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'Seeing As' and the Double Bind of Consciousness

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Central to aesthetic experience, but also to experience in general, is the phenomenon of 'seeing as'. We see a painting as a landscape, we hear sequence of sounds as a melody, we see a wooden contraption as a boat, and we hear a comment as an insult. There are interesting and important differences between these cases of 'seeing as': the painting cannot literally be a landscape while the wooden contraption can literally be a boat; a failure to hear sounds as a melody may count as a shortcoming whereas the failure to hear a comment as an insult may be admirable. Here I want to focus mainly on their similarities, however -- similarities that will lead us back to Kant, and to the nature of consciousness itself.

The phenomenon of 'seeing as' presents certain familiar puzzles: how is seeing a painting *as* a landscape different from *seeing* a landscape, on the one hand, and from *thinking* of the painting as a landscape, on the other? 'Seeing as' is not the same as misperceiving, nor is it the same as offering an interpretation, yet it seems related to both. These puzzles are articulated in Section I, and some candidate solutions are rejected. Section II develops a Kantian account of experience showing how the convergence of conflicting representations, achieved through imaginative syntheses, is essential to the experience of objects and to consciousness itself. Kant's insights are used to evaluate some recent responses to the so-called "binding problem" -- the problem of explaining how the contents of consciousness are bound together, and the role of the imagination is further detailed. Section III then returns to the difference between ordinary seeing and 'seeing as', offering an explanation of the latter in terms of the broader framework developed in Section II.

I

When we see an X *as* a Y (a painting as a landscape, say) we partake in a kind of double-consciousness, experiencing a thing in two different ways

simultaneously (the painting way and the landscape way) -- ways that retain their independence despite their convergence on a single object at a single time. The problem of 'seeing as' can be viewed as the problem of explaining just how such independence and convergence can coexist.

The need for independent representations of X and of Y is evident from the very grammar of 'seeing as', which indicates a three-place relation between the seeing subject, what is seen, and what that thing is seen *as*. If what is seen and what it is seen as are indistinguishable, then the three-place relation collapses into a two-place relation -- that of (simply) seeing. And while we may say of someone who mistakes a bush for a bear "She sees the bush *as* a bear," from the point of view of the subject, she simply *sees* a bear. Thus, the experience of seeing X as Y is not the same as the experience of misperceiving X or hallucinating Y, where the object perceived would be seen in just one way. Nor is it sufficient for the experience of seeing as that a subject realizes that she is misperceiving or hallucinating, for she may know that she has things wrong without having any notion of what is right; indeed, she may know that her perception of a bear is mistaken without knowing whether there is anything there at all.

To experience the independence of what is seen from what it is seen *as* one must recognize some conflict between the two representations, even if they are not strictly incompatible. While being a painting is incompatible with being a landscape, and being a bear is incompatible with being a bush, being a comment is not incompatible with being an insult, and being a series of sounds is not incompatible with being a melody. Still, when we speak of seeing one thing *as* another, we indicate a certain reluctance to subsume one under the other; we register a certain tension or competition between two characterizations of that thing. We would not say that we see a ball *as* a toy or a box *as* a container, for example -- unless, perhaps, to suggest a conflicting experience of the ball as part of a machine, or a conflicting experience of the box as simultaneously a stool. Likewise, to hear the comment "You are very diligent" *as* an insult, one must experience a certain mismatch between hearing the comment as a compliment or an innocent observation and hearing it as an insult. In some cases, the conflict between representations seems to be a conflict between different ways of organizing or grouping the available material. (In describing the experience of seeing a F as a T with an additional stroke, Wittgenstein reports, with a note of

suspicion, "The organization of the visual image changes." -- "Yes, that's what I'd like to say too."¹) In other cases, the conflict seems more fundamental, as when synesthetes report seeing sounds as colors, feeling smells as textures, etc., and it is hard to understand these contrasts in terms of alternative groupings or alternative purposes. However we end up explaining any particular conflict, though, it should be clear that 'seeing as' depends on experiencing some tension between two (or more) representations of a thing.

