

## INTENTIONALLY SUFFERING?

In “Two Senses of See”, Marie McGinn presents two tag-teams of philosophers: in the one corner, Austin and me; in the other Anscombe and Wittgenstein. I am sceptical as to those lineups. There is, for one thing, an initial unclarity as to the contest. Sometimes it is to be over whether the verb ‘see’ is intentional, or has an intentional sense—or *use*. Sometimes it is over whether *perception*, or verbs of perception, is/are intentional, or (Anscombe) “have an intentional aspect” (1965/1981: 11). when it comes to Wittgenstein, the interesting issues she discusses in fact lie elsewhere altogether. About these she has an interesting suggestion, though, I will suggest, right or wrong, no threat to Austin or to me, and no comfort to Anscombe.

Questions about the verb ‘see’ and about perception are liable to part company at this point: like many words whose original home is, no doubt, perceptual (‘looks’, ‘idea’, for a start), ‘see’ has uses other than to speak of experiencing *perceptually*—as in, ‘I see that you plan to make heavy weather of this.’ So the *verb* ‘see’ *could* be intentional on some uses without that touching on the idea of intentional *experience* at all. As to this last, an initial remark is: while an experience (so a perceptual one) may be one *of* witnessing such-and-such (so enjoying awareness of something), it is also, in any case, something one undergoes—something inflicted on, suffered by, one. And it is unclear what it would mean to suffer something intentionally. Though nor, of course, need it be clear at the outset just what intentionality is meant to be.

As to the tag teams, I am not sure just what Anscombe meant to argue in her justly famous essay. Its title, though, speaks of the intentionality of ‘sensation’, which, though perception is not sensation, suggests that it is perception she means to discuss, or at least uses of ‘see’ as a verb of perceptual experience. I think that, in any case, she has made no case for thinking *this* intentional. I will discuss that point last. But if she is up to something on those lines then, indeed, she stands on the other side of one divide which finds Austin and me on its other side. As for Wittgenstein, at least in those late manuscripts McGinn discusses, he is interested (for reasons some of which I will, somewhat speculatively, suggest) in some very special phenomena which either are perceptual, or are difficult to classify as perceptual or not. McGinn suggests something Wittgenstein may well want to say about some of these phenomena. But in this arena his concerns are not with intentionality, and (I will suggest) he does nothing to suggest that anything like a perceptual experience *is* intentional. The issues Anscombe raises are largely orthogonal to his concerns. So far as I can see, neither Austin nor I line up against Wittgenstein. So I am afraid McGinn’s programme has him on the wrong tag team.

**1. Perception and The Verb ‘See’:** McGinn cites Anscombe as saying that “verbs of sense perception ... are intentional or essentially have an intentional aspect.” If we like, we can stipulate that the verbs ‘see’, ‘hear’, ‘smell’, etc., are to be called verbs of sense perception. *Perhaps* they also have ‘intentional uses’, though it is not at all clear to me that they do. But, as Frege noted (1897: 149, 1918: 61), ‘see’ has non-perceptual uses. When we say, for example, ‘He sees that that flower has five petals’ (one of Frege’s examples), ‘see’ is not used to report *perceptual* awareness. One way to see this is to note that, while the petals are on the flower in

the garden, and from thence form images on retinas—they are that sort of thing—*that* the flower has five petals is not in the garden. Nor is it on the kitchen table. It is not the sort of thing to be located, *a fortiori*, to form images on retinas. Rather, it is the sort of thing one *recognises* by exercising capacities of thought. In thought, one can represent the flower as falling under a certain generality; as being a certain way there is for a flower to be—five-petalled.

It *seems* almost inevitable that any perceptual verb (and some other parts of speech) will pick up, naturally, non-perceptual uses. Though verbs having to do with sight are particularly apt for this. It would be interesting to pursue the question why this is. Not only is there ‘see that’, but there are also such constructions with ‘looks’ as ‘looks to be’, as in (on the latest vandalism by the minister of education) ‘This looks to be the end of an era.’ (How does the end of an era look? Bad question.) Indeed, it seems that the word ‘idea’ originally had a perceptual use, now, I think, entirely lost (outside of philosophy).

Frege’s discussion of the construction ‘see that’ was meant to draw our attention to two different sorts of awareness, invoking two different sorts of capacity. There is perceptual (e.g., visual) awareness. In the first instance, at least, this is something one enjoys in perception proper: the sort of awareness I enjoy of the wine in my glass by seeing it, or, again, tasting it. Then there is what one might call *cognitive* awareness—realising that my companion’s glass is empty, for example. I think Wittgenstein was interested in the possibility of cases where such a distinction is not to be drawn, or at least not straightforwardly. Such would be, for him, *exceptional* cases. But Wittgenstein is yet to come.

One might further note that non-perceptual uses of ‘see’ show up in other constructions besides ‘see that’. There is also at least ‘see as’. Perhaps this sometimes has perceptual uses. (I think it does.) But it also has uses like this: ‘I see social networking as a threat to civilisation’, or ‘I see wind energy as our hope for the future.’ To repeat, there need not *always* be an answer to the question whether some given use is perceptual or cognitive; whether it speaks of perceiving or thinking. Usually, though, there is an answer. And it is worth keeping in mind that there are the two sorts of case.

To return, then, to Anscombe. There are, at least, these different theses: the verb ‘see’ is intentional; *perception* is intentional, or has an intentional object. The *verb* ‘see’ might be intentional (if there is such a thing as intentionality) because it has uses on which it does not speak of perception (nor of perceptual experience, if such has a wider scope than perception proper), and on these uses it is intentional. (I do not assert that this is so.) Whether perception is intentional depends on what it is that it is possible to *see*, using ‘see’ here as a verb of perception. It is to this question that I thought, and continue to think, the answer is ‘No’. I am not perfectly clear as to what McGinn thinks the answer to this question is. But more on that later. I take it, though I might misunderstand, that Anscombe takes the answer to be ‘Yes’. I do not think Wittgenstein offers any such answer.

