

Collage Reading: Braque | Picasso

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...behind every twentieth-century grid there lies...a symbolist window parading in the guise of a treatise on optics.

— Rosalind Krauss (17)

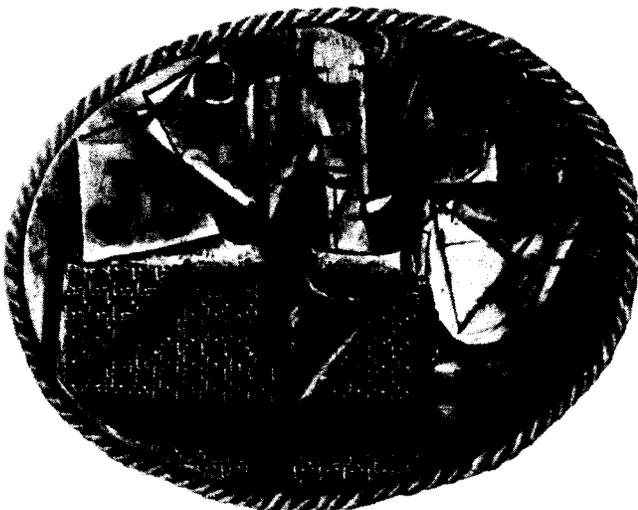


Fig. 1

My theme is the difference between the respective first acts of Synthetic Cubism by Picasso and Braque, *Still Life with Chair-caning* and *Fruit Dish and Glass* (figs. 1 and 2). The purpose is two-fold: first, to suggest that Braque's project, overshadowed by Picasso's, contains evidence of an architectural consciousness of a different nature and is, in certain fundamental ways, more instructive; and second, to describe how the competing, dialectical issues contribute to an understanding/reading of one of my own projects.

It is well known that the invention of collage in 1912 was the anomalous creative act that marked the break from Analytical Cubism to Synthetic Cubism — an act more disruptive to the philosophical structure of the Western pictorial tradition than even Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger* five years earlier. And, if it is less well known that Le Corbusier and Ozenfant were the first, in *La Peinture Moderne*, 1925, to identify the phenomenon of collage as evidence of a violent break in the evolution of Cubism, it is

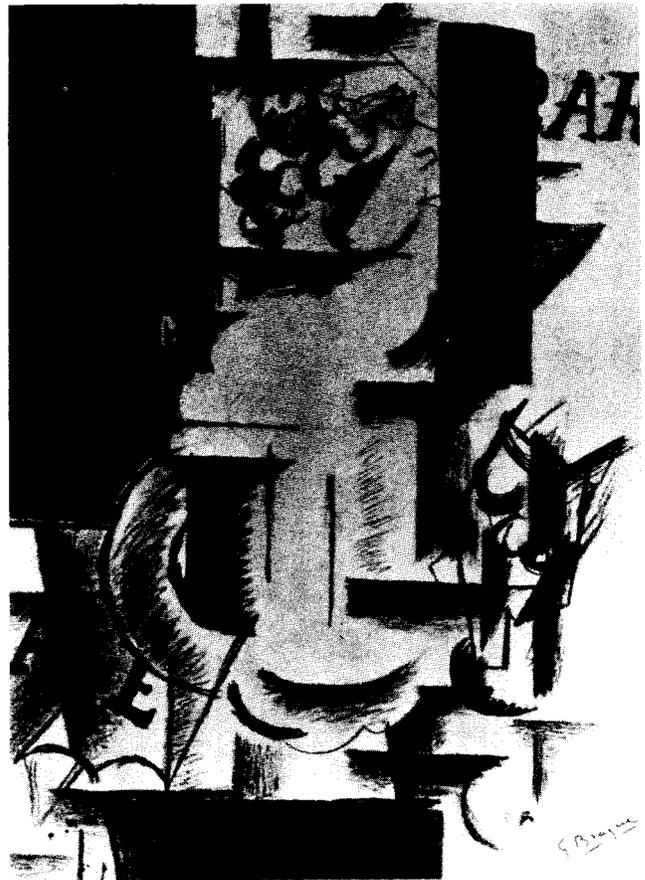


Fig. 2

certainly well known that their own rigorous Purist paintings were a direct reaction to what they regarded as the degenerate excesses initiated by this phase of Braque and Picasso's work (Golding 118). Indeed, Le Corbusier's architecture may be seen to be evidence of an ironic double-phenomenon: on the one hand, his architecture, which unfolds from his Purist paintings, incorporates a sensibility of classical detachment

