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# Abstract

## Guitars with Many Strings:

### The Meanings of Music in Picasso's Early Work 1900-1914

Michelle Ania Kaczmarek

This thesis sets out to explore the use of musical references in Picasso's art. Noting that Picasso had no explicit connections to musical practice himself, the study examines the ways in which music appears in the artist's work and critically assesses explanations for its dominance and consistency as a subject in Cubist art. The study focuses on Picasso's Cubist output between the years 1900 and 1914 but revolves around a central series of six *papiers collés* from the second half of 1912, into which Picasso incorporates fragments of sheet music. The relevance of the sheet music used is therefore taken up as a key line of investigation, as is the symbolism of the guitar, which dominates the subject matter of these works. Chapter One examines the use of musical imagery throughout art history. The role in art of the guitar's predecessors, particularly the lute, provide a solid foundation of symbolism which, it will be argued, Picasso draws upon through his use of the guitar. Chapter Two develops this argument with regards to gender, examining the idea that the guitar is conflated with the image of the woman in Picasso's work. An alternative argument is explored, pursuing the guitar's links with Spain to argue that it functions as a symbol of national identity for Picasso, before the focus moves to the sheet music *papiers collés*. A closer examination of the sheet music results in an exploration of Picasso's connections to the Parisian cabaret scene. In the final chapter the study will conclude by presenting the view that, despite their status as revolutionary experiments in formal innovation, the series of six *papiers collés* can in fact be interpreted as works that express nostalgia and *vanitas*, representing Picasso's paradoxical relationship with tradition.

**Guitars With Many Strings:  
The Meanings of Music in Picasso's  
Early Work 1900-1914**

Michelle Ania Kaczmarek

MA by Thesis

School of Education (History of Art)

University of Durham

2014

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# **Declaration**

This MA thesis proceeds from an interest in Picasso's work that was first explored in my BA dissertation. Although some of the themes covered in this submission are the same, my approach to the material has been revised and substantially developed. This has allowed me to reflect upon its significance in new ways and in relation to the other new material that I consider and present in this study.

# **Statement of Copyright**

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without the author's prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

# Acknowledgements

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# Introduction

This thesis will aim to investigate the use of musical references in the work of Pablo Picasso (1881-1973). Music began to appear in his Analytic Cubist works between 1907 and 1911, but with the birth of Synthetic Cubism in 1912, musical instruments became a very common appearance in Picasso's work. The guitar was the most commonly and consistently used subject in Picasso's work between 1912 and 1914, and continues to appear throughout his later work. This study will aim to examine why, with no strong affiliation to music himself, Picasso would choose to feature the guitar so prominently in his works. We will explore the potential that music held for formal experimentation, the symbolic opportunities presented by the guitar, and whether the use of other musical elements such as sheet music offers us an insight into the meaning of the works.

Cubism began, according to art historical tradition, with Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon* (MOMA, New York) during 1906-1907 and propelled itself towards abstraction through the next five years. In the summer of 1912 Picasso was in Sorgues with Georges Braque (1882-1963). A photo taken by Picasso of his most recent artworks arranged around his doorway (Fig. 1) reveals the change in direction that occurred in Cubism during this summer in the south of France. The four rectangular paintings arranged towards the bottom and top-middle of the photo can be identified as *Aficionado* (1912, Kunstmuseum, Basel), *Man with a Guitar* (1912, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia), *The Model* and *The Poet* (1911, Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice). They are indicative of the abstracted condition that Analytic Cubism had reached by mid-1912; most subject matter had been almost entirely dissolved by a process of fragmentation, leaving only a few obscure, metonymical clues as to what was depicted. The two images in the top right and left-hand corners of the photo are stylistically set apart from the other works displayed. They are most strikingly distinguished from the other images because of their oval canvas shape but the artistic approach to the content, too, reveals a marked change. The sharp, fragmented lines have been replaced by softer, simpler contours and blocks of



colour. Most significantly, the subject re-emerges; a simple, child-like guitar shape is clearly identifiable in the left-hand image.

What the aged photograph does not clearly reveal to us is any differences in medium used in these two oval works. In a letter from Paris that autumn, Picasso wrote to Braque, who had remained in Sorgues, "I am using your latest papery and powdery procedures. I am in the process of imagining a guitar and I am using a bit of dust against our horrible canvas."<sup>1</sup> These "papery and powdery procedures" signalled the birth of Synthetic Cubism. From the summer of 1912, Cubist works were not fragmented down, but built up from other materials and objects. From mixing dust into paint to create texture, Picasso and Braque quickly moved on to including different kinds of fabrics and cut and torn papers in their works. They also incorporated printed paper, mostly from newspaper articles, photos and advertisements.

The effect of including bits of the real world on the canvas was to cut the bond between the notion of representation and art. Whereas Picasso had previously imitated newsprint in his Analytical Cubist paintings, now the newsprint was actually there, validating art's existence as an object in itself, rather than an imitation of something else. While Cubism received a lot of contemporary criticism for its abandonment of representation, some critics recognised its progressive potential. Huntly Carter, in an issue of the British literary journal, *New Age*, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1911, recognised this new, 'real' nature of Picasso's art in his late Analytic phase, relating it to Platonian thought through a letter from an Oxford academic, Mr Middleton Murray. Plato banished artists from his imagined, ideal state because of the superficiality of their craft; despite being a lover of art, he felt that it was simply a copy, and that a new form of art was needed. Carter and Middleton Murray argue that Picasso's Cubism achieves the "inward mastery of the profound meaning of the object expressed" that Plato sought, and that his "art of essentials" is therefore the "first intelligent advance upon Platoism".<sup>2</sup> Despite being written before the development of Synthetic Cubism, we can reasonably assume that Carter would have seen the

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<sup>1</sup> Picasso (1912) in Umland, 2011: 20

<sup>2</sup> Carter, 1911: 88

introduction of real materials into Cubism as a further step on this Platonian progression.

Collage Cubism also had the effect of divorcing the concept of art from that of craftsmanship, and this attracted much negative criticism at the time. An article in a separate edition of *New Age*, this time from 1914, is not so sympathetic towards Picasso, considering his collages to be gaudy. Walter Sickert remarks that, “the archfummiste Picasso... landed his art in canvases where bits of cloth, and bits of tin, and bits of glass stuck on to their surfaces, recall in less amusing fashion, the tinsel of our grandfathers... Our customers can hardly be blamed if they expect a little serious work from us for their reluctant guineas... Some of you have talent. Cultivate it.”<sup>3</sup> Sickert expresses the bemusement of many in the art world as to how the small displays of stuck and pinned materials demonstrated artistic talent and skill. He may have considered these experimental works a “blind alley”, but time would reveal that this Synthetic Cubism was anything but a dead-end investigation.<sup>4</sup> This fleeting period of experimentation caused a profound rupture in the development of art history, redefining the terms of artistic space and material for the twentieth century.

At the centre of this revolution was the guitar. Over half of Picasso’s artistic output between 1912 and 1914 features musical references of some kind; this usually manifests itself in the depiction of musical instruments, the majority of which are guitars or related stringed instruments. The guitar’s appearance as a key subject in the work of Picasso and Braque coincided with their introduction of unconventional media; we therefore come to associate the guitar with this subversive turning point in art.

That the guitar should be such a prominent subject in Picasso’s work is highly intriguing, since evidence from some of those close to Picasso suggests that the artist did not like music. Fernande Olivier recalls in her private journal that Picasso had no particular interest in music.<sup>5</sup> While he did not show a fondness

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<sup>3</sup> Sickert, 1914: 35

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 35

<sup>5</sup> Olivier, 2001: 200

for classical music like his Cubist partner, Braque, who regularly paid homage to Bach and Mozart in his work, we can make the assumption that Picasso did enjoy less formal music, such as that played in the cabarets and the folk music of his homeland. The artist's social scene revolved around the cafés and cabarets of Montmartre, where *avant-garde* artists, writers and intellectuals would meet to drink and discuss current affairs and artistic ideas. These establishments hosted many musicians performing cabaret acts and popular songs, and so Picasso would have been familiar with many of these. Nevertheless, the intensity with which he used musical subject matter, and in particular the guitar, between 1912 and 1914, does not seem to be justified by his less than enthusiastic interest in music.

Modernist art historians may argue that the debated extent of Picasso's interest in music is of very little consequence to the meaning of the works he produced, attributing significance primarily to the visual and physical form of the artwork, rather than the subject it represents. This formal approach espouses the notion of 'art for art's sake' and contends that Modernism saw a progression towards absolute abstraction, bringing the viewer's attention to the artistic object, rather than to any illusion or representation. Clement Greenberg (1909-1994) was one of the first art historians to explore and develop this approach to modernist art criticism. Greenberg drew on Enlightenment philosophies, and particularly those of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), that centre around self-reflective criticism, or the principle of assessing criticism itself, rationally evaluating the foundations upon which we make judgements. Greenberg argues, therefore, that modernist art strives to provide something unique and irreducible, an experience that can only be derived from art itself, rather than from other sources. This art is self-reflective in nature, providing critique from within itself, rather than according to external, pre-existing criteria.<sup>6</sup> For Modernist art historians, therefore, any depicted subject in a work of art is ultimately irrelevant, an external reference seen to form more of a framework upon which formal innovation, the real content of the work, takes place. From this point of view, therefore, it could be argued that the use of a consistent subject across a large number of works allowed Picasso to better compare the effects of the different techniques with

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<sup>6</sup> Greenberg, 1960

which he was experimenting. While this may have been a benefit to Picasso in his guitar works, the socio-historical evidence that will be examined in the following chapters suggests that it is highly unlikely that Picasso's choice of subject was entirely arbitrary or objective. This thesis will therefore argue that, contrary to the Modernist point of view, we can find a wealth of meaning in Picasso's use of the guitar.

One of the unique and more intriguing musical occurrences that we find only in Picasso's early *papiers collés* is the use of sheet music. Scores are pasted into the works both as whole pages or cut and torn fragments. While musical instruments, particularly the guitar, appear frequently in the collages, sheet music is only pasted into six images: *Sheet Music and Guitar* (Fig. 2), *Violin and Sheet Music* (sometimes referred to as *Guitar and Sheet Music*) (Fig. 3), *Sheet Music and Guitar* (Fig. 4), *Guitar and Sheet Music* (Fig. 5), *Guitar, Sheet Music and Glass* (Fig. 6) and *Violin and Sheet Music* (Fig. 7).<sup>7</sup> This series of sheet music *papiers collés* will form the central anchoring point of this exploration into Picasso's relationship with music. Picasso and Braque frequently involved the use of newspaper cuttings and fragments in their creation of collages; the potential relevance and meaning in their use of specific news stories and words continues to fuel much debate and interpretation among art historians. Sheet music has received comparatively little attention but arguably holds even more potential for interpretation, bringing not only linguistic and literary references into the artwork, but also musical ones. As will be explored, Picasso stretches and blurs the boundaries of art not only through the use of new materials, but also by creating a visual representation of a multi-sensory experience or scene through the evocation of sound.

Until recently, even most social art historians failed to address the significant presence of music and musical instruments in Picasso's Cubist collages. Only in the last decade have scholars begun to consider in a "sustained way" the choice of subject matter and its relation to context and formal innovation, with notable contributions including Simon Shaw Miller's "Instruments of Desire: Musical Morphology in the Early Work of Picasso" and Anne Umland's 2011

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<sup>7</sup> Due to the very similar titles of the six images, I will always cite their figure numbers throughout to avoid confusion.

exhibition, *Picasso Guitars: 1912-1914*.<sup>8</sup> The guitar has a strong presence in the *papiers collés*; four out of six of the works in this study explicitly depict the guitar. The two remaining pieces, both entitled *Violin and Sheet Music* (Figs. 3 and 7) are most commonly identified as depicting the violin because of the rectangular sound hole and curled scroll.

The wider body of art relating to music is extensive and rich, providing a crucial and informative context in which these six sheet music *papiers collés* reside. By studying Picasso's work on either side of 1912, it is possible to see his music *papiers collés* as part of his artistic evolution. His late Analytic works are also full of musical themes and, as a precursor to his move into collage, allow us to better understand the Synthetic musical works that followed. Many other members of the wider Cubist circle were also using music in their work at this time. Braque and Juan Gris (1887-1927), as artists close to Picasso, both also produced musically-themed *papiers collés* and their work can supplement our understanding of Picasso's. Exploring the colliding worlds of visual art and music appears to have been a theme in the wider *avant-garde* community during the early twentieth century, and we see it manifested in a broad variety of ways. It was at this time that Vasily Kandinsky (1866-1944) was exploring ideas of synaesthesia and seeking to affect the soul through his abstract *Compositions*, inspired by musical pieces. Natalia Goncharova (1881-1962), too, was moving into a multidisciplinary approach, using musical notes in works such as *Woman with Hat* (1913) (MNAM, Paris) to arguably evoke the dissonant sounds of modern urban life. On the other side of the disciplinary divide, the world of theatre and music was also incorporating *avant-garde* visual art into their performances. The *Ballet Russes* were touring across Europe at this time and, under the direction of Sergei Diaghilev (1872-1929), undertook a series of very influential collaborations with *avant-garde* artists, including Picasso in 1917. This redefined notions of ballet performance and stage design. There was, therefore, an ongoing debate amongst the *avant-garde* about music and art, and whether they could be united, and Picasso engages in this through his use of musical imagery.

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<sup>8</sup> Shaw Miller, 2002: 90

The use of music in art, however, was not a new occurrence in the early twentieth century. Musical instruments and their performance have been depicted in the visual arts since antiquity. The role of instruments in mythology, romance and religion over the centuries has shaped a rich and complex symbolism that Picasso inherited when he employed them in Cubism. An object of the Muses, a tool of courtship and prostitution, and outlawed by the Medieval Church as a vain distraction from God, stringed ancestors of the guitar such as the lute and the lyre developed a strong association with love and lust. The rounded curves and womb-like chamber of the lute can be compared to the female form and this encouraged the use of lute imagery as a symbol of female fertility and sexuality in sixteenth and seventeenth century painting and literature. A study of the use of the guitar's ancestors throughout art history is vital to our understanding of Picasso's *papiers collés*. We will therefore explore this history in Chapter One, arguing that the modern guitar inherits the symbolism of its predecessors.

The second chapter will be underpinned by the history explored in the previous chapter. The argument will be presented that, by drawing on the similarities in shape between the woman and the guitar, as well as the historical gendered symbolism that the guitar inherits, Picasso conflates the woman and the guitar, so that the instrument in fact acts as a substitute for the woman in his *papiers collés*. Through an examination of the works in which Picasso depicts the guitar and the woman in the years leading up to 1912, we will explore the idea that this conflation comes about through a period of metamorphosis, merging the two until eventually the guitar entirely replaces the image of the woman. We will examine how this gendering of the image is supported by other elements of the collage, such as the use of patterned wallpaper, and we will also consider what this gendered reading of Picasso's works may suggest about his relationship with, and attitude towards, women. Women were still very much considered second class citizens in Paris at the beginning of the twentieth century. At the end of the nineteenth century, women were still required to be accompanied by a chaperone when they left the house, and France was one of the last countries to grant women suffrage, passing the law in 1944. Picasso loved women; the affairs and relationships he had throughout his life are well documented and each of the women he became involved with seem to have shaped distinct

periods in his art. His first lover in Paris, Fernande Olivier, with whom his relationship was breaking down in 1912, rarely describes in detail the deterioration of their relationship in her published works, although she does recount his terrible mood swings and attitude towards her on occasions.<sup>9</sup> The pair were frequently unfaithful to each other, however, and, while Picasso was happy to go about his affairs with other women, he was known to be intensely jealous and possessive, often not allowing Fernande to venture out of the apartment on her own.<sup>10</sup> This chapter, therefore, will also explore whether, by directly comparing the body of the woman to the guitar, Picasso suggests an objectification of women.

While gender appears to play an important role in the use of the guitar in Picasso's work, there are also other significant factors that must be considered in an interpretation of these works. The guitar is often viewed in the public consciousness as being a symbol of Spain because it is from the Iberian Peninsula that the modern instrument we recognise today originates. Chapter Three will argue that, for Picasso, the guitar had a more personal connection to nationality. Picasso was born in Málaga, the birthplace of flamenco, and spent his youth in Catalonia, a place to which he often returned. Both of these places have distinctive folk music and we have evidence, through his use of the Catalonian clarinet-like *tenora* in his Analytic works, that Picasso had previously referenced the music of his homeland in his art. The guitar had been adopted also as a common feature of cabaret acts, where the group around Picasso spent most of their time. We will also examine the view, therefore, that, as a Spaniard in Paris, Picasso felt a certain affinity with the guitar, both Spanish outsiders taken in by the French city.

Paris, too, had also shaped the significance and symbolism of the guitar. The instrument had become a key accompaniment to the songs of the *cabaret artistique* and *café concert*. In Chapter Four we will argue that Picasso acknowledges this link through his use of sheet music. The two pieces of music he uses across the six sheet music *papiers collés* were cabaret pieces. As with

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<sup>9</sup> Olivier, 2001: 277

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*: 175

his use of newspaper, there is a debate over whether the scores included in the collages are of any relevance to the meaning of the work, or whether Picasso simply used what was accessible to him at the time. By examining the history of the cabaret scene of which Picasso was a part, the music and words of the songs, and the composers of the pieces, we will conclude in Chapter Four that such is the level of meaning that the scores add to the interpretation of these works, that Picasso must have made some kind of conscious decision to include them.

The final chapter of this thesis will draw on the conclusions and findings of the previous sections to argue that Picasso conveys a sense of nostalgia through his 1912 *papiers collés*. As will be discussed, the use of musical instruments have long been used in art as a reminder of the momentary, passing nature of time; in *vanitas* images instruments act as a symbol of man's vain exploits in the face of the eternity of God. At a time when Picasso was at the forefront of modern art, leading a revolution that would challenge perceptions and affect a change in the art world that would shape the twentieth century, it is rather paradoxical to imagine that his groundbreaking *papiers collés* may have also represented a longing for the past. We will see, however, that the artist's situation at the time, having recently moved to a studio away from Montmartre and its lively social scene, may have encouraged Picasso to dwell on memories of the cabaret experience. References to Spain and Catalonia would also suggest nostalgia for his homeland, after returning from a summer in the South. It will also be suggested that nostalgia is conveyed not only through content but also on a formal level, with the fragile, browning paper a reminder of the effect of time on these one-hundred year old works of art.

While the aim of this thesis is to investigate the use of music in Picasso's work, a number of key themes emerge that are seemingly unrelated to anything musical. References to the Parisian cabaret scene in the works acknowledge the contemporary context in which Picasso was socialising and creating art. Gender and nationality, however, form two main ways in which we can interpret the symbolism of the guitar in Cubist works. The notion of the passing of time, it will ultimately be argued, underpins the entire series of sheet music *papiers collés*. It is the guitar, however, that unites all of these themes and arguments.



They are its many strings, which are played together to give us an intriguing insight into Picasso's world and art at this pivotal time.

# Chapter One: Ancestors of the Guitar

## Introduction

In order to evaluate Picasso's use of music in his art, it is first necessary to identify the role that musical iconography has played in the visual arts throughout history. Music has acquired symbolism in art because of attitudes encouraged by religious doctrine and social custom. Picasso harnesses these connotations through the inclusion of musical references in order to allude to subjects of sensuality and morality.

Musical imagery has played an important role in the visual arts since the Classical Period, when musical instruments were used to represent myths and mythical characters. A relationship was beginning to form between stringed instruments and the woman even at this early stage, with the Muses often being accompanied by the ancient lyre. The sensual nature of music and its power to manipulate and evoke emotion in the listener led to its condemnation by the Church of the Middle Ages. The popularity of the lute between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries reinforced and solidified the stringed instrument's association with the female form. Not only was it an instrument associated with courting and romance, but the rounded shape of the lute itself encouraged links with female fertility. The lute's symbolism as an instrument connected with sexuality worked its way into colloquial language, literature and art. As an ancestor of the guitar, therefore, this symbolism is integral to the argument that Picasso conflates the woman and the guitar.

## A History of Music in Art

Even in antiquity, music was thought of as having a powerful social impact. In classical mythology, Pan's music was linked with excesses in behaviour. Moreover, the songs of the Sirens lured enchanted sailors to their deaths. Plato discusses the relative merits and drawbacks of music to society when debating its usefulness to his 'Republic'. Plato excludes certain types of music from his Republic because of the behaviour that they encourage. He associates music with actions of "drunkenness and softness and indolence", behaviour "utterly unbecoming" the character of the guardians in the Republic.<sup>11</sup> Types of music that evoke intense emotion, such as sorrowful melodies, must also be banished; Plato claims that, "even to women who have a character to maintain they are of no use, and much less to men."<sup>12</sup> Plato's insight provides us with a view of music as the inducer of sensual and emotional exuberance, the corruptor of moderation and rationality. He also provides us with a link between the woman as emotional in character, and music as the heightener of emotions.

It could be strongly argued that the relationship between the female figure and the stringed instrument was established in art in Ancient Greece through the depiction of the Muses. These nine goddesses were said to be the source of artistic, literary and scientific inspiration and each presided over one area of intellectual or artistic activity. In order to identify the Muses from each other in art, they became associated with the image of the woman engaging in an activity that they performed and were supposed to inspire. The *kithara*, from which we derive the modern word 'guitar', and the lyre, a related instrument associated with Apollo, accompanied the Muses of love poetry and dance, Erato and Terpsichore. Images such as that found on a vase from c. 440-430BC (Fig. 8) provide us with examples. Here we see a female figure sitting and playing the lyre or *kithara*; the stone upon which she sits bears the inscription *HAIKON* (*Hēlikon*), the mountain upon which legend claimed the Muses lived, and this image is likely to represent Erato. The female Classical poet Sappho is also often depicted in art holding a similar instrument, such as in an image on

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<sup>11</sup> Plato (330 BC) in Jowett (trans.), 2008: 345

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*: 345

another vase from c. 370BC by the Brygos Painter (Fig. 9). The romance and eroticism in the poetry of Sappho, as well as the sexual undertones of the Muses' poetry and dance, link the symbol of the woman playing a stringed instrument with concepts of sexuality and sensuality, thereby establishing a symbolic thread that is returned to throughout art history.

A subject of philosophical analysis since the Classical period, the five senses became a common subject in art of the Middle Ages, coinciding with a renewed interest in the human cognitive processes. Initially associated with different animals, by the sixteenth century each of the five senses were represented by the female figure engaged in certain activities.<sup>13</sup> The playing of musical instruments was, unsurprisingly, used to represent hearing and so during this period we again see the female figure with a musical instrument returning as a symbolic theme. A Franco-Flemish tapestry from the cycle of *The Lady and the Unicorn* (1484-1500) (Fig. 10) demonstrates this usage. Entitled *Hearing*, the tapestry depicts two women surrounded by a rich garden of flowers and animals, characterising the *mille-fleurs* style. Assisted by a handmaiden, the woman at the centre plays a small pipe-organ, personifying the sense of hearing. The way that music is created through the physical handling of instruments also meant that it was associated with the sense of touch, and this led to erotic interpretations. Images such as Pieter Jansz Saenredam's (1565 – 1607) engraving of two lovers playing music, *Hearing* (1595) (Fig. 11), is a good example of the connotations that music could have in art of this time. A couple look lovingly at each other as they both play music together and this joint activity would have been associated with couples "giving themselves over to the pleasures of love."<sup>14</sup>

Because of music's associations with the "non-intellectual", pleasure-giving senses, and with raucous, exuberant behaviour, religious authorities inherited the classical reservations about music's power upon the soul, and it was considered by the Church to be a path to sin and immorality. When art explored the subject of the seven deadly sins, music often took a central role in the

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<sup>13</sup> Ausoni, 2009: 44

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.: 44

representation of lust, particularly in Flemish painting between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. Music was seen as leading people towards pleasures of the flesh, a meaningless distraction from serving God. It was often used as a symbol of mortal man's pointless pursuits in *vanitas* images, the pleasure of music not lasting beyond its performance.<sup>15</sup> In fact, while we might today associate harps with scenes of angelic choirs and see music as a method of worship, the Church of the Middle Ages associated music with the work of the devil. Religious music consisted only of the monophony of plain chant, rather than the hymns, choirs and organs that we are more familiar with now.

Hieronymous Bosch (c. 1450-1516) perhaps best demonstrates the use of musical imagery as a symbol of evil and sin in the dramatic 'Hell' panel of *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (1502-04) (Fig. 12). Musical instruments which once provided the earthly pleasures of life are here transformed into devices for the perpetual torture of the damned in an intricate and complicated array of symbolism and allegory. Sinners are strung up and crucified on harps and lutes, their once harmonious sounds corrupted into chaotic bedlam; perhaps the large knife slicing painfully between two ears in the top-left of the image is an indication of the torturous din that accompanies the torment. Underneath the harp, a monstrous creature and a chorus of fallen souls sing a melody from a score etched across a man's buttocks, perhaps another condemnation of lust through music.<sup>16</sup> Through the use of musical instruments, Bosch punishes the unfortunate inhabitants of his hell with the very things they abused in life.<sup>17</sup> His painting acts not as a condemnation of music itself, but of the sensual, lustful excesses in behaviour that it encourages.

While perhaps not bearing such strong moral messages as Bosch's works due to the emergence of more secular patrons, painters during the Baroque period also adopted the theme of the figure with an instrument. Here we see the figure with a stringed instrument moving beyond a simply symbolic function in an image and becoming an established *genre* in itself. Renowned masters such as

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<sup>15</sup> Ausoni, 2009: 44

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*: 167

<sup>17</sup> Dixon, 2003: 268

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571-1610) engaged with this *genre* in paintings such as *The Lute Player* (c.1596) (Fig. 13). In this image, a young man with soft, almost feminine features, plays a love song, the music of which is spread across the table in front of him. This is an excellent example of the detailed depiction of sheet music in art, which has the effect of evoking sound in a visual context. The fact that the musician plays a love song highlights the use of stringed instruments for courting and reinforces the *genre's* links with themes of romance. Admirers of Caravaggio also took up this theme, and a painting by the Baroque artist Orazio Gentileschi (1563-1639) provides evidence that artists were exploring the similarities in form between the female figure and the stringed instrument. In Gentileschi's *The Lute Player* (c.1626) (Fig.14) a woman sits rather unusually with her back to us, holding a lute upright next to her ear, perhaps tuning it in preparation for a performance. Most of the body of the instrument is concealed behind the woman, and the neck echoes her head and raised arm. This positioning encourages us to compare the shapes of the instrument and the woman, as we replace the hidden body of the lute with the torso of the woman. This represents a possible early experiment in conflating the two entities and, as we shall explore later in the chapter, highlights the important metaphorical links between the lute and the woman.

The Neo-Classical period brought Classical iconography back into play. We see a return to the theme of the muses in the work of Neo-Classical artists such as Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres (1780-1867) and John Flaxman (1755-1826). The muses often make an appearance in the work that Flaxman did for the Wedgwood pottery company. In a white Jasper plaque from 1778 (Fig. 15) that is generally attributed to Flaxman, five muses are depicted, each engaged in a creative activity that identifies them. On the far left-hand side we see Terpsichore; ruler of dance and dramatic chorus, Terpsichore is depicted holding a lyre, which she uses to accompany her dancers and choirs. While Neo-Classical artists failed to engage as fully with the symbolic power of stringed instruments as Bosch and Gentileschi, they did revive their use as symbols of classical myth and character, and continued to reaffirm their association with the woman as art moved towards the modern period.

Picasso therefore inherited a rich tradition of musical symbolism in art. Particularly in art of the Middle Ages, which primarily expressed the message of the Church, music was used as a symbol of the morally loose behaviour that it often accompanied. The physical touch that is required to produce music, as well as its association with the seven deadly sins, encouraged a connection between music and lust. As the subject of the figure with the guitar was adopted in the Baroque period as a *genre* in its own right, artists such as those surrounding Caravaggio began to explore both the relationship between the two forms. The sexual metaphors hidden in musical iconography, as well as the partnership of the female figure and the musical instrument are therefore likely to be very important to Picasso's own use of music in art.

## **Ancestors of the Guitar: The Lyre and the Anthropomorphic Lute**

We can see by looking back through artistic history that the female figure with a musical instrument has been an important and consistently employed subject in art since antiquity. While the woman is depicted with various different musical instruments in art, there appears to be a particular tradition for coupling the figure with a stringed instrument such as the lyre, lute, or guitar; it is this *genre*, we will argue, that Picasso draws upon in works such as *Ma Jolie* (1911-12) (Fig. 16) and his guitar *papiers collés*. The argument will be presented that the guitar in Picasso's works takes on gendered significance. In order to establish this meaning, however, we must not only look to the guitar's contemporary associations, but also examine any historical symbolism, inherited from earlier ancestors of the instrument. What we find is that the stringed instrument does indeed have a long history of sexual symbolism which provides a supportive foundation for our interpretation of Picasso's works. The lute, in particular, became an emblem for sex and love during its popularity in the Renaissance period, and this symbolism was explored in art and literature of the time.

The lute family encompasses a range of stringed instruments, all featuring a long neck and a deeply rounded back. A descendant of the classical lyre and a cousin of the Middle-Eastern *oud*, the lute was a common instrument in Europe between the medieval period and the eighteenth-century. The ‘Golden Age’ of the lute occurred during the sixteenth century, when the instrument became popular. It featured in a wide range of musical styles, featuring particularly heavily in Renaissance secular music and as part of *basso continuo* parts in the Baroque era. Its appeal lay in its ability to allow one person to produce a fully harmonised consort of music with one instrument; for this reason among others, the lute took on an accompanying role particularly in solo vocal music. At the time, the only other instrument that could provide this ability was the keyboard; while the latter would eventually dominate as technical advances improved its capabilities, the lute was favoured during the sixteenth century because it was cheaper and easier to maintain, and provided a more expressive dynamic range and subtler harmonic possibilities.<sup>18</sup> The Renaissance fascination with Classical texts may also have fuelled the instrument’s popularity. As it flourished, the lute also increasingly appeared in visual art, where it was used not simply as a contemporary prop, but to fulfill a symbolic function. Often women would appear in art not simply engaging in the activity of music-making but also posing with the lute, the two subjects sharing equal importance within the image. We will now explore this symbolism in order to establish the tradition of meaning that Picasso’s modern guitar inherited.

The portability of this instrument meant that it was often used for spontaneous music-making and made the perfect instrument for courting couples. The measured purity of the strings acted as a complement to an expressive vocal line and perhaps because of these reasons, the lute was regarded for centuries as an instrument for “winning the favours of ladies.”<sup>19</sup> In a time where music was seen as the “bridge” between the natural and magical worlds, the lute became a way to communicate the irrational passions of love. We are reminded here, of course, of Shakespeare’s famous line “If music be the food of love, play

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<sup>18</sup> Goodwin, 2001

<sup>19</sup> Shaw Miller, 2002: 95



on.”<sup>20</sup> The dynamic range of the lute, as well as its harmonic capabilities and portability made it a great communicator; through its music the player could express complex feelings that perhaps could not be adequately communicated by words. The lute was an instrument that allowed the subtle communication of feelings without recourse to speaking aloud. As Mary Burwell in the *Burwell Lute Tutor* (c.1660-1672) notes: “the lute is a modest interpreter of our thoughts and passions to those that understand the language. One may tell another by the [word] of it what he hath in his heart.”<sup>21</sup> Sir Thomas Wyatt also draws upon the idea of the lute as an honest channeller of thoughts and emotions in his poem “Blame Not My Lute”. In the poem, Wyatt mockingly suggests that his lover should not blame his lute or poems if they speak ill of her, for they simply speak the truth that he feels.<sup>22</sup>

When the lute was in the woman’s hands, it proved a powerful tool for seduction and rendered her far from passive in the expression of her passions and the stirring of emotions in men. In the society of the time a woman’s success in life was equated with and dependent upon finding a husband, and the lute became an important way for the woman to take an active role in courtship in order to achieve her goal. Mary Burwell celebrates the lute’s attractiveness to men. She writes, “of all the arts I know there is none that engages more the inclination of men than the lute. For ravishing the soul by the ears and the eyes by the swiftness and neatness of all the fingers”.<sup>23</sup> For a woman to play the lute to a potential suitor was for her to advertise that she was willing to have sex and start a family, and so the lute performed the specific function of a “badge of fertility” in this context.<sup>24</sup> It was also an appropriate and acceptable way for a woman to demonstrate her higher sensibilities, opinions and desires in a strongly patriarchal, restrictive social environment.<sup>25</sup> Often the women depicted with the lute do not appear to be actively engaged in playing it; in images such

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<sup>20</sup> Shakespeare, 1602: Act I, Scene I

<sup>21</sup> Burwell, c1660-1672: 43v

<sup>22</sup> Wyatt, 1997

<sup>23</sup> Burwell, c.1660-1672: 45

<sup>24</sup> Craig-McFeely, 2000

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

as Philip van Dijk's (1683-1753) *Woman Playing a Lute* (c. 1725, Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis, The Hague), while the woman's hands may rest on the strings, little movement or involvement in the music is suggested. The lute here could be seen to stand for the personality and sensitivity of the subject. The importance of appearance and visual beauty in lute-playing is not simply constructed by the artists for the benefit of the viewers of their paintings; part of the appeal of female lute performance to potential suitors was the combination of visual and acoustic pleasure. Much emphasis was placed on posture and grace in lute teaching; this was not to improve the quality of the music but as Burwell states, lute players "must not less please the eyes than the ears."<sup>26</sup> By expressing herself through the lute, the woman could create visual as well as acoustic pleasure for the listener, but also demonstrate what she could offer as well as physical beauty.

