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FEELING AND EXPRESSION

STUART HAMPSHIRE

I SHALL argue that, in the particular case of feeling, the inner life of the mind is to be understood as a development from something more primitive in every man's behaviour, of which it is the residue and the shadow. Secondly, that the primitive faculty of imitation, and of imitative play and fiction, are a necessary background to the communication of feeling.

The first problem is: how do we identify a mere something that we feel as anger or as amusement? There is at least one necessary connection that is clear in the normal use of language. If I am amused, I am inclined, or disposed, or have a tendency, to laugh or to smile. If I am angry, I am inclined, or disposed, or have a tendency, to attack or to behave aggressively. Wherever there is this necessary connection between an identifiable feeling or emotion, and the inclination to behave in an identifiable way, the pattern of behaviour may be called the natural expression of the feeling. A certain pattern of behaviour is a natural expression of a certain feeling, if, in distinguishing this feeling from other feelings with which it might be confused, we would specify an inclination towards this particular pattern of behaviour, together with some standard circumstances, actually existing or believed to exist, which provoke the inclination. So in explaining what anger is, as opposed to some other emotion, I would refer to a disposition to attack when the subject has been, or believes that he has been, in some way harmed or hurt.

Human beings are from the beginning recognized as potential language-users, and as potential observers of social conventions which they will later learn to formulate. The conditions of application of the vocabulary of feelings to human beings are determined by the fact that two capacities—the capacity to control their inclinations, and the capacity to identify their inclinations, and their circumstances, in words—are gradually developed together. I know that I am angry, and I am able authoritatively to disclose

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that I am, because I know what I am inclined to do, which is to attack; and I can identify the external situation that is associated in my mind with this inclination. If I do not try to attack, I must have inhibited the natural expression of my anger, which remains as a merely felt inclination. If I have deliberately cut off the natural expression of the anger, then I will certainly know what the residual feeling is, in at least one sense of this deceiving phrase. The subject's own identification of the inner perturbation as a case of anger rather than of some other emotion, such as fear, would not be intelligible, if it were not for the inclination that remains as the shadow of the natural behaviour. About the contained excitement that he feels, the angry man may ask 'What is this feeling that I have?' He identifies it as a feeling or sentiment of a certain kind in virtue of his inclination to act in a certain way, taken together with those features of the situation with which he associates his action or inclination. The vocabulary of feeling and sentiment with which we communicate, each sometimes subjects, sometimes observers, could never be established if this primary identification of an inclination to behave in a certain way could not be made prior to the classification of inner and contained feeling.

The contrast between that which a man feels inclined to do, and that which he is by social convention required to do, runs all through his experience. He therefore easily learns to abstract his inner perturbations, and the controlled inclinations associated with them, from the behaviour that was their original context, and to attend to these perturbations, and the associated inclinations, as separate subjects of interest. If he restrains himself from doing something that he is inclined to do, he must at least know, through the exercise of this restraint, what it is that he is inclined to do. He can identify his own state of mind from his own incipient behaviour, taken together with the external situation. He is at the same time learning to read these signs in the incipient behaviour of others.

At this point we come to the central distinction between natural and conventional signs of feeling. If one could state this distinction exactly, many problems both of the philosophy of mind, and also of aesthetics, would lie open to clarification. At least it is evident that any surviving residue of the distinctive behaviour of an angry man is by itself to be counted as a natural sign of anger. In order to recognize some residual behaviour as a sign of anger, it is not necessary that one should have learnt a general rule of significance, as the rule of use of a conventional sign has to be independently learnt. The residue is taken as a sign, because it is immediately recognizable as a part subtracted from a whole. For this reason no general rule of correlation needs to be learnt between sign and thing signified. Suppose that I see half the surface of a familiar kind of physical object: no learnt general rule of

correlation is required to explain the sense in which I immediately take this visible half-surface as the sign of the presence of the whole.

