

HUMAN SUBJECTIVITY

A Philosophical Investigation after Wittgenstein

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1. Introduction

Wittgenstein often labelled his later philosophical investigations as “grammatical investigations” (*PR* 52, *PG* 71, *PI* 90, 150).¹ According to him, “A main source of our failure to understand is that we do not command a clear view of the use of our words. – Our grammar is lacking in this sort of perspicuity” (*PI* 122). This is true about the words that we use for human beings. Besides the proper names and personal pronouns, we use words like ego, self, soul, mind, spirit, reason, will, etc., to define, describe, or refer to human beings. By arranging Wittgenstein’s relevant remarks I would like to render a synoptic view of ‘human being’ showing various connexions as well as differences of our uses of words that refer to human subjectivity. “Language,” Wittgenstein wrote, “is a labyrinth of paths. You approach from one side and know your way about; you approach the same place from another side and no longer know your way about” (*PI* 203). The object of philosophy is to provide us with an *Übersicht* of our use of words so that we know our way about (*PI* 123). Besides labyrinth, Wittgenstein used the metaphors of fly-bottle (*PI* 309) and jigsaw puzzle (*BB* 46)² to draw our attention to certain pitfalls and confusions in many philosophical questions. We are driven to certain ways of thinking which are far from the actual use of words. “The thing to do in such cases,” according to Wittgenstein, “is always to look how the words

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¹*PR* = Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Remarks*, R. Rhees, ed., Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975; *PG* = Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Grammar*, R. Rhees, ed., Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974; *PI* = Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, G. E. M. Anscombe, trans., Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953. References from the Part I of *PI* are to the numbers of the sections and that of the Part II are to page numbers.

²*BB* = Wittgenstein, *The Blue and the Brown Books*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958.

in question are actually used in our language” (*BB* 56). For, “only in the stream of thought and life do words have meaning” (*Z* 173).³ Our real need in life is the norm of our philosophical investigations.

A grammatical investigation, after Wittgenstein, is undertaken here in order to bring to light the use of words that refer to human subjectivity. The aim is to have a synoptic view of the actual use of the words and the concepts involved so that we get a picture of the concept of human being. According to Wittgenstein, “the idea that the real I lives in my body is connected with the peculiar grammar of the word ‘I’, and the misunderstanding this grammar is liable to give rise to” (*BB* 66). “How the words ‘I’, ‘self’, ‘body’, ‘mind’, ‘soul’, etc., are used?” is the question that we should raise if we want to clarify the nature of these concepts as well as the nature of human subject. Questions like ‘What is I, body, soul, etc.?’ are confusing and misleading; they are the result of wrong pictures (such as all words are names referring to objects similar to physical objects) that hold us captives. The division of a human being into body and soul results from our failure to understand the actual use of these words. First of all, ‘soul’, ‘spirit’, ‘mind’, ‘reason’, ‘will’, etc., are not used to refer to something in the way ‘body’ refers to a body. Secondly, we need to look and see the actual uses of these words in relation to human being. For example, though we say, ‘I have a body’, it is different from ‘I have a pen’ or even ‘I have a hand’. Like other objects, I occupy a space, but I am not my body. Though we can say ‘I am a body’, the expression ‘my body’ shows certain distinctness between a human being and human body and we say ‘I am not my body’. When we use expressions like ‘I have a soul (mind, will, etc.)’ it is different from ‘I have a body’. ‘I can search my soul’; but it is not like searching in my room. We say ‘I make up my mind’, but I am not my mind. ‘I can bring up something into my mind’; it is not, however, bringing something into my room or into my body. ‘My soul/mind/will’, like ‘my body’, shows certain distinctness but cannot be separated from ‘my being’. It would only add to the confusion if we think that the distinctions are similar to those between different kinds of things like chairs and tables. We would fail to see the categorical differences and similarities.

