Leon Kojen
Department of Philosophy
University of Belgrade\*

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## WITTGENSTEIN'S 'TREATMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CONCEPTS' AND ITS PHILOSOPHICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Abstract. Wittgenstein's 'plan for the treatment of psychological concepts' in the second volume of his Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology (§§63, 148) is often understood as motivated by purely classificatory concerns that have little philosophical significance. I argue that this is a misinterpretation of Wittgenstein and that his planned and partly realized 'treatment of psychological concepts' deserves a better fate. In the first part of the paper I attempt to show that Wittgenstein's interest in psychological concepts in RPPII, far from being merely an interest in their classification, is in fact closely connected to one important element of his conception of philosophy in the Philosophical Investigations, the requirement that 'all explanation must disappear, and description alone must take its place' (PI §109). In the second part of the paper I present the broad outlines of Wittgenstein's new, post-Investigations treatment of psychological concepts, as they are seen both in the account of the concepts directly addressed in RPPII §§63, 148 (those of seeing and other sense-impressions, of sensations, mental images and emotions), and also elsewhere in that volume where other important psychological concepts are discussed, e.g., those of thinking, intention and states of mind (Seelenzustände). Although it represents work in progress that was never brought to completion, I suggest that the account of psychological concepts in RPPII is an original, insufficiently appreciated strand of thought within Wittgenstein's œuvre, and also that it is an account worth exploring for anyone not convinced by the scientism accepted by so much of the recent philosophy of mind.

In the almost four decades since their appearance, the two volumes of Wittgenstein's *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* have not excited much philosophical interest in their own right. They have been used to support general interpretations of Wittgenstein's philosophy of psychology, perhaps most notably by Malcolm Budd,<sup>1</sup> but there have been few attempts to assess whether they add anything of more than local importance to Wittgenstein's over-all view of the mind.<sup>2</sup> A large part of the reason is, of course, the undoubted fact that both volumes represent Wittgenstein's thought at a still exploratory stage; here his remarks exhibit little of the characteristic and very

 <sup>\*</sup> Retired.

<sup>1</sup> See Budd 1989.

<sup>2</sup> For one recent attempt, see Hacker 2010, 289–305.

effective organization they have in the *Philosophical Investigations*,<sup>3</sup> where in spite of Wittgenstein's stylistic indirection any reasonably sophisticated reader is able to see the book as a series of focused, extended discussions of an interconnected set of topics. In terms of style and the organization of material, and generally also of content, the *Remarks* clearly lack the endless suggestiveness of a major work like the *Philosophical Investigations*.

There is nevertheless one line of thought in the Remarks that seems to me important within his œuvre, and also philosophically interesting in its own right. It is explicitly announced in Wittgenstein's 'plan for the treatment of psychological concepts' in the second volume of the *Remarks* (*RPPII* §63, 1484), but it is then seemingly abandoned. Even when not overlooking it completely, interpreters of Wittgenstein's philosophy of psychology (e.g., Joachim Schulte and Malcolm Budd) have not made much of this strand of his thought or have been sharply critical of it, like Peter Hacker.<sup>5</sup> In opposition to this, I shall atempt to show that Wittgenstein's partly realized 'treatment of psychological concepts' in RPPII deserves a better fate. It is an account that agrees with, and indeed presupposes, what the Investigations say about sensations, behaviourism, thinking, and the different uses of some psychological verbs (PI §§573–588); but it extends these considerations in ways that help to answer objections and clear away misunderstandings, arguably leaving us with a subtler philosophy of mind than Wittgenstein is often credited with by his critics and, indeed, by some of his followers.

The first section of the paper is concerned with the nature of Wittgenstein's interest in psychological concepts as shown in *RPPII* §\$63, 148 which is, contrary to what is often asserted by commentators, far from being merely an interest in their classification. It is in fact closely connected to one prominent element in his conception of philosophy, the one summed up in the requirement that 'all *explanation* must disappear, and description alone must take its place' (*PI* §109). In the second section I present the broad outlines of Wittgenstein's new, post-*Investigations* treatment of psychological concepts, as they are seen not merely in the account of the concepts directly addressed in *RPPII* §\$63, 148 (those of seeing and other sense-impressions, of sensations, mental images and emotions) but also elsewhere in that volume where other psychological concepts are discussed, e.g., those of thinking, intention and states of mind (*Seelenzustände*). I argue that when it is considered carefully and sympathetically Wittgenstein's post-*Investigations* treatment of psychological concepts in the second volume of the *Remarks* 

<sup>3</sup> Or Part I of that work, for those who disagree with the decision of the new editors to treat Part II of the original Anscombe–Rhees edition as a separate, self-standing text entitled *Philosophy of Psychology—A Fragment*.

I shall henceforth refer to the two volumes of *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* as *RPPI* and *RPPII*, to *Philosophical Investigations* as *PI*, and to *Zettel* as *Z. Philosophy of Psychology—A Fragment* will be referred to as *PPF*.

<sup>5</sup> See Schulte 1993, 30–36; Budd 1989, 10–13; Hacker 1996, 141–143.

is of considerable philosophical significance. Although it represents work in progress that was never brought to completion, it is original within his *œuvre* in a way that has not received proper recognition and that has definite attractions for anyone who views with scepticism the scientism taken for granted by so much of the recent philosophy of mind.

I

**I.1.** Both volumes of *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* represent typescripts dictated by Wittgenstein after he had made a selection from more extensive manuscript material (they are TS 229 and TS 232 in G.H. von Wright's catalogue of his writings). The editors of *RPPII*, von Wright and Heikki Nyman, say that Wittgenstein 'probably dictated' TS 232 'in September or October 1948', and we know that §\$63, 148 had been written almost a year earlier, in December 1947; just a week before that, also in December 1947, Wittgenstein had drawn and illustrated a general distinction between 'states of consciousness' and broadly conceived 'dispositions' (*RPPII* §\$45, 50–57),6 and to understand properly his 'treatment of psychological concepts' and what he might have hoped to achieve with it, we need to look first at this distinction.

Wittgenstein begins by saying that he would like to speak of 'states of consciousness', for instance 'seeing a certain picture, hearing a tone, a sensation of pain, a sensation of taste, etc.' and on the other hand 'believing, understanding, knowing, intending, and so on, [which] are not states of consciousness' and might be called 'dispositions': 'an important difference between dispositions and states of consciousness is that a disposition is not interrupted by a break in consciousness or a shift in attention' (*RPPII* §45).<sup>7</sup> Wittgenstein is content here to ignore the fact that knowing and understanding either are, or at least are akin to, abilities,<sup>8</sup> while believing and intending are not. And he is right to do so; for the point he makes in the last sentence of \$45—'An interruption of belief would be a period of unbelief, not, e.g., the withdrawal of attention from what one believes or, e.g., sleep'—holds, suitably reformulated, for knowledge, understanding and intention as well.

There are further contrasts to be drawn between states of consciousness and dispositions thus broadly conceived, e.g., the possibility of determining 'how long an impression lasts by means of a stop-watch', while 'the duration of knowing, being able to do something or understanding could not be determined in this way' (*RPPII* §51); or the possibility of telling someone 'Pay attention and give me a signal when the picture, the noise, etc. alters',

<sup>6</sup> See Schulte 1993, 24–25.

<sup>7</sup> In some cases, as here, I have slightly modified the translation in order to make it more literal or to preserve consistency in the translation of important terms.

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., PI \$150.

'whereas one cannot follow with attention the forgetting of what one knew or the like' (RPPII §50). All three contrasts point to states of consciousness having 'genuine duration' (RPPII §50), something that it makes no sense to ascribe to dispositions. Of course, it might be possible to pinpoint exactly the moment I realized how a certain theorem may be proved; the moment I formed the belief that sentimental people are not particularly reliable (which I still hold); the moment I decided to go to Rome for my next holiday (which I duly proceeded to do), etc. 9 But this is not to say that from that point on my knowledge, belief or intention is open to being interrupted, amenable to continuous temporal measurement or capable of being followed with attention. None of these are intelligible procedures with dispositions, as they would be in the case of states or activities which have genuine duration. As Wittgenstein puts it, with ironic understatement, 'it can hardly be said that one has believed or understood something "uninterruptedly" since yesterday' (RPPII §45).<sup>10</sup> Our knowledge and understanding, our beliefs and intentions last for a time, and sometimes (with beliefs and intentions if not with knowledge and understanding) we might even be able to fix both the moment the disposition was formed and the moment it was lost. But that is all: for dispositions to be part of the temporal order, along with their possessors, is not the same as their having genuine duration in the sense specified by Wittgenstein's three contrasts.<sup>11</sup>

**I.2.** In a way entirely familiar from the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein makes no explicit connection between this discussion of dispositions and states of consciousness and the proposed 'treatment of psychological concepts', begun a few remarks later:

Plan for the treatment of psychological concepts.

