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Thinking With Images

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THINKING WITH IMAGES

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that images are necessary for thinking. If this is true then the nature of images needs to be understood. The problem with many accounts of perception is assuming that representing what we see is a matter of accurate depiction. The problem is solved by attending to the skills of visual discernment rather than judgments about those perceptions. My approach is both historical and analytic. Aristotle, Hume, and Wittgenstein give accounts of perception which are critically discussed. The notion that an image is a copy is rejected by showing how complicated and indeterminate that relation is. Images have a content that is not representational. Then we must have access to how perceptions are formed before subjecting them to judgments of truth or accuracy. The implication for a theory of perception is that understanding how images are formed and used is prior to any claim of veracity.

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PREFACE

The genesis for the thesis is based on how the Greek word, *aisthesis*, went from meaning sense perception to being used as a subject for the philosophy of art. ‘Aesthetic’ went from describing perceptions of external events to the name for the theory of art. One even sees talk about aesthetic perception as if perception of art objects is a different perception from looking at other objects. The position of this thesis is that there is only one kind of perception.

There are a few explanations for this historical transformation of ‘aesthetic’ from perception to ‘aesthetic perception.’ Around the eighteenth century, some philosophers wanted a way to talk about art and judgments about art; this was supposed to be a way to differentiate it from art history and art criticism. Philosophical aesthetics had to distinguish itself from connoisseurship by establishing universal judgements about art objects. Kant emphasized judgment about objects where Hegel discussed actual art objects and had detailed descriptions of paintings in his *Lectures on Fine Arts*. We need to read more Hegel on art and much less Kant. We should be suspicious of philosophers like Kant who do not seem to have much experience with art yet want to decide what counts as art.

The idea that perceptions are judgments and need to be accurate is another way ‘aesthetics’ subverts the directness of perception. The way this happens is by creating categories of perception which are supposed to be altogether different depending on what is being perceived. If we take the case of painting, there is supposed to be just looking at the painting and looking at the painting aesthetically. If the objection is that to look at a painting is inherently to look at it aesthetically, we must find another example. What is

usually meant is that looking at ordinary objects is to look at them without aesthetic perception. When we are told to look at the ordinary table setting as if it was an aesthetic object this means we are to imagine we are looking at a painting of a table setting. The so called real perception of the table setting is said to be supplemented by an act of the imagination in looking at it as a painting, that is, aesthetically.

If my thesis is successful, it will make the case that ordinary perception already has aesthetic perception in it.

INTRODUCTION

I will argue that thinking requires an image. This means that visual images are fundamental to the mind. Thought can take the form of words or images. The logic of images is different from the logic of language, or linguistic forms.

The general term “cognition” will be used here to cover all acts of mind. If we have a mental image, that is an act of mind and therefore a cognition. Thinking is cognition. Thinking is sometimes identified with language and linguistic forms; I will be disputing this identification. This way of treating thought makes images into something mute and needing the voice of language. For those who claim thinking is linguistic, and representational, the linguistic forms are said to stand in for the original object or refer to it. Wittgenstein can be seen as asserting that thinking takes place through linguistic forms, but these forms are not representations of actual objects and events. This is complicated when we ask what kind of thinking mathematicians use because they are thinking with numbers and letters.

My position is that there is no ordering in our mind of first ‘presentations’ and second ‘re-presentations.’ An artist who looks at a model and paints the person does not ‘re-present’ the figure but makes an image which stands on its own without needing a reference to justify it.

I will be agreeing with Aristotle’s claim that, “Without an image thinking is impossible.”¹ Ross translates that sentence a bit differently. The whole section is translated as:

¹ Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle (On Memory)*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, trans. J.I.Beare (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 714.

We have said in the *De Anima* that it is impossible to know without an image; for the same thing happens when we know as when we draw a diagram; we do not use the fact that the triangle has a definite size, yet we draw it of a definite size, and similarly he who knows imagines an object of definite size but does not think of its size, and if its nature is to have a size but not a definite size, he imagines it of a definite size but thinks of it only as having a size.²

Ross translates the Greek, *noein*, to say that someone “knows” with an image; others translate this as “thinks” with an image. In this passage, I take Aristotle to mean that someone might draw a figure to show the property of an isosceles triangle by marking two sides as being equal in length. No matter how well drawn, its purpose is to show a property of all isosceles triangles. Similarly, you can imagine a triangle having marks on two sides indicating equality. Imagining a figure with 150 sides may be beyond the imagination, but there would still be some kind of figure we picture in our mind.

Aristotle is saying that images have a determinate form without being exact duplicates of the objects they’re about. The case of highly complex mathematics might be an objection to Aristotle’s appeal to triangles. Intuitionism in mathematics, that math depends on mental constructs, could be an endorsement of Aristotle’s claim that we need images to think about mathematical objects. A discussion of intuitionism is beyond the scope of this paper.

By “image,” I mean an area of marks internally related to each other spatially which sustains its shape through time. This definition is more abstract than Aristotle would have considered using, but I do not think it is inconsistent with his understanding of the term. By “visual” is meant anything seen.

I will argue that images are inseparable from thought. This means that understanding thought requires an understanding of images. We can think with language but this does

² Aristotle, *Parva Naturalia*, (*On Memory*), trans. W.D.Ross (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 235.

not mean language is free of images. Whether we have images within our mind or consider the image to be about something external to the mind, the image exists in relation to other images. We do not need to say what is in the mind or external to the mind in order to have understanding. Hume shows that images, thoughts, and language are all things present to the mind and can be called perceptions. This means that an image or thinking about something are both perceptions, which can simply be called thoughts.

The distinction between thinking and having an image could be resolved by saying having an image is having a thought. Language is also a form of thought. Two forms of thinking are using language and using images. A large section of my argument is about Wittgenstein's critical analysis of how images occur in language. I read Wittgenstein as having a similar understanding of images as Aristotle and Hume.

There are different temporal relations thought has to an image: Thought comes first and the image after; the image is first and then we think about it; thought and image occur simultaneously. Thought takes place with a form and we can consider the form itself as an image. The distinction of thought and image is about types and I am not suggesting they can't be distinguished. But in practice, the distinction is more about the fluidity across boundaries and the way they make contact with each other.

The right way to resolve the problem of distinguishing thinking from having an image is to say the distinction itself is artificial. Hume refers to both sense impressions (images) and ideas (thoughts) as perceptions; anything present to the mind is a perception. According to Hume, then, we are not able to make a clear separation between images and thoughts. If thoughts and images are not easily distinguished then it makes sense to consider how our thoughts and images are formed.

It seems natural to say that we see objects when we look around the room we are in. But did we notice the convexity of the middle couch cushion reflecting the light making it look a brighter tan than the other two? Perception requires knowledge about how things appear; such as being able to discriminate between different hues and variations of value. Putting those learned skills to use means that the more we discern, the more we see. Perception is not that we see something, but how much we see.

Perception is not just forming an accurate depiction of an object. It is the way we establish a relation to the object. Perceptions are boundaries. The space between me (my eyes) and an external object is the perception. The exteriors of the physical objects are seen in relation to the exterior of my own body. For example, between myself and the couch across the room is a perception. The perception brings what is far away present to the mind; that space is the space of the perception. That is why perception is the boundary between the objects in my environment and my own physical body. The entire act of forming a perception can be understood as a performance.³

I define three forms of visual perception. Optical receptivity is the mere registration of the visual environment because our eyes are open. This is the most passive form of perception. Directed looking is when we focus on some area in our visual environment. This is more active than optical receptivity because we are paying attention to what is being seen. Productive perception is the skillful practice of visual discernment. These skills include discriminating degrees of value (light to dark), perceiving negative space (the shapes between objects), and discerning how the source of light defines the look of the objects. Directed looking would be when someone decides to look at a sunset on the

³ In *Action in Perception*, contemporary philosopher Alva Noe advocates for enactivism, which treats perceptions as performances. The performance is the act of constructing the perception as a relation to the object.

horizon. Productive perception is the application of visual skills in understanding our immediate environment. Someone who knows color theory will make more discriminations in the hues of a cloud than someone without that knowledge. Both look at the sunset but both do not have the same perceptions. The person with knowledge of color and tone will literally see more. Aristotle and Hume both tend to treat perception as a form of optical receptivity along with directed looking. A visual perception is taken to be one entity which the mind is receptive to. They do not address what I am calling productive perception.

