

A descriptive approach to perceptual theory and visual spectatordom¹

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The following three articles will investigate, using a descriptive approach, how perceptual theories have influenced the role of the viewer in visual spectatordom. In the first article, the role of language (English) is examined in relation to the perceptual process. The interaction between language and viewing is then used in the second article to describe the relationship between the viewer and the work of art. In the third article, which describes seven perceptual approaches to visual spectatordom, the author shows how these perceptual theories can be linked to the role which language plays in visual spectatordom.

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In die volgende drie artikels sal 'n beskrywende benadering gevolg word om ondersoek in te stel na hoe betragtersteorieë die rol van die betragter in visuele betragterdom beïnvloed het. In die eerste artikel sal die rol van taal (Engels) geëksamineer word in verhouding tot die persepuele proses. Hierdie interaksie tussen taal en betragting sal dan in die tweede artikel gebruik word om die verhouding tussen die betragter en die kunswerk te beskryf. In die derde artikel, wat sewe betragterbenaderings tot visuele betragterdom beskryf, wys die skrywer hoe hierdie betragtersteorieë gekoppel kan word aan die rol wat taal in visuele betragterdom speel.

¹ These three articles have been reworked from an honours assignment written in 1989 under the guidance of Prof. D.J. van den Berg (UOFS).

Article 1: The role of language.

Possibly no other issue within and without the field of aesthetics has been more hotly debated, refuted, and periodically renewed than the role of the viewer in visual spectatordom. "The bewildering multiplication of textual and discursive milieus has given rise to a new need to question, review and make explicit the methodological and theoretical assumptions and intentions underlying critical practice" (Freund 1987: 7).

As this is a vast and complicated field of inquiry, it should be obvious to the reader at the outset that not all aspects can be covered in a single article. I have therefore narrowed my focus in this particular article to examine how language may serve as a starting point for investigating the role of the viewer of works of art. The topic of the viewer and the work of art will be elaborated upon in the second article; while the third article will examine seven perceptual approaches to visual spectatordom, and will conclude by my own point of view as to how these perceptual approaches can be tied in with the interaction between the language of perception and the viewer's spectatorship of a work of art.

A component of the present article (where applicable) will deal with visual theories relating to language as a preamble to the later discussion. As a result of this inquiry the reader may be in a better position to return to the aesthetic experience of a viewer, having the "accuracy and adequacy for aesthetic theory [more] ... clarified, enlightened, and with potential for perception" (Berleant 1970: 17).

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Language as a starting point

In the opening lines to his *De interpretatione* (16a4ff.) Aristotle had recognized the fact that written words were symbols of spoken words, which in turn were *symbola* used by men to directly symbolize [*semeion*] their experiences of images [*homoiomata*]. This important observation on the visual rhetoric of language points to the fact that a rather complicated relationship exists between the physical event denoting the thing named and the connoting conception which it referred to (Schultz 1962: 291). Today it is still recognized, although not always accepted, that the symbolic function of language is actualized

in our discourses (Ricoeur 1979: 75). More specifically, in art criticism and art historical scholarship, the word still dominates over the image (Rankin 1986: 10) in a way that has disturbed some postmodernist and deconstructivist critics of language as the disparate tool of interpreting pictures. Flax (1984: 2), for example, seems to feel that "the rhetorical prestructuring of the cognitive fields" by ubiquitous language estranges it from pictures; the reason being, that critical language first has to be in place before a beholder can use it to respond to an artistic environment. The bricolage nature of language means that lan-

guage will always remain allegorical (tropic) in the metaphorical sense that while it says one thing it points to another (Ricoeur 1974: 63-64). Stated in terms of the Greek notion of *physis*, by saying something we are appropriated and never that which we wish to appropriate (Ricoeur 1974: 405). Language, therefore, is no longer conceived as a sacrosanct solitarily embodying meanings, but merely as one way of hypothesizing about meanings (Bakhtin 1982: 370). It is also no longer regarded by some contemporary theorists as a "vertical" activity, since things intervene between the inward choice of the speaker and the paradigmatic axis of language as a material practice (Bryson 1983: 84).

Adding fuel to this fire, it has come to the attention of more recent theorists that the consciousness of language is hybrid in nature, while words are a "double-voiced" trope (Bakhtin 1982: 67-68, 327, 354, 361). As such, the mutually exclusive ontologies of critical languages and the theory of how paintings exist in the world (Flax 1984: 12) tend to obscure at the outset of an inquiry a means of explaining the role of the viewer. Whereas language, as a device for embodying and communicating meaning through the use of symbols, is pre-eminently instrumental in pointing to value beyond itself, the pictorial world plays a key role in aesthetic experience as it is intrinsic to perceptual awareness. Language thus distracts the perceiver from the qualities of the aesthetic situation, and is least able to sup-

ply him/her with his/her expectations about art (Berleant 1970: 32).

