Cézanne Becoming Cézanne: The Influence of Stendhal on the Painter's Theory and Practice after 1878

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Abstract

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This thesis analyzes Cézanne's paintings from around the date 1878 and the impact of the text by Stendhal, *L'Histoire de la Peinture en Italie*, on Cézanne's theory and practice. Interpreting Cézanne's paintings from 1878 in light of this connection, offers a new understanding of the shift that occurred in Cézanne's oeuvre with his invention of the "constructive brushstroke" method. With this shift Cézanne broke with the Impressionist style and became the painter celebrated by many as the father of modernist painting in the 20th century.

Stendhal has been overlooked by most Cézanne scholars and certainly has never been seen as essential to the painter's process of developing the "constructive brushstroke." In three chapters, I will include key insights from Cézanne scholarship, Cézanne's own thoughts on painting and their impact on his art. Discussed in tandem with the Stendhal connection, these observations can deepen the understanding of Cézanne's theory and practice

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Introduction

"[…] all paintings are contemporary. Hence the immediacy of their testimony. Their historical moment is literally there before our eyes. Cézanne made a similar observation from the painter's point of view. 'A minute in the world's life passes! To paint it in its reality, and forget everything for that! To become that minute, to be the sensitive plate…give the image of what we see, forgetting everything that has appeared before our time…'"[1]

The modern painter Paul Cézanne (1839-1906) is best known for his structured method of painting and his ambition to capture his immediate observations, as John Berger's quotation indicates. With his modulation of color and parallel brushstrokes and the organization of pictorial structure toward a "culminating point" in his pictures, Cézanne dismantled the longstanding tradition of one-point perspective. I ask in this thesis: what inspired Cézanne's innovations? In his early period, approximately 1866-67, Cézanne worked in the *couillarde* (literally "ballsy") style, applying paint in buttery swathes with a palette knife, and he worked as an Impressionist painter between 1870 and 1878. It was in 1878 that he broke away from these two methods and began his mature phase, developing his characteristic "constructive brush stroke," an organized method of painting in discrete, aligned patches of color. With this shift Cézanne became Cézanne, a painter celebrated by many as the father of modernist painting in the 20th century. Cézanne scholars have not thoroughly explained what may have inspired this change. I propose that Cézanne's shift in 1878 was deeply indebted to his reading of Marie-Henri Beyle/Stendhal's 1817 *Histoire de la Peinture en Italie*.[2] Cézanne scholars have missed the importance of this text and, as a result, the effect Cézanne's reading of the text may have had on his paintings from the late 1870's, remains unexamined. In this thesis I argue that Stendhal's

[1] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: BBC Corporation, 1972), 31.
[2] A largely un-translated text in French of more than five hundred pages.

book was a seminal inspiration for Cézanne's significant shift in 1878 to a style and method entirely his own.

The only scholar to note the connection between Stendhal's book and Cézanne's writing is Robert Ratcliffe, whose unpublished dissertation of 1960 compares a few short passages in Stendhal's text with Cézanne's letters, but omits any mention of key aspects that relate to Cézanne's theory of art developed in the late 1870's, and he stops completely short of examining any impact on his paintings.[3] Other Cézanne scholars, for example Richard Shiff, have footnoted Cézanne's declarative admiration for Stendhal's text, but with no examination beyond a minimal reference to Ratcliffe's dissertation.[4] The lack of any analysis of the impact of Stendhal on Cézanne's theory and practice of painting in the late 1870's, a crucial moment for the painter, warrants the pursuit of this thesis.

The foundation (and inspiration) of this project originates from Cézanne's own words. Cézanne's letters offer important insights into the painter's thought processes. In a letter of November 20th 1878 to Emile Zola that will play a pivotal role in my thesis, Cézanne describes his enthusiasm (with his rare use of an exclamation point) for Stendhal's book:

> I bought a very curious book, it is a mass of observations of a subtlety that often escapes me, I feel, but what anecdotes and true facts! And people *comme il faut* call the author paradoxical. It is a book by Stendhal: '*Histoire de la Peinture en Italie'*, you have no doubt read it, if not, allow me to draw your attention to it.—I had read it in 1869, but had read it badly, I am re-reading it for the third time.[5]

[3] Richard W. Ratcliffe, "Cézanne's Working Methods and Their Theoretical Background" (PhD diss., University of London, 1960).
[4] Shiff wrote "Robert Ratcliffe has recorded numerous correspondences between the statements of Cézanne and Stendhal" in *Cézanne and the end of impressionism: A Study of the Theory, Technique, and Critical Evaluation of Modern Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), footnote 16, 294.
[5] John Rewald, *Paul Cézanne Letters* (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1976), 172.

Stendhal's book was obviously important to the painter, since he admits to having read it multiple times throughout his life. But with this third or fourth reading in 1878, Cézanne describes having an epiphany, a moment of deeper insight derived from the text. In this thesis I will examine some of Cézanne's key statements that demonstrate the impact of Stendhal's writing on the painter, particularly insights that proved crucial to the shift in the paintings after 1878.

My analysis requires a rethinking of scholarship that has overlooked Cézanne's connection to Stendhal. In addition, few scholars have examined the possible cause of Cézanne's 1878 shift; Mary Thompkins-Lewis and Lawrence Gowing are exceptions. Yet many scholars (for example Jonathan Crary and Meyer Schapiro) examine aspects of Cézanne's theory and practice of painting which, I argue, allow for links to Stendhal's text thus warrant a broader context for this scholarship. In three chapters, I will include key insights from Cézanne scholarship, Cézanne's own thoughts on painting and their impact on his art, particularly after 1878. Discussed in tandem with the Stendhal connection, these observations can deepen the understanding of Cézanne's theory and practice.

Chapter One, "Stendhal," will profile Marie-Henri Beyle, who wrote under the pen name Stendhal, and his impact on the arts in the early 19th century. This chapter will focus on Stendhal's life experiences which informed his opinions about the theory and practice of art. among them his work in the Louvre museum, his experience as a soldier in Napoleon's army, and his views of Romanticism which impacted painters such as, Delacroix, and writers such as Baudelaire. Stendhal's writing style also prefigured the Realist movement in many ways, in particular with his pursuit of appealing to a broad public struggling, in his view, to relate to the arts of the 19th century in a post Revolutionary-France.

Having established these important aspects of Stendhal's life, this thesis will then have a foundation to investigate Stendhal's impact on Cézanne. Chapter Two, "Cézanne's Theory," will examine the significant influence of Stendhal's text on Cézanne's thought process about painting by comparing their similar use of language in three subjects: methods of study, his theory of a modern ideal, and sensation. Cézanne's use of the term *sensations* means both "feeling" and "sensation" and will henceforth be cited in the French form indicated by italics. It is crucial to begin with Cézanne's methods of study, because as the painter himself admits, his development was significantly impacted by his studies from the Louvre and nature, a pursuit that Stendhal also advocated for painters. Cézanne's studies helped lead the painter to develop a "modern" ideal that leaned heavily on individual experience and the involvement of the viewer. His increasing individuality as a painter was in part a result of his newfound theory in painting to express his sensations and viewing experience, which became in the late 1870's the credo that maintained to the very end of his life. Building on Ratcliffe's 1960 dissertation, I will demonstrate how Cézanne adopted specific terms, (for example, *sensations*) and concepts from Stendhal's text, and the important role that these terms played in his artistic development. Ratcliffe traced Cézanne's repeated declarations of his desire to express "feeling" in paintings back to Stendhal's text, particularly through the key term *sensation*. This chapter will build upon Ratcliffe's findings to include new comparisons that have not been discussed, as well as offer a contextualization within broader Cézanne scholarship which also discusses this aspect of Cézanne's theory. Lastly, I will examine several of Cézanne's paintings from the late 1870's that show the effects of these significant changes in the painter's theory.

Chapter Three, "Cézanne's Practice," will elaborate on insights into the connection with Stendhal that show direct correlation to the painter's changes in technique and approach to

painting. Cézanne's method of painting exhibits new uses of perspective, color and line, and color modulation, all of which will be discussed with reference to specific paintings centered around 1878. With the development of the constructive brushstroke method Cézanne's practice altered dramatically, and by his own account he ceased to be an Impressionist painter. His method of constructing perspective in a picture was a significant result of developing this new technique of painting. His works began in the late 1870's to construct space from singular points on the canvas, branching out from these points with faceted planes. As a result, Cézanne's objects appear to oscillate between multiple fields of depth. To achieve this new constructive perspective, Cézanne also altered his technique to further balance the utilization of color and line. With the constructive brushstroke, Cézanne blurred the distinction between painting in color patches and painting with lines. The freedom of this new style offered for Cézanne the liberty to paint with the ambition of achieving balance at whatever cost to the object. It was through altering the colors of his objects with an eye on achieving that balance that Cézanne began painting in an altogether unique way. His modulations of color were based purely on his individual experience of viewing his motif, with the aim of capturing the essence of nature as he saw it.

Cézanne's methods and theories are in many ways difficult to capture in writing. Yet, by examining specific aspects of Cézanne scholarship, and Cézanne's own writings and paintings through the lens of Stendhal's text, a shift in the understanding of Cézanne's work can be accomplished. Together these three chapters will demonstrate the importance of Stendhal's *Histoire* to Cézanne's practice in the late 1870's as the painter came into his own.

Chapter 1

Stendhal

Stendhal was one of many pen names used by the writer Marie-Henri Beyle (1783-1842), whose role in the arts was significant in early 19th century France. Born in Grenoble, Stendhal moved to Paris in 1799, and journeyed to Italy soon after. His education in the arts largely came from his travels through Italy, supplemented by his brief time in art school in Paris. These experiences qualified him for a position in Napoleon's army in 1810, as an organizer of the Louvre's art collection in Paris. Just after the fall of Louis XVI, the Louvre became known as an icon of French independence. What had previously been inaccessible by the early 19th century became a public museum. The works of art which had belonged to Louis the XVI now belonged to the public at large, and Stendhal's role was to help organize a vast number of works, and to help decide which works should be shown to the public. These decisions were a major undertaking, considering the vastness of the space and the size of the collection.

No doubt Stendhal's involvement with the Louvre collection helped shape his aesthetic opinion. Stendhal's choosing on behalf of the public put him both in the position of representing and impacting the public at large. Stendhal's decisions likely reflected a revolutionary lens; his writing strongly advocated for the arts of France to reflect the sentiments of revolution. Stendhal's experience at the Louvre likely impacted his first book, *Histoire de la Peinture en Italie*, begun in the year 1812 after his first appointment with the army and reflected his opinions of public sentiments in a post-monarchy France.

After working for Napoleon on the Louvre collection, Stendhal was enlisted to rejoin the army in the march on Russia. Stendhal scholar David Wakefield describes the result:

> In 1812 Stendhal took part in Napoleon's disastrous Russian campaign, an experience which marked him profoundly for the rest of his life. After the collapse of the Empire, he found himself without a job, and to while away the terrible prospect of boredom which suddenly confronted him he started writing in earnest. Back in Milan […] he resumed work on the *Histoire de la Peinture en Italie.* This had begun in 1811, but he had lost the manuscript on the Russian campaign.[6]

Upon returning from the march on Russia, where he lost his manuscript *Histoire,* Stendhal began rewriting the text. Perhaps Stendhal's difficult time in Napoleon's army accounts for the first chapter in which he describes the negative effects of political conquest, a theme which is interspersed throughout the book. Stendhal's writing reflected the early 19th century rising middle class who had lived through the reality of war and who did not see value in perpetuating aspects of narrative (i.e. history) paintings which glorified war through antiquity. In his view, the middle class could not find aesthetic value in the idealization of political conquest as seen in history painting, allegories, or moralizing subjects which were designed for the edification of the public.

Stendhal's fame as a literary writer came later in his life, starting with *Le Rouge et le Noir,* a book well known today as initiating the Realist movement in literary France.[7] Yet, it was between writing *Histoire* and *Le Rouge* that Stendhal garnered fame as an art critic. The number of publications authored by Stendhal (or Beyle) is difficult to specify, as he is known to have published under several pen names. It is also challenging to gauge Stendhal's originality, as scholars generally agree that aspects of his writing show close similarity to multiple writers. However, Wakefield defends Stendhal's originality by stating the following:

> Even though, as Paul Arbelet discovered nearly fifty years ago, a large part of the book [*Histoire de la Peinture en Italie*] is directly or indirectly borrowed from earlier monographs and aesthetic treatises, it is far from being a worthless piece of plagiarism.

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[6] David Wakefield, *Stendhal and the Arts* (New York: Phaidon Publishers, 1973), 4.
[7] Published 1830 in France

> Merely as a collection of textual quotations from other writers, it would be of considerable interest; for Stendhal believed that a theory or idea, if correct is an acquired fact and therefore common property, originality for him being the way old ideas are combined and re-used. [8]

Wakefield presents Stendhal's writing style as an act of borrowing from other authors, a form of re-contextualizing their work, rather than engaging in the act of plagiarism. He explains that Stendhal's opinion is always present in his writing. Both Stendhal's original writing and the plagiarized components of his text culminate in becoming a resource for Cézanne, and therefore require close examination.

In evaluating Stendhal's impact on Cézanne, it is beneficial to consider Stendhal's *Histoire* as a culmination of ideas inspired by many 18th and early 19th century theorists and writers. In other words, Stendhal gave to Cézanne an overview of shifting early 19th century concepts regarding the arts in the single text, *Histoire*. One particular benefit can be seen in Stendhal's borrowing in his writing from the writer Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe [1749-1832]. Goethe acknowledges Stendhal's borrowing in writing: "He knows very well how to use what one reports to him, and above all, he knows very well how to appropriate foreign works. He translates passages from my *Italian Journey* and claims to have heard the anecdote recounted by a marchesina."[9] Goethe's *Italian Journey*, published 1816-17, is known for its dedication to finding a logical process in the arts, a feat that Stendhal pursued as well. Logic for Goethe can be identified in an excerpt from *Italian Journey:* "It is the same with the works of Nature as with works of art: so much has been written about them and yet anyone who sees them can arrange them in fresh patterns […]. Everything is beginning to make a pattern […]. At this stage, one naturally envies the artist, who, through reproducing and imitating these great visions, comes

[8] Wakefield, 8-9.
[9] Marilyn Randall, *Pragmatic Plagiarism: Authorship, Profit, and Power* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 199.

closer to them in every way […].”[10] This text indicates that for Goethe, the finding of logic in the arts came from the establishment of new patterns, which are also seen in nature. In my opinion Stendhal’s text similarly advocates a logical approach to painting rooted in viewing nature directly. Stendhal’s admiration of logic in painting is shown here is his description of Titian’s painting style : “Chez le Titien, la science du coloris consiste en une infinité de remarques sur l’effet des couleurs voisines, sur leurs plus fines différences, en la pratique d’exécuter ces différences.”[11] Stendhal applies Goethe’s ideas of logic in art also to his own analysis of contemporary French painting and his hope for “modern” painting to come into existence. Stendhal in my opinion looked to the past to understand the present with the aim of outlining what art could be in the 19th century. Stendhal writes: “You must either state that beauty has nothing to do with the imitation of Nature, or else agree that since Nature has changed there must be a difference between classical and modern beauty.”[12] Later, Stendhal wrote of his dissatisfaction with his present: “But we have not yet attained *modern* beauty.”[13] Stendhal’s challenge to artists likely was noted by Cézanne, albeit nearly fifty years later.

