

A version of the picture theory

0. My aims in this paper are largely expository: I am more interested in presenting the picture theory than deciding its truth. Even so, I hope that the arguments by which I develop the theory will do something to support it, since I believe that what I will present as Wittgenstein's view is indeed the truth. This is not an admission of insanity, though some things that have been thought intrinsic to the picture theory are things it would be insane to believe. So clearly the view I will present, when compared to the most embracing interpretations, is a partial and selective one. It would be another kind of madness, one I am just as eager to disown, to suppose that my own favoured selection is the only possible one. That is pretty well the last remark in this paper about other commentators. I trust my reticence entitles me to be presumed catholic until proven non-conformist.

1. The most straightforward way to establish the focus of my exposition is to cite some texts.

The proposition *shows* its sense.

The proposition *shows* how things stand, *if* it is true. And it *says* that they do so stand. [4.022]

This showing of what is said is distinct from, though related to, the showing of what cannot be said. Instead of 'a proposition shows its sense' we might say that it *expresses* its sense, where to express a sense is to *give* the sense in a much fuller or more immediate way than merely identifying that sense. Dummett makes the contrast between, say, a statement of Euclid's parallel postulate and the singular term 'Euclid's parallel postulate'.¹

Either will serve to identify a certain thought, but only the statement of it will *convey* that thought. One might try to explain this contrast by observing that someone might understand a singular term identifying a thought without knowing the thought, whereas one who understands a statement of a thought knows what thought is stated. This is right, but it does not go far enough. For this way of drawing the contrast would equally apply to that between a singular term like 'that true English sentence most notorious amongst philosophers' and a canonical or structural-descriptive singular term like 'Snow is white'. Understanding the canonical term takes you right to the sentence meant,

whereas understanding the first leaves you some tedious factual knowledge short of it. But even the minimally short *a priori* route from a canonical term to its meaning is too long to model the immediacy of propositional *expression*, which must be transparent to the point of disappearance. Someone who understands an *expression* of a sense *is thereby possessed of* that sense. This is one aspect of the way propositions work which the picture theory takes very seriously, and which it can help us to get clear about.

A second quotation:

That the elements of the picture are combined in a definite way represents that the things are so combined. [2.15]

Understanding the transparency of propositional representation, I shall be claiming, is very largely a matter of appreciating the force of the 'so' in this sentence. It will take me quite some time to work back around to this, however. For the moment I'll remark only that 'so' implies a kind of *identity* rather than any weaker form of correspondence.

A third and final group of texts:

In the picture and the pictured there must be something identical in order that one can be a picture of the other at all.

What the picture must have in common with reality ... is its picturing form.

The picture represents its object from without (its standpoint is its form of representation), and thus the picture represents its object rightly or falsely.

[2.161, 2.17, 2.173 (partial quotations)]

Here the identity implied by 'so' is specified as identity of form. This common form is said to constitute the proposition's external standpoint on what it represents. The challenge of the passage is (to mimic the words of 2.0122) to understand how what looks like dependence can be a form of independence.

These, then, are the aspects of the picture theory that I aim to emphasize, to expound, and, so far as possible, to defend. But if these identify the aim I need also to establish an origin, a basic conception of the character and aims of the theory from which to work. And that involves the quickest of dips into the prehistory of the *Tractatus*.

2. Again, a quotation will help me be brief.

I believe that all our problems can be traced down to the *atomic* propositions. This you will see if you try to explain how the copula in such a proposition has meaning.... I now think about 'Socrates is human'. (Good old Socrates!) [NB p.121]

This famous quotation derives from a letter to Russell of 1912, and can be seen as establishing the focus of the research that culminates in the *Tractatus*. The problems it mentions are the problems of logic left unanswered by *Principia*, not, I think, questions of detail concerning the formal development of the logicist programme, but questions of great generality about the logic's applicability and epistemological status. What, most broadly, is needed to secure this status, and what Frege's theory of sense and reference had aimed to provide, is an account which presents the ways in which propositions relate inferentially to one another as but another aspect of how they severally relate to the world they describe. The most fruitful perspective on the picture theory is to regard it as a response to the inadequacies Wittgenstein detected in Frege's attempt to provide such an account.

