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“Pieces of experience literally seized”: Arthur Dove’s symbolic portraits in collage, 1924–25

Todd, Emily Leland, M.A.

Rice University, 1988
Rice University

"Pieces of Experience Literally Seized:"

Arthur Dove's Symbolic Portraits in Collage, 1924-25

by

Emily Leland Todd

A Thesis Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

Approved, Thesis Committee:

William A. Camfield, Professor,
Art and Art History, Director

John S. Hallam, Assistant Professor,
Art and Art History

Roger B. Ulrich, Assistant Professor,
Art and Art History

Houston, Texas

29 April 1988
Abstract

"Pieces of Experience Literally Seized:"
Arthur Dove Symbolic Portraits in Collage, 1924-25

Emily Leland Todd

Arthur Garfield Dove's symbolic portrait collages are a unique body of work. They represent the multiplicity of artistic styles and thought in New York City during the first three decades of the twentieth century. As an outgrowth of a number of avant-garde intellectual and visual precedents, these works stand alone by virtue of Dove's unusual amalgam of European and American thinking. What are the artistic and philosophic underpinnings of these works? What makes them portraits? Are there theories or art works that directly influenced Dove? Where do these eight portrait collages stand in relation to both their artistic precedents and contemporary work? What makes these works significant sixty years after their creation?
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Lastly many thanks to my family and friends who have remained so throughout.
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Arthur Dove. Photograph by Alfred Stieglitz.
Introduction

Arthur Garfield Dove (1880-1946) was one of America’s earliest modern artists, earning the title of America’s first abstract painter. He grew up in New York state, journeyed to France in 1908, returned to the United States in 1909, and began his career as a professional artist in New York City in 1910 under the aegis of Alfred Stieglitz. Stieglitz was then director of the Little Galleries of the Photo Secession, otherwise known as "291" after its address on Fifth Avenue. This was the major exhibition space for modern European and American art in this country. Stieglitz encouraged and supported Dove and provided him with a community of fellow artists and writers.

Dove experimented early on with abstracting forms from nature in a series of six small pastels of 1910-11. While these works were not shown until 1952, they were succeeded by a series titled the Ten Commandments from 1911-12. This group of work was shown in New York and Chicago and caused quite a stir among both audiences. From this point on, Dove was regarded as one of the foremost exponents of abstraction and modernism. He made little work over the next decade but his reputation remained intact and was further enhanced by his next large group of work: the collages.

His first public exhibition of work since 1916 was in a group show held at the Anderson Galleries in New York in March 1925.\(^1\) That exhibition, titled Seven Americans, was organized by Alfred Stieglitz and focused on work by Charles Demuth, Dove, Marsden Hartley, John Marin, Georgia O’Keeffe, Stieglitz himself, and Paul Strand. There was a total of 159 works in the exhibition. Dove was represented by twenty-one works, thirteen of which were collages.\(^2\) Three of the eight symbolic portrait collages under consideration

\[^1\] Anderson Galleries, New York. Seven Americans, March 9-29, 1925. Exhibition catalogue, curated by Alfred Stieglitz with essays by Sherwood Anderson and Arnold Ronnebeck and statements by the artists.

\[^2\] Of the other eight works, Ann Lee Morgan’s catalogue raisonné lists four as lost but identified, and four as lost and whose medium and support are now unknown. Ann Lee
in this paper were included in the exhibition: *Portrait of Ralph Dusenberry, Miss Woolworth*, and *Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz*. Dove thought these collage portraits important enough to include in his first exhibition in a decade; their significance to their maker is demonstrated by the fact that five of the eight portrait collages are mentioned in the diaries kept by Dove and his companion, Helen Torr. These works are Dove’s sole foray into depicting human beings outside of his illustration work for magazines. The symbolic portrait collages represented an unusual synthesis of current artistic and philosophical influences from Europe and America as well as primitive, naive, and folk art. They stand out in Dove’s oeuvre and other contemporary work because he combined the cubist technique of collage with sundry precedents for symbolic portraiture from America and Europe. Why did he choose collage to portray both dear and respected friends as well as generic types of people? Is there a catalyst in 1924 for these works? What do these portraits reveal of their subjects and Dove’s feelings about them? Are these collages successful works of art as well as striking a spiritual likeness to his subject? How was Dove acquainted with the collage technique and are these works related in technique or subject matter to his previous work?

This paper attempts to answer these questions by examining Dove’s background, his career up to the mid-1920s, and the art and ideas that he was exposed to during his time. There are a variety of sources of information about Dove and his milieu: logbook-diaries kept by Dove and Torr from 1924-39, correspondence, exhibition materials (checklists, catalogues, and reviews), and posthumous publications on Dove and his environment.³

³ The diaries are a valuable resource, providing a day-to-day record of progress on paintings and collages as well as Dove’s visits to New York and visits from friends, books read and letters written, and even weather conditions. Arthur Garfield Dove and related documents are available through the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. Microfilms from the Archives will be cited as AAA with roll number and frame noted.

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Chapter 1

1880-1903: Biographical Background

Arthur Garfield Dove, born on August 2, 1880, was the eldest child of a comfortable middle-class family residing in Canadigaua in upstate New York. Dove's family settled in Canadigaua after his father was elected to two terms as County Clerk and Fire Chief. Dove was named after the Republican candidates for vice-president and president in that year, Chester A. Arthur and James A. Garfield. In 1882, the Doves returned to Geneva, New York, where Dove's father resumed his occupation as a building contractor and brick manufacturer.

Dove took piano and art lessons as a child, but it was an older Geneva neighbor and amateur artist, Newton Wetherly (1846-1935), whom Dove later counted as among the four most important people in his life. In 1930, Dove wrote to Stieglitz, "At the age of nine I painted, studying with Newton Wetherly of Geneva, New York. I was unable to devote all my time to it until 1907-08 in France." Wetherly taught the young Dove a love and respect for nature as well as the basic tenets of painting. The most intensive period of Wetherly’s tutelage occurred when Dove was five to nine years old. Dorothy Rylander Johnson, who curated an exhibition of Dove’s collages in 1967, described Wetherly as follows:

2 Dove listed Jesus Christ, Albert Einstein, Newton Wetherly and Alfred Stieglitz as the greatest men in the world. Letter from Dove to Stieglitz, December 1934, Alfred Stieglitz Archive, Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut (hereafter cited as Beinecke Library, Yale University), cited in Morgan, 12.
3 Letter from Dove to Stieglitz, March 22, 1930, Beinecke Library, Yale University, cited in University of Maryland, College Park, Arthur Dove: The Years of Collage, March 13-April 19, 1967, 3, hereafter cited as University of Maryland. This letter is the source of confusion about the dates of Dove’s trip to Europe. The 1907-8 date has been corrected as 1908-9. See note 17.
A truck farmer, naturalist and amateur philosopher, he raised melons and strawberries, fished, painted landscapes in oils; this unconventional and charismatic friend, so adept at doing, gave Dove his first experience with painting. Working with Wetherly's canvas scraps, which he had learned to tack carefully to homemade stretchers, Dove did an oil landscape.  

Johnson also found that Dove's son, William, was aware of his father's deep admiration and affection for Wetherly:

He became early in my father's life good friend, counsellor [sic], woodland companion and philosophical guide. He was a definite influence on Dove's first serious thoughts of being a painter.  

A resident of Geneva, Mrs. Ralph Estes, who owned six of Wetherly's paintings, gave the following thumbnail sketch of the man:

Newt was a great lover of nature, loved fishing and walking and his paintings were of nature... [He] spent much time playing and composing music for the harp, organ or square piano. [He and his son] were invited to play at local theatre but refused because they felt it was beneath them;.... He wasn't afraid to dirty his hands if he dreamt up some [project].... He had an uncanny talent for whatever he attempted to do. Wetherlys were very eccentric and many of the things they did and the way they lived were considered very strange and even wrong.... It is entirely possible that Dove felt a closer kinship to Wetherly, an independent resourceful loner, than to his own father. In 1889, the family moved into a larger house

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4 University of Maryland, 3.
5 Letter from William C. Dove to Johnson, December 5, 1966, cited in University of Maryland, 3.
6 Dorothy Rylander Johnson did a great deal of research on Wetherly and it is unfortunate that none of the three Wetherly paintings included in the University of Maryland exhibition are reproduced in the catalogue.
7 University of Maryland, 22 2n. Paul Dove's remarks, recorded in the AAA, Dove Correspondence, roll 954, frame 3, provide additional insight to Wetherly's eccentricities. He was a great fisherman usually wearing a derby hat and Prince Albert coat and rubber boots. While he stood in midstream with derby down to his ears his coattails were headed downstream with the current while the stream whirled around his waistcoat.
8 There is some debate over the relationship between Dove and his family and the extent to which Dove's family contributed to his household. Dove and Stieglitz present the facts as if Dove received nothing, however there are occasional notes in the Dove-Torr diaries of monetary gifts from Dove's mother. Dove's father did give him money when he went to Europe in 1908. Paul Dove maintained that the family supported Dove handsomely throughout the Westport years. AAA, Dove Correspondence, roll 954, frames 3-5. Paul also wrote: Arthur made friends wherever he lived whether artists or not and was very well liked. He was clean and neat in his appearance and dressed according to his work.... Quite a philosopher. He loved to live by the water, especially salt water.

Dove's early sense of intellectual independence and individual freedom stood him in good stead the rest of his life. We see the seeds of this in the following synopsis of his childhood.

For the first twelve years I was an only child and naturally spoiled in the way my family wished me to be. At the age of twelve I became a brother and therefore gained twice as much freedom. I resigned from the church owing to a difficulty with the clergy over Robert Ingersoll [the professional atheist] having the right to his opinions or not.\footnote{Whitney Museum of Art, 1958, 25.}

Little is known of Dove's adolescence until he matriculated at Hobart College, Geneva (1899-1901), and, after his sophomore year, transferred to Cornell University in Ithaca (1901-3).\footnote{Gallati, 13, unearthed Dove's yearbook illustrations for The Echo of the Seneca (Hobart College yearbook), 1899-1900, and The Cornillian (Cornell University yearbook), 1902.} At Cornell, he studied law for his father's sake and art for his own, taking courses in law, economics, politics, Spanish, German, and physics, as well as studio art and art history.\footnote{Morgan, 12.} Dove, as an art student, also took courses in the colleges of architecture and mechanical engineering.\footnote{Sherrye Cohn, Arthur Dove: Nature as Symbol (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1985), 27, hereafter cited as Cohn, 1985.} Charles Wellington Furlong, "an explorer and amateur naturalist who wrote of and illustrated his adventures for various popular magazines," was one of Dove's professors at Cornell. Barbara Gallati and Frederick Wight both regard Furlong as one "who combined the love of nature with the study of art," thus setting Dove

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He had considerable financial aid from his family which I never knew him to refuse. He was a naturalist always on the lookout for out of door scenes to paint in his subjective manner. Anything from a knothole in a tree trunk to the wind in the willows, the sound in the telephone wires, the moo of a cow or the coo of a pigeon or the clouds and sunrise. Arthur was very generous with his friends and neighbors and was apt to give away much needed money.
an early and influential example for a possible career as a professional artist or illustrator.\textsuperscript{14}

**1904-9: Early Career and Europe**

After graduation, Dove moved to New York, married a Geneva neighbor, Florence Dorsey, in 1904, and began a successful career as a magazine illustrator, working for *Century, Collier's, Harper's, The Illustrated Sporting News, Life, St. Nicholas, The Saturday Evening Post,* and *Scribner's.* His success as an illustrator can be gauged by his salary which was reported to be as high as $12,000 per year.\textsuperscript{15} Through his work for periodicals, he became friends with such major artist-illustrators of the era as John Sloan, George Bellows, William Glackens, Ernest Lawson, and George Luks.\textsuperscript{16} By early 1908, Dove had saved about $4000 to finance a trip to Europe to test his idea of a career as a full-time painter. Supplemented by funds from his father who was impressed by his son's financial stability, Dove and Florence embarked to France in the late spring of 1908 for a fourteen-month exploration of the world of professional painting.\textsuperscript{17}

According to Ann Lee Morgan, author of the 1984 catalogue raisonné on Dove, Dove tired of life in Paris after a while and decamped first to Moret on the outskirts of Paris,

\textsuperscript{16} Gallati, 14, and Whitney Museum of American Art, 1958, 40.
\textsuperscript{17} Gallati, 16-17, was able to date Dove’s trip, previously a source of some confusion, through John Sloan’s diaries in which Dove’s leavetaking and return were recorded. She dated Dove’s trip from approximately May 1908 until late July/early August 1909, fourteen months and not the eighteen months that is usually reported. Morgan, 13-15, 34-35 6n, concurred and remarked that Dove inadvertently confused the dating by saying that he had been abroad for eighteen months when in fact he meant just over a year.
and later to the area around Cagnes in the south of France. She also recorded that Dove briefly visited Italy and Spain. During this French sojourn, Dove became a lifelong friend of Alfred Maurer and associated with the American artists Patrick Henry Bruce, Arthur B. Carles, Jo Davidson, John Marin and Max Weber. Dove may have visited museums, and attended exhibitions and the Stein siblings' Saturday salon, although there is no record of his doing so. Morgan pointed out that:

the most important demonstration of new tendencies that Dove was able to view was the "Salon d'automne" of 1908, in which he himself exhibited a painting. This progressive salon drew an international group of independently minded exhibitors. Whatever he saw, Dove's palette quickly brightened in France, and much of the work he did during the year consists of freely brushed Impressionistic landscapes that demonstrate Dove's awareness of the late work of Monet and Renoir. Before his sojourn ended, however, the fauve approach with which "Alfy" Maurer was experimenting had become the predominant inspiration.

Dove's evolution can be traced from a New York realist painting of 1907 titled Stuyvesant Square [1] to the impressionist Untitled (French Landscape) of 1908-9 [2] and the fauve-inspired Landscape in Red, Yellow and Ultramarine in 1909 [3]. The Lobster [4], although dated 1908 by Dove, was probably painted in 1909 and shows the influence of Paul Cézanne and Henri Matisse more than that of Auguste Renoir and Claude Monet. The composition is reminiscent of Cézanne's focused frontal still lifes and the highly-keyed color, dark outlines, brushstroke, and decorative color of Matisse and his fellow fauves.

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18 Alan Solomon in Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. Arthur G. Dove 1880-1946: A Retrospective Exhibition, November 1954, 6, hereafter cited as White Museum of Art, and Morgan, 15, 39, noted that Cagnes was the city closest to where Auguste Renoir lived and that Renoir's vast influence on contemporary artists, including Dove, at this time is generally overlooked.
19 Cohn, 1985, 5, mentioned Marin and Weber, and Bruce, Carles, and Davidson are noted in San Francisco Museum of Art, 1974, 11. Morgan, 35 fn, cites Jo Davidson's biography Between Sittings (New York: The Dial Press, 1951), 65, which mentions that Dove introduced Davidson to his friends in the illustrating world of New York after they had each returned from Paris.
Arthur Dove, who was one of my Paris friends, introduced me to the Carlos Cafe on West Twenty-Fifth Street. It was then frequented by newspaper men, artists and writers. There I met Frederick James Gregg...Charles Fitzgerald, and the painter George Luks.
20 Morgan, 15.
André Derain, Albert Marquet, and Kees von Dongen. In light of these various influences and the fauvist concentration on landscapes, cityscapes, and portraits for subject matter, *The Lobster* serves as an early demonstration of Dove's ability to integrate differing styles and techniques to make his own work. This painting was exhibited in the Salon d'Automne in the Grand Palais des Champs-Elysées in Paris in October 1909 and is one of Dove's best known early works.²¹

1909-21: Return to the United States and First Encounter with Alfred Stieglitz

On his return to the United States in July or August 1909, Dove retreated for several weeks into the woods near his childhood home in Geneva where he contemplated his future as an artist. Dove must have felt more "himself" here in the woods where he had previously spent days absorbing Wetherly's pantheism and "home-grown transcendentalism."²² After emerging from his retreat, Dove, armed with an introduction from Maurer, presented himself and his work to Alfred Stieglitz in late 1909 or early 1910.

Morgan outlines the fundamental gulf between the backgrounds and temperaments of Dove and Stieglitz on the occasion of their first meeting. Stieglitz in 1910 was forty-six years old, an internationally renowned photographer, and "a New York art-world celebrity." Dove on the other hand was thirty and was just beginning to pursue his career.

Culturally, the unknown painter and the famous photographer represented opposite poles in American life. In contrast to Dove's Anglo-Saxon heritage and Protestant, small-town background, Stieglitz's experience had been urban, Jewish, intellectual, rooted in European culture. Having spent most of his adolescence on the Continent and sojourned there on several later occasions, he spoke German as easily as

²¹ Dove submitted a painting, *Pont-Croix*, to the Salon d'Automne of 1908 where he was listed as Arthur E. Door [sic], né à New York, living at 68, Bvd. Edgar-Quinet, Paris. Grand Palais des Champs-Elysées, Paris. *Catalogue des ouvrages, Salon d'Automne*, October 1-November 8, 1908, 98. Morgan, 39, believed that Dove misdated the work at a later date and that *The Lobster* was painted in 1909. Examination of 1909 works support her conclusion.

English, and he also knew French. The two men also had very different personalities. Gregarious, argumentative, shrewd, and autocratic, Stieglitz already had many "former friends," but he could also be warm and loving. Dove was gentle, contemplative, affectionate, and somewhat ingenuous by comparison to Stieglitz.  

In spite of their differences, however, Morgan notes:

Dove and Stieglitz were united by ideas. By this time [1909-1910], Dove must have developed in at least rudimentary form the basic motivations for both his art and life, since these ideas had widespread currency among the more forward-looking young artists. With them and with Stieglitz, Dove shared a critical attitude toward the materialism and narrowness of American life and a belief that the conventional art of their time was inadequate to the expression of contemporary values, which they defined in spiritual terms.

This belief, an intellectual rather than stylistic bond, is the thread that tied "Stieglitz's artists" to one another and to Stieglitz. Susan Noyes Platt describes this link as follows:

The Stieglitz circle as a group was unified primarily by critical ideas imposed on it by Stieglitz himself and by his most avid supporters among the critics, such as Paul Rosenfield. These ideas formed an effusive, expressive aura around the work of artists....[and] distorted the clarity of O'Keeffe and simplified the art of Dove.  

...[This] perception of the Stieglitz artists was often dominated by Stieglitz' own perspective and his concern for the expression of a universal spirituality.

Although Stieglitz started 291 in 1902 as a photographic exhibition space, he led it gradually toward the arts in general. By 1910, Stieglitz, as director of 291, was exhibiting the work of European artists like Auguste Rodin, Matisse, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Le Douanier Rousseau and, by 1911, Cezanne and Picasso. The gallery's evolution from a photographic to a more general artistic avant-garde emphasis is paralleled in Camera Work which, as Stieglitz' magazine, served as 291's mouthpiece. Stieglitz, as publisher of Camera Work, insured that the magazine was the repository of all manner of writings and

23 Morgan, 16.
24 Morgan, 17.
26 Jonathan Green in Camera Work: A Critical Anthology, (Millerton, N.Y.: Aperture, Inc., 1973), provides a helpful guide to the text and format of the magazine, however, he does not reprint all the articles and illustrations. His text will hereafter be cited as Green. Camera Work in its entirety is available on microfilm.
images of the highest quality. Both 291 and Camera Work were considered laboratories, places of experimentation, by those involved with the gallery and the publication. Classes from the Art Students League as well as curiosity seekers would visit the gallery to see the latest developments in art and to listen to Stieglitz expound on the meaning and mission of contemporary art. An Editors' Introduction to an article in Camera Work proclaimed:

This article in part conflicts with some of our views on photography, but we wish to reiterate for the nth time that articles published in the magazine do not necessarily reflect our own views. As a matter of fact but few of them do. It has been our policy—and it will continue to be our policy—to print such articles as we deem timely, interesting or provocative of discussion.

Green describes Camera Work from 1910-1915—the period during which Dove was most aware of it—as not only characterized by this spirit of debate but also as:

characterized by a dynamic exploration of all that was new and vital in artistic expression. Camera Work expanded its inquiries into the esthetics and spirit of photography and Post-Impressionism, becoming the voice and catalyst of the American avant-garde.

In addition to the laboratory attitude at 291, one senses, as Platt puts it, "religious overtones, and the idea of a schism between believers and non-believers." Whatever modernist European art and ideas Dove had not been exposed to in Paris he would soon see at 291 or in Camera Work.

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27 Green, 13, stated that Stieglitz's brief exposure to the photoengraving business had honed his already exacting eye in an attempt "to equate the reproduction with the qualities of the original."

As a result, Camera Work is a small encyclopedia of the mechanical printing processes available during the first seventeen years of this century. Along with straight photographs, there are mezzotint photogravures, duogravures, one-color halftone, duplex halftone, four-color halftones, and collotypes. It has been frequently remarked that the reproductions in Camera Work are often finer than the original prints....The format of Camera Work displayed the same concern for quality. ...Paul Rosenfeld has written that Camera Work "is itself a work of art; the lover's touch having been lavished on every aspect of its form and content...."


29 Green, 15.

30 Platt, 50.
Almost immediately after Dove introduced himself to Stieglitz he was included in the *Younger American Painters* exhibition in the winter of 1910, represented by *The Lobster*.  

B.P. Stephenson of the New York *Evening Post* wrote of the show:

> We have already spoken of these men, not knowing exactly what they are struggling to reach, and as they do not know themselves, it would be absurd for an outsider to attempt to point it out, but that they are honestly experimenting we have no doubt, and it is only as experiments that these pictures must be judged. They certainly are not masterpieces, and the men painted them do not pretend they are. They fight even among themselves as to what point it is which they hope to reach.

He mentioned Dove at the end of his article, writing that:

> Arthur Dove used to illustrate, but he went to Europe and was attacked by the epidemic rather badly, 1909, judging from his picture of fruit, but as yet he has not expressed individuality.

Even Elizabeth Cary of *The New York Times*, regarded as a conservative but open-minded critic, wrote on March 20, 1910:

> Mr. Dove’s table, on which are lobsters and grapes against a background of handsome figured chintz, is one of the more convincing canvases; but we confess ignorance of the general aim of the group, unless it is to make color and pattern do all the work of a picture, leaving out values of dark and light and substituting symbol for representation.

In 1910-11, Dove made the six *Abstractions* that are the foundation of his reputation as America’s first abstract painter, linked with such other early abstract painters as Wassily Kandinsky, Franz Kupka, Kasimir Malevich, and Piet Mondrian. These works

31 Dove’s first one-man show was a three-day exhibit that he organized at Hobart College, Geneva, in October 1909. The show consisted of twenty-seven paintings. Morgan, 15.  
33 Elizabeth Luther Cary, "News and Notes of the Art World," *The New York Times Magazine*, March 20, 1910, 15, reprinted in *Camera Work*, no. 31 (July 1910): 45. According to Arlene R. Olson, *Art Critics and the Avant-Garde, New York, 1900-1913* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1980), 57-74, hereafter cited as Olson, Cary was moderate in her views and was prone to "search for ethical values in the artists she reviewed." Olson, 61, mentions the area in which Cary was liable to be most favorable to Dove. "One initial concern which shaped Cary's philosophy was an artist's use of imagination. She recognized imagination as the core, even the root of all art. It was the primary source of the creative impulse, the force that was able to give life to abstract ideas and emotions."
were not exhibited until after Dove's death and are considered experimental studies. William Agee, Alfred Frankenstein, Hilton Kramer, and Alan Solomon have all pointed out that these works "rely on the world too much as seen" to be considered abstract today.34

Dove's work throughout his career does "rely on the world" about him; it is the wellspring of his artistic vision. Cohn relates that Dove relied on the "organic analogy" to explain his work. She writes:

As it derived from Romantic nature theory, this convention assumes that there is an innate correspondence between organic growth and artistic creation. Like a plant, the work of art is vital. It grows spontaneously from a root and unfolds its form gradually outward. ... The artist's work achieves the vitality of nature by embodying those principles which characterize the structure and development of nature. Thus, an understanding of nature's inner function and laws was necessary for artistic creation.

Works such as Abstraction No. 3, 1910-11 [5], for example, can be seen both as an abstraction and a forest of trees against a lake and waterfall. Morgan remarks that Dove never created another representational work after meeting Stieglitz:

Within two years, through Stieglitz and the "291" ambience, Dove had transformed himself from a competent but derivative painter to a leader in international, avant-garde developments.36

This leadership, she noted, bestowed on Dove a reputation for radicalism throughout the decade even though he produced very little.

Dove's work changed greatly between 1910 and 1912 and, in 1912, Stieglitz gave Dove a solo exhibition at 291 that then traveled to the W. Scott Thurber Galleries in Chicago. The works of 1911-12 that were exhibited in New York and Chicago are


35 Cohn, 1985, 12.
36 Morgan, 18.
collectively referred to as the *Ten Commandments*. They measure about 18 by 22 inches and are all pastel on different grounds. The *Ten Commandments* as a group are less abstract than the unexhibited *Abstractions* and their individual titles give the viewer insights into Dove's sources. *Nature Symbolized No. 1*, or *Roofs*, 1911-12 [6] is reminiscent of Picasso's cubist view of a reservoir and town in *The Reservoir, Horta de Ebro*, 1909 [7]. Dove described his intent in *Nature Symbolized No. 2*, or *Wind on a Hillside*, 1911-12 [8]:

Then one day I made a drawing of a hillside. The wind was blowing. I chose three forms from the planes on the sides of the trees, and three colors, and black and white. From these was made a rhythmic painting which expressed the spirit of the whole thing. The colors were chosen to express the substances of those objects and the sky. There was the earth color, the green of the trees, and the cyan blue of the sky. These colors were made into pastels carefully weighed out and graded with black and white into an instrument to be used in making that certain painting.  

In both these pastels, Dove has worked from nature, "extracting" (a phrase he coined in 1929) the forms important to him and animating the whole with his singular view.

Dove's work was widely reviewed in New York and Chicago and the response firmly established his reputation as a modern artist. J. Edgar Chamberlin, writing about the 291 exhibition, was nonplussed and yet captivated by the work in his review for *The Evening Mail*:

Mr. Dove, who has been an illustrator along somewhat conventional lines, is another of the young American artists who have seen a new and strange light, and have come out with something absolutely original and quite incomprehensible.... What is it all about? No one can tell—and yet the result is singularly agreeable. It makes us feel as we felt when we were six years old, and gazed through a kaleidoscope.... We should not be surprised if it turned out that Mr. Dove has developed a valuable decorative hint in these pictures.

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Arthur Hoeber wrote in *The New York Globe* in February 1912:

Now comes forward a man with still new notions as to what are the things to put on canvas, and this last to arrive on the scene is Mr. Arthur Dove, who in his time was one of the leading illustrators, with a charming notion of the humorous, a rational view of humanity, and an altogether delightful draughtsman who previously depicted the follies of present-day men and women. Alas, he has now entered the lists as one of the new movementors [sic], and weird and astonishing are the results of his researches. One thing, however, is to his credit. He does not travesty humanity, the landscape, or still life; on the contrary, he seeks to present patterns, and offers a scheme of color with these that, while not appealing to the present reviewer, is at least less objectionable than that of his confreres in these departures.\(^\text{40}\)

Chamberlin and Hoeber noted characteristics in the work that we find in much of Dove's work—an interest in color and pattern, humor, and a sense of delightfully disorienting revelation.

