

New Critical Reasoning

What Wittgenstein Offered

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1. PROMO

Ludwig Wittgenstein changed our intellectual lives. To understand how, we need to understand what he did to the subject of critical reasoning.

Wittgenstein didn't leave us "philosophy"; he left a pathway for a more perspicuous intellect. This was caused by a psychological condition that made him meticulous and hypersensitive. He could abnormally perceive three natural phenomena: (a) the social traits implicated in word use; (b) the task-functions signified in communication; and (c) the pictures that flash before the mind's eye. With this unique acuity, he then discovered something revolutionary: language was merely a reflection of how the intellect behaved in an act of speech. Meaning was usage—or rather, the intellect, used.

And this discovery changes everything. It revolutionizes how we must argue with one another and what we believe is "true." Instead of focusing primarily upon premises or facts, we must point people to how their intellect behaves—called "therapy." And this has radical implications for analysis, conceptual investigation, value judgments, political ideology, ethics and even religion.

This book is both an explanation of, and a blueprint for, the new critical thinking. Written for both a lay and special audience, it shows what Wittgenstein invented and the difference it makes for all of us.

2. MARKET

The book is written for a multidisciplinary audience. It fits three specific publics:

- Academics interested in language, philosophy, cognition & value judgment. This would include political science, linguistics, philosophy, humanities, and psychology.
- Wittgenstein studies.
- Critical reasoning courses (supplemental text).

Title: New Critical Reasoning: *What Wittgenstein Offered*.

Length: 70,000 words:

- 15 chapters.
- 8 tables.
- 57 greyscale illustrations.
—*conceptual in nature, nested into the text.*

Status: 100% Complete.

Peer Approval: *Faculty from multiple and relevant disciplines, having no affiliation with the author, have vetted this manuscript. It offers a reputable scholarly breakthrough in Wittgenstein studies that has wide application to many fields.*

Comparable Books:

- Daniel Kahneman, *Fast and Slow Thinking* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011).
- Steven Pinker, *The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language* (William Morrow & Company, 2007).
- Alfred J. Ayer, *Language, Truth & Logic* (Dover Publications, 1952).

Competitors:

- Stella Cottrell, *Critical Thinking Skills: Developing Effective Analysis and Argument (Palgrave Study Skills)*, 2nd ed., (Palgrave Macmillan 2011).
- John Verdi, *Fat Wednesday, Wittgenstein on Aspects* (Paul Dry Books, 2010).

3. WHY NEEDED

This book offers two large benefits. The first is that it makes Ludwig Wittgenstein accessible not only to a multidisciplinary audience, but to general readership. No longer is he something esoteric belonging to an island of scholars. Secondly, when a change occurs in the paradigm for critical thinking, it affects all fields. This book has content that not only concerns philosophers, linguists and politics scholars, but also any group that makes assertions (scientists, lawyers, graduate students, academics, etc.).

4. HOW IS IT UNIQUE

Wittgenstein Studies:

1. **Autism?** The book's biographical thesis is a breakthrough. It explains why Wittgenstein's functioning was so strangely pronounced in some areas of thinking yet challenged in others. This makes his work more accessible (explainable). No longer is he the genius who must be perpetually misunderstood. And nor is he someone we can understand by using a standard framework for judging "arguments." Both of these pitfalls are transcended.
2. **Unifying Theory:** This book unifies the disparate ways that Wittgenstein is seen. It silences disputes between behaviorists, cognitivists, pragmatists, naturalists, mystics, continentals, new and old Wittgensteinians—and even, lately, American v. European scholars.
3. **Three Natural Phenomena:** The most significant accomplishment may be the discovery of three recurring investigative concerns are at the heart of Wittgenstein's thinking: (a) the traits implicated with word use; (b) the task signified in communication; and (c) the picture that emerges before the mind's eye. No work on Wittgenstein has found a reduction like this.
4. **Method & Therapy:** Wittgenstein's method and "therapy" is summarized and explained unlike any other work in the field.

Critical Thinking:

1. **Assertion:** The book provides new methods for judging an assertion. The new approach involves perceiving what the intellect is doing in the act of speech. This requires introspection, subtlety, experience and sensitivity. Advanced critical reasoning therefore requires a *reflective* intellect.
2. **Problem Sets:** Problem sets help readers understand content as it is presented.
3. **Framing:** The book builds on the research of neuroscientists by investigating the role of framework in argument. It uncovers new ways to understand and confront "frames."
4. **Definitions:** The book displaces appeals to "definition." When people disagree about ordinary words, they don't hold different definitions; they simply offer a different vernacular (use). This is caused by what their intellect is doing to the social cluster—something participants usually do not see.

