Soul, not mind, out there in the world. Platonic inclinations in reading Wittgenstein.

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Abstract: The paper comments on the later Wittgenstein's conception of the soul. While Wittgenstein touches on the issue of the soul in connection with the debates of the body and the mind (inner–outer) and of behaviourism, I lean towards those who read his account independently, as exploring a key concept in understanding what makes life a *human* life, that is, one in which the dimension of *morality* features centrally. This interpretation would bring Wittgenstein close to Plato; some Wittgensteinian philosophers (such as Rhees or Gaita) offer readings of the two philosophers along analogous "ethical" lines. The distinction between the mind and the soul reveals itself most clearly in the context of the difference between the deterioration of the mind (mental *health* disorders) and the deterioration of the soul. Disorders of the soul appear to be problems of *life*, often with moral stakes. A few examples of ailments of the soul are discussed, for example environmental grief.

Keywords: soul, mind, Wittgensteinian ethics

In this paper, I will talk about Wittgenstein's comments on the topic of the soul (*Seele*), and I will try to explore the potential that they offer for employing the notion of the soul, especially in moral philosophy. The discussion cannot be read straightforwardly as Wittgenstein exegesis, for two (interconnected) reasons. First, much of the following discussion is based on distinguishing between the notions of the soul and of the mind, which is naturally embedded in English and many other languages (including my native Czech) but much less straightforwardly in Wittgenstein's native German. Both these English terms are used to translate Wittgenstein's term *Seele*, which is more inclusive than the English word "soul" (its chief equivalent in dictionaries). What I thus reconstruct as an important conceptual opposition mostly takes the shape of internal tension (often not really resolved) *within one* concept in Wittgenstein. And, second, it is only in the work of Wittgenstein-inspired ethicists that the notion of the soul, inspired by Wittgenstein's remarks about *Seele* that cannot be translated using "the mind", is fully developed in directions interesting for my discussion here. An important additional difference-making influence on these thinkers is Plato. Wittgenstein knew and admired Plato, but the extent and nature of Plato's influence on his thought remains discussed and far from settled (cf. Perissinotto and Ramón

Cámara 2013). Overall, then, the following discussion will focus on the notion of the soul, as opposed to that of the mind (in languages where it can be clearly employed), and the combined light that Plato's and Wittgenstein's reflections (each from his own angle) can be taken to shed on it. A slightly wayward interpretation and work with the German–English translation of Wittgenstein's comments plays a central role here.

Wittgenstein's remarks about the soul or psychic life are often read in the context of the opposition inner–outer. In this sense, Wittgenstein tries to comment on roughly the same debate as advocates or critics of behaviourism: do people have minds apart from their bodies? Are their minds localised? Do their minds have contents? Is people's outward behaviour a visible expression of their thoughts, motivations, intentions, and emotions, which are "inside"? "Comment on" is the proper term, though; typically, Wittgenstein mostly aims at deconstructing the theoretical presuppositions of these questions and our urge to ask them, rather than offering any particular answer. Thus, typically, what he leaves us with are questions like "Why should we think of the mind as something that can have a particular kind of 'object' – mental contents – in it?"

Nevertheless, some people picture Wittgenstein as a philosopher friendly to behaviourism (Gier 1982; Graham 2019). This has a certain logic; to the extent that the talk of the mental or the psychological is a natural way of making sense of what people do or say, Wittgenstein would not be very remote from behaviourism if understood in this way. Julia Tanney, an interpreter of Gilbert Ryle, calls this variety of behaviourism "logical" and argues that besides Ryle, a clear-cut representative of it, Wittgenstein is more or less on board too (Tanney 2009). However, nowhere or in no way does Wittgenstein (or Ryle, for that matter) subscribe to metaphysical behaviourism, that is, to the positive theory that there is no such thing as the inner mental substance. Thus, the exact shape of Wittgenstein's proximity to behaviourism is anything but clear, and thus requires caution. Too easily we may succumb to the temptation to read Wittgenstein as contributing to the dualism-vs.-monism debate; for instance, by claiming that by the proximity to *a* kind of behaviourism he indeed has embraced a version of monism. But if what I call "deconstructing" truly serves the indicated intention, then caution towards the dualism-vs.-monism question should never be abandoned in trying to make sense of Wittgenstein. Yet, any reservations about a substantive notion of the mind (and we cannot deny such reservations in Wittgenstein's case) seem to point towards a version of monism.

I believe that a part of this lack of clarity has to do with conflating Wittgenstein's remarks about the *soul* with perhaps related but generally otherwise-oriented issues of the *mind* and mental contents.

