

ALBERTO GIACOMETTI:

AN ART OF IMPASSE

by

ROALD NASGAARD

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Department of FINE ARTS

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver 8, Canada

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ABSTRACT

Within Giacometti's concepts of what art must do, his own art has reached an impasse. He defines art as a means to see better and considers it a method of research into the nature of the exterior world. When the truth of this nature has been discovered and totally re-created on canvas or in sculpture, only then is his art complete. Instead of greater knowledge, however, his visual researches have only yielded more uncertainty and mystery; and the qualities of the exterior world have escaped him until he is in despair of ever reproducing them. He finds himself in the situation, consequently, of trying to represent in art that which he has no knowledge of. It is the terms and manifestations of this impasse that the present paper purports to discuss.

As prefatory background to the discussion proper, I have proposed the contrasted images of the acrobat and the clown, a metaphorical framework suggested in criticism of Samuel Beckett, who, in literature, has reached an impasse comparable to Giacometti's in art. The acrobat represents the artist who, like Giacometti, despite an impasse pursues his impossible goal relentlessly, glad of the most miniscule achievement. The clown, on the other hand, accepts the failure of his art and creates a new art whose basis is failure. The

clown acts as a foil to the acrobat. I note also the critics' failure to consider Giacometti in relation to his tradition, an unpardonable omission because the crisis in his art is as well an indication of a crisis within the tradition.

When Giacometti defines art as a means to see better, he refers to no simple physical act of recording sensation. Seeing is a highly critical procedure which strips vision of the veil of culture which tradition has placed between the eye and the model, and frees the mind of outmoded forms and conventions of perception which have become irrelevant to the total experience and organization of the artist. Having performed this operation, the artist is free to observe the true nature of the exterior world and record its likeness in art.

Giacometti's rigidly controlled seeing, however, has not revealed the desired knowledge, but has instead yielded the experience of the distance which forever separates the artist from everything he wants to depict. Instead of being able to re-create the human face and figure, Giacometti has only succeeded in producing those slim, attenuated, emaciated figures whose human characteristics disappear as we approach them, and whose gaze stares emptily and impenetrably into space, revealing nothing. His art has become a testimony to the common experience of contemporary thought: man's alienation

and isolation. This is basically what denies the artist the intimate rapport with his model necessary in order to re-create its likeness. As contemporary science and philosophy have been limited in their researches by human finitude, so has Giacometti's art. His minuscule bit of knowledge is but a speck on the infinite scale of things; and partial knowledge is not truth.

Finally the awareness of human finitude within art is traced through its development in the nineteenth century. The difficulty of realizing on canvas what he saw in nature became particularly evident to Cézanne in an age when, deprived of all relevant established traditions of art, he had to discover for himself a new artistic language and imagery. Cezanne began to suspect the impossibility of doing art which sought after truth, but he still had reference to metaphysical concepts as to the nature of the external world which made his success in art at least conceivable. Giacometti is deprived of such concepts and his contemporary sensibility denies his ever achieving a basis of certainty. Art for him will always be a tentative gesture in the direction of completion, but completion is inherently impossible. These are the terms of the impasse in Giacometti's art.

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INTRODUCTION

Giacometti defines his art as a means of seeing better. But his re-creation on canvas or in sculpture of what he sees is thwarted because he approaches his model with a contemporary sensibility which, by experiencing separation and alienation as primary attributes of man's being, denies the artist the intimate rapport with his model necessary for him to see it better. The consequent gap which develops between art's ideal goal, which is to re-create the model, and the only partial realization thereof, because the model is inaccessible, creates an impasse whereby the failure of art becomes inevitable. This paper purports to discuss the terms and the manifestations of this impasse in Giacometti's art.

The discussion develops against the metaphorical framework of the contrasted images of the acrobat and the clown. The former represents the artist who will not accept failure, so relentlessly pursues his impossible goal; whereas the latter is he who accepts failure and bases his art upon it. The clown acts as a foil to Giacometti who reaches the threshold of the clown's art but does not cross it.

After noting the critics' failure to consider Giacometti in relation to his artistic tradition - a serious omission because the impasse within his art is evidence of an impasse within the tradition - the paper indicates the

extreme crisis into which Giacometti's artistic pursuit has fallen, and traces the origin of this crisis through his early years. His attitude towards art and his methods of work are outlined and two concepts basic to his art are elucidated: the act of seeing, and the quality of 'likeness' which he strives to realize. The consequent artistic product is examined as a revelation of man's contemporary sense of isolation and alienation; experiences which are basic to Giacometti's incapacity to realize his model on canvas or in sculpture, and to the impasse which has arisen within his art. The final chapter discusses the impasse in relation to the finitude within other areas of contemporary thought and traces the development of the problem of realization through the nineteenth century to its climactic expression in Giacometti's art.

CHAPTER I

Giacometti's art as well as his statements reveal a man who, despite the ultimate failure of his art, nevertheless pursues it persistently, glad of the smallest achievement. I propose as a backdrop to this discussion of Giacometti a pair of contrasting images which sum up the alternatives open to an artist who has reached a point where success in his work has become inherently impossible. These are the images of the acrobat and the clown.

There exists a sketch by Giacometti, from 1923, of a tightrope walker.¹ It is crude and of little aesthetic interest and little is known of the circumstances under which it was done. It does serve, however, to let the artist himself introduce the image with which this paper will associate him; that of the acrobat who balances precariously in space, performing his impossible tricks. The drawing was executed before Giacometti turned to abstraction; at Bourdelle's studio where he still struggled with representation, working directly from the model - a task which for a while he would forsake, but to which he returned and devoted the rest of his life. It is Giacometti's struggle to depict the model as he sees it that warrants his association with the acrobat.

In contrast to the image of the tightrope walker who dazzles us with his agility is the other stock circus character, the clown, who delights us, not by his consummate

agility, but by his failure to be agile. The two images as opposites are proposed in Hugh Kenner's critical writings on Samuel Beckett.² And it is interesting to examine Giacometti in the light of the critical thesis of a contemporary writer, even if it is by contrast rather than by similarity in approach that we must gain our insights. Nor is it inappropriate to compare trends in sculpture and painting to those in literature and theatre since it is to be expected that new artistic tendencies should attain their first explicit verbal manifestations in the latter before becoming apparent to critics and historians. The comparison in this case yields interesting results, for if we consider Giacometti the painter-sculptor as the acrobat of the circus pair, then Beckett, according to Kenner's thesis, represents the clown. But a thorough explication of the two images requires an extensive excursion into the realm of Beckettian thought.

The ropewalker or the acrobat is he who step by step improves his art by greater knowledge and intenser training. By sheer dint of hard work and persistence he perfects with hair-raising precision his tricks on the wire. He is in constant danger. He must work always on the very edge of the impossible. To do less, to perform only that which is safe and proven is to sink into routine and betray the integrity of his art. Not to relentlessly build new strength and skill is to bore and then lose his audience and to emasculate his performance. The acrobat must learn all that has been developed in his art. He must copy all that previous

acrobats have learned and then add to it his own small contribution. Kenner's description is excellent. "The man who imitates is the acrobat himself (all ropewalkers are alike), adding to what we have seen before in other circuses some new miniscule difficulty overcome, moving on felt-shod feet a little further along the dreary road of the possible."³ His inachievable ideal is to defy the laws of nature.

In art, painting and sculpture, the acrobat manifests himself in at least two ways. We turn for clarification to Samuel Beckett himself in his one public appearance. In 1949 with Georges Duthuit he prepared a series of three dialogues on as many painters (Tal Coat, Masson, Van Velde).⁴ We will not concern ourselves in this paper with the adequateness of Beckett's analysis of the painters he chooses to discuss. What is relevant is his analysis of a development within art which is comparable to that manifested in his own novels and plays. The first two painters discussed in the dialogue are, in Beckett's terms, the acrobats. Painter no. 1 is he who deserves the attention of his audience because he has extended the boundaries of his art.

B. Total object, complete with missing parts, instead of partial object. Question of degree.... In any case a thrusting towards a more adequate expression of natural experience, as revealed to the vigilant coenaesthesia. Whether achieved through submission or through mastery, the result is a gain in nature.

D.'s protests, that this painter's discoveries are not in nature, are not related to a given time or place,

but are on quite a different plane, are to naught, for B. asserts that by nature he means "a composite of perceiver and perceived, not a datum, or experience." This is painting adapted to a contemporary environment, but with the same end as all previous painting: "straining to enlarge the statement of a compromise." B. turns to the Renaissance painters about whom we must consider, "not that they surveyed the world with the eyes of building contractors, a mere means like any other, but that they never stirred from the field of the possible, however much they may have enlarged it." The only thing disturbed by such revolutionaries as Matisse and Tal Coat, he concludes, "is a certain order on the plane of the feasible." B. demands the turning away in disgust from such work "weary of its puny exploits, weary of pretending to be able, of being able, of doing a little better the same old thing, of going a little further along the dreary road."⁵

The second manifestation of the acrobat is painter no. 2 whom D. presents as he who has gone beyond the plane of the feasible and addressed himself to the void. His concern now is with "inner emptiness, the prime condition, according to Chinese aesthetics of the art of painting." Here is a painter who senses the need to establish about painting "the data of the problem to be solved, the Problem at last." But B. will not be appeased. Though this painter may yearn for a new stripped art of the void, B. still detects two maladies familiar to previous painting: "the malady of wanting to know what to do and the malady of wanting to be

able to do it." But wanting to express the void is merely to pass from one untenable position to another. Whatever is thus capable of being possessed is hardly to be confused with the void. Nor is the helplessness in facing the dilemma of expression stated on its own merits and for its own wake, though it is "perhaps very occasionally admitted as spice to the "exploit" it jeopardised ... The reason is doubtless, among others, that it (the dilemma of expressing the void) contains in itself the impossibility of statement."

B. turns from the art of painters no. 1 and 2 towards his dream of "an art unresentful of its insuperable indigence and too proud for the farce of giving and receiving." He prefers

The expression that there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express.⁶

B.'s position as stated in the first two dialogues implies rejection of Giacometti's art, which very much strives for expression on the plane of the feasible. Deliberately and with great courage (how else to bear up under impossible odds) Giacometti has contended against the "insuperable indigence" of his art and has attempted to extricate from the amorphous nature of his material a double for his vision of the exterior world. Against doubt, anguish, despair the artist has stacked a lifetime of obsessive striving for knowledge of what he sees: in B.'s opinion, merely the "straining

to enlarge the statement of a compromise."

In the third dialogue B. proposes an escape from the impossible. Escape is postulated on the ability of the artist to "accept a certain situation and to consent to a certain act."

The situation is that of him who is helpless, cannot act, in the event cannot paint, since he is obliged to paint. The act is of him who, helpless, unable to act, acts, in the event paints, since he is obliged to paint.

- D. Why is he obliged to paint?
- B. I don't know.
- D. Why is he helpless to paint?
- B. Because there is nothing to paint and nothing to paint with.

This conclusion is contrasted to the assumption of all painting that the domain of the artist is the domain of the feasible; contrasted to the concern with expressive possibility.

The much to express, the little to express, the ability to express much, the ability to express little, emerge in the common anxiety to express as much as possible, or as truly as possible, or as finely as possible, to the best of one's ability.⁷

Kenner gives us an inkling of what B. may mean.

Shakespeare's powers of expression, it is safe to remark, were infallibly equal to his needs, chiefly since what was needed to write Hamlet was power of expression. But set Shakespeare the problem of writing a play about the non-appearance of his hero (for whom two tramps are waiting), or restrict him to four characters, two legless,

the third immobilized, the fourth dim, and Shakespeare in the course of attaining himself to this assignment would of necessity allow his vast ability to wither, cease describing this man's art and that man's scope, and relinquish the satisfactions (such as he found them) of Prometheon competence.⁸

The proof of such an art as B. advocates, bereft of occasion, is in the novels and plays of Samuel Beckett which one by one have shed themselves of all occasions, of subjects, of objects, of relationships, "evading the elaborate mysteries of cognition and of interaction between mind and hand."⁹ They are works of resignation, their characters have divorced themselves from world and self. Thus there is no predice-
ment, no need to ask why, how and what: all the impossible ponderables which have always been the subjects whether of art or literature and which either has failed to answer, being capable only of providing limited and tentative solutions. B.'s summary statement on the history of painting: It

is the history of its attempts to escape from this sense of failure, by means more authentic, more ample, less exclusive relations between representer and representee, in a kind of tropism toward a light as to the nature of which the best opinions continue to vary, and with the Pythagorean turn, as though the irrationality of π were an offense against the diety, not to mention his creation.¹⁰

Painter no. 3 will be the first to devulge to outsiders the dreaded Pythagorean secret of π , of the irrational; that the diagonal of a square is incommensurable with the side. This artist is the first to admit that to be

an artist is to fail as no other dare fail. Failure is the world in which he works and to shrink from it is desertion into self-deception. Deprived of the ability, even the remotest possibility, of succeeding, the artist is left with his ignorance and his impotence - and the need to write or paint. Here finally emerges that second quality of our circus imagery; the clown.

