

**Wittgenstein and Bodily Self-Knowledge**

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0. In a remark published in *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* vol. 1, Wittgenstein writes:

We should like to say of the sensation of posture that it has no content (1980a, §948).

But why say that? In one sense of ‘content’, it seems obvious that the ‘sensation’ reported by ‘I feel as if my legs are outstretched’ has content: the content is *that my legs are outstretched*. Content of this sort may, plausibly, be common to perceptual experiences in more than one modality, to perception-based judgments and to thoughts that are altogether independent of perception. I therefore read the suggestion that, in some further sense of ‘content’, the sensation of posture doesn’t have it as a challenge to the idea that ‘I feel as if my legs are outstretched’ is a report of perception. However, though the claim that the standard way in which we know our posture is not perceptual is sometimes ascribed to Wittgenstein, we should take seriously his ‘we should like to’: the proper way to think of the quoted remark is not as a statement of Wittgenstein’s considered view of ‘sensations of posture’, but rather as an effort to articulate an unsatisfactory view we are *inclined* to take of them, in order then to trace it to its source and, with luck, to replace it with something better. I hope that this view of Wittgenstein’s remark will be borne out by what follows. This is not to say, however, that the aims of this paper are merely exegetical. The philosophical pressures towards the puzzling view are, I think, real pressures rather than pressures which loomed large only for Wittgenstein, and pressures which dramatize questions which have been of considerable interest in recent philosophy: whether standard judgments of our own bodily position and movement are perceptual judgments, what role (if any) bodily sensations play in such judgments and, more generally, what role (if any) introspectibilia play, or must play, in perception.<sup>1</sup> It follows that by trying to understand the attraction which Wittgenstein felt for the ‘no content’ claim, we should be able to advance our understanding of the relation between standard judgments of our own bodily position and movement and the concepts both of bodily sensation and of perception.

However, though Wittgenstein makes a series of appearances throughout this paper, the view of these relations I’m going to start off with is due not to Wittgenstein but to Elizabeth Anscombe. According to Anscombe, standard judgments of our bodily position and movement belong, like expressions of bodily sensation and of intention, to the class of judgments we are able to make ‘without observation’ (Anscombe 1979, 13), and whatever positive account we are to give of Anscombe’s

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<sup>1</sup> On the first two questions see for example O’Shaughnessy 1995, Kinsbourne 1995, Gallagher 1995, Martin 1995, Eilan et al. 1995, Bermúdez 1998, Gallagher 2003, Pickard 2004; on the third see for example Gendler and Hawthorne 2006.

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category of the non-observational (if indeed it constitutes a tidy epistemological category) I take this at least to exclude the view that these judgments are perceptual. I shall argue that while Anscombe is right to rule out one account of the relation of these judgments to bodily sensation (§1), to conclude from this that they are not perceptual is a mistake (§2). I then assume that the way to rule out a perceptual account of these judgments is to show that – in Anscombe’s terms - nothing could count as a perceptual appearance of posture or movement, and argue in §3 that bodily sensations could not. In §4, I introduce a puzzling feature of the obvious alternative candidates, the ‘sensations of posture’ to which Wittgenstein refers in the remark I began with - feelings such as the feeling that one’s leg is bent. If it is further assumed that perceptual appearances must have introspectible character, this feature implies that these ‘sensations’ cannot count as perceptual appearances either. However, the possibility of belief-independent illusions of posture and movement makes a perceptual account of our standard knowledge of these things mandatory. The danger of paradox is gradually averted in the course of §5, by way of a discussion of Wittgenstein’s conflicting remarks on the subject: the view of perception which on my reading he ultimately sides with does away with the assumption that perceptual appearances must be introspectible, and thus shows why the puzzling feature introduced in §4 can be acknowledged without giving any support to the view that posture and movement are not standardly perceived. §6 addresses a further source of Wittgenstein’s discomfort with a perceptual account of knowledge of posture and movement that is independent of the introspectibility assumption, while in §7 I argue that Wittgenstein’s struggle with this issue, once its overall shape is clear, can be understood as an argument in favour of his preferred view of it.

1. Posture and movement may be accompanied by bodily sensations of various sorts: sensations of pressure on the skin, deep pressure or fatigue in muscles, pains or aches in the joints, and so on. The first theory of knowledge of one’s posture and movement which I shall consider is the theory that these facts about oneself are, in the normal case, inferred from one’s bodily sensations, on the basis of learnt associations between them. Call this ‘the bodily sensations view’. This is the first target which Anscombe singles out for attack.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> ‘The idea that it is by sensation that I judge my bodily position is usually the idea that ... I judge [e.g.] that I am sitting cross-legged ... by a pressure here, a tension there, a tingle in this other place; such sensations are supposed to be sensations of being in that bodily position because, perhaps, they have been found to go with that’ (1981a, 72).

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Before we evaluate the bodily sensations view, two points must be got out of the way. First, people often report the feeling that their arms are folded, that their legs are swinging through the air, or similar feelings; that is, feelings described in the very words which also describe the posture or movement which their reports claim to express knowledge of. But I do not intend feelings of this sort to be among the inferential bases of judgment of posture and movement on the bodily sensations view as I have defined it. (I come back to them later.) Secondly, it is no doubt *possible* to infer one's posture or movement from one's bodily sensations: as Wittgenstein says, an arthritic patient could perhaps judge the angle of a joint by the degree of pain experienced in it, if he had learnt to correlate degrees of pain with the visually observed angle.<sup>3</sup> But the fact that this can happen does not show that it is the normal case, and so does not confirm the bodily sensations view.

Much of Wittgenstein's discussion of knowledge of posture and movement is directed against the bodily sensations view.<sup>4</sup> The arguments he uses are mainly introspective. One is that there may be no difference between the bodily sensations experienced in two different postures, or when making two distinct bodily movements. If the sensations were one's inferential basis for judging the postures or movements, one would expect this to give rise to uncertainty about them, but it does not.<sup>5</sup> Another is that I may experience rather different sensations when making the same movement at different times: when, for example, I am tired, or fresh, or suffering from 'flu. But again, this does not go with any uncertainty that the movement made on each occasion is the same.<sup>6</sup> But though these arguments seem reasonable, they are not decisive. One might reply to the first that the bodily sensations associated with different movements *are* always different, namely in respect of their felt location. And a determined advocate of the bodily sensations view might reply to the second – somewhat desperately, perhaps -

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<sup>3</sup>Wittgenstein 1980a, §400; cp. 1982, §389. According to Pickard (2004, 214), Anscombe is a more radical opponent of the bodily sensations view at this point than Wittgenstein, holding not simply that we don't normally infer limb position from bodily sensations but that we cannot do so. It's not clear to me that Anscombe in fact makes the stronger of the two objections, but however solid the grounds for the stronger objection may be, the weaker objection, if cogent, seems enough to rule out the bodily sensations view, since the latter is a view about the normal case.

<sup>4</sup>For a useful review of Wittgenstein's arguments on knowledge of posture and movement, see Budd 1989, 146-51. I am not sure who Wittgenstein had in his sights as exemplifying the bodily sensations view. William James is an obvious candidate, and James's view of knowledge of posture and movement certainly contains associationist elements: see James 1891, vol. 2, 186-7, where James argues that feelings in the joints and muscular sensations in the eyeball 'signify' movements of various magnitudes, thanks to learnt association between these feelings and visual or tactile perception of the movements. But James's overall picture is more complicated than this: see below, §5.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Wittgenstein 1980a, §§391, 406.

<sup>6</sup>Wittgenstein 1980a, §382 and 1978, 186.

that the inferential basis of judgments of posture and movement is not a single type of bodily sensation, but a disjunction of such types.<sup>7</sup>

An alternative way of arguing against the bodily sensations view is to appeal to pathological cases such as William James's 'anaesthetic boy', cited by Anscombe.<sup>8</sup> James's boy, we are told, could see and hear but had no bodily sensation whatsoever. But when blindfolded - and here I suppress one or two details in order to give the most sympathetic possible description of the case - he was still able to tell the movement and position of his limbs. So this knowledge must have been independent of bodily sensation. But this case does not on its own defeat the bodily sensations view. To do that, we would also need to show (at least) that the way the anaesthetic boy judged the position and movement of his limbs is the same as the normal way. For without this, the case is compatible with the claim that there are *two* ways of judging the position and movement of one's limbs, i.e. the anaesthetic boy's, which is independent of bodily sensation, and the normal way, which is as the bodily sensations view describes it. (Compare the following argument: 'Imagine a man who has no sense of sight. He can nonetheless recognize any one of his friends when they come into the room. So in the normal case people do not recognize their friends by sight'. The argument overlooks the fact that the blind can sometimes recognize people by smell.)

It is difficult to say with much confidence whether the anaesthetic boy's way of judging the movement and position of his limbs was normal or not, since the case is described in outline only. Though I think the bodily sensations view can be defeated in the end, it is not possible to rule for or against it all at once: one's response to it needs to vary both for different types of bodily sensation and for different parts of the body. This can be seen if we look at another pathological case, not dissimilar to James's, described by Jonathan Cole (Cole 1991, 132 and *passim*; see also Sacks 1986a, 42-52). Like James's boy, Cole's patient (IW) retained the power to move his limbs voluntarily. But unlike James's boy, he did not lose all bodily sensation: though he lacked the sense of cutaneous touch, he could still feel pain, subcutaneous pressure, heat and cold, and a range of sensations in his muscles (pressure, cramp, fatigue). Nonetheless he lacked the ability to tell the movement and position of his

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<sup>7</sup> Somewhat desperately, for what account is the bodily sensations view to give of how new disjuncts get added? Suppose one experiences arthritic pain in one's thumb, never having had it anywhere before. This sensation won't, at the time of that first experience, be one of the disjuncts associated with flexing the thumb, so even the disjunctive version of the bodily sensations view should predict uncertainty about how the thumb is moving. But there is none.

