

MIND AND BODY

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'We stand, as it were, behind the wall of the body, sheltered from the eyes of others in the recesses of our mind' —Gregory the Great

'Consciousness is as clear in his face and behaviour, as in myself.' —Wittgenstein

These two quotes paint two different pictures of human emotion and communication: isolated and private, or social and shared. In this paper I am going to look at the two quotes above and explore them in their contexts. I will argue that they do not contradict each other, but that they point to two different aspects of the human experience.

In his book 'Morals on The Book Of Job', Gregory the Great wrote the following passage:

For we, that we may express outwardly the things which we are inwardly sensible of, deliver these through the organ of the throat, by the sounds of the voice, since to the eyes of others we stand as it were behind the partition of the body, within the secret dwelling place of the mind; but when we desire to make ourselves manifest, we go forth as though through the door of the tongue, that we may shew what kind of persons we are within.
(Gregory, 1844)

What the passage is trying to convey is the pivotal role of language in communication with others; however, the passage may also be overlooking things such as facial expressions and body language. Some people are able to tell a lot about a person by the way that they carry themselves; sometimes people can tell whether a person is outgoing and confident or introverted and self-conscious by the way that they walk, or simply by the way that they sit. In his paper 'Feeling and Expression', the philosopher Stuart Hampshire explains that "posture, gesture, facial expressions are often immediately legible by others" (Hampshire, 1962). Nevertheless, I do not think that that contradicts what Gregory the Great is saying: that people are not able to read minds, and although our emotions can be expressed by facial expressions, one of the only ways we may be able to express our thoughts is by speech. According to Gregory the Great, what is said to be hidden behind the 'wall' of the body is the kind of persons we are, and the only way that can be manifested is by speech. The only flaw in the passage is the description of the body as a 'partition'. In the next section I will be discussing how this relates to Cartesian dualism and why it is flawed.

The passage above may be closely linked to Descartes' philosophy of ourselves and others. Descartes' philosophy is that we are incapable of acquiring direct knowledge of others in the same way that we are able to gain direct knowledge of ourselves. It can be argued that Gregory the Great's position is not identical to that of Descartes, because Gregory says that we may be able to access other minds through speech. Furthermore, he does say in the passage above that speech may show others what kind of persons we are within. Descartes, on the other hand, would still classify speech as indirect and secondary knowledge. Where Descartes and Gregory's philosophies may also be seen to overlap is the thought that 'the body is a machine'; although Gregory does not mention the word 'machine,' he does call the body a 'partition.' This would align with Descartes because they both see the body as a material thing that is not a part of who we are. The reason I do not resonate with this outlook on the body is because it seems to

trivialize what a human body is capable of, such as movement and expression. In response to this view, Wittgenstein says:

“359. Could a machine think?—Could it be in pain?—Well, is the human body to be called such a machine? It surely comes as close as possible to being such a machine.”
(Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 1953)

It is not entirely clear as to whether Wittgenstein would call the body a machine: he seems to be implying that the body is far more complex to be called one. The issues that come up when calling the body a ‘machine’ or a ‘partition’, is that it does not take into account how intertwined we are with our bodies. As opposed to thinking of the body as being a ‘wall’ (something that is separate from the mind and consciousness), the body should be looked at as a manifestation of the mind and consciousness. Creating distinct lines that separate mind and body may account for disassociation, meaning the inability for one to recognize themselves when they look in the mirror, because to them they are not their bodies—their bodies are simply vehicles that carry what they think of as their *true selves*. This mode of thinking is certainly outdated. What is required is a sort of middle ground between identifying with a material self and an immaterial self. In that sense, we are not dismissing material reality, yet we are acknowledging the possibility there may be more to us than what we can physically see and empirically examine. Essentially, the body should not be disregarded, nor should it be looked at as a thing that separates us from others or from ourselves.