Psychological verbs characterized by the fact that the third person of the present is to be identified by observation, the first person not.

Sentences in the third person of the present: information. In the first person present: expression. ((Not quite right.))

<sup>9</sup> It might be possible to do the same for the precise moment one *loses* a particular belief or changes one's mind about what to do (though, except in certain medical cases, hardly for the precise moment after which one no longer knows or understands).

<sup>10</sup> See also the following passages from *Wittgenstein's Lectures on Philosophical Psychology* 1946–1947 (henceforth *LPP*): 'It's OK to say "I saw/was in pain/was angry uninterruptedly" but not "I believed uninterruptedly, I knew uninterruptedly". "I intended uninterruptedly" has sense because I may change my intention; but even so there is no question of keeping watch on an intention to see if it changes' (91). And: 'If someone says "I intended to go to x" we don't ask "Did you intend to go all the time between making up your mind to go and going?" There is no answer here since there is no question.' (322)

<sup>11</sup> What I have said in this paragraph seems to me sufficient to defend Wittgenstein's distinction between states of consciousness and dispositions against the objections of Malcom Budd (see Budd 1989, 13–15).

The first person of the present akin to an expression.

Sense-impressions: their inner connections and analogies.

All have genuine duration. Possibility of being synchronized, of simultaneous occurrence.

All have degrees and qualitative mixtures. Degree: scarcely perceptible–unbearable.

In this sense there is no sensation of position or movement.

Place of sensation in the body: differentiates seeing and hearing from the sensation of pressure, temperature, taste and pain.

[...]

One *knows* the position of one's limbs and their movement. One can give them if asked, for example. Just as one also knows the place of a sensation (pain) in the body.

Reaction of touching the painful place.

No local sign about the sensation. Any more than a temporal sign about a memory-image. (Temporal signs in a photograph.)

Pain differentiated from other sense-impressions by a characteristic expression. This makes it akin to joy (which is not a sense-experience).

'Sense-impressions give us knowledge of the external world.'

Images:

Auditory images, visual images—how are they distinguished from sensations? Not by 'vivacity'.

Images tell us nothing, right or wrong, about the external world. (Images are not hallucinations, nor yet fancies.)

While I am looking at an object, I cannot imagine it.

Difference between the language-games: 'Look at this figure!' and 'Imagine this figure!'

Images are subject to the will.

Images are not pictures. I do not tell what object I am imagining by the resemblance between it and the image.

Asked 'What image do you have?' one can answer with a picture. ( $RPPII \ \$63$ ). <sup>12</sup>

I have quoted Wittgenstein directly and extensively for two reasons. First, by an abrupt transition from a general characterization of psychological concepts to a consideration of sense-impressions, sensations and mental

<sup>12</sup> The sentence about the first person of the present being akin to an expression was added by Wittgenstein later (see *Z* §472). I have modified the translation by consistently rendering 'Empfindung' as 'sensation', and also by retaining Wittgenstein's distinction between sense-impressions (*Sinnesempfindungen*) and sensations (*Empfindungen*).

images Wittgenstein lays himself open to misinterpretation: but an unprejudiced look at what he actually says here and in §148 (where emotions are considered in a similar manner) should be sufficient to remove the misunderstanding. Second, Wittgenstein's text shows more effectively than the usual sort of paraphrase could do to what extent he is interested in the differences as well as the similarities between the concepts described: this in itself should make us doubt the widely shared view that Wittgenstein's principal aim here—surely one of the last things to be expected from the author of *Philosophical Investigations!*—is to provide a mere taxonomy of psychological concepts.<sup>13</sup> I shall now take these points in turn.

**I.3.** In a way similar to what he often does in the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein at this point leaves to the reader to tie together different parts of his discussion. He has suggested that psychological verbs, and thereby also psychological concepts, are characterized by two related features. (A) A form of the 1st person/3rd person asymmetry: third person present tense statements in which such verbs occur are established by observation, while this is not true of their first person counterparts. (B) A difference in the typical use of such statements, though this is proposed more tentatively: a third person statement of this kind, 'A is  $\varphi$ ', provides information about A, while its first person counterpart, 'I am  $\varphi$ ', is an expression (or manifestation) of A's being  $\varphi$ . Here a more conventional philosopher might have invoked explicitly the recently established distinction between states of consciousness and dispositions, saying that he would begin his consideration of psychological concepts with verbs for the former, while leaving verbs for dispositions for later or separate treatment. This is in fact exactly what Wittgenstein did, of course without providing the introductory explanation. The first specific thing he says about sense-impressions is that they 'all have genuine duration', just as the first specific thing he says about emotions (Gemütsbewegungen) is: 'Common to them: genuine duration, a course' (RPPII §148). The reader is counted upon to understand that if this is indeed so, then they possess the feature defining states of consciousness within the broader realm of the psychological and thus are states of consciousness. In the same way, when Wittgenstein asks about auditory and visual images, 'How are they distinguished from sensations?',

<sup>13</sup> The term 'classification' *does* occur at the beginning of §148 ('Continuation of the classification of psychological concepts'), but the actual content of §63 and §148 shows that it should be seen as a near equivalent of 'treatment' used at the beginning of §63 rather than as an open invitation for constructing taxonomic tree-diagrams as some commentators do (see, e.g., Schulte 1993, 28, 31; Budd 1989, 13).

I am assuming, though I shall not argue the point here, that Wittgenstein does not take 'I am  $\phi$ ' being an expression or manifestation of A's  $\phi$  (pain, sadness, fear, etc.) as a reason for saying that first person present tense psychological utterances lack truth-value; unlike some of his early followers (e.g., Norman Malcolm), Wittgenstein was not an 'expressivist'. For reasons why the 'expressivist' position has little to recommend it in any case, see Geach 1965, 1979.

the first thing the reader is supposed to grasp is something that he is not explicitly told, and that is that they have genuine duration. For if that were not the case, the question itself would hardly make sense.

**I.4.** Everyone familiar with the second volume of *Remarks on the Philosophy of* Psychology knows that §63 and §148 are the only places where Wittgenstein's 'treatment of psychological concepts' takes precisely this form. But, given that TS 232, the typescript published as RPPII, is very far from a finished work, 15 why assume—as many commentators seem to do—that Wittgenstein ever saw what he says here about sensations, 16 images and emotions as in any sense a complete, i.e. extensionally adequate treatment of psychological concepts? Yet Hacker says, as if he were dealing with a complete classificatory scheme: 'The three general categories [sc. sensations, images and emotions] are patently insufficient to accommodate everything that we might wish to subsume under the heading of "psychological concepts". Apart from anything else, this seems to charge Wittgenstein with forgetting his own general characterization of psychological concepts, given precisely in RPPII \$63: for Hacker's 'three general categories' are, of course, only a small part of the conceptual field covered by the 1st person/3rd person asymmetry introduced there by Wittgenstein.

Hacker's slip would not have been worth mentioning had it been characteristic of its author alone. Schulte and Budd, however—surely no less than Hacker among the most reliable interpreters of Wittgenstein's philosophy of mind—at least come very near to making the same mistake. Schulte says, comparing RPPII §§63, 148 with an earlier sketch of the same terrain in RPPI §836, that 'the new classification... is divided into three parts'. This, I think, is naturally read as assuming, in Hacker's manner, that Wittgenstein would have been at least tempted to present what is now RPPII §§63, 148 as a self-contained 'classification', thus overlooking its obviously unfinished character in the light of his own general characterization of psychological concepts. But the suggestion that RPPII §§63, 148 could be seen as anything but an incomplete treatment of its topic is any case preposterous: in talking of Wittgenstein's 'new classification divided into three parts', Schulte has apparently forgotten his own careful comments on the way in which the two typescripts published as *RPPI* and *RPPII* represent work in progress.<sup>19</sup> Even Malcolm Budd, who sees that there is much more to RPPII §\$63, 148

On this, see very useful remarks on TS 229 (=RPPI) and TS 232 in Schulte 1993, 1–10.

