Wisdom's Wittgenstein

Abstract

In 1921, John Wisdom (1904–1993) became a member of Fitzwilliam House, Cambridge, where he read philosophy and attended lectures by G. E. Moore, C. D. Broad, and J. E. McTaggart. He received his BA in 1924, after which he worked for five years at the National Institute of Industrial Psychology. From 1929 to 1934, Wisdom was a Lecturer in the department of logic and metaphysics at the University of St Andrews and a colleague of G. F. Stout. After the publication of his book *Interpretation and Analysis* (1931) and five articles on "Logical Constructions" in *Mind* (1931–3), Wisdom became a Lecturer in Moral Sciences in Cambridge and a Fellow of Trinity College. This gave him the opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge of Wittgenstein's philosophy. Since nothing by Wittgenstein but *Tractatus* appeared in print for decades, Wisdom's publications of these years were—mistakenly—read as portents of the new ideas of Wittgenstein himself. The publication of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* in 1953 brought with it, among other things, the fall of Wisdom's popularity.

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1. The Early John Wisdom: What is Philosophical Analysis?

Wisdom began to establish his own philosophical views as a student of his Cambridge philosophy professor, G. E. Moore. In his first book, *Interpretation and Analysis* (1931), Wisdom underlined that the significant part of Moore's work involved attempts to find the answer to questions like 'What do we mean when we say: "This is a blackboard"?' (p. 8).

In a similar way, Wisdom maintained that the business of analytic philosophy is to obtain a clear and precise grasp of a phrase's meaning.

A central theme in *Interpretation and Analysis* was Jeremy Bentham's notion of fictitious entities. Preserving individual perceptions and corporeal substances in his ontology, Bentham declared all other items 'fictitious entities'. Such are the 10 predicaments of Aristotle, but also the colour red. Similarly, Wisdom held that persons, animals, and unicorns are individuals, while events and qualities are not. However, concepts, such as 'nations' are both individuals and fictitious entities.

Significantly, in that book, Wisdom argued against the claim that language is the subject-matter of philosophy. He admitted that 'one of the best clues to the analysis of facts is the sentence which expresses it' (1931, p. 64). However, at the same time, Wisdom underlined: 'I don't really want to say that every philosophical proposition is bad grammar. Mr. Russell says Mr. Wittgenstein says that. If he does, I think he is wrong' (p. 78). In other places, Wisdom was more explicit: 'The work of an analytic philosopher is not a work on language. Indeed, all his results could be stated in many other systems of symbols' (p. 15).

Following one of his other teachers, C. D. Broad (1924), Wisdom considered analysis to be only a part of philosophy. Traditional ('speculative') philosophy is on par with analytic philosophy. In fact, one of the tasks of an analytical philosopher is to clarify the propositions of traditional philosophy. Wisdom dedicated to this task a special book, *Problems of Mind and Matter* (1934), in which he explored three notions G. F. Stout used in his book *Mind & Matter* (1931): the "mental", the "material", and "psychology".

In the early 1930s, Wisdom specifically discussed the relationship between language and reality in a series of five articles published in *Mind* that were considered for years to be 'the most whole-hearted of all attempts to set out the logical assumptions implicit in "philosophical analysis" ' (Passmore 1966, p. 365). In them, Wisdom again insisted that he is not a linguistic philosopher. He is analysing sentences only since 'every sentence suggests an analysis of the facts it expresses. … Philosophy is concerned with analysis of facts.' (1931–3, p. 50, n.)

The difference between the analytic philosopher and the translator is derived from their diverse paraphrastic *intentions*. In the same way in which the statement of the liar doesn't differ from the statement of the ignorant, the philosopher and the translator often say the same—but they intend different things. The fact that the analytic philosopher's task closely approximates that of the translator reveals that the philosopher's aim is not to learn new facts but to acquire a deeper insight into the ultimate structure of the facts.[1] Such analysis is worth doing, in Wisdom's view, since we may know the facts perfectly well but possess no knowledge about their essential structure whatsoever (pp. 169–70). The latter claim was directed, in particular, against the members of the Vienna Circle inasmuch as while Wisdom rejected metaphysical entities such like 'sense-data', and explored the 'world' as a metaphysical concept, at the same time he embraced metaphysics as a discipline studying the ultimate meaning, the structure of things.

