RIFL (2013) Vol. 7, n. 1: 3-17
DOI 10.4396/20130302

Wittgenstein's Grammar of Emotions

Francesco Bellucci
Università degli Studi di Siena
bellucci.francesco@gmail.com

Abstract In his later writings, Wittgenstein devoted a great deal of energy to the analysis of emotions. Between March and December 1947, he organized his remarks into a «classification of psychological concepts», in which emotions have a determinate place. This classification was not of course intended as a conclusive theory of psychology, but as a guide for the philosophical treatment of psychological concepts in general, and of emotions in particular. Following Wittgenstein's classifications, in this paper I outline the main features of what one might call Wittgenstein's «philosophy of emotions» in the context of his general method of philosophical investigation. Special prominence will of course be given to the two volumes of the *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* (1947-1948), which contain his most extended and careful analysis of the matter. I argue that, since Wittgenstein conceived philosophy as a grammatical activity, his philosophy of emotions is, more precisely, a grammatical investigation into emotions.

Keywords: Wittgenstein, Emotions, Experiences, Philosophy of Psychology, Grammar.

0. Introduction

Since antiquity, emotions have been a matter for philosophical investigation. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle defines emotions (*pathē*) as

> those things through which, by undergoing change, people come to differ in their judgments and which are accompanied by pain and pleasure, for example, anger, pity, fear, and other such things and their opposites (1378a 20-23).

In the *Passions of the Soul*, Descartes distinguishes between perceptions that we relate to objects outside us, those that we relate to our body, and those that we relate to our soul, which latter are passions *stricto sensu*:

> the passions of the soul are perceptions, sentiments, and emotions of the soul, which are referred particularly to the soul itself, and which are caused, entertained, and strengthened by some movement of the animal spirits (DESCARTES 1649 [1989]: § 27).

Descartes also calls them *émotions de l'âme* (§ 28). For Locke, passions are modes of the simple ideas of pleasure and pain, which we receive from sensation and

reflection (LOCKE 1690: II, xx, § 18); he lists eleven of these: love, hatred, desire, joy, sorrow, hope, fear, despair, anger, envy, and shame (LOCKE 1690: II, xx, §§ 4-17). For Kant, a passion is «a sensible desire that has become a lasting inclination (e.g., hatred, as opposed to anger)» (KANT 1797 [1991]: 208), while for Charles S. Peirce emotions, as sensations, are species of the genus *feeling*, which in turn is conceived as «merely the material quality of a mental sign» (PEIRCE 1931-1958: 5.291). In different ways and with different emphasis, philosophers have never ceased to speculate as to the place of emotions in the topography of the mind.

Ludwig Wittgenstein too, in his later writings, devoted a great deal of energy to the analysis of emotions (*Gemütsbewegungen*). As is typical of Wittgenstein's late philosophical method, numerous threads of argument regarding emotions interweave through his writings, along with partly overlapping examples and suggestive but elusive comparisons. However, between March and December 1947 he organizes his remarks into a *classification of psychological concepts*, in which emotions have a determinate place. This classification was not of course intended as a conclusive theory of psychology, but as a guide for the philosophical treatment of psychological concepts in general, and of emotions in particular. Following Wittgenstein's classifications, in this paper I shall outline the main features of what one might call Wittgenstein's *philosophy of emotions* in the context of his general method of philosophical investigation. Special prominence will of course be given to the two volumes of the *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* (1947-1948), which contain his most extended and careful analysis of the matter. As I hope will become clear, since Wittgenstein conceived philosophy as a grammatical activity, his philosophy of emotions is, more precisely, a *grammatical investigation into emotions*.

1. Grammatical investigations

Wittgenstein's late philosophy of psychology as a whole may be considered as a tentative, multifaceted, and sometimes inconclusive exploration of language games involving psychological concepts in general, and emotions in particular. More precisely, Wittgenstein explicitly intends to explore the *grammar* of these concepts. In order to understand his philosophy of emotions we have therefore to grasp the exact scope of his method of philosophical inquiry.

Philosophical problems are not empirical problems. In philosophy we are not concerned with something that might be confirmed or disconfirmed, proved or disproved, through empirical observation. Philosophical problems are solved «by looking into the workings of our language» (PI: § 109). In philosophy no appeal to empirical truth is needed:

> these problems are solved not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always known. Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language (*ibidem*).

However, the task of philosophy is not the reform of our language, but its *description*: «Philosophy. The clarification of the uses of language» (BT: § 90); «Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describe it» (PI: § 124). The method of philosophy is descriptive. What it describes is the *grammar* of our language. Philosophy is thus a *grammatical* investigation (PI: § 90). In order to know what something is, we have to look at the

way we speak of it. Grammar, not experience, is what reveals us what kind of object something is: «Grammar tells us what kind of object a thing is» (PI: § 373); «Essence is expressed by grammar» (PI: § 371).
Now, Wittgenstein distinguishes between what he calls «surface grammar» and «depth grammar»:

> In the use of words one might distinguish 'surface grammar' from 'depth grammar'. What immediately impresses itself upon us about the use of a word is the way it is used in the construction of the sentence, the part of its use – one might say – that can be taken in by the ear (PI: § 664).