Part of the allure and success of the lute in courtship was its capability to affect and alter the emotions. To be able to manipulate and evoke the emotions of men gave women lute players a powerful tool. In the pre-Enlightenment Age the power of music to affect the emotions was unexplained and therefore seen as a kind of supernatural force. Men were seen to be more at the mercy of this force than women. This observation drew on the Church's teaching that women were evil and dangerous and so the lute was seen as a tool by which the *femme fatale* could bewitch and sexually manipulate men, much as the Sirens lured men to their deaths with their beautiful voices. Shakespeare harnesses this perception, drawing upon the image of the lute repeatedly in his plays. For example, he questions the strange charm of the instrument in *Much Ado About Nothing*: "Is it not strange that sheeps' guts should hale souls out of men's bodies?"<sup>27</sup> The emotive power of the instrument is puzzling to him, considering the humble physicality of its construction.

The lute's connections to love and fertility are not only established through its traditional function in courtship, but are rooted in the structure of the instrument itself. In particular, the rounded back of the instrument acts as a symbol of

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<sup>26</sup> Burwell (c. 1660-1672) in Zecher, 2007: 132

<sup>27</sup> Shakespeare (1623) in Zecher, 2007: 131

fertility, echoing the shape of a woman's pregnant belly. This association has existed in art since very early on in the lute's lifetime, as we can see in Francesco del Cossa's fresco *Allegory of April: Triumph of Venus* (c. 1465) (Fig. 17) in the Palazzo Schifanoia, Ferrara. On the right-hand side of the image, beneath the depiction of the nude women representing the three Graces of classical mythology, a woman stands in a group, holding a lute. Instead of holding the lute by her side, she holds it in front of her womb, evoking an image of pregnancy. The lute is again used in relation to the three Graces in Hans Baldung Grien's later painting *The Three Graces* (c. 1540) (Fig. 18). The three Graces were often employed to represent female fertility and here the figure to the right subtly holds a lute almost completely out of the frame.<sup>28</sup> The physical structure of this anthropomorphic instrument lends itself to the instruments' use as a symbol of fertility in art of the Middle Ages but the leap is only small from female fertility to female sexuality.

The three Graces often accompany the goddess *Voluptas* in Classical mythology and imagery. The daughter of Psyche and Cupid, *Voluptas* is known as the goddess of sensual pleasures. In the hands of the middle-class, single woman, we could see the lute as representing the notion of *voluptas* in a respectable sense; as a tool for courting, the lute allowed the woman to express her sensuality and love in a noble way, without overstepping the boundaries of polite society. However, the line is thin between courtly love and a lewder kind of sexual expression; Zecher comments that "while the lute could symbolize *voluptas* in the positive sense of the term (that is, music-making as a pleasant pastime, as solace, as a source of mind-body equilibrium), it could also connote the *vita voluptuosa*, with its illicit gratification, its excess and dissipation."<sup>29</sup> By *vita voluptuosa*, Zecher refers to the "life of the flesh", the first stage on the journey towards the philosophical life, or *vita contemplativa*, as described by Aristotle and others.

Zecher's words highlight how the lute's meaning could easily shift from the innocent and modest to the lewd and explicit. This distinction is often

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<sup>28</sup> Zecher, 2007: 139

<sup>29</sup> Zecher, 2000: 772

represented in sixteenth and seventeenth century art as the difference between what is seen and what is heard; while the image of the lute may be one of respectability and modesty, clues in the paintings often suggest that a more lascivious story is revealed in the music being played.<sup>30</sup> A series of images of Mary Magdalene attributed to the Master of the Female Half-Lengths provide an excellent demonstration of this. In *Saint Mary Magdalene Playing the Lute* (1520s) (Fig. 19), Mary Magdalen is depicted as a courtesan before her conversion. From her attire and posture we might not suspect that any notions of disrepute were being represented; she is dressed in refined clothing, and her pose suggests a modest, rather than flirtatious, temperament. Nevertheless, Zecher draws our attention to the music that Mary Magdalen plays, which is communicated to us visually through the sheet music on the table. The piece is identifiable as “Si j’ayme mon amy”, a song that would have been known to some French viewers because of its inclusion in a printed collection of poems from 1515-1520.

*Si j’ayme mon amy  
Trop mieux que mon mary,  
Ce n’est pas de merveilles.  
Il n’est ouvrier que luy  
De ce mestier joly  
Que l’on fait sans chandelle!*

If I love my friend  
Much more than my husband  
Are you astonished?  
As a worker there's no one like him  
In the marvelous job  
That is done without a candle!<sup>31</sup>

The playful nature of the song, coupled with its suggestion that she is having an affair, contradicts the innocent visual image of the lute player and suggests that here Mary Magdalen is shown before her repentance.<sup>32</sup> The fact that we only find this out through the sheet music adds a very interesting and innovative element to such an early image. The use of the score evokes an aural

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<sup>30</sup> Zecher, 2007: 140

<sup>31</sup> McMurtry (ed.), 1985: 56

<sup>32</sup> Zecher, 2007: 143

dimension in the painting, expanding our experience of it from the purely visual to the multi-sensory and it is only through this that we discover Mary's true character. The inclusion of sheet music and its importance to our interpretation of this work is highly relevant to our later study of Picasso's sheet music *papiers collés*, linking the art across the centuries.

During the seventeenth century Dutch artists often featured lutes in works to signify sexual connotations. There was a strong linguistic connection for Dutch people between the lute and sex; the Dutch word for lute, *luit*, was also used as a euphemism for 'vagina', while to 'play the lute' signified sexual intercourse. Dutch paintings from this period therefore often use lutes to pun on the other meanings of the word.<sup>33</sup> One example is *The Morning Toilet* (1663) (Fig. 20) by Jan Steen (1632-1675), which features a woman in her bedroom. It could firstly be argued that the ornate archway through which we view the scene possesses a kind of vaginal symbolism that frames the image. We view the woman in a suggestive situation, putting on her stockings as she sits on her bed. The state of the room gives us a further clue as to the nature of her activities the night before. The bed remains unmade, shoes carelessly discarded on the floor. The lute, also left lying on the floor with its open music book, suggests romantic serenading, but also brings with it the symbolism of sex and seduction that this particular instrument had acquired by this time. In this image Steen not only uses visual symbolism but also linguistic punning, as the presence of the *luit* in this Dutch painting implies sexual activity. The woman's stockings perform a similar function, as the Dutch for stocking, *kous*, was also used as a slang word for "vagina".<sup>34</sup>

The Dutch punning on the name of the lute, as well as the notion of *vita voluptuosa* gave rise to the lute's association with sex, prostitution and venal love. Many images of prostitutes appeared, particularly of Dutch origin, in which the woman's disreputable trade would be identified by the image of the lute. In fact, this symbolism extended beyond art; prostitutes in sixteenth century England would often carry lutes to identify themselves in public places. Dirck

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<sup>33</sup> Shaw Miller, 2002: 95

<sup>34</sup> Craig-McFeely, 2000

Van Baburen's *The Procuress* (c.1635) (Fig. 21) is one of many paintings of this period that demonstrates the use of the lute to identify a prostitute or brothel scene in this way. Three figures occupy the claustrophobic image; a prostitute smiles into the face of a potential client while the right-hand figure, the procuress, points to her palm to indicate that she expects payment. This image also hangs in the background of two paintings by Johannes Vermeer. *A Young Woman Seated at a Virginal* (c.1670-72, National Gallery, London) and *The Concert* (c.1664) (Fig. 22) both depict young, middle-class women engaging in music-making in their home, the Baburen image hanging on the wall behind them. While the National Gallery maintains that "it is probable that a more general association between music and love is intended", it could be argued that Vermeer's decision to allude to this image has a more specific meaning.<sup>35</sup> The openly lustful atmosphere of *The Procuress* juxtaposes with the polite, refined society in which Vermeer's women exist. Yet it could also be argued that the fact that the women share in the same music-making activity as Baburen's prostitute reveals the erotically charged atmosphere beneath the layer of etiquette. In Gerrit Van Honthorst's painting, also titled *The Procuress* (c.1625) (Fig. 23), we are presented with a scene very similar to the Baburen image. Again, three figures are involved in the exchange, as the procuress on the far left introduces the young woman to her next client. The man, silhouetted against the same candlelight that illuminates the woman's décolletage, appears to gesture towards the lute, which is held up as though it is the object of discussion, rather than the woman. This emphasis on the lute in the Honthorst and to an extent the Baburen leads us to suspect that the artists are exploiting the *double entendre* of the Dutch *luit* to reveal the true subject of the figures' bartering - namely, the services of the prostitute. There are countless other example images which employ the lute to draw links between music, love and lust, but also to make use of the lute's Dutch word play to refer to a cruder meaning.

The presence of the lute in literature also sheds a lot of light on the symbolic function that the instrument provided during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As in art, lutes were a common appearance in literature of this time;

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<sup>35</sup> "Young Woman Seated at a Virginal", *The National Gallery* [Online]

in France there existed the specific *genre* of lute-poems, which were popular and fashionable during the mid-fifteen-hundreds and also moved to England nearer the end of that century. The tradition of addressing a poem to a stringed instrument dates back to the Classical period, in which poets would use the lyre to invoke an inspiring muse.<sup>36</sup> During the sixteenth-century, lute-poems would draw upon the lute's position in society as an instrument associated with courting and with both professional and amateur music-making, addressing it as a "muse, companion or confidant."<sup>37</sup> The lute was adopted in poems by both male and female poets; the anthropomorphic quality of the instrument's appearance, displaying both the feminine womblike shape as well as the masculine, phallic neck, meant that it was gendered in different ways in poetry. The work of Louise Labé (1525-1566), a Lyonese Renaissance poet, provides an excellent example of how female poets used the lute in their writing. Labé was praised as a talented lutenist herself, and often uses the imagery of the lute in her sonnets in connection to the absence of a lover.<sup>38</sup> She addresses the lute as a sentient being that has the ability to make its own decisions. In contradiction to the symbolism of the lute's form as the female body, the lute is often addressed with the male pronoun and could be seen to stand in for the male. With its position, nestled against the body of the woman, we could even view the instrument as an object of male jealousy.<sup>39</sup> Even outside of the poetic imagination there is evidence of the personification of the lute in the musicians' psyche at this time. Mary Burwell in her *Lute Tutor* described it as "a faithful & commodious companion that watcheth amidst darkness [,] and when the whole nature is in darkness it banisheth from it horror and disquiet by pleasing sounds."<sup>40</sup>

It appears that almost any depiction of lutenists in art is open to potentially erotic interpretation. The moral ambiguities that the lute imparts on the image of the woman are likely to be the reason why Saint Cecilia is rarely portrayed

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<sup>36</sup> Hollander, 1961: 129

<sup>37</sup> Zecher, 2000: 769

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*: 770 (n.6)

<sup>39</sup> Zecher, 2007: 137

<sup>40</sup> Mary Burwell (c. 1660-1672) in Craig-McFeely, 2000

playing the lute in sixteenth and seventeenth century art. So unlikely is this pairing, that Artemisia Gentileschi's painting of Cecilia with a lute (c. 1620, Spada Gallery, Rome) was not identified as such until a 1988 cleaning revealed a pipe organ, which is more commonly associated with the saint, in the background.<sup>41</sup> The lute's popularity had declined by the seventeenth century. In Italy this decline has been linked to the rise in humanism, while a more general explanation may be found in the increasing versatility of keyboard instruments. Musical performances grew from small chamber ensembles to big orchestras in bigger venues, and the lute could no longer be heard among the louder, more modern instruments. The Enlightenment also contributed to the lute's decline; with an emphasis on scepticism and logic, Enlightenment thinkers rejected the "magical" power that the anthropomorphised lute had over the passions, and favoured the more "rational" keyboard. Julia Craig-McFeely also argues, however, that the lute's general decline in Europe could be linked to the instrument's symbolism.<sup>42</sup> By the mid-seventeenth century, the courtly lute was regarded as an instrument of great expressive potential, but also as a metaphor for sex. This volatile emblem meant complicated implications for those who chose to play the instrument, perhaps contributing to its eventual demise.

## Conclusion

Stringed instruments throughout history have been closely related to the woman, whether as an identifying symbol, or as a direct comparison to her form and anatomy. This is an ancient association, dating back to antiquity. It was during the Middle Ages, however, that this relationship was really cemented. Not only did the church brand music as an evil tempter of the flesh, but the popularity of the lute in secular music ensured that its symbolism was wide spread and in the public awareness. The instrument's use in literature, for example in the lute poems of Labé, helped to carry meaning through the centuries.

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<sup>41</sup> Zecher, 2007: 145-146

<sup>42</sup> Craig-McFeely, 2000



The symbolism that the lute had established, therefore, did not vanish with the instrument; the sexual connotations of the lute were inherited by its descendants, which also replaced the medieval instrument in its traditional functions of courting and impromptu music-making. During the eighteenth century the lute was largely replaced by the mandolin, with its rounded, womb-like back, and the guitar, which adopted a figure-eight shape; both of these instruments retained particularly strong connections with the female form. The word guitar also took on the feminine gender in both Spanish and French, causing a linguistic association between the object and femininity. Considering women played such an important part in both Picasso's life and in his art, it is likely that his consistent depiction of the guitar may have been related to the symbolism it held in artistic and societal history. The following sections will examine the evidence and argument in support of this point of view, exploring Picasso's use of the guitar and its symbolism to conflate its image with that of the female figure.

# Chapter Two: Gender and Conflation

## Introduction

In the previous chapter we explored in some detail the long tradition of conflating the woman with a stringed instrument in art and in particular the gendered interpretations and connotations that have developed around this imagery. Knowledge of this history is vital to understanding the complex plethora of meaning inherited by Picasso, and provides us with a foundation from which to explore his own interaction with this musical and gendered imagery. The following section will explore Picasso's view of women and, in light of this, will examine how this is potentially revealed and explored in his art. In particular, we will look at how Picasso plays with sexual themes through the visual and verbal possibilities of conflation.

Picasso's *Ma Jolie* epitomizes the high Analytic style of Cubism. Among the shifting planes, the representational clues come together to suggest the presence of a woman holding a mandolin. Art history has structured the way that we view works such as this. The role of the subject in the work is often down-played in discussions of Analytical works, mirroring the visual retreat of the image into abstraction. Greenberg's essay "The Pasted Paper Revolution" (1958), John Golding's *Cubism: A History and an Analysis* (1959) and Douglas Cooper's *The Cubist Epoch* (1970) are key examples that promote this view. Attention is primarily focused on the different representational devices used, for example the use of both stencilled text and metonymical signs, and how these signify the subject hidden beneath. It could be argued, however, that beyond this large body of existing conventional discourse, there is still scope for exploring this subject further. Considering the frequency with which musical subjects appear in the work of the Cubists, its potential importance is rarely

assessed in great depth. In particular, the subject of the woman with musical instrument is a well-defined *genre* in Picasso's work, and the relationship between the two entities of figure and musical instrument, and how it is affected as Picasso's Cubist style develops, holds potential for great insight and discussion.

The debate surrounding gender was a very current issue, not only in France but across Europe and America, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as people began to question established notions of gender identity and equality. As the suffrage movement gained strength in countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States of America, many fought to break down the barriers of the marginalised position women had been given in such a patriarchal society. Middle-class women in Paris at the turn of the century lived a life of restriction and exclusion from the masculine world of work, intellectualism and creativity, for which they were deemed psychologically and physically unequipped. Often isolated in the suburbs of the city, women were required to travel with a chaperone if they wanted to leave the house, severely inhibiting their independence and social mobility. Many middle-class men feared the consequences of increased freedom for women and the effect it might have on the social fabric of France.

The current nature of this debate led many artists, women artists included, to explore issues of gender in their work. Griselda Pollock, in her essay "Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity" (1988), recognises how the patriarchal foundation of society has affected art history and therefore our perception and understanding of what Modernism is. She argues that the societal structure of sexual difference prescribed what and how men and women painted; it was the subjects and techniques of male artists that were later considered to form the canon of modernist works; the modern experience was seen to be documented in brothels and bars rather than the domestic interiors of Berthe Morisot (1841-1895) and Mary Cassatt's (1844-1926) works. This defined modernity and Modernism by specifically male terms, and therefore not only excluded women from Modernism in art historical discourse, but also denied the validity

of their experience of modernity.<sup>43</sup> Picasso's work is a prime example of the use of the image of the nude, in particular, to document and explore the modern condition. Pollock questions this implied relationship between sexuality and modernity: "If it is normal to see paintings of women's bodies as the territory across which men artists claim their modernity and compete for leadership of the avant-garde, can we expect to rediscover paintings by women in which they battled with their sexuality in the representation of the male nude?... There is a historical asymmetry - a difference socially, economically, subjectively between being a woman and being a man in Paris in the late nineteenth century."<sup>44</sup> It is important, therefore, not simply to recognise the different social positions in which men and women resided during this time, but also to examine and acknowledge the affect that it had on Picasso's work.

Picasso's personal situation leads us to suspect that the appearance of the guitar as such a prominent instrument in the Cubist years was somehow linked to his relationships with women. At that time, he was in a relationship with Eva Gouel, who was also known as Marcelle Humbert. His affair with her, which started whilst he was still living with Fernande Olivier, is often associated with the appearance of the guitar in his work. Picasso wrote of Eva to Kahnweiler in 1912: "Marcelle is very sweet, I love her very much and I will write this in my paintings".<sup>45</sup> Under Fernande's suspicious eye, however, Picasso had to hide his love for Eva in song lyrics and discreet signs until his former relationship had ended in the summer of 1912. Perhaps the most prominent and famous of these signs was "Ma Jolie", a lyric taken from a popular contemporary song by the British music hall star, Harry Fragson. There are also a number of works in which the phrase "J'aime Eva" is discreetly added in small letters. Almost every one of these images feature guitar imagery, which suggests that, for Picasso, the image of the guitar is inextricably linked to Eva Gouel.

This chapter will investigate the validity of a gendered reading of Picasso's works, examining the relationship he develops in his art between musical

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<sup>43</sup> Pollock, 1988: 53-56

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.: 54-55

<sup>45</sup> Shaw Miller, 2002: 113

imagery and the female figure. A gendered approach to Picasso is a relatively new development in art history, appearing predominantly in contemporary discourse. Most of these new approaches are revisionist, revisiting and reevaluating traditional interpretations of Cubist works and concepts. Simon Shaw Miller, for example, argues that neither the Modernist approach that emphasises a dialogue with the surface of the images, nor the socio-historical approach, which examines the political context of their creation provide a satisfactory explanation for the subject matter of Picasso's Cubist work.<sup>46</sup> He goes on to highlight the importance and potential symbolism of the guitar as an instrument in Picasso's works, and its relation to the appearance of, for example, the mandolin in the works of Corot.

Three concepts emerge as key themes in this chapter's exploration of the figure and the instrument in Picasso's work. The concept of 'conflation' will be examined, as we explore the argument that, through the formal developments of Cubism, Picasso begins to merge the image of the woman with the guitar. This process arguably ends with the eventual replacement of the figure with the image of the guitar. 'Metamorphosis' was also a key concept to be explored for artists at this time. The process of one thing turning into another evoked the playful imaginative games of childhood and was clearly an important idea for Picasso. Others such as Henri Matisse (1869-1954) were also exploring this theme and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* was an influential work, for which Picasso produced illustrations in the nineteen-thirties.<sup>47</sup>

In this examination of gender in Picasso, the concept of 'passivity' also becomes integral as we discuss the similar values and connotations that were attached to both women and guitars in the early twentieth century. Musical instruments were deemed passive because they require the active role of a musician to serve their function. There is also a gendered inflection to the term which is vital to our discussion, however. Women have traditionally been viewed as sexually, socially and intellectually passive by patriarchal society. Cubism considered itself as active and intellectual, an exclusively male area of activity

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.: 89-90

<sup>47</sup> Skira, 1931

compared to other artistic ideologies and groupings of the time. While the Vorticists, for example, rejected the idea of women artists, there were nevertheless accepted women Vorticists such as Helen Saunders (1885-1963) and Jessica Dismorr (1885-1935) in their circle. We also see Russian female artists such as Maria Vasileva exploring Cubist ideas in Paris, as well as those such as Liubov Popova (1889-1924) and Natalia Goncharova in Moscow and St. Petersburg at this time. We see virtually no French women artists becoming actively involved in the Cubist discussion; Marie Laurencin orbited the Cubists in Paris at this time and was included in Apollinaire's study on Cubism, *Les Peintres Cubistes*. Stylistically, however, her work exhibits very little sign of Cubism as we now recognize it; indeed, we could argue that it is precisely the femininity of her work – the palette of pastel colours and the curving forms – that sets it so apart from the masculinity of the Cubist norm. While she was certainly associated with the group, therefore, the Russian women appear to have been far more radical in their artistic output. French society at this time had very strong, embedded beliefs about the inherent passivity of the woman, and this chapter will argue that these social prejudices are present in Picasso's depiction of the woman and guitar.

It should be noted that Picasso is not alone in reengaging with the traditional subject of the woman with a plucked musical instrument. In fact, when we look, it seems that many of Picasso's *avant garde* contemporaries were engaging in this debate, revisiting the *genre* with new methods of representation. Georges Braque and Juan Gris, Picasso's closest artistic companions, were also exploring similar subject matter at this time. We see an interest in the figure and the guitar further afield, too. The Russian Impressionist painter Konstantin Korovin (1861-1939) revisited the subject many times, such as in *Lady with Guitar* of 1911 (Regional Museum of Fine Arts, Kostroma). We see the subject being explored by the Russian Cubo-Futurist group too, for example in Aristarkh Lentulov's (1882-1943) 1913 painting *Woman with Guitar* (State Art Museum of Republic Tatarstan, Kazan). The extent to which Picasso took this line of enquiry is profound, however, and it is clear that he is one of the central figures in this debate. He will therefore act as the primary focus of the chapter, though we will also look to those artists who immediately surrounded him, notably Braque and Gris.

## “The Psychology of the Guitar”

When exploring the symbolism of the lute we noted the anatomical similarities shared by the woman and the lute, with the long neck and rounded, womb-like body. It appears that as the lute developed into the modern acoustic guitar that we are familiar with today, these anthropomorphic characteristics grew stronger. Now the instrument does not bear the pregnant belly of a fertile woman, but mirrors the curvaceous, figure-eight shape of the female torso; the subtle attractiveness of this shape has since been demonstrated in other objects, for example the design of the Coca-Cola bottle. Picasso’s depiction of the guitar and the violin predates works such as Man Ray’s *Violin d’Ingres* (1924) (Fig. 24), which openly compares the shape of the female torso with that of a violin. These physical similarities are addressed directly in a contemporary essay written by Nicolás María López entitled “Psicología de la guitarra” (The Psychology of the Guitar), which was published in Spanish in 1901.<sup>48</sup> The essay dwells in a poetic tone on the emotional and metaphorical power of the guitar and its music. Drawing a direct comparison between it and the woman, López writes:

“The guitar is a symbol of those searching and feeling. Maybe that is why it is shaped like a woman. The guitar is feminine, grammatically and psychologically. Her pegbox is the head, like a woman, decorated with blue and red ribbons which, waving loosely, resemble the blond or dark hopeful locks of hair. The neck of the guitar is the erect neck of a woman, as straight as Venus de Milo. The guitar’s fret is a woman’s necklace or pearls (because she is Moorish) and the box; there are the arrogantly curved shoulders and magically curved hips...”<sup>49</sup>

As he mentions, the Spanish grammatical femininity of the word ‘guitar’ aids the narrative of his comparison, as we describe the guitar as a “she”; this is perhaps even more powerful when translated into English as we expect an inanimate “it” but find instead that the guitar has been given life with a personal pronoun. Clearly López established a strong association between the woman and the

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<sup>48</sup> López, 1901

<sup>49</sup> López, 1901 (Trans. De Vial, L.)

guitar; we could argue that this essay also had a strong influence on Picasso's ideas. Published in Madrid in 1901 by the literary-artistic journal *Arte Joven*, the magazine of which Picasso was co-editor in Madrid at the time, we know that he certainly must have read the article and deemed it interesting enough for inclusion in his publication.

We could argue that Picasso gives visual expression to López's views in his *papiers collés*. With the decline of the figure in his works over the first decade of the twentieth century, the guitar becomes the focus of his work. However, in images such as *Guitar and Sheet Music* (Fig. 5) in particular, Picasso treats the guitar like a model, presenting it lain at an angle, head back so that the guitar appears to take the place of a reclining woman, surrounded by a boudoir scene.<sup>50</sup> In Picasso's earlier work, too, we can see the beginnings of this development, as we observe the guitar and the woman coming closer together in the fragmented surface of the Analytic Cubist period. In images such as Picasso's *Girl with a Mandolin* (1910) (Fig. 25), the mandolin and the woman's body are united not only by shape, but also by the monochrome palette. The result is that by the end of the Analytic period the dissolving of the picture space encourages us to view the two objects as one unit.

Picasso shows further evidence of his interest in human-guitar conflation in 1913, when he interchanges the instrument with parts of the head and body in a series of sketches that play with the fluidity in representation and signification that collage offered. The development of Synthetic Cubism and the *papiers collés* had been an attempt by Picasso and Braque to solve the problem of how to represent three-dimensional objects on a two-dimensional surface without resorting to the language of illusionism; for all its efforts to divorce itself from mimetic representation, Analytic Cubism had still maintained the techniques of modelling and graduating light to distinguish its planes from one another and to signify three-dimensionality.<sup>51</sup> The incorporation of separate materials into the image through collage gave the spatial planes their own material existence, freeing Cubism from its reliance on illusion. This simplified, block-like style

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<sup>50</sup> Cowling, 2002: 249

<sup>51</sup> Rubin, 1972: 79



transferred into Picasso's drawing style as well and we are left with images that are stripped of modelling and other illusionistic techniques. The result is this series of 1912-1913 "Head" works, is a collection of charming, comical and cartoon-like faces in which we see Picasso playfully experimenting with the manipulation of shape in order to represent the conflation of subjects. The subject in Synthetic Cubism appears clearer, if less realistic, compared to the fractured, dissolved figure of *Ma Jolie*, but Picasso exploits these simple shapes' potential for ambiguity. By playing with allusion, rather than illusion, he uses the similarities in shape of facial features to refer to other, inanimate objects.

In *Head* (Fig. 26), from the spring of 1913, we are presented with a man's head, eyebrows raised and mouth open in what appears to be a surprised expression. The image is composed from lines sketched cleanly in ink, one section of water colour and two rectangular collaged areas, including a newspaper clipping. The man's ear is reminiscent of the curving, hourglass shape of a guitar's body and Picasso reinforces this visual connection in a number of ways. The shape of the face and skull echoes the contour of the ears, causing the entire head to take on the shape of a guitar. The ear now becomes the sound hole of the guitar or perhaps even the 'f'-shaped holes of a violin or cello, wittily extending the metaphor to connect the ears with the music that they listen to.<sup>52</sup> A similar effect can be seen in almost all of the "Head" sketches, many of which are thought to date from early December 1912. In *Head of a Man with a Hat* (December 1912) (Fig. 27) we see the same shaping of the head and face. Picasso inserts a very similar head composition into the image *Man with a Hat and a Violin* (December 1912) (Fig. 28), which invites a direct comparison between the body and the instrument by placing them symmetrically at the top and bottom of the work. Here the man's neck is also elongated into a straight, vertical fingerboard that is finished by a semi-circle on the man's chest; combined with the neck and the man's rounded shoulders, this could indicate another sound hole and gives us yet another possible interpretation of the image, as the man's torso now becomes the body of the guitar and his head transforms into the pegbox.

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.: 79

In fact, when we look at other images from the same period, we see that Picasso was playfully connecting a whole series of objects by using their similarities in shape as a kind of multi-signifier, attributing multiple images to just one visual element. In images such as *Bottle, Cup and Newspaper* of December 1912 (Fig. 29) the guitar's familiar curves are transformed into the neck of a bottle, the sound-hole picking out the circular base of the cup; in similar images from the period we see the curves in bottles, wineglasses and tumblers. It is interesting to note that all of these objects are objects of volume; the glass and bottle hold liquid while the guitar houses a cavity to produce sound. All of the objects also invite the touch of human hands, including, of course, the female torso. That Picasso would choose such tactile, voluminous objects makes sense when we consider that he was trying to achieve a mode of representation without recourse to three-dimensional illusionism. In *Head*, the man's face is given volume by the addition of a plane along the side of his head. This further enhances the head's likeness with the body of a guitar, creating the impression of a hard edge rather than a rounded, fleshy surface. Rubin comments that the way in which Picasso maps out the image on the paper makes it look like a design plan for a three-dimensional construction or sculpture, with dotted lines to cut or fold down.<sup>53</sup> This deconstruction of volume also brings to mind tailors' dress patterns, which we will examine further later in the chapter.

The last half of López's essay goes on to explore the behavioural and psychological characteristics shared between the guitar and the woman, taking on a strongly misogynistic tone that can appear shocking to a twenty-first century reader.

Like a woman, the guitar sells her body easily. Falling into the hands of error and following down into the filthy, crazed songs of the orgy. She drinks and her music, hoarse and out of tune, echoes the heaviness of the drunk.

Sometimes, amid the depravity of their flamencan melody by ruffians, her strings vibrate a sincere whisper, delicately nostalgic, a heartbreaking woe, or a tearful explosion as

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*: 74

though she regrets the sad fate that brought her to indulge in the bitter pleasures of the flesh.

Just like a woman, the guitar is fickle and difficult. She rebels at first, then submits to slavery; there she blossoms with rich lullabies, withstanding play, often tuning her for more interest. When desperate, jump to her neck, where she is touched, and embrace the torrents of harmony.

She is faithful and affectionate, she forgets easily and possesses all the ingratitude and treachery of a female heart. Feel all the tenderness, and then, when she is old, when she can no longer sing for joy or sigh for love, she will head into the hands of the poor blind man, begging.<sup>54</sup>

These last words bear an uncanny similarity in imagery to a painting that Picasso was to produce only three years after the publication of this essay, *The Old Guitarist* (1903-1904) (Fig. 30). This image epitomises the despair and anguish of Picasso's Blue Period and the scene he depicts appears to be a literal representation of López's description of the shared fate of the old, tired woman and guitar. The resemblance is so accurate that we must wonder whether Picasso took direct inspiration from López's bleak words. The frail, skeletal beggar clutches the guitar, his last lifeline and only hope for income. The instrument becomes the focus of the piece, the only part of the image to break away from the palette of blues and greys. This painting is indicative of Picasso's empathy for the struggle of the needy and destitute, having spent the first few years of the twentieth century very poor himself.<sup>55</sup> Perhaps in this image, however, we do not witness simply the old guitarist's suffering, but also the plight of López's woman, her fading beauty leaving her abandoned and desperate.

The essay by Lopez expresses a widespread view regarding women that was promoted by the patriarchal societies of Europe over several centuries; this is a view in which women have been traditionally viewed as 'passive'; as their natural active role is to produce children, men have taken up active roles in society and culture, excluding women from participating in creative roles outside their biological one.

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<sup>54</sup> López, 1901 (Trans. De Vial, L.)