<sup>8</sup>1981a, 71, citing James 1891, 489-90.

limbs without looking.<sup>9</sup> This pattern of impairment fits what the physiological facts might lead us to expect. Though there has been and still is some dispute as to which physiological mechanisms are responsible for our ability to tell the position and movement of our limbs, the currently favoured candidates are [a] certain receptors in muscles and tendons, whose level of activity covaries with, respectively, degree of muscle stretch and degree of muscle tension.<sup>10</sup> These receptors are distinct both from [b] the receptors responsible for cutaneous touch and from [c] the various receptors responsible for the range of other bodily sensations I have mentioned, including muscular sensations of pressure and fatigue (Cole 1991, 31). In IW, [a] and [b] were damaged while [c] remained unaffected (Cole 1991, 29, fig. 4). IW's case shows that a large range of bodily sensations – those associated with [c] - have nothing to do with the normal way of telling the position and movement of one's limbs. Meanwhile the activity of [a], even when not damaged, is unfelt in the sense that it is not associated with local sensation in the muscles and tendons themselves (Cole 1991, 31). If the bodily sensations view is to be the correct account of knowledge of posture and movement in the normal case, the only possible inferential bases of judgments of posture and movement would have to be sensations of cutaneous touch.

So what of the role of these sensations? Here the evidence points to different answers for different parts of the body. For many joints, anaesthetizing the skin around them has no effect on one's ability to judge their position, or on one's ability to judge their movement when they are moved voluntarily. (Its effect on one's ability to judge their movement when they are moved by another is disputed.) So for most parts of the body, the ability to tell the movement of those parts is very largely independent not only of all those bodily sensations which IW could still experience, i.e. [c], but also of [b] cutaneous touch; and for those same parts of the body, the ability to tell their position and *voluntary* movement is *wholly* independent of bodily sensation. For very many parts of the body, then, we can dismiss the bodily sensations view altogether.<sup>11</sup>

The picture is somewhat different for the hands, feet and face, where anaesthetizing the skin has a significant adverse effect on the ability to judge movement, both voluntary and imposed (Clark

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<sup>9</sup>He subsequently learned to rely also on feelings of muscle fatigue, of warmth and cold, and perhaps other things. But he remained heavily dependent on sight.

<sup>10</sup>See Clark and Horch 1986.

<sup>11</sup>According to C.B. Martin, one who denies that bodily sensation is the normal source of knowledge of posture and movement ought not to find surprising the situation in which the subject has lost feeling in a limb but can still say where it is and how he is moving it: see Martin 1971, 18. Since disabling [b] and [c] would remove bodily sensation, many limbs exemplify precisely what Martin denies should be possible, as long as [a] remains intact.

and Horch 1986, 37). But while this shows that cutaneous sensation plays *some* role in the ability to judge the movement of those parts, it does not confirm that the bodily sensations view holds true for them. For the truth of the bodily sensations view, even so restricted, requires a stronger claim, namely that one's knowledge of the movement of the relevant parts be due entirely to inference from the occurrence of cutaneous sensations, based on a learnt association between those sensations and the observed movement of those parts. But it seems that the stronger claim is false. The physiological evidence suggests that cutaneous sensation plays no more than a supporting role - it is not possible, for example, to induce illusions of position and movement by stimulation of cutaneous receptors only (Clark and Horch 1986, 37) - and that the ability to judge (say) hand movements depends to a large extent on the physiological mechanisms ([a] above) also responsible for our ability to judge movement elsewhere in the body. And this evidence harmonizes with the introspective facts. To adapt some observations of Wittgenstein's, although I would certainly notice if my hands were anaesthetized, it does not follow that, in normal circumstances, I need be aware of any very specific cutaneous sensations when moving my hands, and certainly not such highly differentiated sensations as I would need to be aware of if they were to serve as the basis for inferential judgments about my hand movements.

It might be objected that judgments based on learnt associations are often automatic, and the notion of an inferential basis is not undermined as long as the basis is something which I *could* attend to if I wished, even if often I do not notice it. Thus it is enough to show that I infer the heaviness of someone's shopping bag from the large bulge I see in it that I could attend to the bulge if I wished to; and I surely *could* also attend to my bodily sensations.<sup>12</sup> Wittgenstein's reply is that even if self-attention does reveal a rich range of sensations, I cannot by self-attention discover how I felt when I was *not* attending since, in the case of sensations, attention changes the phenomena; but it is the sensations I have when I am not attending to them which the bodily sensations view must regard as the basis for judgments of movement, since inattention to one's sensations is the normal case (Wittgenstein 1978, 187; 1982, §459). Well, attention is a difficult topic and there is no doubt more to be said here. But we can say at least this much: if cutaneous sensations were my basis for judging the position and movement of my hands, one would expect careful attention to them to improve the accuracy of my

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<sup>12</sup>The point is made by Vesey (1965, 65).

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judgments, or to confirm or defeat a judgment made in haste. But usually the only effect of attention to cutaneous sensations in one's hands is to make one more clumsy.

I shall take it, therefore, that even as applied to those parts of the body where cutaneous touch plays a role in our knowledge of their movements, the foregoing combination of physiological and other arguments is enough to show that the bodily sensations view is false.

2. I now want to go further into what Anscombe has in mind when she speaks of judgments we can make 'without observation'. Consider the following explanation she gives of 'observation':

Where we can speak of separately describable sensations, having which is in some sense our criterion for saying something, then we can speak of observing that thing; but that is not generally so when we know the position of our limbs. (Anscombe 1979, 13)

And she adds that

when I say: 'the sensation is not separable' I mean that the internal description of the 'sensation' - the description of the sensation-content - is the very same as the description of the fact known. (Anscombe 1981a, 72)

Supposing then that the fact known is that my legs are crossed, an example of a 'separable' sensation is the sensation reported by 'I feel pressure from the back of my left leg on top of my right leg', while an example of an 'inseparable' one is the one reported by 'I feel that my legs are crossed'. On this explanation, then, one knows one's posture and movement by observation if there are 'separable' bodily sensations which are 'in some sense one's criteria' for making judgments about them. And though the phrase 'in some sense one's criteria' is vague, I think it is fair to assume that what is meant by the claim that bodily sensations are 'in some sense one's criteria' for judging one's posture and movement is the relation between bodily sensations and posture and movement asserted by the bodily sensations view. Furthermore the only sensations which the bodily sensations view admitted as bases for judging posture and movement were precisely the 'separable' ones. So, according to Anscombe's explanation above, one knows one's posture and movement without observation only if the bodily sensations view is false.

Anscombe's argument against the bodily sensations view is thus clearly meant to go towards establishing the claim that posture and movement are normally known without observation; indeed as I shall explain in a moment, it seems that it is meant to go *all* the way towards establishing that. But the oddity of this strategy will perhaps be apparent already. For to know something by inference from bodily sensations is precisely *not* to know it by observation (at least as I understand the term), so the

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bodily sensations view and the claim that posture and movement are normally known without observation are in fact consistent with one another.<sup>13</sup> I suspect therefore that the term ‘without observation’ wasn’t the best way of expressing what Anscombe really meant. Consider the following passage:

a man usually knows the position of his limbs without observation. ... [W]ithout prompting, we *can say* [how our limbs are disposed]. I say however that we *know* it and not merely *can say* it, because there is a possibility of being right or wrong. (1979, 13-14)

Although we find the unhelpful ‘without observation’ terminology here too, the passage reveals that what Anscombe means by the claim that we know the position and movement of our limbs ‘without observation’ is that *all there is* (normally) to knowing the position and movement of one’s limbs is that we can say where they are, together with the possibility of error; otherwise put, that knowledge of posture and movement reduces, in the normal case, to the exercise of a fallible disposition to judge these things. That standard knowledge of posture and movement does reduce to such a disposition I shall call the *reduction claim*.

Now although the defeat of the bodily sensations view is neither here nor there from the point of view of establishing the claim that posture and movement are normally known without observation, its defeat evidently *is* necessary in order to establish the reduction claim. The substantive question we now need to look at is whether the defeat of the bodily sensations view is not only necessary but also sufficient in order to establish it. Here is another passage from Anscombe:

If only my leg had been bent, there would very likely just have been that fact and my knowledge of it, i.e. my capacity to describe my position straight off; no question of any appearance of the position to me, of any sensations which give me the position. (1981a, 73)

Here there is an identification of the claim that knowledge of posture is not inferred from ‘separable’ sensations (no ‘sensations which give me the position’) with what sounds like the claim that it is not perceptual (no ‘appearance of the position to me’). Let’s assume for the moment that that is the right way to read Anscombe’s ‘no appearance of the position to me’. There is ostensibly a gap, however,

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<sup>13</sup> Pickard assumes that that which, in Anscombe’s view, is observed when one knows by observation that one is (e.g.) going down in a lift is not *that one is going down in a lift* but rather the bodily sensations from which (on the bodily sensations view) one infers that this is what one is doing (‘knowing “by observation” of one’s sensations’ (Pickard 2004, 214)). This reading is charitable to Anscombe in that the word ‘observation’ comes out as less ill-chosen. But it does not fit well with other Anscombean uses of ‘without observation’, and makes less overall sense (I think) than the reading I offer here. (On the first point, it is Anscombe’s view that we know without observation that we are moving our hands in certain ways when we do so intentionally, and this is meant to contrast not with inspecting our intentions (whatever that might mean) and inferring from them that we are moving our hands in that way, but simply with looking at our hands and seeing how they are moving.)