Wittgenstein is brilliant in reminding us of the differences in uses of body and soul/mind/will in relation to a human being. The sketches

³Z = Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, eds., Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967.

relating to the grammar of ‘body’ illuminate our embodied nature and our sharing in the animal kingdom. The sketches on ‘soul’, ‘mind’, ‘will’, etc., on their part point to the subjective dimensions of human being. These two ways of speaking about human beings are interwoven in a number of ways. “Here we have two different language-games and a complicated relation between them. – If you try to reduce their relations to a simple formula you go wrong” (*PI* 180). This is far more realistic and consistent with Wittgenstein’s later philosophy and philosophical method than his earlier framework in which, from a third-person perspective, human beings are seen, like other material substances, plants, and animals, as bodies and from a first-person perspective, they “shrink to a point without extension” (*TLP* 5.64).⁴ A grammatical investigation, after Wittgenstein, will show the primitiveness of the concept ‘human being’ and its relation to human body and soul.

In the following three sections I ‘look closer’ into the Wittgensteinian sketches that are related to soul/mind/will, body, and human being. Wittgenstein’s investigations on the ‘inner’ show a family resemblance term that includes in its fibres expressions with ‘soul’, ‘mind’, ‘reason’, ‘will’, etc., and refers to all the human characteristics that are not bodily. These characteristics give certain mental and spiritual identity and unity to living human beings. It is a ‘delusion’ to treat the inner as something bodily or to deny its reality. Though the inner is expressed in and through the body it is wrong to see them as two separate entities that are united contingently. Body and human being are presented as the best pictures of the human soul and unlike other pictures I cannot show what they are pictured of as independently verifiable facts. They correspond to the concept of a soul. These pictures have to be used in different ways from our pictures that picture empirical realities. They are not given in the language of information; but they are not without cognitive content. They have different roles. They are more like how people express their love in a variety of ways – poems, metaphors, letters, etc. They give expression to their soul. A poetic expression is different from a scientific proposition or a mathematical formula. An image (*Vorstellung*)⁵ is not a picture (*Bild*), but a picture (*Bild*) can correspond to

⁴*TLP* = Wittgenstein, L. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, C. K. Ogden, trans., London: Routledge, 1922.

⁵Though *Vorstellung* could be translated as image, it does not give its contrast with *Bild* as picture. *Vorstellung* is here better understood as idea, concept or

it' (*PI* 301). Pictures of human body and human being can correspond to the idea (*Vorstellung*) of a human soul.

2. "I Presuppose the Inner insofar as I Presuppose a Human Being" (*LW II*, 84)

Descartes rightly observed that "one can perfectly well engage in first-person thinking even though one is not in a position to keep track of oneself as a physical object."⁶ From the observation that 'I could suppose I had no body', 'but not that I was not', he, however, wrongly postulated an ego that owns and controls the body. To say that a human being has such-and-such a sort of body is not to imply that the person is a thinking thing that owns that body. Descartes, who argued for such a view, admitted that the soul is not merely present in the body as a sailor is present in a ship, but rather very closely joined and, as it were, intermingled with it, so that soul and the body form a unit. They are two separate entities and it is the 'thinking thing' that owns and controls the body and their unity is contingent. To hold that "the ego is mental" (*BB* 73) is to place oneself in a long tradition, starting with Plato, of isolating the spiritual from the physical.

Wittgenstein argued that to say that "a human being is not a body," does not necessarily imply that some new entity besides body, namely, the ego, has been discovered (*WL* 60).⁷ It is equally true that a human being is not identical with ego or some other entity – a mind, soul, spirit, or will. As I cannot identify my self with my body, I cannot do so with my mind. A human being is neither a body nor a mind. However, a human being is not without a mind or a body. It is true that we do not assign psychological predicates to the body and its parts, but we cannot ascribe them to the mind either. Otherwise it would be the mind that sees, smells, feels, thinks, desires, decides, etc. This is a difficult situation, because we want to say: 'it cannot be a 'nothing''. In order to avoid this embarrassment, "I presuppose the inner insofar as I presuppose a human being" (*LW* 84).⁸ In

imaginative representation.