This assumption partly explains why, instead of Wittgenstein's claim that 'propositions' 'picture' facts, Wisdom preferred to say that language is 'sketching' facts: 'My description of what I mean by "sketching" must therefore run "the relation which *would* be similar to Mr. Wittgenstein's picturing *if* he accepted 'sentence', instead of 'proposition' " '. (pp. 56–7 n) Wisdom justified this position with the argument that when we write one sentence twice, we write two sentences, while the fact these sentences 'sketch' is one and the same. His next argument was that while 'a sentence requires a speaker, a picture ... requires an artist' (p. 62).

In summary, it could be said that before Wisdom returned to Cambridge in 1934 and started attending Wittgenstein's class, he was already a well-trained philosopher with a well-formed theoretical position. Wisdom studied under G. E. Moore, was a colleague of G. F. Stout (Moore's and Russell's lecturer in Cambridge) for five years, and even wrote a book on him (Wisdom 1934). Wisdom also showed interest in the theory of language of Jeremy Bentham and wrote a book about him as well (Wisdom 1931). As a result, he developed a philosophical understanding that remained with him till his last days. It became a key point of his form of analytic philosophy that also endured his encounter with Wittgenstein's philosophy that was to come.

Historically, one could say that in his early 30s, Wisdom was strongly connected with the British philosophical tradition. Similarly to Stebbing, he felt that Moore and Wittgenstein

belong to two distinct philosophical traditions—arguably, the British and the Germanophone philosophical tradition.[2] Wisdom demonstrated this in a clear and distinct way in a paper he read at the Moral Science Club in Cambridge on May 31, 1935, on 'Moore and Wittgenstein', in which he stated: 'Moore recommends "What is the meaning of the word so and so?" ... In contrast Wittgenstein recommends: "What is the grammar of the word so-and-so?" '. (Nedo 2012, p. 266) In other words, Wittgenstein was more interested in a logical analysis of language, Moore in analysis the language of philosophers.

One can make a further historical claim saying that the difference between Moore and Wittgenstein was an implication of the influence of Frege's obsession with language on Wittgenstein and the lack of such an influence on Moore and Wisdom. To be more explicit, in his *Conceptual Notation* (1879), Frege set up a programme for ideal language that was adopted by Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* as a method but developed by him in a new, idiosyncratic way (Milkov 2017). Significantly, Wittgenstein's obsession with language was decisive for him also after he returned to Cambridge in 1929. He clearly stated this in a remark of 1931:

> People say again and again that philosophy doesn't progress, that we are still occupied with the same philosophical problems as were the Greeks. But the people who say this don't understand why it has to be so. It is because our language has remained the same and keeps seducing us into asking the same questions. (1980, p. 15)

Moore and Wisdom were not obsessed with language this way. They didn't believe that the puzzles of philosophy came out because language repeatedly misled us in a fatal way.

2. Wisdom's 'Linguistic Turn' of 1934

As we have already mentioned, in 1934, Wisdom returned to Cambridge as a Fellow of Trinity College. In the next two years, he regularly attended Wittgenstein's class. The effect of this encounter is well-seen in the paper 'Philosophical Perplexity', delivered at the Aristotelian Society, in which Wisdom noted: 'I can hardly exaggerate the debt I owe to him [to Wittgenstein] and how much of the good in this work is his—not only in treatment of this philosophical difficulty and that but in the matter of how to do philosophy.' (1936, p. 36 n) Importantly, Wittgenstein was also glad to have Wisdom in his class (McGuinness 2008, p. 234). Be this as it may, already in these years the two philosophers laid emphasis on different

points. As Wisdom put it, Wittgenstein 'too much represents [the statements of philosophers] as merely symptoms of linguistic confusion. [In contrast,] I wish to represent them as also symptoms of linguistic penetration.' (1936, p. 41)

In that paper, Wisdom continued to hold that philosophical statements provide no new information. Their point is different from that of the factual propositions. The task of philosophical propositions is simply 'the illumination of the ultimate structure of facts, i.e. the relations between different categories of being or (we must be in the mode) the relations between different sub-languages within a language' (p. 37). In fact, this was simply a transformation of Wisdom's position of 1931–3. New in 'Philosophical Perplexity' was the suggested tolerance towards the opposite claims philosophers make. If two philosophers maintain that philosophical statements are verbal, or that they are not verbal we can say that they are both right. Wisdom as if repeated here Wittgenstein's mantra: 'say what you please, so long as it does not prevent you from seeing how things are' (1953, § 79).

