

PHILOSOPHICAL LECTURE

INTENTION AND UNCERTAINTY

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IN the first section of this lecture I formulate and criticize a theory of intention which is, in essentials, one which I advanced in an unpublished paper written a number of years ago, and which is a descendant of a leading idea in G. F. Stout's essay 'Voluntary Action'.¹ In the remainder, I raise and try to deal with a sceptical puzzle about intention which could, on the face of it, have been met if the theory reviewed in the first section had proved tenable, but which, to my mind, becomes acute otherwise. In the course of this discussion, I reach a neo-Prichardian position which involves a concept bearing some considerable degree of affinity to Kenny's concept of 'voliting',² though I think that my route to it is quite substantially different from that followed by Kenny.

I

The theory to be considered advances a three-pronged analysis of statements of the type 'X intends to do A'. I will put up as plausible a case as I can for each clause in turn.

(1) It would seem odd to say 'X intends to go abroad next month, but won't in fact take any preliminary steps which are (or are regarded by him as being) essential for this purpose'. Of course, no preliminary steps may in fact be required at all; but if we think that, if any steps should turn out to be required, he would nevertheless not take them, then we should hesitate to say flatly that he intends to go. It is true that if the further conditions shortly to be mentioned were fulfilled we might also hesitate to say flatly that he doesn't intend to go. We should be likely to hedge by saying 'He doesn't *really* intend' or 'He

¹ In *Studies in Philosophy and Psychology*.

² See *Action, Emotion and Will*, by Anthony Kenny, ch. xi.

doesn't seriously intend'. But I do not think we should say that he intends in the full sense of 'intend'. So let us say that one condition required for the truth of 'X intends to go abroad' is that X would in fact, at least for a time and up to a point, take steps which in his view are required to be taken to make it possible for him to go.

(2) The second condition is more tricky. If someone were to say, 'I have definitely made up my mind to retire in two years' time', someone else might say, 'What if the directors offer you £1,000 a year more to stay on?' Now if in response to this he allows that the directors might make such an offer, and furthermore, that if they were to do so it is not impossible that he would accept the offer and not retire, it would be linguistically extremely peculiar if he then went on to say, 'But I have definitely decided to retire'. We expect him to back down on his original statement. More than this, if it were clear to us that he had already envisaged the possibility of this offer being made and accepted, we should feel entitled to criticize him for having said in the first place, 'I have definitely made up my mind to retire in two years' time'. The case would be similar if the reply to his original declaration were, 'But it might not be financially/legally possible for you to retire then'. If he admits this he cannot go on saying simpliciter, 'I have definitely made up my mind to retire in two years' (he must add something like 'if I can'); and if we think he has already envisaged the possibility that he may not be legally (or financially) able to retire, we feel entitled to criticize the formulation of his original declaration. I think it is also time that we should be unhappy about the propriety of ourselves saying (without any qualification), 'He has definitely made up his mind to retire', if we thought that he envisaged the possibility that he might in fact not retire.

The case with regard to 'I intend' ('he intends') is perhaps less clear; but here too I am inclined to think that to say of someone that he intends to do A (without qualification) is, in standard examples, to imply or suggest that he does not think it doubtful whether he will in fact do A. The following imaginary conversation will perhaps support this contention:

X. I intend to go to that concert on Tuesday.

Y. You will enjoy that.

X. I may not be there.

Y. I am afraid I don't understand.

- X. The police are going to ask me some awkward questions on Tuesday afternoon, and I may be in prison by Tuesday evening.
- Y. Then you should have said to begin with, 'I intend to go to the concert if I am not in prison', or, if you wished to be more reticent, something like, 'I should probably be going', or, 'I hope to go', or, 'I aim to go', or, 'I intend to go if I can'.

