

## Pictures, language and reality <sup>(1)</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

The focus of this paper is the evolution of Ludwig Wittgenstein's use of the word 'picture' (*Bild*) throughout his works, from the *Tractatus* to the *Philosophical Investigations*. The author's view is that the study of this evolution helps penetrating into the more general transformation of Wittgenstein's thought, which has now become a major area of study and puzzlement.

1. 'What is the link between language and reality?' And 'what role do pictures play in that link?' These questions appear centrally in the writings of Ludwig Wittgenstein, both in the "first" and the "second" philosophies.

It is the purpose of this paper to sketch the transformation of Wittgenstein's attitude towards these two questions and the reasons for this transformation.

Section 2. introduces an interpretation of the *Tractatus*'s views on pictures and propositions, that section 3. defends against Miss Anscombe's analysis. Section 4. shows how, on this interpretation, the *Philosophical Investigations* reacted to, and rejected, the tractarian "picture theory of propositions". Section 5. analyzes the link between grammar and pictures in the later writings. And section 6. tries to explain the

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(1) I am truly indebted to Bradford Petrie and Ed Minar, who read various versions of this paper. Another version was presented at the 14th International Wittgenstein Symposium in Kirchberg am Wechsel (Austria) under the name 'Pictures, from Logic to grammar'.

kind of pictoriality Wittgenstein finally saw in language in its relation to reality<sup>(2)</sup>.

2. In TR, a proposition functions *essentially* as a picture (see e.g. TR 4.011, 4.03). In order for a picture to be able to depict a state of affairs, it must share the same form, it must have the form of reality, which is the logical form. Also, in order to be a picture, a picture must have a pictorial or depicting relation, which is the coordination, or correlation, of its elements with things (TR 2.1513 and 2.1514).

The questions I would like to discuss are: how exactly are we to understand 2.1513 and 2.1514? What exactly is that pictorial or depicting relation? How is it established? Is it external or internal to the picture? Is it determined by the picture itself or by the user of the picture (or of the propositional sign)? Even if a complete answer to these questions is not reached, they will be shown to illuminate the relation and the differences between TR and PI.

In Ogden's translation we read: "2.1513 According to this view the representing relation (*abbildende Beziehung*) which makes it a picture, also belongs to the picture. 2.1514. The representing relation consists of the coordinations of the elements of the picture and of the things". This means that the correlations between the elements of the picture and the things (in the state of affairs it depicts) is a part of the picture, a part without which it couldn't be a picture but a mere fact, a fact without any "depicting (*abbildende*)" power or capacity.

Wittgenstein's thought is accordingly very clear. A picture is a fact, i.e. an organized set of elements, but in order to be a picture (i.e. in order to be able to depict another fact) it must have something that not all facts have: a coordination of its elements with those of the fact it depicts (the condition of the possibility of this coordination being the identity of "form"); a picture, in short, is a fact plus that (pictorial) relationship, and it is as a whole that it is a picture<sup>(3)</sup>. This interpretation is very strongly supported e.g. by TR 4.031: "One name stands for one thing, and another for another thing, and they are connected. And so the whole, like a living picture, presents the state of affairs".

The picture *qua* fact is a part of reality. Hence, if we do compare a picture or a

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(2) The following abbreviations are used to refer to Wittgenstein's works:

BB *The Blue and Brown Books* (New York, N. Y.: Harper Torchbooks, 1965).

PG *Philosophical Grammar*, translated by A. Kenny (Berkeley, Ca.: University of California Press, 1978).

PI *Philosophical Investigations*, translated by G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford, England: Basil Blackwell, 1972).

TR *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*, translated by C. K. Ogden (Boston, Mass.: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981).

WWK *Wittgenstein und der Wiener Kreis*, notes by F. Waismann, edited by B. F. McGuinness (Oxford, England: Basil Blackwell, 1967).

Z *Zettel*, translated by G. E. M. Anscombe (Berkeley, Ca.: University of California Press, 1970).

