

Spring 2019

## It Will Depend on Where the Question is Used: Freud on Dreams in the Light of Wittgenstein on Images

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### Recommended Citation

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*It Will Depend on How the Question is Used:*  
Freud on Dreams in the Light of Wittgenstein on  
Images

Senior Project submitted to  
The Division of Social Studies  
of Bard College

By

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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York  
May 2019



## *Acknowledgements*

To those who made this project possible:

Julian Dime, whose presence in my life I could not live without, for making me believe in myself, for perceiving things in my work that I did not, for sharing so much with me, for being my truest friend

Ellen Waldinger, whom I am incredibly fortunate to have as a parent, for knowing me as I am, for cherishing me, for guiding me through the world, for making me articulate, for giving me the gift of writing, for believing in me, for showing me how to have conviction, how to be resilient, how to be self-directed, how to be comfortable in one's self, for being such a spectacular role model

Dinaw Mengestu, for showing me how to refine, for challenging my expectations and for pushing me to write differently and to read outside my taste, for exposing me to new literature and to new narrative modes, for recognizing my talent and respecting it, for showing me what good writing could be, for undying patience and exuberance, for always being enthusiastic about my work, even when I was not, for keeping me tethered to reality, for helping me grow both as a storyteller and as a person

Garry Hagberg, for expanding my understanding of language and of artwork, and of how the two intermingle, for championing me as a student of philosophy, for supporting me in all my endeavors outside of philosophy, for advising me not just about my college career but in my life, for welcoming my aspirations, for broadening my horizons

So many other people who have touched my life in the past three years made this work possible, to all of whom I'm profoundly grateful, for their friendships, for their insights, for their time, for sharing themselves with me and inviting me to do the same, for conversations, for inspiration, for disagreement, for reconciliation. Their names do not appear here simply because of my own inability to thank them fully, in the right words.



*Though it is certain that the two halves of our existence, the waking and the dreaming states, the former appeals to us as infinitely preferable, more important, excellent, and worthy of being lived, indeed, as that which alone is lived—yet in relation to that mysterious ground of our being of which we are the phenomena, I should, paradoxical as it may seem, maintain the very opposite estimate of the value of dreams.*

-Friedrich Nietzsche, from *the Birth of Tragedy*

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## Dreaming

Dreams exist as a part of almost all people's experience, as a kind of companion to waking life. Our life in sleep, if you were to title that the window in which we are not awake, where we rest from the world around us, consists of these collections of images, sounds, conversations, sequences, and sensations that, while we dream, appear to us as being real, but which we identify upon waking as being otherwise. Dreams are a near universal of lived experiences: all people sleep (however sparingly), and during most peoples' sleeping hours, they conjure up for themselves a dream in which they become enrapt. But often those things that one 'experiences' when they are asleep, engulfed in a dream, things that register as vivid, lurid, convincing, engrossing—*real*—cannot be recalled by the dreamer after waking, or at least can only be recalled in the vaguest of senses. But while anyone you might ask about dreaming knows the experience intimately, has had presumably countless dreams throughout their life (with some exceptions, perhaps, although the overwhelming majority of people have dreamt at one point or another, and have likely dreamt many, many times), giving explanation to the phenomenon, and pinning down in that explanation some 'sense' as to what dreams are, some essence as to what those vivid imagined scenarios into which we are submerged while we sleep that is defining of the dream, that all different discrete dreams experienced over one lifetime—across all experiences of life by all people—share, proves difficult to anyone. In trying to answer this question, A person may describe dreams that

have repeated themselves throughout their life, or things they've noticed consistently in the many different dreams they've had, or the manner in which they wake from their dreams and return to their conscious life. But these would be only little ripples of the experience of dreaming, that the person answering may take to gesture towards something critical and constant seated deep, deep beneath the surface.

Tracking from these ripples their origin point, and the origin point for the whole of the phenomenon of dreaming, proves incredibly difficult. Indeed, a person asked to give a common-sense explanation of “what a dream is,” after supplying those observations they've made for themselves about their own dreams, about something at once second-nature to being alive and totally beguiling, would turn likely away from the question and treat it as unanswerable. But before arriving at such a point, they'd likely make note of dreaming being a private experience; some may even suggest that dreams are private across all cases, and that this feature—if not the *essence* of dreaming—is one that is essential to dreaming.

### **I - Are Dreams Private?**

Wittgenstein writes in the middle of his arguments against private language, during his investigation of pain language in relation to sensation conveyance and privacy, that: “The sentence “Sensations are private” is comparable to “One plays patience by oneself (Wittgenstein p248)”. The aphorism appears as a kind of closing to a line of investigation into the actual nature of *sensation*, where Wittgenstein demonstrates through interrogations of language usage that sensations are, by their nature, not things that can be *known* by an individual, as the term “know” as it is used in its conventional sense, is semantically incongruous with the nature of an actual sensation, and therefore sensation cannot be the

kind of thing of which someone would speak about “knowing” (which Wittgenstein argues is obvious, since a person does not say “I know I’m having a pain sensation,” but instead says “I *am* in pain”). To call pain private, then, in the way the sentence above demonstrates, is both to say something obvious and to presume something strikingly wrong in doing so. Pain, by its nature, is an *internal* experience, not something that exists in some form independent from the individual experiencing it. And to say that, “pain is private” is to imply that pain is something that exists independently from the individual experiencing pain, something that can be observed, that is externalized. The above-quoted statement, already the kind of thing that’s so revelatory that it’s practically mystifying in what it foregrounds about language and experience, offers a kind of suggestion about how we naturally consider cognition and “sense-data” (visual images, sensation, auditory experiences, interior stimuli and responses to exterior stimuli, etc.) that is shrouded by our thinking within language. And what this one-sentence conclusion suggests, when taken in relation to dreams (as cognitive processes, or as we often term them, “experiences”), offers an array of revelations to some of those issues most fundamental to dream appraisal and dream interpretation, revelations intimately connected to our experiences of visual perception<sup>1</sup>.

People operate on the presumption that dreams are private, that the very phenomenon of dreaming is patently a *private* phenomenon. This is to say that people conceive of dreams as being things which, because of how they are experienced by an individual (during sleep), and because of the nature of that experience<sup>2</sup>, and of which there is no record, because they appear to a single individual and their qualities are determined by an

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<sup>1</sup> These issues will be explored extensively in the later chapters of this investigation, both in relation to seeing and in relation to interpretation. For now, we are only making note of them, as they stem from removing the issue of privacy from our conception of the dream.

<sup>2</sup> Where the dream itself consists of an array of different “stimuli” that appear in our state of sleep very much like those sensations we experience in waking life, but which correspond with nothing *real*, as one would typically put it.

array of factors that are context-specific and almost wholly unique to the individual, which are mediated by that individual's predisposed concerns and personality. Now these different facets of the experience of dreaming that impel people to call dreams private experiences are indeed all qualities of dreams, but none of them are singularly a quality of all dreams, and none of them, likewise, are necessarily *defining* qualities of dreams. Furthermore, describing dreams principally in these terms, in terms related explicitly to privacy, would strike somebody as missing the actual nature of dreaming, since a dream, much like pain, is the kind of thing to which the matter of privacy doesn't hold any position of relation. By the very description supplied above, a dream occurs for an individual, assembled from the trappings of their biography and the points of consideration—from the most banal to the most pressing—that take immediacy in their everyday life (whether the dreamer is aware of that immediacy or not), where, while the unspooling of that dream may very well hold great gravity and “reality” for the individual, it occurs internally, having no bearing on the exterior world, and therefore offering no opportunity for another person to experience directly—or maybe more aptly to engage with the dream with complete primacy (where the dream feels real, where it registers perceptually and experientially)—the original individual's dream. But this is really to say that dreams are internal experiences, not private ones. And to take the fact that the dream occurs for the individual and the individual alone and to deduce from that some presumption that a dream, therefore, is something about which anyone other than the dreamer can know absolutely nothing, is a profoundly wrongheaded mistake, but a mistake, nonetheless, that is made over and over again.

## **II – Freud's Method**

Freud gives voice to the frequency with which mistakes of the kind above are made in thinking about dreaming, as well as to the mire of different discrete, not interrogated presumptions that weave together to create a conception of dreams in which such mistakes can be made, at the opening of Lecture V in his *Introductory Lectures*, doing so by presenting and then questioning how it is that people actually do conceive of dreams. Freud opens this line of inquiry by highlighting an interesting quality of dreams, one that has a great fidelity to those qualities of language highlighted by Wittgenstein throughout his *Philosophical Investigations*, and most emphatically during his decry against the concept of a private language: dreaming, like language, is a ubiquitous experience, something which everyone, save for *very* rare exceptions, knows intimately, and has engaged with throughout their lives. Freud writes:

We must begin by finding our bearings in the task before us and taking a general survey of the field of dreams. What, then, is a dream? It is hard to answer in a single sentence. But we will not attempt a definition when it is enough to point to something familiar to everyone. We should, however, bring the essential features of dreams into prominence. Where is that to be found, though? There are such immense differences within the frame that comprises our subject—differences in every direction. The essential feature will presumably be something that we can point to as common to all dreams (Freud 107).

By engaging at the outset with dreams in non-rigid terms<sup>3</sup>, namely by actually inspecting both how dreams occur and how *we* think of dreams, Freud allows for a nuanced realm of resemblances between drastically different dreams to float to the fore. Freud's whole opening to this section of his introductory investigation into dreams, as quoted above, implies heavily the difficulty of taking an essentialist approach to investigating dream and even the potential wrong-headedness of such a pursuit, going so far practically as to establish

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<sup>3</sup> The rigid case being, say, to create a confining definition that gives bracketed, and limiting form to something with which everyone already has an intimate, comprehensive experience

the whole “search for an essential feature” as being a guaranteed folly. Freud opts instead to create a framework for this outset of his investigation of dreams and their interpretation that allows for this kind of therapeutic interrogation of the phenomenon of dreaming through contrasting what features we immediately think of as consistent across all dreams (and many of these are necessary circumstances for dreaming to occur more than they are characteristics of dreams themselves) with how those facets actually manifest within a dream or impact upon a dream, where certain kinds of echoes or resemblances between different dreams become prominent, and where the recognition of those resemblances provides the actual insight into the field of dreams.

Freud’s method, here, like Wittgenstein’s approach to investigating language, takes a therapeutic approach to addressing the issue of dreams. This is to say that the enterprise occurring here in attempting to give form to dreaming as a phenomenon is one that hinges upon unearthing from beneath our presumptions and from beneath supplied descriptions of cases of our experiences the actual features of dreams, free from our own presumptions, rationalizations, and misinterpretations of the matter. Wittgenstein, in interrogating instances of particular language uses and certain utterances—some contrived and unnatural, some intuitive and second-nature to how we conceive of all sorts of facets of experience and existence—dispels long-perpetuated presumptions about all kinds of issues (both philosophical and “practical,” personal and personally pertinent) and through engaging in this kind of interplay between how we conceive of things and how we actually think, pulls from beneath those clouding modes of thinking more nuanced and more actual facets of how people engage with life, with the world, and with each other, ones which both hinge upon and also utterly transform our sense of language. Freud, likewise, chooses to approach the matter of dreaming here not by making pronouncements about dreams, but instead by

trying to localize, inspect, and, through that inspection, unveil how dreams actually behave, how they actually affect the dreamer, and what elements of dreams people hold to be most tantamount, and to show what is evinced actually about dreams through those elements, and to dispel misappraisals and misconceptions which rise to a position of relief through such an interrogation. Now, this is not to say that the two approaches are markedly the same, so much as it is to highlight that they have an affinity to one another, that Freud's impulse to for how to approach dreaming as an issue has a similarity to Wittgenstein's impulse for how to approach language.

But in doing so, Freud implies a certain alignment between the phenomenon of dreaming and Wittgenstein's conception of language, as the presentation of dreams suggested here (namely that they likely lack a kind of common, defining quality bracketing them all together into the category of dreaming, and that the potential cohesive classification of individual dreams into the general bracket of dreams relies on relationships of affinity, not identity, between different kinds of dreams) echoes heavily Wittgenstein's discussion of language during his presentation of the language game in *Philosophical Investigations*, and the suggestion that dreams exist in relation to each other in terms of affinity practically mirrors Wittgenstein's argument for family resemblance.

### **III – Family Resemblance and Dreams**

Wittgenstein's model of language hinges upon the idea of the language-game, where the meaning of a word and the terms on which a person speaks or employs language are determined by the context in which it appears, and underlying rules and presumptions about what can be expected from the individual in how they employ language given that certain

context. From the language-game, which behaves very much like any other game, and which can abound in an innumerable multiplicity of forms and variations, Wittgenstein builds out his model for language, where one essential feature of language is not readily evident and does not *define* language, but where language is made up of an array of distinct language games that all have affinities between one another. Wittgenstein writes early into his investigation into language:

Here we come up against the great question that lies behind all these considerations.—For someone might object against me: “You make things easy for yourself! You talk about all sorts of language-games, but have nowhere said what is essential to a language-game, and so to language: What is common to all these activities, and makes them into language games or parts of language. So you let yourself off the very part of the investigation that once gave you the most headache, the part about the *general form of the proposition* and of language.”

And this is true.—instead of pointing out something common to all that we call language, I’m saying that these phenomena have no one thing in common in virtue of which we use the same word for all—but there are many different kinds of *affinity* between them. And on account of this affinity, or these affinities, we call them all “languages”. I’ll try to explain this. (Wittgenstein p65)

It’s worth noting that Wittgenstein’s response to the suggested objection against his approach to exploring language makes plain the similarity between his approach to language and the exploration of dreaming into which Freud endeavors in his *Introductory Lectures*, although this note is not made to overemphasize the similarity between the two pursuits, as Freud’s exploration of dreams carries with it clear disjunctions from Wittgenstein’s pursuit into language (which will be evident by this chapter’s close). Wittgenstein refrains from gesturing towards one common and essential feature to a language-game, and therefore to all language games not because of the difficulty that comes with locating such a feature, but because such a feature does not exist. The presumption that language is defined by one critical component that is shared across all cases is in and of itself a misleading one, one that



stems from certain epistemological presumptions about the need for an essential from which a conception and understanding of the phenomenon at play can be built.

The absence of such an essential feature to language, however, does not mean that comparison between different language usages in distinct contexts or different modes of language employed separately from one another becomes an impossibility. Likewise, working without some one common feature across all cases or one essential quality for language does not render it impossible to identify certain things as language usages or to engage with those language usages in a manner that carries with it certain consistencies (although sensitivity is always needed when engaging with language, or when speaking of language, sensitivity to the language-game at play and to the particularities of that game). This is because of the *affinities* to which Wittgenstein points between different language-games and language usages, where certain facets of each individual game resemble those of other games, and where those affinities interweave together the games at play into what we call language. Wittgenstein highlights these kinds of affinities by drawing the reader to look (and he takes special care to impel the reader to *look*, not to *think*, in their appraisal) at different kinds of games discretely, writing:

Consider, for example, the activities that we call “games”. I mean board-games, card-games, ball-games, athletic games, and so on. What is common to them all?—Don’t say: “They *must* have something in common, or they would not be called ‘games’”—but *look and see* whether there is anything common to all.—For if you look at them, you won’t see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, affinities, and a whole series of them at that. To repeat: don’t think, but look!—Look, for example, at board-games, with their various affinities. Now pass to card-games; here you find many correspondences with the first group, but many common features drop out, and others appear. When we pass next to ball-games, much that is common is retained, but much is lost.—Are they all ‘*entertaining*’? Compare chess with noughts and crosses. Or is there always winning and losing, or competition between players? Think of patience. In ball-games, there is winning and losing; but when a child throws his ball at the wall and catches it again, this

feature has disappeared. Look at the parts played by skill and luck, and at the difference between skill in chess and skill in tennis. Think now of singing and dancing games; here we have the element of entertainment, but how many other characteristic features have disappeared! And we can go through the many, many other groups of games in the same way, can see how similarities crop up and disappear.

And the upshot of these considerations is: we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: similarities in the large and in the small (Wittgenstein p66).

Wittgenstein highlights here that while disjunctions between individual games exist, and between categories of games, similarities abound across cases, where the network produced by the interweaving of those different similarities between cases allow for the identification of a broader category of games, and the delineation of sub-strata within that broader category. No common quality rises up clearly as being shared between all of those distinct cases of engagements that we call games, but definite similarities exist between cases, such that it is sensible, even intuitive to class all of these different forms of rule-governed activities into the broader category of games, since the “complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing” between cases allows for a person to notice affinities between discrete cases that bleed into one another across the spectrum of games. This is not to say that some strand made up of one *common* tendency links across all these different iterations of games, but instead that a thread of interwoven similarities forms and appears when a person looks at discrete cases of different kinds of games and expands their lens to look at games in conjunction with one another. It is obvious here that such a model is meant to be applied to language, where different discrete language games operate on rules distinct from one another, and where no one shared feature is shared across all cases, but where certain affinities are apparent between one language game and another, and those

resemblances carry on across all cases (even if not all cases appear exactly alike, they likely have a shared cousin.)