<sup>55</sup> The Art Institute of Chicago, 2013: 245

Within this wider gendered context, the letters “JOU” of the publication *Le Journal*, which appear in so many of Picasso’s *papiers collés*, take on new significance when accompanying the image of the guitar, referring to both the words “jouer” and “jouissance” and indicating the active role that the male plays over the woman, and, in a more erotic interpretation, the sexual pleasure that is derived. Man Ray’s photographic comparison between the guitar and the woman also demonstrates a similar idea through his use of language. The title of the photo, *Violin d’Ingres*, is also a French idiom meaning ‘hobby’. The connotation, therefore, is that, while violin-playing is a common pastime, Man Ray also views his model, Kiki, as a hobby of his.<sup>56</sup>

Braque explains the particular character of instruments that appealed to him in one of the only quotes we have providing reasons for the Cubists’ preoccupation with them. His explanation sounds technical, but takes on rather a sexual significance when we relate it to the woman. “Their forms, their volumes, came under the heading of still-life, as I saw it. I was already moving towards tactile space, manual space as I prefer to call it, and the distinctive feature of the musical instrument as an object is that it comes alive to the touch.”<sup>57</sup> We cannot help but feel that when Braque talks of the ‘touchability’ of musical instruments, he would express the same sentiment of a desirable woman. Moreover, the notion that “one could animate it by touching it” brings to mind the supposed passivity of the woman, a pretty object only activated to life through the will of the man. These parallels are fortified through López’s comments on the submissive nature of the woman, an instrument for the man’s touch.

Aside from the curving contours of the guitar’s shape, the sound hole takes on a significant role in linking the woman and the guitar in Picasso’s works. In a later work, *Woman with Guitar* from 1924 (Fig. 31), the sound hole of the guitar duplicates the woman’s navel, uniting the two. The curving outline of the guitar is missing, instead allowing the woman’s contours to act as the body of the guitar as well as her own. The sharing of lines and elements in this way marries

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<sup>56</sup> “Le Violin d’Ingres (Ingres’s Violin)”, *The J. Paul Getty Museum* [Online]

<sup>57</sup> Danchev, 2005: 88

the two in an inseparable union. In other works, the sound hole of the guitar draws more on the historical symbolism of the lute; in the *papiers collés*, for example, the sound hole could be seen to represent the woman's vagina. This emphasises the potential for sexual meaning in the works.

There is also evidence for this view in the formal devices that Picasso uses to represent the guitars; Simon Shaw Miller points out that Picasso's formal approach to the sound hole of the guitar in some works could further encourage a sexual interpretation. In *Guitar, Sheet Music and Glass* (Fig. 6), for example, it is interesting to note that the sound hole is represented by a white circle of paper instead of black, as we might expect for a cavity in an object. Moreover, the white piece of paper is stuck on top of the blue paper that makes up part of the body. This positioning suggests that the sound hole is placed forward, presenting it as a thing of substance rather than a lack of substance. This approach is seen more obviously in Picasso's *Guitar* constructions, which are three-dimensional realisations of his guitar collages, made in cardboard (1913) and sheet metal (1914) (Fig. 32). In these constructions the sound cavity protrudes out as a tube from the body of the guitar. Shaw Miller argues that this inversion of negative space into a protrusion represents a "vaginal-phallic reversal".<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, the tube-like form of this part of the sculpture means that while the protrusion of the form is phallic, the hollow hole could still be interpreted as vaginal. While Shaw Miller's interpretation is an interesting contribution to our discussion of gender in the works, Picasso's choice of representation in this instance is likely to have been more strongly influenced by the art of other cultures, specifically the "primitive" African Grebo masks that also make an appearance in Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger*; the conceptual representation of African art encouraged Picasso to represent things not as they appeared mimetically but, rather, conceptually as he 'knew' them. The protruding tube of the guitar constructions, as well as its indication through placement and colour in the *papiers collés*, convey the depth and volume of the sound cavity. Nevertheless, Picasso's inversion of this depth does strongly support a sexualised reading of his guitar imagery, whether or not it was intended to be seen as such by the artist.

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<sup>58</sup> Shaw Miller, 2002: 99

While Picasso may have shared some of López's misogynistic views, the relationship he explores between the guitar and the woman in his art is at least more subtle and complex than the essayist's rather crude statements. Picasso does not simply compare the woman and the guitar in physical and behavioural terms, but draws on the complex relationships between language, symbol and image, making use of playful pun, visual manipulation and historic symbolism such that the two objects become "truly synthetic".<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, through the objectification of the woman and the sexualisation of the image, Picasso still engages fundamentally in the misogynistic spirit of López's essay. This is not a surprising revelation; French society during the early twentieth century was dominated by the will of the man and sexism was therefore inherent. As was discussed in the introduction to this chapter, the Cubist movement was also male-dominated, driven in part by the belief that women were not suited to creative activities of such an active and intellectual nature. Women played a profound role in Picasso's life, and his relationships often had a significant impact on his art too. We also know, however, that he could be a jealous and possessive lover, as the diaries of Fernande Olivier testify.<sup>60</sup> These insights into both the social and personal prejudices affecting Picasso's art form a helpful basis for understanding further these seemingly simple guitar images.

## **Corot and the Mandolin**

Until the start of the First World War, Picasso made a point of attending each Salon D'Automne, as well as other Salon exhibitions in Paris. This allowed him to keep up to date on what his fellow artists were doing at the time, but he also took a great interest in artists of the past, and the retrospectives held by the Salon were a chance to examine the work of old and modern masters. In 1909, Picasso, along with Braque, André Derain and most probably Gris, attended a Corot retrospective at the Salon D'Automne, featuring twenty-four figure

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*: 118

<sup>60</sup> Olivier, 2001: 175

paintings.<sup>61</sup> Braque recalls the artists being particularly affected by the images, and evidence of their admiration for Corot can be seen in their work from this point onwards.<sup>62</sup> His influence becomes particularly relevant when examining the links between the female figure and the musical instrument in Picasso's work. Corot's figure paintings frequently feature women holding mandolins, and this instrument appears unusually frequently in Cubist works for such a classical subject. Not only does Corot present the woman with a plucked instrument as a major theme in his work, but it could be argued that he provided the link for Picasso between figure painting and still life.

It is perhaps surprising to note Picasso's admiration for Corot when we compare their legacies within the context of art history today. Picasso is considered at least partly responsible for bringing about a major turning point in modern art, shattering traditional conventions and rethinking the way we create and perceive art. While Corot is regarded as anticipating the *plein air* innovations of impressionism, he rarely draws particular attention from art historians and is often overshadowed by the impressionists who succeeded him. This view of Corot does not reflect the enormous esteem he garnered during his lifetime. Commonly known as "*le père Corot*", the artist had huge success and was commonly surrounded by students, artists and collectors. Even considering his contemporary success, it is still peculiar to hear the unrivaled praise that came from the generation of artists who were maturing during Corot's later years. His work is suspended in a timeless idyll between Neo-Classicism and Realism and yet Degas, for example, whose work is so steeped in modernity and urban life, said of Corot, "he is still the strongest; he anticipated everything."<sup>63</sup> It seems that Corot was still very highly regarded in the early twentieth century, by artists and historians at least. Alfred Barr even commented in 1930 that he thought Corot's legacy in the history of art would be as great as that of Cézanne, an opinion quite far from our modern day conceptions.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Shaw Miller writes that there were twenty-five figure paintings, however the catalogue from the exhibition lists twenty-four as being included in the retrospective.

<sup>62</sup> Richardson, 1997: 149

<sup>63</sup> Degas (1883), in Tinterow, 1996: xiv

<sup>64</sup> Tinterow, 1996: xiv

The history of art does not often account for Corot's popularity during his lifetime, and nor does it give enough credit to Corot as a painter of figures. This is largely because Corot has traditionally featured primarily in Modernist accounts in which he is framed as "the father of Impressionism", hence, drawing attention to his landscapes. Mainly produced towards the end of his life, Corot's figure paintings were mostly carried out for his own, personal enjoyment; the artist himself considered them not to be of much importance, and they were rarely exhibited.<sup>65</sup> Nineteenth century critics directed their praise towards Corot's more romantic side, the criteria of figure paintings still belonging largely to the Classical style at this time.<sup>66</sup> He is therefore known overwhelmingly as a landscape artist due to his iconic views of the Italian and French countryside, such as *The Bridge at Narni* (1826, Musée du Louvre, Paris). The show organised by the Salon d'Automne may have proven underwhelming to those hoping to see such landscapes. The writer of the "Letter from Paris" featured in *American Art News* commented, for instance, that the retrospective "might have been arranged with more discrimination, and with greater consideration of the master's glory."<sup>67</sup> It is these relatively unknown figure paintings, however, that appear to have earned the most admiration from later generations of artists. Indeed, when pressed for his opinion as to whether Corot was the greatest landscape artist, Degas replied that he thought he was an even better painter of figures.<sup>68</sup> There is strong evidence to suggest that the Cubists agreed with Degas' sentiment.

In a general sense, Corot's influence can be seen in Cubist portraiture in two ways. Analytic Cubism drew attention towards the fragmentation of form by making use of the muted, silvery palette which Corot used, and which set him against the Impressionists' new experiments in colour. Because Corot's interest lay mainly in capturing subtle differences in light and shade, he does not employ an expressive, vibrant palette, and instead sticks to a relatively limited, subdued

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.: 267

<sup>66</sup> M.R.R, 1939: 26

<sup>67</sup> "A Letter from Paris", *American Art News*, 1909: 5

<sup>68</sup> Sauerländer, 2011



range of colours. It could be argued that the Cubists draw upon a similarly restricted palette in order, like Corot, to draw attention to their primary point of interest and innovation, the unconventional treatment of shape and composition. Further similarities between Corot and the Cubists appear in the compositional approach to portraits. The Cubists seem to favour a very “Corotesque” positioning of the figure in portraits, adopting a three-quarter length, front-facing view of the figure. We need only compare portraits by Picasso such as that of Gertrude Stein (1905-6, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) or Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler (1910, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago) with almost any Corot portraits to observe the similarities in composition and colour, providing strong evidence to suggest that Corot was a great influence on these later artists.

After attending the 1909 retrospective, Picasso, Braque, Derain and Gris all produced responses over the following months and years, directly referencing the images they had seen both at the retrospective and elsewhere. Perhaps the clearest example of this is Gris’ *Woman with a Mandolin (after Corot)* (1916) (Fig. 33), which can be compared with the portraits we see included in the exhibition such as *La Femme a la Toque* (c.1850-55) (Fig. 34). Gris’ woman sits in a similar position to many of Corot’s mandolin portraits, looking slightly to the left and holding a mandolin in her lap. While the Corot portraits may have initially caught Gris’ attention at the Salon d’Automne, it appears that another of Corot’s portraits was the main inspiration, to say the least, for Gris’ *Woman with a Mandolin*. Gris’ work appears to be directly taken from Corot’s *Girl with Mandolin* (1860-65) (Fig. 35). The two images are almost identical in subject and composition, even down to the details of the woman’s head-dress and clothes, but Gris has ingeniously re-presented this traditional subject in a cubist style, using angular planes of colour and simple lines.

Gris’ *Woman with a Mandolin* provides us with evidence that the Cubists took a more in-depth interest in Corot, seeking out and studying his portraits, rather than simply happening upon them in the Salon D’Automne’s exhibition. In fact, *Girl with a Mandolin* had not been in Paris since 1911, when it was in the possession of the *Gallerie Bernheim-Jeune*, before being sold to the Hungarian

banker and art collector, Baron Mór Lipót Herzog.<sup>69</sup> It is likely, therefore, that when Gris came to paint his homage to Corot five years later, he gained access to the work via a reproduction; this could have been a poster or through literature. Two books of Corot's works were in publication at the time; the first was a catalogue raisonné in seven volumes edited by A. Robaut and E. Moreau-Nelaton. This was accompanied by the second publication, a history of Corot and his works, written by Moreau-Nelaton and based upon the documents collected by Robaut.<sup>70</sup> The catalogue of the Salon d'Automne suggests that the second of these publications, complete with almost three-hundred reproductions, was also exhibited in 1909, although not specifically as part of the retrospective.<sup>71</sup> These books provide a good example as to how Picasso and the Cubists would have been exposed to Corot's lesser known works, but also suggest that they would only have found them had they been looking in the first place.

As we have discussed, the use of the stringed instrument alongside (or in place of) the woman in Cubist works can be interpreted in a strongly erotic or gendered way. While Corot and the Cubists may have both engaged with the *genre* of the woman with the stringed instrument, we must now explore whether Corot's works use the image of the mandolin in a similarly erotic light. Willibald Sauerländer, in his review of a 2011 exhibition at the Oskar Reinhart Collection in Switzerland, presents the opinion that Corot avoids eroticism in his portraits of women. Sauerländer notes the sensuality of a semi-nude painting and comments that otherwise, "the erotic remains elusive".<sup>72</sup> This implies that Corot only expresses erotic tension through nudity in his portraits, with his fully clothed women remaining innocent, modest and chaste. This could be seen to represent a rather limited, shallow view that ignores the context of women's social position in the late nineteenth century, as well as their established function as an object of sensuality in art at this time.

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<sup>69</sup> "Girl with a Mandolin", *Saint Louis Art Museum: eMuseum* [Online]

<sup>70</sup> Robaut & Moreau-Nelaton, 1905; Moreau-Nelaton: 1905

<sup>71</sup> Coret, 2003: 358

<sup>72</sup> Sauerländer, 2011

Robert Berg disagrees directly with Sauerländer's view, suggesting that Corot makes use of the mandolin to convey an erotic undertone in his figure paintings. Berg references the series of paintings entitled *The Artist's Studio* to support his argument. In these works Corot depicted women in his studio, often sat in front of an easel and holding a mandolin or reading a book. In *The Artist's Studio* (c. 1868) (Fig. 36), a woman examines a landscape painting on the easel, surrounded by pictures, sketches and little sculptures. A dog, perhaps Corot's, stands to her left in the background and to her right a mandolin rests against her chair. Berg is particularly interested in the way that the woman "holds up the phallic neck of a mandolin to keep it erect at her side"; this posture appears in many of the *Artist's Studio* works.<sup>73</sup> While Picasso did occasionally use the mandolin or guitar as a strong, masculine symbol, his argument may have been stronger had he examined the more traditional use of the mandolin as an analogy for the female, rather than male body. When we look at images such as *La Femme a la Toque*, drawing on the symbolism rooted in the ancestral lute, the mandolin can be viewed as a symbol of femininity and female sexuality. The neck of the instrument may be straight and hard-edged, but in this image it is the body that stands out, with its soft, curving contours mirroring those of the woman's torso. The mandolin sits in the woman's lap, over the womb, acting as a suggestive nod to its sexual symbolism. While we could therefore agree with Sauerländer's conclusion that the "silent timidity of his female paintings should be protected against our ubiquitous phallic obsessions", we cannot deny that the use of the mandolin in Corot's portraits offer us opportunities for gendered interpretation.<sup>74</sup>

Similar to *La Femme a la Toque*, another painting of Corot's, *Gypsy Girl with a Mandolin* (1874), is important to our examination of Picasso's adoption of the woman and mandolin in his art. This image is also known as *Portrait of Christine Nilsson*, and depicts the renowned Scandinavian opera singer dressed in Italian gypsy clothes; this attire could possibly have been for her role as Mignon in the 1870 opera of the same name by Ambroise Thomas.<sup>75</sup> Based

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<sup>73</sup> Berg, 2011

<sup>74</sup> Sauerländer, 2011

<sup>75</sup> While *Mignon* was originally performed in 1866 as an *opéra comique*, a second opera version was performed in 1870, in which Nilsson sung the lead role.

on a story by Goethe, the opera centres around a young gypsy girl and Wilhelm, with whom she falls in love. In the opening act of the opera, Mignon is living with a gypsy community, who dance to the music of a wandering minstrel. The Cubists were certainly familiar with *Gypsy Girl with a Mandolin*; Alex Danchev describes it as “one of Braque’s favourite paintings” and in a 1957 photo of Braque’s studio we can even see a reproduction of the work pinned to the door.<sup>76</sup> The figure of the gypsy, or *la bohémienne* with a stringed instrument appeared in more contemporary art too; Henri Rousseau (1844-1910), who was much admired by and friendly with Picasso and Braque, painted *The Sleeping Gypsy* (Fig. 37) in 1897. The dreamlike image depicts a gypsy woman sleeping in the desert while a lion looks on. Her lute lies next to her at the same angle, encouraging us to compare the two figures. The use of such a similar instrument and figure by Rousseau leads us to wonder whether this image may have even been a response to Corot’s *Gypsy Girl with a Mandolin*.

The image of Mignon was also very popular during the early twentieth century, and numerous Mignon postcards were produced, depicting a girl in romantic, gypsy clothing, posing with a mandolin. Picasso himself sent a Mignon postcard (Fig. 38) to Kahnweiler on August 13th, 1911, perhaps as a humorous, *kitch* echo of the theme that he had been exploring in his own work and in the work of Corot. This gesture reveals the far-reaching relevance of Picasso’s inspiration; related to both popular culture and artistic tradition, the theme of the gypsy woman with a mandolin “ricochets between the souvenir shop and the Louvre.”<sup>77</sup>

As will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, gypsy culture and community also has strong links with Spanish folk music. Flamenco, a key part of Spanish national identity, actually originated in the *gitano* gypsy communities in Andalusia and therefore acts as a nostalgic reminder of Picasso’s childhood in Málaga. However, the image of the gypsy girl also held certain connotations in wider art and popular culture during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As in Corot’s work, the gypsy is often associated with music and romantic

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<sup>76</sup> Danchev, 2005: fig. 4

<sup>77</sup> Rosenblum in Varnedoe and Gopnik, 1990a: 126

serenading; the mandolin, with its history in the traditions of courting, is therefore an appropriate instrument to accompany the gypsy and she is often seen holding one. A commonly perceived view of gypsy women at the time was that they were sexually flirtatious women with loose morals, entertaining and seducing men with their dancing and music. This is related in the poses of some of the women in the gypsy postcards as they touch their hair and hold their mandolins close to their bodies. The majority stare dreamily into the distance, but some look ahead, engaging eye-contact with the viewer. In an example from around 1913 (Fig. 39), the woman representing Mignon is pictured in a close up, half-length view. The top button of her blouse is teasingly undone and she appears to subtly gesture towards the mandolin that she holds. There is, of course, a danger of over-interpreting such gestures in a simple postcard, however, a pose like this is reminiscent of those seen in Jan Steen's *Procuress* painting, in which the lute acted as a visual symbol for the prostitute's services. The mandolin was also used in other contemporary postcards, which held a more explicitly sexual meaning. Women holding the instrument became a key theme in the booming erotica trade of the early twentieth century. In images such as (Fig. 40), naked women pose for the viewer's pleasure. The presence of the mandolin in these images could be to create a scene - a romantic setting in which these women dwell. On the other hand, they also force a strong comparison between the bodies of the women and that of the instrument. Moreover, with the symbolism of anatomy, fertility and sexuality inherited from the lute, the mandolin further emphasises the sexual nature of the images.

Related to the image of the gypsy girl and the *bohémienne*, Picasso and Corot also share the theme of the *Italienne*; Picasso would have seen Corot's *L'Italienne Agostina* (1866) (Fig. 41) displayed at the retrospective and a copy of the image is also shown pinned up in Braque's studio, so it was obviously an image admired by at least one of the Cubists.<sup>78</sup> Picasso produced two works on the theme in 1917 and 1919 which bear a marked resemblance to Corot's piece, despite all differing significantly from each other in style. The 1917 *L'Italienne* (Fig. 42) is painted in a Synthetic Cubist style, with most of the main forms simplified into blocks of colour. St Peter's Basilica can be seen in the

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<sup>78</sup> Danchev, 2005: fig. 4

background of the image, identifying her as Italian. Despite the simplified, modern style, similarities can still be seen with Corot's *Agostina*, particularly in the clothing. Both of the figures appear to wear bohemian-style clothing with necklaces and patterned fabrics. The placing of the patterned material on the dress of Picasso's 1917 *Italienne* mirrors the flowery section on the front of Corot's woman. The 1919 painting is far more classical in style and there are also similarities in the clothing, with both the women wearing a white blouse with blue skirt and red on their upper body. While not described as gypsy women, the bohemian nature of their dress links these Italian women to our theme and also provides us with further evidence of Corot's influence on Picasso after the retrospective.

It is undeniable that the work of Corot had a significant influence on Picasso's choice to explore the theme of the woman and the stringed instrument in his work. It can also be argued that the way in which the figures interact with their instruments in Corot's work implies a passivity that also had a profound impact on Picasso's development of the theme. In Corot's paintings, women are seldom seen engaging in activity; while the mandolin appears frequently in the hands of the woman, she is rarely depicted actually playing the instrument. The presence - but not use - of the mandolin suggests that it holds some kind of symbolic meaning within the image, that it is employed as an attribute. The analogy with the woman's body that we have already discussed provides this symbolism, but the choice to leave the instrument unplayed also does something else to the image; the woman is portrayed as passive. This inactivity echoes the general contemporary opinion that men were naturally active, engaging in employment, intellectualism, politics and creativity, while women should remain passive and at a distance from these strenuous pursuits. Not only this but the passivity of both the woman and the instrument encourages yet another connection between the two, recalling the misogynistic words of Nicolas Maria López when he described how both must submit to a man's touch. Moreover, we could also argue that Corot demonstrated to the Cubists that figure painting and still-life were not irreconcilably distinct from one another, and that one could hold qualities of the other. When a musical instrument is depicted in an artwork, we expect it to be played; the unplayed instrument evokes an unexpected stillness that affects the whole image. According to Danchev,

“Braque was bewitched by Corot’s silence.”<sup>79</sup> In bringing together the passivity of the woman and the passivity of the instrument, Corot demonstrated to them how a “stringed instrument could endow a figure painting with the stasis of a *nature morte*.”<sup>80</sup> We could argue that the Cubists, whom we know were greatly interested in this quality of Corot’s, took this idea into their own artwork, leading to the conflation of the woman and the guitar.

## Metamorphosis

This thesis has so far examined the use of stringed instruments in art across history and what relation and influence this had on Picasso’s own use of the guitar family in his work in the early twentieth century. When viewing Picasso’s works on this theme in chronological order, we can observe the development in his style towards the increasingly abstracted Analytical Cubism and then its move towards linear simplification into Synthetic Cubism with the *papiers collés*. This transition and evolution in style also has an interesting effect on the musical subject matter, transforming Picasso’s representation of the relationship between the figure and the musical instrument. In order to fully understand the nature of the conflation that occurs in the *papiers collés*, we must also understand the journey towards that point. The notion of metamorphosis and transformation was important for many artists of the modern era and has far-reaching ties to the Classical period. This section will examine Picasso’s use of metamorphosis and its relation to both childhood and the work of Ovid.

Metamorphosis - turning one thing into another - is a phenomenon that often transcends reality, the product of a playful imagination. This transformation and manipulation of reality often comes naturally to the minds of children. Children find joy in seeing animals or objects in the inanimate shapes of clouds or wallpaper patterns. Natasha Staller describes how Spanish childhood in particular was filled with creatures, stories and games of metamorphosis, from tales of the mythical griffin, half lion and half eagle, to games such as *La*

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<sup>79</sup> Coret, 2003: 358; Danchev, 2005: 88

<sup>80</sup> Richardson, 1996: 149

*Cabeza Parlante*, in which fists were magically transformed into talking heads.<sup>81</sup> Picasso grew up immersed in this Spanish, fantastical world of transformation. Staller argues that while most children would leave this part of their imagination behind with their childhood, Picasso continued to draw on and utilise it in the development and frequent regeneration of his artistic style. During his adolescence, Picasso appeared to be experimenting with methods of visual manipulation that would later form the basis of Cubism, breaking objects down into parts and combining disparate elements to form hybrid creations.<sup>82</sup> A sketch from 1897-1899 demonstrates Picasso's use of playful metamorphosis even after he had perfected mimetic drawing. In *Woman Facing a Rooster* (Fig. 43), Picasso cleverly conflates the woman not with a guitar, but with the rooster that stands opposite her. By subtly altering and emphasising parts of the woman's figure - swelling her chest, shrinking her hand and placing a comb in her hair - a comic comparison is created. The bird remains largely unchanged but does appear to have a thin woman's leg wearing a small, pointed shoe penciled lightly where its foot should be.<sup>83</sup> While Picasso may have possessed an unusually developed skill for drawing at this age, his methods of drawing are not unique among childhood drawings in general. The art of children was of particular interest to many avant-garde artists during the early twentieth century, notably the Fauves in France, *Die Brücke* in Germany and the Russian Neo-Primitives; a child's innocent style, uninhibited by conventions of mimesis and perspective, provided a liberating and subversive alternative to the restrictive Academic style and, on a different level, represented an escape from the restraints of adult, middle-class society.

Attributing animal or human characteristics to objects is a common game of the childhood imagination. It also forms the basis of the concept of Animism, the belief that objects and phenomena of nature possess living souls. This religion or belief system was outlined in 1871 by the anthropologist Sir Edward Burnett Tylor in his book *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of*

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<sup>81</sup> Staller, 2001: 37

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*: 37

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*: 56-57



*Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom* (1871).<sup>84</sup> A strong rationalist, Tylor was not an Animist himself, but instead used it as a typical example of belief systems in more “primitive” cultures. Animism is also connected with Fetishism, the worship of objects for their magical or spiritual properties. We know from works such as *Les Demoiselles d’Avignon* that Picasso had a keen interest in Primitivism at this time, seeing it as an alternative to Western academic traditions. If we interpret the guitar in Picasso’s *papier collés* as somehow representing the spirit or form of the woman, then we could argue that this attribution of personal life to an inanimate object is another manifestation of Picasso’s interest in “primitive” culture. Even if we do not make this arguably tenuous leap, however, we can see that there could be a strong link between the concepts of Animism and musical instruments in particular. This is highlighted in Braque’s explanation of the appeal of musical instruments, when he describes that an instrument “had the peculiarity that one could animate it by touching it.”<sup>85</sup> This halfway place between *nature-morte* and something alive gives the instrument a magical and spiritual quality in art, and makes its conflation with the woman more convincing, as we can almost believe that the guitar in some way possesses the spirit of its player.

The notion of metamorphosis is a strong and recurring theme in art and literature going back centuries. The *Metamorphoses*, an extensive work by the Roman poet Ovid, had a huge influence on European literature and art. Through two-hundred-and-fifty myths in fifteen books, *Metamorphoses* stretches chronologically from the creation of the world to the death of Julius Caesar. As the title of the poem suggests, metamorphosis functions as a key theme, unifying the unconnected tales that weave through the work. The importance of the idea of transformation is highlighted by Ovid, in fact, in the first lines of the poem, where he states, “I intend to speak of forms changed into new entities”.<sup>86</sup> Of the many myths covered in Ovid’s narrative, one is particularly important to our study of Picasso, both because of its relevance to the guitar *papiers collés* and because Picasso later showed a specific interest in

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<sup>84</sup> Tylor, 1920

<sup>85</sup> Danchev, 2005: 88

<sup>86</sup> Swanson, 1959: 201

the tale. The tale of Pygmalion, set out in Book X of *The Metamorphoses*, tells of a sculptor who carves a statue of a female figure so perfect that he falls in love with it, naming it *Galatea*. After making offerings to the altar of Venus and praying to meet a real woman of such beauty as his statue, Pygmalion returned home to his work of art. Upon kissing its lips, he found not hard ivory but warm flesh; at his touch, his wish had been granted and Venus had breathed life into his statue. They went on to marry and have a child, *Paphos*.

The story of Pygmalion has been recounted many times through the centuries in art and literature. Years after his *papiers collés* played with the idea of life-like objects, Picasso visited the subject directly, when he provided thirty drawings for Albert Skira's publication of *Les Metamorphoses d'Ovide* (1931). He again returned to the subject of the sculptor's studio in the 1930s, with forty-six of the one-hundred sheets he provided for the *Vollard Suite* dwelling on this theme, and a number of other sheets using the subject of the Minotaur, the story of which also appears in *The Metamorphoses*. *The Vollard Suite* was created for Ambroise Vollard (1866-1939), the renowned Parisian art dealer who gave Picasso his first Parisian opportunity in 1901. Picasso left the suite of etchings unordered and unnamed, avoiding any fixed meaning or chronology, so that meanings themselves metamorphose. At the time he produced *The Vollard Suite*, Picasso was in a passionate love affair with his model Marie Térése-Walter and this parallel with the mythical sculptor's infatuation with his statue may have prompted the artist's particular interest in the theme. The plate later titled *Young Sculptor at Work* (1933) (Fig. 44) shows Pygmalion - or perhaps Picasso - surveying the face of his sculpture, sculpting knife looking quite sinister in his hand. The carved face has blank eyes, suggesting its lifelessness. *The Vollard Suite* is renowned for Picasso's exploration of the classical; not only are the myths of a classical origin, but Picasso also presents his figures in a classical setting. In the *Young Sculptor at Work*, the two figures wear vine wreaths on their heads that grow into each other, connecting them, hence representing the physical and psychological bond the artist feels towards his artwork. The story of Pygmalion, and the way in which Picasso dwells on the theme in his art, is strikingly reminiscent of Braque's explanation of why the Cubists were drawn to musical instruments; like Pygmalion's sculpture, there

was something mystical about the animation of instruments at a musician's touch.

While the *papiers collés* can be seen to represent the figure in the guise of a still-life instrument, we can look to the work preceding this style to observe the journey to this point of utter conflation. What we find is that it is not just conflation but metamorphosis, or the transformative process towards conflation, that characterises Picasso's approach to music and the figure at this time. Two years before the 'pasted-paper revolution' of 1912, we can see that the figure and the guitar remain largely distinguished from one another, even in Analytic Cubist works such as 1910's *Girl with a Mandolin*. As is characteristic of Analytic Cubism, Picasso blurs the distinction between the visual planes through the use of techniques such as *passage* and fragmentation, which flattens the image and creates a certain amount of ambiguity in boundaries between the objects and the background. The severely limited palette of browns and ochres, in particular, creates a uniformity that unites the objects on one plane within the picture. In comparison to his later Analytic works, such as *Ma Jolie*, Picasso does, however, retain quite a strong element of clarity and legibility in the forms that almost ceased to exist as his style developed. The mandolin, in particular, is clearly formed and easily identifiable against the manipulated and fragmented female torso. The different elements of the image - the figure, the mandolin and the background plane - are prevented from dissolving into each other through the use of tone. Picasso paints the mandolin in a darker tone, distinguishing the wooden material against the woman's paler flesh. The woman is also distinguished from the background into which her body threatens to melt because she casts a shadow, again creating a contrast in tone.

By 1911 we can see a significant development in the relationship between the figure and the instrument in Picasso's works. In *Ma Jolie* the instrument and the figure now appear to be made of the same material, with no shadow marking the boundary between them. While metonymical references tell us that a stringed instrument and a woman are present, the forms are reduced to a series of largely featureless geometric shapes; the two elements of subject matter do not exist in separate spaces but merge with each other, sharing the same, fragmented plane. The merging of the figure and the instrument in *Ma Jolie* can

largely be seen as simply the result of the extreme fragmentation characteristic of Picasso's late Analytic style; nevertheless, the blurring of lines between these two entities has profound effects for the way in which we view Picasso's next stylistic development - collage and the return to the object, but not the figure. The process of metamorphosis that we witness in *Ma Jolie* is completed with the conflation of the figure and the object in the *papiers collés*. We see in these works a transforming relationship between the figure and the instrument and ultimately the metamorphosis of one into the other; in this one object the figure is made static and the guitar is anthropomorphised.

Metamorphosis was also used by other artists at the time to address the very current issue of the female figure and the woman's place in society. Degas, for example, used methods of transformation and metamorphosis to dissolve figures into natural landscapes. His 1892 pastel image, *Steep Coast* (Fig. 45), is an excellent example of this. Part of the artist's *Imaginary Landscapes* series, the image conflates a coastal landscape with the image of a reclining nude. The woman has almost completely disappeared into the landscape but the contours of the land still follow the shape of her body; her bent legs are visible at the left of the canvas and, head tilted back, her red hair flows down the shore. Matisse also transforms his figures into elements of the idyllic natural landscape that surrounds them. For example, *Arbres à Collioure* (1906, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) could be viewed as a transformation of the female figure into landscape as the woman takes on the form of the curving, arabesque lines that shape the trees and scenery. Rebecca Warren argues that in removing the woman from her traditional surroundings and transforming her into something else, Matisse is allowing her to exist outside of the restrictive social constraints. When the woman is represented as something other than the female body, she is emancipated from her traditional function in art as the sexualised object for the male gaze. Metamorphosis therefore becomes something which can free women from their established gender roles.<sup>87</sup> There is little evidence to suggest, however, that Picasso's use of metamorphosis has the same intention or effect. In both child's play and in Ovid's telling of Pygmalion, metamorphosis brings life to an inanimate object. On the contrary, however, in Picasso's *papier collés*, the

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<sup>87</sup> Warren, 2008: 43

result seems to be to turn the woman into a lifeless object rather than the other way around. Mirroring the metaphor used in Nicolas María López's essay, Picasso, in substituting the woman for the object of the guitar, reverses the metamorphosis of Pygmalion's story, to once again imprison the woman in a passive, life-less role.

