PABLO PICASSO:
THE SPANISH TRADITION OF BULLFIGHTING

A thesis submitted to the College of the Arts
of Kent State University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

by

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May 2012
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Picasso scholarship is an ever-expanding body of literature. Among the major motifs of great interest to the artist was the bullfight. By establishing the role of this important tradition in Spanish culture and Picasso’s life-long involvement with the sport, much information specific to his work and historical milieu can be learned. Bullfighting, as will be discussed in this introduction, has been an integral part of the social and cultural lives of many Spaniards for centuries. Picasso (1881-1973) attended countless bullfights throughout his long life and translated his passion for the sport into his art. For the man, whose art functioned as a diary, the bullfight was a tremendous source of inspiration. His bullfight iconography, as seen in select examples in this thesis, reveals a number of important issues in terms of the evolution of his work.

Among the various different types of subject matter that the artist explored in his life, the bullfight stands out for a number of reasons to be explored. There are characterizations of the bullfight in his oil paintings, ceramics, lithographs, etchings, engravings, pen and ink, pencil, and charcoal drawings, and the corrida even formed part of the theatrical décor for one of his designs for the ballet, Le Tricorne (1919) and an artist’s book Toros y Toreros, (1961). A sampling from this vast body of studies of the arena and its animals, matadors, and audience will be discussed in terms of their significance to the artist and his extensive oeuvre.
History of Bullfighting

The bullfight and the relationship of Picasso to this quintessentially Spanish game is both a fascinating and illuminating subject for research and analysis. It is intended in this study to present a thoughtful investigation of the bullfight in his art from his early years during which it initially appeared, and its development as reflected in the treatment of his evolving styles and concerns.

It will be seen in this examination of the bullfight that the depiction of the sport with its animals and characters plays a changing role in his art. Relevant observations, comments, judgments, and interpretations are drawn concerning his experimentations in terms of formal elements of style, while critical note is also taken of his occasional use of highly sophisticated puns in the progression of the bullfight in his compositions. Psychological or emotional concerns are remarked upon in conjunction with this chronological treatment of the bullfight, as this activity, at times, seems to reflect varying issues in the artist’s life. Aesthetic as well as political factors are cited in his prolific treatment of the game. The corrida becomes a setting for some of Picasso’s most potent and historically important works of art.

Through various borrowings, broad associations, and interpretations, the bullfight in Picasso’s art takes on very different and even suggestive implications as it fluctuates in contextual significance and form in these many years of his career under consideration. The association of Picasso and the bullfight, here traced from his childhood in his native Andalusia, is exciting for study and discussion because of the infinite possibilities for analysis and interpretation of this relationship. His bullfight iconography as seen in
select examples in this thesis reveals a number of concerns ranging from formal to personal issues.

The historical and social context of the bullfight in Spain is critical in understanding the relevance and culturally-specific nature of Picasso’s images. His bullfight imagery indicates his deep roots and attachment to this quintessential Spanish sport. Bullfighting has been for hundreds of years until today a popular pastime sport amongst the Spanish. The bullfight, by definition a public arena, is designed to entertain the populace on holy days or festivals, whether it is organized by official authorities or by amateurs. Picasso was captivated by the fervor of the event, which included such contributing factors as music, costumes, and bravado performances.

Historically, bullfighting became popular when the Moors from North Africa who overran Andalusia in 711 A.D. changed bullfighting significantly from the brutish, formless spectacle practiced by the Visigoths (who were an East Germanic people that ruled over Spain) to a ritualistic occasion observed in connection with feast days, on which the conquering Moors, mounted on highly trained horses, confronted and killed the bulls. From this date various types of men of differing backgrounds entered the bullfight arena. Many Spanish nobles, lacking wars to fight, found themselves seduced by the blood and danger of the sport. In addition, there were numerous good soldiers of lower social status who also participated in bullfighting activity.

The spread of the sport in Spain was unstoppable despite fluctuating attitudes of Christian officials. The church ultimately accepted the sport and began sponsoring

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corridas on holy days and festivals and as regular events on Sundays. Bullrings had a chapel, and a custom of praying before entering the ring was common. In the modern corrida of the 20th century this steadily diminished; rather than serving religious purposes, the bullring has been used for political rallies, military concentrations, performances and mass executions. The bullrings are the only Spanish institution deprived of any religious sign and on some occasions, they have been the starting point for a mob to orient and discharge its aggressiveness against Church dominance.

Bullfighting merely disengaged itself from the Church and bullfighting seems to have become two different provinces.

In the eighteenth century tauromaquia, as the Spanish called the art of bullfighting, first started as a form of entertainment among the royalty and nobility and ultimately reached the lower class. By this time the events were better organized than the early combats. There were peasants, self-trained countrymen familiar with the ways of cattle, who facilitated the matadors. They used their capes or muleta (muleta is a bright piece of cloth), to maneuver the bull from one place to another in the arena. It soon became apparent to these helpers on foot that bulls indeed did follow movement; by

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2 Leibold, *This is the Bullfight*, 11.

3 Leibold, *This is the Bullfight*, 39.

4 Leibold, *This is the Bullfight*, 39.


dragging a cape in front of a charging animal. The footmen now realized this was far more dangerous than the situation the original knights on horseback experienced. These nobles soon left the fiesta of the bulls, a colorful term which was used to refer to the bullfight. The role of matador fell naturally into the hands of the lower-class man and was no longer a pastime of the nobility.

The modern bullfight, as we know it today, started around the time of the American Revolution (1775-1783). The corrida began to take shape as a spectacle and, through a number of changes; a sense of order was maintained. A crucial feature of the corrida was that the matadors were footmen, not horsemen; however, at times, horses were still used by the picador. There were certain occasions when horses were eliminated due to the expense of purchase and maintenance. The agility of the matadors also developed; they took fewer chances in their encounters with the bull. In addition, they showed more awareness of their artistic movements, demonstrated with the flaring capes. An added alteration to the fundamentals of the corrida was the replacement of the knight on horseback. The picador took that role, and his sole purpose in the ring is the essential one of weakening the neck muscles of the bull so that its great head will be lowered for the kill. Another difference was the spear used by the knight, which was

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7 Leibold, *This is the Bullfight*, 148.

8 Fulton, *Bullfighting*, 16.


replaced by a much less powerful weapon, the pike (a pike is a lance that is used by the picador).\textsuperscript{11}

A final change was the place of sport. It ceased to be held in public squares; instead, special buildings of Moorish style, dedicated to bullfighting, were constructed. The rings were no longer located in the center of town, but rather were outside the perimeter of the urban setting, and instead of being square; the arenas were built in a round shape.\textsuperscript{12} The structures were made out of wood and were called plazas.

The popularity of bullfighting was enormous throughout Spain; townspeople were ready to abandon the monotonous dealing of daily life in order to attend the bullfight. Many items were pawned including mattresses in order to attend a bullfight; people would make other sacrifices such as close offices and stores, while family food bills would remain unpaid. Sick elderly adults were left alone at home and some aficionados would fight to defend his favorite torero. Large portions of land were deprived of agriculture; instead of being cultivated, the land was dedicated to the breeding of bulls.\textsuperscript{13}

The vast majority of bullfighters, as mentioned above, came from modest circumstances, the corrida was the most propitious way for Spaniards to achieve sudden social prestige. These men were generally from families with a bullfighting tradition, and had fathers, brothers, uncles, or others who were bullfighters or associated with

\textsuperscript{11} Fulton, Bullfighting, 162.

\textsuperscript{12} Fulton, Bullfighting, 85.

\textsuperscript{13} McNab, Fighting Bulls, 120.
bullfighting in some way and with whom bullfighting was a way of life. Like boxing in our time, bullfighting provided a chance for the poor, but talented, to reach for fame and financial security. Since there was such a tantalizing opportunity for money and recognition, children started at the age of ten to twelve years old to learn bullfighting. Children from the lower classes began their apprenticeships as unpaid performers in village fights called *capeas*. In the *capeas*, pre-teens had to be ready to fight anywhere and under any conditions at any time, often beyond their ability, against old and dangerous animals, a risk that established *matadors* would never consider facing.

In bullfighting there is no such thing as a winner or a loser, but only a good, or interesting, poor, or dull bullfight. Bullfighting is not, and never has been, a fair contest between evenly matched opponents in any sense of the word. On the one hand, the bull is overwhelmingly stronger, better armed and more powerful than the *matador*, while the man is infinitely more intelligent, skillful, and resourceful than the bull. In these terms the bull always loses, since he is always killed. In these same terms the *matador* often loses, whenever he is out maneuvered by the bull, and must resort to expedients in order to bring about its death, since he is expected to be able to do this gracefully and effortlessly. The accomplishment of this feat by the *matador* was a source of great interest for the audience. However if the bull is exceptionally good, and the man

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exceptionally capable, they both may win, in the sense that they have both fulfilled their appointed roles to perfection, and neither could have been shown to such advantage without the other.

The attraction bullfighting has on Spanish men is the excitement and danger which occurs from the battle between man and beast. It requires not only great skill to challenge a six hundred-pound bull, but courage and strength as well. A man fighting a beast with the probability of getting injured by a bull appeals to the machismo of the traditional Spanish male. The corrida is also far from being a mere sport or fight. The struggle is an element of the corrida that raises the spirit of the aficionado not only the battle but class, grace, form, expertness, elegance and above all mastery and dominion as an end in itself.\textsuperscript{17} It is this quality with which Picasso undoubtedly found identification and fascination in addition to the color, music, and unpredictable drama. From childhood to the end of his life bullfighting was an integral part of Picasso’s life. The following chapters will explain his passion for bullfighting and why it was a tremendous source of inspiration.