From here, Wittgenstein arrives at his conception of a “family resemblance” model for language, writing:

I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than “family resemblances”; for the various resemblances between members of a family—build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, and so on and so forth—overlap and criss-cross in the same way. —And I shall say: ‘games’ form a family.

And likewise the kinds of numbers, for example, form a family. Why do we call something a “number”? Well, perhaps because it has a—direct—affinity with several things that have hitherto been called “numbers”; and this can be said to give it an indirect affinity with other things that we also call “numbers”. And we extend our concept of number, as in spinning a thread we twist fibre on fibre. And the strength of the thread resides not in the fact that some one fibre runs through its whole length, but in the overlapping of many fibres. (Wittgenstein p67)

Language, on the model Wittgenstein proposes here, operates then on resemblances, where no definitive characteristic exists across all cases, but where certain likenesses between one language-game and another make it possible for a person to recognize that both uses exist as part of the broader whole of language, a sort of “family” of all different discrete language games. Through his use of the example of numbers, Wittgenstein makes plain that one particular number need not bear an immediate resemblance to *all* other things that we call numbers to be considered such, but need only have an immediate affinity with some other discrete numbers, which themselves share a more striking resemblance to other numbers that are much further removed from the initial case, and which may not have an immediate resemblance.

Think of a family with a long lineage here. It wouldn’t be fair, for example, to expect a person to have an immediate resemblance, for example, to their great-great-great-uncle,

since so many generations lie between the individual and their ancestor. But it wouldn't follow that because of the absence of some common feature between the distant relative and their descendant, the two were not in fact related. And likewise, say the person has the same shape of eye as their grandmother, and the same blue eye color, even though their nose and their grandfather's nose are quite distinct from one another. But in scrutinizing old family photographs, dating back quite a long ways, you notice another relative with a nose very much like the grandmother's—practically the same. Say the photo is captioned with the names of all the relatives, and in looking at the names of the people captured in the image, you notice that the name that corresponds with the person who shares the grandfather's, and realize that individual to be the great-great-great-uncle. It would be evident, then, the strand of relation between the person and the present and their somewhat distant relative, since, even though no affinity appeared immediately between the two individuals, they each share separate features common to one relative along the line. Wittgenstein conceives of language on precisely this sort of model, as is made evident by the closing analogy to a thread linking together all of those different discrete usages and instances that we consider to be language, where the individual fibers vary in length, and do not all continue over the thread's entire length, but where, because one thread is interwoven with another that continues after the first has ended, and which interweaves with yet more discrete fibers to form the whole, the thread has continuity and forms one cohesive whole.

Freud's noting of the abounding of differences in dreams abounding in all directions taken in conjunction with his earlier acknowledgment of the ease with which an individual can identify upon waking that what they experienced in sleep was a dream—something that belies a clear intimacy and awareness of dreaming on some level—presents a kind of affinity to Wittgenstein's model for language here, and suggests a potential relationship between

dreams much like that between language-games, where one distinct feature of dreaming need not rise to the fore—indeed, need not exist—for us to be able to engage with the vast network of different discrete dreams that together make up the whole of dreaming in a manner that is substantive and from which insight can be gleaned into the phenomenon. But there are clear disjunctions between dreaming and language—not necessarily an issue given what Wittgenstein suggests about disjunctions between different discrete iterations of language games from one another—although these divides absolutely inflect the manner in which the two need to be investigated as elements of living, and the suggestion that dreams might operate on a model similar to the Wittgensteinian conception of language is not meant to suggest too strong a relationship between the two phenomena, or that the two are patently dictated by rules of too close an affinity.

And the suggestion Freud makes here about dreaming is not meant to lead the reader to believe that Freud’s approach to exploring the issue of dreaming is markedly the *same* as Wittgenstein’s investigation of language, or that the two engagements with these distinct phenomena have a close similarity to each other. Features of both the phenomena and the investigations into them by the two authors have features that markedly distinguish one from the other, and that frequently clash with each other, something that this exploration aims to address in what capacity it can (both in relation to dreaming in language and to Freud’s and Wittgenstein’s).<sup>4</sup> But what’s striking here is the similarity in intuition between the two authors, which this section is meant to note most pronouncedly. While it may not carry

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<sup>4</sup> Wittgenstein’s relationship to Freud is a complicated one; Wittgenstein dismissed Freud’s contribution to philosophy and his laying the groundwork for the development of basically all modern pursuits to the mind and to mental health (psychology, psycho-analysis, psychotherapy, cognitive science, etc.) as being simply a change in terminology; But Wittgenstein also remarked that he was “a disciple of Freud,” as is made evident by those “therapeutic” elements of his approach to the philosophy of language, a feature that carries across the entirety of Wittgenstein’s later body of work

through fully in Freud's writing on dreams, the fact that it is suggested here, and that it resembles so closely Wittgenstein's model of language, potentially belies something profound about dreaming that problematizes any sort of essentializing definition that may be proposed for the phenomenon<sup>5</sup>.

#### **IV—Defining Dreaming**

But from here Freud and Wittgenstein seem to depart from one another, with the intuition about dreams Freud suggests in the previously quoted passage that Wittgenstein follows through completely in relation to language being abandoned in favor of a return to a search for a common feature across dreams in all their many different iterations. Freud begins proposing and surveying the different things readily evident to be common across cases of dreaming with potential to be the essential, defining factor to the phenomenon, doing so largely as a means of actually delineating how dreams function in relation to those contingent features that most invite an individual to assume they are indeed patent to dreaming. Freud touches first upon sleep in relation to dreams, writing:

The first thing common to all dreams would seem to be, of course, that we are asleep during them. Dreaming is evidently mental life during sleep—something which has certain resemblances to waking mental life but which, on the other hand, is distinguished from it by large differences. This was, long ago, Aristotle's definition. It may be that there are still closer connections between dreams and sleep. We can be woken by a dream; we very often have a dream when we wake up spontaneously or if we are forcibly aroused from sleep. Thus dreams seem to be an intermediate state between sleeping and waking. So, our attention is turned to sleep. Well, then, what is sleep? (Freud 107)

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<sup>5</sup> The issue of the language-game will be taken up again later on, and it is for this reason too that this feature of Freud's embark into the issue of dreaming has been highlighted here.

What Freud suggests as the natural intuition the reader would have initially here, namely that, because dreams occur while we are asleep, dreaming during sleep is the mental analogue to thinking while awake, carries with it an important implication about dreaming that does not go dispelled as Freud's picture of the connection between sleep and dreams becomes more complicated: dreaming is a facet of being alive, one which has an affinity to thinking while awake. What the precise nature of that affinity is remains unclear here, as do the manners in which the marked and apparent differences between thinking and dreaming as components of life both inflect the senses we hold of the phenomena and belie the actual nuanced terms on which the two separate components behave.

That is to say that, while dreaming *may* be an analogue to thinking, as Freud suggests here, the two stand almost immediately as strikingly distinct from one another. Thinking involves a much more immediate engagement with things external to the individual, with reality, while dreaming seems wholly hermetical, occurring in a way that has no immediate relation to anything outside of the dreamer, beyond maybe stimuli experienced by the dreamer's body during sleep—which do not manifest themselves *immediately* in dreams, and instead are transmuted into new forms within the dream itself—and if some sort of relationship does exist between a dream and the world, or between a dreamer and reality, the connection between the two involves a far greater distance between the dream and the world than between thought and reality. We can remember causal chains in our thoughts quite clearly; in fact, the associations between one thought and another often appear quite clearly, or actually pull together a line of thinking in such a way that we can recall it quite fully. In remembering dreams, however, the connections from one sequence to another often disappear, or if they are retained, they appear to us in our recollection in such a manner where they hardly seem sensible as following from one another, where no immediate strand

of connection presents itself from one sequence to the next, and must be excavated after the fact not through recollection but through mediation through language of the experience to another, someone who interprets. Additionally, we don't often speak of interpretation when we talk about thinking (at least, we don't talk about *interpreting* thinking, so much as we do the interpretation of the presentation of thinking through language; instead, we usually talk of interpretation as a form of thought, as something which people do when thinking about facets of their experience of which they are trying to make sense)<sup>6</sup>, whereas dreaming and interpretation practically go hand-in-hand (indeed, Freud's major work, and the writing with which this paper is engaged, solidifies the relationship between the two, extolls the need for interpretation of a dream for an understanding of that dream's significance to be reached, and for a meaning in that dream to be found). And these are just a few of the many striking distinctions between dreaming and waking life. Freud even speaks to this matter, saying that: "In short, this fragment of mental activity during the night has an immense repertory at its disposal; it is capable, in fact, of all that the mind creates in daytime—yet it is never the same thing" (Freud 111). Freud's closing line here too reaffirms the possibility for dreaming to be understood in similar terms to language, where the family-resemblance proposal allows for a potential rectification of the issue of dreams being something easily recognizable to the individual but never repeating themselves, never unveiling in how they are experienced some central and essential quality, but always suggesting certain affinities between each other.

But this suggestion as to how dreams should be understood, that they should be conceived of indeed as an analogue to a person's experience when they are awake that serves a kind of function, stands quite against the estimation of dreams forwarded by other thinkers concerned with the issue of dreaming who produced scholarship contemporaneously with

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Freud. These other works of scholarship on dreams, Freud qualifies, concern themselves chiefly with delineating dreaming from thinking, doing so in a way where the potential for disjunction, the fractured coherence, and the generally choppy and murky nature of dreams are treated not as being valuable and important facets of dreaming that supply it with definition as a phenomenon and distinguish it as *separate* from waking thought, but instead as indications of the diminished value of dreaming, the inferiority of dreams in comparison to what is more typically considered thinking. Freud qualifies this whole ‘in-vogue’ (at the time) estimation of dreaming with an old parlance, writing: “According to an old analogy, the contents of a dream are like the sounds produced when ‘the ten fingers of a man who knows nothing of music wander over the keys of a piano’” (Freud 106). Such an estimation doesn’t necessarily refute that dreams are themselves a form of thinking, but it does imply explicitly a level of such extreme discordance between those different images and sounds that appear to the dreamer in a state of sleep as to make dreams seem wholly incoherent, random, thoughtless, and indecipherable. And what’s more, the analogy about the non-musical man and the piano renders interpretation of a dream impossible and suggests such a venture to be wholly fruitless, since it implies that a dream is not the kind of thing that can have a *sense* to it, let alone a meaning, as the actions of the man striking randomly against the piano are actions that are patently senseless<sup>7</sup>.

And while Freud does not refute the extreme degree of ambiguity that can arise from the disorganized assemblage of different sights, sounds, and experiences that, pasted together, constitute a dream, he also does not accept this kind of model, where a dream is

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<sup>7</sup> An aside: an analogue to this kind of “dream,” if it is indeed a possible one, within language would be Chomsky’s famous example of a syntactically and grammatically exemplary yet semantically nonsensical sentence: ‘colorless green ideas sleep furiously’. This kind of language usage, and what is belied about how comprehensibility operates within language, will be taken back up in relation to comprehensibility in dreaming.

just purely a slapdash combination of unassociated abstractions and trappings of the everyday re-contextualized purely accidentally. This becomes more evident as Freud works clearly to delineate that while dreams and sleep have a relationship to one another, a dream itself cannot purely be a facet of sleep, and that the relationship suggested above, that the dream is *simply* mental life during sleep, is one that is reductive, and that actually obscures many actual qualities of the dream from the individual concerned with understanding it.

Freud writes of sleep that:

Sleep is a state in which I want to know nothing of the external world, in which I have taken my interest away from it. I put myself to sleep by withdrawing from the external world and keeping its stimuli away from me. I also go to sleep when I am fatigued by it. So when I go to sleep I say to the external world: 'leave me in peace: I want to go to sleep.' On the contrary, children say, 'I'm not going to sleep yet; I'm not tired, and I want to have some more experiences.' The biological purpose of sleep seems therefore to be rehabilitation, and its psychological characteristic suspense of interest in the world. Our relationship to the world, into which we have come so unwillingly, seems to involve our not being able to tolerate it uninterruptedly (Freud 108).

Freud's closing sentence here is a particularly striking one, since, while his description of sleep is clearly one that clashes with the notion that dreams are purely mental life in sleep, since, given the suggested function of sleep is to rejuvenate the body and mind, and allow for a total escape, a total exit from the world, and given that dreams are not total respite, not total null over the mind, this closing remark leaves room for that something about dreams may as a kind of intermission from our waking life, one that stems from our inability to engage with and process the world consistently without diversion of attention.

Freud continues later on the page, writing:

If this is what sleep is, dreams cannot possibly form part of its programme, but seem on the contrary to be an unwelcome addition

to it. In our opinion too, a dreamless sleep is the best, the only proper one. There ought to be no mental activity in sleep' if it begins to stir, we have not succeeded in establishing the foetal state of rest: we have not been able entirely to avoid residues of mental activity. Dreaming would consist in these residues. But if so, it would really seem that there is no need for dreams to have any sense (Freud 109).

This full recognition of the fundamental tension between the description of sleep supplied earlier, where sleep is purely rest, a window where the mind is totally quiet, and the dream, which, regardless of what it may be, is not something silent by any stretch of the imagination, suggests that the analysis supplied so far in this description of Freud has no bearing on the text itself. This rings especially true of the closing remark here, where Freud stipulates that, in the case that indeed dreaming is purely the residues of mental activity, trickling across the mind of the dreamer as they sleep, there is no need at all for a dream to be something substantive, something with sense. But an issue arises quickly here, one which belies Freud's actual commitment to the significance of dreams, to their value as a phenomenon of living: even in the case that dreams are purely an auxiliary function of the mind, they are still a phenomenon, and for that phenomenon to be explicable, some sort of sense to the phenomenon is required. And there is no reason, as Freud has qualified dreams so far, that dreaming would be something devoid of explanation.

Freud first touches upon the possibility for dreams to be cases of the mind responding to stimuli from the exterior world impinging upon the body during a sleeping state, suggesting that this may indeed be the source of dreams as a phenomenon. But quickly, Freud problematizes this conception by describing three different cases of dreams in which an external stimulus impinges into the dream, but instead of impacting upon the dream directly, is transformed into being an element of the dream occurring in the moment, where the stimulus is transmuted and reshaped by the dreamer such that it is integrated into the dream

itself in a way that bears little resemblance to how it effects the dreamer's body while they sleep. Freud writes of this case that:

Let us notice, however, one peculiarity of dream-life which comes to light in this study of the effects of stimuli. Dreams do not simply reproduce the stimulus; they work it over, they make allusions to it, they include it in some context, they replace it by something else. This is a side of the dream-work which is bound to interest us since it may perhaps bring us nearer to the essence of dreams. When a person constructs something as a result of a stimulus, the stimulus need not on that account exhaust the whole of the work...it may be that the external and internal stimuli...impinging on the sleeper, are only the *instigators* of the dream and will accordingly betray nothing to us of its essence (Freud 117-118).

The transformation of the stimulus impinging upon the body here makes plain that an external stimulus cannot be the source of the dream, although it *may instigate* the dream that occurs. But all of the cases that Freud describes where an external stimulus invades into the dream and is transformed into a facet of the dream, one that echoes the stimulus effecting the dreamer's body, but which is wholly distinct from the actual source of the impinging stimulus, in this case an alarm-clock sounding, begin before the transmuted version of the stimulus appears in the dream. And this suggests that those stimuli are not in fact the *instigator* of the dream, as Freud suggests here, or the initiator of the dream-content that the dreamer experiences. Instead, they seem only to be incidental facets of the dream itself, things altered by the dreamer in an order indiscernible and seemingly without intention, where the transmutation serves an indeterminable function. And this leads to the major revelation that Freud makes at the close of this quoted section, namely that the possibility for an imposing stimulus in the world in which the dreamer engages while they are awake to enter into a dream in some form or another does nothing to make evident a greater essence—maybe more aptly an explanation—for the dream itself, and that the ability for an external stimulus to be transformed into a feature of the dream suggests little about

dreaming beyond that the sense of the individual are still at play while they sleep, while they dream—even if those sense are overtaken by the dream itself, which appears to the dreamer as being real in the moment.

