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CAN LANGUAGE DEAL WITH EMOTIONS?*

The connection *language and emotion* makes me think about two different things: the language of emotions and language about emotions. The first is a matter of the expression of emotions in interjections and the like, the second of the description of emotions. I will deal with the latter. However, I shall not discuss the problem of particular languages and of how they describe, better or worse, emotions¹. On the one hand the point can be made that, for example, English term *feeling* is not equivalent to German *Gefühl* (but the standard translation is this) and the case is more visible when we think about the possible English correspondence for German *Erlebnis*. On the other hand one can make an objection that the differences in this respect are even bigger between, for instance, Indo-European and American Indian languages².

In fact, several elementary issues are related to the language-about-emotion topic. Suppose I am speaking about a group of similar emotions, I mean emotions characterized by similar modus (way) of perceiving objects. One group can include, let us say, sadness, cheerlessness, depression, despondency, grief, sorrow, unhappiness, affliction, displeasure, anguish, distress, grief, etc. How should we call this group? If I call it *sorrows* or *sadness*, the word *sorrow* or *sadness* takes on two meanings, the broader one – for all this group, and the narrower one – for a particular emotion within this group³. In my opinion, the problem here is a lack of vocabulary and this is only one example among many others.

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¹ For example Ancient Greek language seems to be richer in this respect than many contemporary European languages. For the field of fear and courage see R. Zaborowski, *La crainte et le courage dans ...*.

² As it had been observed by Benjamin Whorf, [i]n sentences formed in Indo-European languages, the particular components preserve their individual properties (...). The constructions built in this way are combined as a machine is made of its parts, and not as a chemical compound is made by blending of elements that mostly lose their individual character as a result of the blending, what seems to be the case of American Indian languages. And: (...) the very nature of the Indo-European languages leads us, or even forces us, to fragment reality (example borrowed from B. L. J. Kaczmarek, *Illogical logic*, pp. 179–180).

³ Hence, I want to underline the following distinction: when I say *individual* emotion, I think of an individual subject's individual occurrence of an emotion and when I say *particular* emotion, I mean a kind of emotion, either as genus (e.g. sadness and not joy) or as species (e.g. enjoyment and not delight).

I would add another preliminary remark and explain that I shall use term *feeling* (*Gefühl*, *sentiment*) to label the generic category instead of *emotion*. I shall do so in order to avoid prejudging whether its nature is passive or active and to leave open whether it is to be appraised negatively or positively¹. The first danger arises with *passion* and *affect*, the second with *emotion*. Surely emotions can be just or unjust², but I would say that before we evaluate them we need to grasp what such and such emotions actually are. Often by saying that they are good or bad, the assertion concerns the value of their practical consequences for individual and/or society. Another time we call negative emotions those who belong to a group we evaluate as negative. For example fears are such a group. But what about a fear for someone (by distinction with fear of someone) or a Kierkegaardian dread? Is it negative too?

Now, we must remember that, according to a widely held opinion, the world we think about is one that our language has previously shaped. For example, according to Emile Benveniste,

(...) here we touch upon questions whose range extends beyond linguistics, it can be seen that "mental categories" and "laws of thought" in large measure do nothing but reflect the organization and the distribution of linguistic categories. We imagine a universe which our language has first shaped.³

If so, the same must be stated about psychic phenomena and feelings as well. They are perceived, analyzed and interpreted according to linguistic tools that we possess. At this moment the general problem arises: what, if they don't fit each other? Then, one may guess, our linguistic tools risk distorting the objects they try to grasp.

Feelings are individual. As it was noticed by Descartes, two men can experience different feelings – fear/courage/etc. – at the same object in the same way⁴. And what about the same man experiencing feeling at the same object but at two different moments? Do these feelings differ only numerically or do they differ in content? If we accept that feeling is unique and hardly repeatable, we could wonder, paraphrasing Descartes, *how the same cause can provoke different feelings in the same person at different moment*. In this case

¹ A tendency to appraise feelings is widespread. For recent examples, both published the same year, see S. Ngai, *Ugly feelings*, which is about *the aesthetics of negative emotions* (p. 1). They are e.g. envy, irritation or anxiety, even if Ngai is aware of *the prominent place Martin Heidegger gives this affect in his phenomenology of moods* (p. 214). D. Pugmire, *Sound Sentiments ...* is more nuanced, because he doesn't evaluate *en bloc* different genera or species of feelings, but each feeling individually. For him sound is any *emotion* that is *capable of genuineness, depth, and other kinds of integrity* (p. 1).

