

KNOWING SELF, IDENTITY, AND OTHERNESS: An Epistemological Account after Aquinas and Wittgenstein

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Abstract: In a closer scrutiny, discussions on the self, identity, and the other take an epistemological turn in Aquinas and Wittgenstein. Both of them leave ample space for it notwithstanding their ontological and linguistic philosophies, respectively. The epistemology that can be drawn from them does not limit itself to the 'process of knowledge', rather moves beyond the synthesis of knowledge to the integration of life and actions. The dichotomy between 'self' and the 'other' and the 'inner' and the 'outer' are overcome with the relational epistemology. Systemic epistemology is transformed to relational epistemology where relationality of knowing, acting, and being constitute a linguistic community. Human persons as the members of this community play distinct roles in the human world where other beings also exist.

Keywords: Identity, Individual, Inner and Outer, Intellect, Inter-reflection, Knowledge, Language-games, Other, Relationality, Seeing as, Self, Soul/Mind.

1. Introduction

Aquinas discusses 'identity' and 'otherness' from epistemological and ontological points of view. Wittgenstein addresses the issue from a linguistic point of view, whose discussions on 'inner' and 'outer' are compatible to the discussions on 'identity' and the 'other'. Despite the similarities and differences in their accounts because of the particular contextual standpoints from which they address the issue, the

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questions of 'identity' and 'otherness' are moving towards a horizon where Aquinas and Wittgenstein meet each other. Aquinas' treatment of human knowledge and Wittgenstein's taste for language games constitute the horizon; the relationality becomes the horizon of identity and otherness. Given the mode of the understanding of 'identity' and 'otherness' from a contemporary analysis of person as an individual with freedom, and the 'other' as the 'outer' which also has an 'inner', it is proposed that the concepts of 'identity' and 'other' are compatible with the analysis of Aquinas and Wittgenstein on 'person', and that can even go beyond their understanding of these concepts. The flexibility in interpreting the concepts, against common rigid considerations (those of rationalism, empiricism, or scepticism), allows an expansion of horizons based on particular interpretation that I undertake here.

We begin with Aquinas' understanding of self, identity, and otherness, and interpret that these are not compartmentalised but are mutually enriching concepts. Secondly, an investigation into Wittgenstein's concepts of self and other is undertaken, and it can be proposed that these concepts cannot escape the labyrinth of language-games but are rooted in them. Finally, it is proposed that while Aquinas and Wittgenstein follow different methodologies with a similar purpose of addressing the philosophical problems concerning human life, they can find ways of interacting, and the encounter with their ideas in the present can be an antidote to unidirectional methods in epistemology, especially with regard to the knowledge of self and the other, that isolate individual and the other. The solution to the problems of 'identity' and 'otherness' are relational since 'self', 'identity', and 'otherness' are relational concepts of a human person in a human world. The questions are primarily approached from an epistemological point of view though they can also be discussed from ontological perspective. The epistemological project is undertaken here due to the methodological realisation that unless the logic of being (identity and otherness) is clarified, the ontology of being is incomprehensible. Epistemology and ontology are two sides of

one coin, but epistemology takes precedence in the order of knowledge, and ontology takes precedence in the order of being. Being is most fundamental notion which also includes knowledge, but knowing 'being' comes prior to the ontology of being.¹ The ontology of 'identity' and 'other' is to be analysed separately in another project. There are many related epistemological, ontological, and anthropological questions that are mentioned but not engaged with, in order to confine the scope of this article to the epistemological perspective of self, identity, and otherness.

2. Aquinas' Way of Gauging the Certainty of "I" through "Identity"

An epistemological question that comes alive while discussing on 'identity' and 'otherness' is how does one know that something exists and continue to exist the way something is? 'Something' is a generic term which includes both material and personal existence. The concepts of 'identity' and 'otherness' primarily refer to the personal existence and secondarily to material existence of things; since the 'other' also includes material things. Another related question is whether there is any relation between one's existence and that of the other. In this section we shall address the question by placing it in the mediaeval context and then moving onto a Thomistic response. One could find intense analysis of personal identity in the writings of Aquinas in discussing about the principle of individuation, the doctrine of resurrection, and the Divine nature and the Divine Persons. The scope of this article excludes the latter questions because it needs a separate treatment of the kind of 'personal identity and the otherness' of the Divine Persons, and considers only the principle of individuation. The personal identity of the Divine persons refer to the hypostasis

¹It is not endorsing Cartesian *cogito ergo sum*, which can be translated both as 'I think therefore I exist' or 'I exist therefore I think', instead, it is proposed that ontologically 'being' (that a thing is) comes first and 'logically' knowledge of 'what a thing' (nature of a being) comes first, than 'that a thing' (existence of a being).