<sup>16</sup> Most commentators lump together 'Sinnesempfindunfen' and 'Empfindungen' as 'sensations', and I am following their practice in this and the following paragraph while I am discussing their views.

<sup>17</sup> Hacker 1996, 142.

<sup>18</sup> Schulte 1993, 30.

<sup>19</sup> See above, fn. 15.

than merely classifying certain psychological concepts—he rightly says that Wittgenstein's 'scheme of classification' provides 'miniature studies of the concepts it depicts'—seems to ignore its unfinished character. He just says that 'it is restricted to the concepts of sensations, images, and emotions', without realizing that talking in this way begs the question of whether we have before us a completed 'scheme of classification' or merely the beginnings of one.<sup>20</sup>

Failing to see the connection that ties Wittgenstein's distinction between states of consciousness and dispositions to his opening 'treatment of psychological concepts' (§63) and its 'continuation' (§148), none of the three commentators attempt to make sense of \$\\$63, 148 in the broader context of RPPII. It is this failure that explains their at first puzzling willingness to take what is clearly work in progress as a finished but flawed product. For the 'miniature studies of the concepts' under discussion in §63 and §148 have many affinities with Wittgenstein's treatment of other concepts elsewhere in RPPII, e.g. those of thinking or intention or states of mind (Seelenzustände). To establish what these affinities are is to understand the nature of Wittgenstein's concerns in RPPII,<sup>21</sup> which are very nearly the same as some of his concerns in the Philosophical Investigations but in certain respects represent new developments. But this can be done only after the misunderstanding I have been discussing is laid to rest: i.e., the misunderstanding of seeing an original and important (though clearly uncompleted) line of thought as merely an attempt to provide a classification of psychological concepts, a project that evidently has little in common with Wittgenstein's concerns in the Philosophical Investigations.

I.5. The terse, summarizing style of §63 and §148, which records in a neutral manner the differences as well as the similarities between the concepts being considered, is one clue to what Wittgenstein is trying to achieve in his post-Investigations explorations of psychological concepts. Unlike the long, dialectical discussions of rule-following or the possibility of an essentially private language in the *Investigations*, these 'miniature studies' seem directly inspired by the idea that philosophy should avoid all explanation and aim instead at such descriptions of our language-games that would reveal the main features of our concepts. This conception, familiar from the Investigations, is perhaps best expressed in a remark Wittgenstein cut out from The Big Typescript and preserved for Zettel (Z §447). The remark ends with the sentence: 'We want to replace wild conjectures and explanations by quiet consideration of linguistic facts.' But what gives point to this sentence, naturally understood out of context as merely another expression of Wittgenstein's banishing explanation from philosophy in favour of description, is the striking picture to which it serves as the conclusion:

<sup>20</sup> Budd 1989, 10.

<sup>21</sup> Most of these concerns, of course, are also present in the first volume of the *Remarks*.

Disquiet in philosophy might be said to arise from looking at philosophy wrongly, seeing it wrongly, namely as if it were divided into (endless) longitudinal strips instead of into (limited) cross strips... So it is as if we wanted to grasp the unlimited strips and complained that it can't be done piece by piece. Of course not, if by a piece one means an endless longitudinal strip. But it might be done, if one means a cross strip. — But in that case we never get to the end of our work! — Of course not, for it has no end.

Taken as a whole, the remark expresses beautifully a central strand in Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy. Instead of trying to deal with philosophical questions as if we were cutting an endless longitudinal strip lengthwise into thinner sections we should try to cut it into limited cross strips: this corresponds to renouncing attempts at a final solution of philosophical problems as an impossible task and settling instead for a piecemeal approach, where 'problems are solved (diffficulties eliminated), not a *single* problem' (*PI* §133).<sup>22</sup>

It is this strand, I suggest, that exerts a dominant influence on his explorations of psychological concepts in the second and (though to a lesser degree) also in the first volume of the Remarks. If we look at §63 in its immediate context, we see that it is preceded by Wittgenstein's introducing the distinction between states of consciousness and dispositions and the idea of genuine duration in terms of which the distinction is given substance: as I have already argued, both are essential to his entire treatment of psychological concepts. It is then followed by a long, careful discussion of the differences that separate visualizing from seeing, and visual images from visual impressions; except for a few stray remarks (§§102–106), this continues until §148 where Wittgenstein leaves the topic of perception and imagination to give his summary account of the emotions. Using a variety of examples, the discussion of seeing and visualizing aims to make clear how remarks like 'Mental images are subject to the will' ('Mental images are not hallucinations', 'Mental images are not pictures', etc.) have to be understood if we are to accept them as genuinely characterizing the concept of a mental image rather than simply being empirical statements about mental images.<sup>23</sup> In one good sense of this over-used word, this might be called clarifying the concept of an F (here, that of a mental image) or, alternatively, clarifying the established use of the term 'F' (here, 'mental image'). In terms of Wittgenstein's picture of

<sup>22</sup> This famous sentence also comes originally from *The Big Typescript* where it occurs just before the picture of the two kinds of strips. 'Endless' (*endlos*) and 'limited' (*begrenzt*), incidentally, is the wording in *Zettel*. In *The Big Typescript* the strips are 'infinite' (*unendlich*) and 'finite' (*endlich*).

<sup>23 &#</sup>x27;Mental image' is often a more natural translation of 'Vorstellung' than 'image' without any qualification, and I have used it here and elsewhere when not directly quoting Wittgenstein.

the two ways of doing philosophy, the set of remarks he makes about mental images in §63,<sup>24</sup> together with the necessary clarifications, might be compared to a (limited) cross strip.

**I.6.** To see why remarks like 'Mental images are subject to the will,' 'Mental images are not pictures', etc. must be considered together with the appropriate clarifications if they are to achieve Wittgenstein's purpose, let us consider in more detail another example from \$63, this time dealing with sense-impressions rather than with mental images: 'Sense-impressions give us knowledge of the external world.' To show how this remark should be taken, Wittgenstein makes a distinction between two possible ways of understanding the connection between sense-impressions and knowledge of the external world: 'What is common to sense-experiences? — The answer that they give us knowledge of the external world is both wrong and right. It is right in so far as it points to a *logical* criterion.'<sup>25</sup>

Wittgenstein does not explain what he means here by a 'logical criterion, but I think it is safe to assume that he is invoking it to deny that 'Sense-impressions give us knowledge of the external world' is an empirical statement. Understood in that way, it would mean that it was established that reliance on the five senses provides knowledge about the world we live in, although it might have failed to do so. It is assumed, in other words, that the reliance on what we see, hear, touch, taste, etc. could have turned out to be systematically misleading or at least no more successful than guesswork; and in that case, of course, there would be no reason to think of the beliefs formed in that way as knowledge. A moment's reflection, however, shows that the possibility here envisaged is illusory: what it would be like to establish that the senses do *not* inform us about the external world although, if we had been more fortunate, they might have done so? Our sense-impressions may lead us to form false beliefs in particular cases, but the supposition that they may be systematically misleading or only randomly successful, with no possibility of correction, is logically incoherent: after all, given human cognitive capacities, any attempt to establish this supposition itself would, inter alia, have to assume that at least in this instance the senses are trustworthy. This is no doubt why Wittgenstein accepts that sense-impressions give us knowledge of the external world only if this is understood as a 'logical' or 'grammatical' remark, not as an empirical assertion that could have turned out to be false.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Or a somewhat enlarged set, characterizing more fully the same concept of mental image.

<sup>25</sup> *RPPI* §702. The English translation here ('The answer... is partly wrong and partly right') is quite misleading.

The following passage from *LPP* 191–192 seems to say as much: 'Suppose one said "Sense-experience is experience by which we get to know physical objects." It sounds as though you *happened* to get to know physical objects by experience. No, I do not want to say that. What I say is logical.'