Linguistics:

1. **Objectivity & Subjectivity:** The book presents a new model for the role that mental states and “intention” play in language meaning. The model is a substantial upgrade over the way that many people, including lawyers, ordinarily conceive of this.
2. **Semantics & Pragmatics:** The book’s thesis about language meaning impacts Paul Grice’s distinction between “semantics” and “pragmatics.” Grice’s view becomes much less useful.
3. **OLP:** The book’s thesis has dire implications for a school of thought called Ordinary Language Philosophy. OLP may no longer be needed.
4. **Category Words & Polysemy:** The book offers a new conceptual structure for “family resemblance” terms. And this is useful not only for border cases (a beanbag as a “chair”), but also for polysemy (a “chair” as an executive).
5. **Word Sense:** The book offers a compelling view of language as a structured variable and shows how fluctuating traits have a conceptual structure or pattern.

Politics & Culture:

1. **Value Judgments:** The book offers a perspective that reorients the field of political science. Value judgments are not a matter of “personal preference”; they are a cognitive phenomenon no different from any other use of an aptitude. As such, there are better and worse efforts, like in any act of intelligence. The book sets forth neutral, “non-moral” criteria for showing the merit of competing value judgments.
2. **Political Ideology:** The book has a striking discovery about “political ideology.” Rather than being something good for “democracy,” it is, in truth, akin to a social pathology. It involves the collective act of trying to manipulate what framework (aspect) dominates a social context. The book provides a new and unique perspective for how to confront this problem.
3. **Ethics:** The book shows that frameworks are not subjective or personal. They require training and a good eye for the matter in question. Ethics is the nothing more than framework-appreciation. This builds upon my work in *The Flexible Constitution*. Connoisseur judgment is given detailed treatment.
4. **Religion:** The book’s approach to religious belief is novel. Beliefs are not based upon “faith”; they are based upon the behaviors of relationship. And the best loyalties run to felt aspects derived from the experience of life. This doesn’t mean that the God question is contrived. Quite to the contrary, it means that what separates a good and bad belief about God is how remarkable the intuited aspect is about our form of life. And this applies equally to those who declare themselves to be atheist. The book also provides a new way to classify religious belief.

5. THE AUTHOR

Sean Wilson is the author of *The Flexible Constitution*. He is a college professor, with tenure, in the U.S. His primary areas of research are Ludwig Wittgenstein and legal theory. He holds a Ph.D. and a J.D. and is currently an associate professor at Wright State University.

Table of Contents

Preface	xi
Introduction	xiii
Part I: WITTGENSTEIN	
Chapter 1: Was Wittgenstein a Charlatan?	3
1. Charlatan?	3
2. Genius?	6
Chapter 2: What Made Wittgenstein Special	9
1. Undetached Thinking	9
2. Qualitatively Fastidious	11
(a) Disorganization & Simile	12
3. Hyper-concentration	13
4. Conclusion	14
Chapter 3: Why Does It Matter?	17
1. Neuroanatomy & Insight	17
2. Perspicuity	18
3. Critical Reasoning	19
Part II: NEW FOUNDATIONS	
Chapter 4: Word Sense	23
1. Ordinary & Extended Sense	23
2. Conclusion	25
Chapter 5: Meaning is Use	27
1. Dominant Specimens	27
2. De Facto and Uncertain Specimens	28
3. Ineligible Specimens	29
4. Universals	30
Chapter 6 Task Functions	33
1. Words as Deeds	33
2. Examples	34
3. The Connection	35
Chapter 7: Picturing	39
1. Introduction	39
2. Pictures Versus Tasks	41
Chapter 8: Therapy	43
1. Mapping Traits	43
2. Isolating Task Functions	44
3. Pictorial Therapy	44

4. Examples, Not Theories	44
5. Goals	45
6. Challenges	46
 Part III: POST-ANALYTIC THOUGHT	
Chapter 9: Meaning & Intent	51
1. Subjectivity	51
2. Objectivity	52
Chapter 10: Definition & False Dispute	57
1. Family Resemblance	57
2. False Disagreements	58
(a) Lay Vernacular	58
(b) Quintessential Vernacular	59
(c) Subfamily Vernacular	60
3. Boundary & Purpose	61
(a) Sharp Boundary	61
(b) Reference Phrase	63
Chapter 11: Conceptual Investigation	65
1. “Knowledge”?	65
2. Extension	67
3. Formality	68
4. Context	69
Chapter 12: Aspect & Framing	71
1. Ideology	74
2. Superior Aspects?	74
3. Aspect Change	75
Chapter 13: Connoisseurship & Ethics	79
1. Experience	79
2. Moralizing	80
(a) Inauthentic Grammars	81
(b) As Aesthetics	81
Chapter 14: Religion	83
1. Grammar	83
(a) Guilt	83
(b) Trust	83
(c) Love & God	84
2. God Pictures	85
3. Aspect Sight	86
(a) Miracles & Silence	86
(b) Afterlife	87
 APPENDIX	
Chapter 15: Designation & Specimen	93
1. Family Resemblance	93
(a) Internal Structure	93
(b) Polysemy	95
2. Labels	95
3. Rigidity	97

(a) Markers & Atoms	98
(b) Tautology & Math	99
4. Proper Names	100
(a) No Separation	100
(b) Separation Required	101
Table of Language Tasks	103
Table of Problems	105
Notes	111
Index	
About the Author	