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between knowing something by inference from sensations and the veridical exercise of a fallible disposition to judge which is occupied at least by perceptual knowledge. For perception – whatever else it is – is surely a kind of way of knowing distinct from that exemplified by inference from ‘separable’ sensations.<sup>14</sup> Moreover perceptual experience is belief-independent.<sup>15</sup> I can have a perceptual experience as of things’ being a certain way without being disposed to believe or therefore to judge that they are that way. So my having the perceptual experience as of their being that way – to use Anscombe’s phrase, my being subject to an appearance as of their being that way - cannot reduce to the disposition to judge that they are.<sup>16</sup> ‘No appearance of the position to me’ and ‘no sensations which give me the position’ are thus very different ideas, and the reduction claim is as yet far from proved. I shall focus henceforth on evaluating the negative conclusion which the truth of the reduction claim requires, namely the claim that posture and movement are not standardly known by perception.<sup>17</sup>

3. Before setting this next stage of the argument in motion, let me clarify what I mean by the ‘standardly’ in ‘standardly known by perception’. Up to now I have been speaking of the ‘standard’ or ‘normal’ way of knowing one’s posture and movement to distinguish it from, for example, knowing these things by looking or from the reports of others, and I intend to go on with this usage. However, some writers have been concerned with a different distinction between ways of knowing posture and

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<sup>14</sup> On some, indirect, theories of perception there may be said to be an inferential component to perceptual knowledge. But even here, the structure of the way of knowing differs from that of inference from ‘separable’ sensations. In the latter case the knower is assumed to be capable of direct, non-inferential knowledge *both* of the inferential basis (by simply having the sensations) *and* of the posture or movement inferred (e.g. by seeing them). But on an indirect theory of perception, we are assumed to be in principle incapable of any knowledge of the things we know perceptually – outer objects generally – any more direct than that afforded, on the theory, by perception itself. I shall have more to say about indirect theories of perception and their relation to bodily sensation later on: see below, §5.

<sup>15</sup> I take this term from Evans 1982, 123.

<sup>16</sup> I do not wish to claim that Anscombe herself uses the term ‘appearance’ to flag the belief-independence of perception.

<sup>17</sup> It is precisely the contrast between the reduction claim and his own perceptual account which O’Shaughnessy (1995, 175) wants to capture when he asks ‘Might it perhaps be that we are misdescribing ... what is in fact no more than an immediate knowledge of limb presence or posture, caused let us say by either cerebral events or postural sensations produced by limb posture? Why posit an intervening event of perception?’ The reduction claim is also credited not only to Anscombe but also to Wittgenstein, and contrasted with a perceptual account, by Eilan et al.: ‘A person’s knowledge of posture and movement should [according to Anscombe and Wittgenstein] be analyzed in terms of his immediate convictions that body-parts are positioned in a certain way or that some body-parts are moving in a certain way. These immediate convictions are presumably based on non-conscious information provided by the proprioceptive systems’ (1995, 19). Pickard (2004, 211) acknowledges that it is natural to read Anscombe’s claim that we know posture and movement ‘without observation’ ‘as denying the existence of a form of perception of our bodies from the inside’, though the view she herself ascribes to Anscombe is more complex: for a summary and an objection, see below, n. 00.

movement, namely the distinction between ‘involuted’ knowledge of posture and movement – the knowledge we have of these things when we focus our attention on them – and the knowledge we have of them when our attention is directed elsewhere (such as on not losing one’s footing on a ladder).<sup>18</sup> Among those who emphasize this distinction there seems to be agreement that ‘involuted’ knowledge of posture and movement is perceptual. But there is disagreement as to whether this is also true of non-involuted knowledge of these things. I comment briefly on this issue later on.<sup>19</sup> For the present, the distinction between involuted and non-involuted knowledge of posture and movement is best thought of as a distinction *within* what in my terms counts as the standard or normal way of knowing these things. Accordingly the claim I shall focus on now may be expressed as the claim that standard knowledge of posture and movement, whether ‘involuted’ or not, is not perceptual.<sup>20</sup> But I will leave out the qualification about involution, for brevity’s sake.

How, then, might one set about showing that knowledge of posture and movement is not standardly perceptual? We say ‘I can *feel* that my legs are crossed’. But there are so many contexts in which the use of the word ‘feel’ does not mark the deliverances of a perceptual sense (feeling tired, feeling upset, feeling that one has said the wrong thing) that no significance can be attached to the mere use of the word. More promising is the thought that if just what makes for the gap between perception and a fallible disposition to judge is belief-independence, then where there is perception, there must be belief-independent perceptual appearances. So if knowledge of posture and movement is standardly perceptual, it seems reasonable to ask which of the various kinds of experience in the neighbourhood are the perceptual appearances. There seem to be two sets of candidates. One consists of the bodily sensations we considered in §1 (or some sub-class of them). These remain candidates despite the defeat of the bodily sensations view, since to show that (‘separable’) bodily sensations are not the basis of inferences about posture and movement is not automatically to show that they are not themselves

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<sup>18</sup> O’Shaughnessy 1995, Gallagher 2003. ‘Involuted’ is Gallagher’s term; O’Shaughnessy’s equivalent is ‘introspective’ (1995: 177).

<sup>19</sup> See below, n. 37.

<sup>20</sup> Thus both Gallagher and O’Shaughnessy would reject the reduction claim for involuted knowledge, and O’Shaughnessy would also reject it for non-involuted knowledge. Gallagher on the other hand denies that non-involuted knowledge is perceptual, as Anscombe – just because she shows no interest in the distinction between involuted and non-involuted knowledge – also does. So is his view of non-involuted knowledge consistent with the reduction claim? Gallagher might say that the reduction claim is a claim about what we would say about our posture or movement if asked, and so, insofar as asking about it necessarily directs our attention to it, a claim about the epistemology of standard knowledge of posture and movement in the involuted case. So Gallagher ought not to assent to the reduction claim.

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perceptual appearances of those things. The other set consists of the ‘inseparable’ sensations of posture and movement such as the feeling that one’s leg is bent.

The first set of candidates was favoured by William James, who regarded feelings in the joints not as the inferential basis for judgments of bodily movement but as perceptual appearances as of bodily movement: ‘Why may not the several joint-feelings *be* so many perceptions of movement in so many different directions?’<sup>21</sup> An updated version of this alternative might replace James’s suggestion with cutaneous sensations. Neither suggestion is a happy one. One might take the line that sensations cannot be true or false: they are, so to speak, ‘original existences’, feelings but not feelings *that* anything is the case. But perceptual appearances possess intentionality, so bodily sensations – so the argument goes – cannot be perceptual appearances. It might be objected that bodily sensations do possess intentionality: they cannot but be experienced as at some bodily location, so to have one is to be subject to an appearance (true or false) *as of* the body part in which it is felt to be located.<sup>22</sup> But to show that they are appearances of parts of the body is not yet to show that they are appearances of posture and movement, and indeed the relationship between the putative intentional content of bodily sensations and standard knowledge of posture and movement is not straightforward. It is possible to feel a sensation travelling from ankle to knee, or for an itch to feel higher up on one’s back than a pain. However, if bodily sensations were appearances of posture and movement *because* they are appearances of body-parts, one would expect the apparent location of bodily sensation to be sensitive to changes in the position of body-parts themselves, but it is not. Thus suppose I know in the standard way that my arm is moving (above my head, say), and simultaneously feel a pain in the wrist of that arm. It is stretching things to say that it feels as if the pain is moving, but if we do, this feeling is not a feature of the way the pain itself feels but is based on the prior feeling that my wrist is moving, because my arm is. But it would be more natural to say simply that, though I feel my arm is moving, the location of my pain appears fixed. Moreover the physiological and phenomenological considerations advanced in §1 when attacking the bodily sensations view showed that as far as posture and at least the voluntary movement of most parts of the body are concerned, the capacity to judge posture and

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<sup>21</sup>James 1891, vol. 2, 194. James's view reflects the now unfashionable but for James's time advanced view of the physiology of the matter, which gives joint receptors priority over muscle receptors as the mechanisms chiefly responsible for our knowledge of the position and movement of our limbs. For the history of the debate on this, see Clark and Horch 1986, 1-4.

<sup>22</sup> Wittgenstein, and more especially Anscombe, have been credited with the view that ‘separable’ bodily sensations do *not* have an intrinsic felt location, and so *a fortiori* cannot be appearances of body parts: see Eilan et al. 1995, 18-19. For a reply to the charge at least on behalf of Wittgenstein, see Harcourt 2001.

movement can be destroyed even while the capacity for bodily sensation remains intact. So for most bodily sensations and most parts of the body, bodily sensations are not sufficient for knowledge of posture and movement. But normally no more is needed for a perceptual judgement to express knowledge than that it be grounded on a veridical perceptual appearance, so if bodily sensations were perceptual appearances of posture and movement, they would be sufficient. The hands, feet and face are once again more complicated cases, thanks to the role of cutaneous touch. But we have seen that it is not possible even here to induce illusions of posture or movement by stimulating cutaneous receptors. But an illusion *is* a (nonveridical) perceptual appearance, so if cutaneous sensations were perceptual appearances it ought to be possible to stimulate the relevant illusions by inducing them. So cutaneous sensations are not perceptual appearances of posture and movement either.