and scrupulous rule of the picture plane that he learned from Post-Impressionist French painters such as Cezanne and Seurat, as well as from the Italian Renaissance mathematician and painter that inspired their researches, Piero della Francesca — this rigorous geometric tradition enabled Le Corbusier to reject the loss of restraint and discipline, the excessive self-assertion, that he saw in collage; on the other hand, he employed the abstracted device of collage as the basis for the plastic expression of the exact and equilibrated relations that govern his paintings and of the "correct and magnificent play of masses brought together in light" that determine his architecture (29). Le Corbusier looked back to the purity of Cezanne's formal vision on this matter in order to resurrect a pre-Cubist regard for invariants, and for the discipline and restraint that attends them. In *Towards a New Architecture*, he employed, without attribution, Cezanne's very words. Cezanne wrote in the famous letter to Emile Bernard, 1904: "treat nature by means of the cylinder, the sphere, the cone" (Harrison 37). Le Corbusier later declared that the "essentials of architecture lie in spheres, cones, and cylinders" (40), as well as in "cubes" and "pyramids" (29). The Assembly Building at Chandigarh and La Tourette, if not also Villa Savoye, are perhaps the best examples of Le Corbusier's dialectical debt to Synthetic Cubism as seen through his Cezannesque, French lens.

Moreover, aspects of Le Corbusier's work may also be seen as a paradigmatic architectural manifestation of a specific phenomenon within the evolution of collage, one in which a more emphatic architectural act of three-dimensionality asserted its dominance over concern with the flatness of the Cubist picture-surface as the origin and sum of the artistic act. And, as is well known, for this we look to the break from the two-dimensional collages of Picasso to his three-dimensional constructions, by which we are able to understand that his *Guitar*, 1912, initiated an even more literal connection between painting/sculpture and architecture. As Clement Greenberg writes:

Sometime in 1912, Picasso cut out and folded a piece of paper in the shape of a guitar; to this he glued and fitted other pieces of paper and four taut strings, thus creating a sequence of flat surfaces in real and sculptural space to which there clung only the vestige of a picture plane. The fixed elements of collage were extruded, as it were, and cut off from the literal pictorial surface to form a bas-relief. By this act he founded a new tradition and genre of sculpture, the one that came to be called 'construction' (79-80).

It is generally held that this transformation from the abstractions of painting to the facticity of construction propelled Picasso ahead of Braque in his researches in an unmistakable way and initiated a revolution in the plastic arts during the nineteen-teens and nineteen-twenties whose premises obviously still underlie much advanced architecture today.

But what about Braque? His *Fruit Dish and Glass* is

generally considered a lesser work, at least in terms of the hierarchy of media. Picasso's collage is classified as a painting whereas Braque's is considered to be a drawing. And, to add insult to injury, Braque produced his *papier collé* (pasted paper), which is considered a particular kind of collage versus collage in general (Golding 108), some months after Picasso's project. On the other hand, it is generally understood that if collage is fundamentally an act whereby "extraneous objects or materials are applied to the picture surface," as Golding writes (104), then Braque committed the first act of collage — the first Synthetic Cubist act — through the anomalous introduction of type at the high-point of Analytical Cubism in his *Le Portugais*, 1911. Significant though this point may be, it is lost in the shuffle of architectural consciousness. Picasso's project enjoys privileged status, which its employment by Rowe and Koetter as the frontispiece of their book *Collage City* perhaps best reveals.

