

CRITICAL NOTICE

Wittgenstein

A Guide for the Perplexed

Mark Addis, Continuum, London, 2006, pp. 176, £ 14.99

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The vast majority of introductory volumes about Wittgenstein's thought that continue to regularly appear almost month by month, are members of some particular series or other about the notable figures of the past, which most philosophy publishers now have on their lists. Series of of this kind with titles like 'Famous Thinkers', 'Great Minds', or 'Philosophical Guides', *etc.* are, generally speaking, directed mostly towards undergraduates with the aim of providing some form of professional guidance to their interpretations of the major works of philosophy. It has become an accepted fact that Wittgenstein, along with figures like Aristotle, Hume and Kant, deserves a place in any series of this kind, regardless of the relevance which his thinking, early or late, may be thought by many to have for 'current debate' within what would be broadly regarded as the analytic tradition.

It is surely worth asking why Gilbert Ryle and J.L. Austin, who are often allied with Wittgenstein as 'philosophers of ordinary language' in the most general terms, and whose work within that grouping is sometimes regarded as being of equal importance to his own, have failed to obtain a similar role in philosophical publishing. Leaving aside the widespread interest in the life of Wittgenstein as an individual, they by comparison have come to be seen, rightly or wrongly, as insular figures who do not deserve the important historical status to be granted to only a select few. As an illustration of this point, Martin Gustaffson, in his introduction to a new volume of essays on the work of Austin (1), reminds us that this is the first collection of its kind for almost forty years. A new book about Ryle is now also long overdue (2).

The contrast with Wittgenstein is stark. Taking, for example, the publisher of the present book under review, Continuum has a considerable number of Wittgenstein volumes in a series entitled 'Studies in British Philosophy'. There is at least one Wittgenstein book in a series on 'Philosophy and Theology'. Chon Tejedor is the author of 'Starting with Wittgenstein' in another series. There are

two books in a series of 'Readers Guides' to philosophical works, one on the *Tractatus* by Roger White and another on the *Philosophical Investigations* by Arif Ahmed, not to mention at least one book, on Wittgenstein & D.Z. Phillips, which is not a member of any particular series at all. The present book forms part of yet another wide-ranging series of 'Guides for the Perplexed' which tackles not only the thinking of individual philosophers, but also topics within philosophy, theology, politics, and in human life more generally, which are described by the publisher as 'especially challenging' (*cover blurb*).

There is inevitably going to be a considerable overlap between the issues covered in the various introductory volumes on Wittgenstein which belong to these different groups, just as their different authors are more than likely to have some differences of opinion, integral to the subject, over substantial questions of exegesis and interpretation. This is all to the good. Mark Addis's book is described on the cover as 'An excellent overview of all facets of Wittgenstein's work' by one reviewer, Brian Bix of Minnesota, and is provided with an even more glowing presentation from the publisher: we are invited to agree that 'This is the most thorough and fully engaged account of Wittgenstein available - an invaluable resource...' This would be a strong claim to make about any volume on Wittgenstein, and it is hardly surprising if the reader should find that in this case it fails to be established, not because there is anything especially wrong with the book itself, but just because in a field which is often regarded as saturated, the same ground has already been covered equally well, if not in some cases rather better than it is covered here.

This opinion need not be revised, as the publisher's blurb suggests, because the book includes a treatment of Wittgenstein's contribution to aesthetics and philosophy of religion, subjects admittedly not normally encountered in elementary accounts of his philosophy. Certainly, although the space allocated to these issues amounts to all of 12 pages, Addis does provide a good general description of the terrain, and mentions most of the associated issues. The relevant chapter entitled 'Epistemology, Religion and Aesthetics' is the final one in the book. The account of religion begins by remarking (*Ibid.*, 142) that Wittgenstein once claimed to see every problem from a religious

point of view, adding that he clearly respected sincere religious conviction. Quoting the passage from *Culture and Value* (*Ibid.*, 145), in which Wittgenstein remarks that 'a religious belief could only be something like a passionate commitment to a system of reference', Addis stresses the common interpretation that this in Wittgenstein's eyes is a commitment which can only be understood by those who actively make it, and who therefore participate in the 'form of life' appropriate to the religious believer. What Addis refers to as 'Wittgensteinian fideism', is the view that religious practices and beliefs are only truly intelligible to those who participate in the practices, or who adhere to the beliefs, with the consequence that religious faith as such is not open to question, and cannot be shown to be incoherent or mistaken by non-participants.

This interpretation in its most extreme form would sever religious belief from any kind of rational criticism, and inevitably raises the question whether it is an expression on the part of Wittgenstein of what religious belief ought to be, as distinct from what it actively has been, or even of what, from the perspective of some participants, it is now: historically, religious belief, at least in the West, and certainly during the Victorian era, was allied by a considerable number of believers to specific causal claims about the activities of a Deity who acts *in* the world. Indeed, if this had not been so, it is difficult to understand how any general dispute between Science and Religion could possibly have arisen. Although Addis does not put it in this way here, this points to the important fact that an individual's expression of a religious conviction cannot be separable from his own interpretation of what it is to *believe* ; and what this amounts to can evidently vary from person to person, at least in the West, where belief as we understand it today is regarded as a matter of individual commitment. Where religious belief is not seen in this way, as it clearly is not when considering the communal religious rituals and practices of a remote jungle tribe, for example, this idea of individual commitment as a form of *decision* can play a far less important role.