(3) One way to make this possible is to consider the lines of projection as external properties of the signs, as opposed to internal properties which determine the possible facts which the signs can be elements of (and the internal properties are sufficient to play that role even if these external properties are lacking).

proposition with reality (TR 4.05), if we can assert anything by means of it (TR 4.062), if we can assent or dissent to it (TR 4.023)<sup>(4)</sup>, or if we can speak of the picture's agreement with reality and of the picture's truth or falsity (TR, 2.21 and 2.222), it is because the picture has a *sense*, because it has an intention *towards* another part of reality which exists independently. Its having a *sense* is what makes it different from a mere fact, and is symbolized by the addition, to the fact that constitutes it, on Lines of projection.

As expected, the same kind of difference holds between proposition and propositional sign as between picture and fact: "the proposition is the propositional sign in its projective relation to the world" (TR 3.12) and the (propositional) sign "determines a logical form only together with its syntactic application" (TR 3.327). The propositional sign is a mere fact, and a mere fact asserts nothing about reality. Hence "the proposition only asserts something, in so far as it is a picture" (TR 4.03), and "propositions can be true or false only by being pictures of reality" (TR 4.06). The propositional sign doesn't treat of anything, but the proposition treats of reality (TR 4.011), it reaches up to it "through the whole logical space" (TR 3.42)<sup>(5)</sup>.

This shows the link between our problem and the difference between signs and symbols, which I have no room here to discuss (see TR 3.32 and 3.326). But given that a propositional sign is a sign and a proposition is a symbol (see e.g. TR 3.31, 3.32), if the proposition (the picture) didn't have the pictorial relation in addition to the propositional sign (the fact), the sign would determine the proposition, the symbol, whence it would be impossible for two different symbols to have the same sign and yet to signify in different ways (see TR 3.321)<sup>(6)</sup>.

3. Miss Elizabeth Anscombe<sup>(7)</sup> strongly disagrees with the above interpretation, or at least with the part of it that concerns the status of the "lines of projection". She first points out that "this correlation [between signs and things] is in a way quite external" (p. 67); she thus suggests another translation for 2.1513: "According to this conception, the picture must have in addition the depicting relation which makes it into a picture", adding in a note that Ramsey's translation "throws Wittgenstein's quite straightforward idea into obscurity" (note 1, p. 68). Her judgement is that "the correlating is not something that the picture itself does; it is something *we* do". So, the pictorial relationship is something *we* add to the picture in order to make it a picture, it being so far just a "proto-picture (Urbild)". If the elements of the picture are signs and if the object in the depicted fact corresponding to a sign is called the sign's reference, then "here it is 'we' who 'give' a sign its reference" (p. 68).

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(4) TR 4.064: "Every proposition must *already* have a sense; assertion cannot give it a sense; assertion cannot give it a sense, for what it asserts is the sense itself".

(5) Hence it is only "in the context of a proposition", not of a propositional sign, that "a word has meaning (Bedeutung)" (TR 3.3, see also 3.22), because the meaning lies *outside*.

(6) Also, to keep facts and signs separated in this way from pictures and propositions *is* to separate logic from its application (see note 3, note 9 below, and especially TR 5.557).

(7) In her *Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus* (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971). Subsequent references are to this work.

Miss Anscombe then applies what she said of pictures to propositions, and writes: "the reason why the proposition doesn't 'contain its sense' (cf. 3.13) is that the correlations are made by us; we mean the objects by the components of the proposition in 'thinking its sense': this is part of what is meant at 3.11" (p. 69).

In my opinion Miss Anscombe's interpretation leads to the collapsing of two notions; on the one hand, thinking the sense of the proposition, which is how the proposition *as picture* is projected onto what it is already a picture of (TR 3.11, TR 3.12), and on the other hand correlating with objects the elements the proposition has *as fact*<sup>(8)</sup>. But these two things do not take place at the same level. The correlations being made is a requirement before the thinking of the proposition's sense can take place; before, it doesn't have a sense nor even the possibility of one, it is not a picture<sup>(9)</sup>. A picture is always "a picture of its state of affairs" (TR 4.0321, see TR 4.124). And the link between having a sense and presenting a certain (possible) state of affairs is most clearly stated: "One can say, instead of, This proposition has such and such a sense, This proposition presents such and such a state of affairs" (TR 4.031).

A picture-proposition, as description of a possible state of affairs<sup>(10)</sup>, cannot subsist without an appropriate naming. Hence that naming cannot be added to an entity already constituted *as picture*, and must already belong to the proposition.