(the way each Divine Person possessing the Divine nature) of each Person to the Divine nature. The principle of individuation is primarily attributed to matter in material things, and in human persons (i.e., composed of material and immaterial), personality.

For Medieval philosophers, in general, the question of the certainty of 'I' is through the question of personal identity and individuation. William of Ockham rejected any universal notion of the person and proposed 'numerical' individuation.² Duns Scotus proposed *haecceitas* or 'thisness' as the principle of individuation³ as opposed to what Aquinas suggested, matter as the principle of individuation. In fact, Aquinas suggested matter as that which individuates a form, distinguishing it from another form, and both matter and form together individuates a being.⁴ To say something as 'this person' one needs to affirm the reality of the whole person. When we look at a human being, it can be considered (a popular perception) that human person is the combination of 'human body' which is the material appearance of a human being, and 'human soul', which is considered as that

²Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy* vol. III, New York: Newman Press, 1993, 49. See also, Peter King, "Duns Scotus on the Common Nature and the Individual Differentia", *Philosophical Topics*, no. 20 (Fall 1992), 50-76. In this article, Peter King analyses the criticism of Duns Scotus on William of Ockham's numerical identity.

³John Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, II. d. 3; qq, 5-6, n.177, Vatican: Studio Et Cura Commissionis Scotisticae, 2005.

⁴See, Christopher Hughes, "Matter and Actuality", in *Thomas Aquinas: Contemporary Philosophical Perspectives*, ed., Brian Davies, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, 61-72. The controversy whether the matter alone is the principle of individuation or whether it is matter and form together (which seems to be the position held by Bonaventure) is never sorted out among Thomistic scholars. Given the possibility of ontological recognition of a 'being' where 'form' is dominant, one might hold for the 'matter-form togetherness' view of individuation, than the 'matter alone' view. In the case of human persons, the identity is referred to the quantified matter as other material beings and substantial form (human soul) as other immaterial beings.

principle which makes the material composition alive and makes it act like a human person. The identity of a human being lies precisely in the way it acts with an appearance which is accepted. The relevance of the concept of the individuation lies in situating the human person as a unique entity in the world. Personal identity does not cease with the question of the principle of individuation rather it persists in the question of the continuity of the 'thisness' or individual person over time. Therefore, the scope of the puzzle is to understand the dynamism of identity and otherness; what makes a thing what it is, what makes a thing the kind of thing that it is, what makes a thing similar to other things of the kind, what makes a thing different from the similar things of the kind, and what makes the thing different from all other things of different kinds. The scope of the question of 'identity' and 'otherness' is diverged and merged in these questions.⁵

The concept 'identity' has various nuances in philosophy. It could be the result of 'identifying' something with something else, or 'comparison' of something to another, or more broadly attributing sameness to something over a period of time though it undergoes some accidental changes, either internal or external. In the case of human person the question can be narrowed down to the 'sameness of self' that endures through the passage of time. In the case of material beings, the sameness of 'thingness' is the principle of identity. The identification of one's self itself is an interesting scheme in Aquinas' account. There are philosophical positions that attempt to see the knowledge of the self as immediate or direct (as in the case of Cartesian self) and the self in turn opens itself to the external world through the concept of friendship.⁶ This way of looking at the self reflects

⁵These questions are analysed by Peter King, "The Problem of Individuation in the Middle Ages", *Theoria* 66, no. 2 (August 2000): 159-184.

⁶For a detailed account of this position see, Mark K. Spencer, "Aristotelian Substance and Personalistic Subjectivity", *International Philosophical Quarterly* 55, no. 2 (June 2015):145-164. Various positions on 'subjectivity' is examined in this article, and the author takes a

'interactionism' - the Cartesian solution to the problem of radical dualism of mind/self and body (soul and body/world and spirit, material and immaterial). An alternative view can be accorded to this position that the self cannot be known immediately but mediately. To ask, whether the question of 'I' is theoretically explained in the writings of Aquinas is to ask whether the obvious is put in words. Being a realist, Aquinas would never have any doubt about one's own existence. Commenting on a passage from Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Book VII, no. 17, he indicates the position: "And by the same reasoning, when one asks 'What is man?' it must be evident that man exists. But this could not happen if one were to ask why a thing is itself, for example, 'Why is man man?' or 'Why is the musical musical?' for in knowing that a man is a man it is known why he is a man."⁷ Aquinas takes the knowledge of a human being as something self-evident, as commented by Robert Pasnau, "Three-dimensional bodies are similarly manifest in our everyday experiences; there is nothing mysterious there."⁸ Human beings are also three-dimensional bodies but with specific difference of rationality. We focus on the knowledge of the self primarily though the 'other' includes all beings both material and immaterial. To ask whether 'oneself exists' or not, was a nonsensical question since the knowledge was self-evident or of a realist kind. He further indicates that only a human person has the particular certainty in this particular way. To understand the logic of this position, one needs to have a holistic view of the process of self-knowledge in Aquinas. The knowledge of the 'self' is a result of cognition with its upward (inductive) and downward (deductive) movements. We grasp the universal through induction and the particular is grasped in

stand that the subjectivity is both irreducible and personal but opens itself to the outer world.