Freud moves quickly, however, to positing another, more intangible facet of dreams common to the experience generally: namely the difficulty for description, or to use Freud's own parlance, 'translation,' of a dream as an experience to another. Freud writes that:

Mental processes in sleep have a quite different character than those of waking life. We experience every sort of thing in dreams and believe in it, whereas nevertheless we experience nothing, except, perhaps, the single disturbing stimulus. We experience it predominantly in visual images; feelings may be present too, and thoughts interwoven in it as well; the other sense may also experience something, but nonetheless it is predominantly a question of images. Part of the difficulty of giving an account of dreams is due to our having to translate these images into words. 'I could draw it', a dreamer often says to us, 'but I don't know how to say it'. This is not, however, a *reduced* mental activity, like that of a feeble-minded person as compared to that of a genius: it is *qualitatively* different, though it is hard to say where the difference lies (Freud 110).

This matter is one to which, while it proves especially challenging to explore substantively and which proves somewhat mystifying as a quality of the experience of dreaming, most people would likely point early into a discussion of the matter of dreaming as a patent element of the experience. But what's more, the difficulty in "translation" of the imagery and visual composite factors of any given dream into comprehensible, sensible, communicative, and maybe most importantly *substantive* terms such that another person can find the experience of the individual's dream at least somewhat comprehensible, enough to attempt interpretation of such a dream, is not a challenge wholly unique to dreaming. And Freud's suggestion that one of the defining characteristics of a dream here, namely both the visual component of dreaming and the difficulty created by both the need for the dreamer to

appraise the images that they see (and which they are also generating) and then to employ language in such a manner to make that appraisal of the imagery (and by that I do not mean the uncovering of whatever underlying psychological concerns may be associated with the images seen while dreaming for that individual) comprehensible through language to another, excavates one of those most complicated features of dreaming, and one of those features that most intersects with issues in language: issues of meaning interpretation as related to image appraisal and seeing.

But Freud becomes much more interested in the relationship between dreaming and memory, touching on the patently visual quality of dreaming only briefly here and once more before closing out Chapter V and moving on to proposing a model for dream interpretation. Freud barely explores the complexity of seeing, and of the relationship between an image and the viewer in a totally minimal capacity, treating the matter almost as being one that requires no explanation, or for which explanation cannot be given, or where the manner in which a person looks at an image and appraises it or engages with it during their waking life is on its own wholly uncomplicated, and where any complexity that stems from dreams consisting primarily in self-generated visual imagery that appears to the viewer while they sleep as being real is a result of the imagery being patently unreal, created by the mind during sleep and therefore not of the order of visual images we encounter while we are awake. Instead, Freud chooses to proceed in trying to elevate to a relief the meaning that underlies a dream, writing: “It only shows that we have come upon a new task. We not only want to know what a dream says, but, if it speaks clearly...” (Freud 119). The connection drawn between a dream and language, where the dream is an attempt by the individual to communicate something to the individual (indeed *is communicating*, as if it has an agency of its own; something no doubt done to make plain the manner in which the dream is dictated by

the unconscious, by those concerns of the individual to which they themselves are not cognizant, but which do affect them and which play a role in how they conceive of the world and how they operate within it) something of which they otherwise would not be cognizant, begins the shift over to Freud's exploration of the matter of interpretation.

If indeed, a dream communicates things like language does, then it makes sense to treat the relaying of a dream, although it consists chiefly in visual phenomena, through language to another, and to have that other mediate over the relaying through language of the dreamt experience and glean from that presentation some underlying concern—the thing that the dream is communicating, is thrusting to the surface—as being unproblematic. And it makes sense too here for Freud to place primacy on a relationship between dreaming and memory, as, for Freud, the possibility for interpretation relies heavily on a conception of each facet of a dream—each discrete visual stimulus or experiential component—being linked explicitly and inextricably to a particular feature of a person's experience life, although to what the dreamt feature corresponds may not be evident. Of this, Freud writes:

If then things that occur to one quite freely....form parts of a connected whole, we shall no doubt be justified in concluding that things that occur to one with a single link—namely their link with the idea which serves as their starting-point—cannot be any less determined. Investigation shows, in fact, that, apart from the link we have given them with the initial idea, they are found to be dependent as well on groups of strongly emotional thoughts and interests, 'complexes', whose participation is not known at the moment—that is to say, is unconscious (Freud 133).

From this quote, where Freud suggests that these links bring to the fore 'complexes' of underlying emotional and biographical concerns and after-effects of lived experience that inflect how an individual engages with the world, and which relate heavily to their identity, to their temperament, and that these are unconscious (indeed, this may *be* the unconscious at play), and that through the process of free association, an individual is able to excavate these

complexes and come to understand those things underlying their life, and which are responsible for a dream behaving in the manner that it does, and which are responsible for the features of the individual's dream being interpreted. Freud says as much, writing:

In dreams the stimulus-world is replaced by something that is itself derived from the dreamer's mental life, from sources unknown to him, and may therefore very easily itself be a 'derivative of a complex'. It is therefore not precisely fantastic to suppose that the further associations linked to the dream-elements will be determined by the same complex as that of the element itself and will lead to its discovery. (Freud 134-135)

What becomes critical, then, in understanding a dream, in gleaning from it a sense or a meaning, is uncovering whatever the complex is that rests underneath those manifestations of the unconscious complex that appear in sleep as being real, as being visual and sensory and *experienced*.

To understand a dream, then, a dreamer must, through guidance by another, presumably a psychoanalyst or a therapist, recall from their memory those experiences that mirror the things that appeared in dreaming, that manifested themselves as being real and sensory while the dreamer slept, and through interpretation of those images in relation to those recollections, arrive at the complex underlying the dream, thereby lifting it out of the unconscious and making it possible to neutralize its power over the individual. What's striking here is the primacy placed on memory, on recollection here, and the diminishment of the fact that dreams register as *experience* to the dreamer in the moment. Based on this conception, the manner in which a dream registers as something real is treated as being simply something deleterious, something that deceives the dreamer while they sleep, but that ceases to be relevant as a concern after they have woken. Freud's suggestion in the first sentence of this passage that the complex, a facet of the dreamer's 'mental life,' overtakes the dreamer's waking life while they dream and enshrouds them in the moment belies this point,



and also makes plain the degree to which recollection takes primacy here. Freud's initial proposal for how interpretation functions, where he draws an analogy between free association as a process for recalling a forgotten name and the kind of engagement that an individual must undergo with their psychiatrist to excavate from their dream the underlying concerns of the unconscious makes all but concrete how strongly he sees dreams and their sense as being connected to memory, and the element of the dreamer's mental life to which Freud is no doubt alluding in the above passage is no doubt a memory, or memory generally.

Indeed, Freud finally identifies the essence of dreams as being the memory that remains with the dreamer, the impression that they leave on the individual after they have woken and returned to their waking life (Freud 130-136). The dream itself, while it is occurring to the individual, ceases to be relevant to Freud, and the fact that the dream strikes the individual as being real ceases to be of concern, instead becoming a kind of diversion or red herring that further deceives the individual, and which, unless it is dismissed in some capacity, makes giving dreams explanation and elevating them to a position of actual significance as a part of living an impossibility. How the dreamer recalls *particular moments* or *discrete* elements of their dream as experiential remains of concern, sure, as those particularities may aid in the process of interpretation, but the fact that dreams across cases register experientially—as lived experience—while they occur to the individual is left unexplored, practically dropping out of Freud's discussion in the *Introductory Lectures* beyond some recognitions of its novelty. This is in part due to the fact that no record of the dream exists beyond the memory of the dream for the dreamer, and that the dream itself did not *happen*, at least in the terms that we conceive of experiences. This issue is one for which Wittgenstein's proposals about sensation offer a rectification, but given Freud's pursuit, the matter appears not to be relevant, and cannot be rectified in a manner where the kind of

interpretation proposed can be pursued. The dream, for Freud, is the memory with which the dreamer is left, and the dream's meaning, its sense, is to be found in comparing that memory with the memories of the dreamer's lived experience in reality. Appraising the dream relies on uncovering the unconscious complex underlying it, which, on this model, is chiefly responsible for the dream's occurrence, and is the thing to which the dream gestures, which the dreamer can only realize through their exploration through recollection.

But this does not rectify a patent quality of dreaming which Freud identifies as being consistent and striking about dreams, and which proves to be one of the qualities that makes the relaying of the dream most challenging: that dreams appear primarily in visual terms when they occur. And likewise, defining the dream as the memory of the dream and nothing more seems to render much of Freud's exploration into the phenomenon of dreaming, and likewise untouched much about how we see images, and about the complicated interplays between seeing, thinking, experience, and language.

## Seeing

### I—Reconsidering the Visual Component

Before closing Lecture V of his *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Freud makes one final note about dreams occurring largely in visual terms, where he qualifies the appearance of dreams as visual imagery as being both one of the most unusual components of dreamt experience, and also one of the least immediately explicable. Of the matter, Freud writes:

The second thing that is common to dreams, their psychical peculiarity, is on the one hand hard to grasp and on the other offers us no starting-point for further enquiry. We experience things in dreams as a rule in visual forms. Can the stimuli throw any light on this? Is what we experience in fact the stimulus? But, if so, why is the experience visual, while it is only in the rarest cases that optical stimulation has instigated the dream?...I venture to dismiss that possibility decisively (Freud 118)

Here, Freud again notes how dreams consist largely of visual imagery as being a patent quality of dreaming, but treats this quality of dreaming, one with which we all have a breadth of intimate experience—something we've all noticed about our dreams—as being inexplicable, and likewise irrelevant to the matter of arriving at a comprehensive understanding of what dreams are and how they behave. Because no explanation for dreaming occurring in visual terms appears as immediately apparent thus far in the pursuit (no doubt later Freud would attribute the visual component of dreams to the influence of

memory on the fixtures that appear in dream, explain this element as being a byproduct of our dreams being fashioned from memories of waking reality, our experience of which consists largely of visual imagery), and because the manifestation of dreams as visual does not seem to bely anything about the *essence* of dreams to Freud, and does not gesture towards some element of how dreams function to make evident concerns of ours that we would not otherwise notice, based on Freud's underlying area of interest, this component is not treated as being relevant in substantive or significant terms to the investigation of dreaming, at least not in a manner where the visual elements of dreams are treated on their own terms, or where the engagement by the viewer with dreamt imagery actually complicates how the matter of dream interpretation is conceived. And in addition, Freud does not account for, or even acknowledge, the nuances, ambiguities, and complications of visual engagement and image appraisal in waking life when talking about the relationship between dreams and lived experience; indeed, no acknowledgment is made about how the process of image appraisal in waking life inflects how we think about memories and how we ascertain from things seen over the course of our lives senses of those images, or make identifications of things in the world based on how we see them.

## **II—Two Modes of Seeing**

The issue of image appraisal already carries with it challenges, ones that relate to issues of meaning containment and relaying within language, and which grow ever more complicated as they become factored into consideration in relation to language usages where those ascriptions of judgment or those assessments of images come into play. Wittgenstein

addresses precisely these issues of seeing in Part II, Section xi of his *Philosophical Investigations*, which he opens with a revelation both strikingly terse and stupefying in its expansiveness:

Two uses of the word “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 in these two faces”—let the man to whom I tell this be seeing the faces as clearly as I do myself.

What is important is the categorical difference between the two ‘objects’ of sight (Wittgenstein PII p111).

To suggest that something as complicated as seeing occurs along only two different byways might strike some as being reductive, as bracketing off a whole range of different kinds of experiences of seeing into two quite narrow categories. But such an estimation of Wittgenstein’s model would require treating these two modes of seeing as being straightforward, rigid in their operation, would require actually looking at these two proposed distinct modes of seeing in simplistic terms. For seeing these two modes of *seeing* as being uncomplicated in how they find themselves at play when a person looks at an image assumes that the kind of mode of seeing with which an individual is engaged when observing something in front of them to be readily evident, both to the individual looking on at the image and to the person to whom the ‘seeing’ that is done is relayed. In actuality, what kind of seeing is occurring is rarely readily apparent or even taken into consideration by the viewer, even when language use around visual experience comes into play. What’s more, to treat these two modes of seeing as being reductive, as failing to account for a whole range of different kinds of visual experiences and identifications within images, requires fully ignoring the proposal Wittgenstein makes that these two modes of seeing occur because of the ‘categorical difference’ between what an individual is actually seeing in one case, in the case of ‘seeing,’ and what they are seeing in the other, in the case of ‘seeing as.’

Wittgenstein emphasizes this categorical distinction between what is being seen in the premise that directly follows this one, writing “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. (Wittgenstein PII Sxi p112.)” This proposal, where the first man notices the two faces, and through his observation is able accurately to reproduce their likenesses in drawings, requires that the individual then observe the faces he saw and accurately appraise them, therefore making the faces and their details the object of sight. In the second case, where the other man looks at the drawn faces (or even the two faces of the people drawn), and notices between them certain resemblances and similarities in features, requires that the individual then observe the *likenesses* between the two faces, noticing their closeness in appearance between the two.

This is not to say that the image being looked at by the two individuals is a different image in each case; but it is to say that what is being *seen* is markedly different, since in the one case, the person is observing the image simply as it is, in a context mostly bracketed by where it appears, but not heavily inflected by that, while in the other case, the person is observing the likenesses between the image and another, interpreting what they see in the two different faces, and noticing details in one in the light of another, where certain features of one image register in a particular manner based on how they compare to the other image. This kind of proposal, then, carries with it a suggestion that in one case, a person is seeing a thing as it is, and in the other, they are seeing something *as* connected to another visual trapping of the world encountered previously, either in a completely separate context or in a closely interconnected one. How such a thing occurs, Wittgenstein argues later, is not necessarily a matter of choice, and does not necessarily carry with it the implication that one mode of observation is more *accurate* than the other, since in both cases the individuals are

noticing *aspects* of the thing at which they are looking, the different objects of vision being each separate aspects of the thing in the world.

Implicit in this presentation so far is the idea that, when a person sees in this kind of way, they may do so selectively, choosing explicitly to look at a thing in a bracketed context, and then taking in its physical qualities all on their own, or selecting instead to see it through the light of something else, through a kind of applied lens, where what is observed relies heavily on that lens, as it has been selected by the individual. In truth, these modes of seeing are not mutually exclusive, in that a single person can see something in one instance and then see that same thing *as* when they encounter the same image in a different context, or with a different set of concerns. Likewise, a person can see something perceptually, see something in the first manner proposed, and register what they see differently in those cases, depending on vantage point, or position, or context. Through the multiple modes of seeing, then, a person gains a greater awareness of the object, they notice a new aspect of it and through that observation and ascription come to see the thing in a wholly new light.

Wittgenstein quickly eschews a concern with whatever causal explanation exists for how these modes of seeing occur mentally for the individual (which does not put to bed a certain problem of projection<sup>8</sup> in relation to images, but which sets aside the issue of delineating a causal explanation for the issue) by qualifying that the causality of such a phenomenon is of concern to psychologist, while “we are interested in the concept and its place among the concepts of experience (Wittgenstein pII sxi p115).” This is to say that Wittgenstein’s exploration is concerned with seeing as it occurs immediately, as it occurs under typical circumstances when an individual looks at an image and gleans from that image

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<sup>8</sup> Where the viewer’s projects onto an image qualities that are not actually manifested visually within the image itself. This is contrasted with perception, where the viewer notices the image perceptually, their impression of the image therefore being a *perceptual* impression

a certain awareness or understanding of the image itself or of the image in a certain light.

Wittgenstein begins this exploration of the actual act of seeing by supplying the reader with a two-dimensional drawing of a three dimensional rectangular prism, the kind found typically in elementary school math textbooks or in introductory guides to drawing with aspect and dimension. Wittgenstein writes of about the image:

One could imagine the illustration appearing in several places in a book, a textbook for instance. In the accompanying text, something different is in question every time: Here a glass cube, there an upturned open box, there a wire frame of that shape, there three boards forming a solid angle. Each time the text supplies the interpretation of the illustration.

But we can also *see* the illustration now as one thing, now as another.—So we interpret it, and *see* it as we *interpret* it.  
(Wittgenstein pII sxi p116)

What proves especially revelatory here is Wittgenstein's suggestion that the act of interpretation of the image, where the image is seen by the individual in a particular manner inflected by how it is that they are looking at the thing (what kind of three-dimensional image they are searching for in the two-dimensional drawing, or what kind of frame of reference they have for ascribing a particular kind of visual identification to the image) and registers immediately as a visual image to that individual based on that inflection. A person can see a two-dimensional drawing and interpret that drawing as being a glass square, or an open box, or a wire frame with no sides, and that interpretation carries with it an immediate act of *seeing* the square as being that thing, where the interpretation and the seeing happen almost in unison with one another. What's more, a person likely has a natural inclination as to how that particular two-dimensional drawing registers to them, (say, you are especially inclined to see the two-dimensional drawing as being a plinth for an art installation), and in looking at the drawing, that inclination leads them to see the image immediately as that



plinth, without registering that what they are doing involves interpretation, and without deliberating over how the image is to be appraised.

