CUBISM AS POP ART
By 1911, the visual and cerebral intricacies of Cubism had reached such a lofty and mysterious peak that in order to approach the exalted heights of a painting we now all recognize as a museum masterpiece, Picasso's "Ma Jolie" of winter 1911–12 (see fig. 79), even so rigorously analytic a scholar as William Rubin felt compelled, in the Museum of Modern Art's 1972 collections catalogue, to describe it by using words like "meta-physical" and by invoking the name of Rembrandt. At the same time, as we also now all know, the bottom of Picasso's painting, with its painted inscription, "MA JOLIE," descends to another level of experience. For here Picasso not only offers the joke of a mock title that serves as a surrogate nameplate and a personal allusion to the nickname of his then girlfriend, Marcelle Humbert, but a far more public reference to the refrain of a popular music hall song that would have been known to most Parisians who had never stepped inside the Louvre. Transposed to the 1960s, the effect would be like finding the name of one of the Beatles' most famous songs inscribed on the bottom of a Rothko.

Here, in a nutshell, is the collision of two seemingly separate worlds, that of the artist's hermetic seclusion in an ivory tower, with its private explorations of unknown aesthetic territories, and that of the coarse but tonic assault lying outside the studio door, a world of cafés, newspaper kiosks, music hall entertainment, billboards, packaged goods, newspapers, commercial illustrations, department stores, and a battery of new inventions that could soar as high as the airplanes manned by the Wright Brothers and Louis Blériot or be as useful in adding pleasure or convenience to daily life as the movies, the electric light, the safety razor, the alarm clock, or packaged breakfast cereal from America. Such major or minor technological triumphs, in fact, all have cameo roles in the repertory of Cubist art.

Demonstrating once again that the experience of important new art can radically alter our view of older art, the revelation of this Cubist seesawing between the most audacious reaches of aesthetic invention and the commonplace facts of modern city life was slow in coming, having to wait, it would seem, until the advent of Pop Art. In the 1950s, in tandem with the sacrosanct aura of spiritual search and primal mysteries radiated by Abstract Expressionism and echoing the visual purities distilled by formalist critics like Clement Greenberg, Cubism remained elite, one of the highest moments, as it still is today, in the history of art for art's sake. But then, a countercurrent within Cubism also began to be discerned more clearly in a decade when artists like Warhol and Lichtenstein, following the leads of Rauschenberg and Johns, were delighted to sully the unpolluted domain of abstract art with a barrage of visual offenses culled from the real world—comic strips, front pages, cheap ads, modern gadgets, factory food and drink, movie stars—the stuff that most proper aesthetes, whether artists or spectators,
recognized as lamentable, if inevitable eyesores of the modern environment, which should be kept outside the sacred precincts of the world of art.

This, at least, is how I experienced these changes, both as a New Yorker and as a professional art historian who began to write and to lecture about Cubism in the late 1950s. In my first published study of this venerable movement, *Cubism and Twentieth Century Art* (1960), I gave the lion's share of attention to the still miraculous formal evolution of the language of Cubism, following the patterns set in such classic introductions to the subject as those by Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler and Alfred H. Barr and clearly reflecting Greenberg's concentration on the emergence of what then seemed to be a quantum leap in the history of painting, a picture plane of such insistent flatness that the techniques of collage almost had to be invented in order to affirm, in the most literal way, this disclosure. Nevertheless, in this first study I offered peripheral nods in the direction of such fascinating intruders within this new pictorial syntax as an occasional verbal pun lurking in the words selected from signs and newspapers or even a visual pun in, say, the shuffling of the anatomies of a woman and a guitar. Soon, the secondary matter of the word, whether handmade by the artist's brush or pencil or printed by a machine, loomed large for me; and in 1965, a few years after the first explosion of Pop Art, I pulled these verbal snippets together in a lecture, "The Typography of Cubism," that was finally published eight years later, in 1973, in sadly unexpected time to commemorate Picasso during the year of his death. With this new focus, I hoped, among other things, to contaminate a bit the pristine air that Cubism had earlier been breathing by indicating the abundance of witty, topical, and at times, even smutty double and triple entendres camouflaged by the fluctuating planes and spaces. These overt and covert puns and allusions corresponded to the multiple visual identities conjured up by the ambiguities of this new pictorial language, which usually opted for "not either/or but both," as well as to the growing revelation that Picasso and his fellow Cubists were eager to absorb the nonstop proliferation of the written word as part of the experienced environment of daily life in the modern city. They echoed, as I then suggested, the inventory of printed matter itemized by Apollinaire in his epic, Whitmanesque poem *Zone* (1913)—prospectuses, catalogues, posters, newspapers, cheap detective stories, inscriptions on walls, street signs, nameplates, notices—a list that, in fact, is virtually duplicated in the choices made by Cubist artists. And once again, a parallel with what was then contemporary art could be made; for already in the late 1950s, in what seemed at the time the impudent, even heretical work of Johns and Rauschenberg, stenciled, drawn, and painted letters and numbers, not to mention newspaper fragments and even comic strips began to invade the remote and poetic spaces of abstract art, an invasion that by 1962, in the
work of Warhol and Lichtenstein, expanded to a full-scale takeover of the rectangular field of painting.

