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BEARD, Richard Elliott, 1928—
ASPECTS OF STRUCTURE IN TWENTIETH CENTURY PAINTING AND THE NOVEL AS RELATED TO MY APPROACH IN PAINTING.

The Ohio State University, Ph.D., 1963
Fine Arts

University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan
ASPECTS OF STRUCTURE IN TWENTIETH CENTURY PAINTING
AND THE NOVEL AS RELATED TO MY
APPROACH IN PAINTING

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

Richard Elliott Beard, B. S., M. A.

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The Ohio State University
1963

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INTRODUCTION

The creation of esthetic form is primarily dependent upon the organization of the component elements into a unified whole. It is the primary purpose of this study to consider aspects of pictorial form as they function in my painting. Since literature is my secondary interest, and since I find that certain basic parallels exist between contemporary literature and painting, it will be my task to point out these parallels, using my own work, certain works in painting and literature, and the ideas and opinions of critics, art historians, and artists to substantiate my argument.

To do this it is necessary to examine the significant aspects of the change in pictorial and literary form that took place from the period of the Renaissance through the twentieth century. This change will form the basis of my theory of structure, which I will apply to the painting and literature of the twentieth century and to my approach in painting.

The most significant factor in the development of art in the twentieth century lies in the consciousness, on the part of the artists, of the power and impact of pictorial or literary form itself. Painting becomes one complex pattern or gestalt, made up of component patterns which relate and interrelate to each other and make up a total configuration. The manifestation of this gestalt concept is found in the idea of "emerging form," which is form resolved while in the process of development.
This process can best be examined by considering three basic elements involved in it. The first and primary consideration is planarity, the second is color, and the third is the dynamics of form, or the apparent interrelationships of the component elements. Paul Klee gives us a good example of planarity when he says that a simple planar element is the energy produced by the broad modulated stroke of a broad-edged pencil.¹ Mondrian believed that a "primary color that is as pure as possible realizes the abstraction of natural color."² He also felt that the important task of all art was to destroy the static equilibrium by establishing a dynamic one.³ These statements suggest the new concept of "emerging form" that distinguishes the art of the twentieth century from the art of other centuries. It was anticipated by Delacroix in the nineteenth century, was pioneered by Cezanne at the close of that century, and because the essential factor in the Cubism of Picasso and Braque and the Expressionism of Kandinsky and Klee at the beginning of the twentieth century. Later this approach reached a high level of expression in the Abstract-expressionism of Pollock, de Kooning, and Kline.

In twentieth century literature a similar phenomenon exists. Writers like Joyce, Hemingway, and Faulkner are representative of those who use three new formal concepts which make up this gestalt. These


³Ibid.
concepts are the autobiographical impulse, the use of word association patterns, and stream of consciousness. Other writers, called naturalists, use these elements in part, but not as formal elements that deliberately seek to unite the work into formal totalities. These authors use them to create more interesting subject matter images, which have meaning only by themselves as isolated images, and which can only relate to other subject matter images, equally isolated.

This gestalt emerging form similarity existing between painting and literature, and the opposing similarity of the preconceived-formula and subject-matter-conditioned group constitute two trends of development in the twentieth century that I will consider. It is my intention to point out the essential structural parallels within these trends as they relate to my own work.
DEVELOPMENT OF PICTORIAL FORM

From the Renaissance to the twentieth century the basic aspect of pictorial form was generally conceived to be planning, ordering and arranging to meet certain pictorial demands. As early as the fourteenth century Cennino Cennini initiates this concept when he talks about "never abandoning the sequence of the colors by yielding or invading the location of one color for another."1 In the early Renaissance Piero della Francesca divides painting into three principle parts.

Painting consists of three principle parts, which we name drawing, measurement, and coloring. By drawing we mean profiles and outlines which contain objects. By measurement, we mean the profiles and outlines placed proportionately in their places. By coloring we mean how colors show themselves on the objects; light on dark, changing according to the light.2

Francesca's "measurement" element is especially important to Leonardo da Vinci. Anthony Blunt, in speaking of Leonardo, says:

The certainty of painting depends on various facts: first it depends on the eye, which is the least easily deceived of all the senses; secondly the painter does not rely wholly on the eye but checks judgements by actual measurement; and thereby painting is based on the principles of geometry.3

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This measurement for Leonardo is manifest in perspective and proportion. Leonardo says that perspective is "the diminution in the distinctness of the form of bodies, the diminution in their size and the diminution in their color."\(^4\) The proportions of the horses in his Battle of Anghiari, the grouping and interaction of their forms, were some of his greatest concerns in this picture. Durer, in the northern European tradition, was also interested in proportion. He insisted that "without proportion no figure can ever be perfect, even though it be made with all possible diligence."\(^5\)

Paralleling these interests in the measurement element of form is the influence the various techniques themselves had on form. In fresco painting, for example, a preconceived cartoon process was necessary. Giorgio Vasari, who is the most informative on this matter, gives an elaborate description of the fresco cartoon process, which has to do with the transfer of the proportions of a small drawing to the proportions of a larger fresco. He takes up many aspects of the technique as well as the recipes and talks at length about them.\(^6\)

Although these plans and formulas and recipes were a necessary ingredient to the rule-minded Renaissance artist, they were nevertheless conscious of the importance of unity in pictorial form. Vasari says:

It is like a form or idea of all the objects in nature, most marvelous in what it compasses, for not only in the bodies of men and of animals but also in plants, in buildings, in

\(^4\) Leonardo da Vinci, quoted from *Artists on Art*, p. 50.

\(^5\) Albrecht Durer, quoted from *Artists on Art*, p. 84.

\(^6\) Giorgio Vasari, *Vasari on Technique*, New York, 1960, p. 213.
sculpture and in painting, design is cognisant of the proportion of the whole to the parts and of the parts to each other and to the whole.  

The unity achieved in Renaissance painting included as one of its most influential elements that of preparatory planning and preconceived form. The great number of preparatory drawings of Leonardo and Michelangelo attest to this fact. Is it any wonder then that Leonardo in his Battle of Anghiari may have felt little need to finish the work? The work, in basic matters of pictorial form, at least, was finished in its preparatory state.

These planned systems of composition and technique developed by the Renaissance artists were continued into the seventeenth century. Pacheco is responsible for some of the "How to Do It" treatises, like "How to Paint a Landscape," where he instructs the artist to draw it first and then divide it into three or four distances and planes. Poussin also makes suggestions concerning the rules of design and color. He says:

A painting will be elegant when the extreme distances are connected to the foreground by means of the middle distances in such a way that they will contrast neither too feebly nor with too much harshness of lines and colors. Here one may speak of the friendship and enmities of colors and their rules.

These suggestions are developed into a remarkable pictorial science, as Kenneth Clark shows us in writing of Poussin's The Gathering of the Ashes of Phocion:

No beauties of light or charming distances, but a full closely knit design presented with uncompromising frontality. The

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[1] Ibid., p. 205.
firmness of these great masses and the certainty with which
the eye is led back into the distance until it is arrested by
the Euclidian finality of the temple, combine to give an
impression of irresistible logic.10

Heinrich Wölflin, however, points out that a distinguishing
difference between the Baroque concept of pictorial form and that of the
High Renaissance (and the more classic mode of Poussin) has to do with
the development from closed to open form manifested in the seventeenth
century:

Every work of art must be a finite whole, and it is a defect
if we do not feel that it is self-contained, but the interpre-
tation of this demand in the sixteenth and seventeenth
centuries is so different that in comparison with the loose
form of the baroque, classic design may be taken as a form of
closed composition. The relation of rules, the yielding of
tectonic strength, or whatever name we may give to the process
does not merely signify an enhancement of interest, but is a
new mode of representation consistently carried out, and hence
this factor is to be adopted among the basic forms of repre-
sentation.11

Wölflin later goes on to show how closed composition tends to
require its elements to move in on themselves, to be self-contained like
the symmetrical composition of Leonardo's Last Supper or Raphael's School
of Athens. Open form to Wölflin is form that extends out from itself
to the point of suggesting movement well out of the limits of the
picture plane itself. This can be seen in Caravaggio's Supper at Emmaus,
where the action extends from the outside of the picture into the center
of the work, where there is a focal point or center of interest which is
determined by a spotlighting effect.

10 Kenneth Clark, Landscape into Art, Boston, 1961, pp. 67-8.
This preparatory planning, this formula-making, this scientific theorizing goes on right into the nineteenth century. Neo-classicists like Bossi and Ingres stressed the importance of line and formal composition. They de-emphasized color, as Bossi did in his writing on chromatic harmony, where he says: "Never use the six principal colors in their full intensity, except very parsimoniously; diversify the gradations of color by many modifications and admixtures of shadow and light." Ingres stressed drawing: "One must keep on drawing, draw with your eyes when you cannot draw with a pencil; as long as you do not hold a balance between your seeing of things and your execution, you will do nothing that is really good."

