

CHAPTER III
BEHAVIOURISM AND THE PRIVATE
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Though Ryle and Wittgenstein both appear to be logical behaviourists or close enough to such a position, yet the views of Wittgenstein are different from those of Ryle. Both the philosophers have accepted the view that mental states cannot be analysed without remainder into behaviour. But their difference lies primarily in the fact that, Ryle, in his most uncompromising way, asserts that there is a clear logical route from statements, about behaviour to statements about the mind and vice versa; and Wittgenstein rejects this claim. He says that though there is a link between statements about mental states and ones about behaviour, yet the link is far more subtle or more elusive than entailment. Wittgenstein's claim is that mental states are not reducible to actual or potential behaviour but are still far less detachable than traditional dualists have supposed.

Wittgenstein's views does not, therefore, fall into any clear theoretical slot in the philosophy of mind - and it thus raises a problem of interpretation. The problem of interpreting Wittgenstein's account may perhaps be reduced to the problem of interpreting a single sentence :

When he says :-

"An 'inner process' stands in need of outward criteria." 1

Here the crucial word is 'criteria'. As it is well-known Wittgenstein held that philosophical problems arise through misunderstanding concerning the grammar or use of words, caused, among other things by analogies between forms of expression (e.g. 'I feel x') in different regions of language. He often takes a philosophical understanding of the grammar of the use of a word to turn on a recognition and knowledge of criteria, together with the rejection of such analogies as would prevent the recognition and obscure the use of a term, becomes, for him, a main task of Philosophical Investigation. He takes it that many of the words which occasion philosophical puzzlement are applied in virtue of a wide but connected network of criteria :

"We see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss - crossing." 2 (on 'game').

"And in the same way we also use the word "to read" for a family of cases in different circumstances we apply different criteria for a person's reading." 3

It seems then that for Wittgenstein a criterion is something in terms of which a general term is applicable. So a criterion is a ground or reason for classification. Furthermore, and more importantly, it appears that if 'P' is among the criteria for 'q' then the sort of reason 'P' gives for the application of 'q' is neither deductive nor inductive, in the sense of 'deductive' in which if 'P' is a deductive ground for 'q' then 'P' entails 'q' and in the

(rather, special Humean) sense of Inductive in which if 'p' is an inductive ground for 'q' then 'p' is correlated with 'q'. This feature of the logic of criteria has caused much controversy, but there are familiar reasons for regarding it as a desirable one in the philosophy of mind. There does not seem to be any cogent objections to such a notion : if inductive is used in the above sense, there must be other than inductive grounds for any classification for which there are inductive grounds; and it is widely accepted that the universal precision of definitions which would be required if all such non-inductive grounds were to be deductive does not obtain.

Wittgenstein often seems to think that all the criteria employed in ascription of sensations are behavioural, since one uses behavioural criteria in the ascription of sensations to others, and no criteria at all in the ascription of sensations to oneself.

"What is the criterion for the redness of an image ? For me, when it is someone else's image : What he says and does. For myself, when it is my image : nothing." 4

It is also useful to note the distinction between symptoms and criteria that Wittgenstein makes. Two points in particular concerning this distinction are as follows :-

(i) The distinction between criteria and symptoms

does not require that it be decidable for every item of behaviour whether it is one or the other.

(ii) It is very difficult to elicit the criteria governing the use of many mental concepts - Wittgenstein compares the recognition of those patterns in behaviour to the recognition of facial expression which is unmediated by any precise knowledge of the measurement of the features, distance between them, etc.

"Think of the recognition of facial expressions. Or of the description of facial expressions --- which does not consist in giving the measurements of the face ! Think, too, how one can immitate a man's face without seeing one's own in a mirror." 5

Once this notion of criterion in Wittgenstein is accepted it is easy to see that his position cannot be seen as conforming to the paradigmatic behaviourist mould. For the latter believes that mental state statements are logically reducible (in the sense of entailment) to statements about behaviour. To say that the inner stands in need of outward criteria is therefore, not to deny the occurrence or the existence of the inner, but rather to suggest that the inner becomes available at all in language only through its connection with the outer. And these connections can be of diverse kinds.

