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Religious beliefs and aspect seeing

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Abstract: **This paper is concerned with the centrality of aspect seeing in Wittgenstein's philosophy, with some analogies between religious beliefs and aspect seeing, and with the implications of these analogies for the question of the justification of religious beliefs. If belief in God is neither a hypothesis nor a regular perceptual belief but rather a type of aspect seeing, then the kinds of proofs and justifications that are applicable to it would have to engage the non-believer in a manner that would help her experience the dawning of a new aspect. This is why the standard philosophical proofs for theism, even when accepted as valid, are likely to be unsuccessful in bringing about faith.**

Introduction

A curious phenomenon happens in some conversations between atheists and theists who accept a certain version of the ontological, cosmological or teleological argument for God's existence. The theist presents the atheist with an argument. Some atheists reject the premises; others argue that the conclusion does not follow from the premises. What is most curious, however, is that some atheists accept the premises, agree that the conclusion follows from the premises and yet do not accept the conclusion. In other words, they agree that the argument has shown that God exists and that as a result, they ought to believe that God exists, but they nevertheless cannot state that they believe that God exists as a result of accepting the argument. The same phenomenon occurs when atheists present theists with an argument against God's existence which they accept. What has gone wrong? Shall we dismiss either the theists or the atheists of such conversations as irrational and turn to devise a new argument for God's existence? I believe that we should not. These curious theists and atheists exhibit a reasonable attitude towards arguments which they consider valid in other domains of human life which do not involve religious issues. It is therefore unlikely that every time that they come across an argument for or against God's existence, they are overtaken by a seizure of irrationality. A different explanation to this curious phenomenon is at hand, namely that the various *philosophical*

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proofs for God's existence or nonexistence and the various *philosophical* attempts to justify theism or atheism miss something important about the nature of religious beliefs. They assume that belief in God's existence is similar to belief in the existence of electrons, magnetic fields, or unicorns, and construct arguments for the existence or nonexistence of God along these lines. The failure of these arguments to turn the non-believer into a believer or vice versa shows something important about the nature of religious beliefs. It shows that the assumption that religious beliefs are fundamentally similar to the aforementioned beliefs is erroneous and that religious beliefs have certain unique features which distinguish them from these beliefs.

Various philosophers of religion who take these conclusions seriously turn to Wittgenstein's philosophy for help in clarifying the uniqueness of religious beliefs. Malcolm emphasizes the concepts 'form of life' and 'language game' in Wittgenstein's philosophy; Winch emphasizes Wittgenstein's comments on the role of paradigms and measuring systems in our language; Phillips emphasizes Wittgenstein's comments on world pictures and framework beliefs.[1] Unlike metaphysicians who write about religion, Malcolm, Winch and Phillips take seriously the intuition that religious beliefs have certain unique features that have to be addressed in responsible descriptions of religious beliefs. The difficulty, however, with their accounts is that they leave no room for religious doubt, for the believer's doubt whether there really is a God listening to her prayer, whether God is good, whether the events that she had seen as miracles are truly from God.[2] Moreover, their accounts render *all* attempts to justify or prove God's existence or nonexistence misguided. They describe such attempts as resulting from a misunderstanding of the nature of language in general and of religious beliefs in particular. This, I believe, is an unacceptable position. After all, the believer and the non-believer do not regard their disagreement as the end of the matter. There seems to be real conversation between them in the course of which each of them tries to get the other to see certain events or facts from her own perspective. Some such attempts are even successful. An error theory will therefore not do.

The purpose of this paper is to point to a way through which we can describe the uniqueness of religious beliefs in a manner that leaves enough room for religious doubt as well as for rational discussion between the believer and the non-believer in the course of which justifications and proofs for either theism or atheism remain relevant. Such proofs, however, will take a different form from that of the traditional philosophical proofs, a form that will be determined by the manner in which the unique features of religious beliefs are to be described.

Like Malcolm, Winch and Phillips, I find Wittgenstein's philosophy particularly helpful for unraveling the uniqueness of religious beliefs. The feature of his philosophy to which I wish to call attention is one whose relevance for the philosophy of religion is usually ignored.[3] What I have in mind is an issue which manifests some of Wittgenstein's most fundamental philosophical concerns, and

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which persisted from the *Notebooks*, into the *Tractatus*, the *Philosophical Investigations*, and Wittgenstein's last writings – his concern with aspect seeing. Throughout his philosophy, Wittgenstein was fascinated by pictures such as the schematic cube, and the duck–rabbit – pictures which we experience as changing while at the same time remaining the same. This paper is concerned with the centrality of Wittgenstein's comments on aspect seeing within his whole philosophy, with the analogies between aspect perception and religious beliefs and with the implications of these analogies for the question of the justification of religious beliefs.

In the first section, I will discuss Wittgenstein's early comments on aspect seeing and their relation to his view of the sublime. In the next, I will discuss Wittgenstein's later comments on aspect perception and their implications for the nature of religious beliefs. In the final section, I will show what an understanding of religious beliefs in terms of aspect perception implies for the question of the justification of religious belief.

Aspect seeing in Wittgenstein's early philosophy

Aspect seeing as a philosophical puzzle

The first explicit mention of aspect seeing is found in a *Notebooks* remark dated 9.11.1914. Wittgenstein simply wrote the following comment: 'puzzle pictures and the seeing of situations'. (*NB*, 28).[4] The remark does not seem to be connected to its immediate context. It looks as if Wittgenstein put down a comment about something that puzzled him for later examination. This apparent puzzle was treated in proposition 5.5423 of the *Tractatus*. Wittgenstein wrote: 'To perceive a complex means to perceive that its constituents are combined in such and such a way. This perhaps explains that the figure [of the cube] can be seen in two ways as a cube; and all similar phenomena. For we really see two different facts …' (*T* 5.5423). The context of this comment is important for understanding why the cube and other similar phenomena puzzled Wittgenstein, and why this puzzle persisted throughout his philosophy into the *Philosophical Investigations* and into his last writings.

The Tractarian comment on what he later called 'noticing an aspect' and 'aspect dawning' appears in the context of Wittgenstein's account of propositional attitudes, which follows his claim that 'propositions occur in a proposition only as bases of the truth operations' (*T* 5.54), which amounts to the same as the claim that complex propositions are truth functions of elementary propositions. Judgement statements seem inconsistent with this claim. It seems as though the subject has a special relation with what she believes, by virtue of which the belief has its particular content. Wittgenstein's comments in propositions 5.541–5.5423 are a criticism of that view. The remark about seeing two different facts in a complex fact is the last comment in this context. Wittgenstein's main

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contention in propositions 5.541–5.5423 is that thinking, believing or any other propositional attitude of the subject does not play any role in the constitution of meaning. He points to the fact that 'it is impossible to judge a nonsense' (*T* 5.5423). The point is similar to the one that Wittgenstein makes in the *Investigation*'s comment that: 'The phenomena of hope are modes of this complicated form of life' (*PI*, II, 174); this complicated form of life being the form of life in which language is being used. Hoping, doubting, believing, thinking, all presuppose a meaningful proposition as their counterpart. This is why the idea of a simple subject that unites the various names into a meaningful proposition is a fiction. The thinking/believing/hoping subject presupposes the existence of meaningful propositions; it cannot account for their existence.