In addition to Stendhal’s impact on Cézanne in the late 19th century, Stendhal challenged artists contemporary to his time in his writing as an art critic for the *Revue de Paris*, in which he referenced ideas from *Histoire*. In 1824 and 1827, Stendhal published two critical reviews of contemporary art written about French painting at the Salon in Paris. The Salon exhibitions were among the most prestigious of art events in Paris each year. Stendhal’s Salon reviews provided a new venue to express directly his opinions on the subject of contemporary art to the public at large. He largely reprimanded artists who showed their work in the Salon, claiming that they

[10] Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe, *Italian Journey* (New York: Suhrkamp Publishers, 1989), 159-160.
[11] Ratcliffe, 325.
[12] Wakefield, 68.
[13] Wakefield, 87.

continued with a style of the past, history paintings, and instead advocated for artists to be innovative and original and paint in the present. He writes: "As soon as a picture shows me fictitious characters next to real ones", he wrote, "it no longer moves me […]."[14] Stendhal's opposition to history paintings established his position as an early proponent of the new contemporary style, now termed Romanticism. Stendhal discussed his enthusiasm for Romanticism in his Salon reviews of contemporary painters, such as the painter Eugène Delacroix. As an art critic, Stendhal was actively engaging with artists and the public while the Romantic movement was developing. He criticized the public for not demanding a new style of art which was self reflective and modern, as opposed to Neoclassicism, which was rooted in tradition.

Stendhal is better known for his later novels than for his work related to the visual arts, and the contribution he made in his early career to the history of art has largely been overlooked by scholars. Scholar Wakefield is an exception in his focus on Stendhal's role as an art historian in his text *Stendhal and the Arts*. He claims that Stendhal's text "made an important contribution to early nineteenth-century critical theory" and that "the *Salon* of 1824 represents Stendhal's personal contribution to the crucial years of French Romanticism in painting."[15] Wakefield describes the disdain which Stendhal's work as a writer has come under by other Stendhal scholars. He defends Stendhal, noting that the writer did not "[…] claim to be a specialist's critic, but rather a spokesman for the ordinary man of taste…standing for the common spectator's right to express his own views."[16] Wakefield describes Stendhal's role as an art critic and his first-hand glimpse of France in the early part of the century as such:

[14] Wakefield, 56.
[15] Wakefield, 1.
[16] Wakefield, 1-2.

> Between 1820 and 1830 the Romantic movement emerged triumphant in all genres, and Stendhal was actively engaged in the polemics and aesthetic debates of the period. He repeatedly advocated the need for new art forms to suit a new post-Revolutionary era, and even if he was not entirely certain of the direction painting ought to take, he saw the absurdity of trying to perpetuate outmoded forms in the name of tradition. Like most of the other French art critics from Diderot to Zola, Stendhal was always on the look-out for the great artist of the age, although his expectations were never altogether fulfilled.[17]

Stendhal wrote critically about the paintings of Nicolas Poussin [1594-1665], objecting specifically his dedication to pure draftsmanship and his disregard for the Venetian painters. With respect to Jacques Louis David, a painter also dedicated to draftsmanship, who more recently had instigated a major revival of classical values, Stendhal declared that, "artists who imitate his [M. David's] draughtsmanship today are merely copyists…."[18] In contrast, Stendhal promoted the artist Eugène Delacroix in his *Salon* review of 1824, stating that he "has a feeling for colour, which in this century of draughtsmen is saying a lot. I suspect he has studied Tintoretto, and there is movement in his figures."[19] Stendhal's analysis of Delacroix's painting style impressed the painter, who responded in a letter stating, "I have read the article in the *Revue de Paris*. It seems to me extremely good and fair…."[20] Stendhal and Delacroix became friends soon thereafter, according to Delacroix scholar Jean Stewart. Unfortunately, their many exchanges in letters were lost. The effect Stendhal may have had on helping the painter to develop his theory and practice in painting thus cannot be traced. However, it is likely that Stendhal influenced Delacroix, and vice versa, given their similar views on the subject of Romanticism. Both Stendhal and Delacroix also admired many of the same painters, including the 16th century Venetian painters Tintoretto, Paolo Veronese, and Titian, and the Flemish

[17] Wakefield, 2.
[18] Wakefield, 108.
[19] Wakefield, 107.
[20] Jean M. Stewart, *Eugène Delacroix Selected Letters 1813-1863* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1971), 117.

painter Peter Paul Rubens. Delacroix's letters thoroughly describe his affinity for these painters, and his many copies of their work indicate his admiration as well.

In *Histoire* Stendhal also discusses his admiration for these Venetian painters and speaks of their unique qualities in painting as daring to be modern for their time. Both Stendhal and Delacroix agreed that to study from nature was as necessary as studying from the past. They both also criticized Neoclassical styles of art, calling for an increase of subjectivity through observation of immediate *sensations*. More formally, the two agreed upon the importance of shifting away from draftsmanship in favor of colorist practices. Similar to Stendhal's opinion of the arts, Delacroix opted to paint in an individualistic style that had a particular logic of contrasting colors. He used a method of painting in broken brushwork as well as developing a technique of painting similar to weaving brushstrokes through cross-hatching. His works using these methods thus achieved a sense of movement and luminosity due to color contrast and vigorous brushwork. Delacroix highlighted the painter's mark by exposing the brushwork in his process of painting. This process of exposing the materiality of paint most distinctly can be related to Stendhal's advocacy for "truth" in painting as he thought was achieved by implementing colorist techniques.

The significance of Stendhal to Delacroix and Cézanne together has not yet been established, to my knowledge, but a further connection between the two can be made. According to Wakefield, the writer and poet Charles Baudelaire [1821-1867] plagiarized much of his early writings from Stendhal, just as Stendhal recycled Goethe. Wakefield states:

> Some passages in Baudelaire's Salon of 1846 on style and the use of the model in portraiture are even a direct borrowing from Chapter 109 of Stendhal's *Histoire*; not all of this is acknowledged. Another, perhaps more important, section in the same Salon, entitled *What is Romanticism?* is also closely inspired by Stendhal's example in the *Histoire* and in *Racine et Shakespeare*, where Romanticism is consistently equated with modern feeling. Baudelaire writes that Romanticism 'is precisely situated neither in

> choice of subjects, nor in exact truth, but in a mode of feeling'. He concludes: 'For me, Romanticism is the most recent, the latest expression of the beautiful. There are as many kinds of beauty as there are habitual ways of seeking happiness.' The point of all this is not merely to show that Baudelaire was just as good a plagiarist as Stendhal, but that the concept of relativity of beauty, most clearly formulated by Stendhal, had evidently taken a firm hold of Baudelaire's mind.[21]

While Baudelaire has garnered much fame as an art critic, in part for his writing on Romanticism, Stendhal has gained little recognition for his contributions. For example, in Ratcliffe's dissertation on Cézanne, the author briefly notes a link between Stendhal's writing and its potential impact on Cézanne, and later the impact of Baudelaire's writings about Delacroix, but does not connect all these sources. Ratcliffe states: "For a true understanding of Delacroix's work, Cézanne turned to Baudelaire's *'L'Art Romantique."*[22] If Ratcliffe had acknowledged that Baudelaire had plagiarized directly from Stendhal's text, Ratcliffe's view that Stendhal influenced Cézanne could have held significantly more weight. Stendhal's text *Histoire* would likely have received more attention by scholars if his connection to Baudelaire were better known, and the impact of Stendhal on Cézanne would have been investigated more extensively. In the broader context of Cézanne scholarship much is noted about Baudelaire's impact on Delacroix and Cézanne, but almost nothing on Stendhal and the two painters, even though Stendhal was perhaps an original source of inspiration. But what did Stendhal offer to the painters that Baudelaire did not?

Wakefield notes that "*The Histoire de la Peinture en Italie* has rightly been called the 'first Romantic manifesto'."[23] He states that "For him [Stendhal] a picture is, quite simply, a form of giving visual pleasure by means of the senses. He seems to have hardly any inkling of the Romantic concept of the imagination as an autonomous faculty—'the Queen of the

[21] Wakefield, 19-20.
[22] Ratcliffe, 364.
[23] Wakefield, 16.

Faculties,' as it was to become for Baudelaire. In this emphasis on immediate sensation, Stendhal's […] primary object of aesthetics should be to concentrate on the psychology of the spectator […]."[24] Stendhal's idea of Romanticism was equally divided between theoretical and formal pursuits, as well as the mutual importance of art and the viewer. While Stendhal's aim in writing this "manifesto" was to represent the spectator's perspective, his ambition differs greatly from that of Baudelaire, according to Wakefield. Wakefield declares that "Unlike Baudelaire, he never lays claim to especially privileged insights into painting, but is content with his job as a routine journalist with views which usually coincide with the public at large."[25] Stendhal's method of writing was also different from Baudelaire in that he had a dialogical style of communicating to his reader.[26] In a format of conversation and of posing questions, Stendhal writes to his reader challenging him/her to think critically. Without the reader's participation, much of Stendhal's message is lost. He engages the reader in a dialogue in a question and answer "Socratic" format about the shifting definition of art. He consistently played the role of educator by way of not educating. In other words, Stendhal wrote in a very structured manner, but offered very few answers to his questions. He hoped not to shape the public, but to carefully push his readers to question the definition of art, and to question the makers of art, and the governing body the French *Académie* for looking to the past and not the present for artistic inspiration.

Stendhal's novels later exhibit similar appeals to the public in that he addresses significant social issues in a way that is often compared to Flaubert for his use of Realism. Wakefield explains that,

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[24] Wakefield, 14.
[25] Wakefield, 21.
[26] In my opinion, Stendhal's writing style resembles that of Plato's writings about Socrates. Particularly, Plato's *Euthyphro*, where Socrates discusses the definition of 'piety', and ultimately explains the structures of language as too permeable to offer a solid definition.

> This shift of emphasis from the work of art to the recipient can be found throughout Stendhal's writing on the fine arts, and one of his favourite illustrations is to compare the reader of a novel to the sounding-board of a violin. A work of art, for him, is not a self-contained end product, but something to be completed and amplified….[27]

Stendhal sought to create a dialogue between the arts and the public, maintaining that the engagement of the public was essential to a painter's process. As noted in Chapters Two and Three, Cézanne shared Stendhal's enthusiasm for Delacroix and Venetian painting. Cézanne similarly took his viewer into account as a sounding board, and in many ways fulfilled what Stendhal advocated: an art that reflected the painter's and the public's modern moment.

[27] Wakefield, 14.

Chapter 2

Cézanne's Theory

Studying from the Past

Scholars commonly agree that Cézanne gained considerable insight into painting from studying the works of the 17th century Venetian painters, as well as Rubens and Delacroix.[28] Part of Cézanne's theory of painting originated from his copying these artists, but with a method that he developed himself. What insights did these painters offer Cézanne? Cézanne scholar Lawrence Gowing began his famous essay, "The Logic of Organized Sensations," by discussing Cézanne's dedication to the painter Delacroix among others. Gowing praises Cézanne's work as "extraordinary and unparalleled."[29] Yet we can begin to understand the theories and practice of this painter if we consider him in relation to earlier colorist painters. Cézanne himself advocated for young painters to learn from artists of the past, as a precursors, from which one develops an individual point of view. Unlike many of his Impressionist contemporaries, he studied throughout his life in the Louvre, painting many copies of colorists, such as the Venetians, Rubens, and Delacroix. In order to understand the origins of Cézanne's theory and development of the constructive brushstroke, it is central to this chapter to first look to Cézanne's technique of painting with the palette knife, a method he learned from studying other painters.

Gowing does not explore in depth the impact other painters had on Cézanne, but he mentions that Cézanne's development of the constructive brushstroke in 1878 came as a result of

[28] As for example, in the work of Cézanne scholars: Meyer Schapiro, Mary Thompkins-Lewis, and Richard Shiff.
[29] Lawrence Gowing, "The Logic of Organized Sensations," in *Cézanne: The Late Work*. Ed. William Rubin. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1977), 55.

having painted with a palette knife in the year prior, as seen in Cézanne's painting *L'Etang des Soeurs* (1877).