‘See’, used to report a case of perceiving, is not an intentional verb, for one thing, because it is a success verb. You cannot see the (or even a) toad on the lotus leaf if there is no toad. If you do see the toad, and it is the one Princess Elisabeth kissed, then you *ipso facto* see the toad Princess Elisabeth kissed. The construction ‘see that’, I think, follows the pattern of ‘know that’. You cannot see that the toad is on the leaf unless the toad is on the leaf (and hence *a* toad is. Perhaps, though, one can see that *that* toad is on the leaf without seeing that the toad that kissed Princess Elisabeth is on the leaf. Or, more exactly, there are occasions on which one can speak truth in the first way without entailing what one would then say to be so

in speaking in the second way.

As for 'see as', on its non-perceptual uses, I can certainly see something as something it is not—e.g., a threat. I cannot see *nothing* as anything. I cannot, e.g., see 'Virgil the snark' as a threat. As for perceptual uses of 'see as', it is unclear to me that one can see something as something it is not, though I do not want to fight the point. I *am* sure that one cannot see nothing *as* anything. What might a case of seeing something as something it is not be like? Perhaps like seeing a fork as a bracelet? But this just means seeing it as what could be made into, or used as, a bracelet. Or perhaps like seeing a fly close to your eye as a bird outside the window (being fooled by distances)? But here it seems to me that 'I saw the fly as a bird' is not the most natural description of what happened. The fly looked like a bird to me. Or it appeared to me as a (great) bird. Here, though, I feel disinclined to fight hard. As for 'see' neat, e.g., as in seeing the coconut, seeing the coconut fall, seeing the pig, seeing it snuffling, again, I do not think there is any understanding of 'see' on which you can see things that are not there, or never happened ('see' in perfect order without scare-quotes). Nor do I think Wittgenstein thinks there are. Anscombe suggests otherwise. I will consider some of her examples at the end.

**2. Wittgenstein and Aspects:** What follows will be somewhat speculative. Moreover, the construals I will give of various cases Wittgenstein discusses are mine, and not necessarily his.

Wittgenstein discussed seeing-as in the *Tractatus*. However he then stood towards what he said, he certainly would not have said the same from 1946 on, at least in *propria persona*. Speculation: perhaps one goal of those late manuscripts was to try to work out what one *should* say here (a goal not fully attained). In any event, what he said in the *Tractatus* is this:

To perceive a complex is to perceive that its constituents are combined in such-and-such way.

This perhaps explains that the figure [the Necker] can be seen in two ways as a cube; and all similar phenomena. For we really see two different facts. (5.5423)

But surely not. Seeing the Necker in one way or another, or switching back and forth, is a *visual* phenomenon. A change in aspect is a change in visual awareness. So that one can perfectly well be aware (see) *that* the lines of the Necker are an image of a cube in orientation A while seeing the Necker *as* an image of a cube in orientation B. (*Pro tem* I will speak of seeing as here.) Once again, 'see that' is not a perceptual use of 'see'. Back, then, to the drawing board.

The Necker, the duck-rabbit, the black and white cross, the concave-convex step, the puzzle picture (a rabbit, say, hidden in grass, or the yacht in the mass of dots), and so on, all present us with *one* sort of case Wittgenstein discusses, here a sort which naturally fits the rubric 'seeing-as'. It is *but* one sort of case. On its own I do not think it is very revealing of Wittgenstein's overall purpose. So far, though, I think we have a sort of case which can be treated, naturally enough, as a case of *perception*; thus as a case to which intentionality is not really relevant. The thing to remember is that the rabbit, the duck, the tiger or the yacht difficult to pick out among the mass of dots, are, first of all, images in pictures, and, second, things which are there to be seen. The picture *is* an image of a yacht, difficult as it may be to

make this out. When one sees the image of the cube in orientation A, one sees an image that is there to be seen. The peculiar thing about ‘ambiguous’ pictures, like the Necker, the black cross-white cross, the convex-concave step, is that it is not possible to see all that is there to be seen at once. If I see the cube in orientation A, that is at the price of missing the cube in orientation B. I may know that it is there—*that* the lines are organised in that way too. But I cannot then see it.

What lesson do we learn so far? One might think of things like this. In normal perception one sees what is before his eyes. Or at least that is a sort of outer limit. One does not see of this what is not visible—what is obscured by something else, or in the dark, or too small, or faint, or large, for his perceptual capacities. There is also another way to fail to see what is before one’s eyes—or at least to fail, on some occasions, to count as seeing it. One may miss it, or be oblivious to it. Such contrasts give special reasons, sometimes operative, to deny that someone saw something. What is missing, where these *are* reasons, is suitable uptake on the seer’s part; some suitable form of registering what one sees (suitability liable to vary with the occasion for asking for it).

Occasion-insensitively, there is no very determinate general demand on uptake. It might take different forms on different occasions, or for different purposes. For all of which there may remain some such demand. What uptake then might be is some responding attitude—a form of thought. E.g., one recognises what he sees as such-and-such, or at least takes it to be such-and-such. ‘Did you see my aunt’s pen on the table?’ ‘Yes, I did.’ Here, then, is a possible role for thought to play even in the most banal cases of perceptual experience: the awareness one enjoys is *perceptual* awareness (insofar as it is seeing that is in question); but one does not count as enjoying it at all unless he responds to this awareness with a thought of some kind. I do not assert that this is generally so. It is just one way things might go in an experience of seeing. Now, a possible view of things like the Necker, or the duck-rabbit, is that in this kind of case thought *must* play such a role. What is *there* to be seen spoils us for, at the same time unavoidable, choice. In the case of your aunt’s pen, visual awareness was anyway afforded, even if, for one reason or another, we want to insist that the offer was not taken up. In the case of the Necker, we cannot so much as say that visual awareness was *afforded* independent of the viewer’s responses to what was before him. For one sees the A-cube only in remaining oblivious to the B-cube, and vice-versa. Here nothing but a response can sort out what was seen from what was not. Perhaps, then, there is just no space between seeing the A-cube and recognising this as what one sees. To say this is not to assert any general thesis. Here I merely note a possibility.