I believe that the significance of Braque's first collage deserves more attention. I would like to make a case for the difference between his project and Picasso's with respect to two fundamental precepts of the Western pictorial tradition; namely, the dialectical phenomena of figure/field (or, as Rowe/Koetter describe it, "object/texture") and symbol/structure. Something of this difference and of the relative importance of Picasso's and Braque's discoveries is recognized by Golding:

It is characteristic that Picasso should have invented *collage*, which was subsequently to be used by the Dadaists as a weapon to destroy all art, and by the Surrealists to achieve the most disconcerting and disturbing of psychological effects, while Braque should have been the author of the first *papier collé*, an equally original pictorial technique at the service of more purely formalistic ends" (108).¹

PICASSO: FIGURE AND SYMBOL

Picasso's collage is an oval. In his painting he glued a piece of oil cloth, overprinted to imitate chair-caning. By one reading, the oval represents a table, perhaps the very table upon which the objects of the still life are organized and with which the chair is presumably associated. By a second, coexistent reading, the oval, as a contemporary photographic collage by Harry Callahan suggests, symbolizes the eye. Picasso's oval is thus a self-referential device that signifies, perhaps, a dialogue between the subjective eye and the reconstituted objects of the tabletop that provide the field of vision for that eye. In terms of formal structure, the collage is organized biaxially. The dominance of the cyclopean eye at the center of the painting and its attachment to the slightly cranked vertical assemblage that ascends to the top of the oval frame compare directly to the guitar. The central hub performs the function of optical bull's-eye and rotational pin about which the objects implicitly spin. The vertical assembly as a whole recalls the device of the diptych, in which the column, as in Renaissance Annunciation paintings, func-

tions simultaneously and ambivalently as mediator and divider between left and right worlds. Through the optical device of bas-relief, Picasso privileges the sculptural properties of the collage, which may be read as piling up to a point of highest altitude at this enigmatic central "column." On one level, the "column" functions not unlike the larger central area in Braque's collage. Thus it generates a subtle *Kepes/Rowe/Slutzky-like* equivocal reading of solid/void. Is it an object of the still life (bottle or flask), anthropomorphic assemblage (elbow, chin, nose, mouth, and eye), or is it a negative, figural cut, a window to the space beyond? Underlying this reading is the fluctuation between volume and plane. But I would argue that here, as in the collage as a whole, the primary reading is aggressively three-dimensional. If Picasso's guitar emphasizes objecthood, his two-dimensional collage does so to no less a degree. Thus, it is not surprising that the intellectual association of the oval shape either symbolically with eye and/or factually with table is more important than its potential function as participatory boundary in the architectonic regulation of the picture plane. Ultimately, in various ways, these two inventions (collage and construction) are consistent with many of Picasso's fractured, centroidal object-fixated works of his earlier analytical period.

There is a line that connects, at least categorically, Picasso's oval and guitar to the paintings and sculptures of other artists, such as Boccioni's *Development of a Bottle in Space*, 1912 (Picasso's collage might be read as its plan and elevation). There is also a line that connects Picasso's work to the expressive, collage-based works of architects such as Tatlin, Chernikov, and Gehry. (This line extends, on another level, to Mendelsohn, too; specifically, to the Einstein tower, 1919.) The works that descend from Picasso's collage privilege objecthood and symbolic content. Issues of texture (field, or negative space) and architectonic, plastic structure are generally secondary.

BRAQUE: FIELD AND STRUCTURE

Braque's project offers a different line of thought. I read it as privileging the painterly versus the sculptural connection to architecture. Braque's chief concern is the problem of the picture plane. If Picasso's collage is "object-minded," Braque's collage is "relation-minded" (Kepes 9). The difference is consistent with the artists' stated definitions of Cubism. Picasso's principal interest is form. Braque's principal interest is space (Golding 78).

Braque's composition illustrates two interrelated principles: (1) it achieves a high degree of phenomenal transparency, which is based on the organizational/optical device of spatial fluctuation and on the plastic unity, or interconnection, of figure, background, and picture plane (Kepes 32/69/77); (2) it establishes an inside/outside dialectic, on two levels, and thereby sets up a problem of complex contingencies.