The puzzlement with the cube is puzzlement with phenomena in which the subject seems to endow the elements of a picture with determinate sense by *seeing* them in a particular way. Certain pictures seem to have indeterminate structure which can yield two different facts. What makes the picture a picture of one fact rather than another seems to be that it is seen/believed/thought in one way rather than another. In other words, it seems that the subject seeing the picture in a particular manner makes the picture into the picture that it is; it seems as if seeing it like *this* gives it the sense that it has. Since a proposition is a logical picture, this special relation of subjects to these special pictures is important. It has a parallel in language.

The most natural parallel to think of in language is of the type 'I will meet you by the bank'. The ambiguity in the proposition is the result of the fact that the same sign, 'bank', is used to mean two different objects. It seems as if the proposition 'I will meet you by the bank' means 'I will meet you by the river bank' if the subject *means* river bank, by 'bank', and it seems as if it would mean the financial institution, if this is how the subject *means* 'bank'. Wittgenstein, of course, would deny that the proposition 'I will meet you by the bank' has either of these two meanings by virtue of how it is thought by the subject, and would point to the fact that the subject can mean either of these two meanings by virtue of the fact that the proposition has both of these meanings; this is the result of the sign 'bank', being used meaningfully in other propositions in two different ways.

Ignoring the role of the Tractarian concept of use is responsible for a prevalent mentalistic misreading of the *Tractatus* which renders Wittgenstein's comments on judgement statements, aspect seeing (the schematic cube), and on the metaphysical subject obscure.[5] This misreading begins with an overemphasis of the relation between a name and an object instead of noting Wittgenstein's emphasis on the primacy of elementary propositions as the smallest units of sense. Hacker states: 'It is by means of ''the naming-relation'', the association of a logically proper name (simple unsayable) with its meaning, viz. an object, that any possible language is unambiguously connected with the world'.[6] The result is that the

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relation name–object becomes problematic. A mysterious process of 'thinking' is then isolated as that by which names refer to objects. Hacker states: 'Such a correlation [between a name and an object] must be the result of some mental act of meaning or intending a certain word to signify an object one has in mind.'[7] The third step of this misreading is to assume a metaphysical subject that unites the various names into a thought. Hacker states:

> **The apparent unitary subject A which seemed related to an object, viz. a proposition, is a multiplicity of elements some of which are structured into a fact that pictures the fact or possible fact that p. The 'unitary subject' recedes into the 'metaphysical self' (infra) leaving behind a *composite* empirical self.**[8]

Against the overemphasis of the relation between a name and an object I wish to emphasize Wittgenstein's comment that 'only in the context of a proposition has a name meaning' (*T* 3.3) and his emphasis on use, such as in propositions 3.326–3.328 of the *Tractatus*. Wittgenstein states: 'In order to recognize the symbol by its sign we must observe how it is used with a sense' (*T* 3.326), and, 'If a sign is *useless*, it is meaningless. That is the point of Occam's maxim …' (*T* 3.328). When the use of names in meaningful propositions is emphasized, there is no longer need for a privileged process of thinking. Propositions 5.541–5.5423 of the *Tractatus* emphasize that. In his correspondence with Russell, Wittgenstein emphasized the same point. He stated that thoughts have 'the same sort of relation to reality as words' (*NB*, 131).

The mentalistic misreading of the *Tractatus* relies heavily on proposition 3.11 of the *Tractatus*: 'The method of projection is the thinking of the sense of the proposition' (*T* 3.11). Winch points to the ambiguity of the German '*Die Projektionsmethode ist das Denken des Satz-Sinnes*'.[9] The German can be understood either as explaining what the method of projection is, namely thinking the sense of the proposition, or as explaining what thinking the sense of the proposition is, namely the method of projection, but without specifying what this method is. Given Wittgenstein's comments on use, given his account of judgement statements and his comments on the metaphysical subject, given his comment that 'there is a general rule by which the musician is able to read the symphony out of the score … . And the rule is the law of projection …' (*T* 4.0141), I think that we have a strong case for reading proposition 3.11 of the *Tractatus* according to its latter interpretation.

Once we rid ourselves of the mentalistic reading of the *Tractatus*, the importance of Wittgenstein's comment on the schematic cube becomes clear. It fits into Wittgenstein's account of how meaning is and is not constituted; it fits into his comments on judgement statements, on the thinking presenting subject, namely that 'there is no such thing' (*T* 5.631) and into his comments on solipsism, namely that 'The I in solipsism shrinks to an extensionless point and there remains the reality co-ordinated with it' (*T* 5.64), represented by the proposition. The only subject that is of any concern to philosophy in the *Tractatus* is the speaking

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subject, the subject who employs systems of representations, who makes propositions about the world. We will later see the centrality of Wittgenstein's comment on the two aspects of the cube for his view of the sublime.

Thus, Wittgenstein denies a special relation between the subject and the picture by virtue of which the picture has its particular sense. He acknowledges our experience of the picture of the cube and affirms that two different facts are represented by the same complex picture: a cube whose top is open, and a cube whose front side is open. What each of those facts is, what its sense is, is not determined by my perceiving the picture in this or that way. My seeing the picture as a duck, to use his *Investigations* example, does not turn it into a picture of a duck. If I saw the picture as a picture of an apple would that turn it into a picture of an apple? This does not amount to saying that a picture is the picture that it is independently of the ways in which people perceive it. It is precisely the manner in which people generally react to pictures that makes pictures into the pictures that they are, and this has something to do both with the picture's features and with the world.

Our being able to take a picture in two different ways, as a duck or as a rabbit is the result of the picture having the logical features of two (or more) different particular facts. The indeterminacy may be resolved through use. Our use of the sign 'chair' to mean only one object from among all the possible objects that it could mean leaves no ambiguity in the proposition 'I am sitting on the chair'. Our use of the sign 'bank' to mean two objects leaves a certain amount of ambiguity. The determination of meaning is arbitrary. Wittgenstein states:

> **A *possible* sign must also be able to signify. Everything which is possible in logic is also permitted. ('Socrates is identical' means nothing because there is no property which is called 'identical'. The proposition is senseless because we have not made some arbitrary determination…). In a certain sense we cannot make mistakes in logic.** (*T* 5.473)

Any picture, whether simple or complex, in both the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations*, is the picture that it is by virtue of two facts:

(1) the fact that it has a particular relation with the world, and
(2) the fact that its signs are used meaningfully in other propositions.

The particular relation with the world in the *Tractatus* is given in terms of the picture theory of the proposition. Wittgenstein's thought in the *Tractatus* is that the proposition pictures a fact by having the same logical form as the fact that it represents. In the *Investigations*, the relation of language with the world involves the whole variety of ways in which our concepts are related to the world. This is expressed in Wittgenstein's comments on the natural ways by which we react to other people and to our world. It is also expressed in Wittgenstein's comments about alternative concepts, and about possible changes in the world and how these would affect our conceptual schemes.[10]

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The distinction between atomic facts and complex facts, elementary propositions and complex propositions is challenged in the *Investigations*. The richness of certain pictures, in the *Investigations*, is no longer accounted for by their complexity. The important lesson that we learn from the *Investigations* is that every statement can be taken in more than one way, and the teaching, learning, and meaningful use of language is regulated by a lot of intake from our surrounding.