While we should be constantly aware of the fact that the language of art criticism exists as its own history of discourses, vocabularies, and language-games, with a dynamic of its own which requires a further discourse on the analysis of discourse that opposes the "fiction wars on art" (Flax 1984: 4, 20), it is not my intention here to overtly criticize language, but rather to show, by means of a descriptive approach, that language itself is in a position which may be useful to the perception works of art. Rather than trying to deconstruct language further, let us try and find a way whereby language (despite its shortcomings) can be used more positively as a component of the aesthetic process involved in visual spectatorship.

The first part in redeeming language is to recognize the obvious: that critics, (even deconstructivists), communicate in language (Wolff 1983: 54). When criticizing a landscape painting, for example, art critics do not react to a tree in the painting by painting another tree: instead, they answer in words. Despite the fact that our inner choice, the meaning of utterances, is governed by a selection of words (Bryson 1983: 82), it is hoped that each speaker of a language is a competent speaker of that language and that his *verba sentiendi* in some way or another is able to describe internal consciousness

(Uspensky 1973: 85). The psychic structure of speakers of English, thus, is "coloured by English" (Gilmour 1986: 50).

Secondly, we should be able to recognize language as a spontaneous expressive medium of a human agent, who attempts, while using language, to transcend the distinction that is often drawn between nature and culture (Gilmour 1986: 112); and to accept that while the speaker does so the language which she/he uses is never unitary, but is rather an artistic reworking, a *heteroglossia* of language, populated not only by socio-historical voices alone, but also as a dialogue of language itself, evolving under the pressures of social and material reality, wherein the centripetal force of language is stratified into dialects of social forces that co-exist, and are forever dying, living, and being born.

Just as we noted earlier with the *physis* nature of language, we should also accept that because language is a process of interaction with an object, a work of art, or an artifact, no living word relates to an object in a single way, but is given stylistic shape and meaning as words are individualized in a specific context within which the limits of each form enable concrete variants of differing degrees of value to emerge (Bakhtin 1982: 149).²

Since every textual theory is language bound as another text to be read, language can be regarded aphoristically as the lingual destiny of each theory it encapsulates. As the life of the mind probes and interrogates language, it reads precisely the circumference of the system underlying our reading practices (Freund 1987: 16-17). More significantly, this process highlights how we regard the differences between words and pictures, in that it reveals what we have to say about knowledge and what we believe to be true about epistemology: "discourse constitutes the world in which we live ... [it is] the study of a process defined by the human condition" (Hasenmeuller 1989: 297).

Wittgenstein himself defined language as a means for "imagining a form of life" (Stumpf 1966: 449). He considered language as a tool for living which was rather like the evolution of an urban landscape "with many suburbs to which new suburbs [could] be added at any time ... [when needed]" (Gilmour 1986: 69).³ The changing practice of a community, to change by its members, legitimized the use of language. At the same time, Wittgenstein noticed that the immediacy of language identifications tended to obscure the functioning of the complex symbols employed in making them (Gilmour 1986: 45). In other words, the deconstructive criticism of the

² Bakhtin (1982: 271, 276, 279, 288, 292, 295, 300, 365, 411). See also Flax (1984: 3).

³ See also Stumpf (1966: 448); Mitchell (1986: 2).

validity of language remained an intellectual pursuit, removed from the sphere of language as a socio-lingual activity.

Complementing Wittgenstein's view of language are some thoughts by Merleau-Ponty. His diacritical theory of language boils down to his belief that we cannot detach our understanding of the kinds of things populating the world from the linguistic meanings we use to describe them. Language, for him, is a form of being in which the linguistic practices of the community serve as focal points for a gaining of self-understanding. Language is also reflexive in that it opens up the possibility of mutual expressiveness between people, and indeed is integral to the development of intersubjective meaning. The verbal matrix is able to account for verbal meaning (Gilmour 1986: 86-88). In Merleau-Ponty's view, the phenomenological aim of language is not "to construct the world we know, but to describe the lived world." Our immediate problem in recovering the historical past in art history, or indeed in our present, is that the primary layer of meaning is what we put there by virtue of our present ways of thinking. What Merleau-Ponty calls the "phenomenological archaeology" undertakes to "recover beneath [the] instituted symbolic codes [...] a level of experience in which meanings ... came into being" (Blinder 1983: 259).

Keeping Wittgenstein's view of language as a socio-lingual activity and Merleau-Ponty's

phenomenological approach to language at the back of our minds, we may ask the question, which begs an answer: how can language, like English (for example), be an integral component of the visual spectatorship of a work of art? In the following sections I will try to answer this question.

The problem of seeing

My initial starting point for this article was language (English). Using the combined efforts of the Thesaurus's of both Roget and MS.WORD, I compiled a list of key English words which were related to other English words relating to perception. This list is given in Appendix 1 (*pg. 31-32*). Since I believe all critics, theorists, and art historians, use language to convey to other readers their ideas, I wanted to find out just how these words could be related to one another and how they served to explain through their subtle nuances the operation of the viewer's role in visual spectatorship. By thinking about each word used on the list, its meaning, and relation to another, I constructed fig. 1 using these English words. The result was a gradual "picture" which emerged concerning how the relationship of meanings of words feed off one another and influenced the operation of each other. In the rest of this article we may examine fig. 1 (*Pg. 35*) more closely.