With respect to the first principle, Braque's organization and articulation of the three pieces of wood-grained paper

generate equivocal readings of figure and field, and foreground and background. The wood-grained paper at the bottom edge of the picture applies to the table, which the imagination understands to be in the foreground, if not coincident with the picture plane itself. Thus, in combination with the other two strips of wood-grained paper, which are associated predominantly with the (more distant) elevation of the interior wall, it functions as a formal device of spatial collapse. In fact, the phenomenal transparency thus achieved has the effect of causing us to perceive at times the upper two strips as advancing even more forward than the one below.² On another level, if the three wood-grained strips are read as the positive figure, the resulting so-called negative, or residual, space of the canvas that they frame, whether in elevation or plan, reads as no less calculated or figural. The reciprocity is such (especially at the left piece, which is the most articulated, and therefore the most contingent) that the lighter area of the canvas might also be read as the positive figure. The three wood-grained pieces might be read, therefore, as visually but not physically separated. In other words, they might be construed to constitute a co-planar surface, a wood-grained back-plane (in elevation) or ground-plane (in plan) that is "behind" or "under" the lighter area of canvas that obscures its continuity.

With respect to the second principle — the inside/outside dialectic — the composition may be understood, on one level, as positing a literal interior, beyond which, through the window above the still-life, we behold the existence of an exterior realm. As suggested above, the wood-grained pieces simultaneously frame a phenomenal window (the spatial opening, or void, on the surface of the painting) and also represent the wood of the frame that defines a literal window (an architectural window implied within the interior room that is depicted). The exterior realm is perceived to exist in depth — that is, along the oblique z-axis that illusionistically recedes from the picture plane. Braque thereby suggests the presence of a window that mediates between the interior realm of contemplation and the world of nature beyond. On a second level, the composition suggests an opposition between an interior that is defined by the picture frame — that is, by the abscissas and ordinates of the picture plane that regulate its scanning laterally and top-to-bottom — and an exterior that lies outside the two-dimensional boundaries of the plane. The wood-grained pieces at the left edge and bottom edge, for example, imply planar extension beyond the edges of the frame. While Picasso's oval lens presumably presents a cropped, circumstantial condition of a larger visual field — thus establishing an inside/outside tension with respect to the circumscription of the cone of vision — the dominant force of his collage is *centripetal*. The gravitational pull is, as I described above, towards the center, a phenomenon that is underscored by the dissipation of the compositional objects at the periphery. For the most part, Picasso's forms are held back from the frame. The combination of dissipated edge, univalent boundary, and central optical axis essentially freezes the eye and mind and impedes

their consideration of the formal conditions outside the picture frame. The dominant organizational force of the Braque, on the other hand, is *centrifugal*. Whereas Picasso's oval boundary is a closed, autonomous condition, which implies that alteration of the visual field must necessarily be elliptical, Braque's rectilinear frame is a contingent condition, and the conditions for its expansion or contraction are less egalitarian. The visual field might be coherently altered at any one of the four edges independently of the other three. By employing a conventional rectangular frame, Braque establishes an inside/outside dialectic in terms that relate to the cropped, asymmetrical compositions of 19th-century artists such as Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec. His collage foreshadows the peripheric, edge-conscious, centrifugal grid-paintings of Mondrian (Krauss 18-19) and the equivocally balanced figure/field paintings of Fritz Glarner.

In a significant act, one that posits the fundamental tension between the two readings of inside/outside and also underscores the oblique, centrifugal forces of the composition, which operate as counterpoint to the prevailing orthogonal grain, the word "BAR" in the upper right corner and the word "ALE" in the lower left corner combine to establish the double assertion of surface and depth. The word "BAR," on its own for example, operates as a device of spatial collapse. It obstructs the reading of illusionistic recession that draws the eye along the oblique axis of the picture plane and "out" to the literal landscape of the upper right corner.³