Normally, we can experience conflicting properties (or conflicting groupings of properties) as belonging to the same thing only by separating them in time. It is tempting, therefore, to explicate the experience of seeing a painting as a landscape as one in which we fluctuate between seeing it as a painting and seeing it as a landscape; and it is tempting to explicate the experience of hearing a comment as an insult as one in which we go back and forth between hearing it as a mere observation and hearing it as an insult. But these explications do not do justice to our experience of seeing the landscape *through* the painting or hearing the insult *in* the comment. They grant the conflicting representations too much independence. For while the "as" of "seeing as" indicates a certain independence of different ways of seeing something, it also indicates a recognition of their simultaneous applicability; we must experience a temporal as well as a spatial convergence of what is seen and what it is seen as.

As usual, Wittgenstein has an acute sense of how sensible assumptions can lead to absurdities:

Could I have made the phenomenon [of seeing as] clear to myself, if I had been told: someone whose eyes are open sees something that is not there before him, and at the same time also sees what is before him, and the two visual objects don't get in each other's way?!²

The suggestion that, in 'seeing as', we see conflicting things in the same place at once may be tempting only until we are called upon to explain how it is that the two things can keep from getting in each other's way. And we could, on such grounds, maintain that the experience of conflicting representations converging in space and time is an illusion -- perpetrated by the misleading grammar of "seeing as", perhaps. (This is a conclusion that is sometimes drawn from Wittgenstein's writing on the topic.) But it is then incumbent on us to supply a more appropriate description of the phenomena in question.

One option would be to redescribe the conflict between the two representations or the two ways of seeing something as a conflict between seeing and thinking. On such an analysis, seeing a painting as a landscape would consist in seeing the painting while thinking that it is a landscape -- or, alternatively, seeing a landscape while thinking it is a painting. Likewise, hearing a comment as an insult would amount to hearing the comment while thinking that it is an insult (or *vice versa*). No doubt there are some experiences that fit these descriptions (the Muller line illusions, for example), but they are not the experiences we are puzzling over: gazing at a painting in the knowledge that it is intended it as a landscape (while unable to see it as such), or thinking that a colleague's comment probably was an insult (without being able to hear it as such) are not experiences of 'seeing as'. ("I do not merely *interpret* a figure, but I clothe it with the interpretation."³)

Would it help to require that the thought of the landscape, or the thought of the insult, follow immediately upon seeing the painting, or hearing the comment? That depends on what sort of immediacy one has in mind. Temporal immediacy seems irrelevant, since I may learn to *hear* a series of sounds as a melody only gradually, after repeated exposure, while the *thought* of that series as a melody may occur to me promptly, on first hearing. Nor is it inferential immediacy that matters here, since I may, for example, rather arbitrarily decide to think of a wooden contraption as a boat without having made any inference whatsoever ("That's just the way I want to think of it") yet still fail to see it as a boat, or I may come to see it as a boat only by making various inferences concerning the probable functions of its various parts. Justificatory immediacy seems closer to the mark, since the thought of that contraption as a boat makes it into my 'seeing as' experience just in case it is justified simply by my looking, and the thought that those sounds comprise a melody makes my experience into a 'hearing as' experience just in case it is justified simply by listening. This seems right, but as an explanation of 'seeing as', it gets things exactly the wrong way around, for it is not the justificatory immediacy of a thought that makes an experience into a 'seeing as' experience but, rather, the 'seeing as' experience that bestows justificatory immediacy on the thought. Direct justification does not create perception, it assumes it.⁴

Wittgenstein's writings on this topic are rich in ambiguities, but one suggestion that he explores sympathetically is the suggestion that seeing a painting as a landscape is a matter of having the *inclination to respond* to it as if it were a landscape.⁵ The requisite conflict between two different ways of seeing is portrayed not as a conflict between images (with all the paradoxes that produces) but rather as a conflict between responses or dispositions. (This is the strand in Wittgenstein's thinking that is developed more fully in Gilbert Ryle's classic account of imagining.⁶) To see a painting as a landscape, according to this account, would be to have inclinations towards the painting that are like the inclinations one would have towards a landscape -- an inclination to peer around a visual obstruction, for example, or an inclination to move forward along a particularly inviting trajectory -- as well as having an inclination to feel the surface of paint, to follow the brushstrokes, etc.. Similarly, to hear a comment as an insult would be to have the inclination to slap back, or to cringe, as well as having an inclination to look for evidence of its truth, an inclination to agree or disagree, and so on.

