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*Reflecting on Language from “Sideways-on”: Preparatory and Non-Preparatory Aspects-Seeing*

Aspect-seeing, I claim, involves reflection on language. It involves letting oneself feel what it would be like to capture something with a certain concept—conceptualize it—all the while remaining uncommitted to this conceptualization. I distinguish between two kinds of aspect-perception:

1) *Preparatory aspect-perception*: allows us to develop, criticize, and shape concepts. It typically involves bringing a concept to an object for the purpose of examining what would be the best way to conceptualize it.

2) *Non-Preparatory aspect-perception*: allows us to express the inexpressibility of certain experiences. It typically involves bringing a concept to an object for the purpose of showing—*per impossibile*—what it would take to properly capture one's experience.

I demonstrate the usefulness of the two kinds of aspect perception in making conceptual judgments, as well as in making moral and aesthetic judgments.

# *Reflecting on Language from “Sideways-on”: Preparatory and Non-Preparatory Aspects-Seeing<sup>1</sup>*

Reshef Agam-Segal

We have the power to shape our own language. We do that when we feel we lack the resources with which to make sense of things, or when we feel that the concepts we have do a bad job. We may, for example, have difficulty deciding whether to call something “baby” or “embryo.” Partly, our difficulty is conceptual. To that extent, it is not that we do not have enough facts; what we lack is more basic. The two terms, ‘baby’ and ‘embryo,’ bring with them two different sets of norms, two conceptual nexuses—two distinct and possibly incompatible ways of making sense of, capturing in thought, that thing in the woman’s womb: Thinking about it as an embryo will reflect interest in things like brain- and lung-activity; thinking about it as a baby is, for instance, thinking about its name, of holding it when it cries, of talking to it, and making eye contact. We can, of course, just decide; but we would like to have a reason with which to justify our decision. What we lack in some cases, then, is conceptual clarity that could help guide the way we treat something—a clear set of concepts with which to make sense of it.<sup>2</sup> We need to conceptualize—not only (or even mainly) to find the right words, but more generally to place an object in a particular network of practices and interests: to give it a logical function. In terms borrowed from Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus*, we need to see a symbol in the sign [Wittgenstein, 1922]. And we do not just need the ability to *make* a conceptual judgment, but primarily the ability to exercise that judg-

ment: make sense of the object in front of us in practice. In this sense, until we decide what to call it and how to treat it, we are not firmly grasping what is in front of us.

Or take another example. A musical theme leaves a certain aesthetic impression on us. We want to use the word ‘pensive’ to describe the theme. But here, of course, ‘pensive’ would not be used as it normally is; the musical theme is not a living creature and does not have a mind. Here again, we are trying to grasp an experience by means of language, and the experience does not give itself easily. We need to get imaginative.

In this paper, I would like to discuss, compare, and contrast several ways in which we reflect on language and on our ways of making sense of things. That reflection about concepts is even possible may seem surprising: Concepts make deliberation and reasoning possible in the first place; they give us the language—the norms—with which to think. But when our difficulty is indeed conceptual, we cannot assume that our language is safe to use, that the concepts we use in deliberation are the right ones. How is it possible to ask questions about language, then, when we cannot even feel safe using language to ask those questions?

Part of the answer is that conceptual difficulties tend to be local. In reflecting about a concept, we can usually rely on other concepts that we are safe using. But this is only part of the answer. Another part, which will be my focus here, is our ability to perceive aspects, the phenomena at the center of Wittgenstein’s discussion in §xi of the second part of *Philosophical Investigations* [Wittgenstein, 1958]. Aspect-perception, I will claim, allows us to reflect on our ways of capturing the world in thought and practice: to conceptualize. It can thus be used to justify conceptual judgments. In turn, this may allow us to make certain moral and aesthetic judgments.

The discussion of aspects stands at the crossroad of several philosophical issues: the nature of psychological concepts and of imagery, the character and uses of the imagination in perception and elsewhere, the status of metaphors, and the nature of mathematical

discoveries. What binds those issues together, I believe, is that they either involve difficulties of conceptualization, as in the discussion of psychological concepts, or involve a question about the very idea of conceptualization, as in the discussion about metaphors and the imagination. I do not propose to connect the phenomena of aspect-seeing to any of those other philosophical issues here; this is a task for other occasions. I will instead concentrate on the general issue: on how aspect-perception allows us to reflect on language or, more generally, reflect on the ways we make sense of things—capture the world in thought and practice.

We might not expect aspect-experiences to be reflective. They are typically experiences in which an object changes right before one's eyes without changing perceptually. Take Robert Jastrow's duck-rabbit, , for example. This may appear, at first, to be a simple rabbit-picture, when it all of a sudden assumes a different appearance and is now a duck-picture. We can now see it both ways. This is an aspect-experience. When such a thing dawns on us, the object is seen—not merely interpreted but literally experienced, perceived—in a different way. Nevertheless, such experiences are reflective: the duck-rabbit aspect-shift does not take place within a given conceptual map, so to speak, but involves a reorientation of the map. Questions like “where would its wings be?” will or will not make sense relative to how you see .

Aspect-experiences thus involve a special kind of reflection. They are not just cognitive or conceptual experiences, but embodiments of conceptual reflections in palpable experience—an experience that is an “echo of a thought” [Wittgenstein, 1958, 212]. The experience of an aspect—this is the other side of the coin—is a special kind of experience: it has to be described in terms of an intellectual reflection. As Wittgenstein puts this: “an interpretation becomes an expression of experience. And the interpretation is not an indirect description; no, it is the primary expression of the experience” [Wittgenstein, 1980, §20]. In the case of aspect-perception, then, there is no distinction between the conceptual and the percep-

tual level, between the abstract intellectual discovery and the palpable experience. The experience, we may say, is the medium for the conceptual discovery.

There are many differences between cases of aspect-seeing, and the discussion of the differences will be central to my discussion below. Let me begin, however, in §1, with a general characterization of aspect-seeing. In §§2-3 I discuss two types of aspect-seeing—preparatory, and non-preparatory—and make some sub-distinctions.

## §1.

### a.

When an aspect dawns, we experience a possible meaningful life of an object—or word, or picture, and so on. We may look at an object and have a sense, for instance, that it is some kind of instrument, but not have an idea what instrument, or see an agitated animal, sensing that something is going on inside it without having a word for it.<sup>3</sup> We may be “looking,” as Wittgenstein says, “without knowing what [we are] looking for” [Wittgenstein, 1980, §60]. In such cases, the experience is of the meaning as waiting for us to discover it, not being quite able to put our finger on it. Often, however, in aspect-experiences, there is a particular concept that makes contact with the object and lets us experience a particular meaningful life of the object.<sup>4</sup> In Tractarian terms, it lets us see a symbol in the sign: it lets us experience what it would be like to conceptualize it in a particular way; and by ‘conceptualize’ I do not mean to attach a certain term to it, but to place it in a logical network of practices and interests by assigning it a logical function. When we have such an aspect-experience it is an essential part of the experience that we see how the concept can be detached from the object: We are not exercising—practicing—a committed judgment that this is the right concept for the object. We see the duck-aspect of , for instance; we see that the image can be connected with the concept *duck*—

with this particular body of norms. And yet, in this experience, the concept *duck* is making a tentative, uncommitted, contact with  $\Rightarrow$ ; it will only stay connected as long as we hold the connection, and we can decide to connect it with another concept: *rabbit*. Or again, suppose we look in the mirror, and suddenly see our father in our own reflection. His identity makes contact with our image, but the connection is not decided: we are certainly not thereby committed to identifying ourselves with him.

