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Citation for published version (Harvard):

Gosetti-Ferencei, J 2018, Phenomenology and the Imagination of Modernism. in A Mildenberg (ed.), *Understanding Merleau-Ponty, Understanding Modernism*. Understanding Philosophy, Understanding Modernism, Bloomsbury Academic, London.

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Phenomenology and the Imagination of Modernism

Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei

Forthcoming in: *Understanding Merleau-Ponty, Understanding Modernism*, ed. Ariane Mildenberg (London: Bloomsbury Academic Publishers, forthcoming 2017).

Visual art and literature of modernism are charged with a mode of reflection on the processes of perception highly relevant to the project of phenomenology. That phenomenology is well positioned to describe such reflection; in profound ways analogous to modernist discoveries of the latent imaginative possibilities within everyday experience; and indebted to common reflective strategies with the arts and literature, I have argued elsewhere.¹ In this essay I will demonstrate how phenomenology as developed by Merleau-Ponty can contribute to a novel understanding of imagination as reflectively manifest in modernist art.

Merleau-Ponty's involvement with modernism is selective, and his resources include Cézanne and other painters who afford phenomenological examination of the relations between perception and expression. An analysis of these relations here will demonstrate Merleau-Ponty's radical, if often implicit, revision of traditional conceptions of imagination, both borrowing and diverging from his phenomenological predecessor Husserl, and offering a striking alternative to Sartre's account. Here we will rethink imagination in light of Merleau-Ponty's account of embodied and expressive perception. It will be asked in conclusion to what extent Merleau-Ponty's modernist imagination can relate forms of abstraction that predominate in the wake of Cézanne.

Modernism, Phenomenology, and Merleau-Ponty

Given its plurality of distinct styles and genres, its social-political and aesthetic divergences, modernism defies narrow definition.² Even the very term courts contestation.³ If modernism, as often claimed, can be summarized as a set of responses to modernization and modernity,⁴ and thus as “oppositional,”⁵ this too risks defining modernism merely reactively.⁶ For modernism also engages new modes of production, selection, and synthesis; it is an affirmation, as in Pound’s (belated) injunction to “make it new.”⁷ “Modernism” and “modernist” in this essay will refer to art and literature of the late 19th and early 20th centuries as they stand in critical tension with received traditions by virtue of a self-conscious awareness of new possibilities of expression. Three modernist themes emerge in this context that are relevant to a study of Merleau-Ponty’s aesthetics and to his view of imagination: a deliberate rejection of realism in art and literature in favor of new modes of presentation or evocation; a challenge to the model of the rational subject inherited from the Enlightenment; and validation of present experience over eternal ideas.

While Merleau-Ponty’s acquaintance with modernism is considerable, it should be noted that his philosophical engagement is selective. References to Cézanne, van Gogh, Proust, Rimbaud and Kandinsky in *Phenomenology of Perception* evidence a broad interest in modernist works. While two essays are devoted to Cézanne, Merleau-Ponty also mentions Matisse and Klee, Rodin, Cubist painters Gris, Braque and Picasso,

and writers such as Balzac, Kafka, Mallarmé, and Sartre. Merleau-Ponty compares the work of phenomenology to modern art and literature. Phenomenology

is as painstaking as the works of Balzac, Proust, Valéry, or Cézanne—by reason of the same kind of attentiveness and wonder, the same demand for awareness, the same will to seize the meaning of the world ... as that meaning comes into being.⁸

Given this comparison, it is not surprising that a specific strain of modernism will dominate Merleau-Ponty's aesthetics. The partiality of his interest in Cézanne as a modernist painter comes into relief when we consider what forms of modernism Merleau-Ponty largely leaves aside.

Merleau-Ponty does not at length engage those modernists whose aim is a radical rejection of ordinary experience in favor of *l'art pour l'art*. There is in his own embrace of modernism no “anxiety of contamination” from everyday life or obsession with its inauthenticity, as modernism has been characterized.⁹ Nor does he valorize those artists who prioritize the imaginary or the self-contained artwork over and above—and in opposition to—the real. If it is the case that, as Eagleton characterizes it, “the modernist work of art brackets off the referent or real historical world,” the strain of modernism that will occupy the aesthetic phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty is one that directly bears upon our contact with reality.¹⁰ Any bracketing is not of reality, but of the sedimented assumptions about reality we have inherited from a culture that Merleau-Ponty's predecessor Husserl saw as in crisis, as having lost touch with a more original relation to things. Merleau-Ponty himself expressly aimed to show that

one of the great achievements of modern art and philosophy ...has been to rediscover the world in which we live, yet which we are always prone to forget.¹¹

Just as the phenomenological epoche does not leave the world behind, but opens it up to study as phenomena, the art that most inspires Merleau-Ponty's philosophy does not promise escape from reality, but rather new orientations within it.

This is not to be confused with subjectivism, where the real world ceases to exist except as a product or reflection of subjective thought, as R. M. Albérès once described the "roman phénoménologique."¹² Early critics of modernism complained about the contraction of art to the sphere of the inner life, while a century later the modernist artwork is retrospectively charged with "brooding self-reflexively on its own being."¹³ Merleau-Ponty explicitly rejects the association of modern artworks with the merely "subjective" and an interpretive approach that would "shut modern painting up in the recesses of the individual."¹⁴ This rejection fits Merleau-Ponty's broader project to overcome the long-standing division in Western philosophy between an inner, spiritual subject and an outer, material world.

In *Phenomenology of Perception*, experience of reality is not conceived as an operation by the subject upon the object, or as the mere panoply of impressions imposed by the object on the subject. Rather, reality emerges as a nexus of coordinated exchanges through the embodied subject's involvement with the world. The exchange is constitutional for both self and world, so that we can no longer assign subjectivity to the inside and the world to an outside: "The world is wholly inside and I am wholly outside myself" (*PP*, 474). Accordingly, meaning is not the possession of a subject observing from a distance a material world essentially other to the mind, or simply a registration of

the qualities of an already pre-given objectivity. Rather, meaning comes into being as the world proffers its significant organization to a body-subject constituted through sensorimotoric and affective responses to that world. Painting, Merleau-Ponty argues, seems to capture that pre-reflexive experience most directly.

Merleau-Ponty's selectivity in drawing on modernism can now be considered according to the three features outlined at the outset of this section. Modernism, firstly, breaks with realism and realistic representation in art and literature. Of course, de Chirico, Surrealists, and Dadaist pursue a break with realism in order to explore the unreal or the surreal—liberating dream, fantasy, and the subconscious—as superior to ordinary reality. In Expressionism, the image of reality may be distorted—with extreme, anti-naturalistic color, exaggerated lines, and irregularized forms—in order to express and valorize heightened emotion. Yet the break with realism may also involve an exposure of its presumptions—as a representational strategy and not unadulterated mimesis—in favor of new modes of examining the real. The aim is not to undermine reality, but rather to break with established conventions of its presentation; disturbing these conventions opens up new ways of encountering the real in its perceptual vitality.

