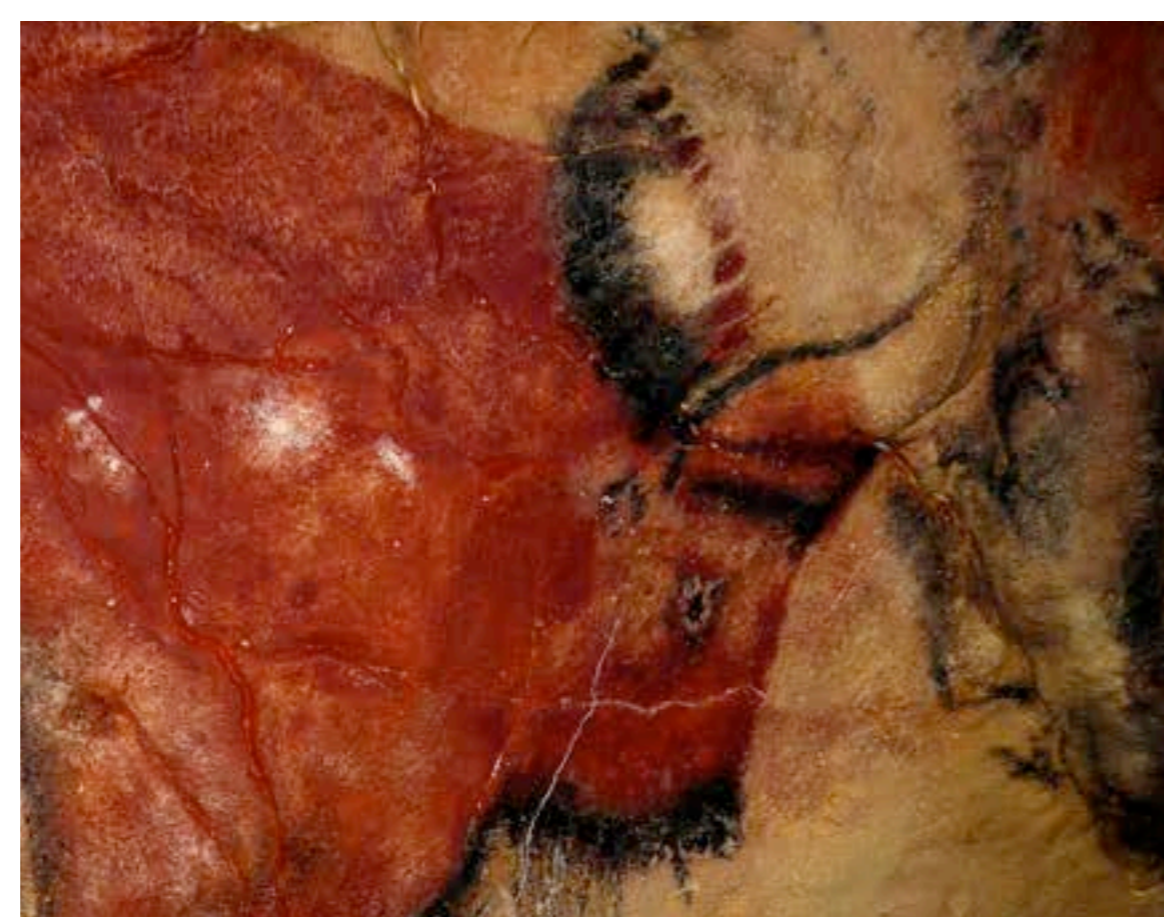