It is Eugene Delacroix, caring little for Ingres' balance and Bossi's "modifications," who dramatically anticipates the trend towards the significance of color in pictorial representation that will be uppermost in importance in the minds of the later-nineteenth century Impressionists and become one of the most distinctive elements in twentieth century painting. About the place of color in painting Delacroix says:

Painters who are not colorists produce illumination and not painting. All painting worthy of the name, unless one is talking about black and white, must include the idea of color as one of its necessary supports, in the same way that it includes chiaroscuro and proportion and perspective. Proportion applies to sculpture as to painting; perspective determines the contour; chiaroscuro give relief through the disposition

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12 Bossi, quoted from *Artists on Art*, p. 200.
13 J. A. D. Ingres, quoted from *Artists on Art*, p. 217.
of light and shadow in their relationship with the background; color gives the appearance of life, etc.\(^1\)

Nor does Delacroix care for the Neo-classic procedure of carefully drawing from nature and carefully and exactly proportioning this drawing to the canvas. He felt that "all precautions have to be taken to make the execution swift and decisive in order not to lose the extraordinary impression accompanying the conception."\(^1\) This statement anticipates the ultimate decline and fall of pre-planned form.

From this point on artists begin to become more and more aware of this "extraordinary impression accompanying the conception" and less and less concerned with formulas and dictums as to the manner and way one should go about painting a picture. The process included in painting the picture rather than before painting the picture will more and more force itself into the consciousness of the painters at the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. Renoir, the Impressionist, attacks the formula thus:

In painting, as in the other arts, there is not a single process, no matter how insignificant, which can be reasonably made into a formula. For instance, I tried long ago to measure out, once and for all, the amount of oil which I put in my color. I simply could not do it. The "scientific" artists thought they had discovered a truth once they had learned that the juxtaposition of yellow and blue gives violet shadows. But even when you know that, you still don't know anything.\(^2\)

The Impressionists were probably less concerned with pre-planning and formula, with imitating the processes of the old masters, than any


\(^2\) Eugene Delacroix, quoted from John Canaday, Mainstreams of Modern Art, New York, 1959, p. 448.

\(^2\) Auguste Renoir, quoted from Artists on Art, p. 322.
other preceding group. They turned to nature for their inspiration, but
with a different purpose. John Rewald describes this preoccupation:

The surfaces of their canvas were thus covered with a vibrating
tissue of small dots and strokes, none of which by itself
defined any form, yet all of which helped to recreate not only
the particular features of the chosen motif but even more the
sunny air which bathed it and marked trees, grass, houses or
water with the specific character of the day, if not the hour.
Nature was no longer, as for the Barbizon painters, an object
susceptible of interpretations; it became the direct source of
pure sensations, and these sensations could best be reproduced
by the technique of small dots and strokes which—instead of
insisting on details—retained the general impression in all its
richness of color and life. 17

Nature here becomes the controlling element over the direct sensations
of the artists. They arrange what they see and allow their senses to
respond directly to what they see. They would not allow themselves to
be told what to see or how to see according to some schema, but tried
to react to the dictates of their sensations. The Impressionists like
Monet and Renoir were conscious of immediate sensations of such things
as flowers or people casually grouped together in conversation; the
casual, almost indifferent quality inherent in these pictures is the
result of the way the immediacy of the sensation directly confronting
the artist can be projected into pictorial order. This is no presupposed
order but a deliberate holding on to Delacroix' "extraordinary impression
accompanying the conception" idea.

But sensation to natural phenomena was not enough for the imme-
diate successors to the Impressionists. The need for greater consider-
ation of the problems of pictorial form itself was felt. The Post-
impressionists like Cezanne, Gauguin, and Van Gogh did not revert to

older formulas to bring form back. Instead they became intimately involved with the problems of pictorial form as a conscious influence over their individual expressions. Cézanne wanted to make Impressionism solid again.\(^{18}\) Gauguin asks: "How do you see this tree? It's green, you say? Well then put down green—the richest green in your palette."\(^{19}\) He goes on to ask why the artist should not "stress even to the point of deformation the curve of a beautiful shoulder or conventionalize the symmetry of a bough unmoved by breath of air."\(^{20}\) And Van Gogh can talk of color relating to men's passions because "color in itself expresses something."\(^{21}\)

So at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, form suddenly ceased to be something which one developed through carefully laid-out plans or carefully controlled schematizations that had been developing since the Renaissance and became the means and power of expression itself. It is this self-conscious struggle with and utilization of the form itself within its configurational relationships that is the main concern of the twentieth century artist. It is called a gestalt conception: one total configurational pattern that is made up of lesser components that interrelate to make up the pattern of totality. This is the new tradition that was born with the beginning of the

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\(^{19}\) Paul Gauguin, quoted from *Modern Art in the Making*, p. 259.

\(^{20}\) Ibid.

twentieth century. Braque, in his "Reflections on Painting" cogently summed up the change that has taken place when he said:

The painter thinks in terms of form and color. The goal is not to be concerned with the reconstitution of an anecdotal fact, but with constitution of a pictorial fact.

One must beware of a formula good for everything, that will serve to interpret the other arts as well as reality, and that instead of creating will only produce a style, or rather a stylization. 22

It is no longer nature that concerns the artists, as it was with the Impressionists, but, as Braque says, form and color and the process of working them into pictorial resolution become the chief concern.

These pictorial concerns of form and color also become the primary considerations of Matisse, Kandinsky, and Klee. Matisse mentions them in talking about expression: "But the purpose of a painter must not be conceived as separate from his pictorial means, and these means must be the more complete (I do not mean complicated) the deeper his thought."

And again on composition: "Composition, the aim of which is expression, alters itself according to the surface to be covered." 23

In fact it seems that Matisse is almost entirely concerned with the pictorial aspects of color:

And I put down a red which satisfies me; immediately a relation is established between this red and the white of the canvas. If I put a green near the red, if I paint in a yellow floor, there must still be between this green, this yellow, and the white of the canvas a relation that will be satisfactory to me. 24

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22 George Braque, quoted in Artists on Art, p. 422.
23 Henri Matisse, quoted in Artists on Art, p. 410.
24 Ibid., p. 411.
Matisse explains how *he* establishes color relationships—*he* does not say how "one" should establish color relationships. He talks about his own process. This is not formula, nor is he pre-planning the work. Only in the sense that he knows before he begins that he is going to work this way can this process ever be construed as being preconceived. The process itself is not preconceived but is motivated to operate by the sense reaction or "feedback" that the artist receives from the handling of the form itself in all of its relationships.

A similar process is revealed when Will Grohmann tells of Kandinsky's reflections concerning one of his paintings, called *Composition IV*:

He speaks first of the masses: at the lower center blue, at the upper right blue, red, yellow; at the upper left the knotted black lines of the horses, and the long drawn-out lines at the lower right. Second, he refers to the contrasts between the masses and lines, between the precise and the blurred, between the knots of line and the knots of color. The principal contrast is that between sharp pointed movement (battle) and bright cold-sweet colors. Third, he mentions how the color flows over the outline and finally he says that the composition has two centers—the knots of line and the sharp peak of blue. Kandinsky clearly avoids emotional or symbolic interpretation.25

Even after the work is finished, the artist can convey verbally some of the pictorial considerations that came up while he was working on the picture. It is like a recapitulation of a soldier's story about a battle he was in. He talks of these things as *he* had experienced them. Kandinsky is not saying this is the way it should be done. He is saying only that this is the way he did it when the forms emerged in the

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process of painting. Kandinsky allowed the form to "emerge" here and simply stated his way of resolving it. There is no preconceived formula in the emerging form concept. There is only adherence to the gestalt relationship concept. Kandinsky the artist can recapitulate what has happened when the forms appeared.

Paul Klee defines the formal elements in the new twentieth century form by saying that

the formal elements of graphic art are: points, linear, planar, and spatial energies. A plane element is ... for example, an energy by the stroke of a broad-edged pencil uniform or modulated. A spatial element, for example is a misty cloud-like spot made by a full brush, usually uneven in its intensity.26

These are elements to work with. These are the "energies" as defined by Klee. Both Kandinsky and Klee, being members of the German Expressionist Blaue Reiter group, used these energies to create a rich dynamic effect as opposed to the artists working in the Cubist group, such as Picasso, Braque and Gris, who used them to create a formal order of elements, quieter and less emotional in effect.