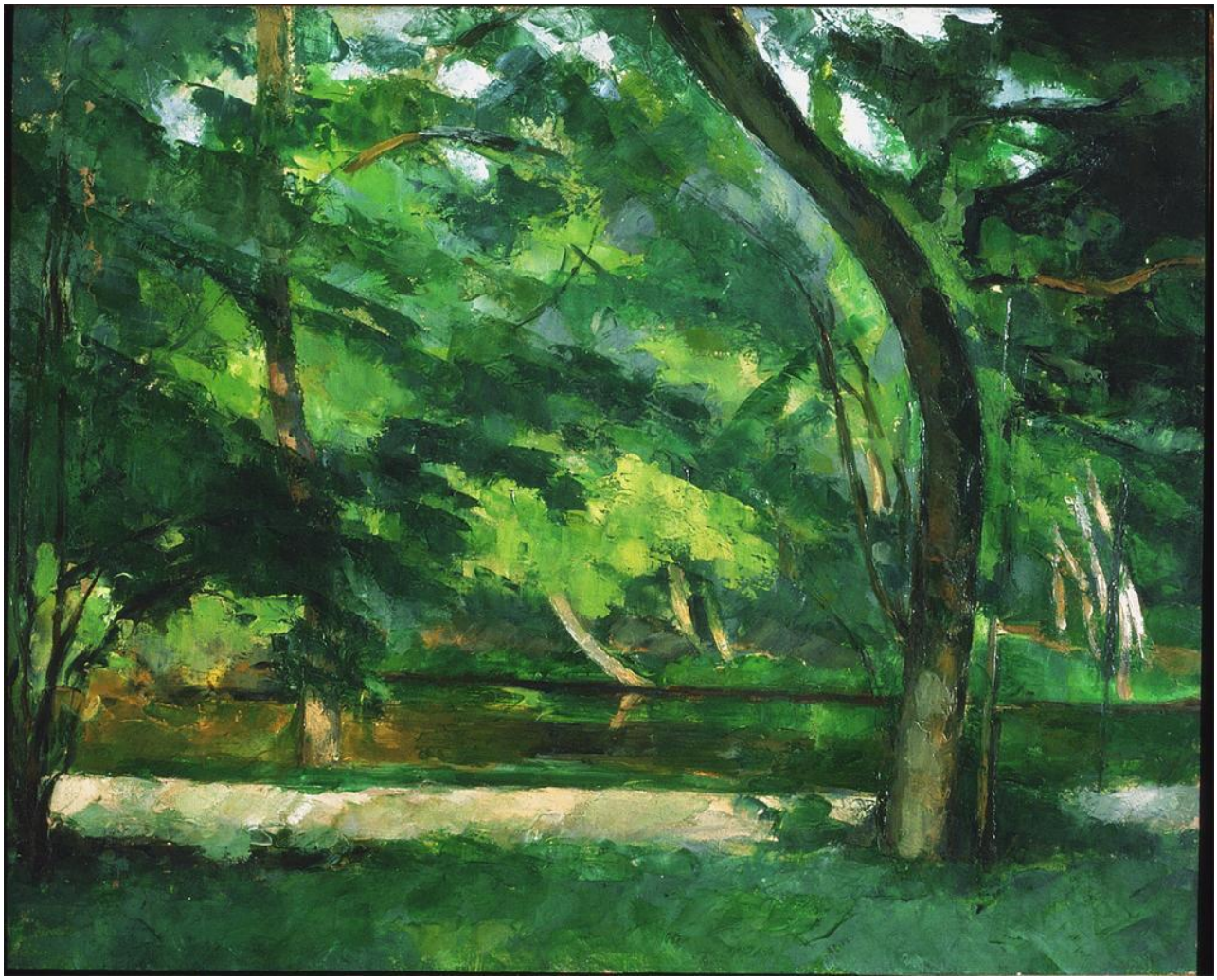

Figure 1. Paul Cézanne, L'Etang des Sœurs, 1877.

As seen in Figure 1, Cézanne paints not with a brush, but uses a palette knife to create an all-over, layered effect with singular strokes. Gowing explains that Cézanne's technique of using the palette knife in this way is borrowed from other painters, stating "Earlier in the century knife-painting had been the mark of an attachment to what was actual and physical in a subject. It was so for Goya and for Constable and, in particular, for Courbet, who was Cézanne's inspiration.

Courbet's use of palette knife is seen in his painting *The Stone Breakers* from 1849. But only Cézanne realized that in the new context a picture that was touched with the knife should be painted with the knife throughout."[30]

Figure 2. Gustave Courbet, The Stone Breakers, 1849.

Courbet's method of painting combined techniques of palette knife and paint applied with the brush. Gowing thus asserts that the difference between Cézanne and the other painters was that Cézanne's method was universally applied to the entire canvas, and that he understood the necessity of exhibiting this kind of logical method in his work.

[30] Gowing, 56.

While Gowing mentions the impact of the painter Courbet on Cézanne, Gowing does not explore the influence of earlier generations of painters on his method of painting. Renowned Cézanne scholar Meyer Schapiro in contrast, writes about the influence of the Louvre's old masters on Cézanne's painting style, stating: "He [Cézanne] was born a composer, with an affinity to the great masters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the largeness of his forms, in his delight in balancing and varying the massive counterposed elements."[31] Schapiro also notes that, in regard to composition, "Cézanne had been thinking seriously about the grouping as well as the appearance of objects, and had no doubt learned much from the masters in the Louvre."[32] Most importantly, Schapiro asserts that Cézanne took from the masters, but made his copies of their works his own. Cézanne's techniques of applying color, inspired by masterworks in the Louvre, were now applied to his paintings of everyday life. On this issue Schapiro suggests:

> He [Cézanne] has treated the forms and tones of his mute apples, faces, and trees with the same seriousness that the old masters brought to a grandiose subject in order to dramatize it for the eye. His little touches build up a picture-world in which we feel great forces at play; here stability and movement, opposition and accord are strongly weighted aspects of things.[33]

Schapiro points out that Cézanne's method is consistent with any subject he undertakes. While studying the effects of movement, stability, and opposition, it is Cézanne's approach to subject matter that sets him apart from the Master painters, in that he uses their techniques and compositional strategies even in works of small scale and with genre themes.

Cézanne scholar Mary Thompkins-Lewis also analyzes Cézanne's studies of the Louvre's old masters, describing Cézanne's particular interest in Delacroix for his use of color, noting that

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[31] Meyer Schapiro, *Paul Cézanne* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2004), 12.
[32] Schapiro, 27.
[33] Schapiro, 9.

Cézanne copied many paintings by the Venetians and Rubens in the Louvre that were previously copied by Delacroix. Thompkins-Lewis writes: "Like Delacroix, Cézanne would copy *The Wedding Feast at Cana* by Paolo Veronese […] and also like Delacroix, Cézanne studied the works of Peter Paul Rubens […] in the Louvre. More than any other painter, the Flemish master fostered, in the art of his later admirers, a whole range of painterly antidotes to Neoclassicism."[34] She observes that learning from past artists is not merely a technical endeavor, but a principled one. The principle implied is that the past is investigated to serve the future, with the goal of creating a modern art that reflects the contemporary changing views of the public. Thompkins-Lewis attributes this changing 19th century idea in part to the painter Édouard Manet. Both Manet and Cézanne exhibited in a group whose works were rejected by the Paris *Académie*, in the *Salon des Refusés* in 1863, which was very harshly reviewed. Thompkins-Lewis points out how in exhibiting *Le Déjeuner sur L'herbe* "with no narrative or moral subject…Manet's canvas was unequivocal in its rejection of the past. Only much later would the painting's roots in Renaissance art be recognized."[35] She also writes that Cézanne's painting style was affected by Manet and also Courbet, for their principles in art using the past to create a new individualized future for painting.

Thompkins-Lewis describes the similarity that an early work by Cézanne, *Still Life with Bread and Eggs* from 1865 shares with Manet's contemporary compositions.

[34] Thompkins-Lewis, M. (2000). *Cézanne.* London: Phaidon Press, p. 36-37.
[35] Thompkins-Lewis, p. 46.

Figure 3. Paul Cézanne, Still Life with Bread and Eggs, 1865.

Manet's painting *Still life: Fruit on a Table* from the year before exhibits many of the same compositional and technical qualities, particularly the technique of mixing colored and black paint directly into white, in a technique known as wet on wet painting.

Figure 4. Édouard Manet, Still Life: Fruit on a Table, 1864.

In regard to subject matter, Thompkins-Lewis writes:

> Not all of his [Cézanne's] Realist paintings were meant to shock his viewers with a deliberately uncouth style or subject – many reveal the artist's deep and self-conscious roots in older pictorial traditions. The somber palette and sober, ordered composition of Cézanne's *Still Life with Bread and Eggs* of 1865, for example, one of his rare signed and dated works, resembles Manet's dark, early still lifes.[36]

Thompkins-Lewis describes Cézanne's approach to painting as rooted in the past, yet also as exhibiting individuality through his "uncouth" method of applying thick strokes of paint to the canvas. Both Manet and Cézanne created unique styles that had yet to be explored.

Cézanne's painting also shares with Manet's the placement of a knife at the lower right side of the composition. The knife becomes a plane that extends from the bread to the table in a way that exhibits an early use of *passage*. *Passage* is a technique of guiding the viewer's eye from plane to plane by connecting geometric shapes at slight points of juncture. By comparison, Manet's picture appears to be flatter, whereas Cézanne's usage of *passage* emphasizes the painting's depth. The forms in Manet's painting are also more well defined and declarative. Cézanne scholar Richard Shiff comments on Cézanne's approach to *passage*, stating:

> As traditionally conceived, *passage* eliminated breaks and gaps introduced by other technical devices, such as overlap. But by calling attention to itself in unfinished or boldly structured paintings, Cézanne's version of *passage* did something quite different. Rather than producing rarefied nuance or mechanistic "abstraction" (as Neo-Impressionist pointillism supposedly did), Cézanne's coarsely grained technique, "abstract" as it was, demonstrated that human feeling could be conveyed by painting in itself, in its sheer material presence.[37]

Although this passage pertains to Cézanne's later works, Shiff suggests here that Cézanne's usage of *passage* moved him further toward a style that explored the act of painting itself, something that can arguably be seen already in the 1865 still life.

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[36] Mary Thompkins-Lewis, 48-9.

[37] Richard Shiff, "Finish/Unfinished" in *Cézanne: Finished-Unfinished.* Ed. Felix Bauman. (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2000), 115.

Thompkins-Lewis also analyzes Cézanne's technical strategies in describing his drawing of 1864 a painting by Rubens, the *Apotheosis of Henri IV,* from the Louvre. She points out Cézanne's mix of "vigorous loops and cross-hatchings,"[38] which indicate his early approach to imposing a systematic logic on painting. Cézanne's copy is a precursor to his palette knife work, where the consistency of method became a key factor to the painter's works on canvas, as much as on paper. Thompkins-Lewis adds that "Rubens's dynamic vision would also be translated into Cézanne's increasingly energetic brushwork."[39] Cézanne's acquired methods of painting, she agrees, originate with his studies of others.

Cézanne's letters, published after his death, offer further insight into his evolving theories and works.[40] For example, Cézanne writes of his admiration for the Venetians in a 1904 letter to Emile Bernard: "I approve of your admiration for the strongest of the Venetians; we praise Tintoretto."[41] Also, as advice to a young painter, Cézanne writes in 1902: "Since you are in Paris and the masters of the Louvre attract you, if it appeals to you, make some studies after the great decorative masters Veronese and Rubens, but as you would do from nature—a thing I myself was only able to do inadequately."[42] Cézanne also expressed his opinions of Delacroix in 1904:

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[38] Thompkins-Lewis, 49.
[39] Thompkins-Lewis, p.49.
[40] Yet, many scholars not including Gowing, Schapiro and Thompkins-Lewis, take into consideration a text written by Joachim Gasquet titled *Cézanne*, recounting his past conversations with Cézanne. For example, Cézanne scholar Katherine Tuma writes of Cézanne's having undergone the influence of poet and philosopher Lucretius. Yet her source, originates from conversations which were recorded long after the fact. The reliability of this source is therefore questionable, and as a result, this thesis will only take into account scholarship that can be supported by Cézanne's own words. Kathryn Tuma, "Cézanne and Lucretius at the Red Rock." (PhD diss., University of California Berkeley, 2002)

[41] Rewald, 309.
[42] Rewald, 282.

> I have already told you that I like Redon's talent enormously, and from my heart I agree with his feeling for and admiration of Delacroix. I do not know if my indifferent health will allow me to ever realize my dream of painting his apotheosis."[43]

Figure 5. Paul Cézanne, Apotheosis of Delacroix, 1890-94.

In planning, or at least intending to plan to paint this "apotheosis," Cézanne envisioned an allegorical symbolic composition. As such Cézanne's reverence of past artists is revealed in Figure 5, illustrating the influence of old masters and of Cézanne's debt to art history.

Cézanne's copies of Delacroix's paintings began in the early 1880's and exhibit an original drawing method. An example of this method can be seen in his copy of Delacroix's

[43] Rewald, 302.

Medea (1880-85). Instead of copying Delacroix's style, Cézanne's painting demonstrates a new method of outlining the figure's rounded features and forms.

Figure 6. Paul Cézanne, Medea, 1880-85.

As opposed to Delacroix, Cézanne's figures appear free from gravity and merge with the opaque background. Cézanne also emphasizes each painterly stroke in applying the same method to the figures and background by putting down patches of color, contrasting with Delacroix's use of more hidden brushwork. The feathery outlining in Cézanne's painting can be seen in the thin parallel lines which delineate each figure, an aspect also not present in Delacroix's painting. This distinctive method of outlining spherical forms can also be seen in his renditions of the works of other colorist painters, such as Rubens.[44]

Cézanne's views of the technical achievements of Delacroix, the Venetians and Rubens coincide with Stendhal's opinions as stated in *Histoire*. Stendhal's text polarizes the visual arts into two sides, the colorists (*les modernes*) and draftsmen (*les anciens*). Stendhal emphasized that a painter's style was in fact a dividing factor, either with the *modernes* or the *anciens*. As indicated in Chapter One, Stendhal favored the "moderns," the colorist painters. In his Salon reviews, Stendhal implied that Delacroix represented the *modernes,* as opposed to his contemporary, the painter Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, who continued the tradition of the *anciens.*[45] This debate was commonly discussed in literary and art circles throughout the 19th century and Cézanne's opinions on the subject more than fifty years later were likely affirmed in reading Stendhal's text. In reference to the painter Ingres, Cézanne writes in 1904:

> Ingres in spite of his 'estyle'[*sic*] and his admirers, is only a very small painter. The greatest, you know them better than I: the Venetians and the Spaniards.[46]

Stendhal also explicitly recommended that painters study from the Louvre, and suggests that the purpose of study was not to create an exact copy, but to create an individualistic style. Cézanne's interpretation of Delacroix's *Medea* could exemplify this point. Throughout his text,

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[44] As seen in Cézanne's *Study after Rubens* from 1878-9.
[45] Wakefield, 107.
[46] Rewald,, 305-6.