The starting point for perceiving the visual world

lies at the bottom of fig. 1 with the physical eye and the act of seeing. Unfortunately, as with language, before we can begin to examine the aspect of seeing we again need to "clear the decks," so to speak. A problem immediately arises when "the inviolable witness of particularity [is asked to] ... confirm ... the instance of sheer givenness" (Kuspit 1983: 272), not only in terms of the problems of language (Kuspit 1983: 281) that I have already mentioned in the previous section, but also by the fact that "the given [can be] put in question in a wide variety of ways, and how this is done influences and shapes the whole undertaking" (Rabinow & Sullivan 1979: 20).

Allow me to illustrate the point by means of two British empirical philosophers of the eighteenth century: David Hume (1711-1776) and Edmund Burke (1729-1797). The former was interested in discovering the "natural" way of seeing the world. In Chapter three of his *An enquiry concerning human understanding* (1748) Hume considered the "ideas" and "sense-data" which he thought mediated a mental or perceptual image as second nature to man, which not only would guarantee his veridical access to the world, but also enable him to irridenitely and ir-retrievably distance the world through a system of intermediate signs. He called this his "principles of association." Burke, by contrast, believed that the universal structure of domination and

slavery formed the natural foundations of the political and cosmic order in nature. In an article he wrote for the *Enquiry* (Number 146), Burke treated the physical eye as a "sphincter muscle" that strained to let light in and was frustrated by darkness. He called this frustrated vision which obscures the world the sublime, and thought that it represented the political falsehood in great and terrible objects, as opposed to beauty which represented the true aesthetic to be admired through the pleasure it gave (Mitchell 1986: 59, 126, 130, 132). What Hume, Burke, and even William Hogarth (1697-1764) in his *Analysis of Beauty* (1753), started was not so much an enquiry into the empirical nature of seeing, but rather the psychology of aesthetic experiences (Berleant 1970: 54).

The constant resting of perceptions case on empirical evidence shows that it never can be an objective analysis of "ideated sensations" as Hume and Abbé du Bos, for example, believed (Rankin 1986: 18).⁴ Not only is reality "empirically imperceptible" in that it conceals "itself in the phenomenal categories it offers spontaneously to inspection" (Savile 1982: 286), but the "idiosyncrasy of sensory qualities forbids a reduction of a quality to simpler characters that might conceivably be shared by persons" (Berndtson 1969: 200). Stated differently, it might be said that there are no Essential Copies or absolute realities which empiricalism could purely

⁴ See also Berleant (1970: 100); Gibson (1950: 14).

perceive as a Divine or Dialectical Science “which can help us purify history absolutely, [or] to pass in our lifetime [as] a last judgment on it” (Freund 1987: 19).⁵ Only a naïve or Machiavellian empirical system could “suppose that the boundaries or goals of any personal act could be objectively determined or demarcated on the grounds of an abstract logic ... while ... at the same time [be] considered ‘free’ or ‘creative’” (Fisher & Nodine 1979: 221). Perhaps for this reason Greenberg’s “rhetoric of cuisine” regarding the evolution of modernist American Abstract Expressionism, has failed to take other factors into critical account. If we “believe that one’s investigation leads one to final reality” we are in fact “absurdly” trying “to believe that it leads one to [a] final purpose” as well (Kuspit 1979: 171-172, 180).

Possibly for this reason, we tend to view the Gestalt theory of perception as a very limited explanation of seeing the world. If we only tend to see man as a “perceptual-motor being-in-the-world” and forget that we are also, among other things, “cerebral-visual seeing” beings as well, we end up with a very restricted form of being able to see (Berleant 1970: 74-77).⁶ While not entirely fundamentally mistaken, Gestalt theory is incomplete (Wartofsky 1979: 272). Not only is it a difficult task to specify the isomorphism which Gestalt psychology speaks of in terms of the way

cerebral structure corresponds to perceived form, but the ontology of this affinitive understanding, rather than psychology alone, has also to be taken into account (Dufrenne 1983: 210). We seem to have returned to Aristotle’s problem with which we began this discussion: the inseparability of *mimesis thaita physike* [imitating physical things] and *memeis thaiten physin* [imitating nature] in terms of the distinction which Aristotle made between ethical know-how [*phronesis*] and theoretical or “scientific” knowledge [*episteme*] (Rabinow & Sullivan 1979: 137); or, as Aristotle sought to explain it in his *De anima* 2.5, the “universal” of both something in the world and the correlate in our minds (Podro 1972: 4).

As far as an explanation of how the physical eye sees is concerned, both Newton (Gibson 1971: 27-28), Descartes (Blinder 1986: 20-21),⁷ and R.L. Gregory (Steer 1989: 93) can be cited as attempts to describe the biology of seeing. Their accounts are similar to J.J. Gibson’s (1950: 12) early ideas about Direct Perception Theory which “conceives of the perceptual process in two parts: the picture or pattern formed on the retina by light rays from the environment and the translation of that pattern into an experience of the three-dimensional world by the brain” (Steer 1989: 94; see fig. 2).