As noted, the Necker, duck-rabbit, etc., carry no hint of any *intentionality* in perception. So far we are dealing entirely with seeing things there to be seen—by *one*. True, one might see one such thing while missing another—necessarily so in cases like the Necker. But here the question is just one of recognising oneself to be seeing what he does. Nor is there anything here one sees under one description but not another. One sees the Necker anyway; and what one sees of what there is to be seen (e.g., a cube in orientation A) is what one sees no matter how described. If the A-cube was Napoleon’s favourite, then to see it is to see Napoleon’s favourite. Here, though, there is at least the germ of an idea that—in certain cases, not as a general rule—one sees only what he can credit himself with having seen.

Such is one sort of case. The interest of that germ of a suggestion emerges only when we come to other sorts. Here again Frege comes on the scene. Frege argued that there is no such thing as a thought (a way to make truth turn on how things are) which is about what he called

a 'Vorstellung'. Here for a thought to be *about* a *Vorstellung* is for its truth to turn irreducibly on how that *Vorstellung* is (or on *whether* it is). So it is not settled whether the thought is true until it is settled what the *Vorstellung* is (was) like in relevant respects. By a *Vorstellung* Frege means, as he explains, something which 'requires a bearer' (that is, which is an object of some particular thinker's consciousness), and which brooks no two bearers: if I were aware of a *Vorstellung* and you were, there would be at least two *Vorstellungen*. If Frege's point holds good (and Wittgenstein certainly seemed to think so), then the problem for philosophy of mind is to see how to think of psychological phenomena without assigning *Vorstellungen* any essential role in them. Where the phenomena are, or appear to be, perceptual, one way for them to work would be for thought (responses to what is happening to you) to take over some of the roles which, in the case of *perception* are played by, e.g., what is before your eyes. If I saw a *bisaro*, that is because that is what was there. If I 'saw stars', perhaps, that is because such is my response to what happened to me. I think McGinn takes this idea very seriously. (This is not a criticism.)

In the late manuscripts, one of the main ways in which Wittgenstein develops this idea of responses taking over functions which belong, in perception, to what those responses are to is in opposing an idea of what he calls an 'inner image'. That idea, applied to the Necker, would look like this. Suppose I see the A-cube, then there is an 'aspect shift'—an experience of things changing for me visually—and then I see the B-cube. Something has changed. But this is not the drawing before me. What changed? Certainly what I was visually aware of: first I was aware of one cube-image, then another (both offered to me by the drawing before me, though through offers which cannot be taken up simultaneously). Problem: I was also aware of the *shift*. So, one might think, I was aware of *something* which shifted. First *it* was one thing—an image of the A-cube—then another—an image of the B-cube. That something could not be the drawing before my eyes. It is at this point that one posits an 'inner image'—something very much like an image of a cube, but a *Vorstellung* in Frege's sense. Wittgenstein works hard to show that this idea collapses if pushed a bit. He writes,

If I know that the schematic cube has various aspects and I want to find out what someone else sees, I can get him to make a model of what he sees, in addition to a copy, or to point to such a model, even though *he* has no idea of my purpose in demanding two accounts.

But when we have a changing aspect the case is altered. Now the only possible expression of our experience is what before perhaps seemed, or even was, a useless specification when once we had the copy.

And this by itself wrecks the comparison of 'organisation' with colour and shape in visual impressions. (1953/2001: 168)

The lines in the Necker (this particular one) are coloured as they are, as is their background. Each is the length it is, in the orientation relative to the background and to the other lines that it is, and so on. So much for colour and shape. Suppose the Necker were an *unambiguous* picture of, say, a house or a staircase. Then that those shapes and colours depicted *that* would be a matter of what Wittgenstein calls the 'organisation' of the picture. Again, if those lines form a rabbit (say, not in a rabbit-duck, but just in a drawing of a rabbit), that would be a fact of organisation.

What changes when, in viewing the Necker, we experience a shift from box A to box B? There is a change in how the Necker *looks*. Perhaps, then, there is a change in something viewed, or at least in some object of visual awareness (something experienced visually). Perhaps it is a change in the organisation of something we are visually aware of. Suppose this a change in an inner image (or, perhaps, exchange of inner images). But, to repeat, the change is in how things look. If we think of the inner image as an object of *visual* awareness, what changes in what it offers for awareness of when, in viewing the *Necker*, one experiences a shift? It remains an image of the same arrangement of lines, shapes, colours—the Necker’s. Nothing changes in those respects. It remains an image of the *Necker*, itself an *ambiguous* image. It remains an image of such ambiguity.

In general, an image need not be just an arrangement of shapes and colours. It may also *depict*—be, e.g., an image of Napoleon. So, too, perhaps, for an inner image. At one moment it depicts the A-box, at another, it, or a replacement, depicts the B. But for an image to depict something is not for there to be some extra element in how it *looks*. An image of Napoleon may have a visually identical twin which is an image of something else, or nothing at all (or just a human being). So, too, for the inner image. If we could make sense of it suddenly changing *in re* what it depicted—if we could make sense of it being in the depicting business at all—such a change would not be one in how it looked. The *inner* image offers no better candidate for what a shift in looks consists in than the Necker does itself. It makes no progress.

My image of, say, All Souls need not be—is not likely to be—something one might *draw*. What drawing could capture the oppressive (or, perhaps, exhilarating) aura I imagine to be there? When it comes to ‘inner’ images, Wittgenstein is alive to such possibilities. An inner image of the Necker, so conceived, might well change as aspect shifts. What thus changes lies in my response, or responsiveness, to what is seen; if we model this on the All Soul’s case, a change belonging to the realm of thought. I would now have a new impression of what the lines were an image of. On my understanding of the Necker (perhaps not Wittgenstein’s) what changes in a shift is *what is seen*, ‘see’ here a straightforward perceptual verb, its object thus something there for *one* to see. For what *I* see to change here would then be for there to be a change in uptake—in what, there anyway to be seen impressed me, was registered—under those special conditions the Necker poses, in which taking in one thing precludes taking in another.