⁶Campbell, *Past, Space and Self*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995, 90.

⁷*WL* = Wittgenstein, *Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge 1932-35: From the Notes of Alice Ambrose and Margaret Macdonald*, A. Ambrose, ed., Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979.

⁸*LW* = Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on The Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. 2, G. H. von Wright and Heikki Nyman, eds., C. G. Luckhardt and Maximilian A. E. Aue, trans., London: Basil Blackwell, 1992

the very next sentence, however, Wittgenstein remarks: “The ‘inner’ is a delusion. That is: the whole complex of ideas alluded to by this word is like a painted curtain drawn in front of the scene of the actual word use.” The ‘inner’ is a delusion, if we think that it is something similar to other physical objects that can be located, named, described, and defined. It is also not like the inside of something, a box, for example, or something like an inner room or inner cave. However, this is not a denial of ‘inner’; it means the inner cannot be spoken of in the language of object and designation. The inner corresponds to human subjectivity.

According to Wittgenstein, the assumption of the ego as an independent entity results from philosophical confusions. When we are forced to recognise that the word ‘I’ is not used, in some important occasions, to designate a body we look for an immaterial one (*BB* 47). “Where our language suggests a body and there is none: there, we should like to say, is a spirit” (*PI* 36). This is because of the bewitching power of the picture of the language in which words always seem to name objects. According to this picture, the meaning of a word is the object for which the word stands (*PI* 1). If body is not a proper object for self, we feel forced to posit an immaterial substance – the real ego (*BB* 69). In his view, “to say that the ego is mental is like saying that the number 3 is of a mental or an immaterial nature, when we recognize that the numeral ‘3’ isn’t used as a sign for a physical object” (*BB* 73). What we need to do is to remind ourselves of the fact that ‘inner’ is not a name of a material or immaterial object. That is not denying the reality of the inner. What is resisted is our temptation to treat it as a material or ethereal object. We remind ourselves that the inner is not bodily; ‘inner’ does not refer to something in the way ‘body’ refers to body. It is not the inner that is deluding; it is to assume the inner as an object, material or ethereal, that is the delusion. “There are inner and outer concepts, inner and outer ways of looking at human beings. Indeed, there are also inner and outer facts – just as there are, for example, physical and mathematical facts. But they do not stand to each other like plants of different species” (*LW* 63). They relate to each other in a variety of ways in the stream of our life and thought. “The inner is tied up with the outer not only empirically, but also logically” (*LW* 63). Wittgenstein is realistic about the inner; but we should not see it as an object similar to a material object. Wittgenstein does not assume that all that is real is empirical. According to him, ‘Not empiricism and yet realism

in philosophy, that is the hardest thing' (*RFM* 325).⁹ In his famous example of shopping for 'five red apples', he has shown that we use words differently. 'Five', 'red', and 'apple' are meaningful words and they are used differently in our language and life. 'Body' and 'soul' are used differently.

To see the empirical as well as logical inter-relations of 'body' and 'soul', we have to examine how the words which stand for the 'soul' and the 'body' are used in our actual language. Following Wittgenstein, instead of searching for an ostensive definition of 'soul/mind/will', we should better raise the question, 'How is the word 'soul/mind/will' used?' (refer *PI* 370). As with the use of 'my body', the expression 'my mind/soul/will' points to a distinction between 'soul/mind/will' and the possessor. We want to draw attention to the fact that it is not the soul that perceives, thinks, remembers, loves, wills, believes, etc.; a human being is the subject of these predicates. It is wrong to give a pre-eminence to the soul. Wittgenstein does not want to treat "the head and heart as loci of the soul" (*PG* 106). 'What sort of entity is the 'inner'?', like 'What sort of entity is a number?', can only be answered insisting that the 'inner', like a number, is not an entity of a sort; neither empirical nor metaphysical, neither bodily nor spiritual. But it is not a 'nothing' either. It is not just a matter of opinion that a living human has a soul (mind/spirit/will) (refer *PI* 178). That a living human being has a soul is my fundamental attitude in dealing with living human beings. It is not, however, something about which we can talk in the language of physical things. The inner confers a kind of unity to the living human being that is categorically different from the unity conferred by the body. It is a unity that is captured especially from within, from the first-person perspective. According to Luntley, "having a mind involves having a point of view upon the world in the sense that it involves experiencing the world in a certain way."¹⁰ The subject's point of view, though not expressible in the language of empirical sciences, is something very important to our life as human beings.