Aspect-perception involves a special form of concept-application. Take the duck-rabbit again. As opposed to seeing a duck-aspect, to hold that something is a duck-picture is not merely to see that, and how, it can be conceptualized as a duck-picture; it is rather to actually conceptualize it, treat it, as such. This would normally involve using it in typical ways: teaching a child how ducks look, using it in a sign that indicates that the duck hunting season is open, and so on. We may say that in such cases we bring the concept  $\Rightarrow$  to an object—a picture in a picture book, a sign—but not in such a way as to make the concept seem detachable. In such applications, we exercise—put to use—a conceptualization, and thereby give the object a *de facto* place and sense in our life.

My claim is that none of *that* is involved in aspect-perception. In aspect-perception, when we see the duck-aspect of  $\Rightarrow$  for instance, we are not actually putting the concept to work in the sense just described—we are not using the object in a way that is guided by the norms internal to the concept.<sup>5</sup> We are, however, reflecting on doing that. We are, for instance, experiencing the need for a concept, or experiencing how a particular concept may let us make sense of an object: what it would be like, for instance, to use it as we typically use duck-pictures, or how the word ‘pensive’ allows us to express our experience of a musical theme.<sup>6</sup> We may say, I suggest, that the application of a concept in aspect-perception is an application whose very essence is that it is reflective: referring to other applications of that same concept.

There is a difference, then, between habitually using a concept

and seeing an aspect. This means that seeing an aspect is different, for example, from recognizing, identifying, and realizing something: all three involve bringing a concept to an object in a way that does not imply that the concept is only tentatively attached to the object. To recognize, identify, or realize something is rather to judge how the object should be conceptualized.<sup>7</sup> To recognize the symptoms of Malaria, for instance, is to judge that one is examining a person sick with Malaria. Aspect-perception, on the other hand, may only involve entertaining (not abstractly-intellectually, but in experience! I discuss this further in §1c) the possibility of conceptualizing the object in a certain way, but without exercising a commitment to this conceptualization.<sup>8</sup>

*b.*

In both seeing an aspect and in exercising a commitment to a conceptualization, we may be capturing the object by utilizing the very same concept. I suggest that we characterize the difference in the following way: In the two cases the object is seen from two different standpoints. When exercising a committed conceptual judgment, we are looking at the object “*from within*” our practices, that is, we are engaged with the norms for its usage. The cogwheels of our mind are, as it were, turned by the mechanism of those norms—animated by them—in some use of the object. For example, when we use a fork during dinner, we—unreflectively, habitually—let the judgment that this is a fork guide, “animate,” what we do with the fork. On the other hand, when seeing an aspect we are looking at something “*from sideways-on*”:<sup>9</sup> we suspend judgment. We may experience the need for some norms for its usage, or we may (sometimes willfully and sometimes irresistibly) entertain some particular norms for its usage, think of it under some concept, but in a disengaged, reflective manner—a manner that does not involve a use of the object according to those norms, but rather only an experience of what it would be like to use it in some such way.

c.

What indicates that we are indeed looking at things “from sideways-on” in aspect-perception is that it involves an exceptional form of reflection: palpable, experiential, rather than purely cognitive and abstract. The expression “see something differently” often just denotes a difference or change of opinion, and not an actual, visual, experience, as it literally suggests. In aspect-perception an actual, palpable experience is involved. In such cases, we are not reasoning by examining the logical implications of propositions. Rather, we consider conceptual alternatives (sometimes willfully, sometimes irresistibly) by having the reality of the relevant object—or picture, or text, or whatever—leave a palpable, possibly perceptual, impression on us. Aspect-experiences are reflections on concepts, embodied in experience.

Aspect-experiences are unlike other experiences we have—of the shoes we wear, the word ‘salt’ when someone asks for the salt, the pen we write with, the stop sign on the way to work. Unlike aspect-experiences, these experiences normally do not involve a kind of stepping back from our routine ways of making sense of things, and reflecting on those ways. Such experiences are a form of routine employment of concepts—themselves a sort of exercise of conceptual judgments.<sup>10</sup>

To say that aspect-experience does not involve such exercise of concepts is not to say that the experience is unmediated conceptually, or that aspect-experience is an experience of some non-conceptual content. On the contrary, aspect-experiences are mediated by concepts, but in a special way: The conceptual mediation is not that of an exercised conceptual commitment. Rather, sometimes when experiencing an aspect the experience is mediated by a concept that tentatively makes contact with the object; at other times, the experience is mediated by the lack of some concept that would enable us to capture the object in thought.

The experience is different in different cases of aspect-perception. Some aspect-experiences involve being visually struck

by something, as in the duck-rabbit case when the duck aspect dawns. But we do not always experience aspects with our senses. Imagine, for instance, sitting at a dinner table with your family and being suddenly struck by the familiarity of the event. This is an aspect experience, but we do not have a sense organ for it.<sup>11</sup> Qualitatively, some aspect-experiences feel somewhat like the way in which an emotion grasps you, floods you. What is important for my purposes, in any case, is first that aspect-experiences are experiences, and second, that these experiences can only be described by reference to our interest in capturing the world in thought and practice—the interest we have in having conceptual clarity that would help guide the ways we treat things, like the language with which we make sense of them in particular networks of practices and interests.

So, for instance, when we see the duck-rabbit, or hear a musical phrase as answering another, or when we suddenly feel as if we disappear in a crowd of people, our experience has to be described in terms of those concepts: *duck*, *answer*, *disappearance*. “It is as if a germ of meaning were experienced, and then got interpreted” [Wittgenstein, 1980, §94].<sup>12</sup> Once again, in the case of aspect-perception, there is no distinction between the experience and the abstract thought. The experience is the medium of the thought; the thought is the content of the experience. In general, aspect-experiences are experiences of meaning.

d.