If this view of the Necker is correct, then I may say, ‘I see the A-cube’, if that is what I am doing, using ‘see’ as a straightforward perceptual verb. I *might* also go on to say: ‘I see it *as* an A-cube.’ What would the ‘as’ add (if anything)? Or, less tendentiously, what would the difference be? Perhaps it is possible to hear the ‘as’ as adding nothing; as simply a way of saying how it looks: it looks to me *as* an (image of) an A-cube would. But I think the ‘as’ can also work to make the whole verb not purely perceptual, but rather one which works to report how I *think* of what I am seeing. Consider a different case: a puzzle painting. I stare at it for hours and see only a mass of dots. Finally, the yacht comes into focus for me. ‘I see the yacht!’, I might exclaim, excitedly. Suppose now that I go on to say: ‘I see it (the painting) *as* a painting of a yacht.’ Such would be taking an extra step. There is the yacht to be seen, alright. But now I also hold a certain view of the matter: if you want to depict a yacht, *this* is a way of doing that too. Here we have another example of the genre *yacht-portrayal*. Thus, if what was hidden in the dots had been a pig, the painting might deserve a place alongside the Morelands. (This is not just a psychological experiment being inflicted on you.)

Similarly with the Necker. I may see it *as* an image of an A-cube. This *may* be for me to see it as (also) an image of an A-cube. (Before, say, I saw only the B-cube, or only a mass of lines.) I see how it can be that too. I see it to be (*inter alia*) that. Or I see it as (none other than) an image of an A-cube. What it is, to my mind, is just a sort of diagram of an A-cube. (If someone said he saw a B-cube, I might, e.g., count him as suffering a sort of illusion, or anyway, as not seeing the thing for what it really was.) All the above are activities of thought. This is not to say that the simple 'I see the A-cube' reports something entirely independent of thought. But if there are such uses of 'see as', which say something *not* said just in that simple 'see', that is a signal to take care when it comes to saying just what role thought does play in what is reported in the simple 'I see the A-cube'.

Two (related) things are distinctive about the Necker (and the duck-rabbit, the black/white cross, etc.). First, while it provides us two different things to see, it does this while occupying a given location, and providing us the same thing at that location to be seen (or missed) no matter which of the two options we take up. At that location is a pattern of lines. It remains the same where we see the A-cube and where we see the B-cube. And (unless we miss it, hence see neither cube) that occupant of the location is *something* we do see throughout. Second, in this case, seeing the one thing (the A-cube, say) excludes seeing the other. The exclusion lies in the *seeing*: what is there to be seen leaves either option open. So the question is how *seeing* can impose a choice between these two. Here, clearly, uptake is all. Our responses to what we are presented with visually must choose what kind of *visual* experience we have, or what it is *of*. Without varying what we are *presented* with, our responses, or uptake, might make what we see either of two things. As I read Wittgenstein, he is developing reasons for caution in how we appeal to responses here, or in just *what* in responses might do that selecting which, patently, is done. Where 'see as', read non-perceptually, adds something to what would be said here in the simple 'see', *prima facie*, at least, that something is not something appeal to which would do the needed selecting. So, for example, I may see how it could be a diagram of an A-cube, or see it to be, or see it as one (as Sid may see Vic as a rival). But that sort of uptake, if it belongs to what is added in seeing as—an addition purely in thought, on a par with *recognising* what I see as the cube on the exam yesterday—cannot be what distinguishes seeing an A-cube from seeing a B-cube in looking at a Necker. If uptake does the choosing, then I see the A-cube just where I am responsive in a given way to what I see. For me, things are, visually, just as they would be in seeing the A-cube. Such is an *attitude* on my part. But it is not the same as seeing *that* such-and-such, nor seeing the Necker *as* such-and-such, where 'see-as' does not speak of *perceptual* awareness.

It is thus, I think, that the Necker and its kin serve as a stepping stone to a range of further cases. Of some of these, at least, Wittgenstein makes the following remark:

Here one must guard against thinking in traditional psychological categories—say, decomposing experience into seeing and thought; or things of that sort. (1982: §542)

This 'here' refers to a particular kind of case (or several). It is not as though, for Wittgenstein, Frege was *wrong* to distinguish between seeing and thinking as he did. An ordinary case of seeing is just that, *seeing*. It is not thinking. Its objects are fundamentally different: in one case, a pig chewing turnips (an episode taking place at a particular location in history); in the other *that* the pig is chewing turnips, something without location, either temporal or spatial

(though what it *represents* as some given way is the way things are at a time, and, perhaps, a place). But there are special cases of the use of 'see' such that something speaks in favour of regarding them as perceptual uses, something in favour of regarding them as *not* perceptual; and in such cases, Wittgenstein suggests, the urge to choose should *sometimes* be resisted.

To what sorts of cases is this advice meant to apply? Drawing from its surroundings, cases, it seems, like these: seeing a similarity between two faces (where someone might see the faces as well as you, but not see the similarity); seeing a row of evenly spaced dots as organised into pairs; seeing someone you have not seen for years and not recognising him, then recognising him. I think one might also include here things like seeing swastikas, or crosses, in a mullioned window, or seeing shapes in clouds (e.g., seeing how *that* cloud is pig-shaped).

The first thing to note about these cases is: insofar as there is talk of *seeing* here ('see' used as a perceptual verb), there is no question of seeing anything other than what is there to be seen. If you have not yet learned to see swastikas in a mullioned window, I can show you how. They are there to be seen. A row of evenly spaced dots is, *eo ipso*, a row of pairs of dots. If you see the pairs, you again see something there to be seen. Though there may be such a thing as 'seeing' (seeming to see, or believing you see) a pig shape in a cloud when there is none to be seen, nothing like that need be supposed to get the sort of case wanted here. Indeed, the supposition would only distort. If you see a resemblance between a man's face and his father's, you see, so far, something there to be seen. You would be disappointed to learn this was not so. So far we can understand this as seeing (the presence of) a certain kind of look; a look for a face to have, one liable to run in families. It may be difficult to draw the look. (Perhaps it is even *undrawable*.) But finding the abstract features of facial contour which define this look is the sort of thing psychologists actually undertake, often enough successfully. (Wittgenstein suggests that to learn to see the resemblance, or that look for a face to have, you need to go beyond what is visually presented when you look at that face we now both see. You need to see the father too, or to see a series of faces with that look, or etc. I think I depart from Wittgenstein here in thinking this (*if* so) at all important. The fact remains, on his story or mine, that *what* you learn is to *recognise* (pleonastically) something there *to be* recognised.)