Stendhal criticizes artists who imitate others, stating "What is more absurd than to borrow the vision of another man?"[47] Stendhal's many asides advocating for individualism likely were appreciated by Cézanne. Cézanne's aim was to study extensively, but he also wrote of wanting to be an individual. In his letter to Charles Camoin in 1904, he states:

> The understanding of the model and its realisation is sometimes very slow in coming for the artist. Whoever the master may be whom you prefer, this must be only guidance for you. Otherwise you will never be anything but a pasticheur. With any feeling for nature and some fortunate talents—and you have some—you should be able to dissociate yourself; advice, someone else's methods must not make you change your own way of feeling. …What you must strive to achieve is a good method of construction. Drawing is merely the outline of what you see.[48]

Cézanne describes his aim to be an individual artist by also stating in 1905: "To my mind one does not put oneself in place of the past, one only adds a new link."[49] Cézanne's letters repeatedly express his belief in an artistic lineage. He saw himself as adding a new link, thereby redefining the past relative to his present.

Thompkins-Lewis places him within the broader context of 19th century painters Delacroix and Ingres, and the *querelle des anciens et des modernes*. She states:

> The contentious art world of Paris that confronted Cézanne's mirrored the larger conflicts of the era, and its disputes often took on a political complexion. For decades, the battle-lines that governed issues of artistic theory and style in official circles had been clearly drawn between two elitist and now ageing adversaries, Ingres and Delacroix. The refined Neoclassicism of Ingres had already been rejected by Cézanne in Aix. But the impassioned, Romantic painting of Delacroix, who was just finishing the great masterpieces of his old age – the murals in the church of Saint Sulpice – was a huge discovery for the young provincial whose painting was already burdened with passions of his own. Above all, it came to signify the essential freedom, individuality and emotional depth that Cézanne himself sought in his art.[50]

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[47] Rewald, 43.
[48] Gowing, 309.
[49] Gowing, 313.
[50] Thompkins-Lewis, 20.

Thompkins-Lewis asserts that Cézanne likely felt an affinity with Delacroix's paintings, in that they both sought to paint with greater personal expression. Her analysis emphasizes the search for an individuality that was separate from Neoclassicism, the dominant style of academic art in the early 19th century. In aligning himself with Delacroix, she argues Cézanne chose a method that offered more freedom. As we see with his development of the constructive brushstroke, Cézanne's desire to create an individual style, a new link, was ultimately accomplished.

Cézanne's Studies from Nature

In addition to study of old master colorists, an equally important aspect of Cézanne's theoretical approach to painting was his incessant drive to paint from nature directly. Scholars agree that Cézanne's studies outdoors are vital to the painter's development.[51] Gowing states that "For the great part of his achievement he remained rooted, as none of his contemporaries were, in direct and daily contact with the native countryside […]. He was well aware that his mutations of color originated as much in theory as in observation. When one of his visitors was puzzled to find him painting a gray wall green, he explained that a sense of color was developed not only by work but by reasoning."[52] Gowing explains that for Cézanne it was equally important to paint both what he saw and how he saw it. He painted nature utilizing pure observation itself. In regard to this combination of seeing and observing, he states: "He deduced general laws, then drew from them principles which he applied by a kind of convention, so that he interpreted rather than copied what he saw. His vision was much more in his brain than in his

[51] *Plein air* painting was in the 1870's made possible by the greater availability of transportable paints, invented in the mid 19th century.
[52] Gowing, 55-58.

eye."[53] Cézanne's objective was not merely to paint an impression, but rather to render a thought process.

Cézanne often wrote of his dedication to nature, beginning in the late 1870's and continuing until the end of his life. At one point Cézanne wrote of his process of study as a hybrid between looking to master painters and to nature, observing nature as he saw it in the present moment. In 1904 he stated, "The greatest, you know them better than I; the Venetians and the Spaniards. In order to make progress, [above and beyond the greatest painters] there is only nature, and the eye is trained through contact with her. It becomes concentric through looking and working."[54] Cézanne's unique approach to studying nature was a key component to his originality. He recognized that the study of nature was a lifelong, laborious process. Toward the end of his life he recounts in 1904, "I progress very slowly, for nature reveals herself to me in very complex ways; and the progress needed is endless."[55] For Cézanne, the exploration of nature via the eye, as translated to the canvas, was an infinite and individualistic process.

Stendhal also wrote of the importance of studying from nature in *Histoire*. He criticized contemporary tastes for admiring painters who do not study from nature in the way he recommended: "To crown the iniquity, these artist-parrots impose their oracles on others as if they had derived them first-hand from Nature."[56] After indirectly criticizing his contemporaries, Stendhal explained his theory by stating, "Every artist must see Nature in his own way."[57] This sentiment was clearly echoed by Cézanne's recounting his own experiences of nature being revealed to him in many ways, insinuating that this is a unique process to each painter. Stendhal continued by recounting his ideas of what students of art should do: "My philosophy is a stern

[53] Gowing, 59.
[54] Gowing, 306.
[55] Gowing, , 302.
[56] Wakefield, 49.
[57] Wakefield, 43.

one, and so it must be. …First of all his hand must learn to obey, then to recognize in Nature the elements his master has extracted."[58] Stendhal made the point that the artist must learn equally from past artists as from experience in nature, yet, as will be explored in the section on *sensations*, the individuality of each painter's experience of his/her *sensations* in nature, is the explanation of Stendhal's idea that each artist sees nature in his/her own way.

In general, Stendhal's text advocated for painters to study the colorists, admiring their subjective individualistic pursuits with color. Ratcliffe explores this theory in stating ;

> The beginning of Stendhal's Chapter LXVI may well have confirmed Cézanne's recent experiments in colour modulation: 'Chez le Titien, la science du coloris consiste en une infinité de remarques sur l'effet des couleurs voisines, sur leurs plus fines différences, en la pratique d'exécuter ces différences. Son œil exercé distingue dans un panier d'organges vingt jaunes opposés qui laissent un souvenir distinct.' It seems quite reasonable to suppose that in observations such as these, Cézanne may have found confirmation of the ideas that he was to explain to Zola (as promised in the letter that described the Stendhal text).[59]

Ratcliffe refers to Cézanne's letter to Zola in 1878, when he wrote: "The next time I can talk to you face to face I shall ask you whether your opinion on painting as a means of expressing feeling is the same as mine."[60] Expressing feeling or *sensation* was an objective Cézanne first mentioned after reading Stendhal's text, and was an aspect of Venetian painting Cézanne especially admired. Cézanne's opinion of the Venetian painters (likely including the painter Titian) is described in his 1904 letter to Emile Bernard:

> […] be convinced you will rediscover without effort, in front of nature the means employed by the four or five great ones of Venice. This is true, without any possible doubt – I am quite positive: - an optical sensation is produced in our visual organs which allows us to classify the planes represented by colour sensations as light […].[61]

[58] Wakefield, 43.
[59] Ratcliffe, 325.
[60] Rewald, 172.
[61] Rewald, 310.

Both Stendhal and Cézanne believed that the individual painter's experience of seeing color in nature was essential to their similar theory of art. The classification of that experience into subtle gradations of paint that was proposed by Stendhal, furthermore, was carried out by Cézanne.

In 1878, soon after Cézanne wrote to Zola of his great admiration of Stendhal's text, his appreciation for studying nature became evident. Cézanne's theory of studying from nature evolved from his direct observation of nature, fulfilling Stendhal's call to do so. Ratcliffe briefly examines the impact of Stendhal's text on Cézanne's writing regarding his theory of the study of nature. He highlights Stendhal's support of artists studying directly the effects of nature, and quotes his observations about Leonardo da Vinci, stating,

> Dans l'étude des sciences qui tiennent aux mathématiques, ceux qui ne consultent pas la nature, mais les auteurs, ne sont pas des enfants de la nature : je dirai qu'ils n'ent sont que les petits-fils. Elle seule, en effet, est le guide des vrais génies ;…' Stendhal's quotation from Leonardo ends with the phrase : '… ; c'est la méthode qu'on doit observer dans la recherche des phénomènes de la nature.[62]

Cézanne's attempt to perceive nature in a new way reiterates his newfound theory, which in turn resonates strongly with Stendhal.

Ratcliffe continues to establish this connection between Stendhal and Cézanne, by stating the following:

> The transition that had occurred in Cézanne's own art – from the rebellious, 'expressionist' interpretation of nature in the late 1860s to the more humble contemplation of the plein air motif under Pissarro's guidance in the early and mid 1870s – may be described in one of Stendhal's perceptive asides: 'Le premier degré du goût est d'exagérer, pour les rendre sensibles, les effets agréables de la nature. C'est à cet artifice qu'eut souvent recours le plus entraînant des prosateurs français. Plus tard, on voit qu'exagérer les effets de la nature, c'est perdre sa variété infinie et ses contrastes, si

[62] Ratcliffe, 326.

> beaux parce qu'ils sont éternels, plus beaux encore parce que les émotions les plus simples les rappellent au cœur.'[63]

Ratcliffe implies that perhaps in the 1870s Cézanne found more relevance to his own theory and practice of painting in Stendhal's text. Stendhal's passage resonates with Cézanne in terms of his seeing infinite views of nature and synthesizing these in painting. Ratcliffe also points out how Cézanne's reading of Stendhal could have "added authority to the more humble approach to nature of 1878."[64] This new humble approach to nature resulted in a shift away from allegorical paintings, which Cézanne painted in the 1860's, and his Impressionist paintings of the early to middle 1870's. At this point in time, he emerged as the modernist painter known today.

Toward a Modern Ideal

"Cézanne is the father to us all" – Pablo Picasso

The origins of "modern art" are widely debated, but all scholars agree that Cézanne's influence on the course of modern art was seminal. With Romanticism and Realism, emphasis had shifted among others to subjective experience, and the notion of being of one's time, two aspects that come together in Cézanne's approach to painting. In shifting from "Impressionist" to "Neo-Impressionist," Cézanne began to exhibit increasing awareness of the importance of including in his picture as much individuality as possible. Cézanne's experimentation with his own process of sight in many ways led him to his unique style of painting. This aspect of his work also related to the public who viewed Cézanne's paintings, thus exposing their process of experience and sight as well.

[63] Ratcliffe, 321.
[64] Ratcliffe, 325.

Lawrence Gowing discusses Cézanne's modernity, particularly his ambition to paint what he experienced, as he experienced it: "The reality of the subject itself, the actual motif, could not be transferred to art by imitation. It could only be made real through whatever was intrinsically real in painting."[65] Gowing describes Cézanne's process as transferring his individual experience to the act of painting. For Cézanne, according to Gowing, capturing a motif required more than passive imitation; it demanded the painter's active interaction with the motif. An example of the way Cézanne's was learning to translate his subjective experience of his motif is evident in his *Still Life with Open Drawer*, from 1877-79.

Figure 7. Paul Cézanne, Still Life with Open Drawer, 1877-79.

[65] Gowing, 63.

Cézanne's still life exhibits a strong horizontal plane as seen with the parallel lines of the table and open drawer. His apples, with the use of small constructive brushstrokes, exhibit a faceted effect whereby the apples seem to protrude from the picture. The painter's visual experience of his motif is most explicitly seen in the depiction of the water glass, where Cézanne tilts the open mouths of both the bowl and the glass toward the viewer, interacting with the motif and combining his multiple views.

Cézanne's developing practice of painting subjectively and as a reflection of his own modern moment were innovative feats for his time. Meyer Schapiro observed that in the late 1870's a new possibility for art opened, an attitude initiated in the 1850's by the painter Courbet. According to Courbet's example to become a painter was to take a stand among contending schools and to anticipate an original personal style. Schapiro quotes the painter Courbet:

> 'Courbet said at this time that he was a painter in order to win his freedom, and that he recognized no authority other than himself, I too am a government…' This sentiment of personal independence stimulated by the revolutions of France made artistic life tense with combat and self-assertion.[66]

Courbet, having exhibited his work independently from the Salon, created a new governing body, the public. Having opened his Pavilion of Realism in 1855 across from the Salon's official exhibit at the Paris Exposition Universelle, he offered for the public a viewing of works which had been rejected, an unprecedented action which greatly undermined the prominence of the Salon's jury. In following Courbet's example, one was now allowed to pursue a style of painting that was original and reflective of the changing art world. Cézanne was able, by this account, to endeavor to be unique.

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[66] Schapiro, 23-24.

Cézanne, having exhibited with the Impressionist group in an independent show in 1874, thus demonstrated his first break with the established order of the art world. This independent show offered Cézanne the opportunity to be the self advocating artist Schapiro describes. Within a few years of showing with this group Cézanne bridged into a method that was all his own through the development of constructive brushstrokes.

Cézanne's shift in style in the late 1870's has been analyzed by many scholars. Tompkins-Lewis argues that Cézanne was significantly impacted by the changing political climate of the time. She writes that the general public's dissatisfaction with the French system of government and rising sentiments of nationalism in the late 1870's may have contributed to Cézanne's pursuit of creating a modern style of art.

> Finally, however, the monarchist Marshal MacMahon resigned in early 1879, and a truly republican form of government was established with the election of Jules Grevy as president. The tide of nationalism that emerged in this period as a major cultural and intellectual force in France evolved within this complex political matrix […] Cézanne's landscape painting of the late 1870's and early 1880's, like that of many of the Impressionists, is marked by the altered political and cultural landscape he discovered in Paris that spring. [67]

The impact of the restructured government was also felt, according to Thompkins-Lewis' account, by the artistic institutions of Paris. She writes: "The role of the arts, and of the state as their patron, would also be transformed by the increasingly republican climate. In 1878, the rules of the Salon underwent revision to allow for a more open-minded jury, and this became the first of a number of reforms that the state would implement."[68] Thompkins-Lewis describes the government's role in redefining art institutions in the late 1870's, an impact, she claims, felt by Cézanne in a crucial year of his development, 1878. It is possible that the artist felt a greater sense of freedom from this shift. However, an impact on Cézanne's artistic process from a

[67] Thompkins-Lewis, 196.
[68] Thompkins-Lewis, 196.

change in government is not indicated in his own writing. His writings in many cases do express his sincere disappointment in the Salon's lack of appreciation for his work, however, and he was possibly given hope of showing his work within the prestigious venue with this new government policy.

