

SENSATIONS, FEELINGS, AND EXPRESSION

by R. J. Sclafani

In a subtle disquisition entitled simply "Feelings,"¹ Professor Gilbert Ryle takes us through seven of the multifarious ways in which we talk about feelings. Ryle claims that one use of the verb "to feel" is a special source of confusion in aesthetics. It is the use exemplified by "feeling that" expressions, as in "I feel that there is a flaw in your argument," "She felt that the joke was in poor taste," "The connoisseur feels that the shape of that Chinese bowl is just right," "The shepherd feels in his bones that a storm is coming," etc. Ryle argues convincingly that "feeling that" expressions cannot be assimilated to hankerings or inclinations, as in "I feel like taking a nap." Nor do they indicate magical ways (intuitions) of getting the answers to questions such as "Will Man-O-War win the Kentucky Derby?" "Is a storm on the way?" etc. Finally, "feeling that" expressions do not, except in highly specialized circumstances, indicate the mood or frame of mind a person is in. Generally, to say a person feels that something is the case is not to give an answer to questions such as "How does he feel?" "In what mood is he?" and so forth. "Feeling that" expressions do not indicate emotional states. While it is true that we often properly use the expression "feeling that" in reporting judgments of taste, Ryle goes on to say:

It is a philosophical misfortune that, partly under the influence of tripartitionism [the view that mental faculties fall under the headings Sense, Reason, and Intuition, to cite an example], many theorists have assimilated feeling-that to emotion, as though the possession of strategic flair or a cultivated taste in ceramics were akin to being a chronic worrier or being easily vexed or scared. The hapless artist seems to have suffered the worst from this muddle. He is sometimes alleged to be having some emotion or other (other than that of being thoroughly interested in his job) whenever he is doing his work; or at least to be in some unexplained way reviving or recalling some emotion that he has previously had. . . . Which particular emotions these are is usually left unspecified; presumably because we should only have to mention such emotions as boredom, jealousy, restlessness, irritation, and hilarity in order to make the whole story sound as ridiculous as it is.²

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No doubt, there have been many "theorists" who stand guilty as charged. Croce is perhaps the strongest case in point. Yet, one has misgivings about this sweeping indictment. Need it be the case that aesthetic theorists who claim that the business of art, or the work of the artist, has something to do with emotion be thus confused about feelings and emotion? If not, can an account of feelings and emotion be given which renders intelligible claims such as "Art is the expression of emotion," "What artists do in creating works of art is express their emotions," and so on? One would have to tell a long story to answer these very complex questions adequately. I can attempt only the bare outline of one chapter of the story here. I hope to use Ryle's remarks in this essay as a springboard for this attempt, (which, I might add, will have little to do with art per se). I shall make reference to a number of things he says in *The Concept of Mind*.³ In the end, I would hope to sketch an account of feelings and emotion compatible with many of the views expressed in that book; an account which may shed some light on the relationships between feelings, emotion, and expression. I have an ulterior purpose as well, of a quasi-historical sort. I will say no more about this, however, until the end of my essay.

The fundamentally anti-Cartesian position of *The Concept of Mind* is well exhibited in Ryle's chapter on Self-Knowledge. Here he argues against the central doctrine of Cartesian psychology which states that acts of consciousness are self-intimating, self-illuminating, or phosphorescent as it were. The mind is a kind of second theatre, and the objects of consciousness are the scenes and episodes presented therein. Moreover, acts of consciousness are mental states and operations of which the mind is necessarily aware. If I think, hope, remember, will, regret, hear a noise, or feel a pain, I must, so the doctrine goes, be aware that I do so; unimpeachably aware, in fact, since thinking, feeling, hearing, etc., are alleged to bear their own self-awareness. By now, Ryle's arguments against this doctrine are familiar and in the opinion of most contemporary philosophers, conclusive. The alleged objects of Cartesian consciousness are mythical, and we come to be aware of an act of consciousness only by a further cognitive act, an act of attention.

Ryle distinguishes five ways in which the term "conscious" and its associated terms "unconscious," "self-conscious," and "consciousness" are ordinarily used. The Cartesian concept of consciousness, as self-illuminating second theatre scenes and episodes, bears little affinity with any of these ordinary uses (*CM*, 158). I have special interest in one of the ordinary uses Ryle distinguishes. We say that a person is conscious of such and such when he is paying heed to it or paying it notice, and conversely, that he is unconscious of such and such when he pays it no heed or notice. Thus, a walker engaged in a heated debate may be said to be unconscious of the sensations in his blistered heel, and people often are unconscious or unaware that they are frowning, muttering, or beating time to the music (*CM*, 157). Ryle con-

cludes that for this set of ordinary uses, "conscious" and "consciousness," or synonymously, "aware" and "awareness" mean the same thing as "heeding," "paying attention to," or "noticing." For the most part, I think Ryle is right about this, although it may be misleading to talk this way. I will argue that there are groups of cases wherein we can properly say that a person is conscious or aware of such and such but is not heeding, paying attention to, or noticing such and such. I will suggest that these cases are best understood as falling somewhere between the notions of "conscious" and "unconscious," "aware" and "unaware" in the "heeding" sense of these terms. And I will argue that these cases are central to understanding the notions of feeling and sensation. First, however, I want to trace out some of the implications of Ryle's remarks on self-knowledge.

