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THE PSYCHIC VICTORY OF TALENT*

(A Psychoanalytic Evaluation of Van Gogh)

By Daniel E. Schneider, M.D., New York

IN ART as in dreams no two minds meet at the same gateway to the unknown. This fact perhaps explains the difference between one aesthete and another, and between one psychoanalyst and another; it would prepare us to *expect* varying attitudes toward the necessary and indeed inevitable divergences of approach and interpretation which can be mustered around an examination of the life and works of any artist, living or dead.

Nevertheless, there is no reason for chaos simply because the unevenness of our cultural development introduces these extraneous and intrinsic obstacles in the way of a straightforward, monolithic orientation to such a complex personality as that of Vincent van Gogh. The facts of his life are known. A great many of his day-to-day thoughts he recorded for us in his letters to his brother—the volume *Dear Theo*—and in his *Letters to Rappard*, an artist who was his friend by mail only. Indeed, as we know from his relationship to his brother, to Rappard, and above all to Paul Gauguin, Vincent could not endure being too close to any man or woman for any length of time, even though he hungered for friendship and love.

We have a right to expect that a science of personality can take these facts, including Vincent's overt masochistic attacks on his own body which culminate in suicide, and at least explain why Vincent behaved the way he did. And, indeed, we can do that psychoanalytically with a fair degree of accuracy.

We have also the right to expect that a professional aesthete, steeped in traditions of art, in history and technique, can tell us what past and contemporary aesthetic influences are burnt into these brilliantly lyrical canvases—a magnificent testimonial to what the liberation of talent can accomplish in nine years of Vincent's tragic lifetime. Certainly any competent and sensitive

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student of painting in particular and aesthetics in general can tell us these things very accurately.

But these two explanations alone (however fitted together or put side by side) would leave all of us, I am afraid, terribly disappointed. For they are only peripheral, though essential, to the really cogent secret we want to pursue and discover.

How could such an isolated, masochistic, suffering, pathetic human being become a virtual *Prometheus* of painting? Where is the giant in this man? And why, having once become literally *Prometheus Unbound*, does he explode into self-destruction, a destruction which is heralded for us in his last wild, racing, agitated canvases? Was he always a madman, and does one have to be mad to be great? Or rather was his painting, his talent in brief, a victory, a torch of line and color, a set of unforgettable songs rising high for all the world to hear, out of the unnecessary crematorium of his character? Does one have to live sadistically or masochistically a prisoner within oneself to reach into these whirlpools of color, to create these faces literally starting with the fullness of the many-hued blood coursing through their veins and reflected in their skin texture? Why was this master of line and color never able to *paint* a nude (though he made pencil drawings of one or two)—or was all Nature for him the body of a universal woman with struggling earthbound children at work within and upon her? Surely no painter ever endowed nature with such intense erotic burgeoning qualities.

And this, the endowment of Nature with every erotic sensation, is part of the secret of his life and character. But it is an almost open part of the secret—he says so with the very thinnest disguise—in his *Letters to Rappard* where he expresses his violent terror of ordinary flirtatious, bourgeois women. He calls them vipers, bloodsuckers; he compares them to Medusa, and contrariwise he extols the one woman worth loving, Dame Nature.

But, for the psychoanalyst, this is very superficial. All of us have heard, *ad nauseam*, about the artist's love for Nature. Everybody loves Nature. Psychoanalytically we take a different approach and say that what Vincent *projects* onto the vast framework of Nature is not only his unconscious *wish*, but even more his *defense against that wish*. It is among other things his deep and intuitive awareness of the *relationship* between that wish and that defense which determines ultimately the quality of his art, a wish and defense best portrayed in natural scenes. But, to go further here, one must be prepared to understand certain basic things about the psychologic meaning and role of talent. Otherwise we shall not be able to understand Vincent van Gogh.

A final caution before we begin—one with respect to medical and certain kinds of psychiatric diagnosis. Do not be misled by all the ponderous medical and neurologic diagnoses of Vincent's illness. In the first place, no one knows what was actually organically wrong with him. Indeed, his long years of abject poverty and severe starvation, superimposed upon his particular upbringing and his overwork, might be all that really mattered. Beware, in matters pertaining to art and dreams, of the various Latin and Germanic classifications of physical and psychic disturbance. The microscope can never tell us the structure of personality. The institutional psychiatrist, who tries to explain art and dreams according to the various classifications of the insane, is cataloguing nothing but the varieties of his own ignorance.