Alternatively, Wittgenstein wrote the following passage:

221. "Consciousness is as clear in his face and behaviour, as in myself."
(Wittgenstein, Zettel, 1967)

The main argument Wittgenstein is asserting is that consciousness does not require any sort of inference, and this is said in response to Descartes’ methodology of validating other minds. When observing human beings, the observer is almost immediately struck with the fact that the people they are observing are conscious, unless they are looking at a person that is no longer alive. For some, complications arise when trying to answer whether non-human animals are conscious, and this will be looked at further in the paper. Wittgenstein’s descriptions of human emotions are very different than Descartes’ description of them. To Wittgenstein, emotions are not entirely private and inaccessible by others; certainly, he doesn’t discount that people can hide emotions, and be deceitful, but what he does argue is that emotions are to be expressed, and that we learn them socially. Wittgenstein wrote the following passage.

222. We do not see the human eye as a receiver, it appears not to let anything in, but to send something out. The ear receives; the eye looks. (It casts glances, it flashes, radiates, gleams.) One can terrify with one’s eyes, not with one’s ear or nose. When you see the eye you see something going out from it. You see the look in the eye.”
(Wittgenstein, Zettel, 1967)

The etymology of the word ‘emotion’ traces back to the Latin words for ‘out’ and ‘move,’ literally meaning ‘to move out’ (Emotion, 2022). This is applicable to Wittgenstein’s passage above. Emotions are fundamentally communicative: when a person is sad, the expression on

their face communicates that to us. It is almost as if the face emits the feeling that a person holds within them, and that is not to say that we make an inference because they are frowning. It closely follows that Wittgenstein makes a valid point by saying that when you look at a person, you need not make an inference from the facial expression and then follow that by an induction regarding our own experiences to tell that a person might be sad. The emotion that a person is feeling presents itself in their face. The phenomenologist Max Scheler wrote:

“We believe ourselves to be directly acquainted with another person’s joy in his laughter, with his sorrow and pain in his tears, with his shame in his blushing.” (Scheler, 1954)

Here is yet another philosopher arguing that an inference is not needed to recognize another’s emotions. Hampshire explains that, when there is a connection between a person’s feeling and their behaviour, the pattern can be identified as ‘the natural expression of the feeling’ (Hampshire, 1962). In turn, this seems to negate Descartes’ account of the relationship between feelings, expression, and the body. According to Descartes, thoughts come from our mind, but actions are from the body. This leaves no space for assuming that our actions can be influenced by our feelings. This would make us incapable of forming the connection that has been mentioned above (between feeling and behaviour). Wittgenstein stated:

567. “How could human behavior be described? Surely only by sketching the actions of a variety of humans, as they are all mixed up together. What determines our judgment, our concepts and reactions, is not what one man is doing now, an individual action, but the whole hurly-burly of human actions, the background against which we see any action”. (Wittgenstein, Zettel, 1967)

In contrast to what Descartes thinks about the lack of influence feelings have on our actions, in the passage above we can comprehend that Wittgenstein believes that humans learn how to express their emotions culturally. For example, in many cultures it is seen as a weakness for men to cry, so a lot of boys and men learn to suppress any signs of sadness. Those following the culture would probably argue that the sight of a man crying communicates to those observing that they are ‘weak’. Which brings me to my next point: there are cases when you look at a person and all you get back is a blank stare. That may be the case on several occasions; for example, the person might be suppressing any feelings that arise within them, and in that case, it could be argued that the person is making a conscious effort to hold back their emotions. Hampshire describes this as refraining from the expression of the emotion (Hampshire, 1962). In the case that a person is not emotionally expressive, and their facial expressions don’t share much, then you could still make a valid assumption about their behaviour, such as that the person is inexpressive or withdrawn. The reason this does not present a serious problem to the case that I am arguing is because, as I mentioned previously, emotions are communicative and involve the person expressing them and anyone observing. The example of someone hiding their emotions only further proves that emotions are social experiences, and that the person hiding them does not wish to involve themselves in that social experience. This shows that emotions being expressed by our bodies and behaviours is what is supposed to happen normally; they are inherently communicative.

What comes up when viewing these quotes is whether or not the argument from analogy is needed, and I would argue that it is not. The argument from analogy is a method to understanding other minds through inner reflection. It could also be described as an inference that is made in the following manner: I have a body and sometimes I experience whichever emotion, therefore other people with bodies similar to mine, may experience similar emotions. The way that it is linked to the two quotes is by asking the question of other minds, whether other human beings are conscious, or if others experience the emotions that I, myself experience. I would argue that this view is almost leaning towards solipsism, the view that we can only be sure of our minds (not even our bodies), is too skeptical to be applied in everyday life. Wittgenstein's model of the way that emotions are expressed is much truer to experience, because from experience we learn not only the labels of our own emotions, but also to identify the emotions others are expressing. Reading the emotions from other faces and behaviour, does not require Descartes' inference from analogy but happens immediately.