By “language,” I mean words that are written or spoken. I do not claim that either language or images capture the sense of thought better than the other.

Some philosophers are not convinced that thought needs to have an image. On my reading, Wittgenstein thinks of images not as bounded entities, but more as a critic of those boundaries. An image is not static. The boundary between thought and image is not predetermined. Nor is the boundary between language and images fixed and stable. In this sense, Wittgenstein does not believe there are pure visual perceptions. This position complicates the idea that thought requires an image but does not refute it. A pure visual perception would be an image that does not need to have a linguistic form attached to it in order to be perceived. For Wittgenstein, our visual perceptions are not linguistic but still play a basic role in what we can think about.

To re-present something means we know what its first presentation was. In Hume’s terminology, anything that is present to the mind is a perception, or a presentation of something. Aristotle and Hume are part of a tradition in philosophy that is different from the one of Descartes. Although Descartes is not easily summarized, he does privilege the

activity of the mind as representing the world. Descartes emphasized certainty; he worried about not being deceived as a way to establish what can be counted on as truth.

Images are appearances but not always appearances of something. We may be tempted to say an appearance is an appearance of something, but that something is something other than that appearance. My claim is that an appearance is not derived from an originating object. One form of the reception theory of perception is that the mind is receptive to external stimuli and records it unadulterated. I am not denying that people looking at a tree see a tree, I am denying that there is one form of the appearance of the tree which everyone sees; we see appearances, not objects. The act of physically making an image is essential to understanding what an image is. There may be other ways to learn visual skills, but drawing is one of the better ways to develop perception.

One of the common ways philosophers talk about perception is to say we perceive objects. However, we do not really perceive objects, we perceive shapes and forms. This distinction is important in order to understand what an image is and how images function. Visual perception refers to the fact that we perceive a visual field of shapes, colors, and variations of tone. For example, we say that we see a table and chairs. But this means we see the back of a chair which is pushed into the desk hiding its front view. You may see the top half of a person sitting at the table but not the lower body. A blue lamp shade may occlude that person's face. So one sees part of a head behind the lamp behind a table and not even the chair being sat on. Perception is not of objects, but the entirety of a visual field of partially visible shapes and relations.

Just as a painter puts marks (pigment) on a canvas, do we form perceptions by consciously discriminating the elements of a visual perception. We mistake the optical

receptivity of looking at a tree with having detailed visual knowledge about how the tree actually looks. If an image is a set of marks, then the element of an image is the mark. Visual artists analyze a painting into its elements such as composition, shape, volume, hue, tone, and perspective. By “mark” I mean both the physical dab of paint on a canvas, but also the coordinated relation of marks which comprise the picture.

If a representation is said to stand in for something else, I hope to have shown that thoughts and images stand for themselves. Representations are abstractions, and useful, but images are not primarily representations.

Section I sets up the problem of how thought is related to an image. Aristotle claims it is not possible to think without an image. This probably refers more to practical action than to thinking in abstract mathematics. For Aristotle, the relation of the mind to the world is stated thusly, “[mind] must be potentially identical in character with its object without being the object.”⁴

Section II takes the notion that the mind and its object have an identical form in common and asks how that form can be articulated. Hume criticizes the availability of such a common form by saying there is a fundamental discontinuity between objects and our impressions, or ideas, of them. This part of the paper claims that thought is possible only with images when we treat all thoughts as ‘perceptions’ (Hume’s term); where all ideas come from sense impressions, which are images.

The third section is critical of treating perception as only a receptivity of the mind. The visual image itself is broken up and not treated as a totality or unity. The activity of drawing a picture is discussed in order to show the inadequacy of the receptivity model of

⁴ Aristotle, *De Anima*, trans. J.A. Smith, (US: Random House, Inc.), 589.

perception. Productive perception accounts for the fact that perception depends on the skills of visual discernment by the perceiver.

What an image is will be discussed in more detail in the fourth part of this paper. I critically discuss Wittgenstein's account of someone painting a picture of his image and provide my own account of how a painting is produced from an image. I don't claim Wittgenstein has a position on whether we cannot think without an image. However, the importance of looking at things and examining them is a constant appeal throughout the *Philosophical Investigations*. Starting with his preface, the relation of thinking to language and images is stated: "The philosophical remarks in this book are, as it were, a number of sketches of landscapes which were made in the course of these long and involved journeyings."⁵ So, "sketches of landscapes" clearly shows Wittgenstein takes the visual form quite seriously and is not meant as a casual metaphor.

The last section makes the differences between Aristotle, Hume, and Wittgenstein more explicit. The reason for asking throughout my paper as to where thinking and images take place is address directly. Thinking and images are not wholly determined by a physical location, such as being in the brain. The intelligibility of the world is a property of the world, not my mind, per se. One might qualify that for Wittgenstein, for whom intelligibility is something we bring to situations.

⁵ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, P.M.S. Hacker, and Joachim Schulte, (West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd), 3.

I. ARISTOTLE

Aristotle tells us why we cannot think without an image:

Perceiving, then, is like mere assertion and thought; when something is pleasant or painful, the soul pursues or avoids it, as it were asserting or denying it; and to feel pleasure or pain is to be active with the perceptive mean towards the good or bad as such. Avoidance and desire, as actual, are the same thing, and that which can desire and that which can avoid are not different either from each other or from that which can perceive; but what it is for them to be such is different. To the thinking soul images serve as sense-perceptions (*aisthemata*). And when it asserts or denies good or bad, it avoids or pursues it. Hence the soul never thinks without an image.⁶

Sachs translates the last part of that section as, “for the soul that thinks things through, imaginings (*phantasmata*) are present in the way perceptible things (*aesthemata*) are, and when it asserts or denies that something is good or bad it flees or pursues; for this reason the soul never thinks without an image.”⁷ The Greek for “thinking soul” is *dianoetike*, which means thinking things through. Thinking about something is a kind of motion or mental activity. Having an image is something more fixed. The relation of thought to an image is a relative one and can be conceived spatially. To flee or pursue is a movement away or toward something.

Aristotle can seem mystical when he states that knowing is identical with the thing it knows: “Knowledge, in its being-at-work [*energeia*], is the same as the thing it knows.”⁸ What he is saying is that the activity of knowing something is a way of making contact with the object. Aristotle’s use of *energeia*, being-at-work, is often translated as

⁶ Aristotle, *De Anima*, trans. D.W. Hamlyn, (Oxford: Clarendon Oxford Press), 63.

⁷ Aristotle, *On the Soul*, trans. Joe Sachs, (Santa Fe: Green Lion Press), 46.

⁸ Aristotle, *On the Soul*, trans. Joe Sachs, (Santa Fe: Green Lion Press), 146.

“actuality.” Aristotle is not talking about what is real versus the not-real, but talking about the activity of thought being engaged with the world.

