The Grammar of Politics: Wittgenstein and Political Philosophy

Cressida J. Heyes

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Ludwig Wittgenstein's work has been widely interpreted and appropriated by subsequent philosophers, as well as by scholars from areas as diverse as anthropology, cultural studies, literary theory, sociology, law, and medicine. *The Grammar of Politics* demonstrates the variety of ways political philosophers understand Wittgenstein's importance to their discipline and apply Wittgensteinian methods to their own projects.

In her introduction, Cressida J. Heyes notes that Wittgenstein himself was skeptical of political theory, and that his philosophy does not lead naturally or inexorably toward any particular political position. Instead, she says, his ideas motivate certain attitudes toward the "game of politics" that the essays in this volume share: some contributors argue that political theory should use Wittgensteinian methods, others apply Wittgenstein's philosophy of language to figures and debates in areas of political theory (such as post-Kantian genealogy or Habermas's foundationalism), and still others reveal the ways Wittgenstein's concepts inform political foci as diverse as anthropomorphism, defining social group membership, and the nature of liberty.

"All the contributors," Heyes writes, "take their lead from Wittgenstein's attempts to break the hold of certain pictures that tacitly direct our language and thus our forms of life. Making these pictures visible as pictures reveals the hitherto concealed structure and the contingency of certain ways of thinking about politics."

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