Surface grammar concerns the syntactic construction of a sentence and the syntactic role of a component word therein. It is, to use Wittgenstein's phrase, what «can be taken in by the ear». Depth grammar, on the contrary, concerns the *use* of a sentence, that is, is the description and the clarification of the circumstances and the consequences of its use. When Wittgenstein denounces the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language, he is of course referring to surface grammar:

> A main source of our failure to understand is that we do not command a clear view [*übersehen*] of the use of our words. – Our grammar is lacking in this sort of perspicuity [*Übersichtlichkeit*]. A perspicuous representation [*übersichtliche Darstellung*] produces just that understanding that consists in 'seeing connections'. Hence the importance of finding and inventing intermediate cases (PI: §122).

Two sentences may well «sound alike» (PI: § 134) and may nonetheless differ markedly in the circumstances of their use. For instance, the surface grammar of «Bachelors are unmarried men» is akin to that of «Bachelors are unhappy men»; yet, they differ in depth grammar: the latter says something factual about bachelors, while the former teaches us how to use "bachelor"[1]. What appears alike in surface grammar might be not in depth grammar, and expressions collected with regard to their superficial similarity might result dissimilar in the way they are used. Surface grammar is deceptive, for it distorts our view and misleads us in conceptual analysis. What is needed is a method that might enable us to have an overview over the different uses an expression has in our language, over and above its surface syntax, and to tabulate these uses in *surveyable representations*[2].
Surveyable representations are indeed collections of *grammatical propositions*:

> Narrowly understood, a surveyable representation of the grammar of an expression appears to be a grammatical proposition or a few grammatical propositions that shed enough light on the matter at hand to dispel illusion and to highlight the grammatical category or role of the expression in question. Broadly understood, a surveyable representation is a synopsis of the grammatical rules for the use of an expression (BACKER & HACKER 1983 [2005]: 332).

[1] Cf. HACKER (1972 [1986]: 183).
[2] On the notion of *surveyable representation* cf. BACKER & HACKER (1983 [2005]: Ch. XV).

A grammatical proposition is a proposition that stipulates the use of a word in language; it has to language the same relation as the rules of a game have to the game[3].

The main tenet of Wittgenstein's grammatical investigations is that *grammar is arbitrary*[4]. With this claim he intends that different grammars are imaginable and therefore possible: «an education quite different from ours might also be the foundation of quite different concepts» (Z: § 387), and therefore of quite different grammatical rules that govern those concepts[5]. Grammar is arbitrary because it «can't be justified by reality» (BT: 148e). But what does it mean that grammar cannot be justified?

First, it means that the rules of grammar cannot be derived from any pre-existent meaning of the words that they are supposed to govern. For example, the fact that two negations yield an affirmation cannot be derived from the meaning of negation. So, although «it looks as if it followed from the nature of negation that a double negative is an affirmative» (PI: § 552; cf. § 556), yet the order of justification is the other way round: it is the grammar of negation (which among other things, prescribes that two negations yield and affirmation) that justifies the meaning that we attribute to the sign. The meaning of the sign of negation is *constituted* by the rules of its use, and does not exist outside them (cf. BT: 186e).

One cannot justify the rules of grammar by appeal to experience, either. For example, the grammatical proposition that there exist only four primary colours cannot be justified by the empirical fact that there *actually are* four primary colours:

> One is tempted to justify rules of grammar by sentences like 'But there are really four primary colors'. And if we say that the rules of grammar are arbitrary, that is directed against the possibility of this justification (PG: §134).

Any attempt at justifying grammar by empirical facts is viciously circular, for the empirical facts themselves presuppose grammar:

> Grammar is not accountable to any reality. It is grammatical rules that determine meaning (constitute it) and so they themselves are not answerable to any meaning and to that extent are arbitrary (PG: § 133; cf. BT: 188e).

Furthermore, just as grammatical propositions cannot be justified by empirical facts, so they cannot be justified with regard to their success in realizing *purposes* (BT: 145e; PI: § 497):

> Why don't I call the rules of cooking arbitrary; and why am I tempted to call the rules of grammar arbitrary? Because 'cooking' is defined by its end, whereas speaking a language isn't. Therefore the use of language is autonomous in a certain sense in which cooking and washing aren't. For anyone guided by other than the correct rules when he cooks, cooks badly; but anyone guided by rules other than those for chess plays a different game, and anyone guided by grammatical rules other than such and such doesn't as a result say anything that is false, but is talking about something else (BT: 187e).

[3] «Grammar describes the use of words in the language. So it has somewhat the same relation to the language as the description of a game, the rules of a game, have to the game» (PG: § 23).

[4] On the arbitrariness of grammar see BACKER & HACKER (1985 [2009]: 241-370); FORESTER 2004.