⁷Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Metaphysics*, trans. John P. Rowan, ed. Joseph Kenny, Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1961, no. 1651.

⁸Robert Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 28.

relation to the universal. These are not separate movements but one movement with two processes. "We can grasp things only in as much as they exist in such and such ways..."⁹ The process of knowledge is aimed at 'what is the case' than 'what ought to be the case' or 'what was the case'. The dynamism that asserts the certainty of oneself is the cogitative power which can be considered as the 'boundary' between the 'sensory' and 'intellectual powers'. I consider cogitative power as a boundary between intellect and senses, after the analogy of Aquinas who considers human soul exists "... on the confines of spiritual and corporeal" (*ST*, I, 77, 2). The cogitative power can have access to both the sensation and the abilities of intellect, just like human soul can know both material and immaterial reality. Contrary to the scepticism of David Hume who validates only 'impressions' (pure sensations) as source of knowledge, it is to be affirmed that for a human person, the scope of pure sensation is not possible, but a sensation as a human person is possible. To illustrate this, a contrast of human pain and dog's pain can be used. The pain of a dog and the pain of a human being after hitting with a stone are ontologically different. The pain in the latter case is also sensation but not a pure sensation, since every experience of a human person is sensitive-intellectual/rational. The role of the senses in a human being is to be qualified to complement his/her rational capacities. While the intellect is able to apprehend an individual as existing under a common nature, the senses always grasp the particular qualities. Intellect abstracts human nature from many human beings and conceptualises it (upward movement), and what is conceptualised is attributed to the individual instances (downward movement). The sensitive knowledge permeates through the intellectual knowledge and the intellectual knowledge influences the sensitive knowledge. That is why 'pure' idea and 'pure' sensation is impossible. The movement of sensible species to the intellect, and the intellectual

⁹Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica Part I, Question 15 Article 3*, [Henceforth *ST*, I, Q., a.,] trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, ed. Sandra K. Perry and Joseph Kenny, Oxford: Benziger Bros. Edition, 1947.

powers to sensation is facilitated by cogitative power that enables the recognition of this human being as 'this human being' and not another. To conceive the dynamism of cogitative power other analogies can be used: Consider the first two human beings in the primitive world. How did they recognise that they are similar to each other as 'human beings' (though names did not matter then), but distinct from all other things in their experience? This simple and unqualified understanding is due to what is called 'cogitative' power. Universal notion of 'man' comes with inductive reasoning where many human beings are involved. The case here is of only the first two primitive human beings. Secondly, the principle of non-contradiction and identity also indicate that the first moment of knowing 'A is A', and 'A is not B' come with the cogitative power. The knowledge begins here and moves with great intensity to the higher specification with the work of the intellect. This knowledge stands midway between conceptualisation and imagination. While senses recognise the sensible species and the intellect perceives the intelligible species; cogitative power does not reason or sense, it simply understands the things as they are.¹⁰ The sort of self-knowledge is advanced thus: one's existence and nature is not to be proved by reasoning but by recognition of one's capacities as corresponding to one's activities in the world. No one has to ostensibly teach me that 'I' am a human being. Sensing, thinking, acting, and living are various capacities manifested by things that have senses, intellect, faculties or powers, and the principle of life or soul, and these capacities and faculties are expressed in the person's life and actions. Various operations of a human person point out that the self exists in such and such ways.¹¹ It is self-evident, and need not be proved at all. An

¹⁰It is to be noted that the cogitative power does not act independently of intellect and senses which is impossible, but cogitative power is a unique power of human person, which is akin to estimative power in animals.

¹¹For a detailed description of the operations of senses, intellect, cogitative, and estimative powers, see, Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary Journal of Dharma* 43, 3 (July-September 2018)

animal too may have consciousness, that it exists such and such ways and fulfils its wants, though it may not be aware of the details of its operations. It has the estimative power which is the highest form of knowledge of its kind, and human person has it as cogitative power that is influenced by the intellectual and sensitive powers (ST, Q.74,4).

