Negation and Not-Being in Wittgenstein's Tractatus and Plato's Sophist

by Robert B. Pippin, San Diego

The origins of our contemporary fascination with language are, of course, quite complex and go to the very heart of that persistent twentieth-century attempt to see philosophy as a "critique of language". But, in investigating those origins, it does no one an injustice to insist upon the importance of Ludwig Wittgenstein and especially his little book, the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, in bringing the issue to the prominence it enjoys today. Central to that book is a doctrine that has come to be called the "picture theory of meaning", Wittgenstein's attempt to answer some continually raised paradoxes about the relation between language and reality. This account, although rejected later by Wittgenstein himself, proved markedly influential when it first appeared, and still stands as one of the most straight-forward and elegantly simple descriptions of how language works. It also seems to return to a much older historical tradition (older especially in appearing to be pre-Kantian) in its insistence on a "correspondence" theory of truth and the iconic nature of language. In fact, it seems to return quite explicitly to Plato's account of language as an *eidos* in a dialogue like the *Sophist*. In a certain sense, one could claim that the central problem of dialogues like the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist* was Wittgenstein's major concern in his early work. Indeed, Anscombe has claimed just that and more.

Plato's *Theaetetus* 189 A: "In judging one judges something; in judging something, one judges something real; so in judging something unreal, one judges nothing; but judging nothing, one is not judging at all." Wittgenstein returned to the problem presented by this argument again and again throughout his life.

Further, in the opinion of some commentators, the Eleatic Stranger and Wittgenstein not only begin with very similar problems, they seem to arrive at very similar solutions. The picture theory's representational model of language's relation to the world, the ontology taken by some to be supported by the picture theory (Wittgenstein's infamous "simples"), the doctrines of logical space and the "form" of objects, and perhaps more than any other issue, Wittgenstein's "derivative" explanation of negation (the claim that not-X depends on X for its intension and the claim that it has no negative extension,

---

1 Unless otherwise indicated, the Pears-McGuinness text of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* is used (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961).

that there are no negative facts, all count as evidence for Platonic shadows stretching across the Tractatus. This seems especially true when we consider that Wittgenstein regarded as a major consequence of the picture theory its ability to account for meaningful, false propositions, that it could explain how "thought can be of what is not the case". Plato's discussion of images is clearly and directly concerned with much the same problem in "capturing" the elusive sophist.

In the following, I will consider two such comparable issues - the general theory of language involved in both accounts, and their specific solution to the problem of negation and false propositions. What I hope to accomplish by this contrast is to illuminate two very different kinds of analyses appropriate to the topic of "not-being"; differences one could roughly characterize as "semantic" versus "ontological". Further, this difference in orientation and in emphasis will involve differences within each mode: specifically it will involve a "picture" versus an "image" theory of language, and atomistic versus non-atomistic ontologies.3

Our first task then is a provisional summary of Wittgenstein's picture theory.

Unfortunately, though, there is no simple way to summarize the details of Wittgenstein's theory of language as Bild. The bare list of propositions which presents the theory is embedded in some spectacular ambiguities which have not gone unnoticed by Wittgenstein's commentators. But, at least we can notice where pictures first enter the text. At 2.1. Wittgenstein announces, "Wir machen uns Bilder der Tatsachen". Up until this point the task of the Tractatus had been explicitly ontological; a series of propositions had described the "world" as composed of "facts" and those facts as immediate combinations of "objects", which themselves never occur except as combined in a "Sachverhalt". As is often pointed out, Wittgenstein thus arrives at two ontologically primitive notions in this initial account, Sachverhalt and Gegenstand, neither really prior to the other.4 But even here, before we reach any point where we could begin to understand how language could relate or refer to the "world", there are some initial problems in this brief account of world itself, as "co-be-pictured". The first, and one of the most famous am-

3 I take it as established by now that "positivistic" interpretations of the Tractatus are mistaken, and that a discussion of its (albeit limited) "ontology" does not sound as strange as it once would have. Cf. Anscombe's critique of the positivistic interpretation, An Introduction, p. 25 ff., and p. 150 ff., as well as Anselm Müller, Ontologie en Wittgenstein's Tractatus (Bonn, Buvier & Co., 1967).

4 "Atomism" would seem an appropriate, even if a bit ambiguous, word to describe this position. A full discussion of in what sense it is atomistic would take us into the complex issues of "particulars", "bare particulars", "simples", etc. I can only refer here to the excellent discussion of such issues by Sellars, Copi and Bernstein in Essays on Wittgenstein's Tractatus, ed. by Copi and Beard (New York, The Macmillan Co., 1966). We can also note that, despite their differences, all work to preserve the independence, in some sense, of objects and Sachverhalte from one another.

biguities that must be resolved is the relativistic, "fact" and "atomic fact". Each is adhered to by Russell in his Introductions would be just a special kind of Tatsache, sense, all atomic facts would be facts, but though, a number of other interpretations. Guinness translation of Sachverhalte as ": with Anscombe, Black, Hartnack, Stenius different interpretations, as far as I can see, Fallist, ist das Bestehen von Sachverhalten statement is crucial before we can understand when he tells us we picture facts to ourselves actuality (or actualization) of a Sachverb, so that a "fact" is an actualized or existing that a fact is made up of "atomic facts", interpretation has some weighty evidence on translations Wittgenstein himself prefers this question aspy, Wittgenstein resolves more: "What is the difference between Tatsache and Elementarsatz if it is true. Tatsache is what would resolve it is true."

And, in the third place, this interpretat der Tatsache besteht aus den Strukturen d not to say fatal, difficulty. According to t two "atomic facts" can ever be said to "co-lows that combination to achieve the separ sind von einander unabhängig.") So it ca "group", in whatever sense, of Sachverb there to be a distinction between the two. successfully the relation of propositions li uses the word "Tatsache" in too many dil- tion to "Sachverhalt". But, at the very lea, derived from what Wittgenstein mess Wittgenstein sometimes uses Tatsache in with 2.04) and sometimes uses it to cover

5 Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophical & Kegan Paul, 1922).


7 Ludwig Wittgenstein, Notebooks, 1914–19
Evidence for Platonic shadows stretching true when we consider that Wittgenstein re-theory its ability to account for meaningful, “thought can be of what is not the case”. Directly concerned with much the same prob-

omparable issues – the general theory of language-specific solution to the problem of negation mishap by this contrast is to illuminate two to the topic of “not-being”, differences one versus “ontological”. Further, this difference differences within each mode; specifically it theory of language, and atomistic versus non-

ary of Wittgenstein’s picture theory.

The way to summarize the details of Wittgen-

list of propositions which presents the theory of which have not gone unnoticed by Witt-

trinsic where pictures first enter the text. At the Birth of the Tatsachen”. Up until this explicitly ontological; a series of propositions “facts” and those facts as immediate combina-

tives except as combined in a “Sachverhalt”. Arises at two ontologically primitive notions gestand, neither really prior to the other. Here we could begin to understand how lan-

er are some initial problems in this brief ac-

The first, and one of the most famous am-

interpretations of the Tractatus are mistaken, of tertology” does not sound as strange as it once would have been. An Introduction, p. 25 ff., and

in Wittgenstein’s Tractatus” (Bonn, Bouvier &

a bit ambiguous, word to describe this position. A total take us into the complex issues of “particu-

tly refer here to the excellent discussion of such in Wittgenstein’s Tractatus, ed. by Copi and Board is also note that, despite their differences, all work of objects and Sachverhalte from one another.

