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Aspect-Seeing and Seeing Paintings

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Abstract of the Thesis

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Wittgenstein's discussion of aspect-seeing is an investigation into how we make use of things that we perceive. We see the duck-rabbit figure as a duck or a rabbit because there are aspects that we notice in seeing the duck rabbit figure that we also notice when seeing an actual duck or a rabbit. To see an aspect is to understand its function- its relation to other aspects. The phenomenon of 'seeing as' describes how an object of perception becomes meaningful. As one notices an aspect in a painting, one sees it differently. Aspect-seeing is akin to perceiving something in a different light. Materially, the object of perception, either old or new, is the same, as the new perception is built upon the old one. What has changed is what the object of perception is for us, which is to say, what it means for us in the given context.

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I. Introduction

Suppose that I am making a watercolor painting of apples. I arrange apples on a table and choose an angle from which I want to depict them. Then I start sketching the apples. I would like to sketch them as they are on the table, but, for the sake of composition, I might decide to move one or more of the apples in order to arrange them as I envision them. While I am sketching apples, I make plans for how I will depict them and represent their color. For that reason, though the sketch does not have to be meticulously done, I do not want it to be too hastily drawn. A few spots where I leave the paper uncolored are for deciding later how to apply colors. Incorporating white space is one way to create a sense of transparency, and producing a transparent atmosphere is one of the primary goals that I want to accomplish in my watercolor. (Of course, it is a matter of style, and some painters might prefer a brief sketch and less planning.)

Now I am ready to apply colors. Since too much water will make the painting look muddy as it gets dry, water is as important as color. There is a kind of economy involved in successful watercolor painting. If I can express the structure of an apple with a few brush strokes, then it will be easier for me to make my painting look transparent. If a few essential marks that imply the structure of an apple are vivid and fresh, then, marks that play a supporting role can be made in a

relatively casual manner. It is often the case, as I make marks on the painting, especially those that are carefully positioned, that I feel as though the painting comes alive. In fact, the moment when I start applying colors, I feel as if I am touching the apples' surface. However, I am certainly aware that what I see in the painting are not actual apples; they are marks on the painting.

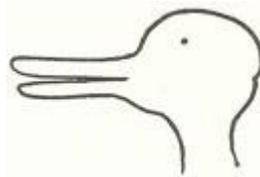
Seeing marks on a paper as an apple is so natural that it seems idle to ask why we do so. I am not having an illusion, and yet, I see something that is not an apple as an apple. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the relation between seeing an apple in a painting and seeing an actual apple. In order to do so, I will discuss the phenomenon of 'seeing as,' and Wittgenstein's remarks on 'seeing as' will be the main focus of my discussion. I do not think that the experience of seeing paintings is the prototypical example of 'seeing as'. However, I will try to show that the language game that we play in the experience of 'seeing as' reveals characteristic features of 'seeing paintings,' and without the experience of 'seeing as,' there cannot be an experience of seeing paintings. In *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology vol. 2*, Wittgenstein writes; "For how have we arrived at the concept of 'seeing this as this'? On what occasions does it get formed, is it felt as a need? (Very frequently, when we are talking about a work of art.)"¹ I agree with Wittgenstein that when we speak about artworks, we often say something like

¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology. Vol.1* ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright. trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press 1980), section#1. p. 2e. Hereafter RPP1.

‘seeing this as this or that’. Why this is the case and what is the basic mechanism involved in this way of speaking is I will explore in this paper. First, I will describe a paradoxical aspect of ‘seeing as’; why it is like seeing and why it is not like seeing. Secondly, I will discuss what are the unique features of the way we speak when we experience the phenomenon of ‘seeing as’- if there is a particular pattern of language game that we play in relation to ‘seeing as’. Lastly, I will discuss the relation between ‘seeing as’ and seeing an object- seeing an apple in a painting and seeing an actual apple- and subsequently, the relation between the apple in a painting and the actual apple that we can eat.

II. Seeing as, Seeing, and Thinking

The following diagram is the duck-rabbit figure that Wittgenstein employs in his discussion of ‘seeing as’. I will use this duck-rabbit figure as the primary example in my investigation of the phenomena of ‘seeing as’. There are several diagrams that Wittgenstein uses, and there are several kinds of ‘seeing as’ such as, seeing a two-dimensional figure three-dimensionally or seeing this figure ↓ as an arrow or as a bird’s foot.² Nevertheless, the questions I will discuss are about the basic mechanism of ‘seeing as,’ and the duck-rabbit figure will sufficiently serve my purpose.



The duck-aspect seems a little stronger than the rabbit-aspect to me. Nevertheless, if I choose to see the figure as a duck, I see it as a duck, and if I choose to see it as a rabbit, I see it as a rabbit. Whether I see the drawing as a rabbit or a duck, the drawing itself is unchanged. Wittgenstein writes, “I see that it has not changed; and yet I see it differently. I call this experience ‘noticing an aspect’.”³ When I see the

² RPP1, section# 156. p. 32e.

³ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 3rd ed. trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1958), p. 193. Hereafter PI.

duck-rabbit figure as a duck, then, it could be said that I am noticing the duck-aspect. Or, since I am already familiar with both aspects, it might be more correct to say that I am paying attention to the duck-aspect. Unlike ordinary seeing, ‘seeing as’ depends on one’s will.⁴ (I do not mean to say that ordinary seeing is pure seeing. I use phrases ‘ordinary seeing’ or ‘mere seeing’ only to contrast it with ‘seeing as’ so that the peculiar feature of ‘seeing as’ can be clarified.) One can choose which aspect one would like to see, whereas, in ordinary circumstances, one does not have to choose to see anything; one just sees what one sees. For example, even though it is possible that I did not notice that my friend had her hair cut, we would not say that I did not see her hair. Wittgenstein says, “ ‘Seeing as ...’ is not part of perception. And for that reason it is like seeing and again not like.”⁵ One reason that ‘seeing as’ is not like seeing is that one can decide which aspect to see in the drawing. However, in this remark, Wittgenstein only seems to point out the ambiguous nature of ‘seeing as’- that it is like seeing and again not like seeing- without telling us why. That ‘seeing as’ is not part of perception seems to be the reason that he provides, but it is not clear why this has to be the reason.

Nevertheless, let’s consider the possibility that ‘seeing as’ is not seeing at all. It might be that the change of aspects is simply a matter of what one intends to see, and the aspect-seeing is not a kind of seeing but something like an after-

⁴ PI, p. 213.

⁵ PI, p. 197.

thought of what one sees, or what one thinks of it: an interpretation. “[Do] I only *interpret* what I see in a different way?”⁶ The question is, as Malcolm Budd puts it, “although we describe the experience in terms of an interpretation, does the intrinsic nature of the experience have an essence that is independent of the nature of the interpretation?”⁷ If this is the case, then it should be possible to see the figure without an interpretation. One could see it without noticing any aspect in it, and later come up with an interpretation. This is to say that there is something that exists without being interpreted in the drawing. There is an aspect that belongs to the drawing itself, which renders itself to a particular interpretation. It would be like the duck-rabbit figure itself has two aspects, a D-aspect and an R-aspect, and seeing the figure as a duck corresponds to its D-aspect and one’s seeing it as a rabbit corresponds to its R-aspect.

However, this explanation seems to be unsatisfactory if we consider the following case. Wittgenstein says:

Would it be conceivable that someone who knows rabbits but not ducks should say: “I can see the drawing ... as a rabbit and also in another way, although I have no word for the second aspect”? Later he gets to know ducks and says: “That’s what I saw the drawing as that time!” - Why is that not possible?⁸

The person who does not know ducks would not know that there is another aspect

⁶ RPP1- section# 1, p.2, also PI p. 212

⁷ Malcolm Budd, *Wittgenstein’s Philosophy of Psychology*, (London & New York: Routledge, 1989), 92.

⁸ RPP1, section# 70, p. 16.

that he did not notice. I think it is possible to make the same point about a person who knows both animals. Suppose that a friend of mine, although she has general knowledge of both animals, at least how they look, is able to see the duck-rabbit figure only as a duck, and I want to help her see the rabbit-aspect. I tell her that this figure can be seen as a rabbit too, and by pointing at the drawing, I explain which part is the rabbit's ears, etc. While my friend tries to see the rabbit-aspect, the drawing itself might exist as something independent of interpretation, and its rabbit-aspect can be considered something that my friend captures as a rabbit. Luckily my friend notices a rabbit-aspect and says, "Now I see the rabbit!" Can we still say that the rabbit-aspect exists independent of an interpretation? The distinction between that which is interpreted and an interpretation, does not hold in 'seeing as'. If we want to say that we "*see it as we interpret it*"⁹ we might have to admit that when our interpretation changes, "[we] see it differently."¹⁰

In the sense that one's will initiates the aspect-seeing, 'seeing as' is different from mere seeing. It is rather like thinking; "The aspect is subject to the will: this by itself relates it to thinking."¹¹ But, when one sees an aspect, for example, the duck-aspect, one seems to have a visual impression of a duck. Aspect-

⁹ PI. p. 193.

