

KNOWLEDGE OF INTENTION

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Readers of Anscombe's *Intention* tend to fall into two opposing groups. On the one hand, there are those for whom her book begins with exaggerated claims about knowledge of intentional action, according to which we know "without observation" whatever we are doing intentionally and the demand for reasons is "refused application by the answer: 'I was not aware I was doing that.'" (Anscombe 1963: 11) Rejecting these claims outright, the sceptic finds *Intention* fundamentally unsound.¹ On the other hand, there are those for whom "being incompatible with Anscombe is a lot like being incompatible with the facts."²

I belong with the relative minority that find some truth in Anscombe's premises, while disputing her conclusions.³ The present essay is, however, less concerned with Anscombe's arguments than with claims she does not argue for. It is addressed to those who insist that we must have prior evidence for beliefs about what we are actually doing, as opposed to beliefs about our intentions or other mental states. Is there any way to demonstrate, without assuming yet more controversial claims, that intentional action is subject to what Anscombe called "knowledge without observation"? Is there any way to bring sceptics to the place from which *Intention* departs? In what follows, I argue that there is.

My argument turns on the possibility of self-knowledge, and on a picture of "transparency" that is both familiar and obscure.⁴ In section 1, I explain what I take the premise about knowledge of action to be,

¹ This is the attitude of Michael Bratman and Michael Smith, among others.

² I owe this turn of phrase to John Gibbons (forthcoming). Recent Anscombeans include Candace Vogler (2002), Richard Moran (2004), and Michael Thompson (2008, Part Two).

³ Setiya 2007, Part One; see also Velleman 1989.

⁴ Appeals to transparency in recent work derive from Edgley 1969: 90, Evans 1982: 224-8, Dretske 1994, and Moran 2001: 60-4.

how it diverges from the letter but not the spirit of Anscombe's formulation, and what is involved in the alternative picture I mean to argue against. In section 2, I explain and motivate the notion of transparency in connection with belief. In section 3, it is applied to knowledge of intention and Anscombe's premise is vindicated.

1. Knowledge of Action by Inference?

Intentional action is that "to which a certain sense of the question 'Why?' is given application; the sense is of course that in which the answer, if positive, gives a reason for acting." (Anscombe 1963: 9) Thus, what we do for reasons, we do intentionally.⁵

Anscombe makes a second claim about intentional action, that what we do intentionally, we do knowingly (Anscombe 1963: 11). If I do not realize that I am speaking out loud as I type, this is not an intentional action, nor can it be something I am doing for a reason. This is not to say that one must consciously attend to whatever one is doing intentionally. It can be said of me as I sleep that I am writing a paper on *Intention*, and that I know I am, just as I know who my parents are and where I was born. But for Anscombe, as for Stuart Hampshire (1959: 102), "doing something [...] intentionally [...] entails knowing what one is doing."

Although I will defend the idea that we have "knowledge in intention" of what we are doing, and that such knowledge is epistemically distinctive, such claims must be significantly qualified. Imagine that I have been recently paralyzed, unable to move my arm or hand. As it lies under the sheets, I cannot see or feel its movements. In a moment of irrational optimism, I believe that I am cured. Now, as it happens, my belief is true: I am able to clench my fist. But if I do so, although I count as clenching my first

⁵ The converse is less clear; but the dispute about acting intentionally "for no particular reason" will not be relevant here.

intentionally, the belief that I am clenching my fist involved in doing it will not amount to knowledge.⁶ Other cases exhibit a failure not only of knowledge but belief. Suppose that, as I recover from paralysis, my hopes are modest. I think that I might be able to clench my fist, without being sure. When I try to do so, I succeed: I clench my fist intentionally. Still, I need not believe that I am clenching my fist. If there is a connection between doing ϕ intentionally and knowledge or belief that one is doing ϕ , it cannot be as simple as Anscombe takes it to be.

Elsewhere, I have argued that such examples force us to weaken Anscombe's view, not dismiss it altogether. We can attribute the problems to a simplification: that of ignoring partial belief. A complete epistemology must deal not only with knowledge but with the justification of confidence, which comes by degree. Likewise, the doctrine that connects intentional action with belief must be qualified to allow for doubt.⁷ Perhaps the truth is this: when one is doing ϕ intentionally one is more confident that one is doing it than one would otherwise be; one has a higher degree of belief. At any rate, this condition is met in the case of cautious optimism. Although I cannot see or feel my fist, I am more confident that I am clenching it than I was before I began.

No doubt there is more to say about these suggestions; the topic of partial belief is taken up again in section 3. But saying it here would do little to convince the sceptic. There is a profound division among action theorists, between those for whom the principle that we know what are doing intentionally is a pivotal guide to the nature of intentional action and those for whom it is not. For the former, examples of paralysis are clues to the proper statement of this connection, calling for refinement, not wholesale rejection. For the latter, such attachment to Anscombe is merely stubborn.

⁶ Anscombe might resist the assumption, implicit in this paragraph, that knowledge of what one is doing intentionally involves *belief*. Thus, when "a man is *simply* not doing what he [intends to be doing]" – as in a failure to execute a basic action – "the mistake is not one of judgement but of performance." (Anscombe 1963: 57) On the more natural view, his mistake is one of judgement *and* performance. When I intend to be pushing button A and I am actually pushing B, there is a mistake in what I do – but also a mistake in what I believe about myself. For a similar response to Anscombe, see Moran 2004: 60-1.

⁷ As in Pears 1985: 78-81, and Setiya 2008a: 390-2; 2009, §I.

My hope is that we can make progress in this dispute by considering a side of Anscombe's doctrine I have so far suppressed: the idea that one's intentional actions are known "without observation."⁸ Anscombe means to exclude not only perception by the five external senses but proprioception and inference. Her final view appears in the following passage:

[The topic] of an intention may be matter on which there is knowledge or opinion based on observation, inference, hearsay, superstition or anything that knowledge or opinion ever are based on; or again matter on which an opinion is held without any foundation at all. When knowledge or opinion are present concerning what is the case, and what can happen – say Z – if one does certain things, say ABC, then it is possible to have the intention of doing Z in doing ABC; and if the case is one of knowledge or if the opinion is correct, the doing or causing Z is an intentional action, and it is not by observation that one knows one is doing Z; or in so far as one is observing, inferring etc. that Z is actually taking place, one's knowledge is not the knowledge that a man has of his intentional actions. (Anscombe 1963: 50)

Anscombe does not deny that knowledge of what one is doing intentionally typically depends on empirical or other knowledge of the world. In the example of paralysis, I cannot know that I am clenching my fist in doing so intentionally unless I know that I have recovered. But even when I have that knowledge, I do not know that I am clenching my fist on the basis of *sufficient prior evidence*. Likewise, in the well-known vignette from *Intention*, the man cannot know that he is pumping water into the house unless he knows that the equipment is working properly; but when all goes well, his knowledge of what he is doing is not perceptual or inferential. It is the possibility of knowing what one is doing without sufficient prior evidence that is denied by Anscombe's critics.⁹ What matters here is that we can address this possibility without worrying about its prevalence and thus without engaging, for the most part, with examples like those above. Our questions can be framed in terms of agents' capacities and by reflection on the following claim:

Anscombe's Principle: If A has the capacity to act for reasons, she has the capacity to know what she is doing without observation or inference – in that her knowledge does not rest on sufficient prior evidence.

