

Triplism in Modern Painting

Student: Arabi Tarek

Stipendium Hungaricum

Supervisor: Prof. Kicsiny Balázs

Hungarian University of Fine Arts Doctoral School

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INTRODUCTION:

As an artist, I think my experience in life is a major factor in shaping my art. I mean that my profession and my personal life can't be divided. Artists cannot separate their art from their life, simply because they must reflect the honest feelings they went through, and they have to articulate their opinion about complicated issues facing people in their life. Probably lots of artists articulate subjects which they try to suppress in their daily life. This is not common in other professions, usually, you have to separate your personal life from your work.

This research is an attempt to analyze a certain type of artistic, intellectual attitude and its role in shaping a total artistic concept. The foundation of this deep analysis originates from my observation of my life in connection with my art practice. In addition, I used this observation method when I analyze two artists Paul Cézanne and Francis Bacon, two philosophers Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Gilles Deleuze, and a writer, thinker David Herbert Lawrence.

Living in similar conditions doesn't necessarily mean to be shaping the same personalities. On the other hand, it's going to make us understand the connection between all the players of this research, and this will be very clear in the connection between Paul Cézanne, D. H. Lawrence, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty in life and their way of thinking, and the intellectual correspondence between Francis Bacon and Gilles Deleuze.

It's very important to clarify the cultural and intellectual background of the artists suggested here which led to the main subject of this research which is Triplism. My main subject will be enriched and based on the above-mentioned philosophers' and writer's theories regarding Paul Cézanne's and Francis Bacon's art and way of thinking.

Triplism is a new term and it is in fact an artistic attitude. In this research, I will try to formulate the basis of Triplism and identify it.

Choosing this subject is also in relation to my own background when I was living in certain circumstances, where I was able to liberate my ideas, despite these conditions are usually able to limit our freedom and direct us through a narrow space of opportunities and possibilities in life. I found that expanding my life borders is very connected with my art practice, and my attempt to create authentic

paintings, which vice versa affected my way of living. I believe that my Triplism concept originates from this experience. In my doctoral dissertation, I am going to look for my Triplism concept's roots not just in my life, but also I will try to find it in the life and art of other artists.

Artists have been always trying to answer questions such as how to draw the invisible force? How to represent or recall an object in a painting? How to draw more true-to-life objects... there were of course some answers but this research would try to connect those answers to form a new concept. This will raise a new question about the structure of this concept, where we can track its trace in the history of art? And I will discuss also other issues such as how can we apply this concept in a painting?

I think it's very important to repeatedly look through previous artists' work from a totally new perspective, from a different point of view. This research is analyzing concepts regarding two modern artists who lived in the late 19th Century and the second half of the 20th Century. and attempting to find out if Gilles Deleuze's interpretation of Francis Bacon's art, and if D.H. Lawrence and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's interpretation of Paul Cézanne's art can be seen in another way now at the beginning of the 21. Century.

I'm convinced, as an artist, that great art is not limited to time, and not limited to an art-historical period as well. I believe that Triplism is used by those who try to depict the unknown, the feeling, the time ..etc.

At the beginning of my dissertation, with a deep analysis of my life, I'm looking for traces of my concept from my childhood to my adulthood, and how did my education affect my creative practice and my personality in high school, BA, and master studies. Then I'll talk about the effects of war while I was inside Syria and then outside of my country.

In my dissertation, I will investigate where this term was used before. Was it used in philosophy or art? I will analyze the specific publications of Gilles Deleuze, D.H. Lawrence, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty where I found very similar approaches of art and thinking with my concept of Triplism, especially in Gilles Deleuze's writings about Francis Bacon and in D.H. Lawrence's and Maurice Merleau-Ponty writings about Paul Cézanne. In my dissertation, I analyze those artist's work.

In the final chapter, I will make a full definition of the term Triplism and suggest “triplist “ as an artistic attitude with a detailed explanation for how to implement it in fine art using my artistic experience in painting, digital art, and installation.

TRACE OF TRIPLISM THROUGH MY LIFE

Chapter I

Everything in our life leads us to be made the way we are in this moment, our personality, our tastes, our shapes, and the way we act. Every little detail is very important in building our understanding of the world around us.

In this chapter, I will talk about the cultural and social background that brought the researcher to the idea of his research, as it was the key to understand what he reached as a way of life and art.

I was born and lived in the Syrian Arab Republic, which is a Middle Eastern country located south of Turkey and shares common borders with Palestine (Israel), Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon.

In terms of religion, 77% of the people are Sunni Muslim, 10% are Alawites and Murshid, while 3% are Druze, Ismaili, and Twelver, and 8% of the population are Christians from various sects, and there is also a Yazidi minority.

As for affiliation, the majority of Syrians are Arabs 93%, 5% are Kurds, and there are other minorities such as Armenians, who are concentrated in Aleppo, Syriacs, Assyrians, Circassians, and Turkmen.

2.1 Childhood

In the nineties in Syria, there were some kinds of mixing and harmony between these ethnic and sectarian affiliations, but not to the point of melting (according to my personal perspective at the time). I was born and lived in the early stages of my childhood in Damascus, the capital, which is witnessing the greatest possible mixing.

We as a family's lived in Damascus because of my father's work, as he was a fighter pilot in the Syrian Air Force, and he was in the rank of general and served at Ad Dumayr Military Airport in the suburbs of Damascus. His work was very intensive, hours and hours of work, he was absent for two days to come back the third day, and he continuously worked like this for many years, which forced us as a family to move to the Ad Dumayr military base residence, far from the city and containing several soldiers' families from all sects of society. It was not forbidden for us to go out as families, but it was difficult because the area was far from any city, the nearest civilian population was the town of Ad Dumayr, which is more than half an hour away if a car was used, but the means of transportation are always with fathers/soldiers who are away in their work areas. And taking into account that the weekend in all fields of work in Syria during that period, not only

in the military field, is only one day, which is Friday, and also the location of the military base in the heart of the eastern Syrian desert far from all the capabilities of domestic tourism, so living in that region was very bad in terms of having the basic entertainment and amusement infrastructure, the pleasure was not part of the main interest of the authorities in that area which cause a greater problem questioning the habitability of that area especially for children who going to be deeply affected by the fact of lacking the interactive life which could be very important in the psychological and the intellectual developing of their personality. I remember, for example, that my favorite trip, which was almost once a month, was to go and see the train, so you can imagine the insufficiency of interactive life.

That area in which we lived was like a big prison from the inside, where we lived under a microscope, everything calculated our words, our belonging, our loyalty, our religion, and even our ideas that we reveal. Everything is differentiated, it is either true from the view of the military community or wrong, there is no room for half-solutions, this differentiation applies to everything in life there, meaning that every action is subject to be questioned only by right or wrong, that is, anything which could be maybe just undesirable in the Syrian society is definitely wrong in that military base, love is wrong, playing is wrong, failure in the study is wrong, sleep is wrong, and there are many red lines that complicate life in that place.

I think it's there where I began to reject the closed reality around me to build an imaginary world free of control, as no one mentioned anything about observing my thoughts that I can keep to myself, and perhaps there also I began to reject the concept of right and wrong.

2.2 the village

When I was eight years old my family moved from the military zone to the village of Umm al-Zaitoun in Swaida

It is worth noting that the majority of the Druze live in the city of Swaida, which is located south of Damascus. During the 1980s and 1990s, Sweida was not very connected with the rest of the Syrian governorates, maybe it was due to religious affiliation, and the fact that it's a small city.

I also belong to the Druze minority, and this was a very critical detail that greatly contributed to the development of my thinking into its current form. Here I present a simplified definition of the Druze.

The Druze:

or Al- Muwahidoun, an Arabic religious sect that meaning "those who believe in one God and just him." Based on the teachings of Hamza ibn-'Ali and created in today's Egypt during the time of the sixth Fatimid caliph Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah.

their sacred text called The Epistles of Wisdom. It's what I consider a mixture of many religions and philosophies, taking from Ismailism, a sect of Islam, Gnosticism, Hinduism, Neoplatonism, Pythagoreanism, and other philosophies and beliefs. This religion was kept hidden, mainly because they were considered apostates from Islam, which means they were to be killed if they revealed their faith to anyone. As a religious minority suffer from persecution which reaches the highest level under the rule of the next Fatimid caliph after the death of Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah which led them to the fleet to Syria, they also suffered under the Mamluks and Ottomans. Most recently, Druze were targeted by the ISIs and Al-Qaeda. The Druze count between 800,000 and a million. They are found primarily in Syria in the southern city of Swaida or Jabal al-Druze "Mountain of the Druze", in Lebanon and Palestine, with small communities in Jordan. They played an important role in shaping the history of the Levant. They have different social customs from those of Muslims or Christians, and they were known to form close-knit, cohesive communities that but the families as its mean concern, and very highly appreciate the good connection with the other members of the Druze society in the same village, then the town, then the city respectively.

The decision to leave the military zone and live in the village was aimed at liberating us as children from the boundaries imposed by the community in the military base, and I really think that decision changed my life for the better. Of course, here I find a great approach between the strict military community and the closed religious community in Swaida. But as a child, the area of freedom given in the village was much greater.

2.3 Children's Society

Relatively great freedom was given to children due to the instructions of the religion to not inform and teach children about it (as children are not aware and not mentally ready to receive the religion). Therefore, there were no limits for us except for the natural social boundaries with the elderly people. As a result, you would find children of every age group and according to gender have formed a small social group outside of the societal restrictions and it's defiantly separated

from their families, as everything generally collapses in case of parents intervention.

At that stage, I formed many friendships that radically changed my personality to live with two personalities, the first outside the house with my friends and the second inside it with my family who, in my mind at that time, were still associated with the closed military community, and I found myself leaving the fictional characters and world that I built for a real-world full of friends, even if it was for a brief period of time daily.

This state, according to my experience, was general in the society in which I lived, so happiness was connected to friends outside of the home, which was sometimes full of moral, social, and sometimes religious rules. To the point that friends became closer to the person from his/her brothers, even if they were of a similar age range, and it seems to me that the reason for that is really the double life that we lived and the unwillingness to mix those two parallel lives, at least in childhood and adolescence.

The rural Druze community is a closed society and has multiple special criteria for classifying the eligibility of its members. Sometimes these criteria are contradictory and I found it impossible to achieve them. In that place, I had to mentally strive to be able to coordinate the requirements of the different community groups that live there, which are many (intellectuals, ignorant, politicians, secular, religious, peasants, workers, government employees, merchants, housewives ... etc.) and it is possible that if someone lost his acceptability in one of these groups, he/her would gradually lose it in other groups because those groups are not closed, so you find that some people are belonging to more than one class, even if they are totally opposite, which kind of similar to what I mentioned about the double life that children live. I mean, it is very possible for a person to be a secular and religious peasant or an ignorant government employee with a political party affiliation. That's why I had to take into account all people's tendencies and deal with them with some flexibility.

Regarding religion and its effect in general on the village and even the city, I do not think that it is a great influence, as religion forms a separating factor between people inside Swaida and people outside it, but in terms of separation between people inside it is a weak factor and not of great importance because they all profess the same religion. There is a kind of differentiation between the sheiks and people who did not declare their receipt of the teachings of the religion, I should

add here that the religion is given from the day of birth. However, the person who would commit himself to his beliefs must declare that when he/she is an adult and then he/she will be called sheik. Actually, in Swaida those religious people don't form more than 7% of adults, and I think that is the main reason why it's not very affecting. However, the society, in general, would remain within the natural limits of a conservative society.

I completed my primary and middle school studies there. Education was good, but we always lost the entertainment side or what we thought is entertaining. art, sports, and music subjects were not of any importance at all, and there was no support from the government or even society and parents to develop these tendencies in the life of a child and teenager. Which put me, the person who loved art, in a place that didn't give full attention to the children's needs, it was a class where I wanted to express my feeling and I think art was one of the only ways to say what would I like to do to other adults in an attempt to contact with them. I was always in an argument with my father in arranging my priorities while taking care of my homework, so I used to spend hours completing my drawing duties while I quickly finished the homework of biology, science, and the Arabic language.

