INTENTION IN WITTGENSTEIN

1. INTRODUCTION

Wittgenstein's thesis on intention is unique and has far-reaching consequences. Notably, his discussion on interpretation has a bearing on behaviouism of all forms on the one hand, and phenomenology and allied subjects on the other. Wittgenstein avoids both the extremes of holding human reality to be mechanical and predictable on the one hand and elusive human subjectivity on the other. However, he does not fail to recognize the merits in behaviourism and phenomenology which he skilfully incorporates into his own theory of action. The component of objectivity and the inter-subjectivity which is there in behaviourism is incorporated in the notion of 'rule-following' and the intentionality of phenomenology in the arbitrariness of the rules. Moreover, Wittgenstein ingeniously brings these two components, i.e., 'rule-following' and 'arbitrariness of rules' together in human action. By speaking of rulefollowing and arbitrariness of rules within the frame-work of a 'forms of life', Wittgenstein has brought behaviourism and phenomenology together. He does not permit speaking of intentions in isolation divorcing them from human action and behaviour in real situations.

The forms of behaviourism is negated for the main reason that it is meaningless to spe ak of behaviour without the component of what one often called 'intention'. In this sense behaviour without intention is mechanical and therefore not human. One has fundamentally failed to make the distinction between event and an action in this model. In contrast, the thesis of intentionality of phenomenology on the other hand, though is not outrightly wrong, misrepresents human intention in abstraction. It treats, among other things, interpretation as an integral part of the language use, not in the manner in which subjective and idiosyncratic factors are made to come into play in the heremeneutics, but in the manner in which one speaks of rules and their interpretations in logic.

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Of all the things that bind human beings with one another, what is noteworthy in Wittgenstein is the roles assigned to rules which bring human beings together on an inter-subjective platform of convention. The rules based on convention are the ones that bridge the gap between an individual and another upon which the whole linguistic activity using concepts and rules rests. This element of convention in language, though looks insignificant, plays the pivotal role of establishing the link between a buman being and another making the community living a reality on the one hand, and language and reality on the other by putting to rest all philosophical deliberations on the nature of the relationship between language and reality.

Philosophers have often falied to keep speech about intention and 'intention' separate. These two should not be identified with one another for the reason that there can be wide gap between the two. One cannot rely much on the speech about one's intention, whereas, an action is a sure measure of intention. Intention that is represented in language need not be the same as the one which is there in action. If the speaker has difficulties of knowing his own intentions present or past, then the situation is more complicated. Even in such a situation speaking of one's intention would be possible by attributing certain intentions afresh on the basis of certain circumstantial evidences. However, such an attribution of intention subsequent to an action would be a mere speculation having no philosophical basis. There is not a single way one could ensure that the intention that one has expressed in language is the same as the one which was there in action. Wittgenstein does not deny the possibility that one could speak about one's intention, but he questions the authenticity of such a claim. He finds faults with the grounds on which one claims to have known one's intentions.

2. PROCESSES AND STATES OF MIND

One of the basic confusions, which perhaps is deep rooted in our language, is the unclarity that we have about a *mental process* and a *mental state*. If one scrupulously maintains this distinction without being misled by the superficial similarity in the structure of words, half of our battle against philosophical confusions is already won. We tend to think that we have a clear idea about mental processes on the analogy of physical processes and the mental state on the analogy of physical states. This analogy of physical and mental fails totally.

Apart from thinking, experience of pain, hearing of sound etc. are processes according to Wittgenstein. We say that pain is growing more or less; we speak of sound increasing or decreasing and so on. Processes, are placed between two points in time, they have beginning and end. In response to the questions "When did it begin?" or "When did it end?" one could answer these questions without having any sense of oddity. For instance, with reference to certain pain one could ask the question when did it begin. But with reference to mental states, one cannot respond to these questions without certain oddity. For instance, "When did you start believing that you could lift the box?" is an odd question. The proper question would be "Do you believe that you could lift the box?"

Some words which seem to suggest mental processes, do not, in fact, refer to processes at all. For example, "having an opinion", "believing", "expecting", "hoping" etc. seem to suggest some processes, but they are not genuinely referring to processes.² Believing, expecting, hoping etc. do not begin at a particular point in time and end at another point in time though as mental states they come into being and may be that they fade away. It is quite possible that I believe that I have the ability to lift it. Surely, my attempt to lift the object was an action, and since it was an action it must have taken place at a particular point in time. But my belief, perhaps, began when I first thought of lifting the object and continued till I actually made an attempt. And this duration could be anything from a few seconds to some days. Similary, one could say that one expected thunder showers when dark clouds were noticed. But when the clouds moved away, no more one expected rain. Obvisouly, there was an interval between when one expected rain and one has stopped expecting it.

Certain statements about our mental states tempt us to believe that mental states have temporal dimension. With reference to certain ability and knowledge we remark sometimes by saying "Now I know!", "Now I can do it!" and "Now I understand!". The word "know" is closely related to the word "can", "is able to" etc., and to the mental states such as "understand". We should be careful, remarks Wittgenstein, and should not confuse both disposition and mental states to be something in time. Suppose one wants to remember a tune and it escapes somehow. Suddenly one gets it and says "Now I know it" and the person sings it. One has not remembered the tune part by part to consider

remembering as a process. When remembered, the tune was there in the form of a mental state. Similarly, the ability, the knowledge how to play chess has no temporal structure. Langauage misleads us into thinking that knowledge has duration like a toothache or a melody.⁴

Take a critical example where both processes and mental states are related. "Understanding" and the process of arriving at a certain formula can be cited here. For example, the process by which two pupils arrive at the series 1, 5 11, 19, 29 could be different and their understanding be the same. One might hit upon the formula $a_n = n^2 + n - 1$ and another might hit upon the series of difference 4, 6, 8, 10. When one claims that one has understood the series, one does not claim just that the formula has occurred to him, but something more. One could say that understanding is the same though the process, accompaniments are different in the case of two pupils in question.

Wittgenstein suggests to conduct the following experiment. Interrupt a man in quite unpremeditated and fluent talk. Then ask him what he was going to say; and in many cases he will be able to continue the sentence he had begun. This is possible because, knowledge is a mental state and not a process. If our habit is to treat mental states to be processes, then it is puzzling to explain the ability of a person to complete the sentence even after interruption.