Wittgenstein's focus on inclinations is instructive in so far as it reminds us that seeing a painting as a landscape, as opposed to merely thinking of it as a landscape, stirs us and inclines us in ways that merely thinking of it as a landscape does not. Hearing notes as a melody, as opposed to thinking they must constitute the melody, requires that they move us in the appropriate way. But what, exactly, are the relevant sorts of inclinations? Thoughts, after all, also involve inclinations: when thinking that a certain set of notes constitutes a melody I am inclined to listen to those notes more closely, to anticipate their return, to try to remember them, etc.. Are the inclinations that accompany seeing, or seeing as, different in kind from the inclinations that accompany (mere) thoughts? More bodily, perhaps -- inclinations to do certain things, or move in certain ways, as opposed to inclinations to have various other thoughts? More automatic, perhaps -- inclinations over which we have very little control, as opposed to inclinations that we may choose whether or not to pursue?⁷ Quite apart from the difficulty of distinguishing the inclinations of 'seeing as' from the inclinations of merely 'thinking as', though, Wittgenstein's appeal to inclinations doesn't help much with the problem with which we began -- the problem of explaining how *conflicting* ways of seeing something manage to *converge* in both space and time. For even if conflicting ways of seeing are equated with conflicting inclinations rather than conflicting images, their

simultaneous occurrence is problematic: how can we be simultaneously inclined to touch the paint *and* to walk into the landscape, or to ask for evidence *and* to slap back? Why don't conflicting inclinations face the same difficulty as conflicting images when it comes to keeping out of each others' way?⁸

We remain, then, without a satisfactory account of the way in which 'seeing as' combines conflict with convergence -- the way it manages to "clothe" of one perception with another.

II

It was Kant's genius to realize not only how conflicting representations *can* be made to converge in experience but, also why they *must* converge for there to be conscious experience at all. By showing how consciousness itself depends on our ability to bring conflicting representations together in the experience of an object, he points towards a resolution of the apparent paradoxes of 'seeing as'. The Kantian insight can be summarized as follows: although seeing seems to be a two-place relation between the seer and the seen, and thinking appears to be a three-place relation between the thinker, the object of thought, and what is thought about that object, conscious seeing also requires one to distinguish an object from the way it is presented and conscious thinking also requires one to merge an object with the way it is presented. (This double dependency is what Kant expresses in the famous statement "Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind"⁹) A certain sort of 'seeing as' underlies both conscious perception and conscious thought, and it is what brings the two together (How such ubiquitous 'seeing as' differs from the more specialized cases of 'seeing as' with which we started is the topic of Section III.)

Kant claims that seeing (that is, consciously perceiving as opposed to taking in information and responding "blindly") requires us to consider conflicting presentations of a single object because we can't see an object without locating it in space (and time) and we can't locate it in space (and time) unless we recognize that it has more than one face (or phase), that it appears differently from different places in space and time. If an object were indistinguishable from its appearance to a given viewer at a given time, it could not be an object *in space*; and, clearly, when we see things we see them as located in space; but the only to distinguish

between an object and its appearance is to distinguish between different appearances of the same object; so, in order to see objects we must distinguish between the different appearances they may have. In perceiving a house, for example, we register its three-dimensionality even though its backside is hidden from us, and in observing a boat on a river, we recognize its pathway as continuous, even when we are not observing it continuously. This requires us to call forth, in imagination, points of view that are not actually ours -- the view from the backside, the view from here when we are looking the other way, and so on. Our memory of past observations can help us to imagine some of the missing points of view, of course, but memory is not enough to do the necessary 'filling in' since we have probably never observed an object from *every* point of view, and since we are regularly confronted with objects we have never before encountered. It is for this reason that Kant emphasizes the importance of "productive" as opposed to merely "reproductive" imagining; one must be capable imaginative projections, not merely imaginative associations.