### **III—Where Perception Ends and Interpretation Begins**

Wittgenstein's two closing sentences in this posit, which most overtly address this quality of seeing, suggest an immediate connection between seeing and interpretation in cases of *seeing as* of precisely the manner that is described above in relation to taking the two-dimensional drawing to be a plinth. But what exactly they suggest about this phenomenon becomes somewhat unclear. On the one hand, Wittgenstein's closing sentence makes plain that a person can interpret what it is that they are seeing through a particular substrate of different individual and contextual concerns, and then see the object through the lens of the interpretation they've supplied to it, therefore creating a kind of fidelity between the interpretation of the object within a context and a seeing of the object as a certain thing. But there is also the possibility, given the actual wording of Wittgenstein's statement that "we interpret it, and *see* it as we *interpret* it," and given the suggestion made above, that a person may have a particular inclination immediately as to how they see the two-dimensional drawing and lend to it three-dimensional depth, that in cases of *seeing as*, interpretation can happen almost concurrently with the observation of the image, such that the viewer does not register that they are interpreting.

But what remains especially unclear so far is the point at which perception ends and interpretation begins. Presumably the answer lies between the first case of seeing that Wittgenstein proposes, where a person sees a thing for what it *is*, seemingly, and the second case, where a person sees something *as* connected to a set of visual qualities of the image,

but which are not themselves visually manifested or articulated by the image. The distinction between perception and interpretation, then, lies between “is” and “as.” But in the case of dreaming, where seeing an image for what it is seems to be an impossibility, given that ‘seeing’ in dreaming is quite different from seeing in waking life, since a person is not observing something *real* when they “see” an image in a dream. This seems to stem from an inapplicability of the concept of seeing, as it’s being investigate here, to the images that appear to a person while they dream, since the concepts of seeing when waking and “seeing” when dreaming seem incongruous to one another. But, as has already been noted in our establishing of dreams during the previous chapter, those features that constitute a dream—indeed the dream itself—registers to the dreamer while it unfolds for them in sleep as “real, ”as actually experienced. And in the moment where a person “sees” an image in a dream, they take it to be the same experience as seeing in waking life. Likewise, given Freud’s proposals about dreams, interpretation is essential to gripping an identification of those concerns inflecting and underlying the particular visual trappings of a dream, but interpretation relies heavily on mediation by another. Because dreaming relies on looking at visual imagery that is unreal, that does not *exist* in a capacity where it can actually be observed by the viewer, but where instead it is *generated* by the dreamer, who in the dream assumes the role of the viewer, perception seems to vanish as a possibility, and instead, seeing an image in a dream seems to rely wholly on interpretation; but the seeing that occurs in a dream still *registers* to the dreamer like perception; the dreamer even describes what they see in perceptual terms. This dissonance between what kind of “seeing” is occurring and how that “seeing” registers to the dreamer, at odds with Freud’s estimation, holds the potential to shed immense insight on dreams, and on waking life as well. And this issue is

one that is tantamount to this exploration of Freud's writing on dreaming in relation to Wittgenstein's investigation of seeing.

#### **IV—How Modes of Seeing Manifest in Language**

Wittgenstein moves from here to discussing how cases of the second form of seeing introduced at the start of Section XI manifest themselves in language uses, as a means in part of compounding the idea that seeing as is not some deliberated-upon choice to interpret an image a particular way, but is in fact as immediate a process as seeing the thing generally. Wittgenstein begins this investigation of the matter by couching a potential intuition a reader might have following what appears previously on the page, writing:

Here, perhaps one would like to respond: the description of immediate, visual experience by means of an interpretation is an indirect description. "I see the figure as a box" amounts to: I have a particular visual experience which is empirically found to accompany interpreting the figure as a box, or looking at a box. But if it amounted to this, I ought to know it. I ought to be able to refer to the experience directly, and not only indirectly. (As I can speak of red without necessarily calling it the colour of blood.)  
(Wittgenstein PII SXI p118)

If, indeed, describing their immediate visual experience of looking at a 2-dimensional drawing of a rectangle through an interpretive utterance like "I see it as a box" qualifies as an indirect description, as what Wittgenstein suggests an individual might wish to say of this sort of case, then likewise it should be possible for the immediate visual experience to be described directly as well. The issue, in this case, stems from the idea that what 'accompanies' (as it is termed in the elaborated-upon description Wittgenstein couches as being that preferred by this potential intuition) seeing the image as a box, or interpreting the seen 2-

dimensional image to be a box, is an ‘immediate, visual experience.’ For the image to be interpreted, as is being suggested here, then it means that thought must be at play in tandem with the perception of the image, such that a person can orient what it is they see in such a manner that they can schematize the lines presented to have a similarity in appearance to a box. And so saying “I see the figure as a box,” is not an indirect description of an immediate visual experience that is wed to interpreting the image to be a box, but instead an articulation of seeing where interpretation and perception intermingle. But likewise, while a person may well say that they “see this figure as a box,” they can just as easily say “I see a box,” which would give voice to an identification of a box in their visual appraisal of the image, and the interchangeability of these two phrases in conversation, even if their meanings may be slightly different, belies that the act of ‘seeing as,’ where interpretation ‘saturates’ perception, is not one done deliberately (at least not in the conventional sense), and instead occurs with an immediacy, the kind that would keep a person from even registering that the process in which they are engaging is one of interpretation. Such a lens would only be applied after the fact, or would only be applicable in a case where the individual forced themselves to ‘see as’.

## **V- The Duck-Rabbit**

The famous case of the duck-rabbit only further reveals the complicated relationship between perception and interpretation, between seeing and seeing as, something which Wittgenstein makes evident quickly simply in describing the drawing. In introducing the duck-rabbit figure, Wittgenstein writes:

In my remarks, the following figure, derived from Jastrow, will be

called “the duck-rabbit”/ It can be seen as a rabbit’s head or as a duck’s. And I must distinguish between the ‘continuous seeing’ of an aspect and an aspect’s ‘lighting up’. The picture might have been shown me, without my ever seeing in it anything but a rabbit. (Wittgenstein PII SXI p118)

Wittgenstein’s closing sentence here, which makes note of the fact that, if somebody were to be unaware of the possibility of the duck-rabbit being seen as either a duck’s head or a rabbit’s head, they could potentially see the drawing *as* a rabbit without ever going over to seeing the thing in a different light. What’s more, in this case, seeing the drawing in the first sense, where the appraisal of the image made by the individual is a purely perceptual one, is an impossibility, since the image itself is designed to be assessed as being one of two things, not as a representation of one singular image. So in the case of the duck-rabbit, any act of seeing is an act of seeing as, although evidently, the interpretation of the image that goes along with such seeing does not register to an individual looking at the image overtly.

Indeed, for Wittgenstein’s final sentence in this posit to be true, a person would have to see the duck-rabbit drawing as a rabbit, without immediately being cognizant of the fact that they’ve only managed to see it that way because of how they’ve interpreted the picture. To the onlooker, the thing registers as either a duck or a rabbit, and that ascription to the image of its representing one or the other feels like something happening immediately, not something relying on the mind’s assessing the visual image in a particular manner and identifying within it one thing or the other. This only make plain that seeing as, while it relies on an interpretive component, isn’t something that is necessarily deliberate. This quality of the duck-rabbit carries with it a striking similarity to how a person registers a visual facet of a dream, which, though it is self-generated, something produced by the individual for themselves, the dreamer takes their impression of it to be perceptual, identifying their “looking” at it within their dream and registering it to be a certain thing as being perceptual.

Sure, if Wittgenstein, as he introduces himself in that last hypothetical, might have been told that the picture shown to him can be seen as a duck's head or as a rabbit's head, he may identify in the image one of the two animal's likenesses (the one to which, for some reason, he is more naturally inclined to notice), and then, knowing that the image can be seen another way, force himself to identify in the image the other animal's likeness. But he does not need to deliberate arduously in the first place to see in the duck-rabbit drawing the rabbit's likeness. He does not need to say to himself "now I must interpret this image in such an such a manner so that from it I can see a rabbit's head." The act of interpretation involved in seeing the rabbit in the first place is much more unconscious, much more second-nature.

Likewise, the dreamer interprets the dream image (which again, is unlike the duck-rabbit, or is unlike an object or fixture that exists external to the viewer and which the viewer through their looking at the thing appearing visually then registers in a particular manner where perceptual seeing is possible, since the dreamer sees some underlying concern of theirs *as* the physical fixture they've created and made manifest within their dream), but in a somewhat roundabout manner, where their interpretation results in their *seeing as* registering as perceptual seeing, where their visual appraisal registers like perception, like visual experience. The interpretation of images in dreams that a viewer undergoes once they've returned to the waking world, and are engaged in relaying what they saw to another, who mediates their description and guides them through unearthing those concerns that the image they produced in their dream articulates, must go through a kind of inverse of the typical process around seeing, where to arrive at an accurate appraisal of the image in terms of what it conveys, they must shift from "seeing" the image perceptually to "seeing" the image *as* the underlying concern that caused it to manifest.

Wittgenstein's distinguishing between the continuous seeing of an aspect and the aspect's lighting-up, if it were, where the manner in which the person sees the thing at which they are looking suddenly transforms, and a kind of epiphanic new mode of seeing the object appears suddenly, suggests too an important quality of seeing: that a new aspect can be seen of an object, or an object can be noticed in a new light, but that such seeing happens suddenly, and is transitional in such a manner where the old way of seeing disappears during the window in which the object is seen anew. A person, then, can see the duck-rabbit as a duck or as a rabbit, and while the shift from seeing the image as one thing to seeing it as another may be revelatory and sudden, it is not possible for a person to see the image as both things at once.

## **VI – the Picture-Object**

To address the issue of interpretation around pictures, wherein the image of which the viewer has made a visual appraisal is a 2-dimensional representation of something, where an appraisal or a “correct appraisal” (if one is to treat the first form of seeing as being a *more correct* form of seeing, because it might be more ‘accurate’) of the image relies on identifying what it is the picture is depicting, not identifying the form of the 2-dimensional image itself, Wittgenstein proposes the idea of a ‘picture-object,’ a 2-dimensional depiction of something the viewer knows to be a 3-dimensional thing, which, because of its contextual appearance and its visual qualities, a person can engage with as if it were a 3-dimensional object. Wittgenstein gives the example of a ‘picture-face,’ a simple 2-dimensional generic figurative drawing of a human face. Of the drawing, Wittgenstein proposes that: “In some respects, I engage with it as with a human face. I can study its expression, can react to it as to the

expression of the human face” (Wittgenstein 119). This is to say that, while it is evident to the onlooker that the face (or the ‘picture-object’ generally) is in fact just a 2-dimensional drawing, the viewer is still able to engage with the image much as they would a real human face, ascribing to it certain features and speculating as to the emotional state of the figure depicted in much the way they would if they were looking at a real person. A person, then, can be fully cognizant that the thing at which they are looking is not a ‘face’ in the conventional sense, but it can still be appraised along much the same lines. It’s critical to note here, also, that for the ‘picture-object’ concept to hold up as being the manner in which somebody actually engages with the face, they must chiefly treat the picture-face as existing in a different category than a real face, even if the appraisal of the face is similar. This does not mean simply that they must be cognizant of the fact that they are looking at a 2-dimensional figure, but instead means that they articulate that awareness and the observations made around it clearly and explicitly in how they refer to it using language<sup>9</sup>.

Wittgenstein illustrates that this would be the case for the ‘picture-object’ model in his next posit, writing:

I may, then, have seen the duck-rabbit simply as a picture-rabbit from the first. That is to say, if asked “What’s that?” or “What do you see there?”, I would have replied: “A picture-rabbit.” If I had further been asked what that was, I would have explained by pointing to all sorts of pictures of rabbits, would perhaps have pointed to real rabbits, talked about their kind of life, or given an imitation of them (Wittgenstein PII SXI p120).

For the picture-object to take on a form perceptible and identifiable to the viewer, the viewer must be able to see a connection between the picture-object and the thing that it is depicting. This is to say that, for the ‘picture-rabbit’ to something with which the onlooker

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<sup>9</sup> This quality of the manner in which a person speaks of the “picture-object” suggests something about the kinds of language-usages a person might employ when engaging in relaying their dreamt experience to another as part of the process of dream interpretation, although this matter will be explored later into the investigation.



can engage, it must do so through a kind of implicit reference based upon its representational similarity to a real rabbit or to another picture rabbit, to which the viewer, because they have enough of a frame of reference to identify the referent for the picture-object, can register what it depicts, and can then acknowledge to another in describing their appraisal of the picture-object as a picture-rabbit.

This kind of model, where the individual identifies that they are looking at a picture of a rabbit through analogy to their own frame of reference to rabbits and to what rabbits look like, bears a striking resemblance to a quality in language Wittgenstein identifies in *The Blue Book* during his problematizing ostensive definition as a theory for language. In that discussion, Wittgenstein identifies how, say in the case that someone speaks to two people about elephants, both individuals immediately will register the meaning of the word elephant in relation to the animal elephant, but the conception each one holds of the animal species, their frame of reference for it, their perceptual understanding of it, and the physical manifestation or visual representation they most associate with elephants, will all be hyper-particularized, such that, while both people are engaged in conversation with a third about something that they all can register and identify and speak of in language, their particular awarenesses of elephants will not come to the fore unless disagreement or ambiguity emerges evidently in the conversation to all parties involved, and therefore certain elements of what is being said and what is *meant* by those statements will disappear.

This issue of certain resonances or awarenesses around objects or visual symbols that are not evinced at all through commonplace language uses intended to refer to those objects or visual symbols or that are employed to give general description to them is something that plagues the issue of dreaming, as, for a person to speak of a dream, they need not explain what particular significance certain facets of that dream may have to them, since those

resonances may be second-nature in the conception, indeed may not even register at all. This problem gives clear cause for the need for an ‘interpreter,’ for a trained person (presumably a psychologist or therapist), to guide the description the other person supplies in such a manner that those conceptions or unconscious considerations come to the fore; it also, somewhat paradoxically, makes plain another potential problem with interpretation through mediation, namely that, although a dreamer may well be able to describe in vivid detail their dreamt experience, without those other pressing concerns that inform the imagery generated coming to the fore and being recognized explicitly, a huge payload of the *meaning* or *content* of the dream will be lost, and this loss is practically inevitable, since the mediated interpretation relies on a fallible mediator from the start. This digression is a significant one, one that will become central to piecing apart certain especially tricky elements of dreaming later, and it is for this reason that it has been fleshed out here. But it is not of consequence currently to the matter at hand, namely the ‘picture-rabbit’ case, to which we will return now.

## **VII – Resonances Lost**

What’s interesting in part about the appraisal of the duck-rabbit as a picture-rabbit when taken into conversation with Wittgenstein’s destabilizing how people typically conceive of language in *the Blue Book* is how the relationship between seeing the duck-rabbit and identifying the rabbit (and this could go for identifying the duck-rabbit as a duck, too, since we haven’t yet begun dealing with the particular nuances of this case in relation to the fact that the image can be seen as either animal) in the image is qualitatively distinct from the issue at hand in the elephant discussion above. Because of their frame of reference here, the individual is able to identify in the drawing the likeness of a rabbit (much like how, because

of their frame of reference in a language game, an individual can hear the word elephant and comprehend that what is being discussed is the animal that is called an elephant), but unlike in the language ambiguity case, where the particularized nature of that person's understanding of elephants inflects how it is that they proceed in the language game, in a manner that likely isn't detectable to another participant, but which affects what it is the individual wishes to communicate in speaking of elephants, here, the particularized awareness does not inflect the image at which a person is looking, although it may inflect their sense of the image, largely in terms of what aspects of the image they glean, and in terms of the sentiments they may carry with them while looking at the image. As Wittgenstein articulates in the final sentence of this posit, in giving explanation to the image to another, if they were to call it a 'picture-rabbit' initially, somebody would likely say that what they see is a picture that represents a rabbit, and they would be able to demonstrate how that was the case through highlighting their reference points.

