

## PABLO NERUDA AND PABLO PICASSO AT THE TOP OF THE ART PYRAMID

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### ABSTRACT

*The lives of Pablo Neruda and Pablo Picasso are briefly presented. Their creativity has the message of how we may better understand ourselves and the world around us and develop more humane relationships that will improve society. We have only one life and therefore we should choose the best and safest path that will lead us to the future. We cannot go backwards to make changes, so it's worth knowing what the great people advise. It is not only the simultaneous death five years ago, the Spanish cultural origin and the same first name of the two great men that unite them; they had identical views on how to achieve the progress of society they were humanists and pacifists.*

**Keywords:** *Arts, Poetry, Painting, Neruda, Picasso, Humanists, Pacifists.*

### 1. Introduction

Chilean poet, diplomat, politician, and winner of the Nobel Prize for the Literature, Pablo Neruda (1904-1973) started writing poetry early, and already at the age of twenty, as a student of French language and pedagogy in Santiago, became famous for the collection *Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair* (*Veintepoemas de amor y una canción desesperada*). We learn about the life of the poet from his autobiographical work "I admit that I lived. Memories" (*Confieso que he vivido. Memorias*) and the special book "Grapes and Wind" (*Las Uvas y el Viento*), which is a kind of diary of a poet in exile. In South America, poets traditionally receive diplomatic service; so, did Neruda, he became a consul with serving in several cities throughout Asia, Europe and South America. During his service in Argentina, he met the Spanish poet García Lorca. The book "General Sing" (*Canto General*) is Neruda's capital work, which was first published in Mexico in 1950, when the poet was in exile. In that book, 231 songs with 15,000 verses are arranged in 15 sections. The illustrations were done by two famous muralists, Diego Rivera and David Alfaro Siqueiros. The work was soon translated into a dozen of languages and achieved great poetic and political influence.

Pablo Neruda's entire poetic output is enormous. Thus, his collection "Complete Works" (*Obras Completas*) doubled over time, from 459

pages in the 1951 edition, to 1,925 pages in 1962, and to 3,237 poems in 1968. Neruda wrote poetry until the end of his life; in total, he published around 3,500 poems, from love poems, through odes, to surrealist and prose poems. In the last years of his life, Neruda published, among other things, a famous collection consisting of "One Hundred Love Sonnets" (*Cien sonetos de amor*). These sonnets are dedicated to Matilda Urrutia, who became his wife. The sonnets are divided into four chapters: "Morning", "Afternoon", "Evening" and "Night". [A sonnet contains fourteen lines divided into two quatrains (stanzas with 4 lines) and two tercets. A tercet is a stanza of three lines containing over eight syllables. Tercets are most often connected, but there are also unconnected tercets. Quatrains have the same type of rhyme, and in tercets the combination of rhymes is less strict. One feeling is expressed in the sonnet, with clarification in the final lines. Dante's "Divine Comedy" is all written in a series of tercets.

In his 69 years of life, the poet experienced happiness, love, heroism, justice, sadness, exile, disappointment, and finally despair. Most of his life experiences found their permanent place in verses. Gabriel García Márquez called him "the greatest poet of the twentieth century," and Harold Bloom believes that Neruda is the most important writer of the Western world.

*Sonnet 2.*

*Love, how hopeless until one kiss, how wandering solitude until your presence! Lonely trains roll by with the rain. Spring has not yet dawned in Taltal.*

*But you and I, my love, we are one and together, Together since time immemorial,*

*Together from autumn, from water, from thighs. Until we become just you, just me, one and together.*

*The thought of how many stones the river must have carried away, at the confluence of the Boro waters, the thought that we are separated by trains and nations, you and I just had to fall in love mixed with all, with men and women, on earth that nurtures the carnations to bloom.*

Spanish painter, sculptor, graphic artist, ceramist, theatrical graphic designer, Pablo Picasso (1881- 1973) spent most of his life in France. He was one of the most influential artists in the world. Pablo has been developing his painting talent since his early years, and later tried himself in various directions, techniques and ideas. After arriving in France in 1904, he abandoned his previous naturalistic style in which he created very successful works (the so-called "blue period"). The most famous painting from that period is "The Old Guitarist"; the painting is characterized by a blue palette; although it contains a monochromatic tendency, it's not simple because the painter masterfully achieves layering with one color. It is unexpected that at the time, using extremely vivid colors, a painter appears to manage expression of deep feelings with almost only one color.