\textbf{Upcoming Chapters}

The upcoming chapters will consist of four sections that deal with bullfight images in numerous situations. Chapter one will focus on the early bullfight scenes of the young Picasso from 1890 to 1907 and the significance of the sport in his career. This chapter will also recall his roots and moments that were spent with his father. Chapter two focuses on bullfight paintings and drawings of a personal nature, such as depictions

\textsuperscript{17} Mcnab, \textit{Fighting Bulls}, 153.
of Marie-Thérèse, his young mistress, with the minotaur. These works importantly show the influence of Surrealism. Picasso’s sexual and emotional side will be also be revealed. Chapter three will analyze political works, which assume the bullfight arena. The chapter will document the artist’s response to the Spanish Civil War through political commentary using this imagery. It will express the brutal nature of modern warfare to the widest audience possible. Chapter four will display post World War II works with ceramics in which bullfight iconography appears. Stylistic changes are particularly evident in this final period of the elderly artist. He restated and discovered new capacities for the field of ceramics. The chapter also mentions book illustrations of bullfight imagery which he created throughout his life and used in others’ works. The conclusion will synthesize the findings and interpretations. The focus of the conclusion will show the main argument of this thesis, demonstrating the versatility of the bullfight theme in Picasso’s art.
CHAPTER II

EARLY PICASSO AND EARLY BULLFIGHT IMAGES

Pablo Picasso was born in Málaga on the southern coast of Spain in 1881. Picasso had two sisters and was the eldest of the children; he was the son of José Ruiz y Blasco and Maria Picasso y Lopez. Picasso was from a middle-class background; his father was a painter whose specialty was the naturalistic depiction of pigeons and who, for most of his life, was also a curator and professor of art at different art schools. His father’s influence was crucial: he identified his son’s extraordinary artistic gifts at a very early age and nurtured them assiduously. His mother, who stayed at home with Picasso and the other children, was one of many females that surrounded him. Grandmothers, sisters, maternal aunts, and a succession of maids also made up the assemblage of people that doted on Picasso. In this chapter I will analyze the complex relationship between Picasso and his father along with their mutual passion for bullfights.

According to Maria, Pablito, as she usually called her son, could draw before he could speak, and the first sound that he made was “Piz”, known as pencil in the English language. His early passion for bull imagery is already seen in his juvenilia. Bullfight; Pigeons (1890) (Figure 1) was one of his first drawings done in pencil. The matador is tossed up in the air by the bull’s horns. The appearance of the figure is stiff and rigid while the face and body are pointed upwards towards the sky. The bull is still in a

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running motion; the animal’s posture indicates that the six-hundred pound beast will strike the bullfighter for a second time. Two figures with capes in their hands are walking towards the scene. The capes are used to confuse and distract the animal. They are there to aid the poor victim; a male figure in the stands is waving his hand in the air and is yelling out into the arena. This image shows what Picasso saw as a nine-year-old child while attending the bullfights.

On the reverse side of the page is a drawing of six little birds. As one looks at the bullfighting scene, the birds appear upside down. Picasso obviously turned the paper upside down to use the empty space. As mentioned above, José Ruiz y Blasco was a painter of pigeons. Picasso claimed that when he did well in school his parents would give him brushes and paints so he could paint his father’s pigeons.\(^\text{21}\) Picasso did have a strong attachment to his father; he liked to watch him paint or go to the museum with him. During his childhood Picasso, carefully observed and recorded what his father did, storing up shapes, colors, and images in his head. His closeness to Don José may have been due to the many women in his household, which caused Picasso to form a bond with the only other male in his immediate family. Admiration for his father as a small child led Picasso to draw what his father liked such, as pigeons and bullfights.

Picasso’s father also exposed his son to the corrida; Don José started taking his son to the bullring as soon as he could walk. Picasso recalled that during his childhood the bulls he saw did not retire as young as they did when he was older.\(^\text{22}\) They were


larger, and they charged the horses as much as twenty times. Horses would drop like flies with their guts spilled out. Another childhood recollection was an occasion when Don José took Pablo to a hotel room in Málaga to meet a matador; it was one of his most vivid moments, sitting on a famous bullfighter’s lap, looking overwhelmed. Don José was a true aficionado and he passed his love of the arena on to his son. The little works that record Picasso’s first enthusiasm for bullfighting are the first of a vast oeuvre that covers every aspect of his art. These images look far ahead to periods of Picasso’s deep personal identification with both the bullfighter and the bull. The obsession would not end for another eighty years.

**Corunna**

At the end of 1890 the collapse of the local economy in Málaga closed the museum doors and Don José no longer had a studio in which to paint. He also could no longer rely on his brother Dr. Salvador for financial assistance. Since his income from teaching was barely enough to feed his family of three children, the unfortunate artist had no choice but to press for a transfer. In 1891 Don José was appointed as a teacher of drawing at the da Guarda Institute in Corunna. The immediate family moved to Corunna and Pablo loved it (Map of Spain) (Figure 2). He was no longer under the watchful eye of his uncle, aunts and countless cousins; despite his mother’s surveillance, Pablo was growing up rapidly and by the age of eleven, running wild.

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Picasso and his friends would spend time chasing stray cats with shot guns. Once, after the children caused a real massacre, the alarm spread among the neighbors. The escapade was reported and Picasso was supervised closely by his mother. In order to see what Picasso was doing, Donna Maria would have to climb on top of the water closet. She would stand on tiptoe and would observe their games through a small crack. She saw organized bullfights by Picasso and his friends; Picasso would teach other boys how to handle the bull and would use their jackets to serve as capes during the games.

*Bullfighting Scenes* (1892) (Figure 3)\(^{26}\) is an excellent example of what Picasso and his friends were mimicking. Two small boys, most likely Picasso and a friend, are fighting a bull. The boy closest to the animal has his sword out and is stabbing it through the upper back area of the bull. The bull is in a motionless position; the wound may have weakened the bull from moving. A second young gentleman stands in the background, he is turned away, most likely finding the view in front of him grotesque. He does not seem to be involved at all with the actions displayed in front of him. On the other side of the picture is a rough sketch of what may be the final drawing. There are two sections; the drawing on the left shows a bull charging after a horse. The rough image on the far right depicts a young man running toward the bull, with a cape in his hands. The rear legs of the bull are up in the air and pointed towards the figure. The bull’s head is turned away from the figure and is facing the ground. There is something extruding from the animal’s mouth. It almost appears as if the boy is rushing to the bull to help him. These

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corrida scenes were the first step in Picasso’s identification with the matador (matador means “killer”) and the bull.

**Barcelona**

In 1895 the Ruiz Blasco family packed up and left Corunna for good and settled in Barcelona. When they arrived, Picasso registered at the school of Fine Arts or La Llotja. He was a gifted student while at the school and graduated in 1897. Next, Don José pressed forward with arrangements for Pablo’s enrollment in Madrid’s San Fernando Royal Academy, the most prestigious art school in Spain. Pablo did not enjoy the classes he attended; he did not get along with Muñoz Degrain, his professor. Bored with the institution and lacking a studio, Picasso trundled his easel round the streets. He was interested during this time in painting modern life, cafés, concerts, theaters, and bullfights. Picasso and his friends would go to these locations on a regular basis to be able to copy details of more ambitious scenes. Another location Pablo would frequent was the Prado. He would copy Velázquez, Goya, El Greco, and was captivated by Goya’s images of the corrida. Sometimes Picasso would spend eight hours a day copying bull scenes as well as numerous other paintings done by the three artists, his great Spanish predecessors in the history of art.

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**First Trip to Paris**

According to John Richardson, on October 25, 1900, before his nineteenth birthday, Picasso stepped off a train and arrived in Paris with his friend Casagemas. Casagemas was a companion of Picasso’s while living in Barcelona. Several days later, once settled in Paris, Picasso met Pere Mañach, a thirty-year-old Catalan who had set up in Paris as an art dealer in modern Spanish art. Picasso visited Mañach, who was much impressed by his bullfight scenes which he had painted several months prior while living in Spain. Pere managed to sell three pastels he had taken into consignment within a matter of days for a hundred and fifty francs. The buyer was Berthe Weill; she had an infallible eye and sold the pastels to a publisher. Berthe Weill was unable to pay Picasso or other artists as much as she would have liked but she prided herself on her fairness. Like all the major artists she discovered, Picasso ceased selling through her the moment he became successful.

*Removal of the Bull (1900)* (Figure 4) is a drawing with charcoal and pastel done on paper. This may have been an image similar to the ones Weill sold. The scene takes place in an arena; the bull is being pulled away by horses while many spectators watch. The small, thin yet visible strokes used to create the image, typify those seen in

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many Impressionist and Post Impressionist paintings. Picasso appears to have been influenced by the Impressionists who were living in Paris.

Mentioned earlier Picasso and his father had a bond from the beginning of Picasso’s life, maintained by their mutual passion for art. This closeness also triggered a love for the bullfight, which Picasso would carry on for the rest of his life.

The following chapter will focus on etchings of a personal nature, such as depictions of the minotaur and Marie-Thérèse. Picasso creates images that show his sexual and emotional side, the women in his life greatly influenced his paintings and prints. The viewer will gain insight in regard to this important motif of the 1930s.
CHAPTER III

OLGA AND MARIE-THÉRÈSE AND
CONTINUING INTEREST WITH BULLFIGHTS

Between the years 1905 and throughout the 1920’s there are very few bullfight images. This may be due to his involvement with the Rose period, African art and the evolution of Cubism, his joint venture with Georges Braque. Then, in the early 1930’s the iconography of the bull in the bullring in Picasso’s work takes on a distinctly personal course. From the early juvenilia seen in the previous chapter, the magic and colorfulness of the corrida turns into a stage in which Picasso creates new fictive actors who move beyond the sports arena into new settings and appear in various guises and masks. In the 1930’s the bull and its mythic offspring, the minotaur, transform into personal emblems of the artist, as the creature is significantly transposed into domestic settings. In a variety of imaginative vignettes on paper, the bull and the minotaur as symbols of the artist’s ego reveal Picasso’s changing emotional world; some images deal with love relationships, some with virile and celebratory moments, as well as those when his life seems to disintegrate.34

For Picasso, his characterization of the bull and the minotaur and their adventures and antics in the vignettes to be discussed are integrally related to his thoughts, desires, and personal issues. Various conflicts he faced during these years of his marriage and subsequent affairs with Marie Thérèse and Dora Maar as well as fantasies seem to be

played out through his work as he struggled to come to grips with the women in his life.\textsuperscript{35} Picasso did not hesitate to mingle the monstrous with images of beauty.\textsuperscript{36} The bull and the minotaur, as will be demonstrated below, function as forms of identification, they reveal another side of the artist. Analysis of these images indicates the autobiographic nature of his art, as his passions and domestic conflicts become for him all-encompassing issues.

In 1917, Sergei Diaghilev, who managed the \textit{Ballets Russes} Company, invited Picasso to make costumes, designs, and stage sets for the ballet \textit{Parade}. In Rome where the performance was held, Pablo became romantically involved with Olga Khokhlova in spring 1917. While never a prima ballerina, she was a disciplined and diligent dancer with developed techniques. With her dark eyes and dark hair tied in a classic chignon and dressed in long flowing costumes, she looked graceful on the stage. Picasso became enamored with Olga, the ballerina and muse, as evidenced by his numerous paintings and drawings of her. Diaghilev warned him mockingly to be very careful because Russian girls of her social class expected marriage following courtship. The artist lacked foresight for the inherent differences he and Olga had and after an approximately eleven-month courtship on July 12, 1918, the marriage of Pablo Picasso and Olga Khokhlova took place.