The first sentence of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* is translated by Ross as, “All men by nature desire to know.”⁹ This is translated by Sachs as, “All human beings by nature stretch themselves out toward knowing.”¹⁰ Sachs brings out the sense of the Greek word which is usually translated as “desire.” Aristotle is not just saying that people want to have knowledge but that this wanting is like physically reaching out for something and making contact with it. It is a stretching because it is an effort and can be understood as a physical action of moving toward something. Perception is reaching out for something and wanting to make contact. The emphasis is on the activity rather than the accumulation of knowledge as facts.

Perceiving is like simply saying something. Hamlyn translates Aristotle’s passage as “Perceiving, then, is like mere assertion and thought.” Different translations give different meanings for what perception is. Another version of “perception” is, “similar to simple declaring and to thinking contemplatively.” Apostle translates this as, “Sensing is like mere naming or [mere] conceiving.”¹¹ Perception, or sensing, is like naming in that nothing about the perception is being described. Like naming, it only means that some particular thing is there. Gendlin translates this in a similar way, “Perceiving is like a mere appearing, or a thought.”¹² Perceiving is having an appearance before us without a judgement about what it is an appearance of. Aristotle uses the word *aisthesis* (from which our word “aesthetic” is derived) for “perception,” which has the sense of looking

⁹ Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle, (Metaphysics)*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, trans. W.D. Ross (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 1552.

¹⁰ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Joe Sachs, (Santa Fe: Green Lion Press), 1.

¹¹ Aristotle, *On the Soul*, trans. Hippocrates Apostle, (Grinnell: The Peripatetic Press), 53.

¹² Aristotle, *De Anima*, trans. Eugene Gendlin, (Spring Valley: Focusing Institute), III-8, 6.

at something receptively. “Sensation” or “sensing” is not the best translation of *aisthesis*, according to Sachs, for whom its meaning is closer to “sense perception”: “Always the reception of organized wholes. Never sensation as meant by Hume or Kant, as the reception of isolated sense data.”¹³ It is important to understand how unmodern Aristotle is in not treating sensation as an isolated event or qualia; there are no raw sense data needing to be interpreted by the understanding.

Aristotle says of all sense perception that “we must take it that the sense is that which can receive perceptible forms without their matter, as wax receives the imprint of the ring without the iron or gold.”¹⁴ This way of talking is similar to what Hume will refer to as sense impressions. Hume can be seen as a transition from the ancient world to the modern. Later interpreters of Hume push him closer to a sense-data theory which I do not think is the best way to understand him. In order for sense-impressions to be sense-data they would have to be clearly distinguished from ‘ideas,’ which Hume denies.

Aristotle uses the word *phantasmata* for image, which we might call today, a mental image. He uses *aisthesis* for sense perception. Images are like sense perceptions except without the matter. He is saying that perceiving, as well as knowing, is to have an intelligible form that is both in thought and in the object. Another way to formulate the relation of thought to image is to say there is ‘thinking about’ and ‘having before us’. If you are thinking about something (thought) you must have something before you (image). Thought seems to be something like movement, like a physical force. The image is something fixed. Together, however, the movement and the fixed image have a relation not reducible to either element.

¹³ Aristotle, *On the Soul*, trans. Sachs, 199.

¹⁴ Aristotle, *De Anima*, trans. Hamlyn, 42.

I do not understand Aristotle's notion of perceiving the form of an external object to necessarily mean there can only be one, proper, form for each object; although he does tend to talk this way. Even if the mind is like wax which takes the shape of the ring pressed into it, we still have not accounted for different angles at which the ring is pressed in or its degree of force. The wax analogy falls short because it presumes the impression is exactly the same for every person. Hume's concept of a sense impression follows Aristotle on the very notion of an impression, that it is universal and the same for everyone. My own position is to show that a lot more is going on at the level of visual perception that is missed by Aristotle and Hume.

We see things all the time; images are ubiquitous. The constancy of visual sensations only requires that our eyes be open. Even with our eyes closed we can have images appear in our minds. While asleep, dreams appear in the mind often with bizarre imagery. There are many things in our field of vision that we are not consciously aware of, even though we say that we see them. However, we can train ourselves to consciously perceive even what is in our peripheral vision. Visual perception is a skill that can be learned. The more skills we have the more we perceive.

II. HUME

Hume makes Aristotle's statement that it is not possible to think without an image more radical by not distinguishing thought from having an image. Ideas and impressions are perceptions such that they are present to the mind. However, present to the mind does not mean in the mind as the location, or faculty, for where thinking takes place. Even if we say thoughts and images take place in the brain that only tells us about one location for those events. The question about the source of an image is raised when we ask about where or when an image first occurred.

The problem of how we perceive the forms of objects is resolved by Hume by defining perception as "whatever can be present to the mind."¹⁵ My understanding of "present" is, that which we are engaged with. When we look out the window and see trees, we perceive them as external to the mind and physically outside the building walls. Our perception gives us the sense of distance of being out there many yards away. Hume defines what he means by impressions and ideas as, "All the perceptions of the human mind resolve themselves into two distinct kinds, which I shall call IMPRESSIONS and IDEAS."¹⁶ Impressions include sensations, emotions, and passions. Ideas are "faint images of these in thinking."¹⁷ Thoughts are images of impressions, or sense impressions. Hume seems to agree with Aristotle that we must think with an image. But this is complicated by "all the perceptions of the mind are double, and appear both as impressions and ideas."¹⁸ When we see a green couch, for Hume, the couch does not cause us to see green. The sense impression of green and the idea of green occur

¹⁵ David Hume, *Treatise on Human Nature*, ed. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton, (New York: Oxford University Press), 408.

¹⁶ Hume, *Treatise*, T.1.1.1.1.

¹⁷ Hume, T1.1.1.1.

¹⁸ Hume, T1.1.1.3.

simultaneously. It is tempting to say the idea is caused by the sense impression, or that the idea is a representation of the sensation of green--but Hume does not talk this way. The distinction of *phantasia* and *aisthesis* is collapsed into things present to the mind. The problem is, how do we know which images are produced by the mind--*phantasia*--and which are of external objects, through *aisthesis*? I am arguing that collapsing the distinction as Hume does solves this problem. If this looks like idealism it is because we use the model of 'inside the mind' and 'external world' to organize the world and our own thoughts. The question is about what is real and how we locate where reality takes place. Idealism is the belief that our thoughts are real and beyond our own thinking we cannot have knowledge. My position, which I take Hume to have, is that once we eliminate the barrier between the inner world of thought and the external world of objects we are left with 'perceptions,' things present to mind. This is not a way to locate the inner world as being present in relation to an external world 'out there.' Without the distinction of images produced by the mind and images as perceptions of external objects we have only images present to the mind and without their source. My 'perception' of the green couch is not caused by the couch, but neither is it arbitrarily caused by my mind. The concept of causation is, for Hume, the concept of constant correspondence. Releasing a ball from your hand which falls to the ground is said to be forced by the law of gravity. So, saying the green couch does not cause the 'perception' is not to say there is no green couch there in the room. By sense-impression Hume means the way we have contact with the world. It is more relational, or spatial, than representational. Hume's conflation of impressions and ideas is a way to argue against the notion that ideas are the regulators of sense impressions; that ideas are closer to the form of truth than sense impressions.

If perceptions are double then we would not be able to make distinctions between impressions and ideas. Hume calls ideas faint images. The faint image lacks the intensity and even the violence of the sense-impression. We can think of this as an echo, or ripples in a pond when a stone is thrown in a pond. When we analyze the temporal order of someone throwing a rock into a pond we have to know where to start the sequence. It started when someone sitting by the pond decided to pick up a rock and throw it. The arc and force of the throw determined how the rock hit the water. The rock hitting the surface of the water was followed by ripples in the pond. In describing the event we would have to start with the person deciding to throw a rock in the water. When asked what caused the ripples in the water we might say, the thought by the rock thrower caused the ripples. If Hume's analysis makes sense, where we say the beginning is defines what the event is. The intensity of an impression is significant in relation to an idea which is a weakened form of that intensity. Hume is not denying that we see events as having a temporal order, but is looking at events based more on spatial relations. We perceive objects and events as a sequence of images. Before and after are relative terms which cannot describe an absolutely original event. This is one way to affirm that we cannot think without an image, if the distinction of images and ideas cannot be made.