So in Pablo's paintings, instead of ladies with big hats sitting in bars, there were beggars, street-women, alcoholics, blind people, old people, sick people, mothers, children and poor street artists. Instead of choosing models to depict them without pity, Picasso finds those to treat with pity and melancholic tenderness.

The guitarist is a blind musician, wrapped around his instrument. The old man is poor, with torn clothes and in despair. That old body, curled

around the guitar, with elongated limbs that form angular shapes, reminds of the people who are seen on the canvases of the great El Greco (1541-1614), a Spanish painter of Greek origin. While looking at the picture of the guitarist, you cannot determine where and when the old man lived; that figure is timeless.

In Paris, Picasso met the works of Henri Matisse, the leader of the Fauves (*Les Fauves*, wild beasts) - a painting movement in which the members showed how to escape from the traditional art of the West - which led to a fruitful rivalry that accelerated the ascent of both artists to the highest level of creativity. It is worth looking at Matisse's painting "Dance I" which is an ode to freedom (all persons are naked), connection (circle), rhythm and undisturbed enjoyment. The painter uses traditional Fauvist colors: blue, green and red. The background has no details, only two colors indicate the sky and the grass.

In 1907, Picasso painted the "Ladies of Avignon", a revolutionary work that marked the beginning of cubism, the direction he founded together with Georges Braque (*Georges Braque*, 1882-1963). This painting by Picasso marks a complete turn from traditional composition and the application of perspective in painting. Cubists, instead of imitating nature, began to paint people and objects by refracting them and combining them in a new way. In the Art Institute of Chicago, next to a number of Picasso's works, there is a famous portrait of his gallerist D.H. Kahnweiler, which Picasso made in 1910. His works are classified into various periods: Blue period (1901-1904), Pink period (1904-1906), Period of African influence (1907-1909), Analytical cubism (1909-1912), Synthetic cubism or Crystal period (1912-1919), the neoclassical style and Surrealism, and in the end he mostly combined elements of earlier styles. Picasso created around 50,000 works of art, including paintings, drawings, prints, book illustrations, sculptures and ceramics. It is estimated that among these works are about 13,500 paintings.



Credit Wikipedia



Henri Matisse: Dance I (260 cm x 391 cm). Since 1948, the painting has been kept in the Hermitage. Credit Wikipedia

Pablo Picasso: The Ladies of Avignon (*Les Femmes d'Alger*), oil on canvas, 243.9 cm x 233.7 cm, 1907.

### Pablo Neruda

Neruda was a lover of the sea. In his book *Canto General*, he writes: "Friends, bury me on the island of Isla Negra/ next to the sea I knew so well/ among the moans by the waves that my eyes will no longer see". Only two decades after his death, the remains of the poet were exhumed from the tomb in Santiago and buried according to the poet's wish. It took so long for Chile to fulfill the legacy of the poet and give recognition to the great son whom the world placed at the very top

of the poet's pyramid.

Pablo was born in the city of Parral, Chile. His father, José del Carmen Reyes, was a railroad conductor, and his mother, Rosa Basoalto, was a teacher who died of tuberculosis after giving birth. He grew up in Temuco, a small town in southern Chile where his father settled. Pablo called his stepmother "the guardian angel of my childhood".