Their relationship was filled with conflicts and disparities almost from the start. She was from a wealthy family and had expensive tastes and liked to go to restaurants,


receptions, and balls of the Parisian upper class. For a short time she managed to distract Picasso from his bohemian friends, but increasingly her way of life began to annoy him. On one hand, he loved his wife and wanted to have his own family. On the other hand the conventions of family life interfered with his work and with his inspiration.37 Their marriage began to deteriorate in 1921, the year of Olga’s pregnancy with their only child Paulo. Olga became unusually upset, and the more advanced her pregnancy, the more remote she became.38 After the birth of Paulo, Olga’s erratic emotions and the resulting effort exerted by Picasso to cope with it was causing an upheaval in their private life; Pablo wanted to stay unencumbered and was ready to sacrifice everything for freedom.39 By the mid 1920’s Picasso began to see married life with Olga as incompatible. He felt he could not paint when she was so disturbed and he was afraid he too would emotionally fall apart like she had. An example of his feelings is Figure and Profile (Figure 5)40 (1927-28). The male presence is indicated in the form of a simple black profile. His mouth is slightly open as though in pain, the female figure has been reduced to an obscene polyp. She appears as a painting within a painting, and it is as if the male has sought to exorcize her powers of destruction by depicting her as twice removed from reality.41

40 Pablo Picasso, Figure and Profile, 1927-28, in Michael FitzGerald, Picasso: The Artist’s Studio (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 122.
In 1927 Pablo met Marie-Thérèse Walter, a blond-haired, blue-eyed, French woman who became his mistress. For some time the love affair was kept secret from Olga, until a friend told her of Marie Thérèse’s pregnancy in spring 1935. Olga and their son immediately moved to the south of France. Maya, the daughter of Marie-Thérèse and Picasso, was born on September 1935. The affair with Marie-Thérèse would continue publicly until 1936, and privately for possibly long after.

**Surrealism**

During this period, Picasso became immersed in Surrealism, the major movement established in 1924 under the leadership of André Breton. In the year of 1925 Picasso agreed to show at the first Surrealist exhibition at the *Galerie Pierre* in Paris. Among the other artists were Joan Miró, Jean Arp, Max Ernst, Paul Klee, André Masson, and Man Ray, all younger than Picasso and all artists belonging to the movement. Picasso was greatly admired by the Surrealists but never joined the movement, which is based on various beliefs in the superior reality of certain forms of previously neglected associations, such as the omnipotence of dreams, and the disinterested play of thought in the mind of the artist.\(^{42}\) Surrealism aimed to eliminate traditional forms and subjects in the arts. It hoped to eradicate all preconceived notions of form and, by exploring the unconscious wellsprings of the human personality, to bring forth entirely new forms and subjects.\(^{43}\)

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Picasso’s relationship to Surrealism is complex. He was not focused on their methods of dream analysis and automatism in the creation of works of art; both central approaches to Surrealist aesthetics were rejected by Picasso. Picasso’s work avoided the enigmatic and ambiguous character of much Surrealist art. Even at his most Surrealistic, the content of his work is relatively clear: the images refer to the vicious and monstrous parts of human nature and to sexuality. Although his art during these years can be considered Surrealist, Picasso never surrendered control over actions to any force but his own powerful imagination and will.\(^{44}\) Significantly, at the time Picasso became, increasingly involved in Greek mythology; his turn to this world of the antique at this time coincided with that of the Surrealists. These cultural interests were part of a larger Surrealist passion in understanding man and his symbols prior to Cartesian rationality and Christian morality.

This Surrealist fascination with archaic societies and their objects and legends is seen in Picasso’s cover of their first issue of *Le Minotaure* (1933) (Figure 6).\(^ {45}\) This Surrealist publication, one of the richest sources of information about the Surrealist world, sold in France for 25 francs. The journal was published on May 30, 1933 by Albert Skira. Picasso’s cover design is a collage piece with a pencil drawing of a minotaur, who holds a sword in his hand. The image is placed on top of layers of various materials such as corrugated cardboard, silver foil, ribbon, wallpaper painted with gold


paint and gouache, paper doily linen, leaves, tacks, and charcoal on wood. His association with the journal may have fostered his interest in the beast and this may also be the first public appearance of the minotaur created by Picasso.\footnote{Penrose and Golding, \textit{Pablo Picasso: 1881-1973}, 89.}

**The Vollard Suite**

Prior to 1930, Picasso had been at most an occasional printmaker. In 1930 he agreed to work with Albert Skira on an illustrated publication by Ovid, which contained nearly two-hundred-fifty separate myths of primarily Greek origin.\footnote{Janie Cohen, \textit{Picasso: Inside the Image} (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1995), 90.} Picasso’s involvement with the stories seemed to have fired his interest in the medium to the extent that before he had even completed the Ovid illustrations, he began to work on another series of prints, more ambitious than any he had undertaken so far, the \textit{Vollard Suite}.

The minotaur is a major player in the \textit{Vollard Suite} created by Picasso during the years 1931 – 1939. The \textit{Suite} consists of one-hundred Images and is divided into five sections: “\textit{Rembrandt},” based on copies of the work of Rembrandt van Rijn; “The Minotaur,” “\textit{The Blind Minotaur},” “\textit{The Sculptor’s Studio}” and “\textit{The Battle of Love}.” Approximately one quarter of the \textit{Suite} does not fall into one of the aforementioned categories and is labeled “\textit{Miscellaneous}.” The following examples selected for discussion will focus on the imagery found in several of the previous sections, with examples: \textit{The Rape} (1933) (“\textit{The Minotaur series}”), \textit{Minotaur Carousing} (1933) (“\textit{Sculptor’s Studio series}”), \textit{The Blind Minotaur Led through the Night by Girl with Fluttering Dove} (1934) \textit{Minotaumachy} (1936) (“\textit{The Blind Minotaur series}”), and \textit{End}
of a Monster (1937) ("Miscellaneous series"). In these images the viewer will see how ruthless Picasso is at dismembering and distorting the human form.

*The Rape* (1933) (Figure 7), an etching and aquatint of a simple sketch, depicts a minotaur embracing a woman in a clearly sexual position. However, despite the title, it is debatable if the woman is resisting or enjoying the act. There is in this image a sensation of uncertainty as to how far the woman enjoys being the victim. Her legs are wrapped around the beast in a manner which does not appear designed to repel the aggressor. Further, her left arm is free and not attempting to injure the mythological assailant. Finally, her facial expression could be interpreted as either extreme pleasure or excessive pain. Picasso shows the minotaur is in a position of power over the female. The act of copulation in which the woman struggles to fend off her lover is a theme which gave Picasso the opportunity to express the equivocal nature of love and human desire. There is a sense of the inevitable, of a mutual sharing of the universal compulsion of sex is too complex.

One could argue that this work is a blatant expression of Picasso’s sexual feelings; that he enjoyed subjugation during the sex act. Marie-Thérèse embodies their lusty affair. Her sexuality inspired these scenes, especially those in the artist’s studio in which the minotaur’s role is to be discussed.

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50 Clair, *Picasso Erotique*, 32.
In the “Minotaur series,” it is important to reflect what this mythological creature meant to the artist as more examples from the Vollard Suite are examined. In the second image, *Minotaur Carousing* (1933) (Figure 8), the viewer will see a minotaur and a sculptor in which both characterizations represent aspects of the artist. Picasso seems to suggest in this well known etching that sexuality involves a reversion to lower-order, animal-like behavior. For the artist, it can only serve as a kind of recess between periods of higher creativity; after the sculptor satisfies his bestial instincts, he returns to his one true passion, art. As we will see, a number of drawings and prints with the motif of the bull or the minotaur’s bestial drive also reiterate this implied equation between sexuality and animal behavior.

*Minotaur Carousing* (1933) (Figure 8), an etching and aquatint, is set in a sculptor’s studio. The scene consists of a bearded man, a minotaur, and two females in the nude after the sexual act. The women are apparently not being tormented; they appear to be relaxed. The male and the minotaur are holding up champagne glasses, the monster is at once accepted by the sculptor and is found reclining amicably with the artist’s models. One female has her whole body stretched out on the floor, with her eyes looking at the viewer. The other woman is cuddled up against the dark-haired sculptor, who has his genitals exposed. The half-man, half-bull has his left arm stretched while he toasts, and they are all four lying on what appears to be soft sheets. The artist and the beast are comfortable with one another, even saluting one another. The invasion of the

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minotaur is a diversion from the worry and restraint that Picasso may have been feeling from the women in his life. From a psychoanalytic perspective, this vignette provides insight into the sexual role of one aspect of Picasso’s psyche (the minotaur) and another aspect (the bearded sculptor) and their interconnection: the two characters indicate the libidinal aspect of Picasso’s work. A This work appears to be a reflection of the liaisons in the actual sculptor’s studio between Picasso and Marie-Thérèse. It is she who represents both women in the image; the two often met at his sculpture studio in Boisgeloup where he created a number of well known bronze sculptures of her.

*The Blind Minotaur Led by a Girl in the Night* (1934) (Figure 9) was completed October 1934. The aquatint and etching depicts a minotaur as he is groping his way along a quay. One assumes he has just been discharged from the boat, which lingers offshore. The eyes of the beast appear to be looking at nothing, while his hand grasps a long walking stick which reaches down to the ground and helps to stabilize his gait. This is a clue that the animal is blind, the affliction of blindness comes as an echo of those paintings of the Blue Period in which Picasso showed hidden feelings of compassion for the blind beggars he saw daily in the streets of Barcelona. The minotaur is gentle, savage, and lustful; he has human emotions but brutal impulses. If the creature is blinded or wounded, the viewer will feel compassion, if the minotaur forces a sexual act upon the female, the viewer will feel horror and disgust.

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Below the mythical creature is a little blond-haired girl who appears to be leading the minotaur as she clutches a dove in her hands. She appears in several of these images in the “Blind Minotaur Series” and is characterized by large features; her nose points out and her eyes appear to be the size of quarters.

Interpretation of this complex iconography necessitates digression to Picasso’s early life. The history of his childhood and many clues in Picasso’s art indicate that, as a child, the artist felt more like Don José’s little girl than his little boy. Nineteenth-century society permitted girls to express their passive, dependent needs openly, whereas little boys, especially those in Latin cultures, were expected to be sturdy and self-reliant. Mary Gedo, an art historian and psychoanalyst, has chronicled the relationship between his major life events and his works. She noted that Picasso was a fragile child who clung to his father for love and protection. Picasso’s father, an unusually gentle, maternal person, did not find this behavior threatening. He realized that his most important task was to foster his son’s great gifts, utilizing whatever crutches he could to help support the boy.

