

Introduction

Synopsis

Wittgenstein didn't leave us "philosophy"; he left a pathway for a more perspicuous intellect. This came about because he possessed abnormal cognitive traits that were hyper-sensitive to context.

With these tools, he discovered that language was predicated upon three *natural* phenomena: (a) the task being signified, (b) the social traits being implicated; (c) and the picture that emerged before the mind's eye. This discovery was revolutionary. It meant that language wasn't a function of a mental state or an "intention"; it was a function of how the intellect behaved in the speech act. Meaning was usage—or rather, the intellect, used.

This completely alters how we must think conceptually. And it changes how we must perceive arguments that use not only general words (like game and chair) but also scientific terms. It requires us to point people to what their intellect is doing in a speech act—called "therapy"—rather than focusing upon the premises in an argument. Not since Aristotle has the subject of critical reasoning been so revolutionized.

And it also radically changes how value judgments, religious beliefs and ethics are perceived to work. Each involves fitting a picture into a social context, a task that requires connoisseurship.

I will explain this view in the next fifteen (15) chapters, which are separated into three parts. The specific contents are as follows.

Part I: Wittgenstein

In Chapter 1, *Was Wittgenstein a Charlatan?*, I explore the philosopher's curious and paradoxical contemporary status. Two perspectives are presented. One that sees him as an overrated philosophical personality, and the other that sees him as a genius whose secrets are hidden but kept alive by devotees. Both of these pictures, I shall argue, are problematic.

In Chapter 2, *What Made Wittgenstein Special*, I present the thesis that Wittgenstein had a unique psychological status that gave him specific strengths and weaknesses. I isolate the particular strengths so that a better account emerges about his unique philosophical acumen. Two traits are paramount: abnormal pictorial reasoning, which caused reverberating (felt) aspects; and a meticulous sensitivity for the details of quality.

In Chapter 3, *Why Does It Matter?*, I argue that Wittgenstein's entire contribution to philosophy basically boils down to the repeated use, over and over again, of his abnormal sensitivities. I argue that understanding him requires that *we* develop better sensitivities for context. We need, in short, a stronger qualitative acumen. This sets up the rest of the manuscript, which shows how to develop better perspicuity for the subjects upon which Wittgenstein directed his skills, and upon which critical reasoning is centered.

Part II: New Foundations

In Chapter 4, *Picturing*, I present the first of the three core phenomena inherent in Wittgenstein's philosophy. I explain how mental pictures emerge in the background of the mind's eye during thinking. Cognitive scientists have recently started calling this "framing" and "metaphor." I not only show how picturing works, but how it can both direct and confuse us.

In Chapter 5, *Word Sense*, I present the second core phenomenon inherent in Wittgenstein's philosophy. To understand language, you must catch the "word traits" implicated by the social context. Because these traits routinely fluctuate with usage, language becomes not unlike a structured variable in its character. I introduce a helpful illustrative device to conceptualize this phenomenon. And I explore how the dynamic of fluctuation occurs.

In Chapter 6, *Meaning is Use*, I introduce a seminal discovery in Wittgenstein's thought. Building upon the last chapter, I show how the usage of words determines the traits in play in a social context. I do this using a step-wise investigative procedure that involves the term "bachelor." The point is to show two things: (a) how a step-wise case investigation can map a language game, and (b) that meaning is a natural occurrence rather than a philosophy.

In Chapter 7, *Language Tasks & Grammar*, I present the last of the three core phenomena inherent in Wittgenstein's philosophy. To understand language, you must find the intellectual task(s) that are being signified. When we isolate these tasks, what we are doing is finding the "grammar" of the utterance. I introduce a unique way to do this, and I also provide a short case study that involves reasoning with labels.

In Chapter 8, *The New Critical Reasoning*, I begin to put the three core phenomena into one theoretical system, as heretical as that may sound to Wittgensteinians. And I explain how this completely transforms the subject of critical thinking. Instead of being centered fundamentally upon debate or argument, we must now point people to confusions that occur in one or more of the three core phenomena. This is called "therapy," and I explain how it is performed.

Part III: Post-Analytic Thought

In Chapter 9, *Mental States & Behavior*, I explain how Wittgenstein's three core phenomena completely changes our understanding of the role of the mind in language and communication. I specifically repudiate the search for subjectivity and intention in the speech act. But I also distance this view from behaviorism. Wittgenstein showed us that the dispute between behaviorism and ratiocination with respect to language was always false. And lastly, I give a new account of what nonsense is.

In Chapter 10, *Definitions & Vernacular*, I explain how reasoning occurs with family resemblance terms. Particular attention is paid to the way the intellect behaves toward the social cluster. This chapter is meant to displace the idea of words having "definitions." They don't have definitions; they simply have the result of the way you chose to behave toward the cluster. There are five different intellectual behaviors that concern us: stereotyping, exemplifying, distinguishing, drawing sharp boundaries (issuing rules) and offering reference phrases. The chapter also explores when some of these behaviors might be more welcome than others.

In Chapter 11, *Philosophy & Conceptual Investigation*, I show how Wittgenstein's discoveries change abstract thinking. This chapter has grave implications for the way philosophy has been performed for centuries. Part of what is said here is that philosophy's history is confused because it did its labor while being unaware of the three core phenomena. I show this using some popular examples in epistemology that concern what knowledge is and when someone is said to "know." And I address the pitfalls of formalism and of being analytic for its own sake.

In Chapter 12, *Aspect & Insight*, I explain that a value judgment is nothing more than the desire to force a picture upon a social context. I discuss Wittgenstein's concept of an aspect sight. And I show how some pictures fit a social context better than others, which means that some frameworks and values are actually superior. I discuss three qualities that an aspect can have that would make it more appealing: congruence, fluency and profundity.

In Chapter 13, *Connoisseurship & Ethics*, I explain what connoisseurship is. It's an aspect that needs taught to be seen. And I show how training and expertise will transform one's judgment about competing aspects (frames). Finally, I show that ethics ultimately amounts to nothing more than a kind of connoisseurship. For all that ethics really is, strictly speaking, is the best way to arrange social behavior—the truth of which rests upon the depth of the connoisseurship.

In Chapter 14, *Religion*, I examine the grammar of God propositions. I contrast them with the behaviors that involve trust, induction and feeling. And I explain the role that pictures play in beliefs about God, as well as the role that aspects plays in miracles and in beliefs about an afterlife. And I end with a more nuanced typology of religious belief that overthrows the existing scheme for classification.

Appendix

The final chapter is placed in the appendix. I did this because it seemed to be a bit tangential in the mix. In Chapter 15, *Designation & Specimen*, I explain how reasoning works with rigid designators, scientific jargon and proper names. And I also explore the basic internal and external structure of social clusters. The unifying theme of the chapter concerns determinacy in language. The central conclusion is that there is no difference between these types of language games and any other: you still have to look for the intellectual tasks, the traits in context, and the picture in the background of the mind's eye. It's all the same method of inquiry.