Wittgenstein's treatment of judgement statements has important insights to offer regarding the meaning of religious concepts. Religious meaning cannot reside in a private way of experiencing the world. It cannot be the case that what constitutes the meaning of the word 'God' or 'miracle' is this way of seeing the world, this unique experience of seeing the world in a particular way. The words 'God' and 'miracle' are used meaningfully by non-believers, by people who do not experience life in a religious way. Thus, whatever experiences coincide with these words, these cannot be identified as the meaning of these words. The concepts 'God' and 'miracle' are not the private property of religious communities, nor are they limited for the use of the mystic alone. However, if it were not for people experiencing the world 'religiously' and if it were not for people reacting to certain events, such as birth, ageing, death, disease, recovery, with fear, wonder, and awe, these concepts would not have had the meanings that they do. Religious beliefs, seeing God in certain events, seeing certain events as miracles, presuppose these common reactions.[11]

Despite the fact that one's way of seeing does not play a determinate role in the constitution of the meaning of a picture, a proposition or a concept, it is of much importance to the writer of the *Tractatus*. The importance of the different ways of seeing is emphasized in Wittgenstein's comments on ethics, aesthetics, the happy and the unhappy man, the mystical, miracles and in various other comments. These comments express the relation between aspect seeing and religious ways of looking at the world.

Aspect seeing as a religious model in Wittgenstein's early philosophy

Aspect seeing plays a central role in Wittgenstein's view of the sublime in his early philosophy. In 7.6.1916 Wittgenstein wrote:

> **The work of art is the object seen *sub specie aeternitatis*; and the good life is the world seen *sub specie aeternitatis*. This is the connexion between art and ethics. The usual way of looking at things sees objects as it were from the midst of them, the view *sub specie aeternitatis* from outside.** (*NB*, 83)

A few months later, he wrote: 'Is it the essence of the artistic way of looking at things, that it looks at the world with a happy eye?' (*NB*, 86).

What is seen is the same object or objects, the same work of art, the same chain of events, the same facts; the secret lies in one's eyes, in one's way of looking. In

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this lies the difference between the world of the happy person and the world of the unhappy. In the *Notebooks*, Wittgenstein states: 'For it is a fact of logic that wanting does not stand in any logical connexion with its own fulfillment. And it is also clear that the world of the happy is a *different* world from the world of the unhappy' (*NB*, 77). The same idea appears in the *Tractatus*:

> **If good or bad willing changes the world, it can only change the limits of the world, not the facts; not the things that can be expressed in language.**
> **In brief, the world must thereby become quite another. It must so to speak wax or wane as a whole.**
> **The world of the happy is quite another than that of the unhappy.** (*T* 6.43).

What Wittgenstein points to, both in the *Notebooks* and in the *Tractatus*, is that happiness is not a result of having one's wishes fulfilled. It is not the result of the world being one way rather than another. Happiness is a certain way of seeing the world; it is surrendering all attempts to control the world, and seeing it as sublime in its eternal form, in its logical features. This is what seeing the world *sub specie aeternitatis* amounts to in the *Tractatus*.

Good or bad willing does not change the world, nor does it change the limits of the world. Wittgenstein emphasizes that there is no logical relation between the will and the world. In his words: 'The world is independent of my will' (*T* 6.373), and 'Even if everything we wished were to happen, this would only be, so to speak, a favour of fate, for there is no *logical* connexion between will and world …' (*T* 6.374). Willing cannot change the limits of the world either, since the limit in the *Tractatus* is nothing other than logic.[12] It is clear that the world does not wax and wane. The world waxing and waning is a metaphor of aspect seeing; it is analogous to the schematic cube. One is looking at the same fact, the same cube, the same world, and yet this same fact may appear in two different ways, as a fact which *says* something and as a fact which *shows* 'something'.

Every proposition, every fact in the world, is ambiguous in the most important sense in the *Tractatus*. It can be seen either as *saying* something true or false about the world, or as *showing* 'something' – the sublime necessary logic of the world. What is shown through facts, through propositions, is not a fact. Wittgenstein emphasizes that logical constants do not represent, that there are no logical propositions, and that the propositions of the *Tractatus* are nonsensical. Thus, there is no direct unmediated experience of logic, of the sublime. Indeed, the idea of an experience of God through no medium whatsoever is an obscure one. A medium is necessary, although anything may serve as a medium.

The showing and the saying aspects of propositions and facts do not constitute two different facts. That, however, does not deem them any less real. The aspect which one sees, whether it is the contingent or the sublime, is expressed in one's *attitude* to the various facts of the world; it is expressed in one's way of life and manner of speech.[13]

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The happy man sees the world in its eternal form, *sub specie aeternitatis*. He sees the sublime shown in and through the facts of the world. The contingent facts of the world, the way the world happens to be, seems neither good nor evil to him. Wittgenstein states: 'In the world, everything is as it is and happens as it does happen. *In* it there is no value – and if there were, it would be of no value' (*T* 6.41). Seeing the world in its sublime aspect, the happy man does not attempt to change his world. He is content and passive. Realizing that the sublime is not a fact but can only be shown in facts, the happy man is aware that 'Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent' (*T* 7). He is silent about logic, ethics and God. The unhappy man, on the other hand, failing to see that the world is independent of his will and that the facts of the world are devoid of any value, attempts to bend the world according to his will. He is active and unhappy. Failing to see that what is sublime cannot be said, he attempts to capture it in meaningless propositions.

What has to be overcome in the journey to happiness is not 'a difficulty of the intellect, but of the will'.[14] This is where the ethical significance of the *Tractatus* lies for Wittgenstein.[15] Wittgenstein claims that the propositions of the *Tractatus* are strictly nonsense and that no new information is contained in them. At the same time he states that the *Tractatus* is concerned with bringing about a new seeing experience of the world, in getting one to see the world aright (*T* 6.54). Since this transformation is not achieved through new information it must be achieved through affecting one's will. This view of philosophy as transforming one's will persisted throughout Wittgenstein's whole philosophy. It determined his understanding of the particular difficulties which characterize philosophy as well as his view of philosophy's ethical/religious significance. In characteristic comments from 1933, Wittgenstein stated: 'Philosophy requires a resignation, but one of feeling and not of intellect. And maybe that is what makes it so difficult for many.'[16] And: 'Working in philosophy – like work in architecture in many respects – is really more a working on oneself. On one's own interpretation. On one's way of seeing things. (And what one expects of them.)'[17]

The significance of one's way of seeing is emphasized in the 'Lecture on ethics'. There, Wittgenstein describes a miracle in terms of aspect seeing:

> **Suppose … one of you suddenly grew a lion's head and began to roar. Certainly that would be as extraordinary a thing as I can imagine. Now whenever we should have recovered from our surprise, what I would suggest would be to fetch a doctor and have the case scientifically investigated and if it were not for hurting him I would have him vivisected. And where would the miracle have got to? For it is clear that when we look at it in this way everything miraculous has disappeared; unless what we mean by this term is merely that a fact has not yet been explained by science which again means that we have hitherto failed to group this fact with others in a scientific system. This shows that it is absurd to say 'Science has proved that there are no miracles.' The truth is that the scientific way of looking at a fact is not the way to look at it as a miracle.**[18]

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Wittgenstein expresses similar thoughts in the 'Lecture on religious belief'. He states:

> **Suppose I went to somewhere like Lourdes in France. Suppose I went with a very credulous person. There we see blood coming out of something. He says: 'There you are, Wittgenstein, how can you doubt?' I'd say: 'Can't it only be explained one way? Can't it be this or that?' I'd try to convince him that he'd seen nothing of any consequence …**
> **I could imagine that someone showed an extremely passionate belief in such a phenomenon, and I couldn't approach his belief at all by saying: 'This could just as well have been brought about by so and so'….'**[19]

What makes a particular event a miracle, in both the 'Lecture on ethics' and the 'Lecture on religious belief', is not the event's extra-ordinary features. Wittgenstein points to the fact that we can regard the most unusual event as 'nothing of any consequence',[20] as a mere anomaly. Even if the event has an important influence on our lives, we can still regard it as a fortunate coincidence. Whether an event is seen as a miracle does not depend on science's ability or inability to explain it. As Wittgenstein says in the *Tractatus*: 'Even if all possible scientific questions be answered, the problems of life have still not been touched at all.' (*T* 6.52). What makes a certain event into a miracle is that it is *seen* in a special way, that God is seen working through a particular occurrence or chain of events.

Wittgenstein contrasts the post-Enlightenment scientific way of seeing with the religious way of seeing. He characterizes the religious way of seeing as 'wondering': 'wondering at the existence of the world', 'wondering that anything should exist'. The scientific way of seeing, on the other hand, puts one to sleep. In *Culture and Value* he says: 'Man has to awaken to wonder – and so perhaps do peoples. Science is a way of sending him to sleep again'.[21] The call to awaken to wonder is directed at both the philosopher and the religious person. Their difficulties are similar. They result from the fact that what is of utmost importance for each of them is hidden in the familiar and trivial. Wittgenstein states: 'The aspects of things // of language // which are philosophically most important are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity. (One is unable to notice something because it is always (openly) before one's eyes.)'[22]

Both the philosopher and the religious person have to learn to see through the banal. Scientific explanations do not necessarily strip away our wonder. It is the spirit in which they are given that often strips away wonder. One can have (or fail to have) a mechanical explanation of a fact, and yet perceive it in religious categories: as revealing a divine plan, a divine will, a punishment, a miracle, a trial of faith. Wittgenstein states:

> **… we may learn from experience that certain primitive tribes are very strongly inclined to fear natural phenomena. – But we cannot exclude the possibility that *highly* civilized peoples will become liable to this very same fear once again;**

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> **neither their civilization nor scientific knowledge can protect them against this. All the same it's true enough that the *spirit* in which science is carried on nowadays is not compatible with fear of this kind.**[23]

Wonder is not necessarily at something unusual. It is often at what lies in front of our eyes and escapes our notice: a meeting, a tune, the change of seasons, an enemy, a friend, a toothache. These banal events can all of a sudden seem to carry a certain importance; all of a sudden they may seem to be the fingerprints of some divine plan. All of a sudden, an aspect dawns.

The believer and the non-believer are separated from one another by a whole way of seeing the world and human life. The gulf between them, although bridgeable, is great. It is a gulf between two different ways of seeing the world by means of which two different worlds show themselves: a world in which life progresses to a purpose, a world in which life has meaning, as opposed to a world in which everything is a coincidence; a world of wonder and mystery as opposed to a world of mechanics.

In this section, we have seen the place of aspect seeing in Wittgenstein's early philosophy. In the next section, we will examine Wittgenstein's later comments on aspect seeing and their relation to religious beliefs.

Aspect seeing in Wittgenstein's later philosophy

With the breakdown of the Tractarian notion of the sublime transcendental logic of the world into the different logics of the various language games, Wittgenstein's concern with the sublime has subsided. His later comments on aspect perception, however, provide a helpful source for understanding some of the unique features of religious beliefs. My main contention is that certain kinds of religious beliefs which we view as central to a person having a living faith, such as the belief that God is revealed in a specific text or event, are a type of aspect seeing. In other words, recognizing a face in a crowd, noticing a likeness between two faces, seeing a duck in what seemed before like a picture of a rabbit, seeing a picture as beautiful, seeing an event as a miracle, seeing a text as speaking the Word of God, have something important in common with one another – they are all experiences of aspect seeing, and as such are 'half visual experience, half thought' (*PI*, II, 197) 'an amalgam of the two' (*PI*, II, 197), between seeing and thinking (*RPP*, II. §462). Moreover, the expressions: 'It's a duck!', 'It's beautiful!', 'God is revealed here!', 'The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord' are similar to one another; they are the characteristic expressions of aspect seeing.

Before we turn to examine the manner by which aspect seeing is between seeing and thinking, we have to deal with the question of what it is that we notice when we notice an aspect.

This question arises out of what seems to be a natural distinction between

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noticing the duck in the picture of the duck–rabbit, and noticing a likeness between two faces, seeing a face as friendly, kind or beautiful. It seems as though when we see a picture as a picture of a duck, we see it as the object with which we are also acquainted in unambiguous circumstances, but when we see a face as friendly, we see a property with which we have no direct unambiguous acquaintance, analogous to our direct unambiguous acquaintance with ducks. Thus what we see when we see a face as friendly seems mysterious. Wittgenstein's statement that 'What I perceive in the dawning of an aspect is not a property of the object, but an internal relation between it and other objects' (*PI*, II, 212) does not seem to help. At first sight, it seems applicable only to aspect seeing of the former type. When I see a duck in the picture of the duck–rabbit, I see that the picture resembles unambiguous pictures of ducks, or the ducks by the river; but what relation do I see when I see a face as friendly? I think that Wittgenstein's comment on aspect seeing as seeing an internal relation between the object and other objects, if applicable to seeing duck-pictures,[24] is also applicable to seeing friendliness or beauty. The reasons for that have to do with some of the most fundamental issues with which Wittgenstein's later philosophy is concerned.

Aspect seeing presupposes a conceptual framework. The puzzlement with seeing a face as friendly, kind or beautiful is puzzlement with the grammar of these words. This puzzlement has to do with the illusion that ostensive definitions are one-time baptisms of words with meanings that do not require any stage setting in language. We wrongly tend to think that while we can teach a child what a duck is by nothing more than pointing to a duck, we cannot do the same with the concept 'friendly'. The truth is that teaching the concept 'duck' is not as simple as it seems and teaching the concept 'friendly' is not as difficult as it seems. A child may take the ostensive definitions wrongly in both the case of 'duck' and in the case of 'friendly'. She may take the word 'duck' to mean a black and white object; she may take 'friendly' to mean smiling. A lot of training is necessary for teaching both concepts. On the other hand, the learning of both concepts presupposes a certain agreement in judgements, a certain uniformity in experiencing and reacting to various facts in our world, such as being able to see animals at the size of a duck, being able to see the difference between a smile and a frown, responding to a smile with a smile. This is the point of Wittgenstein's famous remark that 'If language is to be a means of communication there must be agreement not only in definitions but also (queer as this may sound) in judgements' (*PI*, §242). Thus, our ability to see faces as friendly, kind or beautiful, our ability to see certain actions as good or noble presupposes unambiguous cases of seeing friendliness, kindness or beauty just as much as our ability to see a picture as a picture of a duck–rabbit presupposes them. It presupposes a certain level of agreement in our reactions to certain facts or events.