This would certainly be the case for the kinds of rituals indulged in by James Frazer's natives, whose practices are clearly misinterpreted by him, on Wittgenstein's view, as misguided

attempts to achieve positive results like the coming of the rains during a period of drought. As Addis expresses it, on Wittgenstein's reckoning 'magic and religion should not be regarded as seeking to characterize and control supernatural powers but rather as the expressions of attitudes and emotions' (*Ibid.*, 146). The 'Remarks on Frazer's *Golden Bough*', occasional comments in *Culture and Value*, and the 'Lectures on Religious Belief', by which Addis presumably means the *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Philosophy and Religious Belief* ed. C Barrett, are as he states the sole sources, leaving aside the merely anecdotal, of Wittgenstein's reflections on religious belief ; yet from this relatively sparse material has arisen a highly influential and controversial point of view. Much the same could be said about Wittgenstein's views on ethics, which Addis discusses briefly *via* Wittgenstein's famous 1929 'Lecture on Ethics' in which he makes the claim that any attempt to write or talk about Ethics or Religion is to run against the boundaries of language.

On the question of Wittgenstein's treatment of aesthetics, Addis points out that on Wittgenstein's view 'a certain form of aesthetic appreciation is rendered possible and given meaning by the whole culture of a period' (*Ibid.*, 151), adding, surely not without justification, that Wittgenstein's claims about the decline of taste in his own era introduce a potential tension into his remarks, because judgements of this kind invoke the idea of aesthetic standards that are independent of particular cultural phenomena and practices. More generally, it can sometimes be difficult to see Wittgenstein's reactions to certain aspects of the culture of his time as little more than a personal prejudice. Consider, for example, his preference for Mozart and Beethoven as 'the sons of God', and his intolerance of any music later than Brahms, and that even in Brahms he could 'begin to hear the sound of machinery' (as quoted by Ray Monk in *Ludwig Wittgenstein The Duty of Genius*, 13). More positively, Addis refers to Wittgenstein's rejection of the idea that causal explanation has any relevance to aesthetics. The main point here is that 'If aesthetics were regarded as part of psychology the study of it would concentrate upon the causal mechanisms which link mental phenomena to their behavioural manifestations with the aim of establishing

generalisations about these connections' (*Ibid.*, 152). On the contrary, Wittgenstein's view is rather that, as Addis puts it, 'Aesthetic explanations account for reactions through enhancing understanding of the work of art itself and generally they have a descriptive form' (*Ibid.*, 153). These explanations can importantly involve reference not merely to aesthetic standards, but can also succeed by indicating previously unseen connections, and this is highly relevant to the more general Wittgensteinian idea of achieving surveyable representations of the phenomena under consideration (*Investigations* § 122).

The main feature of this final chapter is its account of epistemology as discussed in *On Certainty*, and Addis begins by pointing out that Wittgenstein took a keen and lasting interest in G.E Moore's articles 'A Defence of Common Sense' (1925), 'Proof of the External World' (1939), and 'Certainty' (1941), in which he claimed to *know* with certainty the truth of certain common sense statements about, for example, the existence of his own body amongst many other material things, and about the existence of the earth for many years before he was born. Wittgenstein's response to Moore is that claims to knowledge in these cases are unjustified because these are not things that we can genuinely be said to *know* : we do not accept them on the basis of evidence. They are instead claims which are *certain* because they point to the *background* against which we ordinarily make the kinds of day-to-day knowledge claims to know this and that, that are part of everyday life. The main problem has been to spell out just what their being part of this background comes to. Addis gestures towards a 'non-propositional' solution *via* the work of Avrum Stroll when he sees 'Absolute Foundationalism' reflected in three different and equally important ideas:

One is that certainty is something primitive, instinctual or animal
(*OC*, § 475), Another is that certainty is manifested in human action
(*OC*, §§ 110, 196 and 204). The third is that certainty derives from
training in communal practices (*OC*, §§ 170, 304 and 509).

Addis arguably manages to provide a comprehensive survey of the most important features of Wittgenstein's thinking on this subject within the six pages he devotes to it.

In the 19 pages which comprise the penultimate chapter on Wittgenstein's later 'Philosophy of Mind', 10 pages are allocated to a section subtitled 'Private Language', and in order to appreciate the flavour of Addis's thinking about this subject, it would be worthwhile quoting a number of passages which capture the essence of his approach:

Arguably Wittgenstein's views about rule-following were an essential part of the conceptual framework of the private language argument. The key notions of rule-following for present purposes are those pertaining to the distinction between being in accord with a rule and following a rule. Wittgenstein's conception of following a rule is notable because it is central to the question of whether it is possible to follow a rule privately. It is essential to inspect his handling of this issue due to the role that it plays in the private language argument (*Ibid.*, 125).