It is in this latter mode that the Impressionists, van Gogh, Cézanne, and the early Cubists, all rejected classical perspective so rigorously advanced in the Renaissance. Such perspective works only form a certain fixed point of observation and is fixed to a single vanishing point; instead of the teeming competition of things for a freely moving gaze, some are stationed forever in the background and others forever in the foreground. Impressionists break with established forms of depiction in favor of a freer and more natural way of framing their subject-matter. In its emphasis on the changing quality of

natural light, its inclusion of movement, its focus on scenes of everyday life, and its open composition, Impressionism reveals the artificiality of academic painting. Cubism, felicitously multiplying perspectives, denies the pretention of capturing anything completely from a single point of view, and according to Merleau-Ponty, “led us back to a vision of things themselves” (*WP*, 93). Such works exposed realism as only a certain way of framing and presenting the object; realism was, in short, already a style. Still more consequentially, the self-conscious break with realism may suggest that the reality in question is itself not static, finished once and for all, but open to elaboration through the involvement of the creative human subject.

Modernism’s challenge to Enlightenment rationality, secondly, is also multifaceted. Expressionism explores the irrational, the excessive emotion, for its ecstatic qualities, inheriting Nietzsche’s celebration of the Dionysian. Merleau-Ponty engages rather those artists who seem to discover the basis for the emergence of meaning in embodied affective and perceptual life, departing from the autonomously rational subject and its distance from nature. Cézanne approaches nature through what he regards as intensive analysis; this involves no scientific observation at a distance, a view from nowhere, but rather from a thoroughly embodied and embedded visual study of nature in its expressive vitality. Modernist rejection of rationality also engages the absurd, from the Surrealists to Beckett. Merleau-Ponty’s modernism, however, values the defamiliarization of such works without endorsing absurdity. Praising Kafka’s fiction (he cites “The Metamorphosis” and “Investigations of a Dog,” where, respectively, a human being is transformed into an insect and a dog investigates human life), Merleau-Ponty argues that “there is something healthy about this unfamiliar gaze” turned upon the

human species. The aim of such works “should not be to suggest that all is absurd,” but rather to see ourselves anew, to prepare the ground for ‘rare and precious moments’ of human recognition (*WP*, 89, 90). The distortions of modern painting are examined in a similar vein. In his renderings Cézanne is said to break free from the “confines of well-behaved draughtsmanship,” and Merleau-Ponty cites Cézanne as wanting to develop an optics ‘by which I mean a logical vision—that is, one with no element of the absurd’ (*WP*, 52, CD 13). Merleau-Ponty shows that the very difficulty of modern art—that it upends the common habits of experience—is its virtue. “Picasso is harder to understand, indeed to love, than Poussin or Chardin,” he writes. But if his work is “difficult and runs counter to common sense, this is because it is concerned with truth” (*WP*, 49).

Again, Merleau-Ponty describes modern thought as seizing the meaning of the world as it comes into being. The present tense in his formulation brings us to a third theme of modernism. Modernist art celebrates the vitality of the present wherever it forgoes epic historical narrative, the timeless decorousness of academic still-life, or geometrical arrangement, and the effort is made instead to engage the shifting temporality of lived experience. For instance, Impressionism attends to the transitions of light and movement and the atmospheric quality of everyday scenes, and allows the painter’s brushstrokes—the traces of the living hand—to remain visible. Expressionism captures, through distortions of color and primitivizations of line, not the poised likeness, but the vital emotive energy of the feeling artist in a moment of self-transcendence. The immediacy of modernism may be partly evoked by Baudelaire’s definition in ‘The Painter of Modern Life’ (1864), of the modern painter as one who deals with ‘the transitory, the fugitive, the contingent.’¹⁵ Yet this tells only half the story, the other half

of which would not fully emerge in visual art until decades after Baudelaire's essay, with the painter Cézanne.

Early on in the critical history, Cézanne was regarded as “the great and original genius ... who really started this movement.”¹⁶ Compared to a legendary explorer, Cézanne was claimed to have discovered “a new continent of form.”¹⁷ This painter offers a unique body of work for the phenomenologist, for Cézanne not only wanted to capture the ephemeral impression which gave Impressionism its name, but also at the same time, the solidity of nature which provides the stable core of a coherently perceivable and knowable world. With Cézanne modern painting does not so much depart from reality—and never in Merleau-Ponty's philosophy does the real become “irrelevant” as a phenomenological concept¹⁸—but rather breaks through our abstracted, objectifying, sedimented ways of regarding it, in order to discover its primary expression, its live, emerging presence. “A minute of the world is going by which must be painted in its full reality,” is how Merleau-Ponty describes Cézanne's efforts—a statement which almost describes Merleau-Ponty's whole philosophical project.¹⁹ It is modernist art and thought that, in Merleau-Ponty's assessment, abandons what was regarded as stylistic realism and conventional assessments of reality in order to understand how “the real lends itself to unending exploration; it is inexhaustible” (*PP*, 378). Modern painting helps to overcome a positivist view of reality to discover “an inexhaustible reality [*une réalité inépuisable*] full of reserves” (*CD*, 15/25).

Needless to say, this strain of modernism goes beyond any straightforward opposition between the ephemeral and the eternal. Baudelaire, still in the shadow of Romanticism, argued that the modern painter's task was to “distill the eternal from the

transitory.” What Merleau-Ponty finds in Cézanne is not the nature of timeless metaphysical laws, or one solely characterized by flux and change, but nature as ancient and evolving—what he calls “this primordial world” (*CD*, 13). For the modern painter of primordial expression, the world is not merely positively present—it is not measurable with exactitude—but rather swells with potentialities: its other sides, its hidden depths, its future as well as its past; the present is, as such, adumbrated with the horizons of the possible and the not-yet or, as Merleau-Ponty sometimes calls it, with the imaginary.

Yet again it would be misleading to suggest that Merleau-Ponty, by attending as such to modern art and literature, supplants a view of reality with the imaginary as reality’s opposite. Rather, the particular contribution of Merleau-Ponty’s insights into modernism lies precisely in how reality is revealed—and in some ways enlarged—through the modernist imagination. Reality and the imaginary do not absorb or entirely obscure one another, but occupy an ambiguous and “dialogical” relationship.²⁰ We thus turn in the next section to the phenomenology of imagination and Merleau-Ponty’s radical transformation thereof in his interpretations of Cézanne.

