Dagfinn Follesdal

While it is fairly clear what Thomism is, it is far from clear what is meant by 'analytic philosophy'. Like most labels, it is highly malleable and can be molded to different purposes, in particular the following two:

(1) *Polemics.* Label polemics is rather widespread, because it is so easy. First one defines a label in such a way that it stands for a view that it is easy to refute. In the best cases, one is able to find somebody who actually has this view. However, the more stupid the view, the less evidence is supplied that anyone actually has it.

This is, however, a minor matter compared to the next step: one now applies the label to a large number of philosophers, too many to discuss individually, and then writes them off as a group. In many cases the whole first step is skipped: one just applies the label to a large group of philosophers without bothering with definition, texts or interpretation.

Such polemics are, unfortunately, widespread, especially in popular discussions of philosophy. They close people's minds and they tend to illustrate the adage: What one is not up on, one is down on. The use of labels is furthered by the following psychological mechanism: given that we have read so little of all that is written, it is comforting to think that much of what we have not read we do not need to read. We attach a label to it and convince ourselves that all that carries this label is so trivially wrong that we miss nothing by not having read it.

(2) *Surveys.* In surveys one usually arranges the items to be surveyed into suitable groups according to the features one happens to be interested in. The grouping may facilitate one's grasp of the field and the groups are normally given labels. This is a relatively innocent use of labels. However, as soon as one turns to evaluation or criticism, one should forgo the use of labels: all evaluation, in particular criticism, should be based on careful interpretation of the individual author one wants to criticize.

For this reason, I avoid the use of labels. One important task of philosophy is to open people's minds, not close them. What, then, remains of the idea of 'Analytical Thomism'?

If one looks at philosophers often called 'analytic', there are no philosophical theses they all share. They are certainly not all nominalists, naturalists, or atheists, as I have seen claimed by some philosophers who have read nothing by them. I have even experienced philosophers who believe that analytic philosophy and logical positivism are the same. However, such failures to distinguish arise only when things are seen from very great distance. 'Analytic' philosophers

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cannot be recognized by their problems, they deal with all the problems that have engaged philosophers since antiquity. Nor do so-called 'analytic' philosophers have a certain method in common, not even a method of 'conceptual analysis', which makes little sense to philosophers like Quine, who think there are no concepts. In some surveys, 'analytic' philosophy is defined genetically, as a tradition; 'analytic' philosophers are Frege and philosophers influenced by him, such as Russell, and their followers in turn. However, philosophers such as Bolzano create problems here, he died the year Frege was born and was never studied by Frege.

The most satisfactory characterization of 'analytic' philosophy is in my opinion that 'analytic' philosophy emphasizes argument and justification. In evaluating a philosophical work, an 'analytic' philosopher does not primarily ask: Do I agree? The crucial question is rather: How good are the arguments? An 'analytic' philosopher who presents and assesses a philosophical position asks: what *reasons* are there for accepting or rejecting this position? This question necessitates an investigation of what follows from the position at issue, and from what other positions it can be derived. How can one strengthen or invalidate this position? This is what is usually meant when one asks: what precisely does this position mean? One then discovers that minute differences in the way a position is formulated determine whether it is acceptable or not. This, I believe, is one reason why 'analytic' philosophers are so often concerned with analyzing language. Linguistic analysis is necessary to avoid ambiguities and unclarities which may be crucial to the validity of a line of argument.

According to this characterization, 'analytic' philosophy is not a phenomenon of the t wentieth century. All the major philosophers through the history of philosophy qualify as 'analytic' philosophers, and Thomas Aquinas comes particularly high on the list. John Haldane states that "if Thomas Aquinas were alive today he would have been an analytic philosopher" [1].

I would say: Thomas Aquinas was an analytic philosopher. Given this, my view is: *Thomism should be analytical.* If one has respect for Thomas Aquinas, one should do what he did: one should emphasize argument and justification. The training of students should focus on this, and one should put a premium on getting things published in journals that emphasize arguments and justification, that is in the best 'analytical' journals. The same holds for appointments: publication in the best journals is the best guarantee that one has something to contribute, and some such publication should be a minimum requirement for appointments. One should study the problems Thomas discussed, and

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also many more, and one should study the contemporary treatments of these problems. 'Analytic' philosophers have been working on pretty much all the problems that engaged Thomas Aquinas, and if one neglects this recent work one is likely to miss insights that Thomas Aquinas would have appreciated. In philosophy, as in all other fields of scholarship and science, if one pretends to contribute something new, one should definitely know what has already been done.

Teaching and research in Catholic universities will then not be very different from what it is in good secular universities. One will emphasize the same general knowledge and the same skills. The sole difference will be that in Catholic universities one will always make sure that central Catholic domains are covered, such as the philosophy of religion, ethics and the history of medieval philosophy.

1 John Haldane, "What Future has Catholic Philosophy?" In *Virtues and Virtue Theories*, Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, 1997/8, pp. 79–90.

Bas C. van Fraassen

There certainly are atheists in foxholes ... and on deathbeds, even among the Jobs on dungheaps. But the old familiar lie does point to a truth: foxholes, death, and despair are also sacred places where we encounter God. Certainly there are atheists in love, transported in joy, awestruck on first beholding the mountains. But joy, awe, and love are also where we find the divine on earth, where we see in others and ourselves the outward signs of inward grace.

What does philosophy have to do with all this? I am perhaps the last person to be in any position to comment on Professor Haldane's Aquinas Lecture.[1] For I am a Catholic and I am a philosopher, but I am not a Catholic philosopher in his sense. Yet I find myself moved by Haldane's narrative of a philosophical tradition begun in the Middle Ages and persisting to this day in its effort to bring faith and reason together. And I accept a challenge he poses—though it is not (to use his words) the challenge 'to harness [my] reason to my faith'. I am concerned not so much with the tension or harmony between (neo)Thomism and analytic philosophy as with an underlying question:

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