220. "Do you look into *yourself* in order to recognize the fury in *his* face? It is there as clearly as in your own breast." (Wittgenstein, Zettel, 1967)

The quote above perfectly captures the unnecessary procedures involved in the argument from analogy. A person does not have to look within themselves in order to see that the emotions another is expressing are similar to the ones they experience, and even if they did need the argument from analogy to understand the emotions being expressed, that would not lead to further actions. Even in the case I had just mentioned (someone needing the argument from analogy), it is not from internal reflection that we learn to recognize and react to emotions from other people. Knowledge that another human being is capable of feeling an array of emotions is not sufficient in the grand scheme of society. What is required of us as conscious beings is the ability to connect to one another, and I must stress that this connection does not come from inner reflection. The connection is formed during our socializing with others, thus we are able to see that another is feeling a certain emotion, and not only that, but we also learn what the appropriate response is.

In his book 'Other Human Beings', David Cockburn states that the argument from analogy fails because the way that I treat another human being is not derived from the procedure of the argument from analogy. Further, Cockburn points out that the way we regard ourselves has no firm logical grounding either, and so extrapolating that to how we regard others is inconsistent (Cockburn, Other Human Beings, 1990). This means that there's a lack of logical explanation when we try to understand why we may treat ourselves the way that we do—there is no single precise indication that points to an explanation. For that reason, it is not consistent to think that we treat others in the same way that we treat ourselves.

I would go even further and argue that the argument from analogy is not necessary when we are observing non-human animals. In a journal article titled 'Humans and Giant Squids', Cockburn argued that a person that cannot come to terms with the fact that animals feel 'pain' or 'fear' is lacking the ability to grasp the meaning of the words 'pain' and 'fear' (Cockburn, Human Beings and Giant Squids, 1994). I agree because 'pain' and 'fear' are seen by many as exclusively human behaviours, but it is evident that non-human animals experience these states as well. To Gregory the Great, language is essential in our understanding of other minds; however whether or not he would argue that non-human animals cannot be understood, or that

they lack consciousness, because they cannot communicate verbally is not entirely clear. It is, however, evident that Descartes believes that non-human animals are not conscious because they lack verbal communication. Descartes stated the following:

On the other hand, men born deaf and dumb, and thus deprived of speech-organs as much as the beasts or even more so, normally invent their own signs to make themselves understood by those who, being regularly in their company, have the time to learn their language. This shows not merely that the beasts have less reason than men, but that they have no reason at all. (Descartes, 1986)

The message conveyed in the passage above is that non-human animals lack reason; Descartes goes even further than this by stating that non-human animals do not feel pain. This is probably because the argument from analogy does not translate well while trying to apply it with non-human animals, but even with the difficulties in applying the argument from analogy to non-human animals, the argument itself does not discount the fact that non-human animals can feel pain. It is because Descartes doesn't apply the argument well, he is incapable of seeing the humanlike behaviours in animals that he thinks that they do not feel pain. Cockburn explains that the geometrical appearance of non-human animals differs immensely from that of humans; however, these differences do not stop us from being able to give non-human animals human characteristics (Cockburn, Human Beings and Giant Squids, 1994). Wittgenstein, on the other hand, says that even without verbal communication it is entirely possible to imagine non-human animals experiencing different mental states. He wrote:

“One can imagine an animal angry, frightened, unhappy, happy, startled. But hopeful?
And why not?”
(Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, 1953)

The implications of the quote above leads one to accept the possibility that non-human animals can experience different mental states. Wittgenstein goes on further to question whether non-human animals can hope, and he concludes that he does not have an answer to the questions he's asking. However, he does also state the following:

283. It comes to this: only of a living human being and what resembles (behaves like) a living human being can one say: it has sensations; it sees; is blind; hears; is deaf; is conscious or unconscious (Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, 1953).