¹⁰ PI. p. 193.

¹¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology. Vol.2* ed. G. H. von Wright and Heikki Nyman. trans. C. G. Luckhardt and M. A. E. Aue (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press 1980), section# 544. p.96e. Hereafter RPP2.

seeing, like the visual impression, has duration.¹² The fact that, as Noel Fleming points out, “one is helped to see the rabbit-aspect by turning the figure right side down”¹³ also supports the seeing side of aspect-seeing. Hence, “the flashing of an aspect on us seems half visual experience, half thought”¹⁴ writes Wittgenstein. This ambiguous feature of ‘seeing as’ has, Wittgenstein points out, something in common with exclamation.

I look at an animal and am asked: “What do you see?” I answer: “A rabbit”.- I see a landscape; suddenly a rabbit runs past. I exclaim “A rabbit!”

Both things, both the report and the exclamation, are expressions of perception and of visual experience. But the exclamation is so in a different sense from the report: it is forced from us. – It is related to the experience as a cry is to pain.

But since it is the description of a perception, it can also be called the expression of thought. - If you are looking at [an] object, you need not think of it; but if you are having the visual experience expressed by [an] exclamation [such as, “A rabbit!”], you are also *thinking* of what you see.¹⁵

The phrase ‘it is forced from us’ seems to be the key point here. When one exclaims ‘A rabbit!’ at the sudden appearance of a rabbit, it is as though one’s attention to the rabbit is demanded, in the sense that the rabbit is suddenly given to one’s visual field. This is even more true in the case of pain in one’s body. The pain demands one’s attention. It is given in the sense that one did not choose to have it.

¹² RPP1. section# 882, p. 155-6.

¹³ Noel Fleming, “Recognizing and Seeing As.” *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 66, No. 2 (Apr., 1957), pp. 161-179. p. 168.

¹⁴ PI. p. 197.

¹⁵ PI. p. 197.

However, at the same time, there is a voluntary aspect in this exclamation or cry of pain; for instance, one can choose not to show the pain behavior. It can be said that ‘A rabbit!’ or a cry is one’s spontaneous reaction to the rabbit or the pain. The exclamation ‘A rabbit!’ is a simultaneous reaction to the rabbit’s appearance, and one’s cry of pain is a simultaneous response to the pain, rather than a result of an inference. Similarly, when one sees the rabbit-aspect of the duck-rabbit figure, one feels as if one is seeing what is there in the figure. It is as though the rabbit-aspect is discovered rather than created.

The analogy with exclamation, of course, is only an analogy. It does not cover every feature of ‘seeing as’. The unique feature of seeing as is that the viewer seems to be able to bring about and maintain a visual impression as long as he or she wants it to last. As Wittgenstein notes, “An aspect dawns and fades away. If we are to remain aware of it, we must bring it forth again and again.”¹⁶

The question arises whether the phenomena of ‘seeing as’ is an arbitrary projection of what one thinks. One might suspect that whenever one is conscious of what one is seeing, one is ‘seeing as’- that all conscious perception is ‘seeing as’. Two possible requirements for ‘seeing as’ are: 1) one must be able to *see* A as B and not merely decide to take it as B, and 2) one must be able to see A as

¹⁶ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology. Vol. I: Preliminary studies for Part II of Philosophical Investigations*, ed. G. H. von Wright and Heikki Nyman. trans. C. G. Luckhardt and Maximilian A. E. Aue (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1982), section# 438, p. 58. Hereafter LW.

something other than B. The ‘seeing as’ that Wittgenstein discusses is seeing an aspect, and it is important that aspects are subject to change. One does not merely decide what the aspect is but becomes aware of what it is; as Wittgenstein says, “[in] the change of aspect one becomes *conscious* of the aspect.”¹⁷ Furthermore, Wittgenstein notes, “We become conscious of the aspect *only* when it changes.”¹⁸ Wittgenstein does not discuss the case when one sees A as A. Suppose that I am looking at a book in front of me and thinking about its being a book. It is not inconceivable that I try to tell myself that it’s a book, but, by doing so, I am begging the question; I not only think that it is a book, I *know* that it is a book. Saying ‘I see this book as a book’ seems like a tautology. Wittgenstein writes:

It would have made as little sense for me to say “Now I am seeing it as ...” as to say the sight of a knife and fork “Now I am seeing this as a knife and fork”. This expression would not be understood. – Any more than: “Now it’s a fork” or “It can be a fork too”.

One doesn’t *‘take’* what one knows as the cutlery at a meal for cutlery; any more than one ordinarily tries to move one’s mouth as one eats, or aims at moving it.

If you say “Now it’s a face for me”, we can ask: “What change are you alluding to?”¹⁹

If one says “Now it is a face for me,” it means that it was not a face but something else at some other time. If one can see it as ‘this’ then one can see it as ‘that.’ And

¹⁷ LW, section# 169, p. 25e.

¹⁸ RPP1, section# 1034, p. 179e. (my Italic)

¹⁹ PI. p. 195.

when one notices an aspect, there is “the temptation to say ‘I see it like this’, pointing to the same thing for ‘it’ and ‘this’ [and that],”²⁰ It is as though the aspect noticed is in the object. Is it or is it not in the object? To explore this question, I would like to visit the passages where Wittgenstein introduces ‘noticing an aspect’.

Two uses of “see”.

The one: “What do you see there?”- “I see *this*” (and then a description, a drawing, a copy). The other: “I see a likeness between these two faces”- let the man I tell this to be seeing the faces as clearly as I do myself.

The importance of this is the difference of category between the two ‘objects’ of sight.

The one man might make an accurate drawing of the two faces, and the other notice in the drawing the likeness which the former did not see.

I contemplate a face, and then suddenly notice its likeness to another. I *see* that it has not changed; and yet I see it differently. I call this experience “noticing an aspect”.²¹

Although we use the word ‘see’ in both cases, Wittgenstein remarks that objects that we see in two cases belong to different categories. If they belong to different categories, then it seems fair to say that two ‘see’s belong to different categories as well, and that’s why he notes that the second ‘see’ is ‘noticing an aspect’. In the second case when one sees a likeness, Wittgenstein implies that noticing a likeness is not a matter of being able to produce a precise copy of what one sees. Why he mentions a face and a likeness, I will discuss at the end of this paper. For now, I would like to focus on how those two cases are different- what kind of language game we play in the second case. If the ‘see’ in the first case is an ordinary seeing,

²⁰ PI. p. 207.

²¹ PI. p. 193.

the 'see' in the second case seems to be 'seeing as'. In order to clarify the difference, the distinction between the transitive and the intransitive use of words that Wittgenstein introduces in *The Brown Book* seems relevant. I will begin the next section by discussing this distinction.

III. *This Language Game*

In *The Brown Book*, Wittgenstein distinguishes between two kinds of word usage: the transitive and the intransitive. In order to illustrate the difference between the two uses, Wittgenstein compares two different uses of ‘particular’. When one says “This soup has a [particular] smell: it is the kind we used as children,”²² the word ‘particular’ is used to refer to a characteristic feature in the object of which it is an attribute. However, when one says “This soup has a [particular] smell!,”²³ one’s purpose in using the word ‘particular’ is not to describe a certain property of the object but to point out an extraordinary aspect. Wittgenstein says “On the one hand, we may say, it [-the word ‘particular’] is used preliminary to a specification, description, comparison; on the other hand, as what one might describe as an emphasis. The first usage I shall call the transitive one, the second the intransitive one.”²⁴ Whether it is used transitively or intransitively, the form of a word is the same. Suppose that I say ‘this tree has a particular smell!’ By ‘a particular smell,’ it is as though I am pointing to a particular feature of the tree. In fact, this could be the case. But suppose that what I meant was that this tree

²² Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books: Preliminary Studies for the Philosophical Investigations*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960), p. 158. Hereafter BB.

²³ BB. p. 158.