A more complex version of the thesis that bodily sensations are perceptions of posture and movement has been advanced by Brian O'Shaughnessy (1995), and this deserves separate comment. In line with what has so far been argued here, O'Shaughnessy says that though bodily sensations possess intentionality – they are experiences as of body-parts – this content falls short of the content of our standard knowledge of posture and movement (1995, 191). And he says that bodily sensation cannot be epistemologically prior to this knowledge, because the body and its spatial properties itself provides the framework for the location of bodily sensation (191). Nonetheless, O'Shaughnessy maintains, bodily sensations are in a sense perceptions of bodily position and movement. Though they only 'help' to make the body perceptible (191), there is nothing else in the way of perceptions which helps alongside them: they are thus 'the means through which we experience' the spatial properties of our bodies when we come to know these in the standard way (192), and stand in perception as 'revealers' to the body's 'revealed' (190). Given the relative poverty of their representational content, bodily sensations are able to play this cognitive role in standard knowledge of posture and movement only thanks to the 'Long Term Body Image' (LTBI; 191 and *passim*). This is not itself a perceptual appearance (or set of such) but it constitutes 'a massive contribution on our part to the formation of the proprioceptive experience' (192).

Can bodily sensation and the LTBI really co-operate in the way O'Shaughnessy says? Explaining the manner of their co-operation further, O'Shaughnessy says that 'sensations mutate as posture alters' so when perceiving posture via bodily sensation, 'we must bring all of the space that we encounter in proprioception – minus the differentia of posture' (192). To simplify somewhat, the idea

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is that the LTBI has as content the shape and possibilities of movement of the whole body, but not any particular posture (184). In conjunction with bodily sensations, the LTBI then generates an (apparent) perception of the body, thus shaped, in the particular posture it is experienced as being in. This model of posture-knowledge surely implies that for each posture, there are different characteristic bodily sensations. For if there were not, how would bodily sensations in conjunction with the (posture-neutral) LTBI determine proprioceptive experience as of this posture rather than that? But the considerations advanced in opposition to the bodily sensations view have already shown such a tight correlation of postures and bodily sensations not to exist. I conclude that bodily sensation cannot play the cognitive role in knowledge of posture and movement O'Shaughnessy envisages for it.

4. I turn next, therefore, to the second set of candidates for appearances of posture and movement, what Anscombe calls the 'inseparable' sensations of these things, that is, whatever it is that we report when we use expressions such as 'I feel my legs to be crossed'. I continue to use Anscombe's phrase for convenience, though on the understanding that properly speaking it labels a locution rather than a type of experience. For the phrase carries no commitment to the claim that it reports either in any genuine sense a sensation or a perceptual appearance; indeed it is just the latter claim that is under investigation.

'Inseparable' sensations of posture and movement have the following puzzling feature. One says, for example, 'I feel I am making a windmill movement with my arm', and certainly if one were making such a movement one would nearly always know it. But – if the contentions of §3 are accepted – for any ('separable') bodily sensation which one has at the time of making the windmill movement, one could also have that sensation at some other time and yet be under no illusion that one was making it. Moreover even if one's knowledge that one is making the movement is underpinned by the operation of receptors in muscles and tendons, this neural activity is – as I have already said – not associated with local sensation.<sup>23</sup> As a result it becomes attractive to say that there is nothing the windmill movement itself *feels like*. As Kinsbourne remarks, asking 'to what does one attend when one attends to the body?', 'it is not clear that attending to a body part brings proprioceptive sensations' - by which I take it he means sensations which are distinctively of posture and movement – 'into consciousness'. 'Subjectively', he goes on, 'the experience when attending is more akin to a local touch, perhaps self-generated by means of a slight muscular contraction' (1995, 213). The point is not

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<sup>23</sup> See above, p 000.

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that there is nothing to attend to when making the windmill movement. There is plenty, but what there is is bodily sensation of one sort or another, and none of this is identical with the “‘inseparable’ sensation’ itself, which has no introspectible character.<sup>24</sup>

Let us call this feature of ‘inseparable’ sensations of posture and movement their *introspective elusiveness*. Introspective elusiveness may be thought to pose a problem for the view that ‘inseparable’ sensations are perceptual appearances. For if there is nothing that making a windmill movement with my arm feels like, what more – one might say – *could* there be to having such an ‘inseparable’ sensation than simply being disposed, fallibly, to judge that I am making the movement?<sup>25</sup> But if bodily sensations are not appearances of posture and movement either, introspective elusiveness may make the reduction claim seem like the only option. However, the reduction claim cannot be right, because there are belief-independent proprioceptive illusions. By stimulating the appropriate muscle

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<sup>24</sup> Compare Kinsbourne (1995, 213): ‘kinesthetic contributions [to knowledge of posture and movement] are unconscious’. Others who have been struck by the elusiveness of anything one might want to call the feel of ‘inseparable’ sensations include Sherrington, who described what he thought of as the sense of posture and movement as ‘our secret, our sixth sense’ (Sacks 1986a, 42); Cole, who says our awareness of body and joint position is ‘subconscious’ (‘perceptions of movement and posture... are so intimate, so essential to us, that they seem scarcely to reach our thinking selves; and words to express them are lacking’ (Cole 1991, 32 and 34)); and Sir Henry Head, according to whom the physiological mechanisms which subservise knowledge of posture and movement lie ‘forever outside consciousness’ with ‘no direct psychological equivalent’ (*Studies in Neurology* (1920), cited at Cole 1991, 32). This is not to say that neurologists have always denied that our ordinary judgments of posture and movement are perceptual, but if the only basis for this conviction is the fact that the judgments have reliable physiological causes, it is not enough, since advocates of the reduction claim will agree that there are such causes.

<sup>25</sup> Pickard, who senses no difficulty in the view that to have an ‘inseparable’ sensation of limb position is (in the veridical case) to perceive a limb, reads Anscombe’s claim that we know our limb position without any ‘appearance of the position’ *not* as the denial that we perceive limb position but as the denial that, even though our knowledge of limb position is perceptual, ‘inseparable’ sensations of the position play a ‘rational or justifying role’ in it (2004, 215 n. 19). The reason Pickard offers – admittedly speculatively – for this uncomfortable combination of views on Anscombe’s part is that Anscombe treats ‘inseparable’ sensations of posture as a dispositionalist about the felt location of sensation would treat (say) pains. Now all it is (according to the dispositionalist) for me to feel a pain in my foot is for me to be disposed to (e.g.) soothe my foot, so – granted the assumption that we can speak of one thing grounding another only when they are genuinely distinct – my foot-soothing behaviour can’t be grounded in my knowledge of where my pain is. By the same token, if all it is to have the ‘inseparable’ sensation of one’s leg being bent is to be disposed to (e.g.) say that one’s leg is bent, then the ‘inseparable’ sensation that it is bent cannot ground one’s saying that it is or, therefore, when one’s saying is an expression of knowledge, one’s knowledge that it is. However, Pickard goes on, dispositionalism about ‘inseparable’ sensations of limb position is an even less attractive view than dispositionalism about the location of pains: it can’t be that what *makes it the case* that my leg is bent is that I am disposed (*inter alia*) to say that it is, since I might be so disposed and yet my leg not be bent. So, Pickard concludes, there ‘is not even the semblance of motivation’ for the combination of views Anscombe holds on Pickard’s reading of her. Pickard’s concluding judgment on Anscombe is, however, based on a mistake. It would indeed be absurd to maintain that my leg’s being bent consists in my being disposed to say that it is, and for the reason Pickard gives. But Anscombe never says *that*; indeed she is careful to distinguish between giving the place of one’s pain and giving the position of one’s limbs precisely on the grounds that we are infallible about the former and not about the latter (1979, 14, and see above, p. 000). All Anscombe says is that my having an “‘inseparable’ sensation” that my leg is bent consists in my being fallibly disposed to say that it is bent. This does not imply any absurdity. But, because it collapses what might otherwise be thought to be a *prima facie* perceptual ground for judgment into a simple disposition to judge, it does seem to be inconsistent with the view that limb position is (standardly) perceived. *Pace* Pickard, Anscombe’s claim that there is ‘no appearance of the position to me’ is intended precisely to rule out a perceptual account of our ordinary knowledge of posture and movement. Whether this view is correct or not remains to be seen.

tendons, it is possible for example – independently of the bodily sensations, if any, brought about thereby - to induce illusions of movement of the forearm (Marcel 2003, 62). Moreover once the experimental set-up has been explained to the participants, about half of them lose the disposition to judge that their forearm is moving in the relevant way, but continue to report that that is how it feels as if their forearm is moving.<sup>26</sup> So their being subject to the illusion cannot consist simply in a disposition to judge that they are making the movement.<sup>27</sup>

If the reduction claim seemed like a good way to accommodate introspective elusiveness before the possibility of belief-independent illusions of posture and movement came on the horizon, it might seem now as if we have a paradox: the possibility of such illusions tells us there must be perceptual appearances of posture and movement, while the introspective elusiveness of ‘inseparable’ sensations tells us (assuming the absence of other plausible candidates) that there cannot be. However, an alternative construction of the dialectical situation is that an assumption we have so far been making about perceptual appearances – that they must *have* an introspectible character – is mistaken: all that is in fact *required* by the concept of a perceptual way of knowing is that there be belief-independent appearances in it, while the introspectibility of these appearances is a further (and optional) thesis about them. Which of these two constructions is the more appealing will depend very much on one’s broader view of perceptual experience. On some such views, it will be thought that unless a perceptual appearance has some introspectible character, there is nothing for the appearance to consist in, and so no appearance at all. To avoid paradox, then, there will be strong pressure to deny introspective elusiveness in order to preserve a perceptual account of posture and movement. On other views of perception, however, the requirement that perceptual appearances have introspectible character will already look expendable on other grounds, so there will be no strain for the advocate of a perceptual

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<sup>26</sup> The others ‘continued to experience the direction of their movement wrongly and it must have carried such conviction that they were unable to adapt their reports of it even though they knew about the illusion’ (Marcel 2003, 66).