I learned a lot in that village despite the obstacles that I faced. I lived my childhood and adolescence there and learned to revolt against what is wrong (which may be true in the view of some) and the defense of right (or what might be wrong in others' opinion) while dealing with different community groups all with their own perspective toward life. I learned the beauty of nature, very unique scenes in my memory are taken for example from the dark brown soil of my village, connecting with the Prussian blue color sky by a strip of emerald green olive trees. adding a perfect white moon will shape a beautiful glowing night in an atmosphere where all those colors emerged gently to unite the background, it's just like if Turner drew a night scene in the same way he drew the sunrise. I also think that the nature I memorized from my village is so important because of its variability, we have a white and dim winter, a flowerful green spring, rusty and golden autumn, and a highly saturated and shiny summer. which for years provided me with a repertoire of aesthetic color and it was a major reason for me to enter the world of art.

2.4 The Town of Shahba

It is the nearest town to my village where I studied high school. This stage was also important in reinforcing my rejection of what is sometimes absolute right or wrong in the eyes of those around me.

Several factors influenced the formation of my personality there:

My school was an impregnable fortress with a high wall that gives a sense of incarceration, and it was a boys' school only, in addition to being the first place in which to stay away from direct parental control, and finally, the system in the school was based on placing students in two different main classes, a science classes and I was in, and a literature classes where most of my friends were.

I did not have a real interest in my high school, no obsession drew me toward it, the loss of freedom and motivation drives a teenager at this age, and not being surrounded even with childhood friends with the absence of parental authority made me somehow deserting that place, I always left school to spend time in video game center, and there I got to know a parallel world that I had never seen before.

It was not at all desirable for anyone to be known as a videogame gamer, it was a secret society that included lost people, so you find drunk people and outlaws who do not want to do anything in life. Maybe some unemployed who do not know how to do anything, and of course, lazy students.

As for me, I was fully aware of the size of the emptiness in which I drowned myself, but the strange thing was that I felt strange happiness that accompanied that period of my life, and I found that I learned a lot from it later. The characters in the hall were superficial from the first impression but very complex on the inside to reflect the complexity of society. It also often appeared opposite the expected image of it, so the outlaw was good, the unemployed were creative and talented, and the lazy student was extremely skilled and intelligent. I did not mean to generalize these three characters, but rather I'm talking about some specific examples that were actually present permanently in that place. I spent three years in high school learning nothing, a heavy curriculum, killer routines, and outdated information, and a lot of general subjects that didn't motivate the student to enhance their knowledge. On the other side, my personality developed in the game center, where I lived a contemporary life, interacted with it and realized part of it. It's where I change my thoughts toward life according to the environment and surroundings.

2.5 Faculty of Fine Arts in Damascus

Later, I began my studies at the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Damascus, and at that time it was the only college of art in Syria, which brought

me together with people from various and different backgrounds coming from diverse parts of the country.

If I tried to locate the position of Syrian art in the context of European and western art, it would be fair to say that we are still 60-70 years late. It's not just that the education system is not up to date it's also related to people's mentality in Syria. We as Syrians are not ready culturally to follow the international contemporary art movement. However, everything changes if we are out of the country as a Syrian artist who lives abroad combining the Syrian background with the global cultural movements in Europe and all over the world.

In Syria, artists should be categorized under a specific art school, so we can notice that for example, one artist is impressionist the other is expressionist or abstract expressionist, and so on. To be clear, I don't think that's wrong, but of course, it should not be the only way to deal with art.

I don't agree with "A cultural leap" that could leave a gap between the past and the present and then another gap that will overshadow the future. But, on the other hand, artists should always be at the front line to motivate people more and more toward evolution. I think now, living in Europe, that Syrian artists are not fulfilling this commitment inside Syria.

This is very clear inside the structure of the Faculty of fine art in Damascus. I studied there and I would say that the curriculum is holding artists back, I didn't have any idea of what is going in the world after World War I, truly, Picasso was the last artist I studied, knowing that our art history classes were focusing always on the modern European art, not knowing anything about the contemporary European art.

The education system in Syria gives a bachelor's degree after four years. In the first year, I study fine arts with specializations in drawing, photography, graphics, graphic design, and interior design. Then, in the second year, the specializations were divided again, for example, at my section (student will be divided into painting and mural painting), finally, I went into the department of mural painting.

I mention this topic because it is closely related to an important detail that led me in this direction, which is the second-year selection process. Where students register their choices in the five aforementioned sections, and my first choice was the graphic design to study animation in the third year, which was my goal at that time, I missed the last seat in that department by 0.01% of the mark, knowing that

the grading system in Syrian universities out of 100. This incident for a while affected my study, but with time, it turned out to be in my favor when I realized that I'm a painter and not a graphic designer.

After spending the second year learning painting, I found it very interesting because I was able to learn information that is not available outside the academic framework in my country. I completed my studies in painting and then mural painting which I always associated with research and practical experience. It's also worthy to notice that I joined the first-ever mural painting class in my country, and because of that, we all teachers and students tried with all our energy to make this new specialization successful, so they gave us all the information they possessed in full sincerity, and this is not common in the faculty of fine arts in my country.

2.6 Mural painting

Four professors were in charge of the department, two of them got their Ph.D. in Mural Painting in Russia and Egypt. The third professor was specialized in anatomy, and the last one had his Ph.D. in enamel.

The problem was that no one had studied Mural Painting at the bachelor's level, as it was not originally available in Syria before. The two professors who wrote theses on Mural Painting had studied it at the doctoral level, meaning that none of them was aware of a comprehensive integrated approach to the techniques, branches, and requirements imposed by the new section. They taught us the theoretical information well, but they did not have technical experience.

Because of that, I think that all of my professors agreed on following a general education method (which is somewhat followed in many areas of Syrian education), where they expanded the field of study to include (mosaic, wall ceramics, stained glass, fresco, graffiti, enamels, and even paintings directed towards social art) to build a wide-ranging curriculum that does not dive into details. This educational curriculum resulted in a kind of cognitive noise, as every professor taught according to his liking.

As for the students, they were clearly affected by the weakness of the information related to Mural Painting, but on the other side, I personally had a free and rich artistic experience as a result of the lack of a clear line or ideology in the department (this is rare or even impossible in Syria). It was indeed the first time in my life that I had been given the opportunity to express myself unconditionally

under the supervision of good artists and free of the conservative academic mindset.

I spent two years in the mural painting department, which had a clear impact on the formation of my personality and artistic knowledge. I believe this was a starting point of constructive development of my personality to a stage to understand my way of thinking as a person and as an artist.

The graduation project for the BA stage was under the title *The Relationship between Color and Content*, which, as I realized later, is closely related to my current artistic concept. I tried at that time to break the duality that has been always existed in the academic field in Syria, where I studied as a student. My project was an attempt to expand my understanding of the duality of form and content by adding a new element, which is color. Color represents the moving form and interacts with the content when changes.

2.7 Master degree

The master's degree in Syria is completely separate from the bachelor's degree. It consists of a preparatory year and a period for submitting a master's thesis extending from at least one year to three years. A small number of students are admitted to the Master's degree. For example, only 6 students from the painting and mural painting were accepted in the year in which I applied. Moreover, it is very difficult to complete the study and deserve a master's degree. This situation is general in all Syrian colleges and universities, where it is nearly impossible to finish the Master's degree and then the Ph.D. in less than ten years, especially in the field of fine arts. The Faculty of Fine Arts in Damascus is the only university in Syria, which authorized to give a doctorate diploma despite the opening of four new faculties of fine arts in different universities in 2009. However, The Faculty of Fine Arts in Damascus did not award doctorate degrees except for only five candidates in the whole period of time I was studying there, from 2004-2016. Therefore, it is customary for Syrian students to stop after a bachelor's degree and devote themselves to work due to the difficulty and length of time required to obtain higher degrees.

I started in the master's stage in 2009 and stopped after a year to register again in 2013 and finally finish my studies in July 2016. I'm mentioning this only to draw attention to the difficulty of higher studies in Syria. Students must adapt to these conditions and should be flexible and responsive. At the same time, the students

must be productive and successful in life and work, to be accepted by society and this pressure undervalues graduate studies, as it is no more than a waste of time.

My graduation project in the master's degree was entitled *Three*, where I wanted to break the semi-theatrical state of (question and answer) that was widespread among the artists around me by adding a third controversial element.

While studying for the master I lived the ongoing war in Syria.

2.8 The war

The war in Syria began in 2011. Like all wars, the conflicting parties put all the people between two options, either with them or against them, and they will classify others as traitors if they were neutral. All my previous rejection of society increased exponentially during the war, so my ability to adapt ceased and I became a stranger wherever I was, in my home, among my friends, or at my university.

In the beginning, the war robbed me of everything that I achieved and stopped me practically, intellectually, and even scientifically. For a long period of time lasted more than two years I stopped artistic production, lost my interest in art, and I may have lost my appreciation for it as well. Then, after about four years, I returned as a person and as an artist in a different but more stable way. I did not adapt to war and I do not believe that anyone can achieve this, but somehow, I was able to understand myself more, years of disconnection from people around me made me literally talk to myself to understand it as an artist and to make my art closer than ever before to my personality as a human being. As strange as this idea sounds, the war, in a bizarre way, helped my judgment, my understanding, and my awareness of my reality, in a different way so to speak.

At that time I expand the binary of (war and peace) first, combining (war, work, and peace) altogether, we would find that the three elements relation type would create a different world, closer to detail than the proposed two side state.

It was the time when I started to work on my new subject titled *Three* at the master level, which was in fact an expression of my personality, as a young man growing up in my country and later living during the time of the war. By rejecting the reality of right and wrong, I was expressing an opinion that was different from the approach of the two parties of the conflict and drawing attention to a third “party” that may be generated from this conflict, symbolizing hope, depression, or sadness,

etc. As a start, I choose the subject of *A Family* to express my Triplism idea symbolically.

Of course, and for the reasons I mentioned earlier, I did not dive into my subject at the master level to the extent that I was satisfied with, as my biggest concern was to evade the hard circumstances that surrounded me from educational bureaucracy and bad living conditions through the continuous electricity outage and having to work for in a second and some times a third job within the deterioration of the economic situation, so the goal was to end that phase and progress towards better solutions which might help me complete my artistic career.

2.9 Hungary

In 2016 I started my studies at the Hungarian University of Fine Arts Doctoral School in Budapest. This opportunity was the driving force to strip my thinking of all restrictions and to look at all my life and artistic experiences from a different point of view, from a new and different perspective. Inside (i.e. inside Syria) I was trying to see the whole truth, but it was impossible because the resources were rare, directed, and following the propaganda in all fields, such as war, science, art, etc.

That's why settling in a neutral place gave me a great benefit. Now I have the ability to see what Syrians did not see from the inside, and at the same time, I could see what the Syrians and other people, in general, did not see from the outside, I was again living in a different area. This, of course, applies to all life matters, for example in the war, I have become able to see everything broadcasted by all the warring parties at home and the consequences of the crisis abroad, and I can relate small details to general events and their impact on the Syrians, so I can try to depict these factors artistically.

At this stage, the term Triplism appeared in my art. I no longer saw that the third element is sufficient to create a living state in the painting. Rather, I can assert that the elements in the painting must be variable, fluctuating with multiple possibilities, so that the painted elements always change with the influence of new elements that will change later by creating another element and so on ...

Of course, in order to dive deeper into the proposed artistic concept, I had to study examples of what I saw close to my artistic approach, and what interests me the most was modern art, which was characterized by its association with intellectual currents revolting against everything that is fixed. I focused on the late 19th and

the 20th century, selecting some artists who presented something similar to me, in order to be able to put a general description of this concept that is not separate from reality and art history but rather derived from it in one way or another.

