In the first comprehensive analysis of the development of Picasso's Demoiselles d'Avignon and through a fresh examination of its forms, clues are found to the meaning and ultimate unity of a seminal masterpiece.

The picture (fig. 1) was five years old when Picasso's poet friend, André Salmon, mistook it for a nearly abstract; its team of prostitutes seemed to him "almost entirely freed from humanity...Naked, white signs on a blackboard." But at that early date, who could foresee where the picture was heading? Or predict that its 28-year-old creator would live to defy seven decades of abstract art?

Kahnweiler's apology for the picture followed soon after. Though he found it unachieved and lacking unity, he recognized it as a desperate titanic struggle with every formal problem of painting at once and hailed its right section as "the beginning of Cubism." 2

During the next 50 years the trend of criticism became irreversible: the Demoiselles was a triumph of form over content; to see the work with intelligence was to see it resolved into abstract energies. 3

The reluctance to probe other levels seemed justified by what was known of the work's genesis. The first phase of the Demoiselles project was to have included two men: a sailor seated at a central table and a man entering the scene from the left with a skull in his hand—apparently a symbolic evocation of death. "Picasso originally conceived the picture as a kind of memento mori," wrote Alfred Barr, but, he continued, in the end, "all implications of a moralistic contrast between virtue (the man with the skull) and vice (the man surrounded by food and women) have been eliminated in favor of a purely formal figure composition, which as it develops becomes more and more dehumanized and abstract." 4

The evidence for the presence of the skull in the early phase seemed incontrovertible, having come from the artist himself. 5 Barr therefore concluded—and his view became canonical for the next 30 years—that the picture had at first been intended "as an allegory or charade on the wages of sin." 6

There were two remarkable consequences. First: since the mortality emblem dropped out as the work progressed, the Demoiselles d'Avignon—"the most important single turning point in the evolution of 20th-century art so far" (Golding) —came to be seen as the paradigm of all modern art, the movement away from "signification" towards self-referential abstraction. Even the violence of the depicted scene was understood as an emanation of formal energies, energies no longer constrained by inhibiting content.

Second: Picasso's numerous drawings for the Demoiselles were as good as ignored. If the painting was his release from a misguided allegorical purpose, then the drawings presumably recorded no more than a false start; they could have no bearing on that premonition of Cubist structure which made the picture historic.

As the criteria of criticism hardened and set, so the questionnaire addressed to the work was gradually formalized. The questions discussed, and obediently answered, concerned the chronology of the painting, its debt to Cézanne, its incorporation of Iberian and African influences—above all, its leap towards Cubism. It was the work's destination and its points of departure that had to be ascertained: like a traveler at a stopover, the picture was only asked to define itself in terms of wherefrom and whereto.

But the picture at 65 deserves a new set of questions; for instance: Those five figures in it—did they have to be corpses? Could the proto-Cubist effects in the right half of the picture—the breakdown of mass and the equalizing of solids and voids—have been accomplished as well with a team of card players? If the essential idea derived from Cézanne's compositions of bathers, why the retreat from the healthful outdoors into a maison close?

Why is the pictorial space still revealed like a spectacle and enveloped in curtains—so much Baroque staging in a picture whose modernist orientation ought to be to the flat picture plane?

Those African masks at the right: are they here because this was the picture Picasso happened to be working on when Negro art came his way, so that he incorporated the novel stimulus regardless of its irrelevance to a Barcelona brothel interior?

Are the anatomies of these women, in their radical transformation from 1906 to 1907, a matter of changing taste, or of substituting the abstract expressiveness of sharp angles for anatomical curves; or are these morphological changes metaphors for states of human existence?

Since no other painting (Las Meninas excepted) addresses the spectator with comparable intensity, how does this intensity of address accord with the abstract purposes normally ascribed to the Demoiselles?

Is the stylistic shift that bisects the painting into disparate halves a byproduct of Picasso's impetuous evolution, or do these discrepant styles realize a pervasive idea?

Did this "first truly twentieth-century painting" (E. Fry) really begin as a half-hearted imitation of the familiar preachment that "the wages of sin is death"—a contrast between vice, symbolized by the enjoyment of food and women, and virtue, by a contemplation of death?

Is it true that in this "first Cubist painting" the artist has "turned away from subjective expression" (Sabatès), unconcerned with subject or content of any sort?

Finally, what of the many drawings that relate to the work? Now counting the drawings for individual figures, or details of figures, the full composition studies alone number no less than 19. Two were first published by Barr in 1939 (figs. 4, 5, 13). These, plus another thirteen (seven of which are here reproduced as figs. 2, 7-12), appeared in Volume II of The Zervos Catalogue in 1942; two more (fig. 6) appeared in the supplementimentary Volume VI, 1954. Another, just come to light, is published here for the first time (fig. 3). Do these 19 drawings reveal an intelligence development, and will their study throw light on the content of Picasso's thought while the Demoiselles was taking shape in his mind?

I believe that the drawings have much to show. And I am convinced that the picture contains far more even in its formal aspect than the words "first Cubist painting" allow. Indeed, the chief weakness of an exclusively formal analysis is its inadequacy to its own ends. Such an analysis, by suppressing too much, ends up not seeing enough. It seems to me that whatever Picasso's initial idea had been, he...
not abandon it, but discovered more potent means for its realization.

No modern painting engages you with such brutal immediacy. Of the five figures depicted, one holds back a curtain to make you see; one
infires from the rear; the remaining three stare you down. The unity
of the picture, famous for its internal stylistic disruptions, resides above
it in the startled consciousness of a viewer who sees himself seen.

To judge the distance the project has traveled since its inception,
consider the early, hitherto unknown composition study (fig. 3): seven
figures disposed in a deep curtained interior. The subject, set in a brothel
altar, is a dramatic entrance—the advent of a man. But the arrangement
presents the most conventionally Baroque grouping. Picasso ever
knew, not only in the topography of its floor plan, but in its unity
as a theatrical situation. Picasso knew such narrative paintings from
his early days at the Prado. Juan de Pareja's Calling of St. Matthew
(h. 3A; here reproduced in reverse) is a good prototype: a magisterial
man entering from one side commands sudden attention; then a secon-
dary focus in a man seated behind a table at center, and a backview
serving as repoussoir at the other end; and the rest of the cast grouped
in depth before curtained openings in the rear. What puts the Picasso
design so squarely within this Italianate Baroque tradition is the dramatic
rendering of the scene—a half-dozen figures in one composite reflex
to a sudden signal. His actors, like Juan de Pareja's, are caught up
in their own time, place and action; the viewer looks in from without,
but he is not there.

In the Demoiselles painting this rule of traditional narrative art yields
to an anti-narrative counter-principle: neighboring figures share neither
a common space nor a common action, do not communicate or interact,
but relate singly, directly, to the spectator. A determined dissociation
of each from each is the means of throwing responsibility for the unity
of the action upon the viewer's subjective response. The event, the
epiphany, the sudden entrance, is still the theme—but rotated through
90 degrees towards a viewer conceived as the picture's opposite pole.
The rapid swing between these alternative modes is not surprising
The Philosophical Brothel

for 1907, nor unique to Picasso. A juxtaposition of these alternatives was in fact up for debate. Five years earlier, the Viennese art historian Alois Riegl described the very absence of psychic cohesion between depicted persons as evidence of a distinct stylistic will. He was speaking of the traditional Dutch group portrait (fig. 35)—the primitive kind, before Rembrandt’s dramatic naturalism restored it to the main European tradition. And his profound analysis of this native genre—the most original expression of the Dutch genius, he called it—was a courageous bid to enfranchise a mode of painting which, judged by Italian compositional standards, had always seemed inept and provincial. Riegl showed that Dutch art, even in its 15th-century religious narratives, suppressed the dramatic encounter which expresses a will, the coordination of action and responsive reaction which acknowledges the unifying force of an event. Instead of graduated active and passive participation, Dutch art strove, on the contrary, to project in each figure a state of maximum attentiveness, i.e., a state of mind which dispelled the distinction between active and passive. The negation of psychic rapport between actors, their mutual autonomy and spirited dissociation even from their own doings—and their incapacity for joint participation in a unified space—all these “negative” factors tightened the positive hold of each single figure on the responsive viewer; the unity of the picture was, as Riegl put it, not objective-internal, but externalized in the beholder’s subjective experience.

Riegl’s pioneering regard for this naïve Northern genre is comparable to Picasso’s early admiration for Iberian and Negro art. And the historian’s definition of its intrinsic value, formulated in opposition to the narrative mode, parallels Picasso’s shift from that early study (fig. 3) to the Demoiselles painting. Not that Picasso had, or needed to have, any direct knowledge of Riegl’s work, or of the obscure Dutch pictures discussed. But he did know the supreme realization of this Northern intuition—that Spanish masterwork which the Prado in large letters of brass proclaims to be the “obra culminante de la pintura universal”—Velázquez’ Las Meninas. Like Picasso 300 years later, Velázquez had oriented himself both to the Mediterranean and the Northern tradition. Heir to Titian and Veronese, he could yet bring off a work which presents itself not as internally organized, but as a summons to the integrative consciousness of the spectator. The nine, ten, or twelve characters in Las Meninas seem uncomposed and dispersed, unified only insofar as they jointly subvert the beholder’s eye. And the lack of immediate rapport between them guarantees their common dependence on his embracing vision.

In the Demoiselles, as in Las Meninas, no two figures maintain the kind of rapport that excludes us; and the three central figures address the observer with unsparing directness. Neither active nor passive, they are simply alerted, responding to an alerting attentiveness on our side. The shift is away from narrative and objective action to an experience centered in the beholder.