² This is one of the principal points in Brentano's approach. See F. Brentano, *The Origin of the Knowledge of Right and Wrong* § 27, p. 20: *A third example is found in feeling itself so far as it is right and has the character of rightness*.

³ E. Benveniste, *Recent Trends in General Linguistics*, p. 6. In some cases this is undeniably true. I have the following example in mind: when I observe the plants in a garden, the more names I know, the more plants I perceive. They are more numerous than when I am ignorant of their names. However, what happens if I forget these names? Do I stop perceiving their diversity or is my discrimination acquired for ever?

⁴ See R. Descartes, *The passions of the soul* § 39: *How one and the same cause may excite different passions in different people*.

we have to claim that two occurrences of the same feeling will probably differ and the same could be stated about perceptions or sensations.

On the other hand, language is not a private tool. It is used commonly and such is its goal: to put two or more individuals into communication. There are dictionaries of such and such a language which give the meaning of words. However, language can be individually stylized. Then there are dictionaries for a particular author. Sometimes language stops being a way of communication and becomes rather a way of expression. The distinction is following: one person speaks to the other, but the other doesn't reply. The reasons for this are several: a misunderstanding of what is said, an incapacity to reply or simply the fact that a reply is not expected, and, even if given, is without point. But in this regard such a language, that is an individually stylized language, doesn't have to be communicable in the same way as that of philosophical or scientific work.

This is mostly the solution of poets who, like other artists expressing themselves without language and by way of music, painting, dancing etc., express themselves in an individual way. They individualize their ways of expression, inasmuch as they don't have appropriate tools at their disposal. In doing so, they give the words new meanings, and when it is not sufficient, they coin new words and expressions. Evidence of this are problems linked to the interpretation of poetical works which pertains to the way in which their content is expressed. As their language is neither scientific nor univocal, their meaning often requires interpretation.

Moreover, in literature, quite as in every day talk, less importance is attached to the fact whether feeling is genuine or simulated. Feelings displayed by fictitious characters may be either feigned or genuine and need not necessarily convey knowledge about human feelings. In addition, the distinction between genuine and feigned need not be made explicitly. But in philosophy one should not be mistaken as to the genuineness of feelings, if his actual topic are feelings and not imitation of feelings. Then, a philosopher happens to be confronted with a following problem: how to detect whether such and such feeling is genuine or feigned? The answer is significant insofar as a manipulated feeling is no longer spontaneous in the sense that a simulated spontaneity is not spontaneity any more¹.

Finally, feelings because of their spontaneity, resemble objects in motion. It is, therefore, hard to capture them. Thoughts too can be spontaneous, but the difference is that: if you repeat them, it has no impact on their content, while in case of feelings, if they are reproduced, their content changes because a repeated spontaneity in case of feelings is not spontaneity any longer. However, there is an interesting parallel which gives us some hope. According to Plato, things that change cannot be objects of philosophy because

¹ But what about actors? There are good and bad ones. Is the good one he who actually experiences a feeling or just he who imitates perfectly? But in order to produce the impression that he intends to bring in, must he experience a feeling actually? Does he merge with it and become one with it or does he remain distinct, separated, and only *as though* subject to it, albeit in a better way than somebody who tries to imitate it clumsily? See J.-P. Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, p. 75: *Such false states of mind [false joy, false fears, false sorrows] are however quite distinct from those of the actor.*

philosophy deals with what is immobile¹. A rigid distinction is made and Plato meshes Heraclitus with Parmenides creating a dichotomy between a tangible world of ever-changing things and a different world of everlasting ideas. But on the other hand, soul (*psyche*) is what is always in motion² and, nevertheless, it is an object of philosophy for Plato. I propose to consider that the same occurs with feelings, which are dependent on the psyche. However, again, one might argue that as philosophy deals with soul as such and not with individual souls, the same happens with feelings: philosophy of feelings has to deal not with individual feelings but only with feeling as a category, groups of feelings, their genera and species at the most.