If mental activities are not self-illuminating (here, I use "mental activity" in the very broad sense of "mental goings-on"), in order for us to become conscious or aware of a given mental activity such as being in pain or inferring a geometrical conclusion from geometrical premises, a further cognitive act, an act of heed, attention, or notice, is required. All mental activities have objects. It is plain nonsense to say that a person was feeling, but felt nothing; that he was seeing, but saw nothing; that he was tasting, but tasted nothing. Similarly, it makes no sense to say that a person was aware that he was adding some figures, but was not aware of adding; that he was paying attention to an inference he was making, but was not paying attention to inferring; that he was taking note of a calculation he was doing, but was not taking note of calculating. A given mental activity either has some other mental activity as its object (being aware of the pain in one's chest, paying attention to a calculation one is doing) or it does not. For all cases, there is a logical connection between the concept of the mental activity in question and that of its object—namely, entailment. In this sense, the object is logically prior to the activity, and the activity is logically posterior to its object.

To forestall possible misunderstanding, I want to clarify several points. I am not using the term "mental" in any "special-status" sense. I use it in its ordinary adjectival sense as a way of indicating that I am talking about such goings-on as perceiving, thinking, remembering, wishing, being in pain, feeling cold, being drowsy, and so on. Hence, when I speak of having a pain in one's chest as a mental activity, I have no special philosophical use of either "mental" or "activity" in mind. And when I say that in order for us to become aware that we are in pain an additional cognitive act is required, I do not mean that we have two separate mental entities, the pain on the one hand and our awareness of it on the other. There is only one thing, viz., the noticed pain. As Ryle puts it, "unnoticed pain" is an absurd expression (*CM*, 203). It does not follow, however, that we cannot distinguish different features of the experiences we call "pains." We must, in fact, for the claim that "'unnoticed pain' is absurd" to be intelligible. Moreover, I think that there is an

element of consciousness or awareness (again, in the "heeding" sense of these terms) in anything that counts as a mental occurrence, although I shall have to say why I think that the obvious candidates for counterexamples to this claim, namely, unconscious sensations or unconscious feelings, are not counterexamples after all. One further point: although it is awkward to do so, I think we can sensibly talk about feeling a pain as the product or result of an act of awareness. Not, of course, in the sense of having some mental raw materials (sensations for example) upon which we decide to exercise an act of awareness in order to come up with a finished product, the pain. Pain and awareness of pain are not two separate ingredients which could be sorted out as one sorts the meats and vegetables in a stew. Nor does it follow from the claim that mental activities are logically posterior to their objects that they are temporally posterior. No temporal ordering is implied by this claim. In the sense, then, that there would be no pains unless there were noticed pains, pain can be said to be the product or result of an act of awareness. Some of the language I use in talking about pains is awkward. I can only repeat what Ryle says about this. I simply do not know the right idioms in which to discuss these issues. Linguistic difficulties in discussing feelings and sensations are numerous (*CM*, 201, 203, and 240-244). Any reader can satisfy himself on this point simply by undertaking such a discussion.

Are there any mental activities which do not have other mental activities as their objects? Are there any mental goings-on which we become aware of by heeding, attending to, or noticing, but which are not themselves the products or results of heeding, attending to, or noticing? If there are such activities, what are their objects? The answers to these questions have already been anticipated. The verbs of sensation "to see," "to hear," "to smell," "to touch," and "to taste" are transitive; they all take grammatical objects. Because phenomenalism and other sense-datum theories are untenable, these grammatical objects can be understood to stand for those things in one's perceptual environment which are seen, heard, smelled, touched, and tasted (colors, sounds, odors, textures, and tastes). Of course, visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile, and gustatory sensations are not the only sensations we experience. We also experience pains, itches, dazzles, tensions, twinges, and the like. Following Ryle, we can call the former group of sensations "perceptual," since they have to do specifically with the specialized organs of perception (the eyes, ears, nose, skin, and tongue), and the latter group "organic," since they have to do with other sensitive, but non-sensory organs of the body (*CM*, 201 and 203). These labels are not, of course, intended as names of neat categories of sensation, but only as idiomatic conveniences. There is no single verb in English to designate both perceptual and organic sensing. Nor is there a single participle to designate the objects of these activities. Ordinarily, we use the verb "to feel" and the noun "feelings" to talk about pains, itches, dazzles, etc. In Latin, there is a single generic verb to designate all of the

perceptual sensing activities; the verb *sentire*. The Latin participle *sensum* designates the objects of these activities. In English, we have no equivalent idioms. Perhaps this is why in Scotland, as I understand it, people talk of “feeling” colors, sounds, and tastes as well (feeling and touching activities are ordinarily linked in English). With these terminological clarifications in mind, we can answer the original questions as follows: There are mental activities which do not have other mental activities as objects; namely, perceptual and organic sensing (or feeling) activities. Their objects are whatever is sensed or felt (the objects of sensations or feelings). For reasons I will indicate shortly, however, I think it will be better to drop “sensing” and “sensations” from this vocabulary and talk of “feeling” and “feelings” only.