Mental states do not have the dimension of past and future is clear from the following example. Wittgenstein remarks that we say a dog is afraid that his master will beat him. But we do not say that the dog is afraid his master will beat him tomorrow. This is because, we take 'being afraid' to be a mental state and tomorrow to be a temporal concept. This being so, a mental state cannot be linked with a time dimension since mental state is not in time; it does not have past or future. Therefore, a certain combination of words describing mental states with the temporal attributes would not be possible. For example, expectation being a mental state and perception being a mental process it is not possible to combine them as subject and predicate. One cannot claim to perceive an expectation, though one can perceive the expression of an expectation. It would be quite odd to say that one perceives one's expectation, rather than to say that one expects certain things.

Remarking on processes and states of mind, Wittgenstein says that we talk of processes and states and leave their nature undecided. We think that sometime in future we shall know more about them. But that is just what commits us to a particular way of looking at the matter. For, we have a definite concept of what it means to learn to know a process better. When we deny the yet uncomprehended process in the yet unexplored medium, it looks as if we had denied mental processes. And naturally we don't want to deny them.8

3. THE NATURE OF INTENTION

Wittgenstein holds the view that intention is not an experience. It is neither an emotion, nor a mood, nor yet a sensation or image says he. It is not a state of consciousness. It does not have genuine duration. He is of the opinion that having an intention is not to have any experience. Since intention does not have genuine duration, it cannot be an experience; and since it is not an experience, it cannot be stored in memory in order to recall it at a later date.

There is a tendency in philosophers to consider intention to be an inner experience, which can be known through introspection. Wittgenstein believes that this is a mistake. Introspection is calling up of memories; of imagined possible situations and of the feelings.10 If intention is not an experience having genuine duration, it is not possible to even introspect. It is not available to introspection because introspection is largely retrospection and intention cannot be stored in memory. For example, Wittgenstein holds that when someone says "I had the intention of ... one does not express the memory of an experience. He claims that the 'inner experience' of intending vanishes in the situation where we try to remember our intentions of past actions. Consider the sentence; "For a moment I meant to...". When we introspect, what we find is not an intention; instead, one remembers thoughts, feelings, movements, and also connexions with earliter situations. 12 Therefore, Wittgenstein firmly believes that intention is something about which one cannot speak in the past tense.

Intention is not a mental state either. Serveral people could carry out something without any one of them having the intention. For example, a government may have an intention which no particular man has. 13 "This appliance is a brake, but it doesn't work"? That means, the brake

does not fulfil its purpose. But whose intention was it that it should work as a brake? This question is not appropriate in this context. Here one must speak of impersonal intentions which are not mental states. One is habituated to look at a thing as a symbol says Wittgenstein. For example, we see the intention behind making the maching and attribute that intention to the machine by claiming that the machine ought to work in such and such a manner. We say that a broken clock is a clock. A brake which does not work also a brake. But these are not mental states of anyone.

Intention is neither an experience nor a state of mind. What is it then? Let us consider "willing" as an example. "Willing" is not the name of an action according to Wittgenstein, and, therefore, is not the name of any voluntary action as well. I can bring about the act of willing to swim by jumping into the water. But I can't will willing. But it "willing" is considered to be an action, then it is identical with speaking, writing, lifting, imagining something. But it is also trying, attempting, making an effort to speak, to write, to lift, to imagine a thing. Therefore, there is no "willing" as a separate thing other than what we do.¹⁵

Wittgenstein notes that it is not possible to have a verb to formulate an intention in words; there cannot be a verb to ask someone to act according to an intention; and there cannot be a verb to ask someone to think about one's intention.\(^{16}\) This is so because, the relationship between intention and the action are internal. There is no scope for any arbitrary relation between intention and action. Moreover, internal relationship is possible if and only when both the things related are simultaneously present.\(^{17}\) Perhaps this is the reason why Wittgenstein maintains that describing an intention means describing what went on from a particular point of view, with a particular purpose.\(^{18}\)

Suppose at the end of a quarrel I say "All right! Then I leave tomorrow!"; I make a decision. But "I am revising that descision to go away to-morrow." only describes a state of mind. Prevising a decision is not a process, it does not have a point in time when it begins and another point in time when it ends, but is another mental state. Being a mental state, one might think that it gets isolated from action, but such a separation is not possible. This is because, if an action does not naturally follow after a descision, even revising the decision is not going to be of any significance. This is because if actions do not naturally follow from

our decisions, then the actions of revised decisions are also not going to follow automaticallly. We would require a faculty to induce actions after taking decisions. And if we assume that there is such a faculty to executes our decisions, one needs to work out the relationship between the faculty that takes the decision and the faculty that executes the decision. However, it is unnecessary to imagine such faculties, one for making decisions and another for converting decisions into actions. This would be unnecessarily complicating the matter. It is better to acknowledge the internal relationship that exist between a decision and the action. It is an unnecessary exercise to argue first that there is a gap and then fill this gap by invoking two separate faculties one for making the decision and another for executing the decision.

The following remark of Wittgenstein emphasizes the fact that intention is something that is in the present and is something that is inseparably linked to action: I open the drawer and routle around in it: at last I come to and ask myself "Why am I rummaging in this drawer"? And then the answer comes, "I want to look at the photograph of..." "I want to", not "I wanted to". Opening the drawer, etc. happened so to speak automatically and got interpreted subsequently.²⁰

Expression of the intention can't contain the intention. This is because language cannot explian itself. Since language itself is based on human intention, language cannot contain human intention. This is the reason why one cannot have a verb containing the intention in language. Since intention and action are inseparably related, and since actions are in time, it is possible to ask the question about the beginning and the end of having certain intention. Wittgenstein remarks: but if you say you intended to play chess, you can say when you started and ceased. However, the time lag between intention and acton is not counted at all. Intention taken singly does not have any genuine duration. Hence the remark: "I have the intention of going away tomorrow:" - When have you that intention? The whole time; or intermittently?²³

