

Wittgenstein's Seeing-as and A Theory of Art

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In this paper I will show how Wittgenstein's concept of seeing-as might serve as the foundation for a theory of art. The theory that I will develop is a sketch, and general themes will take precedence over details. I will describe a way of distinguishing between art objects and other objects, consider what makes art, art, give a Wittgensteinian 'definition' of art appreciation, examine various important sorts of reactions to artworks, and briefly wonder what life without art would be like. I presuppose some understanding of several of Wittgenstein's central concepts in the Philosophical Investigations: language-games, forms of life, and the function of learning in understanding how to use concepts.

I will draw examples and ideas from both the Philosophical Investigations and the Lectures on Aesthetics. In spite of the specificity of the subject matter of the latter, I have often found Wittgenstein's remarks in the former to be more illuminating, because more suggestive, on the topics of art and aesthetics. Also, it is not clear how much weight should be attached to ideas in the Lectures on Aesthetics since Wittgenstein neither organized nor published them himself. However, it is well to note that what he apparently regarded to be the strict subject matter of aesthetics is treated there rather than in the Investigations.

When Wittgenstein talks about aesthetics, he means more than just art. I will talk almost exclusively about art. Therefore, what Wittgenstein said about aesthetics will here be made appropriate to a discussion about art. Although 'art' and 'aesthetics' are often used interchangeably, I will attempt to restrict my use of the term 'aesthetics' to instances where: the use of 'art' is ungrammatical, the topic being discussed is clearly applicable outside the domain of what I will strictly define as art, or I am quoting or referring to something specific that Wittgenstein said.

How do artworks differ from other objects?¹ As physical objects which can be examined for similarities and differences with other physical objects, probably

not at all. True, artworks are pieces of canvas pulled taut over wood frames with pigments smeared over them; they are hunks and strands of metal twisted and hung and perched on bases of wood or plaster or stone; they are little circles with variously flagged lines sticking upward or downward out of them, organized on pieces of specially prepared paper so as to signify the possibility of sound. Or, in their performed form, they are the sounds themselves. Non-art objects are generally none of these things. If we recognize something as a painting or a sonata or a sculpture, does that make it art? These differences between art objects and other objects at the physical level do not seem relevant.

Art objects are things that we do something particular with; namely, we place ourselves in a particular relationship to them, and we do not relate in the same way to non-art objects. I do not want to settle the question here as to what are to be considered works of art versus what are not. What is important is that we do treat a fairly commonly accepted variety of things as art objects, the obvious examples being paintings and sculptures, as well as music, poetry, and dances. Their variety is suggestive of the similarly wide range of relationships which exist between art objects and audience. We go to museums and galleries to look at them, to concert halls and theatres to see and hear them performed. Works of art are things that we look at, listen to, observe, scrutinize, and experience in a peculiarly appreciative way. In order to illuminate the uniqueness of this relationship between artworks and the art audience, I will explore the concepts of art and art appreciation through an application of Wittgenstein's notion of seeing-as. I hope to demonstrate how seeing-as is an experiential concept which is particularly well-suited to the foundation of a theory of art.

To see something as something is to see it as something that it is perceptually not. In other words, whatever is seen and recognized to be what it is, is not seen as any particular thing, but it is merely perceived. A person who sees some ordinary object and recognizes it for what it is, is likely to say, 'I see this', and upon prompting may produce a description, a drawing, or a copy, to illustrate what is seen. The word 'copy' is to be understood as the paradigm for whatever description, drawing, etc. may issue forth; the point is that purely perceptual experience results in non-innovative, relatively uninteresting utterances, if utterances are made. What is seen is not interpreted, nor is it related or compared to other things. It might be said that the seeing of it is simply recorded, and the recording is then available for the construction of a description or the making of a copy. Thus, we would not say of a knife and fork, 'Now I am seeing this as a knife and fork', of the letter 'F',

"Now I am seeing this as the letter 'F'", or of Jastrow's duck-rabbit, 'Now I am seeing it as a duck-rabbit'. Wittgenstein says that none of these expressions would be understood. We cannot make sense of expressions which are attempts to take things as what they are, because there is no sense to be made of our making an effort to take things as what they are. To do that would be, Wittgenstein suggests, like trying to move one's mouth when one eats. We just do move our mouths when we eat; that is part of what eating is. Similarly, we just do call a knife, 'knife', a fork, 'fork', and the letter 'F', "F". Using these names for these things is playing the language-game that we do, in fact, play. We do not try to play this language-game of calling things the names we have given them. We play it.