[5] This is what FORSTER 2004 calls the *diversity thesis*.

The rules of cooking specify what I have to do if I want to obtain good-tasting food, and the end of cooking is specifiable without specifying its rules. I can thus distinguish correct and incorrect rules depending on whether they fulfil or not the end of cookery. If, for example, I burn the garlic instead of just browning it in olive oil, this does not change that fact that I am cooking: I will cook badly, perhaps, but still I will be cooking. Now compare the rules of cooking to the rules of chess. The rules of chess are not determined by reference to any independently specifiable end; rather, they *constitute* the game of chess; this latter is completely determined by its rules, and it would not make sense to speak of chess independently of the rules of chess. If I move the knight diagonally (as a bishop) I cannot be said to play chess badly; rather, I will be playing a different game. The rules of grammar are like the rules of chess, not like those of cookery: «The rules do not follow *from* the idea. They are not got by analysis of the idea; they *constitute it*. They show the use of the word» (LC: 186).

Finally, grammatical propositions are arbitrary because they are neither true nor false, neither correct nor incorrect: «If the true is what is grounded, then the ground is not *true*, nor yet false» (OC: § 205; cf. § 94); «all that a change in grammar can do is to lead us from *one* such game to *another*, not from something true to something false» (BT: 181e). We cannot call the rules of grammar true or false, for they are exactly that which allows us to speak of truth and falsity. The rule of chess that prescribes that bishops move diagonally is not, strictly speaking, true; likewise, a rule prescribing that bishops move orthogonally would not be false. Rather, these rules *define* the game of chess as such, and different rules simply define different games.

All these reasons, singularly and collectively, determine why grammar cannot be justified, and is then arbitrary. Having thus outlined Wittgenstein's conception of grammar, let us now turn to his grammatical investigations into the philosophy of psychology.

2. The classification of psychological concepts

In 1947 Wittgenstein presents the idea of «a genealogical tree of psychological concepts» (RPP I: § 722) which would provide us with *Übersichtlichkeit*, or a perspicuous way of looking at things. What he actually outlines is, however, not so much a genealogical tree as a *classification* of psychological concepts that exhibits them in a perspicuous way so as to enable us to see connections, distinctions, affinities and dependences among them.

The first classification is dated March 18, 1947. Wittgenstein begins by asking «Ought I to call the whole field of the psychological that of '*experience*'?» (RPP I: § 836); the answer to this question seems to be yes, although he does not explain why *experience* should be the most general class of psychological concepts. The most distinguishing characteristic of experiences is that «their third person but not their first person is stated on ground of observation» (*ibidem*). Experiences are then subdivided into *concepts of undergoings* (*Erfahrungsbegriffe*)[6], *emotions* and *forms of conviction*.

Undergoings typically have duration and a course; they also have intensity, and spatial-temporal relations to one another. The only examples of undergoing here

[6] Wittgenstein distinguished between *Erlebniss* and *Erfahrung*, which are translated with *experience* and *undergoing*, respectively; cf. the translator's note in RPP I: 149e, n 1.

mentioned are *images*, of which *impressions* are a subclass. Emotions are experiences (*Erlebnisse*) that are not undergoings (*Erfahrungen*); they are divided into *directed* and *undirected* emotions; they also have duration, but lack spatial determination (have no place). An emotion is said to have a characteristic expression «which one would use in miming it», and to «colour thoughts» (*ibidem*). Examples of emotion are sadness, joy, grief, delight; examples of directed emotions are surprise, fright, admiration and enjoyment. Finally, «forms of conviction» do not colour thoughts, but their expression is an expression of thought. Examples of forms of convictions are belief, certainty, and doubt.

A second classification dates from December 1947. Wittgenstein no more speaks of experiences as the class that encompasses the whole field of psychological concepts; he now outlines a «plan for the treatment of psychological concepts» (RPP II: § 63, continued in § 148), and again insists that «psychological verbs [are] characterized by the fact that the third person of the present is to be identified by observation, the first person not» (RPP II: 63): of sentences involving psychological concepts or verbs, those in the third person of the present are communications (*Mitteilungen*), those in the first person are expressions (*Äußerungen*). The species of the genus *psychological concepts* are sensations, images, and emotions. What was formerly catalogued as *Erfahrung* is now divided into sensations (which substitutes *impressions*) and images. Sensations have genuine duration (are capable of being given a beginning and an end), have degrees (from scarcely perceptible to unendurable) and qualitative mixtures, and inform us about the external world (*ibidem*). Images «tell us nothing» about the external world, may be auditory or visual, and are subject to the will (*ibidem*). Emotions have genuine duration and a course, but differ from sensations in not being localized; they also have a characteristic expression-behaviour and thereby a characteristic sensation. As in the former classification, emotions are divided into directed and undirected (RPP II: § 148).

