on the run. Along the way he thought of a plan of salvation. "These rooms are too big, Maria," he gasped upon arriving. "Cover yourself up with something. And you Pablo, come with me."
>
> After fifty-seven years Picasso still remembers it. "My mother was wearing a kerchief on her head. I had never seen her like that. My father grabbed his cape from the rack, threw it over himself, picked me up in his arms, and wound me in its folds, leaving only my head exposed."
>
> Thus they left their home and thus they arrived at the house of [the neighbor], which was located near the sea; the rooms were small and adjoined the rocks. . . .
>
> That night of great cataclysm was an anguishing night for Malaga. . . . In the midst of all the tribulations his sister Lola was born. [pp. 5–6]

The key word in Sabartés is "cataclysm." Memories of the 1884 Málaga earthquake returned vividly to Picasso on the occasion of another cataclysmic event. In his effort to imagine the first massive aerial bombardment on the European continent, Picasso searched his own past for an analogous experience. The metaphor, earthquake-bombing, came naturally to him. The subject of *Guernica*—the literal subject—is not Guernica. Rather, it is the earthquake of 1884.

Once the earthquake identification has been made, the painting becomes legible as a depiction of the story narrated by Sabartés. No longer is there any need to worry about "deviations" from historical fact. The painting shows a nighttime scene because the earthquake took place in the evening, around 9:00. The enemy is not present because there is no "enemy," only a natural disaster perceived in terms of its effects: burning houses, frightened people, a broken statue. The earthquake identification also helps to explain the puzzling conversation with Malraux. Picasso's list of symbolic themes begins with two items, birth and pregnancy, which figure prominently in the earthquake narrative and which we can also identify in the painting.

The pregnancy of Doña Maria Picasso Lopez and the birth of Picasso's sister Lola are both explicitly portrayed in *Guernica.* One of Picasso's statements to Sabartés provides the clue by which Doña Maria can be recognized: "My mother was wearing a kerchief on her head. I had never seen her like that." In *Guernica,* the frightened woman who runs from right to left clearly wears a kerchief on her head. Her thick body and swollen breasts are consistent with the signs of advanced pregnancy. Behind her to the right is an open door through which she has just rushed into the street. She is on her way to the safety of the neighbor's house. In the preliminary sketches for this figure, the woman's kerchief is even more prominent, and often she holds an infant in her arms, its head dangling down suggestively below her belly (Figure 2). Arnheim, without realizing how close he is to the literal facts of the situation, describes the child of this sketch as "still half unborn" (1962:52). Newly dead or newly born, the child is a deliberately ambiguous image.

In the final state of the mural, Picasso removed this dangling infant to the extreme left of the composition, where it appears as part of a family group that includes a mother and, standing above her in the form of the bull, a father. Usually identified as a mother with dead child, this scene preserves the deliberate birth-death ambiguity of the earlier sketch. The mother can be read alternately as grieving for her dead child or as suffering the pangs of its delivery into the world. In terms of the earthquake story, this family group represents the birth of Picasso's sister Lola in the aftermath of the disaster. The bull is thus Picasso's father, who saved his family in a time of need, escorted them to a secure place, and here stands guard over his wife and newborn child. The bull's testicles, emblem of his paternity, hang prominently in view.

The childbirth and pregnancy motif appears even more prominently in some of the preliminary sketches for *Guernica.* For example, at the extreme left of the study dated May 9 (thus in the same position she will occupy in the finished mural) a woman in labor is clearly represented, her legs[5] lifted high into the air (Figure 3). Pregnancy and birth also appear in relation to another figure in the painting—the horse. Several of the drawings done on May 1, the day Picasso began work on the project, portray the horse as an expectant or actual mother. Thus, in one sketch a tiny Pegasus flies from an opening in her side (Figure 4). Is this the departing soul or a magical, newborn foal? Again there is deliberate ambiguity of death and birth. In another drawing of May 1, crude and childlike in its outline,[6] the horse stands pregnant like some primitive symbol of fecundity (Figure 5). Thus, from the very first, before any human mothers appear on the scene, the horse is Picasso's symbol for maternity, a function it continues to serve in the completed painting. Like the mother with dead/newborn child, to whom it is iconographically related by the position of its head, mouth, and tongue,[7] the horse of the mural is at once a victim and the source of new life. The diamond shape on its side is both wound and womb. Just above the diamond and to the left, a bird of unknown species completes the motif, replacing Pegasus as the symbol of departing/renascent spirit.

The evolution in Picasso's treatment of this bird or Pegasus figure is interesting in its own right and provides another link back to the story of the earthquake. One of the striking details in Picasso's recollection of that evening is the memory of his father wrapping him in a cape and carrying him in his arms through the streets of Málaga. The first two sketches for *Guernica,* done on May 1, both allude specifically to this event. I have already identified the bull as Picasso's father, Don José Ruiz Blasco, also known as Don Pepe. In the initial sketch of May 1, riding like a passenger on the bull's back, sits a bird, its wings outstretched in the form of a "V" (Figure 6). In the second drawing of that day, the bird has metamorphosed into Pegasus, but its position remains the same (Figure 7). Both "passengers," I would suggest, represent the 3-year-old boy who rode securely in his father's arms through the midst of a cataclysm. As the painting developed, the meaning of the bird/Pegasus changed in some of the ways I have already indicated, but its original significance as an autobiographical image should not be overlooked.

Before leaving Picasso's important initial drawing of May 1, let me comment on three further details it contains. I have already pointed out the association of pregnancy and birth with the horse of *Guernica;* this association is no less true of the initial drawing. Although hastily penciled in, the form of the horse has one identifying feature—a single upraised hoof. In a

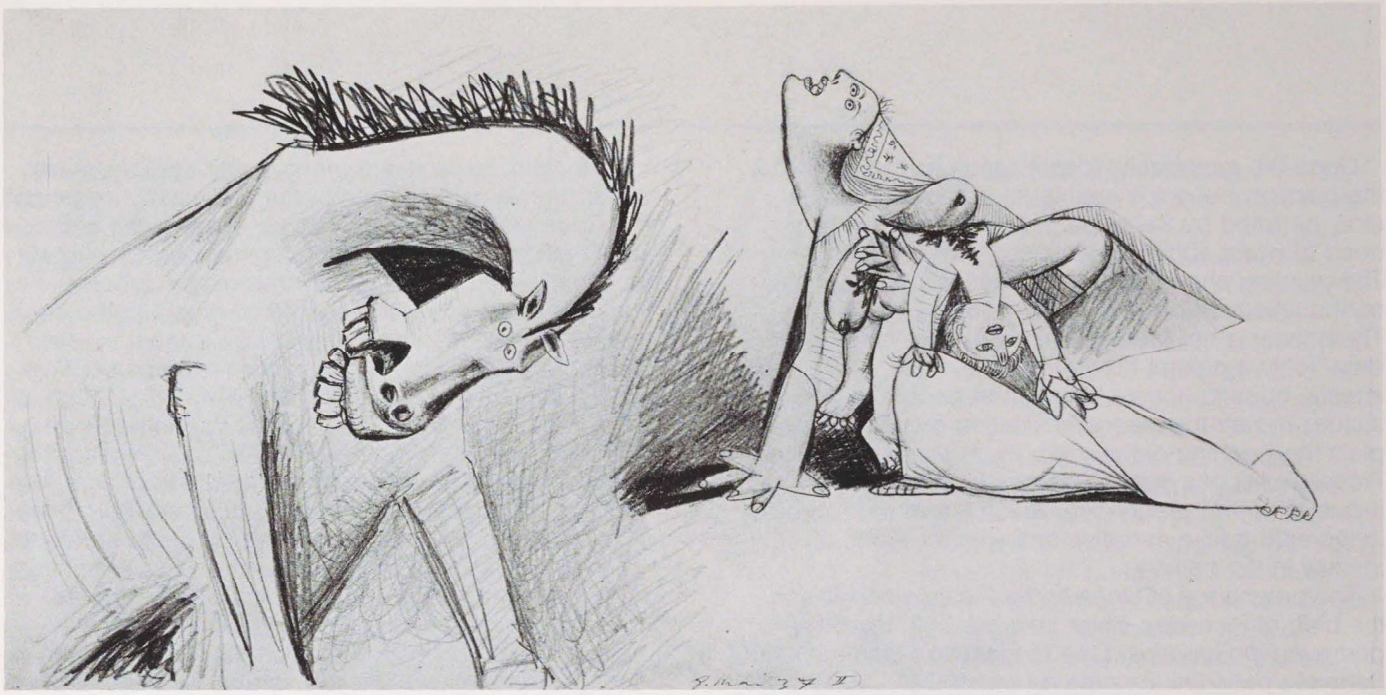


Figure 2 Picasso. Composition study for *Guernica* (May 8, 1937). Pencil on white paper, 9½ × 17⅞". (The Prado, Madrid.)

drawing of the previous year, Picasso had used the same feature to indicate a mare giving birth to a foal (Figure 8). A second notable detail of the initial drawing is the woman holding a lamp who appears at the upper window of a building. So far as I know, this woman has no specific identity in terms of the earthquake story, though she rather quickly assumed the features of Picasso's mistress, Marie-Thérèse Walter.[8] The symbolic role of this figure as light-bearer and witness to the scene below makes me suspect that she represents the position of the artist, an interpretation suggested by Arnheim and by other viewers as well. If she represents the position of Picasso as "informed intelligence," she may also represent his position as the 3-year-old child who witnessed the earthquake and, 53 years later, translated it into art.[9]

One final detail in the initial drawing deserves mention: the curved line that moves from beneath the lamp-holder down and across to the lower left center of the paper, ending in a pointed tip or arrow. This line is important in two respects: as a direction line for composition and as a direction line in time. Although the proportions of the mural differ from those of the initial drawing, the basic organization of the two states is the same. Against the two stable forms of horse and bull at the center and left of the composition, the curved line of the drawing defines a thrust or movement from right to left that appears, essentially unchanged, in the final painting. It is a movement that flows down with the falling woman, turns left at the powerful thrusting leg of the running mother, continues across through the broken statue, and resolves in the family group at the left. None of these figures is present in the initial drawing, but their placement has already been mapped.