⁵ See also Bryson (1981: 9); Berleant (1970: 85).

⁶ See also Van den Berg ([s.a.]: 7).

⁷ See also Suleiman & Crosman (1980: 301-302); Stumpf (1966: 405); Rankin (1986: 112).

Later, revising his theory of Direct Perception, Gibson confessed that it contained certain inaccuracies: the retinal input, and the ocular adjustments made in the brain, could not be a one-way transmission, but had to be a more circular process where "the eye is not a camera that forms and delivers an image, nor is the retina simply a keyboard that can be struck by fingers of light" (Gilmour 1986: 97). Since there is no logical connection that intrinsically exists between a light wave of certain dimensions and a visual *sensum* of a certain hue, this itself makes it difficult to ascertain the "intersubjectivity of the sensory content" of seeing (Berndtson 1969: 200). Yet while seeing is more immediate than words, than understanding it by hearing or reading about it in terms of language, Gibson's later theory of Direct Perception grants the fact that visual sensations are a sort of luxury, incidental to perceiving the world since the information the eye receives is an equivocal array of invariant information that specifies "the distinctive features of an object" (Gibson 1950: 31).⁸ At the same time perception is achieved through both the ambient vision of looking around and the ambulatory vision of moving around (Gibson, in Hagen 1980a: xiv).

The work of Rudolf Arnheim in some respects follows the same ahistorical line of Kant's thought toward a universalist and *a priori* harmonizing of the mind and world in the act of perception

and representation (Mitchell 1986: 152). Working in the same area as Gibson, Arnheim believed that the directness of a response obscured the general structures standing behind them. He also recognized that "salient features," which Gibson had called "invariants," entered into our perception of art without our notice, and that the viewer needed a special intuitive faculty postulated within himself/herself that would explain them (Gilmour 1986: 57-58). In *Art and Visual Perception* (1974), Arnheim summarized his thoughts on the subject: "all perceiving is also thinking, all reasoning is also intuition, all observation is also invention" (Caws 1981: 3).

What it boils down to is that seeing involves more than a neuro-optically based eye-brain dichotomy presented in fig. 2. The so-called "innocent eye" of the viewer is blind (Mitchell 1986: 118). Not only this, it is also non-existent in terms of being a "fresh eye" (Bourdieu 1968: 590).⁹ It would be more accurate to refer to the eye in terms of Klee's "thinking eye" (Rankin 1986: 12), as well as a "private eye" (Caws 1981: 4): "Thinking is a seeing, to the extent that insight consists of the instantaneous grasping of the combinatory possibilities offered by ... the rapprochement between proportionality and ... establishment ... of the insight [into] predicative assimilation" (Ricoeur 1978: 148). Nature, and art, in this sense, are elements of the life-world,

⁸ See also Gibson (1971: 31-33); Gilmour (1986: 97).

⁹ See also Bryson (1983: 79); Blinder (1983: 254); Blinder (1986: 21); Gibson (1971: 32); Freund (1987: 149).

like language, and thus should be seen as a concept which has its own place in the mental [*Geistig*] sphere, not merely in the eye (Schultz 1962: 127).¹⁰

Examining fig. 1 further

Having digressed somewhat on the subject of seeing, let us return to examine the terrain of fig. 1 and see how seeing fits into the design of the diagram. The first important thing to notice about fig. 1 is that the cluster of its separate spheres should not be seen as isolated from one another, or that the "traffic flow" from one sphere to another is a one-way movement. This I have tried to indicate by giving each vector a "double edged" arrow-head and by allowing the lay-out of the terrain to look like a cartographical map that borders on different regions, but whose actual "borders" do not have barbed wire fences around them. Emigration from one area to another also requires no passport or visa, except to carry along with it the baggage of experiences and expectations it has already acquired along the way. To an extent, fig. 1 should be seen as part of the "polyfunctional structure of an open system" that exists in the reader's open journey into whatever may be "counter, original spare, strange" (G.M. Hopkins). This rather patient dialogue or interrogation should be seen as a

multiphased experience in which at different times the dominant features of multiforms can be brought into focus, polysemism following the variability of the material context (Bryson 1983: 70-71).¹¹ This demand for a "poetics of an open system" in Eco's (1983: 56) view, is based on the theoretical and mental collaboration of the consumer, both within himself/herself, and in the inexhaustibility and the ambiguous unlimited finite of the art work he/she is looking at.

So far we have examined the problems concerning the biological and empirical views that connect the eye with seeing. Part of the problem may be solved when we realize that the word seeing has a "two-legged" meaning. On the one hand what we mean by "seeing" is watching something, as a witness of an object or an event, like an audience at the theater or cinema, beholding what is before them. Related to this, on the other hand, "seeing" involves a visit, as in "going to see a friend." It involves a meeting and an encounter with another object or event (Bakhtin 1982: 282).