Following a not entirely perspicuous account of two features of an ordinary and quite unproblematic notion of *privacy* incorporating the idea of something that people can keep to themselves but need not, there occur a couple of sentences which act as a bridge to the important statement of Addis's conclusions about private language which are to follow:

Wittgenstein thought that private rules cannot be followed if they are taken to be rules which are in principle incomprehensible to anyone else apart from the speaker. It is impossible for these rules to have an expression in public language (*Ibid.*)

This precedes Addis's account of what he takes to lie at the heart of what has in the secondary literature become known over the last fifty years or so as *the private language argument*:

The problem with private rule-following is related to the objectivity of according with a rule. Whether a person is according with a rule in

practice is not set by whether the person thinks that he is conforming. Rather, it is determined by that which is considered as conforming to a norm of regularity in practice. (This norm of regularity is related to behaviour which is public.) In order for a rule to be really followed there has to be a norm of regularity in practice. Therefore it is impossible to follow rules in private as there is no technique of conforming with a rule and a person's comprehension of the rule would not be shown in practice
(*Ibid.*)

Seven pages further on, and after a number of winding detours down side-roads exploring ideas like that of a *private object*, not always clearly expressed, and which are not in any event essential to the presentation of his main conclusion, Addis provides a restatement of the 'argument':

A private ostensive definition is a private rule justifying the employment of a sign. In these cases of private rule-following there is no technique of conforming with a rule because exhibiting a private experience (in the way in which the private linguist understands privacy) is not possible. Thus these instances of rule-following in private are ones in which it is possible only for the speaker to know whether they are being followed and thus they are basically privileged access rules. It is impossible to differentiate between the correct employment of a private rule from the usage which appears to be correct to the speaker. The above argument indicates why there is no connection of the required kind between a sign and the privileged access state (§ 258).
(*Ibid.*, 132).

Even if we accept that this is roughly what § 258 is actually saying, it would be very difficult to prove from the way in which Addis presents these points here, that what Wittgenstein is actually doing is anything other than *defining* a private language in order to 'reveal' that it bears no relation whatsoever to those important features which surround our normal sensation talk.

But if Wittgenstein's description of the main features of a private language, is consequent upon divorcing it from everything which helps to provide our ordinary talk about our sensations with the significance that it has for us, it might be better to conclude, not that he is intending to provide us with a definitive *proof* that a private language is demonstratively 'impossible', but rather that he is inviting the reader to agree with him that what is being proposed by introducing this very 'idea' is lacking in any proper *sense*. We consequently have no genuine conception of what a language of this kind could possibly be like. It is a significant feature of Addis's presentation that, despite its evident shortcomings, it succeeds in pointing the reader towards this conclusion.

Nevertheless, there are puzzling aspects of Addis's account that deserve at least to be noted. Drawing our attention, for example, to the two important features by which Wittgenstein defines a private language in § 243, *viz.*, that the words of this language are to refer to what can only be known to the person speaking, his immediate private sensations, so that another person cannot understand the language (3), Addis states that 'this latter claim is not giving a fundamental characteristic of a private language', and this is explained as follows:

That is, a language which is incomprehensible to anyone but the speaker or peculiar to an individual speaker does not have to be a private one (*Ibid.*, 126).

Reiterating that Wittgenstein's 'aim in the private language argument was to demonstrate that a language of this kind is not possible', Addis casually remarks that the incomprehensibility he allows for in a language which is not private - and so public - enables 'Wittgenstein to distinguish between the trivial and the important traits of the concept of privacy' (*Ibid.*); and this suggests that what he is really talking about after all here is incomprehensibility *in fact*, which in this context is the last thing one would have had any reason to assume that he had been referring to. This entire section on private language would have benefited from substantial pruning and rearranging of the material.

Things are rather better with the five pages devoted to 'Classifying Mental Concepts' within this chapter, where Addis discusses Wittgenstein's wide-ranging treatment of psychological concepts

including his way of distinguishing between sensations, images and emotions, and his method of dealing with intentional attitudes including believing, intending and meaning. The idea of *pretence* is mentioned in relation to the distinction between first and third person psychological utterances, and the usual distinction is drawn between Wittgenstein's 'expressive' account of the former, and the 'behavioural' grounds employed in assessing the latter; although by far the more important way of expressing this point is to distinguish between the *criterionless* aspect of first person sensation ascription and the behavioural *criteria* required in making third person sensation judgements. The section ends with a brief discussion of aspect-seeing where 'what was seen in the usual sense had not altered but what was seen in the sense of being allied to thinking had' (*Ibid.*, 124.) Addis describes the change here not as one of perception but of attitude.

Mark Addis is at his best in this chapter within its initial section with the general subtitle 'Perspectives'. Here he concisely and usefully describes, for the benefit of those unfamiliar with the surrounding terrain, the approach that Wittgenstein adopts to the relationship between our ordinary agent-centred understanding of psychological phenomena, and the kinds of physical explanations of these phenomena that we inevitably find in a scientific context:

Wittgenstein was opposed to the position that mental phenomena must be identical with brain states. In contrast, he thought that although some mental phenomena are correlated with specific brain states, (*PI* §§ 376 & 412) it is possible that mental phenomena are present without accompanying brain states of a specific kind. (*Ibid.*, 118)

Quoting the notorious *Zettel* § 608, in which Wittgenstein states that it seems to him perfectly natural that there is no process in the brain correlated with associating or with thinking, Addis arguably has the proper measure of Wittgenstein's method here when he quotes § 1063 of the *Remarks on The Philosophy of Psychology, vol. 1*, in which it is stated that 'Thinking in terms of physiological processes is extremely dangerous in connection with the clarification of conceptual problems in psychology' (*Ibid.*) In short, the existence or non-existence of physical processes upon

which mental phenomena may be shown to be causally dependent, is not actually the issue of utmost importance to Wittgenstein, who is really intent on pointing out how easy it is to become trapped by a way of thinking which would see a continuity between our ordinary unreflective talk about 'minds and bodies', and the content of our scientific discoveries. The primitive dualistic *picture* which is encouraged by this adherence to our 'intuitions', is what gives rise to the idea that because this picture offers a tentative and primitive *account* of the nature of the 'entities' which our psychological concepts are used to 'describe', it must be replaceable by a sophisticated scientific description revealing the *real* causal, and so physical sources of these phenomena. Addis argues:

It is sometimes mistakenly claimed that both the weaker and the stronger versions of his view that mental phenomena exist without associated brain states commits him to the rejection of a highly successful regulative principle of the neurosciences that there must be a causal explanation of mental processes. What Wittgenstein actually maintained was the philosophical point that concepts of brain states play no role in our explanation and application of mental terms. There are no conceptual connections between brain states and mental phenomena (*Ibid.*).