Throughout his life, Cézanne discussed his developing approach to painting in many letters to contemporary painters and friends, with the unending ambition of appealing to the public. As early as 1866, Cézanne wrote,

> I wish to appeal to the public and to be exhibited at all costs. […] Therefore let the *Salon des Refusés* be re-established. Even were I to be there alone, I should still ardently wish that people should at least know that I no more want to be mixed up with those gentlemen of the Jury than they seem to want to be mixed up with me.[69]

Cézanne blamed the jury for his feelings of being misunderstood by the public. Yet in exhibiting with the Impressionist group, Cézanne's paintings were also not received well by the public whom he had hoped to appease. Cézanne wrote to Zola in 1866:

> You can't imagine how much I have suffered during this battle which I have just had with the crowd, with unknown people; I felt myself so little understood, I sensed such hatred around me, that despair often made the pen fall out of my hand.[70]

Following the exhibit, Cézanne left Paris and returned to the French countryside. This was a pivotal moment for Cézanne. In developing the method of the constructive brushstroke Cézanne broke from the Impressionist style, and bridged into an unknown. This break prepared Cézanne's path to his most complex pictures, the late work from the early 1900's.

A factor Cézanne scholar such as Thompkins-Lewis have not considered is the possible impact of Stendhal's writings about the effects of French politics on artistic institutions at this crucial moment in the painter's career. Feeling rejected and misunderstood, Cézanne's rereading

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[69] Rewald, 104.
[70] Rewald, 105.

of Stendhal's text in 1878 (a fourth reading by this time), likely reinforced many of his own opinions. Stendhal exposed Cézanne to a broader discussion of the factors which inhibited the development of a modern art in the early 19th century. Many of these same factors were still in place in the late 19th century, when Cézanne struggled as well. For example, Stendhal wrote that he disagreed with the ethos of the Paris *Académie* and its upholding of Neoclassical styles of art. Stendhal felt that turning to the past in such a way stunted the possibility for an art which reflected the public of France, and the nationhood of a people who had recently become an independent state of government. Stendhal believed that the public should decide what art style best reflected a post-monarchy France. In 1811, when writing his text, Stendhal felt that the ideals of the revolution had been lost. His chapter "The Frenchmen of Yesterday" describes his own era's political climate as contrasted with that of the French Revolution. Stendhal writes: "We must tell our nephews that there was a vast difference between the Frenchman of 1770 and the Frenchman of 1811, the year which marked the apogee of our new social habits. In 1811 people were much closer to the classical ideal."[71] Stendhal criticizes the post-Revolutionary public for not maintaining what he viewed as progressive ideals of the revolution in the arts. In essence, Stendhal aligns the contemporary taste of Neoclassicism with that of the former monarchy system of government. In many ways, Stendhal's text advocated for something that did not yet exist, a modern art which reflected the changes which the people and nation of France underwent in the 19th century. Stendhal thought it was through art, especially painting, that a reflection of the French public could be revealed as it changed over time.

While Cézanne's art was produced more than half a century after Stendhal's text was written, the problem of reflecting modernity was still unresolved. In retreating to the countryside of Aix in 1878, Cézanne reevaluated his theoretical approach to painting and subsequently

[71] Wakefield, 78.

reorganized his methodological approach as well. In particular, his pursuit toward painting in a manner that was both subjective and of his own time exhibited his newfound clarity of what a modern art could be.

Another relevant cultural shift in the late 19th century France, was found in changing methods of perception, according to Cézanne scholar Jonathan Crary. Crary explains that "attention" became a modern problem in the late 19th century, and a redefinition of vision took place. He writes,

> In historical discussions of the problem of attention, one often encounters the claim that the modern psychological category of attention is continuous with notions of appreciation that were important in different ways for Leibniz and Kant. But in fact what is crucial is the unmistakable historical discontinuity between the problem of attention in the second half of the nineteenth century and its place in European thought in previous centuries.[72]

Crary argues that Cézanne's modernity is in many ways a product of shifting modes of attention in the late 19th century. He asserts that Cézanne was affected by the redefining of vision, and in turn, his painting through a modern lens caused a shift in perception of the arts. According to Crary, the shift in late 19th century perception was in part due to a broader paradigmatic shift that had taken place in vision, in the development of different forms of disciplining of the body and the understanding that vision is abstract and lodged in the density of the body. Crary writes: "Had the classical camera obscura model of vision and related forms of empiricism remained culturally dominant, attention would never have become a central problem."[73]

Crary argues that Cézanne's shift in painting style resulted from a newly defined subjectivity in the 1870's. He writes: "My aim here is simply to indicate how, in the second half of the nineteenth century, attention becomes a fundamentally new object within the

[72] Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 19.
[73] Crary, 315.

modernization of subjectivity."[74] For Crary, modern subjectivity came about in response to the problem of attention, which only became visible as a problem due to modern subjects increasingly existing in various states of distraction. Attention, for Crary, originates in knowledge gained from direct experience rather than from *a priori* knowledge. Crary writes, "Not until the 1870's does one find attention consistently being attributed to a central and formative role in accounts of how a practical or knowable world of objects comes into being for a perceiver."[75] For this author, attention took on a new role in the 1870's when perception became the synthesis of seeing and knowing objects.

According to Crary, Cézanne's vision was impacted by these changes, which perhaps made the painter more self aware, not of what he saw, but of how he saw it. For Crary, this discovery was fully realized in Cézanne's paintings from the 1890's. "One of the discoveries he made over the next decade is that perception can take no other form than the process of its formation." Crary continues, "This is no longer a question of recording the evanescent appearances of the world but of confronting and inhabiting the instability of perception itself. Perhaps more piercingly than anyone else, Cézanne disclosed the paradoxes of attention through an understanding of perception's essential *difference* from *itself*."[76] Cézanne's process, by Crary's analysis, exhibits the effects of looking over a period of time, and exposing the instability of vision as the eye tires. The modern ideal, by this account, is more an exploration of the painter's process than subject matter, a task which Cézanne struggled to achieve and make relevant to viewers of his work. It was through articulating his *sensations* in painting, that Cézanne was able to achieve such a feat.

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[74] Crary, 17.
[75] Crary, 21.
[76] Crary, 287-8.

Sensations

Crary's observations about new understandings of perception can be related to Cézanne's evolving understanding of sensory experience. Cézanne's theory of art largely revolves around his experience of studying from nature and capturing his *sensations* in a formalized method on canvas. In order to understand Cézanne's theory of painting his *sensations*, which is central to this chapter, we need to first look at the varying interpretations of this new theory and the subsequent impact on Cézanne's art (made by Gowing, Schapiro, and Crary). Following an examination of the scholarship we will focus on Cézanne's paintings from the late 1870's which exhibit this shift in theory, pointing to specific implementations of this new thought process in painting. Lastly this section will consider how Stendhal's text helped inform the painter on the subject of sensation and the likely impact on the painter's 1878 shift, supported in part by Cézanne's own words.

Gowing's essay titled "The Logic of Organized Sensations," expresses the significance of the topic of *sensations* to Cézanne's process. He writes:

> Sensations were the root of everything for Cézanne. From the beginning to the end of his career, they were his pride and justification. In 1870, when he was interviewed for the Album Stock on submitting his entries for the Salon, the sensations of which he boasted seemed to have comprised not only that data of sight but feelings also. "I paint as I see, as I feel—and I have very strong sensations. The others too, feel and see as I do but they don't dare… they produce Salon pictures…" In his last years, they were sometimes still described in the same terms, as "the strong sensation of nature—and certainly I have that vividly." The pride and the assurance that sensations gave him remained unaltered; they served him as defense. "As sensations form the foundation of my business, I believe myself invulnerable."[77]

For more than thirty years Cézanne grappled with the concept of *sensations*, as Gowing indicates here. It was in the late 1870's that Cézanne began to associate *sensations* with nature, a theme

[77] Gowing, 62.

which according to Gowing maintained its significance late into his life. To Gowing, it was Cézanne's process of organizing his *sensations* in painting that was the defining characteristic of Cézanne's modernism.

Organization in Cézanne's pictures is also discussed by scholar Meyer Schapiro. Schapiro maintained that Cézanne's work from the late 1870's became the precursor to the shift in the development of the late work in the early 1900's. The organized logic that Cézanne applied to his theory and practice was with his development of the constructive brushstroke method. With his objective of painting *sensations*, Cézanne originated a method that brought together subjective experience with logical processes, all with the aim of capturing a motif. The following has been asserted by Schapiro:

> Much has been written about Cézanne's new rigor of composition and plastic use of color; but I would emphasize the importance of the object for this new style. There is here a kind of empiricism, naïve and deeply sincere, which is a necessary condition of the new art. In reconstituting the object out of his sensations, Cézanne submits humbly to the object, as if in atonement for the violence of his early paintings.[78]

While describing a shift from the earlier, allegorical and violent themes to a more empirical approach, Schapiro emphasizes that in his later works Cézanne's process had become one of organizing his *sensations* while painting objects in nature.

Schapiro further explains that painting *sensations*, for Cézanne, equated with his experience of concentrating on objects over a period of time and relaying that experience to his painting. Schapiro writes: "Because this art demands of us a long concentrated vision, it is like music as a mode of experience—not as an art of time, however, but as an art of grave attention, an attitude called out only by certain works of the great composers."[79] Schapiro emphasizes

[78] Schapiro, 27.
[79] Schapiro, 9.

Cézanne's new method of painting as specifically involving the effects of his experience of prolonged attention to his motif.

Also discussing Cézanne's process of attention, as noted above, is Cézanne scholar Crary. For Crary, Cézanne's added theory of painting his *sensations* involved reflecting the painter's experience in nature, rather than his impression of nature. He writes:

> …An older model of sensation as something belonging to a subject became irrelevant. Sensation now had empirical significance…. It cannot be emphasized too strongly how, by the 1880's the classical idea of sensation ceases to be a significant component in the cognitive picture of nature.[80]

Crary asserts that in the 1880's the meaning of the term *sensations* had changed from its classical meaning. It was now, by Crary's account, an abstract process that is independent from the subject. According to Crary, Cézanne's interpretation of what he saw was more significant to his overall process than the subject he portrayed. This concept resonates with Gowing's interpretation of Cézanne's process as well. For Gowing, Cezanne worked through three phases in the act of painting a motif: *sensations, réalization,* and *interprétation*.[81] Gowing's triad is key to understanding Cézanne's transitions in the act of painting from seeing to interpreting, and reinforces the argument that (as Crary also indicates) that for Cézanne capturing his *sensations* was the origin of the painter's individuality.

Crary further explains the new conception of *sensations* through Henri Bergson's writings on the subject, stating: "In Bergson's work, for example, new models of synthesis involved the binding of immediate sensory perceptions with the creative forces of memory."[82] Crary's interpretations of Bergson's writing offer an explanation for the late 19th-century shift in

[80] Crary, 26-27.
[81] Gowing, 62-63.
[82] Crary, 15.

perception as no longer exhibiting a fleeting impression of objects, but rather a process of seeing, remembering, and interpreting objects.

In my reading of Bergson's *Matter and Memory* from 1896 a further definition of *sensation* emerges. Bergson also describes s*ensations* as a synthesis of the activity of the brain with the body.[83] Subjective experience, by Bergson's account, is increasingly individualized as cognitive experience is tied together with bodily movement and experience. In my view, Cézanne's 1878 shift in painting style, transitioning from fleeting impressions to capturing successive moments in time, combining body movements and perception, could be seen as parallel to Bergson's future writing on the subject of *sensations*.

For Cézanne, the term *sensation* becomes synonymous with his lived experience. In a 1904 letter to Louis Aurenche,[84] Cézanne expresses his efforts to portray his experience in nature.

> In your letter you speak of my realization in art. I believe that I attain it more every day, although a bit laboriously. Because, if the strong feeling for nature—and certainly I have that vividly—is the necessary basis for all artistic conception on which rests the grandeur and beauty of all future work, the knowledge of the means of expressing our emotion is no less essential, and is only to be acquired through very long experience.[85]

Here Cézanne explains that it is his intention to articulate his experience in nature through his *sensations*, or lived experience of perceiving nature directly. In 1904 Cézanne wrote to Emile Bernard regarding his newfound theories of art connected to his *sensations*:

> …—an optical sensation is produced in our visual organs which allows us to classify the planes represented by color sensations as light, half tone or quarter tone. Light, therefore, does not exist for the painter. As long as we are forced to proceed from black to white,

[83] Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory* (London: George Allen & Co., 1896), 8.
[84] Louis Aurenche was an admirer and friend of Cézanne.
[85] Rewald, 299.

> with the first of these abstractions providing something like a point of support for the eye as much as for the brain…[86]

In 1906 Cézanne continues to write of the importance of *sensations* to his objective, explaining that the process of capturing color as seen in nature requires considerable effort, time and experience:

> Finally I must tell you that as a painter I am becoming more clear-sighted before nature, but that with me the realization of my sensations is always painful. I cannot attain the intensity that has unfolded before my senses. I have not the magnificent richness of colouring that animates nature.[87]

The visual representation of his *sensations* is difficult for the painter to achieve, in part because it requires a method of painting which attempts to capture the perceptual experiences of the various colors of nature. These concepts and theories can be illustrated in Cézanne's practice of painting as seen in *Chateau at Medan* from circa 1879-81.

Figure 8. Paul Cézanne, Chateau at Medan, 1879-81.

[86] Rewald, 310.
[87] Rewald, 327.

The layering of color reflects Cézanne's capturing his motif, brushstroke by brushstroke. Cézanne scholar Richard Shiff explains this process as: "The more restrained brushwork of Cézanne's earlier years had produced similar tensions, often a play of strokes of "sky" laid over foliage […]. Shift likely refers here to an experience of sustained perception that translates in the viewer witnessing a process of shifts and changes that do not make sense in conventional terms, but are what Schapiro called "grave attention." Once Cézanne became engaged with the life of a sensory motif within a picture he was creating, all marking extended this organic quality, no matter how much it might seem to contradict the conventional structural logic of the model in nature."[88] According to Shiff, this engagement can explain the liberty Cézanne took with his paintings of nature, and he reiterates the importance of the individual perspective which Cézanne used. Cézanne's painting, *Apples* from circa 1877-78, also exhibits the painter's "grave attention" in a wide range of color practices.

Figure 9. Paul Cézanne, Apples, 1877-78.

[88] Shiff, *Finish-Unfinished*, 111.