Seeing, though, is always precluded by an horizon of expectation, or *Erwartungshorizont* (Holub 1984: 44): "Seeing things is affected by what we know or what we believe" (Berger 1982: 8). Expectancy prevails every form of the process or mode of seeing (Day 1979: 45). The

¹⁰ See also Podro (1972: 67); Rapp (1984: 153); Suleiman & Crosman (1980: 299-300); Bryson (1981: 5).

¹¹ See also Berleant (1970: 94); Freund (1987: 154); Burnham (1973); Van den Berg ([s.a.]: 17-18).

natural attitude of the visual perception of a distant object implies the anticipation that the distant object will be brought into contact with the viewer. Every moment seen is brought together by what Schultz (1962: 108) calls the "inner horizon" of the perceived object, which can then be systematically explored through the intentional indications with the *noema* itself. At the same time, the existence of the "outer horizon" between an object and its background offers the viewer a field of perceptions and cogitations which are not isolated phenomena, as spectatordom is not, but one, in the words of William James, which is "connected with fringes connecting it to other things." Schultz (1962: 227) believes that while the noetical side (the perceiving act of the viewer) does not change, the intentional indications of the *noema* itself tend to modify themselves: "from the world within my actual or potential reach ... objects are selected as primarily important which actually are or will become in the future possible ends or means for the realization of my [critical observations] ... [which] I may expect from these objects and the future changes my projected working will bring about with respect to them." This is how Husserl saw the *Erwartungshorizont*: every element succeeding perception was a continuous projection encompassing other perceptive possibilities. Each state of consciousness implied the existence of a horizon which varies with the modification of its connections together with other states and

also with its own phases of duration (Eco 1983: 59).

From the commonplace activity of seeing, the viewer soon realizes that his seeing has become looking (Rankin 1986: 12). Again, as with the word "see," the word "look" has a "two-legged" meaning. On the one hand it is concerned with the veneer, facade, or appearance of an object, and hence, with noticing, discovering and penetrating its inscape; and on the other, it is concerned with the various means of looking: gazing, glancing, peeping, and staring. In the audience participation of the event, looking in this sense is concerned with showing, itself concerned with the art of exhibiting, displaying and presenting on the one hand, and with the theatrical terms of acting and performance of events, on the other hand. From the inscribed audience's point of view, this is because each new member is capable of contributing towards the work of art's "readability." As each new participant brings to the work of art a new set of deficiencies of the prevailing thought systems and norms of his/her day, so too, by his/her postivization of his/her norms he/she enlightens an audience-orientated critic, such as Flax, to the fictional war that the reading public makes on a particular work of art (Suleiman & Crosman 1980: 12, 26-27, 32). Literary critics often write about an audience as though he/she were a reader of a text. Personifications seem to proliferate in recent

years about the name that should be given to such a "reader": "the mock reader <Gibson>, the implied reader <Booth, Iser>, the model reader <Eco>, the super-reader <Riffaterre>, the inscribed or encoded reader <Brooke-Rose>, the narratee <Prince>, the ideal reader <Culler>, the literent reader <Holland>, the actual reader <Jauss>, the informed reader or the interpretive community <Fish>" (Freund 1987: 7).

As far as words are concerned by art historians, the word "reader" is often complemented by the word "eye" seeing that works of art are perceived visually in order to be "read" – an innocent eye, a thinking eye, a private eye, and an implied eye (Van den Berg 1987). These terms each metaphorically suggest an attitude or particular relationship between the viewer and the work of art which he/she investigates.

One of the anticipatory moves of the word "look" was that of discovery. Like a small probe the eye-orientated viewer works within the larger nexus he/she is investigating. Like a private eye doing detective work, this thinking eye is capable of reopening and 'infinitezing' the question of textuality or the interpretator authority, within an "open poetic system" (Freund 1987: 18).

As the role of looking gradually incorporates the act of scanning, the eye is able to scout the aesthetic field as a spectator: "The [eye's] wandering viewpoint travels between all ... segments ...

constantly switching ... the time flow of [looking] ... , thus bringing forth a network of perspectives, within which each perspective opens a view not only of others, but also of the intended imaginary object" (Suleiman & Crosman 1980: 112-113). The key concepts in the scanning process seems to be that it involves the movement of the eye and the body "as it turns in space or perambulates through the environment" and the flow of time (Steer 1989: 29, 94). The concept of picture scanning was introduced into art history by Baxandall, who believed that it was only through this process that the viewer could eventually form an impression of the whole of a work of art. Scanning a picture in this way was governed by the pattern of general scanning techniques and the particular visual cues in the picture: "unless a reference to a code was prompted by special circumstantial cues ... it could not be part of the normal digestion of visual experience" (Baxandall 1972: 81, 460). Interestingly enough, Baxandall's use of the analogy between depicted figures in painting and those in drama, who remain as reprehensive *sedie* "on the stage during the action of the play as a mediator between the beholder and the events portrayed," and who occasionally catch the viewer's eye (Carrier 1986: 12; see also Baxandall 1972: 71, 73), correspond to the connection which the words "looking" and "audience" have with each other in fig. 1.