The work, then, is not a self-existent abstraction, since the solicited viewer is a constituent factor. And no analysis of the Demoiselles as a contained pictorial structure faces up to the work in its fullness. The picture is a tidal wave of female aggression; one either experiences the Demoiselles as an onslaught, or shuts it off.

But the assault on the viewer is only half of the action, for the viewer, as the painting conceives him on this side of the picture plane, repays in kind.

The picture impales itself on a sharp point. It is speared below by a docked tabletop, an acute corner overlaid by a fruit cluster on a white cloth. The table links two discontinuous systems: space this side of the picture couples with the depicted scene. Anybody can see that the ladies are having company. We are implied as the visiting clientele, seated within arm’s reach of the fruit—accommodated and reacted to. It’s like the difference between eavesdropping on a group too busy to notice, or walking in like the man they’ve been waiting for. Our presence rounds out the party, and the tipped tabletop plays fulcrum to a seesaw: the picture rises before us because we hold our end down.

The best commentary on a Picasso is another Picasso. The artist tends to repeat and anticipate his inventions, so that the most enigmatic of them usually turn up in simpler contexts. Thus a pen and ink sketch, clearly related to the Demoiselles, “explains” the kind of interstitial connection proposed in the painting (fig. 14). It shows four sailors in a tight cabaret watching two entertainers. The men are seen from the back, close-up and half-length. And you can develop the staging of the Demoiselles—of its center portion—by imagining a movie camera zooming in.

Evidence for Picasso’s persistent interest in such continuities is common in earlier works, such as the small canvas of 1901 in Chicago, called On the Upper Deck (fig. 15). Since most of its depicted field is taken up by the bow of a vessel seen from amidships, we, the spectators, become fellow travelers on the same deck. It is characteristic of Picasso...
in all his phases that he invents situations of utmost proximity so as to keep the leap from point of perception to thing perceived close and physical.

Like the Demoiselles, the Upper Deck picture is spared from below, the center rail entering like a leveled lance. The very subject is a connection—a passage from out here inward into the body of the representation. And the theme of the deck renders the tilt of the ground surface ambiguous. We are watching an infield diamond rise up like a pyramid. The depicted plane, high over water, is a vertical horizontal. Simultaneously level and up, it heaves like a pitching boat ... Half a century later Picasso paints his own shadow as it enters a room to fall on a woman—a another uncanny simultaneity of horizontal and vertical (fig. 16). And in the Demoiselles, the same paradox of erected depth is maintained by the raised edge of the table. Of all the ways Picasso invented to insinuate the physical availability of the image, this visual metaphor of penetration is the most erotic.12

The table was not there from the start. Earliest among the known composition studies for the Demoiselles is a small crayon sketch, dense with adjustments (fig. 2). It is the first of four drawings that record the seven-figure phase of the composition. The floor plan, due to the low relief character of the design, is still indeterminate; so is the surface fill—the scale of several figures is heightened to load the foreground; there is no front table as yet.

In fig. 3 (which I propose to put second), all locations are clarified; the central group is recessed, space sweeps inward on a diagonal from left to right, and the magnified scale of the curtained setting is fixed. The result is what I have called a standard Baroque composition, and we may well ask why the artist at this advanced point of his career took such a backward step. The answer may lie in the clearing of space at the bottom. Here, over the threshold, the artist traces a faint segment curve, the ghost of the table to come. He is introducing an orthogonal axis, the kind of direct attack on the picture space which needs a confrontation of depth to operate on.

In the next drawing (fig. 4, now in the Basel Museum), that faint curve solidifies as the rim of a table, the balance of which overflows into our space. Then, as it to reverse the table’s direction, its shape is revised (fig. 5)—it becomes angular, suggesting the tip of a larger form reaching in from out here. For the first time, its flowering crest connects forcibly with an implied body in real space—a fact acknowledged by the curious squat whose head turns around in salute.

Three further changes in the table are due, all designed to accelerate its penetration: its upended corner sharpens to an acute point (figs. 6, 7); the full-bodied flower vase of fig. 4—it is sketched on the back of fig. 32—aims down to a cylinder and moves aside to let the tabletop show; finally, in the painted version (preceded only by the Philadelphia watercolor, fig. 13), the inward thrust of the table is both picked up and restored to the picture plane by the toss of a horned melon slice.

But the literal inclination of the intruding table remains in force. More than that; it sends parallels across half the picture—beginning at the upper left.

It used to puzzle me to find the hand at the curtain so disconnected. The imminence of Cubism, with its routine fragmentations, has nothing to do with it, since the hand’s isolation was already fixed in the first composition drawings (figs. 2, 4, cf. also 13). As a feature preserved through successive studies and reaffirmed in the painting, the breakaway of that hand ought to have some specific function. And so it does. Its abrupt appearance over the curtain figure with no apparent mediation of arm, makes sense if the hem of the curtain to which the hand is referred is understood as flowing inward, away from the picture plane. Assume that Picasso here wants an oblique recession, justified by an implied outstretched arm raised at 30 degrees. The disconnectedness of the hand then becomes emblematic of maximum distance.

Again, other Picasso works confirm that he does not necessarily think of such left-hand curtains as flats. Compare, for instance, the 1918 drawing of a curtained interior (fig. 17); or the pompous little picture of a wench in a deshabille grasping a checkered curtain (fig. 18)—clearly related to the corresponding figure in the Demoiselles. In the latter, as in all studies for it, the curtain falls at the forestage; it rises from the figure’s right foot towards the far reaching left hand deep in space.
The aim is to express the recession of these upper reaches, not through linear or aerial perspective, not by way of color or physical clues such as overlaps, but through the suasion of gesture, the omission of arm between head and hand—a space jump offered only to our anatomic intuition. The effect is twofold: the internal space contracts on a tent-like interior; and the left spandrel of the design confirms the tilting plane of the table. Both lower center and upper left tip and tilt in precarious unison.

But there's more. Midway between curtain and table the nude with the pinnacle elbow assumes a similar tilt. Her underslung feet, tucked out of sight, are not those of a figure sitting, standing or leaping. In the first four drawings (figs. 2-5) she does indeed sit bolt upright in a high-backed chair, her shins arranged post-and-intel, as it is the ancient Spinario. But in the 12 subsequent studies her chair dissolves and she sinks back, disposing herself at last like an odalisque. She ends up recumbent—what the French call a gisante—seen in bird's-eye perspective. Her action then reverses that of the curtain: not a given vertical bent into a foreshortened arch, but a recessional figure upended, an upstanding orthogonal. Yet both elements, curtain and figure, articulate the picture plane with the same rigid ambivalence. And both, through the suggestiveness of posture and gesture alone, parallel the ambivalent plane of the table.

Once again, the gisante's character is best understood from parallel cases. The posture is that of the sleeper in the 1918 Beach Scene at Dinard (fig. 19); or that of the lounging in the Nudes pastel of 1920 (fig. 20). With one flexed leg crossing the other and one arm overhead, such figures reprise a canonic recumbency pose.

The idea of verticalizing supine figures has precedents. Think of Michelangelo's drawing of Titus, the punished giant laid low and chained to a rock; on the reverse of the sheet turned 90 degrees, the artist traced the figure again—as a Christ resurrected. Even Michelangelo's sowing Slave at the Louvre becomes an unstable image, for his attitude of dream, rapture, or willing death—which haunted Picasso during the Demoiselles period—is vertical only in material actuality, not in its psychic surrender.

In 1902 Picasso himself produced a series of drawings in which an imagined gisante becomes upright in manifestation. The drawings show Marie-Thérèse at an easel—his mistress-model engendering her own image. But the sleeping form slumped under her feet appears perpendicular on her canvas (fig. 21). And in the very year of the Demoiselles, the notion of the reclining nude in vertical presentation must have been under discussion, for it occurs in a Matisse ceramic of 1907 (fig. 22). But Picasso's interest in those years is not—like Matisse's, or Marie-Thérèse's, or Michelangelo's—a gisante shifted through 90 degrees on the plane, like the hand on a clockface moving from nine to noon. Bent on more radical leverage, Picasso embodies the straining of a receding orthogonal back to the surface—as he does in the small oil panel of 1908, Femme nue couchée et personnages (fig. 23).

The central theme is a reclining nude in foreshortened delivery, yet almost perpendicular on the picture plane. To dramatize the discordance, Picasso flanks her with three upright figures so that her presumptive verticality jars against their more rational kind. Unforeshortened, she remains as if insulated in her own rocking space capsule...adjacency without conjunction. And her head-on projection, that still claims undiminished scope in the field, makes the beholder work harder; one has to push mental levers to keep an erected gisante lying down...

And then the great lifesize Dryad of 1908 (fig. 24). It is not sufficient to keep reassuring ourselves that this awesome engine, stalking us in her jungle, "represents a movement into analytical Cubism"; she meant more than that to Picasso.

Part of her meaning is explained by a certain "Personnage témoin" (Zéros) from the end of 1905 (fig. 25). A trifling drawing—pornographic and faintly frightening at the same time—a fantasy of the cloven sex as an open arch, keystone in place, inscribed "S'il vous plaît!" Posture and gesture signify invitation, solicitation—here as in the Dryad. But that's only half of it, for the Dryad painting spells an ominous change of mood from left to right, from welcome to threat. One hand still invites, but the left arm, turned down, plies its fist like a bludgeon. So menacing is the approach of this figure, so disquieting the ambivalence of its offering, that I think it no blasphemy to recall the analogous shift from grace to damnation on the hands of a Last Judgment Christ.