<sup>27</sup> A little care is needed here, since ‘disposed to judge’ can be read in two ways: (i) disposed *pro tanto* and (ii) disposed all-in. Given this distinction, it might be argued that, even in uncontroversial cases of perceptual illusion (such as the Müller-Lyer lines), it is only in the all-in sense that, having been tipped off about the illusion, I am not disposed to judge that things are as they appear. What establishes the case as a case of genuine perceptual illusion is, according to this line of argument, not the absence of a *pro tanto* disposition to judge - which I still have, though it is overridden by other factors – but something else (whatever that might be). If that argument is correct, then it is a fallacy to argue from the possibility of illusions such as Marcel’s to the falsity of the reduction claim: cases such as Marcel’s would establish only the non-identity of being subject to the illusion with the all-in disposition, but would leave it open whether or not being subject to the illusion was, as advocates of the reduction claim would have it, identical with the *pro tanto* disposition. To block this defence of the reduction claim, it has to be argued that in the uncontroversial cases even the *pro tanto* disposition is absent, because the tip-off destroys the status of how things seem as even defeasible evidence of how they are. (Cp. Evans 1982, 124.)

account in claiming that ‘inseparable’ sensations of posture and movement *are* perceptual appearances of these things, notwithstanding their introspective elusiveness. With these alternatives in mind, I want now to return to the ‘no content’ remark of Wittgenstein’s with which I began.

5. Wittgenstein’s remarks on bodily self-knowledge embody - unsurprisingly, perhaps, given the nature of the material, most of which did not make it into *Philosophical Investigations* - not a single outlook but several conflicting ones. Indeed I think all the theoretical options outlined above – reductionism, unresolved paradox, perceptualism plus denial of introspective elusiveness, perceptualism plus denial of the introspectibility requirement - are represented, with the exception of the third. For the one fixed point in Wittgenstein’s discussion remains introspective elusiveness. Indeed one might say that a commitment to the introspective elusiveness of ‘inseparable’ sensations of posture and movement is simply what the ‘no content’ claim means. But though in a sense this is true, to leave things there would mask some of the most interesting issues. For the fact that Wittgenstein chooses to express what is after all a phenomenological claim *in that way* betrays his shifting epistemological allegiances, some of which make the phenomenology much more puzzling than others, and arguably than it needs to be.

Let us begin trying to trace a path through Wittgenstein’s perplexity about knowledge of posture and movement by considering the passage from which the ‘no content’ remark is drawn:

The duration of sensation. Compare the duration of a sensation of sound with the duration of the tactile sensation that tells you you have a ball in your hand; and with the ‘feeling’ that tells you that your knee is bent. And here again we have a reason why we should like to say of the sensation of posture that it has no content. (1980a, §948)

Unlike auditory experiences, the passage implies, the experience of posture (i.e., the ‘inseparable’ sensation) does not have determinate duration. This is mentioned as a criterion for sensationhood in Wittgenstein’s ‘plan for the treatment of psychological concepts’ (1980b, §63), where he also claims that there is ‘not a sensation of position or movement’. Again, Wittgenstein asks ‘Can you say, e.g., that your sensation of position is weak or strong?’ (1980a, §771), implying a negative answer, for another reason given in the ‘plan’ (no variations in degree). From this passage, it would seem as if all that is meant by the ‘no content’ claim is that ‘inseparable’ sensations of posture and movement are not *sensations*, precisely because of their introspective elusiveness. So if introspective elusiveness is a genuine feature – as it seems to be – of our experience of posture and movement, the ‘no content’ claim seems straightforwardly true.

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But what has that phenomenological claim got to do with the question whether posture and movement are standardly perceived? Whatever the strength of the connection in fact, there seems little doubt that Wittgenstein – in some places at least – regarded the ‘no content’ claim as providing support for the reduction claim, and thus for an anti-perceptualist view of knowledge of posture and movement. ‘My kinaesthetic sensations advise me of the movement and position of my limbs’, he says, setting out (I assume) the thesis under examination rather than his own view. He goes on:

Now I let my index finger make an easy pendulum-movement forward and backward. I either hardly feel it, or don’t feel it at all. ... And this sensation advises me of the movement? For I can describe it exactly. ‘But after all, you must feel the movement, otherwise you couldn’t know how the finger was moving.’ But ‘knowing it’ only means: being able to describe it (1982, §§386-7).

And again:

I feel that I am moving all right, and I can also judge roughly [sc., but not very accurately] *how* by the feeling – but [sc., feelings apart] I simply *know* what movement I have made, although you couldn’t speak of any *sense-datum* of the movement, of any immediate inner picture of the movement. And when I say ‘I simply *know* ...’ ‘knowing’ here means something like ‘being able to say’ (1980a, §390).

There is an implied model of knowledge here – ‘sensations advise me’, ‘sense-data’ – which, thanks to introspective elusiveness, standard knowledge of posture and movement doesn’t fit.

But which model? From ‘sensations advise me’, one might think the model was one of inference from sensations – that is, the bodily sensations view. But if the only epistemic role sensations might be conceived to have is as the basis of inferences, Wittgenstein’s move from ‘no sensations advise me’ to the reduction claim is – as it appeared to be in Anscombe – a *non sequitur*. Wittgenstein’s mention of sense-data, on the other hand, suggests that (again at this point) he had in mind a model of distinctively perceptual knowledge on which sensations nonetheless play a crucial role. And precisely because sensations *do* play this role, the category of sensation is thought of as appropriately broad, ignoring a distinction which might be insisted upon on other models between sensations and perceptual appearances. On this model what it is *in the standard case* to apparently perceive an object is, in the first place, to be aware of something mental; and apparent perception is then actual perception if some further, non-psychological conditions are fulfilled. The ‘something mental’ is Wittgensteinian ‘content’, meaning introspectibilia to be sure, but conceived in the context of *this* theory of perception

as covering – rightly or wrongly – both bodily sensations and (apparently) perceptual experiences in the modalities of sight and hearing.<sup>28</sup>

I think we can find this view of perception, and the correspondingly inclusive notion of ‘content’, at work in more than one place in Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein speaks of ‘the duration of the *sensation* of sound’ (not of the sound), and (in connection with vision) of ‘immediate sense-data’, an ‘immediate inner picture’ and so on; the section in his ‘plan for the treatment of psychological concepts’ (1980b, 63) headed ‘sensations: their inner connexions and analogies’ includes visual and auditory impressions alongside pain. All three are said to have ‘degrees and qualitative mixtures’, which in the case of vision and hearing I take to refer to properties of experiences – i.e. varieties of Wittgensteinian ‘content’ - *not* to properties of mind-independent things. One is reminded, however unexpectedly, of Berkeley: ‘By sense you only know that you are affected with such certain sensations of light and colours &c.. And these you will not say are without the mind’ (1972, 185). Can perceptual knowledge, on this model, really escape being inferential? This may depend on how we conceive of the mental somethings with which we are immediately presented. If we think of them all as Reidian sensations – ‘sensation, taken by itself, implies *neither the conception* nor the belief of any external object’<sup>29</sup> – it is hard to see how it could not, though even this model of perception does not collapse the distinction between perceptual knowledge of posture and movement and the bodily sensations view, thanks to the difference of structure I noted above.<sup>30</sup> But what if the mental somethings include ‘sensations of light and colours &c’ (Berkeley 1972, 185)? However ready we may be to treat bodily sensations as ‘original existences’, it is extremely hard to envisage how ‘sensations of light and colours’ *could* fail to imply at any rate a *conception* of something external. But if that is so, then my being presented with a ‘sensation’ of green – it might be argued - *just is* my perceiving something green, if the further non-psychological conditions are fulfilled. There is indirection in perception, on this account, certainly, but the indirection does not consist in an extra step *by me*, as inference does. It’s this latter model that I suggest Wittgenstein has in mind when he speaks of ‘*telling* the colour of something from a visual impression’ (1982, §393). On this version of the indirect theory of perception, then, perception standardly involves ‘telling’ from a sensation or sense-impression, which are both

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<sup>28</sup> I am indebted here to Foster 2000, 92-7.

<sup>29</sup> Italics mine; I take the quotation from Peacocke 1983, 6 n.

<sup>30</sup> See above, n. 16.

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regarded as introspectible mental entities – Wittgensteinian ‘contents’. Introspective elusiveness in the posture and movement case means there is no such content, and so – without the fallacious move from rejection of the bodily sensations view to the reduction claim – ‘no content’ implies that posture and movement can’t standardly be known perceptually; so the reduction claim seems like the only alternative.