3. On Frege's theory (as Wittgenstein reads it) a proposition's having meaning (*Sinn*, or sense) is a matter of its correlation with an item in an abstract realm, a thought. The realm of thoughts is abstract in that it is timeless, changeless, and isolated from the world of things. (Its causal isolation is not complete. Thoughts are efficacious through their exemplification in the states of thinkers and utterers, but this is a one-way connection which confers no sensitivity on the abstract realm they inhabit.) A proposition's being true or false, on the other hand, must be a matter of how things are in the world of things. Now what is the connection between the abstract world of thoughts and the actual world of things that brings it about that the occupants of the first *non-accidentally* have properties which depend on the disposition of the second? It appears that the world of thoughts, in virtue of its isolation, would be what and as it is if the world of things were quite different; even, it seems, if there were no such world.

But now what sense can we make of logic on this view? On the one hand, it seems that even if there were no world of things, there would still have to be logic. For it

is internal to the occupants of the world of thoughts that they be so and so inferentially related: that A is implied by B, or entails C, must, whatever else is involved in the identity of thoughts, be an internal feature of it. But on the other hand, how could there be logic? For a logical relation between two thoughts has to do with how the truth or falsity of one constrains the truth or falsity of the other. And for this kind of relation to obtain between thoughts depends, on the present conception, on something external to them: that a world of things be so constituted and disposed as to confer on thoughts the properties whose distribution logical relations are to constrain.

Wittgenstein aims to secure the status of logic by disarming the threat of disunity lying in the contingency of the relation between Frege's world of thoughts and the world of things. Neither of these notions survives in the *Tractatus*. The actual world of things is replaced, in the opening passages, by a world of facts; the world of thoughts becomes, instead of a further and hopefully parallel realm of actuality, logical space. In this way the connection between thought and truth becomes as intrinsic as that between a possibility and its actualization: how things are determines the truth and falsity of thoughts in the same way as the presence of a physical object determines the containing space.

4. This sketch of the aims of the picture theory gives a central role to the metaphor of logical space. The present section offers a first, simple unpacking of that metaphor.

A space is, in one sense, a manifold. (Perhaps we might even allow ourselves to say, an "infinite given manifold".) It is manifold in that it contains within it many places; the places are related to the containing space as part to whole, not as objects to a concept, or a general notion that applies to them. Part of what is meant by this is that the places are related to each other by the kind of relation which constitutes the space. These relations are internal to the places they relate: if a place were not, as it is, between two other places, it would not be the place that it is; and if a place were not somehow related to all other places constituting the space it would not be a place in space.

A place is a possibility of existence. A place in physical space is the possibility of the existence of a physical object. A place in logical space is the possibility of the obtaining of a state of affairs [3.411]. A physical place, as we think of it, is a possibility of various kinds of existence. A place may be occupied or unoccupied, and if occupied may be occupied in various ways: there may be an apple there, or an orange. The

general notion of a space, however, survives transition into cases where the possibilities of existence are variously modified from this central example. So we can think of visual space, whose places can be occupied in different ways, by different colours, but cannot be unoccupied. By contrast, the purest kind of physical atomism, which views the world as the upshot of the distribution of undifferentiated simple things, does allow for unoccupied places, but all those places that are occupied are occupied in the same way; the complete story of the world would simply record which places are occupied, which not.

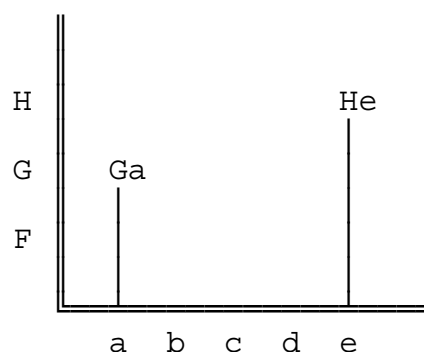
Wittgenstein's logical atomism involves a transition more like, but not completely like, that involved in physical atomism. A place in logical space cannot be variously occupied -- now by an apple, now an orange -- since each place is the possibility of the obtaining of a particular state of affairs. (So nothing 'moves' from place to place.) But unlike the model of physical atomism we cannot conclude that the place occupiers are undifferentiated, or of a single kind. Indeed, beyond the formal property of being place occupiers, states of affairs, there is no kind of thing they all are. A further disanalogy with the case of physical atomism, a corollary of absence of movement, concerns time. Most of us think of physical space as persisting through time, and its manner of occupancy as variable across time. But logical space, as Wittgenstein conceives it, is not something *in* time; rather, time is in it [2.0251].