Given the kind of realism proposed here, can someone ask, how do I know 'I' am the same person who lived and acted as human being a few years ago, and yet existing and acting even now? It is a question on 'self-identity' need not to be proved at all.¹² The relevant question is whether 'I exist' and not whether 'I was existing' or 'I will exist'. Another question is whether 'I' who exists is identical with other human beings. The answer along the thought of Aquinas is that there is no immediate apprehension of self by itself rather in understanding the things around, it understands itself – mediately. All that has been said about the self-knowledge and self-identity, with the analogy of cogitative power, is in fact a mediate knowledge, but a certain knowledge since it is self that knows knows itself mediately. Thus the argument that self can only be known through external world is endorsed by the Thomistic line of thought. This is in sharp contrast to what Descartes proposed as Archimedean point in certainty: '*cogito ergo sum*';¹³ I think therefore I am.

on Aristotle's *De Anima*, trans. Kevin White, ed. Joseph Kenny, Washington, DC: Catholic University Press of America, 2005, Lectio 12 and 13: nos. 373-396. See also, Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 275 and 337.

¹²The study, so far, has not been aimed at proving the existence of self, but explaining the facts of one's existence as an existing self.

¹³For discussions on *cogito*, see, Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, 2nd Meditation no.7, trans. John Cottingham, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986. The question, "what is a human being?" is framed from a deductive regression after Cartesian model of *cogito*. The *cogito* is an answer to all possible agnosticism around the world, human being, and God, and the certainty of one's self is the paradigm for all other certainties. This deductive conclusion on human

Consequently, for Descartes, by knowing oneself, mind knows all things which undermines the knowledge of others from the point of view of themselves, but depends completely on the knowledge of the self. The Cartesian *cogito* thinks itself and at its leisure knows other things, and as a result the world may or may not exist if it does not think about them.

3. Dynamic Turn: From “I” and “Identity” to the “Other”

Progressing on from the previous section, in order to understand the identity of oneself better, the existence and identity of others are also proposed. A simple analysis of the text from Aquinas *on Truth* would do the same. “Hence, our mind cannot so understand itself that it immediately apprehends itself. Rather, it comes to the knowledge of itself through apprehension of other things ...”¹⁴ On the one hand, the mind grasps the universal nature of all things, and the individual nature of a particular thing through the universal nature. On the other hand, ‘cogitation’ occurs before intellect grasps the universal nature. The cogitative certainty is that enables the intellect to grasp it as a human being under universal and particular nature. Thus, cogitative certainty is a certainty of a particular kind unlike intellection, imagination and sensation. These processes, are finally ‘one’ act, under different aspects. Positively speaking, the self is able to know all things by grasping their natures through ‘awareness’. It is a journey of the self ‘inside out’ and ‘outside in’: a kind of ‘inter-reflection’; the self, by reflecting on the objects arrive at self-knowledge. In knowing, mind has no internal dynamism (i.e., innate ideas) to know the things around. It knows all things through the intelligible species presented to itself. The intelligible species are abstracted from the particular sensible species or phantasm, which in turn owe their existence to the real things existing around. It is clear on this account that

being as a ‘thinking self’ fails to answer at the same token the presence of the other in the world.

¹⁴Thomas Aquinas, *On Truth*, trans. Robert W. Mulligan, James W. McGlynn and Robert W. Schmidt, 3 vols, ed. Joseph Kenny, Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, Question 10, Article 8.

the powers of the mind or soul (i.e., memory, intellect, and will) are active only on account of the external things. In other words, the conformity of the mind to the external things increases the scope of the mind to know itself.

From what has been said, we arrive at a seemingly conflicting account of self-knowledge. The 'self' knows itself through identifying its own acts through cogitative power; what could be the rationale of stating that the mind or self knows itself by knowing the other things? At this juncture, there is no conflict except in the variants of understanding. When it is said that the mind knows itself through the cogitative power, it implies that the cogitative power has no individual and unrelated mode of knowing the self, it knows by the help of both sensible and intelligible species (as seen above). The cogitative power of knowing the self, though not conditioned by intellection, is not direct but indirect by means of intelligible species and sensible species. Through reasoning self is to know all things: the fruits of intellection, i.e., universal concepts, and in knowing these, mind increases its scope of knowing its modes of operation. The direct apprehension of the self or what we call Cartesian 'I' is to know itself without the help of anything. This way of self-knowledge is untenable from a realist point of view. The self-knowledge is a combination of all three or in more direct way, these are three ways of understanding one knowledge of the self. Going further, it can be proposed that, through 'reasoning' human persons not only know things but also the self and the other better. The term 'reasoning' needs to be qualified as a fitting term in this process than the term 'intellection'. The word 'intellection' somehow indicates the primacy of intellect in knowing. The word 'reasoning' is a broader term, which indicates the proper assignation of various faculties in knowing, including that of the 'intellect'. It is to be emphasised that self does not know itself from a universal category (as it is the scope of intellection), but knows itself as self-evident and existing, experiencing, and knowing here and now with the knowledge of other things. There is, then, no one solution to the problem of identity since the problem includes both 'sameness' ('I') and the 'otherness'.