What is peculiar about seeing something as something is that such an experience is not part of perception. It is, in fact, not 'seeing' at all, but is an experience that we want to call 'seeing' because it is so similar. We want to say that seeing-as is like seeing, but in an important sense, it is not. The non-perceptual nature of seeing-as can best be explained by giving examples which bring out the contrast between perceptual seeing and seeing-as and their associated verbal and non-verbal reactions.

Imagine that two people have the following similar reactions to Jastrow's duck-rabbit drawing: One person looks, sees the rabbit, and says, 'It's a rabbit'. The second person looks, sees the duck, and then suddenly notices that the picture harbors a rabbit-aspect. He exclaims, 'Now it's a rabbit!' The first person describes by his utterance what he perceives, which is the rabbit, but only the rabbit-aspect of what we know to be a drawing of a duck-rabbit. Why not simply say the same thing of the second person, that he at first perceives the duck, then the rabbit, and consequently the duck-rabbit? To describe the situation in this way is to fail to confront that fact the something was realized, that an aspect was noticed; more happened than that a series of things was merely perceived. It occurs to us that something has changed, and our first inclination is to attribute this change to the object itself. However, it cannot be anything that the object itself does, for then it would be as if the object altered before our eyes. The aspect dawns on us. Noticing an aspect, or seeing something as something that it is perceptually not, is something we do. Interestingly, it follows that the noticing of an aspect often elicits from us not a report of a perception, but an exclamation. We say, 'Oh look, I see this now!' and the ambiguity, as Wittgenstein calls it, of the picture does not escape us, as it escapes the person who merely perceives the rabbit and reports, 'It's a rabbit'.

The question arises: Is there a class of objects such that our relations to them are never merely perceptual, but are always the noticing of aspects about them, and seeing them as things which they are perceptually not? I would like to suggest that art objects are such objects, and I will present evidence to show that Wittgenstein would be supportive of this view.

Ordinary objects need not be seen as anything at all. We need not look at them or listen to them or interact with them in any way and feel compelled to do anything other than report on what we see or hear, if that. Although it at first seems as though we can say the same thing about works of art, that we need not see them as anything or need not offer anything in excess of a report, such as, 'There were blue squares and brown circles', to take this as the outstanding comparison between artworks and ordinary objects is to miss the fact that there are physical art objects, and then there is art. An art object is a work of art when it is seen as something that it is perceptually not. It is the noticing of aspects of an art object that transforms that object into art. An art object cannot be art if it is merely perceived, for then it is no longer a work of art. This statement may seem circular, but to see that it is not we need only ask what things we in fact call art. How do we use the word 'art'? We apply the term 'art' most readily then we encounter objects that strike us in a certain way. The nature of this striking need not be a mystery; we see art objects as things which they are perceptually not. To say this is not to deny that we perceive them; it is just to acknowledge that it is not for the sake of perception itself that we travel all over the world, among other things, to see them. We seek to experience them. They are more than splotches of color, chunks of metal, human figures leaping across a stage. We see them as more than this. We notice things about them, and this is what makes art.

We would treat any ordinary objects in the same way as we treat art objects if there were absolutely no difference between the objects themselves. As I have suggested however, it cannot be their purely physical makeup that distinguishes them. Art objects are fundamentally capable of being seen as what they are perceptually not, and although we regularly notice aspects of ordinary objects as well, I would like to suggest that they do not fundamentally possess the capacity to be seen as what they perceptually are not. I will thus say that art objects are fundamentally expressive and that this is the objective basis of our taking them as works of art.

Here, as before, we do not need to draw a sharp line between two classes of objects, nor need we ignore the fact that many ordinary objects have expressive capabilities very similar to those of art objects.