When Pablo barely knew how to read and write, he wrote a poem dedicated to his mother, i.e. stepmother, because she was his mother whom he knew and loved. At lunchtime, he nervously hands the paper with the poem to his father, who interrupts the conversation about daily chores and, after reading the poem, asks his son: "Where did you copy this from?" and continues the conversation about his affairs. "That's how my first poem was born and how I received the first irresponsible criticism", writes Neruda in his autobiographical book. Pablo started writing songs more and more when he was 10 years old. His father tried to dissuade him and never read his poetry. Perhaps that is why the poet later took a pseudonym and published poetry under the name Pablo Neruda. He chose the surname in honor of the Czech poet Jan Neruda (1834-1891) and officially adopted it in 1946. Pablo entered the boys' school in 1910, and graduated in 1920. Gabriela Mistral, a teacher and talented poet, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1945, worked at the girls' school in the same town, Temuco. In two or three meetings, she gave Pablo books by Russian writers, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky and Chekhov. She considered these writers to have made the most powerful contribution to the world literature. From that time, the young Neftali started collaborating with the literary journal *Selva Austral* (Southern Jungle). When he published his second collection of poetry, in 1924, Pablo used the surname Neruda, and already achieved fame. In these poems, Neruda rejects a surrealist approach to poetry; he is the first of all poets who wrote in Spanish to write about love in the language of everyday life, in expressions of longing for a woman whose beauty is earthly, not abstract. Here is a segment from song number 20,

"Tonight I Write the Saddest Lyrics" from the collection "Twenty Love Songs and One Desperate."

*...She loved me, sometimes I loved her.  
How could anyone not love her eyes.  
I am writing these saddest verses  
tonight. I realize she's not here. I lost her.  
She belongs to someone else.  
Someone else will take her. Like before  
me. Her voice, lovely body. Enchanting  
eyes.  
I don't love her anymore, and maybe I  
do. Love is so short; oblivion is so long.  
Between 1927 and 1935, Neruda served  
as honorary consul in Burma, Ceylon,  
Java, Singapore, Barcelona, Paris, Milan,  
Buenos Aires and Mexico. In that  
difficult period for him, he published the  
collection *Residencia en la tierra*  
(Resident on Earth) in 1933.*

In Buenos Aires, in 1933, Neruda is the Chilean consul, and Lorca is visiting the city and directing in the theatre his tragedy "Blood Wedding". In Buenos Aires, Lorca impressed Neruda with his masterful metaphors, but also with his magical personality - his hands while playing the piano and everything that nature endowed him with to become a smith of wonderful poetry. They became friends. Four years after that meeting, Lorca was killed. A poet who was loved by all of Spain was killed. In memory of Lorca, Neruda's great friend, I present here Lorca's best song *Ballad Luna, Luna*. In this narrative ballad, the moon (*Luna*) descends to earth and transforms into a woman to bewitch a boy. The poem has a wonderful rhythm which is contributed by the form of rhyming used in the poet's Andalusia. This feature can only be seen in Spanish.

### **Romance de la luna, luna**

La luna vino a la fragua  
consupolisón de  
nardos. El niño la  
miramira.  
El niño la está mirando.  
En el aire conmovido  
mueve la luna sus  
brazos y enseña,  
lúbrica y pura, sus  
senos de duro estaño.  
Huye luna, luna, luna.  
Si vinieran los gitanos,  
harían con tu corazón  
collares y anillos blancos.  
Niño, déjame que baile.  
Cuando vengán los  
gitanos,  
te encontrarán sobreelyunq  
ue con los ojillos cerrados.  
Huye luna, luna, luna,  
que yasiento sus caballos.  
Niño, déjame, no  
pises mi  
blanco almidonado.

El jinete se acercaba  
tocando el tambor del  
llano. Dentro de la fragua  
el niño, tiene los  
ojos cerrados.

Por el olivar venían,  
bronce y sueño, los gitanos.  
Las  
cabezas levantadas y  
los ojos entornados.