Perhaps the best way to bring out the Wittgen-

steinian notion of the connection between the inner and the outer is to consider his so-called private language argument. Under normal circumstances the correlations between behaviour and sensations are not called into question. It is these correlations that provide the ground for the use of sensation words in our language. However if these correlations were merely inductive in the Humean sense which would be natural consequence of a dualist philosophy of mind, then it would be possible to imagine a collapse of these correlations in my own case as well as in the case of others. The private language argument arises in the context of such an imagined collapse. In the absence of the normal correlations, I would have no grounds for ascribing any sensations to people other than myself. But I could, so it may be thought, still ascribe sensations to myself. Now the language in which I ascribe sensations to myself in the event of a collapse of the behavioural criteria of ascribing sensations, will be private to me, understandable by me alone because nobody else can have reason to ascribe to me the sensations that I ascribe to myself.

Thus :

"What about the language which describes my inner experiences and which only I myself can understand ? How do I use words to stand for my sensations ? --- As we ordinarily do? Then are my words for sensations tied up with my natural expressions of

sensation ? In that case my language is not a 'private' one. Someone else might understand it as well as I.

--- But suppose I didn't have any natural expression for the sensation, but only had the sensation ? And now I simply associate names with sensations". 6

Wittgenstein's mention of natural expression here need not be emphasised; elsewhere he speaks simply of 'behaviour' which is the expression of sensation or behaviour which expresses, shows sensations. This is what must be abrogated, in the event of a collapse of the behavioural criteria. So that person has only the sensation left. Wittgenstein next argues that if a person attempted to associate a word with a sensation in this way he would not be able to distinguish between using the word correctly and merely seeming to himself to.

"I want to keep a diary about the recurrence of a certain sensation. To this end I associate it with the sign "S" and write this sign in a calendar for every day on which I have the sensation. ---I will remark first of all that a definition of the sign cannot be formulated. ---But still I can give myself a kind of ostensive definition. ---How ? can I point to the sensation ? Not in the ordinary sense. But I speak or write the sign down, and at the same time I concentrate my attention on the sensation - and so, as it were, point to it inwardly. ---But what is this ceremony for ? For that is all it seems to be ! A definition surely serves to establish the meaning of a

sign. ---Well, that is done precisely by the concentrating of my attention; for in this way I impress on myself the connexion between the sign and the sensation. ---But "I impress it on myself" can only mean : this process brings it about that I remember the connexion right in the future. But in the present case I have no criterion of correctness. One would like to say : Whatever is going to seem right to me is right. And that only means that here we can't talk about right". 7

The distinction which does in fact normally exist between a person's using a word in his own case correctly and his merely thinking that he does turn on what is missing from the private language in particular on the behavioural criteria for the ascription of sensations. Roughly we may expect this distinction to be provided by the correlation (or lack of it) between the person's uses of the sensation word with the other criteria for the use of the word. And in so far as such a distinction is a necessary condition of someone's being said to follow a rule in the use of a word, no one, in his use of a sensation word can be said to follow such a rule as would be set up in the kind of correlation suggested in the passage quoted above. (P.I. 258)

Wittgenstein held, as we said earlier that in ascribing a sensation to himself a person uses no criteria. It seems clear that if a person were said to use a sensation word in a self ascription on any basis or ground it would be

nothing but the occurrence of the sensations. In particular Wittgenstein denies that a person ascribes sensation to himself on the basis of the behaviour which others might use in judging that he has the sensation. He says in a parallel case :-

"I do not say it from observation of my behaviour. But it only makes sense because I do behave in this way." 8

The kind of absurdity in the supposition that a person ascribes sensation to himself on these criteria appears in 'I am groaning and grimacing and holding my toes protectively ; so it must be that I have a pain in my toes'.

Thus when Wittgenstein assumes the abrogation of the behavioural criteria for the ascription of sensation, he does not change any basis a person might be thought to have for ascribing a sensation to himself, for using a sensation word in his own case. He rather removes all grounds for a distinction between the persons using the word correctly and merely seeming to himself to do, and so removes the condition of the person being said to use the word correctly or according to rule. This in turn is a condition of the person's being said to recognize or identify his sensation correctly. This then is a requirement to which Wittgenstein is responding when he says - he needs a criterion of correctness for the use of the word or a criterion of iden-

tity for the sensation.