What is important is the difference in the way we treat art objects versus other objects, and this mode of treatment, this relationship that we maintain with works of art, is suggestive of the fact that whatever objects we treat in this way are fundamentally capable of being treated in this way. To say that expressiveness is fundamental is not to claim that it is any less the way things just happen to be than any other of our forms of life. It is just to be ready to admit that an expressive quality is the basis of what art is. It is what we expect of artworks.

We must tread carefully when attributing qualities to objects. There is a sense in which Wittgenstein might admit that we can call art objects fundamentally expressive and a sense in which he certainly would not. The physical objects themselves clearly cannot possess the nonobservable property of expressiveness, for what is there in terms of what they physically are is there for all eyes to see. Yet, many people simply do not see the 'expressive character' of various art objects whose aspects are, for one reason or another, opaque to them. Expressiveness does not reside in art objects, but we've seen that it is partially a function of the way in which we treat these privileged objects. But this is only to consider the point of view of the audience of artworks. The remainder of the story can be gotten by investigating the relationship between art object, expression, and the creator or performer.

An artist creates a work of art in order to bring into being an object which will be part of the exclusive community of objects whose sole purpose for existence is to serve as vehicles for expression. So expressiveness can in a very vivid sense be said to inhere in works of art; they are created to be taken as expressive by the community. A performer, likewise, seeks to bring to the audience the expressive character of a work. Here it is not important what an artist wants his work to express or whether he is capable of making it express anything in particular. Much of the intent behind artistic creation is to bring forth objects of which people will notice aspects, i.e. which will be seen as things that they are perceptually not. So not only is this the way in which art is received; it is also the way in which it is given. Art objects have, as the motivation behind their creation, a fundamental expressivity.

It is not by way of their physical being that artworks are expressive. It is by way of their playing a certain role in the community, of fulfilling the needs and expectations of both the artist and the audience, and of being the crux of the form of life we call aesthetics. Thus, art objects as art are not identical with the physical objects that they also are.

The distinction between physical art objects and artworks might erroneously give rise to the picture

that the two are quite different things. Wittgenstein would not sanction the existence of ethereal artwork-things somehow perhaps capable of existing even if their physical counterparts were to disappear. 'It is as if artworks live on in us', some would say, 'even when we aren't faced with them'. This picture is grossly mistaken. Artworks cannot exist, phantom-like, in the minds of their audience. They must be what they physically are. Expressiveness is not a quality which exceeds their physical being in such a way that it can be divorced from them, usurped by us. Yes, we remember them; but to remember something is not to possess it in phantom form. An art object must first of all be perceived in order for it to even be possible for it to be art. Perception is the foundation for all of our interpretations, for the dawning of every aspect upon us, for the seeing of every artwork as something, for taking it in a certain way. Art object and artwork are the same thing, yet different in character. Perception and seeing-as are different games. What we see art objects as are works of art, and this is the first game we play with these particular physical objects.

When a person perceives a physical object which is expressively an artwork, and yet does not take it expressively, but sees only the physical object and is only able to report on its existence, to describe it, then we must say that this object is not art for this person at this time. Alternative interpretations of such cases are unrealistic in the sense that they are not accommodated by our language-games. What if we instead say that anything which the community calls art (or which the artist calls a work of art) is art for everyone at all times? We are then left with a group of purely physical objects which may or may not have any experiential significance for any given person at any given time. Art which is just called art is no longer fundamentally expressive. It has lost its meaning, and we are left with a useless and inappropriate distinction between one type of object and all others, where there once existed the useful and appropriate distinction between those objects which have a fundamentally expressive character which is capable of being grasped by some portion of the community, and those objects which do not have a fundamentally expressive character.

Because it is the most in conformity with our actual practice, the most realistic way to treat cases in which a particular person does not take an art object expressively at a given time, is to say that that work of art is not art for that person at that time. Much of what Wittgenstein says supports this view. A person may be perfectly willing to admit that when he does not take something as anything, and therefore does not appreciate the expressive character of a creation, it is not precluded that others may do so, and therefore

others may see that same object as a work of art. One interpretation of the recognition by a person that others see an art object as art would be that that person also sees the object as art. Can't his admission that something is art be based on other people's interpretations? Since he does not, himself, appreciate the art object, this interpretation is really senseless. The art object has no expressive quality for him. If he does not experience this for himself, then the art object is not art. Any person that does not see an art object as art for himself is only able to blandly say such things as, 'I will agree that this is art'. But he will not be able to make such vital contributions to an understanding of the artwork as are indicated by statements like, 'See what it looks like if you watch it from over here', 'Now I see this!' and 'I've seen this painting a hundred times and there's something I never noticed before'. A person who cannot make useful appreciative statements about a work of art does not see the art object as art but maintains an external relationship to its artistic character.