Both the artists of the Blaue Reiter group and the Cubists had one basic point in common: the acceptance of the Bergsonian universe. Bergson said that the universe endures and that "duration means invention, the creation of forms, the continual elaboration of the absolutely new."27 Christopher Gray says that the objective of the Cubist painter was to "control this dynamism."28 Thus, the basic problem of the

26 Paul Klee, "Creative Credo," Paul Klee: The Thinking Eye, p. 76.
28 Ibid.
twentieth century artist: to let the form emerge and to control its resulting dynamics. Mondrian, talking about this same kind of dynamism, says:

The important task of all art is to destroy the static equilibrium by establishing a dynamic one. Non-Figurative art demands an attempt of what is a consequence of this task, the destruction of particular form, and the construction of a rhythm of mutual relations, of mutual forms, or free lines.... In order that art ... should not represent relations with the natural aspect of things, the law of the denaturalization of matter is of fundamental importance. In painting, the primary color that is as pure as possible realizes this abstraction of natural color.²⁹

This destruction of the "static equilibrium" which is an element of preconceived form suggests, then, a new schema of things. E. H. Gombrich, in his book Art and Illusion, says:

I believe what we call the Renaissance artist's preoccupation with structure has a very practical basis in their need to know the schema of things. For in a way our very concept of "structure," the idea of some basic scaffolding or armature that determines the "essence" of things, reflects our need for a schema with which to grasp the infinite variety of this world of change.³⁰

If we do need a new schema in art to understand the great variety of our world, the emerging form concept, based on gestalt dynamics, constitutes that new schema. But I think that this concept, which was suggested as early as Delacroix, has been fully manifested since the beginning of the present century. Gombrich himself says that "Cubism is the most radical attempt to stamp out ambiguity and to enforce one's reading of the picture--that of a mass made construction, a colored canvas."³¹

²⁹Piet Mondrian, quoted in Artists on Art, p. 426.
³¹Ibid., p. 281.
when he goes on to talk of perception, he is in fact describing this
schema, this new mode of structure that the painters are now using and
have been using for the past seventy years. Gombrich says: "'Perception,'
it has been recently said, 'may be regarded as primarily the modification
of an anticipation.' It is always an active process, conditioned by our
expectations and adapted to situations."\(^{32}\) This is what Picasso means
when he says he is destroying form only to bring it back again.\(^{33}\)

Gombrich’s idea of perception as an active process and Picasso’s
idea of the destruction of form are two of the most significant elements
in the art of dynamic form and planar organization that exists today,
particularly in France and the United States. It is called Abstract-
expressionism or "action painting." Sam Hunter says of the French
artists of this group, Soulages, de Staël, Riopelle and Mathieu:

> The pure act of painting, the energetic application of
pigment to canvas counts for a good deal, yet out of what
might appear as automatic and "accidental" effects they
achieve often enchanting harmonies of color and a plastic
meaning, the conquest of large pictorial space.\(^{34}\)

Of the American painters he mentions Jackson Pollock, Franz Kline,
Willem de Kooning, Adolph Gottlieb and Clifford Still, whose painting,
he says, "demonstrates more dynamism and is more immediately physical in
its impact."\(^{35}\)

Harold Rosenberg, who coined the name action painting, discusses
the approach of the action painter to his work:

> At a certain moment the canvas began to appear to one
American painter after another as an arena in which to

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\(^{32}\) Ibid., p. 172.

\(^{33}\) Pablo Picasso, quoted in *Artists on Art*, p. 419.


\(^{35}\) Ibid.
act—rather than as a space in which to reproduce redesign, analyze, or "express" an object, actual or imagined. What was to go on the canvas was not a picture, but an event.

The painter no longer approached his easel with an image in his mind; he went up to it with material in his hand to do something to that other piece of material in front of him. The picture would be the result of this encounter.36

Jackson Pollock illustrates this approach further by describing the actual way in which he goes about painting:

My painting does not come from the easel. I hardly ever stretch my canvas before painting. I prefer to tack the unstretched canvas to the hard wall or floor. I need the resistance of a hard surface. On the floor I am more at ease. I feel nearer, more a part of the painting, since this way I can walk around it, work from the four sides and literally be in the painting. This is akin to the method of the Indian sand painters of the West.

I continue to get further away from the usual painter's tools such as easel, palette, brushes, etc.... I prefer sticks, trowels, knives and dripping fluid paint or a heavy impasto with sand, broken glass and other foreign matter added.

When I am in my painting, I'm not aware of what I'm doing. It is only after a sort of get-acquainted period that I see what I have been about. I have no fears about making changes, destroying the images, etc., because the painting has a life of its own. I try to let it come through. It is only when I lose contact with the painting that the result is a mess. Otherwise there is pure harmony, and easy give and take, and the painting comes out well.37

I don't work from drawings or color sketches. My painting is direct ... the method of painting is a natural growth out of a need. I want to express my feelings rather than illustrate them. Technique is just a means of arriving at a statement. When I am painting, I have a general notion as to what I am about. I can control the flow of it: there is no accident, just as there is no beginning and no end.38


Another contemporary action painter is Franz Kline. Where Pollock forms his configurations from a complex network of lines, Kline severely limits his shapes. They are usually comprised of large black linear strokes that seem to thrust themselves dramatically across a white ground of the canvas. These shapes are dynamic, and they draw from within themselves tremendous energy in their black spontaneity. As Hunter says of Kline:

At the same time, his drastic black grids are effectively ordered plastic structures. Unlike the calligraphy of the East with which they have so often been compared, Kline's paintings utilize the reserved white areas of background space as positive forms; these white rectangular intervals function in a space of their own making, obstructing, refracting or amplifying the thrust of his solid bars of black. Usually, too, the white backgrounds are solidly established in paint, giving a further material presence to the total formal configurations.39

In his painting called **Chief**, there is an interaction between the black configuration and the remaining white ground. This white ground becomes a counter-movement to the black configuration by forming a shape dynamics in itself. The white is drawn into the black, which results in an incredible simplicity of pure force controlled into the given pictorial space. Kline seems here to have purged himself of everything but black and white dynamics.

Although no specific subject matter related to nature can be found in Kline, in Willem de Kooning's **Woman I** a phenomenon occurs that does bring subject to the painting. The subject is woman, but it also includes the viewer himself. The viewer is required by the very nature

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of the painting to communicate what he feels about it. He finds that it
does represent woman, but not all the necessary bodily and facial char-
acteristics of a particular woman. In fact, it has little to do with
woman at all. The woman probably exists only as a point of departure
for the artist. Her image is merged into an emotional fragmentation of
brushstroke and color-shape configuration which becomes the personal
solution to the pictorial form of the painting.

De Kooning works directly with the substance of art itself. He
works with its forms, and not the forms of life or the physical nature
of things seen or recollected. De Kooning's shapes "open up" to suggest
new and more exciting shapes which are interrelated to each other, and
which are set into a kind of dynamic contrast with each other. The
painting looks emotional in its spontaneity. It shows paint dynamically
applied. But within this kind of Baroque movement, with this frenzy of
application, one must observe how the underlying shapes merge and react
with each other, forming into large orderly masses that extend across
the canvas. Sam Hunter says of de Kooning:

Few of de Kooning's contemporaries can compete with his power
to beget durable forms, without subsiding into some closed
and systematic rigidity of manner that denies the dynamic
premises of Abstract Expressionist painting.\footnote{Ibid., p. 288.}

Within these "durable forms" his color is modulated to give richness and
quality to the surface, but this modulation does not destroy the color.
Rather, it complements it. These partially modulated color masses close
upon themselves and then "open up" to suggest further possibilities. De
Kooning's painting has been called action painting, and indeed it is an
active and emotional approach. But it is resolved action painting. It is organized on the basis of the dictates of Cubistic planarity. It is a rich fabric of two-dimensional forms emerging into gestalt relationships.

Before closing the chapter, it will finally be necessary to mention a group of contemporary artists who still work in the tradition of preconceived planning and who therefore relate to the similar group of naturalistic writers, who also are more conditioned by past traditions than by the new mode of the twentieth century. I will discuss these writers later in the chapter on literature. In painting, Paul Cadmus, Siegfried Reinhardt and Andrew Wyeth are artists who use naturalistic formulas. For them, cubistically inspired planar structure is nonexistent. Instead one finds a perspective gestalt which is used to project a realistic image within the three-dimensional illusion of depth. It is painting that pays primary allegiance to the qualities inherent in the subject matter and not to qualities of pictorial form.
STRUCTURE IN THE NOVEL

The form of the novel in the twentieth century has undergone a change from its original conception in the eighteenth century that in many ways parallels the change in pictorial form. Initially the novel arose out of the need for man to express his ideas and feelings about life as he experienced it. People were tired of reading the often sentimental stories about other places and other people and other times, which were so conditioned by medieval and classical thinking. Ian Watt, in his book The Rise of the Novel, states that "the novel arose in the modern period, a period whose general intellectual orientation was most decisively separated from its classical and medieval heritage by its rejection—or at least its attempted rejection—of universals."¹ So the novel was born out of a need for realism, out of a need for man to understand his environment. The philosopher Descartes maintained in his Discourse on Method that the pursuit of truth had to be an individual matter independent of the traditions of past thought. It is from such an idea that the first books recognized as novels were born. Watt, speaking of the influence of philosophical realism on the novel, says:

What is important to the novel in philosophical realism is much less specific; it is rather the general temper of realist thought, the methods of investigation it has used, and the kinds of problems it has raised. The general temper of philosophical realism has been critical, anti-traditional and innovating; its method has been study of the particulars of

experience by the individual investigator, who, ideally at
least, is free from the body of past assumptions and traditional
beliefs; and it has given a peculiar importance to semantics,
to the problem of the nature of correspondence between words
and reality. All of these features of philosophical realism
have analogies to distinctive features of the novel form,
analogies which draw attention to the characteristic kind of
correspondence between life and literature which has obtained
in prose fiction since the novels of Defoe and Richardson.2

These first novels eliminated all formal conventions and rejected
the traditional stereotyped plots. In their place a prose style was
adopted which, as Watt says, was designed "to give the air of complete
authenticity."3 Certain basic elements were introduced into this
narrative method. The first of these is Place. In Defoe's Moll
Flanders, the actual physical environment into which the characters are
set is described authentically. And in Fielding's Tom Jones the place-
names given on Tom's route from London are real, not fictional. The
second important new element in the early novel is Time. Watt explains
how the classical and medieval "timeless universals" were eliminated:

The novel's plot is also distinguished from most previous
fiction by its use of Past Experience as the cause of
present action: a causal connection operating through
Time replaces the reliance of earlier narratives on dis-
guisers and coincidences, and this tends to give the novel
a much more cohesive structure.

