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CO N T E N T S

THE CATHEDRAL of the CITY
essay by Frank Morrone

cover

CREATION of an ARTIST
fiction by Wayne Burghardt

CEZANNE'S DOUBT
essay by Maurice Merleau-Ponty

CORRESPONDENCE

ROOFUSS

EDITOR'S STATEMENT
supplement

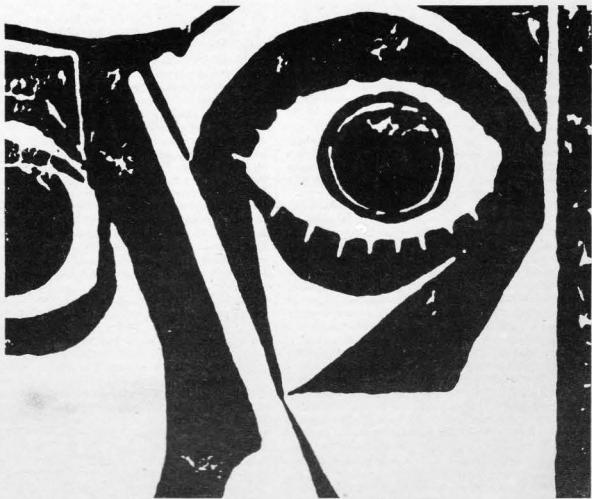
"...the enjoyment of our city as down-towny as possible."

—Henry James

In 1916 my father's parents came to America from the poverty and despair of Calabria. Imagine! They and millions more immigrants had never before laid eyes on anything even remotely resembling the skyscrapers and bridges that they saw as their boats entered New York Harbor. Many had never so much as seen pictures of anything like Manhattan. My mother's family, on the other hand, had been in America since a famous potato famine drove them from County Limerick in 1847. From the time the Irish Moroneys came to America to the time the Italian Moroneys came to America — my mother and father, extraordinarily, have surnames that are pronounced alike — the modern American city came into existence. The great architect Louis Kahn once remarked that "there is the cathedral of the city." One could well imagine that the Italian boy's people's experience in 1916 of beholding the New York skyline after their arduous transoceanic voyage is analogous to seeing Chartres rise amid the flat plains of the île de France. But rather than to pay homage in the shrine of the virgin, what aroused these Italian immigrants were the commerce, success, prosperity of the new land, the promise that they, too, might succeed in a land of unbridled opportunity. The cathedral they saw was therefore a cathedral of commerce.

When I was a boy growing up in Austin in the West Side of Chicago, only trips to Wrigley Field or Comiskey Park came close to exciting me as much as being taken downtown for a day. Merely walking the streets of the Loop sent a shiver up my spine as the spaces and forms of downtown encompassed me and elated me, each time without fail. Downtown was *incredibly* splendid. I remember that my aunt and I would shop in the three department stores that lined State Street. We would have lunch at a place called Drake's, Main's Row, or Deborn Street. To my immature palate their chicken-in-a-basket was sensational. Then to the movies. We saw "The Sound of Music" at the Michael Todd. I liked it fine, though not nearly so much as I liked "The Battle of the Bulge." My aunt would always buy me a toy at Sears or Field's. Not bad for a kid from the streets of Austin.

It was between those two magic years in my genealogy, 1847 and 1916, that downtown Chicago was built. I cannot help feeling that each time I boarded the el for downtown I was symbolically reenacting the rail journey that brought my forbears west to Chicago. My Irish forbears were around to see the modern downtown emerge from the shabbiness of the old central business district. I was around to see the diminishment of my forbear's spirit and of the splendor they helped make. What follows is a personal perspective on the history of downtown Chicago between the arrival of the



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THE CATHEDRAL of the CITY

Moroneys and the arrival of the Morrones. Because what struck me as a kid was not what one *did* in downtown but what one *saw* there, my emphasis is visual. I will try to sketch the development of how in 1916 downtown had come to look the way it did.

The historian Gunther Barth, in his book "City People: The Rise of Modern City Culture in Nineteenth-Century America," dates the rise of the modern downtown from the birth of the department store. Barth points out that, due to lack of a simple definition, it is difficult to place the origins of the department store as it is to place those of the skyscraper. But many scholars agree that the roots of the department store are to be found among the Parisian magasins de nouveautés, or dry-goods stores, of the 1840s and 50s. In this way it can be seen that the modern downtown was in part a product of Haussmann's Paris, the famous city of light of the Second Empire. The population of Paris doubled in the first half of the nineteenth century, and grew by six percent throughout the remainder of the century, to a total of one point six million. Haussmann's redesign of parts of the city included the building of broad tree-lined boulevards, easing cross-city traffic, and, as Barth says, "providing splendid opportunities for leisurely promenades that encouraged window-shopping." Public transit and railroad trains facilitated the movement into and out of the central city of tens of millions of passengers a month. The growth in numbers of people caused the magasins de nouveautés to develop new merchandising techniques involving regularly updated lavish displays of goods, and to expand into contiguous stores or entire buildings. The new emphasis on merchandising and movement into larger quarters are two of the most important factors leading from the magazin de nouveautés to the grand magasin, or department store.

The most successful and most famous Parisian grand magasin was Aristide Boucicaut's Bon Marché. Zola called it "la poème de l'activité moderne." In 1844 the largest dry-goods store in Paris employed only one hundred fifty people. By 1877, the Bon Marché, after twenty-five years in operation, employed 1,788. Two things, however, distinguished the Bon Marché from the American department store. First, Boucicaut continued to emphasize dry goods, hence his store was more of a "grand magasin de nouveautés" than it was a true department store. Second, Boucicaut, in seeking a more or less refined clientele, eschewed the

"democratization of luxury" that had become the byword of the American retailing establishment. In 1867, Boucicaut commissioned the engineer Gustave Eiffel and the architect L.A. Boileau to build a new store for the fifteen-year-old Bon Marché. It was the first building in Europe ever to be designed expressly to house a department store. There were many modern features to the building: large plate-glass show windows; an immense skylit central selling court; aerial bridges, or passerelles, of iron, connecting one wing of the building with another across the central court; slim interior support columns of iron. Zola called it "la cathédrale du commerce moderne." A distinctive if not distinctively modern feature of the building was the corner entrance rotunda, adapted from the round towers of French châteaux. This was a widely imitated form of department store entrance, to be found in the otherwise thoroughly modern Carson, Pirie, Scott store, allegedly added by Louis Sullivan's objections.

The Marshall Field store, right along with Charles Gartner's famous Opera building in exemplifying the era in which Paris became the showplace of Europe.

Haussmann and Boucicaut, Eiffel and Boileau helped create a new city center for the new Paris of the industrial age. They helped invent the modern downtown. But right around the time that Paris was building its new downtown Americans were doing likewise in New York and Chicago. And it was in America that the modern downtown was realized in full.

If Chicago had a Haussmann, surely it was Potter Palmer. Not only did Palmer introduce to Chicago its first "grand magasin de nouveautés," as it were, but he built Chicago's first great shopping street, State Street. Palmer's store, however, was not the first American department store. Credit for the first department store must go to New York's Irish-immigrant genius of merchandising and salesmanship, Alexander Stewart. A.T. Stewart's Marshall Field opened in 1846, six years before the establishment of the Bon Marché. It inaugurated the fashion of the main selling floor as an immense domed enclosure, a convention carried through to the Bon Marché store of 1866 but apothecized in the great Tiffany glass dome of the Marshall Field store of 1902. Stewart later moved his store upstairs into a magnificent cast-iron building which he commissioned the architect John Kellum to design. Opened in 1862, A.T. Stewart's new store, as it was called, was probably the first department store as we know them today. According to Gunther Barth, "Prefabricated household furnishings, ready-made clothes, mass-produced toys, fashionable stationery, and inexpensive books helped make Stewart's the largest retail store in the world."

With great fanfare, Potter Palmer opened his first Chicago store in the fall of 1852, the year that the Bon

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Marche was established in Paris. As Barth describes it, "His window of gloves and hoseery, black silk and white cotton, skillfully arranged against a background of crepe shawls, stirred the city.... Novel phosphene lamps illuminated the display at night and radiated their brilliant lights on to the murkey street." This store must have had an enormously "down-town" presence in what in 1852 was a pretty rugged city.

Between 1850 and 1870, Chicago's population increased by ten times, to three hundred thousand. More than half of this number were foreign-born, mostly Irish and Germans. The year after Palmer's first store opened, Joseph Medill moved to Chicago from Cleveland to assume editorship of the six-year-old *Chicago Tribune*, beginning a career that would make the Tribune one of the cornerstone of his wealth, if not of Palmer's, and Chicago's. "cathédrale du commerce moderne," Palmer built the name of his cathedral when he built State Street.

Palmer was an extremely successful merchant during the 1850s, but his real fortune was made in cotton speculation during the Civil War. With his new fortune, Palmer bought himself three quarters of a mile of State Street. Up till 1867, the year Palmer purchased it, State Street was utterly unpromising commercially, narrow and unpaved and lined with wooden shanties. Throughout the fifties and sixties the focus of retail activity had been along Lake Street. That's where Palmer had had his store and it is where Marshall Field and Levi Z. Letter had theirs. With Haussmannian bravura, Potter Palmer talked the city into widening his new street. At the corner of State and Monroe he built the first Palmer House hotel. Within two years Palmer had built a second hotel, the Hotel Metropole. Impressed, he persuaded Field and Letter to move their stores from Lake Street to State Street, by building for them a grand marble palace. When the new Field, Leite & Co. store was completed, just before the Great Fire, Chicago had its answer to A.T. Stewart's New Store. Suddenly, State Street, through the will and money of Potter Palmer, became Chicago's most important shopping street.

The timing was pretty bad in one respect, though, in that 1871 the entire central city burned to the ground in one of the most terrific conflagrations ever. No sooner had the Field, Letter & Co. building gone up than it became a heap of ashes. But by 1871, by God, Chicago's time had come, and no monstrous blaze would prove otherwise. In 1873 a new Field, Leiter & Co. store was built on State Street. Marshall Field and Levi Letter had had luck when it came to fires, for this new store, this time in isolation from the rest of the city, survived the down. The merchants had tremendous perseverance, and they were making a tremendous amount of money, and in 1878 up went yet another Field, Letter & Co. store. To finish up this success story, in 1883 Letter sold his share to Field, and the store became, officially, Marshall Field & Co. An annex to the store was built in 1893. The 1878 structure stood at the northeast corner of State and Washington, the annex at the northwest corner of Wabash and Washington. A new addition was built at the southeast corner of State and Randolph in 1902 (containing the Tiffany ceiling), and in 1906 there was an addition built at the southwest corner of Wabash and Randolph. In 1907 the original 1878 building was demolished and replaced by a new addition. This is, then, the Field's that stands today, a square block department store which, with Hamm's in Detroit and May's in New York, is one of the three largest department stores in the world. It is, as well, the most prosperous store and most commanding retail presence on today's State Street.

In time, the row of department stores that sprang up along State Street would make the loop one of the world's very most profitable retail districts. Indeed, in the 1920s it was claimed that neither New York nor London nor Paris could match the number of department stores in Chicago or these stores' volume of business.