It's a different kind of shock to learn from the preparatory drawing (fig. 26) that the Dryad was conceived, and fully elaborated, as a harlot slouching with parted knees in a tall chair. The painting then is a precise transposition, even to the lines of the armchair reinterpreted as vegetation...brothel reverting to jungle. And the elevation towards the spectator of what is still a recumbent pose becomes a revelation of power.

The rampant gisante in the Demoiselles carries a similar erotic charge. In the drawings (especially figs. 9 and 11), she lies back, sexually unfurled,
une horizontale, as the Parisians called their cocottes, posed like the woman in the 1905 picture called Nudes Entwined (fig. 27). Facing her clientèle, she becomes the frontal counterpart of the shameless Squatter at right. But her Allan and the suddenness of her apparition—in the late drawings, but most of all in the painting—derive from the secret charge of her original pose, a pose of relaxed extension such as is possible only in floating, flying or lying down, where no exertion is spent on maintaining stability. Relieved of all gravitational pull, she arrives like a projectile.

Does it work? Does the figure in the painting still come across as recumbent? There are two possible answers. The fact that its recumbency has so long gone unobserved might be taken as proof of failure. On the other hand, the failure may be a lapse of ours, and a short-lived one at that. We tend to perceive as we are programmed. For the past 30 years we have been training our eyes to ricochet off the Demoiselles towards Cubism. A more focused approach may habituate us to seeing Picasso's "naked problems" as human figures again. And then that particular figure will begin to register on the picture plane like a Murphy bed hitting a wall, and the painter's intention will have become a success.24

Much of the disquiet in the left half of the picture represents Picasso's rage against the solid drop of the canvas. What he wants is a restless beat. The inflow of the curtain is steadied by its supporter. Her rigid profile abuts on a rampant gisante, who twines with a pillar nude, who in turn surmounts the entrant field of the table. Our vision heaves in and out. A variable pressure, like the pitching of a boat in high seas, or a similitude of sexual energy.

Permissive similis. The plain effect of the erected gisante in her tight quarter is to ensure her spatial autonomy in a narrow scheme of disjunctions. And the drawings prove that this disjunctiveness is no side effect but a program which the painting brings to fruition.

In fig. 2, which we place earliest, all seven figures congregate in a shared space. But already in the two drawings following, the four recessed figures—three women and the man at the table—are silhouetted by backdrop partitions used as framing devices. The remaining three are more cunningly set apart: the man at left by marginal placement and function; the Squatter at right by his unique orientation (of which more below); the sitter, bel-jarred in a high chair. It is as if, even at these early stages, Picasso sought to encapsulate his characters in space pens susceptible of insufflation. In the painting, finally, the separation of figure from figure is consummated. There are no spatial connectives. The wedged interspaces become fields of magnetic repulsion, or simply congeal. But the famous solidified intervals in the Demoiselles are part-pixel of the larger conception; they confirm the autonomies already claimed for the figures. And the wonder of the final work is the coherence impressed upon elements loaded with maximum idiosyncrasy.

At the center of his Demoiselles composition Picasso originally stationed a sailor. In the three earliest drawings (figs. 2-4) he abides meekly behind his table, the object before him recognizable as a porron. The shape of the porron—a Spanish drinking vessel designed for pouring wine down one's throat—isa characterized by an erect spout, and it had recently begun to intrigue Picasso. Staying at Gosol in the Spanish Pyrenees during the summer-fall season of the previous year, he painted it into three still lifes.25 But he also used it tellingly in two figure compositions of 1906. In the first of these, called Harem (fig. 28), the male figure is surely not meant as a eunuch, since eunuchs do not sit around nude. He lofts like a proud possessor and conveys his volition by the penchant of his porroon.

The porron as sexual surrogate recurs in another Picasso project of that same Gosol season—a gouache known as Three Nudes (fig. 29). It is an elaborate study for a large picture with notations on it in Picasso's hand. The project never materialized, perhaps because Picasso could not, at this fertile moment, work fast enough to keep pace with his imagination; the idea for the Three Nudes may have been overtaken by the Demoiselles project already broached in his mind.

The gouache shows one standing nude, her right hand retracted in the narcissistic gesture last used in Picasso's Two Women (fig. 34).
Another nude sits leaning back lazily on the edge of a bed, smoking a cigarette. Both women gaze sympathetically at the youth at their feet, a delicate lad, kneeling with penis erect. "El tiene un perrón," says Picasso's note, and the visual rhyming of spout and phallus is of a publicity unknown in Picasso's finished works of the period.

The unmistakable phallism of the perrón in two works just preceding the Demoiselles fixes its meaning in the early Demoiselles studies. It occupies the vital center of the design: on the table; in front of the sailor; his attribute. For the rest, the sailor remains enigmatic. In the earliest study (fig. 2) he shares everyone's interest in the newcomer, though his round-shouldered pose with both arms drooped under the table, seems strangely demure. He is the man inside, yet within this band of five mannish whores, his one distinction (maintained through figs. 3 and 4) is an effeminate personality. Conventional sexual character traits seem reversed. In the fourth drawing (fig. 5) he retreats further, rolling himself a cigarette; and two surviving studies for his head and half figure (fig. 5A; cf. also Z.II, 6) show him as mild and shy, with a soft down on his upper lip...inadequate as a personification of vice; more likely a timid candidate for sexual initiation.

In the next thirteen drawings he remains a shadowy presence; Picasso gives him no thought. Finally in figs. 11 and 12—the very drawings in which the gigante raises a sleepy elbow—the seated sailor assumes an articulate pose, resting his arm on the table. Immediately after, in the Philadelphia watercolor (fig.13), he disappears.

There can be no doubt that the sailor was meaningful to Picasso, but the meaning eludes, the more so as his figure drops out. An interpretation would have to proceed from the contrast Picasso drew between the two men in the picture—one well inside, of effeminate temperament, inundated by womankind; the other half in and half out, halting at the divider, volatile in his transformation and identity-glimpses, his unstable attributes and final sex change.

*I wish to thank Mlle. Mila Garagone of the Editions Cahiers d'Art, Paris, and William S. Rubin for their generosity in allowing me to reproduce hitherto unpublished studies for the Demoiselles d'Avignon. One of these appears in the present portion of the article as fig. 3. The remainder, figs. 30 to 34, will appear in the October issue where the circumstances surrounding their re-emergence are described and more fully acknowledged in note 30. The numbering of notes and illustrations is continuous through both parts.

14 Picasso: Study, 1907, 7 7/8 inches high (Z.II, 629).

15 Picasso: On the Upper Deck, Paris, 1901, 19 1/4 inches high. The Art Institute of Chicago, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis L. Coburn Collection.

Picasso: Reclining Nude with Mar- 
 guin and Piarot, drawing, 1918, 
3/16 inches high (Z.III, 196).

Picasso: Profile of a Nude Woman, Paris, 
36, 10¼ inches high (Z. I, 350).

Jean Salmon, _La Jeune peinture française_, Paris 1912, p.3: “For the first time Picasso’s work the expression of the faces is neither tragic nor passionate, as are masks almost entirely bred from humanity. Yet these people are not, nor are they Titans or heroes; not even allegorical or symbolic figures. Isn’t des problèmes nus, des chiffres blancs au tableau-noir.”

Hl. Henry Kahnweiler, _Der Weg zum Kubismus_, written in 1915, published in 
York, George Wittenborn, 1949, pp. 6-7. The text runs as follows: “Early 
1917 Picasso began a strange large painting depicting women, fruit and drapery, 
left unfinished… Begun in the spirit of the works of 1909, it contains 
section of the endeavors of 1907 and thus never constitutes a unified 
In the foreground, however, alien to the style of the rest of the painting, 
a crouching figure and a bowl of fruit. This is the beginning of Cubism, 
first to emerge, a desperate titanic clash with all of the problems at once. These 
lems were the basic tasks of painting: to represent three dimensions and 
a flat surface, and to comprehend them in the unity of that surface. No 
important composition but uncompromising, organically articulated structure. In 
ion, there was the problem of color, and finally, the most difficult of all, 
if the amalgamation, the reconciliation of the whole. Rashly, Picasso attacked 
a problems at once.”

Wing are characteristic examples: “Les Demoiselles d’Avignon” is the master 
of Picasso’s Negro Period, but it may also be called the first cubist picture, 
breaking up of natural forms, whether figures, still life or drapery, into 
fragment all-over pattern of tilting shifting planes is already cubism… The 
ѐlles is a transitional picture, a laboratory or, better, a battlefield of 
ipment; but it is also a work of formidable, dynamic power unsurpassed 
cean art of its time.” (Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Picasso: Forty Years of his Art, 
ork, 1939, p. 60. The paragraph reappears in Barr, Picasso: Fifty Years Art, New York, 1948, p. 56. These two works will be cited henceforth as 
ory Years and Barr, Fifty Years respectively.) Though the author is sensitive 
ter expressionist violence and barbanciastic intensity” of the work, he makes 
m of Picasso’s invention with its historic impor-
itone of the first cubist picture.”

Im Botek and Anna Sabatté (Picasso, New York/Amsterdam, 1952, p. 
roduce the Demoiselles as follows: “In the course of 1906 Picasso turned 
more ruthlessly away from subjective expression and… concentrated 
formal problems. He thus shares in the general artistic current of 
ars…” Like the Fauves, Picasso “subordinated subject matter to form 
conceived as an end in itself… The history of the composition… illustrates the 
rocess by which form asserts its supremacy over subject matter.” The authors 
fer only to one of the preliminary studies, our fig. 4. The rest of the discussion 
concerns the sources of the work in Cézanne, El Greco, Iberian and Negro sculpture 
and its anticipation of Cubism.