I shall set aside the much-discussed question how, apart from their non-empirical character, Wittgenstein's 'grammatical' remarks are to be understood and, once the question is answered, whether we should agree with Wittgenstein. It is clear that he denies that such remarks are necessary truths but rather thinks of them as having the character of conventions involved in our language-games and thus as not to be assessed as true or false. They are partly constitutive of how we use words for given concepts<sup>27</sup> but apart from affording clarification when understood in the right way they cannot be justified further: the language-games themselves, and the forms of life in which they are embedded, are the final court of appeal and in that sense grammar is arbitrary.<sup>28</sup>

**I.7.** The reasoning I have attributed to Wittgenstein in order to explain his remark about sense-impressions and our knowledge of the external world is of a piece with other things he says about perception in the *Remarks*. He tacitly rejects any attempt to tie ordinary seeing to anything like the philosophers' sense-data:

'Do you see the way she's coming through the door?' — and now one imitates it.

That is to say, 'seeing' is inseparably connected with 'looking'. [...]

The words which describe what we see are<sup>29</sup> properties of things, their meaning is not learnt in connection with the concept of 'inner seeing'. (*RPPII* §\$67–68)

'Seeing' is in the same way closely tied to 'observing': 'I learn the concept "seeing" along with the description of what I see. I learn to observe and to describe what I observe. [...] When we learn how to use "see" we learn to use it simultaneously and in conjunction with "look", with "observe", etc.' (RPPII §§111, 135) In other words, applying the ordinary concept of seeing which we all use (and also that of hearing, touching, etc.) I cannot but find myself in the external world and in a position to learn about it: that is what is expressed, as I have tried to show, by Wittgenstein's remark that senses give us knowledge of the external world.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Both very general ones such as that of a sense-impression and more specific ones expressed by 'see', 'hear', etc.

On the arbitrariness of grammar, see Forster 2004, and for a brief recent treatment Forster 2017. On the question whether we should agree with Wittgenstein or accept the contrary view that many remarks he describes as 'grammatical' (e.g., 'Nothing can be red and green all over at the same time') do not lack truth-value but express necessary truths, see the recent debate between Javier Kalhat (Kalhat 2008) and Hans-Johann Glock (Glock 2008).

<sup>29</sup> This is clearly a slip, the word needed here is, e.g., 'relate to' or 'refer to'.

<sup>30</sup> The bearing of Wittgenstein's remark on radical scepticism lies outside the scope of this paper. Of the recent literature on scepticism partly inspired by Wittgenstein, the second and third chapter of Genia Schönbaumsfeld's *The Illusion of Doubt* seem to me closest to what he says on perception in *RPPII* (see Schönbaumsfeld 2016, 29–106).

I hope it is also clear why such remarks are revealing of the structure of our concepts only when they are properly clarified: without such clarification they would neither help us to a reflective understanding of our concepts nor be of help in dispelling philosophical misconceptions arising from a misunderstanding of how they are actually applied. Thus, we often speak of the 'content of experience' and this in itself need not lead to any misconception or confusion. But there is, as Wittgenstein says, a line of thought to which we are tempted when we are thinking about the content of experience: 'One would like to say "I see red thus", "I hear the note that you strike thus", "I feel pleasure thus", "I feel sadness thus", and also "This is what one feels when one is sad; this, when one is glad", etc. One would like to people a world, analogous to the physical one, with these thuses and thises.' (RPPI §896)

The first step here is innocent enough, at least in the case of seeing and hearing: one naturally uses such sentences as Wittgenstein mentions together with pointing to a colour sample (of whatever shade of red one is thinking of) or reproducing the note in question in whatever way one thinks right. Using these sentences accompanied by such ostensive gestures is something that happens in the physical world: whatever visual or auditory impression one has, there is so far no reason to conclude that one has somehow exchanged the external world of material objects for a purely inner world, 'analogous to the physical one'.

**I.8.** Yet if for whatever reason this conclusion is accepted, the initially innocent train of thought quickly leads to the consequences familiar from the writings of Wittgenstein's contemporaries like Russell and Carnap. The perceived sensory qualities, defined ostensively, are transformed into sensedata, object-like inhabitants of an inner, non-physical world. The external world itself is then correlatively transformed into a 'posit', the existence of which is *inferred* from the evidence provided by sense-data; or into a 'logical construction out of' sense-data, where its existence is not inferred but is (hopefully) *reduced* to sets of actual and potential sense-data. The undoubted logical sophistication of such attempts cannot quite hide the fact that these are, from a Wittgensteinian perspective, 'only houses of cards' (*PI* §118), erected through a misunderstanding of the 'workings of our language' (*PI* §109), a misunderstanding that is helped, and made to seem almost inevitable, by some unexamined assumptions about knowledge and certainty.

Wittgenstein diagnoses the point where the train of thought about the content of experience slides into error in the next and last sentence of *RPPI* §896: 'But this makes sense only where there is a picture of *what is experienced*, to which one can point as one makes these statements.' In other words, it is only where the sensory qualities can be drawn attention to, as being exemplified in the physical world, that the idea of the content of experience does not lend itself to philosophical misconceptions; for in that case there is no suggestion that 'peopling a world, analogous to a physical one'

is more than a philosophically harmless metaphor. If, on the other hand, we think of the experience-content (*Erlebnisinhalt*) as what can be represented in a picture, but the picture itself is understood 'in its subjective meaning', as conveying just '*This* is what I see—whatever may have produced it', we will quickly reach the confused and confusing conclusion that 'the experience-content is the private *object*' (*RPPI* §694).<sup>31</sup>

**I.9.** It is important to realize that Wittgenstein's diagnosis here relies on his understanding of the crucial point that senses give us knowledge of the external world. It assumes, that is to say, that ordinary statements about what is seen (heard, touched, etc.) relate to our common, shared world, whether they are true or false, and that this is not something we have established, since it is inseparable from our applying the concepts of seeing (hearing, touching, etc.) at all; without that assumption, the diagnosis would have been open to the charge of begging the question. The philosophers I have mentioned would have been justified in complaining that, according to their own view, the senses give us knowledge of the external world precisely because the 'inner experiences' they afford us and their content provide the ultimate and only secure foundation of such knowledge. It simply would not have occurred to them that their traditional empiricist assumptions could be undercut in Wittgenstein's way, through a careful look at our ordinary concepts of seeing and other modes of perceiving.<sup>32</sup> If Wittgenstein is right, the philosophical friends of sense-data have to do more than just engage with the supposedly uncritical beliefs of common sense; they also have to replace our everyday concepts of seeing (hearing, touching, etc.) with alternative ones that apply directly to the inner, non-physical world. In that case, however, their new concepts would be a legitimate target of all the arguments brought forward in the *Philosophical Investigations* against the idea of private ostensive definition and its supposed internal correlate: for the external circumstances that make possible both the usual ostensive definitions of sensory qualities, and the extensive agreement in judgements (of colour, taste, etc.) rightly insisted on by Wittgenstein, would no longer be there.

I have spent some time on what Wittgenstein says about perceptual concepts in the *Remarks* in order to suggest that his observations, though often widely scattered through both volumes, represent a single, internally consistent point of view within which purely classificatory concerns are of little importance. I have also wanted to show how his mode of procedure in

<sup>31</sup> The same confused conception of the content of experience is under attack in *RPPI* §109: 'The content of an experience is the private object, the sense-datum, the "object" that I grasp immediately with the mental eye, ear, etc. The inner picture. — But where is this concept needed?'

<sup>32</sup> I obviously cannot demonstrate this here, but I hope that any perusal of Russell's *Our Knowledge of the External World* or Carnap's *Der Logische Aufbau der Welt* would be sufficient to make my claim at least plausible.

discussing psychological concepts agrees with his striking picture of the right way of doing philosophy.<sup>33</sup> Properly understood, the truism that senses give us knowledge of the external world is consonant with, and may be used to make sense of, various significant facts about perception: that the concept of seeing is learnt together with the concepts of looking and observing (the concept of hearing together with the concept of listening, etc.); that in the language-games with perceptual concepts the original and basic form of statement is 'This is red' rather than 'This looks red' ('This is hard' rather than 'This feels hard', etc.), <sup>34</sup> and so on. At the same time the truism about the senses allows us to clear away confusions and misunderstandings that easily arise, given the complexities of our ways of talking in this area, particularly about what is seen.<sup>35</sup> And talking of the 'content of experience' is only one example of an idiom that may lead to confused ideas about the private world of sense-data as the materials out of which each one of us 'logically constructs' the external world or, alternatively, as the evidence on the basis of which each one of us infers its existence. All this is achieved through 'quiet consideration of linguistic facts': 'wild conjectures and explanations' of philosophers, for example Russell's on how we know the external world, <sup>36</sup> can now with some justification be laid aside as resulting from a combination of linguistic confusions and unexamined assumptions about knowledge and certainty. At least in this case, Wittgenstein's conception of what philosophy should do seems to be in full accord with his practice.