The clown exploits impotence. Inching along the dreary road of the possible has proven futile. Perfection is a goal beyond reach; another minuscule step towards it is a meaningless gesture within the infinity of the cosmos. So, says the clown, I cannot, I give up. But he lives and he must go on, and the only content left around which he can form his actions is his incapacity. To live is to make gestures towards ends and, as such, the gestures will inevitably fail; but the gestures, the pure act will remain. The act which fails will itself become the clown's subject and he will exploit it with extravagant virtuosity. In a recent N.F.B. short, The Railrodder, the strong, expressionless Buster Keaton, crossing the continent in a gas-powered speeder, sights a flight of ducks and pits himself against nature. An experienced hunter, he camouflages his car with branches and again rolling along the track loads his gun and sinks down, inconspicuous amongst the foliage. With the air of a veteran marksman he takes aim, reflects for a moment on the delight of roasting duck, pulls the trigger, and WHAM! The shot flattens against the rocky ceiling of the tunnel which has suddenly

passed over him, while his ears are deafened by the reverberating blast of the gun. But is Buster perturbed? He merely prepares the props for his next action, which he will blunder as badly. Such is the art of the clown.

Contained within the images of the two circus characters - the acrobat and the clown - are the two possible varieties of art: respectively, that which strives to express the possible, and that which considers the possible but an irrelevant speck within the infinite universe of impossibility. The latter is an art of resignation which is an art of doing, because it must, not of purpose. But resigned art, for which there can be no worldly success, (and the world is all) has two outlets, either of which is a game, insignificant beyond the playing itself. The first is that which Buster Keaton plays, the performance of a gesture for its own sake, oblivious to the fact that it will fail. This also is B.'s game in the dialogues when he bows out in defeat at the end of the second dialogue; overcome by D.'s rebuttal of his arguments B. exits weeping. At the end of the third dialogue when asked to complete his "number" he suddenly remembers warmly, "Yes, yes, I am mistaken, I am mistaken."¹¹

The second outlet of resigned art is the performance of an act within a completely closed system, where all the variables are given and under constant control so that success is assured - despite the fact that it is an irrelevant success yielding nothing. Molloy, of Beckett's novel devotes himself to the problem of developing a system of sucking sixteen

stones and passing them through his four pockets (the two pockets of my trousers and the two pockets of my great coat) in such a manner as to be absolutely certain that no stone is sucked more than once within the same cycle. For six pages he deliberates the ups and downs of the question, the various solutions, and finally admits that deep down it was actually the same to him whether he "sucked a different stone each time or always the same stone, until the end of time."¹²

But for Giacometti art is neither pure gesture nor a self-contained game. He has discovered the secret of the irrationality of pi for his has pushed to the limit the problem of working with the art of the possible. But he does not deny the possible, even if he is pushed to the brink of despair by the constant fear of failure under which he works. He remains thoroughly the acrobat, for despite his deep sense of incapacity and his awareness that he can never achieve more than "partial object", he does not give up. Curiously he has said at one point "I'd have made a better clown than a painter. It would have been easier and funnier."¹³ The remark may constitute a sort of self-revelation, or it is perhaps merely a jest.

If the association of Beckett and Giacometti, and the discussion of Giacometti within terms suggested by Beckett's writing, seem arbitrary, then we can at least give a partial justification by briefly comparing background and development of the two men. The number of their similarities is surprising. They are contemporaries born within the same

semi-decade; both grew up steeped in the tradition of their own forms of art; both found their way to Paris to become involved in the prevailing artistic trends. During the war Giacometti retired to his Swiss village, Stampa, to work, while Beckett took up residence in Vaucluse near Avignon in the Unoccupied Zone to write his novel Watt. Both returned to Paris after the war to produce their great work: Giacometti his slender attenuated figures; Beckett his Trilogy, Comment C'est and the plays. But these are the superficial events of life which it is not so startling they should hold in common. The remarkable quality they share is their obsession throughout most of their lives with a single idea to which they devoted their entire energies to the exclusion of all else: Giacometti to the expression in art of his unique visions of the exterior world; Beckett to a verbal expression of that total helplessness of man in trying to forge such visions. Theirs is a singularity of purpose which never sways from its chosen path despite public reaction or acclaim. This devotion to cause interests us doubly when we realize that both artists perform their seeing, thinking and working within a similar social-philosophical context.

It is true that it is venturing on unsafe ground to attempt to speak of philosophical contexts within which works of art are produced, or of ideas which art may espouse. In fact the artist may often deny if confronted with the idea content of his work that he intended anything of the sort. Beckett refuses to comment on or explain his writing.

We have no elucidations to offer of mysteries that are all of their making. My work is a matter of fundamental sounds (no joke intended) made as fully as possible, and I accept responsibility for nothing else. If people want to have head aches among the overtones, let them. And provide their own aspirin. Hamm as stated, and blow as stated, together as stated, nec tecum nec sine te, in such a place, and in such a world, that's all I can manage, more than I could. 14

Nor do we ever catch Giacometti speaking of art in terms other than formal problems and accomplishments; whether he is speaking of museum art at the Louvre with Pierre Schneider,¹⁵ or of his own art to interviewers and sitters. This of course in no way denies a relation between the artist, his art, and the art's cultural, social, historical setting, nor the discussion of these. It is also very true, to quote Alan Bowness, that "the wider relevance of what he is doing often escapes the artist, as does its relative significance."¹⁶ This is not his concern, but ours. He submits the work to the world and what we make of it is, in the last resort, beyond his control. And Kurt Badt writes, "When painters make pronouncements, they usually discuss only technical matters, since they take spiritual aspects for granted."¹⁷ This in fact seems requisite for successful art, for we tend to be uneasy with a work which has been deliberately informed by an artist's philosophical, moral or political intention, feeling that when art tends toward polemics it loses its integrity as an aesthetic object. Ideas which

arise as inherent products of the artist's vision are likely to be more indicative of the contemporary cultural situation.

Critics have without exception related both Giacometti and Beckett to Existentialist philosophy. Beckett has been discussed in terms of Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre. Giacometti includes among his friends and interpreters, Sartre and Jean Genet, and the two major monographs devoted to his work aspire to elevate him to the rank of an existentialist saint (Dupin and Bucarelli). Enough ground here to justify a close association to a current philosophical attitude. But it is finally to the raw material of the works themselves that we must turn for proof that association of Beckett, Giacometti, Existentialism is more than arbitrary.

Beckett's plays may be seen as a rendering of the human predicament: activity is futile, man is constantly thwarted by forces he cannot control; (Act Without Words I); passivity is futile, even in resignation to inactivity the torment does not subside (Act Without Words II). For salvation from this awful predicament man waits for God, but God never comes (Waiting for Godot). Man still waits because hope gives him purpose, and waiting after all is something to do. Hope dies and man waits for death but passes his time with playing games; they are something to do (Happy Days). Death comes, it is neither darkness nor rest, but a sort of reliving of life (Play).

Giacometti confronts us with: slim, tall, erect, gestureless figures of men and women who exist for us only at

a distance, across a space which is forever impenetrable; plazas of walking men, which will never meet but instead pass by one another into nowhere; painted figures shut from our space by the double or triple frames, depicted isolated in deep, murky perspective space from which there is no escape; faces, their life concentrated into that direct burning stare which does not see us and which tells us nothing.

Here is adequate data from both writer and artist of man's fundamental sense of estrangement and of those three human emotions which are the basis of that predominant contemporary mood which received its most prevalent expression in postwar French existentialism: abandonment, because men has realized God's death; anguish, when he is thrown back on his own resources of will; despair, that results when the will is confronted with the impossibility of a situation where nothing is certain either with self or with the other. In response to a common cultural predicament the two artists resorted to almost opposite approaches: Beckett in the direction of the clown who undermines everything that appears definite and positive; Giacometti in the direction of the hero who must strive at all cost and sacrifice to establish what little is positive. It is to the latter's approach that we now turn.

CHAPTER II

The image of Giacometti that developed was exactly that of a man who against anguish and fear of failure puts that minuscule fraction of advancement in his work, that extra little piece of learning about his world; though he knows that within the infinitude of questions and answers it will count for nothing. Some critics began to describe him as the existentialist hero, and the two major monographs devoted to him which have been published to date, by Jaques Dupin and Palma Bucarelli,¹ treated him as such. In these works Giacometti is depicted as the existentialist artist struggling to solve the impossible problem. He performs courageously an action which is meaningful only in itself in a universe in which ends and explanations are absurd. (Do we not have Giacometti's own word that this is so?)² Before launching into a detailed study of Giacometti's art it is perhaps helpful to stop to examine a few falacies that these two critical works have perpetrated, particularly their tendency to isolate Giacometti from his Western artistic tradition.

Both Dupin and Bucarelli have taken the cues for their theses from two essays which Sartre has published on Giacometti.³ Sartre brilliantly delineates Giacometti's basic artistic problems: the opposition of the whole and the

details within the human face; his struggle with space; the element of distance which forever separates artist from model - the basic factor of Giacometti's peculiar vision of the exterior world. Sartre's discussion is deeply rooted in his philosophical thought, and his diction is typically existentialist in its predilection for the terms: void, emptiness, solitude, being, nothingness; the sculptures he describes as "muffled shouts rising to the top of a mountain and informing the hearer that somewhere someone is grieving or calling for help."⁴ M. Dupin and Signora Bucarelli are faithful disciples and Signora Bucarelli acknowledges her debt.

Sartre has written about Giacometti, and so has Genet; therefore Giacometti has become a typical existentialist artist for the audience. His ruffled and unkempt hair, his forehead troubled with wrinkles on such a changeable countenance, worn-out pull-overs, scarfs, his appearing at the D Magots or at the Flore at impossible hours, supper with hard boiled eggs shelled by his large thumbs still covered with clay or wax, a caustic talk, subtle yet of a disquieting dialecticism in its seeming simpleness, complete the portrait: by now Giacometti is a character of

Signora Bucarelli admits that such a definition of the artist is "rather gross and imprecise", but nevertheless maintains that "fundamentally there is some truth in it", and it does inform the core of her argument throughout, particularly in the lyrical closing pages. The result, according to one critics, is the sort of writing "that American critics often envy, and at times try to emulate: writing in which the

symphonic rhetoric of the most prestigious modern ideas soars into the empyrean of intellectual discourse while the works of art ostensibly under analysis remain comparatively earth-bound, undislodged from their artistic quidity and almost modest in their physical particularity."⁶ We quote a typical extract from Signora Bucarelli.

... from myth he turned to dream, then from dream he turned to a melancholic squalid, desolate and miserable yet deeply pathological meditation over the condition of the human being. Unlike anybody else, he has set his problem on the opposite terms of "essence" and "non-entity", and has solved it according to the theories of Sartre, his great friend and his most subtle exegetist, recognizing the presence of the essence in the inner nothingness, together with the discovery of a dull and disquieting dialectics which no longer assumes the essence as an unchangeable ontological truth, but as a suffered and pitiful recovery of every hour, of every minute of our existence.⁷

The essential problem with the Dupin and Bucarelli monographs is not so much that they associate Giacometti with existentialist thought, for that is fundamentally a valid association. It is rather that the European critics' approach, instead of performing an analysis in terms of a disinterested comparison between art and contemporary thought, are imposing an ideological interpretation on the art. In the preceding quote from Bucarelli we note that Giacometti is said to have solved his problem "according to the theories of Sartre" as if this were a preconceived intention of the artist. Neither Giacometti's own statements, nor Bucarelli's observation in

her opening paragraphs, that the artist has "no theory in mind, no principle to support",⁸ bear out such a conclusion. It rather seems that Signora Bucarelli has explicated Giacometti's artistic problems in Sartrean terms in order to assure that their solution may be found within the same system.