John Golding (“Les Demoiselles d’Avignon,” _Burlington Magazine_, C 1958, 
pp. 155-63): “In the last analysis… the Demoiselles is related more closely to Cézanne’s can-
ves of bathing women than to his earlier, less structural figure pieces. Indeed 
it would have been quite natural if, when Picasso became more interested in 
the purely pictorial problems involved in composing and unifying a picture the 
size of the Demoiselles, he had begun to look with greater concentration at 
Cézanne’s later figure work.”

Robert Rosenblum (Cubism and Twentieth-Century Art, New York 1960, p. 25 
henceforth cited as Rosenblum, Cubism), succeeds in evoking the work’s “barbaric, 
dissociated power,” its “magical force,” and “mysterious psychological intensity”, 
after which he concludes: “The radical quality of Les Demoiselles lies, above 
all, in its threat to the integrity of mass as distinct from space. In the three 
udes at the left, the arcs and planes that dissect the anatomy begin to shatter the 
traditional sense of bulk; and in the later figures at the right, this fragmentation 
of mass is even more explicit. The nudes’ contours now merge ambiguously with 
the icy-blue planes beside them, … it is exactly this new freedom in the exploration 
of mass and void, line and plane, color and value—indeed from representational 
ends—that makes Les Demoiselles so crucial for the still more radical liberties 
of the mature years of Cubism.”

Edward Fry (Cubism, New York 1966, pp. 13-14): “[Picasso’s] departures from 
classical figure style (in the Demoiselles)… mark the beginning of a new attitude 
toward the expressive potentialities of the human figure. Based not on gesture 
and physiognomy but on the complete freedom to re-order the human image, 
this new approach was to lead to the evocation of previously unexpressed states 
of mind… The treatment of space is, however, by far the most significant aspect 
of Les Demoiselles, especially in view of the predominant role of spatial problems 
in the subsequent development of cubism. The challenge facing Picasso was the 
creation of a new system of indicating three-dimensional relationships that would 
no longer be dependent on the convention of illusionistic, one point perspective.”

Douglas Cooper (The Cubist Epoch, Exhibition Catalogue, Los Angeles and 
New York, 1970, pp. 22-23): “It is not easy to appreciate or judge the angular 
and aggressive Demoiselles as a work of art today because it was abandoned
The Philosophical Brothel

as a transitional and often re-worked canvas, with many stylistic contradictions unresolved… Thus the Demoiselles is best regarded as a major event in the history of modern painting, where Picasso posed many of the problems and revealed many of the ideas which were to preoccupy him for the next three years. In short, it is an invaluable lexicon for the early phase of Cubism.” Cooper adds that the repainting of three of the heads under the impact of Negro sculpture “led him to inject an element of fierceness into an otherwise emotionally detached composition.”

And most recently, Jean Leymarie (Picasso: Métamorphoses et unité, Geneva, 1971, p. 29). “The Demoiselles d’Avignon, whose heroic genesis and legendary fate are familiar, reversed the direction of modern art by throwing the center of gravity upon the picture itself and its creative tension. All earlier illustrative or sentimental values are dissolved and converted into plastic energy.”

5Barr, Forty Years, p.60 and Fifty Years, p. 57. Picasso’s statement appears to be made in conversation with Kahnweiler in December, 1933, published by the latter in “Huit Entretiens,” Le Point, October, 1952, p. 24. (See now Picasso on Art, A Selection of Views, ed. Dore Ashton, New York 1972, Chapter X, hereafter cited as Ashton, Picasso on Art.)” …According to my original idea, there were supposed to be men in it… There was a student holding a skull. A seaman also. The women were eating, hence the basket of fruits which I left in the painting. Then, I changed it and it became what it is now…” The gist of Picasso’s statement must have been known before its late publication in 1952. Barr does not recall whether he heard it from Picasso directly, but his Forty Years catalogue states in the caption for our fig. 4: “The figure at the left, Picasso says (1939), is a man with a skull in his hand entering a scene of carnal pleasure.” Concerning the skull in this drawing, see Part II of my text. (October).

6Barr, Fifty Years, p. 57; ibid., Masters of Modern Art, New York 1954, p. 66.
10For the present argument it is immaterial whether our “upper deck” is that of a river boat or a horse-drawn double-decker omnibus crossing a bridge. Picasso’s reported remark on the subject is cited in Pierre Daix and Georges Boudaille, Picasso, The Blue and Rose Periods, Greenwich, Conn., 1967, p. 182. (Hereafter cited as D-B, followed by catalogue reference, e.g. V. 61 for the Upper Deck.)
11To appreciate the boldness of Picasso’s spatial conception in the Upper Deck I suggest comparing George Caleb Bingham’s treatment of a similar subject in his Raftsmen Playing Cards, ca. 1847, City Art Museum of St. Louis (Mo).

Picasso: Three Nudes, Gosol, 1906, 24 1/4 inches high (Z.I. 340). The Alex Hillman Corporation, N.Y.


29 Picasso: Study for the Dryad, 7 1/8 inches high (Z.II. 661).


Barre Foundation, Merion, Pa. (Z.I. 350; D-B XVI.33): most closely related to our figs. 11 and 12.

An undulately pose which Picasso invests with almost Pharaonic solemnity. For related studies see Z. II, 647; the unused two-figure group Z. II, 650; and D.B., D.XVI.10, a pastel and charcoal sketch for the oil Z. II, 651.

E.Popham and Johannes Wilde, The Italian Drawings of the XV and XVI Centuries in the Collection... at Windsor Castle, London 1949, Cat. 429. Cfr. also Michelangelo's study for a rising Lazarus conceived as an upridding of the Adam in the Sistine Creation fresco, repro. in Johannes Wilde, Italian Drawings... in the British Museum. Michelangelo and his Studio, London 1953, Cat. 16.

Not in Zervos. The theme of the drawing, with its psychoanalytic suggestion of externalizing a private fantasy, is sustained through a dozen similar studies, Z. VIII, 76-85.


D. II, 688: the deliberateness of the arrangement is evident from the preparatory charcoal study, Z.II, 689.

Concerning La Grande Dryade of 1906 in the Hermitage, Leningrad: The change from an upturned right hand to a left hand turned down, i.e. from acceptance to repudiation, is traditional (Giotto, Gaddi, etc.), and is subtly modified in Michelangelo's Last Judgment, to which Picasso refers in three separate statements quoted in Ashton, Picasso on Art, Chapters IV and X.

On the sexual significance which Picasso assigns to the interchange of right and left feet—in the Dryad and numerous other works—see L. Steinberg, Other Criteria, New York 1972, p.141. The animalism of his jungle women of the 1907-08 period becomes explicit in a remarkable oil study, Z. II.39, where a nude woman's left leg turns into the hind leg of a quadruped with a hook on the reverse side of the knee. Her lower body is half satyrness.

For the traditional formalist interpretation of the Dryad, see Rosenblum, Cubism, pp. 28-29: "La Grande dryade continues something of the constructive fantasies of the nudes of 1906 and 1907, but it also offers a new sense of order and rational form that replaces the more impulsive approach of the earlier works. The figure now seems to be studied in a manner that, for Picasso, is relatively dispassionate, for the artist here quietly examines the elementary building blocks of three-dimensional form..."

Also Jean Sutherland Boggs, Picasso and Man, Exhibition Catalogue, Toronto-Montreal, 1964, p. 62: "(Sculpturally conceived) the planes of (the great Dryad) are clear and bold, but this three-dimensional quality is also related to the forceful movement of her body and of our eyes around that body... Picasso simplified face from a mask, suggestive of African works, to a shape without any associations. The Dryad represents a movement into analytical cubism in its colors and emphasis upon form; she is also one step further in that direction in the passive, complicated movement she provides for our eyes."

An attempt to acknowledge the work in its evocative ambiguity is Charles Ster-.

The Dryad appears fittingly among the trees of a dense and dark wood, she seemed to be about to leap? She is nothing but the embodiment of superhuman energies, and, before learning that she is divine, we know that she is indestructible, that she is as fierce as the wild beasts whose faculty of sudden relaxation she has. The figure's reclining posture has in fact been observed at least once before Günther Bandmann's Picasso: Les Demoiselles d'Avignon, Stuttgart 1965, p. 79. "Diese Gestalt könnte auch als Liegefigur in Aufschicht vorstellbar sein" (This is also imaginable as reclining and seen from above).

There are amusing anticipations of Picasso's effect in Manierist art, e.g., Joseph Sattz (1564-1609), Amor and Psyche (Galerie Peter Griebert, Munich; repro. in the Burlington Magazine, CV.); June 1972, p.404. Also relevant are those modern top photos that produce more or less upright images by taking a bird's-eye view of a reclining model, such as Marilyn Monroe.
 Picasso’s *Demoiselles d’Avignon* project began as a grouping of seven figures that included two men—a sailor seated within, and a mystery man at the left clutching a curtain.

In 1939, when Barr published his great exhibition catalogue, *Picasso: Forty Years of His Art*, all conclusions as to the character of the curtain figure had to be drawn from four pieces of evidence—three available drawings (figs. 4, 5, 47)" and one reported remark of the master: that the man, meant as a student, had at first carried a skull.29 On this evidence Barr based his subsequent statements that Picasso originally “conceived the picture as a kind of *memento mori*, allegory or charade”; but he felt bound to add that the painter, whose passions were never those of a puritan, must have approached the theme “with no very fervid moral intent.” Again, “obviously Picasso was interested in other than homiletic problems.”26

But this left an anomalous situation. Would Picasso have embarked on one of his grandest projects with a lukewarm uninterest in its subject and a morality contrary to his feelings? For though he may link sex with danger, Picasso does not link it with sin. Nor is it like him to deploy grapes, apples and melons as symbols of pernicious indulgence. Picasso likes eating and he mistrusts people who don’t.