Consequently, even if it is reliably established that certain mental phenomena are *in fact* causally dependent on certain states of the brain, it would not follow for Addis's Wittgenstein that 'statements about mental phenomena must be descriptions of brain states', since that view depends upon an adherence to the misleading picture that Wittgenstein repudiates when he is led to conclude that because first person present tense psychological utterances are criterionless, they are not properly referred to as descriptions at all. The point here is a strictly philosophical one. Everything that the neuroscientist wants to say in his non-philosophical moments about the brain and its relation to human psychology, can proceed naturally, given that Wittgenstein's aim is purely to persuade the philosopher to dispense with the misleading picture in question.

There are undoubtedly those who would argue, contra Addis, that by claiming that there are no conceptual connections between brain states and mental phenomena, he is confusing what is *necessary* with what is *analytically* true. As a consequence, he may be thought to be missing the crucial point that in revealing the *essence* of certain psychological phenomena, the scientist is providing us with necessary truths which are nevertheless known *a posteriori*. But Wittgenstein's answer to this could very well have been that in identifying what is necessary with what is true in all possible worlds, the philosopher can be proven guilty of attempting to smuggle in by the back door the same misleading picture which presumes that our scientific discoveries are continuous with our unreflective talk about 'minds and bodies', the very picture that underlies the overwhelming temptation on the part of the philosopher to believe that science tell us what is *really* so. This is reflected in the current tendency to think of psychological terms as ultimately 'designating' complex physical states with explanatory causal roles. Addis does not actually go into these wider issues here. The presentation of his main point may to some readers even seem naive in its simplicity:

Wittgenstein would have thought that replacing ordinary psychological concepts with brain state ones would have the consequence that it would no longer be possible to adequately account for human action. He held that scientific causal explanations could not make human action intelligible... He thought that psychological concepts were employed to explain behaviour in a teleological and not a causal fashion (*Ibid.*, 119).

Whilst this is mainly true, it leaves open the question whether and in what way reasons may or may not legitimately be claimed to be causes. Neither is it certain, as Addis asserts, that if human behaviour were necessitated by causes it would cease to be intentional. The reason for this is that to show that a certain piece of behaviour is causally dependent on certain physical processes, is not by itself to show that the person whose behaviour this is need be acting under any kind of constraint. It depends entirely on how 'necessitated' is being used. Furthermore, it is not clear either whether Wittgenstein would have agreed that Addis's 'brain state concepts' have the primary function of

'explaining, predicting and controlling behaviour', because in correlating the occurrence of brain states with psychological phenomena, the investigator is revealing the physical processes without which those psychological phenomena could not be understood *in fact* to be possible ; and, once again, these processes in themselves are not 'controlling' behaviour in any sense which would suggest that the agent has no choice but to act as he does. It would instead be consistent with Addis's approach here to claim that the two forms of 'explanation', causal and teleological, are functioning at different levels for quite different purposes. Certainly, there are philosophers who would take this viewpoint to be excessively naive; but it would then be incumbent upon them to show that in entertaining its rejection, they have not allowed themselves to become subject to the very misleading picture that Wittgenstein is clearly attributing to them.

In a chapter on 'Aims and Methods of Philosophical Therapy', we are advised that Wittgenstein's method 'varies in its effectiveness in different areas of philosophy', and Addis naturally asks whether this is the result of 'some failing in the method itself which manifests itself more sharply in some philosophical fields than others or by differences between philosophical areas or indeed by some combination of those factors' (*Ibid.*,91). Given that the 'limitations of Wittgenstein's philosophical methodology should be recognised', 'Serious reflection on this matter should lead to a more nuanced approach to the significance of Wittgenstein's philosophy' (*Ibid.*). Generally speaking, Addis may appear to be correct in surmising that 'Wittgenstein's methodology appears to be most effective for the philosophies of language and mind', and 'operates least satisfactorily in the fields of aesthetics, ethics, political and social philosophy and jurisprudence' (*Ibid.*, 95). Given, however, as he advises, that Wittgenstein wrote relatively little or even nothing at all in some of these areas, as conventionally understood, it may be wondered what point is being achieved by making the comparison at all. Certainly, Addis makes some attempt towards the close of the chapter to explain why Wittgenstein's method might be least successful if applied to these disciplines, but the results are at best inconclusive.