### **VIII – Problematizing the Picture-Object**

What is brought out in highest relief by posit 120 is how the person looking on at the duck-rabbit and identifying only the rabbit is not cognizant of the fact that they are engaged in an act of *seeing as* in noticing the rabbit, in large part because they have not seen the drawing as a duck, and in large part because they are not in the moment cognizant of the fact that the drawing even can be seen as a duck (presumably, since Wittgenstein makes no mention of a person relaying to the onlooker that the drawing can be seen in two different ways, in two separate lights). Here, the act of "seeing as" registers to the individual purely as perception, and this is made plain by the utterance "I see a picture-rabbit." In posit 121,

Wittgenstein truly makes explicit how this act of seeing the duck-rabbit just as a rabbit is a non-deliberate act, one that registers to the onlooker as purely perceptual, and not interpretive, by investigating how that quality appears in the language used to describe the duck-rabbit drawing. Wittgenstein writes:

I would not have answered the question “What do you see here?” by saying; “Now I see it as a picture-rabbit.” I would simply have described my perception, just as if I had said “I see a red circle over there.” Nevertheless, someone else could have said of me: “He sees the figure as a picture-rabbit.” (Wittgenstein PII SXI p121).

Here, the onlooker does not naturally respond by making a statement like “now I see it as a picture-rabbit,” where the act of seeing as is acknowledged within the language usage overtly and through such a usage the onlooker recognizes that they could potentially see the duck-rabbit as something else, precisely because they themselves are not aware of the possibility of seeing the thing as something else, or that their mode of seeing the rabbit has some kind of interpretive element inscribed within it. Instead, they would likely say something to the tune of “I see a rabbit” or “look at this rabbit,” since they would be supplying description to something that registers as perception, and that indeed may even be a form of perception. A relationship between the unconscious and the act of seeing becomes evident here, in that there must be some sort of connection between the two for a person to have a natural inclination to look at the duck-rabbit drawing and glean from it only the image of the rabbit, but the actual nature of that relationship, or the influence of unconscious or non-deliberate points of consideration over the observation, delineation, and ascription of association to the duck-rabbit ‘picture-object,’ still remains incredibly murky. And simply because the connection between the two exists does not necessarily mean that the description supplied earlier of an act of seeing in this manner as being an interpretive mode

of seeing even if the element of interpretation does not register to the onlooker continues to be a sensible one. It could very well be the case that such seeing of the kind described here is still perceptual seeing, even if the manner in which the image seen is appraised finds itself influenced by other concerns for the individual not themselves immediately inhered within the image being shown and not imposed onto the onlooker given the context in which the image has appeared.

This is made plain by how naturally the identification of the likeness of the rabbit within the duck-rabbit image is given by the individual, which Wittgenstein raises to a heightened relief with the red circle description supplied. For the act of seeing the rabbit in the image to be described, therefore, as an act of *seeing as*, it must be done by an outside observer, someone already privy to the fact that the image can be seen in one of two ways to whom the initial onlooker relays that they see a rabbit. For the individual looking at the duck-rabbit and seeing in it only the rabbit, who does not know that the image can also be seen as a duck, again, registering that they've committed an act of *seeing as* is an impossibility. In fact, whether what they're actually doing in seeing the rabbit is actually *seeing as* remains unclear.

Wittgenstein compounds the emphasis of this point in his next posit, writing: "It would have made as little sense for me to say 'Now I see it as...' as to say at the sight of a knife and fork 'Now I see this as a knife and fork.' This utterance would not be understood. Any more than: 'Now it is a fork for me' or 'It can be a fork too'" (Wittgenstein PII SXI p122). It would be unintuitive and unidiomatic—indeed, even senseless—to engage with commonplace real world objects like a fork and knife and describe identifying them as such as being some case of *seeing* the fork and knife *as* a fork and knife. Nobody, in looking at the

fork and knife and registering the objects, would ever even entertain thinking of that act of registering in such terms.

This analogy not only puts to bed the issue of *seeing as* in relation to the individual looking at the duck-rabbit and seeing only a rabbit (as Wittgenstein quite emphatically suggests here that such a case as the person seeing only the rabbit and being unaware of the possibility to see the image as a duck is not an act of *seeing as*, and therefore is not interpretive in the sense that such modes of seeing would be. Whether this is to say that interpretation itself is not at play in perception, in the first form of seeing, in any capacity, is unclear, as the dichotomy Wittgenstein draws between those two modes of seeing is not necessarily so concrete. In fact this whole line of inquiry suggests that the lines between the two modes blur in some cases, and that some of the same factors are at play in both cases of seeing, even if the appraisals made that are influenced by those same factors are strikingly different or have qualitative distinctions between them).

The analogy also begins to allow for problems with the ‘picture-object’ concept to bubble to the surface, as the rationale for first entertaining the “now I see it as a picture-rabbit” utterance as a possible description of the image stems from certain intuitions that come with the definition supplied for the ‘picture-object’ as a concept, namely that it operates in such a way where someone can engage with it because of its likeness to something real, because of its reference to an exterior thing with which people have experience. Wittgenstein sums this up exactly, writing “One doesn’t *‘take’* what one knows to cutlery at a mealy *for* cutlery, any more than one ordinarily tries to move one’s mouth as one eats, or strives to move it” (Wittgenstein PII SXI p123). Thinking of seeing cutlery on a table in such terms as are implied by the rejected language usage in p121 involves ascribing a degree of deliberation to the act of seeing that is inappropriate to the process itself, much in

the same way one does not even think about moving their mouth while they eat a meal, since the action is so second-nature that it doesn't even register as a separate action, or an action a person must undertake deliberately and consciously.

### **IX – Lighting Up in Language**

Wittgenstein moves from here to proposing a language usage in relation to seeing a picture-object with multiple potential identifications within it, or multiple 'aspects', where the kind of talk used in the case of the person looking at the duck-rabbit and seeing only the rabbit, makes sense, and suggests something meaningful about the process of an aspect of an image 'lighting up.' This quite brief scenario proves to be quite a revelatory one, even if it echoes points made earlier, as it implies a particular kind of additional meaning to terms that suggest interpretive seeing, or seeing as. Wittgenstein writes: If someone says "Now it's a face for me," then one can ask him: "What changes are you alluding to?" (Wittgenstein PII SXI p124). The exclamation that the onlooker offers when they've noticed a face within the picture at which they are looking makes plain that an aspect of the image previously unrecognized has 'lit up,' allowing for the viewer to see the whole thing in a new light, in a new context.

This kind of instance would presumably be a clean and uncomplicated example of *seeing as*, where an interpretation of the image has allowed for a person to identify in it something that they did not see previously. However, the suddenness of the aspect's appearing clashes with the conception one would typically hold of interpretation, where the analysis of the image and the mental drawing of connections between it and other images of a similar nature and other observed objects in the world presumably would require the kind

of deliberation Wittgenstein dismisses as being at play in the case of the duck-rabbit taken only for the rabbit. What's more, the response by the individual speaking to the onlooker makes plain that, for the appraisal of the image to have shifted so suddenly, which the utterance made by the onlooker evinces, something must have *changed* for the onlooker, either in terms of the image, or in terms of how they've oriented themselves around it. The suddenness of this expression, and the fact that it takes the form of an exclamation, makes it seem as if the viewer has almost been struck by the shift in aspect, like something completely unnoticed previously leapt to the fore for the individual, and their whole mode seeing took on a new form in an instant.

In analysis, a dreamer might make such an exclamation when they arrive at a break-through (this term carries with it exactly the sense of the suddenness of the declaration here, the unexpectedness of the shift, and the arresting nature of its suddenly overtaking the dreamer's previous sense of the image of which they are relaying information), where suddenly some component of the underlying unconscious concerns that manifested in the dream as the image being discussed break to the surface, and change totally the impression the dreamer holds of the image they saw in sleep. In dream interpretation, however, the dreamer becomes cognizant at the arrival of such a break-through of their seeing-as; indeed, it may be the moment at which they have clarity for the first time as to their having seen some non-visual concern or some matter pressing to their psychological considerations *as* a visual image, where the delusive impression of their having *seen* perceptually in their sleep disperse for the first time, revealing what lay underneath. This need not be the case when the viewer says "now it's a face for me!" in relation to the image that they saw differently before uttering the remark; although the location of the shift temporally belies that thought again is seeping into their impression of the image here. And this makes plain a disjuncture



between seeing and seeing in dreams, where, in dreaming, the aspect of the image previously unnoticed now lighting up involves the conscious identification of the seepage of thought into the image (the seeing of thought, or the reclaiming of *seeing as*) while in looking at an object while awake, the new aspect registering does not fore the viewer in any capacity to identify that thought is intermingling with what they see, and may strike them simply as a new perception.

### **X – Aspect Shifts, Context, and Framing**

Wittgenstein's next example is one that suggests that such a shift can happen as a byproduct purely of context, where the other images surrounding the duck-rabbit inflect directly how a person sees the image itself, even if the shift induced by that context isn't one that coheres with what one might initially conceive of as the image's interpretation, and which carries fidelity to suggestions made about the immediacy of interpretation in relation to perception articulated in this exploration earlier. Wittgenstein proposes a scenario where a person encounters the duck-rabbit image surrounded by other images, writing:

I see two pictures, with the duck-rabbit surrounded by rabbits in one, by ducks in the other. I don't notice that they are the same. Does it *follow* from this that I *see* something different in the two cases?—it gives us a reason for using this expression here (Wittgenstein PII SXI p125).

In such a case as the one described above, where the duck-rabbit is presented in a context where the images that surround it, either images of ducks or images of rabbits, inflect what the onlooker registers the duck-rabbit image to be, the more and more muddy dichotomy suggested by Wittgenstein's initial proposal that seeing can happen in two capacities, in a perceptual capacity and in an interpretive capacity, becomes especially evident. Wittgenstein

qualifies this case by writing “I don’t notice that they are the same” precisely as to bring to a relief the tension between the fact that the duck-rabbit can be seen potentially as *either* a duck *or* as a rabbit, suggesting that registering either image in the depiction is an interpretive act of seeing, and that, and that seeing it as one thing or another, both in the previous case discussed and especially in this one, where the registering of the rabbit when the duck-rabbit is surrounded by rabbits and the duck when the duck-rabbit is surrounded by ducks, appears to be something more akin to the first case of seeing, to perceptual seeing. If this is the case, if one treats the mode of seeing that occurs when the person notices the rabbit in the duck-rabbit when it is surrounded by rabbits, and then sees the duck when the duck-rabbit is surrounded by ducks, and does not register that the duck-rabbit itself is the same image, and simply lends itself by its design to being seen one way or another, as being of the order of the “seeing,” and not “seeing as,” it invites someone seriously to entertain the proposal with which Wittgenstein closes the above posit, that the person looking at these two different presentations is in fact *seeing* two different things in each case, and not that they are seeing the duck-rabbit as one thing in the first case, and as something else in the other.

### **XI – Recognizing the Duck-Rabbit**

Wittgenstein then suggests the kind of reaction someone might exclaim at discovering that the duck-rabbit drawing contained in each of the two different pictures looked at by the individual in the previous premise are in fact the same image: “I saw it quite differently, I’d never have recognized it!” Now, that is an exclamation. And there is also a justification for it” (Wittgenstein PII SXI p126). In what manner the individual has discovered that the duck-rabbit is the same duck-rabbit in both different pictures is not

evident here; whether they've gleaned it through their own scrutiny of the images, or whether they've been informed of the duck-rabbit image being present and central in both pictures is unclear simply from the utterance employed above. But in addition, the manner in which they've ascertained that to be the case is in some ways irrelevant to the utterance itself, and to the point Wittgenstein is attempting to make by relaying it: the comment made by the individual once they are aware that the duck-rabbit is the same image present in both is, like the earlier statements of "I see a rabbit", or "I saw a duck," a statement of perception; by uttering "I saw it quite differently," the speaker is not implying any kind of interpretive *seeing as* of the nature outlined in the previous premises, but is making a statement of the kind that falls in line with statements about *seeing*, about perceptual image appraisal, even if some sort of change is implied by the statement in terms of how the image can be seen in one case or another.

The actual exclamation itself, however, lends itself here to the reader assuming that Wittgenstein is in fact correct in suggesting that, before the viewer of the two duck-rabbit-containing pictures is cognizant of the fact that the duck-rabbit is repeated in each, they saw two different, distinct things, a duck in one case, and a rabbit in the other, and that their seeing the duck-rabbit image in these two separate ways is not a seeing of the second nature, that because the image registered differently in the separate contexts, the images the viewer identified, or the likenesses, were different. The closing of the exclamation, where the viewer asserts that "I'd never have recognized it," affirms that to the viewer the two images were in fact separate, and that, therefore, they were not cognizant of interpretation at play, if it even was in the capacity that one might suspect. It seems at this point then that we should take such a case as the one of the person looking at the duck-rabbit superimposed in the two separate context-laden images (the one with ducks surrounding the duck-rabbit, the others

with rabbits surrounding the duck-rabbit) and identifying the duck-rabbit as a duck in one case and the rabbit as another as being one where interpretation in the manner associated with *seeing as* clearly is not at play, where the issue of aspects lighting up in an image, likewise, does not apply, since the viewer is not seeing the same image “in new lights” in each case, but is in fact seeing different things.

But this mode of comparison around the duck-rabbit, where the image is superimposed in two distinct contexts, one surrounded by ducks, the other by rabbits, and the viewer takes in the image in each separate context, and notices separate faces given what surrounds the “picture-object,” is not how a person would immediately intuit to engage in appraising such a picture that can shift back and forth in what the viewer registers it as being. Wittgenstein speaks to this, and potentially to other unusual qualities of the case described above, in one of his more cryptic posits during his investigation into visual appraisal. While this may not explicitly be what Wittgenstein means to address in his description of the unusualness of this kind of suggested context for observation, it’s certainly suggested, and its suggestion is important, since it carries with it further implications about the previously-proposed “picture-object” concept, and also addresses some of the potential contrivance that has carried through thus far in how engagement with image has been presented in Part II Section xi. Following his proposal of the exclaimed “I saw it quite differently,”

Wittgenstein writes:

I’d never have thought of superimposing the heads in this way, of comparing them in *this* way. For they suggest a different mode of comparison.

The head seen in *this* way hasn’t even the slightest similarity to the head seen in *that* way—although they are congruent (Wittgenstein PII SXI p127).

Intuitively, the onlooker wouldn’t expect to encounter the duck-rabbit in the two separate contexts, and wouldn’t anticipate the presentation. Indeed, the whole mode of presentation,

where the duck-rabbit is superimposed into the two different “framing” images, is one of which only a person devising a particular mode of viewing where a certain kind of appraisal of the image is induced into the viewer would naturally conceive<sup>10</sup>. And this is important, as it belies the fact that the seeing of the duck-rabbit as one thing in one context and another in the other is much closer to something perceptual than it is to something interpretive. After the viewer has realized that the central image in both “framing” pictures is the same, the duck-rabbit, they may very well “see anew” in thinking about how to present the image to induce similar responses from others.

### **XIII – Doing Away with the Picture-Object**

But the final point Wittgenstein makes is a critical one here, because based on how the image registers to the viewer in each case, before they’ve realized in both contexts that they are looking at the duck-rabbit, a comparison between the two images would seem unnecessary, or wouldn’t even jump to mind (it would seem like comparing apples to oranges), even though the duck-rabbit “picture-object” is the same in both cases, since indeed the viewer believes they are looking at two different images, since they are *seeing* two different things. If indeed we are to treat this case as a case of *seeing* in the first sense, of perceptual seeing, the possibility of the “picture-object” being an accurate way of describing the duck-rabbit, or two dimensional depictions of things in general, since the viewer can only

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<sup>10</sup> Such a case is of the kind that a therapist might engage in trying to position a sequence in a dream in a particular context for the dreamer, where either the identification of particular sequences that frame an image of primary concern for the viewer is used to help push upwards the underlying considerations dictating the appearance of the image, or where the bracketing of the dream itself into a context with borders demarcated by particular lived experiences that the therapist can identify as being especially pertinent to the image being analyzed are used to aid the viewer in unmasking the concern underlying the image they generated in their dream.

be *seeing* two different things, can only think that they are seeing two different things, if they are not *immediately* cognizant of the fact that they are looking at a 2-dimensional image. This is not to say that they are not aware that the thing at which they are looking is a 2-dimensional drawing, something that does not occupy space, that is representational; but they take the image to be the thing it is depicting, they identify what it depicts and engage with it in such order, placing primacy on the depiction. They do not see the picture-face *as* a picture-face; they do not see the picture-face *as* a face. They see a face. They do not see the duck-rabbit *as* a duck or a rabbit; they see a duck; they see a rabbit. This being a case of perceptual-seeing would be impossible otherwise. A person would have to begin with interpretation to identify anything in the image otherwise; they would have to work from the 2-dimensional image and construct from it an awareness of its depicting something.