With the careful placement of brushwork and attention to the range of color in the apples, Cézanne demonstrates the process of painting over a long period of time. Already then, Cézanne's attentive approach is different from Impressionist methodologies of capturing one single moment. His portrayal of *sensation* as experienced over the passing of time contributes to his transformation into a method-based painter. This approach directly ties to Cézanne's writing about his theory of painting, not as an *a priori* process, based on the painter's years of studies in an art institution, but as an example of his studies of looking at a motif. Instead of painting an idealized image of an apple, his brushwork facets the apples into the color patches of paint that exhibit a color spectrum. As seen in the detail, the center of the apple is painted yellow, a color that attracts the eye's initial attention. The colors moving toward the periphery of the apple are increasingly dark, reflecting *sensations* of colors that have a recessive effect on the eye.[89] For Cézanne, depth is created by expressing in paint what he sees and interprets by way of his *sensations.* Cézanne's interest in *sensations*, according to Crary, is distinctive because it occurred during a moment when the definition of *sensations* was altered significantly.

Cézanne's writings in 1878 also provide evidence of his newfound interest in *sensations*. In the letter to Zola that declares his admiration for Stendhal's text and the truths about painting *Histoire* offered to him, Cézanne wrote for the first time of his *sensations*. Cézanne's explanations of the term are linked to Stendhal's, although as Crary has argued the term had changed by the late 1870's, echoing with Cézanne's aim in to represent, beyond simply a motif, an experience of the motif, its *realization sur nature*, which Gowing translates as "a realization *on* nature, like a variation or a descant."[90] While Stendhal advocated for painters to paint as they

[89] Schapiro makes a similar note regarding color at the periphery of Cézanne's objects, in stating: "Just as a blue may attract a painter by its coolness, its recessive aspect, its transparency, or by its darkness and depth when saturated." In Meyer Schapiro, *Modern Art: 19th and 20th Centuries* (New York: G. Braziller, 1978), 26.
[90] Gowing, 63.

experienced nature (congruent with the older model of sensations), Cézanne sought to capture in painting his experience of seeing nature. Shortly after writing this letter to Zola, Cézanne wrote of his newfound interest in the experience of seeing nature, most likely a result of re-reading *Histoire*. Cézanne declares, "I began to see nature rather late, though this does not prevent it being full of interest for me."[91] While Stendhal's text was written earlier in the 19th century, his ideas for painters had yet to become fully realized in painting. For example Stendhal requested painters understand that "Art must command attention."[92] At the time of writing *Histoire*, Stendhal described how his theories in art differed from the established theories of popular artists of his time. In his Journal written in 1811 (the year he was writing *Histoire*), Stendhal wrote of his dissatisfaction with 18th century philosopher and author Johan Joachim Winckelmann's theoretical and Neoclassical approach to nature and what could be interpreted as *sensations*. He criticizes Winckelmann for looking at the "…Greeks first and Nature afterwards: he only admired Nature when it had been represented by Greek sculptures…"[93] The rift between Stendhal and Winckelmann's scholarship can be in part described as continuing the longstanding debate between the *anciens* and the *modernes*. Stendhal believed in a style of art which depended on observing one's surroundings and resulted in painting modern life as it appeared.

Stendhal offered guidance for Cézanne, describing how to achieve a new method of painting based on intuition and sensory experience. Stendhal states that the arts in the 19th century "could be redeemed by colour, but this calls for some feeling [*sensations*] and it is not an exact science like drawing."[94] He criticized contemporary styles of painting which rely on mathematical proportions as the structure of their work. Instead, he advocated for a method of

[91] Rewald, 174.
[92] Wakefield, 54.
[93] Wakefield, 130.
[94] Wakefield, 79.

painting where color was applied subjectively. According to Stendhal painting should be "Reduced to pure sensation [….]."[95] Stendhal proposes a method of painting that is reflective of the painters' immediate experience with a motif. When painting directly from experience, Stendhal described that authenticity of experience is regained for an artist. Stendhal recommended to painters that a reflection of "Gradually aesthetic sensations merge with the sensations offered by life."[96] It is apparent that for Stendhal the formation of aesthetic *sensations* comes from experience gained in lived experience.

Portraying the experience of daily life in painting was, in Stendhal's writings, a necessary step toward creating modern art. Berger's quotation, as stated at the beginning of this thesis thus becomes most relevant here:

> Cézanne made a similar observation from the painter's point of view. 'A minute in the world's life passes! To paint it in its reality, and forget everything for that! To become that minute, to be the sensitive plate…give the image of what we see, forgetting everything that has appeared before our time…'[97]

As Berger acknowledges, Cézanne's modernism is tied directly to the painter's obsession with capturing his sensory experience through painting. At a time when he felt most rejected, Cézanne's reading of Stendhal's text in 1878 seem to have offered a reaffirmation of his most crucial ideas about painting. The theories and practice which Cézanne developed at this time are what make him the painter known today.

[95] Wakefield, 49.
[96] Wakefield, 45.
[97] Berger, 31.

Chapter 3

Cézanne's Practice

Perspective

Much of Cézanne scholarship revolves around the painter's innovative conception of a new constructive perspective which evokes his sensory experience in nature. Gowing describes Cézanne's originality in his use of perspective in painting:

> The structure is no longer one that we can imagine built. It is a property of the juxtaposition of colors on a flat surface. During the same years, Cézanne's own remarks about the solidity of three-dimensional form were quite positive. In one of his letters to Emile Bernard he described how the eye ranges over the shape that is seen. "The eye becomes concentric by looking and working. I mean to say that in an orange, an apple, a boule or a head, there is a culminating point and this point is always—in spite of the formidable effect of the light and shadow and the sensations of color—the point that is nearest the eye."[98]

While Gowing writes of the importance of Cézanne's painting in rounded forms to create a sense of depth in his work, he indicates that this method only occurred in his late work. However, in the analysis of Chapter Two, I proposed that Cézanne's endeavors in his paintings of the late 1870's made it possible for the complexities of his late work to occur.

Cézanne's pursuit of achieving depth in painting is also explained by Gowing in his description of the artist's balance between planes and particular points on the canvas. Gowing analyzes Cézanne's writing about painting and the depth he created in exhibiting two perspectives of a motif. He states:

> At the right of the surface it is obviously seen more from the left; on the left the line of vision strikes it more from the right. The variation in the angles at which a flat surface presents itself to the eye is thus different only in degree from the angles at which the line

[98] Gowing, 57.

> of vision strikes a rounded surface. In this view flat planes share with forms of circular section a common property in the geometry of vision. Cézanne had a maxim to this effect, which his son reported to Leo Larguier: "Bodies seen in space are all convexes." The varying angles of incidence of the lines of sight transmit to the eye light reflected from different sources—light necessarily of different colors.[99]

The oscillation between convex and concave objects, according to Gowing, offers a vision that is broken down into geometry and depth. By Gowing's account Cezanne's process is not simply about recording what he saw, but an exploration of complex pursuits in painting such as truth, process and the painter's interpretation. He also brings to light how Cezanne understood the arbitrariness of color in painting and that changes of color in light, not geometry, could signify depth for the viewer. The oscillation between convex and concave objects, according to Gowing, offers a vision that is broken down into geometry and depth. The basis for this method is found with Cézanne's development of the geometric method of applying a consistent system of constructive brushstrokes to his pictures in the late 1870's. Gowing's descriptions of the accomplishments of the painter's late career can therefore be tied quintessentially to his earlier works.

According to Gowing, Cézanne's unique approach to perspective also came into being with his unique approach to color. He states:

> […] Cézanne pursued his discovery that colors placed in order one against another carried an inherent suggestion of changes of plane. The series of colors, always in the order of the spectrum and always placed at regular intervals along it, mounted toward a culminating point […][100]

The effect of depth of his paintings is established through the spectrum of color, where all gradations flow toward particular points on the canvas. This effect was discussed in Chapter Two in terms of *sensations*, for example in Cézanne's apples (evident in Figure 9), exhibited in

[99] Gowing, 57.
[100] Gowing, 59.

1879-81, where a culminating point is suggested at the highlight. Emphasizing this method of changing planes, Cézanne used adjacently placed brushstrokes which begin to show some of the later effects of color modulation, shown here through the way the artist applies each gradation of color.

Meyer Schapiro analyzed Cézanne's new form of perspective in contrast to the methods used during the Renaissance, asserting that,

> He loosened the perspective system of traditional art and gave to the space of the image the aspect of the world created free-hand and put together piecemeal from successive perceptions, rather than offered complete to the eye in one coordinating glance as in the ready-made geometrical perspective of Renaissance art.[101]

He explains that Cézanne's process of painting displays a fracturing of his perception. Schapiro indicates that, unlike one-point perspective, the viewer is required to reconstruct Cézanne's perspective by thinking through each moment that the painter put down in a stroke of paint. Schapiro points out that Cézanne's method of constructing perspective is "free-hand" and highlights Cézanne's method as unique among his contemporaries.

With regard to Cézanne's process, Schapiro writes generally about his still lifes made in the late 1870's:[102]

> Finally we observe that Cézanne's table, more irregular than both the real table and the apparent perspective form, is a unique piecemeal construction; we see it as something put together rather than as a single whole. Among the curved forms, the "squaring" of the ellipses of pots and dishes agrees with the blunting of foreshortened lines of the table. Like the latter, it does not arise from a particular position of the eye, arbitrarily chosen by Cézanne, but is a pattern that satisfies the same needs as the pattern of the table. The flattening of the curve arrests the intensity of recession; it is also an approach to the real-object form, the fullness of the circular opening.[103]

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[101] Schapiro, 10.
[102] For example, *Still Life with Compotier* from 1879-82.
[103] Schapiro, 17.

Here Schapiro describes Cézanne's process of tilting objects to show a partial interior and exterior view simultaneously. He also writes of Cézanne's depictions of objects in his compositions as relating to one another based on their geometry, but at the same time, the artist also finds shapes that corresponded to the geometry of the objects. The make-up of Cézanne's canvas thus exhibits his focus on both geometric and color relationships.

These scholars credit Cézanne with overturning the traditional use of one-point perspective, but Cézanne's describes this process best in his own words. As discussed earlier in the context of the painter's theory, Cézanne's unique practice of perspective is described by him as follows: "[…] an optical sensation is produced in our visual organs which allows us to classify the planes represented by colour sensations as light…"[104] These planes of color make up Cézanne's rubric for constructing perspective as depth is indicated, in part, by the way the viewer sees depth through color. It was in his work in the late 1870's that this shift in stylistic and methodological approach is seen, together with the evolution of the constructive brushstroke. While developing this method, Cézanne's writings are less descriptive; however, later in his life, upon reflection, Cézanne's thoughts on color and depth are revealed. In 1905 he writes:

> Now, being old, nearly 70 years, the sensations of colour, which give the light, are for me the reason for the abstractions which do not allow me to cover my canvas entirely nor to pursue the delimitation of the objects where their points of contact are fine and delicate; from which it results that my image or picture is incomplete. On the other hand the planes fall one on top of the other, from whence neo-impressionism emerged, which circumscribes the contours with a black line, a fault which must be fought at all costs. But nature, if consulted, gives us the means of attaining this end.[105]

Here Cézanne describes his process of leaving the canvas unfinished at points, particularly the spaces between the objects that he paints. This technique of outlining likely originated with his watercolor paintings which show pencil markings beneath the paint that circumscribe each

[104] Rewald, 310.
[105] Rewald, 316-317.

object. Cézanne notes that Neo-Impressionism techniques emerged from the intersections among planes, but that some artists chose to provide strong outlines. Here he is likely thinking of Gauguin, to whom he refers negatively elsewhere. This outline technique was eliminated in Cézanne's late phase, yet as the painter writes, his development of the constructive stroke method where planes "fall on top of the other" was instrumental to Cézanne's process of depicting an object in space.

Cézanne's method of exhibiting depth also included a distinguishing of objects based on geometric form:

> May I repeat what I told you here: treat nature by means of the cylinder, the sphere, the cone, everything brought into proper perspective so that each side of an object or a plane is directed towards a central point. Lines parallel to the horizon give breadth, whether it is a section of nature or, if you prefer, of the show which the *Pater Omnipotens Aeterne Deus* spreads out before our eyes. Lines perpendicular to this horizon give depth. But nature for us men is more depth than surface, whence the need to introduce into our light vibrations, represented by the reds and yellows, a sufficient amount of blueness to give the feel of air.[106]

Cézanne's new constructive perspective, by his account, originated from his studies in nature. He describes the constructive brushstrokes as centralizing to one specific point on each object. He indicated that his perspective focuses less on the perfection of painting surfaces of objects, and more on the "natural" experience of depth in the sensory experience of light and air. Cézanne also emphasized that parallel planes face toward a point in cylindrical objects:

> In order to make progress, there is only nature, and the eye is trained through contact with her. It becomes concentric through looking and working. I mean to say that in an orange, an apple, a ball, a head, there is a culminating point; and this point is always—in spite of the tremendous effect; light and shade, colour sensations—the closest to the eye; the edges of the objects flee towards a centre on our horizon.[107]

[106] Rewald, 301.
[107] Rewald, 306.

Cézanne's unique method of creating perspective enables the viewer to experience the relationships between culminating points on each object. In essence, he has taken the effect of one-point perspective, but turned it inside out and multiplied it, so to speak, whereby objects are no longer situated in an *a priori* grid-like space, subservient to that grid and space moving back toward a vanishing point, but instead seem to all aim in our direction. Later this culminating point would become centralized as the point nearest the eye, as exhibited in his painting *Green Pitcher* from 1885-87.

Figure 10. Paul Cézanne, Green Pitcher, 1885-87.

In this painting, Cézanne's use of what looks like a highlight is in fact the culminating point closest to us for the eye to navigate toward. Gowing makes a similar point: "On either side of the point culminant, left blank on the paper—at first sight one could mistake it for the highlight on the pot, but it was nothing of the kind—the colors were arranged in order […]." [108] This effect

[108] Gowing, 58.

was seen earlier with Cézanne's 1878-81 apples, but here is made even more explicit. What may appear like traditional shadows of the pitcher (to the left, for example) exhibit distortions that do not conform to observation. Had Cézanne used traditional perspective techniques the shadow would be shown as broken by the change in depth between the ground plane and upright canvas behind the pitcher. Such distortions may contribute to the effect of a warped object after sustained viewing. Cézanne's method of creating depth is made possible through the oscillation between the rounded white spot on the pot, the rounded white space inside the handle of the pitcher, and the rounded dark top of the shadow. These three points draw the eye among three points of depth on the canvas, highlighting their difference and sameness simultaneously. Cézanne's process offers a perspective effect indicative of the real-life experience of depth as experienced through the observation of objects in space.