Rosalind Krauss's writes that "behind every twentieth-century grid there lies...a symbolist window parading in the guise of a treatise on optics" (17). Braque's project is, ultimately, about window, an idea that is central to the interdependent consciousness of painting and architecture on innumerable levels. His collage-window is an architectural act. It is an optical treatise that achieves an equivocal balance between abstraction and representation, between the reality of surface and the phenomenon of depth, and between structure and symbol. Moreover, it provides instruction on a variety of specific, formal architectural devices, including orthogonal gridding of the plane, oblique counter-tension, plan/elevation reciprocity, decentering of the optical axis, continuation, slippage and displacement of line and plane, dynamic structure (e.g., the four against three rhythm of the solid/void horizontal intervals that comprise the picture's primary vertical stratification), and several types of phenomenal transparency, including: (1) the continuity of line and plane in the xy-plane, which is based on the devices of interruption, alignment, and figural interlock; (2) equivocal advance and recession of the plane along the z-axis, which is based on the ambiguity of foreground and background. Many of these devices are evident in the collage-based architecture of Rietveld, Le Corbusier, and Terragni, for example. Matisse's collage-like painting, *Piano Lesson, 1916*, raises these Braquean themes to a consummate level, wherein figure and field, and symbol and structure, approximate an ideal equilibrium. Other works, ranging from the phenomenal transparency studies of Leger and Rawlston Crawford to the field paintings

of Richard Diebenkorn, provide instruction on various inter-related problems of visual literacy, such as: co-dependency of figure and field within the plastic structure of volume and plane; multiple framings and the grid; edge contingencies and decenterings; and window as iconic formal device and symbol. I refer to these paintings in my own teaching and work for inspiration on matters that relate to the designing and drawing of plan, elevation, and section.

Le Corbusier writes that "in a complete and successful work there are hidden masses of implications, a veritable world which reveals itself to those whom it may concern" (Schumacher 42). This is true of both Braque's and Picasso's projects.⁴ But it is Braque's work, I believe, that relates more to the abstract, architectural intelligence behind Le Corbusier's iconic photographic tableau of the terrace at his mother's house in Vevey, for example. It also perhaps more nearly illustrates Meyer Schapiro's equation of modernism with a "conception of the world as law-bound in the relation of simple elementary components, yet open, unbounded, and contingent as a whole" (32). Moreover, it may well be the ultimate irony that Braque's collage, when read in plan, more nearly illustrates the exemplary condition in *Collage City* of the figural void, which Rowe equates with the Uffizi, and that Picasso's more nearly illustrates the opposing, undesirable condition of the autonomous object, which Rowe equates with the Marseille Block. It is the difference between architecture as space-definer and architecture as space-occupier.

METAPHOR/METONYM

In the end, the fundamental difference between the two works may rest on Ferdinand de Saussure's differentiation between the two basic rhetorical figures, metaphor and metonymy. Terence Hawkes describes the "universal 'competition'" (79) between these two fundamental modes of meaning, as follows:

Metaphor...is generally 'associative' in character and exploits language's 'vertical' relations, where metonymy is generally 'syntagmatic' in character, and exploits languages 'horizontal' relations....The combinative (or syntagmatic) process manifests itself in contiguity (one word being placed next to another) and its mode is *metonymic*. The selective (or associative) process manifests itself in similarity (one word or concept being 'like' another) and its mode is *metaphoric* (77-78).

Hawkes asserts that "both are figures of 'equivalence'" (77) and gives the following example:

Thus, in the metaphor 'the car beetled along', the movement of a beetle is proposed as equivalent to that of the car, and in the metonymic phrase 'The White House considers a new policy', a specific building is proposed as 'equivalent' to the president of the United States (77).

Equivalence in the metaphoric mode is more distant. In the

metonymic mode it is more contiguous. I would argue that Picasso's collage is primarily metaphoric and that Braque's is primarily metonymic. Picasso's hinges on vertical, associative relationships: the oval frame is like an eye, or it is like a rope (which it physically is) that ties the disparate jumble of still life objects together. Braque's depends on the less distant, horizontal, contiguous equivalence between picture frame and window frame, and between foreground and background. The difference is underscored by Hawkes observation that "it is possible to distinguish between Cubism as metonymic and Surrealism as metaphoric in mode" (80), which recalls Golding's description of the basic difference between Picasso's and Braque's intentions and impact.