In his later relationships with women, Picasso often behaved with his beloved as his father behaved with him. The imagery he created in response to Marie-Thérèse reveals that he possessed considerable insight into the real meaning of his attachment to her, but not enough to permit him to interrupt the vicious cycle he seemed doomed forever to repeat with one woman after another. It seems likely that Picasso’s vulnerable women represented not only his mother but his own disintegrated childhood state. He

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could never completely abandon his women, even after they had ceased to interest him.\textsuperscript{56} To Picasso, Marie-Thérèse must now have seemed doubly like his own creatures: she represented not only his ideal of beauty but significantly his own core deficiencies as well.

It is in this context that Picasso’s involvement with Surrealism in \textit{The Blind Minotaur led by a Girl in the Night} (1934) (Figure 9) may be established. The similarity of the young girl in the etching to Marie-Thérèse leads to a number of possibilities. There can be another interpretation of the minotaur’s loss of eyesight. One eye appears to be looking into nothing, and his snout is upturned as though he is trying to decipher his direction from smell. The implication is that the animalistic part of the artist is blindly following a symbol of sexual lust, as Marie-Thérèse was not yet a mother of his child.

\textit{The Minotauromachy} (1935) (Figure 10),\textsuperscript{57} an etching and aquatint with dry point, shows an exiled monster once again arriving from the sea, a gigantic pack on his back. The repeated use of the monster arriving from the sea in these works is significant, as the sea is symbolically a vast and unchartered area. The half-man, half-beast is halted in its onslaught only by the presence of a little girl, who resembles Marie-Thérèse. There is a rain cloud, above the beast’s left shoulder, which is extending down through the minotaur’s left arm. It is notably raining in diagonal lines only on the section of the minotaur and can be interpreted as representative of the misfortune associated with the beast.


To the left of the minotaur, there is a partially disrobed female *torero* falling off a horse. With sword in her hand pointed away from the monster, it would appear that the woman represents a *matador* who has been defeated by the bull. The woman possibly personifies Olga, in the sense that she directed him in his early years and is now no longer an opponent. The indicated nudity of the *torero* represents her sexual desire.

The beast appears to move past the lifeless bare-chested *torero* towards a young girl who holds flowers in one hand and a candle in the other. This young girl again appears to represent Marie-Thérèse. Her two legs are firmly directed toward the minotaur. The girl is not afraid and has the determination to meet the beast, despite having the slain woman as an obstacle in her path. With a lighted candle in her hand, she fearlessly confronts him; by this gesture she is able to enforce once more a precarious balance between the dark powers of uncontrolled violence and the forces of light. Picasso may see Marie-Thérèse as the balance in his life that he needed while he was having troubles with Olga. The minotaur personifies Picasso, whose right arm is stretched out with his large palm open, he is the dark force that seems to push away and yet go towards the light. The minotaur here is more threatening than in previous works discussed.

Gedo provides an insightful reading of the child. The small child remains calm as she confronts the animal, perhaps because she is confident that the beast’s noble impulses will win out over his baser drives, and he will turn tame. There is a strong

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contrast created by the innocence of the girl with her flowers and guiding candle and the rushing minotaur as they face one another.

Above the street, two young women contemplate the drama from the safety of their window ledge, where two doves perch. They have a calm look on their faces because they know that they are not in danger. The white doves may represent a childhood memory, that is, the presence of Picasso’s father, for whom these birds were a major subject of his paintings. At the far left, a bearded man flees up a ladder; he turns his back on the moral drama and faces it at the same time he seems cowardly, but, like the minotaur, he wants to see. His feet are flabby, body is thin and gangly, and his dark hair and beard are reminiscent of a Greek god. As with Minotaur Carousing (1933) (Figure 8), the bearded man can be considered a symbolic representation of Picasso.

There are striking contrasts in the analysis of the characterizations in this vignette. There is first the difference between the bare-breasted torero and the innocent girl. Secondly, there is a contrast between the roles of the aggressive minotaur and the fleeing bearded man. The bearded man on the ladder is looking back as he seeks to escape from these self-created conflicts. Psychoanalytically, this portrays some of the artist’s internal conflicts as seen previously in Blind Minotaur Led by the Girl in the Night (1934) (Figure 9) the minotaur is again sexually interested in the young girl. This famous print depicts Picasso’s animalistic nature as the minotaur takes on a prominent role among his actors.

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60 Penrose and Golding, Pablo Picasso: 1881-1973, 177.
The End of a Monster (1937) (Figure 11), an etching and aquatint, is Picasso’s last depiction of a minotaur in his art. In this simple line drawing, a minotaur has been shot through the heart by an arrow and is in the throes of death along a beach. The beach could be Golfe-Juan, which was a vacationing spot along the Mediterranean for Picasso and his various women. Arising from the water is a representation of Venus; she is holding a mirror in her right-hand and a spear in her other. She is naked and her bare-breasts are exposed, while her vaginal area and legs are covered by the water. The facial features of Venus resemble those of Marie-Thérèse. The beast does not have much hair on his body, the features on his face are minimally portrayed and his right arm appears to be disproportionate with the rest of the body. His tail is small and the front part of the arrow is sticking out of his back. The creature’s mouth is wide open and he appears to be backing away from the mirror in horror of what he sees. The mirror is used to show the beast his true nature, while the spear suggests that beauty may have played a role in the demise of the beast.

The psychological implication of this work is that Picasso, now fifty-six years old, recognized as he aged, the destructive nature of his behavior as manifested in his minotaurs and their relationships to women. His half-man, half-mythological beast personifies his animalistic side and the subsequent dissolution of the minotaur from his oeuvre reflects his greater awareness.

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The minotaur, as evidenced in these examples from Vollard Suite, represents his sexual lust, and it also recalls his most aggressive and self-gratifying behavior. At this point, the minotaur iconography fades from the artist’s work in the 1940’s, possibly due to his emotional maturation and ability to decipher how his negative personality traits, which the minotaur embodied, affect his personal love relationships.

In the next chapter, it will be shown how Picasso assessed the bull and bullring in a political context with an emphasis on his apparent preference for freedom over power. He will also demonstrate his compassion for his fellow Spaniards through his artwork.
CHAPTER IV
PICASSO’S ART INFLUENCED BY POLITICS

In 1937 the iconography of the bullfight appears in two of the few creations Picasso designed for a political and mass media effect: *The Dream and Lie of Franco* (1937) (Figure 12)\(^{62}\) and *Guernica* (1937) (Figure 13).\(^{63}\) At the time of these major works, the artist was living in France, dividing his time between Paris, where Dora Maar lived; and Côte d’Azur with its coast and villages where Marie-Thérèse and his daughter Maya, stayed. The French Riviera, due to its exceptional light, is where so many artists found inspiration for their landscapes.

*Guernica*, a town in northeast Spain, was bombed by surprise attack on April 26, 1937. This was a town of no strategic or economic importance. It was bombed relentlessly for three hours by German and Italian aircraft that were acting on the instruction of Franco’s Nationalist forces. The major news of the period which dominated headlines was the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). On July, 18, 1937 the Nationalists, a coalition of the army, industrialists, aristocrats, and the church, rebelled against the Popular Front, which was elected in February for the first term of 1937. The Popular Front is used to describe the coalition of leftist and centrist political factions in Western Europe, which had its beginnings in the second-half of the 1930’s.\(^{64}\)

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Nationalists were nominally led by Francisco Franco with the backing of the German and Italian states; the Popular Front, by contrast, counted Moscow as an ally. In this political context the discussion of the two works will continue.

In September 1936, Picasso was shrewdly recruited by Manuel Azaña, president of the Spanish Republic to become honorary director of the Museo del Prado. This represented an irresistible position for the artist as he had spent many years as a student at the museum, studying the great Spanish masters such as Velázquez, El Greco, and Goya. In November, Picasso’s role would be altered when the Prado was struck by artillery shells fired by the Nationalist forces, which damaged the museum and forced the collection to be relocated. The defiling of what Picasso undoubtedly considered a shrine appears to have led to the inspiration for The Dream and Lie of Franco and eventually influenced his quick acceptance of the Basque commission for the World’s Fair Exposition and its enduring highlight, Guernica.

Picasso is often portrayed as having a nonaligned political profile. This conception of the a-political aloof artist is not true; there is much evidence to prove his involvement and concern. In October 1944, two months after the liberation of Paris from the Nazis, Picasso joined the French Communist Party.

Picasso stated, “I am conscious of having always struggled by means of my painting, as a true revolutionary. But I have understood now that even that does not suffice; these years of terrible oppression have demonstrated to me that I must fight with not only my art, but my whole self.”

For example, a sampling of his art and his early involvement in Barcelona in anarchist circles reveals his compassion for the downtrodden and his interest in social and

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political issues. Different stages of his art which support his political ideals are found in his Blue and Rose Periods. These works exhibit his interest in the life of the poor, prostitutes, starving artists, and acrobats.

**The Dream and Lie of Franco**

By the end of 1936, European liberals everywhere viewed the Popular Front in Spain as the symbol of active resistance to the totalitarianism that was descending over Europe. Among these participants were some of Picasso’s close friends: André Breton who was a French poet, writer, and the founder of Surrealism. Paul Éluard, a Surrealist poet who joined the Communist party in 1942, and convinced Picasso to become a member of the Congress of Intellectuals for Peace.

Picasso formulated his attack on the Nationalists with his poem, “The Dream and Lie of Franco” in 1937. The title seems to be drawn from two works of the influential seventeenth-century Spanish dramatist Pedro Calderón de la Barca: *La vida es sueño* (Life Is a Dream) and *En esta vida todo es verdad y todo mentira* (In This Life All Is Truth and All Lies). While the poem itself violates the rules of grammar and is a barrage of unrelated ideas, Picasso’s choice of verbal imagery to characterize Franco’s actions conveys his rage in no uncertain terms.

To accompany his poem, Picasso simultaneously created the print series of *The Dream and Lie of Franco*. Two plates were involved, each containing nine rectangular scenes in etching and aquatint. The plates are comprised of eighteen images.

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Although the poem was actually written at the completion of the first fourteen scenes, the end of the poem particularly relates to the concluding four images which depict crying women and children. They were added on June 7th of the same year and correspond to scenes from Picasso’s painting, *Guernica*. The first fourteen images deal with the expression of hatred and contempt for Franco. Picasso accused Franco of following a dream rather than life and of living a lie rather than the truth. He saw Franco as someone destroying civilization and living behind that lie.