How can we tell whether an art object is art for a particular person? Wittgenstein suggests that we focus on the concept of appreciation:

In what we call the Arts a person who has judgement develops. (A person who has a judgement doesn't mean a person who says 'Marvellous!' at certain things.) If we talk of aesthetic judgements, we think, among a thousand things, of the Arts. When we make an aesthetic judgement about a thing we do not just gape at it and say: 'Oh! How marvellous!' We distinguish between a person who knows what he is talking about and a person who doesn't. (Lectures on Aesthetics, I #17, p. 6)

Those people who know what they are talking about are able to appreciate the art object as art. The point is as simple as the recognition that someone who is to admire an English sonnet must know English. Someone who speaks only Russian cannot truly be overwhelmed by an English sonnet. A person who says, 'Ah!' when a particular piece of music is played, but who cannot hum the melody, identify the movements, and say when the bass came in, can perhaps be said not to have appreciated the piece any more than a dog does in wagging his tail when the music is played. Wittgenstein is not trying to grind a fine line here in distinguishing what counts as appreciation from all else, he doesn't need to because his point is easy to see: Appreciation of art objects has to do with being able to see what's in them. I say, 'Appreciation . . . has to do with . . . ' rather than 'Appreciation is . . . ' because the concept of appreciation is not easy to describe, and is

impossible to define. In discussing a Wittgensteinian concept, we presume that: 1) an understanding of the concept is more likely to be generated not from what can be said definitionally or descriptively about the concept, but in terms of what can be shown by means of examples, and 2) it is nearly impossible to conceive of the concepts as being fixed or static, but because of our inability to attach a definition to them, and likewise because of the parts that they play in our constantly evolving and mutating language-games, they are more easily seen as fluid. Thus, since "(w)hat belongs to a language-game is a whole culture" (Lectures on Aesthetics, I #26, p. 8), "(i)t is not only difficult to describe what appreciation consists in, but impossible. To describe what it consists in we would have to describe the whole environment" (Lectures on Aesthetics, I #7, p. 7). Appreciation of art is contextual.

If a person is able to truly appreciate a work of art then what he says will indicate that he 'knows his way about', a familiar idea in the Investigations. The criterion for our being appreciative of works of art will not be that we have certain inner pictures upon contact with these works, but that we are able to generate descriptions of the impressions that we have. Art appreciation is a language-game. That we can and very often do emit appropriate exclamations of various sorts when in the presence of a work of art; this is the criterion by which we judge appreciation. Appreciation would be nothing at all if there were no context in which we appreciated. We could not appreciate art alone. The lone inhabitant of a planet could never appreciate a work of art in the sense of appreciation which we know. Art appreciation for us is a language-game that is part of our culture. It has to do with what we know, what we are familiar with.

We are familiar with the concept of seeing art objects as art. The primary sense in which the concept of seeing-as enters into a discussion of art is the general sense in which art objects are seen as expressive will differ for each member of the community. Recall that expressivity does not define the art object because 1) not all objects which a person will admit to be art have an expressive character for that person, and 2) expressivity is a non-physical property which the physical art object cannot possess. The seeing of art objects as art, the recognizing of certain art objects that they are art, is the first aspect which must be noticed about an artwork if any further aesthetic appreciation is to ensue. Wittgenstein does not directly address this issue, however his comments on aesthetic appreciation are enlightening.