When my father's parents arrived in Chicago from Calabria by way of New York City, State Street was physically much as it was in the early sixties when their daughter took me there on Saturday shopping trips, and much as it remains to this day. But most of the names have changed. Working one's way northward from Congress Parkway in 1916, one first encountered the Siegel-Cooper store, which had been built by the architect Z. Letter and designed by William Le Baron Jenney; it was later to be occupied by Sears. According to Mayer and Wade in "Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis," by 1905 Siegel-Cooper's State Street store, with two thousand employees, claimed to be "the largest retail establishment in the world." Next up the street was Rothschild's, in a 1912 building by Holabird and Roche. Rothschild's became the Davis Store (owned by Marshall Field Co.) and later Goldblatts. In an astonishing instance of adaptive reuse, this building is set to house the main branch of the Chicago Public Library. Next up was the Hub — rechristened Lytton's in 1945 — in a 1913 building by the noted hotel architects (the Drake and the Blackstone) Marshall and Fox.

At the northwest corner of State and Adams was Jenney's 1891 building for the Fair, later to be occupied by May's. Across the street, the Loop stood at the southeast corner of State and Monroe, and the second Palmer House. The first had barely begun operation when the Great Fire destroyed it, but the hotel reopened in 1875 in an even larger and gaudier version of Van Osdell's original design. In 1925 the third and current Palmer House replaced the old sumptuous hulk. Architecturally the most famous of all Chicago department stores undoubtedly was and is Louis Sullivan's Carson, Pirie, Scott store at the southeast corner of State and Madison. Built in 1899 as the Schlesinger and Mayer store, there were additions in 1904, by Sullivan, and 1906, by Burnham and Co. In business, Carson's has long been the most serious competitor to Field's preeminence.

Marshall Field and Potter Palmer created a fantasy world that is at the very core of what the modern downtown is all about. Of course goods were bought and sold and the chief motivator for the merchants was making money. But besides this material dimension lay a spiritual one as well. The immigrant's sense of the city, as they stepped off their boats or trains and into the streets of downtown, must have been something like the servant-girl's dreams in the department store, writ enormously large.

One department store alone does not a downtown make. The modern downtown is distinguished from the old central business district largely by being a shopping district. Potter Palmer brought women to downtown Chicago for the first time, but he did not bring the men. That is, but the corollaries, if you will, of Palmer's, and Chicago's, "cathédrale du commerce moderne," Palmer built the name of his cathedral when he built State Street.

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State and Madison was said at the time to be the

"world's busiest corner." In addition to Carson's, there were two other major department stores at that intersection. The Boston Store, owned by the Fether family, was in an enormous seventeen-story square-block building on the northwest corner. This building, by Holabird and Roche, was constructed in stages between 1905 and 1917, and now is strictly an office block known as the State-Madison Building. The Mandel Brothers store, commanded by Colonel Leon Mandel (for whom Mandel Hall is named), was yet another Holabird and Roche department store. It was built between 1900 and 1905 on the northeast corner, and it would become the Loop store of the Wrigley's chain. At the northeast corner of State and Washington was the nineteen-story 1912 building by Holabird and Root for the Stevens Store. Directly south was Marshall Field's.

This was the great street, my father's parents saw when they came to Chicago in 1914. It simply did not exist at all when Dennis Moroney went to work for People's Gas in 1866, the year before Potter Palmer bought State Street.

The interiors of the department stores were among the great public spaces of the fledgling modern American city. And the stores served to reform the streets outside. Streets became filled with the visual delights both of finely wrought facades and of beautiful show-window displays of goods. Above all, the streets became thronged with women. When a street such as State Street was lined up and down with department stores, the effect was the transformation of the street itself into a great public space. What most impressed me when as a boy I walked the streets of downtown was in this sense of the grandeur of public life. To walk in the main and transverse of downtown, to study the choirs and clerestories, bathe in the diffused light, sense the mystery — nothing else more.

The department stores may have been the starting point of the modern downtown, but the 1880s mark the beginning of a true reaching for the heavens. This movement heavenward must have simultaneously exhilarated and frightened those immigrants who had not imagined such a thing. It was not city planners, but rather greedy developers who first envisaged what would become the indigenous American urban presence: the skyscraper. In the 1880s, architects and engineers realized this ingenious scheme to enlarge the speculative earnings of developers.

Suffice to say that the first skyscraper was not built in Chicago. Those who came to see for themselves may scholars now agree that the first skyscraper in any meaningful sense of the word was the Equitable Life Assurance Building of 1868-70 in New York City. The historian Carl W. Condit notes that with the Equitable, "a 'lot of factors come together... intensive land use, high land costs, the use of the elevator, the great height of the building.'" The Equitable was completed eight years after the opening of A.T. Stewart's New Store, one year after construction had commenced on the Brooklyn Bridge. It is clear now that both in the intensive development of land and in the urban technology thus employed, New York solidly prefigured and presaged Chicago. Just as New York had America's first department store, so inventing the skyscraper New York lays just claim to having built the first modern American downtown.

That aside, we can trace Chicago's upward growth from 1869 when first-floor retailing was no longer hindered by the depression that began in 1873. By 1880 everyone was back on his feet and construction in Chicago was geared for unprecedented growth. In 1880, a Boston-based developer, Peter Brooks, said, "Tall buildings will pay well in Chicago hereafter, and sooner or later a way will be made to erect them." Brooks had in mind numerous technical obstacles to building tall. New York had already taken care of elevators, plumbing, heating, and electricity. One problem peculiar to Chicago was that the land here was so soft — like a swamp, really — that many people felt tall buildings simply couldn't be built on it. An obstacle that was common to both New York and Chicago was that so long as walls held up buildings it only followed that the higher the building the thicker the walls — which would become absurd after a certain height. These obstacles would simply have to be overcome if money was to be made in real estate, and Chicago did.

In 1881, Peter Brooks's Boston real estate firm, together with his Chicago agents, Aldis and Co., commissioned Burnham and Root to act on Mr. Brooks's prediction of a year earlier. The "floating foundation" which underlay the new ten-story Montauk Block solved once and for all the problem of building tall on Chicago's soft sand and clay. No longer would geology prove an impediment to making money in real estate in Chicago. Architecture historian Thomas Mallon Talmadge remarked that "what Chartres was to the Gothic Cathedral the Montauk Block was to the high commercial building." The Montauk was demolished in 1902, which says something about the difference between Gothic cathedrals and high commercial buildings.

In 1885, Jenney's Home Insurance Building embodied the technological elements that make possible the towering — and profitable — "construction of modern cities." What Jenney did was to follow the massive, height-prohibiting load-bearing masonry walls. Instead, use was made of wrought-iron and steel beams that carried the weight of the structure. Iron frames had been used before, although steel beams had not, but what was remarkable about the Home Building was that, for the first time, the walls did not function to hold up the building. The walls became, instead, merely a curtain or skin on a cage of iron and steel.

As if precisely to demonstrate the inadequacy of bearing-wall construction for skyscrapers, in 1891 Burnham and Root's Monadnock Building was put up by the developers Brooks and Aldis at Jackson and Dearborn. At sixteen stories, it was the tallest bearing-wall building

ever. The Monadnock, which of course still stands and forever shall, is a living illustration of speculative capitalism's having gone as far as it possibly could with a certain mode of technology and construction. In order to bear the sixteen story load, the base of the building has walls that are an extraordinary six feet thick. This was a mode already out-of-date by 1891, for the Home Building was already six years old. The equitable Building in New York, which initiated the specific mode of bearing-wall skyscraper, had been built twenty-one years earlier.

John Wellborn Root's design for the Monadnock was in part dictated by guidelines imposed by the developer Peter Brooks. In its almost Egyptian simplicity, lack of ornamentation, and boldness of form, as well as its existence as a result of speculative commercial interests, the Monadnock is a highly characteristic work of what historians have come to call, with good reason, the "commercial style." Sullivan called the Monadnock "an amazing cliff of brickwork," with "a direct singleness of purpose, that gave one the thrill of romance." He said that it was "a solitary monument, marking the high tide of masonry construction as applied to commercial structures." (If one goes to see the Monadnock, notice should be taken that the south half was built in 1893 by the ubiquitous Holabird and Roche and employed the by then standard technique of skeletal construction.)

Dennis Moroney's life spanned an era of untold progress in building and technology. He was thirty-three years old when the Equitable Building was completed in New York, forty-six when the Brooklyn Bridge opened. In 1885, when the Home Insurance Building on the northwest corner of LaSalle and Adams was completed, Dennis Moroney was forty-eight years old and had been a Chicago resident, employee of People's Gas, for nineteen years. Living through the birth of the modern American city, he was among those who, in the felicitous words of the novelist Mark Helprin, "worked day and night in a fury to attend the birth."

Visiting Chicago in 1893, Paul Bourget, the brilliant French writer and member of the photo-fascist Action Française, grumbled that Chicago was "ugly." Bourget frankly accepted the condition imposed by the speculator-multiplying as many times as possible the value of the bit of ground at the base in multiplying the supposed offices. Bourget went on to say, "The sketch appears here of a new kind of art, an art of democracy, made by the crowd and for the crowd!" The crowd was one largely of the foreign-born, for whom these buildings meant hope.

The task of the architect was synonymous with the predisposition of "the crowd": the frank acceptance of the conditions of commerce. These buildings were put up as quickly, as economically, and as profitably as possible. They expressed, in Montgomery Schuyler's famous phrase, nothing but "the facts of the case." The case was commerce. For the growing population of Chicago, the true, unanticipated facts of the case were quite beautiful enough to compensate for any lack of classical detail. Never mind that Chicago "renounced colonnades, mouldings, classical embellishments." As Schuyler put it in 1895, "Elsewhere the designer of a business building commonly attempts to persuade or to hoodwink his client into sacrificing something of utility to 'art.' Commercial architecture in Chicago is long past that stage, and that it is so due rather to the business man than to the architect." In a city of over a million inhabitants, in a downtown where huts and shacks were the order of the day, Schuyler would have been wise than to find fault with the conditions because the successes of the past had been won by an absolute loyalty to the conditions, and by the frank abandonment of every architectural convention that comes in conflict with them."

Chicago, however, managed to acquire New York's tendency to subordinate utility to "art." In the aftermath of the Columbian Exposition of 1893, the "commercial style" began its slow but steady decline. The White City of the World's Fair, as everyone knows, was an enormous success. As it was Daniel H. Burnham who presided over the fair, so Burnham presided over downtown Chicago in the years following the fair. The firm of D.H. Burnham and Co. came to dominate downtown building in the early years of the new century. Even the prolific firms of Holabird and Roche, whose works in the 1880s and 90s were synonymous with the commercial style, maintained their prestige after 1900 only by building in the new Burnham mode. Today's counterpart to such predominant firms as Holabird and Roche and Burnham and Co. is the firm of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill. That may give some idea just how important these earlier firms were in shaping the appearance of downtown.