Negation and Not-Being

Libilities that must be resolved is the relation between a “Tatsache” and a “Sachverhalt”. As is well known, the original Ogden English edition translated these terms as, respectively, “fact” and “atomic fact”. Such is the translation Wittgenstein preferred and the one adhered to by Russell in his Introduction. Under this translation, a Sachverhalt would be just a special kind of Tatsache, one not reducible to any further fact. In that sense, all atomic facts would be facts, but not all facts would be atomic facts. There are, though, a number of other interpretations of this relation, many based on the Peirce-McGuinness translation of Sachverhalt as “state of affairs”. The dispute (and dispute it is, with Anscombe, Black, Hartmann, Stenius, Maslow, Faveköhler and Schwirzer all having different interpretations), as far as I can see, really centers on the meaning of 2 “Was der Fällen, ist das Bestehen von Sachverhalten.” A resolution of the dilemma posed by such a statement is crucial before we can understand what “facts” Wittgenstein is talking about when he tells us we picture facts to ourselves. For, 2 either means that a Tatsache is the actuality (or actualization) of a Sachverhalt, which latter would then be a “possibility”, so that a “fact” is an actualized or existing (Bestehen) “state of affairs”; or, 2 could mean that a fact is made up of “atomic facts”, as a “molecular fact” would be. This latter interpretation has some weighty evidence on its side. In the first place, it is much truer to the translations Wittgenstein himself preferred; in the second place, when Russell asked him this question explicitly, Wittgenstein responded

“What is the difference between Tatsache and Sachverhalt?” Sachverhalt is what corresponds to an elementarzatz if it is true. Tatsache is what corresponds to the logical product of elementar propositions when this product is true.

And, in the third place, this interpretation would coincide with 2.034: “Die Struktur der Tatsache besteht aus den Strukturen der Sachverhalte.” However, it has one serious, not to say fatal, difficulty. According to the unambiguous insistence of the Tractatus, no two “atomic facts” can ever be said to “combine” in any way, least of all in a way that allows that combination to achieve the separate status of a “fact” (2.061: “Die Sachverhalte sind von einander unabhängig.”) So it can never be correct to speak of a Tatsache as a “group”, in whatever sense, of Sachverhalte; but something like that must be true for there to be a distinction between the two. It may be that there is no final way to explain successfully the relation of propositions like 2 and 2.034, with 2.061. Wittgenstein simply uses the word “Tatsache” in too many different ways for one to define precisely its relation to “Sachverhalt”. But, at the very least, one can say that Tatsache is a derivative notion, derived from what Wittgenstein means by the more fundamental Sachverhalt; that Wittgenstein sometimes uses Tatsache in the same general sense as Sachverhalt (cf. 1.1 with 2.04) and sometimes uses it to cover a wider “logical space” than just a Sachverhalt.

1 Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, transl. by C. K. Ogden (London, Rout-

ledge & Kegan Paul, 1922).

2 For a detailed investigation of the numerous possible interpretations of this problem, see David Faveköhler, An Interpretation and Critique of Wittgenstein’s Tractatus (Copenhagen, Muskaard, 1967), p. 38ff.

(cf. 2.034; "Die Struktur der Tatsache (i.e. a singular fact) besteht aus den Strukturen der Sachverhalte" (i.e. plural states of affairs).  

We are assisted, though, in trying to understand what Wittgenstein thinks language pictures by his later remarks on the difference between a Satz and an Elementarsatz, found most explicitly at 4.21f. and especially in the contrast between 4.21 and 4.4.

4.21. The simplest kind of proposition, an elementary proposition (der Elementarsatz) asserts the existence of a state of affairs (Sachverhalt).

4.4. A proposition is an expression of agreement and disagreement with truth-possibilities of elementary propositions.

When these two statements are coupled with 4.0312, "My fundamental idea is that logical constants are not representatives (nicht vertreten); that there can be no representatives of the logic of facts", then some conclusions may finally be drawn about what Wittgenstein means when he says we picture facts to ourselves. Since he seems to use the word Sachverhalt as a "kind" of Tatsache, and since "propositions" are truth functions (not pictures) of "elementary propositions", and since the truth functional connectives of these propositions represent nothing (as, indeed, they could not, since all Sachverhalte are independent), then, from all of this, when Wittgenstein says, "Wir machen uns Bilder der Tatsachen", he must mean a picture of a special kind of Tatsache, a Sachverhalt, an "atomic fact" consisting only of objects in immediate combination. The proposition that is that picture must be an Elementarsatz, all other Sätze being truth functions of these elementary ones, which truth functions "represent" nothing in the world.

Finally, then, to complete this initial account of the essential features of the picture theory, we need to consider what Wittgenstein thinks pictures, as propositions, have "in common" with their facts so that they can picture them. His well-known answer to this question is given, basically, in propositions 2.16–2.22 and especially at 2.18:

"What any picture, of whatever form, must have in common with reality (Wirklichkeit), in order to be able to depict it—correctly or incorrectly—in any way at all, is logical form, i.e. the form of reality (die Form der Wirklichkeit)."

And even more important is 2.202: "Das Bild stellt eine mögliche Sachlage im logischen Raume. Bilder picture by having their logical form in common with a "place" in what Wittgenstein calls "logical space", defined as the nexus of possibilities determined by the inherent possibilities of combination (the "form") of objects. A proposition thus has meaning only if it represents, or "pictures" logical space; it is, further, true if that point exist. Thus we have what is intended as philosophic problems about the relation between truth and reality. We are able to understand the meaning and not if it is true in roughly the same way we understand language and referent propositions in the Tractatus.

... it was difficult to see why a described fact proposition that would normally be said to describe an event.

Anscombe, in her commentary, admits counter it by simply quoting 2.1513 and 2.1514 picture relation itself is contained in the four characteristic to distinguish picture and fact as a proposition is a picture of a fact and not the proposition can picture because of state, then the fact pictured must "contain" the picture relation" itself. Wittgenstein says that what this means is that we can picture it picturing relation Anscombe thinks suffic the Tractatus between language and the "rea Tractatus always insists on the identity of so much that even the necessity for "veri


9 This result is supported by Copi in his Objects, Properties and Relations in the 'Tractatus', Essay, ed. Copi and Beard, p. 170.

10 Wittgenstein goes on here to describe how "names" in the proposition "stand for" ("vertreten" at 2.131 and 3.22) objects in the fact and thus how the "meaning" of a name is just its bearer. But it clear that names do no "picture". Only propositions picture and only they picture since a picture is necessarily a picturing that so and so. Every picture must present its pictures as like those, whereas a name only "stands in" for its bearer. Cf. Copi's criticism of Daitz, Objects, Properties and Relations, p. 167 ff.

11 It is necessary here to distinguish two notion ways, but which he never formally distinguishes with these Sachverhalte that actually "are the case non-existence (Nichtbestehen), or the "poss. 2.04. Thus a picture is meaningful as a picture. We shall have some difficulty later with this picture. Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Language (London, R

12 As reported by Anscombe, An Introduction to the Tractatus. Another consequence of this feature of the picture theory is that in a Tractarian world, elementary propositions must always be clear that to be true or false in order to say that them imitate the whole does not seem a likely case:

13 Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Language, p. 43.
Pippin

singular fact) besteht aus den Strukturen der

verständ dass Wittgenstein denkt linguage
ce zwischen a Satz and an Elementarsatz.

n der Elementarsatz) asserts the

unt and disagreement with truth-possibilities of

4.0312, "My fundamental idea is that log-
verteilt); that there can be no representa-
ations may finally be drawn about what Witt-
to ourselves. Since he seems to use the word
propositions" are true functions (not
since the truth functional connectives of
ed, they could not, since all Sachverhalte

Wittgenstein says, "Wir machen uns Bilder

Spezialkind of Tatsache, a Sachverhalt, an

mediates combination". The proposition that

other Sätze being truth functions of these

present" nothing in the whole world.10

unt of the essential features of the picture

n pictures, as propositions, have "in-

cture them. His well known answer to this

2.16-2.22 and especially at 2.18:

n common with reality (Wirklichkeit), in order

any way at all, is logical form, i.e. the form of re-

d stellt eine mögliche Sachlage im logischen

form in common with a "place" in what

he nexus of possibilities determined by the

orn") of objects. A proposition thus has

on, an explanation which contrasts with this and

books: Wittgenstein's Picture Theory of Lan-

g-" in the proposition "stand for" ("verteilen") as

im "meaning" of a name is just its bearer. But it is

ons picture and only they picture since a picture

picture must present its pictures as like this,
f. Copi's criticism of Dazis, Objects, Properties

meaning only if it represents, or "pictures", one of these possible points in the realm of

logical space; it is, further, true if that point happens to exist, false if that point does not

Thus we have what is intended as the solution to the first of many traditional

philosophic problems about the relation between language and world — meaning

true. We are able to understand the meaning of a proposition without knowing whether

or not it is true in roughly the same way we can understand what a picture is about with-

out yet knowing whether it is actually a good representation.