## Wallpaper

We will now move our focus back to the *papiers collés* and examine the way in which the setting and surroundings in which the guitar appears have a bearing on our interpretation of the works. The *mise en scène* is crucial to a gendered reading of these works. Typically, the backgrounds and surroundings of Cubist, and particularly Synthetic Cubist, works appear minimal or unreadable. We might see the newspaper, bottles and instruments that appear in many of the *papiers collés* as signifiers of a café setting, as will be discussed in Chapter Four. The view could also be taken, however, that the guitars in the 1912 *papier collés* are simply situated in anonymous space. Nevertheless, there is a strong argument to suggest that the key to the 'staging' is Picasso's use of wallpaper and, when examined closely, it will be argued that Picasso's use of this material has enormous potential for expression.

Traditionally, the use of wallpaper in the *papiers collés* has been accounted for in both Modernist and Socio-Historical terms. The Modernist perspective maintains that, like other materials used in collage such as newspaper, the surface pattern of wallpaper emphasizes the flatness of the image, opposing any traditional forms of spatial illusion and drawing attention to the piece of art as an object in itself. Social historians of art, on the other hand, might argue that Picasso included the paper as a means of including a real piece of contemporary culture. Some art historians, such as Elizabeth Cowling, however, have more recently argued that Picasso's use of wallpaper has been neglected in art history as social historians have focused their attention primarily on the unravelling of the stories and riddles in the *papiers collés* newspaper clippings. Cowling argues in an article from September 2013, that there is a wealth of

“expressive function equal to that of the papers printed with text that [Picasso] also cannibalised at this period”.<sup>88</sup> This section will examine how the wallpapers could be seen to support a gendered reading of the guitar *papiers collés*.

Wallpaper is likely to have appealed to Picasso and Braque at this time for a number of reasons. Cubism from 1912 up until the start of World War One was characterised by games of parody and imitation, and the often illusory nature of wallpaper designs ties in with this. Braque’s use of *faux bois* paper that created a wood effect is an excellent example of this. By including sections of this in works such as *Fruit Dish and Glass* (1912, Private Collection), we see a “real-life” material, that itself is an illusion of wood-panelling, being used to signify the table, something else which it is not. In 1914, Picasso inverted this further, by mimicking a sheet of mottled wallpaper using paint in *Pipe and Sheet Music* (Museum of Fine Arts, Houston). Picasso and Braque clearly enjoyed harnessing the illusion of wallpaper and incorporating it into their game of true and false.<sup>89</sup> Wallpaper had become a far more popular and affordable way to decorate the home and the range of patterns available was numerous and varied; this broad range of ready-made patterns all arguably had specific social associations that Picasso could use for expressive purposes and this is likely to have been another attraction of the material.<sup>90</sup>

A Modernist art historian may argue that the design of the wallpaper is likely to be of little consequence or significance, as Picasso would have simply chosen the paper on the basis of what was available and how well it highlighted the flatness of the image. A letter from Clive Bell to Duncan Grant on 26th February 1914 suggests that, on the contrary, Picasso did not just make use of the wallpaper that was most available to him:

“I promised to take [Picasso] a roll of old wallpapers which I have found in a cupboard of my hotel and which excited him very much as he makes use of them frequently and finds very difficult to get. He sometimes tears small pieces off the wall, he said.”<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Cowling, 2013: 594

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.: 595

<sup>90</sup> Cowling, 2002: 248

<sup>91</sup> Bell (1914) in Cowling, 2013: 594

This short excerpt provides an interesting insight into Picasso's methods of obtaining materials. It also contradicts a socio-historical view that these papers were chosen to represent contemporary popular culture. While most of the newspaper clippings and advertisements that Picasso incorporated into the collages were from current or recent editions, Clive Bell's comments suggest that the wallpaper he sought was old. After all, wallpaper had become cheap and easily accessible during the time that Picasso was using it, due to new methods of mass production. That Picasso spent effort seeking out hard-to-find samples of wallpaper for his works suggests that the papers hold more meaning than we might initially have assumed.

The first wallpaper design that Picasso began to use appears in a number of works in late 1912, including *Guitar and Sheet Music* (Fig. 5) and *Guitar, Sheet Music and Glass* (Fig. 6), and consists of an ochre and white trellis-and-rose pattern. In the nineteenth century this kind of floral, elegant pattern became so associated with the feminine that by the early twentieth century it was regarded as clichéd for such designs to be used in the bedrooms of women. Not only does this reveal Picasso's self-mocking fondness for *kitsch*, therefore, but more importantly reinforces the visual metaphor of the guitar as the female form.

Moreover, Picasso's choice of wallpaper arguably has the power to transform the setting of the *papiers collés*. The design contradicts the common interpretation of the images as most commonly depicting scenes in cafés and bars; the delicate design does not evoke these masculine spaces, but the feminine.<sup>92</sup> In this way, Picasso's images relate to Van Gogh's 1888 paintings of his and Gauguin's chairs (Figs. 46 and 47). In contrast to the way Van Gogh represents his own chair, with its square, simple frame and tiled floor, his depiction of Gauguin's chair is lavish and ornate. On one level this may be seen to refer to the differences between Van Gogh, who associated himself primarily with the simple life of the French provincial peasantry, and the rather more aristocratic and sophisticated background of Gauguin. Some art historians, including Derek Fell, have, however, speculated about another level of

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<sup>92</sup> Cowling, 2002: 248

symbolism in the works; Gauguin's chair has far softer curves that bring to mind Picasso's curvaceous guitars and as has been mentioned, floral, elaborate designs such as that of the carpet beneath Gauguin's chair had become unequivocally associated with feminine spaces. Coupled with the erect candle standing in the seat of the chair, which arguably casts this image in an erotic light for its phallic associations, the chair now stands in a richly carpeted boudoir. The argument is, therefore, that Van Gogh feminizes Gauguin in this image, possibly revealing a sexual or romantic attraction towards the artist with whom he had such a turbulent relationship.<sup>93</sup>

The possible meanings that can be drawn from Van Gogh's symbolism provide evidence for similar readings of Picasso's guitar and wallpaper imagery. Cowling suggests that the pattern used by Picasso is out of place if we interpret pieces such as *Guitar and Sheet Music* (Fig. 5) to be a café scene; the functional *faux bois* wallpaper seen in Braque's *Fruit Dish and Glass* was more common in masculine surroundings such as intellectual cafés and bars.<sup>94</sup> In fact the paper better represents the walls of a boudoir, transforming the guitar into a woman reclining on sheets, echoing Nicolás María López's words of physical comparison.<sup>95</sup> The wallpaper's incongruity with the masculine café scene, therefore, plays a vital role in supporting an interpretation of the guitar as a representation of the female figure. Furthermore, the very physical form of the wallpaper – its quality and material – also provides an expressive function within the image's meaning. Wallpaper had become much cheaper and easier to produce at the end of the eighteen-hundreds and it was now not just a luxury item for upper class domestic interiors; this meant that there was a much larger variety of prints available, and of a wider range of quality. The flowered paper that Picasso picks out for his *Guitar and Sheet Music* series is not of a high standard; thin, low quality paper that would have been at the lower end of the price range suggests that the romance indicated in the image is not of a noble kind.

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<sup>93</sup> Fell, 2004: 131

<sup>94</sup> Cowling, 2013: 595

<sup>95</sup> Cowling, 2002: 249



In support of the argument that the floral wallpaper of the sheet music *papiers collés*, we can also see examples where the style of the wallpaper is used to evoke a more masculine setting. In the slightly later work, *Bottle of Vieux Marc, Glass and Newspaper* of Spring 1913 (Fig. 48), the wallpaper is still floral but this time the pattern is less delicate and more reminiscent of an arabesque style. Sections of the deep brown and gold paper are stuck across the image, forming the background and setting the scene. The familiar curves of the guitar's shape are visible at the centre of the image but they are stifled and obscured by the angular planes of colour and pasted paper. Moreover, we find that the guitar, complete with sound-hole at its centre, has been transformed into a bottle of Vieux Marc. The wallpaper once again reinforces this transformation, and, together with the newspaper clippings describing political events, suggests a café scene, a decidedly masculine space.<sup>96</sup>

The floral imagery used in the *papiers collés* could not only be seen to symbolically evoke the feminine, but in some cases also appears to directly relate to other elements of the collage. In *Guitar, Sheet Music and Glass* (Fig. 6) the piece of sheet music used is a setting of Pierre de Ronsard's *Sonnet* (Appendix A), the relevance and meaning of which will be discussed in greater depth in Chapters Four and Five. The section of the poem included in the *papier collé* translates as "so love me while you are beautiful", words directed at a lover to embrace the beauty of youth before it fades. The first section of the poem, however, employs imagery of flowers, blooming and then withering, as a metaphor for this idea. The flower and trellis wallpaper pasted into the background, therefore, visually acknowledges the unseen section of the poem. Cowling takes this connection further and speculates that the haphazard manner in which the wallpaper is pasted, with the flowers on their side rather than the right way up, represents the fallen, wilted flowers that Ronsard describes.<sup>97</sup>

Picasso's use of patterned wallpaper represented a dramatic step in the development of Cubism, which had distanced itself from the decorative arts.

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.: 251

<sup>97</sup> Cowling 2013: 596

Cubism had previously despised the decorative arts for their connotations of passivity, regarding itself as an art form that was active in breaking boundaries and pushing forward into development. As we have seen through the words of Nicolás María López, women have traditionally been characterized as passive, and have therefore been associated with the decorative; it could be argued that through decorative wallpaper Picasso made use of this passivity to allude to the feminine undertones in his guitar images. The move into collage also signalled a return to colour - for Picasso more so than for Braque - and the block areas of rich pattern suggest Henri Matisse's influence, as well as emphasising the flatness of the image. *The Dessert: Harmony in Red (The Red Room)* of 1908 (Fig. 49) is an excellent example of Matisse's use of decorative pattern to great effect. The climbing, floral pattern is oversized and stretches the whole height of the canvas, passing from the table cloth up the wall. This dramatically flattens the space of the image, and gives the appearance that wallpaper has been pasted onto the surface. Picasso harnesses this effect four years later, but, to Greenberg's great pleasure, breaks down another barrier of illusion, pasting in the wallpaper itself and further emphasising the "ineluctable flatness of the support."<sup>98</sup>

## Dressmaking and Fashion

Other influences on the Cubists at this time add to the sense of femininity in the guitar *papiers collés*, for example the way in which the *papiers collés* are constructed could relate to the rather feminine craft of dress-making. The Cubists appear to have taken a surprising amount of interest in dress-making and fashion during the time that they were producing Synthetic Cubist works. It was not unusual for the avant-garde to become involved in clothes and textile design; during the 1920s Russian Constructivists such as Lyubov Popova and Varvara Stepanova applied their ideas of practical, useful and meaningful art to clothes production, designing fabrics and outfits for the masses in post-war Russia. Picasso, too, later became involved in clothing production, designing costumes for Ballets Russes, such as for their performance of Eric Satie's

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<sup>98</sup> Greenberg, 1960: 87

*Parade* in 1916-17. In 1912, however, we can already see his interest in the methods involved in dressmaking and tailoring through the collages and this section will argue that this further reinforces the gendered metaphor played out in the images.

In Juan Gris's *The Table* (1914), for example, he includes a newspaper snippet bearing the headline "Le vrai et le faux chic". The *Le Journal* article was about trends in fashion but took its title from a book by the satirist Georges Goursat, who was a close acquaintance of the Cubist group and a friend of Picasso and Braque's, and went by the pseudonym Sem. The notable thing about Sem's book is that on its front cover are a large pair of dress-making scissors, the tool of the tailor and the Cubist.<sup>99</sup> Futurist works, too, had shown an interest in dress-making, as we can see from Severini's use of sequins in his images of dancers. Picasso had not been short of exposure to dress-making work; he had once had a studio in a corset factory and had sketched the women at work there, and had no doubt watched Fernande and Eva sewing in their spare time.<sup>100</sup> This relation to the femininity of fabrics and dressmaking is also displayed through the lingerie and corset adverts that he includes in *papiers collés* such as *Au Bon Marché*.

Analytical Cubism had tried to represent objects from all angles; Synthetic Cubism took a more deconstructive view, taking apart objects and laying them out as cut-out pieces of paper, much like a dress-making pattern. In fact, art dealer Adolphe Basler remarked that the *papiers collés* resembled "quite simply tailors' patterns."<sup>101</sup> Rather than gluing the papers down, Picasso would also often make use of dress-makers pins to hold the collages together, occasionally leaving them in as part of the finished image. This can be seen in *Sheet Music and Guitar* (Fig. 2), where the small rectangle indicating the sound hole has been pinned on instead of glued.

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<sup>99</sup> Moss, 2011: 575

<sup>100</sup> Richardson, 1996: 149

<sup>101</sup> Basler in Cowling, 2002: 251

The guitar is also, like a dress, an object that has been crafted and constructed from different parts. Guitars presented the perfect object for the kind of deconstruction that we see in Synthetic Cubism, and Modernist art historians often cite this as the primary reason for their appearance in Picasso's works. "All guitars are born cubist," with their variety of surfaces, hard lines and soft curves, and different textures and materials; "A stringed instrument, with its clear oppositions of curved and rectilinear shape, solid and void, line and plane, is almost a dictionary of the Cubist language of 1910-12", argues Rosenblum.<sup>102</sup> Gopnik also argues that the guitar holds the building blocks for art, and perhaps Picasso agreed.<sup>103</sup> Picasso readily manipulates the guitar in his collages and must have come into close contact with them at some point; Richardson speculates that Picasso may have seen guitars being made in Montmartre, as the Spanish guitar maker Julián Gómez Ramírez was known to work on the street outside his premises.<sup>104</sup> This may be true, but we also know that for a time, Picasso had a guitar in his studio, for it appears in photographs taken around 1914, when he constructed a figure with newspaper arms to hold the instrument, juxtaposing the real object with its Cubist surroundings.<sup>105</sup>

The influence of fashion and dressmaking on Synthetic Cubism is visible to an extent in the subject matter of the newspaper clippings that Picasso selected to paste into his collages. The methods of tailoring and dressmaking appear to have had a more significant impact on the formal make-up of the collages, however. The deconstruction of three-dimensional forms into simple nets of flat, cut-out shapes is reminiscent of a reversed process of clothes-making, with the panels of material cut out according to a paper pattern. The craft of dressmaking and other textile-based skills such as sewing, knitting and embroidery traditionally have been the pastimes of women; Picasso perhaps even borrowed the pins he used to fix his papers from the sewing kits of women with whom he lived. Like the use of floral wallpaper, therefore, the influence of fashion and dressmaking on the Cubists further serves to emphasise the

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<sup>102</sup> Rosenblum (1960) in Kachur, 1993: 253

<sup>103</sup> Gopnik, 2011

<sup>104</sup> Richardson, 1996: 254

<sup>105</sup> Umland, 2011: 72-73

feminine presence in the guitar *papiers collés*, supporting the primary argument of this chapter that the image of the guitar represents a conflation with the woman.

## Conclusion

Throughout the development of Cubism from 1907 onwards, we not only witness a shift in the formal appearance of Picasso's work, but also in the nature of the subject matter he chooses. Throughout the Analytic Cubist phase, the use of the figure becomes less frequent; the women of *Demoiselles d'Avignon* are dehumanized by their primitive mask-like faces and, aside from occasional portraits of Picasso's acquaintances, later figures such as that of *Ma Jolie* have been abstracted into faceless accompaniments for the instruments they hold. By the time we reach Synthetic Cubism, the figure has been entirely removed from the image in favour of still-life instruments, most notably the guitar. This transition may be explained in technical terms; the increasingly abstract nature of Analytic Cubism and the later use of multiple materials in the collages suggest that Picasso's focus on volume and surface resulted in his move to the inanimate. Our examination in Chapter One of the historical uses of musical instruments in art, however, supports the view that there may be other factors at play. A gender-focused exploration of Picasso's guitar works resulted in the argument that the figure of the woman does not disappear in Synthetic Cubism, but is instead signified through the inanimate guitar. The conflation of the woman and the guitar in the *papiers collés* uncovers many gendered implications in Picasso's work, as well as revealing much about attitudes towards women in the early twentieth century.

There is an abundance of evidence to suggest that Picasso had come across ideas comparing the woman and the guitar and their possible conflation before he pasted his paper guitars. Corot's portraits of women with mandolins proved to have a significant influence on the Cubists, introducing the instrument into their works as well as the sexually flirtatious subject of the gypsy, *italienne* or *bohémienne*. Nicolas Maria López's article "*Psicología de la guitarra*", published by the journal that Picasso was co-editing whilst in Madrid, could be seen as a

literary version of what Picasso went on to explore visually. Picasso's playful manipulation and conflation of images echoed López's words to objectify the woman and anthropomorphise the guitar. Drawing on the symbolism of the lute, the guitar becomes sexualised, with the sound hole taking on particular sexual symbolism in the *papiers collés* and the three-dimensional *Guitar* construction. Other elements of the *papiers collés* also support the metaphor; the cheap, floral wallpaper pasted into the images suggests femininity but also evokes a boudoir scene, in which the reclining nude is replaced by the image of the guitar, offering itself to the hands of the man. In reducing three-dimensional objects into flattened cut-outs we are also reminded of the feminine craft of dressmaking.

We also see the conflation in the *papiers collés* as part of a wider process of metamorphosis in Picasso's work. Viewing the collages in the context of Cubism's development, we see that the guitar and the woman start to merge during Analytic Cubism, becoming indistinguishable from one another as the process of fragmentation progresses. Again this ties Picasso into another theme from history, linking him to the Classical past with Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and also drawing connections with Matisse and Degas' metamorphous female forms. Whereas in Ovid's tale of Pygmalion the female sculpture is given life, Picasso subverts this process, transforming his female figures into inanimate guitars that only sound at the man's touch. The woman in Picasso's works is passive and powerless, capable of beautiful music but only through the action of another. The Cubist's thought of their art as active and therefore masculine in comparison to the decorative. The use of the decorative arts in the form of wallpaper therefore strengthens this sense of passivity and reinforces the stasis of the feminine. The result echoes both the misogynistic words of López's essay but also likely acts as a reflection of the Cubist's view of women at the time, influenced heavily, of course, by societal boundaries and prejudices.

A gendered reading of Picasso's work around 1912 reveals many avenues of potential meaning, linking the groundbreaking *papiers collés* to past tradition, historical symbolism and contemporary socio-political context. On the one hand a gendered interpretation builds upon our sense of Picasso's creative playfulness; the collages provide Picasso with the opportunity to engage not

only with verbal puns through newspaper clippings but also visual puns, highlighting the ambiguities in certain shapes and objects. On the other hand, however, by reading the guitar as a metonym for the woman in Picasso's works, we also gain an unsettling insight into Picasso's attitude towards women and the societal restrictions that were imposed on women during the early twentieth century.

# Chapter Three: Nationality

## Introduction

As will be discussed further in the next chapter, the subject matter of Picasso's work immediately before World War One, and particularly that of the *papiers collés*, is often attributed to urban sources, notably the Parisian avant-garde café culture of the early twentieth-century. Picasso was a regular visitor to many cabarets and cafés, particularly in Montmartre. He often frequented the 'Lapin Agile', an old and traditional cabaret in Montmartre, and used it as the setting for a 1905 painting, *At the 'Lapin Agile'* (Fig. 50), which features himself dressed as a harlequin. In the background of this painting is Frédé, the owner of the establishment, who would entertain customers by singing with his guitar. The guitar, then, must have been particularly related to the atmosphere of Parisian social life for Picasso, and as his works became more abstract and less figurative, the instrument takes on the significance of both bohemian and popular culture through its inclusion in the collaged café scenes.

Kachur agrees that Picasso draws from popular culture in his *papiers collés* but disagrees that the only source for this is necessarily Parisian urban culture.<sup>106</sup> Until recently, museums often described Picasso as a "French painter, born in Spain".<sup>107</sup> This is largely down to the fact that the works for which Picasso received the most fame and recognition were produced after his move to Paris and came about out of a French social context. This chapter will present the idea that Spain played a far more important role in Picasso's artistic identity than is traditionally recognised, and that a closer examination of the Spanish context in which Picasso worked and the early art that he produced can help us to understand how he related to his national identity in later work.

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<sup>106</sup> Kachur, 1993: 253

<sup>107</sup> Serraller in Giménez and Serraller, 2006: 53



Picasso grew up in a Spain in crisis, surrounded by debates concerned with reevaluating the country's identity as a post-colonial nation and struggling to reconcile the push and pull between a collective national identity and regionalist sentiment. As a young artist spending his adolescent years amongst this political back-drop, we must consider that such a context would have had a lasting impression on the artist. The following section will explore the view that Picasso's guitars refer not only to Parisian entertainment but also act as a symbol for his Spanish homeland through reference to Spanish and Catalan folk music, and ultimately, as a Spanish object in a Parisian context, that the guitar can be seen as a symbol of Picasso himself.

## **National Identity in *fin-de-siècle* Spain**

The socio-historical and political context of Picasso's youth plays an important role in how we interpret any nationalist undertones in his work during the first fifteen years of the twentieth century. Picasso's years as a young artist coincided with the development of nationalist sentiment as a potent force in European society, a force that would ultimately lead the continent into a devastating period of war and violence. The concept of nationhood, with a primarily linguistic and ethnic basis, began to merge ominously with non-genetic ideas of "race".<sup>108</sup> Picasso spent his young, most impressionable years in a Spain that was struggling with its own sense of identity, and surrounded by some very difficult and significant debates about the future of the nation, not least of which was the on-going battle between centralisation and fragmentation. This, as well as his later years in France, also had a marked cultural impact and, as Brown states, "the tension between the allure of French ideas and the compelling histories of his homeland proves to have been a crucial element in Picasso's art and thought."<sup>109</sup>

The end of the nineteenth century was characterised by a period of imperialist expansion and colonial redistribution as the big powers scrambled for the remaining unclaimed territory across the world. Influenced by the ideas of Social

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<sup>108</sup> Brown, 1996: ix

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.: xi

Darwinism, colonial possession was seen as a sign of a healthy, strong world power. Weaker states were expected to give way to stronger powers, and the empires of Britain, France and Germany flourished during this time.<sup>110</sup> In comparison, the turn of the century was marked by defeat and decline for the once great and powerful Spanish nation. During the nineteenth century Spain had already lost many of her American colonies as a result of the Napoleonic Wars, the brutality of which was documented explicitly in Goya's *Disasters of War* (1810-20). The six year period of war, which ended with the expulsion of Napoleon's forces from the Iberian Peninsula, shook the social, political and economic fabric of Spain and fractured the nation into volatile regional juntas. In 1875, however, the Bourbon Restoration, based on Britain's two-party, democratic model, ushered in a period of relative political stability.<sup>111</sup> Nevertheless, the final, fatal blow to Spain's empire came in the form of the three month long Spanish-American war of 1898. Often referred to simply as the "Disaster of '98", Spain suffered a terrible defeat to the American forces, and was forced to cede her two main remaining colonies, Cuba and the Philippines. Once the richest colony in the world, the loss of Cuba was particularly painful for Spain, and represented a great economic blow for the nation. More than that, however, it was also experienced as a terrible national trauma; Spain felt very close to Cuba and viewed it not so much as a colony as a *domaine outre mer*, a province of the homeland itself. Spain emerged into the twentieth century a depleted nation, scarred by war.

The Disaster of '98 marked a significant crisis because it exposed a number of fictions within Spanish society and the Spanish psyche. Firstly, the surprise of the crushing defeat at the hands of the Americans revealed the self-delusion that Spain was a great and powerful nation. The belief had been held that the Spanish empire was different to the newer empires of Europe, which were based solely on economic gain. Instead, Spain's colonies were believed to be united by nobler ties, built on racial bonds and shared culture.<sup>112</sup> The Hispanic Cubans who fought for independence were deemed traitors, and the blacks

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<sup>110</sup> Balfour in Mar-Molinero & Smith (eds.), 1996: 107

<sup>111</sup> Balfour in Ibid., 1996: 108

<sup>112</sup> Balfour in Ibid., 1996: 107

who joined them were held to be demonstrating the inferiority of the race. At the beginning of the conflict, the troops were waved off with marching bands already celebrating their inevitable victory. The massive defeat was therefore a big, painful shock to the country and this complacent nationalism was exposed as hollow.<sup>113</sup> Spain's inability to keep hold of these close colonies forced it to reevaluate itself in the context of the other world powers, and to examine its identity as a post-colonial country.

This complacent nationalism was largely the result of an attempt by the ruling classes to establish an illusion of nationalist sentiment among a population that felt more connected to its differing regional and local identities than to any sense of national collectivity. During the nineteenth century the country had been slow to modernise, largely because of a lack of economic integration; modernisations in communication systems were later to arrive in Spain than in other European countries. This not only meant poorer road networks and mail systems, but also no established national newspapers, which were a vital tool in guiding a sense of national opinion. Junco argues that "nationalism is a reaction to modernity", and that Spain's hesitation in the face of urbanisation, combined with the weakness of its central government, meant that local bonds and regionalist sentiment remained strong; the rural communities did not feel the need for a collective national identity.<sup>114</sup> Spain did not have a national flag until 1843, nor a national anthem until the twentieth century.<sup>115</sup>

In the years leading up to the war, the government and to a certain extent the press had tried to induce a sense of patriotic fervour in an effort to mobilise troops and win popular opinion. Images of nationalism were disseminated through songs, speeches and propaganda. This mobilised the population to fight for national objectives. Americans were portrayed as a mongrel race of cowards, no match for the pure and mighty Spanish valour.<sup>116</sup> The projection of nationalistic values was also a project of the bourgeoisie and the oligarchy in an

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<sup>113</sup> Balfour in Graham and Labanyi (eds.), 1995: 29

<sup>114</sup> Junco, 2002: 24

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.: 24

<sup>116</sup> Balfour in Graham and Labanyi (eds.), 1995: 29

effort to maintain their power and a sense of stability. The Restoration, while based on a democratic system, was in reality controlled by the oligarchy, a powerful group of rural-based Conservatives. The two parties, the Conservatives and the Liberals, were made up of two factions of the landed classes. This meant that the continued stability of the Restoration relied on establishing a compromise and consensus with the elites who had no direct political representation, to ensure that everyone with money and power was satisfied with the system. The system also depended on the withholding of power from the majority of the population. As a result, however, the Spanish government was too weak to establish a common market or justice system.<sup>117</sup> Through putting a stress on education and culture, they sought to establish common symbols of identity at a national level. By creating an apparent collectivity, they hoped to unite the diverse regions under the same images in order to pacify social grievances and avoid revolution.<sup>118</sup> While the Restoration survived the devastating war, it could only function in an unmodernised Spain, taking advantage of poor communication links to keep power in the hands of the oligarchy. The war exposed the fragility of the Restoration and the emptiness of its nationalistic rhetoric. The state's ability to encourage nationalism through traditional images in order to exert its authority was undermined as imperial enthusiasm waned.<sup>119</sup> Moreover, the increasingly rapid pace of modernisation strained further the consensus and agreements upon which the Restoration relied.

It was also the uneven distribution of the modernisation process that threatened the possibility of a stable, united Spain. The disillusionment that the war had caused with the traditional images of Spain resulted in a move towards a plurality of identities in the more developed areas on the periphery of the country.<sup>120</sup> Nowhere was this more evident than in the provinces of Catalonia and the Basque Country, which by the early twentieth century were far more urban, industrial areas in comparison to the bulk of agrarian, rural Spain. Their

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<sup>117</sup> Balfour in Mar-Molinero & Smith (eds.), 1996: 108-109

<sup>118</sup> Graham & Labanyi (eds.), 1995: 9

<sup>119</sup> Balfour in Mar-Molinero & Smith (eds.), 1996: 112

<sup>120</sup> Balfour in Graham and Labanyi (eds.), 1995: 30

modernisation encouraged the growth of an industrial middle-class and the development of liberal ideas that alienated the two provinces from the oligarchic order and the traditional ideas it espoused. Catalonia and the Basque Country's unity with the rest of Spain was based on a compromise of state protection and shared imperial goals. The regions benefitted greatly from the colonial markets, the majority of their textile exports being absorbed by the empire. The state's failure to defend its colonies, therefore, caused a big economic problem for the regions and severely strained the fragile ties that united them with the state. As movements campaigning for autonomy gained in popularity and momentum, the Conservative Right in the Castilian heart of Spain reacted with increased hostility towards any calls for the devolution of power; after all, allowing similar rights to Cuba had resulted in the loss of that colony all together.<sup>121</sup>

After the Disaster of '98, Spain was enveloped in a prevailing sense of pessimism. It was felt that Spain was a dying nation; Lord Salisbury, in his speech of 4th May 1898 at the Albert Hall, described Spain as a "moribund nation".<sup>122</sup> This sentiment was echoed by the future Conservative leader Francisco Silvela, who proclaimed that Spain was "without a pulse" ("*sin pulso*").<sup>123</sup> Despite the fragility of the Restoration regime after the Disaster of '98, it resisted collapse and continued to function until Primo de Rivera seized power in 1923. While neither the royalist Carlists, the Republicans nor any other group possessed the necessary support to take power, this period was characterised by a widespread voicing of criticism of Spain's political and social structures; "the Spanish nation was on its deathbed, it had to be born again."<sup>124</sup> Politicians, intellectuals, philosophers, the Church and the military all took part in a heated national debate over the causes of Spain's decline and what measures could be put in place to return the country to her former glory. Far-right Conservatives blamed the loss of the empire on an abandonment of virtues, hierarchy and strong Catholicism, while more liberal groups placed more accountability with the country's failure to modernise in pace with the rest

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<sup>121</sup> Balfour in Graham and Labanyi (eds.), 1995:

<sup>122</sup> Harrison in Harrison & Hoyle (eds.), 2000: 5

<sup>123</sup> Harrison & Hoyle (eds.), 2000: 5

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*: 5

of Europe.<sup>125</sup> The Regenerationism movement (*Regeneracionismo*) came to encompass this investigation into the reasons and remedies of Spain's decline. While stress was placed on objectivism and scientific inquiry, proposals of how to regenerate Spain were disparate in approach.

One interesting result of Spain's particular path through history was the effect of its relatively late modernisation on Hispanic cultural development. Mass media had already been introduced when Spain embarked on its period of "nation formation". Rowe and Schelling argue that this rather unusual situation broke down some of the barriers between elite and popular culture in Hispanic countries, as modern techniques such as mass reproduction became involved in the development of what was considered "high culture".<sup>126</sup> For example, gramophone concerts were held, in which people could listen to recorded classical performances, and exhibitions of reproduction prints were also displayed.<sup>127</sup> This not only allowed a wider section of the population access to this kind of culture, but it blurred the lines between popular, mass culture, and what was deemed "exclusive" high art. This merging of high and low becomes a very important theme in Picasso's *papiers collés* and is something we will return to in Chapter Four. It was in this fraught socio-political and cultural context that Picasso came to maturity and, as a young artist of the avant-garde, he necessarily participated in these debates.

## **The Generation of '98 and *Arte Joven***

During the first half of 1901 Picasso was in Madrid. With perhaps the exception of John Richardson, who dedicates an entire chapter to this period, this relatively brief trip rarely attracts particular attention from art historians, sandwiched between Picasso's lengthier and more productive stays in Barcelona and Paris.<sup>128</sup> However, during these few months we see Picasso

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<sup>125</sup> Balfour in Graham and Labanyi (eds.), 1995: 25

<sup>126</sup> Rowe & Schelling, 1991: 194

<sup>127</sup> Graham & Labanyi (eds.), 1995: 9

<sup>128</sup> "Chapter 12: Madrid 1901" in Richardson, 1991

engaging directly with the socio-political situation in Spain at the time, which can give us an insight into the opinions and experiences he had of his home country and how these may have influenced his approach to the notion of national identity over the coming decades.

Picasso's decision to return to Madrid for a third time may seem an unexpected one; on his previous visits to the city Picasso had been unimpressed. As well as experiencing deprived conditions and illness while studying at the Royal Academy of San Fernando in 1898, he was disillusioned by academic teaching methods and "disenchantment set in almost immediately."<sup>129</sup> Picasso was encouraged to return, however, as he had arranged with a young, Anarchist writer, Francisco de Asís Soler, to start up an artistic and literary periodical. As both were frequent visitors to *Els Quatre Gats* in Barcelona, it is thought that the pair met there to discuss their plans for the publication, named *Arte Joven* (Young Art), before Picasso moved to Madrid. Soler would be the literary director, while Picasso would take charge of the graphic contributions, most of which were his own. Soler had previously directed a magazine, *Luz*, and they modelled their new project on *moderniste* magazines from Barcelona such as *Pèl i Ploma*, the literary director of which was Picasso's friend Miquel Utrillo.<sup>130</sup> *Modernisme* - usually referred to in the Catalan rather than the Spanish "Modernismo" - was a cultural movement based in Barcelona between around 1888 and 1910; it is often associated with other European *fin-de-siecle* movements, such as Art Nouveau, Symbolism and *Jugendstil*. The movement was closely tied with a search for Catalan identity and the establishing of Catalan art as of equal quality and status to that of other European countries. Figures associated with *Modernisme* include Antoni Gaudi, Santiago Rusiñol and Joan Maragall. *Modernistes* rejected bourgeois values by either opting out of society through bohemian living, or trying to change society through their art. In emulating magazines from Barcelona, Soler and Picasso hoped to import *Modernisme* into Madrid, creating a cultural bridge between the two cities.