How is confession of intention possible if intention is not there already before the action? What is important to realize is that confession is something like 'knowing how' not 'knowing that'. It is something performed, an action and therefore the question of intention being there earlier to the act of confession need not arise. If one says, I want to confess, it is a mental state, as any desire is a mental state. The problem would

arise if we treat intention to be something similar to physical object and on the analogy of physical object ask the question "How is confession possible if intention is not there prior to the action?" The one who knows how to confess, confesses and there ends the matter.²⁴

4. INTENTION AND MENTAL STATE

It is possible to have mental states of various kinds without having any link with the world in the form of action. But intention is inseparably linked to action. Wittgenstein has painstakingly reserved the term "intention" to be used only in the context of an action. He would not like to speak of intention in a wide variety of ways the way we normally do. Generally, decisions, wants, dispositions, knowledge, belief etc. are all taken to be intentions. But Wittgenstein who wants to retain the fine distinction between intention and these mental states, does not permit such use of terms. Mental states are not automatically linked to physical world. What converts our decisions which are mental states to actions is the intention, but intention is not distinct and separate from action. One speaks of intention only in the context of action and intention and action are internally related. It is only in the context of action that one has to understand intention and not in the context of mental state which, of course, can exist without the other, i.e. action. An action conceived without intention, whereas a mental state can be conceived without action.

Why is it that we do not find any example of the kind where someone has learnt the expression "I was just on the point of" or "I was just going to..." and could not learn the use of these expressions? This is certainly not because that a person cannot learn this expression without learning to know content of our intention in the form of a thought. Wittgenstein indicates indirectly that it is not a shear historical accident that we have never found such an individual. This fact indicates something basic about the very nature of the expression of this type. The expression "I was just on the point of" is only a preparatory; it is a part of knowing how which cannot be learnt without knowing to act in a particular way expressing one's intention in a concrete situation.

Wittgenstein clarifies how certain ambiguity of intention should not arise at all. If I have two friends with the same name and am writing one of them a letter, what does the fact that I am not writing it to the other consist in? It may not consist in the content because it might fit either. To whom one has written the letter depends on how one has used this letter. It is only the application that is going to indicate the intention behind it.²⁴⁵

Wittgenstein wants to make the distinction between action and an event. Any explanation of how my arm went up in terms of physiological causes would not give us a satisfactory account of the human action of raising the arm. Action, for Wittgenstein, is human, and is invariably accompanied by human intention which is there from the very beginning till the end, since actions and intentions are internally related. Thus, we have on the one extreme of scale, a physical event, in the middle human action with intention and the other extreme the mental states of believing, knowing, willing and so on.

5. INTENTION AND RULE-FOLLOWING

Intention is very much linked with our idea of the rule-following. It is not from the habit that one follows a rule, it is not the repetition that would help us, nor our practice in that sense. Even if we follow rules almost in a mechanical manner, what is important to note is that rules are always followed in the *present* abiding the conventions. Rule-following is therefore an act with intention to abide by conventions.

Consider the long discussion by Wittgenstein on rule-following. What is it to be guided by a rule? Wittgenstein gives an example of playing in a field both the eyes being bandaged. Someone leads you by the hand, sometimes left, and sometimes right. One has to be constantly ready for the tug of his hand, and must take care that one does not stumble when there is an unexpected tug. Another situation one can imagine is that of someone leading you by force where you are unwilling to go. Yet another situation where you are guided could be by your partner in a dance. And still another situation where you are guided by someone else is that of your taking a walk with someone while conversing and you go whereever he does. Or you walk along a field-track simply following it. All these situations are similar to one another, yet the experience of each one would be quite different. If one says that being guided is surely an experience, then one is thinking of a particular experience of being

guided and not what is common to all the above situations.²⁷ And all the above situations are situations where one is 'guided' by someone else.

Our feelings have no relation to our use of language. We formulate rules and use the words in accordance with rules. Rule-following does not have any reference to individual feelings. Wittgenstein provides an example to explain a certain phenomenon where one is in a position to follow a rule and say "now I can go on". In all the various situations which are described in PI 151, one is in a position to follow the rule, yet the individual experiences do not figure anywhere in the account of rulefollowing. He gives the following example: A writes series of numbers down; B watches him and tries to find a law for the sequence of numbers. If he succeeds he exclaims: "Now I can go on!" - So this capacity, this understanding, is something that makes its appearance in a moment. A has written down the numbers 1, 5, 1 1, 19, 29; at this point B says he knows how to go on. What happened here? Various things may have happended; for example, while A was slowly putting one number after another, B was occupied with trying various algebraic formulae on the numbers which had been written down. After A had written the number 19 B tried the formula an = $n^2 + n - 1$; and the next number confirmed his hypothesis.

Or again, B does not think of formulae. He watches A writing his numbers down with a certain feeling of tension, and all sorts of vague thoughts go through his head. Finally he asks himself: "What is the series of differences?" He finds the series 4, 6, 8, 10 and say: Now I can go on.

Or he watches and says "Yes, I know that series-and continues it, just as he would have done if A had written down the series 1, 3, 5, 7, 9.- Or he says nothing at all and simply continues the series. Perhaps he had what may be called the sensation "that's easy!".

But the expression "Now I know how to go on" does not refer to any experience. If that were the case, the experience in following different formulae the experience would have been different. The word "Now I know how to go on" were correctly used when he thought of the formula: that is, given such circumstances as that he had learnt algebra, had used such formulae before.²⁸

Wittgenstein remarks that one need not do the same thing every time when one follows a rule. There seems to be a certain tendency on the part of philosophers to seek perfect similarity in the account of rule following. Wittgenstein asks: If from one day to the next you promise: "To-morrow I will come and see you" are you saying the same thing everyday, or every day something different?²⁹ He gives another example and asks the same question: suppose someone gets the series of numbers 1, 3, 5, 7, by working out the series 2x + 1. And now he asks himself: "But am I always doing the same thing, or something different every time?"

Obeying a rule does not mean doing the same thing again and again. People tend to think that this should be so. Note what Wittgenstein remarks in P1 227: Would it make sense to say "If he did something different every day we should not say he was obeying a rule"? That makes no sense.