The novel's closeness to the texture of daily experience
directly depends upon its employment of a much more minutely
discriminated time scale than had previously been employed
in narrative.4

The life story of Moll Flanders, for instance, is pictured as a chronolo-
gical time sequence based on the minutiae of day-to-day experience.

The third and final new element, which includes the first two, is
the development of the "narrative method." The story has a beginning,

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2 Ibid. 3 Ibid., p. 27. 4 Ibid., p. 22.
it describes the environment and characters in a recognizable, realistic fashion, and it moves through a chronological time sequence to a definite ending. The characters are recognizable people of their time living in recognizable environments. Both are reliably reported by the novelist in the step-by-step telling of his story. This is in essence the early novelist's method. This is how he seeks after basic truths about life and incorporates them into his characterizations. His truth is inherent in the physical existence of things as he perceives them. Defoe treats Moll Flanders, the prostitute, sympathetically as a complete human being with the physical and mental attributes which the reader will recognize as being typical of her station in life.

Thus, the early novel is thoroughly conditioned by an atmosphere of physical reality. This atmosphere is the chief element that causes the novel form to be distinctive from other literary forms, such as poetry, which by its inherent nature retains certain universal, generalized, and abstract elements instrumental to its form.

The realistic element is the dominant factor throughout the nineteenth century as well. But in the nineteenth century "the realistic novel" can be divided into two general categories: what the French call le roman de l'individu, or the psychological form, and the sociological or environmental form. Naturally the two trends interweave, but in most cases one or the other will be dominant.

Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* is an example of the first category. Although her novels are generally considered to be novels of manners, that is, novels which reflect ideal examples of how genteel people should act toward one another, they are in fact very subtle studies of human behavior. Her characters react to each other,
and their response is used as a thread to hold the narrative together.
Also, Jane Austen’s characters are real people, and they reveal the essential human emotions the reader would expect real people to exhibit in the given situations.

Elizabeth’s astonishment was beyond expression. She stared, coloured, doubted, and was silent. This he considered sufficient encouragement; and the avowal of all that he felt, and had long felt for her, immediately followed. He spoke well; but there were feelings besides those of the heard to be detailed, and he was not more eloquent on the subject of tenderness than of pride.5

The key to the psychological relationship implied here is contained in the second line of the quote where Darcy reacts to and is motivated by Elizabeth to express his feelings toward her. The emotional interplay is expressed, of course, on a very genteel, cultured, and aristocratic level.

Another exponent of the psychological form in the early nineteenth century in France is Stendhal, whose Charterhouse of Parma appeared in 1830. In this novel the environmental detail and sociological influence is subordinated to the characterization of one man, Fabrizio. The descriptions are mainly of places, like Lake Como, which have a direct effect on Fabrizio.

Emile Zola, in A Love Affair, uses similar formal means to play up the psychological interests, although he generally leans more towards the sociological, as in Lourdes. In A Love Affair, the reciprocal interplay of the emotions of the mother and daughter sets up the conflict and

its ultimate tragic result. As Jean Stewart describes the book:

_A Love Affair_ is primarily a psychological study. Perhaps remembering his early enthusiasm for the then unfashionable Stendhal, Zola tackles a theme traditional enough in itself; the analysis of a woman's dawning love. But he tackles it in his own way. "I must study the birth and growth of love as I studied drunkenness, little by little, step by step," he notes. And he shows it not as an isolated emotional experience but as something profoundly affecting the whole personality, both mind and body. Furthermore, he complicates the theme by introducing a second psychological study of even greater interest: that of a child's jealousy. The remorseless dissection of Jeanne's morbid passion for her mother, with her hypersensitive reactions and her dawning awareness of sexuality, is the most extraordinary thing in the book.  

Thus, Stendhal and later Zola epitomize the intense desire of the "romantic" nineteenth century novelist to investigate the reality of life through the intense dissection of individuals and their relationships with the society of which they are a part.

There is another formal element which must be considered because of its effect on the psychological and sociological strains. It is the symbolic, which is especially manifested in America in the works of Hawthorne and Melville. In Hawthorne's _Scarlet Letter_ the title of the novel already suggests the symbolic "method." That symbolic letter is the cause of all the action. The psychological elements of snobbery, meanness, prudishness, puritanism, love, frustration, etc., are all put into formal relationship with each other through the causal action of this symbol. In Melville's _Moby Dick_ (again note the symbolic title) the whale is the causal agent, rousing Captain Ahab to an almost maniacal state of mind in his intense desire to encounter this creature.

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directly. But the whale does not remain a mere animal, a material enemy; it is equated with universals, evil, force, God, eternity, timelessness, etc. In fact, all the psychological elements in the book have symbolic referents as equivalents. And these symbolic references create the atmospheric environment as much as the individual characterization. All of these elements become the actual form of the novel, as they are interrelated and combined—the real, the part-real, the scientific, the psychological—into one great voyage, one great quest for the absolute.

Other nineteenth century American writers, like Twain, in Huckleberry Finn, and William Dean Howells, in The Rise of Silas Lapham, have little interest in symbolism. Twain is essentially naturalistic, and sociological. The story of Huck is conditioned primarily by the small town he lives in and the river, around which most of the narrative takes place. Perhaps the river could be construed as a symbol of the active moving principle, the organic, growing aspect of life itself, but if so, this symbol is not obvious. Like Zola's A Love Affair, the story centers around one character. But here it is the simple and humorous tale of a boy and his childhood experiences. Zola's girl is secluded, protected by her mother, sick, jealous, and ultimately dies. That novel is an intimate psychological portrait of the tragic aspect of an adolescent girl fearful of her environment. Huck, outward, easygoing, is completely in tune with his environment. He controls it. Even the river, with its unpredictable portents and suggestion of imminent danger cannot overwhelm him. He is too robust; he is too much a part of the environmental life current which is the form in Twain. Zola's Jeanne is a part of the romantic death current.
Silas Lapham does not control his universe as well as Huck does. The life and difficulties inherent in the cosmos of a metropolitan situation seek to destroy him entirely, and partially succeed. They destroy the outward manner and personality of the man, who had become autocratic and garrulous. But Silas the man of integrity, the essential human being, lives through it all. Here the sociological aspect of the city, with its growing pains and insistent clamor after the material success that can bring class distinction is one formal element, set against the opposing element of puritan honesty and integrity, purity, and chastity. These elements become the formal controlling agents by the very nature of their conflict with each other, because this conflict is Silas Lapham's conflict. Once again the title is significant. The "rise" in the title is synonymous with "life development." In the book Silas "rises" and "falls," but it is not the intention of the author to present a moral lesson. Rather, he wants to show the total life experience of a man, and this ebb and flow of Lapham's life is the heart of the book. It is conditioned always by the sociological realism which conditions the life of the man, and governs the methods of the novel. Thus the total life experience becomes the basic formal element of the book.

This sociological realism found in Howells occurs in Europe from the 1830's on into the mid-century period. It is prominently manifested in the works of Balzac and Dickens. Henry James describes Balzac's Comedie Humaine in a way that suggests the social-naturalist approach of Balzac:

This huge distributed, divided and subdivided picture of the life of France in his time, a picture bristling with imagination and information, with fancies and facts and figures, a
world of special and general insight, a rank tropical forest of detail and specification.  

And he criticizes Balzac because:

He sees and presents too many facts—facts of history, of property, of genealogy, or topography, of sociology, and has too many ideas and images about them.  

Balzac creates an enormous mosaic of the world of France. He is concerned with creating a totality out of what he perceives in life. As James further suggests in his criticism of Balzac, the ideas and images have their values "threatened with submersion by the flood of general reference in which they float, by their quantity of indicated relation to other facts, which break against them like waves at high tide." The implication is that Balzac, by attempting to achieve this totality of all facts that exist in life, fails to achieve the totality necessary to artistic form.