Hume states his principle that, without exception, "every simple idea has a simple impression, which resembles it; and every simple impression a correspondent idea."¹⁹ He then says, "That idea of red, which we form in the dark, and that impression, which strikes our eyes in sun-shine, differs only in degree, not in nature."²⁰ The idea of red has less intensity in our memory than the actual experience. We can remember a dark red

¹⁹ Hume, T1.1.1.5.

²⁰ Hume, T1.1.1.5.

sunset that occurred yesterday but the memory is less intense than when we actually saw it. Complex ideas and complex impressions are just forms of the simple ones: “all simple ideas and impressions resemble each other; and as the complex are form’d from them, we may affirm in general, that these two species of perceptions are exactly correspondent.”²¹

Hume’s fundamental idea is, “That all our simple ideas in their first appearance are deriv’d from simple impressions, which are correspondent to them, and which they exactly represent.”²² There is a constant conjunction between impressions and ideas and a dependence on the one to the other but impressions have precedence. “I consider the order of their *first appearance*; and find by constant experience, that the simple impressions always take the precedence of their correspondent ideas, but never appear in the contrary order.”²³ The question of how new ideas, or secondary ideas, are possible is answered by Hume: “ideas are images of our impressions, so we can form secondary ideas, which are images of the primary” and, “Ideas produce the images of themselves in new ideas.”²⁴ The order of impressions and derived ideas does seem to be important here, for Hume. But this does not mean that the things we’re seeing, and our understanding of them, are determined by that order. The first time someone looks at a painting forms the initial impression, which is then followed by an idea. The next thirty times the painting is viewed may form thirty more ideas. What I take Hume to be saying is we have impressions in time, and ideas which follow, but eventually the order is forgotten and we just have what he calls ‘perceptions.’

²¹ Hume, T1.1.1.6.

²² Hume, T1.1.1.7.

²³ Hume, T1.1.1.8.

²⁴ Hume, T1.1.1.11.

One criticism of Hume is that the association of ideas can be an endorsement that any arbitrary correspondence of ideas and impressions is valid. While I do not think this is Hume's position, nonetheless, I do not think he is trying to explain how certain knowledge can be established. What he is trying to do is give an account of how we get our ideas and form perceptions. I think Hume treats impressions, at first, as atomic and individual. They get built up into complex ideas. Spatial relations are different because they are not determined by temporal order, but still use the principle of association. The ability to group ideas by resemblance is how we use memory to associate a current situation to some events in the past. If you're walking down a street at night and recall people telling you they got mugged there, your recall of those accounts will tell you to take another route. But I do not read Hume to be saying that an impression is absolute and always the same thing even for one person.

One way to understand what an image is, is to say it perfectly resembles the object. In the opening of the section entitled, "Of skepticism with regard to the senses," Hume states the problem: "We may well ask, *What causes induce us to believe in the existence of body?* but 'tis in vain to ask, *Whether there be body or not?* That is a point, which we must take for granted in all our reasonings."²⁵ Hume dispels the notion that his system is idealist. The issue is not whether there are external objects (bodies) but how we perceive them. In a surprising move, Hume makes the belief in external objects dependent on the belief in the continued existence of objects:

This inference from the constancy of our perceptions, like the precedent from their coherence, gives rise to the opinion of the continu'd existence of body, which is prior to that of its distinct existence, and produces that latter principle.²⁶

²⁵ Hume, T1.4.2.1.

²⁶ Hume, T1.4.2.23.

Hume asks how the very idea of external objects being continuous, constant, and coherent comes about. His conclusion is that our senses do not provide evidence for attributing an identity to all external objects, such as to ascribe to them one property or type of being. Neither our perceptions nor the appearances of objects is continuous and constant.

The smooth passage of the imagination along the ideas of the resembling perceptions makes us ascribe to them a perfect identity. The interrupted manner of their appearance makes us consider them as so many resembling, but still distinct beings, which appear after certain intervals. The perplexity arising from this contradiction produces a propensity to unite these broken appearances by the fiction of a continu'd existence.²⁷

Perceptions among themselves are discontinuous. Appearances of objects themselves are discontinuous. We are left with “the fiction of a continu'd existence.”

Any correspondence is not proof of there being actual objects. This seeming idealism is not a denial of there being an external world so much as it avoids talk about the external world and the internal world. Hume does not say that impressions are real and the external world cannot be known. He is denying the usefulness of opposing the outer and inner worlds in order to say that our thoughts, or ‘perceptions’, are all we need in order to understand the world.

For Hume, an idea is an image of an impression. If I see a blue wall then I can form an idea of the blue wall. The sensation, or impression, of the blue wall is then correspondent to my idea of the blue wall--such as I can remember seeing it yesterday. The idea itself is not blue, nor is the initial impression blue. Calling impressions representations does not seem accurate either because for Hume, ‘perceptions’ are not mediated by anything. If all we have are ‘perceptions’ then any claim to reality is not

²⁷ Hume, T1.4.2.36.

about a correspondence of perception to an object. The idea of there being an external world and an internal world need not impose itself on us.

The question is how impressions and ideas are images of each other and how the initial impression is connected to the idea. There is a space of contact between the impression and the idea. Hume is not saying that impressions cause the ideas, but that there is a constant correspondence between them. This does not fully explain how they are taken to be connected. A clear distinction between impressions and ideas may not be possible. There may be an initial first impression, a sense impression, but Hume eventually argues that the mind does not distinguish between such a first impression and the idea.

First Hume talks about a sense impression and an idea being a copy. He calls the idea a weak form of the impression. But being weak is not a clear distinction from the strong, even violent, force of the initial impression. He calls impressions and ideas, perceptions. The relation among perceptions is not ordered by original impressions and ideas as copies. Since there is no discernible difference between the impression and the idea they would be the same thing and identical. The problem is conceiving of perception as a receptive activity which makes an impression on the mind like a ring pressed into wax. The mind is not wax and neutrally receiving sensations from our environment. What is not addressed by Hume, in a sustained way, is that the mind is productive and creative. He talks about perceptions being organized by resemblance, with the imagination smoothing over these differences or broken appearances. The “fiction” which unites appearances is what I have been calling productive perception. If we agree with Hume that identity conceals true the diversity of perceptions, then there is no true object which

we perceive. In fact, even the mind is not united into a coherent identity. Hume says the “mind, is nothing but a heap or collection of different perceptions.”²⁸ So it was a bit misleading to distinguish impressions from ideas. The principle of association of ideas was a way to dispute the idea of causation, or the necessary connection of ideas. There is, however, a sense one gets from Hume that the mind does all these things automatically-- otherwise, why would some associations happen rather than others? Calling this process convention, actually is accurate much of the time; we learn by imitating our teachers and parents. My claim is that this seeming passive process of association is also a productive process.

The mechanics of how perceptions are formed needs to be accounted for. Perceptions are not passively placed in the mind; though it can seem that way when we hear a loud car horn. However, we are not obligated to say we internally represent events which occur externally to our own senses. Hume criticizes the idea of the existence of external objects precisely because he does not advocate the idea of an inner reality. Though he talks about ideas and perceptions being present to the mind, it is not clear he means that thoughts take place in the mind. Thoughts occur, but we need not be committed to where they take place or treat the mind as a container for thoughts. When Hume talks about perceptions being present to the mind, he does not say they are in, or inside, the mind: “External objects are seen, and felt, and become present to the mind; that is, they acquire such a relation to a connected heap of perceptions.”²⁹

Even more radically questioning the identity of mind as a perfect simplicity he says, “there is no absurdity in separating any particular perception from the mind; that is, in

²⁸ Hume, T1.4.2.39.