If one insists on doing the same thing again and again in following a rule, one cannot even use words in our imaginations and negative sentences. Wittgenstein remarks: The red that we imagine is the same red which we perceive. If that were not the case then in saying "Here is a red patch" and "Here there isn't a red patch" one cannot be saying the same thing by the word 'red'. ³⁰ Language does not operate at the subjective level. What is necessary in language is to be able to recognize the presence as well as the absence of a certain colour when we perceive. ³¹ It would be odd to say that a process looks different when it happens from when it doesn't happen. This is because language abstracts from this level of difference. This subjective level of difference is not counted at the level of language. ³² In rule-following, the subjective variations are transcended.

The above suggestion seems to be self-contradictory. If one does not do the same thing in following a rule, how is it that we consider different acts in different situations to be following the same rule? Wittgenstin would not deny this at all. He would in fact consider this to be definitional. "All red objects ought to be red" is a grammatical point. And by offering the definition, one has offered the rule. Rule is not the same as its application. For example, Wittgenstein considers the statement "He has the same pain as I" as grammatical. It does not explain

anything. He remarks further: if it were not the same, one would not have called it a pain at all.

What is noteworthy is that the individual variations due to sensation, feeling and other indiosyncratic factors never enter rule-following. Therefore, one could conclude that language transcends subjective level and operates at the inter-subjective plane.

6. INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE INTENTION

One needs to make a distinction between individual intentions and institutionalized intentions. This is required because one does not speak of individual intentions always, and the institutionalized intentions are given much importance. Our social organizations seem to work on the principle of collective intention, intention of no one in particular yet there seems to be a conscious pursuit of a certain kind. Language itself is a social institution and the intention that can be expressed in language to this institutionalized way of expressing intention. Individual intentions figure only at the level of changing the existing conventions and norms. It is possible that an individual wants to deviate from the existing norms of using certain words, or wants to introduce new words to organize his thoughts differently, or express himself differently. For this, an individual might choose to introduce a new word either by ostensively defining a word or by providing a verbal definition. But if this individual method becomes the institutional way of doning things, then each one of us would be able to adopt to the new situation. The critical question is: How does one know the intention of the other person especially when the rule is newly invoked for the first time?

Perhaps, we can get a hint from Wittgenstein from the following example on this issue. While speaking of copying Wittgenstein says: The method of projection must be contained in the process of projeting. The total result-i.e. the copy plus the *intention-is* the equivalent of the original. The actual result-the mere visible copy-does not represent the whole process of copying; we must include the intention. The *process contains* the rule, the result is not enough to describe the process.³³

Note that it is not possible to simply say that I intend without adding the preposition 'to'. It is always appropriate to ask the question: "What do you intend to do?" whenever one says "I intend to...". This

is the reason we are not in a position to have a verb to describe our intention in language. Since intention and action are internally related, it is not possible to have one without the other. Therefore, there is no gap between intending and acting on the one hand, and action if performed would exhibit the intention. Intention is obvious to one who observes the action, and action should be moderated by intention.

7. RULES AND INTERPRETATIONS

In the light of the above discussion, what becomes pertinent is the question of interpretation. This problem of interpretation is considered to be double edged. The question that is immediatly relevant is whether one interprets the rule every time one follows a rule, and whether one interpretation is necessary when one understands someone else's rule-following. Hermeneutics and its allied schools believe that every understanding involves interpretation, Wittgenstein seems to hold the opposite view, namely, understanding emerges only when one stops interpreting. Interpretation is a mental process, and understanding is a mental state for Wittgenstein. This being so, he would not like to identify one with the other. Interpretation is a process like thingking, but understanding is knowledge, a mental state.

A mental process can never be the intention itself he opines. For we could always have intended the opposite by reinterpreting the process of projection. It is easy to imagine a case in which, say to deceive someone, we might make an arrangement that an order should be carried out in the sense opposite to its normal one. The symbol which adds the interpretation to our original arrow could, for instance, be another arrow. Whenever we interpret a symbol in one way or another, the interpretation is a new symbol added to the old one.³⁴

It is not possible to understand something when the act of interpreting continues and the level at which it should be taken is not clear. Understanding comes only when the process of interpretation stops. Interpretation is required only when there is some ambiguity: something is not understood straight. A decision is required to avoid this state of ambiguity or unintelligibility by supplying a rule of interpretation. When looked at this situation again, the new rule would help us to put intention and action together from a particular frame of reference.

But this is not a situation where understanding emerges if interpretation is to be forced on the context by invoking a rule for interpretation. Understanding would be there if and only if the rules that govern the behaviour of the person, and the behaviour are considered together. If the behaviour of the person does not fit any rule of behaviour, then there cannot be any understanding according to Wittgenstein. For example, a person raises his hand and a taxi stops and the stranger gets into the taxi and the taxi vanishes after a while. Understanding the intention and the action of the stranger by any observer would be the same here. Given the conventional rules, a taxi would stop if request by raising one's hand is made. And the convention is that one should raise one's hand for a taxi if and only if one wants to hire it. Given these conventions, the behaviour of the stranger is the indicative of his intention, namely that he wanted to hire a taxi which he did by raising his hand. Suppose the stranger were a criminal whose activities were being studied by a batch of secret police and they observed exactly the same what we narrated. Instead of understanding the way an onlooker did, every police person understands the intention of the stranger and his act of signalling differently. The taxi driver being a friend of the stranger senses certain danger and takes him away to some unknown destination in an attempt to save the criminal from the police. There is no ambiguity even in this understanding and no new rule for interpretation need be invoked. Given the behaviours of criminals and the conventions they adopt for their communication and the information that the members of this team had, they understood the intention of the taxi driver differently than the way an onlooker had done it. But there is no ambiguity here as well. Two different persons having different set of informations or theories perceive the intention and the behaviour of a person differently. In both the accounts the intention and the corresponding actions are internally related and there is no need to interpret anything by invoking a new rule for interpretation.