It seems to me that Y's remarks are reasonable, perhaps even restrained. It is true that there are cases in which we would not complain that the speaker had omitted such a qualification as 'if I can', even though we were well aware that he had doubts about the actual performance of that which he said he intended to do, but I am inclined to think that these cases can be accounted for consistently with the thesis I am suggesting. Sometimes we tolerate the omission of such a phrase as 'if I can' when the nature of the proposed action is such that it is obvious that the speaker must have doubts about the fact of performance, and so the warning 'if I can' is unnecessary. Suppose I say, 'I intend to keep ducks when I am a very old man'; my extreme old age is still some way off, and it can be assumed that I am perfectly aware that a lot may happen between now and then which would upset my plans. Again, if I say of someone that he intends to climb Mt. Everest, the task specified is of such notorious difficulty that no one is misled if the qualification 'if he can' is omitted. We may note, however, even in these cases, if the obstacles and uncertainties are pointed out, and are admitted by the speaker to be such as to render performance dubious, he cannot now refuse to qualify his specification of the intention by such riders as 'if I can' ('if he can'); if, after the magnitude of the task is pointed out, I say, 'Nevertheless, he intends to climb Mt. Everest', I imply, I think, that he expects to triumph over the difficulties; if I wished to avoid this suggestion I could use another verb, e.g. 'aims to' or 'hopes to'.

Bearing in mind these considerations, we can I think allow that there is quite a good case for saying that one condition for the truth of 'X intends to do A' is that X should be free from doubt whether he will in fact do A (provided that 'intends' is being used *strictly*). But I do not think this formulation of the condition will be adequate as it stands; we must look at the force of the phrase, 'free from doubt'. A man could be said to be

free from doubt whether something will happen if he has simply not considered the question at all; or again, if he knows perfectly well that it won't happen it is not this sort of freedom from doubt that is needed for this theory; what is needed is the notion of 'having no doubt *that*', which seems to be indistinguishable from 'being sure that'. So I think the theory, to avoid the possibility of confusion or equivocation, should come into the open and employ the notion of 'being sure' (even if it later suffers for doing so). We may then propose, as a second condition for the truth of 'X intends to do A', that X should be sure that he will in fact do A.

(3) The argument for the third condition is as follows. For it to be the case that X intends to go abroad, it must be the case that his being sure that he will go is not dependent on his having what seems to him satisfactory evidence that he will go. Once we found that he thought he would go *because* he thought the evidence pointed that way, we should say that he was, at the moment at least, treating the question of his going not as a practical question (one calling for action or decision), but as a theoretical question (one to be settled by investigation), and that it is impossible (logically) to treat a question in both of these ways at once. X may of course (intending to go) marshal theoretical reasons which support the view that he will go (e.g. 'look how much I stand to lose by not going'), in order to convince someone else that he will go; but he cannot (consistently with intending to go) do this to convince *himself*. We can then offer, as a third condition for the truth of 'X intends to do A', that X's being sure that he will do A is not dependent on evidence.

The theory, then, offers three conditions for the truth of 'X intends to do A'. The conditions are supposed to be individually necessary and jointly sufficient; the falsity of either the second or the third condition is sufficient for the falsity of 'X intends to do A'; but this is not true of the first condition; if this condition is false the truth or falsity of 'X intends to do A' *may* be undecidable. The conditions, stated as briefly as possible, are that

- (1) X would take steps required for doing A,
- (2) X is sure that he will do A, and
- (3) X's assurance of this is independent of evidence.

I now turn to criticism. The crucial difficulties arise in con-

nection with the central idea of the theory, the suggestion that the focal element in an intention is a certain sort of belief.

