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Representation and Intention: Wittgenstein on What Makes a Picture of a Target

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Throughout his later philosophy, Wittgenstein repeatedly asks the following: "What makes my image of him into an image of *him*?" (LW1 308).¹ "What makes this picture *his* picture?" (LW1 309). He takes this same question to apply to linguistic utterances: "Isn't my question like *this*: 'What makes this sentence a sentence that has to do with *him*?'?" (LW1 308). This is by no means a peripheral concern of Wittgenstein's, and in *Philosophical Grammar* (62), where he first phrases this question, he pronounces: "That's *him* (this picture represents *him*)—that contains the whole problem of representation."

This essay will explore Wittgenstein's evolving interest in this key problem of representation, his criticisms of certain tempting answers, and his own perspicuous solution.² So as to bring some cohesion to this highly ramified issue, I will mostly restrict my discussion to mental images along with diagrams, maps, models, sketches, paintings, and so on, which I will lump together as "pictures."³ Loosely, what sets apart pictures, when they are used to depict how something is, is that they are *correct* when they *resemble* (look like, are projectable onto) what they are meant to represent.⁴ The later Wittgenstein assumes that a picture may be of an actual or possible, real or fictitious, particular or type of thing or situation: for example, Napoleon, Napoleon's coronation, a kind of action, or people in a village inn (cf., PG 114). In order to resolve an ambiguity in talk of what a picture "represents" or is "about" or "of," I will

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call the “*target*” what it is supposed to be of, the “*content*” how it represents this target as being (when it is used to depict how something is), and I will speak of what it resembles as a structured complex as what it “*shows*.”⁵ Thus a map, whose *target* is the street plan of Manhattan, may *show* a grid of streets, and in part have the *content* of representing that Fifth Avenue runs along Central Park’s east side. Provided this rough distinction, I will clarify Wittgenstein’s question in this direction: *What makes a picture of a target?*

I.

I will suggest that Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* was barred from asking, in particular, what makes a picture of *him* or represent that *he* is short or bald. This work was nonetheless deeply concerned to express both what *comprises* and what *grounds* a picture’s target and content, and in such a way as to lay bare how a picture correctly or incorrectly represents how things stand. These same concerns carry over into his later thought even if, as I will soon examine, his accounts of each alter.

“We picture facts to ourselves” (2.1), according to the *Tractatus*, and a fact “is the existence of states of affairs” (2). This is possible because a picture is a *model of reality* (2.12): it “presents a situation in logical space, the existence and non-existence of states of affairs” (2.11). This means, to speak loosely for now, that a picture has “reality” as its *target*. “It is laid against reality like a measure” (2.1512), so that the picture is “true” or “false” on the basis of whether it agrees or disagrees with reality (2.21–2.225). This also means that a picture must have a “*sense*,” roughly what I term a “*content*,” which comprises how things are depicted as standing in reality (2.221). Now a picture cannot function to model anything unless it can be either true or false, and it cannot be either unless it has a sense “independently of its truth or falsity” (2.22). Because its target is reality, a picture must therefore have a sense apart from how things do stand in reality (cf., 2.173). Yet, one cannot judge whether a picture is true or false by comparing it with reality unless its sense at once reveals which conditions make it true or false. Thus, a picture’s sense is “a possible situation in logical space” (2.222), and because the picture represents that this possible situation exists or does not exist, its sense is therefore how things stand in reality *if* it is true (cf., 4.022).

So what makes a picture have a particular sense? The answer is that a picture’s sense is something it internally “*shows*.” “A picture contains the possibility of the situation that it represents” (2.203), so that one *sees* this possible situation *in* the picture itself (cf., 4.023). For the situation that is

the case if the picture is true consists in a determinate set of simple objects of reality (2.01), whose definite relations to each other are its "structure" (2.032), and where the "possibility of this structure" is its "form" (2.033). Likewise, as a "fact" (2.141), a picture is also a structure of elements (2.14, 2.15), where "the possibility of this structure" constitutes its "pictorial form" (2.15). Now, individually or as a heap, a picture's elements have no sense but merely stand in for objects as their "representatives" (2.13–2.131). It is nonetheless the "*pictorial relationship*" the picture "includes," wherein the (simple) elements of the picture correlate to simple objects of reality (2.1514), that enables the picture to contain the possibility of a fixed set of simple objects against whose actual structure the picture is measured. Unfortunately, the *Tractatus* does not say how the two are correlated. Is it that an element is arbitrarily assigned to an object to which one attends? Or is it that an element correlates to just the object whose combinatorial possibilities in situations (the object's "form," 2.0141) mirrors its combinatorial possibilities in pictures (the element's "form?")? Though I will not make too much of it, I lean toward the second interpretation since it strikes me that a picture could not *show* its sense unless (from within a system of pictures) it could show *which things* it depicts as standing a certain way.⁶ In any event, what enables the picture to contain the possibility of a precise structure of the objects correlating to its elements, apart from their actual structure, is its *pictorial form*. For besides being the possibility of the picture's structure, "[p]ictorial form is the possibility that things are related to one another in the same way as the elements of the picture" (2.151). A picture's sense is therefore determined by to which possible structure of simple objects the picture is isomorphic when its elements are correlated to these objects.

To speak more precisely now, on the *Tractatus*, a picture's *target* is how the simple objects of reality corresponding to its elements are in fact arranged, while its *content* is how these objects are arranged *if* the picture is true. Thus, for example, a picture is never of a *particular chair* and never represents that *it* is black or leather. For one thing, whatever the *Tractatus*' "simple objects" are, a particular chair is presumably entirely a structure of simple objects. For another, a picture's target is the actual arrangement, not of this chair's simples, but of the simple objects of reality *correlating to the picture's elements*. It is this that the picture is measured against, and because it is correct if and only if its structure is of identical form to the actual structure of these objects, its truth or falsity is indifferent to whether these simple objects compose an actual chair, or one arranged in a particular way.

Why does Wittgenstein later suppose that a picture's target may comprise *him*, where its content comprises how it repre-

sents that *he* is? This change in perspective grew out of an increasing dissatisfaction with the *Tractatus*' vision of the *ground* of a picture's target and content, to which I will now turn.

II.

Starting with unease over the *Tractatus*' idea that the truth of one elementary proposition cannot depend on the truth of another (5.134), prompted by the realization, for example, that the truth of 'x is red' excludes the truth of 'x is green,' by the mid-thirties Wittgenstein had given up several key doctrines of the *Tractatus* infusing and supporting its vision of what comprises and grounds a picture's content and target. On the one hand, he abandoned its "metaphysical atomism." Things are simple or complex, he eventually holds, not absolutely but only relative to practices wherein we divide things into their elements (PI 47).⁷ Consider a schematic drawing of a cube, *A*, and a wooden cube, *B*. One might construe *B*'s simples as six flat surfaces or twelve edges, as eight one-square-foot cubes or two four-square-foot volumes, or as its molecules or atoms. But if *B*'s structure is a function of both its elements and their arrangement, then *B* will consist in different structures on different "methods of analysis" (my term). The same goes for *A*. On the other hand, Wittgenstein gave up the idea that anything has an "absolute form." In the *Tractatus*, the "identical form" of *A* and *B* was thought to "enable" the projection of *A* onto *B* (TLP 2.16–2.17), so that *A* is projectable onto *B* *because* they share the same form. By his *Philosophical Grammar* (113) Wittgenstein had reversed the order of explanation: *A* and *B* may be said to share the same form just *because A* is projectable onto *B*. With what *A* shares the same form depends on *how* one projects from *A*, and different "methods of projection" are possible. By utilizing different methods one could project *A*, as a structure of lines, now onto a cube, now onto a two-dimensional photograph of a cube, and now onto a pyramid (cf., PG pp. 212–4; PI 139).