When seeing an aspect in something—in that short moment<sup>13</sup>—the meaningful life of an object is in view, and yet we do not (yet) take part in it. We may talk here of looking at something from a distance, perhaps even *sub specie aeternitatis*: from the point of view of eternity; seeing it, but so to speak, without coming into full practical contact with it—bringing the concept to it, for instance, but not yet putting it to work or practicing the norms for the application of this concept.<sup>14</sup>

Examining something from such a disengaged, uncommitted standpoint does not mean, however, that we are disengaged from our humanity and interests—from what Stanley Cavell called our “whirl of organism” [Cavell, 1969, 52]. On the contrary, the point of occupying or taking that standpoint is to give expression to our natural human interest in making sense of things, in capturing them in thought. It is out of concern for the norms we are disengaged from that we adopt that reflective standpoint, and it may express the wish to re-engage them. It is itself an expression of humanity.<sup>15</sup>

## §2.

### *a.*

Seeing an aspect, I argue, does not involve an exercised conceptual commitment. Still, it involves a kind of awareness—a capturing in thought—of an object (or picture or text); and if this is right, then aspect-perception can be preparatory. That is, we may use the fact that we can see a certain aspect as grounds for so conceptualizing the matter in practice.<sup>16</sup> For example, seeing similarity between two faces may serve as a reason, justification, for using a picture of the one to identify the other. Or seeing the duck in  may serve as reason for putting it in a picture book to represent ducks.

When we see an aspect in a preparatory way, then, we are looking at something and are experiencing the need—possibly a particular way—to connect (possibly reconnect) into life with it. Metaphorically, we can describe this as standing at the sidelines of the language-game—just outside our practical life with the object, or moving outside—but all the while facing inside, or backwards: towards our normative life with it, and with a view to return and re-engage this life. The mark of a preparatory aspect-experience is, then, that it intimates a sense that it should at least be possible to come into routine practical-normative life with the object. If, for instance, the aspect we experience indicates a conceptualization

that we can endorse—can practice habitually, routinely—the aspect-experience is preparatory.

### *b.*

Our ability to experience aspects in a preparatory way can be of help to us in our attempt to overcome conceptual ambiguities. It may be of such help, for instance, in cases where competing ways of seeing the matter—experiencing and conceptualizing it—strike us as equally attractive. Here are some examples: Is it a heap or just a bunch of grains? Is the Mona Lisa content, or is it her embarrassed face? Was the death of that woman murder, or was it mercy killing? Is this action legal, or is its flagrant and brutal injustice enough to make it illegal? Should this be called marriage, or can marriage only really exist between one man and one woman?<sup>17</sup> – To the extent that these uncertainties are conceptual, I suggest we can make some progress towards their resolution with the help of aspect-perception.

Before I explain how (in §2e), I will need to clarify the problem a bit more (in §2c-d). But even before that, let me acknowledge that there are many differences between the cases. In different cases the conceptual uncertainty has different origins. Sometimes, as in the heap-grains case, there is a continuum, and no clear cutoff point suggests itself. In the duck-rabbit case, there is no such continuum. Also, in some cases the decision may be more urgent than in others. In some cases where we can conceptualize in different ways there is also a question for us about the *right* conceptualization. I take it that there may not be such a question, for instance, with the duck-rabbit. But the decision is more urgent in the moral cases, for instance, than in the heap-grain case or the Mona Lisa case. Also, some aspect-experiences are the result of the aspect dawning on us—we are being struck by an aspect. Only in some cases—like the duck-rabbit—we can learn to see the object in more than one way, and willfully switch between aspects. Relatedly, in some cases there is more room for remaining conceptually uncommitted than in others: Sometimes, as

in the duck-rabbit case, we can freely move between conceptualizations. In other cases, concepts force themselves on us, so that we cannot help conceptualizing the object in a certain way. This is the way in which slaughter-house images may ruin our dinner: they make what we have on our plate not seem like food anymore.<sup>18</sup>

Despite the differences between the cases, our interest in all is similar: we are entangled in the conceptualization of something—attempting to capture it in thought and practice. Our ability to make moral and aesthetic judgments in some of those cases depends on our ability to settle that—to decide what language is appropriate, and in which semantic field we should make the judgment. But even in cases where we do not have an immediate interest in making such judgments (e.g. the duck-rabbit), reflecting on the meaningfulness of things is most natural to us: it is a basic human mode of interaction with things. Preparatory aspect-perception, I am claiming, is one of the forms that this interaction may take.

*c.*

To overcome conceptual uncertainties of the kind I described, we need to acquire capacities that are internal to, definitive of, having concepts: generally, the capacity to make sense of things and own them in thought. Let me clarify.

There are things that having a concept allows us to do which are external to having the concept. We may thus choose certain concepts and not others because the former fulfill some needs that the latter do not. Having number concepts, for instance, allows us, among other things, to build stable bridges. This involves an idea about the usefulness of concepts that only makes sense regarding the things we can do that are external to having concepts.

Having a concept, however, is primarily tied to the things that it allows us to do that are internal to having it. To have a concept, in this sense, just *is* to be a master of some particular technique: to be able to do certain things—i.e. capture certain things in thought and practice. Having number concepts allows us to capture, make

sense of, quantities in a particular way. For example, it allows us to capture in a particular way the fact that yesterday I drank more cups of coffee than today, or that all weeks have the same number of days in them. We do not have to have number concepts to capture these facts, but having them allows us to capture those facts in particularly useful ways: it allows us to ask how many more cups of coffee I drank yesterday, and how many days there are in a week. It is internal to understanding a concept that we understand the point of having it—of capturing things in thought in that particular way. For example, to have the concept *number* is to see the point of being interested in quantities in a particular way. A concept that does not have functionality, a concept with which nothing can be captured, is not a concept. With regard to those internal things, therefore, it makes no sense to talk of having a concept without being able to do them (e.g. to have number concepts without being able to make sense of quantities). In this sense, concepts and what we (need to) do with them are not given independently. My point about our difficulty with the kind of conceptual uncertainties I described and what we need in order to overcome those uncertainties pertains to the things that concepts allow us to do that are internal to having them.

*d.*

Aspect-perception, I claim, allows us to reflect on how to make sense of things. My claim is that we *can* use the fact that we can see something in a particular way in deciding how to conceptualize the matter, and that often we *do*. I also believe that we *should* do this, for otherwise, we may end up with ways of conceptualizing that are unnatural, and that do not reflect our real interests and needs. But I do not wish to argue that as a matter of logical necessity we always have to use the fact that we can see something in a particular way for such purposes.

There are, alternatively, always some facts of the matter on which we can rely: we will not conceptualize  as a zebra, for instance; and we will not conceptualize the creature in the preg-

nant woman's womb as a baby-horse. There are all sorts of limits, logical and factual, as well as things we are committed to—values, ideas, theories, and even taste preferences—that can provide boundary conditions on what possible conceptualizations are available to us. Nevertheless, appeal to such prior commitments may not settle the matter. We are not logically forced by the reality of things to conceptualize them only in certain ways and not others—duck or rabbit, baby or embryo. And even given all the facts and all our prior commitments, we may still be able to conceptualize in several incompatible ways. The cases I mentioned above are only a sample; there are many such cases.