In its suspect assumptions and lyrical interpretation this sort of criticism is reminiscent of Sartre's introduction to the Gallimard collected works of Jean Genet, a one volume work which exceeds the length of the collected works themselves. The difficulty with Sartre's Saint Genet⁹ is that while we are confronted with a brilliant analysis of the writer and his life, related to the works, overwhelmingly elucidated according to existentialist psychoanalysis, we are nevertheless, though we cannot deny the genius of the interpretation, doubtful as to the relevance of all this to the actual works of Jean Genet and to the writer himself. It may validly be questioned how much the book is a product of the imaginative and futile genius of Sartre's own mind. It is not, however, that Sartre or Dupin or Bucarelli do not illuminate something about the art or literature under discussion; it is rather that their texts, in Hilton Kramer's words; "illuminate the oeuvre the way a display of fine works lights up a landscape. Certain features are glimpsed, briefly but dramatically, in the flickering light, but one is never in any doubt that it is the display itself - not the landscape - upon which the

principal energies have been lavished."¹⁰

Palma Bucarelli's is the more concrete of the two monographs and relates Giacometti directly to the painters and sculptors of the twentieth century, whose milieu the artist has shared and under whose influence he has learned. M. Dupin, on the other hand, offers the following untenable position: "His (Giacometti's) attitude is in absolute contradiction to all the tendencies and experiments of his time and the theories which justify them. He is alone in his century and against everyone clinging to his obsession, against the current in spite of himself."¹¹ This rather gross over-simplification ignores Giacometti's close involvement with all the artists and currents that surrounded him: Brancusi, Picasso, Arp, Miro, Laurens, Dada, Surrealism, primitive art. A check into his writings about contemporaries reveals the affinity he felt towards their work; of Laurens he writes:

De ces sculptures de Laurens on n'approche jamais tout à fait, il y a toujours un espace de dimension indéfinissable qui nous en sépare, cet espace qui entoure la sculpture et qui est déjà la sculpture même. Et je retrouve l'atmosphère dense et légère de la clairière. C'est la même sensation que j'ai éprouvée souvent devant des êtres vivants, devant des têtes humaines surtout, le sentiment d'un espace-atmosphère qui entoure immédiatement les êtres, les pénètre, est déjà l'être lui-même; les limites exactes, les dimensions de cet être deviennent indéfinissables. La sculpture de Laurens est une des très rares qui rendent ce que je ressens devant la réalité

vivante et par là je la trouve ressemblante
et cette ressemblance est pour moi une des
raisons de l'aimer.¹²

of Derain he writes:

Les qualités de Derain n'existent qu'au-delà
du ratage, de l'échec, de la perdition possible,
et je ne crois, il me semble, que dans ces
qualités-là, au moins dans l'art moderne - je
veux dire, (peut-être) depuis Giotto.¹³

It is closer to the truth than M. Dupin's conjecture, that
Giacometti has assimilated all the tendencies and experimenta-
tions of his time and adapted those he found relevant to his
own purposes.¹⁴

The monographs under discussion similarly fall into
error by depicting Giacometti as existing in a complete
vacuum in relation to the tradition of French art. The pro-
position that his is an isolated phenomena is of course
absurd. It would be difficult to find another artist with
so profound a familiarity with and insight into the history
of Western art from its primitive beginnings to its contem-
porary manifestations. Pierre Schneider in his article
"At the Louvre with Giacometti" evokes for us the artist's
powers to see and penetrate into the masterworks of our
tradition whatever be their age. Giacometti muses on Cimabue's
"Virgin Surrounded by Angels" at the top of the main stair-
case.

This is the painting I used to prefer, to find the
truest. The brutes! They have put it on the
staircase. They have expelled it from the Louvre.

It is impossible to be truer to life.
 Here ... it is those Roman excavations
 that changed Giotto. ... Here! what could
 be truer, denser than the hands? They
 are more real the Rembrandt's hands.
 What depth.¹⁵

Schneider relates his experience in seeing the painting in Giacometti's company: "Something peculiar now happens: I follow Giacometti's intense gaze and the Virgin's hands seem to begin to grow larger. Soon I see only them. They generate the void around them.... We were looking for a thing aspects; what we unexpectedly came upon is space's depth."¹⁶

"I have just about the whole Louvre stored in my mind", says Giacometti; "room by room, painting by painting". Chaldea, Fayum, Egypt, Byzantium, Tintoretto, Le Nain, Cézanne, everything. His assured command of the tradition of Western art harks back to his employment of the method of copying used by Western artists since the Renaissance. He has copied practically everything that has been done since the beginning of art; first from reproductions, then from originals during his travels to Venice, Padua, Assisi, Rome, and at the Louvre. "In trying to copy a thing, you see it better. I questioned each work in turn, intensely, at length." Art he defines as "a means to see better."¹⁷ Only during the periods when he did not question reality but retreated into the world of memory and imagination did he stop going to the Louvre.

It should be unnecessary to have to stress that a man so aware of his tradition cannot escape its influence.

He is the acrobat who has copied what all previous acrobats have done and now must add to it his own small contribution. A definitive consideration of Giacometti consequently must take into account the tradition out of which he has emerged and ascertain how he has expanded its frontiers in new and unexpected directions. If it still be maintained that Giacometti's art is one of an extreme situation, it is perhaps because the tradition itself has fallen into so extreme a crisis.¹⁸

Though no attempt will be made to approach a definitive evaluation of Giacometti's art, references will be made to the past in order to firmly establish the artist's place within the tradition. But our researches will not reach far back beyond Cézanne, whom Giacometti cites as a major influence. In connection with Cézanne and his century our concern will centre on the problem of 'realizing' a work of art - from circa 1850 a significant factor in art criticism. The widening chasm between the artist's vision and his capacity to realize it upon canvas or in sculpture, which the nineteenth century began to discern, reaches its climactic point in Giacometti's art, in which the satisfactory realization of vision has become inherently impossible; in which we are brought to the threshold of the clown's art.

CHAPTER III

The discussion proper of Giacometti commences by indicating the extreme crisis his artistic pursuit has fallen into, and then traces the origins of this crisis through his early years.

The contemporary artist, who, like the acrobat, wants to go a little further towards perfecting his art - here to see better - dangerously risks failing. In Cézanne's artistic search, the give and take between man, canvas and nature little by little closed the disparity between his vision of an eternal truth in the orderliness of nature and his intellectual and technical capacity to translate his vision into painterly language. If to his death he still had not achieved full realization in his work, he had the advantage of the stability of an absolute. This is denied to Giacometti. The result of his dialogue with material and model has led, true, to greater knowledge, to greater technical ability, but not towards certainty.

In 1935 Giacometti thought to do a few studies from nature, "just enough to understand the construction of a head, of a whole figure,"¹ so he took a model. This study, he expected, would take two weeks; he worked with the model all day from 1935 to 1940. He writes:

Nothing was as I had imagined. A head
(I quickly abandoned figures, that would

have been too much) became for me an object completely unknown and without dimension. Twice a year I began two heads, always the same ones, never completing them, and I put my studies aside.²

From the first time that Giacometti began to do a head to his last work the mystery as to how to reproduce a head never ceased to be. At moments even late in his career he would utter with despair in his voice that he had gotten no further than he was when he began as a boy. Eventually success or failure became irrelevant quantities; all that mattered was the sensation of working. To have accomplished something was to put aside his work for the day and be able to go outside and see reality to be just a little different. This became the purpose of art to Giacometti; "even if the picture has little sense or is destroyed - I am the winner anyway. I have won for myself a new sensation, a sensation I have never known before."³

No aim is expressed here of producing pictures and sculptures which will seduce the eye with their beauty. What matters is the attempt to record whatever the artist sees; that which, wherever he looks, astonishes and surprises him, though he may not know exactly what it is he sees. "I have the impression or illusion", he writes, "that I am making progress every day. This is what stimulates me, as if one should at last get to the point of understanding the secret of life."⁴ But always the achievement is the ropewalkers: one more miniscule step along the dreary road of the possible.

But, he says, "One continues, knowing very well that the nearest one gets to the 'thing', the further it moves away. The distance between me and the model tends to grow steadily; the nearer one gets, the further the thing moves away. It is an endless quest."⁵

An art which proposes to search for the "secret of life is neither casual nor easy. On the contrary, if we believe the artist when he pronounces a purpose which normally would be deemed both pretentious and presumptuous - and we believe Giacometti and grant his qualifications to devote himself to so profound a quest - then we are confronted with an art so serious and committed that it takes precedence over all else in the artist's life and becomes his life. To paint and sculpt and to live blend into a single action. Again to quote Giacometti:

In a way it is rather abnormal instead of living to spend one's time trying to copy a head, every evening to confine a person to a chair and to do so for five years, trying to copy a person without succeeding, and to continue. This is no activity one could call exactly normal, is it? One has to belong to a certain society for it to be even tolerated, for in others it could not be tolerated. It is an activity which is of no use to society as a whole. It is a purely individual satisfaction. In fact, as such completely egotistical and thus displeasing. Any work of art is completed completely for nothing. All time passes, so do all the geniuses, all the work, and in the end, seen against the Absolute, for nothing. Were it not for that immediate sensation in the present that one experiences as one tries to apprehend reality. The adventure, the great adventure is every day to see something new emerge in the same

face, and this is greater than any journey around the world.⁶

Like the young Cézanne, Giacometti from the beginning vitalizes his work with strong, violent personal emotions and desires. But Cézanne was to discover that only by ridding his art of its blunt personal intensity, and of his romanticism and love of the impressive and exuberant - in order to find a quiet impersonal and classical style - could he ever realize in his art that vision which he had developed of the unity and oneness of nature. In his later work the artist's personality is withdrawn completely from his painting, even from the human body so that it too becomes merely a form within the eternity of the natural setting. Giacometti, on the other hand, shows no desire to depersonalize his art, it is an emotional art to the end. Late in his career he points to a sculpture of a dog. "That is me," he says. "One day I saw myself in the street just like that. I was the dog."⁷ Unlike Cézanne whose art eventually became subjected to an external impersonal metaphysical law, Giacometti continues to see art as a personal quest. His relation to his model is always a relation between subjects; and subjects can only be understood through the artist's self; and the self in turn is only defined in terms of relations to the other, which is the artist's model. Art consequently becomes a means for the search for self. The artist's own statement:

Yes certainly, I do pictures and sculptures. I always did, from the first time I drew or painted, to denounce reality, to defend myself, to support myself, to grow stronger in order to better defend myself, to strike more forcefully, to take a hold, in all fields and in all directions to gain as much ground as possible, to protect myself against hunger, cold, death, to be as free as possible, free - with the means today which appear to me most suited - to try to understand better, to understand better so as to be freer, freer to the fullest; to squander my talent to fully exert myself in my creative work, to experience adventure, to discover new realms, to fight my battle - for fun? for the thrill? - a battle for the pleasure of losing or winning.⁸

Giacometti's consistent frustration when trying to understand his model and in achieving its 'likeness', as he calls it, in material, and the depth of his personal and emotional involvement are borne out by the history of his early years. Our interest here, however, is in his art in its maturest expression, which obviates the need, if within the context of this paper only, to be overly obsessed with rooting out the actual facts of his history. Our emphasis on his mature spiritual attitude directs our attention more towards the artist's interpretation of his past.

The primary source of biographical details is the autobiographical letter written to Pierre Matisse in 1948. If approaching the letter with a scientifically historical attitude we would hesitate more than a moment before accepting its contents as fact. Written in retrospect, from the point of view of Giacometti's spiritual and artistic development in 1948 the letter is undoubtedly an ordering of his

experiences seen from his present position and interpreted accordingly. A historian interested to establish biographical detail from which to draw precise conclusions as to the development of and influence upon the artist's style would have to conduct more direct studies. Nevertheless there are important truths contained in a document which indicates the artist's attitude towards his direction and achievement at the moment of writing. The experiences selected and the way in which they are remembered are those which loom important to the artist as a consequence of his present accomplishments. And 1948 was a significant moment in Giacometti's career; he had by then become patently aware of the impossible demands which his art was making.

We learn from the letter to Pierre Matisse⁹ that from the very beginning Giacometti found it difficult to record what he saw. During his stay in Rome in the very early twenties he had begun two busts. After six years of doing busts from life, at home, and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the Ecole des Arts-et-Métiers, both in Geneva, after having for as long copied paintings and sculpture from reproductions, Tintoretto's in Venice, Giotto's in Padua, Cimabue's in Assisi, and many more, suddenly now, he recalls; "for the first time I could not find my way. I was lost, everything escaped me, the head of the model before me became a cloud, vague and undefined." The difficulty did not in the least subside when Giacometti entered Bourdelle's studio at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière in Paris. It became impossible to grasp the

entire figure; "we were much too close to the model, and if one began on a detail, a heel, the nose, there was no hope of ever achieving the whole." Nor, he found, was it any simpler to analyze a detail for here everything as well was lost as the form dissolved "into granules moving over a deep black void; the distance between one wing of the nose and the other is like the Sahara, without end, nothing to fix one's gaze upon, everything escapes."

It is not to be supposed that Giacometti's difficulty during these years can be traced to technical incompetence. It was not inability to draw or shape with his hands that hindered his translating what he saw of the model onto paper or into sculpture. Years of copying the masters, of learning how Raphael or Tintoretto or Rubens or Ingres would depict the human body should have served as adequate apprenticeship to provide him with skill for depicting the model as had done these, the greatest of his predecessors. It was precisely here, however, that the difficulty lay. Giacometti had discovered the divorce between classical presentation and real perception. The former could only be a partial image of reality, and that is false; and a total expression of reality would be humanly impossible. Total realism too, consequently, is impossible.