Since each place in logical space is the possibility of the existence of a particular state of affairs, the internal relations between the places are equivalent to internal relations between their possible occupants. But the connectedness of logical space cannot be allowed to depend on its places being occupied. If the relatedness of two points in space were to consist ultimately in the relation between two states of affairs, then in the absence of those states of affairs, and hence of the relation between them, the space would, as it were, fall apart. So for the necessity of the connectedness of space to be compatible with the contingency of its occupants, this connectedness has to consist ultimately in something that persists, is fixed, however the state of the world may vary. This fixed, persistent thing Wittgenstein terms the *substance* of the world; it comprises what he calls *objects*. (Note again that the dimension of variation referred to is modal, not temporal. So nothing said here connects the permanence or fixedness of objects by more than loose metaphor with eternal existence.) If it is in objects that the relatedness

of logical space fundamentally consists then, as Wittgenstein says, "Objects contain the possibility of all situations" [2.014].

Substance being what exists independently of whatever is the case [2.024], of how logical space is occupied, the objects it comprises must not themselves be thought of as space occupiers. They are rather analogous to planes,ⁱⁱ at whose point of intersection a state of affairs may lie. But we should not run away with this conclusion to draw specious consequences outside of the metaphor. For instance, since logical space is not physical space, and is not phenomenal space, that objects are not things in logical space does not imply that they are not occupants of phenomenal, or physical space. There may not be a great deal to be said for either of these suggestions, but the articulation of the metaphor does not rule them out.

A mercifully simple example of a logical space -- a space with no more dimensions than a blackboard -- is that required for the explanation of syllogistic reasonings. Along one axis would be ranged the members of the domain, along the other the properties *F*, *G*, *H*. These are the *objects* that, in an obvious sense, contain all possibilities.



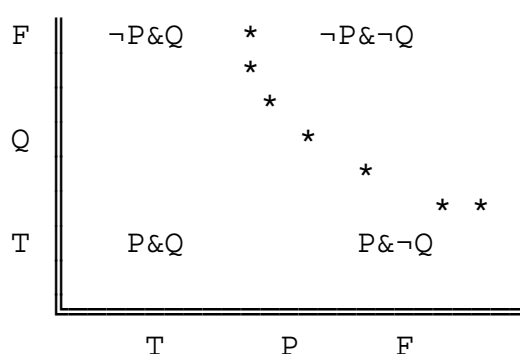
Each point of intersection is the place of a possible *elementary state of affairs*, the totality of such places constituting an unchanging space which may be variously occupied. Any complete description of the world will represent some subclass of these points as occupied, so we may as well identify *possible worlds* with subclasses of elementary states of affairs. The actual world is of course one such class: "the facts in logical space are the world" [1.12].

5. There are two things to note regarding this first account of the metaphor of logical space.

5a. First, that it copes neatly with the initial, defining appearance of the notion (that at 1.12) indicates that our exposition has captured the central sense of the metaphor of

logical space. But it has to be admitted that not everything fits so well; and in particular, not the kind of general sentence, 'Some F is G ' for instance, that actually crops up in syllogisms. Such a sentence, which presents what Wittgenstein call a *situation*, or *Sachlage*, effects a division between possible worlds in which it is true and those in which it is false. The notion of division here, taken over from Wittgenstein, cries out for spatial interpretation; but our present understanding of the metaphor affords nothing to be divided.

Although it may be right to say, on the present conception, that logical space is the space of possible worlds, it would not be right to say, as Stenius does, that "the real (actual) world occupies only one 'point' in the logical space of possible worlds".ⁱⁱⁱ On our view the points are occupied by *Sachverhalte*, elementary states of affairs. Different possible worlds correspond not to different places in logical space, but to different *determinations* of the whole of space. What Stenius describes is, however, a clearly intelligible model. In this alternative model logical space will have as many dimensions as there are elementary states of affairs. The possible values of each dimension are restricted to two, the obtaining and the non-obtaining of that state of affairs. So a rather thin, blackboard space defined by two states of affairs has four points of intersection, each of which represents a possible world.



Any fully determinate description of the world represents it as occupying one of these points. But this model also makes room for the notion of a less than fully determinate description that pins the world down only to some region of logical space. So, to persist with our trivial example, a proposition equivalent to ' $P \vee Q$ ' divides the space, as shown, into those possible worlds in which it is true and those in which it is false.