This quality is evinced throughout this whole exploration of the issue of image appraisal thus far, and from the engagement with language usages around them as Wittgenstein presents them and interrogates them. The fact that a person in the moment engages with the 2-dimensional image like they would a real 3-dimensional thing is revelatory, and is especially critical when we return to thinking of dreams and of dreaming, since it makes plain that, while the dreamer is engaging with visual stimuli that are imagined, they perceive those things as being real while they sleep, and they do not “take the images *as* something,” they *see* the thing that has manifested itself visually. If in a dream, for example, I believe that I’m in the atrium of a large apartment complex with escalators stretching from the ground floor to the roof, I treat what I am seeing, where I am, as if it is real, I take it to be real. And I do not see something—some “sense-data” encountered by my body while it is asleep that has been transmuted into the dream or that has informed the pieces that constitute the dream I am undergoing (and also “generating”) or some underlying

psychological concern manifested into the imagery—*as* the apartment complex with the atrium and the escalator array; such a conception could only be applied after the fact. I *see* the atrium in the apartment building; I *see* the escalator. What’s more, when someone wakes from the dream, and returns to the world of “waking life,” they do not reconfigure their experience as being one where they saw something *as* something else. In relaying the dream to a friend, I would never say “In my dream I saw something *as* an apartment complex.” One, likewise, would not say “What I dreamt I took to be an apartment complex with an atrium and an escalator array that stretched to the roof of the building.” One would say “I dreamt I was in the atrium of an apartment building with an escalator that stretched to its roof” or “I dreamt I was in an apartment building, standing at its atrium, and that in front of me was a massive escalator array that went from the building’s base to the building’s roof.” Even after the fact, once I’m awake, and the unreality of a continuous escalator that does not wrap around levels, that continues in a constant procession upwards, has registered to me, I still would not think of what I saw and experienced in an interpretive capacity<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> This becomes complicated with lucid dreaming, where a person can register that they are dreaming while they are within a dreaming state, while they are “in the dream,” but such a revelation doesn’t result in an ‘aspect shift’ in the way necessitated by *seeing as*; the dreamer does not start to think that they are seeing something *as* a certain thing because they are cognizant of its non-reality; instead, they become aware of their ability to transform the thing, to dictate what it is they see. They become free to transform the trappings around them at will, but they do not register their seeing as being markedly non-perceptual seeing. Even if they begin to alter the fixtures of their dreams, they still *see* the things perceptually, like they would if they were awake and looking at something in the manner they do at the duck-rabbit

## Interpretation

Through interpretation, through the mediating forces supplied by relaying the dream through language to another (again, likely a therapist or psychologist), a person can shift to seeing their perception (or what in the dream registered like perception) *as* a certain thing, indeed can even come to re-contextualize what they “saw” while they slept as being a case of *seeing as*, but this largely requires a person’s identifying that what it is they saw in the dream was a manifestation of likely a non-visual artifact of the unconscious pressing to the surface of the mind and taking form *as* a particular physical or structural thing within the dream. But this very quality, that the thing seen initially in the dream registered to the dreamer perceptually, that they *saw* something and took it to be a certain thing without a striking and apparent interpretive function rising to the fore, carries over even after the dreamer has awoken, and has engaged in a mediation of their dream where, through interpretation, they’ve arrived at an understanding of the image’s symbolic significance. The actual experience they had of seeing the image in their dream remains an experience of perception, even after the dreamer has become aware that other forces were at play that inflected the image, that indeed even inspired them to make/generate the image while they dreamt.

This phenomenon is also at play in the case of the duck-rabbit even after the possible shift over to being able to *see as* with the duck-rabbit has been made, which Wittgenstein articulates in the next premise. Wittgenstein describes this shift and the



continuity of the initial perceptual seeing being evinced through language usages describing the duck-rabbit image, writing:

I'm shown a picture-rabbit and asked what it is; I say "It's a rabbit". Not "Now it's a rabbit". I'm reporting my perception.—I'm shown the duck-rabbit and asked what it is; I *may* say "It's a duck-rabbit". But I may also react to the question quite differently.—The answer that it is a duck-rabbit is again the report of a perception; the answer "Now it's a rabbit" is not. Had I replied "It's a rabbit", the ambiguity would have escaped me, and I would have been reporting my perception (Wittgenstein PII Sxi p128).

Something especially of note here is the actual ambiguity of the initial question posed to the viewer, of "what is it?". While the utterance is an immensely terse one, and a simple question in that it is of the kind that even a child could be expected to answer with ease, what it is that is being asked of the individual remains somewhat unclear. It's not immediately apparent whether the question being asked is one akin to "what is it depicting?," or closer to "what is the drawing?" or to "What do you see?". And it is in part for this reason that there is such an abundance of potential answers to the question in this case.

In the first case, where the individual is asked and responds with the answer "it's a rabbit," the report supplied is one of perceptual seeing, as we've explored previously, since it attests to the image being a rabbit and implies no kind of mediation on the part of the viewer as to how the rabbit is seen. The answer "now it's a rabbit" isn't supplied again because it would be unintuitive as a response, unless the viewer were cognizant of the possibility for the duck-rabbit to be seen either as a rabbit or as a duck, and even in the case that they were aware of how the image functions, the answer "now it's a rabbit" would still seem to be an unnatural one, since, if indeed the viewer knew the duck-rabbit and how it behaves as a 2-dimensional image, they likely wouldn't describe their experience with the image in the temporal manner implied by "now it's a rabbit," since the utterance carries with it an implication that the image itself is shifting, not their impression of it (which, again, if the

person were aware of how the duck-rabbit functioned, if they'd *seen* it both possible manners previously, they'd likely described saying "I see it *as* a rabbit," since they would likely employ their language to locate the change in how the image registers with themselves, not with the duck-rabbit itself).

Wittgenstein also notes that a person could also respond to the initial question with "it's a duck-rabbit," which, based on the first proposed response, suggests that an individual is far more likely, if they've encountered the duck-rabbit previously, and are aware of how the image operates, to respond to the question by identifying the duck-rabbit image as the duck-rabbit image than they are to describe "what it is" in the expected supplying of a "perceptual seeing statement" or the unusual terms of the utterance "now it's a rabbit." The response of "It's a duck-rabbit" seems to suggest a reaffirmation of the idea of the picture-object, but such a response would likely only be supplied if the individual looking at the duck-rabbit were familiar with the image already and were aware of the possibility for the image to "shift" in how it is seen between one thing and the other. In such a case, then, the response would not be a refutation of what's been suggested by the analysis of the premises leading up to 128 supplied herein, since that individual would likely have already gone through the experience of seeing the image *perceptually*, identifying one thing in it, and then maybe the other, and the response of "it's a duck-rabbit," would only be possible because, after being informed of the possibility for the image to register as the duck or as the rabbit, the quality of the image to shift—indeed the fact that the duck-rabbit is something that *exists* not so much as a representation but as an exercise in gestalt—would take primacy for the viewer in relation to the image over what they might actually *see*—what they might identify the image to depict—in looking at it.

But again, even in such a case, the report the individual is making is a perceptual report, since it involves an identification of the duck-rabbit image, a perceiving of the image in the terms that it is appearing (which, though it resembles what the “picture-object” concept suggests about how people view images, does not carry with it the same implications at all, since it does not require that first a person identifies explicitly that they are looking at a 2-dimensional object, then, after that identification and the engagement with that object, see an affinity between it and something within the real world; instead, the order is reversed, where the person sees the image first and identifies in it the duck or the rabbit, then, after being told the nature of the image as a kind of gestalt, treats the image as chiefly a 2-dimensional image that can be seen in multiple manners). What’s more, Wittgenstein qualifies this potential response by saying the viewer “*may say*” it’s a duck-rabbit, implying that, while this answer is a possible one to the question of “what is it?,” it’s not necessarily fair to expect it as a response, something that denotes the response of “it’s a duck-rabbit” itself as being a less immediately intuitive one than “it’s a rabbit,” one that could only really be anticipated in a context where the viewer has seen the image previously.

And “now it’s a rabbit,” unlike the other two potential responses suggested herein, wouldn’t be a perceptual statement, because of how it recognized the possibility for the image to register differently at different points in time, an inflection of the image itself that is interpretive, that requires a blurring together of thinking with seeing in the viewer, since the potential for the image to appear differently to the viewer is not something actually inhered within the duck-rabbit image itself. There’s nothing about the drawing that allows for the viewer to register that the image can register in two distinct manners to the onlooker, nothing that suggests a possibility for the image to be seen as one thing or another. Either the viewer sees the rabbit, or the duck. And once they’ve seen both depictions within the

image, they can ascertain the manner in which the image can be appraised in two distinct manners. This would mean that, for the viewer to say “now it’s a rabbit,” they again would have to be cognizant of how the image can be seen in two ways, would likely have had to see the rabbit, and then the duck. Any other conception of the utterance “now it’s a rabbit” making sense as a response in relation to an initial impression of the duck-rabbit would require the viewer to be clairvoyant, and even in that case, the description supplied of what the duck-rabbit “is” would not be one of a “sense-impression” in the sense that has been discussed throughout so far.

What remains most unclear here is *what*—if there is something explicitly that Wittgenstein means to suggest by saying that “I may react to the question quite differently”—the viewer may say in response to the initial question of “What is it?” It is for this reason that the identification of the initial question’s ambiguity is so critical, since its ambiguity in relation to what precisely the “it” is that the viewer is meant to identify may well be responsible for the possibility that a viewer “might respond to the question quite differently.” A viewer may well recognize that the question does not necessarily “cohere” with what they see, or how they see the duck-rabbit, and they might respond by asking for a clarification. They may try and delineate what it is they see “in” the image, or what they identify the image to be, from the image itself. They may offer a response that is anecdotal, or that inflects the questioner’s sense of what the image “is” with details unrelated to the image itself but strikingly interconnected to the viewer’s perception of it (this would be a case of *seeing as* in the manner Wittgenstein initially fashions the two modes of seeing, although it may not actually so rigidly fit to that bifurcated model for modes of seeing). They may say “it’s a rabbit, but I also know it’s a 2-dimensional drawing,” where the seeing of the rabbit is a perceptual mode of seeing, thereby keeping with the idea that the “picture-object”

model is inapplicable as a way of categorizing seeing in relation to 2-dimensional pictures, but which also offers clear acknowledgment of the viewer's recognition that the image at which they are looking is a 2-dimensional image, and not a *real* living rabbit (this case is conceivable, sure, but, like the "it's a duck-rabbit" response, isn't likely to be encountered in the kind of scenario described above). What begins to take form from this potential multiplicity of different responses Wittgenstein suggests with the middle remark in this posit is something actually quite critical about images, about "meaning" in relation to images, and about the manner in which language inflects visual perception and image appraisal.

The question "what is it?" asks for the viewer to conceive of their answer within a particular framework, wherein their relaying of their sense of the duck-rabbit is to be presented in a manner that aligns with the initial question. Because of this quality of the question, and because of the ambiguity of the question as it relates to what "it" is meant to register as being to the viewer, the person must assess first if contextually the question being asked is one requesting information about their impression of the image, and must from there attempt to align what it is they see (or what it is they take the image to be) with the brackets posed by the initial question. The broadness of the question and the non-immediacy of what is meant by "it" creates a framework where the viewer's sense of the image is inflected by trying to align what it is that they see with the "frame" implied by the question (which granted, is a pretty ambiguous frame, but which, because of this opaqueness, and because the viewer is not being asked to make a comment on what they see, but instead on what the thing they're looking at *is*, leads the viewer to try and search for an interpretation of the question that allows for their "sense impression" to be a sensible one in their relaying).

The question itself, in terms of how it forces the viewer to reconfigure their actual seeing so that it coheres with the framework of what it is that they are being asked to convey,

evinces how language forces a viewer to describe their perception in a way that alters the actual perception, or that re-contextualizes the experience of looking at the image in a way that permanently changes that impression. Seeing, then, occurs in a manner directed by language, and acts of seeing can be mutated or reshaped based on the language accompanying those acts, based on the linguistic context in which a person encounters an image, and through the formulation of words the viewer chooses to best relay or to communicate elements of their seeing to another, and based on the kind of language used to request from the viewer an inclination as to what it is they see, as to how they see, and as to what they notice and identify in the images at which they look.

If someone goes to an art museum, for example, and looks at a painting of women dancing in masks, one produced in the cubist style (think here of Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger*, a part of the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art), how they see the image, what they see *in* the image, will be heavily inflected by whether they look first at the accompanying statement fixed next to the image, or whether they ignore it completely. If they glance at the painting first, then at the statement, then back up at the painting, their impression of the painting will be shaped by their newfound awareness of the artist, and of the period in which it was produced. They may initially see simply women in masks, and identify to some degree the colors used to depict the women, to paint upon their faces the masks. But after glancing at the placard, they will start to notice similarities and discontinuities with other paintings of the same time, will start to identify embellishments and flourishes within the brushstrokes that are signatures of the artist, will begin to consider the particular painting at which they are looking with other paintings produced by the same artist. If, by contrast, they were to decide to forego completely looking at the placard, and instead sit and gaze at the painting for a prolonged period of time, taking it in, observing and

absorbing its particularities and its subtleties, their sense of the painting would be a radically different one.

Does this difference in what is noticed rely on that same division as the one between “seeing” and “seeing as”? It’s not immediately clear here, although saying simply in one case that “I see women in masks” or “I see a painting of women in masks” (which, again, would be unintuitive, although it makes more sense to speak this way in *this context* than it would when speaking of the duck-rabbit or the “picture-face”) and in the other “I see a Picasso” or “I see it as a Picasso, one that depicts five nude women in masks” does not capture completely the differences in what is observed depending on the awareness of the viewer about the work or the context in which the image is being observed. Now, what we are speaking about is largely context, and so we are speaking more of how information dictates perception than how language usages around images do, but this is still information being presented in language, and the terms chosen to present that information no doubt inform how the viewer engages with that information before looking at the painting.

Suppose, for a moment, another onlooker at the museum pulls the viewer aside and says something to the effect of “notice their eyes,” and the viewer takes in the eyes of the women in such a manner that a new aspect of the painting “lights up” and the viewer’s whole sense of the painting reforms. The viewer’s sense of the painting has changed, and that change has been inspired by an utterance, one that carries with it certain presumptions about the image, about the painting, and about what should serve as a point of focus for someone engaging with the work. Suppose, instead, that somebody pulls the viewer aside and says “notice the angular nature of the contours around the center of the face, and the simplicity in form and the distinctness between the different colors used to paint the eyes, that they’re not blended, and that they’ve been painted in a way that somebody might initially

take as crude,” and the viewer re-examines the image with a scrutiny to these particular formal details around the eyes in such a fashion that, again, something revelatory appears to the viewer upon their inspection, and the whole “sense” of the painting transforms, a new aspect again lights up.

Is this a different aspect? Of course! In both cases, the viewer’s sense of the image is redirected and informed by an utterance, by a suggestion made in language. But is the thing to which that suggestion is made the same in both cases? The answer would seem to be both yes and no. In both cases the other gallery-goer is making reference to the eyes of the women in suggesting that the viewer inspect the image differently, but the terms in which they are describing them, the manner in which they have appraised the image, are radically different, so much so that the actual features of the painting being highlighted may themselves be different features. And yet they are parts of the same thing.

This sort of case makes plain how language can inflect and inform the sense of the image the viewer has, how it is that they see the thing at which they look. In both cases, the initial viewer comes away having scrutinized the same image, but with totally different impressions of the thing. Unlike in the duck-rabbit case, though, where the image presented offers two different “depictions” for the viewer to identify, where the viewer sees a rabbit, and then a duck, and in that way, “sees” two different things explicitly, here, the viewer seems to be “seeing the image differently” in the two cases. What’s not immediately apparent, here, however, is whether the *seeing* that’s occurring is a perceptual seeing of the image strictly, in which case the elements of the image identified in each of the two different viewings actually involve identifying qualities inhered within the image, or whether the seeing occurring is a form of *seeing as*, where the identified qualities of the image are ones that rely upon some interpretive mode for the viewer, and which may involve a kind of mapping onto



the painting certain qualities not actually evinced by or contained within the image itself. But the frequency with which these kinds of separate forms of seeing occur, the seriousness with which they're often discussed, and the kind of value ascribed to them in how they actually can afford for revelation about images to appear, make plain that, if there are indeed two different modes of seeing, those two modes do not exist in some kind of hierarchical relationship where perception is privileged over interpretation. And even more pressing, by this point in Wittgenstein's investigation and in our exploration of that discussion of how we see, the boundaries between the two modes of seeing proposed at the outset are wholly blurred, and some relationship between seeing and thinking that carries through in all cases of observing an image is suggested. But it is evident here, if language is informing how a viewer sees the image at which they are looking, that thought seeps into what we see, and that simply classifying that thought as being something interpretive, something that renders the whole act of seeing markedly separate from seeing in a *strictly perceptual* sense, actually wrongly categorizes how thought works, and actively misguides us into thinking of seeing as a whole phenomenon in a manner that is wrongheaded.