It was probably in discussions at 291 and in *Camera Work* that Dove initially came into contact with the idea as well as the visual realization of caricature, symbolic portraiture, and the idea of equivalence, that is "this can stand for that." There were examples of symbolic portraiture in Stieglitz's and Dove's immediate circle, and elsewhere. "Word-portraits" of Picasso and Matisse by Gertrude Stein (1909) and abstract geometric portraits by Marius de Zayas (1913) were reproduced in *Camera Work*, and Francis Picabia's mechanomorphic portraits (1915) were reproduced in 291. Symbolic portraits of a deceased soldier friend from 1914-15 by Marsden Hartley were exhibited twice in New York in 1916. After *Camera Work* ceased publication, Stieglitz began making his series of portraits of Georgia O'Keeffe and studies of clouds, the *Equivalents*, and, by the mid-1920s Demuth was painting his symbolic poster portraits. If Dove was not familiar with these previously, examples of Demuth's and Stieglitz's work were included in the *Seven Americans* exhibition of 1925.\(^\text{41}\)


\(^{41}\) The Hartley's in the exhibition were limited to landscapes and still lifes but there were twenty-seven *Equivalents* included in the show and seven of Demuth's *Poster Portraits* including those of Dove, Duchamp, Charles Duncan, Hartley, Marin, and O'Keeffe.
Dove was unable to produce much in these post-Paris years after 1912 as he settled into a life of farming, fishing, and impoverished domesticity. In 1909 his purchase of a house in Westport, Connecticut, was reported in the local newspaper.\textsuperscript{42} He and Florence did not move into their new house for over six months until Dove renovated it and William was born, on July 4, 1910.\textsuperscript{43} In 1912, Dove purchased Beldon Pond Farm, where he continued to try to support himself by raising chickens and vegetables, crabbing, and briefly working as a lobsterman. While life was difficult for Dove, Westport was not a cultural backwater: residents and visitors included the silent film actor William S. Hart, the photographer Paul Strand, and writers Sherwood Anderson, Van Wyck Brooks, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Paul Rosenfeld. Gallati concludes that in Westport:

Dove could enjoy a life close to the soil yet still keep abreast with what was developing in avant-garde circles. He remained in constant touch with Stieglitz throughout the Westport period.\textsuperscript{44}

Around 1916, Dove took up illustrating again to supplement his clearly inadequate income, moving to New York in 1917, and living in his Stuyvesant Square apartment. "When he returned to illustration [around 1919], Dove's work regained its earlier popularity although he remained diffident about it."\textsuperscript{45} In 1917, as a further solution to their economic difficulties, Florence Dove and another woman opened and operated the Turnpike Tea House in Westport.\textsuperscript{46}

The works from this period are primarily additions to the Ten Commandments group. Morgan suggested that Dove may even have virtually stopped painting from 1917-21 except for some strong charcoal drawings that were not exhibited until later [9]. His work was included in a few shows between 1912 and 1925: the most important was the Forum

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{42} AAA, American Art Exhibitions Catalogs, 1803-1945, roll NHS 1, frames 568-78.
\textsuperscript{43} Morgan, 35 14n, cited the Westporter-Herald, December 10, 1909.
\textsuperscript{44} Morgan, 15.
\textsuperscript{45} Gallati, 18.
\textsuperscript{46} Gallati, 19.
\textsuperscript{46} Morgan, 19. Dove only summered in Westport for the next few years.
\end{flushleft}
Exhibition of Modern American Painters in 1916.\textsuperscript{47} Stieglitz was a member of the six-man committee led by Willard Huntington Wright that organized the show. Dove was represented by sixteen works, all from 1911-12, all abstract, and all from the group called Nature Symbolized. Pieces from the Westport era are scarce in part because Dove had so little time to paint and in part because, according to Wight, he destroyed work:

Of the little he produced in those years much was destroyed, enough to require a ritual, devised by an etcher-lithographer friend [Ernest Haskell]; together they dug a hole behind the studio and buried the experiments. What remained, the Westport yield, was a modest number of pestels [sic]. His son was forbidden to go into the room where they were made, and he remembers that his father was rarely there.\textsuperscript{48}

However, there is some disagreement over the veracity of this story. Suzanne Mullett Smith was the first to report it in her 1944 master's thesis on Dove, and Morgan believed it apocryphal.\textsuperscript{49} Dove and Florence separated around 1920 and Morgan reports that:

when he had departed, he had left behind possessions that his wife sold. Among the things he was careful to salvage, however, were his copies of Camera Work and Stieglitz's letters.\textsuperscript{50}

The 1920s

In 1921, Dove started painting again. Morgan attributes his return to painting in part to the emotional release brought on by the death of his father as well as to his blossoming romance with Helen Torr, better known as "Reds"\textsuperscript{[10]}. O'Keeffe and Stieglitz had started living together in 1918 and Morgan believed that their example freed Dove

\textsuperscript{47} Anderson Galleries, New York. Forum Exhibition of Modern American Painters, March 13-25, 1916. Seventeen artists were selected out of the fifty invited to submit work. There were a total of 200 works of art in the exhibition. Morgan, 18, noted that Dove declined to participate in the Armory Show of 1913. She speculated that Dove declined "because Stieglitz, although listed among the sponsors of the show, was not one of the main forces behind it. Perhaps he distrusted the magnitude and sensationalism of the show. Perhaps he was just too busy."

\textsuperscript{48} Whitney Museum of Art, 1958, 41.
\textsuperscript{49} AAA, Smith Papers, roll 1043, frames 1143-44, and Morgan, 70 37n.
\textsuperscript{50} Morgan, 20. Cohn, 1985, 7, reported as evidence of the bitterness of this separation that Dove even left behind his easel and paints! In fairness to Florence Dove, Stephen Westfall has noted how grueling their life together was and how difficult it must have been for her to raise and maintain their family. Stephen Westfall, "Abstract Naturalism," Art in America 73, no. 5 (May 1985):128, hereafter cited as Westfall.
and Torr to live together on a houseboat moored in Manhattan.\textsuperscript{51} There was a negative side to this romance--Dove became permanently estranged from his wife, Florence, who would neither grant him a divorce nor allow him to see his child, William, despite his continued financial support. In fact, it was not until after Florence's death in 1929 that Dove and his son were reconciled and, only then, were Dove and Torr free to marry.\textsuperscript{52}

After the houseboat, Dove and Torr moved into the forty-two foot yawl \textit{Mona} \textsuperscript{11} that Dove purchased from his friend, the actor Bill Hart, in late 1922. Dove and Torr took the boat from Manhattan to the north shore of Long Island where, from July 1924 until July 1933, they moored in the area near Halesite and Huntington, wintering on land from 1927 until 1933.\textsuperscript{53} It was under these conditions that the portrait collages were conceived and constructed.

The 1925 \textit{Seven Americans} exhibition was Dove's first exhibition since the 1916 \textit{Forum Exhibition} and was obviously very important to Dove. The inclusion of the collages reflects not only how much Dove liked the works but how significant Stieglitz thought they were. The \textit{Seven Americans} exhibition consisted of 159 works assembled at the Anderson Galleries in New York to mark the twentieth anniversary of the founding of 291. From this point on, Stieglitz showed John Marin, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Dove almost every year until his death in July 1946. These exhibits inevitably generated critical response on the strength of the exhibitions and Stieglitz's high repute. The development of the artists and the critics is thus recorded in their annual confrontations in print. Reviews of art exhibitions appeared regularly in all of New York's major newspapers as well as a number of other journals.

\textsuperscript{51} Morgan, 20. AAA, Dove Correspondence, roll 725, frames 59-69, contains letters from Stieglitz to Dove on how to get accustomed to divorce and living together, and reassuring him that their difficult situation will improve, October 24, 1922.
\textsuperscript{52} Dove and Torr were married in 1932.
\textsuperscript{53} On July 23, 1924, Dove wrote in his diary that they had had a "swell day" moving from Manhattan to Lloyd's Harbor on Long Island Sound. AAA, Dove-Torr Diaries, roll N70-52, July 23, 1924.
As previously noted, Dove was represented by twenty-one works, thirteen of which were collages—close to the same amount of work that he would have had in a one-man show. Royal Cortissoz of The New York Herald Tribune saw craftsmanship in the work of O'Keeffe and the portrait posters of Demuth, "But we remain utterly untouched by Mr. John Marin's incoherencies in water color, by the strained pleasantries of Mr. Arthur G. Dove and the crudities of Mr. Marsden Hartley."\(^{54}\) The reporter for the New Yorker was more open to Dove's paintings but less intrigued by the collages:

> We are not liberated enough for more than a smile for the watch springs, saws, files and other media that Arthur Dove utilizes for his compositions, but we can stand all day in awe before his storm clouds and abstractions.

Less than a year later, Dove had the second show in Stieglitz's new space, The Intimate Gallery, from January 11 through February 7, 1926. The exhibition consisted of between twenty and twenty-five works, at least ten of which were collages including Portrait of Ralph Dusenberry, Goin' Fishin', Grandmother, and possibly The Critic, The Intellectual, and Reds. Mentions of the show were generally sympathetic; however, comments on the collages ranged from Prosper Buranelli's relatively straight description to Murdock Pemberton's printed wish that Dove would abandon this pursuit in favor of painting. Buranelli's long article in May 1926 traced Dove's ideological differences with his father and romanticized the younger Dove's dilemma. He characterized Dove's recent work as follows:

> Recently Dove gave a second exhibition in Stieglitz's studio. The time since his first show reveals a further departure from orthodox esthetic theory. He is experimenting with the use of various stuffs, along with paint, bits of fabric affixed to a picture, a disk of gauzy cloth to give the disk of the moon, sticks of bamboo glued to the canvas to represent the idea of a fishing pole in a picture of a negro fishing off a pier.\(^{56}\)


\(^{55}\) Unsigned review, "Art," New Yorker 1, no. 6 (March 28, 1925): 17.
Pemberton was not at all happy about this turn of events. In January 1926, he wrote:

All of which is to let us know, and some will take the news sadly, that Arthur Dove is now on a path where few can follow. With Stieglitz we must agree—if you accept a man as an artist, you must be ready to believe that anything he did is right....

Three weeks later, he is still unsettled:

Of all the moderns we get most repose from Dove, in his old mediums. Secretly we hope he is wrong in his new endeavors. The current show is the lifetime of an artist and you should see it if you are interested in such things deeper than your eye.

The New York Times critic was cautious and yet inadvertently has pinpointed the source of the evocative power of the collages:

Part of the danger of using familiar objects for new purposes is that the spectator cannot free himself of the usual associations of an object. A button will also hunt a buttonhole. This very association should be given some subtle power.

The critical response Dove elicited in 1925-26 was mild when compared to the newspaper accounts of Younger American Painters at 291 in 1910 and of his exhibition at 291 and the Thurber Galleries in Chicago in 1912. However, there were murmurs of relief in the critical world from 1927 onward that Dove’s collage experiments were passing. A writer for the New York World Telegram confessed to not liking or understanding the work.

Like others in the Stieglitz fold, Mr. Dove remains in the symbolic field to his own material detriment, which should be proof enough of his complete sincerity.

Pemberton wrote the following for the New Yorker in 1927:

His present show is no longer a rebellion but rather a patient interlude on the part of an artist who is so far ahead of the crowd that he sometimes chafes at their inability to catch up or even to glimpse his vision. Gone are the bits of driftwood and sand that nature had composed for him.... If you have tired of what is often called modern art and can see no sense to it, we advise a visit to the Dove show.

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60 Author unknown, "Rhapsody in Blue Defined in Color Terms," New York World Telegram, December 18, 1927, 9M, in AAA, Downtown Gallery Papers, roll ND70, frame 530.
While more or less scorning to use nature or reality, Dove has made a gesture of borrowing, if not their semblance, at least their patterns.  

In 1929, Edward Alden Jewell reiterated that he was glad that Dove was no longer doing collage and Pemberton says, "Don't miss this show if you are interested in America's best."  

Dove has often been portrayed as a hermit, cut off from the mainstream and working in the wilderness, pursuing his singular vision, unconcerned with and separate from New York's art world. Stieglitz encouraged and promoted this view of Dove. Elizabeth McCausland held to this view. And, even twenty years after Dove's and Stieglitz's deaths, Hilton Kramer titled an article for The New York Times "The Loneliness of Arthur Dove." In 1985, Kramer pursued this theme, disdaining the search for sources of Dove's art and seeing strength in Dove's independence:

[After 1908] everything in the work of Dove's maturity seems to be self-generated. Ann Lee Morgan dredges up everything she can in the way of identifying roots, sources, influences, etc., but in the end offers nothing more definitive than a parcel of speculations and probabilities.

George Wolfer points out that Dove made revealing choices in his living conditions and Johnson writes:

65 Kramer, 1985: 37.
In choosing farms or boats as dwellings, Dove...revealed even more than his love of
the soil and the sea. In both situations, he was placing himself where he might be
master of his own destiny, in control of his own schedule, independent.  
68

There is truth to Dove's self-imposed isolation insofar as Dove realized that in order to
create he needed time to himself to observe nature's way. As Cohn remarked:

In Romantic thought the solitary encounter with nature is an experience which
carries great inner authority. It is a way to transcend the limits of the self and
partake in a higher order of reality. It is also a means to preserve a sense of
mystery in the world and heighten that cherished condition of inwardness.
However Dove was certainly not a lonely, Ryderesque hermit, lost in the throes of
self-absorption.  
67

But he was also a social individual who was generous, curious, entertained frequently,
corresponded with a number of people, and was interested in his fellow artists. Among
Dove's friends in Westport and on Long Island were an intellectually-oriented group of
artists and writers. Frequent visitors to the Mona included Elizabeth and Donald
Davidson, Alfred Maurer, and Holly and Henry Raleigh, as well as neighbors like Van
Wyck Brooks and Paul Rosenfeld. 68 John Marin and Rebecca and Paul Strand are
mentioned often in the Dove-Torr diaries and Wight listed Sherwood Anderson, Waldo
Frank, Gaston Lachaise, and O'Keeffe as good friends. 69 Morgan wrote that "Dove was
universally loved" and quoted an August 1920 letter from Rosenfeld to Stieglitz, "No one
can help being attracted to him." 70

But beyond his circle of friends, Dove read newspapers and magazines other than Camera

Cohn, 1985, 6. She also noted that all the members of Stieglitz's circle retained a
certain distance from New York.
68 Donald Davidson and his wife, Elizabeth Stieglitz Davidson (Stieglitz's niece), were
close friends of Dove and Torr as well as confirmed Vedantists, a sect of Hindu. Cohn,
1985, 50. Henry and Holly Raleigh were friends of Dove's in Westport and later of
Dove and Torr's on Long Island. Raleigh is described as an artist and leading
illustrator; he also purchased some of Dove's work. Morgan, 169.
70 Letter of August 30, 1920, cited in Morgan, 16, 35 17n.
Work.\textsuperscript{71} He checked books out of the library and he and Torr bought and were given books. The diaries mention books on various technical aspects of painting as well as books on philosophy (Confucianism, Plato, Henri Bergson), religion (Chinese and Indian), and novels.\textsuperscript{72} In addition, Cohn includes among their reading interests:

Bergson, Spinoza, Plato, Patanjali, Dostoevsky, Rilke, Nietzsche, Havelock Ellis, Bertrand Russell, Aldous Huxley, D.H. Lawrence, Cervantes, Emerson, and Jean Cocteau, among others. Dove especially admired James Joyce and Gertrude Stein.\textsuperscript{73}

Morgan adds:

As a voracious reader, Reds was an important conduit. She read many more books--both classics and new works--than Dove did and probably read more of the magazine articles. However, it is obvious from many comments in her diaries that they talked a great deal about ideas, and she must have often drawn his attention to things he otherwise might have missed.\textsuperscript{74}

Stieglitz, too, was a voracious reader. A single letter to Dove on June 23, 1924, mentioned that he was reading Georg Morris Cohen Brandes’ two-volume biography of Voltaire (1923), J.B.S. Haldane’s *Daedalus; or Science and the Future* (1923) and Bertrand Russell’s *Icarus; or The Future of Science* (1924). Next, he planned to read *The Travel Diary of a Philosopher* (c. 1925) by Count Hermann Keyserling and *Ulysses* (1924) by James Joyce.\textsuperscript{75} Cohn reiterates the importance of science to the artists in Stieglitz’s circle. Of Dove, she writes:

The bearing of science on Dove’s art derives from his profound need for a unified knowledge. Being a modern artist (and the epithet was significant for him) meant being au courant, not only on art but on all significant human endeavors.\textsuperscript{76}

Dove’s exposure to art and ideas was clearly not limited to the Stieglitz circle: he traveled into New York from his Long Island mooring frequently to pick up and deliver

\textsuperscript{71} Specific newspapers and magazines mentioned are *Life*, *The Dial* and *New Yorker*. Those mentioned in diaries are usually related to exhibition reviews or Dove’s jobs.
\textsuperscript{72} AAA, Dove-Torr Diaries, roll N70-52. See Chapter 2, 65n; Chapter 3, 40n.
\textsuperscript{73} Cohn, 1985, 10.
\textsuperscript{74} Morgan, 71 64n.
\textsuperscript{75} AAA, Dove Correspondence, roll 725, frames 82-87.
\textsuperscript{76} Cohn, 1985, 19.
illustrations, and occasionally he must have visited exhibitions that intrigued him. The diaries specifically mention that he saw the Oscar Bluemner show at J. B. Neumann's (December 1924), Maurer's show at Weyhe Gallery (January 1926), and that Duchamp gave him a catalogue of the 1926 Société Anonyme exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum (April 1926).\textsuperscript{77}

\textbf{Dove on Dove}

So far this paper has examined how other people have judged Dove's work. One must look to Dove's writings to uncover his intentions and his view of his work. He explained in 1927 his attitude toward the wellspring of his work:

Why not make things look like nature? Because I do not consider that important and it is my nature to make them this way. To me it is perfectly natural. They exist in themselves, as an object does in nature.

I should like to take the wind and water and sand as a motif and work with them, but it has to be simplified in most cases to color and force lines and substances, just as music has been done with sound.\textsuperscript{78}

He did not deny that he was an abstract painter but preferred the term "extract" to describe his creative process. He wrote the following in 1929:

\begin{quote}
Jan. 12 -- Just now I am trying to put a line around, in, and through an idea. After that, or at the same time, to thoroughly grasp or sense the light condition in which that idea exists. The rest is just trying to make everything you put down say the same thing in different ways as hard as possible, and with order, or disorder, if necessary, to make the sensation completely realized.

March 5th -- Perhaps art is just taking out what you don't like and putting in what
\end{quote}


From notes of trips into New York in the diaries he might have seen other exhibitions such as the works of Max Weber at Neumann (June 10, 1924), William Zorach at Kraushaar (October 22, 1924), and Georges Seurat at Brummer (December 4-5, 1924) mounted at these times. AAA, Dove-Torr Diaries, roll N70-52, and Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington, \textit{Avant-Garde Painting and Sculpture in America, 1910-1925}, April 4-May 18, 1975, 169-70, William Innes Homer, editor and contributor, hereafter cited as Delaware Art Museum.

you do.

There is no such thing as abstraction. It is extraction, gravitation toward a certain direction, and minding your own business.

If the extract be clear enough its value will exist. It is nearer to music, not the music of the ears, just the music of the eyes. It should necessitate no effort to understand. 79

Dove attempted to convey the essence of what he saw and his responses. He believed that a sensitive individual could tap into primal creative matter, distilling sensation, intuition, and understanding to an essence. Dove wrote a long letter to Samuel Kootz that was published in Modern American Painters. In this letter he explained his working method and his terminology. His goals he described as follows:

If one could paint the part that goes to make the spirit of painting and leave out all that just makes tons and tons of art.

Feeling that the "first flash" of an idea gives its most vivid sensation, I am at present in some of the paintings trying to put down the spirit of the idea as it comes out. To sense the "pitch" of an idea as one would a bell. 80

Cohn writes:

To simplify, to reach the underlying essence of things, to reconcile opposites in the knowledge that truth is unified, this was Dove's enduring concern.

She notes that Dove copied the following passage from Plato's Phaedo into his 1925 diary:

And do we know the nature of the abstract essence?  
To be sure he said.  
And when did we obtain our knowledge? Did we not see equality of material things such as pieces of wood and stone and gather from them the idea of an equality which is different from them? For you will acknowledge that there is a difference.  
Or look at the matter another way. Do not the same pieces of wood or stone appear at one time equal and at another time unequal?  82

The making of art was clearly an intuitive, spiritual issue for Dove.

Summary

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80 Kootz, 36, 38.
81 Cohn, 1985, 15.
82 Ibid.
This chapter has presented Dove’s life until 1924 and a survey of possible artistic influences. Newton Wetherly encouraged an independent and idealistic Dove. Furlong, Sloan, Glackens, Lawson, and Luks were embodiments of self-supporting artists. Maurer, with his widespread connections in Paris’ art community, introduced Dove to his fellow artists and art movements, especially fauvism. Stieglitz as artist, friend, and dealer was a lifelong support. As gallery director, challenged by Eduard Steichen and Marius de Zayas, Stieglitz introduced America and Dove to avant-garde art. Demuth, Duchamp, Hartley, Lachaise, Marin, O’Keeffe, Picabia, and Strand also encouraged Dove and, by their presence, gave him a loosely bound but supportive circle. Reporters like Sherwood Anderson, Van Wyck Brooks, Waldo Frank, Jewell, McCausland, Pemberton, and Rosenfeld were consistently supportive of Dove’s endeavors and struggled to understand and explain them to the public.

Torr was even more important to Dove than Stieglitz. A fellow artist, she was extremely understanding and respectful of his need to work. There are frequent notations in the Dove-Torr diaries of them both painting. Morgan noted that Torr’s work was shown with Dove’s at An American Place in March-April 1933 but that Stieglitz did not encourage her. O’Keeffe tried to help by including her in a show that she organized for another gallery. Torr would probably be better known if she had been more confident of her abilities and aggressive about exhibiting but as Morgan concludes, "Her lifetime output is simply too small for her to be considered an important artist, but the quality of her extant work confirms her ability."83 Dove could probably have done more to promote Torr but she allowed her career to be subsumed by his, working less and less. By the late 1930s she was not painting at all and since this was the period when Dove’s heart disease set in, one presumes she spent most of her time caring for him.84

83 Morgan, 26.
84 Torr (1886-1967) was an accomplished if not confident artist whose work shows many of the same modernist influences as Dove’s does although their work is not similar. In
By the mid-1920s a number of influential artists, American and European, had shown their work in the burgeoning art world of New York. Stieglitz had shown the Americans Demuth and Hartley, the Europeans Georges Braque, Paul Cézanne, Matisse, Picabia, Picasso, Gino Severini, and Max Weber as well as Marius de Zayas, children's drawings, African sculpture and Mexican pottery. Montross Gallery had shown Jean Crotti, Marcel Duchamp, Albert Gleizes, Jean Metzinger, and Vincent van Gogh. De Zayas' Modern Gallery exhibited many of the European artists that Stieglitz had shown plus Juan Gris, Joseph Stella, and the Mexican Diego Rivera as well as the Americans John Covert, Morton Schamberg, and Charles Sheeler. The Société Anonyme, founded in 1920, showed work by Alexandre Archipenko, Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Fernand Léger, and Kurt Schwitters.85

Platt insists that the art of the 1920s be regarded as a fabric composed of a wide variety of artistic theories and styles, distinct from the work of the previous decade, and far broader in its critical and popular reach. She states that:

A dominant characteristic of the development of modernism in the 1920s in New York is the simultaneous appearance of different styles and their concomitant theories....

The interpretation of art during this intense period was open to anyone who wished to take on the responsibility.86 The result was an outpouring of opinion and impassioned interpretation....

After examining the portrait collages in detail in the next chapter, in the third chapter I will survey the names and styles of his counterparts in an attempt to discern what Dove may have seen and found influential.

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85 Delaware Art Museum, 162-70.
86 Platt, 2.
Chapter 2

Introduction

Dove's twenty-seven collages represent a small but unique part of his oeuvre. They are varied in style and subject but include two distinct groups--landscapes and portraits. The landscapes range from the light-hearted *Huntington Harbor* [12] to the sublime *Sea II* [13]. Dove chronicled his daytime activities like sailing in *Huntington Harbor II* [14] and nighttime activities like star gazing in *Starry Heavens* [15]. These works were made as Dove arrived at the mature period of his life and art, and they reflect many of the influences of the previous forty years: Wetherly's craftsmanship and respect for materials, the folk art and Victorian ornament that surrounded him in Geneva, the crucial development of collage by Braque and Picasso, and the wit, humor, and inventiveness conveyed in the works of Dove's contemporaries De Zayas, Duchamp, Picabia, and Picasso. Dove made three-quarters of these collages in a concentrated period from 1924-26. In 1924 alone, seven of the ten documented works are collages and, of the other three, one was painted on a watch crystal, one on cardboard and the third on plywood. From 1924-31, Dove experimented with such unorthodox supports as tin, zinc, and aluminum as well as unconventional metallic paints.

This was a period of great invention and creativity for Dove although there was a general loss of idealism in the western world and a growing isolationism in the United States. Dove was the only one of the early American modernists who continued to explore the possibilities of abstraction. Barbara Haskell charts the disillusionment of the 1920s, quoting Alfred Kazin who wrote in 1942, "Nothing was so dead in 1920 as the crusading spirit of 1910." Americans retreated from their former international stance and tried to define themselves in a:

search for cultural identity [that] erupted in a wave of nationalistic fervor that was manifested by the Red Scare, the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti, the passage of the immigration restriction laws, the rejection of United States membership in the League of Nations, the rise of the Ku Klux Klan and the Scopes trial.\(^1\)
Dove reacted strongly to this brand of Americanism in an oft quoted statement from a conversation with Alfred Maurer and Torr, held in Halesite:

When a man paints the El, a 1740 house or a miner’s shack, he is likely to be called by his critics American. These things may be in America, but it’s what is in the artist that counts. What do we call ‘American’ outside of painting? Inventiveness, restlessness, speed and change. Well then, a painter may put all these qualities in a still-life or an abstraction, and be going more native than another who sits quietly copying a skyscraper.

The American painter is supposed to paint as though he had never seen another painting.... The French come and go freely through the history of art, back and forth, from the early stone cutters to their own hieroglyphic-like work, everywhere along the road, taking what stimulates, adding, discarding, absorbing. How can one do otherwise? 3

Cohn concludes that, "For Dove there was no choice between being modern or American: he had to be both." 4 One can see in Dove’s collages his version of American inventiveness as well as a return to the concrete. The collages, "things" as Dove called them, are constructed of mundane objects. The viewer knows and can recognize what he is seeing without theory or external authority.

I will examine Dove’s portrait collages in chronological sequence because this presents the opportunity to observe changes in the method of fashioning the work as well as developments in the artist’s intent. The chronological approach, relying primarily on the diaries, confirms that, while Dove could work on illustrations, paintings, drawings, and collages in the course of the same day, he chose during this period to concentrate on the collages and investigate the possibilities of the medium. After examining the collages, in the final chapter, this paper will try to sort out the causes for Dove’s re-entry into art work with the radical collages.

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1 San Francisco Museum of Art, 1974, 40, 44.
3 Cohn, 1985, 97.
4 Cohn, 1985, 99.
The collages present a well-defined body of work made of similar materials, either found or purchased by Dove, framed by the artist, and exhibited by Stieglitz within the relatively brief period of time in which Dove was living on the Mona in Huntington Harbor. This period also marks his first years of freedom from his fifteen-year marriage. Dove, living on a boat with Torr, was in a sense blossoming in his liberation from his former obligations; he seems to have made a leap in his art as well. There had been a hiatus in Dove's production from 1917 until 1921 when he began painting again. From 1921 until the summer of 1924, Morgan listed only fourteen paintings, four of whose current whereabouts are unknown. Suddenly in 1924, Dove began experimenting with new ideas and produced ten new paintings that year and nineteen in the following. He must have been experiencing a recovery of sorts from an artistic block and/or the exhilaration of new discovery. The collage technique apparently freed him from whatever constraints were binding him and presented him with an avenue for exploration.

Seven of the eight portrait collages were made in 1924 and 1925. Although currently dated c. 1926 by Morgan, a case could be made for the eighth, Reds, having been fabricated during these years based on its similarities with the other portraits of 1924 or 1925. The dating of the portrait collages by other authors varies widely between 1924 and 1930 for all the collages. Morgan, however, seems the most reliable source since she had more archival material at hand and her dating of the collages corresponds to this author's findings, with the exception of Reds.

The collages themselves have been the subject of two exhibitions in addition to their original displays at the Intimate Gallery: Collages: Dove at the Downtown Gallery from November 1-26, 1955, and Arthur Dove: The Years of Collage at the Art Gallery, University of Maryland, College Park, from March 13-April 19, 1967. The 1955 show was organized by Edith Halpert and was accompanied by a brochure with a reproduction of The Intellectual and a checklist. In the 1967 show, Dorothy Johnson presented the results
of her thesis research in a concentrated study of the collages which related them to American folk art and exhibited them with modernist works by Maurer, Joseph Stella, and Weber, as well as samples of Wetherly’s paintings, works by an American collage artist Edward Plunkett (born 1922), and over twenty examples of 19th-century folk art. She delved into Dove’s youthful experiences and the American art community’s burgeoning fascination with folk art and primitivism between 1919 and 1924. Solomon, Wight and Haskell in their retrospective exhibitions of Dove’s work in 1954, 1958, and 1974, respectively, also study the collages. Sasha Newman included a few of the collages in her discussion of the relationship between Duncan Phillips as patron and Dove as artist.5

Portrait of Ralph Dusenberry

*Portrait of Ralph Dusenberry* is the earliest documented collage by Dove [16]. Ralph and Edith Dusenberry were friends and neighbors of Dove’s and Torr’s who also lived on a boat moored at Huntington. On August 24, 1924, Dove wrote in his diary, "Did caricature painting of Ralph Dusenberry."6 Here Dove uses a variety of materials and techniques: oil paint with collage elements like wood and a page from a hymnal. The collage is framed by two folding carpenter’s rulers that measure out the dimensions of the 22 by 18 inch piece. The rulers acknowledge Dusenberry’s career as an architect and handyman. Further reference to his career are the two weathered wooden shingles that dominate the composition. The uppermost shingle is cut into a triangular form that gives the impression of diving from right to left. This form is reminiscent of a bird or a fish owing to its painted eye, hints of salmon color, pencil markings and feathered tail. The lower shingle, also cut diagonally to make a point, could refer to the body of the fish or bird. It is also reminiscent of a sail, reinforcing the weathered marine quality of the piece. Formally, the

6 AAA, Dove-Torr Diaries, roll N70-52, August 24, 1924.
lower shingle balances the dominant upper right to lower left diagonal movement of the shingle above it by providing both a counter diagonal and a strong central vertical axis.