Troubled by these anomalies—I must at this point refer to personal history—I looked again at the known drawings. Not one of them showed a death’s head, not even that oft-reproduced Basel sheet (fig. 4), in which a whole generation of Barr’s readers have claimed to see it—though in this drawing the large rectangular object on the man’s arm is neither shaped, nor scaled, nor held like a skull.27 It was then that I began to restudy the genesis of the work—without reference to any *memento mori* idea, or to that dubious skull on which it was founded, but for which no hard evidence had yet come forth. In a public lecture at the Metropolitan Museum (in March, 1972), I proposed to proceed with no further regard to any initial death theme, unless hitherto unpublished drawings appeared.

The approach was at least fertile. It brought information from Mila Gagarine, successor to the late Christian Zervos in the continuing *Picasso Catalogue*, that a number of unknown drawings for the *Demoiselles* had just come to light, including several that referred to the man with the skull—“il s’agit bien d’un crâne.” They were to be published in a forthcoming supplementary volume during 1973.30 At the same time, William Rubin of the Museum of Modern Art, with whom I had discussed the matter, found occasion to mention the disputed skull to Picasso himself during a visit early last April. The upshot was unexpectedly rich. Whoever has been unable to see a skull in the Basel drawing (fig. 4), is now officially vindicated, for the drawing hails from a stage when the emblem was long discarded. And the presence of the skull at an earlier stage need no longer be taken on faith. On the other hand, the *memento mori* interpretation remains as doubtful as ever. Questioned by Rubin, Picasso confirmed that the original conception of *Les Demoiselles* had indeed included the skull motif and then produced an unpublished sketchbook (24.5x19.5 cm) containing four pages of studies directly related to the curtain figure—whom he identified as a “medical student” (figs. 30-34).

A medical student? Rubin comments as follows: “Since in discussing the Student, Picasso made a special point of identifying him as a medical student, the skull may be considered a casual medical-school, i.e., ‘professional,’ prop. . . . His being a medical student obviates any necessity to read the picture allegorically as does Barr (the skull being an anecdotcal prop), but by no means eliminates the possibility that the picture also functions on this level.”29

But suppose we press further. Why a medical student rather than a student of say, engineering, law or philosophy? Had Picasso wished to evoke the idea of a contemplation of death, he could have given the skull to any man, everyman. Why to a medical student dressed in a business suit? Does that uniform make him an anti-hero, like Joyce’s Buck Mulligan—clinical and irreverent before the forces of life? Think of the interns in *Ulysses*—Medical Dick and Medical Davy—who also land in the stews.

And why the skull as its symbol? It is not even an efficient mark of its bearer’s profession, since it could as easily designate a grave digger, or a life-drawing instructor. And contrariwise, is not a medical man more securely defined by such insignia as Asclepius staff, urine bottle, scalpel or stethoscope? We are still left in need of an answer to two distinct questions: why choose a medical student, and why make his symbol a skull?

Perhaps because a medical student is the one member of human society who can, and who does, look at a skull with thoughts other than thoughts of death—i.e., looks at it as an object of scientific enquiry. It is surely significant that this particular skull is interchangeable.
second drawing shows the man burdened with both book
gull (fig. 34), and thereafter with a book only (figs. 2-4), suggests
these attributes served as symbols of knowledge, and of a par-
brand of knowledge—non-participatory and theoretical. They
the deadening approach of analysis. Hence the death's head
hand of the student—as against the sailor's ithyphallic life
For while the naive sailor behind his Bacchic perron is in
ock of it, his counterpart, the knowing man at the curtain,
es the outsider. Not a personifier of pious death consciousness,
s (R. de la Souche has suggested) a man condemned by
ng into sin, into that house of woman which goes down to
embers of death, but one opposite—a man apart, self-exiled
ance on studious dissection: condemned for not entering. In
ent of Picasso's Demoiselles studies, as a man placed in
plane of the curtain, the student stands for an attitude.
er looks at the nudes in his path; although the summary character
drawings, Picasso always succeeds in turning his head up
nce away. He is the non-participant, the excluded one in the
ge game of inclusion.

we must have an allegorical starting point. I suggest
m the Demoiselles project began, not as a charade on the wages of
as an allegory of the involved and the uninvolved in confronta-
the indestructible claims of sex. For Picasso, 70 years ago,
ot listening to Church fathers, but hearing the voice of the
her who had written: "Christianity gave Eros poison to drink:
not die of it but degenerated—into a vice."30

king to Kahnweiler in December, 1933, Picasso referred to
xes he and his friends used to make about the women in the
series painting, identifying one of them as Picasso's girlfriend,
de, another as Marie Laurențin, a third as the grandmother
poet friend Max Jacob — "all in a brothel in Avignon!"31 Since
human characters did not survive the initial studies, not even mock-
s for them have come down; but it would be in character for
r to have had specific persons in mind. Rubin discerns Picas-
features in the youth with the skull in fig. 30; and he proposes
both men in fig. 3 as partial self-portraits, aspects of Picasso’s
ature.32 This is surely a strong possibility. On the other hand, a
olic role for the curtain figure as the sexual "outsider" may
allowed it to coalesce with successive identifications. Not only
figure quickly grow tall and lean (figs. 34, 2, 3, and 4),
be the artist’s own physical type; in fig. 5, the last to include
ll cast of seven, the man at the curtain becomes bald and
erly older, claiming resemblance to Max Jacob (figs. 35-36).
ognomic clues are of course always inadequate, but it remains
vestive alternative to link the variable male in the original cast
Demoiselles with the sexual personality of the poet—a ped-
morality drawn to, but repelled by, the love of woman, fluc-
ting between contrition and what he called his "amours d'enter."
asso's former roommate, literary mentor and most intimate
of those years, he must have caused the artist to ponder that
uous housing of sexuality which is a man’s body; and to brood
 difference between possessing, or being possessed by,
sex.33

at the curtain passes through rapid changes of personality
skull in hand and left arm disconnected, as a stocky youth
ose-cropped hair (fig. 30); his precise profile interests Picasso
left to repeat and enlarge upon (fig. 31). The skull-holding gesture
is studied in two further drawings (figs. 32, 33).34 Immediately
ards, in the same sketchbook, the figure becomes long and
head as though this second attribute were needed to sustain the significance of the first. In three further drawings (figs. 2-4), the man's character remains constant, but paper replaces the skull—until at last all attributes disappear.

Rid of symbolic props in the last full-cast study (fig. 35), the short, balding, ex-medical student with the plump features of Max Jacob seizes the curtain with both his hands. In the drawings that follow (figs. 6-9), he grasps it with increasing determination and his body leans forward as though inclined to drag the curtain along—as though he had the power, or the intention, to foreclose the act. Finally (figs. 10-12), the figure undergoes a sex change and petrifies. The face mask she wears in the painting protects a secret history.

But her marginal relationship to the rest of the cast remains intact; she differs from the nudes on stage in being gowned. Yet she belongs, and is like the picture itself, being veiled by her garment as the picture is by its curtain. Her déshabillé introduces the theme of exposure. She is the overture, the true curtain raiser. The character that invested her figure from the beginning still clings; she remains non-participant and go-between, not part of the revelation but one who reveals. And the crucial change in her role consists in this, that the brothel inmates, instead of reacting to her dramatic entrance, are through her made to react to us.

What then has happened to the original drama—the polarity of external knowledge and initiation? As the action turns through 90 degrees to confront the viewer, the picture ceases to be the representation of an adventure enjoyed by one or two men and becomes instead an experience of ours, an experience, that is, of the painting. The change seems drastic; from an allegory of man meeting woman, to the adventure of a collision with art. As if the whole theme had been shunted from the subject of sex to that of painting itself—which is, in a sense, what has always been said, that the picture has become "significant" as painting only. Whatever the original subject had been—wages of sin or detachment versus engagement—it seems superseded when the whole confrontation proceeds between the contained work of art over there and its observer outside.

But, I think, the picture says otherwise. It declares that if you wholly accept and undergo the esthetic experience, if you let it engulf and "frighten" you—as Gertrude Stein says Alice B. Toklas was frightened—then you become an insider. It is in the contagion of art that the types of knowledge, the external and the engaged, are fused, and the distinction between outsider and insider falls away.

Not every picture is capable of such overriding contagion. Few works of art impose the kind of esthetic experience which the young Nietzsche called "a confrontation with stark reality." And this, surely, is why Picasso strove to make his creation a piece of "wild naked nature with the bold face of truth." He wanted the orgiastic immediacy and the Dionysian release.

Once more one realizes the importance to Picasso of dissociating those five figures from one another. Despite the congested group there is no communication between them, no conceivable transit across the narrows that hold them apart. The disjunctions are part of the mechanism; each figure at its own terminus connects individually with the viewer, much as our five fingers connect with the world. And the appeal, appropriately enough, is to the most primitive location, to that ground of earliest consciousness wherein all perceptions are beings relate separately to the perceiving self. The child's slow recognition that there exists, say, between mother and father, a mutuality of intimacy from which his own self is excluded, constitutes a sort of enculturation, an achieved intellectual detachment that allows him to register external interrelations. Picasso's Demoiselles, p.
this cultured crust, alerts a regressive impulse and activates the most
instinctual mode of confronting experience.