Faced with the dilemma of wanting to record totally and faithfully his perception and yet realizing that such an act is impossible the artist, according to Dupin, is left with two alternatives, diametrically opposed: The first is

"to cast one's lot with the impossible, turn one's back on reality and substitute the imaginary as a field of experience; the other ... is an absurd and heroic obstinacy in the pursuit of that unseizable reality."¹⁰ On Beckett's scale then alternatives would both fall within the realm of the possible if on two different planes, and Dupin overlooks the other alternative of turning to the impossible and admitting one's failure before it. The 1920's however, were not a period when the latter would have occurred as a solution. Futurism, Dada and Surrealism may have been destructive and anti-art but they were not resigned or defeatist. Their destruction rose from hate against a dead tradition; but out of their hate grew vitality and resolution, and confidence that life could be built anew. It was the avowed aim of Breton to change the world. One could be hard put to discover a work of art from the 1920's in France comparable in spirit to Waiting for Godot.

So when Giacometti in the mid-twenties did choose the first of the alternatives proposed by Dupin and turned from working from the model and reality to the mind and the imagination, it was out of defeat that he did so; but only out of defeat in the realm of the exterior world. It is impossible that a young artist in Paris in the early twenties should not have been infused with some of the vigor with which Breton, Aragon and Soupault in their journal La Révolution Surréaliste had embraced the world of the irrational, imaginary and fantastic turns of mind. This newly discovered realm of

investigation which centered on the unconscious was a vessel from which would be drawn new and exciting truths about the nature and existence of man which would embrace the real to yield the new absolute knowledge of the surreal. We can surmise that it was with a spirit of optimism and enthusiasm that Giacometti turned to the imaginary, hopeful of new territory to infuse his art with truths that reality had withheld.

Even so, the rejection of the real was only done with reluctance. While turning from directly copying the model he still hoped to realize a little of what he had seen in his studies of it so "as a last resort"¹¹ he began to work from memory. "I tried to do what I could to avoid this catastrophe." Working in terms of mental conception led to flirtation with current styles, Brancusi and particularly Cubism ("one necessarily had to touch it") and the results he considers the closest he had come to his visions of reality. Still the vision was fragmentary ("I still lacked a sense of the whole") and the human body and face remained in the foreground throughout his ten years in Babylonian captivity, as he described it. Rather than a release, Giacometti's excursion into Surrealism seems to have been a period of imprisonment. Dupin describes some of the quality of the years (though this of course is interpretation through hindsight.)

When he evokes the human face, and this is almost always the case, it is to tell passionately again and again his powerlessness to attain it. A defeatist attitude, with which he tries to persuade himself to renounce reality without really breaking with it, but which is still preparing unconsciously, deep within him, to return to the visible world.¹²

In the first ten years his work is highly fraught with violence and emotional tension. The undulating gentle wave-like horizontals of Femme Couchée Qui Rêve are stabbed by three slender prongs. Homme et Femme suspends us in that infinitesimal fraction of a moment before a catastrophic act of violence. In Main Prise a twist of the handle will tear the thumb from the hand, and in Fleur en Danger the bow is bent, the string taut, triggered for release to shear the blossom from its stem. In Femme Egorgée the violence has happened and the woman writhes in her death throes. The sculptures are full of irresolvable fear for in them the violence is rushed to a climax where the impending horror is held fixed, for eternity a hovering threat.

Fear and danger are transformed into an ominous non-directed anguish, quiet and inexplicable, in Projet pour une place where six forms share a mutual isolation in isolation; and in Circuit in which a ball must travel in its groove, for an eternity separated from its resting place. The mystery of these objects and of L'objet invisible is a premonition of the feeling which he will infuse into his post-war sculptures.

However these objects may be admired as aesthetic objects, Giacometti in the end found them unsatisfactory. As a

constructor he was satisfied by the search for abstract harmonies and flawless structures; as a poet of the fantastic he was absorbed by the capture of fleeting dreams and unconscious imagery and their revelation of the emotional life. Nevertheless, the disparity between these objects, which appeared more and more useless and gratuitous, and life tormented him.

I saw anew the bodies that attracted me in reality and the abstract forms which seemed to me true in sculpture but I wanted to create the former without losing the latter, very briefly put.¹³

In 1933/34 the figure begins to return. Nu and Homme Qui Marche partake of the tall slenderness of his later sculpture, but are still products of the imagination with only a tenuous suggestion of reality. Eventually he felt the need to do one or two studies from nature, "just enough to understand the construction of a head, of a whole figure" - two weeks' work he supposed, so in 1935 he took a model. The results are legend: he worked with the model all day every day for ten years.

During the last part of this ten year period, during the Occupation, Simone de Beauvoir had her first encounter with Giacometti, who recalled for her his experiences in the middle thirties.¹⁴ During two or three years he had become convinced that the Surrealist method, though it produced work which appealed to Breton and his friends, was getting him nowhere; he wanted to return to what he regarded as contemporary sculpture's real problem - "the re-creation of the human face." Breton

apparently was shocked by this assertion and exclaimed, "Everyone knows what a head is!", a remark which Giacometti in turn found somewhat shocking when, in his opinion, no one had yet succeeded in modelling or portraying a valid representation of the human countenance: "the whole thing had to be started from scratch." Giacometti was subsequently expelled from the Surrealist movement. Simone de Beauvoir continues her account:

A face, he told us, is an indivisible whole, a meaningful and expressive unity, but the inert material of the artist, whether marble, bronze, or clay is, on the contrary, capable of infinite subdivision - each little separate bit contradicts and destroys the over-all pattern by the fact of its isolation.¹⁵

The problem has been stated - "the recreation of the human face" - as have the necessary terms within which a solution must be found: the indivisible unity of the human face and the opposition of the material with which it must be re-created. For the next thirty years Giacometti will struggle with fanatical obsession to find its solution.

CHAPTER IV

Giacometti's artistic problem revolves around two concepts: The first is the act of seeing (art is a "means to see better") for what appears on the canvas must be a direct product of the artist's vision. The second is the quality of resemblance or likeness¹, which the artistic work must possess if it is to be a product of vision. Giacometti admires likeness in Laurens' sculpture because the latter arouses the same rare experience as does "la réalité vivante",² and it is by not being able to achieve likeness that Giacometti fails in his artistic pursuit. But these concepts require a more precise definition.

Giacometti speaks of likeness in reference to figures he was producing in the early forties after having returned to working from memory in order to summarize what he had learned from studying the model. "But wanting to create from memory what I had seen, to my terror the sculptures became smaller and smaller, they had a likeness only when they were small."³ The scale revolted him, so presently he set out to produce larger figures. But these as well seemed false and invariably the smaller they became the more truth they seemed to have. Later through drawing he did arrive at larger figures, but this time to his surprise "they achieved likeness only when tall and slender." Likeness, then, is not some easily determined relationship between model and sculpture or picture. It is a quality which is neither pre-determined nor pre-imagined, but

one which achieves realization as the work takes shape, and then surprises the artist with its aspects, which do not necessarily correspond to his expectations. But whatever subtleties may occur between the achievement of likeness and its source, its source is always in what the artist sees.

Likeness consequently is not expression in the sense of an attempt to convey or manifest a given emotion about the human figure. Giacometti's stripped, scarred, hollow-eyed emaciated are in no direct way mid-twentieth century counterparts of Munch's angst-ridden figures of some fifty years earlier. The relation of Giacometti's art to the exterior world is much more direct. It is a copy of what is; or, more precisely, it is the artist's vision (and this not meant in any mystical way) of what is out there beyond his sense organs - and as such it strives to resemble reality.

Giacometti, however, cannot be considered a realist. It is a small point, perhaps, but an important one, that the term "realism" has come to incorporate a certain genre of reality which often resembles reality very little. "Il s'agit toujours d'un réalisme conventionnel, qui n'est que l'académisme."⁴ Originally the realists thought truth was to omit the subjective from the reproduction of nature and describe what they saw without comment. This is how Courbet describes realism in his "Manifeste 1861."⁵ But soon the question of what exactly nature was had unavoidably to be raised

for within the next half century in painting nature came to mean a whole number of things. It could refer to the simplicity of rural or lower class life, or to that seedy part of the urban world which the average bourgeois preferred to overlook. Nature could mean the physical surface of objects and their iridescence; it could be organized and arranged into patterns or recorded in its irregularity. In the final analysis, the realists, and after them the impressionists, conceived of that part of the natural world which was the subject for art as some form of surface quality. By the time that Giacometti began to paint realism had come to mean that which is easily recognized, that which represents exterior reality in the most banal manner.

And today if asked to identify a realist representation of a woman, most people would choose a Bouguereau over a Cézanne, and most certainly over a Giacometti. In speaking of the relation between the resemblance attributed to realism and the exterior world, Giacometti says:

J'ai des amis qui prétendaient aimer Picasso, parce qu'il ne fait pas "ressemblant". Les mêmes affirmaient cependant qu'ils voyaient la réalité comme Bouguereau. Et ils voulaient absolument me faire dire que c'est la même chose pour moi. Si c'était vrai, je préférerais Bouguereau à Picasso ou à Cézanne, puisque ce qui m'intéresse dans toutes les peintures, c'est la ressemblance: ce qui me fait découvrir un peu le monde extérieur!⁶

He points out that of all the pictures he has seen, the ones which seemed most true to his sensations of reality

were certain Egyptian paintings of trees, which he too, as anyone would, thought too stylized for such a claim to be feasible until he drew copies of them. The search for likeness always pulls him back to the actual experiences of drawing, painting and sculpting, which are the only valid methods of research for seeing reality more precisely. But it is very difficult to see.

You remember the big Bathers of Cezanne, where one of the heads is almost a line off in the distance - fades to nothing? Or his portrait The Boy in the Red Waistcoat? People say the boy's arm is too long, but that's not true. On the contrary, it's very accurate, not at all exaggerated. It's just that we're so in the habit of looking at things from the view point of classical art and its idealized forms that we don't see anymore.⁷

In order to approach likeness in art it is essential to learn to see free of conventions: to see a female figure, not a Bouguereau; to see a landscape, not a Pissarro. This was the truth Giacometti discovered while working from the model in Bourdelle's studio, or earlier when under his father's direction he would draw a still life of fruit, only to discover that the image of the fruit appeared minute in spite of his efforts to draw it "life size". This peculiarity of vision which informed his work from his youth in later years would command even his way of seeing an ordinary experience. "When I am outside a cafe and see people passing on the opposite pavement, I see them very small."⁸ In 1945, after the ten years

of concentrated study of the model, his way of seeing reached a climax. For the first time he noticed a profound schism between his vision in the street and photographic or cinematic vision. Until that day he went regularly to the cinema and would emerge again into the street and notice no difference between the exterior world and what happened on the screen. One was a continuation of the other. Then one day:

au lieu de voir un personnage sur l'écran, j'ai vu des vagues taches noires qui bougeaient. J'ai regardé les voisins et, du coup, je les ai vus comme je ne les avais jamais vus. Le nouveau n'était pas ce qui s'est passé sur l'écran: c'était ceux qui étaient à côté de moi. Ce jour-là, je me souviens très exactement, en sortant boulevard du Montparnasse, d'avoir regardé le boulevard comme je ne l'avais jamais vu. Tout était autre, et la profondeur et les objets, et les couleurs, et le silence ... Tout me semblait autre, et tout à fait nouveau. ... la réalité s'est revalorisée, pour moi, du tout au tout; elle devenait l'inconnu, mais, en même temps, un inconnu merveilleux.⁹

With the realization of his transformed vision, each day he became more amazed at the isolation of things, their smallness and distance, or their size when close; how they loomed up as gigantic forms blocking his whole field of vision.

Douglas Hall would have it that Giacometti's vision is abnormal, for in normal vision the actual image on the retina is compensated for and adjusted by many different factors. In Giacometti this mechanism seems to be erratic in its behavior.¹⁰ Sartre understands Giacometti's vision in terms of

his own personal experiences when he was first subjected to normal living space after a long period of imprisonment in a concentration camp, where bodies were packed so closely together that one forgot the distinction between one's own limbs and those of a neighbor. Sartre was overcome with agoraphobia and felt lost in the deserts of space and the distance which separated him from fellow beings in so-called normal existence. Giacometti's vision consequently becomes associated with the sense of alienation and separation which is the scourge of post-war existentialist man.¹¹ These are explanations not without truth, but there is yet another way of looking at Giacometti's vision: it is, to quote Michel Leiris, seeing without "the screen of culture interposed between eye and object."¹²

The capacity for vision to let go of its conditioned habits of organizing sense perception in order to see in an unbiased manner is exemplified by a curious experience Giacometti had while Isaku Yanaihara was posing for him. During a long period of concentrated study of the model Genet one day came into the studio. Giacometti recalls that Genet looked very strange, "with such a round, very rosy face and puffed lips." Diego entered and the artist had the same feeling about him, his face was very rosy and round and his lips puffy. Suddenly he realized why. He had studied Yanaihara's face for so long that it had become a norm and for a moment he was seeing Diego and Genet as they looked to Yanaihara. "I

could see white people the way they must look to people who aren't white."¹³ This is the peculiarity of Giacometti's vision, his capacity to free his seeing from the conditioned, traditional categories, and his ability to shift his seeing to new unanticipated points of view. Such clarity of vision has necessitated the development of a rigid research procedure which, operating in an impartial frame of mind, would give equal value to the whole range of sensation. A mind conditioned by tradition, on the other hand, would tend to select from sensation that which would reinforce presently existing patterns of perception. To postulate for Giacometti a vision of total purity, however, is not the whole story.