As the scouting of a picture takes place through

scanning, the viewer undertakes a voyage of discovery as though on a guided tour. In one sense, he/she becomes a spectator in, and of, a picture through his/her observations and considerations about the visual process. Observing though, is always a selective process that "needs a chosen object, a definite task, an interest, a point of view, [and] a problem [I]t presupposes similarity and classification, which in turn presupposes interests, points of view and problems" (Bryson 1983: 32). In this sense, it joins the problems of the role of the spectator in, or in front of, pictures.

Part of the consideration which the viewer observes in his/her role as a private eye, detective, investigator-interrogator and scrutaneer, are slowly assimilated through seeing, looking and scanning processes. As it is impossible to understand all the subtle complexities of a work of art in a single glance these methods of studying the various parts of an art work can only gradually be digested in relation to each other, and in relation to the larger compositional whole (Greene 1952: 224). To an extent, the viewer projects his/her critical performance through the motivation of his/her fantasizing (Schultz 1962: 73), as though he/she, too, were a role-playing partner in the common parlance of seeing and perceiving (Rapp 1984).

What emerges out of the combined efforts of seeing, looking, scanning, performance observation and consideration, is a grasping of the cognitive

view of what has been seen and explored. "The highest degree of intersubjective grasp in aesthetic experience ... consists of [these] relations ... which may be constant while terms [or points of view] differ." The "internal grasp of the nature of the work of art makes the work more self-contained and consequently more public" in terms of the "concretization [of] its semantic structure ... against the background of a broader ... artistic tradition ... [and] the system of values and meanings of a particular society" (Berndtson 1969: 201-202; see also Odmark 1979: 200). The viewer's imagination thus must complete the initial expectation [*Erwartungshorizont*] and later inspection of a work of art, in order to grasp the heart of artistic and aesthetic vision. Through his/her judgment and criticism, the viewer is able to reach some kind of solidarity consensus with other intersubjective partners in the social praxis of the interpretation of a work of art.

At the same time, the "analyst [also] introduces into the object the principle of his[her] own relation to that object" (Bryson 1983: 12). In the reciprocal relationship of codes, the *Erwartungshorizont* of the interpreter also "brings to consciousness aspects of [the] visual experience which are normally embedded in the totality of vision" (Steer 1989: 98). Vision thus instructs the eye to see afresh the habitual balance between an art work and the viewer (Caws 1981: 5), and by apprehending, understanding, and grasping, the vision which the art work has

to offer, appreciation may follow the psychology of the artistic creation. During this ocular-lingual process, which is also an aesthetic experience, the line between the artist and the perceiver merge with one another, and appreciation "actually [becomes] a superimposition on the process creation, for both reflect the common process of experiencing ... the aesthetic field" in terms of analytic descriptions (Berleant 1970: 61, 64, 76, 123).

32 Following appreciation, the excess of the image over and beyond the didactic mandate in Bryson's (1983: 142, 153) view may be augmented and enjoyed to the full by the viewer. This end, to gratify the mind of the viewer through *prodesse* [teaching], *delectare* [pleasing] and *movere* [moving] (Abrams 1953: 16-18) have remained three of the most important aims of visual rhetoric. In no small way it has served as a "deeper impulse for ... [the fulfillment of the self] ... in the expansion of awareness that induces some people to devote energy and effort in the cultivation of the arts" (Rankin 1986: 23).¹²

Conclusion

Fig. 1 shows that the meaning we have attached to words in English do in some way correspond to how a descriptive explanation of the viewer might take place. It also demonstrates that "per-

ception occurs . . . in a context of memory and expectation. We always [need to] ... interpret what we see" (Gombrich 1985: 221). Perception thus can be considered in terms of Klee's "thinking eye" as being a "mind's vision" which Wartofsky has termed an *Einstellung* (Hagen 1980b: 134). By looking more deeply at works of art the viewer becomes transformed into an audience, and thus joins, along with other visitant participants in the on-going process of the aesthetic experiencing of works of art. The private eye, however, reminds us that the viewer's participation is always, first and foremost, a subjective response through seeing. In this regard, the prefixes in some of the English words I have used lend themselves to stressing and enhancing this subjectivity. The private eye is an inward-looking eye that relies on insight [in-sight], intuition [in-tution], and imaginative responses, which remain the properties of an individual intellectual enquiry (Biggsby 1972: 75), which having seen, and examined the visual evidence presented in a work of art, then strives towards developing an objective point of view.

Works of art thus demand to be seen, their visual rhetoric demands to be studied and interpreted by a participatory viewer who must interact with the work of art, and describe and interpret, through language, his/her (subjective) responses to the art work. In the second article I will expand on this topic; but for now I would like to conclude by saying that the language

¹² See also Podro (1972: 19); Bourdieu (1968: 594).

(English) of perception is an integral component of viewing, visual spectatordom and perceptual theory with regard to the perception of art works.