From these sketches we can see that, according to Wittgenstein, an emotion is an experience (*Erlebniss*) or, more generally, a psychological concept that i) presents an asymmetry in (depth) grammatical status in first- and third-person sentences; ii) has a characteristic expression; iii) has genuine duration and characteristic course or pattern; iv) is not localized; v) colours thoughts; vi) is either directed or undirected. Let us begin with points (i) and (ii), which, as I will try to show, are tightly connected.

3. Asymmetry and expression

According to Wittgenstein, psychological concepts in general, and emotions in particular, exhibit an asymmetry in that «psychological verbs [are] characterized by the fact that the third person of the present is to be identified by observation, the first person not» (RPP II: § 63). Wittgenstein's insistence upon the asymmetry regarding the *sensation* of pain is well known, and pervades many of his later writings. Let us take the two sentences "I am in pain" and "he is in pain". It is at first sight quite natural to imagine that the first sentence describes exactly what the second does when it is said of me. Yet, this logical symmetry only occurs on the level of *surface*

grammar[7]. With regard to *depth* grammar, on the contrary, these two sentences are to be carefully distinguished one from the other. The third-person statement that "he is in pain" derives from the *indirect* observation of his behaviour, whereas the first-person statement that "I am in pain" does not. The latter does not *describe*; it rather *expresses* my sensation:

> The asymmetry consists in the fact that predicating psychological attributes of others is warranted by what they do and say. By contrast, one's use of such sentences in the first-person present tense does not rest on one's observation of one's own behaviour (HACKER 2010: 287).

"I am in pain" is not something that I can say as the result of the observation of my behaviour, as I do when I say that "he is in pain" because he looks so-and-so. Nor does this sentence result form an act of introspection. On the contrary, "I am in pain" counts as the *expression* of my sensation: «the verbal expression of pain replaces crying and does not describe it» (PI: § 244). In its depth grammar, the first-person sentence that "I am in pain" is more alike to a moan of pain than to the statement that "he is in pain". The same happens with similar expressions of sensation: «does one say: 'Now I feel much better: the feeling in my facial muscles and round about the corners of my mouth is good'?» (RPP I: § 454). This, Wittgenstein observes, would sound laughable, for when I say that I feel better, I am by no means talking about *what it looks like* to feel well or better. I am rather expressing my feelings.

This grammatical asymmetry is also evidenced by the use of psychological concepts in epistemic contexts. Take the two sentences "I know that I am in pain" and "I know that he is in pain". While they are perfectly alike in surface grammar, with respect to depth grammar the latter turns out to be a genuine epistemic statement, while the former is not. In fact, I can doubt that *he* is in pain, but I cannot doubt that *I* am in pain: «it makes sense to say about other people that they doubt whether I am in pain; but not to say it about myself» (PI: § 246). In this sense, "I cannot know that I am in pain" is not an epistemological claim at all. It is purely grammatical; it does not delimitate the possible knowledge of psychological states, as if I were ignorant of something that others might know; rather, it delineates the use of an epistemic verb in respect to psychological expressions. "I cannot know that I am in pain" expresses a *grammatical*, not an *epistemic* impossibility. It does not define the bounds of knowledge; it describes the bounds of *sense*[8]. However, Wittgenstein concedes that we might attribute to the sentence "I know that I am in pain" a non-grammatical meaning: «It can't be said of me at all (except perhaps as a joke) that I *know* I am in pain. What is it supposed to mean—except perhaps that I am in pain?» (PI: § 246). The only empirical meaning of "I know that I *am* in pain" is "I am in pain". And, as we have just observed, "I am in pain" is not a description based on external or internal criteria, but the *expression* of a sensation (RPP I: § 313).

The asymmetry of epistemic contexts involving sensations is as clear an example as can be found of the gap between surface and depth grammar.

> The fact that two ideas seem here inseparably bound up suggests to us that we are dealing with one idea only & not with two & that by a queer trick our

[7] Cf. HACKER (1990: 187ff). Hacker speaks of "a fundamental epistemological asymmetry side by side with the apparent logical symmetry" (HACKER 1990: 188), and observes that such epistemological asymmetry is expressed in "grammatical differences" (1990: 191).
[8] Cf. HACKER (1972 [1986]: 276ff).

> language suggests a totally different structure of grammar than the one actually used. For we have the sentence that only I can know directly my experience & only indirectly the experience of the other person. Thus language suggests 4 possible combinations but rules out 2. It is as though I had used the 4 letters a b c d to denote two objects only but by my notation somehow suggesting that I am talking of 4 (PO: 224-225).

The surface grammar of our language, that is, the fact that I am given with words and rules of word-combination, suggests four possibilities; direct knowledge of my experience; indirect knowledge of my experience; direct knowledge of others' experience; indirect knowledge of others' experience. But, as we have seen, it makes no sense to say that I know my sensations indirectly (this would amount to treat myself as if I were a different person), nor that I know someone else's sensation directly ("I cannot feel your pain" is a grammatical proposition). We are left with only two possibilities: direct knowledge of my sensations, indirect knowledge of others' experience. Is only a trick of our language that which makes us perceive the possibility of indirect knowledge of ourselves and direct knowledge of someone else. Surface grammar is deceptive: it suggests possibilities that are ruled out by depth grammar.