It has been observed that common language can be individualized. Conversely, one could ask: may individual feelings be collectivized? Two possible answers suggest themselves: positive and negative. One may speak of collective panic or of the group reactions of a crowd, and the like. But these rather involve a common atmosphere and mood which, however, each member of this group must experience on his own account. They are, therefore, common only apparently. Another case where we speak of shared feelings is empathy³ or what can be called *sympathy* in an etymological sense: to feel together with someone else. Here a community of feeling must be distinguished from a fellow-feeling, an emotional infection and an emotional identification as Max Scheler did⁴. But a real community of feeling is a happy event that occurs rather seldom. Statistically the norm is different and we often observe affective misunderstandings.

Another objection would be the following: even if there were actually such a category as group or social feelings, they should be considered only as secondary to primary individual feelings. Then, the relationship would be like that between Plato's social psychology and his individual psychology. For Plato the state is an organism composed of individuals, composed themselves of parts that are divided in the same, trichotomical way. And if there were such a thing as group feelings, they should be describable within a common language, but it wouldn't imply that individual feelings do or can become an object of a common language. Of course, I say still something when using a universal word to describe my individual state: I claim something, rather this than that, e.g. that I am in joy rather than angry. When I use word *joy*, I convey that I understand it, that I distinguish joy from anger, and finally that I apply it correctly to myself, unless I am deliberately misleading or giving a word new meaning, in which case I should make this clear. However, this

¹ See Plato, *Cratylus* 439 d 3–5, transl. H. N. Fowler: *Then let us consider the absolute, not whether a particular face, or something of that sort, is beautiful, or whether all these things are in flux. Is not, in our opinion, absolute beauty always such as it is?* and 439 e 1–5, transl. H. N. Fowler: *How, then, can that which is never in the same state be anything? For if it is ever in the same state, then obviously at that time it is not changing; and if it is always in the same state and is always the same, how can it ever change or move without relinquishing its own form?*

² Plato, *Phaedrus* 245 c 5, transl. H. N. Fowler: *Every soul is immortal. For that which is ever moving is immortal (...).*

³ See E. Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*.

⁴ For classification of the phenomena of fellow-feeling see M. Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*.

question remains: how far can I go in description of my individual state using a general word? If I use a word individually for my individual state, it will correspond to nothing that my hearer could perceive or understand¹. And if I claim that others than I cannot understand the meaning of the word denoting my individual feeling and that feelings couldn't be conveyed except to oneself by herself², I arrive to the idea of the private language which was denied by Wittgenstein³, but sustained by Kierkegaard⁴.

Last, not least. A notable point is the time and duration of feelings. Here, let me only⁵ point out that there are differences as to duration of feelings and some feelings are of short duration, others of longer, and others last a very long time. For this reason it seems that the component of permanency will be different for several types or levels of feelings and, consequently, it will be harder to analyze fleeting sensations than affective experiences that last over the life of a person.

Because of these three features of feelings – their individuality (uniqueness), genuineness and spontaneity the following question is to be asked: to what extent it is possible to grasp feelings by philosophical talk? For example when I express my feeling, it is not expressed in form of a philosophical statement, but when I take it as a given object of my analysis I have to adopt philosophical rigorousness.

Here, as it seems to me, there is one of the fundamental differences between thought and feeling. When I put forward the same thesis twice, the difference may be only numerical: the content can be exactly the same, and

¹ See A. Kenny, *Action, Emotion and Will*, p. 66: *But we meet a difficulty here. We have all along insisted that there is no pattern of behaviour common to every manifestation of a single emotion no matter what its object. We cannot therefore simply say that emotion-words are taught as a replacement of emotional behaviour (...).*

² See L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Part I, 243, p. 75^e: (...) *But could we also imagine a language in which a person could write down or give vocal expression to his inner experiences – his feelings, moods, and the rest – for his private use? – Well, can't we do so in our ordinary language? – But that is not what I mean. The individual words of this language are to refer to what can only be known to the person speaking; to his immediate private sensations. So another person cannot understand the language.*