But before dealing with this theory's treatment of false propositions, we should note

here one odd feature of this account, a characteristic that will eventually be important in

our attempt to distinguish Wittgensteinian "picture" from Platonic "image". We need to

consider the observation first made by Columbo, the Italian translator of the Tractatus.

He claimed, in effect, that Wittgenstein's strong insistence on this "isomorphism" of

"logical form" between language and reality was wildly overstated; that, from what

Wittgenstein says in the Tractatus

... it was difficult to see why a described fact should not be regarded as itself a description of the

proposition that would normally be said to describe it, rather than the other way around12.

Anscombe, in her commentary, admits this is indeed a "strong point", but claims to

counter it by simply quoting 2.1513 and 2.1514 in which Wittgenstein insists that the pic-
turing relation itself is contained in the picture; serving, for Anscombe, as a sufficient

characteristic to distinguish picture and fact strongly enough to preserve our ability to say

a proposition is a picture of a fact and not the other way around. But this is not sufficient.

If the proposition can picture because of the picturing relation it shows and does not

state, then the fact pictured must "contain" the ability to be pictured, or, again, the "pic-
turing relation" itself. Wittgenstein says as much at 3.001: "A state of affairs is thinkable:

what this means is that we can picture it to ourselves." A Sachverhalt must contain the

picturing relation Anscombe thinks sufficiently preserves the tenuous distinction in the

Tractatus between language and the "real"13. Wittgenstein's language throughout the

Tractatus always insists on the identity of logical form between picture and pictured14,

so much so that even the necessity for "verification" of propositions in the "world" (by

11 It is necessary here to distinguish two notions which Wittgenstein uses in consistently different

ways, but which he never formally distinguishes. "Welt" in the Tractatus clearly includes only

those Sachverhalte that actually "are the case", while "Wirklichkeit" denotes the existence and

non-existence (Nichtbestehen), or the "possibility of existence" of Sachverhalte, as at 2.06 and

2.04. Thus a picture is meaningful as a picture of "reality", it is true as a picture of the "world".

We shall have some difficulty later with this "non-existence". Cf. also James Bogen, Wittgen-


12 As reported by Anscombe, An Introduction, p. 67ff.

13 Another consequence of this feature of the picture theory that makes it hard to appreciate the

ambiguity of sophistry in a Tractarian world is the sense-determinacy thesis. What we mean, in

elementary propositions must always be clear; we must know what it would mean for the propo-

sition to be true or false in order to say that the proposition is meaningful. The sophist's claim to

imitate the whole does not seem a likely candidate for such determinacy. Cf. Bogen, Wittgen-

stein's Philosophy of Language, p. 43.

14 Contrast Schwyzer's denial of this, Wittgenstein's Picture Theory, p. 272ff.
far the most stupendous ambiguity in the book) seems muted by the fact that world, as described in the *Tractatus*, is, only in accordance with the logical form demanded by propositions. Rather than verify propositions by the world, we seem rather to describe the world as a result of the character of propositions, as again we seem confused about “what” is original and “what” picture.\(^{15}\)

At any rate, having seen at least provisionally what it is that Wittgenstein thinks language pictures and how he thinks it accomplishes this, we turn now to the most difficult problem raised by that analysis – the “meaning” of negative and false propositions. In the first place, it is clear that these must be separate problems. Simply put, a negative proposition \(-p\) can be true or false, in obvious contrast to a false proposition. Wittgenstein’s position on the former of these two problems is well known. To sum up, to say “\(-p\)” for Wittgenstein is not to “machen ein Bild” at all, but is to perform a truth functional operation on the picture “\(p\)”. Both in the sense of so-called “normal” negation (“The river is not long”) and in the sense of “radical” negation (“There are no unicorns.”) negative propositions have meaning for Wittgenstein only because of, or as derivative from, the meaning of the pictured proposition it negates. In “\(-p\)”, it is the “place” in logical space designated by “\(p\)” that determines the “Sinn” of the truth functional statement “\(-p\)”. The famous and strikingly odd “picture” in the *Notebooks* “shows” all of this immediately.

\[\begin{array}{c}
(-p) \\
(p)
\end{array}\]

... The proposition, the picture, the model are – in the negative sense – like a solid body restricting the freedom of movement of others; in the positive sense, like the space bounded by solid substance, in which there is room for a body. This image (Vorstellung) is very clear and must lead to the solution.\(^{16}\)

Or, as in the *Tractatus* itself,

4.0621: But it is important that the signs ‘\(p\)’ and ‘\(-p\)’ can say the same thing. For it shows that nothing in reality corresponds (entspricht) to the sign ‘\(-\).’

4.0641: The negating proposition determines a logical place with the help of the logical place of the negated proposition. For it describes it as lying outside the latter’s logical place.

By far the most important consequence of this treatment of negation is expressed in “... nothing in reality corresponds to the sign ‘\(-\).’” Wittgenstein has effectively excluded the question of negation from any ontological arena. Just as with the famous distinctions supposedly discovered in the *Sophist*, to say not-X (where X is here a whole proposition, not a part), is not to assert any contrary of being (“the non-X”) but is just to “use the negation sign correctly”, to follow Owen’s characterization of the Stranger’s strategy.\(^{17}\)

\(^{15}\) For difficulties associated with this world-language confusion, as well as a number of other explicitly ontological difficulties, see Müller, *Ontologie*, p. 231 ff.


---

Negation at

The cryptic ontology of the first few pages are verse of separate, unaffected *Sachverhalte* so “immediate” as to deny also any

But it should also be emphasized that this

ally, “not-being” has a secondary or derivative like the way *dynamis* achieves an ontological presents no reality at all; it merely instruct plea
tely positive places in logical space. All atomistic nature of these *Sachverhalte*. To one “place” in logical space is determined others (or to say with Spinoza, “Determine: elements of this ‘world’, rather than being connected in order to be said to have a ‘pla be unacceptable for Wittgenstein.”

Negation is thus merely an operator and there being no “negative” *Sachverhalte* to hovers near this solution to the negation qu – the more famous, traditionally “platonics” us say false *Elementarsätze*, or false picture are always pictures, to put the whole problem proposition pictures?

Initially, it is tempting to see this problem.

One could reasonably claim that species of negative ones, in the sense that th out false would be just the meaning of “\(-p\)” that “\(p\)” is true. There is, though, an inmediate terms of the *Tractatus*. That is, a proposition being false, and, even more critically, it does not mean false, its meaning does not begin being explained as a “true function” its meaning is still dependent on what it pick sense of “meaning”. To move from theory of meaning to what Favrholdt has functional realm where a meaning is derti Favrholdt even goes so far as to suggest this in the *Tractatus*, one for negation and one

and, “\(p\)” and “\(p\)” on the other

\(^{18}\) The role of “negativity” for Hegel, even in such contrasted with Wittgenstein. Cf. *Winersch* pp. 26–32 with the *Tractatus* at 4.242 and 4

\(^{19}\) Favrholdt, *An Interpretation*, p. 48.
The cryptic ontology of the first few pages of the *Tractatus* asserts only a positivist universe of separate, unaffected *Sachverhalte*, composed of *Gegenstände* in combinations so "immediate" as to deny also any ontological reality to "relations".

But it should also be emphasized that this does not mean that negativity, or, traditionally, "not-being" has a secondary or derivative "reality" in Wittgenstein in something like the way *dynamis* achieves an ontological status in Aristotle. Rather the sign "-" represents no reality at all; it merely instructs us to perform a certain operation on completely positive places in logical space. All of this also follows quite consistently from the nomistic nature of these *Sachverhalte*. To be able to say, as suggested above, that any one "place" in logical space is determined only by, in some determinate way negating others (or to say with Spinoza, "Determinatio negatio est."), would be to claim that the elements of this "world", rather than being primordially independent, are critically interconnected in order to be said to have a "place" at all. Such a conclusion would obviously be unacceptable for Wittgenstein.

