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## The Relationship between Soul and Body in Wittgenstein's Late Philosophical Investigations

### Abstract

The article is an attempt toward a reconstruction Wittgenstein's solution of psychophysical problem. According to authoress, Wittgenstein rejects traditional dualistic conception of man as composed of soul and body, and he perceived the human as a psycho-physic whole. Knowledge about such a whole is a primary knowledge, and it is embedded in our reactions toward phenomena like sorrow, anger, joy, etc. According to this analysis, the soul-body distinction is to be seen as a secondary corollary resulting from the interpretation of experience.

### 1. Introduction

Interpreting Wittgenstein's writings to extract views on the relationship between the soul and the body may seem a strange project Wittgenstein is generally considered a philosopher of language. However, his late writings on the philosophy of psychology evidence that pigeonholing him in that fashion does not do justice to the extent or the actual nature of the subject matter with which he was occupied.

The direction of Wittgenstein's investigations after 1944, when he withdrew the second part of his *Philosophical Investigations*, then in the process of being written, (remarks on the philosophy of mathematics) and started to write down remarks on the philosophy of psychology instead, is not easy to pin down. Indicating a subject that could unify the remarks originating in the late period will necessarily – the author not having clearly stated or even hinting at one – be in the nature of a mere hypothesis. Still, what appears indubitable and beyond all controversy is that in the late and final periods of his creative life, Wittgenstein is occupied with the analysis of psychological concepts. These in turn – although from the perspective of the philosophy of language, they could seem to be only an attempt to establish the criteria for the correct usage of these concepts – admit an equally legitimate interpretation as a proposal for a position in the classic dispute over the psycho-physical constitution of the human being

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## 2. Preliminary outline of the issues

Wittgenstein's remarks from the late period of his work share a common, critical nature. The author not so much wants to assert something (put forward a particular philosophical claim) but rather targets certain ideas he considers a reflection of a bias to which we succumb. By exposing the fallacious grounds on which they arise, he seeks to ensure that such convictions around which philosophical theories had grown disappear. Consequently, to place Wittgenstein's thought within the dispute concerning the psycho-physical constitution of the human being, it is necessary first of all to delineate that facet of the dispute which Wittgenstein considers to be a reflection of our misconceptions. This can be done most simply by recalling the fairly unambiguous position taken by Descartes in this regard.

According to that philosopher, the human being consists of two substances isolated from each other: the soul (or, if you will, the mind) and the body. What determines a human being's identity, what makes a person a particular being is his soul. The soul is what the first person singular pronoun refers to: the pure *I*, the self, that is each one of us individually. The human mental activity is an activity of the soul. All mental acts (thinking, wanting, but also erring) occur in strict isolation. Actions of the soul residing in the body take place in complete isolation. Between the soul and the body there is no cause-and-effect link, but what happens to the soul is reflected in the activities of the body and vice versa. There is a close parallelism between the spiritual substance and the physical substance, a parallelism guaranteed by God.

To anticipate the analyses in the further part of this article, it can be stated that Wittgenstein in no uncertain terms rejects the view of man as a composite being. The human being is not, according to that philosopher, a being composed of a soul and a body. What kind of being is man, then?

The denial of the position that a person is a composite being usually takes the form of conceptions in which man is a psycho-physical whole. Is that Wittgenstein's position? Given that he cannot be ascribed with the Cartesian position, it would appear that it must be. It would be futile, however, to search for such a conception in his writings. What is the purpose of all the criticism, one might ask, if there are no constructive proposals?

## 3. The path of Wittgenstein's answer

The position that man is a psycho-physical whole inseparable into parts, is only seemingly easy to adopt. The verbal sign of what would correspond to this position: 'psycho-physical whole', while not expressing the isolation, still indicates a distinction between the physical from the mental. The position one strives to abolish returns. Surprisingly, those who oppose this position despite their attempts not to make a distinction between what is mental and what is physical in the human being, act as if in spite of themselves. They try, as it were, to weld together something that becomes separated again the moment the effort ceases. The separation returns like a boomerang.