This does not mean that there are no differences between the language games

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of ethics and aesthetics, and the language games of physical objects. One important difference has to do with the level of agreement and the kind of ambiguity and non-ambiguity that characterize each of these language games. While we expect a very high degree of agreement among people who know what a duck is regarding whether a certain object is a duck, we do not expect such sweeping agreement in ethical and aesthetic discourse. This does not mean that there is neither certainty nor truth in ethics and aesthetics. Wittgenstein emphasizes that 'The kind of certainty is the kind of language game' (*PI*, II, 224). The kind of certainty that we have in discourse regarding physical objects, in ethics, aesthetics, and religion characterizes the nature of these realms of discourse. It is not an accidental feature of them. If the certainty in ethics, aesthetics, and religion were different, our ethical, aesthetic, and religious concepts would not have been what they are (*PI*, §77). The same is true of our concept of physical objects. If the certainty regarding their existence when we do not look at them changed, their grammar too would have changed.[25]

Objects and events may be saturated with the ethical and the religious just as much as they are saturated with colours and shapes. Attempting to describe some events without the use of ethical or religious concepts may be as contrived as the attempt to describe a picture of a duck through the arrangement of colour on a page. Our description of a picture as beautiful or friendly is not an indirect description, inasmuch as our description of a picture as a picture of a duck is not an indirect description of it. Both descriptions are the natural ways by which we react to the pictures. Wittgenstein emphasizes that what counts as a direct or an indirect description of an object is determined by one's purpose. '"It was a small rickety table decorated in Moorish style" is a direct description if one's purpose is to bring a vivid image of the table' (*BB*, 181). Thus, beauty and friendliness may be features of a fact just as much as its shape or colour. This is not inconsistent with Wittgenstein's statement that 'What I perceive in the dawning of an aspect is not a property of the object, but an internal relation between it and other objects' (*PI*, II, 212). Even if this statement expresses Wittgenstein's own position, what it would deny is the notion that noticing an aspect is having a private visual image with the property of organization added to colour and shape to account for the shifting aspects.[26]

Neither the seeing of the duck aspect, nor the seeing of friendliness is having a mental image in our mind. Rather, it is an attitude, a way of acting, both linguistically and non-linguistically; it is expressed in making certain comparisons rather than others (*RPP*, I. §316–317), in grouping things one way rather than another (*LW*, I. §531), in having an inclination to do one thing rather than another (*RPP*, I. §18), and in characteristic linguistic expressions. We say of a person that she experienced the dawning of the duck aspect when she exhibits the characteristic behaviour to noticing the duck aspect: exclaiming 'It's a duck!', grouping it together with pictures of ducks; we say of a person that she sees a person's face

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as friendly if she smiles at her, behaves in a friendly manner with her; we say of a person that she notices the similarity between two people when she exclaims 'Oh, you look just like your father!'; we say of Job that he sees his misfortune as God's doing when he says 'The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord'.

By emphasizing the public criteria for noticing an aspect, whether it is a religious aspect or an optical one, Wittgenstein does not deny that when we notice an aspect we perceive something, that we have a certain experience. He emphasizes, however, that 'seeing x as y' relies on certain behaviour that we take as expressive of this phenomena.

We now turn to discuss the strong experiential component in aspect seeing and the manner by which it is modified, through the similarities of aspect seeing to both seeing and thinking.

Due to the common features that aspect seeing has with both seeing and thinking, Wittgenstein places it between them, while emphasizing that it is neither seeing nor thinking. Like seeing, aspect seeing, both the continuous seeing of an aspect and the dawning of an aspect, forces itself on us. There is no inferring, no weighing of evidence, no concluding involved, but a spontaneous relation to the aspect. When I see a picture face, 'in some respects I stand towards it as I do towards a human face' (*PI*, II, 194). We say 'He is sad', 'I'm not sure what his expression is' etc. This is because my relation to the picture is not like my relation to a blueprint which is in need of interpretation or explanation. We do not see these lines and these colours and reach a conclusion based on certain other presuppositions and rules of inference that the picture represents a man. We identify the picture with what it represents: a face, a horse, a duck, a friendly smile. We relate to the picture similarly to the way that we relate to what is pictured. When I see a photograph of my nephew, I do not infer (at least not usually) that it is my nephew but I smile at it, kiss it, or exclaim 'Tom!'. This immediacy characterizes both the continuous seeing of an aspect and the dawning of an aspect. When I see the picture of the duck–rabbit as a picture of a duck and suddenly the rabbit aspect dawns on me, I do not interpret it as a rabbit, nor do I infer that it is a rabbit. I take it as a rabbit. This immediacy is expressed in my exclamation 'It's a rabbit!' which constitutes part of the experience of the dawning of the rabbit aspect. It is 'related to the experience as a cry to pain' (*PI*, II, 197). It is not so much a description but rather, a cry of recognition (*PI*, II, 198). It is what Wittgenstein calls an '*Ausserung*'.

Mulhall, in his *On Being in the World*,[27] emphasizes that our relation to our native language and to people's behaviour exhibits the same immediacy. I do not interpret words in my native language. I do not hear a sound and interpret it as the sound which refers to the object table. Such a relation to language is my relation to a foreign language that I begin to learn. When someone asks me to fetch a chair, I do not stop to think what she is asking me to do, nor do I need to

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stop and correlate the sound 'chair' with the object to which the sound refers. Language seems transparent to me.

People too, at least in certain respects seem transparent. When I see a man crying, I do not interpret his crying as sadness nor do I infer inductively that the man must be sad. I respond to his sadness 'without thinking'. This, I think, is the point of Wittgenstein's comments on certain people being transparent to me, and others being a complete enigma; this is also the point of the comment that: 'If a lion could talk, we could not understand him' (*PI*, II, 223). The distinction is between the 'seeing as' direct kind of understanding, and the foreign language indirect kind of understanding. 'Seeing as' is an immediate way of understanding, without interpretation and inference. We can distinguish between this kind of understanding and the kind of understanding that involves interpretation manuals, dictionaries, inferences and explanations. In both kinds of understanding, the user of language is a competent user of the various linguistic concepts. However, in 'seeing as' this is done without effort. Language, as I have said, is transparent. This is the sense in which human beings too can be transparent or enigmas to one another. When a person is transparent to me, I do not need to stop and ask myself what he means by 'How are you?'. When a person is an enigma to me, I find myself wondering what exactly he might mean by such a question. The expression is like a blueprint which awaits interpretation. I may recall other instances in which he had asked me the same question, how I had responded, and how he had responded to my answer. I may then conclude that when this person asks me 'How are you?' what he actually wishes to know is whether I am hungry. My relation to the speaking lion is similar to my relation to such a person. It is not that I cannot understand his language. Wittgenstein says 'understand him' – not 'understand what he says'. My relation to the speaking lion is not likely to be characterized by the immediacy of 'seeing as' which would make it transparent to me.