Imagination, Cézanne, and Embodied Expression

Merleau-Ponty’s interpretations of painting offer a critical alternative to traditional accounts of imagination. With its conceptual history and various terms traced elsewhere,²¹ we can focus our discussion here on a few core associations of that tradition undermined with Merleau-Ponty’s aesthetics. Persistently throughout the Western

tradition, imagination refers to the capacity to form mental images or representations—be they visual, quasi-visual, or otherwise—on the basis of sense perception, particularly where the object is absent. Thus it is largely, and problematically, seen as a reproductive faculty. In Aristotle this capacity (*phantasia*) is considered a form of memory, compared to impressions made in wax by a seal; these impressions (*phantasmata*) are claimed to be involved in every kind of thinking.²² In Descartes such a capacity (*imaginatio*) is presented as mediating between sensation and cognition, but, as a kind of mental picturing, it is—at least in the *Meditations*—considered not an essential part of the cogito.²³ Imagination may be assigned to the activity of synthesis in the background of cognition, as in one of the several roles for *Einbildungskraft* in Kant.²⁴ Merleau-Ponty's account has been likened to Kant's productive imagination in embodied form, as a bodily rather than merely cognitive synthesis.²⁵ Where imagination is associated with creativity, it may still be regarded as reproductive (combining ideas formed from sensation). But imagination may also be considered productive, as offered by Kant when describing its transcendental role, and potentially its “free play” with understanding in aesthetic experience.²⁶ Ricoeur describes the productive imagination, loosely adapted from Kant's term, to denote the capacity for the generation of new thought, such as in the novel reference of metaphor, fiction, myth, or ideas of utopia.²⁷

Phenomenologists have taken special interest in the problem of imagination. We find it in Husserl,²⁸ in the treatment of presentification (*Vergegenwärtigung*) of something that is not present in perception, making it available to consciousness in an intuition, and freely varying it in fantasy (*Phantasie*). Sartre devotes two studies to imagination and, following Husserl, regards the mental image not as some kind of

immaterial inherence in the mind, but as a mode of consciousness; imagination is intentional, a mode of intending an object of consciousness where the object is absent.²⁹ Sartre strictly segregates imagination and perception, as does Husserl,³⁰ but for the latter an ambiguity arises when discussing the role of imagination in phenomenological reflection. Methodologically at least, imagination operates in parallel to perception and, in the procedures of variation, may have even priority, since it can exceed what is immediately given in intuition.

While in *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty refers uncritically to Sartre's account, and favorably reviews Sartre's early study *L'imagination*, in his essays on painting, the imagination is profoundly reconceived. Merleau-Ponty departs considerably from Sartre in *The Visible and the Invisible*.³¹ Not only does Merleau-Ponty radically embody the imagination. It turns out that the fundamental arguments distinguishing perception and imagination rehearsed in *Phenomenology of Perception*—that the “imaginary has no depth, and does not respond to our efforts to vary our points of view; it does not lend itself to our observation”—do not tell the whole story (*PP*, 377; cf. *VI*, 40). While Husserl largely restricts the priority of imagination to its methodological role,³² he opens the way for Merleau-Ponty's aesthetic treatment that suggests a far broader relevance of imagination in our perceptual grasp of the world. Merleau-Ponty recognizes the imagination as registering a kind of halo around the visible, or what he calls “a presence of the immanent, the latent, or the hidden” (*VI*, 245), and this will be central to his understanding of modern painting. This halo-structure is already inchoate in Husserl, as we shall see in the next section, in his recognition that the perceptual field has a vital horizon composed of potentialities.

What we can characterize as a representational view of imagination is deliberately undermined by Merleau-Ponty's account of artistic expression. Several elements of this view are explicitly challenged, namely that imagination: a) is an *internal* capacity of a mind; b) is *reproductive* in nature, copying, as it were, the appearance of an external object; c) is, though reproducing sensation, *segregated* from perception; d) and *precedes* expression. Emerging with Merleau-Ponty's studies of visual art, especially Cézanne's paintings, is a reconsideration of imagination as: embodied and extended; conversational and productive; interwoven with perception; and enactive, or manifest through expression.

The first of Merleau-Ponty's major essays on painting, "Cézanne's Doubt," has profound implications for the understanding of imagination, even as Merleau-Ponty first of all points out that Cézanne does not, but for some early works, depict scenes or objects that are merely imagined (in the sense of inwardly presented or recollected) or imaginary (in the sense of invented in the mind by something like fancy or fantasy). Rather, Cézanne works from direct and intensive observation of his subjects. Through the influence of the Impressionists, Cézanne came to reject his own early inclusion of subjects that would express fantasies from some inward sense, and came to see painting as "an exact study of appearances" (CD, 11). Also under the influence of the Impressionists, Cézanne rejected the old masters on the grounds that they "replaced reality by imagination and by the abstraction which accompanies it." They were painting pictures, Cézanne thought, whereas he was "attempting a piece of nature" (CD, 12).

Yet it is Cézanne's divergence from the Impressionists that particularly motivates Merleau-Ponty's analysis in this essay, and brings another role for the imagination back

into play—not as fantasy divorced from perception, but as integrated in the perceptual process. For Cézanne it was not enough merely to capture the sense of fleeting perception without regard for the more stable structures of visibility. For the Impressionist, the depiction of atmosphere and breaking up tones into daubs of contrasting color “submerges the object and causes it to lose its proper weight.” Monet’s haystacks or cathedral façades, depicted at different times of day, exude an airy unreality. In contrast, Cézanne rescues the solidity of things by returning certain excluded colors (warm colors and black) and by using graduated tones, a “progression of chromatic nuances across the object, a modulation of colors which stays close to the object’s form and to the light it receives.” Through this coloration process, the object is “no longer covered by reflections and lost in its relationships to the atmosphere and to other objects: it seems subtly illuminated from within, light emanates from it, and the result is an impression of solidity and material substance” (*CD*, 12). For Cézanne wanted to get closer than the Impressionists had to a living perception of nature. As Merleau-Ponty explains of Cézanne:

He did not want to separate the stable things which we see and the shifting way in which they appear. He wanted to depict matter as it takes on form, the birth of order through spontaneous organization (*CD*, 13).

Cézanne discovers the possibility that painting might engage a “lived perspective” (*CD*, 14). This would not be equivalent to a geometric or a photographic representation, but rather the achievement of a deeper, vitalist vision.

But this lived perspective would not be available through received modes of painterly representation. It had to be discovered in and through a new form of expression

that, like phenomenology itself, interrogates appearances. Particular to modern painting is its lingering examination of the visible world. Thus Merleau-Ponty describes:

In the work of Cézanne, Juan Gris, Braque and Picasso, in different ways, we encounter objects—lemons, mandolins, bunches of grapes, pouches of tobacco—that do not pass quickly before our eyes in the guise of objects we “know well” but, on the contrary, hold our gaze, ask questions of it, convey to it...the very secret of their substance, the very mode of their material existence (*WP*, 93).

The expressive vision of modern painting, then, cannot be understood as merely reproducing an impression in the mind drawn from sense experience by transferring it onto a canvas. Merleau-Ponty thoroughly undermines this classical characterization of painting as mimesis, first presented in Plato’s *Republic*: that painting is foremost a matter of copying onto a surface a likeness of an impression that was itself drawn from sense-perception. The painting, further, is not merely an analogue for a mental image, a sign that by virtue of resemblance points to something in the world, and here Merleau-Ponty differs from Sartre’s discussion in his second major study of imagination, *L’Imaginaire*. For Merleau-Ponty the very notion of likeness or resemblance as the principle of art itself comes into question.