⁸ Anscombe 1963: 13-15.

⁹ See Donnellan 1963; Grice 1971; Langton 2004; Paul 2009.

Since the capacities at issue here are general, this claim is consistent with cases in which the first is exercised but the second is not, and with the performance of particular intentional actions one is incapable of knowing without observation or inference, as perhaps when I clench my fist while recovering from paralysis.

It is the possibility of knowing what one is doing without sufficient prior evidence that Grice (1971: 268) derides as "licensed wishful thinking" and Langton (2004) as an unwarranted "leap of faith." My purpose here is not to explain this possibility or to explore such doubts. Those are matters I have taken up elsewhere.¹⁰ Instead, I will argue directly for the truth of Anscombe's Principle. My argument will not appeal to further doctrines of *Intention*, about the meaning of the question "Why?" or the nature of the practical syllogism, which tend to presuppose this principle. Nor do I aim to give reasons that Anscombe would herself endorse. The plan is rather to rely on grounds acceptable to those who deny Anscombe's Principle and thus to give a novel argument on its behalf.

Begin with the following point: even those who reject non-observational, non-inferential knowledge of intentional action should concede that we often know what we are doing not solely on the basis of perceptual evidence. Imagine, for instance, that my hand is anaesthetized and held behind my back. I can still know that I am clenching my fist when I decide to do so. The basis of my knowledge is not perceptual. The same is true in perfectly ordinary cases. This comes out as soon as we shift our focus from brief movements of the body to projects that take considerable time.¹¹ If I decide to build a shed and start by taking out my tools, the perceptually available evidence for what I am doing is extremely thin. Imagine someone watching and trying to guess. Unlike that observer, I know perfectly well that I am building a shed, not mending the cupboard. The upshot is that even if we reject Anscombe's Principle, we should accept its weaker implication:

¹⁰ In "Practical Knowledge" and "Practical Knowledge Revisited" (Setiya 2008a; 2009).

¹¹ For a similar argument, see Falvey 2000: 25-7 on the "broadness" of the progressive.

Non-Perceptual Knowledge: If A has the capacity to act for reasons, she has the capacity to know what she is doing without observation – in that her knowledge does not rest on sufficient perceptual evidence.

Again, this is a claim about general capacities. It allows for intentional actions that cannot be known without observation and need not get entangled with paralysis and the like. What is more, it suggests a diagnosis of Anscombe's allure. She is right to say that knowledge of what one is doing intentionally is, or can be, knowledge without observation in a modest sense: knowledge that is not perceptual. We do not have to wait and see what we are doing intentionally. Anscombe's mistake is to move from this fact to the more radical doctrine that knowledge of intentional action is knowledge without observation *or inference*. This is what the sceptic resists, noting that our evidence may outstrip what perception provides. Knowledge of what one is doing intentionally may rest on sufficient prior evidence, after all.

It remains to say what this evidence could be if it is not derived from proprioception and the outer senses. According to the sceptic, a capacity for non-perceptual knowledge of action is contained in the capacity to act for reasons – but it is a capacity for knowledge by inference. What is it that we make the inference from? In the ordinary case, *not* from our own past behaviour. We have a kind of access to what we are doing intentionally that is distinctively first-personal. Nor do we predict what we are doing from general knowledge of our own beliefs and desires. For the sceptic, the capacity for non-perceptual knowledge of action which flows from the capacity to act for reasons depends on having special access to our own intentions.¹² First-person knowledge of what I am doing intentionally rests on an inference from premises of the following form:

I. I have the intention of ϕ -ing.

II. I have the ability to ϕ in the simple conditional sense: that if I have the intention of ϕ -ing, I am.

¹² This picture originates in Donnellan's (1963: 407-8) critical response to Anscombe. It was taken up by Grice (1971), who distinguished unhelpfully between "willing" and intending; and has been developed most carefully by Sarah Paul (2009).

The first premise is a matter of self-knowledge, not self-observation. It ascribes the intention of acting in a certain way without assuming that I am acting as I intend. I could have the intention of clenching my fist while being entirely paralyzed, or the intention of pumping water into the house when there is a hole in the pipe. The second premise is broadly empirical, though it need not rest on perception of what is presently going on.¹³ Conditionals like (II) may be learned from past experience. On this inferential model, I can ordinarily say what I am doing intentionally without observation because I know what I intend to be doing, and I know that I have the ability to do it. The inference is ready to hand.

It is this model that affords the most intractable opposition to Anscombe's view and is the principal target of the arguments to come. One objection I note only to set aside. It contends that there is no fundamental contrast between intending and doing, so that knowledge of intention already amounts to knowledge of an action in progress, though perhaps at a very early stage. There is no need to make an inference from one to the other. If we can know what we intend without sufficient prior evidence, we thereby know what we are doing. This view can be refined and made more subtle.¹⁴ But I ignore it here, for two reasons. First, although I have focused primarily on acting intentionally, there is a corresponding doctrine about prospective intention:

If *A* has the capacity to plan for the future, she has the capacity to know what she is *going* to do without observation or inference – in that her knowledge does not rest on sufficient prior evidence.

It is not at all clear how the metaphysics of intending as doing would help us to resist an inferential picture of such prospective knowledge or provide an adequate alternative. Even if it suffices for action, intending to ϕ does not entail that I am going to ϕ .¹⁵ Second, I think the metaphysics in question is false.

¹³ See Grice 1971: 276; Velleman 1989: 20; Pau 2009, §V.

¹⁴ As in Thompson 2008, Part Two; Moran and Stone 2009, §§II and III. For an earlier view in much the same spirit, see Wilson 1989: 222-30; and for the relevance of this metaphysics to the epistemology of action, Falvey 2000: 25-6, 28-9.

¹⁵ A related point is made in Setiya 2008a: 400, n. 39.