As a matter of fact, Wisdom's main concern at this moment was the sentences considered by the neopositivists, and also by Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus*, meaningless. Typical examples are sentences that give rise to traditional philosophical problems such like 'God exists', 'Humans are immortal', 'I know what is on in my friend's mind'. Wisdom insisted that it is misleading to merely call them 'meaningless', at least because by every one of them we have a meaninglessness of a different kind. Compare, for example, the propositions '2 + 3 = 6' and 'Can you play chess without the queen?' They are nonsense in different ways.

Puzzles raised by philosophical propositions can only be solved 'by reflecting upon the peculiar manner in which those sentences work' (p. 38), in other words, by reflecting upon their style, upon their *use*. Wisdom's 'mnemonic slogan [was now]: It's not the stuff, it's style that stupefies.' (Ibid.) Incidentally, this change of emphasis annoyed Wisdom's philosophical friend Stebbing, who openly criticised his new 'mnemonic slogan' (Stebbing, 1938/9, pp. 80 n., 84). She believed that Wisdom became a philosopher of language *tout court*. As we have already seen, he didn't. Wisdom remained a philosopher of facts.

Pushing forward the style into the centre of philosophy, Wisdom started to discriminate between the 'content' of the proposition and what we actually want to say with it, to its 'point'. We often cannot *say* of a philosophical theory why it is false, although we *feel* that

it is theoretically poor. Actually, this is the case because philosophical 'statements' are not, properly speaking, statements. Rather, they are recommendations for elucidating a problem.

Philosophers often maintain, for example, that they can never know what is going on in other people's minds, as if they dream of a world in which this was possible. Wisdom's aetiology of this problem, however, differed markedly from that of Wittgenstein. According to him, this complaint is misleading since it implies likeness that doesn't exist and conceals likeness that does. Wisdom further claimed that 'philosophical theories are illuminating … when they suggest or draw attention to a terminology which reveals likeness and differences concealed by ordinary language' (1936, p. 41). In other words, by struggling with a philosophical puzzle, we can achieve cognitive progress, alternatively shifting from provocation to pacification in a quasi-dialectical way. In contrast, according to Wittgenstein, philosophical puzzles are misleading since they suggest false grammatical forms that incessantly torment us. What is to be done is to free ourselves from them through grammatical analysis.

Having in mind the difference between Wittgenstein's and Wisdom's position, the discordance between that was to come cannot be a surprise. It showed itself for the first time in the Moral Science Club session of December 1, 1938. In his paper 'Metaphysics and Verification' (1938) Wisdom spoke about 'Verification Principle' (p. 99). Wittgenstein, in contrast, confessed that he 'did not like calling the statement that the meaning of a statement is the method of its verification, a principle. That made philosophy looks too much like mathematics.' (McGuinness 1995, p. 289)

Be this as it may, Wisdom's manifesto paper 'Philosophical Perplexity', his first attempt to closely adopt Wittgenstein's new philosophy, was well received in Cambridge. So much so that in 1938/9 Wittgenstein considered Wisdom, his fellow applicant for the Professor of Philosophy position in Cambridge as G. E. Moore's successor, the favourite (Monk 1990, p. 414). A clear sign of the rising stand of Wisdom in Cambridge was observed on April 21, 1939, at a session of the Moral Science Club in Cambridge, when G. E. Moore 'took up some of the claims about knowledge and certainty which Wisdom had made in his [1936] Aristotelian Society paper' (Wittgenstein *et al*., 2015, pp. 74, f.). Moore's main argument was directed against Wisdom's claim that the word 'certain' is simply used in different

senses which have different styles, or uses (Wisdom 1936, pp. 45 f.). Moore, in contrast, maintained that there is an absolute certainty; there are 'things that can be *safely* counted on' (Wittgenstein *et al.*, 2015, p. 76).

