

A STUDY ON CÉZANNE

A ROMANTIC SPIRIT

DENIS LONERGAN



1
THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

A STUDY ON CEZANNE/A ROMANTIC SPIRIT

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO:

THE FACULTY OF HISTORY OF ART AND DESIGN & COMPLEMENTARY STUDIES

AND

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE

FACULTY OF FINE ART

DEPARTMENT OF PAINTING

BY

DENIS LONERGAN

APRIL 1984

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS	4
FOREWORD	6
Chapter:	
I A Paradox	7
2 Early Period	15
The Picnic	
A Backdrop And Influences	
3 Middle Period	36
The Black Clock	
The Cottage With Trees	
The Walls And Other Works	
A Summary	
4 Late Period	60
Motifs (Bathers)	
Still-Life With A Plaster Cupid	
Cezanne's Humanity	
The Gardener	
5 The Meditative Quality (A Conclusion)	82
APPENDIX I	85
2	100
3	102
4	104
BIBLIOGRAPHY	105

TABLE OF CONTENTS

S	4
.....	6
Paradox	7
Early Period	15
the Picnic	
Backdrop And Influences	
Middle Period	36
the Black Clock	
the Cottage With Trees	
the Walls And Other Works	
Summary	
late Period	60
studies (Bathers)	
Still-Life With A Plaster Cupid	
Cezanne's Humanity	
the Gardener	
the Meditative Quality (A Conclusion)	82
.....	85
.....	100
.....	102
.....	104
.....	105

ILLUSTRATIONS

Page

<u>THE PICNIC</u> 1869, oil on canvas, by Paul Cezanne....	16
<u>THE BLACK CLOCK</u> (c) 1870, oil on canvas.....	39
<u>THE COTTAGE WITH TREES</u> 1873, oil on canvas.....	48
<u>THE WALLS</u> 1875-76, oil on canvas.....	52
<u>THE GREAT BATHERS</u> 1898-1905, oil on canvas.....	63
<u>STILL-LIFE WITH A PLASTER CUPID</u> 1895, oil on canvas.	71
<u>THE GARDENER</u> 1906, oil on canvas.....	78
MONTAGE (containing areas of <u>Blue Landscape</u> /	
<u>Pistachio Trees/Sainte Victoire</u> /	
<u>Study Of Foliage/Dr Gachet/Still-</u>	
<u>Life With Chair</u>	83/84
COVER ILLUSTRATION <u>PISTACHIO TREES</u> & Superimposed Figure.	

JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU

I have this story with the words of Rousseau, in his statement he tells us that he was forced/reduced into fixing his senses and attention upon the waves of water, upon a particular event in nature, by doing so he brought about a freedom in his 'soul', enhancing his existence. Through his meditation upon that particular event he eventually championed the limitations of any allegorical incident or event, producing in himself a feeling and awareness as though he were before all nature and a part of all nature, by all accounts a feeling of magnitude.

There is something similar in Goethe, there is that same meditative quality. Mark Tobey the American Abstractist once pointed to the power and enchantment in a Caspian landscape. Tobey, also, has that meditative quality and attitude. Camille in his book *Exposition of Modern Art* says-

"Goethe, Winckelmann, Haller, Ponce, Delacroix, invented the concept, before these conceptions, forms, sounds became intellectual ones reacting on each other. The work of art became official and significant to a generation."

"THE MOVEMENT OF WATER ENTHRALLED MY SENSES, DRIVING ALL

OTHER AGITATION FROM MY SOUL, SO THAT I WAS PLUNGED INTO

A DELICIOUS REVERIE!"

JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU.

1. Goethe, *Exposition of Modern Art*, p. 10.

FOREWORD

I open this essay with the words of Rousseau, in his statement he tells us that he was forced/seduced into fixing his senses and awareness upon the waves of water, upon a particular event in nature. By doing so he brought about a freedom in his 'soul', enhancing his existence. Through his meditation upon that particular event he eventually championed the limitations of any singular instant or event, producing in himself a feeling and awareness as though he were before all nature and a part of all nature, by all accounts a feeling of magnitude.

There is something similar in Cezanne, there is that same meditative quality. Mark Tobey the American Abstractionist once pointed to the power and containment in a Cezanne brushstroke, Tobey, also, has that meditative quality and attitude. Ozenfant in his book Foundations Of Modern Art says-

"Cezanne, Rimbaud, Mallarme, Poincare, Debussy, invented the compact, dense poem, conceptions, forms, sounds become innumeral cogs reacting on each other. The work of art became efficient and significant to a degree undreamed of."

That meditative quality is something I think the poets of the Romantic Movement included in their writing and methods, but for the most part the painters forgot about it, some may have illustrated it as Friedrich Casper David did, but Cezanne united his vision and approach to produce a tour de force.

I draw attention to Rousseau as he is situated at the emergence of the Romantic Movement and Paul Cezanne was born at the end of the historical period. There have been Romantics before and after the actual Movement, I believe Cezanne is a special Romantic.

In the end of this essay I have included a type of visual conclusion, a montage of some areas of Cezanne's paintings and watercolours. By doing so I hope to leave the final word to the artist for I feel his works in the final analysis describe themselves and all their facets.

1 Ozenfant, Foundations Of Modern Art, p.9.

C H A P T E R I

A Paradox.

In the early summer of 1983 I was talking with a friend about paintings. The conversation centred round ones reaction to paintings, the subject of Cezanne arose.

It was suggested by my friend that one painting he had seen by Paul Cezanne appeared ugly to him. In a strange way I could see the point he made. He admitted that he felt the work to be masterful and excellent in execution but there was something so intense about it, that, as he hinted, it had an "odd and beautiful ugliness" and then he made a comparison to a Delacroix painting.

The painting we talked about was one of the Late Monte St. Victoire series, in which the sky is composed of green brush strokes, as is the foreground 'ugly' may not have been the word I would have used, yet there is for me a strange beauty that does not stem from the execution and formal elements of the work alone.

That beauty, or the reason for it, has been on my mind since this conversation. To put a tangible explanation forward at the time was impossible, I had to suffice with the feeling, and one could only wonder every now and then, on the random viewing of a reproduction.

Cezanne has always been an inspiration to me. In one way I see him, his work as a mentor, in another, I find a certain pleasure and bewilderment in the vastness of his work. I had always felt a clarity in him. One is able to sense a working and creative process at play, there is a balance evident, one that goes beyond mere appearances and mere compositional elements, difficult enough as that is. Things stretch further, there is a harmony, which is passionate, an order which does not limit the viewers responses. There is the harmony of a universe, an apple, a gardener, a woman, a canvas, the effect goes beyond the painted object and that rectangle covered with pigments.

In general, I believe, my appreciation of Cezanne was a formal one. An appreciation which bent towards those structures, colour harmonies, his marvellous devices, the force of his technical skill and painstaking execution of it. Somehow I may have forgotten about a more important aspect, one that really orchestrated all the other elements we love in Cezanne; his vision. Of course the former elements are of great importance and this I hope to show. But when I think of my emotive responses to his work I realize now that such could not come from the formal elements alone.

I feel his paintings to reach out and strike a chord or a phrase in me that sounds of worldliness, of humanity, and sometimes I feel

that Cezanne's vision not only of painting but on a wider spectrum, was one which engulfed everything. I think he felt a thread common to everything; that humans were of the same 'stuff' as the mountain, apples, onions, water, there was an emotional appreciation of those things that recognised their material separate-ness but stretched into a spiritual awareness of a 'common denominator'.

A painter once told me, that he witnessed a cow calving. He said there was something about that moment, the blood, the new calf, the attendants, the scent, causing him to feel everything to be human and he to be 'everything'. In one way, an odd reaction, in another, very understandable.

The more I discuss Cezanne, the more the idea of a paradox arises. Even in these few lines, I have suggested a paradox in the notion of an 'ugly beauty' or the humanity of a mountain and in my earlier appreciation leaning towards the classical qualities, those things in his work that recognised the material separations and orders of things, the modulation of forms, the containment of forms within structures etc. This hints at our notions of the classical ideals with regard to history, while on the other hand he achieves the opposite, he breaks out of the enclosed universe of the classical into a spiritual vision, open and far reaching.

Is this another paradox or is it the true harmony we talk about? So often this is the case, an opposite leads us to see a connection of some sort.

Richard Murphy remarked that Cezanne was like a diamond, one that was cut into many pieces, and this is important to note. Cezanne is that type of painter who's art can be seen in facets.¹ It is easy to understand how another artist can be drawn to a particular facet and so develop his own particular interests and with this I think our general appreciation has been split up. One point I would like to make to make is that, he is a special artist who provides in his work many different facets, each being a valid and original endeavour, to quote a section from the conclusion of Judith Wechler's book The Interpretation of Cezanne.

"To conclude, Cezanne continues to have a unique significance to artists, critics and historians. His insistence on the Primary of vision revolutionised the visual arts, and he also profoundly altered the way we can view our world.

Abstract expressionist painters were concerned with the procedural aspects of Cezanne's work, and not with his formal composition, still less his representation. In action painting, the expression of process in recorded gestures takes precedence.

Modernist painters of the 1960's pursued new concepts of

pictorial unity. Cezanne had unified the structural elements of his paintings by relating part to part, colour to colour. A simpler solution was pursued by the colour field painters..... overall unity through broad areas of colour, unambiguously lying on the surface of the canvas without reference to illusory depth.

Now new realist painting has once again raised the problem of bringing the world back into the picture without losing the modernist intensity of attention to composition and surface...."2

And there is so much more, Cubists, Fauves, Neo-Classicists, Symbolists etc. Indeed Cezanne had to be unique in the sense that not only did he affect so many artists, but so many movements.

One thing is clear, a great number of young artists, critics etc. responded to his work, they saw things in different ways, focusing on aspects, but there is that appeal that draws you in, you can be guided by your needs and you can find a lesson but you can also experience the unique wholeness of the work and you then see how Cezanne is a diamond. At present my appreciation of Cezanne is of the uncut stone, a large gem. I think Cezanne was a Romantic and more so at this later period than any other stage, but being Cezanne I am, therefore talking about a very original and unique Romantic, a brand that does not fit into any particular historical group of

Romantics.

I was formulating the idea that Cezanne's later work evoked a far more spiritual sensation, a certain awe, wonder and rapture in the viewer than those of his earlier work, yet there are feelings that we generally associate with romantic work and thought, the feeling of power and rapture, the facet that one is emotionally moved.

In a way Cezanne was trying to evoke such sensations in his so called Romantic Period. I feel he was trying to present us with human tragedies, rape, theft, temptation. Was he trying to touch us and tell us about our overall condition? That in itself is a large and hard task to handle, one is talking about a high tension of emotions, yet these early paintings tend to fall short of the mark, or so it seems in relation to his late work and its masterful brilliance.

I came across a late Monte St. Victoire. I know the painting well, I have examined it several times, its structure, the scene, the dimensions, the series of works it comes from etc. But I saw it afresh. The actual painting is $23\frac{5}{8}$ " x $28\frac{3}{4}$ ", the reproduction I casually came across was particularly good, there was also a life size detail which impressed upon me the intensity of the painting, the feeling I got was so intense that it was almost

ineffable. But the point I'm making is, I was struck by its whole-
ness, not any particular facet, but all facets without having to
labour over any one. I got that strange feeling of 'everythingness'
from it. At that stage I could not put my finger on what I was
sensing, why when I left the painting the world of things seemed
closer. And so the feeling ebbed but left me with a problem. Why
was I feeling such emotional response to a painting which is
commonly described as classical and heading towards abstraction?

Footnotes

¹ Richard.W. Murphy, World Of Cezanne, p86.

² Judith Wechsler, The Interpretation Of Cezanne, p.89

C H A P T E R 2

Early Period.

The Picnic

Some time after seeing the St. Victoire painting I came across an early Cezanne The Picnic from about 1869. This is a strange painting, it is from the 'Romantic' period, one of the last of that period. Many of the other romantic paintings tend to be more definite, like The Murder, it is about an act, we see it happening, the scene is dark, the heavy forms hang over the victim. In some sense, we feel the tragedy, we recognize the roles of killers/robbers and victims, as in The Temptation at first glance we recognize the setting, what is happening. We sense what is about to happen in The Donkey and the Thieves but The Picnic, I cannot give any immediate impression.

The painting seems to be a riddle, it doesn't seem to say anything, yet it hints at a lot of things. Yet one thing strikes me, the dog in the foreground has his back towards us, slanting slightly in the direction of the lower left corner. He is lean and has a pointed head, his hind leg is accentuated, we see in particular the curve and flesh of the rump leading into the curve of the upper portion of his leg. This is a natural pose for a dog. His head directs the gaze of the viewer into the actual



picnic. Suddenly one comes to see the pose of the woman squatting by the picnic cloth, there is something strange about her posture, it is most uncomfortable. It seems unnatural. It is the very same pose as that of the dog. In fact if one eliminates the main part of the upper body the form resembles some great grey animal.