But to return to the suggestions made at the close of our exploration of language and its influence over image appraisal, as we explored through the sections on the painting of the women in masks. We will resume our discussion of p128, around which some critical pieces of information have still been left on the table, but this juncture renders a prime opportunity to explore an element of seeing about which we've spoken quite a bit thus far, but for which no explanation has been supplied, no serious inquiry has been endeavored. One component of Wittgenstein's conception of seeing, one that is critical in understanding how people see images and how those images register in different manners depending on how the person is seeing, such that they take on a multiplicity of meanings, such that new, separate qualities

come to the fore in our looking at something again, in our re-examining it and seeing it anew, that has gone largely unexplored so far is this idea of something “lighting up,” of a new aspect of an image appearing suddenly to a viewer and changing their sense of the thing at which they are looking. While it’s certainly been at play in much of our exploration of the duck-rabbit and during our refutation of the idea of the picture-object, how the phenomenon operates, and how it relates to the dichotomized model for seeing Wittgenstein proposes at the opening of Part II Section XI, has largely gone without explanation. This hasn’t been done purely because such a process is one that can be understood intuitively; in fact, far from it. Aspect change is one of the elements of our visual experience of the world with the utmost primacy, and is at play basically whenever we have a revelation about visual imagery, about the images at which we look. And the phenomenon serves as a neat intersection point for much we have yet to explore, but that has been suggested, about both image appraisal, its relying on some sort of relationship between thought and vision, and about images themselves. Wittgenstein first addresses the issue of aspect change overtly in the premise that follows p128, writing:

The change of aspect. “But surely you’d say that the picture has changed altogether now!”

But what is different: my impression? My attitude?—Can I say? I *describe* the change like a perception; just as if the object had changed before my eyes. (Wittgenstein PII Sxi p129).

Again, here we encounter an issue around our locating through language what precisely has changed when a new aspect emerges for the viewer upon their glancing at the image. Unlike in the case before, where what the “it” in the question “what is it?” creates an ambiguity for the viewer that makes it more difficult to communicate what they see in the image at which they are looking without mutating or reforming their conception of the image, here, with the initial utterance of “But surely you’d say that the picture has changed altogether now”, the

language usage creates an issue around localizing what about the image permitted for a new aspect to appear, for a quality previously unnoticed to emerge while the viewer sees the image that reshapes their sense of the thing at which they are looking. Wittgenstein here is gesturing to the complicated interplay between viewer and image, and to certain conceptions we might hold about things at which we look in relation to our thoughts. To say that the picture has changed altogether seems actually quite natural as a response somebody would have to another person saying “I see something completely different,” or “I see the picture so differently, or “what I see has shifted!” or “I see something new!” Here, the viewer looking at the image, for whom a certain new element, an aspect, has “lit up,” indeed sees the image in a new light, and that shift, where something wholly distinct from how the image registered previously, makes the image itself seem different, seem changed. The issue here, of course, is that the image *itself* hasn’t actually shifted; it has remained the same, in how it exists separate from the viewer. Yet the ability for an appraisal of the image, for a seeing of the thing, to register as so wholly divorced from the manner in which it was seen upon first glance, renders it to the viewer as *changed* on some level, like it itself has shifted into being something wholly new. The image cannot really be chimerical, and yet it seems to the viewer as if it must be, given how distinct, how *different*, their seeing the image is now. Yet the fact that the viewer describes what they see still in perceptual terms, saying “I see it differently,” makes it appear as if the way in which the onlooker conceives of the image is indeed one where the image *has* shifted. And this identification by Wittgenstein of the “seeing anew” taking form in language as an act of perceptual seeing also draws the reader’s attention to the difficulty and opacity presented by trying to *locate* what has changed.

Is it that the impression of the image held by the viewer has changed, or that some detail the viewer didn’t register previously floated to the fore for them upon looking and

realigned their whole conception of the image? Is this a case of different associations, different sentiments than those present upon first viewing inspiring the viewer to see the image at which they are looking in a wholly new way? It's not immediately clear, and part of the issue here comes with trying to *localize* the change in aspect, trying to pinpoint a particular location at which the shift has occurred. If the image itself indeed has not shifted, then it would seem to follow that the change must be an interior one for the viewer, something within them shifted such that their sense of the image is now changed.

But for this to be the case, it would require us to adopt a model for looking that we haven't entertained in any capacity previously, namely one where a viewer generates an *interior* image of the thing at which they are looking, and that their sense of the exterior image being appraised relies on the manner in which this *interior* image has been given form internally. But this sort of model seems to make no sense, since it takes away the idea of reference, and it nullifies much of what has been discussed in relation to seeing as. If this were to be the model that made sense for image appraisal, then the case of the duck-rabbit registering differently based on the "frame" in which it's presented would make no sense, since in those cases, the duck-rabbit itself would be isolated, inscribed into the viewer's interior, and then inspected in isolation, such that the other images around it have no bearing on the interior image. Additionally, if this model were to be the case, then changes of aspect would result from vividness and definition, where the initial seeing would be like a rough sketch, and the "seeing anew" closer to a finished draft of the image. But we are talking about a person seeing an image *differently*, not more vividly, and no premium has been placed on the latter form of seeing over the former. Indeed, no real hierarchy of modes of seeing has been implied, now that the initial bifurcated model for seeing has been drawn into question. So it can't possibly be that the change in aspect is a result of some internal image

(which the term “impression,” which has been used to describe acts of seeing throughout this work, implies; although it is not meant to be used in this sense here, except for in the above-quoted p129 from Wittgenstein) being refigured or re-etched.

An internal picture framework too would largely clash with much Wittgenstein argues in relation to language, namely that there exists no “pre-linguistic” mode of cognition, where thought exists in a capacity uninfluenced by language. The internal-picture model would imply that this is not the case, and would imply that something akin to a private language is possible; and since we’ve already discussed the matter of language inflecting how we see, the interior picture explanation ceases to be sensible. Wittgenstein arrives at this very point in p133 of Part II Section xi, writing:

The concept of the ‘inner picture’ is misleading, since the model for this concept is the ‘outer picture’; and yet the uses of these concept-words are no more like one another than the uses of “numeral” and “number”. (Indeed, someone who was inclined to call numbers ‘ideal numerals’ could generate a similar confusion by doing so.) (Wittgenstein PII Sxi p133).

The point here is really driven home by how obviously incongruous the concepts of “inner picture” and “outer picture” actually are with one another, rendering this kind of conception of visual perception, which presumes a possibility of a kind of mirroring, truly delusive, basically nonsensical. An outer image functions like a referent, in that the individual does observe it and make appraisals of it, but the impression that the individual has of the image is not the kind of thing that exists purely through a relationship of reference between an interior and an exterior. Likewise, the inner picture model would convolute the issue of reference in a profound and delusive way, since it would require the individual to see an outer image, reproduce it accurately and unconsciously *within* their mind, have that new image exist in a relatively fixed capacity, and then inspect the new *inner* image as a referent,

making judgments based on something present internally, divorced from an outside world. This kind of model for perception would in fact be patently *non-perceptual*, and would rely fully on a kind of deliberate and scrutinizing thinking that actually holds little weight when taken into consideration with how we *actually* think about images, how we actively engage with images, as has been demonstrated consistently throughout this investigation of image appraisal thus far.

But if this is not the case, then the change that occurs when a person notices a new aspect, indeed is “struck” by a new view of the object (notice the wording here; it’s an intuitive description, yet it highlights the complicated nature of the concept), becomes especially hard to explain, since it would seem that the change in how the image is perceived would require for the image to change itself. The fact that it does not, even though the whole conception the viewer holds of the image has shifted radically, creates such a level of confusion for the viewer because of the degree to which it does not cohere with the actual sensory experience of looking at an object and registering something completely different about the image being appraised. And this kind of complicated sense of incoherence in relation to the aspect shift stems largely from attempting to give explanation to how the image can shift in how it is seen by trying to locate a source of change, by trying to pinpoint a particular facet of the viewing experience, or to identify a very particular and discrete terminus with the image in relation to the viewer from which the change in aspect can become sensible. Again, the image has not changed, and what exactly, in one particular instance of a new aspect “lighting up” for the viewer, allowed for the change in image appraisal to occur, cannot be taken to be common across all cases where a person “sees anew” in relation to imagery. The going-between for the viewer in seeing the duck-rabbit, where the viewer may register the rabbit, and then suddenly see the image completely

differently, as the duck, is not a kind of shift that happens uniformly across cases, even if the resulting shift in appraisal is the same.

Further, identifying in an image something that was not seen previously does not nullify the previous perception of the image, or render it wholly inaccessible. While it may be difficult for the original perception to be *reclaimed*, where the viewer both remains aware of their first “seeing” of the image and can still *see* the image in the same manner that it was seen initially, it is possible, although it may occur now with a certain kind of deliberation on the part of the viewer that did not factor into the initial seeing of the image and the kind of registering the viewer did of that image when it was first encountered. That a “going-between” of image appraisals is possible, and that these different image appraisals are articulated by the viewer in perceptual terms, suggests a model for a viewer’s sense of an image where the image for the viewer consists of an overlay of different “sense-impressions,” different seen qualities that begin to stack on top of each other and that overlay in how the viewer conceives of the image itself.

Again, this conception of visual appraisal thrusts itself forward through the kinds of language usages people employ when actually speaking of a shift in how the image is seen, in asserting the registering of a new and distinct visual appraisal of the image of which they previously had a different sense. Wittgenstein identifies this quality of the language through which people speak of aspect shifts by pointing to an unusual dissonance between how a person both asserts that they’ve seen something new and makes reference to the continuity of their first visual impression when speaking of something “lighting up” for them in relation to an image. Wittgenstein writes of this quality of the articulation of a new impression of the image that:

“Ah, now I see *this*”, I might say (pointing to another picture, for example). This has the form of a report of a new perception. The

expression of a change of aspect is an expression of a *new* perception and, at the same time, an expression of an unchanged perception (Wittgenstein PII Sxi p130).

What's immediately notable here, unlike in the context presented with the duck-rabbit in p128, is that the viewer expresses their registering of a new aspect by saying “now I see *this*,” and that in this context, such an utterance makes sense, is even an intuitive way of phrasing the expression of something new appearing. And unlike in the previous context, where the statement is *markedly* not of the kind that articulates a perception, here, as Wittgenstein notes in the closing of this posit, the remark is a gesture towards a new perception, a sort of exclamation of a new registering of something about the image that was not noticed previously, but is also a reference to the initial perception. This occurs because the exclamation of “now I see this” is one a recognition of the temporality of the aspect change is couched in the utterance, because the viewer is recognizing themselves, is, by making themselves the subject of the utterance, as opposed to the image at which they are looking, locating that they are, at this particular moment in time, seeing something distinct from what they saw previously. Unlike the dismissed utterance “Now it’s a rabbit” in p128, where the phraseology implies that the image has actually shifted, has changed as time has passed, here, the viewer recognizes in their expression that their perception has shifted, that they’ve identified something new in the image, and their utterance does not here imply that their new observation is contingent on a certain kind of shift manifesting itself visually within the image<sup>12</sup>. And what’s complicated in this case is the manner in which the expression of the

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<sup>12</sup> This is an impossibility in regards to images, maybe with the exception of something like a hologram, although such a case is an unusual one, since a hologram is definitively not a *fixed* image, and therefore does not cohere with our expectation of an image with which we’d engage, and bears more in common with a sequence of images, or with a film, where multiple images are being shown over a set period of time. Exploring perception to images of this nature would no doubt be a revelatory pursuit, but the line of investigation is not relevant to dreaming, and for this reason, we will not be engaging with cases like these. Still,



new visual perception is at once a reference to the previous impression of the image; indeed, to say that the viewer is *seeing as* in this case seems hard to justify, as there is nothing that qualifies that the elements of the image identified in the new perceptual identification are ones that are inflected by a certain level of different associations divorced from the image or different concerns not immediately relevant to the image at hand overtaking the viewer's perception or inflecting the manner in which the viewer sees the image; and yet, just as with the previous case of a person using now in reference to the thing at which they are looking, the viewer's acknowledgment of their perception being rooted in time makes plain that there is some degree of thought at play in their current visual appraisal. To call that thought interpretive seems too strong, but there is still some degree of thinking at play, since, for the viewer to be able to recognize that their impression of the image has changed, they must be cognizant of their previous impression of the image, and they must have that awareness sit in play with the new aspect appearing to them. The viewer, in having a new aspect light up and exclaiming in response "now I see this!" acknowledges at once their current perception and the perceptual shift that has occurred, but their recognition of the temporal dependency of this change and its contingency to a previous visual appraisal belies a certain level of cognizance on their part of both their former impression and how their current visual impression is a disjunction from that previous appraisal. This is to say that when the new aspect appears to the viewer, two impressions of the image are present for the viewer in unison, not in a capacity where one and the other are *seen* in unison, but where the viewer holds an awareness of their first sense impression in relation to the second.

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they are important to note as curious challenges or exceptions to what else has been suggested about visual perception thus far, and no doubt would complicate our sense of seeing in relation to time passing.

Does such a case qualify as one of perceptual seeing, then? While the viewer is making a statement *about* their current perception, the awareness that they hold immediately of their previous perception of the object in observing the new one, something which developed in response to the viewer looking at the object and noticing it, but which itself is not contained within the object, is not a *detail* of the object, but is an impression of it (not an internal picture, but an awareness for the viewer of the image as it exists separate from the viewer), makes the observation by the viewer here one that is not purely perceptual, where thought is intermingling with how the viewer sees the object in the present. Again, this kind of thinking may not be interpretive, but that the viewer is aware of something separate from the object but related to their own engagement with it in the moment that they observe something distinct makes plain that such a case as this one is not *purely* perceptual in the sense that Wittgenstein's initially proposed first mode of seeing seems to dictate. But the statement made here isn't patently non-perceptual; it's simply not purely perceptual. Aspect changes occur constantly in our engagement with images, and the moments where a new mode of seeing occurs to the onlooker, where their whole sense of the object shifts, is one of those instances where the intermingling between seeing and thinking occurs most explicitly, most obviously. While the relationship between what thoughts occur to the viewer at the moment at which they've seen anew and the manner in which their seeing of an image has shifted remains varied case-by-case, and basically impossible to delineate definitively from simply noting the seepage of the viewer's cognitive concerns into their observing the image in front of them, the occurrence of a seepage, or of a kind of blurring between thought and vision, remains quite apparent.

Wittgenstein addresses this matter just a few posits further into Part II Section XI, when describing the case of an individual making an exclamation when they see a rabbit run across a landscape in front of them. Wittgenstein writes:

I look at an animal; someone asks me: “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 stands to the experience somewhat as a cry to pain.  
(Wittgenstein PII SXI p138)

In the first case here, the viewer is not actively *thinking* in relaying what it is they see. The process in which they are engaging is one very much like that of the person responding to “what is it?” in the duck-rabbit case who answers, “It’s a rabbit.” Their response appears to be like a description, but it’s much more an identification of the object than anything else, something where the kind of thinking that is occurring—if it can even really be termed thought—is so immediate and second-nature that it happens almost unconsciously, and the viewer, therefore, is not expressing any special awareness or cognizance to their position, to their visual experience of the object, in simply saying “a rabbit.” They are reporting their perception, which, again, given how language both shapes our perceptions, and how intuitively we engage with language, does not require the viewer to be particularly careful or considerate in supplying their response. Likewise, the visual experience the viewer is having when they simply look at the rabbit and then report to another what it is they see is an unassuming one, in that there is no facet to it as an experience for the viewer that makes the viewer markedly *cognizant* that they are experiencing something, that dictates a particular need to be thinking about seeing.

But in the second case, where the viewer observes a landscape and, as a rabbit runs across the landscape, exclaims “a rabbit!”, they are speaking of something that has shifted in their immediate field of vision. That shift, which occurs suddenly, requires an awareness of something *changing* for the viewer, and that possibility for the recognition of the shift occurring as it occurs requires the viewer to be cognizant of the landscape as it was before the rabbit ran across, and to register in contrast with the visual impression left during that prior moment in time the new appearance of the rabbit. The viewer, then, to identify that the impression that they held of the landscape has changed, must be cognizant at once of the previous moment in time and the current one, and to hold the previous impression in mind and contrast it with the current moment requires the viewer to be thinking about what it is at which they are looking. But the second case is not a report in the manner that the first is, in that the identification being made here is not as simple, is not something of the nature of the response given to the question “what do you see?”. The exclamation “is forced from us,” as Wittgenstein puts it, in that it springs out from the viewer upon noticing the rabbit, identifying what it is, and then registering how the impression of the landscape has shifted because of the rabbit’s running past. The registering of the rabbit and identifying it to be such is much like the first case with the report, in that the viewer does not have to *think* intensively to realize that what it is they are seeing is a rabbit; instead, much like the first case, they look at the rabbit running past on the field and identify it to be a rabbit.