³ See L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Part I, 246, p. 76^e: *In what sense are my sensations private? – Well, only I can know whether I am really in pain; another person can only surmise it. – In one way this is wrong, and in another nonsense. And 261, p. 76^e: For "sensation" is a word of our common language, not of one intelligible to me alone. So the use of this word stands in need of a justification which everybody understands. See also A. Kenny, *Action, Emotion and Will*, p. 62 & p. 65: *To avoid misunderstanding, it is perhaps necessary to explain in what sense emotions are private, and how the names for the emotions are learnt. Emotions, like other mental states, may be manifested or kept to oneself. (...) It is possible, then, for feelings of emotion to be kept to oneself, and, in that sense, to be private. But it does not follow from the fact that some emotions are private events that all emotions could be private events. (...) The reason why it is not possible that all emotions should be concealed emotions is that if they were, the meaning of emotion-words could never be learnt. – but I don't see why this is a good reason. After all, it can be the case that the meaning of emotion-words can never be learnt.**

⁴ For example S. Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling* (published under the pseudonym Johannes de Silentio (sic!)), p. 137 & p. 139: *Abraham is silent – but he cannot speak, therein lies the distress and anguish. For if when I speak I cannot make myself understood, I do not speak even if I keep talking without stop day and night. (...) Abraham cannot speak (...) something no one can understand because it is a private undertaking. See also H. Elzenberg, *Kłopot z istnieniem ...*, p. 235 [dated April 5, 1936] where there is an attempt to define "unity of solitude": the more someone's experiences are unknown to others, the lonelier he is.*

⁵ See R. Zaborowski, *Du temps en tant que du facteur différenciant le sentiment et la pensée ...*.

my/your/her thesis may be communicated accurately by someone else. And if I subscribe to your thesis, it will be then our thesis. We happen often to quote thought of which authorship is unknown for us. Sometimes we do more than quote: we think these thoughts. It occurs to us to appropriate them and in some cases the question of copyright is involved.

But does the same happen with feelings? May I reproduce – or rather, may there recur the same feeling? In a word, can I quote someone's feelings or subscribe to them as I can quote or subscribe to someone's thought? And feel them? I would say no and I would argue that the individuality of feelings is hardly reduced what is not the case of thoughts: a great discovery made centuries ago by such and such man happens to be quoted today without referring to its authorship, as it were be a universal one. But when you and I experience feeling, even if the object and circumstances are the same, your and my feeling must be and are two different feelings in more than a numerical sense. Obviously, this is also the case when I speak about physical objects, let say, tables which are also individual. But tables don't differ between them as much as feelings do¹.

All this shows that the question of boundaries of language is salient. How, then, philosophers deal with feelings? Please look at three philosophers addressing feelings and psychic phenomena. First, Heraclitus' saying: *It is hard to fight against impulse; whatever it wishes, it buys at the expense of the soul*², then Plato's two comments on his own talk:

In my opinion we shall never in the world apprehend [accurately – omitted by the translator³] this matter from such methods as we are now employing in discussion. For there is another longer and harder way that conducts to this⁴,

and:

To tell what it really is would be a matter for utterly superhuman and long discourse, but it is within human power to describe it briefly in a figure; let us therefore speak in that way. We will liken the soul to the composite nature of a pair of winged horses and a charioteer.⁵

¹ See also M. McGinn, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Wittgenstein ...*, p. 125: *When we look at how these concepts are actually used, however, we see that they function grammatically in quite different ways, for while we talk of people feeling pain, and of their feeling the same (i.e. similar) pains, we don't identify or count pains in the way that we identify and count chairs.*

² Transl. K. Freeman, DK 22 B 85: θυμῷ μάχεσθαι χαλεπὸν· ὃ γὰρ ἂν θέλη, ψυχῆς ὠνεῖται (I stress).

³ In Jowett's translation ἀκριβῶς is rendered and even reinforced by *adequate*: (...) *and I do not think that the method which we are employing is at all adequate to the accurate solution of this question; the true method is another and a longer one* (I stress).

⁴ Transl. P. Shorey, Plato, *Republic* 435 c 9–d 3: ἡ ἐμὴ δόξα, ἀκριβῶς μὲν τοῦτο ἐκ τοιούτων μεθόδων, οἷσιν νῦν ἐν τοῖς λόγοις χρῶμεθα, οὐ μὴ ποτε λάβωμεν – ἄλλη γὰρ μακροτέρα καὶ πλείων ὁδὸς ἢ ἐπὶ τοῦτο ἄγουσα (I stress).