In closing, I will leave the reader with a question to ponder, which some reader may even wish to answer: how do other languages (other than English) contribute towards visual spectatordom; and how do these languages aid the “reader,” or viewer, in understanding the process of perceiving, as well as assisting in, the interpretation of a work of art by means of a perceptual theory?

Appendix 1

consider – admire, adore, appreciate, cherish, esteem, idolize, love, prize, respect, treasure, value.
– account, calculate, deem, judge, reckon, regard, view, surmise.
– contemplate, digest, meditate, mull, ponder, reflect, see, speculate, study, think, weigh.

consideration – courtesy, dispensation, favor, indulgence, kindness, privilege, respect, service.
– bonus, goal, incentive, inducement, motivation, motive, reason, reward, stimulus.
– aim, cause, purpose.
– account, admiration, esteem, favor, regard, respect.
– diplomacy, discretion, poise, regard, tact, savoir-faire, thoughtfulness.

discover – ascertain, catch on, determine, find out, hear, learn
– listen, uncover, unearth.
– debunk, expose, show up, uncloak, unmask, unshroud, ferret, find, locate.
– chance, encounter, happen, meet, stumble.

gaze – eye, gape, gawk, goggle, observe, ogle, peer, stare, study.

glance – glimpse, look peek.
– backfire, boomerang, bounce, brush, graze, rebound, skim, skip, touch.

grasp – command, control, grapple, grip, hold, influence.
– assume, believe, estimate, expect, fathom, gather, infer, suppose, guess, suspect, trust.
– behold, digest, distinguish, realize, recognize, taken in.

look – appearance, cover, facade, facet, factor, front, surface, veneer.
– appearance, aspect, cast, countenance, expression, visage.
– anticipate, await, believe, count on, expect, hope, faith, wish, look forward to.
– delve, dig, examine, explore, feel out, grope, investigate, hunt, inquire, observe, peer, probe, pursue, ‘research, scan.
– scrutinize, search, seek, study, test.

– portend, indicate.

observation – espionage, reconnaissance, surveillance.

– commentary, statement, remark.

– benchmark, criterion, gauge, measure, rule, standard, yardstick.

– analysis, assay, examination.

ocular – optic, optical, visual.

penetration – explanation, foray, infiltration, invasion, patrol, raid.

portend – anticipate, augur, budge, call, divine, estimate, plan, foresee, harbinger, herald, judge, signify, soothsay.

regard – deference, devotion, esteem, homage, honor, just due, respect, reverence.

– concern, curiosity, inquisitiveness, interest, admiration.

scan – examine, inspect, observe, pursue.

– delve, dig, examine, explore, feel out, grope, hunt, look, inquire, investigate, observe, peer, probe, pursue research.

– browse, glance at, look through.

see – encounter, greet, interview, meet, visit.

– behold, glimpse, look, mind, sight, spot, watch, think.

show – array, display, exhibit, parade, performance, presentation, procession, showing.

– make believe, pretense, ruse, sham.

– act, farce, make believe, parody, sketch, skit.

– acquaint, announce, delineate, depict, introduce, present, reflect.

– disclose, evince, imply, indicate, manifest.

– allude, denote, indicate, mention, point out, refer to, reveal.

sight – look, picture, view, outlook.

– behold, glimpse, look, mind, see, watch, witness.

– catch, comprehend, conjure.

survey – examination, inquiry, inspection, probing, scrutiny, search.

– assessment, scope, scout, unravel, solve.

– appraise, assay, assess, charge, estimate, evaluate.

– explore, go, journey, migrate, proceed, journey, trek, voyage.

view – attitude, belief, bias, conviction, feeling, inducement, leaning, mind, opinion, persuasion, sentiment.

– angle, aspect, facet, mien, opinion, side.

vision – daydream, dreamy fancy, fantasy, musing, revere.

– distance, future, horizon, outlook, perceive, preview.

– caveat, foresight, forethought, providence, prudence, vigilance, wariness.

– apocalypse, oracle, prophecy, revelation.

– aberration, apparition, delusion, figment, ghost, image, hallucination, illusion, mirage, phantom, specter.

voyage – adventure, excursion, expedition, journey, passage, tour, venture.

– circuit, course, itinerary, path, road, route, survey, traverse.

witness – approval, confirmation, doctrine, enactment, evidence, passage, proof, testament, testimony.

– attest, authenticate, certify, confirm, corroborate, justify, notarize, prove, ratify, sanction, substantiate, support, validate, verify, vouch.