However, Wittgenstein's reflections on the sense in which we talk about the soul in humans should not be read as having relevance for the dualism-vs.-monism question – or the other way round. In elaborating on this suggestion, I will rely on authors reading Wittgenstein's remarks about the soul in a distinctly "Platonic" way – ethical thinkers such as Rhees, Dilman, Phillips, or Gaita. This is not to argue in favour of there being an objective Plato–Wittgenstein influence in matters of the soul, but rather in favour of there being a space opened by reading the two philosophers as kindred philosophical spirits for a particular approach to questions related to morality and human life.

I. Wittgenstein and the Attitude towards the Soul (*Seele*). Later, Enters the Mind

One much-quoted remark by Wittgenstein (PI 2009, II, § 22)[1] reads: "My attitude towards him is an attitude towards a soul. I am not of the opinion that he has a soul." Wittgenstein is refusing to play the game of metaphysical behaviourism here; the soul-endowedness of human beings, or the lack thereof, is not a matter of any opinion (*Meinung*) we may have about them. The English-language discussion of this passage (see Winch 1987; Cockburn 1990, Ch. 1; or Gaita 2004, Ch. 10) rightly focuses on the assumption that the soul-endowedness of human beings should be a matter of the *belief* that such-and-such (people having souls) is or is not the case. The place in the original German that is translated by the rhetorical "Do I also *believe* that he isn't an automaton?" (i.e. that he is/has a soul) reads: "*Glaube* ich auch, daß er kein Automat ist?" (PI 2009, II, § 19). Here, the emphasis is slightly different: "glauben" can also mean the reactions of belief or disbelief to what the other is saying or to how she is behaving (as if in pain, for instance) and is in a close connection to *trust* (cf. § 310), rather than being merely a matter of what one thinks (dispassionate or detached manners of thinking included) is or is not the case.

In general, though, Wittgenstein is clearly not interested in whether there is a certain, particular something that people have – perhaps in their heads. The talk about the soul relies in general on complex, holistic, pervasive, and – with respect to particular things we think – foundational ways in which we *relate* to others. That we deal with a soul is not an independently formed conjecture. We have here a cluster of primitive attitudes of a "reactive" or "participant" character, as Strawson (2008) puts it. These are attitudes we adopt towards each other as agents who hold each other responsible for how we behave towards each other. The difference between attitudes of goodwill or affection, on the one hand, and callousness or maliciousness, on the other, matters greatly, and this importance is not simply a matter of the material pleasure or pain produced. We resent somebody who maliciously treads on our hand rather than somebody who does it by accident, even when the latter hurts more (Strawson 2008, 5f). These differences are the differences between the complex attitudes of one human being towards another, and

[1] My idiosyncratic way of quoting the 4th revised edition of PI combines retaining the "Part II" (against the policy of the editors) with the use of the numbered paragraphs added by the 4th revised edition into what it calls the "Fragment" part (formerly "Part II). The numbered paragraphs are helpful, but Hugh Knott (2017) makes a persuasive case in favour of keeping the title "Part II".

these attitudes can be characterised as unreflected "feeling about and acting towards" others (Cockburn 1990, 6). We are angry with the other, we long for her words, and we care about what she thinks, also because *it is she* who thinks that (unlike the way we care about what our GPS route planner "thinks"). These attitudes also have very different "contents": being callous or negligent towards another human being, who may be suffering, is also an attitude towards a soul, and one that differs, as such, strikingly from simply ignoring, say, a piece of wood tossed on the ground (cf. Phillips 1992). *That* or *whether* the other has a soul is a way of describing what all the attitudes in this heterogeneous family have in common, what they are like.

Winch (1987) observes that for Wittgenstein, the key difference between beliefs and attitudes is that they do not have objects of the same kind. That we relate to each other differently from the way we treat an automaton is not because we have certain beliefs about each other. We have beliefs *about* particular things. Thus, we *may* have beliefs about other people's souls, but their object will not be the "general fact" that the other has a soul, but rather something like "Only a man with a dark soul could have hit the child as he did!" And such beliefs are held – that they *can* be held is – thanks to or on the grounds of the foundational attitudes towards others as souls. Thus, while we certainly have beliefs about particular states or qualities of people's souls and their lives – "I believe she is profoundly unhappy" – we hardly "believe" in the same sense that someone has a soul. We say "I believe she is unhappy" in a situation in which our interlocutor, or ourselves, *may not* be aware of the person's unhappiness, or may misinterpret her behaviour, which is confusing for him/ourselves. We can also, with regards to the specificities of the German word "glauben", react with belief or disbelief to somebody's statement about her own or anybody else's unhappiness. However, we can hardly imagine analogous situations where what is at stake is whether she has/is a soul. *That* is not something about which we form opinions that this is or is not the case, and neither do we meet this with belief or disbelief in the way in which such an alternative is open in cases such as unhappiness. All this happens on the grounds of there being a soul, as something towards which we adopt an according attitude.