Cézanne's new method of portraying perspective is established also in his method of combining multiple views. Throughout his life, his fascination with studying the experienced variables in nature recurred often in his letters. In 1906 he writes:

> Here on the bank of the river the motifs multiply, the same object seen from a different angle offers subject for study of the most powerful interest and so varied that I think I could occupy myself for months without changing place, by turning now more to the right, now more to the left.[109]

Cézanne described the experience he had in formulating his motif with both eyes and by the process of slight shifts in the positioning of his head. He explained that in his experience of viewing nature, a multi-faceted perspective came into place for him. In painting in the moment of seeing his motif, Cézanne tried to approximate the way he perceived objects in "lived perspective," a term commonly used by Cézanne scholars. Rather than painting with a structure of traditional perspective in place, Cézanne's "lived perspective" began from one object, and

[109] Rewald, 327.

linked it to the next via a culminating point. His webbing structure took on a perspective that reflected the painter's experience of looking from object to object and connecting them through lines of sight.

With the constructive brushstroke, Cézanne's canvases link his objects together. The painting *Still Life with Fruit Dish* from 1879-80, for example, exhibits Cézanne's use of parallel strokes and his new perspective.

Figure 11. Paul Cézanne, Still Life with Fruit Dish, 1978-80.

This painting shows depth through color contrast, with faceting planes that face toward a culminating point, displaying multiple views. Cézanne's use of primary color contrast can be seen in the predominantly blue background, and yellow, red and green apples. Cézanne chooses these colors to emphasize the objects' relative positions in space.

This painting also offers a sense of depth by aligning parallel swatches of paint toward particular points on the canvas. An example of this process is evident in the rendering of the

apples. The apples which show the indentation toward the apple's stem appear to be more prominent in the composition than the apples that do not include this added feature of depth. In essence, the point gives a reference for the short planes to work toward, creating a shading effect of sorts. The brush markings make a pattern-like appearance. With closer examination, the parallel lines create a tension in space. The patches of paint seen on the apples appear to be individual facets of the apple's exterior. When the eye moves from facet to facet, figure and ground relationships act as though in a state flux. Due to Cézanne's use of *passage*, the planes appear to oscillate between coming toward the viewer and receding. The ambiguity of planar space thus creates a unique sense of depth. The constructive perspective of the facets is not clear either. Is the viewer standing over the apples, looking from side to side? In my view, it is the breaking down and building up of planes that creates a space for the viewer's interpretation.

As noted above, Cézanne's articulation of depth in his paintings comes also from the combination of multiple views. The painting *Sea at L'Estaque* from 1878-79, exhibits his new use of perspective.

Figure 12. Paul Cézanne, Sea at L'Estaque, 1878-79.

It is evident the painter is working here with the concept of depicting planes which oscillate between concave and convex, as seen in the architecture in this painting. The painting emphasizes geometric form and draws a relation between the rectangular shapes of the buildings and the small rectangular patches of paint. Cézanne's use of *passage* draws together unique angles of rooftops to enhance an effect of three-dimensionality. The rooftop angles function similarly to the constructive brushstroke in their relation to one another, revealing the faceted planes of space which alternate between the fields of depth.

The influence of Stendhal's writing may be seen with Cézanne's increasingly individualized method of painting. Cézanne followed the guidelines put forth by Stendhal and created a depth which was not based on conventional forms of representation, but rather on how depth was experienced in reality, through a process of "lived perspective". Stendhal's preference for the colorist painters impacted Cézanne's practice in developing depth through color. Stendhal describes the methods of perspective used in the 17th century in a positive light. The 17th century Venetian painters Tintoretto, Veronese and Titian, are, by Stendhal's account, integral to understanding his theory of pictorial depth. In reference to the painter Veronese, Stendhal writes:

> Painting, considered as a three-dimensional art or as the representation of light and colour, is not painting as Michelangelo understands it. There is nothing in common between himself and Paolo Veronese or Correggio. Like Alfieri, despising everything that is accessory and of secondary interest, he concentrated exclusively on painting man, and that rather as a sculptor than a painter.[110]

Stendhal explained that in contrast to Michelangelo, Veronese's painting achieved three-dimensional representation through light and color. He clarified Michelangelo's approach to painting as being more from a sculptor's perspective than from a painter's. Significantly,

[110] Wakefield, 84.

Stendhal acknowledged the achievement of three-dimensional depth in painting by way of color and light only.

Stendhal advocated for a balance of logic and intuition in painting, by explaining the positives of the colorist painters and the limitations of methods such as one-point perspective. He stated:

> La logique est moins nécessaire à la peinture qu'à la poésie il faut raisonner mathématiquement juste sur certains sentiments: mais il faut avoir ces sentiments: tout homme qui ne sent pas que la mélancolie est inhérente à l architecture gothique, et la joie à la grecque doit s'appliquer à l'algèbre. En fin le quinzième siècle était le premier, et la liberté de notre vol est appesantie même par le génie du dernier siècle, qui, sous la forme de science, pèse déjà sur nos ailes.[111]

Stendhal described his general dissatisfaction with the artists of the 17th and 18th centuries, who he felt turned more to science than to expressions of individualistic experience or feeling. His criticisms of the dominant views in the early 19th century on perspective in the arts, and his approval of Delacroix and disdain for Neoclassical painters likely affirmed Cézanne's own opinion on the subject.

Balance of Color and Line: Solving the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*.

The balance of color and line is a topic much discussed by Cézanne scholars. Gowing describes many aspects of the role of both color and line in Cézanne's paintings, clarifying Cézanne's method as an exploration of relationships. He writes: "But for Cézanne the relationships of color—and color only existed in relationships; the story makes clear that he was unable to apply it in any other connection—were akin to the physical articulation of forms that

[111] Henri B. Stendhal, *Historie de la Peinture en Italie*. Edited by Paul Arbelet. (Pans: Edouard Champion, 1924), 116.

he drew in line in the museum."[112] As seen in the analysis in Chapter Two, Cézanne's balance of color and line was structurally based. While Gowing's description is in regard to Cézanne's late work, the same principles can be seen originating with his constructive brushstroke. The patches of paint oscillate between being identified as color or line, so that the two reconcile in their similar function of creating depth, as seen in Cézanne's *Poplars*, from circa 1879-82.

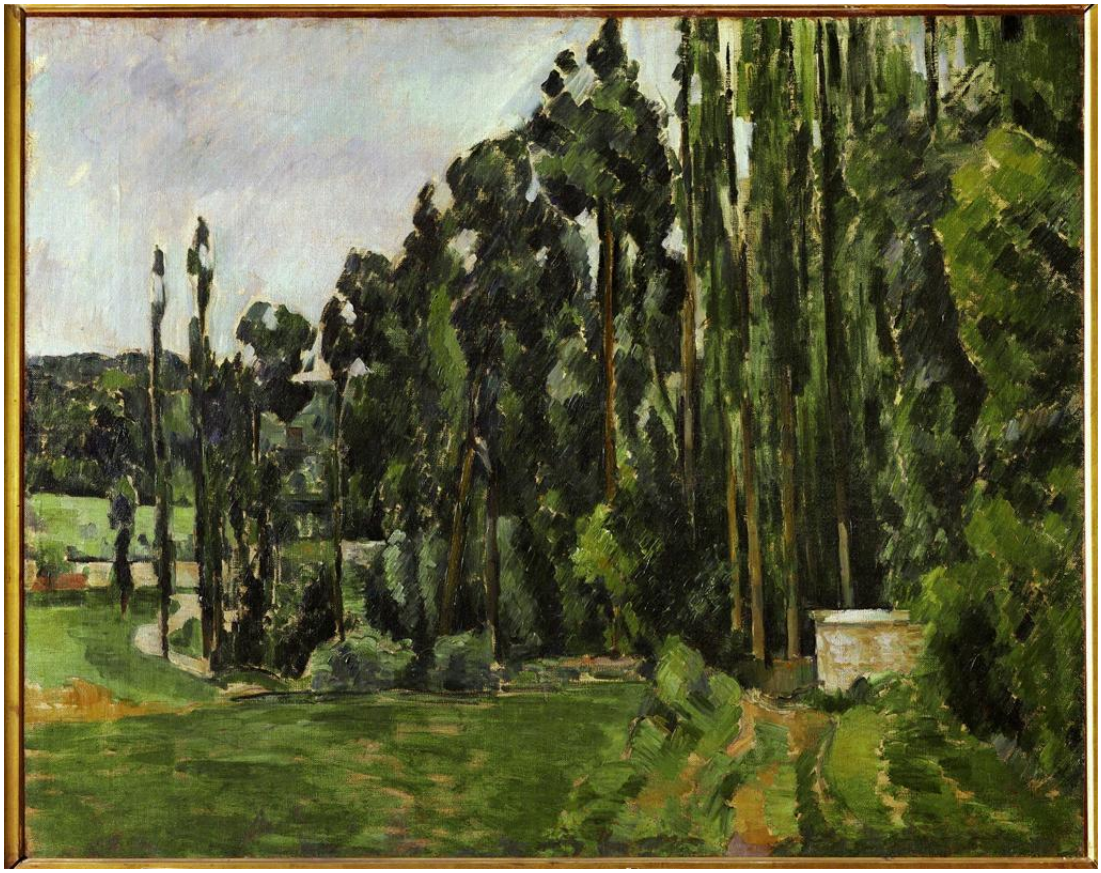

Figure 13. Paul Cézanne, Poplars, 1879-82.

In this painting, the poplar trees are depicted as thin vertical lines which with closer examination are comprised of small patches of paint. Cézanne's brushstrokes construct vertically, but in their similar make-up share a commonality with each aspect in the painting. The thin poplar trees appear to oscillate between receding into the tree-line and protruding out toward the viewer,

[112] Gowing, 61.

partly due to the ambiguous patches which are at the right side of the picture. This ambiguity of depth is heightened by the all-over use of constructive strokes, and a new sense of depth is created.

Schapiro also describes Cézanne's pursuit of balance between color and line. He asserts, "But unlike those who in admiring both artists supposed that Classic and Romantic were incompatible kinds of art—the art of the colorist and the art of the pure draftsman—Cézanne discovered a standpoint in which important values of both could coexist within one work."[113] He emphasizes the significance of Cézanne's place in the history of art as reconciling these two approaches to painting into one.

Schapiro also explains that Cézanne's use of color and line was very different from his contemporaries. Thus: "For the Impressionists, who wished to overcome the bareness and inertness of local color, it was precisely these volatile, 'subjective' contrast colors that gave to the painting a greater vibrancy and truth to *sensation*, the evidence of the artist's live sensibility."[114] Cézanne's subjective approach to painting according to Schapiro, was tied to his balance of color and line in his pictures, made possible due to the painter's explorations of his *sensations*.

Cézanne's letters describe the importance of color to his process of painting: "Harmony reveals itself more and more through the discord of the colours and, what is even worse, the aphony of the tones."[115] His letters also indicate his appreciation for the linear effects of landscape. Thus: "For within us they have not gone to sleep for ever, the vibrating sensations

[113] Schapiro, 28-29.
[114] Schapiro, 20.
[115] Rewald, 213.

reflected by this good soil of Provence, the old memories of our youth, of these horizons, of these landscapes, of these unbelievable lines which leave in us so many deep impressions."[116]

Cézanne's conception of line as it related to color in his pictures was that "Drawing is merely the outline of what you see."[117] He adds that "what you must strive to achieve is a good method of construction."[118] He explains that, similar to Stendhal, the use of outlining was perhaps not as important to the painter's objective of constructing space through a balance of line and color. As an alternative to outline, Cézanne's lines in essence can be related back to the constructive stroke, where through "lines" of short painterly marks, he constructs a figure in three-dimensional space.

Cézanne's writings towards the end of his life explain his earlier pursuits, advocating for a balance between the two methods of painting. He states, "…a painter, by means of drawing and colour, gives concrete form to his sensations and perceptions."[119] He describes his formula for painting as constructing with both color and line equally. On this issue, Cézanne also states, "I started a water-colour in the style of those I did at Fontainebleau,[[120]] it seems more harmonious to me, it is all a question of putting in as much inter-relation as possible."[121] Here Cézanne affirms his aim of achieving inter-relation in his paintings. Inter-relation is likely Cézanne's language for describing the structure of planes which relate to one another by their color within the canvas, and also by their identical nature of parallel strokes. In *Bridge at Maincy* from 1879, Cézanne exhibits the use of parallel strokes of paint which act both as patches of color and as line.

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[116] Rewald, 271.
[117] Rewald, 309.
[118] Rewald, , 309.
[119] Rewald, 303.
[120] Cézanne's style of painting at Fontainbleau likely refers to his painting *Pines and Rocks* from 1897, where his use of constructive brushstroke becomes more loose and patch-like, increasing in similarity to his watercolors.
[121] Rewald, 323.

Figure 14. Paul Cézanne, Bridge at Maincy, 1879.

This painting shows the artist working in his initial phase of the constructive brushstroke method. Cézanne creates a balance of color and line in very carefully orchestrated and subtle ways. As seen throughout the entirety of the canvas there is a balance of color patches running parallel or perpendicular to lines. All parts of the canvas except for the sweeping longer lines which run horizontally across are portrayed with the constructive brushstroke method. In this instance, the patches are brightly colored and create balance for the dark thin lines. This painting is particularly intriguing because of Cézanne's dynamic use of figure and ground inversion. The tree which appears to be in the foreground mixes its branches into the background in the upper left section of the canvas. It is difficult to tell if these branches are meant to be a part of the tree, or if they are an example of Cézanne's method of outlining with line his objects. Yet it is the

feathery lines which become a web that in many ways appears to hold the picture together. Through following the *passage* of these feathery lines, the foreground, middle ground and background all come together.

Cézanne's painting *Three Apples,* from 1878-79, exhibits a similar balance of color and line, and also illustrates his theory of inter-relation of objects.