In most cases a painting, so it is said, represents objects; a portrait often represents someone whose name we are given by the painter. ...Indeed, does it not resemble those exact photographic reproductions which retain all the essential features of the object and allow us to examine that object in its absence? ...Yet all painting of any worth has come into being in opposition to precisely this conception of its role, one which painters of the last one hundred years at least have quite

consciously resisted.... So painting does not imitate the world but is a world of its own (*WP*, 95-96).

The novelty of Merleau-Ponty's argument comes more fully into view when we contrast it to that of Sartre.

For all the merits of Sartre's account of imagination—particularly his rejection of the notion of the mental image as a thing inherent in the mind—he still relies heavily on the notion of resemblance. The calling to mind an image of an absent friend, and the portrait and its resemblance to an absent person, are central examples in *L'imaginaire*. The problem with this, as Ricoeur argues, is that Sartre's account still “refers the image to an original, whose analogue is a likeness,” and in the end “reinforces the privilege of the *original*.”³³ Painting or imagining is thus always secondary to reality. Merleau-Ponty argues in contrast to all mimetic accounts that painting, in manifesting expressive vision, does not copy the world but achieves a world. “Art is not imitation.... It is the process of expressing” (*CD*, 17). The imagination involved is not merely reproductive but productive, in the sense elaborated by Ricoeur, for whom “imagination is ‘productive’ not only of unreal objects, but of an expanded vision of reality. Imagination at work—in a work—produces itself as a world.”³⁴

So understood, the productive imagination is relevant to Merleau-Ponty's concept of expression and its absorption of what Cézanne called the “*réalization*” of his motif. *Réalization* means to bring to visibility the fullness and unity of the subject-matter in its visual field through a rigorous, enactive study. This requires expressive manifestation of the process of something coming to be seen in all its startling fullness and presence. In Cézanne's painting, overlapping planes of color, multiple outlines, seemingly shifting

planes and perspectival distortions will contribute to expressing this process. Cézanne's particular distortions are not merely deconstructive, then, but productive. What I call the "productive distortion" of modernist expression generates new ways of seeing. As Merleau-Ponty writes: "it is in the name of a truer relation between things that their ordinary ties are broken" (*IL*, 93).

Examples of such productive distortion in Cézanne's works include geometrical, perspectival, or logical incongruities. In a portrait of Mme. Cézanne, a line along the wall, as it runs behind and emerges again from the seated figure, is disjointed. In a still life, a saucer is lopsidedly swollen. The table plane may be impossibly tilted. Apples are given multiple sketchy outlines rather than a single definitive one, and are shaded in blue. But the effect is that

when the overall composition of the picture is seen globally, perspectival distortions are no longer visible in their own right, but rather contribute, as they do in natural vision, to the impression of an emerging order, of an object in the act of appearing, organizing itself before our eyes (*CD*, 14).

The shape of an apple is not rendered as a single outline, but rather with overlapping outlines that follow the object's swell, such that the edge is the "ideal limit toward which the sides of the apple recede in depth." The contour is not given in a single line but must be indicated through the play of colors "if the world is to be given in its true density" (*CD*, 15). Color is assigned not to the individual objects in isolation, but layered systematically such that its modulations resonate across the whole scene to render fullness and depth, nearness and recession, stillness and movement.

It is not enough, then, to paint things realistically or—if realism could be so characterized—to depict objects with an accuracy of scale, color, and outline, compiled or arranged alongside other objects so depicted, from a fixed perspective. For a human-experienced reality is not a collection of entities with stable qualities seen from an immobile point of reference. Rather, an embodied human subject experiences the world as a system of interweaving references and implications corresponding to sensorimotor action and affective relatedness, where shapes and density emerge from shadows, contours from colors, and things are recognized by way of relations or resonances with other things. Cézanne is said to express this, among other ways, by means of a system of modulations of his overlapping color planes that, especially in the late landscapes, give the impression of a trembling, moving, emerging whole. By evoking a systematic whole Cézanne is said to capture not merely the object as realism is meant to do, but “the imperious unity, the presence, the insurpassable plentitude which is for us the definition of the real.” Already here there is an ontological charge to Merleau-Ponty’s analysis. “Expressing what *exists* is an endless task” (CD, 15).

In Merleau-Ponty’s later essay, “Eye and Mind,” the study of expression through painting becomes more explicitly ontological and advances his thesis concerning the thoroughly embodied nature of painting. Here, in the ultimate challenge to Plato’s metaphysics, Merleau-Ponty characterizes painting as the manifestation of “carnal essences, actualized resemblances, mute meanings.”³⁵ Merleau-Ponty implores thinking to “return to the ‘there is’ which precedes it.” But this ontological fundament is nothing other than the world as it can be lived through human embodiment; it is “the site, the soil

of the sensible and humanly modified world such as it is in our lives and for our bodies” (*EM*, 122).

Just as mind is embodied, the world we have regarded as external to consciousness is profoundly interwoven with it. Thus any capacity to express a vision of the world in painting is due to an inherent reciprocity of world and body. Merleau-Ponty argues that the human being is “a being who can only get to the truth of things because its body is, as it were, embedded in those things.” Again: “Humanity is invested in the things of the world and these are invested in it” (*WP*, 63). In “Eye and Mind” Merleau-Ponty invokes this reciprocity between embodied consciousness and world in terms of painting:

“Nature is on the inside,” says Cézanne. Quality, light, color, depth, which are there before us, are there only because they awaken an echo in our bodies and because the body welcomes them. (*EM*, 125)

This interweaving of embodiment and world is the source for painterly expression: “art, especially painting, draws upon this fabric of brute meaning [à cette nappe de sens brut]” (*EM*, 123/13).

By demonstrating the interweaving of embodied consciousness and the material nature it evokes in painting, Merleau-Ponty rescues modernism from the charge of retreat into the subjective, from the idea that modernism’s various departures from realism had to be understood as a fixation on inner experience. Modernist art and literature would, on that view, remain expressive of an interior realm where the stuff of perception was reproduced and rearranged by the distorting power of emotionally-laden fantasy. Merleau-Ponty’s account of reciprocity between world and embodied mind offers another

way to think about the innovations of modernist art. It is not the inner life of van Gogh that is expressed in his paintings; rather,

that very life, to the extent that it emerges from its inherence, ceases to be in possession of itself and becomes a universal means of understanding and of making understood, of seeing and presenting something to see—and is thus not shut up in the depths of the mute individual but diffused through all he sees (*IL*, 90).

Van Gogh's works, like those of Cézanne, can be described in terms of productive distortion, in this case with their vivid, exaggerated color contrasts, perspectival irregularities, rugged brushstrokes. But again the effect in Merleau-Ponty's analysis transcends a merely subjective viewpoint. As Merleau-Ponty writes: "what replaces the object is not the subject—it is the allusive logic of the perceived world" (*IL*, 94).

Articulation of this allusive logic has to take into account the embodied nature of perception and indeed of all cognition. Vision is not "an operation of thought that would set up before the mind a picture or a representation of the world, a world of immanence and ideality" (*EM*, 123). It begins rather with the life of the body in its spatio-motor projects, its affective dimensions, its enactive adjustment to the world. The body, in motion as it perceives, adjusts itself to the forms of the visible world, just as the latter takes on form in conjunction with sensorimotor and affectively engaged projects of the body-subject. In this way vision, Merleau-Ponty says, "is caught or comes to be in things" (*EM*, 125).