¡Cómo canta la  
zumaya, ay cómo canta  
en el árbol! Por el cielo  
va la luna con un niño  
de la mano.



**Ballad of the Moon, Moon**

The moon came to the  
forge in an immortelle  
skirt.

The child looks and  
looks. The child is  
looking at her.

In the trembling air  
the moon spreads her  
arms and discloses clean  
breasts made of hard tin.

Run, moon, moon,  
moon! If the gypsies  
come,  
will make of your heart  
necklaces and rings  
white! Let me play,  
child!

When the gypsies come,  
they will find you on the  
anvil, with your little eyes  
closed.

Run, moon, moon, moon!  
I can already hear their  
horses. Let me alone, child,  
do not step on my starched  
whiteness.

The horseman approaches  
beating the drum of the  
plain.

A child lies in the  
forgethe eyes are  
closed.

Gypsies came through the olive  
grove, carrying bronze and dream.  
Their heads lifted  
upright and their eyes  
half closed.

Oh, how the owl is

A banquet of the PEN club in honor of the visiting poets, Neruda and Lorca, is scheduled at the Plaza Hotel. But it did not go smoothly.

Opponents spread the false news that the banquet was cancelled, and the hotel manager was informed that no dinner was being prepared. Nevertheless, about a hundred writers came to the banquet; they stayed for dinner, but enjoyed a special performance by two poets. Just before the banquet, it occurred to Lorca that the two of them should speak interchangeably, *al alimon*. The poets sat down, facing each other, at two tables that were at the opposite ends of the hall and spoke alternately throughout the evening. Here is the insert in which I recorded that event at the American Writers' Seminar, Michigan.

**Corrida AL Alimon**

Corrida is a great adventure, and the *al alimon* type fight is the most dangerous of all. Two brothers fight a bull and use only one mantle.

In a similar way, *al alimon*, Lorca and Neruda, gave a speech-homage to the neglected poet Ruben Darius. Lorca, at the end of the table, begins, at the other end, Neruda ends the sentence. Then it all starts again; their speech provokes, protects and encourages.

During the Spanish Civil War, Neruda joined the republican movement, and his comrades at the front, in the old monastery, printed a collection of poems in 1937. Due to the lack of paper, during a break in the bombing, soldiers make it from a mixture of various materials, and thus one of the most unusual books is created. Only a few copies have survived and one is in the Library of Congress in Washington, DC.

**The Ruins of Machu Picchu**

From 1940 to 1943, Neruda was consul in Mexico. Towards the end of that stay, he visited Machu Picchu, the remains of an ancient city in Peru. He described the visit in the poem The Heights of Machu Picchu (*Alturas de Machu Picchu*). The poem contains twelve chapters that represent individual stages of the journey. That poem is among Neruda's best poetic works.

Machu Picchu (meaning "old peak" in the Quechua language) was built by the Inca people around 1450 for their ruler, Pachacuti Inca (1438-1472). In the Quechua language, the word "inca"

means "ruler". At that height of the Andean Cordillera of 2,430 meters, the ruins of 150 buildings remain: houses, baths, temples and sanctuaries. It was an unprecedented construction undertaking. Not much is known about everything that was in the city because the Inca people did not have writing, like the Mayans who lived further north. People left Machu Picchu around 1572, twenty years after the arrival of the Spanish; either due to the destruction of the Inca civilization or due to diseases brought to them by Europeans (e.g. smallpox), the city was abandoned. [Anatomists called one bone at the back of the skull "Inca bone" (Lat. *osinca*, Eng. Inca bone). Today, it is a rare variant when a triangular insert is found in the back bone of the skull at the place of the fontanelle, where once in evolution there may have been a back (parietal) eye. This variant is often found in Peruvian mummies.

Neruda climbs Machu Picchu and writes enthusiastically about that magnificent creation and its poor builders. Here are two segments from the poem "The Heights of Machu Picchu". Then I climbed the stairs of the earth through the harsh thickets of lost rainforest to you, Machu Picchu.