The curved line also defines a movement in time. *Guernica* is a narrative painting; it tells the story of the earthquake, and that story moves from right to left, beginning with buildings on fire and people escaping as best they can, and ending, most improbably, in a scene of nativity.[10] With a single downward stroke of the pencil, Picasso anticipated the narrative line his painting would eventually follow. Nor, in the end, did he forget the pointed tip of the line. In the final state of the mural (but not before) an arrow inexplicably appears between the horse's hind feet, near the lower left center of the canvas. It has no function other than as a directional cue; it tells us to move on to the next scene, the scene of birth. This arrow, like so much else in the painting, has its origin in the initial sketch of May 1.[11]

Thus, from the very outset, the earthquake memory provided Picasso with an extended visual metaphor by which to depict the cataclysmic events of April 26, events that were difficult to imagine since they had no precedent in European military history or in the traditional iconography of warfare. Many elements of the earthquake story could be transposed without difficulty to the bombing: sudden violence, confusion, alarm, destruction, the helplessness of the victims and their frantic efforts to escape. At the same time, the earthquake story imposed coherence and direc-

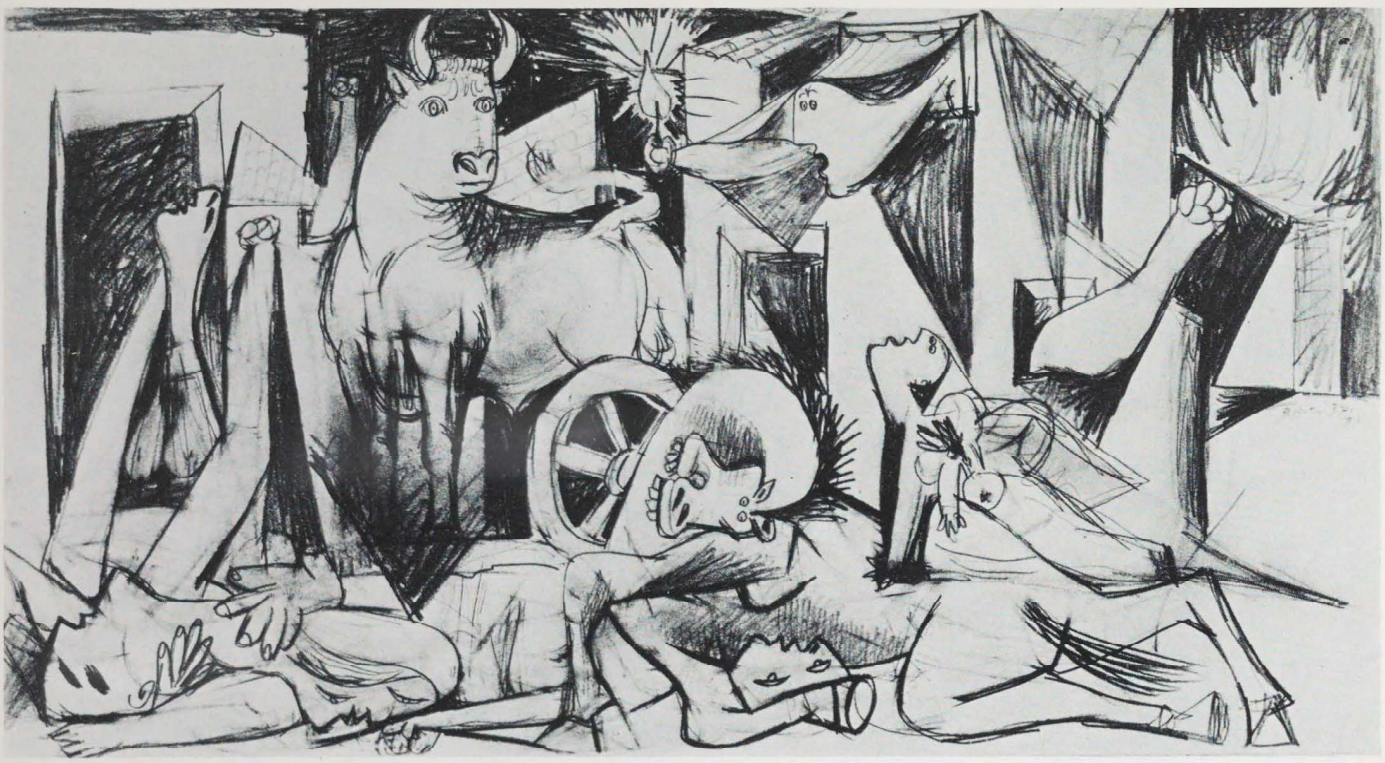


Figure 3 Picasso. Composition study for *Guernica* (May 9, 1937). Pencil on white paper, 9½ × 17⅞". (The Prado, Madrid.)

tion on these events. It gave them a cast of characters and a simple narrative structure or plot. In this way, it allowed Picasso a useful economy of means, limiting the number of figures needed to represent the experience of an entire town while enriching the painting's significance by the addition of pregnancy, birth, and paternity as symbolic themes. Moreover, the earthquake story gave the painting a powerful emotional resonance for Picasso that it might not otherwise have had by condensing into a single image the collective trauma of his divided homeland and a vivid childhood memory of his own family's escape from a disaster of comparable magnitude.

The Theme of Violence

The common element that makes the earthquake-bombing metaphor so effective is violence—sudden, irrational, large-scale violence. *Guernica* is a painting about violence, or rather about the consequences of violence. In addition to the frightening, impersonal violence of the earthquake and the bombing, however, the painting also suggests the more familiar, personally motivated violence that occurs between individuals and within the family. Three of the central figures who appear in the early sketches for *Guernica* and who remain in the completed mural are familiar from Picasso's graphic work of the 1930s, where they often seem to translate the scenes of domestic violence that were occurring in Picasso's private life during this time. The bull, the horse, and the female onlooker (who sometimes carries a light) frequently appear together (Figure 9) in violent encounters that several critics have linked to the deterioration of Picasso's marriage to his wife Olga and the development of his new relationship with Marie-Thérèse Walter (see especially Chipp 1973–1974:103). The raging bull who gores the horse and sometimes devours its entrails would thus represent Picasso's rage against his hapless wife, the blonde onlooker being his beautiful young mistress.

Picasso's domestic difficulties during the 1930s are another important element in the background to *Guernica,* and it will be useful to recall quickly some of the main events from this time. In June 1935, after a long and bitter dispute over the terms of a settlement, the marriage to Olga ended in a legal separation. Picasso continued to see his estranged wife, however, for it was through her that he had access to his son Paulo.

Early in 1936, Picasso traveled to the south of France for several months in the company of Marie-Thérèse and their infant daughter, born the previous October. Things did not go smoothly on this trip, however, and in May, Picasso returned abruptly to Paris. Although he continued to see Marie-Thérèse and to spend weekends with her and Maïa at le Tremblay-sur-Mauldre, where he installed her in a villa, their relationship never regained the intimacy it previously had (Jordan 1981). By the summer of 1936, Picasso had begun to keep company with Dora Maar, the

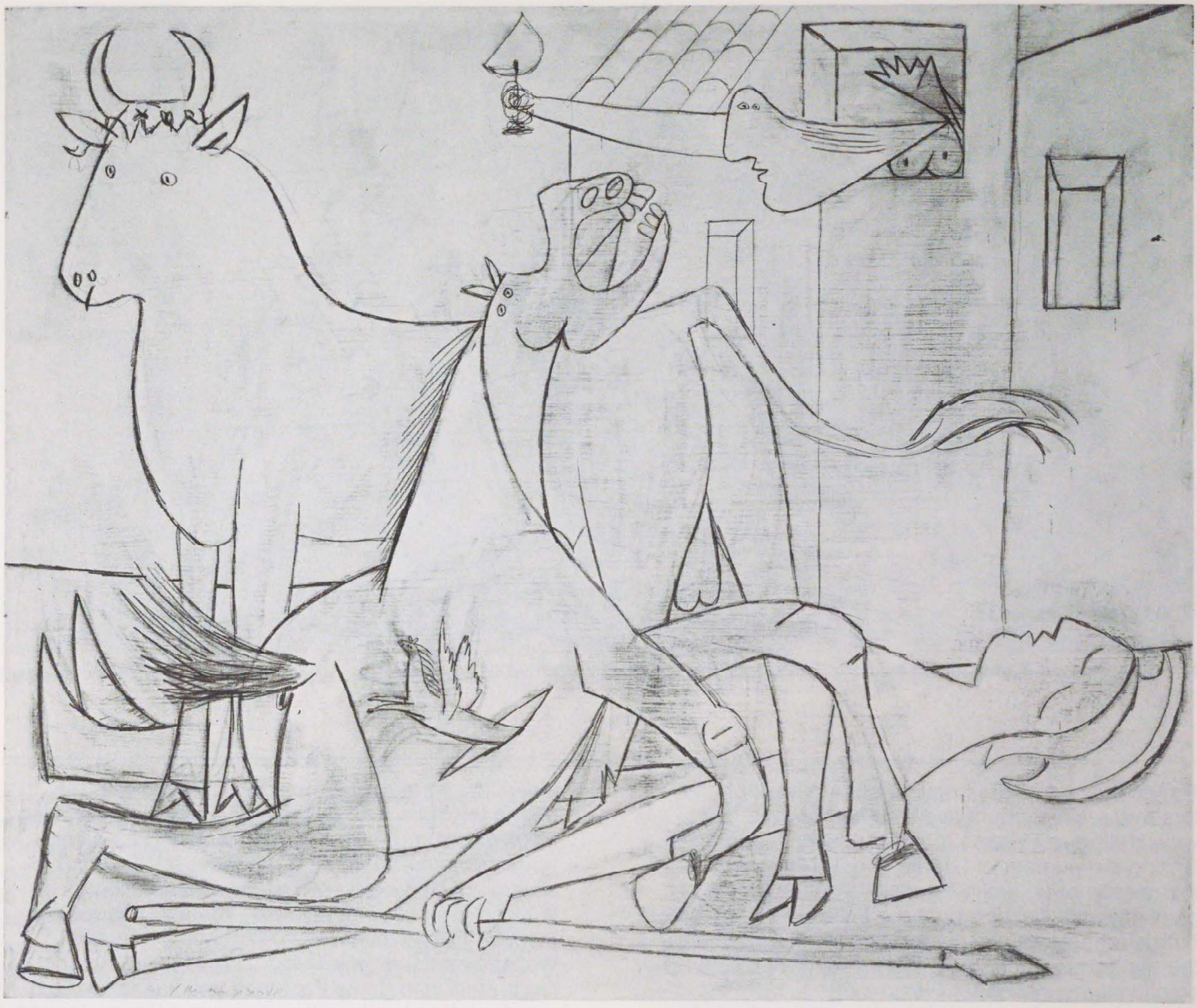


Figure 4 Picasso. Composition study for *Guernica* (May 1, 1937). Pencil on gesso, on wood, 21⅛ × 25½″. (The Prado, Madrid.)

Figure 5 Picasso. Composition study for *Guernica* (May 1, 1937). Pencil on blue paper, 8¼ × 10½″. (The Prado, Madrid.)

Figure 6 Picasso. Composition study for *Guernica* (May 1, 1937). Pencil on blue paper, 8¼ × 10⅝". (The Prado, Madrid.)