This radically differs from the idea put forth by Kant that the mind synthesizes the disparate data of sensation to make a coherent picture of the world. Kant argued that for

experience to be coherent, “imagination has to bring the manifold of intuition into the form of an image.”³⁶ Merleau-Ponty argued in the *Phenomenology of Perception* against the view that the world is first of all given in disparate data of sensation that must be put together to make a meaningful whole. The world is already encountered as a progressive “cohesion” (*PP*, 474). Moreover, synthesis would be undertaken not by a faculty of mind but through embodied interaction. The body-subject, because it can look and glance and move and touch and engage all manner of potential variations in its nexus of responses, encounters a proto-meaningful world:

I would never see anything clearly, and there would be no object for me, if I did not use my eyes in such a way as to make a view of a single object possible. And it is not the mind which takes the place of the body and anticipates what we are going to see. No; it is my glances themselves—synergy, their exploration, and their prospecting—which bring the immanent object into focus (*IL*, 103).

The body does not, as it were, impose form onto what would be disparate data of sensation, but synergizes its own sensori-motor projects with a reality that invites forms of response. Approached by the body and its schema, things are already nascent with meaning, and meanings are latent in things.³⁷ In this account imagination would operate as a synthetic activity that, transcending the “merely” given, engages actualities and potentialities through embodied interaction.

But this means that neither embodied consciousness nor the world it encounters are finished in advance, or encounter each other as totalities.

We must therefore recognize that what is designated by the terms glance, hand, and in general body is a system of systems destined for the inspection of a world

and capable of leaping over distances, piercing the perceptual future, and outlining hollows and reliefs, distances and deviations—a meaning—in the inconceivable flatness of Being (*IL*, 103-4).

Embodied consciousness does not register reality as already finished, but integrates its own activities with the potentiality harbored within the real. Their exchange seems to be expressed in certain forms of modern painting, in which the world exhibits the trembling complexity of becoming, a reality that is not fixed but has moving contours and recesses, pores and deviations—latent possibilities that invite expression.

At this point we must again contrast Merleau-Ponty's account and Sartre's philosophy of imagination. Sartre celebrates the image as the nothingness of unreality, out of reach of the totality of being, and therefore the realm of the imagination is that of the freedom of consciousness. Merleau-Ponty appreciates Sartre's recognition of the intentionality of the image, its liberation from some private mental thing. But of both imagined and painted images Merleau-Ponty insists on their intimacy with the real:

They are the inside of the outside and the outside of the inside [le dedans du dehors et le dehors du dedans], which the duplicity of sense [le sentir] makes possible and without which we would never understand the quasi presence and imminent visibility which make up the whole problem of the imaginary (*EM*, 126/23).

For Sartre the activity of imagining is a matter of negation—of making something merely imaginary out of the positive reality of the objective world by converting it into image. Thus he writes in wholly negating terms of “imagination déréalisante” and “imagination irréaliste” and of the “néantisation” of the content of perception.³⁸ The modern

painting that draws Merleau-Ponty's attention does not exploit the nothingness of the image in contrast to reality, but rather explores productive distortions that bear upon the relation between perception and imagination. Instead of Sartrean nothingness, Merleau-Ponty favors the openness of the lived world, its horizontality or "*Horizonhaftigkeit*" (VI, 196). The Husserlian grounds for this alternative mode of thinking about imagination and perception will be addressed in the next section.

In his last work, *The Visible and the Invisible*, Merleau-Ponty criticizes Sartre's bipartite analysis of perception and imagination as if we confront

the "real" and the "imaginary" of two "orders," two "stages," or two "theatres"—that of space and that of phantasms [des fantômes] (VI, 39/61).

This bifurcation leaves both imagination and perception inadequately understood. Merleau-Ponty goes on to reject the view of the imagination as negative and negating, a view that also leaves perception to be conceived as mere "observation, a close-woven fabric, without any gaps" (VI, 266). This also has implications for the phenomenology of the image. While for Sartre the image is ontologically void, Merleau-Ponty recognizes continuity between imaging and perception, in "a continuous spectrum of experience that is mediated and determined by the imagining body."³⁹

For the imaginary ... is in my body a diagram of the life of the actual, with all its pulp and carnal obverse exposed to view for the first time.... it offers the gaze traces of vision, from the inside, in order that it may espouse them; it gives vision that which clothes it within, the imaginary texture of the real [la texture imaginaire du réel] (EM, 126).

In *Phenomenology of Perception* Merleau-Ponty already recognized that the imaginary weaves dream, daydream, and the images of speculative hypothesizing through otherwise mundane life, but also takes pains to distinguish them from perceptions. Yet the relevance of the imaginary is sustained through its symbolic resonances, as interwoven with the body-schema and later as enfolded in being itself, in the flesh of being.

In the wake of the essays on painting and in the *The Visible and the Invisible*, it seems that being itself is recognized as having dimensions that, without collapsing the imaginary and the real, summon involvement of imagination in perception: “The least particle of the perceived incorporates [the imaginary] from the first into the ‘perceived,’ the most credible phantasm [le fantasme le plus vraisemblable] glances off at the surface of the world” (VI, 40/62). While contemporary phenomenologists following Sartre may continue to segregate imagination from reality,⁴⁰ in Merleau-Ponty the imaginary is caught up in the ambiguity of the real by virtue of its flesh and our embodiment. For the imaginary becomes the “virtual focus [le foyer virtuel]” of the visible, that invisibility interior to and sustaining the visible (VI, 215/265). Ultimately Merleau-Ponty transcends Sartre’s strict dualism between being and nothingness that leaves imagination on the side of nothingness, and instead offers a continuum, a dialogical overlapping, between imagination and reality.⁴¹

Horizontality, the Indeterminacy of the Perceptual Field, and the ‘Halo’ of Things

As Merleau-Ponty marshals an ontology that contests the philosophy of Sartre, there remain distinct echoes of Husserl in his reformulation of imagination. Especially relevant are Husserl's acknowledgment of imagination as a capacity for variation that generates new presentations beyond an intuited given, and his account of retrieving and realizing potentialities from the perceptual field. While Husserl aimed to restrict imagination's role in the phenomenological method, Merleau-Ponty suggests imagination operating more generally, inseparable from the experiences of perception, and expressed through the embodied activities of painting. This approach may risk an aestheticization of phenomenology,⁴² but it offers a means to rethink the imagination and understand its expression in modernism.