⁵ Transl. H. N. Fowler, Plato, *Phaedrus* 246 a 4–7: οἷον μὲν ἐστὶ, πάντα πάντως θείας εἶναι καὶ μακρὰς διηγήσεως, ᾧ δὲ ἔοικεν, ἀνθρωπίνης τε καὶ ἐλάττονος· ταύτη οὖν λέγωμεν. εἰ κέ τω

and Max Scheler's: *I find this phenomenal character of the "depth" of feeling to be essentially connected with four well-delineated levels of feeling (...)*¹. What can be noticed? Heraclitus' buying is an obvious metaphor here. Plato's comments point to the fact that his talk concerning the soul's trichotomy, first in the *Republic* IV, then in the *Phaedrus*, is approximate. Finally, Scheler's use of inverted commas plus italics proves that he understands the word *depth* metaphorically. Anyway, the fact is plain here. The category of *depth* is metaphorical when applied in philosophy, because it refers to a physical dimension, fitted for geology, oceanography etc.

The problem is, therefore, more general and it is indicative that philosophers are using metaphors when they are analyzing feelings. David Hume expresses it explicitly: *We speak not strictly and philosophically when we talk of the combat of passion and of reason.*² And according to J. R. Searle:

*If the question is interpreted as meaning, "Does every existing language provide us exact devices for expressing literally whatever we wish to express in any given metaphor?" then the answer is obviously no. It is often the case that we use metaphor precisely because there is no literal expression that expresses exactly what we mean.*³

If, then, it is the case of feelings, the question is whether we can grasp feelings in other than metaphorical way. If we accept that feelings are individual, we should have as many words as there are individuals feelings in response to all of feelings in the world and it would be necessary to produce an enormous number of words required so as to describe all them.

In order to devise a philosophically satisfactory solution combining the object of philosophy of feelings with a philosophical rigorousness, it is productive to identify this object as what is belonging equally to different individual feelings, let say, as what constitutes a kind of a common denominator:

"How is one to define a feeling? It is something special and indefinable." But it must be possible to teach the use of the words! (...) I want to describe a feeling to someone, and I tell him "Do this, and then

δὴ συμφύτῳ δυνάμει ὑποπτέρου ζεύγους τε καὶ ἡνιόχου. (I stress).

¹ M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics ...* , p. 332 (I stress, inverted commas and italics are Scheler's). Likewise, J. H. Jackson, *The Croonias Lectures ...* , p. 660: (...) *there are different "depths" of dissolution, and consequently, different "shallows" of evolution remaining (...)*.

² D. Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* II, III, III, p. 415. Poets create metaphors. In this respect too, often their communication is not univocal and even we don't postulate that it should be so. The case of philosophy is different: philosophy should avoid ambiguity and this requirement is valid for the analysis of feelings as well.

³ J. R. Searle, *Expression and meaning ...* , p. 114. Absence of such a literal expression can result from one's incapacity to express a mental state for reasons such as one's ignorance of that state or the insufficiency of one's language, or a psychic block to expressing oneself, or one's inability to name feelings (*alexithymy*). Compare a situation when I say *someone is knocking at the door*, meaning one of various things: I don't know who it is, or I know who it is but am unable to say it because I've forgotten his name, or I don't want to say who he is.

you'll get it," and I hold my arm or my head in a particular position. Now is this a description of a feeling? and when shall I say that he has understood what feeling I meant? – He will have to give a further description of the feeling afterwards. And what kind of description must it be? I say "Do this, and you'll get it". Can't there be a doubt here? Mustn't there be one, if it is a feeling, that is meant? This looks so; this tastes so; this feels so. "This" and "so" must be differently explained.¹

However, it could be argued that, first, the issue is not the use of the words, but the understanding of what feelings are². Second, it is possible not to understand correctly what another's feeling is or not to be sure about right understanding of it, given that two speaker are separated as subjects of the feelings. They may feel differently what they call by the same word not only because they have different spatial positions, but mainly because of their different bodies and minds³. On the other hand the above Wittgenstein's description concerns simple feelings: holding an arm or head. But what should be provoked by *do this* in order to get a more complex feeling, for instance love or friendship? As it results from the example he gave, Wittgenstein's instructions comply rather with affective sciences' approach which rely on physiology and neurology of affective phenomena. This position confines itself to feelings that can be examined in experiments. In most cases they are linked to bodily reactions which can be directly observed, tested, measured. But they don't form a whole of human feelings.