This is precisely the starting point of Wittgenstein's reflection on the psycho-physical constitution of the human being. He appears to be primarily occupied

with the ‘force’ with which the view of man as a being composed of the spiritual and the physical returns. As has been said, the interpretation one wishes to discard retains its impact force even when for ‘philosophical’ reasons we find it wrong. Therefore, we will not discover any attempt made by Wittgenstein to ‘at last’ bind the soul to the body, to make them – perhaps for the first time in the philosophical tradition – inseparable.<sup>1</sup> The uniqueness of Wittgenstein’s position in the dispute over the psycho-physical constitution of man lies in showing a path on which we really ‘know’ that man is a whole indivisible into a body and a soul, which path does not lead to the construction of a philosophical conception or even to deliberations on this subject. The reason is that the proper way to understand that man is not a composite being is a path that will not require the effort to ‘weld together’ the human being from the mental and the physical parts, which is always the case when one tries to see man as a psycho-physical whole. To show the path Wittgenstein performs an analysis of the picture that plays a primary role in our ideas about the composite nature of the human being. It is the picture of a soul inhabiting the human body.

#### 4. The picture we succumb to

When do we use the picture of the human being as a soul enclosed in the body? We do it when we are to imagine what happens when a person experiences something, expresses emotions, carries out plans, etc. It seems to us in such cases that it is the person’s soul that actually does it, whereas the body is what reflects the sensations of the soul. We imagine that our emotional states and thoughts are ‘projected’ onto the body from the inside, and the body manifests outwardly what internally is a state of the soul itself. Here we use the picture of a puppet, which is animated by pulling cords invisible to others.

This picture becomes sharper when the parallelism between what goes on in the soul and what happens to the body is distorted. This is the phenomenon of pretending analyzed by Wittgenstein. This phenomenon can be seen as a limiting case of the parallel activities of the body and the soul. What does it consist in?

The picture of a soul enclosed in the human body comes forth when we imagine the ‘mechanics’ of how pretending some emotion or thought occurs. It seems to us that the soul internally does one thing, while the body (as it were at the request of the soul) does something else.

The fact that a person can behave in one way while feeling something else is an ordinary human experience. When we ourselves pretend, the picture of the soul and the body acting ‘separately’ does not appear with such clarity as when someone else is disingenuous to us. In the latter case we feel that something else is going on under the skin of the person’s body, that the person’s self ‘behaves’ differently. It seems to us that the inside of the person remains, so to speak,

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<sup>1</sup> This issue is framed similarly by Dilman: The human being in Wittgenstein’s writings – a flesh-and-blood being inhabiting the world together with other people – is not a being established as a psycho-physical whole through philosophical reflection. If the human being is to be understood as a whole, this whole must be the starting point rather than the end point of deliberations on the human being. Cf I. Dilman, ‘Body and Soul’, *Philosophical Investigation*, 25 (2002), pp. 54–65.

genuine to itself of necessity, and what misleads us is the body. The soul makes a different face from that presented outwardly by the pretender

We say “The expression in his voice was genuine”. If it was spurious we think as it were of another one behind it. (PI 606)<sup>2</sup>

The ‘two faces’ explanation remains in effect as long as we explain to ourselves the mechanics of pretending. What happens, asks Wittgenstein exposing the absurdity of the interpretation that we use here, when someone stops pretending and the expression on his face becomes genuine? Does he make two faces then? And why does he not make them when he is disingenuous incessantly?

*This* is the face he shews the world, inwardly he has another one. – But this does not mean that when his expression is *genuine* he has two the same. (PI 606)

The picture through which we wish to see the experience of pretending is at odds with how it actually happens. Someone genuine in his behaviour does not experience any ‘close fit’ between the soul and the body. Neither does one experience the locations of the feelings of joy, anger or understanding someone, although one is confident that ‘it is all happening inside me’.