There is, after all, a pervasive spirit that runs through the work,
a oneness of theme and structure and a spirit of insolent summons
to the beholder. Hence the insistence on vectors that define the
orthogonal axis—inward from the spectator’s station, by way of the
penetrant table, past the masked curtain raiser who unveils an event
of overwhelming proximity: the sudden exposure of crowded whores
startled by our intrusion and returning our gaze. Without the mutual
dependency of aroused viewer and pictorial structure there is no
picture. The whole picture, form and subject together, strives against
educated detachment.

Why is the blue curtain in the upper right always parted, and why
the inquisitive demoiselle peering in? Picasso never questioned the
finality of the motif and carried it almost unchanged through 19
studies. Of course, it’s a spacemaking device; given the compressed
staging of the Demoiselles, it opens the backdrop just as the spilling
tablenspread opens the front. But why so much extraterritoriality in
this “first Cubist picture?”

Or put it this way: What secret reserves of space does that jungle-
nosed nude, looking in from backstage, leave behind? One possible
answer lies in a comparison of the Demoiselles with the last major
work that precedes it in Picasso’s oeuvre—the Two Women (fig. 39),
produced, after innumerable preparatory studies, in Paris in the late
fall of 1906.

The contrast between the two pictures is absolute. The Demoiselles
is all actuality, a clash of the sexes and a reciprocal shock—the
women, themselves the quarry, stare at their game. The penetrant
table, bridgehead of the masculine presence, turns the depicted space
into common ground, the site of shameless exposure to shameless
eyes. In the Two Women (fig. 39), all is privacy and anticipation;
absorbed in each other, the women stand in an anteroom—a place,
a condition rather, of woman alone. Since these two works are so
nearly consecutive—the many studies for them, including postscripts
to the Two Women, almost shading off into each other—it may be
well to reconceive them in sequence.

Begin with the changed body image. In the Two Women they stand
like ensouled monuments, like trunks of trees. They are shells intact,
their humanity sealed in exteriors of solid fusion. As sculptured mono-
liths, they suggest material never yet cracked or bent. As creatures of
growth, they appear ripe and unbreached. As physiological types,
they seem unadapted and unaccustomed to motion, with flesh that
has never submitted to pressure. Bodies, then, of primal virginity,
designed only to enclose their own substance, retained on the shel-
tered side of the curtain, antecedent to the strains of experience. And
then the eager anatomies of the Demoiselles become Picasso’s opposite metaphor—bodies manipulable and articulated for play.

It is worth recalling that the earliest of Picasso’s many images of two women in an intimate meeting is the Two Sisters of 1902 (Leningrad; Z.I, 183), the subject of which Picasso explained in a letter to Max Jacob. It represented, he wrote, the meeting of a nun and a prostitute in the hospital of St.-Lazare.37 The extremes of woman’s physical life joined in a single arch: the body unused and the body abused—and the whole comprehended again in the succession from the Two Women to the Demoiselles.

Consider the contrast of gesture in the two pictures. Picasso’s painting of the Two Women ends a period of preoccupation with woman as a closed body, restricted to self-sealing attitudes—folded hands, arms crossed, limbs locked together, and elbows that cleave to the trunk (fig. 40). Then, in the Demoiselles—all elbows out! Let the reader repeat the experiment to experience the full psychic effect of released elbows.

Two Women is a mysterious picture: a pair of young massy females on either side of a breach. One of them is poised to go through—but not the one on the left: in a gesture of self-absorption, one hand recoils to her shoulder, the other hand grasping the curtain as if to show it or draw it aside. This farther hand introduces our “disconnection” motif, an earlier example of that space jump by way of understated foreshortened gesture which Picasso renders more recondite in the Demoiselles. But the whole figure is a tour de force of depicted depth in compression—from her right wrist, through the bulk of her shoulders, to the distant grasp on a screening curtain. And beyond that, some ulterior world to be broached. By whom? She eyes the other—i, you.

The woman at right is half lost to us, facing away. Her lost profile is addressed to the cleft in the curtain; likewise the stony index of her raised hand. Several of the studies for the Two Women show Picasso thinking a pointing hand (figs. 41-42; cf. also Z.VI. 822). In the painting, the arm retracted as far as it goes and the elbow pressed close to the waist indicate that the pointing hand is suspended distantly from neck and shoulder and the large, lighted finger poised in mid-air. Such a gesture, like that of the Sistine Isaiah, speaks of only awareness or self-recognition. The whole picture is inner directed, a strange prelude to the extrovert plot of the Demoiselles.

In keeping, too, is the close congruence of the two women’s near-identity of their lower limbs suggests duplication. To Alfred Barr, who admired the picture before anyone else, the two figures seemed to stand for one woman: like a self and its mirror image in self-discovery. There is a beautiful parallelism in the two rising hands, the self-searching hand that falls back on its shoulder, and the other whose finger is cocked in the direction to go. But this question, whether one woman or two, is not designed for a literal answer. It is a classical Spanish notion that a person discovers himself in intercourse with another, that a meeting of persons is a reciprocal mirroring. But the image the other wins from you is your surrendered part; it is possessed by the other. The self separates from itself to retrieve itself in reciprocity and mutual consciousness. The picture then—if it is indeed of one woman—is of a person on the threshold of an encounter, about to pass through the curtain that shields the unmated self.

At least three surviving sketches for the painting partner in the Two Women externalize her premonitions: she is beset by two devilish little satyrs (Z. VI, 803), or flanked by a satyr and cupid (Z. VI, 805). In a fine watercolor (fig. 43) she stands alone, but alone with a goat-footed faun traipsing up. What connection is there between the gift of the satyr and the finger addressed to the mind?

Whether the Two Women represents one twofold person or companions with complementary roles, face and finger of the woman at right direct themselves to the place where a curtain is about to divide. And is there no sequel? We know that Picasso wonders about the averted back of what he sees, and that his oeuvre exhibits inversions of viewpoints from back to front in infinite ways. I propose that his next decision constitutes what the movies call a jump cut. As if his next picture must inevitably behold that same curtain from the reverse side. The next picture is the Demoiselles d’Avignon, formerly christened “the Philosophical Brothel,” familiarly revolutionary by every stylistic measure; but surely the psychic energy which powered that revolution flowed from the artist’s total humanity; from his meditation on woman no less than his struggle with art. For both the Two Women and the Demoiselles are about the human condition, about that perpetual moment in which self-knowledge comes in sexual confrontation.

The “wherefrom” of the incoming demoiselle becomes answerable: she has left the state antecedent, the state of woman alone. What lies behind is as solidly female as the domain in front of the picture is male, the depicted space upon which she intrudes being the common ground. But such an answer has little face value, since we are not actually seeing consecutive frames of a filmstrip. The nosy bawd peering in as if from the mouth of a cave is not the “same” character as the outward-bound one in the Two Women. More important to Picasso than a sustained identity is precisely the transformation of character implicit in the two states—from unbreached simplicity to keen-edged articulation. Yet certain features shared by both figures suggest a residual constancy. The breast of square shape—apparent in the Philadelphia watercolor even before being canonized in the Demoiselles painting—is anticipated as a left breast in the Two Women. And the three-quarter backview of the earlier picture is reversed in the three-quarter face of the jungle-nosed demoiselle. In fact, one suspects that the latter’s whole figure is conceived as a forced conjunction of divergent three-quarter views. The one-breasted chest, which describes the body turning away (as in the Two Women) is counterpointed by the hither turn of the head.

Her dissonant visage, like that of the squatter below, accords with the theme of the Demoiselles painting, if not with its style. Most of the composition studies—those small ones that represent the sit
In retrospect. And most later observers, at one time or another, have come down on the funny side of the Demoiselles—one of them “opened out like a sucking pig,” wrote Roland Penrose; “five of the least seductive female nudes in the history of art,” according to Alfred Barr. Did Picasso expect us to take the work seriously—all of the time?

We probably need to see them as comical to survive them at all. How, otherwise, relate to a vision of five bedeviled viragos whose sexual offering, visually inescapable, is decivilizing, disfiguring, and demonic?

The two at the right are key figures, both of them with disordered anatomies and ambiguous orientations. The incoming figure had been arriving upstage through 18 composition drawings, and Picasso knew very well that the three-quarter angle in which he was casting her was fraught with consequence. Unlike a strict profile or an en face, which tend to lie flush on the picture plane, the transitional three-quarter aspect implies spatial depth—either towards the rear, as in the Two Women, or hitherward on a diagonal. Thus the oblique intrusion of the upstage demoiselle threatens to redefine the entire space of the picture as a continuum. Her nose is aimed at the curtain raiser as through a transparent, traversable medium. To insulate her, as he must, from all connective ambience, Picasso makes his most fateful decisions. The crouching figure below, precisely because she is the most neighborly in point of space, is removed to the utmost stylistic distance. At the risk of scandalizing logic and art—to say nothing of abashing his friends—he will negate the fixity of focused vision, the vacancy of empty space, and the coherence of style. Three momentous decisions, or intuitions, which we trace in the last two composition studies and in the final phase of the painting.

The last of the drawings to include the sailor in a six-figure group is a large, accurate composition study in charcoal (fig. 45). It lays down the main tonal divisions and outlines the figures as blank shapes in the field, suggesting that Picasso is no longer staging actors in space, but approaching the thought of his canvas. But that he is not sacrificing spatially to decorative values of flatness is proved by the drawing on the reverse of the sheet.

On the back of fig. 45 appears a large, carefully structured design of a Standing Nude (fig. 46; Picasso enlarged the sheet at top and bottom). Its single breast is an important sign. Were the body presented as a conventional side view, such a breast contour would be acceptable as the profilation of a familiar silhouette. But on a thorax that is not in strict profile, the single breast implies—as it did in the Two Women, and as in the two demoiselles on the right—that the body inhabits a depth of space which holds another breast in the offing. The lone breast becomes the thoracic version of the profil perdu—a signal that Picasso is not thinking flat. And indeed, the Standing Nude is a space pun, his earliest figure in two-way orientation.