Negation is thus merely an operator and negative propositions are not pictures at all, there being no "negative" *Sachverhalte* to picture. But there is another issue that always hovers near this solution to the negation question and one which is often confused with it - the more famous, traditionally "platonic" problem of how false propositions (here, let us say false *Elementarsätze*, or false pictures) have meaning. If elementary propositions are always pictures, to put the whole problem simply, what is "it" that a false elementary proposition pictures?

Initially, it is tempting to see this problem as merely a version of the problem of negation. One could reasonably claim that so-called "false" propositions were merely a species of negative ones, in the sense that the *meaning* of asserting "p" and having it turn out false would be just the meaning of "-p" being true. Likewise "-p" as false only *means* that "p" is true. There is, though, an immediate, obvious error in this analysis, at least in terms of the *Tractatus*. That is, a proposition does not cease being elementary merely by being false, and, even more critically, it does not cease being a picture. Because an elementary proposition is false, its meaning does not cease to be explained by the picture theory and begin being explained as a "truth function" of a picture. As false, it is still a picture, its meaning is still dependent on what it pictures and cannot be explained by a wholly different sense of "meaning". To move from "p is false" to "-p" is to move from a picture theory of meaning to what Favarholdt has called the "thesis of extensionality", to a truth functional realm where a meaning is derived from pictures but is not itself a picture. Favarholdt even goes so far as to suggest that there should have been two explicit symbols in the *Tractatus*, one for negation and one for truth and falsity ("p" and "-p" on the one hand, and "p ⊤" and "p ⊥" on the other), designations we shall follow below.

---

8 The role of "negativity" for Hegel, even in such formulations as the law of identity, should also be contrasted with Wittgenstein. Cf. *Wissenschaft der Logik* (Hamburg, Felix Meiner, 1969), v. II, pp. 26-32 with the *Tractatus* at 4.242 and 4.243.

This point is crucial for understanding why the sophist will pose difficulties for us later. The whole point of much of the *Tractatus* account of language is to explain how we can know a proposition’s meaning *without* knowing whether it is true or false. Likewise, in Plato, it is not only the possibility of unknowingly “being in error” that must be explained (the possibility that, when \( p \) is asserted, we can claim not-\( p \) and avoid the wrath of Father Parmenides), but also the possibility of “seeming to be true”, or of being meaningful prior to being either true or false. The Sophist does not only taunt us with a supposed inability to say not-\( p \), but also with our inability to explain how \( p \) could make sense in the first place, if not-\( p \). Put most directly, it is easy but dangerous to assume that the Sophist is the “answer” to the *Theaetetus*’ problem of error. But, unfortunately for our attempt to capture the Sophist or explain falsity in Wittgenstein, the sophist does not elliptically say not-\( p \); his *eikon* would not be deceptive if it *claimed* to be of what is “other than \( p \),” leaving us only the task of explaining -\( p \). In that case, we would need to know that \( p \) were false before we could explain what the sophist said.

It is, of course, true that part of what is involved in capturing the sophist is in showing that we can meaningfully say that he “says what is not”; that our response of not-\( p \) to his \( p \) is sensible without positing any contrary of being. But also involved is explaining the negative status of what he says, how he makes an image of something, and how that something also is not. The sophist does not image not-\( X \); he images \( Y \) as \( X \). Our attempt to unmask him is thus committed to two tasks: (1) Understanding how not-\( X \) could have a meaningful status, and (2) understanding the mode of being of \( Y \), or more precisely, \( Y \)’s referent, especially since it seems to be \( X \). This problem of the mode of being of the image, or here in Wittgenstein, of false pictures, is lost if it is treated as some elliptically negative claim. In short, a false picture is *still a picture* and we must still ask what it pictures, especially as contrasted with a true one. In order to be finally clear on what status a false proposition can have within the whole explanation of the picture theory, consider the following analogy, very loosely borrowed from what Wittgenstein says at 4.063. Let us suppose that the whole of logical space could be represented by a system of coordinates, within which we may locate “points”.

4.

3.

2.

1.

Then, consider the following propositions:

(a) There is a black dot at (3,3).
(b) There is not a black dot at (1,2).
(c) There is a black dot at (1,2).

We should take note here of the various well-known attempts out of this problem. Stenius, *Wittgenstein’s Tractatus: A Critical Exposition of its Main Lines of Thought* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1960) would have only true propositions “really” picture (p. 96) and Anscombe would have pictures themselves be neither true nor false. Both of these interpretations seem to me unacceptably in conflict with 2.21.

According to the analysis thus far, assumptions, (a) and (b) would seem to be explained it pictures a possible point in logical space of a possible picture of a black dot at (1,2) is true. But already, within that negation, a \( \neg \) negates, *picture*! It is certainly true, it seems to picture what “is” only as But then it pictures what is and is not. -\( p \) in the language of the Sophist, what is “out of course, Wittgenstein explicitly wanted possibilities etc., yet his relegating all negation would seem to be leading at that moved from the picture theory, towards t

10 genstein II.)

Thus we arrive at three strange Wittgenstein’s tures of (2) logical space, or points of poss case in (3) the world, the acutal existence. But if pictures are, initially at least, pict have to be made in Wittgenstein’s earlier tatus is that realm of logical space as a real in ontological terms. Its status is indeed bi have any reality independent of the “word have sense) and yet still “be”. For, the *S* supposed made up of *Gegenstände, w* stance of the “world” or “what is” and \( d \) merely seems to be. This means that all \( w \) system of *Sachverhalte*-possibilities mus what only “is” the case. This \( \text{then means t} \), but still “something” that has sense, an a picture then, “it is and is not.” But, will ent from saying that it pictures *what is no* “ontological” status)? This problem is con and the fact that a picture must share exact. In that case what “logical form” would a contrast with the logical form a true prop the logical form of that which seems to be is. But, of course, to re-raise the tradition “logical form”?

21 Clearly, revisions can also be made in the en turing acts, rather than as facts necessarily ce here and in the Sophist, I am more concerned early phase than in the revisions made later, tionalism, abandon the “Platonism” I am i
the sophist will pose difficulties for us later. Account of language is to explain how we can ring whether it is true or false. Likewise, in gly “being in error” that must be explained in claim not-p and avoid the wrath of Father ming to be true”, or of being meaningful does not only taunt us with a supposed ina- y to explain how p could make sense in the sy but dangerous to assume that the Sophist of error. But, unfortunately for our attempt Irrgenstein, the sophist does not elliptically if it claimed to be of what is “other than p”, at case, we would need to know that p were is said
olved in capturing the sophist is in showing hat is not”; that our response of not-p to his f being. But also involved is explaining the akes an image of something, and how that age not-X; he images Y as X. Our attempt is: (1) Understanding how not-X could have a mode of being of Y, or more precisely, Y’s problem of the mode of being of the image, st if it is treated as some elliptically negative are and we must still ask what it pictures, order to be finally clear on what status a false ation of the picture theory, consider the fo- n what Wittgenstein says at 4.063. Let us be represented by a system of coordinates,

Then, consider the following propositions:
1) There is a black dot at (3,1).
2) There is not a black dot at (1,2).
3) There is a black dot at (1,2).

own attempts out of this problem. Stenius, Writ- its Main Lines of Thought (Oxford, Blackwell, r.” picture (p. 96) and Asacombe would have pic- of these interpretations seem to me unacceptably

According to the analysis thus far, assuming all except (b) to be elementary propositions, (a) and (b) would seem to be explained. (a) pictures the existence of a state of affairs, it pictures a possible point in logical space which also happens to be the case. (b) makes use of a possible picture of a black dot at (1,2) and excludes it, and, by doing so, happens to be true. But already, within that negation, a problem has arisen. Namely, what does (c) mean? It is certainly not a picture of what is the case. As a false picture, it seems to picture what “is” only as a possibility, and what also happens not to be. But then it pictures what is and is not. p may not picture a negative fact, but p 1 seems to. In the language of the Sophist, what is “other than what-is” (the world) seems to be. And of course, Wittgenstein explicitly wanted to avoid any Meinongian subsistings or existing possibilities etc., yet his relegateing all questions of otherness to the operational status of negation would seem to be leading in that direction. (Or, of course, in a direction far re-moved from the picture theory, towards the rule-following, speech-act locution of Witt- genstein II.)