This direction, once sighted, could embrace even broader areas of popular culture, a viewpoint I then began to explore, now more consciously under the new historical shadow of Pop Art. In 1975, I gave a lecture titled "High Art versus Low Art: Cubism as Pop," and since then, I continue to realize, along with older and younger generations of art historians, that this was a theme which, far from being only a footnote to the study of Cubism, kept prodding it left, right, and center, constantly providing a juggling act between, on the one hand, an arcane visual language that was legible only to an elite group of artists and their audience and, on the other, a profusion of popular references that, while often obscure to us, could be understood by any resident of Paris on the eve of World War I.

Only to survey the kind of objects that turn up on Cubist table tops is to realize the extent to which the modern world of streamlined packaging, advertising logos, and new inventions (especially from America) was rapidly substituted for the more traditional still-life components—the venerable earthenware jugs and fruitbowl s, the generic wine glasses and carafes, the timeless apples, oranges, pears, and lemons—that allied the earliest Cubist still lifes of Picasso and Braque to the past of Cézanne and Chardin. When, in 1965, I scrutinized with a magnifying glass a newspaper ad for an electric light bulb that Picasso had pasted upside down in a drawn still life (see fig. 101), I was mainly interested in the verbal joke revealed in the very small print, which boasted that the bulb was the only one that gave light from all sides and could be placed, as the artist demonstrated, in any position at all. Now, however, the proto-Pop character of this choice of newspaper ad—which singles out a floating symbol of modern urban life and depicts it via the impersonal hand of a commercial draftsman—has become conspicuous, a voice in the Cubist wilderness announcing not only a Dada fascination for mechanical imagery in style and subject, but Lichtenstein's and Warhol's early compilation of a virtual emblem book of cheap illustrations advertising modern products. A similar point can be made with a Braque still life of 1914 (fig. 112), which, amidst a drawn wine glass and bottle, offers a flurry of pasted papers that might once have been looked at uniquely as elements of textural contrast or indications of finely layered planes in the shallowest of spaces. But in center stage, one rectangle of newspaper print excerpts an advertisement for a Gillette safety razor, a new American product first patented in 1901 and then aggressively marketed abroad. Apart from the Cubist wit that transforms this newspaper clipping into a symbol of the package itself, which might contain a razor blade whose paper-thin weightlessness is akin to the neighboring Cubist planes, the mere presence of such a new product is a jolt of technological modernity, the counterpart to
Picasso's light bulb. It is telling that, a decade later, when that most American of 1920s Cubists, Gerald Murphy, composed a still life (fig. 113), it was again a safety razor that figured large in his repertory, which also included, in the same painting, safety matches and a fountain pen, two more new-fangled inventions from America. Yet once more, the roots of this machine-age selection go back to Parisian Cubism. For example, Picasso had already included a real box of safety matches in a still life of 1914, and Diego Rivera, while defining his own brand of Cubism in Paris on the eve of World War I, also clearly felt the need to select still-life objects in tune with the modern era. In his only known papier colé, that of 1914 (fig. 114), Rivera depicted not only a fountain pen (for which the first patent was made in New York in 1884, and then widely proliferated), a choice that precedes Murphy's by a decade, but another blaring symbol of modernity, an actual telegram he had received (a triumph of the new wireless, which was younger than the artist himself and had only just begun to connect nations and continents at the turn of the century). And in the same year, 1914, Rivera arranged a Cubist still life (fig. 115) around another modern invention, an alarm clock, clearly updating the more old-fashioned watch selected by Juan Gris as the centerpiece for a still life of 1912 and heralding as well Picabia's Dada alarm clock of 1919.

Such a commitment to the artifacts and inventions of the modern world was directly articulated by Gris, who, according to Cocteau, was proud to claim that it was he who had introduced the siphon bottle into art, a boast that could be traced in his work back to 1909, for his commercial cartoons, and to 1910 (fig. 116), for his loftier work in oil on canvas. Although, in fact, Gris was wrong in his claim—the siphon had made an appearance as early as 1857 in a painting by Thomas Couture—the more important point was his self-consciousness in modernizing a repertory of still-life objects, a direction confirmed in Léger's 1924 painting (fig. 117) of a syphon inspired by a newspaper ad for Campari (fig. 118). And again, the comparison conjures up Lichtenstein and Warhol's adaptation of commercial illustrations within the domain of high art. As for Gris, even in the 1920s, when his art took a more retrospective, old-master turn, he could feature in two still lifes of 1925 (fig. 119) not the premodern grid of a chessboard that he had so often used before, but its modern update, the grid of a crossword puzzle, an American invention that first appeared in newspaper form in 1913.