П

**II.1.** To present clearly the broad outlines of Wittgenstein's treatment of psychological concepts is a daunting task. Even if we leave aside the obviously unfinished character of the *Remarks*, there remain the inherent difficulties of his approach to any subject, an approach memorably described by himself in the preface to the *Investigations* as involving a compulsion to 'travel crisscross in every direction over a wide field of thought'. Thus, any attempt at an *Übersicht* of what Wittgenstein had to say on psychological concepts will inevitably fall short in many ways: no brief account, for instance, will be able to give an adequate idea of the suggestive analogies or imaginative thought experiments we find on so many pages of the *Remarks*, nor even to do justice to the entire range of psychological concepts considered by Wittgenstein.

Bearing these various difficulties in mind, the best course may be to adopt a conservative approach. Instead of presenting Wittgenstein's treatment

<sup>33</sup> See above, **I.5**.

<sup>34</sup> RPPI §896. The point is developed brilliantly in RPPII §§311–319.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. RPPII \$\$452-453=PPF \$\$160-161.

<sup>36</sup> See Russell [1914] 1961, 70-105.

of psychological concepts in terms of some interpretive scheme of my own, I shall try to follow the order of his own exposition in *RPPII*, which (as we saw) is initially clear but then after the account of the emotions in \$148 suddenly seems to start meandering in every direction though without leaving the general field of philosophical psychology. It may be argued, however, that a more careful look shows the appearance of meandering in every direction to be somewhat deceptive. Particularly in the part of *RPPII* from \$45 to, say, \$283 or \$289 (with \$\$1–44 serving as a sort of prologue and subsequent remarks such as \$\$418–420, 498–500, 564–577, 648–649 and 722–730 playing the role of later additions) there is a discernible conceptual thread holding the entire discussion together; and it is this thread that I hope first to bring out and then use to describe the main themes and concerns of Wittgenstein's account of psychological concepts.<sup>37</sup>

The thread makes its appearance, as I have already suggested, with the distinction between states of consciousness and dispositions and the idea of genuine duration in terms of which the former are distinguished from the latter. Wittgenstein then proceeds, though without explicit acknowledgement, to divide provisionally the field of psychological concepts along the lines of this distinction. He is able to do this because concepts on both sides of the divide clearly satisfy the general condition he offers as defining all psychological concepts: the asymmetry between the first person present tense statements and their third person counterparts (the former *not* established by observation, the latter established by observation) holds whether we are dealing with 'I see grey clouds', 'I am in pain', 'I am sad', etc., on the one hand, or with 'I believe it's going to rain', 'I know there's little justice in the world', 'I intend to go to Rome next summer', etc., on the other.

II.2. Wittgenstein's philosophical interests being what they were at the time of the *Remarks*—at one point, discussing pain, he explicitly asks 'What is the place here of the conceptual and what of the phenomenal?' (*RPPI* §662)—it was natural for him to begin with the states of consciousness side of the divide. The concepts we use to deal with sense-impressions, sensations and mental images present a particularly convenient starting point because they have no use in which, as it were, they might cross the divide or make us realize that applying the distinction between states of consciousness and dispositions may not be an entirely straightforward matter as it is, say, in the case of knowing and seeing or knowing and hearing (*RPPII* §\$52–56). This is largely, if not entirely, true of the concepts relating to the emotions as well, and I think that is why, apart from particular emotions being connected to characteristic sensations, they are discussed just after the first group.

<sup>37</sup> It bears repeating that *RPPI* also contains much relevant material, both in the form of more or less isolated remarks and, in several cases, of longer sets of remarks dealing with the same subject, e.g., thinking or seeing or states of mind.

The concepts Wittgenstein discusses next—those of states of mind, thinking and intention—all spell trouble of one sort or another for anyone who tries to see them as applying straightforwardly to either states of consciousness or dispositions. The easiest case to accomodate is that of states of mind (*Seelenzustände*). This is Wittgenstein's preferred term for states which are rather like the emotions in that they have genuine duration but also unlike them in that they have less affective content and are more narrowly tied to dispositions like hope, fear (in one sense of the word), expectation and belief: both in the *Investigations* (*PI* §577) and here, Wittgenstein is inclined to see them as specific manifestations of such dispositions. Thus, the difficulty is resolved by distinguishing two different if related applications of these concepts: as Wittgenstein says in the *Investigations* and repeats here (*RPPII* §164), 'we could imagine a language in which different verbs were consistently used in these cases' (*PI* §577).

The concepts of thinking and intention, however, have widely divergent applications, and the difficulties here are greater. We speak of thinking and intention in cases that intuitively call for an 'adverbial' account (e.g., thinking involved in our not speaking thoughtlessly or, as Wittgenstein says, without thought; thinking involved in acting intelligently, when one is 'thinking what one is doing'; acting intentionally or, more specifically, acting with a further intention); and others where this does not seem to be the case (thinking as a mental activity, intention as a disposition of a special kind). Different uses of these concepts behave very differently with respect to the notion of genuine duration: it applies to thinking as a mental activity, just as it does to states of consciousness and states of mind, but hardly to any of the other cases mentioned.

Any general treatment of psychological concepts that explicitly aims at *Übersichtlichkeit*, a clear view of the structure of our concepts and their interrelations, as Wittgenstein's does,<sup>38</sup> has to address these issues, and this is exactly what he does. Directly after his account of the emotions and some related remarks (*RPPII* §\$149–153), Wittgenstein proceeds to discuss states of mind (§\$154–175, 177) and intention (§\$176, 178–182); after that there is a long discussion of thinking (§\$183–240, 248–267, with an interlude on intention at 241–247),<sup>39</sup> followed by another look at intention (§\$271–276) and belief (§\$279–283).<sup>40</sup> The resulting picture is, of course, only a first sketch of the terrain from Wittgenstein's chosen point of view, that of the

<sup>38</sup> See *RPPI* \$895, where the aim of his investigations of psychological phenomena is said to be 'not exactness but Übersichtlichkeit'.

<sup>39</sup> There are also a few unrelated remarks on colour (§§196–199) and seeing as (§219).

<sup>40</sup> There are some vaguely related observations on knowledge (§\$277–278, 284–289), and then the remarks begin to deal with various topics, with no dominant connecting thread. Many are about colours, seeing, and particularly seeing as: apart from the general account of psychological concepts with which I am concerned here, this is the other great subject in both volumes of the *Remarks*. I shall have little to say about seeing as, however, since

relationship between the conceptual and the phenomenal in our most basic language-games: but it is a sketch of such clarity and (occasional) brilliance that it deserves far more attention than it seems to have received both by Wittgenstein's commentators and by philosophers of mind.

II.3. Let us now look briefly at what Wittgenstein says about the emotions. They have 'genuine duration, a course': 'anger flares up, abates, vanishes, and likewise joy, depression, fear'. They differ from sensations in being neither 'localized nor diffuse'. They have characteristic behavioural expression, and 'this by itself also implies characteristic sensations'. But the sensations are not the emotions, as 'the numeral 2 is not the number 2'. Another 'grammatical' difference from sensations, here understood widely to include sense-impressions, is that 'they do not give us any information about the external world' (*RPPII* §148).

In addition to these features common to all emotions, Wittgenstein also suggests how they are differentiated among themselves, and this seems to provide a significant clue on how he came to recognize the related category of states of mind:

Among the emotions the directed might be distinguished from the undirected. Fear *of* something, joy *over* something.

This something is the object, not the cause of the emotion.

The language-game 'I am afraid' already contains the object.

'Anxiety' is what undirected fear might be called, in so far as its manifestations are related to those of fear.

The *content* of an emotion—here one imagines something like a *picture*, or something of which a picture can be made. (The darkness of depression which descends on a man, the flames of anger.)

The human face too might be called such a picture and its alterations might represent the *course* of a passion.<sup>41</sup>

[...]