TRIPLISM IN MODERN ARTS AND PHILOSOPHY

Chapter III

My research in modern and contemporary art connected me in one way or another with artists, writers, and philosophers. In their art, theories, and writings there are traces of what I propose as the concept of “Triplism”. Modern art revolutionized what was considered to be traditional art in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. Modern art or avantgardism searched for a new way of creativity, which was opposing the old theories and academism. Many avant-garde artists talked about a radically new way of creation, breaking the old rules of forms and composition to replace them with modern art.

The artists that I felt close to my topic are Frances Bacon and Paul Cézanne, in their art, way of thinking and in their life, there are multiple similarities. What also connects me to these two artists is the rich analysis written by Gilles Deleuze on Bacon, and on the other side, D. H. Lawrence and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's writings about Cézanne. I will clarify in my dissertation the connection, which I propose between the writer, the philosopher, and the artist because I think there is some kind of correlation between Francis Bacon and Deleuze, and between Cézanne, D. H. Lawrence, and Merleau-Ponty.

These binary relationships will provide another dimension by connecting them to each other and furthermore when applying them to my concept of Triplism.

But what is the reason for choosing these artists and philosophers? The answer lies in both their lives and in their creative work. In my text, I'm going to go into detail to explain these connections.

3.1 Paul Cézanne

(1839 –1906)

Paul Cézanne is one of the most influential artists of the late 19. Century art. His works established the base of the modern art movements by connecting 19th-century impressionism with early 20th-century cubism. His art was very appreciated by other artists, unfortunately after his death, and we know that both Matisse and Picasso said that Cézanne "is the father of us all"

Cezanne's life was full of conflict with the world around him. For example, his home countryside's people in Aix-en-Provence were hostile with him after a very critical article published in L'Intransigeant in 1903 by Henri Rochefort titled "Love for the Ugly".

Another very known incidence is when Louis Leroy, a French art critic, described one of Cézanne's portraits of Victor Chocquet. (Figure 1) : *"This peculiar looking head, the colour of an old boot might give [a pregnant woman] a shock and cause yellow fever in the fruit of her womb before its entry into the world".*¹

Even his closest friend Émile Zola was not sure about Cezanne's artistic quality. In his novel titled L'Œuvre, the main character is a painter, Claude Lantier, who is on one hand is a genius artist but on the other hand is unable to express his level of creativity in his art, which is why he is a broken man. Only supposedly Lantier's character was based on Cézanne, but Zola's and Cezanne's friendship ended soon after the publication of the novel.

Some physiological instability always characterized Cézanne. He had a rather unsettled and stormy life with his wife forced him of living away from her and from his son, then he lost his mother, he had some health problems as he suffered from diabetes which led to some kind of strained relation with others, and also, he had some religious instability and turned to Catholicism.

His struggle in artmaking also characterized him, he always wanted more than art, rather trying to create nature, as he told Emile Bernard

*"They created pictures; we are attempting a piece of nature."*²

Maybe he was trying to create a parallel world full of his vision of a perfect world and maybe he was just trying to reach a point where he can distinguish his art from all other artists.

*"We have to develop an optics," Cezanne said, "by which I mean a logical vision—that is, one with no element of the absurd." "Are you speaking of our nature?" asked Émile Bernard. Cezanne: "It has to do with both." "But aren't nature and art different?" "I want to make them the same. Art is a personal apperception, which I embody in sensations and which I ask the understanding to organize into a painting."*³

¹ Brion, Marcel (1974). Cézanne (The Great Impressionist). Thames and Hudson.p.34

² Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Sense and Non -Sense, translated by Hurbert L. Dreyfus & Patricia Allen Dreyfus, Northwestern University Press.. 1964. P 12

³ Sjøstad, Ø. (2014) A theory of the Tache in Nineteenth-Century Painting. Burlington, VT: Ashgate. P 90

Cézanne wasn't trying to "copy" nature; he was attempting to bring it to his canvas and depict a moment. This is absolutely what Triplism is all about, I will go deeper into this subject later. But first I will explain how Merleau-Ponty understood Cézanne, to see a special interpretation of his art.

3.2 Maurice Merleau-Ponty

(1908 – 1961)

Maurice Merleau-Ponty is a French philosopher. He played an important role as a phenomenologist, when he was trying to connect it with Gestalt psychology, psychoanalysis, Marxism, and Saussurian linguistics. His main interest was the sensational and the physical in the human experience. Among his most important books are *La Structure du comportement* (1942) and the *Phénoménologie de la perception* (1945). He argues in these works the declaration of psychology to establish itself as a science. The task of phenomenological philosophy, according to Merleau-Ponty, is to make a return to the original and primitive realm of life.

When World War II started Merleau-Ponty served on the frontlines in the French army, in a battle in 1940 he was wounded. After that, he founded an underground resistance group with Jean-Paul Sartre called Under the Boot, and continued fighting against the Nazis.

Cézanne also had an experience of war during the Franco-Prussian War in July 1870 but he reacted in a different way than Maurice Merleau-Ponty as he left Paris with his mistress and was declared a deserter. I also experienced war in Syria, and I think this experience of suffering in the war caused Cézanne's and Merleau-Ponty's realizing how war can change their understanding of life.

Merleau-Ponty confirmed my thought by defending Cézanne's position *"We do not hold it against Cézanne that he lived hidden away at L'Estaque during the Franco-Prussian War. And we recall with respect his "life is frightening," It is as if in the painter's calling there were some urgency above all other claims on him. Strong or frail in life, but incontestably sovereign in his rumination of the world".*⁴

⁴ Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. Edit by James M. Edie. Carleton Dallery. The Primacy of Perception, Northwestern University Press, USA. 1964. P 161

3.3 Merleau-Ponty and Cézanne

Cézanne's paintings were analyzed by the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty. In his essay titled *Cézanne's Doubt*, written in 1945. Merleau-Ponty discusses how Cézanne abandoned classical artistic elements such as singular viewpoints and outlines surrounding color in an effort to obtain a "living perspective" by capturing all the complexities that the eye observes. He wanted to see and feel the things he was painting instead of thinking about them. Ultimately, he wanted to get to the point where "optic" is also a "sense". Sometimes it took hours to put in one touch because each paintbrush stroke needed to contain "air, light, composition, character, outline, and style." Even to paint a still life may have taken for Cézanne nearly a hundred sessions, while another type of painting took him much more than one hundred sessions. Cézanne believed that while he was painting, he was capturing the passing moment in time where we could not go back. Cézanne tried to capture the atmosphere of the exciting reality when he was painting.

"*Cézanne's Doubt*" by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, is one of the most distinguished philosophical sources of Cézanne's interpretation, maybe the first and most penetrating study of the profound perceptual connotation of Cézanne's art. Art historians today often analyze Cézanne in terms that Merleau-Ponty first made clear: the initial quality of the artist's vision, his attempt to arrive at the essential truths of a perceptual experience, and his pursuit of a "lived perspective" that exceed the traditions and systems of academic art. This essay titled "*Cézanne's Doubt*" followed by Merleau-Ponty's later work on Cézanne's phenomenology titled "*The Eye and Mind*". this text served as a brief illustration of the principles of Merleau-Ponty's own philosophy, as a convincing example of his arguments about the nature of human visual experience.

In "*The Eye and Mind*", he defines Cézanne Impressionistic theory of painting as identical to his own radical thinking, and an attempt to return to, and reflect on, pre-reflective consciousness, Merleau-Ponty defines science as the opposite of art, and while art is an attempt to capture the perception of the individual, science is anti-individualism.⁵

⁵ Carman. Taylor, Hansen. Mark B.N, (2005) the Cambridge Companion to Merleau-Ponty. Cambridge University press. P. 291

In his essay "*Cézanne's Doubt*" Merleau-Ponty described the way Cézanne works, in details he analyzed the portrait of Mme Cézanne in Red (Figure 2) he said: "*the border of the wallpaper on one side of her body does not form a straight line with that on the other: and indeed, it is known that if a line passes beneath a wide strip of paper, the two visible segments appear dislocated*".⁶

Merleau-Ponty was trying to understand the way Cézanne saw the world around him and then put that vision on his canvas. Cézanne was not trying to find a scientific or philosophical excuse for his methods, he knew that his attempts were opposing everything painted before. Merleau-Ponty had also written in his essay about the distortion of the table on the Portrait of Gustave Geffroy (Figure 3), how Cézanne stretches the surface of the table toward the bottom of the canvas because he was trying to represent what will happen when we see a large surface from different points of view and we feel as if it "wrapped". Usually, painters try to depict the standard and perfect geometric perspective and ignore the unsettled movement that we can have a glimpse of when we have a short look at an object. However, Cézanne considered these incidences very important in his attempts to create a scene in his paintings.

Merleau-Ponty thinks that Cézanne was able to reflect all these illusions and distortions and use them in his scene in a way that the receiver doesn't notice its existence as a weak feature, on the contrary, they are enriching the visual experience of reality, just like his paintings contribute in our real and natural world.

Merleau-Ponty also in his essay explained one of Cézanne's very important aspects about the way he defined the contour in his painting which emphasize the way Cézanne gives depth to his objects by making them a part of the geometric distorted perspective

"If one outlines the shape of an apple with a continuous line, one makes an object of the shape, whereas the contour is rather ideal limit toward which the sides of the apple recede in-depth".⁷ He also added, "*To trace just a single outline*

⁶ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Sense and Non -Sense*, translated by Hubert L. Dreyfus & Patricia Allen Dreyfus, Northwestern University Press.. 1964. P 14

⁷ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Sense and Non -Sense*, translated by Hubert L. Dreyfus & Patricia Allen Dreyfus, Northwestern University Press.. 1964. P 14, 15

*sacrifices depth—that is, the dimension in which the thing is presented not as spread out before us but as an inexhaustible reality full of reserves”.*⁸

Then Merleau-Ponty clarified Cézanne’s technique by following the depiction of the object using various tones of colors and then drawing several outlines to let the receiver's perception capture the shape from all these different possibilities.

For Merleau-Ponty Cézanne’s paintings were paradoxical, because Cézanne was trying to achieve the reality without making any compromise aesthetically, Cézanne didn’t take into concern the contours as we knew it, he didn’t care about the outline that defines the shapes in his painting, he just used the immediate impression he captured of objects and disregarded the perspective

Between 1870 and 1890 Cézanne’s had difficulties in painting to express his ideas. This is very clear when he drew cups or plates and he didn’t take into account the elliptical shape of the object, he rather expanded the shape of it, like when he stretched the table on Gustave Geffroy's portrait towards the bottom edge of the canvas, breaking the law of perspective. Emile Bernard called that Cezanne's suicide

*"By giving up the outline Cézanne was abandoning himself to the chaos of sensation, which would upset the objects and constantly suggest illusions, as, for example, the illusion we have when we move our heads that objects themselves are moving—if our judgment did not constantly set these appearances straight. According to Bernard, Cézanne "submerged his painting in ignorance and his mind in shadows.".*⁹

Cézanne using an innovative way of thinking in his painting far away from academic scientific regulations. He thought long time before putting on his canvas any particular paintbrush stroke, because, as Bernard wrote each paintbrush stroke must *"contain the air, the light, the object, the composition, the character, the outline, and the style. Expressing what exists is an endless task".*¹⁰

⁸ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Sense and Non -Sense*, translated by Hurbert L. Dreyfus & Patricia Allen Dreyfus, Northwestern University Press.. 1964. P 15

⁹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Sense and Non -Sense*, translated by Hurbert L. Dreyfus & Patricia Allen Dreyfus, Northwestern University Press.. 1964. P 13

¹⁰ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Sense and Non -Sense*, translated by Hurbert L. Dreyfus & Patricia Allen Dreyfus, Northwestern University Press.. 1964. P 15

Merleau-Ponty in his essay described Cézanne's method when he drew a landscape as well. Starting with examining the geological features of the scene, then he would open his senses to feel the whole nature around him and he attempts to forget all the academic preconceptions of visual presentations and just give his full emotions to representing his nature, to reach a moment when he can use his knowledge and experiences to paint the scene as a living being. *"Cézanne called it the "motif."¹¹ The "world's instant"¹² that Cézanne wanted to paint, an instant long since passed away, is still hurled toward us by his paintings. (Figure 4)*

Cézanne was able to do that by uniting in the canvas all the elements that viewers could see in that environment, and he tried to capture the essence of nature in that moment of reality.