The same is true of emotions. In third-person sentences like "John is sad" and "Mary is frightened" we can justify our ascription of emotional states to John and Mary by referring, for instance, to the expression of sadness on John's face or to that of fright on Mary's. In such cases, we describe others' emotions *indirectly*, by referring to external criteria (facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice, etc.). As Wittgenstein's classification points out, one of the differences between emotions and other mental states or dispositions (like belief or doubt) is that the former have a characteristic *expression-behaviour*, while the latter have not: «the characteristic mark of all 'feelings' is that there is expression of them, i.e. facial expression, gestures, of feeling» (RPP II: § 320). We indeed know other person's sentiments and emotions because we *see* their expressions:

> 'We *see* emotions.' – As opposed to what? – We do not see facial contortions and make inferences from them (like a doctor framing a diagnosis) to joy, grief, boredom. We describe a face immediately as sad, radiant, bored, even when we are unable to give any other description of the features. – Grief, one would like to say, is personified in the face. This belongs to the concept of emotion (Z: § 225).

I can know how John feels by looking at his face, but I cannot know whether Mary believes that 'p' or not by so doing:

> Compare the expression of fear and hope with that of 'belief' that such-and-such will happen. – That is why hope and fear are counted among the emotions; belief (or believing) however is not (RPP I: § 596).

The characteristic expression-behaviour is that which allows me to ascribe a psychological state to other persons, and which distinguishes emotions and sensations from those mental states or dispositions that have no characteristic expression-behaviour.

With first-person statements things stand differently. In first-person sentences like "I am sad" or "I am frightened" it would be senseless to justify my assertions by

referring to my facial expressions or my gestures. Unlike third-person sentences, first-person sentences involving emotions are not based upon observation:

> If we call fear, sorrow, joy, anger, etc. mental states, then that means that the fearful, the sorrowful, etc. can report: 'I am in a state of fear' etc., and that this information – just like the primitive utterance – is not based on observation (RPP II: § 177).

Again: «If he says it of himself (that he is sad) he will not in general give his face as a reason» (RPP II: § 324; cf. Z, § 526). When I say "I am sad" I am not describing the external symptoms of my present mental state for the purpose of communication; rather, I am directly *expressing* my sadness. In the *Brown Book* Wittgenstein writes that

> we think of the utterance of an emotion as though it were some artificial device to let others know that we have it. Now there is no sharp line between such 'artificial devices' and what one might call the natural expressions of emotion (BrB: I, § 48).

Let us take different expressions of anger: a) my face turns purple; b) I raise my voice; c) I ring the bell angrily; d) I write an angry letter[9]. (a) is of course a natural expression of anger; (d) is of course an artificial expression thereof. What about intermediate cases (b) and (c)? Is my raising my voice a natural or an artificial expression of anger? It would seem a natural expression; however, it differs from case (a) in that, that while I might artificially raise my voice to pretend to be angry, normally I cannot artificially make my face turn purple for the same purpose. Case (c) is likewise not obvious: I could feign to be angry by striking the bell energetically, but it is by no means certain that the person addressed would thereby understand my state of mind[10]. In general, there is no secure way to tell whether an expression should count as natural or artificial. But this is not Wittgenstein's point here. What he wishes to suggest is instead «the importance of finding and inventing intermediate cases» (PI: § 122) that might help seeing connections obscured by our surface grammar and bringing out the depth grammar of our language. Grammatically, my face's turning purple and my writing an angry letter behave alike; they are *expressions*, not communications, of my anger[11].

4. Duration, localization, colouring, direction.

We have seen what Wittgenstein intends by saying that emotions present an asymmetry in grammatical status in first- and third-person sentences (i) and that they have characteristic expression and behaviour (ii). Let us now take points (iii) to (vi) into account.

In order for something to count as an emotion, it must have genuine duration: «Why does it sound queer to say: 'For a second he felt deep grief'? Only because it so

[9] I have modified Wittgenstein's examples to render my point even more explicit (cf. BrB, I, § 48).
[10] Cf. SCHULTE (1993: 123).
[11] The question whether a determinate expression is natural or artificial is, on Wittgenstein's mind, tightly connected with William James' claim that emotions follow, and not precede, the behavioural expressions of emotion (we do not cry because we are sad; we are sad because we cry). On this subject cf. SCHULTE (1993: Ch. 8).

seldom happens?» (PI: II, 174); «what about something's 'striking' one? Does that take place in a moment, or does it last?» (RPP I: § 527). The reason why it would sound queer to say that someone felt deep grief or that something strikes me *for a second* is by no means that these things happen rarely. The point here is that we simply do not characterize something as an emotion if it lasts just one moment. Nor are we disposed to call an emotion something that is suddenly interrupted, or that appears and disappears intermittently:

> The feeling of the uncanny (*Unheimlichen*). How it is manifested? The *duration* of such a 'feeling'. What is it like, e.g., for it to be interrupted? Would it possible, for example, to have and not to have it every other second? (RPP I: § 887).