Since the knowledge of the self is related to sensible species, intelligible species, cognition, cogitation, and sensation, the knowledge itself is relational. The knowledge of the self is indirect or relational, and the relational is always 'other-oriented'.

Another distinct question that is related to the question of identity and otherness is the knowledge of others as immaterial beings or beings with minds. Aquinas in his discussion *on Truth* gives a remote argument for the knowledge of a being as an immaterial being.¹⁵ This is a question related to the knowledge of angels and God. We have seen that the self-knowledge depends on the relational way. This in fact is the 'first person' knowledge about one's own self through reflecting on the external things. This type of knowledge never gives a clue to the understanding of other people's thoughts and minds. For Aquinas, the knowledge of other people's minds was not a problem as he would envisage any human person with normal thinking and rational ability would be able to think the kind of thoughts any human person would have. This position is to be examined in the light of language use and the actions of human persons.

Given the dynamism of language where speaker (subject), receiver (term), and the spoken word (foundation) are related, we could propose that use of language itself is an indication of how others think. It could be demonstrated that the use of language by other beings would eventually prove the movement from premises to conclusion which can be recognised by others. For, e.g., when one says, "It is quite cold here, therefore I need

¹⁵Aquinas, *On Truth*, Question 10, Article 11: " ... by means of the natural knowledge, which we experience in this life, our mind cannot see either God or angels through their essence. Nevertheless, angels can be seen through their essence by means of intelligible species different from their essence, but the divine essence cannot, for it transcends every genus and is outside every genus." The scope of the knowledge of immaterial beings is to be treated specially, and therefore, we shall restrict the article to the knowledge of human beings as intellectual/rational beings.

warm cloths" it would communicate to others who are acquainted with English language what the first person has been thinking. Coming to the broader side of language, one could even argue that thoughts are revealed in the linguistic practice of the human beings where 'identity' and 'otherness' are interrelated; 'I' recognise others' minds through language and activities proper to the human persons. Just like knowledge of self, escapes 'solipsism' through the relational process of sensation, imagination, cogitation, and intellection (all this can be summarised into 'reasoning' in a broad sense), the knowledge of the other minds/thoughts escapes 'private language' through expressions like behaviour, language, communication, and thought-acts. Seen the whole process of knowledge of the self and the other in this way, we can further propose that Wittgenstein's language-games and linguistic practices complement the Aquinas' process of knowing the self and the other.

4. 'Identity' and 'Otherness' through 'Language-Games'

In any of his available writings, we have no evidence of Wittgenstein being sceptical about the existence of the self. Nor is it found that he gives argument for the existence of oneself. To those who ask for the evidence of the self, Wittgenstein might reply that it is open to the view. In one of the passages in *Philosophical Investigations*, we have this realistic turn, "...It can't be said of me at all (except perhaps as a joke) that I know I am in pain. What is it supposed to mean—except perhaps that I am in pain...?"¹⁶ Further, he suggests that, "This dispute is so like the one between realism and idealism in that it will soon have become obsolete, for example, and in that both parties make unjust assertions at variance with their day-to-day practice." (*RFM* 293).¹⁷ According to him, "Not empiricism and yet realism

¹⁶Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958, no. 246; Henceforth *PI*.

¹⁷Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, eds. G. H. Von Wright, R. Rhees and G. E. M. Anscombe, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978; henceforth *RFM*.

in philosophy, that is the hardest thing" (*RFM* 325) Without complicating the argument, it can be said that to add 'knowing' to one's own experience and to express it in words, 'I know I am in pain' are nonsensical in themselves, since it might suggest that the 'knowing self' and the 'paining self' are two entities. To my mind, Wittgenstein does not want to prove/know something more certain than something self-evident. From a similar argument it can be asserted that to say, "I know I exist" is a nonsensical proposition. Knowing and existing are two modes of 'one existing' being but one act which does not need a proof. The existence of 'I' is beyond knowledge and beyond arguments: 'I' is simply there with all its knowledge and experiences. Thus, first person narratives (of knowledge) about oneself, one's experiences, and scepticism and arguments on the contents of the mind are unnecessary and illogical.¹⁸ One does not have to introspect, devise a criterion, or constitute a methodology to know oneself. There is no need to take a long journey into the self but the self is simply open to the view. The derivative question on the identity of 'I' is also to be dealt in a similar way. There is nothing that makes me to be sceptical about my past 'existence' as 'I' than my certainty of the present 'I'. The present 'I' is more than enough to affirm my identity: a living human being is more than a witness to itself.