At any rate, my ambition is to say what is wrong with the inferential model without disputing the picture of intention as a mental state distinct from and causally responsible for its own execution.¹⁶

We can do this by reflecting on the nature of self-knowledge. The problem with the inferential model is that it gets things backwards in assuming a capacity to know what we intend that does not rest on a prior capacity to know what we are doing. In a sense to be explained, knowledge of intention is transparent to knowledge of action; it is by knowing what we are doing, or what we are going to do, that we know what we intend. This formula is deliberately reminiscent of a more familiar claim: that knowledge of belief is transparent to the world. In the following section, I defend the transparency of belief, laying the groundwork for a defence of Anscombe in section 3. It transpires that the cases are parallel. Our capacity for self-knowledge of belief exploits a prior capacity to know the world by forming beliefs about it. Likewise, our capacity to know what we intend exploits a prior capacity to know what we are doing by forming intentions. As I will argue, we must have non-observational, non-inferential knowledge of intentional action in order to have such knowledge of intention as a mental state.

2. Transparent Beliefs

Our text is a justly influential passage from *The Varieties of Reference*:

[In] making a self-ascription of belief, one's eyes are, so to speak, or occasionally literally, directed outward – upon the world. If someone asks me 'Do you think there is going to be a third world war?', I must attend, in answering him, to precisely the same outward phenomena as I would attend to if I were answering the question 'Will there be a third world war?' I get myself in a position to answer the question whether I believe that *p* by putting into operation whatever procedure I have for answering the question whether *p*. (Evans 1982: 225)

¹⁶ Compare Anscombe (1983: 95): "the relation of *being done in execution of a certain intention, or being done intentionally*, is [not] a causal relation between act and intention." Anscombe's arguments are criticized in Setiya 2007: 56-9. Hursthouse (2000: 105) objects that "on the causalist view, an agent's knowledge-of-his-present-or-future-intentional-action *must* be speculative knowledge of action-caused-by-certain-mental-items." But she gives no argument for this, and Anscombe (1963: 15-6) explicitly denies it. Why must knowledge of mental causation be "speculative" or based on evidence, any more than knowledge of what one is doing?

Many philosophers find insight in the claim that our beliefs are transparent to the world.¹⁷ But what exactly does this slogan mean? And what problem about self-knowledge does it help to solve?

Let's begin with the second question. Although I sometimes come to believe that I believe that *p* on the basis of inference, as from my own past or present behaviour or in the course of therapy, this is typically not the case. If Ryle (1949: 149) meant otherwise when he wrote that the "sorts of things I can find out about myself are the same as the sorts of things that I can find out about other people, and the methods of finding them out are much the same," he was mistaken. I often know what I believe without having behavioural evidence for the self-ascription of a kind that would justify the attribution of that belief to someone else.¹⁸ Nor does my belief that I believe that *p* typically rest on *appearances* of belief: its seeming to me that I believe that *p*. It is not that there are no such appearances – we are familiar with feelings of conviction and doubt – but that I often know what I believe without experiencing them. Knowledge of one's own beliefs is often *groundless*, in that it does not rest on quasi-perceptual appearances of belief or on inference from evidence of other kinds.¹⁹

This might be thought enough to generate a puzzle: how is groundless self-knowledge so much as possible? But the force of this challenge is unclear. As John McDowell writes, when a philosopher wonders how something is possible, "one's first move [...] should be to ask: why exactly does it look to you, and why should it look to me, as if such-and-such a thing (e.g. baseless authority about oneself) is *not* possible?" (McDowell 1998: 57-8) What principle threatens the possibility of groundless self-knowledge? It would beg the question to assume that knowledge always rests on inference or on quasi-perceptual evidence. Of course, we can ask in completely general terms when a belief is justified and

¹⁷ Along with those cited in note 5, see Gallois 1996, Byrne 2005, and Boyle 2009.

¹⁸ This point is decisively made in Boghossian 1989: 7-8.

¹⁹ The wording in the text leaves room for Peacocke's (1998: 71-2, 82-3) view that self-knowledge of conscious belief is based on reasons from which it is not inferred. As we will see, appeal to such reasons does not address the most pressing question about self-knowledge.

when it counts as knowledge. But that these questions can be raised is hardly evidence of some sceptical problem for groundless knowledge of belief.

A better question – one that points us in the direction of transparency – is how it can be *rational* to form beliefs about one's own beliefs not on the basis of perception or inference. This is not a demand for proof or refutation but for further specification. By what rational means are such beliefs acquired? What rational capacity operates in their formation? The paradigm capacities of epistemic reason, perception and inference, are apparently ruled out. Is there some further power at work?

In framing things this way, we do not beg the question against reliabilism in the epistemology of self-knowledge. Here I am thinking of Armstrong (1968, Ch. 15) and Mellor (1977-8), among others.

"How do I know so much about my own beliefs?" asks Mellor (1977-8: 97).

My answers of course will be causal not conceptual. [...] When I perceive other people's beliefs (and wants), part at least of the mechanism is that of my outer senses. [...] Not so with assent. [...] But some perceptual mechanism there must be. Assent does not occur by magic, nor is it an accident that it generally reveals what I believe. So we must have an 'inner sense' [...] which I take the liberty of calling 'insight'. And just as neurophysiology must account for the workings of the eye and ear, so it must account for the workings of insight. (Mellor 1977-8: 97-8)

Although I am sceptical of reliabilism, there is nothing so far to prevent its advocates from insisting that insight is a rational capacity distinct from perception and inference, and so from meeting the demand to specify the rational means by which we have groundless knowledge of belief.

The problem is rather one of psychological extravagance.²⁰ In an important series of papers, Sydney Shoemaker has urged the impossibility of "self-blindness" as an objection to what he calls the "broad perceptual model" of self-knowledge. As he defines the term, a "self-blind creature would be one which has the conception of the various mental states, and can entertain the thought that it has this or that belief, desire, intention, etc., but which is unable to become aware of the truth of such a thought except in a third-person way." (Shoemaker 1988: 30-1) Shoemaker argues that an epistemically rational creature could not be self-blind, but that she could lack insight, understood as a contingently realized causal

²⁰ For the use of this term, in this context, see Byrne 2005: 92, to which I am indebted throughout this section.

mechanism for the detection of beliefs. In that respect, the capacity for groundless self-knowledge is unlike our perceptual capacities, each of which is a contingent supplement to epistemic rationality.²¹ For our purposes, the key insight of this argument is that self-blindness is impossible. There cannot be a subject capable of thinking and reasoning, who has the concept of belief, but is denied first-person access to his own beliefs. Although Shoemaker offers reasons for this premise that others reject, I think both sides of that dispute mistake the dialectical situation.²² The impossibility of self-blindness is a *datum* in the investigation of self-knowledge to be taken for granted and explained. More carefully, the following principle is true:

Cognitive Self-Knowledge: If *A* has the capacity for inference and can ascribe beliefs to others, she has the capacity for groundless knowledge of her own beliefs.