What has duration typically has also a *course*; for instance, «rages flares up, abates, vanishes, and likewise joy, depression, fear» (RPP II: § 148). In other words, duration has a temporal structure, with a relatively clear beginning and end: «Don't [the feeling of the uncanny's] marks include a characteristic kind of course (beginning and ending), distinguishing it from, e.g., a sense perception?» (RPP I: § 887). The course of an emotion is revealed by the pattern of its expression:

> 'Grief' describes a pattern which recurs, with different variations, in the weave of our life. If a man's bodily expression of sorrow and of joy alternated, say with the ticking of a clock, here we should not have the characteristic formation of the pattern of sorrow or of the pattern of joy (PI: II, 174).

Wittgenstein insists that emotions are (grammatically) distinguished from other psychological concepts through duration. The main difference that exists between emotions (and sensations) and what Wittgenstein calls mental dispositions is that the latter lacks genuine duration:

> I want to talk about a 'state of consciousness', and to use this expression to refer to the seeing of a certain picture, the hearing of a tone, a sensation of pain or of taste, etc. I want to say that believing, understanding, knowing, intending, and others, are not states of consciousness. If for the moment I call these latter 'dispositions', then an important difference between dispositions and states of consciousness consists in the fact that a disposition is not interrupted by a break in consciousness or a shift in attention. (And that of course is not a causal remark.) Really one hardly ever says that one has believed or understood something 'uninterruptedly' since yesterday (RPP II: § 45).

Where there is genuine duration, it makes sense to say that something has been interrupted; I can for example consistently affirm that I have a toothache since yesterday uninterruptedly, or that my anger towards him has never ceased - not even for one moment; but I cannot likewise say that I understand what the German word *Schmerz* means since yesterday *uninterruptedly*. Also, where there is genuine duration, as in sensations and emotions, one can pay attention to their course (RPP II: § 50), and ascertain by spot-check whether they are still going on (RPP II: § 57). Therefore, while it makes sense to pay attention to the course of my toothache or my anger, it does not to pay attention to the course of my believing something or knowing something: «I may attend to the course of my pains, but not in the same way to that of my believing or knowing» (RPP I: § 972; cf. Z: § 75-77). Likewise, I

can say that I ascertain by spot-check whether my pain is still going on, or whether my anger against him endures; but I cannot meaningfully affirm that I am aware that I believe something as a result of self-examination. Finally, one can meaningfully say that an emotion endures continuously from one time to another, while the same can hardly be said, e.g., of being able to multiply two numbers (cf. Z: § 71). However, Wittgenstein is sometimes unclear about what has to count as a mental state and what as a mental disposition[12]. For example, he distinguishes between emotions and emotional dispositions like love and hate (RPP II: § 148) on the basis of the fact that «emotional attitudes (e.g. love) can be put to the test, but not emotions» (RPP II: § 152; cf. Z: § 504). In one sense, he also observes, fear is also a disposition, for example when an "acute" fear turns into a "chronic" fear (RPP II: § 148). But in ascribing love, hate and chronic fear to dispositions, he seems to deny that they possess genuine duration, thus falling outside the grammatical domain of emotions. We have, however, to remember that such hesitation is typical of Wittgenstein's method of work. What he aims at is not a definitive categorization of psychological concepts, but a tentative classification thereof, in which the possibility of intermediate cases (PI: §122) is more important than the completeness or conclusiveness of the research.

In having genuine duration, emotions are thus distinguished by mental disposition such as knowing or believing, but are not from sense-perceptions, which, like emotions, do have duration. Thus, duration is a necessary but not sufficient condition for being an emotion. In order to capture emotions grammatically, Wittgenstein adds two criteria. First, unlike sense-perceptions, emotions are not localized. Sensations are localized; for example, I feel pain in my arm, or warm in my throat. What is more, sensations *have to* be localized, if they are to count as genuine sensations. Can we imagine a pain without localization? (RPP I: § 440; cf. Z: § 498); of course we cannot. For let us suppose that I say "I feel pain" and that you ask me "where do you feel it?"; could I answer that I don't know, or that I feel it in no specific place of my body? If I were to answer this way, you surely would be legitimate in thinking that *I feel no pain at all*. On the contrary, I cannot, in the same way, meaningfully affirm that I feel sad *in my head*, or happy *in my mouth*:

> 'Where do feel your grief?' In my mind. – Only what does that mean? – What kind of consequences do we infer from this place-assignment? One is, that we do not speak of a physical place of grief (RPP I: § 439).

To inquire about an emotion's localization is a nonsense: «'I feel a great joy'- Where?- that sounds like nonsense» (Z: § 486). Emotions, unlike sense-perceptions, are not localized.