The form of a man, which resembles Cezanne, is in a squatting position more natural in one sense, yet very uncomfortable. The leg which is bent out from the body is out of proportion making the body top heavy, suggesting that all the weight should be on the supporting arm, yet there seems to be no pressure on it. The arm seems to be useless yet functioning. This figure seems to be away from the actual picnic cloth, an outsider with the dog. One senses that these three figures are important.

First the dog leads us to the woman, then the woman to the man, and the man back to the dog. I think the three elements sympathise with each other. What I found curious was that striking resemblance between the dog and the woman. This brought to mind the association my friend made with the calving cow and something human, it also brought back to mind the St. Victoire painting.

The dog and woman seem to touch each other both in shape and through the figure of the man. There is a hint of a divide being crossed, a bridge in nature. This is an animal like gathering,

primitive, a ritualistic meal that celebrates the threads of nature which sews all things together, the cloth like an altar. This is similar to the feeling I got from the St. Victoire painting, or more correctly an illustration to the feeling.

What maybe significant is the man's/Cezanne's pose, while similar, it is reverted, thus separating him. The dog, while on the outskirts, is, in an ideal sense, more akin to the people and the activity. This maybe an expression of Cezanne's own personal position in life at the time. In a particular way he was always distant from people, from other painters. Yet he was to some degree in there amongst them, save the late years. He was continually running into critical opposition.

There is a Romantic nature to the picture, but I feel this should not be with the Romantic Movement and especially that of France and Germany.¹ Even at this stage there is an individual flavour, for if there is a romantic element there is a tint of realism. One is reminded of Daubigny, one is reminded of the 1860's when Realism and Romanticism met.

The Realist approach in this painting can be sensed in the dog, he is not the marvellous animal found in a Delacroix. He is an everyday dog, he sits beside a flask. The handling of the paint is thick and is very much used as paint. There seems to be a regard

for it as a material and this is reflected in the heavy mood of the painting, the dark forests, dark coats, heavy folds with stark contrasts. Once more there is a paradox, there is a slight air of confusion. Cezanne seems to be responding to two schools of thought, Realist/Romanticist. To go further he is not too worried about the conflict. In a strange way it is not a conflict but very much the world according to Cezanne. It is an honest exploration of his mood, attitudes, an honest approach to his subject and his tools as a painter.

The clumsiness we feel comes from the fact that the artist was in a type of 'Limbo' before nature and life. Life was real, hard and confusing. Nature excited a spiritual feeling, yet all things are connected in some way, the dog and woman, the three oranges, fruits of nature, there is nothing else. The picnic seems to be a ritual in which the fruit takes the form of a spiritual offering. The woman bent over the cloth holds the third orange as if she were a priestess. Mystical, hinting at a 'man-nature-beast' kinship.

The cloth in its starkness, jumps forward, in fact it is shocking and visually disturbing. A man leans on it with his elbow, or so it seems. The cloth goes beyond the representation of a material but becomes to the eye solid and real as it shocks the viewer. The man in the background has a stark white shirt, heightened by

dark edge of the forest, which he oddly leans against into a relaxed unconscious pose, he is oblivious and happy. It is as if his problems are solved, thus he is firm and content, he projects forward with confidence.

To make some points about the painting:

- (i) The more romantic notions suggest a oneness with nature, yet the suggestion at best is a hint.
- (ii) The inclusion of the Cezanne-like figure is a call back to reality, his own conditons and position?²
- (iii) The curving forms; the stark contrasts seem to aim at two levels, they are reminiscent of Romantic paintings; they are a response to the method of painting, light shifting contrasts would be lost in a heavy broad use of paint and pigment.
- (iv) The painting has an honesty, which strengthens those forms, the freedom taken with limbs and materials.
- (v) The work seems to be more Romantic in spirit but not that of the historical movement. It stems from a personal belief, personal vision, which gives a realistic substance to the more spiritual, poetic nature and mood of the work.³
- (vi) The painting appears clumsy, yet there is a strong structural composition, with human forms harmonizing with natural forms of trees etc. The clumsiness seems to come from the inner handling of forms

and areas, reflecting the honest confusion of the artists vision.

It is important here to give some biographical details and to sketch the artists life at this stage of his life. When he was born in Provence in 1839, Paul Cezanne was the illegitimate and only son of Louis-Auguste Cezanne and Anne-Elizabeth Bourgeois Aubert. His father had been described as a clever and ambitious, he started life as a hat-maker, however he forced his own bank.

Cezanne had a rather comfortable upbringing on a large estate, Le Jas de Bouffan.

Already one can see a shining, middle class background, not atypical of Post-Revolution France, an atmosphere which was going to affect Cezanne and his art in many ways.

His father was a practical man, who ran a business but was not surprised at his sons artistic inclinations. His mother, as we know, was protective of Cezanne and within the family structure there was a basic conflict. Cezanne was at the centre. The sort of situation reminds me of Lawrence's John and Lorena or Chekov's Sevilli. I feel we are talking about this kind of a background (without the violence). Cezanne was a good child, had a violent temper at times. All in all he had a rather comfortable view of life.

A BACKDROP AND INFLUENCES.

It is important here to give some biographical details and to discuss the artist's life at this stage of his life.

Born in Aix en Provence in 1839, Paul Cezanne was the illegitimate and only son of Louis-Auguste Cezanne and Anne-Elizabeth Honorine Aubert. His father has been described as clever and ambitious, he started life as a hat-maker, however he formed his own bank.

Cezanne had a rather comfortable upbringing on a large estate, le Jas de Bouffan.

Already one can see a wealthy, middle class background, not untypical of Post-Revolution France, an atmosphere which was going to affect Cezanne as the swirling days of the revolution ebbed into the practicalities of living and normality.

His father was a practical man, who ran a business and was not surprisingly a very domineering person. His mother, we believe, was protective of Cezanne so within the family structure there was a basic conflict. Cezanne was at the centre. The sort of situation reminds me of Lawrence's Sons and Lovers or Chekov's Seagull. I feel we are talking about this kind of a backdrop (without the melodrama). Cezanne was a moody child, had a violent temper at times. All in all he had a rather subjective view point towards life.

He was caught between a father who was cynical of his son's work, who saw no real importance in it, and a mother who would praise her sons' efforts regardless. He was on a ground caught between 'yes' and 'no' looking for understanding and encouragement.

During his childhood he formed a friendship with Emile Zola. By all accounts the childhood was happy, as Cezanne often referred to childhood activities with tenderness⁴ They swam, roamed the countryside talking of art and literature, both were keen to become writers. Even in this there are hints of confusion, writer V. painter. On top of this his father wanted his son to study law.

Cezanne did have a good academic career. Latin and Greek were among his best subjects, obviously the germination of his classical interests and sensitivity.

Oddly Zola was the better painter receiving prizes for his drawings. Cezanne seemingly the better writer achieving prizes for his literary efforts. Even more ironic, Zola remarked of Cezanne "yes old chap, more of a poet than I am. My verse is perhaps purer than yours, but certainly yours is the more poetic, more true, you write with the heart. I write with the mind."⁵ A situation which was to be somewhat reversed years later with regard to Cezannes method of painting, he achieved a synthesis of

'mind' and 'heart'. However, if Cezanne wrote from the heart he painted with a fever from it in his early years.

I would agree that Zola did exert an influence on Cezanne. With this type of stimulation from his best friend one would imagine that Cezanne had very strong impressions of how he should paint in the light of being aware of how emotional he was. Yet he must also have been aware and discussed the more realist nature of his friend. So, one could admire the Romantics, understand the Realists and appreciate the Classics. His friendship with Zola would have brought about a strength of character, they themselves intellectuals each influencing the other. This is important to note as his nature was that of persistence and somewhat headstrong. He also had a receptiveness to absorb, his tenacious nature would see him push through his own personal beliefs and accumulations of ideas.⁶

However, outside his personal life, the artistic climate was still somewhat under the influence of the romantic spirit. The 'cultural giant' Delacroix was still alive and the academies were of a similar persuasion even though a realist school was present too.

But we must consider the provincial attitudes of which Cezanne was a part. An artist such as Emile Louban (1809-1863) would have left an effect, for he was typical of the provincial academian painter, influencing artists to a somewhat impersonal romantic style.

Cezanne was not born an impressionist, he was born a poet, a

Cezanne was not born an Impressionist, he was born a poet, a Romantic who looked towards realism and back to the classics. The characteristics of his Romantic nature was that he realized his great emotive responses before nature and life in all its appearances. One must consider someone of his background and emotional temperament, by no means a prodigy skilled in the use of the elements of painting, finding strong urges to paint in order to release the gathering of ideas and responses. One has to have something tangible, the most immediate influence has to be the prevailing mood. What is worth remarking even at this stage is that Cezanne never copied any painters, not even his idols.⁷ When people talk about his 'Romantic Period' they use the term 'romantic mood' for it is clear that he is not a jig-saw piece that fits into the historians' arrangement. We must recognize that mood at an individual level and see it as a spiritual response to an artist's personal vision, one which has yet to be fully developed or enhanced, with this the spiritual facet strengthens and builds upon itself.

Certainly Cezanne did have a regard for the Romantic Painters, a particular idol was Delacroix, even in the late years he planned a homage to Delacroix. What he saw in the latter was twofold. Delacroix was that type of Romantic who sought his expression in the mood of an event, a happening that may evolve from the distance

of a myth, a story by Byron, the common thread in connection with Delacroix is in the flavour and theme of the works, violent massacres, the air of an approaching doom as we feel in the Death of Sardanapalus. I think that Cezanne would have identified with the presence of a mood, also there were those works which stemmed from a contemporary passing of events, for example: Liberty and the Barricades. The ability to carry the mood and the skill in execution would have been attractive elements.

The other aspect which we see in Cezanne, is the treatment of forms, those curves, heavy and swirling this we find in Delacroix also and in most of the French Romantics. Again as in a painting like Sardanapalus the work is compressed with curves, rich and exotic, they produce the erotic mood, something similar occurs in Cezanne's Temptation of St. Anthony, not as dense, not as complicated but the nude that confronts St. Anthony pursues a similar physical gesture as the nude who is about to be stabbed in Delacroix's painting.

Forms like those in Delacroix are powerful and masterful in their exploitation as elements that carry feelings to the viewer. The power to do this would have impressed Cezanne. Delacroix may have used it to express grandeur, the power of the happening. For Cezanne it showed the possibilities that lay behind the exploitation

of forms for whatever purpose.

Cezanne's admiration of Delacroix extended into the painter's use of colour. Sardanapalus has been described as the "best organised clutter in art history"⁸, the ability to organise would impress a painter who finds it difficult to attain the discipline to do the same. Delacroix in achieving this organisation would take liberties with perspective to enhance a structure giving an air of freedom and movement.

An attempt to do this appears in some of Cezanne's early works, for example, in The Donkey and Thieves. Cloud forms seem to sit and interlock with a cliff face which in turn interlocks with tree forms in the foreground. Something similar happens in The Picnic. The edge of the forest, the clouds and the man smoking his pipe seem to occupy a similar location in space. The cloth as I said before, defies a logic that would be corrected if its tones receded and if colours faded and were light hues.

What Cezanne seems consciously to dispense with is the attention to detail, something which is essential in works of a literary flavour. While some of his paintings have a somewhat literary aspect, that facet is minimised, as it is in The Picnic there are several objects which pose questions that provide elaboration.

Delacroix belongs to the Revolution, the tumultuous time of

change, he belongs to the age of Byron, he belongs to the era of the Greek War of Independence. He was motivated by these things, indeed very much a man of his time. However to be a Romantic does not mean one is in the mould of any particular order. As Romantic ideals and expressions changed from individual to individual, for example Gericault's Raft of the Medusa 1819. While in a Romantic flavour has an air of social realism, it also has a strange classical structure. David's expression seems to come directly from the days of the Revolution, showing its power and swiftness, its greatness, yet within years he is capable of showing the same of Napoleon and the Empire, but there is also the cross connection with the classical, a romantic heroic impression of the Greek and Roman days of grandeur.

In Germany, the appeal was to the natural world, man being but a small cog in the wheel of creation, in a poetic sense Caspar Friedrich presents us with the vastness of nature before man, be it a shipwreck as the ice engulfs the vessel of man or a landscape of the Silesian Mountains.

In England Turner sought something similar, he expressed the power of the elements, yet once again the dominance of nature and natural things over the human and his methods and to a degree he imagines a heroic struggle.

Constable held the other end of the stick, his was a response to nature, on a quiet and calmer scale, he sought to be truer, certainly a touch of the realist in attitude and means, yet a Romantic in what he sensed and in his personal vision. His means of expression paralleled that individualistic vision.