It is plain that certain remarks in the *Tractatus* are best interpreted by reference to this second model of logical space; but just as plain that this second model must be accepted additionally to, and cannot displace, the model first sketched. It is a nice question, to what extent was Wittgenstein conscious of his oscillation between these models. The remarks 3.4ff, I think, suggest the answer, no very great extent.^{iv}

5b. The second observation concerns what might be called the metaphysics of logical space. In the models I have presented the logical space of possibilities is a space with no centre and no vantage point; a world is simply possible, not possible at world 1, or accessible from world 2. Noting this, we might be led by analogy to think of S5 models of modal reasoning, and thus to detect in Wittgenstein a commitment to absolutist or objectivist notions of possibility and necessity, notions whose intelligibility recent non-cognitivists, and perhaps Wittgenstein himself later in his career, have been disposed to doubt. To challenge the S4 principle (and hence S5) in defence of conventionalism or anthropocentrism is, according to these philosophers, to take seriously our position in and point of view on the world. When we consider this, it seems natural to allow that other viewpoints, of whose existence we can in outline conceive, may not be wholly transparent to us, so that what is inconceivable to us might have been conceivable, had certain very general but still empirical features of our world or ourselves been different from what they are.

It is, I think, in keeping with the *Tractatus* to counter that this thought takes *only half-seriously* our viewpoint on the world and the centredness of our concepts: to ask, in effect, *where we are standing* when we make this kind of remark. That is not a question I want to press further here. I mention it only to warn against hasty inferences from incidental features of the metaphor.

6. Our interest in the notion of logical space lay in the promise it held out of elucidating the connections between thought, the meaningfulness of propositions, and truth. We've been led to the conclusion that to think, or to utter a meaningful proposition, is to present a possible existence in, or determination of, logical space; this thought or utterance is then true precisely if space is so determined.

Wittgenstein catalogues the virtues of this account in the remarks following 4.02. These virtues are all aspects of the way the account cuts between two intolerable extremes. The first, which I've claimed Wittgenstein found echoes of in Frege, leaves meaning unconnected with the world: a proposition has meaning by expressing a certain thought, conception, or idea, but it remains a philosophical problem what any of these has to do with the way reality is laid out. The second so securely cements meaningfulness to the facts -- by holding, say, that a proposition is a signal of, or a description of, a fact -- that it becomes mysterious how a meaningful proposition can be

false. In distinction from either of these, Wittgenstein offers a theory which ties the meaning of a proposition intrinsically into whatever reality may confer on it its truth, without allowing its meaningfulness to presuppose that it is true. In this way the theory explains in one stroke the meaningfulness of false propositions, as well as what has come to be called the 'creativity' or the 'generative' aspect of language, the fact that "we understand the propositional sign without having its sense explained to us" [4.02]. To understand the proposition is to know what place it presents as occupied; to know this it suffices to know the coordinates of the place, and each coordinate, differently combined, will contribute to the identification of a range of related places. 'Creativity' is thus just another side of the fact that "one can understand [the proposition] without knowing whether it is true" [4.023].

7. All these are straightforward consequences of the metaphor of logical space; they are as securely established as the metaphor is appropriate. But how far is that? If it was legitimate to challenge Frege with the question, "What connects the thoughts we express with the world that is to confer on them their truth or falsity?", it cannot be any less legitimate to ask of the present theory, "What connects our picturing-propensities with the space of possible worlds?". How do we know that we are not, as it were, trying to represent a two-dimensional space as characterised by the presence in it of a three-dimensional cube?

We have to distinguish two versions of this question. In one version it presents a variety, perhaps the most fundamental variety, of scepticism: how can we be assured that our thinking latches onto the world at all? It would take more time and mind than I have to decide whether Wittgenstein has any kind of answer to that question. All that need be said here is that he certainly does not confront it head on (but then nobody who tried that ever got anywhere). Equally certain, though, is that this is not the version of the question that corresponds to the challenge presented to Frege. That challenge alleged, not a lack of certainty or epistemological guarantee in the proffered explanation of thought-world connections, but the lack of any such explanation. And to the explanatory, rather than the justificatory, version of the question Wittgenstein has plenty to say.

In explaining how the meaning of a proposition is independent of its truth it was enough to remark that the meaningfulness of a proposition is secured by the mere existence of a place in logical space, not by its being occupied. But in this new context

we should recognize that to have the meaningfulness of a proposition rest on its possible truth is to have things, in a centrally important way, the wrong way around.

Just how important this is for Wittgenstein's theory is shown by his repeated insistence on the point. 2.203 has: "The picture contains the possibility of the state of affairs it represents". The same is said of thoughts at 3.02: "The thought contains the possibility of the situation of which it is the thought. What is thinkable is also possible."