Now this does not mean that Wittgenstein drops as incoherent talk of what a picture "shows." The above implies just that the complexes *A* and *B* are or are not isomorphic only given methods of analysis and projection, and that neither complex determines which methods ought to be used. Still, he also comes to argue that neither can another representation determine how one ought to project from or analyze a complex (PI 139–141, 198, 201). Certainly, for example, one may produce a schema *C* representing a method of projecting *A* onto *B*, say by means of drawing *A* and *B* together with lines of projection running between their elements. But *C* cannot determine how one ought to project *A* onto *B*, for different analyses and

projections of *C* are possible, and *C* itself cannot show how *C* ought to be analyzed or projected. The same holds true for any other schema meant to show how *C* ought to be interpreted and applied. Yet, it does not follow that there is no truth about whether *A* is isomorphic to *B*. We may indeed speak of a “rule” of correct projection. Wittgenstein’s point is that this rule’s representation does not fix but expresses what constitutes a correct projection of *A* onto *B*. The criterion for whether one correctly interprets and applies the represented rule is simply whether one projects *A* onto *B* conformably to a particular custom or regular use. And we can proceed to correctly project *A* onto *B* and thereby judge that they are isomorphic, without need of interpreting any represented rule, insofar as we have been trained by example into techniques of going on with pictures (RPP2 400–16). These techniques are the outgrowth of our physiology and environment, of our primitive behaviors and needs, and of our more evolved social customs and institutions. In brief, it is these *practices* that allow for agreement on the criteria for whether *A* *really* resembles *B* independent of what someone at some point might *think* (cf., PI 241).⁸

All this does imply, however, that Wittgenstein could no longer affirm the *Tractatus*’ doctrine of *pictorial form* wherein a picture is held to contain the possibility of one determinate structure of simple objects by virtue of being one determinate structure of pictorial elements. For not only is it possible to analyze a picture into different structures of elements, even given just one such analysis it is also possible to project it onto different types of articulated complexes. All this implies as well that Wittgenstein had to give up the doctrine of *pictorial relationship* whereby a picture contains the possibility of an exact set of simple objects by virtue of consisting in an exact set of pictorial elements. For he could no longer suppose that pictures and the possible situations they picture decompose into absolute simples and simples of determinate combinatorial possibilities. But if no picture by itself contains the possibility of either an unique set of simple objects or an uniquely determinate way in which they are structured, then *in itself no picture can show just this and not that “possible situation in logical space.”*⁹

III.

How, then, may a picture have a content? What a picture *shows* as an arrangement of elements remains part of the equation for the later Wittgenstein (cf., PG 121; PI 523). Of course, a picture can show something only relative to methods of analysis and projection (cf., PG pp. 212–4), and only by virtue of a viewer’s “recognizing in it objects in some sort of characteristic arrangement” (PG 115, cf., PG 37; PI 526). In the

last regard, while it may be capable of showing something that a viewer may fail to recognize, what a picture does show depends on the viewer's conceptual repertoire (LW1 734). In order to see a duck in a figure one needs to know what a duck is and what it looks like (RPP1 872); and in order to see a running horse in a painting one needs to know that horses do not just stand in that position (RPP1 873).

Still, a picture's content cannot be strictly a function of what it shows. We have seen that a picture can show far too many things. In addition, a picture's *showing* a possible *complex* (say, a brick house) is not the same as its *representing* a *fact* (say, *that* a certain house is brick) (cf., PG 114). Wittgenstein cautions against thinking that a picture can represent a fact only when it is translated into words or other pictures (PG 37, 114, 123). Yet, he also denies that a picture can represent a fact simply by virtue of showing something (PG pp. 199–201). One house may after all resemble another, but that does not make it a representation of the fact that the other is a house or is a house of a certain design.¹⁰

On Wittgenstein's view, it is how one *uses* a picture, the type of *action* one performs with it, that makes it represent a fact. It need not be so used, and he now emphasizes the diverse ways a picture may function: as a portrait, historical painting, genre-painting, landscape, map, diagram, or blueprint (cf., PG 114). Further, he now stresses that the *same* picture could have now this use, now that, so that it is only a *picture-token* that represents a fact: "Imagine a picture representing a boxer in a particular stance. Now, this picture can be used to tell someone how he should stand, should hold himself; or how he should not hold himself; or how a particular man did stand in such-and-such a place; and so on" (PI p. 11, bottom).

In turn, Wittgenstein comes to see that it is the target that allows a picture-token to have a discriminate content despite the promiscuity of what it shows as a type of structured complex. As he now views things, the target is a function, not of to which simple objects the elements of a picture-type correlate, but of that to which a picture-token is *applied*, on a variety of its uses. I shall later explore Wittgenstein's conception of this "application" and why he ties it to someone's intention. Here I need stress that it enables him to realize that a picture-type does not need to possess a content. Rather, only a picture-token has a content, which it has in virtue of both what it shows and to which target it is applied, so that its content comprises how *this* target is if the picture is accurate. Depending on to which target it is applied, therefore, the same round-shaped figure may represent now the fact that a certain coin's face is circular in shape, or now the fact that someone's head is spherical rather than ovoid. This at once provides a basis on

which to discriminate what a picture-token is *supposed* to show from all that a picture-type can show. The fact that a picture is a map, and one of New York City's streets, for example, constrains, from within practices of map-reading, how one ought to interpret its lines and colors and project from them.¹¹

All this often surfaces in Wittgenstein's comparison of pictures to yardsticks. In his transitional *Philosophical Remarks* he writes: "You cannot compare a picture with reality, unless you can set it against it as a yardstick" (43). "It only makes sense to give the length of an object if I have a method for finding the object—since otherwise I cannot apply a yardstick to it" (36). Notice that it makes no sense to say that *of itself* a yardstick shows what is the case in reality if it is true. Within a practice of its use, a yardstick constitutes a "method of measurement" (PG 84). Yet, it cannot provide an actual measurement of length unless it is used to measure something and is laid against a particular object. It is this actual measurement (the representation of a fact), not the yardstick itself (as a complex), that is accurate depending on whether it agrees with the object's length (cf., PG 85). This analogy, then, suggests that it is equally senseless to say that a picture by itself shows what is the case in reality if it is true. The picture provides a "method of measurement" by virtue of what it shows; and Wittgenstein compares a picture, taken apart from any particular use or any particular application to a target, to a "proposition-radical" (PI p. 11 bottom). But it may produce an "actual measurement" only insofar as it is *applied* of a particular target. And it is accurate depending on whether what it represents this target as being agrees with what this target is.

IV.

This way of thinking of pictorial representation may be further elucidated by briefly considering how Wittgenstein later conceives of the logic of linguistic representation. For there turn out to be striking parallels between the two, even though he has abandoned the idea that a proposition is a kind of picture whose sense is grounded in the manner the *Tractatus* had envisaged for pictures.

Intertwined with Wittgenstein's discussion of what makes a picture of a target is the question of what makes a *sentence-token* of a *target* such as *him* (e.g., LW1 308–18; PI 660–693). But this ought not be confused with the question of what connects a *sign-type* to a "bearer" or "reference." Nor should the question of what makes a *particular utterance* of "he is coming" an assertion, or the expression of an expectation or wish, *whose content is that the particular person N is coming* (cf., PI 441–4), be mistaken for the question of how this proposition-

type has a *sense*. To explain, say, *of* which person someone is speaking, or to explain *what* it is that someone is asserting, is to describe the *application* of language, and Wittgenstein is careful to mark this off from the explanation of the *meaning* of our words.