Burnham and Co.'s Loop buildings represented a major deviation from the commercial style, thus substantially altering downtown. The new downtown "vernacular" skyscraper was tall — sixteen to twenty stories — and slathered with ornament, a curtain-wall of classically-derived detail, not especially expressive of the underlying skeleton. A representative example of the new mode was the Merchandise Mart, built in 1911, one year before Burnham died, and one year before Dennis Moroney retired from the company after forty-six years' service. Its gray granite curtain-walls are coated from street to cornice in heavily molded — and heavy-handed — Renaissance-inspired terra-cotta ornament. At the base are rows of immense granite columns. The People's Gas Building, still standing on the northwest corner of Michigan and Adams, was completed in 1911, one year before Burnham died, and one year before Dennis Moroney retired from the company after forty-six years' service. Its gray granite curtain-walls are coated from street to cornice in heavily molded — and heavy-handed — Renaissance-inspired terra-cotta ornament. At the base are rows of immense granite columns. The People's Gas Building was indeed a deviation from the commercial style, or, if you will, it represented a new commercial style — a synthesis of technical achievement with eclectic ornament in order to exalt, not merely express, the commercial.

Another skyscraper that is still standing that is representative of this new mode is the Blackstone Hotel. It

was built in 1909 on the northwest corner of Michigan and Balbo; the architects were Marshall and Fox. The Blackstone is twenty-two stories decorated in the neoclassical manner that quite literally recalls Haussmann's Paris.

Before the fire, building heights in the Loop never exceeded four or five stories. From 1880 to 1900, the high tide of the commercial style, skyscrapers rose ten to twenty stories. Chicago beat every other city to the sixteenth-story plateau — the mark was reached in 1890 by Jenney's Manhattan Building on Dearborn and Congress. Two years later the Masonic Temple at State and Randolph became, at twenty-two stories, the world's tallest building. (The Masonic Temple was demolished during the depression, replaced by the Art Deco skyscraper known as the Helmsley building.) Between 1890 and 1900, Chicago's building heights rose to twenty stories within the legally allowable maximum in Chicago until the 1920s and the introduction of the New York-style setback skyscraper. So it was that building heights in downtown Chicago in 1916 were fairly uniform; most buildings at or near the maximum.

In 1916, by my own very unscientific estimate, slightly greater than half of all the tall commercial buildings in the Loop were holdovers from the commercial style. Slightly fewer than half were in the new Burnham mode. A handful were pre-commercial style. The only main street that was dominated by the new style was Michigan Avenue between Balbo and the river. On the whole it was a street sheathed in classical detail: the People's Gas, the Blackstone, the Fine Arts Building, the Pullman Building, Orchestra Hall, the Public Library, and others too numerous to list. (All these buildings still stand, with the exception of the 1884 Pullman building at Adams Street, demolished in 1956.) It was from his office in his own seventeen-story 1904 Railway Exchange Building at Jackson that Burnham worked out his 1909 Chicago Plan, aiming way beyond anything Potter Palmer ever thought of doing.

While the bulk of the 1909 plan has never been realized, a good portion of it has. The current design of Grant Park, for example, Burnham's design for Grant Park was modified after the fire, but the basic concept remained. Grant Park began with the refuge from the Great Fire and was not completed until the year of Burnham's plan. It would not be until the twenties and thirties, however, that the great park we know today would take recognizable form. Nonetheless, there was, in 1916, a Grant Park, a large open spread of grass across the street from Michigan Avenue, complementing the street's shinnying cliff of buildings. When Dennis Moroney moved to Twenty-second and Racine in 1866, what in 1916 was Grant Park was Lake Michigan.

What Michigan Avenue was to the new Burnham style, Dearborn Street was to the preservation of the old commercial style. Still commercially very viable in 1916 were: the sixteen-story Manhattan Building, the seventeen-story Old Colony Building by Holabird and Roche, the twenty-story Fisher Building by Burnham and Co. (no less an example of the commercial style for this curtain of elaborate Gothic ornament), the sixteen-story Manhattan Building, the sixteen-story Monadnock Block, and the seventeen-story Marquette Building by Holabird and Roche. (All these buildings are still standing!) It should be noted that although Dearborn contained many monuments of the old commercial style, it also had the very best and most bravely eclectic work in the city. The Federal Building and Post Office, built in 1899 and 1905, its neoclassical double deck took up the entire block extending from Dearborn to Clark and from Adams to Jackson. It was demolished in 1968 to make way for Mies van der Rohe's Federal Center. Beautiful in its way that Dearborn Street might have been, by 1916 the showplace street of downtown was Michigan Avenue.

State Street and La Salle Street were mixed bags architecturally, some old and some new. Wabash Avenue, Lake Street, and Wells Street were dominated by the elevated rail structures that are still in operation. Surely these structures were, as they are now, looming presences in downtown. Indeed, downtown is called the Loop because these rapid transit trains form a loop around it. Also vastly visible were the train yards and the railroad stations. The riverfront had not yet been reformed and much of the lakefront had yet to be beautified. But all these things, important as they are, are outside the scope of what I'm trying to describe: downtown as the cathedral of the city. These things were accessible to downtown proper, as they were not presences on the four great streets: Michigan, State, Dearborn, and LaSalle. Michigan and State were the great promenades, Dearborn and LaSalle were the great skyrampers.

I was taken to the movie theatres — the Michael Todd, the Chicago, the State-Lake, the Woods, and the McVickers. My aunt took me to the department stores: Sears — whatever happened to Siegel-Cooper? — and Field's, Drake's, Mayor's Row, which checked-in as highly refined retail, with right across Dearborn Street from the old Field's Building and Post Office. I also recall the Bergdorf, which became a regular through my grown-up years, and the Italian village, and the Holloway House cafeteria. Of course there were family outings to the observation deck of the forty-two-story Prudential Building. A formative experience of modernity was going with my parents and sister to the 1968 unveiling of the Picasso in the Civic Center Plaza. One foray to the "new downtown" of Wacker Drive was going with my best friend and his mother to the Merchandise Mart. We actually went inside! My friend's family was quite well-off and they frequented the exclusive designer galleries in what I was awed to think was the world's largest building. I was also taken to the great Grant Park museums that did not exist in 1916 — the Field, the Aquarium, and the Adler Planetarium. And I will never forget seeing Buckingham Fountain spray its colors on a warm summer night. It was the world's

largest fountain! The Conrad Hilton was the world's largest hotel! Never before did a town, or a kid, so suffer from that characteristic American weakness, love of abstract magnitude.

When I was a kid, State Street, Potter Palmer's street, was still "that great street." It was still the heart of downtown, the heart of the heart of the city. Sears and Ward's, Goldblatts and Wieboldt's, Field's and Carson's were still bringing the crowd to State Street. The phrase "downtown Chicago" immediately conjured a vision of State Street and LaSalle Street and Michigan Avenue. One thought of the grand hotels, the Palmer house, the Conrad Hilton, the Blackstone, The Congress, and the Bismarck, of the legitimate theaters such as the Shubert and the Sullivan, of cultural institutions, civic institutions, financial institutions, and of first-run movies and first-rate restaurants. Above all, one thought of department stores and skyscrapers.

By the time I was in high school, downtown had shifted slightly uptown. The old Loop became, at night, a black entertainment district. Middle-class whites who once comprised "the crowd" now were afraid to go to the Loop, even though the Loop continued to have one of the lowest crime rates in the city. Eventually State Street was forced to take over the function once performed by the neighborhood retail districts — neighborhood shopping having fallen victim to the late sixties' racial violence.

If downtown was the cathedral of the city, then an area like Madison and Crawford was one of the city churches. As a young person my mother — Dennis Moroney's great granddaughter — frequented the Paradise and Marbro theatres, neighborhood movie palaces that would have done Randolph Street proud. She recounts how as a teenager she could walk at midnight without fear through Garfield Park. I live now in Brooklyn, not fifty yards from Olmsted and Vaux's magnificent five hundred-acre ramble of meadow, forest, and lake, Prospect Park. On the evening of winter's first fresh snowfall, my wife-to-be and I may wish more than we have ever wished for anything simple to do for a midnight stroll across the long meadow of "our park." Alas, we can do no such thing. It is too dangerous. Garfield and Crawford are safe, I mean it!

Toops, Madison and Crawford is a cathedral that has closed its doors. Churchless, the people now travel by el to worship in the cathedral. Consequently, the Loop is now more like a big church than a cathedral.

My own feeling is that the key is not to allocate more money to revive downtown. They key is to fix the neighborhoods from within. Thus downtown may be restored to its proper function: the cathedral of the city.

At the same time, the northward shift opened up a new branch of downtown. The so-called "Magnificent Mile" did not exist in 1916 nor when either of my parents was born. Publicists in the early seventies proclaimed North Michigan Avenue the "new downtown" — implying that Michigan Avenue was a new nave for the cathedral. It is in fact no more than a fine transept. It's hard to say why the Magnificent Mile doesn't quite cut it, why it isn't "of, by, and for the crowd." Maybe it is because it is not served by mass transit trains. Or maybe it's that its shops and department stores are not, as Boucicaut's Bon Marché was not, dedicated to the "democratization of luxury." One senses about the Magnificent Mile, as one never did about State Street, that it is of, by, and for the rich. Don't get me wrong — a shopping precinct set aside for the well-off is an essential part of any great city. I merely feel that it mustn't be taken for the nave of the cathedral. At any rate, it was thrilling to view the building front world from top Big John. For me, there are two incomparably great American urban thrills. One is walking across the Brooklyn Bridge. The other is walking across the Michigan Avenue Bridge and marveling at the vistas of a city that is a monument to the ingenuity of men who build things.

The new crowd that has replaced the old, I'm sorry to report, is being betrayed. It's been going on for some time now. But at long last the architects are rebuilding downtown in such a way as to reflect and solidify this continuing reality. From Jenney and Root, Roche and Sullivan and a world's fair, came the vernacular forms of downtown, the easily replicable forms and facades that gave unity and poetic compression and music to downtown. In the twenties the setback slabs of Wacker Drive and North Michigan Avenue would do much the same for the new downtown. In the fifties and sixties and seventies the so-called "International Style" would provide a new vernacular for both the old and the new downtowns. The new skyscrapers were uniquely suited to expressing the continuing reality of what I feel is a truly characteristic American weakness: bureaucracy. In their frank acceptance of bureaucracy they recall the commercial style's frank acceptance of speculative capitalism. The greatest monument of the new style is, fittingly, the Richard J. Daley Civic Center Building and Plaza. Sears Tower is another example of the bureaucratic style. At 1,468 feet high it is almost twice as tall as the world's tallest building built in 1916, New York's Woolworth Tower.

Now as Montgomery Schuyler might have said, the "architects have betrayed the people." When I visited Chicago, some friends took me round to see all the new Loop buildings. Looking at these new buildings, I can feel only that the crowd doesn't count any more. It is fashionable to say that today's architectural excesses are a reaction to the last three decades to glass-and-steel monuments to bureaucracy. I think it is more accurate to say that these new buildings represent a process of disurbanization that is in part an offshoot of the bureaucracy represented by the earlier buildings. At any rate, no vernacular will arise out of what Helmut Jahn is doing. Xerox Centre is a respectable speculative skyscraper — ugly but to the point. One South Wacker and the new State of Illinois Buildings are pure manifestations of egomaniacal greed.