We notice, for instance, the similarity of Giacometti's attenuated sculptures to the tall, slender, graceful figures of Dahomey or Etruscia; and the similarity in rigidity of pose and directness of gaze to the Kuro figures of Archaic Greece.¹⁴ At times it is as if the five or six centuries of Renaissance traditional conceptualization and form as nurtured in Classical Greece has been stripped away to allow Giacometti to see man as he was seen by archaic and primitive man. Perhaps what we have conventionally looked at as style and abstraction were really clearer ways of seeing. Giacometti testifies to something of the sort when he says, "What I love in the past is exactly what is most alike to what I see, to my way of seeing, Chaldean sculpture, for instance; and I prefer a thousand times Byzantine to Western painting."¹⁵ At first glance, there is a

contradiction here. Likeness results from the artist's vision, which is ordinary perception sharpened to absolute purity, free of tradition and preconception. Yet the art which is most like what Giacometti sees, Egyptian, Chaldean, Archaic, etc. are "styles" in art history, and style implies the negation of ordinary perception in favor of arbitrary invention, subjective imagination and non-imitative creation. Giacometti solves the dilemma nicely. On a tour of the Louvre with the artist, Pierre Schneider remarks that they are coming to the 'grandes machines' of David, Gros and company. "One step further, and we shall be with realism. You must be happy." "Realism is balderdash ...", replies Giacometti. "Those who came closest to the vision one has of things are those which art history calls the 'great styles.'" It is the works of the past which generally are considered most distant from realism that he regards as closest to it. Anyone of us resembles a sculpture from Egypt or the exotic art of Africa and Oceania more than anything done since. Yet people like the former because they consider them wholly invented and because these works negate the external world, the banal view of reality, whereas they despise an academic Graeco-Roman head because it is 'life-like.' Giacometti's reasons for preferring ancient and primitive art over a 'conventional' head are just the opposite:

The most faithful 'vision' is that provided by 'style'.¹⁶ Of course, nobody ever plans a style. For the Egyptians, this would have been meaningless. They translated their vision of reality

as closely as possible. For them it was a religious necessity. It was a matter of creating doubles as near as possible to human beings. There exists an ancient text, a kind of poem, which talks about sculptures so true that they seem living and that they are able to frighten those who see them. The 'style' in them is revealed to us by another vision. Egypt has become a 'style' in our eyes because we see differently. But for them ...there could only be one clear vision of the world: their own. The same was true for pre-historic, Romanesque, and Polynesian artists. They had no choice. Only one valid vision of things was available: their own. But to-day we know all the possible visions and we call these visions 'styles' once they are arrested in time and space.¹⁷

Style, consequently, is considered a direct result of sharpness and fidelity of vision. Even so, Giacometti admits, if he were to succeed in making a head somewhat as he sees it, it would obligatorily look 'stylish' in the eyes of other people. People look at his work and believe it something invented; the real reason that they look is that his work comes close to realizing his vision. On the other hand, "a realistic picture is a picture too unreal to become 'stylish.' The trouble with it is that it doesn't look like anything."¹⁸

Likeness in Giacometti's terms refers to a much profounder resemblance than that conveyed by realism. Likeness results from true seeing, but not from pure sensation, if by sensation is meant the totality of uncensored sense impressions which stimulate the eye. Seeing as a relevant part of experience can never refer to some sort of neutral perception, some purely physical reaction within the socket of the eye.

It has no similarity with the instantaneous, mechanical objectivity of the camera, for the camera lens does not register distance, it does not select, it only captures a myriad of undifferentiated information and cannot convey any of the quality of inner human experience. The eye, on the other hand, sees under the direction of the brain. Seeing is informed by the whole depth of phenomena of human experience. It is as much a mental activity as it is a physical one because the brain sorts out, selects and directs the data of perception which is transmitted from the eyes. The human eye will always see through a veil of controlling habits so that it tends to know what it sees as it sees. It has been conditioned in perception by the expectations of patterns set by past experience. This is why we see a woman as a Bouguereau and a landscape as a Pissarro. We are, so to speak, blinded by knowledge.

Giacometti would seek to unblind vision and pull the veil of preconception from in front of our eyes. His aim, however, is not pure or undifferentiated vision, for this is inherently impossible by the very nature of human perception. Furthermore, to render vision neutral would be to dehumanize it, and to strip it of whatever is relevant and interesting to art. Giacometti is not interested in doing scientific research into the nature of the world. What he searches for is knowledge, as he says, of the "secret of life"; and that is not a

disinterested search.

Man is not interested in sense impressions, except in so far as they can be interpreted in terms of his concepts about the external and internal worlds which survival necessitates that he develop. These concepts, which are shaped by tradition, culture and personal experience, must not be allowed to solidify and become absolute. The human mind has the capacity to set up patterns of conditioned attitudes and reactions which facilitate living, and at the same time maintain a critical attitude towards these patterns, subjecting them to constant reinterpretation according to the incessant bombardment of new sense impressions. Vigilant exercise of this capacity allows a continuous revaluation and reorganization of the whole fabric of experience and attitudes toward the external and internal life and prevents mental patterns from conditioning themselves into rigor mortis. Man's vision, consequently, will always express itself in terms of an organization of attitudes understood in terms of the most recent revelations of experience. By maintaining his mind on constant alert, freely receptive to new impressions, man escapes from being lulled to sleep by yesterday's conceptions, which are today's clichés. This is true vision, as Giacometti envisages it: manifested in the courage to "without a second's hesitation to efface the work of the day before because", says he, "everyday I feel I see further ... And if I see more clearly afterwards, if as I go out I see reality just to be a little

different, then ... I am the winner."¹⁹ Likeness is a product of true vision and style is the historical denotation for likeness as it was seen through the temperaments of other ages.

As a postscript to this chapter, it is interesting to note how little Cézanne's concept of artistic vision differs from Giacometti's. Gauss quotes Venturi's argument that Cézanne's theory lets "vision appear in its sensible purity"²⁰ and his refutation of Venturi is essentially a reiteration of the discussion of vision in relation to Giacometti in this chapter. Whatever is the sensible purity of visual perception? There is no absolute resemblance between things as they are and the way in which we see them. "The appearance of objects depends on the total visual field in which they are found and upon the definite attitudes and experiences, in short, upon the total organization of the observer."²¹

Cézanne, too, had reacted to realism, dissociating himself from Manet and the impressionists because he was dissatisfied with the facility and superficiality of their work. As Giacometti was to do a half century later, Cézanne devoted his art to the discovery and elaboration of a deeper truth as he discovered it in nature, in contrast to what convention regarded as true. Whatever it be, an apple, a head, a mountain,

"Je pars neutre", he said, abstracting himself from all pre-conceived ideas, wishing to render his vision more precisely.

In contrast to the facile surface characteristics of impressionism, Cézanne sought to discover something deeper and more absolute in the exterior world. The result of these researches towards a new conception of the nature of things was the revelation of an unchangeable interrelationship and unity in nature on which the very existence of things depended: "The permanent and harmonious disposition of objects and space governed by their being together."²³ This was an intellectual concept, a vision ordered according to certain religious, metaphysical and scientific precepts available to Cézanne at the end of the nineteenth century. By taking the visual discoveries of the impressionists and imposing on them his intellectual ordering, he discovered a new way of seeing. There is revealed here a combination of visual innocence and intellectual sophistication at work which has real relevance to the art of Giacometti.

CHAPTER V

Cézanne's and Giacometti's comparable devotion to vision free from preconceptions and to a search for absolute truth also suggests a similarity in actual working procedure. Both, in fact, approach art in a very scientific manner.

Cézanne sought to establish from nature a principle derived, not from mere perception of its accidental qualities, but from the primary qualities of nature, which would be to art what mathematics is to physics. These qualities, as his vision detected them, were volumes and the recessive juxtaposition of planes as given linear and aerial perspective: he decided to treat nature "by the cylinder, the sphere and the cone."¹ The formulation of an intellectual principle, however, did not result in his retreat to the studio to paint landscapes out of his imagination and according to his principles. If he approached his sensations from a predetermined point of view, he worked like a scientist with a hypothesis. Because of the overwhelming diversity of nature it was essential that the artist, like the scientist, approach his sensations according to some ordering principle. If Cézanne posited for nature a wholeness, and a standing together of objects within it in a permanent unity, this hypothesis was tested by continuous reference to nature. With obsession, he referred time and again to the same subject, whether it was Madame Cézanne or Mont Sainte-Victoire.

Giacometti's methods, as we shall see, are as rigid. A brief discussion of his precise working procedures will lead to an analysis of the basic elements of his art, which are distance and separation. These characteristics are basic to the works not only as physical objects, but as presences which we approach on an emotional and psychological level. The fundamental elements of distance and separation in Giacometti's works ultimately explain the impasse which his art has reached.

Giacometti's method of working is one of experimentation, drawing of conclusions, questioning, a reforming of conclusions and so on through the cycle ad infinitum. This process applies not only in the creation of each individual work, but as well to his lifetime development as an artist. His early years at Bourdelle's studio were ones of experimentation in terms of working directly from the model. And if he got carried away in his surrealist activities, these at least began as a period of resort to memory in order to formulate a little of what he had seen. In 1935, to regain touch with reality, he returned to direct study, but the forties again required a period of summation and formulation of conclusions. This was the period of the tiny figures which realized likeness only as they disappeared into dust. These were found to be unsatisfactory and further study was required. Thus alternating between direct study and memory and as well

between painting, sculpture and drawing, he continued a relentless search for likeness, turning to whichever method or medium was necessary to solve the problem on hand.

On another level, each picture and each sculpture is a study which could go on for an indeterminate time-period of questioning and requestioning his vision of the model; destroying and beginning afresh each time a new insight into the realization of his vision is discovered; an insight which, in turn, will lead to sharper and preciser seeing, and then to destruction and requestioning and so on.

It could be claimed that Giacometti is dull in his constant return over the last thirty years to the same few problems, the same models, the same devices, "reapplying himself with remarkable patience and force to an imagery already familiar and to artistic devices long established."² Annette, Caroline, the artist's mother, Diego, almost exclusively have been his models during the three decades, with a few still lifes and some landscapes interspersed here and there. A list of subjects to be complete would be very short, and a few predominate almost to exclusion: head or bust, seated figure, standing figure, plus groups and the walking figure. And even with these radical restrictions, the degree of reduction of the subject matter itself is remarkable. The figures stand rigidly at attention, face front, gestureless, except for the gaze of their eyes; the seated figures are placed on a stool in frontal pose, legs crossed, hands in lap.

In the paintings the figure is placed rigidly and symmetrically in the centre; background and setting are given only cursory treatment, light and color are irrelevant. Few artists have so violently reduced their human figures. Only Samuel Beckett comes to mind. His characters are stripped of all occasion, of place, of time, of memory or belief or knowledge, even of physical body; reduced to whatever it be, mind or soul, which is the final source of existence.