In just what sense, though, do we need to "register" or "recognize" alternative points of view on an object in order to see it from our point of view? In what way am I aware of the unseen back of a house or the movement of a boat when I look away? Surely there is some distinction between what is actually seen and what is merely remembered or imagined; otherwise, we would be hopelessly confused about our own position. Indeed, seeing the front and the back of a house simultaneously seems absurd for just the reason Wittgenstein indicates: how would the two presentations keep out of one another's way? Peter Strawson, elaborating on Kant, speaks of the need for perceptions to be "infused by" what is imagined, but he admits that the 'infusion' metaphor is elusive and requires more work.¹⁰ Patricia Kitcher offers a functionalist interpretation of Kant whereby perceiving an object depends (both causally and logically) on having the capacity to imagine various other representations of that same house -- without, however, requiring that such imagining actually be activated while perceiving any particular object.¹¹ But her analysis fails to take the convergence requirement seriously enough, losing the crucial distinction between 'seeing as' and 'thinking as' (since a functionalist account of thought is equally insistent on our capacity to think other, related thoughts, *at other times*).

The requisite recognition of alternative perspectives must avoid the impossibility of collapsing multiple perspectives into a single image (in which case we cease to experience the perspectives as independent) but it must also avoid the inadequacy of being merely disposed to imagine alternative perspectives as the need arises (in which case we cease to experience the perspectives as convergent).

What is needed, it seems, is a kind of three-dimensional image within which different perspectives are positioned as such, or a set of dispositions that can be simultaneously activated without actually triggering conflicting responses -- dispositions which can be taken "off line" as it were.¹² If this is right, seeing objects located in three-dimensional space is a bit like enclosing them in a visual hand -- a hand that sees all sides instead of feeling all sides. In order to interact with a particular object (to get back "on line"), the position that I occupy must be recognized as such; but that does not prevent my continued imagining of a more encompassing array of perspectives; indeed, I have argued, conscious perception requires as much.

Thinking, according to Kant, also depends on imagination's ability to synthesize conflicting representations. But if, in the case of seeing, the challenge was to show how seeing requires us to register conflicting representations or points of view, in the case of thinking the challenge is to show how thinking requires us to register the spatiotemporal convergence of conflicting representations. From the mere fact that the thoughts are structured, it is clear that thinking presupposes a distinction between *what* we think about (a house, for example) and *how* we think of it (as having a backside, for example). But why should the mere thought that it has a backside (versus actually seeing it as having a backside) require us to experience the convergence of those representations? Indeed, wasn't it the observation that 'seeing as' requires more convergence than 'thinking as' that first led us to reject the analysis of 'seeing as' as an instance of 'thinking as'? So why isn't it enough - for thinking as opposed to seeing -- to be merely *capable* of thinking of an object in different ways?¹³

The problem is this: there can be no thought without structure, and structure depends on the possibility of attributing different predicates to the same object (as well as the same predicate to different objects); but knowing that different predicates can apply to the same object depends on knowing that different predicates can apply simultaneously (otherwise, there is no distinction between a

series of predicates applying sequentially to the same object and a series of predicates applying to a sequence of objects). We must, therefore, have some way of merging our representations in space and time in order to experience them as predications at all.¹⁴ The thought that a house has a backside, therefore, depends on our ability think of it having a backside, having a frontside, having a size, having a color, etc. simultaneously, for this is what it to recognize the house as an object rather than a predicate. This is not to say that all thinking must be accompanied by images; sometimes thinking amounts to little more than the syntactical manipulation of symbols (as with a computer). But, as Kant realized, any such manipulation of symbols, however deft, is ultimately empty unless appropriate connections can be made to a perceived object -- that is, to an object experienced as existing in space. Thus, in some important sense, neither I nor the computer succeed in thinking *of an object* unless the spatiotemporal convergence of that object and its various representations or predications is actively imagined. (Descartes seems to have appreciated thought's ultimate reliance on the spatiotemporal convergence of representations, and hence on perception, when he insisted that all steps of a proof be considered simultaneously and shown to form a single, consistent 'object'. His translations of algebra into geometry were especially valued for this reason, and he advised serious thinkers to rehearse the steps of a proof faster and faster until all the steps could be seen at once.¹⁵)

Kant's insights about the imaginative syntheses required for seeing and thinking are equally insights about the requirements of consciousness itself. Thinking of objects ultimately depends on seeing objects, and seeing objects depends on simultaneously imagining the different sides, or stages, of those object. The simultaneous imagining of such contrasting perspectives is only intelligible, however, insofar as the different perspectives can be relativized to different perceivers or different stages in the perceptions of a single viewer -- which is to say, we must imagine various possible subject positions in order to see the position of a single object (and *vice versa*). Thus, the experience of objectivity and the experience of subjectivity are necessarily intertwined and the requirements for seeing or thinking of objects as objects are also the requirements for having conscious experiences.