And how about such an expression as: “In my heart I understood when you said that”, pointing to one’s heart? Does one, perhaps not *mean* this gesture? Of course one means it. Or is one conscious of using a *mere* figure? Indeed not. – It is not a figure that we choose, not a simile, yet it is a figurative expression. (PI p. 178e)

When we think of sadness, for example, it seems to us that our sad soul as if notifies our body, which becomes sad ‘at the news’. The same *notification* mechanism is involved in situations that are, in a sense, the reverse of this, namely, when we imagine how we learn about what is happening in the outside world. It seems to us that our body – through the senses – notifies our soul about what the latter could not learn about due to being enclosed.

One is inclined to say: “Either it is raining, or it isn’t – how I know, how the information has reached me, is another matter.” [...] And what gives this ‘information’ the character of information about something? Doesn’t the form of our expression mislead us here? For isn’t it a misleading metaphor to say: “My eyes give me the information that there is a chair over here?” (PI 356)

What exactly does the picture we use contain? If we inspect the picture of a soul enclosed in the human body, it will be a picture of two persons exchanging

<sup>2</sup> PI in parentheses, followed by the number of the relevant remark or page is a reference to: L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford 1958).

information, engaged in a conversation. Depending on the situation, one or the other will assume the role of the notifier. When one is sad, the soul-person will report the sadness to the body-person; when the sound of an approaching storm is heard, the body-person will inform the soulperson (whispering what he has heard into the other's ear (?)).

What is surprising is that in this picture, in a way one does not notice, the body becomes equipped with a mind, and the soul is endowed with a body. Why do we do this? Perhaps because we actually cannot imagine a bodiless soul, whereas a spiritless body does not express anything.

I am inclined to speak of a lifeless thing as lacking something. I see life definitely as a plus, as something added to a lifeless thing (Psychological atmosphere). (Z 128)<sup>3</sup>

As has been said, Wittgenstein aims to demonstrate that the picture of a soul enclosed in the human body is, upon a closer inspection, a picture of a human being enclosed within the body of another human being. We encase the soul in a body, thus simply obtaining a human being, while the body is forever the human being (what we, upon reflection, describe as the soul acting inside it). This exercise must appear paradoxical in the light of the intention to conceive of the soul as something incorporeal. What would an incorporeal soul be?

The soul is said to *leave* the body. Then, in order to exclude any similarity to the body, any sort of idea that some gaseous thing is meant, the soul is said to be incorporeal, non-spatial; but with the word "leave" one has already said it all. Shew me how you use the word "spiritual" and I shall see whether the soul is non-corporeal and what you understand by "spirit". (Z 127)

Calling the soul incorporeal is a way to 'exclude any similarity to the body'. The reason for doing so is obvious. We think of the soul as what gives life to the body, so it cannot be corporeal itself. The very exercise of 'depriving' it of corporeality is questionable. We take away from it something that does not belong to it in the first place. And what do we want to achieve anyway?

The answer looks very paltry. The pure difference is obtained. Or rather a sense of difference, because the moment we move from the idea itself of an incorporeal soul to the use of such concepts as 'soul', 'spiritual', 'mental' etc., the 'body' of the soul seems to immediately spring back to where we took great pains to remove it from.

What am I believing in when I believe that men have souls? What am I believing in, when I believe that this substance contains two carbon rings? In both cases there is a picture in the foreground, but the sense lies far in the background; that is, the application of the picture is not easy to survey. (PI 422)

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<sup>3</sup> Z in parentheses, followed by the number of the relevant remark or page, is a reference to: L. Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, transl. G.E.M. Anscombe, Oxford 1967.