Wittgenstein expands his comment about attitudes by saying, equally famously, that "[t]he human body is the best picture of the human soul" (PI 2009, II., § 25), and, much less famously, that "[i]nstead of 'attitude toward the soul' one could also say 'attitude toward a human'" (LW 1992, 38). The second quotation explains Wittgenstein's refusal of "opinions" and "beliefs". For the question is: could one conceivably be of the *opinion* that the other is a human (other than in science fiction)? Could one believe, or disbelieve, this in reply to somebody's observation to this effect? (If anything, this observation would be met with a different kind of disbelief: why are you telling me this? What do you mean by it? I don't get your point.) What would it be like? The soul is not something the presence or absence of which is stated, after an inquiry or after consideration of evidence; it simply is at play whenever anything human is at play. Making sense of *human* encounters involves naturally speaking in terms of the soul and attitudes towards it. And much as many of these cases give the impression of

something metaphorical, they need to be taken seriously. If we make use of the term "soul" in order to talk about the life of faith (PI 2009, § 589), we do it with a certainty that the state in question is thereby elucidated rather than obscured, that the audience (non-philosophical, too) now sees more clearly and is less confused about what one is up to. The "soul" relates to the aspect of a certain unity pertaining to situations in which we relate to another as to a whole being, though in seemingly "dissectable" contexts:

> How does it become clear that it is *not* the body? – Well, something like this: if someone has a pain in his hand, then the *hand* does not say so (unless it writes it), and one does not comfort the hand, but the sufferer: one looks into his eyes. (PI 2009, § 286)

And this is the way in which it "comes out" that the "object of my pity" is "this human being" (§ 287).

Wittgenstein's position shares some elements with recent philosophical rejections of dualism – Dennett's functionalism or Davidson's anomalous monism. Dennett, too, refuses to search for another "thing" that "is there" apart from the body. He argues that talking about the mind takes part in describing a *relatable* bodily being. Something of this is captured by Dennett's Wittgensteinian-spirited example highlighting the difference between the mind-boggling "We left Houston at dawn, headin' down the road – just me and my truck" and "just me and my oyster" and the perfectly natural "just me and my dog". Only the third example represents an intelligible use of "we" in our language. Dennett observes: "When *I* address *you*, I include us both in the class of mind-havers" (Dennett 1996, 4). That is, by addressing you as a "you", I ascribe a mind to you; and not based on ascribing a mind to you – establishing that you have a mind – I can address you as a "you". Though Dennett talks about minds and mind-endowment, he indeed is concerned with relatability in a sense similar to Wittgenstein:

> We might make mistakes. We might endow mindless things with minds, or we might ignore a mindful thing in our midst. These mistakes would not be equal. To overattribute minds – to "make friends with" your houseplants or lie awake at night worrying about the welfare of the computer asleep on your desk – is, at worst a silly error of credulity. To underattribute minds – to disregard or discount or deny the experience, the suffering and joy, the thwarted ambitions and frustrated desires of a mind-having person or animal – would be a terrible sin. After all, how would you feel if you were treated as an inanimate object? (pp. 5–6)

Note, however, that the importance of the proper kind of relations between "mindful things" has to do with the possibility of asking oneself: how (badly) would *you feel* to be omitted as a member of this domain?

Analogously, Davidson (2004) argues that while we can talk about bodies and about minds, this is principally a difference in *vocabulary* applied to the same "object". By applying the "vocabulary of agency" (Ramberg 2000) we are not positing an extra entity apart from (human) bodies: we use a conceptual tool appropriate for talking about motives, reasons, and ideas – all that makes the motions of human behaviour *agency*. Without accommodating propositional attitudes, or the concept of truth, our descriptions of human agency as such are impossible, while medicine or similar disciplines can do away with these. In one case, the description of the movements of bodies is enough; in another, one is concerned with the *meaning* of these movements (cf. the dramatic difference in the example discussed by Wittgenstein in RPP 1980b, § 458).

It is notable, though, that Dennett and Davidson are concerned with *minds*, not souls. Wittgenstein covers the same area too; occasionally, when he talks about "Seele" he does not seem to have more in mind than that which is distinct from the realm of the inanimate – in other words, all living creatures (cf. PI 2009, § 357). In such cases, the German "Seele" proves to be more inclusive than its English equivalents and covers both "soul" and "mind". In the following sections, however, I will limit my focus. I inserted these brief mentions of Dennett and Davidson to show that some important elements of Wittgenstein's account of the soul do not necessarily indicate extravagant metaphysics or anthropology, or even theology. His account is not wholly disconnected from the directions of discussion opened by established figures in the philosophy of mind. In many respects, though, Wittgenstein stands far from Dennett and Davidson; for example, he is not interested in advocating for any kind of naturalism. And when what he talks about is properly elaborated on in terms of the "soul", we need to take into account areas largely ignored by the philosophy of mind.