If, as architecture historian Bob Buremann suggests, the truncated cylinder form of the State of Illinois Building

continued

was inspired by the dome of the old Federal Building and Post Office. I can only feel that the link is so ephemeral and so private as to be游离于 public discussion. Architecture critics are the last among critics of the arts to understand the "intentional fallacy." Poetry critics know that so elliptical as association as Burgenmann's could never be supported by claiming knowledge of the artist's stated or latent intention. The proof of linkage must be in the work itself and not in any mesmeric act of interpretation. Poetic meaning is generated by repeated form and meter, that establishes connection within a greater tradition of meaning. In other words, if that's a dodec, I'll eat the latest issue of *The Chicago Architecture Journal*.

In urban architecture, ego is restrained. The "facts of the case" are allowed to predominate. In Helmut Jahn's architecture, only Helmut Jahn predominates. As the city becomes ridden with crime and sprayed with graffiti, when the most common courtesies are not enacted, when

people so shut themselves off from the city around them that they wear radio headsets to turn public life into another private fantasy — is it any wonder we have buildings that are, in the architect Moshe Safdie's words, "private jokes in public places"? Of the new buildings I saw, only 333 Wacker with its well-detailed rounded facade and fine Art Deco entrance qualities as urban architecture. Ten years hence Chicago will play host to a new world's fair. It will be interesting to see if it will be "of, by, and for the crowd" — or a monument to the death of the crowd.

Those who have betrayed downtown for Oak Brook Center and Northbrook Court and Woodfield Mall worship false idols in these pagan temples. My forebears helped to build Chicago and Chicago helped to build them. Their children, me included, have simply abandoned Chicago.

Still, when I visit Chicago — and I try to frequent — downtown remains first on my itinerary. I'll lunch at the Bergbo — America's greatest restaurant. For where else do spaetzle taste like anything other than the library

paste they in fact are. Where else can one dine on ragout and rye bread and draught beer so good. Or do it alone if one wishes or with one other person or eleven other persons. Is it the height or urbanity, not to be taken for granted. Beforehand I'll visit the Impressionist galleries at the Art Institute or Preston Bradley Hall in the Public Library and gaze at what are surely the Western Hemisphere's most elaborate mosaics. After lunch I'll go to Field's where I'll have a slice of Frango Mint pie and a cup of coffee in the Crystal Palace and then gaze at their glass ceiling. The sculptures of the zipper man in Field's collection are easily as impressive as Steinlen's Glass. The architecture historian Reynier Benham once remarked that "For sheer commercial splendor, Chicago is the rival of Baroque Rome." Exiting Field's, I'll think. "Long live commercial splendor!" The sheerer the better. Long live downtown.

Frank Morrone
1983

In this neighborhood there are mostly small houses, old and decrepit, yet with a certain amount of class. Take little Laura's house, for instance, the place with which we are presently concerned. It is one and a half stories high, chopped off abruptly at half the length of all the other houses on the block, with the front being the missing half. Seeing it, one would probably wonder why it was ever built in the first place, and why no one ever thought enough to tear it down. But I would say that a certain amount of class is present here in this neighborhood, and Laura's house is no exception. In fact, its little bit of class is located in that part of the attic which serves as her bedroom. This questionably furnished room is located at the front, the south side, where a single window supplies all of the natural light for the entire upstairs. It is this window through which the old building appears to gaze safely, cyclopedically at the rest of the world, demanding respect for its absurdity.

The window is created in leaded glass; not merely a pane, but a work of art. The highlight of the glass is naturally in the center: a peacock with long, narrow diamond-shaped feathers which extend nearly to the limits of the frame — with the imagination, just a little bit farther — each crystal feather a prism in itself, spreading its rainbow unto the dismal dust-gray room, distortedly translated gift from a plain white uncarved sun.

Laura is but a child, properly innocent for her three years. She sleeps up here in her bedroom, a room literally furnished with nothing more than her bed. There is no light fixture except that which is in the front window over there in the bed, which is quite adequate by day, not night. At night the flends are loosed up here, flying tight circles round and round Laura's bed; she was older and more knowledgeable; they would perhaps keep her awake and well terrorized, but her youth demands its beauty rest and beckons her into peaceful bliss in spite of all the bad things.

And so Laura sleeps upstairs, dreaming mostly things beautiful, though a few giant ants pinching her in half and her growing faint, and always she wakes in the morning in the same manner. Morning has come several hours ago, not as a sunrise, but as a morning: a light sky appeared out of darkness and has grown brighter, yet the sunball has not quite reached above the house across the street. A child lays asleep on an old bed under the crystal window. The sheets beneath her were once white, many years ago; now, though gray, inside the attic room with already splitting light filtering through the glass and sprinkling down upon them they almost seem white again. Upon the sheets the angel, with only her left leg wrapped within the night's twining, nakedly lets the light warm her, love her in sleep as her mother's cradling arms. Deep in the shadows, she lets go of her dreams; look at her face and see that she dreams a poetry without words, for in herself she is her own sweet poem.

And now upon her eyelids begins the trickle of rainbow, dripping slowly, swirling whence the sun directly touches the peacock. Upon her fresh body see the fullness of the spectrum, from feet to forehead colors mixed with what is still white and unbroken by the glass feathers: behold the true sunrise, but do not try to

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CREATION OF AN ARTIST

capture it for it only pretends.

Now watch the angel's eyes as somé of the white light sneaks into them from underneath the lashes; see them flutter just at the instant, then open slowly, wonderfully at the prospect of a day begun so pleasantly. She gazes down her body, smiling at the rainbowed tattoo's carress: turning her head to side, she allows the colors to flow over her, *take*, joy in her ability to infinitely change. If the time her mother comes up to wake her, the sun has moved high enough that the colors are now gone from the bed. She finds Laura tucked under the gray sheets, just beginning to wake.

After breakfast, two go out for a little walk. The day is fresh, clear-skied, cool, calling to those who will appreciate it. Mother and daughter go where they have never gone by foot before: reach the intersection, the traffic clears and step by quick step they zip across the busy street with the stoplight. A little unsure of herself in this new place, Laura clings so close to her mother that they often trip over each other. Near the end of the second block past the busy street an older girl blocks the sidewalk as she draws upon the cement. Her creations are expansive, taking up nine whole squares including the one she is working on. They are of monsters with big heads, some smiling, some not, most of them already worn-out away by adults walking all over them, spreading their chaotic existence into themselves. The girl, oblivious to the destruction of her past art, continues feverishly on, the new monster biting its sharp blue teeth to the world. Laura and her mother pass on around; the walk has gained a slight cost: Laura must have chalk to do that too.

White chalk! What a bad mistake. What can you draw with white chalk? Stick-people and colorless, pallid monstrosities that can't be frightened because they're hardly anything more than the gray sidewalk you draw them on. Any houses, but who needs houses when you've all got chalk? No, not even ghost trees, what good are they? Substance is required, substance, something to bite into, or have bite you: colors are life — a boxful of colors and life will be created, a real life, an imaginative existence which can at least be expressed. Have you ever tried to draw a white rainbow?...Well, have you?...Colored chalk, now!

Because, you see, with colors a little child is able to create the world that you and I only dream of; because a child, when still young, knows what is the difference which makes us forget there even is such a thing as pure color, pure life and happiness, can sit down on the cement and with innocent simplicity spread it over in a wash of fantasy — the kind that is real. And so, on a not so promising day from our perspective — partly sunny with a good chance of afternoon thunderstorms — goes Laura with her new box of colored chalk, each piece perfectly unspent, each color no less, no more, than any other.

Intensely draws the tiny girl, showing the signs of a true artist, with more chalk on her little body than on the sidewalk: she feels her work, with passion would swim in it if she could; and the creation of a simple mind takes place almost by itself, for there is no model, no art form really, only art where the distinction between creator and creation blurs and the artist is lost. And when would this... "d" draw upon her cement easel but what nature has repeatedly painted upon and within her? One rainbow appears, and then another next to it, and more and more until there is no more room on her square, but that, doesn't matter because her colors have the same constitution as her dreams and so they swim on top of each other, flow through each other, swirls and swirls lightly beginning in nothing and ending the same yet bursting, ripe to the inner sight. But now Laura notices the sky, the clouds, the wind, the signs of a bad time nearing, when the monsters come out to play: she brushes one final sweep of yellow across her abstract, packs, and goes inside, satisfied, unaware of the properties of her chalk and the conditions that the world in which she creates place upon the potential permanence of her work.

A new morning, bright sunshine trickles through crystal, wakening angel in gray. A great morning, full of optimism, of joy, of the expression yet to come in the continuation of a beautiful piece. Laura is out of bed, is down the stairs surprising her mother so early, is ready to go outside and expand her art — one, two, and perhaps even three more squares today. But first breakfast and getting dressed before she goes, says mother.

And finally Laura is out, skipping down towards the main sidewalk, singing to herself nothing in particular, magical chalk in hand. And then she is there, but her rainbows are not: only gray gray, empty canvas starting back at her...we're did it go? who took it away? why? Is there anyone to do this sort of forever?

But, as mother comes, mother tries to soothe, mother pretends to understand.

But mother can only feel a sympathetic sorrow for her crying child, a sympathy which does not nearly begin to share the absolute loss.

Laura can draw a new rainbow, yes,

she can draw a new one today even better than the last one, now doesn't Laura feel better? And somehow, she does.

Several houses down the block is one with a long gray-painted stairway leading from the main sidewalk all the way up to the roof. The roof is flat. Bobby's mom, a little girl and boy have climbed all the way to the top, and in intimate reclusion they talk of the important things in life. Something about chalk and rain, some small tears shed, and a secret solution promised by the older, more experienced boy. Bobby takes Laura by the hands, leads her inside. They go downstairs to daddy's work area and Bobby digs around in a cabinet, soon taking out an old rusty can with a faded label. "You have to shake it a real long

time," he explains as he begins the process, his head dipping like a chicken's, sympathetic to the motion of his arms. And then it is Laura's turn, but she tries quickly and it is his turn again and though Laura has no idea what they are doing she agrees it must be done now.

Slowly the screwdriver pries, it pries, and slowly the lid comes closer and closer to maybe coming off, and then it twangs and flies away across the room, rolling, rolling, until it slows to a halt, teeters, tips precariously, then falls. Laura gazes at the shiny red paint inside the can, painted by the easy drops from the edges as they fall back into the pool. Bobby momentarily vanishes into the cabinet, emerging with a brush. Tonight, he tells her, they will do an experiment.

And so after the sun has cleared the sky and they are supposed to be asleep, Bobby and Laura meet in the alley behind the house. He bids her to watch as he dips his brush and begins to paint red and more red until something has been completed in the dark. He closes the can and leaves, telling Laura about the weather forecast for tomorrow. She goes back to bed and waits away the night.