For one must understand the relationship between art and dreams. One must understand that art-work is a continuous dream-work in which the personal dream becomes "turned inside out" and cast into *form* which is communicative by virtue of being intuitively and implicitly interpretive. And anyone who wishes to exhibit and to profit from the public communication of his dreams cannot shrink from the inevitable public right to try to understand the sources and the material of his dreams. Indeed, every artist deserving of the name takes delight and pride in that very courage and capacity for self-revelation and self-interpretation. Anyone who wants to put the artist under wraps is no friend of artist or art. For we do not examine the sources of dreams and of art for any purpose other than a cultural or scientific one. We need furthermore to know what carries the artist to his originality and what sustains his pleasure in creativity. We need to acknowledge, for the sake of all humanity, that every man has his talent. And today we need to make war on excessive inhibition with its inevitable destructiveness; we need the secret of the development of talent and of creativeness. This is the essential activity of a world at peace. A working union in our universities between the field of the fine arts and that of applied psychoanalysis would be a great step forward in the development of our culture.

It is in this spirit that we approach Vincent van Gogh whose career is an example of our failure to protect such men, to help them to protect themselves, in the entire trajectory of their lives. Above all, he is an example of the psychic victory of talent.

The simplest way to proceed is through Vincent's paintings in order to formulate a concept as to where Vincent's psychic victory lay, why his talent grew and how it literally kept him alive until success came to close. For, although a great deal of stress has been laid on his dramatic mutilation of his ear and his sending the lobe to a prostitute, this was not the critical

factor though it was a culminating one. Rather there is strong evidence that the first trumpets of success had already sounded in the distance; Paul Gauguin's coming to stay with him in the little yellow house at Arles is already a sign of Vincent's growing prestige. Paul Gauguin was too powerful a sadist not to be tempted to crush Vincent, especially when it became clear that Vincent's fame and power would increase. And we know from recent startling examples in our own country how dramatically suicide follows seemingly from having reached a pinnacle of achievement and acclaim. One of Vincent's paintings sold. An article appeared praising his work. He was invited to exhibit in Brussels. The signs of success were there, faint but definite, just before the end.

First, examine the self-portraits, with no attention to their chronology except to isolate for comparison with all the others the magnificent study following his ear-mutilation. They are each, to me, as different from each other as it is possible to imagine. Indeed, were it not for certain stylistic characteristics which mark them as Vincent, it would not be easy at first glance to say that any two of them resemble each other particularly. His pictures of himself are constantly changing far beyond reality. They are each filled with high tension, with the bursting suffusion of color in motion. The mouth never relaxes. There is a certain pursing of the lips. In no portrait except the one after his mutilation is there the suggestion of a smile. In two of the portraits a pipe is held between the lips; and, interestingly enough, Vincent's self-portraits are never without the *motif* of a certain treatment of hair, even in the portrait after amputation where he is clean-shaven, where there is a comparatively striking relaxation of musculature and smoothness of skin texture, where the pipe-smoke curls mischievously, where there is the faintest hint of a smile in the secondary mouth-lines, even here the hair-motif must be portrayed. For it is quite obvious, it seems to me, that the choice of this particular furry cap is really the choice of a displaced beard. Together with this, Vincent is always carefully buttoned up at the neck no matter what kind of garment he wears. In one we barely see his hand as he holds his palette—and this from a master of drawing. To me, taken together with Vincent's failure ever to paint a nude, these elements, especially the comparative contentment of the face following the ear-mutilation, indicate that Vincent stood in sheer terror of his own violent but secret interest in human nakedness. Anatomy, human anatomy, exists for Vincent only through layers of clothes. Not so when he approaches Dame Nature. She is always nakedly sexual in Vincent's eyes. Sometimes when she approaches human form, as in the drawing *Wheat Sheaves*, she

even dances, though again *headlessly*, for Vincent must never identify her nor identify himself with her nor define his relationship to her. Nature is so attractive to him because she is naked and permissibly so.