²⁹ Hume, T1.4.2.40.

breaking off all its relations, with that connected mass of perceptions, which constitute a thinking being.”³⁰ The ‘thereness’ of being present to the mind only implies an engagement with the perception.

Is the tree we see outside the window really there? It is there externally to me, but ‘there’ only when I look at it or recall it in memory. The success of Hume’s argument is to not treat the existence of external objects as a something to be proven or disproven. That our own bodies are part of the environment which we see is one way to show that the very notion of externality is an abstract idea which is not derived from the senses. Further, it is not clear that Hume claims our ‘perceptions’ are the sight of reality; rather they are the site of what is present to the mind. Thoughts and images need not be in my mind, only present to the mind.

For Hume a thought is just a weak form of the initial sense impression. But thoughts and impressions are perceptions (or ‘perceptions’), and perceptions are things present to the mind. We can say that thoughts are images and that images are marks. A mark establishes a position and relation to other positions. Abstract thoughts are still ‘perceptions’ and have to have some form to be able to be present in any way.

Let’s take the example of drawing. If you make a line on a sheet of paper, it becomes a mark on a page which defines the space around it. The more lines and marks there are on a page the more relations there are. Where Hume talks about perceptions as being present to the mind, I am calling those things marks. A mark is a perception such that it can be noticed; something present can be noticed. So a perception, in Hume’s sense, is something present to the mind but that does not tell us in what form it is present.

Perceptions have parts, but not atomistic parts which are absolute or irreducible. When

³⁰ Hume, T1.4.39.

you look at a tree you see branches, colors, shapes, volumes, and needles or leaves. If you draw the tree, you build up the picture by making marks. The more you examine the tree and make marks on the paper the more you see. This is how I understand what Hume means by impressions and ideas--there are parts, but not absolutely simple parts.

One question about Hume's system is why would one way of perceiving be better than another? One explanation is that our parents and school teachers taught us language. We are taught what is expected of us and how to be a competent actor in the social arena. This is all fairly practical. But I do not think that even for Hume it is society which solely determines those meanings. Conventions tell us what is expected, but they do not tell us how we have to understand our own experience. Perceptions are not fixed in their meanings nor do they tell us what to do with them. An image has more possibilities in its meaning than the way it is used in any situation.

III. DRAWING MODEL

We think we know what we are looking at until we are asked to give a demonstration of that knowledge. It is common to say that we see objects, but what we see are shapes, colors, volumes, and variations of light, or tone. In fact, what we see is a lot of empty space; we see the shapes formed by the negative space between objects.

Drawing is a valuable skill to learn because it forces us to make a physical picture and demonstrate explicitly what we see. The idea that we see merely because our eyes are open does not mean we see what we think we see. This is important because there is a logic to images that is distinct from thinking and language. An image, or a picture, is an area of visual information. A produced image is a deliberately constructed field of marks, as distinct from natural, optical perception, where the objects are not put there for the purpose of viewing. There are many kinds of images and ways of talking about images. My main focus will be on drawings and paintings. It may not be the case that we have an image in our brain so much as that we have perception and see things. Constructed images, such as paintings, are there because someone made them. We look at them as things made in order to impart some meaning to us. Pictures are not reducible to a message or a content, even though they were made for people to look at them.

My argument started with Aristotle's statement that thought always takes place with an image. This was understood to mean that thought moves about in relation to a fixed position of the image. Sometimes, looking at things and thinking occurs simultaneously in a way that makes them indistinguishable. Sometimes an image comes first and the thought comes second. Or the thought comes first and the image comes second. This also means that we do not merely think about what we are seeing. For example, just because

we look around the room and see tables and chairs, it does not mean we cannot be simultaneously thinking about what we need to cook for dinner tonight.

My claim is that images are images no matter where they take place. Thinking is different from having an image before us and images are not reducible to thoughts. The structure of an image is the same whether it occurs in the mind or as a physical picture. A vague, or indeterminate, mental image is no different from a vague painting. We can use Hume to clarify what is meant by an image by calling it a perception, which is anything present to the mind. If an image is a perception then it can be about an external object, but it need not be. The image, or perception, is mostly a relation to other perceptions. By mental image, I mean only having an image present to mind. The image itself does not have an abruptness, it is the thinking which makes it about something.

We can distinguish an image from a picture or a painting. A painting is the physical object of pigments applied to a canvas surface attached to wood stretcher bars. When we hang a painting we are putting the entire object on a nail in the wall. When we talk about paintings we mean the picture we see on the surface, not its entire physical apparatus. There is sometimes a confusion about the painting having an image of a person in it and treating the entire picture as an image. In the first sense, we mean that there is physical paint on the surface which has a distinct shape, such as a human figure. The second sense of image does not refer to the physical shapes on canvas, but the totality of all the marks on the surface coming together as the image. A painting can be indeterminate in the same way a mental image can be indeterminate. An objection to this similarity is based on confusing the physicality of the pigments on the surface with the image. Just because there is physical stuff on the surface does not make the painting determinate. Paintings

that end up in museums are usually well crafted and not vague. But if we visit galleries or artists' studios, we can see some works which don't make much sense and leave us wondering what it is we are looking at.

Perception should not to be understood as cognizance of a sensation. By productive perception, I mean that perceptions are not idly waiting in the mind to be acknowledged or be applied as a stored knowledge. Perception is not just a judgement or reference to a sensation. For example, making a drawing extends our vision and helps us to see. A drawing has the role of an empirical demonstration. When you draw the tree it demonstrates what you were able to see. We say that we saw the tree, but how much detail of the tree we actually perceived is demonstrated by the drawing we make. The skill of drawing is also the skill of learning visual skills of discernment. The green tree looks different with a background of dark gray-blue clouds or a bright blue sky. The adobe wall behind it reflects light onto the branches. Perception is based on how much of our visual environment we are able to discern. Take another example, where someone looks at objects on a table and draws a picture of them. While looking at the objects the person makes a picture and compares the drawing to what is seen. As the person draws and looks at the setup and compares it to the drawing the act of perception takes place. Though we call the drawing a picture it actually is the result of looking at the objects, making marks on the paper, and comparing the two. The first method of comparison is optical resemblance. This is based on using the techniques of rendering a three dimensional object on a two dimensional surface. The second method is based on how you want the picture to look. This is the more productive aspect. The second way is more about the experience of looking at the object than optical similitude. The question of how

you want the drawing to look has to be determined. The mind can be said to be extended onto the sheet of paper through the movement of the hand holding the charcoal. We can say the image is in the mind, but also that it is on the sheet of paper. The image can be said to be on the surface of the objects as a reflection of light. But the image is also in the hand holding the charcoal because the image is also a kind of feel of the objects. There is a paradoxical nature of images and perceptions. Calling something a copy would mean that an original exists and the copy can be shown to be derived from it. We say the drawing is a picture, but that is in reference to the physical sheet of paper with charcoal marks.

It may seem obvious to say that a person drawing cannot think without an image, since he's making a picture. But this is not different from other acts of 'perception' (in Hume's sense) which use thinking and apprehension of images.