Such emblems of the commonplace, machine-made facts that defined the urban world of the early twentieth century were, in fact, ubiquitous in Cubist still lifes. Match holders ("pyrogènes") with ads for Dubonnet or Quinquina printed upon them; packages of cigarette papers with the brand name JOB; ads for KUB, a bouillon-cube product particularly susceptible to Cubist punning would all turn up, as would such other manufactured food products as the French version of the very American Quaker Oats box, which
makes its debut in a 1915 still life by Gris (fig. 120), who exaggerates further the comic-strip crudity of the logo of William Penn surrounded by the consumer imperative, "Exigez la Marque du Quaker," and who underscores the harshly unartistic manufactured colors of the box's yellow, red, and blue—shades of Warhol's soup cans!—in a way that was soon to be tempered by Gino Severini in his far more chaste and seemingly vacuum-packed Still Life: Quaker Oats of 1917 (fig. 121). The disparity between the look of such manufactured food products and the old-fashioned conventions of academic painting and drawing was pointed out with still greater irony in one of Picasso's earliest about-faces from the language of Cubism, a modest little drawing from the 1914 summer sojourn in Avignon (fig. 122) that renders, in a mock-Ingresque style of linear precision and exquisitely nuanced shading, an uncompromisingly modern still life of a plate displaying freshly unwrapped cookies. One brand name, LA SULTANE, is prominently machine stamped amidst an inventory of other manufactured baked goods that offer a variety of waffled and serrated decorative patterns reminiscent of the machine-made, trompe l'oeil weaving of the oil-cloth chair caning in the master's first collage.

It was this kind of aesthetic clash between the hallowed domain of museum-worthy art and the plebeian facts of modern life that must also have prompted Picasso to do the most arcane Cubist drawings not on a sheet of proper Ingres drawing paper, but rather on an entire sheet of the daily newspaper. In a particularly startling example from 1913 (fig. 123), he selected a whole page bristling with the coarsest commercial illustrations and with ads for such up-to-date hygienic products as a septic tank and Scrubb's ammonia, and then, after turning it upside down, used it as the trash-can background for a mustachioed Cubist head that would have looked totally crazy to the vast majority of readers of the same newspaper. And contrariwise, the illegibility of this Cubist scarecrow could be balanced, at the same time, by the appearance of the human figure in a Cubist context not as reinvented by the artist with the obscure hieroglyphs of Cubism but simply as depicted by the most anonymous of commercial illustrators. In a still life of winter 1912–13 (see fig. 100), which seems to be hawking the wares of two major Parisian department stores, Au Bon Marché and La Samaritaine, Picasso includes a snippet of a fashionably dressed lady who, surrounded by a still life and a barrage of commercial come-ons, may even be a sly reference to Manet's Bar at the Folies-Bergère, which had been seen in Paris from June 1–17, 1910 at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune, just before Picasso left for Cadaqués. But the figure, rather than being drawn by Picasso himself in a Cubist mode, is, instead, a "ready-made" avant la lettre, a commercial drawing that, unlike the objects in the ambient still life, would obviously be legible to all viewers. It was a visual and cultural paradox that Braque also picked up, a year later, in a still life of winter 1913–14 (fig. 124)
that includes, among the barely decipherable still-life objects on a tabletop, another pasted snippet from a newspaper ad, this time for furs, featuring the fragment of yet another fashionable lady, now decked out in a fur boa and florid hat. In both these papiers collés, Picasso and Braque reintroduced legible, populist, and anonymous versions of the human figure into their nearly illegible, elite, and individualist vocabulary of Cubism, a strident reminder of the visual disparity as well as the historical simultaneity of these two separate social levels. Invading the territory of high art from the enemy position and swiftly rising to the top, these commercial humanoids again ringing bells in the story of Lichtenstein’s early adaptations of the crassest figures from the cheapest ads and comic strips.

It is, of course, not only the source of this imagery but the look of it that the best Cubists attempted to assimilate into their work. Picasso, in his usual role as artist-chameleon, clearly enjoyed mimicking the stylized simplifications of the commercial artist. In the summer of 1914 in Avignon, just months after Braque’s lady in a fur boa, he imitated—this time in a completely painted Cubist fashion plate of a seated lady—the flattened decorative flourishes of a feather boa and a fancy hat that were part of the language of the journeyman illustrator of the day (fig. 125). Elsewhere, he preferred the still cruder simplifications of the lowliest cartoonist or sign painter, a point borne out by the almost comic-strip economy of his frequently childlike Cubist heads with their circle eyes, cartoonish mustaches, and crescent-moon or X-shaped mouths, as well as in his high-spirited efforts to mock the look of the pictures of the daily fare that might be found in a low-class restaurant. Most conspicuously, in a still life of 1914 (fig. 126) Picasso imitated not only the kind of lettering one would find on the walls and windows of a Parisian bistro, but more to this point, the rendering of a roast chicken in a style of such clumsy vigor that we might almost think he had incorporated the work of a professional sign painter, as Duchamp was later to do, in order to confuse the boundaries between elite and populist styles. It is telling that this Cubist vignette of a restaurant was, in fact, illustrated in an article by Roger Vitrac about a show of signboards held in Paris in 1935, a context that would also have suited Picasso’s earlier rendering of a chicken cut out of paper as well as his coarse and lusty recreations of roast hams, breads, cheese and sausages in both two and three dimensions. Once more, these witty translations of populist imagery in the depiction of restaurant still lifes anticipate the repertory of American Pop Art. In both style and subject, Lichtenstein’s hot dogs and Oldenburg’s hamburgers may find their ancestry in a food chain linked to Picasso, a chain, in fact, that even reaches back to his Barcelona years when, still a teenager, he designed a menu card in Catalan for the famous café Els Quatre Gats (fig. 127). On which the identity of the Plat del dia (the Plat du jour) would have been scribbled in a mock frame below a swiftly drawn waiter whose broad
silhouette and minimal detail echo the bold economies of turn-of-the-century commercial artists.