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Fig. 1

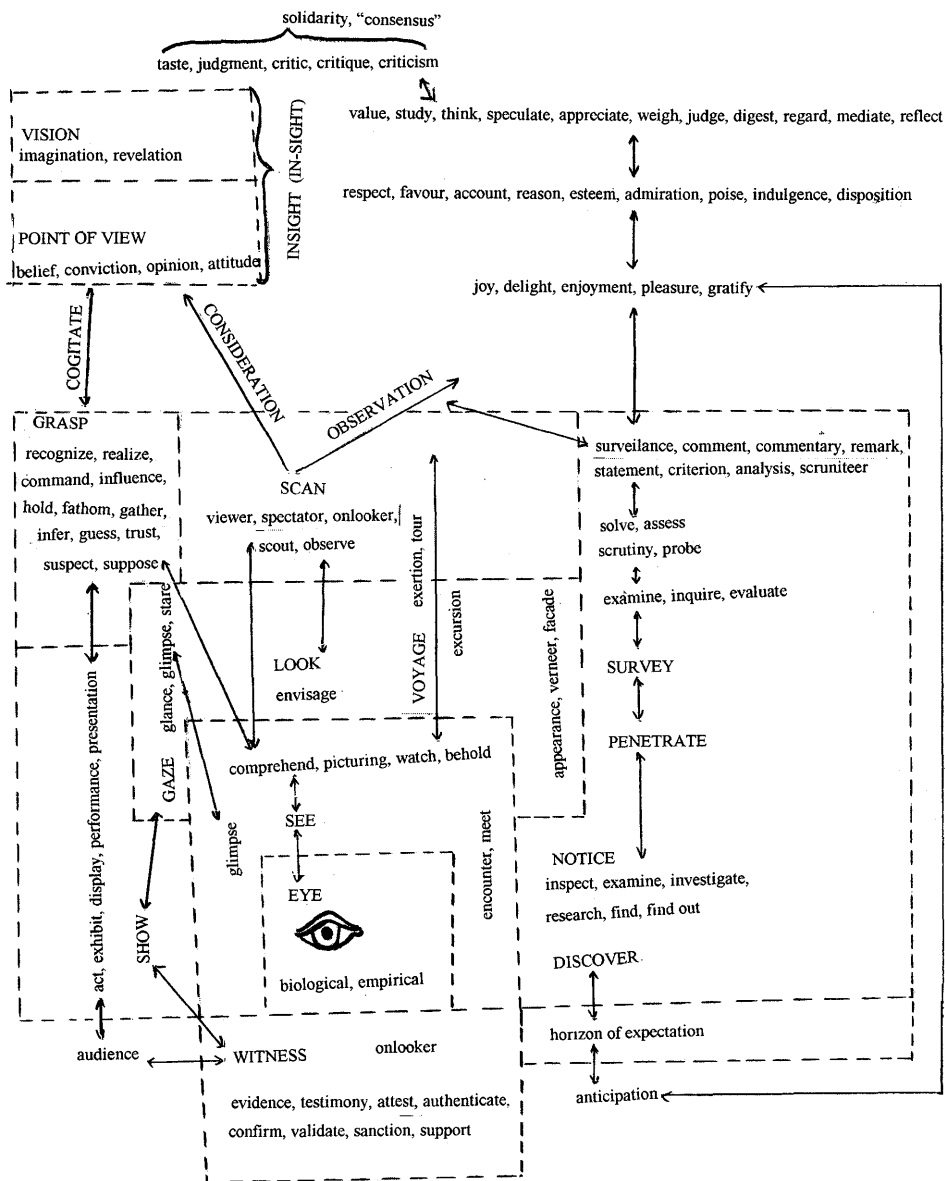
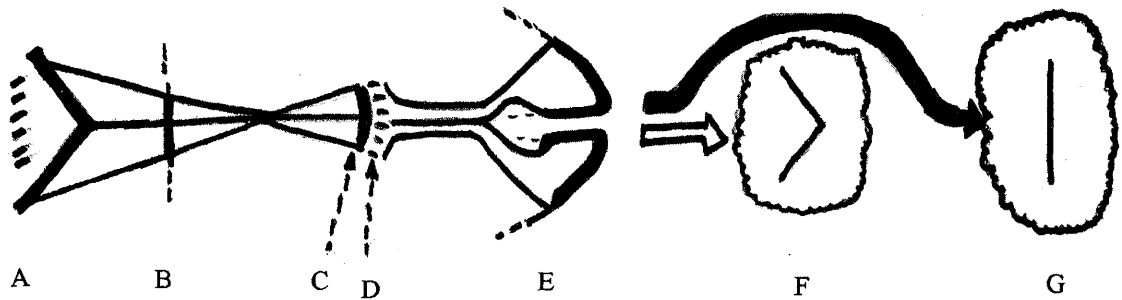


Fig. 2
The sequence of transformations in the process of visual perception according to Gibson's "Direct Perception Theory" (1950).



- A The physical environment: a wedged-shaped physical object, reflecting light.
- B A "picture" of the physical environment: a plane projection of the light reflected from the physical object.
- C The retinal image (the proximal stimulus for vision): a curved projection of light reflected from the physical object.
- D The pattern of excitation: a mosaic of photosensitive receptors.
- E The brain process: a bifurcated and oddly-shaped projection of the excitations on the rear surfaces of the hemispheres.
- F The visual world, or phenomenal experience: the experience of a wedge-shaped object.
- G The visual field, or the colour-sensations obtained by introspection: the impression of two flat patches of colour adjacent to one another.