Almost any way of talking about sensations per se is bound to be misleading. For one thing, this way of talking might lead one to believe that sensations are discrete entities (things or episodes which we can observe, inspect, or otherwise bear witness to). This is perhaps the core of Hume’s bundle theory of the self. Several contemporary philosophers, principally Wittgenstein, Strawson, and Ryle, have mounted devastating attacks against this position. In Ryle’s case the attack takes the form of exhibiting the unintelligibility of claims to observe, witness, inspect, introspect, or scrutinize sensations (*CM*, 203–210). “Observing” entails the having of at least one sensation, although sensations themselves cannot be objects of observation. This is Ryle’s unique way of putting it:

... There is a contradiction in saying that someone is watching or peeping at something, but not getting even one glimpse of it; or in saying that someone is listening to something, though he gets no auditory sensations. Having at least one sensation is part of the force of “perceiving,” “overhearing,” “savouring” and the rest. It follows that having a sensation cannot itself be a species of perceiving, finding or spying. If all clothes are concatenations of stitches, absurdity results from saying that all stitches are themselves very tiny clothes. (*CM*, 214)

It is better to say, perhaps, that sensations are not “objects” at all. We understand sensations in terms of other mental activities (perceiving, observing, feeling, etc.).

Ryle observes that we do not employ sensation words “neat.” We commonly talk of having a glimpse of something round; hearing the sound of something buzzing; tasting something sweet; feeling a stabbing, grinding, or burning pain; and so on. Ryle correctly points out that the intelligibility of these expressions depends upon our being able to describe the corresponding sensations by reference to common objects like balls, bees, candy, knives, drills, and embers.

Epistemologists are fond of using words like “pains,” “itches,” “stabs,” “glows” and “dazzles” as if they were “neat” sensation names. But this practice is doubly misleading. Not only do most of these words draw their significance from situations involving common objects like fleas, daggers and radiators, but they also connote that the

person who has the sensations likes or dislikes, or might well like or dislike, having them. A pain in my knee is a sensation that I mind having; . . . (CM, 203)

Ryle's remarks about sensation words "connoting" likes and dislikes hint at a crucial point about sensations. The point is this: We do not experience sensations in neutral, sterilized form. Always sensations seem to be accompanied by some general element of like or dislike, pleasure or displeasure, satisfaction or dissatisfaction, etc., or some more specific element of fear, security, shame, anger, jealousy, and so forth. In general, sensation experiences always seem to carry with them some emotional overtone(s). I think, in fact, that the connection between sensation and emotion is stronger than this "overtone" (or in Ryle's terms, "connotation") description indicates. When an infant is frightened by a clap of thunder or some other loud noise, or is frightened by some dark object such as its father's black beard, we do not discern two separate experiences: one, the sensation "loud" or "black," and two, the emotion of fright. There is only one experience, namely, the frightening noise or the frightening black. For the infant, or for ourselves for that matter, we can distinguish two features of that experience, but that does not mean that we can distinguish two experiences (such as the sensation of the ringing bell and the salivation of the dog). We cannot strip off the emotion aspect of the experience and get behind it, as it were, to discover the pure, unadulterated sensation.

There may be a time in the sentient development of the human organism (in early infancy perhaps) when sensations are experienced in an emotionally unadulterated form. It is nearly impossible, however, to form any conception of this condition. By the time we reach the stage of mental development when we are able to reflect on our experience, we have already been unavoidably influenced by the language we have learned to speak, and by the forms of life around which this language has emerged. I cannot say, then, that we never experience sensations as such. I can say only that any sensations we are in a position to reflect upon are sensations which seem to carry an inseparable emotional quality. As "feeling" organisms, then, human beings have what might be called a "sensuous-emotional" nature. One can see the point in following Scottish usage in talking about "feeling" smells, colors, tastes, sounds, and textures as well as feeling pains, itches, twinges, etc.

Although this account of feelings which I have begun to outline is far from complete, we can see in it already an interesting and, for philosophers unsympathetic to a Cartesian position, welcome consequence. Emotion cannot be regarded as a distinct species of consciousness according to this view. It is always the case that emotion will be a feature of some mental activity (e.g., feeling), but never a mental activity in itself. Thus, any tripartite, sexpartite, or n-partite theorist who assigns a separate category of emotion to his mental schema has failed to see that like sensations, emotions do not exist indepen-

dently of other mental activities. Emotion is possible only when one is feeling, thinking, choosing, or engaging in some other mental activity. Moreover, just as we do not experience sensations without an emotional accompaniment, so, it would seem, we never think thoughts, hope hopes, will ends, etc., independently of some emotional experiences. All mental activities carry with them some emotional quality, although it does not follow that there is any particular emotional quality which any given mental activity need bear (there may in fact be, but that is something we can determine only by looking and seeing).