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<sup>129</sup> Richardson, 1991: 90

<sup>130</sup> Kaplan, 2007: 9

Many of the main literary contributors to *Arte Joven* came from a loosely defined group known as the Generation of '98, or in Spanish, the *Noventayochistas* (the “ninety-eighters”). This innovative group of writers and poets identified with the Regenerationist movement and directed their attention towards both literary rejuvenation (*renovación estética*) and socio-political goals (*la regeneración de España*).<sup>131</sup> Named, perhaps ironically, after the year that traditional notions of Spanish identity were undermined and damaged, they recognised the cultural need to bolster and discover Spain’s identity in the modern, post-colonial age. Writing with mockery, idealism and pessimism, the *Noventayochistas* attacked the injustice and backwardness (“*retraso*”) in Spanish society. When addressing the question of identity, they distinguished between the official image of Spain issued by the establishment and what they saw as the real, squalid Spain, that of vast, dusty plains and forgotten villages. While the first decade of the twentieth century is characterised by demoralisation, doubt and pessimism in Spain, groups which sprung from this, such as the Generation of '98, are credited with triggering a period of richness and rejuvenation in contemporary Spanish culture. Significant figures in the *Noventayochista* group, such as Pío Baroja, Miguel de Unamuno and José Martínez Ruiz (more commonly known by his pseudonym, Azorín, from 1904), were all contributors to *Arte Joven*. The ideas that *Arte Joven* espouses are therefore strongly influenced by the ideology of the Generation of '98. Collaborating with these writers and intellectuals must have, in turn, had a lasting impression on the young Picasso.

As the magazine’s name suggests, the *Arte Joven* group were interested in youth and newness. Along with many other Regenerationists, they believed that modernisation was essential in the revitalisation of the country. The group looked further afield, first to Barcelona and then out into the rest of Europe, for ideas and influence to bring Spain up to date with its neighbours. Madrid had made efforts to modernize, for instance by installing a new electric tram system; however, the contributors to *Arte Joven* wanted to see change at a deeper level. Their definition of “youth” was more complex than the conventional notion. A youthful idea was “that which survives, that which has enough strength to resist

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<sup>131</sup> Shaw, 1975: 3



the attacks of the new, that which remains firm and unscathed.”<sup>132</sup> Ideas therefore had the potential to achieve eternal youth, no matter how old they were, and so they built what Richardson describes as an “absurd pantheon” of immortal figures, including Mozart, Beethoven, Homer, Dante, Goethe, and so on.<sup>133</sup> This approach to regeneration and progress rejects the establishment and yet is still rooted in history and tradition. The Generation of '98 demonstrated this outlook by attempting to replace the traditional myth of Spain by reintroducing folkloric language used by the peasantry and recovering the old myths of the “Romancero”, or folk ballads.<sup>134</sup> It could be argued that this idea can be seen reflected in Picasso’s work throughout his career. With the young artist’s desire to break ties with his father and the academic doctrine he represented, the regenerationist rejection of the constructed, artificial traditions of the established order must have particularly appealed to him at this time. As well as this, however, we also see Picasso continually referring back to the past, a notable example of which is his return to classical forms during the nineteen-twenties. The ties that Picasso creates to the past will be examined further in the final chapter. By simultaneously rejecting and referring to the traditions that have gone before him, Picasso attempted throughout his career to write himself into the history of art and eternally young artistic masters.

It seems that Picasso did not stay in Madrid as long as he had planned to; having signed a year-long lease on his apartment in January, he had left for Paris by June.<sup>135</sup> Despite spending months working hard to produce *Arte Joven* with Soler and the other contributing artists and writers, the artist’s early departure is one sign that leads historians such as Richardson to conclude that Picasso ultimately could not commit to the politics and ideals of the group. Having experienced the cutting edge of artistic thought in Paris, Picasso seemed to be more interested and excited by the ideas he could discover there, rather than what he could bring to the conservative city of Madrid. While *modernisme* may have possessed a subversive quality in the context of Madrid,

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<sup>132</sup> Kaplan, 2007: 11

<sup>133</sup> Richardson, 1991: 187

<sup>134</sup> “The Generation of '98”, *Spanish Books*, 2011

<sup>135</sup> Richardson, 1991: 177

it had been around in Barcelona for over a decade, and would have almost completely declined by 1910; to Picasso, who had experienced some of the latest ideas coming from further afield in Paris, *modernisme* must have seemed “irredeemably provincial”.<sup>136</sup> Moreover, Soler and Picasso’s attempt to create a cultural bridge had largely failed, with the magazine only importing ideas from Barcelona, rather than enabling a reciprocal export of ideas from Madrid. *Arte Joven* was under-staffed and running out of money; it only survived to its fifth issue and by this time, Picasso had moved to Paris, leaving Ricardo Baroja to complete the illustrations for the final publication. Nevertheless, while Picasso may not have completely shared in the same objectives and beliefs as the other figures involved in *Arte Joven* and the Generation of '98, we can assume that his time collaborating with them in 1901 had an influence on the development of his ideas and art.

## “El guitare”

When compared with other parts of Europe, the guitar has a long history as a prominent instrument in Spain, with its development thought to have been influenced by the four-stringed *oud*, brought to Spain by the invading Moors in the eighth century. The rise of flamenco as a symbol of national culture further solidified the instrument’s associations with the country. The guitar is so bound up in Spanish tradition and culture that, as Rosenblum states, “as a symbol of Spain, it is so obvious as to almost go unnoticed.”<sup>137</sup> While the previous chapter examined the gendered use of the guitar by Picasso, we cannot ignore the potential significance that the guitar holds as a symbol of Spain and the Spanish in his artworks. This section will explore the relationship between Spain and the guitar and examine how Picasso relates this connection in his artwork.

According to the poet André Salmon, when visitors to Picasso’s studios would ask about his sheet iron *Guitar*, trying to find out exactly what the artist considered it to be, he would reply with the simple phrase, “It’s nothing, it’s *e/*

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid.: 178

<sup>137</sup> Rosenblum in Brown, 1996: 78

*guitare!*<sup>138</sup> While it is important to remember that Picasso was not entirely fluent in French during this time, and might have often lapsed into his mother-tongue, this use of the Spanish article in a French conversation suggests he relates the instrument to his homeland. Picasso nevertheless still uses the French word for the guitar. This mixing of the two languages perhaps is a demonstration of his attachment to both cultures and his relation of the guitar to both also.

While the guitar's associations with Spain are obvious in the public consciousness, this alone does not hold as a strong argument that Picasso personally pointed to this connection in his art through the use of the guitar as a symbol of his home country. We can, however, identify other symbols and devices that Picasso uses to reference Spain; in Rosenblum's words, "Picasso... stealthily compiles an inventory of national souvenirs within the presumably supranational language of Cubism... these memories kept Picasso in contact with his roots south of the Pyrenees."<sup>139</sup> The guitar can be included in this group of national objects and images. Picasso's iconic image *Guernica* (1937, Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid) is full of national symbolism, with the tormented horse generally interpreted as representing the suffering of the Spanish people. In other works, such as *Spanish Still-Life*, 1912, Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris), Picasso departs from the monochrome palette of Analytic Cubism with a flash of red and yellow, a nod to his national flag.<sup>140</sup> Perhaps the imagery best and most consistently used to represent Spain is that of the bullfight. Rooted in a mystical sense of ritual, a brutal confrontation between culture and nature, the bullfight is a passionate, grim drama that has been played out in arenas across Spain again and again for centuries. The *corrida* metaphorically reenacts the bloody history of the Spanish people; the power of the emotions evoked by imagery of the bullfight is perhaps why it has become such a potent symbol of Spanish national identity.

Picasso harnessed the symbol of the bullfight to allude to his nationality and homeland in his works throughout his life. He dwelled on the imagery of the

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<sup>138</sup> Umland, 2011: 21

<sup>139</sup> Rosenblum in Brown, 1996: 81

<sup>140</sup> Rosenblum in Ibid.: 68-69

*corrida*, often in small-scale paintings and sketches; in 1900-1901 the artist was already transfixed on the subject, producing multiple pastel and oil works, entitled *Courses de taureaux*, of a bullfight seen from the stands. Sixty years later, Picasso was still exploring the subject, producing a series of fourteen brush and ink drawings on the *corrida* theme on the 25<sup>th</sup> February 1960.<sup>141</sup> When Picasso's work became far more overtly political during the Spanish Civil War, the bull was employed for its symbolic value and power of national identity. This occurred not only in *Guernica* but also in *Dream and Lie of Franco* (1937, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), for example. The bullfight can also be seen as a sexual metaphor too, demonstrating the dominance of man and masculinity over nature. This mirrors the symbolism that we explored in the guitar imagery in the previous chapter. The bull, therefore, associates with the guitar, both objects dominated and controlled by man and, as a result, both objects also symbolizing the woman, her passivity and her relationship with nature. The bullfight's symbolic function is predominantly that of nationality, however, and its presence across Picasso's body of work supports the idea that the image of the guitar could have been employed for similar purposes.

Other images take on a more understated Spanish significance. Objects such as Spanish newspapers, Corrida tickets, and Spanish words appear across Picasso's works to suggest that Spain was on his mind. The 1915 image *Bottle of Anis del Mono, Wine Glass and Playing Card* is an excellent example of Picasso's subtle homage to the country of his birth - so much so, in fact, that it has led Rosenblum to argue that the image should be retitled *Spanish Still-Life*.<sup>142</sup> At the centre of the image, placed on the upturned oval of a table, sits a bottle of the Spanish liqueur, Anis Del Mono ("The Monkey's Anisette"). This Spanish drink is often depicted or referred to in many of Picasso's café scenes and could be seen as a nod to his homeland. Perhaps it was common for Picasso and his friends to sit around in Paris and raise a glass to remember their heritage, for Anis Del Mono begins to appear in the work of other artists of Hispanic background, such as Juan Gris' *The Bottle of Anis Del Mono* (1914, Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid) and Diego Rivera's 1913 *Still Life* (Kunstmuseum,

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<sup>141</sup> Bottinelli, 2004

<sup>142</sup> Rosenblum in *Ibid.*: 78

Bergen). In the Picasso image, the distinctive diamond pattern engraved on the bottle here recalls the harlequin pattern that Picasso had used particularly during his Rose Period and that he still used to identify his alter-ego in images such as *At the 'Lapin Agile'*.<sup>143</sup> In other works this pattern therefore also takes on a hint of Spanish flavour. In the New York version of the *Three Musicians* (1921) (Fig. 51), the central figure, widely accepted as representing Picasso, is depicted as a harlequin, bedecked in the diamond pattern of Anís Del Mono. This time, however, Picasso chooses to also depict the harlequin in the colours of the Spanish flag. The figure is also seen to be playing the guitar, and thus this “most Spanish of instruments” completes the clues to leave us in little doubt about the nationality or indeed identity of the central musician. The guitar also arguably makes a subtle appearance in *Bottle of Anís del Mono, Wine Glass and Playing Card* (Detroit Institute of Fine Arts, Detroit, metamorphosing from the bottle, a sound hole appearing from the label).

The guitar as a signifier of nationality also appears to be an important device for Picasso's Spanish friend Juan Gris. The guitar appears frequently in his work immediately before World War One, probably influenced by Picasso's obsessive use of the instrument, but it could also be argued that as early as 1906 he uses the instrument as a direct reference to Hispanic culture. This occurs, for example, in a series of pre-cubist *moderniste*, illustrations executed for a collection of poetry, *Alma América, Poemas Indoespanoles* (1906) by Peruvian author José Santos Chocano.<sup>144</sup> The use of the guitar here evokes the Hispanic culture that the Iberian Peninsula shares with South America and reflects the national theme of the poems. Gris' use of the guitar as a symbol of nationality reflects not only the sharing of ideas between the Cubists but also the national meaning that the image of the guitar holds in the public imagination, reinforcing the idea that while nationality is at once a personal and public sense of identity, with both private and shared images.

Not only has the guitar been linked with Spanish and Hispanic culture in general, there is also a tradition of representing the instrument and its older

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<sup>143</sup> Rosenblum in *Ibid.*: 78

<sup>144</sup> Rosenblum in *Ibid.*: 79

relatives in Spanish still-life. There is a strong argument, put forward by both Rosenblum and Shaw Miller, which maintains that the techniques adopted by Spanish *tromp l'oeil* still-life painters during the eighteenth century are likely to have influenced the creation of Picasso's musical *papiers collés*. Artists would often present guitars and other stringed instruments hanging flat on walls like ornaments. Pedro de Acosta's *Tromp l'Oeil* (Fig. 52) of 1755 provides us with an excellent example of this style of composition. The presentation of the guitar upright against a flat, two-dimensional plane in Acosta's image bears a likeness to the flat surfaces and lack of perspective against which Picasso's *papiers collés* guitars appear. Other images in this style, such as Marcos Correa's *Trampantojo* (17th Century, Hispanic Society of America, New York) are also particularly notable in their realistic depiction of pieces of paper pinned up on the flat wall.<sup>145</sup> In addition, some paintings of this tradition even occasionally feature open musical scores fixed up on the wall, a painted illusion of what Picasso would replicate in reality almost two centuries later.<sup>146</sup>

Musical instruments were a perfect subject for *tromp l'oeil* images as their tactile nature aided the trickery involved in this style of painting. *Tromp l'oeil* employed a style of painting so realistic so as to create an illusion, tricking the eye into believing that the objects depicted are real. As discussed in Chapter One, the guitar only achieves its function when picked up and played, and therefore invites the viewer's or musician's touch. Painters such as Acosta play on our urge to touch the instrument, for only when we reach out to the canvas is the illusion broken.<sup>147</sup> While the cubist depictions of the guitar may seem visually very far from eighteenth century Spanish still-lives, it is clear that Picasso's work is linked to Spanish art of the past in its subject and compositional choices, as well as in its exploration of concepts of reality. Rosenblum also speculates that other more domestic Spanish guitar-based sources may have influenced his art. For example, guitar-shaped tin cake molds were a common feature of Hispanic

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<sup>145</sup> Staller, 2001: 113

<sup>146</sup> Rosenblum in Brown, 1996: 80

<sup>147</sup> Shaw Miller, 2002: 107

kitchens, and the inverted tin shape recalls Picasso's manipulation of solids and cavities in his sheet metal *Guitar*.<sup>148</sup>

Picasso firmly establishes that the guitar he depicts is a Spanish one by labelling it as such in a number of drawings from the summer of 1912. Picasso lightly pencils in a label inside the sound-hole of one guitar, identifying its Spanish origins with the two words "Madrid - Lopez". Spanish guitar makers would often mark their guitars with a label detailing the guitar's provenance and advertising their skill to the guitar's future players, and it would appear Picasso mimics this traditional practice in this image. It is possible that Picasso observed this labelling whilst examining guitars made by his luthier neighbour, Ramírez. The name "Lopez", could perhaps be a direct reference to, Domingo Estesio Lopez, a luthier renowned for his high-quality flamenco guitars, who was working in Madrid during Picasso's youth. Juan Gris reinforces this connection between the guitar and Spain also by identifying the guitar in *Guitar and Glasses* (1912, Private Collection) with a Spanish label.<sup>149</sup> It is interesting that despite the presence of guitars and guitar-makers in France, both Picasso and Gris choose to clearly identify their guitars as being products of Spain, their homeland, rather than the country in which they were working. This choice further solidifies the argument that Picasso drew a strong connection between his homeland and the instrument that makes such repeated appearance in his work.

It is clear that Spain has a strong connection to the guitar in the public consciousness. It's history in the culture of the country means that despite being a popular and common instrument in Paris during the early twentieth century, it was ultimately tied to the culture of Spain. The French public, too, would have been aware of the instrument's origins and would have shared in this association. It could be strongly argued, however, that there was not just a public connection but also a private one between the guitar and Spain, and that Picasso personally related the instrument, "el guitare", to his homeland and engaged with this relationship in his art, adding the guitar to the collection of

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<sup>148</sup> Rosenblum in Brown, 1996: 79

<sup>149</sup> Kachur, 1993: 259

objects and images that he used to allude to Spanish themes, as well as looking to the guitar's part in the Spanish still life tradition.

## Folk Music of Catalonia

During his time in Barcelona Picasso was immersed in a creative community in the capital of Catalan culture. This vibrant city had a growing reputation as a centre for music and the young artist came into close contact not only with artists and writers during this time but also Catalan composers, who were as much motivated by regionalist sentiment as figures in the other artistic spheres. This section will aim to explore the argument that this contact with both contemporary Catalan composers as well as Catalan folk tradition had an impact on Picasso, to the extent that we can see evidence of its influence in his work years later.

It is perhaps surprising to note that the music of Barcelona did not seem to have an immediate or great effect on Picasso's work. Few musical instruments appear in his work at the turn of the century, with the only notable exception being the appearance of the guitar in *Old Guitarist* (1903) and *At the 'Lapin Agile'*, the latter of which is obviously set in Paris. Picasso's interest in Spanish and Catalan music appears to have lain dormant until after 1910, with a sudden interest in musical instruments appearing in the spring of 1911. This late recognition of Catalan influences could be explained by the musical world that Picasso was exposed to after he moved to Paris. Music by Spanish and Catalan composers was becoming increasingly popular in Paris at the turn of the century. There was a strong link between French and Catalan composers in the form of the Schola Cantorum de Paris, a music conservatoire set up in the late nineteenth century to counter-balance the opera-focused curriculum of the Paris Conservatoire. This institution attracted Catalan and Spanish composers and musicians both as students and teachers, including the Andalusian Isaac Albéniz, Ricardo Viñes and Joaquín Nin.<sup>150</sup> These composers occasionally merged with Picasso's social circle, and even the Salon D'Automne hosted a young Spanish composer, Joaquín Turina, to perform there. The flourishing of

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<sup>150</sup> Waters: 2008: 183



music in Paris during this time, therefore, often featured Spanish and Catalan influences.<sup>151</sup>

During his first decade in Paris, Picasso took a number of trips outside of the city to French Catalonia. In particular, he visited a small town called Céret. While in Céret, Picasso could keep in touch with the Catalan culture that he missed from his time in Barcelona, without the complication of crossing the Spanish border.<sup>152</sup> Picasso returned to this Pyrenean village several times and was also joined by other artistic figures there. The composer Deodat de Severac (1872-1921) and the sculptor Manuel Hugué (1872-1945) (known by most as Manolo) had spent the summer there in 1910, before being joined the following year by Picasso and Braque. Lewis Kachur argues that Céret plays a very important role in Picasso's artistic development, marking the return of Spanish imagery to his artwork, and reconnecting Analytical Cubism with signification.<sup>153</sup>

Until his last visit to the town in 1913, Céret was an important link to Catalan culture for Picasso, and we can see evidence of his visits to the town in his work of the period, as well as in the work of the friends who joined him. Since the early nineteenth century there had been an effort in Catalonia to strengthen the cultural output of the region. Artists and writers had realised the futility of the political campaign for autonomy and instead placed more importance with the struggle for cultural, rather than political, independence. This resulted in a Catalan Renaissance that strove to put Catalan art, literature and music on a par with other European nations. Poets abandoned French and Castilian Spanish for their indigenous language and medieval literary contests, known as "Floral Games" were revived.<sup>154</sup> The links that the Catalan Renaissance had with regionalism and independence meant that, so long as the struggle for autonomy for the region continued, interest in its indigenous culture remained strong.

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<sup>151</sup> Buettner, 1996: 107

<sup>152</sup> Kachur, 1993: 254

<sup>153</sup> Kachur, 1993: 254

<sup>154</sup> Waters, 2008: 168

The Sardana is an important feature of Catalan culture. The style of music, unique to Catalonia, was one of the beneficiaries of the Catalan Renaissance; its popularity grew further during the twentieth century and the style remains popular today. The origins of the Sardana are disputed and unclear, with some claiming that its true provenance lies in the circle dances of Ancient Greece.<sup>155</sup> It seems that as nationalist interest grew in Catalonia, however, the origins of the style were elaborated to endow it with a distinctly Catalan ethos. The Sardana is played to accompany a dance of the same name. The music is traditionally played by a *cobla* band, usually comprising eleven instruments, including the shawm-like *tiple* and *tenora*, the small wooden flute *fluvíol*, horns, bass and drum. The music starts with a ten-bar *fluvíol* improvised introduction, which prepares the band and dancers for the start of the sequence. The music is hypnotic and repetitive, with sudden changes in tempo and pitch, and contrasting sections of duple and triple meter. The Sardana is danced at festivals and village gatherings.

The Sardana dance involves the participants holding hands in a circle and dancing simple, repetitive steps to the left and right, reflecting the hypnotic nature of the music. During the early twentieth century the Sardana was popular across classes and inclusive of all genders. The communal nature of this dance has transformed it into a symbol of Catalan unity and independence.<sup>156</sup> This was reinforced during the dictatorship of General Franco, when demonstrations of Catalan cultural identity were suppressed. The Sardana represents pride in Catalan identity, with arms raised in defiance and celebration. Robert Waters argues that the Sardana was the 'perfect expression of Catalan psychology. With the growth of political aspirations, it has become a symbol of Catalan freedom.'<sup>157</sup> Picasso directly harnesses the Sardana dance as a symbol of harmony, peace and unity in his 1953 lithograph *The Sardana* (Fig. 53), of which there are a number of versions. Dancers move in a circle, joining hands above their heads or holding flowers. At the centre of the circle, Picasso

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid.: 169

<sup>156</sup> Waters, 2008: 174

<sup>157</sup> Buettner, 1996: 110

employs another, more universal symbol, the dove of peace. This image not only demonstrates that this regional folk dance continued to provide artistic inspiration for Picasso many decades later, but also affirms the Sardana's role as a symbol of peace and harmony, as well as Catalan independence. The idyllic, child-like nature of the drawing arguably conveys some of Picasso's feelings about the small, simple town to which he escaped from the bustling Paris.

With its simple melodies and rhythms, the Sardana resembles provincial folk music; some argue, however, that it is not folk music at all, as much of the music and choreography has been composed by known individuals during the nineteenth century, rather than passed from anonymous sources across generations.<sup>158</sup> The renewed interest in Catalan culture, as well as the evolution and expansion of the *cobla* band created a demand for new Sardanas. Pep Ventura, Anselm Clavé and other Catalan composers contributed to the repertoire over the course of the nineteenth century. Whether an authentic folk style or a nationalist folk construction, there is no doubt that the Sardana left a memorable impression on the young Picasso. George Brassai reports that fifty years after his initial stay in the city, Picasso could still dance the Sardana and remember its rhythms.<sup>159</sup>

Picasso drew artistic inspiration not only from the dancers of the Sardana, but also from the *cobla* band and, more specifically, their musical instruments. The *tenora* in particular, appears to have stood out to Picasso as an interesting subject for his development of Cubism. Until the 1990s, many Cubist images were thought to contain clarinets. The reeded woodwind instrument, signified by its finger-holes, mouthpiece and bell-shaped end, is prevalent in his Analytic Cubist works around 1911. What earlier art historians neglected to notice in these metonyms was that the mouthpiece was unmistakably triangular in shape, suggesting a double-reeded instrument, rather than the single-reeded clarinet. Robert Rosenblum, along with other art historians tried to resolve this

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<sup>158</sup> Waters, 2008: 174

<sup>159</sup> Brassai, 1966: 238

contradiction by identifying the instrument in the works as an oboe.<sup>160</sup> The oboe better fits the metonymical clues Picasso leaves us and would be a more reasonable assumption to make if we were analysing a work by Braque and his more classical musicality. We have no evidence to suggest that Picasso had come into close contact with an oboe and it seems a strange and irrelevant choice of instrument for him to choose to depict in so many works, considering he appeared to favour more popular or folk references to music. Lewis Kachur, instead, turns to the Catalan folk tradition to provide us with a stronger, alternative identification of this mystery instrument in the form of the *tenora*. Despite looking very similar to an oboe, the *tenora* in particular is characterised by a triangular double-reed on the mouthpiece, identical to the shape that Picasso leaves visible in his Cubist depiction of the instrument.

In support of the argument that Picasso depicts the *tenora* in his art, we have evidence that places Picasso in close contact with the *tenora* during his trips to French Catalonia. In a 1921 poem dedicated to Picasso, Max Jacob pays homage to the *tenora*, the Sardana, and describes the impression left on him by a *cobla* band performance during a trip to the Catalan town of Figueras across the border from Céret. In the poetic memory entitled “All my life I shall remember the musical instrument which is called the *tenora*.” Jacob describes how “the music brings tears to our eyes / The artless music grips our chests.” The use of the possessive determiner “our” suggests he is speaking not only for himself but for Picasso too. This could imply that Picasso was emotionally affected by the Sardana and particularly the *tenora*, appreciating the music for more than its mathematical principles.<sup>161</sup> Braque also shows his awareness of the *tenora*, for example during a trip with Picasso to Céret in the summer of 1911. Severac also went on to make use of the *tenora*, including them in a number of compositions, as well as writing music inspired by the Sardana, such as *Cerdana: Etudes pittoresques pour piano* (1919). In fact, Severac’s connections with Céret were so strong that a commemorative statue, designed by Manolo, stands in the town centre. Being a close acquaintance of Severac’s, Picasso is likely to have heard Severac’s Catalan-inspired music.

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<sup>160</sup> Rosenblum in Brown (ed.), 1996: 79

<sup>161</sup> Buettner, 1996: 114

Rosenblum speculates as to whether Picasso may have brought back a *tenora* to Paris with him after his 1911 trip to Céret. This is certainly a possibility but, regardless of whether he brought back a physical momento, the continued appearances of the *tenora* in Picasso's works over the coming year are a representation of the Catalan culture that Picasso took back to Paris from his trips south.<sup>162</sup>

Picasso's incorporation of folk music and influences into "high art" mirrors a phenomenon that was also occurring in the musical works of contemporary composers elsewhere in Europe, and particularly in Eastern Europe. Celebrated Hungarian composer, Béla Bartók (1881-1945), was at this time embarking on his period of extensive study and collection of folk music, travelling through Hungary and the surrounding region and recording the folk music that he encountered. Bartók helped to establish the discipline of ethnomusicology and his experience of folk music also influenced his own compositions; he produced a number of classical arrangements of the tunes that he had recorded, and the styles and scales of folk melody also transferred into his original compositions. Other composers including the Russian Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975), and the Bohemians, Antonín Dvořák and Leoš Janáček were also heavily influenced by folk music. Folk music offered subversive possibilities to composers because it presented itself as a celebration of a particular culture, people or nation. Shostakovich's 1948 song cycle *From Jewish Folk Songs* (opus 79) could be seen to reinforce his denunciation of the Zhdanov cultural policy in Russia, which stated that the work of artists of all disciplines must conform to Soviet Communist ideas, and directly opposes the anti-Semitic sentiment embedded in post-war Russian society. Indeed, the piece was considered so controversial that it was unable to be performed publicly until 1955. By incorporating Bohemian, Slavic and Moravian influences into his symphonic music, Dvořák showed the love he had for his homeland and his support for its fight for national independence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. These musical examples clearly show how folk influences and excerpts can add a sense of nationalism to artistic output. In terms of the divisions and tensions between Catalonia and the rest of Spain, Picasso appears to show affection for both;

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<sup>162</sup> Rosenblum in Brown (ed.), 1996: 81

having called each of them a home, it seems more likely that his folk influences represent a pride and celebration of the communities in which he had spent his younger years in opposition to the urban life he now led, regardless of where they were on the Iberian Peninsula.

Kachur's revelation that the reeded woodwind instrument in Picasso's 1911 works was not in fact a standard clarinet or oboe, as previously thought, has important implications for the way in which we interpret such musical references in Picasso's works, and the nationalist undertones that they could imply. The use of the clarinet could be seen to reflect the urban social life Picasso was living in Paris, with its music cabarets and regular classical concerts. Instead, the use of the *tenora* presents a very different picture, as the importance of Picasso's experience of Catalan culture, his time in Céret, and the influence of Catalonia on his wider social circle are all revealed to us. It could be argued that in these works Picasso in fact draws on Catalan folk influences and presents them as an alternative to the industrialised, mass culture that overwhelmed Paris, and in opposition to the standardised academic traditions embedded in that society.<sup>163</sup> In 1912 a transition in subject matter took place in Picasso's works, as the *tenora* was replaced with the guitar, an instrument which dominated the early *papiers collés* and continued to play a significant role over the following years. This turn away from the *tenora*, however, did not mark the end of Picasso's interest in folk music from the Iberian Peninsula, as will be discussed in the following section.

## Flamenco

In a small sketch from Picasso's years in Madrid entitled *Flamenco Dancers* (c. 1898, Private Collection) a group of faces look on, clapping rhythm as two dancers hitch up voluminous skirts, their feet stamping in a flurry of movement.<sup>164</sup> While the dancers take centre stage in this scene, we can spot the neck of a guitar protruding from amongst the watching crowd, the source of rhythmic music that drives the dance. Flamenco music has become iconic of the

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<sup>163</sup> Rosenblum in Brown, 1996: 81

<sup>164</sup> Richardson, 1990: 90

Spanish nation and the importance of the guitar to this style can lead us to see the instrument as a symbol of Spain in Picasso's works. This section will present the view, however, that this is a very generalised and external view of symbolism in Spanish culture and, in fact, the use of flamenco by Picasso has a more specific meaning, referring in particular to the city of Málaga, Picasso's birthplace and one of the central Andalusian cities of flamenco.

Picasso was born and spent the first ten years of his life in Málaga, in the province of Andalusia in southern Spain. Andalusia was the birth place of flamenco, a style of music originating in the Gitano Romani communities, that is now regarded as one of the defining musical styles of Spain. Spanish flamenco has been an important part of Spanish culture for centuries. The emotive, pain-filled vocals, virtuosic guitar parts, voluminous skirts and castanets are all recognisable features of this venerable and revered art-form. Picasso grew up in Málaga during the 'Golden Age' of flamenco, when there was a huge boom in its popularity as it was accepted by the general public outside the Gitano community, and it moved beyond Andalusian borders. The guitar part, or *toque*, plays a vital role in flamenco music, supporting the voice with virtuosic flurries of improvised notes and chords, and can therefore be seen as an essential symbol of the music. As well as his childhood experiences, Picasso was also surrounded by composers and some of them, particularly those of Spanish origin, were also paying homage to the venerable folk style in their music. Manuel da Falla, an acquaintance of Picasso's and with whom he later collaborated on a ballets commissioned by Sergei Diaghilev in 1919 and 1921, composed *El Amor Brujo* (Love, the Magician) in 1914. The piece, which was later re-scored as a ballet and for which Gregorio Martinez Sierra wrote the texts, is considered one of the great tributes to flamenco. Its Andalusian musical style is enhanced by the use of colloquial gypsy language. As we can see, therefore, flamenco was breaking out of its small, provincial origins at this time but was also seen as a distinctive symbol of Spain and, more particularly, of Picasso's birth place. The importance of the guitar in flamenco music makes it a natural symbol of the style.

The other significant and distinctive feature of the flamenco style is the voice. The lyrics of flamenco song are dark and passionate, reflecting on the sorrows

of love and life, and are emitted by the singer in a wail of emotion and elaborate microtonality. The origins of flamenco music are disputed, but it is generally agreed that its beginnings are rooted in the fifteenth century and the Romani gypsy, or *gitano*, immigration from elsewhere in Europe and North Africa that occurred at this time. In the southern region of Andalusia the music of the *gitanos* mingled with other groups escaping Catholic persecution, particularly the Jewish and Muslim communities. The flamenco vocal part, or *cante*, is often filled with pain and passion, and the lyrics are dark in nature, dwelling on tragic subjects. Love, death and loss are common themes and it is thought that this derives from the suffering experienced, especially under Moorish occupation, by the ethnic minorities from whom the style originates. The words of Pierre Ronsard's poem 'Sonnet', Marcel Legay's setting of which Picasso uses in his *papiers collés*, dwell on the theme of dying beauty. The last line translates as "so love me while you're beautiful", used in *Guitar, Sheet Music and Glass* (Fig. 6), and would not sound out of place in a deep, lamenting flamenco piece. Moreover, in *Sheet Music and Guitar* (Fig. 2) the only visible words of the song are translated as "blade", "death" and "passionately" and we could interpret this choice as intentional by Picasso.