'Inner' is a word in our language that has a number of uses. It is, in Wittgensteinian terms, a family resemblance concept like 'game'. There are no necessary and sufficient conditions for the use of the terms that

⁹*RFM* = Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, G. H. von Wright, R. Rhees and G. E. M. Anscombe, eds., Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978.

¹⁰Luntley, *Reason, Truth and Self: The Postmodern Reconditioned*, London: Routledge, 1995, 57.

refer to ‘inner’. We use ‘mind’, ‘soul’, ‘spirit’, ‘reason’ ‘will’, etc., to refer to what we indicate by human subjectivity. If we look and see at all these terms and their use, what we observe is ‘a complicated network of similarities overlapping and crisscrossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail’. We could say that words referring to ‘inner’ ‘form a family’. There is no single property (or a sum of properties) like a fibre that runs through the whole length of the thread, on the part of all and only phenomena so called but only overlapping of many fibres (*PI* 66-67). A grammatical investigation gives a description of the various uses of these words clarifying the existence and nature of the inner. It is used in our language as a principle to unite all the mental, rational, and spiritual characteristics, something characteristic of human beings. Though we can make sense of the demonstrative ‘this body’, we cannot make sense of ‘this mind (soul/spirit/will)’. We could only say, “I meant my mind, but could only point to it via my body” (*BB* 66). I examine further, in the next section, Wittgenstein’s struggles to throw light on the relation between mind/soul/spirit and body.

3. “The Human Body is the Best Picture of the Human Soul” (*PI* 178)

Human beings, as a rule, are recognized by the appearance of their bodies. The characteristics of a human body do change, but gradually and within a recognizable range. “We are inclined to use personal names in the way we do, only as a consequence of these facts.” “If facts were different,” for example, “all human bodies which exist looked alike” or “the shape, size and characteristics of behaviour periodically undergo a complete change,” then, the use of names would also change. Thus, the use of the concept of an individual human being depends on certain contingent facts (*BB* 61-62). This, as far as philosophy is concerned, should be treated not only as an empirical fact but also as a logical fact. “The inner is tied up with the outer logically, and not just empirically” (*LW* 64). Often Wittgenstein reminds us that language-games and forms of life and the words and concepts that are interwoven with them are closely connected with facts about human nature and the nature of the world. “If we imagine the facts otherwise than they are, certain language-games lose some of their importance, while others become important” (*OC* 63).¹¹ For example, legal concepts presuppose “a scaffolding of facts,” particularly a normal human background (*Z* 350). To

¹¹*OC* = Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, eds., Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969.

have different concepts, “we would have to be made in such a way that all of us or almost all of us in fact would react in the same way under the same circumstances” (*LW* 23). Similarly, mathematics is “an anthropological phenomenon” (*RFM* 180). Though mathematical concepts and procedures are *sui generis*, it is the “facts of daily experience” that give them their importance (*RFM* 3). Induction is made logically possible by the regularity of events (*OC* 618). Actions like walking, eating, and bringing up children are part of our natural history (*PI* 25, 467). Expecting, loving, and hoping arise only in certain surroundings and situations (*PI* 481, 583). If we did not laugh and smile at jokes, cry and weep when hurt, turn pale, shiver, and run away when in danger, then our shared concepts of joy, pain, and fear would not have their roles in our form of life. At the bottom, our language-games in which our words and concepts are interwoven are ways of acting and ways of living (*OC* 204). The words that we use to talk about human subjectivity are interwoven with our characteristic ways of acting and living.