Giacometti's sitters have testified to the precision with which he approached even his very restricted and meagre subject matter. Jean Genet, James Lord and Isaku Yanaihara all report how his preparations for a sitting were as rigid as if he were setting up an elaborate, precisely controlled scientific experiment. From Yanaihara's journal:

La place de la chaise est marquée sure le plancher a la peinture rouge. Cela le rend très nerveux. Quand je pose sur la chaise que j'ai placée soigneusement à la place marquée, il me demande: "Etes-vous sur d'être à la bonne place?" Je lui assure que oui, mais en vain; inquiet, il se lève pour venir vérifier lui-même la position de la chaise. ...Il n'y a pas que la place de la chaise qui le rende nerveux. La hauteur de sa toile le tourmente aussi toujours. Pour la chaise, il suffit de respecter la marque peinte, mais la hauteur de la toile n'est pas fixée a l'avance. Car la hauteur "juste" varie selon le progrès du travail. On peut ajuster la hauteur du chevalet à plusieurs niveaux, mais Giacometti n'étant pas satisfait de ces hauteurs approximatives, il a placé sous la toile un peu de l'argile dont il se sert pour la sculpture. Au cours de son travail, s'il trouve fausse la hauteur de la toile, il ajoute ou retire un peu de cette argile. La distance qui sépare le peintre du modèle étant

fixe par la place intangible de la chaise, il ne peut peindre son modèle que dans une certaine position et à une certaine dimension, s'il veut le peindre exactement comme il le voit. Par conséquent le changement de position de la toile détermine le changement de l'espace autour du portrait. Le changement des caractères du visage provoque le changement de l'espace qui l'entoure et nécessite le changement de la hauteur de la toile. Mais comment trouver la hauteur "juste"?³

In order to isolate the essential truths in his vision of the exterior world, Giacometti has organized the strictest working procedures and has reduced his subject matter to the barest minimum. Within this situation, with work commenced, he establishes a remarkably close identity with his model. Lord describes how one day the artist's foot accidentally struck the catch which holds the easel shelf at the proper level so that it fell a foot or two. "Oh excuse me!" he said as if he had apologized for causing the model to fall, rather than the painting. "That's exactly what I did feel," he replied to Lord's observation.⁴

The anecdote indicates Giacometti's feelings towards his work in relation to the model. In a sense, he differentiates little between the two. If his physical distance from the model and the figure on the canvas differs, his visual distance from them and their size are the same. The size of the figure on the canvas corresponds to the size of the image at the end of the visual cone running between Giacometti's eyes and the model. Normal vision would correct

the retinal image so that the distant head would not be perceived small, but lifesize and distant. But Giacometti is freed from the normal conceptual adjustment and his copy of the head on canvas refers to the strictly visible. This capacity to see without preconception also explains the steep perspective in many of his paintings. This is particularly emphasized in those done from direct study and causes the more distant head to seem disproportionately small and the nearby body and legs to loom up large in contrast. In explanation, Giacometti points out that among sculptures produced by early civilizations and prehistoric man, there is a fairly common size for a figure and for a head and this is very small. "I think this was purely and simply the size which instinctively was to hand - the size one really sees things. With later developments, vision got transformed by the mind into concept. I can do your head life-size because I know it's life size."⁵

Inherent in seeing as precisely and accurately as possible is the realization that all seeing is done at a distance: A head is not seen life-size because it is seen across the distance that separates it from the artist. Experience reminds us of the significance of this fact, for the object seen may alter its aspect entirely with a change in distance. At two steps a figure looms up before us and we have no concept of the totality or unity of its forms; we are too overwhelmed by the multiplicity of detail. At a great distance

the details become absorbed into the whole and the greater the distance the more the details disappear, until eventually the object itself vanishes into a tiny, unidentifiable speck. Vision performed with scientific precision cannot overlook this simple truth. Consequently, art, if it wishes to reproduce what is seen, must incorporate into its image the distance between artist and model. Painting which has always been confronted with the problem of representing three dimensions on a two-dimensional surface has long been aware of this. The distance between the figures in a painting and the eyes of the observer never changes whether we see the painting from one foot or twenty feet away. This distance is totally imaginary but an integral part of the painting.

The same truth has not been recognized by sculpture, as Sartre explains,⁶ for sculptors have always worked in three-dimensional space. But whereas the product, the sculptured figure, was imaginary, they thought they were working with real dimensions. The result, due to the confusion of real and imaginary space, is that sculptors produced the model as over there instead of the model seen from here, ten feet away. The result gives rise to constant confusion between reality and illusion. For if the sculptor produces here the model as it is over there, rather than as he sees it from here, then it must conform to all the visual experience which the model yields. Sartre: "Ten steps away from her, I form a

certain image of a nude woman, if I approach and look at her at close range, I no longer recognize her; the craters, crevices, cracks, the rough, black herbs, the greasy streaks, the lunar orography in its entirety simply cannot be the smooth, fresh skin I was admiring from a distance."⁷ If the sculptor is to imitate the model as it is over there, he would have to incorporate its appearances at all distances - an impossible task. Instead, the statue resembles neither what the model is nor what the sculptor sees, but a contradictory compromise between the two, presenting certain details not visible from so far away as if they did exist and neglecting others that do exist as if they were unseen. The result is a construction according to what is a conventionally acceptable figure. To extricate himself from this muddle, Giacometti found it necessary to restrict himself to one distance - the absolute distance of painting, which is an imaginary, indivisible space always separating the viewer from the sculpture by the same distance that the sculptor was separated from the model.

The closer one approaches a classical statue, the more the details are revealed until when close enough the statue can meaningfully be examined part by part in terms of the details. The experience when confronted by one of Giacometti's figures is quite different. At a certain distance from Venice Woman VIII, the eye follows sensitively the curvature of the breasts, the narrow intake of the waist, broadening gently into the bulge of the stomach below, the shape of hips and thighs;

even facial features and bone structure are imagined.⁸

Approaching the figure, however, does not bring it into sharper focus, revealing details ready for analysis. Instead, everything, characteristics of face and body disappears, leaving only great hollows and ridges of squeezed plaster or their bronze equivalent. The original absolute distance between artist and model rigidly controls our perception of the statue.

Distance implies depth in space, but in sculpture depth is inherently understood for the object dealt with is three-dimensional. It is in painting consequently that Giacometti's obsession with depth can most decisively be observed. Interestingly, his preoccupation with space on the two-dimensional surface of the canvas, so contrary to most contemporary trends in painting, can be traced back to Cezanne, who as well is given credit for having initiated the realization that the canvas is a flat plane and not a window to look through. In the painting of Annette, 1951⁹ the double frame is the first indication that we are looking through into a space behind the canvas. Next, a perspective system is vaguely suggested by diagonals running from the bottom corners of the picture towards the rear corner of the studio. In the triangular space thus depicted Annette is seated on a chair very close to the edge of the frame. She is seen in very steep perspective; her head is a small concentrated sphere deep in space whereas her legs and feet are large and very close. There is some ambiguity in the

latter, however, for her feet, which should be touching the inner frame of the picture, have been demolished with those large grey brush strokes that he uses to 'undo' what he has previously finished. Perhaps the painting of those feet was an insoluble problem. It seems that they would protrude out towards one, very close, but where would they go? The legs of the chair seem as well to rest on the very edge of the frame. The sensation of looking at Annette is not unlike seeing someone through a reversed pair of thick eyeglasses or a small telescope. The further away an object is the smaller it becomes and the vaster the space in which it exists. Annette's corner of the studio is tiny but so empty that she is immeasurably separated from the clutter of objects lining the walls. Volumes of space lie behind and around her. And as the eye moves away from the centre of her body, the dashing quick lines which define her open up and mingle with the space around her. This grey-green liquid space which floods the room, freezing the objects eternally into their place, penetrates and circulates the configurations of her body. She is not set against the objects and walls of the studio, but is suspended in the middle of its space.

Further insights into Giacometti's methods and artistic language are revealed via a close-up: a drawing of a Head, 1961¹⁰. Here there is no time to linger over the details of facial features or follow their configuration in terms of delicately drawn contours. Instead, rapid, almost scribbled, lines in an instant seem to capture the wholeness of the face. Through an

accumulation of swift strokes of the pencil the face becomes denser and denser until it seems a tightly wound mass. But again space and boundary intermingle so that the head seems suspended in the infinite void of the white paper. It partakes of the space around it but is a total to itself, absolute and inviolable.

Via this image of scribbled, circling lines, each of which cancels the importance of the others so that no single line serves as a defining contour but is subordinated to the total impression, Giacometti begins to re-create a head as he sees it in its wholeness. The details too, however, enchant him - the eye in the face or the moss on a tree. "Yet no more than the whole for how to differentiate between the detail and the whole? It is the details that form the whole ... determine the beauty of the form."¹¹

He continues:

When I see a head from very far, I have the impression of a sphere. When I see it from very close, it ceases to be a sphere and becomes extremely complex in depth. One enters into a being. Everything seems transparent, one sees through a skeleton. The main insurmountable obstacle is to grasp the whole as well as what one might call the details.¹²

The emotional implications of Giacometti's art which arise from the dramatic confrontation of artist and model must not be forgotten in this context. Giacometti is never merely an objective observer and would disdain to represent a head as

an Arcimboldi archipelago of differentiated parts. A head is not the addition of two eyes, two ears, a mouth, a chin, cheeks, forehead etc., but a synogy of these features. A face will always be a whole for man is a single unified being. A return to the drawing discussed above reveals a head with all the facial characteristics, but they are only ambiguously described and lack, for instance, the clarity and definition of contour of an Ingres portrait. The criss-cross of lines interact to shape the parts of the face but the lines do not stop after performing the function of describing an eye but run on to mingle with the whole of the face.

Unity, however, cannot exist independently of an organizing factor. In Giacometti this factor is aliveness, for what he is confronting is a living being. Without life the facial features would be entities unto themselves aggregated into an inexplicable union. This is why the focus of a Giacometti head is always on the eyes, the sources of beauty and life.

Therefore I think of nothing but the eyes!
In a sculpture one should render the head
and the body as well as the ground on which
it stands, then one would also have space
and the possibility of putting into it
everything one wants. Yes, to sculpt all
this it would suffice the eyes.¹³

In the drawing, the lines which shape the face are lines of force concentrating their energy, not on describing the curl of the lips, the upturn of the nose, the wrinkles of

the forehead, but on emphasizing the eyes whose gaze is eternally trained upon us. It is an intent, questioning, sad, uncomprehending, silent gaze which cannot be interpreted, much less penetrated. Nevertheless, it is the essence of the gaze of those eyes which really defines our relationship to the figure. This is the meaning of Giacometti's art, this gaze which creates between us and it an impenetrable distance and separation which can never be closed.

The analysis of the elements of Giacometti's style has been cursory and confined to the figurative work, with no adequate distinctions made of the different parts that drawing, painting and sculpture may play in the development of his art. Interest instead has been centered on extricating the basic and shared characteristics of his work. Those predominant characteristics, in summary, are distance and separation. The figure re-created is posed rigidly and symmetrically, tense but gestureless, making no physical contact outside itself. If sculpted, its human characteristics vanish when approached; if painted, the spectator is separated from it by double sets of frames and a thick, hazy atmosphere, the essence of inertia. Whatever the medium, the figure is isolated in an impenetrable space whose solitude could not be broken. The one source of contact, the gaze, which concentrates the life of the figure,

stares directly out but sees nothing. It is a non-expressive stare, empty and self-directed.

The quality of distance, as revealed by a vision which has freed itself from tradition and sees small, expresses itself doubly in Giacometti's art. Purely in the act of being an artist, Giacometti develops the technical means of rendering in paint or plaster the physical depth and distance which separated him from other objects and beings. The experience, however, is valid as well on an emotional level. The empty gaze of the eyes embodies the psychologically and spiritually perceived distance which also will divorce him eternally from intimate contact with fellow beings. The artist may speak specifically in terms of the description of physical reality as rendered by vision, but art is always a corner of nature seen through a temperament, and distance and separation are elements of human relationships particularly experienced in the mid-twentieth century. And this experience is inherent both in the impenetrable psychological space created by the gaze and in the impenetrable material space which separated the viewer physically from the figures. Hence both levels of interpretation coalesce in Giacometti's art: that which originated in physical experience as recorded by the senses, and that which originated in psychological and spiritual experience.

The double interpretation is right because distance has no meaning outside human relations. Whatever separates a stone

from a stone or a tree from another tree has none of the qualities that separate men. For man, however, the spiritual may be experienced as well on the physical level, though it may take a strong, sensitive intelligence to perceive the mingling of the two levels of experience. Distance, however, as a total experience is part of the sensibility of the post-war European milieu. It is the decisive element in the feelings of alienation and estrangement which have been experienced in many forms by sensitive men throughout history, but which only in this century has become an increasingly shared experience, almost an everyday fact.

M. Dupin speaks of the two aspects of Giacometti's art: the technical aspect, with which only the artist is concerned and to which he tends to confine his comments, perhaps taking the other aspect for granted; and the emotional drama which is expressed via the technical and which primarily fascinates the spectator. This distinction is, of course, purely academic for the two aspects are mutually interdependent, woven together inseparably in the finished product. It is the coexistence, however, of the two elements in Giacometti's art which gives relevance to the ideological criticism of the European existentialists (not overlooking, of course, their pitfalls) and makes it an essential adjunct to purely formal criticism. It is perhaps a fault even to suggest that the two levels of criticism are distinguishable.

