# WITTGENSTEIN'S WILLING SUBJECT

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## ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to clarify the meaning of Wittgenstein's "willing subject". His fragmentary hints at the nature and significance of the willing subject are to be found in the concluding portions of the _Tractatus_. These suggestions are elaborated upon in the _1914-1916_ _Notebooks_ where we find Wittgenstein's concern over the difficulties which appear to be the consequence of this idea.

In his later writings, the idea of a transcendental willing subject is dropped. Replacing his early transcendentalism is a strong contextualist account of the nature of willing.

The disputants in the _Philosophical Investigations_ engage in often negative dialogue about the nature of volition, behaviour and action. It will be seen, by analysing and weaving together seemingly unrelated themes running through Wittgenstein's later works, that a positive concept of person does emerge.

Thus the method of this thesis is dialectical in the sense that it is against the backdrop of a critique that a positive picture of the nature of the willing subject is developed. This method parallels Wittgenstein's own.

Through a critique of the key concepts involved in dualistic accounts of volition, and by an examination of the role of behaviour, we are provided with a platform from which we can adequately explain the nature of intended action. We will show how Wittgenstein's contextualism is a viable alternative to dualistic and behaviouristic accounts. Finally, we will see how crucial, for Wittgenstein, the idea of a willing subject is, for it allows us to regard existence as meaningful.

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# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the nature and significance of Wittgenstein's "willing subject." This idea is introduced in the concluding part of the *Tractatus*. It is extremely difficult to understand Wittgenstein's meaning there, and this is so at least partly because his early style is epigrammatic: he seems satisfied to merely hint at what he means by a willing subject which is transcendental. In the *1914-1916 Notebooks* this idea is elaborated upon, and it is evident there that Wittgenstein appreciated its problematic nature.

The idea of a transcendental willing subject is dropped in his later writings -- much of the *Philosophical Investigations* is devoted to criticising the philosophic search for simples, and the idea of a pure will co-extensive with the world appears to be such a simple.

In his later writings, instead of positing a transcendental will, we find Wittgenstein analysing all of the various language-games in which the words 'intention', 'purpose', etc. are used. That is, he now concerns himself with persons in real-life situations in order to elucidate the meaning of these terms.

One finds, specifically in the *Philosophical*

Investigations, that through Wittgenstein's critical appraisal of an interlocking network of concepts, emerges a positive picture of the person as a willing being. That is, by critically evaluating what he takes to be serious misconceptions of "the will", Wittgenstein's idea of the self as primarily a willing subject is fleshed out.

My method in this thesis is the following: in the first chapter, I shall briefly describe Wittgenstein's early conception of the will, and point to some serious problems which it seems to involve.

I shall begin, in the second chapter with an examination of certain dualist positions, showing how Wittgenstein is opposed to criteria of privacy and immediacy as definitive of intended action. So the purpose of this chapter is to describe those concepts which form the focal point for Wittgenstein's critique. His positive conception of the person as willing subject can be partially elucidated by being seen against the backdrop of certain misconceptions which he seeks to dispel.

The purpose of the third chapter will in part be to continue the critique. In this vein, it will attempt to show how a rejection of introspectible inner events does not require that Wittgenstein embrace a behaviourist position regarding volition and intentional action. For we shall see here how he does require an irreducible concept of purpose against certain behaviourist strictures.

The second part of this chapter will attempt to show how Wittgenstein's appraisal of behaviour, and specifically of language as a form of behaviour, points back towards the willing subject. It does so in part because implicit in our forms of expression (the applicability of the question "Why?", etc.) is the idea of a purposive being.

In the fourth chapter, I shall attempt to account for the nature of the terminology which can be considered adequate and appropriate to explain human action. To use Wittgenstein's analogy of language being a net (Tractatus-Logico-Philosophicus 6.341) which can, as it were, catch reality in its meshes, we will here undertake a description of that net which can ultimately make sense of human conduct. In seeing how, on Wittgensteinian lines, it is necessary for us to reject a causal framework here, we find that Wittgenstein's position is in radical opposition to (a) dualistic (e.g., volitional theorists) attempts to account for intended action by inner states and to (b) behaviouristic (e.g., S-R theorists) attempts at reducing the category of purpose to, for example, "drive-states" and/or defining action by means of a reflex-arc. The latter is indicative of a crude causally associative mechanism which Wittgenstein rejects. Seeing how Wittgenstein opposes such manners of describing human action is central to the thesis as a whole, for it reveals for Wittgenstein the necessity of explaining conduct in

"reasonable" (purposive as opposed to causal) terms.

The purpose of the fifth and final chapter, then, will be to outline that network of concepts which, for Wittgenstein, serves as a groundwork for intentional action. We will find, in the course of this chapter, what can serve as criteria for 'intention'. Wittgenstein's idea of the person as willing subject is given substance here by being set within a world. That is, by exploring the link-ups amongst rules, conventions, and forms of life, we can see the nature of those conditions against which it is meaningful to speak of a willing subject, and indeed of a person at all. Meaning or value can be predicated of one's world by the related notions of intention (one's plans) and intentionality (one's description or interpretation of given actions, beliefs, and one's view of the world).

Now, structurally, my method throughout this thesis will, in large part, resemble Wittgenstein's own. It will involve the gradual unravelling of seemingly disparate and unconnected issues scattered throughout his writings. The reader who wishes to understand Wittgenstein must follow him through the interweaving of related and sometimes seemingly unrelated themes to tie together the disparate elements of the problem under consideration. From the weaving together and juxtaposition (sometimes Wittgenstein's, sometimes the reader's own) of the different voices in this philosophical dialogue, from these so often apparently

negative remarks, emerges, it will be argued, a positive expression by Wittgenstein on the subject of person.

## CHAPTER I

## THE WILLING SUBJECT AS TRANSCENDENTAL

In the concluding sections of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein introduces the concept of a willing subject. He describes this subject as metaphysical[1]: it is placed outside the world as a limit, or boundary, to it.[2] In the 1914-16 *Notebooks*, Wittgenstein describes the willing subject in the following way:

> Only from the consciousness of the *uniqueness of my life* arises religion -- science -- and art .... Good and evil only enter through the *subject*. And the subject is not part of the world, but a boundary of the world .... Isn't the thinking subject ... mere superstition? .... I objectively confront every object. But not the I ... there must be mention of the I, in a *non-psychological* sense in philosophy.[3]

Now it is clear that Wittgenstein considered this subject or self as vitally important: the subject is spoken of as a

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[1] L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961. Hereafter to be referred to as *Tractatus*, 5.633, 5.641.

[2] Ibid., 5.632.

[3] L. Wittgenstein, *Notebooks, 1914-1916*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, ed. G. H. von Wright and G. E. M. Anscombe, New York: Harper & Row, Harper Torchbooks, 1969, pp. 79-80. Hereafter to be referred to as *Notebooks*.

presupposition of the world's existence.[4] In terms of values it is the bearer of good and evil.[5]

It is equally clear that the idea of a will co-extensive with the world and yet outside of it, has many problematic aspects. That Wittgenstein appreciated these difficulties is apparent in the Notebooks where we find many unsettled questions, and Wittgenstein's own expression of his confusion. He writes: "I am conscious of the complete unclarity of all these sentences."[6] Whether by the time he wrote the Tractatus he thought that he had ironed out these confusions, or whether he was content to merely stifle these questions in order to present a complete and uncluttered account, in the Tractatus we find minimal discussion of these puzzling notions.

I shall briefly describe this early conception of the will and point to some seemingly unresolvable difficulties which it involves. Once we have even a cursory understanding of what Wittgenstein hoped to accomplish by such a characterization, and of the extent of the problems involved, we will be in a better position to appreciate Wittgenstein's later account of the nature of the willing subject.

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[4] Notebooks, p. 79. Cf. the eye and the visual field analogy, Notebooks, p. 80. Cf. Tractatus 5.633.

[5] Notebooks, p. 76.

[6] Ibid., p. 79.

If we see Wittgenstein as working within the Kantian tradition, then the bifurcation of will and world which his early account appears to endorse, can be historically placed. On lines parallel to Schopenhauer's, there is, in Wittgenstein's early period, a radical dichotomization of self and the world. "There are two godheads: the world and my independent I."[7] This "independent I" is the willing subject, for, as Wittgenstein writes, surely the thinking subject is an illusion.[8] To posit a purely thinking being is superstition.[9] If we understand this to be part of a critique of Cartesianism, which he was to greatly elaborate later on, Wittgenstein's position seems strictly negative. However, not only does he say that the thinking subject does not exist, he also says that there must be a sense in which we can speak philosophically of the self.[10] It is in this context that he introduces the idea of the self as a willing subject. The resemblance to Kant has been remarked upon by several commentators. Unable to conceive of the "I" as a purely contemplative entity, yet compelled to offer some characterization of its nature, the subject is described in its practical role as agent, in Wittgenstein's words, as

[7] Ibid., p. 74.

[8] Ibid., p. 80.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

"the bearer of good and evil." In addition to the apparent dichotomization of the self and the world, we find in the early Wittgenstein, a struggle to deal with the duality of will and idea. That is, he asks whether it is conceivable that we might have a being incapable of will and capable only of idea.[11] This is answered in the negative. Yet, the will seems always to have to relate to an idea.[12] There clearly cannot be a purely willing being as a limit of the world, for the world -- to be <u>my</u> world -- must be describable in terms of my interpretation, or description, of it. For Wittgenstein, this is of course the domain of the language-using subject. And not only is ethics (the domain of the willing subject) transcendental,[13] so too is logic (the domain of the language-using subject) transcendental.[14] Both characterizations of the subject then, would appear to be candidates for limits of the world. In the <u>Notebooks</u>,

[11] Ibid., p. 77.

[12] Ibid., p. 86.

[13] Ibid., p. 79. Cf. <u>Tractatus</u> 6.421.

[14] <u>Tractatus</u>, 6.13. Cf. the eye and visual field analogy, <u>Notebooks</u>, p. 80, <u>Tractatus</u> 5.633. By 'transcendental', Wittgenstein seems to mean that which is presupposed by our language -- that which must be <u>the case</u> for our language to operate as it does. Thus, the fact that we do utter statements in which value is ascribed, necessitates, for Wittgenstein, a subject of value. This is the willing subject. And although he does not strictly define either, Wittgenstein appears in places to equate the meaning of 'transcendental', with 'metaphysical'.

Wittgenstein wonders whether we might properly subsume thinking under a kind of willing.[15] However that alternative would present its own difficulties.

The existence of a willing subject, Wittgenstein argues, allows us to ascribe value to our world. Good and evil willing characterize the two extreme frameworks from which the subject faces his world. As well, there must, Wittgenstein says, be a kind of ethical reward and punishment. These are not to be the contingent consequences of some action, but must be part of the action itself.[16]

Now the Tractatus is often seen as a strictly logical work: on this interpretation the above statements on the nature of the self and its relation to the factual world are treated as secondary material, merely expressions of Wittgenstein's personal interest in ethical matters. Granted that Wittgenstein's remarks are unclear, there is yet a need to get past the tendency to simply label the whole endeavour "mystical" and leave it at that. The nature of Wittgenstein's alleged mysticism warrants some description, at least to the extent of demonstrating its impact on the subjects of language and the nature of the world which indisputably are the subject matter of the Tractatus. And since, in Wittgenstein's own words in a letter to Ficker,

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[15] Notebooks, p. 7[illegible]

[16] Ibid., p. 78.

the point of that book is an ethical one,[17] these propositions about good and evil willing, the purpose of life, and the nature of the willing subject all warrant some attention.

In the Notebooks, Wittgenstein speaks of an oppressive tension which one day objectifies itself in a question.[18] Not only does this describe for us the nature of philosophic puzzlement for Wittgenstein, and so gives us insight into the man himself, but as well it supplies one of the strongest hints, or keys, for an understanding of the Tractatus. The tension which runs through the whole length of the Tractatus is that between the sayable and the unsayable, between that which can be said significantly, and that which can only be shown, i.e., that which is manifest. He writes, "What can be shown cannot be said."[19] This serves as a criterion for distinguishing legitimate propositions, that is, propositions with sense, propositions which can be true or false, from nonsense -- literally, those propositions which have no sense, and hence cannot be either true or false. But these latter propositions can sometimes be

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[17] P. Engelmann, Letters from Ludwig Wittgenstein With a Memoir, trans. L. Furtmuller, ed. B. F. McGuinness, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, quoted in editor's appendix, p. 143.

[18] Notebooks, p. 50.

[19] Tractatus, 4.1212.

"important nonsense." For there are things, Wittgenstein says, which cannot be put into words. They are what is mystical.[20] When all scientific questions have been answered -- the problems of life remain.[21] The unsayable, that which our language can point to, or "show", remains for Wittgenstein what is most important: he writes in the preface to the Tractatus,

> "... the second thing in which the value of this work consists is that it shows how little is achieved when these problems are solved."[22]

Now this same distinction, or division, of language was adopted by the positivists, with very different purposes and results. Whereas Wittgenstein wished to protect the sphere of the unsayable from improper intrusion, the positivists appear to have conflated the meaning of 'unsayable' with 'unimportant.' For Wittgenstein, ethical and religious propositions are either disguised statements of fact (propositions of relative value) or else they are nonsense.[23] Such nonsense represents what he calls man's attempt to run against the boundaries of language.[24] Whether or not it is

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[20]Ibid., 6.522.

[21]Ibid., 6.52.

[22]Ibid., p. 5.

[23]L. Wittgenstein, "A Lecture on Ethics," Philosophical Review, LXXIV (1965), pp. 3-12. See pp. 9-12.

[24]Ibid., p. 11.

implicit that, for Wittgenstein, such an urge or thrust beyond the limits of legitimate discourse is universal, still it does characterize Wittgenstein himself who strongly wished to express himself on these issues, and yet felt forced to refrain, because of the rigid clamp of his theory of meaning. Waismann notes that in a conversation with Schlick, Wittgenstein called ethics the urge to thrust against the limits of language. And this tendency, or thrust, Wittgenstein said, points to something.[25] In the "Lecture on Ethics", Wittgenstein says that this tendency (to talk ethics and religion) is one which, personally, he cannot help respecting. "I would not for my life ridicule it."[26] In the Notebooks, Wittgenstein writes:

> To believe in a God means to understand the question about the meaning of life ... to see that the facts of the world are not the end of the matter ... to see that life has a meaning.[27]

There is, for Wittgenstein, sense or value to life and this is not expressible in language. In face of this we should be silent. In a sense then, our silence before the unutterable represents our best knowledge. All this is far removed from the positivist's subordination of non-cognitive

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[25] Schlick, "Notes on Talks with Wittgenstein," trans. M. Black, Philosophical Review, LXXIV (1965), p. 13.

[26] Wittgenstein, "Lecture," p. 12.

[27] Notebooks, p. 74.

discourse, making it a kind of second-class speech. For Wittgenstein, these propositions about value are not simply reducible to expressions of emotion.

Now the saying/showing dichotomy, as vital as it is to Wittgenstein's theory of language, had great importance as well for his views on aesthetics and ethics. The propositions of aesthetics and ethics in the strictest sense have no meaning -- they transcend the domain of legitimate discourse. Yet, as Wittgenstein says, they can point to, or show, something. Let us for a moment compare this with the way factual propositions operate. Now in the sense that these propositions picture states of affairs in the world, they "say" that such states of affairs do or do not obtain. However, what is "manifest" in such propositions is that they picture. But that cannot be stated: it is shown. In other words, the relationship between language and the world is itself unutterable -- to be able to describe this relationship would require that we in some way transcend our language, and this we cannot do. In a similar, and perhaps analogous way, poetry -- and all art -- has the capacity to "point to" or to "show" something. This capacity enables art to be effective. That which art shows is contained in it -- Wittgenstein's word is 'manifest' --but one cannot state or say that which is shown. Hence Wittgenstein says, "What can be shown, cannot be said." In a letter to Paul Engelmann, he writes:

> And this is how it is: if only you do not try to utter what is unutterable then *nothing* gets lost. But the unutterable will be -- unutterably -- *contained* in what has been uttered![28]

Finally, the distinction between saying and showing has important ramifications for Wittgenstein's ethics -- on his account of the nature of the willing subject. In consistency with a theory of language which eliminated ethical propositions, Wittgenstein would have to argue against the possibility of a rationalist foundation for ethics. In *On Certainty*, he writes,

> Giving grounds, however, justifying the evidence, comes to an end; -- but the end is not certain propositions' striking us immediately as true; i.e., it is not a kind of *seeing* on our part; it is our *acting*, which lies at the bottom of the language-game.[29]

Ethics cannot be captured within a system of propositions. Ethics can only be shown: good is to be shown by describing the manner in which a good man lives his life. In *On Certainty* Wittgenstein writes, "The assumption, one might say, forms the basis of action, and therefore naturally, of thought."[30] In this context, he quotes Goethe:

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[28] Engelmann, *Letters from Wittgenstein*, p. 7.

[29] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, eds. G. H. von Wright and G. E. M. Anscombe, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, Oxford: Blackwell, 1969, 204.

[30] Ibid., 411.

... and write with confidence
"In the beginning was the deed."

Goethe, *Faust* I trans.[31]

There are, in other words, questions beyond the province of speculative reason, and in the *Tractatus* this requires that they be beyond the scope of language. "We cannot think what we cannot think; so what we cannot think we cannot *say* either."[32] Later on, he was to say that language itself does not proceed from ratiocination,[33] that language issues in forms of life, which are not products of speculation (of which there can be doubt) but rather prototypes of ways of thinking.[34]

I have so far attempted to describe three major influences on Wittgenstein's early conception of the will. One has been the Kantian tradition; the second can be described as a mysticism which begins perhaps with wonder at the existence of the world, and ends with silence in the face of the unutterable. The third factor, intrinsically interwoven with the above, is Wittgenstein's early theory

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[31] Ibid., 402.

[32] *Tractatus* 5.61.

[33] Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, 475.