The painted ground varies from blue to green to grey to creamy whites. Dominating the left side of the collage is a painted portion of a flag, rumpled as if it were flying in a breeze. The flag is navy blue and infers a flag with an anchor encircled by a ring of stars. The flag might be the Yacht ensign flag [17] which Dove might have used because the truncated anchor resembles an R or it might be the flag of the Ketewomoke Yacht Club in Halesite where the Mona was moored. The salmon red stripe below it could represent the shadow of the diving form, a splash, or part of the flag. To the right of the wooden forms are scrubbed green strokes with salmon highlights and a charcoal black stroke that reinforce the diving or splashing analogy. The triad of black and beige arcs below the upper shingle enhance the marine flavor of the portrait by referring to waves as well as bird flight. The rounded ends of the ruler joints (note the joints at regular intervals between six and seven, twelve and thirteen, and eighteen and nineteen) reinforce this echo, resembling a stylized wave pattern. A curved black line with salmon and white highlights link the hymnal page, with its printed text and sheet music, with the lower shingle. When extended, this line unites the lower portion of the work, tying into the charcoal line on the right. This black line might represent a fishhook or an anchor, both of which would be appropriate attributes of Dusenberry. The line also resembles the curved form of a pipe—either a reference to the fact that Dusenberry smoked a pipe (although this is not mentioned in the diaries) or a very sly and subtle reference to cubism’s use of the pipe.

Another possible reference to cubism is a portion of a hymnal page with a fragment of the score to "Shall We Gather at the River?" a traditional elegiac hymn written by Robert Lowry in the second half of the 19th century, centered on the bottom of the collage.\(^7\) By

\[^7\] Exact dates for "Shall We Gather at the River?" are not given, however, Lowry lived 1826-1899. The song was adapted by Charles Ives in the early 20th century for
1912, Braque and Picasso were frequently incorporating fragments of songs and sheet music in their collages and often took musical instruments as their subject [18].

Dove commonly framed his own works and the viewer can assume that he applied the 1/4-inch round wooden molding framing the ruler. The entire work is encased in a box approximately 3/4-inch deep and is enclosed under glass. As previously mentioned, Portrait of Ralph Dusenberry was exhibited a number of times in the 1930s and 1940s before O'Keeffe gave it to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in 1949 as part of the Alfred Stieglitz Collection.

Dove and Torr enjoyed the companionship of Ralph and Edith Dusenberry when they were all living in the Huntington area, and a number of Ralph Dusenberry's exploits are recorded in their diaries between 1924 and 1926. Fortunately (and somewhat curiously) this first symbolic portrait collage is the only one for which Dove explained how the images relate to the subject of the work. Dove stated:

Apropos of the hymn in the "Ralph Dusenberry," the Dusenberrys lived on a boat near us in Lloyd's Harbor. He could dive like a Kingfish[er] and swim like a fish. Was sort of a foreman on the Marshall Field place. His father was a minister. He and his brother were architects in Port Washington. He drove into Huntington in a sleigh one winter and stayed so long in a cafe there [that] they had to bring a wagon to take him home. He came home to his boat one day with two bottles, making his wife so mad that she threw them overboard. He dived in right after them and came up with one in each hand. When tight he always sang "Shall We Gather at the River?".


Dove owned a recording of the tune and mentioned listening to it on October 20, 1924. AAA, Dove-Torr Diaries, roll N70-52, October 20, 1924. Judith Zilczer, in "Synaesthesia and Popular Culture: Arthur Dove, George Gershwin, and the "Rhapsody in Blue"." Art Journal 44, no. 4 (Winter 1984):361-66, discovered that Dove owned the first Whiteman recording of Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue." I have not yet found the source of the recording of "Shall We Gather at the River?" that Dove mentioned.

8 AAA, Dove-Torr diaries, roll N70-52, note frequently that Dove framed his works.
9 Morgan, 133.
Evidently Dusenberry was pleased with Dove’s depiction of him because Dove wrote in his diary on October 26, 1924, that "Ralph likes his portrait." 11

Dove’s way of capsulizing the man is primary and simple, conveying his history and character in a brief but vital way. His comments give us a model for the study and interpretation of the portrait collages since it is clear that each element has meaning and can also act on a variety of levels. Wight was the first author to publish the comments made by Smith in 1944 with Dove’s assent:

A printed piece of the song in the picture, the carpenter’s rule as a symbol of architecture makes a frame; the flag, the patriotic nature of Dusenberry, and the arrow forms his diving and swimming ability; while the weather-worn wood shingles suggest water and sun-soaked piers. 12

As Smith pointed out, the diving form refers to Dusenberry’s remarkable ability to swim and the weathered shingles to his life on the water. In light of Dove’s explanation of the piece, it seems obvious that the artist had a kingfisher and a fish in mind as he constructed this portrait of a man who "could dive like a Kingfish[er] and swim like a fish." The flag is nautical but also refers to his patriotism and freedom. "Shall We Gather at the River?" is, of course, Dusenberry’s drinking anthem but again refers to their life at the water and the fact that he was brought up in the church. The ruler refers to his work as an architect and handyman and, in concert with the old but still useful shingles, speaks of good hand-hewn craftsmanship and may serve to remind us that Dusenberry operated on the "straight and narrow." Wight introduces a literary precedent:

Ralph Dusenberry...is rich in the resources of the collage adventure, with its odds and ends put into evidence as a character study. In much the same fashion, the contemporary Scott Fitzgerald liked to build a personality with an inventory of habits, of things-found-in-the-pocket.... 13

11 AAA, Dove-Torr Diaries, roll N70-52, October 26, 1924.
12 Quoted in Whitney Museum of American Art, 1958, 52, and University of Maryland, 14.
13 Whitney Museum of American Art, 1958, 51. Sherwood Anderson, a Westport friend of Dove’s, was a some-time champion of America whose work could be posited as a literary influence on Dove.
Henry Geldzahler, curator of Twentieth-Century Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, characterized *Portrait of Ralph Dusenberry* in 1965 as follows: "With very few elements he [Dove] builds up a subtle characterization at the same time he presents a forceful picture image." He pointed out that while the collage is a precise reference to a specific individual, it is also visually delightful, even if the viewer does not know the subject.

*Portrait of Ralph Dusenberry* is a blend of conceptual measure and textural roughness, of muted and garish color, of light humor (in the fish face) and sophistication (in the frame). Here, Dove deals with abstract sign and abstract images in a number of ways. Obviously, the most important of these is the concept of making a portrait of another individual without any interest in creating a physical likeness. Dove grappled with the idea of how to make a portrait of his friend and neighbor and came up with a rectangular format containing a number of abstract references to Dusenberry’s attributes. The rulers, the numbers on them, the flag, the words, and the musical notations are all symbols of other things and carry specific messages that have been assigned to them. Dove, in turn, uses these symbols to create another symbol which should stand for the man Ralph Dusenberry.

**Miss Woolworth**

After completing *Portrait of Ralph Dusenberry*, Dove’s diary reveals that during the next month he worked on magazine illustrations, rented a studio for $5 per month, socialized, and also managed to start painting in his new studio. On September 26, 1924, he "made a new painting of Harbor" and on September 28 and 29, he "did painting of Storm." Two days later, on October 1, Dove wrote "Miss Woolworth was borned [sic]"

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Dove was busy making paintings, collages, and frames during the rest of October. He painted and framed *Sunrise*, the "new painting of Harbor," as well as four unidentified "portraits of Davidson, Alfy [Maurer], Capt. Eaton and [illegible]." He constructed collages from objects that caught his fancy at the Huntington 5-and-10-Cent Store. He mentioned working on two "10¢ store things" during October and on December 3 records that he "threw it [one of them] out." The remaining "10¢ store thing" is extant and is indicative of Dove's ability to compose enchanting collages out of unassuming materials. In *10¢ Store*, 1924, he constructed a delicate work from artificial flowers, a dried fern, three pipe cleaners, and a price sign for ten cents from F.W. Woolworth.

*Miss Woolworth*'s head is a molded mask ringed by a "halo" of hair. Gardening gloves are her hands and cork heels and felt innersoles constitute her feet. If one could discern the words on the soles there would certainly be a pun intended: imprinted in the heel is the phrase "A Heel of Merit." Stockings constitute her legs and torso. Being "Miss Woolworth," she is adorned with earrings, brooch, necklace, wristwatch, metal coin purse, and a "diamond" ring. She also carries a spray of artificial flowers. Dove tacked, rather than glued, the elements in this piece with pins with rhinestone heads. He uses these pins to decorative advantage and also to illumine the character of his subject. *Miss Woolworth* is a sturdy soul with a penchant for adornment and a giddy approach to life judging by the jaunty tilt of her head and her wide smile.

The dimensions (including the fringe border) were probably about 22 by 20 inches, judging from the scale of the innersoles, gloves and jewelry. There is no mention of the coloration of the piece in commentaries but one can conjecture that the mask was an

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15 AAA, Dove-Torr Diaries, roll N70-52, entries for September 26, 28, 29, and October 1, 1924.
16 AAA, Dove-Torr Diaries, roll N70-52, entries for October 3, 7-9, 19-25, 1924.
17 AAA, Dove-Torr Diaries, roll N70-52, entries for October 7-9, 19, and December 3, 1924.
exaggerated face while the gloves, stockings and innersoles were probably various beiges and browns, punctuated by the rhinestone pins and enlivened by the flowers. Dove may have enhanced Miss Woolworth’s lively countenance with paint; however, there is no evidence of paint in the photograph. If the fringe was colored it would have accentuated the exuberance of the portrait. Italian Christmas Tree, 1931 [21], was made several years later and embodied a whimsical, cheerful aspect similar in tone to Miss Woolworth.

Miss Woolworth was exhibited with Portrait of Ralph Dusenberry and Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz in the Seven Americans exhibition at the Anderson Galleries in March 1925. The collage elicited some responses at that time. Torr recorded on March 11, 1925, that "people [were] resentful of Miss Woolworth." 18 The piece was used by Pemberton to characterize all the collage works fabricated out of found objects:

The new things he has turned out this year are of the "Miss Woolworth" family: bits of driftwood, pine cones, sticks and stones, sea shells, cork insulation, blue steel covered with chiffon. To say that some of them are pure beauty and some are not is to put our limited esthetic sense as final appraisal. 19

Deoch Fulton was more enthusiastic and broadminded:

Dove seems to me the poet of the group, a poet with a sense of humor, who constructs both sonnets and limericks.... But it is ridiculous to suppose that the man who painted some of the canvases in Dove’s section is less than an artist because he also made a flapper of things, from the ten-cent store pasted on cardboard and called her "Miss Woolworth." 20

Miss Woolworth reportedly rusted out while in storage in New York City and has been dealt with little by critics since it was made. 21 This work now exists only in a black-and-white photograph, taken either in 1925, possibly by Stieglitz, or in the 1930s. 22 Although

18 AAA, Dove-Torr Diaries, roll N70-52, entry for March 11, 1925.
21 Smith’s card file of Dove’s works, compiled in 1942-43, notes that "Clyde Eddy says that it fell apart and is gone, 1943." The Downtown Gallery files agree, "Clyde Eddy said it fell apart due to age and rust and is no longer existent." AAA, Smith Papers, roll 1043, frame 557, and Downtown Gallery Papers, roll ND31, frames 372-73.
22 Miss Woolworth, was reproduced in the May 1935 Magazine of Art as Woolworth's,
the piece appears to have been composed on cardboard, Dove mentioned in his diary backing Miss Woolworth on October 2, 1924.\footnote{AAA, Dove-Torr Diaries, roll N70-52, entry for October 2, 1924.} If this backing was metal, the eventual rusting might be explained. Dove worked on the frame on December 19, 1924, and Torr mentioned the piece four times in her diary. In March 1925 she recorded that Dove framed Miss Woolworth and that it was part of the Seven Americans exhibition. Two-and-one-half years later, she added a cryptic note: "A[rthur] fished, caught 50 smelts. Telephoned Stieglitz about Miss Woolworth."\footnote{AAA, Dove-Torr Diaries, roll N70-52, entries for December 19, 1924, March 2-3, 1925, and November 14, 1927.}

The work is typical of Dove's portrait collages in its size, its inclusion of actual objects, and its representation of a recognizable figure. By employing identifiable "tools of the trade" to describe the subject, Miss Woolworth anticipates the use of the photographic plate in Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz, the fishing pole in Goin' Fishin', and newsprint in The Critic. Miss Woolworth, The Critic, and Italian Christmas Tree also share a certain giddiness in their stances and expressions. Dove is clearly having fun here building up these characters, but one also is aware of less interest in formal and aesthetic issues. This is surely intended and the piece succeeds as an entertaining work, executed with vigor and novelty.

In 1913, Samuel Swift pointed out that avant-garde artists in various locales in American and Europe were confronting the same issues. He used two, Picabia and Dove, as examples of artists from vastly different backgrounds who independently came to closely related artistic conclusions, each of whom was "evolving these symbols out of his inner consciousness."\footnote{Samuel Swift, Title unknown, The Sun (New York), March 1913, reprinted in Camera Work (New York), nos. 42-43 (April-July 1913): 48.} The question of influence arises again between Picabia and Dove in a remarkable collage by Picabia whose whereabouts are currently unknown. Retour des
barques, c. 1923-27 [22], includes shoe innersoles that represent sails in a bay. The use of shoe soles by these artists is worthy of remark since Picabia and Dove had been linked ten years before and because of their mutual respect for Stieglitz. However, as Camfield points out, the soles were used in different ways and there is not yet any evidence to indicate that either artist was aware of the other's work at this time. Miss Woolworth probably represents the department store's ideal customer, one adorned with all the inexpensive finery Woolworth's provides and one who, consciously or not, subtly imitates and mocks the finery of the real Miss Woolworth, herself a valuable commodity. 26

**Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz**

The third of Dove's portrait collages included in Seven Americans was Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz [23]. Like Portrait of Ralph Dusenberry, this is a portrait of a person whom Dove respected and the elements in the work refer to Stieglitz's profession. Like Miss Woolworth, the work is composed of collage elements and does not include any painting. Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz was immediately preceeded by "Long Island sand drawing," "Cloud sketches," and Starry Heavens [15]. Dove worked on this piece for a relatively long time during November 1924 and its progress is recorded more than any other portrait collage. On November 9, Dove noted, "Tried to do the Stieglitz thing," on November 22, "...stuff... for Stieglitz then worked on it," and the next day, "worked on Stieglitz portrait." Torr noted in her diary on November 25 that she "helped Arthur with Stieglitz portrait--held taper to make smoke on lens." The piece was completed by December 4 when both Dove and Torr remark on the subject's pleasure at receiving the piece at the gallery in

26 F.W. Woolworth's & Co. was founded in 1879 as a high-volume, low-cost (items literally cost five and ten cents) store. Hugely successful, the chain grew exponentially until it was a coast-to-coast operation by 1912. F.W.Woolworth (1852-1919) had three daughters who married between 1904 and 1912. He completed his New York skyscraper headquarters in 1913. In 1932, Woolworth's price ceiling climbed to twenty cents and during WWII, Woolworth's became a variety store with no fixed price ceiling. John P. Nichols, Skyline Queen and the Merchant Prince (New York: Trident Press, 1973).
New York. Dove wrote, "Stieglitz thinks portrait one of finest things he's ever seen--...(he said), Wait until Duchamp sees this." Torr added, "Up at 6.30.... Stieglitz came in soon. Arthur showed portrait of him first and that delighted him. He said all much more than he had expected." A critic for The New York Times wrote a thoughtful and yet damning review of Dove's contribution to Seven Americans:

Arthur Dove is using anything for his purpose, wood, sticks, stones, shells, glass, glue, and would use kings, surely, if he found he needed one for just the right word, and he finds the right word in the portrait of Stieglitz himself, for instance. Dove's is a funny joke and a beautiful joke, but at the risk of being accused of unsubtle humor, never, for this writer, does it become a serious joke. And it is only the serious, no matter how funny, with which art is concerned. Otherwise it will die tomorrow, and Arthur Dove is not really merry.

Stieglitz was the subject of a number of portraits in his lifetime [24]. As the sculptor Jo Davidson wrote in his autobiography, "When he [Stieglitz] talked art one could not get a word in edgewise, but his conversation was always illuminating and fascinating." Dove himself wrote of Stieglitz:

I always hear someone talking of the whole condition.
Someone I always like to hear talking.
Who is always saying something, something that has life rather than value.
It is like the voice of a fine old firm that made fine instruments for the love of their quality.
It is a great voice.
This voice will always be known.
Everyone who has known this voice knows that it will be, I mean the knowing ones.
This voice is the thing that has changed this America of ours.
Made something of hope in it.
It has quality.
I have the privilege of knowing the owner of this voice, and--I wouldn't trade it for anything.

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27 AAA, Dove-Torr Diaries, roll ND 70-52, November 9, 22, 23, and December 4, 1924.
29 Jo Davidson, Between Sittings (New York: The Dial Press), 1951, 64.
With his strong personality, mane-like moustache and hair, and self-appointed role as spokesman for the avant-garde art movement, Stieglitz was particularly susceptible to caricature. Marius de Zayas made three caricatures of Stieglitz that were reproduced in Camera Work in 1910 [25], 1912, 1913 [26], and one that appeared in 291 in March 1915 [27]. Man Ray portrayed Stieglitz in 1913 [28] and Picabia drew a "mechanomorphic portrait" of Stieglitz as a broken old-fashioned bellows camera for the cover of 291 in 1915 [29]. John Lane regarded Stuart Davis' 1921 ITLKSEZ [30] collage as an anagram for Stieglitz as well as its more conventional reading as the figure of a black jazz musician captioned "It looks easy."31 Dove's Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz is probably the least revealing of all of his symbolic portraits. Fortunately, a number of people have examined the piece and have made some progress on deciphering the symbolism.

Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz is framed with silver painted wood, set 1/2 inch under glass, and measures 16-1/2 by 12-1/2 inches. Like Miss Woolworth, objects are assembled and attached to a cardboard ground with no painting or drawing. Smith noted that many of the collages had been damaged while in Lincoln Storage and that Dove repaired them in 1944. Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz is the only piece that she mentioned by name:

It was here [Lincoln Storage] that I discovered that many of the collages had been affected by the atmosphere of storage, and had fallen apart into the bottoms of their frames. When Dove learned of this he was anxious to have them removed from storage so that he could put the parts back into place. He did so, and as a result, such collages as Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz now has its steel wool, springs and mirrors, mounted properly against the painted [sic] background.32

A camera lens, approximately two inches in diameter, is in the top center of the heavily oiled paper on plywood ground.33 The lens floats serenely above a ten-by-eight inch photographic plate that acts as a mirror. The circular form of the lens is repeated in

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32 AAA, Smith Papers, roll 1043, frame 398.
the watch and clock springs that reside on the plate. Both springs refer to time and 
movement; the small reflective watch spring appears to rotate and the clock spring’s spiral 
suggests growth and motion. Cohn traces Dove’s use of the spiral throughout his career. 
She writes:

As a result of the biological research of the late nineteenth and early twentieth 
centuries, a great deal of symbolic lore accumulated around the spiral because it 
was discovered to be a form pervasive in nature.... the spiral formation gives 
dramatic demonstration of natural growth based on enduring mathematical laws. 
For reasons such as these, the spiral acquired great symbolic meaning. It was an 
emblem of constancy and change, the inner law of vital force. Today we can 
hardly comprehend the significance attached to this form, but early in the century 
it held great promise of being visible evidence of nature’s invisible unity.  

Further, in her discussion of theosophy, she states that the:

conic spiral, an upwardly gyrating configuration, became an important intellectual 
conceit used to envision time and temporal development. Cyclical theories were 
widely prevalent in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries because they 
signified the change from a static to a dynamic world view.  

Dove’s use of the watch and clock springs to create these spirals surely was intentional. 

Dove wrote Stieglitz about the dynamism of the spiral in August 1925:

The future seems to be gone through by a spiral spring from the past. The tension 
of that spring is the important thing.  

A rectangular swatch of steel wool, the only random, indistinctly defined element in 
the composition, cuts diagonally across the plate. Although the plate is chipped along its 
edges and the glue used to adhere the plate and the clock spring has yellowed, the viewer 
is struck by the stable, classic geometry of the composition. Dove plays this ordered 
formality against the quicksilver mutability of the reflective plate surface, the smoky edges 
of the plate and lens, and the disorderly tangle of steel wool. The highly reflective nature 
of the plate causes the work to mirror the viewer and its surroundings. This quality is 
apparent even in photographs of the piece. From a distance the dark discoloration at the

34 Cohn, 1985, 32.
35 Cohn, 1985, 60.
36 Quoted in Cohn, 1985, 60.
bottom of the plate can be read as a horizon line with a Milky Way of steel wool and the swirling orbit of the universe. Dove surely reveled in double entendre and the ambiguity between microcosm and macrocosm, and may have been alluding to the work and influence of his mentor.

How does this work capture Stieglitz as Dove knew him at this time? Laurie Lisle, in her 1986 biography of O'Keeffe, describes Stieglitz's appearance around 1915:

There was much about him that was contradictory. One friend observed that his shapely head had two looks—a jagged one due to a nose with a broken bridge, and one in which the planes of his face were smooth. His finely chiseled mouth was as sensitive as a girl's, but his graying hair bristled fiercely, even from his ears. Under his dour black cape, he often wore a flamboyant red vest.37

Lisle quotes another contemporary of Stieglitz's:

The great photographer's deep-set eyes "were like two powerful lenses," wrote Mabel Dodge, "and when he turned them upon one they burned through to the core." ... Nevertheless, Stieglitz's "laboratory" of ideas, as he liked to call it, continued to exert its magnetic effect.38

While the piece does not convey Stieglitz's flamboyance, a resemblance to the photographer's piercing eyes, bristling hair, elegance, and career can be inferred from the collage. Authors of studies on Dove's oeuvre have pointed out how well this collage describes Stieglitz. Wight states in his exhibition catalogue of 1958 that:

The title for once told all, that Stieglitz looked with a magnifying eye, that he mirrored and reflected, ticked on time with the century, and had unruly hair of the vitality of steel wool, or pubic hair, to stay with Rosenfeld's whole man.39

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38 Lisle, 54.
Dove begins a sort of "Leaves of Grass" through pigment. He brings the beginnings of an whole man to his art. He brings a spirit which does not separate any one function of life from the others. It does not know noble and ignoble organs. Hence, it has the power of making all of its bodily functions sweet by relating the whole of life to that function. And it has the power of making the whole of life rich and sensible through feeling which does not spring from the head alone, but from the breast and belly and reins as well.
Johnson believes that the lens represents Stieglitz's head or eye and the plate his body. She speculates that his personality is communicated by the other elements in the work: the clock spring is related to the curve of a nautilus that in turn refers to his energy and commitment to artistic expression, the watch spring to the precision of his mind, and the steel wool to his abrasiveness and sexuality by its texture and shape. After making these claims, she cautions about diminishing the power of the piece through too specific an interpretation. She, too, suggests that Dove remembered Picabia's "mechanomorphic" portrait of Stieglitz as a camera reproduced in 291 in 1915 but raises three areas of dissimilarity:

Dove chose objects themselves rather than depictions; marked by use, they carry the warmth of human contact and transmit an aura of personality rather than machine-like precision.  

There can be no doubt that Dove intended this piece to operate on many levels in order to reflect the complexity of his subject. The collage refers only in a minimal way to Stieglitz physically. The lens can be regarded as a literal reference to his eyes and glasses, and metaphorically to the all-seeing and yet shaded eye that makes this man an artist. The steel wool may refer by its size to his moustache and by its shape to his genitals. The plate and lens clearly refer to his occupation as a photographer. The formality and muted metallic tones of the piece may be references to his European training, manners, elegance, and control. Dove could be commenting on aspects of Stieglitz's personality such as his virility, combative nature, and creative energy with the steel wool, the coiled springs, the reflective (both as thoughtful and as hard and impermeable) plate, and the precise circle of the lens. He wrote in 1934:

A fine old head with a spirit that can make circles around the younger ones through sheer spiritual energy. His ears appear as though the roots of his feelings have grown out into the air in the form of hair for more room to breathe.

40 University of Maryland, 15.
41 America and Alfred Stieglitz, 244.
Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz is generally considered a gift of thanks from Dove to Stieglitz. The work remained, in fact, in Stieglitz’s collection until his death in 1946. Dove wrote to Stieglitz in 1925:

You always do such wonderful things that thanking you seems superfluous--The only way is with work even though it be 'sticks and stones.' I seem to get on with them better than 'words.'

Newman regards the collage as an expression of gratitude, "a thank-you for Stieglitz’s efforts on Dove’s behalf." She presents the idea that this work "commemorates Stieglitz’s renewed photographic activities" and his "reemergence as a contemporary artist out of the shadows of photography’s past." Every thorough commentator on Dove’s career must deal with the tremendous influence and support that Stieglitz had on and gave to Dove, and Dove’s correspondingly deep admiration for his friend and dealer. Dove freely acknowledged his debt to Stieglitz in his published writings and in his correspondence.

When asked what Stieglitz means to me as an artist, I answer: everything.
Because I value his opinion as one who has always known.
I do not think I could have existed as a painter without that super-encouragement and the battle he has fought day by day for twenty-five years.
He is without a doubt the one who has done the most for art in America.

The most interesting reference in this symbolic portrait is to Stieglitz’s career as a photographer and his work at this time. Newman conjectures that Stieglitz’s photographs of the 1920s had an influence on Dove’s paintings of the 1930s. Expanding on this observation, it is possible to suppose that Dove was gently referring to Stieglitz’s spare Equivalents, a series of photographs primarily of sky and clouds made from 1922 to 1932 [31-32]. The first apparent indication of Dove’s or Torr’s knowledge of the cloud

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42 The collage remained in the Stieglitz Estate until it was purchased by the Museum of Modern Art in 1955, Morgan, 129.
43 Letter from Dove to Stieglitz, June 10, 1925, cited in University of Maryland, 15.
44 After years of exhibiting other artists, Stieglitz had three major exhibitions of his photographs within a four-year period. In 1921 the Anderson Galleries sponsored a retrospective of works made between 1886 and 1921. Two shows, also at the Anderson Galleries, held in 1923 and 1924, concentrated on the most recent work. The Phillips Collection, 1981, 37.
45 America and Alfred Stieglitz, 245.
photographs dates from December 5, 1924, on the very trip that they presented Stieglitz with his portrait. However, there is an October 2, 1923, letter from Stieglitz to Dove that may refer to these works since it reads in part, "Working on 'little prints.'...These are sure to make you smile with satisfaction. I really have gone myself one better." In fact, the only work of art that Dove ever bought that I know of was one of the Equivalents. Morgan reported that:

By that summer [1942], when Phillips again agreed to renew the payments, Dove and Reds decided they were finally financially secure enough to be able to buy a Stieglitz photograph, one of the "Equivalents." Stieglitz was so pleased that he turned over their check to the gallery and sent them two specially framed prints.

Kramer also perceived a link between Dove and Stieglitz through the concept of equivalence. He found this to be one of Morgan's stronger insights. He states:

The importance of the "equivalent" for an artist like Dove—whether or not he called it by that name—was that it provided the means by which art could be linked to nature without recourse to literal description or illustration. It was never conceived of as a means of rejecting nature in favor of pure abstraction.

Since there is no concrete evidence that Dove had seen these photographs until after he had completed the Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz, this association between Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz and Stieglitz's work remains speculative; however, the resemblance is noteworthy.

Goin' Fishin'

Dove continued to work for the next three months after delivering Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz to Stieglitz, preparing for the March opening of Seven Americans. A number of works result from this period: "little moon," at least one "sculptured painting," Mary Goes

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46 AAA, Dove-Torr Diaries, roll ND70-52, entry for December 5, 1924.
47 AAA, Dove Correspondence, roll 725, frames 73-74.
48 Morgan, 33.
49 Kramer, 1985, 38.
to Italy, Willows, Rain, Sacreligion, two or three "ideas" for Sunset, illustrations for Life and Pictorial Review, and some boxing pictures. After the exhibition opened there is little evidence of art making until July 21, 1925, when Torr wrote, "A[rthur] on Negro Goes Fishing," and the following day, "A[rthur] to Huntington early, got blue shirt for negro thing."\(^{51}\) She mentions him working on it again on July 23, August 7 and August 19.\(^{52}\)

Goin' Fishin', 1925 [33], measures 19-1/2 by 24 inches and is composed of bamboo, denim, wood, buttons and nails on a wood panel. Unlike Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz or Miss Woolworth, Dove painted this piece extensively—in some of the same hues discovered in Portrait of Ralph Dusenberry. As in Portrait of Ralph Dusenberry the materials used are associated with working on the water: bamboo, creosoted wood, and denim.

A single bamboo fishing pole establishes two five-digited shapes, a group of three uprights, the fan-shaped four on the left, and the three long arching shapes. These arches conceivably refer to both the cast of a fishing rod and the circuit of the sun and moon in the skies. The arching and finger-like elements bestow on the work a sense of the movement of the stars in the night sky as well as the rhythm of the tides. Since this circuit is perceptible, clear skies are indicated; fishing is reputedly better under clear skies. The fan shapes may refer to fish fins as well as human hands; the central five-fingered shape is accented by the dark wood that lies under each finger. Reference to a person is inherent in the well-worn denim sleeves that also serve to anthropomorphize the deep red creosote wood, making a possible reference to a face because of the wood's proportion, the placement of the button (or eye), and the tooth-like shapes on the bottom. The tooth-like area at the bottom is a formal link in the internal revolution of the piece as well as a smiling mouth. Dove has wrapped sections of the bamboo in denim and painted others; his whimsical, Klee-like touches include painting the squares created by the junctures of the

\(^{51}\) AAA, Dove-Torr Diaries, roll ND70-52, entries for July 21 and July 22, 1925.
\(^{52}\) AAA, Dove-Torr Diaries, roll ND70-52, entries July 23, August 7, August 19, 1925.
seams and the sections of the arcs in alternating black and white, thus reinforcing the day-night interpretation.