He chose carefully his view where he could see everything rested, then he started with a charcoal sketch of the whole view and then added the colors depending on the geological structure. His painting would develop in a way that the landscape was talking to him in his consciousness.

Cézanne wasn't appreciated by his contemporaries, critics and the public didn't saw the unique thoughts he delivered by his art. But on the other hand, Cézanne himself was not very sure of what he was doing, he always felt that his attempts were unsuccessful, most of them at least. However his own goal was to convince people of his unique view of the world and his artwork would have been the proof for that Just like in his painting all must develop together to reach a final perfect state which, of course, is unreachable, that's why he never finished working as a painter.

"What I am trying to convey to you is more mysterious; it is entwined in the very roots of being, in the impalpable source of sensations".¹³

¹¹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Sense and Non -Sense*, translated by Hurbert L. Dreyfus & Patricia Allen Dreyfus, Northwestern University Press.. 1964. P 17

¹² Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. Edit by James M. Edie. Carleton Dallery. *The Primacy of Perception*, Northwestern University Press, USA. 1964. P 169

¹³ Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. Edit by James M. Edie. Carleton Dallery. *The Primacy of Perception*, Northwestern University Press, USA. 1964. P 159

Merleau-Ponty was able to understand Cézanne to a level where he “put himself in Cézanne’s shoe” and he tried to explain with the words the same thing that Cézanne thought, analyzed, interacted, felt, reacted when he was painting.

"My movement is not a decision made by the mind, an absolute doing which would decree, from the depths of a subjective retreat, some change of place miraculously executed in extended space. It is the natural consequence and the maturation of my vision. I say of a thing that it is moved; but my body moves itself; my movement is self-moved. It is not ignorance of self, blind to itself; it radiates from a self"¹⁴

Merleau-Ponty deeply analyzed Cézanne’s art, because I think he understood him as a person and then as an artist. Merleau-Ponty researched every little detail of Cézanne’s life, he went deep in his analysis to a point where he was united with the artist.

"Visible and mobile, my body is a thing among things; it is one of them. It is caught in the fabric of the world, and its cohesion is that of a thing. But because it moves itself and sees, it holds things in a circle around itself. Things are an annex or prolongation of itself; they are incrustated in its flesh, they are part of its full definition".¹⁵

Cézanne’s way of thinking toward nature is in fact unites all the time’s and space’s structures. That’s how Merleau-Ponty put into words the same of what Cézanne in painting. I think Merleau-Ponty’s writings have been enriching the Cézanneian experience when he opens the viewer’s mind towards a new way of interpretation of Cézanne’s art.

"Since things and my body are made of the same stuff, vision must somehow come about in them; or yet again, their manifest visibility must be repeated in the body

¹⁴ Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. Edit by James M. Edie. Carleton Dallery. The Primacy of Perception, Northwestern University Press, USA. 1964. P 162

¹⁵ Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. Edit by James M. Edie. Carleton Dallery. The Primacy of Perception, Northwestern University Press, USA. 1964. P 163

by a secret visibility. "Nature is on the inside," says Cézanne. Quality, light, color, depth, which are there before us".¹⁶

3.4 David Herbert Lawrence

(1885 – 1930)

David Herbert Lawrence was an English writer, poet, thinker, and painter. His works analyze sensitive and modern issues such as sexuality, emotional health, vitality, spontaneity, and instinct. He left a great heritage of literature but for me, I was fully in touch with his ideas especially his last years' articles and essays collected in *Late Essays And Articles* and written between 1926 and 1930 until Lawrence's death.

D. H. Lawrence was the fourth child in his family. His father did not have a formal education and worked as a miner at Brinsley Colliery. His mother, a former pupil-teacher, was forced to work in a lace factory to help her family facing financial difficulties. Lawrence spent his childhood in the coal mining town of Eastwood.

I can see here some similarities with my childhood when I was forced to live in a military base with D. H. Lawrence's early years who had to grow up in a coal-mining town. I think it is important to emphasize this life determination to understand someone's way of thinking about the world.

Latter as a writer D. H. Lawrence had also the same kind of struggled life as Cézanne. He had many enemies because of his nonconformist ideas which caused him official persecution and censorship. The misinterpretation of his creative work throughout the second half of his life, forced him to voluntary exile, as he called it "savage pilgrimage". Like Cézanne, D. H. Lawrence was also stigmatized by others, to be someone who wasted his talent, and his reputation was that of a pornographer. After his death, his reputation completely changed, but of course, it was too late.

Lawrence wrote in 1929 one of his essays titled *Introduction to These Paintings* about Paul Cézanne as an idol that can be an example for English artists to understand the meaning of modern art, which is in his interpretation a recreation of experiencing a moment by art.

¹⁶ Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. Edit by James M. Edie. Carleton Dallery. *The Primacy of Perception*, Northwestern University Press, USA. 1964. P 164

Lawrence thinks that Cézanne was the first artist who was able to create something that's not related to his own personality.

"The actual fact is that in Cézanne modern French art made its first tiny step back to real substance, to objective substance, if we may call it so. Van Gogh's earth was still subjective earth, himself projected into the earth. But Cézanne's apples are a real attempt to let the apple exist in its own separate entity, without transfusing it with personal emotion. Cézanne's great effort was, as it were, to shove the apple away from him, and let it live of itself. It seems a small thing to do: yet it is the first real sign that man has made for several thousands of years that he is willing to admit that matter actually exists".¹⁷(Figure 5)

But Lawrence also claimed, as we saw at Merleau-Ponty did, that Cézanne was not satisfied with the result he achieved.

"Cézanne's apple rolled the stone from the mouth of the tomb, and if poor Cézanne couldn't unwind himself from his cerements and mental winding-sheet, but had to lie still in the tomb, till he died, still he gave us a chance".¹⁸

However, Lawrence thinks that Cézanne is a very unique figure in modern art because he attempted to create the new, and attempts to destroy the stereotype cliché. For Lawrence, Cézanne was a courageous example, which he has to follow, even if his reputation was damaged by that. He wrote his essay in the last years of his life, Lawrence understood that clearly, he would have to face ignorance and rejection by his surroundings. We can take it much further by recognizing them both as revolutionary artists who sacrificed their reputation and success in order to change the people's way of thinking. I can understand that deeply when coming from a war area, how revolutionary thinkers and artist has to face struggles in their life.

¹⁷ D. H. Lawrence. Late essays and articles. edit by James T. Boulton. Cambridge University Press 2004. p. 201

¹⁸ D. H. Lawrence. Late essays and articles. edit by James T. Boulton. Cambridge University Press 2004. p. 203

"The most interesting figure in modern art, and the only really interesting figure, is Cézanne: and that, not so much because of his achievement, as because of his struggle".¹⁹

Lawrence seems to understand that how difficult it is to change the conformism of the people regarding art and culture. He understands that it's not a fight to destroy the old way of thinking rather than an attempt to form it, to put it under continuous argument, in other words, to put the cliché under the scope.

"To a true artist, and to the living imagination, the cliché is the deadly enemy. Cézanne had a bitter fight with it. He hammered it to pieces a thousand times. And still it re-appeared".²⁰

For Lawrence Cézanne was an artist, who instead of trying to duplicate or copy life he tried to represent the world through art. Representation, as Lawrence used the term, meant that the figure or the object, whatever it was, will be invited to the surface of the painting without interfering with the artist's personality. For example, when Cézanne represents an apple, it was a representation of an apple only without Cézanne himself.

"I am convinced that what Cézanne himself wanted was representation. He wanted true-to-life representation. Only he wanted it more true to life. And once you have got photography, it is a very, very difficult thing to get representation more true-to-life: which it has to be".²¹

Lawrence's analysis of Cézanne's work is very close to Merleau-Ponty's. They both seem to agree that Cézanne wasn't trying to apply learned science, philosophy, or art theory on his painting, but something different, something very unique and original that evokes the mind of the audience to look for the truth in the least expected places, which couldn't be reached by logic and theory. Therefore for Cézanne to represent life, he had to look for a totally new reproach of art.

¹⁹ D. H. Lawrence. Late essays and articles. edit by James T. Boulton. Cambridge University Press 2004. p. 204

²⁰ D. H. Lawrence. Late essays and articles. edit by James T. Boulton. Cambridge University Press 2004. p. 210

²¹ D. H. Lawrence. Late essays and articles. edit by James T. Boulton. Cambridge University Press 2004. p. 211

"Cézanne wanted something that was neither optical nor mechanical nor intellectual. And to introduce into our world of vision something which is neither optical nor mechanical nor intellectual-psychological requires a real revolution. It was a revolution Cézanne began, but which nobody, apparently, has been able to carry on".²²

Cézanne's revolutionary thinking was against the traditional representation of reality by art. Lawrence thought that when Cézanne struggled against the cliché, he was able to achieve his goal with an object like an apple, but he had some obstacles when he painted portraits. Lawrence described this problem in a very similar way as Merleau-Ponty did, how Cézanne saw the role of an object in his scene, but differently thinking with the placement on the canvas of "real existence" and living object because he was questioning the state of the living thing before him. Although he represented factually of the person, but also he destroyed, distorted that, because for him, nothing is really stable, statically resting. Cézanne rephrased a question about the intrinsic nature of everything he represented even if it's as simple as a lemon.

I think Cézanne was not just questioning the nature of the object in front of us, he was also representing the process of thinking regarding this object. Cézanne was painting those moments when we are inattentive toward what around us, but at the same time when we see an object, our subconscious will drive us in a journey related to this object, into its past, to its future, and finally, to the truthiness of the object. That way of thinking about our cognitive relationship with the object is how Cézanne fights against the cliché of representing something.

"At the same time that Cézanne was triumphing with the apple and appleyness, he was still fighting with the cliché. When he makes Madame Cézanne most still, most appley, he starts making the universe slip uneasily about her. It was part of his desire: to make the human form, the life form, come to rest. Not static—on the contrary. Mobile but come to rest. And at the same time, he set the unmoving material world into motion. Walls twitch and slide, chairs bend or rear up a little, cloths curl like burning paper. Cézanne did this partly to satisfy his intuitive feeling that nothing is really statically at rest—a feeling he seems to have had strongly—as when he watched the lemons shrivel or go mildewed, in his still-life group, which he left lying there so long so that he could see that gradual flux of

²² D. H. Lawrence. Late essays and articles. edit by James T. Boulton. Cambridge University Press 2004.

change: and partly to fight the cliché, which says that the inanimate world is static, and that walls are still. In his fight with the cliché, he denied that walls are still and chairs are static. In his intuitive self he felt for their changes".²³ (Figure 6)

Lawrence also described the way he saw Cézanne's late landscapes paintings, how Cézanne let the viewer see a moving scene of the landscape's living moment. He was able to do that meanwhile questioning the nature of elements involved in the scene. He gave movement to the elements, by that the interpreter experiencing the view of a landscape itself. This way of representing landscape is completely the opposite of what artists did before. He is retreating himself from the scene to leave the view and the viewer alone without his interference.

" In the best landscapes, we are fascinated by the mysterious shiftiness of the scene under our eyes, it shifts about as we watch it. And we realize, with a sort of transport, how intuitively true this is of landscape. It is not still. It has its own weird anima, and to our wide-eyed perception, it changes like a living animal under our gaze. This is a quality that Cézanne sometimes got marvelously".²⁴(Figure 7)

This level of truthiness, reality, and honesty was reached by applying some additional and creative tools that can change all the old traditional representations in art.