Thus we arrive at three strange Wittgensteinian ontological planes: (1) language, or pictures of (2) logical space, or points of possibility which may or may not happen to be the case in (3) the world, the actual existence of states of affairs. But if pictures are, initially at least, pictures of “possibilities”, then some revisions will have to be made in Wittgenstein’s earlier stated ontology. For, nowhere in the Tractatus is that realm of logical space as a realm “other-than-the-world” explicitly discussed in ontological terms. Its status is indeed highly questionable. It is hard to see how it could have any reality independent of the “world” (as it must have, if false propositions are to have sense) and yet still be “be”. For, the Sachverhalte occupying points in logical space are supposedly made up of Gegenstände, which are explicitly said to constitute the sub- stance of the “world” or “what is” and do not seem capable of having any status as what merely seems to be. This means that all we can say thus far is that “logical space”, or the system of Sachverhalte –possibilities must be ontologically distinct from the “world” or what only “is” the case. This then means that a false proposition pictures only a possibility, but still “something” that has sense, and is as a possibility, but yet as actual is not. (As picture then, “it is and is not.”) But, with this as a consequence, is this really any different from saying that it pictures what is not (thus reintroducing negativity as having some “ontological” status)? This problem is compounded when we recall Columbus’s objection and the fact that a picture must share exactly the same logical form with what it pictures. In that case what “logical form” would a false proposition have or “share”, especially in contrast with the logical form a true proposition shares? The difference must be between the logical form of that which seems to be but is not, and the logical form of that which is. But, of course, to re-raise the traditional problem, how can that which is not have a “logical form”?

Clearly, revisions can also be made in the explanation of pictures, interpreting them more as pic- turing acts, rather than as facts necessarily connected with other facts. For the moment, however, here and in the Sophist, I am more concerned with the ontological issues at stake in Wittgenstein’s early phase than in the revisions made later, revisions which, by moving much closer to conve- nentionalism, abandon the “Platonism” I am interested in pursuing.
We have thus arrived at a situation where the whole concept of "picture" seems to me to have become questionable, precisely in the sense in which it is quite clumsy to speak of a picture of a possibility, or of that which is not but may "seem" to be, especially since, except in very special circumstances, we do not mean to picture possible points in logical space. To speak loosely, there cannot be a picture of a "hole" in logical space, a place where there may be, but is not a "point". And even further, beyond this problem of false propositions, it must be the case that all propositions are pictures of possibilities, or possible situations in logical space and, then, that some of them happen also to picture what holds in the world as true. As pictures, they depict only possibilities, of what is and is not at the same time. But a "picture" does not, in any sense, call attention to this "distance" from what is; quite the contrary, Wittgenstein's claim is an "identity of logical form" between picture and pictured.

To sum up, there are three elements in Wittgenstein's account which contribute to such a problematic status for false pictures. First, Wittgenstein's emphasis on mathematical isomorphism between picture and fact ignores the crucial element of intentionality necessarily involved in the picturing relation. We can surely use language for ends other than picturing (as in sophistry, for example), and this should convince us that the speaker's activity, his "making" is central to the sense of the proposition. Now, Bernstein, Copi, Black, and especially Schwyzter have tried to discover some of the later Wittgenstein's act location in the *Tractatus*, but, for the most part, I think Bogen is right here. It was only after Wittgenstein discovered the role of intentionality that he saw that the picture theory had to be abandoned. What is meant by this discovery of the role of intentionality is shown clearly in the *Blue Book*.

An obvious and correct answer to the question, "What makes a portrait of so-and-so?" is that it is the intention.

The *Tractatus* had claimed a necessary relation between picture and fact, a relation we found difficult to assess in false propositions.

A proposition presents a situation to us and so it must be essentially connected with that situation (4.03).

To put this move in the *Sophist's* language, a picture is made, it is the result of an act. "P" need not share a logical form with anything (like a possible point in logical space); there need be no "shadow" between the proposition and the world.

---

23 Even Schwyzter's heavy inaccuracy in interpreting pictures as acts, as picturings or presenting, admits that we must not only present a state of affairs (assert that such and such is the case), but we must also show what we are presenting, reintroducing some of the traditional picture location he had excluded. Finally, Schwyzter's admitted difficulties with 4.012 and 4.014, as well as the conflict of his interpretation with 2.16, 2.17, 4.023, and the *Notebooks* (p. 128) weaken his overall attempt considerably. Bogen's evidence for a change in Wittgenstein's thinking after the *Tractatus* seems to me more supportable in the text.

24 Bogen, *Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Language*, pp. 98 and 104 ff., and his summary on p. 159.

the whole concept of "picture" seems to me to be a sense in which it is quite clumsy to speak of not but may "seem" to be, especially since, not mean to picture possible points in logical picture of a "hole" in logical space, a place and even further, beyond this problem of false positions are pictures of possibilities, or possible some of them happen also to picture what lexic only possibilities, of what is and is not in any sense, call attention to this "distance" in's claim is an "identity of logical form" be-

Wittgenstein's account which contribute to such a, Wittgenstein's emphasis on mathematical is the crucial element of intentionality neces-
can surely use language for ends other than this should convince us that the speaker's re of the proposition. Now, Bernstein, Copi, to discover some of the later Wittgenstein's part, I think Bogen is right here. It was of intentionality that he saw that the picture by this discovery of the role of intentionality

"What makes a portrait of so-and-so?" is that it is a relation between picture and fact, a relation we ns.

it must be essentially connected with that situation ge, a picture is made, it is the result of an act. thing (like a possible point in logical space); proposition and the world.

Now, as is well known, this shift to an act location involves other serious alterations. As Bogen puts it, we replace

the question 'how can an assertion be internally connected with a possibly non-existent fact,' with the question 'how does a speaker use such and such a sign to say so and so?'

But before we travel down the road opened by this move, we will want to consider, via the Elatic Stranger, whether admitting the role of the speaker's activity and intentions cannot yet preserve the "connections with reality" language implicit in the description of "images".

Secondly, Wittgenstein's discussion of negation as a linguistic operator ignores all the "material" questions such an issue might generate. The referent of a false proposition must be other than what-is-the-case in a far more determinate sense than "not the same as". And that otherness cannot be explained as if it were an instance of negating true propositions. A negative proposition has sense by virtue of the meaning of the proposition it negates. But a false proposition has its own sense, it is meaningful prior to being understood as the negation of what is, and the status of that otherness still requires an explanation.

Finally, we need to distinguish propositions that straightforwardly "picture what isn't", from deceptive propositions, so constituted as to picture not just what can be, but what "seems" to be. Or, we need to explain the Sophist's activity by including an account of the conditions for his "deception".

I believe all three of these qualifications are taken into account by the Elatic Stranger (ES) and that his discussion argues for the "reality of otherness" in a way quite different from Wittgenstein's, a way that may prove helpful in eventually defining the difference between "dialectical" and "dianoetic" logics.

II

The issue of philosophy and sophistry, the issue of the dialogue Sophist, is especially relevant to this last point. The Tractatus, at least as much as any other book in this century, was extremely persuasive in insisting that philosophy was only a "Sprachkritik", a methodology for purifying sentences of their occasionally bogus appearance of meaning and reducing them to the bare structure of elementary propositions and logical connectives. Indeed, it could be said that the ultimate claim of the Tractatus is that, in the overwhelming majority of cases, what passed for "philosophy" through the centuries, was only "sophistry", only the deceptive "appearance" of meaning. But, although there is a dubious theory of false propositions in the Tractatus, there is no explanation of the possibility of this strangely deceptive "seeming", a seeming which is the life blood of the sophist's activity. There is no way, speaking strictly within the Tractatus, of explaining, either by reference to "intentions" or to the simple structure of language itself, the fact

1 Bogen, Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Language, p. 123.
that which is not appears as if it were. All propositions, as pictures, appear as mere possibilities, all of which need to be referred to their verification instances, whatever these "originals" might be. Any proposition that cannot be so verified is "non-sense". This elimination of kinds of sentences which only appear to be about those verification instances but are not (and thus whose status is "non-verifiable") eliminates not only the Tractatus' ability to define "sophistry" at all, but as is well known and much argued, its ability to define its own "philosophic" enterprise by propositions themselves regarded as nonsense since not "pictures" of anything. In short, there must be some intermediary state between saying what simply is and saying what simply isn't, however difficult this latter is to defend just by itself; a state "partaking" of both and requiring an account of its peculiar ontological conditions. But, if it is true that sophistry, the perennial accusation against philosophy, can only be defined with reference to "image" and "not-being" how is it that Plato's Eleatic Stranger arrives at a way of "hunting" the sophist different from the reduction of language to logical form?