²⁴ BB. p. 158. Wittgenstein’s distinction of the transitive and the intransitive use is not the same as the conventional distinction. Wittgenstein’s distinction depends on one’s purpose of using words and, unlike the conventional distinction, is not restricted to the use of verbs.

has a very strong smell and I found it to be very impressive. Being asked ‘what is it like?’ I might say ‘it is very strong and very unique.’ As Garry Hagberg writes, “The crux of the distinction, then lies in our ability in the transitive case to provide further explanations and descriptions of the ‘particular feature’; in the intransitive case there exists no such further identifying descriptions. There is, in the intransitive case, nothing *apart* from the phenomenon under consideration to be captured by a further description.”²⁵ What seems to be a description of what is seen may not have a descriptive function. Since the distinction between the transitive and intransitive use of words does not lie on the form of expressions, Wittgenstein seems to suggest, people often do not recognize their difference. It seems people consider the intransitive use of words as transitive, and there is an assumption that words describe something that can be pointed to.

suppose I speak of the way in which A enters the room, I may say ‘I have noticed the way in which A enters the room’, and on being asked ‘What is it?’, I may answer ‘He always sticks his head into the room before coming in’. Here I’m referring to a definite feature, and I could say that B had the same way, or that A no longer had it. Consider on the other hand the statement “I’ve now been observing the way A sits and smokes”. I want to draw him like this. In this case I needn’t be ready to give any description of a particular feature of his attitude, and my statement may just mean “I’ve been observing A as he sat and smoked”. – ‘The way’ can’t in this case be separated from him.²⁶

The phrase ‘the way’ in the second utterance does not refer to a particular way A

²⁵ G. L. Hagberg, *Art as Language: Wittgenstein, Meaning, And Aesthetic Theory* (Ithaca and London: Cornell Univ. Press, 1995), 105.

²⁶ BB, p. 160.

sits and smokes. The statement “I’ve now been observing the way A sits and smokes” is close to ‘I’ve been observing A and while I do so A sat and smoked’. Nevertheless, it is as though one has to be able to answer the question ‘in what way does A sit and smoke?’

We are inclined to answer the question “What do you mean?” by “*This way*,” instead of answering: “I don’t refer to any particular feature; I was just contemplating his position.” My expression made it appear as though I was pointing out something about his way of sitting [...], whereas what makes me use the word “particular” here is that by my attitude towards the phenomenon I am laying an emphasis on it: I am concentrating on it, or retracing it in my mind, or drawing it, etc.”²⁷

What Wittgenstein means by “I am laying an emphasis on it: I am concentrating on it,” I will discuss in a moment. For now, I would like to emphasize a feature of the intransitive use of words – that words do not point out something about the object that one perceives. Expressions such as, ‘a particular smell’ or ‘this way’, when they are used intransitively, do not refer to a property of the object perceived. This feature of the intransitive use of words can also be found in one’s utterances when one is seeing a drawing, namely what one says the drawing expresses; “Let this face produce an impression on you.”²⁸



In viewing this figure, one might say “Surely I don’t see mere dashes. I see a face

²⁷ BB. p. 160.

²⁸ BB. p. 162.

with a *particular* expression.”²⁹ One might even try to provide further description such as, “It looks like a complacent business man, stupidly supercilious, who though fat, imagines he’s a lady killer.”³⁰ But this will not be a description of the “*particular* expression”³¹ that one *sees* in the face. It would, at best, as Wittgenstein says, “only be meant as an approximate description of the expression.”³² The reason that one uses the word ‘particular’ is to say that the drawing has made a strong impression on him. However, as Wittgenstein notes,

And yet one feels that what one calls the expression of the face is something that can be detached from the drawing of the face. It is as though we could say: “This face has a particular expression: namely this” (pointing to something). But if I had to point to anything in this place it would have to be the drawing I am looking at. (We are, as it were, under an optical delusion which by some sort of reflection makes us think that there are two objects where there is only one. The delusion is assisted by our using the verb “to have”, saying “The face *has* a particular expression.” Things look different when, instead of this, we say: “This *is* a peculiar face”. What a thing *is*, we mean, is bound up with it; what it has can be separated from it.)³³

When one uses words intransitively, for example, ‘this painting expresses a particular feeling,’ one’s utterance does not tell us anything about properties of the painting. If the utterance describes anything, it is one’s relation to the painting, in the sense of what one takes it to be. Let’s consider seeing the duck-rabbit figure in

²⁹ BB. p. 162.

³⁰ BB. p. 162

³¹ BB. p. 162.

³² BB. p. 162

³³ BB. p. 162.

relation to the intransitive use of words; “Let [this figure] produce an impression on you.” When I say that I see the figure as a rabbit, should I say that the figure *is* the rabbit rather than the figure has the rabbit-aspect? It seems this is what Wittgenstein argues. I can describe which part of the figure is the rabbit’s ears, eyes, or forehead, etc.. It is as though the image of a rabbit that I see emerges from the figure. The rabbit is in the figure. However, Wittgenstein seems to ask if the rabbit-aspect belongs to the figure itself, if I am describing something about the duck-rabbit figure and whether the rabbit-aspect is something that the duck-rabbit figure possesses. In so far as I see it as a rabbit, the rabbit-aspect and the figure cannot be separated, and the same holds when I see the figure as a duck.

Wittgenstein seems to offer not only a linguistic but also a phenomenological account of the language game in relation to the intransitive use of words. But before I present his description of this game, I would like to briefly discuss the view that Wittgenstein rejects: the idea of an inner picture. “After all my visual impression isn’t the drawing; it is *this* –which I can’t shew to anyone.”³⁴ If one has the idea of an inner picture, one might explain the situation like this: what I see physically is one, but my mind’s eye can see two. There is one source of the visual impression (the drawing), but my mind’s eye came up with two ways of seeing it, or can construct two ways of perceiving the figure. Seeing the picture with my eyes is primary or direct experience, whereas my seeing the picture with

³⁴ PI. p. 196.

my mind's eye is a secondary process which is private.

The idea of an inner picture causes confusion because we use the same words to describe the inner and the outer, but the words that we use in each case cannot have the same function. Wittgenstein says, "The concept of the 'inner picture' is misleading, for this concept uses the 'outer picture' as a model; and yet the uses of the words for these concepts are no more like one another than the uses of 'numeral' and 'number'. (And if one chose to call numbers 'ideal numerals', one might produce a similar confusion.)"³⁵ It is not difficult to see how the same expression does not function in the same way in describing the inner and the outer. For example, how do we point to a picture? We can point to the picture that exists in front of us physically. When one sees the duck-rabbit figure as a rabbit, one can point to the rabbit in the figure. But how does one point at 'a rabbit' in one's mind? Maybe one points to the inner image by "the inward glance at the sensation?"³⁶ How does one perceive the inner picture? How does one see the inner picture in one's mind? When we apply words such as perceive or see to an image in one's mind, they do not function as they do when they are applied to an outer image. As the intransitive use of words is not a special kind of transitive use but a different kind of use entirely, the use of words in describing an inner picture is different in

³⁵ PI. p. 196.

³⁶ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, 2nd California Paperback. ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright. trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 2007), section# 426, p. 75e. Hereafter Z.

kind from the use of same words in relation to a physical painting.

As I discussed earlier, when one sees the rabbit-aspect or the duck-aspect, one seems to have a visual impression of a rabbit or a duck, and it is as though the impression is given. Even if it was one's intention to see the rabbit-aspect, one feels as if the image of a rabbit "is forced from [oneself]." In fact, Wittgenstein seems to argue that the impression of a rabbit or a duck is not something that is caused by seeing the figure but is something produced by the viewer himself or herself. He writes, "The concept of an aspect is akin to the concept of an image. In other words: the concept 'I am now seeing it as' Is akin to 'I am now having *this* image'."³⁷ When I see the duck-rabbit figure as a rabbit, I have an image of a rabbit. And since it is possible that there are people who cannot see the rabbit-aspect, it is an ability to see the image of a rabbit. If this is the case, having an image, rather than impression, might be a better way to put it. If we consider the fact that aspect-seeing is subject to the will, aspects are more like images than impressions. As Wittgenstein notes, "We do not banish visual impressions, as we do images."³⁸ (I do not think that whenever one has an image in one's mind or imagine something, one does so intentionally or voluntarily. However, having an image is subject to one's will in the sense that it makes sense to order someone to imagine something.) When one sees the rabbit-aspect of the duck-rabbit figure, one

³⁷ PI, p. 213.