The areas between the arching bamboo, between the bamboo sections, and between denim and wood are painted in luscious, rich, slightly iridescent colors. This shimmering color interacts with the denim sleeves to imbue the piece with a dawn or twilight atmosphere. The small orb in the upper right can be interpreted as a sun or moon and the bamboo "hand" as light rays. The range of colors in the piece are closely akin to the hues seen at seaside--blues, greens, yellows, blacks, browns, beiges, and sand. The original frame is a dark brown, one-inch wide, curved molding and the whole is encased in a glass-covered box that is about an inch-and-a-half deep.

In my opinion, Goin' Fishin' must be regarded as one of Dove's portrait collages. For the past twenty years the work has been grouped with the landscape collages, what Johnson terms the "Earth, Sky, and Sea" theme.\(^{53}\) Even Newman of The Phillips Collection ignored the original title of the portrait when she writes:

\[\text{Goin' Fishin'}\] describes at once a person, an activity, and a highly specific locale. It is powerful on a purely compositional level but also strongly associational--the textures of nature are felt in the bark, cloth, and wood, in the sense of the movement of water and sky, in the strong linear elements of the fishing pole against the flat expanse of blue denim.\(^{54}\)

\[\text{Goin' Fishin'}\] was included in Dove's 1926 exhibition at The Intimate Gallery, where it was titled Fishing Nigger, and remained in Stieglitz's collection until 1937 when, although loathe to part with it, he sold to Duncan Phillips for $2,000, "the largest sum paid to that date for any work by Dove."\(^{55}\) When the piece went into The Phillips Collection and when it was loaned to the Tenth Anniversary exhibition Art in Our Time at the Museum of Modern Art in 1939, it was listed as A Nigger Goes A'Fishing. Prosper Buranelli's 1926

\[^{53}\] University of Maryland, 16-19.
\[^{54}\] The Phillips Collection, 1981, 41.
\[^{55}\] Morgan, 31.
article on Dove described the work as "...sticks of bamboo glued to a canvas to represent the idea of a fishing pole in a picture of a negro fishing off a pier." 56

Herbert Seligmann quotes Stieglitz's remarks of February 6, 1926, the final day of Dove's 1926 solo exhibition, which reinforce the interpretation of this work as a portrait.

There have been many others [works by Dove], among them a small number whose feeling about painting is authoritative though they are not authorities. They, and living with "Fishing Nigger" have taught me to overcome my first impulse to withdraw from it. For when Dove brought it in, it shocked me. Others called it sinister and found it intensely unpleasant. It happens that Dove lives in a boat moored close by a dock. He heard that a Negro had drowned; so he called his work, "Fishing Nigger." The painting repelled me, as I would have been repelled had I suddenly come upon a black corpse floating in the water....The subject matter is unpleasant but when we go to see the plays of Shakespeare we see murders and other unpleasant things represented on the stage and still we enjoy Shakespeare. 57

The actual incident is not recorded in the Dove-Torr diaries, but one is reminded of the ambiguity sensed by the reviewer of Dove's work and particularly his feelings about Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz and the lack of merriment in the work. If a drowning is in fact the impetus for Goin' Fishin', the bamboo might refer to bones. 58

Duncan Phillips saw nothing morbid or sinister about Goin' Fishin' in 1947 when he wrote:

In the collage Nigger Go Fishin', which was exhibited in the Contemporary American show at the Paris Jeu de Paume in 1938, we think of Mark Twain rather than of Braque and Picasso. Against a background of trout pool, painted in tones of shadowed and dappled green, sand, blue and brown, among the objects arranged and enclosed behind glass in a box are sections of bamboo rod, a rotted stump from an old tree, buttons for the black boy's eyes, and a glimpse of his blue denim overalls. The ingenious use of these things to bring out their constrasting textures and amusing theme has made the contrivance celebrated and admired even by those who have failed to appreciate Dove as a painter. 59

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Whether the work is threatening or not, it is clearly reflective of a person in addition to its other references. Although Solomon considers Dove "essentially a landscapist, concerned with the mood and the vital forces of nature," in his 1954 retrospective of Dove's work, he echoed Phillips' description, seeing "a fisherman's blue denim overalls and sections of his fishing pole...against a painted background of green, blue and brown, which suggests the fishpond." He also sees "humorous overtones" in Goin' Fishin' and in Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz. Alfred Frankenstein, on the other hand, regards the collage as a "self-portrait... made of a denim shirt and bits of a fishing pole...." Johnson examines the work most carefully, seeing "psychic probings" in the piece as did Dove's longtime supporter Elizabeth McCausland, who said that Goin' Fishin' was "a surrealist work made before the doctrine reached these shores." Johnson pointed out the interplay between the vigor of the poles and the subdued blues, the evocative textures of the bark, cloth, and bamboo as well as the joys of water, sun, and sky. Without calling the piece a portrait, she recognized the figurative aspect of the 'eyes' in the cross-cut bamboo, buttons, painted circle, and the finger bones of a hand. She related the latter to "psychically oriented art from cave painting onwards." She continued:

Fishing, with its various layers of meaning, is crystallized in a shadow-box reminiscent of folk tableau; Dove's cheerful alchemy in Mark Twain-like terms is both a satisfying aesthetic experience and the precipitant of a powerful associational compound.

It seems that only Stieglitz was sensitive to the morbid aspect of Goin' Fishin' and one might be tempted to credit him with poetic license derived from a desire to make a point at the expense of factual veracity.

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60 White Museum of Art, 16, 9.
61 White Museum of Art, 9.
64 University of Maryland, 18.
If *Goin’ Fishin’* is a portrait, the question of whom arises. It is tempting to propose a specific person, especially since a number of likely names and personalities emerge from the Dove-Torr diaries. The collage must, however, be considered a generalized or composite portrait, since Torr refers to the portrait collage as "Negro Goes Fishing" from its inception without specifying any particular subject. The piece should correctly be titled *Negro Goes Fishing* since Torr clearly did not use the more derogatory "nigger." As in *Portrait of Ralph Dusenberry, Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz, and The Critic*, Dove links the individual to his occupation. There is human presence in *Goin’ Fishin’* and yet it is also ambiguous, operating on a number of levels as indicated in the diverse interpretations of the work. One tends to agree with Newman’s multi-layered interpretation since Dove was probably intuitively building up these multiple references to place, person, and pastime. Unfortunately, she did not expand on her remark about the locale although one might assume that she was referring to the area around Dove’s mooring in the Huntington area. In any case, these reverberations enrich the formal and sensual beauty of the collage.

**Grandmother**

Although one would expect Dove to be busy preparing for his January 1926 exhibition in the summer and fall of 1925, there is little work recorded in the diaries after August. Torr did note that Dove did a quite a lot of reading.\(^5\) There is also no mention of *Grandmother* [34] in the diaries; the work was probably made during 1925 but in fact the title, date, and early exhibition history are not well documented.\(^6\) *Grandmother*, like *Goin’

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\(^5\) Dove read novels (Walter de la Mare’s *Memoirs of a Midget*, 1922, and Sherwood Anderson’s *Dark Laughter*, 1925) and books on painting techniques (Blockx, Cernino, Doerner, Mayer, Elliot Oswald and Toch) in addition to the previously mentioned texts on religion and philosophy. AAA, Dove-Torr Diaries, roll N70-52, and The Phillips Collection, 1981, 40.

\(^6\) August through December 1925, Torr mentioned nine works, of which only *Plaster and Cork* can be identified. AAA, Dove-Torr Diaries, roll N70-52, entries for August 11, 21, September 21, 22, October 1, 23, 27, 1925. Presumably Dove made the piece sometime after *Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz* (November 1924) and the *Seven Americans* exhibition (March 1925) and before *Goin’ Fishin’* (July 1925). On November 30, Torr
"Fishin'," is a well-known and "trademark" example of Dove's portrait collages.67 Unfortunately, no checklist or catalogue of the 1926 Arthur G. Dove exhibition is extant so there is no sure record of the contents of the exhibition. Fortunately, we know that Grandmother was in this exhibition at the newly opened Intimate Gallery because Morgan notes that Donald Davidson saw Grandmother on January 4, 1926, and Seligmann related that Demuth said that Grandmother was "lovely" on February 6, 1926.68

Grandmother measures 20 by 21-1/4 inches, is simply framed in brown wood, and is encased in a 3/4-inch deep box. The square format, subdued tones and symmetrical composition give the work a quiet stability. The collage is composed of four major elements: wood shingles, a piece of worn fabric with a floral pattern sewn on it, the title page from a 1790 Bible Concordance table, and pressed flowers and ferns.69 The colors range from the silver-grey-blue-brown of the shingles to the black and smoky brown stain of the fabric; from the creamy white of the page with brown-black type to the stronger hues of the thread and the dried flowers. The richly weathered shingles form the base of the work and can be seen through the small tears in the fabric. The shape and composition of the pattern of this worked flannel-type fabric suggests that it was originally used as a chair or stool seat cover.70 A variety of flowers are fastidiously cross-stitched

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67 Grandmother is well known in part because it has been in a public collection since 1939 when Philip Goodwin donated the work to the Museum of Modern Art. This also indicates that it was not one of the pieces rescued from Lincoln Storage in 1944 and repaired by Dove at that time.

68 Seligmann, 45.

69 The print on this sheet identifies the origin of this page; it reads in part "Concordance Table of the Bible, Last Transliteration." The smaller words read, "Serving for the more easy finding...the...useful Place therein contained" and "Psalms CXIX 10, Thy Word is a Lamp unto my Feet, and a Light [unto] my Path." The publication date given is MDCCXC.

into the thin black cotton; the central arrangement might be roses or peonies while the four surrounding sprigs represent two or three different types of flowers. The Concordance page is torn and cut at the top, and worn at the sides and bottom.

Dove placed a dried fern and flower spray atop the sheet of paper, obscuring some of the text but also picking up some of the tones in the faded needlework. This pressed and dried foliage establishes a contrast to the stitched representation of flowers above and man's practical uses of nature as exemplified by the shingles. Dove explored the structure of nature as man shares in it, utilises it, perceives it, and attempts to replicate it. This, of course, is also the artist's challenge--how to transform nature and the world of the senses into art. The inherent wildness, the untamableness of nature within man's structured world is demonstrated by the patterns of growth and the hand planing of the shingles contrasted with their regular verticality. The tightly-woven black cloth and the exacting needlework contrast with the lush and exuberant flowers they describe. In a way the tiny dried foliage represents the foundation of the pyramid of growing things from which the other collage elements (sprigs to bushes to flowers or trees and even paper) are derived. Dove presumably chose to incorporate the Concordance for its meaning and because its purpose is to make sense out of universals and religious authority. Dove cannot resist a little fun, injecting a bit of nonsense into the collage. The pressed fern is placed in such a way that the larger type reads "Concordance Tale of the Bibie, La Tra Fla."

The composition, which originally seemed abstract and formally derived, suddenly resolves itself into a vase of flowers sitting on a wooden table. This visual interplay of positive and negative, of abstraction and representational still life is reminiscent of naive or folk art. The humor is gentle and delightful. Dove engages the intellect by playing with

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December 23, 1971, reads in part: "The flannel-type material is attached to four long pieces of wood which might have been shingles from an old building. There are numerous tears and holes in the fabric which were probably there when the artist created the picture. (The textile appears to be part of an old chair seat cover.)"
these ideas.

Like *Goin' Fishin',* there is a question of subject with this piece. Is the work a portrait of a specific grandmother? Dove definitely knew one set of his grandparents, William and Ann Chippie, who were the proprietors of the Geneva House in Geneva, New York. 71 In his 1947 tribute to Dove, Phillips describes *Grandmother* as a direct reference to Dove's grandmother: "a portrait achieved with a sample of her needlework, a page from her Bible, a flower and fern pressed within, and shingles from her old house." 72 Other writers like Waldo Frank and Shirley Meador have followed Phillips' lead in assuming that the work is a portrait of Dove's grandmother, but most critics are less specific. Wight was undecided about the subject of the collage and hedged by quoting Phillips. He continued by saying that the work is unfortunately quaint and gives a folksy impression of Dove, stating that: "Dove's endeavor to fuse form and natural source in the symbol did not always succeed." 73 There is a sentimental, nostalgic edge to the piece that may reflect a slight urge on the artist's part for some old-fashioned warmth and kindness. Johnson postulates a generalized notion of grandmothershood that also encompasses his respect for earthy independent people like Newton Wetherly and Ralph Dusenberry. She held the view that *Grandmother* is indicative of:

Dove's respect for simple, unassuming, industrious people, it is the essence of a generation gone and fondly remembered, one which produced innumerable folk creations. 74 Like Wight, Davidson is unsure of the subject, stating that *Grandmother,* is "perhaps the most beautifully composed of his collages... [made of] materials meant to suggest the grandmother's (his grandmother's?) fragility, love of homespun things, and piety." 75

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71 AAA, Dove Correspondence, roll 954, frame 1.
74 University of Maryland, 16.
On January 30, 1926, Torr wrote in her diary with pride about the exhibition:

To Room 303. Steiglitz talking about A[rthur] for most of two hours. Feltman in. Saw Seligmann, Rosenfeld, O'Keeffe, telephoned Elizabeth [Davidson?]. [Donald] Davidson in, he and I to Quinn [?] show--a drop after A[rthur]'s--more pictures than painting. Steiglitz said Brancusi said Plaster [and] Cork 'handsome.' Frenchman--curator of Boston museum said Fishing Nigger --'grand,' 'Plaster, pure beauty,' Ralph Dusenberry 'wittiest thing I've seen in America.' Child [unnamed child who visited the gallery] said portrait of mother artistic because 'it's restful to the eye...'

This last phrase is the first possible mention of the collage *Grandmother* in the Dove-Torr diaries and it indicates that the work may refer to one of their mothers rather than a grandmother. Torr mentioned her mother frequently in her diaries and she and Dove seem to have had a good relationship with her family. It seems more probable that Dove might be describing his mother, at least partially, in *Grandmother*. Anna Chipps Dove was an accomplished needlewoman according to her other son, Paul:

Mother was quite artistic in a different way. She did a great deal of fancy work, needle, knit, and crochet, made lace by tatting. Made her own designs. Quilts both knitted and so called crazy quilts with bits of gay colored silks and varied types of stitching.

She, of course, would have been the grandmother of Arthur Dove's son William, born July 4, 1910. She had probably aged significantly over the past few years since the death of her husband William George Dove and the deaths of her sister (Mary Little Chipps) and brother (Clarkson King Chipps) on the same day in August 1924. Since she lived until 1933 the piece is not a memorial portrait despite its elegiac quality. However, summers must have been difficult for Mrs. Dove as an anniversary of these losses, and perhaps a visit from her sometime between July and December 1925 triggered the piece.

As Wight stated, *Grandmother* is perhaps the "folkiest" of the portrait collages and has substantiated the claims for the folk art influence in Dove's work promulgated by

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76 AAA, Dove-Torr Diaries, roll N70-52, January 30, 1926.
77 AAA, Dove-Torr Diaries, roll N70-52, June 27, 1924.
78 AAA, Dove Correspondence, roll 954, frame 2.
79 AAA, Dove Correspondence, roll 954, frame 3.
Halpert and adopted from her by other commentators like Johnson. Halpert is important here because she succeeded Stieglitz as Dove's representative and had a great personal interest in folk art, which was exhibited in her Downtown Gallery. She saw Dove's work as stemming from a folk tradition; however, there is not yet substantive reason to indicate that Dove was particularly interested in American folk art. Johnson proposed that Dove may have been influenced by the Victorian knickknacks and 19th-century crafts present during his middle-class upbringing in upstate New York in the 1880s and 1890s. Folk, naive, and primitive art were in vogue in the 1910s and 1920s as evidenced by the collections of Hamilton Easter Field, Elie Nadelman, and Max Weber. Memories of folk and decorative arts from Dove's youth might have been spurred on by a visit to the Whitney Studio Club exhibition of American folk art in 1924. On the other hand, this link may be a superficial one. The correlation between the type of found or inexpensive materials that Dove was using during this period of his life when he had little money and less workspace, and the "folk-like" care he lavished on these humble materials may constitute the extent of this relationship.

Morgan broadened the arena of discussion by relating Grandmother to other artistic developments of Dove's time:

'Americana,' colonial art and architecture, rural antiques and handicrafts, America as an accumulation of man-made things—all these were rediscovered by those who were looking for a way out of the stale present. Although Dove had no interest in Americana as such, the quaintness of his Grandmother assemblage and the hominess of materials and imagery in so much of Dove's work provide evidence, as do the writings of Sherwood Anderson and Sinclair Lewis, of a deep attachment to certain aspects of the America against which they rebelled in other respects. The duality of fascination and repugnance reflected a contradiction between the wish to find roots in the American past and the simultaneous wish to eradicate negative elements.

Morgan was not alone in relating Dove's ideas to contemporary literary attitudes. Stephen Westfall, reviewing Morgan's book and the accompanying exhibitions, said:

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80 Morgan, 76.
His career is marked by the paradoxical urge to ground abstract ideas in concrete things (as in William Carlos Williams's "no ideas but in things"), the contemplation of which would drive him further up into the esthetic ozone, where he might be loosed from the earthly bounds of conventional representation.\textsuperscript{81}

And Stuart Preston wrote:

Best and most famous [of the collages] is \textit{Grandmother}, in which, like Proust, he set out to recapture the past that always remains present in memory-evoking souvenirs.\textsuperscript{82}

\textbf{The Intellectual}

The format of \textit{The Intellectual}, 1925 [35], accentuates the meaning of this portrait collage. Almost everything about this work is elongated, attenuated, exaggerated, sharp and hard in contrast to the soft, well-worn quality of \textit{Grandmother}. The collage is strongly vertical, measuring 17 by 7-1/8 inches, and contains disparate and unusual objects. This assembly of elements is placed in a glass-covered, black-painted particle board box that is about two inches deep with 1/4-inch round molding holding the glass in place. The box was probably fabricated by Dove in December 1925 when the work was made presumably in preparation for his January 1926 exhibition at The Intimate Gallery. \textit{The Intellectual} is not discussed much in Torr's diary. On December 1, 1925, she noted that "A[rthur] framed two pastels, small painting and \textit{Intellectual}," on December 10, she wrote, "Working on \textit{Critic} and \textit{Intellectual}," and on December 14, "A. working all day on \textit{Intellectual}."\textsuperscript{83}

\textit{The Intellectual} is composed of a magnifying glass atop a chicken breastbone with a mossy rock at its end, completed by a pocket fish scale mounted on veneer. The whole is tacked to a ground of varnished yellow cloth, scored regularly (at 1/8-inch intervals), first with pencil and then with ink, and mounted on wood panel.\textsuperscript{84} The magnifying glass (its

\textsuperscript{81} Westfall: 131.
\textsuperscript{83} AAA, Dove-Torr Diaries, roll N70-52, entries for December 1, 10, 14, 1925.
\textsuperscript{84} Registrar’s files, Museum of Modern Art, New York. A condition report describes the work as mounted on wood panel although this is not apparent through visual
perimeter chips well hidden) appears to have been lightly brushed with paint in an irregular radiating fashion, almost like a flower, an explosion or an iris. The properties of the glass and the fact that the chiffon beneath appears not to have been varnished makes the area below the glass seem closer and lighter; it gives the illusion of the backing bubbling forward, of some sort of attraction between the glass and backing. This regular manmade form is countered by the breastbone with its classical amphora-like shape and subtle inherent patterning. Dove reinforces the facial analogies of the bone by putting two green tacks (previously brass?) that act as eyes beneath the "handles." The narrow central ridge of the bone projects out about an inch. The moss or lichen that covers an ambiguous lump of dirt or rock is at the center of the piece. It is amorphous, unattractive, and organic. Dove picked a lump of many colors and textures: tiny yellow crystals, brown tufts with blonde highlights, and brown florets. This small ill-formed cosmos suggests primal chaos or elemental viscera which contrasts with the scale that hangs below it. The "Excelsior Pocket Balance, Sargent & Co. USA" rests on a piece of varnished wood veneer with a vertical grain. The split down the middle echoes the ridge of the 'nose' and might be read as the division between legs. The scale, although currently registering 0, is intended to weigh fish up to 25 pounds, and also relates to the magnifying glass as a manmade quantifying and examining tool. Further, the swinging hook has the potential to move, flipping from side to side, and also refers to capture.

What do these disparate elements—man-made glass, animal bone, mineral (and vegetable?), wood, and metal—signify about a person or a type? When they are examined, do they give clues about a particular acquaintance of Dove's? Cultural stereotypes and the color and composition of this piece give a picture of a tall, slender, pale individual. While

85 examination. Registrar's files, Museum of Modern Art, New York. The condition report also reports that "the paint [is] thinly smeared over the surface of [the] magnifying glass (artist)."

86 Smith thought the wood part of a cigar box. AAA, Smith Papers, roll 1043, frame 556.
elegant and self-contained, this individual relies on close, painstaking inspection and measuring instruments for his profession. The personality traits suggested by the components of *The Intellectual* are brittleness and precise, linear thinking; one who is clearly defined and circumscribed; a person of many elements who weighs and inspects his subject matter, who is methodical, and whose manner has some rough edges. The film on the magnifying glass might suggest that the individual is a "foggy," obscure, or negative ("through a glass darkly") thinker. Everything is tacked down and distinct. The title, the verticality, and the configuration of elements bestow a figurative aspect upon the piece, although it is a figure without empathy.

Like *Grandmother*, *The Intellectual* can be read in multiple ways, here as an entire male figure or as a bust. As a figure the magnifying glass would represent the head, the bone the torso, the rock the stomach, the split wood veneer as legs with the scale referring to genitals. The work also resembles a torso in that the magnifying glass can be read as a dome-like forehead and brain, and the bone becomes a face with jug-like ears, small piercing eyes and a prominent aquiline nose. In this case, the wood-backed scale could then be read as shirt-front and necktie. If the mossy rock is read as a mouth, possibly covered with a beard, perhaps it connotes that the words that come out are obfuscatory, dense, and unclear. Photographs of Demuth, Hartley, Sadakichi Hartmann, Pemberton, Rosenfeld, and Stieglitz could fit the physical type suggested, and certainly all were intellectuals. The consensus, however, seems to indicate that this portrait has a negative aura and all these men were Dove’s friends and supporters.

It is of interest that there is another 1925 collage, titled *Pen and Razor Blade* [36], that shares the elongated proportions of *The Intellectual*. By its very title the work refers to a dangerously close-cutting razor blade as it relates to the power of a pen in the hands of an artist or writer. This work has a figurative cast because of the vertical "stance" of the drawing with its horizontal "arms" and cut-out face. *Pen and Razor Blade* has a quixotic,
animate, maybe even dancing quality, and might be considered a companion piece to The Intellectual. Pen and Razor Blade was owned by Stieglitz, exhibited only in the Seven Americans exhibition of 1925, and is currently in the Alfred Stieglitz Collection at the Beinecke Library at Yale University.

There is no record of the works included in Dove’s 1926 Intimate Gallery exhibition other than the works noted in the press and sources outside of 291. If it was not included in that exhibition, then The Intellectual was first shown in the Downtown Gallery’s 1955 survey of Dove’s collages. The Intellectual was purchased by Philip L. Goodwin and was donated to the Museum of Modern Art in 1958.87 The first commentaries on the piece come from The New York Times and Art News. Preston wrote:

There are the straightforward constructions, such as Goin’ Fishin’, made up of sections of denim and bamboo... The more personal, the more satirical--the Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz for example, or that in which Dove berates the intellectual, a creature of glass, bone, moss, bark and fishscale.88

Frank O’Hara remarked in Art News that, "The Intellectual makes a face of magnifying glass, fish bone and scale which is ferocious for all its elegance."89 While complex visually, the piece does not have the warm resonance of a piece like Goin’ Fishin’ or Grandmother. Johnson suggests that The Intellectual is a "portrait of one whose head has eclipsed his heart." She continues:

Perhaps the unsettling sharpness of the protruding hook summarized Dove’s opinion of those whose tendency is to mentally weigh and scrutinize had obscured their propensity to deeply feel. In a world of cerebration and specialization, men of feeling found themselves less and less at home.90

Dove and his group of friends worked to behave intuitively, to reach the basic roots of

88 Preston, 17.
90 University of Maryland, 16.
nature, to become one with the cosmos without the distance that critical analysis requires. Dove was clear: "What do you mean by abstraction? Intuition." There were articles in Camera Work championing this intuitive approach and encouraging a heightened individual sensitivity and awareness of the cosmic forces in the universe. Henri Bergson was a late 19th-early 20th century French philosopher who championed intuition as a channel to overcome the material world and to comprehend those forces that animate the universe and all dimensions of reality. Bergson attacked reason because it cannot reveal the truth, whereas, through intuition as Bergson defined it, the "intention of life" can be perceived. The individual's ability to see this truth makes the individual infinite, as infinitely valuable as the universe. Excerpts from Bergson's writings published in Camera Work posed questions such as "What is the Object of Art" and examined the relationship between intelligence, instinct, and intuition:

[Intelligence] goes all round life, taking from outside the greatest number of views of it, drawing it into itself instead of entering into it. But it is to the very inwardsness of life that intuition leads us--by intuition I mean instinct that has become disinterested, self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object and of enlarging it indefinitely. ...Our eye perceives the features of the living being, merely as assembled, not as mutually organized. The intention of life, the simple movement that runs through the lines, that binds them together and gives them significance, escapes it. This intention is just what the artist tries to regain, in placing himself back within the object by a kind of sympathy, in breaking down, by an effort of intuition, the barrier that space puts up between him and his model.

Thus, intuition may bring the intellect to recognize that life does not quite go into the category of the many nor yet into that of the one; that neither mechanical causality nor finality can give a sufficient interpretation of the vital process. Then, by the sympathetic communication which it establishes between us and the rest of the living, by the expansion of our consciousness which it brings about, it introduces us into life's own domain, which is reciprocal interpenetration, endlessly continued creation.

It is at the point of establishing the value of individual experience that Bergson's thinking dovetails with what Morgan called "the strongest current in American nineteenth-century

91 Quoted in Cohn, 1985, 45.
92 The writings of Benjamin de Casseres and Sadakichi Hartmann sound these themes.
thought: individualism." She points out that Transcendentalism and Pragmatism, the "philosophical manifestations" of individualism, were important influences on Dove's thinking about nature and action. Platt, who has approached the art and attitudes of the 1920s through the writings of New York critics, explained that the symbolist viewpoint pervaded American understanding of modernism, even in its cubist manifestation. Benjamin de Casseres, American writer, poet, and critic, wrote frequently and cogently for Camera Work. In the same issue of Camera Work that contained the excerpt from Bergson's Creative Evolution, De Casseres examined the role of the unconscious in the artistic process:

    Imagination is the dream of the Unconscious. It is the realm of the gorgeous, monstrous hallucinations of the Unconscious. It is the hasheesh of genius. Out of the head of the artist issues all the beauty that is transferred to canvas, but the roots of his imagination lie deeper than his personality.

This championing of the role of the unconscious in the creative process is an example of symbolist thought as well as the theories of Sigmund Freud. These beliefs in the "binding intention of life" are evidenced in the Stieglitz circle in the introduction to an article by Marius de Zayas where the editors of Camera Work state their belief in the interrelationships and mutual dependency between all things:

    It may possibly lead to the publication in Camera Work of many articles on subjects apparently alien to Art but in reality closely related, as all manifestations of the evolution of man are closely related, while the understanding of all is necessary to the understanding of any one of them.

Cohn and Morgan have researched the spiritual component of Dove's life in depth. He was involved in theosophy, practiced prescience and telepathy, was well-read in spiritual matters, and felt deeply the need to stay in touch with nature. His sensitivity to the world

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94 Morgan, 75.
95 Platt, 70-90.
around him was the springboard from which his art commenced, and he worked hard to
protect his awareness. Cohn points out that Dove's reticence was an attempt to disguise
his deep spiritualism so as not to endanger his "rapport" with nature or expose his faith to
denigration or skepticism. He appears to have been wary even of allowing Stieglitz access
to his beliefs. Cohn writes:

There was a solid core of privacy in this artist; he would not desecrate his most
cherished beliefs by subjecting them to casual conversation.  

She continues:

Antiintellectualism [sic] is a characteristically American tradition which derives on
one hand from the Puritan mistrust of gratuitous ideas and from the egalitarian
spirit on the other. Among intellectuals themselves it is a mask. Dove aligns
himself with this tradition in works like The Bessie of New York, which has a kind
of popular humor, Goin' Fishin', a collage of denim and straw which suggests the
vernacular idiom, and the satirical "portraits" of The Critic and The Intellectual.
Indeed, Dove's antiintellectual [sic] persona was so successful that it has long
dverted attention from the substantive content of his art. However, Dove cared
deeply about ideas.  

*The Intellectual* is probably a symbolic portrait of a type that is recognizable without
referring to a particular individual. It is a portrait of one who would disdain and ridicule
the kind of life and art that Dove and his compatriots were trying to build.