But what’s critically different here is that the individual looking at the landscape here has noticed the manner in which that landscape has changed, and that the appearance of the rabbit demarcates a shift. The exclamation that accompanies that shift, while it is as a response something purely immediate, is a description of a perception, unlike in the first case, where the remark of “a rabbit” is simply just a report of a perception. And this makes the

meaning of Wittgenstein's closing analogy between the exclamation at seeing the rabbit run past and moments where people cry out in pain. In the case of the pain discussions upon which Wittgenstein embarks during the first part of the *Philosophical Investigations* (like those quoted at the beginning of this exploration into dreaming), much is done to delineate pain as a sensation from those sorts of things we typically consider to be "known," as it is a sensation, something actually experienced internally by an individual, that are by their very nature, because of their immediacy and because of their behavior as sensations, are divorced from thought. The cry that a person makes when they are injured, then, is not quite what one would conceive of typically as language, and is certainly not what someone would classify as attempt to express and convey the *nature* of that pain to an individual such that the same experience is fully *sensible* to the other person and can be *known* (since, again, pain is not the kind of thing that is known, but that is experienced), but it is in some way descriptive, in that it relays to another that the person who has injured themselves is experiencing pain (it does not purport to make that pain discretely sensible, but it makes plain that the pain is being experienced).

The description in the case of a person crying out "Ow!" when they are in pain, however, does not relay anything about how their sensation *feels* to them in the moment, and in this way does not dictate that the individual in pain is thinking when they let fly the exclamation; instead, it simply alerts another that they are currently experiencing pain. The case of the viewer exclaiming "a rabbit!" when the rabbit bolts across the landscape in front of them, by contrast, is one where they are actually describing their perception by letting out the cry, since they are conveying, even if only through two words, that before they saw only the landscape, but now they see a rabbit running across the landscape. The fact that their perception is one that consists of moving parts and that is contingent upon an array of

different visual details interacting with one another in a particular context at a particular moment in time requires that for the viewer to be able to make that perception something that is evident and sensible to another, they are thinking about those contingencies and those multiple facets of what they see when they let out “a rabbit!” Wittgenstein clarifies this matter in his next posit, writing:

But since the exclamation is the description of a perception, one can also call it the expression of thought.—Someone who looks at an object need not think of it; but whoever has the visual experience expressed by the exclamation is also *thinking* of what he sees. (Wittgenstein PII SXI p139)

To identify something in an object, to look at an object and see it, a person does not need to engage in thought; they need only look at the object and notice it, and the noticing of the object or the image does not require that person to think about the object or to deliberate upon how they are appraising it visually. To be able to report what someone sees when looking at an object, they need only supply through what they say the identification they’ve made in that object. But actually to *describe* the perceptual experience of the thing, to relay through language more than just the identification of the object or the observation of the image and give voice to the perception that they’ve had, or that they are having in the moment, a person must be thinking about that perception, must be thinking about it in order to engage with it in language and to try and relay it through description.

In the case where someone is shown an image of a smiling face and asked what they see, when they respond “a smile,” they are not actually *describing* their perception. Instead, they are identifying the image at which they are looking, what they’ve noticed through their perception. But if the person in the same case responds by saying “I see two eyes, next to each other, and beneath those, I see a mouth, pulled together into a smile,” they are supplying description not of what they saw, but of their seeing, and this kind of description

of the perception requires the individual to be thinking about seeing in the moment. It seems obvious here that we are in danger of suggesting that thinking seeps into all acts of seeing, that seeing and thinking are inextricable from one another; such a suggestion would invite the consideration of the idea that an *accurate* appraisal is an impossibility, since all acts of seeing then would be ones mediated by thought. We will not put to bed this concern about thinking intermingling with seeing in all cases where our eyes are open and we are looking at objects and images in the world around us here. But what will be put to rest here, and which previous passages of this paper have been meticulously defusing piece-by-piece, is the idea that all cases where thought saturates sight are cases where what's occurring is interpretive, are cases of *seeing as*. Wittgenstein writes in the posit 140 that: "And that's why the lighting up of an aspect seems half visual experience, half thought" (Wittgenstein PII SXI p140).

We've been through many cases so far where a new aspect appearing to a viewer is markedly perceptual, or where what the viewer is seeing in the image is not resulting from an interpretive gaze. If the viewer sees the duck in the duck-rabbit, and then sees the rabbit, and does not arrive at these two separate visual appraisals by scrutinizing the image searching for a separate mode of seeing, the byproduct of their sight is not something *seen as*; it is indeed something seen. And multiple aspects absolutely exist for visual imagery; nothing we've said so far suggests explicitly that there is one definitive mode of seeing for any particular image. Aspects light up constantly for us when looking at things in the world, and those aspects are by no means across-the-board deleterious or inaccurate. And indeed, if an aspect lighting up to the viewer is half-thought, half-visual experience, then it would mean that thinking is heavily involved in an array of cases of *seeing*, where the thought present does not serve an interpretive capacity, and where the viewer does not arrive at their new visual appraisal through seeing an image *in a certain light* dictated by concerns, sentiments, sensibilities, and

experiential concerns held by the individual in the moment that become projected onto the image and that cause the viewer to notice details that aren't not necessarily there, or to identify in the image particular qualities not actually manifested visually.



## Dreaming, Revisited

### **In the Gallery (a concluding analogy)**

Take another case: an individual goes to an art gallery to observe a sculpture installation. In the atrium of the gallery someone is handing out copies of a booklet with a figurative drawing of a swan on its cover, inside of which is an artist's statement. The viewer flips through the booklet as they walk from the atrium of the gallery into the actual gallery space, reading over the artist statement and taking it into consideration as they move towards the different sculptures. Here, sure, there is an element of anticipation at play, where the viewer's thoughts are informed by the statements that the artist makes about the work being presented, about its formal qualities as they relate to thematic or conceptual concerns that the artist hopes to evince through the works; this may seem an instance where the presumption then about the works about to be seen will color the viewer's perceptions in a way where seeing in the first sense becomes an impossibility. But the viewer may not be so attentive as they read through the leaflet, which doesn't put to bed the idea that their seeing of the works will be different than it would have if they'd foregone picking up the booklet and flipping through it, but which also gives the impression that the viewer isn't searching out those qualities of the work discussed by the artist in the statement or isn't having their perception of the work schematized purely by the artist's concerns, or at least that these things are not happening on a *conscious* level. If Wittgenstein's proposals about the duck-rabbit, then, are correct—if indeed the report the viewer makes of *what* they see in the

intuitive terms that suggest perception, and if then perception *is* at play, or the viewer registers their seeing the gallery as chiefly a perceptual experience (as made plain through their language usage), then it wouldn't follow to say that everything the viewer sees during the show was *seen as*, or that their inspection of the works was patently interpretive. Again, this case is one where thought interplays with seeing, but where that interplay does not mean that the images seen are so mediated that the viewer's impression of them is totally adulterated and does not cohere at all with the images themselves. In addition, the presence of thought here in relation to the act of seeing doesn't necessarily suggest that what the viewer is doing in looking at the images is interpretive.

For example, the viewer could just as easily forego taking the artist statement, make their way through the gallery exhibition and look upon the many different sculptures contained within, and through their inspection, through their *seeing* the sculptures, identify in them qualities of the works the artist points to as being primary in the artist statement, *see* the sculptures in a manner that carries fidelity to how the artist conceived of them during their production (how the artist "saw" them, if you will). Here, the identification of those qualities is in no way inflected by the artist's trying to direct the viewer's sense of the work through language, and yet the qualities are still identified, even if they don't take primacy in the sculptures depicted, and even if their visual articulation carries with it a certain level of subtlety (think of the Kantian conception of the "unmotivated engagement"). In this case, then, do we say that the viewer is *seeing* the sculptures because of the identification? Do we say that a person who does not notice those same qualities that this viewer has identified and that the artist hoped to bring to form through the sculptural work *isn't* seeing the image? Presumably not, although the qualities being identified, being noticed in the visual representation here, are not necessarily *visual* qualities in the terms that we've been discussing

them, since they aren't necessarily connected to something representational, they are not contingent upon an identification in the same sense. But to say that what's occurring here is markedly non-perceptual, or relies explicitly on interpretation, seems too strong. This case may be closer to interpretation than the previous one, although the fact that the viewer is recognizing these qualities without the kind of previously-informed context, without whatever lingering preconceptions might have come with reading the artist statement before encountering the sculptures suggests a limit to the degree to which this can be treated as *interpretive* seeing. If anything, this sort of case would be the kind that would warrant an individual saying that the viewer of the sculptures is "especially perceptive" or especially "astute," and though such utterances may not *betray* explicitly what kind of seeing is occurring when the individual looks at the sculptures totally fresh and notices in them those qualities most central to the artist, most related to the individual works and to the exhibition as a whole, they suggest that our conception of perceptive (not perceptual) seeing actually accommodates already for an intermingling between thinking and seeing, where the thought informing the perception isn't necessarily something that would be classified as interpretive. Again, though, this particular case relies heavily on the identification of qualities in an object—a 3-dimensional one—that is *made* by an individual, that is designed by an artist, and that therefore is crafted with a certain level of intention behind its design, an intention the artist hopes an onlooker will identify. These issues of intention will not be touched on now, although they do not totally refute or invalidate what other noticed qualities of visual appraisal have been covered here, as the language usages that would be employed in this case belie a great deal about our actual innate awareness of the presence of thought within perceptual experiences.

But what's more, other imagery can inflect how a person sees something at which they are looking presently just as much as a language utterance can inform a person's impression in of the current image being appraised. Let's say the viewer goes to the art gallery, takes one of the booklets containing the artist's statement, but does not flip through it, instead choosing to experience the exhibition "blind," much in the manner that is described in the previous case; however, they glance at the booklet's cover, and notice the swan. Maybe they make a slight note of it before entering the exhibition space; maybe they barely register it at all. The viewer, in looking at the swan, automatically assumes a kind of context in which the sculptural work is to be appraised, one that carries over into their looking at the different pieces and trying to glean from them a sense of at what it is they are looking. This influence is likely an unconscious one, but it still informs how it is the viewer engages with the work that they are seeing. Here, the image on the cover behaves much like the images framing the duck-rabbit in posit 125, where they inflect the manner in which the viewer actually *sees* the image. Unlike in the duck-rabbit case, though, the sculptures are not being taken in concurrently with the image of the swan (unless the gallery goer is glancing down constantly throughout their time in the space at the duck on the cover of the booklet in an obsessive manner, although we wouldn't realistically expect this course of action to be taken by someone in a gallery space), are not "framing" the sculptures in the same manner that is at play with the two large images of duck-rabbit with ducks surrounding it in one, with rabbits in the other, or are at least not "framing" the sculptures in the same sense that was at play earlier. Instead, the viewer has an awareness at the back of their mind of the swan, which, though they may not mean for it to do so, will bubble up into their mind in one capacity or another while they gaze at the sculptures on display. They may not even be cognizant immediately of the association they draw between the swan and the sculptures, or

of associations between swans—or the particular image of the swan—and other elements of their own experience that inflect their sense of the sculptures, of the manner in which they engage with the sculptures visually.

Again, the kind of influence held over the act of seeing occurring here is one that is inflected by a previous association, by a sort of direction in which the viewer is guided based on the image of the swan. Unlike the artist statement, however, and unlike the cases where the viewer of the Picasso painting is “guided” to observe certain qualities of the painting and then from taking in those qualities comes to *see anew*, here, the image that informs the manner in which they see the sculptures in the exhibition is susceptible to the same kinds of phenomenon that are at play in the other cases, and so the particular manner in which the viewer *sees* the swan inflects how that image realigns their sense of the installation as a whole. In this sense, the viewer’s seeing the sculptural exhibit in the context of the swan image appears unlike the cases where language uses affect visual appraisal, since the swan image is prone to the same kinds of ambiguities that are at play with images generally, and which do differ from ambiguities in language. Likewise, how the viewer sees the installation differently because of the swan on the booklet cover isn’t directed in the manner that looking at the Picasso painting after being told to notice particular details is, and isn’t “guided” by the image in the way it is by the language of the artist’s statement in the first of these gallery cases. This case likely registers immediately as falling in line with seeing as, as it is described at the outset of Wittgenstein’s Part II Section XI, in that the seeing here, based purely on how it is described above, seems to be interpretive (like the case of a person looking at 2 images and saying of them “I see a likeness between them). But the way in which a person sees the sculptures after encountering the image of the swan is not necessarily one where certain affinities between the sculptures and the swan image rise to the fore; indeed, it is

unclear here if the intention of the artist in sharing the swan image on the cover of the booklet is to draw attention to similarities between that image or between the swan—as it exists in reality—and the sculptures presented. It's still possible, even, that the viewer looks at the sculptures and identifies in them those same qualities to which the artist gives voice in their statement, those same components of the sculptures that are identified by the “perceptive” viewer in the second case.

Whether the swan aids in that identification here isn't immediately evident, but the image doesn't seem to detract from the ability for the viewer to notice those aspects. Here, the associations conjured up by the swan no doubt seep into the viewer's appraisal of the sculptures, but whether the manner in which those images inflect the sense of the sculptures is interpretive, whether they operate in such a way that they adulterate the viewer's actual perception of the sculptures, is not clear. Whether that's even what is at play here, in fact, is unclear, and it is for this reason that it seems too strong a phrasing to call the seeing that occurs here “interpretive” seeing. The viewer does not necessarily “overlay” the swan, or the associations that come with it, onto the sculptures. In fact, the framing image here may actually bring to a relief qualities of the image that otherwise wouldn't be noticed, elements of the sculpture that would not immediately register if not for the frame. Again, this relates to “intention,” but not in the manner that the previous case does. What's at play here is much closer to how dreams behave, where sequences of images, or patterns of scenarios, follow each other in a succession that, though the actual images and experiences register as being “real” to the dreamer while they sleep, are generated by the dreamer in a manner dictated likely by some kind of concern at play within their unconscious, the kind of concern that likely must be identified through interpretation through the relaying of the dream to another while the dreamer is awake.

In fact, the analogy here can be made even stronger: the dreamer and the person in the gallery aren't just engaging in similar ventures into perceiving imagery and unearthing from those perceptions concerns central to the manner in which the image has been produced. The dreamer *is* in the gallery, is wandering past the sculptures, noticing their many different visual facets, their curvature, their formal facets, their position in the space, the manner in which they've been crafted and molded with a fine attunement to detail, and is attempting to deduce, through the inspection of the images individually, and in concert with one another, and with the remarks made in the artist statement, with a consideration of the swan on the cover of the booklet, those elements at play in the individual images, and those facets shared across the different cases, which, when taken together, bring a radical and new understanding to the installation as a whole. This is precisely what the dreamer does in interpreting the dreams that they've had; they are attempting to have that other side of their life, the one that, though it bears some striking resemblances to waking life, occurs differently, behaves differently, *reflects* on the events experience during waking in a way that cannot occur in consciousness, where the unconscious is free to abound, and to try and impart through things that so closely resemble experience, that so *seem* like experience within the dream, those many different associations, considerations, sentiments, resting underneath everything of our waking life, which are equally as responsible for our sense of self, our sentiments about the world, our awareness of the things around us and of ourselves.

**"It will depend on how the question is used"**

For interpretation to be possible, for the dreamer to actually forego the process of uncovering those unconscious concerns that appeared in sleep as imagery and as sensation, an intricate engagement must occur with the dream as it *occurs*, not just as it is remembered by the dreamer. Those sensations and the immediacy they held for the individual while they

dreamt must be reclaimed, must be reinvestigated, until the underlying elements of the dream, which are interwoven with how the dream is *experienced* while it is happening, can be exposed to light and reclaimed. Freud says that a dream is nothing more than the memory of the dream. Of this, Wittgenstein writes

People who on waking tell us certain incidents (that they have been in such-and-such places, and so forth). Then we teach them the expression “I dreamt”, which is followed by the narrative. Afterwards I sometimes ask them, “did you dream anything last night?” and am answered Yes or No, sometimes with a dream narrative, sometimes not. That is the language-game....Does this mean that it is nonsense ever to raise the question of whether dreams really take place during sleep, or are a memory phenomenon of the awakened? It will depend on how the question is used (Wittgenstein SII PVII p52-53)





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