There is, incidentally, a Berkeleyan echo in this area of Wittgenstein’s writing that goes beyond the thought that sound and colour are dimensions of variation of mental somethings. Consider the following passage (1982, §387):

‘But after all, you must feel the movement, otherwise you couldn’t know how the finger was moving.’ But ‘knowing it’ only means: being able to describe it. I may be able to tell the direction from which a sound comes only because it affects one ear more strongly than the other; but I don’t *hear* this. It only has this effect: I *know* where the sound comes from, and, for instance, I look in that direction.

Here Wittgenstein tries to explain the reduction claim by claiming that we do not hear the direction of sounds. But the explanation must be distinct from, and parallel to, the one just offered and which appeals to an indirect theory of perception. For if perception standardly involves ‘telling from sensations’, the sensations which (by introspective elusiveness) are absent in the posture case are precisely present in the hearing case, since – on the view of introspectible ‘content’ that goes with this theory of perception – ‘content’ includes ‘auditory impressions’. So why shouldn’t Wittgenstein have said that we ‘tell’ the direction of a sound from such impressions, rather than falling back on an analogue of the reduction claim? The answer would seem to be that Wittgenstein here is assuming the *further* Berkeleyan principle that three-dimensional space cannot be perceived. (‘Sight ... doth not suggest or in any way inform you, that the visible object you immediately perceive, exists at a distance’ (Berkeley 1972, 185). Since ‘in truth and strictness, nothing is heard but sound’ (1972, 188) and sound too ‘is a particular sensation in the mind’ (1972, 162), given the first quotation about visual distance, we can assume that ‘sound’ is intended to exclude direction.) This principle both explains the claim that we do not hear the direction of sounds, and also the reduction claim: assuming that what we know in our standard way of knowing posture is the disposition in space of a body, then if the principle is true, that knowledge cannot be perceptual. So our knowing it (plausibly) reduces to a fallible disposition to judge. However, this additional Berkeleyan principle implies that we cannot visually perceive distance and Wittgenstein explicitly rejects this view (one ‘can’t separate three-dimensionality from seeing’, 1980a, §420) - perhaps why the additional principle makes only a single appearance.

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An indirect theory of perception is not of course the only such theory which gives introspectibilia a crucial role. Some philosophers have worked with a notion of ‘phenomenal’ or ‘sensational’ content.<sup>31</sup> To claim that a perceptual experience has content of this sort is not to claim that, if perception is to give us access to the mind-independent at all, it must be by a two-step process of which the first is awareness of contents of this sort. The thought is rather that, though perceptual experience represents things directly as being thus and so, the experience’s representational content – the way it represents things as being – has a non-representational sensuous vehicle. Since sensational contents are essentially introspectible, such a notion of content would at least match introspective elusiveness to the ‘no content’ remark. And the fact that this notion of content doesn’t explain the ‘indirectionist’ (or more extravagantly Berkeleyan) strand in Wittgenstein’s thinking – it doesn’t require, for example, that colour and sound be regarded as dimensions of variation of mental somethings<sup>32</sup> – might be reckoned an advantage. Whether or not Wittgenstein ever held it, would a sensationalist – as I shall call it – conception of content rationalize the ‘no content’ remark without propelling Wittgenstein towards the reduction claim?

I think not. Michael Ayers maintains as an *a priori* principle about perception that ‘there could not be a perceptual object which lacked “secondary” qualities’ (1991, 183), adding that space is not secondary. Now if ‘secondary’ here just means ‘perceptible’, the principle is question-begging: whether spatial properties alone are perceptible – in the form of the spatial properties of our bodies – is just what is at issue. If on the other hand ‘secondary’ gestures at some other way of marking off the class of secondary properties, e.g. in terms of their role in explanation, it is not clear what relevance the principle would have to what can and cannot be perceived. I suggest that best sense is made of the principle if we understand ““secondary” qualities’ in terms of the sensationalist theory of content, that is, to mean the properties of a non-representational vehicle of representational content. So understood, the principle implies that where a sensuous vehicle of representational content is absent, knowledge cannot be perceptual. Ayers himself, notwithstanding his principle, draws back from an anti-perceptualist conclusion about posture because he thinks his secondary quality requirement is satisfied in this case, albeit inconspicuously: experiences of posture and movement are simply ‘less striking’

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<sup>31</sup> Terminology varies. For ‘sensational content’, see Peacocke 1983. See also Gendler and Hawthorne 2006, Introduction, for helpful discussion.

<sup>32</sup> That is precisely why Peacocke (1983, 20) introduces concepts of primed properties – red’ etc. – which are the nonrepresentational properties experiences must have if they are to represent their non-primed counterparts.

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than (say) sensations of heat and cold or pains (1991, 185). But this is to fudge the fact of introspective elusiveness: whatever bodily feelings are brought into focus when attending to one's posture – whether they are ordinarily recessive or not – are not the experience of posture itself. If we get the phenomenology right, Ayers's principle together with a sensationalist interpretation of Wittgenstein's 'content' yields the view that posture and movement are not standardly perceived, and thus makes way for, even if it does not imply, the reduction claim. Of course Ayers's principle might not be true. But to admit exceptions to it is precisely to admit that there might be varieties of perception which the sensationalist model doesn't fit, and so is no help in showing that the sensationalist model itself doesn't, in the posture and movement case, lead to an anti-perceptualist position.

Introspective elusiveness – according to Wittgenstein, and I have argued he is right about this – is a phenomenological fact. In the context of two different interpretations of Wittgenstein's 'content' and the theories of perception they belong with, introspective elusiveness makes sense of the 'no content' claim. But both theories also seem to make the reduction claim – which we have seen cannot be right – hard to avoid. To what extent can introspective elusiveness be acknowledged without this unwelcome implication? And how strongly was Wittgenstein committed to a theory which assigns introspectibilia a constitutive role in perception?

As regards the first question, the idea that introspectibilia must play a constitutive role in perception – as on both the indirect and the (direct) sensationalist theory they do – is far from mandatory within contemporary philosophy. According to a widespread alternative view, perception can be 'transparent': most saliently, when we set out to introspect the properties of our visual experiences, our attention cannot but fall only on the visible properties of things.<sup>33</sup> Much that one might have been tempted to classify as an intrinsic property of an experience (as on the indirect theory) or as a property of the non-representational vehicle of the experience's representational content (as on the sensationalist theory) is, if it is a genuine property at all, to be counted as an aspect of the experience's representational content.<sup>34</sup> On a 'transparentist' view, introspective elusiveness no longer

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<sup>33</sup> I borrow the term 'transparent' from Gendler and Hawthorne 2006, 3. A stronger version of 'transparentism' would have it not that perception need not involve introspectibilia constitutively, but that it never does. But the case of touch – see e.g. Martin 1995 – seems to show that the stronger version of the view is false.

<sup>34</sup> The guarded 'much' is explained partly by the wish to take due account of the fate of Peacocke's primed properties on a transparentist view. Though not an aspect of an experience's representational content, Peacocke's 'elliptical', for example, remains a *genuine* property even on a 'transparentist' view, in that it turns out to be the property a two-dimensional object immediately in front of the viewer's eyes would need to have in order to occlude an object in the visual field of a certain size at a certain distance and at a certain angle to the line of sight.

counts as a reason not to treat “inseparable” sensations’ of posture and movement as perceptual appearances of those things, since visual experiences need have no introspectible character either, and no one would dream – I take it – of denying that vision is a perceptual sense.<sup>35</sup>

As regards the second question, though Wittgenstein was evidently captivated by the thought that introspectibilia must play a constitutive role in perception, it was also a thought he struggled against, and many of his remarks both on bodily self-knowledge and on other sense-modalities show him inclining in a much more ‘transparentist’ direction. Thus at 1982, §619, we find this:

What I really want to say is that by looking I do not observe my *visual impression*, but rather whatever I am looking at.

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It is just that it is not the kind of property Peacocke thinks it is. I want to stay neutral on the further controversy as to whether the representational content of experience is to be regarded as conceptual or nonconceptual, partly because the question as to how this distinction is to be drawn is itself controversial, partly because the issue does not bear directly on the present discussion. For some of the controversy, see Gendler and Hawthorne 2006, Introduction.