And just about when the sun should be rising, the sky changes from black to yellow-gray. And the trees bend, rippling their leaves, and thunder chases its lover lightning, and rain spills sideways from an unseen bucket, beating hard against Laura's window, and she fears the failure of the experiment. And then finally the storm ends, when mother has already come to wake her and breakfast is over, she is outside, running to the alley, arrives and beholds a miracle.

Down in his basement Bobby exhumes all the old cans, a gift to Laura since dad never uses them anymore. And she, back in her bedroom, opens them with his screwdriver. Many colors, but few the right ones for her, and most of the cans just black and white. But the colors that are there the imagination may alter as it chooses and she at least will see the idea in the final product. She closes up the cans for the time is right.

The following Sunday the family goes to the zoo — that is, the family minus Laura, who feels not so good but good enough that she can be left alone while they all go. From beneath her bed she pulls out the dusty old cans, in several trips getting them all down to the front walk. She shakes, she opens, she dips her brush, stares at the canvas for a moment, then begins. Later, she steps back and admires. When mother and father come home they are far too late — permanence has set in.

Several days later, a rain storm: a still afternoon, a grey day, a day when a banished child demands its attendance, demands. Apparently hand in hand they go. Laura thrusts into the downpour ahead of her mother. Like a dog her face is shoved forward to look and assume proper guilt — Look what she's done, just look! Is she satisfied? It's there forever — see, even the rain can't wash it away!

And Laura looks down, and Laura is happy.

Wayne Burghardt
1983

[Ed.'s note: The following essay originally appeared in *Fontaine*, number 47, in December of 1945. This translation is printed through the kind permission of Northwestern University Press, copyright 1964.]

He needed one hundred working sessions for a still life, one hundred and fifty settings for a portrait. What we call his work was, for him, only an essay, an approach to painting. In September, 1906, at the age of 67—two months before his death—he wrote: "I was in such a state of mental agitation, in such great confusion that for a time I feared my weak reason would not survive." Now it seems I am better and that I see more clearly the direction my studies are taking. Will I ever arrive at the goal, so intensely sought and so long pursued? I am still learning from nature, and it seems to me I am making slow progress." Painting was his world and his way of life. He worked alone, without students, without admiration from his family, without encouragement from the critics. He painted on the afternoon of the day his mother died. In 1870 he was painting at l'Estaque while the police were after him for dodging the draft. And since he had moments of doubt about this vocation. As he grew old, he wondered whether the novelty of his painting might not come from trouble with his eyes, whether his whole life had not been based upon an accident of his body. The uncertainty or stupidity of his contemporaries correspond to this effort and this doubt. "The painting of a drunken prey cleaner," said a critic in 1905. Even Georges C. Mauchir feels Cézanne's paintings have spread throughout the world like a disease, a terrible disease which leaves only failures, and, suddenly, the greatest success?

Zola, Cézanne's friend from childhood, was the first to find genius in him and the first to speak of him as a "genius gone wrong." An observer of Cézanne's life such as Zola, more concerned with his character than with the meaning of his painting, might well consider it a manifestation of ill-health.

For as far back as 1852, upon entering the college Bourbon at Aix, Cézanne worried his friends with his fits of temper and depression. Seven years later, having decided to become an artist, he doubted his talent and did not dare to ask his father—a hatter and later a banker—to send him to Paris. Zola's letters reproach him for his instability, his weakness, and his indecision. When finally he came to Paris, he wrote: "The only thing I have changed is my location: my ennui has followed me." He could not tolerate discussion, because they wore him out and because he could never give arguments. His nature was basically anxious. Thinking that he would die young, he made his will at the age of 42; at 46 he was for six months the victim of a violent, tormented, overwhelming passion of which no one knows the outcome and to which he never referred. At 31 he writes to his father: "I have found myself led to do a few things, but where also he returned to the world of his childhood, his mother also his sister. After the death of his mother, Cézanne turned to his son for support. "Life is terrifying," he would often say. Religion, which he then set about practicing for the first time, began for him in the fear of life and the fear of death. "It is fear," he explained to a friend, "that I will be on earth for another four days—what then? I believe in life after death, and I don't want to risk roasting in *aeternum*." Although his religion later deepened, its original motivation was the need to put his life in order and to be relieved of it. He became more and more timid, mistrustful, and sensitive; on his occasional visits to Paris he motioned his friends, when still far away, not to approach him. In 1903, after his pictures had begun to sell in Paris at twice the price of Monet's and when young men like Joachim Gasquet and Emile Bernard came to see him and ask him questions, he bent a little. But his fits of anger continued. (In Aix a child once hit him as he passed by; after that he could not bear any contact.) One day when Cézanne was quite old, Emile Bernard supported him as he stumbled. Cézanne flew into a rage. He could be heard striding around his studio and shouting that he wouldn't let anybody "get his hooks into me." Because of these "hooks" he pushed women who could have modeled for him out of his studio, priests, whom he called "stuck-out"; out of his life. Emile Bernard threw theories out of his mind, when he became too realistic.

This loss of flexible human contact, this inability to master new situations, this flight into established habits, in an atmosphere which presented no problems, this rigid opposition in theory and practice to the "hook" versus the freedom of a recluse—all these symptoms permit one to speak of a morbid constitution and more precisely, as, for example, in the case of El Greco or schizophrenia. The notion of painting "from nature" could be said to arise from the same weakness. His extremely close attention to nature and color, the inhuman character of his paintings (he said that a face should be painted as an object), his devotion to the visible world; all of these would then only represent a flight from the human world, the alienation of his humanity.

These conjectures nevertheless do not give any idea of the positive side of his work: one cannot thereby conclude that his painting is a phenomenon of decadence and what Nietzsche called "impoverished" life or that it has nothing to say to the educated man. Zola's and Emile Bernard's belief in Cézanne's failure probably arises from their having put too much emphasis on psychology and their personal knowledge of Cézanne. It is quite possible that, on the basis of his nervous weaknesses, Cézanne conceived a form of art which is valid for everyone. Left to himself, he could look at nature as only a human being can. The meaning of his work cannot be determined from his life.

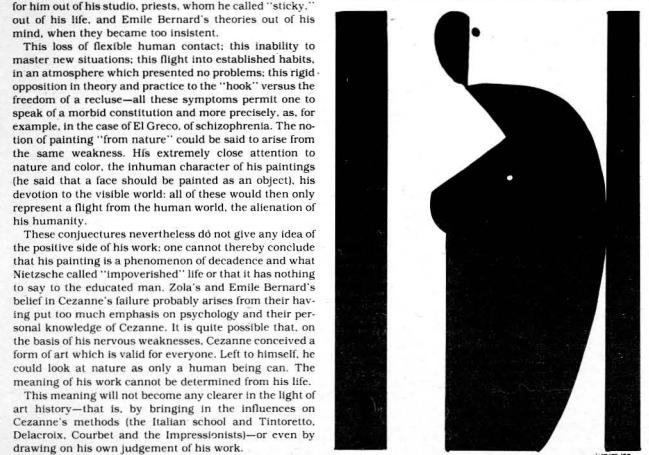
This means that we must become any clearer in the light of art itself—the art is bringing up the influences on Cézanne's methods (the Italian school and Timoreto, Delacroix, Courbet and the Impressionists)—or even by drawing on his own judgement of his work.

His first pictures—up to about 1870—are painted fan-

tasies: a rape, a murder. They are therefore almost always executed in broad strokes and present the moral physiognomy of the actions rather than their visible aspect. It is thanks to the Impressionists, and particularly to Pissarro, that Cézanne later conceived painting not as the incarnation of imagined scenes, the projection of dreams outward, but as the exact study of appearances: less a work of the studio than a working from nature. Thanks to the Impressionists, he abandoned the baroque technique, whose primary aim is to capture movement, for small dabs placed close together and for patient hatching.

He quickly parted ways with the Impressionists, however. Impressionism tries to capture, in the painting, the very way in which objects strike our eyes and attack our senses. Objects are depicted as they appear to instantaneous perception, without fixed contours, bound together by light and air. To capture this envelope of flight, one has to exclude siennas, ochres, and black and use only the seven colors of the spectrum. The color of objects cannot be represented simply by placing on the canvas their local tone, that is, the colors they have on account of their surroundings; one also had to pay attention to the color of light, that which modulates local colors in nature. Furthermore, by a sort of reversal, every color we perceive in nature elicits the appearance of its compliment, and these complimentaries heighten one another. To achieve sunlit colors in a picture which will be seen in the dim light of apartments, not only must there be a green—if you are painting grass—but also the complementary red which will make it vibrate. Finally, the impressionists break down the local tone itself. One can generally obtain any color by juxtaposing rather than by mixing the colors which make it up, thereby achieving a more vibrant hue. The result of these procedures is that the canvas—which no longer corresponds point by point to nature—affords a generally true impression through the action of the separate parts upon one another. But at the same time, depicting the atmosphere and breaking up the tones submerges the object and causes it to lose its proper weight. The composition of Cézanne's palette leads one to suppose that he had another aim. Instead of the seven colors of the spectrum, one finds eighteen colors—six reds, five yellows, three blues, three greens and black. The use of warm colors and black shows that Cézanne wants to represent the object, to find it again behind the atmosphere. Likewise, he does not break up the tones, but rather, he replaces this technique with graduated colors, a delicate shading, a chiaroscuro which gives the object a modulation of colors which stays close to the object's form and the light it receives. Doing away with exact contours in certain cases, giving color priority over the outline—these obviously mean different things for Cézanne and for the Impressionists. The object is no longer covered by reflections and lost in its relationships to the atmosphere and to other objects; it seems subtly illuminated from within, light emanates from it, and the result is an impression of solidity and material substance. Moreover, Cézanne does not give up making the warm colors vibrate but achieves this chromatic sensation through the use of blue.

One must therefore say that Cézanne wished to return to the object without abandoning the Impressionist aesthetic which takes nature as its model. Emile Bernard reminded him that, for the classical artists, painting demanded outline, composition, and distribution of light. Cézanne replied: "They created pictures; we are attempting a piece of nature." He said of the old masters that they "replaced reality by imagination and by the abstraction which accompanies it." Of nature, he said that "the artist must conform to this perfect work of art. Everything comes to us from nature; we exist through it; nothing



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CEZANNE'S DOUBT

tastes: a rape, a murder. They are therefore almost always executed in broad strokes and present the moral physiognomy of the actions rather than their visible aspect. It is thanks to the Impressionists, and particularly to Pissarro, that Cézanne later conceived painting not as the incarnation of imagined scenes, the projection of dreams outward, but as the exact study of appearances: less a work of the studio than a working from nature. Thanks to the Impressionists, he abandoned the baroque technique, whose primary aim is to capture movement, for small dabs placed close together and for patient hatching.