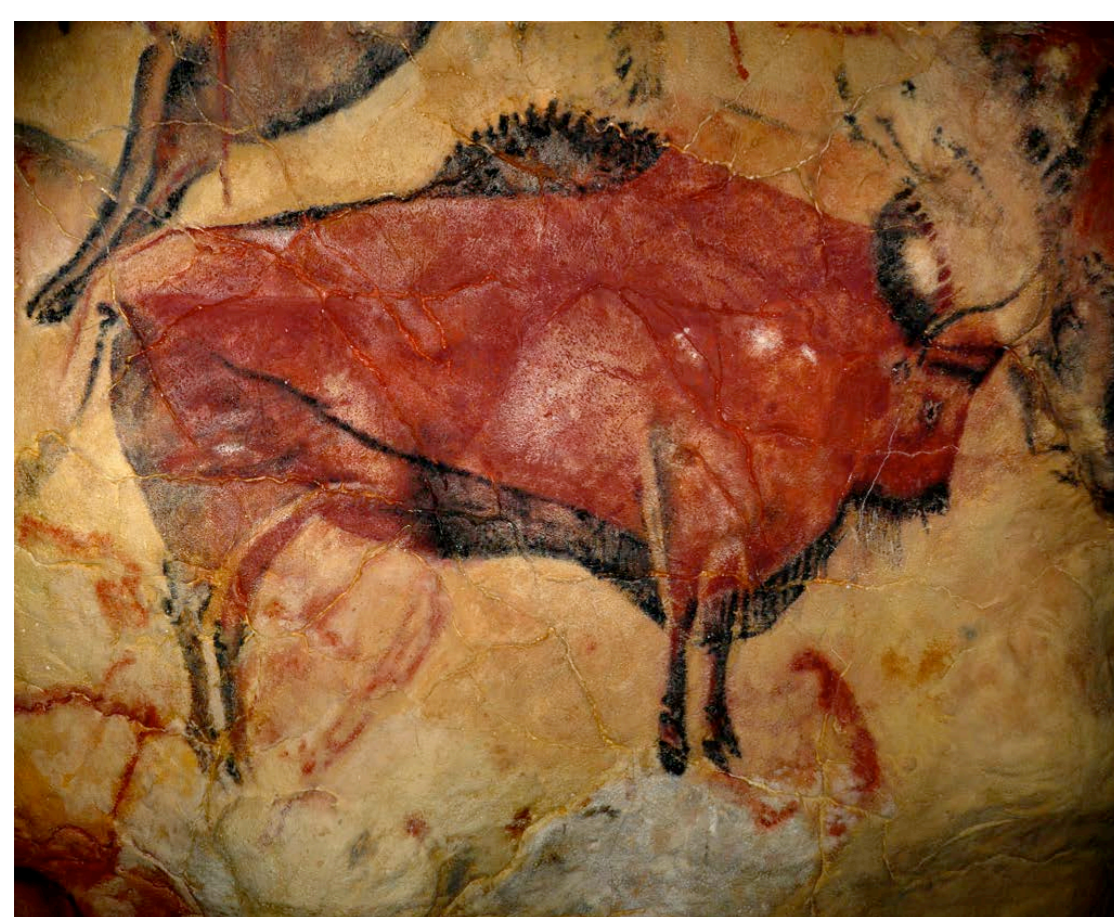