*e.*

When we are conceptually uncertain, and appeals to facts, logic, and prior commitments do not suffice, aspect-perception gives us an essential part of what we need: an appreciation of the kind of interest we have in the object. Let me demonstrate this. When thinking about the morality of euthanasia, for instance, we may be facing a conceptual question: what to call it—“an act of mercy,” or “murder?” And the problem may be conceptual. That is, our difficulty making a moral judgment may stem from the fact that we have not yet settled the question how to conceptualize this act. To the extent that we are faced with such a conceptual dilemma, saying: “If I were to keep a pet animal in the same condition I am in, I would be prosecuted,”<sup>19</sup> or “It is the kind of creature that makes sense of its pains, and responds to the moral claims of its suffering”<sup>20</sup>—appealing to such images may help. Such images stir us. They make us experience aspects—reveal to us possible ways of making sense of the situation, conceptualizing it—and thereby force, in this particular manner, these ways of making sense on us, typically for a limited while. The images, that is, have a preparatory role: they allow us to experience what it would be like to conceptualize the matter in this particular way or that, and possibly make a decision.

Or again, when thinking about the morality of abortion, we like-

wise may be facing conceptual questions. Asking ourselves questions like: “Is that the kind of thing it would make sense to name, or bury?” or “would not naming it be as humiliating as not naming a person; would naming it be as funny as naming one's foot?”—asking such questions can give us a feel, an experience, of what we are talking about, but without assuming any commitment on our part. It allows us to feel what it would be like to conceptualize the matter in this way or that—as a baby, or as an embryo—and can thus allow us to choose the appropriate language and practices.<sup>21</sup>

As these examples show, aspect-perception allows us to feel the contours of our conceptual uncertainty—to have a sense of what would and what would not be a candidate for the missing conceptual piece. It does that without involving us in a committed exercise of any particular way of conceptualizing the matter. If there is more than one alternative conceptualization, we may, by using questions and images of the sort I have mentioned, let ourselves experience the different ways—sample the options. This would give us an idea what it would be like to conceptualize the matter, now this way now that, and thus, what it would take to conceptualize the matter properly.

All of this can happen before we have exercised any conceptual judgment, and in a way that can later be used as grounds for endorsing some way of conceptualizing the matter. Admittedly, this sounds un-Wittgensteinian: it makes it seem as if the facts are there independently from their articulation, waiting to be captured by means of concepts, and as if the experience of aspect is an experience of some non-conceptual content. However, this would be a misunderstanding. As I argued above (§1c), the experience of aspect-perception—this kind of taking up of the facts in thought—is mediated by concepts; but the mediation takes a special form: we are not experiencing the facts by employing them according to the norms that their concept determines (as we experience the fork during dinner). We rather let a concept make a tentative contact with the facts, and only experience (sometimes this is forced on us,

sometimes not) what it would be like to conceptualize them in this way.

*f.*

It is worth mentioning that there is a connection here with the philosophy of mathematics and the nature of mathematical understanding. Aspect-experiences, or something very much like them, occur also in mathematics. A collection of numbers, for instance, may look random and in this sense lifeless. It may suddenly dawn on us, and we may suddenly see a point in taking them together: We may suddenly see the good of having a concept that would make sense of those numbers together—by animating them as an arithmetical series, for instance. In the same vein, Wittgenstein comments on the proposition, “I’ve just noticed that a familiar drawing contains this form: The discovery that this is so is of the same kind as mathematical discoveries” [Wittgenstein, 1980, §439].<sup>22</sup>

Also worth mentioning is a connection with the philosophy of art and the role of the imagination in critical understanding in general. When we look at a work of art and attempt to “interpret” it, our activity is not always that of raising hypotheses about the work: hypotheses that can be examined relative to independent data, such as data about the childhood of the artist, or the political climate in which the work was created. Rather, we look for ways of describing the work; and unlike with ordinary objects—pillows and spoons—the way in which the work of art is to be described is not unproblematically given by the work. To capture a work of art, what we sometimes—perhaps often—do, is bring concepts to the work of art, or to part of it, and attempt to experience the work through the medium of these concepts.<sup>23</sup> Thus, for instance, we may look at the Mona Lisa, and see it through the medium of the concept *embarrassment*, or alternatively through the concept *contentment*. When we do this, we may be attempting to conceptualize the art-work, but this is not necessary. More commonly, we bring a concept to an art-work, and attempt to see the work through the concept, as part

of performing other sorts of imaginative contemplation of works of art. I discuss such forms of contemplation in §3.

*g.*

Experiencing a way of conceptualizing does not function as justification of a certain conceptualization by forcing us to accept it on pain of involving ourselves with some contradiction. The decision is *our* burden, and the burden is not to logically deduce what our commitment should be, given the facts and our prior commitments. When we deliberate about how to conceptualize something, we may need to go beyond appeal to such considerations, and the burden may be yet heavier: to examine the possibilities, try the alternatives, taste the options, and make up our own experienced minds. So, as I argued above, it is not that we are logically forced by the reality of things to conceptualize and capture them in thought only in certain ways and not others; but it is not as if we have nothing to go on either, or no way to justify ourselves—or think intelligently about—ways of conceptualization.

I should emphasize that settling such conceptual matters is typically not something we need individually. It is typically a shared need, something we need together—as a community of language: a community that makes sense together. To the extent that aspect-experiences can serve as justifications, they also bring us together: they allow us to put this life of ours into language together—give us, or help us agree on, the concepts with which to make sense of things.

§3

*a.*

Seeing aspects involves feeling the meaningful life of an object—often by bringing a concept to it—and letting ourselves feel what it would be like to conceptualize the object with the concept, but

without exercising a conceptual judgment. I have so far described one way in which we do this—one reason: to prepare our linguistic norms, shape and re-shape them. But we may do this for other reasons as well. In this section, I would like to describe another kind of reasons for doing this: non-preparatory reasons. The mark of non-preparatory aspect-experiences is that they do not reflect a sense that it is possible to properly come into routine practical-normative life with the object.

Non-preparatory aspect-perception characterizes some forms of aesthetic experience—for instance, when we feel that our experience defies conceptualization. We say in such cases things like: “I immerse myself in the colour [...] I ‘cannot get my fill of a colour’” [Wittgenstein, 1958, §277].<sup>24</sup> Similar things happen outside aesthetics—arguably in ethics—when we find ourselves drowning in the eyes of a loved one.<sup>25</sup> The color in which we immerse ourselves, the eyes in which we drown, are perfectly ordinary. They were there even before we found ourselves drowned or immersed in them, and the routine of our conceptual life with them was safe. But now, an aspect-experience has shattered the routine: When we found ourselves immersed or drowned, something happened that gave the color and the eyes depths that they did not have before; or it exposed dimensions we had not noticed before.