I would like to stress the importance of the characteristic element of change in the movement. The Romantic Movement was one that held the capacity to absorb changes and individual interpretations, I think Romanticism was not a mould, it was an attitude, a reaction as it spread well into the 19th.⁹

Cezanne stood on the lip of another era of change, Romanticism was a break with tradition, change was a characteristic; and this is what was happening. In a manner of speaking there was a crossroads within an era, but that did not necessarily mean the end of an era but the continuation of a Spirit.

This I think is what Cezanne felt, what one painted, the subject matter was not the essential element, but one's attitudes, and the manner in which it was painted. It was important to feel deeply for one's subject, the whirling emotive power of Turner, the sincerity and faithfulness of Constable.

When Cezanne finished High school, he continued drawing lessons

yet under the forceful character of his father he went to law school. We must appreciate his dilemma, it was not his choice to study law, it was his father's desire. The young man was anything but a lawyer. One can imagine a sort of inner turmoil, he was a 'fish out of water' struggling to do something with conviction. Yet he had convictions devoted to another activity. This was a time he wrote mock heroic poems, aimed at his father and his character, ridiculing in one way or another, expressing the domination of father over son, the suggestion that the son can do no right.

It is not hard to understand the subjective nature of Cezanne, the moodiness, the fear of his father, who wrote to him saying : "Think of the future; with genius you die, with money you eat."

By 1859 Cezanne was devoted to the thought of becoming a painter, in 1861 he went to Paris with his father, that same year saw him back home. This time, working in his father's bank, Cezanne was rather resentful of the circumstances, yet he became more resolute. He wrote:

"Cezanne the banker sees not without trembling, Behind the counter a future painter being born."

In 1862 he was back in Paris. In 1864 his father consented to allow him to study art. He submitted for the Ecole Des Beaux-Arts. He failed the entrance requirements. On the other hand he was reacq-

maintaining himself with fellow painters; Guillaumin and Pissarro. He was to come into contact with Bazille, Sisley, Renoir and Monet. A rather hectic time. The new environment of the city, the great gatherings of innovative painters, Cezanne's fever to paint must have increased on the encouragement of his friends.

Cezanne failed a second time to enter the Ecole, there was a sense of a personal failure, he also failed twice to exhibit in the salon.

So by this stage we see that Cezanne's life was rather confusing. He was coming up against official displeasure and failure, countered by the encouragement of his friends, he had his father to contend with. He felt somewhat torn between the environment of Paris and the countryside of Provence.

In 1866 he told Zola that he wanted to work in the open air. He felt he wanted to capture "a true and original aspect of nature" such an attitude must have developed from a few separate sources. From conversations with others like Pissarro in Paris. From Cezanne's interest in realist attitudes, and as a response to his own personal vision. In 1869 he met with Hortense Fiquet with whom he started a relationship.

From the early 1860's to the end of that decade, Cezanne's life is marked by confusion, change, rejection, resentment, influences,

etc. by all standards tough yet critical period.

In spite of his failures, he became more resolute; this decade was casting his character. Certainly there was confusion and it is reflected in his work. At certain stages he realized this, once in 1865 he said he was going to abandon what he called "fouled-up style". This was in part due to Pissarro, however he did not adopt a totally primary palette as was suggested in that year by Pissarro. He was not ready for the discipline nor was he intellectually prepared. Cezanne was still exploring other ideas, something that must be said about this decade of his life, is that it is entirely valid, the artist seems to be running the whole gambit of ideas.

By the end of the decade we see an artist who in some ways has confirmed for himself that there is something in life for him and there is something for him to express. What exactly that is, he is not fully sure, he is aware of his responses to nature. He is aware that there is something spiritual in man's association with nature. He is once again aware of his classical interests. From his discussions with the painters in Paris he is probably more aware of the problems that beset a painter, he has had time to discuss changes in art. To discuss Realists, something which he declared himself to be. By 1869 he is also entering into a relationship. There is both joy and anxiety as he must hide the relationship from his father. He is still somewhat under the parental shadow.

With The Picnic and the paintings that follow it (another version in 1870 also The Temptation) we see a confidence in the bold handling of the pigment, as if they came from the hands that knew they were part of a painter.

The many questions that are hinted at in The Picnic seem to be honest, as if the artist realizes that he has so many interests and that he still cannot make complete sense, but to be honest his work must express the reality of his own state. The later version of The Picnic is even more confident, containing three nudes, considering the outcry in 1863 at Manet for the inclusion of one nude, putting three was indeed confident and it suggests an artist who is becoming more faithful to his own intentions and less worried about the criticisms of others.

This new inner strength will allow him to become more disciplined and more receptive. That is not to say he wasn't receptive, he was, to the past and his own interests, much the cause of his decade of confusion. He looks back on the ancient masters, the masters and heroes of France. I think he does realize their worth and was not prepared to dispense with them. He also realizes the worth of the younger innovators. Yet he has to absorb their lessons.

We must note that he was a man of many interests, as much as his late work can be taken apart in facets of different concerns.

We accept readily that Cezanne's late work is a wholly personal view, so too must we adopt this attitude to his early work. As I have said earlier, these paintings reflect the world according to Cezanne. I hope to show at a later stage the reversion Cezanne made in his late works to his work of this period.^{10/11}

¹ One of his last works, a watercolour of a valley or bridge had a special significance for him as it brought back memories of his boyhood activities in that area. The River At The Bridge Of Three Springs 1904.

² Lionello Venturi, Cezanne, p. 13

³ He also showed his individuality while working with Pissarro. Cezanne never copied the artist who was a mentor to him while remaining receptive to him.

⁴ If he wasn't going to copy Pissarro neither was he going to copy the masters of the past.

⁵ For Pridmore, The World Of Cezanne, p. 63

⁶ See appendix 1.

¹⁰ The theme of nudes, bathers etc were carried on throughout his life. Many poems are similar eg some nudes in the Les Femmes d'Alger resemble those found in The Bathing Women and the squabbling women in The Picnic.

¹¹ See appendix 2 for some points on the realist aspect in Cezanne at this stage in his career.

Footnotes

- I See appendix I on Romanticism for further discussion on this subject.

- ² Similar qualities are found in his later work. See section on the Still-Life With A Plaster Cupid.

- ³ Similar qualities can be found in the Great Bathers and other such paintings .

- ⁴ One of his last works, a watercolour of a vault or bridge had a special significance for him as it brought back memories of his boyhood activities in that area, The River At The Bridge Of Three Springs, 1906.

- ⁵ Lionello Venturi, Cezanne, p.13

- ⁶ He also showed his individuality while working with Pissarro. Cezanne never copied the artist who was a mentor to him while remaining receptive to him.

- ⁷ If he wasn't going to copy Pissarro neither was he going to copy the masters of the past.

- ⁸ Tom Prideaux, The World Of Cezanne, p.65

- ⁹ See appendix I.

- ¹⁰ The theme of nudes, bathers etc were carried on throughout his life. Many poses are similar, eg, some nudes in the Great Bathers resemble those found in The Temptation and the squatting woman in The Picnic.

- ¹¹ See appendix 2 for some points on the Realist aspect in Cezanne at this stage in his career.

C H A P T E R 3

Middle Period.

The Black Clock.

When most of us think of Cezanne, a sense of order and clarity of intention comes to mind. That characteristic exists in him however it did not come about overnight, nor did it start with the beginning of his career. As we have seen, even the clarity of Cezanne's thoughts were somewhat muddled during his early period.

It is important once again to appreciate the honesty of his thoughts and attempts during his early years, for that honesty is something he never lost. Indeed it was to mature along with his craft and his way of seeing things.

The second great period in his life is marked by his adoption of the Impressionist use of colour, although he was never an Impressionist.

The reason why I mention clarity of intention along with honesty, is that Cezanne developed the former, and from the clarity of Pissarro's advice and teachings, from a new palette, Cezanne could build a sound platform or foundation upon which he could truly develop and innovate.

Historically this phase extends from 1872 to the end of that decade. But I would like to go back two years or so from

1872 to a much known and loved painting The Black Clock.

I find this painting fascinating on a few accounts. Apart from its being a beautiful work, it has another beauty, in a sense, an historical beauty. It is like a document, one that sums up his past and lays down the intentions of the future. This work was painted before the union with Pissaro. Cezanne by himself was developing a passion for colour, and out of the somewhat muddled decade that preceeded, Cezanne was at last having moments of realization.

By the end of the 1860's he must have been tired. Tired in the sense that he had approached his work with an untethered spirit, he tried to say everything without knowing how. He had to slow down, he had to discipline himself, and he knew he had to do this, even in 1866, when he told Zola that he was going to work directly from nature, but these things don't happen overnight, one must wait for the passion to agree with the mind. The Black Clock is the realization of that promise to Zola. I can imagine Cezanne setting up a still life and saying to himself that 'this is what I'll concentrate on, I will concentrate on it's own reality and beauty'.

The Black Clock certainly does not present one with the problems of understanding as the 'Picnic' does. For the problems it involves itself with, come basically from its methods of exec-

ution and composition. It is a painting that discusses visual problems, however there are certain reminders of the past in it. But it is the implication of these problems that are important.

First I would like to discuss the painting itself. What makes it stem back from the past?

There is still a dark mood. That heavy clock without hands, the thick handling of paint on the vase, there is that feeling of a moment.¹ One cannot help but sense a stillness. That stillness is in sympathy with the clock that can no longer tell the time, no doubt a touch of the literary. The Romantic in Cezanne is evident here, but it is already a quieter spirit and a good taste of that future spirit, a good indication of what is to come.

Cezanne's concentration has shifted to the problems of dealing with what is before him and the subsequent interpretation of that on the canvas. He also links this with a concept of solidity and the static, but it is as if the concepts are born from the act of looking and seeing, the act of interpretation. The concepts are linked to the composition. This is a big step, it is also something which he attempted earlier, but the weakness lies in the concept being at odds with the methods.



What I find so striking about the painting, is that large shell and its red lip, the weight and intensity of the red contrast and balance off the weight and tone of the clock. There is a curious connection between the two elements. The shell points to a world of colour with its brave strokes of red and pink, the clock is part of the past. It has the blackness of his past paintings, yet the two command an equal role, and an equal occupancy of space, as the white face pulses forward. A vase lies between them, like the vertical of a weighing scales. As the two objects on either side struggle to dominate. But this is only one part of the painting. But one can see that the role the objects play are those that stem from a direct visual experience. They find their justification within the painting as they are conceived in the composition, and this is what truly dominates the work.

While the shell, vase and clock relate, they also play a part in the composition. The latter is not forced to fit them, one comes from the other. On top of the clock there is another vase, this expresses a vertical, on the other side of the centre vase there is a curving panel which follows into the curves of the shell. This is another vertical, the eye is lead back into the picture plane as it draws connections with the two outer

verticals. From the left hand vertical one comes down to the shell, one feels with their eyes the similarity in treatment, both have a baroque treatment. They connect and fuse, their strokes become part of the shell, but their tone and colour remain that of the vertical hand. Then that horizontal red, with its deep dark centre, travels across and comes forward, strangely these two elements are like the missing hands of the clock.

The edge of the table cloth leads from the table in a diagonal to the edge of the painting, bringing the eye forward in space, yet down the expanse of the canvas, the eye's journey down is aided by a thin black line. At the end of the table cloth, in the lower left corner we come to a mid-tone, on the other side of the dark line there is a similar tone. This starts as a horizontal, echoing the red lip of the shell. The eye follows into the vertical of the fold, upwards, up to the cup and saucer. One gets the full impact of this object, its dark green hand is like a junction. The eye can recede back to the vase as we connect the relationship between cup and vase leading back to the clock, and its double reflected vase on top. As we go from vase to reflected vase we follow a white line down the table cloth along the three horizontals and back to the shell. On the other hand one can follow the horizontal of the cup's line across the ruffled cloth. This

momentarily creates a rhythm between shell, cup and ruffles. The cup being the axis, the structure has created a line of relationships that brings about a diagonal, with the cloth end being the nearest to the viewer. As the eye comes to the end of the cloth it meets a curve, it is a dramatic curve and brings us downwards fast. It is both dark and light, once again we meet the horizontal, leading to the next horizontal. The eye is caught once more in a dark area that recedes dramatically, we are at the forefront of the painted objects. The table cloth which in reality we know to occupy a space in front of everything else yet our sense of vision recedes back into a deep gorge, following this the eye goes under the ruffled cloth, and one arrives at the piece of yellowish fruit. In one sense an illogical journey, yet in another it can only be thus in our world, but in the interpretation of our world onto the canvas that logic breaks down as other rules of perception come into play.

One has journeyed the painting as the hands do a clock, standing back one can enjoy the rhythms, three 'concrete slab' like areas of the table cloth with their incisive horizontals. They too create a spacial expression. The eye can enjoy the many echoing shapes and lines. One is not only given the means to travel the picture plane, the structure and composition allows one to encompass the

whole. It allows the eye to take in the entire painting, fixing the painting in that stillness I mentioned earlier.