The certainty of the existence of others is also not to be inducted or deducted from anything else, though it needs a special treatment. The arguments against the private 'I' itself would provide the grounds for the certainty of others. For Wittgenstein, the existence of others are also as certain and self-evident like the certainty of 'I', because of a creative attitude. "My attitude towards him is an attitude towards a soul. I am not of the opinion that he has a soul" (*PI* 178).¹⁹ I use the phrase

¹⁸It does not mean that all first person narratives are illogical but those referring to the knowledge of oneself or knowledge of one's experiences.

¹⁹The term soul used by Wittgenstein may not have the ontological character as Aquinas taught; however, Wittgenstein too uses this concept to indicate the principle of operation in human life.

'creative attitude' to distinguish between the knowledge of 'others' as human beings, and the knowledge of other things. The attitude is creative that unlike the knowledge of other things which is self-evident (like the knowledge of a 'stone' as stone' and nothing beyond itself), the knowledge of others as human beings requires the knowledge of human being with soul. The attitude towards 'soul' and the attitude towards a human being are similar or equal as opposed to, if I say, 'my attitude towards a human being is an attitude towards a stone'. The attitude towards a human being and a stone are categorically distinct since a stone and a soul do not complement each other but a human being and a soul can. This way of looking at human being and soul is thus creative.

The knowledge of 'who' and 'what' human being is never complete as the knowledge unfolds as the human beings engage with the world. On the other hand, one can predict the acts or status of other external things. This statement is in connection with how Wittgenstein is looking at the whole question of a human being. The human being is recognised not as an automaton but as one that has a soul. Having a soul as the defining feature of a human being is a religious view, but whether the term is soul or anything else, what is implied is that the object in concern behaves like a human being. Moreover, "[t]he human body is the best picture of the human soul" (*PI* 178). What one considers as soul, the principle of life, empirically non-provable, is not a mysterious entity, rather it is that faculty with which a human person operates in the world, or its actions are expressed in the world through human actions. It could be simply argued from this point of view that the 'identity' and 'otherness' are complementary concepts along with the concept of 'I'.

There have been discussions to find out the criteria by which Wittgenstein recognises the other and others' minds or how we know that the other human beings too have similar thoughts

that we have. His earlier solipsistic position (*TLP* 5.6-5.641)²⁰ argued for an 'I' which is elusive, and has an inner which does not need an outer. In his later works, he seems to have qualified the position, and some might argue that he abandons completely the mental process. Wittgenstein does not deny mental processes or inner processes but makes a distinction between 'pain' and 'pain behaviour'. "And now it looks as if we had denied mental processes. And naturally we don't want to deny them" (*PI* 308). His arguments on 'inner process' and 'outer criteria' have given rise to multiple positions of behaviourism, relativism, and using the tools of analysis, analogy, and criterion to drive home the problem of other minds. These various interpretive positions are praiseworthy in explaining the philosophy of Wittgenstein.²¹ However, without engaging with them for their merits and demerits, it could be stated that all these are the efforts of the interpreters to find out various criteria to determine the self and the other. Such criteria would never have been the concern of later Wittgenstein since the human form of life was as real as a flowing stream.

The problem of other minds is relevant only from the point of view of the uniqueness of human being; the common perception of human being as different from an automaton or an animal. The statements like "[t]he human body is the best picture of the human soul", "My attitude towards him is an attitude towards a soul", (*PI* 178) and "an inner process stands in need of outward criteria" (*PI* 580) indicate that Wittgenstein might fall into behaviourism. From these considerations, it can be proposed that a kind of behaviour is emphasised, like in the case of 'pain behaviour' or 'thought-behaviour'- when a person expresses one's thoughts through actions, like the 'pain behaviour –though

²⁰Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. C. K. Ogden, London: Routledge, 1922.

²¹For various viewpoints on the problem of other minds, see, Jonathan Ellis and Daniel Guevara, ed., *Wittgenstein and the Philosophy of Mind*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. This edited book contains relevant articles that deal with these various interpretive positions.

both these 'behaviours' belong to different language-games. But 'behaviour' in question is not like the 'particular adaptive-end behaviour' of an animal or mechanised system of an automaton. Human behaviour is 'human act' since it is 'intentionally oriented' to an end; the 'inner' and the 'outer' concurrently work to the end. Wittgenstein denies every inner process independent of life. The behaviour, if considered as only an action, independent of inner process that too cannot become a human action. Any activity of a human being, on this account, is subject to a thought-process, or any activity is simultaneously a well thought inner process; activity and inner process weave the human form of life, in which a living human being exists.