## Depiction depends...

**Pictorial reference.** “The plain fact is that a picture, to represent an object, must be a symbol for it, stand for it, refer to it; and that no degree of resemblance is sufficient to establish the requisite relationship of reference. (5) ... Nor is resemblance necessary for reference; almost anything may stand for almost anything else. A picture that represents- like a passage that describes- an object refers to and, more particularly, denotes it. Denotation is the core of representation and is independent of resemblance.” (5)

**Pictorial attribution.** “In representing an object, we do not copy such a construal or interpretation-we *achieve* it. In other words, nothing is ever represented either shorn of or in the fullness of its properties. A picture never merely represents *x*, but rather represents *x as a man* or represents *x to be a mountain*, or represents *the fact that x is a melon.*”



**Gibson on perspective.** “... it does not seem reasonable to assert that the use of perspective in paintings is merely a convention, to be used or discarded by the painter as he chooses, ... When the artist transcribes what he sees upon a two-dimensional surface, he uses perspective geometry, of necessity.”

**Goodman on perspective.** “Pictures in perspective, like any others, have to be read; and the ability to read has to be acquired.”



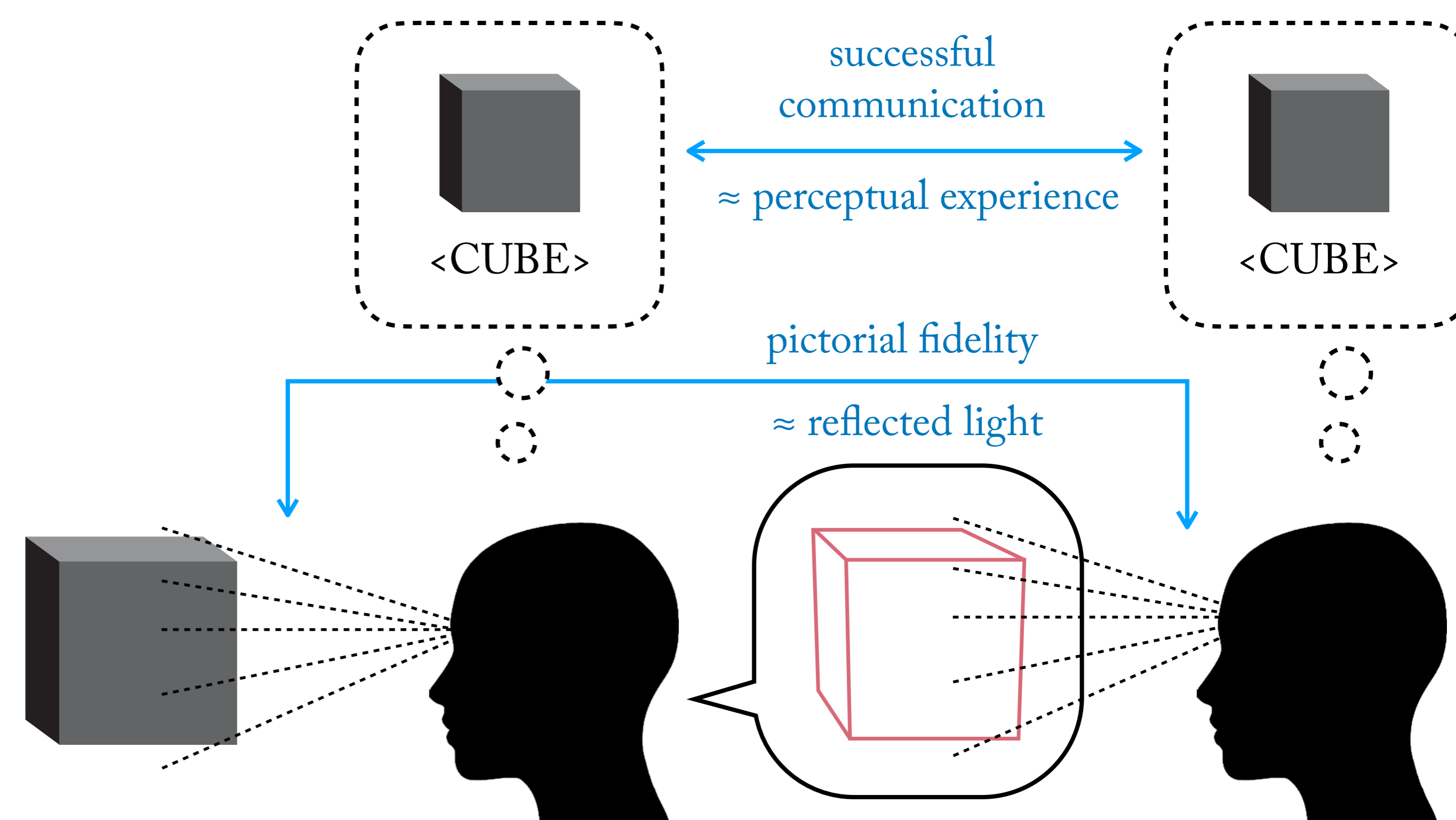
## Phil 138: Goodman on Resemblance

I.13.25 • Prof. G. Greenberg • Quotes from Goodman 1968

### Review: Gibson 1960 on depiction

Gibson makes two related general claims about depiction.

