

**McGinn, Marie**

**Wittgenstein and the Philosophical Investigations.** (English) [Zbl 0878.03002](#)  
Routledge Philosophy Guide Books. London: Routledge. x, 216 p. (1997).

The book gives a comprehensive interpretation of *Ludwig Wittgenstein's* "Philosophical investigations", which were first published in 1953. The philosophy of mathematics is no topic in this classic of analytical philosophy. Among other things Wittgenstein develops his language-in-use theory, his language-game conception, and his denial of any private language. Very often, however, Wittgenstein uses examples from elementary mathematics, such as the addition of numbers or the development of a series. This is especially the case in his considerations on rule-following, treated in chapter 3 of the volume under review which covers the paragraphs 138-242 of Wittgenstein's book. First of all the author criticizes the reconstruction of a skeptical argument in Wittgenstein which *Saul A. Kripke* presents in his "Wittgenstein on rules and private language" (Oxford, Blackwell, 1982). By analyzing sentences like "I mean addition by '+'" or "Jones means addition by '+'", Kripke arrives at the result that there is no fact about me (or Jones) that distinguishes between my meaning a definite function by "plus" or anything else or even nothing. The author rejects this reconstruction. She emphasizes Wittgenstein's idea of grammatical investigations which can be seen as a reflection on how the use of language is going on, i.e. on our ordinary language games. Wittgenstein's questions are, "what does it mean to know how a given series can be extended?", or, "what does it mean to follow a rule, or to think that one follows a rule?".

Reviewer: [V.Peckhaus \(Erlangen\)](#)

**MSC:**

- [03A05](#) Philosophical and critical aspects of logic and foundations
- [03-02](#) Research exposition (monographs, survey articles) pertaining to mathematical logic and foundations

**Keywords:**

[Understanding](#); [thinking to understand](#); [rule-following](#); [language game](#); [analytic philosophy](#)