Secondly, unlike sense-perceptions, emotions are said to colour thoughts: «thoughts may be fearful, hopeful, joyful, angry, etc.» (Z: § 493); «let us speak of sad thoughts, but not, analogously, of toothache thoughts» (RPP II: § 153); «thoughts can be care-

[12] On Wittgenstein's ambiguities in the treatment of states and dispositions see HACKER (1990: 261-262); SCHULTE (2009: 33-34). Schulte advances the hypothesis that the difficulties in Wittgenstein's account of states and dispositions (love and hate above all) might have induced him to adopt a fuzzier notion of emotion. He thus retraces an evolution in Wittgenstein's thinking about emotions, from an earlier conception which «assumed a model in terms of which we have psychological phenomena (experiences) on the one hand and a corresponding concepts on the other», to a later conception focusing not on «individual criteria or characteristics but, rather, on more complex structures which in their turn are always to be seen in the context of other complex structures» (SCHULTE 2009: 38).

laden (*sorgenvolle*), but not toothache-laden» (RPP I: § 747; cf. § 835). A joyful thought is one that I think with joy, or that is accompanied by joy; likewise, a sad though is one that I think with sadness. But while I can say that joy colours my thought of a joyful object, it would be completely senseless to say that pain colours my thoughts of a painful object. Further, a thought can rouses an emotion in me (fear, sadness, cf. Z: § 494), but it cannot likewise be said to rouse a sensation, except in the case in which such sensation is the direct consequence of an emotion; so, if I think at something dreadful, this thought rouses in me the emotion of fright; if this emotion is in turn accompanied by a particular sensation, say of trembling, we may then say that the thought, *through the emotion*, has roused in me the sensation.
Wittgenstein further distinguishes between *directed* and *undirected* emotions. A directed emotion is one that has an object, or which is directed towards an object; an undirected emotion is one that is not. For instance, fear and joy are directed: «Fear *at* something, joy *over* something» (RPP II: § 148). Anxiety, by contrast, may be considered an undirected emotion, and may thus be called an «undirected fear» (*ibidem*). Again, regret is directed (RPP II: § 306), while depression is not. Further, Wittgenstein seems also to imply that some emotions are *implicitly* directed towards an object: «The language-game 'I am afraid' already contains the object» (*ibidem*). As explained by Budd, this obscure remarks is intended to show that

> if I have mastered our language I have learnt when to utter the verbal expression of a directed emotion, and this indicates the object or state of affairs toward which the emotion is directed (BUDD 1989: 153-154).

Let us suppose that I say "I am afraid" and that you ask me "whereof?"; if I answer "of nothing in particular" you probably would think that I do not know the meaning of the expression "being afraid", or that I misused it. By contrast, I might be legitimate in affirming that "I am anxious, but of nothing in particular". This indicates, on Wittgenstein's analysis, that fear is a directed emotion, while anxiety is undirected.
However, Wittgenstein is very clear that that towards which an emotion is directed is the object, not the cause of the emotion:

> We should distinguish between the object of fear and the cause of fear. Thus a face which inspires fear or delight (the object of fear or delight), is not on that account its cause, but—one might say—its target (PI: § 476).

This does not prevent that, in some cases, the object and the cause of the emotion coincide: in the case of depression, of sorrow, or of joy, the cause of the emotion is also its object (RPP II: § 148).

5. Conclusion

Wittgenstein's investigation is conceptual and grammatical, not empirical. That is, he does not wish to differentiate emotions from other mental states, experiences or dispositions on the basis of an empirical observation of their expression, duration, localization, or direction. Rather, he wants to investigate the grammar of our emotions by analyzing what we typically *say* about emotions. His grammatical investigations provide an *overview* over the different uses of expressions of emotions, which uses define their depth grammar and are expressed in *grammatical*

propositions. "Emotions are expressed", "emotions have genuine duration", "emotions are not localized", "emotions colour thoughts", "emotions are either directed or undirected", etc. are not propositions of psychology obtained by empirical observation; they are grammatical remarks, for they determines what counts as an emotion for us and what does not[13].

In this sense, these grammatical propositions, and the picture that results therefrom, are, in the sense specified above, arbitrary. In fact, Wittgenstein gives no reason why emotions have genuine duration while mental dispositions have not, or why they can colour thoughts while sense-perceptions cannot. To affirm *why* this is the case would amount to *justify* our grammatical proposition with respect to reality. But grammar cannot be so justified, for grammatical propositions are not susceptible of being confirmed or disconfirmed, proved or disproved, by empirical observation. It is instead the task of psychology to explain whether and why, e.g., emotions lack a place in the body. The goal of Wittgenstein's inquiry is just to show that we are not disposed to call something an emotion which is not expressed, which does not possess genuine duration, which is localized, or which does not colour thoughts, etc. Wittgenstein's grammar of emotions does not describe the bounds of our psychological knowledge of emotions; it simply traces the bounds of our language, describing and thereby clarifying the way in which we *speak* about emotions.