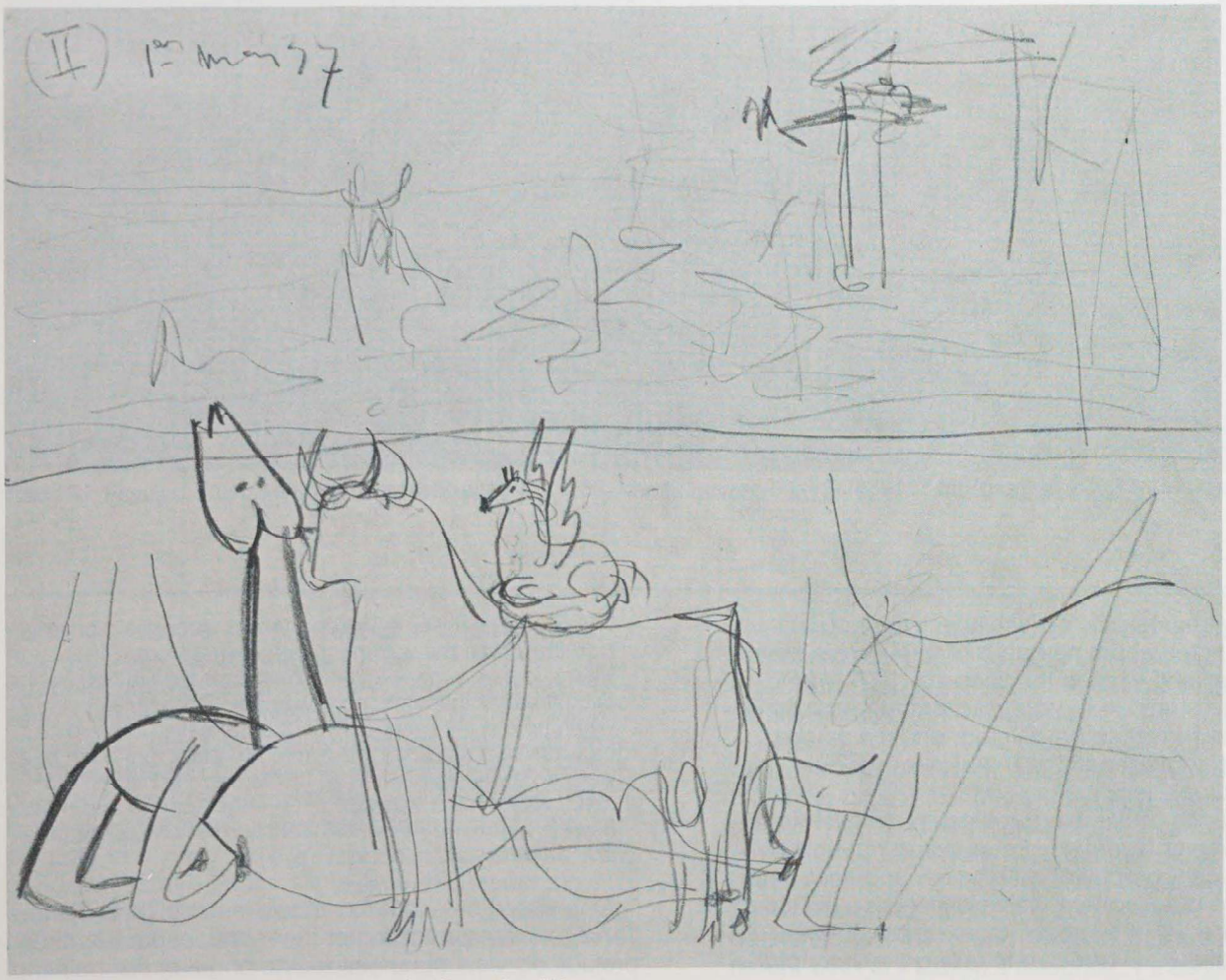


Figure 7 Picasso. Composition study for *Guernica* (May 1, 1937). Pencil on blue paper, 8¼ × 10⅝". (The Prado, Madrid.)

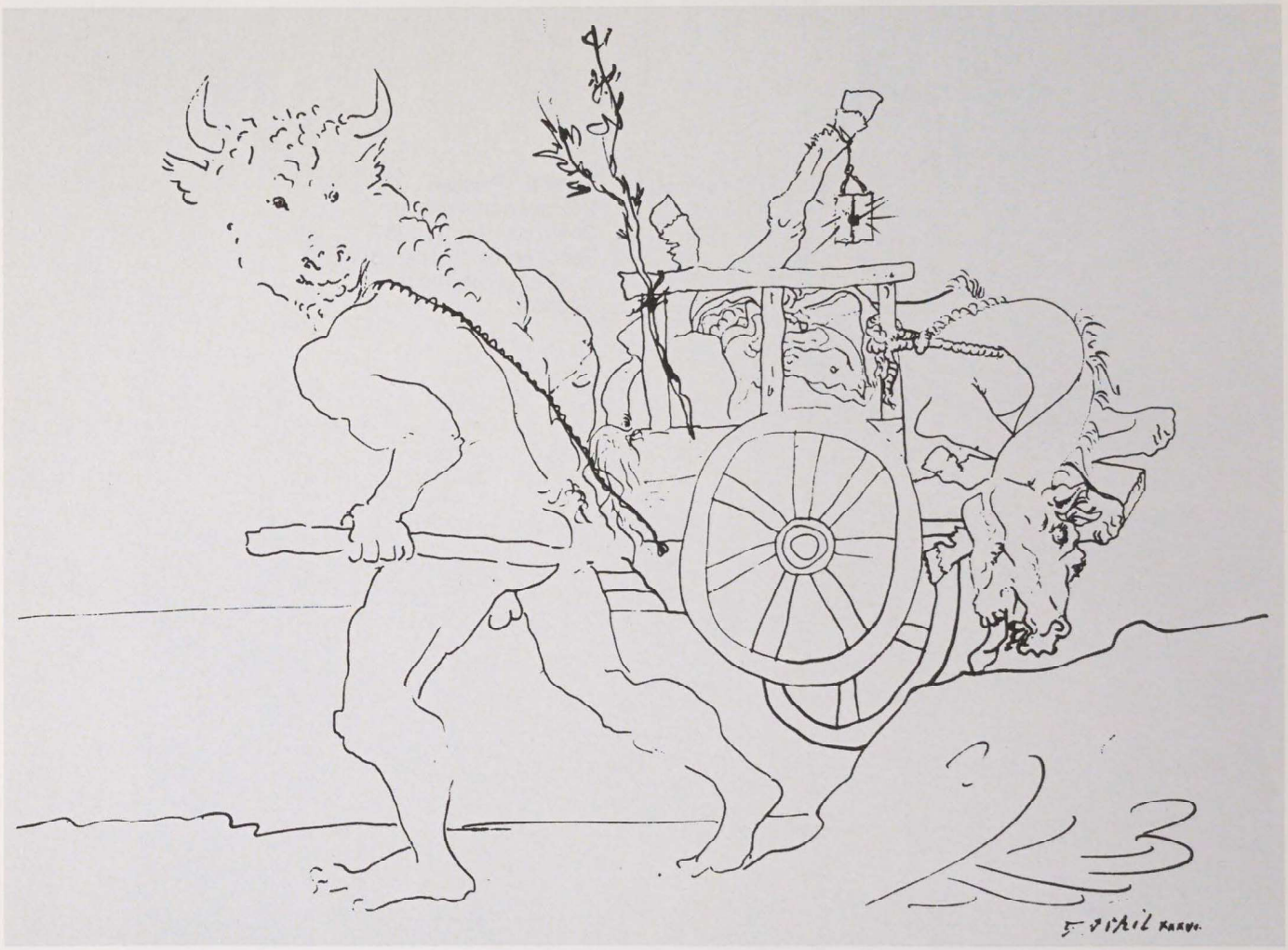


Figure 8 Picasso. Untitled drawing (April 5, 1936). Ink on paper, 19½ × 25⅜". (Musée Picasso, Paris.)

dark, Spanish-speaking, politically active photographer and painter whom he had met through his friend Eluard. It was she who, in the winter of 1937, found him the large studio in the rue des Grands-Augustins where *Guernica* was to be painted, and it was she who took photographs of the mural in its various stages of completion.

The relevance of this biographical information to an understanding of *Guernica* is suggested not only by the familiar iconography of bull, horse, and light-bearing onlooker, but also by Picasso's inclusion of "the couple" in the list of symbolic themes that he mentioned to Malraux. In addition to telling the story of the earthquake, the painting contains traces of a more recent sequence of events: the history of Picasso's troubled relationship with the women in his life. Further support for this hypothesis comes from an unexpected source, Marie-Thérèse herself. In an interview with Pierre Cabanne (1974), Marie-Thérèse gives us a glimpse of Picasso's complicated domestic arrangements during the period when he was working on *Guernica:*

> When Guernica was bombed, he was in despair; on one side there was the war, on the other there was Olga whom he saw every day and to whom he gave 500 francs each time. At that time there was also Dora Maar. . . . When he did the great canvas that he called "Guernica," he was like a madman; he wanted to paint that bitch of a war and at the same time all the women he had on his mind. As for me, I was sort of an angel for him and that's how he portrayed me; and then the other one, Dora Maar, she was the war, poor dear. [p. 9]

One would not want to put too much faith in Marie-Thérèse's interpretations of the mural, especially the prejudiced view of herself as the angel of the painting (presumably the light-bearer) and of Dora Maar as the war (probably the running mother, as well as the various weeping women who appear in the so-called postscripts to *Guernica*). Nevertheless, her statement helps to explain why the victims in the painting are mostly, or perhaps all, women and children, and why the bull is portrayed in such an ambiguous fashion that critics have endlessly debated whether he is the cause of violence or a defender of the weak—in politi-

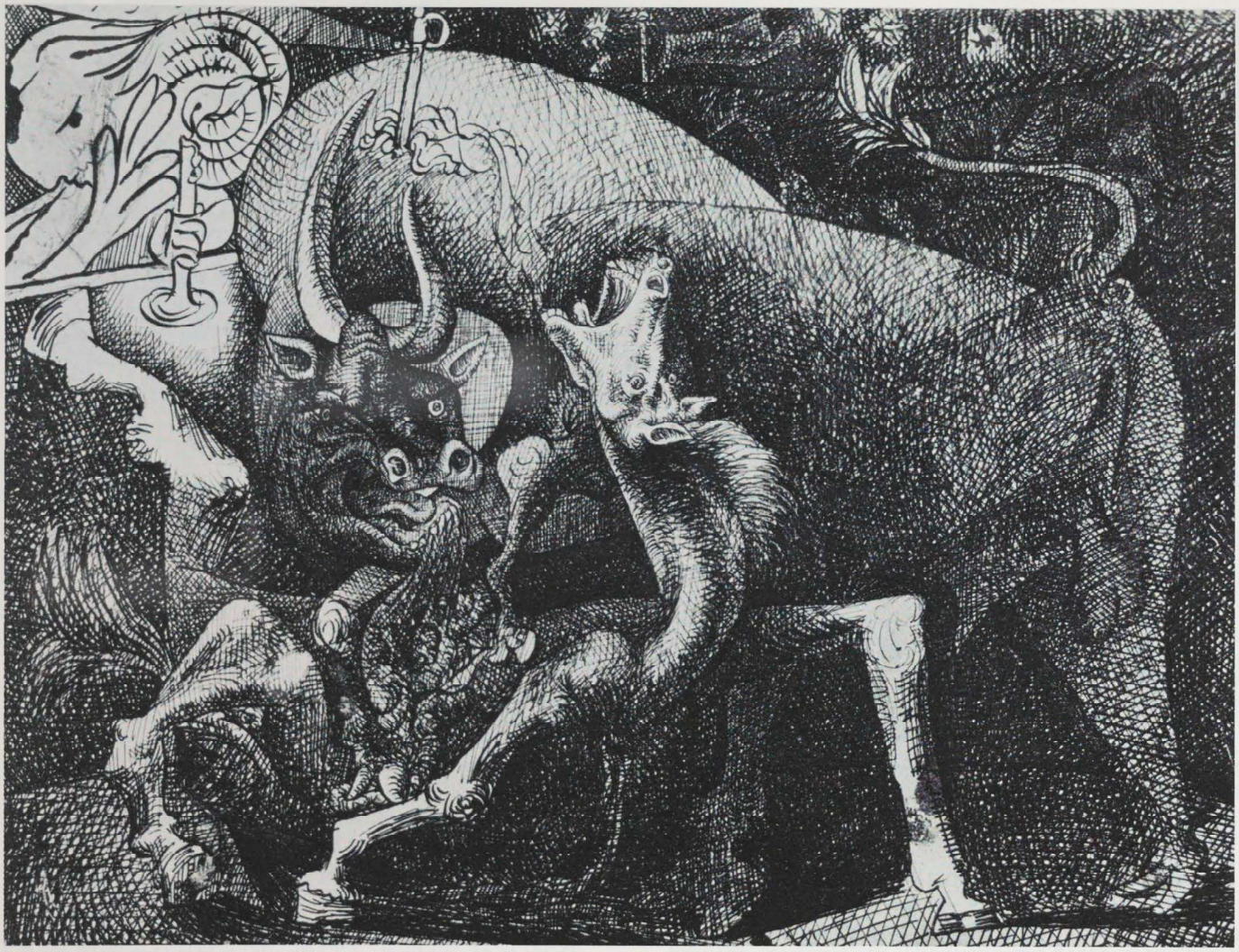


Figure 9 Picasso. *Bull Disembowling a Horse* (July 24, 1934). India ink on wood, 12⅜ × 16″. (Musée Picasso, Paris.)

cal terms, whether he is a Fascist or a Republican. Picasso's famous answer to this question is useful, but does not tell the whole story. "The bull is not fascism," he said to Jerome Seckler (quoted in Ashton 1972:137), "but it is brutality and darkness." By refusing to equate the bull with fascism, Picasso was emphasizing the complexity of his symbolism and the inadequacy of any interpretation that reduces the painting to a simple allegory of political parties or of good versus evil. At the same time, his response does acknowledge a degree of similarity between the bull and the Fascists, even if the bull's significance is far from exhausted by this resemblance.