I can talk about myself and in this regard sometimes I do talk about my body, which is a material thing that can be identified and described like other material bodies in physical terms. Accordingly, I ascribe myself material characteristics like height, weight, colour and my body is just like and part of the world among others, among beasts, plants, stones, etc. A body, including my body, has some shape and occupies some space excluding other bodies. It could be perceived by the senses and could be moved to occupy other spaces. It could be picked out, identified, labelled and described like any other material thing. There are, however, important differences between material bodies and living bodies and between plants and animals and more importantly for our purpose between animals and human beings. “Our attitude to what is alive and what is dead, is not the same. All our reactions are different. – If anyone says: ‘That cannot simply come from the fact that the living move about in such-and-such a way and a dead one not’, then I want to intimate to him that this is a case of the transition ‘from quantity to quality’” (*PI* 284). This is a fundamental attitude.

Applied to human beings, ‘having a body’ is grammatically distinct from ‘being a body’ though we use both ‘I have a body’ and ‘I am a body’. The distinctions with regard to the use of ‘having’ and ‘being’ with regard to ‘body’, ‘soul’, ‘mind’, ‘will’, etc., in relation to ‘human being’ are blurred. These expressions with ‘having’ are not anything like human beings owning something. I have two hands and they are part of my body;

but my body and mind are not part of anything. I do have a special relation to my body. It is uniquely mine, not just like having land or other properties. Human beings are not, however, identical with our bodies. Though I am bodily, I am not my body. “We can’t substitute for ‘I’ a description of a body” (*BB* 74). It cannot be used without a body either. Even mental and spiritual properties are expressed in and through the body. Although a human body reacts to a great variety of stimuli, even when I am asleep or unconscious, it is not the bearer of the sensations, moods, thoughts, and so on. ‘I’ is not used here “because we recognize a particular person by his bodily characteristics” (*BB* 69), a feature particularly obvious in first-person experiential propositions. We don’t say “Now I feel much better: the feeling in my facial muscles and round about the corners of my mouth is good” (*RPP* 454).¹² When I say, ‘I feel much better’ others understand me from the context and from the tone of my voice, expression in my face, and other fine shades of behaviour. “It is always presupposed that the person who smiles is human, and not just that what smiles is a human body” (*LW* 84). The smile is expressed on the face and we can have a smile only on a human face and we cannot separate the smile from the face (*LW* 3). We cannot separate the inner from the outer: “‘I noticed that he was out of humour.’ Is this a report about his behaviour or his state of mind? (‘The sky looks threatening’: is this about the present or the future?) Both; not side-by-side, however, but about the one via the other” (*PI* 179).

The body is the medium by which the presence of the soul is brought about. It is in and through our bodies that we are present to the world and to fellow human beings and relate to them and live in collaboration and conversation. It is to be remembered, not just as an empirical fact but also as a logical fact, that ‘human being’ does not mean the same as ‘this body’, although it “only has meaning with reference to a body” (*WL* 62). We cannot drive a wedge between the body that expresses an idea of human action, and the body that is the subject matter of the idea of action, because it is part of the sense of human action that utterer and subject should be one and the same.¹³ Commenting on Fraser’s report that Malays conceive the human soul as a homunculus corresponding exactly in shape, proportion, and colour to the body in which it resides, Wittgenstein wrote:

¹²*RPP* = Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. 1, G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, eds., Oxford: Blackwell, 1980.

¹³Kenny, *The Legacy of Wittgenstein*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984, 87.

“How much more truth there is in this view which ascribes the same multiplicity to the soul as to the body, than in a modern watered down theory” (*PO* 141).¹⁴ It is in this spirit we can understand his remark: “The human body is the best picture of the human soul” (*PI* 78). Human subjectivity is revealed in and through the human body; “not side-by-side, however, but about the one via the other” (*PI* 179).