According to *Philosophical Grammar* (45), the meaning of a sign is part of the “grammar of language.” Only here does a word function as a certain sort of tool. When a word is used as a “name,” the grammar sets out where in the language this sign “is stationed”—establishing, for example, what sort of thing gets christened by a name through an ostensive definition (PG 45)—and the link of name to bearer belongs to the grammar (PG 55–6). Thus only in the grammar does a proposition have a sense: “That an empirical proposition is true and another false is not part of the grammar. What belongs to the grammar are all the conditions (the method) necessary for comparing the proposition with reality. That is, all the conditions necessary for understanding (of the sense)” (PG 45). But, importantly, none of this is to speak of the “*application*” of language (PG 45), and a location in a system of grammar does not lend a word or proposition an application but makes it a particular “*method of measurement*.” As Wittgenstein writes: “The role of a sentence in the calculus is its sense. A method of measurement—of length, for example—has exactly the same relation to the correctness of a statement of length as the sense of a sentence has to its truth or falsehood” (PG 84). Thus, the explanation of the meaning of a sign through a verbal or ostensive definition “remains at the level of generality preparatory to any application” (PG 45).

During the thirties, Wittgenstein increasingly refers to “language-games” in place of “grammar.” I share the belief that this flags a shift from seeing a sign’s use or meaning as fixed by its place in an all-purpose, rule-based, *calculus* to seeing it as tied to particular actions themselves inhering in certain human and social practices. As a consequence, Wittgenstein no longer thinks the explanation of a sign’s meaning can prepare one to apply it in *any* context or as part of *any* action. Yet, “language-games” play a similar role to “the grammar”: they make a sign a type of tool, or give it a type of meaning, but do not lend it an *application* (cf., RPP1 240; PI 241). To explain the meaning of signs is still to “describe methods of measurement” rather than to “obtain and state results of measurement”—even if, as he now stresses, “what we call ‘measuring’ is partly determined by a certain constancy in results of measurement” (PI 242).

Now, if the use or meaning of types of signs in our language-games constitute types of *methods of measurement*, then, from this later perspective of Wittgenstein’s, particular *results of measurement* cannot be obtained and stated unless

these signs are *applied to particular objects* at certain times and in certain contexts—and if they are applied to other objects, different results will ensue. And to describe *which object* is measured in some time and context, or which *result of measurement* is obtained and stated, is to explain, respectively, what comprises the *target* and *content* of a *particular application of a sentence*.

Provided this schema, let us focus on what makes a particular utterance of a sentence of a target. A sentence often contains a subject expression, whether a demonstrative, proper name, plural noun, definite or indefinite description, which “*designates*,” let us say, the object to which its predicate expressions are applied. As Wittgenstein remarks:

If I point to a circle and say ‘That is a circle’ then someone can object that if it were not a circle it would no longer be *that*. That is to say, what I mean by the word ‘that’ must be independent of what I assert about it. (PG p. 206)

It is Wittgenstein’s view that the object designated by such a subject expression is the one the speaker *intends* or *means* (meinen), and that it is the *application* the speaker makes of this expression, and not only the grammar of language, that establishes a connection to this object (cf., PG 62; Z 24; PI 686–9). This does not mean that the object designated is not often the object that is the bearer of a sign. Nor, as we will see, does this mean that a speaker could designate an object without participating in diverse language-games. What it means is that the target of the sentence “he is coming,” the person designated by “he,” hinges on *who* utters it. For, as Wittgenstein observes, unlike the explanation of a sign-type’s *sense* or *reference*, the explanation of which object someone means to be speaking of makes appeal to the speaker’s *circumstances*, together with what this person *believes*, *thinks* and *does* (RPP2 254; cf., Z 9). He notes that certain words may be about him because they are used to express the thought of *him* (PG 62): it is their belonging to a language *plus* this *context* that makes them of *him* (LW1 113; PI p. 217; RPP1 230). Or, as he remarks while discussing that a conversation is of *him*: “In saying this you refer to the time of speaking. It makes a difference whether you refer to this time or that (The explanation of a word does not refer to a point of time.)” (LW1 111; cf., PI p. 217).¹²

This is fairly obvious in the case of demonstratives. The later Wittgenstein denies that demonstratives are “names” or “proper names” (PI 38–9). One upshot of this is that a demonstrative should not be viewed as having a bearer in the language. It is best to see a demonstrative as a multiple-use tool, one of whose uses in sentences is to designate the subject.

Here, which object is designated depends not simply on the character of the demonstrative but also on the time and context of its utterance.

But what about subject expressions containing proper names? Wittgenstein offers that the link of the thought that Napoleon was crowned in the year 1805 to Napoleon is due to two factors: "that the word 'Napoleon' occurs in the expression of my thought, plus the connection that word had with its bearer" (PG 62). He adds that the *latter* connection need not be established at the time one expresses this thought and that it may result from the fact that "that was the way he signed his name, that was how he was spoken to and so on" (PG 62). Still, the link of the thought's expression to Napoleon is not the same as this link of name to bearer; for this same name may after all have different bearers in the language, and thus the language itself cannot fix which is meant (cf., Z 7; PI 689). Nor is a sentence's target necessarily the bearer of any of its proper names. When one is asked "Who was married to Marie Antoinette?" and one wrongly answers, "Napoleon," the target of the answer is Louis XVI, not Napoleon.

One may, of course, provide a definite description in clarifying whom one meant to designate with a proper name (PG 62; BB p. 39). Or, as Wittgenstein observes, one may define "Moses" via various definite descriptions, so that a proposition containing "Moses" will have different "senses" depending on which description is assumed (PI 79). But one need not give up one's proposition as false if one learns that Moses does not satisfy an assumed description; for one may be prepared to fall back on other descriptions, or, if they prove false, on yet others still. Of course, one *could* use a proper name as if it were a definite description and use it to designate *whatever* satisfies the description (cf., PI 87). Given *this* use, the language may settle what one designates. But when one uses a proper name to designate the object of which one *believes* some of a loose set of definite descriptions to hold true, which object one means also hinges on what one *believes* of this object. And if one falsely believes that a regular at the local golf course is the ex-president Gerald Ford, whom one designates by "the ex-president Gerald Ford" in the sentence "The ex-president Gerald Ford has on new loafers" might not be the person who satisfies this description.

V.

Commenting on its view that we "picture facts to ourselves" (TLP 2.1) and that pictures model reality by virtue of pictorial form and pictorial relationship, the *Tractatus* states: "That is how a picture is attached to reality; it reaches right up to it" (TLP 2.1511). If Wittgenstein later rejects this vision of how

representations connect to reality, he by no means loses interest in how they do so. His interlocutor phrases the issue this way: "Put a ruler against a body; it does not say that the body is such-and-such a length. Rather is it in itself—I should like to say—dead, and achieves nothing of what thought achieves" (PI 430). Wittgenstein wants to dispel this idea that it takes "thought" as a peculiar medium to enliven our "dead" pictures or sentences and tie them to reality. Life is not breathed into them, rather they are alive in their *use*—their use is their life (PI 432). And our pictures and sentences "reach right up to reality" when they are used, not only to describe reality, but also to give an order or to express a wish or expectation.

For Wittgenstein, as we have seen, our pictures and sentences may meet up with reality in such actions because within our pictorial and linguistic practices they constitute *methods of measurement*. It is due to the meaning of "he" and "is coming" in the language that "He is coming" expresses a particular expectation, so that "[i]t is in language that an expectation and its fulfillment make contact" (PI 445; cf., PI 429, 443–4; PG 55–6). Even so, our pictures and sentences cannot meet up with reality in these diverse actions unless they are also *applied of targets*. Only then does the utterance of "he is coming," or the creation or use of a portrait, as a particular act performed in the context of certain thoughts and actions and circumstances, make contact with a particular person and have a certain content (cf., PI 454–457; PG 62).