1. **Function of pictorial communication.** Pictorial communication is successful when it causes perception at second hand: it causes perceptual experience effectively the same as an experience of the scene it represents.
2. **Function of a picture.** Picture contributes to pictorial communication by reflecting an array of light functionally identical to that of the scene it represents.

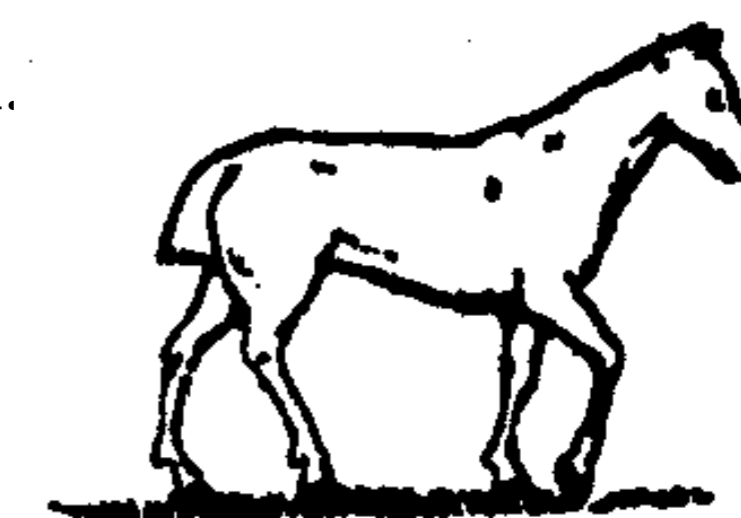


We can discuss refinements of the theory... but is this even the right starting point? Should we think about depiction as **re-creating** any aspect of the scene it represents? Compare: what is the function of linguistic communication? What is the function of a sentence?

### Resemblance & Representation

Gibson's theory is one instance of a historically popular approach to depiction.

**Resemblance Theories** hold that depiction is based on resemblance or similarity, whereas linguistic representation, for example, is based on arbitrary convention.