The members of an audience exhibit different degrees of appreciation of a work of art. The uninteresting, because uninformed reaction of some is a

simple 'Ah' or 'Oh'. Those who are familiar with the art form or the particular work will be able to say much more, and consequently will be able to make judgements about the work. If there were no question of not seeing art objects as art, then what was art would be art for everyone. There would be different degrees of discerning tastes but all tastes would be discerning and every judgement would be valid, informed, a legitimate show of appreciation. Further, no one would be able to admit, 'That is not art for me!'. The expression would have no sense. What would the significance of the expressive character of art then be? Artworks could not be artworks because of their fundamental expressivity, for expressiveness is an aspect of something which has to be taken. If art objects just were art and were not taken to be so by anyone, then either artworks could not be fundamentally expressive, in which case it would be hard to see what their being art consisted in, or their expressivity would be irrelevant to their being art, in which case it would be difficult to see what possible function their expressivity could have. Wittgenstein does not discuss whether or how we take art objects as art, but his views on aesthetics which emerge in the context of his discussion of seeing-as are conducive to an adoption of the view that art is art because art objects are taken aesthetically by the community; this shows by way of the fact that aesthetic appreciation is a language-game that we do play, and aesthetics is a form of life which we do have.

Here it occurs to me that in conversations on aesthetic matters we use the words: 'You have to see it like this. This is how it is meant'; 'When you see it like this, you see where it goes wrong'; 'You have to hear this bar as an introduction'; 'You must hear it in this key'; 'You must phrase it like this' (which can refer to hearing as well as playing). (Philosophical Investigations, Ixi, p. 202)

'Now he's seeing it like this', 'now like that' would only be said of someone capable of making certain applications of the figure quite freely.

The substratum of this experience is the mastery of a technique." (Philosophical Investigations, Ixi, p. 208)

Wittgenstein is much more explicit in explaining what the mastery of the technique of aesthetic appreciation consists of. In other words, at the level of what are actual reactions, responses, and interpretations of works of art, Wittgenstein offers examples prolifically.

In many cases, the examples he provides are not intended to specifically illustrate a point about art or aesthetics. Yet they have a curiously aesthetic sense, which is highlighted by the occasional references to music, poetry, and the pervasiveness of the ideas of pictures and drawings. Wittgenstein's discussion of seeing, and "the difference of category between the two 'objects' of sight" (Philosophical Investigations, p. 193) serves as an excellent springboard for aesthetic indulgences.

Simply seeing a work of art and seeing it as something are two entirely different modes of apprehending the art object. In the first instance, the artwork is merely a perceived object, and the viewer might be able to produce a description, a drawing, or a copy of what is perceived. A copy or a description is, in fact, all that could be expected from a person who could in no sense be said to understand the artwork, who could produce no verbal or gestural signals of having truly appreciated it by way of making judgements about it based on his familiarity with works of its type, or works produced by the same culture or during the same age. It is easy to think of examples of what someone who does not understand or appreciate an artwork, who does not experience it, who does not recognize its expressive character, and who therefore, does not take it as art, does or says. And what someone does or says is that by which we tell what significance the object has had for them. A museum patron may say of Rothko, 'Oh, he just paints colored squares'. or 'What lovely paintings of colored squares he does'. A concert-goer may remark of a Stravinsky piece, 'I can't hear the melody', or of a John Cage composition, 'The order of the notes makes no sense'. A novice viewer of the ballet might simply say, 'Oh look! They're pointing their toes. It's lovely!'. Uninformed reactions may be positive, negative, or neither. Clearly, these art objects have not been taken as art by their viewers. They have simply been perceived and the result is some description which serves as a copy or which replicates in words what the viewer has seen (or heard), but no more. These are the kinds of things that we expect people to say when an artwork has made no impression on them, when their seeing has not been seeing-as. They have noticed no aspects about the art object, or at least none that convince them of its status as art. Remember Jastrow's duck-rabbit and the person who 'notices' the rabbit and remarks, 'It's a rabbit?'. The person has not noticed the rabbit-aspect however, but has merely seen the rabbit. The ambiguity of the picture is thus lost upon him. Likewise here, a person may accidentally, as it were, 'notice an aspect' of a work of art. A John Cage piece, for example, may consist of a series of notes arranged according to no prior 'sense', and to truly notice this would be an

astute observation. But for the person who unwittingly reports upon it as upon a perception, it will not be as if he has noticed an aspect. That was merely what he perceived when he viewed the art object, and was certainly no manifestation of his seeing the art object as a work of art.