If this is so, then a perspicuous overview is needed of what makes a representation of a target, and "the whole problem of representation" therefore pivots on this question. I have said that, for Wittgenstein, of which target a sentence is applied depends on what its speaker *means* (meinen) or *intends*. The same, he asserts, holds true of pictures. "The expression of intention describes the model to be copied; describing the copy does not" (PG 58). "An obvious, and correct, answer to the question 'What makes a portrait the portrait of so-and-so?' is that it is the *intention*" (BB p. 32). Likewise: "Image and intention. Forming an image can also be compared to *creating* a picture in this way—namely, I am not imagining whoever is like my image: no, I am imagining whoever it is I mean to imagine" (RPP2 115).

Let us again restrict our focus to pictures. I have gestured at the bond a representation's application has to someone's intention. Beyond this, why does Wittgenstein conclude that "the intention" is the "obvious, and correct, answer" to his question? To paraphrase PR 20, it is because he believes that to exclude the intention gets wrong the function of pictures and destroys the whole logic of pictorial representation. Before turning to his conception of the intention, let us first see why he thinks this is so.

VI.

“What makes a portrait a portrait of Mr. N.? The answer which might first suggest itself is: The similarity between the portrait and Mr. N” (BB p. 32). I shall label the “Resemblance Thesis” this long-standing notion that a picture’s *target* is simply whatever it best resembles. Clearly, Wittgenstein never affirmed this thesis. Yet, he raises and rejects it in several places (e.g., BB p. 32; PG 62; LW1 318; PI p. 177). He faults this thesis, not because he finds talk of resemblance incoherent, but because it makes a mess of the logic of pictorial representation—something he was at pains to clarify in the *Tractatus*.

Wittgenstein has found that a picture-token has a *discriminate* content only in relation to a discriminate target. However, the Resemblance Thesis entails that a picture cannot be of *just* Napoleon, or *just* the Louvre, unless it resembles this person or building better than anything else; and we have seen that what a picture may resemble is far too promiscuous to afford any such “unique fit.” But perhaps, as Wittgenstein’s interlocutor asserts, this does not hold true for peculiarly *mental* images:

‘The image must be more like the object than any picture. For, however like I make the picture to what it is supposed to represent, it can always be the picture of something else as well. But it is essential to the image that it is the image of *this* and nothing else.’ Thus one might come to regard the image as a super-likeness. (PI 389)

Wittgenstein affirms that one may indeed imagine just King’s College on fire, and no other building (BB p. 39). But he denies that this is so *because* one’s image manages to uniquely resemble King’s College. As Wittgenstein’s interlocutor asks: “How do you know that it’s *King’s College* you imagine on fire? Couldn’t it be a different building, very much like it? In fact, is your imagination so absolutely exact that there might not be a dozen buildings whose representation your image could be?” (BB p. 39).

“Going by the usual criteria of knowledge,” Wittgenstein grants that one may indeed *know* what one imagines (cf., Z 22). One can *say*, and one has no *doubts* (Z 7). Here, that is, “‘know’ means that the expression of uncertainty is senseless” (PI 247). But because it entails that one would have to *learn* that one imagines him by means of *recognizing* him in one’s image, the Resemblance Thesis cannot account for this *certainty*. Wittgenstein remarks: “Of course I was thinking of him: I saw him in my mind’s eye!—But I did not *recognize* him by his appearance” (Z 31; RPP1 229). For, first, if one were to

come to a judgment about what one imagines on the basis of what one recognizes in one's image, the promiscuity of resemblance would render one's judgment *uncertain*. Besides, one can imagine someone one has never seen (RPP1 231). Second, the Resemblance Thesis errs more fundamentally in assuming that one is in the position of having to *ascertain* what one imagines (LW1 811, 831–5). Even when an image “just pops into one's head,” one is only under a psychological, not logical, “compulsion” to treat it as an image of that which one recognizes in it (cf., LW1 316; PI 139–140, p. 177). And when, in contrast, one imagines him in the course of thinking about him, one “knows” whom one imagines, not because one has reasons for being certain (PI 679), but because one does *not tell* this from anything at all.

Finally, Wittgenstein claims that “it is the essence” of the idea of a portrait “that it should make sense to talk of a good or bad portrait. In other words it is essential that [it] should be capable of representing things as they are in fact not” (BB p. 32). In this respect, he asks whether one could not discover that one imagined someone quite wrongly (LW1 308), and he comments that “I have an image of *N.N.* even if my image is wrong” (RPP2 82). But the Resemblance Thesis cannot allow for either accurate or inaccurate pictorial representation (BB p. 32). For a picture *P* could not rightly or wrongly represent a target *T* unless there could be a difference between what *T* is like and what *P* represents *T* as being like; and since the latter depends on what *P* shows, *P*'s accuracy depends on whether *P* appropriately resembles *T*. However, if *P* were not to resemble *T*, or were to better resemble something else, then, according to the Resemblance Thesis, *T* could not be *P*'s target.

VII.

At this point, it may be tempting to call upon causation to fix the target, freeing up resemblance to account for what a picture shows along with its accuracy. But how exactly might causation do the job? Well, it appears that a picture's target may often comprise a particular such as Napoleon or Napoleon's coronation. It also appears that different tokens of the same picture, as a type of structured complex, may have different targets. Thus, rather than appeal to with which property instantiations tokens of a picture-*type* causally covary, it may be better to suppose that the target of a picture-*token* is just the particular object that factors into its causal genesis in some particular way. Let us call this the “Causal Thesis.”¹³

While Wittgenstein has little patience with causal theories of meaning or intentionality in general, in such places as BB pp. 32–3 and PG 57–61 he raises several issues that bear on

this Causal Thesis. Now, if one copies a picture from a certain object, one's picture may be causally linked to this object in various ways. But, as Wittgenstein notes, even if one tries to copy a picture from one object one may do so in order to depict another. This suggests that, even when a picture's target is the object copied, it is nonetheless the picture's *application* and not its *causal link* to an object that makes it *of* this object.

Indeed, a key challenge for the Causal Thesis lies in explaining how one thing's being caused by another in a certain situation makes the other its *target*. What carries the explanatory weight here is not the idea that smoke "indicates" or "means" fire but the idea that the picture's formation belongs to a "process" of copying—where it is natural to think that a *particular* copy is of the *particular* original from which it is derived via some process. In that case, what makes something an instance of copying?

What we call "copying something," Wittgenstein observes (BB p. 32), is not a type of physical or mental "process." Now he warns against thinking that "the essence of copying is the intention to copy" if this means that the intention is a something accompanying particular acts of copying. Yet, he comments that "there are a great many different processes we call 'copying something'," and he contends that what makes a particular process *P* the act of copying is not its similarity to other processes. Nor is *P* this act simply because *P* is causally linked to a viewed object and issues in the production of some structured complex: just because one makes a dark line on paper when one sees a black dog, it does not follow that one is copying the black dog. Rather, just as a particular process is that of putting one's opponent in check only when it belongs to a series of moves in a particular game of chess together with all the rules of the game (PI 197, 205), so *P* is an act of copying only if *P* belongs to a series of acts together with a practice of copying (cf., PI 268). Thus, if something functions as a copy insofar as it issues from an act of copying, it does not have this function just because it is causally linked to an object in some fashion.