³⁸ Z., section# 633, p. 110e.

has an image of a rabbit, and “it is as if an *image* came into contact, and for a time remained in contact, with the visual impression.”³⁹

If images are subject to will, if it makes sense to say that one creates an image for oneself, then images are not about the external world. Whether one sees the duck-rabbit figure as a duck or as a rabbit, one perceives the same configuration of lines. An image of a duck or a rabbit is not a property of the duck-rabbit figure. Wittgenstein contrasts images with sensations. Wittgenstein says “images tell us nothing, either right or wrong, about the external world.”⁴⁰ whereas “Sensations give us knowledge about the external world.”⁴¹ If we mean, by impression, something given from the experience of the external world, we can see the contrast between impressions and images. Images are not caused by exposure to the external world, whereas impressions are; “For if I voluntarily change my visual impression, then *things* obey my will.”⁴² Having an image may not teach us about the external world. Nevertheless, one thing to remember is that an image is no less vivid than an impression. Wittgenstein warns us; “Auditory images, visual images –how are they distinguished from sensations? Not by “vivacity”.”⁴³

By saying that images do not tell us about the external world, Wittgenstein does not mean that images are not connected with our experience of the external

³⁹ PI. p. 207.

⁴⁰ RPP2. section# 63, p. 13.

⁴¹ RPP2. section# 63, p. 13.

⁴² RPP2. section# 91, p. 17.

⁴³ RPP2. section# 63, p. 13.

world; “Images are not hallucinations, nor yet fancies.”⁴⁴ His point seems to be that one’s seeing the rabbit-aspect is not caused by seeing the duck-rabbit figure. No doubt, seeing the rabbit-aspect and seeing the duck-rabbit figure are connected, but seeing the rabbit-aspect is not an effect of seeing the duck-rabbit figure. It is one’s way of dealing with the figure or one’s take on it. Seeing the rabbit-aspect requires the ability to do so. I will discuss the relation between having an image of a rabbit or a duck and seeing the duck-rabbit figure, but before I do so, I will attempt to answer the question of what ‘having an image of a rabbit’ could be if not sensation.

Thomas Tam, in his essay ‘On Wonder, Appreciation, and The Tremendous,’ suggests that ‘aesthetic feeling’ in Wittgenstein’s discussion of aesthetics, is not a special kind of feeling but something qualitatively different.⁴⁵ Tam remarks “[What Wittgenstein calls ‘aesthetic feeling’] is not something that one feels within oneself, but something like a reaction that is *directed* at an object.”⁴⁶ His point is not that there is sensory experience in seeing artworks, but rather “that feeling and reaction are inseparable from one another in reality,”⁴⁷ and “that the feeling ... is directed at an object, so that the reaction constitutes a form of

⁴⁴ RPP2. section# 63, p. 13.

⁴⁵ Thomas Tam, “On Wonder, Appreciation, and the Tremendous in Wittgenstein’s Aesthetics,” *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 42, No. 3, (July 2002), p. 314.

⁴⁶ Tam. P. 314.

⁴⁷ Tam. P. 314.

criticism of that object.”⁴⁸ Analogously, if we apply Tam’s description of this use of ‘feeling’ to the phenomenon of ‘seeing as,’ it can be said that ‘seeing’ in ‘seeing as’ is not a special kind of seeing but a different kind of activity. When Wittgenstein says “The expression of a change of aspect is the expression of a *new* perception and at the same time of the perception’s being unchanged.”⁴⁹ By ‘new perception’ Wittgenstein might mean something that is not a kind of perception but is of a different in kind. And yet, this new perception is still related to perception. New perception seems to presuppose old perception.

When we obey the order, “Observe the colour...”, what we do is to open our eyes to colour. “Observe the colour...” doesn’t mean “See the colour you see”. The order, “Look at so and so”, is of the kind, “Turn your head in this direction”; what you will see when you do so does not enter this order. By attending, looking, you produce the impression; you can’t look at the impression.⁵⁰

When I am looking at the duck-rabbit figure with my friend, if I hear my friend saying ‘it’s a duck’, I cannot but notice that my friend is not seeing the rabbit-aspect. So I say to my friend ‘look at it carefully, you might see something else’. What I mean by ‘look at it carefully’ of course is not ‘turn your head in this direction’ or ‘get close to the figure.’ I am telling my friend that there is something else to be noticed. “By attending, looking, you produce the impression” does not mean that you are hallucinating. It means that, while you see an object, you notice

⁴⁸ Tam. P. 314.

⁴⁹ PI. 196.

⁵⁰ BB. p. 176.

something in the object. What you notice does not belong to the object that you see but is something that you come up with by yourself, and it comes with its own impression. This description, “By attending, looking, you produce the impression” or the way Wittgenstein discusses the intransitive use of words such as, “by my attitude towards the phenomenon I am laying an emphasis on it: I am concentrating on it, or retracing it in my mind, or drawing it, etc.”⁵¹ might seem a little unnatural if not odd. What Wittgenstein means by these remarks, however, might be something quite common in everyday life (the everyday life of non-aspect-blind people). He might be describing a common activity and hence a common capacity. I think he is alluding to a capacity to understand what ‘this’ means when an ostensive definition is given.

Suppose that I am teaching a color word ‘red’ to a two-year-old boy. I point to a red book and say ‘this is red.’ I point to a red pillow and say ‘this is red too’. I point to a red stripe on an envelope and say again ‘this is red too’. I might try to point out as many red colors as possible. Finally, I feel that I have provided the child with enough examples. I ask the child, ‘what is this?’ pointing to a red apple. If the child answers ‘red’, then I assume that my job is done. But what if the child says ‘an apple’ or ‘a fruit’ (assuming the child knows what an apple or a fruit is). I would say ‘yes it is an apple, but what is this? This color?’, hoping the child answers ‘red’. If he doesn’t, should I try to teach the child what ‘color’ means? I

⁵¹ BB. P. 160.

might have to. But, how can I teach the concept of color if he didn't get it through my numerous ostensive definitions of 'red'? How can I point to a concept?

When I say 'this color,' pointing to the red apple, it is as though both my pointing with my finger and the phrase 'this color' are "singling out the particular color that I [see]."⁵² However, this is not the case. In fact, as Wittgenstein says, "the pointing with my finger was ineffectual."⁵³ It does not give the child a direction for an action or an utterance that he needs to make. It makes the child look at the apple, but it does not "indicate a direction."⁵⁴ If it does, it has to be possible to point in the opposite direction: "contrasting a direction with other directions."⁵⁵ The phrase 'this color' is used as if 'this color' is a sample of a color: for example, a particular red which is a sample of the red. It is as though 'this color' is used transitively, which is to say the phrase 'this color' can be applied to other cases. But, what would be the function of the phrase 'this color'? My pointing and the phrase 'this color' do not provide the child with any information about the color the child sees. This is why Wittgenstein says, "It seems that you wish to specify the colour you see, but not by saying anything about it, nor by comparing it with a sample,- but by pointing to it; using it at the same time as the sample and that which the sample is compared with."⁵⁶ My pointing accompanied

⁵² BB. p. 175.

⁵³ BB. p. 175.

⁵⁴ BB. p. 175

⁵⁵ BB. p. 175.

⁵⁶ BB. p. 174.

by ‘this color’ does not tell the child what to notice. I cannot point to an aspect. My pointing only “directs [the child’s] attention.”⁵⁷

When an ostensive definition is given, it is eventually up to the child to notice what is to be noticed. When the child notices the right aspect, the child understands what ‘this’ means, and ‘this’ is communicable. Likewise, it is up to the viewer to notice the duck aspect or the rabbit-aspect in seeing the duck-rabbit figure. When the viewer notices, say the rabbit-aspect, even if it is up to the viewer’s ability to notice it, the image of a rabbit is not a private one. It is possible that a person cannot see the rabbit-aspect, even if he can copy the duck-rabbit figure perfectly. The rabbit-aspect may not be available to this person. However, this does not mean that the rabbit-aspect is hidden. It means that an ability is required to see it. Among the people who can see the rabbit-aspect, it is there in the figure. They see the same image of a rabbit.

The ability to see the rabbit-aspect is an ability to make use of the figure. ‘I see the rabbit-aspect’ is not about the figure but about my way of dealing with this figure. My utterance is not about the figure but it is rather about my opinion about what the figure can be about; “I don’t really speak *about* what I see, but *to* it.”⁵⁸ If my utterance is about anything, it is about my judgment on what the figure can be about. By saying that I see the rabbit-aspect, I am stating what I am focusing on

⁵⁷ BB. p. 175.

⁵⁸ BB. p. 175.

now; “That is what I treat it as,” and “this is my attitude to the figure.”⁵⁹ When one uses words intransitively, for example, “this painting has a particular expression!,” one’s utterance is an expression of one’s reaction to it, one’s attitude toward it. It is “of a state of attention.” We can relate this remark to Wittgenstein’s comment on ‘seeing’ and ‘interpreting’ in relation to ‘seeing as’.