Wittgenstein points out that when we refer to the soul as incorporeal we ‘have in hand’ a picture, but we cannot use it, we cannot apply it. That is to say that the way we actually use the word ‘soul’ contradicts the picture associated with that word. We say that the soul leaves the body, inhabits the body, governs the body, etc., in doing which we attribute to the soul materiality, which it cannot have to begin with

“While I was speaking to him I did not know what was going on in his head.” In saying this, one is not thinking of brain-processes, but of thought-processes. This picture should be taken seriously. We should really like to see into his head. And yet we only mean what elsewhere we should mean by saying: we should like to know what he is thinking. I want to say: we have this vivid picture – and that use, apparently contradicting the picture, which expresses the psychical. (PI 427)

In using the expression, we are left with the corporeal soul, or simply the human being. This is because if we are to actually understand what happens to the soul (comprehend what the activity we ascribe to it involves), we must – in spite of our notions – ‘supplement’ it with a body. How should we understand this?

To explain it, Wittgenstein refers to the difference between what we say about our own souls and what we say about the souls of others. Emotional states, thoughts, sensations seem to us to be the activities of the soul itself only as long as we think about verbs such as to think, to rejoice, to suffer, etc. in the first person singular. As soon as we think them in the third person, the body is back as something indispensable. If somebody rejoices, it is not some ‘joyous basis’ of the joy he manifests that rejoices. In dealing with the ‘joyous body’ of another person, we deal with his soul itself, as it were.<sup>4</sup>

Instead of “attitude toward the soul” one could also say “attitude towards a human”. (LWPP II p. 38)<sup>5</sup>

Wittgenstein also presents the problem of the embodying of the soul in his analyses concerning our notions as to the mental life of non-human living creatures. The embodying of the soul that we perform when we want to comprehend human activity has one very important aspect. The body that encloses the soul is not any body but precisely a human body.

And can one say of the stone that it has a soul and *that* is what has the pain? What has a soul, or pain, to do with a stone?

<sup>4</sup> Thornton draws attention to the fact that assigning psychological terms to specific beings is behavioural. What we assign them to immediately takes on human form – and that, obviously, is not the form of the soul (which, by definition, has no form), but that of the body. The homunculus fallacy, consisting in attributing psychological predicates to objects insufficiently similar to humans, paradoxically also applies to the human soul. Cf. S. Thornton, ‘Sempiternity, Immortality and the Homunculus Fallacy’, *Philosophical Investigation*, 16 (1993), pp. 311–314.

<sup>5</sup> LWPP II in parentheses, followed by the relevant page number, is a reference to L. Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. II, transl. C.G. Luckhard (Oxford–Cambridge 1992).

Only of what behaves like a human being can one say that it *has* pains.  
(PI 283)

Why should the corporeality that makes ‘the behaviour of the soul’ comprehensible to us be human corporeality? After all we do ascribe certain spiritual states to animals too. We say that they long (for the owner), that they are afraid, that they dance with joy, etc. In some sense, perhaps limited, we believe in animal souls. However, such souls would not be clad in human bodies. What does Wittgenstein say to this?

In the first instance he draws attention to the fact that of the wide array of psychological concepts we have, only some are attributed to animals. For example, we say that a dog can feel fear but we do not say that it can feel remorse (Z 518). When we attribute certain emotional abilities to an animal while denying them others, it seems to us that we do so based on knowledge about their inner life. The matter will be even clearer if we consider examples of the attribution of certain emotional states to different species of animals: we can say that a dog longs for its owner but we will not say so of a fish in a bowl even though it will also usually have an owner. It appears to us that the difference lies in the inner lives of the animals, that it is a difference relating to the soul. In this connection, Wittgenstein notes:

Those who say that a dog has no soul support their case by what it can and cannot do. For if someone says that a dog cannot hope – from what does he deduce that? And whoever says that a dog *has* a soul can only support that with the behaviour he observes in the dog. (LWPP II p. 65)

We have grown so accustomed to projecting emotional states on the inner side (considering it the active centre concealed under a layer of skin) that it escapes our attention that our knowledge is based on the behaviour of a particular living creature. We are convinced that the range of an animal’s abilities has its roots inside it, from where it is read through some investigations. But even children know what animals feel and they can hardly be said to be familiar with the results of any investigations. What is given, what is the basis of our knowledge is the animal’s behaviour