Perhaps the most authentic and informal setting for a flamenco performance is the *gitano juerga*, a gathering of the community or family in a private house involving singing, dancing and almost always alcohol. The night will begin with some songs in a light, cheerful mood, but usually as more drink is consumed and the night wears on, the atmosphere becomes more intense and the performers will descend into *cante jondo*, the darker, passionate style, often reducing themselves and the audience to tears with the emotional fervour the music instills in them. While *juergas* still occur in the *gitano* community, they have rarely been accessible by non-gypsies, known as *payos*. However, in the mid-nineteenth century flamenco first became commercialised, with the establishment of *café-cantantes* which offered flamenco performances as well as food and drink, much like the Parisian *café-concert* and cabaret venues that also appeared at this time. This opened up flamenco music to the public outside the *gitano* community. Into the twentieth century flamenco performances continued to grow in popularity, especially with tourists. These *café cantante* draw clear parallels to the cabaret venues of Paris at the time. It is not hard to



believe that Picasso looked around at the Parisian café scene and related it to early memories of the kind of cafés and music that he experienced as a child.

Considering the flamenco style has become a symbol of the whole Spanish nation, it is directly representative only of a small, regional section of society and, as such can be viewed as having quite strongly political associations. Flamenco has been used, for example, as a symbol in the campaign for political autonomy in the region of Andalusia. Flamenco lyrics are rarely overtly political in subject matter; scholars such as William Washabaugh, however, argue that flamenco has always been deeply rooted in politics, despite not explicitly revealing itself as so. The lyrics are arguably rooted in the suffering experienced by ethnic minorities under oppression, and so the pain and passion expressed in flamenco song often takes on political undertones. The *gitanos*, in particular, are important in the understanding of the politicising of flamenco. The gypsy in society is symbolic of freedom, individuality and free travelling. “Given their connections with the Southern symbols of flamenco music and dancing, dress and bullfighting, the gypsies’ symbolic importance is much greater than their numbers indicate.” The gypsy community therefore emerge as a symbol of flamenco and a symbol of freedom in society that can be exploited for political means.

Through flamenco, therefore, the guitar becomes not simply a symbol of national identity but also a symbol of regional identity, representing the iconic music of his birthplace. The artist’s choice of poem draws parallels in literary tone with the pained, passionate lyrics that are sung during flamenco performances. A style that evolved out of the suffering and persecution of the *gitano* community, flamenco also takes on political significance, and it could be argued that this is transferred into Picasso’s works both through his persistent use of the guitar and through the image of the free travelling gypsy. Whether implicitly political or not, there is no doubt, however, that Picasso related to images of flamenco as identifiers of his homeland.

## A Shared Journey: Picasso as the Guitar

So far we have been considering the guitar as a symbol that Picasso potentially uses to represent Spain, but relating to nationality we can also consider that the guitar can be used to represent the artist himself. As discussed in Chapter One, the anthropomorphic features of the guitar, combined with the closeness of the guitar against the body when played, result in a conflation of the guitar and the guitar player; while Picasso was certainly not a regular guitar player, he performs a different kind of creative process, and the guitar player becomes the artist. While Picasso largely seems to represent the guitar as a feminised object, when we think back to the more masculine, angular guitars that occasionally appear in his *papiers collés*, it is not hard to imagine that these instruments represent the artist himself. In the *Three Musicians*, we commonly identify Picasso as the central figure, the harlequin representing his alter-ego in a number of artworks. This central musician plays the guitar, and there is argument to suggest that the guitar itself represents another alter-ego for Picasso in a similar way to the harlequin figure.

The guitar, adopted as a crucial element of Parisian cabaret, became, like Picasso, an innately Spanish object in a French context. The Andalusian artist, with his confusing and contradictory relationship with national identity, must have identified with the guitar's position. Picasso's well-travelled youth labelled him a "perpetual foreigner".<sup>165</sup> Andalusians in industrial Catalonia were stereotyped as bullfighters, gypsies and flamenco dancers; while Picasso perhaps overcame this stereotype when he moved from Málaga to Barcelona, he was still differentiated from the rest of the *Els Quatre Gats* group as "the young Andalusian".<sup>166</sup> In the cosmopolitan Madrid Picasso was less identified by his regional identity but marked himself as an outsider by associating with the *Arte Joven* group, whose ideology and Catalan *modernisme* style clashed so intentionally with that of the established institutions and conservative bourgeoisie in Madrid. It appears that even within the *Arte Joven* group, Picasso was an outsider; younger than the majority of the group, he did not fully

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<sup>165</sup> Cowling, 2002 :59

<sup>166</sup> Kaplan, 2007: 83

subscribe to their political convictions, and none of the group remained lasting friends.<sup>167</sup> Upon moving to Paris, Picasso was now officially a foreigner geographically and linguistically. Paris was full of a mix of nationalities at the time, especially among the artistic community, who flocked to Paris from across Europe, some escaping persecution or censorship and all seeking access to the new ideas, styles and opportunities that this vibrant capital provided. Despite the multicultural atmosphere, among his group of café-frequenting friends, Picasso earned the nickname “le petit Goya”, a reference not only to his artistic talent, but also to his Spanish heritage.<sup>168</sup>

Even in his birth-place of Málaga Picasso was to some extent an outsider because of his rejection of the artistic education that his family, and particularly his father, represented. Sabartés recalls that upon his entry into the Academy, “his family... had reckoned... he would win travelling scholarships...prizes in exhibitions...In winning fame for himself he would win it for the family.”<sup>169</sup> Picasso quickly moved away from the traditional path, and his father’s hopes for him to follow his footsteps into teaching. When, in 1901, Picasso sent his Uncle Salvador a copy of *Arte Joven* in the hope of some much-needed funds and perhaps a subscription to sustain the magazine, the magazine was returned with a note of disparaging rejection that read: “What are you thinking? How far will this go until it stops! Who do you take me for? This is not what we expected from you. You have some ideas! ... And what friends! Keep on this path and you’ll see...”<sup>170</sup> From this it is clear that Picasso’s bohemian living and artistic and ideological direction caused the family some concern and even shame. The black sheep of the family, Picasso was an outsider even in his home town. The struggle with his father’s expectations perhaps explains Picasso’s comment that “in art one must kill one’s father”.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid.: 84

<sup>168</sup> Richardson, 1991: 191

<sup>169</sup> Sabartés in Richardson, 1991: 93

<sup>170</sup> Richardson, 1991: 187

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.: 95

Not only do Picasso's circumstances relate metaphorically to the guitar, but many attributes of his work can also be related in this way. With its use in both Spanish folk music and the popular entertainment of the Parisian population, the guitar is both primitive and modern, echoing the modern art produced by Picasso as a result of his fascination with primitive art forms. The guitar's uses in folk and popular music also contrast with the classical connotations of the courtly lute, with the pure and natural notes of its strings. Again similar parallels can be seen in the comparison between Picasso's use of low-quality materials in his collaged works and the dramatic return to classical subjects and media that followed in the nineteen-twenties.

To a certain extent, these kind of parallels can only be identified with the benefit of hindsight; however, this is not to say that these connections do not exist, and his consistent use of the guitar over a prolonged period is enough to suggest that he developed a certain affinity with the instrument.

## Conclusion

While Picasso's Spanish origins are simply a matter of fact, his place within French painting is also something that is widely accepted. American libraries, in fact, categorise Picasso as a French painter.<sup>172</sup> He played such a prominent role in the *avant-garde* scene in Paris that when examining this period it is easy to forget that he was not native to this socio-political context and was in fact shaped by the unsettled atmosphere of *fin-de-siècle* Spain. The earlier works featuring the Catalonian tenora demonstrate that Picasso was in the habit of referencing folk music in his art. As a vital component of flamenco, the music of Picasso's home province and a style linked so strongly with Spanish national identity, the guitar makes an appropriate instrument to choose as a signifier of Spain. Evidence that Picasso viewed the guitar as a Spanish instrument is clear through his use of a Madrid maker's label in his work and through his description of the guitar using the Spanish language. The guitar's prevalence in the Parisian music scene puts the guitar in a very similar position to Picasso himself and we must consider that, aside from being a symbol for Spain,

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<sup>172</sup> Brown, 1996: ix

Picasso may also have noticed this similarity and related to the guitar on a more personal level, seeing it as representative of his own personal journey.

The last two chapters of this thesis have explored one of the main ways in which music appears in Picasso's works - the image of the guitar. There are a number of explanations for the predominance of the guitar in the cubist works around 1912; the woman with the guitar was a popular subject with other members of the avant-garde at the time but the intensity with which Picasso lingered on it indicates that, for him, the guitar represented something more than an interesting form for pictorial innovation. We have explored two different ways in which the guitar could provide symbolic meaning in Picasso's works but that is not to say that they must exist in contradiction to one another. Instead, they form part of the rich and complex layers of meaning available in these simple works. The use of the guitar, however, is only one of the references to music that we find in Picasso's art. The rest of this thesis will examine other musical elements, with a particular focus on the sheet music found in the 1912 *papier collés* and the cabaret scene that Picasso was surrounded by whilst working in Paris.

# Chapter Four: The *Chansons*, the *Chansonniers* and Parisian Cabaret

The first three chapters of this thesis have focused primarily on the musical imagery used by Picasso during the Cubist years and in particular on the symbolism of the guitar in his works. Aside from the depiction of musical instruments, another significant way in which music appears in Picasso's work is through the use of musical notation. Musical scores are, like written text, a visual means of representing something which is heard. The introduction of musical notation onto the canvas, therefore, was revolutionary in the same way as the introduction of text to images such as *Ma Jolie*. Like the use of text in Cubism, musical notation was occasionally painted into Analytic Cubist works but with the move into Synthetic Cubism, these painted staves were soon replaced by pasted portions of their real counterparts. Torn fragments of sheet music appear in some of the very first of Picasso's *papiers collés* and this series of six works have so far formed the central focus of our investigation into Picasso's use of music. Our attention will now focus more particularly on these works and the significance of the sheet music that they contain.

As discussed in the previous chapters, the guitar forms a link between Picasso and music that holds many different interpretations and meanings. The collages, however, provide us with a more solid and revealing connection to the world of music, as the sheet music used acts as an artifact that can be traced. In the six *papiers collés* that feature sheet music, the fragments are only taken from two pieces: *Sonnet* (1892), a setting of Pierre de Ronsard's poem by Marcel Legay, and *Trilles et Baisers* (1905), a piece by Désiré Dihau. It could be argued that Picasso reused the pieces because they held no particular significance and simply signified music to him; this opinion would characterise the Modernist point of view put forward by Clement Greenberg in "The Pasted Paper Revolution" (1958), which refrains from finding contextual meaning in the

contents of the sheet music. Instead, the scores would be seen to take on a similar formal function to the newspaper clippings, bringing attention to the surface of the image. While this formal interpretation remains valid, this chapter will argue, however, that there is persuasive evidence to suggest that the part that the sheet music plays is more complicated than this.

We have reason to believe that Picasso selected the two pieces of music, rather than using whatever was available, in order to add a further layer of meaning to his works. Firstly, as is argued with his use of newspaper, if Picasso had simply wanted to signify music, he would have taken less care in making it legible to the viewer. In *Sheet Music and Guitar* (Fig. 4) and *Violin and Sheet Music* (Fig. 7), for example, the first page of each of the pieces is used; both pages are used relatively intact, with the titles clearly visible, taking an important role at the top of the image. Also significant is the type of music that Picasso chose; unlike Braque, who often displayed dedications to Bach and classical music in his works, Picasso leaned more heavily towards popular music. The two pieces that appear in the *papiers collés* are both *chansons*, popular songs sung in *cabaret artistique* and *café* venues in Paris. Picasso was known to spend many evenings with fellow artists, poets and intellectuals in such venues and so it is hardly surprising that this kind of music has been chosen. Firstly looking at the wider cabaret scene before focusing on *Sonnet* and *Trilles et Baisers*, this chapter will explore further Picasso's connections with the popular music scene in Paris and examine the possible levels of meaning that these connections brings to the *papiers collés*.

An exploration of the cabaret scene in Paris during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is important in order for us to better understand the origins of the pieces of music that Picasso pastes into his *papiers collés*. More significantly, however, it gives us an insight into the social and cultural context in which Picasso was working during this time and the impact that this had on his work of the period. What we find is that not only was the cabaret reflected in Picasso's subject matter through the depiction of musical instruments and cabaret songs, but there are also formal parallels between the cabaret format and Synthetic Cubism.

The meaning of the term 'cabaret' in relation to nineteenth and early twentieth century Parisian entertainment has evolved over history and encompasses a variety of more specific terms, in particular the *café-concert*, the *cabaret artistique* and *le music-hall*. The *café-concert* developed out of an eighteenth century tradition of hiring musicians, singers and dancers to perform in restaurants and cafés. The performances of sentimental and patriotic songs proved to be very profitable for the restaurants, despite the often second-rate quality of the music. The concept of cabaret also existed at this time, though it differed little in style from the *café-concert*.<sup>173</sup> With its arrival in 1881, however, the *cabaret artistique* pitched itself as the antithesis of the two. In contrast to the broad, cross-class appeal and large audiences of the *café-concert*, the *cabaret artistique* was initially a very exclusive affair, involving artists, poets and intellectuals and taking place in small and dark venues such as Rudolf Salis' famous '*Le Chat Noir*', which inhabited an abandoned post office.<sup>174</sup>

The material performed at the *cabaret artistique* was a showcase from artists of all disciplines, who presented their own work personally. Remembering '*Le Grillon*', the Latin Quarter cabaret venue of Marcel Legay, F. Berkeley Smith describes how "men sing their own creations, and they have absolute license to sing or say what they please... many times these rare bohemians do not take the trouble to hide their clever songs and satires under a *double entente*".<sup>175</sup> After gaining notoriety in the early 1880s, the *cabaret artistique* opened its doors to the general public; now the subjects of their satire - namely the bourgeoisie - were in the audience, and the performers exploited this tension, playing on the attraction of high to low. As well as making fun of the bourgeoisie, the cabaret performers also mocked their own pretensions and elitism. The face of cabaret had changed by the time Picasso produced his collages, however; the influence of American music and cinema, combined with the increasing general popularity of cabaret entertainment had resulted in larger venues and a style of music that appealed to broader tastes. Apart from a few

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<sup>173</sup> Houchin, 1984: 6

<sup>174</sup> Poole, 1994: 38

<sup>175</sup> Berkeley Smith, 1901: 115



establishments which fought to retain traditional cabaret, therefore, the *cabaret artistique* was largely replaced by *le music-hall*.

When Picasso moved permanently to Paris in 1904, he was absorbed into cabaret and café social life. Picasso originally lived in Montmartre, the village of artists but also of cabarets. Many *cabaret artistiques* had set up in this area with the rather Romantic notion that by intruding on the artists' space, they would take a step towards creating a synthesised art world. Picasso was known to be a frequent visitor to venues such as the 'Eldorado', where Marcel Legay's *Sonnet* was first introduced, or the '*Lapin Agile*', which had been previously called the '*Cabaret des Assassins*'. Here Picasso would meet and socialise with other artists and writers, such as Guillaume Apollinaire. In fact, we have artistic evidence that Picasso often visited the '*Lapin Agile*' because he uses it in the pre-Cubist work, *At the 'Lapin Agile'*. Picasso himself features in this work, dressed as a harlequin and stood next to a woman at the bar. In the background we can see the owner of the establishment, Frédé, playing his guitar. Frédé was a *chansonnier* himself and would often entertain his customers personally. We therefore know that Picasso did hold considerable connections with the Parisian cabaret scene, legitimising the argument that it may have had an influence on his work.

Beyond the obvious use of sheet music, other parallels can be seen with the cabaret in the subject matter of the *papiers collés*. Considering the anthropomorphic nature of the musical instruments, Christopher Green imagines the still-life's transformation into a cabaret scene, with "glasses, bottles and musical instruments that recline, jostle and dance on stage-like table-tops."<sup>176</sup> As well as directly influencing Picasso's subject matter, art historians such as Jeffrey Weiss have argued that the *papiers collés* present strong correlations in form to the cabaret. The collages are an apparently improvised interplay of different papers and real life materials, a mixture of advanced cubist technique and emblems of popular culture that appear in one frame. Underneath the surface aesthetic value of the image there is an impression, and in some cases a critique, of contemporary society and culture.

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<sup>176</sup> Green, 2009: 44

In many ways, the *cabaret artistique* was similar; a variety of acts and songs all patch-worked into an overall performance, a product of both high and low culture, and simultaneously an object of entertainment and biting critique. Cabaret therefore became “an informing agent, not just of iconography, but of style, structure and bearing.”<sup>177</sup>

The use of word play by Picasso presents another strong link to the cabaret scene. Weiss argues that Picasso’s use of this technique in the *papiers collés* with sheet music goes beyond his suggestive use of the title of *Le Journal*, which while appearing in many works of the time, is only included in one of this particular series, *Guitar, Sheet Music and Glass* (Fig. 6). Not only does the word “*valse*” signify both “waltz” and “false” in *Guitar and Sheet Music* (Fig. 5), but Weiss suggests that Picasso partakes in a kind of secondary wordplay through the use of a music score. The French word for sheet music is “*partition*”, and therefore puns on the idea of division, and parallels the cubist partition and division of the objects in the image.<sup>178</sup> It could be argued Picasso’s tendency to use puns to comically encode multiple meanings is mirrored in the style of humour used by the *cabaret artistique*. When doors were opened to the general public, cabaret artists retained their air of exclusivity by employing a complex, biting kind of humour known as *la blague*. Deeply cynical, *la blague* has been cited by Roger Shattuck as a prerequisite to modernity.<sup>179</sup> It allowed artists to separate themselves from those who did not understand, and its use of street jargon, together with the cabaret’s love of wordplay, meant they could revel in the incomprehensibility of it to the outsider.<sup>180</sup> Picasso’s widespread use of wordplay in his works of this period could therefore be partly attributed to his connections with the cabaret at this time, and the encoding of meaning and in-jokes that were rife in this setting.

Picasso also sets up a kind of cultural opposition in his collage through the use of sign systems, which mirrors that set up through the use of *la blague* in the

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<sup>177</sup> Weiss, 1994: 11

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*: 11

<sup>179</sup> Shattuck in Poole, 1994: 5

<sup>180</sup> Poole, 1994: 6

cabaret. The medium of collage is in itself an opposition of high and low culture; the point at which poster design, light entertainment and the 'reality' of modern urban living enter the realms of high art. Picasso also directly references this juxtaposition in his works. For example, in *Guitar, Sheet Music and Glass* (Fig. 6), he balances the fragment of popular sheet music with a drawing of a glass, itself cut out from a separate piece to be another 'pasted paper' in its own right. The glass is presented in an Analytical Cubist style, baffling to those who do not understand its complex system of signifiers. This contrasts with the broad appeal of cabaret music, meaning that the image calls to two different audiences. On the other hand, the sheet music, despite representing mass culture, also draws attention to sign systems; those who are unable to read the notation can gain nothing from looking, as it gives little or no visual clue to its meaning. Like the text of the newspaper article and the cubist glass, musical notes do not have a mimetic relationship with the thing that they signify.<sup>181</sup> Like the humour and word-play of the cabaret artists, therefore, a distinction is drawn in the work between those capable of deciphering the non-illusory meaning behind the code and those who are incapable.

The cabaret scene in Paris during the early twentieth century encompassed a range of different events and establishments reflecting the complicated relationship between popular entertainment and artistic elitism. Picasso's social life in Paris was centred around the cabaret and in particular the *cabaret artistique*, a common gathering place for artists and intellectuals to showcase and discuss ideas. Picasso's works can often be seen to reflect this setting; the earlier work *At the 'Lapin Agile'* places Picasso directly in one of the famous venues, and Cubist works, with their common depiction of bottles, glasses and musical instruments, could often be interpreted as scenes from cabaret venues. In the sheet music *papiers collés* this setting is more specifically indicated through the inclusion of cabaret scores. Beyond subject matter we find that the cabaret is also linked with Synthetic Cubism on a formal level. The very format of the cabaret as a programme comprising a variety of different acts mirrors the juxtaposition of different materials used by the Cubists, cut and pasted into one frame. Moreover, the *papiers collés* and the *cabaret artistique* also share in a

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<sup>181</sup> Shaw Miller, 2002: 107

similarly complicated and paradoxical relationship with popular culture. On the one hand, they incorporate popular culture through contemporary references, mentioning songs, events and products of the time; this drew broad audiences to the cabarets and, from the Cubist perspective, encouraged a questioning of the notion of 'High Art'. On the other hand, however, barriers of exclusivity were simultaneously put up, alienating the general public from fully engaging with either medium. The deep satire inherent in many *cabaret artistique* performances separated the performers from their bourgeoisie audience. Through systems of puns, signs and secret languages, both Picasso and cabaret performers deemed their art exclusive, only fully accessible to a select few. They therefore simultaneously engage with popular culture but also set themselves above it.

The two pieces of music that Picasso chose to use in his *papiers collés* are both simple, sentimental *chansons* that in 1912 were slightly dated and therefore were more likely to have been heard in the less avant-garde *café-concerts* than in the establishments of their initial introduction. Picasso never mentioned in writing anything about his choice of these songs and so we can only speculate about any significance or meaning attached to the pieces. It is possible, of course, that he paid little attention to the choice; however, I would argue that this is not the case because of the deeply interesting and relevant histories of the two composers. The content of the pieces, particularly *Sonnet*, and the way in which Picasso uses it in his collages is also important in assessing the relevance of the works for the artist. Nevertheless, Marcel Legay and Désiré Dihau were both residents of Montmartre, and both possessed significant connections with the art and cabaret worlds, and it is difficult to believe that Picasso's choice of music was not in some way influenced by these connections.

The part that Désiré Dihau plays in Picasso's collages is often overlooked by art historians; if they address the role of sheet music at all, focus is generally given to Legay's piece. In fact, Lewis Kachur is one of the only historians to even identify the piece as being by Dihau.<sup>182</sup> *Trilles et Baisers* is easily visible in the

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<sup>182</sup> Kachur, 1993: 259

lyrics of the music but barely documented as a cabaret song, and the whereabouts are unknown of *Sheet Music and Guitar* (Fig. 4), the image in which the first page of the piece was pasted, bearing the title and composer. It is hard to identify the piece from the poor quality photograph of the missing collage, and Dihau's name is partially obscured under another piece of paper; this is probably the reason for its lack of attention in literature. Born in Lille in 1833, Dihau was primarily a bassoonist who performed at the Paris Opera, as well as in the concert halls and cabarets, most notably the 'Eldorado'.<sup>183</sup> This was probably before Picasso ever set foot in Paris, however, and his most significant legacy is to do with his relationships to other artists. Dihau lived near Edgar Degas in Montmartre and they were good friends in the second half of the nineteenth century. This led to the Dihau family appearing in a number of Degas' paintings, the most famous of which, perhaps, is *L'orchestre de L'Opéra* (c.1870) (Fig. 54). The odd viewpoint in this image, influenced by the compositions of Japanese prints, focuses on members of the orchestra instead of the dancers on stage. The central figure of the image is Dihau playing bassoon. Many of the other figures depicted were not actually instrumentalists and according to the standard layout of an orchestra, the bassoon should not be in the front row, which suggests that Degas' primary intent for this image was to showcase his musical friend.

While Dihau was friends with one legendary artist, he was related to another. The significantly younger Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901) greatly admired Degas and was awestruck by *L'orchestre L'Opéra* which hung in his cousin Desiré's apartment. When Picasso arrived in Paris in the early 1900s, it was this artist who, through his cabaret and music hall posters, embodied the exuberant spirit of the *Belle Époque*. Toulouse-Lautrec befriended Dihau and through him was eventually introduced to Degas in 1889. Dihau then also went on to feature in lithographs and paintings by Toulouse-Lautrec, as well as commissioning the artist to design several covers for his published material. *Les Vieilles Histoires...Pour Toi* (1893) (Fig. 55) is a lithograph of Dihau playing his bassoon. Perhaps not brave enough to use the same medium as Degas, Toulouse-Lautrec nevertheless mimics Dihau's posture in *L'orchestre L'Opéra*,

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<sup>183</sup> Keyes, 1990

making obvious the influence that this image had on him. Both Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec went on to focus on on-stage performers and Dihau's links with the orchestra allowed them to get backstage and close enough to do this. Toulouse-Lautrec sought out his cousin not only in pursuit of Degas, but also to gain access to Parisian performances. The bassoonist, therefore, played an important part in helping them both to pursue their artistic careers.<sup>184</sup>

Reports of when Dihau died conflict, but he was certainly no longer alive by 1912, making it impossible that Picasso had recently met him, seen him perform, or acquired the music directly from the composer himself. Is it a coincidence, then, that the piece of music that Picasso happened to choose for his first series of revolutionary *papiers collés* was by a composer with such strong connections to the avant-garde? If Picasso was unaware of Dihau's friendship with Degas and had failed to recognise the bassoonist in *L'orchestre L'Opéra*, he would surely have connected portraits such as Degas' *Mademoiselle Dihau at the Piano* (1869) or Toulouse-Lautrec's *Monsieur Dihau Reading a Newspaper* (1890) to the composer. In 1900 to 1902 Picasso also produced many sketches of performers and spectators in the style of Degas, indicating that, like Toulouse-Lautrec, he had both an admiration for the artist and a similarly keen interest in the world of performance.<sup>185</sup> In using *Trilles et Baisers* in his *papiers collés* Picasso therefore follows the tradition of previous avant-garde artists, yet in representing Dihau in such a radically different way - through inclusion of his musical output rather than his physical image - he demonstrates the move towards a conceptual mode of representation and the modernisation of art to suit the contemporary experience of the world.

A number of factors relate Désiré Dihau with the composer of *Sonnet*; they both trained as musicians in Lille, were both residents of Montmartre, and were both active musicians during a similar period. Having failed to follow his dream and become an opera singer due to his short-sightedness, however, Marcel Legay became far more closely associated with the cabaret and all that it represented. Legay moved to Paris in 1876 and began his musical career as a singer on the

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> Weiss, 1994: 6

streets of Montmartre. Two years later he was introduced to Émile Goudeau and the Hydropathes, a social group of writers, artists and performers who made up the first regulars of *'Le Chat Noir'*. Poole argues that, "Marcel Legay embodies the paradox of *cabaret artistique*."<sup>186</sup> Legay was a prolific song-writer, composing in a range of *genres* popular in the late nineteenth century, from sentimental to patriotic, to crude comedy.<sup>187</sup> He also performed at a range of cabarets; he was a regular feature at the old and close-knit venues but was never too proud to return to the more modern, larger café-concerts. He retained a balance, therefore, between both the popular appeal and the exclusivity of the cabaret. The composer also had an exuberant and memorable stage presence; photos and illustrations depict him as a tall figure with a long coat, goatee and wild, untamed hair, and, as F. Berkeley Smith recalls: "Legay has the faculty to make you feel the roar of battle. He sings with fire and virility and his personality fills the room."<sup>188</sup> Legay's notoriety made him well known in Paris, and especially in Montmartre, where his distinctive voice had once been one of the defining sounds of the streets there. It would be nice to imagine that Picasso must have bought the music for *Sonnet* from him personally whilst passing him on the streets outside his studio, but Poole notes that, due to a couple of successful albums of music, the *chansonnier's* street-singing days were over by the late 1880s.<sup>189</sup> It is likely, however, that Picasso would have met him during the last few years of Legay's life in the cabaret venues they shared.

An exploration of the *chansonniers* whose work features in Picasso's *papiers collés* reveals many hidden connections in the works. A resident of Montmartre and a likely acquaintance of Picasso, Legay epitomised the cabaret scene of the late nineteenth century, existing into Picasso's era both as a prolific and eclectic song-writer and a symbol of the golden era of cabaret performance in all its variety of venues. Dihau was not unaccustomed to being depicted in avant-garde art; a friend of Degas and the cousin of Toulouse-Lautrec, he appeared in many works of art known to Picasso, leading us to believe that

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<sup>186</sup> Poole, 1994: 1

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*: 1

<sup>188</sup> Berkeley Smith, 1903: 208

<sup>189</sup> Poole, 1994: 185

Picasso used a piece of Dihau's music as a metonym for the composer and a quiet homage to Degas' work. Modernist art historians may argue that the content of the pieces of music that Picasso uses in his collages is not relevant to any meaning present in the works, which they source only from formal features. Upon investigation of the pieces and their origins, however, we cannot help but recognise what an unlikely coincidence it would be if these scores were chosen by Picasso by chance. The background histories and circumstances of the *chansonniers* Desiré Dihau and Marcel Legay in particular provide us with convincing evidence to dispute the Modernist point of view.

As we have already discussed, art historians debate over the function of the sheet music in Picasso's *papiers collés* just as they debate the role and relevance of newspaper clippings. After exploring the cabaret scene in Paris and the lives of the composers, we will now turn our attention to the content of the two scores that Picasso uses. Just as the newspaper stories often add a further dimension of meaning to the collages, the music and words of the particular pieces that he used can further contribute to our understanding of these works and in general the role that music plays in Picasso's art.

It would be expected that from a Modernist art historian's point of view, the function of the sheet music would be very similar to that of the newspaper. Rosalind Krauss argues for a semiotic reading of the *papiers collés*, and interprets the pasted papers as signs for space and volume on a completely two-dimensional surface.<sup>190</sup> While she does not directly address the use of sheet music, she describes the newspaper print with its characteristic stippled black and white surface as a sign for light and the dust-motes in the atmosphere that it highlights or as a sign for the conventional artistic practice of stippling. This interpretation can also be applied to the sheet music in, for example, *Violin and Sheet Music* (Fig. 7). The blue piece of paper that comes from the bottom of the violin seems to represent a shadow, which suggests that the light source for this still-life is located behind the instrument. It makes sense, if we interpret the sheet music as a metonym for light, therefore, that the score is pasted behind the violin. Viewing the image in this way even creates the

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<sup>190</sup> Krauss & Leighten, 1993



impression that the lines of the stave are rays of light, entering a dusty studio through the window. While this is a very plausible reading of the works, I would argue that, considering the connections that we have explored between Picasso, the cabaret, and its *chansonniers*, this view of the sheet music is only half of the story.

As well as using sheet music paper as a signifier of light in the collages, it could be argued that it simultaneously represents itself, and additionally acts as a sign for the fret-board of the guitar, with the lines of the stave representing the strings. Indeed, this relationship can be seen as interchangeable, with the guitar strings in some images conjuring images of sheet music staves. This two-way representation is particularly effective in the Analytic Cubist works where forms are not too clear cut, ambiguously merging into one another. For example in *Ma Jolie* similar groups of lines are used to indicate the woman's fingers, the strings of the guitar and sheet music in different points of the canvas. In Picasso's sketches of 1912 we also see many instances of the stave lines evoking the guitar's fret-board; there is evidence in some of the sketches that shows Picasso exploring the idea of conflating the two, with the sound-hole and musical note simultaneously being represented by a circle that sits across the lines.<sup>191</sup> In Picasso's sheet music *papiers collés*, the strings of the guitar are often missing; it is likely that Picasso thought them too finer a detail to add to his pasted paper shapes. In this context, therefore, the ready-printed lines on the musical pages provide a perfect replacement. While the visual features of the scores provide connections within the image, the literary and musical content of the songs also hold potential for meaning within the works.

One of the notable things about Legay's *Sonnet* is the fact that the lyrics are far from contemporary; the *chansonnier* chooses to set a poem by Pierre de Ronsard, a sixteenth century French poet. This seemingly unusual choice can be explained by a number of factors. Early 'Romantic' poets were particularly popular in the 1890s; Weiss maintains that the lyrics of Frédé, the owner of the '*Lapin Agile*', were greatly influenced by such poets.<sup>192</sup> *Sonnet* may have added

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<sup>191</sup> Umland, 2011: 77

<sup>192</sup> Weiss, 1994: 10

to the variety of a normal evening at such an establishment, or perhaps would have been prepared especially for the themed evenings that F. Berkeley Smith describes: “Classic evenings are given, classic poems are read, and the ancient songs of Provence and the ballads of the sixteenth century are sung by the same *chansonniers* who the night before may have amused you with the “Voyage of Madame Humbert” and other such parodies.”<sup>193</sup> In Chapter Five we will discuss further the implications of this piece’s sixteenth-century origins for Picasso’s work, arguing that the paradox formed by the incorporation of such a classical form into these avant-garde artworks aids a sense of nostalgia and acts as a reminder of established tradition.