We obviously will be unable in the following to deal with a number of the well known issues involved in that famous hunt, or to approach an overall interpretation of the dialogue. Doing so would involve such complex issues as explaining the identity of the ES, understanding Socrates' silence, placing the dialogue in its projected trilogy, etc. For our purposes, we shall be concerned mostly with how the issue of not-being arises, and how it is initially resolved (212b-241d and 252c-259c).

For reasons not immediately clear, the Eleatic stranger of the Sophist appears to have considerably less reverence for Parmenides than did Socrates26. "Whoever" the stranger is, he is willing to discuss the sophist and false opinion explicitly in terms of images and thus to confront the problem of not-being head on, risking even the accusation of being a "parricide" (patraloia). By doing so, the stranger makes explicit the philosophic consequences that arise when language is conceived as "image" instead of picture.

After six sometimes comically involved diaeretic attempts to capture the sophist, the difficulties in the stranger's much heralded method seem to lead him to decide that the sophist can only be pinned down by considering in detail (and non-diaeretically) the mode of being of the image. The transition, though, from the diaeresis section of the dialogue to the much more famous discussion of images and non-being is not accomplished immediately. It is preceded by a strange "return" to an earlier diaeresis, the fifth, where the sophist had been defined as a "disputer" (antilogikon). The stranger now adds that he is also a "teacher" (didaskalon) of this art and shows Theaetetus how he claims, as such a teacher, to be able to teach "all things", both of them then wondering at this remarkable claim. At this point (233b ff.) the stranger argues forcefully that, obviously, the sophist must only appear to be the wisest of men, thus concluding that his Eidos or Eidos is only a bŏntos. This description of the sophist elicits an excited response from Theaetetus: "ποτε οὐκ οὐδέν" he rejoices, deciding that this claim is the "most certain" of all the descriptions thus far. As far as Theaetetus is concerned, we have succeeded in being so correct thus far without mentioning the extremely troublesome problem of

26 Plato, Theaetetus, 183e2ff.
All propositions, as pictures, appear as mere of their verification instances, whatever these cannot be so verified is “non-sense”. This *appear* to be about those verification instances ("non-verifiable") eliminates not only the, but as is well known and much argued, its rise by propositions themselves regarded as. In short, there must be something intermediary what simply isn’t, however difficult this king" of both and requiring an account of its true that sophistry, the perennial accusation reference to “image” and “not-being” how way of “hunting” the sophist different from

N as not-being have arisen. The sophist as a deceptive teacher of disputing is a definition that leaves us safe within the genus of *doxa*, within established common opinion. But, as in both the *Theaetetus* and the *Tractatus*, the central problem of *how* deception occurs still remains. The stranger seems to realize this lack by responding to Theaetetus’ superlative (orthotata) by asking for a still “clearer model” (paradigmata) of this supposedly clearest of statements.

It is with this different “paradigm” that the dialogue takes its most drastic turn, a change in direction that defines most precisely the difference between Wittgenstein’s *bild* and the stranger’s *eikon*, and which is ultimately responsible for the most decisive difference in the two accounts of language – the status or “place” of not-being. It is from 233b7ff. that the dialogue explicitly begins to turn on the twin issues of “image” and “non-being”. Nothing had as yet been suggested to explain how the sophist could deceive youths with his “doxastic” knowledge, nothing especially about the nature of logos. That defect is now remedied by the substitution of two infinitives, “making” (poiein) and “doing” (dunam) for those used thus far to define the sophist’s activity, “speaking” (legein) and “contradicting” (antilegein). The stranger does not mention, of course, that hardly any sophist (except perhaps for Hippias) literally claimed to *make* all things; the stranger himself says that the sophist only claims to be able to teach disputing about all things (233b ff.); if it is the stranger who now asks that we consider this as “really” a claim for *making*. It is finally because the stranger is implying that “speaking” is “making” that the products of the sophist’s work can ultimately be called “spoken images” (eidos logosmena) (234c6). We should also note here, with reference to *legein*, that nothing the stranger has said leads us to believe that only the sophist “makes” what he says.

The explicit characteristic of sophistry that permeates the following discussion is the sophist’s claim to *eikones* or *eido*, to “everything”. That is the “joke” (*paidia*) a pun on the earlier used *paidia* which leads us still closer to the sophist, and it is that claim which is so clearly false as to make a division of false from true images necessary. “Our” speeches as well are “spoken images”; the uniqueness of the sophist’s images lies in their deceptive claims for totality, not their ekistic nature.

Parenthetically, we should remember here that the stranger has not yet at all made clear how this discussion relates to the dialogue’s earlier and, therefore, apparently definitive mention of “making” – at the very beginning of all the diarrestes (219b). According to the beginning of this discussion (232b) we have returned to the sophist as a “disputer”, in the fifth diarresis, one which, of course, in the grand structure of all the first diarrestes, explicitly *divided off* from “poetics” by being “under” the genus “capture” which is under “acquiring” (*kétike*), in the very early divisions. Much, much later in the dialogue (265a–b) this confusion is explained directly. We are told there that “mimetics” as poetic has “taken over” the sophist (*perieilephon*), taken him over from *kétike*. We are in fact, now (232b) at the point of that “take over”, where it becomes clear that the sophist, as an *antilogon*, cannot be understood unless *logos* itself is understood as *made*.

This “take over” means that the dialogue now concerns itself with made images and imitation (mimetike) explicitly. And, of course, once mimetics is the issue, the stranger can divide that technique into a mimetics whose products attempt only to copy the original
(eikostike, or "eikastics") and those which deliberately distort the proportions of the original and are thus false images but ones which appear true because of the "unfavorable" position of the observer. It is this latter case, defined later as "appearing and seeming, but not being, and of saying things but not true ones" (236c) that raises the awesome question of how the false can "be", or finally, how it is possible for το μη δε ελθειν.

It is this connection between the poetic status of images and their "otherness" that generates the different discussion of negativity in Plato. Given Wittgenstein's logical isomorphism, a picture in a sense mirrors exactly the logical structure of an atomistic fact, a characteristic that, as we saw, made it hard to specify the sense in which a picture was "other" than the fact. But now, the whole point of calling an image made is to stress that it is other than the original. And, here we mean by "other-than" much more than not-the-same-as. We mean that, while in a number of respects it is like the original (it is after all an image of it), in other respects it is not like it (it is only an image, limited in its reproducing power in ways familiar since the Republic). It is this likeness-within-difference that will require the first class of images, and the image making art—eikostike. This art makes true images, but only under the qualification of otherness.

ἡ γὰρ ποιμάς ποιητικος τῆς ἄγει, εἰδωλῶν μέντοι, ὁμον., δέλτιας αὐτῶν βιάζοντων.
(For imitation is a kind of production, however of images, nor of each of the things themselves.)
265b1-3.

Further, it is the difference within likeness that makes eikostike necessary, the art of making images which seem to be true. In the language Plato is wont to use in explaining this aspect of otherness, the image is, at the very least, one remove from reality.

But this all means that it is the problem of the mode of being of the image that sets the stage for the classic, recently much discussed parable of Parmenides, and the limited reality the ES gives not-being. We now need to explain, not just the operation of negation in the formal mode as a meaningful linguistic activity; we need to explain the specific way in which what is "other" can be;27 we need an account of the way in which the form of otherness is woven together with "what-is" and especially with logos and opinion. Without this intermingling the image would be indeterminately other than or trivially different from its original. As we have stressed, it must be determinately other, either as the image of the original, or the image of what is other than the original, but seems to be of it. It is this characterization of false (not negated) images that raises the question of the being of otherness in a primary "ontological" way. And it is this characterization that must be defended by showing how otherness itself everything, especially with spoken and written.