We do not say that *possibly* a dog talks to itself. Is that because we are so minutely acquainted with its soul? Well one might say this: If one sees the behaviour of a living thing, one sees its soul. (PI 357)

How do we know how to interpret an animal’s behaviour? It seems to us that we deal with the pure movements of its body, which we interpret as manifestations of certain sensations based on knowledge about its inner life. But if this interpretation is discarded, what is left? The basis of our knowledge of animals’ mental life is, according to Wittgenstein, known to us much better than the results of any

research. That basis is human behaviour.<sup>6</sup> What we associate with the activities of the soul (mental life), is so strongly linked to the human body that only similarities to that body allow us to attribute a 'psyche' similar to ours to other living creatures

"I assume that a picture swims before him". – Could I also assume that a picture swims before this stove? – And why does this seem impossible? Is the human shape necessary for this? (Z 531)

The issue of a 'corporeal soul' brings up one more question. If the body – the human body at that – plays such an important role in what can be described as understanding the life of the soul, could the soul itself not be eliminated as unnecessary? How then would we have to view the human being? Is ours a view of man as a soulless human body?

Imagine we were to encounter a human who had no soul. Why should not something like that occur as an abnormality? So a human body would have been born with certain vital functions, but without a soul. Well, what would that look like?

The *only* thing I can imagine in that case is that this human body acts like an automaton, and not like normal human bodies. (LWPP II p. 66)

Despite what the foregoing analyses seem to suggest, viewing the human body as soulless poses a certain difficulty. It is not as if such a viewpoint is unfeasible for us; if we try hard enough, we are able to regard the smile of another as a smiling human body. The difficulty is precisely that in order to do this we must do what we usually do not. This perspective takes a special effort. We take the soullessness of the human body as being tantamount to it being a machine. A soulless body is a robot, and while viewing the human being as a mechanically moving body, it is not how we usually regard people.<sup>7</sup> Faced with a human affected by some

<sup>6</sup> Anthropocentrism in attributing specific mental states to animals is also noticed by Churchill. However, unlike the present author, he denies that knowledge about mental life actually is analogical in character. In his argumentation, he emphasizes that we do not hypothesize about the 'inside' of animals. Understanding animals is in fact just as spontaneous as understanding people and is grounded in a social and biological basis, similar to ours. My reply: I can agree that we do not hypothesize about the mental life of animals based on their behaviour. We indeed see animals' behaviours as 'immediately' meaningful, but it is not the circumstances 'themselves' that cause us to attribute specific feelings to animals, because the circumstances are only invested with meaning by the animals' behaviours, so we must see those behaviours as being 'of some kind'. Cf. J. Churchill, 'If a Lion Could Talk', *Philosophical Investigation*, 12 (1989), pp. 113–317.

<sup>7</sup> It is of course thinkable that the human being while not moving mechanically remains a machine, albeit a very subtle one. This point is made by Brunton, who adds that there is no penetration of the human body that would give us a more certain knowledge that the human being is a machine than considering him as a mechanically moving human body. In this context, Wittgenstein's 'reversed' metaphor, saying that no machine is like the human being, gains a new meaning. Cf. A. Brunton, 'A Non-Definitive Solution of the Free-Will Problem', *Philosophical Investigation*, 16 (1993), p. 238.



sensations, we deal not with a soulless body but with his soul itself, hence the paradox.<sup>8</sup>

Could the soulless one produce signs of pain? If he only screamed and writhed then one could still view this as an automatic reaction, but if he grimaced in pain and had a suffering look, then we would already have a feeling that we were looking *into him*. (LWPP II pp. 66–67)

We are getting at the heart of the problem here. We do not regard the human being as something deprived of a soul; indeed we often have the impression that we deal with the soul itself, but then again we cannot imagine a soul without its corporeality<sup>9</sup> The metaphor of the soul encased in the human body breaks down, and yet we find it difficult to abandon it. Indeed, we feel compelled to use it.