"Cézanne was a realist, and he wanted to be true to life. But he would not be content with the optical cliché".²⁵

Lawrence saw Cézanne's personality as paradoxical. Merleau-Ponty thought that too. Well, this could be also true when we are talking about Lawrence as well. In fact, Cézanne was just like Lawrence and Merleau-Ponty, a revolutionary in his ideas and art, that connects them. Also, they suffered similar consequences, and they either hide behind another name or another place far from home. Cézanne as we know had stayed at the place he loved despite all the hostility of the local

²³ D. H. Lawrence. Late essays and articles. edit by James T. Boulton. Cambridge University Press 2004. p.213-214

²⁴ D. H. Lawrence. Late essays and articles. edit by James T. Boulton. Cambridge University Press 2004. p. 214

²⁵ D. H. Lawrence. Late essays and articles. edit by James T. Boulton. Cambridge University Press 2004. p. 211

people, maybe his unpleasant experience during the Franco-Prussian War taught him to fight for what he believes, in a very beautiful and progressive way I think.

"Without knowing it, Cézanne, the timid little conventional man sheltering behind his wife and sister and the Jesuit father, was a pure revolutionary. When he said to his models: Be an apple! Be an apple! —he was uttering the foreword to the fall not only of Jesuits and the Christian idealists altogether, but to the collapse of our whole way of consciousness, and the substitution of another way".²⁶

When Cézanne painted a portrait, he was trying all his best to get rid of the cliché and go closer to a free individual objective substance. For example, when he drew his wife he makes sure to represent her personality as a human being not to copy her features.

"In the portraits of Madame Cézanne, particularly the portrait in the red dress,(Figure 6) while he was painting the appleyness he was also deliberately painting out the so-called humanness, the personality, the "likeness," the physical cliché. He had deliberately to paint it out, deliberately to make the hands and face rudimentary, and so on, because if he had painted them in fully, they would have been cliché".²⁷

Lawrence also described the way Cézanne painted men. He tried to escape from painting the figures by concentrating on the clothes but, in Lawrence's opinion, it wasn't very successful and they were always some interesting clichés.

"With men, Cézanne often dodged it by insisting on the clothes, those stiff cloth jackets bent into thick folds, those hats, those blouses, those curtains. Some of the Card-players, the big ones with four figures, seem just a trifle banal, so much occupied with painted stuff, painted clothing, and the humanness a bit cliché. Nor good colour nor clever composition, nor "planes" of colour nor anything else will save an emotional cliché from being an emotional cliché, though they may, of course, garnish it and make it more interesting".²⁸ (Figure 8)

²⁶ D. H. Lawrence. Late essays and articles. edit by James T. Boulton. Cambridge University Press 2004. p. 212

²⁷ D. H. Lawrence. Late essays and articles. edit by James T. Boulton. Cambridge University Press 2004. p. 212

²⁸ D. H. Lawrence. Late essays and articles. edit by James T. Boulton. Cambridge University Press 2004. p. 213

My next binary will be Gilles Deleuze and Francis Bacon. Similarities would be seen in the way of thinking and approaching the subject between artists, Francis Bacon and Paul Cézanne and in the way of analyzing their work by Lawrence, Deleuze, and Merleau-Ponty.

3.5 Gilles Deleuze

(1925 –1995)

"Deleuze was born in a middle-class family in Paris. He was a student during World War II. During the Nazi occupation of France, Deleuze's older brother, Georges, was arrested for his participation in the French Resistance and died while in transit to a concentration camp".²⁹

Deleuze was a poststructuralist philosopher and he became famous for his books titled *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, published in 1972 and 1980 accordingly, both co-written with psychoanalyst Félix Guattari.

Deleuze had developed tuberculosis after long suffering from respiratory system problems and then he had surgery to remove a lung. He never gets well after, lived in great pain led him to committed suicide on the 4th of November 1995 by throwing himself from the window of his apartment.

In the last years of his life, Deleuze declared that he is going to write a book entitled *La Grandeur de Marx* (The Greatness of Marx). His final project was unfinished with two chapters written of a book entitled *Ensembles and Multiplicities*.

Multiplicity is very related to the subject of my research, not directly, but in the context of the idea of “Triplism”.

Deleuze refers to it as "A multiplicity is, in the most basic sense, a complex structure that does not reference a prior unity. Multiplicities are not parts of a

²⁹ François Dosse, *Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari: Intersecting Lives*, trans. Deborah Glassman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), p. 89.

greater whole that have been fragmented, and they cannot be considered manifold expressions of a single concept or transcendent unity".³⁰

The idea of multiplicities had been in his theory as early as his book titled *Difference and Repetition* (1968). In a chapter of this book when he writes about repetition, he proposes three different levels of time during where the repetition occurs. Deleuze declares that there is no other time than the present that contains the past and the future, the past and future can be written in the present. In this complexity, the present situation itself becomes more abstract.

Maybe by this interpretation of multiplicity and repetition, we can understand why he was interested in Francis Bacon's art.

3.6 Francis Bacon

(1909 – 1992)

Francis Bacon had an unsettled life, moving often, between Ireland and England several times, leading to a sense of displacement which remained with Francis throughout his life. The family lived in County Kildare, Ireland from 1911, later moving to London, close to where Bacon's father worked. They returned to Ireland after the World War I. Bacon lived with his maternal grandmother and step-grandfather, although the rest of the family again moved to Straffan Lodge.

Bacon experienced the war and as a volunteer, worked full-time in the Air Raid Precautions (ARP) rescue service. The fine dust of bombed London worsened his asthma and he was discharged.

Francis Bacon was homosexual, which caused tension in his relationship with his father. He became an internationally famous artist in the 1970s but he was deeply affected by the loss of his lover George Dyer. He had lost also other friends and his nanny during this time, therefore death had been dominating his life and his art. Although he didn't admit or acknowledge that and never express his feelings to critics, only later he admitted to friends that "daemons, disasters, and losses" stalked him.

³⁰ Adrian Parr. *The Deleuze Dictionary: the revised edition*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 2010 p. 181.

He once said in an interview, "*I've always wanted and never succeeded in painting the smile*".³¹

He was known for his raw, unsettling imagery. Focusing on the human form, his favorite subjects included self-portraits, and portraits of close friends, with figures sometimes isolated in geometrical structures. Bacon claimed that he tried to render "the brutality of fact" to be used as a term by David Sylvester as a title in the third edition of their interviews

He said that his artistic career was delayed because he spent too long looking for subject matter that could sustain his interest.

In 1944 Bacon had painted the Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion (Figure 9) He became a foremost post-war painter. Marking the cultural significance of Three Studies, John Russell observed in 1971 that "*there was painting in England before the Three Studies, and painting after them, and no one ... can confuse the two.*"³²

In his artwork, Francis Bacon tried to answer a lot of fundamental questions that an artist has to face. One of them was put in words by Gilles Deleuze: How to draw the invisible force?

This particular question is very related to my research as well. Deleuze articulated this question to understanding Bacon's artwork in a way that Bacon himself might never think of. My research also seeking to apply a concept to other artist's work in the same way, knowing that they didn't mention the concept of Triplism directly. Therefore Deleuze's approaches can support my claims.

"to capture these nongiven forces in what it gives us, to make us sense these insensible forces. It is in this way that music must render nonsonorous forces sonorous, and painting must render invisible forces visible. Sometimes these are the same thing: Time, which is nonsonorous and invisible – how can time be painted, how can time be heard? And elementary forces like pressure, inertia, weight, attraction, gravitation... how can they be rendered? Sometimes, on the contrary, the insensible force of one art instead seems to take part in the "givens"

³¹ David Sylvester, Interviews with Francis Bacon. 1999. Thames and Hudson Inc, 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10110, p. 50

³² Russell. John, 1971, Francis Bacon, London: Thames & Hudson. p. 22

of another art: for example, how to paint sound, or even the scream? (And conversely, how to make colors audible?"³³.

Gilles Deleuze thought that Bacon's figures were marvelous answers in the history of art to the question "How can one make invisible forces visible?" Deleuze's analysis of Bacon's painting in the context of my concept is a unique idea of creating a force from nothing. The figure and his movement are not the most important; the force is indeed the secret element that is transferring Bacon's paintings to another level. This way of seeing the artwork from a totally unique point of view, where the invisible force is present, can be observed on the figures and in the background of Bacon's paintings. This idea is very close conceptually to what Cézanne did earlier with bending and stretching objects in his own creative way.

"we will see that Bacon remains relatively indifferent to the problem of effects. Not that he despises them, but he thinks that, in the whole history which is that of painting, they have been adequately mastered by the painters he admires, particularly the problem of movement, of "rendering" movement. But if this is the case, it is reason enough to confront even more directly the problem of "rendering" invisible forces visible. the extraordinary agitation of these heads is derived not from a movement that the series would supposedly reconstitute, but rather from the forces of pressure, dilation, contraction, flattening, and elongation that are exerted on the immobile head".³⁴

For D. H. Lawrence representing time, life, sound, feelings were always unreachable to artists and Cézanne was the first one who did it. For Deleuze Francis Bacon was the most important artist who clarified the problem of representation in his painting. This timeless dialogue between Lawrence's and Merleau-Ponty's about Cézanne's art as well as Deleuze's about Bacon's art creating a complexity, which overlapping Cézanne's "apple" with "the force" of Bacon as I can see in my particular way of interpretation of this dialog.

Deleuze saw that Bacon's figures were deformed and not transformed. Deleuze explained that Bacon was trying to paint the true figure not by using movement or abstraction. He saved the figure, the real figure, and give him some life to express himself or herself.

³³ Deleuze, Gilles. Francis Bacon: the logic of sensation, Translated from French by Daniel W. Smith p.57

³⁴ Deleuze, Gilles. Francis Bacon: the logic of sensation, Translated from French by Daniel W. Smith p.58

"the problems Bacon faces are indeed those of deformation, and not transformation. When a force is exerted on a scrubbed part, it does not give birth to an abstract form, nor does it combine sensible forms dynamically: on the contrary, it turns this zone into a zone of indiscernibility that is common to several forms, irreducible to any of them; and the lines of force that it creates escape every form through their very clarity, through their deforming precision (we saw this in the becoming-animal of the Figures".³⁵(Figure 10)

For me, painting is a window to a moment in life, everything in it is interacting with each other and they are all related, as Bacon called, to the invisible force. I think that what we see on the surface of a painting is definitely important but there is also a very important unseen element, and paradoxically it must be represented in the case we wanted to reflect the truthful natural objects and figures.

"Bacon's deformations are rarely constrained or forced; they are not tortures, despite appearances. On the contrary, they are the most natural postures of a body that has been reorganized by the simple force being exerted upon it: the desire to sleep, to vomit, to turn over, to remain seated as long as possible".³⁶

3.7 Bacon's way of approaching his subject

It's very important when someone analyzing an artist's works to understand that how he built the paintings, motifs, the scene using the artist's own roles, experience, tools, and logic. Bacon, like any other artist, had a clear vision for what he wanted to achieve. From some records, we can see his way of working, which might give us some idea for a deeper interpretation of his art. For example, his way of choosing his module, way of using chance, probabilities, these methods are traceable in his paintings.

Bacon had to be sure that he knew the person whom he was attempting to "recall". For him, painting wasn't a process of copying, just like Cézanne, it was a process of inviting the person into his painting. That's why he wanted to know that person, at least to have a memory that related to him or her. With this memory Bacon can imagine his figure as a living person in his mind, he can talk to him and finally, he would invite him to appear in his painting.