He quickly parted ways with the Impressionists, however. Impressionism tries to capture, in the painting, the very way in which objects strike our eyes and attack our senses. Objects are depicted as they appear to instantaneous perception, without fixed contours, bound together by light and air. To capture this envelope of flight, one has to exclude siennas, ochres, and black and use only the seven colors of the spectrum. The color of objects cannot be represented simply by placing on the canvas their local tone, that is, the colors they have on account of their surroundings; one also had to pay attention to the color of light, that which modulates local colors in nature. Furthermore, by a sort of reversal, every color we perceive in nature elicits the appearance of its compliment, and these complimentaries heighten one another. To achieve sunlit colors in a picture which will be seen in the dim light of apartments, not only must there be a green—if you are painting grass—but also the complementary red which will make it vibrate. Finally, the impressionists break down the local tone itself. One can generally obtain any color by juxtaposing rather than by mixing the colors which make it up, thereby achieving a more vibrant hue. The result of these procedures is that the canvas—which no longer corresponds point by point to nature—affords a generally true impression through the action of the separate parts upon one another. But at the same time, depicting the atmosphere and breaking up the tones submerges the object and causes it to lose its proper weight. The composition of Cézanne's palette leads one to suppose that he had another aim. Instead of the seven colors of the spectrum, one finds eighteen colors—six reds, five yellows, three blues, three greens and black. The use of warm colors and black shows that Cézanne wants to represent the object, to find it again behind the atmosphere. Likewise, he does not break up the tones, but rather, he replaces this technique with graduated colors, a delicate shading, a chiaroscuro which gives the object a modulation of colors which stays close to the object's form and the light it receives. Doing away with exact contours in certain cases, giving color priority over the outline—these obviously mean different things for Cézanne and for the Impressionists. The object is no longer covered by reflections and lost in its relationships to the atmosphere and to other objects; it seems subtly illuminated from within, light emanates from it, and the result is an impression of solidity and material substance. Moreover, Cézanne does not give up making the warm colors vibrate but achieves this chromatic sensation through the use of blue.

One must therefore say that Cézanne wished to return to the object without abandoning the Impressionist aesthetic which takes nature as its model. Emile Bernard reminded him that, for the classical artists, painting demanded outline, composition, and distribution of light. Cézanne replied: "They created pictures; we are attempting a piece of nature." He said of the old masters that they "replaced reality by imagination and by the abstraction which accompanies it." Of nature, he said that "the artist must conform to this perfect work of art. Everything comes to us from nature; we exist through it; nothing

else is worth remembering." He stated that he wanted to make of Impressionism "something solid, like the art in the museums." His painting was paradoxical; he was pursuing reality without giving up the sensuous surface, with no other guide than the immediate impression of nature, without following the contours, with no outline to enclose the color, with no perspective or pictorial arrangement. This is what Bernard called Cézanne's suicide: aiming for reality while denying himself the means to attain it. This is his reason for his difficulties and for the distortions one finds in his pictures between 1870 and 1890. Cup and saucers on a table seen from the side should be elliptical, but Cézanne paints the two ends of the ellipse swollen and expanded. The work table in his portrait of Gustave Geffroy stretches, contrary to the laws of perspective, into the lower part of the picture. In giving up the outline Cézanne was abandoning himself to the chaos of sensations, which would upset the objects and constantly suggest illusions, as, for example, the illusion we have when we move or hear that objects themselves are moving—if our judgement did not constantly set these appearances straight. According to Bernard, Cézanne "submerged his painting in ignorance and his mind in shadows." But one cannot really judge his painting in this way except by closing one's mind to half of what he said and one's eyes to what he painted.

It is clear from his conversations with Emile Bernard that Cézanne was always seeking to avoid the ready-made attitudes suggested to him: sensation, mass and judgement, the pain which sees and the pain which thinks; nature versus composition; primitivism as opposed to tradition. "We have to develop an optics," said Cézanne, "by which I mean a logical vision—that is, one with no element of the absurd." "Are you speaking of our nature?" asked Bernard. Cézanne: "It has to do with both." "But aren't nature and art different?" "I want to make them the same. Art is a personal appreciation, which I embody in sensations and which I ask the understanding to organize into a painting." But even these formulas put too much emphasis on the ordinary notions of "sensitivity" or "sensations" and "understanding"—which is why Cézanne could not convince by his arguments and preferred to paint instead. Rather than apply to his work dichotomies more appropriate to those who sustain traditions than to those men, philosophers or painters, who initiate these traditions, he preferred to search for the true meaning of painting, which is to continually question tradition. Cézanne did not think he had to choose between feeling and thought, order and chaos. He did not want to separate the stable things which we see and the shifting things they appear; he wanted to depict matter as it takes on form, the birth of order through spontaneous organization. He makes a basic distinction not between "the senses" and "the understanding" but rather between the spontaneous organization of the things, the objects, and the organized, rational, scientific and technical sciences. We see things; we agree about them; we are anchored in them; and it is with "nature" as our base that we construct our sciences. Cézanne wanted to paint this primordial world, and his pictures therefore seem to show nature pure, while photographs of the same landscapes suggest man's works, conveniences, and imminent presence. Cézanne never wished to "paint like a savage." He wanted to put intelligence, ideas, sciences, perspective, and tradition back in touch with the world of nature which they must comprehend. He wished, as he said, to confront the sciences with the nature "from which they came."

By remaining faithful to the phenomena in his investigation of perspective, Cézanne discovered what recent psychologists have come to formulate: the lived perspective, that which we actually perceive, is not a geometric or photographic one. The objects we see close at hand appear smaller, those far away seem larger than they do in a photograph. (This can be seen in a movie, where a train approaches and gets bigger much faster than a real train would under the same circumstances.) To say that a circle seen obliquely is seen as an ellipse is to substitute for our actual perception what we would see if we were cameras; in reality we see a form which oscillates around the ellipse without being an ellipse. In a portrait of Mme. Cézanne, the border of the wallpaper on one side of her body does not meet the border of the other; and indeed it is known that if a line passes beneath a wide strip of paper, the two visible segments appear dislocated. Gustave Geffroy's table stretches into the bottom of the picture, and indeed, when my eye runs over a large surface, the images it successively receives are taken from different points of view, and the whole surface is warped. It is true that I freeze these distortions in repainting them on canvas: I stop the spontaneous movement in which they pile up in perception and in which they tend toward the geometric perspective. This is also what happens with colors. Pink upon gray paper colors the background green. Academic painting shows the background as gray, assuming that the picture will produce the same effect of contrast as the real object. Impressionist painting uses green in the background in order to achieve a contrast as brilliant as that in objects of nature. Doesn't this falsify the color relationship? It would if it stopped here, but the painter's task is to modify all the other colors in the picture so that they take away from the green background its characteristics of a real color. Similarly, it is Cézanne's genius that when the overall composition of the picture is seen globally, perspectival distortions are no longer visible in their own right but rather contribute, as they do in natural vision, to the impression of an emerging order, of an object in the act of appearing, ordered itself by our eyes. In the same way, the contour of an object conceived as a line enclosing the object belongs not to the visible world but to geometry. If one outlines the shape of an apple with a continuous line, one makes an object of the shape, whereas

continued



the contour is rather the ideal limit toward which the sides of the apple recede in depth. Not to indicate any shape would be to sacrifice the objects of their identity. That is just a single outline sacrifices depth—that is, the dimension is which the thing is presented not as spread out before us but as an inexhaustible reality full of reserves. That is why Cézanne follows the swelling of the object in modulated colors and indicated several outlines in blue. Rebounding among these, one's glance captures a shape that emerges from among them all, just as it does in perception. Nothing could be less arbitrary than these famous distortions which, moreover, Cézanne abandoned in his last period, after 1890, when he no longer filled his canvases with colors and when he gave up the closely-woven texture of his still lifes.

The outline therefore should be a result of the colors if the world is to be given in its true density. For the world is a mass without gaps, a system of colors across which the receding perspective, the outlines, angles, and curves are inscribed like lines of force; the spatial structure vibrates as it is formed. "The outline and the colors are no longer distinct from each other. To the extent that one paints, one outlines; the more the color harmonizes with the outline, the more precise becomes the plenitude." Cézanne does not try to use color to suggest the tactile sensations which would give shape and depth. These distinctions between touch and sight are unknown in primordial perception. It is only as a result of a science of the human body that we finally learn to distinguish between our senses. The lived object is not rediscovered or constructed on the basis of the contributions of the senses; rather, it presents itself to us from the start as the center from which these contributions radiate. We see the depth, the smoothness, the softness, the hardness of objects; Cézanne even claimed that we see their odor. The painter is to express the world, the arrangement of his colors must carry with it this invisible whole, or else his picture will only hint at things and will not give them in the imperious unity, the presence, the unsurpassable plenitude which is for us the definition of the real. That is why each brushstroke must satisfy an infinite number of conditions. Cézanne sometimes pondered hours at a time before putting down a certain stroke, for, as Bernard said, each stroke must "contain the air, the light, the object, the composition, the character, the outline, and the style." Expressing what exists is an endless task.

Nor did Cézanne neglect the physiognomy of objects and faces; he simply wanted to capture it emerging from the color. Painting a face "as an object" is equivalent to strip it of its "thought," "to realize that the painter interests it," said Cézanne. "The painter is not an imbecile." But this interpretation should not be a reflection distant from the act of seeing. "If I paint all the little blues and all the little marmots, I capture and convey his glance. Who gives a damn if they want to dispute how one can sadden a mouth or make a cheek smile by wedging a shaded green to a red?" One's personality is seen and grasped in one's glance, which is, however, no more than a combination of colors. Other minds are given to us only as incarnate, as belonging to faces and gestures. Countering with the distinctions of soul and body, thought and vision is of no use here, for Cézanne returns to just that primordial experience from which these notions are derived and in which they are inseparable. The painter who conceptualizes and seeks the expression first misses the mystery — renewed every time we look at someone — of a person's appearing in nature. In *Le Peau de Chagrin* Balzac describes a "tablecloth white as a layer of newly fallen snow, upon which the place-settings rise symmetrically, crowned with blond rolls." "All through 'yesterday,'" said Cézanne, "I wanted to paint that, that tablecloth of new snow ... Now I know that one must will only to paint the place-settings rising symmetrically and the blond rolls. If I paint 'crowned' I've had it, you understand? But if I really load and shade my place-settings and rolls as they are in nature, then you can be sure that the crowns, the snow,

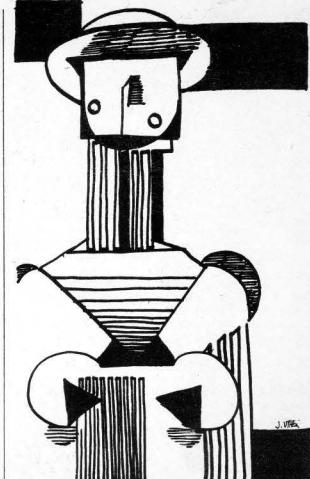
and all the excitement will be there too."