**The Critic**

*The Critic*, 1925 [37], supports the idea of *The Intellectual* as a portrait of a type (like
Miss Woolworth or Goin' Fishin') rather than as a specific individual. As previously
mentioned, Torr noted that Dove was working on *The Critic* on December 10, 1925,  
and Morgan reports that the piece was probably included in the January 1926 exhibition
at The Intimate Gallery.  

*The Critic* is one of the most discussed of Dove's symbolic
portrait collages because of its title, wit, legibility, and conjecture over the subject of this

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98 Cohn, 1985, 9.
99 Cohn, 1985, 9-10.
100 AAA, Dove-Torr Diaries, roll N70-52, December 10, 1925.
101 Morgan, 137.
parody. The piece, like many of the others, is set into a two-inch deep wooden box and measures 19-1/2 by 12-1/2 inches. The figure of a man is largely composed of an article by Forbes Watson cut from a daily newspaper in New York, *The World*, of November 8, 1925 [38]. He is adorned with skates, cut from a catalogue or magazine advertisement, a lacquer-red top hat, and a pencil-drawn monocle on a black cord that emerges from the green cardboard ground. The head is implied by a hole cut in the cardboard; under the red top hat there is a celluloid or plastic dome with a teat projecting into the hat.

The red cords coming from the upper corners of the piece are placed as if the curtains had just swung open and the show was about to begin! The portly critic is centerstage with an Energex vacuum cleaner (also cut from a catalogue or magazine advertisement) in hand, standing on a red carpet flanked by curtains composed of exhibition and auction notices. The notices are also cut from *The World* but one week later, the next Sunday’s November 15, 1925, edition [39]. These advertising columns reflect on the commercialism of art as well as the popularity of antiques and European art over contemporary American art.  

*The Critic*’s body, cut from Watson’s "Reviews and Notes of Current Events in Art," is a review titled "Paintings on View by Eakins, Luks and Sargent" (cut to read as a child-like "tings on view...") and subtitled "All Three Are Important Figures in the Story of American Art." In the lower corner of the critic’s leg is mention of the Whitney Studio Club's Opening Exhibition which featured works by Blendon Campbell, Max Kuehne, Boardman Robinson, H.E. Schnakenberg, Eugene Speicher, Allen Tucker, and Nan Watson. The word "art" appears on the neck and right cuff. The third "art" is "off the

103 The exhibition of Fernand Léger’s work, held at the Anderson Galleries and the 22nd Société Anonyme show, was the most adventurous notice. Other notices advertise auctions of European furniture and art at the Broadway Art Galleries, Auction Rooms, Inc., and the American Art Galleries, a show of "an eminent Italian sculptor" at Silo, and Herbert Vos at Fearon.
cuff," floating loose on the right and might originally have represented the critic's left cuff. Could this refer to the critic's straight-laced personality through his high collar and cuff with the conventional landscape painting, *Mahonoy City*, by George Luks' as his substance?

Smith who found *The Critic* in Lincoln Storage in 1944, noted at the time that the glass was broken and that two loose pearls were in the box. The possibility exists that the head was originally a globe made out of a lightbulb or Christmas tree ornament. The need to accommodate this sphere would account for the extra inch under the cardboard ground in the box. This inflated head would have represented the inflated ego and swelled head of a critic. Perhaps the "loose pearls" represented eyes if they were attached to this globe. One, of course, would like to think that the pearls of wisdom were always rolling around loose. As R. Warren Dash said in a review of an exhibition of American collages touring the United States in 1957:

Arthur Dove's 1925 *The Art Critic* is the only construction [in the exhibition] to continue the witty and humorous incursions of Braque and Picasso. A top-hatted roller-skated, empty-faced word-machine, the bumbling pretentious fellow (whose left hand clutches a vacuum cleaner) may well be the first egghead, for a celluloid shell (hidden by his stovepipe) forms the basis of his skull.

Art critics were regularly mocked through reprints of their articles in *Camera Work* and the poor reception given by New Yorkers to contemporary art was often discussed on the pages of this periodical. In 1910, William D. MacColl submitted an article titled "Some Reflections on the Functions and Limitations of Art Criticism--Especially in Relation to Modern Art." In 1911, *Camera Work* reprinted a review by Mr. Fitzgerald titled

104 AAA, Smith Papers, roll 1043, frame 553.
106 Green, 14, believed that the inclusion of: "reprinted articles [reviews from the daily papers] helped to encourage a spirit of debate which made *Camera Work* an open forum where painters, photographers, and critics could explore the issues surrounding the emerging esthetic sensibility."
107 William D. MacColl, "Some Reflections of the Functions and Limitations of Art
"The New Art Criticism" written for the *New York Evening Sun*, as a response to De Zayas' article on Picasso in *Camera Work*. 108 Fitzgerald concludes his article on De Zayas' discussion of Picasso's work as follows:

The old-fashioned critic was bad enough. He had but one theory for all modern manifestations of art—the theory of insanity. The new-fashioned critic is no better, for he makes it a matter of conscience to approach all things with the innocence of an imbecile. His only merit lies in the singular skill with which he plays his part.

Oscar Bluemner, an artist and friend of Dove's, pointed out the shallowness of art critics, particularly Kenyon Cox, Royal Cortissoz, and Mr. Borglum. He said of Cortissoz:

Mr. Cortissoz continues on like lines of mingling orthodoxy with pathology and the unpolite end of the vocabulary, but in a far more furious and revengeful mood. Evidently these Cubists and Futurists fell like live flies into his soup. Better to spill it all and kill them, as it were! 110

Rising above his discussion of particular personalities, Bluemner established a credo for critics:

All "Authority" sanctioned to prescribe for and tutor the artist is, after all, unconstitutional; and any critic who fails to act as interpreter between artist and public and who does not assist evolution but defends the usurped privileges of academicism, is a leech on the growth of art. 111

Dove's collage portrait of the art critic appears relatively whimsical and gentle when compared to the European treatment of the subject, Raoul Haussmann's *The Art Critic*, 1919-20 [40].

_The Critic_ has been assumed to refer to a specific critic, Royal Cortissoz of *The New York Herald Tribune*, at least since 1967 when Johnson made the following remarks:

The March 1925 Seven Americans exhibition at The Intimate Gallery...included *Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz and Miss Woolworth*. The critical response ranged from

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111 Bluemner: 32.
praise to tolerant curiosity to bellicose depreciation--Dove's *Critic* was aimed at the
arch-conservative Cortissoz who loudly and consistently proclaimed his distaste for
modernism, typifying the unsympathetic commentators who have for centuries
plagued artists.  

She regarded his empty head under his red hat as his most striking feature:

Thus Dove seems to imply, the vacant critic, plugged to the nearest outlet and
armed with an unused monocle, careens into the velvet gallery, picks up the 'dirt'
and blows it, through his column, at the public. The delightfully comic touch with
which Dove dismisses him compares with Miss Woolworth, and the blend of whimsy
and depth links them to *Monkey Fur* as well.  

Cortissoz in 1925 was a well-established and well-known critic. He had been with the
*The New York Herald Tribune* (founded by Horace Greeley in 1840) since 1891 and was an
intimate of artists, dealers, and collectors. He had written in 1925 of "the strained
pleasantries of Mr. Arthur G. Dove" and reinforces his reputation with smug advice like
this given to Stieglitz in his review of *Seven Americans*:

> Stieglitz is a courageous, resourceful man. We wish he would undertake the
organization of an exhibition such as has never been held by any modernist. Let
him supply each one of his friends with canvases divided in the middle by a
straight line. Let them paint to the left of the line pictures after their own hearts,
expressing themselves in their own way. And to the right let them paint the same
subjects according to Hoyle which is to say, with all the elements of perspective,
texture, light and shade, line, form, color, handled with competence. This might
show whether the modernist really knows how to paint or if the fearful and
wonderful expedients he adopts make the refuge of inadequacy. If he needed
inspiration he could easily get it from Stieglitz. Look at the latter's photographs of
clouds and trees. How beautiful they are! Because, for one thing, they are
well done.  

Cortissoz wrote a number of magazine articles and books, including monographs of
Augustus St. Gaudens (1909) and John La Farge (1911), *American Artists* (1923) and
*Personalities in Art* (1925). Olson claimed that Cortissoz and Stieglitz were very
friendly. She credits Cortissoz with trying to understand the modernist position out of

112 University of Maryland, 15.  
113 University of Maryland, 15.  
Herald Tribune*, March 15, 1925, sec. 4, 12.  
115 Olson, 25-26, stated that:

Cortissoz' association with the well-known director of the Photo-Secession Gallery,
respect for Stieglitz and stating in print that Stieglitz maintained the sole forum for the
viewing of modernist work. However, by the 1920s, he had become increasingly acerbic.
Olson cited a December 30, 1923, New York Tribune review of American Artists that found
the book already to be out of date before it was published.\textsuperscript{116} Milton Brown in 1955
echoed the earlier criticism:

\begin{quote}
Royal Cortissoz, art critic of the New York Tribune, third member of the anti-
modernist triumverate [the others being Kenyon Cox and Frank Jewett Mather],
although the least perceptive, was the most influential because of his position on an
important newspaper. He remained until his death a peculiar phenomenon of
American art life, a critic who viewed and discussed the passing artistic scene for
fifty years only to remain completely impervious to the march of events.... In
reading Cortissoz one has an uncanny feeling that the nineteenth century is
imperturbably chugging beside the speeding twentieth and with indestructible self-
confidence predicting the return of the horse. Cortissoz kept inviolate not so much
his mind as his eye, which was steeped in the academic art of the last half of the
nineteenth century. His judgments were neither social, moral, nor esthetic.... his
major criterion of value was technical competence, and he placed above everything
else the elements peculiar to that type of artistic display: virtuosity, elegance, and
taste. With remarkable consistency, which can be explained only by the fact that
his judgments were based on criteria entirely incompatible with contemporary
tendencies, Cortissoz managed to be wrong in almost every major judgment he
propounded on modern art.\textsuperscript{117}
\end{quote}

This damning characterization epitomizes the weakness of some art critics and also
implicates Cortissoz as the perfect candidate for identification with The Critic.

However, Patterson Sims, in a recent catalogue of the collection of the Whitney
Museum of American Art, proposed another candidate. He noted that the article Dove
chose to cut out is by Forbes Watson, thus pointing the finger of caricature toward
him.\textsuperscript{118} Watson wrote for the World newspaper and assumed the position of editor of Arts
magazine in 1923. Platt wrote:

\begin{quote}
Alfred Stieglitz, went well beyond a mere professional acquaintance. They were
close and fast friends, often vacationing together at Lake George in the summer
months.
The period Olson is specifically addressing predates the 1920s and she concluded that
they disagreed often despite their mutual respect.
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[116] Olson, 84 11n.
\item[117] Milton W. Brown, American Painting from the Armory Show to the Depression
\end{footnotes}
Watson's underlying dependence on [formalist] theory contributed to his subsequent rejection of modern art. He repeatedly demonstrated his inability to see the works; he approached them instead as an issue in his political positions. ...As the decade [of the 1920s] progressed, Watson increasingly became a foe of modernism and a promoter of nativism.

Cortissoz and Watson were mentioned in the same entry in Torr's diary for March 11, 1925, as having visited Seven Americans. A third candidate might be the critic Arthur Hoeber of whom De Zayas' drew an abstract geometric caricature that Dove might have seen exhibited at 291 in 1913. William B. McCormick, writing for the New York Press, reviewed the show and described the work as follows:

The one of Arthur Hoeber certainly looks like a black egg cut off at one end to stand on a plinth with a dark circle near the upper edge of the egg and two lines in the manner of eyebrows below this larger eye, that suggest the disfigurement of Wotan. Below the egg, if we may call this superintellectualism by such a mundane term, is an alleged algebraic formula that reads, "a equals ab equals minus bc equals minus cd equals minus D." [a=ab=-bc=-cd=-D]

Although Hoeber had written not very complimentary things about Dove's work, he had died in 1915 and so was not the direct object of Dove's derision. Dickran Tashjian linked three of Dove's portrait collages to Stieglitz: Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz, The Intellectual and The Critic who "serves as a bemonocled antagonist to Stieglitz." The giddy, empty-headed figure in The Critic may simply be a composite of all the anti-modernist critics—Cortissoz, Cox, Hoeber, Mather, and Watson—rather than a comment on a specific critic. It is intriguing that The Critic and The Intellectual were worked on simultaneously. The question arises whether this was a timely and easily-mined subject for Dove to include in his upcoming exhibition or whether he had recently suffered some slight at the hands of either a critic or intellectual, possibly in relation to Seven Americans.

119 Platt, 38.
Reds

The last portrait collage by Dove to be discussed is Reds [41], a portrait of Dove's companion and eventual wife, Helen Torr. Reds, c. 1925-26, is a small work, measuring 8-3/4 by 9-1/4 inches. The collage is dominated by a tangled curl of auburn hair that is generally assumed to be a lock of Torr's hair. The curl rests at the top and center of the piece on a horizon line established by a dark watercolor line. Below this line is a wash of mahogany watercolor that in turn is separated from a blue area of watercolor by another dark line. There is a white clam shell shape in the center of this blue wash and below the curl. Pencil lines within the shell/swan form are reminiscent of a checkerboard grid pattern, like a tablecloth or bedspread. A field of brick red horizontally bisects the collage; a wide triangular (pyramidal) piece of brown paper constitutes the bottom of the composition.

Reds presents an unusual case. Morgan noted in her description of the piece that:

There is no documentation at all for this work. If it was ever shown by the artist, it must have been among the undocumented works in his 1926 exhibition at The Intimate Gallery.\footnote{Morgan, 149.}

Otherwise, Reds was first shown at the Andrew Crispo Gallery, New York, in 1977, and later at the Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey, in 1979, and Terry Dintenfass Gallery in 1984.\footnote{Andrew Crispo Gallery, New York. Twelve Americans: Masters of Collage, November 17-December 30, 1977. Exhibition catalogue, introduction by Gene Baro. Reds was reproduced in advertisements for Barbara Mathes Gallery, New York, in Antiques and Art in America in January 1982.} Piri Halasz mentioned having seen the work at Barbara Mathes Gallery in 1982 in an article on abstraction and the painter Friedl Dzubas but does not note whether it was exhibited. Halasz wrote about the work in the context that hair has "intimate, domestic associations:"

The collage is a symbolic portrait of Dove's beloved, Helen Torr; it's composed of a lock of fair, curly hair pasted on, at the top, and bits of silk, to suggest coverlets,
Reds was reproduced in Stephen Westfall's article reviewing the Dintenfass exhibition but was not discussed. In her review of that 1984 exhibition, Bonnie Stretch stated: "One of the most charming of these assemblages is Reds in which a curl of his wife's red hair acts as an abstract element while evoking her whole being." Although she pointed out that Dove's work in collage was represented by only two pieces (the other being Huntington Harbor I), she did not question the title or provenance of the piece. The title of the piece seems appropriate but the basis for this assumption has not been revealed. The work is not signed (none of the collages are) and there is no mention of the title being on the piece. There is no record of the work in Smith's files nor is there evidence that it was included in any pre-1977 exhibitions.

What was Dove's intent? Was this, like Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz, intended as a gift? Is the work one he was preparing for the show in January 1926 that he did not finish? Its air of being incomplete is caused by the penciled notations and by the lack of Dove's usual shadow box frame. Did he consider it an unsuccessful work or was it too private to exhibit? Despite these questions, the piece has been wholeheartedly accepted as a work of Dove's and as a portrait of Torr.

It seems logical to place Reds in 1924 since the two collages that definitively refer to individuals (Portrait of Ralph Dusenberry and Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz) were made in 1924 for the Seven Americans show and the generalized portraits are grouped in 1925. Reds shares the specificity that characterizes the best of these where objects in the piece are somehow closely connected with the subject, as in Portrait of Ralph Dusenberry, Portrait of

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125 Westfall: 126.

Alfred Stieglitz, and Grandmother. On the other hand, Reds relates formally more to collages made in 1925 and 1926 so a stylistic analysis is not conclusive.\textsuperscript{127} Reds and Grandmother share a central focus, a pyramidal composition and an interplay of abstract flat surface and referential, recognizable image in depth. Reds is similar also to Grandmother in that it can be read in multiple ways. On one hand, we see a seascape with the blues and browns of the water and the creamy white of the sky above the horizon line and a long stretch of beach. The brown paper in the foreground may refer to the prow of the Mona with Torr’s curl representing the sun and the white area below it a shell. On the other hand, an alternative interpretation is that it is a portrait of Torr in her bed, propped up against her white pillows with the footboard in the foreground. Beds are intimate, protected places and it would not be inappropriate for Dove to do his own version of Botticelli’s Birth of Venus or Titian’s Venus of Urbino. Torr was often ill during the 1920s so the piece might be a form of "get well" card. The sea, the bed (as symbol), and the woman were all very important to Dove at this time when he had broken out of an unhappy marriage and was at last free, living on the water in the Mona, and in love. Both Grandmother and Reds are evocations of personality through materials rather than depictions of a figure. Dove may have been trying to merge actuality and his deepest emotions in this piece and either felt it too personal to exhibit or for some reason did not complete it.

Reds’ provenance, intention, date and exhibition history remain something of a puzzle.

As it stands, The Critic and The Intellectual are the last portrait collages recorded in the Dove-Torr diaries. While Dove occasionally produced collages in the next few years, the portraits were made in a seventeen-month period between August 1924 and December

\textsuperscript{127} Reds is similar in scale to Rope, Chiffon and Iron, 1926, which measures 7 x 7 inches but the works are not otherwise related. Reds shares a pyramidal composition with Sea I, 1925, and a strong grounding element in the foreground with Huntington Harbor I, 1926, and Seaside, 1926.
1925. The next chapter will examine what caused Dove to so wholeheartedly plunge into this radical way of making art.
Chapter 3

Precedents, Possible Influences, and

Posthumous Scholarship

Why Collage?

As noted previously, Dove's life changed dramatically in 1921 when he separated from his wife Florence and his father died. Freed from some spousal and parental obligations, Dove was also reveling in the joy of a new romance with Helen Torr. Torr was an artist and, consequently, she understood Dove's need to create and was supportive of his endeavors. And apparently Dove was ready to experiment. He had had neither the opportunity nor ability to produce a large body of work since 1911-12, and he seems to have been rejuvenated by this change in his circumstances. He also must have enjoyed the mobility of a boat after having been tied to the land since 1910, and perhaps he felt more in control of his surroundings.

While living on a boat may have had some spiritually liberating advantages, it was a cramped space for making art. Haskell reports that the cabin of the Mona was five foot-ten inches at its highest point, allowing neither Dove nor Torr to stand erect, and the relatively small scale of the work during this time attests to his lap or desk top working method. The largest works executed during this time measure only 20 by 21 inches.

Living on a boat on the waterfront, however, provided two providential ingredients for collage--a constant source of materials washed ashore and an uncomfortable situation for painting. The elaborate preparations that oil painting requires (Dove ground and mixed his own colors), trying to paint as the boat rocked or finding a place for a work to dry must have been quite difficult. Smith, who knew Dove well, noted that the salt in the air, the dampness of the climate and the sudden changes in temperature were very debilitating to oil paintings. The collage technique circumvents some of these problems--elements can be
tested in various configurations, there was a ready supply of materials and incomplete works could be easily stored at a moment's notice with little risk of damage. Johnson however discounts the discomforts of the boat, pointing out that he had been aboard for four years before making the collages and in fact did some good-sized paintings during this period. She quotes O'Keeffe:

I think he worked with collage because it was cheaper than painting and also it amused him—once he was started on it one thing after another came to him very easily with any material he found at hand.¹

Johnson believes that the burgeoning interest in Americana, Dove's kinship with materials, and his awareness of European and American collage were all more important contributions to his experiments than the constrictions of the boat.

In addition, Dove had very little money at this time and using discarded or inexpensive materials made it possible for him to make more work than he could have if he had to purchase paint, canvas and stretchers. According to Morgan's catalogue raisonné, Dove made less than twenty conventional paintings on canvas between 1921 and 1924 while he lived on board boats. These works concentrated on the subjects that surrounded him on the water—storms, barges and machinery. Judging from the number of collages produced in quick succession, Dove enjoyed this period of experimentation, of constructing collaged interpretations of the people and landscape that surrounded him. This delight may have stemmed in part from relief—relief at having extricated himself from his familial situation and from a relatively barren artistic period. The enthusiasm that Dove felt can be heard in a letter he wrote Stieglitz in June 1925:

At this season something new turns up every day that has to be done. The beauty of it is though that it is all done out where we can be using our eyes and feelings on things while we work.²

¹ October 25, 1965, letter to Johnson, quoted in University of Maryland, 13.
² Letter dated June 10, 1925, Beinecke Library, Yale University, cited in University of Maryland, 6. This is in marked contrast to what Dove had written to Stieglitz in 1920, "Family first, safety first, duty first, and spirit last." Quoted in Whitney Museum of American Art, 1958, 47.
I suggest that Dove was more concerned about maintaining his reputation as a radical and avant-garde painter than about the physical limitations placed on him by the farm and boat. This preoccupation may well have caused him some problems in making his art. Characterized as "the leading American pioneer in the abstract idiom through the close of 291 [1917]," Dove was probably asking himself what step to take next and wondering if he would ever be able financially to work on his art full-time. Cohn also senses his quandary which he dates from 1920:

The pressures he faced were enormous—not only emotional and financial but artistic. His last one-man show had been in 1912 and though he continued to paint, he had not been able to develop or enlarge upon the pictorial ideas first expressed in The Ten Commandments.

Also, Dove's colleagues at 291, especially Marin and O'Keeffe, were deriving a certain amount of financial success from their work whereas Dove was not. Dove's son William stated that Dove despised working on the illustrations to support himself:

First of all understand that illustration became a real bugaboo to him; he began to hate it. My father's illustrations, fine as they were, were created with a feeling of horrible hate for them—a dislike which in the later period of his illustration career would get him actively sick to his stomach. In my opinion this may have influenced his attitude of not doing people in his painting. It may have been that drawing people bothered him—I remember his commenting to me one time that it got to be so that you 'laid in six figures in the morning and six figures in the afternoon—that's all there is—it's like being a factory.'

Dove's frustration with his artistic career, disgust for his illustrating work and the tension and disappointment manifest in the dual failure of his marriage and farm seem to have curtailed his production. Collage might have presented a way around the creative block caused both by emotional dissatisfaction and the anxiety sparked by a blank sheet of paper or a newly primed canvas. Making a collage is a clear-cut task. The collagist can move elements around, alter them with paint or scissors and create associations between his materials, all before fixing them to their ground. In 1922, the painter Louis Lozowick

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4 Cohn, 1985, 50.
5 William Dove in Wolfer, 1961, 11, cited in University of Maryland, 14.
wrote that, "Construction scorns prettiness, seeks strength, clarity, simplicity, acts as a stimulus to vigorous life."\(^6\) Or, as Harriet Janis and Rudi Blesh put it, collage demonstrates that "artists began to re-enter the world by embracing its artifacts."\(^7\) Dove clearly takes pleasure in his materials—in their texture, color, shape and history—that is matched by the pleasure of analyzing their interaction. His remarkable sensitivity to materials is apparent in all of the works—consider the fact that he conveys a sense of individual "personalities" as disparate as *Grandmother* and *The Critic*. After Dove's death Torr wrote about the genesis of the collages:

> One day [Dove] said, "I'm tired of putting brushstrokes on canvas." After the next walk we took on the other side of the water in Halesite he collected leaves and things and made his first collage.

> He got some handsome old wire on Marshall [Field]'s dump.—Put it, a blue chinese silk from a belt of mine in a beautiful white plaster rectangle.

> Brancusi said (at the Intimate Gallery) it was one of the most beautiful things he'd seen in America. I don't think at that time he'd [Dove] seen anything but some newspapers pasted or some of the French in reproduction. We saw very little in New York, not having the car fare.\(^3\)

The collage that she described, *Plaster and Cork* \(^{42}\), can be dated from the Dove-Torr diaries and was actually made in September and October 1925, after *Portrait of Ralph Dusenberry*, *Miss Woolworth*, *Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz*, and *Goin' Fishin'*. Dove was fastidious about his materials and usually framed his own works. This handmade or handcrafted aspect of his work is more apparent in the collages where the viewer is most acutely aware of the wide variety of materials Dove employed.

> If, in fact, Dove was "tired of putting brushstrokes on canvas," then collage provided him a new challenge and also gave him a path out of a painter's version of writer's block.


\(^8\) Quoted in Morgan, 143.
On the other hand, Dove may have been trying to make his work more accessible to his audience, to engage them by using recognizable objects and humor to give them a "handle" with which to approach his work.

Dove used the lessons he learned in this period of experimentation well. Techniques he developed during this brief time surface throughout his career. He continued to make use of unconventional metallic paints, unusual grounds and wax emulsions, and texture achieved through various brushstrokes, A collage "look" appeared in his work for the rest of his career, particularly in works of the 1940s like Rain or Snow, 1943 [43], and That Red One, 1944 [44].

Portraiture

Portraiture has a long and venerable artistic history. Along with history painting, still-life, and landscape, it is one of the traditional subjects of art. The history of the western world can be traced from the "imperial" portraits of the ancient Mediterranean civilizations--Hammerabi, Assurnasipal, Ahknaten, Mausolus, Marcus Aurelius, Constantine, Justinian, and Theodora--to portraits of the new powerful factions of society in Renaissance Europe. These portraits of merchants and cultural and religious leaders--Jan van Eyck's Arnolfini Wedding, 1434, Raphael's Baldassare Castiglione, c. 1515, Hans Holbein the Younger's Erasmus of Rotterdam, c. 1523, or Titian's Pope Paul III, 1543--signify social position, wealth and authority.

In the Mannerist and Baroque periods, the subjects of portraiture broadened. Giuseppe Arcimboldo explored recent discoveries of natural science through allegory and personification in his paintings; only The Jurist, 1566 [45] and The Librarian, c. 1566 [46], are personifications of real people composed of the tools of their trade. Allegorical

\[9\] The jurist is Johann Ulrich Zasius and the librarian Wolfgang Lazius, both influential men in the Hapsburg court. Pontus Hulten, ed., The Arcimboldo Effect (New York:
portraits referring to Antiquity appear throughout this era. In the 16th century, Diane de Poitiers, the mistress of King Francis I and his son King Henri II of France, is depicted as the Roman goddess Diana the huntress in several works by Benevenuto Cellini, Jean Goujon and Luca Penni. Later the actress Sarah Siddons is portrayed by Sir Joshua Reynolds as *The Tragic Muse*, 1784, and Pauline Borghese had herself sculpted as the nude Venus in 1808. In this same period, Houdon’s *Voltaire*, 1781, captured the wit and intelligence of the man Francois-Marie Arouet while Goya immortalized the decadence and vanity of the Spanish royal family in *The Family of Charles IV*, 1800.

At the end of the 19th century, portraits encompass a large range from Thomas Eakins’s *The Gross Clinic*, 1875, to Vincent van Gogh’s pair of paintings, *Vincent’s Chair* and *Gauguin’s Armchair*, 1888-89 [47]. Van Gogh painted numerous portraits throughout his career; however these two have been approached as symbols of Van Gogh and Gauguin’s relationship. Van Gogh himself is the source of this discussion. He wrote to his brother on January 17, 1889:

> I should like de Haan to see a study of mine of a lighted candle and two novels (one yellow, the other pink) lying on an empty armchair (really Gauguin’s chair), a size 30 canvas, in red and green.

> I have just been working again today on its pendant, my own empty chair, a white deal chair with a pipe and a tobacco pouch.

A year later, he wrote to Albert Aurier:

> A few days before parting company...I tried to paint “his [Gauguin’s] empty seat.” It is a study of his armchair of somber reddish-brown wood, the seat of greenish straw, and in the absent one’s place a lighted torch and modern novels.

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12 Ibid.
Are these works symbolic portraits? Van Gogh is painting with a knowledge of the symbolist movement while Eakins is painting without it. Was Van Gogh conscious of the symbolism of placing a "coffin-like" box engraved with his name contrasted with a sprouting onion (representing hope) in his self-portrait? Was the pairing of the unlit pipe (representing his virile inferiority and frustration) and the erect candle in Gauguin's armchair a purposeful comment by the artist? Did Van Gogh intend the rounded arms of Gauguin's armchair to convey a feminine principle and the sturdy austerity of his straight chair to connote a male principle? Are these paintings actually reflections of Van Gogh's inner condition, of the split between his well and ill selves, his male and female urges, his day and night selves, aching to be one? Are these unconscious symbols on the part of the artist that are perceived and analysed as psychosexual surrogates only by students, critics and scholars? Or, as Robert Goldwater suggests, do all of Van Gogh's works become symbols of the artist and his perception of the universe?

[Van Gogh] infused the nature that he painted with such intensity of emotion and execution, made of each object such a microcosm of an animated universe vibrating with its own feelings, that it is, in this new sense, a symbol of himself and of a pantheistic spirit.

European and American Philosophical Influences: Symbolism, Theosophy and Transcendentalism

Such comments raise the question of whether abstract art can arise without spiritual or symbolic thought. It seems that a spiritual attitude is necessary for the development of abstraction in art. Symbolism, theosophy and transcendentalism are all spiritual systems, varied in their effects on artists, but each influential on the art of their time.