So, it is clear that Wittgenstein would argue that non-human animals are conscious, and that the argument from analogy is not needed to come to terms with that fact. A quote that presents us with an appropriate analysis as to our regard for non-human animals was said by the philosopher Jeremy Bentham:

“The question is not, Can they reason?, nor, Can they talk?, but rather: Can they suffer?”
(Bentham, 2001)

My argument is that if non-human animals can suffer, which I would argue they can, when, for example, a dog is hit by a car, we can hear it in the sounds it makes that the dog is in pain; or when some animals flee because they are afraid, their behaviour communicates their fear to us

directly. It follows that there ought to be a consensus that they are conscious beings, even if they cannot communicate verbally.

When both quotes are looked at, they do not seem to be entirely in disagreement; rather, they are both pointing in two different directions, and there is a bit of tension between them. There are a few points that do not align, such as Gregory the Great's description of mind and body existing separately, much like Cartesian dualism, and Wittgenstein's description of consciousness manifesting in one's face and body. Gregory describes the body as a partition, and that is where it could be argued that he is mistaken. A more accurate image of the body would be that of a drawbridge: sometimes we can choose what we wish to share, not only through speech, but also through facial expressions and movement. Far from being a wall, the body is the very means by which we communicate ourselves to the world; it is the manifestation of our consciousness. We may also be able to choose what we want to conceal, and yet the case remains that consciousness is always visible when you are looking at a living human being and non-human animals.

To conclude, the two quotes do not contradict each other, but in fact complement each other because together they present the varied nature of the human experience. What should be taken away from the Gregory the Great quote is that speech is a tool for human beings that can relay what someone is thinking, and what kind of persons they are. The reason I did not mention that it can also relay what someone is feeling at times is because normally, that is what is the purpose of expressing our emotions. The merit for Wittgenstein's quote is that consciousness is not a hidden part of human beings and non-human animals; on the contrary, it is shown in our faces and in our behaviours, and we do not need the argument from analogy to grasp that. The way in which their philosophies point in different directions is as follows: in Gregory the Great's quote, one's thoughts may only be known by speech, and his description of the mind being a 'secret dwelling place' points to our thoughts being contained in our minds, and that they have no effects on our bodies. To that I would not entirely agree; I would argue that thoughts do have an effect on our bodies, but I would also say that we could only communicate so much without the help of language. It is important to look at the way language is viewed in both quotes. Clearly, it plays a pivotal role in the lives of human beings. I would not say that it is the most important form of communication; however that is what is argued in the Gregory the Great quote. Language is of great importance to Wittgenstein, and it is one of the most examined topics in his philosophy, both in his early works and in his very different, later views. One of Wittgenstein's most well-known arguments is called the "private language" argument. Wittgenstein basically argues that there cannot be a private language of an individual's own, that cannot be, at least in principle, intelligible to another person. So, he argues that 'private language' does not exist. This does not negate other forms of communication. Our facial expressions, body language, and behaviour, are not any less important than verbal communication—I would argue that they are just as important. Occasionally, we are able to choose what we want to share with others, but that is not always the case. At times others are able to point out the emotional state we are in long before we recognize it ourselves, and it is this which is to be understood from Wittgenstein's quote. Consciousness is manifested in our face, bodies, and our voices too. If we take a step back and look at the dichotomy of both quotes, then we can see that they are both true of the human experience. This presents a good case of

dialectics: opposing propositions that both have truth to them. On the one hand, the human experience is private and lonely, and at times we may feel there is an uncrossable gulf between ourselves and the rest of humanity; on the other hand, our bodies and the ways we express ourselves are inherently communicative—we are forever caught in the web of constant verbal and nonverbal communication between people that occurs quite naturally all the time. On the one hand, true communication may seem impossible, and, on the other hand, inevitable. We can see how both realities play out differently for everyone. In every person a probability of either of those cases playing out at any time exists, and just because the individual is more attuned to one case than the other does not negate the possibility of the other case ever playing out. My argument has been that both quotes can coexist and that they don't negate each other. Finally, they are both right in their own ways, they both have their merits, and depending on my state of mind I find myself more attuned to one quote or the other.

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