[34] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, eds. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1970, 541.

of meaning. This involves not only his conception that propositions picture facts, but that there is an ultimate ideal language, with the important consequence that there is supposed to be one binding logic which lies at its heart. The view that propositions picture states of affairs and that this is the sole function of language prevented Wittgenstein from seeing all of the other uses, or purposes, our language might have. Later, in the *Investigations*, he is, of course, extremely critical of this. The bifurcations he later condemns are seen as a direct result of a mistakenly simple picture of language, meaning and truth. In the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein writes, "We predicate of the thing what lies in the method of representing it ...."[35]

His early account of the nature of the willing subject characteristically reflects his early rigidity on the above questions. The dilemma which, most probably, he felt very strongly was due to the narrowness of the strictures he had confined himself within. He was subject to a profound ambivalence: no propositions about the meaning or purpose of life, the value of good action, or the nature of the self could legitimately be uttered -- yet Wittgenstein felt compelled to utter them. Hence his attempt to discount these propositions -- to try to erase what he had just written.

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[35] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, Oxford: Blackwell, 1968, 104. Hereafter to be referred to as *PI*.

> My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them -- as steps -- to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it).[36]

We have seen that, for Wittgenstein, whereas there is no thinking subject, he finds it necessary to postulate a willing subject which is transcendental, i.e., which must be acknowledged in order to account for value ascription, and which is ineffable in that it cannot be described by language because it is presupposed by language. Now let us examine the account Wittgenstein offers despite his strictures, of the willing subject.

Is Wittgenstein, after all, attempting to supply a unitary concept of the will? If this is an accurate representation of his intention, there appear to be serious confusions involved. It might be argued then, that what he was offering was a non-unitary concept of the willing subject: that is, that there are different kinds of will, or different aspects of the willing subject, e.g., (1) Body-Moving Will, (2) Ethical Will, (3) Geist, Spirit.[37] Such a division would appear to iron out some inconsistencies in Wittgenstein's account. It has been suggested that there is a transcendental

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[36] *Tractatus*, 6.54.

[37] For an elaboration of this, see J. Walker, "Wittgenstein's Early Theory of the Will: An Analysis," *Idealistic Studies*, Vol. 3, 1973, pp. 179-205.

deduction in the Tractatus, a deduction from the conception of the world having limits to a necessary noumenal or transcendental subject co-extensive with the world.[38] That subject will be the willing subject -- as opposed to a contemplative, or thinking, subject. Moreover, this subject would not be the human being, or the experiencing subject, for these are phenomenal terms. And there must, Wittgenstein says, be sense to a "non-psychological I" (or self).[39] These latter notions (human being, etc.) would properly fall within the range of psychology, not philosophy.

Let us look for a moment at some of the most problematic areas in Wittgenstein's characterization of the willing subject. After this, we shall outline in a most general way how these issues are to be handled by Wittgenstein in his later period.

1) Limit of the World: Wittgenstein speaks of the willing subject as a boundary, or limit, of the world.[40] In this context, he speaks of ethics as transcendental.[41] However logic too, for Wittgenstein, is transcendental.[42] Now the

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[38] Ibid., pp. 185-187.

[39] Tractatus, 5.641.

[40] Notebooks, p. 79. Cf. Tractatus, 5.633.

[41] Notebooks, p. 79. Cf. Tractatus, 6.421.

[42] Tractatus, 6.13.

traditional characterization of the subject as a thinking being (Descartes) is transformed in the _Tractatus_ to that of a language-using being. Presumably, when we are told that logic is transcendental, this would require positing a transcendental subject in the same way as, for Wittgenstein, since ethics is transcendental, a transcendental willing subject must be posited. That is, at the limit of the world where the willing subject is, there would also be a "logic-using" subject. But Wittgenstein says that there is no knowing subject.[43]

2) _Relation to the World_: (i) Wittgenstein says that the willing subject penetrates the world,[44] that through such penetration the world can change to such an extent that it becomes a totally different place.[45] He writes, "I am my world. (The microcosm)."[46] (ii) But Wittgenstein also says that the willing subject does _not_ alter the facts of the world.[47] Initially, it might seem that (i) and (ii) are contradictory. However, Wittgenstein says that whereas

[43] _Notebooks_, p. 86. Cf. _Tractatus_, 5.631.

[44] _Notebooks_, p. 73.

[45] _Notebooks_, p. 73.

[46] _Tractatus_, 5.63.

[47] Ibid., 6.373, 6.43.

the willing subject does not alter the facts of the world, it does alter the limits. This would remove the apparent contradiction, but it would also leave us faced with a puzzle: how might the limits of the world change so that the world is completely different and yet have no effect on the facts of the world?

3) Necessity: Wittgenstein claims that there is no necessary connexion between wanting (same as willing?) and its consequences in the world.[48] This presumably is so because, for Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus*, there is only one kind of necessity -- logical necessity.[49] That is, there is no causal nexus, for that is only psychologically justified.[50] One might argue that Wittgenstein's position is perhaps too strong, for what would it mean to say that it is possible to conceive of wanting as never being followed by appropriate action?

4) Ethical Reward and Punishment: In a discussion on the effectiveness of the will, Wittgenstein speaks of good and bad willing.[51] This presumably has no connexion with the

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48 Ibid., 6.373, 6.374.

49 Ibid., 6.375.

50 Ibid., 5.136-5.1362, 6.3631-6.37.

51 Ibid., 6.43.

world of facts. But doesn't action take place <u>in</u> the world of facts? And what can "good and bad willing" mean if they have no connexion with action or behaviour? Wittgenstein seems to see this: he says in the context of imagining a being incapable of will, "To love one's neighbour <u>means</u> to will!"[52] What can this mean if no appropriate action matters?

Wittgenstein says that there must be a <u>kind</u> of ethical reward and ethical punishment.[53] Further, these are not in terms of consequences, but in terms of the action itself. Two things are of note here: firstly, this appears Kantian, in that what is good is done not for a reason (i.e., a pragmatic attempt for betterment, etc.). Secondly, it would seem then that action is quite relevant! (See above comments).

5) <u>Relation to Body</u>: Wittgenstein argues that the willing subject is a limit of the world. Being a limit of the world, it must be coextensive with the <u>whole</u> world. Now, body is as much a part of the world as any other thing. And in willing -- Wittgenstein admits -- there appears to be a closer connexion between willing and my body than between willing and the rest of the world. He says that this idea of a closer connexion would be intolerable.[54] It would be "intolerable"

[52] <u>Notebooks</u>, p. 77.

[53] Ibid., p. 78.

[54] Ibid., p. 88.

because his system requires a will confronting the whole world as its counterpart.

If there are indeed in Wittgenstein's account different kinds of will, then clearly the bodily-effective will above described does not necessarily present us with problems. That would simply be a phenomenal will, behind which lies the noumenal, or transcendental will. However strictly in terms of #1 (above) the idea of a transcendental deduction seems to present a problem. It alleges that a strictly willing subject is deduced; however, it appears that such a deduction would seem equally applicable to a thinking subject. That is, since Wittgenstein explicitly describes both logic and ethics as transcendental, if in fact he is offering us a deduction from the nature of the world to some subject outside of it, a proper characterization of this subject could conceivably be either a willing or a thinking being.

Now, how would the later Wittgenstein critically consider the above ideas? First, the bifurcations I have briefly outlined (word and will, idea and will, fact and value) would probably not appear. Second, what appears to be the search for some simple which is to stand as the world's counterpart is dropped. Third, we no longer look for the meaning of something as ambiguous as a "willing subject." Instead we find Wittgenstein considering persons (human beings) in lived situations, examining all the various language-games in which words like 'intention',

'volition', 'will', 'subject', 'self', 'purpose', 'reason', etc. are used. Particular contexts and "forms of life" are seen to supply meaning to the use of these words. In other words, since the stringent requirements for the legitimacy of propositions are dropped, Wittgenstein is free to consider all such utterances -- and they may or may not be intelligible. That will depend upon a number of things. Fourth, ethics is readmitted. That is, ethical propositions can be seen as intelligible within certain specific contexts and, most importantly, intelligibility does not apply only to language. Actions and behaviour can be seen as intelligible. Ethical and aesthetic concepts now cannot be rigidly defined, that is, words like 'good' are learnt in a host of situations and have, therefore, a "family of meanings."[55] Aesthetic and ethical judgements can be meaningful: they are not simply reducible to a response such as "Marvellous!"[56] They can be meaningful because they may have important consequences. And, as Wittgenstein says in another context, "I 'draw the consequences' not only in words but also in action."[57]

Finally, Wittgenstein is to handle necessity in a

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[55] Wittgenstein, PI, 77.

[56] Ludwig Wittgenstein, "Lectures on Aesthetics," in L. Wittgenstein, Lectures and Conversations, ed. C. Barrett, Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1972, p. 11.

[57] Wittgenstein, PI, 486.

different and complex manner. Some things must be exempt from doubt. Wittgenstein seems to regard such certainties as being beyond the need for justification. He describes certainty of this kind as something animal, as a form of life.[58] Wittgenstein says in the context of a discussion on expectation, "It seems like the expectation and the fact satisfying the expectation fitted together somehow."[59] These "fit together" in the sense that a single description applies to both. What sort of relationship holds between these? It appears that they are internally related. In the Investigations, Wittgenstein writes, "Suppose it were asked 'Do I know what I long for before I get it?' If I have learned to talk, then I do know."[60] What then of the relationship between willing and action? Although it must remain contingent whether a particular action ensues on a given occasion, the relation between our concept of will and our concept of action is surely an entirely different sort of question.

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[58] Wittgenstein, On Certainty, 341, 358, 359.

[59] Wittgenstein, Zettel, 54.

[60] Wittgenstein, PI, 441.

## CHAPTER II

## A CRITIQUE OF THE "GHOST IN THE MACHINE MYTH"

The basic problems considered in this thesis are the conditions which need to hold for us to be able to speak of a person as a willing subject. From the determination of which conditions are relevant and which are not to such a locution as, "I intend to do x", will emerge a positive concept of what it is to be a person. The philosophical investigations engaged in by Wittgenstein's antagonists, his negative voices, ultimately result in impasse and confusion. But in Socratic fashion, such arguments point toward something. Their negative chatter points beyond itself through Wittgenstein's remedial intervention to positive results. Wittgenstein tries to show that we are often conceptual prisoners, captivated by bewitching illusions created by our language.

And so the purpose of this chapter is largely negative. It is to describe a conception of the will which is both compelling and misguided. For Wittgenstein, the activity of philosophy was often a therapeutic exercise, consisting in awakening us to our own conceptual confusion. This confusion often betrays itself in pictures which to us seem necessary because of their captivating nature.

Of this kind of bewitchment Wittgenstein says:

> Thus it can come about that we aren't able to rid ourselves of the implications of our symbolism, which seems to admit of a question like 'Where does the flame of a candle go to when it's blown out?' . . . . We have become obsessed with our symbolism—led into puzzlement by an analogy which irresistibly drags us on.[1]

Instead of regarding such models as things that we ourselves have created, we separate them from ourselves, giving them independent status. Thus any attempt at criticism seems to be a dispute about a well-known matter of fact. So deeply has the picture entered into our consciousness that an attempt to challenge it is often regarded as destructively positivistic.

Discussion of the person as willing subject which constitutes the central point of this thesis involves an examination of the set of concepts which, to Ryle, constitute "The Ghost in the Machine"[2] myth. This myth, or linguistic picture, finds a clear expression in a dualism such as Descartes'. Wittgenstein's critique of dualism which is paramount in the Philosophical Investigations is central to his own philosophy of mind. An underpinning to the Cartesian account, a paradigmatic case of dualism, is the equation of

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[1] Ludwig Wittgenstein, The Brown Book, in The Blue and Brown Books (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 108; hereafter to be referred to as Wittgenstein, Brown Book or Wittgenstein, Blue Book.

[2] See G. Ryle, The Concept of Mind (Middlesex, England: Peregrine Books, 1963).

the mental with the private.[3] It is just this identification, and the description of a human being which is its consequence, that Wittgenstein rejects.

Thus, in order to clarify our concept of intention, it is firstly necessary to see how not to characterize the will. Consequently, I shall begin by describing the source and nature of the conception Wittgenstein attacks, and his reasons for doing so. This will point beyond itself towards a positive description of intention. Because intention is a psychological concept, we can expect that our description of it will shed light on other concepts such as understanding and thinking, that is, it will have consequences for a general theory of mind.

Let us first consider the dualist argument. The dualist sees the human body as composed of two disparate entities. A person's body can be adequately described in terms drawn from the sciences. Physics and chemistry not only characterize the inanimate universe around us, but ourselves as well. But, because predicates such as willing, thinking and feeling are also applicable to humans, and, so the dualist argument runs, these activities cannot be reduced to the purely quantifiable terms of the sciences, these are often described in what, for example, Ryle calls

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[3] A. Kenny, "Cartesian Privacy" in _Wittgenstein, The Philosophical Investigations: A Collection of Critical Essays_, ed. G. Pitcher (New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Co., 1966), p. 361.

"counterpart idiom". He writes in explication of this:

> As the human body is a complex organized unit, so the human mind must be another complex organized unit though one made of a different sort of stuff and with a different sort of structure. Or, again, as the human body like any other parcel of matter, is a field of causes and effects, so the mind must be another field of causes and effects, though not (Heaven be praised) mechanical causes and effects.[4]

The source of such a representation of human beings is twofold. Firstly, an understandable desire to differentiate between man and inanimate nature might seem to require the positing of purely spiritual, incorporeal entities. "... one imagines thinking as the stream which must be flowing under the surface of these ... [auxiliary activities] if they are not ... to be mere mechanical procedures."[5] A misuse of our language results in false analogies, for, secondly, our language serves to bewitch us into imagining that, because no bodily action seems to suffice as a referent for a term such as 'willing' and because this term appears similar to one like 'seeing' or 'feeling', we think we can cast our glance inwards, thereby identifying the referent of this mental concept. What, Wittgenstein asks, is the prototype of our idea of acts of volition: the prototype is the experience of muscular effort.[6]

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[4] Ryle, The Concept of Mind, p. 20.

[5] Wittgenstein, Zettel, 107.

[6] Wittgenstein, Brown Book, p. 151.

At the heart of Descartes' philosophy lies a particular conception of what is uniquely human. In The Meditations he says that his essence must consist solely in the fact that he is a thinking thing. He says: "And although possibly (or rather certainly, as I shall say in a moment) I possess a body with which I am very intimately conjoined . . . ."[7] Disregarding any religious motives which may have prompted such a characterization, we find that Descartes' problematic description is at least partially the result of linguistic confusion. One of the main problems here is a simple case of incorrect analogizing. He has assumed that the words 'hand' and 'body' fall into the same logical category; that one could begin by supposing he had no hand, etc., and finally be able to conclude that he had no body, much as if one could work oneself up from having no nickels, dimes, etc., to conclude that he has no money.[8] But the analogy fails. Whereas it is conceivable that a man have no money, this relationship being purely accidental, it is not conceivable that he does not have a body. Thus, contra Descartes, this is not a contingent question and is something

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[7] R. Descartes, The Philosophical Works of Descartes, trans. E. S. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross. 2 Vols. (Cambridge University Press, 1972, Vol. 1), p. 190.

[8] J. Cook, "Human Beings," in Studies in the Philosophy of Wittgenstein, ed. P. Winch. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 124.

of which we can have no doubt. Our concepts are a web whose meanings are interrelated such that certain ties cannot be broken. One which can't be broken is that of trying to think of seeing, emotion, etc., going on independently of a body. Here there is not just uncertainty as to facts -- but as to meaning.[9] It is this redescription of a human being in terms of which one imagines it possible to skim off a mental side that Wittgenstein rejects. He wants to return to a more basic picture of a person, one in which the person is primitive and the starting point of any inquiry into mind.

As stated earlier, Descartes' philosophy of mind turns on his notion of privacy: the view that one can, by turning one's glance inwards, survey the contents of one's mind. For example, I alone am in the privileged position of knowing my mental activities directly. I can know myself, therefore, as no one else can. But the unfortunate implication of this privilege is skepticism as to the minds of others. The dualist is saved from the brink of solipsism only by an analogical argument which guarantees that other bodies are indeed persons like himself and not mere automatons. The picture of a mind, constantly aware of its own inner objects, and able to scrutinize these by a sort of inner vision might

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[9]P. Geach, "Could Sensuous Experiences Occur Apart from an Organism?", in Wittgenstein and the Problem of Other Minds, ed. H. Morick (New York: McGraw Hill, 1967), p. 207.

seem an attractive way of accounting for our epistemological claims to self-knowledge and concept-formation. A good example of this tendency is found in C. J. Ducasse: "What thought, desire, sensation and other mental states are like, each of us can observe directly by introspection."[10] Psychological concepts are, by this reasoning, simply abstracted by the so-called inner sense. The classic statement of this kind of abstractionism is to be found in Locke.

Such privileged access to the contents of one's own mind goes hand in hand with the belief that one's certainty about one's own thoughts and intentions is such that it cannot be mistaken. Only I can know what I wish for, if I am happy or that I intend a given action, though others are free to perhaps infer such things from my actions and statements. They may be mistaken for they may read my behaviour wrongly or because I have concealed the truth from them, but I cannot be so mistaken.

Now although it might appear that in order to make a judgement final and infallible, all that need be done is to use words such as "it seems to me now that ...", or an expression of equivalent meaning, it must be admitted that this resort is itself problematic. Wittgenstein deals with this claim for a privately grounded and guaranteed knowledge in the following way:

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[10] Cook, "Human Beings," p. 126.

> 'I know how the colour green looks to <u>me</u>' -- surely that makes sense -- Certainly: what use of the proposition -- are you thinking of? .... Imagine someone saying: 'But I know how tall I am!' and laying his hand on top of his head to prove it.[11]

In no way is it obvious just what such a qualifier accomplishes. In saying "it seems to me ..." just what is it that supposedly is certain? Is it the seeing, the seeming-to-see, or the seemingly-seen object? With these confusions admitted, it appears that one cannot fortify a claim by such an expedient, nor arrive at guarantees in this manner.[12]

Wittgenstein's arguments against the possibility of a private language are in this way crucial to his critique of the Cartesian mental/private equation.[13] Wittgenstein tries to show that the names of mental states and processes do not acquire their meaning by a private, ostensive definition; it is not by introspection that our mental activities become known to us, nor by inner sense that we abstract a concept of will. In the case of thinking, for example, Wittgenstein says:

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[11] Wittgenstein, <u>PI</u>, 278, 279.