In preparatory aspect-perception, when seeing the duck aspect of Jastrow’s duck-rabbit for instance, we are not committed to a conceptualization, but we are committed to the possibility of conceptualizing—e.g. of conceptualizing  as a duck. As opposed to that, in non-preparatory aspect-perception, for example when suddenly noticing our father in our own reflection, we are not only uncommitted to identifying ourselves with him; we are also not committed to the possibility of such identification. Similarly, when we cannot get our fill of a color, we are not thereby committed to the possibility of saying how exactly we take colors in, and when we find ourselves drowned in the eyes of a loved one, we are not thereby committed to the possibility of saying how deep these eyes

exactly are, and how to measure that.

*b.*

Avner Baz takes something like this non-preparatory kind of aspect-perception as more paradigmatic of aspect-perception in general. He does not make a distinction between preparatory and non-preparatory aspect-experiences, but he declines to give center stage to “the ambiguous figures and schematic drawings, which are pivotal to most accounts of seeing aspects” [Baz, 2000, 100].<sup>26</sup> He has in mind ambiguous figures like , which are indeed useful in demonstrating the preparatory role of aspect-perception, but not its non-preparatory role.

Baz is the first to have emphasized that there are cases of aspect-experiences that are unlike the two-dimensional experience we have with Jastrow’s duck-rabbit. He should be further credited for emphasizing that such aspect-experiences happen in our daily encounter with ordinary objects, people, and words, and not only with contrived laboratory-designed images. Nevertheless, by his repeated talk of examples that are more and less representative of the phenomena of aspects in general, Baz hinders attention to the importance of the fact that there is more than one kind of point to seeing aspects.

“Disentangling a philosophical puzzlement,” claims Baz, “can require the kind of patience and concentration and persistence that disentangling a Gordian knot made of delicate threads would require” [Baz, 2010, 237]. He gives voice to a Wittgensteinian notion of philosophizing that necessitates patient attention to detail and particularity, a conception in which “we must focus on the details of what goes on; must look at them *from close to*” [Wittgenstein, 1958, §51].

In response to Baz, I want to point out that it is by comparing and contrasting different cases that we attend to particulars—not just by looking deep into each and every case separately. It is by putting different cases alongside one another, without taking some

of them to be less important, as Baz does, but rather using them as objects of comparisons, that we clarify grammar—here, the grammar of aspect-perception; or so it is in the Wittgensteinian conception of philosophizing. That may be impeded by taking some cases of aspect-perception as less paradigmatic, and as deserving less attention: Doing this runs the risk of *a priori* taking certain things that we might learn from the comparison to be not-so-important, and thereby of possibly failing to learn from the comparison. And this in fact happens in Baz's discussion. So even though, as noted above, Baz makes several important distinctions between kinds of aspect-experiences, he often uses these distinctions to justify his disinterest in some aspect phenomena, and in what can be learnt from them. His insistence on treating some of these phenomena as less paradigmatic obstructs his discussion.

Comparing and contrasting the different phenomena of aspect-perception will give us an insight into the different ways we shape language, the different ways we assume the burden of taking care of our concepts, and the various things we need concepts to do for us. And so this is what I propose to do now: to contrast the preparatory kind of aspect-perception I discussed in §2 with non-preparatory cases of aspect-perception.

*c.*

Preparatory aspect-perception, I argued, allows us to deal with one kind of conceptual difficulty, i.e. uncertainties about how to conceptualize things. Non-preparatory aspect-perception allows us to deal with a similar, but different, difficulty that we sometimes have in capturing things in thought: the poverty of concepts. Sometimes we need to capture an object in thought, but not in any routine, matter-of-course, way. We need to find in the object, or find a way to express that the object has for us, dimensions that surpass what any norm-laden use of language could capture.

Aspect-perception allows us to deal with the experience we sometimes have that our concepts cannot quite capture our expe-

riences: the depth of the color, the dimensions of soul that we see in the eyes. Aspect-perception allows us to deal with this kind of difficulty just because it involves conceptually uncommitted thinking. This enables us to bring to the objects we experience concepts that do not typically belong to them—to employ our concepts figuratively, and thereby signal the specialness and the dimensions of the experience, which do not have room in any literal use of language.

*d.*

Let me describe three kinds of non-preparatory aspect-experiences. First, sometimes things—objects, words, people—become routine, in a way that makes us blind to them, so to speak. Often, it takes a long time to realize that, and often we never do. However, it may dawn on us that this is how we live—that we are not *really* reading those texts even though we are reading all the words, or that we are not *truly* exposed to the existence of those people even though we are familiar with their names. It may dawn on us that we are treating them as a matter of course.

The experience of it dawning on us that we have been living with something merely as routine—the experience of the need for more dimensions, as it were—is itself a kind of aspect-experience: an experience that may involve a feeling that this routine is shallow or empty. When we have this experience, we typically want to overcome it. But our difficulty is not to find the appropriate routine; it is not that we are uncertain how to conceptualize our experience. We rather need to deepen the shallowness of the way in which we capture the matter, to break the routine. We need a way to bring ourselves to see those things—expose ourselves to them—*anew*. Inducing aspect-experiences is a way of doing this: and we may try to do it by, for instance, putting a urinal in a museum, or thinking about a coworker through the concept *someone's daughter*. As Avner Baz says: “our relation to the world, as revealed by the dawning of aspects, is one in which we continually have to restore an intimacy with the world—an intimacy that is forever at stake, and that if taken

for granted is bound to be lost” [Baz, 2010, 238].<sup>27</sup>

Second, closely related to the kind of experiences just mentioned, and not quite constituting a separate category, there is a kind of linguistic shallowness that we notice only after the aspect dawned and the shallowness overcome. This is the kind of thing that happens when we notice our father in our own reflection in the mirror, or when a portrait seems to be looking down on us from the wall. Our routine, so far, with our image and with the portrait was perfectly fine. But then an aspect dawned, and re-problematized the way we capture those things in thought. What we now need in order to capture those things properly is to overcome the very routine-ness, matter-of-course-ness, of our normal dealings with them. In such cases, we accordingly often feel that our words fail us. The object we consider, this is our experience, has more significance than it normally has—more dimensions; and our words do not normally support those dimensions.

Experiences of this sort can be less or more dramatic. In the more dramatic cases the new meaning revealed in the aspect-experience can make the routine matter-of-course attitude seem false or inauthentic. A word, say—a perfectly ordinary word—can suddenly strike us as encapsulating great depths of meaning in a way that may make our previous understanding of the word seem wrong: for instance, “Now I know what *blue* really means” after looking at a Picasso painting, or “Now this is what I call *music*” when listening to a Bach concerto. What we are experiencing in such cases is the object—or word, or whatever—as an embodiment of meaning. We may say in such cases that we are struck by the “true” essence of a perfectly ordinary object, or by the “real” meaning of an everyday word.<sup>28</sup>

Third, there are also non-preparatory aspect-experiences in which the very opposite of what I have so far described happens: Rather than revealing new dimensions, a word or an object may strike us as devoid of meaning, or of any true reality.<sup>29</sup> This happens in a famous passage in Sartre’s *Nausea*, in which a chestnut is

experienced as if the world in its background recedes, and it is left singled out as an embodiment of meaninglessness:

The roots of the chestnut tree were sunk in the ground just under my bench. I couldn’t remember it was a root anymore. The words had vanished and with them the significance of things, their methods of use, and the feeble points of reference which men have traced on their surface [Sartre, 2007, 126–7].