To begin with, one may well feel pretty uncomfortable about the notion of beliefs which are (in the required sense) independent of evidence. Suppose I were to say, 'I have just decided that the Chairman has a corkscrew in his pocket', and, when asked what reason I have for supposing this to be so, I reply, cheerfully, 'None whatsoever'. I shall just not be taken seriously at all, and even if I systematically set about behaving as if he had a corkscrew (e.g. collect a lot of bottles which need uncorking), it could be pointed out that to decide to behave as if p were true is not the same as to believe that p . It might, however, be argued that completely unevidenced beliefs will not be beliefs that we *adopt*, but beliefs that come upon us, that we find ourselves with. Hunches might be cited as examples of this sort of belief. But this line runs into trouble in three ways. (1) It is far from clear that a hunch is a belief, and not something on the strength of which (together perhaps with the memory of the correctness of previous hunches) one may form a somewhat tentative belief. (2) If a hunch is a belief, and one which one finds oneself with rather than one which one adopts, it is importantly different from the alleged unevidenced belief involved in intending. For if there are such beliefs involved in intention, they are certainly not usually things we find ourselves with; we do not, normally at least, find ourselves with intentions; we form intentions. (3) Again, if a hunch is a belief, it is one which we should feel more comfortable about if it were supported by evidence. But the beliefs supposed to be involved in intention are, according to the theory, perfectly satisfactory as they are; we not merely are not relying on evidence, we have no need of it. The general direction of this attack is, I hope, clear; it is that the less able we are to find parallels in the non-practical sphere for the so-called beliefs about our own future actions which the theory invites, the more special these so-called beliefs become, and the more unjustified is the application of the term 'belief' (or 'assurance').

However, the case is not yet hopeless, for I think a more promising parallel can be found. Consider the pair of statements, 'I remembered that I bit my nurse', and, 'I remembered biting my nurse'. If we ask how they differ, it would, I think, be quite a promising answer to say that whereas I may be entitled to make the first statement if my belief that I bit my nurse is wholly dependent on evidence or testimony, this does not entitle me

to make the second statement. For me to be in a position to make the second statement, it must be the case that, even if I have been provided, say, with testimony that I bit my nurse, my belief that I did so should be independent of that testimony, i.e. that I should be prepared to maintain my belief in the event of that testimony turning out to have been unreliable. If this is correct, then memory sometimes at least involves beliefs which are not held on the basis of evidence. These memory-beliefs could, moreover, be held to be parallel to beliefs allegedly involved in intention in a further respect; sometimes at least we are perfectly happy with them as they are; we would be no happier if we were provided with information which supported them.

Here, however, the parallel ends, and the lack of parallel begins to emerge. (1) Immediate memory-beliefs are things we find ourselves with; we do not adopt them or form them. (2) I *can* come to question an immediate memory belief of my own, and if I do, then I do rely on confirmatory evidence to settle my doubt, but if I begin to doubt whether I shall after all go abroad this year, I do not dispel this doubt by gathering confirmatory evidence. (3) If we ask why (assuming the theory to be correct) I hold a belief such that (say) I shall go abroad, the only possible answer is that I believe this because, for example, it is something that I should particularly like to be the case, or something that I think ought to be the case. This is not only common form, it is regarded by us as entirely reasonable. So, to put it crudely, the theory represents having an intention as being a case of licensed wishful thinking. (4) It could be most unnatural to speak of someone who intends to do A as thinking truly, or falsely, or rightly, or mistakenly, that he will do A; that is, we cannot employ here the ordinary terminology for appraising beliefs (cf. Aristotle on the difference between *προαίρεσις* and *δόξα*). This point may be (and I think has been¹) put vividly by saying that if a man fails to fulfil an intention, we do not criticize his state of mind for failing to conform to the facts, we criticize the facts for failing to conform to his state of mind. I think the conclusion to be drawn from this discussion is that a so-called belief which cannot be confirmed, which cannot be called true, false, right, or mistaken, and which it is reasonable to hold because one would like that which one believes to be the case, is not properly called a belief at all; and this conclusion is, I think, fatal to the theory under discussion.

¹ By Professor Anscombe.