It is when considering the intermingling of the technical

and the dramatic elements in Giacometti's art that there emerges an understanding of the anguish which confronts him because his work is incapable of completion and because what he has achieved is insignificant in comparison to what is left undone. The artist's problem in facing a collection of objects, a landscape or a human figure, at least in Giacometti's terms, is to depict with utmost fidelity what he sees. But his vision, as we have determined, is more than a mere reference to sensual perception, it is the culmination of a lifetime's experience and attitudes which critically organize the sensory facts. Giacometti's organization is particularly surprising because his sensibility is the effect of contemporary awareness, stripped of all conventions from the past which experience has proven false or outmoded. In order to translate the most relevant aspects of his experience in terms of his sensibility when re-creating the model, he has stripped his art of all incidentals and of all the accidents of human activity to be free to concentrate on the essential element of human confrontation. He is left with distance, separation, alienation; all qualities which will frustrate him in ever achieving a total rendering of the human figure. To complete a figure Giacometti must get closer and closer, study in detail and understand, whether it is body, mind or soul. But modern experience teaches that so total a confrontation is forever denied, not only to the artist but also to every contemporary man. Man instead will be isolated within his own space, impenetrable by others, inescapable for himself,

confined in his solitude.

In mid-century philosophical thought there is no place for certainty. There can only be questioning and probing into the world of experience with little hope of securing certainty or knowledge. Such is the order of Giacometti's artistic quest, and the isolation and alienation of his figures betray the hesitancy and tentativeness of his answers. Contemporary sensibility denies an anchor to which man can attach his values and without such an anchor there can be no knowledge. Giacometti speaks the truth when he complains that he has achieved nothing since as a boy he did his first bust. Regardless of what else he may have achieved, if it is truth and knowledge he seeks about the human figure, he has not gone far towards defining it. Inevitably he will always feel an unbridgeable gap lying between ideal knowledge and the achievable knowledge allowed by his vision when subjected to contemporary standards of self-criticism. The image of the acrobat is indeed appropriate.

CHAPTER VI

The dilemma faced by an artist like Giacometti for whom art is a quest for knowledge is but one aspect of the finitude facing man in all his areas of knowledge. Never has an age been so self-conscious and self-analytical as ours. The consequence has been a demolition of a whole series of absolutes which in past ages had acted as foundations on which man could base his religious, philosophical and social structures. The constant self-questioning resulted eventually, not in greater certainty and assurance, but in man becoming aware of the fragility and contingency of human life, and of the impotence of reason in face of actual experience. Man came to feel solitary and unsheltered as never before in a universe whose pervasive character became denoted as 'Nothingness.'

During the Enlightenment and most of the nineteenth century man's horizons seemed without limit. Today, on the other hand, even what had been the ever-widening inclusive system of science is confronted with human finitude. Of the methods of investigation and systems of thought on which man had relied in his quest for knowledge reason was one of the first to go. Over a century and a half ago Kant showed that reason itself was subject to ineluctable limits. A century later psychology discovered the irrational, a most awkward obstacle to the use of reason, which reason with its own limitations could not circumvent. Kant's conclusions, which the nineteenth

century positivists managed to overlook, were caught up to by science in the twentieth century. Heisenberg's Principle of Indeterminacy, Bohr's Principle of Complementarity, Godel's pronouncement that mathematics contains insoluble problems so that it can never be formalized into a complete system: all are evidence that the most advanced of Western sciences, mathematics and physics, have become paradoxical. They have arrived at a state where they breed paradoxes for reason itself. If mathematics cannot attain complete systematization in mathematics, it is not likely to reach it anywhere.

The dissolution of certainty found equal support in philosophy. Kierkegaard, a century ago, stated that no system was possible for human knowledge. Heidegger's Being and Time, a sombre, rigorous meditation on human finitude was published in 1927, the same year as Heisenberg's principle. In diverse areas of knowledge and investigation such parallel events, and only a few examples are listed here, are not meaningless coincidences but significant indication of the whole trend of the twentieth century. From their full implication emerges the image of man in a world denuded of certainties. The hyper-critical attitudes of contemporary man has led to a return to sources, to things in themselves (Husserl) towards truth freed from inherited presuppositions and empty forms.¹

Giacometti's application of the modern critical attitude has yielded the stripped down truths of his painted and sculpted figures. The denial of the empty artistic conventions

of the cultural tradition and a return to man himself, seen by an emancipated vision, has revealed the finitude of man's knowledge about other men. Man has emerged as irrevocably separated from his fellow and denied anything but the scantest knowledge about them. The artist is doomed forever from being allowed to realize his goal of knowledge about the exterior world.

It was not until Giacometti that this total denial of realization was understood. Within art criticism, however, realization as a problem first gained recognition in the nineteenth century. Balzac's short story, Le Chef d'Oeuvre Inconnu of 1832² is a tale of a painter who had collated the experiences of a lifetime of painting and for ten years laboured on his masterpiece which was to be the pinnacle of perfection in painting. When at last he believes himself to have achieved his goal he shows his picture to two younger painters who can at first see nothing but "confused masses of color and a multitude of fantastical lines that go to make a dead wall of paint."³ Only after a long perusal do they notice in a corner of the picture "a bare foot emerging from the chaos of colors, half-tints and vague shadows that made up the dim, formless fog."⁴ It dawned on them that below the coats of paint with which the painter had overlaid his canvas in search for perfection there was a woman.

Frenhofer, the painter, had devoted intense study to nature and given deep thought to painting and had subsequently

seen his main artistic problem in terms of the plasticity of solids and sfumato. He had discovered that solids were not separated by lines and had consequently suffused his outlines "with a haze of half-tints warm or golden, in such a sort that you cannot lay your finger on the exact spot where background and contours meet."⁵ If the painting seemed blurred at close-up, if one were only to step back, the objects of the picture would acquire firm shape and stand out from one another, or so he believed. But what Frenhofer saw was invisible even to other painters. He had produced neither a convincing nor a recognizable representation.

Balzac in his story had seized on the whole problem of realization - as it was understood in the nineteenth century - at its very basis and at its first appearance. The problem was one of subjective seeing, worked out in its fullest implications to the point where there no longer was an order of perception common to the artist and his audience. Balzac recognized that if the artist had become forced to fall back on subjectivity in his interpretation of the external world, of beauty and form; if there were no longer absolute rules of reference, it was possible to reach a point where contact would completely be lost between artist and audience.⁶

Whereas the critics of the time recognized the problems involved in achieving realisation, Balzac had actually called in question its aims and objects, had demonstrated the artist's technique was fundamentally subjective (which he represented as being the secret which Frenhofer had anxiously concealed from everyone

his whole life through) even the foundations on which to rest the possibility of fulfilment no longer existed; or at least that this foundation had been greatly shaken and that it would have to be established under new conditions, namely by the artists themselves who would teach the public to see in their own way (something for which there was no precedent.)⁷

The difficulty that the subjective element raised in regard to realization had not generally been a problem for the old masters. As far as they are concerned "it is still a valid axiom that their artistic intentions coincided with what they 'realized' in their works and that these intentions can be deduced only through what they realized."⁸ Rubens, for instance, thanks to an assured tradition, was quite certain of what was intended by realization and what it had to achieve. "So far as visibility, clarity and perfection of portrayal were concerned, ideas about pictures and works of art as such were fixed in his day."⁹ For Delacroix, on the other hand, this presented a problem he had to solve by himself on the basis of his own conception of the aims of his art. A critic, Jean Rousseau, in 1859 indicates how Delacroix' solutions were endangered and how they were beginning to escape the public's understanding. The pictures submitted to the Salon by Delacroix, the critic maintains, were showing signs of old age. "The time is near when, if Delacroix does not get cured, he will wear himself out linking up shades of colour without worrying what they may portray; he will paint bouquets in which one can no

longer find flowers."¹⁰

Castagnary's Philosophie du Salon de 1857 gives the most precise definition of 'realization' as it applied to the nineteenth century:

A realized work is, on the basis of the idea contained in it and its outward form, not a copy and also not a partial imitation of nature but a quite extraordinary subjective production, the outcome and the expression of a purely personal conception.

The artist materializes and concretizes his personal conception of beauty to correspond to the particular forms of his art.

Art is simply the realization of individual expression under the supreme control of a conception of beauty and by means of the infinite number of differing basic forms which nature offers.¹¹

The achievement of realization is to reach a point of confluence where come together the artist's subjective attitude towards the world around him, his conception of this attitude in terms of an idea, universal and inherent of what is beautiful, and the complete expression of these by means of the necessary, appropriate artistic style.

A vital aspect of the problem of realization is the discovery of the artistic means whereby the artist's subjective conception achieves full expression on a universal plane of communication. This is where Frenhofer failed, and in Balzac's imagination he represented the painter full of the highest aims, but incapable of transcribing convincingly to the canvas what was

in his mind and what he actually 'saw.'

Cézanne throughout his life identified himself with Frenhofer, and this precisely because the latter was an artist of intention rather than realization.¹² Zola, in the draft for L'Oeuvre, describes Cézanne as "un genie incomplet, sans la realisation entiere",¹³ and Cézanne concurred fully "that he achieved realization only in his mind, and that like Claude of the novel "he did not succeed in bringing out the remainder, in making it stand out, he did not know how to conclude or finish."¹⁴

Cézanne's conception of realization was closely bound up with nature: "In order to realize my progress there is only nature." He writes of "the obstinacy with which I pursue the realization of that part of nature which comes under our eyes and gives us the picture" and continues "I must realize in the presence of nature." Another statement gives fuller expression to what he intended to realize in art:

my sketches, my canvases, if I made any, would be merely things constructed after nature, based on the means, the feelings and the developments suggested by the model.¹⁵

Such words as 'constructed' indicates that his role as an artist was not to reproduce the appearance of nature as perceived by the observer. Nature was to serve only as a starting point upon which the construction of his pictures would be based. Nature was to be subjected to "intelligent observation" and seen through a personal temperament in order to discover its

essential character and spirit. Cézanne set into play his "sensation forte de la nature" which enabled him to perceive meaningful interrelationships between things seen, whose spiritual content he never mentioned in actual words.¹⁶ This assured him of a "metaphysical vision" which saw nature stripped of accidents and temporality and elevated to a higher state of permanency and harmony.

The view of the world in its higher state represented the ideal according to which Cézanne would construct his pictures: in terms of plastic values, color scales, shadow paths and distribution of masses. Within this primary structure as a whole, the next stage of work was the realization of the individual forms - trees, mountains, houses, fruits, human beings - whose shapes had to evolve in terms of the basic structural pattern. His view of the "permanent, unalterable relationships which persisted in the world through loneliness and timeliness ... the stability of existence" ¹⁷ could be expressed only by relating in a recognizable way the real world as generally understood and the shape of its objects, perishable and subject to change, to the metaphysical construction. This was essential since Cézanne strove to express, not merely a set of subjective feelings, but to state a truth about the world. Consequently his representations of the real world must be included within his portrayal of truth; the individual objects must be made to signify something lasting and indestructible.

From nature Cézanne derived both his idea, his meta-

physical vision, and his means of realizing his pictures - the latter eventually reduced to a concern with the changing inter-relationships of colors in solids. It was here that Cézanne's difficulties of realization arose: the source of his continual complaint was how difficult it was to capture these means which had to be observed in nature herself. He could not begin with a conception of the structure and form of his picture (unlike those artists who work towards ideals and find the formal means for their portrayal in ready-made conceptions). Cézanne could find his ideas only in the process of working directly from nature. "For progress in realization there is only nature and the eye develops in contact with her."¹⁸

To have attempted to elucidate the essence of Cézanne's artistic problem is to have performed the same task with Giacometti's. The similarity of their concerns and approaches is vital evidence that the latter's art is a direct out-growth of Cézanne's. Whether in front of nature or in front of the model in the studio, the process is the same: both eye and mind learn to see through a constant dialogue between model, mind and the brush on canvas as controlled by the artist. The concept of the beautiful or the true evolves from brush stroke to brush stroke and from canvas to canvas, as does the realization of means whereby to depict these ultimate ideas. Progress is slow because there are no standards; everything has to be begun afresh, based on direct contact with the things in themselves.

Both artists conceive of their subject in terms of unity and oneness and attempt to include the multiplicity of detail within that unity. Both are concerned with the elaboration of what is true in what he sees. Neither is concerned with merely individual views of reality, but with far-reaching assertions of an objective nature which will reveal something essential about the exterior world. Both refer directly to nature for raw material from which to shape their ideas and base their means of realizing them, and both approach realization as a consistent process of question and response between model and canvas. Nevertheless, for Giacometti realization is more complex a problem.

According to Nietzsche, in all human creative activity the important thing is whether the stimulus springs from an abundance of spiritual resources or from their lack, and hence a need and longing for them.¹⁹ Cézanne still preserved unbroken his link with the metaphysical world.²⁰ If the realization of his ideas could be achieved only from a continual and direct study of nature, his conception of the world as existing through things "standing together" in permanency and harmony had priority in his mind as a basic belief which shaped the construction of his canvas from the first stroke of the brush. Giacometti, on the other hand, begins with poverty of spirit. His age has allowed him no metaphysical certainty, or any other certainty for that matter, on which to base his art; he is in quest of it. If his primary concern is "to do a head," he does not in any way

know what a head is or what it should be. His only reference point is the thing in itself with which he must conduct his dialogue.