"If I assume the abrogation of the normal-language game with the expression of a sensation I need a criteria of identity for the sensation."9

So in the normal language game with the expression of sensation a person neither has nor needs a criterion of identity for the sensation he ascribes to himself. The required distinction in his use of sensation word in his own case is provided by the behavioural criteria for the ascription of the sensations to others. Although he does not use these criteria, he, like anybody else, can regard them as giving a background against which the use of sensation words in his criterionless self ascription can be judged as correct. So he can be said to use sensation words in his own case correctly and in accordance with rules, if not on the basis of the criteria to which correctness of his uses is answerable.

It follows that it is misleading as regards the role of the sensation itself in the self-ascriptive use of sensation words to speak of as if a person used such a word on the basis of his recognition or correct identification of a sensation. For this implies that the sensation is something which can by itself be said to be correctly identified; whereas the behavioural criteria provide a condition of the sensation's being (significantly said to

be) correctly identified. So a person cannot regard the identification of his own sensation as logically independent of his behaviour.

It should be clear from the above that, (i) Why we said at the beginning that the Wittgenstien view of the relationship between mental concepts and behaviour is much more subtle than a classical behaviourist view can possibly be ; (ii) Why the notion of criterion, in this case behavioural criterion must be other than that of either an inductive basis or a deductive entailing condition and (iii) Why in spite of the logical link between sensation and behavioural conditions, the inner is never abolished in Wittgenstein view of things.

This becomes even clearer when we consider the remarks about memory in the argument of (Section-256 - 258). In the appearance of the sign, the ostensive definition, there is no question of correctness or lack of it; but then the problem is whether there can be a way of telling whether

"this ...brings it about that I remember the connection (between the sign and the type of sensation) right in the future."10

So the question whether the diarist's has a distinction between correct and the merely seemingly correct use of his sign is almost the same as the question whether he has a

distinction between remembering and merely seeming to remember what sensation he had. Now it is frequently urged that Wittgenstein's argument can be reduced to absurdity because it depends on some sort of general assumption of the unreliability of memory for sensations. As it has been urged above only a lack of reasons to make a distinction about memory, in a special case, rather than some assumption about unreliability of memory in general, is at issue in Wittgenstein's argument. In section 265 Wittgenstein imagines a table or dictionary "that exists only in our imagination."¹¹ and asks whether you can justify a translation by looking a word up in that dictionary. Wittgenstein suggests that it would not be a justification, because a justification involves an appeal to something independent. His questioner then says, 'surely I can appeal from memory to memory', gives an example of such an appeal and asks whether his example is the same sort of case as the imagined dictionary. Wittgenstein says no, that it is not the same; presumably his reason is that one of the memories in the questioner's example, that of a railway timetable, is a memory that can be checked, whereas nothing in the dictionary of the imagination could. In saying that the cases are different, Wittgenstein implies that the appeal from memory to memory in the case of the timetable is legitimate. He then asks whether the appeal, which is legitimate, given that the cases are different would remain so if the cases were more alike;

if, contrary to fact, the image of the timetable could not be tested. There is nothing in the passage to suggest that Wittgenstein thinks that an appeal to memory, or from memory to memory, is subject to some general objections. To think so would be to take Wittgenstein's "no" for "yes".

In the case of the putative private language, because of the abrogation or collapse of behavioural criteria for ascription of sensation to others, an appeal from memory to memory would be illegitimate because there could be no independent check on any particular memory impression. Such a check could be provided only by the possibility of appealing to others, that is on a return to behavioural criteria for the ascription of mental states to others. Wittgenstein's claim may be questionable, but it is clear that it has nothing to do with the view that (i) remembering is not an inner process, (ii) that remembering consists simply in behaving or in being disposed to behave in certain sorts of ways; and (iii) statements about behaviour entail statements about mental states. What however the argument does claim is that my ascriptions of mental states to myself is in some deep sense parasitic upon my ascription of mental states to others; and this is very different from the central behaviourist thesis.

REFERENCES

1. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations,
Section, 580, P. 153.
2. Ibid, Section, 66, P. 32.
3. Ibid, Section, 164, P. 66.
4. Ibid, Section, 377, P. 117.
5. Ibid, Section, 285, P. 98.
6. Ibid, Section, 256, P. 91.
7. Ibid, Section, 258, P. 92.
8. Ibid, Section, 357, P. 113.
9. Ibid, Section, 288, P. 99.
10. Ibid, Section, 258, P. 92.
11. Ibid, Section, 265, P. 93.