This puts us in a position to see the promise but also the shortcomings of some recent solutions to the 'binding' problem -- the problem of explaining just

how it is that we bind together the disparate contents of our experience into a unified consciousness of a single world. It has become common to distinguish between several different binding problems: the problem of how our experiences of different properties get bound together into the experience of a single object, the problem of how our experiences of different objects get bound together into the experience of a single world, and the problem of how our different experiences get bound together into the experiences of a single subject. If Kant is right, however, these different binding problems are mutually dependent and an adequate solution to any one will provide a solution to the others as well. I consider, in turn, the recent suggestions of Daniel Dennett, of Francis Crick and Christof Koch, and of Susan Hurley, highlighting the ways in which they do or do not satisfy the Kantian requirements.

Daniel Dennett attributes the unity of consciousness to the creation of narratives -- stories we tell ourselves (and others) about what we are experiencing.¹⁶ The internal narrative, in order to be coherent, must include some elements and not others, and must order events in some ways rather than others (not necessarily the same order in which information is received). Whatever makes it into an internal narrative makes it into consciousness; and what doesn't appear in a narrative doesn't appear in consciousness. What many find missing in (at least this part of) Dennett's account is an appreciation of the phenomenal character of consciousness; but what is that? I do not think Dennett has succeeded in "Quining qualia" (by showing how we can say everything we want to say about experience without committing ourselves to the existence of so-called qualia), but neither do I think that phenomenal character is by nature inexplicable. In terms of our preceding discussion, the problem with Dennett's account is that it overlooks the convergence requirement; the phenomenal character of consciousness is missed because the experienced convergence of different aspects or appearances in space is missed. I may construct a long and detailed 'narrative' about the melody I am hearing without consciously experiencing it as a melody; but if that is so, the occurrence of something in a narrative cannot ensure its occurrence in consciousness. Dennett might claim that narratives are the means through which the experience of spatiotemporal convergence is created; but even if this is so (I think that narratives sometimes effect such convergences, but not always), it cannot be so in the first instance. For in order for narratives to be *about* what we experience, experience must already have effected the syntheses necessary for

consciousness. We must succeed in consciously seeing at least some objects before we can merely think about them. And if Dennett insists, as he seems inclined to, that the relevant narratives do *constitute* our perceptions as conscious perceptions, then he cannot also insist that the narrative be a narrative *of* those perceptions, for the notion of a narrative -- suggesting a sequential story about various objects and events -- then *presupposes* what it is meant to explain.

Francis Crick and Christof Koch offer a very different solution to the binding problem.¹⁷ They suggest that the contents of our minds are united, and hence made conscious, precisely when the neural vehicles of those contents oscillate in unison (at appropriate frequencies). When the oscillations of neurons become too disparate and ill-coordinated, consciousness is lost; when harmony is reestablished, consciousness is regained. Supported by some important empirical observations, the underlying thought seems to be this: as long as the activation of different representations is carefully aligned in time, we will experience different representations as representations of a single world, effecting the very unity that is necessary for consciousness. It is not always clear whether Crick and Koch are addressing the unity of representations in a single object or the unity of objects in a single world. Clearly, both sorts of unity are necessary, for objects will not register as objects unless they can be positioned within a larger, spatiotemporal framework, and a spatiotemporal framework will not register as such unless objects (and subjects) can be placed within it. But it is not clear how a single oscillation rate can accommodate the need for both sorts of unity. The oscillations that unite the neurons that represent the color and texture and shape of this book into a single object must, it seems, be distinct from the oscillations that unite the neurons that represent the color and texture and shape of this pen; yet both pen and book must be experienced as existing simultaneously in a single world. What is missing, I think, is a recognition of the fact that different representations can be aligned with different points of view, for it is only through that recognition that we can have the experience of a single world containing multiple objects. Crick and Koch's oversight, then, is a variation on Hume's: it is not enough simply to bundle together associated representations to get the experience of an object; the different representations must be actively imagined as varying in response to different points of view. Whereas Dennett shortchanges the fact that we need to experience a convergence of representations in order to experience consciousness, Crick and

Koch shortchange the fact that we also need to experience the independence of representations in order to experience consciousness.