Addis is rather more successful in assessing the kinds of objections which have been

made to Wittgenstein's methodology in general, and here he cites the familiar opposition amongst 'mainstream' philosophers to a widespread rejection of theory in philosophy, with the consequent complaint that what was once regarded as 'the Queen of the sciences' should now be reduced to a trivial pursuit. Furthermore, it is often argued that although Wittgenstein claims to reject a theoretical perspective on philosophical problems, his practice is at odds with the therapeutic approach he espouses. These objections are, mostly, easily overturned, and in answer to the main one it is quite obvious that it simply begs the question since, as Addis argues, the sources of what are regarded as philosophical problems are as complex as the confusions which Wittgenstein's method is able to unravel. The charge that Wittgenstein employed philosophical theories in some sense in his work, is less easily answered, and would actually be accepted by a proportion of practitioners who would see themselves adopting a generally Wittgensteinian approach, so this is evidently an 'objection' that can only be responded to case by case. At the beginning of this section on the 'Scope of Philosophical Therapy', Addis provides us with what has by now become a fairly conventional account of developments within the analytic tradition since the initial turn away from an acceptance of Wittgenstein's method in some form or other actually began:

Wittgenstein's influence has declined in the last 25 years or so against a widespread acceptance of the continuity between philosophy and science. Arguably this trend at least partially stems from the work of Quine and his influence in promoting new sorts of linguistic philosophy. Such movements have been complemented by developments in theoretical linguistics by Chomsky and his followers. The picture offered here is that problems of how linguistic creativity is possible are tackled by the creation of a theory of meaning for language. Scientific investigations aided by philosophical analysis will demonstrate that language is a complex system of rules that are tacitly known to speakers' (*Ibid.*, 91).

To which of course must be added the work of Saul Kripke in *Naming and Necessity* and

also in his later *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* which is more obviously directed towards Wittgenstein's thought. The remainder of the chapter is devoted amongst other things to spelling out in more detail in a section entitled 'Methodologies' how Wittgenstein's therapeutic method actually works, and here Addis draws a distinction between two interpretations of the term 'perspicuous representation' (*Investigations* § 122) found in the secondary literature. The more conventional one sees this representation as 'produced by the clarification and the classification of the grammar of words' (*Ibid.*, 88), and a newer version, which he finds in Gordon Baker, sees it as focussing 'upon its connection with seeing aspects of the use of words' (*Ibid.*, 89). On Addis's view, the aim of achieving such a representation is 'to persuade one to see things in a different way' in order that some specific philosophical problem might be resolved. More generally, 'philosophical problems are deep because they are rooted in the ways that human beings think and the same difficulties in different forms will recur endlessly' (*Ibid.*, 78), a point which captures the background to Wittgenstein's aims in adopting a therapeutic approach. Addis also raises the interesting question of how Waismann's conception of philosophy as presented in 'How I see Philosophy' relates to Wittgenstein's own, given that it is referred to as 'our method'; and here Addis identifies a connection Waismann makes with psycho-analysis, one with which many philosophers including Peter Hacker would clearly not like to think that Wittgenstein had really been associated. Generally speaking, this chapter is a useful guide to Wittgenstein's therapeutic approach to the problems of philosophy.

Beginning with the picture provided by Augustine at the opening of the *Philosophical Investigations* of 'the essence of human language', Addis proceeds in his chapter on 'Philosophy of Language and Mathematics' to describe exactly what is wrong with it:

The connection between words and their meanings is established by ostensive definition and this form of definition is the foundation of language. Words are mentally associated with objects (*PI*, § 32) which has the consequence that learning the public language of the linguistic community is only possible if an individual already has a private language (*Ibid.*, 97).

Referring the reader at this point to the treatment of private language which he provides later in the book, Addis fails to mention that the sense in which Augustine's child is pictured as being able to develop a language for himself 'privately', *viz.*, a sense in which he is presented as being able to 'name' those *already* identifiable items of different *kinds* in the world around him, is clearly not the same sense as that introduced in § 258 and surrounding passages in connection with the traditional 'private language argument'. The only connection between the two cases rests in a common use of that not clearly defined expression 'private ostensive definition'. In the former case, it is used by Addis in connection with the invention of a language which is public in principle, the language of a traditional 'born-Crusoe', whereas in the latter Wittgenstein uses it in a context where it is not intended to have any application: the 'private language' of § 258 is already *defined* as one which is capable of being understood solely by its speaker, so that we can have no real conception of what it could be like. In the former case, what we are being presented with is a misleading *picture*, one which leads to an infinite regress of explanation: the born-Crusoe, like Augustine's child, has experiences which are *intrinsically* meaningful, *i.e.*, that have so-called '*representational content*'.

This point is important if we are to understand why Baker and Hacker should find it feasible to think of a born-Crusoe who is able to invent a language for himself based on the principle that how a language is learned is irrelevant to the fact that it is exercised. They are merely adhering to the traditional Humean principle that 'whatever is conceivable is possible', in that wide sense which Wittgenstein is allowed to exploit in considering solitary cavemen, *etc.* who have, in this sense, private languages. Addis considers this question later in the chapter when he refers to the 'controversial issue...whether a solitary individual could follow a rule' (*Ibid.*, 105):

The received view is that it is highly doubtful whether a lifelong Crusoe would engage in activities which would appropriately be termed rule-following. Some commentators, such as Baker and Hacker ..., oppose the standard position in holding that such a lifelong Crusoe could follow his own rules agreeing over time with himself in judgements

and behaviour. Even if not psychologically possible it is conceivable that a lifelong Crusoe should employ some kind of language and follow rules in doing so (*Ibid.*, 106).