³⁵ Deleuze, Gilles. Francis Bacon: the logic of sensation, Translated from French by Daniel W. Smith p. 59

³⁶ Deleuze, Gilles. Francis Bacon: the logic of sensation, Translated from French by Daniel W. Smith p. 59

"Bacon mentioned that he does not like to paint the dead, or people he does not know, and even those he knows, he did not draw them in person, while they were sitting in front of him. Bacon prefers a current photograph and recent memory, or rather the sensation of a current photograph and that of a recent impression: this is what makes the act of painting a kind of "recall".³⁷ (Figure 11) and (Figure 12)

While painting, each artist would face some obstacles and solve them in his own way. However, Bacon tried to use these "givens" in his favor. Chance is not the plan but it would be taken into consideration.

"We have to define are all these "givens" [donne'es] that are on the canvas before the painter's work begins, and determine, among these givens, which are an obstacle, which are a help, or even the effects of a preparatory work".³⁸

Bacon's use of probabilities and chance is very close to the concept of Triplism. Deleuze mentioned an example of using chance in the artistic process when he compared Bacon with Duchamp, who let three threads fall on the painted canvas, and fixed them exactly where they fell. Bacon used chance or coincidence differently; it is just the entrance to make the painting. And Bacon even suggested more complexity of chance when he answered to the question if his cleaning lady would be able to make some lines or not and he said:

"yes, the cleaning woman could do it in principle, abstractly; but she could not do it in fact, because she would not know how to utilize this chance or how to manipulate it".³⁹

In one of his interviews with Sylvester, he explained more about using the chance *"It transforms itself by the actual paint. I use very large brushes, and in the way I work I don't know very often what the paint will do, and it does many things which are very much better than I could make it do. Is that an accident? Perhaps one could say it's not an accident, because it becomes a selective process which part of this accident one chooses to preserve. One is attempting, of course, to keep the vitality of the accident and yet preserve a continuity."⁴⁰*

³⁷ Deleuze, Gilles. Francis Bacon: the logic of sensation, Translated from French by Daniel W. Smith p. 68

³⁸ Deleuze, Gilles. Francis Bacon: the logic of sensation, Translated from French by Daniel W. Smith p.87

³⁹ Deleuze, Gilles. Francis Bacon: the logic of sensation, Translated from French by Daniel W. Smith p.95

⁴⁰ David Sylvester, Interviews with Francis Bacon. 1999. Thames and Hudson Inc, 500 Fifth Avenue,

In fact, Bacon explained clearly his way of dealing with cliché and probability. In one of his interviews, Bacon said:

*"the painter himself must enter into the canvas before beginning. The canvas is already so full that the painter must enter into the canvas. In this way, he enters into the cliché, and into probability. The painter enters into it precisely because he knows what he wants to do, but what saves him is the fact that he does not know how to get there, he does not know how to do what he wants to do. He will only get there by getting out of the canvas."*⁴¹

In another interview, he again described the way he worked. Showing how he controlled the element or figure to achieve the true authentic moment he experienced. *"Bacon: Very often the involuntary marks are much more deeply suggestive than others, and those are the moments when you feel that anything can happen." Sylvester: "You feel it while you're making those marks?" Bacon: "No, the marks are made, and you survey the thing like you would a sort of graph [diagramme]. And you see within this graph the possibilities of all types of facts being planted. This is a difficult thing; I'm expressing it badly. But you see, for instance, if you think of a portrait, you maybe have to put the mouth somewhere, but you suddenly see through this graph that the mouth could go right across the face."*⁴²

Bacon's famous triptychs are in fact the best manifestation of this attitude. Bacon very consciously uses the three paintings, the triptych.

"We would see three rhythms: first, an "active" rhythm, with an increasing variation or amplification; then a "passive" rhythm, with a decreasing variation or elimination; and finally, the "attendant" rhythm. Rhythm would cease to be

New York, New York 10110, p. 16-17

⁴¹ David Sylvester, Interviews with Francis Bacon. 1999. Thames and Hudson Inc, 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10110, p. 100 (I don't know what it's about myself) and p. 12 (I don't know how the form can be made)

⁴² David Sylvester, Interviews with Francis Bacon. 1999. Thames and Hudson Inc, 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10110, p. 56

attached to and dependent on a Figure: "it is rhythm itself that would become the Figure, that would constitute the Figure".⁴³

This painting attitude, similar to Cézanne attitude – when Cézanne was painting one canvas and he was melting the figure with the background to a level where the energy or the force of the painting transform or recall the object into the front of the viewer. The spectator does not need to understand the artwork because the artwork itself is “alive”.

Deleuze went further in his analysis of Bacon’s triptychs. He tried to give an explanation from a philosophical point of view. He examined the way Bacon was thinking while he succeeded those paintings. Finally, he reached some conclusions to show how Bacon’s triptychs were accomplished.

"We can thus summarize these laws of the triptych, whose necessity is grounded in the coexistence of the three panels: 1- the distinction between the three rhythms or the three rhythmic Figures; 2- the existence of an attendant-rhythm, along with the circulation of this attendant throughout the painting (visible attendant and rhythmic attendant); 3- the determination of an active rhythm and a passive rhythm, with all the variations that depend on the character chosen to represent the active rhythm".⁴⁴ (Figure 13)

However, Deleuze believed that Bacon had surpassed the three different paintings, and he united his figures in one created space-time. Everything becomes floating in these triptychs when the body is submitted to forces of isolation, deformation, and dissipation. Deleuze refers to that as a new way of abandoning the easel and he distinguishes this representation from the abstract and informal painting. Deleuze gave an example of Piet Mondrian’s painting which is in his opinion an example of abandoning the easel in order to transform the picture into a mural painting than he talked about Bacon’s way of abandoning the easel.

"The triptych is indeed one way of going beyond "easel" painting; the three canvasses remain separated, but they are no longer isolated; and the frame or

⁴³ Deleuze, Gilles. Francis Bacon: the logic of sensation, Translated from French by Daniel W. Smith p.71

⁴⁴ Deleuze, Gilles. Francis Bacon: the logic of sensation, Translated from French by Daniel W. Smith p.82

borders of a painting no longer refer to the limitative unity of each, but to the distributive unity of the three".⁴⁵

Deleuze thinks that this characteristic of triptychs also exists in other singular paintings of Bacon. For me, it is a very interesting idea to go beyond the easel, and I will write more about that in the chapter regarding my master's work.

"There is nothing but triptychs in Bacon: even the isolated paintings are, more or less visibly, composed like triptychs".⁴⁶

Cézanne was representing to us the folding force of mountains, the “appleness” of an apple, the force of a landscape, and so on. On the other hand, Bacon's subjects or objects are not showing multiple faces, but to settle a true state, one on top of the other, in a different way, that we can imagine by learning of representation of the “reality”.

Cézanne was perhaps the first to have made deformations without transformation, by making truth fall back on the body. Here again, Bacon is Cezannean: for both Bacon and Cézanne, the deformation is obtained in the form at rest; and at the same time, the whole material environment, the structure, begins to stir: *"walls twitch and slide, chairs bend or rear up a little, cloths curl like burning paper."*⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Deleuze, Gilles. Francis Bacon: the logic of sensation, Translated from French by Daniel W. Smith p.85

⁴⁶ Deleuze, Gilles. Francis Bacon: the logic of sensation, Translated from French by Daniel W. Smith p.85

⁴⁷ D. H. Lawrence. Late essays and articles. edit by James T. Boulton. Cambridge University Press 2004.p.

TRIPLISM

Chapter IV

4.1 Terms close to Triplism

We saw in the last chapter some terms used by Cézanne and Bacon or by Merleau-Ponty, Lawrence, and Deleuze who wrote about them, such as doubt, multiplicity, repetition, probability, possibilities, choice, invisible force, and graph. Triplism has some intersection with all of these terms.

To reach the highest level of truth we need to doubt every fixed truth and fact we might think of, it's nearly impossible to start a process of creation just upon our human knowledge because as a human had made a lot of mistaken judgments. I think doubt is the key to overcome any long-lasting belief that turns into a fact because of its continued existence and this is one of the basics that Triplism seeks too.

Triplism has also another feature that's giving us the flexibility and the ability to receive the subject with multiple implementations. Artist would be able to depict time, by using repetition and representing the past and the future in the present, increasing the complexity to a level where the present itself gets out of the fact of being static. By using Triplism artist considers all possibilities and investigates all probabilities that existed in their scene and then he/she would apply and interferes with his judgment to determine a transcendent level of truth in representing and recalling the painted subject.

The changeable third element suggested by Triplism is similar to the term invisible force used by Gilles Deleuze, it represents the continuously variable answer to any question suggested in the painting. We saw Bacon was able to use all of these terms in his painting with his techniques and using the graph to define his possibilities of truth, while Cézanne captures the perception of the individual. Cézanne's technique follows the object using various tones of colors and then drawing several outlines to let the receiver's perception capture the shape from all these different possibilities.

4.2 Triplism existence in Cézanne's and Bacon's

In their effort to obtain a "living perspective", to reach a level where "optic" is also a "sense". To represent the scene and to recall it.

Starting with Cézanne who believed that meanwhile, he was painting, he was capturing a moment in time, which passes, and we could not go back in it. He was

trying to depict some feeling in the painting, he wanted to bring nature to his art. To do that he didn't ignore anything that our eyes would see, he captured all the complexities which can be observed. Cézanne was not trying to find a scientific or philosophical excuse for his methods, knowing that his attempts will be attacked by his contemporaries because his art opposing everything which was painted before. Somehow he used ugliness, illusions, and distortions for the favour of the painting. It was a revolutionary idea at his time of course, but what connects it with Triplism, even more, is the way he used the ugliness, illusions, and distortions to create a living scene. He succeeded because he was playing with unseen elements between optic and sense, between living nature and still painting, between simple subject and complex details, between science and philosophy and art, between ugly and beauty and that's precisely what Triplism is.

Cézanne had his techniques to achieve his ideas as we saw it in his drawing, where the contour, as Merleau-Ponty described it following the object by using various tones of colors and then drawing several outlines to let the receiver's perception capture the shape from all these different possibilities. "*Color is the place where our brain and the universe meet.*"⁴⁸

Cézanne also didn't care about the rules of perspective. He drew tables stretched and plates without taking into consideration the elliptical shape. He was trying to mimic the feeling when someone is seeing a moving scene, a living nature.

Merleau-Ponty also talked about how was Cézanne uniting with the landscapes when he drew in a moment meanwhile he forgets his knowledge and lets the moment flew through his painting.

"What Cézanne finally managed to do, Merleau-Ponty thinks, was to cut through the conceptual biases of these other styles and, like a faithful phenomenologist, let the solid, weighty, voluminous presence of perceived things appear. By attending to surfaces and the structures perceptible beneath them, by painting the modulations of colour at the edges of things and including perspectival distortions, he made canvases in which these elements 'are no longer visible in their own right, but rather contribute, as they do in natural vision, to the impression of an

⁴⁸ James M. Edie. Carleton Dallery. The Primacy of Perception, Northwestern University Press, USA. 1964. P 180

emerging order, of an object in the act of appearing, organizing itself before our eyes".⁴⁹

Lawrence on the other hand admitted that Cézanne was the first artist who been able to create something that's not related to his own personality. For him, Cézanne was the only artist who was able to depict something on its own, neither related to the artist nor to the painting, or to the history of art. It was an apple! "Cézanne's apple rolled the stone from the mouth of the tomb".

Lawrence showed us how much he understood and appreciated Cézanne. His analysis was unique because he took some small details of Cézanne's paintings and made a complex argument about them, a very different one than the philosopher Merleau-Ponty's but with a very similar final conclusion.

Lawrence and Merleau-Ponty's analysis of Cézanne's work was close, saying both of them that Cézanne wasn't trying to implement the science or philosophy or art theory to his painting, but something different. This is the element that would be suggested by the concept of Triplism, something that is neither optical nor mechanical nor intellectual. But to do that it needed a revolution which started by Cézanne, although nobody, apparently, has been able to carry on.