Symbolism as a movement arose in Europe in the 1880s as a reaction against the naturalism in art and literature of the previous two decades. Goldwater wrote: "Symbolism


can be thought of as a part of a philosophical idealism in revolt against a positivist, scientific attitude that affected (or infected) not only painting but literature as well."\textsuperscript{15} He concurs with Eugenia Herbert, who stated that "...symbolism had been in part a rebellion against authoritarianism in art and an insistence on the right to individual aesthetic canons."\textsuperscript{16} There was a desire, "...to give pictorial form to the 'invisible world of the psyche,' to go beyond realism."\textsuperscript{17} Goldwater posits that Gauguin's symbolism, exemplified in \textit{Yellow Christ} and \textit{Breton Calvary}, both of 1889, is rooted in the same sentiments that are the foundation of folk art.

\[\text{[Gauguin] starts, not with nature, but with a distillation of emotion, an object of faith--therefore a symbol--summary and simplified in style, which in itself already concentrates the mood (idea) he is seeking to depict, or to express, through the means of form. Twice removed from nature, he is free to create an ideal scene, imagined, but for this reason more essentially true than if he had been "shackled by the need for probability" for which he later criticized the impressionists.}\]

Symbolism was a belief in and focus on the spiritual, nonrational world and involved a search for meaning through the exploration of the occult, primitivism and non-Western religions as an antidote to both naturalism and materialism. Goldwater continues:

\[\text{The times of the day, the round of the seasons, which mirror in nature the moods of man and his life's progression and link him with a spiritual universe, are recurrent symbolist themes. And it is this subjective projection upon the universe which distinguishes the symbolists from the early romantics they admired.}\]

Recently, Maurice Tuchman stated that symbolism was the single most important aesthetic source for abstract artists between 1900 and 1920.\textsuperscript{20} This "desire to make emotion meaningful, by connecting it with humanity at large and by seeing nature as its reflection," is the aspect in which Dove is closest to the symbolist.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{15} Goldwater, 1979, 1.
\textsuperscript{16} Quoted in Goldwater, 1979, 71.
\textsuperscript{17} Goldwater, 1979, 9.
\textsuperscript{18} Goldwater, 1979, 81-82.
\textsuperscript{19} Goldwater, 1979, 60.
\textsuperscript{21} Goldwater, 1979, 6.
Dove was aware of symbolism through Stieglitz who was familiar with the work of Redon, Gauguin, and Van Gogh. Works by these artists were included in the Armory Show that Dove probably visited in 1913 as well as in subsequent exhibitions in New York. According to Newman, symbolist and transcendental attitudes were pervasive throughout the 291 group. 22 Rosalind Krauss maintains that symbolism was still strong enough in the United States well after its peak in the 1880s and '90s to inspire Stieglitz' Equivalents of the 1920s and '30s. 23 Stieglitz' statement in the catalogue for his 1924 exhibition at the Anderson Galleries confirms Krauss' theory:

These are tiny photographs, direct revelations of man's world in the sky--documents of eternal revelations--perhaps even a philosophy. 24

Charles Eldredge made a similar claim for symbolism in the early 1920s in New York:

Pioneers like Hartley, Dove, and O'Keeffe made unique contributions to the abstract idiom that was evolving internationally. Through intuition and by individual avenues, they had arrived by the mid-1910s at a distinctly American expression of the Symbolist ideal defined by Albert Aurier [Gauguin's leading apologist]. 25 He believes that:

In their exceptional inventions Dove and O'Keeffe drew upon the heritage of the late nineteenth century to craft a decidedly modern idiom, an abstract Symbolism. 26

Pamela Allara sees a shared symbolist motif in works by Stuart Davis, Demuth, Dove, Hartley, and O'Keeffe evidenced in the "emblem device." She writes:

This use of an emblem device--a bold frontal design in which an object is condensed into the visible sign of an idea--is a development peculiar to American art of the 20th century that is derived from symbolist aesthetics. 27

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24 Quoted in Platt, 14, 149 50n.
26 Eldredge, 117.
Cohn introduces an important qualification into this discussion of symbolism in its America:

The role which Symbolist aesthetics played in the criticism of Camera Work and the "291" gallery has been frequently observed. However, it is equally important to note that the Americans—artists and critics—were selective in their borrowings. Key aspects of Symbolism which characterize much fin de siècle European art—the fatalism, physical passivity, decadence, celebration of artefact, and feverish devotion to obscure perceptions—were of no relevance to the beginnings of modernism in America.²⁸

Both Cohn and Tuchman see a change in Dove’s work around 1920, owing to the influence of theosophy and the occult.²⁹ Theosophy, a blend of hermeticism, Hinduism and neo-platonism, was introduced by Madame Helena Blavatsky and Colonel Henry Steele Olcott to New York in 1875. Theosophy propounds that one truth has existed throughout time and is brought together in this combination of philosophy, religion and quasi-scientific thought. The primary aim of theosophy, as defined by Robert Galbreath, was:

to enhance awareness of the relationships between nature and spirit, and thus to enable the individual to achieve direct, intuitive knowledge (wisdom) and personal experience of the spiritual.³⁰

Cohn describes theosophy and its appeal:

In its doctrines Theosophy pictures a universe which is fundamentally composed of consciousness, ruled by correspondences and which is susceptible to sympathetic influences. A central premise of the teachings is the Hermetic identification between microcosm and macrocosm. ...It offered a comprehensive philosophy which claimed to be the unifying element behind all human activity—art, science, industry and religion. Moreover, it was consolingly optimistic. By using the controversial theory of evolution for its own ends, theosophy promised that life was immortal and not only evolves but progresses in an upwardly moving spiral.³¹

Theosophy dropped its shroud of secrecy under the leadership of Annie Besant and Charles Leadbeater (Blavatsky’s successors) and the movement grew until its peak year in

³¹ Cohn, 1985, 54.
1928 of 45,000 members. Cohn speculates on the roots of Dove's interest:

Dove had the invincible need to believe in a transcendental reality, and as an artist it was his purpose to give expression to that reality--invisible and interior--which eludes scientific measurement.\textsuperscript{32}

She continues:

For Dove it offered a means to project into life a coherence and value which the contemporary culture could not provide. Given his Romantic temperament, his sequestered lifestyle, his early rejection of organized religion, and his need to believe in a transcendental reality, he was naturally susceptible to the promise and particular slant of theosophical thought. It fulfilled his craving for religious belief by providing some form of spiritual focus. Most importantly, it did not contradict his respect for scientific knowledge.\textsuperscript{33}

It is easy to understand why Dove would be sympathetic to a philosophy that saw nature and man as part of an organic whole. Cohn hypothesizes on how symbolism, theosophy, and transcendentalism were woven together in Dove's mind:

Fearing the emptiness of an art without content, . . . Dove sought to legitimate his abstractions by grounding them in truths found outside of the realm of art itself. In the writings of Blavatsky . . . and others, he found the means to envision the transcendental reality in which he so earnestly believed. Theosophy was useful to him as an instrument, not an end--a point of departure, not an aesthetic solution. No more or less true than any other mythic structure, it was a symbolic convenience which provided him with the spiritual focus he craved and the means by which nature could be celebrated as something sacred.\textsuperscript{34}

The third leg of Dove's philosophical stool was transcendentalism. American transcendentalism is an outgrowth of:

the German Romantic nature philosophy which had a formative influence on the development of American culture. According to this belief, expounded in the writings of Goethe, Schelling, the Schlegel brothers, and Schiller, there is but one realm of truth which includes both art and nature. Because they derive from the same source, they share the same laws and the same aim. Both are routes to spiritual understanding. Art is meant to mirror the laws of nature, as nature mirrors the cosmos.\textsuperscript{35}

Transcendentalism posits that all matter, including nature, is an extension of God.

This philosophy is the belief that nature is formed and informed by spirit; that a

\textsuperscript{32} Cohn, 1985, 45.
\textsuperscript{33} Cohn, 1985, 54-55.
\textsuperscript{34} Cohn, 1983: 91.
\textsuperscript{35} Cohn, 1985, 11.
leaf or pebble, mountain or star, is a symbol of a greater spiritual reality, both beyond and within; that God not only created nature but is in nature as well.\footnote{Cohn, 1985, 2.}

Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman were the 19th-century writers who spearheaded the transcendental movement. Emerson wrote in \textit{Nature}, 1836:

Standing on the bare ground--my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space--all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or parcel of God.\footnote{Emerson quoted in Barbara Novak, \textit{American Painting of the Nineteenth Century} (New York: Icon Editions, Harper & Row Publishers, 1979), 110, hereafter cited as Novak.}

Solomon claims that Dove was heir to this sensibility:

[Dove] seeks not an intellectual exegesis of the structure of nature, but rather a mystical sense of her majesty at the deepest levels of feeling. He translates his responses into a style of painting which exploits a kinesthetic \textit{elan} peculiarly his own. In another sense Dove belongs to an older tradition of American painting, a kind of painting which echoes sympathetically the particular distinctions of the American landscape. Like his ancestors in the Hudson River school, Dove responds to his environment, along the coast or upstate in New York, as a heartfelt and transcendental source of artistic inspiration.\footnote{White Museum of Art, 16.}

Pragmatism goes hand in hand with transcendentalism. Barbara Novak observes that American landscape painters such as Thomas Eakins, Martin Johnson Heade, Fitz Hugh Lane, and William Sidney Mount utilized a combined scientific and spiritual approach, creating works that are simultaneously specific and mythic.\footnote{Cited in Cohn, 1985, 3.} A similar interest led Dove to pursue a wide range of systems to clarify the relationship and desired unification of religion and science. He read Henri Bergson, Maurice Bucke's \textit{Cosmic Consciousness}, Havelock Ellis, Lao-tse, Patanjali, Hindu books like \textit{Bahagavad Gita}, \textit{The Lectures of Bodhananda}, and \textit{Kali the Mother}, and twice met with Swami Nikhilanda through the Davidsons.\footnote{Cohn, 1983: 87-88.} Dove avoided traditional allegorical symbols as he attempted to create universally comprehensible paintings that reflected the tempo and independence of nature.
Novak perceives an unexpected marriage in the cross fertilization of folk art and transcendentalism in America.

My contention has been that luminous vision, and indeed, the conceptual mode of much indigenous American art, has derived in part from the tempering of a continuous primitive tradition that has run parallel to the mainstream of sophisticated art in America. 41

Tashjian makes a similar claim for primitivism's role in the development of dada and for nativism's importance in America although he regards Dove's collages as only "tangentially" influenced by dada. 42 As we have seen, Johnson regards American folk and Victorian art as crucial inspirations for Dove's collages. 43 It is difficult to establish how influential any of these concepts are on Dove's portrait collages. There is however a firm philosophical tie between his paintings and symbolism, theosophy, and American transcendentalism.

18th and 19th Century American Precedents: Folk Art and the Still-Life Tradition

Dove's symbolic portrait collages can be discussed both as collages and as symbolic portraits within the American tradition. In order to establish their place in 20th-century art history, the viewer must examine them in both contexts.

American folk art has often been posited as a source of Dove's collages. Johnson maintains in her 1967 survey of the collages that Dove would have been familiar with folk art and Victorian knickknacks from his middle-class upbringing in northern New York. Cohn sees a strong "nativist component" in Dove's early work, which was equal in importance to the avant-garde influences that led both him and Kandinsky to experiment

41 Novak, 110.
43 University of Maryland, 9-12.
independently with an abstract idiom in 1911.\textsuperscript{44}

A resurgence of interest in American crafts and folklore in the early years of the 20th century paralleled the French avant-garde's discovery of the art of primitive societies.\textsuperscript{45} In 1913, Hamilton Easter Field founded an artists' colony called the Onunquit School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine and began assembling his collection of early American folk art, crafts and furniture with the assistance of his adopted son, the French-born sculptor Robert Laurent. A number of artists visited Field's colony and collection, including Hartley in 1917. He responded to the folk art he saw there in a number of still-life paintings on glass that echo early American works [48].\textsuperscript{46} Beatrix Rumford reported that Elie Nadelman and his wife began collecting native art in 1919. They spent $500,000 and amassed close to 15,000 objects, exhibiting their collection publicly in New York, starting in 1924.\textsuperscript{47} However, she notes that:

Folk art collecting as a national phenomenon received much of its impetus from a small group of artists in New York City, many of whom were of immigrant ancestry. Not until 1923, when a special showing of the portrait Mrs. Freake and Baby Mary (ca. 1674) at the Worcester Art Museum engendered several review articles, is there clear evidence of a developing interest in the aesthetics of "American primitives."\textsuperscript{48}

There was also an exhibit in 1924 of early American portraits from the Kent, Connecticut, area, and Isabel Carlton Wilde began marketing folk art in 1926 in Boston, so interest was

\textsuperscript{44} Cohn, 1985, 95.
\textsuperscript{45} It is widely known that Picasso's interest in primitive art, particularly central African sculpture, was of particular influence in his formal development of cubism. It seems feasible that the objects Picasso viewed at Paris' ethnographic museum, the Trocadero, could also have inspired his eventual inclusion of non-art materials in his experimentation with collage.
\textsuperscript{48} Rumford, 14.
not strictly limited to New York.  

As one of the probable inspirations for Dove's exploration of the collage technique, Johnson posited the Whitney Studio Club exhibition of American folk art, presented at the Anderson Galleries in February 1924. Rumford points out that at least four of the lenders to this exhibition had summered at Ononquit and that Juliana Force, director of the Whitney Studio Club, was "an avid early collector of folk art." The exhibition consisted of forty-five objects, including paintings, carving, sculpture, and Benjamin Greenleaf's 1817 portrait of Mary Ann C. Nichols [49] on glass.

From this point on, exhibitions were frequent. It is unclear whether Dove was familiar with these exhibitions and collections; however, a general interest in things American was in the air. Writers of the era such as Sherwood Anderson, Sadakichi Hartmann, Sinclair Lewis, and Lewis Mumford were all trying to define America, to present America's strengths and weaknesses in order to establish what was truly American. Platt writes:

Paul Rosenfeld and his colleagues in the 1920s emphasized the importance of contact with the native American environment and the expression of that environment directly in art. The model for this approach to art was Walt Whitman, who was admired for his content and style. Even Stieglitz withdrew from his previously international stance beginning in 1917 by showing only American art, although he maintained his interest in international artistic developments and ideas. Cohn notes that:

Except for Hartley, the Stieglitz artists remained in America after the war, painting nativist themes, cultivating a life with the soil and a sense of place. Marin painted the New York skyline and the Maine coast. O'Keeffe alternated between Abiquiu and Lake George. Hartley went to Taos and eventually settled in

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49 University of Maryland, 11-12, Rumford, 19-22, and Cohn, 1985, 103.
51 Rumford, 15-17.
52 Platt, 45.
53 There were only three exceptions: Gaston Lachaise in 1927, and Bluemner and Picabia in 1928.
Maine. Dove never left the vicinity of New York. In their attachments to place, these artists too were regionalists of a sort, but they used locale as a means, not an end, attempting to grasp the meaning of America in modernist terms.  

The folk art or nativist influence on Dove’s symbolic portrait collages might be complemented by the influence of the still-life tradition. Growing out of its Dutch ancestry, this tradition had been strong in America since the 17th century. Trompe l’oeil letter racks from the 17th and 18th centuries are extant, as are the still lifes produced by the Peale family.  

Charles Bird King painted Poor Artist’s Cupboard, c. 1815 [50], as a still-life study of the paltry contents of an artist’s storage cabinet. The sentiment that prompted this work is directly in concord with Dove’s and the Stieglitz circle’s perception of America’s cultural poverty. Andrew Cosentino writes:

For example, apart from the explicit rebukes in the Poor Artist’s Cupboard, the images of poverty that overburden the picture—the torn books, the stale morsel of bread, and the sheriff’s sale sign—reflect on the deplorable condition of the artist. ...King was... commenting on...the state of poverty among artists generally, and their neglect by the American public."  

King’s The Vanity of the Artist’s Dream, [51], painted about fifteen years later, expanded on this theme:

The Vanity concerns itself with the rejection by society of art itself, personified in the head of Apollo. So critical is the condition of the arts that Plenty empties her cornucopia of its dwindling riches. ...King’s painting moralizes on the injustice of the temporal world toward the spiritual world of the arts."  

Another possible still-life influence on Dove’s exploration of the collage medium are the late-19th century still-life paintings of William Harnett, John Peto, and John Haberle. Around 1890, Peto painted Patch Self-Portrait with Small Pictures [52], a self-portrait

54 Cohn, 1985, 98-99.
56 Ibid, 80.
surrounded by trompe l'oeil samples of his paintings and scraps of music referring to his major source of income, playing the cornet at camp meetings. Like King, both Peto [53] and Haberle [54] used their painting palettes as subject matter. Presumably the palettes stand-in for the artists, representing the tools of their craft and their mastery of these tools. Peto used his actual palette, encrusted with paint, as a ground for a characteristic and realistic depiction of a pipe and pottery mug. Haberle painted a picture of his palette in a trompe l'oeil wooden frame with his brushes and palette knife appearing to project from the canvas. His Grandma's Hearthstone, 1890 [55], provides an interesting counterpoint to Dove's Grandmother. While these works are not collages, these trompe l'oeil depictions of sundry objects in still-life compositions have the appearance of collage.

While the inclusion of actual objects is not unusual in American folk art, examples of folk art collage portraits are few. Ruth Whittier Shute and Samuel Addison Shute, an early-19th century husband and wife team, are among the few who included collage elements in their portraits [56-57]. In Dove's immediate circle, however, a number of artists had experimented in the decade between 1915 and 1925 with different types of portraiture that relied on a spiritual or character definition rather than a physical likeness. These works will be discussed in more depth later in this chapter.

20th Century Collage: Cubist, Futurist and Dada Interpretations

The history of modern collage before Dove is brief. In the early years of the 20th century, Braque and Picasso initiated a revolutionary way of making art. Their cubist paintings grew increasingly monochromatic and unrecognizable. To counteract this and to

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ground those works in reality, the artists inserted words, fragments of newspapers, song
lyrics, and cigarette brand names in the works to engage the viewer. Picasso made his
first collage, Still Life with Chair Caning, in May 1912 [58]. Here a piece of oilcloth
representing chair caning is attached to the canvas to represent a chair, and Picasso
framed the whole with rope. In Fruit Dish and Glass, September 1912 [59], Braque pasted
wallpaper that resembled wood grain on paper to represent a wooden table. [59] These
moves challenged traditional fine art conventions. These conventions dictated that subject
matter should be recognizable and that the only appropriate materials for realistically
depicting the subject were oil paint, gouache, pastel, charcoal, and the like. New notions
about subject matter, recognizability, and media were quickly developed by Braque and
Picasso and expanded on by the futurists, Kurt Schwitters, and dada artists.

Dove could not have seen these early collages while he was in France in 1908-9, but
in November 1908 the critic Vauxcelles initiated the use of the term "cubism" to describe
Braque’s earliest cubist pictures exhibited at Kahnweiler’s gallery in Paris. After Dove’s
return to the United States he almost certainly saw the exhibition of eighty-three drawings
and watercolors from 1905-10 by Picasso (some cubist) which were displayed at 291 in
1911. [60] Dove would have been familiar with two early cubist works in particular that
were purchased by Stieglitz and reproduced in Camera Work: Head of Fernande, 1909 [60]
and Nude, 1910. Head is considered a portrait of Picasso’s companion at this time and is a
charcoal drawing composed of many arcs with volume indicated by shading. During this
period, Picasso produced a number of cubist portraits, including Portrait of Ambrose

16, 1980, 151.
[59] Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée national d’art moderne, Paris. Georges Braque: The
[60] This exhibit of Picasso’s work at 291 was chosen by DeZayas, Picasso, Steichen, and
the painter Paul Burty, and ran from March 28-April 25, 1911. It was accompanied by
a pamphlet with a perceptive essay by De Zayas that was reprinted in Camera Work,
Vollard, 1910 [61]. Dove’s first opportunity to confront a cubist collage would have come later and may have been the exhibits of 1914-15 at 291 and at the Modern Gallery, where Picasso’s Violin and Guitar, 1913 [62], was shown. Wolfram claims that Picasso encouraged the fertile union between artistic expression and human experience by experimenting broadly with collage techniques, "impart[ing] a fiendish wit, [and] an uninhibited love of mischief" to his works. 62

Precedents for collage portraiture within the cubist traditions are few. Still Life with Calling Card, Head and Student with a Pipe, all of 1913-14, represent Picasso’s broad translation of a portrait through the collage medium [63-64a]. The first was apparently a gift to Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas, however, as far as is known, none of the other works refer to specific individuals. In Au Bon Marché, 1913 [64b], Picasso refers to the Parisian department stores Au Bon Marché and La Samaritaine in a witty and lascivious fashion but he does not anthropomorphize their clientele in the same way as Dove’s Miss Woolworth does. 63 In fact, James Mellow traces the development of the abstract or "object-portrait" from the early 1910s beginning with Parisian cubism to the New York-based Stieglitz-Stein-Mabel Dodge salons and later through the Arensberg-New York dada group. 64

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61 Drawings and paintings by Picasso and Braque were shown at 291 in December 1914 with archaic Mexican pottery and carvings. Works by Picasso were shown twice more in New York in 1914, and at the Modern Gallery in October 1915 (portraits and collages), in December 1915, during the winter and spring of 1916, in the fall of 1916 with African sculpture and works by Picabia and Stieglitz, and also in March 1918 with Derain, Gris and Rivera. The Bel'maison Galleries of the Wanaaker Galleries sponsored an exhibition of French Cubism and Post-Impressionism in November-December 1921. On the other hand, in 1924, Wildenstein Gallery exhibited sixteen of Picasso’s 'Ingresque' works.


Duchamp and Picabia exhibited cubist works in the Armory Show that were much commented on. In her survey of art criticism of the 1920s, Platt characterizes cubism in America at this time as "identified with cubified landscape and analytic Cubism, but most particularly with Marcel Duchamp’s *Nude Descending a Staircase.*" She notes that American understanding of cubism was based on Picabia's interpretation.

The primary expicator of Cubism in the early teens was Francis Picabia. As the only European Cubist in New York at the time of the Armory Show, he naturally was sought after by the press.... Picabia's theory was based on the Symbolist influenced Puteaux Group. That same theory forged the primary source for Walter Pach, a major interpreter of Cubism in America.

She writes that Pach's "terminology clearly relied on Symbolist concepts" and that:

The Symbolist orientation of Pach's ideas, centering on the equivalence of art and sensation and the autonomy of the art object, reflected the influence of Duchamp as well as of Gleizes and Metzinger.

Dove's interest in symbolism, theosophy, and transcendentalism may have been reinforced from the unlikely quater of cubism and dada. Pach's writings reveal this crucial link between symbolism and cubism into dada in America. He states in his 1924 *Masters of Modern Art*:

The parallel between our conditions and those of a hundred years ago lies in the need to unite the classic aesthetic principles (seen today in the work of Cézanne, Seurat and Matisse) with the vision of our time, especially that vision of the inner world, first predicated by Redon and carried by the Cubists to a point where it breaks entirely with the formula for appearances....That [Cubism] is a great force negating the false things of our time and strengthening much that is best in art, I believe, to be beyond doubt.

Variations of the cubist movement were seen in New York in the work of Alexander Archipenko, Albert Gleizes, Fernand Léger, Jacques Lipschitz, Jean Metzinger, and Diego Rivera. In 1916, the Montross Gallery introduced the work of Jean Crotti, Duchamp, Gleizes, and Metzinger. Crotti's proto-dada works, *Portrait of Marcel Duchamp sur mesure*,

65 Platt, 71.
66 Platt, 71.
67 Platt, 72.
68 Quoted in Platt, 73.
1915-16 [65], and Clown, 1916 [66], were introduced in this exhibition, and shown and published repeatedly in the coming two years. Works of the latter three were shown in New York throughout the 1920s by the Société Anonyme, including Gleizes' Man on a Balcony or Portrait of Dr. Morinaud, 1912 [67], and Metzinger's The Bathers, 1913 [68]. The Modern Gallery introdcured Rivera's cubist works to New York in two shows in 1916. Archipenko, who made volumetric "sculpto-paintings" and metal relief sculpture, was represented in a Société Anonyme exhibition at the Daniel Gallery in February 1921, and at the Kingore Gallery in January-February 1924. A critic for Art News wrote on the latter exhibition, stating that the:

Most striking of his "sculpto-paintings" is the "Woman" [69] fashioned in the half-round of brass, copper, strips of lead taped on and painted, a piece of freakiness lamentably "old fashioned" even in the Modernist school. 

Despite this "old-fashioned" look, these works, sculpted with a sensitivity to various metals, may have reinforced Dove's interest in constructing works out of unusual, but expressive, materials.

Léger's first exposure to American audiences was through set design. The Société Anonyme later sponsored an exhibition at the Anderson Galleries in November 1925 and a notice of it is included in the newsprint that comprises Dove's The Critic. Works like Léger’s Umbrella, 1925 [70], from this exhibition are oil-on-canvas works that reflect an awareness of collage; Umbrella refers to Léonce Rosenberg, an art dealer, via the bowler sitting on the chair. Platt remarked that "Léger was easily the most popular of the

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71 Platt, 84, 161 62a. In fact, Archipenko made collages from 1913-15 but it is unclear whether these works were exhibited in New York.

72 Herbert, et al., 404.
European Cubists," presumably because of the clarity of his images and palette.\textsuperscript{73}

Cubist applications of the collage technique were quickly adopted by futurist and dada artists who were experimenting with collage, albeit in a wholly different way from the cubists and thus less well known in the United States. The futurists used collage to indicate the speed, energy and, eventually, the absurdity of the modern era. The Italian artist Gino Severini [71] was in Paris with Braque and Picasso during their early experiments with the collage technique and conveyed the technique to his fellow futurists, Umberto Boccioni and Carlo Carrà [72].\textsuperscript{74} Dadaists like Jean Arp [73] and Schwitters used collage for its quality of randomness and its demonstration of the possibilities of juxtaposition. In Schwitters' work, collage refers to urban life and the modern age because he used everyday detritus in his compositions. Schwitters is known to have made only one collage portrait, \textit{Merzbild 1A. Der Irrenarzt}, also known as \textit{The Alienist} or \textit{The Physician} [74] of 1919. This is one of Schwitters' earliest \textit{merzbilder} and John Elderfield believed that this collage represents either Schwitters' psychiatrist or Schwitters himself.\textsuperscript{75} In terms of portraiture, Janis and Blesh state that there were plaster grottos in Schwitters' Hannover merzbau dedicated to the artist's friends and also, oddly enough, that Schwitters painted academic portraits as a means of financial support throughout his career.\textsuperscript{76} Surely Dove would have been fascinated by Schwitters' experimentation with junk off the street metamorphosed into exquisite, intriguing compositions.

Numerous articles were published in \textit{Camera Work} on caricature.\textsuperscript{77} The earliest

\begin{verbatim}
\textsuperscript{73} Platt, 86.
\textsuperscript{75} John Elderfield, \textit{Kurt Schwitters} (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), 51-52.
\textsuperscript{76} Janis and Blesh, 64.
\textsuperscript{77} Among them, "Caricature and New York" by Benjamin de Casseres in no. 26 (April 1909): 17, De Casseres "The Physiognomy of the New Yorker" in no. 29 (January 1910): 35, "Caricature: Absolute and Relative" by De Zayas and "Marius de Zayas--Material, Relative and Absolute Caricatures" by Paul B. Haviland in no. 46 (April 1914): 19-21, 33.
\end{verbatim}
precedents for symbolic portraiture seen in New York are caricatures by Marius de Zayas that were exhibited at 291 in January 1909. These works are executed in an art nouveau style demonstrated by their sinuous, evocative line. De Zayas' first caricature of Stieglitz [25] appeared in Camera Work, no. 30 (April 1910) and was succeeded two years later by a chalk drawing of Stieglitz titled L'Accoucheur d'Idées in Camera Work, no. 39. Soon thereafter, De Zayas devised extremely complicated symbolic portraits using geometric forms and invented mathematical formulas. Eighteen caricatures, half of which were abstract, were exhibited at 291 in 1913 and six were reproduced in Camera Work in April 1914.\footnote{Willard Bohn, "The Abstract Vision of Marius de Zayas," The Art Bulletin 62, no.3 (September 1980): 435, hereafter cited as Bohn.} His subjects encompassed the full range of subjects from his friends Haviland, Picabia, and Stieglitz to Theodore Roosevelt [26, 75]. In this issue of Camera Work, De Zayas gave an extended explanation of how he arrived at these geometric forms and mathematical formulas. He balanced his mathematical theorizing with the following intuitive explanation--what Tashjian would consider the primitivist aspect of dada.

In 1914, studying the ethnographical collection at the British Museum, I was impressed by an object invented by an artist from Fukapuka or Danger Island in the Pacific. It consisted of a wooden stick to which a few circles made of some vegetal material were fixed by pairs right and left to the stick. It impressed me particularly because it reminded me of the physical appearance of Stieglitz. I say "physical" because the resemblance was also so spiritual. The object, said the catalogue, was built as a trap for catching souls.... [and] expressed my understanding of Stieglitz' mission: to catch souls and to be the midwife who brings out new ideas to the world.\footnote{Camera Work, no. 46 (April 1914, published October 1914). De Zayas' exhibition at 291, April 8-May 20, 1913, immediately followed Picabia's show, March 17-April 5.}

Willard Bohn's recent, detailed study of these works clarifies De Zayas' writings. Bohn explains:

Instead of depicting the physical appearance of an individual--a superficial process at best--de Zayas proposes to provide an "analysis." Art is no longer to be rendered as extrinsic impression but as "intrinsic expression." ...In trying to express his "feelings and ideas through material equivalents," de Zayas was aiming primarily at "psychological representation" of his subject. ...Despite the startling originality of this system, de Zayas is heavily indebted to two schools of thought: Positivism and Cubism.
While Dove did not begin his own experiments with portraiture for another decade, De Zayas’ abstract portraits surely came to his mind as he commenced.