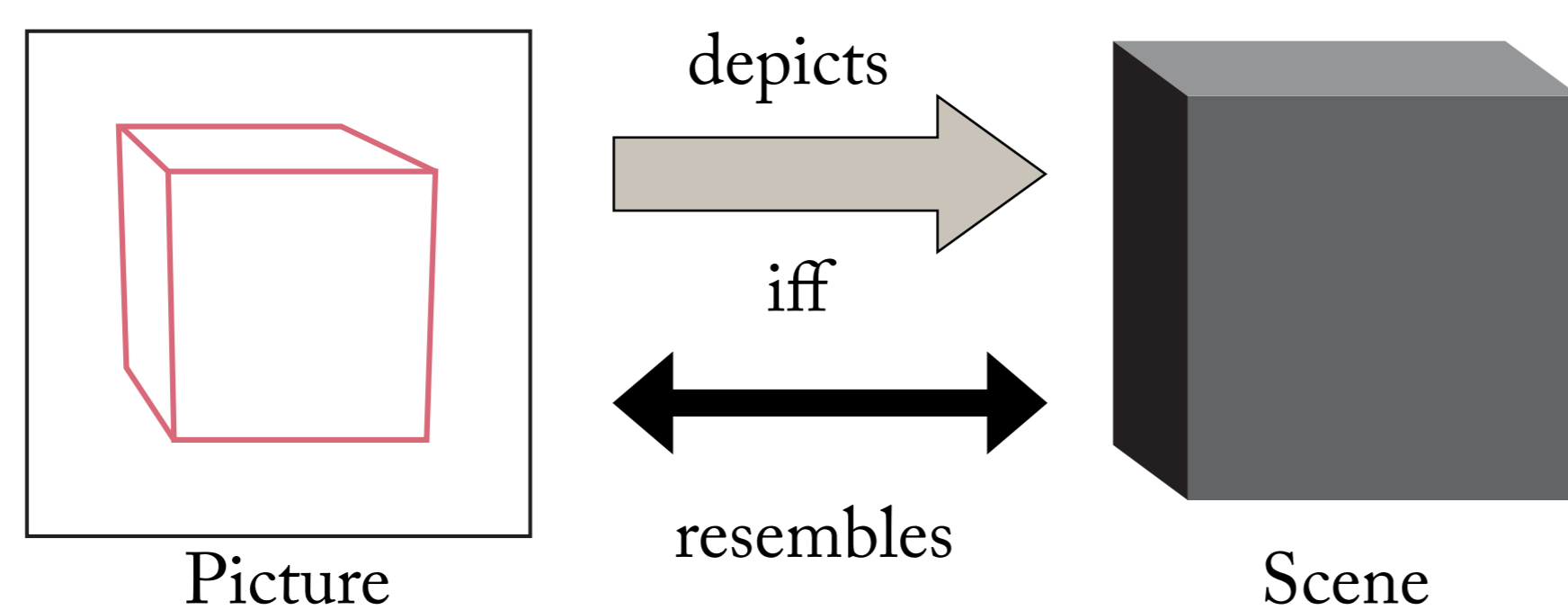
**EQUOS**

## Resemblance Theory of Depiction.

“The most naive view of representation might perhaps be put somewhat like this: “A represents B if and only if A appreciably resembles B”, or “A represents B to the extent that A resembles B”.” (3)

Resemblance Theories have the following general structure:

**Resemblance Theory:**  
Picture P depicts scene S  
if and only if  
P resembles S.



Goodman rejects almost every part of the resemblance theory.

## There is no innocent eye

Goodman’s first challenge: resemblance with respect to what?

“To make a faithful picture, come as close as possible to copying the object just as it is.” This simple-minded injunction baffles me; for the object before me is a man, a swarm of atoms, a complex of cells, a fiddler, a friend, a fool, and much more. If none of these constitute the object as it is, what else might? (6)

I cannot copy all these at once; and the more nearly I succeeded, the less would the result be a realistic picture.” (7)

“What I am to copy then, it seems, is one such aspect, one of the ways the object is or looks. But not, of course, any one of these at random— not, for example, the Duke of Wellington as he looks to a drunk through a raindrop. Rather, we may suppose, the way the object looks to the normal eye, at proper range, from a favorable angle, in good light, without instrumentation, unprejudiced by affections or animosities or interests, and unembellished by thought or interpretation.” (7)

“The catch here, as Ernest Gombrich insists, is that there is no innocent eye. The eye comes always ancient to its work, obsessed by its own past and by old and new insinuations of the ear, nose, tongue, fingers, heart, and brain. It functions not as an instrument self-powered and alone, but as a dutiful member of a complex and capricious organism. Not only how but what it sees is regulated by need and prejudice. It selects, rejects, organizes, discriminates, as-sociates, classifies, analyzes, constructs. It does not so much mirror as take and make; and what it takes and makes it sees not bare, as items without attributes, but as things, as food, as people, as enemies, as stars, as weapons. Nothing is seen nakedly or naked.”