[12] A. Tormey, "Access, Incorrigibility and Identity," in <u>Journal of Philosophy</u>, Vol. 70, No. 5, 1973, pp. 123-124.

[13] See, for example, Wittgenstein, <u>PI</u>, 261.

> . . . to get clear about the meaning of the word 'think' we watch ourselves while we think . . . . But this concept is not used like that. (It would be as if without knowing how to play chess, I were to try. . . and make out what 'mate' meant by close observation of the last move of some game . . . .)[14]

To deny that human beings state, describe and remember their intentions would be to deny very crucial human activities and this could not be further from Wittgenstein's mind. "Philosophy . . . can . . . only describe [the actual use of language] . . . . It leaves everything as it is."[15] What he does refuse, however, is to accept a very special account of just how it is that we arrive at such concepts. He is denying the role assigned to introspection in understanding mental activities. The use of introspection is also central to an abstractionist account of how we know what it is to think or will.

In abstractionist terminology, we would, for example, form a concept of intention by performing an act of introspection, trying, as it were, to catch ourselves in the act of willing. Then, after repeating this operation a sufficient number of times, presumably we recognize the object of our gaze as the will, or at least individual acts of volition.[16]

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[14] Ibid., 316.

[15] Ibid., 124.

[16] For a critical account of abstractionism, see P. Geach, Mental Acts (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957) E. G., pp. 21, 44.

The crucial flaw in this argument is not the reification of our willings; this is only a final stage in the argument which is misguided in its method. Wittgenstein refers to W. James here:

> . . . he [had] the idea that the 'self' consisted of 'peculiar motions in the head and between the head and the throat' . . . . James' introspection shewed, not the meaning of the word "self" (so far as it means something like "person". . .) nor any analysis of such a thing, but the state of a philosopher's attention when he says the word "self" to himself and tries to analyze its meaning . . . .[17]

On these same lines did James suggest that our word 'or' gets its meaning by the subject's performing abstraction upon the inner experiences of hesitation; in the same way did Price try to maintain that negation might be understood by isolating and recognizing our inner experiences of frustration.[18] What is necessary to realize here is that for Wittgenstein, whereas on occasion the use of these logical words is accompanied by such inner feelings, these may be entirely absent and yet the word will still have its meaning. Similarly, in a given case we might very well find that upon intending a given action we can find an accompanying inner sensation which we might call "steeling oneself", "strength of purpose", etc. But so too can we use these expressions when x intends something even if x has no accompanying inner

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[17] Wittgenstein, <u>PI</u>, 413.

[18] Geach, <u>Mental Acts</u>, pp. 23-24.

feeling at all. But, Wittgenstein would argue, what is important is to beware of focussing on one very particular occasion of intention which may be accompanied by an inner experience, and then creating a paradigm case of it, extending the particularities of this one case to cover all possible cases of intention. Often this tendency is precisely what we are guilty of.

Supposing that one does isolate some inner event as intending and after this identification is made, recognizes it again whenever it recurs. What point, we might ask, is there to the question of correctness?

> Why can't my right hand give my left hand money? . . . the further practical consequences would not be those of a gift . . . . [When the action was done], we shall ask "Well, and what of it?" And the same could be asked if a person had given himself a private definition of a word . . . .[19]

Assuming that we form our concepts through abstraction, what guarantees the correctness of our identification? There seems to be no sense to the question of what being right could mean; what if each time the subject looks inward he misidentifies his emotion of anxiety as the sensation of pain. How could he, or anybody else for that matter, straighten out the confusion?[20] In other words the descriptions 'correct' or

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[19] Wittgenstein, PI, 268; see also 258, 259.

[20] N. Malcolm, "Knowledge of Other Minds," in Essays in Philosophical Psychology, ed. D. Gustafson (New York: Doubleday, 1964), p. 373.

'incorrect' have no point; this being so, it becomes senseless to speak of inner identification at all. Ryle writes:

> When psychologists . . .[maintained] that introspection was the main source of empirical information about the workings of minds. . . [they] were embarrassed to discover that the empirical facts reported by one psychologist sometimes conflicted with those reported by another . . . . [Often they justly] reproached each other . . . with having professed to find by introspection just those mental phenomena which their preconceived theories had led them to expect . . . .[21]

What the introspectionist had done is an excellent example of what Wittgenstein would call confusing a question of meaning with one of discovery. He had mistaken the entire nature of his enquiry. We may imagine that once we have found those elusive events we would have successfully analyzed our concepts; however, none of these events seems to be able to fulfill the logical features we require of our mental concepts.

Thus we have seen that an introspectionist account (be it Cartesian or abstractionist) of the meaning of activities such as willing, rests primarily upon private inner identification. If I wish to know what it means to intend an action, I study as best I can what activities go on in my mind whilst I intend; when I proceed to ascribe these activities to others, it is because I observe the similarity of their behaviour to my own. Along these lines

[21] Ryle, Concept of Mind, pp. 158-159.

is it held that our concept of will accordingly is derived from careful inner observation of our mental objects. Since, however, so this argument runs, I cannot observe the mental events in the minds of others, I am compelled to infer that their similar outward behaviour implies a like mental life. Both the introspectionist picture and the argument from analogy are based on the assumption that our concepts are acquired by observation; in my own case, self-observation, immediate and incontrovertible; in the case of others, observation of their behaviour, though fallible, is unfortunately the only thing I have to go by. And thus:

> By what evidence do I know, or by what considerations am I led to believe, that there exist other sentient creatures; that the walking and speaking figures which I see and hear, have sensations and thoughts, or in other words possess, Minds.[22]

Mill goes on to answer his own question in the following way:

> . . . because they exhibit the acts and other outward signs . . . which in my own case I know by experience to be caused by feelings . . . .[23]

Not only is it worthwhile inquiring at what point in our lives such an argument must occur before I am justified in imagining that my friends really are people,[24] so too is the following objection applicable. Earlier we saw that for Wittgenstein the notion of inward, private identification is problematic

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[22] J. S. Mill, quoted by Malcolm, "Other Minds," p. 365.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Cook, "Human Beings," p. 140.

due to the question of a criterion for sameness which cannot be avoided. Because of the difficulty in specifying the nature of the mental act involved, for example, in willing, there is sometimes an attempt to resort to indefineables.

> while we know the general character of that to which we refer when we use the word "willing" this character is _sui generis_ and so incapable of being defined.

Fortunately for the above commentator, however, we can at least say what it is not: he continues:

> . . . In addition, plainly, willing is not resolving, not attending to a difficult object . . . nor for that matter attending to anything, nor, again, consenting to the reality of what is attended to . . . .[25]

Certainly we might hope for a more illuminating account of the nature of intention and, as will emerge from these discussions, Wittgenstein does in fact offer us one. Where we can find no means of establishing questions as to the duration or quality of the intention, how correct can it be to maintain that the existence of volitions can be empirically demonstrated. Unless the problem of inner identification is cleared up, that is, that we clarify the sense of "I had the same intention last year . . ." it will not do to apply the concept to others. As Wittgenstein expresses it, we would then be guilty of question-begging, presupposing the word 'same' which is in dispute.[26] For the argument from analogy

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[25] H. A. Prichard, "Acting, Willing, Desiring," in _The Nature of Human Action_, ed. M. Brand (Illinois: Scott Foresman, 1970), p. 43.

[26] Cook, "Human Beings," p. 127.

to stand it is therefore necessary to show that our mental concepts have meaning because of our inward discovery of them. Wittgenstein's attacks on private language are in this way central to his refutation of the argument from analogy.

Let us suppose that we are in need of an argument to convince us that other beings are truly possessed of minds, as we ourselves are. If we give any credence to the argument, we should be willing to go an additional step, Wittgenstein argues, and allow that perhaps stones have pain and machines may think.

> For, if I identify pain and thinking inwardly, if I do not learn these concepts, in learning a common language, then my concepts 'pain' and 'thinking' are not essentially related to living human beings.[27]

Some have taken the heroic course of accepting this unfortunate implication. If Mill's statement of the argument from analogy, quoted above, seems credible, perhaps the following will suffice to illustrate some of the difficulties involved. H. H. Price says:

> If the rustling of the leaves of an oak formed intelligible words conveying new information to me, and if gorse bushes made intelligible gestures, I should have evidence that the oak or gorse bush was animated by an intelligence like my own.[28]

We can only shake our heads and wonder what the man can

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[27] Ibid., p. 126. See also Wittgenstein, PI, 283.

[28] Quoted in Malcolm, "Other Minds," p. 369.

possibly mean. The supposition that a gorse bush possesses a will like our own sounds queer not because we have never met an articulate gorse bush, but because we never could. For what would our concepts of will and articulation mean, given such a state of affairs that they were ascribable to bushes and oaks? What would serve as a criterion that Price's oak tree understood the words issuing from it? What would understanding mean here? Wittgenstein says: "We only say of a human being and what is like one that it thinks."[29] In the case of a foreigner learning a new language, there is much that would illustrate to us that he has understood a given word. His behaviour (including his linguistic behaviour) will usually indicate whether his words are in fact words or mere babbling. But in the case of the oak tree, we cannot attach any meaning to the hypothesis that it understands, for the necessary connections with behaviour have been broken. Our mental concepts are made by and for ourselves; this is why Wittgenstein says we do not attribute understanding to the gramophone or the parrot.

Considerations such as these lead us to seek a clarification of our concept of will which does not depend upon inner identification in our own case, or upon analogical inference in the case of others. We can ask if it is so that we ordinarily learn a word first in respect to ourselves and

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[29] Wittgenstein, PI, 360.

only then in relation to others. Wittgenstein argues that concepts are formed against a vast backdrop of language so that the elaboration of our conceptual structure is one and the same with our linguistic development. Looked at in this way, that is, that the possibility of formulation in words is fundamental, concepts can be seen as more closely akin to capacities than to private entities.[30] And, further, he tries to show how an individual has a concept of the colour red if he can use the word in a number of situations and can respond to a number of requests. The elaboration of our colour-concepts would then involve wider connections, such as the description of a poker as red-hot, a fury as blind white, despair as utter blackness, etc. That is, involved in the sophisticated use of language is the ability to synthesize and create. Any inquiry into our conceptual structure then, is to be seen not as an empirical inquiry into the curiously ethereal nature of private entities, but rather as an inquiry into how it is possible that we do synthesize and create by means of our concepts.

Along these lines, for Wittgenstein, a concept of self would begin with the use of the word 'I',[31] and would become developed within a wide sphere of actions, reactions, desires and intentions, and the expression of these. It

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[30] See, for example, Wittgenstein, Brown Book, p. 117.

[31] See Geach, Mental Acts, p. 12.

should be no cause for surprise for us to see that a child uses other persons' names before his own, and his own name before being able to say "I".[32] The ability to identify, to confront oneself is surely a momentous one, and it is through language that this comes about. Because of this intricate weaving of language with our other activities, both in our self-discovery and our discoveries of others, it can be seen how crucial it is, Wittgenstein argues, in our conceptual examination, to always take into account these interconnexions. Such it is with action and intention, with thought and self. It is when one refuses to see the totality of structure that a concept becomes twisted out of shape. When we hypothesize a stone in pain or a machine able to think, we have ignored the connexions of pain and thought with those of crying, musing, etc. So too, when we wish to say that we become aware of friends as persons by a process of inference do we misrepresent the nature of that confrontation. "I am not of the _opinion_ that he has a soul"[33] -- and this because his being a person is not something we _can_ opine. It is not something open to doubt.

Our language seems to refer to bodily activities,

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[32] For an elaboration of this, see M. Ponty, "The Child's Relations With Others," trans. W. Cobb, in _The Primacy of Perception_, ed. J. Edie (Northwestern University Press, 1964), pp. 96-155.

[33] Wittgenstein, PI, p. 178

such that when we describe our reasonings or intentions, we might be tempted to think that these words signify specific episodes, or perhaps the tendencies for such episodes to occur. However, when we try to say exactly what bodily activity it is which our word refers to, or what mental state a word like 'intends' refers to, we find ourselves in a muddle. There may be many such activities and we are unable to decide upon only one, or when there is no such bodily activity there is a tendency to seek out a non-bodily referent. It is because of these temptations that Wittgenstein urges us to question the supposition that our mental-conduct verbs all have meaning because they name things, mental states or processes.[34] There are several traps we constantly fall into because we are inclined to look at language as something much simpler than it is. One primitive feature is that we look for an object when we see the sign of a language . . .[35] To discourage us from the tendency to make generalizations, we are advised to "look and see." Looking here of course does not mean looking into ourselves, but rather at the particular circumstances in which our words 'thinking', 'intending', etc. are used. When we focus inwards, searching there for some essential element, we isolate all sorts of images or feelings, thereby assimilating

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[34] Cf. Wittgenstein, _Zettel_, 487 and Wittgenstein, _PI_, 153, 308.

[35] See E. G., Wittgenstein, _PI_, 1.

these mental concepts to mental processes.[36]

At first glance, questions such as that which Wittgenstein's antagonist asks, "How do you raise your arm?" might lead us to imagine that willing is a special act, an inner activity of which our bodily actions are consequences. Because we are in danger of an infinite regress if we allow the possibility that our willings are themselves willed, we must, given this reasoning, maintain that our intentions are of a very special nature: that willing is not an act which we perform, but one which just happens, that the will is only a mover and is not, so to speak, itself moved.[37] Yet when, along these lines, it becomes necessary to describe the nature of such acts a resort is made to at least questionable accounts. Take for example the following appraisal:

> We thus find that we reach the heart of our inquiry into volition when we ask by what process it is that the thought of any given action comes to prevail stably in the mind, . . . . Effort of attention is thus the essential phenomenon of will.[38]

Yet even here are we forewarned against the possibility that such effort is muscular effort, rather it is "volitional effort pure and simple."[39] But such a characterization

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[36] See Wittgenstein, PI, p. 231.

[37] P. Strawson, "Review of Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations," in Wittgenstein, The Philosophical Investigations: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. G. Pitcher (New York: Doubleday, Anchor Books, 1966), p. 56.

[38] W. James, Psychology: Briefer Course (New York: Collier, 1962), pp. 446-447.

[39] Ibid.

rests on an examination only of very particular occasions of intention, occasions involving irresoluteness, doubt, distraction, or forgetfulness. Now although such may be the case some of the time, it is false to represent our intentions as always of this nature; whereas we do speak of intention when one, so to speak, nerves oneself to perform some action, so too do we speak of intention when there are no obstacles to action.

One of Wittgenstein's chief purposes in his later philosophy is to show how mental-conduct verbs, of which intending is but one, do not refer to episodic states. If we look more closely at arguments directed against the equation of willing with mental states, we shall see why it is that Wittgenstein argues against the view that immediacy is one of the two chief prerequisites of mental activity. If a consequence of Cartesian dualism were the typification of the mental as both private and immediate, it is central to Wittgenstein's philosophy that this equation be rejected. All such arguments are central to his notion of person.

It is not necessary, then, to believe that 'will' is the name of some mysterious entity to be guilty of "word superstition." Not only is the will not a thing, but neither are willings necessarily mental happenings. I say "necessarily" because, as Wittgenstein himself admits, on a particular occasion the word 'volition' might serve as a report or a description of some mental happening. However, the

essential point is that such need not be the case; that is, an inner event need not occur for us to justifiably speak of an action as intentional. Wittgenstein writes:

> Philosophy arises out of prejudices -- prejudices in favour of one form of description. Every philosophical problem contains one particular word or its equivalent, the word "must" or "cannot."[40]

At the base of Wittgenstein's inquiry and criticisms of the foregoing theories is the belief that often we mistake the conceptual nature of our investigation for an empirical one:

> We feel as if we had to _penetrate_ phenomena: our investigation, however, is directed not towards phenomena, but, . . . towards the '_possibilities_' of phenomena . . . .[41]

That is, instead of analyzing the relationships that our concepts intention, action and person bear to one another, as Wittgenstein attempts to do, we have the tendency to hunt out an empirical foundation for our use of these words. He is at pains to show how specific episodic states, particular images, or the presence of a special atmosphere, can never alone serve as the material for an investigation into the meaning of our language. Activities such as thought or intention, by their nature are directed to some object; in this way are our mental concepts purposeful. If this is accepted it becomes obvious that a given internal impression is not

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[40]Quoted in A. Ambrose, "Wittgenstein on Universals," in _Wittgenstein: The Man and His Philosophy_, ed. K. T. Fann, (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1967), p. 341.

[41]Wittgenstein, _PI_, 90.

relevant to our inquiry:

> . . . how can an internal impression, some sort of inner itch, . . . or tension, exhibit this property [of directedness]. How can it be directed at any thing at all?[42]

A visual image can not be criterial for the description of understanding because it is not at all necessary or sufficient that such an image accompany an act of understanding. To show how it is not necessary that, for example, a visual image occur, Wittgenstein shows how such images are replacable by looking at a colour-chart. Nor is such a private image sufficient, for there is no guarantee that it will be correctly applied. Wittgenstein here points out the various possible applications of a formula. Thus, even if it is the case that when x understands something, a given formula flits through his mind, in order for us to know what he means when he utters the formula, it is necessary for us to see what use he will make of it. And, this use is "extended in time."[43] To find out the meaning of a person's utterance, one of the things we most naturally do is to wait and see his later behaviour; thus his meaning unravels itself out in time.

But, perhaps it will be argued that the position of the observer is only secondary, that whereas for an outsider,

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[42] A. I. Melden, Free Action (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961), p. 110.