Let us put it in this way: "Every sign is capable of interpretation; but the meaning mustn's be capable of interpretation. It is the last interpretationa." If you do so, e.g., by saying that the meaning is the arrow which you imagine as opposed to any which you may draw or produce in any other way, you thereby say that you will call no further arrow an interpretation of the one which you have imagined. To say in this case that every arrow can still be interpreted would only mean that I could always make a different model of saying and meaning which had one more level than the one I am using.³⁵

What is important to note here is that we understand only when we stop interpreting and stop invoking new rules for interpretation. Application of a rule is not interpretation according to Wittgenstein. A rule applies to its objects necessarily. The relationship between a rule and its application is natural, internal and necessary. Rules are arbitrary, purposeful, but once a rule is invoked, commitment to the rule is unavoidable and its application follows necessarily. Given this position of Wittgenstein, he would not naturally consider the cases of application to be so central to his inquiry. If there are cases of ambiguity of a certain kind, say the problem of deciding whether to call someone a bald person or not, whether to classify a plant as bush or tree, what is required is taking certain decision. And it is humanly impossible to solve all problems of this kind since there—will always be borderline cases. But there is no ambiguity even here requiring interpretation, but only decision to invoke new rules or not.

Rule-following requires rule, either conventionally given or newly invoked. If the behaviour is not according to any rule and if the obsever invokes a rule to interpret the behaviour, it would be the case of understanding for cetain philosophers, but not for Wittgenstein. The situation where new rule is required to interpret the behaviour of the other person, is the situation—where the person in question is not even aware of the rule. Therefore, the question of the person acting in accordance with this later invoked rule does not arise.

Given this position of Wittgenstein, there is no scope for ambiguity in rule-following in the case of an agent and understanding the behaviour of the agent on the part of an observer. Since he maintains that application of a rule is internal to the rule, there cannot be any process between the rule and its application. Therefore, interpretation cannot be a process or a stage between a rule and its application. He believes that understanding is something that happens naturally. But invoking a rule is an activity for Wittgenstein and whenever interpretation is inevitable an unfamiliar rule is neesarily involved.

One should remember that there is no finality to any interpretation. If one interpretation can fit the situation, another can as well fit the same situation. This is the basic scepticism of Wittgenstein about the interpretative methood elaborated by Kripke.³⁶ The basic argument of rule-scepticism is that given certain behaviour of individuals, the same

behaviour seems to stisfy many rules and thereby making the process of identifying the rule that is being followed impossible for an observer. Wittgenstein rejects rule-scepticism as well as the hermeneutic position which cashes on the arbitrary relation that can be attributed to such interpretations. Recognizing the possibility of formulating unlimited number of rules for interpreting a situation, Wittgenstein rejects such interpretations as having any significance in language. Language, for Wittgenstein, consists of rules which assist one to interpret a situation or action provided the behaviour on the part of the other individual is rulegoverned. This obviously lays a condition for understanding which is overlooked by hermeneutics as a discipline. The condition that should be met prior to any understanding is the recognition of a collectively accepted rule which guides both the behaviour and the interpretation of it. In the absence of a rule, if an observer assings some meaning to the behaviour of an individual by invoking an imaginary rule, that is not acceptable to Wittgenstein. He believes that an essence of a rule is that it has an infinite application and there is no rule which has one application in only one occasion.

We should guard ourselves from mistaking this situation of invoking one-time rule for interpreting a situation and forgetting all about it later from the situation where one starts a convention by arbitrarily defining a word. The latter situation where one arbitrarily deifines a word has to meet the following condition which the one-time rule does not: [1] a commitment to adhere to the definition and systematic use of the word in future, [2] the rule when invoked should be treated as a grammatical rule and its application later. These being the requirements, a one-time rule invoked on the spot by an observer to interpret certain behaviour is not a rule, and the interpretation is not a genuine one according to Wittgenstein. Any interpretation if it can be re-interpreted, and further interpreted is not a valuable interpretation because it would have no application in life.³⁷ If a word can be interpreted in all possible manners, one could hardly communicate anything using such a word. The word loses its signifacnce as a symbol, and the distinction between one word and another cannot be maintained. However, Wittgenstein does not deny the possibility of assigning personal significance to a one-time behaviour of a person or a word, but such things do not enter language which is public.

8. INTENTION AND PAST ACTION

In the hermencutic accounts, intention is something that is added by the obsever onto an experience, behaviour, a symbol or a statement as a discrete component to complete the picture. Therefore, it is possible to supply this missing component of intention separately to our past acts as well. Wittgenstein's basic criticism of this postion is that one cannot simply supply this missing component of intention in our account of past actions. He does not deny that often we attribute certain interntions to our past behaviour as is often done, but denies the legitimacy of such a claim.

Speaking on the issue of knowing past intentions, Wittgenstein says that one could never speak of past intentions. This is because, in speaking of past intentions, one always interprets from what is there in one's memory. For example, one may remember one's feeling, one's associated thoughts or behaviour. These thoughts and feelings. can be interpreted in various ways. It is nothing but reconstructing our past on the basis of what we remember. In this reconstruction, we supply now what is lacking in our picture of the past. Since intention is not something that is temporal in nature, one cannot say one is expecting someone all the time, or one intends to go tomorrow all the time, this information would not be found in the form of memory at all.38 Intention is not something that is experienced, and therefore there is no possibility of our finding our intentions from memory. This being so, we attribute certain intentions to our past actions on the present assessment of our past actions, and therefore, even if we attribute some intentions to our past actions, one cannot contradict that because there would be no basis on which one could contradict such a claim. Therefore, Wittgenstein writes: if someone asks me whether I have doubts about my past inentions, I have no ground to doubt it, but I have no ground to belive it either. 39

Wittgenstein provides another example of our interpreting what our intentions were from what we think of our past at present. I tell someone that I walked a certain route, going by a map which I had prepared beforehand. Then I show him the map, and it consists of lines on a piece of paper; but I cannot explain how these lines are the map of my movements, I cannot tell him any rule for interpreting the map. Yet I did follow the drawing with all the characteristic tokens of reading a map. In this example, even if I claim that I read my intentions from my

behaviour it would not be different than saying this: I am now inclined to say "I read the intention of acting thus in certain states of mind which I remember." 40

Let us make the argument more explicit. [1] If one could speak of past intentions, then one has to suspend one's present intentions. That is to say, one has to speak of intentionless state of mind and have the past intentions which is a contradiction in some sense. Or, one has to treat one's present intention to be that of remembering one's past intentions. If this is done, one's present and past intentions are one and the same and thus, one has lost all the advantages of speaking about past intentions. [2] Sometimes one says: I alone know what I wanted. We say in explaining the meaning of the word 'intention' that 'Only you can know if you had that intention'. And here the import of the statement is that the term 'know' means that the attribution of uncertainty is senseless. This is the way we use the word 'intention'.