Whether we are talking of pains, itches, colors, or sounds, feelings have both a sensuous and an emotional aspect. Ryle describes the sensuous aspect of perceptual feeling as achievements, and he calls the verbs which designate those perceptual activities "achievement verbs" (*CM*, 207 and 223).

Verbs of perception such as "see," "hear," "detect," "discriminate" and many others are generally used to record observational successes, while verbs like "watch," "listen," "probe," "scan," and "savour" are used to record observational undertakings, the success of which may still be in question. . . . The simple-seeming assertion "I see a linnet" claims a success, where "I am trying to make out what is moving" reports only an investigation. (*CM*, 222-223)

These remarks imply that, ordinarily, a person who sees, hears, smells, tastes, and in certain cases, touches, must be conscious or aware that he is seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching (*CM*, 223, 226). He must be heeding, attending to, or noticing the objects of these perceptual activities. Like an unnoticed pain, then, an unnoticed object of perceptual achievement is also an absurdity for Ryle. I said earlier that Ryle's way of putting this point is misleading. I now want to develop this claim and in so doing offer a somewhat different account of the sensuous aspect of both perceptual and organic feeling.

It is not always the case that verbs of perceptual sensation signify achievements of heed, attention, or notice. I want to describe cases involving each of the five basic perceptual verbs wherein ordinary usage sanctions our saying both "Jones smelled, tasted, heard, touched, or saw such and such," "Jones was conscious or aware of such and such," and "Jones did not notice such and such." I want to describe a similar case for organic sensations (e.g., "Jones felt a pain") as well. The cases I will outline stand in need of filling out. They represent, moreover, only one segment of a continuum of cases which need to be discussed in detail. Nonetheless, they are sufficiently clear to suggest that, contrary to what Ryle claims, being aware of a perceptual or an organic feeling is not always the same thing as heeding, attending to, or noticing an object of sensation. Hence the sensuous aspect of feeling will have to be understood in a different way.

We have all had the experience of attending a party in a smoke-filled room, but because we have been there for some time, and because the room has

filled with smoke gradually, we do not notice the smoke. In such a case, it seems reasonable to say that "Jones smelled smoke." Was Jones aware of the smell of the smoke? If we take his inadvertent sniffing, occasional coughing and eye rubbing, along with his remark, "I didn't notice how foul the air smelled in there until I went out into the evening air," as reasonable indicators of his olfactory condition, then Jones was aware of the smell of the smoke. But he did not notice it. Undoubtedly, the same may be true for the smell of chocolate for people who work in candy factories.

Similarly, if Jones is dining at a restaurant *à haute cuisine* but is absorbed in the beauty and charm of his dinner companion instead of his food, we cannot claim that he did not taste the quiche, but we can say that he did not notice or pay any attention to its taste. He may not have noticed the Strauss waltz in the background either, although it was being played rather loudly. Unless he was having some auditory malfunction, however, it does not follow that he did not hear the music. To round out this story, we can imagine Jones saying several days later, "Although I did not pay any attention to it at the time, I now recall that the table linen was extremely fine to the touch." For Jones to recollect this properly, he must have been aware of the linen texture at the time, but not in the way that he was aware of his companion's many charms (which, the waiter tells us, "Held his undivided attention").

The verb "to see" may be somewhat more problematic. As I write this sentence, my pad, my pen, my hand, the desk I rest on, etc., all fall within my visual field. I may not be paying attention, however, to anything but my penmanship. I may be taking note only of the quality of the letters I am inscribing. Can I be said "to see" the walnut desk? It occupies 3/5 of my visual field. It is a large, dark, imposing surface. If someone were to place a cardboard cutout in front of my face he could thereby block out the desk from my view but still allow the pad and pen to be seen by me. Given these conditions, it seems reasonable to say that I saw the desk all right, but not in the same way that I saw the ink-smear ruin my capital "R." Again, being visually aware of the desk does not seem to be the same thing as heeding, attending to, or noticing the desk.

Because perceptual feeling is not always accurately described as an achievement activity, the sensuous aspect of feelings will have to be characterized in terms other than "objects of perceptual achievement." I have already suggested what that characterization might be. In this last example, the focus of my vision was by no means identical with the focus of my visual attention. The desk fell within my visual range, but I was attending to the letters only. The desk was before my eyes (it was within my field of vision), but I paid it no heed. We can certainly say that the desk was within my visual field without having to say that I was aware of it (in the sense that I was attending to it). All we are committed to saying is that I would be aware of

it, *without refocusing my vision*, if I were attending to it. The ambiguity of "Jones sees X" can be rendered unambiguous by saying "X falls within Jones' visual field." Although ordinary English does not provide such expressions, we could, without confusion, talk of "auditory fields," "olfactory fields," "tactile fields," and "gustatory fields" as well (the generic expression "sense field" need not be confusing either). The generic statement "Jones has a sensation" is, then, to be understood as "Something is in at least one of Jones' sense fields"; and "Jones has a feeling" as "Something is in at least one of Jones' sense fields and is accompanied by some quality of emotion."⁴