Susan Hurley has recently developed an account of the unity of consciousness which, unlike Dennett's account, seems to take the convergence requirement seriously, and, unlike Crick and Koch's account, seems to take the independence requirement seriously.¹⁸ Central to her account is the notion of a dynamic feedback system. Perceptions become conscious, she suggests, insofar as they are directly and systematically responsive to our actions in the world, and actions, in turn, are consciously intended in so far as they are directly and systematically responsive to our perceptions. The unity of consciousness, then, depends on the convergence of inputs around the actions of a single organism -- actions which, by their very nature, must register the independence of objects from any particular way they may appear to a subject at a given time. This is a promising account, for which she offers both empirical and philosophical support. But I don't think it recognizes the importance of imagining the merely possible appearances of objects we are conscious of. The feedback that Hurley focuses on is always feedback between actual inputs and actual outputs, but such feedback loops are quite common in the (apparent) absence of consciousness; amoebas and beetles and ants all establish effective feedback loops with their environments, and I continually adjust my posture in response to pressure from my chair without any (apparent) consciousness of that pressure. Also, conscious thought can occur without any immediate feedback from the objects of thought -- as when I consciously think of a particular building in Scotland while sitting at my desk in New York. The way to accommodate both sorts of counterexample, I suggest, is to require that non-actual feedback loops between subject and object be *imagined*. Crucial to the difference between my relation to the tree I am now staring at and the amoeba's reaction to heat is the greater flexibility of responses I am capable of; my responses are mediated by a wide range of information that is available to me not only upon further reflection, but immediately, in my current perception of the tree. (I see the perch for a bird despite the fact that no bird is now present, I see the pointed leaves despite the fact that I am not now close enough to discern their shape, I see its young age, and so on.) Hurley's feedback loops are better than Dennett's narratives or Crick and Koch's synchronized oscillations in accommodating both the independence and the convergence of representations necessary for consciousness, but, I suggest, they focus too narrowly on the

immediate present and overlook the crucial role that imagination plays in creating the wider range of feedback loops necessary for consciousness.

III

Let us now return to the experiences of 'seeing as' that we started with --the experiences of seeing a painting as a landscape, of hearing a series of sounds as a melody, of seeing a wooden contraption as a boat, and of hearing a comment as an insult. The Kantian framework of the last section, demonstrating the way we experience different ways of seeing or different appearances as both conflicting and convergent whenever we are conscious of objects, threatens to turn ordinary seeing and thinking into instances of 'seeing as', overlooking what is special about the experiences we ordinarily label as such.

To understand what is special about 'seeing as', as opposed to what it has in common with ordinary seeing and thinking, we need to get clearer about just what it is that conflicts and converges in the case of seeing versus the case of 'seeing as'. When we see a landscape (standing on top of a hill, for example), conflicting presentations of the terrain converge as we imagine a variety of different points of view or perspectives converging on the slopes before us; the different appearances retain their independence insofar as they are imagined as appearing from different points of view, but they converge insofar as the imagined points of view are directed towards a single thing. In the case of 'seeing as', on the other hand, conflicting presentations cannot be accommodated by relegating them to different spatiotemporal points of view. A painting does not appear as a landscape from the right and as a painting from the left (and even if this were the case, such a conflict in presentations is not resolved by appeal to different angles of vision -- as it would be in the case of ordinary). For it is not different angles of vision so much as different 'depths' of vision that conflict and converge in the case of 'seeing as'. What seems to be an *object* -- the painting -- around which various appearances converge (rough surface from this angle, smooth from that, smattering of bright colors from up close, subtle shade from farther back) will also seem to be an *appearance* of some further object -- the landscape. We seem to see a landscape through a painting in much the way that we seem to see a tree through its surfaces - - except that, in the case of a painting, the 'surface' is an object in its own right. Likewise, to hear a sound sequence as a melody requires us to hear a sound

sequence both as an object in its own right (which may appear soft or loud, clipped or slurred, short or long, depending on one's listening position) and as appearances of something deeper which is made manifest through the sounds -- a melody.