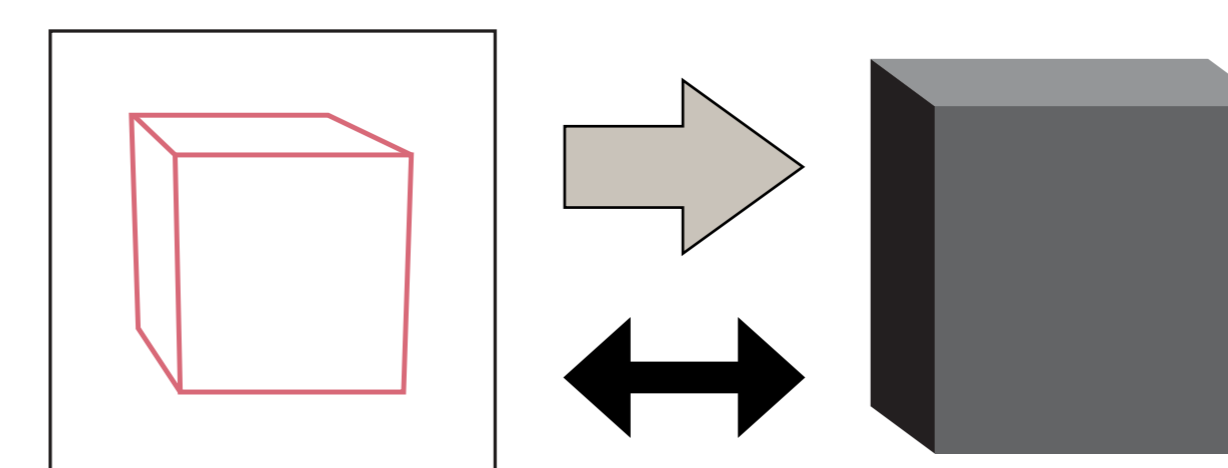
## Structural objections to resemblance

**Reflexivity and symmetry.** “An object resembles itself to the maximum degree but rarely represents itself; resemblance, unlike representation, is reflexive. Again, unlike representation, resemblance is symmetric: B is as much like A as A is like B, but while a painting may represent the Duke of Wellington, the Duke doesn't represent the painting.”

### Argument from Symmetry

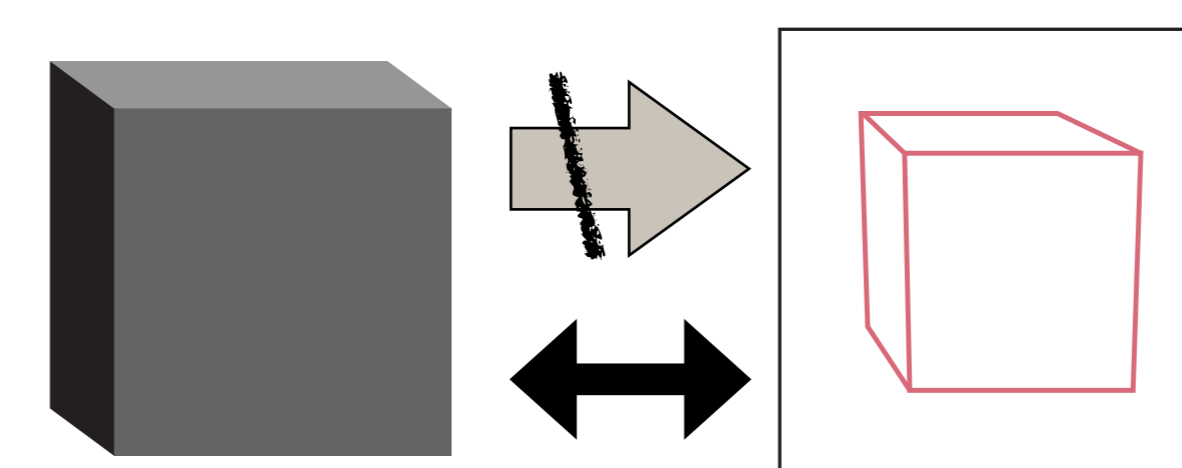
1. Resemblance is symmetrical:  
For all X, Y: if X resembles Y, then Y resembles X.
2. Depiction is not symmetrical: there is some picture A and object B, such that A accurately depicts B, but B does not accurately depict A.
3. So Resemblance Theory is false.