As with the earthquake metaphor, Picasso's use of bullfight imagery in the painting is related to his central concern with violence. The bull is like the Fascists in that he is a destroyer of innocent lives. The brutality and darkness he embodies are those of the enraged beast in the arena who acts out his fury against the horse in so many of Picasso's bullfight pictures and who, in *Guernica,* is implicitly responsible for the diamond-shaped wound (*cornada*) in the horse's belly.[12] The brutality and darkness of the bull are also those of Picasso himself, in his relationship not only to Olga (usually represented by the horse) but also now to Marie-Thérèse and Maïa, whom he had more or less rejected in favor of Dora Maar. The mother and child beneath the bull's body at the left side of the mural thus take on additional meaning in relation to these events. They suggest the new family group that Picasso had formed in 1935 but from which he withdrew, except for visits that suited his convenience, in 1936. The childbirth motif that emerges in the earthquake story is reinforced by association with the more recent birth of Picasso's daughter. Picasso's ambivalence toward his own role as *père de famille* is reflected in the bull's posture: fiercely protective, but at the same time emotionally detached and aloof. The expression of agony on the mother's face can thus be understood as resulting both from the travails of childbirth and from the pain of being rejected by her child's father, different moments in their relationship being condensed into a single image.

Considered in this perspective, *Guernica* becomes

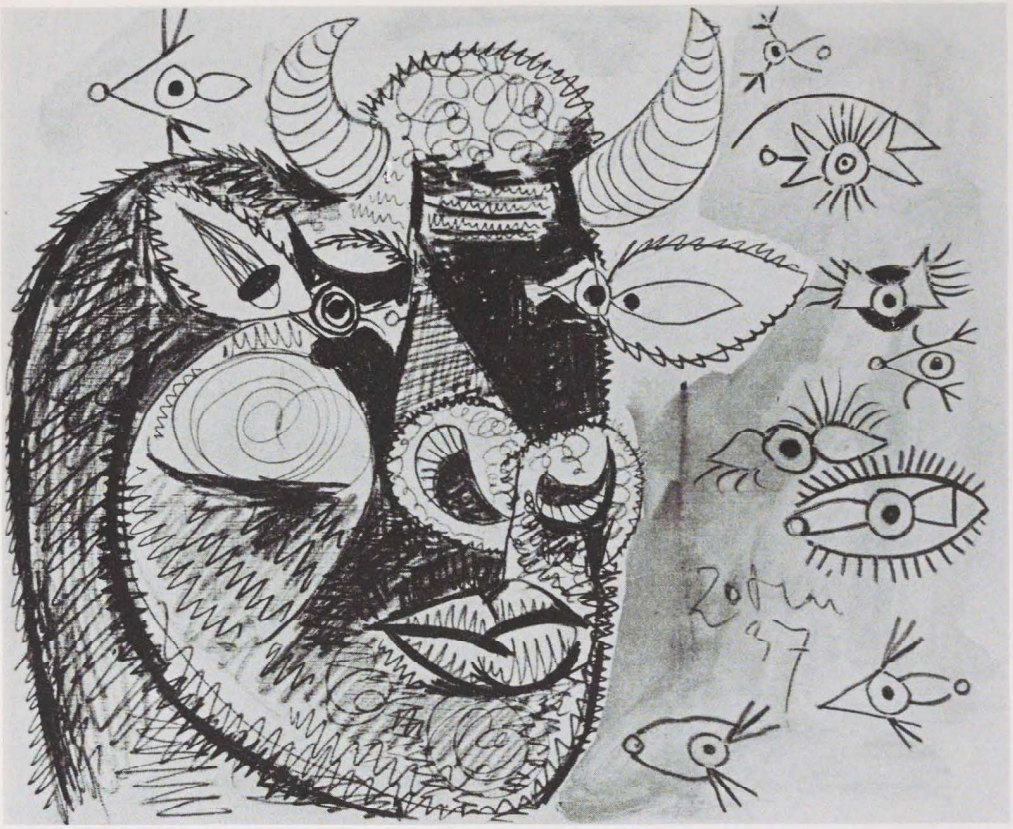


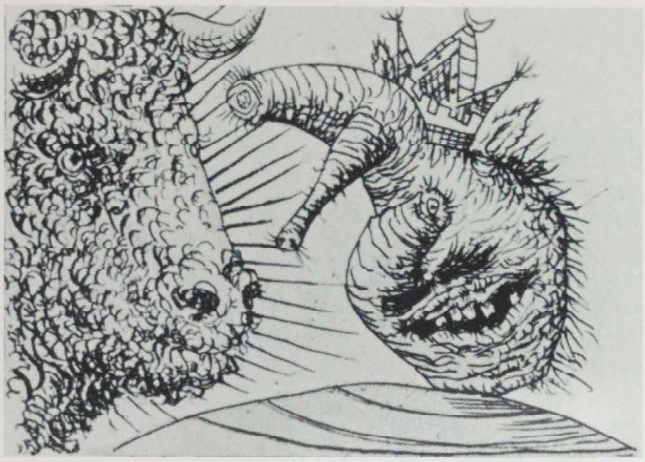
Figure 10 Picasso. *Head of Bull with Studies of Eyes* (study for *Guernica;* May 20, 1937). Pencil and gouache on paper, 9¼ × 11½". (The Prado, Madrid.)

Figure 11 Picasso. *Dream and Lie of Franco,* II (detail; January 8–9, 1937). Etching and aquatint. (Collection, Museum of Modern Art, New York.)

a painting about domestic violence as well as about the earthquake and the bombing. Its symbolic themes rightly include "the couple," as Picasso hinted to Malraux; and it is indeed about "all the women he had on his mind," to a greater extent even than Marie-Thérèse realized, for it includes his mother and his sister Lola as well as references to Marie-Thérèse in roles other than that of angel.[13] Women and children are victims of the domestic violence in *Guernica,* and man—or male brutality—is the oppressor. Like the muscular, bison-headed figure in the *Minotauromachy,* the bull of *Guernica* embodies this tragic capacity for violence. It is a capacity that Picasso found deeply rooted in himself, in Spanish culture, and perhaps in human nature generally, and that he saw as having particularly destructive consequences in the relation of men to women. *Guernica* is Picasso's protest against the destruction of innocent lives, but it is also, at least in part, a confession of his responsibility for similarly destructive acts toward the women and children in his own domestic sphere.

It is scarcely an exaggeration, then, to say that Picasso identified with the Fascists as well as with the victims of the bombing, for he knew what it was like to be a destroyer. To say this, however, is only to point out one of the elements that makes *Guernica* great art and lifts it above mere political propaganda. The conflict in Spain was a civil war, and Picasso, as a Spanish artist, understood and experienced the full anguish of a nation divided against itself. Although his political allegiance was strongly to the Republican side, this did not prevent him from recognizing in himself elements of "brutality and darkness" that resembled those of the Fascists. As we shall see, *Guernica* does contain a strong partisan message, but it is important to emphasize Picasso's profound understanding of both sides of the conflict.

In the painting, this double awareness is reflected primarily through ambiguities in the portrayal of the bull, who is literally a two-sided figure: facing left as well as right and folded back upon himself in a violent contortion that was one of the relatively late changes Picasso made in the layout of the mural. Benignly protective (in terms of the earthquake story) but also destructive (in terms of the bullfight), the bull is a figure of tragic contradictions: head turned against body, light side against dark. Because of these contradictions, he can be read either as a Fascist or as a Republican, depending on which side of his nature one chooses to emphasize, but in fact, of course, he is both. The ambiguities do not resolve. He is like the minotaur, Picasso's favorite self-image during the 1930s, in his mingling of opposed qualities—bestial, human, and divine. As a creature of "darkness," he shuns the light, turning his head away from the double source of illumination in the painting. In this respect, he resembles the minotaur in the great etching of 1935, who tries to shield his eyes against the light



of a candle held by a little girl. The sight that each wishes to avoid is a scene of domestic violence for which he is in part responsible and which includes a disemboweled horse.

In both works, however, the compulsion to see and to enlighten is stronger than the wish to evade and obscure. The strong forward thrust of the light-bearer's arm indicates an insistence that nothing be hidden and that the truth about the disaster be known to all (Hohl 1978). Sight as well as light is an important element in the mural. *Guernica* is a painting full of eyes—eyes that stare and that force us to stare, to be witness to the horror of destruction. Overhead, the naked lightbulb forms the iris and pupil of a single eye that looks down unflinchingly on the scene of violence. This motif is repeated in the tiny oval flame of the oil lantern, which, like the electric lamp, is at once a source of light and an organ of vision.

The bull too is a singularly well-sighted creature. His eyes are intelligent and human, oval rather than round like those of a beast,[14] and there is even the faint trace of a third eye visible between the other two. Picasso's emphasis on the theme of vision, especially with respect to the bull, is evident in one of the early studies for the painting (Figure 10). Here, the bull's head is surrounded by a swarm of ocular improvisations, free-floating eyes that call attention (albeit rather playfully) to the bull's extraordinary powers of perception.[15]

In the final state of the mural, this visionary power is stressed both by the pentimento of a third eye and by the displacement of the bull's left eye downward below his ear and onto his neck, where it settles quite contrary to the laws of conventional physiognomy. The effect of this cubist displacement is twofold. First, it establishes a meaningful tension between the head gesture of the bull as it turns away from the light and the counter-force of attraction that draws the bull's eye back toward the central scene of violence.[16] (The displacement of this eye did not occur until the same state of the mural at which Picasso made the decision to fold the bull's body back upon itself, thus creating the effect of a turn and with it the tension between sight and evasion.) A second effect of displacing the bull's eye is to emphasize the quasi-autonomous power of the faculty of sight. The bull, like the artist, sees more profoundly than other creatures. Vision is for him a separate and special mode of apprehension. (Picasso's penetrating eyes were always his most striking feature.) The bull's displaced lateral eye is thus the sign of his special understanding and insight, an understanding that the viewer who is confronted by this eye must seek out for himself.

The tensions and ambiguities in Picasso's portrayal of the bull have many sources, personal as well as cultural and political. The bull has elements of Picasso's father in his role as savior and protector of the family during a time of crisis. Like Picasso, the bull is an artist possessing special powers of intelligence and vision. The bull is noble and heroic, like the magnificent fighting bulls of the *corrida* whom Picasso had drawn and painted since childhood and who often carry the artist's own personal symbolism. Seer, defender, creator, and preserver, the bull represents all that is strong and admirable in the Spanish character and in the Spanish Republic. The bull who embodies all these virtues is the one who opposes the hideous polyp, Franco, in Picasso's political cartoon, *The Dream and Lie of Franco,* from the winter of 1937 (Figure 11).