<sup>35</sup> Taking perception as at least in some modalities ‘transparent’ enables us to address the considerations which, according to O’Shaughnessy, make his view of the perceptual status of bodily sensations inevitable – which, given that we have rejected his view, we need to do. The considerations seem to be twofold. The first is what we might call the argument from undivided attention. If knowledge of posture and movement is perceptual, then if bodily sensations ‘*attentively mediate*’ the perception of the object they help to make perceptible’ (191), we would expect the body to compete for attention with (for example) a tennis ball when we are concentrating on it and trying to hit it, but it doesn’t. Gallagher (2003: 59-61) sees this as a reason for denying that ‘non-involved’ awareness of the body is perceptual at all. O’Shaughnessy’s response is to deny that bodily sensation attentively mediates the perception of the body. (Contrast the role bodily sensation plays, according to O’Shaughnessy, in touch, where it ‘stands between one and awareness of the tactile object’ (176).) But the alternative – that perception of posture be *radically immediate* – is possible, he says, only if ‘the *revealed* (material object) constitutes the very system of ordering ... of the *revealer* (bodily sensation)’ (190), that is to say, if bodily sensation is related to the spatial properties of the body via the LTBI in the way he says it is. However, it seems to me that this radical immediacy requirement could be satisfied in a different way: by denying that bodily sensation has a cognitive role in standard knowledge of posture, and denying this on the grounds that this knowledge is a form of perception in which introspectibilia play no part. Vision, on the ‘transparent’ account, makes it clear that sense-modalities like this at least *can* exist; and if there are no introspectibilia playing a constitutive role in standard knowledge of posture and movement – that is, if the introspectively elusive ‘inseparable’ sensations *are* the perceptual appearances of these things – then there just isn’t anything that might attentively get in the way. (This way of viewing things also deals with Gallagher’s motivation for denying that non-involved posture- and movement-knowledge is non-perceptual, a position which anyway sits uncomfortably with Gallagher’s perceptualist view of involved knowledge of these things. For, as O’Shaughnessy points out, one often has short-term memory of movements one made even when one wasn’t attending to them at the time, so presumably one noticed them even when one’s attention was not involved.) Thus the outstanding motivation for the LTBI view becomes the second of the two considerations O’Shaughnessy offers. The second consideration is that if posture were not ‘revealed’ by bodily sensation, then the ‘anaesthetic’ (197) immediate knowledge of posture we would have would not be ‘proprioception’, and thus not a form of perception at all, because proprioception is ‘as essentially a “feeling so” as is sight a “looking so” or hearing a “sounding so”’ (198). But this seems like a bad reason for insisting that bodily sensation must have a cognitive role in standard knowledge of posture. The claim that vision is essentially a ‘looking-so’ (and indeed the claim that it is impossible to have ‘visual experience in the complete absence of visual secondary qualities’ (197)) may well be true, but it does not on its own get us as far as the claim that visual experience requires introspectibilia (and indeed on a ‘transparentist’ view of vision it does not). Thus awareness could be both immediate and perceptual just insofar as it is immediate awareness of the body’s spatial properties (i.e. posture and movement), without this awareness having to involve awareness of bodily sensations. So it is not the case that, on pain of denying that standard knowledge of posture and movement is perceptual, bodily sensation has to play a cognitive role in that knowledge, even a cognitive role which it cannot discharge except in conjunction with something else (the LTBI).

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This is as clear an expression of ‘transparentism’ as one could wish for. Again in Geach 1988, 313

Wittgenstein says:

Compare ‘I tell where he is by sight’ and ‘I tell where he is from hearing a whistle when I am blindfolded’. Telling a position is more like telling by sight. You would not say ‘I *learn* the position of the colour by sight’.

Wittgenstein is not going back here on the idea that ‘inseparable’ sensations are introspectively elusive. Rather he is going back on the idea that perception has to involve ‘telling from [an] impression’ (1982, §393). But without this idea, introspective elusiveness gives no support to the reduction claim. Given the shaky credentials of the reduction claim, it is not perhaps surprising that what Wittgenstein ‘really wants to say’ should involve turning his back on a view (or set of possible views) of perception which make introspective elusiveness seem like a problem rather than an insight.

Should we go further, and say that once the idea of the transparency of perception had appeared on Wittgenstein’s horizon, he drew back not only from the reduction claim but also from the ‘no content’ claim itself? One remark at least might be interpreted this way:

Where do we get the concept of the ‘content’ of an experience from? Well, the content of an experience is the private object, the sense-datum, the ‘object’ that I grasp immediately with the mental eye, ear, etc. The inner picture. – But where does one find one needs this concept? (1980a, §109)

This passage connects with Wittgenstein’s familiar attack on the idea on the possibility of a private sensation-language (1978, §§243 ff.). If the ‘contents’ of the ‘no content’ remark are creatures of a philosophical outlook Wittgenstein – rightly or wrongly – comprehensively rejects, then evidently the observation that the ‘sensation of posture has no content’ says nothing distinctive about the ‘sensation of posture’: *nothing*, at least in Wittgenstein’s view, would ‘have content’. This would be a disappointing conclusion, at least for someone trying to explore the peculiarities of bodily self-knowledge by following Wittgenstein’s discussion of it. But it is also avoidable. Even if the *formulation* of the ‘no content’ remark owes everything to an outlook Wittgenstein battled against – so the fact that ‘we should like to say’ this belongs with our liking for formulations such as ‘another person can’t have my pains’ (1978, §253) – the remark records a *phenomenon*, introspective elusiveness, which can be expressed outside it.

6. For all that accepting a ‘transparent’ conception of perception lays to rest *much* of Wittgenstein’s disquiet at the idea that posture and movement are standardly perceived, there is I think one source of

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disquiet at this idea which this view of perception leaves untouched. To see why this is so, let us consider first of all the following remark (1982, §396):

Colour, sound, taste, temperature, all have a subjective and an objective side to them. And that undoubtedly means that sometimes they show what I feel, sometimes they describe the external world. – Now my knowledge of the position of my body seems to be lacking the subjective link [*das subjective Zwischenglied*].

What might be meant by ‘subjective and objective sides’, the first of which knowledge of posture apparently lacks? This terminology might of course simply be being used to express the indirect theory of perception whose attraction for Wittgenstein we have already noted. Colour is, supposedly, a matter of ‘telling’ the colour of things from visual impressions; but thanks to introspective elusiveness, there are no corresponding impressions for posture, so posture poses a problem.

A second idea one might mean by this terminology is exemplified at least by the case of touch. Thus in one and the same experience of touch, I can attend either to the properties of the object I am touching (say hardness), or to the sensation in the tips of my fingers (say a sensation of pressure).<sup>36</sup> It is not at all clear, however, that there is in this sense any ‘subjective side’ to vision: as the ‘transparentist’ emphasizes, all there seems to be to dwell on in vision are the (real or apparent) properties of objects seen. But vision is a perceptual sense, so on this understanding of the distinction between subjective and objective ‘sides’, the absence of a subjective side to knowledge of posture does not imply this knowledge is not perceptual.

In any case, though perhaps more controversially, it is not clear in *this* sense of a ‘subjective side’ that knowledge of posture does *not* have one. In saying that it does not, Wittgenstein seems to be picturing a report such as ‘I am lying on my back with my body in an S-shape’ as an example of posture-sense’s (in his terms) ‘describing the external world’, and envisaging the ‘subjective link’, if it existed, as a report of something as it were closer in. But perhaps this is the wrong place to draw the ‘subjective’/‘objective’ distinction where knowledge of posture is concerned. I can, it seems, know that a high-design *chaise longue* is S-shaped just by lying on it (with my eyes closed). What is more, this seems to be an exercise of the same epistemic power I exercise in simply knowing how my body is disposed on that occasion, namely my standard way of knowing my posture. After all, if I were in that same position in water or in mid-air, I would know it, and in that way. So how can my way of knowing differ just because in the one case I have something solid under me and in the other not? The standard

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<sup>36</sup> This point is emphasized in Martin 1995, 270.

way of knowing posture can thus arguably deliver knowledge of objects *beyond* the body, and it is *this* knowledge, not knowledge of my posture itself, which properly speaking is what it is for this way of knowing to ‘describe the external world’. By the same token the appearance that knowledge of posture lacks the ‘subjective link’ comes from looking for it in the wrong place: ‘I am lying with my body in an S-shape’ is it. Indeed the ‘fact known’ the description of which gives the description of an ‘inseparable’ sensation (Anscombe, 1981a, 72) may very well be or involve a description of something beyond the body, as in ‘hugging a statue’ (to describe a whole-body posture), or ‘a G-minor chord’ (to describe a hand-position) just as, more familiarly, descriptions of intentional body-movements do. The ‘subjective side’, even though it would consist in a description of (apparent) body-positions or -movements rather than of bodily sensations, may be hard to recover.<sup>37</sup>

There is, however, a third way to understand the remark at 1982, §396 which neither credits Wittgenstein with an interesting distinction only then to accuse him of misapplying it (as on the second reading), nor (as on the first) treats it as further evidence of the indirect theory of perception which is one of the epistemological outlooks that lies behind the reduction claim. On this third understanding, to say colour (and so on) have subjective and objective sides is simply to record the fact that colour-experience, auditory experience and the rest sustain a distinction between how things are and how they appear, a distinction required by the fact that (e.g.) ‘it looked red to me’ – the expression of the ‘subjective side’ – is invoked to explain why someone said something was red when it wasn’t. Of course on some theories of perception the account of its looking red to me will involve introspectibilia, but the availability of an ‘is’/‘looks’ distinction is surely in itself neutral in this respect. So to interpret Wittgenstein as drawing this distinction in the case of colour (etc.) does not commit him to any such theory. And if he wasn’t (at this point) entertaining any such commitment, introspective elusiveness wouldn’t pose a problem for treating knowledge of posture as perceptual, and indeed the remark at 1982, §396 seems not to question this. But if Wittgenstein is still puzzling over knowledge of posture (as the remark surely implies) even while acknowledging that it is perceptual, the apparent lack of a ‘subjective side’ in the posture case can’t be puzzling him *for the same reason* as it did when, in a different epistemological frame of mind, he was drawn to the reduction claim. Reading the distinction between subjective and objective ‘sides’ as the ‘is’/‘seems’ distinction shows a perceptual account of

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<sup>37</sup> There is thus no conflict between the claim that posture-knowledge has, in this sense, a ‘subjective side’ and introspective elusiveness, since even the ‘subjective side’ of posture-knowledge, on this view, doesn’t consist in introspecting anything.

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standard knowledge of posture and movement – I now want to suggest – to be a source of discomfort for Wittgenstein even on his (as I would say) preferred ‘transparentist’ view of perception, and in such a way as to make sense of some further remarks of his that could not otherwise be accounted for.