II

A possible sceptical position may be stated as follows:

(1) A man who expresses an intention to do A (who says 'I intend to do A') is involved in a factual commitment; he is logically committed to subscribing, with this or that degree of firmness, to a factual statement to the effect that he will do A. Furthermore, given that expressions of intention have *legitimate* application, the intender must be able to make such a factual statement *with justification*; he must be regarded as entitled to say (as being in a position to say) that he will do A.

(2) Since 'I shall in fact do A' cannot be the expression of an incorrigible statement, if the intender is to be entitled to make this statement, there must be something which gives him this title; if someone is entitled, the question 'What gives him the title?' must have an answer.

(3) The standard source of entitlement to make such a factual statement is not available for this case, since the ordinary concept of intention is such that if one intends to do A, one is logically debarred from relying on evidence that one will in fact do A. No alternative source, however, of a different, non-evidential kind, for the entitlement to say 'I shall in fact do A' seems to be forthcoming.

(4) One must, therefore, reject the idea that expressions of intention have a legitimate use; the ordinary concept of intention is incoherent, since it involves (a) the idea that one who intends to do A is entitled to say that he will, in fact, do A, (b) the idea that there is nothing which gives him this title.

On the theory which I have just been considering (the three-pronged analysis of intention) there is, at least on the face of it, a way of disposing of the sceptic's position. It might be possible to maintain that 'I intend to do A, but perhaps I shall not do A' is illegitimate for the same reason, whatever that is, which makes 'I am sure (certain) that *p*, but perhaps not *p*' illegitimate; for on the theory in question 'I am sure that I shall do A' is straightforwardly entailed by 'I intend to do A'. It might further be possible to maintain that the illegitimacy involved is analogous to that involved in Moore's 'paradox' ('*p*, but I do not believe that *p*'). But if the three-pronged analysis of intention be rejected, then we lose the basis for supposing 'I am sure that I shall do A' to be entailed by 'I intend to do A'.

It can be argued, I think, that this sceptical position is clearly untenable; but even if this be so, I do not regard the mere refutation of the sceptic as an adequate treatment of his puzzle. There are two difficulties in the sceptic's position.

(1) He in effect complains 'If only the statement that one will in fact do A (made by someone who would ordinarily be described as intending to do A) conformed to the requirements satisfied by a respectable expression of belief, then the concept of intention would be open to no objection'. It is clear that the sceptic proposes to reject the concept of intention while retaining the concept of belief. But it is very dubious indeed whether this proposal is itself coherent. For, if the concept of intention be rejected, other concepts which involve it must also be rejected, for example such concepts as those of planning and of acting. But is it not essential to the notion of belief that it should be possible, if occasion arises, to act on a belief? Will not the rejection of the notion of acting involve also the rejection of the notion of belief?

(2) In order that the sceptic should get going at all, it is essential for him to show that the ordinary concept of intention does involve a factual commitment as regards future action. This contention seems to rest largely, if not entirely, on a point of analogy between a (so-called) intender's statement that he will do A and the general run of factual statements; namely that someone who announces an intention to do A is ordinarily held *both* to have given others a justification for planning on the assumption that he will do A *and* to have committed himself, on pain of being convicted of insincerity, to planning on that assumption himself; just as someone who makes a factual statement that *p* is held to have given others a justification for planning on the assumption that *p* and to have committed himself to planning on that assumption. But if the notion of intention, and with it the notion of planning, is to be rejected, can this analogy be maintained? It looks as if the sceptic needs to use the notion of planning in order to put himself in a position to reject it. Can one use one's own bootstraps in order to demonstrate that one has no bootstraps to pull oneself up by?

But to refute the sceptic is not enough. I suggest that the point of most sceptical arguments is not to attempt to persuade us that something very paradoxical is in fact true, but to confront us with a quandary; to give us seemingly cogent reasons for accepting something which can independently be shown to

be false. What is primarily wanted, in reply to the sceptic, is an attack on the cogency of the reasons apparently supporting the sceptic's 'conclusion'.