We hoped to specify the rational capacity responsible for such knowledge. This principle dramatically constrains our answer. The only capacities to which we can appeal are those required for making inferences and for the attribution of beliefs to other people. The problem for Armstrong and Mellor's reliabilism is that it conceives of insight as something distinct from these, a further mechanism that may be absent while they are present. According to Cognitive Self-Knowledge, there must be some other way to know what we believe.

With this much in place, we can begin to generalize. There is, it turns out, an argument behind the question, how we have groundless knowledge of belief. Such knowledge must derive from the exercise of a rational capacity. What is it? In answering that question, we have to respect the conditional above. Assuming that the power to ascribe beliefs to others does not bring with it a new capacity of epistemic reason, a new way of forming beliefs on a par with perception and inference, the capacity for groundless knowledge of one's own beliefs must already be contained in the capacity to infer one proposition from

²¹ Here I paraphrase the argument of Shoemaker 1988, which is repeated in Shoemaker 1994, Lecture II. Related considerations appear in Burge 1996.

²² Shoemaker 1988; 1994: 235-41; Kind 2003: 44-5; Byrne 2005: 89-92.

another. But to say that this knowledge is groundless is in part to say that it is *not* inferential! What source can it possibly have?

Perhaps ironically, the emerging paradox is not addressed by Shoemaker in his critique of the broad perceptual model. Although he objects to a version of reliabilism on which first-person knowledge of belief rests on insight as a causal mechanism, Shoemaker's position involves no fundamental break with the reliabilist approach. He holds it as a necessary truth that first-order beliefs are typically accompanied by second-order beliefs in rational subjects. Still, such beliefs "count as knowledge, not because of the quantity or quality of the evidence on which they are based (for they are based on no evidence), but because of the reliability of the mechanism by which they are produced." (Shoemaker 1994: 222) Shoemaker declines to specify the nature of this mechanism, except to suggest that it is "constitutive" of belief.²³ Insisting that self-knowledge draws on capacities involved in being rational, he does not tell us how these capacities work or what they are.

This is a sin of omission; but it is difficult to see how the gap could be filled. On the face of it, the capacity for inference cannot be responsible for groundless and so non-inferential knowledge. (As we will see, this appearance is deceptive; but it is initially compelling.) That leaves only one way to account for our conditional. Self-knowledge must derive from a further rational capacity, one that is similar to insight except that its possession by subjects capable of inference is not contingent. This necessity must be explained, in turn, by the fact that inference exploits and relies upon self-knowledge. On this proposal, making an inference from p to q requires the belief that one believes that p , acquired by a capacity distinct

²³ Shoemaker 1988: 34; 1994: 242-4. The persisting reliabilism of these passages is criticized by Peacocke (1998: 77, 83, 93-4) and Martin (1998: 106): "If we are told simply of a general constraint – that on the whole one must have correct higher-order beliefs to have lower-order beliefs – this tells us nothing about the relation between any particular higher-order belief and its subject-matter, the corresponding lower-order belief." Similar concerns apply to Burge 1996. Peacocke's own view is that conscious judgements are reasons for the self-ascription of belief (Peacocke 1998: 71-2, 82-3). But if self-ascription is not a matter of *inference* from these reasons, this no more answers our question than does Shoemaker. By what rational capacity do we form beliefs about our own beliefs and how is this power contained in the capacity for inference?

from both perception and inference.²⁴ That is why self-blindness is impossible, and why the conditional above is true. Call this strategy for explaining Cognitive Self-Knowledge the Presupposition Approach.

The difficulty for this approach is that, while some sorts of epistemic self-management rely on self-knowledge, as when I notice a contradiction in my beliefs or reason hypothetically (distinguishing what I believe from what I merely suppose), the bare capacity to form one belief on the basis of others does not.²⁵ In its simplest form, inference is wholly world-directed, moving from premise to conclusion without self-ascription. There are puddles on the sidewalk, so it must have rained. In reaching this verdict, I am sensitive to my own beliefs, but I need not ascribe them to myself. That there are puddles on the sidewalk is strong evidence that it rained; it is redundant to mention my *belief* about the puddles. Something similar holds for other rational capacities. In forming beliefs on the basis of perception, I must be sensitive to how things appear, but I can learn that there is a hand in front of me without drawing on beliefs about my own perceptual state.

A more abstract argument supports this view. The claim that inference relies upon self-knowledge is an instance of a more general claim:

Presupposition: Rational capacities rely on beliefs about our mental states, not just the realization of those states.

But if Presupposition were true, groundless self-knowledge would be impossible. Making an inference from p to q would require not only the belief that p but the belief that I believe that p . This belief, in turn, must be acquired by a distinctive rational capacity, a capacity to form the belief that I believe that p when I do in fact believe that p .²⁶ According to Presupposition, however, the exercise of this capacity in that

²⁴ Here, as elsewhere, I will be careless about the distinction between schematic letters and propositional variables.

²⁵ The role of self-knowledge in critical thinking is emphasized by Shoemaker (1988: 28-9, 33-4) and Burge (1996: 98-100), but they seem to allow the possibility of inference without it. Compare Boghossian (1989: 9), who attributes the contrary view, I think implausibly, to epistemic internalists.

²⁶ There is no implication here of temporal priority. Even if I form the belief that I believe that p as I form the belief that p itself, we can ask for the rational capacity involved. Nor can we simply cite the capacities for perceptual judgement or inference responsible for the first-order belief, since they are capacities to know that p on the basis of apparent evidence that p , and I come to believe that I believe that p without apparent evidence.

circumstance depends on the belief that the circumstance obtains: that is, on the belief that I believe that p . Self-knowledge is always already presupposed. This problem would not arise if the capacity in question did not appeal to prior self-knowledge. But if one capacity is exempt from this requirement, why not others? In particular, why can't inference also draw on the belief that p without second-order belief? If it can, the Presupposition Approach must fail. We cannot account for the impossibility of self-blindness by noting that inference requires self-knowledge acquired by other means, for that is not the case.

How, then, to make sense of Cognitive Self-Knowledge? If A has the capacity for inference and can ascribe beliefs to others, she has the capacity for groundless knowledge of her own beliefs. Since inference does not presuppose such knowledge, but the capacity for inference entails it, the latter capacity must be the *source* of groundless knowledge. But groundless knowledge is not inferential. It is this paradox that transparency helps us to solve. The solution has two steps. The first is to conceive of inference as a species of *epistemic rule-following*. This idiom could mislead, if it suggests intentional action: deliberately following a rule that one has formulated to oneself.²⁷ I doubt that we can form beliefs intentionally at all.²⁸ In any case, "inference" here does not imply intentionality. It consists in forming a belief on the basis of prior beliefs that offer putative evidence for its truth. To see this as an instance of epistemic rule-following is to see it as the application of a more general capacity to form beliefs on the basis of other beliefs.