Wittgenstein was not at this session, but when its content leaked to him, he 'reacted like a war-horse' (Malcolm 1958, p. 30). As Norman Malcolm later remembered, 'He was more excited that ever knew him to be in a discussion' (ibid.). Significantly, Wittgenstein's criticism of Moore's defence of common sense can be considered a turn back to Wisdom's position. To be more correct, it was more of a 'dialectical synthesis' between Wisdom's 'thesis' and Moore's 'anti-thesis'. Importantly enough, this discussion urged Wittgenstein to think this matter over again and again. An important result of these reflections was his *On Certainty* (1969) that many considered to present the position of the 'third Wittgenstein'.

4. Epistemic Anxiety

Between 1940 and 1942, Wisdom published a series of eight papers in *Mind* under the title 'Other Minds' (1952a). Their publication was the most important philosophical event in Britain during the Second World War, which explains why the opening discussion at the Joint Session of the Aristotelian Society and Mind Association after the War in 1946 was on 'Other Minds' at which Wisdom and J. L. Austin (1946) presented their conceptions.

Similarly to Wittgenstein, Wisdom took his position from psychoanalytic theory, whereby he maintained that 'the treatment is the diagnosis and the diagnosis is the description, the very full description, of the symptoms' (p. 2 n.). The philosophical difficulty is eliminated only when the philosopher himself comprehensively describes his problems—not in abstract general terms but narratively, telling stories about them. Wisdom's conclusion was that ultimately 'every philosophical question, when it isn't half asked, answers itself; when it is fully asked, answers itself' (ibid.). At the same time, however, he continued putting an accent on asking questions that can produce important insights about facts. Here Wisdom again deviated from Wittgenstein, who claimed that only a detailed description of how we learn and teach language can help us to achieve peace of mind, cancelling the uneasiness caused by the language we use.

Take one of Wisdom's examples. To the uncertainty expressed by the question, 'How do I know other minds?', we can reply 'by analogy'. However, this answer, Wisdom insisted, is as misleading as true. In fact, it is just another deceptive 'smoother' that tranquillises thinking, albeit only momentarily. If we say, for instance, that the hippopotamus is a water horse, we must immediately add how this identification also misleads.

Wisdom further maintained that instead of speaking of metaphysical doubt, it would be better to say contemplating possibilities (1952a, pp. 6, 33). When I am pondering a philosophical puzzle, 'rival images are before me ... two alternatives, two possibilities' (p. 14), and, in the process of *deliberating* on them, I understand the puzzle. Such contemplation aims at *judgement*, at *decision*. In fact, 'all philosophical doubts are requests for decision' (p. 3 n.), not for information.

For example, a religious person and an atheist think about different worlds. 'The theist accuses the atheist of blindness and the atheist accuses the theist of seeing what isn't there.' (1944, p. 158) This difference in seeing is determined by the difference in the attitude (p. 160). Every one of these positions demonstrates an 'aspect blindness' (Wittgenstein 1953, II, xi) which is eliminated by illumination. The same facts are often seen differently by people with different cognitive attitudes. A couple of spouses enter the room, one of them saying 'I think somebody was here'. The other person denies this resolutely. Such cases are mostly a question of feeling, not of experience. It is inappropriate to ask now Who is *right*?

Wisdom underlined that such exercises in reasoning are typically explored in philosophy as well as in religion. They are worthwhile, in particular, by evaluating different cultures, in court, etc., but also in discussing the foundations of mathematics, where two parties, for example, the logicists and the constructivists, defend different theses, each of them being right.

Wisdom's conclusion, clearly opposing the logic of Frege–Russell but also of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, is that in such disciplines 'the process of argument is not a *chain* of demonstrative reasoning' (1944, p. 157). Of course, the growth of knowledge in these disciplines is, similar to that in science, cumulative. However, it starts from several independent premises—not by repeating the transformation of a bunch of premises, as it is in *Principia Mathematica*.