II. The Soul vs. the Mind. Later, Enters Plato

Here, I would like to stress the differences between the talk of *mind* and the talk of *soul*. My discussion, though strongly motivated by Wittgenstein, will only be partly dependent on him, that is, it does not primarily aim at presenting a scholarly, accurate reading. I will try to explain my reasons.

The German word "Seele", as Wittgenstein uses it, indeed covers both (English) semantic fields of the mind and the soul. However, that is just another way of pointing out that *both* these aspects cannot be reduced to what is rendered as "mind" in English. There are distinctive contexts in which the term is properly translated as "soul", and I would like to discuss these a bit. In fact, in the original 1953 translation of *Philosophical Investigations* (PI), G. E. M. Anscombe somewhat "mechanically" used "soul" to translate *Seele*. This may, inadvertently, show how strongly soul-tinged are even mind-related

contexts when we talk about humans. That would be an independent point, though, elaborating on Wittgenstein in directions only embryonically indicated by himself. It seems quite proper that Peter Hacker and Joachim Schulte, the editors of the 4th revised edition of Anscombe's English translation of PI, opted for a finer-grained capturing of the notion's ambiguity and changed Anscombe's "soul" to "mind" in several places (see Hacker and Schulte 2009, xivf). It is also worth noting that, exegetically speaking, the matter is less clear-cut than I present it here, and while Wittgenstein seems to be at least sometimes pointing to the fact that we mean (at least) two rather different and distinct things by *Seele*, at other times he is far from clearly resolving the internal tension of the concept. In his *Lectures & Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief* (LA), in which we hear his English-language voice, he uses "mind" and "soul" rather interchangeably, with "soul" featuring also in "mind-y" contexts, such as when he mentions the idea of "things going on in my soul – [such as] discomfort and knowing the cause" (p. 14), or the idea of psychology as "a mechanics of the soul" (p. 29).

However, Wittgenstein's struggles with the notion of *Seele* (or the struggles that his use creates for those who want to think *with* Wittgenstein in another language) indicate that there is something about the notion of the "soul" that often evades notice – notably, by philosophers of *mind* – and that Anscombe's original translation highlighted (if unintentionally). For, according to Hacker and Schulte, there is little more to the distinctive "soul" contexts – where the "soul" translation is properly kept – in Wittgenstein than what is, in their view, exemplified most clearly by his comment (PI 2009, II., § 23) that "Religion teaches that the soul can exist when the body has disintegrated." It is true that the traditional religious dualism of the body and the soul is an important language game we play with the word "soul"; yet, equally important is another context (which the editors do *not* comment on, despite *keeping* Anscombe's original solution): "[t]he human body is the best picture of the human soul." There are reasons why, in Wittgenstein, "soul" is sometimes an apt rendition of some of his uses of "Seele" that could, in another author, pass for "mind" quite easily:

> Anyone with a soul must be capable of pain, joy, grief, etc. etc. And if he is also to be capable of memory, of making decisions, of making a plan for something, with this he needs linguistic expression. (LW 1992, 67)

What Wittgenstein may be taken to draw our attention to here is the fact that the phenomena that range from the capacity for joy and grief, through intention or decision-making, to the capacity of speaking meaningfully, cover the *whole* ground of the *human* kind of life (cf. the above-quoted remark from LW 1992, 38). And human lives integrate *both* aspects towards which philosophers of the likes of Dennett refer without misgivings as matters of the mind *and* those that may be more troublesome –

where “soul” would be more appropriate, even when the context is not overtly religious or spiritual. Consider another such example:

> “Where do you feel grief?” – In my soul. – And if I had to give a place here, I should point in the region of the stomach. For love, to the breast and for a flash of thought, to the head.
>
> “Where do you feel grief?” In my soul. – Only what does that mean? What kind of consequences do we infer from this place-assignment? One is, that we do *not* speak of a physical place of grief. But *all the same* we do point to our body, as if the grief were in it. Is that because we feel a physical discomfort? I do not know the cause. But why should I assume it is a bodily discomfort?
>
> (…)
>
> I say that to the grief-stricken the whole world looks grey. But what was before my soul would in that case not be grief, but a grey world: as it were the cause of grief. (RPP 1980a, §§ 438f, 441)