As to the sense of the proposition, the following things can be said. The proposition has a sense that it does not contain (and this is the difference between a proposition and a thought; a thought has a "content"<sup>(11)</sup>, but is determined by it<sup>(12)</sup>. And through the grasping of that sense, or through the understanding of the proposition, one knows "what is the case, if it is true" (TR 4.024; see also 4.021).

The proposition, or the picture *itself* "agrees with reality or not" (2.21). And this shows that no further interpretation is required. It is the picture that agrees with reality, not the picture after its sense has been thought. Of course, whether it agrees with reality or not can be found out only after its sense has been thought and the proposition has been projected, or after one sees which sense of affairs it presents<sup>(13)</sup>.

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(8) I am not claiming that this distinction had been fully problematized by Wittgenstein at the time of TR. In fact, much of Wittgenstein's later reaction to it, as we shall present it below, could be viewed as the effect of such a problematization.

(9) That the elements of a fact *can be* interpreted (i.e. coordinated with other things) is not essential to the fact. Hence it is not essential to a sign that it can be interpreted, while it is essential that it can be a part of the fact. Thus it becomes clear why "in logical syntax the meaning of a sign ought never to play a role" (TR 3.33).

(10) For pictures and propositions compared to descriptions, see e. g. TR 4.016 and 4.023.

(11) Starting with a propositional sign, to obtain a thought we must *first* "apply" it (which leads to a proposition, which has a sense that it does not yet contain) and *then* "think" it (3.5).

(12) This is to say that we cannot give a proposition a wrong sense (somewhat oddly, this is said of names at TR 5.4732). Why this is so certainly cannot be explicated within Miss Anscombe's interpretation.

(13) Whence a deep but obvious sense to TR 2.224: "It cannot be discovered from the picture alone whether it is true or false".

But to say that a proposition determines its possible sense is not at all to assert of a picture that it *says* of itself that it is a picture of *this* fact, which is impossible on Wittgenstein's account (see TR 3.221, the last phrase). As a matter of fact, this impossibility is linked with the essential reason for which the proposition's sense must remain external to it: a picture can only *show* what it is a picture of, but it cannot *say* that it is a picture of it, no more than it can say its (logical) form, but just displays it.

It is important to see that, with our interpretation above, the inclusion of the lines of projection in the picture does not violate this constraint. "The picture is linked with reality; it reaches up to it" (TR 2.1512) and the "coordinations are as it were the feelers of its elements with which the picturer touches reality" (TR 2.1515), but still the reality reached is not known through a contemplation of the picture alone. (And this is why the picture still needs to be "projected".) The picture and its elements' "feelers" on one hand, and reality on the other, exist independently: the picture is the same whether what it depicts exists or not, or in other words, whether what it shows to be the case if it is true is the case or not; and reality, whether described or not, is what it is<sup>(14)</sup>.

What Miss Anscombe was willing to introduce in TR is the naming of the objects as a practice *we* accomplish. But although the "thinking of the sense of the proposition", which is the "method of projection", may at first appear as a practice, it is certainly not one for the simple reason that it cannot be one. The proposition contains the lines of projection possibly linking its elements with things, not what it can be projected on; it contains the possibility of expressing its sense, not its sense (TR 3.13); but what is essential is that it determines its sense, which is both to say that there is one sense only whose possibility is included in the picture-proposition, and that if a sense (*that* sense) is to be thought at all, it will be along these lines of projection which are predetermined by (because they are included) in the proposition. Of course there is such a thing as "applying the method of projection". But this is, from a tractarian standpoint, a quite obscure notion that is a matter for psychological rather than philosophical investigation.

4. What has been shown is crucial: there is no place in TR for the interpretation of a picture or of a proposition, no place for an indeterminacy of sense, or a plurality of possible senses. This is a point on which the critique of TR by PI and Z is devastating: "A picture (Bild), whatever it may be, can be variously interpreted" (Z #236); "Is there such a thing as a picture, or something like a picture, that forces a particular application on us ...?" (PI #140; the answer is no); "Suppose, however, that not merely the picture of the cube, but also the method of projection comes before our mind? ... —But does this get me any further? Can't I now imagine different applications of this schema too?" (PI #142).