DANTE/TELESCOPE HOUSE^{ZLOWE}

I now turn briefly to a current project in order to suggest how it may be read in terms of the Braque/Picasso dialectic. *Dante/Telescope House*^{ZLOWE} (fig. 3) attempts to find some equivocal balance between readings of three-dimensional figure versus two-dimensional field, poetic form versus intellectual content, symbolist window versus plastic structure, and metaphor versus metonym. In the spirit of the Russian formalists, my work centers on the double problem of move/moving and strange-making — defamiliarization — which, in a nutshell, involves bringing architecture into a sphere of new perception through devices and techniques applied to materials. I am concerned both with architecture's identity as an abstract plastic art and with its ancient, original iconographic and ontological functions as text and observa-

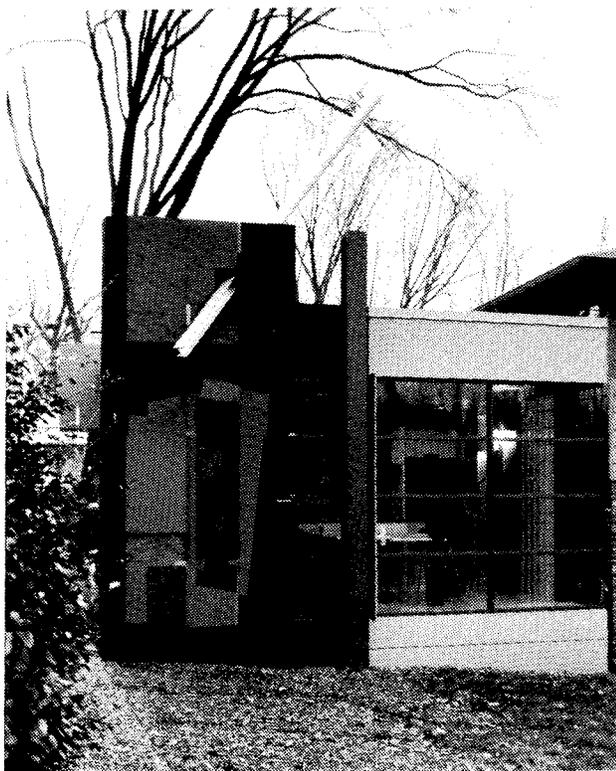


Fig. 3

tory. At the heart of this inquiry is the connection between architecture and painting, literature, and astronomy.

The primary architectural event of *Dante/Telescope House*^{ZLOWE} is the garden facade, which includes what I call the Dante Monolith and Diptych Column. The Monolith is structural (in the engineering sense, that is). The free-standing Diptych Column is not. The primary function of both is to support an idea. Seen through the lens of the Picasso collage, the dominant reading is an architecture of figure and symbol, an architecture that is simultaneously sculptural object (totemic construction) as well as intellectual proposition. The steel beam — the "Telescope" — in the Monolith is sighted on the North Star, a device of orientation as well as a device of memory (it recalls architecture's original connection to astronomy; for example, the first architects were astronomer priests). The word "DANTE," which is written across the Monolith, employs a principal device of Synthetic Cubism, thus signifying the connection between architecture and painting (and between Cubism and literary formalism). It also recalls architecture's ancient, original connection to writing, or literature (i.e., the idea of the building of a book, and the book as building). According to this reading of my project, which relates to lessons of Picasso's oval eye/table collage, objecthood and symbolic content are dominant. The construction is metaphorical. It is associative. It is a process that "manifests itself in similarity" (Hawkes 78). The Monolith is "like" a book. The steel beam is "like" a telescope.