The medium of behaviour is the body. Bodily expression may take many distinguishable and subtle forms. The more obvious sub-headings are posture, gesture, facial expression. Posture, gesture, facial expression are often immediately legible by others, as signs of an inclination to behave in a specific way, when they are the last vanishing vestige of a familiar and classifiable pattern of behaviour. So the man who looks daggers at his neighbour has cut off the action of aggression, and the vestige of it remains in his glance, voluntarily or involuntarily directed. The man who cowers or shrinks, only sketching the action of flight, makes a gesture, or assumes a posture, that is the suggestion of the action, with the effective remainder of it removed. The inclination has shown itself, and, because it is less than quarter realized, the truncated action is legible as a sign of the contained, and therefore felt and inner, inclination.

But we cannot continue any further along this path, following the notion of expression, without noticing that we have from the beginning left out of account one of the most fundamental of the facts of human nature. Fundamental as it is, it is none the less a fact omitted from many contemporary philosophies of mind, which are in consequence misshapen. There is a primitive activity, or rather, a set of primitive activities, which involve the use of natural signs, in childhood and throughout life: that set of activities which can be very roughly grouped together under the heading of imitation. From the beginning of their development, men not only learn not to behave as they feel inclined to behave, and learn to cut off the natural expression of their feelings. They also concurrently have the instinct to mimic, and the institution of mimicking, the forms of behaviour which they observe in others. In imitative play they go through the motions of doing things without believing that the conditions for effectively doing them are present and therefore without the intention of actually doing them.

Imitation is one primitive and natural way of learning routines and customs and the use of language itself, and it is the child's first way of entry into social life. That it must be counted as an original disposition of men seems certain. The overt behaviour, and the visible expression, of a man who is angry or amused are in imitation adopted gratuitously, in the absence both of the type of external occasion, actual or believed to be actual, and of the ensuing inclinations, that are essential to real anger or real amusement. We have here the converse of an inclination to behave in a certain way, of which the manifestation is inhibited; there is the behaviour alone, without the original inclination to effective action behind it. The power to conceal a present inclination, and the power to simulate a non-existent one, come

into existence together. It is difficult, and perhaps impossible, to suppose creatures, capable of full communication in a language, who possessed the one power without also possessing the other. No one who has been angry has, in addition, to learn the rules for expressing anger, as he has to learn how to say that he is angry in the course of learning a language. He does not normally need to look in a mirror to see that his physiognomy is correct, and that his posture and facial expression are the right signs to convey that which he wants them to convey. When he sees in another the facial expression and posture of an angry man, and sees them as such, he would know what to imitate, if he was imitating the expression as an expression of anger. This is part of his ability to place himself in the position of another, where this involves reconstructing in himself the disposition of another man through their natural expression. So the operation of sympathy, which was mysterious in Hume's immaterialist philosophy, may pass through this primitive tendency to imitate an expression, which may bring into existence the whole of which it is naturally a part. But if a man was imitating the face and posture of another, as he sees them in front of him, without any thought of them as natural signs, he would so far have no ground to distinguish the relevant and expressive, from the irrelevant and inexpressive, features of the physical object which he sees before him. He would then be aiming at a photographic likeness, or at a copy, of the face; and for this he might indeed need a mirror.

Imitative play takes many forms. It is commonly a form of fiction. That kind of fiction which is imitative play may begin at an age when the idea of a true statement, and of the use of conventional signs to convey information, has not yet occurred to a child as a distinct possibility. The child may merely imitate for the original pleasure of creating a likeness, and under these conditions we would normally speak of his imitation as mere play. Imitation and play are the two related concepts that in general aesthetics have to be explored in great detail; imitative play enters into the present inquiry only as a form of human communication that has to be considered alongside the use of conventional signs, and alongside the use of language. When a child has learnt to use conventional signs according to rules, and then learnt how to convey information and to make statements, and thereby to distinguish truth from fiction, playing at doing things, and imitating others for the sake of imitation, become for him autonomous activities, distinguishable from all others, and requiring their own particular skill. Then he may engage in imitative play, deliberately and at will, and knowing what he is doing. He assumes the expression and posture of an angry father, or of a frightened child, distinguishing this fiction from fact. The success of the imitation, as imitation, carries its own satisfaction with it, as truth-telling carries its own satisfaction with it. They are both cases of making or doing some-