The second thing to observe here is that in each of these cases there is a question one *might* puzzle over as to whether the difference between seeing and not seeing the thing in question is a difference in *visual* experience—that is, whether one *visually* experiences something in the case where he sees other than what he experiences where he does not? Does it look different where you perceive the dots as a string of pairs? Does it look different where you recognise (see) the swastika in the mullioning? Does the face look different when you see the resemblance, or when you recognise it as your old friend's face? In each case there is a temptation both to say 'Yes' and to say 'No', or at least 'It need not'. Unless you are suffering an illusion, the dots should be drawn the same way in drawing what you see whether or not for you it is a string of pairs of dots. Similarly for the other cases. There need not be anything new to draw when you see the resemblance. There has been uptake to, recognition of, a look there anyway. You need not draw the mullions in any new way unless seeing the swastikas causes you, in addition, to suffer some optical illusion. And so on. On the other hand, there is in each case a temptation to say, 'Now it looks different'—when you see the swastikas, that is, or the pairs, or that look shared by father and son, or recognise your friend. If you were directing a movie, and you came to the scene where our slightly paranoid protagonist is



suddenly struck by swastikas in the mullions, you might well make the windows look different for an instant or two—thus giving the *audience* hints of what is going on.

I suggest that it is here that Wittgenstein suggests that we should not think in those ‘familiar psychological categories’. How then? I will stop short of answering that question here. But I extract this leading idea from Wittgenstein’s texts. Half of it is this:

What is the criterion of the visual experience? The criterion? What do you suppose?

The representation of ‘what is seen’. (1982: §563; PI II, xi, p. 169)

The other half is this:

The concept of a representation of what is seen, of a copy, is very elastic, and so *together with it* is the concept of what is seen. But the two are intimately connected. (Which is *not* to say that they are alike.) (1982: §446; PI II, xi, p. 169)

What is a representation of what is seen? Something which represents what was seen *as* being such-and-such. What I think Wittgenstein has in mind here is something which *shows* what was seen *to be* such-and-such. Like an image (say, my image of All Souls), it may be (in whole or part) something visual, but it may also *not* be this. There is nothing it *looks like* for All Souls to have that particularly stuffy atmosphere I picture it as having; though, again, cinematically you might try to show it, for example, in that peculiarly affectless way in which the fellows greet each other. If I see the line of dots as a line of pairs, to show this in a film you might make them actually so group themselves before the audience’s eyes. Which need not mean that that is what they do for me (as if in so seeing them I suffer an illusion). (*Does* the director thus represent what I see? Here we come to the point that the notion of representation is elastic. (And with it, Wittgenstein notes, that of what is *seen*—let this be read perceptually.)

Now one needs to understand the method of representing in a way in which no understanding seemed called for when it was a question of mere reproduction. Suppose the pairs separate themselves from each other, so that there is actually more space between them than between their members. This is a way of showing how things looked. But it is also a way of showing how things looked where the looker suffered a certain sort of illusion—an illusion of some distances being larger than they are. One needs to be sensitive to *which* it is; needs to know how to take the longer distances in the representation. They show the right thing under what (I think) Wittgenstein calls one ‘method of projection’, not under another. (Here the idea that the notion of a representation is elastic.)

Seeing the line of dots as a line of pairs of dots is an example of what Wittgenstein calls ‘seeing an organisation in’ what is seen. Suppose I see the line as a line of pairs of dots. I see it organised in a certain way. Now, Wittgenstein tells us, one can show the colour of what was seen, and the shapes of what was seen, just by producing that colour and those shapes. But to show an organisation that was seen one needs to take a different step. One step would be, not to show, but to describe: ‘He saw the line as a line of pairs of dots’. Another would be to *show*

it, to draw something. But then what one needed to draw would not be determined by what was there before the eyes. It would all depend on how one's drawing was to be taken. What we need here is some 'method of projection'. And practically anything might show the right thing under some such method. The interesting thing is that, for all this, what is being described might still be someone *seeing* such-and-such, undergoing a particular kind of perceptual experience.

Suppose I stare at the kitchen counter, where my keys are in plain sight. But I simply fail to see the keys. Suppose you want to draw what I see. Two ways of doing so. First, you draw the kitchen counter, but in the region of the keys, you leave a hole in your drawing: there is nothing to be said as to what *was* seen there, only something to be said as to what was not: the keys. Another method would be to draw an empty kitchen counter. But this *could* be crediting me with 'seeing' something I did not: an empty expanse of counter. Which need not be how it was when I failed to see the keys. Whether what you draw is a correct representation of what I saw depends, for one thing, on how your drawing is to be taken; perhaps also on the circumstances in which it is offered.

So now consider seeing the resemblance in the face—a resemblance, say, between a son's face and his father's. How would one represent what was seen? Again, that depends on the way a given representation would be (or be to be) to be taken. But one would need to take account of the fact that, so far as what is reproducible is concerned—things, that is, like shapes and colours—there is no reason to suppose that anything different was seen by one who did see the resemblance than by one who did not. So we need *some* form of representation of what was seen which needs to be taken in the right way. Wittgenstein's idea for doing this amounts to roughly the following. To see the resemblance is to bring what was seen under a given generality (represent it to oneself as so falling). And, as Frege insisted, doing that is a function of thought, not sight. Wittgenstein's rough idea: To see the resemblance is to *register*, or note, seeing what would also be seen in such-and-such range of other cases. One is presented visually with what he is. What he *sees* is fixed not just by his registering, or being suitably sensitive to, things being (visibly) as they were, but also by his responding to what he sees by bringing it (now in thought) under given generalities. Here it is that that 'thinking in traditional categories' which Wittgenstein refers to lets us down.