There is a continuity between the above-given descriptions, which might be made by art viewers perceiving art objects without seeing them as art, and the examples of primitive or unappreciative reactions to art objects that Wittgenstein actually provides in the Lectures on Aesthetics. Nonappreciative gaping perhaps accompanied by uninformed comments such as 'Oh!', 'Ah!', 'How marvellous!', or 'How awful!' (a possible uninformed reaction to a Picasso or a Dali, or perhaps a musical composition on synthesizer), are similarly indicative of the fact that a person has not really appreciated the artistry of an art object. In fact, if such a person were asked to elaborate on his initial primitive reaction, he might respond with such descriptions as appear in the previous paragraph. In other words, uninformed art viewers are unlikely to be able to articulate more than a series of unappreciative reactions to works of art, even if pressed. In order to see in exactly what sense these cases can be said to be cases of persons not seeing art objects as art, not noticing aspects of the artworks except accidentally, it will be useful to examine what sorts of reactions will count as cases of genuine appreciation.

It is because a person can see an art object as an artwork that he is able to notice aspects of that artwork, to see it as things that it perceptually is not. An aspect can never be noticed if the art object is not first taken as art, for then there is no noticing by the viewer but only perceiving, out of which a mere description or replication of the perception in words or drawings can ensue. Supporting this claim are two assumptions: 1) The noticing of aspects of artworks is derivative of their status as art, 2) If an aspect of an artwork is noticed, and it is not derivative of the status of the object as art, then that aspect is irrelevant to the artistic value of the work. It is only outside of the strict boundaries of perception that noticing can take place, because only there can it be said that something is, in fact, noticed rather than perceived. I appeal here to Wittgenstein's idea that to understand the difference between two concepts, we must examine how we use those concepts, and the language-games that we play with them, and that this in turn depends upon how we have learned them. Thus, we have learned to say that we have noticed something about something if a framework already exists in which we can see the object that we are noticing things about. If I say, 'The room was full of sunlight', it is presupposed that I have had past experiences which

qualify me to make this statement. I have been in rooms in which I was not struck by the lighting. I have been in rooms that have been much darker; likewise, rooms which were artificially lit. We are only equipped to notice on the basis of some familiarity, some contextuality, some amount of informedness, or some capacity for drawing relationships. The primary, or most general framework within which we are able to notice aspects of artworks is our acceptance or recognition of them as works of art; and that involves, as I have already shown, more than the simple admission that something is a work of art. It involves an appreciation of the fundamental quality of expressivity of the work. Both the Investigations and the Lectures on Aesthetics shed light on the nature and extent of informed aesthetic appreciation:

It is possible - and this is important - to say a great deal about a fine aesthetic difference. The first thing you say may, of course, be just: 'This word fits, that doesn't'- or something of the kind. But then you can discuss all the extensive ramifications of the tie-up effected by each of the words. That first judgement is not the end of the matter, for it is the field of force of a word that is decisive. (Philosophical Investigations, Ixi, p. 219.)

In order to get clear about aesthetic words you have to describe ways of living. We think we have to talk about aesthetics judgements like 'This is beautiful', but we find that if we have to talk about aesthetic judgements we don't find these words at all, but a word used something like a gesture, accompanying a complicated activity. The judgement is a gesture accompanying a vast structure of actions not expressed by one judgement. (Lectures on Aesthetics, I #35, p. 11.)

What emerges from Wittgenstein's words is the importance of there being a wide range of reactions to works of art, verbal and otherwise. Verbal reactions, as Wittgenstein points out, are themselves multiform, often in consequence of the diverse experiences which they make articulate. One might say upon feeling a certain tension while looking at a painting, 'Look! yellow and purple are juxtaposed there'. Or one might exclaim, 'Oh! It's in 3/4 time', upon hearing a piece of music that made one wobble in a certain way. Wittgenstein warns us to beware of thinking that these sorts of statements, which we often offer in order to justify our aesthetic impressions, are causal explanations (Lectures on Aesthetics, III #11, p. 21). It is always conceivable that any explanation given would

simply not be the explanation. The criterion for its not being causal is that it cannot be "corroborated by experience or statistics as to how people react." (Lectures on Aesthetics, III #11, p. 21) Experimentation is not what the understanding of aesthetic impressions is all about. In attempting to point out what it is about a painting that gives us a feeling of tension, or about a piece of music that gives us a wobbly feeling, the wrong thing could easily be pointed out, and the viewer might still be satisfied. Statements like those above are part of the behavior we exhibit when we see an art object, and we want to verbally manifest our experiencing of it.

