**Seeing in bits: Lessons from visual art in rethinking viewpoint in discourse**

Of traditional photography David Hockney once said it is “all right if you don’t mind looking at the world from the point of view of a paralyzed Cyclops – for a split second” (1984: 9); in reality we scan all the time, see in bits, and link the bits together. In this talk various examples from Hockney’s own artistic practice (including painting, photo collage and multi-screen video art), as well as that of precursors, illustrate ways in which visual art overcomes this limited “single vanishing point” perspective typical of photographs. This search for richer and “bigger” pictures is compared to the way in which, in the history of the novel, forms such as free indirect discourse have crystallized from authors’ tweaking of various parameters (pronouns, quotation marks, embedding, etc.), and further parallels are drawn between multiplicity of viewpoint in image and discourse in examples from poetry and from contemporary, “fragmented” novels. The general point that emerges from this exploration is that in discourse as in visual artefacts, global coherence is achieved through compression and blending of the potentially manifold local viewpoints the reader or viewer is presented with.

References

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Hockney, David (1984) *Cameraworks*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

**Short bio**

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