Granted this, it still might be claimed that a copy's *target* just is the object to which the copy is causally linked in some particular way. As Wittgenstein phrases this view, "that a picture is a portrait of a particular object consists in its being derived from that object in a particular way" (BB p. 33). However, the *derivation* of a copy from an object is again an intentional act, one that one may try to perform and not succeed at (PG 57; BB p. 33), and not any particular kind of process or causal link to an object. We may think of this derivation as a kind of projection from object to copy, Wittgenstein remarks. But then someone may derive a copy from an object only insofar as she *conforms* to the method of projection, the rule. She could employ different methods of projection, moreover, and which is the

one she employs does not consist in what goes on when she makes a copy. Indeed, on different interpretations she could be construed as projecting her picture from different objects (PG 57).

While other avenues could be explored, it does not appear that the Causal Thesis can explain what makes a copy or picture of just *this* or *that* target, let alone explain what makes something function as a *copy* of anything. Nor can it do justice to what a picture's target may *comprise*. For not only may one use a picture copied from one object to represent another, one may after all make a picture of a possible or fictitious person, thing, situation, or event to which no causal links are available. Finally, as Wittgenstein stresses from the *Philosophical Remarks* (20–26) onward, since it entails that one must *learn* what one copies by *discovering* to which object one's copy is causally linked, a Causal Thesis can allow for neither one's knowing *in advance* what one means to copy nor one's being *certain* about what one copies.

VIII.

Let us ignore, for now, a prior intention to make a picture of something, as well as what someone other than a picture's creator means it to be of, and let us suppose that someone, Jill, intends a picture she paints to portray Jack. I shall refer to this as "Jill's intention." If, as Wittgenstein claims, Jill's picture is of just the target she intends, then *what is* Jill's intention if it resides neither in what her picture resembles nor in its causal links to an object? And how can it *make* her picture of Jack?

When one describes Jill's intention one is not describing what she does as so many physiological goings-on or saying that the latter count as certain physical acts (such as painting a picture) because they occur in certain circumstances or because they have a certain significance in our practices. Nor is one describing all this together with the effects caused by Jill's physical acts: the fact that Jill's painting is of Jack is not a physical state of her painting, nor is it a "physical event" brought about by her bodily movements. It is tempting, then, to think that one is describing something which *causes* her physical acts. Moreover it is natural to think of Jill's behavior and her painting as *inheriting* their "life," their "aboutness," from her intention. It may thus be concluded that Jill's intention must be some sort of mental *process* that is itself about Jack (cf., BB pp. 4–5; 32). And because Jill may after all imagine, portray, speak of, or think of Jack, it may be supposed that what "aims" each of these acts at Jack is just that each is caused by a token of the same mental process, an original and brute germ of "indicating him" (cf., Z 12; PI 689–93).

Wittgenstein believes that to view any mental state as a *process* is not innocuous but “commits us to a particular way of looking at the matter” (PI 308), and he repeatedly claims that an intention is not a process that accompanies words or pictures (LW1 820; PI p. 218). As he puts it: “If God looked into our minds he would not have been able to see there whom we were speaking of” (LW1 108; PI p. 217).

On the one hand, he denies that an intention displays the “*criteria of identity*” of a mental process, or at least of a “state of consciousness.” For whereas the last has the “logical characteristic” of being interruptible by breaks in consciousness and shifts in attention (RPP2 43–50), an intention does not disappear when one momentarily attends to an itch: an intermittent intention would not be one interrupted by shifts in attention but would be “to have an intention, to abandon it, to resume it, and so on” (Z 47; cf., Z 46, 50). And while conscious states have the related logical characteristic of having “genuine duration,” measurable by a stopwatch, with a beginning, middle, and end (RPP2 51), intentions do not (Z 45). Importantly, Jill’s saying “I meant my painting to portray Jack” *does* make “essential reference” to a particular time (cf., RPP1 175–7; RPP2 256, 266; PI p. 175). Yet, this report does not express the memory of an experience (RPP2 582; Z 44), but reflects, for example, what she *would* have said at that time where she queried (PI 684; RPP1 1134–5). Yes, she might be able to recall an experience, but there could be no way of deriving what she intended from this experience with any certainty (RPP2 576). Wittgenstein, then, tentatively classifies as “mental dispositions” the motley of what are called “intentions,” although he adds that unlike the disposition to jealousy an intention is not “a disposition in the true sense, inasmuch as one does not perceive such a disposition within himself as a matter of experience” (RPP2 178).

On the other hand, Wittgenstein argues that no process as such can *make* a representation of a target. As he states in regard to meaning an utterance of *him* (LW1 818–21): “Meaning [meinen] is not a process which accompanies words. For no ‘process’ could have the particular *consequences* of meaning [meinen]” (LW1 820; PI p. 218). First, to state that “Jill intends Jack” is without point or sense apart from the circumstance of her performing a particular act (cf., Z 12–28); but no process Jill undergoes could have as its consequence, say, that Jill *portrays someone*. Among other things, Jill’s behavior could not count as such an act unless there were in place *practices* of making pictures, of applying them of targets, or of using them to represent how something is and of doing so by virtue of how the picture appears (cf., PI 205). Only then would Jill’s applying paint to a canvas have the *significance* of painting a picture. More importantly, only when she is trained

into these practices could her behavior have certain *normative consequences* and count as the act of *representing* something or of *portraying* someone; where her painting is *supposed* to be of a particular person and is *supposed* to *depict* this person's appearance, mood, or disposition; where the picture's observer is *meant* to become *acquainted* with this person's appearance and so on; where her painting may be *judged good* or *bad*, *accurate* or *inaccurate*, on a variety of criteria, including whether it captures his appearance, and so forth (cf., PI 692–3).

Second, Wittgenstein contends that no process that Jill may undergo could have the *consequence* that her painting is *supposed* to be of *Jack*. Here, I can only provide a summary of his main reasons. Jill may, of course, focus her attention on Jack while she paints his portrait. But her attending to Jack, he claims, may consist in a variety of different processes and there is no one characteristic process that occurs whenever she does so (PI 35). Attending to Jack, besides, is an intentional act, and a process-token counts as such an act only because it is located in a series of acts and because it has a certain standing in a set of practices (PI 33). Furthermore, no process in Jill's head could so much as count as a "sign" which functions to designate something, he argues in his so-called "private sensation language argument," unless there were in place practices of designating objects together with their incumbent ramifications. Jack is a person, moreover, the particular person who is so-and-so. But Wittgenstein also argues that such a being could neither satisfy nor fail to satisfy this sign apart from a scaffolding of language-games wherein particulars and types of things are identified and discriminated, or described and referred to (PI 28–35, 257–261). Still, it might be thought that the mental mechanism tokening this sign either represents or "realizes" in its structure an "intension," a rule determining this sign's application. However, as Wittgenstein stresses in his remarks on following a rule, a rule is no mere process but expresses what it is to proceed *correctly*; it is something that may be *conformed* to or *violated*. There could be no rule for the correct application of a sign, moreover, unless there were a custom or regular use of going on with this sign. Thus, whatever Jill might "represent" in her mind, it could function as the representation of such a rule, and function as a "signpost" guiding her correctly going on, only within this practice (PI 197–202). Likewise, whatever the mental mechanism tokening this sign might "realize" in its structure, if it could *malfunction* then the criterion for the sign's correct application could not be strictly with what its tokening happens to "correspond." The criterion for whether something is the right sum of an addition is not whether it is the sum that someone happens to produce; rather the crite-

tion for whether someone correctly adds a sum is whether the action performed conforms to the rule (cf., PG 56; PI 689–93).

IX.

If it is not a “dead” process she undergoes, it might be tempting to conclude that Jill’s intention is a “living” act she performs from within diverse human and social practices, one comprising the formation or use of a (mental) representation whose target is Jack or which expresses that Jack is her painting’s target.