Perception cannot be broken down into pure thinking with no image or pure image with no thought. We are not able to make the distinction of pure image and pure thought in practice. To appear is to be seen. Appearances are events, occurrences of something. Thinking is an occurrence of something. When we read we look at the words as marks on a page and also think about their meanings as conveyors of thoughts. One distinction between a picture and a text is that a picture can be apprehended in one look. English sentences are written from left to right, line by line, from the top of the page to the bottom. All the sentences in a three hundred page novel are not apprehended in one look the way the entire painting can be seen.

An image is often thought of as mirroring something else. When we look at a mirror we see an image of our own face. The mirror acts as an aid to vision since we

cannot look directly at our own faces. Our face is visible to others but visible to ourselves only with a mirror. A picture is not a mirror and need not reflect anything. In that sense a picture is different from an image in a mirror. This is why images are associated with copies; especially in the sense of reflecting the original object. We do not usually think of a mirror as a machine but it is said to produce an image in a consistent way. This consistency is important because it can be confused with accuracy. We may be tempted to look in the mirror and say, "This is how my face really looks," as if a mirror cannot distort what it reflects. For example, the angle we look at the mirror affects the image, as well as environmental lighting and the quality of the mirror.

An image has a meaning that is not just based on representing or depicting real objects existing outside of it; an image is not a copy. The role of intentionality is in deciding what to do with images and our perceptions. We do not have to respond to everything we see--unless there is an immediate threat requiring action. Each of us has a sense of what kind of world we want to live in and how we want to be in it. This could mean deciding where to live based on the landscape and openness of the night sky in order to see the stars. It could also mean that we pay closer attention to how we perceive things around us.

For Aristotle, if thoughts were only about other thoughts there would be no bodies. And there would be no forms, because objects give us forms. Because we have bodies we always think with images, which are like bodies. In one sense, Hume eliminates the very distinction between thought and image by calling everything 'perception.' One might even say that Hume treats thoughts as images, such that they are copies of impressions; where impressions are like images, though they include feelings and emotions. But even

Hume's technical term 'perception' is meant to preserve the visual quality of seeing something. In this sense, thoughts are like images, making Aristotle's distinction problematic. What is common to both philosophers is treating our thoughts as part of our lived environment rather than representations of reality. If all thought is like an image, we still need to discriminate between different images. In one sense, thoughts have a form and this can be like an image; a form is a shape which is like an image. Nonetheless, the difference between thought and having an image can be preserved for the sake of understanding each in more detail.

IV. WITTGENSTEIN

The relation of thought to an image needs to be further developed. Wittgenstein, in the *Philosophical Investigations*, does not always provide a clear idea of what images are.

While this may be because he believes clarity about how images function is not articulable, I will read the *Philosophical Investigations* and provide my account of what images are and their relation to thinking.

By doing a close reading of a few passages in the *Philosophical Investigations*, I will show that there is not always an originating place for images. We can say an image is always already in language. If a picture represents something, that can be understood as a correspondence but not a claim about an exclusive relation. A picture may depict a house without being a claim of being the right way to represent it. Other photos or paintings may be correspondent to the house without any one of them standing as the correct one.

How does Wittgenstein understand what is happening when someone looks at a color? "I know how the color green looks to me" -- surely that makes sense! -- Certainly; what use of the sentence are you thinking of?"³¹ There is a difference between saying "I see green," and "I know how green looks to me." This passage is part of his critical inquiry about what sense it makes to talk about one's sensations as objects of knowledge. Also, that each context in which we might say that "I know how green looks to me," is different and requires attention to the exact circumstances.

The reason for asking, "what use of the sentence are you thinking of?" is because the meaning of the original statement is indeterminate. Perhaps this person was about to tell us how green looks to her and how it reminds her of the tall grass on her farm.

³¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, #208.

Wittgenstein is saying we don't respond to our sensation of color, we respond to the color.

The attention to language in the *Philosophical Investigations* might give the impression that images and words are easily distinguished. The question is whether there are pure images and pure linguistic forms. A painting may have no words in it but that does not mean it functions as a purely visual image. When we look at a picture and think about it we're associating things in the picture with other images we have. The painted image of Aristotle in Rembrandt's, "Aristotle with a Bust of Homer," requires us to compare it with other images of people we have seen in order to see the painted form as an actual person. I am defending Hume position that all our thoughts start as images, or impressions. An idea comes from the impression and is connected to it, even as a faint image. The engagement with images by thinking and talking about them is one way to show the relation is not accidental but essential to how images function along with thought.

Next, we get a discussion of images and pictures and the notion of a private impression.

Someone paints a picture in order to show, for example, how he imagines a stage set. And now I say: "This picture has a double function: it informs others, as pictures or words do—but for the informant it is in addition a representation (or piece of information?) of another kind: for him it is the picture [*Bild*] of his image [*Vorstellung*], as it can't be for anyone else. His private impression of the picture tells him what he has imagined, in a sense in which the picture cannot do this for others."—And what right have I to speak in this second case of a representation or piece of information—if these words were correctly used in the first case?³²

The German word *Bild* is translated as "picture," though it can also mean "image."

Wittgenstein is using "picture" to refer to a physical object and "image" to refer to

³² Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, #280

something like a mental image. Wittgenstein is using the idea of an image as a mirror for something. An image can be in the mind, or the imagination. Someone paints a picture to show what was in his imagination. This picture is said, by an interlocutor, to have a double function of informing others "as pictures or words do" as well as act as a representation of the image the designer had in his imagination. The problem for Wittgenstein is with how a picture represents what was in the designer's imagination; how a picture corresponds to a mental image. The interlocutor is saying that pictures inform us about something. How they inform is not spelled out, but it is similar to the way words inform. This is important because a picture informs us, but we have to be attentive to the context in order to say what we're being informed about. A picture tells us something--informs--but what it informs us about is part of the problem of representation. His way of structuring the problem is to contrast the function of a picture as providing information and a picture functioning as a representation. Wittgenstein is disputing the idea that for the person who made the painting this picture is a "picture of his image, as it can't be for anyone else." This person is said to have an image from which the picture was made, yet we are left wondering exactly where this image is and how that person is said to know what it is. To say it's in the imagination is not helpful, at least no more helpful than saying it is in the mind, let alone in the brain.

I don't think Wittgenstein is saying that there is no image that the designer (the person making the painting) is said to have. The question is about how the painting relates to the image that the designer had. Is Wittgenstein denying there is such a thing as having an image? Certainly, we can be away from our bedroom and have an image in our mind about what our bedroom looks like, such as the color of the bedspread, where the TV is,

and the stain on the rug. If this means remembering things, it would mean I can scrutinize the image I have in my mind and recall the bed spread slightly touching the floor; that the bedspread is red and the rug blue. It seems rather common to have images in our mind of things not before us. Is Wittgenstein denying there can be such a thing as a picture of an image? He's denying that the picture can be a picture of his image in a way it cannot be for others. If someone can draw a picture of his bedroom without being there it means it is drawn from an image.

It is worth gathering together what has been said about an image and giving my idea of what an image is. As I use the term, image refers to a field, or area, of visual information. The form in which the image takes place is secondary to its being a field of visual information. The form is not insignificant but the concept of the image is constant. To further clarify, even if I am in my bedroom, I am not seeing objects I am seeing areas of shapes and colors. So if I am not in my bedroom the image I have is the pieces of visual information I recall. I may visually recall my red bedspread as it looks in the morning, a bit crumpled, with the sun coming directly through the window, in March.

For this interlocutor, what the picture is for the designer is not what it is for others and we should ask why. What Wittgenstein is going after here, is calling the image a private impression which by definition cannot be shared. If the image is in the mind it would be impossible for others to see it. What Wittgenstein is criticizing is the belief that we have things like images, sensations, or experiences which are our own and so close to us that we cannot be deceived about their content. He is not claiming that we do not have images, but that until they're shown in some way, we ourselves don't fully know what they are.