A picture of body can correspond to an idea (*Vorstellung*) of soul. We cannot have pictures of soul. A picture of body can, however, correspond to a *Vorstellung* of a soul. We look at photographs and portraits and see human beings not just bodies. We see the expression of soul in a face and in the bodily posture. We see happy, sad, serious, or fearful persons, not just pictures of bodies. However, the picture itself is not soul nor does it stand equivalent to the word ‘soul’. Words and pictures are used to represent imaginatively soul; they are not soul(s). An idea of soul is not a picture of a soul, nor a picture of a body, nor the word ‘soul’. It is not replaceable in the language-game by anything that we should call a picture. The idea of soul certainly enters into the language-game in a sense; only not as a picture.¹⁵ The word ‘soul’ cannot mean what it does by way of a picture qua picture: there cannot be a picture of soul; however, pictures can correspond to it. The idea of soul represents something for which there cannot be a picture; yet, we typically use pictures in our talk about soul. This is true also about what we say regarding ‘mind’, ‘spirit’, ‘will’, ‘inner’, etc., with necessary changes depending on the context. They are all pictured using pictures of body. ‘Body’ and ‘soul’ are, thus, used to speak about human beings. The expressions regarding body are interwoven with expressions regarding mind, soul, spirit, reason, will, etc. They do not stand for separate parts of the human person, but for the whole human being considered from different perspectives. All of them are interwoven to give a synoptic view of human beings.

¹⁴*PO* = Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Occasions*, Klagge, J. and A. Nordmann, eds., Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993.

¹⁵“The image of pain is not a picture and this image is not replaceable in the language-game by anything that we should call a picture. – The image of pain certainly enters into the language-game in a sense; only not as a picture” (*PI* 300). The meaning would be clearer if *Vorstellung* is translated as idea or concept rather than image.

4. “The Human Being Is the Best Picture of the Human Soul” (CV 56)¹⁶

At a certain stage in his pervasive and persistent attempts in clarifying the concepts regarding the human subject, Wittgenstein made the following illuminating remark: “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). From an empirical point of view, it is merely a description, a common sense report. It is revealing, however, from a philosophical point of view; it puts an end to our struggles to decide between body and soul, matter and spirit as the essence of human being. The category of human being is drawn here as fundamental to our language-game; the basis of all our talk on human beings. Human being is what it is and is neither to be reduced to some other thing like body, mind, soul, spirit, reason, will, etc., though they are used in relation to the concept of ‘human being’, nor is it a compound of such entities. We do speak of body, soul, mind, will, reason, spirit, etc., but we should not forget at any stage that we are speaking about human body, human soul, human mind, etc., and that the subject is always a living human being. In fact, philosophy has nothing to do with metaphysical and ethical subjects if these concepts have nothing to do with living human beings.¹⁷

Human beings are neither bodies nor bodiless selves, but beings with distinctive psychophysical characteristics. Our use of “living human being,” as Evans observed, “simply spans the gap between the mental and the physical, and is no more intimately connected with one aspect of our self-conception than the other.”¹⁸ It is primitive in the sense that it is not an ‘abstraction’ from or a ‘fiction’ constructed out of other basic concepts. It is not to be analysed in terms of body or soul nor as that of an animated body or of an embodied anima. A human being is no more a thinking substance than a bodily thing. He/she is a living

¹⁶CV = Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, G. H. von Wright, ed., Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1998.

¹⁷In his early philosophy, Wittgenstein discarded the study of ‘human being’ together with body and mind/soul to empirical sciences, declaring such studies have “nothing to do with philosophy” (TLP 6.53).

¹⁸Evans, G. *The Varieties of Reference*, J. McDowell, ed., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982, 256.

creature that perceives its environment, and responds in various ways with its own goals and purposes. In their responses to the environment human beings are creative to such an extent that they make the given world, a human world. To conceive them simply as automatons is not intelligible (*PI* 420). 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.