The problem with both Addis's 'received view' and its denial on the grounds that we can imagine a born-Crusoe inventing a language for himself, or being born already in possession of one, is that the issue at stake here is presented as if it were some kind of obscure question of *fact*, when it is not really a question of fact at all. But that does not mean that the genuine question at issue is in some sense 'conceptual', for if that were so, it may be assumed that an application of the Humean principle at stake would provide the answer to it that Baker and Hacker supply. The truth of the matter is that the 'received view' and its denial are not views in which Wittgenstein could have displayed any interest. The point of introducing the notion of 'ostensive teaching' in § 5 is to draw our eyes away from the misleading picture that Augustine's child who can 'think only not yet speak' (§ 32) incorporates. On the other hand, there is a plain question of fact whether a child could be born already armed with a 'language of thought' in this broadly Augustinian sense, and here it may be surmised that the existence of feral or wolf children, reared by and behaving very much like wolves, provides the *basis* for an answer to how empirical research can proceed.

Addis continues his initial discussion of Augustine's child with the claim that, on Wittgenstein's view, 'the Augustinian picture idea that all language is descriptive does not adequately account for the whole range and complexity of linguistic practices' (*Ibid.*, 97), with the consequence that this picture 'cannot be relied upon as a basis for developing linguistic theories which apply to language in its entirety'. Whilst this is surely not a particularly good way of expressing what Wittgenstein is about, it is less important than Addis's claim that the builders' language game with its evident limitations 'describes a language which is correctly characterized by the Augustinian picture (*PI*, § 2)'. The problem here is that when Wittgenstein asks us to imagine 'a language for which the description given by Augustine is right', it is not at all clear how, and in what way the builders' language serves to satisfy his requirement. Certainly, it is common ground

to many commentators, including Addis, that 'Wittgenstein thought that the linguistic philosophy of Frege, Russell and the *Tractatus* was underpinned by the Augustinian picture of language and criticized these views through an attack on this picture' (*Ibid.*); but this is a commonplace that it is not at all easy to see properly reflected in these initial passages, although it is admittedly one which it is much easier to find an application for later on in passages like § 65.

Addis takes the opportunity to discuss Wittgenstein's wide notion of *grammar*, which encompasses 'many phenomena which are ordinarily not regarded as grammatical at all' (*Ibid.*,98), and stresses Wittgenstein's famous statement in *Zettel* § 331, that 'there really are four primary colours' is misunderstood if it is thought to offer an *explanation* of how we are able to use colour terms. The distinction between *semantics* and *pragmatics* as it relates to Wittgenstein's work is dealt with in a way which, it would now generally be agreed, can act as a very useful means of clarifying the method employed by thinkers who espouse the importance of ordinary language, as distinct from those belonging to 'mainstream' analytic philosophy:

A facet of Wittgenstein's view that there was no clear boundary between semantics and pragmatics was his claim that the meaningfulness of a sentence is not solely determined by syntactic and semantical considerations. He thought that whether or not a sentence is meaningful is frequently dependent upon the circumstances of its utterance... Wittgenstein disagreed with the position that a sentence can be understood and yet its function remains entirely obscure (*Ibid.*, 101).

In a section entitled 'Rules and Form of Life', Addis presents us with an almost inevitable criticism of Saul Kripke's 'sceptical' reading of *Investigations* § 201, although his presentation of the point is not one that Kripke would accept:

Kripke argued that what counts as correct rule-following is not determined by the rule itself but by what the community accepts as following it...Correct cannot be defined independently of what this community either accepts or

can be persuaded to regard as acceptable. This is a very strong version of the position that it is not possible for an individual to follow a rule in the absence of a community. It is widely agreed by scholars that Kripke's views are dubious as interpretation of Wittgenstein's remarks on rule-following (*Ibid.*, 106).

But the point of adopting what would be described in Kripke's case as an anti-realist 'account' is that it should have no effect on what we would ordinarily want to say, for example, about the calculations of the mathematical genius who shows everyone in the community to be *wrong*, a point which Addis seems almost to acknowledge in his reference to what the community can be persuaded to regard as acceptable. In that respect, Kripke would not see himself providing a 'definition' of what rule-following is, as distinct from revealing that because we cannot *justify* our 'belief', say, that the future development of the series must already be present in some sense in the act of grasping the rule, we have to find another form of 'justification' based on the circumstances which surround our ordinary practices. This will reveal the 'assertion conditions' underlying our normal claims as distinct from the 'truth conditions' we previously believed that we could supply. Kripke's Wittgenstein differs from Wittgenstein in cleaving to the misleading *picture* that he sees himself being unable to *apply*. The acceptance of this picture, which is believed to encapsulate what it *means*, for example, to *grasp* the rule, is what underlies, on Wittgenstein's assessment, the rejection of a 'truth-conditional' account in favour of one based on day-to-day, practical 'assertion conditions'.

The remainder of the chapter discusses agreement in judgements, forms of life, and those 'general facts of nature' which 'impose limitations upon which concepts are natural or unnatural to all human beings...' (*Ibid.*, 110). The four pages devoted to mathematics stress Wittgenstein's radical view of mathematical propositions as grammatical rules, as norms of representation, his rejection of the idea that mathematics requires foundations, and equally of an 'epistemological' perspective from which one might ask how mathematical 'objects' can be 'known'. This chapter covers a considerable amount of ground and, as has been clearly shown, almost inevitably raises a large number of questions relating to the interpretation of the original texts. But this is arguably what an introductory volume like this ought to be doing.