Various religious beliefs manifest these seeing characteristics of the continuous seeing of an aspect and of aspect dawning. 'Seeing as' is expressed in believers' attitudes towards certain objects; the objects become transparent for the believer. God is seen in and through them. I will give two examples: the relation of the religious Jew to the Bible and to the Wailing Wall. The believer's attitude towards a Bible book is an expression of the believer seeing God in the book. This is not an inference, an interpretation, a dogma. It is an immediate relation to the book, a 'seeing as' relation. When the believer dances with the Bible in *Simchat Torah*, he is not dancing with a book made of printed paper. He is dancing with God's Word. He sees God in and through the book. When a religious Jew drops a Bible, he instinctively picks it up and kisses it. No inference – pure instinct. God's presence in the book is as real as the book's colour and size for the believer. It is not inferred. It is seen; it is felt.

The same is true of the relation of the religious Jew to the Wailing Wall. The

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religious Jew does not see an ancient wall and concludes that since it is the exterior wall of the Temple, it is holy. The religious Jew feels particularly close to God when praying at the Wailing Wall. God's spirit is seen in the stone. Paratroopers cry when liberating the Wailing Wall not because they have won a battle which has a religious significance for some people. They cry because they *see* two thousand years of history in the stones.

Aspect seeing is like seeing in another important manner. Like seeing, aspect seeing is a state which has genuine duration. Wittgenstein emphasizes that in various remarks. He states: '[i]t is as if the aspect were something that only dawns, but does not remain; and yet this must be a *conceptual* remark, not a psychological one' (*RPP*, I. §1021); '[t]he aspect only dawns; it doesn't remain fixed …' (*LW*, I. §518). This is true both in the case of the shifting pictures and in cases such as noticing a likeness between two faces, noticing the beauty of a drawing, seeing a smile as friendly. When we experience the dawning of the rabbit aspect of the duck–rabbit, the experience lasts a minute or two, and then the picture shifts again. When we notice a likeness between one person and another, we are aware of it for a little while and then we no longer notice it (*LW*, I. §707). Wittgenstein contrasts this feature of aspect seeing with thinking, knowing or understanding.

Certain kinds of religious beliefs are similar to aspect seeing in that respect. They have genuine duration. When one reads the Sermon on the Mount, it may all of a sudden strike her as God's Word. She may then exclaim 'This is God's Word!'. A minute later, however, God's voice may not be heard any longer through the text. When she looks at a beautiful flower, she may see it as God's creation for a minute or two, but then her attention would turn to something else and she would no longer see it as such. This is different from knowing, believing (in its cognitive use), or understanding, where one can be said to know and understand something even when her attention is not directed at the proposition that she knows or at the theory that she understands (*RPP*, II. §50–51).

If religious beliefs of the type that I have described are states with genuine duration then religious doubt may get a grip on the believer at those long moments in which objects and events are not seen religiously. The believer may then wonder whether all the various things that she had seen religiously were truly God's fingerprints. This is perhaps similar to a man wondering whether his wife truly loves him, whether the various things that he had seen as expressions of love were expressions of love rather than of habit. When she comes through the door and kisses him passionately, his doubt may vanish. He may then see her as loving. However, a day, a week or a month later he may wonder again. Losing one's faith in God and in a partner's love can be described in similar terms, through aspect perception. After a long period of not seeing events religiously, one may say that she no longer believes in God. After a long period of not seeing a partner's behaviour as loving, one may say that she no longer believes that he loves her. Some believers' relation to God, the believers whose faith we charac-

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terize as 'living' rather than 'dead', is just as lively as their relation to their partners: it is a mixture of both trust and suspicion in varying degrees.

We have seen the relation between aspect seeing and seeing. We can now turn to examine the relation between aspect seeing and thinking.

Wittgenstein states: 'If you are looking at the object, you need not think of it; but if you are having the visual experience expressed by the exclamation [a rabbit!], you are also *thinking* of what you see' (*PI*, II, 197). Moreover, unlike the case of seeing, in aspect seeing, custom, upbringing and education play a significant role.[28] Wittgenstein points to the fact that other people may not have the same immediate relation that I have to a certain painting as a result of that. We can take the example of the stop sign. Such a picture is purely conventional. Our seeing and reacting to it as a stop sign is the result of a particular training and education. A different training, or little training, may bring about different reactions to this picture. Wittgenstein emphasizes that we cannot say what a picture must be like in order for us to have a particular 'seeing as' relation to it. The linguistic parallel of that is the possibility of taking an ostensive definition in various different ways. The transparency of the picture or word is the result of training in both cases. Aspect seeing, therefore, presupposes a community of discourse in a way that seeing does not. Wittgenstein emphasizes that when he discusses the difference between the experience of seeing an aspect and other experiences. The following comments are made in the context of seeing the aspects of a triangle according to what is seen as apex and what is seen as base. He states:

> **'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.**
>
> **But how queer for this to be the logical condition of someone's having such-and-such an *experience*! After all, you don't say that one only 'has toothache' if one is capable of doing such-and-such – From this it follows that we cannot be dealing with the same concept of experience here. It is a different though related concept.** (*PI*, II, 208)

Wittgenstein emphasizes that the viewer must be familiar with the categories in order to experience aspect seeing and aspect dawning. In order for me to see a picture as a picture of a duck, rather than as a picture of a particular shape, I have to be familiar with ducks. In order for me to experience the dawning of the rabbit aspect, I have to be familiar with rabbits. Wittgenstein says: 'It is only if someone *can do*, has learnt, is master of, such-and-such, that it makes sense to say he has had this experience. … And if this sounds crazy, you need to reflect that the *concept* of seeing is modified here' (*PI*, II, 209). 'Seeing as' experiences seem to have 'more than purely visual reference' (*ibid.*, 209) since the familiarity of the person having the experience with certain concepts is presupposed. Wittgenstein gives other examples of such experiences: hearing a plaintive melody ('plaintive' is

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presupposed), seeing a sad expression (sadness is presupposed), seeing a hesitant posture (hesitant is presupposed). These are all modified examples of the concept of sensation (*PI*, II, 209).

