> And a very interesting thing happens to your brain, which is that any information which is common, after several repetitions, you cease to hear. You reject the common information, rather like if you gaze at something for a long time, you'll cease to really see it. You'll see any aspect of it that's changing, but the static elements you won't see ... The amount of material there is extremely limited, but the amount of activity it triggers in you is very rich and complex.[30]

Reich's *It's Gonna Rain* was a remarkable experiment in the psychology of musical perception: for although one could hear each individual voice one at a time if one tried, far more fascinating was the composite, subtly changing, rhythmic texture that arose from the phase shifts. New, unforeseen musical events were formed as it were out of the chinks between the words, the listener's attention could be riveted by any one of a multitude of possible composite patterns, and flip back and forth between patterns of interpretation. A visual analog to such flipping might be those diagrams used in experiments on perception that are open to different interpretations: a vase in silhouette becomes two heads facing each other, or a rabbit becomes a duck. The graphic artist M.C. Escher made such perceptual shifts a major component of his style, for instance in his mind-bending, multiple-perspective stairway drawings.[31] In music, Reich's phase shifts constituted a use of repetition inviting or requiring a new mode of listening, if one listened in the old way, all one heard was hundreds of boring repetitions of the same phrase. Eno was aware of this, and even found an analogy in the biological world:

> There's an essay called "What the Frog's Eye Tells the Frog's Brain," by Warren McCulloch, who discovered that a frog's eyes don't work like ours. Ours are always moving: we blink, we scan. We move our heads. But a frog fixes its eyes on a scene and leaves them there. It stops seeing all the static parts of the environment, which become invisible, but as soon as one element moves, which could be what it wants to eat – the fly – it is seen in very high contrast to the rest of the environment. It's the only thing the frog sees and the tongue comes out and takes it. Well, I realized that what happens with the Reich piece is that our ears behave like a frog's eyes. Since the material is common to both tapes, what you begin to notice are not the repeating parts but the sort of ephemeral interference patterns between them. Your ear telescopes into more and more fine detail until you're hearing what to me seems like atoms of sound. That piece absolutely thrilled me, because I realized then that I understood what minimalism was about. The creative operation is listening. It isn't just a question of a presentation feeding into a passive audience. People will sometimes say about Reich's piece, "Oh yes, that one with that voice which keeps hammer-

[30] Tannenbaum, "Cage and Eno," 68.

[31] See E.H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, the A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, 1956, National Gallery of Art, Washington (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 5, 244.