Lawrence talked about the artist's tools when he painted Madame Cézanne (Figure 6). In his painting, he made the universe slip and move around her letting his figure resting and putting all the world around her into motion. Walls twitch and slide, chairs bend or rear up a little, cloths curl like burning paper. Well, for me, it's a very clear message from Cézanne to the receiver that this is something you had never seen before, this is a new creation. We will see it true because it's not life as we acknowledge before. Did he make that by flipping the binary of still life and living figure? No, I think, it was much more complicated, he introduced our mind to a world of continuous movement and filling with possibilities so we can see it always in a different way. He did that by adding another changeable element that encourages the still life and the figure to communicate repetitively.

On the other hand, when talking about Bacon's artwork, from my point of view, Frances Bacon's famous triptychs are interconnected with Triplism, not by the fact

⁴⁹ James M. Edie. Carleton Dallery. The Primacy of Perception, Northwestern University Press, USA.

1964. P 186

of the indicated number three, but by their concept of representing the invisible force.

As we saw the figure and his movement are not the most important, the force is the secret element that transfers his work to another level. It's the same hidden element as Cézanne used before in my opinion by tripling the possibilities again and again. It's the same Triplism!

Deleuze mentioned that Bacon's figures were deformed and not transformed, this is also the same with Cézanne's background. They didn't want to draw their object less realistic and more toward abstraction, in contrast, they wanted it even more true to life than "realism" and that meet with Triplism as it's not tending to take the subject into another understanding but it's representing the subject alive on the painting. The *"uniting separating"*⁵⁰ is Bacon's technical solution, which brings his entire set of techniques into play, and distinguishes them from the techniques of abstract and informal painting.

We can see also how Bacon was able to execute his way of thinking. From choosing his module to this way of painting when he was using probabilities and diagrams, and Instead of copying the image of the person, he tried to "recall" the figure not copying his picture, that's why it was very important for him to get to know the person he would draw.

His use of "givens" [donne'es] or probabilities and coincidence is very close to the concept of Triplism. Because he is attempting to define the most perfect form and find the complete truthful figure. However, he would leave many possible answers that could be understood in many different ways as many people interpret it.

In one of his interviews with David Sylvester, Bacon explaining how he interacts with his painting *"When I was trying in despair the other day to paint that head of a specific person, I used a very big brush and a great deal of paint and I put it on very, very freely, and I simply didn't know in the end what I was doing, and suddenly this thing clicked, and became exactly like this image I was trying to record. But not out of any conscious will, nor was it anything to do with illustrational painting. What has never yet been analyzed is why this particular way of painting is more poignant than illustration. I suppose because it has a life completely of its own. It lives on its own, like the image one's trying to trap; it lives on its own, and therefore transfers the essence of the image more poignantly. So*

⁵⁰ Deleuze, Gilles. Francis Bacon: the logic of sensation, Translated from French by Daniel W. Smith p.64

that the artist may be able to open up or rather, should I say, unlock the valves of feeling and therefore return the onlooker to life more violently".⁵¹

Bacon's triptychs were a true representation of the concept of Triplism, the deformation of the scene and creating the element (the force) which can open the possibilities for unlimited space-time dialogue going beyond "easel" painting and delivering us the moment he recalled.

"I find it so difficult to do one figure that that generally seems enough. And, of course, I've got an obsession with doing the one perfect image".⁵²

From all of that I mentioned, I saw a clear simple structure for Triplism containing on a painting 1. The main subject. 2. The environment of the subject as it is in it. 3. The unseen and unpaintable various elements that define the real subject and background.

However, let me go deeper in explaining the structure of Triplism

4.3 Triplism

In this artistic research, I suggest the existence of Triplism as an artistic method. It's not a new method, but it's a new term. I noticed its presence much more after the beginning of modernism, especially in the works of Paul Cézanne and Francis Bacon. And here I will identify the concept of Triplism.

Humans through history had the ability to advance and surpass their previous knowledge. They achieve that through experiences, hard work, and sciences. However, there were always some extraordinary achievements that happened through unique ideas created by people who thought out of the logic process from an entirely new perspective. There were, of course, many factors that affected those people to create, but we cannot say that their involvement and participation in human history was just because of the progressive development of knowledge and it's not common that people will think in this creative way. Actually, it's very rare to witness

⁵¹ David Sylvester, Interviews with Francis Bacon. 1999. Thames and Hudson Inc, 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10110, p. 17

⁵² David Sylvester, Interviews with Francis Bacon. 1999. Thames and Hudson Inc, 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10110, p. 22

a person who can create a new way of thinking. That is the basic role of Triplism, to think in a different way than before. It's an attempt to destroy the cliché by overcoming the logic.

Triplism in art gives the ability to express the non-expressional such as life, time, energy, senses, soul... etc by referring to them through the components the painter has in his scene. The way to achieve that is entirely left to the artist himself or herself, and it could be different from one artist to another.

Triplism means not to be limited to a precise and identified number of elements or ideas that give a direct clear image for the suggested subject. it is an unusual behaviour or a sequence of unusual behaviours that led to a more true-to-life subject creation.

The concept is not to add a third element and then stop at this limit, the purpose is to enlarge the area of perception for all variables, the third element is always variable and not fixed. The purpose is to create a vibrated movement representing the complexity of life.

What Triplism could present is a continuous vibration between questions and answers to reach a point where the artist is creating multiple answers and more questions for any simple question, it creates a way to escape from what is logical and factual to our mind. It creates a space and time of real life.

multiplicity, repetition, probability, possibility, choice, doubt, coincidence, and hesitance create a space that can contain the real complexity of life, within the unknown and the unimagined space and vacuum, which contributes to creating an atmosphere of the unexpected but also controlling the dialogue between different elements. Triplism suggests this as a way of representing the operation of creation.

Triplism is not an abstraction at all, rather than giving space for possibilities around the scene and each spectator can have, in a different understanding, choosing the most preferred probability or even the most perfect shape.

A very important characteristic of Triplism is the ability to see the artwork from many different views, the artwork must not be direct and obvious

But how an artist can create a painting (portrait, for example) through the concept of Triplism?

Triplism gives the artist the flexibility to deform the figure to refer to the unseen element such as the force of life, the soul, time, feelings, and so on... It gives him the power to manipulate the cliché we saved in our minds and create a new living and unique figure. The artist would be also controlling the background, the landscape, and the perspective in order to deliver a true-to-life object that is not an abstraction or transforming into something else. Deformation in this aspect will give the artist the ability to express the invisible and achieve the "representation".

4.4 Triplism as an artistic attitude

By achieving the basic requirement of Triplism in a painting or an artwork, we could call the artist who made it a "Triplism" which is an "artistic attitude". However, I have to notice that some artists had used some of these features suggested now by Triplism but not all features. For example, Vincent van Gogh was Triplism in many ways but he wasn't the perfect match in other aspects. He did draw the energy of the world surrounding us and was a master in creating the feel of space in two-dimensional space, he even used the very same technique used by Cézanne of distorting the perspective when he painted his room. His background shift turns with what is considered to be the main subject to rise a question of which is more important, the background or the subject or the relation between them. In my opinion, he was partly a Triplism in most of his work, but what could make him not perfectly suited for Triplism is the way he was trying to paint a parallel world and not trying to depict this world, our world without the interference of himself, Therefore, I see his painting as a very personal reflection of Vincent.

4.5 Researcher experience

My research was not just theoretical, I made many paintings and this absolutely helped me to develop my way of reaching and connecting everything in the concept of Triplism. I believe that understanding and experimenting with the process of making art is very important to shape a full idea.

I develop my personal technique to reach a level that -I think- made me able to deliver my ideas in this concept through painting, digital painting, installation, and performance.

I started with painting portraits (Figure 14) that express multiple feelings, different personalities, time, movement, and possible changes in reacting with the figure. I try to represent a person that I know because it's very important to let that person lead my progress toward a final true representation. My goal is to create a live image of a person that reacts differently with the audience. To actually transfer that to the painting surface I start drawing my figure using charcoal, the figure was moving in my drawing in the same way I imagine him. It's creating many possible depictions and my hardest test is to choose the probabilities that represent him.

Colours for me are a true representation of life, a very vast range of colours means a very complex structure in a painting. I don't mean by that to use a lot of different colours, sometimes, I had painted with just charcoal and ink, the most important was using the diverse tones to support the idea of nothing is perfect. I adapt a way of letting the colours float as a dialogue between the deformed shape and the affecting background to unite them and define their true characters.

After reaching a point where I felt good with the figure I add the background to my work. (Figure 15) Again, every line, object, and connection were under the roles of Triplism. The background gives the ability to describe an event or a story, that might limit and frame the space of possibilities. However, with Triplism, I could give an endless dialogue toward a specific event. I drew some paintings around the war in my country Syria and I think that Triplism is the best way to talk about a very complicated subject that surbases the individual capability of understanding the world. I mean as a Syrian I have of course my opinion in this war but it's absolutely not the full image of such a disaster. Triplism multiplies the probabilities of receiving the artwork to exceed the limit of the one individual approach adopted by the artist. For example, I paint in one of my paintings titled Hiba (Figure 16) a story of a girl who died because of a mortar shell dropped over her house to destroy it, she was having dinner with her family at that moment. The reason why I choose this scene is the number of contradictions that existed in it, first of all, I knew her very well. She was adapting a side in this war and killed by people from her side. Her father was always in great danger because he worked in an active fighting area but he was safe at that particular accident as he is at work. Her personality and life which I knew were full of opposites but she was able somehow to live very happily. She was a story to be tilled in a complex piece of art, that's why I thought Triplism could be the way to do that.

I painted another story of a child's burial scene by men, and only men, with some Quranic verses been read. I deform everything in this scene, figures, God's words, and death. (Figure 17)

My diploma work is a collaborative artwork made with Hanan Saif to represent our different concepts. (Figure 18)

Hanan's work is about merging Syrian and Hungarian children's artwork, while mine is about Triplism.

My diploma work titled "Into the Box" is a wooden construction of a room. "Into the Box" can be interpreted as a total artwork, as well as an interpersonal model. In the shelter-like structure, the audience is directed into the inside, to share solidarity with the artists, who created this work. The project in fact is an intimate dialogue between the audience, artist, and the artwork.

All the interior walls, floor, and even the entrance where the audience can enter this installation are covered with reflecting surfaces.

Just one person will be able to enter this world of probabilities, multiplication, possibilities, hesitance, and searching for his true reflection.

The main idea is to invite the audience into a parallel world by deforming their reflection and merging that deformation with children's drawings of portraits from Syria and Hungary. The artists try to make the interpreter seeing himself or herself in a totally new way, very different from the stereotype form that he always sees when looking into a mirror.

The chosen materials are related to shipping, the pallets, wrapping nylon (which form the walls), and the careless wooden frame

It's not just to transfer the audience to a different place, but also to refer to the position of children in our mind, bringing back the feeling of weakness which is giving by entering alone into an unstable surface -because on the pallets audience should be careful of how to stand - Also the viewer has to be in interaction when seeing his or her reflections, because the of the uncomplete pictures and the uneven reflecting surface which simulate the way how children see the world as it comes to them in separate pictures and thoughts, but they cannot put them together. *"the things began to move, color against color; they began to modulate in the instability"*.⁵³

„We (Children from Syria and Hungary) invite you to enter our imaginary space. Please know that each and every work is made by love, passion, and honesty. We

⁵³ Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. Edit by James M. Edie. Carleton Dallery. The Primacy of Perception, Northwestern University Press, USA. 1964. P 159

encourage you to release your mind and to put yourself in our position and see life as we saw.”

The installation was accompanied by a performance made by me and Hanan Saif. The performance starts by wrapping the box while Hanan is inside and closing it completely. I took into consideration the method used in transportation companies where precious and valuable objects are treated with no concern. This is simulating how every person tries to build an exterior image for himself or herself without taking into consideration his personality, his passion, and what he always dreamed to do which was clear for him in his childhood. The performance ends with tearing the wrap and Hanan steps out holding a child to represent her awareness to herself after reacting with the reflected surface and see her true identity to go again in a journey maybe to another box.