Such connections with the world of popular illustrations were, in the case of Gris, more than casual, since from 1907 until 1912, he published humorous cartoons in a variety of magazines in both Paris and Barcelona.34 Far from suggesting an unhappy descent to the level of commercial art in order to support his higher calling, these illustrations maintain a constant and nourishing dialogue in both theme and style with the most ivory-tower cerebrations of his Cubist paintings and drawings.35 In his 1908 series of cartoons, Les Aéroplanes (fig. 128), a send-up of the lunatic new world of aeronautics,36 he not only prefigures Braque and Picasso’s own sly allusions to the Wright Brothers and the future of aviation,37 but employs a whole battery of Cubist things to come. Spaces are made paper thin by schematic perspective lines that irrationally fuse the vast sky with the earthbound figures below; clothing is ironed out into the flattest silhouettes of uniform blackness or belt-line patterns that signify texture; faces are defined by comically simple geometries of arcs and angles; an abundance of words and signs floats through the air with the greatest of ease. But the distance between this popular language and the high achievements of Gris’s mature Cubism is hardly immeasurable. In fact, the overlap is found everywhere.

So it is that his 1912 painting of a respectable, well-heeled gentleman seated at a Parisian café (fig. 129) bears the marks not only of the caricaturist’s breezy topicality, but of the jaunty, angular stylizations Gris himself had employed in his earlier cartoons for L’Assiette au Beurre (fig. 130).38 There, too, one could find such graphic rhymes as the top hat clicking into place against the stripes of the café awning or such rapid evocations of a city milieu as the dollhouse grid of windows in the background. Moreover, the cartoon-like treatment of the face, hands, and limbs (in which arcs stand for eyebrows and mustaches and rectangles become the joints of fingers or trousered legs) also depends upon this language of popular imagery. The point becomes still clearer in Gris’s close-up drawings and paintings of men’s heads from 1913, The Smoker and The Bullfighter (figs. 131 and 132), whose cornical physiognomies look as though they were scrambled into a Cubist jigsaw puzzle from a cartoonist’s manual of crude geometries that could stand in for nostril, ear, eye, or mouth. Gris, in fact, seemed to enjoy even more than Picasso the brusque, yet humorous clash between the rudimentary modules of an emphatically modern, mechanized vocabulary and the old-fashioned styles of nineteenth-century illustration. For instance, like both Picasso and Rivera,39 he selected, with comparable ethnic relevance, a Spanish liqueur, Anis del Mono, for inclusion in a still life (fig. 133); but unlike Picasso and like Rivera, he willfully included the bottle’s label, whose florid, Victorian rendering of a simian drinker and of the prizes awarded the liqueur in the 1870s brusquely and wittily collides with the
streamlined, intersecting geometries around them, a diamond-patterned grid also inspired by the manufactured bottle. And elsewhere, he would produce the same cultural and visual frictions by using as collage elements fragments of nineteenth-century engravings, much as Picasso, in the winter of 1912–13, had composed a mock Cézannesque still life by filling a Cubist compotier with whole and fragmentary apples and pears cut out of highly realist, colored illustrations of fruit.

Gris's willingness to explore the look of modern and popular styles that would release his art from the conservative shackles of tradition even extended to his choice of color. Although in his earliest painting, he often conjured up the old-master effects of a somber and dramatic tenebrism particularly associated with Spanish seventeenth-century still-life traditions, he could also embark upon a conspicuously different counter-current of chromatic vulgarity, especially in 1913, during a sojourn at Céret near the Spanish border. There, he lustily embraced a synthetic rainbow of fiesta colors—of a kind associated with the costumes and posters for bullfights which he had recorded in The Torero—a riotous palette that he could also use for landscapes and still lifes and one that would unsettle any conventions of chromatic decorum he had learned at the Louvre or at the Prado. It was an assault comparable to the use of Day-Glo and printer's-ink colors in the heyday of Pop Art, a head-on challenge to the nuanced, organic palette of the Abstract Expressionists.