What James finds lacking in Balzac's Comedie Humaine and would find correspondingly lacking in Dickens' Bleak House, he locates in Flaubert's Madame Bovary:

Madame Bovary has a perfection that not only stamps it, but that makes it stand almost alone; it holds itself with such a supreme unapproachable assurance as both excites and defies judgement. For it deals not in the least, as to unapproachability, with things exalted or refined; it only confers on its sufficiently vulgar elements of exhibition a final unsurpassable form. The form is in itself as interesting, as active, as much of the essence of the subject as the idea, and yet so close is its fit and so inseparable its life that we catch it at no moment on any errand of its own. That verily is to be interesting—all round; that is to be genuine and whole.

The realistic or vulgar detail in *Madame Bovary* is subordinated to a formal control of all the elements involved in the characterization and depiction of environment. They are held, according to James, in a kind of captivity, a captivity which could never exist in Balzac or Dickens: a captivity symbolized by a birdcage. He says: "Then her setting, the medium in which she struggles, becomes in its way as important, becomes eminent with the eminence of art; the tiny world in which she revolves, the contracted cage in which she flutters, is hung out in space for her, and her companions in captivity there are as true as herself." James insistently points up the problem which still exists in novel writing, the conflict between the naturalists, who say that the detail the writer perceives and reports can exist and have meaning in its own right, and the formalists, who insist that naturalistic details must be subordinate to the effect of the relationships between them when they are organized into a totality. James, himself is a formalist as seen in his novel *The Ambassadors* where individual details are always subordinated to the effect of "impressionistic" images and superimposed on each other. He anticipates the new gestalt-totality conception which begins with Joyce in the beginning of the twentieth century.

But before my twentieth century considerations begin, it is necessary to mention two other authors who show the essential formal stress of nineteenth century structure. They are Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. In Tolstoy's *War and Peace* one finds the sociological and environmental element carried to its grandest height of style. This is seen in the description of middle class life in Moscow and in the extremely precise

11 Ibid., p. 138.
delineation of the structure of battle. This is the last giant "romance" of the nineteenth century. Here is the life of all the people, with a few major figures standing out to form interrelating love interests and rivalries, narrated historically and related to the gigantic panorama he spreads before us of the total environment of Russia.

Dostoevsky, with his preoccupation with abnormal states of mind, brings the psychological novel to a point particularly close to the twentieth century's interests in the science of psychology. In the _Idiot_ or the _Brothers Karamazov_ delicate shadings of psychological emotion prevail. Individual characters are set against other individual characters from the standpoint of their internal frustrations, their angers, their superstitions, their religious conflicts. Dostoevsky tries to get at the essence of these conflicts and desires, and in so doing he creates characters like Aliyosha who somehow lose their humanity in favor of intangibles. He tries to find out what goodness is; what evil is; what desire is. To do this he dissects his characters clinically, and as a result they become unreal; they become enigmas. Is Aliyosha a saint, is he Christ—what is he? Dostoevsky sacrifices the humanity of his characters in order to penetrate the sub-human. And this becomes his form, this sacrifice of the world of the physical to get at the world of the internal or the spiritual. It is a tremendous manifestation of the psychological novelist's departure from realism.

So far, it would seem that the structure of the eighteenth and nineteenth century novels corresponds very little to the developments in painting from the Renaissance through the mid-nineteenth century. Although painting and literature have certain psychological and
sociological interests in common, in literature these elements become
the primary conditioning force in the structure. This is not so true in
the painting. The primary conditioning force here, as far as the struc-
ture of most of the paintings is concerned, is pre-planning, or the pre-
conceived formula. In literature, the need for a "realistic explanation
of life" is the conditioning form element. Not only must one examine the
existence of these elements themselves, as I have done, but one must
also look at the way these formal elements control the individual works.

But whatever the conditioning factor is in the nineteenth century,
whether it be psychological, sociological, or formulistic, this factor
changes by the beginning of the twentieth century in both art forms.
Although Dorothy van Ghent, in the following quotation, is defining form
for a good novel of any period, this definition is particularly appro-
priate to the emphasis on form that the twentieth century novel offers.

A novel is one complex pattern, or Gestalt, made up of
component ones. In it inhere such a vast number of traits,
all organized in subordinate systems that function under the
governance of a single meaningful structure that the nearest
similitude for a novel is a "world." This is a useful
similitude because it reflects the rich multiplicity of the
novel's elements and, at the same time, the unity of the novel
as a self-defining body. The novel's planetary orbit lies
through different minds and different generations of minds,
each exerting its special pushes and pulls upon the novel's
substance, each interpreting it according to the different
spiritual constitution of each.12

Just as in the nineteenth century, twentieth century novels
retain the basic philosophical impulse that conditions the form, that of
realism or the desire of the author to investigate the life of which he
is a part. But this realistic form has three basic elements that dis-
tinguish it from the nineteenth century's dual approach through

12 Dorothy van Ghent, The English Novel: Form and Function, New
psychology and sociology. Although these elements still exist as part of the twentieth century novelist's consideration, three new elements appear in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. First there is the autobiographical impulse, which arises out of an intense desire for self-analysis on the part of the author, an often merciless probing and dissection of character and motives. This is a technique which begins, as in Joyce, with genuine autobiography but can easily be extended to give the analysis of other characters the flavor of stark authenticity which is the greatest virtue of this element. Autobiography involves the use of the first person singular as narrator, a device that was widely used in the nineteenth century. But with a considerable difference, because the earlier narrators, even if they were closely bound up with the action—and often they were not—were little inclined towards introspective self-analysis. The first person was a device to gain sympathy, but prolonged dwelling on the character of the narrator would be immodest. The sections of *Bleak House* labeled "Esther's Narrative" are a case in point. What we learn of her character and personality comes to us not directly but by reading between the lines.

The second new device appearing in Joyce is the use of word association patterns, i.e., language itself as a creator of reality, as in the following passage from the *Portrait of the Artist*:

A wave of fire swept through his body: the first. Again a wave. His brain began to glow. Another. His brain was simmering and bubbling within the cracking tenement of the
skull. Flames burst forth from his skull like a corolla, shrieking like voices: --Hell! Hell! Hell! Hell! Hell! Hell!...

The third, and probably most striking of the new elements, is the use of the stream of consciousness technique or, as Joyce calls it, "interior monologue." This device, in its developed state, is best exemplified by Joyce's later book *Ulysses*, in such passages as the following soliloquy:

Yes because He Never Did a Thing Like That Before As Ask To get his breakfast in bed with a couple of eggs since the City Arms hotel when he used to be pretending to be laid up with a sick voice doing his highness to make himself interes­ting to that old faggot Mrs Riordan that he thought he had a great leg of and she never left us a farthing all for masses for herself and her soul greatest miser ever was actually afraid to lay out 4d for her methylated spirit telling me all her ailments she had too much old hat in her about politics and earthquakes and the end of the world

This complete lack of syntax and running phrases together in an effort to capture the actual inner workings of the human mind is, in its developed form, entirely Joyce's contribution to modern style, though there are certain nineteenth century antecedents. Stendhal, for instance, did a good deal to develop the idea of an inner dialogue, usually in the form of unspoken thoughts which run parallel to a spoken conversation. There are also certain elements of his style which point to the twentieth century. He often uses a disjointed grammatical sequence and abrupt breaks to show breaks in thought, even when there are none in the action, so that a certain sense of spontaneity of thought is conveyed by the seemingly uncontrived style. And the first three paragraphs of

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Dickens' *Pickwick Papers* describe a London fog in a page-and-a-half of word-impressions piled one on top of the other without a single complete sentence. This is description, not interior monologue, but the unsyn-tactical structure suggests the workings of the mind nevertheless.

Style-conscious writers following Joyce eagerly took up each of these devices. In Ernest Hemingway's story "A Clean Well-Lighted Place," the autobiographical impulse is apparent as a means to probe to the inner core of a man:

Turning off the electric light he continued the conversation with himself. It is the light of course but it is necessary that the place be clean and pleasant. You do not want music. Certainly you do not want music. Nor can you stand before a bar with dignity although that is all that is provided for these hours. What did he fear? It was not fear or dread. It was a nothing that he knew too well. It was all a nothing and a man was nothing too. It was only that and light was all it needed and a certain cleanness and order. Some lived in it and never felt it but he knew it was all nada y pues nada y naday pues nada. Our nada who art in nada, nada be thy name they kingdom nada thy will be nada in nada as it is in nada. Give us this nada, our daily nada and nada us our nada as we nada our nadas and nada us not into nada but deliver us from nada; pues nada. Hail nothing full of nothing, nothing is with thee.  

Here the autobiographical probing moves away from the character of the author himself and also from the use of the first person. Though we may speak of three separate devices, in practice they tend to combine and interrelate. Hemingway's words themselves here are a forceful creator of reality with an ironic wallop achieved by the reiteration of the word nada and its projection onto the form of the Lord's Prayer. And it would seem to be the autobiographical impulse which directs the use of

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the stream of consciousness technique to begin with. Hemingway's version of this technique is illustrated in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, when Jordan, the wounded hero of the book, lies waiting to ambush the enemy and die:

> Think about Montana. I can't. Think about Madrid. I can't. Think about a cool drink of water. All right. That's what it will be like. Like a cool drink of water. You're a liar. It will just be nothing. That's all it will be. Just nothing. Then do it. Do it. Do it now. It's all right to do it now. Go on and do it now. No, you have to wait. What for? You know all right. Then wait.16

The inherent simplicity of Hemingway's words, their conversational effect, their relationship to life as it is felt, their quality of understatement, combines them into relationships and patterns which serve to unite the total statement of each of his books into a unity of form. A recognition of the power and effectiveness of such simple word relationships is one of Hemingway's main contributions to the form of the twentieth century.