Throughout the above quotation, I have replaced Anscombe’s (and Hacker’s and Schulte’s) “mind”, after some hesitation, with “soul”. My reasons are connected to the above observation by Wittgenstein that the human body is the perfect picture of the soul – something that we see and meet in this visible, perceptible world, in the shape of living human beings. We show pity to a sad person by stroking the person’s arm and looking into her eyes, but not because the arm or the eyes are the location of her sadness. In a manner of speaking, the whole person is the “location” of the sadness, but looking into the eyes is a way of establishing contact with the “whole person”. The soul of the person is that which perceives not (just) sizes, shapes, and colours around her but what the world is *like*; it is the soul that marks the difference between “the world of the happy man” (the world as it strikes the happy man) and “that of the unhappy man” (TLP 1972, 6.43). Note also the above tiny difference between the associative idea that the “place” in which the flash of thought is happening is naturally imagined to be the head, while grief – as that which is happening in “Seele” – could not be localised in any part of the body to which we would associate “the mind”. If it can be “localised” at all. (For some reason, it is easier to associate the mind with the head than with the stomach, while matters pertaining to the soul move in much more mysterious ways.)

The soul thus seems to be the matter of what is going on with the whole person, with her whole life – in which matters of thinking, perception, intention, and so forth are happening. But it is not simply matters of thinking, perception, intention, and so forth that comprise the human kind of life, while they

can be considered as comprising and characterising the life of a *minded*-being. In human beings, the contents of what it means to have a thought, or to intend something, are connected to concerns that may be related to things such as the (above-mentioned) immortality of the soul, or to faith as the state of the soul. (Thus, one might say that talking about people in terms of the soul means to talk about the whole of human life by drawing attention to one of its – several – aspects, which is exactly what Wittgenstein is up to, rather than presenting a doctrine of the human being as consisting of two substances; cf. Gurczyńska-Sady 2012, 83.)

Man is a minded being, just as many animals are. But what it means in people that they are minded beings might differ from what it means in animals: to coin thoughts about others, to act intentionally towards them, presupposes thinking about them and about these actions under descriptions that involve also moral and religious terms. We think and act towards others in terms of the concepts of our language, but human language is not simply a complex system of communication with signs that have references. It would not be what it is if it did not include humour, literature, jokes, and ways of expressing praise and blame, horror, or awe (cf. Rhees 1960). This is one of the reasons why, in humans, the life of the mind – the way that thoughts, memories, and intentions go – is also irreducibly and inevitably the life of the soul.

This is, however, not to say that the two are to be confused. Dilman (2005, 9–10, 20–1) notes that our talk of the *soul* concerns "that part of us, as flesh-and-blood beings, in which we respond to good and evil, and also to beauty", as opposed to the "capacity to think, feel, make choices, take decisions, etc." characteristic of the talk of the *mind*. He frames this discussion as motivated by Wittgenstein's remarks about the soul, but his attempt to *explicitly dis*entangle the talk of the "mind" from the talk of the "soul" is, to my knowledge, unique in Wittgensteinian philosophy (and certainly not common in philosophy generally). Thus, when we talk of the mind, we usually focus on matters of perception, consciousness, knowledge, representation, or embodied action. The talk of the soul is indispensable for us when dealing with *moral* or spiritual concerns. While in English (or in Czech), these observations sound like platitudes, German (and German-speaking philosophers, like Wittgenstein) cover the two territories using the same word, *Seele*, both showing its plasticity (its applicability in quite different language contexts [games?]) and making it easier to see the interconnectedness of these two territories.

Indeed, Wittgenstein mentions the fact that people often consider the soul *immortal*, and act accordingly. We do not need to take him as thereby committing himself to a metaphysics of a discorporate mind, though. The immortality of the soul is not a matter of whether the respect, in which living beings are functioning and conscious, exists independently of a mere body. Instead, this framing may rely on Platonic and Christian intuitions. In Wittgenstein's own writings and remarks about the soul, he does not dwell explicitly on these intuitions, but they feature prominently in the seminal works of the pioneering figures of Wittgensteinian ethics and philosophy of religion. Thus, D. Z. Phillips subscribes to the intelligibility and, indeed, the high moral significance of the idea of the immortality of the soul, but

not in the sense of the doctrine of survival (which he criticises). He takes the immortality of the soul to be the matter of life "lived in the light of eternity" and "seen under certain moral and religious modes of thought" (Phillips 1970, 49).