Wittgenstein also denies that the intention has the logical characteristics of an act (PI 693). To intend a picture of him is not the same as to think about him (PI 692; LW1 821). The fundamental error, he insists, is to think that the intention “consists in” anything which could qualify as either “articulated” or “non-articulated” (Z 16; PI p. 217; contrast PR 69–70). Naturally, Jill *may* imagine, think about, or speak of Jack, before or during or after she paints his portrait (cf., RPP1 238). But such accompanying acts are on a par with her act of creating Jack’s portrait, and they do not constitute her intention. After all, one cannot reliably infer that Jill has performed any such act simply from the fact that she intends her painting to portray Jack (Z 21). Nor is it correct to think that Jill intends her picture to portray Jack *by means of* one of a family of more “basic” actions in the way that one can turn on a light by flipping a switch or by pushing a button (Z 26). “It is wrong to say: I meant him *by* looking at him. ‘Meaning’ does not stand for an activity which wholly or partly consists in the ‘utterances’ of meaning” (Z 19). For, unlike the command to calculate a sum, the command to intend a painting to portray so-and-so does not command one to do anything at all (Z 51). In order to obey the latter command, one must *bring* oneself into this condition (Z 52), say by imagining a situation and a history to fit this intention (Z 9).

Still, all this will be readily rebutted as long as one holds that Jill’s intention *must* consist either in her mentally representing Jack or in her applying her picture conformably to what this act sets out as her picture’s target. Wittgenstein’s response is that this “must” produces a vicious regress (cf., BB pp. 33–4). For what would make the mental representation of Jack? If it is not of Jack “inherently” then, according to this “must,” its being meant of Jack has to consist in, say, her applying it conformably to what a second mental representation lays out as its target, and so on. And Wittgenstein has maintained that no mental act is any more “inherently” of Jack than is an act of painting a portrait. That is, he has argued both that the target of a mental image is fixed neither by what it resembles nor by its causal links, and that the target of a

sentence is not determined simply by the sense or reference of its terms in a language but depends on the utterer's intention—on her circumstances, beliefs, thoughts, and actions.¹⁴

According to Wittgenstein, then, by itself no accompanying representation has the consequence that another representation is of a certain target. If Jill is already painting Jack's portrait then her painting is *already* of him, and an accompanying act of imagining or speaking of Jack does not *make* her picture his portrait (RPP1 183; PI 683–4). It is instead a *sign* of which target she means her picture (LW1 818). As Wittgenstein writes in regard to meaning a sentence of him:

Instead of 'I meant *him*' one may also say 'I was speaking of *him*.' And how does one do that, how does one speak of *him* in speaking those words? Why does it sound wrong to say 'I spoke of him by pointing to him as I spoke those words'?

'To mean him' means, say, 'to talk of him.' Not: to point to him. And if I talk *of him*, of course there is a connexion between my talk and him, but this connexion resides in the application of the talk, not in the act of pointing. Pointing is itself only a sign, and in the language-game it may direct the application of the sentence, and so shew what is meant. (Z 24)

Now Jill may first imagine someone and then paint the person she imagines (RPP2 82), so that what she imagines "makes" her painting of this person (LW1 311). But this is so because she *applies* the painting she later creates *of* the person she imagined earlier. She could apply it otherwise, and her so applying it does not itself consist in an act of representing anything. For suppose that she also says to herself that she intends to paint a portrait of the person she has just imagined, namely Jack, and that she thereby *forms* the intention to paint Jack's portrait. Again, this makes the painting she produces into Jack's portrait only if she later *applies* her painting conformably to the intention she formed by means of these words. And, on pain of vicious regress, it had better not be the case that her so *applying* her painting *must* require her to say, in addition, that her painting is supposed to be about just the person that she has intended to portray.

X.

The question "*What is Jill's intention?*" has turned out to be misleading. It immediately inclines one to search out the intention in something occurring alongside her painting or act of creating it. It is better to ask this: What does one describe when one describes Jill's intention? Wittgenstein comments: "Describing an intention means describing what went on from

a particular point of view, with a particular purpose. I paint a particular portrait of what went on" (Z 23). One might describe whom Jill meant her painting to portray in order to reveal something about her, or to render intelligible her further behavior (PI 654–9). More directly, one's purpose is to specify, not what ran through her mind, or what "caused" her painting to be about Jack, but simply to which target she applies her painting; and Wittgenstein compares the point of doing so to the point of describing something's *function* (PR 31; PG 95; Z 48). To say that a brake is *meant* to stop the car is to describe, not what it does do (since it may malfunction) or can do (since it may have all sorts of additional capacities), but its *function* in the system of the car, given the car's uses. In turn, to describe the brake's function is to state what it is *supposed* to do so that, for example, one knows that it malfunctions when it does not stop the car. Similarly, to say what Jill's painting is *meant* to portray is to describe, not what it does resemble or what it could accurately represent, but which target it *functions* to be of in some system. And to describe this function is to state what her painting is *supposed* to represent so that, for example, one knows whom it portrays as looking a certain way, or that it is inaccurate if it misrepresents this target.

But if what one describes when one describes Jill's intention is what her painting functions to portray, then on what basis does Jill's painting function to portray Jack? Something functions as a brake due to the role it plays in the system of a car. But clearly, on Wittgenstein's account, Jill's painting cannot have this function due to the role a picture of its type of appearance plays in a system of pictures. A better example, I think, is the position of a needle on a car's fuel gauge. Provided its role in the system of a car and the car's use, a car's fuel gauge has the function of representing the level of fuel in the gas tank. It is due to *this* function that the needle's being on 'F' functions to represent that the *gas tank* is full. Given a different function of this gauge in a different system, the needle's location on 'F' would function to represent something else. This example, then, suggests that Jill's painting functions to portray Jack due to the function of *that which* employs this painting.

So what employs Jill's painting? The answer, quite simply, is a being who performs a particular *act* at some time and in some context. Jill's painting functions to be of Jack, that is, because what she does functions as the act of painting Jack's portrait. There is after all a "logical" link between Jill's *intention* and what she *does*: it is true that Jill means the picture she paints to portray Jack if and only if it is true that Jill performs the act of painting Jack's portrait. It is not that Jill's intention is this act, or any other act accompanying it. Rather, to describe Jill's intention is to describe a particular sort of

function of what she does. In this regard, Wittgenstein often mentions diverse acts that are of a person *N* and wherein one makes or uses a gesture or image or picture or words: one might command *N* to come by means of saying "Come here" or by means of making a hand gesture, speak or talk of *N*, make a remark with an allusion to *N*, say that *N* is over there while pointing, think about *N*, imagine *N*, write a letter to *N*, curse *N*, or paint *N*'s portrait (Z 21–32; PI 680–5). Here, as Wittgenstein sees it, the gesture or image or picture or sentence is of *N*, not because this is their function in a system of gestures and so forth, but *because* the act functions to be of *N* (cf., LW1 318). When queried, therefore, one may answer "I was speaking of *N*" in place of "I meant *N*" (Z 24; PI 687). If one does say "I meant *N*," one is describing not *what* one did, or anything accompanying what one did, but a certain function of what one did—what one's act *counted* as being of—a function that other acts could have (cf., PI 680; Z 25).¹⁵

If this is so, then what makes an act of forming or using a representation *count* as being of a certain target? Wittgenstein, unfortunately, provides only the germ of an answer in such comments as these: "What connects my words with him? The situation and my thoughts. And my thoughts in just the same way as the things I say out loud" (Z 9). "What makes this sentence a sentence that has to do with *him*? The fact that we were speaking about *him*.—And what makes a conversation a conversation about *him*?—Certain transitions we make or would make" (LWI 318). Such remarks suggest that what makes Jill's behavior count as the act of creating *Jack's* portrait is that it is performed *within a particular stream of thoughts, acts, and events* (provided her participation in a host of social and human practices). It could be that Jack asked Jill to paint his portrait, Jill decided to accept his commission and intended to paint his portrait, she used Jack as her model, she corrected her painting so that it better approximated his appearance or better captured his mood, and later gave it to Jack in exchange for money (cf., BB p. 32). Likewise, what makes an image an image of him is the particular "path on which it lies" (PG 99). An image may be of the streets of one's town because one may have formed this image while attempting to figure out the best route from one's house to the grocery store. In general, therefore, Wittgenstein claims that what makes a representation of a target is the fact that its creation or use has a particular location in a system of transitions comprising the antecedent situation and history, the present circumstances, and what follows (Z 7, 9, 14, 26, 28; BB p. 39; PG 99; RPP1 230, 240).