Now we seem to have cases with the following two features. First, they involve questions of what was *seen*—of what needs representing to represent this—where the objects of 'see' are (speak of) the sorts of things which might be objects of sight: not *that* such-and-such, but rather objects, events or episodes, *visible* features of those objects, such as, e.g., looking just like Elvis, or having an Elvis quiff. So they are cases where 'see' seems to function like a verb of perception. But, second, they are cases where seeing seems to involve noting, or being struck by, something; thus responding in a certain way to what one sees. And this seems to involve us with things which belong to thought, and not to perception. The above idea about representing gives us another way of putting the point. In these cases, representing what was seen seems to require producing what calls for *understanding* in the same ways that representing truly or falsely does. It requires representing something *as* something, rather than (if this is a contrast) simply producing the colour of something. Here, I suggest, is where Wittgenstein wants to abandon 'traditional psychological categories such as seeing and thinking'. The *representing* involved here remains in a subject's responses (in thought) to what he is presented with. But the upshot concerns what is seen.

Wittgenstein states, "Noticing is a visual experience" (1982: §511). I take it he does not

mean to include noticing *that*; nor, e.g., noticing a radio playing in the street. Rather he is speaking here of noticing the sort of thing which *can* be experienced visually in being presented with it visually. In any case, what he says about noticing contrasts with what he says about seeing as:

If I saw the duck-rabbit as a rabbit, then I saw: these shapes and colours (I give them in detail)—and I saw besides something like this: and here I point to a number of different pictures of rabbits.—This shows the difference between the concepts.

‘Seeing as ...’ is not part of perception. And for that reason it is like seeing and again not like seeing. (PI II xi p. 168)

The last remark does not follow the same passage in LW I (§467). Still, the two concepts Wittgenstein is speaking of here do seem to be seeing and seeing-as. I will suppose that he does mean to contrast seeing-as with noticing in the way suggested here. What contrast *might* Wittgenstein have in mind?

Suppose I stare at the kitchen counter and simply do not see my keys (which are in plain sight). Then I notice them. Now I enjoy visual awareness where formerly I did not—awareness *of* something there all along to be aware of. (Here I bracket issues of (Leibnizian) unconscious perception.) The difference, of course, lies in uptake. But it need only consist in my taking in more history than I did before. I am now prepared to bring the scene under generalities I would not have brought it before—being a case, e.g., of my keys being before my eyes. But my new awareness is just of what it is that history furnishes to do the instancing. I see more of *this*. Such, I suggest, is the sense in which noticing belongs to perception.

By contrast, suppose that, staring at Pia’s face, I suddenly notice that resemblance to her father. There is a certain look which they share—which, perhaps, runs in the family. For Wittgenstein at least, to notice a *look*, or a resemblance (in such a case) is to be suitably sensitive to its being the look it is; which is to be (sufficiently) prepared to identify it on its other occurrences. Which, I have suggested, is to bring the look under a certain generality; which (within a Fregean perspective, at least) is an exercise of thought. It is just when we allow this that we also need to be prepared to abandon traditional categories. For one can enjoy *visual* awareness of the look. One can, so to speak drink it in, study it, draw it, fantasise over it, and so on.

*Perhaps* unlike Wittgenstein, I think ‘see as’ does have purely visual applications—most notably in cases of illusion. For example, under certain lighting (and viewing) conditions, it is possible for convex and concave to reverse for one. In my experience, this most notably makes houses and other architecture look very strange. E.g., a perfectly ordinary two story house suddenly seems to have strange appendages growing out of it. Like any illusion, once it happens it can be *very* difficult to make it go away. Thinking that things are not so is, as a rule, of little help. Where such a thing happened to me, I would be prepared to say: ‘I see convex as concave, concave as convex.’ Similarly (another sort of illusion) I might see a fly before my eyes *as* some large monstrous thing flying around in my garden. I would *not* say: ‘I see a large monstrous thing in my garden.’ (More on that in the next section.) ‘See as’, though, does seem to fit my needs here.

Obviously, though, Wittgenstein is not thinking of *such* uses of ‘see as’ (whether he allows them or not). The particular case he mentions is seeing the rabbit-duck *as* a rabbit.

This is *not* to be a matter of *seeing* the rabbit-likeness. It is not a matter of *visual* awareness. So it is *not* to be classed with seeing convex as concave; nor with the sort of Necker-like switch one experiences when he finally gets what he knows ought to be a rabbit-duck to look like the rabbit, and not the duck. So, presumably, it is something which may occur or not no matter which way the picture looks to the viewer at the moment. Someone might say, for example, ‘The funny thing about *this* rabbit picture is that, sometimes, if you screw your eyes up right, it looks just like a duck-picture.’ Someone who said that would be one who took the picture for, classified it as, a rabbit picture. This, of course, is a way of thinking of it, and not a form of visual awareness.

**3. Anscombe:** The above is but the barest, and most tentative, outline of an attempt to understand, or profit from, those late manuscripts in the form of notes by Wittgenstein to himself. One might see them as Wittgenstein’s attempt to think through Frege’s attempt to distinguish two sorts of things to be aware of, and, correspondingly, two forms of awareness: things of the sort to fall under generalities of the sort which concern him, and those generalities themselves; among which things of the sort which might be before the eyes, and things not of that sort. Much of the above may be debatable. But the one thing I need for my immediate purpose is this: there is no sign in Wittgenstein’s discussions of seeing, or of seeing as (or of aspects) that he thinks there is any such thing as a use of ‘see’ which is both for speaking of perceptual experience and intentional. ‘See that ...’ may sometimes fail to survive substitution of co-referring singular terms. And ‘See ... as ...’, used to speak of an activity of thought may sometimes take an object which speaks of what is not so (e.g. Sid see Vic as a threat while he is not). But such things, if so, do not bear on the question whether there is anything intentional about *perception* (or, to use Anscombe’s term, sensation). So, I suggest, when we delve into Wittgenstein on perception and its relation to thought, we do not find him lining up with Anscombe on such matters; nor against either Austin or me. Such was the first point I aimed to make.