I said there was no nude in his painting and that he was always buttoned up, that his figures were all clothed figures against a background of the sheer nudity, sheer sexuality of Nature. But there is one exception, and this exception proves the rule. That exception is the painting *Pietà* after Delacroix. Here there is a nude. To be sure, he tells us it was Delacroix's idea, but it is the nude of Christ, draped to the waist, and beside Christ stands the compassionate somewhat Dutch-appearing mother. The face is, it seems to me, Vincent's face; he, too, like Jesus, was red-haired. The conscious theme which attracts him is the theme of compassion, the same compassion which draws him to the influence of Millet, which earlier in his life makes him go down into the mines of the Borinage and, Christ-like, to live in such starvation and self-abnegation that the churchmen expel him from his career as a preacher because he is so much a Christian martyr that he lowers the dignity of the church! He is always indeed the crucified son of the suffering peasant. He atones, denies himself food, buttons himself up, fears personal nakedness, marries a pregnant prostitute, works to the point of exhaustion, avoids too close contact with any normal man or woman except by letter, and with his eyes devours and portrays, in lyrical interpretation, the inexhaustible, seductive, fully nourishing, rich-boweled, placid, serene, lewd, raging Mother, the earth. His art saves him from the sin of lusty nakedness and naked lust by transmutation of it. The aim of his sexuality is lifted up to the aim of his art. He, the creator-artist, identifies himself formlessly with light and darkness, with the sky in brief. The many-haloed suns and stars (and even lamps and candles) are his own eyes looking down upon and lighting up the earth. And as with every great talent, he is a master in the capture of motion, stereoscopic and stroboscopic motion. He builds up stereoscopic planes of seeing at the same time that his lines go whirling rhythmically.

There are the essentials of my own reaction; one could expand this type of premise endlessly, however, without coming closer to the psychoanalytic role of talent in general and the specific esthetic manifestation of Vincent's talent, his gift and his technique in particular.

Let us now take these very few reactions and make a formulation as to what Vincent has done, how the relationship between his wish and his defense against that wish has become transmuted into his grasp of form, of line and color—given the gift of drawing, a gift he permitted himself to develop only comparatively late in life. All other doors, all other attempts

to identify himself with the nearest men of his family, had to be closed off first. He had to fail as an art-dealer, as a martyr-preacher first. He had to be forced literally, by the power of events, to the discovery and development of a talent with which he had been born. Talent in painting runs in his family by the way; his cousin Anton Mauve was a good, competent artist who, however, had no more understanding of Vincent than had anyone else. Not even his brother Theo, whose relationship to Vincent is intensely neurotic, really understands him.

Our formulation is as follows, and it holds for all the great talents among whom Vincent has a right to be classed: the gift of genius, keen to all the natural laws of motion in whatever medium, however much it may lie fallow, is one which does not permit ordinary identification with one's parent. The gift of genius is the result of an increased psychic intuitively interpretive capacity and urge to expressive activity which cannot be fulfilled by simply accepting the routines of a less gifted father, uncle, or brother. To do so is to be discontented, irritable, restless, hypersensitive. The gifted man has no alternative but to identify with the creative act itself in all its implications human and universal, beginning with curiosity as to how human life is created and going far beyond that into all the unfelt, unseen, but inevitable progress of man into the unknown. The gifted man, keen in childhood to the mystery of sexual union, becomes keen about the mysteries which lie beyond all laws. The inventor, the artist, the creative scientist—Thomas Edison, Leonardo da Vinci, Albert Einstein—these men illustrate the various activities of such increased psychic capacities which demand more, much more, than identification with the routines and faiths of the fathers and forefathers. Vincent van Gogh's life is a shining example of this kind of restless search which cannot be denied, or if denied, can only lead to greater unhappiness because it leads to meaninglessness. Only if one finds one's own true Ego, one's own true creative direction can life have full meaning, and it is worth whatever unhappiness and struggle to find it. Again Vincent van Gogh illustrates this fact.

But while this is the ultimate goal for the very gifted man, one does not simply vault to that position, not even if one is a child prodigy. The very possession of that gift requires a stable platform of predominant masculinity if one is male or predominant femininity if one is female, if that gift is to achieve its finest flowering. We all know the phenomenon of the great homosexual artist, but even where overt homosexuality takes its toll in distortion of the gift and in many other ways, at least it makes a provision for a love-relationship. Homosexuality is always a perverted second-best; it

is distorted; it brings many social and personal disasters in its train, but at least it provides some relief of tension. And the great artist, whether homosexual or heterosexual, is not unaware of the opposites that go into creativity. The heterosexual artist, if a male, is not terrified of feminine, passive attributes of life, at least not in the portrayal or use of such elements of his personality. The great artist intuitively, like the scientific psychoanalyst explicitly, recognizes the deep and fundamental truth that we are all made by a man and a woman, that we all have masculine and feminine attributes, though one set normally does and should predominate. The artist knows this basic design of creation.