Such invigorating descents into the visual facts of popular life pertained as well to the decorative materials and trompe l'oeil devices commercially disseminated throughout a burgeoning low-budget market that would ape, with manufactured products, the luxury stuffs and exquisite craftsmanship of old money and aristocracy. Braque himself was the son and the grandson of professional house painters and was apprenticed as a teenager to several peintres-decorateurs who trained him in the tricks of a modern trade that could imitate, with factory-made papers, anything from marble to wood grain, and that could make letters with stencils and wavy paint patterns with steel combs. His delight in these popular surrogates for old-fashioned skills and finances, techniques he quickly shared with Picasso, was typical of the Cubists' witty enjoyment of an inventory of cheap new materials that mocked the real thing, from the carved leaves of a wooden frame to the polished marble of a fireplace. Elegant as Braque's papiers collés may look to us today, their inclusion of materials as lowly as corrugated cardboard undid their genteel ancestry in the still-life arrangements of a master like Chardin, to whom Braque would so often allude both before and after the high years of Cubism; and expectedly, the more raucous taste of Picasso and Gris would embrace a repertory of, among other things, large swatches of common wallpaper patterns and decorative borders, whose cheap floral repeats again assailed preconceptions of aristocratic good taste, permitting
dime-store products to invade the precincts of high art. Even the paint itself was dethroned. By the spring of 1912, in fact, Picasso, in a nod toward his dual national allegiances, French and Spanish, included the flags of both countries in several still lifes and in at least two cases used a most unartistic commercial paint, Ripolin enamel, to do so.\textsuperscript{45} In the \textit{Souvenir du Havre} (fig. 137), the French tricolor is painted with this product so alien to the old-master chiaroscuro nuances of the preceding two years of Analytic Cubism, and in the \textit{Spanish Still Life} (fig. 134), the Spanish flag that signifies a ticket to the bull ring (with the fragments of the words "sol y sombra" floating above it) is even more emphatically rendered with the opaque enamel paint, providing, among other things, a brilliant chromatic contrast to a somber Cubist background, a color chord of red and yellow whose patriotic echoes can be found, alternating with the French color chord, throughout the master's work.\textsuperscript{46} Apart from such matters of public flag-waving with private allusions to his own divided loyalties, Picasso's use of Ripolin enamel is again a precocious step in a Pop direction, opening the door to, among other things, Duchamp's far more subversive use in 1916–17 of an actual ad on painted tin for Sapolin enamel paints\textsuperscript{47} and the full-scale assault of the 1960s upon the venerable medium of oil paint. And in terms of assimilating the most up-to-date synthetic materials, Gris, whose patchwork-quilt Cubist patterns often resemble fragments of decorative papers bought at the local equivalent of Woolworth's, would even imitate the machine-age look of such new plastics as Bakelite, invented in 1909. In his \textit{Still Life with Plaque} of 1917 (fig. 135), the trompe l'oeil frame, with the artist's name and the painting's date mechanically stamped upon it, resembles a plaque made of the toughest synthetic stuff, a joke on old-fashioned hand-made wooden frames.

Picasso constantly explored this territory of popular materials and artifacts as a way of both undoing and invigorating moribund traditions. His pivotal \textit{Still Life with Chair Caning} (see fig. 88) of May 1912 not only uses a new machine-made material, oil cloth, whose printed trompe l'oeil weave replaces handicraft traditions, but reflects, in the rope frame, a world of kitsch objects. My own hunch is that this use of a nautical rope as a mock oval frame, which Picasso had also used in a still life bearing the popular slogan "Notre avenir est dans l'air" (see fig. 98) floating over the French tricolor,\textsuperscript{48} is related to the world of kitsch products, such as an oval mirror framed by a sailor's rope (see fig. 136) of a kind found in souvenir shops in port towns.\textsuperscript{49} Perhaps during the trip to Le Havre with Braque in April 1912, Picasso had seen just such an object. But in any case, that the two great Cubists shared a taste for such kitsch is clear from, among other things, the postcard that Braque sent to Kahnweiler on November 27, 1912 from Le Havre (fig. 138).\textsuperscript{50} The picture on the card is a popular send-up of high art, depicting a photograph of the city's commercial core, La Bourse, honored by
a fancy frame and nameplate and set upon an artist's easel garlanded with roses. Above, the phrase "Souvenir du Havre" floats across this trompe l'œil joke, reminiscent, in fact, of the way Picasso inscribed the same phrase on a ribbon at the bottom of his Le Havre still life of May 1912, whose compilation of seaport motifs — scallop shells, anchor, rope, and life preserver — may well mimic the "artistic" arrangement found on a kitsch postcard or artifact he observed at a local souvenir shop. And speaking of picture postcards, the one that Picasso sent to Kahnweiler on August 13, 1911 (fig. 139) again ricochets between the souvenir shop and the Louvre.51 In this case, the image, inspired by a popular song, is of Mignon playing a mandolin in a Romantic costume and setting, a kitsch descendant of the theme that Corot had often treated and that presumably inspired Picasso's as well as Braque's variations on this motif in 1910 (fig. 140)52 as it would inspire Gris more literally in 1916.53 But as is usual in Cubism and in Picasso source hunting, this is probably not a question of either/or but of both being relevant. Given the fact that Picasso selected this picture-postcard mandolinist to send to his dealer, it is clear that he enjoyed these vulgar echoes of his own work or that, reversing directions, he might have been inspired by such popular imagery to take a fresh look at Corot.

Even the master's famous constructed sheet-metal guitar of 1912 (fig. 141) may have comparably humble origins, as I suggested in 1982,54 when I indicated its affinity with a cake mold from Mexico (see fig. 142) of a kind which must have its kitchen counterparts throughout the Hispanic world. Here, in the form of a decorative utensil, was not only a symbol of the most popular musical instrument in the culture that nurtured Picasso, but a new kind of sculptural construction and medium, a lightweight tin skin enclosing a void.