I want to ask: what does seeing the figure now this way now that consist in? – Do I actually see something different each time; or do I only *interpret* what I see in a different way? I am inclined to say the former. *But why?* Well, interpreting is an action. ... Seeing isn’t an action but a state. (A grammatical remark.)⁶⁰

As he notes, it is a grammatical remark. I do not think that he means to say that ‘seeing as’ is not an action, whereas interpreting is an action. As he says, “The expression of the aspect is the expression of a way of taking (hence, of a way-of-dealing-with, of a technique); but used as description of a state.”⁶¹ When Wittgenstein notes that seeing is a state, he is focusing on the seeing-like aspect of ‘seeing as’. He does so by alluding to “Kinship and Contrast”⁶² between concepts. The concept of ‘seeing as a state’ is tied to concepts of duration and dawning/fading of an aspect. The seeing-like aspect of ‘seeing as’, however, needs to be occasioned by interpreting. In the first section of this paper, I suggested that if

⁵⁹ PI. p. 205.

⁶⁰ RPP1. section# 1, p.2e.

⁶¹ RPP1. section# 1025, p 178e.

⁶² Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on Colour*, 2nd paperback printing. ed. G. E. M. Anscombe. trans. Linda L. Mcalister and Margarete Schattle (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 2007), Part 3- section# 46. p. 23e.

we interpret the duck-rabbit figure differently, we might have to say that we see it differently. Suppose that I intend to see the rabbit-aspect. In order to do so, I have to focus my attention on the figure's rabbit-aspect. And while I am putting emphasis on the rabbit-aspect, I see the rabbit in the figure. And I might say that "It is as if I *saw* an interpretation."⁶³

I mean: Seeing a figure with this interpretation is a kind of thinking of the interpretation. For should I say that it is possible to see this as a [rabbit] without at the same time thinking about the special relationship which the word "[rabbit]" signifies? But I see an interpretation and an interpretation is a thought."⁶⁴

To put his point crudely, in the phenomenon of 'seeing as,' one sees what one thinks: " 'The echo of a thought in sight'- one would like to say."⁶⁵ I will consider this 'seeing a thought' later, in Kendall L. Walton's discussion of 'fictionality', something's being fictionally true. But here I just want to note that this idea that one sees what one thinks does not necessarily suggest that one's experience of 'seeing as' can be reduced to verbal reaction. It is not the case that one's sensational feeling and thinking can be reduced to words or sentences. It is quite far from it. However, I think the duck-rabbit figure might be a little too simple to illustrate this point. I will connect what has been discussed in the phenomenon of 'seeing as' to the experience of seeing paintings.

⁶³ LW. section# 179, p 26e.

⁶⁴ RPP2. section# 360, p. 67e.

⁶⁵ PI. p. 212.

I would like to consider seeing paintings as belonging to the family or the language game of ‘seeing as’. However, I do not mean to treat paintings as versions of the duck-rabbit figure. Rather, my primary interest is the relation between seeing paintings and seeing the duck-aspect or seeing the rabbit-aspect. I do not want to exclude the possibility that a painting (not just a figurative property of a painting but an entire painting) can have two distinct aspects, as the duck-rabbit figure does. I admit that it is strange to say that one sees an image in a painting. I do not mean to suggest that a viewer of a painting consciously makes a distinction between the image and the painting. My purpose is to clarify a conceptual difference between ‘image’ and ‘picture’ or ‘painting’.

Wittgenstein says “Images are not pictures.”⁶⁶ I can think of an image without seeing a painting. If I am [asked] :What image do you see?” [I] can answer with a picture.”⁶⁷ In this case the image that I have in my mind and the picture with which I answer the question may or may not be the same. However, if a painting is shown to me, the image that I have while I see the painting may not be different. When I see a painting of apples, would the image that I see in the painting be different from the painting? When one sees the duck-aspect or the rabbit-aspect, one sees each aspect *in* the duck-rabbit figure. Wittgenstein notes that seeing an aspect is related to “forming an image.”⁶⁸ By ‘an image,’ I do not think

⁶⁶ RPP2. section# 360, p. 67e.

⁶⁷ RPP2. section# 360. p. 67e.

⁶⁸ LW. section# 733, p 93e.

that Wittgenstein means an imaginary figure whose only place is in one's mind. 'Forming an image,' in relation to aspect-seeing, might be a way of utilizing the figure. It is an action that cannot be independent from perceiving the figure. One does not form the image of a duck or the image of rabbit from without. One sees the image of a duck or the image of a rabbit that one formed for oneself in the figure. Forming those images are the ways in which one makes use of the duck-rabbit figure. Both images, the image of a duck and the image of a rabbit, correspond to the duck-rabbit figure.

“...How would the following account do: ‘What I can see something as, is what it can be a picture of’?”

What this means is: the aspects in a changed of aspects are those ones which the figure might sometimes have permanently in a picture”⁶⁹

If I can see the duck-aspect, then the duck-rabbit figure can be a picture of a duck. If I can see the rabbit-aspect, then the figure can be a picture of a rabbit. Seeing an image of a duck or a rabbit is not separable from seeing the duck-rabbit figure. Seeing an image in a painting and seeing a painting are not two separable activities. It is rather that the former is based the latter. Seeing an image in a painting is an attempt to notice an aspect in the painting, which is akin to reading a poem aloud. The reader's reading of a poem is a process through which the reader understands the poem, and through which the poem becomes meaningful to the reader. Likewise, the viewer's forming an image is seeing an image in the painting, and

⁶⁹ PI. p. 201.

this is a process through which the painting becomes a conveyer of an image rather than a mere thing (even if what it conveys cannot be separated from it.) The painting is *treated* as something that expresses something. Wittgenstein says, “An image is not a picture, but a picture can correspond to it”⁷⁰ I do not think that Wittgenstein is positing two different entities. In the experience of seeing a painting, “I see something into a picture.”⁷¹ If we want to say that an image that one sees in a painting and the painting are two distinct entities, we might also say that a word and its meaning are two different entities; the relation between a painting and an image that one sees in the painting is analogous to a word and its meaning. As the way we use a word in our utterances determines the meaning of a word, the way we make use of a painting(e.g. the duck-rabbit figure) determines which aspect the painting represents. An image can function as the meaning of a painting.

When I say that a viewer sees an image in a painting, what I mean by ‘see’ is like the ‘see’ in the sentence ‘I see an apple in the painting’. Let’s assume that I am seeing a painting of apples like the one that I made at the beginning of this paper. I say, ‘this apple is behind this one.’ ‘this one is bigger than this one,’ ‘this one is pushed further away in the background’ and etc. This is what I see in the painting. But by ‘see’ I do not mean that I have an ability to see or normal vision. What a viewer ‘sees’ in the painting is akin to the aspect that the viewer notices in

⁷⁰ PI. section# 301, p. 101.

⁷¹ RPP1. section# 1028, p 179e.

seeing the duck-rabbit figure. Even when one says that one feels a breeze of fresh air in the painting or that there is a feeling of evanescence in the painting, the ‘feeling’ that one says one feels is not sensation per se. “You think of the expression ‘felt’ in connexion with looking at a picture. (‘One feels the softness of that material.’) (*Knowing* in dreams. ‘And I *knew* that ... was in the room.’)”⁷² Sometimes we feel something soft or warm when we see a painting, “But [we] do *not* want to say here that we feel this reaction in our muscles and joints and that this is the ‘sensing’. – No, what we have here is a modified concept of *sensation*.”⁷³ No one would deny that there is a sensation in one’s body, but when the viewer says ‘I see birds and clouds there in the top of the painting’ or ‘I see something luminescent in the greens in Corot’s landscape,’ these utterances are not a report of the viewer’s sensation. These utterances show the way the viewer reacts to the painting. If there is another viewer, these utterances could be an expression of how the two viewers interact with one another. One’s reaction to the painting calls for the other’s attention, provoking a new reaction. As Wittgenstein says, “we react with these words in particular situations. And in turn we react to these words with particular actions.”⁷⁴

If one asks ‘how do you know that you are not the only one who sees apples in the painting?’, though I think it is an odd question, I would have to ask if

⁷² PI, p. 208.

⁷³ PI, p.209.

⁷⁴ RPP1. section# 1, p. 2e. (Z. section# 208, p.37-8e.)

others see apples in the painting.