The chapter on 'The Middle Period' is a fairly concise account of what Wittgenstein was about after he returned to philosophy from 1929 onwards. Beginning with the paper 'Some Remarks on Logical Form', Addis tackles Wittgenstein's increasing dissatisfaction with logical atomism and his confrontation with the colour exclusion problem. Mentioning *Philosophical Remarks*, *Philosophical Grammar* and The 'Big Typescript', Addis identifies the concept of a 'hypothesis relation' which, for example, 'relates statements about the material world to those about sense data', or which couples 'behavioural descriptions to other minds' (*Ibid.*, 64).

This leads to a discussion of Wittgenstein's dalliance with 'methodological solipsism'. According to Addis, Wittgenstein 'thought that the only experientially derived propositions that could be rendered in terms of instant and decisive verification were abstractions from first person present tense psychological statements in which the first person no longer had a role', so that 'claims about other person's experiences must be produced out of statements about their behaviour' (*Ibid.*, 64). At this period, however, Wittgenstein's ideas were developing rapidly so that by 1932-3 he began to feel that he could no longer regard statements about other minds as 'hypotheses which were incapable of conclusive verification': they became logical constructions derived from behavioural evidence. By the time he dictated the *Blue Book*, however, Wittgenstein had come to reject the solipsistic idea that he as an individual had the only *real* pain:

The first point to note is that the solipsist has invoked ordinary grammatical rules to support his position and simultaneously denied the intelligibility of certain grammatical contrasts which are essential to the application of these rules....an expression such as 'my pain' can only make a meaningful claim in a language where it can be contrasted with 'his pain'....It is not a significant expression in a language where 'my pain' is equated with 'there is pain'....In effect the solipsist has undertaken what might be thought of as a grammatical sleight of hand as the sense of his claim that he has the only real pain presupposes the grammatical rules which he professes to reject. (*Ibid.*, 75).

As Addis expresses the point further on, 'Wittgenstein argued that although the solipsist claims to have discovered the metaphysical truth that the world is indeed identical with his experiences once again all that has really happened is that a new form of grammatical rule has been recommended (*Ibid.*, 76). The point finds a more sophisticated presentation in *Investigations* §§ 398 - 402, particularly in the example of the 'visual room' which has no owner: 'Inasmuch as it cannot be anyone else's it is not mine either' (§ 398). What *appears* as a form of discovery about a new *object* is actually described as a grammatical movement misinterpreted as the observation of a quasi-physical phenomenon. Yet this can innocently be regarded from the perspective of Wittgenstein's new method, not as the result of some flash of metaphysical insight, but as a 'new way of looking at things' like a new way of painting (§ 401).

In addition to fairly brief discussions about the concepts of a *language-game* and *family resemblance*, and how these gradually developed during the 'Middle Period', Addis spends rather more time with what has sometimes been regarded as the rather difficult notion of *criteria*, and its role in the later philosophy:

The most widely accepted interpretation of criteria which propounds a theory is the non-inductive evidence view. It holds that the concept links semantics and epistemology....a criterion holding between two propositions makes a contribution to the sense of both propositions, and the criteria relation is distinct from one of entailment..this position maintains that if a proposition criterially supports another proposition and it is known that the former proposition is true, then it is fully justified to claim to know that latter proposition is true (*Ibid.*, 74).

Discussing the vexed question of 'other minds', Addis concludes that 'If mental states do have criteria, which can be perceived then it is certain that when the criteria for a specific state obtain the state is present and that when they do not, the state is absent' (*Ibid.*). What Addis does not mention is that most of those interpretations of this concept which had found a place in the

secondary literature during the 1960's and 1970's, tacitly assumed the 'validity' of that highly misleading picture of 'other minds' which Wittgenstein came to discard along with his acceptance that human behaviour is the expression of what is 'inner'. For if we do directly see the anger, the pain or the joy in someone else's behaviour, then even if we do allow for the possibility of pretence, the very idea that there should exist some kind of *epistemological* gap between 'inner' and 'outer' is already undermined.

Addis is surely correct to conclude in this chapter that it is a 'misleading oversimplification' to regard the *Blue and Brown Books*, as Rush Rhees evidently did, as preliminary studies for the *Philosophical Investigations*. Identifying a clear continuity in certain areas, a number of reviewers came to believe that because the *Blue and Brown Books*, as Addis puts it, 'are the most accessible of Wittgenstein's writings', their lack of 'stylistic polish' and apparent presentation of underlying reasons and justifications for his conclusions, made it seem that they could be regarded as clearer expressions of what in the *Investigations* is often presented in a much less prosaic and more oracular way. But not only does this neglect how integral the expression of ideas in the *Investigations* is both to its content and to Wittgenstein's method, but it also fails to take account of those instances in which ideas prevalent in the former works, especially in the *Blue Book*, fail to make an appearance later on, or appear to some degree revised. A case in point is the famous reference on page 12 of the *Blue Book* to the conceivability of what in effect is a born-Crusoe, an idea quite at odds with at least one aspect (*Investigations* § 32) of the 'Augustinian Picture'.

There are two chapters devoted to the *Tractatus* in this book, and the first, 'Charting the Bounds of Sense', is concerned with how, in Addis's words, 'Wittgenstein's critique of language sought to differentiate sense from nonsense or alternatively put to demarcate the limits of sense' (*Ibid.*,35). Quoting 4.1212, 'What *can* be shown *cannot* be said', Addis mentions the reference in 4.121 to propositions which exhibit or *show* 'the harmony between language and reality'. The more famous kinds of propositions which attempt to say what can only be shown are for Addis laws of nature (6.36), the ethical and everything 'higher' (6.42) and the propositions of the *Tractatus* (6.54).