Unlike this simple and unequivocally heroic figure, however, the bull of *Guernica* also has a dark and brutal side that suggests his kinship, if not his identity, with the Fascists. The wounded horse, traditionally his victim in the cruel ritual of the arena, confirms the bull's role as aggressor and destroyer. The frightened women and children in the picture take their place too, along with the horse, as victims of male brutality. This interpretation, an extension of more widely accepted readings of Picasso's bullfight pictures from the early 1930s, draws on biographical information about his relationship with Olga, Marie-Thérèse, Maïa, and Dora Maar. It need not remain narrowly biographical, however. The bull can be seen more generally as representing masculine pride and tyranny—Spanish *machismo* in all its benevolent and oppressive force.[17] The injuries suffered by the women are in this sense gender-induced. Their wounds are emotional and psychological rather than physical, and the bull can be understood as protective and possessive but at the same time cruel. Viewed in this way, *Guernica* assumes additional coherence as a study of domestic violence. The story of the couple takes its place along with that of the earthquake and the bombing in the narrative composition of the painting.

Father and Son

If *Guernica* is a painting about the couple, it is also, as I indicated at the beginning, a painting about father and son and about Picasso's myth of paternity. Allusions to the theme of fatherhood have already been noted in relation to the earthquake story and to the figure of the bull. I have suggested that in Picasso's initial conception of the painting the bull represents his father and that the bird/Pegasus figure who rides on the bull's back in the first two sketches of May 1 thus represents the son who was carried through the streets of Málaga on the night of the earthquake.

Part of the appeal that this memory must have had for Picasso is the image of his father as strong, virile, and decisive. Don José is usually portrayed in his son's art as a weak and lonely old man. In Picasso's portraits of him from 1895 to 1900, he often appears in isolation, his hands idle and his head bowed or leaning on his arm. One early drawing from La Coruña, dated January 1, 1895, shows him lying back on a couch or bed with his hands folded across his body in a state of almost death-like passivity (Figure 12). The date of this New Year's portrait locates it at or around the time of Don José's personal crisis, when he is supposed to have renounced painting and handed his tools over to his son. The date of the drawing also situates it in relation to another crisis in Don José's role as father. His youngest child, Concepción, then seven years old, had contracted diphtheria and died only nine days later, on January 10. Picasso's memory of his father as the rescuer and guardian of the family during the earthquake contrasts sharply with the more frequent image of him as vulnerable and weak and therefore provides the son with a stronger model of paternal identification. The bull may thus express part of the positive side of Picasso's ambivalent feelings toward his father, but, as we have seen, the bull of *Guernica* is also associated with domestic violence and brutality and in this way carries part of Picasso's guilt for being a bad or destructive father with respect to Olga and Paulo, Marie-Thérèse and Maïa.

Picasso's pervasive concern in the painting with violence and the effects of violence extends to yet another area of relations within the family. In addition to the violence of men toward women and children, the mural is about the violence between generations, between son and father. The figure in the painting who carries this aspect of Picasso's myth of paternity is the warrior, or sword-bearer, whose fallen body, reduced in the final mural to a head and two forearms, lies in fragments across the bottom left of the picture beneath the horse's feet and below the bull. One of the warrior's hands grasps the hilt of a broken sword, near and apparently out of which grows a single flower. The significance of this warrior figure has been

Figure 12 Picasso. *Portrait of Don Jose Ruiz Blasco* (January 1, 1895). Pencil on green paper, 4⅞ × 7½″ (signed P. Ruiz). (Museo Picasso, Barcelona.)

variously interpreted, and several different genealogies for him have been suggested from the history of Western art. He is often associated with the Crucifixion, either as a Christ-like martyr or as one of the two thieves or, by virtue of the spear and helmet that he has in one of the early studies, as the Roman centurion who pierced Christ's side and who was subsequently canonized as St. Longinus (Russell 1980:22–23). In terms of Picasso's bullfight motif, he can be linked both to the picador, who wields a lance, and to the matador, who uses a sword. Because of the occasional overlapping of bullfight and Crucifixion imagery in Picasso's work, these possible interpretations are viewed as simultaneous and mutually reinforcing. In all accounts, the warrior is taken as one of the victims of the bombing, a Republican soldier who died defending the town—his sword thus being a futile or perhaps only a symbolic weapon, for it could have no practical effect against an aerial bombardment.

In order to grasp the meaning of the *Guernica* warrior, a meaning I believe to be quite different from the ones just mentioned, it will be useful to trace the development of this figure from the early composition studies through the several states of the mural. The warrior first appears in the sixth and final composition study which Picasso completed on May 1 (Figure 4). Here he wears the classical helmet and carries a spear. His entire body, especially his arm and feet, is stiff, almost statue-like in its rigidity. Only the curved lines that indicate closed eyelids suggest any relaxation or death-like repose in his figure. On the following day he appears again, only this time a little less rigidly positioned (Figure 13). One knee is slightly raised, and the arm that holds his spear is bent at the elbow. The classical helmet is gone, and his head lies in what may be a pool of blood. His spear is broken, and he has been joined on the ground by a female

Figure 13 Picasso. Composition study for *Guernica* (May 2, 1937). Pencil and gouache on gesso on wood, 23⅝ × 28¾". (The Prado, Madrid.)

Figure 14 Picasso. Composition study for *Guernica,* II (May 8, 1937). Pencil on white paper, 9½ × 17⅞". (The Prado, Madrid.)

figure, both of them presumably victims of the unseen violent force that alarms the bull and the light-bearer. In a study of May 8, he occupies much the same position as in the previous sketch (Figure 14). Finally, in the important composition study of May 9, the warrior loses his individuality and sinks into the tangle of broken bodies that line the base of the picture (Figure 3). At this stage in Picasso's conception, he apparently no longer figures as an important actor in the drama. His weapon is gone, and he joins the group of other anonymous victims who form a supporting cast to the main action.

In the first state of the mural, the warrior surges into a new position of prominence that nothing in the preliminary studies had anticipated (Figure 15). Naked, his feet and legs together, and his arms outstretched from his body, he assumes a posture that is at once cruciform and helpless but also heroic and defiant. In one hand he grasps the broken sword that will remain an integral part of his role from this point on. With the other arm he raises a vigorous, clenched-fist salute that provides the canvas with a strong vertical axis to offset its horizontal length. He is at the same time Christ militant and Christ crucified. He is also Christ Republican, his raised arm giving the familiar anti-Fascist gesture of resistance.

State two of the mural (Figure 16) represents an important transitional moment in Picasso's portrayal of the sword-bearer. On the one hand, the soldier's vertical gesture of defiance has been strengthened and rendered more affirmative by adding weight to his closed fist and giving it a sheaf of grass and grain to hold, and also by surrounding it with a large, flower-like sun that forms a halo behind it at the apex of the central compositional triangle. On the other hand, Picasso has considerably blunted the force of this affirmative gesture by blacking out a large rectangle at the center of the horse's body in such a way as to cancel the warrior's shoulder and bicep and thus deprive his fist of any visible support. Arnheim is correct, I believe, in suggesting that this technique was used by the painter "to indicate the ground and also to clear for free action certain problematic parts of the composition" (1962:120). The blacked-out areas of the canvas have, in effect, been condemned in preparation for the trying out of a new idea. With respect to the sword-bearer, this means that Picasso had already begun to reconsider the appropriateness of giving such prominence to a figure of martyred resistance and to so obvious a gesture of political allegiance.[18]

State three of the mural (Figure 17) marks Picasso's first attempt to work toward a new conception of the sword-bearer, but his idea at this point remains tentative and vague. Gone are the raised arm and clenched fist that signaled militant resistance. Gone too is the cruciform deployment of the body. The strong vertical axis has collapsed, and the warrior lies reduced to the horizontal, his muscular torso effaced completely and his legs partially blacked out to indicate that they too will not remain. The direction of his head is now reversed, connecting him more strongly to the left side of the painting. His face turns downward, and his features, notably the eyes and the weak, recessive chin, lack strength or determination. Only the forearm and the hand that holds the broken sword remain unchanged from the previous state. It is difficult at this stage of the painting to speculate on what the warrior's role in the action has become. One thing, however, is clear: Picasso has rejected the idea of this figure as a militant and crucified Christ, choosing instead to emphasize his fallen, horizontal posture and the broken weapon that he continues to hold.

Between state three and the completed mural, Picasso made three further changes in the sword-bearer figure. First, in the botton left corner of the

Figure 15 Picasso. *Guernica*: first state of the mural. (Photographed by Dora Maar.)

Figure 16 Picasso. *Guernica*: second state of the mural. (Photographed by Dora Maar.)

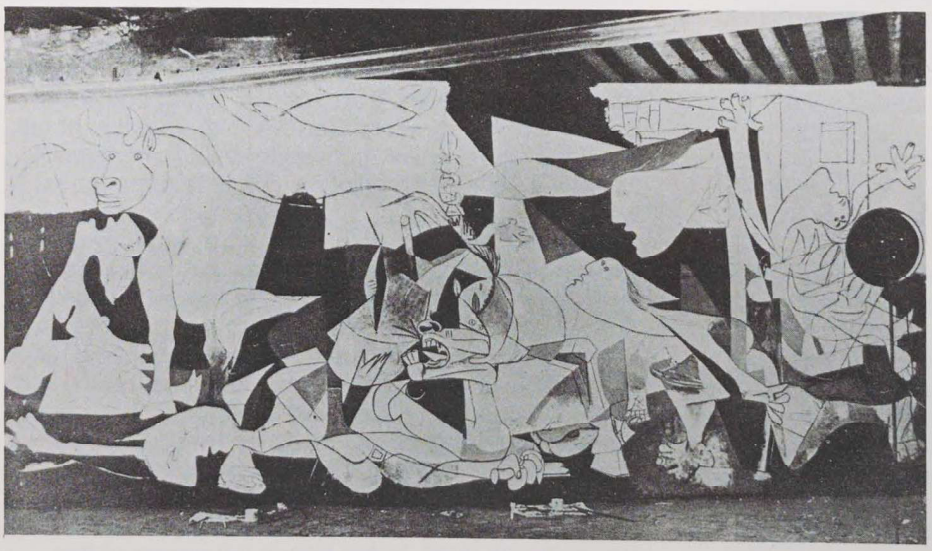


Figure 17 Picasso. *Guernica*: third state of the mural. (Photographed by Dora Maar.)

painting where the warrior's legs had previously appeared, he added a second arm with open hand and outstretched fingers. Second, after experimenting with different positions and combinations of features,[19] he settled on a final conception of the warrior's head: the face now turned upward toward the bull, the mouth open revealing a double row of teeth, and the eyes wide and staring, repeating in their shape and asymmetrical disposition those of the bull. Finally, and most important, he transformed the sword-bearer from an ordinary human figure, presumably of flesh and blood, into a set of plaster casts or fragmented pieces of statuary, their open hollow forms exposed at the join of elbow and of neck. The effect of this final transformation is to make the warrior seem more like a toppled and broken statue than a dead soldier killed in the bombing. In this respect, the warrior's final appearance recalls his rigid, statue-like position in the composition study of May 1 (Figure 4).