Before drawing out the implications of the distinction between feeling and attention, I want to make a few remarks about organic sensations such as pains. Ryle claims that "unnoticed pain" is an absurdity. This, too, is misleading. Suppose the companion of the walker with the blistered heel who is engaged in heated debate notices that his friend has been favoring what turns out to be his afflicted foot for the last half mile. He walks gingerly. Frequently, he reaches down and readjusts his shoe as they move along (all the while arguing strenuously for a Democratic victory in the next election). Finally, his companion says to him, "Jones, what's wrong with your foot? You've been limping and fussing with it for half a mile now." Jones replies, "Now that you mention it, I guess I have at that. Something has been bothering me but I was so caught up in our conversation that I hadn't really noticed it." Was Jones aware of his painful heel? If we take his limping and his fussing as indications of his feelings, then Jones was indeed aware of the pain, but only barely aware of it. In any case, not as aware of it as he was after his attention had been drawn to it.

This case, and the cases of perceptual feeling previously cited, make it clear that the notions of "conscious" and "unconscious," or "aware" and "unaware" (in Ryle's "heeding" or "attending to" sense), are not adequate for describing states of feelings. Feelings, in these cases, are neither conscious nor unconscious. Our walker is aware of his blistered heel (in some sense of "aware"); he feels the weight of the pack on his back; he feels the warmth of the sun; he sees the blue of the sky; he hears the sounds of the birds; he smells the fragrance of the grass; but he is not paying attention to any of these things. As such, feelings are undifferentiated. Jones will, along with experiencing all of these feelings, be in some emotional state (mild agitation, mixed vexation, pleasant excitement, or whatever). Taken together, all of these feelings will convey a total impression. And he could, of course, bring any of these feelings to his full attention. As unattended, however, feelings are directed to a diverse field of sensation which has several focal points (visual, auditory, etc.) but no sharp boundaries.

Jones became aware that "something was bothering him" (that he was in a state of mild discomfort, agitation, or whatever). He also became aware of the pain in his heel. In the first instance, his attention was not selective.

It was directed to a diversity of feelings. In the second, his attention was selective. It was directed to a specific feeling. Selective attention entails non-selective attention, and both entail feeling as unattended. Selective attention cannot create its own objects. In order to become aware of a specific feeling, there must be something already present to consciousness of which we become specifically aware. And in order for us to be conscious of anything at all, we must be experiencing a diversity of feeling directed to a diffuse field of sensation. It is true that this diversity of feeling is never experienced as unattended (except, as I have suggested previously for sensations, in very early infancy). For any purpose of reflection, it is always experienced as attended to non-selectively or selectively. Ryle is right. With the exception of some very early stage of a human organism's sentient development (and with one other exception which I will mention shortly) "unconscious feeling" (i.e., strictly "unattended feeling") is an absurdity. It does not follow, however, that feeling which is conscious or attended to can be attended to in only one way. Feeling, as attended to non-selectively, is neither conscious nor unconscious (in Ryle's "heeding" sense). There is some precedent in psychoanalytic theory for calling this kind of feeling "preconscious." Without getting bogged down in disputes on Freudian usage, I will adapt this expression to suit my purposes.

As preconscious (attended to non-selectively), a feeling of pain is intermingled with a diversity of feelings. As conscious (attended to selectively), it is clear and differentiated. Finally, as unconscious (strictly unattended), feeling can only have the status of the kind which obtains for a very young human organism. In this sense, although we do not experience it as such, unconscious feeling would seem to survive even in adulthood. Vestiges of unconscious feeling come to the surface when we are about to fall off to sleep; when we are daydreaming, under hypnosis, or under the influence of a drug like sodium pentothol; and perhaps when we are actually dreaming.

Feelings (perceptual or organic) are not raised to consciousness or awareness until they are attended to (generally speaking, it is cases of selective attention we are interested in). What, then, is attention, and what does it mean to say that we "attended to" feelings? Questions like "What is attention?" to borrow Wittgenstein's remark, "... produce in us a mental cramp. We feel that we can't point to anything in reply to them and yet ought to point to something."⁵ To relieve this cramp, we might begin by saying what attention is not. Following Ryle, we can say that attention is not an act of seeing within, introspection, or inner observation (*CM*, 203-210). Nor could it be some further sensation or feeling (*CM*, 160-161). This is not to say, of course, that we cannot come to know our own minds (*CM*, 160-161). It is to say only that to understand how we come to know our own minds requires something very different from inner observation. Ryle gives us the clue to what that different something will be: "... knowing what we are about does not entail