With a double-edged title, the scenes, filled with motifs emblematic of the horrors Franco brought upon his countrymen, function as a bitter satire. Due to the methodology of printing, the plates read from right to left, top to bottom. When denoting direction, this treatise will state the order as it appears on the plate, rather than the direction on the resultant printed work which would be reversed. For example, if the plate shows an appearance of something on the left hand side, on a postcard created from a photograph of the imprint, the object is found on the right hand.

The first image, located on the upper right of plate one, has a caricature of Franco riding a horse, wearing a crown. The horse is disemboweled and Franco takes on the figure of a louse. He is under the shining sun with sword and banner in opposing hands. The banner, when perceived at a right angle to the print, bears the image of a woman in a long dress with a halo above her head, seemingly depicting the Virgin Mary. It is important to note in this opening vignette the clearly elevated place the Virgin Mary would represent to established power bases in Spain, a historically Catholic country. In

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this mockery of the Spanish royal equestrian iconography as exemplified in the works of Velázquez, Picasso astutely alludes to ties between the church and fascist forces.

In the second illustration, Picasso’s parody of Franco is seen as the polyp-headed creature that is balanced on the right end of a tightrope, with a sword in his left hand and his right hand attached to a lasso placed above the left end of the tightrope. This scene perhaps represents Franco’s capture of land. This may be further supported by the flag that is being held by an exaggeratedly large penis attached to the character of Franco. The flag represents a right-wing authoritarian regime, a mockery through destruction. This illustration of his ideological nationalism is the only one in the series with a focus on the enlarged genitalia.

The third sketch consists of the monster Franco, with scythe in hands, confronting a classical sculpture of a woman. Picasso’s political satire represents the assault of Franco’s forces on the Prado, or on a larger scale, his potential destruction of the arts. It could also portray him destroying mother earth. The fourth scene depicts an enlarged effigy of Franco, dressed up as a Spanish woman complete with a mantilla on his head, holding a fan emblazoned with the Virgin Mary in his right hand and possibly a scepter in his left as he stands in front of a distant city. This satire points to the associations which Franco had both to the monarchy and the military in the civil war.

The fifth image consists of the Franco caricature being gored by a Spanish bull, while the crown and sword are thrown from the creature. The bull could represent Picasso or the Popular Front standing up to Franco. The sixth figure has Franco, now wearing a bishop’s miter, kneeling before an altar with money atop. To add to this ironic
image of Franco’s greed and power, Picasso created a barb-wired fence around the praying monster.

In the seventh picture, Franco is fenced in and again equipped with crown and Virgin Mary banner, and now holds a lance. The bull has struck the horse a second time and, with its entrails hanging out and turning into snakes, it becomes an image further indicating the horror this dictator created. In vignette eight the Franco caricature is being assisted by a Pegasus. He appears to be riding the horse with wings in the eighth cartoon, once again with crown and flag showing his victory. In the ninth serial, the lance is held in hands with the Virgin Mary emblem attached. The Pegasus has been transformed into a pig, a degraded farm animal on which Franco rides as a passenger. The pig represents the destruction and carnage associated with the Spanish dictator.

In the second plate, *The Dream and Lie of Franco* (1937) (Figure 13) (plate 2) there is much more horror, destruction, and death that involves both animal and human lives.

The tenth image depicts a boar returning to the form of a winged horse, which Franco has mortally wounded with his lance, the animal is lying near the dictator’s feet. Figure eleven consists of a prostrate woman lying dead amidst a field, while in the twelfth cartoon a dead white horse lies upon a lifeless bearded man. Both of these etched plates further indicate human and animal loss of life under Franco’s rule.

Scenes thirteen and fourteen deal with a battle between Franco and the bull, which represents Picasso’s intense feelings of hatred for Franco as well as his attachment to the power of the bull and to Spanish culture. In picture thirteen, a facially close perspective,
Franco is seen as the polyp-headed creature that wears the crown and the bull radiates lines of energy. In the subsequent frame the bull has gored the polyp-headed monster; its entrails are extruding from the body and the monster appears to be in pain. Franco’s body is lowered, with the front two legs lying on the ground and a hind leg up in the air. The bull is feverishly pounding on the louse’s innards which are pouring out of his splayed body; this depicts the dominance the bull has over Franco. He also is no longer wearing the crown.

The final four images, fifteen through eighteen, were created by Picasso six months after the originals, notably after the bombing of Guernica. Scene fifteen deals with a women who is looking upwards, she is screaming in agony and has her right arm up in the air. Image sixteen is of a woman holding a wounded baby outside of a building which is engulfed by fire, her right arm is up in the air and her face is in agony, she is crying out for help.

Figure seventeen is another picture of a mother in a protective position over her child as a bomb destroys the city. The mother appears to have sustained a head wound, and her eyes are closed; while the child has open eyes and a look of serenity. The woman in the last three etchings is in severe emotional pain due to the bombing. The last scene, a chaotic one, consists of many faces and few bodies, horror is conveyed by the dramatic gesture of outstretched arms, and Picasso’s use of expressive lines shows the agony of the victims. The two plates, which started nearly a half year earlier, were completed on June 7, 1937.
Picasso chose to use sugar-lift aquatint on the images, and the first plate of vignettes is different in style than the second. The second series of the last plate had some color burnished away to achieve the desired play of light, dark, and shadows. The features thus became more accentuated, making the bull and Franco more grotesque. In addition the viewer can see more details compared to the first plate, where only one process of aquatint was used to achieve a single tone.70 Picasso composed *The Dream and Lie of Franco* (1937), with the intention that it be reproduced and sold to benefit the Spanish Republican Relief Fund and those devastated by Franco. Postcards were produced and turned into individual prints and mass produced in 1939. Sets of the postcard prints and poem were eventually reunited and reissued.

**Guernica**

Picasso was determined to express his vision of the brutal nature of modern warfare to the widest audience possible. Having already depicted his opinion through a mass-distributed serial comic, he now focused his talents on creating a complex painting suitable for display, while retaining his intended political effect. *Guernica* (1937) (Figure 14)71 describes the destructive force and resultant anguish which were the aftermath of the bombing of Guernica, Spain, on April 26, 1937. While it is not known for certain whether the Nationalists conducted the raid, it is clear from his work that Picasso blamed Franco for the calamity. In January 1937, Picasso was invited by the Spanish Republic to contribute a mural to the Spanish Pavilion for the World’s Fair to be


held in Paris. When the Spanish Republic delegation departed, its members left Picasso with a difficult problem. Picasso, as mentioned earlier, was often portrayed as politically nonaligned and the proposed mural was to be both a public monument, standing before the eyes of the world, as well as an image devoted to the propaganda aim against Franco. After the raid, which infuriated Picasso, he found his subject for the commission to work on a large mural for the Spanish Pavilion at the World’s Fair; *Guernica* was that masterpiece.

*Guernica* is a remarkable size, eleven feet tall by twenty-three feet wide, painted in oil. This large mural presents a scene of death, violence, brutality, suffering, and helplessness without portraying their immediate causes. Stunned and horrified by the black and white photographs of the bombing’s devastation, Picasso quickly sketched the first images for *Guernica* on May 1, 1937. He made various sketches of buildings, animals, figures, and specific props that would be included in the final painting; there were at least sixty-one pencil drafts. *Guernica* was laid out May 11, 1937 and underwent nine phases until reaching the final stage. His decision to paint in simple black, grey, and white lends itself well to the dominant method of media distribution of the daily newspaper. The Spanish Civil War is sometimes described as the first photographic war, not meaning the first war to be covered by the press, but the first war with embedded reporters sending back stories, photographs, and film for wide-spread distribution in more or less real time; 1936 was a time of newspaper, radio, and newsreel.

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There is some coloring in some sketches, but no composition exists in color. The black and white gives a particular removal from reality in that the work does not so much present “another world” (as a painting in strong unrealistic hues might) but rather “less than the world.” By comparison to a work in many colors, a monochrome is always strongly abstract, less substantial materially, closer to a diagram then the visual representation of an idea. In *Guernica* there is no red blood, no difference between fire and light or between the complexions of the dead and those of the living. The image is reduced to expressive shapes, which are interpretive rather then narrative. The flames have the generic sharpness of saw teeth, but they do not burn. Monochrome, in other words, tends to move the image in the direction of a disembodied statement of properties rather than a rendition of objects. It emphasizes the detachment of the “epic” presentation.\(^73\) The absence of color recalls newspaper reports

The overall scene of the mural is set within a room; on the viewer’s left there is a bull with disproportionate features on his face. There are eight other figures, each in a different role and clearly distinguished from all the others. Four women, one child, a warrior, a horse, and a bird, are all concerned with one event happening in front of them. Each figure represents a group of people who were actually present at the bombing and behaved in the way depicted in the painting.

The women depicted in *Guernica* are as follows: the mother, the burning woman, the running woman, and the woman holding a lamp. Below the beast is a woman grieving, her mouth is wide open and her head is extended back, as if in anguish; she is

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holding a dead baby in her arms. This reflects the many newspaper photographs and stories of refugee women and children. The image functions as a secular pietà and brings to mind the tortures inflicted by Franco’s Nazi allies upon Guernica’s civilian population.

Underneath the child and mother is a man lying on the ground with his left-arm extended above his head. He is dead and has his mouth open. In his hand he clutches a broken sword that was presumably used during a physical confrontation. A flower is also in his grasp which expresses a sign of life that still exists and can overcome destruction. In the middle of the work is a horse whose essence is heightened by its body lanced by a sword as it shrieks. The animal is in agony, beyond recovery and represents the victims of Franco’s terrorism. On the other side of the painting is another figure whose arms are waving in the air. Devoured by large flames, she is struggling for her life but is failing; the scene is set in a house in flames. Her head is also extended back with her mouth wide open, as if she is screeching. A very large woman’s head projects through the window and in her outstretched arms she holds an oil lamp. She has a classical profile and resembles Marie-Thérèse, whose face was the most familiar in all of Picasso’s art. She is coming to the aid of those who are in anguish and holds the bright light to illuminate the scene of carnage. Below is another female; her breasts and buttock are exposed. Her arms are stretched reaching for the child and her cloaked form and heavy breast may have suggested pregnancy. This may bring back the memory when Picasso’s mother gave birth to his sister Lola during an earthquake in December 1884. Picasso transferred the dead
infant to the mother on the opposite side.\textsuperscript{74} Behind the bull is a bird; representative of his father, who had a passion for birds in his life and in his art.