This emphasis is important in the context of religious 'seeing as' experiences. It is often thought that a religious 'seeing as' experience is independent of custom, upbringing and training, that it is independent of a religious community in which certain religious concepts are used. Mystical experiences are often thought of as direct unmediated experiences of God which have nothing to do with the mastery of a particular vocabulary.[29] However, if this is so then why do we not speak of babies and animals as having mystical experiences? They do not have mystical experiences because they do not have the concepts through which the experiences can be experienced as mystical. Mystical experiences are 'modes of this complicated form of life' (*PI*, II, 174). The role of education and upbringing also accounts for the similarity among the different mystical accounts. If Christians are taught that God is love, they are likely to describe their experience of God and of God's grace in a vocabulary of love. However, the role of culture and education in religious experiences and beliefs does not render them a mere convention. I do not mean to suggest that God is encountered as love simply because one is taught that God is love. Our religious concepts and the attributes that we assign to God are not random. The ubiquitous presence of religious concepts such as the concepts 'God', 'miracle' and 'salvation' tells us something important about their relation to the world. Whatever else is true of religious concepts, at least this bit is true of them: they slice up reality usefully.

Another important manner in which aspect seeing is like thinking is in being subject to the will. Wittgenstein states:

> **An aspect is subject to the will. If something appears blue to me, I cannot see it red, and it makes no sense to say 'See it red'; whereas it does make sense to say 'See it as …'. And that the aspect is voluntary (at least to a certain extent) seems to be essential to it …'.** (*RPP*, I. §899)[30]

And, '"The aspect is subject to the will." This isn't an empirical proposition. It makes sense to say, "See this circle as a hole, not as a disc", but it doesn't make sense to say "See it as a rectangle", "See it as being red"' (*RPP*, II. §545). In the *Investigations* Wittgenstein states: 'Seeing an aspect and imagining are subject to the will. There is such an order as "Imagine *this*", and also: "Now see the figure like *this*"; but not : "Now see the leaf green"' (*PI*, II, 213). The point is not that every attempt to see a picture as a picture of a duck rather than of a rabbit is successful. Rather, it is that it makes sense to *try* to see it as a duck.

Since one can try to see things one way rather than another, it makes sense to ask her to do so. This feature of aspect seeing accounts for the existence of rational discussions in ethics and aesthetics in the course of which arguments, proofs and justifications are presented, which are directed at getting the other to see the

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events or the objects from her own perspective. It also accounts for the existence of rational discussion between believers and non-believers. A rational discussion, as I shall argue in the next section, would not give a metaphysical account of the good, the beautiful or the divine but would address the experiential component of ethical, aesthetic and religious judgements.

We have seen some of the unique features of aspect seeing, and of religious beliefs as a type of aspect seeing. We have seen the manner by which aspect seeing is between seeing and thinking, we have seen its modified experiential component, its duration and its subjection to the will. In the next section, I will shortly discuss the implications of the analogy between religious beliefs and aspect perception for the question of the justification of religious beliefs.

Explanation, justification, and proof

The question whether religious beliefs admit of justification arises out of the fact that nothing seems to settle the disagreement between the believer and the non-believer regarding God's existence. Nothing that the believer can point to will be *necessarily* accepted as justifying evidence by the non-believer. This may suggest that the category of justification is out of place in such discussions. Malcolm, Winch, and Phillips reject, on principle, any philosophical attempt to justify religious beliefs. They emphasize that the dispute between the believer and the non-believer is not over a matter of fact, and that the believer and the non-believer are separated from one another by an enormous gulf which leaves no room for rational debate.

This, however, flies in the face of reality. The believer and the non-believer do not regard their disagreement as the end of the matter. There seems to be a real conversation between them in the course of which each of them tries to get the other to see certain events or facts from her own perspective. For Winch and Phillips as well as for the Wittgensteinian fideist, this conversation is a chimera that results from a misunderstanding of the nature of religious beliefs and of language in general.

If we regard religious beliefs as half experience and half thought, the reasons for the disagreement regarding the applicability of justifications and proofs to religious beliefs become clear. We do not ask for justification of an experience. We speak of neither knowledge nor doubt. This is the point of Wittgenstein's comments in *On Certainty*. The proposition 'I know I am in pain', is not made in normal circumstances. We do not doubt, nor do we attempt to justify first person pain language. Thoughts however, admit of justifications, of grounds, of degrees of certainty. It makes sense to ask 'how do you know that he is in pain?' It makes sense to ask for justifications to the assertion 'he is in pain'. Since religious beliefs are half experience and half thought, our difficulty with the question of whether religious beliefs can be justified is hardly surprising.

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I have argued that religious beliefs, or at least certain kinds of religious beliefs which are at the core of what we call a 'living religiosity' are unique in being a type of aspect perception. If justifications, explanations and proofs of religious beliefs are to be successful, they must take into account the various analogies between religious beliefs and other types of aspect perception.

Justifications and proofs of religious beliefs are *possible* by virtue of the fact that religious belief, like thinking, is subject to the will. It therefore makes sense to ask a person to try to see things one way rather than another, to try to see this event together with that, and as manifesting God's will. Justifications and proofs are *needed* because religious beliefs of the kind that I have described have genuine duration. When a long time has passed since one had experienced things religiously, religious doubt seems very real. Justifications and proofs are then required in order to assure the believer that the things that she had seen religiously are truly of God. This can be done by getting her to see things religiously again. This is also the purpose of presenting proofs, evidence, explanations and justifications to the non-believer.

The parallels between religious beliefs and other types of aspect seeing suggest that justification and evidence in the dispute between the believer and the non-believer should take the form of neither a logical deduction nor an empirical induction. Owing to the experiential component in religious beliefs, owing to the manner by which they are similar to seeing, a metaphysical proof that a certain event is a miracle, that a certain text is God's Word, that the world is God's creation, are not likely to work. Even when accepted as valid, they are not likely to bring about a new seeing experience of the world.

Attempting to turn a non-believer into a believer by means of such arguments is like attempting to convince a person who dislikes Mozart of the beauty of his music by an argument about the nature of beauty. Even if she accepts the validity of such an argument and therefore agrees that she should believe that Mozart's music is beautiful, she may still feel that she cannot believe that it is beautiful. Believing that a piece of music is beautiful is hearing the beauty of it. A metaphysical argument may convince her that she should hear the beauty in Mozart's music, but it does very little by way of helping her hear it as beautiful. The same is true of religious beliefs and of metaphysical attempts to prove them. In both aesthetics and religion, one has to see for herself. Another person's testimony will not do. This is, perhaps, what is behind Wittgenstein's profound remark: '"You can't hear God speak to someone else, you can hear him only if you are being addressed". – That is a grammatical remark.'[31]

It may be the case that nothing that one does will bring about the dawning of the aspect through which a person perceives the beauty of a piece of music, of a painting, or the world as God's creation. It may happen in a flash for no apparent reason or it may not happen at all. Some people are aesthetically aspect-blind to the beauty of a certain piece of music; others can be said to be religiously blind

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and unable to see God in a certain event. Nevertheless much can be said before we reach the conclusion that a person is musically or religiously aspect-blind to something. To take the example of a drawing, we can suggest that the person sees these lines first and these second, that she thinks of the drawing in relation to other drawings of the same period, that she thinks of the blue patch on top as hope etc.

