

Le Portugais by Georges Braque: A Frontier and evocative boundary-place

Ana VASCONCELOS

Departamento de Arquitectura, Urbanismo e Design, Faculdade de Arquitectura,
Universidade de Lisboa, Lisboa, Portugal

av@fa.ulisboa.pt

Orcid: 0000-0001-7510-0952

Abstract

The title of the painting "*Le Portugais*", and the recognition of certain elements, such as the silhouette of a figure and something similar to a guitar, seem to induce the observer to try to decipher the image. However, Braque's intention goes beyond a simple game to discover the figure, beyond the figurative, even though in this case it is a "blurred figuration".

When we abandon the first frustrated attempts to recognise the image, we discover that we can "move around" in it with great ease, as if it were a territory, thus being able to determine that between the presumed figure and the presumed background does not exist the difference that appears in figurative paintings. Little by little, the feeling settles within us of being in the presence of an image condensed of images, a sort of "machine to invent worlds", a system of paradoxes, an *in-between place*, from the ambiguity of which emerges uncertainty, and from it, evocation.

It is, in short, a poetic object. It is an intentionally imprecise *in-between frontier space* whose *paradoxical condition*, begun in the production process and typical of analytic cubism, is what supports the "conflict" between *figuration-abstraction*, *figure-background* and *flat space-deep space*. Between *being* and *becoming* emerges an unstable place that operates in ambiguity, an aesthetic, poetic and evocative *frontier boundary-place: a poietic place* that "transports" us in its aesthetic osmosis, while at the same time inspiring us and seducing us to create/generate other possibilities for shapes, space, time, sensations, and so forth.

Would it not be that the topic of the *in-*

between place, of the *boundary-place*, of those tense, imprecise and paradoxical frontier spaces a topic that in art, as in architecture and life itself, still claims a "*poietic theory*?" A "*pragmatic-creative-theory*" that could have creatively inhabited both the territory of theoretical and critical speculation and the pragmatic territory of the specific poetic operations, where action, contemplation and motivation dialogically intertwine. It is a transformational and evocative theory, capable of transgressing the established meaning and proposing a new sense and experience that are shaped in this transit, in this constant *becoming* between the "conventional world", "non-world" and "new world" in that imprecise, yet evocative *frontier boundary-place*, capable of transporting us to other places.

Keywords: cubism, in-between-space, paradoxical, imprecise, poietic