The question is fundamentally: is there something between language and its

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(14) One last point about the necessity to consider the correlations as belonging to the picture. If these were merely external to both the fact and the picture, there would be no reason to call one the fact and the other the picture, for nothing else distinguishes between them. The same point is mentioned by Miss Anscombe (p. 67), but strangely she doesn't seem to see it as a problem for her own interpretation.

application? TR answered no. The position in PI is more complicated, and seems to hesitate between answering yes, and denying the validity of the question. In any case, it doesn't mean that there is a "leap in the dark", a decision or an interpretation standing in need for a justification. This I want to develop a little.

The sections from PI quoted above are extremely important; in fact, their importance is of two kinds. First, they show a direct and deep criticism of the "first" philosophy by the "second": there is no such thing as a picture which would determine, all alone, how it is to be used (i.e. projected). Secondly, they must be seen as the premiss of one of Wittgenstein's most famous discussions in PI, that of following a rule<sup>(15)</sup>. And in *this* discussion, Wittgenstein gives as solution what is *now* the real description of a practice: a rule doesn't contain the infinite set of its instantiations, but there is a following a rule which is not a leap in the dark, there is a "grasping a rule" which is not "an interpretation" (PI #201), but which calls on a practice, a training and a teaching.

The fact is that we do not always interpret a sign *further*, and similarly, that we do not always call on another rule to apply *this* rule. I say "similarly" because of the definition Wittgenstein gives of 'to interpret': to interpret is to replace the expression of a rule by another (PI #201)<sup>(16)</sup>. Why, then, don't we *further* carry out such a "replacement"?

In the case of a symbol, it is because this is how I have learned to use it, and I feel at home (*weil ich heimisch fühlen*): "What happens is not that this symbol cannot be further interpreted: but I do no more interpreting. I do not interpret, because I feel at home in the present *picture*. When I interpret, I step from one level of thought to another" (Z #234, italics mine<sup>(17)</sup>). See also PG p. 79 and Z # 197, where among the possible marks of having found the solution to a "puzzle picture (Vixierbild)", among the reasons for "calling the picture sketched a solution", the notions of "feeling at home in" and "being familiar with" (*wohl kennen, das ist mir bekannt*) are widely used.

Of course, the possibility of interpreting, the logical possibility of replacing, is still open: "The intention seems to interpret, to give the final interpretation, which is not a further sign or picture (*Zeichen oder Bild*), but something – else the thing that cannot be further interpreted. But what we have reached is a psychological, not a logical terminus" (Z #231, see PG p. 146). In this vocabulary, we might say of the picture-

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(15) For an assimilation of 'projecting' and 'following a rule' in TR, see 4.0141. Also, a rule is equivalent to a symbol (TR 5.514).

(16) Because of this definition, it can be very misleading to call the correlation of a picture's elements with things in TR an interpretation. 'Interpretation' does not appear in TR.

(17) In this passage from Z, the meaning of 'picture' is slightly different, it operates a different level. We shall see more examples of this use of 'picture' in what follows. It is very interesting to note that this sense of 'picture' is the one Wittgenstein uses in order to say that TR offers a wrong *picture* of how language functions, but also to notice that if this picture is bad it is for essentially the same reasons as for any picture (see PI p. 184).

propositions of TR: they had the possibility of showing what their own *intention* was, they were giving the final interpretation of themselves<sup>(18)</sup>.

So, we have already seen one kind of reasons in PI for denying this possibility, but more can be found, and I would like to consider two of them.

The first one is that a picture is never such that it contains all the features of the fact it has the *intention* to picture<sup>(19)</sup>. When I *imagine* someone suffering (see Z #621), I can produce a picture, but it will contain nothing which could be compared with his pain (see Z #654 for a parallel case with memory-experience). All the same, I can have a picture of myself doing this or that, but not a picture of myself doing this *yesterday*, because nothing in a picture can correspond to the fact that it is yesterday that I did this, performed this action (see e.g. PI p. 185). And again, it is a mistake to think that what makes a picture of him a "picture of *him*" is a feature of "the picture's likeness (die Ähnlichkeit des Bildes)", or that it is *fixed* by it (PI p. 177; but read also PI #389, which is highly puzzling; see also Z #24 and Z #27 for the case of meaning).