These final changes in the sword-bearer figure, especially his transformation into a man of stone or plaster, correspond to a fundamental shift in Picasso's conception of the warrior's role. As I have already mentioned, the idea of a broken or fallen statue may owe something to Picasso's memory of the Málaga disaster of 1884. Certainly, the violence of the earthquake as well as of the bombing was sufficient to topple many a statue from its base. Picasso's decision to render the sword-bearer in this fashion, however, has other important implications. Where before he had imagined the warrior as a Christ-like victim and a martyr of the resistance, Picasso now began to think of him more as the embodiment of traditions and values from the past, in other words as a figure from history—hence his representation as a statue or the fragments of a monument.

The historical associations of this figure are of three different kinds. They refer to Picasso's own personal history, to the history of art, and finally to the history of Spain. In terms of Picasso's own private history, the fallen warrior refers, I believe, to the artist's myth of paternity and in particular to his father, whom he admired as his first instructor but whom he quickly surpassed and overthrew in the process of asserting his creative independence. The portrayal of the sword-bearer as a set of plaster casts supports such an identification. Fragments of classical statuary, we recall, served as models in the nineteenth-century academic schools where Picasso studied and were used specifically by Don José for the instruction of his son. The pieces of statuary that lie across the bottom of *Guernica* recall the figure studies that Picasso produced at La Coruña under his father's supervision (Figures 18, 19). The fact that they lie fallen and in fragments indicates the overthrow of the father and of the academic tradition that he represents by the revolutionary new style of the younger generation.

In addition to indicating the fallen father and the son's rejection of his early academic training, the pieces of statuary in the mural are also an allusion to the classical past. In this sense, they combine with other classical elements in the painting to reflect Picasso's acknowledgment of the continuity between his own work and the art of Greece and Rome.[20] Most notably, the monumental size and triangular composition of *Guernica* recall the sculptured pediments that surmount Greek temples. Antique heads and forearms, rendered as plaster casts, had appeared previously in Picasso's art as similar reminders of his classical heritage (Figure 20). Despite the presence of such allusions, however, *Guernica* is hardly a classical work; or rather, it is so chiefly in a violent and disturbing way. Its classical elements are more notable for their profanation than for their faithful and loving imitation. Far from being an ideal of heroic virtue, the warrior is fallen and fragmentary rather than erect, entire, and noble. Likewise, the mural's resemblance to a classical pediment is suggested only to be violated by the grotesque distortion of its figures.[21]

Like so many of Picasso's paintings, *Guernica* is thus a work of deliberate stylistic discontinuity. It evokes the conventions of classical art in order both to use and to transgress them. Self-consciously aware of its relation to the art of the past, it dramatizes its position as a modernist canvas by establishing an interplay of conflicting aesthetic codes. In this way, it stages the search for origin and the conflict with the Law that Roland Barthes views as the essence of storytelling, and it enters into the "dialectic of tenderness and hatred" that Barthes (following Lacan) identifies as the response of narrative to the "absent, hidden, hypostatized father." The Law, in this instance, is no longer the weak and limited figure of Picasso's biographical father, but the set of formal structures and conventions that Lacan calls the Name-of-the-Father and that appears in *Guernica* through the various classical elements, including the fallen warrior, that the painting simultaneously violates and sustains. Both in personal terms and in terms of the history of art, *Guernica* can thus be understood as an enactment of Picasso's myth of paternity.

If the fallen warrior of *Guernica* carries these suggestions of a contested and deposed paternal order, then a similar thematic pattern can be derived from his figure with respect to political events in the Spain of 1937. In order to understand how this can be so, we must think of the painting in a broader historical context than just that of the bombing. Among the symbolic themes mentioned in the list he recited to Malraux, Picasso included that of "rebellion." Yet there was no rebellion at Guernica, only the murder of innocent victims; the town was a civilian target, most of whose residents were women and children. From Picasso's perspective as a Republican sympathizer,

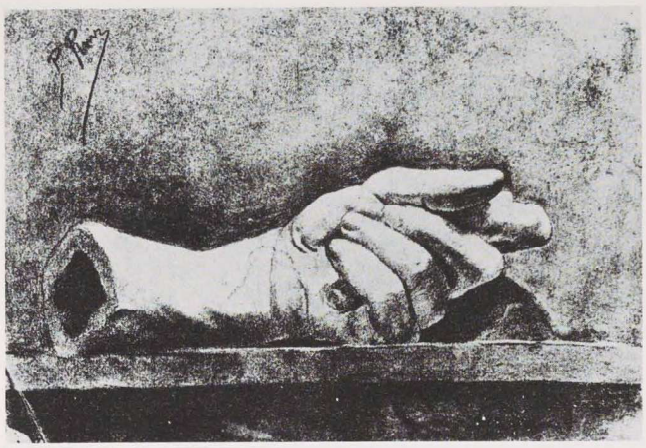


Figure 18 Picasso. *Study of a Hand after a Plaster Cast* (1893 or 1894). Charcoal on paper, 9⅛ × 13⅜" (signed P. Ruiz). (Musée Picasso, Paris.)

Figure 19 Picasso. *Study of a Reclining Torso after a Plaster Cast* (1893 or 1894). Pencil on paper, 18¼ × 25¼" (signed P. Ruiz). (From C. Zervos, *Pablo Picasso: oeuvre catalogue,* volume 6, plate 4.)

however, the conflict in Spain was indeed, in its largest significance, a rebellion—that is, a social and political revolution by the Spanish people and the forces of democracy against a privileged and entrenched ruling class. The uprising led by Franco and his generals against the Spanish Republic was, for Picasso, part of a reactionary counterrevolution carried out by the military in the name of the ruling elite. Such, in more or less these terms, was the position that Picasso took in a statement he made in the spring of 1937 on the occasion of an exhibition of Spanish Republican posters in New York. The exact date of this statement is unknown, but it was issued in May or June while Picasso was still at work on the mural. It is both his clearest statement about the meaning of the Spanish struggle and his strongest assertion of the mural's political message. The statement (quoted in Barr 1946:202) begins as follows:

> The Spanish struggle is the fight of reaction against the people, against freedom. My whole life as an artist has been nothing more than a continuous struggle against reaction and the death of art. . . . In the panel on which I am working, which I shall call *Guernica,* and in all my recent works of art, I clearly express my abhorrence of the military caste which has sunk Spain in an ocean of pain and death.

In *Guernica,* Picasso's abhorrence of Franco and the Spanish military caste finds expression in two ways: first, through his depiction of the ocean of pain and death that the Fascists wrought upon the women and children of the town; and second, through his depiction, in the person of the sword-bearer, of a symbolic representative of that caste—one who has been overthrown, however, and whose sword, one of the two weapons visible in the painting, has been broken. When he rejected the idea of the sword-bearer as a martyred hero of the resistance, Picasso instead changed this figure into an embodiment of the values and traditions within Spanish culture that were ultimately responsible for the bombing.

The fallen warrior of *Guernica* is precisely that: a warrior. His outstretched arm and open hand recall not so much the Crucifixion[22] as the Fascist salute (Figure 21). The fact that he grasps a sword in his other hand links him implicitly to the Spanish cult of militarism and to the tradition of military iconography in Spanish art and literature. The hero of the Spanish national epic, the Cid, is repeatedly referred to as having his sword in hand, *la espada en la mano.* From Charles V to Franco, portraits of the Spanish monarchs and political leaders have shown them in military costume, holding a sword (Figures 22, 23). Countless civic monuments, not only in Spain but throughout Europe, have been erected in public buildings and on city squares to honor the exploits of military men. Public art tends to glorify the warrior. Statues of sword-bearing heroes became one of the clichés of Fascist art in Germany under National Socialism (Figure 24). Picasso's art, by contrast, is deliberately antiheroic and antimilitarist. In *Guernica,* he takes the familiar icon of military heroism and smashes it to pieces, breaks the sword, the instrument of violence, and beside it plants a flower, watered by the tears of suffering. (The flower has a tear-shaped petal that connects it to the eyes of the falling woman and the weeping mother.)

The fallen father of the painting is thus also a social and political father. If not specifically Franco, he is at least a historical type of which Franco in 1937 was the particular instance. He is also, as a statue, an example of what Picasso meant by "reaction and the death of art": neoclassical style in the service of fascism and military ideals. By showing this statue as toppled and broken, Picasso inserted a prophetic message into his painting of the ruined town. Although the Fascists might bomb cities and murder women and children, the final result of the Spanish struggle would be the overthrow of repressive authority and the birth of a new social order. In this way, Picasso used his myth of paternity—a myth centrally concerned with the overthrow of authority—as a means of interpreting history and looking into the future.

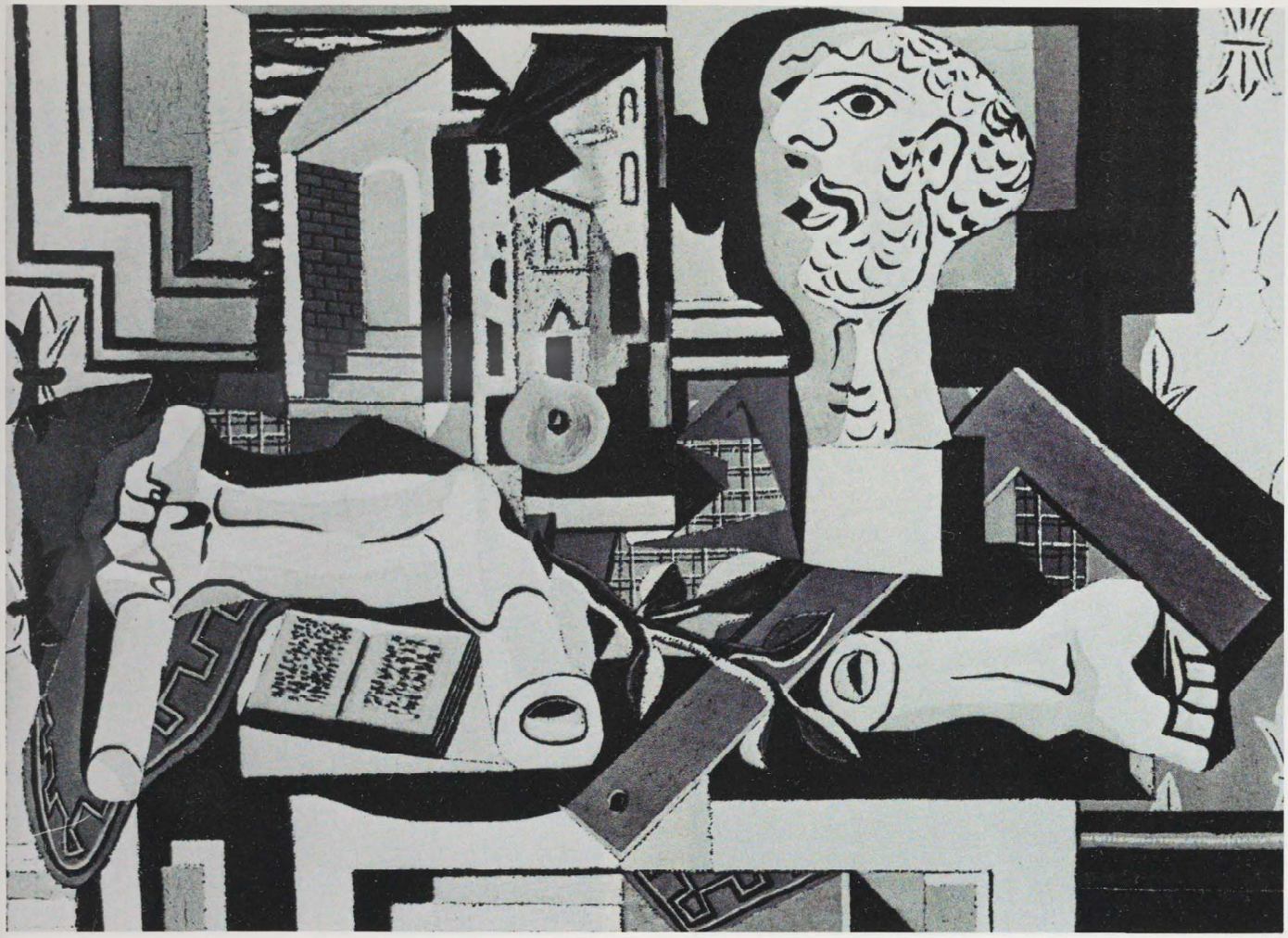


Figure 20 Picasso. *Studio with Plaster Head* (1925). Oil on canvas, 38⅝ × 51⅛". (Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.)

