Many contemporary social and political theorists who work with the ideas and methods of Wittgenstein's later philosophy owe a debt to Hanna Pitkin's seminal work, *Wittgenstein and Justice*. In it, Pitkin provided an early statement about the usefulness of Wittgenstein's later philosophy in delineating a new approach to methodological and substantive issues in the social and political sciences. In using a pre-existing philosophy to derive implications on society and politics and their study, Pitkin is not alone. She follows a long line of political philosophers from J.S. Mill (utilitarian consequentialism) to John Rawls (Kantian deontology). Nevertheless, Wittgenstein's later philosophy is unlike utilitarianism and Kantian deontology in two related ways. Firstly, with the exception of *Lecture on Ethics*, Wittgenstein's later philosophy is bereft of direct comments on ethics or politics. And even in his *Lecture on Ethics*, Wittgenstein writes about a visionary form of ethics that is more likely a product of solipsism than of a consciousness of the irreducibility of collective life. Secondly, as moral theories, both utilitarianism and Kantian deontology are generally normative theories that prescribe, but even if one were to limit oneself to deriving methodological implications from Wittgenstein's later philosophy, one seems to be violating his anti-theoretical calls against explanation in favour of pure description in philosophy. In the *Philosophical Investigations* he writes, “Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; in the end it can only describe it. For it cannot give it any foundation either. It leaves

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everything as it is.”4 Thus, unlike Mill and Rawls, it is incumbent on Pitkin and any other Wittgensteinian social or political theorist to more carefully and explicitly justify how their political thought is derived from Wittgenstein’s later philosophy. Further, compared to Wittgensteinian philosophers of social science and history, Pitkin, as a normative political philosopher, has the doubly difficult task of justifying her derivation of both methodological and moral implications from Wittgenstein’s later philosophy.

Hence, the puzzle before us is exactly how Pitkin managed to derive normative implications from what seems to be a purely descriptive and perhaps nihilist philosophy and whether she adequately justified those derivations. The second section below will be dedicated to a close reading of Wittgenstein and Justice in service of answering our first question and the third section will then analyse and evaluate Pitkin’s derivation of normative ideals or principles from Wittgenstein’s later philosophy in service of answering our second. This paper will first argue that while Pitkin’s normative methodological principles follow in Wittgenstein’s post-analytic epistemology, Pitkin’s presentation of her social thought in Wittgenstein and Justice does not follow in his general post-foundationalist eschewal of building first-order theories. Secondly, this paper will also argue that while Pitkin makes good arguments against conservative readings of Wittgenstein, it is unclear whether Pitkin’s leftist Arendtian reading of Wittgenstein is any more correct given his anti-theoretical tendencies and the fact that Pitkin leans heavily on secondary authors for her normative political commitments. So, while Wittgenstein’s later philosophy does indeed have interesting implications for thinking about society and politics, accepting and embracing Wittgenstein’s methods and ideas need not exclusively entail left civic republican views such as Pitkin’s.

We will see in more detail in the sections to follow how Pitkin’s Wittgenstein and Justice is motivated by generally anti-positivist and anti-conservative attitudes. In fact, Pitkin sees the former as being closely related to the latter. To Pitkin, the domination of scientific positivism in social and political science has led not only to an erroneous view of social and political reality, but also to the increasingly detached academic observer who becomes conservative by default. And so, while Wittgenstein indeed does not offer any new arguments or any new empirical data to help overcome this malaise, he does offer a new perspective or a new way of seeing the social and the political that can be mobilised against both positivism and conservatism. This is important, Pitkin believes, because there is much in the social and political world which we do