*e.*

My claim then is this: In non-preparatory aspect-experience we are attempting to capture our non-routine meaningful life with something, and we may do this for instance by bringing a concept to the object—letting ourselves feel what it would be like to conceptualize it with that concept—all the while not having any intention to ever actually make a conceptual judgment—to exercise as a matter of course a commitment to that conceptualization. We do not have such an intention, for the concept we are bringing to the object is *intentionally* foreign to it. The very point of appealing to foreign concepts in such cases is to set the object apart. By this sort of attention, that is, we are able to exclude the object from its routine life and usage, and treat it as special—perhaps even ontologically special.<sup>30</sup>

Let me go back to a metaphor I used in §2a: When standing on the sidelines of the language game—in that disengaged standpoint from which we experience aspects and can reflect on our ways of conceptualizing things in a non-committed manner—or when moving to this standpoint, we may, I argued, be facing *inside* or *backward*: toward our normative life, and with the intention of finding a way into a norm-soaked life with the object. This is our position in preparatory aspect-perception. But, and this is my claim now, we may also be facing *outside*, or *forward*—that is, not have any intention of finding a way into a norm-soaked routine with the object. We

may reflect on an object, and bring a concept to it, not with a view to actually conceptualize it, but in order to move away, escape or express that we are away, from any routine with it. This characterizes non-preparatory aspect-experiences.

*f.*

I have so far mostly described cases of non-preparatory aspect-experiences that are somewhat extraordinary, or unusual. But there is a variety of phenomena that have similar grammar—or so I suggest—many of which are ordinary and common. Thus, finding the atmosphere so tense that you could cut it with a knife, experiencing a turn of phrase as unnatural, feeling at home in a conversation, finding a musical phrase funny, discovering one’s father in one’s reflection in the mirror, finding a name to be fitting a face, and more. What all these cases share grammatically—and this is the reason why I suggest it is instructive to look at them together—is the kind of attention we give to things is most naturally expressed by stretching language: by employing ways of expression that deliberately go beyond, if not violate, accepted linguistic norms. So, even though those experiences are not unusual, they are not routine.

In such cases, I claim, we find it natural to describe things in grammatically “inappropriate” terms. We let ourselves feel what it would be like to conceptualize an object with an “improper” concept, and by stretching language in this way, we signal that our experience is not routine. We do not literally cut tense atmospheres with knives, or see our father in the mirror, and the portrait does not literally look down on us from the wall. By employing such forms of expression we are not exercising a conceptual judgment. We are, rather, bringing the concept to the object, *as if* it were possible to conceptualize the object with it. And we do this in order to show, *per impossible*, what it would take—what imaginative feat it would require—to appropriately capture the matter in thought. The non-literal way of expression in such cases is therefore the most natural and direct way of expression. In fact, it is the only way: The very

point of such uses is to exclude the possibility of a literal translation (but not non-literal, figurative, translations and paraphrases in general), and thereby to express the non-matter-of-course-ness of the experience. In such cases we make what Wittgenstein called a use of an expression in a secondary sense [Wittgenstein, 1958, 216f], or secondary use [Wittgenstein, 1958, §282].<sup>31</sup>

*g.*

As in the preparatory case, non-preparatory aspect-perception typically does not merely express one individual’s need. It rather typically expresses a shared need: something we need together, as a community that makes sense together. Non-preparatory aspect-perception can bring things—words, objects—back to life for us when they have been eroded by use, forgetfulness, and carelessness; and when this happens, we need to be able to communicate this to others. This is why, as Avner Baz argues, seeing aspects allows for intimacy: “the seeing of aspects, or rather its expression, puts our attunement with other people to the test” [Baz, 2000, 99]. Unlike the preparatory case, however, since seeing the aspect in the non-preparatory cases is not done for the sake of setting norms and concepts for future use, or settling conceptual dilemmas, whether or not others share such aspect experiences with us—our attunement with them—is not marked by their accepting the same norms as we do, or by exercising the same conceptual judgments.<sup>32</sup>

Can we explain to others such uses of figurative language? Can we justify our deliberate use of grammatically “inappropriate” words and intentional violation of the rules of the language game? – Despite all this, I maintain, we may still be able to justify our ways of expressing ourselves in such cases. As with the preparatory way of seeing aspects, a justification in non-preparatory cases calls upon people’s natural need to make sense of things, to capture things in thought. Unlike in the preparatory cases, the use of figurative language in expressing non-preparatory aspect experiences is meant to make people—tempt them to—experience the need to

make sense of something in a particular, exceptional, perhaps peculiar, way. Again, as in the case of preparatory aspect-perception, we may use images and pictures to explain and justify our way of seeing things. But there is also a difference. When utilizing figures of speech in the non-preparatory cases, we do not call upon people to conceptualize something in a particular way. The type of agreement we want to get out of them in the non-preparatory cases is therefore not an agreement on concepts. What we hope for is rather a signal of a shared sense that the object under discussion escapes conceptualization—that the normal conceptual tools we have will not do. And we also hope for an agreement on the particular way in which the object escapes conceptualization: we hope that our interlocutor will feel the need to use the same—or similar—“inappropriate” concepts and figures of speech to describe their experience. When they do that, it signals that they share our experience.

If, for instance, we wanted to explain our saying that the portrait is looking down on us from the wall—if, that is, we wanted to explain more than just the fact that it was taken *en face*, and not *en profil*—we would have to continue talking in terms that describe the portrait as having a mind: We would have to say for instance, “See, it is looking straight at me, scrutinizing me!” And the point of saying this would be partly to convey the way in which our experience of this inanimate object escapes the forms of descriptions we have for inanimate objects.

Take another example. John Locke tells the following story:

A studious blind man, who had mightily beat his head about visible objects, and made use of the explication of his books and friends, to understand those names of light and colours which often came in his way, bragged one day, that he now understood what scarlet signified. Upon which, his friend demanding what scarlet was? The blind man answered, it was like the sound of a trumpet [Locke, 1996, Book III, Chapter IV, §11].

Even sighted people can recognize the blind man’s intention. A reflection on red brings to many minds the sound of a trumpet. To the extent that we recognize the possibility of expressing ourselves in such a way, we should also recognize that language here is employed in a peculiar way: for color is not something one hears. And yet, this is the only way to express the relevant kind of experience, namely to use a concept outside its natural logical domain, so to speak. And this is not a failure on our part, for part of our intention in giving voice to our experience in such cases is to mark its peculiarity. Making secondary uses of expressions—using words out of place—is our way of doing that.