What is the criterion for the sameness of two images? –What is the criterion for the redness of an image? For me, when it is someone else’s image: what he says and does. For myself, when it is my image: nothing. And what goes for “red” also goes for “same”.⁷⁵

Wittgenstein’s point is not that there is no criterion for the sameness of an image or that there is a private one. His point is that if there are criteria for the sameness of images, they have to be the same criteria for the use of other concepts. Suppose my fellow viewer says that he sees pears when everybody else sees apples. I might say ‘Really?’ if I am aspect-blind, but, if I am not, I would think that he is joking. If he is not joking, then he might have to justify his use of words. But he cannot give a subjective justification for using these words, “For if I need a justification for using a word, it must also be one for someone else.”⁷⁶ Wittgenstein would say that under normal circumstances, the image that I see in the painting is available to other viewers; “*Forget, forget that you have these experiences yourself!*”⁷⁷

The fact that utterances such as, ‘I see something evaporating in the painting’ or ‘I feel something fragile in it’ are not expressions of sensations but reactions to the painting does not mean that the experience of the viewer can be reduced to those utterances. My experience of a painting cannot be reduced to words. Consider different painters. In Cézanne’s painting of apples, there is much

⁷⁵ PI. section# 377, p 117.

⁷⁶ PI. p. 117.

⁷⁷ Z. section# 179, p 32e. (RPP2. section# 531, p 94e.)

more than a depiction of apples. One might feel that each apple has its own look and try to describe it. But how much of the viewer's feeling can be captured in words? In one of Monet's cathedral paintings, one might feel that the cathedral is disappearing into the air. But, from the utterance 'the cathedral is disappearing into the air,' how much can be delivered to the viewer, who has not seen the painting? I do not underestimate the descriptive power of words, but it is often the case that it is hard to articulate one's appreciation of artwork.

Especially when the work is strong, I see something in it, and it is as though the something in it does not let me walk away. It is as though something is demanded from the work and I have to come up with a right response. "This [work] says something" and it is as though I had to find *what* it says."⁷⁸ Even if Wittgenstein says that the work and what it says are not separable, there is some truth in this remark. The work seems to be capable of expressing emotions and thoughts. Even if there is no aspect that can be pin-pointed in simple terms like 'duck' or 'rabbit,' I *feel* obligated to articulate something; "It is as if the aspect were an inarticulate reverberation of a thought."⁷⁹

Even if we understand that the aspect that we notice in seeing a painting is not a property of the painting, the painting is not a mere surface onto which we project whatever we want. When a viewer engages in appreciating an artwork,

⁷⁸ BB. p. 166.

⁷⁹ RPP1. section# 1036, p 180e.

there seems to be a dynamic relation between the viewer and the artwork. The feeling that ‘the work says something to me’ or ‘something is emerging from the work’ can be as real as the material presence of the work. This phenomenon raises the question why we use words transitively- why we say, for example, ‘the work *has* this feeling or this expression. In front of a masterpiece portrait, say, Rembrandt, we feel (feel, see, or think) as though the emotional character is contained in the figure depicted. The portrait is not a mere painting. We see a person in it, and the painting conveys the sense of presence that an actual person would have.

The way we speak about the emotional character that we see in works of art is not the only case in which the intransitive use of words is confused with the transitive one. The way we speak about emotional states that we see in someone’s face also shows the mixture, if not confusion of two uses. A person’s face informs us about the emotional state of the person. We can be wrong about what our friend’s face tells us. Some people are particularly not good at reading others’ faces. Nevertheless, we see our friend’s face in distress and ask ‘what happened?,’ and this is how we communicate with people. Wittgenstein says, “It might be an incorrect use of language to say “I see fear in this face”. We would be taught: a fearful face can be ‘*seen*’; but the fear in a face, or the similarity or dissimilarity

between two faces, is 'noticed'."⁸⁰

We use the same word 'see' whether we mean perception *per se* or not. I say 'I see the bridge over the river,' and I also say 'I see sadness in my friend's face.' But, where is the sadness that I see in my friend's face? In her face? If I am the one whose face exhibits sadness, would I know where the sadness is?

But here the thought is: "After all, you feel sadness – so you must *feel* it *somewhere*; otherwise it would be a chimera". But if you want to think that, remember the difference between seeing and pain. I feel pain in the wound – but colour in the eye? If we try to use a schema here, instead of merely noting what is really common, we see everything falsely simplified.⁸¹

Wittgenstein seems to point out that we sometimes confuse emotion with sensation. Uncharacteristically, Wittgenstein even explains why we confuse emotion with sensation. Unlike sensation, emotions cannot be located in one's body. Wittgenstein points out two common features of emotions. One is that they have "genuine duration, a course. (Rage flares up, abates, vanishes, and likewise joy, depression, fear.)"⁸² The other is that "they have characteristic expression-behavior. (Facial expression.)"⁸³ This latter feature of emotions seems to be most responsible for the confusion between emotion and sensation. The fact that emotions are expressed by characteristic behavior or facial expressions links emotions with "characteristic

⁸⁰ RPP2. section# 552, p 97e.

⁸¹ Z. section# 510, p 90e.

⁸² RPP2, section# 148. p. 28e.

⁸³ RPP2. section# 148. p. 28e.

sensations”⁸⁴; “Thus sorrow often goes with weeping, and characteristic sensation with the latter. (The voice heavy with tears.)”⁸⁵ A certain emotion is often related to a certain facial expression, and it is as though the emotion is an object of perception.

The *content* of an emotion – here one imagines something like a *picture*, or something of which a picture be made. (The darkness of depression which descends on a man, the flames of anger.)

The human face too might be called such a picture and its alterations might represent the *course* of a passion.⁸⁶

We see an emotional state in someone’s face. It is natural to say that we see happiness in someone’s face. Nevertheless, this emotional state is not something we see literally. The happiness that we say we see is akin to an aspect noticed, which is to say that seeing an emotional state in a face is akin to seeing an aspect in a drawing. When we see the rabbit-aspect, the duck-rabbit figure is a rabbit in the sense that the rabbit-aspect is not detachable from the figure. When we say we see happiness in one’s face, the happiness is not detachable from the person; happiness is not something *in* the person’s face. What is different in the latter case is that, it is not one’s face that is happy. The person is happy. The utterance ‘I see happiness in his face’ expresses the utterer’s attitude toward the person; it is the utterer’s reaction to the person. Considering this, Wittgenstein makes an interesting

⁸⁴ RPP2. section# 148. p. 28e.

⁸⁵ RPP2. section# 148. p. 28e.

⁸⁶ RPP2. section# 148. p. 28e.

comment. “My attitude towards him is an attitude towards a soul. I am not of the *opinion* that he has a soul.”⁸⁷ I am not in a position to judge whether my interlocutor has a soul or not. I cannot define what it means to have a soul, but “I am not of the opinion that he has a soul” can be understood as meaning ‘I do not doubt that the person is capable of undergoing emotional changes and also capable of expressing them externally.’ Wittgenstein says, “The human being is the best picture of the human soul.”⁸⁸ One’s face plays an especially important role, as he notes: “The face is the soul of the body.”⁸⁹

In the background of the way we speak about emotional states of people, there is an assumption that people have a soul. Is there a shared assumption behind the way we speak about paintings? I think there is. I suggest that a rule or an order, ‘see it as an image,’ is what grounds our utterances when we see paintings. Both ‘it’ and ‘an image’ refer to the painting. As we see the human soul in the face, we see an image in the surface of the painting. A prescription to see a painting as an image is what makes utterances such as, ‘the rabbit looks benign’ or ‘the duck looks mischievous,’ meaningful in communication between the viewers of the painting. It can be asked if this assumption has any effect, since we are already familiar with seeing paintings. I think this demand to see a painting as an image is more

⁸⁷ PI. p. 178.

⁸⁸ PI. p. 178, and also Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, ed. G. H. von Wright in collaboration with Heikki Nyman, trans. Peter Winch (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980), 49e. Hereafter CV.

⁸⁹ CV. P. 23e.

acceptable if we consider a painting that we don't comprehend. When asked 'what do you see?', we may not know what to answer. However, when we are dealing with paintings that we are familiar with, the demand to see a painting as an image still can be useful. An effective way can be found in Kendall L. Walton's discussion of art- specifically, his view that a prescription of what is meant to be imagined constitutes what is fictionally true. In the next section, I will discuss Walton's account of artworks in relation to Wittgenstein's 'seeing as' and the view I just discussed.

IV. Seeing *this* Image

Kendall Walton holds that an adults' experience of artwork should be understood as a continuous and advanced stage of children's play with dolls, teddy bears, or toy trucks.⁹⁰ An appreciator of an artwork is playing a game, as a child is playing a game with her teddy bear. This is to say that the function of the artwork for the appreciator is analogous to the function of the teddy bear in the child's game. Both the appreciator and the child are engaged in a game that Walton calls a game of make-believe. The key feature of the game is on "the use of (external) props in imaginative activity,"⁹¹ and both toys and artworks are props in the game.