Such a descent to ethnic roots may, of course, be only coincidence in the case of this parallel, but in another example, recurrent in the work of Braque and Picasso, there is no doubt. Thus, as Lewis Kachur has discovered,55 the mysterious woodwind that turns up again and again on Cubist tabletops and that has been consistently misidentified as a clarinet (despite the obvious dissimilarity of its mouthpiece)56 is, in fact, a folkloric instrument from Catalonia, a tenora, which Picasso had heard in performance in the Pyrenees and which both he and Braque often included in their still lifes (see fig. 143) as what must have been an ethnic memento of Spanish culture, comparable to their many allusions to the bullfight and other Spanish motifs. And here, too, the choice not of a clarinet, for which Mozart himself had written concert and chamber music, but of a crude woodwind from a lower cultural stratum was characteristic of the constant fluctuation in Cubist art between high-brow cultural traditions and grass-roots reality, whether in the heart of Paris or in the remoteness of the Pyrenees. Any survey of the musical references in Picasso and Braque's work indicates the double-track
allusions to both the music of the concert hall (whether composers like Bach and Mozart or performers like Kubelick and Cortot) and that of popular café-concerts, whose songs and dances find their titles, refrains, and even scores fragmented throughout the writings and pastings in Cubist art. The parallel is close to Stravinsky, who, in 1911, within the most avant-garde thickets of Petrouchka’s polyrhythms and polyharmonies, could introduce the lilting popular tune, “Elle avait un’jambe de bois.”

Such an attraction to the tonic excitement of the vast range of popular reality outside the traditional confines of art expanded for the Cubists in every direction. When Apollinaire mentioned in Zone the lure of cheap detective stories, he might well have been thinking of the enormously popular fictional detective Fantômas, who, beginning in 1911, appeared in serial format not only as pamphlets to be picked up like the daily newspaper but as a movie by Louis Feuillade and as a character who turned up both overtly and covertly in works by Gris of 1914 and 1915 (fig. 144). And the most popular of modern forms of entertainment, the movies, could appear in even more direct ways in two papiers collés of Braque that display the pasted announcements of the very first program of the Tivoli Cinema in Sorgues (fig. 145), which opened to its eager provincial audience on October 31, 1913, as well as a fragment from another movie program at the same theater (fig. 146). As for that grand opening, one of the movies shown, we read, was “Cow-Boy, Millionaire,” clearly a reflection of those popular myths about America that appealed to Europeans and that were prominent in the Picasso-Braque milieu in the form of Buffalo Bill, whose Wild West company toured the United States and Europe and who turns up in a painting by Picasso of 1911, in Picasso’s library of detective and adventure stories, and in his circle’s friendly slang references to “notre pard,” as in Buffalo Bill’s calling a friend “my pard,” an Americanism comparable to Picasso’s addressing Braque, in allusion to the Wright Brothers, as “mon cher Wilbur.” And by 1917, in Parade, whose offensiveness to theatrical conventions had everything to do with its full-scale absorption of the components of popular entertainment, Picasso had materialized just such American myths in his costume for the Manager from New York, who wears a skyline of Cubist skyscrapers above a pair of cowboy boots worthy of Buffalo Bill.

If the Cubists felt, as Duchamp and Picabia soon would, that the raw, forward-looking vigor of popular culture and modern technology was a wind that blew strongest from America, in general, and from New York, in particular, a younger generation of American artists, with appropriate reciprocity, felt compelled to translate the language of Cubism, especially its populist elements, into an American vernacular. This theme comprises a huge chapter in the history of modern American art, and one that would take us through artists of the 1920s and 30s like Gerald Murphy, Charles
Shaw, and Charles Demuth right into Pop territory of the 1960s. But there would be no better place to begin the story than in Gar Sparks's Nut Shop in Newark, New Jersey, where in 1921 Stuart Davis completed a wrap-around mural (fig. 147) in which the inventory of free-floating words from Cubist café scenes—the names of beers, liqueurs, and wines—has been re-created as an all-American bill of sweet-toothed fare—banana royal, nut sundaes, ice cream, taffies.  

But no less than Davis in New York, the Parisian Cubists, beginning in 1911, were determined to absorb into their art as into their daily lives the fullest impact of a teeming world of popular culture that by convention would have been censored out of the purer domain of high art. Or would it have been? For just as clearly, what would appear to be the Cubist revelation that everything from the movies to American breakfast cereal was grist for the mill of art had a long nineteenth-century history. We now know, for example, that many of the apparent innovations of the Impressionists in terms of abrupt cropping and rapid, abbreviated draftsmanship were inspired by the coarsest newspaper illustrations of the 1860s and 70s; or that in the 1880s, Seurat, in a remarkable prophecy of Lichtenstein, would be fascinated by the grotesque figural distortions of contemporary caricature as well as by the new printer's-dot techniques of primary colors used in chromolithography. And getting closer to the Cubist generation, it has long been apparent that artists as exquisitely refined as Bonnard and Vuillard, not to mention as streetwise as Toulouse-Lautrec, would immerse themselves, like lesser artists of the 1890s, in commercial designs that merged words and images in a way that would stop urban dwellers in their tracks.