Revolution and Rebirth

Picasso's prophetic message in *Guernica* is one of revolution and rebirth, the rebirth not only of Spanish society but of Spanish art. This message was part of the important 1937 statement that he sent to accompany the New York exhibition of war posters. "As to the future of Spanish art," the statement concludes,

> this much I may say to my friends in America. The contribution of the people's struggle will be enormous. No one can deny the vitality and the youth which the struggle will bring to Spanish art. Something new and strong which the consciousness of this magnificent epic will sow in the souls of Spanish artists will undoubtedly appear in their works. This contribution of the purest human values to a renascent art will be one of the greatest conquests of the Spanish people. [ibid.:264]

Although his immediate subject is the work of other artists and in particular the posters in the exhibition, Picasso's remarks about a renascence of Spanish art have relevance to his own work and to *Guernica.*

The theme of birth—of birth surrounded by violent destruction—was from the very beginning a central element in Picasso's conception of the painting. The birth of his sister Lola in the aftermath of the earthquake provided him with a motif that appeared in the initial sketches of May 1 and that retained its place in the completed mural. As I have indicated, the dangling infant in the family group at the left side of the painting carries associations of childbirth as well as of death. The other figure associated with the theme of birth in the early sketches is the bird or Pegasus, who in one of the May 1 drawings is shown flying from an opening in the horse's belly. This winged figure soon disappeared from Picasso's composition studies, but reappeared briefly in state one of the mural before metamorphosing into a hand and then dropping out again until almost the very end. Only in the penultimate state of the mural did the bird take its final position, occupying the space vacated when Picasso decided to rotate the bull's hindquarters 180 degrees to the left.

Figure 21 Photograph of General Franco (October 1938).

Figure 22 Giovanni Britto. *Charles V with Drawn Sword* (ca. 1540). Woodcut after Titian. (Albertina, Vienna.)

The bird of the mural consists of little more than an outline, an artist's cartoon with stick legs, set against the wedge-shaped corner of a table just in front of the horse's open mouth. Its body contains a horizontal white bar that once formed part of the bull's shoulder. Its upraised beak is open in a silent carol—whether of victory or defeat we do not know. Added at the last minute, the bird is not, however, an afterthought. In view of its important place in the early studies, the bird's return to prominence in the completed mural should come as no surprise.[23]

The bird of *Guernica* resumes and completes Picasso's theme of rebirth, once again with respect to the artist's own personal history as well as to the history of art and the history of the Spanish war. In terms of Picasso's private themes and symbols, the bird recalls the doves and pigeons that his family raised in Málaga and La Coruña and that Picasso often kept around him in his studios in later life. Doves are also associated with Picasso's theme of paternity, for they were the favorite subject of his father's paintings.[24] A dove also figures prominently in the narrative of Picasso's paternal myth. According to the story told by Sabartés and Penrose, it was the figure of a dove painted by the son in a canvas of the father's design that led Don José to renounce painting and hand over his brushes to the young boy. The bird of *Guernica,* with its legs and feet clearly outlined against the table top, evokes a memory of the dove whose feet the father dissected and pinned to a board for his son to use as a model. The bird of the mural is thus associated with the father's overthrow, but at the same time its presence in a painting by the son constitutes a resurrection of the father's totem animal (what Lacan would call the paternal metaphor) and hence a restoration through art of the paternal legacy.

The bird of the mural functions as a symbol of mediation between father and son. It expresses both violence and conciliation. It has attributes that suggest the continuity of generations and the passing on of inherited traits. Its upraised beak, for example, forms a V-shaped pair of "horns" like those of the bull,[25] and the white bar in its body represents the literal internalization of what was formerly a part of the bull's back.

Figure 23 *Portrait of General Franco* (detail from mural of the Spanish Civil War). (Servicio Histórico Militar, Madrid.)

Figure 24 Arno Breker. *Readiness* (1939). (From *Die Kunst im Dritten Reich,* August 1939, p. 261.)

In the first two preparatory sketches, we recall, the position of the bird/Pegasus figure on the bull's back derives from the earthquake memory and suggests the most positive and supportive aspect of the father-son relationship. In the final state of the mural, the bird thus resumes its position of intimacy with respect to the paternal shoulders.

In terms of the history of art, the bird also reinforces Picasso's theme of rebirth. It suggests not only a restoration of the father's artistic legacy and of one of his favorite motifs but also the general revitalization of Spanish art that Picasso foresaw as one of the consequences of the people's struggle. It expresses "the vitality and the youth which the struggle will bring to Spanish art." Born out of civil strife and the suffering of the entire nation, it emerges like a bolt shot from the horse's mouth or a new soul risen from the diamond-shaped wound (or womb) in the horse's side. It may also embody the reborn soul of outworn conventions and traditions that must be destroyed, like the statue of the sword-bearer, if this new "consciousness" (as Picasso calls it) is to thrive.

The bird's earlier incarnation as Pegasus is relevant in this regard. Pegasus was also the product of a violent birth, sprung from the drops of blood that fell to the ground when Perseus cut off the Medusa's head. Moreover, Pegasus is traditionally associated with poetic or artistic inspiration. The winged horse was sacred to the Muses, and on its back creative artists rode to the top of Mount Olympus. These associations with creativity and imagination carry over into the figure of the bird and support its role in the painting as the symbol of "a renascent art."

In more general terms, we can think of the bird as having been born in the midst of conflagration and strife—as a phoenix, in other words, embodying the undying spirit of the people and of the Spanish Republic that neither fascism nor bombings nor military leaders like Franco would be able to suppress. Or the bird may be a dove of peace, announcing a cessation of bombings and the murder of innocent people and holding out the promise of a future time when "the purest human values" will pervade Spanish society as well as Spanish art. In either case, the bird

seems to play a mediating role, involved both as witness and participant in the present violence but also suggestive of transcendent values and ideals. As such, the bird is a fitting (and less restrictively symbolic) replacement for the warrior's upraised fist in states one and two of the mural, and it merits its position between the horse and bull near the top of the central triangle. Like the flower that grows beside the warrior's broken sword, the bird of *Guernica* helps to carry Picasso's prophetic message of hope for the future, a message in which he believed so strongly that he left the painting as a legacy to the people of Spain, to be held in trust for them until the death of Franco and "the reestablishment of public liberties" there. The very terms of the legacy imply Picasso's belief in the inevitable victory of the values for which the Spanish revolution was waged. With the recent return of *Guernica* to Spain and its installation in the Prado, we can only hope that Picasso's belief will prove not to have been betrayed.

The Fundamental Vision

In his important 1935 interview with Zervos, published in *Cahiers d'Art,* Picasso made a number of statements which seem in retrospect like anticipations of *Guernica.* It is as if, in this year of abstinence from painting (from February 1935 until early April 1936), he knew he was gathering strength to produce a masterpiece that would sum up his career and that would exemplify his creative process. "It would be very interesting," he told Zervos (quoted in Barr 1946:272), "to preserve photographically, not the stages, but the metamorphoses of a picture. Possibly one might then discover the path followed by the brain in materializing a dream." Two years later, Picasso carried out this project by arranging for Dora Maar to photograph the mural seven times during its process of completion and also by preserving the more than 60 sketches, studies, and postscripts for the painting, with the result that a more complete record of its genesis exists than for any other major work in the history of art. "But there is one very odd thing—" Picasso continued, "to notice that basically a picture doesn't change, that the first 'vision' remains almost intact, in spite of appearances" (ibid.). We have already seen to what extent this statement is true of *Guernica.* Picasso's first vision, in the initial sketch of May 1, remains in many ways unchanged up through the final state of the mural, keeping the same cast of characters, the same general format, and the same plot or subject—that of the earthquake—as its basic visual metaphor for translating the story of the bombing.

In the same interview, Picasso made another general statement about art which, with only a slight adjustment in perspective, we might take as his announcement of the central theme in *Guernica.* "In my case," he said, "a picture is a sum of destructions" (ibid.). The destruction of Málaga by the earthquake, the destruction of Guernica in the bombing—these are the immediate historical subjects of the mural. But there are other ways in which destruction or violence becomes a main concern in the painting: the violence of bull against horse, for example, which functions as a metaphor for violence between the sexes and, in particular, for the artist's own destructive impulses toward the women in his life. There is also the violence of son against father, which, I have argued, derives from Picasso's myth of paternity and operates in the painting not only through a set of coded biographical references, but also as a more general explanatory code with reference to the history of art and to the civil war in Spain. The theme of "rebellion," of overthrowing the father, thus suggests the relation of modern art (and Picasso's work in particular) to the art of previous generations (especially the academic and neoclassical traditions). It also suggests what will be the eventual outcome of the people's struggle against the military caste of men like Franco.

Picasso was not a sentimentalist about violence, however, and his painting is neither a simple piece of antiwar propaganda nor its equally simple opposite, a celebration of revolutionary violence. Rather, it is a complex meditation upon the consequences of violence and upon the capacity, both for evil and for good, of human aggression. On the one hand, the painting bears mute but eloquent witness to the horror of sudden, wanton, unprovoked destruction. It compels us to identify with the helpless victims of an irrational and invisible violence that rains upon them in the dark and forces them to flee their homes. It directs our outrage against the perpetrators of that destruction, whoever or whatever they may be. And in its monumental, frieze-like pattern, its reminiscence of Grecian temple pediments, and its careful placement of figures within a triangular composition, the painting also reflects a desire for order and structure, based on classical models, to contain and withstand the forces of destruction.

On the other hand, the painting recognizes the familiarity of violence as something that takes place in ordinary domestic surroundings, beneath electric light bulbs and in front of tables. Violence is a part of daily life. It occurs within families, between the members of a couple, and between parents and children. Picasso's recognition of the pervasiveness and banality of violence, together with his awareness of his own destructive potential as son, father, and lover, enabled him to portray violence in the painting not just as an alien force to be condemned but, especially in the

bull, as a more ambiguous quality, intimately involved with the capacity to love and to create. Violence in this sense appears rooted in the human condition, perhaps in basic aggressive instincts, and, like the destructive force of an earthquake, becomes much more difficult to judge as good or evil.

Moreover, with Nietzsche and with some of the Surrealists such as Bataille, who advocated the redemptive power of "transgression" as a cultural force, Picasso seems to have believed in the necessary connection of violence and creativity. For him, the artist was not a patient follower of rules and traditions, but a restless breaker of conventions, the overthrower of received canons of beauty and stylistic uniformity. In its formal qualities, *Guernica* is certainly a less revolutionary painting for 1937 than the *Demoiselles d'Avignon* was for its time 30 years before. Nevertheless, it does contain grotesque distortions, nonmimetic elements such as the arrow, and cubist dislocations in perspective[26] and body parts.[27] These disruptive elements work against the painting's nostalgia for classical form and structure and produce the unsettling effect of one system of representation jostling against others within a single canvas. Stylistic violence as a means of disorienting and defamiliarizing viewer expectations thus becomes the method as well as to some extent the content of *Guernica.* The most literal translation of this content into iconography is the set of disjointed sculptures at the bottom of the mural—shattered fragments from the classical past. The presence of this content as style, however, is apparent throughout the painting.