Most fully we read of propositions at 3.4: "The proposition determines a place in logical space. The existence of the logical place is guaranteed by the existence of the constituent parts alone, by the existence of the significant proposition." How a thought carries this logical guarantee of its possible truth is explained at 3.03. To think is to present a possible existence in logical space by means of its coordinates. But one cannot present by its coordinates anything that will not 'fit' into the space: the 'depth' of a cube, as it were, simply has no coordinates in the plane.

That one might represent in language anything which 'contradicts logic' is as incoherent a supposition as that one might, in geometry, represent by its coordinates a figure which contradicts the laws of space, or give the coordinates of a point that does not exist. [3.032]

We cannot, then, think anything 'unlogical', for to do that we should have to be thinking 'unlogically' [3.03]. The idea that we might be thinking and yet failing to present a possible state of affairs simply gets no grip on Wittgenstein's theory: what defines the possibilities of how things might be defines also the possibilities in, that is, what constitutes, thought.

8. Central to this line of argument is the dual role of the notion of coordinates, both as what structures logical space and as that through which the occupants of the space are represented. In the simple model I first sketched the coordinates of space were the objects. But it is not by means of objects, but rather my means of the signs for those objects in language, that we represent states of affairs. So the question arises whether the argument will hold together when the dual role of the notion of coordinates is divided between objects, as the containers and determinants of worldly possibility, and their names or other representatives in language or thought. And as we normally think of

naming it seems like a leap of faith, or even a kind of superstition, to suppose that it will. For this would apparently be to suppose that a name will take over the role and character of the object it names, contriving to shape the possibilities of thought in a manner parallel to the way its object shapes the possibilities of existence. It is, indeed, easy to read some such superstition into the way Wittgenstein speaks of names as the representatives, or proxies, of objects:

The possibility of propositions is based on the principle of objects having signs as their representatives. [4.0312]

Name-object pairings thus constitute the fundamental link between language and reality; and that such a link should carry the weight of Wittgenstein's argument seems hardly credible.

Having got this far, that conclusion would be dispiriting. But we need not rest with it. There are clear indications how we might advance beyond the crude picture of Wittgenstein's thought as involving naïve reliance on an almost magical view of naming.

One lies in the *Notebooks* source of the passage just quoted (25.12.14). There Wittgenstein follows it with: "Thus in the proposition something has *something else* as its proxy. But there is also the *common cement*". This passage suggests that to understand the possibility of naming, of how something in a proposition can be a stand in for something else, we must also find something in the proposition something *common*, that does not represent anything other than itself.

A second indication concerns our hasty identification of name-object links as the fundamental points of connection between language and reality. For at 2.151-2.1511 Wittgenstein offers another, not obviously equivalent, candidate for the same role:

The pictorial form is the possibility that things are combined with one another as are the elements of the picture.

That is how the picture is connected with reality; it reaches right up to it.

Both of these indications point in the same direction. For the second identifies the something "common" spoken of in the first: the way the elements of the picture combine with one another to constitute it, and the way the objects might possibly combine with one another in a state of affairs. So they point, in effect, straight back to my first

quotation from the letter to Russell, which spoke of the difficulty and importance of explaining "how the Copula in such a proposition [as 'Socrates is human'] has meaning". For the role of the copula in a proposition is not to be the representative of anything, but to indicate how its representing elements are therein combined.

9. Let's briefly review how we got to this point. We began by pressing Wittgenstein with the question he presented to Frege: how, in thinking, do we contrive to represent the world? How, by having a thought or uttering a proposition, do we latch onto a content which we can be assured is not, as it were, radically unfounded -- where to say this is to say that, whilst the contingencies of the world may render our thought false, they cannot bring it about that we have failed to have a significant thought. The answer to this worry was, in a certain sense, deflationary: *that* is how language works; just that is *what it is* to think, or for a proposition to be significant. But when further pressed this answer appeared to involve a further level of dubiously grounded confidence, this time in the ability of name-object links to hold our thinking in some kind of congruence with reality. An unsympathetic response to this appearance would be to conclude that we had uncovered the brute metaphysical commitment that sustains the whole theory. A more sympathetic response to the question of how referential ties sustain the congruence of language and reality would be to look for an answer parallel to that given to the analogous question about thought: for a name to reflect the logical or formal properties of an object is *just part of what it is* for the name to refer to that object. Most recently, we have seen that the place to look for this answer is in the role that the notion of *pictorial form* plays in the discussion of picturing at 2.1ff.