References

A. Abbreviations of works by Wittgenstein

BrB WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig (1958), *Brown Book* in *The Blue and Brown Books*, Oxford, Blackwell.

BT WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig (2005), *The Big Typescript*, Eng tr. by LUCKHARDT, C. G. & AUE, M. A. E., Oxford, Blackwell.

LC WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig, (1982), *Wittgenstein's Lectures: Cambridge 1932–1935*, ed. by LEE, D., Chicago, Chicago UP.

OC WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig (1977), *On Certainty*, ed. by ANSCOMBE, G. E. & von WRIGHT, G. H.; Eng. tr. by PAUL, D. & ANSCOMBE, G. E., Oxford, Blackwell.

[13] We may also say that these propositions identify *criteria*, not *constituents*, of emotions, in the following sense: "Criteria are items of definitionally backed behavioral evidence for emotions. Constituents are the psychological states and dispositions which make up emotions" (GREEN 1979: 263). Green maintains that Wittgenstein's arguments concerning psychological concepts do now show that a rigorous theory of emotion cannot be developed, and proposes his own theory in terms of criteria and constituents. However, in no place does Wittgenstein explicitly deny the possibility of a "theory of emotions", and the fact, remarked above, that his remarks and classifications were not intended as a conclusive theory of psychology does not exclude that he believed that such a theory might in principle be possible.

PG WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig (1974), *Philosophical Grammar*, ed. by RHEES, R., eng. tr. by KENNY, A. J. P., Oxford, Blackwell.

PI WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig (1967) *Philosophical Investigations*, Eng. tr. by ANSCOMBE, G. E., Oxford, Blackwell.

PO WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig (1993), *Philosophical Occasions 1912-1951*, ed. by KLAGGE, J. & NORDMANN, A., Indianapolis, Hackett.

RPP I WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig (1980), *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. I, ed. by ANSCOMBE, G. E. & von WRIGHT, G. H., Oxford, Blackwell.

RPP II WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig (1980), *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. II, ed. by von WRIGHT, G. H. & NYMAN, H.; Eng. tr. by LUCKHARDT, C. G. & AUE, M. A. E., Oxford, Blackwell.

Z WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig (1967), *Zettel*, ed. by ANSCOMBE, G. E. & von WRIGHT, G. H., Oxford, Blackwell.

B. Other works

ARISTOTLE, *On Rhetoric*, ed. by KENNEDY, George A., Oxford, Oxford U. P. 2007.

BACKER, Gordon P. & HACKER, Peter M. S. (1983), *Wittgenstein: Understanding and Meaning*, Part I: Essays, Oxford, Blackwell; 2nd rev. edn. by HACKER, Peter M. S., Oxford, Blackwell 2005.

BACKER, Gordon P. & HACKER, Peter M. S. (1985), *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar, and Necessity*, Oxford, Blackwell; 2nd rev. edn. by HACKER, Peter M. S., Oxford, Blackwell 2009.

BUDD, Malcolm (1989), *Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology*, London, Routledge.

DESCARTES, René (1649), *Les Passions de l'âme*, Paris; Eng. tr. *The Passions of the Soul*, Indianapolis, Hackett 1989.

FORSTER, Michael (2004), *Wittgenstein on the Arbitrariness of Grammar*, Princeton, Princeton U. P.

GREEN, O. H. (1979), «Wittgenstein and the Possibility of a Philosophical Theory of Emotion» in *Metaphilosophy*, n. 10, pp. 256-264.

HACKER, Peter M. S. (1972), *Insight and Illusion: Wittgenstein on Philosophy and the Metaphysics of Experience*, Oxford, Clarendon Press; rev. edn. 1986.

HACKER, Peter M. S. (1990), *Wittgenstein: Meaning and Mind*, Oxford, Blackwell.

HACKER, Peter M. S. (2010), «The Development of Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology» in COTTINGHAM, John & HACKER, Peter M. S. (eds.) (2010), *Mind, Method, and Morality. Essays in Honour of Anthony Kenny*, Oxford, Oxford UP, pp. 275-305.

KANT, Immanuel (1797), *Die Metaphysik der Sitten*, Königsberg; Eng. tr. *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Cambridge, Cambridge U. P. 1991.

LOCKE, John (1690), *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, London; n. edn. Oxford, Clarendon Press 1975.

PEIRCE, Charles S. (1931-1958), *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, ed. by HARTSHORNE, Charles, WEISS, Paul & BURKS, Arthur, 8 vols., Cambridge MA, Belknap Press.

SCHULTE, Joachim (1993), *Experience and Expression. Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

SCHULTE, Joachim (2009), «Wittgenstein on Emotions» in GUSTAFSSON, Ylva, KRONQVIST, Camilla, MCEACHRANE, Michael (eds.) (2009), *Emotions and Understanding. Wittgensteinian Perspectives*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 27-42.