What is worth noting in the above examples is that our speaking of our past intentions makes no progress. This is because in addition to what is stated above, Wittgentein considers that the most explicit expression of our intention, i.e., verbally stating our intention, by itself insufficient evidence of intention. That is to say that if someone says he wanted to do good to you, does not mean that he wanted really to do good until he has done it. This is not because that there were some time lag and the person could have changed his mind, but because the person himself would not have had the intention till he acted. 43 We say sometimes that there were connexions between the present thought and our past thoughts on a certain matter. According to Wittgenstein such connexions between the present thoughts and the past thoughts are found out only later. Therefore, it is a new construction of what one's past was, but not an indicator of what the past was.44 Therefore, Wittgenstein firmly belives that intention is something about which one cannot speak in the past tense. This is because, intuction is always in the present. Given this thesis of Wittgenstein, what follows is that our past intentions cannot be captured in language even by most explicit statements. 45 Whatever one tries, that would only indicate what one wants to express presently about one's past personal history as viewed by the person in question from the perspective of the present. That is to say, one cannot have any past perspective, the perspective is always tied down to the present and one could speak about the past only from the present perspective.

Imagine the following situation. Someone was about to say something, and he was interrupted. And after a while the person spoke. Here, Wittgenstein believes that there cannot be any difference between what the person wanted to say and what he said. Till he said it, it would be wrong to conclude that he wanted to say a particular thing. There cannot be any certainty with which one could say that he knew what he was going to say before he said it.⁴⁶ Wittgenstein believes that it is pointless to say that I know exactly what I was going to say. Since I did not say it, it makes hardly any difference. I don's read my intentions from the processes which happened at that time.⁴⁷

The main reason why Wittgenstein believes that one cannot speak of intentions with reference to our past actions is that nothing can contradict our claim about our past intentions, since many interpretations could fit the same behaviour. If nothing can contradict, it is senseless to say what is said is the truth.

Why should it be the case that anything that is said significantly should be contradictable? The reason seems to be the following: If nothing could contradict a statement, it could only be a statement which is true by difinition which Wittgenstein calls a grammatical statement. A grammatical statement is a statement of a general type which contains a rule for the use of a word based on convention, and anything based on convention cannot be contradicted. A grammatical statement which is true by definition, therefore, cannot be a factual statement. If it is a matter of definition that we know what our past intentions were, then this statement cannot be contradicted. But it is possible that this statement has no application or use. If by difinition we say that we know what our past intentions were, then that would not be a factual statement about our past at all. Therefore, there is not much point in claiming that we know our past intentions as a matter of fact.

Wittgenstein is unhappy with the interpretative model. He believes that the camponent of intention cannot be added to a portrait. To think that intention is an element which has to be added to what we do is misleading because, it is always possible to add a different intention to the same thing. This is what the paradox of rule following which Wittgenstein discusses in the *Philosophical Investigations* which Kripke takes up for elaborate discussion in his book *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*. Kripke imagines the model to be of the above kind

where the intention is to be attributed to the act of rule-following subsequently. The sceptical problem is this. Wittgenstein asks: how is it that we know that some one is following one rule rather than the other? Wittgenstein thinks that if one could attribute an intention to an act in this manner by interpreting the behaviour in one particular manner, there is always another equally plausible interpretation of the behaviour. He believes that interpretative model of accounting for intentionality inevitably leads to scepticism of rule-following.

One might wonder why Wittgenstein maintains that one cannot know the past intentions having maintained that use determines meaning of a word. He agrees that we use the term 'intention' in a particular manner where we claim that we had certain intentions in the past and deny that very possibility of knowing our past intentions. Going by his general theory, one is tempted to say, if everyone uses the term 'intention' with reference to their respective past, then there must be a sense in which they are using the term. One begins to become sceptical about Wittgenstein's theory. One may even ask the question: Is Wittgensteinian theory falsifiable? Wittgenstein has maintained that one cannot know one's past intentions because intentions do not have any genuine duration and this being so, they are something that cannot be experienced. Suppose someone maintains that intention is something that we remember, he wants to deny even this possibility by claiming that intention is not even a mental state.

9. INTENTION AND FEELING

One tends to identify our intentions with that of our feelings in certain occasions. For example, one tends to distinguish between mere uttering words from uttering words with certain feelings. Promising that one would do such-and-such a thing for someone with feeling is considered to be significantly different from uttering the same words merely without the feelings. One tends to treat the former case more seriouly than the latter one, because one thinks that there is a certain commitment on the part of the speaker in the former case while speking, and this is lacking in the case of the latter.

Intention and feeling are two different things. Feeling is a mental state whereas intention is not. Knowing for example what one intends with a particular move in a game of chess does not mean knowing the

state of mind while one is making the move. In certain cases, knowing the state of mind might furnish one with very exact information about one's intention.⁴⁹

Even if one does not remember past intentions, one necessarily remembers the feelings associated with certain statements uttered and actions performed. On Wittgensstein's own admission, we remember our feelings and our actions, though one cannot remember one's intention. This is no loss, one may remark, by claiming that if feeling is remembered, it is the same thing as intention. Both intention and feeling can be identified at a certain level though there are different feelings due to various reasons. It is quite natural and intuitively accurate to consider saying with feeling is different from uttering mere words without any feeling. This is true especially in the case of promises. And, one could even identify the intention of returing borrowed money in the case of a person with that of his feelings. If he feels intensely, whether he is able to keep his promise once made or not, one tends to view his situation more sympathetically than the person who lacks appropriate feeling of guilt when he fails to keep his promise. This being so, there seems to be every ground to identify intention with that of appropriate feeling.

If I know certain things about private experiences only from my own case, then I know only what I call that, not what anyone else does. But when we are considering intention, sensation etc. we are speaking of words from the public language. Therefore, Wittgenstein thinks that at least the word 'sensation' should be explained in a manner in which every one understands it. ⁵⁰ A dumb person cannot speak to himself in the manner in which we are able to do. 'Speaking to oneself' has certain meaning in our ordinary language which cannot be applied to a person who does not speak any language. ⁵¹ Therefore, Wittgenstein would not have any obection if one maintains that one has experiences which are private, but would have objections if one holds the view that these private experiences are the meanings of words which are used in our ordinary language which is public.