thing which matches, and which is in its own medium an equivalent of, an independent reality. The making, or discovery for oneself, of such an equivalence is at once the source and the evidence of an adequate grasp of the reality. The making of an equivalence may be taken as a kind of mastery of the independent reality, a reduction of it to our own terms, and its independence may no longer be felt as threatening. The ancient problem is to find the points at which imitation, as the making of a match that is a likeness, supplements, or replaces, the kind of matching that, as an arrangement of conventional signs according to learnt general rules, can for this reason constitute knowledge. We do not here have simple and unmixed opposites, but rather a continuous scale from natural to conventional sign, from likeness to statement, and complicated intertwinings of the two. We are more ready to speak of *knowledge* of reality in proportion as the medium, in which the match or equivalence is found, consists of conventional signs arranged in accordance with a system of rules, which are learnt as general rules of interpretation and of syntax. A good map of the countryside by itself conveys knowledge of the countryside, but is scarcely a likeness. A good free sketch of the countryside may constitute a kind of likeness; in virtue of its comparative freedom, where freedom is opposed to rule, it is less readily considered as by itself conveying knowledge of the countryside.

The sense in which we may come to discriminate more exactly the various emotions and sentiments through an imitation of their natural expression may be approached through an analogy. Suppose that I am asked what a particular person is like: it might be difficult to find the exactly fitting words to describe that which is peculiar to this man. I might then turn to parody, and in imitation of him reproduce some of the idioms, turns of phrase, tones of voice, that are typical of him, isolating them from their more commonplace accompaniments. If it is admitted that I have in fact succeeded in my imitation in isolating that which is peculiar to him, it will be admitted that I have in a sense answered the inquiry. But the answer was in sensory terms and not in a conceptual or discursive form. Suppose similarly I am asked, not about an individual, or group of individuals, but rather about a general and abstract thing—'What is it like to be jealous?' or, a rather different question, 'What is it for a man to be jealous (e.g. rather than envious)?'—I might similarly convey that which is peculiar to this emotion by isolating in an imitation the typical features of its natural expression. In the literature of aesthetics one will meet the portentous phrase—'Seeing the universal in a concrete and sensory embodiment.' One can, I think, forget this phrase with its pseudo-logical air and try to be a little more precise.

There is a rough general law of revealing imitation that is most clearly illustrated in the fundamental arts of mimicry and parody. He who mimics

the speech and expression of another communicates more effectively the personal peculiarities of his victim in so far as the likeness in speech and expression shows through an unlikeness, with the imitation superimposed on an alien and contrasting personality. The essential qualities of the thing imitated are then filtered through the resisting medium. A totally faithful reproduction of the voice by a reproducing machine would not serve the same cognitive purposes as a revealing imitation. There would not be that primary abstraction that is involved in any contrivance of a likeness in a naturally resisting medium. In the representative arts the medium, and the conventions governing the use of the medium, produce this tension between likeness and unlikeness in the imitation, which makes the imitation revealing. The solidity of material objects is most strongly felt, as a visual experience enjoyed for its own sake, when a likeness is contrived on a flat surface. The recessions of space can also be vividly revealed and enjoyed through a contrived equivalence in this resisting medium. So also the making of an equivalence of the natural expression of an emotion in a resisting medium seems to give some insight into the general nature of the emotion itself. Because we are faced with an imitation, we respond to it, not with an immediate inclination to action, as with any direct expression of emotion in an individual suffering man, but rather in a contemplative way. Any too complete copying and reproduction of a natural expression of feeling tends to excite in us a disposition towards appropriate action. This will destroy a purely contemplative and inquiring attitude. For this reason the representation of feeling in any of the arts must always be in some way distanced and filtered by the artificialities of the art: for instance, by the mere existence of a stage in a theatre, which still may be not enough to prevent a too immediate, or a confused, response in the audience. A representation is felt to be obscene, when there is a felt conflict in the audience between the contemplative and inquiring attitude, the attitude of the perceiver, and the controlled disposition to act. Then the conditions of a revealing fiction have been destroyed, as they are destroyed by a successful *trompe l'œil* painting, which is designed to excite a disposition to respond as we would respond to the material thing represented.