[43] Wittgenstein, PI, 138.

x's intention is made apparent in time, as far as x himself is concerned, he knows his intention full well with no need to wait for his future behaviour. Cannot this intention for him be identified as the immediate event of some inner act? About this though, firstly, it should be noted that any given inner act need not occur. Also we can question the validity of arguments to the effect that consciousness of one's mental states is entailed by and itself entails knowledge of them. That is, does it make sense to speak of knowing or not knowing this twinge of pain, this thunderclap?[44] In the case of a person saying he knows what he means, if he is unable to express this in further words or action, we might wonder about his meaning. As well, it would seem possible, then, that one could perform an endless series of meanings, i. e., "I mean what I mean, etc.", that there is an infinite number of "onion skins of consciousness embedding any mental state or process at all."[45]

For Wittgenstein, performing an action intentionally does not mean that two activities have occurred: one, the bodily behaviour accessible to public scrutiny; and two, an inner act of volition preceding the behaviour and only privately accessible. Expressed adverbially, as above, we might see that in describing an action as intentionally done,

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[44] See Ryle, The Concept of Mind, p. 155.

[45] Ibid., p. 156.

we are but further characterizing one activity, representing one action in a special light, putting it in a wider framework.[46]

Just what is Wittgenstein's aim in rejecting an interpretation in which mental-conduct words are said to name private objects? Some of his remarks might seem to imply that he rejects mental acts altogether. I would hold that nothing could be further from his mind; for to maintain that people never hide their pain, for example, would be quite simply counter to experience and would contradict all of Wittgenstein's own urgings to us to go to experience and conscientiously describe exactly what we see. He is not trying to explain away their existence but to delineate the meaning of mental terms. A flash of insight, for example, might have as much reality and relevance to our concept of understanding as does the observable exclamation "Eureka!" Here, as elsewhere, no empirical fact is being denied or disputed; nothing, except a way of expressing these facts, for there is a way of describing the meaning of these events which is misleading. That way is one that suggests that if we are to find the meaning of x's exclamation, we are to look underneath his verbal behaviour to a psychical counterpart which stands as a referent and is itself the meaning.

If these occurrences do not have meaning in this way,

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[46] Ibid., p. 132.

this is not to say that they are not real or do not have meaning in another way. It will become apparent that, contrary to much popular opinion, Wittgenstein does not argue away these realities in behaviouristic zeal. The meaning such occurrences have, to both the observer and the observed, is contextual. It is to be found in the pattern of events and behaviour both before and after. For something such as an exclamation to be seen as meaningful, it is essential that we look beyond the given moment at which it occurs. As it is with understanding, so too with hoping, believing and intending. What the individual momentarily experiences, whether it be an upsurge of emotion, a feeling of awe, or a sense of resolution, these acquire significance within a panorama of actions stretched out over time.

In this characterization, Wittgenstein's rejection of immediacy is predominant. His conception relates to a view within which language is seen as a purposeful human activity rather than as an entity. Because language is most predominately a social phenomenon, it becomes highly irrelevant if, when a given word is uttered, the same image pops up before different individuals' minds. These experiences owe their significance to their reactions and further actions. When two people fail to understand each other, it is not because they have not experienced identical episodic states, but for reasons which, usually, relate to a wide network of emotions, hopes, etc.

> What really ... has meaning, is not the image a word or sentence conjures up, but the action that it suggests, or commands .... Language is ... [simultaneously] a bridge and a barrier between men.[47]

This chapter has been an attempt to draw connexions between problems which together constitute the "Ghost in the Machine Myth." It has explored Wittgenstein's response to and criticism of the following web of ideas: private identification through the concept of introspection, immediacy, and the problems of dualism. It has been argued by some that Wittgenstein's critique of these ideas leaves him but one alternative, that is, to deny mental states altogether and embrace behaviourism. The next chapter will be an analysis of the role of behaviour. It will be argued that although behaviour is crucial to our concept of the willing person, this neither necessitates a denial of mental states nor a covert acceptance of behaviourism on the part of Wittgenstein.

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[47] A. Janik and S. Toulmin, Wittgenstein's Vienna, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973, pp. 127-128.

## CHAPTER III

## ON THE ROLE OF BEHAVIOUR

In the last chapter we saw how Wittgenstein repudiates appraisals of intended action which devolve upon introspectible inner events. That chapter, then, was the first part of an attempt to outline those concepts of action, intention, and person, which Wittgenstein's negative critique focuses on. We begin to see how a more positive picture of intended action might emerge by seeing what his rejection of privacy and immediacy constitutes.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: firstly, I shall attempt to show the way in which for Wittgenstein, an analysis of behaviour, both in language and in action, is imperative for an understanding of intention. We shall find certain similarities at the base of dualism and behaviourism, and see how these two alternatives are not our only ones. So this part of Chapter III will continue the elaboration of a negative critique; here though, we shall see the way in which Wittgenstein's unwillingness to find the mainspring of action in isolatable private entities does not, as a consequence, involve him in a rigidly behaviourist position. (To the extent that Wittgenstein explores behaviour as a key indice to our conception of the person, one might wish to call him a

"modified" behaviourist. But, of course, this would require a like characterization of novelists, dramatists, historians, etc., who describe their subjects by narrating their conversations, etc. The description then seems diluted to the point of uselessness). Out of a brief description of an extreme form of behaviourism -- stimulus-response theory -- will emerge the need we have of an irreducible concept of purpose in explaining action.

Secondly, since behaviour plays a crucial role in Wittgenstein's concept of person, the last part of this chapter will attempt to show how essential the role of language-behaviour (for instance in the specific locution "I intend to . . ." and the applicability of the question "Why?") is to our concept of intention. So that, after initially outlining what for Wittgenstein constitutes the intimate connexion between language and the rest of our behaviour, we shall see the nature of the relationship between language which is expressive of intention and action itself.

Once we have thus seen how vital it is to see language as part of human behaviour, i.e., as an activity, rather than representing it as an entity which merely and only reports and describes, we will be in a better position to see the nature of that terminology which, for Wittgenstein, is considered adequate to explain human action. This chapter then will point towards the general requirement that any

explanation of action must meet: for we shall find that such an account must be founded upon a concept of purpose. This will form the subject-matter for Chapter IV. Here we shall see that Wittgenstein does not reduce purpose to any behaviouristic "drive-states", etc. Ultimately, what allows Wittgenstein to speak of the person as essentially a willing subject, is his belief that action is describable in intentional, purposive terms.

In his attack on dualist positions, Wittgenstein is rejecting in the most general way a certain description of the nature of a human being. By redescribing what we call a person into mass or senseless body, and mind or mental states, the character of all our human concepts is distorted. Instead of seeing mental activities as having a necessary connexion with behaviour, they are ensconced within a mind as private objects whose expression in behaviour is largely a contingent matter.

> ... think of the sensations produced by physically shuddering: the words "it makes me shiver" are themselves such a shuddering reaction .... Now why should the wordless shudder be the ground of the verbal one?[1]

Against such a view, Wittgenstein's investigations lead him to a conception in which the basic entity is a living being, a person; and human behaviour becomes not incidental but integral to such an accouat. In such a context, Ryle speaks

[1]Wittgenstein, PI, 174.

of a dissipation of the hallowed contrast between mind and matter -- ". . . but dissipated not by either of the equally hallowed absorptions of Mind by Matter or of Matter by Mind."[2]

Realizing that more must be involved in an examination of our mental concepts than particular images or feelings, the dualist wants to assert purely mental acts in an "as yet unexplored medium."[3] But Wittgenstein rejects this hypothesis and so some have assumed rejects mental states entirely.[4] It is, however, the manner of expression, the implied analogy between physical object and inner experience, and the assimilation of two radically different types of concepts that Wittgenstein rejects. If it is assumed that the only alternative to dualism implies some sort of materialism, then Wittgenstein's apparent opposition to the "hallowed absorption of matter by mind" seems to imply a behaviourist position. But not only are these not mutually exhaustive, but in certain areas these are not even exclusive of one another. For the argument from analogy, which is a consequence of dualism in the problem of other minds, has the following in common with behaviourism:

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[2]Ryle, The Concept of Mind, p. 23.

[3]Wittgenstein, PI, 308.

[4]See D. Waismann, "The Existence of Mental States," in Dispositional Properties (Southern Illinois University Press, 1965), pp. 119-158.

> ... both rest on the assumption that we are forced to recognize descriptions (or observations) of bodily movements as being epistemologically basic in our knowledge of other persons .... It is just this assumption which Wittgenstein rejects.[5]

The manner in which Wittgenstein rejects this assumption is by opposing first and foremost any definition of a human being in dualistic terms. Dualism accounts, of which Cartesianism is one, begins by drawing a firm line between two sorts of stuff which together compose a human being. Thus Descartes' quote referred to earlier: "I have a body," expresses some curious possessive relationship between disparate entities.

Once such a divorce is made, language-games in which the human part of human being has special status, are pitted against language-games in which the human part is allegedly inessential, in cases where, for example, the being is quantitatively described in terms of height and weight. Now behaviourism, as we shall see, does reject one side of the Cartesian account, namely that in which the human being has a unique status in specifically mentalistic ways. However, behaviourism does not appear to negate the dualist account in full. While rejecting one part of it, it takes for granted the initial redescription of a person. That is, the possibility of separating specifically human attributes from typically bodily ones forms the foundation of dualism, and

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[5] Cook, "Human Beings," pp. 120-121.

this possibility is echoed by the behaviourist himself who sees human action as bodily movements. What Wittgenstein does is to reject this very possibility, the distinctly human becomes in his hands not mental states sundered from bodily expression, but the inseparable welding of these, such that it becomes nonsensical to speak of a person as "having a body" at all.[6]

In our discussion so far we have illustrated the nature of the dualist picture Wittgenstein hoped to dispel. In the case of one's knowledge of one's self, he rejects the twin notions of infallibility and privileged access (see Chapter II); for to mourn the fact that inner states are private is to mistake the logic of the concepts involved. It is as if one were to regret the fact that solitaire is played alone. Although it makes no sense to question x's knowledge of his pain, it makes as little sense to speak of his not knowing his pain. If Wittgenstein attacks introspection as the light by which we know our inner selves, and the argument from analogy as the basis of our knowledge of others, it is because both of these involve an objectionable description of a human being. This is not to say that we do not know other minds, but rather that we do not know others by observing bodily movements and by making

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[6] Ibid., p. 150. Cf. Wittgenstein, PI, 412, 421.

inferences from these.[7] Instead, what we observe is a human being expressing his intentions, desires, joys, etc.

Although we have pointed to similarities at the basis of dualism and behaviourism, it is necessary to look more closely at the behaviourist challenge. For, if to intend something does not mean that an inner act of volition occurs, perhaps, as the behaviourist would argue, it is that our concepts of intention and purpose are empty of meaning. Partly as a reaction to the subjectivities of introspectionism in psychology, we now find in that discipline an attempt to study only that which is considered verifiable. If there are such things as inner states, these are not open to observation; hence, the tendency is to examine only that which can be fruitfully examined. The object of empirical research, then, should be behaviour because only this is open to inspection. Certain variations of philosophical behaviourism go further than this and deny the reality or knowability of unobservable inner events, resulting in an identification of so-called "inner processes" with outward behaviour.[8]

If we consider, for a moment, stimulus-response theory, we find there the belief that in order for there

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[7]See, for example, Wittgenstein, On Certainty, 287.

[8]B. Gross, "Historical Introduction," in Analytic Philosophy (New York: Pegasus, 1970), p. 167.

to be a true science of human behaviour, free from the antequated notions of introspectionism, what we must do is rid ourselves of any notion of purpose in explanations of human behaviour. A notion such as "disposition to behaviour", because of its ambiguities, is rejected as "anthropomorphic and introspective."[9] Instead of dispositions, we find in the writings of stimulus-response theorists such as Hull, notions like "drive-state" or "need," which presumably refer to measurable psychological conditions. Similarly, on the response side of behaviour, we find a rejection of the concept of action. In short, we find in stimulus-response theory the "... wish to do away with all notions involving intentionality ... [the belief] that these notions are not genuine empirical concepts."[10]

The situation confronting the behaviourist is the following: appreciating that mental images, feelings, etc., are essentially impenetrable to us, that only a person's behaviour is observable, and finding that in most cases such outward behaviour provides sufficient data, the inner world becomes irrelevant. The alternative is to reject out of hand that these mental happenings are facts at all. When human action is characterized in such a way, the laws by which we might explain action are the laws which govern

[9] C. Taylor, The Explanation of Behaviour, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964, p. 113.

[10] Ibid., p. 112.

inanimate nature as well.

> Thus to classify behaviour as action is to rule out a certain type of account. It is to set the type of laws by which it can be explained . . . [e.g., If I say X hit me --] it is compatible with this claim that his behaviour be accounted for by some such law as 'he strikes whoever contradicts him'. But it could not be explained by some law to the effect that, e.g., whenever a light flashes his arm moves in this way. For in the former case(s) these are conditions of his behaviour because they are conditions of his intending . . . [to behave] in this way.[11]

Concepts such as will or purpose, accordingly, are reduced by the behaviourist to needs and drive-states, acceptable only insofar as they are measurable. To express ourselves in the vocabulary of purpose, on these lines, is to indulge in unnecessary obfuscation of a metaphysical nature.

Now because Wittgenstein resists attempts to define mental conduct verbs in dualist terminology, in terms of a special substance like the mind or the will, and as well refuses to identify meaning, thinking, intending, etc., with any given mental happening, he is taken for a behaviourist, rejecting all which is not quantifiable. It is assumed that his arguments against dualism leave him only with the alternative of a logical or philosophical behaviourism.[12]

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[11] Ibid., p. 35. (Emphasis mine).

[12] See C. S. Chihara and J. A. Fodor, "Operationalism and Ordinary Language: A Critique of Wittgenstein," in Wittgenstein. The Philosophical Investigations: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. G. Pitcher (New York: Doubleday, Anchor Books, 1966), pp. 384-385.

I shall urge, along with commentators such as Malcolm, that it is a "howler"[13] to accuse Wittgenstein of hostility to that which is not observable. Specifically, we shall see that along Wittgensteinian lines it is not only possible, but necessary to reintroduce a concept of purpose.

It has been said that, to Wittgenstein, conscious mental states are irrelevant to the proper use of expressions about such activities as understanding or meaning, that for him, even if at a given moment no such state is occurring, it can yet be legitimate to apply such expressions. For instance, D. Weismann argues about Wittgenstein . . . "he does not regard conscious states as being any part of human experience."[14] Now whereas Wittgenstein would indeed, for example, claim that a man may persist in carrying out some resolution without going through some preliminary act of nerving himself, it is certainly not the case that for him conscious states do not form a part of our experience. In this case, as in others, it may not be that a mental state stands as the criterion for our application of words such as 'resolution'; however, this is not to say that there are not inner events. For

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[13] N. Malcolm, "Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations," in Wittgenstein, The Philosophical Investigations: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. G. Pitcher (New York: Doubleday, Anchor Books, 1966), p. 94.

[14] D. Weismann, Dispositional Properties, p. 127.

example, in a particular case of understanding, Wittgenstein says, nothing need have gone on in you ". . . and yet you would be remarkable if . . . you never had anything to report about what went on in you."[15] We shall explore the concept of criteria more fully in a later context (Chapter V) but for the moment it is sufficient to look at mental states and see how these can not be the needed criteria. Now, plainly, they cannot be necessary because for example, understanding may take place without any flash of insight; an intentional action may not be preceded by any ritualistic concentration of attention. Nor are such feelings sufficient for our ascription of the terms 'understanding' and 'intention', for future behaviour may show the flash of insight to be inconsequential and the concentration of attention to be ineffectual. Weismann goes even further in his attack on Wittgenstein. He says:

> But if language is experience, and linguistic expressions are merely the utterances which are learned as responses to particular circumstances, there is no avoiding the claim that Wittgenstein is a straightforward example of a stimulus-response behaviourist.[16]

Yet even this is not the end of the matter, for on this view (i.e., Wittgenstein's) ". . . there is no difference in principle between the activities of people and those of

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[15] Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, 136.
Cf. Wittgenstein, *PI*, p. 187.

[16] Weismann, *Dispositional Properties*, p. 127.

sophisticated machines . . ."[17]

> . . . we may feel it's . . . wrong to say that [when no one special experience occurs] . . . all that happens may be that I hear or say the word. For that seems to be saying that part of the time we act as mere automatons. And the answer is that <u>in a sense we do and in a sense we don't</u>.[18]

Wittgenstein goes on to say how the whole environment of a person's saying something reveals to us whether he is speaking with understanding or as an automaton. It is the uniquely human nature of this environment which enables us to say "He is speaking like an automaton." Such accusations, as quoted above, represent a serious misunderstanding of Wittgenstein. Not only do they reflect a tendency to remove from their proper context certain of Wittgenstein's passages, but they distort, often to the point of contradiction, what Wittgenstein has written. I am not suggesting that this distortion is intentional, however, it does represent a fairly pervasive yet erroneous typification of Wittgenstein as a positivist. In the course of this paper we shall see how very mistaken this is.

On this very comparison between human beings and machines, Wittgenstein describes the sources of the misanalogy in this way: because we divide up our human conduct

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[17] Ibid., p. 131.

[18] Wittgenstein, <u>Brown Book</u>, p. 157. (Emphasis mine).

vocabulary into mental and bodily compartments, we think that it is possible to define their meaning apart from the public arena which is the mastery of language. We generalize from examples where we can solve a problem in our heads, to the possibility of so doing even if we had never had a language at all. James, for example, to show that thought is possible without speech, quotes from an experiment with a person who had once been a deaf mute. The individual claimed that in his youth -- even before he could speak -- he had thoughts about God and the world. We might ask, as Wittgenstein does, "What can he have meant?"[19] Being able, on occasion, to formulate our intentions without writing or speaking them, we might imagine that such expression is secondary and inessential to the actual intention. Having sundered our activities from their physical surroundings, the inner object of thought becomes the sole entity worth considering, and the possibility that a machine too can think, a matter of real concern. As Wittgenstein himself urges, it is only of what behaves like a human being that it makes sense to speak of pain, thought and intention. These are strictly human capacities, and it is by seeing human behaviour as an afterthought to what is truly human, that these capacities become empty notions.[20] That there is an essential connexion between

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[19] Wittgenstein, PI, 342.