As far as pictures are concerned, the situation is clearly described in PI #297: "Of course, if water boils in a pot, steam comes out of the pot and also pictured steam comes out of the pictured pot. But what if one insisted on saying that there must also be something boiling in the picture of the pot?" That person would be misunderstanding how pictures can, and do function (i.e., serve their purpose).

This leads us to the second kind of reasons, linked with the questions of primary signs and ostensive definition. In TR, we saw propositions being connected to reality through a depicting relationship which is the coordination of its elements (signs) with objects. But the biggest metaphysical claim in TR is precisely the existence of simples, both in reality and in language (TR 2.02 and 3.202). Characteristically enough, the existence of these simples is a requisite for the determinateness of sense (TR 3.23), a necessity for the possibility of forming a "picture of the world" (TR 2.0211) —which shows that in TR ontology is deduced from views on language and its connexion with reality<sup>(20)</sup>.

Ideally, the correlation between a propositional sign and a state of affairs will be made by an association of their respective simples. The problem here is twofold. First, we have no access to these simples<sup>(21)</sup>, and TR never says how this association (or correlation, or co-ordination) ought to be performed, nor even thinks it is of philosophical

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(18) And they were self-explanatory *because* they were expressing the essence of pictoriality (see TR 4.016, 4.02, and later in this paper).

(19) For what follows, see J. Bouveresse, *Le mythe de l'intériorité* (Paris, France: Les Editions de Minuit, 1987), pp. 547-548.

(20) The same idea was expressed by Max Black in his *Companion to Wittgenstein's Tractatus*.

(21) At PI #59, Wittgenstein writes: "A name signifies only what is an *element* of reality. What cannot be destroyed, what remains the same in all changes' ... This was the very expression of a quite particular image, of a particular picture we want to use. For certainly experience does not shew us these elements ... They are the materials from which we construct that picture of reality". See e.g. TR 2.0271.

interest<sup>(22)</sup>. Second, the link between an object named and the name is far too simplistic in TR.

This is notably shown in the context of sensation-language. Repeatedly, Wittgenstein explains that we *first* learn to play with words like 'sensation', 'sorrow', 'thought', and that these (language) games are too complicated to be explained as generated by a "scribble written on the object (or such very trivial relation)" (BB, pp. 172-173)<sup>(23)</sup>.

In his later works, Wittgenstein introduces a new and very different type of connection between the names and the objects they designate. It is not that "only in the context of propositions do words have meaning" as in TR, it is that "only in the stream of thought and life do words have meaning" (Z #173). What Wittgenstein is proposing here is a different "tie-up (*Zusammenhang*)"<sup>(24)</sup> between language and reality, where the "example of something corresponding to the name, and without which it would have no meaning, is a paradigm that is used in connexion with the name in the language game" (PI #55); or also, "in this language game ... if the object ceases to exist, the name, which has done its work in conjunction with the object, can be thrown away" (Z#715).

What Wittgenstein is questioning here is the possibility to view language and reality (the world) as two self-subsistent realms which can be linked together more or less arbitrarily (see e.g. TR 3.315, 3.342), or which can be related thanks to their having the same form, the form of reality: in this picture, the tractarian one, a purely formal agreement between language and reality is warranted *a priori*, by this sharing of the same form. There is, on this view, a language-independent structure of reality and a reality-independent structure of language, and these structures have the same form, they are isomorphic. More generally, Wittgenstein challenges the fundamental assumptions of TR, that a picture describes reality by its internal properties (describes 'the inside' of reality, see 4.023, 4.124), and that the pictorial relation is an internal relation (4.014) based on a "logic of depiction" (4.015)<sup>(25)</sup>.

According to the later Wittgenstein, something in this picture is missing, which is

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(22) See a letter from Wittgenstein to Russell in 1915: "I don't know *what* the constituents of the thought are but I know that it must have constituents which correspond to the words of language. Again the kind of relation of the constituents of the thought and of the pictured fact is irrelevant. It would be a matter of psychology to find out". This, Miss Anscombe writes, "is fantastically untrue", as in "shown by any serious investigation into epistemology, such as Wittgenstein made in *Philosophical Investigations*" (p. 28).

