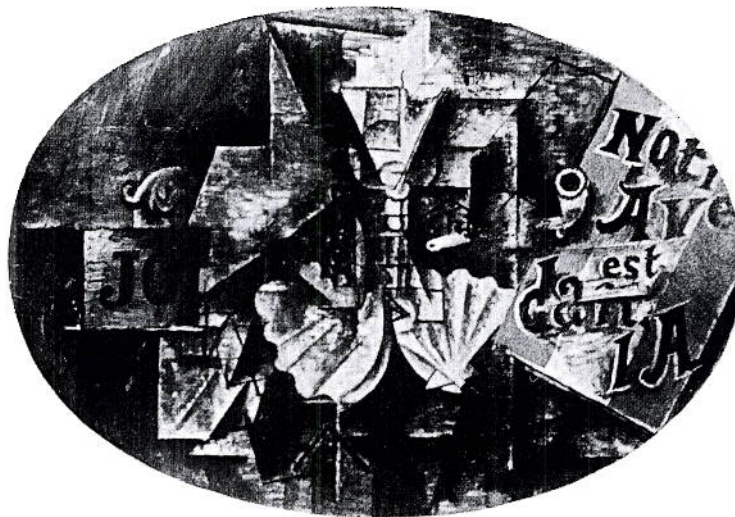


wisdom uses "Casagemas" to explain the picture—to provide the work's ultimate meaning or sense. When we have named Casagemas, we have (or so we think) cracked the code of the painting and it has no more secrets to withhold.

La Vie is after all a narrative painting and this close examination of its dramatis personae is an understandable (though insufficient) response to the work. The methodology of the proper name becomes more astonishing, however, when practiced on the body of work inaugurated by cubism.

Two examples will serve. A recent study by Linda Nochlin takes up the question of Picasso's color, an issue almost completely ignored by earlier scholar-



Pablo Picasso. *The Scallop Shell* (*Notre avenir est dans l'air*). 1912.

ship.¹⁵ Within modernist art, color would seem to be a subject set at the furthest possible remove from a reading by proper names. This turns out not to be true, as Nochlin analyzes a 1912 cubist painting that is mostly *grisaille*, broken by the intrusion of a flat plane broadly striped in red, white, and blue, and carrying the written words, "*Notre avenir est dans l'air*." Conceived at about the same time as the famous first collage, *Still Life with Chair Caning*, the work in question echoes many other canvases from early 1912, in which the introduction of some kind of

15. Linda Nochlin, "Picasso's Color: Schemes and Gambits," *Art in America*, vol. 68, no. 10 (December 1980), 105-123; 177-183.