Katharine Dreier and Walter and Louise Arensberg were among the earliest collectors of avant-garde art in America. The circles of Stieglitz, Dreier, and the Arensbergs overlapped in time, interests and membership. The Arensberg coterie included John Covert, Duchamp, Picabia, and Joseph Stella and was the focus of American dada from 1915-21. Dreier enlisted the support of Duchamp and Man Ray and founded the Société Anonyme, Inc., the first American museum of modern art, in 1920. The Société Anonyme was created initially to sponsor exhibitions but began its own collection in 1923 when John Covert donated six of his paintings. Dreier believed that "modern art was a source of spiritual enlightenment, a belief grounded in [her] study of theosophy and of the theories of Wassily Kandinsky."81 Under the leadership of Dreier, Duchamp, and Man Ray, the Société Anonyme sponsored challenging and innovative exhibitions of American and European artists: Archipenko, Covert, Léger, Schwitters, Stella, Jacques Villon, and Marguerite Zorach.

At the time of the opening display of the Société Anonyme, a mixture of Picasso, Braque, Villon, Stella, Duchamp and Man Ray, he [the critic Henry McBride] characterized the Société as a "shrine of Cubism," calling the work of Stella and the French-influenced color abstractionist Patrick Henry Bruce, "old-fashioned cubism." He then confused the issue by referring to all the art as "the various expressionistic schools."82

The Société Anonyme, through the presence of Duchamp, Man Ray, and Schwitters, can also be tied to dada. Schwitters’ Merz collages [76] were included in group exhibitions at the Société Anonyme as early as 1920 and 1921.83 In 1921 Duchamp and Man Ray

80 Bohn, 439-40.
81 Platt, 8, 20. She sees a similar attitude on the part of the dealers Stephan Bourgeois and Alfred Stieglitz.
82 Platt, 74-75.
brought out the sole issue of New York Dada, a four-page brochure that contained two Stieglitz portraits, a Rube Goldberg cartoon, a poem by Hartley, a Man Ray photograph, and a cover designed by Duchamp and Man Ray. 84

Duchamp’s thinking and work would have been familiar to Dove. Duchamp had three realistic or impressionistic works in the 1908 Salon d’Automne in Paris and had created a stir with Nude Descending a Staircase at the Armory Show in 1913. His mixed-media Chocolate Grinder (No.2), 1914 [77], was shown twice in New York in 1915 and 1916. The latter show, held at the Anderson Galleries, included two unnamed readymades which Dove may have seen. The clamor caused in the avant-garde art community by the rejection of Duchamp’s Fountain from the 1917 exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists and its subsequent reproduction in the May 1917 issue of The Blind Man (which incidentally had a reproduction of the Chocolate Grinder on its cover) cannot have failed to have reached Dove’s ears. Duchamp’s readymades can be regarded as the conceptual cousins, or the sculptural equivalents, of collage. His last painting, Tu m’, 1918 [78], was commissioned by Dreier for her library. Through the oil-on-canvas work, which contained trompe l’oeil elements as well as real objects, Duchamp attempted a summation of his career to date and his thinking about two, three, and four dimensions as well as perceptions of reality and illusion. 85 Duchamp worked on The Large Glass from 1915-23 and, although it was not exhibited until 1926, it was in his studio for almost a decade, during which time Dove might have heard about or seen the work in progress.

Picabia was a sensation in New York and the Stieglitz circle at the time of the Armory Show. Cohn perceives a strong influence from Picabia on Dove subsequent to the Armory Show and Picabia’s 1913 exhibit at 291, revealed artistically “in the new

85 Herbert, et al., 230-33. Incidentally, Dreier too was an artist and painted two oil-on-canvas portraits of Duchamp: the later of the two is an abstract symbolic work.
structure of space:"

Rather than layering flat shapes in such a way as to suggest spatial recession, Dove arranged the forms, now open and continuous, in interlocking patterns which defy clear spatial relations.  

Picabia's "mechanomorphic portraits" were reproduced in the July-August 1915 issue of 291 devoted to these caricatures and were exhibited alongside African sculptures at The Modern Gallery in January 1916. The mechanomorphic portraits are ink-on-paper schematic drawings resembling machines or appliances whose titles are the only indication of their identity [79]. Haviland, who was previously mentioned as a contributor to Camera Work and supporter of 291, is portrayed as a lamp, whereas De Zayas is portrayed as a complex machine with mannequin and stirrups. Agee links these works with De Zayas' algebraic portraits because both deliberately "repudiated the cliches of another tradition, the portrait 'likeness.'" And William Camfield explains that the French artist:

Instead of developing a vocabulary of abstract forms [like De Zayas] and colors, Picabia now sought machine equivalents or symbols to comment on man and human situations...

The best known of these mechanomorphic portraits is a drawing of Stieglitz characterized as a broken bellows camera [29]. Camfield writes of the work:

For a portrait of the distinguished photographer, Alfred Stieglitz, Picabia utilized a camera--an appropriate and straightforward symbol except for three features: it is pointed straight up toward the word "Ideal," yet broken and combined with alien machine forms identified as an automobile gearshift in neutral and a brake which is set. From [the Stieglitz-de Zayas correspondence]... it becomes clear that Stieglitz was indeed "neutral" about the need for 291 and dragging his foot ("braking") on The Modern Gallery. Accordingly, Picabia's portrait looms as a respectful criticism of Stieglitz by younger colleagues who opposed his inclination to retire from an active role in avant-garde activities.

Of this period, Tashjian states that "Dove was surely attracted by Picabia's machine

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66 Cohn, 1985, 101.
69 Camfield, 1979, 77.
70 Kunsthalle Bern, 10.
portraits in 291.\textsuperscript{91}

Also of interest in relation to Dove's portrait collages are a number of collages made by Picabia in the south of France, including \textit{Centimeters}, c. 1924-25 [80], and \textit{Portrait of Poincaré?}, c. 1924-26 [81]. A centimeier tape is used to represent, respectively, a tree and a nose in these collages from the 1920s. It is interesting to note the relationship between the centimeter tape in these works and Dove's use of a ruler in \textit{Portrait of Ralph Dusenberry}, however, there is no evidence that Dove saw these works. Picabia's \textit{Matchwoman II}, 1923-24 [82], a collage composed portrait composed of coins, hairpins, matches and string, may have been included in the New York venue of the 1925 \textit{Tri-National Exhibition} that ran at the Wildenstein Gallery from January 26 to February 15, 1925.\textsuperscript{92} Furthermore, one of the three works by Picabia included in \textit{An International Exhibition of Modern Art Assembled by the Société Anonyme} at the Brooklyn Museum in 1926-27 was a collage, amusingly titled \textit{Peinture (Midi)}, c. 1923-26 [83].\textsuperscript{93} Titled \textit{Painting} and framed in snakeskin, this collage depicts a boardwalk bordered with feather and macaroni palm trees on the southern coast of France (called the "midi") at midday (also referred to as "midi"). It is difficult, particularly with Picabia and Dove, to determine whether there is mutual influence or simultaneity, as noted in 1913.\textsuperscript{94} As tempting as it is to posit a relationship between Picabia and Dove, according to Camfield, there is almost no chance that either man was (or could have been) aware of the other's collages unless a specific "carrier" can be identified at the "right" time in 1924.

Man Ray is considered the foremost American dada artist. He is credited with the

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{91} Tashjian, 1975, 198.
\textsuperscript{92} Camfield, 1979, 219. The catalogue for \textit{The Exhibition of Tri-National Art} is on microfilm from the AAA, roll D176, frames 185-197. Over 200 works by more than 100 artists were shown first in France, then Britain and lastly in New York.
\textsuperscript{93} Bohan, 57.
\end{footnotesize}
earliest, or proto-, dada publication, *The Ridgefield Gazook*, of March 1915. He continued to experiment with a wide variety of media throughout the 1910s and '20s. Two collages, *Self Portrait*, 1916 [84], and *Decollage*, 1917 [85], are probably as close in media and temperament as Dove and Man Ray ever got. Arturo Schwarz believes that the *Self Portrait*, composed of two electric telephone bells and a push button, was the "first dada assemblage produced in America." Man Ray spoke of the reaction this work and *Portrait Hanging* elicited at the Daniel Gallery in 1916:

> Yes, the *Self Portrait* made people furious. They pushed the electric button and nothing happened. They thought, if you push the button the bell should ring. It didn't. That made them livid and they said I was a bad workman. Then the *Portrait Hanging* was hung with a nail in a corner and attached to another nail in the wall, so that when you tried to tighten it you couldn't shift or do anything. It just swung back like a pendulum. I wanted the audience, the visitors, to participate in the creative act.  

He also stated:

> You see, the idea of scandal and provoking people, which was one of the principles of Dada, was entirely foreign to the American spirit. That is why I said Dada and Surrealism do not belong here.  

And, encouraged by Schwarz, he proclaimed: "There is no such thing [as New York Dada]."

Duchamp and the dada movement's influence on American art and Dove is extremely difficult to determine. Agee, Cohn, Pincus-Witten, Platt, Schwarz, Tashjian, and Wight have tackled the question of dada influence on Dove. Schwarz defines New York dada as a "one-man movement which involved only Man Ray." He characterizes the New York version of dada as composed of "a carefree, cultured and high-spirited bohème" without the iconoclastic furor of the European movements. According to Schwarz, the American

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96 Man Ray quoted in Schwarz, 91.
97 Schwarz, 99.
98 Ibid.
99 Schwarz, 36.
participants did not question the nature of aesthetics; in fact, he regards the American movement as closer to cubism and futurism than the activities at other dada centers. To Schwarz, Dove's collages represent a belated attempt to catch up to current art. He sees them as the use of a dada technique that fails to achieve a dada spirit. Robert Pincus-Witten also believes that Dove's collages were rooted in dada techniques but similarly did not claim them as dada works.

Art historians use *Hand Sewing Machine*, 1927 [86], as evidence of Dove's response to the machine age art of dada and futurism as well his experiments with shape and texture. Tashjian relates the work to Man Ray's *Enigma of Isadore Ducasse*, 1920, and Duchamp's *Coffee Mill*, 1911. Agee regards *The Intellectual* "as a Dada mockery of the limits of reason" and draws a connection between it and the 'old junk constructions of Schwitters.' The enigmatic *Monkey Fur*, 1928 [87], is often used to illustrate Dove's purported dada streak. Morgan dates the work 1928 but this date may be contradicted by the Dove-Torr diaries. On January 26, 1926, Torr noted that "A[rthur] to Tony's and walks looking for materials, brought back start for 'the Acid Test,' an ancient in the way of rusty metal." It is plausible that the "ancient in the way of rusty metal" is in the center of the composition. The title of the work may refer to Darwin's controversial theories of evolution that had figured prominently in the well publicized Scopes trial of 1925. Solomon straddles the question of artistic influence, stating "it is not surprising that Dove should essay a number of experiments in collage," but also sees the collages as a marraige of cubism and dada.

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100 Schwarz, 38.
102 Tashjian, 1975, 200-201.
104 White Museum of Art, 9-10.
Agee states that:

The catalytic force behind the Arensberg circle and indeed all Dada was Marcel Duchamp, who, by the time of his arrival in New York, had reversed nearly every accepted law of painting. He regards dada and the puzzling Inje-Inje group as movements whose goal was to return art to a state of simplicity and direct expression. Agee sees the collages as "pure Dada in conception and technique;" influenced significantly by the relief construction of Schwitters, and includes them as evidence of dada influence in America:

The dates of New York Dada can be fixed from 1910, the moment of Benjamin de Casseres' first attacks on esthetic conventions, to 1930 when Arthur Dove did the last of his Dada-inspired collages.

Tashjian concurs, believing that dada is tied to primitivism and, in its New York incarnation, linked to the search for a native American experience.

Dada turned the negative qualities of crudeness and barbarism into a virtue, and not simply in an ironic fashion. Something could be made out of crude materials, as in the instance of Stella's collages, modelled after those of Schwitters. Dada primitivism also affirmed simplicity, energy, naivete, spontaneity, and in America directness above all: the thing itself, as [William Carlos] Williams so often said.

Tashjian ties Dove to dada insofar as:

Dada advocated open-ended experimentation and thus attracted the diverse talents of John Covert, Joseph Stella, and Arthur G. Dove to the possibilities of assemblage. ....Imbued with the spirit of experimentation, they turned from painting (for which they are primarily known) to assemblage. Theirs was an anti-art gesture of radical proportions in America, as indicated by the ridicule that greeted Jean Crotti's portrait of his brother-in-law in 1916. Yet the Dada element in their work was not unadulterated, but was rather appropriated for their own pictorial needs.

Thus, while Stella and Dove made significant contributions to assemblage at a time when its possibilities were generally ignored by other American artists, their success should be measured less by their close emulation of Duchamp or Picabia than by their ability to take a Dada attitude or idea and bend it to their own creative purposes.

107 Tashjian, 1979, 143.
108 Tashjian, 1975, 188.
Platt introduces an important point to the discussion of dada.

Contemporary scholars postulate that the Dadas' enthusiastic attitude toward the machine stimulated artists like Charles Demuth and Charles Sheeler to break with Cubist principles. They also believe that the Dadas' use of experimental materials led Americans such as John Covert, Man Ray, Joseph Stella and Arthur Dove to create their "assemblage" work. No such connection to Dada was made by the critics of the 1920s. 109

She uses Dove's collages to demonstrate how complicated this issue is by citing the widely differing opinions of Dreier, who called Dove the "only American dadaist" in 1923, and Lloyd Goodrich who wrote in 1926 that:

It is evident that Mr. Dove's intentions are less serious and more satiric than those of the followers of Picasso who use somewhat similar methods. 110

Robert Goldwater wrote that Picabia and Duchamp:

taught Dove...something of the ironical methods of Dada. In its spirit, but with a gentler touch, he carried out the collages of the 'twenties. 111

Dove's response to dada and the machine age does seem more gentle, more akin to Charles Sheeler's Self Portrait, 1923 [88], than to the works of Man Ray, Picabia, or Duchamp. Dove's Gear, c. 1922 [89], featuring that machine part and symbol of the well oiled assembly line, is often used as an example of dada influence on Dove. One could regard O'Keeffe's and Strand's close up studies of scenes and objects as equally influential. Tashjian states that Dove's "iconography [is derived] in large part from Picabia and Duchamp," but makes the distinction that:

he typically chose machinery which pertains to rural life.... His pictorial treatment of the machine has actually the same organic emphases as his abstract natural forms. 112

Cohn concurs:

[Dove's] very choice of objects and style reveal[s] how truly foreign Dada aesthetics was to his own purposes as an artist; for to Dove, épater le bourgeois was not a motivating ambition. In comparison with the mechanomorphic ironies of Duchamp

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110 Platt, 101-2.
111 Quoted in Tashjian, 1975, 198.
112 Tashjian, 1975, 200.
and Picabia his subjects are rendered with an embarrassing literalism. The machinery is that of the farm, not the factory, and it looks handcrafted rather than measured and precise, but the personal significance of this approach can be understood when the paintings are viewed in another light—as a response to the critics' appeal for an indigenous art based on the artist's relation to his own locale and the objects of his immediate environment.

By its very existence, dada was important to Dove's work. As Cohn remarks:

Dada's appearance on the New York art scene occurred at a fortuitous moment for Dove—a time when his career was marked with uncertainty and indecision—and it proved to be an important stimulus, awakening him to new possibilities of artistic creation. Although his own response to machine aesthetics was somewhat lacklustre, the assemblages which followed are amongst his freshest and most inventive works. By adapting the example of Dada into a vehicle for the expression of his own personality, he achieved in these assemblages an art form which was modern and American at once.

Dove's collages demonstrate an awareness of dada but, like the other influences on his art, it seems to have been amalgamated into a larger and very personal artistic approach. Part of the issue is how dada is defined. Machines, synaesthesia, wit, and unusual materials all seem to justify labeling a work as dada without regard for defining the usage of the term. Although it is difficult to determine exactly what Dove may have seen or heard in New York, from this brief summary we can see possible American and European sources for Dove's experimentation with collage: the American still-life tradition and naive American multi-media constructions as well as cubist, futurist, and dadaist collage. The next question that arises is, what prompted Dove to combine collage with portraiture?

Other 20th Century Precedents and Influences

Dove had been exposed to a broader spectrum of influence by 1924 than discussed so far. In Paris, Dove saw the 1908 Salon d'Automne which included over 600 artists and

113 Cohn, 1985, 102.
114 Cohn, 1985, 102.
115 The following chronological information is garnered from a number of texts primarily: Davidson, 1981; Delaware Art Museum; Marius de Zayas, with Introduction and Notes by Francis M. Naumann, "How, When, and Why Modern Art Came to New York," Arts 54, no. 8 (April 1980), hereafter cited as De Zayas, 1980; and Homer, 1977.
over 2000 works.\footnote{Grand Palais des Champs-Elysées, Paris. \textit{Catalogue des ouvrages, Salon d'Automne, 1908}, October 1-November 8, 1908.} Here, Dove would have had his first exposure to work by many of the artists already mentioned (Duchamp, Léger, Matisse) and many others, including Pierre Bonnard, Maurice Denis, André Derain, Raymond Duchamp-Villon, Kandinsky, Paul Ranson, Maurice Vlaminck, and the Americans Carles, Jo Davidson, Marin, Maurer, Steichen, and Weber. After his return to the United States, Dove could have seen work by European and American modernist artists exhibited in New York first at Stieglitz's galleries (291, The Intimate Gallery, and An American Place). By the time of the Armory Show in 1913, Dove would have been familiar with the work of Cézanne, Kandinsky, Matisse, Toulouse-Lautrec, and Weber through Stieglitz's efforts. Later, the circles that developed around Mabel Dodge, the Arensbergs, Dreier and the Société Anonyme, and the mushrooming number of exhibition spaces provided forums for discussion and presented works from throughout Europe. The work of Kandinsky, Stella and Klee has not been discussed and may have affected Dove's thinking and work of the mid-1920s.

Dove was well acquainted with Kandinsky's work and theories by the time that the Société Anonyme exhibited the Russian's work in May 1923. An excerpt from Kandinsky's theoretical treatise, \textit{Über das Geistige in der Kunst (Concerning the Spiritual in Art)}, 1912, was reprinted in \textit{Camera Work}. The quoted passage concerned the art of Matisse and Picasso and concluded "Matisse--Color. Picasso--Form. Two great highways to one great goal."\footnote{"Extracts from 'The Spiritual in Art'," \textit{Camera Work}, no. 39 (July 1912): 34.} Dove had his own copy of Kandinsky's book in German before 1914 and was probably familiar with Kandinsky's \textit{Improvisation No. 27}, 1912 [90], which Stieglitz had bought out of the Armory Show.\footnote{Morgan, 68 14n.} Dove was given a copy of \textit{Der Blaue Reiter Almanac}, 1912, inscribed by Stieglitz, in November 1913.\footnote{Homer, 1977, 292 6n, noted the inscription. Henry McBride was the sole critic of the 1920s to regard Dove's works as related to the German Expressionists Kandinsky and Klee. Platt, 55.} Platt differentiates Kandinsky’s
thinking from the 291 approach in a way that applies to Dove’s collages.

Kandinsky sought to eliminate the object from his work; he focused on the unconscious, while the Stieglitz orbit saw universal meaning in the objective world—a more transcendental approach.\(^{120}\)

Cohn recognizes Dove’s awareness of Kandinsky’s work and theories, but believes his influence to be felt primarily in synaesthesia, as shown in the music paintings of 1927-28, in which Dove’s line developed an independent energy.\(^{121}\)

Joseph Stella’s work was exhibited in April-May 1913, at the same time that Picabia’s and De Zayas’ was exhibited at 291. Large groups of Stella’s works were later shown at the Bourgeois Gallery in March 1920, and at the Société Anonyme in January 1923. Stella worked in a variety of media during this period as illustrated by Chinatown, 1917 [91], a painting on glass. He made collages throughout his career, however, only two can be dated with any certainty, The Bookman [92] and Study for a Skyscraper, both dated c. 1921-22 [93]. Both works were included in the Autumn 1922 issue of The Little Review.

Dove must have been familiar with these works since it is known that he read excerpts from Apollinaire’s writing in the spring, autumn and winter issues.\(^{122}\) Jaffe believes Stella was very much influenced by the inclusion of Schwitters’ collages in a November-December 1920 Société Anonyme exhibition. She regards his attraction to collage as twofold: Stella perceived these castoff materials as analogies for himself and also that collage liberated him from his classical training, allowing for spontaneity and associative thinking.\(^{123}\) While Stella is not mentioned in the Dove-Torr diaries, it is quite possible that Dove was aware of Stella’s experiments with detritus and other non-traditional materials.

\(^{120}\) Platt, 45.
\(^{121}\) Cohn, 1985, 105-6.
\(^{122}\) Morgan, 52, 71 58n.
The Société Anonyme included Paul Klee in exhibitions in 1921, 1923, and in a one-man show in 1924. Newman claims that:

Dove often expressed admiration for, and interest in Klee, whose art and theories seem to have been an important inspiration for Dove.\(^\text{124}\)

Cohn concurs:

Ultimately, what he sought to express was not nature's products but process, or in his own Klee-inspired words "not form but formation." He greatly admired Klee's art....\(^\text{125}\)

Dove and Klee's work seem related mostly by their mutual delight in whimsy and sensitivity to color [94]. McBride wrote a review of the "Blue Four" exhibition at the Daniel Gallery in February 1925 in which he said:

Klee... is an Ariel. He is light, dancing, fantastic but always the charmer. No matter what the motif, he plays with it with astonishing agility and usually induces a mood.... The artist is evidently mocking at the superman of a too scientific age, but he achieves also a highly decorated page.\(^\text{126}\)

Dove's experiments with symbolic portraiture can be traced directly from De Zayas, Picabia, Stein and Hartley in the 1910s, and Stieglitz and Demuth in the 1920s. Gertrude Stein and her Paris salon was a gathering point for artists working in France. Picasso, Matisse, Maurer, Hartley, and most of the 291 set (with the exception of Dove and O'Keeffe) paid their respects. She was the subject of portraits by artists like Picasso (1906), Manierre Dawson (1912), Hartley (1912), and Demuth (c. 1924).\(^\text{127}\)

\(^\text{124}\) The Phillips Collection, 1981, 42.


1912 Special Number of Camera Work was devoted to the work of Matisse and Picasso and accompanied by "word-portraits" of the artists composed in 1909 by Stein. Mellow considers Stein's written endeavors the literary equivalent of the painted cubist explorations of the time. 128 "Pablo Picasso" concludes:

He was working, he was not ever completely working. He did have some following. They were always following him. Some were certainly following him. He was one who was working. He was one having something coming out of him something having meaning. He was not ever completely working. 129

She submitted "Portrait of Mabel Dodge at the Villa Curonia" to the June 1913 Special Number of Camera Work, a word-portrait that relied even less on syntax than her 1909 writings. This issue also contains reproductions of three works by Cézanne, one by Van Gogh, and four by Picasso, including a sketch of Stein.

Marsden Hartley's series of portraits made in Germany at the outset of World War I are among the surest examples of symbolic portraiture. Portrait of a German Officer, 1914 [95], and Painting No. 47, Berlin, 1914-15 [96], are memorial portraits of a friend who was a German officer. In both of these works, Hartley described his subject, Karl von Freyburg, not through a likeness but through numbers and signs associated with him: 24 is his age at death and possibly the date of his death, KvF his initials, 4 and E refer to his his regiment, the Iron Cross refers to the one he received before his death, the German flag and a number of epaulets and dangling tassels to his career as a soldier. 130 One Portrait of One Woman, 1912 [97], is purportedly a symbolic portrait of Gertrude Stein, a friend and supporter of Hartley and his work, who contributed to the catalogue for his 1914 exhibition at 291. 131 Stieglitz exhibited these works at 291 in April 1916 after

\[\text{Footnotes:}
\begin{itemize}
\item 128 Mellow, 1977: 124.
\item 129 Quoted in Green, 225.
\item 131 Whitney Museum of American Art, 1980, 52. The inclusion of the word "moi" at the bottom of the painting also suggests that this may be a self-portrait.
\end{itemize}\]
Hartley returned to New York and *Portrait of a German Officer* and *One Portrait of One Woman* were included in the *Forum Exhibition of Younger American Painters* in March 1916.\(^{132}\) Dove almost certainly saw these works at one or both of these exhibitions.

As previously discussed, Stieglitz’s on Dove influence as a friend, dealer and supporter was tremendous. Newman suggests that Stieglitz’s renaissance as a photographer in the 1920s, provoked in part by his involvement with Georgia O’Keeffe, was inspirational for Dove.\(^{133}\) Stieglitz first exhibited O’Keeffe’s work at 291 in 1916 without having met the artist. When they met, the painter and the photographer fell in love and began to live together. O’Keeffe’s presence and art rejuvenated Stieglitz and inspired whole new bodies of work.\(^{134}\) From 1917-37, Stieglitz photographed O’Keeffe, a cumulative photographic portrait that consists of approximately 500 prints. These portraits are affected by the clarity and abstract beauty of O’Keeffe’s work as well as the sensuousness of her body, the strength of her face and surety of her hands [98-99]. From 1922-32, Stieglitz simultaneously worked on another group of groundbreaking works, the *Equivalents*. He initiated this series in response to the charge by a critic that he hypnotized O’Keeffe and his other portrait subjects to achieve his effects. Stieglitz’s eye became increasingly discerning as he worked on these two groups of non-referential, abstracted studies of the figure and ephemeral phenomena such as clouds in the sky [100]. Stieglitz explained the works this way:

> Shapes, as such, do not interest me unless they happen to be an outer equivalent of something already taking form within me. To many, shapes matter in their right. As I see it, this has nothing to do with photography, but with the merely literal or pictorial.\(^{135}\)

\(^{132}\) Homer, 1977, 158-59, 226.

\(^{133}\) The Phillips Collection, 1981, 36-38. She also believes that the photographs of Paul Strand (a neighbor in Westport, a fellow ‘Stieglitz artist’ and owner of *Painted Forms, Friends*, a 1925 collage) influenced Dove’s work.

\(^{134}\) Dove and O’Keeffe were close in temperament, mutually supportive and mutually influenced. Their artistic interaction is probably least active in the collages however, one of the few works of art that O’Keeffe kept with her was Dove’s 1924 collage *Rain*. Cohn, 1985, 100, and Morgan, 1984, 132.
He was trying to create photographic equivalents of physical and emotional sensations that cannot be described: grace, moods, or atmospheric effects that capture and inspire the imagination. Exhibitions in 1921, 1923, and 1924 testify to Stieglitz's renewed involvement in the making of art.

Charles Demuth's poster portraits were probably the immediate impetus for Dove's symbolic portraits. The first two of these nine works, *Poster Portrait: Georgia O'Keeffe* and *Poster Portrait: Arthur Dove*, were made in 1924. These two, with *Poster Portrait: Charles Duncan*, were Demuth's only recent paintings in the *Seven Americans* exhibit of March 1925. Demuth painted objects, plants, and words in these works to symbolically describe his subjects. Abraham Davidson describes the forms in these poster portraits as "object substitutes" for the individuals Demuth is painting.\(^{136}\) Emily Farnham, author of a 1971 study on Demuth's life and art, notes that these symbolic portraits were painted as Demuth discovered that he was dying of diabetes. She characterizes these works as "hommages (...farewell tokens of affection)."\(^{137}\) In fact Demuth, an early experimenter with insulin, lived until 1935 but because of his chronic weakness, these works are among the few oil paintings made in the last decade of his life and they remain an important and influential part of his oeuvre. Haskell regards the series differently, not as gifts or mementos but rather as a "gallery" of American accomplishments in the arts.

Demuth's decision to focus on prominent "American" artists rather than only on close friends emanated from his renewed sense of identification with America. Paying homage to American artists through his poster portraits offered him the means to celebrate American achievements and affirm his national identity. His search for an indigenous expression led him to format his posters to resemble advertisements, thus linking them to what was viewed as a singularly American


This celebration of Americana would certainly jibe with the artistic climate of the time and the idea of symbolic or abstract portraiture had been in the air for over a decade.

Demuth's first entry into this gallery, *Poster Portrait: Georgia O'Keeffe* [101] was painted on Valentine's Day, 1924, a date that would precede Dove's experiments by six months. Haskell corroborates this claim by citing correspondence from Demuth to Stieglitz in which the painter:

stated that O'Keeffe's poster portrait was on its way and those of Dove and Duchamp [never realized] were started. When he finished O'Keeffe's on Valentine's day, he said the portrait had taken three months.\(^\text{140}\)

The tall sansevieria and arrangement of O'Keeffe's name in the shape of a cross or candle emphasize the verticality of the composition. The plant, pears, apple and squash sit on a table in what seems to be a spare white interior, perhaps a reference to O'Keeffe's studio apartment. The aura emanating from the top of the candle or cross has scorched the tips of this plant. Demuth might be referring to O'Keeffe's shining spiritual light. Or, as Haskell posits:

That this plant is commonly known as a snake plant could also indicate Demuth's awareness that O'Keeffe's strength was not always benign.\(^\text{141}\)

Could Demuth also have been encouraging O'Keeffe to "GO" as her initials can be read horizontally? He might be suggesting that she would flourish farther from Stieglitz. The growing sansevieria and cross might point to a western destination while the fruits of the east lie passively on the table.