an incessant actual monitoring or scrutiny of our doings and feelings, but only the propensity *inter alia* to avow them. . . ." (CM, 161). Language, then, is the key. We come to know ourselves in the same way in which we come to know others; not by private intuition, but by public language. Ryle's position suggests, then, that attention is a function of language. By "language" I mean not only verbal communication, but communication by gesticulating, grimacing, crying, holding one's foot, moaning, etc. In general, I mean any consistent set of bodily movements by which we convey meaning. In Austinian terms, attention is a linguistic act. We attend to our feelings (either non-selectively to a diversity of feeling or selectively to a specific feeling) by performing a linguistic act (by making a meaningful verbal utterance or a meaningful non-verbal gesture). This, I propose, is the way we become conscious or aware of our feelings. Once again, however, I want to emphasize that this does not mean that attention is some discrete mental event (or some discrete linguistic event for that matter). It is not as though we have a feeling on the one hand upon which we exercise an act of attention by uttering a word such as "red," or by gesturing with some other bodily movement. The feeling and the awareness of the feeling are not separable ingredients. They are not ingredients at all. This is not to deny, as Wittgenstein points out, that sometimes it is true to say, "First I am aware of it [a feeling, image, or sensation] as this; and then I remember what it is called."⁶ But this is not true for all cases. "How do I recognize that this is red?—'I see that it is *this*; and then I know that that is what this is called.' This?—What?! What kind of answer to this question makes sense?" (PI, sect. 380). Manifestly, no answer makes sense, for the question is actually a pseudo-question. "How do I know that this color is red?—It would be an answer to say "I have learnt English" (PI, sect. 381).

The kind of attention Wittgenstein has in mind here is what I have called selective attention. It seems reasonable to describe this attention as conceptual. One writer sums up this point as follows:

Whenever my attention shifts from one thing to another, it seems to me that I invariably form some conception, either in words or in some other form of utterance, first of the one and then of the other. If such shifts of attention do not consist in forming, by means of language, successive conceptions of the things attended to, I am at a loss to know what they are.⁷

I also suggested earlier that selective attention entails non-selective attention, and that both entail feeling per se (i.e., strictly unattended feeling). I want now to explain what is meant by saying that non-selective attention is linguistic and that it presupposes feeling per se. I hope to be able to tie in this discussion with the notion of expression.

Ryle talks about self-knowledge as "a propensity *inter alia* to avow" doings and feelings. By "avow," Ryle seems to have in mind something like "express." I will take Ryle to be talking at least in part about expression.

This immediately raises the question of how feelings and the expression of feelings are connected with language. No discussion of this question can ignore Wittgenstein's notoriously difficult suggestion; "A child has hurt himself and he cries; and then adults talk to him and teach him exclamations and, later, sentences. They teach the child new pain-behavior" (*PI*, sect. 244). I, too, have a reading of this passage. The interpretation I will now sketch ties together all I have said thus far about sensations and feelings. My sketch will be in terms of commonly recognized features of the natural development of human organisms.

Everyone who is familiar with the development of a new baby through infancy and childhood will recognize that something like the following story can be told. In early infancy, as sentient organisms, babies certainly have feelings. They are responsive to heat and cold, noises in their environment, hunger, the doctor's hypodermic needle and the like. Moreover, certain of their responses indicate like or pleasure, others dislike or displeasure. Gurgling is a natural sign of pleasure as wailing is a sign of displeasure. At this stage, feelings are experienced as strictly unattended or unconscious. The expressions of these feelings are automatic and involuntary. The baby does not choose to wail and it does not deliberately flinch at loud noises. There comes a time, however, when parents begin to distinguish the baby's cry of hunger from its cry of pain. And there also comes a time when the baby begins to learn that certain kinds of noises get certain kinds of responses. At this point, we begin to talk about the baby crying "on purpose" as it were. Not, of course, in the sense of "intentionally" or "deliberately." What we mean, I take it, is that the crying is no longer simply involuntary or automatic. It now exhibits some aspect of control.

Is the baby beginning to be aware of its feelings? Does its crying constitute the beginnings of communicative language? It is difficult to avoid answering these questions affirmatively. Certainly, the baby's feelings at this stage are not very differentiated (I have called them "preconscious"). Only a vague level of non-selective attention can be discerned. And the crying, as linguistic expression, is a highly primitive, ejaculatory form of linguistic expression. Nonetheless, there seems to be sufficient consistency in the ways in which preconscious feeling is expressed to enable parents and other experienced observers to understand the baby's cries and gestures very well.

As I have amplified it, then, Wittgenstein's suggestion amounts to this: Initially, feelings are unconscious and they are expressed in automatic, involuntary behavior. Linguistic behavior begins when we can discern some aspects of consistency and control in the baby's bodily movements. As the baby (or child) becomes more and more aware of what it feels, its linguistic behavior becomes more and more differentiated. Primitive, ejaculatory linguistic behavior is eventually replaced by more sophisticated linguistic behavior (as the child's ability to attend to its feelings becomes more acute). Con-

ventional language is a highly developed form of linguistic expression and is, perhaps, the primary vehicle of expression for mature human beings. Vestiges of unconscious and preconscious feeling survive in adulthood, although it is difficult to reflect upon feelings as such since the primitive language of preconscious feeling has been replaced by more sophisticated conventional language.

