Elements in the Philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein
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WITTGENSTEIN ON
ASPECT PERCEPTION

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Wittgenstein on Aspect Perception

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Abstract: The perception of what he calls ‘aspects’ preoccupied Wittgenstein and gave him considerable trouble in his final years. The Wittgensteinian aspect defies any number of traditional philosophical dichotomies: the aspect is neither subjective (inner, metaphysically private) nor objective; it presents perceivable unity and sense that are (arguably) not (yet) conceptual; it is ‘subject to the will’, but at the same time is normally taken to be genuinely revelatory of the object perceived under it. This Element begins with a grammatical and phenomenological characterization of Wittgensteinian aspects. It then challenges two widespread ideas: that aspects are to be identified with concepts, and that aspect perception has a continuous version that is characteristic of (normal) human perception. It concludes by proposing that aspect perception brings to light the distinction between the world as perceived and the world as objectively construed, and the role we play in the constitution of the former.

Keywords: Wittgenstein; Perception; Aspect Perception; Phenomenology; Philosophical Method
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