Contrary to one's expectation, Wittgenstein holds that whether one has said something with feeling or without feeling, that should be irrelevant to the issue of intention. This is because, he thinks that feelings cannot give us the intention. One of the reasons for holding this view, he opines, is that one feels that one has caught the right intention

of oneself in this feeling but in fact this is quite questionable. Giving the analogy of microscope Wittgestein opines that it is an error to think that one has rightly adjusted the microscope focussing now on the correct feeling. One did not see it before what is now in focus. One tends to say that it did not highlight the correct feeling at that time. Now we are able to do it correctly. But the obvious question now would be: "What makes me now an able person to conclude a sensation which I remembered was the intention then?" ^{5,5}

Consider another example where one is tempted to treat the intense feeling of hatred as intention. Wittgenstein writes: "At that moment I hated him." If I were to rehearse that moment of myself I should assume a particular expression, think of certain happenings, breathein a particular way, arouse certain feelings in myself. I might think up a conversation, a whole scene in which that hatred flared up. And I might play this scene through with feelings approximating to those of a real occasion. If I now become ashamed of this incident, I am ashamed of the whole things: of the words, of the poisonous tone, etc. ⁵⁴

Wittgenstein holds that when someone says "I had the intentions of..." one does not express the memory of an experience. 55 He claims that the 'inner experience' of intending vanishes in the situation where we try to remember our intentions of past actions. Consider the sentence: "For a moment I meant to..." When we introspect, what we find is not an intention: instead, one remembers thoughts, feelings, movements, and also connexions with earlier situations. 56.

Wittgenstein does not want to undermine the fact that while one is following a rule, one might have certain feelings, certain facal expressions can be observed, yet that is not what we consider as rule-following.⁵⁷ When we look at our feeling etc. certain interpretation always springs from our mind. That does not mean that such an interpretation would give us the intention.⁵⁸.

10. INTENTION AND THOUGHT

Thoughts are mental states. This being so, one has a temptation to hold the view that one's intentions are stored in one's thoughts which one can recall at will. Thus it looks quite logical that one can review one's own past intentions by recollecting one's thoughts. This general philo-

sophical position which seems to have been taken for granted is problematic for Wittgenstein. It is this philosophical position which Wittgenstein wants to demolish. Let us consider his main arguments against such a general position.

The basic tendency in most of us is to identify intentions to be mental. Challege from Wittgenstein on this position comes in two different ways: Firstly, he points out that all the situations where we feel the necessity of attributing some intension to the speakers are not the situations where one requires such an intentions. Secondly, there is no other ground for accepting intentions as mental entities.

When someone syas "I was then going to say..." is like speaking from the notes. That means, the note is not the full text, it is expanded at the time of delivery. Thus the question of something that was in mind before it was said does not arise here. 5% The grammar of the expression "I was then going to say..." is related to that of the expression "I could then have gone on." Or this is like saying that if someone falls into water then I should have jumped after him. 6% It is like that one has some outline of the things, and filled the details when it was found necessary. 64

Consider the following example where the question is framed in mentalistic vocabulary but the natural response is not in mentalistic vacabulary: "What is it like doing the sum in one's head?" The natural response would be something like the following: "First I add 17 and 18, then I subtract 39..." But this is not the same as doing the sum in one's head claims Wittgenstein. He adds further that this is like doing the sum in a normal way without doing it in the haead. This example is designed to show no special significance should be attached to our mentalistic vocabulary. They are used and understood in normal terms without forcing us to recognize any mentalistic processes.

Wittgenstein gives another example to elucidate the same point. If we assume that there are 'mental processes' then we would be in a difficult position to explain our normal activities. Having accepted mental processes we cannot deny that this mental process would have some constraints such as time, energy etc. Now if we are to consider one rule in mathematics or in natural languae, that would require us to recognize that the rule has infinite applications. This character of rule would force on us the view that we never know the rule—and its—

applications fully because we have not taken infinite time to consider all the infinite cases of its applications. Wittgenstein believes that our supposition here is wrong. He opines that comprehending a rule is done at once; it is not a 'mental process' requiring some time to process the thoughts in our mind. The reason is that a process would have taken some time to be completed whereas comprehension of a formula takes no time. It occurs to one in its entirety in a moment. The same thing can be said about a tune which one suddenly gets it after struggling for a while. 63

Intention cannot be considered like an object which can be named in order to make it a subject matter of our thought and analysis. If intentions can be embedded in thoughts and images etc. it would have been possible for anyone to infer with great certainty what one were going to do next after knowing the relevant thoughts of that person. But often one cannot do this. Moreover, if one were to infer one's intention on the basis of one's own thought and images, others have equal right to claim that a certain conclusion that "I was then going to do such-and-such" were uncertain.⁵⁴

If language were able to describe itself, then one could have explained the intention in language, but language being intentional in character, it cannot speak about itself. Therefore, Wittgenstein holds the redundancy theory of 'truth. By claiming that "What I have just said is true", one does not add anything to what is asserted. If language could express about itself, then such a sentence would have added something about itself in language. No one could speak about one's intention or the intention of others in a clear manner in language. One has to look for intention in the act of speaking or in a specific context, but one cannot add the component of intention what is often called 'text'.

A 'text' is something which is always interpreted, but a thought cannot be text in this sense. This leads to the suggestion that a thought should be understood as something which requires no further interpretation and therefore itself the meaning of the text. And further this meaning is nothing but the intention, the final product that we were trying to achieve by interpreting the text. However Wittgenstein makes an admirable observation there. He writes: By "intention" I mean here what uses a sign in a thought. The intention seems to interpret, to give the final interpretation; which is not a further sign or picture, but something else, the thing that cannot be further interpreted. But what we have reached is

a psychological, not a logical terminus.⁶⁵ A thought cannot be used as further sign. And the impossibility that one senses here is the psychological impossibility. Therefore, there is no end to the process of interpretation, however, there is always an end to psychological process. On this ground Wittgenstein wants to keep thought and intention as distinct and separate.