This clearly relies on the Platonic rejection of the idea that what harms the soul is the same sense of harm that concerns the body. However, rather than Plato's metaphysical doctrine about the nature of the soul or its indestructibility, the *moral* aspect of his conception of the immortality of the soul is alluded to. This take on Plato features prominently in the extant writings of Wittgenstein's student Rush Rhees. Rhees's commentary on Plato is very Wittgensteinian in spirit. In fact, the commentary on Plato is an in-depth reflection of the specificity of our *talk* of the soul:

> The chemical changes of the body at death (…) do not tell you what has "left" the body. They do not tell you what it is to be alive, or to feel joy or sorrow, to strive or to be dejected or to capitulate, or to love or triumph. There may be special bodily or chemical changes that accompany all these (…) But if we have understood these bodily changes, we have not understood what joy or sorrow or love or thinking are. (Rhees 2004, 80)

In this context, it is fair to point out that naturalist or functionalist philosophers of mind *are*, and quite legitimately, interested in the relevance of bodily chemical processes for the *mental events* of thinking, or of being in love. However, no study of these processes allows us to understand what it means to love, to be dejected, or to capitulate. Insights into these phenomena require understanding them in terms of their position in the human (form of) life, that is, one in which spiritual, aesthetic, and, most significantly, *moral* concerns play a central role.

Rhees's angle of reading Plato is heavily morally laden, and his take on Plato's doctrine of the immortality of the soul is, in fact, rather an attempt to explore the meaning of the notion of the immortality of the soul in a Wittgensteinian manner. Thus, in Rhees's view, the upshot of the doctrine is the observation that the soul need not fear the death of the body. The (functionalist, emergent) mind is quite straightforwardly a "thing" of sorts that can perish, from causes that lead to the death of the body, too. On the other hand, while there may not be much sense in talking about the presence of the soul where no human life is present (after death, for instance), this is not to diagnose the soul as a thing that perishes from the same causes as the body. Whether or not the soul is a thing, it *does* perish from certain causes, though. Souls *can* become better or worse; they *can* suffer. However, in the first place, the soul is "that which the body loses through moral degradation", says Rhees (2004, 94), arguing that, eventually, the only thing that can destroy the soul is its own evil. Here, the underlying background in Plato seems to be *The Republic* (610a). I am not sure to what extent Rhees's reading does proper scholarly exegetical

justice to Plato's own position. After all, Plato occasionally does advocate for the indestructibility of the soul, which for morally degraded souls results in suffering in the afterlife (e.g. *Phaedo* 113d–114c). The idea of the posthumous suffering of morally degraded souls who have survived, in this state, the death of their bodies, would likely be viewed by many Wittgensteinian philosophers with suspicion, or as confused. However, I believe that the contribution of Rhees's reading of Plato does not consist in Plato exegesis in the first place but rather in helping us to make sense, in a uniquely penetrating manner, of Wittgenstein's own comments about attitudes towards the soul, and especially of the way in which, for example, Peter Winch elaborated on these rather cursory passages.

Thus, while our bodies *are* pictures of our souls, it would be sensible to realise that (the talk of) "[t]he soul *accounts for* the life and actions of the body in a way in which the bones and the sinews do not" (Rhees 2004, 80). One reason is that the good or bad condition of our bodies, and of our minds, is a matter of their *health*, or welfare understood in a naturalised way. Relatedly, a wide range of scientists relying on empirical expertise can deal with issues of our health: from physicians to medical researchers, biochemists and physiologists, etc., and to psychologists, psychotherapists, nutrition specialists, and so on. All these specialists can offer us valuable insights and help regarding our bodily and mental health. And, to the extent that issues of mental health and welfare still represent something of a puzzle, compared to issues of bodily health more narrowly construed, these specialists can inquire into, and come up with fascinating findings about, the relations between the chemical and physiological processes in our bodies and the states and conditions of our minds. To be sure, not all that philosophy (or psychology, for that matter) discusses with regard to the matter of mind seems to await simply this kind of explanation (cf., for one thing, the debates about the "hard problem of consciousness", as raised by Chalmers 1996). However, compared to this, the soul is not a hitherto-unanswered question of biology (if only "in part") but rather not a question for biology at all, as Rhees (1997, 259–60) argues. He observes that the soul is not a "something" *based on which* "I have certain responsibilities or I am capable of good and evil – (…) having such responsibilities is a part of what is *meant* by having a soul (…) [a]nd similarly with 'being capable of good and evil'."

The condition of our bodies or minds can be considered or described as something that makes our lives good or bad in an at least partly instrumental sense: good physical or mental health is something that unlocks access to some "basic capabilities", to borrow Martha Nussbaum's term (cf. Nussbaum 2011). Here, the goodness of being in good health would at least partly consist of something other than the very being in good health. That is, good health is something that *makes*, or contributes to making, life good. On the other hand, the condition of the soul makes our lives good or bad in a sense different from health, or from welfare understood in a naturalised way. The goodness that is at play here is not any further external purpose for the moral endeavours of the soul, which would thereby have instrumental importance with respect to this purpose. In the Wittgensteinian context, perhaps the canonical version of this observation that morality does not have an external purpose can be found in Winch's "Moral

Integrity" (Winch 1972, 172). To be a good person, the soul is connected *intrinsically*. Not only does being a good person require a non-degraded soul but having a non-degraded soul simply is what being good or living a morally good life means. Whereas we *can* look at mental health as instrumental for the person's welfare.

