

KRIPKE ON WITTGENSTEIN

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Phil Language

“Wittgenstein’s argument as it struck Kripke” (p. 627)

1. The puzzle

The “quaddition” (“quus”) function:

$$x \oplus y = \begin{cases} x + y & \text{if both } x \text{ and } y \text{ are less than } 57 \\ 5 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

... if I am now so confident that, as I used the symbol ‘+’, my intention was that ‘68 + 57’ should turn out to denote 125, this cannot be because I explicitly gave myself instructions that 125 is the result of performing the addition in this particular instance. By hypothesis, I did no such thing. But of course the idea is that, in this new instance, I should apply the very same function or rule that I applied so many times in the past. But who is to say what function this was? In the past I gave myself only a finite number of examples instantiating this function. (p. 628)

The Kripkenstein skeptical argument

1. There are no facts about me (such as facts about my past usage) that determine that my word ‘+’ means addition rather than quaddition
2. If there are no facts about me that determine that my word ‘+’ means addition rather than quaddition, then it’s not true that I mean addition rather than quaddition
3. Therefore, it’s not true that I mean addition rather than quaddition

2. Mental states?

“I mean addition by ‘+’ because I intend to do so”

3. Community usage?

“I mean addition by ‘+’ because I intend to mean the same thing as others in my community, and other have in the past added 68 to 57”

4. Method for adding?

“I mean addition by ‘+’ because I’ve always used certain method with ‘+’: adding with carry in column format in base 10”

5. Dispositions?

“I mean addition by ‘+’ because I’m *disposed* to give answers in accord with addition rather than quaddition”