The second step is to formulate a *rule of transparency for belief* inspired by Evans (1982: 225-6): "whenever you are in a position to assert that p , you are *ipso facto* in a position to assert 'I believe that p '."²⁹ If one is capable of inference, one has the capacity to form a belief on the basis of others. Groundless self-knowledge exploits this capacity, not to form the belief that p -or- q on the basis of one's

²⁷ See, for instance, Shoemaker 2009: 36, responding to Byrne 2005.

²⁸ Setiya 2008b.

²⁹ For this approach see Byrne 2005: 95, to which I am once again indebted. A related view is developed in Moran 2001, but there are differences that affect the generality of the respective accounts. I come back to this briefly in section 3.

belief that q , or the belief that p on the basis of evidence that p , but to form the belief that one believes that p on the basis of one's belief that p . In doing so, one follows the rule of transparency for belief. The capacity for groundless self-knowledge, then, is a repurposing of the capacity to follow rules of inference. Anyone who has the latter capacity and can ascribe beliefs to others can identify her own beliefs without relying on evidence of what she believes.

This picture needs elaboration and defence. To begin with, although it exploits the capacity for inference, I have been careful not to describe the movement of transparency as inferential.³⁰ Unlike inference in the ordinary sense, it does not draw on putative evidence for one's conclusion: the premise of the rule of transparency, that p , typically is not good evidence for its conclusion, that I believe that p . Also unlike inference, the justification of the conclusion does not depend on the justification of the premise. When I infer from p to q , my belief that q will not be justified if my belief that p is not. By contrast, when I follow the rule of transparency, I come to know that I believe that p even when that belief is irrational or unjustified.³¹ These facts are related: it is tempting to define inference as epistemic rule-following whose rationality depends on the premise being evidence for the conclusion, and to deny that unjustified beliefs provide evidence. Even if this fails as a definition, it states a necessary condition for inference that is not met when we follow the rule of transparency for belief.

While they clarify the present account, the preceding remarks prompt serious objections. If the rule of transparency is so different from an ordinary rule of inference, why accept that the capacity for inference entails a capacity to follow that rule? And even if it does, how is it rational to form the belief that I believe that p on the basis of my belief that p , when the fact that p is not good evidence that I believe that p ? Possible or not, this procedure seems epistemically corrupt.³²

³⁰ Compare Gallois (1996: 46-7), whose view is otherwise similar to the one expounded here.

³¹ Again, compare Gallois (1996: 50-3, 111-2), who struggles to explain self-knowledge of unjustified belief precisely because he treats the rule of transparency as a rule of inference. See also Martin 1998: 110, Shoemaker 2009: 36.

³² For this complaint, see Brueckner 1998, Martin 1998: 110 and Shoemaker 2003: 396-8. The problem is taken up in different ways by Moran (2003: 404-6, 409-115), Byrne (2005: 93-8), and O'Brien (2007: 103-4, 111-20).

In response to the first objection, note that the claim involved in the account is relatively weak: if one has the capacity for inference, no further *general* capacity is required for other forms of epistemic rule-following.³³ This is consistent with local incapacities: with rules that, for one reason or another, a particular subject is prevented from following. But so is the capacity for inference itself. Although I have this capacity, specific rules of inference may be cognitive blindspots. What I need in order to follow them is training, or instruction, or therapy, or physical repair..., not some entirely new psychological power. This is how to read Cognitive Self-Knowledge. If *A* has the capacity for inference and can ascribe beliefs to others, she has the general capacities required to follow the rule of transparency and thus gain groundless knowledge of her own beliefs, but she may be prevented from doing this by obstacles of various kinds.

Here, as in the tentative definition above, I am drawing on a natural picture of inference as the application of a general capacity to follow epistemic rules – or to form one belief on the basis of others – to rules of a specific kind. Is there any reason to resist this view? An alternative would hold that inference always turns on the assessment of evidence. If the capacity to infer is the capacity to form beliefs on the basis of prior beliefs about evidential support, it cannot be redeployed in following the rule of transparency, whose premise is not evidence for its conclusion. But this is a dead end. Suppose that, in order to infer from *p* to *q*, one must believe that *p* is evidence that *q*. Where does this belief come from? It is a belief about the specific support offered by a specific fact – that there are puddles on the sidewalk, say – for a specific conclusion – that it rained. This is not the sort of claim for which one needs no evidence or for which the evidence is perceptual. It must be acquired on the basis of other beliefs by the use of a rational capacity. And now there is an obvious dilemma. If this instance of epistemic rule-

³³ Unfortunately, the next two paragraphs are littered with claims about the identity of rational capacities, without the further metaphysics needed to make them precise. The topic is too large and too obscure. My hope is that we can make progress without being more systematic. At any rate, I don't know how to talk about the epistemology of self-knowledge without invoking such capacities and the distinctions between them.

following is subject to the demand for prior beliefs about evidence, we face a vicious regress.³⁴ If it is not, the capacity for inference after all depends on a capacity to follow epistemic rules without believing that one's premise is evidence for one's conclusion, a capacity that might be applied to the rule of transparency for belief.

Suppose we grant all this. Still, the second objection remains. How can it be rational to form the belief that one believes that p on the basis of one's belief that p itself, when the content of the latter is not good evidence for the truth of the former? As before, however, we should ask for the argument behind the question. What makes this appear irrational? That one's conclusion is not based on evidence? Since our topic is groundless self-knowledge, that much is inevitable, and it would beg the question to doubt its legitimacy. Nor is there a problem about the non-accidental reliability of beliefs about one's beliefs acquired by transparent means. Far from it: no epistemic rule is more reliable than the rule of transparency. In saying this, we do not fall into reliabilism. It is essential that self-knowledge of belief be acquired by the exercise of a rational capacity, not just a causal process. The point of mentioning reliability is to pre-empt any sceptical argument. Compare Evans (1982: 225): "If a judging subject applies this procedure, then necessarily he will gain knowledge of one of his own mental states: even the most determined sceptic cannot find here a gap in which to insert his knife." The claim of necessity may be unduly optimistic, but the second part seems right. It is idle to question the epistemic standing of beliefs acquired in this way without identifying serious grounds for doubt, and this has not been done.