In any representation of persons in any medium, and particularly of a face, we naturally look for physiognomic features within the representation. We try inquiringly to read through the conventions of representation some expression in the face. In direct dealings with men, and outside the context of fiction, we perceive, and react to, the physiognomy of persons almost as immediately as to the full behaviour of which the facial expression is the residue. The expression, considered by itself, is as much a sign, or even a part, of incipient behaviour as it is a sign of inner feeling. Expression can

therefore be considered as the connecting arch between a person's disposition to behave in a certain way, which, if it is inhibited, may remain as an invisible affect, and his perceptible behaviour.

Because of the connecting arch of expression, we cannot truthfully say, as many philosophers have implied, that we perceive only the behaviour of others, if behaviour is interpreted as that which is described in terms of effective actions performed and in socially recognized routines. We perceive also that kind of residual, shadow behaviour which constitutes an expression. And we can show that we have perceived it by adopting the same expression in imitation, without trying to reproduce, item by item, the physical features of the face or posture of another. The criterion of identity, which here justifies the phrase 'same expression', is to be found partly in the common behaviour of which the expression, in each case, is taken to be the residue, and in part also in certain common physical changes. The phrase 'same expression', in virtue of its connecting role, cannot derive its sense exclusively from one side or the other. If therefore I am to imitate successfully your angry expression, it seems that I must pass an exacting double test. I must make, within the medium of my own face, an equivalent of the deviations from the peaceful norm in your face; and at the same time the whole, or gestalt, must be convincing as a sketch of aggressive behaviour by me.

Consider now the link between feelings as dispositions to behave in certain ways and the full corresponding behaviour. I have suggested successive stages of the interiorization of feeling. First, there is the angry man who, being provoked, immediately attacks. If, in answer to the question 'Why did he attack?' we were to answer merely 'Because he was angry,' the explanation would be, on its own level, complete. Compare with this 'Why did he laugh?' — 'Because he was amused.' There is no unexplained gap between the disposition attributed to him and the behaviour to be explained. To ask the further question 'Why does his amusement lead to laughter?' would be like questioning a tautology. The question would suggest that the questioner did not know what is meant by 'amusement' or by 'laughter'. If we have said that he was angry, we have already said that, considering himself to have been provoked, he was inclined to attack. The connecting 'because', in giving the reasons for action, has here its minimum force; it makes no allusion to any implied general proposition correlating his behaviour with any independently identifiable event, or with any ulterior calculation. The inquiry into the reasons for his behaviour could only be pressed further by asking why he was angry. This line of inquiry will only terminate when it leads to those fundamental dispositions that constitute a standard of normal response. At the second stage, there is the angry man who, being angry, is inclined to behave aggressively, but for some reason controls his inclination.

Suppose that we identify the contortion of his face as a scowl: we imply that he is behaving as an angry man behaves in at least one respect. 'Scowl' is a physiognomic predicate, as opposed to a physical state description. A scowl, or an angry glance, are allowed to survive, when the rest of the behaviour is inhibited, partly because they are largely ineffective as action. Generally speaking, we effectively do things, and make changes in the world, in the primary sense of these words, that is, in the sense that is associated with physical change, with our hands and with other limbs rather than with our face. This is a contingent matter of fact, a fact of natural history. When a disposition to behave in a certain way is controlled, the last vestige of the behaviour is apt to survive in facial expression, and particularly in the eyes, as being the ineffective part of the behaviour, the most subtle and insubstantial, and therefore the most immediately expressive of the inner movement of the mind. If the angry man had shaken his clenched fists at his adversary, he would have gone through motions that show only too coarsely his inclination to attack. This gesture is the full action that flows from the inclination without its proper climax, and rendered ineffective; and therefore it is an unmistakable natural sign. If a movement is seen effectively to serve some evident and familiar human need or purpose, its significance as gesture is lost. The behaviour generally needs to be uneconomic and useless, as action, in order to be taken as a sign. Again the imitation is effective as imitation, just because it is in this respect also strikingly unlike that which is imitated.