The concept 'living human being' is critical in the thought of Wittgenstein in considering the existence of other human beings. "It comes to this: only of a living human being and what resembles (behaves like) a living human being can one say: it has sensations; it sees; is blind; hears; is deaf; is conscious or unconscious" (PI 281). Wittgenstein pinpoints the identity of a human being as a living human being. According to Jose Nandhikkara, "A living human being is an embodied subject with active and passive bodily and spiritual (rational, emotional, volitional, etc.) powers and is substantially and creatively present in the world. We live, move and have our being in the world."²² Given the ontological constitution of the living human being and the possibility the resemblance of such beings in the world, the identity of others can also be inferred like-wise. The other human beings are not existent because of some criteria that 'I' provide but because they are open to the view with all their behaviour, emotions, thought-behaviour, and the like. Others are their own criteria; their outer shows the inner. When a human person 'lives' in the world as 'I' live, there is no point in arguing

²²Jose Nandhikkara, "The Person: Project of Nature, Nurture and Grace: Philosophical Investigations after Wittgenstein", *Journal of Dharma* 37, 1 (January-March 2012), 97-116, 106. Also see Jose Nandhikkara, *Being Human after Wittgenstein: A Philosophical Anthropology*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2011.

that his/her existence is to be proved. His/her inner which is manifested in the outer itself provides the witness – the living human being is the witness itself. Someone might argue that a human being can pretend to such and such or there are no concrete expressions that reveal the inner. This is a valid objection as far as a human being can feign their experiences (*PI* nos. 156-160 and 250). People might pretend their activities like reading, loving or having pain, etc. However these are activities in themselves that cannot be distinguished between the real and the simulated. Even in pretending, there is an 'inner' which is expressed in the 'outer'. The pretending itself is a language-game among the varieties of language-games.²³ The distinction of the real and the simulated can be differentiated only in the stream of life. To recognise the pretention one needs to have signs of pretence recognised: signs too are the 'outer' of the 'inner'. These are the linguistic signals that accord to the rule-following of a language-game of pretence, just like the rule-following of any other human activity. Thus, activities or behaviour of a living human being is open to the view, and is recognised as such in the public linguistic practice and language-games. All these indicate that a human being is easily identified as such and the other is likewise identified as a human being – living human being. There is no scepticism or crisis in the knowledge of the other human beings nor is there any incompatibility of human behaviour as the expressions of the human 'inner'.

5. 'Seeing As': Identity and Otherness

While understanding the process of recognising the existence of the self and others, identity and otherness, we have accorded Aquinas' position of 'indirect seeing' via sensation, cogitation, and cognition. Aquinas seems to be systematising the whole process of thought and the mode of arriving at the knowledge of others. Wittgenstein could be restless to see something is being

²³M. R. M. Ter Hark, "The Development of Wittgenstein's Views about the Other Minds Problem," *Synthese* 87, no. 2, (May 1991):227-253.

known through any process, which is fragmented and divided (*PI* 196-197); he conceives the 'knowledge of something' not as a process but as a continuum. From Aquinas' account, sensation and intellection are the two processes which seem to have their own proper activities; the scope of intellection is different from the scope of sensation. This way of looking at the whole process might cause confusion and may advance unilateral roles of senses and intellect, as it has occurred in the history of philosophy; theses of rationalism and empiricism. It is very unlikely that a realist like Aquinas might advocate a divisive or compartmentalised process of knowledge, whether it be of oneself or of the others. It could be that, for the sake of understanding the process better, a systematic and analytical approach of scrutinising each stages of the human being in the process of knowing is emphasised. The analysis helps in understanding the scope of sensation and intellection, and their mutual enrichment. Given the details of the process as continually related to sensation, cogitation, and intellection, and the incompleteness of each stage without the other, indicate that he also has proposed 'knowing process' as 'seeing as' the way Wittgenstein considers. In no way this undermines the reality of the one act of 'seeing as'. Even when Wittgenstein presents 'seeing as' he admits that there is no stereotype and monotonous 'seeing as' but 'seeing as' as always unpredictable and flexible. His allusion to the 'elasticity' of 'what is seen' (*PI* 198)²⁴ reveals that the seeing is not constrained to 'one act' alone but a combination of multiple aspects that converge and diverge. Even an 'aspect seeing' in 'seeing as' is not just a single act, but it is also connected with various other interconnected aspects. While looking at the face of a person for some time, one can recognise the multiple expressions of emotions; yet they are the 'outer' of an 'inner'. While Aquinas seems to have divided the process of knowledge, in reality, he sees that as one act with multiple

²⁴This is a way of saying that something can be known without complicated process of sensation and thought process, but it is an act which occurs spontaneously.

'aspects'. These aspects are neither construed in the sanctuary of the soul nor are simulations, nor are inducted from the external affairs, but it is a movement from the 'inner' and 'outer' and *vice versa*.