The lyrics of both Dihau’s and Legay’s pieces are sentimental, most likely intended for a lover. Unfortunately, the complete lyrics of *Trilles et Baisers* are not available to us due to the difficulty in locating a full score. The title, “*Trills and Kisses*”, suggests a playful and simple theme. The lyrics of *Sonnet* are still romantic, yet rather more somber, dwelling on personal thoughts of fleeting youth and beauty:

“To you I send this bouquet  
Lately plucked by my hand  
From these fulgent blooms  
Which, if left ungathered at dusk  
Would tomorrow have fallen to the ground.  
That should show you for sure  
That your charms, whilst they blossom now  
Will soon wither and, like flowers,  
Suddenly perish.  
Time moves on my Lady.  
Alas! Time no, but we, we take our leave  
And soon will lie stretched  
Beneath the sword  
And the loves of whom we speak  
When we are dead shall be no longer new.  
So love me. Love me while you are beautiful.”  
(*Translation from French*)

Poole argues that in the late nineteenth century, the emergence of the cabaret suited the Parisian impulse at that time for public sociability. The *cabaret artistique* had originated as an exclusive hideaway for artists and writers to

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<sup>193</sup> Berkeley Smith, 1903: 208-210

exchange ideas, but, whether due to business sense or because of this impulse to display and exhibit, had opened its doors to the masses.<sup>194</sup> The cabaret and *café-concert* became a means for performers and audience alike to dramatize daily life and use popular entertainment to express and display private meaning. Despite the words not being written by Legay himself, I would argue that *Sonnet*, in the face of the patriotic and historical songs common at this time, is a demonstration of the use of a popular, public medium to express aspects of private life. This draws a strong relation to Picasso's medium of collage. In the use of newspapers, advertisements and music scores to establish a symbolic meaning such as those described in the previous chapters, Picasso employs popular materials in the service of private meaning. Moreover, he uses artwork as his platform for private thought, and this artwork is ultimately destined for public display. In *Ma Jolie*, too, we see the line erased between public and private as Picasso brings the Henri Fragonard's popular song into play whilst addressing it to the sitter, his lover Eva Gouel. Picasso therefore takes part in the purposeful blurring of boundaries between public and private life that characterised cabaret culture and performance.

The musical content of both *Trilles et Baisers* and *Sonnet* is fairly unremarkable, however it still highlights some potentially interesting connections and, more importantly, suggests that Picasso manipulated the score to create meaning through its musical content. Dihau's piece is described as a *mazurka* by Rosenblum.<sup>195</sup> This kind of waltz is typically characterised by stress on the second or third beat of the bar. Originating as a Polish dance, the *mazurka* became popular in traditional French folk music; this presents rather a tenuous link to Picasso's interest in folk music highlighted in Chapter Three, but also reinforces the relationship between folk and popular music at this time. Similarly, Poole describes the left hand piano part of *Sonnet* as 'lute-like'.<sup>196</sup> This description is probably based on the simple movement and doubled octaves of the part, which serves to musically acknowledge the provenance of the poem by alluding to the instrument that may have originally accompanied it.

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<sup>194</sup> Poole, 1994: 25-26

<sup>195</sup> Rosenblum, 1973: 57

<sup>196</sup> Poole, 1994: 263

The reference to the lute bridges the gap between the piano music and the guitar that Picasso depicts in the *papiers collés*; these links, however, are quite insubstantial and do not require Picasso's knowledge of the musical content of the piece.

The use of music in *Guitar, Sheet Music and Glass*, on the other hand, suggests that Picasso may have in fact manipulated the music to reflect meaning on an aural as well as visual level. The fragment of music used, bearing the lyrics “-dant quêtes bel-” is from the last line of the piece. Picasso chooses not to allow the words to conclude, however, and in doing so cuts off the piece half way through a cadence, one chord from resolution, and chooses to use the last bar of the piece in a different work *Sheet Music and Guitar* (Fig. 2). This unresolved cadence marks the highest point of harmonic tension in the entire piece, and is left permanently unfinished by Picasso, creating tension in the image on a multi-sensory level.

The scores used by Picasso, therefore, can be interpreted to relate to the potential meanings that we have already explored in Picasso's use of music. Visually, the sheet music offers symbolic opportunities, and can be seen to evoke the effect of light as it filters through windows and plays across surfaces. The lines of the staff also double up as the strings of the guitar, a detail that Picasso often excludes from the instrument itself. The content of the *chansons*, and in particular that of *Sonnet*, also plays an important role in the artworks. The words of the song, taken from a Ronsard poem, are heartfelt and personal, mirroring the use of both the cabaret and Picasso's collages to express private meaning through popular materials in a public context. The musical content and the way in which Picasso appears to manipulate it on the canvas also holds significance. The style of the pieces strengthens the work's ties with folk music and in *Sonnet* the lute-style bass-line reflects the time-period of the words. Picasso affects the atmosphere of the piece on a multi-sensory level by cutting the paper such that the climax of the piece goes unresolved. The extent to which this interaction with musical material was intentional by Picasso, we cannot be sure. Nevertheless, the presence of these scores in his art undoubtedly provides interesting avenues for interpretation, adding to the complexity of the *papiers collés*.

The two music scores used in Picasso's *papiers collés* provide us with solid historical artifacts that can be traced to provide insight into Picasso's relationship with the world of music and ultimately provide evidence to suggest that Picasso made a meaningful decision about the musical references that he used. The two pieces reveal very strong connections between the collages and the Parisian cabaret scene; both engage interesting interactions between the concepts of 'high' and 'low' culture and similarities in form can also be seen. Perhaps the strongest connections can be found in the particular *chansonniers* that Picasso chooses to represent. Marcel Legay was a prolific figure in the cabaret scene. He was a regular performer at many of the cabarets that Picasso often visited but also a symbolic figure of the cabaret scene as a whole. Through Picasso's use of the music of Désiré Dihau, he establishes himself as part of the avant-garde tradition of Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec. As well as becoming part of a tradition, however, he also separates himself from it, representing the composer conceptually as he 'knows' him, through his music. I would argue that the evidence therefore suggests that, rather than making an impartial choice, Picasso chose these two pieces for particular reasons, and the final chapter will take this further to argue that the sheet music plays a pivotal role in the overall meaning of the *papiers collés*.

# Chapter Five:

## Nostalgia in the *Papiers Collés*

While Modernist art historians such as Greenberg may celebrate Cubist collage as a grand step towards the pinnacle of Modernist art, from a socio-historical point of view, the Cubists have been generally regarded as presenting a rather ambivalent view of modernity in the early 20th Century. By 1912, Picasso and Braque were both over thirty and had seen the world around them change dramatically. On the one hand they were using “a new kind of artistic process as a way to embrace a specifically modern phenomenon”<sup>197</sup>. In other words, they captured the essence of the modern Parisian social experience through the representation of café and cabaret scenes and through the use of real contemporary materials in their images. On the other hand, their works often carried a level of subtle social critique hidden, for example, in the content of newspapers, which suggests that their intention was not necessarily to celebrate all aspects of the modern society in which they were living. Focusing on elements of the sheet music in the *papiers collés* and how these potentially relate to both Picasso’s personal situation and the historical context in which he created them, this chapter will argue that this series of works in fact does more to express a nostalgia for the past, rather than simply presenting a contemporary experience of modern society. Furthermore, it could be argued that this series of works draws attention to the transience of human actions and the unavoidable passing of time through the use of *vanitas* symbolism at the levels of both form and content.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the guitar, which appears so consistently not just in Picasso’s sheet music *papiers collés*, but throughout his entire output in this period, has strong associations with Spain. The guitar acts as a symbol of Spain both on the level of Picasso’s personal experience of the country, and on a more public and general level because of its well-known Spanish origins and traditional use in the folk music of Spain. It could be argued, therefore, that if

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<sup>197</sup> Varnedoe & Gopnik, 1990b: 24

the guitar is indeed a conscious reference by Picasso to his homeland, then in some way it expresses Picasso's nostalgia for the country in which he grew up. We know, for example, that Picasso often visited the Catalonian town of Céret which allowed him to experience some of the culture he missed from his years in Barcelona without crossing the border. These trips resulted in the establishment of links between Spanish and Catalonian folk music and Picasso's musical instruments, which highlights the individual and unique characteristics of Spanish and Catalan culture. This perhaps expressed a level of nationalist pride in his Parisian surroundings, but also suggests that he felt nostalgia for the cultural experiences he could not find in Paris.

As well as the Spanish associations in the *papiers collés*, it could also be argued that the links to Montmartre evident in the sheet music express Picasso's feelings of nostalgia for life in that area of Paris during the autumn of 1912. In the summer of that year Picasso had had to move out of his studio and home in Montmartre, which he had shared with Fernande Olivier. Upon the breakdown of their relationship, he moved to a new studio in the area of Montparnasse. Montparnasse was undergoing the process of 'Hausmannization' at this time, which was impossible in Montmartre due to its unique geographical position. While many other artists also lived in the more urban, modern and comparatively banal Montparnasse, Picasso was separated from his friends, including Braque, the informal Montmartre village atmosphere, and the nightlife he enjoyed.<sup>198</sup> Considering his situation at the time therefore, Picasso's music score collages appear to clearly reference the cultural atmosphere of Montmartre, a sensory memory of the context from which he had been separated.

This idea of a sensory memory, recorded visually with the use of real materials and musical notation reveals the influence of both Futurism and Bergsonian philosophy in Picasso's work. Bergson's philosophy, which underlies analytic Cubism in particular, was based upon the idea that our true experience of reality is constructed from fragmented sensory information that our consciousness translates into a smooth narrative. This idea was taken up by the Futurists as

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<sup>198</sup> Penrose, 1958: 174

well as the Cubists, who tried to capture the essence of the modern experience in more than just a visual way; Goncharova, for example, occasionally employed references to musical notation in her paintings in order to record the sounds of a particular moment or context. In *Woman with Hat* 1913 (Paris: MNAM), for example, a bar of music is drawn into the top right-hand corner of the image. When played, the notes emit a dissonant chord, the sound of modernity. Using only a few notes communicates the fragmented nature of reality and the way we remember it. Similarly, Picasso's torn pieces of sheet music supply fragments of information, metonymical references, that allow us to piece together the memory of an experience in a Parisian music venue. The image of the guitar, repeated so frequently in his works, could here be a reference to the owner of the '*Lapin Agile*', Frédéric, who was well known for accompanying himself on guitar, and was known to be influenced by the romantic lyrics of early French poets such as Ronsard.<sup>199</sup> With this in consideration, there is a strong argument for the reading of these works as conveying Picasso's nostalgia for his life in Montmartre.

Weiss suggests that Picasso could have heard Legay's *Sonnet* at the music venue, the 'Eldorado', where the piece was introduced by Legay himself, or at the '*Lapin Agile*', which was frequented by Picasso and Legay.<sup>200</sup> If we accept Weiss' view, then Picasso's inclusion of the scores in his *papiers collés* created an impression of contemporary entertainment, particularly that which he experienced personally in his favourite venues. In providing this explanation for the selection of these specific works by Picasso, however, Weiss appears to ignore a chronological inconsistency; Legay introduced *Sonnet* at the 'Eldorado' in the early 1890s, and was a regular visitor to the '*Lapin Agile*' in the mid-1890s, (when the cabaret still held its previous name, the '*Cabaret des Assassins*'). At this time, Picasso was young and living in Barcelona and was yet to even visit Paris. Dihau's piece *Trilles et Baisers* was published the year after Picasso moved to Paris, in 1905. By the time they were pasted into Picasso's work in 1912, however, both pieces were outdated, and performances, far fewer than when they were when the pieces were fresh,

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<sup>199</sup> Weiss, 1994: 10

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*: 9-10



probably conjured memories of the last two decades. This choice of pieces stands in contrast to another of Picasso's allusions to popular music at this time, the *Ma Jolie* reference from Fragson's *Dernière chanson*; when Picasso used these words in his paintings in 1911-1912, the song was new and in vogue, with regular performances at music halls and cabarets across Paris. Therefore, the *Ma Jolie* images reference the Paris entertainment scene as it existed at the time Picasso painted them, and contemporary audiences would have recognised them as such. The use of music score in his *papiers collés*, however, pushes the contemporary viewer towards a very different connection with the image, encouraging not a recognition of fashionable and recent songs, but a nostalgia for the popular culture of the past.

Not only was Picasso's use of outdated pieces of music important in conveying a sense of nostalgia in this series of *papiers collés*, but his choice of a piece specifically by Marcel Legay could also be interpreted as full of significance when we look at the transformation that the Parisian cabaret scene was undergoing at the time. Legay was such a prolific and prominent character in Parisian cabaret just before the turn of the century that, especially in the years just before and after his death, his image was often used as a symbol to evoke memories of the cabaret scene of this time. In the years before the war, when Picasso produced his *papiers collés*, cabaret in Paris was undergoing significant change, sparked partly by its own increasing popularity and partly by the increasing presence of American music and the introduction of cinema in the city. The transformation of the cabaret had already begun in the years before Picasso moved to Paris, and larger music halls were over-taking *café-concerts* and traditional *cabarets artistiques*; the increasing influence of American music halls changed the performer-audience dynamic in many venues, with the introduction of more defined stages and bigger audiences, separating the entertainers from the rest of the room. Public cinematography viewings were also becoming more popular and with no purpose-built cinemas, screenings took place in music-halls and cabaret venues, encouraging their adaption to suit this purpose. This was not to say that cabaret had become any less popular; in fact, many new cabarets had sprung up across Paris and audiences had grown, with increasing numbers of the bourgeoisie becoming interested. Competition between *chansonniers* affected the content and tone of

their works, and “base ribaldry and vulgar jokes often replaced the characteristic wit of the original *cabaret artistique*”.<sup>201</sup> *Chansonniers* were paid very little for performing and many traditionalists refused to play for these increasingly bourgeois audiences.<sup>202</sup> As they became the mainstream that they had originally worked so hard to distinguish themselves from, the cabaret lost its originality. This change caused the *chansonniers* to become nostalgic before their time, claiming to be part of a tradition such a short time after its establishment. Ignoring the radically diverse selection of music that had come out of the cabaret, they claimed a unified practice and judged their best songs to be those produced when the cabaret was still exclusive.

It was therefore generally felt by advocates of the cabaret style of the 1890s, that the traditional *cabaret artistique* was under attack from foreign and bourgeois influences. Seeing themselves as one of the last strongholds of traditional Parisian nightlife, the old cabarets of Montmartre took on an ‘embattled air’ in the years preceding the First World War.<sup>203</sup> The ‘Eldorado’, where Legay first performed his ‘Sonnet’, was regarded as one of the oldest and most respected cabaret venues in Paris. It maintained the atmosphere of the old cabaret and in 1914 was celebrated for its determination in continuing the tradition of cafe-concert song recitals.<sup>204</sup> As a defining character of late nineteenth-century Parisian cabaret, Legay became a kind of symbol for the fight for the preservation of the French cabaret and the French *chanson*, and his image and music provoked a nostalgia for the old traditions. After his death in 1915, *Le Figaro* said of Legay that “the French *chanson* has lost one of its last, its most valiant and valuable defenders.”<sup>205</sup> Picasso was a regular visitor not only to the ‘Eldorado’ but to other strongholds of traditional cabaret in Montmartre, such as the ‘*Lapin Agile*’. It is unlikely, therefore, that he was unaware of the threat that had been presented to French cabaret traditions and, if he had not come across Legay personally at one of these venues, we may

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<sup>201</sup> Poole, 1994: 141

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.: 139

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.: 138

<sup>204</sup> Weiss, 1994: 8

<sup>205</sup> Poole, 1994: 230

argue that Picasso knew of the *chansonnier's* significance and used this to both comment on the current state of Parisian cabaret and evoke a sense of nostalgia for a more traditional culture.

When we take a closer look at the text of Legay's 'Sonnet', it seems rather paradoxical that Picasso, who was considered to be at the forefront of modern art, and had constructed a whole method of representation appropriate to the modern world, would choose for his collage not a *chanson* that spoke of the experience of modern life, but a timeless sonnet by a sixteenth-century poet, Pierre de Ronsard (1524-1585). It appears as though Picasso is paying tribute to the old, traditional literary forms of the past; Legay set many poems by early French poets but here Picasso specifically chooses the one entitled 'Sonnet', drawing attention to the form in which it is written. As an artist who arguably broke all of the boundaries and conventions of academic artistic practice, it is surprising to see a possible expression of nostalgia in reference to wider artistic history, rather than just based on his own personal experience. Picasso later formed another connection with Ronsard in 1925, when he provided the design for the front plate of Poulenc's *Poèmes de Ronsard* (Fig. 56). Despite the music being for piano and voice, Picasso interestingly still chose the image of a guitar for his design, perhaps because of the associations that he still drew between Ronsard and the cabaret scene. A similar gesture can be seen in Picasso's use of Désiré Dihau's *Trilles et Baisers*. Like Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec before him, Picasso immortalises Dihau in his work and, in doing so, connects himself to this grand tradition of modernist artists. Perhaps displaying more respect than nostalgia, therefore, the artist who marked a turning point in the development of modern art still remembers artistic tradition, both old and recent, in his revolutionary works.

The words of Ronsard's 'Sonnet', as discussed in 'Chapter Two', dwell on the transience of love and beauty. This infers a concentration on the passing of time and a nostalgia for faded beauty and lost loves. The poem in fact acts as a *vanitas* and encourages the whole image to do the same. *Vanitas* still-lives use symbolic images to dwell on the transience of human actions, the passing of time and our inevitable mortality. Musical instruments often carry *vanitas* significance when in still-life because of the impermanence of their tones; music

is a temporal art form, and so is only momentary.<sup>206</sup> Of course, music is also associated with dance, entertainment and seduction, traditionally seen as the 'vanities' of mankind. Again, this presents an example of Picasso reverting back to traditional forms in order to present modern visual innovation in these works. He may have felt it to be, however, the most accurate means of expressing his sentiments of the time; having abandoned his relationship with Fernande Olivier and committed to a new life with Eva Gouel, the excitement of new love may have caused him to contemplate its momentary nature and lament its inevitable passing.

Picasso produced many images with *vanitas* significance. *Les Demoiselle d'Avignon*, for example, depicts a bowl of fruit that not only holds erotic symbolism but also that of eventual decay. In the 1908 image *Composition with Skull* (1908, The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg), the skull acts as a more obvious reminder of our ultimate demise. The artist continued to produce these works throughout his career, such as a number of still-lives featuring skulls in the 1940s and 1950s. Another work contemporary to our period that is explicitly displayed as a *vanitas* is *Musical Instruments, Skull* (Fig. 57) of 1914.<sup>207</sup> The skull symbolising mortality is juxtaposed with the instruments as a reminder of the ultimate futility of the creative action in the destructive context of time. In the sheet music series, the guitar symbolically echoes the sentiments of Ronsard's poem, both acting as a traditional symbol of *vanitas* as well as representing the young, beautiful woman to whom he directs his words. Therefore, in the *Sonnet papiers collés* the theme of transient love and passing beauty is reinforced both through the words of the song, with its imagery of dying flowers and momentary love, and the reference to music through the score and the guitar.

When we look at Picasso's *papiers collés* now, they look old, fragile and faded. When they were constructed, the images would have looked fresh and bright, with crisp, new newspaper displaying the most recent news. One exception would be the newspaper in *Head*, for which Picasso recalls purposefully

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<sup>206</sup> Shaw Miller, 2002: 102

<sup>207</sup> Green, 2009: 169

choosing aged newspaper clippings because of their browned colour.<sup>208</sup> This poses the question of whether Picasso foresaw the decay of the images over time when he first created them, for visitors to his studio certainly did. Despite the fresh papers, the collages still appeared fragile, as Wyndham Lewis writes in *Blast* in 1914, “They do not seem to possess the necessary physical stamina to survive. You feel the glue will come unstuck and that you would only have to blow with your mouth to shatter them.”<sup>209</sup> Similarly, Umland quotes Vanessa Bell in a letter to Duncan Grant shortly after a visit to the studio in 1914 in which she describes the paper works she has seen as “not at all permanent.”<sup>210</sup> Christopher Green describes the newspaper that appears in the later *vanitas* image *Musical Instruments, Skull* as the “emblem of modern transience.”<sup>211</sup> This description refers both to the yellowing and degradation of the paper over time, but also to the momentary shelf-life of the information it holds. Had Picasso conceived of his collages as lasting into the future, he must have considered the effect of time on the real materials he was using, especially the newspaper and its distinctive yellowing process. With this in mind, it is therefore conceivable that the line from *Sonnet*, “love me while you are beautiful,” that Picasso chooses for *Guitar, Sheet Music and Glass* is partly directed towards the artwork itself, and the materials in it, which will eventually decay. The different elements of the sheet music *papiers collés* and their potential symbolic meaning thus become more deeply connected; the materials that make up the guitar emphasise the momentary nature of the notes it produces in their aging, and their symbolic relationship to the woman echoes Ronsard’s words of the decay of youth, beauty and new love. Picasso acknowledges that artworks exist as objects in time and space, subverting the traditional view of an artwork as an immortal illusion. The works therefore ultimately act as *vanitas* images both on the level of content and form.

Despite the Cubists’ inextricable relationship with modernity, there is a substantial body of evidence to suggest that the series of *papiers collés* in

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<sup>208</sup> Rubin, 1972: 80

<sup>209</sup> Wyndam-Lewis, 1914: 139

<sup>210</sup> Umland, 2011: 26-27

<sup>211</sup> Green, 2009: 169

which Picasso chose to include fragments of sheet music express a sense of nostalgia and lament the passing of time. The guitar's associations with Spain suggest Picasso's nostalgia for his younger years in his homeland, while the Montmartre cabaret music reminds us that he was no longer living in that area of Paris. As well as nostalgia generated through geographical associations, there are more socio-political and cultural factors that suggest Picasso's desire for a return to certain traditional forms. This is most strongly communicated through Picasso's choice of the song *Sonnet*; written in a traditional literary style by a sixteenth-century poet and set to music by a figurehead of 1880s Parisian *chansons*, the piece completely contradicts the image of Picasso as a forward-looking, ground-breaking, twentieth-century modernist. Moreover, the very lyrics of *Sonnet* imbue the pieces in which it featured with *vanitas* significance, which is echoed by the symbolic musical instruments and the nature of the materials Picasso chose to use. It seems clear that Picasso's intention in these pieces was not to celebrate the modern experience, but to contemplate the passing of time and its effects on love, life and culture.

# Conclusion

The primary aim of this thesis has been to investigate the use of musical imagery and materials in the work of Pablo Picasso during the early twentieth century. Due to its particularly frequent use as a subject, the guitar became a focus of this study, as did a series of six 1912 *papiers collés* for their unique inclusion of real sheet music. The extensive use of musical instruments as subject matter by Picasso during the Analytic and Synthetic Cubist period could be explained in one of two ways. In line with a Modernist perspective, it could be argued that the artist used a consistent but arbitrary subject in order to draw attention to the surface of the work and aid comparison in formal experimentation. The use of a consistent subject would have proven useful in this way, as we can see through photos in which Picasso compares his guitar images with constructions and real guitars.<sup>212</sup> Nevertheless, these benefits do not rule out any potential for symbolism and meaning in the musical subject matter. After studying the ways in which Picasso uses musical references, both within a socio-historical situation and within the context of his other work, we must conclude that music forms a key part of his artistic development, and that the *papiers collés* are not only key revolutionary works in formal and spatial experimentation, but are also works of complex public and private meaning.

Vital to this study has been the ability to place Picasso, his ideas and his work in the context of history and tradition. An examination of the ways in which music has been employed in art for specific symbolic purpose throughout history has provided a solid foundation from which to explore the cubist works. Music has been represented in visual art for thousands of years, with musical instruments representing an art form that could otherwise not be displayed visually. From as early as the Greek depiction of the Muses, women have appeared alongside musical instruments in art. It was during the Middle Ages, however, that instruments took on a particularly sexual symbolism. The power of music to affect the emotions and its appearance alongside the other

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<sup>212</sup> Umland, 2011: 72-73

corrupting forces of alcohol and dance led to its condemnation by the Church. It was the lute, however, that first encouraged a direct comparison between the woman and the instrument that Picasso was to pick up centuries later. The lute is so important in art history and to our study of Picasso's work because it is not simply a speculative theory or argument put forward by art historians that the lute took on erotic symbolism. Evidenced in the literary *genre* of the lute poem and through the euphemisms that the lute took on in the Dutch language, we know that by the time of the lute's decline it had grounded associations in the public and literary consciousness with the erotic and with female sexuality. The depth of symbolism that the lute took on ensured the endurance of the woman and the stringed instrument as a *genre* in art right up to the twentieth century. In Corot's portraits, for example, the mandolin and the lute reveal to us something of the woman's emotions and personality that are hidden behind her usually respectable appearance.

The historical tradition of associating stringed instruments with the female form unveils a wealth of gendered undertones in Picasso's musical imagery. The artist's recently initiated affair with Eva Gouel fuels the reading of the guitar as a symbol for the woman, allowing Picasso to pay secret homage to his new love. It appears, however, that the symbolism is far more extensive than this, drawing heavily on the sixteenth century associations that tied the lute with notions of fertility and sexuality. With the contextual support of the floral wallpaper, which reinforces the feminine metaphor in the *papiers collés*, we come to see the guitar as a still-life representation of the woman. Moreover, we can see that this notion of conflation did not start in 1912 with the *papiers collés* but years earlier during Analytic Cubism. Heavily influenced by the portraits of Corot, the appearance of the woman and guitar or mandolin in the work of the Cubists encouraged a comparison between the two objects. The shifting panes and monochrome palette of the Analytic style provided the ambiguous conditions for the process of metamorphosis to begin, blurring the division between the woman and the guitar until, eventually, we arrive at complete conflation in the collages.

This transformation demonstrates Picasso's playful use of metamorphosis and highlights the similarities in form between the two subjects, but more importantly



it also reflects the social position of women during the early twentieth century. The movement from Analytical to Synthetic Cubism abolished the figure from Picasso's work. This conflation between the woman and the guitar equates her form with a still life object. Visually echoing Nicholas Maria López's essay, the woman is reduced to a passive, inanimate object. While women may have enjoyed more freedom in the twentieth century compared with the previous decades, their continued state of stasis in art from Corot to Picasso suggests that opinions of women's position in society were slow to progress. A gendered interpretation of Picasso's musical works provided the most extensive and convincing insights into his works of all the angles explored in this thesis. The arguments for a gendered view are so strong because of the historical backing upon which they rest; in depicting the woman and the guitar, Picasso joins the long history of artists who have employed this subject and reinforces the affiliation between the pair, picking up the centuries-old symbolism. Nevertheless, we must not limit our understanding of Picasso's musical works to an exclusively gendered viewpoint. The significance of the guitar and other musical references used by Picasso can be examined from many different angles, building a multi-layered picture of Picasso's artistic development and personal and political context at this time.

Aside from gender, the guitar takes on a second important symbolic function within Picasso's work around 1912. Once again this is underpinned and supported by the history of the instrument and the history of Spain. The Spanish origin of the modern guitar and its prominent use in the folk music of the Iberian Peninsula has fostered a connection between the image of the instrument and notions of Spanish culture. We argued that Picasso's use of the instrument in works such as the *papiers collés* of 1912 could represent an attempt to evoke ideas of his home nation. The notion of national identity was a particularly stirring and current topic in the turbulent Spain of Picasso's youth. Picasso's socio-political stance is likely to have been affected by his experiences with the Generation of '98 in Madrid and by the political situation and independent culture of Barcelona. As a foreigner in Paris, it is not unreasonable to understand Picasso's obsession with the image and form of the guitar as in some way related to his Spanish national identity. He did, after all, use other

images, such as that of the bull, to represent Spain in other works, so we know that it was not unusual for him to attribute national symbolism in his art.

This was also not the first time that the artist had depicted an instrument of his homeland; the clarinet-like *tenora*, a key part in Catalanian folk bands, featured heavily in the Analytic works of both Picasso and Braque, suggesting that the guitar could also have national significance. As well as being a prominent instrument in Catalanian music, the guitar is also a primary instrument in flamenco music, the folk music of Picasso's birth-place, Andalusia. The widespread adoption of the guitar in Europe meant that Picasso came across the guitar regularly in the cabarets of Paris; it could be argued, therefore, that Picasso particularly identified with the instrument because he saw it as having been on a very similar journey to himself. Both Picasso and the guitar were Spanish outsiders, instruments of creativity accepted as having an important role in the cultural life of Paris. It could be argued that the national and gendered interpretations of the guitar do not conflict or invalidate each other and instead create a rich and complex bed of meaning in the *papiers collés* and wider works that give us an insight into Picasso's situation and thinking in 1912, and allow us to pursue an investigation into other musical elements.

In Chapter Four we explored the musical context within which Picasso was immersed during his time in Paris and examined the possible influence that it had on his art. Social historians of art argue that in many of Picasso's works, particularly during his *papiers collés* phase, the artist was often recreating common contemporary social scenes from his life in Paris. These were most commonly café settings, with bottles on the table and newspaper clippings indicating the political discussions across the table.<sup>213</sup> The venues for these social gatherings included many cafés, where musical accompaniment was popular in the form of the *café-concert* as well as cabaret establishments such as *Le Lapin Agile* and *Le Chat Noir*. We explored the idea that, as a key part of this *milieu*, the cabaret crept into Picasso's works as he used them to reflect upon the modern world he was experiencing.

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<sup>213</sup> Krauss and Leighten, 1993

From the general social environment in which Picasso was working, we narrowed our focus to look at the influence of the cabaret on the set of six sheet music *papiers collés*. Here we found many similarities between the Picasso's collage work and the cabaret. The use of materials from popular culture demonstrates the opposition between 'high' and 'low' art that occurs in the *papiers collés*, but a closer look at the *cabaret artistique* in particular can reveal that cultural and societal juxtaposition also formed the basis of this entertainment form. The cabaret also resembles the formal characteristics of the *papiers collés*, and both share the use of word play and humour.

Far from the influence of cabaret simply finding its way into the collages as part of the background environment that Picasso depicts, the sheet music in the works reveals a lot to support the argument that Picasso's use of cabaret is far more focused and intentional. We could argue that the evidence is strong enough to suggest that Picasso chose *Sonnet* and *Trilles et Baisers* as much because of the composers as the content of the pieces. For many, Marcel Legay represented the pinnacle of the cabaret tradition, which had been forced to change under the pressure of growing audiences and the introduction of cinema. A prolific performer, personality and composer, Legay was a key figure in the Montmartre cabarets, and is likely to have met Picasso in their common haunts, the '*Lapin Agile*' or the 'Eldorado'. Désiré Dihau's appeal for Picasso came not through his musical success but through his explicit connections with the avant-garde. Dihau had been immortalised in the work of Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec and through the inclusion of his music, Picasso indirectly addresses the avant-garde tradition, representing Dihau in a more conceptual, rather than mimetic way to demonstrate the change that Cubism had affected in art. We would argue, therefore, that Picasso chooses these composers not for the people they are but for what they represent, referencing Dihau's connections to the avant-garde and Legay's reputation as the epitome of Montmartre cabaret. This study of the way the sheet music is used by Picasso also revealed that he seems to have been aware of the formal characteristics of the music itself, and exploits them in works such as *Guitar, Sheet Music and Glass* to create tension on a multi-sensory level. This provides strong evidence against Greenberg's Modernist account of the *papiers collés* as purely pictorial in their agenda.

Chapter Five addressed the concepts of modernity and time in the collages. The incredibly ground-breaking, progressive steps that Picasso makes in art may lead us to assume that, as a modern artist, he was always looking to the future. In fact, informed by the conclusions drawn in the first two chapters, it can be argued that the six *papiers collés* that feature sheet music could be interpreted as expressing Picasso's feelings of nostalgia. The guitar, as a symbol of his homeland, would naturally evoke feelings or memories of youth for the artist. The sheet music expressed a nostalgia for Montmartre, from where Picasso had recently relocated. The choice of Marcel Legay also displays itself as a mark of solidarity with those who fought to preserve the traditional *cabaret artistique* in the face of modernity. Most significant, it could be argued, are the lyrics of *Sonnet*. As well as taking the name of a traditional literary form, Ronsard's poem was actually centuries old when it was set to music by Legay, and even older when Picasso pasted it into his collages. The song is a direct call to the past and tackles the immortal contemplation of the momentary nature of time. The Cubists' use of newspaper provides strong evidence that they paid particular attention to the use of words in their works, and there is a strong argument to suggest that the words of songs are not an exception. Combined with the symbolic presence of the guitar, the *papiers collés* featuring *Sonnet* are transformed into *vanitases*, lamenting the fleeting nature of time, love and beauty. This subverts the common view that Picasso demonstrated an ambivalent, or even celebratory view of modernity in his *papiers collés*.