But there is really nothing surprising about this. Artists, like the rest of us who live in the modern world, may choose, of course, to shut their eyes and ears to the overwhelming assault of urban life and popular culture; but they may also try to adapt to these urgent realities, to integrate the private and the public, the elite and the commonplace. In their art as in their life, the Cubists, on the eve of World War I, smilingly and triumphantly bridged that gulf.

NOTES


3. I have indicated some of these early references in Rosenblum, "Typography," p. 266, preface to the notes.

4. The lecture was first given on January 28, 1965, at a meeting of the College Art Association of America held in Los Angeles and was often repeated in the following years.

5. This was reprinted, without illustrations, by Harper and Row, New York, in 1980, and more recently, with illustrations, in Katherine Hoffman, ed., Collage: Critical Views (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1989), pp. 91–120.


7. This lecture was first given on May 11, 1975, at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C., and subsequently repeated with many variations on both sides of the Atlantic. Some of these observations on Picasso’s popular sources are now also found in the publication as a brochure in 1989 of a lecture, "Picasso: Now and Then," that I gave at the Art Gallery Society of Western Australia, Perth (Third Christensen Lecture), in December 1988.


11. I discussed this Rivera collage, from the point of view of the witty variations on true and false signatures and handwriting, in Rosenblum, "Typography," p. 68. On this papier collé, see also Ramón Favela, Diego Rivera: The Cubist Years, catalogue of an exhibition at the Phoenix Art Museum, 1984, p. 73.


14. For this and other Cubist timepieces, see Rubin, Paintings of Gerald Murphy, p. 32.


16. See, for example, the commercial illustration in Papitu, no. 8, January 13, 1909, p. 128, reproduced in Gary Tinterow, ed., Juan Gris Madrid, catalogue of an exhibition at Salas Pablo Ruiz Picasso, 1985, p. 446; and the oil painting Siphon and Bottles of 1910, reproduced in Cooper, Juan Gris, number 1.

17. In Two Politicians, discussed and illustrated in Albert Boime, Thomas Couture and the Eclectic Vision (New Haven and London, 1980), p. 311, including the painted sketch. Couture’s painting, incidentally, offers surprising prophecies of Cubist iconography, not only in the siphon, but in the poster announcing a “bal” and the behind-the-scenes view of figures dressed as Pierrot and Harlequin.


19. A particularly apt analogy is Roy Lichtenstein’s Spray of 1962, which similarly shows a disembodied hand operating a spray can.

20. Cooper, Juan Gris, numbers 520, 521. These crossword puzzles, however, now appear in books, rather than in newspapers.

21. I have discussed the use of most of these brand-names from a more verbal point of view in Rosenblum, "Typography," passim.


24. I first discussed this drawing, from a quite different point of view, in Cubism and Twentieth Century Art (New York, 1960), p. 98.

25. This drawing, unlike the better-known one also executed on a full sheet of upside-down newspaper (Daix, Picasso, number 551), is not included in Daix.

26. This complex collage has been most provocatively and fully discussed by Christine Poggi in "Mallarmé, Picasso, and the Newspaper as Commodity," in Hoffman, Collage, pp. 180–83 (originally published in the Yale Journal of Criticism, vol. 1, no. 1 [Fall 1987]). Poggi relates the collage, among other things, to contemporary attitudes to saleswomen in department stores, a point that would support the allusion to Manet.

27. The most obvious comparison is with Lichtenstein's Girl with Ball of 1961, an adaptation of an ad for a vacation resort (Mount Airy Lodge) that still appears in New York newspapers.

28. Daix (Picasso, number 784) identifies the object at the lower left as a light bulb, a more plausible reading than the traditional one of a flame, and one that would reintroduce, in a different visual language, the commercial light bulb from the papier collé of 1912 (number 543).

29. Zervos's original date of 1912 (Vol. II, fig. 347) is obviously incorrect. I would follow Daix's suggested dating of spring 1914 for this still life (Picasso, number 703), which corresponds to the other restaurant still lifes of 1914, comparably cram with food and words (numbers 704, 705).

30. In Apolinère Enameled (1916–17) and 'Tu m’' (1918).

31. See Daix, Picasso, number 703.

32. For example, see Daix, Picasso, numbers 609, 703–705, 746.

33. I first discussed this menu card in connection with its mix of words and images in the poster tradition of the 1890s (Rosenblum, "Typography," p. 74). Marilyn McCully dates it about 1900 and mentions that we do not know whether Picasso's design was, in fact, ever printed. See McCully, Els Quatre Gats: Art in Barcelona around 1900 (catalogue of an exhibition at Princeton, N.J., 1978), p. 33.

34. For a full list of these cartoons, see the appendices by Rosario Maseda and Anne M. P. Norton in Tinterow, Juan Gris, pp. 445–62.