There remains the question whether Anscombe is *right*. If she is maintaining that ‘see’, used to mean what it does mean (or at least one such thing if there are several) may be understood to speak of a certain *perceptual* feat one might perform (or fate one might suffer), and that *this* is intentional in the sense that, on this understanding, one may see things not there for one to see, or see something there to see, but under one description and not another, then I will suggest, at the very least no case has been made. But to see this, we need to look at some of her examples. I will discuss only the first four on her list (1965/1981: 120). This will do, I think, to suggest how to go on in the same way.

Her first example is this: “When you screw up your eyes looking at a light, you see rays shooting out from it.” (Quotes hers. I omit doubling.) Here the simplest thing to say is: a familiar phenomenon; with an idiom to match. Speaking for myself, I am inclined to hear scare-quotes around the ‘see’. But—like ‘seeing stars’ when you stand up fast with low blood sugar—the case is so familiar that those scare quotes can certainly be close to inaudible. (Thus my mention of idioms.)

If more than idiom is at work here, one might ask this: on that supposed understanding of ‘see’, whatever it may be, when would it be true that you saw X? Two answers are possible. One is: screw up your eyes and look at the light. If it now looks (to you) just as if, or as it might if, there were rays shooting out of the light, then, on this understanding of ‘see’, you saw rays shooting out of the light. If that is all there is to it, we can go beyond seeing rays. I might

say, 'If you screw up your eyes and look at the light, you will see flying monkeys/knives and forks shooting out of the light.' Depending on just what sort of mushroom we have been eating, and other factors, this might turn out to be true (on our present idea of what is said in saying, 'I see ...', on this understanding). I, at least, am unpersuaded that there *are* any such truths. Of course, someone who suffers hallucinations (a schizophrenic, say) may be said to 'see' things that are not there. But here, I think, scare-quotes are important. You may 'see' ghosts, or lions in the kitchen, when there are none. The problem then is that you are 'seeing' things which are not there to be seen; that is, not *seeing* anything.

A second answer: seeing rays shooting out of a light is a special case—or at least different from seeing flying monkeys shooting out—because it is the sort of thing *one* might experience. So if we counted it as something someone might see, that would be because, even though there are literally no rays coming out of the light (or anyway, no *such* rays), That description made recognisable what it was being used to indicate, which is, in fact, something there for *one* to see. There is a familiar, quite public, phenomenon at issue here. When you look at a light source—the sun, especially low on the horizon, headlights at night, a bare bulb in the ceiling of the only hotel room you could find—there is a way it often looks for it to be emitting light. (You *may* have to screw up your eyes to see this in the bulb's case, depending, e.g., on the density of flyspecks. Typically you need do no such thing in the case of headlights.) The light emanating from the source makes it look as though it were coming out in rays, or anyway what we colloquially call rays. ('The last rays of sunlight disappeared from the surface of the water.') Watching the sun set, you thus *witness* a familiar visual phenomenon, which we often describe—invoking poetic licence no doubt—as rays emanating, or, sometimes, shooting, out. (Compare: 'The lake sparkled in the sunlight.' No mention of seeing here. A point to which I shall return.)

Anscombe's second example is this: (again in quotes) "I see the print very blurred: is it blurred, or is it my eyes?" Again, I do not speak as Anscombe apparently does. Philosophy should not be decided by that sort of thing. I record, anyway, what I would say: 'I see the print blurrily. Is it blurred? Am I seeing blurred print? Or is it just my eyes?' If it is just my eyes, then I do not think I see anything blurred (here 'blurred' an adjective modifying what I see), but, perhaps, 'blurred' can function as an adverb, for want of a better ('blurrily' being an ugly word). It is perhaps worth noting that in the kind of case Anscombe has in mind, it need be neither the print nor my eyes. I can be looking at the (perfectly clear) print through some sort of distorting medium—a lens, perhaps, or some sort of screen. In that case, I see the print looking blurred, for such is how it looks under such conditions. I do not see blurred print on any understanding of 'see' I can muster, since there is no blurred print to be seen. I note that Anscombe does not suggest as her example, 'I see blurred print. Is it the print or my eyes?' Whereas, if we understand her 'blurred' as an adjective modifying 'print', there should be no difficulty in so speaking (if she is right)—so not that difficulty to which she thus exhibits sensitivity. So, again, no evidence here for an understanding of 'see' on which one can see things that are not there. Nor any other evidence here of any 'intentionality' in seeing.

Anscombe's third example is: "Move these handles until you see the bird in the nest." (Squint-testing apparatus; the bird and the nest are on separate cards.) You look, and when it appears as it would were the image of a bird in the image of a nest, you say, 'Now!'. Let us suppose that *this* reveals the intentionality of seeing (on some (extant) (perceptual) understanding of 'see'). Now let me demonstrate to you the intentionality of the verb 'to canoe'. I buy my niece a video game. The object of the game is, through judicious choice of

means and ends, to arrive at the lost temple of the Alcaponahuatls, that ancient civilisation at which we all wonder. She turns towards her game-player, I leave the room. After a coffee and a *sonho*, I return to the television room and ask, 'Well, what are you doing now?' She replies, 'I'm canoeing down the Amazon.' 'Well', I tell her, 'I think you have a problem, since the lost temple is in Peru.' In case you missed this part of the story, my niece is sitting in front of her (parents') television. It is a hemisphere and a bit away from the Amazon. And the family has no canoe. Now that you have seen the trick, I think you can see how I could also show that 'walk', 'eat', 'kick' are also all intentional. One *might* say: there is a use of *language* here, parasitic on its normal use, on which we can tell truths where the words, taken literally, describe what is not so. Such suggests nothing as to what is, what not, an intentional phenomenon.