Husserl acknowledged the importance of imagination for phenomenology, particularly in his description of imaginative variation and its role in the eidetic reduction.⁴³ The imagination allows the phenomenologist to analyze an intuition by engaging different possible variations on what is given and constructing an intentional, indeed fictional, unity out of these variations; this essence would incorporate possibility as its mode of ideality. Husserl expressly affirms the role of the non-actual, imagined elements of this process, of what he calls "non-experiencing" intuitions, "which do not seize upon factual existence but which are instead 'merely imaginative' ['bloß einbildenden' Anschauungen]." He argues that essences can be seized upon not only in the experience of what is actually given, but "out of mere fantasy [in bloßen Phantasiegegebenheiten]."⁴⁴ In the first volume of *Ideas*, Husserl argues that in seizing upon essences, "presentations, and, more precisely, free fantasies [Vergegenwärtigungen, und, genauer gesprochen, freie Phantasie], acquire a position of primacy over

perceptions.”⁴⁵ Accepting this critical role of imagination in phenomenology, Merleau-Ponty argues in *Phenomenology of Perception*: “we can elucidate [any] singular fact only by varying it somewhat through the agency of imagination, and then fastening our thought upon the invariable element of this mental experience” (*PP*, 73).

A still broader role for imagination may be anticipated by Husserl’s description of the phenomenal field itself. For Husserl shows that we never have a complete perception of a thing; even the mere shape of an object is ever only given to intuition in aspects (*Abschattungen*). We see some sides but not others, the inside or the outside, and never all totally at once; this same is the case with an object’s qualities, its relations among other things. However much we vary the point of view in progressively examining an object, the variations remain potentially infinite. Thus in attempting completeness, we could be drawn into “infinities of experience” even in the perception of the physical property of an object.⁴⁶ But potentialities suffice to co-function in perceptual consciousness. Husserl explains this with the notion of the perceptual field, which includes both internal and external horizons pertaining to any object of perception. These horizons, never directly perceived but peripherally or horizontally apperceived, co-intended, or co-meant, are constituted by possible perceptions, both of the thing (internal horizons) and of its relation to other things surrounding it (external horizons). Surrounding these internal and external horizons is of course the world-horizon that, never totally present and uncovered, remains for the phenomenologist a regulative ideal.⁴⁷ For whatever is actually and positively given in experience, there resonates a host of potentialities or possibilities, which, in their systematic multiplicity, give texture and depth to the given. This horizontality is echoed in Bachelard’s notion of the reverberation

of poetic images. Sufficient grounds have been indicated thus far in this essay for tracing this forward to Merleau-Ponty's understanding of modern painting: "This is what Cézanne meant when he spoke of the particular 'halo' of things which it is the task of painting to capture" (*WP*, 64).

But even in classical phenomenology, imagination may be involved in reflecting on this perceptual field and expressing this perceptual halo. For Husserl describes the potentialities as an "atmosphere of mute, concealed, but co-functioning validities" that, made up of past acquisitions of consciousness as well as its anticipations, constitute a constantly flowing, "vital horizon." While usually peripheral, on the fringe of consciousness, we can reflect on these potentialities, reactivate those that are previous acquisitions, as well as "consciously grasping new apperceptive ideas, transforming them into intuitions."⁴⁸ The activities of retrieval, grasping the new, and intuitive transformation describe activities associated with imagination in both reproductive and productive terms.

Husserl's description of the perceptual field and its stratified horizons of potentiality is echoed in Merleau-Ponty's view that "the visible itself has an invisible inner framework [une membrure d'invisible]" (*VI*, 215/265). Given their recognition of such horizons, halos, and adumbrations, Husserl and Merleau-Ponty can be said to recognize an irreducible indeterminacy in the visible world, a porosity of the given such that is not exhausted by any actualized manifestation. A task of modern painting unmistakably phenomenological in orientation is the evocation of the recessive, the concealed, the implicit potentialities that give depth to the world we experience. Paul

Klee argues as much when he writes that in painting ‘something has been made visible which could not have been perceived without the effort to make it visible.’⁴⁹

Husserl, of course, emphasized the systematicity and harmony of the potentialities and their horizons, and promoted the methodological aim of ever-greater clarification in reflecting on them. The invisible was to become visible; indeterminacy was to be reduced by rigorous eidetic reflection, seizing upon essences. In contrast, Merleau-Ponty accepts this indeterminacy and makes of it an ontological foundation for art.⁵⁰ Moreover, the play of visibility and invisibility in Merleau-Ponty’s studies of modern painting comes to be emblematic for his ontology as such.

Thus despite his own aims toward clarity, Husserl opened up a phenomenology of the vital horizon and its inner adumbrations that Merleau-Ponty traces through painting understood as embodied expression. Cézanne’s modernism has been described here in terms of his rejection of straightforward realism, and we can now say that his attention to immediate, living presence is one with his refusal to rationalize the visual plane and fix the object within a field of determinate, explicit relations. In Cézanne’s landscapes, for instance, we do not encounter a fixed perspective that would suppress the moving situatedness of the painter’s position, but rather the “trembling life” of perception. This is not analytical depiction, but being emerging in and through potentiality, rendering

the feel of the world in which no two objects are seen simultaneously, a world in which regions of space are separated by the time it takes to move our gaze from one to the other, a world in which being is not given but rather emerges over time (*WP*, 54).

What Merleau-Ponty adds to Husserl's understanding of the vital horizon surrounding perceptions—the indeterminacy and potentiality of the real—is the explication of the role of the body, central to his readings of Cézanne. An irreducible indeterminacy arises from the fact that we take up space and move within it in certain, bodily-grounded ways; that our glance is always moving; that we must approach an object from a particular angle; hold, view, touch it from one side or another; that an inside always pertains to an outside and that we cannot reveal them both with equal immediacy; that we never, except as an intellectual abstraction, have a view from nowhere, but rather inhabit a physical position with respect to things and that things for us always have a position among other things. All thought about the world arises in the context of our sensorimotor projects and embodied-affective inter-involvement, and there is always a blind spot in this experience, illustrated finally in the disjointed coincidence of touching and being touched, seeing and being seen which Merleau-Ponty associates with reversibility. Embodied experience is shot through with anticipation and possibility, in the as-yet to be realized glances, actions, movements, adjustments, and transformations one can take in response to things. Indeterminacy is, then, an irreducible element of corporeal life. The recognition that the primordial reality is not ultimately the world as measured from scientific, analytical distance, but the world of “vertiginous proximity” can be understood as a decisive achievement of the modernist—and phenomenological—imagination (*WP*, 66).

Phenomenological Abstraction: Modernism Beyond Cézanne

The “unfinished and ambiguous” character of modern thought, as Merleau-Ponty describes it, finds an appropriate mode of expression in modern art (*WP*, 106). Modern painting, as he suggests of Cézanne, is an infinite effort of “approximation” (*WP*, 111). Such effort liberates our understanding of reality: rather than the too-densely woven, impervious fabric of the merely observed and reproduced, we find the imaginary—via the potentialities and possibilities of vital experience—summoned in the very perception of the real. As argued at the outset of this essay, such a formulation of the modernist imagination favors those forms of digression from realism that parallel the tasks of phenomenological ontology.