*h.*

To be sure, there is nothing unnatural or even unusual about looking for ways to escape established conceptual norms, and this is related but it is not what Stanley Cavell means when he says that “nothing could be more human” than “the power of the motive to reject the human” [Cavell, 1979, 207]. Rejecting conceptual norms may be a rejection of humanity, but one does not have to reject humanity when one rejects those norms. One may just as well be trying to discover it.

Discovering how to capture the world in thought is our task. Sharing this task is part of what makes us human, and by accomplishing it we also discover what it takes to be human. My claim in this section comes to this: Our ability to experience aspects in the non-preparatory way allows us to accomplish one aspect of this task of discovering our humanity. It allows us to fill the linguistic void created when we cannot turn to our linguistic norms for help—not because there are none, or because there are too many, but for the very fact that they are norms: just norms. Using them would be an expression of routine, and what we want is to express something whose very essence is that it is not routine. The kind of depth that we see in the eyes of a loved one, the dimensions we see in a Picasso blue, will not be tamed conceptually; they cannot be ex-

pressed literally. We therefore have to appeal to essential figures of speech—figurative language that does not allow for literal translation.

Using essentially figurative language does not reveal a way of making sense of the situation any more than it reveals the way—the particular way—in which the situation escapes our ability to make sense of it. Put differently, when having a non-preparatory aspect-experience, part of the phenomenon that we need to capture in thought and get others to see—part of what our form of expression attempts to grasp—is a certain ingraspability in the phenomenon: Whereas to capture things in thought is normally to conceptualize them, in the non-preparatory cases to capture things in thought is also to capture the way in which these things frustrate conceptualization—thwart committed mater-of-course application of concepts.

There is much more to investigate in connection with aspect-perception. As I mentioned, the topic stands at the crossroad of quite a few philosophical topics in the philosophy of psychology, of art, of religion, ethics, and mathematics. I would like, in conclusion, to suggest that the matter has deep metaphilosophical implications: If aspect-perception is indeed a form of reflecting on language, then we may ask: Is there a lesson here to be learnt about the forms that philosophical reflection may, or perhaps in some cases should, take? – It seems to me a matter worth pursuing.

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## Notes

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<sup>2</sup>By talking about conceptual clarity I do not mean to imply that we are unclear about the concepts yet clear about the object. Rather, the unclarity here is two-folded: We do not know whether a concept—*baby*, *embryo*—appropriately applies to the object, and in that sense are not clear about the concept; but at the same time we are not clear about how to call, and in general treat, the object, and in that sense we are unclear about the object.

<sup>3</sup>See [Wittgenstein, 1980, §347]

<sup>4</sup>This is admittedly a figurative way of putting the matter. However, I submit that there is no non-figurative way of expressing this idea. In discussing the phenomena and the experiences of aspect, Wittgenstein often makes use of figurative language: “The substratum of this experience is the mastery of a technique” [Wittgenstein, 1958, 208]. “[...] what I perceive in the dawning of an aspect is not a property of the object, but an internal relation between it and other objects” [Wittgenstein, 1958, 212]. “It is as if one had brought a concept to what one sees, and one now sees the concept along with the thing. It is itself hardly visible, and yet it spreads an ordering veil over the objects” [Wittgenstein, 1980, §961]. Figurative language itself becomes a topic in Wittgenstein’s discussion. When describing secondary uses of language, he notes that some phenomena cannot be described except in figurative language. “Seeing aspects,” I submit, is a secondary use of “seeing.” To defend this claim will take me too far off course, but I briefly discuss the idea of secondary use of language in §3f.

<sup>5</sup>Thus, says Wittgenstein: “[...] I take it as the typical game of ‘seeing something as something,’ when someone says ‘Now I see it as this, now as that.’ When, that is, he is acquainted with different aspects, and that *independently* of his making any application of what he sees” [Wittgenstein, 1980, §411].

<sup>6</sup>What one brings to an object in such cases are typically images and feelings that are psychologically associated with a certain concept. One may therefore say that this is a form of thinking without concepts. It is however equally worthwhile to think of it as a particular form of thinking with a concept, that does not manifest mastery of the language-game with the concept—“an exercise of an unapplied concept,” as it were. (I take the expression from [Geach, P.T., 1957, 14] who treats it as an absurdity.) This will allow us to see the matter as part of a larger investigation of thinking with and about concepts.

There is a question here about what is, and what is not, part of the language-game with a concept. The employment of a concept in aspect-perception is not external to the language-game with the concept, but it is not a criterion for the mastery of that game, so it is not quite internal either.

<sup>7</sup>A similar distinction is implicitly made by Avner Baz: “what exactly is meant by ‘his sudden realization that the picture-object is both a picture-meek-man and a picture-complacent-businessman’[?] Does it mean that he suddenly realizes—it all of a sudden occurs to him—that it could serve as either of them, be taken or interpreted to be either of them? Or does it mean that he found he could see it as one or the other?” [Baz, 2010, 242]. Unlike me, Baz does not connect the phenomena of aspects to adopting a reflective attitude towards language.

<sup>8</sup>A note of warning: When we suddenly notice an aspect, we may sometimes express this by saying “I’ve just realized it is a duck!” That is, we may use the term ‘realize’—and likewise ‘identify,’ and ‘recognize’—to express aspect experiences. What is important, however, is not what term we use, but what we intend by using it: whether we intend to be making a conceptual judgment, in which case we are not expressing an aspect-experience; or whether we alternatively intend to say that we have brought a concept to the object but have not thereby committed ourselves to treating the object as if it decisively falls under that concept, in which case we are expressing an aspect-experience.

<sup>9</sup>I borrow this expression from [McDowell, 1981, 141–62]. I am using the expression in a different way, however. McDowell uses it to refer to an illusory standpoint, independent of all human activities and reactions. As I explain in §1d, I do not take the standpoint from which we see aspects to be dehumanized.

<sup>10</sup>I therefore side with Avner Baz in his criticism of Stephen Mulhall’s treatment of aspect-seeing as characterizing our general relation to the world. See [Baz, 2000, 97–121] and [Mulhall, 2001].

<sup>11</sup>This does not have to be a *déjà vu* experience, in which we feel that *this* has happened before. It can rather be a feeling that can be described as a feeling that we already have a slot in our mind for this experience.

<sup>12</sup>See also [Wittgenstein, 1980, §1025].

<sup>13</sup>See [Wittgenstein, 1980, §§175–6], and [Wittgenstein, 1958, 210]: “I should like to say that what dawns here lasts only as long as I am occupied with the object in a particular way.”