There are as usual some beautiful paradoxes attached to the painting.

For a painting that is certainly very still in mood, the eye does a lot of travelling.

It is a painting that gives the softness of cloth a stone-like solidity and the sharpness of a glass a shadowed wall-like surface.

The objects are heavy yet there is no real table, the lower right corner reveals no legs, just a heavy black area that becomes a graded tonal surface.

The cloth is at once separate from the table and the only suggestion of a table.

It is a painting wherein movement is frozen, look again at the ruffled part of the table cloth, if you concentrate on that image it seems like a mountain with deep valleys, tumbling lines or like a cloth blowing in the wind, yet it is so still.

The top of the shell is like a mountain or a sea that has been frozen as if by a magic wand.

The artist has played with our senses. He has played on the way we normally see things and the way in which reality can be

extended by the painter.

As the painting evokes an uneasy sense of stillness it gives us an awareness of space. The work is not a rendering of the illusion of space, but the expression of it. It is also as expression of composition and structure.

It has a quieter romantic feel about it, a more personal bent, as it is about nature and as in the late years about space.²

What are the implications of all this? The painter is no longer concerned with painting pictures, he is now making painting, or at least he is aware that a painting can have a life of its own, that an inward expression can be found in the relationships that the painter discovers, that these in turn can reward the viewer with an outward expression.³ They expand beyond the picture plane as, the elements, the spacial dance, the compositional design, the painted objects, after living their painted life begin to relate to the reality of the world of touch, of distance, the material world. Nature is at work both in the painting and outside. Cezanne is beginning to discover the nature of painting. There is an awareness of space, and the poignant relationship that man has with space. For as the eye weaves through forms, slips through images, confronts reflected images, which are as real as their caster, one is made aware of the com-

plexities of space, and the way in which it unites us to nature. For we are of space as much as the sky, sea, mountains, objects and the spaces between them. Look again at the vase on top of the clock, its reflection inhabits the same world, it is on the same line in space. There is for all the world two vases, two had to be painted, two had to be pondered. There is an equality in the treatment and attitude. The anti-shape created by the two is locked between them, creating another space evolving from the same attitude. I find, the use of the mirror to do this, somewhat touching. In later years Cezanne wouldn't have to use a mirror to do such things. It reminds me of some works which use paintings within paintings.⁴ One is reminded of a particular childhood activity of concentrating on ones reflection, and wondering which is the 'real' being. This awareness of space or attachment to it is a key concept in the Romantic Movement, no one expresses more beautifully or with as much urgency as Cezanne.

This painting shows the emergence of the ability to convey the above. It was a similar sentiment he attempted in The Picnic. The dog was the reflection, the actual Picnic was a reflection of somesort, but the difference now is that Cezanne is beginning to discover these links and the means to achieve an expression of

them, as he paints, the connections come from the painting activity.

The other important factor is, that red lip. It shows a growing awareness of colour. I would like to stress how important a new awareness of colour is to the artist. Cezanne was never unaware of such things. There was always an attachment to colour. Those trips into the countryside, his passion for nature, he responded to these emotionally but somehow in his passion he was confused. This passion is now going to be harnessed. This new awareness is a mark of maturity and discipline and it contains an excitement and passion. However the relationship between space and colour has yet to come and it can only come with the Impressionist lesson.

The objects Cezanne chose to paint seem to stem from some sort of literary attitude. A natural approach for him at this stage. He must discriminate between subjects according to some method. What he was moved by were the connotations held by the objects, the shell, that strange mouth, the clock and time etc. But it is as if he forgot these, or at least allowed them to fade into the background of his intentions. He began to fix himself on the objects themselves. Their position and relationships, their particular existence in space. The Painting is a meditation on these objects and this comes through to us again and again in his later works.⁵

The Cottage with Trees.

In 1872-'73 Cezanne was at Pontoise and Auvers-Sur-Oise sketching and painting in the open air with the subject in direct view. There is a marked difference in subject matter. But that does not change the emotional content so dramatically. The Auvers' paintings show an enthusiastic appetite for learning and discovery.

The Hanged Man's House (1822), House of Dr. Gachet or Cottage with Trees, these are somewhat elementary when compared with his late work. We see a man building up a painterly confidence. The Cottage with Trees as with the Black Clock is an insight into the state of the artist at the time of painting. A short period of time separates the two works. In the earlier work we saw the awakening of colour responses, we witnessed a network of horizontals, structures, diagonals which encompass the whole painting and there was the red of that shell, it serves its purpose on the outer area of the picture plane, almost as if there is an uncertainty about it.

In The Cottage the red is transported to the centre, to a position of surety. This is a result of the willingness to learn. It is a broad stroke of red which at once suggests a roof top, (reminiscent of the roof tops in Melting Snow.) but not so much a roof at the same time. This one element works on two levels, serving to suggest part of a cottage, but we draw that connection



as if by piecing together the elements by logic. The logic of the picture plane. The whole painting pivots round this stroke. When the eye, on familiarity with the image, begins to perceive the red as a pure colour all elements that find their satisfaction in relation to it come to our perception on the same level, in a manner that has never really happened before. A conception of a plastic world developed from the appearance of the real state of objects. Two worlds are tied together.

In this painting that union is both brought about and expressed by the red stroke. It is a point, an essential area upon which we focus, for us it is a point of meditation. For Cezanne it was a practical meditation. The act of thought and painting are bonded.⁶

The Impressionist Lesson.

I have mentioned before that there was no real change in spirit, by that I mean, there was no turn about with his new-found abilities. For as I have said he had already developed a sense for colour previous to Pissarro's guidance. However, something we must be thankful for and pay tribute to, is Pissarro's presence.

When you consider the relationship between the two, it was a

'father-son' and 'tutor-pupil' partnership. Yet Cezanne never copied Pissarro nor did the latter force anything on Cezanne, but this could easily have been the case. Pissarro saw the greatness of Cezanne's talent, he saw him as an excellent painter. What he showed Cezanne was a method, something which his pupil could use and interpret according to his will. Between the two there was a reverence for personal vision.

Lionello Venturi says of the partnership in his book on Cezanne "Cezanne owed this new maturity to Pissarro, who taught him to look at reality with a certain detachment and made him understand that it could be rendered through his own temperament and in the mood of a particular moment, without investing it with all the loves and hates of his own character. If there must be dramatic overtones, they should be those of light and shadow, they should lie in the pictorial means, not in a literary adjunct. Pissarro encouraged him to follow up the path which he had taken with the Black Clock but could not yield results until he had gained a greater freedom and above all a greater complexity in the colour effect."⁷

Whatever about owing his 'new maturity' to Pissarro, he certainly owed some of it. Pissarro certainly recognized the growing ability of Cezanne to see things with a 'certain detachment' to rediscover his emotional responses.

Cezanne had always held an emotional response before nature, that was strong but by now he has found a means to channel that passion. Previously his passion was like a tree that could not produce fruit properly. This period in his life is the attainment of the means to express what was already his, his personal emotions and passions.

So many things unite, things which were previously polarized, this belongs to the Romantic spirit. That feeling of unity and being 'part of' which spread throughout the world, it becomes a reality with Cezanne, while others felt it, and expressed the feeling, none found the bond in the visual arts. This is what makes Cezanne a unique Romantic. For me, that red is at once one of the most important and beautiful acts in the history of the activity of Painting.

The Walls, and other works.

In the still-lives from this period we can comprehend the maturing of his style and his own interpretation of Impressionism.

Delft with Dahlias 1873-75, is a painting which is bountiful in Impressionist colour, yet there is that marked personal touch. The background is fusing with the fore'. The atmosphere is uniform



and again that solidity is striking but not stark and startling to us, because of the unity he has achieved. He hasn't forgotten the past. There is an allusion to Delacroix and his rendering of the same subject, both painters had a passion for colour. But Cezanne's effort is uniquely his own. He has brought that almost rigid solidity from the colour. The latter is the key factor in the total unification of the painting.

This uniqueness, this thing which Cezanne was beginning to conceive is so much of the wonder and rapture that we sense in his paintings. So forceful is the feeling evoked in the later painting, that it shakes the eye, as it is brought towards the painting by its uniform appearance, yet one is pushed back by the solidity of form, an almost impossible combination, even to make it work in small areas, but a Cezanne can be wholly concerned with such a combination, yet expressing itself beyond the confines of any one approach or concept.

Brushstroke was an important element for Cezanne because it held an expressive power which was sympathetic to those subjects which surrounded him. It also has the constructive power in which the directive properties of an object could be curbed to suit the overall composition of a painting. It is also apt for fusing light and dark colours, helping that uniformity.

In an 1875-76 painting The Walls we see the mastery in the manner he used the brushstroke to achieve a unity. There is also that strong compositional sense brought to light by the vertical of the trees, the twisting of the leaves towards the centre, bringing one's eyes into the plastic space created by the colour and simultaneously bringing one across the picture plane. The horizontal of the wall combining with the foreground and the village and mountains, form a solid block of colours and forms.

But when looking at the wall again, (it is a wall, when one connects with the shadows of the two trees.) but it looks almost like a lake, or shall I say a flat surface, simultaneously. This gives painting life without making it totally ambiguous. The wall is somewhat similar to the roof top in concept.

This shows the growing concern for the picture plane without forgetting the existence of form.

The painting has an atmosphere that is more than 'Impressionist'; it is uniquely 'Cezanne'.

In any of Cezanne's still-lives or landscapes one can note the characteristic ways in which the spaces react between branches, yellowish leaves, petals, buds. The way in which a pictorial space is created by the complimentary relationship between the colours of a sky and a cluster of leaves, between a vase and a wall.

In the walls the space created between the shadow on the wall (which is purple) and the branch of yellowish leaves, shows a depth in the painting relating to other areas on the canvas as the same branch reacts spacially with the sky. Even the painter's signature creates a space, relating the foreground to the middle.

As with most of his paintings The Walls is marked by a network of structures, yet these are becoming more suggested and are being fused with the colour, space and form reactions.

The structure in paintings like these, are so at one with the picture plane that it is not annoyingly visible. Cezanne confirms the use of structure but does not over-emphasise. It now plays a role as with other elements, the paintings are becoming combinations of many approaches held together by a strong intellect. The structure reminds us of his classical leanings, his faithfulness to his objects and his sense of vision, that of his realist interests. His passionate use of red recalls his love for Delacroix and that of past Master's use of colour. All this and more are the ingredients which are intrinsically linked to his perception and spiritual appreciation of the world.

A Summary.

To recap on this period in his life. In it we see Cezanne's involvement with dimensions, colour, form, pictorial space and that personal rapture of colour, which I maintain he always had, but had to digest the 'Impressionist lesson' to liberate his palate and release that rapture from himself. The underlining proof of this, is his originality. Cezanne was painting with the mind, he was driven by the heart and inspired by his own spirit. His spirit which had an empathy with all nature, causing a formidable result. His paintings can be appreciated on one level, but to be truly appreciated, have to be examined from all human angles, as he worked them.

The mind examing the colour relationships, consciously putting a stroke of colour here, reaching out with its satisfaction to another area, contemplating its size, pitch, its overall sympathy to the picture plane and the subject.

His heart maintaining his interest and his love for Aix, searching for the truth, feeding the mind and being fed by his minds' deductions.

His spirit which bound everything together, his energy, his ability to meditate on his visual experiences. His spirit allows

him to be motivated.

All three combine to bring about a portrait, a still-life, a landscape. There is at last a harmony within the artist. Before he sensed it in nature. But had none within himself. As in the Picnic he was a bit of an 'outsider', he understood but there was no understanding within him. This harmony has come to be expressed on the picture plane.⁸

Cezanne has a vision, he is original and alone, creating for himself a future, as a man building a wall brick by brick. Not only was his method of progression like this but internally his works are thus. Again an important part of the harmony that Cezanne was achieving more and more.

Because he was on new ground, the connection between this period and his earlier period are obvious. The feeling his paintings produce are not as intense as his later ones. He is still developing a technique. In the early period, his painting had feeling and were trying to express feelings but he did not have the techniques and 'know-how'. It is only in the late period that we see both working in absolute harmony. However that is not to say he did not produce masterpieces during this period of the 1870s. Those paintings I referred to are masterful. The comprehension that he could excel his now excellent standards is

exciting.

With each and every painting and every investigation, the emotional and spiritual intensity increases with the technical knowledge, revealing before us that almost frightening release of sensitivity which he achieved towards the end of his career.

Footnotes

- ¹ This I think is something that comes through in his final works.
See sections dealing with his late work.
- ² Cezanne did not imitate nature, he found that, which expressed him best in nature. This is important with respect to the Modern Art Movement as it relates the artist and his creativity to his subject and activity.
- ³ The concept of the artist finding himself in his subject is suggested here.
- ⁴ See section Still-Life With A Plaster Cupid.
- ⁵ See appendix 3.
- ⁶ The idea of a meditation is important in the appreciation of Cezanne and is discussed more fully in the section on the late works and in the final section of this essay.
- ⁷ Lionello Venturi, Cezanne, p.68.
- ⁸ This shows the developement of Cezanne's approach to his subject. Once again the finding of himself in his subject or that "certain detachment" which prevents the artist from being a mere imitator.