At least part of the account of representation offered there is familiar. The simplest representation of the world is a model or picture of an elementary state of affairs. Such a picture is, in Wittgenstein's phrase, "articulate" [cf. 3.141]. That is, it is not a jumble or mixture, but a determinate structure of discrete elements, and consists in the fact that these elements are combined in a definite way. These elements act, in the context of the picture, as the representatives of objects; the coordinations between elements of the picture and objects jointly constitute what Wittgenstein calls the *picturing relation*. These coordinations make it a picture; that is, it is through the picturing relation that the determinate combination of elements in the picture represents that the coordinated things are so combined.

This deliberately partial account, as we saw, leaves everything resting on the name-object links, the picturing relation. The account is partial in that it excludes all mention of the notion of pictorial form. And the suggestion we want to try out is that some of the philosophical weight of the theory can be taken off the name-object links by reinstating this notion in its proper place.

This is none too easy. The difficulty, first remarked by Ramsey,^v derives from the fact that "pictorial form" receives, in the space of a page or so of text, what appear to be three different and independent definitions. It is first said to be the possibility of the structure of the picture, the possibility, that is, that the picture's elements are combined as they are to constitute the picture [2.15]. It is then immediately said to be rather a possibility concerning the objects coordinated with the picture-elements, namely, that they are combined with one another in the same way as the picture elements are combined [2.151] And finally it is identified in 2.17 as what a picture must have in common with reality in order to represent it at all. What we need to do, then, is to solve for "pictorial form" in these three equations; or if that is too ambitious -- if these three do not uniquely determine the notion of pictorial form -- then at any rate to show how these three could all be intelligible things to say about some single and unified notion of form.

Let us start with 2.15:

The connexion of the elements of the picture is called its structure, and the possibility of this structure is called the pictorial form of the picture.

We should think of the pictorial form of the picture as constituted by the form of its elements, in the following sense. A proposition, for instance, is a definite combination of expressions. As elements of a language, rather than mere marks, these expressions have as internal features certain possibilities of combination with other expressions in propositional contexts. These possibilities of combination are internal to an expression in that they are essential to its identity as an expression: mere sameness of physical mark does not make two signs tokens of the same expression; it is further required that the two signs symbolize in the same way, and this in turn requires that they be subject to the same rules of use. Wittgenstein calls an expression's potential for combination with other expressions the *form* of the expression. So to talk of the pictorial form of a proposition is

to draw attention to the fact that any particular propositional structure is an actualization of possibilities of use built into the forms of its constituent expressions.

Moving on to 2.151, this same pictorial form is said to be:

the possibility that the objects are combined with one another as are the elements of the picture.

Now if the combining possibilities of names could be assumed to line up exactly with those of the corresponding objects, then this would be a straightforward consequence of the preceding remark. That the picture is an actualization of possibilities internal to its elements would ensure the potential existence of an elementary state of affairs similarly exemplifying corresponding possibilities internal to the coordinated objects. But what worried us was why we should assume any such alignment. To see this we must leave 2.151, and attend instead to its previously quoted implication: that *just this* is how the picture is linked with reality [2.1511]. Since we have, in the representing relation, a further and more obvious applicant for the job of connecting pictures with the world, the most natural way to understand this remark is to suppose that alignment between the combinatory possibilities for names and objects is a condition of the representing relation. And this is indeed what Wittgenstein goes on to make explicit:

To be a picture a fact must have something in common with what it pictures.

In the picture and what it pictures there must be something identical, in order that the one can be a picture of the other at all.

What the picture must have in common with reality in order to be able to picture it as it does, truly or falsely, is its pictorial form. [2.16, 2.161, 2.17]

This is enough to justify a deflationary response at the point where we were inclined to detect a kind of superstition. There *can* be no mystery over why the significant combination of names in a proposition should present a state of affairs which is likewise a possibility for the objects named. Unless it did so there would be nothing in common between the proposition and reality, so there would be no picturing relation holding between the two; and then the 'names' would simply not be names of those objects.

10. It may seem that we are again left with a brute requirement at the bottom of the theory. For what in turn motivates the demand that there be something in common between a picture and what it pictures? I intend to offer two different answers to this question. The first will connect the idea of picturing form as an external standpoint with the requirement that the meaning of a proposition be independent of its truth. The second will take up again the issue of transparency left hanging since the introduction. It will link the requirement that there be 'something common' between picture and pictured with Wittgenstein's contextualism, and through that with the inexpressibility of picturing form.