We live in the midst of man-made objects, among tools, in houses, streets, cities, and most of the time we see them only through the human actions which put them to use. We become used to thinking that all of this exists necessarily and unshakable. Cézanne's painting suspends these habits of thought and reveals the base of inhuman nature upon which man has installed himself. This is why Cézanne's people are strange, as viewed by a creature of another species. Nature itself is stripped of the attributes which make it ready for action. There is no life, there is no wind, there is no movement, no movement on the Lac d'Annecy, the frozen obiects hesitate as at the beginning of the world. It is an unfamiliar world in which one is uncomfortable and which forbids all human effusiveness. If one looks at the work of other painters after seeing Cézanne's paintings, one feels somehow relaxed, just as conversations resumed after a period of mourning mask the absolute change and give back to the survivors their solidity. But indeed only a human being is capable of such a vision which penetrates right to the root of things beneath the imposed order of humanity. Everything indicates that animals cannot look at things, cannot penetrate them in expectation of nothing but the truth. Emile Bernard's statement that a realistic painter is only an ape is therefore precisely the opposite of the truth, and one sees how Cézanne was able to revive the classical definition of art: man added to nature.

Cézanne's painting denies neither science nor tradition. He went to the Louvre every day when he was in Paris. He believed that one must learn how to paint and that the geometric study of planes and forms is a necessary part of this learning process. He inquired about the geological structure of his landscapes, convinced that these abstract relationships, expressed, however, in terms of the visible world, should affect the painting. The rules of anatomy and design also present in each stroke of his brush just as the rules of the game underlie the stroke of a tennis match. But what motivates the painter's movement can never be simple perspective or geometry or the laws governing color, or, for that matter, particular knowledge. Motivating all the movements from which a picture gradually emerges there can be only one thing: the landscape in its totality and in its absolute fullness, precisely what Cézanne called a "motif." He would start by discovering the geological foundations of the landscape; then, according to Mme Cézanne, he would halt and look at everything with widened eyes, "germinating with the countryside. The task before him was, first to forget all he had ever learned from science and, second through these sciences to recapture the structure of the landscape as an emerging organism. To do this, all the partial views one catches sight of must be welded together; all that the eye's versatility disperses must be reunited; one must, as Gauguin put it, "join the wandering hands of nature." "A minute of the world is going by which must be painted in its full reality." His meditation would suddenly be consummated: "I have my motif." Cézanne would say, and he would expect that the landscape had to be comprehended in its highest and deepest caught moment, a moment which would let nothing escape.

Then he began to paint all the parts of the painting at the same time, using patches of color to surround his original charcoal sketch of the geological skeleton. The picture took on fullness and density; it grew in structure and balance; it came to maturity all at once. "The landscape thinks in me," he said, "and I am its consciousness." Nothing could be farther from naturalism than this intuitive science. Art is not imitation, nor is it something manufactured according to the wishes of instinct or good taste. It is a process of expressing. Just as the function of words is to name — that is, to grasp the nature of what appears to us in a confused way and to place it before us as a recognizable object — so it is up to the painter, said Gauguin, to "objectify," "project," and arrest." Words do not look like the things they designate; and a picture is not a *trompe-l'oeil*. Cézanne, in his own words, "wrote in painiting what had never yet been painted, and turned it into painting once and for all." Forgetting the viscous, quavious appearances, we go through them straight to the things they present. The painter recaptures and converts into visible objects what would, without him, remain wallowed up in the seerite life of each consciousness: the vibration of appearances which is the cradle of things. Only one emotion is possible for this painter — the feeling of strangeness — and only one lyricism — that of the continual rebirth of existence.

Legendre, Vinci's motto was persistent rigor, and all the classical works on the art of poetry tell us that the creation of art is a very material task. Cézanne's difficulties like those of Balzac or Mallarme — are of a different nature. Balzac (probably taking Delacroix for his model) imagined a painter who wants to express life through the use of color alone and who keeps his masterpiece hidden. When Frenhofer dies, his friends find nothing but a chaos of colors and elusive lines, a wall of painiting. Cézanne was moved to tears when he read *le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu* and declared that he himself was Frenhofer. The effort made by Balzac, himself obsessed with "realization," sheds light on Cézanne's. In *Le Peau de chagrin* Balzac writes of a "thought to be expressed," "a system to be built," a "science to be explained." He makes Louis Lambert, one of the abovite geniuses of the Comédie Humaine, say: "I am heading toward certain discoveries ... but how shall I describe the power which binds my hands, stops my mouth, and drags me in the opposite direction from my vocation?" To say that Balzac set himself to understand the society of his time is not sufficient. It is no superhuman task to describe the typical traveling salesman, to "dissect the teaching profession," or even to lay the foundations of a sociology. Once he had named the visible forces such as money and passion, once he had described the way they evidently work, Balzac wondered where it all led, what was the impetus behind it, what was



the meaning of, for example, a Europe "whose efforts tend toward some unknown mystery of civilization." In short, he wanted to understand what interior force holds the world together and causes the proliferation of visible forms. Frenhofer had the same idea about the meaning of painting: "A hand is not simply a part of the body, but an expression and continuation of a thought which must be captured and conveyed." That is the real struggle! Many painters triumph instinctively, unaware of this theme of art. You draw a woman, but you do not see her." The artist is the one who arrests the spectacle in which most men take part without really seeing it and who makes it visible to the most "human" among them.

There is thus no art for pleasure's sake alone. One can invent pleasurable objects by linking old ideas in a new way and by presenting forms that have been seen before. This way of painting or speaking at second hand is what is generally meant by culture. Cézanne's or Balzac's artist is not satisfied to be a cultured animal but assimilates the culture down to its very foundations and gives it a new structure: he speaks as the first man spoke and paints as if no one had ever painted before. What he expresses cannot, therefore, be the translation of a clearly defined thought, since such thoughts do not exist; those which have already been uttered by thousands of others. "Conceptual art" cannot proceed "execution." There is nothing but a vague fever before the act of artistic expression, and only the work itself, completed and understood, is proof that there was something rather than nothing to be said. Because he returns to the source of silent and solitary experience on which culture and the exchange of ideas have been built in order to know it, the artist launches his work just as a man once launched the first word, not knowing whether it will be anything more than a shout, whether it can detach itself from the flow of individual life in which it originates and give the independent existence of an indenfifiable meaning either to the future of that same individual life or to the monads coexisting with it or to the open community of future monads. The meaning of what the artist is going to say does not exist anywhere — not in things, which as yet have no meaning, nor in the artist himself, in his unformulated life. It summons one away from the already constituted reason in which "cultured men" are content to shut themselves, toward a reason which contains its own origins.

To Bernard's attempt to bring him back to human intelligence, Cézanne replied: "I am oriented toward the intelligence of the *Pater Omnipotens*." He was, in any case, oriented toward the idea or the project of an infinite Logos. Cézanne's uncertainty and indecision were necessarily explained by his various temperament, but by his project of the word. Hereditarily well given him rich sensations, strong emotions, and a vague feeling of anguish or mystery which upset the life he might have wished for himself and which cut him off from men; but these qualities cannot create a work of art without the expressive act, and they can no more account for the difficulties than for the virtues of that act. Cézanne's difficulties are those of the first word. He considered himself powerless because he was not omnipotent, because he was not God and wanted nevertheless to portray the world, to change it completely into a spectacle, to make *visible* how the world touches us. A new theory of physics can be proven because calculations connect the idea or meaning of it with standards of measurement already common to all men. It is not enough for a painter like Cézanne, an artist, or a philosopher, to create and express an idea; they must also awaken the experiences which will make their idea take root in the consciousness of others. A successful work has the strange power to teach its own lesson. The reader or spectator who follows the clues of the book or painting, by setting up stepping stones and re-bounding from side to side guided by the obscure clarity of a particular style, will end by discovering what the artist wanted to communicate. The painter can do no more than construct an image; he must wait for this image to come to life for other people. When it does, the work of art will have

united these separate lives; it will no longer exist in only one of them like a stubborn dream or a persistent delirium, nor will it exist only in space as a colored piece of canvas. It will dwell undivided in several minds, with a claim on every possible mind like a perennial acquisition.

Thus, the "hereditary traits," the "influences" — the accidents in Cézanne's life — are the text which nature and history gave him to decipher. They give only the literary material of his work. But Cézanne himself, like a man's free decisions, impresses on this given a figure and a sense which did not pre-exist them. If Cézanne's life seems to us to carry the seeds of his work within it, it is because we get to know his work first and see the circumstances of his life through it, charging them with a meaning borrowed from that work. If the givens for Cézanne which we have been innumerable and which we spoke of as pressing conditions, were to figure in the web of projects which he was, they could have done so only by presenting themselves to him as what he had to live, leaving how to live it undetermined. An imposed theme at the start, they become, when replaced in the existence of which they are part, the monogram and the symbol of a life which freely interpreted itself.

But let us make no mistake about this freedom. Let us not imagine an abstract force which could superimpose its effects on life's "givens" or which cause breaches in life's development. Although it is certain that a man's life does not explain his work, it is equally certain that the two are connected. The truth is that *this work that is to be done called for this life*. From the very start, the only equilibrium in Cézanne's life came from the support of his future work. His life was the projection of his future work. The work to come is hinted at, but it would be wrong to take these hints as causes, as though they do make a single adventure of his life and work. Here we are beyond causes and effects; both come together in the simultaneity of an eternal present. Who is it at the same time, the formula of what he wanted to be and what he wanted to do? There can be no rapport between Cézanne's schizoid tendencies and his work because the work reveals a metaphysical sense of the disease: a way of seeing the world reduced to the totality of frozen appearances, with all expressive values suspended. Thus the illness ceases to be an absurd fact and a fate and becomes a general possibility of human existence. It becomes so when this existence bravely faces one of its paradoxes, the phenomenon of expression. In this sense to be schizoid and to be Cézanne come to the same thing. It is therefore impossible to separate creative liberty from that behavior, as far as possible from deliberate, already evident in Cézanne's first gestures as a child and in the way he reacted to things. The meaning Cézanne gave to his objects and faces in his paintings presented itself to home in the world as it appeared to him. Cézanne simply released this meaning: it was the objects and the faces themselves as he saw them which demanded to be painted, and Cézanne simply expressed what they wanted to say. How, then, can any freedom be involved? True, the conditions of existence can only affect consciousness by way of a detour through the *raisons d'être* and the justifications consciousness offers to itself. We can only say that we are by looking ahead of ourselves, through the lens of memory, and so our life always has the form of a project or of a choice and that choice seems spontaneous. But to say that we are from the start destined to aiming at a particular future would be to say that our project has already stopped with our first ways of being, that the choice has already been made for us with our first breath. If we experience no external constraints, it is because we are our whole exterior. That eternal Cézanne whom we first saw emerge and who then brought upon the human Cézanne the events and influences which seemed exterior to him, and who planned all that, happened to him — that attitude toward man and toward the world which was not chosen through deliberations — free as it is from external causes, is it free in respect to itself? Is the choice not pushed back beyond life, and can the choice exist where the is as yet no clearly articulated field of possibilities, only one probability and, as it were, only one temptation? If I am a certain project from birth, the given and the created are indistinguishable to me, and it is therefore impossible to name a single gesture which is not spontaneous — but also impossible to name a single gesture which is absolutely new in regard to that way of being in the world which, from the very beginning, is myself. There is no difference between saying that our life is completely constructed and that it is completely given. If there is no liberty, it can only come about in the course of our life by our going beyond our original situation and yet not ceasing to be the same: this is the problem. Two things are certain about freedom: that we are never deter-

minded and yet that we never change, since, looking back on what we were, we can always find hints of what we have become. It is up to us to understand both these things simultaneously, as well as the way freedom dwells in us without breaking our bonds with the world.