C H A P T E R 4Late Period.

Motifs (Bathers).

By the end of the 1870's Cezanne was alone.¹ He chose to isolate himself as he worked in direct view of his subject. This is an attitude that becomes understandable when we consider the importance of his relationship to Provence and indeed to the still-lives etc. he set up. This relationship was intense as the artist viewed and considered the subject, slowly perceiving the qualities relevant for translation onto the picture plane. This is that meditative approach. He would look at a tree or a branch for hours. Allowing himself to become so acquainted with it that when it came to render its counterpart only a few seconds would be involved in its execution. But the stroke or dash would contain the power of that meditation.

Each stroke not only corresponds to a location in space, but in time also. In this regard there is a union. The other important consideration is the awareness of the picture plane. For the painter this constitutes a different type of space. For Cezanne the real objects, the real landscapes, were something else to the things he painted. This pivots round his attitude to the subject and picture relationship. The former had become a motif.

One is reminded of Kepler and his life long procrastination, as calculation and observation contradicted his classical conception of the heavenly crystals. In Cezanne's case we are talking about art, emotions, interpretation and seeing. There is a difference but there is also a common denominator and that is truth.

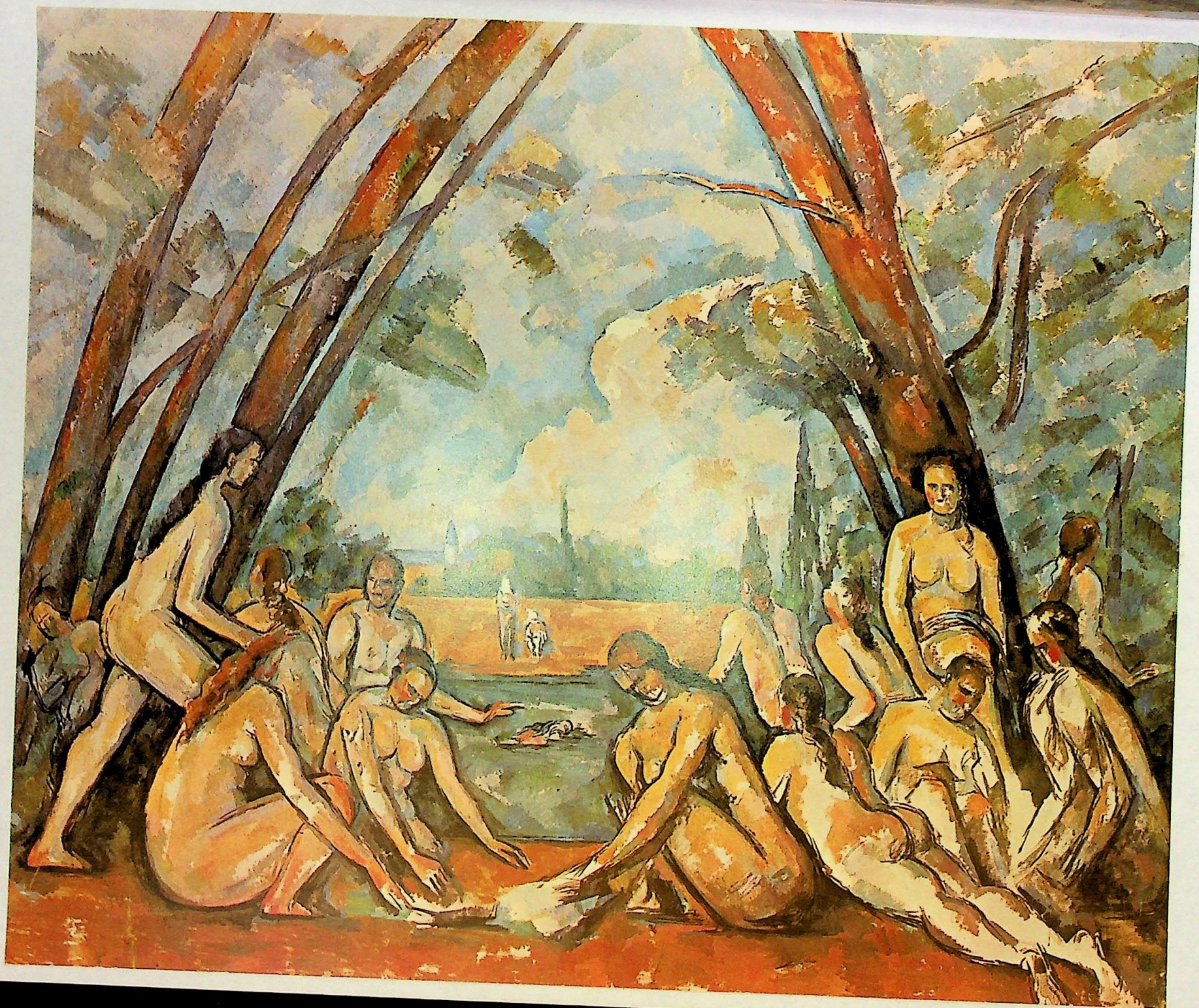
Cezanne did not deny the classical, but used it. Let's say he wasn't a slave to any order of things. He responded to his own emotive reactions in the face of nature.²

There are those paintings which have a strong classical strain. An obvious subject which comes to light are his 'Bathers'. The Great Bathers 1898-1905 is generally seen as the culmination of some thirty years of working with the nude. I have taken a passage from a previous essay which considers the composition;

"The Great Bathers is one of the last in a series in which Cezanne was deeply involved. The artist shows us basically everything, structure, unification, colour modulation, panoramic views, volumes and he shows us method.

The basic structure concerns a pyramid which is comprised of the use of trees and the nude motif. Together they form a sound foundation and give the whole painting an air of strength.

Colour is used to 'cement' the pyramid and thus help in solidifying it. (i.e. the pyramid forms the structure, yet the structure



is derived from the use of colour and brushwork, thus Cezanne is manipulating his materials (paint) to a degree of intensity (colour) to mould his subject, or the realization of his subject.) Using colour however, Cezanne goes a step further, he has a very subtle use of colour. for example; the leaves of the trees are similar to that of the sky, and the surface of the nude is similar to that of the tree trunks. By doing this Cezanne has not only used colour to identify forms but he has made a flow, which circles round the canvas, each area of colour becomes an entity and related to its neighbour, thus each brushstroke has a function and a satisfaction on the picture plane. This causes things to be unified and appear structurally stable...."³

This hints at ~~the~~ classical attitude towards composition. However there are basic differences with the actual composition, for example the greatest activity takes place at the sides of the pyramid etc. In the same essay I mentioned the forms.

"....Cezanne is not just satisfied with the study of form. The form has to be strongly related to the essentials of the whole painting. This has been done, the nudes are part of the foundation of the whole. So within the large pyramid one finds other structures, thus leading to the strength of the overall pyramid. The motif of the nude, is used to manipulate volumes of empty space, the

areas between a leg and a curving back are packed with colour and are vividly strong and balance the volume created by the sky. In order to do this two-fold task certain methods had to be taken into consideration, the most obvious ones, the use of colour modulation, the directions in which the nudes point in their relationship with the picture plane and the elimination of certain parts of the nude (which brings the nude to the realization of a motif and thus a functional form). This is important because it adds to the basic function of the nude form for example; the heads of the nudes are unidentified and in the case of three, the heads disappear. This is done to strengthen the visual experience and guide the eye and express the form as a basic shape which serves a function on the canvas. Once again by doing this Cezanne has kept his forms basic, solid, the nude is a motif without identification, she enhances the whole, she has been treated as a functional form, the same way Cezanne would treat an apple in a still-life or his rocks in a landscape. They are all motifs which have in them a quality common to each, a quality which Cezanne saw fit to be celebrated on the picture plane...."⁴

I mention three descriptions of composition as it lays down the classical influence but it also holds the key to the more emotional and spiritual side of the artist.

Let us go back in time to The Temptation and The Picnic those

early nudes and indeed other nudes and figures from other paintings, this is what Cezanne was trying to do. But he just did not know how. This painting shows Cezanne fulfilling something which had been an ambition for years.

The squatting figure in The Picnic is akin to the nudes in The Bathers: those figures on the other bank remind one of the man smoking a pipe in The Picnic. There is something there that he was trying to express for years, and that something cannot be a reduction of things to a closed classical order, a scheme which engulfs humanity.

The feeling has got to do with that dog and woman, and the relationship he strives to express does not come from the working out of rules and laws but comes from his emotions, it is a feeling. Yet this feeling is something that remains a feeling and cannot be satisfied by metaphor and allegory.

To find a release; an expression and satisfaction for such a feeling you must rediscover it in the activity one chooses to express it by. In Cezanne's case, painting.

While he stood before the Provence landscape and experienced a certain rapture, he became aware, that in his emotional responses there was something that made it a reality for him. That was something he described as the "Durable", durable in the sense that as he translates his vision into the canvas, that quality remains the same

more condensed and focusing on the elements that carry the feeling.

That is to say, whatever moved him in the experience would become the subject for painting and as the subject was painted it rediscovered itself in terms of colour and the picture plane.

In doing this space becomes a primary consideration, and the emotional response has got much to do with the space in which we exist, his human forms are not imitations of our bodies, they are of another world so to speak.

The nudes in The Great Bathers are for me a glimpse of aliens, or should I say beings from a two-dimensional world, that world which we cannot belong to, for as we are we are limited to this world of three dimensions.

Cezanne's paintings are not two-dimensional in reality but they are very much aware of that concept, from which stems the manner in which he produced a form. These nudes are part of a surface, yet they have a form not in imitation of reality but one which adheres to the realities of colour.

I feel a certain joy in their celebration, as she twists and turns through some eleven poses. Cezanne must have been rejoicing also and took certain delight in doing this. It is as if he were everywhere

In the understanding of Cezanne's motifs some tend to regard it as a depersonalization and once this happens a certain 'grace' is lost.

I would agree that there is by necessity a 'depersonalization' if that word is apt enough to describe the process of his perception. But as the poet writes within the 'laws' of a particular scheme, his expression resurfaces with more strength and freedom as he both submits to the 'laws' and defies them by expressing his sentiments.

When Cezanne told young artists to consider 'cones', 'spheres' and 'cubes' he meant the above, he saw the underlining importance of structure. This stems back to his attachment to the classical, the conception of a scheme. Some take this too literally. When you look at a Cezanne painting, you don't just see 'cones' and 'spheres' they are there in part. They are a means, they themselves are not the overall purpose. He uses these structures to break away from them. He has found a doorway within the structures. This in some respects knocks the bottom out of a classical ideal. The conception of a closed order that cannot be broken. If Cezanne was to deny his emotional responses and produce works that wholly adhered to such a way of seeing things there would have been a conflict of truth and a conception that finds itself in a handed-down ideal.

at the same time.

For me these nudes are born out of a strong sensitive emotion. The fact that they are so beautifully connected to the plane, built out of colour, motifs of a form that is part of us yet evoked with respect to a different set of dimensions, strengthens their emotive reality.⁵

The subject is passed through a concept of space and an emotional filter, which builds them into a harmony of other motifs equally akin to us as they deal with elements that express something basically ineffable. They thus make a direct appeal to our senses becoming once again an emotive reality. For we as humans live and experience things through our senses, we survive by them. The sensuousness that is in Delacroix comes from exotic and erotic allusions. Cezanne's comes from his colours, his forms, his motifs, his space.

His paintings tap a spirit within us, we must admire the understanding that he had of such things and how he painted according to some of the basic ingredients of life.

Not only do the nudes carry this sensitivity, but the sky and trees etc. are the same as they unite on the plane. We as humans relate more to the human form, the nudes carry our shape, and it is almost upsetting as one can feel that closeness to the world they belong but one becomes aware of that gulf which we may never bridge.

There is a shock, like the shock we get from the white table-cloth in The Picnic as the reality of two things meet and one discovers that one belongses and the other is only a glimpse.⁶

Still Life With A Plaster Cupid.

It is hard to think that a still-life can produce such a feeling, a 'romantic' feeling, more so when one thinks about the Romantic paintings of the past, the theme, the revolutions and struggles and myths that they depicted. But when one comes to a humble still-life and discovers a message and feeling that rivals the great paintings of the past one can only be impressed. It is that very humbleness that gives power to the 'spiritual' in Cezanne's work.