*High buildings and stone steps,  
you are the abode of that who did not  
hide his earthly features under sleeping  
clothes.  
In you, like two parallel lines, the cradle of  
lightning and man swayed in the thorny  
wind...  
Rise up to be born with me, brother.  
Give me a hand from the deep of his  
scattered suffering.  
You will not return from the deep caves.  
You will not come back from underground  
time. Your petrified voice will not return.  
Your pierced eyes will not return.  
Look at me from the depths of the earth,  
weavers, weavers, silent shepherds, tamer  
of sacrificial llamas,  
the mason from the perilous scaffolding,  
water carrier of Andean tears,  
jeweler with skinned fingers,  
the farmer who trembles at the seed, stuck  
the potter in his clay,  
bring into the cup this new life all your old  
buried pains.*

*Show me your blood and your furrow, tell  
me: I was punished here  
for the gem did not shine or the earth  
she did not give birth in time with stones  
and grain:  
show me the rock where you fell  
or the tree on which they crucified you,  
light an ancient flint,  
old candles and whips, soaked over the  
centuries into the early and axes,  
glistening with blood.  
I want to speak through your dead  
mouth...*

In conclusion, the poet says that the lives of the builders of the holy city, Machu Picchu, were both senseless and noble, just like the lives of the poet's contemporaries today. That reminds us of A. P. Chekhov (1860-1904) to whom science did not give an answer to the question "What is the purpose of life", and he describes a man who lives as a victim in an absurd world.[6] Maxim Gorky wrote in 1892, as a young poet: "Such a question man should not set himself. Live...that's all! When you think about the meaning of life, you will not be satisfied with yours." However, Neruda is able to take on the biggest challenges.

Two years later, Neruda became a member of the Chile Communist Party and was elected as a senator. Due to a written protest against harsh repression during the miners' strike in 1946, Neruda went underground. The workers hid him in their houses until 1949, when it became dangerous that he might be discovered, he left the country in secrecy.

The members of the party took him by car from the northern part of the country to the far south where he would cross the Andes, a high mountain range that stretches between Chile and Argentina, on horseback and on foot. A police doctor - a member of the communist party - drives him in his car to the suburbs of Santiago where he is picked up by Neruda's old friend, the professional driver Escobar. They drove both day and night. In the middle of the day they passed through Temuco, the place where Pablo grew up. They were lucky, no one recognized him. From there they turned towards sawmill located in an uninhabited area at the foot of the Andes where

comrades from the party worked.

While preparations were being made for the transfer to Argentina, the owner of sawmill from Santiago came for a tour. He was a young man, a prominent member of Chile's far-right party and an associate of Gonzalez Videl, the country's president who sought to exterminate the Communists. The manager of sawmill, a party friend, suggested Neruda meet the owner anyway, because if he discovered Neruda's presence, it could have fatal consequences. Neruda accepts the proposal and meets the owner. They talked for a long time over drinks. It turned out that the owner, Pepe Rodríguez, was an intelligent person and a man of his word, and that he knew and loved Pablo Neruda's poetry very well. At the end of several conversations, Rodríguez said: "From now on you are under my protection" and they parted as friends. The boss returns to Santiago, and on his orders, the workers stop work and clear a 60-kilometer long path over a high mountain for the poet, which Neruda will use to reach Argentina. No one found out how Neruda got out of the country. After two years, Rodríguez died.