35. They are discussed, with references to their connections with Gris's Cubist style, by Marilyn McCully in "Los Comienzos de Juan Gris como Dibujante," in Tinterow, Juan Gris, pp. 17–24.


38. McCully ("Los Comienzos," p. 22) also singles out this painting in connection with Gris's popular illustrations.

39. Picasso so camouflaged a bottle of Anis del Mono in a still life of 1909 that it was traditionally considered to be a tube of paint until William Rubin was able to identify it correctly (Rubin, Picasso in the Collection, p. 63). Rivera, on the other hand, depicted the bottle as legibly as did Gris in two still lifes of 1913 and 1915 (Ramón Favela, Diego Rivera, pp. 72, 103).
40. In Picasso’s still life, this diamond pattern, which is actually on the bottle, may have provided a surreptitious reference to his alter ego, Harlequin.

41. In two papiers collés of 1913. See Cooper, Juan Gris, numbers 38, 42.

42. Daix, Picasso, number 530.

43. For some conspicuous examples, see Cooper, Juan Gris, numbers 55–57.

44. For a useful inventory of the materials used in these works, see Isabelle Monod-Fontaine, with E. A. Carmean, Jr., Braque: The Papiers Collés, catalogue of an exhibition at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1982, p. 147.

45. See Rubin, Picasso and Braque, entry in early May 1912, p. 390; and Daix, Picasso, numbers 458, 476. Clearly, Picasso was aware that his use of commercial paint and lettering would be considered outré, for in a letter of July 15, 1912, to Kahnweiler (ibid., p. 400), he wondered what Shchukin might have thought of these new techniques.

46. Nochlin (“Picasso’s Color”) has fully discussed Picasso’s tricolorism, if not his Spanish bicolorism, which is also shared by Miró’s preference for red and yellow, the national colors of Spain.

47. In Apolinère Enameled.


49. I first proposed this connection in my discussion of Still Life with Chair Caning in Picasso from the Musée Picasso, Paris, catalogue of an exhibition at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 1980, pp. 41–47.

50. See Rubin, Picasso and Braque, p. 410.

51. Ibid., p. 376.

52. See Rubin, Picasso in the Collection, p. 205 n. 3. Closely related are Picasso’s Woman with Mandolin, 1910 (see Daix, Picasso, number 341) and Braque’s Woman with Mandolin, 1910 (see Nicole Worms de Romilly and Jean Laude, Braque: Cubism, 1907–1914 [Paris, 1982], number 71).

53. Cooper, Juan Gris, number 197.


55. In a forthcoming article on Picasso and popular music that he was kind enough to let me read.

56. Without knowing the real identity of this enigmatic instrument, I suggested as far back as 1960 (Cubism and Twentieth Century Art, p. 94) that the clarinet in a Braque papier collé of 1913 more closely resembled an oboe with a projecting reed.

57. I rapidly surveyed the question of musical references in Cubism, both popular and classical, in my “Typography,” p. 57; but the field is now being investigated far more fully by Lewis Kachur and Jeffrey Weiss.


61. Daix, Picasso, number 396.

62. Rubin, Picasso and Braque, p. 55 n. 3.
63. Ibid., p. 374.
65. The importance of the popular elements of street and circus entertainment in the program of Parade has now been fully explored in a Ph.D. dissertation by Deborah Menaker (Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1990).

80. Harry Fragson on the occasion of his engagement at the Alhambra music hall in October 1911. From *Comoedia illustré*, October 1, 1911, p. 27. The New York Public Library at Lincoln Center: Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations. Billy Rose Theatre Collection

81. The ma jolie refrain from "Dernière chanson" by Harry Fragson, as it appeared in **Excelsior**, October 5, 1911, p. 9. Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris

113. Gerald Murphy. Razor 1924. Oil on canvas, 32 5/8 × 36 1/2" (82.9 × 91.4 cm). Dallas Museum of Art. Foundation for the Arts Collection; gift of the artist.


118. Advertisement for Campari. From Le Matin, September 12, 1924, p. 3


120. Juan Gris. The Package of Quaker Oats. 1915. Oil on canvas, 17¼ × 14⅜" (44.5 × 37 cm). Present whereabouts unknown.


123. Pablo Picasso. Head of a Man with a Moustache. [Céret] after May 6, 1913. Ink on newspaper, 21 7/8 × 14 3/4″ (55.5 × 37.4 cm). Private collection

128. Juan Gris. Les Aéroplanes. Cover page from L'Assiette au beurre, November 14, 1908

129. Juan Gris. The Man in the Cafe. 1912. Oil on canvas, 50½ × 34¾" (128 × 87.9 cm). Philadelphia Museum of Art. Louise and Walter Arensberg Collection


135. Juan Gris. Still Life with Plaque. December 1917. Oil on canvas, 25⅜ × 32" (65.5 × 81 cm). Oeffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, Kunstmuseum


138. Picture postcard of Le Havre; sent by Braque to D.-H. Kahnweiler; November 27, 1912

144. Juan Gris. Fantômas (Pipe and Newspaper). 1915. Oil on canvas, 23 1/2 x 28 7/8" (59.8 x 73.3 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Chester Dale Fund.