Since his analysis of modern art, Merleau-Ponty consistently privileges problems of perception, the question remains to what extent his aesthetics can accommodate other post-Impressionist modes of abstraction. Less than a decade after Cézanne’s death in 1906, artists seem to leave behind the figuration of the perceptual world altogether. Malevich’s *Black Square* (1915), for example, and his later *White on White* (1918), abandon perception for composition, the world for the pictorial plane, and so progress what Clement Greenberg saw as the great achievement of modern painting: orienting its task solely according to its unique medium. Since the flat surface is shared by no other artform, modernist painting is on this view all about the canvas, and so sacrifices “representation of the kind of space that recognizable objects can inhabit.”⁵¹ Piet Mondrian’s cubist experimentations, still featuring trees in the decade after Cézanne, give way by 1920 to minimalist abstractions that eschew all natural shapes and all but primary colors, white and black. Kandinsky’s early Fauvist landscapes yield to ever more perceptually untethered productions of fantasizing imagination, including studies of

circles within circles and other geometrical musings. Such trajectory of abstraction could extend to Yves Klein's post-WWII monochromes and the Color Field paintings of Mark Rothko, Hans Hofmann, and Helen Frankenthaler. It might seem that Merleau-Ponty's modernism would be too conservative to be able to address any of these works, and thus would be unable to account for perhaps the most central development of modern painting.

Yet even here there may be tacit continuities between the modern art Merleau-Ponty most appreciates and ensuing non-figurative forms of abstraction. The play on movement and traffic within the lines of some of Mondrian's later works resonate with the mapping of kinetic experience in almost musical space, and the kinetic energy in works from Kandinsky to Frankenthaler echoes that of embodied life in a world ever in motion. Even the repose of planes of color in Mark Rothko's works has been seen to evoke a phenomenological awareness of landscape.⁵² Indications of horizons, fields, expanses of color, reverberating halos of indeterminate line, can be seen as monograms of elementary spatial and perceptual experience. Such paintings do not represent objects or the space of recognizable objects, but can evoke elementary landscapes nonetheless—fields, oceans, sky, cloudscapes, can after all be seen horizontally and without distinct boundaries—continuous with the space of embodied life. A great diversity of abstract works could be included where Merleau-Ponty refers to “paintings without identifiable things, without the *skin* of things, but giving their *flesh* [sans la *peau* des choses, mais donnant leur *chair*]” (VI 218/268).

Abstract landscape may be the most relevant in the wake of Merleau-Ponty's Cézanne. The landscapes were of special importance, in particular those of the Montagne Sainte-Victoire, which Cézanne painted scores of times and which evolved to suggest an

increasingly intimate intertwining of solidity and luminosity, permanence and immediate vitality of the living presence. Among Merleau-Ponty's references to Klee is the latter's evocation, however oriented through line and geometrical shapes, of living objects and natural spaces. Abstract landscape can be seen as allowing the viewer to suspend the habitual expectations of sedimented vision, allowing a potential glimpse into a pre-human world, of being that precedes any human-inscribed order. Even the most abstract landscape retains, on the one hand, ties to living perception—horizons, planes, movements are after all elemental to lived space—and allows, on the other, an exploration that from the outset can dispense with narrative, objects of human making, and any figurative likeness. Rather than mere formal reduction to the flat surface, abstract painting can be seen as offering a phenomenological reduction to certain elemental fundamentals subtending any perception—evoking, for instance, the phenomenal field and its horizons as such.

Indeed modernist landscape has been defended against the presumption that landscape dies with modernism in its turn away from a “figurative ‘outer’ world” to an inner psychological one.⁵³ Rather, works by such painters as the Fauvists and Klee, Matisse and Kandinsky, and extending to such abstract expressionists as Rothko, can be seen as continuous with an evolution of abstraction in which the landscape, as one scholar argues, “turns phenomenological.”⁵⁴ It has been argued that landscape is not abandoned but transfigured, abstracted, defigured, and refigured in modernism.⁵⁵

So understood, the example of abstract landscape suggests that the reach of Merleau-Ponty's aesthetics goes far beyond his favored painters and even those modernists most obviously amenable to phenomenological readings. Contemporary

reconsiderations of artistic and literary mimesis, dispensing with a reductive notion of representation, recognize that a work of art or literature creates its own ideal dimension “with an idiosyncratic logic specific to the constructed world of that work.”⁵⁶ This view is commensurate with Merleau-Ponty’s suggestion that the painting or poem does not copy a world, but makes a world of its own; its imagination is profoundly productive. Inevitably, it has been questioned whether Merleau-Ponty’s thought can account for radical artistic transformation—for instance, for the extent to which modern painting can more than approximate, but intervene upon, visual reality.⁵⁷ Yet I would argue that such intervention could only ever be explained once imagination is summoned to account for the full experience of reality.

Conclusion

We began this essay by designating three themes central to modernism: the critique of realism in favor of different modes of evocation; the rejection of the primacy of disembodied rationality; and the affirmation of immediate experience. A further theme of modernism, it has been suggested, is “to stress the role of the imagination in safeguarding human freedom and in realising human potential.” Central to modernist projects is the exercise of imagination that joins creativity with “those values that one’s direct experience confirms.”⁵⁸ We have seen that Merleau-Ponty’s appreciation of the coextensivity of embodied perception and expression in painting, taken together with his suggestions about the imaginary texture of the real, have allowed us to articulate an

alternative phenomenology of imagination of vital significance to modernism, both in respect to Cézanne and beyond his works. The imagination so understood is productive, embodied and extended, and operates not as straightforward mimesis, but as evocative expression. Imagination does not offer a negation of the real, but rather, summoned by the vital horizon of potentiality and possibility, registers its vital, inexhaustible texture, and a fundamental invitation to human expression.

¹ Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei, *The Ecstatic Quotidian: Phenomenological Sightings in Modern Art and Literature* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2007).

² Michael Levenson, *Modernism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), 8-9.

³ Perry Anderson, "Modernity and Revolution," *New Left Review*, no. 144 (March-April 1984): 96-113, here 113; Michael H. Whitworth, "Introduction" to *Modernism*, ed. Michael H. Whitworth (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 3-60, here 4; Susan Stanford Friedman, 'Definitional Excursions: the Meanings of Modern/ Modernity/ Modernism,' *Modernism/Modernity*, 8.3 (Sept. 2001): 493-513, here 493; Stan Smith, *The Origins of Modernism* (New York, London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994), 11.

⁴ See Harrison, 6; Whitworth, 3.

⁵ Levenson, 8.

⁶ Friedman, 504.

⁷ See Kurt Heinzelman, "Make It New—the Rise of an Idea," in *Make It New: The Rise of Modernism*, ed. Kurt Heinzelman (University of Texas Press, 2004), 131-132.

⁸ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* trans. Colin Smith (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), xxiv. Hereafter cited in text as *PP*. *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945). For Merleau-Ponty's works, in citations with two page numbers, English translation is given first, then French.

⁹ Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986), 53.

¹⁰ Terry Eagleton, "Capitalism, Modernism, and Postmodernism," *New Left Review* I/152 (July-August 1985): 60-73, here 67.

¹¹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The World of Perception*, trans. Oliver Davis (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2004), 39. Hereafter cited in text as *WP*. *Causeries* (Paris: Seuil, 1948).