In the nineteenth century understanding of realization it is possible to anticipate the achievement of realization. Cezanne is allowed rapport with a nature which eventually will reveal its secrets which the artist will appropriate in order to find means to finish his painting. This is precisely what Giacometti is denied. His model, the thing in itself, will reveal only its otherness, its distance, its alienation and the artist's eternal separation from the discovery of its essence.

He is frustrated not only in finding artistic means whereby to express his ideas as to what a head is, he is as well denied even the comfort of obtaining such ideas. The eternal separation of artist and model makes realization in Giacometti's art inherently impossible, both as a realization in the mind and as a product in material. His art has reached a total impasse.

CONCLUSIONS

The desire of art to re-create its model when it has no access to the model: this is the impasse of Giacometti's art. The implacable routine with which patiently, for over thirty years, he studied the same few models day after day in order to discover the true nature of their being and then transfer their 'likeness' onto canvas or into sculpture yielded only failure. With a critically alert mind he stripped his vision of the outmoded screen of culture which tradition had interposed between his eyes and the model; in order to see anew and without preconception the objects and people he wanted to paint. But contrary to expectations, to free his mind from conventional habits of organizing perception did not yield either a clearer vision or a surer knowledge of the model, on which he could base his work. What he discovered, on the contrary, was the impenetrable distance which always lay between the artist and the model he was working from; and his art, which was directed towards a better understanding of the exterior world, could not deny this quality of distance which was an inescapable part of the artist's visual experience. Distance, however, denied the intimate rapport essential to Giacometti in order to successfully re-create his model in art; a problem which became no simpler if he concentrated his attention on the gaze of the eyes, the source of life in the human face. Here it became patently evident that nothing certain could be known about

the model, whose existence was always outside beyond oneself. The non-expressive, inner-directed, empty, impenetrable stare yielded nothing. In both the physical and psychological spheres an unbridgeable distance separated artist and model.

In earlier ages of the artistic tradition, Giacometti could have referred to a number of accepted religious and metaphysical truths in terms of which it would have been possible to complete a work of art. But Giacometti partakes of the self-critical attitude of contemporary thought which has stripped his intellectual milieu of such established absolutes, wherefore he consequently must face an inherent uncertainty and finitude in whatever be his area of research. His twentieth-century sensibility, which in contact with other men has experienced only separation and alienation, denies him that intimate knowledge of man without which his art must remain incomplete. Like Cezanne, who towards the end of his life said, "I'm making experiments - experiments towards painting,"¹ Giacometti cannot foresee achieving a completed, definitive work. Each painting or sculpture is but a tentative gesture in the direction of completion, but completion itself is impossible.

Giacometti's art, which directs its efforts towards better seeing and towards learning about the exterior world, even if it is a failure in the artist's own terms is not a failure for the spectator. Manifest in Giacometti's sculptures and paintings is the poignant expression of man's isolation and

alienation - and his dignity - which offers a depth of experience comparable to what previous ages obtained from their great religious or idealistic art. In the artist's terms, however, his painting and sculpture must finally be judged an acrobatic feat, thwarted in its fulfilment by human finitude. The acrobat for a lifetime strives each day to do just a little better until one day, if he is a juggler, he can perform the impossible trick of making a ball stand still in the air. This is his ultimate goal, though he knows that were he to succeed and defy the laws of nature and become free and all-powerful in his art, his art would die. Still he longs for that day, as Giacometti awaits the moment when finally he can do a human head, for then he will never again have to do another. But one day both acrobat and artist die, their ideals unattained.

Ideals so high assure inevitable failure. To a contemporary sensibility, plagued by a finitude in all human activities, the pursuit of them ultimately is ludicrous. And now that the inherent impasse in the pursuit has achieved its climactic expression in Giacometti's art, who will continue his researches? Until art again can trace its path to new reference points which are true and absolute, it can only end in failure. Until then, art, understood in terms of the acrobat's ideal, is a futile gesture.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I

1 See Georges Limbourg, "Giacometti," Magazine of Art, vol. 41, no. 7 (November 1948), p. 254.

2 Hugh Kenner, Samuel Beckett: A Critical Study, New York, Grove, 1961, pp. 33-34.

3 Loc.cit.

4 Samuel Beckett and Georges Duthuit, "Three Dialogues," Samuel Beckett, A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Martin Esslin, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1965, pp. 16-22. Also see Kenner, op.cit., pp. 28-34.

5 Ibid., pp. 16-17.

6 Ibid., pp. 17-19.

7 Ibid., pp. 19-22.

8 Kenner, op.cit., p. 30. The plays referred to are Beckett's Waiting for Godot and End Game.

9 Ibid., p. 31.

10 Beckett and Duthuit, op.cit., p. 21.

11 Ibid., pp. 19, 22.

12 Samuel Beckett, Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable, New York, Grove, 1965, pp. 69-74.

13 James Lord, A Giacometti Portrait, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, p. 46.

14 From a letter printed in The Village Voice, March 1958; cited in Esslin, op.cit., p. 1.

15 "At the Louvre with Giacometti," Encounter, vol. XXVI, no. 3 (March 1966), pp. 34-40. An Interview with Pierre Schneider.

16 Alan Bowness, Modern Sculpture, New York, Dutton Vista, 1965, p. 7.

17 Kurt Badt, The Art of Cézanne, trans. Sheila Ann Ogilvie, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1965, p. 29.

CHAPTER II

1 Palma Bucarelli, Giacometti, Rome, Editalia, 1962.
Jacques Dupin, Alberto Giacometti, Paris, Maeght, 1962.

2 See quoted texts in Chapter III, footnotes no. 4, 5.

3 Jean-Paul Sartre, "The Paintings of Giacometti," and "The Quest for the Absolute," in Essays in Aesthetics, trans. Wade Baskin, New York, Citadel, 1963.

4 Ibid., p. 57.

5 Bucarelli, op. cit., p. 8.

6 Kramer, op. cit., p. 54.

7 Bucarelli, op. cit., pp. 70-72.

8 Ibid., p. 8.

9 Jean-Paul Sartre, Saint Genet, Comédien et Martyr, Paris, Gallimard, 1952.

10 Kramer, op. cit., p. 54.

11 Dupin, op. cit., p. 15.

12 Alberto Giacometti, "Un sculpteur vu par un sculpteur: Henri Laurens, "Labyrinthe," no. 4 (January 15, 1945), p. 3.

13 Alberto Giacometti, "Derain," Derrière le Miroir, no. 94/95 (February - March 1957), p. 8.

14 Kramer also indicates two post-war artists who have shared with comparable achievements Giacometti's efforts "to restore the viability of the French tradition." Etienne Hajdu and the late Nicolas de Staël "were moved by a similar aspiration no matter how different in style their work may be from Giacometti's." Op. cit. p. 56.

15 "At the Louvre with Giacometti," op.cit., p.37.

16 Ibid., p. 38.

17 Ibid., p. 34.

18 See Kramer, op.cit., p. 56.

CHAPTER III

1 Alberto Giacometti, "Letter to Pierre Matisse," 1947. Cited in The Museum of Modern Art, Alberto Giacometti, exhibition catalogue, New York, 1965, p. 26.

2 Loc. cit.

3 Alberto Giacometti, quoted in Galerie Beyeler, Alberto Giacometti, exhibition catalogue, Basel, 1964, opp. plate 87. The quoted texts are taken from conversations of Andre Parinaud with Giacometti, Arts, no. 873, June 1962.

4 Ibid., opp. plate 99.

5 Loc. cit.

6 Ibid., opp. plate 99a.

7 "Letter....," op.cit. p. 62.

8 Galerie Beyeler, op.cit., opp. plate 3.

9 "Letter....," op.cit., pp. 14-29.

10 Dupin, op.cit., opp. p. 33.

11 Quotation in this paragraph from "Letter....," op.cit., p. 18.

12 Dupin, op.cit., opp. p. 40.

13 "Letter....," op.cit., p. 26.

CHAPTER IV

1 The usual English translation of 'ressemblance' is 'likeness.' See David Sylvester, "The Residue of a Vision," The Arts Council of Great Britain, Alberto Giacometti, exhibition catalogue, London, 1965.

2 See quote to footnote no. 13, Chapter II.

3 "Letter....," op.cit., p. 26.

4 "Entretien avec Alberto Giacometti," Georges Charbonnier, Le monologue du peintre, Paris, Juillard, 1959, p. 172.

5 "The art of painting should consist solely of the representation of objects visible to the artist....Beauty is in nature.... it is real and visible, it has its own artistic expression. But the artist has not the right to amplify that expression. He cannot touch it without risk of changing its nature and consequently of weakening it. Cited in Charles Gauss, The Aesthetic Theories of French Artists, 1855 to the present, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins, 1949, p. 10.

6 Cited in Charbonnier, op.cit., p. 172.

7 Cited in Carlton Lake, "The Wisdom of Giacometti," Atlantic Monthly, vol. 26, no. 3 (September 1965), p. 123.

8 Cited in Douglas Hall, "Giacometti," The Masters, no. 48: 4, 1966.

9 Cited in Charbonnier, op.cit., pp. 179-180.

10 Hall, loc.cit.

11 See Satre, ibid., pp. 47-48.

12 Michel Leiris, in Galerie Beyeler, op.cit., opp. plate 1.

13 Lord, op.cit., p. 22.

14 Compare H.W. Janson, History of Art, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1963, fig. 124, ("Kouros," c. 600 B.C.) and Museum of Modern Art, op.cit., p. 65. (Woman," 1953).

15 "At the Louvre....," op.cit., p. 34.

16 Giacometti here borrows two basic terms in Andre Malraux's theory of art: 'vision' is ordinary perception, and 'style' implies invention, subjectivity and non-imitation as primary elements in creativity. See Ibid., footnote p. 36.

17 Ibid., pp. 36-37.

18 Ibid., p. 37.

19 Cited in Galerie Beyeler, op.cit., opp. plate 87.

20 Lionello Venturi, Cézanne, son art, son oeuvre, 2 vol., Paris, 1936, vol. 1, p. 53. Cited in Gauss, op.cit., p. 40.

21 Gauss, op.cit., p. 40.

22 Cited in Charbonnier, op.cit., p. 175.

23 Badt, op.cit., p. 29.

CHAPTER V

1 Paul Cézanne, "Letter to Bernard," April 15, 1904. Cited in Gauss, op.cit., p. 46.

2 Kramer, op.cit., p. 55.

3 Isaku Yanaihara, "Pages de Journal," Derrière le miroir, no. 127, May 1961, pp. 20-21. Translated from the Japanese.

4 Lord, op.cit., p. 23.

5 Cited in Sylvester, op.cit.

6 See Sartre, op.cit., p. 87.

7 Loc. cit.

8 Museum of Modern Art, op.cit., p. 69; Arts Council of Great Britain, op.cit., plate 28. A photograph, of course, cannot convey the phenomena of the disappearance of detail as one draws near a Giacometti sculpture. The photograph inherently separates us from the figure by the absolute distance between it and the photographer.

9 Galerie Beyeler, op.cit., plate 64.

10 Dupin, op.cit., p. 23; Lake, op.cit., p. 125.

11 Galerie Beyeler, op.cit., opp. plate 39.

12 Ibid., opp. plate 38.

13 Loc. cit.

CHAPTER VI

1 See William Barrett, Irrational Man, Garden City, Doubleday-Anchor, 1962, pp. 36-41.

2 Honoré de Balzac, "The Unknown Masterpiece," The Quest of the Absolute and other stories, trans. Ellen Marriage, Boston, Dana Estes, 1901.

3 Ibid., p. 237.

4 Loc. cit.

5 Ibid., p. 224.

6 See Badt, op.cit., pp. 195-226. to whom I am much indebted for his discussion of "The Problem of 'Realization'."

7 Ibid., pp. 203-204.

8 Ibid., p. 200.

9 Ibid., p. 209.

10 Jean Rousseau, Le Figaro, May 10, 1859. Cited in Badt, op.cit., p. 209.

11 Cited in Badt, op.cit., p. 200.

12 According to Emile Bernard, Souvenirs sur Paul Cézanne, Paris, 1924, p. 44. See Badt, op.cit., p. 211. There is a drawing "Frenhofer showing his Work," by Cézanne, Badt, plate 34, which clearly is a self-portrait.

13 Emile Zola, "Preliminary Notes to L'Oeuvre," 1879. Cited in Badt, op.cit., p. 210.

14 Emile Zola, L'Oeuvre. Cited in Badt, op.cit., p. 211.

15 Cited in Badt, op.cit., pp. 212-213.

16 Ibid., p. 215.

17 Ibid., p. 214.

18 Cited in ibid., p. 215.

19 Ibid., p. 32.

20 Loc. cit.

CONCLUSION

1 Cited in Lake, op.cit., p. 126.

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