(23) It must however be acknowledged, with J. Bouveresse, *op. cit.*, pp. 446-491, that Wittgenstein never really questioned the possibility of associating names with sensations (see PI #244). When in the context of the private language argument, at PI # 258, he discusses the naming of a sensation as a process *prior* to any private language, what he wants to show is only that we can give no sense to that process if it is to lead to the establishment of a private language.

(24) 'Tie-up' is a (very good) translation by Anscombe. It must be noticed that in TR '*Zusammenhang*' is used both to describe the internal organization of a picture or of a state of affairs, and the link between a proposition and the state of affairs it depicts, *this* link being the sharing of the same form (see TR 4.03).

(25) This criticism of the internal properties and relations brings us back to rules. In TR indeed, a series is produced (or "ordered") by an internal relation, see 4.1252, 5.232.



how both the world and language are given to us, hence a “form of life” and a practice (and thus the teaching and learning of that practice), and, more generally, a language-game: “Thought, Language, now appear to us as the unique correlate, picture, of the world. The concepts: proposition, language, thought, stand in line one behind the other, each equivalent to each. (But what are these words to be used for now? The language-game in which they are to be applied is missing)” (PI #96).

5. Our conclusion was that, according to PI, any picture is deficient in the sense that no picture is apt to play the role TR wanted them to play. Hence, that any serious investigation of concepts such as meaning, thinking, intending, understanding or following a rule requires more than a mere postulation of these perfect but illusory pictures together with the claim that anything beyond that belongs to psychology, not philosophy.

But as to the pictures, we must now consider the following questions: ‘What, if any, is the legitimacy kept by the pictures in the later philosophy?, and ‘What, if any, is the pictoriality still possessed by language?’

Before attempting to answer these questions, one must have a firm grasp on the status of grammar in Wittgenstein’s later works.

In PG pp. 313-314, we read:

“The ‘connection of language with reality’ by means ostensive definitions and the like, doesn’t make grammar inevitable or provide a justification for grammar. The grammar remains a free-floating calculus which can be extended and never supported. The ‘connection with reality’ merely extends language, it doesn’t force anything on it”.

We are very far here from the conception of a “logical syntax” (in TR, and of logic as essence of reality (the logical form is the form of reality), as something “sublime”, as a “pure crystal” (PI #89 and #97). In the later works the emphasis is on grammar, not on logic anymore; logic has been, in effect, replaced by grammar. This claim may appear to be bold, but it is supported by numerous remarks in the later works, especially Z #55: “Like everything metaphysical the harmony between thought and reality is to be found in the grammar of the language”, and PI #371: “*essence* is expressed by grammar”<sup>(26)</sup>.

But we ought not to think that grammar is here to play the role formerly played by logic, or by logical syntax<sup>(27)</sup>. It may be possible to imagine a logical grammar (a grammar that would follow the laws of logic) and a language which would obey that

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(26) It is important here to remember TR 4.016, which says that the passage from figurative (*bildliche*) writing (hieroglyphes) to letters does not jeopardize the “essence of pictoriality (*Wesentliche der Abbildung*).” An important question for us might thus be formulated: is it *this* essence that grammar expresses?

(27) To some extent it seems that the role of grammar is much greater. Compare TR 3.334 (“The rules of logical syntax must follow of themselves, if we only know how every single sign signifies”) and PI #373 (“Grammar tells us what kind of object anything is”).

logical grammar, but that grammar and that language wouldn't in any case be better than *our* grammar and *our* (common) language, or than any other.

There isn't anything as a good or a bad grammar, there can't be anything as a necessary (and justified) grammar. Grammar cannot be necessary, no more than simples are necessary for a language-game to exist, nor for our propositions, our speech, to have a sense.

The danger is above all to adopt a wrong "grammatical *attitude*" (see e.g. PG p. 85) that would prevent us from "seeing the facts" (PI #79). And what is most interesting for our purpose is that, most often, a wrong grammatical attitude is connected with the use of a certain *picture*.