I think Wittgenstein would be sympathetic to Walton's view that artworks are props in a game of make-believe. If Wittgenstein holds that language is a tool with which we do certain activities,⁹² why can't artworks be props in a certain activity that we perform? As we saw earlier, Wittgenstein notes that 'seeing as' does not inform us about the external world, but he also notes that "images are not hallucinations, nor yet fancies."⁹³ When one sees A as B, one knows that A is not B.

⁹⁰ Kendall L. Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe: On the Foundations of the Representational Arts* (Cambridge Massachusetts, London England: Harvard Univ. Press, 1990), 11.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁹² I think this is the view that Wittgenstein holds through out *Philosophical Investigations*, but he states this specifically in section 569; "Language is an instrument. Its concepts are instruments." PI. p. 151.

⁹³ RPP2, section# 63, p. 13.

In seeing A as B, one is not having an illusion. Nevertheless, as Wittgenstein says, “we regard the photograph, the picture on our wall, as the object itself (the man, landscape, and so on) depicted there.”⁹⁴ Wittgenstein further remarks that there is “a seeing-as which only takes place while I am actually concerning myself with the picture as the object depicted.”⁹⁵ The way we speak about artworks shows that we treat them as if they are capable of undergoing changes and expressing something: we treat artworks as if they are people. This feature of ‘seeing as’ can be found in children’s play.

In some respects I stand towards [a picture-face] as I do towards a human face. I can study its expression, can react to it as to the expression of the human face. A child can talk to picture-men or picture-animals, can treat them as it treats dolls.⁹⁶

Suppose that we are observing two children playing with a teddy bear. One child treats it like a baby and talks to it as if she is its mother. If the other child says ‘it is only a doll not a baby,’ it is an awkward thing to witness. It is very unlikely to happen, but if it does, we might say that the each child is playing a different game, or that they are not playing a game at all. Suppose that I am with my friend and we are both looking at a portrait. I say ‘this person is looking at me.’ If my friend replies ‘are you saying that these marks on the painting are looking at you?’, under

⁹⁴ PI. p. 205.

⁹⁵ PI. p. 205.

⁹⁶ PI. p. 194. Walton also quotes this passage in the beginning of his discussion of *Depictive Representation*. (p. 293).

normal circumstances, it is very likely that my friend is joking. But, let's suppose that that is not the case. My friend does not see the painting as I do. We are not engaged in the same activity, and, therefore, we are not playing the same language game. Rules that are valid in the language game that I play are absent in the language game that my friend plays. We are not following the same rule. However, suppose that my friend says, instead of 'are you saying that these marks on the painting are looking at you?', 'I feel the same way too. His eyes are piercing,' then we are on the same page. We are playing the same language game, and we share a rule that is valid in this game. My point is that there can be a rule in a language game that is at work even if it is not explicitly mentioned. There can be a rule that is not often acknowledged because it has to do with the stage set-up for the language game, because it is a shared assumption between the participants in the game. Whether the rule is consciously applied or not, the rule plays a role. My point will become clear if we look at Walton's example of a stump-bear game.

"Let's say that stumps are bears," Eric proposes. Gregory agrees, and a game of make-believe is begun, one in which stumps- all stumps, not just one or a specified few- "count as" bears. Coming upon a stump in a forest, Eric and Gregory imagine a bear.⁹⁷

Stumps are props in this game. That stumps are bears is a rule that must be accepted in order to play this game. If Gregory does not accept this rule, then he is not part of the game. Of course, this rule can be modified as they play.

⁹⁷ Walton, p. 37.

Encountering a very thin stump, Eric and Gregory might decide to make an exception and call it a giraffe.⁹⁸ However, in so far as they play this game, the rule that stumps are bears must be accepted. As Walton says, “to refuse to imagine that there is a bear where there is a stump in full view would be to flout the rule, to refuse to play the game.”⁹⁹

In this game, if Eric and Gregory find two stumps in front of them and one of the stumps is taller than the other, then it is fictionally true that Eric and Gregory encounter two bears and one of the bears is taller than the other. What about a stump that is unnoticed? Suppose that there is a stump behind Eric and Gregory, a stump that they did not notice. According to Walton, it is also fictionally true that there is a bear behind Eric and Gregory.¹⁰⁰ Against the background of the rule that stumps are bears, the existence of a stump that Eric and Gregory perceive makes a statement ‘Eric and Gregory encounter a bear’ fictionally true in this game. Likewise, against the background of the same rule, a stump that is behind Eric and Gregory- the stump that they do not perceive- makes the statement that ‘there is a bear behind Eric and Gregory’ fictionally true. The point is that it is fictionally true that there is a bear because there is actually a stump. Walton notes that “Props generate fictional truths independently of what anyone does or does not

⁹⁸ Walton, p. 50.

⁹⁹ Walton, p. 40.

¹⁰⁰ Walton, p. 37.

imagine.”¹⁰¹ Of course, if there is no game in which a stump is a prop, then there is no fictional truth about the stump; it is not even a prop.

I said something is ‘fictionally true,’ but, in fact, it might be redundant to say that something is fictionally true. In Walton’s discussion of fictionality, that something is fictional means that it is true in a fictional world: “In general, whatever is the case ‘in a fictional world’ ... is fictional.”¹⁰² It is accurate to say that it is true that a bear is behind Eric and Gregory in the game of make-believe they are playing. But, as Walton notes, “we often feel free to omit phrases such as ‘It is true in a fictional world that’ entirely, just as we omit ‘It is true that’ thereby asserting what is true rather than describing it as true.”¹⁰³ We tend to say that there is a bear behind Eric and Gregory without the phrase ‘it is fictional’ or ‘it is true that ... in a fictional world.’

What is fictional “[is] to be imagined- whether or not in fact [it is] imagined.”¹⁰⁴

An important thing to note is that “imagining is not exclusively propositional.”¹⁰⁵ Encountering a stump, Eric does not necessarily think the proposition that ‘there is a bear in front of me.’ He could imagine seeing a bear rather than that he sees a bear. This is to say that something that is fictional does not have to be a proposition.

¹⁰¹ Walton, p. 38.

¹⁰² Walton, p. 35.

¹⁰³ Walton, p. 41.

¹⁰⁴ Walton, p. 39.

¹⁰⁵ Walton, p. 42-3.

If there can be non-propositional imaginings, then there can be a non-propositional truth in a fictional world. Not only imagining that ‘there is a bear’ or ‘I see a bear’ but also imagining a bear or seeing a bear is important in Walton’s discussion of games of make-believe.¹⁰⁶ We will encounter non-propositional imagining when we discuss his analysis of seeing paintings.

Eric and Gregory’s game of make-believe is a particular game played by particular individuals, and the rule that stumps are bears is a rule that is effective in this particular game. However, the rule in Eric and Gregory’s game shows a way in which the ground rule that I suggest is a prescription to see paintings as images. I think this ground rule is embedded in the way we speak about paintings; it is part of a custom that we do not need to be conscious of. However, our utterances regarding paintings are meaningful when they are uttered against the background of this rule. Suppose that there is a painting that I see as a painting of eight apples. On the assumption that what you see when you see a painting is an image, it is true that there are eight apples in the painting. It is true even if there is no viewer in front of the painting. If this is not so, if there should be a viewer perceiving the painting in order for there to be eight apples in the painting, then it has to be the case that when we are not looking at the duck-rabbit figure, the figure has no aspect. We say that the duck-rabbit drawing has two aspects whether we see it either way or we do not perceive it at all. We speak in this way because we treat the figure as an image,

¹⁰⁶ Walton, p. 13.

not as a material configuration. Since we see the duck-rabbit figure as a duck and as a rabbit, I might have to say that we treat the figure as two images. But my point is about the role of the figure in the way we speak about it. It is true that the woman in Picasso's *Woman in Blue*, whether we are perceiving the painting or not, is smiling in a very strange way. The way we speak about paintings does not make sense if we do not conceive it at the level of aspect-seeing. What we say we *see* when we see paintings exist as aspects; they are not material objects but images. To see aspects is an ability to make use of what is perceived, but it is true that when we see paintings, we do not feel that we are performing some sort of task. This might be the case when we see paintings that are familiar to us. But when we see paintings that we are not familiar with, we might know what to see it as, what image to see in it. We might even think that the painting is not finished yet. In the assumption that 'we see a painting as an image,' by 'image' I do not necessarily mean a conventional shape of a recognizable object. By saying 'that we see a painting as an image,' what I intend to do is to characterize the kind of activity that we perform and the kind of object that is under discussion: aspect-seeing and aspects. An image of a flower can be seen in a painting even if there is no naturalistic depiction of a flower in the painting. One can see a flower in the painting because there are resemblances between the flower one sees in the painting and an actual flower in a garden, on the level of aspect-seeing. But before

I develop this idea, it would be useful to discuss Walton's characterization of the activity of seeing paintings; why seeing a painting is a visual game of make-believe and why paintings are props employed in this visual game of make-believe.