Conclusion

In the concept of Triplism we can notice

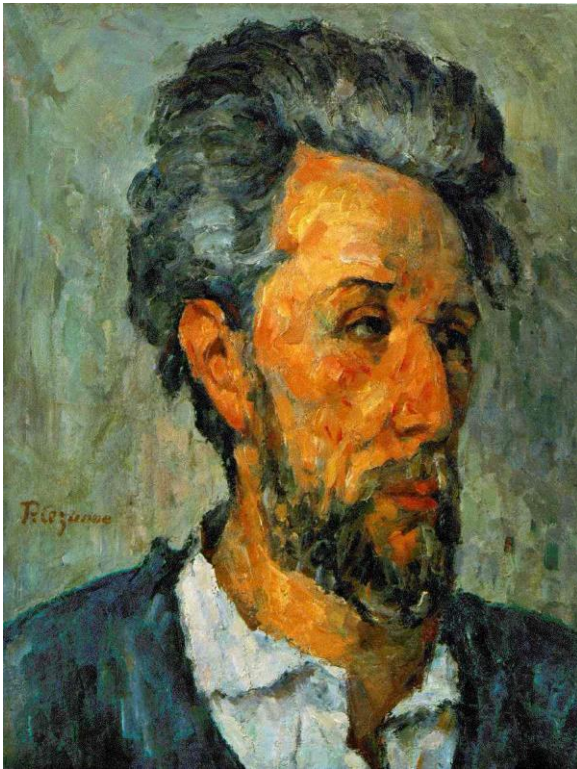
- Triplism is a complex structure that does not reference a static moment. Triplism cannot be considered manifold expressions of a single object or transcendent unity. possibilities represent different states of what is considered "an object"
- The main focus of the artist is indicating the invisible element which interacts with the subject and the background.
- Artist should show that nothing is really statically at rest
- An artist shouldn't connect his painting with his personality, he is the creator and he is not allowed to be in his creation.
- Lines are not continuous nor straight they do not necessarily reach the points predetermined in our minds between two points. They do not exist on the canvas rather in the receiver's awareness. And they can be referred to by drawing several possibilities.
- Doubt is applied to the technique used. Triplism creates a unique surface in the painting by allowing every two opposite to be questionable. For example, it gives permission to light and shadow to exchange their side in the same painting and this could be true for anything else.
- Objects are deformed and they still own their characteristics, they are not transformed or abstracted.
- Deforming the objects and figures in Triplism is not a way to reach a pleasant visual experience. Its main purpose is to represent them in a more truthful form.
- The structure for Triplism containing on a painting 1. The main subject. 2. The environment this subject is in 3. The unseen and unpaintable various elements that define the real subject and background.

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Index of Paintings

Numbers in brackets in the text refer to the corresponding painting in the chronological list below.



1. Cézanne, Paul "Portrait de Victor Chocquet"
1876–77
Oil on canvas
18 1/8 x 14 3/16 in. (46 x 36 cm)
Signed at left in red: P. Cezanne
Vollard archives: photo no. 221, Annotated: *Chocquet 1875*
Private collection, New York



2. Cézanne, Paul "*Madame Cezanne en robe rouge*"
1888–90
Oil on canvas
31 7/8 x 25 5/8 in. (81 x 65 cm)
Vollard A stockbook: no. 3440, *portrait de femme assise sur un fauteuil jaune*,
65 x 81 cm (200 frs)
Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel



3. Cézanne, Paul "Portrait de Gustave Geffroy"
1895–96
Oil on canvas
45 11/16 x 35 in. (116 x 89 cm)
Vollard archives: photo no. 393, Annotated by Cezanne's son: 1894
Musée d'Orsay, Paris



4. Cézanne, Paul "La Montagne Sainte-Victoire vue du Pont de Bayeux à Meyreuil"
1886–88
Oil on canvas
26 5/8 x 36 in. (67.5 x 91.5 cm)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (Gift of the W. Averell Harriman Foundation in memory of Marie N. Harriman)



5. Cézanne, Paul " Cup and Apples "

1877

Oil on canvas

23 13/16 x 29 in. (60.6 x 73.7 cm)

Vollard archives: photo no. 518, Annotated: 1877

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Bequest of Mrs. H.O.

Havemeyer)



6. Cézanne, Paul "Madame Cézanne (Hortense Fiquet, 1850–1922) in a Red Dress" (French, Aix-en-Provence 1839–1906 Aix-en-Provence) 1888–90
Oil on canvas
45 7/8 x 35 1/4 in. (116.5 x 89.5 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Bequest of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ittleson Jr. Purchase Fund, 1962)



7. Cézanne, Paul "Montagnes en Provence"

c.1879

Alternate titles: *Berglandschaft; Landscape; Le barrage de François-Zola; Le barrage François Zola; Maison en Provence, près de l'Estaque, Midi à l'Estaque; Middy, L'Estaque; Midi (L'Estaque); Montagne Sainte-Victoire (Le barrage or Le bassin de François Zola); Montagnes en Provence (près de l'Estaque?); Montagnes, l'Estaque; Mountains in Provence (near l'Estaque?); Paysage; Paysage de l'Estaque; Paysage provençal; The François Zola Dam; Vallée du Rhône*

Oil on paper mounted on canvas

21 1/16 x 28 1/5 in. (53.5 x 72.4 cm)

Vollard archives: photo no. 164, Annotated by Cezanne's son: *circa 1885*

Vollard archives: photo no. 499

National Museum of Wales, Cardiff (Bequest of Gwendoline Davies)



8. Cézanne, Paul "*Les Joueurs de cartes*"
1890–92

Alternate titles: *Die Kartenspieler*; *Joueurs de cartes*; *Joueurs de cartes or La partie de cartes*; *Kartenspieler*; *La partie de cartes*; *Les joueurs de cartes*; *Les Quatre joueurs de cartes*; *Partie de cartes*; *The Card Players*

Oil on canvas

25 3/4 x 32 1/4 in. (65.4 x 81.9 cm)

Vollard archives: photo no. 117, Annotated by Cézanne's son: 1890–91

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Bequest of Stephen C. Clark)



9. Bacon, Francis. "Triptych, Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion"
1944.
Oil and pastel on hardboard, 3 panels
Each panel is 37 x 29 in. (94 x 74 cm).
Tate archives: N06171
The Tate Britain Gallery, London. (Presented by Eric Hall 1953)



10. Bacon, Francis. "*Head I*"

1947-8

Oil and tempera

1003 x 749 mm

Tate archives: The Estate of Francis Bacon/DACS 2008

Photo: © 2008 The Metropolitan Museum of Art



11. Bacon, Francis. "Study for the Nurse in the Film 'Battleship Potemkin'"
1957
Oil on canvas
198 x142 cm.
Stadelsches Kunstinstitut und Stadtische Galerie, Frankfurt.



12. Photo, the Nurse in the Film 'Battleship Potemkin'



13. Bacon, Francis. "*Triptych Inspired by the Oresteia of Aeschylus*"

1981

Oil on canvas

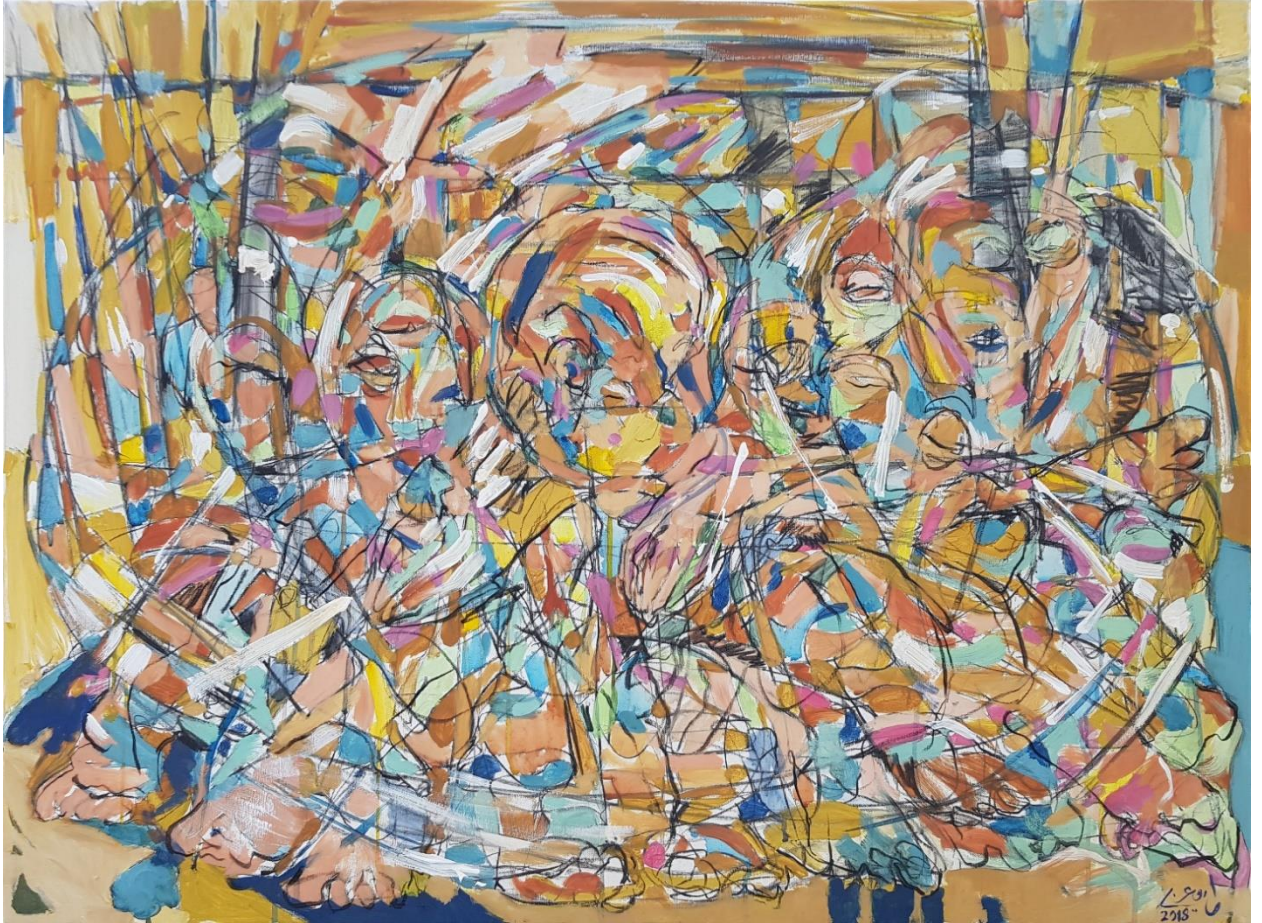
Triptych: Each panel: 78 x 58 in. (198 x 147.5 cm).



14. Arabi, Tarek "Portrait"
2018
Acrylic and Charcoal on canvas
75 x58 cm.
The Hungarian University of Fine Arts.



15. Arabi, Tarek " Safwan's life"
2018
Acrylic and Charcoal on canvas
120 x90 cm.
The Hungarian University of Fine Arts.



16. Arabi, Tarek " Hiba"

2018

Acrylic and Charcoal on canvas

90 x120 cm.

The Hungarian University of Fine Arts.



17. Arabi, Tarek " Pray"
2018
Acrylic and Charcoal on canvas
90 x120 cm.
The Hungarian University of Fine Arts.



18. Saif, Hanan and Arabi, Tarek " Into the Box"
2020
Installation
220 x180 x120 cm.
The Hungarian University of Fine Arts.

Declaration

I hereby certify that the material which is submitted in this dissertation towards the award of the Doctoral degree in Fine Arts is entirely my own work and has not been submitted for any academic assessment other than part-fulfillment of the award named above.

Signature of candidate:



.....

Date

27.05.2021