If a feeling or sentiment necessarily includes a disposition to a certain pattern of behaviour, and if every feeling therefore has its appropriate physiognomy, it follows that every feeling can be portrayed in some perceptible imitation, and that its occurrence on any occasion can be communicated by some perceptible natural sign. As it is of the nature of feelings or sentiments that they can be expressed by natural signs, so it is of the nature of a thought, and of a process of thought, that any perceptible expression of it is a conventional sign, the significance of which is determined by learnt rules of use and of syntax. My facial expression and gestures may express my expectancy and excitement. But I cannot (logically cannot) express my thought that my prodigal son will return without converting my gestures into separate signals which require rules of interpretation and of syntax. When Wittgenstein suggested that the words 'I am in pain' can be said to replace a cry of pain, he concentrated an immense transition, a whole natural history, into this single word 'replace'.

It will be evident that, in dwelling on the notion of expression, I am hoping to correct a particular philosophical view of the relation of feeling to behaviour, and therefore of the relation of mind to body: namely, that prevailing, semi-Cartesian view which leaves us with the difficult problem: Can the ex-

istence of a feeling or sentiment, independently identified, ever be validly inferred from the behaviour with which it happens to be correlated? And if this cannot be a valid inductive inference, can there be any test that guarantees that the terms of our common psychological vocabulary are applied with a common significance? If not, how is rational communication about our inner feelings ever possible at all?

The picture from which this problem arises is of feelings and states of mind, which are *first* distinguished and identified by the subject as feelings of certain kinds, and which are then *independently* found to have typical manifestations in behaviour. The manifestations in behaviour are conceived as something altogether independent which is added to the states of mind. We move, as it were, outwards from the identification of a specific feeling to the recognition that certain patterns of behaviour are contingently connected with it. I have been suggesting an order of dependence in classification that is the very reverse: that we must first have distinguished certain patterns of behaviour in certain standard circumstances, actual or notional; and then, on the basis of this kind of classification, we can distinguish the various inner sentiments as controlled inclinations to behave in these ways in these standard circumstances. We arrive at the distinctions between the different feelings and sentiments by abstracting from the manifesting behaviour. In our classifications we move, as it were, inwards from expressive behaviour to inner feeling.

Between these two philosophies of mind there are two principal dividing lines. The first raises one of the most general of all philosophical issues, and one that has been at the centre of recent discussion. What conditions are necessary for the establishment of a common vocabulary? Must the common vocabulary, including the vocabulary of states of mind, be established on a common basis of reference to publicly observable things? Must any classification of a state of mind be in principle testable by reference to something other than the felt quality of the experience? Or can I identify my feeling immediately as a feeling of a certain kind, irrespective of anything else, as it seems that I may recognize and name a shade of colour that appears in my visual field? This problem of the conditions of classification leads to the second issue between the philosophies. Does the order in which every man learns to apply mental concepts of certain types in common language determine the conditions of application attached to these concepts? I believe that the answer to this second question must be 'Yes', and that this answer already settles the issue of classification, as it applies to the more refined distinctions within the vocabulary of sentiment and emotion. Entry into a certain 'form of life' is a necessary background to using and attaching a sense to these concepts: namely, entry into that adult human form of life which includes,

among other things, the habit of deliberately controlling the natural expression of inclination, and includes also a growing knowledge of restraining conventions of speech and of behaviour. It is characteristic of the more refined concepts, which we use to distinguish between one sentiment and another, that the subject's own avowals are a necessary part of the conditions of their application. A person gradually acquires the power to apply these distinctions, both to himself and to others, in conjunction with his power to dissociate his inclinations from their immediate natural expression. When I speak of *deriving* the concept of feeling and sentiment from the concept of inhibited behaviour, the order implied is both the order in which a person learns the use of two classes of expression, and also the order in which he himself acquires the faculties of mind to which these expressions refer. Whenever these two orders coincide, the method of derivation will be appropriate to fixing the sense of the concepts in question; and they will coincide, whenever the subject's own avowals play a necessary part in the application of the concept.