While it would require obviously more through this conception of ontology, we call it conception of being, of a thing's being. Kahn's formulation of the primary sense of oneness of any being is possible only if, on identical and "other", is what-it-is by also exclude it from other beings.

We cannot here pursue such difficult matter ES's full definition of on. Our initial point pendence model of truth and meaning is world, then, first, the question of intention it must arise, together with the topic of the production. Finally, this mode of other exclusion of negation, requires on account of the being (especially the "being true")

But, with the issue raised in this way, so ontological account of otherness would be, are pursuing. In short, we can ask, what

...καθαρός ἐστιν ὁ ἄλλος ἐκ τῶν μόρων ἄλλος ἔστιν ὁ ἄλλος ἄλλος
(...since the nature of the other is among the less being to its parts.)

Even though the ES is clear at 258c6ff. being" exists, he is also clear that even this than being (not the same as being) and form the forms. In short, the first result of this systematic denial of atomism, of any sen

28 This agrees with Moravcsik's analysis in B Festina, vol. XIV, 1962, as well as with much logical and semantic issues at stake in the p. 41). But, he shares a problem with Ower be explained independently of truth, Morav result, even though he grants the "reality" they are just negated predicates (p. 65-73) modes. See especially p. 52, where 26a3b11-... is translated into "of each entity m some of the same ambiguities are shared be even though the other-than-X is given intense and especially p. 296.
deliberately distort the proportions of the which appear true because of the “unfavorable, defined later as “appearing and seeming, not ones” (236c) that raises the awesome question it is possible for to μὴ ὑπὲρ εἰκόνας of images and their “otherness” that gentrify in Plato. Given Wittgenstein’s logical clarity the logical structure of an atomic fact, a to specify the sense in which a picture was int of calling an image made is to stress that it by “other-than” much more than not-the-respects it is like the original (it is after all an is only an image, limited in its reproducing It is this likeness-within-difference that will making art – εἰκόνωσιν. This art makes true otherness.

υἱοντος, ρημαίν, δὴδε αυτών ἐκστάσεις.
of images, not of each of the things themselves.)

that makes φαναιστική necessary, the art of language Plato is wont to use in explaining: very least, one remove from reality. the mode of being of the image that sets the parricide of Parmenides, and the limited re-explain, not just the operation of negation in tivity; we need to explain the specific way in 

account of the way in which the form of and especially with logos and opinion. the indeterminately other than or trivially difficult must be determinately other, either as the other than the original, but seems to be of it.) images that raises the question of the being.

And it is this characterization that must be

---

Negation and Not-Being

of sentences (237c–238c) where a claim for 1 not-Being. Owen notes the problem of “im-
t-being is too "Wittgensteinian". The claim that from analogy" with negating any predicate, once in favor of a thoroughgoing “incomplete” sense, re not simply the “existence” of some non-being, icate. As Lee points out, Plato on Negation and wa, v. 81, 1972, p. 270, Owen’s analysis is “too Otherness section (257c–258c) where a claim for, not the existence) of “other-than-X” is main-

defended by showing how otherness itself is woven together with being throughout every-thing, especially with spoken and written images.

While it would require obviously more detail than can here be presented to follow through this conception of ontology, we can note that it results in what we can call a “du-
d” conception of being, of a thing’s being-what-it-is, or its being “truly”, if we borrow Kahn’s formulation of the primary sense of ἐνέσης. This requires that the determinacy or oneness of any being is possible only if, on the same ontological plane, that being is self-

identical and “other”, is what-it-is by also having parts or elements which determinately exclude it from other beings.

We cannot here pursue such difficult matters as symploke, the μεγίστη γένεσις, and the ES’s full definition of on. Our initial point is to show that when some version of a correspond-ence model of truth and meaning is invoked to explain language’s relation to the world, then, first, the question of intentionality (the question of “making” in the Sophist) must arise, together with the topic of otherness, of the image’s distortion as well as re-production. Finally, this mode of otherness, not reducible to the indeterminate, direct exclusion of negation, requires on account of the being of otherness within an account of the being (especially the “being true”) of anything.

But, with the issue raised in this way, some indications can be given of what such a full ontological account of otherness would be like, at least within the limits of the topic we are pursuing. In short, we can ask, what can the ES mean, when he says at 258a18

...πολιτέας ἢ θεατέας ὁποῖοι ἐφέσχη τῶν ὄντων ὕποστα, ἐκείνης δὲ ὕποστος ἀνέγερα ὅταν τὰ μέρη αὐτῆς ὑπῆρχον ὕπον ὑπότην

( ...since the nature of the other is among the beings and, with it being, it is necessary to ascribe no being to its parts.)

Even though the ES is clear at 258c6 ff. that he does not mean by this the “opposite of being” exists, he is also clear that even though the other is (partakes of being) it is other-than being (not the same as being) and forms with it an intermingling dyad throughout all the forms. In short, the first result of this characterization of the reality of otherness, is a systematic denial of atomism, of any semantic or ontological variety.²⁹

---


²⁹ This agrees with Moravcsik’s analysis in Being and Meaning in the Sophist, Acta Philosophica Fennica, vol. XIV, 1962, as well as with much of his clarification of the difference between the ontological and semantic issues at stake in the Sophist. (Cf. especially his definition of falsehood on p. 41). But, he shares a problem with Owen. Immediately after informing us that meaning must be explained independently of truth, Moravcsik claims Fa, if false, can only mean that ¬Fa. As a result, even though he grants the “reality” of negative predicates, it is not clear whether or not they are just negated predicates (pp. 65–73), re-raising confusions between formal and material modes. See especially p. 52, where 263b11–12, “...in relation to each thing, much is and much is not ...” is translated into “of each entity much can be predicated affirmatively and negatively”.

Some of the same ambiguities are shared by Lee’s “operational” sense for “other-than”, again, even though the other-than-X is given intensional legitimacy. Cf. Lee, Plato on Negation, p. 293 and especially p. 296.
This notion of the constitutive ontological role of otherness can be expanded by noticing our results thus far. We have claimed that the poetic status of images (as opposed to Wittgenstein’s pictures), the difference between falsity and negation, the “seeming art,” and aporiai in Wittgenstein’s own account, force us to consider the issue of nothwithstanding more than the correct use of “not,” more than distinguishing between denials of identity and denials of predication. Throughout that account, one point was continually stressed—explaining the sense of negative expressions, while a difficult and tricky task in itself, will not explain the sense of false expressions. Again, the Sophist does not say -p and challenge us to figure out how; neither does he merely say p, confident of our inability to explain some error we know he has committed. As we have shown throughout, what he does assert are “images,” and their mode of being is the crucial issue. They are certainly not “unreal”, as “other than the real”, nor are they just indeterminately other, not the same as their originals. In short, the “image” is for logos what doxa is for political reality and what phainomena are for the whole, the “mix” of being and not-being, of determinacy and indeterminacy, the constant Platonic duality so enigmatically entitled to ev and to δοόντως δεισι in the Philebus.

To summarize one final time, to say something false, according to the ES, is, but is not only, to “do” something incorrectly. That is, to claim that otherness is woven together with all the forms does not only mean that it can make sense to say that something isn’t, since we only mean by that that it isn’t something else. For the referent of a false image to make sense independent of negation, it must also mean that any thing’s being what-it-is cannot be determinate as a monadic, self-same unit, as a pure “one”. Its being depends on the way it excludes anything else from its place in “logical space”. This other-than-X is neither the trivial denial of identity, nor the positioning of some specific contrary (the non-X). It is not the former because X, by being what-it-is must specifically define and exclude its other (just as in the parts of Otherness section, the not-large is not meant to include “green” or “just”, but just those things not-large). It is not the latter, since something need not be a contrary to be other-than-X in this determinate sense (“medium” does as well as “small” for not-large).

Now, it should be immediately noted that this discussion of ontological otherness needs a good deal more explanation, but we can note here some initial problems before going any further. In the first place, as Rosen’s recent Hegelian treatment of Plato points out, if this requirement for “determinateness only by virtue of otherness” is applied to Being itself, Being must be indeterminate, or at least unspeakable. There is no “other” for being, no το μηδαμοςτον, in Hegelian terms, no Nichts. Thus Being itself would not be definable or delimitable. In line with this, other, is still a being, indeed it is the form just a further constituent of what it means our parricide of Parmenides has taken pl.