This is why, if there is some question about what Jill means her painting to portray, we must ask her—and her truthful answer would be decisive (LW1 813–8; PI p. 177). It is

not that Jill's answer is decisive because she can infallibly ascertain her intention whereas we can only guess. Indeed, were she to try to do so, her judgment could be quite uncertain since nothing in the surrounding circumstances might tie up to her painting's target unconditionally (Z 41; RPP1 230). Rather, her answer may be decisive because it functions to *establish* a connection of her painting to Jack. Or, it may be decisive because she has *performed* the act of painting Jack's portrait and because she has done so in a particular situation of which she is intimately aware. As Wittgenstein remarks in regard to a related topic:

At the question 'Why don't I infer my probable actions from my talk?' one might say that it is like this: as an official in a ministry I don't infer the ministry's probable decisions from the official utterances, since of course I am acquainted with the source, the genesis of these utterances and of the decisions (RPP 1 711)

XI.

Has Wittgenstein answered his question? Has he explained what makes a picture or image or thought or sentence of him?

While his investigations do offer a perspicuous answer, they may be seen as raising a number of issues, not all of which Wittgenstein has himself pursued in any detail. In particular, there is the matter of just how an act's location in a series of thoughts, acts, and circumstances is supposed to make it count as the act of representing a certain target.

But even if he were to have taken his investigations further in such a direction, he still would not have stated just which conditions are necessary and sufficient in order for a representation to be of a particular target. For Wittgenstein, however, this is as should be. Exactitude is after all relative to one's aim, and Wittgenstein's goal has been to provide a perspicuous overview of representation and intention in order to untangle various philosophical snarls. Further, he doubts that a more precise *general* explanation is to be had (RPP1 257) inasmuch as he denies that a picture may function to be of Jack if and only if its formation or use occurs in the context of just *such-and-such* thoughts and actions and circumstances (Z 26). If this is so then the attempt at a "clearer" statement of the necessary and sufficient conditions will likely be motivated by, or produce, false "musts." Wittgenstein freely allows, for example, that Jill may have formed the prior intention to paint Jack's portrait. But we err, he believes, once we suppose that her act of painting Jack's portrait *must* result from such a prior intention; and in respect to this "must" he often stresses that the link of picture to target might be forged only in what follows (Z 7, 14, 27).

Nor does Wittgenstein forward a reductive explanation of the intention. Not only does he make no pretense at “analyzing” Jill’s act of creating Jack’s portrait as just the “process” with these or those *causal* inputs or outputs, everything indicates that he would treat such an “analysis” as hopelessly wrongheaded. Clearly, moreover, he assumes that Jill’s creation of a picture is the act of painting Jack’s portrait just because it belongs to a particular series of thoughts and acts that are themselves *about* diverse targets. “The connection between the portrait of *N* and *N* himself,” Wittgenstein observes, could (but need not! (PG 99)) reside in the fact “that the name written underneath is the name used to address him” (PG 62). But the act of tacking a name onto a picture can either make it the portrait of *N* or report that it is *N*’s portrait only if there is already a link in place between this sign and *N*, and only if this name has the appropriate application in this situation. Finally, he has argued that Jill’s act of painting a picture (or her surrounding thoughts and acts) could not count as being of Jack, or as representing what he is like, apart from a rich scaffolding of human and social practices together with the form of life in which they inhere.

Jerry Fodor writes: “It’s hard to see ... how one can be a Realist about intentionality without being, to some extent or other, a Reductionist If aboutness is real, it must really be something else.”¹⁶ Disregarding the misreading of Wittgenstein as a behaviorist, what may give rise to the suspicion that he denies the “reality” of the intention is precisely that he has no interest in reducing it to something presumed, on some a priori basis, to be “more real”—whether a mental or physical process, or a relation of resemblance or causation. This reflects Wittgenstein’s general (though rather nuanced) forswearing of “explanation” in favor of “describing the phenomena.” But, in the case of intentionality, this bespeaks something else as well:

An explanation of the operation of language as a psychophysical mechanism is of no interest to us. Such an explanation itself uses language to describe phenomena (association, memory etc); it is itself a linguistic act and stands outside the calculus; but we need an explanation which is *part of the calculus*. (PG 33)

A reductionist’s explanation of the intention is itself an intentional act employing language meant of a target. The reductionist is thus in danger of defeating herself when the consequence of her explanation is to obscure the significance and normative standing of her act. She is also in danger of exchanging the living explanandum of intentionality for a dead phenomenon. Wittgenstein observes that when viewed from the “outside,” in “isolation” from its surroundings, a picture

appears “dead”: “It does not point outside itself to a reality beyond” (PG 100). Yet, if the actions and context surrounding someone’s creation or use of a picture or image are also viewed from the outside, as “processes” of diverse causal relations, as under the reductionist’s gaze, then they too appear as dead (PG 100). A living explanation of intentionality, he believes, can only hope to elucidate it from within rather than pretend to explain it from without.

NOTES

¹ The following are Ludwig Wittgenstein’s texts that I will refer to by abbreviation. All numbers refer to remark number unless preceded by a ‘p’ for a page reference.

- BB *The Blue and Brown Books* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956).
LW1 *Last Writings, Volume I, Preliminary Studies for Part II of Philosophical Investigations*, G. H. von Wright and H. Nyman, eds., C. J. Luckhardt and M. A. E. Aue, trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).
PG *Philosophical Grammar*, R. Rhees, ed., A. Kenny, trans. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974).
PI *Philosophical Investigations*, 3rd edition, G. E. M. Anscombe and R. Rhees, eds., G. E. M. Anscombe, trans. (New York: Macmillan Company, 1953).
PR *Philosophical Remarks*, R. Rhees, ed., R. Hargreaves and R. White, trans. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975).
RPP1 *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, Volume I, G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, eds., G. E. M. Anscombe, trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).
RPP2 *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, Volume II, G. H. von Wright and H. Nyman, eds., C. G. Luckhardt and M. A. E. Aue, trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).
TLP *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, D. F. Pears, trans. (London: McGuinness, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961).
Z *Zettel*, G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, eds., G. E. M. Anscombe, trans. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967).

² For other discussions of Wittgenstein’s views on this topic see, for example, P. M. S. Hacker, “The Agreement of Thought and Reality,” in *Wittgenstein’s Intentions*, J. Canfield and S. Shanker, eds. (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1993), 38–50; and Malcolm Budd, *Wittgenstein’s Philosophy of Psychology* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 125–145.

³ This is not to say that there are no important differences between mental images and physical pictures or that Wittgenstein does not resist identifying the two. In RPP2 63 he states: “Images are not pictures. I do not tell what object I am imagining by the resemblance between it and the image.” It is hard to tell whether the second sentence is meant as the reason for the first. It would be a bad one since he also denies that one ascertains what a picture one makes is about by what it resembles (RPP2 115; cf. PG 62; BB p. 32). A better reason would be that mental images are not enduring objects that are repeatedly viewable and from multiple perspectives by a homunculus (cf., RPP2 63–144). Even so, Wittgenstein draws a parallel between imagining something on

will and creating a picture of something (RPP2 115), and between having an image pop into one's head and seeing a picture (PI p. 177; LW1 316). He also assumes that an image, like a picture, may be of him, represent that he looks a certain way, and indeed "look like" him. One may reveal the look of an image that pops into one's head by means of a picture, even though one may not know what this image is about or from what it is derived (RPP2 63; LW1 316).