Above the head of the horse is a bright light bulb, with flashes extending from it, which makes it appear as an eye. This image highlights the idea of watching the scene below. The illumination is both natural sun and electric (indoor) light, the time both day and night, the place both inside and outside, so the observer is not confined to a specific position in space or even a single level of reality but is imaginatively free to perceive the theme in its widest implications.\textsuperscript{75}

\textbf{Crucifixion}

\emph{Guernica} has embedded religious references. Bullfights take place on Sundays and on major church holidays; Picasso’s own priceless definition of a perfect Sunday was mass in the morning and bullfights in the afternoon. \emph{Guernica} makes reference to the collision between the realities of the twentieth century and the venerable Catholic traditions that had nurtured him in Spain. In \emph{Guernica}, the artist’s awareness of the impossible disparity between a new kind of modern warfare and the ancient faith in heavenly redemption through suffering takes on a numbing apocalyptic vastness.\textsuperscript{76}

When Picasso began the large studies and states of \emph{Guernica} he clearly drew on religious material for iconographic and expressive content and even for specific details.

The late Robert Rosenblum has noted the tripartite structure’s resemblance to a central crucifixion and side panels with a \textit{mater dolorosa} on the left

\textsuperscript{74} Mary Matthew Gedo, \textit{Picasso: Art as Autobiography} (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press), 23.

\textsuperscript{75} Chipp, \textit{Picasso Guernica: History, transformation, Meanings}, 14.

and a hysterically grieving Magdalena on the right, her raised arms imploring the heavens. The dying horse, victim of nameless brutality, has replaced Christ on the cross.\textsuperscript{77}  

Picasso has created a secularized crucifixion. Picasso was never able to repeat the epic sweep of \textit{Guernica}’s proclamation of a new form of anti-Christian evil, but the aftershocks could be felt again and again in his works throughout the war years, in both oblique and direct ways.\textsuperscript{78}  

\textbf{Meaning of the Bull and Horse}  

The meaning of bull and horse which appear as two of the mural’s protagonists is vitally important for a proper understanding of his work. Picasso had just used the imagery of the animals in \textit{The Dream and Lie of Franco}, which deals with the same Civil War problem and is temporally close to \textit{Guernica} since its first state was completed on January 9, (1937).\textsuperscript{79}  

Both logically also draw upon the meaning of bull and horse in myth as well as folklore.  

The bull towers over the scene of chaos, an agonized horse writhing on the ground and screaming toward the sky; the animal is wounded just as it often is in a bullfight. A figure next to the horse is a fallen warrior grasping a broken sword which injured the horse. The addition of this personage complicates more than just the composition, for it creates a triumvirate of bull, horse, and human being analogous to that

\textsuperscript{77} Oppler, \textit{Picasso’s Guernica}, 111.  

\textsuperscript{78} Oppler, \textit{Picasso’s Guernica}, 120.  

of the first act of the bullfight just after the mounted picador has incited the bull to charge the horse.  

The scene symbolically represents a bullfight inside an arena. Although the idea of suffering probably had its immediate source in the headlines and photographs of the victims of the bombing of Guernica, imagery powerful enough to convey it existed already within Picasso’s own art. The motif most appropriate to embody this tragic epic of suffering was therefore to be found not in modern warfare, even if it was at this moment engulfing Picasso’s homeland, but in that part of his culture with the power to arouse the greatest emotion, the Spanish bullfight with all its implications of pain and death.

The bull is the pivotal object of Guernica; the presence of the animal suggests a bullfight but also personifies Spain. Picasso saw himself as this image; his love for bullfighting is why he used this image to show the destruction of Guernica. Picasso presents the bull as the strong observer who does not take part in chaotic activities. The bull does not seem partial to any side but can also be seen as the strong protector because of his firm strength.

The bull in the corrida, an image he knew in youth, became the roots of Guernica. As mentioned before, Picasso’s father, who was an aficionado, would take Picasso to bullfights. The sights Picasso witnessed at the bullfight had the most profound effect upon his psyche. Picasso at the age of three had experienced an earthquake on

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80 Leibold, This is the Bullfight, 47.
Christmas night. Picasso was wrapped quickly by his father and taken to a friend’s house. The bull making the earth tremble in his wrath must also have deeply affected the child. The trauma caused Picasso to internalize what he was feeling; in the mind of a child he did not understand natural causes. Picasso had developed a deep attachment to his father and saw him as the protector. He was a figure in Picasso’s life which he could not bare to lose. Gradually, the bull assumed the status of Picasso’s symbol, representing himself as the magical destroyer, an aspect of his identity he shared with the world both in Guernica and in the bullfight and Minotaur pictures that preceded it.

The bull can also represent the ideal hero to Spanish Society. The bull watches the scene but does not participate in it. His sympathies lie with the stricken, as evidenced by his raised tail and show of tongue, but he does not react. Despite his nearness to the catastrophe, he is psychologically removed. This image fits neither Loyalist nor Franco’s Spain, but it suits the French Republic. There existed manifold ties between the two brother countries. The Frente Popular, the party whose victory at the elections of February 16, 1936, provoked the Franco Insurrection of July 17, 1936, was modeled after the French Popular Front. Consequently there was ample reason for France to be sympathetically interested in the fate of the Republic. Picasso seems to indicate through the powerful, silent bull that he and the community can overcome this adversity.

Gedo mentions, for Picasso the bull was a symbol of Spain, a defiant animal that stood against evil. The bull represents the strength of the nation as he remains the

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observer. He is a source of power to all those fleeing in the mural, the bull was a reminder of the culture and history of the country he loved and wanted to see freed of terror. The bull stands proud and bold amid a massacre of innocents.

**Indoor/Outdoor**

The bull and horse encounter in the arena and the presence of the dwelling clearly create an outdoor environment. The light bulb evokes an indoor space and the tiles drawn in a perspective scheme extending over the entire ground suggest a patio or floor of a Spanish house. To the extreme right, a door complete with doorknob, indicates interior space. This freeing of the conventions of representation has been well known in Picasso’s work since the early cubist days. Through the vocabulary of Cubism, Picasso is able to simultaneously indicate the dual nature of the disaster and its impact.

**Color**

Picasso worked on many sketches and states before the final completion. Although the final version of *Guernica* had no color, there were different stages of the image where color was applied. For example in State V, Picasso added a large strip of wallpaper with gold and maroon attached squarely over the mother mourning her dead child on the left, which was eventually covered up with black, grey, and white. Picasso conducted an experiment on some drafts using brightly colored crayons such as yellow, orange, violet, and red. The color seemed to weaken the role of expression and was not used by Picasso.

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Final Guernica

Upon completion, three months later, Guernica was delivered to the Spanish Pavilion of the Paris World’s Fair of 1937. Located out of the way, and grouped with the pavilions of smaller countries some distance from the Eiffel Tower, the Spanish Pavilion stood in the shadows of the fairgrounds. Despite the prestige attached to Picasso’s name, the painting and the entire Spanish Pavilion were virtually ignored by the press, because the building opened seven weeks after the official inauguration of the Paris World’s Fair. Mention of the mural was lacking in all but a few illustrated magazines. After the Paris World’s Fair, Picasso lent the painting to a large traveling exhibition of four French artists, himself, Henri Matisse, Georges Braque, and Henri Laurens. The exhibition toured Norway, Denmark and Sweden between January and April 1938. After its return in the spring Guernica remained in Picasso’s studio until September and then traveled to various museums in Europe.

The work was sent on May 1, 1939 to New York City for a forty-two year stay. The painting was picked up by Columbia graduate students, Blanche Mahler and Evelyn Ahrendt, both members of the Spanish Refugee Relief Campaign. Peter Rhodes, also a member of the group in Paris, made specific arrangements with Picasso to send Guernica to America. The artist made it clear that his purpose for lending the painting was to raise funds for the Spanish Refugee Relief Campaign. Picasso wrote a plea to all artists in the cause of peace. Volunteers of the organization asked the American Artists’ Congress for help. The American Artists’ Congress was an organization founded in February 1936 as part of the popular front of the Communist party as a vehicle for uniting
graphic artists in projects helping to combat the spread of Fascism. Its members were already aware of the issues of the Spanish Civil War. Sidney Janis, a young art dealer, secured a showing in May 1939 at the Valentine Gallery in New York City. These attempts to help the Loyalist cause created organizational motivation for anti-fascist artwork that depicted images in Spain.

The painting drew a distinguished group to the exhibition such as Simon Guggenheim, Georgia O’Keeffe, and Eleanor Roosevelt, and it aroused much sympathy for the cause of the war refugees. Sidney Janis’s energetic efforts on behalf of the relief committee resulted in a nationwide tour for the Picasso exhibition, which began at the Stendahl Art Galleries in Los Angeles and moved throughout the country. On November 15, 1939 *Guernica* joined the collection of The Modern Museum of Art as an extended loan and remained there for four decades.

The painting became familiar to an ever widening American public. It became a popular reproduction, sold poster-size on college campuses. In later years its associative powers, instantly suggesting unjust war and terror bombings, worked effectively in protest art, posters and actual demonstrations against U.S. involvement in Vietnam. The simplified cartoon-like figures endeared *Guernica* to the Pop generation.

From the beginning of World War II until 1981, it was housed in its temporary home at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, though it would frequently be sent for exhibitions to Munich, Cologne, Stockholm, and São Paulo in Brazil. The one place it

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did not go to was Spain, although Picasso had always intended for the mural to be owned by the Spanish people. He refused to allow it to travel to Spain until the country enjoyed “public liberties and democratic institutions.” As early as 1968, Franco had expressed an interest in having Guernica return to Spain. Picasso refused to allow this until both the Spanish people again enjoyed a republic and Franco left power. After Franco’s death in 1975 Spain was transformed into a democratic constitutional monarchy which was ratified by a new constitution in 1978. The Modern Museum of Art was reluctant to release Guernica, and argued that a constitutional monarchy did not represent the republic that had been stipulated in Picasso’s will as a condition for the painting’s return. Under great pressure, the Museum of Modern Art in New York finally ceded the painting to Spain in 1981. Guernica is now permanently exhibited at the Reina Sofia, Spain’s national museum of modern art.

Tapestry

A notable tapestry copy of Guernica, commissioned by Nelson Rockefeller, has hung in the United Nations Building in New York, at the entrance of the Security Council’s chambers since its donation in 1985. This version was not thoroughly monochromatic, in that shades of brown have been added. The fabric reproduction was covered on February 5, 2003, while U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell presented to the world the American case for war against Iraq. Aside from its general evocation of anti-war sentiment, Picasso’s painting threatened to pose historical parallels that the Bush administration and United Nations officials were clearly determined that the media or the

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88 Chipp, Picasso Guernica: History, Transformation, Meanings, 98.
public should not make. According to Picasso, the painting will affect the state of mind of whomever is looking at it, and he may be eternally correct in that analysis.