Another sort of verbal reaction to works of art can often not be adequately explained. We frequently do not know precisely why we use the words 'right' or 'correct' in evaluating works of art or other aesthetic materials, when we do. In his Lectures on Aesthetics, Wittgenstein gives the example of a man going to his tailor with a jacket which he has bought, whose color was somehow 'just right'. As the tailor adjusts the length of the jacket, the man says: 'Too long', 'Now it's too short', 'There! Just right!'. In the cases in which the concept of correctness is applicable (and it is more commonly applied by the artist or performer than the audience), there are often rules of guidance. For example, to compose a piece of music you can apply the rules of harmony and counterpoint. But when it comes to deciding which notes should be left out of which chords, and when the piece should be concluded, not everything can be said. Much about correctness cannot be articulated or made understood, yet we continue to use the word 'correct' when there are no articulable grounds.

Gestures are very similar to verbal reactions. In fact, verbal reactions can be referred to as verbal gestures. Wittgenstein remarks that when one says of a piece of Schubert's that it is melancholy, it is like giving that piece a face. Interestingly, Wittgenstein then adds that gestures (presumably nonverbal) can, in fact, be more exact than words (Lectures on Aesthetics, I #10, p. 4). Nonverbal gestures would seem to include arm and body movements, facial expressions, the construction of drawings, models, or other representations of aspects, and artworks themselves. Aesthetic appreciation (versus appreciation of non-aesthetic objects) appears to Wittgenstein to be highly gestural, whether verbally or otherwise. A meaningful gesture can say more than any number of uninformed words or nonverbal contortions, and can even function to reveal a deep appreciation of an artwork where no words are available. Wittgenstein relates a relevant personal anecdote: Once he began to stress the metre in Klopstock's poetry abnormally, his enjoyment and thorough appreciation of the poetry was manifested by his reading it again and

again, all the while making gestures and facial expressions of approval. Yet, no words were said.

Gestural appreciation of a work of art is continuous with the idea that we make verbal and nonverbal comparisons of works of art and noticed aspects to other things. I find Wittgenstein's comments and examples on the making of comparisons, the drawings of relationships, and the noticing of similarities, to be among the most interesting statements made both throughout the Investigations and the Lectures on Aesthetics. Wittgenstein says that "(w)e find certain things about seeing puzzling, because we do not find the whole business of seeing puzzling enough." (Philosophical Investigations, IIxi, p. 212) This comment seems particularly applicable to these unusual cases in which comparisons, relationships, and similarities are themselves seen. The examples which are and can be given are so familiar to us, and yet we find them puzzling because there seems to be no immediate explanation of them. What constitutes our feeling as if the name 'Schubert' fits Schubert's works and Schubert's face? What is it about a piece of music that makes us think of travelling? How can a few dashes made with a pencil on a paper look to us like Napoleon? And why, if we substitute a second minuet for a certain minuet which makes us want to dance, do we not then feel similarly possessed?

We find these cases puzzling because we do not find the whole business of seeing puzzling enough. Wittgenstein says this in opposition to the several unreflective ideas which have come to surround the concept of seeing and other related concepts. He spends the bulk of the Investigations attempting to undermine these ideas. A study of the depth grammar of 'seeing' leads him to replace our unreflective ideas with the very plausible accounts of seeing and seeing-as. They are so different from one another, and yet we want to call them such similar names. We must not let our grammar confuse us. There is no need for us to be puzzled by our ability to make comparisons and see similarities. We do these things because we are able to notice aspects, and this can only take place against some background. We must know our way about. There need be no puzzles. In the realm of aesthetics, imponderable numbers of complexities enter into our noticing aspects of works of art, for our ways of living pervade our noticing and even influence our ability to see art objects as art. Why should it puzzle us that we see a similarity between the style of musician and the style of a poet who lived at the same time, that we find, for example, certain themes of Brahms to be Kellerian? (Lectures on Aesthetics, IV, p. 32) Such cases do not trouble Wittgenstein, although they clearly interest and amuse him, for it is simply not mysterious that we notice such things if we bother to understand what