So far as the current topic is concerned, one might try to discharge this task in one or other of two ways; (a) by denying that the factual commitment allegedly involved in the ordinary notion of intention is really present, or (b) by maintaining that, contrary to appearance, one who intends to do A does have (and rely on) some evidential basis for the statement that he will in fact do A.

A. *The possibility of denying the presence of the factual commitment*

(i) *Thesis*

There is, in Brecht's *Refugee Conversations*, an anecdote which relates (no doubt fictively) that Denmark was at one time plagued by a succession of corrupt finance ministers, and that, to deal with this situation, a law was passed requiring periodic inspection of the books of the Finance Minister. A certain Finance Minister, when visited by the inspectors, said to them 'If you inspect my books, I shall not continue to be your finance minister'. They retired in confusion, and only eighteen months later was it discovered that the Finance Minister had spoken nothing other than the literal truth.

This anecdote, it seems, exploits a modal ambiguity in the future tense, between (a) the future indicated or factual, and (b) the future intentional. This ambiguity extends beyond the first person form of the tense; there is a difference between 'There will_f be light' (future factual) and 'There will_i be light' (future intentional); God might have uttered the second sentence while engaged in the Creation. Sensitive English speakers (which most of us are not) may be able to mark this distinction by discriminating between 'shall' and 'will'. 'I shall_i go to London' stands to 'I intend to go to London' analogously to the way in which 'Oh for rain tomorrow!' stands to 'I wish for rain tomorrow'. Just as no one else can say *just* what I say when I say 'Oh for rain tomorrow!' so no one else can say *just* what I say when I say 'I shall_i go to London'. If someone else says 'Grice will go to London', he will be expressing his, not my, intention that I shall go. There is (so the thesis maintains) no unambiguous but less specific future mood, no 'future neutral'. One who intends to do A cannot *honestly* use the future factual, only the future intentional; if he uses the future factual he will

be *pretending* that doing A is something with regard to which he has no intentions (maybe that it is something not within his control). So, if one has an intention to do A, one either says (dishonestly) 'I shall_F do A', in which case a request for an evidential basis is perfectly legitimate (and to maintain one's pretence in response to such a request one may have in supply, and perhaps even invent, an evidential basis for 'I shall_F do A'); or one says 'I shall_I do A', in which case a request for an evidential basis is syntactically no more appropriate than it would be in response to 'Oh for rain tomorrow!' The sceptic, then, is hamstrung.

(ii) *Reply to the thesis*

The thesis is heroic, in view of the following objections.

(1) If one intends to do A, one can certainly discuss the possibility that one will be prevented, and so that one will_F not do A. Even if use of the future intentional were to be restricted to expressions of an intention to attempt to do A, rather than to do A, it is still true that an attempt to do A may be prevented by such contingencies as sudden death; so the possibility of the prevention of an attempt to do A is no less discussible than the possibility of being prevented from doing A. Furthermore, one can surely not merely discuss whether one will be prevented, but deny that one will be prevented. So even if one intends to do A, one can (honestly) deny that one will_F not do A; in which case it must be possible to assert (honestly) that one will_F do A.

(2) One who expresses an intention not only says something which, to this or that degree, justifies others in planning on the assumption that he will in fact do A, but also puts himself in a position in which he is expected himself to plan on this assumption. Such planning on his part will involve the use of 'I shall do A' in the antecedents of conditionals, where it presumably has the force of 'I shall_F do A'.

(3) The thesis offers no reason why it should be impossible to operate simultaneously with both moods of the future tense. There is certainly no general principle of the mutual exclusiveness of different moods; I can certainly combine 'Oh that it may rain tomorrow!' either with 'It (probably) will rain tomorrow' or with 'it (probably) will not rain tomorrow'.

One might consider a modified form of the thesis; namely that an intender may use both moods, but can only reasonably use the future factual in so far as he has evidential backing.