11. The first answer might be put, somewhat paradoxically, in the form: the picture needs something in common with what it represents in order to be independent of it. Or, to remind ourselves of how Wittgenstein himself expresses the point at 2.173:

The picture represents its object from without (its standpoint is its form of representation); therefore the picture represents its object truly or falsely.

A picture needs something in common with reality to constitute the viewpoint from which it can represent reality, independently of whether it represents it truly or falsely; without this 'something in common', therefore, there would be no securing that the meaningfulness of a proposition is independent of its truth.

Given the identification of this 'something common' as the possibilities of combination of the picture-elements and their corresponding objects, we could present Wittgenstein's reasoning for this conclusion as follows. A class of names cannot represent any state of affairs; we may, in that way, be able to draw up a list of things, but never to say that anything is so. So we must acknowledge that in a proposition the manner of combination of the names plays some role in its meaning. But the combination of the names cannot in turn have significance by representing something other than itself, in the way that a name does. For if that were so then its significance, like that of a name, would depend on that 'something else' actually existing. And then we should be left with a choice of impossible positions. On the one hand, if the actual existence of the 'something else', signified by the combination of the names, suffices to cement the referents of the names into an actual state of affairs, then the proposition

cannot be significant unless those referents are indeed so cemented; unless, that is, the proposition is true. On the other hand, if the actual existence of whatever is signified by the combination of the names is insufficient to so cement the referents of the names, then it must instead be one more thing awaiting combination; but in that case the proposition can represent only a class of things, and never get so far as to represent how things are.

Putting the points of this argument together, we could say that there must be something common between a picture and what it pictures if the combination of picture elements is to represent that the objects are *so* combined; for "so" here just means "in the same way". And according to the picture theory to do this is just what it is to represent that anything at all is *so*.

12. The second answer starts from a comparison of the notions of "logical form" (logische Form), "pictorial/picturing form" (Form der Abbildung) and "representational form" (Form der Darstellung). It seems to me that the issues here are less tangled than many expositions pretend. The crucial passage is 2.181-2.19:

If the pictorial form is logical form, then the picture is called a logical picture.
Every picture is *also* a logical picture. (On the other hand, for example, not every picture is spatial.)

A logical picture can picture the world.

According to this passage logical form is simply the least determinate picturing form. Different pictures may have different pictorial forms, but in being all pictures they share in logical picturing form, the form of reality. In one sense, then, it is true to say that a single picture has distinct picturing forms: a picture may be a spatial picture and a logical picture. An example may serve to bring these points together. If we consider an architect's sketch of, say, the proposed development of Paternoster Square, and contrast with it first the architect's drawings in plan and elevation, and second the verbal description of it he might give, we can say that only the sketch has coloured form, the sketch and the drawings share the form of spatiality, and all three share logical picturing form. (Note that in saying this we do not deny that the drawing may use coloured inks; and of course his verbal description, if written, will be extended in space.) The logical

picturing form which all share is simply the least determinate, and so the most widely applicable, notion of form.

(There is no place in this scheme for a distinct notion of "representational form". It seems that "Form der Darstellung" is merely a stylistic variant for "Form der Abbildung". The phrase occurs only twice in the work, at 2.173&4, in contexts insufficient to fix for it an independent sense. This suggestion would explain why Wittgenstein did not complain, in his detailed comments on the first translation, about its suppressing any distinction between the two, and why he accepted "form of representation" as a rendering of "Form der Abbildung".)

If there is no more to it than this, why did Wittgenstein complicate his exposition by approaching the least determinate notion that centrally concerned him through the determinate and parochial? I believe that the order of presentation here reflects an order in the development of Wittgenstein's thought, and that he maintained this order in the finished work, in the belief that some of the transparency that determinate forms give to the notion of picturing would be inherited by the notion of a logical picture. To understand what is meant by transparency here consider the very different ways in which colour figures in a naturalistic painting and a map of the colonialized world. (I mean the sort of map that once served, merely by its expanses of pink, to bring pride to a British chest.) Colour belongs to the representative powers of both, but in the painting its manner of representation is transparent. One does not have to consult the key to determine its significance, since it represents nothing other than itself. In the painting, but not in the map, a feature of reality has been simply taken up into the system of representation; in the map, but not in the painting, colours are used as names. The idea of something's being taken up into the system of representation is connected, I think, with what Wittgenstein later said about the way in which a colour sample serves, not as an anchor to which language might be tied by ostension, but as itself an element of the system of representation. A sample so used becomes an instrument of the language, but even so it does not become a *name* whose significance has to be learned.