One example is the law of excluded-middle which gives us a bad picture when applied to reports on someone's sensations; we say 'either he has this sensation or he doesn't!' as if we had a clear picture applicable to it, which tells us what it is without ambiguity, while there are conditions that have to be met in order to know what we are speaking about:

"'There is no third possibility' ... But what does that mean? - We use a picture ... it really ... says nothing at all, but gives us a picture ... Here saying 'There is no third possibility' ... expresses our inability to turn our eyes away from the picture: a picture which looks as if it must already contain the problem and its solution, while at the same time we *feel* that it is not so" (PI #352; see also Z #677).

Another case, much like this one, is to be found in Wittgenstein's remark that it is very difficult to consider the identity of one thing with itself as an "infallible paradigm" for the identity of *two* things. The question is: "How am I to apply what the *one* thing tells me to the case of *two* things?" (PI #215) Once again, we run the risk of being "held captive" by a picture.

From all this it seems clear that Wittgenstein's opinion that our common language is in order has different connotations in TR and in PI. In TR it is because, even if imperfectly, it *shows*, it *displays*, the logical form which is also the form of reality. In PI it is because of the non-sense of the pretention that we can give up our common language together with the affirmation that no language could do a better job, or simply could be better; when we claim such things, it is often because we are misled by a picture "which conflicts with the picture of our ordinary way of speaking" (PI #402); because a picture has "forced itself upon me", while it should be acknowledged that "the figurative (*bildische*) employment of the word can't get into conflict with the original one!" (PI p. 215).

In spite of the fact that pictures can be misleading<sup>(28)</sup>, to give pictures is not bad

(28) And misleading in a way such that they can conflict with grammar. One example is that "it would be stupid to call meaning a 'mental activity', because that would encourage a false picture of the function of the word" (Z #20).

*in se*. But also, a picture's being bad or not is not a result that we might get through a confrontation of the picture with reality, but rather, through the different puzzles to which it might lead us; in other words a picture's being good is shown by *success* (see PI #320 and #324). This is why a case by case investigation is required, as Wittgenstein emphasizes at various places: "the best I can propose is that we should yield to the temptation to use this picture, but then to investigate how the application of the picture goes" (PI #374).

The remedy is to go back to the grammar of our language, to grasp and to examine that grammar (this is probably the very reason for and starting point of a philosophical grammar), which is a task to which pictures can actually contribute and help: "the picture which the answer to these questions gives us shews what gets treated grammatically here" (PI #573; see also PI #295); "the picture attaching to the grammatical proposition could only shew, say, what is called 'the length of the rod'" (PI #251).

We can use pictures and still have the required correct grammatical attitude, and more, we can even secure that attitude thanks to a judicious and cautious use of pictures, if we don't let the pictorial use of the words corrupt the original one.

But the passage from pictures to language and from language to pictures needs some further investigation, in which the distinction *Bild/Vorstellung* will prove essential.

6. It is clear that if a pictoriality (*Bildhaftigkeit*) of language is to be found at all in the second philosophy, then it is bound to be grounded on very different principles from the ones considered in TR. Also, that in this new conception of pictoriality, it is the nature of reality as well as the nature of language which is questioned.

But as to the question whether the nature here there is indeed a pictoriality of language in the later works, the answer must categorically be yes. Constantly we find pictures and language placed on the same level: understanding a proposition is like understanding a picture (PG p. 42); a verbal description can take the place of a picture (PI p. 177); one can use a picture in the same way one uses a sentence - and what makes it possible is their common pictoriality (WWK p. 85); one acts according to a sentence as one would act according to a picture (PG p. 163), and indeed one feels inclined to say that "and order is a picture of the action which was carried out" (PI #519)<sup>(29)</sup>; "what sense-impression? Well, *this* one; I use words or a picture to describe it" (PI p. 185); "describing an intention means ... painting a particular portrait of what went on" (Z #23); "the ugliness of a human being can repel in a picture, in a painting, as in reality, but so can it too in a description, in words" (Z #226, see PG p. 183).

Language often functions by giving us pictures (even if it is not its ultimate purpose nor essential to its functioning), and pictures are essentially already word-pictures (*Wortbild*) in a word-language (*Bildsprache*):

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(29) Wittgenstein adds: "but also that it is a picture of the action which is to be carried out on the order", this being the whole question of the intentionality of pictures.