Another American novelist who contributes to the development of style in the contemporary novel is William Faulkner. But if Hemingway's contribution is the value of simplicity, Faulkner's is the richness of complexity. In a later chapter I will deal with one of his novels in some detail, but at present I should like to show, by a single example, how Faulkner uses the Joycean techniques of autobiographical analysis, word association, and the stream of consciousness:

> He reached town and went to the corner where she had told him to wait. It was a quiet corner and he was quite early, thinking I will have to remember. To let her show me what

16 Ernest Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, New York, 1940, p. 470.
to do and how to do it and when. To not let her find out that I don't know, that I will have to find out from her.

This quotation from *Light in August* begins descriptively with the correct punctuation and grammar—with periods and sentences with subject, verb, and object—but then he moves into the interior monologue. The rhythmic beat is short, instantaneous, erratic. There is no period at the end of the final sentence, and there is no apostrophe in "dont." There is conveyed the sense of a man's quick succession of thoughts, the spontaneity and almost instantaneous quality of them, and it is through the compact structuring of the words that the reader feels this. The language creates the reality here, rather than merely reporting about reality. The language conjures up, without description, the image of the kind of man who might think this way. He is worried and apprehensive, and the language itself suggests these qualities. The repeated use of "I will" or "I don't" accentuates the autobiographical or introspective note. All together, the lack of syntax, the short jumpy rhythm, and the words themselves suggest the kind of man this is.

In the vast melting pot of American literature there appears a tradition of writing, set apart from that of the authors we have just been discussing, which, by the sheer weight of the number of its adherents, exerts a considerable influence on form, as it has since the beginning of the century. This has been referred to as the naturalistic school. A large part of the intention of these writers can be traced directly to Balzac and Zola, who tried in as comprehensive a way as

possible to delineate clinically the physical existence of the things
that constitute the appearance of our society. As a group these authors
make only partial use of the great formal approaches to their craft
developed in Joyce, Hemingway, Faulkner, and Fitzgerald. They tend to
fall into two groups: one deals with the rise of the small town,
generally in midwestern America; the other deals with life in the great
metropolitan centers of America. The first group, called the regional-
ists, comprises writers such as Sherwood Anderson, Sinclair Lewis, Willa
Cather and John Steinbeck. The second group includes such writers as
Theodore Dreiser, John Dos Passos, James T. Farrell and Saul Bellow.
Also associated with this latter group are Ralph Ellison and James
Baldwin, writers who deal primarily with racial problems, regardless of
locale. Many of the novels of these authors, like Farrell's Studs
Lonigan and Dreiser's The Financier, have the autobiographical flavor,
and in Dos Passos' trilogy U.S.A. all the characters are presented by
autobiographical accounts. And certainly the language is descriptive
enough, as this passage from Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio indicates:

Wash Williams spat forth a succession of vile oaths. "Yes,
she is dead," he agreed. "She is dead as all women are dead.
She is a living-dead thing, walking in the sight of men and
making the earth foul by her presence." Staring into the
boy's eyes, the man became purple with range. "Don't have fool
notions in your head," he commanded. "My wife, she is dead;
yes, surely. I tell you, all women are dead, my mother, your
mother, that tall dark woman who works in the millinery store
and with whom I saw you walking about yesterday,—all of them,
they are all dead."19

The feeling of reality connoted here by Anderson's use of the word "dead"
is powerful. And a writer like Ralph Ellison, in the Invisible Man, may

present a surrealistic dream sequence in a manner related to the stream of consciousness technique.

That night I found myself hearing not only in time, but in space as well. I not only entered the music but descended like Dante, into its depths. And beneath the swiftness of the hot tempo there was a slower tempo and a cave and I entered it and looked around and heard an old woman singing a spiritual as full of Weltenschmerz as flamenco, and beneath that lay a still lower level on which I saw a beautiful girl the color of ivory pleading in a voice like my mother's as she stood before a group of slave owners who bid for her naked body, and below that I found a lower level and a more rapid tempo and I heard someone shout: "Brothers and sisters, my text this morning is the 'Blackness of Blackness.'"20

But although we can find all of the new stylistic elements introduced by Joyce in naturalistic fiction, they are used for a different purpose than the one formulated by Joyce. To return to Dorothy van Ghent's presentation of the gestalt concept, in which she says that a novel is one complex pattern which is made up of many component ones, we find that in Joyce and Faulkner the component ideas do indeed resolve into a larger gestalt pattern. But in naturalistic fiction these component elements exist separately; nothing emerges from their grouping to make up a larger totality of relationship. The images remain isolated, so the gestalt unity cannot develop. For instance, in the Dos Passos trilogy one finds little correspondence between one isolated segment of autobiography to another, or from one "newsreel" image to another, or from one "camera eye" segment to another. It is true that the segments are repeated again and again at the beginnings of new stories or new chapters, but mere repetition is not sufficient to create relationships

which would enable all the devices to interrelate or close with one another. The same problem exists in *Studs Lonigan*, which is the long and tedious account of how an adolescent Irish boy is never able to account for, control, or be a part of his environment, which is described in such clinical detail that even Balzac might be tempted to scream. Unwittingly, and ironically, by that same insatiable need of the naturalist to report every possible environmental fact, the environment as a factor in the formal ordering of relationships becomes inconsequential and loses its power to affect the whole structure.

But formal structure is not important to the naturalists. Their purpose, as stated by Farrell himself, centers on his hope that the work will "be a source of new insight for some readers, and a stimulation for a quickened sympathy, as distinct from sentimentality, in reference to all of those problems, confusions, feelings and emotions which are part of the condition of youth in the recent past and the present." In short, the naturalist is interested in people as he thinks they really are. He is interested in environment with its sociological implications as he thinks it really is. He is not interested in putting these things together to form an artistic unity which will make them take on a value quite apart from life. For him it is life first and art second, if at all. In Farrell, it is not at all. The same subordination of art and form to life is characteristic of Wyeth and the naturalistic school of American painting with which he is allied.

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The great analogy between the development of the novel and the development of painting lies in the degree to which each is able to emerge into total gestalt relationships. The twentieth century novel differs from the nineteenth century novel only in the means by which this gestalt is arrived at. This is also true in painting.

It is difficult to make specific analogies between painting and literature, but from a structural standpoint stream of consciousness in literature may be equated with planar consciousness in painting on the basis of the awareness, on the part of either the writer or the painter, of structural values which are directly instrumental to the effect of form itself. Planar art forces the viewer to become intimately involved in the form elements, such elements as color-shapes and lines, as they serve to structure the total entity of the painting. In literature, stream of consciousness similarly forces the reader to become more intimately concerned with the process, which acts as a conditioning force over the expression of ideas and which itself creates the total formal effect. Language, the motif of the writer, and color, the motif of the painter, therefore share similar functions, as they are the "process agents" most closely involved in attaining the gestalt of the twentieth century.
WILLIAM FAULKNER

The writer who best illustrates the literary gestalt of this century is William Faulkner, so for a more intensive analysis of literary structure I have selected one of his novels, Absalom, Absalom. Also, I feel that his approach to writing most clearly relates to my approach to painting, so that a comparison can be made.

In Absalom, Absalom, the evolving narrative conditions the characterization, but within this context there also exists a continuing and enduring environmental influence which conditions the action or inaction of the characters. It is a complex system of threads woven together to form the kind of unified gestalt Dorothy van Ghent talks about. The novel arrives at its richest meaning through its structural completeness.

Harvey Breit writes of it in the Modern library edition:

The travails are there. The key is pitched high, so high that Faulkner attempts to offset it by the Canadian Shreve's wintery blasts. The story is handed round in space from narrator to narrator something as a football is by a skillfully deceptive backfield; and it is handed round in time, so that the focus shifts without warning from the son's time to the father's time to the grandfather's time. The technique employed in relating the narrative is that of a system of screens and obstacles, "of deliberately withheld meaning," as Conrad Aiken wrote, "of progressive and partial and delayed disclosure." And the endless, unsyntactical, nefarious sentences are here to challenge and plague and puzzle and dazzle.

But these travails are transformed into triumphs. The sustained, high key, it turns out, is justified by the events, and casts, as well, a luminous, lyric unity over the colossal panorama. The story gains as each narrator contributes his special fact and sense to what was a painfully secret history; and as each observation falls into place the mass begins to coalesce and the structure to rear toward dramatic completeness.
(It is to my mind the most structurally perfect of Faulkner's novels, as well as one of his greatest.) The system of obstacles is precisely the means by which one ultimately learns the truth; it is also the way in which one tells a story not only in order to impart its chronology of discovery, but to give accent to the way in which the story was dredged up, fragment by fragment, out of the remote past. The unsyntactical sentences retard and surround and engage the reader so that he not only remembers more and experiences more but becomes susceptible to the pulsating, strong rhythms of Faulkner's world.