[20] See, for example, Ibid., 283, 284.

thought and its expression, as there is between pain and pain-behaviour, does not necessitate an identification of these. Behaviourism, which involves such an identification, represents a serious simplifying of the nature of person. We must, from the start, acknowledge a certain complexity in human beings. Whereas hunger, for example, applies to a being which eats, once we admit this connexion we are not forced to identify hunger with eating. The meaning of the two is not identical: human beings are not only beings that eat when hungry, but beings which sometimes choose to fast, and diet.[21] In this way, meaning is not exhaustively defined when specific behavioural details are supplied. The same behavioural events may be given different interpretations.

Although the meaning of intention is not to be exclusively defined in terms of appropriate behaviour, there is certainly some relationship between these, and this relationship must be explored along lines which are neither dualistic nor behaviouristic. That is, behaviour must be viewed neither as a mere afterthought to some mental process of willing, nor as the sole factor to be considered in a discussion of intention.

To begin with, it is necessary to see that behaviour is not only physical but also linguistic. Language cannot

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[21] Cook, "Human Beings," p. 147.

be separated from behaviour, so close is the interweaving of language with our daily activities. To speak of a concept of warning, or promising, no less than that of letter-writing, requires behaviour that is expressly linguistic. To see in what way language forms a part of human behaviour, we must guard against the temptation to see language as an entity with one function -- that of reporting or describing. Language is more properly an activity, its nature inseparable from other social activities. To regard it as an entity is to imagine that language can be defined apart from its varied roles. Wittgenstein's later conception of language represents an attempt to give credit to all these diverse ways in which language operates.

> "So if a man has not learned a language, is he unable to have certain memories?" Of course -- he cannot have verbal memories . . . and so on. And memories, etc., in language, are not mere threadbare representations of the real experiences; for is what is linguistic not an experience?[22]

Regarding statements that appear to be descriptive of mental states, utterances such as "I intend" we must then keep in mind the diversity of our language -- be alive to the fact that reporting or describing is but one of a host of purposes our words may have. It is only if I am expressing a conclusion about my inner states that "I intend" is a description. And whereas at times I do reach conclusions about my own beliefs and intentions, and express them accordingly, more

[22]Wittgenstein, PI, 649.

often than not when I use the words "I intend", my purpose is not to report a mental occurrence to myself or to another, nor to describe any particular feeling of effort. If when I utter these words, nothing is being described, and if I am not thereby concluding anything about myself, what then is the purpose of my words? Wittgenstein's answer is that often these statements are not descriptions of states of mind, but simply "expressions of intention." Thus, when I say "I intend to X", sometimes this means that I have "searched my psyche" and have accepted certain intentions as ascribable to me while rejecting others, and am simply formulating all this in words. But usually this is not the meaning of the statement. Depending upon the nature of the particular occasion, this utterance may be spoken to a friend to whom I wish to reveal myself. It may be a public act of accepting responsibility, or an attempt to close some conversation, and even a spontaneous response such as a blush or a shrug might be. Wittgenstein describes the multitude of occasions wherein such utterances are forced from us, wrung from us as a cry might be.[23] In other words, to properly elucidate the meaning "I intend" has, we must examine the particular circumstances within which the statement is embedded.

What J. L. Austin referred to as "the descriptive

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[23] See, for example, Ibid., p. 189.

fallacy"[24] is symptomatic of this tendency to imagine that the meaning of any sentence lies in the object that is so described, to think that language always and only issues in assertion. In place of this, he argues, that a bulk of our statements are to be seen as "performative" in nature.[25] To say "I am sorry," for example, is not necessarily to describe anything presently going on in my mind, but to perform the act of apologizing. Unlike a factual assertion or report of a state of affairs which usually allows for immediate confirmation or disconfirmation, the above utterance admits of "verification" only in a stretched and very different sense of that word. For, whereas it might make sense to speak of a "false apology," or a "false avowal of intention," this depends not upon something occurring at the moment, but on events preceding and following the statement. In the case of observing a chemical reaction, an increase in information about the relationships between the chemicals, data about other experiments, are often quite extraneous to our present purposes. But in the case of performative utterances, because of their time-extended nature, as much information as to the history of the incident, the future actions and statements of the individual, the interconnexions between the

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[24]See, for example, J. Hartnack, in Wittgenstein and Modern Philosophy, trans. M. Cranston (London: Methuen, 1965), p. 88.

[25]Ibid., p. 115.

present avowal and the personality of the speaker, are all crucial to an enquiry into the meaning of the utterance. For this reason, the more detailed our knowledge of the person's background and past responses to like situations, the more accurate will be our understanding of his words. If then, it is ever meaningful to speak of verifying such a statement, it is so not because of any private mental event which may or may not have occurred at the moment, but within the context of the very public world of statements, actions, responses, and reasons.

However, this distinction between descriptive and performative utterances is not a hard and fast one. The statement, "I have pain," for example, is called by Wittgenstein an actual part of the pain-behaviour itself, and not a description of it.[26] However, Wittgenstein does allow that a man may say "I have pain" as a description in certain circumstances.[27] Although it is not surprising or even contradictory that Wittgenstein maintains this, an attendant difficulty is that these two levels can now be seen to be not entirely distinct. The announcement of an intention may be a deliberate attempt at self-revelation or an unrehearsed almost accidental response. It may, however, also express a conclusion. And only in this latter case can it properly be asked

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[26] Wittgenstein, PI, 244.

[27] Ibid., p. 187.

of the speaker what basis he has for the announcement.[28] In particular cases it is often easily apparent whether the utterance is descriptive or not. If X screams in agony, we do not wonder if his scream is a description; it is part of the pain itself. In a doctor's office, if a patient quietly lists the symptoms of his current illness, we do not take this as part of the pain but as a description of it. However, Wittgenstein appears to offer us no simple criterion for contrasting these levels of expression. In the Tractatus, the distinction between propositions that model facts and so present experience, and propositions which "show" the meaning of experience (e.g., poetry) is the method by which he separates the meaningful, in terms of value, from the factual.[29] With the apparent collapse at least of the absoluteness of this dichotomy in his later work, it seems necessary to look elsewhere for our distinguishing criteria. Later we shall see in what way it is necessary to consider convention and culture, what Wittgenstein describes as the "forms of life" within which our language, and so our distinctions, have meaning.

The meaning of the locution "My intention is to . . ." is to be found, then, not in accompanying mental phenomena. This is to say not only that linguistic expression is an essential part of most forms of human conduct, but also that

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[28] Strawson, "Review of Wittgenstein," p. 56.

[29] Cf. Wittgenstein, Tractatus, 6.4, 6.41, 6.42, 6.421, 6.522.

it becomes emptied of meaning when sundered from such conduct. Just as the statement "I doubt" can be a mere ritual devoid of content given certain behavior of the speaker, similarly, to say "I intend to . . ." loses its meaning if it is never followed by appropriate behaviour. Of course a person may very well be prevented from carrying out some intention; some obstacle might intervene, or he might simply change his mind. In these cases we would not say that the original statement of intention had thus lost its meaning. It is not necessary that an action take place for the linguistic expression of intention to have meaning. However, if there has been no external obstacle, and if the speaker professes no change of mind, yet still the avowal is not followed by action, we might seriously wonder if the individual properly understands the meaning of the words "I intend to . . ." If this utterance is often made and the action never ensues, we would be tempted to say that what the individual means can more properly be expressed by the words "I wish . . ." than "I intend . . ." Wittgenstein writes: "When I raise my arm, I have not wished it might go up. The voluntary action excludes this wish . . . ."[30] In this way, we can see how the failure to execute a professed intention necessarily cannot be the normal state of affairs, but only the exception. We might explain the individual's inactivity in a number of

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[30] Wittgenstein, PI, 616.

ways; we might, for example, say that he has no will-power. But when confronted by a person who consistently fails to supply the requisite behaviour, we would probably and with justification, wonder whether his problem might not be a conceptual one, a confusion about the meaning and the logic of intention. As in other cases, the language-game of intention ". . . only works when a certain agreement prevails."[31] But, as we shall see further on (see Chapter V) this agreement is not an agreement of opinion; it is a prerequisite of agreement or disagreement in opinion.[32] Again we come up against the idea of forms of life.

Thus the expression of intention has a close connexion with the possibility of action and this illustrates not only the extent to which language and behaviour interconnect, but also part of the logic of the terms 'intention' and 'action'. This will be elaborated upon in the following chapter; for the moment, it is sufficient for our purposes to see in what way the fact that we do express our intentions in language is significant. For example, in the case where I describe an intention I had years earlier but had never fulfilled, I am relating to the listener no less socially than linguistically. I am inviting the listener into my life by revealing myself to him. So that what Wittgenstein again and again implores us to see

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[31]Wittgenstein, Zettel, 430.

[32]Cf. Wittgenstein, PI, 241, 242.

is that our avowals in language are not the inessential clothing, or the outer casing, for example, of my revelation; to reveal myself to the other means, in this instance to describe my past intention -- the revelation takes place in and through language and could not have occurred without it.

What has to be rejected is the view that one's ideas are first formulated in one's mind, and that then one need only find the appropriate words to express them.[33] A good example of this tendency is to be found in Carroll's Alice in Wonderland. Humpty Dumpty tells us: "Take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves."[34] But language for Wittgenstein is not a mere vehicle through which our preformulated concepts are conveyed. We could not have these ideas at all if we did not have as well the form of their description.[35] In a similar way can it be seen that Kant emphasizes the linguistic (or logical) forms which structure our knowledge, that our sense experiences do not just "happen" to us independently of a comprehensive structure or framework.[36]

When we refer to the possibility of expressing our

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[33] For example, Wittgenstein, Blue Book, p. 41.

[34] Quoted in G. Pitcher, "Wittgenstein, Nonsense and Lewis Carroll," in Wittgenstein, The Man and His Philosophy, ed. K. T. Fann (New York: Dell, 1967), p. 328.

[35] See G. E. M. Anscombe, Intention (Oxford: Blackwell, 1963), p. 84 [47].

[36] Cf. Janik and Toulmin, Vienna, pp. 120, 121.

intentions, we are not speaking of some capacity which human beings accidentally possess. The natural expression of intention is in words and in action. "The possibility [of such expression] . . . is a condition of their existence."[37] Anscombe goes to the heart of the matter when she says that ". . . the description of something as a human action could not occur prior to the question 'Why'";[38] that is, our characterization of behaviour as specifically human is dependent upon our possessing the form of description "intentional action." So many of our descriptions are purposive in nature, and being so are of expressly human activities; writing a letter for instance, is a willful activity, is typical of so much of our behaviour in that there can be no counterpart in a non-human context. Here the reference to physical activity, marking strokes on paper, is not an unimportant accompaniment but a necessary precondition for the description to apply. Of course, even when the requisite marks are made, the description 'she wrote' need not apply; for if a child were to write the letter I, this would not count as the word 'I' unless the child was already a language user. In other words, a whole host of conditions needs to be fulfilled before the behaviour becomes classifiable as an intentional action. We saw in the last chapter how these

[37] Cf. S. Hampshire, Thought and Action (New York: Viking Press, 1967), p. 99.

[38] Anscombe, Intention, p. 83 [46].

conditions are not to be sought in the private arena of the mind. The preconditions of the child's scribbles counting as writing are not the specific mental episodes prior to the physical activity, but the child's place in world, that is, his capacities in general, and in particular, his linguistic skills. In such a way does the history of the incident give it its meaning -- both past and future behaviour determine whether the scrawl is just that, or if rather in writing I, the child is expressing a concept of self.

For Wittgenstein then, the nature and significance of language can be seen only if, when considering it, we do so within the various social contexts which are its home. The language of description is very different from the language of poetry and supplies a different need. And thought and feeling do not only find their expression in language, but as well their completeness; expression serves us not only as an instrument of conveyance, but as a means of making our beliefs more definite, our ideas and intentions clearer and more distinct. The conceptual and linguistic worlds are interwoven with all our activities and in action find their natural expression:

> A man to whom we attribute a rich inner life of belief and disbelief, of unexpressed doubt and self-questioning, must be a man of great powers of self-restraint, to whom the inhibition of action is natural. He has cut away the substance of human routines and chosen to live with their shadow . . . he does not weep, but he feels sad . . . . This habit of inhibition . . . is the process of civilisation. Manners create

the inner life of the mind by placing barriers in front of the immediate and natural expressions of thought and feeling.[39]

In the course of this chapter, I have attempted to show that Wittgenstein's rejection of private states as criteria for willing need not bind him within the constraints of an inflexible behaviourist position. It has been illustrated how misguided is the behaviouristic redefinition of a human being, and how such a position usually is complemented by the removal or severe reduction of the concept of purpose. Finally, I have tried to point attention to the intimate relationship which, for Wittgenstein, language bears to the rest of our behaviour. We have seen, in this respect, the closeness of the connexion between the expression of intention and the possibility of action. It is now important for us to see the way in which human action can be significantly explained; that is, in the following chapter, we shall consider the nature of that terminology adequate to describe intended action. Specifically, we shall see that, for Wittgenstein, to speak of an "explanation" of conduct does not mean that we are required to supply a causal account; rather the old, familiar explanation of conduct in terms of motive and purpose is called for here.

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[39] Hampshire, Thought and Action, pp. 164-165.

CHAPTER IV

## ON THE EXPLANATION OF ACTION

In trying to delineate the boundaries of our concept of intention, it is necessary to elucidate what we mean by the term 'action'. This is necessary for two reasons: firstly, on a general level, understanding a concept always involves the clarification of its surrounding concepts; secondly, and more specifically, we shall see that there is a logically necessary relationship between intention and action. In this chapter then, I shall begin with an attempt to differentiate between action and happening. After this, I shall briefly look at certain causal theories of action and present specific objections to them. Once we have seen how it is that human action cannot properly be elucidated within the framework of causal terminology, we will more easily be able to define the meaning of intention, its connexion with the concept of action, and what this tells us about the nature of a human being. "Like everything metaphysical the harmony between thought and reality is to be found in the grammar of the language."[1]

Wittgenstein's method of clarifying the meaning of

[1] Wittgenstein, Zettel, 55.

mental concepts is to explore their "grammar." The grammar involves the way in which these concepts are used -- so that an analysis of a psychological term must be consistent with the place it occupies within actual linguistic practice. A description of intention, then, must adequately mirror our applications of the term. On countless occasions we do distinguish between action which is intended and that which is not, and this fact must be admitted and accounted for in an analysis. By keeping our eyes open to the actual language-games within which the word 'intention' has a place, we are not trying to accumulate statistical data, such as the number of occasions of X type in which the word is employed. We want to understand something that is already in plain view. Remembrances and notes about how we might have used the word are not assembled for purposes of experimentation or prediction of future behaviour. In this sense, Wittgenstein's investigation is not scientific at all, rather it is conceptual, that is, an analysis of what we would count as an intention, what conditions must be met before we can apply the vocabulary of intention and purpose.

> . . . what such answers are meant to provide us with is not more knowledge of matters of fact, but the knowledge of what would count as various "matters of fact." Is this empirical knowledge? Is it a priori? It is knowledge of what Wittgenstein . . . means by grammar -- the knowledge Kant calls "transcendental."[2]

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[2] S. Cavell, "The Availability of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy," in Wittgenstein, The Philosophical Investigations: A Collection of Critical Essays (New York: Doubleday, Anchor Books, 1966), p. 175.

Ultimately for Wittgenstein, it is the willing subject, as we have seen, that is transcendental.

Now to begin with, if it were the case that human action could be defined in strictly scientific terms, that is, if our understanding of behaviour was adequately expressible in the language of physics, biology and chemistry, there would then be no room for any notion of purpose. If this were so, then it could be said that action was identical in meaning to event. To see how there is not an equivalence of meaning between events (happenings -- bodily or mental) and acts, we might observe the way in which the following two descriptions differ: to see that the statement (I) "I move my hand" is not equivalent in meaning to (2) "My hand moves", we note that the second statement would adequately describe a case in which someone had lifted my arm, or perhaps, an occasion in which it uncontrollably jerked in some nervous spasm. But in the case where there is no external manipulating force, nor any internal cause, we would not employ the locution "My hand moves". In normal cases of an individual raising his hand, the statement "My hand moved" on his part, would serve only to produce confusion. However, it is noteworthy that in the case of inanimate beings, there is precisely such an equivalence of meaning. Taylor describes it in the following way: In the case of a tree, the descriptions that (a) The leaves have dropped off, and (b) The tree has shed its leaves, are interchangeably used to report the

same fact. Because a tree is strictly a passive being, ". . . there are no circumstances where it could truly be said that although the leaves had dropped off, the tree had not in fact shed its leaves."[3] This is so because we are here describing identical events with different words. It is precisely and uniquely in the case of human behaviour that there is not an identity between descriptions in which the person is passive, e.g., "His hand jerked uncontrollably," and descriptions in which the person is seen as agent, e.g., "He jerked his hand to accomplish X."

It should be readily apparent that not all physiological occurrences signify that an action has occurred. We would thus find incorrect the statement: "I beat my heart." We never dispute whether physiological occurrences such as this constitute actions. Although, in a sense, we can speak of ourselves as "causing our heart beat to increase," the way in which this is accomplished is quite different from the way in which I raise my arm. To accomplish the former, we need do some other activity, such as exercising, which we might have found to affect our pulse. But to accomplish the latter, I need not perform any other activity. That is, I do not perform some prior act of attending to certain specific muscles which themselves effect the arm movement.

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[3] R. Taylor, "Simple Action and Volition," in The Nature of Human Action, ed. M. Brand (Illinois: Scott, Foresman, 1970), p. 54.

This is what is meant by saying that I do not raise my arm _by_ moving certain muscles; rather, I move certain muscles _in_ moving my arm.[4]

> . . . I bring about the act of willing to swim by jumping into the water. Doubtless, I was trying to say: I can't will willing; . . . "Willing" is not the name of an action; and so not the name of any voluntary action either . . . .[5]
>
> . . . I do not use any instrument to bring the movement about . . . .[6]

In the chain of events passing between the decision to raise my arm and the actual movement, there are many such physiological happenings which, properly speaking, are not things which I do. Such occurrences might very well be relevant to the physical question -- "How does my arm move?"; but certainly, as Ryle expresses it, not all questions are physical questions.[7] The strictly physiological fact that the motion of X muscles causes the motion of the arm need not contradict the fact that it is by raising my arm that I move certain muscles.