In the *Brown Book*, Wittgenstein comments on the nature of justification and explanation in aesthetics:

> **In certain cases I can justify, explain the particular expression with which I play … [a tune] by a comparison, as when I say 'At this point of the theme, there is, as it were, a colon', or 'This is, as it were, the answer to what came before', etc. (This, by the way, shows what a 'justification' and an 'explanation' in aesthetics is like.)** (*BB*, 166)

Justifications, explanations and proofs in religion should take a similar form. We may tell a story, personal or otherwise in relation to a certain event that we wish a person to see religiously; we may point to the relation between the event and other events; we may read a few passages from the Bible that seem particularly relevant to one's life circumstances; or we may suggest that the person tries to pray and hope that she feels that her prayers are heard.

There is no logical necessity between the facts that we point to and the dawning of the religious aspect. This is why religious people speak of the grace of God as bringing about the transformation from disbelief to belief. All that the believer can do is to attempt to seduce the non-believer to see things differently, to shut the eyes and open them up again to a new world in which coincidence is replaced by design, anomalies by miracles and surprise by wonder. And wait for God's grace.[32]

Notes

1. For further details of these accounts, see Kai Nielsen 'Wittgensteinian fideism' in *Philosophy*, **67** (1967), 191–209; Norman Malcolm *Thought and Knowledge* (Ithaca NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1977); D. Z. Phillips *Faith After Foundationalism* (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1995); Peter Winch 'Meaning and religious language', in *Trying to Make Sense* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 107–131.
2. In construing religion as a form of life, Malcolm renders a believer's doubt regarding the meaningfulness of her form of life incomprehensible; Winch's suggestion that the word 'God' functions like the word 'metre' in that both terms are taken for granted within the particular form of life in which they are used does not allow for significant doubt on the part of the participant; Phillips's suggestion that a belief in God's existence is a 'framework belief' for a religious person that is held fast by everything around it does not allow for a believer who grapples with whether someone is actually listening to her prayers.
3. For a different account of the relevance of aspect seeing to religious belief see John Hick *God and the Universe of Faith* (London: Macmillan, 1975), chs 2–3; *idem Faith and Knowledge* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1957), part 2; *idem An Interpretation of Religion* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1989), chs 8–10.
4. **Abbreviations:** *NB*: Ludwig Wittgenstein *Notebooks 1914–1916*, 2nd edn, G. H. von Wright and G. E. M. Anscombe (eds) (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979); *T*: Ludwig Wittgenstein *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*, trans. C. K. Ogden, introduction by Bertrand Russell (London and New York: Routledge, 1988); *PI*:

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Ludwig Wittgenstein *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc., 1968); *RPP*: Ludwig Wittgenstein *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980); *BB*: Ludwig Wittgenstein *The Blue and the Brown Books* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1960); *LW*: Ludwig Wittgenstein *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982).

5. See for example G. E. M. Anscombe *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus* (London: Hutchinson, 1959); Anthony Kenny *Wittgenstein* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1993); P. M. S. Hacker *Insight and Illusion* revised edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).
6. Hacker *Insight and Illusion*, 73.
7. *Ibid*.
8. *Ibid*., 85.
9. Winch 'Language, thought and world in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*', in *Trying to Make Sense*, 13.
10. See for example Wittgenstein, *PI*, II, 230; *idem Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics I* G. H. von Wright, Rush Rhees, and G. E. M. Anscombe (eds), trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1978), §152; *idem Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1976), §202; *idem On Certainty* G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright (eds), trans. Denis Paul and G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: Harper and Row 1972).
11. Winch makes this point in 'Meaning and religious language'. He suggests that the genesis of religion is in certain events in the life of the community which involve awe and wonder, and which are later connected to certain propositions about gods or a God. See Peter Winch 'Meaning and religious language', 107–131.
12. That logic is the limit of the world can be concluded from Wittgenstein's use of the verb '*sich zeigen*' in relation to both logic and the limit, and from the fact that '*sich zeigen*' is not an accidental attribute but one that characterizes the nature of the concept to which it is applied.
13. The significance of one's attitude to ambiguous pictures is emphasized in Wittgenstein's later philosophy. Wittgenstein points to one's attitude as the criterion for aspect seeing, for the manner in which one takes the ambiguous picture. See, for example, *PI*, II, 205.
14. Ludwig Wittgenstein 'Philosophy', in *Philosophical Occasions 1912–1951*, James C. Klagge and Alfred Nordmann (eds) (Indianapolis IN and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1991), 161.
15. In a letter to von Ficker about the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein wrote: 'the book's point is an ethical one'. See G. H. von Wright *Wittgenstein* (Minneapolis MI: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 83.
16. Wittgenstein 'Philosophy', in *Philosophical Occasions*, 161.
17. *Ibid*.
18. Wittgenstein 'A lecture on ethics', in *Philosophical Occasions*, 43.
19. Ludwig Wittgenstein 'Lecture on religious belief', in *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*, Cyril Barrett (ed.) (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), 60–61.
20. *Ibid*., 61.
21. Ludwig Wittgenstein *Culture and Value* G. H. Von Wright (ed.), trans. Peter Winch (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 5.
22. *Ibid*., 179.
23. *Ibid*.
24. I am inclined to read the comment regarding aspect seeing as the seeing of an internal relation as expressing the position of Wittgenstein's mentalist interlocutor, rather than Wittgenstein's own position. The mentalist might desperately attempt to account for the mysteriousness of aspect seeing by suggesting that it is the seeing of an internal relation; however, she lacks the ability to explain how seeing an internal relation is possible. For Wittgenstein, who emphasizes people's behaviour as that through which seeing (of regular objects of perception as well as of aspects) has its sense, a retort to seeing an internal relation would be unwarranted.
25. For a helpful discussion of Wittgenstein's comment that 'the kind of certainty is the kind of language game' (*PI*, II, 224) see Lars Hertzberg 'The kind of certainty is the kind of language game' in D. Z. Phillips and Peter Winch (eds) *Wittgenstein: Attention to Particulars* (London: Macmillan, 1989), 92–111.
26. The context of this comment in *LW*, I. §516 emphasizes that. Wittgenstein makes that comment in *LW*, I. §516 after denying that organization is a property on the same level as colour and shape.
27. Stephen Mulhall *On Being in the World: Wittgenstein and Heidegger on Seeing Aspects* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), particularly chs 1–3.

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28. Wittgenstein distinguishes different kinds of aspect seeing according to the degree of their reliance on a conceptual framework. On the one end lie the aspects of the double cross which can be seen by a child even before it could talk (*PI*, II, 207); on the other lie seeing the triangle as hanging from its apex which requires a conceptual framework, custom and a particular upbringing (*PI*, II, 200). The following discussion concentrates on the more conceptual types of aspect seeing since most cases of aspect seeing tilt towards the latter kind, since Wittgenstein's general emphasis is on the latter kind and since religious beliefs presuppose a complex conceptual scheme.
29. Alston, for example, insists that certain mystical perceptions are 'nonconceptual and nonjudgmental in nature'. See William Alston *Perceiving God* (Ithaca NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), 41.
30. See also *RPP*, I. §971, §976; *LW*, I. §451–453.
31. Ludwig Wittgenstein *Zettel* 2nd edn, G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright (eds), trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), §717.
32. I am grateful to Jane Heal, Janet Soskice, E. Olson, Brian Hebblethwaite, D. Z. Phillips and to my husband, John Kloppenborg, for helpful comments on a previous draft.

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