In this way, in a broader analysis, the questions of 'identity' and 'otherness' are relational concepts, interwoven language-games within the human engagements in the human form of life. Human activities can hardly be analysed in isolation: earning livelihood, entertainment, forming groups, marriage, family, responding to societal needs, academic pursuits, survival projects, influencing others, etc., are not done with a unilateral 'adaptive end', but with intention, freedom, goodness, dignity, purpose, corrective measures, trial and error, sense of justice, etc. The former ones are open to the view since they can be identified easily as 'activities proper' in a general sense. Usually the latter ones are not considered as activities proper but as 'attitudes' or 'qualities' that may accompany the former ones. However, the latter ones are also equally 'activities proper to human persons' expressed through the former ones. There is no dichotomy between the two, rather correspondence or relationality where 'the activities proper' (outer) are entrenched with the 'qualities' (inner). Paradoxically, the inner is to be deemed by people as those ones proper to human beings (only the human beings have the profound inner), but they are often put under sceptical scanner since they are not 'open to the view'. Just like the 'outer' is considered as the witness of the 'inner', the 'other' can be the certainty of my 'identity', since I do not have to consider my identity as a human being if there are no other human beings to ascertain it indirectly through their presence. Their presence is an active presence where dialogue, communication, sharing, and relationality are at work. The 'other' becomes intelligible through its 'presence' and engagements.

Ontologically, the 'identity' has precedence over the 'other', since if there is no 'I' there is no possibility of knowledge in its strict sense. Epistemologically, the 'other' takes the importance, since the knowledge of the self is through the other or the 'knowledge' itself is for the sake of the other. Given that, there

are no *a-priori* language-games or rule-following, and language-games evolve as the human life progresses, and consequently, the rule-following also progresses as such. The 'identity' and 'otherness', then, are dynamic concepts that resist unidirectional definition or explanation. As the human world develops from one century to another or one epoch to another, the evolution of these concepts occur progressively since the 'inner' and the 'outer' vary according to the human engagements with the world.

6. Conclusion

The investigation so far was an attempt to understand the relevance of Aquinas and Wittgenstein on the concepts of 'identity' and 'otherness', and how their perspectives contribute to the present day understanding of self and the other. Aquinas' notion of indirect knowledge of the self endorses the existence of the other. This mediate knowledge of the self and the other point out to the whole network of relations at work in the 'seeing as' of human knowledge. Wittgenstein's tool of language-games and rule-following places the 'subjectivist turn' and 'objectivist turn' on the plateau of variability and stability, which I consider, as the hinge points of knowing the self, identity, and otherness. Another attempt was to address the extremes of extensionless Cartesian privacy and the 'mindless' objectivity. I have argued that the concepts of self, identity, and otherness from Thomistic and Wittgensteinian perspectives neutralise the extremes. These extreme positions are recurrent in the human life in the forms of 'individualism' and 'consumerism/utilitarianism'. Paradoxically individualism and consumerism in the present day human context are interrelated unlike private 'I' and pure objectivity. The boundary between the two is relationality which is proposed as the paradigm of 'identity' and 'otherness'. However, relationality as a paradigm of knowing the self and the other needs to address further the ontological, anthropological, and existential dimension of being a human person. The scope of this article confines itself to the epistemological interpretation. Again, it is to be admitted that

the epistemological project is not all embracing since the project takes a mediate route that diminishes the lustre of individuality of a human person. Individuality is an ontological status of a person since an individual is primarily an 'existent' and then related to other individuals, where as, 'identity' and 'otherness', because of the indirect knowing process, are intrinsically related to each other epistemologically. Thus, a further investigation can be undertaken to understand the complexity of the ontological status of 'identity' and 'other', and the epistemological position of an 'individual'.

A further argument is concerned with the linguistic practices and the evolving language-games within a human community that widen the horizon of 'identity' and 'otherness' and encounter new epistemic challenges but can be solved according to the kind of language-games and rule-following of the new situations. Again, bringing everything under the dynamism of language-games has two important consequences. The first is a possibility of relativistic interpretation of rather stable concepts like 'identity' and 'other', and as a corollary to this view, philosophical scepticism; whether there is a person existing at all as a result of understanding the 'self' through the other, or whether the self is existing through linguistic practices. The danger is that the concept of 'self' can be constructed epistemologically without the support of ontology. Secondly, there is a possibility of interpreting the concepts of 'identity' and 'otherness' from a strict modern/enlightenment idea of self (as a private 'I' or bundle of perceptions) to the wider interpretation of 'identity' and 'otherness' forming a horizon: the horizon of language-games, individuality, identity, otherness, self, etc. The concepts are not sacrosanct in order that they can be untouched, but they are embedded in the language-games and human engagements, and therefore viable for progressive and alternative views. The interaction of these concepts synchronise with the contemporary existential and phenomenological projects on human person. A further research on this perspective would bring closer Aquinas and Wittgenstein to the contemporary reader.