to change this perception requires teaching others honestly what it is that we do and do not believe, not leaving them with the impression that faith is a matter of irrational and incommunicable 'personal belief' or a mere 'underpinning narrative' of the real philosophy.

In *Fides et Ratio* the Pope writes that Catholics may build upon various systems of thought such as Asian and African philosophies. Thomism has no monopoly on truth; the Church has no philosophy of her own. There is a danger, however, of analytic philosophers believing that their framework can deal sufficiently with everything, that no other system has anything to offer; hence the image of the TV philosopher pontificating on everything from political economy to philosophy of physics, NATO to birth control. Thomists should not be seduced by this vision of the professional philosopher; we have a clear picture of the proper place of philosophy: autonomous, but intimately tied to theology in its search for truth. Most Thomists, medieval philosophers and Catholic ethicists are notable for the rigour and courage of their arguments; they should continue in this analytic endeavour, and in dialogue with the best of secular thought, but they should be wary of analytic philosophy as a system that can inhibit religious thought and belittle the general human urge to philosophical enquiry which is Thomism's starting point.

Nicholas Rescher

Dissent is a prime mover of philosophical work. Committed to the cultivation of truth, we philosophers have a penchant for pursuing our ends by way of explanations of how the others have got it wrong. On this basis, John Haldane's superb lecture was something of a disappointment to me because I can find in it so little with which I disagree. From its magisterial initial exposition of the historical background to its wise concluding recommendation of a constructive engagement between Thomism and analytic philosophy, the lecture's forceful and cogent discussion of the issues enlists my admiration and approbation. Such caveats as I have relate at most to matters of emphasis.

What is it that a productive philosopher of one era can derive from one of an earlier day? There are many possibilities here. The principal sorts of things for which our own work can be indebted to a predecessor include:

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- concepts
- problems and questions
- doctrines and theses
- arguments
- methods
- aims/goals/values

The first thing to note about this list is that it provides for enormous flexibility. One need not agree with a single one of a philosopher's doctrines and substantive conclusions and yet be deeply in his debt for concepts, questions, methods, or aims. It is thus an error to think Platonists alone profit from Plato's dialogues or Thomists alone profit from the Angelic Doctor's intellectual toil. And even analytic philosophers are not excluded. Indeed, insofar as the adequacy of a mode of philosophizing is best measured by the pragmatic standard of its efficacy in accomplishing its intended work, philosophical analysts would do well to see Thomism as yet another testing ground for the utility of their favoured methodology, as yet another source of grist for their mill.

And conversely. Thomists need not favour the particular doctrines that are in fashion among analytic philosophers to recognize and capitalize upon the concepts, methods, and clarifactory aims of the analytical enterprise. On the side of method it should, in fact, be acknowledged that St. Thomas himself has substantial claims to consideration as a philosophical analyst.

In any event, the fact that philosophy is not merely a kind of literature means that Thomism is something larger than the exegetical study of the writings of St. Thomas. If, as is indeed the case, Thomism represents a philosophical position, then its concern has to be with the ideas and arguments at issue in solving the philosophical problems and answering the philosophical questions posed by St. Thomas and not merely with the texts in which these were set out. Texts are historical fixities, their development ends with their production. But ideas, arguments and positions have a life of their own. They evolve over time and become reconfigured in the wake of the responses they evoke. Where philosophical doctrines rather than text elucidation is at issue it is the impersonal truth of things rather than the thoughts of a particular individual that is the determinative consideration. And so, there is no prospect of an *opposition* between Thomism and analytic philosophy. Since Thomism is a matter of theorizing rather than a dogma, analytic philosophy is an approach whose resources are as much at its service as at that of any other doctrine.

Accordingly, Haldane is entirely right. Philosophical doctrines and

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positions as such have a life of their own beyond the control of their inaugurators. They admit of refinement and development both in response to misunderstanding or criticism and in response to intellectual innovation on relevant issues. If they are not to be a mere pieces of flotsam and jetsam of the past washed up on the shore of the present—inert driftwood and ready for decorative display—then they must be reexamined, refurbished and reworked to meet the needs and opportunities of changed conditions and altered circumstances. Thomists would thus be well advised not to reject analytic philosophy but to avail themselves of its methodological resources for the clarification and substantiation of their position. A Thomism worth its salt must be able to emerge alive and strengthened from the intellectual encounters of an era where the ideas and methods of philosophical analysis are prominent parts of the philosophical mainstream. A position of perennial value must not only be restated in the changed condition of a later different thought world, it must be reconstituted as well.

There is one aspect of St. Thomas's great project that is clearly of transcendent value and ubiquitous utility, namely its commitment to systematization. His theory and practice in the refusal to exile reason from theology carries a wider lesson. This may be favoured in a regulative maxim: "Do not fragment and compartmentalize your thinking. Whenever there is no necessity for doing so, do not divide your thinking into separate and disjoined compartments. Develop your thought systematically, keeping all of its elements in productive contact and interaction with the rest." This is assuredly a positive and productive policy from which nothing but good can come. Commitment to cultivating the integrative unity of thought is of ever-increasing value in an age of specialization and division of intellectual labour. If *philosophers* do not strive for a synoptic perspective in the realm of human understanding, then who will?

For me, moreover, one of the most illuminating contrasts of medieval/_____ thought is that between the Thomistic emphasis on the power of reason and the seemingly contrary emphasis of Nicholas of Cusa on the inherent limitation of the human intellect. For here I see an ironic testimonial to the doctrine of the "unity of opposites" of my great namesake, since it must surely be counted as one of the remarkable tokens of the power of reason that it is able to recognize and clarify its own limitations and to elucidate their source and nature.

In any case, my one dissent from Haldane's almost invariably congenial views relates to his seeing the pursuit of philosophical

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wisdom as aiming at achieving "a form of understanding that may bring mankind peace of mind." This envisions the prospect of a completion or perfection that I view as decidedly unrealistic. For I see the human situation in a less optimistic light as a stage of struggle and striving. The battle against the forces of ignorance and incomprehension is endless. And, even more importantly, intellectual innovation also brings new challenges. Behind every "solution" there lurk further difficulties, behind every answer come further questions. If wisdom consists (as I incline to think it does) in an ability to see things as they are, then the incompletability and imperfectability of our philosophizing is something with which we must come to terms. For in the intellectual as in the moral life there are no permanent victories to be achieved and no rest short of the grave. As I see it, the cognitive condition of man in this vale of tears is something we may come to view with resignation (*Gelassenheit*) but never with rational contentment (*Zufriedenheit*). There are no permanent victories to be won in man's intellectual struggle for understanding.

Thomas D. Sullivan

Though John Haldane and others have made a strong case for bringing the thought of St. Thomas into cognitive contact with contemporary analytical philosophy, the proposal is bound to elicit two familiar objections.

First, the Theoretical Historicist will argue that the temporal and cultural distance separating us from Aquinas prevents us from making any informative comparison between Aquinas' work and what is going on today. It is pointless to ask whether Kripke lends support to Aquinas on essence or whether contemporary physicalism spells ruin for his teaching on the soul. Such questions presuppose that Aquinas' philosophy can be lifted out of its original environment and compared with other systems similarly disembedded from their attendant conditions. And that, the Theoretical Historicist insists, is an elementary mistake.

Occasionally friends of Aquinas sound like Theoretical Historicists. 'The real question' Etienne Gilson once wrote, 'is to know whether one can snatch a philosophy from the milieu in which it was born and plant it elsewhere away from the environment in which it ever

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