The greatest misfortune that can befall any human being in his personal life, no matter how great his talent, is to have a violent conflict about identification with either sex with the result that he recoils from contact with both men and women. He becomes lonely, isolated, tense, peculiar, and if there is no rescue mechanism, he may be on the road to a psychosis, to outright insanity. For the mind is based upon the sexual tension-mechanism of the human brain. This is why the mind can be shattered.

But there is a rescue factor in all men, something that can save even such a conflicted human being from schizm or explosion, and that factor is one's pleasure-giving, tension-relaxing talent. The greater the talent, the greater can the victory be over those forces which prevent stable identification, providing certain minimum conditions of love exist. Within oneself, one can unite the diverging elements and create something to be loved, interpreted and portrayed, something that combines the male and the female, the personal and the universal, the maternal and paternal. Artistic talent, in many partial ways, intuitively interprets and analyzes. This is inherent in that mastery of form for which all artists struggle. Talent can then bring about for a time a great psychic victory. For, in an optimum situation, the great intuitive artist strengthens himself in this way, though it is a much slower and more painful process than our modern method of psychoanalysis. As a matter of fact, the forerunner of psychoanalysis is Art. Without this, the struggle even in so talented and powerful an artist as Vincent is heart-breaking and may fail in one final explosion. Vincent is not great because of his neurosis; he is great in spite of it. Ultimately his neurosis destroyed him. No organic disease by itself destroyed Vincent van Gogh though he was constitutionally sensitive and may have had an epileptic tendency; he was destroyed by the combined forces of neurotic self-starvation, neurotic lack of love, neurotic over-work, by a powerful neurotic necessity—a consuming psychic masochism.

Remember, not only Vincent but his brother Theo suffered from a profoundly inhibited upbringing as well as from their theoretical hereditary taints. The effect of the van Gogh parents upon their children is reflected in the tortured lives of these two violently inhibited men. Vincent's parents were in no way prepared to encourage his talent though his interest in drawing and color apparently manifested itself in a very timid way in his childhood. While Picasso's father did everything to encourage the artistic strivings of his son in childhood, by contrast it seems, if one reads between the lines, the traditions and routines of Vincent's parents' negative or unknowing attitude tended to crush him. One remembers that it was a minister near the Belgian Borinage who, himself an artist, helped Vincent discover his talent.

The result of this was that Vincent could never complete the intermediate step of identification with a man, with a full manly proud attitude toward women. The first girl selected during his stay in England is a girl betrothed to another man, the second is a close relative, a cousin, the recent widow of another man, the third is a prostitute pregnant by an unknown man of the streets. He marries her, then leaves her. He seeks like an infant for situations impossible of fulfillment and demanding in turn the psychic toll of guilt and atonement. He must never eat properly, he must never partake of the body of a woman, he must never create his own child. He must never completely, in his personal life, differentiate away from his attachment to his mother, into an identification with fatherhood, except under the conditions of Art. Here in this realm, belatedly, at the age of 27, he begins the slow process toward maturity, desperately holding himself together by the very existence of his long-denied talent itself.

And, I think, there was a chance for Vincent to succeed, had the cards not been stacked against him. Had Paul Gauguin not been the cynical sadist he was, had he been a man of true depth and kindness, Vincent might have succeeded in having a friend for the first time and in identifying with Gauguin, but, in justice to Gauguin, the difficulty lay in the fact that Vincent approached Gauguin with a powerful, unconscious infantile desire. In brief, Vincent approached Gauguin much as a three-year-old child approaches a father. And to complete the triangle there was the prostitute who exposed Vincent, the unfinished child, to the deep feeling of infantile betrayal. The disguised, degraded mother gave herself to the disguised sadistic father, a substitute father who would not respect (and could not know) Vincent's longing for both physical and fatherly encouragement and love from him. And, characteristically, instead of simply giving Gauguin a good beating, Vincent's aggression is too deep, too savage, too murderous. It comes up

against his own over-severe conscience and boomerangs upon himself. The castrative rage against the disguised father Gauguin turns against himself and he sends the severed ear-lobe to the prostitute accusing her of failure to protect him and his manhood.

Against this background let us discuss three paintings related to the Gauguin episode to see what color means to van Gogh and how his compositions show his intuitive awareness of the meaning of symbols in his mind. These three paintings are *The Open Bible*, *Gauguin's Chair*, and *The Self-Portrait*, originally dedicated to Gauguin.

The Open Bible with a candle and candlestick beside it is undoubtedly the symbol for his religious preacher-father. He could not identify with that activity. It remains the sign of a power denied to him. In this painting he places next to the Bible Zola's *Joi de Vivre*, a volume advocating sexual and sensual freedom. This grouping tells the story most simply. Its language is as clear as the picture language of the orient.