The unsyntactical sentence structure Breit speaks of is related to the stream of consciousness technique which was discussed in the last chapter. An analogy with twentieth century painting can be drawn here, since the syntactical sentence, in its regularity of style and chronology of grammatical correctness is similar to the preconceived system that primarily characterized painting up to Cezanne. Whereas the unsyntactical sentence structure relates to the new approach to shape relationships seen in Cezanne, in Picasso's Cubism, and seen in Faulkner in the following illustration:

To become once more for a period without boundaries or location in time, mindless, and irrational companion and inmate of a body which, even after four years, with a sort of dismal and incorruptible fidelity which is incredibly admirable to me, is still immersed and obliviously bemused in recollections of old peace and contentment the very names of whose scents and sounds I do not know that I remember, which ignores even the presence and threat of a torn arm or leg as though through some secretly incurred and infallible promise and conviction of immortality.

Stream of consciousness is the emerging form of literature. The sentences are not preplanned grammatically according to traditional schema, just as the shape-colors of contemporary paintings are not worked out.

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"grammatically," but are related as they emerge to the sum total of all the parts. The characters in such a system, become emerging form elements, not static characterizations, and Faulkner then proceeds to manipulate them artistically as the artist does shapes in painting.

The human emotions of anger, lust, and incestuous desire are all woven into the environmental symbolism. An example of this is the character of Sutpen. The major character in the book, he is an Old Testament personality, absolute and patriarchal in his ideas. To create a great new culture in the American wilderness, he hires a French architect to build an incredible Greek revival mansion in Mississippi. The formality, balance and dignity which the architect is supposed to give to the mansion are the qualities Sutpen earnestly desires to cultivate. The building of the mansion becomes a physical manifestation of these desires, which serve to make up the total "configuration" of the character. Sutpen's is the great autobiography here, and this greater autobiography controls the lesser autobiographies of the other characters. Yet the influence also works the other way around, for the lesser characterizations contribute to the evolution of Sutpen's greater one as well. This reciprocity is analogous to the reciprocal influence of shape configurations and total structure in painting.

To carry this analogy further, within the configurational organization is the narrative element, which serves as a line may serve in painting to help interrelate the configurations together. The narrative here is about Sutpen's two sons, one of whom is illegitimate. The illegitimate one, not aware at first who his father is, falls in love with Sutpen's daughter, who would receive him if she could. She also is unaware of the relationship. Sutpen seeks to prevent their union, by
having the legitimate son kill his half-brother with Sutpen's aid. Because Sutpen's great idea is to build his house and establish his family on a solid foundation, he fears incest, as a symbol of decay and destruction, even more than the guilt of murder.

The plot as it unravels is told by observers in the first person, including Sutpen and his sons and daughter, who are also simultaneously revealed through each other's eyes in order to intensify their emotional frustrations and desires. This is structurally important, as the first person acts as a kind of linear thread designed to merge each complex pattern of elements, the psychological, the environmental, and the symbolic, into a totality. There is no chronological time sequence, no beginning or end. There is no present setting but only a great and involved series of flashbacks which describe particular situations.

Only the most necessary physical description, of such objects as the staircase, above which the act of murder is committed, is used. Beneath it are characters who suspect what has happened, or is happening, or will be happening, depending upon which time reference is operating at the moment. Because of the repetition of the staircase scene, it appears that the action of the narrative arrives at its focal point here. The murder takes place in a room above the stairs. The reader looks at the staircase through the eyes of one person, then another, and yet another; but the reader neither goes up the staircase nor comes down it. He cannot because the characters do not. The staircase symbol is of utmost significance as far as Faulkner's structural method is concerned because it serves to merge the reactions, opinions and feelings of each of the characters together to form one configuration of thought, apart
from a chronological time context, but indicative of the all-over meaning of the theme.

All of Faulkner’s structural elements interpenetrate one another. It is difficult to separate them into categories because the forms emerge as interrelated entities which cannot be separated without breaking up the total feeling. The action is totally instrumental to the flash-back device and to the characterization. The environment is suggested just enough to give the characters direction in what they say and feel about themselves and each other. Flash-back, characterization and environment revolve around the father image of Sutpen, seeking like Abraham to establish a new civilization in the wilderness for his tribe. And the unspoken references to David remind us of the strong puritanical strain, also Old Testament in origin, with its obsessive fear of sin, especially incestuous sin. The total incapacity of the characters to communicate directly with each other implies and lends strength to this fear. Anything direct and simple in approach is certainly not a part of Faulkner’s structural conception. The suggestion and implication motifs, that have to do with characterization and environment, and that develop as part of his emerging form, would be completely broken up if the elements were not carried through the book from beginning to end. One does not know Sutpen until one has witnessed the action, felt the environmental atmosphere, understood the implied symbolism: in short, read the entire book. Nothing is left separate or out of thematic context with all the other elements. The book is a form of Cubism or interpenetration of planes. In painting, it is the visual plane which dominates, but in literature it is the plane of symbolic language.
I find that I can only use the entire work of *Absalom, Absalom* as an example of my main argument, and not any individual passages. Just as Faulkner's characters, taken individually, mean relatively little to the reader, so do individual passages taken from their context. Each passage is merely a part of some larger element; none of them stands well by itself structurally. Only the sum total of all the passages in the book seems to make it resolve. At this point, moreover, it should be made clear that I am not comparing my painting with the novels of Faulkner from the standpoint of subject matter or symbols. There is little analogy here. But I do see structural similarities both in intention and resolution. None of my images needs to compare with Faulkner's for this to be true. I probably do not see a church, for example, the way Faulkner sees one or might write about one. It is not the specific images which we handle similarly but the structure of relationships. Granted that my relationships are plastic and visual and his are literary and conceptual; granted that his staircase is a symbolic literary configuration instrumental to the literary dictates of his medium, whereas the old king image in my painting *Old King and His Bird*, Plate 1, is a visual configuration; but in Faulkner the staircase becomes an emerging structural device just as my color shapes or "kings" become emerging structural devices. Like the novel, my painting does not begin in a specific place or time, nor does it end in a specific place or time. In fact there is no specific place on the canvas, nor any specific time.

Simply because all the elements mentioned in Faulkner and in my painting are called structural, I do not mean to imply that they lack specific subject matter meanings. The total meaning which evolves or
emerges from the final resolution is the summation of the meanings of the images as well. But the total meaning, regardless of what shapes or images I use in my painting and what particular verbal passages Faulkner uses, reaches final completeness by the way it is structured. I suspect that Faulkner does not fully realize, before he begins a novel like *Absalom, Absalom*, with all its complexity in relationship, just what the total effect ultimately will be. Only while in the actual process of writing the book can he preserve the rich and complex pattern of relationships between the specific meaning and the structure of that meaning, because each must become so completely a part of the other in the process of creating. This is the emerging form or process-in-conception idea which makes Faulkner's work so much a part of the twentieth century gestalt.
MY APPROACH TO PAINTING

My approach to painting evolves out of the twentieth century tradition of planarity, color, and the dynamics of emerging form, as developed from the beginning of the century by the Cubists and Expressionists and later carried to more sophisticated levels by the Abstract-expressionists. I recognize that these elements do not constitute the total aspect of mine. Further, I am aware of the many variables of complexity that have to do with the psychological and sociological interests that are often a part of a work of art. De Kooning's attitude toward woman, for example, may play a large part in the consequent resolution of his paintings of women. But the subjective attitudes and life experiences that are brought to the work of art are not my concern here. Structure alone is my concern. And it is precisely those structural elements of planarity, color, and dynamism that most distinguish my work, as part of the expression of this century, from that of other works which are part of the expression of other centuries.

From the very beginning of my painting process my interest in planarity is expressed through the selection of hard-surfaced panels or through the stretching of canvas against a wall. In my mind "hardness" equates itself with "flatness," and this in turn makes me conscious of the interesting possibilities inherent in planar organization.

Since the structure in my painting is predicated on the principle of emerging form—that is, form that "evolves" out of the actual process
of painting a picture, it necessarily follows that this form, to be significant, must derive its energy from within itself. Planarity, which concerns the interrelationship of various planes of color, set in juxtaposition to each other, but still conditioned by the effect of the whole picture plane, is therefore one of the three most important elements from which I derive this energy. In Plate 2 the planes of color are set at certain key points in juxtaposition with each other by virtue of their varying hues and values and by virtue of their size and placement. Sometimes these planes overlap each other (overlay) to form specific unities, but regardless of the "action" of the planes in relationship to each other, they all relate to the planar element, which constitutes the size and shape of the painting surface itself.