Such bonds are always there, even and above all when we refuse to admit they exist. Inspired by the writings of Da Vinci, Valery described a monster of pure freedom, without mistresses, creditors, addictions, or adventures. No dream interests him, no hint of and no things through which a thinking talker for granted his certainties, and he does not repeat his fate in any favored image, such as Pascal's abyss. Instead of struggling against the monsters he has understood what makes them tick, has disarmed them by his attention, and has reduced them to the state of known things. "Nothing could be more free, that is, less human, than his judgments on love and death. He hints at them from a few fragments from his notebooks: 'In the full force of its passion,' he says more or less explicitly, 'love is something so ugly that the human race would die out [*la nature si perdrerelle*] if lovers could see what they were doing.' This concept is brought out in various sketches, since the leisurely examination of certain things is, after all, the height of scorn. Thus, he now and again draws anatomical unions, fruitful cross-sections of love's very act!" [Introduction à la méthode de Léonard de Vinci.] [Varieté.] He has complete mastery of his means, he does what he wants, going at will from knowledge to life with a superior elegance. Everything he did was done knowingly, and the artistic process, like the act of breathing or living, does not go beyond his knowledge. He has discovered the "central attitude..." on the basis of which is equally possible to know, to act, and to create because action and life, when turned into exercises, are not contrary to detached knowledge. He is "an intellectual power"; he is a "man of the mind..."

Let us look closer. For Leonardo there was no revelation as Valery said, no abyss yawning at his right hand. Undoubtedly true, but in "Sainte Anne, the Virgin and the Child" [the Virgin of the Rocks] he touches the face of the child. There is that fragment of the flight of birds where Da Vinci suddenly interrupts himself to pursue a childhood memory: "I seem to have been destined to be especially concerned with the vulture, for one of the first things I remember about my childhood is how a vulture came to me when I was still in the cradle, forced open my mouth with its talons, and struck me many times between the lips with it." [Sigmund Freud, *Un Souvenir d'enfance de Léonard de Vinci*.] So even this transparent consciousness has its enigma, whether truly a child's memory or a fantasy of the grown man. It does not come out of nowhere, nor does it sustain itself alone. We are caught in a secret history, in a forest of symbols. One would surely protest if Freud were to decipher the riddle from what we know about the meaning of the flight of birds and about *felettes*, fantasies and their relation to the period of nursing. But it is still a fact that to the ancient Egyptians the vulture was the symbol of maternity because they believed all vultures were female and that they were impregnated by the wind. It is also a fact that the Church Fathers used this legend to refute, on the grounds of natural history, those unwilling to believe in a virgin birth, and it is probable that Leonardo carried across the legend in the course of his endless reading. He found it in the symbol of his own fate, in the illegitimate son of a rich notary who married the noble Donna Alberga, the very year Leonardo was born. Having no children by her, he took Leonardo into his home when the boy was five. Thus Leonardo spent the first four years of his life with his mother, the deserted peasant girl: he was a child without a father, and he got to know the taste of the sole company of that unhappy mother who seemed to have miraculously created him. If we now recall that he was never known to have a mistress or even to have felt anything like passion: that he was accused — but acquitted — of homosexuality; that his diary, which tells us nothing about many other, larger expenses, notes with meticulous detail the costs of his mother's burial, as well as the cost of linen and clothing for two of his students — then we are on the verge of saying that Leonardo loved only one woman, his mother, and that this love left no room for anything but the platonic tenderness he felt for the young boys surrounding him. In the four decisive years of his childhood he formed a basic attachment which he had to give up when he was recalled to his father's home and into which he had poured all his resources of love and all his power of abandon. His thirst for life could only be turned toward investigation and knowledge of the world, and since he himself had been "detached," he had to become that intellectual power that man who was all mind, that strong arm, that body incapable of any strong indignation, love or hate, he left his mother and dedicated to devote time to bizarre experiments: he became a person in whom his contemporaries sensed a mystery. It was as if Leonardo had never quite grown up, as if all the places in his heart had already been spoken for, as if the spirit of investigation was a way for him to escape from life; as if he had invested all his power of ascent in the first years of his life and had remained true to his childhood right to the end. His games were those of a child. Vassari tells how "he made up a wax paste and, during his walks, he would model from it very delicate animals, hollow and filled with air; when he breathed into them, they would float; when the air had escaped, they would fall to the ground. When the wine-grower from Belvedere found a very unusual lizard, Leonardo made wings for it out of the skin of other lizards and filled these wings with mercury so that they waved and quivered when the lizard moved; he likewise made eyes, a beard, and horns for it in the same way, tamed it, put it in a box, and used this lizard to terrify his friends." He left his work unfinished, just as his father had abandoned him. He paid no heed to authority and trusted only nature and his own judgment in matters of knowledge, as is often the case with people who have not

been raised in the shadow of a father's intimidating and protective power. Thus even this pure power of examination, this solitude, this curiosity — which are the essence of mind — became Leonardo's only reference to his history. At the height of his freedom he was, in *that very freedom*, the child he had been: he was detached in one way only because he was attached in another. Becoming a pure consciousness is just another way to taking a stand about the world and other people. Leonardo learned this attitude in the solitude of the situation in which his birth and childhood had made for him. There can be no consciousness that is not sustained by its providential involvement in life and by the manner of this involvement.

Whatever is arbitrary in Freud's explanations cannot in this context discredit psychoanalytic intuition. True, the reader is stopped more than once by the lack of evidence. Why this and not something else? The question seems all the more pressing since Freud often offers several interpretations, each symptom being "over-determined" according to him. Finally, it is obvious that a doctrine which brings in sexuality everywhere cannot, but the rules of inductive logic, establish its effectiveness anywhere, since, excluding all differential cases beforehand, it deprives itself of any counter-evidence. This is how one triumphs over psychoanalysis, but only on paper. For if the suggestions of the analyst can never be proven, neither can they be eliminated: how would it be possible to credit chance with the complex correspondences which the psychoanalyst discovers between the child and the adult? How can we deny that psychoanalysis has taught us to notice echoes, allusions, repetitions from one moment of life to another — an encatenation we would not dream of doubting if Freud had stated the theory behind it correctly? Unlike the natural sciences, psychoanalysis was not meant to give us necessary relations of cause and effect but to point to motivational relationships which are in principle simply possible. We should not talk of Leonardo's fantasy of the vulture, or the infantile past which I speak for a form which determined his fate. Rather, it is like the words "the vulture" — an ambiguous symbol which applies in advance to several possible chains of events. To be more precise: in every life, one's birth and one's past define categories or basic dimensions which do not impose any particular act but which can be found in all. Whether Leonardo yielded to his childhood or whether he wished to flee from it, he could never have been other than he was. The very decisions which transform us are always made in reference to a factual situation; such a situation can of course be accepted or refused, but it cannot fail to give us our impetus nor to be for us, as a situation "to be accepted" or "to be refused." The incarnation for us of the value we give to it. If it is the sin of psychoanalysis to describe this exchange between future and past and to show how each life over riddles whose final meaning is nowhere written down, then we have no right to demand inductive rigor from it. The psychoanalyst's hermeneutic musing, which multiplies the communications between us and ourselves, which takes sexuality as the symbol of existence and existence as symbol of sexuality, and which looks in the past for the meaning of the future and in the future for the meaning of the past, is better suited than rigorous induction to the circular movement of our lives, where the future rests on the past, the past on the future, and where everything is nothing but everything else. Psychoanalysis does not make freedom impossible; it teaches us to think of this freedom concretely, as a creative repetition of ourselves, always, in retrospect, faithful to ourselves.

Thus it is true both that the life of an author can teach us nothing and that — if we know how to interpret it — we can find everything in it, since it opens onto his work. Just as we may observe the movements of an unknown animal without understanding the law which inhabits and controls them, so Cézanne's observers did not guess the transmutations which he imposed on events and experiences: they were blind to his significance, to that glow from out of nowhere which surrounded him from time to time. But he himself was never at the center of himself: nine days out of ten all he saw around him was the wretchedness of his empirical life and of his unsuccessful attempts, the leftovers of an unknown part. Yet it was in the world that he had to realize his freedom, with colors upon a canvas. It was on the approval of others that he had to wait for the proof of his worth. That is the reason he questioned the picture emerging beneath his hand, why he hung on the glances other people directed toward his canvas. That is the reason he never finished working. We never get away from our life. We never see our ideas or our freedom face to face.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty
1945



J. MARE



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something authentic and delicious
you know something like a mark
in a toilet

graced with guts and gutted
with grace

squeezed your nuts and open your
face

E.E. Cummings
1935

the only way of rising toward God.
Paul Gauguin
Pont Aven, 1888

I must carry on. I simply must produce after nature — Sketches, pictures, if I were to do any, would be merely constructions after nature, based on method, sensation, and developments suggested by the model, but I always say the same thing.

Paul Cezanne
Aix, 1906

I have little to tell you: indeed one says more and perhaps better things about painting when facing the motif than when discussing purely speculative theories — in which, as often as not, one loses oneself.

Paul Cezanne
Aix, 1902

I said of a picture: its interest does not overwhelm the spectator who must go in front of it. Like the book on the shelf of a bookcase, only showing the few words of its title, it needs, to give up its riches, the action of the reader who must take it up, open it, and shut himself away with it — similarly the picture enclosed in its frame and forming with other paintings an ensemble on the wall of an apartment or a museum, cannot be penetrated unless the attention of the viewer is concentrated especially on it. In both cases, to be appreciated, the object must be isolated from its milieu (contrary to architectural painting). It is this which made me write that the spectator must go 'in front of': I should have written 'in search of' to be more precise.

Henri Matisse
1943

At all events, law and justice apart, a pretty woman is a living marvel, whereas the picture by da Vinci and Correggio only exist for other reasons. Why am I so little an artist that I always regret that the statue and the picture are not alive? Why do I understand the musician better, why do I see the *raison d'être* of his abstractions better?

Vincent van Gogh
Arles, 1888

Dear Mr. Pollack.

Thank you for your letter of the 28th February and for the kind and flattering things you say in it about my work.

Your brief list of questions are precisely those which I have avoided answering throughout my long and varied career. Most of us talk a great deal of nonsense about what we do and I would far rather audiences, and therefore your readers, judged what I do by the body of the work and not by my probably erroneous evaluation of why and how I do it.

Naturally, I thank you for your interest and wish you success with your magazine.

Yours sincerely,
Richard Lester

Some advice: do not paint too much after nature. Art is an abstraction; derive this abstraction from nature while dreaming before it, and think more of the creation which will result than of nature. Creating like our divine master is

ROOFUSS

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SHEET

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"It is impossible for ideas to compete in the marketplace if no forum for their presentation is provided or available."

—Thomas Mann

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—Francis Ford Coppola

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