Is the lady facing or backing away? Are we seeing her front or her back with turned head looking over her shoulder? Faint traces in the zone of the pelvis may once have spilled rump, but Picasso has let them fade out; their precise reference would have dispelled ambiguity. Contours of waist, thorax and breast yield no specific clue; nor does the cylindrical neck, or the flat falling arm. The head, of course, can be read both ways—either thrown backward or as a three-quarter front view. This leaves only the lifted hand which, as an open palm with extended thumb, would stand unequivocally for the right hand of a figure seen from the rear. And this is precisely why the thumb is removed by a slash continuous from elbow to index. The rest of the hand is no problem, since the emphatic cross-
stroke at the roots of the four fingers defines the back of the hand as readily as the palm. Thus every part of the figure ends up at the same ambivalence level.

Inside its bounded planes the drawing is flat. But it recreates the idea of "body," of something denser than silhouette, through the sustained front/back ambiguity. Not a body in the sense of spatial displacement, but the embodiment of a two-way visibility, a form impressed between antipodal points of sight. Visual duality in the interest of symbolic concretion—a principle which Picasso will pursue for the rest of his life—is here laid down for the first time. And it is vastly significant for the history of his art that this figure was drawn on the back of a study for the Demoiselles d'Avignon.

Return now to the squatter's blank silhouette in fig. 45. The pigtail which would have established an explicit backview is not picked up by the system of reinforced contours. Hands and feet are suppressed; overlaps are ruled out, so that her flattened impress orients itself simultaneously inward and outward.

Looking back, one observes that Picasso had been courting this prodigy for some time. His early oil study (fig. 35) had already smoothed the squatter like a butterfly to a pane. Arms cut away at the elbows, one leg cropped by a curtain, both breasts everted, and the head wrenched around—the figure appears somewhat ambiguously dorsal and frontal. And a hint of the same obsession returns in fig. 9 (and in Z.II, 638, not reproduced). But Picasso seems also to resist the idea; it may have seemed too contrived and too cleverly punning, like those riddle drawings for children that read two ways—rabbit or duck; or those diagrams that depend on tricks of omission. In the Philadelphia watercolor (fig. 47) the device is abandoned; the squatter becomes once again a backview with defining pigtail, and her acknowledgement of the spectator is conveyed by the anatomically sound turn of a head.

But in the painting the two-way orientation returns with a vengeance. Frontality—a warped facemask cupped in a huge boomerang hand—settles without logic of anatomic coherence upon a back; half of an arm akimbo is absorbed by a climbing thigh, and what's left may as well be right—recto as well as verso. Picasso discovers that abruptness of gesture can be expressed by suppressing transitions—no neck, for instance, between head and shoulders. His squatter becomes a focus of concentrated disorientation, like something too close to see. Gradually, as the studies reveal, Picasso edges her straightforward backview towards contradiction. Frontal and dorsal aspect—the latter full-splayed and spreadeagled—arrive in simultaneity. And the suddenness of the inversion more than makes up for abstraction and flattening. It gives her pink flesh an aggressive immediacy, brought nearer still by the impudence of her pose and the proximity of an implicated observer who knows every side of her.

The Philadelphia watercolor (fig. 47) is the only known study for the Demoiselles in its definitive five-figure state. The sailor and his table-to-lean-on have been removed, allowing Picasso to pair the two central nudes. One of them, the karyatid, long treated as a distant, archaic effigy, is brought down to stage center, her sex at the intersection of all coordinates, her crownpost position aligned with the thrust of the table. There is a new determination to clench dispersed elements without relaxing their mutual repulsion.

But the outstanding event in this final drawing is the positive charge given to the interspaces at right. The vacant surround fills and hardens, and the inspissation of intervals converts the two right-hand figures into negative shapes reserved on a dark ground.

Much has been written about the eruption of these solidified voids in the painting. Ever since Kahnweiler, they have been seen as a

45 Study for the Demoiselles, 18 15/16 inches high (Z.II, 644).

stylistic break with the rest of the work, a shift in intention. Their prophetic energy seemed to Kahnweiler to offset the sacrifice of internal unity. Robert Rosenblum, too, felt that the painting embodied a headlong change of style from left to right, a change come, as it were, in the heat of action, within the painting itself. "[Its] very inconsistency is an integral part of Les Demoiselles. The irrepressible energy behind its creation demanded a vocabulary of change and impulse rather than of measured statement in a style already articulated. The breathless tempo of this pregnant historical moment

Itually obligated its first masterpiece to carry within itself the very essence of artistic evolution..."[16]

Can it be that the noble enthusiasm of this description, dated just before 1900, echoes the cry of American Action Painting? For it appears that the "radical quality" of the Demoiselles, the reversal of the charges of figure and ground, "the threat to the integrity of mass as distinct from space," was already envisaged in the Philadelphia watercolor. It was part of a program, part of the eruption which was planned for the picture. Already here, that open curtain in upper right—previously rendered by two canted lines—condenses to cold boulders of color that turn the space intervals into mass. And there is good reason why these curtain folds gelled exactly here, where the scene is intruded on from a momentum sufficient to reconvert the whole setting into a single space. Think the blue curtain away, and that savage expression will dissipate all of Picasso's carefully plotted disjunctions. But if those five clustered nudes are remain discontinuous, the artist must quarantine the intruder and build the gap between her and the rest into an insurmountable barrier. This is imperative that the Philadelphia drawing obeys. And in the painting, what had once been a tame background curtain behind interval of airspace, becomes an outcropping of glacial blues at transmit neither dramatic motion, nor bodily heat, nor lines of light.

The painting maintains a relentlessness in isolating each face, and the viewer is called on to keep switching between divergent formal modes. Reading from left to right, the curtain raiser defines a flat shape like an incision—a sunken relief with its ground moved. The viewer sees nothing but side, a profile traced on the film that separates him from the stage. It has been observed that it cannot quite tell whether the leg she shows is the right or the left; it is indeed one leg standing for both, as though to forestall any hint of another member behind. And the angularity of her limbs in keeping: the leather-cut arm; the broadside from shoulder to wrist as if stretched between tenterhooks; and the left hand, "soiled like somebody else's"—not issuing from a substantial body, but in another stratum across an abrupt space jump.

Intelligible continuity relates the curtain raiser to the gisante which lifts off against her own shreds of recession—halations of private which she shares with nobody else. She and her elbowing neighbor seem to present a common front—both of them footless and levitating, kindred in dress, flesh and feature, and both plainly facing. But one figure's frontality calls for looking down from above, the other for looking up. Their spatial orientations, mutually unreconciled, depend upon our intuition of their respective positions.

At the right sits the squatting, flattest in drawing, but of multiple aspects. Offering both front and back—as though to be experienced in time or from an embracing position—she implies an alarming intimacy to the spectator.

And at last the intruding savage, deeply recessed, trapped in the cleft of a curtain whose collapsing pleats simulate an impenetrable solidification of space—the famous birthplace of Cubism.

But Cubist pictures are remarkable for stylistic coherence, whereas the program of the Demoiselles is an accelerating mutation of pictorial means in a narrowing field. What Picasso attempts in this work throws shadows across vast reaches of 20th-century art. He challenges far more than traditional focused perspective—which after Cézanne, Gauguin, and the Fauves, had long lost its hold on advancing art. Far more is at stake than Cartesian space conceived as a geometry of infinite homogeneous extension—a philosophic projection whose psychic detachment reflects neither the way we see nor the way we dream nor the way we move. Picasso's ultimate challenge is to the notion that the coherence of the art work demands a stylistic consistency among the things represented; that one style must obtain in every part of the canvas, whether to correspond with the supposed unity of an instant visual experience or to maintain constancy in transformation. In both these alternatives, the persistent style registers as an objective rule, preformed like the grammar of language. The viewer follows a system from which he expects a predictable regularity. And the shock of the Demoiselles resides largely in the frustration of this expectation. In Picasso's farewell to stylistic consistency, the means of rendering and the modes of experiencing become subjectified—open choices, the acts of a personal will. Those three rocking orthogonal—curtain top, lying nude, leveled table—will not come flush with the picture plane. The straight curtain raiser and the gisante in bird's-eye perspective—a legitimate upright followed by a usurper—they are two images as distinct as two pictures; and the two-way squat in the lower right is a disturbed diagram. Neighboring objects diverge willfully into discrepant styles; styles become subjects to paint. Only in the mind of the perceiver and nowhere else is their unity recreated.

One realizes from how deep a conviction spring such perverse statements as this: "When you draw a head [Picasso said sometime in the 1950s] you must draw like that head...Take a tree. At the foot of the tree there is a goat, and beside the goat is a little girl tending the goat. Well, you need a different drawing for each. The goat is round, the little girl is square, and the tree is a tree. And yet people draw all three in the same way. That is what is false. Each should be drawn in a completely different way."[17]

Or this anecdote from the Bateau-Lavoir days, i.e., the Demoiselles period. Time: 2 A.M. Place: outside Max Jacob's window where the oil lamp, as usual, is still alight.

Picasso: Hey, Max, what are you doing?
Jacob: I'm searching for a style.
Picasso (going off): There's no such thing.[18]

Collage was the first major outgrowth of Picasso's intuition that divergent modes of representation can cohabit, like diverse fruit in a still life. But the idea of collating unreconciled elements in one scene recurs continually in his art; its ultimate premises are explored half a century later in a series of paintings which have yet to receive serious attention—Picasso's variations on Las Meninas, begun in 1957 (Barcelona, Picasso Museum), wherein each painted personage
metope in which to be its own picture. In the Meninas series (as in the final canvas of the Algerian Women, 1955) these dichotomies are clearly deliberate.