According to Walton, props in a game of make-believe can have two additional functions. One is prompter of imagination and the other is object of imagination. The stumps in Eric and Gregory's game can perform all three roles. A stump can prompt them to imagine something, and it can prompt them to imagine the stump being a bear. But the unnoticed stump behind Eric and Gregory, although it is a prop, does not prompt any imagination; nor is it an object of imagination.¹⁰⁷ Whether a prop in the game of make-believe is also an object of imagination points up an important difference between reading novels and seeing paintings. As one reads a novel, say, John McPhee's *The Pine Barrens*,¹⁰⁸ one can imagine seeing the pine barrens described in the novel. However, one does not imagine reading the novel to be seeing the pine barrens: "*his viewing of the words of the text to be a viewing of the pine barrens*"¹⁰⁹ The words in the text are not objects of imagination. In seeing a painting, however- for example, Meindert Hobbema's *The Water Mill with the Great Red Roof*- one not only imagines that one is seeing what the painting depicts but also takes one's seeing the painting to be seeing what it depicts. The painting functions as an object of imagination. Furthermore, what is

¹⁰⁷ Walton, p. 38.

¹⁰⁸ Walton, p. 294. Walton quotes a passage from this novel.

¹⁰⁹ Walton, p. 294.

unique in the experience of seeing paintings is that imagining is interwoven with seeing, that it is inseparable from perceiving the painting. Walton writes, “One does not first perceive Hobbema’s picture and then, in a separate act, imagine that perception to be of a mill. The phenomenal character of the perception is inseparable from the imagining which it takes as a object.”¹¹⁰ The fact that seeing the painting and imagining seeing what the painting depicts are “integrated into a single complex phenomenological whole”¹¹¹ makes seeing a painting a visual game of make-believe in the way reading a novel is not, even though one uses one’s eyes to read the novel.

Walton’s analysis of the experience of seeing paintings seems to be analogous to the crossover between seeing and thinking in the experience of ‘seeing as.’ In the phenomenon of ‘seeing as,’ it is as though one is seeing a thought. Regarding ‘seeing as,’ Walton notes that the discussion of ‘seeing as’ points out the right direction of inquiry- that, rather than investigating the relation between an object depicted in a painting and the object in the actual world, we should focus on the relation between seeing an object in a painting and seeing an object in the external world.¹¹² But he also remarks that ‘seeing as’ does not take us far enough, and it is not his main concern to investigate where it takes us.¹¹³ I think, however,

¹¹⁰ Walton, p. 295.

¹¹¹ Walton, p. 295.

¹¹² Walton, p. 302.

¹¹³ Walton, p. 300.

Walton's account of a visual game of make-believe is close to the experience of 'seeing as.' The experience of 'seeing as' is an attempt to utilize the figure one perceives. One makes use of the figure by forming an image- forming an image in the sense that one comes up with what image the figure can be. Thinking about what image the figure can be is not something that happens in one's mind. While one is thinking about it, one is also seeing the figure. To think about what image this figure can be is to think about what image one is seeing now, and this is why seeing and thinking cannot be independent of each other. Walton describes the experience of seeing paintings as that in which "experiences contain thoughts."¹¹⁴ In the experience of 'seeing as,' it is as though seeing contains thoughts.

One sees an apple in a painting because, according to Walton, one imagines one's seeing the painting to be seeing an apple. My account is not the same as Walton's but, is compatible with his view. My account of seeing paintings is that one sees an apple in a painting because one takes the surface of the painting to be an image and one finds an aspect that one sees in seeing an actual apple. I do not mean that one sees the painting as an image and then subsequently finds an apple-like aspect. That one sees the painting as an image is a ground rule that underlies one's experience of the painting, and the reason why one sees not just any image but an image of an apple is because one notices an aspect that one also notices in seeing an actual apple. One does not see a pear in the painting because

¹¹⁴ Walton, p. 295.

one does not notice an aspect that one notices in seeing a pear. Between an apple in a painting and an actual apple, there is a resemblance on the level of aspects. I think this is why Wittgenstein mentions the likeness of two faces when he introduces the phrase “noticing an aspect.”¹¹⁵ There might not be a symmetrical relation between the aspects that we notice in the apple-picture and the aspects that we notice in the actual apple; nevertheless, there can be a convergence of aspects that we notice in both cases.¹¹⁶ Aspects such as the smell of an apple or the hardness of it may not be noticed in the apple painting. But aspects such as redness, gradation from yellow to red, or roundness are the aspects that can be noticed in both cases. One might be able to teach those concepts ostensively by using the apple-painting. An instance of an ostensive definition shows how a concept is functional in a certain way in a certain activity. To understand the concept is to understand it is located in various forms of life. As Wittgenstein writes, “The concept of pain is characterized by its particular function in our life”¹¹⁷; “Pain has *this* position in our life; has *these* connexions; (That is to say: we only call ‘pain’ what has *this* position, *these* connexions).”¹¹⁸ I suspect that this applies to concepts other than ‘pain.’ In order to understand what ‘this’ means in an ostensive definition, the child has to understand the context of the conversation, and

¹¹⁵ PI. p. 193.

¹¹⁶ Regarding the issue of resemblance, Walton seems to be quite dismissive, as he writes “‘Seeing-as’ may not lead us astray in ways that ‘resemblance’ does, but it does not take us very far either.” p. 300.

¹¹⁷ Z. section# 532, p. 94e.

¹¹⁸ Z. section# 533, p. 94e.

understanding a context is an essential part of noticing an aspect; “what I perceive in the dawning of an aspect is not a property of the object, but an internal relation between it and other objects.”¹¹⁹ Between an aspect X that one notices in a painting and the aspect X in the external world, there might be “sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail.”¹²⁰ In a portrait of a person one knows, one may not find that the eyes in the painting do not resemble the actual model’s, and yet, it is probable that one sees an overall impression of the model in the painting and sees the portrait as a portrait of that particular individual. The portrait may not have to be realistic for a viewer to see that person in it, since we can see, for example, Francis Bacon’s portrait or self-portrait as *of* a particular person. In an abstract painting, a viewer can notice an aspect. One may not see a complete shape or an entire flower in an O’Keefe’s painting. Nevertheless, one sees a flower in her painting because one notices aspects such as subtle tonal changes in a light color or thin layers of color plane. One might find “family resemblances”¹²¹ between a flower in the painting and the flower in a field. In order to notice an aspect, one needs to understand how the aspect noticed is connected with other aspects in the figure, in addition to its relation to other concepts in other contexts. As Wittgenstein notes, “Seeing aspects is built up on the basis of other games.”¹²²

¹¹⁹ LW. section# 516, p. 67-8e. Also PI. p. 212.

¹²⁰ PI. section# 67, p. 32.

¹²¹ PI. section# 67, p. 32.

¹²² RPP2, section# 541, p. 96e.

V. Conclusion

“The expression of a change of aspect is the expression of a new perception and at the same time of the perception’s being unchanged”¹²³ writes Wittgenstein. Seeing an aspect is akin to shedding a light on a perception. It makes one see differently, and therefore experience a new perception. What makes it new, though, is not part of perception. It is one’s effort to see something in the object perceived that makes the difference. Aspect seeing is a way in which the object of perception becomes meaningful. As one sees one of Van Gogh’s shoe paintings, one might notice that the shoes are carefully located, as if the painting is a portrait of them. One might also notice that the painting is rich in color but does not look colorful in the sense of playful. The light in the painting is soft and warm, and the atmosphere of the painting is quiet and austere. As one becomes aware of one’s own description of the experience of the painting, one might feel that one is responsible for this painting and the painting becomes meaningful. ‘Seeing as’ cannot change the external world, but it can change the value of what is given. In *Culture and Value*, Wittgenstein writes, “I believe that my originality (if that is the right word) is an originality belonging to the soil rather than to the seed. (Perhaps I have no seed of my own.) Sow a seed in my soil and it will grow differently than it

¹²³ PI. p. 196.

would in any other soil.”¹²⁴ One may not be able to produce a seed oneself, but, depending on one’s attitude toward it, it will grow differently. In another passage, Wittgenstein says, “You cannot draw the seed up out of the earth. All you can do is give it warmth and moisture and light; then it must grow. (You mustn’t even touch it unless you use care.)”¹²⁵ Wittgenstein’s discussion of ‘seeing as’ describes the way in which we “give [the seed] warmth and moisture and light”¹²⁶; it describes a way in which we create value.

¹²⁴ CV. P. 36e.

¹²⁵ CV. P. 42e.

¹²⁶ *op. cit.*

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