> No supposition seems to me more natural than that there is no process in the brain correlated

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[4] A. I. Melden, "Physiological Happenings and Bodily Actions," in _The Nature of Human Action_, ed. M. Brand (Illinois: Scott, Foresman, 1970), p. 26.

[5] Wittgenstein, _PI_, 613.

[6] Ibid., 614.

[7] Ryle, _The Concept of Mind_, p. 74.

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> with associating or with thinking; so that it would be impossible to read of thought-processes from brain-processes.[8]

Our problem essentially centres on an ambiguity in the meaning of the word 'explanation'; for, as we shall see below, not all explanation need be causal.

> Supposing it was found that all our judgements proceeded from our brain ... [e.g.,] One could show that this sequence of notes produces this particular ... reaction .... The question is whether this is the sort of explanation we should like to have when we are puzzled about aesthetic impressions ... [this puzzlement] can be cured only by peculiar kinds of comparisons.[9]

To Wittgenstein, there was a sharp line of demarcation between the spheres of fact and will, and it is this latter sphere which for him is not explicable in scientific terms. Similarly, we find Ryle saying:

> ... during the three centuries of the epoch of natural science the logical categories in terms of which the concepts of mental powers ... have been coordinated have been wrongly selected.[10]

Whereas, as Wittgenstein admits, a person can be transparent to another, it is crucial to see at the same time that a human being can also be a complete enigma to another.[11] It

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[8]Wittgenstein, Zettel, 608.

[9]Wittgenstein, "Lectures on Aesthetics," p. 20. (Emphasis mine).

[10]Ryle, The Concept of Mind, p. 10.

[11]Wittgenstein, PI, 223.

is this indeterminacy, this inflexibility to strict and quantifiable laws, that puts human action out of the reach of the sciences.

In the attempt to differentiate between bodily happenings and action, such psychological factors as the so-called "acts of volition" are sometimes advanced to provide a criterion of distinction. Or, using slightly different terminology, an account might define action as a bodily event plus a motive.[12] In this context, motive seems to bear the relation of part to whole; upon its admixture, a bodily happening is transformed to the status of action. But such an account is doomed to failure in that the cases examined are far too restricted to be a fair cross-section of our many and diverse actions. Of course we at times do act with a motive and deliberate methodically how we are to proceed. But so too do we often act with no apparent motive. In cases of purely impulsive behaviour it is often the case that we afterwards deny any reason for our behaviour at all. In such circumstances, Anscombe says, the question "Why?" is refused application.[13] So broad is the category of behaviour we apply the name 'action' to that it is no wonder that any method of defining action in terms of a psychological

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[12] See discussion in A. I. Melden, "Action Equals Bodily Movement _Plus_ Motive," in _The Nature of Human Action_, ed. M. Brand (Illinois: Scott, Foresman, 1970), pp. 27-31.

[13] Anscombe, _Intention_, p. 11.

ingredient, or any other, would not satisfactorily apply to all cases. The same problem recurs if we try to distinguish action in goal-terms. This is so because goal directed behaviour and goal-less behaviour are not exclusive classifications.[14] A given action can simultaneously bear alternative descriptions. Our friend John Doe may be spoken of as (a) sawing a plank, (b) sawing oak, (c) making a squeaky noise with a saw, (d) making sawdust, etc.[15] He may be aware of his action under any one of these characterizations and not under any other. An action, then, may be intentional under one description and not intentional under another. In the same way, it is difficult to draw any definite or final line between mere behaviour and action. In between the two types of activity classifiable as obviously mere behaviour and responsible action, there is a wide range of cases which fall on either borderline and resist such classification. Once we refuse to acknowledge different descriptions or differing interpretations of a piece of behaviour, we have sacrificed accuracy for simplicity. For example, on the concept of seeing, Wittgenstein writes:

> The concept of 'seeing' makes a tangled impression. Well, it is tangled . . . . -- But this just is what is called "description of what is seen." There is not one genuine proper case of such description -- the rest . . . [to be] swept aside as rubbish.[16]

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[14]C. Taylor, Behaviour, p. 28.

[15]Anscombe, Intention, p. 11.

[16]Wittgenstein, PI, p. 200.

This does not imply that we can never make such a distinction: we can and do so, often, and with justification. Often the circumstances supply us with sufficient information, however sometimes they do not, and in such cases it is imperative that we not twist the case to fit a preconceived theory.

I shall now briefly consider a theory of action which, for the sake of convenience, I shall call the "volitional theory." Whether this appears in its traditional garb of an action being caused by an antecedent act of volition, or in the characterization of action as behaviour caused by an agent, the theory is problematic at its core.[17] The volitional theory is an attempt to explain willing, that is, intended human behaviour, in causal terms. The specifics of the argument may differ, but the basis is constant, entrenched within the empiricist tradition. The premises, put simply, are that human action can be satisfactorily described within causal terminology, that our information about both our own actions and those of others comes to us in discrete isolatable units, and that our concepts are one and all reducible to our own private experiences.[18] These

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[17] For brief descriptions of the theory of agency, see R. Taylor, "Simple Action and Volition," p. 56; and cf. J. Shaffer, Philosophy of Mind (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1968), p. 85.

[18] C. Taylor, Behaviour, p. 11.

premises complement each other, and, I shall argue, together serve to misconstrue the nature of the concepts action and intention.

The initial question to ask is how to distinguish between happenings in the physical world and human actions, i.e., doings. Now, so the volitional theory runs, whereas happenings in the physical world fit into a causal chain, such behaviour of ours which warrants the name 'action' must owe its initiation to causes within the individual himself. Yet even this will not suffice; for the act of raising my arm to be an intended one, it must have as its cause an event which is itself uncaused, otherwise the chain will have no end. When we say "X is raising his arm," our scientific acumen forces us to admit that the actual movement is caused by muscular contractions, and that by nerve impulses, and that in turn, by changes in the states of the brain. This much being admitted, to pinpoint what the agent does, it is tempting to look beyond this chain of physical events and argue that, being unable to control these various events, what the individual <u>really</u> does is something non-physical, i.e., mental.

Thus it is these non-physical events, occurring in the mind or the soul, the so-called "acts of will" or "volitions" which have bodily changes as their result, and, together with these changes, constitute action which is intended. Look for a moment at Mill's statement of the case:

> Now what is an action? Not one thing, but a series of two things, the state of mind called a volition, followed by an effect. The volition or intention to produce the effect is one thing, the effect produced in consequence of the intention is another thing; the two together constitute the action . . . .[19]

Not only must a volition accompany the bodily behaviour but it must be instrumental in bringing it about, that is, an intention must have an actual role in effecting bodily change for the term 'action' to be applicable. This is the way in which we are confronted not with one object to consider, but instead with two events, namely, the volition which is a mental occurrence, and the requisite bodily movement.

The supposition here, that our endeavour is a scientific one answerable in the language of the sciences, is a particular instance of the belief that to request an explanation of conduct is to ask an empirical question about the causation of behaviour.[20] In a discussion on our speculation about the cause of certain aesthetic discomfort, Wittgenstein points to three different senses our use of the word 'cause' can have. He says:

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[19] Quoted by M. Brand in his Introduction to The Nature of Human Action, ed. M. Brand (Illinois: Scott, Foresman, 1970), p. 9.

[20] G. Ryle, "The Will," in The Nature of Human Action, ed. M. Brand (Illinois: Scott, Foresman, 1970), p. 65.

> We have here a kind of discomfort which you may call 'directed' .... Saying 'I know the cause' brings in mind the case of statistics or tracing a mechanism .... There is a 'Why?' to aesthetic discomfort not a 'cause' to it.[21]

The volitionist's manner of expressing the issue represents, alongside certain other prejudices, the confusion of expressions such as "Some actions are intended" with "Some beverages are alcoholic."

To see how this choice of terminology is inadequate for our purposes, we would do well to consider the following objections which the volitional theory seems to be open to. Let us use Wittgenstein's example of an individual raising his arm as paradigmatic of cases where supposedly the bodily activity is preceded by an interior mental act. The volitionist would argue that the difference between the two descriptions: "My arm is rising" and "I am raising my arm" lies in the nature of their production; both times the event is caused, only in the latter case the cause is some sort of internal act of volition. It is presupposed, as Melden puts it "... that one causes one's arm to rise by moving muscles just as one causes the door to unlock by turning the key,"[22] that in some way we control the interior happening which results in the bodily event.

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[21] Wittgenstein, "Lectures on Aesthetics," p. 14.

[22] Melden, "Happenings and Actions," p. 24.

But this account is fraught with difficulties; no one, surely, would want to argue that only one who has mastered human physiology can raise his arm, and one would have to admit this if it were true that we needed to know which muscles to move in order to raise our arm.[23] This difficulty is the direct result of describing the action of my arm-raising as the effect of another event. As well, there is the practical impossibility of describing the arm-raising volition in terms other than just that. There are no predicates applicable, such as their frequency, duration, etc. "No one says such things as that at 10 A. M. he was occupied in willing this or that . . . ."[24] One might try to buttress the argument by urging that by merely thinking of some bodily event, we can be said to be willing it and that this is adequate enough characterization of the interior event. However, our language-games of thinking and those of intending are quite different, we do not use these words interchangeably. Because it might be possible to define consciousness in terms of a person's thoughts, beliefs, etc., and his intentions (Speculative and Practical Reason) is not to say that these concepts are either identical or causally linked. Finally, and complicating the volitionist account still further, is the problem involved

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[23] Cf. Wittgenstein, Brown Book, pp. 153-154.

[24] Ryle, "The Will," p. 63.

in trying to account for the cause of the volition itself. Is it to be some second act of will, the volition, for example, to will the raising of one's arm? If so, we are unfortunately caught up in a never-ending chain of prior volitions.[25]

To say that there are good reasons to reject a causal terminology as an adequate tool to describe action does not preclude, however, that in specific cases we might find that something warranting the name 'action' is, in fact, mentally caused. That is, it is not necessary to make a hard and fast distinction, typifying as non-action all behaviour which is caused. This is so because the variety of types of human behaviour is vast and complex. Once we have looked at a few such cases we shall see how important the distinction is between mental causes and intentions.

While allowing that mental causes are possible for some actions, Anscombe, for example, refers to the need to distinguish between such causes and motives. As an example of an action preceded by a mental cause, she offers the following: "The martial music excites me, that is why I walk up and down."[26] But not in all, or even in most cases, can the request for an explanation of behaviour be satisfied

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[25] Ibid., pp. 64, 65.

[26] G. E. M. Anscombe, "Intention," in *Essays in Philosophical Psychology*, ed. D. Gustafson (New York: Doubleday, 1964), p. [illegible].

in such a way. Whereas we might respond to the question "Why did you . . .?" in a locution such as "Out of a desire that . . . ." ". . . it is not in all cases that 'I did x in order to . . .' can be backed up by 'I felt a desire that . . .'"[27] As Wittgenstein expresses it -- we do one thing and later interpret it[28] -- so that the statement's being in the past tense does not necessarily indicate a reference to a past event. This tendency is noteworthy because in the case where in answer to the question "Why . . .?" a person replies, "I felt a desire that . . .", this statement is one of intention, and not an example of mental causation. It could with no loss of meaning, be rephrased as "In order to . . ." and here the reference to the future prevents us from the temptation to look for a mental event in the past.

What this points to is a distinction between explanations in terms of reasons and those in terms of causes. And whereas in an individual case, it might be difficult to decide upon the applicability and validity of one type of explanation over another, in the vast majority of cases, the circumstances themselves dictate what type of answer we are looking for. If, in response to the question, "Why did you kill your mother?" an individual replies "Because I saw

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[27] Ibid., p. 32.

[28] Cf. Wittgenstein, Lectures on Aesthetics, p. 22.

red . . ." and does not mean this figuratively, he is offering us not a reason for his behaviour, but a mental cause which presumably has determined it. This answer may or may not be acceptable. Most often it would suggest to us that there had been no rationality exercised, and at such points might we bring in considerations of temporary insanity. If, on the other hand, he replies "Because I wanted revenge," he is supplying us with a reason for his action; he is giving an explanation which makes his behaviour intelligible to us.

If in answer to the question "Why . . .?", the individual replies, "For no particular reason", he is refusing the propriety of any explanation.[29] Often this response will indicate that the action is voluntary as opposed to intentional. Thus in the case where I ask my friend, "Why are you wearing your red dress?", the answer, "For no special reason", is a valid one, and would usually satisfy me. In certain cases, however, this same reply would not be acceptable. For example, to use Anscombe's illustration, a man methodically arranges all his books on his rooftop and when asked "Why?", he replies, "For no particular reason." This answer, under these circumstances, would not be satisfactory to too many of us.

Now, the volitional theory represents motives as mental events which are distinct from the bodily occurrences

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[29] Anscombe, *Intention*, p. 89 [49].

which they precede. It is because of this supposed logical independence that permits a causal relationship to apply.[30] The formula "action equals bodily movement plus motive" cannot accomplish all it is designed for because it is too strong. The presence of a motive is not sufficient to account for certain actions because X may have a motive but restrain himself; nor is it necessary, for X may act without any motive.[31] The problem with any such formula is not that there is no difference between a bodily occurrence which is merely a happening, as is a reflex kick, but because it is wrongly imagined that the difference consists in there being an event entirely distinct from the display of physical activity. Whereas it is plainly apparent that there is a vast qualitative difference between my arm rising and my action of raising my arm, it is not necessary for this difference to consist in a reference to or denotation of some distinguishable mental event which occasions the action. The causal theorist, of course, has to affirm that two events do take place in order to be able to draw the causal link.

An example of the difficulties involved in such a line of reasoning are reflected by Pritchard. He says, of volitions, that whereas they must function as causes, still they do not seem distinct from the physical movements they

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[30] Melden, "Bodily Movement Plus Motive," p. [illegible].

[31] Ibid.

precede. Further, their description seems to be in terms of these very physical movements.[32] That is, in attempting to define what it is that we mean by a volition, we are confined to a characterization such as: It is a mental event which causes an action. There is an inherent circularity in the argument for a volition, because once we ask for a characterization of this volition, we can only say that it is that prior mental event which causes the action. Similarly with our concept of expectation, Wittgenstein writes:

> It seems as if the expectation and the fact satisfying the expectation fitted together somehow . . . . Here one thinks . . . of the fitting of a solid into a corresponding hollow. But when one wants to describe these [i.e., the former,] two one sees that, . . . a *single* description holds for both . . . .[33]

It is this lack of information conveyed in the alleged explanation that leads, Melden, for example, to argue that the argument is itself vacuous and, being vacuous, the whole appeal to causes is a sham.[34]

These problems should warn us of some basic confusion in the theory. Such confusion turns on the basic presupposition that when one is requested to explain human behaviour, one is thereby required to provide a Humean causal explanation.

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[32] E.g., see Melden, *Free Action*, p. [illegible].

[33] Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, [illegible].

[34] [illegible]

In fact, there is another, fundamentally different type of explanation at our disposal: the "familiar explanation of conduct in terms of motives."[35] Wittgenstein's account of this latter type of explanation is that it operates within such language-games as disclosure and confession, explaining the action by giving us a heightened understanding of the individual.[36] In such language-games where a given action is related to past and possible actions, these link-ups make us better equipped to understand the action because it is then placed in a framework within which we can see that it has significance, and what significance as well.

> Although it may look like a motive must be what produces or brings about the choice, . . . rather -- it interprets the action.[37]

The less an action is described as mere response and the more it is described in and through its connexions with the beliefs and plans of the agent, the more apt are we to employ the description 'reason'.[38] Now, this is not a clear-cut distinction, and we might expect that occasionally we will have difficulty in applying it; however, this does not mean that in all cases such a distinction would have no point.[39]

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[35] Melden, *Free Action*, p. 90.

[36] Cf. Wittgenstein, [illegible]

[37] [illegible], p. [illegible]; and cf. Wittgenstein, [illegible], p. [illegible].

[38] [illegible]

Practically, it is precisely the determination of the applicability of the term 'reasonable' which allows us to assign responsibility in a legal and moral sense.

The possibility of accepting responsibility or of assigning responsibility to another is an important and frequent enough phenomenon that it be explicable within any account of action. Now if our conduct were entirely describable as mere events whose occurrence was subject to the laws of causation and association, then our appraisal of such thoughts and actions in ethical terms would be thoroughly misguided.

> "To purpose to do something is a special inner process". -- But what sort of process -- even if you could dream one up -- could satisfy our requirements about purpose?[40]

If desiring, for example, is

> . . . [characterised] as an internal happening in the mechanism of the mind or body, its connexion with anything worthwhile becomes wholly fortuitous. It is futile to try to explain conduct through the causal efficacy of desire -- all that can explain is further happenings, not actions performed by agents.[41]

Actions, or doings, are entirely different from happenings or events, and alone are fit subjects of inquiry from a conceptual point of view. The attempt to divide human action into components, bodily behaviour and mental states,

we are forced to see the meaning of intention in terms of the relation of part and whole and so distort the meaning of the term 'agent' as well. A motive is a motive for some action. In another context Wittgenstein says:

> ... Suppose it were asked "Do I know what I long for before I get it?" If I have learned to talk, then I do know.[42]

There is not a contingent but a necessary relationship between these terms. Because of this

> ... a motive, far from being a factor which when conjoined with any bodily movement thereby constitutes an action, actually presupposes the very concept of an action itself.[43]

A precondition of the volitional theory, and as well, any theory which attempts to remove the category of purpose by reducing it to causality, is the supposed viability of describing motive and behaviour atomistically. This involves the presupposition that" ... it not be a condition for identification of either term that it be linked to the other term ...."[44] It is this assumed possibility of separate characterisation which allows for a causal connexion to hold; were it necessary for volitions, etc., to be described with respect to their connexion with other concepts in order to be meaningful, the contingency characteristic would be nullified.

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[42] Wittgenstein, [illegible]

[43] [illegible]

[44] [illegible]

And we have seen how the moment we ask for an identification of the cause, we find that this can only be done in terms of the behaviour which was meant to be seen as the effect.