The experience of depth, however, just is the experience of conflicting appearances or presentations converging in space and time. This is the reason binocular vision is so important for the visual experience of depth and why stereo sound is so important for the experience of sound depth. And the more different perspectives we can bring together in an imaginary convergence, the greater our experience of depth. To look more deeply into an object, then, means to find a way to unify its various aspects or parts more fully. What makes it possible then to experience something as both an object in its own right and as the appearance of some further 'object' is that an object's different spatiotemporal aspects or parts can be viewed as different appearances of a still more fundamental and more unified object. In the case of a painting, this may mean that the bright area here and the blur of color there, the rough texture to one side and the slanting lines above, can all be seen to converge when seen as the appearance of a particular landscape. In the case of sound, it may mean the variations in pitch, the slow crescendo, and the occasional moments of silence all come together into a whole once the underlying melody is discerned. And in the case of a colleague's comment, it may mean that a particular word choice, an edgy intonation, and unusually fast timing can all be seen as manifestations of the same underlying intention to insult. Or, taking things 'deeper' still, the apparent calm of the landscape's water next to the apparent violence of its sky may be seen as two manifestations of a single nature, which is God's; the apparent harmony of a melody together with its apparent gaps may be heard as deriving from an underlying wistfulness; and the harshness of an insult together with its slyness might both be expressions of a deeper desire for revenge. Finally, in addition to viewing the different parts of individual objects as different appearances of some 'deeper', more fundamental object, we may view a variety of objects as appearances of some one underlying reality. We sometimes speak of seeing what an artist sees only by seeing whole series of paintings, or a whole collection of songs. Or, crossing mediums, like Oliver Messiaen (and many other synesthetes), we may view a certain set of sounds and a certain set of colors merely as alternative presentations of what is fundamentally one. (Such attempts to find new and greater unity is, of course, a central part of aesthetic appreciation according to Kant.¹⁹)

There is a certain similarity here between the aesthetic appreciation of paintings and sounds and the scientific appreciation of tables and chairs. In both cases, ordinary objects may be seen also as appearances of still other, less ordinary objects. It is a rare person, scientist or otherwise, however, who can see a table as atoms in motion -- that can unify the tables' many different properties all at once through appeal to something deeper. More importantly, though, in the case of science, the underlying objects (for example, the atoms) tend to be less rather than more unified than the objects through which they may appear.

In some cases, the laws of optics or the laws governing sound perception are enough to ensure that one thing is seen as another; it doesn't take an education in art history to see a photograph as a scene and it doesn't take musical training to hear a sound as growing or contracting. But usually the ability to see one thing as another is more dependent on learning. The imaginative projections required in order to see what lies 'behind' a cubist painting, or to hear what 'underlies' a piece by Ligetti are not at all automatic, and may depend on principles of translation or transformation that are highly conventional. And the discernment needed to see a boat in the wooden construction of a child, or to hear an insult in the comment of a colleague may depend on having a very strong desire to see or hear more than meets the eye. Certain schools of art, moreover (all of modern art, according to some), actually resist the experience of depth, insisting that paint be seen (in all its richness) merely as paint, that sound be heard merely as sound, and that neither be perceived as being *about* anything beyond itself.

Without some experience of a world beyond appearances, though, there will be no consciousness at all because there will be no distinction between subject and object. Consciousness, I have argued, depends on the balancing of conflict and convergence: without enough contrast between different perspectives, our experiences lose their subjectivity; and without enough convergence between different perspectives, objects lose their objectivity. By increasing the convergence of an increased number of conflicting appearances, 'seeing as' enables us to experience a world of increased depth and objectivity which, in turn, intensifies our experience of subjectivity and consciousness itself. If aesthetic experience teaches us that we can extend the degree to which appearances converge, and extend the degree to which objects are recognized as independent of

their appearances, it also teaches us that we can extend the degree to which we are conscious. The suggestion that aesthetic appreciation intensifies consciousness is not a new one, but I hope here to have defended a particular understanding of that claim in such a way that its truth can be better appreciated.