¹² R.M. Albérès, *Métaphorposes du roman* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1966). Cited in Maria Elisabeth Kronegger, *Literary Impressionism* (New Haven: College and University Press Services, 1973), 26.

¹³ Eagleton, 67.

¹⁴ Merleau-Ponty, "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence," in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader*, ed. Galen Johnson (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 76-120, here 85, 86. Hereafter cited in text as *IL*. *Signes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960).

¹⁵ Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, ed. and trans. Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon Press, 1964), 13.

¹⁶ Roger Fry, "Introductory Note" to M. Denis, "Cézanne," *Burlington Magazine* (January 1910); reprinted in Harrison and Wood, eds., *Art in Theory: An Anthology of Changing Ideas 1900-1990* (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992), 40-41, here p. 41.

¹⁷ Clive Bell, *Art*, (London 1914); 2nd edition (London 1928), 207, 199.

¹⁸ Cf. Annabelle Dufourcq, "The Fundamental Imaginary Dimension of the Real,' *Research in Phenomenology* 45 (2015): 33-52, here 36.

¹⁹ Merleau-Ponty, "Cezanne's Doubt," in *Sense and Nonsense*, trans. Herbert Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 9-25, here 17. Hereafter in text cited as *CD*. "Le Doube du Cézanne" in *Sens et non-sens* (Paris: Nagel, 1966).

²⁰ Richard Kearney, *Poetics of Imagining* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1998), 137.

²¹ See Eva T. H. Brann, *The World of the Imagination: Sum and Substance* (Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 1991), 18-23. Mary Warnock, *Imagination* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976). Kearney, *Poetics of Imagining*, op cit.

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- ²² Aristotle, *de Memoria*, 449b24-30; *de Anima* 3:3.
- ²³ René Descartes, *Philosophical Writings*, vol II, trans. John Cottingham, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 51.
- ²⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), Ak 120.
- ²⁵ See Lennon, *Imagination and the Imaginary*, 41; Stephen H. Watson, “Beyond the Speaking of Things: Merleau-Ponty’s Reconstruction of Phenomenology and the Models of Kant’s Third Critique,” *Philosophy Today* 52 (Supplement 2008): 124-134, here 124-6; David Morris, “Reversibility and Ereignis: On Being as Kantian Imagination in Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger,” *Philosophy Today* 52(Supplement 2008): 135-143, here 139-140.
- ²⁶ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. J. C. Meredith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 86.
- ²⁷ Paul Ricoeur, ‘The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality,’ in *The Ricoeur Reader*, ed. Mario J. Valdés (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 118-136.
- ²⁸ Edmund Husserl, *Phantasy, Image-Consciousness, and Memory* (1898-1925), trans. John B. Brough (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005).
- ²⁹ Jean-Paul Sartre, *L’Imaginaire: Psychologie phénoménologique de l’imagination* (Paris: Gallimard, 1940); *L’Imagination* (Paris: Presse Universitaire de France 1936, reprinted 1969).
- ³⁰ Husserl, *Phantasy, Image-Consciousness, and Memory*, op cit, 4, 10-12.
- ³¹ Merleau-Ponty, in *The Visible and the Invisible, Followed by Working Notes*, trans. Alphonso Lingus (Evanston, IL: Northeastern University Press, 1968), for example 215, 236, 245, 266-7, and throughout chapter 2. Hereafter cited in text as *VI. Le Visible et l’invisible, suivi de notes de travail*, ed. Claude Lefort (Paris: Gallimard, 1964). On Merleau-Ponty’s relation to Sartre’s view of imagination, see Kathleen Lennon, *Imagination and the Imaginary* (New York and London: Routledge, 2015), 42-45; and James B. Steeves, *Imagining Bodies: Merleau-Ponty’s Philosophy of Imagination* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2004), 78-79; and Kearney, 121-127.
- ³² See Brian Elliott’s critique of Husserl’s restriction in *Phenomenology and Imagination in Husserl and Heidegger* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 59-60.
- ³³ Paul Ricoeur, “Sartre and Ryle on the Imagination,” in *The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre*, ed. Paul Arthur Schlipp (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1981), 167-178, here 172.
- ³⁴ Paul Ricoeur, ‘The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality,’ op cit, 123.
- ³⁵ Merleau-Ponty, “Eye and Mind,” trans. Michael Smith, in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader*, op cit, 121-149, here 130. Hereafter cited in text as *EM. L’Oeil et l’esprit* (Paris: Gallimard, 1961).
- ³⁶ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Ak. 120.
- ³⁷ See Morris, 139.
- ³⁸ Sartre, *L’Imaginaire*, op cit, 25.
- ³⁹ Steeves, 68.
- ⁴⁰ See for example Edward S. Casey, *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study*, second edition (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000).
- ⁴¹ See Kearney, 123-126.
- ⁴² See Watson, 126-127.
- ⁴³ See Gosetti-Ferencei, *The Ecstatic Quotidian*, 86, 106-107, 111-112.
- ⁴⁴ Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. F. Kersten (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1982), III/12.
- ⁴⁵ Husserl, *Ideas*, III/130.
- ⁴⁶ Husserl, *Ideas*, III/10.

⁴⁷ Husserl, *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 162.

⁴⁸ Husserl, *Crisis*, 149.

⁴⁹ Paul Klee, *Notebooks Volume I: The Thinking Eye* (London: Lund Humpheries, 1961), 454.

⁵⁰ Gail Weiss traces this indeterminacy from Husserl to Merleau-Ponty in her article ‘Ambiguity, Absurdity, and Reversibility: Indeterminacy in De Beauvoir, Camus, and Merleau-Ponty,’ *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy* 5.1 (2010), 71-83, esp. 71-74.

⁵¹ Clement Greenberg, “Modernist Painting” in *Modern Art and Modernism: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Francis Frascina and Charles Harrison (London: Harper & Row, 1982), 5-10, here 6.

⁵² See Espen Dahl, “Towards a Phenomenology of Painting: Husserl’s Horizon and Rothko’s Abstraction,” *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 41. 3 (2012), 229-245.

⁵³ Kenneth Clark, *Landscape into Art* (New York and London: Harper and Row, 1949/1976).

⁵⁴ Martin Leer, “‘I already live in the landscape’: Phenomenology and Modernist Landscapes in Phenomenology, Modernism, and Beyond,” in Carole Bourne-Taylor and Ariane Mildenberg, eds. *Phenomenology, Modernism, and Beyond* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), 273-298, here 278.

⁵⁵ Michel Collot, *Paysage et poésie* (Paris: José Corti, 2005). 2005, 79-98.

⁵⁶ Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei, “The Mimetic Dimension: Literature between Neuroscience and Phenomenology,” *British Journal of Aesthetics* 54.4 (October 2014), 425-448, here 429. See also Ricoeur, “The Function of Fiction,” op cit; and Lubomír Doležel, *Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible Worlds* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

⁵⁷ Paul Crowther offers this critique in *The Phenomenology of Modern Art: Exploding Deleuze, Illuminating Style* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 121, 128.

⁵⁸ Charles Harrison, *Modernism* (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1997), 18, 19.