Admittedly, one feels a bit uncomfortable having to resort to quasi-biological/anthropological facts about human beings to elucidate a philosophical position. Yet I can think of no other way to proceed here. Indeed, Wittgenstein and Ryle as well (*CM*, 231–233) find it necessary to talk about such development. Some of the misgivings one has about this may be dispelled, however, simply by realizing that no appeal to either mysterious or incontrovertible facts of human nature is being made. Hence, if one is inclined to ask questions like “But how does all of this development of language, expression, etc., come about?” an appropriate response would be of the sort Ryle gives for a similar question about perception:

But this is a queer sort of how-question, since, constructing it in one way, we all know the answer perfectly well. We know how infants come to learn that some noises do, and others do not, belong to tunes. . . . There is no more of an epistemological puzzle involved in describing how infants learn perception recipes than there is in describing how boys learn to bicycle. They learn by practice. . . . (*CM*, 231)

If one wished to pursue these “how-questions” further, the best one can hope for is the sort of metaphorical descriptions of “emergence,” “light dawning gradually over the whole,” etc., which Wittgenstein employs in his book *On Certainty*.⁸

This foregoing analysis suggests the following account of what it is for a person to express his feelings. Expression is an activity. It is the activity of attending to either a diversity of feeling non-selectively, or a specific feeling selectively. For both cases, the most natural metaphors for describing the activity of expressing one’s feelings are “bringing them to awareness” or “raising them to consciousness.” Neither of these metaphors, however, is intended to designate “how” expression is accomplished. Beyond further metaphorical appeal, we can say only that expression is accomplished in or by linguistic behavior. This is, certainly, only the very beginning of an adequate account of expression. It is as much as I can say, however, in this short chapter of the story.

It should be clear that this account of feelings and expression in no way confuses feeling, or feeling that, with emotion. Emotion cannot be assimilated to either feeling or feeling that. Nor can feeling be assimilated to emotion. Feelings, as attended to either non-selectively or selectively, have an inseparable emotion aspect, but they have a sensuous aspect as well. Hence, when feelings are expressed (again, either non-selectively or selectively), the emo-

tional qualities they bear are also expressed. The expression of emotion, then, is to be understood in terms of attention and linguistic behavior.

While it is not my purpose in this essay to develop an expression theory of art, given the foregoing account it is not difficult to see what a "theorist" might have in mind in making claims such as "Art has to do with emotion," "Art is the expression of emotion," "What artists do in creating art is to express their emotions," and so forth. Art, as the expression of emotion, is an activity of raising either a diversity of feeling or a specific feeling (or specific feelings) from a state of preconsciousness to a state of consciousness. The activity is carried on by means of language, or broadly speaking, linguistic behavior. One of the best statements of this view I am familiar with comes not from a philosophical theorist, but from one of his would-be hapless victims, the Russian-born American artist Ben Shahn. Shahn was asked to do a series of illustrations of a tragic fire which claimed the lives of a poor black family on the South Side of Chicago. His efforts culminated in a profound painting which he later entitled "Allegory." Shahn gives the following biographical account of that painting:

I was asked to make drawings for the story and, after several discussions with the writer, felt that I had gained enough of the feel of the situation to proceed. I examined a great deal of factual visual material, and then I discarded all of it. It seemed to me that the implications of this event transcended the immediate story; there was a universality about man's dread of fire, and his sufferings from fire. There was a universality in the pity which such a disaster invokes. . . . I now began to devise symbols of an almost abstract nature, to work in terms of such symbols. Then I rejected that approach too. . . . I returned to the small family contacts, to the familiar experiences of all of us, to the furniture, the look of ordinary people, and on that level made my bid for universality. . . . Of all the symbols which I had begun or sought to develop, I retained only one in my illustrations—a highly formalized wreath of flames. . . . Sometimes, if one is particularly satisfied with a piece of work which he has completed, he may say to himself, "Well done," and go on to something else. Not in this instance, however. I found that I could not dismiss the event about which I had made drawings. I had still not fully expressed my sense of the enormity of the Hickman fire; I had not formulated it in its full proportions. . . . The image that I sought to create was not one of a disaster; that somehow doesn't interest me. I wanted instead to create the emotional tone that surrounds disaster—you might call it the inner disaster. . . . When a painting is merely in the visionary state, the inner critic has already begun stamping upon it. The artist is enthusiastic about some idea he has. "You cannot," says the inner critic, "superimpose upon visual material that which is not essentially visual. Your idea is underdeveloped. You must find an image in which the feeling itself is embedded. . . . What you want to formulate is the terror, the heart-shaking fear. Now find that image." . . . So the inward critic has stopped the painting before it has even begun. Then when the artist strips his ideas down to emotional images alone and begins slowly, falteringly, moving toward some realization, that critic is constantly objecting, constantly chiding, holding the hand back to the image alone, so that the painting remains only that, so that it does not split into two things, one, the image, and another, the meaning. . . . When I at last turned the lionlike beast [Shahn's eventual key image] into a painting, I felt able to imbue

it with everything that I had ever felt about a fire. I incorporated the highly formalized flames from the Hickman story as a terrible wreath about its head, and under its body I placed the four child figures which, to me, hold the sense of all the helpless and the innocent.⁹