And while one might conceivably argue that one is limited in one's capacity for good and evil if one is severely cognitively impaired and/or suffers from a devastating mental health condition, the Platonic undertone present in many Wittgensteinian writings leans towards the suggestion that the good life – the goodness of the soul – is largely independent of the presence of "external goods" in an Aristotelian sense, whether as prerequisites or as consequences. It is in reply to the Aristotelian criticism of the Socratic "a good man cannot be harmed" as a "cheap high-mindedness" that Gaita (2004, Ch. 11) reads Wittgenstein's deathbed statement, "tell them that it has been a wonderful life". The goodness therein indicated, Gaita argues, should be read as an embrace of absolute value, but also the veracity of this statement is such that the observable misery of Wittgenstein's life does not act as its direct measure in any relevant sense, partly thanks to the fact that such a statement can, *in this sense*, only be made in the *first person*.

The Platonic aspect of the Wittgensteinian account of the soul thus points in this direction: the soul is not a function of the organism, while the mind is, in a way. The mind can be healthy in a similar way to the body; the health of both is conducive to one's welfare. When something is wrong with the soul, it concerns the person's integrity (for instance) rather than their health. A mental disorder, being a health disorder, differs from a disorder of the soul. Mistaking a disorder of the soul for a mental health disorder prevents us from clearly seeing important things in the person's life. A disordered soul transforms one's life in a different way; it opens space for non-approving pity, for instance ("hate the sin, love the sinner").

Dilman (2005, 9–10) offers a tentative observation of the meaning of this distinction by way of contrasting the different things we may be said to lose. "Losing one's mind" is a phrase we use in cases when a "person's capacity to think" is lost and he "can no longer reason, judge and understand what is going on around him". On the other hand, we would use the phrase "losing one's soul" in cases "when a person becomes totally indifferent to moral considerations":

> A person whose life is steeped in evil could not think of himself as harmed by such a life, for he is alienated from the moral perspective from which he can appreciate this. Such a person is sometimes described as having "lost his soul" by those who are at one with the values which would give him such a perspective.

And the soul can not only be "lost"; it can also be "sold", or we *can* live our lives with our soul "destroyed", in ways that cannot be intelligibly said about the mind. What is happening to the person in these instances more often than not *cannot* be illuminatingly described in terms of what is happening to her as the psycho-physical unity. Thus, Wittgenstein (RPP 1980a, § 586) says:

> [I]t is quite intelligible if I say "My soul is weary,[2] not just my mind" [*Meine Seele ist müde, nicht bloß mein Verstand*].[3] But don't you at least say that everything that can be expressed by means of the word "soul", can also be expressed somehow by means of words for the corporeal? I do not say that.

And:

> Regret is called a pain of the soul because the signs of pain are similar to those of regret.
>
> But if one wanted to find an analogy to the place of pain, it would of course not be the mind (…), but the *object* of regret. (RPP 1980b, § 307)

III. Ailments of the Soul: Addiction, Environmental Grief

I will end by offering a few comments about what can be called "ailments of the soul". In the previous section, I tried to outline the Platonic framework that may help to flesh out a distinctive Wittgensteinian (if not Wittgenstein's) conception of the soul, highlighting the independently important character of the concept. I have focused mostly on the moral dimension of the talk of the soul. Yet, let us remember Dilman's observation, quoted above, that the soul is that in us which responds "to good and evil, and also to beauty". I think we can safely extend this list by one more item: the sacred. Then, the description of our life as the life of an ailing soul would refer not only to cases in which we are "steeped in evil" but also to cases in which our natural tendency or need to respond appreciatively to the presence of beauty or sacredness (but also to the otherworldly goodness of others) is compromised or blocked. If we cannot fill in the space for good, beautiful, and/or sacred "things" in our lives – whether because of our eroded capacity to *perceive* them or because of the *fact* that these values are being destroyed in the world out there – our soul can be said to be ailing or suffering.

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[2] I have altered the Anscombe translation, which has "tired" for "müde".

[3] Translating "Verstand" as "mind" is an interesting choice on Anscombe's part, by the way; "understanding" and "reason" would probably be more accurate, though I appreciate that speaking of these as "tired" or "weary" might strike the reader as difficult to comprehend.