Love and hate might be called emotional dispositions, and so might fear in one sense.

It is one thing to feel acute fear, and another to have a 'chronic' fear of someone. But fear is not a sensation. (RPPII §148)

Joachim Schulte has criticized Wittgenstein for saying that all emotions have genuine duration (Schulte 2009, 27–28), but this objection seems to be based on a misunderstanding. Wittgenstein is careful to point out that love, hate and 'fear in one sense' are not *Gemütsbewegungen* but should rather be

Wittgenstein's extended discussions of it here are superseded by his definitive treatment of the topic in section xi of *PPF* (or, if one prefers, of *PI*, Part II).

<sup>41</sup> Cf. 'We do not see facial contortions and *infer* that he is feeling joy, grief, boredom. We describe a face immediately as sad, radiant, bored, even when we are unable to give any other description of its features.' (*RPPII* §570)

called 'emotional dispositions' (*Gemütsdispositionen*): and there are no doubt other cases analogous to 'fear', where an emotion-word, e.g. 'jealousy', has both an occurrent and a dispositional use. Wittgenstein assumes, I think rightly, that these two uses can be clearly distinguished, and any sympathetic reader can see that his main interest here is in the former; this comes out in his tacitly reserving the term *Gemütsbewegung* for that use only and introducing the term *Gemütsdisposition* for the latter. Schulte ignores this completely: it is as if he thinks that the emotions are just there for our inspection, as so many soldiers standing on the parade ground, and then, as it happens, it turns out that only some of them pass muster, i.e. have genuine duration. <sup>42</sup>

Reasons of space prevent me from discussing further Wittgenstein's carefully constructed account of the emotions. Some of its features are distinctive (the idea of the content of an emotion), while others (the connection with sensations, the insistence on characteristic behavioural expression, the distinction between the object and the cause of an emotion) may be interestingly compared with later philosophical studies of the same field.

**II.4.** Wittgenstein, I think, noticed that in an ordinary, unreflective way we often talk of 'Seelenzustände' or 'states of mind', these being similar to the emotions through having genuine duration and some affective colouring but also unlike them in an important respect: for they do not appear to be either directed at an object or undirected, lacking an object, in the sense specified here by Wittgenstein. They are tied instead to the content of a 'propositional attitude', say hope or expectation, specified (or in principle specifiable) by a that-clause. Cases where we talk in this way, however, are not to be assimilated to the usual use of sentences like 'I hope that he will come' or 'I expect they'll be late'. They are different because they involve genuine duration:

I say to myself 'I still keep on hoping, although...' and in saying it I as it were shake my head over myself. That means something quite other than simply 'I hope...!' (The difference in English between 'I am hoping' and 'I hope'.)

And what is observed by observing your own hope? What would you *report*? Various things. 'I hope every day... I imagined... Every day I said to myself... I sighed... Every day I took this route in the hope...' (*RPPI* §\$465–466)

<sup>42</sup> Schulte has other objections to Wittgenstein's account as well, but they seem to show the same sort of misunderstanding: e.g., he says that 'another problem turns up when one discusses emotions that do not last long enough, as it were, to speak of "genuine duration", for instance being surprised or being startled, since 'in most cases' they are over 'in a matter of seconds' (Schulte 2009, 28). Cases of this kind are implicitly excluded by Wittgenstein's attributing to emotions 'a course'; but *if* we want to mark their similarity to undoubted emotions (there is no agreement either within psychology or outside it that being surprised or being startled *are* emotions), we might perhaps call them *emotional reactions*.

A direct comparison between such a case and one where 'I hope...' is an expression (*Außerung*) of hope, an instance of 'hoping behaviour' (*Hoffnungsbenehmen*), as Wittgenstein puts it (*RPPI* §§460), and thus does not report or describe anything, shows the difference clearly:

Is 'I hope...' a description of a state of mind? A state of mind has duration. So if I say 'I have been hoping for the whole day...', that is such a description. But suppose I say to someone, 'I hope you come'—what if he asks me 'For how long have you been hoping that?' Is the answer 'For as long as I've been saying so'? Supposing I had some answer or other to that question, would it not be quite irrelevant to the purpose of the words 'I hope you'll come'? (*RPPII* §722)

Where hope or expectation or fear, or even belief,  $^{43}$  is a state of mind rather than a 'propositional attitude', we always find the subject occupied with thoughts of what is hoped for, expected or feared (*RPPII* §\$154–155), and there may be feelings or gestures or acts expressive of her hope, expectation or fear. But even though Wittgenstein talks here of the 'object' of hope, etc., an 'object' of this kind should not be confused with the object of a directed emotion like the 'fear of a dog barking at me' (*RPPII* §\$154). The 'object' of hope or expectation or propositional fear owes its identity to the corresponding that-clause (cf. Z §58): it is not an object in the sense in which Desdemona is the object of Othello's jealousy or Othello of Iago's hatred. That is why such states of mind, unlike the emotions, may be thought of as manifesting the corresponding dispositions, and also, I think, why Wittgenstein respects ordinary usage and never calls them 'states of consciousness' in spite of their having genuine duration.

II.5. Wittgenstein's discussions of intention and thinking involve an important distinction that I have not mentioned so far. With the notion of the asymmetry between the first person present tense psychological statements and their third person counterparts, the former unlike the latter *not* established by observation, he had managed to find an indisputable core in the traditional idea of our having privileged access to our own minds. In a somewhat similar fashion, he had also managed to make usable the equally venerable idea of the mind as active in some cases (e.g., in thinking) and passive in others (e.g.,

<sup>43</sup> In the case of belief Wittgenstein is pulled in opposite directions: he sometimes denies that we may speak of it as a state of mind in this sense (e.g., *RPPII* §\$154–155), and sometimes does so himself (e.g., *PI* §577), at least in one case producing a very convincing example (*RPPI* §597). This seems to be a case of genuine hesitation on Wittgenstein's part, not merely of sensitivity to linguistic nuance which makes him exploit various terminological solutions: e.g. calling hope, expectation or belief dispositions but also states (e.g., *PI* §572) and at least once both at the same time (*PPF* §102 on belief); calling intention a disposition while also wondering whether only felt inclinations should be so called (*RPPII* §178); generally speaking of non-dispositional hope as a state of mind but also saying that it 'may be called an emotion' (*RPPII* §154), etc.

in perception). His version of this traditional distinction contrasts the cases where it makes sense, and cases where it does not make sense, to use the imperative of a psychological verb:

Application of the imperative. Compare these orders:

Raise your arm!

Imagine...!

Work... out in your head!

Consider...!

Concentrate your attention on...!

See this figure as a cube!

with these:

Intend...!

Mean... by these words!

Suspect that this is the case!

Believe that it is so!

Be firmly convinced!

Remember that this happened!

Doubt whether it has happened!

Hope for his return!

Is *this* the difference—that that the first are voluntary, the second involuntary movements of the mind? I would rather say that the words of the second group do not stand for actions.  $(Z \S 51)^{44}$ 

The concepts of thinking and intending are variously connected, and the application of the 'imperative test' brings this out with particular clarity:

One may disturb someone in thinking—but in intending? — But certainly in planning. Also in keeping an intention, that is in thinking or acting. (*RPPII* §258)

Thus, the answer to the question 'Is thinking a mental activity?' is 'Yes', in so far as one may tell someone 'Think it over' (RPPII §193), or even 'Think of nothing at all!', 'Make your mind a blank!' (RPPI §353) In general, 'You can obey an order to summon up thoughts, to call up images—but also, and this is something else, an order to think of something.' (RPPI §759) These cases make it seem as if the idea of thinking as a mental activity is entirely uncontroversial, and in such cases—whatever philosophers or psychologists too impressed by a particular theory might say—this is indeed the case. But if the same notion is extended to apply to meaningful speech or intelligent behaviour in general, so that behind any sentence used in normal conversation or any voluntary act there is an accompanying 'process of thought', the

<sup>44</sup> The remark dates from 1944–1945. See Maury 1981, 60.

incoherence that results might lead, if we are not careful, to abandoning our concept of thinking and replacing it with some behaviourist substitute.