Now examine *Gauguin's Chair*. Observe its purple shadow which we shall find again. But more important, see how the essential elements in the composition of the *Open Bible* done years before now rests upon the seat of the chair, forward near its edge. This choice of chair, and this position of books and candle is so obvious in its meaning, one need hardly point out that Gauguin's phallic power as artist-father is here portrayed in utter simplicity. And, against the wall, at a respectful but cautious distance is the lit candle surrounded by that halo which is Vincent's identifying signature. This is, psychologically, a most powerful painting—a clear portrayal of that passive love a son has for a father, the awe of the father in which the son stands, and his ultimate hope of equation with paternal power. I know of nothing more eloquent, more accurate in all painting, than this portrayal of that critical phase through which a son must pass to become a father. Yet the small light says: "I shine brighter than you do, though you are bigger and stronger. I have a haloed light." Vincent's paintings are a language that speak clearly and fit with his admiration of Oriental drawing.

Finally now, look at the self-portrait originally to have been dedicated to Gauguin, the dedication smeared over by Van Gogh when he learned that Gauguin had fled from him instead of standing by. See the strip of purple color on the coat, the same which marks *Gauguin's Chair*. Like a child, and this self-portrait seems to me to have a child-like quality under its desperation, he wants to wear Gauguin's colors. These three paintings put together have a telling, intrinsic sadness. There three dreams were "turned inside out" so fruitlessly so far as Vincent's hope of Gauguin's (and a father's) love and

friendship is concerned. And, from that point on, once the physical pathway of release by self-mutilation is opened, it is only a matter of time until an even larger sweep of the destructive instinct takes its toll in repeated attacks. For his talent can no longer bind together that integration of self which is the basis of all mental health. In the sphere of his art his manhood is as shattered with respect to Gauguin as it was shattered with respect to his father in the sphere of religion. The Ego, robbed of its creative rescue mechanism, falls apart again and again in delirium after delirium, until the ultimate self-destruction. And he senses that it is coming because he can no longer sustain the exquisite balance of that universe of escape in which his eyes, disguised as haloed stars and suns, in their whirling stroboscopic and stereoscopic motion look down upon the body of his earth-mother in all her tenderness and her orgies, in all her potentiality of nourishment and her seductiveness. She has become like the prostitute to whom he sent his ear. She is hatefully dangerous and the form of his intercourse with her, out of the illuminated heavens where he shines down upon her, is now perpetually interrupted. He knows his Ego, his pleasure and reality as an artist, is about to dissolve under the unbearable challenge: *Change your character or die!* His last painting is one of upheaval—of agitated cornfields with flocks of black birds ominous beneath raging skies (cf. *Cornfield with Blackbirds*). His secret femininity now raging with desire, the source of which is his identification with his mother, is no longer to be denied. His inner purity and perfection is now damaged for all to see. Manhood is no longer the haloed suns and stars of the creative sky. It has become insistent enough to strike out against the father Gauguin. His body is undeniably physical. He must seek out a woman or seek out a man or perish! He chose death; he had no alternative because he had no help.

Look at this last picture. Look at it naïvely and unashamedly if you can. Dame Nature, the earth, is portrayed by a dark cleft, the road, between her heaving limbs. The Creator-sky is dark and blind and unhaloed. The ominous birds are the black death of his last joyous thoughts, his last living thought-creatures. His artistic joy, the one solace within the inferno of his character, is on the wing.

Lest anyone doubt the accuracy of these compositional elements, himself as peasant, himself as Creator-sun and haloed stars, Nature as a rhythmic woman bearing children in sorrow, listen to some of Vincent's own comments:

"If a man tries to create thoughts instead of children, he is still a part of humanity. . . . To express hope by some star, the eagerness of a soul by

a sunset radiance, certainly there is nothing in that of stereoscopic realism but is it not something that actually exists? . . . (I) paint men and women with that something of the eternal which the halo used to symbolize. . . ."

Or with respect to what has been said about the painting *Gauguin's Chair*, this, concerning his profound attachment to his father: "I returned to my room where Pa's chair stood near the little table on which were Pa's textbooks and writing books from the previous day. . . . I was overcome like a child."

These facts tell us the state of Vincent's Ego-development, his failure to differentiate in his own personal sexual life and his rescue of himself by his painting in which he is the Creator-father, the haloed light of the sky, impregnating Dame Nature and possessing her, producing suffering children like himself afraid of actual nakedness under the sky in which he identifies himself with "serious sorrow," with all the implications of deprivation, hunger, and castration.