⁴ In BB p. 37, while attempting to dispel the notion that a proposition's sense is a "shadow" or "picture" alongside the proposition, Wittgenstein further marks off "copies" or "pictures by similarity" from other pictures. "Copies are good pictures when they can be easily mistaken for what they represent." In contrast, an accurate plane projection of one hemisphere of the terrestrial globe is not a "copy" insofar as it does not look like its target.

⁵ This use of the term "target" is largely indebted to Robert Cummins, *Representations, Targets, and Attitude*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996). Wittgenstein, of course, does not use the terms "target" or "content" in these ways, and while he certainly speaks of what a picture "shows," we shall see that his views on what a picture can show alter over time. Nonetheless, I believe that this schema will be of considerable aid in understanding his conception of the logic of pictorial representation.

I should say why I choose to use the term "content" rather than "sense" to refer to what a representation represents a target as being. In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein speaks of a picture's or proposition's "sense" (Sinn), and his views there allow little discrimination between a picture's or proposition's sense and what I call its content. Matters are rather different in his later philosophy. Here, he very rarely speaks of a picture's "sense" and, as we shall see, he ties talk of a "proposition's sense" to what a type of proposition means in the language rather than to what someone is, say, asserting by means of this proposition in some particular context and time.

I should also mention that my distinction between a picture's "target" and what it "shows" is similar to Nelson Goodman's distinction between "a picture of a black horse" and "a black-horse picture" (see *Languages of Art* [Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968]), while my distinction of "target" and "content" is not unlike Fred Dretske's distinction between a picture's "topic" and its "comment" (see *Explaining Behavior* [Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988], 70–1). However, Goodman speaks of what a picture is of as its "denotation," and Dretske speaks of a picture's "topic" as its "reference." I find this rather misleading, especially when a similar distinction is drawn in regard to linguistic utterances. For, as I shall later suggest, to speak of a linguistic utterance's target is not the same to speak of the "reference" of a sign in the language.

⁶ For discussions of the *Tractatus*' views on especially how the correlation of a proposition's names to simple objects is made see the following: Steve Gerrard, "Two Ways of Grounding Meaning," *Philosophical Investigations* 14 (2) 1991: 95–114; Richard McDonough, "The Philosophical Psychologism of the *Tractatus*," *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 31 (4) 1993: 425–447.

⁷ These methods of division are tied to our interests, needs, and aims. But that does not mean, as Wittgenstein observes in RPP1 45–49 and PI p. 230, that "general facts of nature" may not make one method

of dividing things up, relative to our interests, needs, and aims, appear “natural” (but not “necessary”). And though it would not follow that we *would* employ different methods of division were these general facts other than what they are, or that our current methods would become *incoherent*, our current methods could become *useless*.

⁸ As I am reading his “remarks on following a rule” in PI 138–242 and elsewhere, therefore, Wittgenstein’s goal is not to raise “skeptical doubts” concerning the possibility of rules (although, as he admits, his remarks may have this appearance), but is to dispel a mistaken view of their nature and ground as well as provide a perspicuous representation of both. See, in contrast, Saul Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982).

⁹ Oddly, the *Tractatus* granted that the same schematic drawing of a cube may be at once isomorphic to two different possible situations in reality—to a cube with this face in the fore, and to a cube with that face in the fore (TLP 5.5423). Yet, it did not proceed to ask: “So which of these does it represent as being the case in reality?”

¹⁰ According to Wittgenstein in PR pp. 301–3, and again in PG pp. 199–201 (see also BB p. 31), a house is a “complex” whereas “that I am tired” is a “fact.” Complexes may move, facts do not. Complexes are spatial objects, facts are not. Complexes, but not facts, can be literally pointed at. Complexes are wholes composed of parts, facts are not. And while it is a fact that a complex is composed of such-and-such parts arranged in such-and-such ways, a complex is not composed of its parts and their relations. However, it is unclear both whether Wittgenstein takes all this to contradict the *Tractatus*, and whether the *Tractatus* does confuse facts and complexes (see, for example, Anthony Kenny, “The Ghost of the *Tractatus*,” in *Understanding Wittgenstein*, G. Vesey, ed. [Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1974], 1–13). It strikes that me that the *Tractatus* does assume a distinction between fact and complex when, for instance, it construes a fact (Tatsache), not as a state of affairs (Sachverhalt) tout court, but as the existence (or nonexistence) of a state of affairs (2). It also strikes me that the *Tractatus* implicitly acknowledges the point I am making in this paragraph when it writes “A proposition shows its sense. A proposition shows how things stand if it is true” and adds that it “says that they do so stand” (4.022). If this is the case, then the *Tractatus* may be said to allow a distinction between what a picture “shows,” a possible state of affairs, and its “content,” which fact (or facts) it represents as being the case in reality.

¹¹ Of course, in order for there to be pictorial misrepresentation it had better not be the case that one is constrained to so interpret a picture’s content that it turns out to represent its target *correctly*. While I do not believe that one is so constrained on Wittgenstein’s account, I will not try to pursue this complex issue here.

¹² In this respect, Wittgenstein often dwells on phenomena that heighten the potential dissonance between a word’s meaning (Bedeutung) in the language and what a speaker means (meinen) by it, as for instance when one makes a special code language from everyday words, or when one plays the game of meaning a word such as “bank” with now this meaning, now with that. Similarly, he explores the import of someone’s being incapable of saying with which meaning she means a word in some context, or of playing the game of meaning a word with now this meaning, now that, outside any particular context (cf., RPP1 175–250, passim; PI pp. 214–216).

Representation and Intention

¹³ I need stress that the “Causal Thesis” at issue here concerns what fixes a representation’s *target* and thus differs in aim from the various, currently popular, “causal theories of meaning.” In general, the latter largely seek to explain the ground of the *semantics* of the predicate expressions of a “language of thought”—how tokens of a predicate-type “mean” the instantiations of a certain property, irrespective of the time or context of their tokening. Jerry Fodor, in *A Theory of Content and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), for example, proposes that tokens of the language of thought symbol “dog” denote dog instantiations because there is a nomic causal covariance between dogs and the property that causes a cognitive system to token “dog” when it is about the business of detecting what is present in its sensory environment, where any non-dog-to-“dog” causal link would be “asymmetrically dependent” on the dog-to-“dog” causal link. Such a theory is inherently ill-suited as an account of a representation’s target if, as Wittgenstein supposes, different tokens of the same representation-type may have different targets in different times and contexts.

¹⁴ Thus, even if a person were to possess an innately understood “language of thought” whose terms have “inherent meaning,” as some are wont to speculate (see Jerry Fodor, *The Language of Thought* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975]), it would not follow that any sentence-token in this language is inherently of a target.

¹⁵ Like Wittgenstein, Robert Cummins (see, *Representations, Targets, and Attitudes* [Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996]) holds that a representation-token functions to be of a target in virtue of what tokens it. However, Cummins discussion of representations and their targets occurs in the context of contemporary cognitive science, and in this context his view is roughly that what makes *t* the target of a token of a mental representation *r* is that *r* is tokened by a cognitive mechanism or system whose functional role in the mental economy is to represent *t*.

¹⁶ Jerry Fodor, *Psychosemantics: The Problem of Meaning in the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987), 97.