¹ Paragraph 535 from Remarks of the Philosophy of Psychology, Vol I, edited by G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright (University of Chicago Press, 1980).

² *Ibid*, paragraph 1014. This passage follows Wittgenstein's dismissal of the explanatory relevance of physiological explanations appealing to the simultaneous activation of two images.

³ *Ibid*, paragraph 33. Because this passage is in quotes, suggesting attribution to someone other than himself, Wittgenstein must be assumed to be suspicious. Still, Wittgenstein repeatedly acknowledges that something is missing from the view that 'seeing as' is no more than 'thinking as'. See, for example, paragraphs 1, 26, and 874, in Remarks of the Philosophy of Psychology, Vol I.

⁴ This 'natural' way of understanding the relation between justification and perception has recently been challenged in some interesting ways by Robert Brandom, in Making It Explicit (Harvard, 1994). Among the counterintuitive implications Brandom embraces is the claim that a physicist observing a hooked vapor trail actually *sees* mu-mesons. (p. 223)

⁵ "What is in question is an *inclination* to do one thing or the other." (Paragraph 18 of Remarks of the Philosophy of Psychology, Vol I) See, also, paragraph 1012.

⁶ Gilbert Ryle, The Concept of Mind (Barnes and Noble Books, 1049), Chapter VIII: "Imagination".

⁷ Wittgenstein treats inclinations to *speak* in certain ways as central, claiming that they are the "primary expressions" of seeing as. (See paragraphs 20 and 862 of Remarks of the Philosophy of Psychology, Vol I.) But surely one can see a painting as a landscape or hear a series of notes as a melody without being able to describe what one hears (not even as "a landscape" or "a melody" let alone "a case of seeing as" or "aspect seeing").

⁸ This may be one reason Wittgenstein puzzles so over the duration of 'seeing as' - for example, in paragraphs 512-532 of Remarks of the Philosophy of Psychology, Vol I.

⁹ Immanuel Kant, The Critique of Pure Reason, translated by Norman Kemp Smith (Macmillan, 1029), B75/A51.

¹⁰ Peter Strawson, "Imagination and Perception" in *Freedom and Resentment, and Other Essays* (Methuen Press, 1070). He also suggests the metaphors of visual experience "irradiated by" and soaked with" concepts (p. 57).

¹¹ Patricia Kitcher, *Kant's Transcendental Psychology* (Oxford, 1990), especially pp. 148 - 162.

¹² The relevance of "off line" simulation to thoughts of all sorts is a topic of growing interest (and controversy) of course. A collection of now-classic papers edited by Tony Stone and Martin Davies is *Mental Simulation: Evaluations and Applications* (Blackwell, 1996).

¹³ This is all that Gareth Evans, in *Varieties of Reference* (Oxford, 1982) requires with his Generality Constraint on thought (pp. 100 - 105).

¹⁴ Daniel Dennett sometimes complains (in Chapter 6 of his *Consciousness Explained*, for example) about the fallacy of confusing simultaneity of representations with representations of simultaneity. But, as Kant argued (in the First Part of the "Transcendental Aesthetic" of his *Critique of Pure Reason*, as well as in some earlier writings), space and time cannot be mere concepts; if this is right, though, then spatiotemporal location cannot be just another attributed predicate; it must be experienced directly.

¹⁵ Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, translated by Donald A. Cress (Hackett, 1980), Part II.

¹⁶ I refer to his account in *Consciousness Explained* (Little, Brown, and Co., 1991), especially Chapter 5, which is somewhat different than previous accounts he has offered and, arguably, at odds with some other things he writes in the same book.

¹⁷ Francis Crick and Christof Koch, "Towards a Neurobiological Theory of Consciousness", reprinted in *The Nature of Consciousness*, edited by Ned Block, Owen Flanagan, and Guven Guzeldere (Bradford, 1998).

¹⁸ Susan Hurley, *Consciousness in Action* (Harvard, 1998).

¹⁹ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, First Part, translated by James Creed Meredith (Oxford, 1952).