Anscombe's fourth example is, "I see six buttons on that man's coat, I merely see a lot of snow flakes framed by this window-frame—no definite number." I take it that Anscombe is supposing that the man actually has six buttons on his coat. For the rest, I think that here we need to invoke an idea of Thompson Clarke's (see Clarke, 1965), which he expresses as the idea that seeing is a 'unit' concept. What he means is that 'see' bears various understandings, varying from occasion to occasion for its use; and that, in particular, *what* one sees depends on what seeing such-and-such is to be contrasted with—on what *not* seeing might come to. So, e.g., snowflakes are falling. As is their wont, they are falling before your eyes, but also well beyond your field of view. On an occasion the question may be whether you see the snowflakes falling—the snowfall. You do or you do not. No question here of seeing, or not, this or that snowflake. If I identified a snowflake outside your field of view—in the neighbour's backyard, say—well, perhaps it is determinate enough that you did not see that. It may, of course, be indeterminate exactly where your field of view stops. Perhaps, now, we can pick out a given snowflake; say, one falling before your eyes. Then there are questions one might ask, on some occasion or other, as to whether you saw that one. The answer to each such question depends on what, on that understanding of seeing the snowflake, it might be *not* to see it. Is the point that, as *it* fell, your back might have been turned? Or that you might have blinked? Or is the point that, on that way of counting as seeing a snowflake or not, you should be able, if you saw it, to distinguish it somehow from other snowflakes—that it should be, so to speak, a *memorable* snowflake? Depending on what is being asked, the question may have an answer, or it may be left indeterminate whether you saw that snowflake or not.

Anyway, you saw the snowflakes falling; and we can suppose, for sake of argument, that there is some definite number of them which fell before your eyes (while you watched). On one understanding of seeing a snowflake fall, what you saw was *them* fall. If *n* of them fell, then you saw *n* of them fall. That is one understanding of seeing a snowflake. There are, to be sure, others. If the question is how many you *saw* on some such other understanding, it is one we cannot yet approach until it is fixed what that understanding is. Even then we may have a question with no determinate answer. It is not fixed in advance, just by the concept *see a snowflake*, just what kind or quality of uptake is required for seeing a given one. Better: independent of an occasion for discussing such things, there is no particular sort of uptake that is required. Uptake is required for seeing. But, where seeing is a visual phenomenon, pick some object of sight. The question is then what sort of sensitivity is needed to *its* presence for one to count as seeing *it*. There is no suggestion here that seeing might be intentional, if intentionality has anything to do with the possibility of seeing something under one description of it while not seeing this under another. Something like that might hold for 'see

that'. But the question was whether *perception* (or sensation) might be an intentional phenomenon.

Clarke's question was how much of the tomato you see. That is, Clarke's project was to investigate the pitfalls of the question. It is a form of question *some* of whose instances sometimes make sense (and accordingly have a definite answer); but whose making sense is not automatic. Where the question does have a sense—e.g., how much of the tomato was obscured by the wrapping, or the tray, it came in—it may also have a definite answer. But it does not have one, or no other one, in every case where one sees the tomato. Similarly, I suggest, with snowflakes. The question 'How many?' may have a sense, but does not always. There is not always a question, or a way, of distinguishing between the ones you did see and the ones you did not where you watch the snowfall. The idea of such a distinction does not automatically make sense. No such considerations supply anything which did not exist, or happen, but is yet something one might see, nor any case of seeing something under one description, but not under another. Seeing snow fall is *not* a case of seeing certain flakes fall under one description but not another.

**4. Conclusion:** McGinn thinks that there is no harm in admitting that seeing is intentional on at least some, perhaps secondary or unusual, understandings of the verb. One of her questions is why I should need, or want, to resist the idea; or what harm there could be in admitting it. The first thought that might occur is that this has something to do with being a disjunctivist. I think that, ultimately, it does. But to my mind something still more fundamental is at stake. It is a distinction Frege points to between (in my terms) the historical and the conceptual. The conceptual, here, is the realm of generalities: things of which there can be cases; things which things may be represented *as* being. A generality is, for example, for things to be such that snow is now falling on Dakar. One may represent the way things are as such that snow is now falling on Dakar. Where, as in the example, truth is at stake, what is represented as the way in question is things being as they are. It is the way things now are which is a case of things being such that snow is falling on Dakar if it is true that snow is now falling on Dakar. Of course, representing things as some way there is for things to be may also be representing, say, Pia as some way there is for her to be, e.g., as skint, or as sipping arinto on *esplanada*.

The conceptual, as Frege insists, is *not* an object of sensory awareness. For things to be such that Pia is on a chaise longue sipping arinto is neither on, nor under, the chaise longue, nor anywhere else. It cannot be before the eyes. Nor is there anything *it* looks like. It thus cannot be something one might see. *Idem* that Sid drinks lager. By contrast, some of the historical—some of what instances, is a case of, those ways for things to be which things can be represented as being—*is* a (potential) object of sensory awareness. One cannot watch *that* Sid is drinking lager. But one can watch him doing it. To think about the world at all, one must be able to recognise cases of one or another generality *as* such. If things being as they are now is a case of things being such that Pia is now sipping arinto, then its so being is the sort of thing a thinker must be able to recognise. For this, one needs acquaintance with things being as they are. And, in a case like this one, it is perception which, preeminently, plays the role of providing such acquaintance. One *sees* Pia sipping (sees the label on her bottle, and so forth), and *thereby* is able to recognise the way things are as a case of Pia sipping arinto.

Perception, thus, is a way of providing acquaintance with that which can be represented, truly or falsely, as being such-and-such ways. Perceptual awareness, e.g., visual

awareness, is the sort of awareness one enjoys in being so acquainted. Perception's business is not with the generalities under which things fall, but rather with that which falls under them. Perceptual awareness is, accordingly, a way of relating to particular objects, episodes, and whatever else makes up world history as it unfolds. What matters is that seeing is awareness of what *instances* generalities, so that we can thereby *recognise* generalities as instanced. It presents us neither with those generalities, nor, *a fortiori*, with these as instanced. Nor does it present us with things which, not existing, instance no generalities at all. Such things are not what it is for.

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