Consider a concept of a contrasting kind: that of intelligence, which is a power or capacity, and therefore not a disposition, in the sense in which an inclination is a disposition. A person's avowal that he is intelligent has no special authority in determining whether in fact he is. We have no difficulty in determining that a child is in fact an intelligent child, when he is still too young to be a judge of intelligence either in himself or in others. There is therefore no reason to demand that the conditions of application of this concept should be explained genetically, that is, by reference to the order of a human being's development. Similarly, of a creature, infant or animal, which is incapable of confessing to anger or fear, we can evidently say that it is angry or frightened. The standard behaviour in standard circumstances, notional or actual, is sufficient to give this kind of application of these elementary concepts a definite sense. But as soon as more finely marked distinctions between dispositions and sentiments are drawn—for example, between anger and indignation, between fear and embarrassment—and as soon as we begin to apply a full vocabulary of intentional states, the testimony of the subject, and therefore his developed capacity to make these distinctions for himself, are indispensable in giving the distinctions a sense. Manifestations in behaviour become in these cases correspondingly less decisive in determining whether the concepts have been correctly applied in any particular case.

The derivation of the concept of inner feeling and sentiment from that of inhibited dispositions still leaves a final problem, and one that has been abundantly discussed among philosophers in recent years: What is a disposition? When we say of a man that he is disposed, or inclines, or wants, to

do something, which he is not actually doing, what kind of potential behaviour is this? Until we have answered this question, we have still said little that is definite and clear about the relation of the inner life of feeling to perceptible behaviour. I have time only to say something negative in order to prevent misunderstanding: that to attribute a disposition to someone, in the sense of 'disposition' that enters into the analysis of the concepts of feeling and sentiment, is not to make a hypothetical statement about him, to the effect that he would behave in certain ways if certain conditions were satisfied. The word 'disposition' has sometimes been used in such a way that a capacity or power, such as intelligence, is to be counted as a disposition. It is at least plausible to interpret statements about capacities and powers as implicit hypothetical statements about possible performances. The kind of disposition that is an inclination to behave in a certain way is something that may occur at a certain moment, and may then immediately disappear, although it may also continue over a certain period of time. Both the statement that it occurred at a certain moment, and the statement that it lasted for a certain period, are irreducibly categorical statements about that person at that time or during that period. As statements, they are no less categorical than the statement that a man had at a certain time a certain facial expression.

The analysis of inclinations to action in terms of hypotheticals might be defended, on the ground that a statement that someone was inclined to do something entails the statement that he would have done it, or tried to do it, if he had not restrained himself, or, alternatively, if another inclination had not supervened. But I think that it could be shown that the hypothetical statement allegedly entailed here is vacuous (cf. 'If nothing occurs to prevent it, it will rain tomorrow.') The conditions specified in the words 'If another inclination had not supervened' and 'If he had not restrained himself' are too utterly unrestricted and general to allow the hypothetical statement a sufficiently definite sense. There would be no acceptable method of establishing the truth or falsity of the hypothetical statement except by a reference to the original inclination. The alleged analysis would therefore be circular.

I make this point, briefly and dogmatically, in order to dissociate myself from that philosophy which might be called logical behaviourism: the philosophy that claims that statements about the inner world of feeling and of sentiment are all in principle reducible to complicated statements about overt behaviour. My motive in dwelling on the concepts of expression and imitation, and on the derivation of inner feeling from inhibited behaviour, is precisely to point to a possible middle way, which is neither a Cartesian dualism on the one hand, nor on the other hand a reduction of that which is distinctively mental to its overt behavioural expression.