Seen through the Braque lens, the same project can be understood to be primarily a metonymic, self-referential assertion about painting, boundaries, framing, two-dimensional plastic structure, and windows. On one level, in opposition to the facticity of the Monolith's literal incisions, cuts, and windows, the painting of its surface attempts to achieve a reading of phenomenal transparency, drawing on themes of the plan. This act declares the primacy of surface. It supports a reading of the Monolith's primary identity as plane versus three-dimensional object. On another level, the principal elements of diptych Renaissance Annunciation paintings are in place: inside/outside, left/right, and vertical/horizontal opposition (the Telescope functions as the iconic diagonal and symbol of heavenly light). Braque's instruction causes us to see that the Monolith and Diptych Column not only have mental and visual independence (not only can they be read as individual elements of sculpture or construction), but they are also co-dependent elements of an abstract, two-dimensional plastic structure. They function as fragments of a larger visual and mental organization. They define not only their own localized rectilinear boundaries but also the peripheral/asymmetrical conditions of a contingent, open-ended visual field. The void between them and the world outside their boundaries is no less important than the space they occupy. They define a localized diptych, and they also define one edge of a larger horizontal visual field that extends to include the existing house. Thus the project can be seen to be fundamentally as much about control of an equivocal visual field, and

its underlying geometric regulation, as much about the tension between edges and centers and about framing and making windows on many levels, as it is about objecthood and other symbolic, narrative content. And in this way it operates primarily in the metonymic mode, which foregrounds the contiguous, horizontal equivalence of architecture and the picture plane, of elevation and window, of the vertical surface (visual field) and painting.

NOTES

- ¹ Golding discusses the differences between collage and *papier colle*, generally, as well as the specific differences in the way Picasso and Braque each employed the two media (104-113).
- ² As Golding writes: "Braque's first *papier colle*...already shows a full and sophisticated command of the medium. The three strips of wood-grained paper boldly establish the basic composition of the picture to which the object is subsequently related by overdrawing. Each strip has a clear representational function: the two uppermost suggest wood-paneled walls behind the still life, while the lower one by the addition of a circular knob becomes the drawer of the table on which it stands" (109).
- ³ Two competing oblique forces are generated by the words "BAR" and "ALE." One force operates in the xy-plane and affirms the reality of the surface. The other force appears to operate in the xz-plane and suggests the illusion of depth parallel to the horizon. The blurring of the spatial condition of the "B" in "BAR" and the wood grain compounds the ambiguity. Braque thereby causes us to consider the coexistence of two windows: the first window is spatially centripetal and is confined to the top center of the painting (this is reinforced by the assertion of a smaller rectangular painting or mirror within the window); the second window is spatially centrifugal and extends, through the illusion of oblique recession, to include the upper right edge of the picture frame and the implied infinite expanse beyond the boundary of the collage.
- ⁴ Since writing this paper, I have taken another look at the Picasso. I now see new layers of meaning. In the interest of expediency (and in light of my interest in Russian formalism and the self-referential technique of baring the devices of a work, including the devices of second-thoughts and narrative disorder), I introduce these observations as a lengthy note, rather than rework the entire paper. It is possible to read in Picasso's collage the presence of fragments of his analytical paintings. Compare, for example, the upper central passage of the still-life with *L'Afficionado*, 1912. (fig. 4). We now understand the project to be as much a portrait — or cameo — as a still life. Though veiled through the usual analytical devices of fragmentation and complexity, the presence of a human figure, which we understand to be seated in the chair, is evident. Whether reflected in a mirror or physically present at the table of the still-life, the eyes of this virtual person gaze back at us through the same oval/eye lens through which we look into the picture. Reassemblage of the anatomical elements is required. But ears, mouth, nose, and at least several sets of eyes are discernible. Thus at work in this remarkable construction are many events that continue the Cubist investigation of genre blurring and morphological *deforming* of idealized, in this case anatomical, models. My reading that Picasso is here seeking to achieve an awakening to the abstract, yet semantically connected structure of anatomical components, is confirmed by his famous remark: "A head...was a matter of eyes, nose, mouth, which could be distributed in any way you like — the head remained a head" (Bois, 90). This head is also part of a larger