A final objection is that the present account gets the phenomenology wrong. Having formed the belief that p , do I really need to engage in epistemic rule-following in order to learn that I believe that p ? For the most part, I am not aware of any further step. Asked whether I believe that p , when I do, the answer takes no further thought. This is true, but it does not conflict with our appeal to the rule of transparency. Suppose one has the capacity to make a rational inference from p to q . Having formed the

³⁴ For similar regress arguments, see Johnston 1988: 87-8, Railton 2006 and Boghossian 2009: 492-4; earlier versions appear in Hume's *Treatise* (1.3.7.5n) and, perhaps, in *Philosophical Investigations* (Wittgenstein 1953, §§185-242).

belief that p , say on the basis of perception, must there be a further temporal step before one believes that q ? There is no reason to think so.³⁵ One's inferential capacity makes it rational to form, on the basis of the relevant perception, the belief that p -and- q . What goes for inference goes for other sorts of epistemic rule-following. If one has the capacity to know that one believes that p on the basis of one's belief that p , one need not wait to exercise it, moments after forming that belief. In coming to believe that p , by whatever epistemic means, one is entitled by the rule of transparency to believe that one believes that p . These thoughts need not even be distinct from one another. We commonly form beliefs whose content is self-referential: "I hereby affirm that p " or " p , as I believe."³⁶ We do so by employing the rule of transparency in concert with our capacity to form the belief that p on the basis of perception, or inference, or whatever. Evans' procedure is performed in anticipation.

Further objections are possible, but they cannot be examined here. It is more fruitful to end by noting, in brief, how the arguments of this section illuminate a pair of tempting claims about the nature of self-knowledge. The first is Kantian:

It must be possible for the 'I think' to accompany all my representations; for otherwise something would be represented in me which could not be thought at all, and that is equivalent to saying that the representation would be impossible, or at least would be nothing to me. (B131-2)

Whatever exactly Kant meant by this, something similar holds for Cognitive Self-Knowledge. Assuming that I can ascribe beliefs, any belief from which I can make inferences and thus take up in thought is one to which I can attach "I think" by following the rule of transparency.³⁷ (How far this extends to other representations, perceptual and volitional, will occupy us below.)

The second claim is that we have a way of knowing our own beliefs that is distinctively first-personal and is not available to others. That is precisely what we get by adapting our capacity for

³⁵ Gallois (1996: 104) makes the same point in defending his "doxastic schema."

³⁶ The importance of such judgements in understanding self-knowledge has been emphasized by Tyler Burge (1988: 649, 654; 1996: 92-3).

³⁷ For this connection, see also Evans 1982: 228 and Boyle 2009: 160-1.

inference to the rule of transparency. In doing so, we gain self-knowledge through a rational sensitivity to our own beliefs that we cannot have to the beliefs of anyone else. If this is how I come to believe that I believe that p , I am aware of myself "as subject" in Wittgenstein's sense: my belief is "immune to error through misidentification" and there is no room for the question, "Someone believes that p , all right, but is it me?"³⁸ Nor is there a possibility of reference-failure, as there is with demonstrative thought and, perhaps, with bodily self-awareness.³⁹ These echoes of Kant and Wittgenstein offer confirmation, albeit modest, for the account developed so far.

3. Transparent Intentions

In the previous section, I argued that we need to explain the following principle:

Cognitive Self-Knowledge: If A has the capacity for inference and can ascribe beliefs to others, she has the capacity for groundless knowledge of her own beliefs.

We cannot account for the necessity of this conditional by claiming that inference presupposes knowledge of belief; for it does not. Instead, the capacity for inference must be a *source* of groundless and so non-inferential self-knowledge. That it is rational to follow the rule of transparency explains how this could be.

How far do the idea of transparency and the considerations that motivate it generalize? We should not expect them to apply to all mental states, only to those which admit an analogue of the argument about belief.⁴⁰ That argument was driven by entailment of the capacity for groundless self-knowledge by

³⁸ Wittgenstein 1958: 66-7; Shoemaker 1968, 1994: 210-12.

³⁹ O'Brien 2007: 33-43.

⁴⁰ On the dangers of assuming uniformity in the sources of self-knowledge, see especially Boyle 2009. A question of particular interest is whether transparency explains how we know the *reasons* for our beliefs. There would be a problem here if reasons for which I believe that p were efficient causes of that belief, since transparency affords no special access to how my beliefs were caused. But that is not what such reasons are. (Here I side with Lehrer 1971 against Harman 1970: 845.) Instead, reasons for which one believes that p consist in what one takes as evidence that p . Hence the following extensions of the rule of transparency for belief: if you believe that the fact that q shows that p , form the belief that you believe that p because you believe that q ; if you believe that the fact that q is evidence that p and p , form the belief that you believe that p partly on the ground that q .

other capacities apparently independent of it. That something similar holds for intention is a lesson of section 1. There we saw that even critics of Anscombe should accept the following principle:

Non-Perceptual Knowledge: If *A* has the capacity to act for reasons, she has the capacity to know what she is doing without observation – in that her knowledge does not rest on sufficient perceptual evidence.

According to the sceptic, the capacity for non-perceptual knowledge of action that follows from the capacity to act for reasons is a capacity for inference from intention and ability. Its first-person character turns on the fact that, like the knowledge of belief explored in section 2, self-knowledge of intention is groundless. For the sceptic, then, the capacity to act for reasons brings with it a capacity for groundless knowledge of intention; it is by inference from such knowledge that we are able to know our intentional actions without appeal to evidence of the kind that others need. Those who resist Anscombe's Principle thus concede not only Non-Perceptual Knowledge but the following claim:

Practical Self-Knowledge: If *A* has the capacity to act for reasons and can ascribe intentions to others, she has the capacity for groundless knowledge of her own intentions.

Like the sceptic, though on different grounds, I think this must be true. It is the counterpart of Cognitive Self-Knowledge. Just as it is impossible for a subject with the power of inference and the concept of belief to lack first-person access to his own beliefs, so it is impossible for an agent who does things for reasons and has the concept of intention to lack first-person access to what she herself intends.

The correspondence between the two conditionals encourages the extension of the transparency approach. Further reflection demands it. Assuming that the power to ascribe intentions to others does not bring with it a new capacity of epistemic reason, a new way of forming beliefs on a par with perception and inference, the capacity for groundless knowledge of intention is entailed by the capacity to act for reasons. There are two possible explanations of this. On the Presupposition Approach, acting on the ground that p or in order to ϕ presupposes groundless knowledge of intention acquired by other means. But this is no more plausible here than it was in relation to belief. In the simplest case, practical inference,

like theoretical, is wholly world-directed, moving from premise to conclusion without self-ascription. I am cooking dinner, for which I need some eggs, so I'll head to the store and buy them. In reasoning thus, I am sensitive to my own intentions and beliefs, but I need not ascribe them to myself. (This point is emphasized in Anscombe's own discussion of the "practical syllogism.") If this is right, the capacity to act for reasons does not rest on a further capacity for self-knowledge of intention. Instead, it must be the source of such knowledge – as the capacity for theoretical inference is the source of cognitive self-knowledge through the rule of transparency for belief. The hard question is *how* to adapt the transparency approach from the cognitive to the practical sphere. As I will argue, there is no way to do this without accepting Anscombe's Principle: the capacity to act for reasons must be a capacity to know what one is doing – not just what one intends – without sufficient prior evidence.