### **There Is No Recipe for Poetry**

By 1953, Neruda was in exile; he visits various European countries and spends a short time in Mexico. After the fall of Vidal's government, he returns to Chile where he mostly lives on the island of Isla Negra, near the coast of Santiago. Pablo not only loved the sea but also sea mollusks. That hobby helped him create one of the largest collections of shells in the world. In 1971, Salvador Allende, president and friend, appointed Neruda as ambassador to France. It was a time of hope for the success of the revolutionary movement in which Neruda finally (in 1971) received the Nobel Prize for Literature. Allegedly, during the selection of the winner of that prize for 1964 - as the Los Angeles Times writes - the CIA put pressure on the members of the Nobel Prize Committee and it was awarded to Jean-Paul Sartre, which he rejected. Sartre said: "I won't take it. Neruda should have been the winner". During his speech in Stockholm, Neruda

said that he did not find a recipe for writing poetry in books, but that life trained him as a poet. That is why he cannot give new poets advice on how to write. "A poet is not a small god. He is not a chosen one who suffered a mystical fate higher than that which befell members of other trades and professions".

Neruda returned to the country due to illness in 1972, only to soon experience the fall of Allende's government. Immediately after Allende's murder, Neruda dies under suspicious circumstances. Allegedly, Chilean doctors, frightened by Pinochet's soldiers, refused to treat him while he was in the hospital; but there are other versions of his death, as well. Neruda died on September 23, 1973.

### **Pablo Picasso**

Picasso lived and worked in France for most of his life. He was one of the most famous and influential artists of the twentieth century in painting, sculpture, graphics and ceramics. Pablo has been developing his painting talent since his early years, and later tried himself in various directions, techniques and ideas.

He was born in the Andalusian port city of Malaga in 1881. (Seventeen years later, the most famous Spanish poet Federico García Lorca was born in Andalusia, as well. He was killed by fascists at the height of his creative power at the age of 38.) In 1895, Picasso's father moved with his family to Barcelona, where he worked at a school as a painting teacher. Pablo started painting early, and when he was 11, his father said to him: "I have nothing more to teach you, you have surpassed me. I will send you to a master better than me". He didn't stay long with that teacher either. His first series of paintings were of a conservative, academic character: he paints life realistically, and often includes religious themes. However, he realized early on the shortcomings of academic art - he noticed that the avant-garde was heading into a dead end, that *art nouveau* used superficial ornamentation and rigid linearity, and symbolism was characterized by lifeless mysticism. Therefore, since 1901, he has been creating something new, creating images that

enter his Blue Period; he painted poor and unhappy people. He settled in Paris in 1904 and these paintings made him famous.

His most famous painting from the blue period is "The Old Guitarist". This painting is characterized by a blue palette which, although it contains a monochromatic tendency, is not very simple because the painter masterfully achieves layering with one color. It is unexpected that at the time of the use of blooming and extremely vivid colors, which reached their peak with Maurice de Vlaminck, a painter would appear to obtain expression of deep feelings with almost only one color. With shades of blue, Picasso expresses sadness and his melancholic mood, which was triggered by his friend's suicide due to unrequited love. However, such a mood was certainly present in him from before, rather because of the misery in the environment than because of his own poverty. So in his paintings, instead of ladies with big hats sitting in bars, there were beggars, street women, alcoholics, blind people, old people, sick people, mothers, children and poor street artists. Instead of choosing models to depict without pity, Picasso finds those to treat with pity and melancholic tenderness.

The guitarist is a blind musician, wrapped around his instrument. The old man is poor, with torn clothes and in despair. That old body, curled around the guitar, with elongated limbs that form angular shapes, reminds of the people who meet on the canvases of the great El Greco (1541-1614), a Spanish painter of Greek origin. While looking at the picture of the guitarist, you cannot determine where and in what time the old man lived; that figure is timeless/eternal.



The Old Guitarist, oil on wood panel, 1903/04; 122.9 x 82.6 cm. The painting is kept in Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago. (Photo: R. Igić.)