Of course, if water boils in a pot, steam comes out of the pot and also pictured steam comes out of the pictured pot. But what if one insisted on saying that there must also be something boiling in the picture of the pot? (PI 297)

If steam is coming out of a pot, we know that something is boiling in it, which also allows us to see a pictured pot as a pot in which something is boiling. In the case of the human being the situation is, in a way, reversed: We first deal with the picture through which we want to see the human being and only then with the human being *per se* We understand what the human being is in a way that gives rise to paradoxes. By following this picture, in a way we go counter to our experience, to which both the bodiless soul and the soulless, mechanical body are alien Why do we follow it then?

## 5. Wittgenstein's philosophical credo

As was said at the outset of this article: the uniqueness of the substance of Wittgenstein's remarks on the psycho-physical constitution of man does not lie in his view on the matter as such Most of the remarks are, as has also been pointed out already, critical in nature: their thrust is against understanding the human being as a soul residing in the human body. An unmasking theme predominates Wittgenstein exposes this view by pointing out both people's susceptibility to it and its absurdity (paradoxicality). Yet, contrary to what one might think, by regarding the human being as a soul inhabiting the body we do not commit an error Or rather the error is not made by us; it is inherent in language. We are deceived by its forms of expression.

<sup>8</sup> As rightly pointed out by Cook, that we also see the human soul when looking at the human body is reflected in the fact that, if we were able to regard the human being as the human body only, we would consider it no more a possible subject of sensations than, say, a stone. Cf. J. Cook, *Human Beings*, [in:] P. Winch (ed.), *Studies in the Philosophy of Wittgenstein* (London 1969).

<sup>9</sup> As Cavell poetically puts it: the spirit of the body is the body, just as the spirit of the wind is the wind. Cf. S. Cavell, *The Claim of Reason* (Oxford 1979), p. 400.

We predicate of the thing what lies in the method of representing it. Impressed by the possibility of a comparison, we think we are perceiving a state of affairs of a highest generality. (PI 104)

We are, says Wittgenstein, held captive by pictures absorbed into our language (PI 94, 112, 115). In learning a language, we become so accustomed to its forms that we do not notice they are merely forms. These forms plunge us into a world of appearances

In our failure to understand the use of a word we take it as the expression of a queer *process* (As we think of time as a queer medium, of the mind as a queer kind of being. (PI 196)

Wittgenstein does not simply point out that the conceptions of the human being as composed of two different substances is erroneous, arising from mistaken premises. His important contributions in this regard include pointing out that this view impacts on us much more strongly than any philosophical view could. The reason for this is that its strength is not the strength of a conclusion stemming from specific reflections. The interpretation that compels us to see the human being as a soul inhabiting the human body is, as it were, always-already-at-hand as it is provided by the language used to talk about people's mental life. This explains the above-mentioned fact that although we can, on philosophical grounds, conclude that the view of man as a being composed of a soul and a body is erroneous, we still persistently 'cobble together' the whole human being out of two parts

For this reason it can be said that Wittgenstein's critical remarks are in the nature of proverbially 'reversing the tide with a broom': even if we acknowledge that the criticism is fair, we revert to the 'old' way of thinking about man the very next moment. This is because by admitting it we contradict what in some sense remains obvious to us. Why then should we discard this view at all?

There are two answers that suggest themselves. First, it has already been shown what difficulties the conception of the human being composed as a soul and a body can lead to. As a matter of fact, Wittgenstein's talent lies in unmasking what we take to be an expression of thought-through views but what in reality is a form of expression of our language (*cf.* the above-cited remark 196 in *Philosophical Investigations*). The proper picture of the human being regarded as the body inhabited by the soul is the picture of two persons (one inside the other) remaining in quasi-verbal contact. Once we realize this, our view supported by this picture appears simply laughable.