And, there are problems with this notion made, and, exactly as in Wittgenstein, on “conditions” for its being, for its determinate making, however much, since the imagination conception of those conditions or, in Plato between forms as παραδείγματα, for diatries, between being “being” and “truth” periods, is well known. Both elements of the Sophist, and because of our comparis ontological aspects of the problem of not-é we stress the otherness of images since ma imagining “Originals” talk, or finally, any.

This difficulty is dramatically underscored noticed inconsistency in the ES’s overall a image and thus the possibility for iconic an we are still left wondering about our “acce what those original might be. Through image and original, and the status of the stranger. Early on in the discussion of the unqualifiedly, to be “beings”. (οτι τις μή, immediately, though, how the sophist could make an image of them, even a deceptive last grand diatess of the sophist, which, not know (boi dουχ eidos) and do not, it will even cautiously coin a new word for t mimetike (267d), a name which clearly is at all ta ona, as is clearly stated at 235a, i stands in relation to the true much as an in 235a to 267d, the characterization of the shifted from that of a man who, in imagi tarmata (said there to be done for the sak man who does not know the real and who’s distortion of the real, but because, as finition of phantastike, the sophist still cl

30 We are thus disagreeing strongly with P. Seligman in Being and Not-Being (The Hague, Nijhoff, 1974), p. 117. Far from having no alternative to the Parmenidean το μηδεμοστον or indefinite negation, and far from confusing explanations of negation with explanations of falsity, the ES is concerned precisely to avoid such confusions.
32 Similar arguments against the possibility of a univo or “fundamental” ontology are broached in Aristotle, Metaphysics, 1001 af.
33 Cf. Gerhart Huber’s study of the problem in solution of the ambiguity in Plato and the No. 46, 1952, seems far too one-sided.
34 Cf. Republic, 598 af. and Philebus, 39 af.
role of otherness can be expanded by noticing the poetic status of images (as opposed to true falsity and negation, the "seeming art", once we consider the issue of not-being as more than distinguishing between denials that amount, one point was continuous expressions, while a difficult and tricky expression. Again, the Sophist does not either does he merely say πάντα, confident of all he has committed. As we have shown, and their mode of being is the crucial issue, than the real, nor are they just indeterminate. In short, the "image" is for logos what men are for the whole, the "mix" of being nacy, the constant Platonic duality so enigmatic in the Philebus.

At this point, I am not trying to make sense to say that something isn't, existing false, according to the ES, is, but is not, to claim that otherness is woven together can make sense to say that something isn't, existing false. For the referent of a false image to also mean that anything's being what-it-is as premiss, as a pure "one". Its being depends on the logical space". This other-than-X is the posing of a specific contrary (the being what-it-is must specifically define and less section, the ontological and not-large is not meant to be not-large). It is not the latter, since something-X in this determinate sense ("medium"

at this discussion of ontological otherness can note here some initial problems before's recent Hegelian treatment of Plato points as only by virtue of otherness" is applied to at least unspeakable. There is no "other" for no Nichts. Thus Being itself would not be

in Being and Not-Being (The Hague, Nijhoff, the Parmenidean τὸ μήποτε ὅν or indefinite negation with explanations of falsity, the ES is not.

and Aristotelian", in G.W.F. Hegel: An Introduction (the University Press, 1974), pp. 64–88, tivocal or “fundamental” ontology are broached definable or delimitable. In line with this, any particular other-than-X, while genuinely other, is still a being, indeed it is the form of other-than-X. If otherness in this sense is just a further constituent of what it means to be, it is hard to appreciate how any dangerous part of Parmenides has taken place.

And, there are problems with this notion of "image". For, the image is still something made, and, exactly as in Wittgenstein, once this function of its otherness is stressed, the "conditions" for its being, for its determinacy, shift inevitably to the semantic and syntactic rules for that making, however much, since the image is still elastik, still has "originals", the traditional conception of those conditions or "forms" is maintained. Now this equivoque in Plato between forms as πρότερον υγιεστέρα or being-itself, and forms as functions, or rules for derase, between "being" and "truth", or even between the so-called middle and late period, is well known. Both elements of this formal and material analysis are present in the Sophist, and because of our comparison with Wittgenstein, we have stressed some ontological aspects of the problem of not-being. But it should not be denied that the more we stress the otherness of images since made, the more difficult it becomes to retain any imaging "originals" talk, or finally, any ontology.

This difficulty is dramatically underscored by a strange, and as far as I can tell unnoticed inconsistency in the ES's overall account. That is, even if the mode of being of the image and thus the possibility for iconic and phantastic is explained as it is in the Sophist, we are still left wondering about our "access" to the "original" for "images", and, indeed what those original might be. Throughout the dialogue, both our ability to compare image and original, and the status of the original itself seem unproblematic for the stranger. Early on in the discussion of the sophist as imitator, what he imitates are said, unqualifiedly, to be "beings". (ὅτι τὸ μήποτε ὅν τὸν ὅντον 235a1). We wonder, immediately, though, how the sophist could "see" the onta in any sense in order to be able to make an image of them, even a deceptive one. This is especially odd in the light of the last grand diarèsis of the sophist, which places him clearly in the class of those who do not know (ὅτι d' ouke eidotes) and do not, in any sense, "have" the "beings". The stranger will even cautiously coin a new word for the sophist's unique kind of imitaton – dōxos-mimēstike (267 d), a name which clearly indicates that "what" the sophist imitates are not at all onta, as is clearly stated at 235a, but that he is an imitator of doxa, which itself stands in relation to the true much as an image does, both like and unlike. In short, from 235a to 267 d, the characterization of the sophist as a particular kind of image-maker has shifted from that of a man who, in imaging the real, deliberately distorts it into phantasmata (said there to be done for the sake of beauty, for kalas summetrias) to, now, a man who does not know the real and whose images are defective not primarily because of their distoration of the real, but because, as images, they only image doxa. In the first definition of phantastike, the sophist still clearly "looked at" the original, τὸ ὁμολογεῖν, but

---


34 Cf. Republic, 598 aff. and Philebus, 39 aff.
produced, instead of an "exact" copy, one distorted for the sake of beauty. Now, of course, the sophist's access to the original vanishes, leaving him, and perhaps us, with just images of doxa. In any event, this clear shift in describing the phantastic nature of the sophist from him as a mimetes ion onton to him as a doxomimetes raises more than a few problems with regard to what the stranger thinks the original is for any of our eidola legomena and what access we have to them. (This is all not to say that the stranger's, and Wittgenstein's for that matter, ontology merely require a "critique of reason", but it is to say that for both there may finally be no ontology, no possibility of a real doctrine of primary "being" in any sense.)

Of course, if the above is correct, then, while the stranger's explanation might reveal how false images are false, it does not go very far in explaining how we could ever know or discover any given image were false, precisely because there is no explanation in the dialogue of either what exactly is the original for spoken images, or how we could know those originals except, again, through further images. In other words, the stranger's long and tedious education of Theaetetus would seem, amazingly, to be of little use in instructing Theaetetus in "unmasking" any sophist, in being able to recognize, much less refute, a sophist. (In that sense, the stranger's πραξίδεια might be a πραξίδα.) To do so would require, to use the stranger's own example at the end of the dialogue, that Theaetetus could know the true "form" (schema) of justice and "present" it discursively, a possibility about which we are nowhere enlightened. Finally, then, in a strange and "fantastic" way, it could be said that this dialogue's doctrine of images, however superior in some ways to Wittgenstein's account of "pictures", critically "lacks" a doctrine of originals, much as the dialogue Sophist itself lacks its counterpart, mentioned but never presented throughout this trilogy, or anywhere else in the Platonic corpus, the dialogue Philosopher, a final incompleteness, or absence which may always be the beginning and end of any "Platonism".

35 In fact, this last dissertation is even more confusing in its definition of phantastike, since we now find under this dissection of the art, supposedly the class of all false images (266 e 3), an imitator who does not know the original, and produces, still under phantastike what seems to be an icon, not a phantasm (267 b 11).