Because we do not understand the logic of our language, most of what has been written about philosophical matters is not false but nonsensical (4.003). Dealing principally with the logical aspects of the book, this chapter describes Wittgenstein's relations with Frege and Russell insofar as their contributions to the development of logic are germane to the *Tractatus*. It also describes the possible reducibility of mathematics to logic, Russell's paradox and the theory of types, a commitment to anti-psychologism by all parties, Russell's theory of descriptions and the picture theory of meaning.

The orientation of the second chapter on the *Tractatus* is towards the metaphysics of the work, and here Addis surmises that Wittgenstein's anti-psychologism was a contributing factor in his inability to identify the *objects* of the *Tractatus* with, for example (as suggested in the *Notebooks 1914-1916*) patches in the visual field, because, as he later put it to Malcolm, as a logician it was not his business to sully himself with what were purely empirical matters (*Ibid.*, 41). A relatively short account is provided of 'New Wittgensteinian' interpreters and their evidently 'non-metaphysical' rendering of the work in terms of an interpretation of what can really count as 'nonsense' (*Ibid.*, 51), and this partly emerges from a discussion within a section entitled 'The Early and the Later Work' concerned with identifying continuities and discontinuities in the conception of the nature of philosophy. Given, however, that Addis stresses Wittgenstein's rejection of logical atomism on the grounds that he came to question how elementary propositions could be logically independent if he could discover no satisfactory analysis which might resolve the 'manifest incompatibility of apparently unanalysable statements' (*Ibid.*, 56), it seems unlikely that Addis would stray very far from a more 'traditional' outlook on the metaphysics of the *Tractatus*. This is partly confirmed by his description of the later development in the Middle period of 'propositional systems' to solve the problem, like propositions of colour or number, an idea that develops in the *Blue Book* into 'multiple language-games', before it achieved the status of that prodigious diversity of language games found in *Investigations* § 23.

This section on 'The Early and the Later Work' cannot really be said to answer Addis's initial question 'whether there is fundamental continuity or whether the later writings constitute a radical break from the earlier ones' (*Ibid.*, 51), and apart from pointing out both that Wittgenstein 'rejected

what he saw as the dogmatism of his early work', and that 'there are substantial continuities and discontinuities between the early and the later work', almost invites us to conclude that the question itself is misconceived. *Yes*, of course there are radical differences between the viewpoint of an early solipsistic metaphysics, and the later anthropocentric outlook in which ordinary human practices act as the fundamental arbiter in making decisions on questions of a philosophical kind. *No*, there is no fundamental divergence on the perspective adopted, early and late, concerning the ultimate linguistic source of philosophical perplexity. It all depends on where the emphasis falls, and if it falls very much in favour of the latter claim rather than the former, this might provide a motivation for saying that the anthropocentric perspective is ultimately the dominant one, serving even to undermine, as 'New' interpreters suggest, the 'metaphysical' nature of the claims that for 'Traditional' readers, are seriously propounded in the early work.

There is almost bound to be some overlap between a number of the questions asked in this final section and those raised in a more general way in a 20 page Introduction which is split fairly evenly between an initial 'Overview' of Wittgenstein and his place in 20th Century philosophy, a 'Biography', and a final assessment of 'Wittgenstein's Philosophical Influence'. There is nothing in this chapter which adds significantly to the philosophical content of those that follow, although Addis does mention a misuse of Wittgenstein's notion of a *language-game*, by Jean Francois Lyotard in his *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, with which most philosophers who are unfamiliar with 'Continental' philosophy will be quite unaware (*Ibid.*, 17).

Whilst on the surface Mark Addis's guide may be readily rated by the cynic as 'yet another' introduction to Wittgenstein's philosophy to join the ranks of the many which regularly appear, and the majority of which, he rashly believes, sink quickly into cold oblivion - and no one, he will tend to claim, could possibly take time to study them all - a detailed reading of the book reveals just how wide-ranging it is, and how many interesting questions it raises. From this point of view, it more than satisfies the hope mentioned by Wittgenstein in his Preface to the *Investigations* that it should be able to stimulate readers to thoughts of their own.

ENDNOTES

- (1) *The Philosophy of J.L. Austin*, ed. Martin Gustafsson and Richard Sorli, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3.
- (2) This state is likely to be remedied with Julia Tanney's *Re-Thinking Ryle* in preparation, following upon her *Rules, Reason and Self-Knowledge* on similar themes, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Due January 2013).
- (3) Edward Craig in 'Meaning and Privacy' famously argues that the 'so' is inappropriate because the conclusion does not follow from the premise (in *Blackwell Companion to the Philosophy of Language*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997, 127). If, however, we adopt a more pragmatic approach, then we can regard Wittgenstein here as speaking quite loosely: from what he evidently regarded as a solipsistic perspective, the question of the existence of other 'selves' simply does not arise, so that the mere supposition that 'another person' could not understand the language is little more than a figure of speech.

As do most philosophers, Derek McDougall fondly remembers the publication of his very first paper. This was in MIND in 1972. He has, however, continued to worry whether Gilbert Ryle's comment that "the matter is stated well and almost interestingly" referred more to the quality of its treatment rather than to Ryle's aversion to the nature of its subject (religious belief). Other papers have appeared in organs including PHILOSOPHY AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH, PHILOSOPHIA, THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH (2008) PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS (2010) and ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY (forthcoming late 2012-13).