'noticing' means, what familiarity is, what similarities are. It often seems to be the very business of art to take into account a background, to allow for varied interpretations and comparisons to be made. Such characteristics are part of the fundamental expressivity of works of art. Add to the expressivity of the artworks themselves the capacity of the members of an audience to grasp that expressivity, to see the art object as art, and to notice aspects of the artwork, and whatever puzzlement there was, is dissolved. Wittgenstein tells us that it was all merely grammatical confusion, confusion about concepts.

Throughout this paper, I have tried to stress the dependence of the ability of a viewer to notice aspects of a work of art, to see it as something, and to notice similarities or make associations between it and other things, upon the primary taking of the art object as art. Thus, not all art objects are works of art for all viewers at all times, and those for whom certain art objects are not artworks are those upon whom the expressive character of those art objects is lost. Wittgenstein asks us to imagine "human beings lacking in the capacity to see something as something." (Philosophical Investigations, Ixi, p. 213) One thing that people such as these will lack is the ability to see any art object as art. Art or aesthetics will not exist for them. They will not be able to play the language-games of art appreciation nor will aesthetics be a form of life in which they participate. The only relationship that an aspect-blind person will have to an art object will be his perception of that object and his ability to describe that perception, or to copy or replicate it in words or in a drawing. The mention of any aspects in such a description will be purely accidental and will not be a result of their having been noticed. The expressive character of the art object as a work of art will be inaccessible to the aspect-blind person, and the only possible function that art objects could play in such a person's life would be as working drawings (or working sounds or working motions). Thus, "(t)he 'aspect-blind' will have an altogether different relationship to pictures (likewise music, poetry, dance, etc.) than ours." (Philosophical Investigations, Ixi, p. 214). We might say that artworks will have no significance for him. He will be able to do things with them; i.e. treat them as working materials. If he is able to work with them, he should be able to carry out an order like, 'Bring me something that looks like this'. His ability to carry out very simple, very ordinary everyday tasks should not be impaired. The example fails to accentuate the extent to which the aspect-blind person is cut off from aesthetics and the art world. The severance is total. What a person can do with art objects when they are not art for him is extremely limited, and at any rate has

nothing to do with their being art. Therefore, even as purely physical objects, they exist as a relatively useless realm of entities for him.

Aspect-blindness is a purely hypothetical idea. Wittgenstein conjures up the concept to make a point, and clearly does not want to push it any farther than is necessary, because in a culture with our forms of life, and the language-games we play, I think he would admit that it is a conceptual impossibility. Yet the concept is illustratively effective. We are not aspect-blind; we notice aspects. We see things as things that they perceptually are not. One of the things that we do, in fact, see things as, is art. Thus, seeing art objects as art is part of our culture. It is a form of life for us. Art (aesthetics) is intimately intertwined with other forms of life, so that to understand art, or to experience it with some degree of informed appreciation, we have to understand many things about the way that we live. We notice aspects of the artworks we experience because or if we have a background through which we can appreciate them, through which they are familiar to us. So we play our language-games of appreciation and we make gestures and comparisons, and we notice relationships and similarities, and thus art, for us, is alive. It is expressive. If we take it as expressive, it never leaves us untouched.

Wittgenstein may not have solved all philosophical problems, but what he has lighted upon, he has made simple. Here I have tried to show the simplicity of a theory of art which can be developed from an extension of several of his central ideas. Its simplicity lies in showing how confusions about art are conceptual, thus leaving the complexity and beauty of aesthetic experience untouched.

NOTES

'Art' and 'art object' will be strictly dichotomized, and defined shortly. 'Artwork' will at times seem to vacillate in meaning between these two poles; however, I mean by this term the physical art object which is accepted as art. Its use is consistent with this definition which will be elaborated upon.