A human being cannot be reduced to ‘body’, ‘mind’, ‘soul’, ‘reason’, ‘will’, or a combination of all these or some of them. I may be proud/ ashamed of myself without being proud or ashamed of my body or mind. I may hurt my foot, but it is I who suffer, not my foot. My foot may hurt, but it does not hurt itself; it hurts me and it is I who have hurt myself. I may be conscious of a sharp pain in my foot, but my head is neither conscious nor unconscious of it. “It is a primitive reaction to tend, to treat, the part that hurts when someone else is in pain” (*Z* 540) and, “if someone has a pain in his hand, then the hand does not say so ... and one does not comfort the hand, but the sufferer: one looks into his face” (*PI* 286). It is human beings, not their bodily organs like eyes, ears, hearts, and brains that behave. A person sees with his eyes, and listens with his ears but eyes do not see nor do the ears hear. It is not like writing with a pen. Hearts beat and pump blood, but they do not fall in or out of love; it is human beings who love and take care. Emotions are exhibited in human face, tone of voice, bodily responses, and in other fine shades of behaviour. It is the human being who expresses thoughts, opinions, and beliefs in utterances and manifests them in deeds. Therefore, “instead of ‘attitude toward the soul’ one could also say ‘attitude toward a human’” (*LW* 38).

5. Conclusion

What we learn from these investigations is that the concept of human being is to be treated as something fundamental. It can neither be reduced to bodily or mental characteristics nor be seen as a product of body and something else (mind, soul, spirit, etc., or a compound of all these). Human being is a fundamental concept. There are no metaphysical definitions for human being and our inability to produce definitions or sufficient and necessary conditions or criteria for human subject is not ignorance. Nor is it the result of the depth or mystery of the topic; it is just a matter of the primitiveness and irreducibility of the

concept of a “living human being.”¹⁹ We agree in our judgements regarding human beings and our attitude to human beings is different from our attitudes to other objects, living and non-living.²⁰

In all the sketches on self, person, I, body, mind, soul, will, consciousness, etc., we are to take into account the concept of living human being as fundamental. It is only in relation to such terms that human subjectivity can be expressed. Also those terms have their currency only in relation to ‘human beings’. We can rightly use ‘body’, ‘mind’, ‘soul’, ‘will’, ‘reason’, etc., with regard to human beings. We note the similarities and differences in the use of these words and understand their meanings in their contexts. “What goes on within also has meaning only in the stream of life” (*LW* 30). Care is taken, however, not to reduce human subjectivity into any one or a definite grouping of them. We also look and see how these words and other related expressions are interwoven to give the fabric of human subjectivity. As Wittgenstein observed, “... one pattern in the weave is interwoven with many others” (*Z* 569) and one has to see them in the context of the “weave of our life” (*PI* 174).

The identity and continuity through time of a ‘living human being’ is intelligible in the context of human life, and it is just that continuity which allows us to talk about human beings, rather than just about points of views, scattered thoughts and random sequences of experiences. “Prima facie, such continuity does not need anything underlying it of a mysterious and indefinable nature, any more than the continuity of a physical object needs to be thus supported.”²¹ A living human being is not just a bundle of perceptions or a collection of points of views or a host of relations. He/she is living, dynamic and creative, and at the same time subject to bounds and bonds. “All the peculiarities we have noticed about ‘I’-thoughts are consistent with and, indeed, at points encourage, the idea that there is a living human being which those

¹⁹McGinn, *The Character of Mind*, Oxford: University Press, 1999, 146.

²⁰There are occasions when we raise questions whether something or someone is a living human being. For example, our attitudes and opinions regarding human embryos vary. It is a moral problem whether to treat them as babies or foetus. We discuss and debate questions such as ‘when do embryos become babies’ and ‘what makes them living human beings’.

²¹Madell, *The Identity of the Self*, Edinburgh: The University Press, 1981, 10.

thoughts concern.”²² The human being is, indeed, the best picture of human subjectivity (*RPP* I, 281). If someone insists on asking ‘What is self?’ we can simply answer, ‘a living human being’.

²²Evans, *The Varieties of Reference*, 256.