

Philosophy 132  
Philosophy of Mind  
Handout 11  
Monday 8 October 2007

### 1. *The Location of Sensation*

Sensations are located in parts of one's body: one feels an itch in one's ankle; or a sore part on one's left knee; an area of tenderness on the back of your left arm; or a warm tickling sensation in the middle of one's back.

It is conceivable that one can have qualitatively exactly the same pain in one's left hand as in one's right. The difference between feeling it in one's left hand and in one's right hand is just that it is felt to be in the one place, one's left hand, rather than the other, one's right hand.

So the situation of feeling the pain in one or other of these places, or in both at once are different kinds of situation experientially. How does an adverbialist deal with this?

As with spatial location in the visual case, location of bodily sensation can play an *individuating* role.

Does this show that individual pains are objects? What is the role of bodily location here?

### 2. *Is a Pain Like a Marble in your Pocket?*

- (1) There is a marble in my jacket pocket
- (2) My jacket pocket is in Surrey Street
- (3) There is a marble in Surrey Street
  
- (4) There is a pain in Ellen's ankle
- (5) Ellen's ankle is in Surrey Street
- (6) There is a pain in Surrey Street
  
- (7) There is a hole in the button
- (8) The button is in the drawer
- (9) There is a hole in the drawer

What is it for a pain to move?

Suppose your knuckle is grazed and aches, and you move your hand is that a moving pain? Compare: you have an itch just below your wrist, and the itchiness is then gradually in each place between your wrist and your elbow.

### 3. *Are pains necessarily located in the body?*

Let us say, then, that what is true of all my pains, including any phantom ones I might have, is that they follow my body around. (Langsam, 'Why Pains are Mental Objects', 304)

...there is no more reason to deny that in the imagined situations I can feel my lover's pain than there is to deny that in the normal situations I can feel the smoothness and warmth of my lover's skin. To insist that in the imagined situations I cannot feel my lover's pain, that I can only feel my own pain in her skin, would be tantamount to insisting that I cannot feel the warmth of her skin, that I can only feel my warmth in her skin. In sum, pains are private but only contingently so. (307.)

I find it all but impossible to comprehend a claim concerning sensation position that detaches it from actual or seeming limb, eg. "A pain to the right of my shoulder and not even in a seeming body part". Brian O'Shaughnessy, *The Will*, v. 1 p.162

*Can you feel a pain in a location outside of your body?*

(i) What of an amputee who has a phantom limb sensation? Where the amputee feels the pain to be located may simply be the block of concrete on which they rest their stump.

*Can we make sense of the difference between the genuine location of pain and its apparent location?*

(ii) Referred pain: heart damage can lead to pain in the shoulder for example. Is the pain really in the heart or in the shoulder?

Suppose someone complains of hurt in their fingernails. Perhaps this is brought about through agitation of the nerve endings at the cuticle. Can the fingernails really be the location of pain?

Two Questions:

(A) Can one feel a pain to be located in a region which does not feel to be a part of one's body?

(B) Can a pain genuinely be located in some region or item which is not properly part of one's body?

#### *4. Anscombe on the Location of Sensation*

Anscombe suggests that one does not *know* where a sensation is located, one is merely disposed to act towards or point to one part of one's body rather than any other.

Anscombe also denies that there is genuine awareness of limb position or movement.

#### *Two Problems*

How does Anscombe deal with the case of *inappropriately* located pain?

The fingernail example is not 'unintelligible'.

The location of sensation appears to rationalize movement: how it can do so if its apparent location is none other than how one is disposed to move?

#### *5. The Importance of Location*

If O'Shaughnessy is right, what account can be given of why sensations should seem to be located in one's body; and genuinely be located just in proper parts of one's body?

*Suppose pains just are mental objects, why shouldn't they be located just in any physical location, or in none?*

It looks as if we have to appeal to the function or role of feeling pains in order to explain the close connection with the body.

Suppose that a feeling of pain takes as its object a *part* of the body: the part of the body is felt to hurt. Then we count pains by counting the parts of the body in which we feel hurt, or the number of feelings of hurt we have. We do not need to introduce, in addition, any mental object which is felt and which is the pain in contrast to the body part which hurts.

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