One of Wisdom's corollaries was that we can find a solution to a cognitive problem not only by adding new illuminations but also by conversation. Sometimes, trying to demonstrate that our opponent is wrong, we are become aware that it is us being wrong. Often, our opponent has unconscious reasons for his attitude, which we should try to disclose. By such explorations we are 'connecting and disconnecting', thus 'explaining a fallacy in reasoning' (p. 161). They are a kind of talking therapy.

Now, Wisdom was not shy about provoking a direct philosophic confrontation with Wittgenstein. In particular, he criticised Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy as a method of treating mental cramps (Wittgenstein 1958, p. 1): '[Wittgenstein] emphasises much more what evil philosophy removes than what good it brings.' (Wisdom 1946, p. 169) For example, he is seriously trying to prove that, in spite of philosophers' claim that we do not know other minds, we actually do. In fact, however, nobody believes this kind of scepticism. Philosophers discussing it shouldn't be considered as healers of difficulties but, similar to psychoanalysts, as disturbers of our complacency. In contrast to Wittgenstein, Wisdom also maintained, as he usually did, that 'a purely linguistic treatment of philosophical conflicts is often inadequate' (p. 181). Often, philosophical puzzles have no linguistic aetiology.

In fact, philosophical puzzles are not different in type from some other puzzles that disturb us in life. The reasonableness employed in philosophical dispute is also in use when a woman decides 'which of the two men is the right one for her to marry[; or, when a man must …] decide which of two professions is the right one for him to take up' (p. 178).[3] In contrast to them, however, whereas the philosopher discusses his problems like the businessman, the judge, or the army general does, he never considers his discussions a preparation for action. The philosopher simply 'desires the discussion never to end and dreads its ending [..., like] the man who cannot be sure that he has turned off the tag or the light. He must go again to make sure, and then perhaps he must go again because though he knows the light's turned off he yet can't *feel* sure.' (p. 172) Furthermore, in contrast to the neurotic, the metaphysician can never check his doubts. Actually, he doesn't doubt but just pretends to doubt. Moreover, he doesn't just pretend in front of the others, but in front of himself too.

The conclusion Wisdom reached was: '[The] philosophical discussion is the bringing out of latent opposing forces like arriving at a decision and not like learning what is behind a closed door.' (p. 181) The philosophical solution is an invention, not a discovery. In such cases, the

point is 'to pass from conflict into harmony, to find, as Aristotle said, the proper point between opposites' (p. 179). This is simply a 'dialectical process in which they [the horns of the paradox] are balanced' (p. 263). At the face of this claim, one is reminded that among Wisdom's teachers in Cambridge was also the Neo-Hegelian McTaggart…

The final difference between (the later) Wittgenstein and Wisdom was that whereas the former preferred to speak about grammar, not about logic, Wisdom continued to explore logic. For example, he claimed that the eccentric logic of other minds differs from the logic of wires, in which we suppose an electric current. To be sure, the latter can be checked, while the former can't. Actually, every situation has its own logic. 'The logic of milk is like the logic of wine. … [And] the logic of God may be more like the logic of Energy or of Life than at first appears but surely it is very different.' (1950, p. 15)

5. The Case-by-case Procedure

Wisdom was adamant that '*analytical* movement' is the wrong name for the New Look philosophy, which began with Moore.[4] Indeed, 'Moore did not hold that philosophy is analysis' (1959, p. 83). His philosophy is to be better characterised as a 'move to the concrete'; as strive for 'a renewed view of the manifold of particular cases covered by our general terms' (p. 85). When asked a general question, Moore always gave examples, striving 'to present philosophical problems in a concrete form' (1971, p. 32). Along with this, Moore's philosophy was critical. His 'work was often prompted by someone's asserting or appearing to assert that every proposition of a certain sort is false' (1959, p. 83). The questions he addressed 'were questions whose answers would throw light on how we know propositions which some philosophers have said we do not know' (p. 84).

Wisdom remembered that the main subject of criticism in Wittgenstein's lectures delivered between 1934 and 1936 (we already know that Wisdom attended them) were the concepts 'definition' and 'meaning' understood as essences. Wittgenstein's mnemonic was 'Don't ask for the meaning, ask for the use'. To Wisdom himself, all questions about meaning understood as an entity can be reduced to questions of the type 'What happened when you understood?', 'When someone understood, believed, remembered, was reading, was coming to a decision, felt frightened, etc.' (1952b, p. 88) (Milkov 1992, p. 71). When we understand, we are inclined to believe that we imagine some kind of mental mechanism with concealed movements. This is a misconception, though.