To think in terms of the "ailment of the soul", it may be illuminating to think about some quite particular phenomena in our lives. One example is addiction. Drug-related problems are interpreted in many different ways, by philosophers too. The common ways of looking at addiction often obscure more than they illuminate. One of these is to characterise addiction as "a mundane health problem that should be treated scientifically", or to locate it in the breakdown of one's will or cognitive capacities (as an incapacity to see what drug use leads to). However, to the extent that there is a difference between the consumption, even regular and frequent, of a drug and a drug *problem*, it consists in the latter being a more complex problem one has with oneself and one's life. (For a more comprehensive exposition of this account of addiction and detailed criticisms of the common accounts, see Beran 2019.) Without blaming anyone for their addiction, it is important to see that it is a problem different in nature, one that is not "simply happening" to you in the way that a physical health problem (Covid-19) or a mental health problem (endogenous bipolar disorder) happens to you. It needs to be addressed differently. There are the needs of an ailing soul, needs of a spiritual kind, at play here, though the problem no doubt often grows out of particular social, economic, or cultural roots.

Another example is environmental grief. This is not simply a mental health issue, though it is sometimes described in these terms. Rather, it is a complex response to the degradation of something that is the object of pragmatic *and* moral *and* spiritual *and* aesthetic concerns: something that is valuable pragmatically *and* valuable in its own right *and* beautiful *and*, perhaps, sacred too. By destroying it, we harm our soul through our own evil, but our soul is also harmed by simply witnessing this destruction, even when we are not significantly complicit. That much is testified by the endemic presence of environmental grief or anxiety in young people. (For a more detailed account of environmental emotions and the soul, see Beran [2023a].)

That "the soul" refers to quite central areas of human life and to the most vital needs we as human beings have – needs that, if unfulfilled or neglected, lead to ailments the object of which can hardly be described, if not as "the soul", in less comprehensive terms than "life" or "person" – is indicated by this beautiful remark by Roy F. Holland (1980, 59):

> [B]y being brought into contact with forms of understanding and apprehension in which some good is to be encountered, some wonder to be seen, whether in nature or the work of human beings, a person might be helped to see the beauty of reality, helped to live more fully, helped to be glad he is alive. The expression knocking at my mind here is "nourishment of the soul".[4]

[4] Chappell (2022, Ch. 5) expands on Holland's observation in a more systematic manner. She identifies three "dimensions" in which the soul is given its nourishment (or "food", as Chappell puts it, more straightforwardly): "pleasure, interest, and reality": soul food needs to be, first, "pleasant or delightful or enjoyable"; second, it needs to be stimulating, intriguing, absorbing, in all possible ways the opposite of boring; third, it needs to enlarge our knowledge, deepen and correct our comprehension of reality, make us *think* (235–6). I do not have the space to engage in a discussion with Chappell here; after all, she admits that, quite typically, particular

Addiction and environmental grief are just two of the probably many kinds of "ailments of the soul". The relevance of the observations discussed in the above two sections for a philosophical reflection on these cases is, I believe, twofold. First, I am convinced that the sense in which it is not only meaningful but illuminating to think about addiction or environmental grief exactly in terms of the "ailing soul" responds to the Platonic roots of the notion of the soul, as opposed to any alternative conceptions of the soul, seeing it as a more metaphorical way of referring to the matters of the mind, and thus essentially reducible to the contemporary kinds of the discourse of the mind/the mental. Such a reduction may be misleading or useless. Second, the particular use that the Wittgensteinian tradition – making use of the potential implied by Wittgenstein, which then takes an explicit shape in authors such as Rhees, Winch, Dilman, or Gaita – makes of this Platonic heritage indicates ways of maintaining the independent, self-contained reality and value of the *talk* of the soul, without subscribing to any substantivist doctrine of the soul (e.g. a body–soul dualism)[5] or even getting entangled in discussions about these doctrines.[6]

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examples of soul food score high in one dimension, compensating thereby for a low score in another. It is, however, conceivable that one of these dimensions may be not only marked by a low score but altogether *absent* from how one experiences and understands the encounter with what is soul-nourishing for her. Nostalgic reminiscing about the lost (environmentally damaged) landscapes of our youth provides relief (admittedly temporary and somewhat surrogate) for our ailing soul, but not only it does not seem to enlarge our knowledge, we do not even approach this experience under a description in which these terms would play a role.

[5] To be fair, the Wittgensteinian philosophers' "grammatical" sidestepping of what they tend to dismiss as confused metaphysical positions (about the soul) can be seen as evasive and in fact as a version of reductive anti-realism in disguise. And it is by no means ruled out that closer attention to a more varied range of examples of religious practices could yield a particular version of a "realist notion of the soul" – that much is persuasively argued by McGhee (1996). A similar point about the inherent risk of the Wittgensteinian philosophy of religion not doing justice to the full variety of religious experiences and practices is made by myself (Beran 2023b) in an independent context.

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