11. INTENTION AND ACTION

Language is inseparably linked to our form of life. Without assuming that human intention to use the language, it is not possible to conceive of language at all. Wittgenstein says "If you exclude the element of intention from language, its whole function then collapses. 65 To obey a rule, to make a report, to give an order, to play a game of chess are all customs and hence can be called as institutions. Language is an institution, and to understand a sentence means to understand a language. 6 An institution is what it is by virtue of the rules that govern the institutions. If the technique of the game of chess did not exist, I could not intend to play a game of chess. In so far as I do intend the construction of a sentence in advance, that is made possible by the fact that I can speak the language in question. Suppose someone asks me: "Do I know what I long for before I get it?". The answer would be obviously yes if I know how to talk. 68

Every sign in the life is dead, it gains life only when we use it says Wittgenstein. ⁶⁹ What is being emphasized here is that a sign is given some significance by using it. A ruler against an object does not say that the body is of such-and-such a length. There has to be someone to read it in a certain conventional rule governed manner. A sign is alive only when it is applied according to the rule it has. Uttering something without meaning, whatever is normally meant by the expression, is not possible. One cannot say I did not mean what the words meant, it would be absurd to say that. ⁷⁰

The question is whether one knows what one wants to do until one does. But such a question is nonsensical. If this is nonsensical, then one surely knows what one intends. Wittgenstein asks: What is that connexion between the act of intending and the thing intended? The

connexion is in the list of rules of the game, in the teaching of it, in the day-to-day practice of playing.⁷¹

When someone cursed and meant N. it is irrelevant whether he looked at picture of N. or whether he imagined him or mentioned his name. Now the question that should not arise is: "The point is how the man who is cursing means his victim." This is because given the conventions, the rules of the words, they would naturally refer to the person who was the victim. Nor, of course, does one ask: "Are you sure that you cursed *him*, that the connexion with him was established?" This seems to be an impossibility. The connection between language and reality is intentional in nature. To say that the order "Do such-and-such is executed by "doing such-and-such" is to make a grammatical statement. Thus, the connection between language and action is made by grammar in conventional terms.

Wittgenstein uses the analogy of copying something in order to explain what is intention and how it is embedded along with what we do. One cannot know the intention of a person simply by looking at the copy. The copy plus the intention in the form of following a rule would be equivallent to the original. By looking at the result alone, one cannot infer the intention of the person. The details are necessary in order to know the intention.⁷⁴

Intention is present only in action, in doing things. To say that I had certain intention is to speak about oneself, the manner in which one reacts to certain things rather than speaking about intention. But it is not a mental state like disposition or that of knowledge. It is inevitably linked to action. Therefore, one can act only in the present, but neverthless like mental modes, it seems to occupy a range, though not measurable. One could say that intention acts like a mental state from the beginning of an action to its completion from a point of view and yet does not occupy time.

To conclude we shall quote again from Wittgenstein. Ye Why do I what to tell him about an intention too, as well as telling him what I did? -- Not because the intention was also something which was going on at that time. But because I want to tell him something about myself, which goes beyond what happened at that time. I reveal to him something

of myself when I tell him what I was going to do.-- Not, however, on grounds of self-observation, but by way of a respone.

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NOTES

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- PI 572-574. Also see PI 586.
- PI 149-151.
- L. Wittgenstein Wittgenstein's Lectures. Cambridge 1930-32 [LWL].
 Edited by Desmond Lee, Blackwell, 1982, p.94. Also see PI 184.
- I. Wittgenstein, Zettel JZJ Ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. Von Wright, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 2nd Edn., 1981, p.8/38.
- 6. PI 550.
- 7. PI 453.
- PI 308.
- 9 Z. p. 9/45.
- 10. PI 587.
- 11. Z. p. 9/44.
- 12. PI 645.
- 13. Z. p. 9/48.
- 14. See LWL p.40.
- 15. PI 613-615.
- 16. Z. p. 9/49.

- 17. LWL pp. 31-32.
- 18. Z. 23/p.4.
- 19. PI 588.
- 20. Z. 8/p. 2.
- 21. LWL p. 112.
- 22. LWL 84.
- 23. Z. 46/p. 9.
- 24. Z. 39/p. 8.
- 25. Z. p. 1/7; also see Z pp. 4-5/24.
- 26. PI 172.
- 27. See PI 173.
- 28. PI 179.
- 29. See PI 225 and PI 226.
- 30. See PI 443. Also see PI 445 and PI 446.
- 31. PI 448.
- 32. PI 446
- 33. LWL pp. 36-37.
- L. Wittgenstein, The Blue and Brown Books [BB]. Basil Blackwell. Oxford, 1975, p. 33.
- 35. See BB. pp. 33-34.
- S.A. Kripke Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1982.
- 37. PI 198. If it is only one person follows a rule only once in life, then this is arbitrarily defining the word "to obey a rule" in a new way. But this is not the normal meaning of the expression "to obey a rule". See PI 199.
- 38. PI 645.
- 39. PI 646.
- 40. PI 653.

- 41. PI 197.
- 42. PI 247.
- 43. Pl 641.
- 44. PI 640.
- 45. See PI 641.
- 46. PI 633.
- 47. PL 637.
- 48. LWL, pp. 31-32.
- 49. BB. p. 147.
- 50. PI 594.
- 51. PI 594.
- 52. PI 594.
- 53. PI 646.
- 54. PI 643. Also see PI 644.
- 55. Z. p. 9/44.
- 56. PI 645.
- 57. See PI 173
- 58. PI 656.
- 59. PI 634. Also See PI 635.
- 60. See PI 143, PI 185-187; also see PI 660 and PI 692.
- 61. PI 635.
- 62. PL 369.
- 63. PI 184. Also see PI 180.
- 64. Z. 41/p. 8.
- L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Grammar*, R. Rhees [Ed.] and Trans. A. Kenny, Blackwell, 1974, p. 145/98. Also see p. 144/96.
- L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Remarks [PR]*, Ed. R. Rhees, trans. R. Hargreaves and R. White Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1975, p. 63/20.

- 67. PI 199.
- 68. PI 441.
- 69. Pl 432 also see PR. p. 69/31.
- 70. PI 674-676, Also see PI 430.
- 71. PI 197
- 72. PI 680
- 73. See PI 681-684. Also see PI 458.
- 74. PI 636. Also see LWL, pp. 36-37.
- 75. PI 659-660.