Picasso did not generally create art for the sake of the viewer, and aside from the works discussed above he did not intend for political effect. In the next section, his book illustrations will be mentioned, which were produced throughout his lifetime; also his work involving the *tauromaquia* in the 1940’s will be reviewed. Picasso’s evolution in form and focus of bullfight iconography from his earlier years and the correlation with his personal life will be examined.
CHAPTER V

PICASSO CERAMICS, ILLUSTRATIONS, AND BULLFIGHT IMAGERY

Pablo Picasso’s reputation as an artist could not have been higher in 1947, the year in which he began his activities at the Madoura pottery facility in Vallauris in the south of France. His achievements in painting, printmaking, and sculpture had an enormous impact on the development of twentieth-century art as a whole, and *Guernica*, had earned him widespread recognition for his opposition to fascism.\(^8^9\) Now in his late sixties, Picasso embarked on new adventures of artistic investigation in a wide variety of mediums, which may have matched the spirit of optimism he felt at the end of the war. Picasso’s involvement in ceramics, an art form with a great popular and historical tradition especially around the Mediterranean, can be seen in this light. In Vallauris he revolutionized ceramics.

His contribution is significant in that he brought a radical change to the development and evolution of ceramics. As he had done in earlier years with other materials in the field of sculpture, Picasso broke with the medium’s previous uses to give us a glimpse of a magnificent array of possibilities.\(^9^0\) His own vision altered the history of modern ceramics as he daily experimented in clay in this ancient Roman pottery town. Here he restates the medium’s capacity for expression, liberating it from procedures that

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\(^9^0\) Raimé, *Picasso Ceramics*, 233.
had constricted it for centuries.\textsuperscript{91} The bull again becomes a significant motif for Picasso as he develops an enormous and highly individualistic body of work in clay.

**Early Pottery**

After Picasso’s departure from Paris in 1902, the artist spent nine months in Barcelona, where he may have had his first exposure to working in clay. There he inaugurated his career as a sculptor by making *Seated Women*, (1902) (Figure 15)\textsuperscript{92} a small modeled figure in unfired clay. Picasso permanently left Spain in 1904: while in France he would dabble from time to time in ceramics. An example of this is *Still Life* (1914) (Figure 16),\textsuperscript{93} a collaboration with Picasso and his friend André Derain, the former Fauve painter. The combined results were decorated ceramic tiles in a Cubist-style, mounted on a plaster plaque, although this ceramic was used as a surface for a painted composition.

**Vallauris**

Picasso discovered Vallauris in 1936 (Map of Vallauris) (Figure 17)\textsuperscript{94} when he and his friend Paul Éluard would enjoy excursions along the Mediterranean coast. On one occasion the poet and the artist drove into Vallauris and were fascinated by the various artists and ceramic workshops they visited. Picasso did not return to Vallauris

\textsuperscript{91} Raimé, *Picasso Ceramics*, 233.


until ten years later. In August, 1946, Picasso and his current lover, Françoise Gilot, whom he met in 1943, spent more and more time vacationing at Golfe-Juan. He heard of an exhibition of local production of the work of many potters; he asked to speak to one of them and was introduced to Suzanne Ramié. This lady ceramicist, along with her husband Georges, would both play key roles in Picasso’s ceramic productivity. Picasso had accepted an invitation to the Ramié’s studio; while listening to Suzanne Ramié talk, the artist was provided with a bench and a lump of well-kneaded clay, which he seized with enthusiasm. That day Picasso created his earliest fired works, red plates, on which he drew eels, fish, and sea urchins.

Vallauris had been a major center in the Roman world for the production of pottery. In Picasso’s time there were still a large number of Vallauris potters; their presence was originally due to the upheavals of population brought about by World War II. Young potters, Georges and Suzanne Ramié, owners of the Madoura workshop, which was an old factory over a hundred years old, wanted to revitalize the industry. They were following a general trend that had seen artists and craftsmen setting up their studios in the regions of Provence. Suzanne Ramié helped inject new energy into the local crafts scene, thus contributing to the general revitalization of traditional centers of ceramics, which had been slowly dying out.

Picasso was fascinated by the ease with which he imposed his will on the clay. He decided to work from September to November 1946 at the Chateau d’ Antibes, a workshop for artists in Vallauris. After spending the winter in Paris where Françoise

\[95\] Raimé, *Picasso Ceramics*, 10.
Gilot gave birth to their son Claude, Picasso returned the following year, 1947, to a villa in Golfe-Juan, which is in close proximity to Vallauris.

The ceramic objects Picasso had previously worked on at Madoura remained at the studio for a year; one year later, 1947 to the day, Picasso on holiday took route to Vallauris. Madame Ramié in late summer came to the beach and asked Picasso to drop by the studio and see the results of what he had done the year before. He went out of curiosity and was greatly impressed by what he saw. Picasso was so bored with his lack of activity at the time that before he left he told the Ramiés, “If you’ll give me a workman to help out with the technical side, I’ll come back and work seriously.”

Although Picasso never learned to throw a pot on the wheel, he quickly set about to master or interpret traditional techniques of decoration and the special requirements that firing in the kiln imposed. In order to learn his craft Picasso took specific steps; on many occasions he chose to use white stoneware, he also concentrated on a large number of ordinary press-molded plates, known as plats longs, that were in production at Madoura. He is thought to have produced over six-hundred plats-long in a year; he experimented with incising, impressing, or adding relief to their surfaces, while trying out different methods of applying slips, oxides and glazes, whose colors were revealed only after firing. Picasso also collaborated with craftsmen who would produce a piece on the wheel, which Pablo would reassemble or decorate. Picasso began by isolating the different parts of an object so that the handles, necks, and plate-shaped bases could come

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together to form a new, organic structure such as arms, wings, horns, beaks, necks, legs, and heads. Picasso would create zoomorphic and female figures based on his own sketches.

In 1948 Picasso and his family moved to *La Galloise*, a small pink villa set on a terraced hillside above Vallauris. During his first year of intense involvement at Vallauris he created a sizeable selection of ceramics. There were an estimated two thousand pieces made within a year and in a concentrated fifteen-month period of almost non-stop work he produced nearly half of his known ceramic oeuvre. Picasso suddenly had so much work that he began to look for a place for storage. He bought *Le Fournas*, an abandoned pottery studio that he would use as a workshop for both painting and sculpture and where he stored ceramic pieces.

All of the ceramics that Picasso produced at Vallauris were not intended to be used. Nonetheless, from the start Georges and Suzanne Ramíé were eager to place some of his designs into production. Picasso allowed the replicas because he found it amusing that his originals might be copied and sold as souvenirs. These “Picasso editions” were produced and decorated by Madoura craftsmen, not by Picasso. His pieces were bought by dealers and resold in New York for ten times the price.

The subjects of the large numbers of ceramic plates, vases, bowls, and amphorases that Picasso produced are very much tied to the Mediterranean world in inspiration. They include numerous fauns, centaurs, and sculpted Tanagra inspired figures.

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Bullfighting was another popular image created while in Vallauris; this was due not only to Picasso’s love of bullfighting but the town’s own passion for the *corrida*. Picasso would go to see these fights, which were held in Vallauris, and always started the first Sunday in August. In 1948 Picasso became a poster artist for the Association *Vallaurienne d’Expansion Céramique*. He designed the posters free of charge from 1948 to 1964. The images displayed upcoming art openings but at times also incorporated motifs related to the *corrida*. These announcements, in which calligraphy merged with highly stylized bullfight imagery, could be found on walls everywhere in Vallauris and neighboring towns and villages.

*Exposition Vallauris* (1961) (Figure 18), a poster, advertises a ceramic exhibition held in the month of July. The image is printed with brown ink on yellow paper; a bull is at the bottom-middle of the picture. The sun is on the right-side, while a bullfighting scene appears on the left-side. The top portion announces an exposition, which will be held in the town of Vallauris, while the bottom gives the viewer the date of the show and the signature of Picasso. The bullfight scenes that appear on ceramic plates and platters as well as in Picasso’s prints of the 1950’s reflect deep knowledge of every aspect of the *torero*’s art.

**Ceramic Sculptures**

Bulls also appear in Picasso’s ceramic sculptures. The assembling of individual clay parts into a variety of three-dimensional shapes offered the artist the challenge of

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fusing painting and sculpture. A statue of a bull (1947) (Figure 19)\footnote{Pablo Picasso, A statue of a bull, 1947, in Georges Raimé, Picasso Ceramics (New York, NY: The Viking Press, 1976), 113.} is an example of formed pieces put together. The enormous legs have been thrown on the potter’s wheel, that is, a large piece of clay was hand built around the wheel thrown legs to form the body. The bull is comprised of a small head and its horns are placed at the front-right side.

The head and horns are much smaller in proportion to the rest of the animal’s body. This contrast produces an impressive sense of the brooding strength of all this corpulence totally concentrated on its effort.\footnote{Raimé, Picasso Ceramics, 126.} Due to this effect the horns stand out, while the flat small oval head appears almost pasted and fused onto the body.

A bull figure (1953) (Figure 20)\footnote{Pablo Picasso, bull figure, 1953, in Geroges Raimé, Picasso Ceramics (New York, NY: The Viking Press, 1976), 59.} is hand-built out of white clay. It is an example of bisque ware (which is a piece that has been fired only once before glazing). The form appears to be made quickly and roughly, as cracks are present in the clay. The sculpture is comprised primarily of geometric shapes in which nine rectangular pieces are joined together to create an animal. The bull has his head down, with the horns pointing towards an almost horizontal position. This object may have been a sample piece for other ceramic artists to work from or an actual model for the final version.
Functional pieces like an \textit{amphora}, (1955) (Figure 21)\textsuperscript{103} has a black bull painted on both sides of the vessel. The horns, eyes, and nose have been carved out of the black paint. On one side of the object are the painted front legs and head of the bull, while the reverse side presents the rear of the animal, which includes the legs, testicles, and the tail applied onto the handle of the jug. It appears to be a functional piece with a decoration painted on it.\textsuperscript{104}

Picasso states “I made a piece that you can view from any angle and it always stays flat. I painted it and it’s the paint of course that makes it flat.”\textsuperscript{105}

Picasso gave sculptures a deceptive appearance of two-dimensionality, due to its merging of painting and sculpture ceramics was the ideal medium in which to continue this joust with the eternally misleading image.\textsuperscript{106} Picasso would pounce on unfired clay objects before they were dry and reshape them, bend them, hollow them, stick them together and cut them out. The transformations he wrought were astounding and the potter now became a sculptor.