To sum up: if one asks, *can language deal with feelings?*, the reply is yes. We have two cases, both not interesting for a philosophical analysis of the issue. Biological and poetical approaches are both unsatisfactory for the philosopher⁴, because the first misses phenomena which are not given through

¹ See L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Part II, viii, pp. 158^e–159^e.

² The distinction had been made by J. St. Mill, *A System of Logic Ratiocinative and Inductive*, Book 1, ch. 8, § 6: (...) definitions of names, and definitions of things. The former are intended to explain the meaning of a term; the latter, the nature of thing; the last being incomparably the most important, B. Spinoza, *Ethics* III, def. XX: (...) the nature of things, not the meaning of words (...), and Plato, *Cratylus* 439 b 6–8: but it is worth while to have reached even this conclusion, that they are to be learned and sought for, not from names but much better through themselves than through names. See also Wittgenstein's *Lectures on Philosophical Psychology* 1946–47, p. 5: Surely what puzzles us isn't a word but the nature of a phenomenon. To investigate the nature of a phenomenon is to look closer.

³ See R. S. Peters, *Emotions and the Category of Passivity*, pp. 117–118: (...) our language for the different shades of emotion is too blunt. A man may feel blue on Monday mornings; but we do not have a word for the shade of blue he feels on a particular Monday. Fear, too, covers what a man might feel for a bull in a different field, in the same field where there is an easy escape route accessible to the bull, and in a field where there is no escape route at all. One may argue that all these shades of emotion are describable or expressible in poetry. My point is to know how far we can go in philosophical analysis of such states.

⁴ On the other hand, it happens that philosophers express their ideas in poetical way. A good example is Søren Kierkegaard. See also L. Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, p. 24^e: I think I summed up my attitude to philosophy when I said: philosophy ought really to be written only as a poetic composition. And Niels Bohr said to W. Heisenberg that: When it comes to atoms, language can be used only as in poetry. The poet, too, is not nearly so concerned with describing facts as with creating images (W. Heisenberg, *Physics and Beyond: Encounters and Conversations*, p. 41).

experimental methods, the second by its language need not be universally communicable and its methods is permeated with ambiguity. Does this mean that we cannot describe feelings in their whole at all in a philosophical way? Or are we able to avoid the position of neurosciences which reduces a whole of feelings to only one type of them because it excludes spiritual feelings and the position of poetry which is not adequate by its often ambiguous language?

Perhaps some remedy can be offered. I propose to distinguish material issues and formal issues¹. By way of formal logic or formal axiology, I postulate a formal philosophy of feelings for debating formal issues of feelings. Therefore, I stop at the level for which we have or can have words at our disposal. This is the level of the common denominator, that is of features of feelings which are common for two or more persons' feelings. Henceforth we don't analyze individual feelings but their species and genera and feeling as a general category. In other words, the first of issues is the very definition of this phenomenon: what feeling is – and I speak here about the definition of phenomenon, and not about the definition of words signifying it² – its *to ti en einai* as different from other psychic phenomena³. Then follow other issues: in horizontal perspective – characteristics of different groups of feelings (genera) which are different *modi*⁴ of feeling (e.g. sorrow, joy, courage, shame, etc.)⁵, and, in vertical perspective – characteristics of different strata of feelings (e.g. impressions, sensations, emotions, psychic feelings, etc.)⁶. The final point of the first stage of research will be to reveal *to ti en einai* of each particular feeling (species) within the group. The species of the same genus are in fact different levels of the same *modus* – the same *modus* unfolded on several layers.

¹ A similar distinction in: J.-P. Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, p. 76: *formal quality (...) the substance of that quality*.