“Using such a picture-language we might in particular e.g. keep our hold in the course of battles. (Language-game). And a sentence in our word-language approximates to a picture in this picture-language much more closely than we think” (Z #241).

“Let us remember too that we don’t have to translate such pictures into realistic ones in order to ‘understand’ them ... Suppose we were to say at this point: ‘Something is a picture only in a picture-language’? (Z #142)<sup>(30)</sup>.”

“What is my picture? ... I have now for picture only the words ...” (Z #249).

The analogy grows so far as to make us say that a criterion for the understanding of a sentence or a description could be: to give a picture (in a totally non-metaphorical sense of ‘picture’). “I understand this description exactly, I could make a drawing from it. In many cases we might set up a criterion of understanding, that one had to be able to represent (*darstellen*) the sense of a sentence in a drawing” (Z #245).

On the other hand, Wittgenstein seems to warn us against too complete an assimilation, probably in order to prevent mistakes of a ‘tractarian type’: “Thinking of a description as a word-picture of the facts has something misleading about it: one tends to think *only* of such pictures as hang on our walls: which seems *simply* to portray how a thing looks, what it is like. (The pictures are as it were idle)” (PI #291; italics mine) The last passage strongly suggests that if a description in words can be compared to a picture, it is nevertheless not comparable to any kind of picture, because descriptions do a far greater job than the pictures which are hanging on our walls.

A word-picture is not *only* a portrayal of what exists, it has more in it. What is it? I think the distinction *Bild/Vorstellung* could help us. Why can’t an image (*Vorstellung*) be a picture (*Bild*) (see e.g. PI #300 or Z #638)? The answer is clearly given in Z: they “tell us nothing, either right or wrong, about the external world”, and this is because they “are subject to the will” (Z #621); images are voluntarily produced entities, they are things we can will and decide to have. On the contrary, pictures “tell us” something about the world (either rightly or wrongly), about the facts of the world and, among them, even about images (“Asked ‘What image have you?’ one can answer with a picture” (Z #621), this picture being most likely the “*Vorstellungsbild*” mentioned in Z #636<sup>(31)</sup>).

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(30) This last question is certainly designed to remind us of “only in the context of a proposition does a word have meaning”, which, as we have seen, was extended to “only in the context of a language game and the course of life have words meaning”.

(31) See also PG pp. 182-183: “Then one will not contrast operating with written or spoken signs with operating with ‘imagination-pictures’ of events”. Elsewhere Miss Anscombe had chosen ‘mental picture’, which is defined as “the picture which is described when someone describes what he imagines” (PI #251, #367).

Pictures are something we experience, they are given to us: "Attitude to a picture (to a thought). The way we experience a picture makes it real for us, that is, connects it with reality" (PG p. 183). Without that experience (and that practice), a picture is something inert, dead; to give life to it we have to enter into it (see Z #232; and Z #236: "When he has the picture in view by itself it is suddenly dead ... it does not point itself to a reality beyond"; this brings us back to some of our previous discussions<sup>(32)</sup>: it is *we* indeed who give life to the picture; see also Z #233 that refers directly to TR).

A picture is not a mere 'reflection' of reality, it is how reality, the world, is given to us; pictures are a friviledged mode of information (and of communication), pictures are the original mode of presentation (*Darstellung*) of the world. The *Bild* will remain legitimate as long as it is understood, and used, in agreement with the grammar of our language. As already cited, "the harmony between thought and reality" (which is the root of the philosophical problem of pictoriality and its metaphysical conclusion) "is to be found in the grammar of our language" (Z #55). The key will be the description, and eventually the understanding, of the internal structure and properties of that language which is well-known to all. From no other part is any elucidation or clarification to be expected, for "it is *in language* that it is all done" (PG p. 143).

7. In this paper, I tried to follow this recommendation given by Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus*: "In philosophy the question 'Why do we really use that word, that proposition?' constantly leads to valuable results" (TR 6.2111), being sure that *this* recommendation the author of *Philosophical Investigations* would not have disavowed.

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(32) And to a criticism of TR: "One name stands for one thing, another for another thing, and they are combined with one another. And so the whole, like a living picture, presents the atomic fact" (TR 4.0311).