> Physiological occurrences are blind -- they can be described without reference to anything else. As drives, endeavours, etc., no such logical divorce is possible.[45]

Far from himself being a stimulus-response behaviourist, as some have argued, seeing human behaviour always within the framework of cause and effect, Wittgenstein rejects the very possibility of any such account of behaviour by requiring that our action concepts be internally related.[46] His own remarks are set radically apart from the tendency we have been discussing to see the relation between intention and action in a contingent, hence external way. Wittgenstein writes:

> But it is clear that ethics has nothing to do with punishment and reward. So this question about the consequences of an action must be unimportant. At least these consequences cannot be events . . . There must be a kind of ethical reward and of ethical punishment, but these must be involved in the action itself.[47]

Our psychological terms behave in a complex manner and this logical behaviour cannot be described by any formula as simplistic as "Action = Bodily Movement + Motive", nor by any [illegible] as the reflex-arc. This latter

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[illegible]

does not explain human behaviour at all; instead it reports
simple physiological events. Looking at our language here
points us in the right direction, for we can see how happen-
ings, such as X's leg jerking in response to some stimulus,
can be circumscribed within the structure of the reflex-arc,
independently of any concept of purpose. On the other hand,
when dealing with a man's efforts, emotions and aspirations,
we are no longer in the area of events at all, but in the
sphere of human behaviour, where questions of the person's
whys and wherefores are immediately relevant. The
phenomenon of an individual's hoping, for example, can only
be satisfactorily dealt with within the web of the person's
emotions, the object hoped for, his reasons in doing so, his
temperament, etc., all of which would be irrelevant in the
case of a happening or an event.

Our everyday use of the term 'action' then, already
contains within it the notion of directedness.[48] Goal-
directed activity is often characterized by some end-
condition. However, much of our behaviour to which we might
wish to apply the term 'directed' does not explicitly have
any such end-condition. Dancing, for example, is not neces-
sarily describable in terms of such an end-condition. In
such cases . . . [illegible] . . . is not some
[illegible] the [illegible] of the behaviour of

the required type . . . ."[49] To say that "X has signalled a turn" only if the two conditions of (a) his raising his arm and (b) Y has seen X raise his arm, misrepresents the action of signalling. It does so within condition (b). Regardless of whether or not anybody on the road has seen X's arm movement, he has in fact signalled his turn. Nor is the raising of his arm a distinguishable event from his signalling. The statement, "He signalled by raising his arm", does not mean that our driver has done two things, but one.[50] The role of the arm-raising movement to the action of signalling is not secondary, subsidiary to the driver's intention to signal. Wittgenstein says: "Willing, if it is not to be a sort of wishing, must be the action itself."[51] That is, we need an account of action which does not ". . . put something else in the place of what we do, [or] . . . come between us and our bodily movements."[52] Instead of attempting a definition of intending in causal terms, that is, resorting to such antecedents as volitions, or in terms of end-conditions which are external to the action itself, we should examine the connexions intrinsic to the notions of action and intention. It

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[49] Ibid.

[50] Melden, Free Action, p. 20.

[51] Wittgenstein, PI, 615.

[52] G. N. A. Vesey, "Volition," in Essays in Philosophical Psychology, ed. Gustafson (New York: Doubleday, 1964), p. 54.

is fortuitous whether the requisite behaviour has been successful; whereas what is necessary is that the requisite behaviour be requisite at all. Our concepts of intention and action warrant elucidation on this latter, non-contingent level.

## CHAPTER V

## TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF THE WILLING SUBJECT

We have seen so far that for Wittgenstein our criteria for the use of 'intention' are not private mental accompaniments and, further, that behaviour is central to an understanding of 'will'. As well, our discussion in the fourth chapter attempted to show the kind of terminology adequate to describe human action in general.

In this chapter I shall show that the later Wittgenstein does indeed offer us a positive account of the nature of person, an account which is contextualist. There is a radical change in Wittgenstein's conception of the subject or self: in his later writings there is a steady stream of criticism against mentalistic elements which were at least implicit in his early work. He directs a sustained attack on ostensive definition as the means by which our language is linked to the world. He thus criticises introspectionism as a method of acquiring self-knowledge and appears to drop the idea of a pure will or transcendental subject. The contextualism Wittgenstein describes is an alternative not only to mentalism, but to behaviourism as well. We find, especially in the <u>Philosophical</u>

*Investigations*, an intensive analysis of our mental or psychological concepts, and this analysis is explicitly non-reductivistic. The picture of the willing subject which emerges thus avoids the pitfalls of these two extremes.

In the course of this chapter I shall offer an outline of those concepts which together serve as a groundwork for intention. For the later Wittgenstein, the meaning of the word 'intention', like the meaning of all words, is in great part revealed in its use. And use, being application within various language-games, is governed by communal criteria and rules. These, in turn, are grounded in conventions and the broader forms of life which persons share. The terms 'criteria', 'rules', 'training', 'use' and 'forms of life' then, for Wittgenstein, all serve to fill out the picture of the conditions necessary for us to speak of a willing subject. These concepts do not connect with each other in a simple linear fashion; rather they overlap and criss-cross in a complex manner.

The genesis of Wittgenstein's contextualism, I think, is largely the result of the radical change in his understanding of the way language operates. Wittgenstein came to see that picturing is only one of a host of functions that our language performs. And, most importantly, he came to regard language itself as a form of behaviour. So to properly see the meaning of an expression of belief or intention necessitates seeing it within the context of

all the other actions involved. Terms such as 'belief', 'understanding' and 'will', only have meaning when their consequences are understood -- and consequences work themselves out in the course of time. We thus can make sense of expressions of belief and intention only by an examination of the past statements and actions of the individual.

To understand the meaning of the concept of subject, or person, requires seeing the dual manner in which a person confronts the world. A person's consciousness can be described in terms of his thoughts, beliefs, intentions and hopes. By a detailed examination of psychological concepts such as understanding, learning, thinking, believing on the one hand, and intending, willing and wishing on the other hand, Wittgenstein is able to give meaning to the otherwise nebulous idea of a subject. The self, or person, appears to be, for Wittgenstein, a function of knowing and willing in the sense that only once we are able to ascribe all sorts of activities to it, does the concept of subject have any meaning. These activities take place against the backdrop of a host of conventions, which are themselves rooted in the forms of life of the society.

At this point then, it is most [illegible]ant to note that the two broad classifications of the subject as knower and the subject as agent, are parallel in that the meaning of each particular instance of thinking or intending is due to the actions involved. Wittgenstein writes:

> [To mentally review ways and means, x] ... must already have some in stock. Thinking gives x the possibility of perfecting his methods ... [a man] 'thinks' when ... he learns in a particular way.[1]

To learn or to believe something, no less than to intend to do something always requires some technique of application. Expressions of belief and intention are at least in part constituted by our many institutions. That is, our concept of subject or person must faithfully reflect the facts of our shared training and common expectations. Use or function is thus, for Wittgenstein, of crucial importance: without appropriate conduct our psychological concepts are empty -- Wittgenstein calls them idle rituals.

We learn how to use the words 'think', and 'intend' in specific circumstances, circumstances which, however, we do not learn to describe.[2] It is only therefore by surveying a multiplicity of language-games, that we can see the different methods of application of these terms. That is, language is no longer seen only as picturing or mirroring the world, so Wittgenstein must now show what it does besides picturing and also how it does this.

In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein writes: "Language did not emerge from some kind of ratiocination."[3] Language

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[1] Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, 104-105.

[2] Ibid., 114.

[3] Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, 475.

issues from something more basic than reasoning: it issues from the forms of life that language-users share. He writes, in the <u>Investigations</u>:

> ... And if things were quite different from what they actually are -- if there were for instance no characteristic expression of ... fear, of joy; if rule became exception and exception rule, ... this would make our normal language-games lose their point.[4]

For instance, in a discussion of the nature of pain-talk, Wittgenstein says that the words 'presupposition' and 'assumption' most often here have no place. For "... doesn't a presupposition imply a doubt?"[5] And there may be no place for doubt in a given language game. "I can be as certain of someone else's sensations as of any fact."[6] At another point he writes: "Just try -- in a real case -- to doubt someone else's fear or pain."[7]

Against philosophic attempts to supply justification for our response to another, to argue, for example, that our compassion is evoked <u>because</u> we assume that there is pain behind the pain-behaviour, Wittgenstein says that what we should say is "This language-game is played."[8] That is, our

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[4] Wittgenstein, <u>PI</u>, 142.

[5] Ibid., p. 180.

[6] Ibid., p. 224.

[7] Ibid., 303.

[8] Ibid., 654.

reactions to others are often not products of thought about which it is appropriate to apply the words 'argue', 'imagine', and 'suppose'. "What has to be accepted, the given is ... forms of life."[9] If X doubts whether another's screams are pain-behaviour, it is not his reasoning which is faulty; but certainly in certain situations, his doubts are symptomatic of something lacking in his emotional make-up. His doubts are an abnormal response at a level far deeper than of illogicality.

Wittgenstein writes: "My attitude to him is to a soul ... I am not of the opinion that he has a soul."[10] Reactions to the joys and sufferings of another are really beyond the scope of reason in that they are not the product of speculative thought. Wittgenstein refers to the tendency to care for another's pain as a "primitive reaction." And by primitive he says that he means that this kind of behaviour is "prelinguistic"; "... that it is the prototype of a way of thinking and not the result of thought ...."[11] This is not to say that we never question another's expressions of intention or displays of emotion; however, we have seen that to argue that our confrontation with other human beings

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[9] Ibid., p. 226.

[10] Ibid., p. 178.

[11] Wittgenstein, Zettel, [illegible]

consists in observing their bodily movements which (fortunately) we might assume to be accompanied by a rich inner life is to severely distort the nature of human confrontation. We learn to read human behaviour within various contexts, contexts which we might later tend to forget or ignore.

Traditionally, the way of accounting for the nature of self-knowledge was by means of some sort of private mechanism. Here, we find self-knowledge, or self-consciousness to be describable in terms, for example, of linguistic skills which are, of course, open to public scrutiny. As such skills are developed, so too is our self-awareness. Thus it is not only that we enable others to better understand ourselves by learning to articulate our emotions, thoughts and intentions, but it is through such articulation that we come to know ourselves. The following should help to elucidate Wittgenstein's meaning:

> 'I am trying to control my anger' -- [is a] sophisticated form of speech [which represents] a type of self-consciousness that develops only as the forms of language develop.[12]

Looked at in this way, we see how the statement is itself an action; it is specific behaviour made possible because of language. In terms of conceptualization it represents my awareness of what I feel as anger. For most of us, then, an

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[12] [illegible], Thought and Action, p. [illegible]

our proficiency in using language increases, so too does our ability to conceptualize and, in the process, to understand ourselves.

Wittgenstein argues that because language is fundamentally a public instrument, its use is governed by public criteria. Having an idea of self then, must bear upon the actual use of that word. Our concepts are thus inextricably interwoven with the customs and institutions of the society which we are a part of. The word 'death' for example, Wittgenstein writes, is "... a public instrument, which has a whole technique of usage."[13] At another point he says that concepts are like painting styles: they cannot be chosen at random.[14]

It is the various applications of the word 'I' that supplies it with meaning. When this is not appreciated and, for example, an attempt is made to account for the meaning of 'I' by private criteria, the significance of the concept is severely distorted. The distortion consists in trying to give an inner process the consequences which meaning and intending have. But no process can have the consequences of meaning.[15] Wittgenstein's arguments against private

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[13] Wittgenstein, "Lectures on Religious Belief," in L. Wittgenstein, Lectures and Conversations, ed. C. Barrett, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972, pp. [illegible].

[14] Wittgenstein, Z, p. 230.

[15] Ibid., p. [illegible].

language are thus in part directed against the possibility of defining the nature of the willing subject psychologically. The use of 'I' in soliloquies is to be seen as derivative from its use in communication with others. In soliloquy, the use of 'I' is superfluous -- to use Wittgenstein's expression it is an idle ritual -- it <u>does</u> nothing, performs no function.[16] This is not to say that the concept of self is an empty one; rather, it emphasizes the social foundation of our concepts.

For Wittgenstein, the logic of the word 'meaning' is very closely related to that of 'criterion'. If we wish, then to clarify the meaning of 'intention', a way of going about this might be to explore the nature of the criteria involved in its use. Put briefly, Wittgenstein rejects characterizations in which the criteria for applying the description 'intended', are private sensations and/or mental images. Accordingly, he attacks the idea that criteria are momentary. "An 'inner process' stands in need of outward criteria."[17] Wittgenstein writes:

> ... What does it mean to say 'What is happening now has significance', or 'has deep significance'. What is a deep feeling? Could someone have a

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[illegible]

feeling or ardent love ... for ... one second -- no matter what preceded or followed this second ....?18

Against this he wishes to show (a) the behavioural nature of our criteria, (b) their time-extendedness and (c) their contextual environment which ultimately reaches bedrock in our "forms of life".

Now, we make predictions and inferences about others every day of our lives. In this sense the future behaviour of another justifies not only our present characterization, but also the method by which we arrive at all such characterisations. Having criteria to determine another's graciousness, intelligence, and resoluteness, etc., must mean that in most cases the individual's actions and statements are acceptable indices. What would it mean to argue, to the contrary, that behaviour can always be doubted as a genuine expression of the experience or capacity in question?

> ... if someone always had endless doubts about the genuineness of expressions of pain, it would mean that he was not using any criterion of another's being in pain. It would mean that he did not accept anything as an expression of pain. So what could it mean to say that he even had the concept of ... pain?19

However, when we consider, not others, but ourselves, the need for such criteria of application seems, in most cases, unnecessary, if not nonsensical. That is, to know [illegible] I truly understand a [illegible], I can look at [illegible]

to various tests I supply him with. But surely I need not test myself in these ways. It appears as though I use no criteria in attributing understanding to myself, but that I am reporting some mental occurrence when I say "Now I understand" or "It is my firm intention to ...."

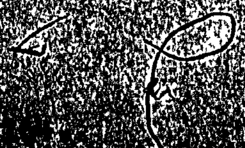
Our words seem to denote some intangible yet quite necessary occurrence, which is the "real" understanding or the "real" intention. "In order to find the real artichoke, we divested it of its leaves."[20] Wittgenstein's handling of an emotion such as grief illustrates one of the central themes running through the length of the Investigations and one which is applicable in our present context: that

> ... certain words which seem to denote something momentary and fleeting -- usually, a feeling or thought or sensation -- actually signify something quite different -- perhaps a disposition or ability, or at least a longer-range pattern of events.[21]

In the Zettel, Wittgenstein writes,

> But now it is said, we can't be certain when a child really begins to hope, for hope is an inner process. What nonsense! ... [illegible] bit by bit daily life becomes such that there is a place for hope in it.[22]

We do not compare our hopes with the hopes of others



[illegible]

in the same way as we might compare experiences. Similarly, we do not compare thoughts in the way we compare experiences. For Wittgenstein then, hoping and thinking cannot be concepts of experience.[23] Although some brain process might therefore be symptomatic that the child hopes for X, the criteria for the child's hope are all he says and does.[24] The criteria symptom distinction is, as Wittgenstein realizes, a problematic one: he recognizes that the two cannot everywhere be sharply differentiated. Yet Wittgenstein insists that there is a vast qualitative difference between them. Criteria display a logical form -- their nature is a question of definition.

The criteria of X knowing the meaning of intention, having a concept of will, would be all that he says and does. If, for example, X is in the habit of declaring on his birthday: "This year I intend to learn how to swim", and whereas there are no obstacles which seem to prevail, he never even makes any attempt to do this, we can legitimately question the meaning he is giving to the word 'intend'. In such circumstances, a more accurate statement for him to make might be "I wish I could swim". Unlike willing, wishing carries

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23 [illegible] Wittgenstein, [illegible] p. 14[illegible]

24 [illegible]

with it no binding relation to acting, or to reality for that matter. Wittgenstein writes: "When I raise my arm, I have <u>not</u> wished it might go up: the voluntary action excludes this wish."[25] X might, for example, express a wish to live forever and not have his grasp of reality questioned; if, however, he solemnly expresses his resolute intention to live forever we would quite likely react in a different way.

But to see how even in such a case our criteria are contextual we find that if we were to examine different possible circumstances within which an individual might express an intention to live forever, we find that we cannot in all cases apply this as a criterion for madness. Many situations can come to light; the individual might be on stage, the words part of a play; or we may find that he has recently learned the English language: perhaps he means that by his poetry he hopes to achieve immortality. He might mean that he will, in some sense, "live on" in his poems. And he might in fact be mad, might believe that he will never die. It is because of this tremendous variety of circumstance, Wittgenstein argues, that no one criterion could ever be <u>the</u> criterion for the application of such descriptions. What determines whether a given criterion can be used are these contextual surroundings. Moreover, if we ask whether, for Wittgenstein, propositions describing

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[25] Wittgenstein, PI, 616.

certain criteria for intention logically imply the proposition "He intends", the answer would have to be that there is no logical entailment here. Wittgenstein writes:

> ... we must be on our guard against thinking that there is some <u>totality</u> of conditions corresponding to the nature of each case (e.g. for a person's walking) so that, as it were, he <u>could</u> <u>not</u> <u>but</u> walk if they were all fulfilled.[26]

And further on he describes the way in which a change in the contextual surroundings alters the whole sense of an action:

> A coronation is the picture of pomp and dignity. Cut one minute of this proceeding out of its surroundings: the crown is being placed on the head of the king ... -- But in different surroundings gold is the cheapest of metals, its gleam is thought vulgar .... A crown is a parody of a respectable hat. And so on.[27]

Similarly, there are countless and diverse situations within which an individual might express his intention, attempt to describe what his intentions had been, or try to determine another's intention. Not only do time and place alter the details of situation, but they can entirely change the surroundings, and so too the actions involved. Conversation flows on, the application and interpretation of words, and only in its course do words have their meaning.[28] The linguistic expression is significant because, for example, it can act as a bridge between two persons and can make

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[26] Ibid., 183.