Wisdom reminisced that Wittgenstein fought such misunderstandings with the help of his family resemblance argument which, in fact, was nothing but criticism of definitions as understood by Plato, Aristotle, and Hegel. He persistently asked questions like 'Can one play chess without the queen?' In fact, such questions are 'Wittgenstein's biggest contribution to philosophy' (1952b, p. 88). In the face of this approach, it is not surprising that Wittgenstein refused to bind himself to an answer when involved in discussions.

But Wittgenstein did not only criticise the definition and meaning. He also challenged the universals and other abstract objects. According to Wittgenstein, 'we can't tell what a man means ... until we have faced the laborious job of finding what in innumerable incidents he refers to' (1961, p. 91). Instead of supplying definitions, Wittgenstein appealed to examples. Truly, the principles and the laws are useful too. 'But at the bar of reason, always the final appeal is to cases. ... Examples are the final food of thought.' (p. 102) The ultimate subjects of interest of Wittgenstein's philosophy were neither experience, as it was by Hume, nor analysis, as it was by Russell, but the phenomena. Exactly because philosophers do not pay attention to details, they do not speak the same language: hence 'the difference between players of the philosophic game which make one feel inclined to say they aren't playing the same game though they don't realise this' (p. 93). This is the main hindrance to their progress in their work.

In his 'Proof and Explanation' lectures, delivered at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville in 1957, Wisdom underlined that in some 'writings of Wittgenstein you do get the impression that the only people who produce a need for philosophy are philosophers' (1991, p. 5). In fact, this is not the case. Scientific problems give rise to philosophical puzzles as well: for example, Freud's theory of unconscious; or Newton's saying 'Here is action, although there is no transmitting medium; here is action at a distance'; or physicist's talk of a flow of unseen 'electrical current'.

Such forms of expression are the products of long episodes of deliberating and judging. 'Our worry about the unconscious isn't remediable by looking further or listening longer.' (p. 8.) It calls for reflection and, ultimately, for a decision. The physicist comparing two competing theories of light is like the judge. Importantly enough, now Wisdom stopped holding that an essential feature of metaphysical enquiries is that they start from paradoxes, or

puzzles. Instead, he maintained that 'the paradoxical flavor or form of philosophical questions is not essential to them; ... what is essential to them is that review, or new view, of a familiar process of enquiry which we can come to via the consideration of the paradoxes.' (p. 27)

Wisdom also criticised Wittgenstein's claim in *Philosophical Investigations* that 'the meaning of a word is its use in the language' (1953, § 32). What this principle produces 'is a sort of *chronic obstinacy* in discussions of whether a term is applicable. It encourages each party in the controversy to insist dogmatically on a particular answer.' (1991, p. 58) In fact, Wisdom maintained, Wittgenstein embraced this claim under the influence of technical philosophy. The problem with technical philosophy is that, first and foremost, it relates to the accuracy of the discourse. In contrast, Wisdom was convinced that 'to show that a statement is not absurd or self-contradictory is not at all to show that it's true' (p. 33). We must not always strive for exactness but for truth.

Wisdom further maintained that 'things sometimes can reach a successful outcome even though the person involved has an imperfect understanding of what has happened' (p. 19). Contrary to Frege's and to the early Wittgenstein's principle of only considering flawless (*Lückenlose*) chains of reasoning when doing logic and science, Wisdom held that 'the fact that in a particular case we lack a definite step-by-step way of demonstrating the applicability of a predicate by no means entails that we cannot recognise clear-cut instances to which the predicate is applicable' (p. 39). His conclusion was that 'so far as logic is concerned, it doesn't matter how vague the terms are. ... Instead of Venn's diagrams, one might use painted circles that fade out towards the edges.' (Ibid.) The principle of flawless chain of reasoning is just 'a habit of thought' that 'creeps into the mind'. Wisdom's final verdict was:

> Unfortunately Wittgenstein and his followers were so anxious to draw attention to the mischievous effects of the idea that a better grasp of what it is for a thing to be of a certain kind can be gained only by finding a correct definition of what it is for a thing to be of that kind that they sometimes gave the impression that whenever no such definition exists it is a waste of time to look for one. But incorrect definitions can be extremely valuable to us provided we come to see how they are incorrect, and this we can do even when we cannot define that incorrectness. (1962, p. 164)

A motive giving rise to this belief in metaphysics is 'a tendency to think that any question of fact must be calling for investigation' (1991, p. 75), for observation, or experiment, not for

enquiry. This tendency leads us to forget that a question of fact may also be calling for reflection.[5] To be sure, if the goal of science is only to report and so to predict phenomena, 'why in the name of wonder would Maxwell and other scientists use [metaphorical] expressions like "lines of force", "tubes of force", and "current"?' (p. 100). Why don't they introduce new terms for the new phenomena?

The 'true logic', Wisdom suggested in the Virginia lectures, is based on the 'case-by-case procedure' (aka 'argument from particulars to particulars'). This procedure is employed with exemplar clarity in court: 'We *have* to hear the argument [in it]: it wouldn't be fair without. And what takes place as we listen? Reflection, argument, reasoning; leading to an increased grasp of the situation.' (p. 40) Wisdom reminded his reader that the case-by-case procedure has been extensively used by Wittgenstein, for example, in the *Blue Book,* where he deplored our contempt for the particular case. A similar procedure of trying to understand a general term by considering instances can also be found in William James' *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902). As a matter of fact, this procedure was well-known in the British philosophy of the 19th century. One can fittingly say that 'what Mill asserts of inductive reasoning, that it is always ultimately from particular to particular, Wisdom asserts to all reasoning' (Ayers 2004). In the last resort, Wisdom 'argues for the *fundamental* character of such "case by case reasoning" or "reasoning by parallel cases": it is more fundamental than other forms of reasoning, both inductive and deductive reasoning.' (Dilman 1996, p. 586)

6. Epilogue

John Wisdom was not alone in his effort to follow Wittgenstein but refused to consider all philosophical problems as resulting from misunderstood grammar of our language. Two other most industrious scholars of Wittgenstein, Friedrich Waismann and Gilbert Ryle, followed him in a similar way. All the three showed no deep understanding of the decisive role of language in Wittgenstein's philosophy. Take, for example, Waismann. Similarly to Wisdom, he maintained that

> arguments are used in such a [in philosopher's] discussion, though not as proofs but rather as means to make him see things he had not noticed before: e.g. to dispel wrong analogies, to stress similarities with other cases and in this way to bring about something like a shift of perspective. (1968, p. 18)

Wittgenstein judged these efforts to follow only some aspects of his philosophy clearly negatively (McGuinness 2008, p. 476). As he saw it, they failed to understand the true character of his work. Moreover, Wittgenstein considered the work of these closest followers of his as abortive cases of plagiarism: 'they show you a bundle of stolen keys, but they cannot open a door with them' (Nedo 2012, p. 407).

The approaches of these three philosophers, of Wisdom, in particular, to Wittgenstein's legacy are, however, of special interest since today it is more than clear that 'to claim that philosophical problems arise from misunderstanding of language just seems implausible as a diagnosis of the causes of philosophical perplexity' (Grayling 1991, p. 63).

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Notes

[1] In her paper 'Logical Positivism and Analysis' (1933), Susan Stebbing maintained virtually the same (see Chapter 'Stebbing's Wittgenstein' in this volume). Presumably, Stebbing followed Wisdom on this point and not vice versa. An indication for this is that Wisdom's first two papers on logical constructions were published earlier—already in 1931 and the third one in 1932.

[2] To be sure, Wisdom didn't speak in these terms.

[33] They are also in use when one is 'to decide on the rights and wrongs of socialism, communism, conservatism and liberalism, war aims and post-war planning' (Bambrough 1986, p. 63).

[4] Gilbert Ryle, among others, held the same view (Milkov 2003, p. 124).

[5] At approximately the same time Gilbert Ryle maintained that there is not only inductive or deductive thinking but also reflective thinking which is directed to finding out a solution of a problem (Milkov 2003, p. 148).