Perhaps the most prominent attempt to generalize the model of transparency is Richard Moran's *Authority and Estrangement*. But his line is unsustainable. For Moran (2001: 63), "transparency requires [...] the deferral of the theoretical question 'What do I believe?' to the deliberative question 'What am I to believe?'" This normative inflection is absent from the rule of transparency pursued in section 2, on which the question "Do I believe that *p*?" is transparent to the question whether *p*. In extending his approach, Moran (2001: 124-8) takes the questions "What am I doing?" and "What do I intend?" to be transparent to the normative question, "What am I to do?" But whatever may hold for belief, to determine the balance of reasons for intending or acting is *not* to settle the question of what I intend or what I am going to do. Nor is there any special self-opacity when these questions come apart: along with *akrasia*, there are mundane examples of choice in the face of many permissible options, where I know perfectly well, in the ordinary way, both what I intend and what I am doing.

What we need, therefore, is an explanation of Practical Self-Knowledge that adapts the idea of transparency, but does not pursue a normative line. In seeking an alternative, we should go back to Evans, who sketched a view about the self-ascription of perceptual experience, where normative considerations do not apply.

[A] subject can gain knowledge of his internal informational states [i.e. perceptions] in a very simple way: by re-using precisely those skills of conceptualization that he uses to make judgements about the world. Here is how he can do it. He goes through exactly the same procedure as he would go through if he were trying to make a judgement about how it is at this place now, but excluding any knowledge he has *of an extraneous kind*. [...] The result will necessarily be closely correlated with the content of the informational state which he is in at that time. Now he may prefix this result with the operator 'It seems to me as though...'. This is a way of producing in himself, and giving expression to, a cognitive state whose content is *systematically* dependent upon the content of the informational state, and the systematic dependence is a basis for him to claim knowledge of the informational state. (Evans 1982: 227-8)

This may sound like an implausibly elaborate strategy for discovering how things look or taste. But that appearance is deceptive, as we can see by comparing Evans' procedure with the rule of transparency for belief. The idea behind that rule is to redeploy one's capacity for epistemic rule-following and consequent sensitivity to the belief that *p*, not to make an inference from the premise that *p*, but to form the belief that one believes that *p*. Here, one redeploys one's capacity for perceptual knowledge, not to form beliefs on the basis of how things perceptually seem, but to form the belief that they seem that way. Although we could defend this adaptation much as we did the rule of transparency in section 2, perception is not our principal topic. Instead, the moral to be drawn from Evans is that we can tell a story of transparency for any capacity to know the world. For those with appropriate concepts, such capacities contain epistemic resources for self-knowledge.

As I understand it, the capacity to act for reasons is a capacity of just this kind. It is a capacity for non-perceptual, non-inferential knowledge of what one is doing and why. This formula states in epistemic terms what Anscombe (1963: 9-12) meant when she wrote about intentional action as that to which the question "Why?" is given application and what it means to think of intention as desire-like or motivating belief.⁴¹ The characteristic exercise of the capacity to act for reasons is a belief about what one is doing and why that has the power to motivate action. "Intention" is a name for this kind of belief, but the terminology is misleading if it obscures the range of conditions to which the relevant capacity gives rise.

⁴¹ Setiya 2007: 39-51. Among those who think of intention as being or involving belief are Hampshire and Hart (1958), Harman (1976), Pears (1985), and Velleman (1989, Ch. 4). Critics include Davidson (1978: 91-5), Bratman (1981: 254-6), and Mele (1992, Ch. 8).

Here the comparison with perception helps. Although the paradigm exercise of the capacity to know by looking is perceptual knowledge or belief, its actual exercise can be more subtle. On the basis of visual perception, I may become more confident that p without achieving full belief. Suppose that I am looking at a distant figure in the ocean at dusk. Is it a man or a woman? Swimming towards me or away? Waving or drowning? Perception rationally affects my degrees of belief about these questions in complex interaction with other sources of evidence. The capacity to act for reasons is not perceptual or inferential but it is like those capacities in that its exercise may not amount to knowledge and that it interacts with evidence about one's circumstance. This is the proper context in which to make sense of the reference to partial belief in section 1. Having epistemic right to form the belief that I am doing ϕ by forming an intention depends on knowing how to ϕ , not just the general capacity to act for reasons.⁴² And this right may be undermined, as by doubts about my own ability or evidence of interfering factors. Like other capacities to know, the capacity to act for reasons can be exercised imperfectly, in ways that contribute to confidence without sufficing for knowledge or belief. That is what happens in the case of paralysis, where I am clenching my fist intentionally but only partly believe that I am doing so because I am not sure that I've recovered. Such examples do not refute the present conception of the will, any more than examples of perceptual uncertainty refute the idea of perception as a source of knowledge.

If this Anscombean picture is correct, we can adapt Evans on transparency to intention. Roughly speaking, an agent can know what he intends in the following way:

He goes through exactly the same procedure as he would go through if he were trying to make a judgement about [what he is doing] but excluding any knowledge he has *of an extraneous kind*. [...] The result will necessarily be closely correlated with the content of [his intention.] Now he may prefix this result with the operator ['I intend...']. This is a way of producing in himself, and giving expression to, a cognitive state whose content is systematically dependent upon the content of the [intention], and the systematic dependence is a basis for him to claim knowledge of [what he intends].⁴³

⁴² Setiya 2008a; 2009.

⁴³ Cf. Evans 1982: 227-8, quoted in the text above.

This protocol differs from the perceptual one, in which a rational capacity is applied to an existing state. In gaining transparent knowledge of experience, I exploit my capacity for perceptual knowledge, with its sensitivity to appearances, not to form a perceptual belief, but a belief about how things perceptually seem. Doing so does not affect the perceptual state itself, to which my thought is merely receptive. In contrast, when I try to make a judgement about what I am doing using only my capacity to act for reasons and excluding knowledge "of an extraneous kind," I am engaging in practical thought: making up my mind about what to do, not tracking how my mind is already made up. It follows that, while the transparency procedures for perception and belief can be utilized after the fact to gain knowledge of how things already seem or what I already believe, the transparency procedure for intention cannot.⁴⁴ The picture is rather that, when I employ the capacity to act for reasons in forming an intention and thus acquire some degree of belief – ideally, knowledge – about what I am doing and why, I may at the same time and by the same capacity form the belief that I have that intention. What looked optional in section 2 – using one's rational capacity at once to form an attitude and the belief that one has it – is mandatory here. But the crucial analogy holds. If one has the capacity to act for reasons and can ascribe intentions to others, one has everything one needs for groundless knowledge of one's own intentions. Like other capacities for knowledge of the world, the capacity to act for reasons is potentially self-conscious.