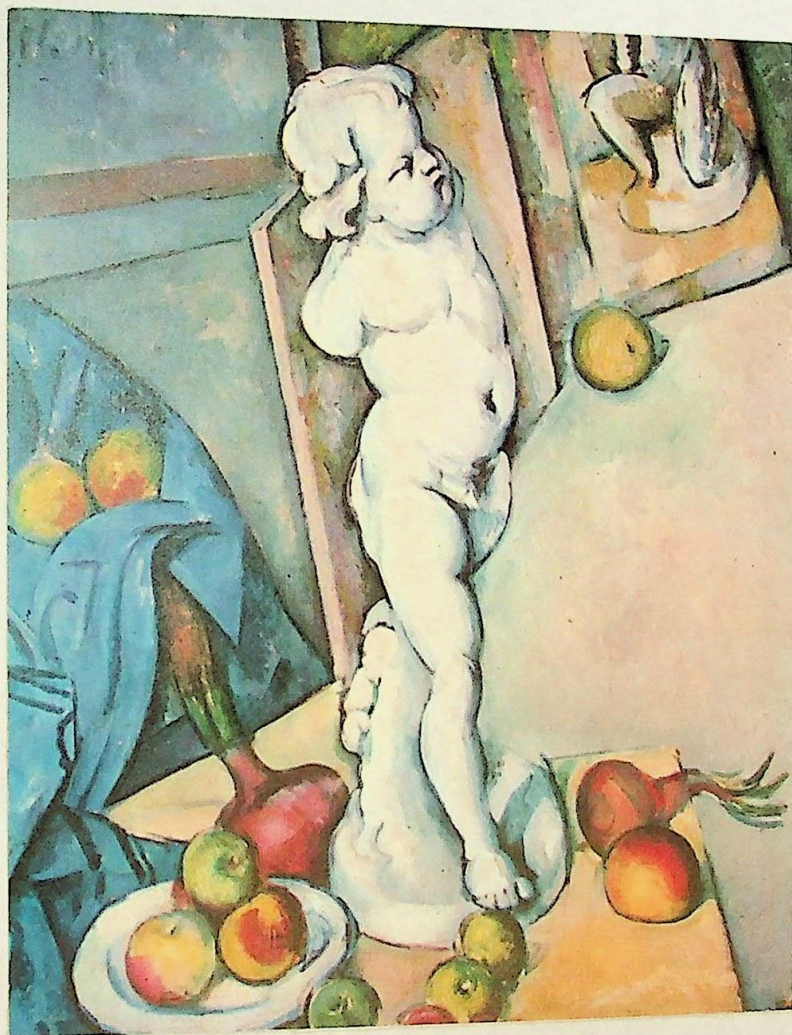
Still Life with a Plaster Cupid (1895) is a revealing work as it embraces many things.

It presents a work of art. The Cupid, and The Flayed Man it also uses some of the artist's own work.

It is also a study of apples, onions etc. It has a dynamic structure as it investigates space.

Cezanne is dealing with perception at different levels, the different stages of painting and the process of painting as the artist and his work becomes more removed from reality and reacts to its own set of realities. Meyer Schapiro describes this painting in his book 'Cezanne':

"Among Cezanne's still-lives, this one is remarkable for the presence of a work of art, a cast of Puget's cupid. Two works really



for in the background is a sketch after another statue, 'The Flayed Man'. Both are sculptures he studied from casts - we have many drawings from them in his notebooks. His taste in sculpture is revealing: He drew mainly from works of a baroque character, with rich contours and powerful contrasted movements, they are often themes of passion or struggle. To place such figures in a context of apples and onions is strange. What other painter would do this? The marriage of the heroic - passionate or idyllic to the commonplace - domestic corresponds to Cezanne's complexity as a man...."⁷

Indeed what other painter would do this? To put it another way, what sort of concept allows such things to be considered together? One feels things to be intrinsically connected. One that feels an 'allness'. And as a Plaster Cupid is likely to rub shoulders with the fruit of a still-life in an artist's studio so too can it in a work. Once again one is reminded of the curious relationship between the woman and the dog. It is a concept of a man that allows such things to happen, which makes things relate. That conception is complex as it is one that comes from the emotions and from the rational methods of a painter. As the subjects are married in this painting so too is the spirit of the artist to his trade.

I said earlier that the painting had a dynamic quality. This is something that rarely happened in still-life painting. This

dynamism is caused by the structure. The viewer's[✓] eyes are drawn to the cupid. One follows his form round the curves of his body (which although only a plaster model are sensuous) down along his leg to the three apples. Then along the bottom horizontal of the picture plane - up along the apples on the plate - to the onion which links with a stalk in another painting - yet a dark[|]line separates the two, while the cloth in the painting flows out into the cloth on the table. From here one can be brought upwards to the two apples in the painting (which have as much presence as any other fruit in the overall painting) and from here through the diagonal planes that seem to cut into the pictorial space. Yet bounce back to the picture plane when they meet another plane.

One swerves round the cupid, going in and out. Round curves, along planes and edges, from image to image, from different stages of reality. It is like running through a gallery. This painting has an intense atmosphere. Yet the eye always comes back to the cupid. As you stand back you are confronted by this awkward standing figure, his whiteness is a little shocking, his upper body seems to project forward, and our eyes seem to travel behind him along that diagonal plane. But sooner than you realize this, you become aware that it is a painting and that he is made up of colour as the other planes are.

The realization of this is shocking; that apple on the curious slope which seems ready to roll down and join the other apples, suddenly becomes quite logical for these things, we realize can happen on the picture plane. So we are drawn into the pictorial spaces; we go on a journey as we weave round the contrasting forms at a rapid pace. Then as the pace slows down, it is as if we are ejected from the picture and its space.

What is the purpose of such a shock and why should a painting reject the viewer's involvement with its spaces?

The answer is manifold. We become aware that we do not occupy the same world as he does or as a painting does. But the lesson is in the 'durable'. The way in which the spaces are linked, the shifting planes, the levels of reality, that go back and forth in and out yet remain unified on one plane.

We become the Cupid; round us and through us swivels the spaces; objects and realities of our existence.

We are forced with the feeling that we are space, Yet we are enveloped in space; we are challenged by these connections which we take for granted.

The painting is a lesson and it rejects us when the lesson is over.

Then as our eyes return to the cupid we have to cope with our

own world and our enhanced awareness of it.

In Cezanne's early work he tried to depict 'the human condition' the things we are forever suffering due to our own nature. Now he confronts us with the most basic of conditions, one that is not only particular to humanity but to everything that is of our realm of experience. That is space and our location in it and our relationship to nature.

As the painting surveys its own spaces and satisfactions, as forms emerge from colour, as planes come and go, we feel their reality. We must now feel our own.

When you leave this painting; there is still a rapport, as one's attention is turned to themselves and their world. In a sense it defies its location in time and space. For apart from the rectangle the images, its reality is its emotion. That is something we as viewers can take away. That remains 'durable'. This is what seeps from world to world. This is the common link which makes Cezanne's spirit so powerful. A Cezanne painting at the bottom of its complexity; is a feeling. An emotive reality.⁸

Cezanne's Humanity.

I have always found Cezanne an artist with a particular interest in humanity. More so than an interest in individuals and persons.

One can see this as a generalization of people and of events. We tend to think of his depersonalization of people as wholly denying them any humanity yet this is exactly the opposite of what really happens.

In aiming at a notion which considers everything in one particular object or instant a process of elimination must take place, otherwise issues become confused and watered down. Cezanne discovers the essentials, of nature, space and humanity. He aims at a very broad concept of humanity, a dangerous thing to do. But he finds it in the particular, he focuses on a point, and as one concentrates on a point, the expanse of vision passes beyond and spreads outward.

In these respects Cezanne did not define any grand scheme nor does he impose any order on the viewer. For the order of the painting is not pretending to be anything else and this passes to the realm of emotions.

The Gardener.

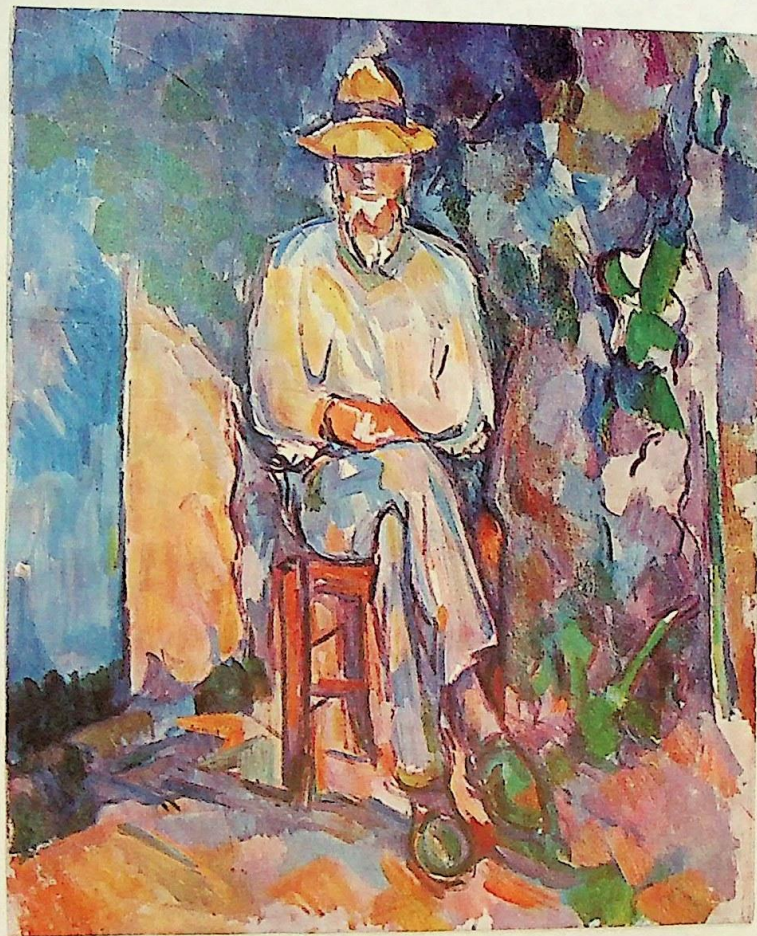
We can see this focal point that I mention, in his 1906 painting of Vallier the gardener. For the purpose of this essay I was considering a Portrait study, maybe a 'Madame Cezanne' or the Vollard portrait. In that sense I was thinking of a portrait that was of a particular person, someone we know about, even his self portraits.

But I choose this one, because at first glance it is depersonalized, there is no real description of the person Vallier. The detail of the person is eliminated. I choose it because it is one of the last studies; it is also very similar to other studies, one of St. Victoire, the late water colours and the Bathers.

It is a good example of how Cezanne dissolves the person to emerge with a far greater expression of humanity.

What causes one to feel this? It is partly due to the conscious elimination of personal detail and the allusion to personal effects. Thus leaving the door open to other things.

But more essential is the manner in which the form is painted; The figure emerges from the other areas of the canvas. I do not want to call the areas located round Vallier 'the background' for the sensation the painting produces is a quiet pulsation, as the form defines itself and reunites with the other patches of colour.



We sense both the surface and the form, Vallier comes from the stuff of colour. His body is a variation of hues and tones, of colour patches each carving an intensity that can rival the whole painting, the area to the right or left, is as considered and as important as the form we call the Gardener. By rights these areas are as much a part of the portrait as an arm or a foot.

In one sense the form looks idyllic and dignified, a strange feeling to get from a 'depersonalized' portrait. This dignity comes from the structure and the mood of the colours. There is a ~~soft harmony~~ ^{soft harmony} as the eye moves through the painting, calmly shifting from patch to patch experiencing the various tones and colours. At stages passing through spaces that lie behind Vallier; or deeper into the picture plane then coming back to the reality of the surface.

The sensation on the eye is like a body bobbing up and down on a calm sea, a sensation that becomes a rhythm. The painting has a weaving-type rhythm. A 'before' and 'behind', 'in' and 'out' or like our heart beat a 'lub-dub', this is the point of focus.

Strangely this is a point that is everywhere in the painting, once again the idea of a meditation arises. One is reminded of Rousseau sitting at the shore on his lonely island listening to the sound of waves lapping. His whole awareness becomes fixed on the rhythm, so that the experience becomes part of his existence, giving

a joy and a meaning. A sensed understanding, once again an emotive reality.

This is the true spirit of Romanticism, this is what Vallier is about.

The effect on the viewer is similar to the cupid painting. A certain reality is touched, the experience of the painting becomes part of the viewer's existence.

The cupid makes us aware of our environment. We are in the centre and experience things round us.⁹ Vallier makes us aware of ourselves; an intense awareness of our spacial condition, our position in nature. It is an inner portrait or a spiritual one. It is more akin to the experience of Rousseau the seminal Romantic.

It is pure but I don't think it is mystical; as I have said Cezanne discovered it through his means; his creative process.