stormy landscape, which is more conventionally expressed at the lower right corner of the collage, where evidence of a cliff wall raking upwards to the right, sea and sailboat, if not also star and clouds of an atmosphere or sky are discernible. Perhaps this head, which is deployed/fractured laterally across the surface of the work, may also be understood as the simultaneous view of these same cliffs seen in elevation. Is it not the case that a hint of the sea rests on the surrogate horizon-line at the top of the chair-caning? The oblique cliff walls are even reiterated by a fragment isometrically projected on the surface of the chair-caning at the center of the composition. It is at this point, the center, that cliff, bottle, and human chin might be seen as coming together to form the symbolic joint, or pivotal column, about which hinges the interconnection of the three traditional genres of painting. In a stroke of brilliance, Picasso also uses the chair caning to suggest a frame for viewing the landscape beyond, a landscape whose horizon-line between land, sea, and sky is pulled across the surface of the caning. Inasmuch as "jou" means play, Picasso seems to be commenting on the play and interplay of many things: the interplay of traditional genres — still-life, portraiture, landscape; the play among the multiplicity of surrogate horizon-lines within our field of vision; the play between realism (through the device of incorporating actual pieces of reality within the picture) and illusionism (through the anti-analytical cubist device of bas-relief, which underlines the three-dimensional quality of the picture). In fact, it is this last point that causes us to see the more Cezannian approach to pictorialism that Synthetic Cubism recalls. For unlike the high-point of Analytical Cubism, in which the reality of the two-dimensional picture surface all but shut down an opposing reading of the illusion of depth, Picasso's synthetic bas-relief construction posits a dialectic. We confront the essential tension between material reality (the flatness of the painting surface) and optical reality (the three-dimensional plasticity of the exterior world). Mark Linder reminds us that this double-sided "structure of pictorialism" — realism and illusionism — is at the very center of modernism, including modernist criticism, and he points to Rowe's essay on La Tourette as a compelling example (26).

To return for a moment to the matter of Picasso's oval frame. We might well read it as the deformation of the traditional formats employed for these genres. That is to say, that the horizontal was typically used for landscape and the vertical for portraits. The oval is some deformed model in between. Inasmuch as its major axis is horizontal, it can perhaps be construed as signaling a dominant reading of the painting as, ultimately, an interior landscape. Thus it might be read as the idealized condition of still-life, which ultimately contains the other two genres as well. And if we consider that the illusion of the sea/landscape might well be the phenomenal act of Picasso's referring to a painting within a painting — that is to say, that the outdoor scene, in addition to referring to an actual outdoors beyond the life of the still-life could also be the evocation of the presence or memory of a painting within the interior of the room and thus function as one of the objects projected onto the tablescape — then we have further reason to understand the simultaneity of competing incident within this self-referential, symbolist-optical construct. Perhaps we may now understand the rope-frame of the oval as the symbolic device that ties all these disparate pictorial acts together. For within this eye is the simultaneous presence of multiple concerns, including the following: blurring of the three genres of painting; simultaneity of architectural drawing conventions (plan, elevation, perspective, and isometric); and tension between realism and illusionism on the one hand and between romantic imagery and analytical-cerebral assertion on the other.

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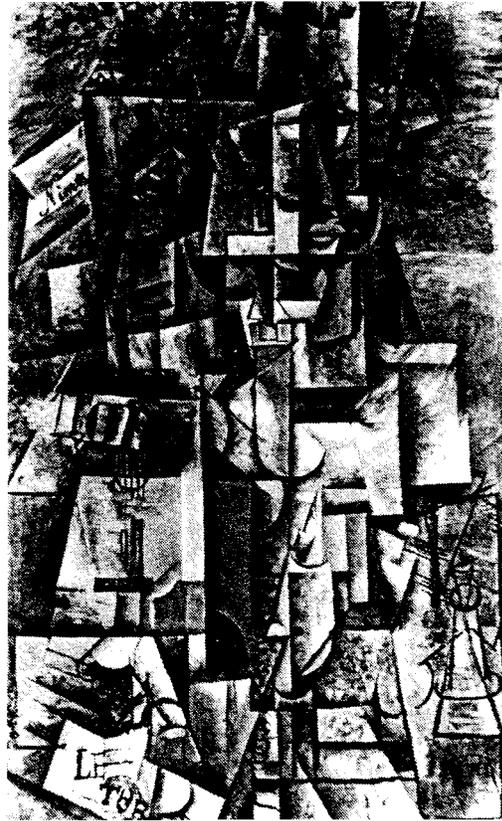


Fig. 4