This modification either runs into the difficulty that it licenses such illegitimate locutions as 'I shall_I do A, but I cannot say (have no reason to think) that I shall_F do A', or else involves the contention that one who intends always does have evidential backing (viz. his intention) for the relevant future factual, and this reduces to an example of the second main line against the sceptic ((*b*) above).

Before considering line (*b*) directly, I want to give a little attention to the possible impact on the sceptical puzzle of the introduction of a generic notion of 'acceptance'.

Acceptance

It seems that a degree of analogy between intending and believing has to be admitted; likewise the presence of a factual commitment in the case of an expression of intention. We can now use the term 'acceptance' to express a generic concept applying both to cases of intention and to cases of belief. He who intends to do A and he who believes that he will do A can both be said to accept (or to accept it as being the case) that he will do A. We could now attempt to renovate the three-pronged analysis discussed in section I, replacing references in that analysis to being sure that one will do A by references to accepting that one will do A; we might reasonably hope thereby to escape the objections raised in section I, since these objections seemingly centred on special features of the notions of certainty and belief which would not attach to the generic notion of acceptance. Hope that the renovated analysis will enable us to meet the sceptic will not immediately be realized, for the sceptic can still ask (*a*) why some cases of acceptance should be specially dispensed from the need for evidential backing, and (*b*) if certain cases are exempt from evidential justification but not from justification, what sort of justification is here required.

Some progress might be achieved by adopting a different analysis of intention in terms of acceptance. We might suggest that 'X intends to do A' is very roughly equivalent to the conjunction of

- (1) X accepts that he will do A
- and (2) X accepts that his doing A will result from (the effect of) his acceptance that he will do A.

The idea is that when a case of acceptance is also a case of belief, the acceptor does not regard his acceptance as contributing towards the realization of the state of affairs the future

existence of which he accepts; whereas when a case of acceptance is not a case of belief but a case of intention, he does regard the acceptance as so contributing.

Such an analysis clearly enables us to deal with the sceptic with regard to his question (*a*), namely why some cases of acceptance (those which are cases of intention) should be specially exempt from the need for evidential backing. For if my going to London is to depend causally on my acceptance that I shall go, the possession of satisfactory evidence that I shall go will involve possession of the information that I accept that I shall go. Obviously, then, I cannot (though others can) come to accept that I shall go on the basis of satisfactory evidence; for to have such evidence I should have *already* to have accepted that I shall go. I cannot decide whether or not to accept that I shall go on the strength of evidence which includes as a datum that I do accept that I shall go. But we are still unable to deal with the sceptic as regards question (*b*), namely what sort of justification is available for those cases of acceptance which require non-evidential justification even though they involve a factual commitment. Though it is clear that, on this analysis, one must not expect the intender to rely on evidence for his statement of what he will in fact do, we have not provided any account of the nature of the non-evidential considerations which may be adduced to justify such a statement, nor (*a fortiori*) of the reasons why such considerations might legitimately be thought to succeed in justifying such a statement.

B. Second main line against the sceptic: an intender does have evidential backing

When faced with the suggestion that one who intends to do A really does have evidence that he will in fact do A, it would be dangerous for the sceptic to rely on an argument from usage to rebut the suggestion; to rely, for example, on the oddity of saying 'How do you know that you will go to London?' or 'What reason have you for thinking that you will go to London?' in response to someone who has expressed his intention of going to London by saying 'I shall go to London'. For it might be argued that in the *unusual* case in which an interrogation does not assume that it is up to X whether he goes to London or not, such questions are in order and are at least partially answered by 'I intend to go'; it is only when as is normally the case, one already assumes that, if a man says he will go to London, he

says so because this is his intention, that such questions are odd; and they are *then* odd because they ask a question the answer to which the asker already knows, or thinks he knows.