His talent, like all talent, becomes interpretive of himself, of his own unresolved incestuous wishes toward his mother, and his blocked defense with a consequent erotic universalization of himself in terms of the environment of the poor and oppressed whose only heritage is their working of the fertile earth.

It is this which gives us the secret of his form and his technique. It is this which leads us to the giant in the man. It is *the particular interpretation of life which Vincent makes* out of his own agony that draws us throughout this nation and throughout many nations to his painting. It is this which attracts us like moths to a flame, this intensity of our pure sexual, lyrical, common nakedness which is the source of our joy, our sorrows, our children, our taboos, our climates, our need for food, clothing, shelter, our cleansing of ourselves. This lyrical sexual nakedness diffused, transmuted, universalized, this is the secret of Van Gogh's painting. Examine in this connection his rare drawing (*not* a painting) of a nude and see how her beauty is denied by her masculinized, ugly, vulgar face, however accentuated by her form. Wish and defense. The naked woman must not have the power to draw him into her body. If she attracts, she must also repel. But he could not paint her in color. That would be to give her life, blood, light. That would be to make her exciting personally. Had Van Gogh survived and transcended the episode with Gauguin, he might have developed out of his compulsive, prohibited universalization into the most magnificent painter of the body of man. Examine his exquisite drawings of hands.

We can now understand the essence of the particular stereoscopic and

stroboscopic motion Van Gogh gives to his scenes and the striving for the utmost illumination in terms of that freshly bathed morning nakedness of life after a restful sleep. This makes up part of the beauty of the painting *The White Orchard* and many others. *The White Orchard* is a magnificent example of his planes of stereoscopic motion. There are no whirling skies here.

The peculiar building-up of paint so that on close photography a tree-trunk actually looks like a tree-trunk and the motion peculiar to him, the waves and phalanxes and curlings of rhythmic strokes, all these have but one purpose, and he uses everything he can to achieve it.

This is the purpose of visual and tactile, interpretively erotic tangibility. One loves to feast one's eyes; one is impelled to rush into these surging, undulating, rhythmic fields and to loll in them. The whirling stroboscopic night skies (*Cypresses at Night*) induce in us the same feeling as that whirling sensation which occurs in us when we dance. And Vincent is very consistent once he knows his wish, his defense, its consequences, the scenes and symbols he will use to sing this erotic joy to the world in overt terms of Nature but at the same time in covert terms of all our sensations of nakedness and necessities of intimate congress.

The technique is quite simple in its every detail, the technique of the blending rhythms of the stereoscopic and the stroboscopic, of moving depth and whirling color in all possible combinations. This is a technique demanded by Vincent's longing as well as by his interpretation of life, an interpretation that hurls the defiance of naked beauty into the face of narrow prohibitions and yet is vanquished by the unresolved sense of guilt which his father and Gauguin stimulate in him. Hence finally comes the compassion for all children so vanquished. This is Vincent van Gogh painting the eternal struggle of the sensitive, hopeful, radiant, erotic child under the sky and on the earth where the fears and strictures of religion and the horrors of coal-mining blacken, bend, and shrivel those radiant children. Vincent van Gogh's conquest of these forces of visual motion is also the invitation for the spectator to come into his world in which he sees all the hope that ought to be fulfilled, honestly, savagely, and nakedly. This mastery of motion and of capturing and eliciting psychic patterns of development for the purpose of artistic interpretive language is the essence of all human talent in music, architecture, dancing, etc. We know the dictum that music is architecture in motion and architecture is frozen music.

Listen to Vincent finally when he says: "The trees are in blossom and I want to paint a Provencal orchard of astounding gaiety. . . . I cannot tell

you enough, I am ravished, ravished with what I see. . . . I have a terrible lucidity at moments. . . . The picture comes to me as in a dream."

He has turned his dreams into places where we want to go, into feelings we want to have, into things we want to touch. In this way, he himself enjoyed himself and interpreted himself for us, seeing more clearly, feeling more deeply than most of us, in spite of all agony, all prohibition. This is talent. And when we create the kind of world in which children will be safe, treasured, and understood, this same capacity of man will give us greater wonders than ever before. Until then, it sustains us, interpreting our advancing vision of the future and countering the onslaughts of the present. This is the great psychic victory won by the talent of Man.



Louis Boza, Self Portrait, pen and ink drawing.