**II.6.** Simplifying matters somewhat for ease of exposition, we could say that there are three principal contexts of use that we need to consider if we are to clarify our concept of thinking: (a) that where applying it to a person, A, is tied to A's *speaking* or *talking*; (b) that where applying it is tied to A's *acting*; and (c) that where applying it is tied directly to A's *reflecting*, or *considering*, or *musing*, or *deliberating*, or *weighing alternatives*, etc., with seemingly no connection to either A's speaking or A's acting. The third context, (c), is of course the one where we speak in an unforced way of thinking as a mental activity.

In his discussion of thinking in the *Investigations* (§§316–362) Wittgenstein had mostly dealt with (a), showing almost no interest in (b) or (c). In *RPPII*, on the other hand, he concentrates on (b), with some important remarks on (c), while generally taking for granted what he had said on (a) in the *Investigations* and only offering some additional considerations in its support. I shall start with (a) as well, following the apparent order of Wittgenstein's own late reflections on thinking. Such an order might well have been dictated by Wittgenstein's realization, mentioned in *RPPII*, that at an earlier time he had seriously misconceived the relationship between thinking and speaking:

It is not true that thinking is a kind of speaking, as I once said. The concept 'thinking' is categorially different from the concept 'speaking'. But of course thinking is neither an accompaniment of speaking nor of any other process. (*RPPII* §7)

Yet for all that the relationship between speaking and thinking is obviously close; we have only to remind ourselves of a comment like 'What happened? You suddenly stopped thinking what you were saying', to see that there is no denying that speaking and talking normally involve thought. Indeed, any attempt to deny this would be merely foolish: what is debatable is not that speech involves thought, but how precisely it does so.

Wittgenstein's view of the connection is carefully phrased to avoid any suggestion of behaviourist reductionism, but superficially at least it seems to be much closer to behaviourism than to any form of mentalism:

When I think in words, I don't have 'meanings' going through my mind in addition to the verbal expressions; rather, language itself is the vehicle of thinking. (*PI* §329)

It might be argued, however, that the apparent closeness to behaviourism is illusory, an artefact of looking at Wittgenstein's remark against the background of a comparison with behaviourism and mentalism. Taken by itself, the remark merely seems to register what should be obvious to any impartial observer. Except in special cases, when I am trying to find the right

word which eludes me or (more ambitiously) the right way to express what I wish to say, I just talk, conversing normally with others or, occasionally, with myself, whether *sotto voce* or in internal monologue. There does not seem to be any internal process going on all the time 'behind' my spontaneous use of words: any suggestion that there is, that such a process is a regular mental accompaniment of speaking, is a philosophical misconception. This is what Wittgenstein is trying to bring out by formulating the opposing view precisely and asking us to consider the absurd consequences of its acceptance:

One would like to say that [thinking] is what distinguishes speech with thought from talking without thought. — And so it seems to be an accompaniment of speech. A process which may accompany something else or go on by itself.

Say: 'Yes, this pen is blunt. Oh, well, it'll do.' First, thinking it; then without thought; then just think the thought without the words. (*PI* §330)

Wittgenstein adduces further considerations against this conception,<sup>45</sup> according to which thinking would be the mental accompaniment of speaking, intending (presumably) the mental accompaniment of acting, etc. (*PI* §§331–340). But the devastating thought experiment I have just quoted is sufficient to expose its absurdity: thought is involved in speech, as Wittgenstein himself insists and as we all agree, but not in the form of thinking as a regular mental accompaniment of speaking, an accompaniment implicitly thought of as having genuine duration.

The view expressed in PI §329 and the dialectical considerations supporting it essentially represent Wittgenstein's way of dealing with (a). A further consideration in its support (RPPII §238) is that we would not understand a person who had a pleasant conversation with us and later claimed that he had spoken 'entirely without thought'. This is not because we have established, as a matter of experience, that a person who speaks in this way can hardly do so 'without accompanying processes of thinking'. Rather, the imagined situation brings out that, where someone 'engages in a normal conversation', such postulated 'accompanying processes' are irrelevant and 'do not constitute thinking'.

Different arguments for the same conclusion, involving various imagined situations, are given at *RPPII* §\$248–267 and further consequences are drawn. I shall only mention the one discussed in \$266 because it involves explicitly the idea of genuine duration. If someone remarks, 'While saying these words I thought...', his statement does 'refer to the time of speaking', but we cannot

<sup>45</sup> The conception, as stated, falls short of full-fledged or thoroughgoing mentalism as it is silent on the causal role of the mental in relation to behaviour (including speech). But it is a natural position for the mentalist to adopt in response to what Wittgenstein has just claimed in §329.

describe the thinking involved as 'something happening in this stretch of time'. 'I cannot say, e.g., that this or that phase of the process occurred in *this* time segment.' To do so would lead to absurdities analogous to those exposed in *PI* §330. One may describe speaking itself in this way, but not the thinking involved in 'saying these words': thinking here 'cannot really be called a process at all' (§266).

II.7. In RPPII, however, the discussion of thinking mostly concentrates on (b), cases where we attribute thinking to someone, A, on the basis of how A acts in doing whatever it is that he is doing, e.g., playing tennis, or repairing a watch, or gardening, or making a piece of furniture to satisfy a customer's wishes, etc. 46 The cases Wittgenstein considers mostly belong to the simpler pole of this very wide field. His central example is carefully described in a long remark that opens the main discussion of thinking (RPPII §183). Wittgenstein imagines someone who is 'constructing an appliance out of various bits of stuff with a given set of tools, in a way that involves comparison, trial and error, and choice between different tools at his disposal: the work is neither routine nor mechanical. The person working never speaks but occasionally, at what seem to be appropriate moments, he utters what look like 'sounds of hesitation, sudden finding, satisfaction, dissatisfaction. Wittgenstein does not say so explicitly, but we are meant to conclude that the entire episode was at least reasonably successful: on the strength of it, for example, the person working would not be criticized as incompetent at this kind of work.

Wittgenstein now asks: 'Would it be a falsification of what was actually going on if [the worker] were to describe it precisely and say something like: "Then I thought: No, that won't do, I must try to do it another way" and so on—although he had neither spoken nor had these words been going through his mind?' And, if in this way he 'later repeated his wordless thoughts in words,' would we, who actually saw him at work, be inclined to agree with his account, particularly if we had often watched him working, and not just once?

These clearly rhetorical questions anticipate the conclusion explicitly drawn by Wittgenstein in the next remark:

Of course we cannot separate his 'thinking' from his activity. Thinking is not in any way an accompaniment of working; any more than it is of speaking with thought. (*RPPII* §184)

Just as 'thinking in words' cannot be factored out into two separate but concurent activities, thinking *and* speaking, so 'thinking while working' or 'not working thoughtlessly'<sup>47</sup> cannot be similarly factored out into two

<sup>46</sup> To stay close to Wittgenstein's own examples, I have only mentioned cases where both the action itself and its point centrally involve some *physical* activity on the agent's part (e.g., composing a poem or constructing a philosophical argument would not be cases of this kind).

<sup>47</sup> I take these two expressions to be roughly equivalent in what they convey.

independent activities of thinking *and* working. In both cases the thinking involved has to be understood 'adverbially'. We normally speak and act 'not thoughtlessly', or (it might be more appropriate to say in some cases) 'with thought', but neither in one type of case nor in the other does it make sense to speak of thinking as a separate activity or process.

II.8. This is not to say, however, that the same verdict holds for perfectly ordinary cases where we speak of thinking as a mental activity: they extend from humdrum thinking about everyday matters to concentrated reflection on definite problems, of a theoretical or practical kind, and the normal use of 'I am thinking of/about...' relates to the entire range of such cases. Wittgenstein imagines a case where we might want 'to distinguish between two chimpanzees with respect to the way in which they work, and say of the one that he is thinking and of the other that he is not' (*RPPII* §229), on the same sort of ground we are familiar with from the discussion of his central example. But his following remark clearly shows that the 'adverbial' account of thinking can only take us so far:

But here of course we would not have the full use of 'to think'. The word would relate to a mode of behaviour. The meaning of mental activity is first acquired through its particular use in the first person. (*RPPII* §230)

This judgement is confirmed, as we saw, by the applicability of the imperative to verbs of thinking. If I can tell someone 'Think of what we are going to do tomorrow' or 'Think of A as he was in his prime,' there would seem to be nothing incoherent in the idea of thinking as a mental activity, just as there is nothing incoherent in the notion that we are able to see at will now one now another aspect of an ambiguous figure or to form at will a mental image. Accepting that, however, should not be construed as accepting any detailed parallel between thinking (when it is a mental activity) and physical activities of this or that kind as to structure, mode of operation, precisely delimited phases, etc.: a moment's reflection will show that such detailed parallels hardly make sense.