[27] Ibid., [illegible]

[28] Wittgenstein, Zettel, 135.

intelligible something previously unclear. If the present moment has significance this is due only to the meaning bestowed upon it by the participants. The future and the past enter into our appraisals -- i.e., X's later behaviour and his personal history -- and guide us in understanding his expression of intention. Thus, our criteria for whether X intends to play chess or not, for Wittgenstein, must be extended in time.

Our criteria for intention are variable, flexible and time-extended. Now sometimes we will have occasion to doubt whether we have adequate information, and will have to resort to conjecture. But when we do not hesitate and our appraisal is an enlightened one, what this fundamentally depends upon is the entire backdrop of training that constitutes our knowledge of the other person and of people in general. The more understanding an individual has of human nature in the broadest sense will determine the extent of his insight into both his own and others' intentions.

The capacity for speech is integral to Wittgenstein's account of a human being and enters into many of his discussions of criteria. And, of course, speech is not to be considered in reductivist fashion, that is, as movements of larynx, throat, mouth, etc., and sound. This may be an adequate appraisal of what goes on when the parrot utters words. But it is only in a special deviant sense that we describe the parrot's word-stringing as "talking."

> Our criterion for someone's saying something to himself is what he tells us and the rest of his behaviour ... [if he] *can* speak. And we do not say it of a parrot; nor of a gramophone ....[29]

Our criteria are specifically human criteria applicable only to human phenomena. This means that the examples of behaviour Wittgenstein considers could never be attributed to parrots, gramophones, etc. The question "Can a machine think?" arises out of precisely this confusion, out of our tendency to ignore human prerequisites, the implications of language and society. Wittgenstein writes: "We say a dog is afraid his master will beat him; but not, he is afraid his master will beat him tomorrow. Why not?"[30] And the answer must be that the criteria for the use of the word 'tomorrow' cannot apply here. 'Fear' like 'hope' refers to phenomena of human life.[31] As Wittgenstein says: "a smiling mouth *smiles* only in a human face."[32]

I have argued that in Wittgenstein's view, our criteria for intended action cannot be private or immediate, that to adequately describe an action, emphasis must be placed on the behavioural surroundings, on the entire history and future behaviour of the individual. We will now

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[29] Wittgenstein, *PI*, 344.

[30] Ibid., 650.

[31] Ibid., 583; cf. *PI*, 360.

[32] Ibid., 583.

attempt to show the manner in which, on Wittgensteinian lines, the concept of criterion is connected to the following: 'rule', 'training' and 'use'. Once we are able to "map out" the geography of these terms we will have characterized the viewpoint from which Wittgenstein understands human behaviour, as essentially macroscopic in nature. Wittgenstein writes:

> An intention is embedded in its situation in human customs and institutions. If the technique of the game of chess did not exist, I could not intend to play a game of chess.[33]

Obeying a rule is distinct from merely acting according to a rule. Without such a distinction there would be no difference between the intentional action of checkmating performed by an accomplished chess-player, and the game movements randomly done by a child. The child, who knows nothing of the game, cannot be obeying any of its rules; his movements are by chance in accord with those rules. His arbitrary shifting of pieces on the board cannot constitute castling even if his bodily behaviour is identical to that of an expert player.

In what way are we to understand what Wittgenstein means by going by a rule? How do rules determine our action? What constitutes correct application of a rule? All such questions are relevant to the sense of the term. Wittgenstein

[33] Ibid., 337.

admits that in a given rule the words themselves are merely symbols and being symbols are dead or inert. Seeing this lifelessness in the words, we are tempted to imagine that only something psychical, the "intention behind the rule", is what determines its use.

> ... the expression "The rule meant him to ..." makes it appear that this rule, as it was meant, <u>foreshadowed</u> all the transitions .... But the assumption of a shadow of a transition does not get us any further, because it does not bridge the gulf between it and the real transition. If the mere words ... could not anticipate a future transition, no more could any mental act accompanying these words.[34]

Lapsing into mentalistic vocabulary here, as elsewhere, is futile. Wittgenstein argues that what infuses the expression with meaning is the use to which it is put. A rule can be variously interpreted; it is, however, possible to speak of correct and incorrect application, and this possibility is due to the fact that within a given context (language-game) such an interpretation is customarily used. Its regular use then becomes the determining factor and we shall soon see how this involves custom and convention.

Now, we might ask two very different sorts of questions; firstly, the causal question of <u>how</u> a rule leads to action; and, secondly, the conceptual question of what it <u>means</u> to 'go by a rule'. We shall see, in distinguishing between these two questions, in what perspective

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[34] Wittgenstein, <u>Brown Book</u>, pp. 142-143.

Wittgenstein's complementary concepts training and use are to be placed. Finally, this will give us a comprehensive framework in which to place intended action.

Wittgenstein answers his antagonist in the following way, ending with a question, which will form the basis of our further inquiry. First is the antagonist's statement:

> "But it is just the queer thing about intention, about the mental process, that the existence of a custom, of a technique, is not necessary to it, ... e.g., it is imaginable that two people should play chess in a world in which otherwise no games existed; and ... begin a game of chess and then be interrupted."
>
> But isn't chess defined by its rules? And how are these ... present in the mind of the person who is intending to play chess?[35]

If we look at the causal side of the question and ask in what way it can be said that a rule determines action, we find that the cause consists just in the training or (as Wittgenstein at times implies) possibly even in a natural propensity. This latter notion is at least problematic but will not be considered here. Now in the game of chess, it is indeed true that making an appropriate move is often an example of a learned response to specific training: this is especially true in the opening plays. On the other hand, it might be objected, other circumstances cannot similarly dictate a response for the simple reason that a given play may occur but once in the individual's whole history of

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[35] Wittgenstein, PI, 205.

chess-playing. And this objection is fair as far as it goes; however, it seems that one can go even further. For the fear one might feel, that, once it is admitted that we do in fact act according to such rules, then any discussion of man's freedom in action is either precluded or at best curtailed, is a groundless fear. Whereas the rules of chess are necessary for there to be a game at all, they are alone insufficient for an adequate appraisal of any game. This is so because the tactical principles one learns, develops and applies with relative skill depend upon the rules of the game but are not reducible to them.

This seems to indicate that, for Wittgenstein, the appeal to rules cannot serve as a final explanation for language. In support of this interpretation, we find that Wittgenstein writes:

> How should we have to imagine a complete list of rules for the employment of a word? -- What do we mean by a complete list of rules for the employment of a piece in chess? Couldn't we always construct doubtful cases, in which the normal list of rules does not decide? Think e.g. of such a question as: how to determine who moved last, if a doubt is raised about the reliability of the players' memories?[36]

How are we to understand then, the nature of the connexion between an expression of intention (e.g. "Let's play chess") and that which is intended (e.g. a game of chess)? For chess seems to be the game it is because of its rules;

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[36]Wittgenstein, [illegible]

that is, it seems definable strictly in terms of such rules. Wittgenstein says that the connexion between our expression of intention and that which is intended lies not only in a list of rules, but also in the teaching and day-to-day playing of the game.[37]

To say that we are obeying a rule, or that a given example of behaviour is determined by a rule does not necessarily mean that we are in any specific, pre-determined, way simply emitting behaviour in direct response to given training. The manner in which Wittgenstein characterizes our responses is significant: they are described in time-extended terms, within the context of complex situations. That is, it is not suggested that rule-governed action is describable as the simple emitting of behaviour in response to stimuli. Wittgenstein says, for example:

> In what we call the Arts a person who has judgement develops ... [this] doesn't mean a person who says "Marvelous!" at certain things .... He must react in a consistent way over a long period. Must know all sorts of things.[38]

This brings us to a consideration of the second sense in which it can be said that for Wittgenstein a rule determines an action, that is, the conceptual question of what

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[37] Wittgenstein, PI, 197.

[38] Wittgenstein, "Lectures on Aesthetics," [illegible] 6. For an elaboration of the [illegible] difference between learning and mere response, cf. ibid., [illegible] where Wittgenstein contrasts the utterance of delight with artistic [illegible].

'going by a rule' constitutes and the connexion this has to his interpretation of intended action. Ultimately, going by a rule means acting from within the framework of some convention, from the midst of some "form of life." Our psychological concepts acquire their meaning in their use, that is, within our various language-games. To see what 'intention' means we must examine those contexts in which the word is used; that is, in public acts of communication. Since, Wittgenstein argues, we must explore a medium which is public, it must be made clear what requirements are imposed by such exteriority. Obeying a rule is subscribing to an established practice in that it is impossible to obey a rule privately. Wittgenstein writes:

> It is not possible that there should have been only one occasion on which a report was made, an order given or understood ... -- To obey a rule ... to play a game of chess, are _customs_ (uses, institutions).[39]

The public nature of rule-following must involve criteria that are themselves common, "... otherwise thinking one was obeying a rule would be the same thing as obeying it."[40]

Now, when it was said above that one "subscribes" to some customary practice, and in so doing becomes subject to governing criteria which are themselves public, this should not be taken to imply that, for Wittgenstein, it is by some

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[39] Wittgenstein, PI, 199.

[40] Ibid., 202.

voluntary act that an individual might choose to become party to the convention. That we do become party to certain conventions is part of what Wittgenstein calls "the given": "What has to be accepted, the given, is -- so one could say -- <u>forms of life</u>."[41] Our doing so is largely not a matter of choice but rather a fact of our being human and of our sharing a language. Wittgenstein refers to this more basic level as an "agreement in judgements."

> Our language-game only works ... when a certain agreement prevails, but the concept of agreement does not enter into the language-game. If agreement were universal, we should be quite unacquainted with the concept of it.[42]

By judgement he does not mean any conscious deliberation, but something far more basic and in a sense pre-linguistic.[43] It is agreement in opinion, although admittedly not universal, that finally anchors the criteria we employ and is presupposed by the given fact of our common judgements. The following should serve to clarify Wittgenstein's meaning:

> [Wittgenstein] wishes to [show] how inessential the "appeal to rules" is as a [final] explanation of language .... We learn and teach words in certain contexts, and then we are expected,

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[41] Ibid., 226.

[42] Wittgenstein, Zettel, 430.

[43] [illegible]

> and expect others, to be able to project them into further contexts. Nothing insures that this projection will [occur] ... just as nothing insures that we will make, and understand, the same projections. That on the whole we do is a matter of our sharing routes of interest and feeling, modes of response, senses of humour and of significance ... all the whirl of organism Wittgenstein calls "forms of life." Human speech and activity, sanity and community, rest upon nothing more, but nothing less, than this.[44]

Whereas we may temporarily be at a loss to explain some action, we usually do know what would serve to demystify us; nor do we require justification for seeing the behaviour as action to begin with—here the chain of reasons comes to an end. It is in the light of our forms of life which are the given that some things must be simply described with no need for justification. And because of the connexion between forms of life and our conventions, Wittgenstein says that when we get down to convention we strike bedrock.

> ... If I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I ... say: "This is simply what I do" ....[45]

Our forms of life cannot be dismissed or rejected on intellectual grounds. Wittgenstein speaks of the forms of life in this way:

> But that means I want to conceive it as something that lies beyond being justified or unjustified; as it were, as something animal.[46]

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[44] Cavell, "The Availability of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy," pp. 160-161.

[45] Wittgenstein, PI, 217.

[46] Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, 359.

Often when we describe our intentions, we, in doing so, reveal something about ourselves. Wittgenstein says of this:

> ... Describing an intention means describing what went on from a particular point of view, with a particular purpose. I paint a particular portrait of what went on.[47]

Because descriptions of intentions are often in this way revelatory, it is not to say that intentional actions are only and always the outcome of some deliberations. We might, for instance, simply decide to do something and there need be no practical reasoning involved. Often one says "Oh yes, I _wanted to_ find X" but also "I _want to_ ...." In the former case, opening the drawer, etc., happened _automatically_ and got interpreted subsequently.[48] Intentions _can_ simply crop up, can be as fleeting as some of our momentary wants are. In most cases, however, an intention cannot be described in momentary terms, and, characteristically, such intentions are often our most significant ones. In such circumstances, "... to express an intention, or to impute an intention ... to someone else, is in many ways like expressing or imputing a belief."[49] And, as Wittgenstein says, not in all circumstances does it make sense to say: "I had that belief this

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[47] Wittgenstein, [illegible], 23.

[48] [illegible], 2.

[49] [illegible]

morning but do not have it any longer."

Let us amplify the meaning of intentional description and see its connexion with intention. When we speak of an "intentional description" of an action, we mean that specific description which accurately expresses our particular reason in doing it. That is, an action can be variously interpreted. Now, because of this equivocal nature of a given example of behaviour, we might feel that only an individual really knows his intention. In this context, Wittgenstein writes:

> "I am not ashamed of what I did then, but of the intention which I had" -- And didn't the intention lie <u>also</u> in what I did? What justifies the shame? The whole history of the incident.[50]

An action becomes meaningful to us when we can see it as an intelligible piece of behaviour, and this requires seeing it within the whole fabric of an individual's wants, hopes and thoughts. To intend something in a certain way, and its counterpart, to understand something in a special light, is determined by the history of the behaviour which acts as a backdrop to it. An action can only be seen as rational when it can be intelligibly woven into some pattern; when it can be seen within the framework of a larger intention.

A person confronts the world as an agent, and his concept of himself as a person in the world will determine the nature of his goals and the manner in which he pursues

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[50] [illegible]

them.

> For men and only men can be said to be conscious of the reasons for their action, ... whereas the behaviour of animals can be accounted for ... by a set of species laws ... with men a factor of variance is introduced by the fact of convention ... the way men go about seeking the goals which are common to them, is dependent on the idea they have of these goals ....[51]

Seeing is always seeing under some description -- with some interpretation. For this reason, no level of description can be "primary" or "more basic" than all others.[52] In the context of a discussion on seeing Wittgenstein writes,

> The concept of 'seeing' makes a tangled impression. Well, it is tangled -- ... There is not <u>one genuine</u> proper case of such description [i.e., description of what is seen] -- the rest being just vague, something which awaits clarification, or which must just be swept aside as rubbish.[53]

It is the circumstances which will decide whether or not a description is adequate. What determines whether the description is incomplete is, Wittgenstein says, "... if there is still something to ask."[54]

It is the particular intentional description, under which an object or action is seen that allows us to distinguish between, for instance, X not eating because he is

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[51]C. Taylor, Explanation of Behaviour, pp. 69-70.

[52]Ibid., p. 143.

[53]Wittgenstein, PI, p. 200.

[54]Ibid., p. 199.

full, because he is dieting, or because he is fasting.[55] That these are vastly different types of actions shows the centrality of intention and intentionality. These concepts taken together define a person's place in the world for they tell us what the world is to him. Perhaps then, this is Wittgenstein's meaning when, in the *Notebooks*, he says that the world of the happy man is fundamentally different from the world of the sad; the world becomes two completely different places because of the interpretations so placed on it. Necessarily this will radically define the nature of the goals and intentions these individuals set for themselves. It affects not necessarily the facts or isolatable events, but the very boundaries of their divergent worlds, what the world is *to* them. "The world must ... wax or wane as a whole."[56]

In this paper I have attempted to elucidate the meaning that a willing subject has for Wittgenstein. The transcendentalism which characterizes Wittgenstein's account of the will in the *Tractatus* and the *Notebooks*, is replaced in his later writings by what might be called "contextualism". Wittgenstein's contextualism allows him to explore

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[55] Cook, "Human Beings," p. 147.

[56] Wittgenstein, *Notebooks*, p. 73.

the nature of will and action without falling into the pitfalls of either mentalism or behaviourism. It enables him to dispel serious misconceptions about the way our mental vocabulary operates. Thus although the idea of a transcendental willing subject is dropped in his later works, questions about the nature of intention and action remain of crucial importance to Wittgenstein throughout his writings.

To the person as willing subject, the world is, so to speak, inchoate, requiring his participation to acquire shape and form. This seems to be Wittgenstein's meaning when he describes the willing subject, in the early writings, as the condition for value in the world. In our present discussion on the connexion between intention and intentionality, we have seen that a person's world-view determines, in the broadest sense, the goals he sets for himself. That is, the way the subject sees himself, others, and the nature of the world (all this constituting his world-view), sets the very boundaries of his existence. The picture one has of oneself as agent determines the nature of one's actions and manner of treating others.

But what is crucial to note here is that one cannot talk of a "world-view" without a consideration of the individual's conduct. Without appropriate activity, these words lack content; they have no applicability. In the context of a discussion on religious belief, for example,

Wittgenstein writes:

> It [belief] will show, not by reasoning ... but by regulating for in all his life.[57]

And further on he writes:

> This is partly why one would be reluctant to say: "These people rigorously hold the opinion (or view) that there is a Last Judgement." "Opinion" sounds queer .... Indubitability isn't enough because it couldn't be enough to make me change my whole life."[58]

To some extent then, we find a certain continuity in Wittgenstein's early and later accounts of the will. In both accounts, it is the willing subject which allows us to ascribe meaningfulness to existence. In his early account, Wittgenstein says that the willing subject is the bearer of good and evil. He says, "Things acquire 'signifiance' only through their relation to my will."[59] In his later work as well, we find that it is through the actions of the willing subject that existence is supplied with meaning. In the Brown Book, Wittgenstein writes that "The chain of reasons has an end."[60]

> ... but the end is not certain propositions' striking us immediately as true, i.e., it is not a kind of *seeing* on our part; it is our *acting*, which lies at the bottom of the language-game.[61]

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[57] Wittgenstein, "Lectures on Religious Belief," p. 54

[58] Ibid., p. 57.

[59] Wittgenstein, Notebooks, p. 84.

[60] Wittgenstein, Brown Book, p. 143.

[61] Wittgenstein, On Certainty, 204.

That is, our language-games proceed from something more basic than thought or consideration.[62] They are rooted in the forms of life which human beings share -- not through choice -- but through the fact that they are human.

> Does man think, then, because he has found that thinking pays? -- Because he thinks it advantageous to think? (Does he bring his children up because he has found it pays?)[63]

For Wittgenstein, as for Goethe before him, we might write with confidence:

> "In the beginning was the deed."
> Goethe, *Faust* I.

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[62] Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, 391.

[63] Wittgenstein, *PI*, 467.

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