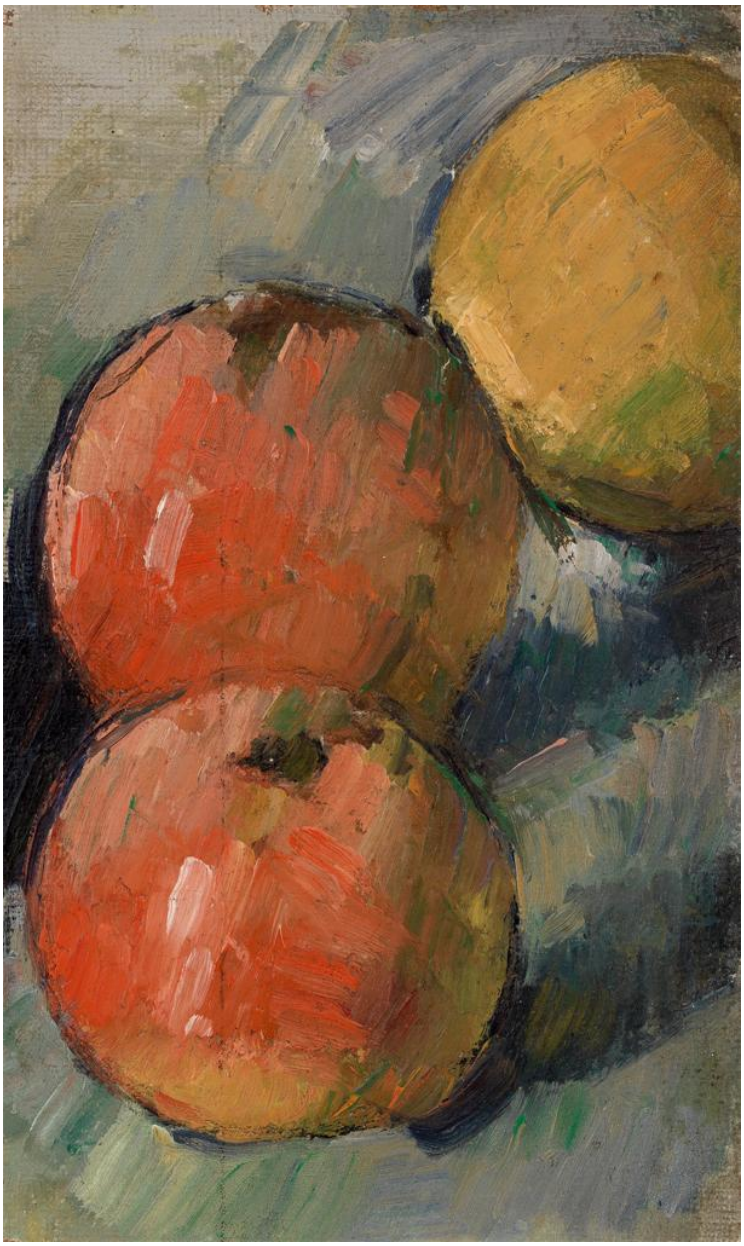

Figure 15. Paul Cézanne, Three Apples, 1878-1879.

As seen here, the balance of color and line creates a relationship of tension and depth in the picture. Here more than in his previous still lifes of apples, Cézanne uses primary colors to create an even greater contrast of depth. Cézanne's perception and *sensations* are, as he stated, represented through an interplay of colors and lines. With time, the eye oscillates back and forth between color relations and linear relations, inverting the figure and ground. This back and forth oscillation can be interpreted as indicative of the painter's real experience with a motif.

As noted in Chapter Two, Stendhal's advocacy of the balance of color and line in art most likely impacted Cézanne's ideas for painting. While Stendhal described his affinity for color, he also explained the possibilities of the graphic. His assessment was that the importance of drawing was not shading or outlining, but instead was a structural component of the picture. In describing how, in just a few strokes, an artist could capture the figure and he asked, "Do you think the artist should apply the same principle to colour and chiaroscuro as we have to lines?"[122] In posing the question, Stendhal implied that in his view, color could be equally used to achieve construction in painting. Cezanne's method of constructing with paint in many ways echoes Stendhal. This is evidenced in Figure 15 where his apples create a three-dimensional structural quality from the faceting of planes shown through constructive brushstrokes. The brushstrokes apply the same principled method of creating depth in the canvas as artists of the past who utilized one-point perspective achieved. However, in Cézanne's practice, color merges with line and builds up his objects patch by patch, so that they create a space to be situated in. In turning color application into a method of constructing space, Cézanne eliminated the need for color to represent exactly what he saw in his motif, thus leading to his invention of the technique of color modulation.

[122] Wakefield, 66.

Color Modulation

Scholars commonly agree that color modulation was a significant aspect of Cézanne's originality, and while this practice largely attributed to his later work, the origins of this method of painting can be linked to Cézanne's paintings in the late 1870's. Gowing's scholarship offers detailed descriptions of Cézanne's practice of modulating color. He explains, for Cézanne, masking his painterly marks was not truthful to the act of painting. Gowing writes:

> Modulation implies a transition through clearly perceptible stages. Smooth monochromatic modeling always seemed to Cézanne's a falsification. But it is possible that in later years he may have thought of shifts in the range of colors in his code […].[123]

With the development of the constructive brushstroke, Cézanne's marks solidified into a method of apparent patches. His paintings do not reflect a mimetic image of what he saw, but instead revealed his unique view by exposing each painterly mark.

Cézanne's use of primary colors to depict objects was often altered, Gowing notes, particularly in his watercolor pictures. He finds in Cézanne's work, "The simplest progressions of primary colors are arranged in order: from red through yellow, then from yellow into green and from green into blue."[124] Accordingly, he describes the painter's process of creating a system of depiction for his canvas as progressions of primary and secondary colors.

Scholar Richard Shiff also offers his own explanations on the significance of Cézanne's color modulation. Shiff writes: "With modeling, the motif would seem to derive from (or "reproduce") a view of nature, with modulation, the motif would become purely pictorial, a self-

[123] Gowing, 59.
[124] Gowing, 65.

generating construction."[125] Color modulation, by Shiff's account, is the record of perception in painting, and is not limited to the representation of objects.

Crary's scholarship on Cézanne's color modulation affirms many of these observations, explaining Cézanne's painting in modulation as more in line with actual perception:

> When one deliberately moves one's eye slightly from one fixed position to another, the shift of an object or area out of the center of vision even to the inner edge of the periphery transforms it: its color modulates to something less distinct, it loses detail but more importantly becomes something other than what it had just been, and in a new relation to what now occupies the *Blickpunkt*. Perceptual constancy is a phantom, and the world thus seen is no longer identical to itself. It becomes, as Lucretius long ago understood, an infinite cascade of self-differentiation.[126]

Crary explains the processes of change which occur when viewing an object over a long period of time. He notes that no perceptions of a motif could in fact be constant. Rather, he points out that modulating color is a process which occurs on the retina as one continues to look at the colors of objects over a period of time. He explains that vision becomes less distinct toward the periphery, quite in line with Cézanne's writing on the subject of viewing the breadth of nature. For Cézanne, the inconsistencies of vision could be a justification for not painting perfectly mimetic scenes. Based on Crary's analysis, Cézanne's search for truth in painting could therefore be an exploration of the limitations and inconsistencies, as well as the possibilities of sight.

Cézanne's beginnings of modulating with color can be seen in most of his paintings made in and around 1878. His increase toward greater personal expression in his art is clearly evident. In *Self Portrait* from 1879-82, the painter modulates the color to capture his own likeness.

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[125] Shiff, *Cézanne and the End of Impressionism,* 104.
[126] Crary, 299.

Figure 16. Paul Cézanne, Self Portrait, 1879-82.

Cézanne's early modulations can be seen mostly in the painter's face. Unique patches of paint which range throughout the color spectrum can be observed. He paints depth by way of color contrast here, rather than through local colors and shading. The bright hues found in the painter's face are in contrast with the darker tones of his jacket. But with closer examination and time spent looking at the darker components of the canvas, one notices the significant variation of colors. After some time looking, it becomes impossible to see the initial contrast of merely dark against light. At first sight these contrasts appear to be traditional application of local color,

in fact after sustained experience before the canvas, the viewer can see a complex set of constructed brushstrokes that show the beginnings of color modulations.

As earlier quoted, Ratcliffe briefly notes Stendhal's impact on this important aspect of Cézanne's work, stating:

> The beginning of Stendhal's Chapter LXVI may well have confirmed Cézanne's recent experiments in colour modulation: 'Chez le Titien, la science du coloris consiste en une infinité de remarques sur l'effet des couleurs voisines, sur leurs plus fines différences, en la pratique d'exécuter ces différences. Son œil exercé distingue dans un panier d'oranges vingt jaunes opposés qui laissent un souvenir distinct.' It seems quite reasonable to suppose that in observations such as these, Cézanne may have found confirmation of the ideas that he was to explain to Zola (as promised in the letter that described the Stendhal text).[127]

Stendhal's quotation, explicitly details the purpose of color modulation as coming from a painter's method of looking carefully at color in nature, and learning to distinguish between the subtleties that can be captured in painting. This endeavor for artists to learn to see the subtleties of difference in nature and in objects is at the core of both Cézanne's theory and practice of art. Stendhal's *Histoire* offered guidance for Cézanne, as Ratcliffe briefly mentions. Yet, as I have argued in this thesis, the impact of *Histoire* on Cézanne's theory and practice is undeniably significant to the painter's career. With his shift in 1878, in many ways Cézanne's art becomes modern, thereby fulfilling the aims Stendhal's indicated in his text.

[127] Ratcliffe, 325.

Conclusion

Stendhal's 1817 text *Histoire de la Peinture en Italie* outlined the early 19th century shift toward Romantic and Realist theories and practices. He explained the importance of studying the precedents of the colorist painters, the Venetians and Rubens. The author also advocated that artists study as much from nature. Stendhal's rubric for modern art was a mixture of both of these practices, in that through color and experience, an individualistic art form was created. His text explains that the subjective sensory experience of painting from one's *sensations* in direct contact with nature was a necessary step for modern painting. Stendhal explained that for him modernity was an ever-changing view of nature, one that could never be fully captured or realized.

In terms of the formal aspects of painting, his text almost advocated that artists alter existing principles of depth and move beyond one-point perspective. He also wrote about the significance of balancing color and line in a picture, reconciling the great debate between the *anciens* and *moderns*, an affinity he shared with Cézanne. Lastly, Stendhal explained that individualism of the painter was of utmost importance to his attainment of originality. In many ways, Cézanne's paintings fulfilled the difficult task presented by Stendhal to be a modern painter.

Stendhal has been overlooked by most Cézanne scholars and certainly has never been seen as essential to the painter's process of developing the constructive brushstroke. Yet it is important to consider that in 1878, when Cézanne's work shifted so dramatically, he read Stendhal's text for the fourth time and exclaimed its significance as full of truths about painting. Cézanne's pursuit of truth, meaning his pursuit of truth to the vagaries of *sensation* and

perception, including shifting color patterns and the organization of forms according to the point on an object that is closest to the eye (hence "corresponds" with it), became his credo.

While many Cézanne scholars discount the influence of Stendhal's text because aspects were borrowed from other authors, the impact on Cézanne may have been quite profound. While other authors impacted Cézanne at different periods of his life, for example Baudelaire, in 1878 a year of considerable achievement and the focus of this thesis, Cézanne declared his profound admiration for Stendhal's text. As established in Chapter One, much of Baudelaire's early writings are in fact borrowed directly from Stendhal. That alone warrants the pursuit of this thesis: to establish Stendhal's text as a source of inspiration and converging ideas for the painter's theory and practice supported by Cézanne's own declarations.

In breaking with the Impressionists, Cézanne ventured into an unknown. His painting style had previously been an exploration of buttery strokes inspired by an amalgam of styles and theories. The 1860s offered Cézanne the freedom to think about the trajectory of art. It wasn't until the 1870s, however, that he began to question his role in the historical development of art. Stendhal's text offered him the justification for breaking free of the Impressionists. Stendhal made available an altered approach to the arts, one that was not descriptive of perfection, idealization, and beauty, but of contrast, conflict, and a battleground in the arts. Stendhal offered reinforcement to Cézanne in the way his writing addressed painters directly.

With the rising French middle class in the 19th century and the greater autonomy of the public at large, a new audience became interested in the arts. In Stendhal's view, the middle class could not relate to the aspects of narrative (i.e. history) paintings, which glorified war through antiquity. Rather, the middle class, like Stendhal himself, had lived through the reality of war in the city and country, and perhaps did not find aesthetic value in the perpetuation of the

idealization of political conquest, the use of history painting, allegories, or moralizing subjects designed for the edification of the public. Cézanne likely felt this, too. His retreat to the countryside in *Aix* was not perhaps a retreat from reality, but rather a search for truth and aesthetic beauty in the simplicity of everyday life. In other words, Cézanne reached out for a different kind of reality, one that was rich with everyday objects, people, and nature.

Cézanne's unique use of opposition and tension of figure and ground relationships are ever-present in his canvases painted in the late 1870's. Cézanne encouraged the active participation of the viewer, by offering a place for the viewer to contemplate in viewing his pictures. He does not give the viewer a painting that is easy to digest; instead he provokes the viewer's most basic level of knowledge and forces him/ her to question even that. How does that apple stay on the table? How does the tree hold to the ground? How does the artist capture the sameness of people and the difference, simultaneously? Most of all, how is the master painter revealed to be just an everyday person, who learns from looking, the way that any person could? Cézanne exposed the canvas as simply cloth, the stretcher as merely wood, and the paint as pigment applied with a brush.

There is another side to Cézanne's art that transitions his work into mental engagement. Rather than painting purely to create an object, Cézanne sought to synthesize his experience with that of his viewers. This was done by his looking at nature from direct contact with it, and yours and mine as we experience his canvases. To reiterate again, John Berger writes:

> …All paintings are contemporary. Hence the immediacy of their testimony. Their historical moment is literally there before our eyes. Cézanne made a similar observation from the painter's point of view. "A minute in the world's life passes! To paint it in its reality, and forget everything for that! To become that minute, to be the sensitive

> plate…give the image of what we see, forgetting everything that has appeared before our time…"[128]

It is our desire to look side to side, near and far, that gives perpetual significance to Cézanne's work even today. We are drawn to the uncanny aspect of impossible balancing and objects stringing together via constructive brushstrokes in web-like translations. Yet attainment of understanding is never possible with Cézanne's painting: the longer one looks, the less his paintings make sense. At all times, the logic seems divided between building up and breaking down, as the eye moves from plane to plane, line to line, and color patch to patch. There is no end to Cézanne's canvases. They offer only an infinite number of views of nature, and an infinite number of views for us. As we continue to look at his art, Cézanne's paintings remain perpetually modern.

[128] Berger, 31.

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