**Resemblance isn't sufficient.** “Furthermore, in many cases neither one of a pair of very like objects represents the other: none of the automobiles off an assembly line is a picture of any of the rest; and a man is not normally a representation of another man, even his twin brother. Plainly, resemblance in any degree is no sufficient condition for representation.” (4)



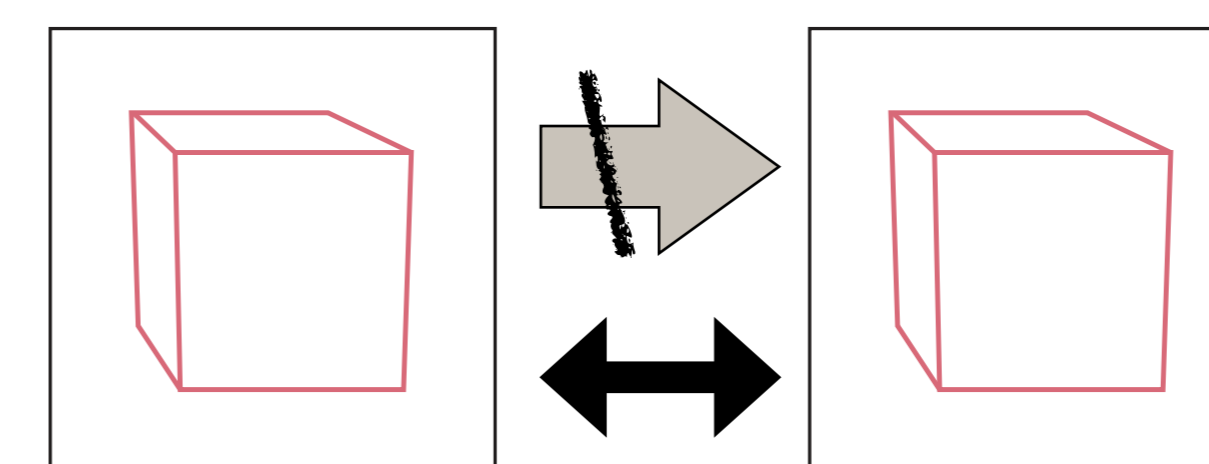
### Starting point.

Suppose A depicts B.  
By resemblance theory, A resembles B.



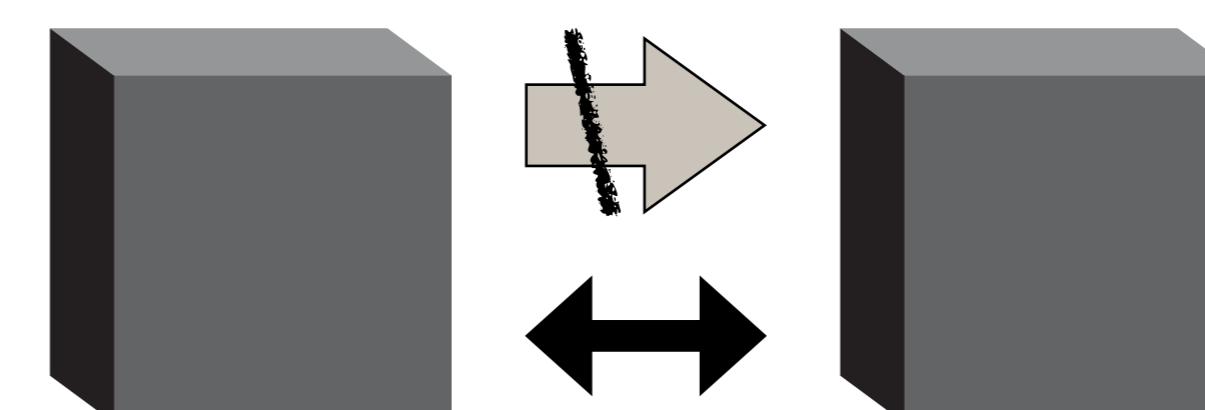
### Failure of symmetry.

By symmetry, B resembles A.  
But B doesn't depict A.



### Failure of reflexivity.

By reflexivity, A resembles A.  
But A doesn't depict A.



### Failure of sufficiency.

Every object resembles itself as much as possible.  
But no object depicts itself.