Is Wittgenstein saying this person does not have a mental image or that a mental image is not a private image which only he can know? The problem is thus stated: "His private impression of the picture tells him what he imagined...." Wittgenstein uses the term "private impression" for the first time in this passage. The picture has already been made and others are looking at it. What is being proposed is that this private impression is the same (similar?) idea which originally generated the picture; the picture is supposed to be a representation of his mental image. The sentence continues, "...in a sense in which the picture can't do this for others." Others looking at the picture, according to this interlocutor, cannot have the private impression of the person who made the picture. They cannot know how the person imagined the stage set. Finally, "And what right have I to speak in this second case of representation...if these words were correctly used in the first case." The second case is where the person who made the painting is supposed to have an idea in his imagination and the painting is to refer back to it as a representation. Wittgenstein is criticizing the idea that a mental image and a picture produced from it have a one to one correspondence.

The way I fill out Wittgenstein's story is to say that a designer is asked to make sketches for a theatrical production. Together with the producer and director, they talk about the show and how the stage should be set up. The designer finally makes a painting based on the sketches and discussions. Wittgenstein first supposes that this person paints the picture in order to show how he imagines the set. But the reason for a designer to paint a picture is to get approval from the producer and use it to start building the set and hiring people to do the lighting and other work. Did the designer have a mental image from which he made the painting? In Wittgenstein's story, the designer

makes the painting in order to show what he imagined. Let's consider a few cases of how an artist's (or designer's) image might relate to a painted picture. The artist has a mental image and paints that on the canvas. The picture is not exactly what he imagined so he continues working on the painting to make it look the way he wants it to look. A second case is where the artist has an image and paints in on the canvas and it does look like his mental image. The painting actually resembles the mental image. But this time, when he looks at the painting, he realizes it does have the emotional power he thought it did. The artist had a thought associated with the image but upon producing the painting realizes the image did not convey the meaning he thought it did. So, if the painting depicts the artist's mental image then his relation to the painting is the same as someone else looking at it. If the painting did not quite express his mental image, then his relation is different from someone else's because of the associations with the painting that did not find visual form in the painting. The technical point is to talk about the relation of the picture to the mental image of the designer. The question is how a painting can represent the mental image in a way it cannot do for other people. The picture the artist paints does not always look like the image the artist had. In practice, there would be no issue about the physical picture produced by the designer referring back to his image. I am not contesting Wittgenstein's analysis of such a problem, but saying that the actual problem is producing the painting that satisfies the mental images of the people involved. The producer of a play might tell the designer the image he has for the stage setting. The designer provides some sketches and the producer says which ones come closest to his image. For me, this is the relation of images to thought; it is a back and forth process where the producer's mental image may in fact change each time he approves or

disapproves of those sketches, or paintings. The relation of that visual idea to the painting was really an order of visual ideas where the initial image in the imagination of the designer was itself informed by other visual ideas.

Without disputing Wittgenstein's analysis, I am noting how unusual a situation it would be to make a painting just to show what was being imagined. The picture may come from the designer's imagination, but this really means it comes from the designer's visual skills of rendering pictures. For example, artists are trained to look at a still life for fifteen minutes and then told to draw it from memory, with the still life covered. This is one way to develop visual skills of recall--and this could be called the imagination. But the point of the exercise is to get better at visual observation and actually drawing is part of learning how to see. Let's say Wittgenstein is talking about someone wholly fabricating a stage set and making a painting based on that imagined scene. Since it never existed anywhere but in that person's imagination, it would make the example more problematic, since the image has no existence except in this person's imagination. You don't always know what you are imagining until you make a picture. Even if you have a very disciplined imagination it still takes the process of physically drawing to know what you were thinking about. The painting that is made may not represent the image you had in mind and may surprise you for how different it is. Wittgenstein is right about this, the picture informs the one who made it as it informs the others. Picturing things is active in the sense that we are always forming and reforming our images. To the artist, one painting always leads to another one because the idea is generative and not completed in one picture. Images tell us something about how the world is.

Speaking directly about the imagination Wittgenstein says, "What is in the imagination is not a picture, but a picture can correspond to it."³³ This statement is a way to establish that images are 'mental images' and pictures have a material form. I think what he's saying is that we don't know what a mental image is until it is realized, for example, as a painting. This is like the person who says, "I know what the color green is for me", without making any demonstration or saying exactly what that is. Knowing what green is for you is like knowing that you have an image but cannot show the image. The question revolves around what it means for something to be in the imagination. It is common to talk about images being in the imagination. But when someone tells you to use your imagination, they mean to think creatively about a situation to find new ways to solve a problem. We now need to understand Wittgenstein's notion that a "picture can correspond" to what is in the imagination.

The way a picture corresponds to what is in the imagination needs to be understood with an account of what an image is and what a picture is. Let's say someone visits the MET (Metropolitan Museum of Art) in New York and sees Rembrandt's painting, "Aristotle with a Bust of Homer." He sets up his own canvas in the gallery in order to copy the painting. After studying Rembrandt's painting for thirty minutes he turns his back to it and starts his own painting. This person is not looking at the painting of Rembrandt while he is making his own painting of it, so we need to explain how this new painting can be done. We can use Hume's vocabulary to say there is a sense impression (or several) of the painting as the artist is looking at it. This impression is most vivid while looking at it and fades into an idea when the artist turns his back to Rembrandt's painting. But the person copying the painting is a professional artist and quite familiar

³³ Wittgenstein, #301.

with Rembrandt's body of work. He has seen the painting before and studied his brushstrokes. He knows the technique of chiaroscuro and used it in his own paintings. Thus, his knowledge of this painting and the techniques used to produce it means he has a much more structured sense impression than someone who knows little about art. I do not mean just the skill in copying the painting is different, but the actual perception of the Rembrandt painting is different. The visual skills of the trained artist brings an understanding to what he is seeing to the initial perception of Rembrandt's picture. Upon turning around he has an idea, in Hume's sense, which is a faint copy of the sense impression. But the vivacity of that idea is much more intense than the naive person, making the idea much more clear and detailed. Here I would say the distinction about whether the artist making a copy has a mental image, an image in the imagination, a picture in his head, is somewhat of a distraction. We could also distinguish between saying the artist is recalling looking at the Rembrandt picture and not using a mental image. First, I would say that if we talk about mental images being identical to what we saw, there would be no way to demonstrate that--even if such way of talking made sense. My defense of Hume is to say that we never really have perceptions perfectly resembling external objects. In this case, the skill level of visual discernment makes the initial sensation much more structured by past knowledge of art. Again, the Human principle of identity means there are not identical perceptions, but resemblances which are informed by perceptual skills. We can then say the artist is copying from memory, but that memory is informed by past knowledge. This memory can be called a mental image so it would mean you're painting from your own mental image. The skill of visual recall can be trained so that we can have detailed images in our imagination. If what is in the

imagination is not a picture, I take Wittgenstein to mean a physically existing object.

Whether we say the artist paints from the memory of looking at the Rembrandt painting or painted from one's own image, it would amount to the same thing.