While there are differences between the transparency of perception, intention, and belief, in each case we use a capacity for knowledge of one kind in forming beliefs of another. The capacity for inference or epistemic rule-following takes me from the belief that p to the belief that I believe that p , instead of beliefs for which the fact that p is putative evidence. The capacity for perceptual knowledge takes me from the appearance that p to a belief about this appearance, instead of the belief that p itself.

⁴⁴ This may be too quick. If the capacity to act for reasons entails a capacity for instrumental reasoning, in which I form one intention on the basis of another, that may restore the parallel between intention and belief. Just as the capacity for inference from p to q is sensitive to the belief that p , and can be redeployed in forming the belief that I believe that p , so the capacity for practical inference from intending E to intending M is sensitive to the former intention, and might be redeployed in forming an intention and thus belief whose content is that I so intend. I am not convinced, however, that the capacity to act for reasons entails the further capacity for putting means to ends. If it does, that would simplify some of the arguments in the text – but they do not depend on it. For further discussion, see Anscombe 1963: 30-3, Vogler 2002 and Thompson 2008: 106-115.

And the capacity to act for reasons, as a capacity to know what I am doing by intending to do it, is used to gain knowledge of my intention along with the belief about what is happening that this intention provides. A peculiarity of this case is that, since I come to know what I intend through the capacity to act for reasons, I know it by intention, not mere belief. In effect, when I form an intention self-consciously, it refers to itself: "I am doing ϕ , as I intend."

This claim may seem too weak, since it leaves room – at least in principle – for intentions that are not self-conscious. On the present account, I could act on the intention of doing ϕ , and know that I am doing ϕ , without knowing that I have the relevant intention.⁴⁵ The peculiarity of this should fade, I think, when we recognize that the description of what I am doing that figures in the content of my intention is almost always "of a type to be formally the description of an executed intention" (Anscombe 1963: 87). Anscombe lists actions one cannot perform except intentionally, such as greeting and promising. But the point applies much more widely. Whenever I am doing ϕ for reasons, part of what I intend is to act for those reasons, and what I know (if all goes well) is that I am doing so, from which it follows that my action is intentional.⁴⁶ Only when I am doing ϕ for no particular reason and what I am doing is not of a type to be formally the execution of intention can I have knowledge in intention that I am doing ϕ which does not entail that I am doing it intentionally.

Other objections echo those against the rule of transparency for belief. We can ask whether it is possible to redeploy a rational capacity for knowledge of the world in gaining knowledge of ourselves and whether it is epistemically corrupt. But there are no more grounds for doubt at this point than there were before. If I can form the belief that q on the basis of my belief that p , why not the belief that I

⁴⁵ For versions of a stronger view, on which intentions are *always* self-referential, see Harman 1976, §II; Searle 1983: 83-90; Velleman 1989: 88-90, 94-7, 140-1; and Setiya 2007: 41-5, 48-9. In the past, I have also claimed that intentions represent themselves as *causing* action. Again, the argument in the text is weaker: when I intend to be doing ϕ self-consciously, I represent myself as doing what I intend – not necessarily as doing it "hereby," or *because* I so intend. As I now recognize, the stronger claim is false; see Harman 1976, §II.

⁴⁶ For the claim that one's reasons figure in the content of one's intention, see Wallace 1999: 60-2, Searle 2001: 16, and Setiya 2007: 39-49.

believe that p ? Likewise, if I can form the belief that I am doing ϕ in practical thought by forming an intention, why not also the belief that I intend to be doing it? So long as we have the appropriate concepts, there is nothing to prevent our capacities for knowledge from being exercised in these ways. Nor is there a problem about the epistemic propriety of the beliefs thus formed. They may not rest on evidence, but we knew that already, since it is groundless self-knowledge we are trying to explain. And since the way in which they are formed is non-accidentally reliable, it is hard to imagine how a sceptical challenge would go.

Most importantly, the conception of the will as a capacity for non-perceptual, non-inferential knowledge of what one is doing explains the truth of our conditional:

Practical Self-Knowledge: If A has the capacity to act for reasons and can ascribe intentions to others, she has the capacity for groundless knowledge of her own intentions.

If A has the capacity to act for reasons, she has the capacity to form beliefs whose contents are systematically correlated with her intentions, since those intentions themselves involve beliefs. If she also has the concept of intention, she has the capacity to incorporate this correlation into the content of the intentions she forms, and thus to know what she intends.

Notably, this way of explaining Practical Self-Knowledge entails the truth of Anscombe's Principle: if A has the capacity to act for reasons, she has a capacity to know what she is doing that is distinct from both perception and inference. No similar explanation can be had if the capacity to act for reasons is *not* a capacity for knowledge or belief, but for intention as a non-cognitive state. While a capacity for knowledge of one kind might be used to form beliefs of another, a capacity for non-cognitive intention cannot be used to form cognitive states: attitudes that differ in kind, not just in content. Nor can we follow an epistemic rule that takes us from intention to self-ascription if intention does not involve belief, since the capacity to follow epistemic rules is a capacity to form one belief on the basis of others. For those who reject the conception of the will as a capacity for knowledge, and with it Anscombe's Principle, knowledge of intention must draw on quasi-perceptual evidence, on inference from evidence of

other kinds, or on a further rational capacity. Since it is groundless knowledge we are after, perception and inference are out. And the necessity of Practical Self-Knowledge precludes appeal to a primitive faculty of insight: one could have the capacity to form intentions and act for reasons without it. It follows that there is no way for Anscombe's critics to explain why the capacity to act for reasons and to ascribe intentions to others are together sufficient for groundless knowledge of one's own intentions. Self-blindness is, absurdly, possible.

It follows in turn that these critics cannot make good on the promise to explain first-person knowledge of intentional action as a matter of inference from intention and ability. For the capacity to know what one is doing without the kind of evidence that others need is contained in the capacity to act for reasons – that was the concession to Anscombe in section 1 – while the capacity for self-knowledge of intention, on the critics' account, is not. The upshot is that only the Anscombean view, on which the capacity to act for reasons is a capacity for knowledge of what one is doing distinct from perception and inference, can accommodate first-person access to our own intentions *or* intentional actions. Only this view can explain why such access is entailed by the capacity to act for reasons. Whatever we say about of the rest of *Intention*, Anscombe's starting point was right.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ A version of this paper was presented at a conference on Anscombe's *Intention* at the University of Chicago, April 2009, with a response by Agnes Callard. I am grateful to her, and, for further discussion, to Matt Boyle, Matthias Haase, David Hunter, Jennifer Hornsby, Patricia Kitcher, John McDowell, Sarah Paul, Sebastian Rödl, Nishi Shah, and Fred Stoutland.

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