Modern technologies that are used for the technical examination of images in order to establish certain stages of image creation (initial sketches, layers, characteristics of the materials, etc.) use various forms of electromagnetic radiation, i.e. visible light, ultraviolet, X-ray and infrared rays. Such an examination of the painting "The Old Guitarist" revealed that there were two more paintings under the painting. The first is a house, and the second is a portrait of a woman. I noticed that some parts of the portrait of the woman are even slightly visible in the final image - the eyes are barely visible above the neck and shoulders of the guitarist, and the parts of the woman's breasts are slightly lower. Some speculate that it is the image of the girl that caused Pablo's friend to kill himself, and that is the reason that layer was undone. However, poorer painters are known to often skimp on materials, and perhaps that's why this wooden panel contains layers of three paintings.





Credit Wikipedia  
 "Old Guitarist" — an X-ray

### Drawings and Colors are my Weapons

Poet Wallace Stevens (1879-1955, inspired by this Picasso's painting, wrote the song "The Man with the Blue Guitar." It is not uncommon for an artistic painting to inspire a poet, and vice versa for a poem to inspire a painter to create a painting. There was more talk about this in 2016 when I organized a meeting of painters and poets in Sombor, Serbia. Here are a few of Stevens' verses displayed at this gathering.

### The Man Leaned Over His Guitar

They said to him, "Your fingers are on the blue guitar." But you don't play things as they are. "I cannot clearly depict the world Although I draw him like a child flower. There, I put the pieces together as best I can And that's how I sing about a man".

When Picasso came to Paris, he gradually entered the Pink period, and since he mostly painted circus artists, some people first called this post-impressionist phase of his creativity the Harlequin period. However, no style or direction of

painting could satisfy the creativity of this creator, because Picasso constantly strives for innovation, and he described this striving as follows: "My paintings are research and experiments. I never paint to make the work art. They are all research."

With these words, Picasso points to certain similarities between the progress of painting and scientific research. One branch of philosophy -- methodology -- studies how truths about the world are recognized and how they are critically explored. That discipline, the philosophy of science, is closely related to the theory of knowledge. Science uses methods to recognize truths about the world. It is about confirming the relationship between evidence and hypothesis, using appropriate methods to avoid falsified evidence. In order to contribute to existing knowledge, the scientist presents the obtained results to the scientific public in such a form that they can be verified and thus become a contribution to existing knowledge. By observing, experimenting and forming theories, scientists discover the secrets of nature and expand our knowledge. Scientific research within one theory can reveal anomalies that sometimes lead to a crisis that eventually turns into a scientific revolution that paves the way for setting up a new theory. Then everything continues in a circle. Innovations led to the development of painting, as well. The goals of painting and science are different. The painter-artist with his visual language highlights, first of all, emotions, ideas, thoughts and truths, and sometimes shows the beauty of real or unnatural phenomena.

### Guernica

On a Market Day, April 26, 1937, General Francisco Franco called on the German air force, the Luftwaffe, to destroy the Spanish city of Guernica, the spiritual center of the Basque people. The destruction and death of 7,000 people was the first razing of a city in the world. The goal was to more easily conquer Bilbao, the capital of the Basque Country. In the same year, Picasso created the famous mural "Guernica", on which he depicted scenes of death, brutality, suffering and helplessness.

The immediate cause of that tragedy is not indicated in the picture; thus it has an even stronger and wider significance. That ingenious work will always remind humanity of all war destruction, murder and suffering, from the German bombing of Belgrade, through Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to numerous American wars around the world, the NATO bombing of Serbia and the war destruction of Ukraine. "Guernica" will continue to show us for a long time that humanity is an ideal that not everyone strives for equally. Unfortunately, today there are few great men who present a solution, as Dante did, how to curb the avarice of rulers and states that leads to wars.