<sup>14</sup>Wittgenstein talks of two ways of experiencing things *sub specie aeternitatis*: “besides the work of the artist there is another through which the world may be captured *sub specie aeternitatis*. It is—as I believe—the way of thought which as it were flies above the world and leaves it the way it is, contemplating it from above in its flight” [Wittgenstein, 1998, 7]. Possibly, these correspond to the two kinds of aspect-perception I discuss in §§2-3.

<sup>15</sup>Not that when this happens we are necessarily aware of this interest, or that we would necessarily describe it as a linguistic interest if we were aware of it, or as an interest in making sense in general. One does not have to be a philosopher of language to experience aspects; but one also does not have to be such a philosopher to have an interest in making sense of things.

<sup>16</sup>David Seligman argues for a similar idea: “When I ‘experience the meaning

of a word’ it is as if I were providing contexts for its use. I do not actually provide them, but I must be able to do so” [Seligman, 1976, 216]. Seligman here makes an important connection between seeing aspects and experiencing the meaning of a word, which I accept. I further agree with Seligman that when one sees an aspect or experiences the meaning of a word, one often has the ability to provide a context for use: there is often a use in the horizon, but not in actuality—a use that involves an exercise of a conceptual commitment. Unlike Seligman, I do not take such experiences to always have a use that involves a conceptual commitment in view. To employ the terms I shall explain below, the ability to provide such a context is only a necessary criterion for the experience in some preparatory, but not in non-preparatory, aspect-experiences.

<sup>17</sup>With regard to this last example, there are at least two forms that the objection to same-sex marriage takes: (1) there are those who think that such a thing can exist, and so for instance, that there is no problem calling two women who go through some ceremony “married;” they believe, however, that same-sex couples should not go through such ceremonies, or that even if they do, they should not be legally recognized as married. (2) There are those who would regard same sex marriage as a conceptual impossibility. They would not even allow that the two women who went through the ceremony are properly called “married.” For such people such “marriage” is akin to marrying a table: whatever ceremony you go through with a table, they would say, it would be a mistake to call it “marriage” (even if people chose to make it legal), and they think that the same holds for same-sex couples.

<sup>18</sup>In [Wittgenstein, 1998, 97] Wittgenstein claims that life can force the concept *God* on us. This, however, would be an example for a kind of non-preparatory aspect-perception.

<sup>19</sup>The words are from Bob Dent’s letter dictated to his wife on the eve of his death: [Dent, 1999, 19–32].

<sup>20</sup>For a defense of this view, see [Bachelard, 2002, 131–40]

<sup>21</sup>See [Wittgenstein, 1980, §381] for a discussion of the Mona Lisa case mentioned above. Regarding the heap-grain case, this refers to the famous Sorites Paradox: A difference of one grain does not turn a bunch of grains into a heap. One grain is not a heap, and a million are. By these assumptions, it seems that there both must and cannot be a cutoff point in which a bunch of grains turns into a heap. This paradox reflects, I believe, a sort of conceptual uncertainty. When applied to this sort of case, my suggestion that this uncertainty can be resolved with the help of aspect-perception amounts to the claim that by adopting a disengaged attitude, and letting oneself experience aspects—feel what it would be like to conceptualize the matter in this way or that—we may be able to say what the cutoff point is. At the same time, however, our idea of what it is for there to be a cutoff point in the first place, and thus of what it is to draw a cutoff point, may completely change in the process. For a defense of the claim that we cannot discover cutoff

points, see [Williamson, 1994]. It is not part of Williamson's account, however, to spell out exactly what it is for there to be a cutoff point in different cases in the first place, and what it is—what it means—to draw a cutoff point in the different cases.

<sup>22</sup>For further discussion of aspect-perception in connection with the philosophy of mathematics see [Diamond, 1991b, 243–66]; [Floyd, 2010, 314–37].

<sup>23</sup>Richard Eldridge makes similar claims in [Eldridge, 2003]. He claims that “elucidatory-critical understanding is *perceptual*, not inductive or deductive” (143), and he thinks that the perception here is also not ordinary, but rather “imaginative.” I here concentrate on one particular type of imaginative perception: the experiencing of an object through the medium of a concept.

<sup>24</sup>And this has clear ties to Kant's view of aesthetic judgment: “the judgment of taste determines the object, independently of concepts,” [Kant, 1952, 5:219]. Furthermore, the beauty judgment in Kant's view does not conceptualize the object: “it does not join the predicate of beauty to the concept of the object” (5:215). In Kant's terms, we may say that both preparatory and non-preparatory aspect-perception involve *reflective* rather than *determining* judgment (see 5:179), the point of preparatory—but not non-preparatory—reflection being conceptualization. More generally, this whole discussion connects with what seems to be a close relation between the philosophical interests of Kant and Wittgenstein: to distinguish between and explore different forms of rationality, of judgment, of exercising concepts, and of thinking.

<sup>25</sup>This involves a type of recognition of a person, and may thus be regarded as a moral matter. In the background there is here a philosophical worry about the possibility of distinguishing between moral and aesthetic judgments by saying that they have different forms. Kant, for one, seems to have been after something like this.

<sup>26</sup>Elsewhere, Baz similarly argues that “we are almost bound to mislead ourselves” if we take the duck-rabbit and examples like it as paradigmatic [Baz, 2011, 710]

<sup>27</sup>Baz makes a similar point elsewhere: “What we need, then, if this experience [the experience of the ordinary] is not to be lost on us, [. . . is ] to find it [the ordinary] *new*” [Baz, 2000, 99].

<sup>28</sup>See also Wittgenstein on a word “striking a note on the keyboard of the imagination” [Wittgenstein, 1958, §6], and Cora Diamond on “Now I know what ‘down’ means!” in [Diamond, 1991a, 233].

<sup>29</sup>In [Wittgenstein, 1980, §125], Wittgenstein describes a certain experience as “a feeling of unreality.”

<sup>30</sup>“[...] by my attitude towards the phenomenon I am laying an emphasis on it: I am concentrating on it, or retracing it in my mind, or drawing it, etc.” [Wittgenstein, 1969, 160–3]. The quotation is taken from a context in which Wittgenstein discusses a related issue. The relation to the present context is made explicit in [Wittgenstein, 1958, 207].

<sup>31</sup>For Wittgenstein, what distinguishes secondary uses from metaphors is that metaphors can be “translated” into literal language, and secondary uses cannot. For further discussion, see [Diamond, 1991a].

<sup>32</sup>This is connected to Kant's claims about the kind of agreement we can expect when making aesthetic judgments. Such judgments, he says, have only subjective, not objective universality: they are made in what Kant calls a “universal voice”—with the expectation of universal agreement. But since they do not rely on prior conceptual commitments, they cannot logically necessitate agreement. If I am right, then in opposition to Kant, our expectations should be similarly construed in some non-aesthetic cases: the applicability of this form of judgment (in Kant's sense of the word) is not limited only to aesthetic cases.

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