A prominent philosophical theorist has described the activity of expression in terms more general than Shahn's:

When a man is said to express emotion, what is being said about him comes to this. At first, he is conscious of having an emotion, but not conscious of what this emotion is. All he is conscious of is a perturbation or excitement, which he feels going on within him, but of whose nature he is ignorant. While in this state, all he can say about his emotion is: "I feel . . . I don't know what I feel." From this helpless and oppressed condition he extricates himself by doing something which we call expressing himself. This is an activity which has something to do with the thing we call language: he expresses himself by speaking. It also has something to do with consciousness: the emotion expressed is an emotion of whose nature the person who feels it is no longer unconscious. It also has something to do with the way in which he feels the emotion. As unexpressed, he feels it in what we have called a helpless and oppressed way; as expressed, he feels it in a way from which this sense of oppression has vanished. His mind is somehow lightened and eased.¹⁰

Neither of these descriptions is an account of the concept of expression, of course. They are, simply, descriptions of expression activity. The philosophical analysis of the expression of emotion and art as the expression of emotion is, for the most part, yet to come. Suffice it to say, however, that given the analytical groundwork on sensations and feelings I have attempted to lay out, such an analysis is not only within the realm of intelligible possibility, but is, perhaps, unavoidable.

The philosophical theorist I have just cited, R. G. Collingwood, sees the matter in just these terms. This takes me to what I have called my quasi-historical purpose. Any reader familiar with *The Principles of Art* and *The New Leviathan* will recognize that the account of sensations, feeling, and expression I have attempted is, with selection and revision, a reconstruction of the views expressed in these books by Professor Ryle's Waynflete predecessor, R. G. Collingwood. Any such reader will also suspect that not only Croce, but Collingwood as well, are among the theorists Ryle has in mind in the passage initially cited. If I have been successful, it should now be clear that far from being a tripartite culprit, Collingwood very often shares Ryle's views. I have taken care to employ as little of Collingwood's language as possible. There are two reasons for this: first, this paper has mainly to do with Ryle's work, not Collingwood's. My discussion, then, had to be couched in Rylean terms. Second, Collingwood's intellectual ancestry is that of 19th century idealism (particularly Croce's historicist brand). His language is, accordingly, anachronistic, and not especially congenial to the ordinary language ear. Nonetheless, Collingwood's major philosophical works are very good ones indeed, worthy of far greater consideration than they have presently been

afforded. This is especially true of *The New Leviathan*, Collingwood's philosophy of mind and society.

My interest in Collingwood vis à vis Ryle is not simply historical. On the topic of feelings and expression, and on many other topics as well, they both express views I want to endorse. The historical aspect of this inquiry should not be underplayed. Philosophy is an on-going human activity, and as such its history is inextricably linked with its current status. Attempting to set matters straight in the history of philosophy is not something very different from doing philosophy itself (if, indeed, it is different at all). More immediately, the Waynflete Chair has had a remarkable succession of occupants in Collingwood, Ryle, and now Strawson. As we would hope, their work has been very different in many respects. However, the important similarities should not be overlooked. Anyone familiar with Collingwood's views knows that Professor Ryle was not merely paying homage to his predecessor in his inaugural address when he credited Collingwood with a kind of insight into the mind/body question, the full power of which was brought to fruition in Ryle's major work, *The Concept of Mind*.

NOTES

1. Gilbert Ryle, "Feelings," reprinted in W. Elton, ed., *Aesthetics and Language* (Oxford, 1954), pp. 56-72.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

3. Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London, 1949). All further references in my text will be to this original Hutchinson edition, denoted *CM*.

4. I owe this analysis of the sensuous aspect of perceptual feeling entirely to Alan Donagan, who develops this account in his book, *The Later Philosophy of R. G. Collingwood* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 36-38. I must note here that my interest in Ryle vis à vis Collingwood was ignited by Alan Donagan's work. Donagan is certainly a Collingwoodian scholar, and if one can appropriately use the expression at this stage, a Rylean scholar as well. His book was indispensable in writing this essay. I owe much of what I say to Donagan's pioneering work on Collingwood.

5. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books* (New York, 1965), p. 1.

6. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Philosophical Investigations* (New York, 1953), sects. 379-380, p. 117e. Following references to this edition are abbreviated *PI*.

7. Donagan, *Collingwood*, p. 43.

8. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty* (New York, 1969), sects. 141, p. 21e and 475, p. 62e.

9. Ben Shahn, "The Biography of a Painting," reprinted in V. Tomas, ed., *Creativity in the Arts* (Englewood Cliffs, 1964), pp. 14-20.

10. R. G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* (Oxford, 1938), pp. 109-110.