The bullfight theme was also the preferred motif for plates, and later for the dishes whose oval shape enabled Picasso to play with the space in which he mixed the colors of the bullring, the bull, the bullfighter, and the tiers of seated spectators. Picasso

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\textsuperscript{104} Raimé, \textit{Ceramics by Picasso}, 79.
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\textsuperscript{106} Koplos, \textit{The Unexpected: Artists’ Ceramics of the 20\textsuperscript{th} Century}, 134.
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used the oval shape of the dishes as an area within which the scenic perspective was adapted to the ellipsis, as if the dish were a cinemascope screen.\textsuperscript{107} Large Oval Plate (Bullfight Scenes) (1951) (Figure 22)\textsuperscript{108} is an example of this. Picasso’s bullfight imagery contributed new ceramic images. His later drawings of bulls and bullfights appeared to be much less detailed than earlier images. Lines and dots were used to represent the audience, bulls, matadors, and picadors, and many of these scenes were most likely done rapidly and quickly. In addition these pictures were the first to exhibit the whole arena, along with the audience. Also mentioned earlier, the large oblong plates with flat or scalloped rims create a descriptive, narrative space arena. The elliptical shape of the dish is a circle seen in perspective, a projection of the stadium seen from above at a specific angle. This spatial precision is enhanced by the shadow of the balconies, which varies according to the time of day; this was a new technique created by Picasso.\textsuperscript{109} The viewer is drawn into the plate like a spectator; it feels as if an aficionado is inside the stadium rather than just looking at it.\textsuperscript{110}

At the workshops Picasso acquired familiarity with the properties of the clays, the coloring power of mineral pigments when fired, and also how to distinguish between the different kinds of fire. Ceramic work implies the use of immutable colors which cannot be further changed once they have been fired. Such an offer of immortality must

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\textsuperscript{107}Raime, Ceramics by Picasso, 20. \\
\textsuperscript{108}Pablo Picasso, Large Oval Plate (Bullfight Scenes), 1951, in Georges Raimé, Picasso Ceramics (New York, NY: The Viking Press, 1976), 55. \\
\textsuperscript{109}Paul Bourassa, Picasso and Ceramics (Toronto, Gardiner Museum of Ceramic, 2004), 229-33. \\
\textsuperscript{110}Koplos, The Unexpected: Artists’ Ceramics of the 20th Century, 132.
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inevitably have seduced the painter. Picasso had never painted as much as he had since he took to ceramics. He also learned the effects of high and low temperature, the meaning of oxidation, reduction, and the best wood for maintaining the firing temperature; skills necessary for the proper functioning of a 1940’s kiln. Many wondered what he would do when he began to work with clay; it is obvious that he never treated it as a decorative art.\textsuperscript{111} Picasso never adorned the finished product of another artist, but did borrow the skill of and the use of discarded material from fellow craftsmen in order to create other kinds of objects. Picasso reached out beyond traditional ceramic work, especially when dealing with volumes, and achieved what he had so long sought after the merging of painting and sculpture.\textsuperscript{112} The color and challenge of the corrida still held the interest of the artist as he had sixty plus years experience of the bullfight.

Picasso saw the most wonderful possibilities of ceramics without having to worry about rules or heeding the advice of traditional potters. In his intense search for the medium’s possibilities, his enormous production made him plunge into the adventure with the zeal of someone younger, a person who may want to seek his or her own imprint. He began his work with ceramics when his career was completely established, with at least fifty-five years experience behind him.

As he established himself for several years in a ceramic shop at Vallauris, Picasso assumed the difficulties, the lack of understanding, and the jokes that the presence of a

\textsuperscript{111} Raimé \textit{Picasso Ceramics}, 210.

famous artist commands at a place with a ceramic production tradition.\textsuperscript{113} He was delighted with the fusion of painting and sculpture he found in ceramics. There he examined, observed, and utilized the available resources, as he took advantage of the production in the workshop. His ceramic bull imagery was part of a vast body of work one could say a universe of studies between color and form. Picasso dignified and advanced ceramic language as he had with modern sculpture and painting. His ceramics stood out as the standard to be used in understanding the evolution of the ceramic art of his time. These works are still regarded as having elevated a once sleepy craft and its techniques. His discipline, ability to conceptualize form and image, and thoroughly innovative approaches are why Picasso’s work in ceramics still stands out today.

**Book Illustrations**

Through his life Picasso created many illustrations for books. While living in Vallauris, Picasso met Luis Miguel Dominguin; he was a bullfighter and would perform on Sundays. Picasso would attend these fights and decided to collaborate on a book with him. In the book the bullfighter wrote about his relations with Picasso. *Toros y Toreros* (1961), has many reproduction drawings by Picasso, he also designed the cover as well as its title page. Some of the images included were in color. *Untitled* (1961) (Figure 23)\textsuperscript{114} is a lithograph heightened with colors by the artist and signed by him in colored pencil. This image depicts black figures with many capes flying through the air. A line vertically divides the paper, which indicates Dominguin’s motivations to enter the ring. The


Spaniard has passion for the sport and thrives on the excitement, danger, and thrill of the *corrida*.

Another lithograph produced by Picasso was *Toros* (1960) (Figure 24), superscript 115 this image was created for his friend Pablo Neruda. Neruda was a Chilean poet who had an arrest warrant against him due to his Communist ideals. In August 1948, Picasso spoke out, opposing this decision at the Congress of Intellectuals for Peace held in Warsaw. The Congress of Intellectuals came about from the aftermath of the Second World War. In 1960 Neruda spent a few months in Paris where he spent time with Picasso. He wrote a long poem, in which he states:

> so that rain may fall upon arid Spain, the bull is scarified in a life and death games pitting man against beast.

*Toros* (1960) (Figure 23), is a simple drawing done in black which shows the picador on horse challenging the bull. He drew what the poet describes in his poem. Neruda’s poem is given in French and Spanish, the text is followed by 15 reproductions of wash drawings done by Picasso.

The illustrated books were another way to use Picasso’s bullfighting images. The decision Picasso made to use them in others’ literature shows the true passion he had for the *corrida*. Mentioned earlier Picasso created book illustrations throughout his life. The book illustrations demonstrate the bull symbol as a recurrent theme during his life, a motif that played a large part in many periods of his work.

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CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

Bullfighting continues to be an integral part of the social and cultural lives of many Spaniards as it has been for centuries. For Picasso, whose art functioned as a diary, the bullfight was a tremendous source of inspiration. His characterizations of this sport in his ceramics, intaglios, pen and ink, and charcoal drawings are intimately tied to his artistic development and fame.

The meaning of the bull evolved throughout Picasso’s life. As a child Picasso had fond memories with his playmates, mimicking the bullfight. Above all, the corrida had special meaning to him because the event recalled his roots and moments that were spent with his father. As Picasso reached adulthood the minotaur became an emblem of his personal identification. This half-beast refers to the sexual side of Picasso’s psyche. During the making of The Dream and Lie of Franco (1937) and Guernica (1937) Picasso was painting what he felt was so destructive to his native country. In the future these works soon became a political remembrance of what had happened. Late in his life Picasso found a new medium, which took his work to another level incorporating painting and sculpture in his ceramics. Painting images of bullfights brought the aging Picasso back to his roots and childhood memories.

In chapter one the images produced in his youth look far ahead to periods of deep personal identification with both the bullfighter and the bull, an obsession which did not end for another eighty years. These juvenile drawings record Picasso’s first enthusiasm for bullfighting.
In the second chapter the bull takes on the minotaur and love relationships. Various conflicts he faced during these years of his marriage and subsequent affairs as well as fantasies seem to be played out through his work as he struggled to come to grips with the women in his life. The images reveal the emotional side of the artist. The sketches referred to vicious and monstrous parts of human nature and to sexuality. Minotaur etchings in a variety of settings are inspired by Marie-Thérèse. These works importantly show the influence of Surrealism.

Chapter three deals with images of the bull and the bullfight in a political context and expresses the brutal nature of modern warfare to the widest audience possible. Both works, *The Dream and Lie of Franco* (1937) and *Guernica* (1937) are considered propaganda and were created as a direct result of Picasso’s compassion for his fellow Spaniards as they suffered under Franco. The bull is a focal point in both images; in *The Dream and Lie of Franco*, the confronting bull appears to be an alter ego for Picasso. It is the bull who alone faces the polyp-headed monster, Franco.

*Guernica* (1937) also depicts a bull that does not seem to be affected by the destruction around him. The heroic bull towers over the scene of chaos, an agonized horse writhing on the ground and screaming toward the sky, the animal is wounded just as horses often are in a bullfight. The scene is depicted as a bullfight inside an arena.

*Guernica* is one of the greatest paintings of the Western world because it expresses the damage to life from a single evil act. Through the setting of a corrida, Picasso has symbolically staged the horrors of modern warfare as people and animals are killed. The bull, standing over all of the characters in their frightened state, provides both
strength and power in this scene of carnage. The mural is timeless in that it brings to mind what the future holds as more nations acquire nuclear capabilities. The bull remains a forceful image as we face increasing fears of superpowers.

The last portion of this thesis deals with Picasso in his later years. Picasso produced pottery in mass production and broke with the medium’s previous uses to give a glimpse of a magnificent array of possibilities. He restated and discovered new capacities for the field of ceramics, liberating it from procedures that had constricted it for centuries. The bull and bullfighting was a popular image he used on clay as he merged painting and sculpture in new ways.

The Picasso literature is filled with references to the bull and, to a lesser degree, its mythic offspring the minotaur. There are books literally devoted to the subject, articles, and online websites. The bull as I have tried to summarize, held multiple meanings for the artist from his early years as a boy through his decades-long fame as one of the greatest artists in history. To understand the high visibility of the bull in his oeuvre I have tried to weave the appearances of the motif in conjunction with biographical facts and the personal and political issues he faced. The bullfight was so intertwined with Picasso’s work that on his birthday, a bullfight was held in his honor. There are photographs of Picasso attending the corrida surrounded by family and famous friends. More importantly, the incredible numbers of his works of art in which the bull and the minotaur appear underline his attachment to his Spanish roots and heritage. The bull must be regarded as one of the critical images with which he identified, along with several other personifications.
There are objects that become non existent such as the guitar which vanished from his work in 1925 and there are other animals and symbols which reappear in Picasso’s art. However none is as consistent or recurrent as the bull. It was for him a symbol of *machismo*, a quintessentially Spanish image like the guitar and ultimately a motif which therefore played a large part in many periods of his work.

I have tried to demonstrate throughout this study the artist’s complexity as the bull resurfaced in his art from early childhood drawings to sophisticated plates. I am also the first to discuss and document Picasso’s bullfight imagery throughout the span of his life. The artist’s aggression, his complex emotional world is often expressed through his representations of the bull and minotaur. His energies and interests were channeled in new stylistic developments and mediums throughout his career. The bull was almost a constant motif.
REFERENCES