As we have seen, an investigation into the use of musical references in Picasso's collages can reveal the extent of the potential symbolism and meaning that connects the work that Picasso was producing with his social, historical and personal situation at the time. The guitar was a suitable still-life object for Picasso's formal experimentation, but also allowed him to blur the boundaries between the still-life and the figure, breathing life into one, or stasis into the other. As Braque commented, "a musical instrument is an object with a peculiar feature: one can bring it to life by touching it."<sup>214</sup> This play with life and

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<sup>214</sup> Braque (1954) in Buettner, 1996: 103

death is not complete without the sheet music, an immortalised representation of a momentary cabaret performance. The words of Ronsard's *Sonnet* complete the *vanitas*, but also call back to the past, and, together with Dihau's music, establish Picasso's Cubist collage as the next part of a long tradition.

One of the most significant things that we have discovered through our exploration of Picasso's use of music is that the artist does not invent symbolism in these works, but draws on historical associations that already dwell in the public consciousness. This strengthens the socio-historical, as opposed to Modernist, view of Picasso's art during this period. A gendered interpretation of the guitar only becomes feasible with the support of the lute's historical affiliation with the female form. Similarly, the guitar becomes a symbol of nationality in Picasso's works because of its Spanish origins and its key role in the distinguishing folk music of Spain. By drawing on historical meaning that is already sewn into the fabric of art history, Picasso writes himself into the tradition. As he pushes forward into modernity with revolutionary methods, he simultaneously reaches back, rooting himself in the past. This historical imagery helps in the audience's participation in the artwork, for it is ultimately the viewer's willingness to imaginatively engage with the possibilities that Picasso presents us which is crucial to the existence of these many meanings in Cubist art.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Green, 2009: 60

MARCEL LEGAY à SÉVERINE.

# SONNET

Chanté par MARCEL LEGAY, aux Soirées Artistiques à l'Eldorado.

Poésie de  
**PIERRE RONSARD.**

Musique de  
**MARCEL LEGAY.**

*Andantino grazioso con espressione.*

PIANO.

*P dolce sostenuto.*

*con Ped.*

*très doux.*

.Je vous en - voye un bouquet que ma main Vient de tri - er de ces fleurs é - pa -

- nies Qui ne les eust à ce ves - pre cueil - lies, — Cheu - tes à terreel - les fus - sent de -

- main — Ce - la vous soit un ex - em - ple cer - tain Que vos beau -

L. BATHLOT-JOUBERT, ÉDITEURS, Rue de l'Éclouquier 50.

L. B. 7860.

Tous droits d'auteur, de traduction et de reproduction réservés.

2

*rall.*

- tez bien que fleu - ri - es En peu de temps seront flé - tri - es Et comme

fleurs pé - ri - ront tout sou - dain Le temps s'en va ma Da -

- mé - - - - Las! - - - - le temps non, - - - -

Mais nous nous en al - lons, - - - - Et tost se - ront es - ten - dus sous la

L.B.7860.

*a Tempo*

la - me Et des a - mours des quel - les nous par - lons. Quand serons

morts ne se - ra plus nou - vel les

*appassionato*

Donc ai - mez moi ai - mez moi ce - pen -

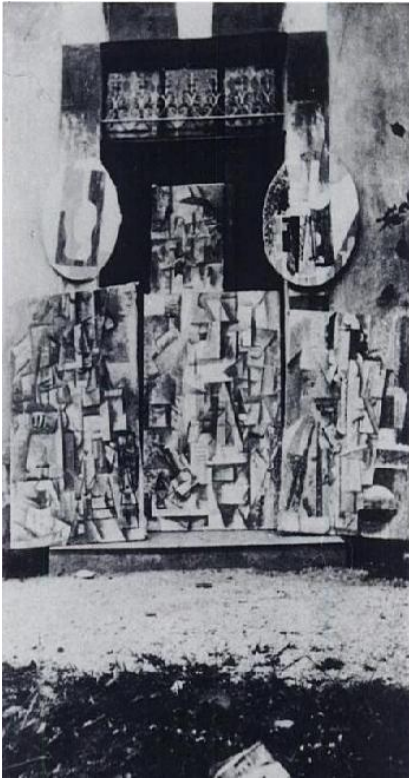
- dant qu'ê - tes bel - le

Ped.





# Illustrations



**Fig. 1 (left)**  
*Installation in front of Villa des Clochettes.* Pablo Picasso. August or September 1912. Gelatin silver print. 10.8 cm x 8.5 cm. Private collection.

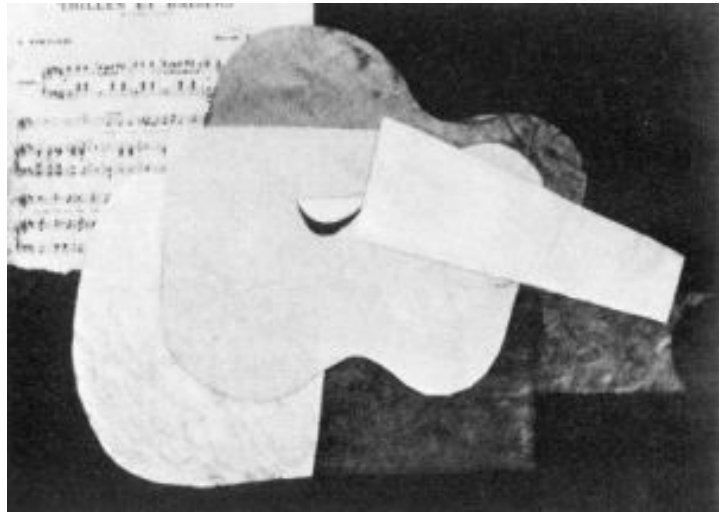


**Fig. 2 (above)**  
*Sheet Music and Guitar.* Pablo Picasso. Autumn 1912. Pasted & pinned paper on coloured paper. 41.5 cm x 48 cm. Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

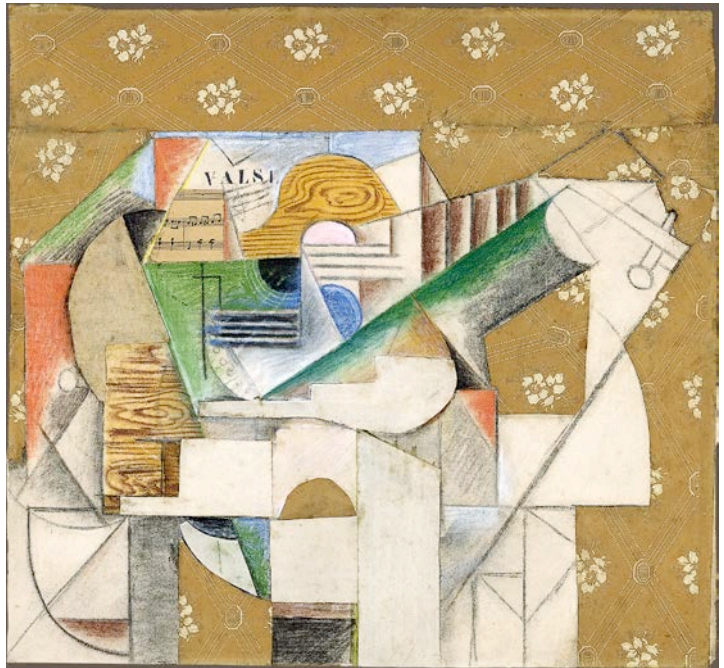


**Fig. 3**  
*Violin and Sheet Music (Guitar and Sheet Music).* Pablo Picasso. Autumn 1912. Gouache, coloured paper & score pasted onto cardboard. 78 cm x 63.5 cm. Musée Picasso, Paris.

**Fig. 4**  
*Sheet Music and Guitar.*  
 Pablo Picasso. Autumn  
 1912. Pasted papers.  
 Whereabouts unknown.



**Fig. 5**  
*Guitar and Sheet Music.*  
 Pablo Picasso. October-  
 November 1912. Pasted  
 wallpaper, sheet music,  
 pastel and charcoal on  
 paperboard. 58 cm x 61  
 cm. Private Collection,  
 Germany.



**Fig. 6**  
*Guitar, Sheet Music and  
 Glass.* Pablo Picasso.  
 After 18th November  
 1912. Pasted wallpaper,  
 paper, hand-painted *faux  
 bois* paper, sheet music,  
 newspaper, gouache,  
 and charcoal on paper.  
 48 cm x 36.5 cm. McNay  
 Art Museum, San  
 Antonio, Texas.



**Fig. 7**  
*Violin and Sheet Music.* Pablo Picasso. Autumn 1912. Cut-and-pasted wallpaper, sheet music & colored paper on cardboard box lid. 78 cm x 63 cm. The Picasso Estate.



**Fig. 8**  
*Muse on Mt. Hēlikon Vase.* Achilles Painter. c. 440-430 BC. Pottery. (H) 36.8 cm. Staatliche Antikensammlungen, Munich.



**Fig. 9**  
*Sappho Vase.* Brygos Painter. c. 370 BC. Pottery. (H) 52 cm. Staatliche Antikensammlungen, Munich.

**Fig. 10** (right)  
*Hearing*. Cycle of *The Lady and the Unicorn*. 1484-1500. Tapestry. 369 cm x 290 cm. Musée du Moyen-Âge, Paris.



**Fig. 11** (below)  
*Hearing*. Pieter Jansz Saenredam after Hendrick Goltzius. 1595. Engraving. Rosenwald Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

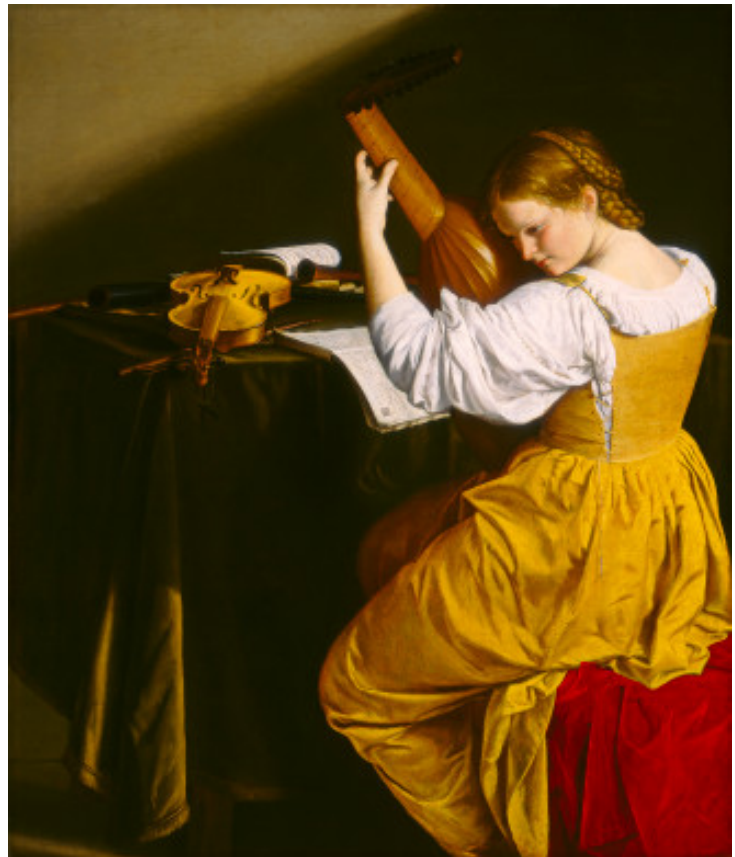


**Fig. 12** (right)  
*The Garden of Earthly Delights: Hell*. Hieronymus Bosch. 1502-1504. Oil on wood panels. 220 cm x 389 cm. Museo del Prado, Madrid.

**Fig. 13**  
*The Lute Player.*  
Michelangelo Merisi da  
Caravaggio. c.1596. Oil on  
Canvas. 100 cm x 126.5 cm.  
Wildenstein Collection.

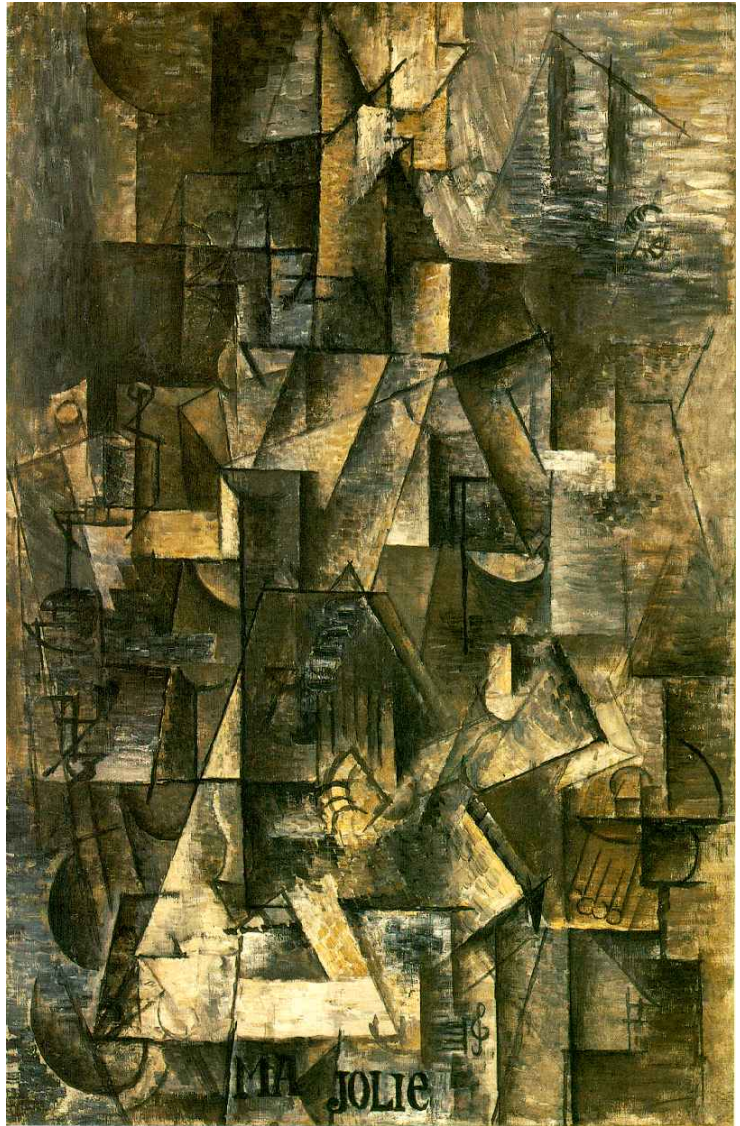


**Fig. 14**  
*The Lute Player.* Orazio  
Gentileschi. c. 1626. Oil  
on canvas. 144 cm x  
130 cm. National Gallery  
of Art, Washington D.C.



**Fig. 15 (left)**  
*Wedgwood Jasper  
plaque: Five Muses.*  
John Flaxman Jnr.  
1778. Unglazed  
ceramic. 38.5 cm x  
15.8 cm.  
Wedgwood  
Museum, Stoke-on-  
Trent.

**Fig. 16**  
*Ma Jolie*. Pablo  
Picasso. 1911-1912. Oil  
on canvas. 100 cm x  
64.5 cm. Museum of  
Modern Art, New York.



**Fig. 17**  
*Allegory of April: Triumph of Venus*. Francesco des Cossa. c. 1465. Fresco with details in  
tempera. 500 cm x 320 cm. Palazzo Schifanoia, Ferrara.

**Fig. 18 (right)**  
*The Three Graces*. Hans Baldung Grien. c. 1540.  
Oil on panel. 151 cm x 61 cm. Prado Museum,  
Madrid.



**Fig. 19 (left)**  
*Saint Mary Magdalene Playing the Lute*. Master of the Female Half-Lengths. 1520s. Oil on panel. 37.5 cm x 26.8 cm. Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

**Fig. 20 (right)**  
*The Morning Toilet*. Jan Steen. 1663. Oil on wood. 64.7 cm x 53 cm. Royal Collection, London.



**Fig. 21**  
*The Procuress*. Dirck Van Baburen. c. 1622. Oil on canvas. 101.6 cm x 107.6 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



**Fig. 22**  
*The Concert*. Johannes Vermeer. c. 1664. Oil on canvas. 72.5cm x 64.7cm. Stolen from Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, in 1990. Whereabouts unknown.







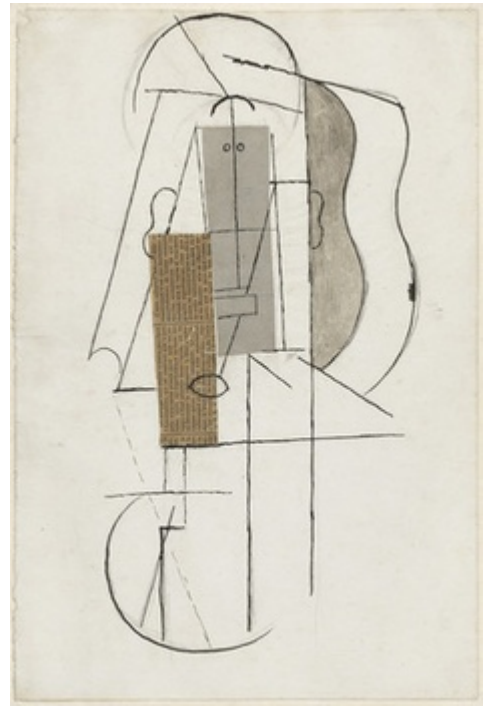
**Fig. 23 (above)**  
*The Procuress*. Gerrit Van Honthorst. c. 1625. Oil on panel. 71 cm x 104 cm.  
Centraal Museum, Utrecht.

**Fig. 24 (right)**  
*Violin d'Ingres*. Man Ray. 1924.  
Gelatin silver print. 29.5 cm x 22.7  
cm. J. Paul Getty Museum, Los

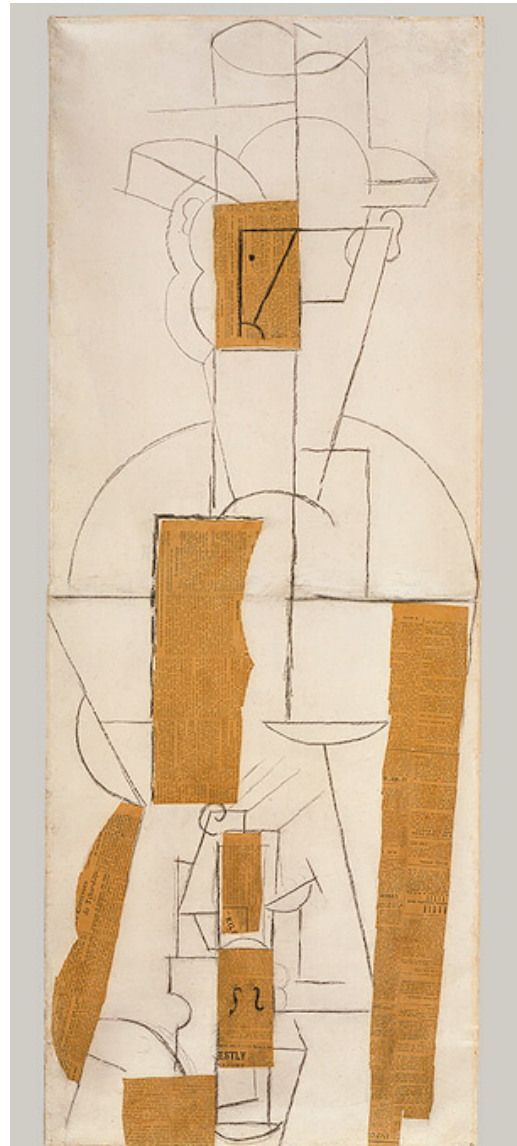


**Fig. 25 (left)**  
*Girl with a Mandolin*. Pablo  
Picasso. Spring 1910. Oil on  
Canvas. 100.3 cm x 73.6 cm.  
Museum of Modern Art, New  
York.

**Fig. 26 (right)**  
*Head.* Pablo Picasso. Spring 1913. Ink,  
coloured paper and newspaper on paper.  
42.9 cm x 28.7 cm. Museum of Modern Art,  
New York.

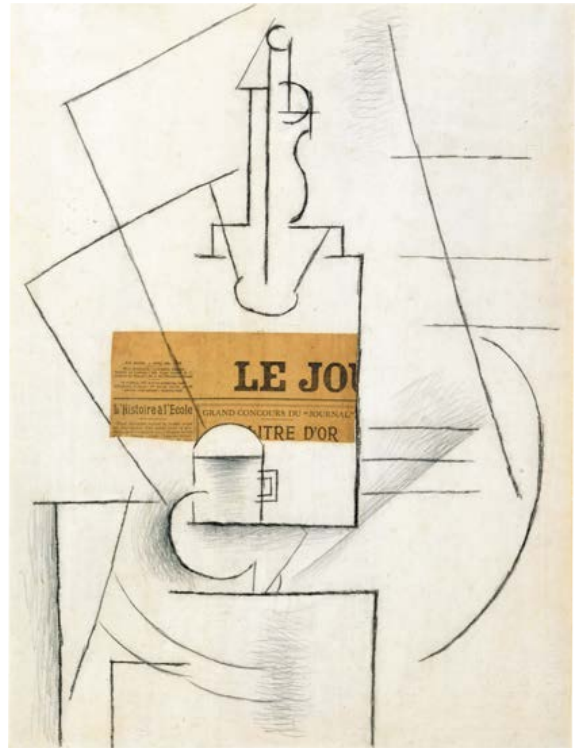


**Fig. 27 (above)**  
*Head of a Man with a Hat.* Pablo  
Picasso. December 1912. Cut and  
pasted colored paper and printed  
paper, charcoal, and ink on paper. 62.2  
cm x 47.3 cm. Museum of Modern Art,  
New York.



**Fig. 28 (right)**  
*Man with a Hat and a Violin.* Pablo Picasso.  
December 1912. Cut and pasted newspaper  
and charcoal on two joined sheets of paper.  
124.5 cm x 47.9 cm. Metropolitan Museum of  
Art, New York.

**Fig. 29** (right)  
*Bottle, Cup and Newspaper.* Pablo Picasso. December 1912. Charcoal, pencil and newspaper on paper. 63 cm x 47 cm. Museum Folkwang, Essen.



**Fig. 30** (above)  
*The Old Guitarist.* Pablo Picasso. 1903-1904. Oil on panel. 122.9 cm x 82.6 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago.



**Fig. 31** (right)  
*Woman with Guitar.* Pablo Picasso. 1924. Oil on canvas. 114 cm x 87.5 cm. Musée Picasso, Paris.

**Fig. 32** (right)  
*Guitar*. Pablo Picasso. 1914. Sheet metal.  
Museum of Modern Art, New York.



**Fig. 33** (above)  
*Woman with a Mandolin*  
(after Corot). Juan Gris. 1916. Oil on panel. 92 cm x 60 cm. Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel.

**Fig. 34** (right)  
*La Femme a la Toque*. Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot. c. 1850-1855. Oil on canvas. Private Collection.



**Fig. 35** (right)  
*Girl with Mandolin*. Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot. 1860-1865. Oil on canvas. 51.4 cm x 40.3 cm. St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, MO.



**Fig. 36** (left)  
*The Artist's Studio*. Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot. c. 1868. Oil on panel. 61.8 cm x 40 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.



**Fig. 37**  
*The Sleeping Gypsy*. Henri Rousseau. 1897. Oil on canvas. 130 cm x 201 cm. Museum of Modern Art, New York.

**Fig. 38 (right)**  
*Mignon Postcard*. Sent by Picasso to Kahnweiler, August 13th 1911. Postcard.



**Fig. 39 (left)**  
*Mignon postcard*. GG & Co. of Berlin. c. 1913. Postcard.



**Fig. 40**  
*Girls with Mandolins*. Early twentieth century. Postcard.

**Fig. 41 (right)**  
*L'Italianne Agostina*. Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot. 1866. Oil on canvas. 132.4 cm x 97.6 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.



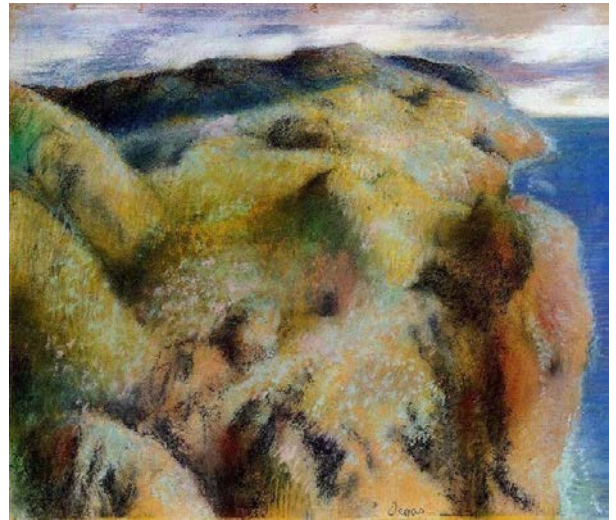
**Fig. 42 (left)**  
*L'Italianne*. Pablo Picasso. 1917. Oil on canvas. 149.5 cm x 101.5 cm. E. G. Bührle Collection, Zurich.

**Fig. 43 (right)**  
*Woman Facing a Rooster*. Pablo Picasso. 1897-1899. Conté crayon on paper. 11.7 cm x 18 cm. Museu Picasso, Barcelona.





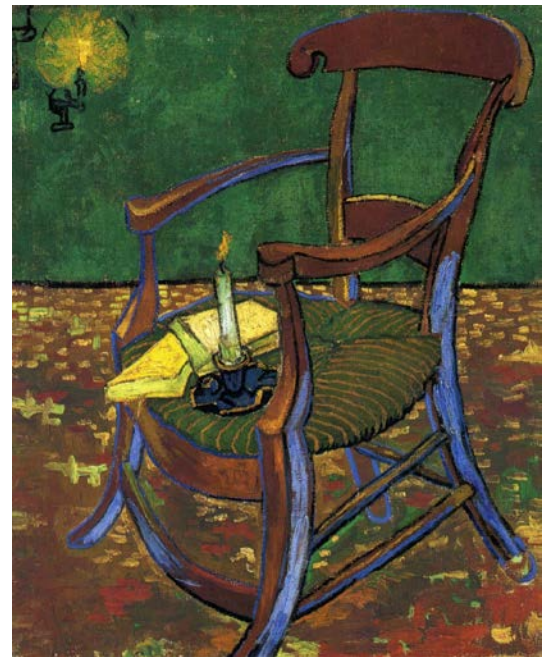
**Fig. 44 (left)**  
*Vollard Suite: Plate 46, Young Sculptor at Work.*  
Pablo Picasso. 1933.  
Etching. British Museum, London.



**Fig. 45 (right)**  
*Steep Coast.* Edgar Degas. 1892. Pastel.  
42 cm x 55 cm. Private Collection.



**Fig. 46**  
*Van Gogh's Chair.* Vincent Van Gogh.  
1888. Oil on canvas. 91.8 cm x 73 cm.  
The National Gallery, London.



**Fig. 47**  
*Gauguin's Chair.* Vincent Van Gogh.  
1888. Oil on canvas. 90.5 cm x 72.5 cm.  
The Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam.

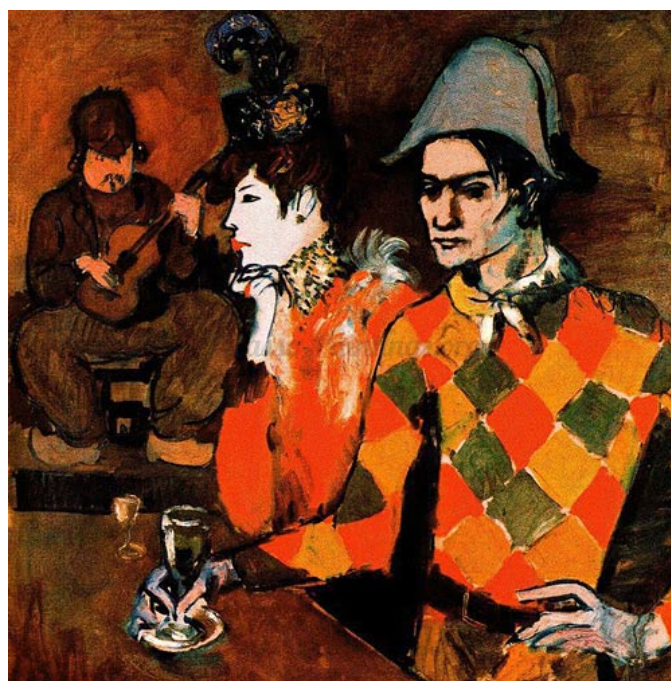


**Fig. 48** (right)  
*Bottle of Vieux Marc, Glass and Newspaper.* Pablo Picasso. 1913.  
Pasted paper, oil and charcoal on canvas. 62 cm x 48 cm.  
Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf.



**Fig. 49** (left)  
*The Dessert: Harmony in Red (The Red Room).* Henri Matisse. 1908.  
Oil on canvas. 180 cm x 220 cm.  
Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.

**Fig. 50** (right)  
*At the 'Lapin Agile'.* Pablo Picasso. 1905.  
Oil on canvas. 99.1 cm x 100.3 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



**Fig. 51**  
*Three Musicians*. Pablo Picasso.  
1921. Collage and oil on canvas.  
200.7 cm x 222.9 cm. Museum of  
Modern Art, New York.



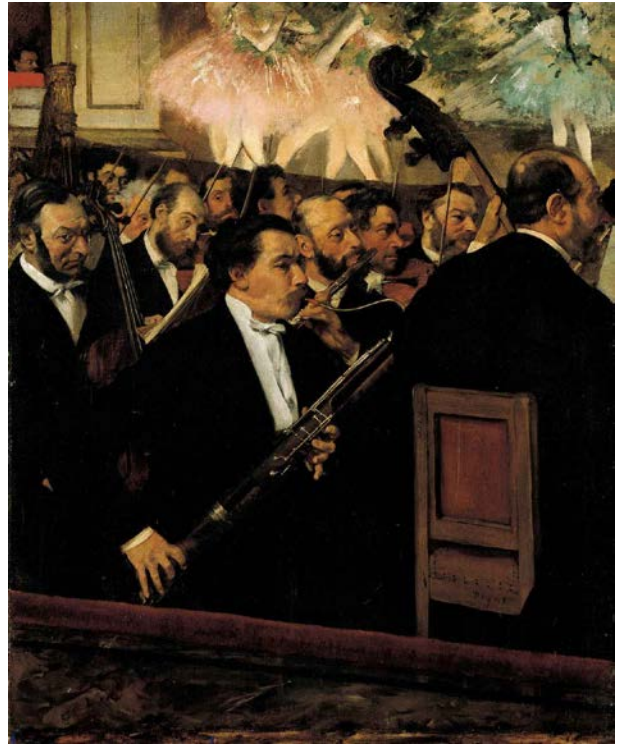
**Fig. 52**  
*Tromp l'Oeil*. Pedro de Acosta.  
1755. Oil on canvas. 92 cm x 124  
cm. Real Academia de Bellas Artes  
de San Fernando, Madrid.



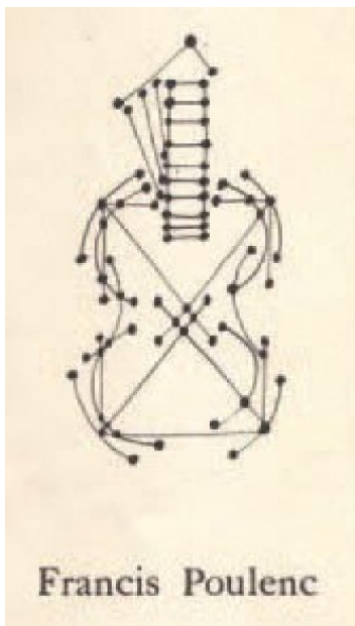
**Fig. 53**  
*The Sardana (The Dance of  
Youth)*. Pablo Picasso. 1953.  
Lithograph.



**Fig. 54 (right)**  
*L'orchestre de L'Opéra*. Edgar  
 Degas. c.1870. Oil on canvas. 56.5 x  
 45 cm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



**Fig. 55 (left)**  
*Les Vieilles Histoires - Pour Toi*. Henri  
 Toulouse-Lautrec. 1893. Lithograph.  
 27.3 x 19.7 cm.



**Fig. 56**  
*Poèmes de Ronsard: Front Plate*. Pablo  
 Picasso. 1925. Book illustration.



**Fig. 57**  
*Musical Instruments, Skull*. Pablo Picasso. 1914. Oil  
 on canvas. 43.8 cm x 61.8 cm. Musée d'Art Moderne  
 Lille Métropole, Villeneuve d'Ascq.

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