If this *caveat* is observed, it seems to me, though I cannot argue the case here, that a properly circumscribed notion of thinking as a mental activity, with a field of application delimited so as to exclude cases that clearly require an 'adverbial' treatment, is neither problematic in itself nor problematic for Wittgenstein, at least if we go by what he says in the *Investigations* and the *Remarks*. Commentators who see the later Wittgenstein as sceptical about any idea of thinking as a mental activity, or at least as tempted to such scepticism (e.g., Hacker 1990, 147–155; Schroeder 1995), tend to forget that his denials in the *Investigations* and the *Remarks* that thinking is an activity or process are always made in a particular context: that of arguing against the idea that thinking is a regular accompaniment of meaningful speech or intelligent

behaviour. There is no suggestion in such passages that the denials should be extended to other cases of thinking, those that would be reported by 'I am thinking of/about...,'48 nor would such extensions be at all plausible given the grounds on which the denials themselves have been made.

**II.9.** Unlike the long discussion of thinking, of which I could only bring out the main features, and even these in the barest outline,<sup>49</sup> Wittgenstein's remarks on intention are brief and programmatic. They are also mostly negative:

Intent, intention, is neither an emotion, a mood, nor a sensation or image. It is not a state of consciousness. It does not have genuine duration. Intention can be called a mental disposition.

[...]

'I intend' is not an expression of an experience.

[...]

However, one might very well call the *decision* with which an intention frequently begins an experience.

Is decision a thought? It can be the end of a chain of thought. (RPPII §\$178–180)

Wittgenstein makes some points on linguistic intentions that parallel those made about thinking and speaking (e.g., *RPPII* §274 presents a version of the same argument familiar from *RPPII* §266). There are also some exploratory observations on how our present concept of intention might be extended in different directions (*RPPI* §\$594, 598, 830). But he seems less inclined than elsewhere in the *Remarks* to offer any positive suggestions: it is almost as if he were marking the importance of the notion but reserving it for later extended treatment.

Perhaps the most interesting of Wittgenstein's remarks on intention here is *RPPI* §831. One might almost call it 'the puzzle of intention':

When I make my coffee, I intend to drink it. If I were making it without this intention—must some accompaniment of my action then be *lacking*? Does something go on during the normal doing of a thing, which characterizes it as a doing with this intention? But if someone were to ask me whether I intend to drink, and I replied 'Yes, of course'—would I be saying something about my present state?

<sup>48</sup> It is significant that Wittgenstein explicitly denies that 'I am thinking' is used, like 'I am in pain' or 'I am sad', as 'an expression (*Auβerung*) of a mental state'. At most, he says, that might be true of 'I am thinking it over'. But by saying "Leave me alone; I am thinking it over concerning..." one of course does not mean "Leave me alone; I am behaving in such and such a way". Therefore "thinking" is not behaviour.' (*RPPII* §12).

<sup>49</sup> I also had to leave out all considerations in favour of points of interpretation that may be found controversial.

The Remarks contain no suggestion how this puzzle might be resolved, but looking at it today it is difficult not to be reminded of G.E.M. Anscombe's Intention and its proposal that an intentional action is one 'to which a certain sense of the question "Why?" is given application, the sense [being] that in which the answer, if positive, gives a reason for acting' (Anscombe 1957, 9). Thus, to illustrate Anscombe's proposal in terms of Wittgenstein's example, if asked why I am making coffee, I may answer 'In order to have something to drink before going out'; the answer is sufficient to characterize my action as intentional (which intuitively we would all agree that it is), without throwing doubt on the negative points about intention rightly insisted on by Wittgenstein. I may then be asked again, 'But why have something to drink before going out?', and answer that question in a way that makes it clear that there was no further intention in my acting as I did (e.g., I can say, with perfect truth, 'I don't know, I usually do'). But, in a different scenario, I might truly answer, 'In order to keep a promise to myself that I will stick to regular habits, and then there conceivably might be further questions and answers of the same kind (Anscombe 1957, 37-41). The additional puzzle how to characterize the notion of acting with a further intention is thus handled satisfactorily as well, by exploiting the same idea used to characterize the notion of intentional action itself; though the resulting 'adverbial' account of intentional action and acting with a further intention is of a very different type than the 'adverbial' account of thinking involved in meaningful speech or intelligent behaviour.<sup>50</sup>

**II.10.** I shall end with an important point that applies equally to thinking and intending. Behaviourism is a shallow philosophy of mind because it wants to limit our thinking and theorizing about mental life in a misplaced and unnecessary way. There *are* limits to intelligible talk about thinking and intending but they are given with the concepts of thinking and intending themselves. I cannot intend to do S unless I know or firmly believe that doing S is feasible for me at the time I propose to do it; and I cannot think that p unless I am capable of expressing the thought that p, and that entails possessing the relevant concepts and having in one's linguistic repertoire a sentence of some natural language that, in the given context, could be used to express 'p'. Wittgenstein clearly saw this, and it seems to me that it was one of the reasons why by the time of the *Investigations* he saw behaviourism as an irrelevance.<sup>51</sup> It is conceptual, *a priori* investigations that will reveal to us the

The affinities between Wittgenstein's observations on intention and Anscombe's characterization of intentional action are easier to recognize today than they were at the time the *Remarks* were first published in 1980: Anscombe's book was then read and discussed almost exclusively in the context of the debate on the explanation of action initiated by Davidson.

<sup>51</sup> See PI §337 on intention and RPPII §214: 'Equally Ballard's testimony (in James) cannot convince one that it is possible to think without a language.' Ballard, also mentioned in the *Investigations*, was a deaf mute, who claimed that he was capable of complex

structure of our psychological concepts and thus also the limits of intelligible talk about the mind. But, to return to Wittgenstein's strangely effective way of contrasting two different approaches to philosophy,<sup>52</sup> we may be able to achieve this only on condition that we work piecemeal, as a person cutting an endless longitudinal strip not lengthwise into thinner sections but crosswise into finite cross strips.

\* \* \*

I hope I have managed to present a case for taking seriously Wittgenstein's 'treatment of psychological concepts' both within his œuvre and, at least by implication, in the current controversies about scientism in the philosophy of mind. It seems to me, in addition, that his account of psychological concepts has an important bearing on the perennial debates among Wittgenstein scholars about his conception of philosophy and its proper tasks. Hans-Johann Glock has recently argued, in a balanced survey of Wittgenstein's views on philosophy (Glock 2017), that there are 'three tensions in [his] account of conceptual elucidation': '(i) treating it as a kind of (psycho-) therapy or propaganda for a particular point of view vs. regarding it as a type of dialectic argument; (ii) insisting on it having a purely critical purpose in dissolving philosophical puzzles vs. allowing for a more positive project of conceptual self-understanding; (iii) rejecting systematic theories vs. envisaging systematic surveys of our conceptual scheme' (Glock 2017, 231). Glock urges, and I agree, that these tensions 'should be resolved in favour of the second members of these pairs of alternatives' (Glock 2017, 231). But, if I am right, the Wittgenstein who left us his unfinished 'treatment of psychological concepts' would have agreed with him as well. His account of psychological concepts, as I have tried to show, is (i) largely based on dialectical argument against opposing views; (ii) various philosophical misconceptions cleared away by his discussion are almost a by-product of his attempt to characterize without distortion the relevant concepts; and (iii) if not exactly systematic in the usual sense of the word, his attempted Übersicht of our psychological concepts does aim at an account where characterizing properly any important concept 'throws light on the correct treatment of all' (RPPII §311). I also agree with Glock that Wittgenstein would have welcomed a description of his work as aiming at conceptual self-understanding. If I am not mistaken, that is very much an implication that Wittgenstein himself wanted us to attach to his striking picture of philosophical work being properly concerned with limited crossstrips rather than with endless longitudinal strips—a picture, I have argued, that fits almost perfectly his account of our psychological concepts.

thoughts about God and the world 'some two or three years before my initiation into the rudiments of written language' (PI §342).

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