Demonstrating the absurdity of the view by exposing the attitude on which it is founded is, however, only part of Wittgenstein's philosophical strategy. In accordance with his intention, as such, the view of man as a soul inhabiting a body, which is not simply an erroneous view, cannot be rejected by pointing out its ridiculousness or incoherence. By drawing attention to the fact that there is a clash

between how we interpret our experience (how we explain it or how we imagine it) and how it actually proceeds, he proposes to demonstrate that what one arrives at by rejecting the erroneous interpretation is not a theory or view. This explains the fact, mentioned above, that one will not find in Wittgenstein a positive conception of the human being as a being composed of soul and body. What one arrives at as a result of Wittgenstein's critical remarks – and this applies to his entire philosophical activity – does not have the character of something new, something we learn as a result of discoveries made, but of something that has, in a way, always been around.

Not, however, as if to this end we had to hunt out new facts; it is, rather, of the essence of our investigations that we do not seek to learn anything *new* by it. We want to *understand* something that is already in plain view. (PI 89)

What is there in plain view when looking at a human being?

## 6. The whole human being

When do we 'know' it is the *whole* human being that is smiling, sad, has hopes, intentions, etc., rather than something inside the human being manifested outwardly by the accompanying parallel corporeality? It seems to us that one does not know it until one realizes it is so. For Wittgenstein it is the other way round. What we must refer to is our experience as such, even before the manner in which we want to see it so to speak 'kicks in'. How should we understand this?

In remark 283 of *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein poses the following question: 'What gives us so *much as the* idea that living beings, things, can feel?' He replies:

Look at a stone and imagine it having sensations. – One says to oneself: How could one so much as get the idea of ascribing a *sensation* to a *thing*? One might as well ascribe it to a number! – And now look at a wriggling fly and at once these difficulties vanish and pain seems able to get a foothold here, where before everything was, so to speak, too smooth for it.

And so, too, a corpse seems to us quite inaccessible to a pain. – Our attitude to what is alive and to what is dead, is not the same. (PI 284)

What we react to is a human being, whose behaviour is meaningful to us.<sup>10</sup> When experiencing a person as cheerful, pensive, anxious, etc., we react to him in a particular way, and the distinction into soul and body is alien to what that reaction 'knows'. Our spontaneous reactions to a human being as something having

<sup>10</sup> The role of 'reactions' upon meeting another human being is emphasized by many interpreters of Wittgenstein's thought. Among other, Phillips argues that human reactions constitute the human being – thus they are primal relative to the 'recognition' of a human being as such. Hence, paradoxically, one need not come across a human being in order to react to him. Cf. D.Z. Phillips, 'My Neighbour and My Neighbours', *Philosophical Investigations*, 12 (1989), p. 116.

sensations contain our attitude to him as a psycho-physical whole<sup>11</sup> To put it simply, knowledge about this whole consists of our reactions: compassion when we see the suffering look of another human being, anxiety when somebody is enraged. The breakdown of the human being into the soul and the body emerges as secondary – as an interpretation through which one sees the experience, which in fact is alien to that interpretation

Thus, the uniqueness of Wittgenstein's voice in the dispute over the psycho-physical constitution of man does not consist in proposing a position according to which man is not a composite being. This is because the human being as a whole does not appear at the level of reflection, where he must always be 'put together' from parts. As a non-composite whole, he appears at the level of pure experience, that is, together with our reactions to a human being's sadness, joy, or anger, reactions that 'know' about man what no reflection expressed in language can know.

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<sup>11</sup> The fact that we react immediately to a human being having certain sensations is, according to Malcolm, the most comprehensive answer to Wittgenstein's great philosophical problem of the existence of other minds. Reaction precedes the distinction between soul (mind) and body. Cf. N. Malcolm, *Wittgenstein: A Religious Point of View* (London 1993), pp. 90–92.