Footnotes

- 1 His need to be alone stems from his personal approach to his work as well as his relationship to Aix. He also needed to separate himself from Impressionist painters in order to develop his own techniques and extend them.
- 2 The act of finding that which expressed him best in the landscape.
- 3 Denis Lonergan, Cezanne In Progress, p.2-5.
- 4 Ibid, p 6-7.
- 5 This shows that element of 'detachment' with the subject, which Pissarro showed Cezanne in the 1870s.
- 6 A similar reaction takes place before the Still-Life With A Plaster Cupid and The Gardener, see sections on these paintings.
- 7 Meyer Schapiro, Cezanne, p.89.
- 8 See appendix 4.
- 9 This can be seen as a classical ideal, ie, putting the human in the centre. That can hold true with this work but it also relates everything to that position. It suggests one of many possible positions.

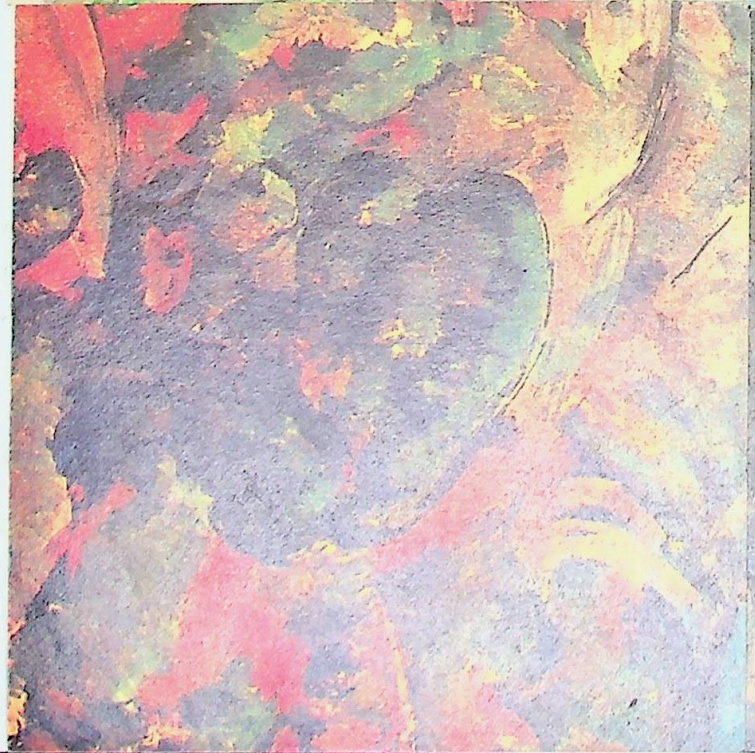
C H A P T E R 5

The Meditative Quality. (A Conclusion.)

It is important in the appreciation of Cezanne to consider the meditative quality he brought to his work, in both the execution of a painting and in the consideration of the subject matter.

From that red stroke in the cottage painting to The Gardener, to St. Victoire scenes, to his late watercolours, we witness this attitude and we see it develop as he grows more mature. Cezanne was discovering a means that reflects the artists' creative process. By the end of his career each brush stroke becomes a point of intensity, those late renderings of Mont St. Victoire are almost abstract (with regard to the appearance of 20th abstraction), show a personal rapture derived from the interpretation of nature through the plastic medium of colour and paint.

This is very much part of the emotive power and reality that we find in these passionate areas which are woven throughout the greater career of Cezanne. The following montage is not to show any abstract qualities; but just to focus upon the importance of this facet of the artist's work.





APPENDIX I

It is particularly hard to define the Romantic Movement as it took on many faces in separate nations and individuals. It was also a movement that drew on many ideas, it enveloped classic ideals in order to break them, it hinted at Realist attitudes. In some sense I think it was a hybrid movement. One which came in response to a changing world. A world of revolutions, social and industrial. Such a movement that finds its emergence upon such things has in turn to respond to the eventual realities of revolutions as they become apparant.

Romanticism as a movement was more than a set of ideals, approaches etc. it was a Spirit which could touch nations and individuals and find expression in the arts and applied arts. To understand Romanticism in light of this essay, it is that Spirit which is of importance.

Roots.

Sometimes I think Romanticism was or is a movement without any clear end and without any certain beginning. The historian has tied it down to a location in time roughly spanning the latter part of the 18th and dissolving somewhere in the mid 19th. Romanticism was a response to change and the emotive reality that change brings. This has been discussed elsewhere in the essay as it is one strain that runs through the Movement.

For me the seeds of Romanticism were planted many years

before, ironically in Greece, Rome and the East and that may seem a bit paradoxical as it hints at those classical ideals of the Renaissance*, that idea of solidity, stable beauty, the expression of the internal through the external. A bond was made between the outside and inside, a structural symmetry, a mechanical harmony and in some ways this provided a universe and in others it closed man off by its rigors and assumptions, eg. of beauty and what it reflects, a closed universe.

I would like to go back to the REN for a while. This epoch was the age of rediscovery of ancient concepts, of beauty, of humanity, of knowledge. It was based or ignited by rediscovery yet inevitably true discoveries were made but for the most part they were curtailed as new discoveries didn't always fit established and ancient philosophies.

If we can call the REN a movement, it was then an elitist movement and very much an intellectual revolution, yet it was for the few. It was for those who could read, privileged to be educated, those who could afford to be collectors of manuscripts or newly printed books. It was for princes, bishops, statesmen and kings. Modern times were however sown here as an awareness of identity was conceived, as the Dark Ages seeped from Europe as the caste system slowly eased its strangling grip and as Humanity rediscovered a confidence in itself and with that came a dignity one which was lost many times since. The REN was an age of discovery, great

* From hereon referred to as REN.

ocean voyages, new routes, many modern sciences owe their existence to the men of the REN previous to this there was little to distinguish areas of study, knowledge was shrouded in a cloud of mysticism that was for God only.

However this great era only touched those who understood it and to understand one had to be in a privileged position in society. Another factor to remember is that it was a new start for Europe and the world, yet merely the conception. Society could not be affected in the manner it was by the Industrial Revolution. A great separation between the discoveries and implimentations of concepts of these two ages was that the latter produced tangible ideas and objects, peoples revolutions, it was the era of bridges, trains, power, steam, energy, an engineer's heyday. Some fundamental shifts took place from the agricultural to the industrial, life was changing, it was as if the searching of the last three hundred years or indeed the last two thousand, was finding practical expression. In comparison the REN produced men with ideas, beliefs yet they were only emerging from the ashes of the past of Rome and Greec. Even though we find in the REN the great maxim of observation; experimentation; implimentation, the latter never took place on a grand scale, only in the visual arts and architecture another reason for its never touching the entirity of society. Modern Europe had to start somewhere and it did so among the elite of the REN. There was a spirit in that age and

part of it spilt into the Romantic spirit but as I have said it was enclosed not only in concept of the Classical scheme of things but with a group of wealthy power wielders, scholars and intellectuals.

By all means we do find those that stretched those ideals for good or for worse, if you had humanists you also had the radicals, even the Mannerist handling of forms was almost an inversion of REN ideals. It is a necessity no matter what, the elasticity of any ideal must be tested to snapping point, as the trigger is pulled backwards to allow the hammer forward. One will find this in any era, there is no straight line of progression, it is also the same with the overflow from era to era. After the decline of the REN, Europe turned into a melting pot producing decorative mixtures of styles. If the REN looked back to the Ancients the Romantics looked back also, it transported views of the past into a new spirit, there was to be a new attitude. Cezanne looked back, Poussin looked back, Gericault, Delacroix, Byron looked back. There was a duality, the glance back is like the trigger loading the spring to propel forward. Tom Prideaux, a student of Romantics says- "The word 'romantic' first appeared in the English language round the mid 17th, in reference to romances -- tales of wild adventures and chivalrous sentiments. For a while it was ill repute, connoting false emotionalism, bombast and general wooziness. Gradually;

however something attractive and pleasing to the imagination.

Beyond this accepted definition, however, "Romantic" had a special meaning determined by historical circumstances of the era in which the word came into common use, and to which, indeed, it was generally applied; the end of the 18th and the first half of the 19th. The overriding problem of the Romantic period was to create a new world on the wreckage of the old. With a shattering impact the stage had been blasted clean by the French Revolution; the authority symbols of God and king had been toppled. Now as never before, was the time for innovation, experiment, new social orders, utopias, new concepts of morality, forays into the supernatural and the morbid, and even the probings into the subconscious.... A surge of energy was released.... with boundless hope and zeal, one notable example of a Romantic enterprise was the settling of the American West. A Romantic, then, was one who had broken loose from the rigid controls of the past, and felt free to move ahead. Here is the nub of our meaning: Romanticism was an attitude of mind that was not inclined to recognise limits...."

So according to this description one may assume that Romanticism in the historical sense was an expressive reaction to a changing world. For example one can see a fundamental difference between Romantic and Classic. the former embraces a world of immense possibilities the latter a somewhat closed and ordered universe, this

is Romanticism in its historical context, can one go further and bring it out of that? This might seem pointless in light of C20th attitudes of Romantics, for us today 'romantic' still exists and can be accepted in certain spheres of activity. A 'romantic' affair does not essentially mean some sort of distasteful relationship but some thing of the Romeo and Juliet syndrome, today it is something which slots in with most peoples morality. A 'romantic' novel is an ideal form of escapism in the mode of a Barbara Cartland story. On the other hand a 'good story' or an 'important piece' is more or less concerned with direct problems of the day. Romantic has gone back to "wooziness", at least our general understanding of the word. Today an economist cannot have a Romantic Policy. Here lies a contradiction, as Romanticism is an expression of a changing world, therefore an economic policy if it is to be valid must be an expression of a world undergoing change in fact the very need for new policies is because of change. Maybe one can say that scale is important, that things have to be of the 'Grand Scheme' type, and to a degree I think that that is true, and that is what happened, change took place on a large scale, and that is what caused the Movement to boil with fury.

What one is saying, is that ,Romantic in the historical context and in light of present and latter day attitudes is just a word which does not carry the same values, and is not respective of the

feelings from which it stems.

I have mentioned the word 'feeling' which brings me back to expression and the expression of change in particular. The presence of change is something which evokes feelings and the extent of the change determines the extent of the emotive responses.

However I think if you extract the feelings concerned with Romanticism one will find that they are everpresent in any context. There is the story of Michelangelo striking the knee of Moses demanding of him to speak. Be that true or not yet in a way it describes a moment of feeling, a certain reality being touched in the emotions that demands expression. Today we are faced with a new communications revolution one that we have never seen the like of before. With the personal computer information is readily available, there is a sense of change in the air, it is almost too fast to notice but there is also fear and wonder as people are being left behind by a new technology.

I would like to expand on the idea of the Romantic period being a spirit and an attitude. Most movements have a similar centre, eg, we can talk of a 'Futurist Spirit' and indeed we do talk about a 'Classical Spirit'. But there is a difference with the Romantic Spirit, it was essentially a 'Spirit', it could not be tied down it could only undergo change itself. While within that historical era revolutions set up institutions which in turn set themselves an internal system and held them in static pose, that

I think, is human nature and is important and is once again, the trigger pulling backwards. Yet there is the paradox, these were the things that were causing the world to change its face, even geographically, as tunnels and bridges were built as railways were laid, as skylines changed with great puffs of steam rising from chimneys which crowned massive red bricked buildings. In one sense a severe order was set, the order of the utilitarian, in another there was the impressive expression of possibilities, there was evident living illustrations of the power that man could tap, the power of nature, of water, of iron, some would feel it to be far greater than man, that man was only a part of the universe. As this belief was stretched it snapped into the Realist attitude and it was soon seen that man was indeed a small part of the machine, it was seen that revolutions do not bring all the hopes and promises they seek to achieve. The focus shifted to Man and his position and in some cases it became obvious that Man was the cog, the smallest cog in the factories and estates while at the same time it was Man imposing that condition on Man. This brought more change, in some cases it was a shift of emphasis, Man was looking at Man again, the interest that extended from the earlier Romantic Spirit was concerned with the position of Man, now that that had been defined it was felt in real terms. I don't see this shift as a total reversal but it is part of the elasticity of Romanticism. The true Romantic was one who embodied change, even if one accepts Prideaux's description "not inclined to recognise

limits...." one must recognise that to adopt such an attitude one must be involved with a sense of movement and an awareness of change, to reach out and achieve the impossible one must develop new ways and ways of seeing things. The Romantic Spirit was carried into a social consciousness. One is reminded of Theodore Gericault's Raft Of The Medusa 1819. For me it is a hybrid painting. It borrows Classical techniques and structures, yet it makes a social comment, a poignant statement on an event of the day (it foreshadows the Russian film Battleship Potemkin) and it produces that emotive response in the viewer that is so characteristic of the Romantic period, the presence of the sea the power of the waves, the sailors pitted against the elements. The Romantics sought to tap an emotive reality and this is why there are so many 'disaster' paintings, this is why paintings could be more exotic and erotic, this is why there were so many expansive skylines, mountainous seas, animals locked in mortal combat, so many spring-loaded curves reminiscent of the Baroque yet more heroic, there were steep cliffs and huge trees, these were the things that the Spirit could find solid enough to build an expression upon, for a while. For it was essentially an emotion that was the driving force, the need was to make that a reality and that is where Cezanne comes in. He too was in search of a similar goal. In Delacroix's painting Lion Hunt we are confronted with a passionate scene. It is difficult to see an actual hunt and it doesn't really matter, the forms are subordinate to the colours and the flowing expressive manner of the application:

Baudelaire said of this painting, " A veritable explosion of colours. ...never did more beautiful or intense colours penetrate to the soul by way of the eyes." From the identification of oneself with nature to identification with the elements of human activities, the feeling that one is involved the internal nature of things as well as the outside. This reminds one of the Classical approach yet now there was no symmetry but an awareness of the existence of the many facets of human activities, society and life.