*Credit Wikipedia*

*Guernica is a mural with dimensions of 349.3 cm × 776.6 cm, made using the oil on canvas technique.*

### **Sculpture in Chicago**

Since 1967, a huge steel sculpture created by Picasso has stood on the square in Chicago (Daley Plaza). He named the model "Tête de Baboon" (baboon's head), but the final work remained untitled. The sculpture was a gift to the city because Picasso refused the fee - \$100,000 at the time. A factory in Gary (Indiana) cast this sculpture according to a model, and its workers erected the work weighing 162 tons, about 17 meters high. The sculpture was placed in the square that today bears the name of Richard Daly, the mayor of Chicago from 1989 to 2011. In the beginning, the opinion of the Chicago citizens was divided, and today there are less people who are disturbed by this unusual figure.



*Picasso sculpture at Daley Plaza in Chicago. (Photo: R. Igić)*

### **Epilogue**

"Isn't it the communist party that tries the hardest to get to know and build the world, to make today's and tomorrow's people better, freer, happier? Weren't the communists the bravest in France, like in the USSR or in my Spain? How could I hesitate? For fear of not committing? On the contrary, I have never felt freer, more complete!

My membership in the Communist Party is a logical consequence of my entire life, my entire work. I can proudly say, I have never considered painting as a kind of entertainment and recreation; I used drawing and paint, since it is my weapon, to penetrate even deeper into the understanding of the world and people, so that it would contribute to our liberation every day; I tried to express in my own way what I considered the most true, the most accurate, the best, and that, of course, was always the most beautiful, as the greatest artists well know. I am aware that I have always fought with my images, like a true revolutionary. But now I realize that this in itself is not enough; these years of terrible oppression showed me that I must fight not only with my art, but with my whole being." That's what Picasso said in 1944 when he became a communist.

The Communist Party of France (*Communiste Français*, PCF) emerged from the Second World War as a strong political force, but after a few years it began to weaken, both for external and internal reasons. In 1947, the PCF

was excluded from the government. When this was happening, many thought that Picasso would quickly give up on the party, but they were wrong. Picasso died as a communist.

Fuelled by his experiences in the Spanish Civil War, Neruda, like many left-leaning intellectuals of his generation, admired the Soviet Union and Joseph Stalin, for the role the USSR played in defeating Nazi Germany and Stalin's idealistic views. The poet emphasized this in the book *Canto a Stalingrado* (Singing about Stalingrad, 1942) and *Nuevo canto de amor a Stalingrado* (New songs to beloved Stalingrad, 1943). In 1953, Neruda received the "Peace Prize" in Moscow. Many writers believed that humanity, at the beginning of the twentieth century, would enter a post-religious age, Chekhov, for example, said that he was an atheist, regardless of the fact that his parents raised him in a religious spirit and that he attended religious rituals in his childhood, sang in the church choir, read about Russian monasteries, gladly listened to church bells and wrote about the clergy, he completely rejected religiosity. He wrote: "I would gladly become a monk if monasteries would accept people who are not religious and who do not have to pray."

Picasso and Neruda became communists and were opponents of war, violence and lies. They were moral pacifists. Today, everywhere, especially in post-communist countries, a large

number of people are returning to religion. To use a modified Lenin's catchphrase: "They took two steps back to eventually take one step forward." Unpleasant present, uncertain future, with the fear of unrest due to the vast differences between the poor and the rich, but also possible atomic war, many today turn to the flattering promises offered by religion, which has long been provided to us by the initiators of wars.

Picasso fought for the prosperity of society with painting, and Neruda with the most powerful weapon of art - poetry. Picasso said: "Art is a lie that helps us to find out the truth", and Neruda, after his life experiences, concluded in the most important verse: "It is nice to live on this planet." Unfortunately, many inhabitants of the planet do not have the opportunity to enjoy themselves for a long time, because they lose their lives in conflicts and wars that may destroy people *en masse*. Dante Alighieri wrote in 1304 and 1307 the *Convivio* (The Banquet); he stated that the main reason for wars come due to avarice. Perhaps similar reasons rarely push the animals of the same species to clash, and some even kill each other. However, man has today developed sophisticated weapons that can destroy almost all living beings on this planet. There are no limits to man's technical advancements, but man cannot improve himself.

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