13. The story is endlessly told of how Wittgenstein fell upon the picture theory while considering how, in French law courts, models are used to clarify claims about, for instance, a traffic accident. This story may be, for all I know (or care), completely apocryphal; it is nonetheless significant. Such a model has a particular transparency, in

that how things are represented as being can be *read off* from the model. Plainly this transparency is *not* to be attributed to the model's being a completely a non-conventional form of representation (whatever that might mean). Conventions, standard to the court or established explicitly on this occasion, are certainly in play: the time of the model is not the time of what it models; the colours, or relative sizes, of the toy cars and people may or may not be intended to be significant. The transparency of the model is owed to the fact that, in the context of these conventions, some at least of the features of the represented situation are taken up into the manner of representation, and so represent nothing outside of themselves. Because of this the model can be said to represent that things were *so*, where what "so" means is shown by the model itself.

The notion of a logical picture is the least determinate abstraction from such a model that retains the grounds of its transparency. For Wittgenstein wishes to maintain that every logical picture, every proposition, can similarly be said to represent that things are *so*, and that a proposition *shows* its sense; and he takes the possibility of maintaining this, as we saw, to rest on an identity between the picture and what it pictures. The notion of a proposition must share with these suggestive models the feature that its representing power rests on its being characterised by something that does not represent anything outside of itself.

The law court presumably used little toy cars and people, things that look like cars and people. But this is of course incidental. They might as well have used little cardboard tiles with letters written on them. What is significant is that the point of saying that such a piece of cardboard is to stand in for Jacques's truck, and another for Jean's 2CV, stands and falls only with the possibility of bringing these pieces into relations which represent how the corresponding things were related at the time of the accident. Doubtless, also, the relations onto which the models were put were spatial relations. But this too is inessential: we can suppose that the spatial order of the vehicles is represented by a temporal order in which their proxies are placed. Properties of objects and relations between objects, just as much as objects themselves, may have non-naturalistic proxies in the picture, without the essential identity of picture and pictured being lost. This persisting identity consists in this: that the proxies in the picture are combined in a definite way represents that the things are *so* combined. All material identity -- colour for colour, space for space -- having been abstracted away, what remains is identity of form: that the combination exemplified by the proxies in the

picture is an exemplification of the combinatory possibilities of the coordinated things. For only in that way can those proxies be indeed proxies for those things:

Only the proposition has sense; only in the context of a proposition does a name have meaning. [3.3]

Wittgenstein does not call this his "fundamental thought". But in my view he might have done, since it is the ground of the thesis he does dignify with that name:

My fundamental thought is that the "logical constants" do not represent [are not proxies]. That the logic of the facts cannot be represented [that nothing can go proxy for the logic of the facts]. [4.0312]

14. In this second answer I have presented the formal identity of a proposition and what it represents as reached through a kind of abstraction which will preserve the transparency of picturing. In the simplest, suggestive case that transparency was achieved through certain natural features of the models we envisaged representing nothing but themselves. But in the process of abstraction these features were in turn replaced by proxies in the picture. The grounds of the picture's ability to picture, of its transparency, become, as it were, less and less a visible matter, and more purely an intelligible matter, as this abstraction proceeds.

On this way of presenting the issue, consideration of the picture theory takes us straight to a version of the thesis of the inexpressibility of form, which now presents itself as the impossibility of a stage of abstraction beyond what I have claimed is its final stage. That would be a stage of abstraction in which the formal, logical combination of things in reality would be represented, not by that same formal combination of their proxies in the proposition, but would in turn be given its own proxy in the proposition. The idea of doing this, however, is immediately seen to be incoherent. For proxies are proxies only in virtue of their logical combination. The elements of a proposition can represent things in the world, only because their manner of combination represents nothing but itself.

Peter M. Sullivan

Department of Philosophy
University of Stirling
Stirling FK9 4LA
Scotland

NOTES

i.E.g. *The Interpretation of Frege's Philosophy* (Duckworth, London 1981) pp. 40 ff.;
also "Frege's myth of the third realm", in *Frege and Other Philosophers* (Clarendon
Press, Oxford 1991) p. 256.

ii.This comparison was first suggested to me by Roger White.

iii.Erik Stenius, *Wittgenstein's Tractatus* (Cornell U.P., Ithaca 1960) p. 43.

iv.In this connection, compare Stenius, *op. cit.* p. 54.

v.In his "Critical notice", *Mind* 32, 1923.