To go back to Cezanne and those so called 'Romantic' paintings. We are used to calling them dark, moody, tragic etc and so they are, but that seems to be the reason they are termed Romantic. On the face of things that seems to be a natural enough assumption but there is something that goes deeper. The paintings are rooted in Romantic Spirit but the Spirit of his day, Romanticism was in another phase of change, it had already shifted to Realism and in the visual arts that was slowly beginning to focus on the mechanics of painting.

Cezanne had an interest in Delacroix, he often spoke of the latter's colour harmonies. For him Delacroix was a master of colour, Cezanne had planned a homage to this painter. I spoke earlier of the Lion Hunt, a painting in which we witness a profound celebration of colour and the ability of communicating to the viewer the emotional impact of the palette. The power of this transcends

imagery and as I have mentioned, form and easily recognised figures are sacrificed or merely support the spiritual pleasure and excitement of colour.

Delacroix had an awareness of the picture plane as had Gericault while this was never fully developed a certain residue of this awareness is left in some of their works. There are studies by Delacroix of a delft of flowers (indeed Cezanne was inspired by these studies, in his later work we see what must be direct references to them.) in which any allusions to illustrated space as we know it are stretched to the point where it is almost eliminated. Gericault also played with the sensations derived from the actual surface of the painting, in his Cart Bearing Wounded Soldiers 1818 the positioning of figures are stragically placed to flatten the illusion of real space, thus allowing the forms to express themselves as strong broad shapes, also permitting the close laying of strong colours for dramatic effect.

There is a lesser painter, Jean - Baptiste Carpeaux 1827-75 who remained very much a traditional painter, in the sense that he did not allow his forms to disappear or play a subordinate role. Yet he showed an unusual experimental attitude in his handling of those forms. In his Berezowski's Attempt Upon The Life Of The Emperor c 1867 one is reminded of Cezannes' early attempts, his figures are composed of fast, broad brushstrokes that suggest

the forms that contain them. His paintings also contain that black moodiness, high contrasts but the thick plastic handling of the forms remind one of Cezanne's attitude to his own forms. One cannot help but think that the actual handling of paint produces a response in the painter and that painters round this time were becoming more aware of the possibilities with the painter's rapport with the actual execution of their work, paving the way for 20th attitudes. Latter day attitudes in my opinion are an extension of Romanticism, they are part of the same Spirit. From the wonder of nature and its creative forces through to Man and His social position, the realities of that to the creative force that is Man. One thinks again of the REN and its emphases upon Man and human potential.

I have used the word 'hybrid', I have hinted that Romanticism was a hybrid, so too was Cezanne. Certain aspects of art history provided Cezanne with a melting pot of approaches, ideas and attitudes. From his own words and interests we know that he saw something in the Classics, Realism, Impressionism and Romanticism, here I seem to have separated the last three aspects but in actuality they are intermingled and form a general attitude. Cezanne focused on all three. This in earlier years caused confusion but with maturity, Cezanne using these attitudes, rebuilt the art of the past with blocks of the present and his own special designs and concepts.

I would like to make the point that Cezanne was not a Rom-

antic as Delacroix, Gericault and so on, his art manifested itself in a different and original manner just as Romanticism manifested itself in other nations. Something I think we owe to the Renaissance, as the emergence of nationality and the concept of the nation state first took root in that age so by the 18th national identity was a source of pride and a person could draw on his homeland's resources for inspiration on his culture present and past.

This epoch was to a large extent a tumbling period of events and radical changes, it must have been confusing for some, as in the case of the young Cezanne. But out of it a certain type of man was to emerge, one who stood alone and followed his own interests and will, free enterprise was and is the backbone of America, the commercial giants of England, on the art scene artists were freeing themselves from the pressures of patrons, they were to follow their own will. That I believe is an essential hallmark of the Romantic Spirit. I would like to quote a passage from Kenneth Clark's Civilisation -

"....take a picture like Seurat's Baignade, unquestionably one of the greatest pictures of the nineteenth century. There are factory chimneys in the background and, in the foreground, a bowler hat, boot-taps and other proletarian emblems; but to classify the Baignade as a piece of social realism would be absurd. The point of the picture is not its subject, but the way in which it unites the monumental stillness of a Renaissance fresco with

the vibrating light of the Impressionists. It's the creation of an artist independent of social pressures.

Never before in History have artists been so isolated from society and from official sources of patronage as were the so called Impressionists. Their sensuous approach to landscape through the medium of colours seems to have no connection with the intellectual currents of the time. In their best years—from 1865–1885—they were treated as madmen or completely ignored. And yet there can be no doubt that they were the painters by whom these years will be remembered. The greatest of them, Cezanne, retired to Aix-en-Provence, where provincial incomprehension allowed him freedom to work out his difficult aims...."

Cezanne's aims were varied and complex, they involved a synthesis of ideas but something contained all this, and that belongs to his regard for nature, he felt the reality of his responses in greatest strength before nature. The nature of his own studies demanded that he reduce his subjects to motifs, what is sometimes taken for the impersonalization of things, but this also points to the ability of expressing all in the one, I am reminded of Wordsworth and his great poem of 1798 Tintern Abbey.

" For nature then...
To me was all in all—I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion."

*Tom Prideaux, World Of Delacroix, p.13

**Kenneth Ckark, Civilization, p. 340-341

APPENDIX 2

It is of interest to note what Lionello Venturi has to say about the realist aspect of Cezanne at this stage in his life, he says-

"He believed himself to be a Realist, his preferences among the painters of the past, (Zurbaran) and those of the present (Courbet) are indicative of that assumption. But what did reality mean to Cezanne at this time? Certainly it did not mean what it meant to Courbet, whose realism consisted in taking over from nature such features as could be turned into painting. The Realism of Cezanne at bottom was formless, it was the mental superstructure of a passionate, strongly introverted temperament, it was a Romantic transformation of reality, Cezanne soon found that he would have to attenuate his Romanticism and take a broader approach to nature, opening his whole mind and eyes to the life of nature -- in other words, surrendering himself to it as the Impressionists had done.*Certainly Cezanne did have to suspend some of his interests during the time he learnt the Impressionist's lesson. However I don't think Cezanne surrendered his interests never to acquire them again. It is very often the case that when one dispenses with their preconceptions in the light of new knowledge and learning they only confirm to some degree that which they had thought or believed all along, the difference being have found truer meaning and conviction in the light of new learning.

It is also interesting to note that Emile Zola's novel 'L'Oeuvre' in which the main character Claude Lantier is said to have resembled Cezanne and Manet in some parts of character coupled with the invention of the author. Zola describes a man, a painter, who is in a struggle against nature and

in his personal struggles to express himself. The painter eventually kills himself in front of his unfinished work. Cezanne was somewhat insulted and saddened by the semi-portrait, however he sensed a misunderstanding in Zola; Cezanne did not struggle against nature, not even in his early period, and if some Romantics saw the role of man as a lesser power set in the authority of Nature and the domination of Nature in that struggle, Cezanne's 'Romantic' notion was a reversal of that. His notion did not visualise a scheme of things that allocated roles and oppositions, it was one that felt some type of spirit, it is a unique Romanticism as it owes much to Classicism; Realism; Impressionism and Cezanne's own vision and discoveries.

* Lionello Venturi, Cezanne, p. 60-62

APPENDIX 3

The work calls to mind Manet in its use of black, the objects, cups and clocks etc, that Japanese influence, the suggestion of reality wherein one finds that meditative quality which the Orient believed to be so fundamental in their approach to the expression of nature.

While this painting has that quality it foreshadows his powerful meditation on the act of painting before nature and the world in which he lived and moved. One finds this Japanese and the more obvious Manet qualities in other paintings from these years, one thinks of Melting Snow 1870-71, its large flat areas suggesting spaces, tree crowns suggesting volumes etc, or indeed his painting Alexis Reading To Zola which dates from 1869, it is an unfinished canvas, the initial treatment of the Zola figure is brought about by a minimum of linear suggestion, it has a calligraphic quality, a quick flick to bring about the expression of a shadow; a curve; a ruffle but a very considered flick. The painting is of particular interest as it is unfinished and shows the artist's method as he builds his figures, allowing the shape to be born out of the lines which in turn come from the real object, the real Zola. But there is no copying, beside Zola there is Alexis who is more finished as a study, he has already undergone the method of translation. Round the two figures there are broad

empty spaces, the figures seem to float amid these somewhat pulsing spaces as they recede and come forward.

I mention these paintings for they show that Cezanne was already maturing. He was beginning to find his own means of expression. The awareness of the elements was in him when he went to Pissarro, he went to him with a passion that was new-found for colour. Cezanne was receptive in his new awareness. The former has strength only because Cezanne found that awareness in himself and from his own approach. This gives him more understanding, he can develop quickly from the 1870s onwards.

APPENDIX 4

This emotive reality became a much sought after quality in the early C20th. Some saw it as an unspoilt, naïve and childlike approach others searched for it in broad areas of vivid colours and flat shapes, the Futurists wrote about it in their manifestos, oddly they condemned Cezanne for attaching himself to the masters of the past. In some respects they ignored the message of Cezanne and it is in this message that we find the victorious Romantic Spirit of Cezanne, he did not suppose flighty spirits of nature, heroic and awesome ghosts of the past rousing the passion of man momentarily, he discovered a profound quality and in that discovery he found a humble yet strong spirit. This spirit does not channel the viewer's emotions into a particular type of philosophy or imagery, for the Romantic paintings of the past used turmoil, massacres, revolutions, happenings from the political world from history and myth. All strong stuff, powerful images but their power diminishes on the leaving of the work, they too supposed that an emotional power was to be found in their particular images and scenes. They used their particular motifs to carry a calculated effect. Cezanne used his to discover. This attitude has become so fundamental in our century that it is hard to understand how odd it seemed in the 1880s--1890s and not to mention the resulting appearance of his paintings.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Note. This thesis is a culmination of several years study on Cezanne, each essay taking a separate aspect of work and times (in an attempt to develop a personal appreciation of him). Titles of previous essays follow.

Cezanne In Progress (a work exploring the development of the artist's abilities, focusing on technique and his influence on young artists.)

Cezanne And The Romantics (a study on the earlier years of his career and times.)

Cezanne And The Gardener (a study on the philosophy of his approach to painting, this essay focused on his theory of 'realization and modulation' and the affects of this on one's appreciation of art and one's own approach to seeing etc.)

Clark, Kenneth. Civilization. London;
British Broadcasting Corporation, 1969, 7th imp 1973.

Clay, Jean. Romanticism. New York;
Vendone Press 1981.

Gombrich, E.H. The Story Of Art. London;
Phaidion Press Ltd, 1972, 13th ed, 2nd imp 1979

Editors of the Jupiter Art Library, Cezanne And The Post-Impressionists.
Jupiter Art Library, no date given.

Kaufman, Elizabeth.E. Cezanne. U.S.A.;
Minster Bks Ottenheimer Publications Inc, 1980.

Michelli, Mariolle. Cezanne. London;
Thames And Hudson, no date given.

Muller, Joseph Emile. Cezanne. London;
Methuen London Ltd, 1983.

Murphy, Richard.W. World Of Cezanne. New York;
Time-Life International Inc, 1978.

Ozenfant. Foundations Of Modern Art. London;
John Kooker Publications, 1931.

Prideaux, Tom. World Of Cezanne. New York;
Time-Life International Inc, 1978.

Rubin, William. (editor) Cezanne. The Late Work. London;
Thames And Hudson, Ltd 1981.

Schapiro, Meyer. Cezanne. New York;
Harry.N.Abrams.Inc, date not given.

Venturi, Lionello. Cezanne. London;
Skira Macmillan 1978.

Wechsler, Judith. The Interpretation Of Cezanne. New York;
Umi Research Press, 1981.

William, Ray. Keywords. London;
Fontana/Croom Helm, 1979.

Wright, Christopher. French Painting. Oxford;

Phaidon Press Ltd . 1979.

Catalogues;

The Romantic Movement. The Tate Gallery and The Arts Council Gallery;
The Arts Council Of Great Britain. 1959.