Wittgenstein talks about, "What is in the imagination..."³⁴ and I want to address this locution. This would make the imagination into a faculty or a depository for images where things could be in it or outside of it. My preference is to talk about the imagination as a process or activity without implying it is a faculty or has a location somewhere in the brain. The sense of imagination I prefer is stated by Hume, "The smooth passage of the imagination along the ideas of the resembling perceptions makes us ascribe to them a perfect identity."³⁵ The imagination is already engaged with what seemed like a simple sense perception. If someone sees a person walking across the room, why involve the imagination? But this is precisely what Hume does in order to explain how broke perceptions are smooth over to give us the illusion of continuous movement. So, sense perceptions are brought together into unities by an act of imagination. Thus, the mind is fundamentally based in imagination. For convenience we use the concept of identity to unify a diversity of perceptions. We might say, look at the sunset. But we could mean, look at the mountains and the colors reflected on it by the blue gray clouds, and so on. Referring to the imagination as a faculty, or a place where images reside, oversimplifies the situation. The reason to emphasize this point is that we often think of artists as endowed with a greater faculty of imagination. In one sense, it is just the opposite; artists are more likely to scrutinize what they see and analyze those perceptions to see their components. By not assuming that things hold together according to nature or custom,

³⁴ Wittgenstein, #301.

³⁵ Hume, T1.4.2.36.

they examine those broken perceptions to see how meaning is produced by putting them together in different ways.

Wittgenstein, like Hume, does not talk about the subject being the locus of thought or perception. Although Wittgenstein, in the *Philosophical Investigations*, is not a behaviorist, it is worth considering what status our sense of having an inner life has. Behaviorists emphasize the outward displays of behavior in order to confirm that a thought or experience even occurred; and that the thought or experience is the behavior. Behaviorism confirms the structure of inner experience of an outer world by asserting there is no inner experience and only an outside world in which thoughts are expressed for others to see. Wittgenstein is criticizing some talk about inner experience and public display of behavior. Experience is a continuum ranging from the inner to the outer. What Wittgenstein is criticizing is the conviction that the inner is what feels to be most close to me; and that the outside world are things like physical objects. Thoughts and feelings are not physical objects but responses to physical objects. If I have an image of a stage setting it does not mean it is inside me where others cannot see it. But we can have an image of a stage setting which we see and others do not. This is not mysterious. But it would be wrong to say that I am able to see my image better than anyone else because of my intimacy with the image. It does seem to be a part of me; it is my image in my mind in my physical body. The problem is that we really don't know what the image is until we find a way to express it or manifest it in some form.

What is sometimes called the private language argument is Wittgenstein's criticism of the idea that someone can have language that is not available to others. The idea of the private is that no one else but that individual can see what is going on. But Wittgenstein

pushes that term even farther to say that person does not always see what is going on with himself--or at least not as clearly as he thought. This passage gets to the heart of talking about sensations as being private:

Of course, saying that the word "red" "refers to" instead of "means" something private does not help us in the least to grasp its function, but it is the more psychologically apt expression for a particular experience in doing philosophy. It is as if when I uttered the word I cast a sidelong glance at the private sensation, as it were in order to say to myself: I know all right what I mean by it.³⁶

Wanting to keep some things private because it is not for others to see is a fairly common experience. Even if I am thinking of something to myself and don't tell anyone, it is still the use of language. The word private has the sense of privation, of being deprived. We might say that a private sensation is one which even we ourselves are deprived from knowing. It is as if it happens without seeing or sensing it--but also that we discover it as if surprised to have found it within ourselves. A private sensation would mean that a sensation occurs twice. Once when it occurs privately, a second time when we notice it. This is what Wittgenstein means when he says, "It is as if when I uttered the word ["red"] I cast a sidelong glance at the private sensation, as it were in order to say to myself: I know all right what I mean by it."³⁷

A private sensation is like having a temporary tattoo on one's imagination. A tattoo on one's arm can be seen by others, as well as yourself, because it is on the outside of one's body. A private sensation is like having an internal temporary tattoo of red. Since it is inside me it cannot be seen by others but I know it is there. I look at the internal tattoo and say, yes, that's red alright. Why should anyone know what my red sensation is since it is me who has that sensation? Then we would want to know where that sensation is and

³⁶ Wittgenstein, #274.

³⁷ Wittgenstein, #274.

what kind of seeing allows you to see it and not others. The private language, or private sensation, argument is to say that there is an illusion of something taking place when I say that I know what having a sensation is for me.

Wittgenstein can be put together with Aristotle as a peripatetic philosopher. The Peripatetic school refers to Aristotle and his students walking around the Lyceum while discussing philosophy. Walking around and talking is important not only because you are physically exercising and getting the blood flowing into your brain, but you are actively engaged with your physical environment and looking at things as you walk. Being in motion yourself makes thinking of the world as being in motion more compatible. The idea of a fixed view becomes less convincing and less necessary. We are able to have intelligibility without using a fixed reference from which to explain everything.

V. CONCLUSION

Is it impossible to think without an image? Aristotle said, yes. Hume might say, yes; because thinking is associated with, or derived from, images. Wittgenstein might say, maybe; because there are different kinds of thinking and some are associated with images.

Aristotle's claim that we cannot think without an image is similar to how Wittgenstein thinks about images and language. Hume refers to all thoughts and images as 'perception;' which is things present to the mind. If thinking only takes place in the mind, then we would want to know exactly what is outside the mind, and how things go into the mind and how they get out.

The very word "mind," according to Sachs, only occurs once in Aristotle's, *On the Soul* (or, *De Anima*), "in the translation of a quotation of Homer at 427a 26."³⁸ Different translations for "mind" call it reason, intellect, or the thinking part of the soul. Hamlyn notes that Aristotle's concern is with the "mind, or more generally, of the soul (for the notion of the *mind* was to the Greeks a more limited one than it is for us, being confined to the more intellectual aspects of the mental life)."³⁹ Aristotle's belief, "which runs through most of earlier Greek thought--[is] that the soul...is the principle of life."⁴⁰ If we say that thought occurs in the intellect, or mind, and the mind is part of the soul, and the soul is the principle of life--then we are locating thought in life. Thought is all around us and is not just a property of an individual mind. What *nous* means is that there is an intelligibility to the world which is not caused by objects or the individual intellect. If we say the mind takes the shape (or form) of the object, it means the form is available to the

³⁸ Aristotle, *On the Soul*, trans. Sachs, 121.

³⁹ Aristotle, *De Anima*, trans. Hamlyn, ix.

⁴⁰ Hamlyn, ix.

mind so far as it is receptive to it. This is knowledge for Aristotle, the receptivity of the mind to the form of the object.

Hume's concept of impression is similar to Aristotle in emphasizing the receptivity of the mind. Unlike Aristotle, Hume says we know the world through a bundle of perceptions. There is no direct taking of the form of the objects as it is for Aristotle. Since the intelligibility of the world is based on the principle of resemblance, there really isn't a form of the object which is in thought. The bundle of perceptions are organized by resemblance, not by identity. Thought is really the isomorphic movement of perceptions. Our understanding of the world is based on our visual perceptions and not on intelligible forms. Hume is careful to point out that our perceptions are both about real, external objects and the perceptions themselves. I don't think there is *nous*, for Hume; there is neither a kind of universal thought available to all persons, nor an integrity (or identity) to the thinking person.

One aspect of Wittgenstein's thought looks to be closer to Aristotle's idea of *nous* than to Hume's notion of perception when he says, "Since everything lies open to view, there is nothing to explain."⁴¹ There is an intelligibility to the world which we just need to see before us; though for Wittgenstein it is not a universal *nous* but a case by case understanding. Our thinking belongs to the world and not just to our minds. There is no external world existing separate from our perception of it for Wittgenstein and Aristotle. Thought is a property of the world. Even though Hume does say there are external objects, or bodies, he does say, "'Tis absurd, therefore, to imagine the senses can ever distinguish betwixt ourselves and external objects."⁴² My sense of that sentence is that

⁴¹ Wittgenstein, #126.

⁴² Hume, T1.4.2.6.

our perceptions don't provide the idea that we, our bodies, are distinct from our environment or the world. If our senses don't give us a perception of our bodies as distinct from our environment, this would suggest that we always think of ourselves as being contiguous with our environment.

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