The sceptic's best resource seems to be the following argument. If an intender has and relies on evidence that he will perform, this evidence either (a) is independent of his intention to perform, or (b) includes the fact that he intends to perform. If (a), then it will be difficult or impossible to avoid the admission that it makes no difference, as regards performance taking place, whether the intention is present or not; performance is something that the performer cannot avoid, and, if so, something which he cannot regard as within the scope of a possible intention on his part. If (b), then, since the fact that one intends to do A cannot be a logically conclusive reason for supposing that one will do A, it must be logically possible for a situation to arise in which *this* piece of evidence favourable to the idea that one will do A is outweighed by counter-evidence. I ought to be able to say 'I intend to do A, though other evidence makes it virtually certain that I shall not in fact do A', just as I can say 'It looks to me as if there were a red object before me, but other evidence makes it virtually certain that there is in fact no such object before me'. But the former is something that I cannot legitimately say; and this fact blocks the suggestion that my intention to do A can properly be regarded as being (for me) evidence that I shall do A.

An approach to a solution via consideration of action

We may remind ourselves of a Prichardian problem about action. If, somewhat artificially, we treat such sentences as 'X raised his arm' as restricted, in clear application, to descriptions of actions, then we may say that 'X raised his arm' entails, but is not equivalent to, 'X's arm went up'. What more, then, is required for the truth of 'X raised his arm' beyond (1) 'X's arm went up'? Perhaps (2¹) 'X intended to raise his arm'. But the introduction of (2¹), as it stands, would involve circularity, since the analysandum ('raise his arm') reappears in it. So we might substitute (2) 'X intended that his arm should go up'. (1) and (2) together, however, are not sufficient; X might intend that his arm should go up, and it might go up; yet, if it went up because of, for example, an appropriately placed electrode, X would not (in the favoured sense of 'raise') have raised it. So we seem to need (3) 'X's arm went up *because* X intended that it should go up'; and it would be natural to interpret (3)

as specifying that the arm's going up was a result or effect of X's intending that it should go up.

We now face a twofold difficulty.

(a) It seems that my intending that so-and-so should occur involves my thinking of this occurrence as something which will result from something which *I do*; if so, we start by explaining doing A in terms of intending that so-and-so should occur, and then have to explain intending that so-and-so should occur; in part at least, in terms of doing something (doing B). This will lead to an infinite regress.

(b) There is obviously a distinction between cases in which an intention that A should occur may be expected to be effective and those in which it cannot, at least in any relatively direct way. An intention that my arm should go up would fall into the first group, an intention that my hair should stand on end into the second. How do we learn to separate the two sorts of case? The obvious answer seems to be 'By experience'. But I cannot find by experience that an *intention* that my hair should stand on end is ineffective; for I cannot *have* such an intention unless I think of my hair's standing on end as a matter within my direct control; and to think of this as being so is to suppose myself as being already provided with the answer which experience is supposed to give me.

Both these difficulties will be avoidable if we can replace, in the analysis 'intending that' by some concept—call it 'Z-ing that'—which satisfies the following condition: that it should be closely related to, indeed involved in, 'intending that', but that, unlike 'intending that', 'Z-ing that so-and-so should occur' should *not* entail that the occurrence is thought of as being within one's control. Prichard, for reasons not unlike those here mentioned, introduced such a concept, which he called 'willing'. I would like to suggest that he deserves great credit (a) for seeing and taking seriously the initial problems about action, (b) for seeing the lines along which an answer must proceed, (c) for looking for a concept which applies both in cases of one's own action and in cases which are not cases of one's own action (e.g. 'willing the footballer to run faster'), and (d) for seeing that the accurate specification of willing should take the form 'willing that . . .', not 'willing to . . .'. The deficiencies in his account do not lie in these regions, though I think that they are usually thought to do so; they lie rather in the fact that he did not give an adequate characterization of the notion of

willing (he did not, indeed, seem very greatly interested in doing so; what little he does say is dubious or misleading, for example that willing is 'an activity' and that it is '*sui generis*').