At the same time, then, that it protests against the inhumanity and suffering produced by violence, the painting works a violence of its own against the viewer and against inherited artistic conventions. Violence in this sense for Picasso was regenerative as well as destructive. In the world of art, as in the social and political world, violent revolutions against imposed authority were sometimes necessary in order to prepare the way for new forms and beliefs. In art, however, the logic of contradictions does not always hold. That which has been destroyed does not necessarily disappear. It may continue to exist under the sign of cancellation. The process of destruction can, paradoxically, become additive, and a painting may thus be justifiably described as a *sum* of destructions. Picasso's explanation clarifies the paradox: "I do a picture—then I destroy it. In the end, though, nothing is lost; the red I took away from one place turns up somewhere else" (ibid.). In *Guernica,* what has been destroyed, flattened, smashed, is a monumental classical pediment, but traces of the pediment remain. The painting is both profoundly anti-classical and profoundly classical as well.

Violence as a prelude and means to regeneration also enters the painting via the theme of birth. The birth of Picasso's baby sister in the midst of the Málaga earthquake becomes a metaphor for two other violent births: the renascence of Spanish art and the eventual restoration of public liberties, both as a result of the people's struggle against fascism. The burden of Picasso's political message in the painting is thus prophetic and optimistic. He foresees the overthrow of the military oligarchy and of the Spanish ideal of militarism. And from the ashes and ruins of the bombed city, he foresees the birth of democratic principles and a renewal of "the purest human values."

Finally, in addition to its meditation on violence and destruction, *Guernica* is a work of mourning. It is the expression of Picasso's grief, as a Spaniard, at the injury and death inflicted in the bombing. It is also, in more personal terms, an expression of the guilt and confusion he must have felt as a 3-year-old child, fantasizing himself omnipotently the cause of a violent force that threatened the life of his family. It is also, as we have seen, an expression of sorrow and regret for destructive feelings toward other people whom he loved: father, wife, mistress, children. An important part of the process of mourning is the acknowledgment of one's ambivalence toward the lost object, one's hatred as well as one's love. *Guernica,* in its personal significance, was just such an acknowledgment for Picasso.

But mourning, in order to be successful and cathartic, also involves the internal reparation of the injuries inflicted or imagined. In this sense, the work of mourning is creative. *Guernica,* as a work of art, provides such a healing and restorative experience. It opens itself to the forces of darkness and destruction in order to control them. It resurrects the father as well as overthrowing him and shows new life born out of chaos and violence. The net result is a gain, a sum of destructions. Nor is the gain only a private one. The ritual of mourning draws people together, binds them as a community. *Guernica* has the same effect. It binds its viewers into a community of mourners, of witnesses. In this way, and especially now that it is returned to Spain, the painting helps to create the values and the new social consciousness that it imagines as being born out of the events of 1937.

Notes

1 For a fuller discussion of this important concept, see Wilden (1968:126–127, 270–271). I have also drawn on the clear and concise presentation of Lacan's ideas in Muller (1980:150–151). Lacan's principal discussion of the Name-of-the-Father appears in Lacan (1977:179–225). A less well known but important extension of Lacan is that of Rosolato (1969:36–58).

2 Frank D. Russell (1980:102ff.) argues that the scene is "a kind of daytime nocturne," neither night nor day but ambiguously both. I would grant the ambiguity as an interpretive enrichment, while insisting that in the final state of the mural all visual cues indicate a nocturnal setting. In earlier states of the painting, Picasso depicted a large, flowerlike sun overhead, but in the final state it is reduced to an electric lamp whose naked bulb casts jagged rays of light into the darkness. An observation by Anthony Blunt (1969:33) is also relevant in this context: "Given the important part played from the very beginning by the woman holding the lamp, it is reasonable to suppose that [Picasso] had always intended to darken the sky, even if this is not indicated in the drawings."

3 Gedo (1979:191–210) was the first critic to identify the earthquake as a source for the painting's imagery. See also Gedo 1980:173–184. A shorter version of the present essay was written before the publication of Gedo's article. Although some of our conclusions are similar, Gedo and I differ considerably in the use we make of the earthquake material as well as in the significance we attribute to certain figures in the painting, notably the bull. Gedo treats the earthquake as a childhood "trauma," leaving unconscious scars on the artist's psyche and causing him to reexperience "subjective fragmentation" when associations to the event are revived by the news of the bombing. My interpretation focuses less on the possible traumatic effects of the earthquake for the three-year-old child than on the use made of it by the adult painter. I consider the earthquake story as an extended visual metaphor: an integrative memory used consciously by Picasso and serving him as a means of mastery and control. For the sake of economy, I have chosen to pursue my own line of interpretation without noting every point at which Gedo and I agree or disagree.

4 For example, Russell (1980:8–77). Russell treats the bullfight theme and the Calvary theme as "scenarios" or "broken narratives" that underlie the Cubist surface of the painting. See also Chipp (1973–1974:100–115).

5 Both Arnheim (1962:57) and Russell (1980:184) see these extended limbs as arms, like the ones that project from windows at the far right and upper left center of the study. An ambiguity is of course possible. Anatomical logic, however, makes legs more plausible in this position, especially if we read the curved shape between the limbs as representing the mother's swollen belly.

6 Was Picasso deliberately trying in this drawing to imagine pregnancy through the mind—and thus the style—of a very young child?

7 Another link between the two figures is the woman's "pony tail" hairdo, her *queue de cheval* in French.

8 For a valuable discussion of the women in Picasso's life in relation to *Guernica,* see Chipp (1973–1974:103–112).

9 Gedo (1979:204) suggests that the lamp-holder may also be a figure for Picasso's mother.

10 The earthquake took place on the evening of December 25, 1884. In addition to the iconography of Crucifixion, we should thus not be surprised to find that of Nativity as well. Picasso's sister Lola was not actually born on the first night of the disaster, but three days later, on December 28. Both in the painting and in the story related by Sabartés, Picasso fused the two events into a single memory.

11 Russell (1980:124, 267) reads this arrow as the political symbol of Franco's military junta, the Falange, but he offers no explanation of why such a symbol should appear in the painting or why the arrow should occupy this particular position. In fact, the Falangist symbol bears little resemblance to Picasso's directional pointer, consisting rather of a group of arrows bound together near the middle of their shafts and radiating like spokes from this central point.

12 See Russell (1980:75–77), who also relates this wound to the one in Christ's side in a drawing of the Crucifixion from 1930–1931. It can of course be objected that in none of the preliminary studies for the painting is the bull ever shown goring the horse or in any way inflicting injury on it or on the other figures. While this is true, the presence of the *cornada* in the horse's belly immediately implicates the bull in an act of violence and recalls the inevitable cruelty of virtually every bull-horse encounter depicted in Picasso's oeuvre.

13 Russell (1980:320–321) is reluctant to accept Chipp's (1973–1974) identification of the light-bearer as Marie-Thérèse and suggests instead that this figure may represent Dora Maar in her role as photographer: "The capable wielder of the lamp and projector of intelligence and still-contained passion." I do not include Dora Maar in my discussion of the motif of domestic violence because I do not consider her (at least not in 1937) as a victim of Picasso's "brutality and darkness." If Picasso used her as a model for the weeping women of the *Guernica* postscripts, it is probably, as Pierre Daix (1977:282) suggests, because of her strong political sympathies and because her dark looks were better suited to represent Spanish womanhood than were the fair hair and features of Marie-Thérèse. Daix (pp. 267–269) gives a good brief account of Dora Maar's background and personality and of her place in Picasso's developing political consciousness during 1936–1937.

14 Chipp (1973–1974:111–112) calls attention to the many human features of the bull and compares the eyes in particular to those of Picasso's 1906 self-portrait.

15 Russell (1980:212–213) notes that the ocular dot-and-circle motif even invades the bull's ears, perhaps adding a visionary quality to his hearing as well.

16 When Russell (1980:56ff.) calls the bull of the mural "wavering," "baffled," and "irresolute," he is trying to find a satisfactory explanation for the contradictory elements that are essential to the bull's divided nature.

17 The popular view of Picasso as a ruthless sexual exploiter should not disqualify this interpretation. He was extraordinarily sensitive to the feelings of women, including their pain—even when he knew himself to be the cause.

18 Picasso may have wished to avoid using a symbol that implied some connection to the Communist party. Such, at least, is the suggestion of Anthony Blunt (1969:41), a keen observer of such matters. More likely, he wished to avoid obvious symbolism of any kind, either Christian or Republican—hence his rejection of the blatant Crucifixion motif as well as of the clenched-fist salute. Also, he saw that the martyred soldier risked overshadowing both horse and bull, who from the very first were intended as the principal actors in the painting. The deletion of the raised fist, however, left a blank in the composition that needed to be filled. Picasso solved this formal problem by raising the horse's head and by transforming the sun of state two into the electric light/eye of the completed mural. The addition of the bird in the penultimate state also helped restore some verticality to the composition.

19 Picasso did three studies of the warrior's head: on May 24, June 3, and June 4. The last of these is the one he settled on for the final state of the mural. Also on June 4, he did a study of the warrior's open hand. An earlier study of the hand with broken sword dates from May 13.

20 For a discussion of classical elements in the painting, see Russell (1980:81–84, 115–123, *et passim*). Although he alludes to Picasso's "lifelong work, his salvaging and destroying of the classic" (p. 122), Russell does not accord this project the central importance in *Guernica* that I believe it deserves.

21 Clement Greenberg (1965:65) has wittily described this disorienting effect as follows: "Bulging and buckling as it does, this huge painting reminds one of a battle scene from a pediment that has been flattened by a defective steam-roller."

22 Russell (1980:22) argues that the stretched tendons of the arm and the crossed lines of the palm suggest a crucified hand.

23 Picasso's one direct statement about the bird is disingenuous in the extreme and sounds more like an exasperated response to academic symbol-hunters than a genuine effort to explain. According to Kahnweiler (quoted in Ashton 1972:155), Picasso said, "But this bull is a bull and this horse is a horse. There's a sort of bird, too, a chicken or a pigeon, I don't remember now exactly what it is, on a table. And this chicken is a chicken. Sure, they're symbols. But it isn't up to the painter to create the symbols. . . . It's up to the public to see what it wants to see."

24 Gedo (1979:207) also finds a possible allusion to Picasso's father in the figure of the bird, but sees no other references in the painting to paternal motifs.

25 The "family resemblance" of bull and bird is also apparent in the initial study of May 1 (Figure 6), where the "V" of the bull's horns is repeated in the shape of the bird's wings.

26 The much-discussed question of whether the painting has an indoor or an outdoor setting can be resolved with reference to the story of the earthquake. The right side of the mural takes place outside and shows the pregnant mother running through the streets and in front of buildings. The left side of the mural takes place inside (the lines of a wall and ceiling can be seen at the upper left) and shows the mother giving birth to her child in the neighbor's house. The two scenes are connected and given the illusion of simultaneity by a system of receding squares across the bottom of the canvas, suggesting a cobblestone street or a tile floor or—more likely—both.

27 A seldom-noted feature of the mural is the pair of tiny circles placed in the upper and lower quadrants of an "X" that appears between the horse's hind legs, just above the arrow. These, I believe, are all that remains of the warrior's torso. They are nipples, migrated from their position on his absent chest and settled here, devoid of any support save that of the canvas.

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