² Although the latter is less important, it is nevertheless necessary and basic for further research, otherwise it would be difficult to proceed when the same word denotes various objects. I take an example from a completely different field: *Cela ne signifie pourtant pas qu'il faut tenir pour acquis que les savants traitent du même sujet lorsqu'ils emploient les mêmes termes. Quand les biologistes moléculaires parlent aujourd'hui de gène, ils ne l'emploient pas toujours selon la même définition, et en aucun cas en suivant la définition initiale que lui a donnée Johanssen en 1909* (example borrowed from C. Grimoult, *Les grandes étapes dans l'histoire de l'évolutionnisme*, p. 137). See also D. Cairns, *Look both ways ...*, p. 50: *Aristotle and Chrysippus, like Ekman and Wierzbicka, share a language, but differ on the nature of the psychological phenomena labelled by the words they use and on the meaning of those words themselves*.

³ See J.-P. Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, p. 23: *emotion as a purely transcendental phenomenon, not considering particular emotions, but seeking to attain and elucidate the transcendent essence of emotion (...)*.

⁴ See J.-P. Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, p. 57: *Emotion is a specific manner of apprehending the world*.

⁵ See J.-P. Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, p. 41 & p. 74: *the explanation of the diversity of emotions (...) there are many more, and it would be a useful and productive work to classify them*. And finally, in his conclusion, p. 92, n. 1: *From this point of view, we hope that our suggestions may lead, in particular, to the initiation of complete monographic studies of joy, sadness, etc. Here we have furnished only the schematic directions of such monographs*.

⁶ The classification of M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics ...*, p. 332 runs as follows: (1) sensible feelings, or "feelings of sensation" (...), (2) feelings of the lived body (*as states*) and feelings of life (*as functions*), (3) pure psychic feelings (*pure feelings of the ego*), and (4) spiritual feelings (*feelings of the personality*).

And what about material issues? As to feelings *qua* individual events, philosophically there is nothing to do. If you want to know anything, please experience feelings yourself or follow a well known piece of advice: *read a good novel*. Such a reading can, given outstanding skills of a writer, replace a personal account of someone's experiences.

This distinction between individual subject's individual occurrence of a feeling which is out of philosophy of feelings and categorial issues (definition, genera (*modi*), species, objects, causes¹, duration, value) is important. That is why my suggestion is to sketch the line between what the philosophy of feelings can attain and what it cannot and to formulate some questions explicitly: to investigate which tasks can be undertaken by the philosopher of feelings and how we can integrate biological and spiritual perspectives in such a way as to fill the gap between them, working all the time in a philosophical manner.

The intention of my paper is to concentrate on linguistic and categorial consciousness that a philosopher of feelings should present in his research in order to see properly to what extent it is plausible to explore them. What is at stake is, in my opinion, to escape the dichotomy of exclusively biological feelings and exclusively spiritual feelings because neither of them cover the entirety of feelings. A reduction either to a biological and experimental view or to a poetical and metaphorical point of view are two fragmentary positions. In order to build up an overall view of feelings, the world of feelings – a whole of affectivity – should be taken into account in its vertical and horizontal perspectives and with full consciousness of the linguistic boundaries². If both neuroscientists and poets use the category of feeling, emotion or affectivity, there must exist somewhere a common denominator for neuroscientists and poets. Otherwise, the terms are empty or only one party is right and other is wrong. But then we come back to Wittgenstein's formula that all this is the problem of language³. If all issue of philosophical categories of feeling were actually the problem of language, it would be a loss both for human feelings and for our capacity to analyze feelings philosophically. On the other hand, if it is plausible to reveal feelings taken as a entirety, it could enhance our knowledge about human being.

¹ For A. Kenny, *Action, Emotion and Will*, p. 74: *Causes are sought for emotions—regarding—particular—objects, not for emotions simpliciter: we look for the causes of a man's fear of mice, or dislike of strawberries; we do not look for the causes of his fear, or his dislike: for this would be to ask the question "why does he have fears?" or "why does he have dislikes?" to which the only answer seems to be: because he is a human being. – I disagree: it is not indifferent whether he experiences rather fear than dislike in such and such situation. Fear and dislike are not interchangeable, therefore we can look for further features in order to know why he experiences rather this than that.*

² Similar is the purpose of J.-P. Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, pp. 92–92: *We now wish to indicate the limitations of such a psychological investigation. (...) But one can immediately see the limitations of such a description: the psychological theory of emotion postulates an antecedent description of affectivity (...).*

³ See L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, *Preface*, p. 27: *The book deals with the problems of philosophy and shows, as I believe, that the method of formulating these problems rests on the misunderstanding of the logic of our language.*

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