The second element which gives to my painting the energy necessary to form a dynamic expression is color. I use the primary colors first, as ground colors, because doing this gives me maximum opportunity to expand in variation and contrast. In red, yellow, and blue I have the greatest possible chromatic range. If I worked from analogous colors I would be limiting myself to a lesser range of color. If you begin with close relationships of color, you must stay within those same close relationships throughout the work, in order to gain any kind of resolution. Therefore I work from the greatest possible range of hues in order to get the greatest possible dynamics—they are instrumental to the phenomenon of feedback, which is critical for subsequent color choices. In other words, if you work with analogous colors, which are colors close to each other in value, instead of with chromatic colors, which are far apart in value, there is less opportunity to exploit the possibilities of the full color scale. But if you turn the process
around and work chromatically, in terms of hues rather than tints of analogous color, the total range of the color spectrum can be more fully realized.

In Plate 3 I have exploited the total dynamic possibilities of the red, yellow and blue primaries. Here I have created three basic ground areas: the red at the bottom of the picture, the yellow in the center, and the blue at the top. Each ground area is brushed across the vertical painting from right to left. The grounds are thinly painted and transparent. They bring out textural qualities inherent in the canvas skin itself. Within each ground I have created "figure" shapes, shapes that are smaller than the ground shapes and that interrelate within themselves but at the same time are conditioned by the "mother shape" or ground shape. These shapes, when combined, show a great range of hues and values. Within the red ground, for example, one finds shapes that are tan, green, brown, yellow and red. These colors, with their variety and complexity, interrelate pictorially in order to create excitement and interest.

After establishing the primary hues, I work repeatedly with black and white. Black as opposed to white, although creating less potential energy of contrast than the contrast found in color-hue juxtaposition, nevertheless is a dramatic source of pictorial energy. Combine this range with the primary hue range and one is immediately set to form the greatest possible range in handling the formal elements. As I proceed, as Plate 4 shows, I move from primary and black and white extremes to more analogous and neutral relationships. I do not move from the neutral to the primary, but always from the primary to the neutral and then back
Neutral colors serve to relieve intensities realized by too much hue contrast. But the structure itself must be chromatic; that is, it must be conceived in terms of the hue. Too much neutrality weakens the dynamics I am after.

The third structural element primarily used in my approach to painting may be described as the "dynamics of shape configuration," or dynamism. The causal element in shape configuration, the element which "activates" the shapes to interrelate pictorially, is called "closure."\(^1\) Closures can be formed in the following ways: by creating a similarity of size of one shape to another and by creating a similarity of hues and values; by forming bracketing groups of shapes in partial contrast to other groups; and by partially overlapping shapes with other shapes (overlay). A total closure, that is a shape completely circumscribed by a line, would tend to isolate one configuration from another, so it is well to allow the shapes to be partially incomplete as separate entities. The quality of incompleteness in itself tends to cause shapes to interpenetrate each other. In Plate 3 each shape "closes" with the others and the whole group of shapes in turn close with the encompassing area. Without the ground, which forces the closure to take place, and without the closure of this particular red ground with the other two ground areas, the entire canvas would fall apart into a series of isolated areas. The same principle of closure is also taking place within the other two ground areas. Finally, all of these elements are further unified by black lines which form closures in themselves as well as with

\(^1\)This is a broad interpretation of the closure phenomena in the Wertheimer categories of visual organization.
the ground areas. The line, which also changes color at various points, extends up and down vertically and holds the horizontal ground areas, with all their textural and "figure" variation together.

Using Plate 5 as an example, I will describe the process of emerging form as it relates to the dynamics of shape configuration. This painting was initially set up in a very active and dynamic manner. It was composed of a great number of complex shapes and lines that tended to overlap each other. The Key was of the highest pitch. But in the initial stage the colors and textural areas failed to "lock up" or "close" with each other to a point where the entire work would be unified. In the second state, Plate 6, I further overlapped the shapes deliberately and rationally to unify them. This created a third or "union" shape which tended to complicate the work even further. To make up for this I tried to extend the ground somewhere else and to simplify other areas. I introduced a linear pattern in order to help unite the forms. This again tended to add new shapes and they also had to be compensated for. I next added bright hues that were flat and without any value modulation and I developed neutral areas. Over the bright hues and the neutral areas I painted thin washes of color. This glazing was not to refine the color, although careful glazing does do that, nor to create transparencies, though indeed this does happen, nor simply to enrich the surface, which also occurs, but to get back into the dynamics of the picture as a whole. The tempo of application was quickened; the strokes became less deliberate and more spontaneous throughout. Glazing made its contribution to the property of planarity. At the same time I used the roller to bring up the surface quality and to merge planes.
Each additional element, whether it be new color shapes, linear patterns, or glaze and roller effects, must "close" or interpenetrate with the others. This entire process of closure: destruction of, compensation for, and rehabilitation of forms, constitutes the emerging form concept. The resolution of this dynamism or growth and destruction process results in the completed painting.

Some of these shape configurations assume a naturalistic image in the initial stages, as in Plate 1. This image suggests other image relationships and in the course of the painting process they emerge along with the shapes themselves. When this occurs, abstract shapes and the images become one single configuration. They are treated simultaneously in relationship to their separate spheres. For the resolution of the abstract shapes and the image configurations must occur simultaneously, so that each becomes an integral part of the other. The figures of the king and the bird, while retaining their identity, become shape configurations instrumental and united to their formal requirements. One cannot resolve the image itself in terms of a specific meaning, without resolving the total configuration of formal values within which the specific meaning must exist.

Although limited to value and lacking the energy of color, drawing and printmaking contribute to the extent and variety of my artistic production. Drawing is often resolved in the initial stages of the dynamics. To have to go back into a drawing time after time usually results in a loss of spontaneity and freedom. And it is these two qualities that I most consider indigenous to the essential character of my work. The drawing, Plate 7, was created within the dynamics of the
initial stage. I actually threw a pan of ink-wash onto the paper as it was hanging on the wall to create the large black mass that afterwards reminded me of the sound of a huge organ or of a large choir singing one of the Mozart masses. After this black shape configuration was set up, I "attacked" the paper with the brush and very quickly proceeded to control the dripping wash and to paint in solid areas where needed. The act of throwing the ink wash, and the resulting spontaneous quality is effectively handled by the subsequent controlling action. This action gives direction and control to the initial spontaneous effect.

Although some of the prints are concerned with subject matter, the formal aspects of structure are not omitted but are used as instrumental to expression. In Plate 8, for example, an attitude I have about certain kinds of people is expressed. This attitude draws much of its inspiration from the Die Brücke group of the German Expressionists, but the form or structure of the shape configurations comprising the subject is the primary concern. And when the work is abstract or without subject matter, I am all the more interested in concerns intrinsic to structure.

In printmaking this concern is merged with the quality of the print itself. Plate 9 shows how the quality of the etching print manifests itself in the burn line engraved in metal. This quality of the engraved line, as seen also in Plate 10, is merged into the total pictorial concern.

Figure-ground relationships are critical to black and white drawings just as they are to drawings in color. In black and white drawings the figure dominates the ground or the reverse is true. The
black and white areas in each, however, are related to the effect of the entire picture plane. In Plate 11 the black configuration is done with ink and wash. It controls all the variation found within it. This configuration in turn is worked out in contrast, but is still related to the tonal areas which similarly control the figure elements. This is a very complex drawing. But it holds structurally because all the many small shapes, lines, scrapings, and tints are bound to the ground shapes which in turn are bound to the total pictorial statement.

Thus my approach to painting, drawing and printmaking belongs well within the twentieth century movement of form that emerges while in process of conception. The form is not preconceived or planned out before the actual process begins. It involves the idea of gestalt totality that can be seen not only in the most significant painting of the twentieth century, but in the most significant literary efforts as well. Emerging form has as its chief value, as I produce paintings, the opportunity, inherent in the process, to exploit painting problems as they arise in an infinite number of directions regardless whether the problems are involved with subject matter speculation or with pure form. It enables me, along with other artists, to cope with the total "gestalt" complexities of the twentieth century.

In conclusion let me quote Frank Lloyd Wright, whose remarks here seem particularly pertinent to the thesis of this study:

As to the logic of the plan it is easy to see there can be none except as the result of integrated scale; materials and building method clearly articulate. But with all that
logically set, all the more, there is the important human equation at work in every move that is made. The architect weaves into every part, as each step is taken, his sense of the whole. He articulates, emphasizes, and finally emerges triumphant with what the man loves.²

THE FOLLOWING TWENTY PLATES ARE
REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES OF
MY PAINTING, DRAWING,
AND PRINTMAKING
PLATE 1. OLD KING AND HIS BIRD OIL
PLATE 4 MADONNA OIL
PLATE 5 TRIPTYCH (FIRST STATE) OIL

PLATE 6 TRIPTYCH (SECOND STATE) OIL
PLATE 7 CHORALE WASH DRAWING
PLATE 16 CARNIV ECLIPSE OIL
PLATE 18  CITYSCAPE II  OIL
PLATE 17  THE FOUR SEASONS  OIL
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