

Philosophy 132
Philosophy of Mind
Handout 12
Friday 12 October 2007

1. *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?

2. *The Importance of Location*

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.

3. *Feeling Pains in Others Bodies; Feeling Others Pain*

Wittgenstein's example: Jones feels a pain and when asked to indicate where the pain is points to Brown's body. We can imagine that there is a reliable correlation between damage to parts of Brown's body and Jones's pain responses.

Brown – neurotransmitter; Jones – neuroreceptors; a form of wireless extension to the nervous system: there is a reliable correlation between, e.g., sticking pins in Brown and Jones's reaction. Jones answers, 'It is my other leg that hurts.' If Jones and Brown are always close then perhaps Jones can indicate where the leg is which hurts – but perhaps we don't need that, we can't always exactly indicate where the place is that hurts.

Is this a case in which Jones genuinely feels pain in Brown's body?

Does Jones thereby feel Brown's pain? If not, why not?

4. *Body and Self*

In self-awareness, each of us has a way of being aware of him or herself in which we are aware of no one else. I can know my thoughts, sensations, feelings in a way that you cannot know mine; though you know yours in a way that I do not know them.

In relation to our own bodies we also have a distinctive awareness which is shared with no other.

- (i) You see the world with your body as origin; you hear things with your head as the centre of the auditory world; no one else sees or hears the world in this way;
- (ii) You are aware of the disposition and movement of your limbs in a way that no one else is aware of them;
- (iii) You are aware of the orientation of your body relative to the gravitational field in a way that no one else is

(Note that there is still an interesting contrast between the privacy of your thoughts and the privacy of your body: it is conceivable that Siamese twins share body parts and each have awareness of the disposition, movement or orientation of those body parts. Does it make sense to suppose that two thinkers could share the same thought episode or feeling?)

How can sensations provide for this special awareness of one's own body?

5. How Are Sensations Located within the Body?

What is it for a sensation to feel to be within one's body – that the location seems to be a bodily one rather than anything else?

One answer is – it is in a recognizable limb or body part.

How does this relate to privacy? Why does this fix that there is one body which the sensation would be felt in?

Is there any extra quality of 'ownership' or 'mine' which is associated with the body parts sensations are located in?

(Note that if this were an additional qualitative component of sensation or awareness, then it should be conceivable to be aware of a bodily location but for it not to feel positively part of one's body, or even for it to feel to be distinct from one's body.)

3. Can I Really Only Feel Pain in My Body?

Filling out the details in Wittgenstein's example:

Three Options

- a. What Wittgenstein describes is not only possible, it reveals that it is contingent which body one feels a pain to be located in. Perhaps it needs a seeming body part but not a body part which belongs to one's own body;
- b. Wittgenstein's description is not coherent as it is glossed here. That is because LW assumes that Brown's leg is not part of Jones. However, if Jones can really feel a pain in Brown's leg, then Brown's leg is a part of Jones's body, even if it is still a part of Brown's body too;
- c. Wittgenstein's description is not coherent as described here. That is because LW assumes that there can be genuine awareness of pain in Brown's leg. But while Jones can feel pain, and mislocate it in a body part extending to where Brown is (phantom limb), he can't be aware of Brown's leg if it is not part of his body.

What would show either that Brown's leg had to be part of Jones's body if Jones comes to be aware of it; or show that if it wasn't part of Jones's body Jones couldn't be aware of it?

What are the primary objects of awareness?

Option 1: Parts of the body are the primary objects of awareness

Suppose that they are bodily parts such as fingers, toes, hands, legs or arms. Whether one is aware of a body part is determined by whether there is an appropriate link between how things are in that body part and one's experience of the body part. Cf. causal theories of perception. If the neurotransmitters have been set up correctly we will get such a connection between Brown's leg and Jones's experiences.

Either being aware of the limb is sufficient for it to be part of one, or not. We have (a) if the latter, otherwise (b). Why accept the sufficiency claim? Normally we think of the body as a physical thing whose limits and nature are determined independently of the scope of our awareness. However there are examples of seeming extension of awareness, say in the learned use of a prosthetic limb, where we might want to say that the limb becomes part of the body. Is awareness sufficient, though? What of the connection with action?

Option 2: The body as unit is the primary object of awareness; its parts are objects of awareness only through being parts of it

Two consequences: one is aware of a mere part of the body in as much as the part is a part of the body, i.e. a part of the object which is being monitored as a whole. Which object is being monitored may be determined by more than causal facts – e.g. what the function or point of bodily awareness is. This favours option (c).

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