A persistent worry for Wittgenstein is how to state a criterion of identity for experiences of posture and movement, the usual contrast being with vision. When we talk about ‘my visual impression’, we may be tempted – mistakenly – to think an ‘inner picture’ is in question here. ‘Inner pictures’ are a kind of private object, and as such, an instance of a suspect notion of the ‘contents of experience’:

The *content* of experience. One would like to say "I see red *thus*", "I hear the note that you strike *thus*", "I feel pleasure *thus*", "I feel sorrow *thus*" ... etc. One would like to people a world, analogous to the physical one, with these *thuses* and *thises*. But this makes sense only where there is a picture of *what is experienced*, to which one can point as one makes these statements. (1980a, §896)<sup>38</sup>

But the notion of a visual impression doesn’t stand or fall with ‘inner pictures’ or ‘contents’ construed as private objects.<sup>39</sup> For with vision at least, the condition just stated – that there be ‘a picture of what is experienced, to which one can point as one makes these statements’ – can be readily fulfilled: ‘*What* sense-impression? Well, *this* one: I can describe it: ‘It’s the same one as the one...’ – or I can demonstrate it with a picture’ (1982, §394). Stating the criterion of identity for the feeling of movement – the ‘K-feeling’ – seems harder, however:

I want to describe a feeling to someone, and I tell him ‘Do *this*, and then you’ll get it’, and I hold my arm, or my head, in a particular position. Now is this a description of a feeling? And when shall I say that he has understood what feeling I meant? (1982, 400)

One is tempted to say of such a feeling that ‘one can only recognize it within oneself’, but this of course won’t do (‘But it must be possible to teach the use of the words!’, 1982, §394).<sup>40</sup> Again (Wittgenstein says) ‘one can represent a visual picture by a drawing. But as for giving someone, or oneself, the feeling that is characteristic of the arm’s being bent at an angle of 30°, I mean without bending the arm - that one can’t do’ (1980a, §391; cf. also §385). Wittgenstein’s thought seems to be as follows. If we perceive our posture and movement, it must be possible – as it is with vision and so on – to distinguish between how things are in this modality and how they seem. But to ground such a

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<sup>38</sup> Cp. Wittgenstein 1982, §148: “‘Actually you should point to your own visual impression when you say ‘I see this’, then you would really be pointing to what you see.’” A result of the crossing of different language-games’; and §442, ‘The concept of the “inner picture” is misleading’.

<sup>39</sup> See also above REF

<sup>40</sup> The complete quotation is ‘And now: what do you feel when your fingers are in this position? – ‘How is one to define a feeling? One can only recognize it within oneself.’ But it must be possible to teach the use of the words!’ . Cp. 1980a, §393.

distinction, we must be able to point to (or otherwise publicly represent) how things seem. With vision this is (allegedly) straightforward. But with posture and movement, Wittgenstein thinks, there is nothing corresponding to the (outer) picture of what's seen. Denying that posture and movement *are* standardly perceived does not seem to occur to Wittgenstein here. Indeed it seems evidence of the strength of his commitment (at this point) to a perceptualist view of this way of knowing that, granted the supposed unavailability of public representations of the relevant appearances, the idea of inner objects and inner pointings comes to life again – but he thinks these are illegitimate, so there is a puzzle.

Having reconstructed this line of thought, we have a reason why bodily self-knowledge remained puzzling for Wittgenstein even once a perceptual account of it is accepted. But how well-grounded are his worries about the criteria of identity for seemings? For anyone unimpressed by Wittgenstein's hostility to inner ostension, not at all. But even if we are impressed by this, the worries seem a little flimsy. We can agree that, if we are to talk about how things seemed to us in a given modality, we must be able to 'teach the use of the words' (1982, §394). But how significant is the availability of pictures in the visual case? Wittgenstein at least appears to see the same difficulty in *representing* what lies on the 'subjective side' of touch as he sees for 'sensations of movement': 'Isn't it an important fact that the theatre gives us exhibitions of colour and sound, but not sensations of touch? One [cannot imagine this] for sensations of touch' (1980a, §773). And though in this last remark, touch seems to pose a problem that neither vision nor hearing does, it's no less true of hearing than it is, *mutatis mutandis*, of posture-knowledge that one cannot give a representation in an audible medium of a sound without reproducing the sound. So is there a problem with speaking of an 'is'/'seems' distinction for hearing? The remark about touch suggests not. But if there is not, why should the impossibility of 'pictures' in the modality of posture-sense create a special problem? No wonder, then, that at 1980a, §391, Wittgenstein should have expressed scepticism about the very requirement for a criterion of identity which made posture-knowledge seem like the odd man out:

'In order to be able to say the feeling tells me where my arm now is, or how far I am moving it, ... you would need to have a criterion of identity of the feelings *besides* that of the movement you've made.' But even if this condition makes sense at all, is it fulfilled for *seeing*?<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Cp. 1978, §377: 'What is the criterion for the sameness of two [visual] images? – What is the criterion for the redness of the image? For me, when it is someone else's image: what he says and does. For myself, when it is my image: nothing.'

Moreover even if we take seriously the thought that an ‘is’/ ‘seems’ distinction for a given modality requires us to be able to state criteria of identity for the appearances, the requirement that we be able to represent a perceptual appearance in a medium *accessible to the same sense-modality* – as we can with pictures and vision – is too tight, because it overlooks the fact of cross-modality: the fact that different perceptual senses function in an integrated way.<sup>42</sup> Wittgenstein apparently thinks it would be a bad explanation of a standard appearance of posture or movement either to demonstrate a movement or to make a three-dimensional model of the position of one’s arm (1980a, §xxx), because after all then we would only be *seeing* the movement or position. But for a philosopher who makes so much of our untutored responses to others’ pains in accounting for our understanding of ‘I am in pain’ as said by another (e.g. 1978, 287), this is an odd reservation to have. A keyboard player can give time to the orchestra from the keyboard, but he could do so just as well with a conductor’s baton that makes no sound. Or consider what seems like a fact (though there may be intersubjective variation here) about imagining feeling, in the standard way, that one’s leg is bent. This can involve *visually* imagining a ‘ghostly’ leg (perhaps a hollow transparent leg with a slightly reflective surface) in that position, or else *tactually* imagining tracing the shape of a bent leg with one’s hands – that is, one imagines experiences of a kind that are not essentially involved in standardly coming to know the posture itself. This imagery is not an intrusive irrelevance, but rather a sign of the cross-modal imagination working just as it should. But if we can’t help visual and tactile imagery when imagining our own experience of posture, it should not be surprising that we are helped in our understanding of what someone else means when they say ‘I felt as if my arm was moving *thus*’ by – for example - their accompanying (visible) arm-movements. To conclude, then, Wittgenstein’s discomfort with the idea that posture and movement are standardly perceived has *one* source that is not addressed by rejecting a theory of perception which gives introspectabilia a constitutive role, because it stems from the bare requirement for an ‘is’/‘seems’ distinction and this arises on any theory of perception. But Wittgenstein had more resources at his disposal to make sense of that distinction than he thought.

7. If we have succeeded in imposing some order on Wittgenstein’s conflicting remarks about bodily self-knowledge, can we go further, and say that Wittgenstein gives us reasons for preferring one account of the issues to another? As regards those of his concerns about appearances of posture and

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<sup>42</sup> See e.g. Eilan 1993.

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movement which presuppose a perceptual account of bodily self-knowledge, I think they can be set on one side, for the reasons I gave in the last section. As regards those more substantial concerns where the availability of a perceptual account is still at issue, we can I think not only identify the outlook Wittgenstein favoured but also find, in the pattern of his arguments if not always in the detail, some reason for favouring it ourselves. Though Wittgenstein was persistently attracted to an indirect theory of perception and by the capacious notion of introspectible ‘contents’ that goes with it, it was an attraction he felt needed to be resisted: if an indirect theory is where he found it natural to start out, the view he felt more comfortable with was that perception at least can be ‘transparent’. This is not of course to say simply that transparentism is true – though the phenomenology of vision makes it an attractive view, such a bold conclusion would overlook too many possible objections to it which it is beyond the scope of this paper to answer. But I think we have established more in its favour than just noting that Wittgenstein gave his preference to it. Wittgenstein’s ‘no content’ remark can be broken down into two components, a phenomenological observation – introspective elusiveness - and an assumption or set of possible assumptions about perception which, in conjunction with the phenomenological observation, imply that posture and movement are not standardly perceived. The phenomenological observation is itself neutral between different assumptions about perception, but it is these assumptions which explain why Wittgenstein chose to express the phenomenological observation as the claim that the experience of posture ‘has no content’. For as I noted at the outset, there is at least one kind of content which it clearly *does* have. Since the possibility of belief-independent illusions of posture and movement rules out an anti-perceptualist view and thus rules out the reduction claim, we have two options: either accept a (direct) sensationalist or an indirect theory of perception, and deny introspective elusiveness; or accept introspective elusiveness and accept that perception can be transparent. Much of the discussion here has been by way of showing how ‘transparentism’ allows an acknowledgment of introspective elusiveness without giving rise to any problem for a perceptual account of posture and movement that does not also arise for vision. But given this way of structuring the options, we can go further: to the extent that Wittgenstein provides good reasons in favour of the phenomenological component of his ‘no content’ remark, he also provides a presumptive argument for the view that perception can be transparent.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> This paper has been so long in the writing that I cannot be sure the following list is complete, but with apologies to any who deserve to be on it and aren’t, my thanks for valuable help and criticism are due to at least  
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