What we need is to find analogies between the state of the man who does something intentionally (e.g. scratches his head) and other states not conjoined with intentional action; just as previously we found analogies between intending and believing. Let us first, however, stipulate that willing is to belong to the same general categorial family as intending and wanting (and, maybe, believing); it is not a process or activity, but rather, perhaps, a 'state', though the precise significance of any such classificatory term would emerge only within the context of a developed theory. We do not by this stipulation (we hope) commit ourselves with respect to any particular candidate for the further analysis of 'willing'; we do not, for example, exclude a physicalistic analysis.

Let us consider the following four examples:

- (i) I scratch my head (intentionally);
- (ii) I intend to scratch my head in one minute's time;
- (iii) I wish, wholeheartedly, when tied up, that I could scratch my head;
- (iv) I wish, wholeheartedly, being *now* tied up, that I had scratched my head two minutes ago, when I was not tied up.

There seem to me to be the following, possibly familiar, points of analogy between the four specified situations.

(1) In each case I think, or assume without question, that there is a good case for saying that it would be (would have been) a good thing if my hand were to scratch (had scratched) my head.

(2) There is no rival occurrence the case for which is in serious competition with that for head-scratching.

(3) Not only do I recognize the superiority of the case for head-scratching, but I do not shrink from the idea of this taking (having taken) place.

(4) The considerations relevant to the merits of the case for head-scratching are apart from time-differences, the same in each example; e.g. that head-scratching will (would, would have) relieve (relieved) an itch.

(5) If, when tied up, I say 'I wish I could scratch my head' and my gaoler immediately releases me, it will be very odd if I do not then scratch my head. I can refrain and say (a) 'the itch has gone' thereby implying that there is no longer a case for head-scratching, or (b) 'I've changed my mind'; but I cannot say 'I only said, when tied up, that I wished that I could scratch my head; but now that I am untied I am faced with a quite different question, namely whether or not to scratch my head'.

If we accept the generic concept of 'willing that', as a concept which captures such analogies as those just mentioned, then perhaps 'X scratched his head' may be regarded as roughly analysable as follows:

- (1) X's hand scratched his head;
- (2) X willed that his hand should scratch his head;
- (3) The circumstance specified in (1) resulted, relatively directly (with no intervening overt link) from the circumstance specified in (2).

Normally the first, and sometimes the second, of two further conditions will also be fulfilled:

- (4) X expected that it would be the case that (3);
- (5) X willed that it would be the case that (3).

But I do not see any reason to regard either (4) or (5) as a necessary condition for the truth of 'X scratched his head'.

What, then, are we to say about the analysis of 'X now intends to scratch his head in one minute's time'? Perhaps this can be regarded as roughly analysable as

- (1) X wills now that his hand should scratch his head in one minute's time;
- (2) X believes that his present will that his hand should scratch his head in one minute's time will result at the time in question in X's hand scratching X's head.

To deal with our sceptic, we must show with what justification X has the thought mentioned in clause (2) of this provisional analysis.

(1) X is in a position to say what his will *now* is. This is clearly not, for X, an evidential matter, though its status is by no means easy to determine.

(2) X is (or may be) in a position to say that, if one minute

hence his will is still the same, then his head will be scratched; this will be for X an evidential matter, and rests on (a) his knowing from experience that head-scratching is a matter within his control, that is, is the sort of occurrence which will result from willing that it occur, provided that there are no interference-factors, and (b) his having reason to suppose that, on this occasion, there will be no interference-factor.

The justifiability of X's factual commitment, if he expresses an intention by saying 'I shall scratch my head in one minute's time', to its being the case that he will in fact scratch his head in one minute's time, reduces then, to the question of the justifiability of an assumption on his part, given that he *now* wills that his head be scratched in one minute, that he will still in one minute hence will that this be so. This question, which is fairly closely related to questions about the predictability of one's own decisions (which have been worked on by David Pears and others), is not one which I shall attempt to resolve in this lecture.