Demuth, always interested in tying together the literary and visual arts, reportedly was delighted at the similarity of interpretation of Dove between Rosenfeld's *Port of New

\(^{139}\) Davidson, 1978: 57.
York essay and his poster portrait. Davidson explains Poster Portrait: Arthur Dove [102] as follows:

A sickle in the Dove poster alludes to the fact that for years Dove had made most of his living as a farmer, and was even awarded a prize by the Farm Board of the State of Connecticut. A ribbon on the sickle indicates a farmer who has been tied down, domesticated: having divorced his first wife [incorrect], Dove married the painter Helen Torr, and from 1920 or 1921 the two, blissfully devoted, lived in a houseboat in which they cruised about Long Island Sound and the Harlem River. [Sarah B.] Feigin noted that the reverse of the Dove poster is inscribed "For Helen with Love from Demuth." Helen Torr was commonly called "Reds"—she even signed her letters that way—and the bright red ribbon attached to the sickle becomes her symbol, as the sickle itself is Dove's.

Morgan also refers to this work, viewing the sickle as a dual symbol both of Dove's radicalism and of his life as a farmer. The point of the sickle is firmly embedded in the rich rolling earth in foreground of the painting while "DOVE", in white letters, floats high in the sky over the earth and sea like a bird. The red ribbon tied around the sickle handle is the brightest element in the work and surely refers to Torr. The graceful bow of the ribbon is echoed in the curving stalk of the bunch of dark grapes. The grapes, in conjunction with the wheat kernel, reinforce Dove's connection with the earth and could refer to the fundamental symbolic food and drink. Perhaps Demuth is saying that although Dove is living ase a his roots are deep in the earth.

Davidson also discusses Poster Portrait: John Marin, 1926 [103], the work that is probably most similar to Portrait of Ralph Dusenberry, with the inclusion of the "straight-arrow" motif, flag, stars and word "play."

In the Marin poster a field of stars and stripes denotes Marin's ultra-conservative political views. Dove's son William once told me that Marin had always been a rock-bound Republican, and it has been observed that Marin characteristically colored his speech with Yankee aphorisms.

143 Davidson, 1978: 56. Despite this indication that the work was a gift, there is no mention of the piece in the Dove-Torr diaries.
144 Morgan, 35 20n.
145 Davidson, 1978: 56.
If Dove saw these works at the Anderson Galleries or discussed them with Demuth or Stieglitz, they might have provided the impetus for Dove’s portraits, although this does not explain his use of collage. It is tempting to consider that both artists were experimenting with symbolic portraiture independently, but this seems unlikely given their ties to one another and the fact that Dove and O’Keeffe were Demuth’s earliest subjects. It is conceivable that there was mutual influence from the Seven Americans exhibition on when each certainly saw the other’s symbolic portraits.

In his portrait collages, Dove grappled with one of the problems that abstract art poses—how to make a portrait and convey the personality of the subject without relying on a likeness of the individual. Demuth answered the question with compositions that use words to refer to the individual and in some cases actually incorporate the subject’s name as in Poster Portrait: Georgia O’Keeffe or a reference to their work as in I Saw the Figure 5 in Gold, derived from a poem by William Carlos Williams [104]. Schwitters, Braque and Picasso explored the work of collage and some of its associative properties but they used collage to different ends, finding it unsuitable for portraiture. Mellow sees a natural progression in the development of these portraits, stating that "the abstract-portrait was indebted to Cubism and it was later to make use of such Cubist techniques as collage and assemblage."¹⁴⁶ Dove’s exposure to the work of De Zayas, Picabia, Hartley, and Demuth as well as Crotti, Stella, Weber, Maurer, and Schwitters, and Duchamp’s championing of the readymade broadened the crucial cubist and dada underpinnings of his collages. But other views remain.

Despite these influences, it is important to underline the fact that Dove’s symbolic portrait collages are unique. All of the artistic and theoretical influences that Dove had been exposed to came together in the right circumstances to make this exceptional and

unparalleled group of works. After 1927, Dove made virtually no collages, but his experimental attitude, intuitive approach and occasional humor persist. The collage period of experimentation essentially ended in 1928, when Dove and Torr took up winter residence first on Pratt’s Island, near Noroton, Connecticut, and then spent the following three winters at the Ketewomoke Yacht Club in Halesite. In this period Dove continued to have exhibitions at The Intimate Gallery in 1927 and 1929 and then later at its successor, An American Place. Dove and Torr would presumably have continued to live on Long Island if the Depression, the resultant change in family fortunes and the death of his mother had not caused them to return to Geneva on family business. The two of them lived in straitened circumstances in Geneva from 1933 to 1938. In 1938, Dove suffered a heart attack while on rare visit to New York. The Doves then set up housekeeping in a very small, abandoned one-room post office built over the water in Centerport, Long Island, near his son William where they resided until Dove’s death in 1946.

Posthumous Scholarship

Dove produced a total of twenty-seven collages from 1924 to 1931: eight of which can be conclusively called portraits. Collages were included in his annual exhibitions at The Intimate Gallery in 1926 and 1927 after their 1925 introduction at Seven Americans. Published criticism of these shows reveal that the writers in New York were generally puzzled and unenthusiastic about the collages. Even critics who ordinarily supported Dove’s work yearned for the end of his experimentation with collage. There is little mention or exhibition of Dove’s collages after these shows. With the exception of three---Portrait of Ralph Dusenberry, Goin’ Fishin’, and Grandmother---the collages were put into storage and forgotten.\(^\text{147}\) Goin’ Fishin’ was the most exhibited of the portrait collages,

\(^{147}\) The fact that the works were not shown is not entirely unusual. Every year Stieglitz tried to exhibit the previous year’s output of each of his artists (Dove, Hartley, Marin, O’Keeffe). Generally, exhibitions were retrospective only when illness or other commitments prohibited the artist from making enough work to warrant a show. This
traveling to New York, Washington, D.C., Paris, and San Francisco in the 1930s and 1940s. 148 Grandmother and Portrait of Ralph Dusenberry were included in the Museum of Modern Art’s Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism exhibition of 1936 where Dove was grouped with Peter Blume, Alexander Calder, Walker Evans, Isamu Noguchi, and Rube Goldberg as artists working independently of the dada and surrealist movements.

Suzanne Mullett Smith, a graduate student at the American University in Washington, D.C. in the 1940s, approached Dove as the topic of her Master of Arts thesis. Smith worked in concert with the American Art Research Council, informing them of her catalogue of extant works by Dove. In April 1943, she wrote Lloyd Goodrich, who was directing the AARC project at the Whitney Museum of American Art that, “The paintings in the storeroom, over 200, were very exciting, particularly some of the collages.”149 She became a great friend of the Doves and made the first concerted effort to question Dove and to catalogue his work. Smith’s files and thesis serve as a source of information garnered directly from Dove, Stieglitz, and Torr. 150

In post-1946 writings on Dove’s work, one finds a reluctance to re-examine the paintings and collages on their own merits without attempting to link them with a school or movement. Dove’s first museum retrospective was organized by Alan Solomon in 1954 at Cornell University’s White Museum of Art. Duncan Phillips wrote the foreword:

Now we know he is the heir of the romantic Ryder as well as the acknowledged leader of the American avant garde of the 1950s. He combined in his everyday living on the farm and by the lakeside and in his unique creations a reconciliation and a synthesis of the outer and inner life, the object and the symbol. 151

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was the case in 1934 when Dove’s move to his hometown of Geneva, New York, and his responsibilities there prevented him from producing much new work. In 1938 and 1944 Dove was too ill to make enough work for his annual exhibition so the exhibition of the following year was supplemented with earlier works.

148 Morgan, 137.
150 Smith completed her thesis in 1944 and revised it in 1976. Her files and thesis are on microfilm at the AAA, Smith Papers, roll 1043.
151 White Museum of Art, 4.
Solomon notes "Dove's concern with materials at every stage of his development" and regards Dove's experimentation with collage as prompted by dada collage. Halpert perpetuated Stieglitz's and the writer Elizabeth McCausland's portrayal of Dove as an untutored intuitive genius, unsullied by European concepts, who worked independently of all other artists and schools. Her devotion to folk art led her to emphasize those aspects of Dove's work that linked him to naive, native artists and to the "craft" of the folk artist. Wight gives much of the credit for Dove's newfound popularity in the post-World War II era to "Edith Halpert's belief in this painter's genius."

Her's is a belief that has brushed away a view of Dove works as objects of a private taste; an assertive belief based on a life spent working closely with the artists of our time.

On-going historical analysis is important for all art; however, in Dove's case it is essential since the audience and understanding of his work was just beginning to expand at the time of his death in 1946. Most scholars, critics and collectors had not really developed a vocabulary for abstract art until the abstract expressionist art movement exploded in New York. This movement was considered proof of the artistic superiority that purportedly paralleled America's political domination of post-World War II Europe. American scholars and art historians sought American precedents for American abstraction and Dove, who had pursued his singular path for thirty years, was an ideal precedent. Halpert's efforts at the Downtown Gallery, Smith's documentation, and the national interest in abstract expressionism caused a re-emergence of Dove's work and a resurgence of his reputation as art historians and critics looked at the roots of American abstraction.

It was not until November 1955, nine years after Stieglitz' and Dove's deaths (in July and November 1946, respectively), that the collages as a distinct group of work were

\[152\] White Museum of Art, 9.
\[153\] Whitney Museum of Art, 1958, 81.
shown publically. It was then that Halpert opened an exhibition of eighteen of Dove's collages, including *The Critic, Goin' Fishin', Grandmother, The Intellectual, Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz* and *Portrait of Ralph Duenenberry.*¹⁵⁴ Her exhibit was the first to focus on the collages. She attributed Dove's motivation for the collages to his direct contact with nature, his keen sense of observation and his Yankee humor, remarking that "they add up to a portrait or scene with fully recognizable symbolism," born of an "endless variety of techniques and ideas."¹⁵⁵

Critical response to the collages was varied. In 1953, Goldwater linked Dove's collages with Picabia, Duchamp, and the dada movement but he had little support from the reviewers of the 1955 Downtown Gallery exhibition with the exception of James Thrall Soby.¹⁵⁶ Soby believed many sources inspired Dove's work in general but felt the collages in particular were rooted in Marcel Duchamp's readymades, concluding that "Dove belonged in essence to the cultural traditions of Western Europe."¹⁵⁷ On the other hand, Stuart Preston reported in *The New York Times* that "they all have a dry, nostalgic, homespun quality, very American, totally opposed to Cubist collages which are primarily esthetic and impersonal."¹⁵⁸ C.L. Mulligan followed Halpert's cue, stating that the collages "revert" to 19th-century American folk art, while Fairfield Porter declared that Dove's "touch was naive and unskillful with irrelevances around the edges."¹⁵⁹ Frank O'Hara was more alert to the importance and meaning of these works:

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¹⁵⁵ Quoted from Downtown Gallery's press release for the exhibition, AAA, Downtown Gallery Papers, roll N70, frame 402.


¹⁵⁸ Preston, 17.

Dove's collages have not been shown in a group before, and they make a strongly individual addition to his oeuvre. Discovering this medium for Dove was a move toward naturalism; the works are not only exciting esthetic achievements, they are pieces of experience literally seized in its actuality, and incorporated. Unlike many collages seen today, they have a sturdy, explicit expressivity, forcing one toward the subject and the artist's attitude with unobtrusive plastic means.160

Halpert's 1955 Downtown Gallery exhibition was followed closely by Frederick Wight's 1958 retrospective organized for the Whitney Museum of American Art, which then toured the country. Wight thoroughly traced Dove's background and added substantial new insights into the work. Wight understands abstraction; he classifies Dove's 1938 painting Hardware Store as an abstract expressionist work in search of the term.161 Like Cohn and Eldredge, Wight noticed a change in the power and scope of Dove's work in 1923, "great omnipresent symbols" emerge as Dove's subject. He regards the collages as fabricated with a knowledge of dada but also as "obviously an instinctive development, an outlet for the higher levels of the subconscious which come to the surface as wit."162

Wight concludes his essay with a discussion of Dove's late paintings. What he says about works of the 1940s also holds true of the collages made twenty years earlier:

Dove never yields to the totality of mysticism, an allover state of mind; he restates that the whole is made of elements inevitably separate in kind, as a red is separate from a blue.163

The Worcester Art Museum organized an exhibition of paintings and watercolors in 1961 from the William H. Lane Collection. While only passing reference is made to the collages, Daniel Catton Rich's remarks can be applied to these works. Rich perceives that the Stieglitz group took landscape and still life as their subject matter because the potential for portraiture and figure composition had been exhausted. He quotes Dove who, when

160 O'Hara: 52.
163 Whitney Museum of Art, 1958, 76.
translating nature into a drawing or painting, stated that, "Everything we do is a self-portrait." Rich tries to explain Dove's creative process:

"Throughout, Dove's method was not, I believe, primarily to simplify, by gradual stages, the object before his eye. ...He pulled out one aspect of a thing and immersed it in his own feeling. It was often, I imagine, revealed to him in a flash."

Johnson's 1967 exhibition focused on twenty-five of Dove's collages at the University of Maryland. She brought new attention to the works as a discrete and important part of Dove's oeuvre and as unique works of art. In the preface to the catalogue, George Levitine distinguishes three aspects of collage making:

The first is related to the artist's pleasure in "making" things and toying with materials. The second is to be found in the fascination for a tour de force, the challenge of representing something or organizing a surface with unrelated materials. The third is the concept of unforeseen relationships, that is, the formal and psychological... discoveries brought about by the new associations achieved at the expense of the conventional homogeneity of traditional techniques.

All three clearly apply to Dove's work. Johnson makes much of Dove's puritan roots and 'make-do' attitude. In fact, his father was a builder and contractor and many of his friends were people who made things. Dove certainly appreciated this self-reliant attitude that Johnson attributes to economic necessity as well as to "a democratic philosophy of the potential of the common." Johnson states that:

"The symbolic, allusive paintings and the amalgams of ordinary materials are analogous in that both mediate between external reality and personal, evocative emblems."

She perceives precursors of the collages in Dove's work but postulates that the interest in American folk art in the early 'twenties, epitomized by the Whitney Studio Club exhibition of 1924, in league with his boyhood memories of Victorian decoration, were crucial to Dove's experiments with collage. She recognizes Dove's knowledge of the collage works of

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164 Worcester Art Museum, 6.
165 Worcester Museum of Art, 8.
166 University of Maryland, i-ii.
167 University of Maryland, 10.
168 University of Maryland, 13.
Braque, Picasso, and Schwitters but unequivocally states that the collages are not dada, surrealist, cubist-inspired (like Covert's), or Schwitters-inspired (like Stella's).\textsuperscript{169} This paper stands as a testament to Johnson's statement of 1967:

His collages seem, after 40 years, fresh, contemporary, and significant as warm human experiences and as aesthetic achievements.\textsuperscript{170}

Or, as Cohn writes:

The artist establishes a comfortable rapport with the viewer, as in a neighborly conversation over the back fence. Though the assemblages have been compared frequently to the novels of Mark Twain, the comparison remains useful: it points out the delight Dove took in the commonplace and how he was able to put the vernacular to artistic use.\textsuperscript{171}

Haskell's 1974 retrospective for the San Francisco Museum of Art also traveled widely. The exhibition succeeded thanks in part by access to archival material and the value of historical distance. Her writing reflects the spirit of 1974 as much as of Dove's era with discussions about feelings and the utopian attitudes of the 1910s.

The most pervasive jargon was apparently the word "felt," with value and status attributed to those things and individuals that were the most "felt."\textsuperscript{172} Dove maintained his idealism throughout his career, even during the 1920s and 1930 when:

American scene realism and the rejection of internationalism dominated the decade in the visual arts as it had in literature. Of the early American abstract artists, only Dove remained committed to abstraction. Modernism seemed to have died. The twenties saw the rise of painters such as Edward Hopper and Charles Burchfield who explored the spiritual isolation and romantic nostalgia of America, and the Precisionists who coldly depicted the industrial landscape.\textsuperscript{173}

Haskell attributes the collages to the same causes discussed previously: space and financial constraints, amusement, and what she characterizes as "American pragmatism."

It also could be that Dove reacting unconsciously to the national mania for the literal. Since collage incorporates actual pieces of everyday reality, it is the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{169} University of Maryland, 1, 12.
\item \textsuperscript{170} University of Maryland, 9.
\item \textsuperscript{171} Cohn, 1985, 103.
\item \textsuperscript{172} San Francisco Museum of Art, 1974, 31.
\item \textsuperscript{173} San Francisco Museum of Art, 1974, 47.
\end{itemize}
ultimate in literalness or "super-realism."¹⁷⁴

She views his collages as distinct from Schwitters', Stella's, Covert's, and other artists although she recognizes the precedents set by De Zayas, Picabia, Demuth, and Stein for the portraits. She cites the insufficiency of trying to place the collages in a dada, surrealist, or folk art context, writing, "As he had done with his paintings, Dove assimilated his artistic ambience into an extremely personal vision."¹⁷⁵

Newman, in her 1981 exhibition that plumbs the relationship between Dove and Phillips, is the first to develop the idea that the photographs of Stieglitz and Strand influenced Dove's work. She views the collages as variously rooted "in Picabia's machine portraits of 1915 [and] the traditions of nineteenth-century folk art and Victorian constructions of native craftsmen."¹⁷⁶ She sees his process as intuitive, as a "genuine expression of his joy in his life and his world."¹⁷⁷ She regards the renewed interest in Americana of the Westport group as hand-in-hand with Dove's approach to art. She concludes:

The spirit of Dove's paintings and collages is very much akin to these sensibilities of localization, identification, and rediscovery. ...Dove, a self-conscious modern pioneer used his own intuition to formulate his vision.¹⁷⁸

Cohn performed groundbreaking research into the scientific and spiritual roots of Dove's work and extends the comprehension of his deep and very private spiritual life and its affect on his work. She grapples with the intellectual background of Dove's work. She explains:

The want of scholarly attention to Dove's work can be explained by several factors. First, much of the writing on American art has been characterized by an anecdotal tone which emphasized biography above formal and thematic analysis. Second, the prevailing view of this artist as the simple innocent living in bucolic harmony with

¹⁷⁴ San Francisco Museum of Art, 1974, 49.
¹⁷⁵ San Francisco Museum of Art, 1974, 52.
¹⁷⁸ The Phillips Collection, 1981, 44.
the sun and soil has hindered the recognition of his intellectual concerns. Third, Dove had a deep reserve, a reluctance to publicize his most personal beliefs for fear that exposure would travesty their importance. Finally the view of Dove as a "revolutionary" tends to obscure the genuine nature of his accomplishment. As historical perspectives lengthen, modernism itself no longer appears the revolution it once did. Its continuities with the past become increasingly clear.\textsuperscript{179}

She has revealed that Dove was a well-read and visually educated man who sought a holistic approach to art and nature through the scientific, artistic, and spiritual vehicles of his time. She aligns Dove's collages with an anti-intellectual, vernacular or nativist sentiment as previously discussed. Although she considers the collages sparked by dada:

They represent his solution to the problem of creating an indigenous art that utilized vanguard aesthetics and was at the same time a true expression of his own personality.\textsuperscript{180}

In 1984, Ann Lee Morgan assembled a catalogue raisonné of the paintings and collages and wrote an essay incorporating information available through the Archives of American Art as well as many interviews and much research. She has succeeded in producing the most thorough publication on Dove's work to date. She clarifies many previously muddy areas, particularly during his early career. She weighs American and European influences on Dove, expanding our knowledge of his awareness of literary and artistic movements. She regards Dove as working out of a shared pool of modernism, emphasizing the influence of symbolism, Bergson's theories of vitalism, the American concern with individualism, and the craft tradition. Morgan adds little to the discussion of Dove's collages, saying they share elements of dada but distinguishing them from the cubist experiments of Duchamp and Schamberg. She focuses on the radicalness, the originality of the collage, and discusses Dove's use of objects for their associative qualities.

Agee compliments Morgan for viewing Dove in an international context, however he finds fault with her insistence on the abstractness of the pastels of 1911-12. He

\textsuperscript{179} Cohn, 1985, xvii.
\textsuperscript{180} Cohn, 1985, 103.
particularly challenges her refusal to link the collages more closely to dada and to Schwitters.

That the formal possibilities offered by Dada touched American art at many and diverse points, especially during the twenties, still raises the hackles of many historians of American art.\(^{181}\)

Kramer, too, does not understand why Morgan dwells on Dove’s role as a pre-eminent abstractionist.

It does violence to the essential spirit of Dove’s art to impose such an overscale, world-historical role upon it, and it raises expectations which Dove’s paintings simply cannot fulfill.\(^{182}\)

He acknowledges that Dove was aware of other artistic developments but believes that finally they did not influence him. Dove was isolated and independent. After his trip to France in 1907-8, "everything in the work of Dove’s maturity seems to be self-generated."\(^{183}\) Westfall also still finds the works of the 1920s and ‘30s challenging to the viewer. He and Agee both criticize Morgan for ignoring Haskell’s 1974 exhibition and catalogue. Westfall points out that most of the writers to date have ignored the fact that Dove created many of the hardships in his life and also overlooked the blatant eroticism of many of the paintings. Stretch concludes her review with a broader claim:

His is a unique body of work in American painting. There were no precedents for most of what he accomplished. He consistently worked on the outer edge of avant-garde painting. Knowledgeable of the innovations of his European contemporaries, he subsumed all within his own sensibility.\(^{184}\)

All four reviewers find fault with the publication. The collages are treated in a cursory manner and the drawings and watercolors illustrated haphazardly. The arrangement of the works, alphabetically by year, is misleading. The book seems to have been assembled in haste for the layout is poor, information of the works is incomplete, and there are more than the average number of typographical errors. In balance, however, all

\(^{181}\) Agee, 1984: 17.
\(^{182}\) Kramer, 1985: 36.
\(^{183}\) Kramer, 1985: 37.
\(^{184}\) Stretch: 95.
agree that this is an important addition to the Dove research.

The schism between scholars who group Dove with the European avant garde and those who portray him as a naive American artist is being resolved in writings of this era. Rather than trying to link Dove's work solely with one or the other, Newman explains that Dove merged European esthetic beliefs with his American heritage. She outlines the latter as follows:

Dove believed that man's spiritual origins lie in the earth on which he lives. He sought to characterize place and the actuality of objects through the simplest and most evocative means. Folk art provided a valuable precedent. The initial exposure to folk art in the pages of the Blaue Reiter Almanach was reinforced during Dove's years in Westport. ...Dove's collages are related to nineteenth-century work in mixed mediums. Folk artists were often associated in approach, and blended paint, paper, textiles and dried plants with their compositions. Dove shared with these earlier American folk artists a fascination with ordinary materials and with the fundamentals of intuitive design. His art, and his life, also refer back to the individual creations of the common craftsman--to a time before machine age conformity.

According to Cohn, despite the fact that he maintained a "healthy intellectual curiosity about European art":

To see Dove as still another follower of the European mainstream is to ignore the substance and values of his work. It is to ignore the fact that he had different goals and distinct ambitions and ideals--all of which centered on the transcendental value of nature. Though his style profited from the innovations of the Europeans, it was guided by the requirements of his thought.

She concludes:

Grounding his work in nature, the forms and forces of organic life, was an expression of personal value; it was as well the means to the national identity which his generation so self-consciously pursued. ...his Americanism is evidenced by an inherited commitment to nature; and his individualism lies in the way he created an art that was modern and American.

185 The Phillips Collection, 1981, 44.
186 Cohn, 1985, 110.
Conclusion

The portrait collages expand our interpretation of Dove's oeuvre and reveal another facet of his talent and knowledge. They are his sole works (excepting his magazine illustrations) that take people for their subject, they represent a breakthrough after a ten-year hiatus in his career, and represent one of the last gasps of the internationalism of the 1910s. He overpowered his abhorrence for portraying the human figure and, from this point on, felt both reconciled to his work in illustration work and free to explore the rich world around him. The collages allowed Dove to escape some sort of self-imposed restriction in his work, since his ability for artistic expression blossomed during this period. In fact, Dove's thinking may be most accessible in these works; his desire to communicate is evidenced in the legibility of these works which are less arcane and abstract that some of his works. He forged a crucial and personally necessary bond between the real world of material objects and his ideas; in these works, he captured the wholeness he believed existed in the cosmos.

The 1925 Seven Americans exhibition marked the reinvigoration of Stieglitz and the 291 artists. Among them, there was new energy and an impetus to experiment. They were searching for new forms and solutions to traditional questions in a reaffirmation, rather than a rejection, of values. Their radicalism was in fact marked by their respect for the traditional values of honesty and sincerity, their belief in craftsmanship, their search for quality in life, and their fundamental optimism and idealism. They aimed to make the world more perfect and more comprehensible through their art, and their goal was the betterment of the universe. Because of these lofty ideals, these artists developed images that were larger than life. Stieglitz and others created a persona for Dove that shielded him until after his death from examination. He became the archetypal independent artist laboring alone in the wilderness--wholesome, proud and self-sufficient. In a way, Dove was forced to take this role because his presence and image were probably more influential in
his lifetime than his work. Dove looked anew at the world around him, focusing on the
telling moment that described the whole.

Composing intuitively, Dove imbued ordinary objects with new significance and
meaning in these works, independent of but not divorced from their original function. Dove
was a pragmatist who saw in his materials relationships to real things. A photographic
plate represents photography, inner soles shoes, and a fishing pole just that. His
"extraction" is achieved by his choice of particular materials from the mundane world as
well as extracting the essence of a personality. The objects and materials Dove chose set
up an evocative/associational complex, which he manipulates to establish a string of
reverberations. This is a region where collage can be more communicative and fruitful than
working in paint. The materials intercede, asserting their "thing-ness" into the
communion between the artist and his ground, and thereby inserting a third participant in
the creative process. The collages represent a marriage between the tangible world of
"stuff," nature, and representation, and the intangible cosmos of faith, theory and
abstraction. The artist uses collage to take the world as it is and reorders it from the
chaos.

Dove wrote, "So what we know about objects is not so important as what we feel
about them."1 In the collages Dove achieves more than a metaphorical correspondence, he
merges object and subject. His sensitivity to correspondences and reverberations between
objects imbue these works with a gentle double entendre, but his compositions contain
neither the unsettling and absurd conjunctions of dada nor the literary innuendos of
Demuth. Instead Dove strove for clarity, he wanted his works to be understood. Dove's
message in the collages is similar to the statement he wrote to accompany their first public
presentation in Seven Americans:

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We have not yet made shoes that fit like sand
Nor clothes that fit like water
Nor thoughts that fit like air. There is much to be done--
Works of nature are abstract,
They do not lean on other things for meaning
The sea-gull is not like the sea
Nor the sun like the moon.
The sun draws water from the sea
The clouds are not like either one--
They do not keep one form forever
That the mountainside looks like a face is accidental.²

This poem can be interpreted many ways. Among other things, Dove is saying that objects, nature, paintings, and collages are independent. They do not rely on each other for meaning nor are they static in their definition or form.

The collages, as we have seen, have been linked to American and European art and literary movements and yet they remain Dove's unique synthesis of these many ideas. It is in the collages that the influence of Picabia, Picasso, Braque, Duchamp, and Stella is felt more keenly than in the rest of his work. Knowing the work of artists as diverse as these as well as his American counterparts, Dove set out to test their authority, melding their influence with his ingrained American pragmatism and appreciation of craftsmanship and native production. He shuns theory in a statement written in 1916; his artistic goal is to exalt in direct, intuitive creation.

I should like to enjoy life by choosing all its highest instances, to give back in my means of expression all that it gives to me: to give in form and color the reaction that plastic objects and sensations of light from within and without have reflected from my inner consciousness. Theories have been outgrown, the means is disappearing, the reality of the sensation alone remains. It is that in its essence which I wish to set down. It should be a delightful adventure. My wish is to work so unassailably that one could let one's worst instinct's go unanalyzed, not to revolutionize nor to reform, but to enjoy life out loud. That is what I need and indicates my direction.³

One can regard Dove's oeuvre as a search for a philosophy in which art is the vehicle for a metaphysical statement. The portraits complicate Dove's desire to convey universal wholeness because he is using this "stuff" to make these "things," and in many cases, the "things" are grounded in the reality of an individual. These grow through their evocative powers to encompass universal truism. *The Intellectual* whose propensity is for analysis and scrutiny misses the chaotic mound of matter just under his nose, while *Portrait of Ralph Dusenberry* juxtaposes the exuberant independence of the fish and birds of the water with the artificial boundaries of humankind symbolized by the carpenter's ruler and the flag. Works of collage fulfill two mutually exclusive functions. They are simultaneously both real and symbolic. These works are symbolic in that everything in the work has multiple meanings and the work as a whole embodies a whole universe. Through this process Dove creates a symbol.
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Figures
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