In the Demoiselles, where stylistic inconsistency makes its first monumental appearance, the phenomenon has been attributed to haste, to the incomplete state of the picture, or the uncontrollable surge of Picasso’s creative momentum. But we now have two potent reasons to regard the apparent lack of coherence as equally purposeful in the earlier work. One of these has been discussed in detail: we have seen that the inconsistencies in the Demoiselles are not merely late interferences, but programmed throughout; the striated masks at the right may be more discordant, but are not more damaging to received notions of pictorial unity than that kite of a hand in the upper left, or those incongruous eye levels at center.

The second reason seems equally obvious: Picasso’s insinuations to continuity are too knowingly neutralized to be the consequence of a runaway evolution. Color is used consistently as a conjunctive agent. It binds together whatever his stylistic shifts pull apart. Homologous pinks of flesh pervade the entire field. And a crescendo of blues expanding towards the right is counterpointed by diminishing browns and ochres.

Equally binding are those streamers of line that lace all contours together. A diagonal discharged from the skatter’s knee homes in on a target hand at the curtain—the trajectory passing through the loincloth of the pillar nude, and the gisante’s listing shoulders. Linear structure is organic throughout, like a nervous system. Even the upswEEP of the skatter’s nose breaks through the peak of her head to produce further contours.

But the will to unity in the Demoiselles encompasses more than color and line. It acts as a compressive force on the whole composition. It determines the format and every spatial allotment within it.

The composition began as an oblong, as befits a multfigured narrative scene (figs. 2f). But through the 19 known composition studies the artist periodically applies lateral pressure to contain his ebullient personnel. The one option he keeps available until the end is the frame’s elasticity. As he keeps rehearsing the scene, the picture shrinks and dilates, narrows down to a square (as in figs. 6 and 45), but expands again to a rectangle in the Philadelphia study where the cast is reduced to five (fig. 47). That was the last stage before beginning to paint. It was then that Picasso ordered his huge 8-foot canvas, prepared, we are told, “with unusual care....the smooth type of canvas that he liked to paint on would not have been strong enough for so large a surface. He therefore had a fine canvas mounted on a stronger material as a reinforcement and had a stretcher made to his specified unconventional dimensions.” These dimensions—slightly higher than wide—represent a final contraction, so that in the painting, as in no preceding study, each figure is crowded and each interval squeezed.

As might be expected, the forces acting against the expanse of the field are personified in the actions depicted—the pulling across of the curtain in figs. 6-8 and the dramatic entrance from the side opposite. But the sidelong compression coincides with a compression of depth. In the orthogonal axis, the two central figures advance against the inroads of the outer curtain and table. The famous shallowing of the pictorial space is but half the action. Picasso is a multidimensional thinker, and it is every spatial dimension that comes under stress. In the painting, the five figures, though conceptually freed from each other, become a conglomerate unity, cohere like tensed fingers, and the whole collapsing interior stage of the picture closes in like a fist.

what it is that is being flattened. Its spatial cues may be given in contradiction, but they are given; they are both deployed and collapsed. And the violence of the picture resides in the conflict between crush and expansion maintained by its material and spatial sequences. That famous near-Cubist space at the right is a conflated recessional sequence. It takes off between a white flat and a lifted still life at center; it proceeds to a roadblock nude squatted down on an ottoman; halts at the sudden chill of blue draperies falling; and ascends again to the figure upstage emerging from a cavernous hollow. No terms taken from other art—whether from antecedent paintings or from Picasso’s own subsequent Cubism—describe the drama of so much depth under stress. This is an interior space in compression, like the inside of pleated bellows, like the feel of an inhabited pocket, a contracting sheath heated by the massed human presence.

The space of the Demoiselles is a space peculiar to Picasso’s imagination. Not a visual continuum, but an interior apprehended on the model of touch and stretch, a nest known by palpation, or by reaching and rolling, by extending one’s self within it. Though presented symbolically to the mere sense of sight, Picasso’s space insinuates total initiation, like entering a disordered bed.

Gertrude Stein has a telling Picasso story.6 She was showing him a first photograph of an American skyscraper, and the young Spaniard, who evidently did not yet know about elevators, produced what Gertrude calls “a characteristic reaction.” Where others would have been impressed by the sheer height of the thing from the ground up, Picasso’s comment eroticizes the American engineering feat into a situation that entails the exertion of climbing, the impatience of waiting, and the denouement of an intimate quarrel. “Good God,” he said, “imagine the pangs of jealousy a lover would have while his beloved came up all those flights of stairs to his top-story studio.” Even the skyscraper is felt from within to become a sexual witness.

The Demoiselles d’Avignon seems to me to have one insistent theme to which everything in the picture lends force: the naked brothel interior, the male complicity in an orgy of female exposure, the direct axial address, the spasmodic action, the explosive release in a constricted space, and the reciprocity of engulfment and penetration. The picture is both enveloping and transfixed; it sorts over and overwhelms and impales itself. And it ought to be seen as it was painted—hung low in a narrow room, so that it spills over into it, tugged by the entrant wedge of the table. In one sense the whole picture is a sexual metaphor, and Picasso will have used all his art to articulate a sexual meaning.

But it is also the opposite, a forced union of dream image and actuality. The picture is about the image in its otherness locked in with the real world. And like those mystics of old who used sexual metaphor to express ultimate union with the divine, so Picasso will have used sexuality to make visible the immediacy of communion with art. Explosive form and erotic content become reciprocal metaphors for each other.

Decades later, having passed 80, Picasso gives the secret away (fig. 48) and makes the action of painting coincident with the making of love.

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*Part I of this article appeared in the September Art News. The numbering of illustrations and footnotes is continuous through both parts.

**Through an unfortunate accident, fig. 4, Part I, was severely cropped on all sides, so that its important foreground, discussed on p. 23, does not show. Cf. the reproduction in William Rubin’s Picasso in the Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1972, p. 196, fig. 24.
Picasso. Suite 347. No. 317
etching, Sept. 8, 1958 III.

**See especially I. Z. 349 (D-B XVI, 32) and Z XXII, 64 (D-B XVI, 20), a postscript to the Two Women projecting a four-figure group in a setting of curtailism. An interesting transitory thought is embodied in a conte drawing of 1906 (Z. VI, 814), where a nude figure, shaped like one of the Two Women, approaches like the incoming demonology, from behind a curtain in a quartet front view.

"Je veux faire un tableau de ce dessin que je t'envoie (Les Deux Sourcils). C'est un tableau que je fais d'une putain de St-Lazare et d'une sorcière." Letter to Max Jacob, Barcelona, 1907. See Janine Savary, Picasso Documentes Iconographiques, Geneva, 1964, No. 70.

**See, for instance, the opening chapter of Balfaser Gracia's, allegorical novel El Criticó (1651-1657). The shipwrecked Criticó, who personifies the critical intelligence, reaches a desert island where he meets the lone Andreino, "the human one," who has never before seen a fellow man and who personifies man's instinctual side. Asked who he is, Andreino offers this remarkable answer: "Yo, dijo, ni un hombre soy, ni un hombre me hago darte el ser, ni para que me lo dé; que de veces, y sin voces, me lo pregunta a mí mismo, tan cercano..."

**See the discussion of the chronology in Golding, Cubam, pp. 52-55.


**Birth of Tragedy, Section VII.

**For the jokes Picasso and his friends used to make about the demonstris, see note 31. For the Fénex incident, see Ashton, Picasso on Art, Chapter VII (Portraits). The last two quotations are from Penrose, op. cit., p. 125 and Barr, Masters of Modern Art, p. 68.

**The word "earliest" is always a risk when discussing Picasso. His beginnings are like the beginnings of my soul. As soon as one identifies a novel theme and starts searching for its earliest occurrence, the impression arises that there is never a starting point; nothing ever happens for the first time. In my own recent study of Picasso's lifelong obsession with the problem of simultaneous front-and-back representation ("The Algerian Women and Picasso at Large," in Other Criteria, New York, 1972), I cited the 1907 Standing Nude (fig. 46) as the first systematic instance of this preoccupation; but I pointed to earlier drawings of 1904-05, where figures appear successively recto and verso, as evidence of an earlier concern with the problem. I would now cite even earlier evidence in a sheet of nude studies, dated 1902 (D-B, D. VII, 5). The third figure from the left is a female back view but with arms and head ambiguously outlined for a possible frontal view.

**Cf. E. H. Gombrich, Art and Illusion, New York 1959, figs. 2 and 201.

"It is a misunderstanding of Picasso's intention to rationalize his deliberate befuddlements into an analytical exposition of three-dimensional form—e.g.: "in the squashing 'demonic' Picasso had dissociated and distended the various parts of the body in an attempt to explain it as fully as possible, without the limitations of viewing it from a single, stationary position." (Golding, Cubam, p. 62).


**Quotation from Roland Penrose, Picasso, His Life and Work, New York 1958, p. 124. The information goes back to Leo Stein, who (according to Barr, Masters of Modern Art, p. 68) — remembers visiting Picasso's studio one day and finding there a huge canvas which, before he had painted a stroke, the artist had had expensively lined as if it were already a classic work.”

In Barr's text the words "that fail" refer to 1906, which must be a memory lapse on Leo Stein's part. Picasso insists that he did not embark on the painting of the Demoiselles until the following spring. It would be strange for him to produce a score of preliminary composition studies of which not one corresponded to the dimensions of the canvas already stretched.